



The UC
Review

across

Winter
2017



Street Duality, Photograph, *Julia Balm*



Street Duality *Julia Balm*

2 **Persimmons** *Steven Han*

3 **things my mother says to me in an attic,** *sun rey*

4–5 **In his mind & In her mind** *Kimia Ghannad-zadeh*

6 **Bowl** *Sana Mohtadi*

7 **The Philosopher King** *Nazanin Zarepour*

8 **The Window** *Kelly Aiello*

13 **School of Athens** *Reanne Cayenne*

14 **Incoming TTC** *Julia Balm*

15 **Firebird** *Julia Balm*

16 **Transformers** *Rachel Schloss*

18 **in case you're scared** *Shania Perera*

19 **through the gale.** *sun rey*

20 **Miasmatic Lamb** *Julia Balm*

21 **Weekend Trip** *Sana Mohtadi*

22 **Christ's Watchmen** *Julia Balm*

24 **Afterthoughts** *Josh Scott*

26 **Chicot** *Anna Stabb*

27 **traverser** *sun rey*

28 **Toronto / 4.03** *Brenda Gomes*

29 **Pillow Between Thighs** *Rachel Schloss*

30 **The House of Broken Sunlight** *Leyland Rochester*

31 **"Go as far as you can see; when you get there,
you'll be able to see farther."** *Aaron Ng*

32 **Filling Station** *Julia Balm*

33 **Mother** *Sana Mohtadi*

34 **Titanic** *Alex McCulloch*

35 **Blue Lake** *Julia Balm*

36 **Lily's Dream** *Vivian Li*

37 **A Personal Essay on Finding Home** *Vivian Li*

40 **Night Time, My Time** *Reanne Cayenne*





MAIN PORTAL

“The new plan looked like the answer.”

— *Farley Mowat, UC 1949*

Readers,

I want to warmly welcome you to the Winter 2018 edition of the *UC Review*.

This is only the fourth edition of the *Review* since its revival in 2015. The period prior saw the journal lie dormant, and we shouldn't easily forget how quickly that can happen in a setting where institutional memory is chronically cursory. Since 2015, we have been met with overwhelming support from members of the UC community, and I want to extend my utmost thanks to all who submitted to the *Review* this time around. Every single submission hammered home the creativity and skill of the students who call this college home, and I only wish we could publish all of them. Your efforts assure me that the *Review* will be around for years to come.

This is the first themed edition of the *Review* since its revival. Last year, two themes were applied during production; this year, our call for submissions asked for a theme from the outset — “across.”

Across: the implication of a binary; description of movement, position, or attitude; and, in one clever case of wordplay, a visual of a crucified Jesus Christ.

The *Review's* niche amongst the wealth of campus publications is that it has none. We abide only by a word limit for print (2,500), and strive to publish anything that can't be held on a page online. I think many of the works between our covers show the strength of openness, and I hope you think so too. Some works blur the boundaries between poetry and prose, and the literary and visual arts. This is, I believe, a good thing.

In any case, I'm beginning to pontificate. I know you're not here for my stories but for those of the brilliant writers and artists whose work lies in the pages to come.

Please, turn the page, and explore the book across from you.

Yours,
Jack O. Denton

Persimmons

Steven Han

There was a persimmon tree
Behind that fence
Long before it ever stood there

“I remember eating from it—
The sweet flesh,
Juice running down my face
Nothing but sweat and nectar and dirt
And long summer days”

The old man limps on as he speaks;
His creased skin,
Mottled flesh,
Gnarled limbs
Reflected across the chain links
By an old persimmon tree—
A perfect mirror
Framed by barbed wire and MPs

**things my mother says
to me in an attic.**

sun rey

“california
water is so
many kinds of
blue,” and
“phosphorous
remembers me
as her sister,” and
“the story is
I met aunt magda
two lifetimes ago
when she called
herself milena
and asked me
if i’d heard of

