

# The broken

Prose Poetry Photography Art Music



## Issue 1 : Places Called Home

Writers examine an elusive concept

Fall 2007

ISSN 1916-3304

# FALL 2007

Cover Photo: Yulee Hong

The Broken City, ISSN 1916-3304, is published semi-annually out of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, appearing sporadically in print, but always at: [www.thebrokencitymag.com](http://www.thebrokencitymag.com). Submission information can be found at that site and submissions can be sent to: [thebrokencitymag@yahoo.com](mailto:thebrokencitymag@yahoo.com). Questions about The Broken City or its policies can be directed to Editor-In-Chief Scott Bryson at [doriangraving@yahoo.com](mailto:doriangraving@yahoo.com). Rights to individual works published in The Broken City remain the property of the author and cannot be reproduced without their consent. All other materials © 2007. All rights reserved. All wrongs reserved.

## Contributors

Crystal Aelbers, 25, is a poet living inside a painter caught up in a photographer encased in a musician surrounded by an anomaly that wears her heart on her sleeve and thinks that she would die if she couldn't express herself.

Jana Drake is a graduate of North Carolina State University, where she studied English Creative Writing and Artistic Journalism. Her work has appeared in independent and college publications such as Splat Magazine, Windhover, The Technician, and the United Arts Council of Raleigh & Wake County Newsletter. She can be reached via email at [jana.drake1@gmail.com](mailto:jana.drake1@gmail.com).

Margaret Fieland lives in the suburbs of West Boston where she writes computer software for a living and belongs to a marching band. She's a staff writer for Femme VIP ([www.femmevip.com](http://www.femmevip.com)), an ezine for women. Her website is [www.margaretfieland.com](http://www.margaretfieland.com).

Yulee Hong's work can be seen here:  
[www.choochiedesign.com](http://www.choochiedesign.com).

Hope Jamieson lives in East Vancouver and attends Simon Fraser University, where she studies Women's Studies and sustainable community development. She

has been published in numerous anthologies, zines and the like.

Lorette C. Luzajic has released her first poetry collection, *The Astronaut's Wife: Poems of Eros and Thanatos*, available through Indigo or Amazon. She freelance writes full-time, marketing her writing and editing services through [thegirlcanwrite.net](http://thegirlcanwrite.net). She also runs The Idea Factory at [ideafactorymagazine.net](http://ideafactorymagazine.net).

