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# ALLYX WILLIAMS



HONEST WORK #3

### KAYLYN OLYNYK

## LATIMERIA

seven hundred feet of deep sleep floating in a dream of Lapis Lazuli lava walls stuck with oyster shells memories resurface like the coelacanth an extant wonder from the past. hollow spine and armoured scales, thought to be lost to time. dredged from the deep trawling the black-hole ocean floors a living fossil, Lazarus taxon. sea foam, shallow waters whispering to lost memories crawling under stone.

# SANTA'S SMOKEHOUSE

I remember the first time I met him. I walked into work one October morning—the ancient, dirty, painfully Alaskan, fish and game butcher—and there he was. My best friend was behind him, she had just started working with me. I realized two weeks into my job that I was the only one running the shop. When she called me on the phone that morning I thought she said "Jeanne was back," not "Jimmy was back." I was confused. Where's the inebriated, drama-fueled Jeanne, who trained me just a few weeks ago? She was fired for drunkenly running into too many walls in one day. I took a little pride in being one of the few non-alcoholics that could successfully run that disorganized family business. The standards were low because most of the people who came before me fucked up in ways that costed the Vietnam vet owners thousands of dollars. Rotten meat, angry rich white men from Tennessee that could not believe what an old-fashioned shit show they were dealing with, screwed-up shipping orders, and walk-in freezers full of archaic smoked salmon that never got organized unless someone was sloshed up enough and spent eight hours in the subzero temperatures attempting to regain a sense of order. The place was deranged and I only knew the least of it that fall. It was witty and amusing at first. My boss, Earl, smoked countless Marlboro Special's in his tiny, haze-filled office. The walls

were a pleasant shade of smoke-stained yellow, and it was filled to the brim with antiquated collateral and fossilized fish and game maps. He yelled a lot, and so did Ethel, his wife. They didn't know how to use computers and that was the source of most catastrophes at the shop. Over the course of that winter it became less and less charming as I learned the history of this family and the realities of their failing business in the place I called home—Fairbanks, Alaska.

Jimmy, not Jeanne. He used to run the shop. I knew this man just because he was the husband of the owner's daughter, Shelia. He came in often, always with a tidal wave of chaos. He swooped into places with the energy of a time-bomb adorned with sly vulpine smirk. He was always ticking away, and always trying to make people smile. Ethel was always trying to prove he was on drugs. He was thirty-three, and grew up in Fairbanks. He had a lot of stories. His mom was a Alaskan drug hustling icon in the late 70's. He loved her and she died. He had a brother, he also loved him and he died. He went to jail a few times, never for anything too wild. He was an artist, and he had painted murals around town. He knew the south-side like the back of his hand, it was where he grew up. He befriended a moose when he was ten. He got addicted to crack when he was eleven. He made people laugh, and there was no one he couldn't win over, except for Ethel and Earl. After thirty-two years of running the business, they regretted hiring him more than anything else. Jimmy married their daughter, and he lived in the house they built for

her and her child. The whole family lived on the same cul-de-sac that Earl owned in the North Pole, fifteen miles out of Fairbanks. Jimmy had a child of his own. He was bumming off the family for a place to live so he could have a stable life in order to see his daughter. I spent almost every afternoon listening to Ethel unload her persistent and unfaltering resentment for this man.

I let him borrow my car one night, something I never did when there was ice and snow on the road. I felt an unfamiliar affinity for him. When he came back, he asked me to come smoke some weed before we closed. Things felt too comfortable and the words came too quickly. That night turned into the next day, which then turned into weeks and inevitable months. He told me his stories. I didn't know if he was on uppers at first, but his explosive creativity and authenticity reminded me of heart-racing methamphetamine highs. This was the only way I had ever seen him, so I thought he was just this mysteriously kooky and perplexing man. Maybe that is why I was so enthralled by him in the first place. His being reminded me of a comfortable place, I felt as if I recognized him. He reminded me of the first time I used. He filled the hole of my dead father, absent brother, and deep-seeded need for masculine refuge. I was able to be whole with him- I didn't have to hide the part of me that used to be an addict. He knew me in ways no one else did.

