



a Black Moss Press e-magazine

offSIDE

november 2012

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welcome to *offSIDE*

Our cover this month speaks hopefully to the content within; an offering that's colourful and scarily consumable. Paying a close focus to poetry in this issue, our contributors from across Canada each bring something individually in their work to play on the palate - sweet naivete and recollection, the salt of passion and loss, sour moments of disappointment. Devour this literature. Let it play on your tongue, then rot on your teeth.

The selections this month are from names both new and familiar to this publication. Vanessa Shields and John Wing, Jr. return to *offSIDE*, each examining and making sensory their old memories in light of loss. Shirley Limbert brings a poem in the same vein, recalling her experience as a child in air-raided Britain. An intensely personal perspective on textbook history is always fascinating, and Shirley's child narrator lends the kind of details that give the retelling life and tiny slivers of light.

Dennis Robillard graciously gives us three of his poems in these pages, engaging with limber prose both the people and the landscape that surround him. AJ Nogueira recalls the a stomach-drop familiar to any student with a brevity

offSIDE is an e-magazine operated by Black Moss Press, a Canadian publishing house in operation for more than 40 years. *offSIDE* publishes poetry, fiction, non-fiction and photography with a taste for innovation.

Send submissions to offsidezine@gmail.com.

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 Black Moss
Press

University of Windsor
thinking forward 

that speaks volumes. And Emily Fraser-Jeffries closes out November, sheltering herself against the elements with lines that are challenging, sensory, and compulsively re-readable.

The skillful Emily Buta is behind the lens and occupying Top Shelf space this month. We're pleased not only to publish Emily's photos, but also to feature in her own words a reflection on her process and, in a larger sense, where the allure lies for her in capturing an image. Emily's photos are a vibrant collection of stolen glimpses - images that truly bring the viewer into the split moment of their taking.

On a closing note, Kate Hargreaves bids a fond farewell with this issue of offSIDE from her role as managing editor. We would be remiss in not recognizing the work that Kate has done with this publication over the last year-plus. In exiting, Kate spreads her considerable talents ever further - watch this space as we'll profile some of her newest work in 2013.

New and exciting things are happening not only in this magazine but also at our blog (offsidezine.wordpress.com) in the weeks upcoming. Do be on the lookout for some of our exclusive coverage from October's Bookfest event, as offSIDE caught up with a host of distinguished guests over the course of the weekend.

Until next time,

Brad Smith
Managing Editor, *offSIDE*

call for submissions

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offSIDE returns with a new issue in early 2013 and is accepting submissions beginning December 1st. We are looking for your original & unpublished short fiction, poetry, or photography.

Contact offsidezine@gmail.com with your submissions (limit of five per individual) and visit our blog (offsidezine.wordpress.com) for more details.



offSIDE's
mouthful pg. 14 "With the willful / anemometer of her eyes / she checks
of the month: the predacity of God / and pounds and pounds the boards."

Shirley Limbert

is a poet from the south shore of Prince Edward Island. Her poems and short stories have appeared in anthologies, journals and magazines. Her first book of poetry, *Lilacs Year to Year*, was published in 2001. She has a book of creative non-fiction, *Seachange Cottage*, which was launched in April 2005. Primarily a poet, all writing appeals to Shirley and the ongoing tension between writing and painting is a constant itch to be scratched.

A Child Remembers WWII London

evacuation

my heart is caught by the memory
of an exciting bus ride
with school friends
I wave happily to my mother
as the bus leaves

in a tin box
chocolate and a sandwich
my Teddy bear sits with me
his paws have my initials printed
a red scarf anchors me to him
a paper label on my coat
gives my name and other things
but I'm four I can't read it

there are cows in the passing fields
no cows in London I am excited
me and my friends from kindergarten
point to the animals we see
we're off to the country for the day

that's what they told us

parents, nuns
'for the day'
I am excited
later I find we are not going home

Mama, Mama.

a strangers meets us at the bus stop
a nun hands me over
with admonitions to be good
for 'little Jesus' sake'
the ultimate betrayal

a new home
a woman who feeds me
gives me a bed in her children's room
outside the small window
railway lines and telegraph poles
going down the track
leading home
I press my nose to the window
other older children who belong
stare at me as I cry
I am allowed to play with
their toys, their things
only
by their good graces
they hit me

parents and their children
they hit me
but not all the time
only when I don't understand their
northern accent
couldn't do as I was asked
I dream of my mother
every night

one day
a beloved face at the kitchen window
a flash of sunlight
a glimpse but when
I look again she's gone

I race up the path
she's come for me at last
four-year-old legs pump
mouth stretched wide
"Mama, Mama."

