

On Devising Performance:

The Apathy Project

Undergraduate Journal of Performance Creation

Concordia University – Department of Theatre

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with production stills by Antoine Saito.

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We acknowledge that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community. We recognize the Kanien'kehá:ka as the custodians of the lands and waters upon which we work, create, and learn.

On Devising Performance:

The Apathy Project

apeTHē/

c.1600, from French *apathie*, from Latin *apathia*,
from Greek *apatheia*. Without feeling. Without suffering.
Without.

UJ
PE
RC

Editor Note

Welcome to the second edition of the Undergraduate Journal of Performance Creation (UJPERC). The aims of UJPERC are to highlight the work of our students and provide them with a space to critically reflect on creative and artistic enquiry through performance theory and practice. Since the inception of the Performance Creation Specialization in 2016, the Department of Theatre's curriculum has expanded with new course offerings and special topic courses addressing contemporary social, cultural, and design performance practices including, among others, oral history performance, site-specific performance creation, spatial and material dramaturgy, and performance studies.

This edition of UJPERC highlights the creative process of devising and realizing a new play. Under the direction of Jessica Carmichael, Assistant Professor, students explored the theme of apathy, through personal perspectives and how this "state of being" resonates with experiences of living with current global events and contemporary societal issues.

The *Apathy Project*, and the traces of that work which make up the content of this issue, marks critically the importance of making spaces for pedagogical and learning experiences that celebrate the unknown journey, risks, and thrills that come with the creative process, as well as the potentially transformative role that critical self reflection can play in yielding a work of theatre.

—

Dr Shauna Janssen

Assistant Professor

UJPERC Founder and Chief Editor

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Guest Editor Notes

Apathy is a devised creation project developed by students in the Performance Creation Specialization at Concordia University. In documented form, we give you our process. The things left out. The things kept in. What needs to be said now about creating this performance. About creating. The dust settling and kicking back up again.

Devising is a tenant of the Performance Creation program. It has been no so small feat to create an original contemporary play with twenty-odd collaborators. We explored *Apathy* with a variety of methods: with invited guest artists, with stilts, with song circles, with mask, with photographs, with a reading list that that included such work as: *My Conversations with Canadians* by Lee Maracle; *Theatre of the Unimpressed* by Jordan Tannahill; *Evicted: Profit and Poverty in the American City* by Matthew Desmond; *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life* by Nina Eliasoph; *Feminism and Theatre* by Sue-Ellen Case; *Postdramatic Theatre* by Hans-Thies Lehmann; *Kids These Days: Human Capital and The Making of Millennials* by Malcom Harris; and *The Inconvenient Indian* by Thomas King.

We began building templates of the play we wanted to work on. We tried improvisation, argued, watched playback from world news such as the Christine Ford testimony, argued, read book excerpts and articles, argued, staged compositions, argued, saw plays together, argued, looked at cartoons, newspapers, shared poetry... and... started to focus. We engaged in dialogue with the public and our families to find out their thoughts on *Apathy*. We spent weeks in our writer room talking about the direction of the play.

We found characters. We found words. We found more questions than answers.

Welcome to our process. Still forming. Still arguing.

—

Jessica Carmichael

Assistant Professor

Department of Theatre

Most of you probably don't know what a dramaturg is. To be perfectly frank, neither did we. It's like being a parent to ten children. Actually, it's like being a midwife to ten different pregnant ladies giving birth to one child. And we are there to double-check that from the moment of conception to the after-birth, the end result is a healthy, two-hour long baby.

That, my friends, is what a dramaturg does. Sort of.

Much of our work involved documentation: taking notes, pictures, videos—all before the writing even began. We asked questions, led discussions, made timelines, and dissected many different versions of the script that was presented in March 2019. And now, we are very proud to share some of this documentation, as well as writings that did not make it into the play, concept images from our designers, soundscapes, and notes from members of our production team. Read on for a little peek behind the curtain!

Please enjoy the fruits of our labours. Pun intended.

—

Danielle Eyer & Camille Fecteau

Dramaturgs

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Production Team

Author by the Company

Jessica Carmichael
Director, Conceiver and Co-Dramaturg

Merlin Platt
Set, Lights and Video Designer

Jonathan Stern
Costume Designer

Alana Marta DeVito
Sound Designer

Sara Jarvie-Clark
Music Director

Michael Friend
Props Designer

Danielle Eyer
& Camille Fecteau
Dramaturgs

Alessandra Tom
Stage Manager

Jennifer Townsend
Assistant Director

Camille Lapointe
& Shaylah Mahoney
Assistant Stage Managers

Cast

(In order of appearance)

Cheyenne Schaub
Reporter/Nora

Emelia Geryk
Sylvia

Sara Jarvie-Clark
Kid A

Samson Mills
Niko

Mariia Bashmakova
Petra

Scarlet Fountain
Sam

Lila Ciesielski
Cleo

Madison Phyper
Ella

Tamara Fattouh
Mae

Quinlan Green
Editor/David

Apathy

Script excerpt
by the Company

Prologue

Rain on the window. REPORTER's rented room. Barely furnished. REPORTER sits at a chair. Winds and rewinds a tape in their hand. We hear on the tape KID A's voice.

KID A singing on tape

But here I am alive
Everything all of the time...

The REPORTER stops the tape. And puts their head in their hands. SYLVIA appears. She observes REPORTER. She addresses REPORTER. The REPORTER does not see or hear her.

SYLVIA

There's an ecology of it growing here.
It started underground.
It was vomited up.
I cried about it for years before I let it go.
At first I had no pity for it.
At first I took joy in hating it.
At first I wanted to sleep with it, so I could call it as my own.

The following words appear:

| | | |
|---------|----------|--------|
| Ecology | Lethargy | Energy |
| Ecology | Lethargy | Energy |

The REPORTER looks up. Stares about the room. Bewildered and terrified.

SYLVIA sings

But here I am alive
Everything all of the time

REPORTER shakes their head. Pushes their hands into their eyes. The words disappear. It is silent. REPORTER drinks a sip of their coffee. It's cold. Their hands are shaking. They play the tape again. SYLVIA joins in as tape plays.

KID A on tape singing

Here I am alive
Everything all of the time

The REPORTER turns the tape off. Looks around once and shudders. SYLVIA almost touches their shoulders. But the REPORTER's cell phone goes off. REPORTER picks up.

REPORTER

Yeah?...Where are you? What? Okay, yes, I got it I think. I'm just... unsure. Right. Right. Okay. I'll send what I have tonight. It's... almost... Okay. Yeah. You can... read it and see.