Guinevere Mercer

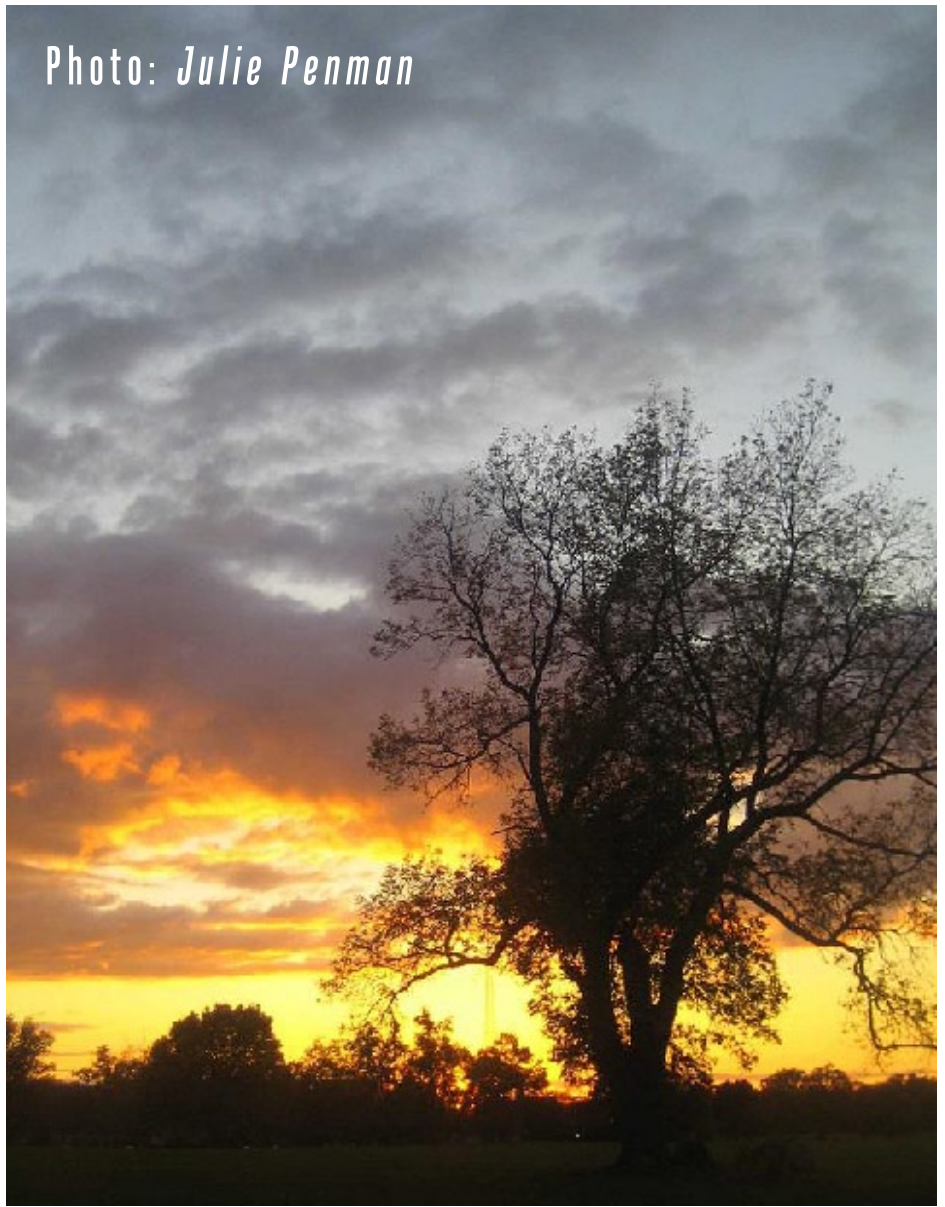
Julie Penman

Jordan Somers

Colleen Isabel Thompson lives in Vancouver's West end. She has a blog where she dumps the occasional garbage thought at [www.colleenknows.blogspot.com](http://www.colleenknows.blogspot.com). She also has a myspace if you feel like stalking her: [www.myspace.com/inconsolablemoth](http://www.myspace.com/inconsolablemoth).

Bianca Wylie is currently working on a project called Primed — [www.primedtoronto.org](http://www.primedtoronto.org) — creating short video resources about municipal government. She can be reached via email at [biancampublic@gmail.com](mailto:biancampublic@gmail.com).

Photo: *Julie Penman*



## **Vancouver #11**

### ***Hope Jamieson***

Autumn's fallin' hard and  
draggin' me down,  
down with it —  
out of sight and out of my mind.

Maybe it's the  
Slow striptease of trees  
against a grey silk sheet of sky that reminds me  
how hard  
I just wanna be fucked, or maybe it's just bad luck,  
months with no sunlight or goodnight's sleep  
tight in the arms of some stranger who will not  
make me coffee or call or  
maybe he will and it'll be  
"hi sorry I can't take your call right now  
but I've jumped in front of a skytrain and it may be  
some time before I get back to you  
no matter how much I liked  
the bruises you left between my thighs."  
It's all lies and never enough of them, but  
I'm not ashamed, it's just how I do, baby.  
Fuck me and leave me lonely, it's the ideal  
interaction cos I can't do love but sublimation only gets a girl so far in this world. I can  
Only roll so many cigarettes before my fingers turn yellow and who's gonna fuck me then, huh?  
Truth is I'm a liar and a whore and I'm asking for it but no one's been giving me any answers these days and  
that's all I'm looking for.



# There's No Place Like It

Use a word enough and its meaning gets diluted. We tend to forget that a concept as superficially simple as “home,” for one, is capable of taking on any number of connotations — some having not much to do with a concrete location. Wikipedia, in its definition of *home*, notes not only a site’s physical characteristics, but also provides that home can be classified as a place “where a person feels safe or comfortable.”

Jon Paul Fiorentino, in his poem *spectre*, looks at the matter from a different perspective:

winnipeg’s restored district  
never tear down any building lucky enough to be haunted  
a notion disperses like a scattered pamphlet —  
home is where you are discarded

Whether it’s physical settings — like the roads and houses in Margaret Fieland’s *The Lake* — or the feelings, smells and tastes found in Jana Drake’s *Cheddar Cheese and Coffee*, it seems unavoidably true that *home* is something we’re all perpetually trying to find.



Photo: Yulee Hong

## The Lake

### *Margaret Fieland*

They dammed the Housatonic River,  
bought your homes and moved you away,  
flooded the valley:

more than eight square miles,

leaving the homes,  
the roads,  
the covered bridges,  
the Model T Fords.

Behind the dam  
the detritus of your lives remains  
hidden under forty feet or more of water,  
snapshot of the Roaring Twenties.

The lake is surrounded with new homes,  
golf courses,  
beaches and marinas,  
parks that have offered swimming lessons  
to several generations of summer residents.

If we obtain scuba equipment  
we can dive down,  
travel again the drowned roads,

see the reminders of lives  
that are no longer lived in their midst.

Q: Brother, are you headed home?

A: Brother, aren't we always headed  
home?

*-Question used by  
Masons to identify themselves  
among strangers*

## [more than anyone else could]

### *Crystal Aelbers*

i'll lie with you on hardwood floors.  
my back angled into the ground.  
sharp and invasive.

if it means your head is lying on my chest.  
and we're listening to the rain filter through the sky.  
and drain into the ground.

i'll lie with you on soft couches.  
my arms wrapped around your form.  
like the sun curves around a perfect silhouette.

if it means your heart is beating against mine.  
and we're listening to the wind carve pathways  
from the ocean.  
to the insides of every living thing.

## Notes on Leaving a Friend

### *Lorette Luzajic*

You are dancing,  
shrouded in prisms of blue-blond light  
eyes closed, hands empty  
swallowed by smoke.

