

Name  
Student Number  
Email

Born in the small coastal town of Powell River, British Columbia, I grew up surrounded by artists and travellers. My earliest memories are of travelling through Mexico, Guatemala and France, and as I grew older, the stories I grew up hearing slowly turned into a grand mythology where the gods and goddesses were my parents and their friends. From a young age I knew I wanted to be a writer, and it is this desire that led me to Ottawa to pursue an English degree. Going into my fourth year at Carleton, I look forward to completing a Concentration in Creative Writing. Holding a CGPA of 10.28, I aim to pursue a career in writing in whatever manner I can, hoping that my unique voice and experiences while growing up in a bus with five younger siblings speak to others. To touch someone with my writing as literature has touched my life and mind would be more than I could ask for from my “professional” life. Having taken two workshops previously, I know that workshops are the classes in which I demand the most of myself, and apply myself wholeheartedly, and I would be thrilled to have the opportunity to explore my creative limits.

**Proposal:**

The hybrid piece I have in mind for this workshop has the working title of “A Family History.” Inspired by Ondaatje's “Running in the Family,” this piece would explore the boundaries between fiction and creative non-fiction, blurring the lines of truth and objectivity; thereby reflecting the ways through which we know our own family's, and in turn our own, history. Our own sense of self and belonging is passed down through stories and memories, which are prone to inconsistency and subjectivity.

“A Family History” will tell the story of a woman's process of self-discovery through her recreation of her parents' lives; having found a box full of postcards, letters, and journals, she realizes that her parents were not the people she believed; instead, they were her own fabrications, as revealed by how little skew their true selves, making her question all she knows.

This piece will thus meld together prose, poetry, postcards, photographs and confessional writings to showcase the multiplicity of truth and the notion of history. In working on and thinking about this piece, I have also been inspired by my own family history, and my own collection of family photos. Musical inspiration is also central to this piece, as I take cues from the lyrics of French musician Mano Solo, particularly his album “La Marmaille Nue.” I look forward to writing a piece that will allow me to explore my own sense of self. While also pushing my creative limits and allowing me to mature my voice.

*This poem demonstrates the kinds of imagery I enjoy using, and speaks to the feeling of freedom that comes from writing, as well as loving.*

### Abandon

Tiptoeing through my heart shall never  
suffice for you.

You prefer to whisk me into your  
tornado of passion, leaving a mess  
of uprooted houses once you have  
passed through.

Keep me in your dizzying  
orbit, and any complaints  
will die on my lips, replaced  
with dreams as you kiss me.

*Although not raised in a religious family, much of my work tends to have Biblical references, such as can be found in this poem, which pairs seemingly contradictory notions of divinity and sexuality.*

### To Fuck A Saint

If my hair was long, I would wash  
your feet with it. You are my holy  
communion, and I bite into you  
with Biblical abandon.  
In turn, you heal the leprosy devouring  
my heart. Make me whole.  
A holy trinity of you, me, and us.

You fuck a saint. Or  
am I fucking the saint?  
In the end, it's all saintly  
destruction, and someone must  
eventually be burned at the stake.

*This poem is near and dear to me as it attempts to explore the different ways in which we deal with grief and loss, and how at times it is possible to feel all-consumed by another person's essence until we no longer remember who we are.*

## Remedies

I've done extensive research  
of a desperate nature,  
into fabled remedies  
with the power to mend  
a rotting heart.

You see, a broken heart is not the same.  
I have had the luck to be informed,  
of scads of cures for that ailment.

Time, one friend told me,  
until my eyes felt like hourglasses  
tracking each grain of sand trickling  
away.

A friend whose boisterous  
nature concealed a fierce compassion,  
let me in on her secret: sex and alcohol.  
That seemed to work, until the glue  
holding me together poisoned me from within.

Countless people counselled self-love,  
of the platonic and sexual kind.  
But I found I could only stand myself  
for so long.

Food seemed to soothe the hunger  
in my soul, until my curves felt  
anything but attractive. That killed  
more than anything.

And then, the rot begins to set in.  
Only so many lonely nights can be spent,  
until you ferment, and your misery oozes  
from every pore, giving off some sort  
of pheromone from which people  
pull away, fearing that you are contagious.

I think he has squatter's rights  
on my heart by now.

And ain't no way his ghost is moving out  
anytime soon.

*Although the most obvious example of hybridization in this poem would be the use of French and English, to me this poem also melds together images from my childhood with memories from my adulthood.*

### A Carnivorous Affair

*Qu'elle heure est-il?*

It's that time when skies  
bleed purple into the sea,  
and we head home for the night.  
Salty wind billows my clothes,  
my skin coated in sun.

