

HOWEVER, THE
MUSIC IS THE
BEST PART



CAN'T TELL
IF IT'S
WRITING CLUB

Remi Watts *coitus au courant*

HERE IN THE AGE OF SEX-
UAL ENLIGHTENMENT

LOVE IS AWKWARD. INSTEAD WE
JUST **FUCK**

CONDOMS ARE FOR COWARDS
MONOGAMY IS FOR COWARDS
A **THICK** MIX OF BLOOD_SWEAT_CUM IS
HOLY WATER.

ON A -QUEEN-SIZED- ARENA LIPS COLLIDE
AND EYES STAY LOCKED AS CLOTHES HIT THE
FLOOR

// THE *TINGLING TANGLED TANGLING TWYNED*
LIMBS SWIRL IN AND OUT AND
AROUND ONE AND THE OTHER
IN THEIR LATTICE WEAVE
THE FINGERS IN FLOW OVER
SKIN SOFT SKIN
SMOOTH SKIN TOUGH //

TONGUES
LASH
BATTLE
BASH

A **BITE**.
A **BITE** TOO HARD = AND BLOOD FROM THE *LIP flows*
AND BLOOD FROM THE *LIP drips*

A HAND, ANGRY, STRIKES A CHEEK.
BUT YOU'VE FORGOTTEN THAT
TENDER SKIN
AND **SWOLLLLLLEN** LIPSSS
MAKE FOR BETTER KISSES

FINGERNAILS SCRAPE ON SKIN SO SURFACE BLOOD

THRUSTS
AND
R - H - Y - T - H - M
AND
SWEAT

// THE *TINGLING TANGLED TANGLING TWYNED*
LIMBS IN SWEAT-SOAKED IN
BLOOD-CLOAKED IN SWIRLING
FRENZY KEEP PACE //

SWEAT
FROM PORES SLIPS INTO WOUNDS,
AND THE STING
AND THE STING
KEEPS THIGHS HONEST

BLOOD_SWEAT STREAKS FROM
SPLIT | LIPS
BROKEN | SKIN
FLUSH RED | BODIES, WHO ~~~

TO ANIMAL
ANIMAL **RHYTHMS**
ANIMAL EYES FLICKER
ANIMAL MOANS ... AND ... AND ...

...
* 0 *
...

ANIMAL FULFILLMENT.

YET ...

STRANGERS REALIZE THAT THEY...

BUT NEITHER WILL SPEAK IT
'CAUSE TO DAY
NOBODY
FUCKS WHAT THEY LOVE

SO DON'T WORRY, AFTER-ALL,
BLOOD_SWEAT_CUM ARE ONE
AND THAT,
IS SAINTELY
ENOUGH FOR NOW.



GUINEVERE

appeared in Northern California
at a renaissance fair wondered if
she could be an allusion in green

what gave her away
was in the twenty-first century
forks can be plastic

and plates cardboard though ropes
are rope and horses whine and
food is cooked with fire

what gave her away
was the weather of Avalon
in her eyes the gnash
of heavy steel behind

wood of a young forest raised
by ancient rain

some women
let fake foxtails flap
from their dresses adding a touch
of animal cruelty the kind rampant
in the time period while chewing
on hen and pig

watching re-created knights recreate a joust
for recreation

what gave her away
was the memory of honours charged
love killing fear feather tipped
gore shining a slow day
of peasants braying

Ken Hunt

MELT WALK WATERWAY

crystal grip slack
on fever slick grass topped
with rabbit litter

ice smothered stalks
surge on their bitter meals
for the teeming sun

lost nutrients
are reabsorbed
when a change of tempera
ment allows

there is drowning in
runoff without direction
stagnating flows that breed
themselves to rest

in splashes of open sight
light worn eyes lay lonely claim
to moments often missed

caught guarded
gravel grinding concrete
swept by scraping steps

a warm wind came
and gave collapse
to frost's last thought

Ken Hunt



Swingsets & Lampshades

I left without a jacket. I walked out the door, down the steps, through the gate, along the street. A mum with two young kids stood by the road to the common house. The youngest, skirt twisted, walked in front of me.

Who are you?

I had no response, but my weighted eyes were, for a moment, accompanied by a smile. I inhaled the laundry morning air and followed my feet. A swing set.