They get up and stuff tape and a notebook spilling out with notes into their nearby bag. The REPORTER exits. SYLVIA remains. A beat. Sits in the REPORTER's chair. Stares out at the audience.

SYLVIA

Do you see it?
Do you feel it?
Do you believe in it?

She stands up. A Buzzing. A cacophony of noise: the outside world. Potentially includes: people wearing headphones, what's his name/what's her face, individuals engaging in apathetic acts, the environment/birds dying. Idioteque plays. Adding to the noise, as the news flashes, we hear snippets of shouting and speeches from WHAT'S HER NAME and WHAT'S HIS FACE.

WHAT'S HER NAME and WHAT'S HIS FACE overlapping each other

Protests! Resistance! Negligence! Conspiracy! Obstruction
of justice! Inhumane treatment! Rigged economic system!
Foreign involvement! Lack of workforce! Inconsistent policies!
Immigration! Healthcare! Shutdown! Impasse! Instability!
Safety and security nightmare! Negotiations are a disgrace!
National Emergency!

The outside world fades. SYLVIA exits.

Scene 1

The rehearsal space. A garage. The sign on the outside calls this place “The Bunker.” The people on the inside call this place safe. The walls vibrate in newspaper clippings, images, mind maps. A mood board of humanity. There is a large stained rug, an old worn-down armchair, a mattress, copies of books. The space is messy, lived in. The room feels both doomed and protected. The space is bleeding out. It is a living entity. Microphones, guitars, keyboard, violin, and other instruments litter the room. KID A is sitting at the piano. Absentmindedly singing.

KID A

Here I am alive... Everything all of the time...

Sighs. Returns to trying to write a song.

Tell me a story...

What’s... A story again?

Residual... uh... residual origins...

Looks out into the space, voice opens up to the auditorium

I dare you to talk about things you don’t know...

They hum the next two lines of the song. NIKO and PETRA enter. They tune instruments as if setting up for a gig.

PETRA

I mean, it’s so strange, y’know? When you’re doing the things you actually want to do, time goes by so fast. But when you’re doing a thing you hate, it’s like agonizingly slow. And then when you’re doing NOTHING... and don’t want to be doing nothing, but also there’s nothing to do, you just get bored waiting, and somehow it feels like the waiting goes on forever... Time gets tricky. The voices in your head are saying “you should be doing something, anything,” but you can’t for whatever reason, and that makes you feel even more guilty and makes you feel like doing nothing even MORE, and you let the nothing take over you. So you’re stuck in nothing.

Pause.

What were we talking about?

NIKO

Nothing.

Pause.

I was saying it just seems like nothing can be done out there right now.

PETRA

Why do you say that?

NIKO

Have you even looked outside recently?

PETRA

So, what's your solution?

NIKO

Solution? I never said we had to reach a solution—

PETRA

Then what was the point?

NIKO

If we don't talk about things we can't solve them. Here, we can talk, we can think about—

PETRA

Yes... that's—but that's what everyone's doing. Everyone everywhere is all about starting a dialogue, but most things will never get truly resolved—they'll just be eclipsed by bigger things as the planet changes its mind.

NIKO

Isn't that exactly why we're here? So we can create and think about how we can change what's going on out there.

PETRA

Maybe but... maybe by hiding away we're becoming a part of the problem.

NIKO

No. We're not hiding, you're making it sound like we're avoiding it all but we're just working towards something... it just... it takes time.

PETRA

But time isn't unlimited and we, we're sitting in here wasting it when instead we could be out there trying to prevent people from doing shitty things because they don't give a shit anymore!

KID A

We did do that, I did do that—

NIKO

—And you're proposing we turn around all of humanity's collective subconscious actions... how?

KID A

Accidentally?

KID A has picked up a guitar, and absent-mindedly begins to strum some chords. THE BAND improvises. They then break into "In the Context of War." A REPORTER enters. They are searching their pockets. REPORTER checks the bottoms of their shoes. Scrapes off something they have stepped in. They notice THE BAND, and make eye contact with KID A.

Beat.

Jonathan Stern

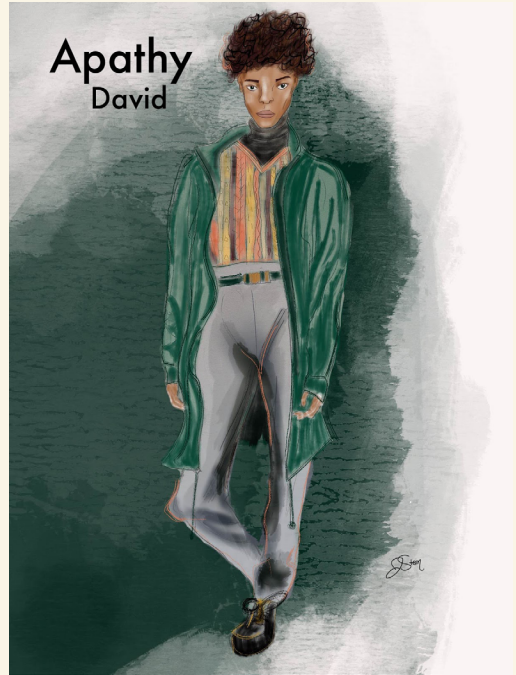
Costume Designer

We began by trying to find out how apathy moves. Its colours, and textures. How it could catch light and engross our movements. We didn't know what time period we would be in, or what world we were creating. We just experimented with something new each day. As the world began to form I responded to the politics we developed. I looked at runway looks that radically transformed the fashion world. Designers such as Vivienne Westwood and her work protesting climate change on the runway, and trends such as white bandanas that signified acceptance and diversity in post-Trump America. I decided that the band speaks through their fashion. Their self-representation and fame is highly constructed by both their sound and visuals. Then the world began to come alive. Apathy became more than shades of grey and a feeling of nothing, but rather an entire colour spectrum refracted, and a feeling of everything.