*Quand reviens tu?*

Your warm fingers  
interlaced with mine,  
fitting as snugly as you  
do next to me in our sleep.  
As we walk up the hill,  
the sun dipping at our backs,  
I decide: this is it.

*Où a tu appris a mentir?*

Grains of sand litter  
my sheets as we make love –  
Remnants of mountains  
clinging to my skin,  
each as unique as our  
mistakes  
and the things we got right.

*Qui t'as fait si mal?*

Placing the fresh salmon  
on my tongue, lemon juice  
dripping down my chin,  
never stopping to think  
about the lives we've destroyed.

*Referencing one of my favourite poems, “Whoso List To Hunt”, this piece showcases my vivid imagery, combining the eroticism of modern poetry with the sensuality implied by Sir Thomas Wyatt.*

### Catching Wind In Nets

My muse fills all of my moments.  
One moment her blood orange hair  
is soft under my fingers,  
and the next: platinum locks are gripped  
in my fists.

Ever-changing, I can never let her go:  
her bakery smell entrances me, and I  
am like a child craving a baguette, crisp  
on the outside, yet warm and soft once  
cracked open.

The ink which covers her body mimics  
the impressions I shall make upon her flesh  
(and the ones she makes upon my mind).

Harming her for inspiration will never do  
for all I wish to write about are her succulent  
lips, and the way they travel over my skin.  
Writing about her salty tears, or unrequited love  
would sully this carnal union.  
Emotions (wonder and bliss excluded)  
have no place between her legs.

With every spasm, I invoke my muse.  
I do not wish to possess her, instead she  
possesses me.

Her sweet breath fills me, yet this is all  
I can retain of her, for though she may seem  
tame, she is wild to hold.

*In this poem I experiment with rhythm, building up to a frantic pace and playing with repetition.*

### A Love Written in Stone

Take me now , you minx you.  
Fuck me until I forget those who splintered  
my soul and dropped me like a rag doll.  
Leave your books of poetry behind –  
a calling card promising your return.

Cradle me like an infant while I suckle  
at your breasts. Dance against me, our skins  
slick with sweat as our hair mingles to  
the beat of my desire. Take me now,  
while watching me take you, you siren you.

Drag me to the depths of your oceans,  
where I'll explore you for newfound treasures.  
Running out of air, drowning in you, drunk  
on your skin and having no intention to leave  
anytime soon.

Slip into my pants on your way out  
the door, yours pooling at my feet,  
the only thing you will let me keep.  
Our lipstick kisses scattered through  
my bed – take me now, you ghost you.

Skin on skin on skin on lips on lips  
on lips on lips. Sigh gasp inhale scream  
look into my eyes and deny that you  
want me that you need me like I need  
you. And I'll believe you, you Medusa you.

*This is an excerpt from the proposed hybrid piece "A Family History". As of now this is how the novella begins, although through workshopping I hope to improve and flesh out my characters and setting.*

When I found my mother, I wasn't surprised. No. What I felt was not surprise. Instead, it was a visceral panic that seeped from every pore of my body, blinding me. I don't know when I knew that it would happen. At some point, I knew this would be the inevitable end. Maybe I always knew.

Every moment in time was leading up to this. The moment of my mother's suicide.

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My mother belonged to the first great generation of suicides. Suicides had of course happened; but never on such a scale. The previous generations had been used to losing their peers in the Great Wars but with my parents, people were taking their own lives; it was a violence of a completely different species.

My parents were never shy about suicide; it had permeated their youths.

"Oh, I had a friend who's sister killed herself. Her name was Leah, and well, when we were sixteen she found her older sister in the closet," my mother's voice was unusually somber.

On another occasion, on a trip with her to her hometown, we went to a suspended bridge. As I stepped across the wooden planks, I tried not to look down. My eyes strayed to my feet, and I gasped. Below me lay hundreds of feet of nothing, followed by green trees that looked like little more than small brushstrokes. We stopped to take pictures, and our smiles covered our pounding hearts.

"People often go bungee jumping here. Can you believe that?" my mother whispered, and her eyes grew sad. "You see those guards over there? Well they're here because it's a popular place for suicides. Your aunts know a few people who jumped here. They still can't come and visit." I grabbed her hand, a gesture which only made me appear smaller than normal. I dragged her from the bridge, stained by the despair covering that place.