I've dreamed of this day, knew it
would arrive
the kitchen window looks blindly out
my fingers tear at the door
my heart breaks
why won't she let me in
doesn't she care
but she didn't wait, she's gone

left me behind

Mama, Mama.

I know she was here
saw her beloved shape
her face peering at me through glass
as I played at the end of the garden

later when I'm calmer
tears wiped, heart broken
faith in adults destroyed
they tell me I was mistaken
she wasn't there, hadn't come for me
but I know they lie
a strange awakening
to know adults lie
it was her
the days stretch endlessly
I forget her face

Mama, Mama.

four months later she comes takes me home
I've been away almost eight months
they say the war will be over soon
of course it isn't
don't send me away again

when I return it seems as if everything is different
every night we go to the local shelter
I remember
the sound of coughing in the dark
frightened eyes, snuffling whispers
the feel of harsh wool blanket
ice-cold feet
I listen to the sky-borne pulsing
coming nearer
the warning siren wails, the guns pop, pop
nearer... nearer
mother's hand tightens on my arm
a baby cries
somewhere the clacking sound of rosary beads
an old man grunts
then the first ear-splitting bang
they're over the road now
when we open the front door tomorrow
there will be a whole new landscape
yesterday two houses gone completely
rubble everywhere and firemen's hoses

old missus Brown's shop
sliced off at the end of the road
like a piece sliced off her bread
on our way to school we stand and laugh
at her corsets hanging on a nearby tree
her bed at a crazy angle halfway down the stairs
and missus Brown's dog's

little red collar forlornly
on a hook by the empty doorway

I can hear the sound of Mary's mum
crying for her husband missing in action
someone's covered up the old man
with missus Greenaway's good blanket
covered even his face
I guess they did it while mother
kept me occupied with prayers
'gentle Jesus meek and mild
keep safe from bombs your little child'
and what about keeping safe my friend Peter's
big brother who limps around now
should I pray for them to find his leg
when they dig in the rubble each morning
would the leg be any good now?
I'm so tired, I wish the bombs would stop
I hear mother tell someone she thinks the bombs
are following us about
she says that it's because
we've been bombed out of two houses
they must be keeping an eye on us
she laughs when she says it
...but I don't know

Miss Clark is talking now
she used to teach at the big school up the road
but the school was bombed

no school for those children for a while
lucky them!
I try not to listen but her words come through
the blanket
'Annie's mother
wouldn't go to the shelter
stayed in the queue for bread
even though the siren had sounded
blown right through the butcher's window
oh what a mess'
I stuff my ears with cold fingers
wiggling them so I can't hear any more
their mouths stop moving
I remove fingers
we listen to another siren off in the distance
maybe we are safe for tonight
the pulsing has stopped
the boom of the guns die down
now our siren starts up the All Clear
sounds like a stuck pig the old man would say
and then he'd laugh and cough and laugh some more
until someone would bang him on the back
he's not coughing any more
under that blanket
I'll snuggle down to sleep beside my mother
there's just the smell of wet plaster now
noise from the ARP and firemen across the road
the sound of ambulances
tomorrow on my way to school

I'll search the street looking for
shrapnel to add to my growing collection
I'll swap some with the boys down the road.

...maybe the sweet shop
will have sweets in stock tomorrow
or some American serviceman will give candy
if I ask nicely and smile and say
'Got any gum chum?'
glad my mother doesn't know I do that
she says not to talk to anyone I don't know
says they might give me sweets
then take me into a corner and touch my knickers
I don't know why they would do that
... also I know I shouldn't ask.

I love this sleepy feeling
warmth creeping up from my toes
warmth from all the bodies
breathing near us tonight
I don't care that the warning siren has started up again.
it'll soon be time to go back home
to see how much damage they've done to our street
get ready for school.