The cold chains made a grinding noise, the seat hiccupped in flight and my stomach kicked. I held onto the idea of a swing: young, carefree and happy.

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Is that chalk?

Yeah — some kid was having fun.

Looks like they left some of their skin on the pavement.

Can you have fun if nobody ever gets hurt?

That's cute. They drew a family.

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Four girls, with darkly stained hair and plucked eyebrows, sat in a second-hand car holding cigarettes. I diverted my glance from the virgin smoke. My friend and I walked in silence, past the couples in dark cars and sullied alleys.

On the corner: the cement foundation of a levelled house.

That house had personality.

I forget.

My gloved fingers reached over and touched the back of my friend's hand. He pushed his hand towards mine, gently pressing the backs of our hands together.

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I hoped my friend would see the beauty in the room of shadows and rotten berries.

The ground is wet.

It's better than sitting on pine needles.

He sat in front of me, leaning on me and slightly curled up.

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Walking down the alley, my friend squinted and stared straight ahead as if deep in thought.

I was thinking about the water from the melting snow that had soaked through my thin shoe and into my socks. Stepping carefully — to avoid squelching in my shoe — I watched the shining network of rivers, flowing between pebbles, sticks and pieces of plastic that had blown out of the overturned trash can. A newspaper, words no longer legible, sat absorbing the water. My friend didn't turn towards me, but he broke the silence.

Do you ever feel an urge to dam the water?

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Two trains passed, going the wrong direction. I was glad. The night was too beautiful for our train to arrive. My friend's smile was fuller than usual.

He owned 3 sweaters, 2 pairs of pants and 1 pair of shoes, but on the platform he was different. I didn't want to lose him to the train. We were freed in the night — freed from rotated pants and routine compliments.

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The teahouse was relatively settled: a man with a laptop and a pile of books sat to our right and a middle-aged couple occupied the table by the window. The man seemed content, busying himself with his work. I wondered if he intended to crack open the books stacked beside him, or if they were just for show.

My friend was drawing on his napkin: a collection of geometric shapes. I watched him work busily away, finishing one cube only to begin another. I slowly slid my foot across the ground and placed my foot on his toes. He didn't look up, but he mirrored my foot, sliding it across the ground and placing his shoe gently on mine. As I took another sip of my tea, I began to watch the couple at the window. They never spoke or made eye contact. The young woman, head resting on her arm, gazed out the window.

Our table was covered in crumbs. We had bought a muffin — share, but hadn't considered the inconvenience of putting a plate in the middle of the table and attempting to, without mess, reach our mouths from such a distance. My friend took a piece of muffin, wrapped it in his

brown napkin, and put it in his bag. That would be his dinner.

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Your sweater is inside out.

I know.

Well, you should probably fix that. It looks bad.

I think it's rather clever to wear it inside out so nobody can see the food stains I got on it.

What are you doing later?

I like this sweater.

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The room was too clean. The air seemed different: choking. I sat beside my friend's bed. I could hear the squeaking and rattling of another bed through the thin door. My friend looked at his hands. Beneath the palm's leathery layer blushed a creamy pink undertone. His knuckles were hard and chapped, fingertips callused.

How are you feeling?

My nails are still growing.

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Pencil sketch evening: the cement rough, grainy — fading into the hazy flatness of a papery sky. Clouds smudged as if with a sweaty fingertip. Buildings seemed organic and weathered, while trees stood artificially upright. The ground: a charcoal carpet. My friend lived in his canvas.

I watched, helpless.

It was cancer of the tongue. He gagged often and his taste buds were gone. I was one of the few that could understand his sloppy words. Spit would build up in his mouth and he would have to swallow.

He wrote, 'Things could be worse,' and tacked it on his tack board.

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We do not say 'I love you.' We do not say anything. There is nothing to say.

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The coughing, dark grey van had lots of leg room, but little else. I was surprised to hear the engine start. My friend had a tea towel resting on his shoulder to soak up the mucus weeping out of his cancerous cyst, which looked now like a second mouth in the side of his neck. I wanted to look away but couldn't. I told him not to drive. He shook his head, carefully, and wrote on his notepad:

This is important.

We approached a set of train tracks. The gates began to close. My friend lit up. He turned sharply to the right and tripled in speed, flying past swing sets. He had nothing to lose — death was a month away. He seemed to forget I was in the car. I didn't want him to know I was scared; this was his game now and the train was coming fast. We were no longer on the road. I gasped.