My father's obsession with death was much different than my mother's. While hers was always filled with a morbid wistfulness his was full of anger. And with this anger, my father did what he did best: he wrote.

In the dark of the night, eyes open,  
you seek out cowardice, you give into  
it. Swallow the bitter pill of your  
perceived failings, allow them to  
eat you from within.

And no one was with you.  
I was not consulted, the cop out  
was all yours. Checking out early  
some call it. I'd call it a damn shame.  
If I had known how we would've  
found you, empty and limp,  
I would never have hesitated,

to scream that you were wrong.  
That putting up a fight is what  
matters. I wanted you to give the  
world hell, and make it regret  
the days it ever fucked with you.

At my mother's funeral, my father came back. It was the first time I'd seen him in person in five years. His hair was no longer the jet black of old; instead there was more grey than anything else. As he hugged me, wrapped in his arms, I felt like a child once more. I inhaled his skin which always smelled like salt. Back then, I had yet to discover their letters and diaries. I had purposefully refused to be a fan of my father's poetry, pretending his words were insignificant. Back then, I refused to cry in my father's arms. Now, I would not make the same decisions.

“Nina, I've missed you,”

“Hey dad.”

His breath tickled my ear, “have you been getting my letters?”

“Yes I've been getting your letters. I just haven't bothered to answer. After all, who knows how long you'll stay anywhere, right?”

My father sighed, his blue eyes squeezing shut. I gripped his shoulder and squeezed it before walking away. That much I would give him.

During the funeral, while the warm air suffocated me in my black mourning garb, my father stood up and read a poem. This I could also not deny him.

Your naked skin shines with  
dried salt. I am tempted to  
lick paths onto your body.  
You are so alive.

With every breath, you feed  
your dreams. I am jealous  
of the wind, caressing you.  
You are vitality.

When my father finished, all I felt was jealousy. It clawed at my throat until it was only with great effort that I could resist lashing out at him.

“You were lucky to have good times with her dad. Damn lucky,” I said. In that moment, I was jealous of him. But I did not hate him. I loved him because I knew that he had been the spark that kept my mother going, the flame that fanned her voracious appetite for life. I couldn't even hate him for taking all of that away from my mother. Just for a moment, I forgot to be mad at him for killing my mother.

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*This is an excerpt of my short story “Love it Dissipates”. This is the final scene where the protagonist, Eva, confronts the “monster” that has been tormenting her, realizing that her own memories and fears are the real threat.*

Back in her room, she stripped her body naked, biting her lip every time an old nightmare was exposed.

“I had to do this!” she exploded to the monster as it observed her body languidly.

“I had to leave! Don't you dare look at me like that! Do you think I *wanted* to leave her behind? All I wanted was escape!” she screamed shrilly. Time was no longer measurable, and no longer felt concrete. She was neither where she wanted to be, or when she wanted to be. Somewhere, her life had split into two distinct parts: the one which she seemed to be experiencing, and the one she could imagine so vividly it was like having everything she wanted in the worst way possible.

“Oh you escaped all right. Without any explanation. And now you have a free life Eva. It's just you and me baby.” The monster put its arms around her as sobs wracked her body.

“You piece of shit!” Thrashing as if caught in a net, she struggled to push the monster away, but her hands merely brushed air.

“You did this to me! I left to get away from you! Why are you still here? I don't want you anymore! I don't!”

“Oh Eva.” It laughed softly. “You have always wanted me. And you still do. It's not my fault you weren't good enough.”

Tic toc, tic toc.

The air around her crackled with desire. She was not strong enough to resist.

“Tell me you love me. Tell me I'm beautiful,” she whispered, praying the monster would join her on the bed.

“Eva, you know I love you. Why do you think I won't let you go?” it replied, hands sliding over her hips. As shivers travelled across her body, Eva did not know or even care who's hands she felt. All she wanted was to sink into bliss.

Moans escaped her full lips as her body was explored, the monster following the road map of her desires along paths only she knew.

As she reached a climax the monster dug its claws into her.

“You're mine. Worthless as you are, you will always be mine,” it said into her ear as she curled into a sobbing ball.

She wanted the monster. She needed the monster. But the monster no longer wanted her. The monster only wanted to torture her. To sink its teeth and claws into her, and to never let her go. The monster refused to let her stop loving it.

The monster carved a hole into her, and that was where it lived. She could never get rid of it. And there she was, trying to glue the pieces back together as the monster joyously prodded her leaky reconstruction. She no longer knew who the monster was. Maybe she was the monster. And how could she escape that?

Tic toc, tic toc.

And there she was. Still.