We spent many days and nights that winter having these transcendent

secret adventures. Sometimes things got scary in the cold, dark shadows of Fairbanks's empty hours. Sometimes they were so beautiful and full of sparkling white snow and I couldn't help but smile and laugh at how deep my love was for him. Jimmy Begg made me feel like the best version of myself. I made him feel like who he used to be when he was younger and addiction was less confusing. We got lost in unfamiliar woods together and stumbled upon things we shouldn't have. He showed me the indistinct slab of icy asphalt where his brother died. These vague and empty places formed the shapes that he began to take inside me. We explored the hidden parts of town that he painted, and I became engulfed in his bizzare, offbeat vision. Then there was the bed inside the run down, broken-in hoarders' property that all of the neighborhood was rummaging through for sellable treasures. There was the gun range where I first shot up. There were the snowbanks we laid in while watching the northern lights rip across the sky. There were the dreadful crack houses. There was the tiny sauna that we walked through deep untouched snow to get to. Why was there a sauna with a four-foot-tall door? The dark, cold space felt warm with our two bodies against one another. Then there was my cabin, and all the things he touched inside it. All the things we did inside it. Finally there was the fish hook I found stuck to my coat, and his quick-witted back talk— "what can I say, you've got me hooked."

Somewhere within me I knew Jimmy had me hooked, but I would never relish in that devotion. The winter was cold but the aurora was there every night to greet us into the darkness. To guide us down a path that had a

definitive ending. I often thought it didn't. I chose not to listen to my moral compass, which made me believe that our relationship was truly exceptional and divine. I reflect upon this naïve act and see that once again I thought I was a better, healed person. One who knew their limits—and was stronger than them. I had control this time, and he made me believe it. We shared this deeply embedded justification that we were the good addicts, the ones with willpower stronger than comedowns. He will always exist within the untouchable reels that roll through my head reminding me of the sublime bliss of falling into love and relapse simultaneously. He will exist within these stories that never see the light of day. I am going back home to Alaska. I wonder if I will know Jimmy Begg again.

# ADRIAN SOUTHIN

# HENOSIS

Once, Aristophanes said, each being began as a circle: a symmetrical orb of conjoined flesh, our partners found. Then, we were content in our wholeness.

Zeus, livid in the jaggedness of form, could never feel complete as we were, and he split us from euphoria: remade us to his shapeless image. Placed in Aethiopia like wooden game pieces, we roamed Olympus, Anatolia and Persia, Britanniae and beyond, trying to fit our bodies into one another, skin against skin, to become indistinct, to reform our circles.

\*

Once, the universe was fixed at a single point, each subatom pushed into an infinitely dense sphere.

# ADRIAN SOUTHIN

As they pulsed and constricted the circle, the oneness was struck and the whole began

to

pull

apart

wholeness

lost

Even as we expand

repelled from the

soil

and still water lakes

tell ourselves

how

different we are

from the apes

we share

ninety-nine percent of our DNA with ,

we

seek

oneness

:

the binding thread of every neutron impressed on every proton.

# BECCA KOZAK



COURTNEY LOVE DOLL

## ALEX KUNG

# THE CLEARING

Emotional streaking, Crystal had called it. But all strangers have secrets, he has secrets to share–Peter considers it a public service.

Real talk requires rapport. Rapport requires commonality. He and Carmen, classmates in a 1-day seminar, are seated in the same rec-centre parking lot with identical cafeteria sandwiches—he's coaxed Catholic confessional from strangers with less.

Peter yawns, stretches, and thus shows her his ring.

It's supposed to happen like this:

Carmen notices. She notices such things. She asks if that's his wedding band.

No, the diamond's made from the ashes of Crystal, his wife.

Oh, she whispers, describing her mouth.

Peter coaxes the corners of his lips into a shallow smile. Would she—and if she refuses, he'll understand—like to hear about her?

Of course she would.

For the next five minutes, Carmen nods to the rhythm of Peter's story. He starts with his and Crystal's meeting in a walk-in freezer, and ends with her heart attack.

When he cries-emotional streaking, Crystal had called it-Carmen

## ALEX KUNG

holds his hand. She holds his head.

There's a better way, she murmurs. To grieve, I mean. Better than wearing hard gemstones. Did it for my dad.

What?

Follow me.

He does. He, the middle-aged widower, and she, half his age, halfway to orphan-hood, walk into the woods beyond the parking lot. She whistles "Don't Worry, Be Happy" as they go.

They arrive at a clearing, hidden from the parking lot and road. Sometimes Peter begins the fantasy here, with the notan of sun and shadow across Carmen's back. She unclasps a pin and lets her hair fall free.

What now?

She kneels, then replies.

Take off everything that's made of her, or reminds you of her, and lay it in the dirt.

He obeys. Soon, the ring, his watch, Crystal's two-year-old driver's licence, and collars from three dead dogs are laid in a circle, like the guts of a pagan sacrifice.