I handed you heart, hands  
made up of broken glass  
and bloody angels  
filthy fingers that had  
touched earth, you.  
you made them soft,  
peeling back the fibres of the palms,  
you breathed laughter  
I trusted you  
I trusted our Tuesday morning wine  
and let loneliness dissolve  
melting darkness into dawn.

Now, missing you  
watching you dance like spun cotton candy  
no angles no edges  
I am off to the ends of the earth  
to Africa  
alone with this dazzling picture.

## Flowers from Carmine

### *Lorette Luzajic*

Who knows who you are  
or why you keep yourself sane  
by collecting dogs and lunchboxes

You love to talk on about this and that  
and never disclose much  
in these ramblings

I've lived half as long as you have  
and I haven't lived as hard,  
but I don't have a garden.  
Your bouquets are startling — colour like spring  
erasing used up seasons.

I imagine you at night, trowel in hand,  
digging through the pieces of your life  
weeding out what is broken or dead.  
You meditate in secret  
on the colours that you and rain created.

But these are just my imagined pictures. I am one of those types  
who spends too much time alone in cafes. It's the caffeine that  
does it to me. I put too much store in the unknown, in multiple  
causation. And you — you could not analyze me if you tried.

Your invitations to smoke grass are uneasy but eager.  
You like me because you do not scare me,  
and because there is something left in me  
that can still surprise you.

But we will never really know each other. I will lose you.  
I would ask for more from you but you do not ask for more friends.

I picked a rose while walking home one summer night,  
a treasure  
from your quiet yard.  
I wore it, like a gift, in my hair.



Photo: Yulee Hong

## Vallium for Breakfast for Iaian Greenson *Lorette Luzajic*

Since you asked, Iaian, I'll tell you  
what has become of me, and none of it will  
come as a surprise. Tonight on a Friday  
I will write this for you.

I can't deal with sordid clubs  
or cat barf and dirty socks. And I can't seem  
to get into the "new series" —  
isn't there an endless stream of new series?

My thoughts are scattered tonight: I am  
wondering why my orange kitten  
always has such dirty little feet. I think,  
well, I'm fat and I work as a cashier,  
just as Satan promised me on Highway 61.  
I think, money, how there isn't any,  
unimaginably less than zero.

And I think, my friend,  
that love is a sick delusion: I read  
graffiti that said so on a bathroom wall.  
Love, its quiet scars, its gaping maw, how  
I fell in and drowned and now I'm just a ghost,  
writing to you, telling you  
what has become of me,  
because you asked.

And it's Valium for breakfast  
and vitamins for lunch  
and yoga on Sundays and  
therapy on Wednesday afternoons.  
And I might not come out often  
but you know just where to find me  
you could write out my heart like a poem.





Photo: *Yulee Hong*

## **Cheddar Cheese and Coffee** excerpts from the short story by ***Jana Drake***

My childhood is the taste of sweet, creamy coffee and sharp cheddar cheese served on a Blue Willow platter. When I was six, my mother told me how the bittersweet taste of coffee helped cut the edge off the sharp cheddar. Sixteen years later, I still find myself sipping on the same coffee and slicing cheese in my suburban, gun powder gray kitchen, trimmed with red-flowered wall paper. It's not at all like my mother's country kitchen. My apartment refrigerator is packed with TV dinners, frozen vegetable stew and chocolate ice cream pops. Mama's fridge was full of frozen butter beans, canned tomatoes and chilled cucumbers grown in our very own back yard — one gigantic garden with green husks of corn, red balls of tomatoes, yellow banana peppers and bright green watermelons quilted into the landscape. A colorful, peaceful blanket over dull soil.



Daddy would have all of us working in the garden for three long months in the summer time. The air was so hot and sticky that my t-shirt and cotton shorts would cling to my scrawny body, making me look like a wet cat. I would pull my hair back into a long, dark ponytail and slick my bangs back with the sweat from my forehead. My older brother, George, was fourteen, a muscular body starting to grow on him. He had dark hair and dark eyes that I could never look straight into. He swore up and down that I looked like a little boy. He would parade around the fields, chasing after me, screaming "Come 'ere li'l boy!" He only did it because he knew I hated it. He was eight years older than me, bigger than me, and I couldn't do anything but run from him.

---

My older brother, Ken, never chased me around Daddy's garden or called me a little boy. His face was tan and his dark hair would sparkle in the sunlight. When he got home from school in the afternoons he would run into the livingroom, turn on the radio, and we would start dancing. He taught me how to foxtrot, how to waltz, and how to turn in a way that would make my dress flare out like a fabric church bell. I would giggle each time he looked at me with those blue eyes and he dipped me backwards in his arms. Even though he was seven years older — almost as old as George — he treated me like I was his equal. When Ken was around, I even loved being the youngest.

---



# Featured Fiction

by *Guinevere Mercer*

It didn't matter that the necklace was wrong. Jade had the slant of neck and smoothly ridged collar bones that did not require a necklace at all. Her superfluousness in wearing any jewelry on her throat excused her if the beads were too loose for the fit of her dress. And anyway, the dress (which did matter) recovered any shortcomings of her accessories.