I khknow hthese parhts lihkh

the bahck of my hhand.

He had forgotten he was in too much pain to speak. We bumped, uncontrollably, through the mud.

ROAD BLOCKED, CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

Time slowed as the tiny van crossed the expanse of rock, mud and metal tracks. The van, wheezing now, seemed as pained as my friend, but invigorated with the same thrill of one final hurrah.

You ok?

Yeah.

He dabbed his weeping cyst and the car continued puttering until it reached the studio where he would make me a canvas. The studio was a garage with one large table, canvas materials, an upside-down rocking chair, paintings all over the walls and a radio in the corner. He wanted to listen to jazz, but I heard mostly radio static. Sawdust filled the air. I wanted to flip the chair over and sit my friend down with some warm milk, but he was distracted and comforted by his work. I stood and watched. It took him a few hours.

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A reference to lampshades, that I had trouble writing for some reason

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Dedicated to Ben & Chris
By: Amy Melnychuk

HER PAINTING OF HIM

Jet black paintbrush oozes across the canvas,
Outlining the size of an oak door,
Curly black spirals drip over his eyes,
Blackheads peppering his round nose.
Paint runs easily like the booze on his chin,
Soaking into his thick cardigan.
Rough, sweeping strokes across his chest.
Paint trickles down towards his thick, restraining legs,
Steel-toed boots.
Then they etch themselves in,
The lipstick smudge
across his palm.
The tears
On his shirt.
The scratch marks, bite marks, try to get away marks
On his skin.
A solid wall of man.
Unstoppable.

Miranda Krogstad

LULLABY FOR THE WORKAHOLIC

Files piled high like a parchment city,
The desk groans,
beneath the condominiums of contracts,
the skyscrapers of signatures.
Oak legs creak as weak as twigs,
shudder
as the clock sounds and pounds seconds into the wall.
Tick.
As you cross your t's and close your weary i's.
Tick.
Feel your way to the dotted line.
Tick.
Can't find the energy to sign.
Tick.
So you dream that all that tick tick ticking made the hands get dizzy
and face go to sleep
and the clock nestles down into a bed of papers,
and they cuddle up into a ball of white and carry the clock away.

Yet soon the sun creeps over the ninth floor,
Your forehead on the fine print,
Your glasses pressing neat lines into your skin,
And the clock as lively as ever . . .
Ready for another day.

Miranda Krogstad

From Field Guide

Laughing Owl (Sceloglaux albifacies)

If one opens a pocket, it may be picked. The coins will tickle the folds of the mantle, edged with snow that melts in a thought. A melancholy stroll marks the mewling notes of fabric as it shifts. A drifting rain weeps in an accordion's drawl. It is from a distance then that one scene unfolds across the frame of another and, now, can accommodate new populations that choke up little support. The part deposits little that stands firm in storms, little that flees to caves from madness. None in a pair will turn blind, but, fruitless, none will congregate in the trees, folded between the leaved shag of sights. One must carefully tease out the threads of outbound saddles following the well-rutted garden path. One must peel back the vivid hues of each summit to confirm the saint wastes in each trip. One must keep a careful vigil.