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Dennis Robillard

was born in Northern
Ontario and now
teaches high school
in Windsor, Ontario.
For the past 15 years
several of his poems
have appeared in the
small presses and
online magazines
across Canada, the
USA, England, and
Scotland. He has over
80 publications to date.
Some of those include:
Rattle, Rampike,
Word Riot, Nashwaak
Review, Algoma
Ink, Cliff Soundings
(Michigan), Sidereality,
Orange Room Review,
Dogzplot Magazine,
Dusty Owl and Dufus.
In 2011, Robillard was
published in Windsor
Review and Bolts of
Silk.

Country Windmills

From here
they appear as propped up
Lancaster bombers with sheared wings
mechanical land snatchers
stretching for miles.
Midnight stalkers in cyber steps.
Pesky mechanical warriors.
Landscape Darth Vaders
hanging their Gothic gloom
Over this vanilla sky.
A vast white army of ill equipped scissors
slicing the county landscape into mulch.
Their banners of torn and muted clouds
limping across the landscape
obliterating the carbon footprint.
A country of white ribbon cleft in two.
Pay heed to these sky machines.
As their angular blades pierce the clouds
We travel in circumstances of wires now
A second pair of eyes
for innocent cousins.
To flee the horror of insect machines.
At night
we close down all the cloud factories
We Go deep inside to harness the harm-
less sun.

I Split the Rock

I split the rock from my chest which is you.
I split the seed from my loin which was spit by you.
I split the hairs on my head to lean on you,
To see you through.
I split my tongue in my tongue of words
Which longs the truth of you.
I split myself in two, to grieve fully of you.
The gnawing absence, the longing need.
You split the life inside of you, cleft in two.
To need of me, To be like you.
The rock of my chest, always rests in you.
The seed of my loins always waits for you.

A Windy Fence Day

I watch my dark haired Medea
Outside
another storm brewing
speaking its hunger in plaintive tones.
I watch my wife
My wonderful wife
and her will to tame the wind.
To secure a fence against her near ruinous
flower bed.
The fence needs a cane
like an old man, she says.
You are making my arms tired by pounding, she says.
Armed only with her bold courage,
her string pole mechanics
she goes out in her nightdress, her slippers,
a single hammer under her arm
to lean into wind and heal this fallen down maze.
To jerry rig temporary outdoor architecture
and fasten a bastion
 against Aeolia's wrath.
Inside,
the clock ticks like demented staple gun
tacking down the memory of this event.
Only God Tempers The Wind, I say.
With the willful
anemometer of her eyes
she checks the predacity of God
and pounds and pounds the boards.

Emily Buta

splits her time between reading for classes, working her retail therapist job and photographing life. Her interest in photography began in the film-only age of cameras, and then quickly switched over to digital photography after her discovery of online blogging. When she isn't cramming for a paper or taking a black and white picture of a lawn chair, Emily spends her time watching episodes of *Arrested Development* with her friends and trying to figure out what really happens at the end of *Inception*.

The Photography of Emily Buta

When I was younger my dad handed me a camera.

"I need to finish this roll of film, so I want you to take a few shots- but be smart about it,"

And smart about it I was. I prowled through the house, my eye glued to the viewfinder; index finger placed lightly on the shutter button ready for something to find itself in my lane of sight. Had camera-Would document.

• right: 'Vienna Bike'





*But I quickly learned after bumping into
walls and stubbing toes that
pictures don't always fall into your lap
and you can't only look through the lens
finder to find the perfect shot. You have
to peer to the far sides, to the very top; to
the lowest bottom- look
everywhere and you're sure to find a
great photo.*

*Never doubt your own eye; it's the
greatest viewfinder you can possess.*

- EB

• • previous page: 'Seine'

• • • right: 'On Train to Paris'



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•••• above: 'Kitsch'

••••• right: 'Tomatoes'



John Wing Jr.

is a stand up
comedian and
poet from Sarnia,
Ontario. The
author of seven
books, including
several collections
of poetry, Wing
has also appeared
on the Tonight
Show six times and
at several Just for
Laughs festivals.