Rob immediately forgave her the necklace. He dropped his tobacco pouch and, in attempting to catch it, sent wisps of rolling paper across the pavement — a white petal walkway strewn for her approach. Jade, in all her confidence, had to pause at this. But it wasn't fair, because Rob was a leg man, and the jagged cut of the dress exposed and lengthened her thighs.

"Jade," he managed, "you're heaven walking."

He'd been there all of thirty minutes, she guessed, before squirming on the stool and beginning his rounds when the three or four people he knew there would have eventually come to him. And now he stood watching his breath mix with the smoke of his match. She didn't want to waste time on Rob who couldn't even commit to the bar.

But she owed him for the rolling paper trail. That was more than any girl had a right to. To satisfy her estimation, and out of gratitude, she asked, "How long you been here, Rob?"

"Must be an hour," he shrugged.

She subtracted fifteen and nodded. The debt was repaid now, but she added, "See you inside," because she was generous by nature.

She didn't even deliberately ignore Travis. On most nights it was her custom to scan and tally the men she knew, but she wasn't interested in hunting tonight. Female intent was a level of code far above the

abilities of poor Travis.

Travis had something of the predatory initiative about him. Only it never went beyond the watching. Never even a half-approach and certainly nothing resembling a pounce. But because he camouflaged himself so well, tonight when Jade wasn't searching, she missed him. His anticipation snapped and bled cold into his stomach.

As he rustled for his car keys, Jade signaled for a beer. She pursed her lips as the singer screamed into the microphone, sending a piercing reverberation across the bar. Fliers outside had promised Love Gunk, a rock band from across the river that had actually turned down a spot on a local TV commercial. Pure art was their gig. The wailing punks onstage now strutted as though expecting the audience to hurl coins at them. Right between the eyes, maybe. But she'd never been a good shot and unless she was assured the imprint smack on the lead singer's brow it just wasn't worth the effort.

Her beer came quickly, but she let it wait. She didn't so much as center it on the napkin at first, but let it stand sweating half onto the table.

"I thought you weren't coming out tonight."

Only women call this greeting a friend. Jade, at a disadvantage sitting, still managed to shift gracefully and meet the speaker with a smile.

"You know how it is, Abbey."

There was a man standing behind Abbey and Jade acknowledged him with a glance. But he was waiting for another's permission.

"This is Fred," Abbey explained.

Usually, Jade objected to ridiculous names. She hand-

ed out pet names or dismissed the worst ones altogether. But something about the sagging lips wrinkled up in a grin and the impossible bigness of his hands made the name acceptable to her.

“Lo, Fred.”

Fred nodded rapidly, but was quiet. A chill rolled from Abbey, seeming to frighten the howlers onstage who immediately slipped into an apologetic ballad. Abbey, with exaggerated gestures, picked up a napkin and handed it to Fred.

“Here,” she spat. When he only blinked dumbly at her, she added, “You’re drooling a little.”

Fred was ruined. His body shrank from the blow. He wavered, unsure if he should retreat to the barstool or to the car. Jade glared at Abbey. Her hand instinctively sheltered the necklace.

“Not much of a scene tonight,” said Abbey sitting across from Jade.

Now Fred was shaking, but he had the good sense to not only squeeze beside Abbey (who had left little room) but to kiss her cheek.

Jade relaxed. “What happened with Love Gunk?”

“Apparently, they were upset about the fliers. They won’t have anything to do with advertising, you know.”

“Good for them,” said Jade.

It went that way for an hour or slightly less. Abbey refused to abandon her game of tormenting Fred, and Fred, in turn, eventually lost interest in winning back her approval. His sad, ridiculous face stopped glancing away when it locked with Jade’s smile. Abbey went on, miserable, but determined against herself.

At last, Fred stood up, “I’m off. Could you use a ride?”

The question was unabashedly directed at Jade. Abbey buckled, studied the table. Jade said, “Not just now.”

Fred did badly hiding his surprise. He muttered some-

thing about next weekend and fled.

Abbey, however, was expert in disguising spite. She unfolded her hands and yawned, allowing her brain to register the waste Jade had just made of her lover. The moment she grasped it, she labeled it inconsequential and scoured the room for a conversational topic.

What she found staggered her so that she snickered with an ugly curl of her mouth. She had to resolve quickly if a warning would do more harm to Jade than the shock. She calculated this without breaking another expression and decided. She knew Jade was likely to recover swiftly from either, so Abbey would have to be satisfied with delivering the news. “Look who’s come in,” she said calmly.

Jade shifted enough to tilt her head towards the door. He was facing her direction, but not her. If his back had been turned she could have collected herself, prepared a moderate surprise for the moment when he at last greeted her. But his eyes met with hers, barring retreat. Her position was vulnerable; clearly she had made an effort to look at him. He mattered enough to be brought to her attention and even to warrant a glance. Awkward, bent around the back of the booth, Jade was left unarmed to her own astonishment and to him.

Abbey, able to conceal disdain efficiently, had too little practice to temper the signs of her delight. “You may as well go over there,” she said.