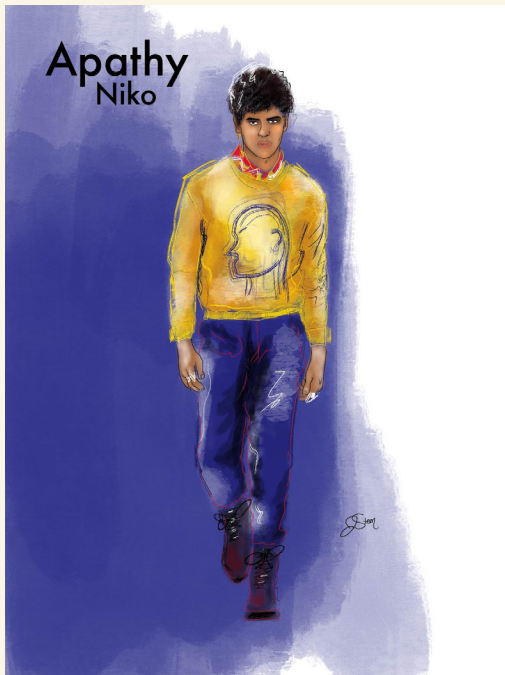
Apathy
Kid A



Apathy
David



Apathy
Niko



Apathy
Cleo



Merlin Platt

Set, Lights and Video Designer

The final design bears witness to our rehearsal process and the intimacy of such an endeavour. In this design, I am trying to expose the internal functioning of the artistic process through dismantling the facade of the Cazalet Theatre: there is little to no masking, wires are laid bare and little is hidden in this performance. The seating arrangement democratizes the space while also allowing the accessibility of non-conventional entrances and exits.

The lighting and projection design express the essence of the final script—a spectacle that can be interpreted as an homage to a pseudo contemporary magical reality. As the play developed/evolved, so too did the design. It is multifaceted in that it addresses the needs of the different worlds of the play and allows the actors liberty to move within it. Through the deconstructive transformation of this space we can see the honesty that lies at the forefront of our intentions in this collaborative experience.

Alessandra Tom

Stage Manager

“I dare you to talk about things you don’t know.”

At the beginning of this process, we were met with a lot of unknowns. Using only the keyword *apathy* as our starting point, the company was tasked with creating a show to be shared in late March 2019. Over the year we were led by Jessica Carmichael in deepening our relationship to each other as a group as well as exploring our personal and political connection to apathy.

I think the creative process, specifically on devised work, holds a number of challenges. At many times it’s like walking in the dark. It helps to have strong leaders and good friends along the way but nevertheless we are creating our path as we go. I feel that the same can be said for our experiences as students and young creators. Who’s to say what lies ahead. However, to witness and support the company as they created this show, navigated through the dark, and hopefully holding a light in times of need, was a great honour this year as Stage Manager. I was able to see a group of incredible artists say yes to the unknown and make something that didn’t previously exist in the world and that was a beautiful experience.

Artists are often asked to make strong choices to better define and articulate their vision. This year I was reminded that through challenges, unknowns, and yes, even *Apathy*—continuing on despite is a choice. When pushed, we can find the power to embrace the unknown with excitement and create incredible music together. We can play with images and share poetry. We can even conjure the energy to get through tech week. Through this we can find a voice in the dark. It is here that the space resonates.

Alana Marta DeVito

Sound Designer

As apathy is a difficult, ephemeral emotion of relative nothingness, the sonic scape of this unique play required an auditory pliability to sculpt each scene carefully. Sometimes with the observer conscious of the metamorphosis and sometimes not. Textures and movement motivate the imagination and draw unexpected feelings—the haunting leader—not only through the story itself but through the collective psyche of the observers. As the stage remains and the story flows through, suspension of disbelief is not needed; where eyes are deceived, the ears do the painting.

Follow this link to hear a sample of her work from *Apathy* entitled “Sylvia’s Benevolent Score”:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BxUoJYGgkEy/>

Sara Jarvie-Clark

Music Director and Kid A

When you are working between that line of creating music that is not in the typical musical theatre style, but also not living entirely in the world of music we plug into on the metro each day; a place for experimenting with sound and song opens up in a really interesting way. As someone who took the lead on developing music for the show, I started by looking at the musical influences from my own life and offered them as inspirational pieces to work on as we started composing and building our ensemble skills as a whole.

Radiohead was very influential because they are a band whose body of work has taken so many different turns throughout the years, and the political influence in many of the albums resonated really strongly in our group discussion surrounding political apathy. Their seminal album *Kid A* spoke to me almost like an anthem of the apathetic and the dying world around them, while also being a protest cry, a warning to change before it's too late. To balance this out, I also brought in a choral piece I came across a few years ago called *Wester Caputh*. I've always seen this song as an antidote to apathy; an emblem of hope.

From here we started composing music under our theme. I think the funny thing about trying to write songs on a certain topic, is that you end up doing a lot of writing around that thing, rather than writing about the thing itself. *Tell Me A Story* was the first song I wrote for the show, and in a way it's about apathy, but I wouldn't say that that's its theme. I think a lot of the music in the show was written not only in response to apathy and the many places it lives, but also in reaction to different things that

can trigger apathy. And even when the lyrics of song don't seem directly related to apathy, that song, in a way, is a vessel of sound that hopefully carries an antidote to apathy (I'm thinking of the song Lila wrote, *Oh Dear Sylvia*) because of the way the music feels.

Another large part of the musical process was doing improvisations within the group. Various ensemble members brought in methods for developing group songs which was a great way to experiment and get to know one another musically.

Music is the being that allows you to understand what you cannot know through words. For me music is often a savior to the horrors of the world and the helplessness but also joy that comes with feeling everything all of the time. I think the personal music and sounds inside each member of this ensemble echoes throughout our play in a really beautiful way. I like to think of it as connective glue, the music ties all these words and memories and thoughts and feelings together to tell a tale of how we are living now.

Cheyenne Schaub

I have so much I want to say.

I have so much I want to say.

I want to talk about the days where the world is too cold to get up and be faced, and how covers have a tangling tendency around my wrists and ankles. Loose enough to move between the four corners of the bed, but tight enough around my eyes and my brain that the day appears too daunting to see it.

I want to talk about the futility of news, because mass media franchises own everything and mold information to get the reaction they want you to have, so is it ever really true and objective? And when it is it's either underwhelming or overwhelming, but somehow never in between. And then once you've heard the news, you're either so physically or emotionally separated that there's nothing you could do, even if you wanted to.

I want to talk about staying too long. How or why a woman chooses to look past her bruises and scars, to accept discomfort and pain for a while longer, or why a couple doesn't call it quits when the feelings aren't there anymore. Is it hope? Is it certainty? Is it loneliness, self-esteem or lack thereof, his father, her mother, her father, her child?

I want to talk about mothers, and how they die to themselves every day for years, and somehow come out of it when her nest is empty and her past self is buried behind so many boxes, the weight of it is too much to even start unpacking in order to get passion back.

I want to talk about fathers, who were told by their fathers, the war veterans, that facing their emotions means falling apart. It means losing control. It means compromising their ability to support their families because emotion means weakness. But the sons of the veterans haven't fought the same war.