They entomb each item in a shallow hole, dug with fingers. Peter works his hands into the damp humus and across Carmen's knuckles.

Next, Carmen takes a handful of twigs and builds one-foot tipis over each hole. Fairy houses, she calls them. Under direction, Peter roofs each one with leaves. Temporary markers.

That's key, Carmen says. Build something to last, and it will.

When they're finished, they stand and face each other. Dust and

### ALEX KUNG

mayflies rise from the sod as Carmen, open now in every way, unbuttons her blouse in the early-afternoon heat.

You'll lose a bit of her wherever you go, she says. Try and make it beautiful.

### It happens like this:

Carmen notices. How could she not? The man beside her-Pedro, Paul, something like that-just yawned, stretched, and waved his hand in front of her face. He tries to be subtle when he leers at her, but he fails. He looks twice her age. Great.

Something glimmers on his finger, but she's no magpie. She retreats behind her smartphone and tries to look busy and boring. When he drops his ring—did he just say, could you hand me my wife?—and leans toward her, Carmen stands and scampers back to the rec-centre, where there are Good Samaritans and security cameras.

Peter watches her leave. They always leave. Is she orphaned? Lonely? What's under her blouse? He'll never know.

He works the diamond into his palm until it draws blood.

### CELINA SILVA

# MAP OF THE KOOTENAYS 2

21 years old and at the top of Uphill, stand at the kingdom of an airy peak, like Gyro Lookout, ache ache all over this town, houses you grew blue in took to stroking the slant of a street soul raw, handcuffing yourself to mountainsides throwing keys away, skipping them lazy days like rocks into the cool-lipped lake, buttery weeds meet these weak knees, and fuck landscape, aura of smalltowns, and everyone knows your emotion of the decade, leaking down Baker Street, up Cedar Street, down Stanley Street, up Carbonate Street, all day, at Oso Cafe, the familiar snow drift licks the naked ankles of Kootenay people tucked into mountain haikus. Old friends, these streets, the 2 bars purring ashes all night. Skinny-dip smalltown drunk at the dock, under the orange bridge make out with a hot breeze, this guy with a flower in his hat strums the ukulele, and the girls can't find their underwear splayed across the cold sand spit beach, speckled with night moon light dripping between my legs.

# DEEP COVE

house, a carved wooden crown on the emerald hill. At the door, a great slant of garden swoops to the ancient seaside, the road carving the small coast, totems hollowed and poured full of cement. Deepwater sky. Clams glow like pennies thrown into the wishing well at night, the glass-sea silence aura over small towns. North Vancouver rises, spills city into the inlet, ribbons of metal oil on the beaks of kind birds. Cates Park Whey-Ab Whichen face to the wind, Oma her straw hat, sun wide shadow over tan-freckled shoulders. Her easel deep tides of greens. At lunch she will swim with the whalefish, listen to their singing through her mouth. Germany, guttural in the peace of inlets. Soon she will plant daffodils. Record the weather. Map the line of snow, thawing at the foot of Mount Seymour she will look back and water the spring. Among the Magnolia trees. Sing to us at home, a hard boiled egg. Her face in the sun. Look at her. Look this is how to admire her.

### ADRIAN SOUTHIN

### ROAST LAMB

A man outside the outreach building's gated parking lot bids we roll down our window. He wants to speak to someone different from the people around here, the people like me, he says.

He asks what we're doing for Christmas. His will be spent in the shelter next door, jammed in the space between turkey and cold potatoes.

But he dreams of Moroccan roast lamb turned over coals on a spit, pulled from the bone by his father. Rrroast lamb, he rolls.

I have his father's hands, he tells me. Asks if he can hold them. His dark fingers are waxed leather rigid under softness. They're cold. Rrroooast lamb.

# ADRIAN SOUTHIN

I have his father's eyes.

His breath fills our car with cloves and rice wine.

The health authority nurses upstairs give him five dollars and ten cigarettes a day.

He removes his ballcap

shows us a scar running from temple to crown

bisecting long wisps of ashen hair,

This is why I'm here, he says, this is why I'm homeless.

Rrrrrooooooast Laammb.

He says nothing, stroking my hand, smiling; I am his father. Somewhere, the spit turns and grease sputters on the coals. Hot air pushes saffron and cumin to the lines in his face.

# FIONA VIAJE



APPLAUSE

# CONFESSION BELLS

Fade in on MANDY, 46, centre stage, dressed in a mailman uniform and a tie, clutching a messenger bag. She stands cast in the light of a stained-glass window.