It was true. There was no point pretending she didn’t anticipate a meeting. And, as Jade told herself, at least in strolling over to him she regained control. There was even the benefit of distancing herself from Abbey. Jade settled herself and rose, encouraged by the sway of her dress.

He was leaning against the bar now and Jade was all the more reassured by the perfectly sized niche between him and an impatient sorority girl. Jade gave a light cough to announce her approach and from the way his head moved she knew he had heard her. Then his drink arrived and to Jade’s horror he left the bar and spun around to the nearest table.

Setting his drink on the table, he motioned for her to



take a seat. This was unfair, for she had to scuffle her stride to a halt and fall awkwardly into the chair. The cushion announced her with even less grace. It was this, his complete lack of social consideration, that always left her feeling such a fool in his presence. It had been more than lack of chivalry for him to leave the bar before she could slip in beside him; it had been insulting. She ruffled even more when she realized it was no longer only Abbey's cold eyes that were watching her fall.

He smiled across the table, and she was nearly convinced it had not all been deliberate. But he waited beyond his turn to speak, staring with the same smile that began to unravel her last nerve.

She said, "You look well."

"How can you tell in here?" He asked.

She fought a scowl, but the effort kept her from answering.

He said, "I suppose anyone who looks terrible in here would look well outside."

"Are you saying then that I look terrible now or that I will as soon as I leave?" She asked, convinced of her triumph.

But he studied her quietly for a moment. He said, "There is something slightly off."

He said it without merely conversationally, but in just such a way that she could not subdue the comment with a laugh. She was becoming defensive. "I can't believe you're picking on me."

He seemed genuinely taken aback. "I wouldn't do that. You strike me as the kind of girl who can take the truth as easily as a compliment."

"So compliments are never truth?" She asked.

"Don't you know that better than anyone?"

She was uncertain if he was provoking her to flirt or fight. He didn't follow any of the patterns she knew and she clenched her toes in misery.

He was clearly waiting for her to answer. She shrugged, "It's so difficult to hear." She nodded towards the stage.

"Come outside with me then," he said, standing.

She could not understand why anyone would bring pragmatism here. But she was chained to it now. She waved brightly to Abbey as she left, but knew she was unconvincing.

At least Rob had given it all up and gone home. There were still some rolling papers in the gutter and she strengthened again when she saw them. Then she felt a sudden weight as the scent of leather and a man conquered her poise.

"You looked cold," he said simply.

She relented, pulled his jacket around the dress so the skirt of it stuck almost horizontally below his waistband. She felt naked and warm and she embraced it. All she had left was her innocence in this circumstance and she turned it full force against him as she tilted her head.

"Oh," he said. "It's the necklace."

"I didn't have any others with real jewels," she confessed.

He shrugged and began making for his car. She hung back, with an amnesiac expression. He paused by the car door. "Need a lift?"

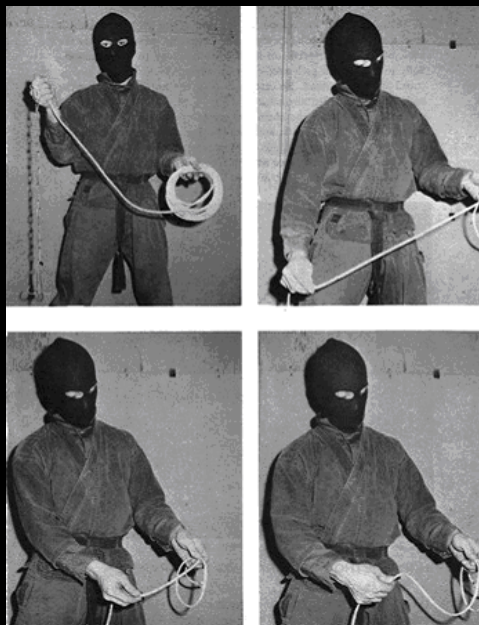
She shuffled her feet and the heels made a slightly pleasant noise against the pavement. Not enough to reinforce her. Her arms were folded, her fists tugging the jacket as if to blanket herself in another layer. She knew that nothing or many things might be implied by his question and she was not willing to bind herself to most of them. But she was blind and naked again, now shamefully so. Her only assent was to play with the zipper before moving towards his car.

# Featured Poetry

Ninjoetry  
*Jordan Somers*



THE EYES NEVER POSSESSED  
LOSE THEIR PIGMENT  
BI-WEEKLY.



BATHED IN A SHEET FOR NOT -  
I CAN FEEL IT PULSATING  
NOW.

THIS SHARD OF A HEART MISSING  
TEETH  
THIS ACCENTUATED HAIR LINE  
MASQUERADING ME

I AM A SHADOW CIRCUMVENTING AN  
EVEN  
GREATER SHADOW.  
I NO LONGER WANT HER TO BE  
MINE.