I want to talk about politics, much like news. Where we focus on the outside, outside, outside, to influence our inside, but by the time there is change and we've looked at all the paintings in the palace, we've neglected the olive oil we were meant to carry in our spoon.

But I want to talk about our environment. Because some of us have been staring at our spoon for too long, scared of spilling, to not see the oil spills elsewhere, the decay, the rubbish, the melting, the rising, the heating, the smoking. We'd rather look at the spoon. But if we don't look up, our children won't even have spoons.

I want to talk about a country that has a history of saying they would paint over its roots with white-wash, and instead dyed it red with blood of innocents, tainted it with conditioning to grow in a direction that they weren't meant to. Telling them, don't grow apples, grow oranges. Why have we told a people that they can't be; that their culture is the devil's work, to the point where they believe it now, and they've become afraid of a drum. Of their language. I want to talk about how this is still being resolved, even has yet to be acknowledged. I want to talk about how in my lifetime, with 23 years on this earth, there were still residential schools.

I want to talk about death. It could come tomorrow. The thought of it makes me want to work, to run, to play, to jump. It makes me want to cry, to curl up, to throw up. It makes me want to tell the people I love that I love them, and really mean it. It makes me want to sell everything I own, and buy everyone I know their favourite dessert. It makes me want to donate my organs. It makes me want to live in truth while I'm here, because the convenience of living in lies isn't worth it. It makes me want to have kids. It makes me want to travel and see the world while I can. It makes the world colourful. Because often enough, when you leave something out or put something away because you know it's not going anywhere, it starts to turn. It starts to grey. It starts to get dusty.

But if something is fleeting, it moves. It flows with the living water of a river. It falls and melts. It breathes. It lives its life to its fullest.

And it makes me want to live mine the same way.

Masha Mariia Bahmakova

I was on the bus home one night, and I heard someone talking
with what felt like artificial loudness behind me. It was an older
man, rambling on and on. I took out my earphones. I listened.
My frustration grew into a slow smile...

We should let the teenagers talk.
We should let teenagers make the decisions
and the adults can take a back seat and see what they do.
Adults wake up every morning
and they put bad things into the world.

And they're not evil,
or crazy.
They're intelligent and they're still killing the earth because they don't
put love into the world.
They're too busy being scared of love.

We should let the teenagers make the important decisions because
they are excited by the world and they are full of love and they don't
take too long to think.
Adults take so long to think before they do things.

We need to pour love into the world.
But instead we pour poison into the water
and into the fish
and we're killing the planet.

We need to let the teenagers be in charge so we can save the Earth
and if there is love in the Earth
then we will be able to breathe again.

And if the teenagers don't do anything then we're doomed.

I can neither claim these words nor say that I am quoting him exactly.
But his voice was in my head for a long time after that.



Madison Phyper

To ___,

Your death ought not to be a poem
Your death ought not to be
But here we are.
So here I go.

I hope that you've come back to this world as a dragonfly that spends
all day roaming in fields of flowers, landing on daffodils and
bathing on soft rose petals in the sun.
Or a bumble bee surrounded by honey all day dilly dallying along with
that humble bumble buzz.
That your ears would only know the sounds of birds singing morning
songs and your skin should only know the touch of tender leaves.
No metal, no cold, no sharp objects.

That you could have a quiet mind and a quiet heart.
You should have been born a bunny, you should have been born a
turtle so that you'd have the protection of a hard shell.
You were soft
Beautifully soft
Too soft to stay here, I understand you were meant for better things.
Maybe we'll meet again one day in the mountains, I hope you'll pass
me in the breeze.
I hope so badly that you've had a chance to experience peace.



Jonny Stern

How to Rake Leaves on a Windy Day

A city with traffic. Mebs enter slowly into their backyard, leaves litter the ground. The wind is always blowing at changing rates. It moves the leaves around quite a lot. Mebs follows the directions of the narrator, they are pensive.

N: Leaf blowers are like giant whining insects that have moved into your head.

Leaf blower sound begins to grow.

They are swarming behind your eyes, drilling deep inside your teeth and clapping in your eardrums. Leaf blowers have ruined autumn with their constant whininess and their noxious fumes. And they are everywhere. You may believe it is impossible to resist them, but you still can. In almost every situation where something is loud, obnoxious and seemingly ubiquitous, (*Leaf blower stops*) resistance is an option.

Head to the weathered shed in your backyard and fiddle with the rusty padlock until it finally yields. Reach into the corner where you keep the shovel and the pruning shears. From within the jumble of wonderful tools that require no gasoline, pull out a rake.

Mebs picks up a rake, and begins to inspect it.

Quite some time has elapsed since you last used the rake, and its tines may be a bit crooked now, bent here and there along the row. Never mind, the rake will do. Making do is part of the job.

Think of how the rake reminds you of the comb your mother tugged gently through your clean hair after a bath. Think of the way your mother smelled as she leaned close to untangle the snarls. Remember how your damp hair held the rows the comb left behind, like new-planted vegetables in your grandfather's backyard garden. That's what the grass will look like after you've cleared it of the leaves.

Mebs begins to explore the leaves on the ground with the rake; they are not raking yet.

Take care to lift the rake a little when you arrive at the raised roots of the maple trees and the margins

of the yard where the lawn mower can't reach beneath the tangle of honeysuckle. Don't push too far into those hidden spaces beneath woody shrubs or the hollows between tree roots. This is where small crawling creatures are hiding, sheltering under the damp leaves for protection. (*Mebs begins to rake.*) This is their home, their ecosystem. When the birds finally return in the spring, these little stirring critters will be a feast for their nestlings. Whatever it might feel like on this damp November day, remind yourself that spring is coming.

The wind picks up and blows Mebs.

Don't let the wind become a frustration to you. This is not the time for insisting on perfection. We are making do today, remember?

Mebs begins to rake.

In a forest, fallen leaves compost themselves to feed the trees. The leaves you will miss in raking will decay and rot throughout the coming winter, generating their own heat and protection for large trees and small creatures alike. Think of your perfunctory raking as a way to feed the trees, as an investment in the urban forest. This is a gift, a way to provide care to the ecosystem.

Suddenly the wind blows profusely around Mebs creating billows of leaves around them.

When the wind rises, pause. Stand still. This is your chance to smell the scent of the living soil stirred up around it. Its pungent scent may recall to you the nostalgic taste of mud pies and the smell of centipedes. Here you remember collecting small shiny rocks and searching for the habitats of ladybugs.