#### MANDY

Ever notice how a person's face changes when bells start a-banging? Kids, they get all boggly and smile-eyed, mouths popping open in these cherry pucker grins. Why sure! Cause here's this humungous booming belly song! Sound blusters up in bubbles so beautiful the kiddies can't help but stare gobsmitten, wondern' at the sky. With grownups, though, it's different. Bells don't mean the same thing as you get older. Why sure, even on New Years, when people're supposed to be celebrating they can't help the way they look when the clock bom-boddles twelve. A new wifey turns orange with recollections of her wedding day. The old widower who lives down the street shudders like a screen door in a thunderstorm. Maybe the school secretary glances at her watch to see if lunchbreak's over, or Mr. Levi's Stonewash Hotshot whups out his phone to check if his date's called back. Me, I can't help but jump a little—that old ding-a-dong reminds me of those alarm

posts they got stuck outside the shops. First time I got caught by one of those, hoo-boy, almost rattled my shorts off—tilted right off the ground like a helicopter! Never was so startled, uh-huh. (beat) But back at the New Year's party. After the chimes fade away into cold January clouds people cheer and sing Old Long Time like everything's just dandy—fix their faces back to normal, all good and tight. You'd never think just a moment ago they been struck still with shock-bafflement, all because this one sound. The sound of a bell.

I remember when the school here used to have a bell tower—big loud clang-alang-alang before they got that noisy electric buzzer installed. And I remember how the church bell used to ring all wonky, until the village council got the funds to have the crack fixed. (beat) I remember my first fellow, holding my hand up on top of the baseball dugout. We eat our jelly sandwiches and watch the trucks rumble by down the highway and—and he whispers he's gonna take me away from here so we can get married in the big city with big cathedral bells.

The stained-glass pattern fades. An occasional light flashes across Mandy like passing cars.

But then there aren't any big bells ringing in the big city. No, all the sounds there are wrong—horns like a billion geese honk-honk-honking on your front

porch, feet on tarmac like the way hailstones hit a window. Everybody's how-dya-do's, their please and thankyou's, pardon me's and goodbye's—they all fizzle like they're talking through a radio, faraway and mechanical. Buildings jump so high they block out the moonglow, streetlamps chase away what's left of the night. Twenty-four hour this, twenty-four hour that—heck! You'd think nobody in the city sleeps a single minute. But my fellow, he loves it. Gets work as a rabble rouster at one of those shiny party spots. Never has the energy anymore for a good walk around the park, or even a little conver-station! (*Pause*) The only bells I ever hear are the ones at bus stops and store check-outs. And pretty soon, my ears turn inside out and I stop hearing even that.

During her next speech, lights flash more rapidly across Mandy and eventually turn to an amber red. When she names her stolen objects, she takes them out of her messenger bag and shows them to the audience.

Round that time I start to take things. Real little gidgets, not the kind of stuff anybody'd miss. A pack of gum from the newsstand. A toothbrush from the drugstore. Tin of cat food outta some tiptop lady's grocery bag. Walk home with the items under my shirt and stash them in the bottom drawer of our dresser with my socks. (beat) Then one day I go and swipe a pack of double A batteries from a local fix-it shop. On the way out—well. Let's say I hear a different kind of bells. The kid at the register, he looks up, picks

up the phone, and I jump about as high as—(beat. The flashing lights fade) But I already mentioned that didn't I? Well okeedoke, anyhoo. I bolt away from there good and fast, head straight home and chuck all my, whadda they say, implicit objects in the dumpster. When my fellow comes back he finds me blubbering, asks what the heck's the matter. And I gotta tell him nothing—oh sure, it really should be nothing. Except the next day I get sick. Chuck up my meals, can't even keep water down! (Pause) After a few weeks, every one of those stick-straight steel towers and those fly-swatter-flat streets start to bend round and I gotta lock myself up in our little two-room apartment just to keep the big city sights and sounds from collapsing on top of me.

Pause. The stained-glass pattern frames Mandy once more.

So I come back here—by myself this time—and you know, I make do. Got the mail job three days a week and dust the church down on Saturdays for a bit of extra greenstuff. (beat) Thought the...the theftery business would stop once I settled, but turns out it's not that slip and sinkable. Still got a sock drawer crammed full of knickknacks in my room above the post office. Add something new every week, and I worry the folks here might be starting to figure it.