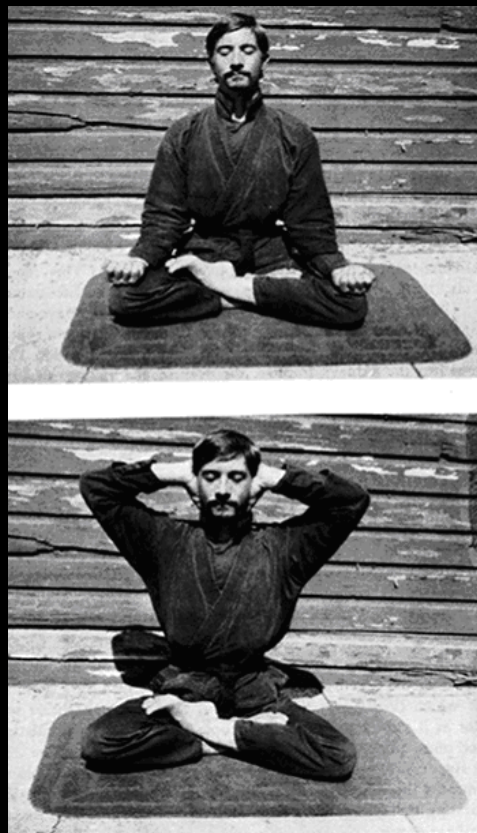


I ETERNALLY ENJOYED THE NOTION  
OF YOUR PREVIOUS LOVERS -  
CATASTROPHIC MYRIADS OF TOUCH...

FLURRIES OF PAVLOVIAN FLAVORS  
SUBTOTALING  
THE NIGHT'S DESIRE TO STAND.  
ALL THE WHILE YOU CLUTCHING FOR  
ANYTHING RESEMBLING THEIR  
OPPOSITE -

A DOPPELGANGER IF YOU MUST,  
WITH HAIR PARTED TO THE RIGHT  
OR PERHAPS SOME TYPE OF SLICK  
MOUSTACHE...

I THINK ABOUT YOUR LOVERS FROM  
TIME TO TIME WHEN I WANT TO  
STOP MYSELF FROM CLIMAXING.



WHEN YOU REQUESTED  
SPACE.  
I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE  
PLANNING  
TO MAKE LOVE TO  
OTHER MEN



WHEN I AM HONEST,  
IT IS REALLY MYSELF  
I DETEST.



HE DESERVES BETTER THAN  
CHERRY WOOD  
MINGLED WITH SWEAT ~  
TO BE USURPED  
EACH MORNING WITH  
THE GRAVE NOTION OF  
FORGETTING ANEW

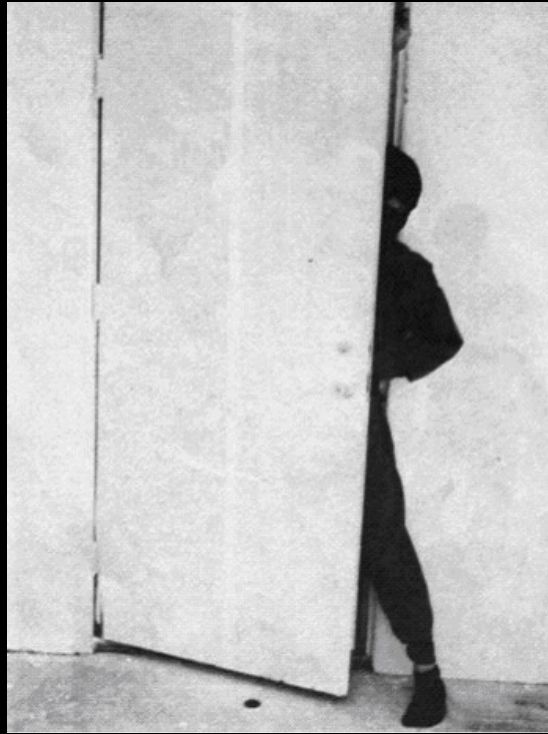
AND

ONCE AGAIN  
HE WILL BE REMINDED ~  
LIVING NEVER PROMISED TO  
CONTAIN  
MUCH MORE THAN THIS.



TIPTOE NOW~  
FOR SOME REASON YOU ARE NOT  
A CHILD ANY LONGER  
AND THIS APPEARS TO PRESENT  
PROBLEMS.

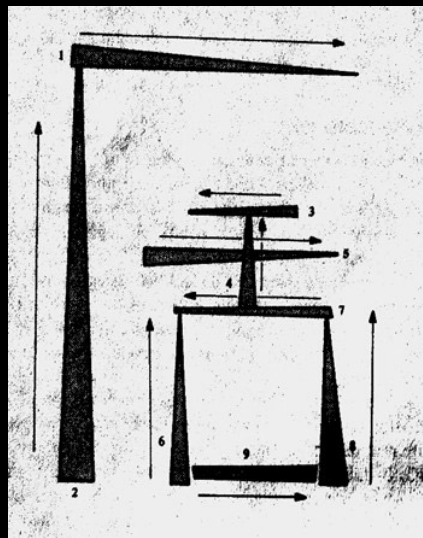




**I HAVE NEVER PAID RENT.**



**NOW THAT THE WALLS APPEAR  
TO BE THE PROPER COLOR,  
WE HAVE VERY LITTLE LEFT  
TO LIVE ABOUT.**



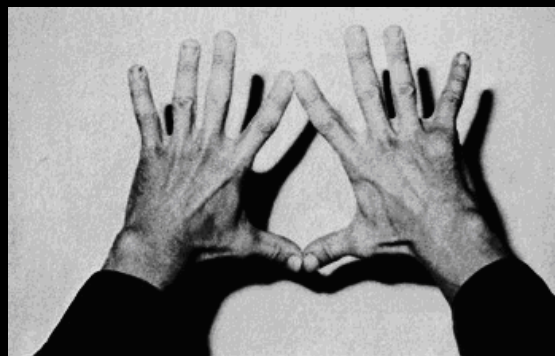
THE SENSES OF OUR YOUTH HAVE  
LED US ASTRAY  
ONCE AGAIN -