Ryan Fitzpatrick



UNTITLED

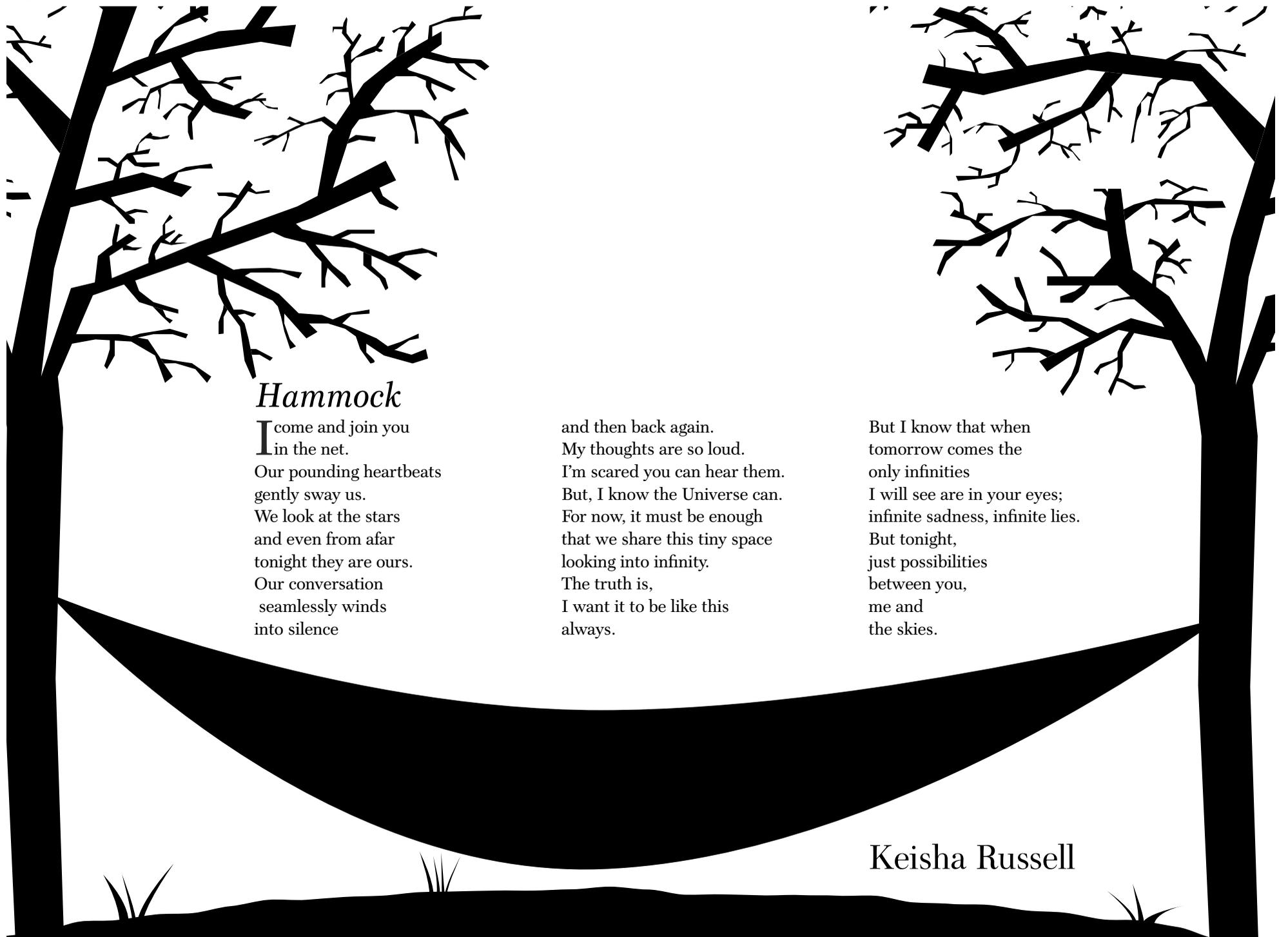
Once there was a bus driver who would not kill. He braked for rabbits and squirrels anything squiggly and small. He sideswiped cement trucks avoiding barking dogs. At one point he was taken out of service after driving into oncoming traffic on McLeod Trail to avoid a swarm of mosquitoes swooping down on his windshield. Over the median he went through a red light, clipping a motorcycle policeman who had just switched his siren on.

After the bus driver got out of intensive care and was able to walk, Calgary Transit gave him another chance. His world began to clear. He became one of the star drivers of the service,

obsessive about timetables and procedure. And he never lost control of his bus again. When small creatures fell into the path of his bus he went out of his way to stick to the painted lines and avoid the curb.

There were some of regular passengers who noted the change. A smile they said would creep across his face below his mirrored shades and he would give a satisfied squeeze of the horn when the bus would bump over squirrels and kittens, rabbits and whining dogs, never wavering from his duty.

Jude Dillon



Hammock

I come and join you
in the net.
Our pounding heartbeats
gently sway us.
We look at the stars
and even from afar
tonight they are ours.
Our conversation
seamlessly winds
into silence

and then back again.
My thoughts are so loud.
I'm scared you can hear them.
But, I know the Universe can.
For now, it must be enough
that we share this tiny space
looking into infinity.
The truth is,
I want it to be like this
always.

But I know that when
tomorrow comes the
only infinities
I will see are in your eyes;
infinite sadness, infinite lies.
But tonight,
just possibilities
between you,
me and
the skies.

Keisha Russell

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