While you're breathing in the scent of the ancient soil, listen for the squirrels. They will be fussing at you from the treetops, those pesky scoundrels! Scolding at you for turning up the dirt they have claimed for their own tree planting! All autumn long, the squirrels have been sowing nuts and acorns across the landscape. Think of them as one the curators of this land, the trees you walk by, young and old, may have grown from one of the many seeds sown by one of those thumbless rascals.

Take a moment to wonder, leaning on your rake, how many forests the squirrels' tiny thumbless hands have planted, in all the busy autumns of their life.

The wind blows.

Now, see!? For a moment you have managed to forget the leaf blowers! You have failed to notice the sounds of traffic on the nearby street where everyone is in a hurry and drives way too fast. For a moment, too, you have forgotten your worries—your own small worries and the bigger worries of the world.

Remember that one day soon the wind will die down, the tree limbs will be bare, and all the small critters that live beneath the leaf piles will burrow deep into the cold ground. They will be warm and protected and okay without your help.

For now, give yourself over to what is happening above you. (*Leaves begin to fall and are picked up by the wind.*) Watch the leaves loosen themselves from their branches and deliver themselves to the wind. Notice their unique shapes and colors as they become a new detail in the landscape above you. Watch the wind, which you cannot see, catch and lift the leaves. Watch the wind catch them, lift them, drop them and then lift them again! Pushing them higher and higher into the sky, so that everyone in the world has a chance to see them.

Again and again and again.

Mebs stands still, the leaves still litter the ground, but the work is finished.

Before you go inside, take a leaf into your hand; this is a gift for you too. Put it on your desk or next to your bed. Keep it nearby, through whatever troubles the long winter may bring. It will help you remember that nothing is ever truly over. It will help you remember what the wind always teaches us in autumn: that just because you can't see something doesn't mean it isn't there.

Camille Lapointe

Nowhere. That's not it. I was not nowhere, I was lost. Not lost. I just didn't know where I was.

Now that I realise I don't understand emotions I ask too many questions. Do I? My mother said that she didn't feel it. She brings up the fact that I knew when she was not feeling well. And that I laugh hard even at TV shows (my preschool teacher said to her that it was unusual and that it struck her—she brings that up often).

But yeah, I guess by nowhere I mean, at least a little, that feeling of not being, not being you. Being somewhere else. Where? I don't know. But I felt like a bird. A third-person narrator, maybe. But not the omniscient one. I felt as if I were in the middle of a hurricane. But the actual middle, where there is no wind. So I knew that something was going on without really knowing.

To know. What an imprecise, strong word. Too imprecise to be as strong as it is, maybe. "I know that I know nothing," said Plato or Socrates. Can't remember which one. That's a bit intense. Or is it? We are always subject to our perception, aren't we? And I do strongly think it is a good thing. What a curse it would be to know everything. Every single little thing. I know that I don't want to know that much. What kind of responsibility would you have after that? And what kind of ethic code would you need? Sometimes I am tired of my own mind. I can't even imagine how tiring and annoying it would be to not only have questions but also answers. I don't feel it would stop the flow of thinking. I think it would

just go even faster. Questions bringing answers bringing questions bringing answers... Nope. Not for me. Really. Even if I tend to want to have all that knowledge, there are still things I am grateful I don't know. I am quite sure there is even stuff I would like to forget. I can't think of one right now but I do remember that I have thought about that in the past.

And knowing everything, would it bring action? Or apathy? I mean, if you know everything you certainly know the answer to how to resolve all the problems of the world. You even have the answer about what are, in an exhaustive and complete list, the world's problems. But it doesn't give you the strength to do it. It's not because you have the recipe that you have the ingredients at home. Or it isn't because you have the protocol that you have the competencies to effectuate the experiment. With social media and the speed of the flow of information we get every day, maybe those are the reasons why apathy is talked about these days. Because maybe too much information does bring inaction. A freeze, a bug because of all this. Our brains have a maximum speed at which it can process information. Don't click everywhere on you screen and press all the keys on your keyboard if you're computer freezes. We all know that.

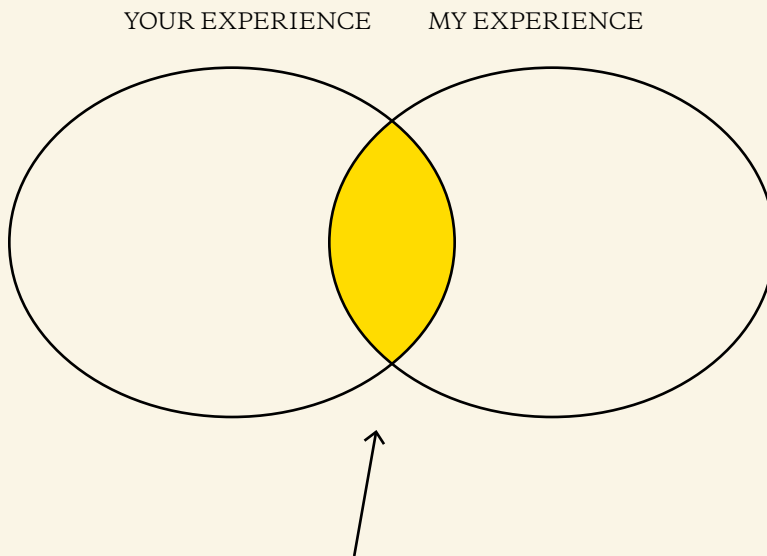
From what I've found,
people are finding
it hard to detach
themselves now that
everything has become
um... well, inevitable
and indoctrinated.

— REPORTER

Cheyenne Schaub

Exam of Life

Fill in the blank correctly.



“I how you feel.”

-
- a) relate to
 - b) know
 - c) felt
 - d) understand
-

Danielle Eyer

This is what I know about breathing:
If you hold your breath long enough, your body will force you to pass
out and breathe again.

This is what I know about drowning:
The reason people die from drowning is because even though you're
entirely submerged in water, your body will continue to force you
to breathe.

This is what I remember (a list):

- Four shots of rum
- Singing "Maybe This Time" from *Cabaret* at the top of my lungs
- The sickly sweet taste of those red Tylenol pills that melt in your
mouth a little if you don't swallow them fast enough
- A flash of a street at night as I stumble down a sidewalk
- My heart racing as I lie prone
- Waking up in a hospital bed with the urge to vomit

This is what I was told:
That after downing four shots of rum and a bottle of Tylenol, I left my
apartment, walked to a clinic minutes before they were closing, and
told the receptionist what I had done.

This is my conclusion:
That even in the worst period of my life, when all my mind wanted was
to destroy itself, my body still wanted me to *live, live, live*.

Our default setting is to live. Our bodies are forever on auto-pilot.