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM IS NOT  
SIMPLY A  
MACHINE  
BUT INSTEAD A FIVE POINTED  
HOLLOW  
DAGGER  
DENOTING  
FEAR.



WITH THE DOJO IN RUINS.  
WHO BUT ME  
TO DEFEND THIS LACK  
PARADING AS A HEART —

THESE LONE SIX HUNDRED YEARS  
OR SO.  
MOSTLY OF NO INTEREST.



SEE THESE IDLE THREATS AS  
FEEBLE  
ATTEMPTS  
TO CONNECT THE POINTS OF SOME  
NEUROLOGICAL SCHISM  
MISFIRING.  
HABITUALLY AND FRIGHTENED.



# Blatant Propaganda

## Training The Anti-Citizens

*Bianca Wylie*

A functional democracy cannot exist without the support of an intensive civic education system. And, contrary to what we've grown comfortable believing, democracy is not simply about voting, majority rule or towing a party line. Real democracy requires a level of political involvement that we are failing to create within ourselves.

We seem to know that our democracy is horribly weak in practice — we should know how dangerous it is to let this continue — yet we fail to put any educational systems in place to correct the trend. The insanity of this irresponsibility ought to be blowing our collective mind.

But it's not. It's not even crossing our collective mind because we're so incredibly well-trained to stay out of politics. Not on purpose, mind you, and an apology to all the conspiracy theorists that may find this conclusion disappointing. Our public school system is not enmeshed in a plot to keep citizens political pawns of those currently in power. This doesn't change the fact, however, that this is exactly what is happening. This training to stay removed from politics is the involuntary manslaughter of our political freedom.

Some concrete signs of this learned anti-citizen-ship: We're unaccustomed to dealing with community issues that require we leave our home to congregate with strangers. We don't know how to debate within our communities to create intelligent decisions amongst our differences. We're only well-versed in the fight of right or wrong; a habit that stems from the well-honed value of absolutism in our education. The very word community sounds lame and hokey to most; ditto municipal. We've confused personalities, sound-bites and politicians for politics. We don't know how to control, shape and direct the country we live in. Worse yet, we don't want to.

Why are we letting it happen?

Because we're passively accepting of the weak education systems we grew up with — that, "my parents hit me and I turned out ok so it's fine" kind of acceptance. Because civics and education reform sound so boring and devoid of meaning that they're invisible; in one ear and hellishly fast out the other. In an age of glitzy commercialism, civics and education reform have terrible brand recognition. Because education is the responsibility of a government we're enormously skeptical of. Because we don't understand that education reform is an issue that people of all ages and sorts, non-parents especially, need to control. Because we've never really taken our ability to evolve human potential too seriously, so we don't recognize that our school system is held to disgustingly low and confused standards.

We're negligent, therefore, to even entertain the notion that we are providing ourselves with the education we need to be happy and successful. We're ignorant to think that a massive influx of money for shiny supplies and perfect walls is going to create great schools. Well-funded, dysfunctional schools are still dysfunctional, just not as aesthetically alarming. A big part of being happy means contributing to justice and taking care of our fellow man and our collective living standards. By failing to teach ourselves how to do this, in rich and poor schools alike, we force ourselves to find happiness elsewhere — in specialization and isolation, in careers that chase money and notoriety, in lives full of self-indulgent tabloid and consumer hysteria.

Hope lies in the fact that we can be taught to care about what's important. Caring and responding to one's conscience is a learned practice. It should be almost easy compared to dealing with the searing emotional heartburn we swallow daily as we mill around in an existence where we pretend our society feels just fine. While we've absolutely mastered the art of silencing our subconscious for now, we can't escape

our human factor forever; more of us intend to help than hurt. We have the opportunity to channel this truth and develop ourselves a next class of citizens who are not cynical about politics; who are involved because it's the only thing they know.

Civics is the language in which we must create a national fluency. The human mind has an incredible capacity to pick up a language and maintain it, so long as it is introduced and utilized throughout youth. Politics as a second language needs to be implemented across every school board in this nation. It will bring our democracy to authenticity after decades as a most-convincing fake.

But this new civic education cannot be a trend or a

fad for the next few years; an extra eighty hours of talk and an extra pound of textbook, a few more essays and a field trip. It cannot hinge upon the spewing of facts for consumption and repetition as a sign of respectful allegiance to a country. It has to grow beyond its focus on the history of the national anthem and whether the mail is a federal or provincial concern. This is an opportunity to evolve the notion of democracy. Only when our schools begin an intense concentration on active civics — the actions of man that make and change laws to tune and improve our lives — will we properly manage a political system so beautiful in theory but so utterly devastated by current practice.