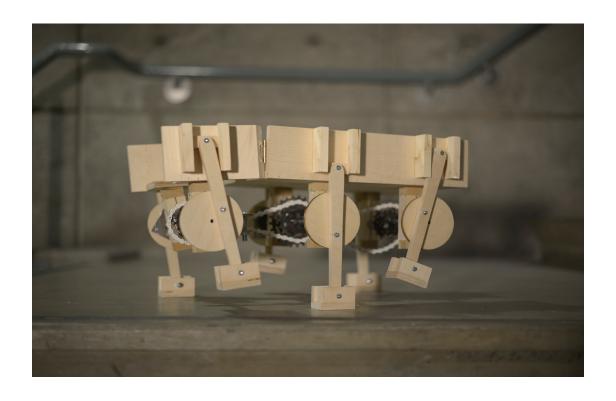
Kinda hoped I'd have more a sense of...lemme see...fitting right when I came back. Like the way it feels so fine and proper-done tucking a person's letters

all nice and neat in their mailbox. But nah, I end up like that package you gotta leave out on the porch because it won't fit anywhere else. Do my best though; at least in this town people's voices don't sound all fuzzy and faraway. And hey! You can sure bet I get to church every Sunday, keep an eye peeled and watch how everyone's faces twist around when good old Saint Benedict chimes for the eleven o'clock mass. Oh yes!

(*Pause*) Bells for me, they're like homecoming. And that's not a bad thing and it's not a good thing neither. Just how it goes. Can't choose everything, huh? Like—like a person can't choose where they been born, and they can't often choose where they die. So it might as well be the same place right? (beat) Might as well be here.

Lights fade, except for the stained-glass pattern on the floor. Mandy stands still in the remaining light for a moment, then exits. The stained-glass pattern fades to darkness.

# XIAO XUE



"Something to Ponder On is a walking truck camper on legs in the building process.

I received an abandoned truck camper with broken hydraulic jacks mid September 2016. It is an object that easily triggers one's sympathy, without a truck to travel with, this camper just sits statically, like a lost domesticated pet, or an amputated limb from someone's body. While building proper support for this camper, I developed an urge to revive it.

What better way to revive it than letting it walk?"

- Xiao Xue

SOMETHING TO PONDER ON

# EVAN STEWART-HEAL

a glance.	the limbs of a maze	
multiplied across	stretch out like	parallel
a wet-nosed man	a continuum of rooms	two mirrors,
		a landscape.

### CONTRIBUTORS

#### Allyx Williams

Allyx Williams is currently working towards her BFA in the Visual Arts program. While she works in a variety of mediums, she focuses primarily on digital art, photography, and acrylic/oil at this time.

#### Kaylyn Olynyk

Kaylyn grew up in Comox. She likes long walks on the beach and howling with her dog.

#### Sinead Morris-McHugh

Home is the Northwest Coast. Majoring in Geoscience and Gender Studies at University of Alaska in Fairbanks. Originally from Canada, and has been studying at University of Victoria for the past year.

#### Adrian Southin

Adrian Southin is a poet and filmmaker from Victoria, BC. His work has appeared in Plumwood Mountain, subTerrain and the Undertow: UEA Undergrad Anthology, among other publications.

#### Becca Kozak

Becca Kozak is a second-year writing student/punk rocker.

#### Alex Kung

Alex Kung is a second-year writing student from Victoria who can't decide whether to write poetry or fiction. He won first prize in poetry in UVic's Diversity Writing Contest 2016-2017.

#### Celina Silva

Celina Silva is a Writing and English major at UVic, and is from Nelson, BC.

#### Fiona Viaje

Fiona Viaje is a second-year student at UVIC, in combined Visual Arts and Computer Science major.

#### Sarah Pitman

Sarah Pitman is a third-year student at UVic working towards a Creative Writing major and an English minor. In her spare time, she enjoys going to the theatre, eavesdropping on other people's conversations, eating peanut butter, and getting lost in libraries.

#### Xiao Xue

Xiao Xue makes sculptures and installations with honest and revealing structures. They are often kinetic. Motivation for making these objects often comes from unresolved feelings, or an urge of solving an unattended problem. Investigating these subjects through art making manifests a thorough understanding of the matter, and often a visual proposal of a genuine solution.

#### Evan Stewart-Heal

Evan Stewart-Heal is what some people call a "homebody." Mostly cos he has like this deep fear of zombie-like droves of people groveling at his feet and saying drooly things like "take our baby as an offering," or "I am your sword, my liege" while kissing his hand with too much tongue, which he would have to rip away dramatically from them and cause a whole scene. So, nope. He'll stay right inside, thank you very much.



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