I wish I could stop getting in its way.

Lila Ciesielski

A Bit on Emotions

Some emotions have no names.
it would be impossible for every feeling ever felt
by every human to be verbally recorded
it would be impossible for all emotions to have
been experienced by everyone
in fact maybe some emotions are experienced
by no one other than ourselves.
could that be?
No. not with a population of nearly 7.7 billion
people.

Someone else must feel that strange way you feel
that you have no other way of describing other
than saying it tastes kind of like how the moon
would taste if it were ice cream and it hurts
kind of like how it would hurt to be eating ice
cream on the moon,
both of those at the same time and so you can't
decide if it's a good feeling or a bad one.
It's an emotion with no name,
or maybe you just don't know the name.
yes maybe we just don't know that there is a word
for more emotions than we know.

There is a word for when you're inside and you feel
calm even though it is storming outside.
That word is *chrysalism*.
But i don't think everyone feels that.
Some people are always terrified of storms.
Liberosis is a desire to care about less things.
does that mean it's a desire to feel less too?

But you can't pull out a dictionary every time
you can't find the name of your emotion,
because they won't all be there. I doubt they could.
And you look for definitions in the dictionary
not for words.
You can't tell the dictionary how you feel and
expect a name for it.
and who knows if anyone else has ever even felt it?

I wonder,
what is the emotion between two emotions called?
like that quarter of a second that makes you
change the way you feel.
If for example i am crying and someone makes
me laugh, what is that feeling between the pain
and the laughter?
I asked the internet and found nothing.
The internet knows everything,
so i guess there isn't a word for it.
I could make one up.
I'll call it *millimeesis*.
because it's a state that lasts a millisecond.
but no one else will ever know about *millimeesis*.
It will be my word, unless i share it.
But i wonder, has anyone else ever thought about
millimeesis?
Or am i the only one?



↗
 Quinlan Green, Cheyenne Schaub,
 Emme Geryk and company in *Apathy*

Quinlan Green

Re: “I Find Some Whole New Meaning for Myself.”

I’ve written the reporter as an outsider to the group and I’ve coded them as black, racialized, like me.

I believe people of colour might have an inherently different idea behind what the damnation and saving of the world looks like. (This goes beyond a personal unfamiliarity of “Radiohead aesthetics,” which I accept as our show, and which I am open and am eager to work with regardless.) For example, while a Eurocentric dystopian writing about the end of the world might paint our “universal” demise as a “universal” result of man-kind’s destructive recklessness towards the environment, a First Nations perspective, coming from a culture which has positioned Indigenous people as legitimate and capable stewards of this land for thousands of years, would be fully incompatible. A Eurocentric writing of mental health would depict emotions and depression as an enigmatic failure of the psyche, while a person of colour with personal experiences with otherness and colonially as an effect would see it, conversely, as the sociological effect of code-switching, minority stress. Middle-class teenagers coming from a position of privilege, pessimistic in what their system offers them, believe rock music, anarchism, will topple dictatorships and capitalism. People of colour, women of colour, queer liberation movements, “resistance groups” as I’ve come to know and participate in them, have always known that the heart of resistance is at a dinner table, in meditation, in writing and centering their own narratives. The destruction of Apathy, of capitalism and oppressive governments, of this “fucked up world,” isn’t in a New World Order, doesn’t succeed the assassination of Trump, and doesn’t include nuclear bombs. It comes from voices, marginalized or made “subaltern,” being able to write their own stories into existence and legitimacy. That way, supremacy of the rich, of domination, of the patriarchy, of whiteness, loses its footing. That’s how we save the world.

I think there's a disconnect between what *Fault Lines* says saving the world, and the end of the world, looks and sounds like, and what I think that looks and sounds like. I think that comes from my (deliberate? appropriated? productive? incohesive?) thinking as a racialized person. I think that comes from my thinking of what privilege is attached to this kind of existentialism, this kind of music making, this kind of philosophy in this kind of music-making context. I think that kind of thing has blind spots in actually recognizing and then presenting what's wrong with the world.

Sara Jarvie-Clark

Still a Rose

What does it say about her? And then similarly
what does it say about me? That I should be the
one to forget her, just as I am the one to desert
her

And I do not know what to make of any of this
in all truth.

All truth fails me at the end of the day and I'm
left wrapped inside a self that I no longer
recognize...It wasn't supposed to be about tidal
waves, it wasn't supposed to be about all the
gold armor you wore.

I was supposed to come in a clean red dress
I was supposed to be the beautiful thing
Wanted by many and had by none
I was supposed to be the last standing tower

And what will I say to them now that she's left me?

Will I tell them she grew disgusted at the sight
of me, and they twisted her mind and insides
and I'll go on trial to say "no it's not her fault.
There are so many things that are but that is
not her fault"

Before I entered the academy I read about it,
I dreamt about it
How I would while my days away in the net
of intellectualism
How I would one day have my own room for
my own private thoughts
That would become my home
How Montreal would save me from the option
to go completely

And it did
After all this time
It did
And it never apologizes
For all that it gave me
It only seeks to make me remember it

It took a very long time.
It always takes a very long time
Just like it does in art
Just like it does in science
I couldn't come to a conclusion

But she's happy she had the chance to share
herself with me
And I bow to her and I wish I could stay her forever

But she is shifting
And though it is inherently a sad thing I cannot
make it a sad thing
Because then what would be the point?

So how would I frame it for you?

I would tell you about the first time I felt it
The first time I felt everything all at once
and the energy
Became trapped inside me like a bomb
And I didn't know when it would end
Because when you are inside beauty you don't
think about the end

It was a calculated descent
Into a deep time of my life
A time I'll remember after everything else



↗
Sara Jarvie-Clark and
Mariia Bashmakova in *Apathy*

Lila Ciesielski

Oh Dear Sylvia

Oh dear Sylvia
Oh Oh Oh
All you think about
Are traces left behind by those who hurt
All you dream about
Are phrases left unsaid by those unheard

Oh dear Sylvia,
don't you know your head is not your worth
Sweet, sweet warrior,
won't you save yourself before you burst

Go, go to the steeple
Go warn all the people
that the wolves are on their way
Go, go past the mountain
Go find the lion
and tell him he better stay
We don't talk out loud,
Whisper secrets to our kindest friends
When the truth comes out
We just wait and hope that this will end

Oh dear Sylvia,
don't you know your heart is not your worth
Sweet sweet warrior,
this world needs you now or it will burst

Go, go to the steeple
Go warn all the people
that the wolves are on their way
Go, go past the mountain
Go find the lion
and tell him he better stay
Drink your water, hold your tears
Be the one who stands her ground
You know he might not disappear,
but the winds have changed somehow

Go, go to the steeple
Go warn all the people
that the wolves are on their way
Go, go past the mountain
Go find the lion
and tell him he better stay



↗
 Samson Mills, Mariia Bashmakova
 and Sara Jarvie-Clark in *Apathy*

Jennifer Townsend

Have you ever stepped in shit?