Catch

Dad had a curveball, which he called
dinky, but hell, it moved. It would come
spinning out of his hand, and ten feet from
the glove, it would slam on the air brakes,
(you could hear the hiss) and dive down
to the right. It wasn't hard to catch, if
you knew it was coming.

I was afraid of the ball,
Thick-spectacled, like him, I was
always afraid of things coming at me.
He would try and smile me out of it,
saying, "But you have your glove
to protect you."

He had an easy motion when he threw.
His arm would swing around chest high
and the ball would come, generally hard (for me)
and in a two to three foot area. Even high school
pitchers have their skills.

We stood no more than forty feet apart
and we threw. He taught me the proper grip
and the weight shift. He hated that we kids

called it ‘Hardball’. It’s not hardball, he would say, it’s baseball.

Sometimes he would talk about pitching and tell the story of the pitch he put too close to the middle on a guy and he belted it to dead centre, but the outfielder, whose name he always mentioned ran back half a mile and caught it, saving his bacon.

One day, after two or three curves, which were about all his arm could handle by then, he suggested he throw me a fastball. I wasn’t exactly keen on the idea but I agreed. He warmed up with a couple I thought were really fast, and then he called out, ‘Here it is’.

Man, it buzzed as it went by me. I didn’t even reach for it. I knew how much it would hurt my hand to catch it. I simply moved a little and let it go. Belt high. Sizzling through the air.

We walked in then, He wasn’t happy that I’d wimped out, but he understood. We all come to accept our children’s inabilities.

He was smiling though, as we reached the house. “I put it right where I wanted to,” he said.

AJ Nogueira

is a UWindsor
graduate seeking
employment
as an author.
He dislikes
Shakespeare and
is the co-founder
of Satyr's Hoof
Publishing. He
can sometimes be
found brooding.

Hamlet Survey

I mean the kind of feeling that we have / seemingly
in advance of anything else / before intuition (even)
/ what we sometimes call a gut feeling.

— “Prelinguistic Thinking” Alan Davies

1.2 argh

2.2 ohh

3.1 ...

3.3 ugh

3.3 ugh!

4.4 ah

Vanessa Shields

celebrated the publication of her first book, *Laughing Through A Second Pregnancy*, in April 2011. She writes poetry, flash fiction, young adult novels, plays, and screenplays. She also teaches several creative writing classes. She writes a weekly blog for the Windsor Star online newspaper.

Visitation

When I came in the second time
His white shirt was lifted
Exposing his chest
White with life and age

Grey and black hair dappling the surface
Like seaweed on the sea's skin
I could see his heart beat
Vibrating just below

His arms spread out
Beside him on the bed
Bearing an invisible cross
Accepting it in morphine bliss

I wanted to bend into him
And kiss his chest
The cavity holding his heart
But I didn't have the courage

Instead I took his purple hand in mine
Palm to palm I poured my love
Into him it's all I know how to do



Emily Fraser- Jeffries

is a poet,
fiction writer,
and saxophonist
from Cambridge,
Ontario. She has
a BA in English
Literature from
the University
of Waterloo
and is currently
working towards
an MA in English
in the Field of
Creative Writing
at the University
of Toronto.

Where It's Warm

Canada's no place to build a house,
tough wind thick as cold,
ruffian ground of rucked leather.
But let me try, with these calloused
painted hands, to make a home
for us, out of unsettled ground;
my long fingers,
good for holding pencils,
can chop wood, plant wheat,
break rock, and squeeze knees.

We'll have a room to be warm,
breathe seasoned air like cedar shakes,
dry crack and spit from burning pine,
marble wood walls, knots and holes
we'll fill with cloves and rosemary,
peasant smells. Because we are
peppermint and sweat,
too tang, crisp, new.

You can tear the buttons from my shirt,
I'll sew them onto yours.
Keep them done or the cold will get you;
it seeps in like light under a door.
You don't need to say any thing,

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just place your lips against my ear
and sweep the hair from off my neck.
I'll carve words above the door,
and let them be our manifesto, our talk.
We'll stay tight under blankets,
down, wool, fleece, and skin.
Here it's quiet.
Here, it's warm.