## The Advice

### *Colleen Thompson*

Don't sleep with wet hair.

Rebels will. Rebels will take four baths a day and sleep twice with wet hair  
at the wrong times of morning and day.

It will give one a chill that will not go away, it will cool the back  
of  
one's neck and make one stiff, it will give one headaches and make one  
unhappy and make one rebellious out of spite.  
One will rebel against what is healthy and right, it will make one  
drink  
coffee into all hours of the night.  
It will make one write bad poetry and fear everything.  
It will give one anxiety and waking nightmares.

Do not sleep with wet hair.

If one wishes to rebel,  
one should not rebel against one's self, or sleeping with dry hair.

One should not bathe more than twice a day and one should not let one's  
dwelling fall into chaos.

Do not leave broken glass on the carpet.

Laziness is rebellion against productivity, safety, common sense and  
happiness.

Stubborn does not equate strong.

Proper sleeping habits will make you more productive and happy. Proper  
sleeping habits will lead to success.

Insomnia is romantic and inspiring and tortuous and fascinating,  
but it will make living uncomfortable.

## This issue, *The Broken City* asked contributors, “Where do you consider home to be and what’s wrong with it (if anything) that you would fix?”

*Margaret Fieland:* I am a native New Yorker, born and raised in Manhattan. We also had a house on Candlewood Lake in Connecticut where we spent the summers (my father commuted back and forth on weekends). This house and the surrounding countryside have a special place in my heart. That’s the lake in my poem, as a matter of fact. Right now I live outside of Boston. We also have a house on Cape Cod. In a way, they are all home to me. As to what I would fix: More public transit. Cars that fly. I hate being stuck in traffic.

*Lorette Luzajic:* I never felt at home in Niagara where I was born though, now, when I go back, the land and the farm where I grew up feel weighted with the things that formed me. I didn’t feel at home anywhere until I hit my thirties, when I stopped looking for it and realized it was inside of me. I make my home in Toronto, but would be at home anywhere that I could bring my Mac and my three cats.

*Hope Jamieson:* Home comes from within. I have been cursed with a chronic wanderlust which incites me to constantly change surroundings; if something is not in the works for me to leave where I am, there’s no hope of being happy there. I think one only really sees the beauty of his or her city when they come into or leave it, so this vagrancy keeps me clued into that sensitivity which overexposure has a tendency to reduce. It is hard, though, to sustain the relationships that create the true home (where the heart is, no?), the one I carry with me at all times, going over such distances.

*Jana Drake:* There are a lot of places I think of as home. However, I think Feist gets it right in her song Mushaboom. “But in the meantime I’ve got it hard / Second floor living without a yard / It may be years until the day / My dreams match up with

my pay.” Home to me, is in a state of creation — a masterpiece of my own that I am slowly developing. I live in an older, renovated three-bedroom apartment in Raleigh, NC. It is full of my past (the hand-me-down striped blue couch my mother gave me in college) and full of my present (an embroidery of the tree of life hand-made in India, which hangs on my dining room wall). I can’t say that I feel like the apartment is mine, but is rather a state of mind I will take with me to each place I will live in my lifetime. For instance, I will always have a basket full of various hot tea leaves, a wine rack of nice selection, a comfortable couch to curl up on, pieces of my grandmother’s jewelry, and paintings from Asheville, London, and New York that line my walls. Home couldn’t be anywhere else without these pieces of me. They are part of me — a traveling home of my own — which will settle down at some point in the future, but for now they are each content to travel randomly from apartment to apartment.

*Colleen Thompson:* My home is a cave with unformed peoples and soft ground. We don’t live in it together, though it would be really lovely if we could.

*Crystal Aelbers:* Right now, Home is the cold leather seat of a bright red truck, holding the hand of a blue eyed goddess between gears. It is getting lost & found in the beauty of her mouth. It is anywhere and everywhere we find ourselves.

*Bianca Wylie:* Home is my two favourite girls, minimal privacy and a big sister and brother just down the street. The three of us have moved within 400 metres four times in as many years. Home has become home by staying in the same neighborhood. Broken? My radiator and my faith that I’m receiving all of my mail. What would I do to fix them? Nothing. Nothing that would work.

It’s time to start thinking about issue two. *The Broken City* is now accepting submissions for its Spring edition - *The Big Thaw*. Got tales of hybernation? An anecdote of heartbreak on the ski slopes? A story about the snowman you built that suddenly came to life? We want to read it. Please send us your poetry, fiction, non-fiction, comics, art, photography, music/book reviews that have to deal with surviving the winter. Nothing that fits the theme? Send something anyway - there’ll be plenty of room for non-conforming work too.

The Broken City - Issue 1

[www.thebrokencitymag.com](http://www.thebrokencitymag.com)

[thebrokencitymag@yahoo.com](mailto:thebrokencitymag@yahoo.com)