But like... *really* stepped in it?

Not just like, with a pair of sneakers or something that has a flat sole—that doesn't really count because it is easy to just scrape it off on the sidewalk or through some grass or something. I mean, like when you're wearing boots that have *deep* treads. The kind of stepping in shit where you have to search for a twig so that you can actually get in there and dig that crud not just *off* your shoe but *out* of it.

I have.

I didn't even realize that I had until the next day either. I went to go put my boots on and there it was: A bunch of shit on my shoe.

And... Okay, this might sound gross, but I just put on a different pair of shoes because I just didn't have the time to deal with that, you know? I figured, like maybe if I just wait until I have a day off I will do it. Maybe if I just wait until I have a day off, and it's raining I can use a puddle to loosen the shit because there are no twigs in my apartment and I live in the city, so finding one might be tricky. Plus if I just wanted to wash it off where am I supposed to do that? My bathtub, my kitchen sink? And like I said, I live in an apartment so I don't have a hose or anything. So, maybe if I just wait until I have a full day off and it's raining so I can find a puddle and I can walk to a park somewhere and find a twig... *Then* I can deal with the shit on my shoe.

Or... Maybe I can just go buy a new pair of shoes.

She was pronounced
vacant

With sunflower petals
tangled into her braids

And pink dresses still
folded up neatly in her
nightstand.

No longer having the
privilege to hope for a
better tomorrow

People aren't supposed
to feel what she felt.

— CLEO

Shaylah Mahoney

*Monday
October
8th:
7:36 PM*

(Someplace between Ottawa and Montreal)

I made tea before I left home, but it's still too hot to drink. This past weekend was the first time I had been home since coming back for my 'final' year of study. I think I was reluctant to go back just because of the sheer factor of having to answer questions that I wouldn't know the answer to, but somehow am expected to answer all the same.

"How are your classes going?"

"Is this your final year?"

"What do you plan to do next year?"

The known presence of these questions couldn't stop me, however, from actually going back, because although the questions were undesired, the voices that would ask them would bring me comfort. All in all, it wasn't too bad.

My tea is still steaming.

I would've liked to have seen a few more of my friends back home, but I am grateful for the extended time I was able to visit with my dear friend, A. She and I were able to offer each other more than a simple life update; over the 52 hours I was home, we were with one another for at least 8—which is impressive when I say that I did sleep for probably close to 24 of those 52 hours. Without knowing it, I think we mostly talked about time.

Time studying.

Time praying.

Time with each other.

Time alone.

Too much, too little, never enough.

How we hadn't seen each other for nearly two months, though it seemed like mere hours;

And how we'd see each other soon.

Still, as I sit on this train, time seems to pass by without a consequence. The clock is counting up but I feel no different; I haven't grown tired and my tea is still hot enough to burn my tongue as I try to sip it.

Going into this weekend, I had such high hopes for making the time to “do work.” I had planned out my days, being sure to allot time for French homework, for PERC and CATS readings, for assignments and papers... for writing, but in the moment, I couldn’t tear myself away from my family to seclude myself in a book. The feeling of warmth that would radiate from the smiles of my mother and sister, the laugh of my father, the stories of my grandfather—they all proved too worthy of my attention. My education, the thing that I pour myself into day in and day out in Montreal, seemed so distant. Most of the time I enjoy both, but for some reason I lost an appetite for studies and became ravenous for stories.

In his old age, my grandfather is willing to tell more and more about his past. The son of a man who at the age of 12 jumped out his school window to escape a threatening nun, never to return and soon after began working in the Coal Mines of Cape Breton. A boy who followed his father’s path and worked in the coal mines for years. A teenager who would have been called a ‘hoodlum’ to his face and worse to his back. A man who left everything he knew in Cape Breton to head to Ontario in order to feed his family. A father to three daughters; a husband to a terminally ill woman who would die too soon. A grandfather to eight grandchildren, seven of whom still live and a great-grandfather to two.

He has some great stories.
And luckily my tea is cool enough to drink.

Scarlet Fountain

What does being good mean for me?

A (very) personal definition/guidebook to being good.

Volunteer. Keep volunteering. Volunteer in lots of places, but make
your volunteering count—no tokenism.

Go places with people. People are more important than money.

Find ways to compliment people. Say their names.

Tell them they're good. Point out things you noticed them do, or say.

They deserve attention.

One compliment a day is a good starting point.

Give at least one genuine compliment per day.

Give hugs. Ask first. Wear deodorant. Shower.

Small acts are valuable. Hold doors. Offer to carry things.

Accept offers for help when you need help.

It makes both of you feel better.

Teach yourself to use the word please again.

Say thank you. Say you're welcome.

Big things are good too sometimes. Not always.

But sometimes, it's good to bake people some cookies.

Think about how you have made this day better for other people. Strive
to make it better still. Strive to make more people's days better.

Listen more than you speak. Ask questions.

Other people are interesting. Learn them.

Don't apologize for things that don't need apologizing for.

When you apologize, make sure it means something.

Care about yourself.

Goodness is self-rewarding. Goodness is about the feeling of doing
something good. It's not about expecting good things in exchange
for doing good.

Be aware of your privilege. You are not the only minority, and you are
not more of a minority than anyone else in a minority community.

Take risks. Say yes.

We can't find the
solution if we don't
actually know what
it is we're trying to
solve. We can't fix
the world without
hearing it. Feeling it.
And we sure aren't
doing either of those
enough...

— REPORTER

Camille Lapointe

It is crazy how when you really care about something you tend to put it far from us. We talk about that often with love. Like when you love someone but never speak to them because they are so amazing. It's not that you are not great, just that they are so amazing. So we put them on a pedestal and freeze when the time comes to make a move. I feel that that's a bit, at least for me, what we are doing with this project. We love it so much, we care so much, that sometimes some of us freeze. And we all have such different backgrounds in theatre.

There is a big spectrum between nothing and many many years of previous schooling, or community learning, or autodidact learning. We have thought of apathy as white because it could be everything instead of nothing even though it looks more like nothing. Maybe we are like this too. We all have our own colour and together we blend ourselves with this project. Because we care so much about everybody and about this project, we don't want anybody to be out of it. Maybe we fear that if we bounce we will be alone and we don't want to erase others' colour, do we? And sometimes, you look somewhere and when you look at yourself you realise that the others were actually looking at something else. But it takes time to see what they are seeing; we go so fast. 299 792 458 m/s.

We all have different wavelengths but we are all light. Visible light. And together we blend into white. But being afraid of being the only one to bounce is also a dangerous game because by wanting to do everything we might as well end up doing nothing and disappear by being absorbed. And the fact that we all are different colours could explain why we don't always understand each other. We all want to listen so badly, but sometimes you are two colours that are so different, and that is really hard. How could blue understand orange if they are opposites? The length between them is the diameter of the chromatic circle. Some colours are closer and it might be easier for saffron to understand orange and yellow-orange than it is for it to understand blue. And we all have the ability to change our colour a little bit. Some reds can go from purple to orange, and others can change into different shades of red. Can we all be visible at the same time without fully blending? Maybe. Rainbows exist. Is that what we want? I don't know. But for rainbows to be seen we need a prism. Maybe this project is a prism. Or maybe we prefer to blend. I don't know. What I know is that we care. And we do our best. Even if sometimes it means not doing as much as we would like. Even if sometimes it doesn't show. That's how I feel.



↗
Madison Phyper, Scarlet Fountain,
Lila Ciesielski and Tamara Fattouh
in *Apathy*

Cheyenne Schaub

She sees herself as dust in the wind with the privilege of being kicked by someone's boot. He sees his body as food to be chewed up and spat back out onto the wall to drip down and be admired. Or mocked.

I don't see them this way.

I see them as gallant blue-eyed masterpieces. That's the closest I can get to seeing them the way God sees them, but I won't stop trying. Because if I don't try to see them this way, who can? Who will? The worst part is, they don't know the way God sees them, the love that is there for them. The love separated by a wall of mistrust and manipulation and lies and anxiety and hopelessness and helplessness, but there is a hole in the wall with beaming light shining through, and they need only get up the courage to open those marvelous blue eyes. Then courage to scream will follow. Then courage to be. Then courage to fight, to tear down the walls, to walk, to breathe, to run, to laugh, to be, to be, to be...until the next wall builds itself and they search for the light all over again.

My words can't save them. My words are issued on obsolete newsprint, and it's raining outside. My words are smushed bugs swiped away by windshield wipers. My words can't conjure the light, they are dim and fucking... they're a brick in the wall sometimes too.

Madison Phyper

Leda and the Swan

Lovely Leda and the swan
Keep away from the pond
We should have warned you not to bathe.

His beaks a broken record singing “hatred”
His beaks a broken weapon teaching force

She was pronounced dead
With sunflower petals tangled into her braids
And pink dresses still folded up neatly in her
 nightstand
No longer having the privilege to call herself a child
Because children aren’t supposed to know what
 she knows

She had only been pretending to be big
She wasn’t really.
Punished for playing a game she didn’t know about
No one ever taught her,
That growing up is sacrifice

Lovely Leda and the swan
Keep away from the pond
We should have warned you not to bathe.

Hair.

Hair, it's a funny thing.

It's simple thing, but complicated too i guess.

Hair.

A year ago, it reached my lower back,

when it was wet I could feel it tickle my bare skin

I felt free and natural, a little wild and very safe.

I felt beautiful too. Sometimes.

Now, it's all gone.

I chopped it off.

Why? You ask.

1. I wanted change. Change is the only thing that makes the world go round.
2. I felt stuck.
3. I wanted to do something that scared me. My hair had become a safety blanket, a place to hide, a shield. It was getting too comfortable.
4. I was curious. But curiosity killed the cat.
5. I wanted to find myself. I don't know if I really thought cutting hair would help me do that. It does seem a little bit ridiculous. And I don't even know if finding oneself is possible, so... 5. I wanted to learn about myself.

But when I sat in front of the mirror and the hairdresser looked at me and said "Don't worry, it will still look feminine."

I thought to myself: Feminine hair? What does that even mean?

And then it hit me—

My entire identity would be perceived differently.

The type of people who approach me now are different.

The way people look at me is different,

so I'm sure what people think of me is different.

At house parties i get pinpointed as the queer one.

When my hair was long I got pinpointed as the straight one.

Depends on the party, depends on the people but, it seems like there's
no such thing as fitting either way.

some will think I'm gay,
some will tell me i look like small british boy,
others will think I'm confused,
ask me if it was an act of rebellion,
or an existential crisis?

Hair.
It's a funny thing.

And now, I wonder, do they still think I'm beautiful?

I hope they do.
And I hope they don't.

I hope the people I want to kiss still want to kiss me.

But is it bad that it feels weird to suddenly get cat called less?

That when I go out at night wearing baggy pants and a long coat I
suddenly feel safe because I don't hear car horns or whistling or any
weird comments about what I'm wearing.
Whereas a year ago, when my hair went down to my lower back I'd get
cat called about twenty times a week.
Is it me?
Am I suddenly less desirable?

I mean don't get me wrong, I appreciate not getting yelled at but...
feeling wanted can be nice.

To me, my short hair means vulnerability, it means a different kind
of honesty, and i like it.
But I'm still going to grow it out.

Quinlan Green

I'm growing my hair out.
Gone are the trips to the barber
every four weeks,
gone is "one curl, too long."

The clean cut face, the sculpted silhouette,
the razor-sharp hairline, is no longer.
It's a forest up there, a jungle!
It's inch long (or more) undergrowth,
tangled vines.
Spiraled and stretching and going all over.
And straight in a patch to the left of my skull
and parting a bit in the front?

I unwind at the loops constantly,
I spin into the natural-growth emerging from
this cranium,
rooted in my,
roots.
My see pan-African ecology
running through my fingers,
Caribbean flora poking out behind my ears.
A starless night, dark as my father's skin,
unnavigable [how I remember him].

I listen to *Black Gold of the Sun* and rub leave in
conditioner, it pulls back for seconds, it bounces
back!
Wet, glistening.

I feel it constantly. I'm the black boy in this
bomber jacket,
I'm the black boy in your depanneur,
I'm the black boy posed with his black cousins
and brother
and we are *fine* young men.
I am a djambe drum beat,
I am a jazz playlist,
I am a vocal-run.

I am Jamaican
and light-skinned
and blued eyed and Montreal.
I am Canada when He said: "multicultural."

I am mine for the taking.
I find some whole new meaning for myself.
I ask, and my body grows it back.

Is this the shortest your hair's ever been?
Did you grow,
when you cut it?

What do you name me?
What do I name you?

Lila?