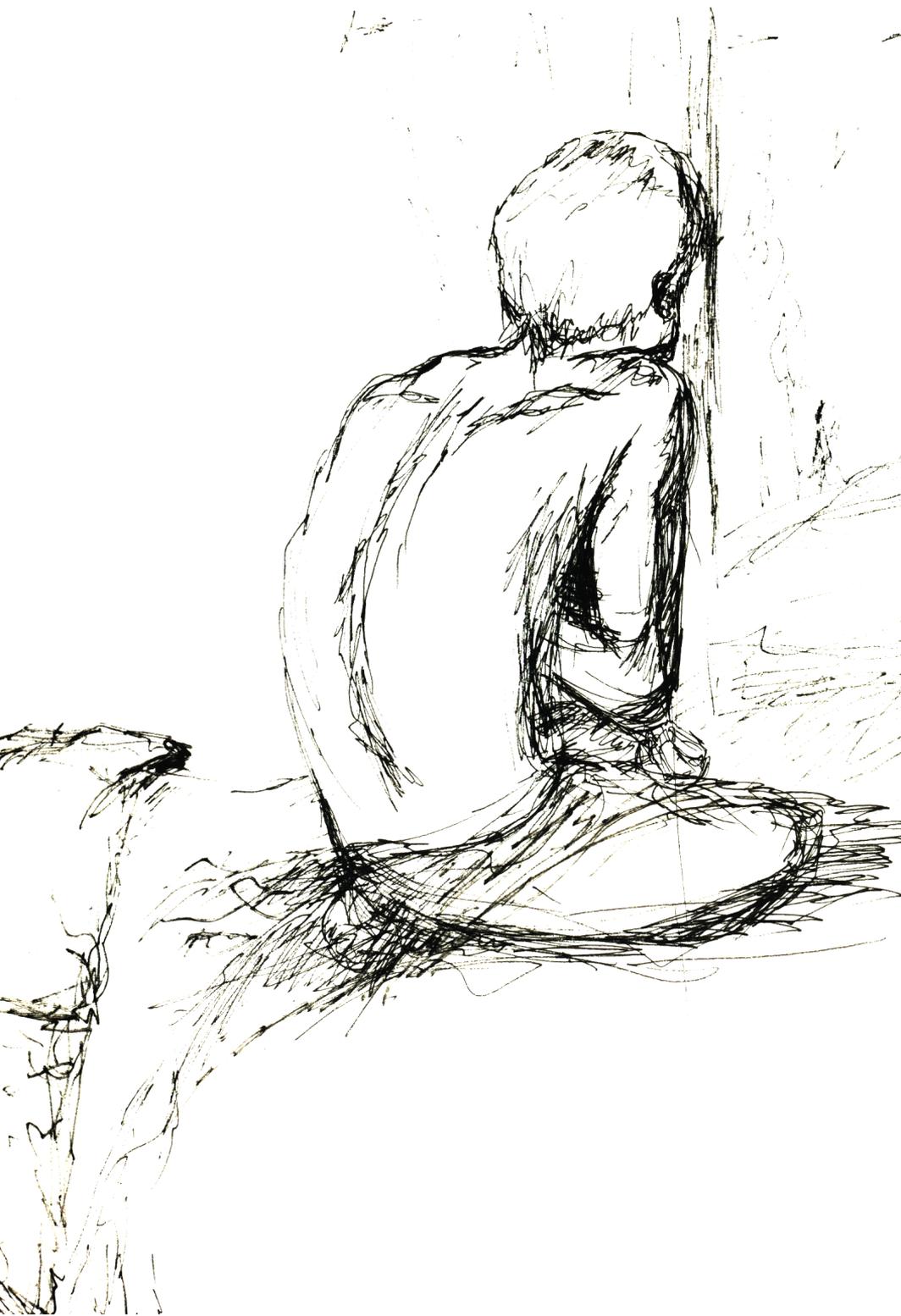
france—



In her mind & In his mind

Ink on paper

Kimia Ghanad-zadeh



Bowl

Sana Mohtadi

There was a bowl I bought you while on holiday
Delft blue, decorated with deer and forget-me-nots
She carried my winter and my guilt
She begged to be given away

In another century she was useful, necessary
But wrapped in my suitcase, she's a souvenir
And I wished for her to crack so that
The dam could break, and I'd be a little lighter
And I wouldn't place so much stock in porcelain

But then you told me that a bowl is a bowl is a bowl
Like a rose is a rose is a rose
That I could empty her and she wouldn't mind
And fill her up again sometime

The Philosopher King *Nazanin Zarepour*

The Philosopher King
Sits with a sticky face
Dancing in the vitamins
That lay in my northern villa
The Philosopher King
Awaits my consumption
Snoozing in the sap
Of the phallic gourd
Intertwined he is
Through the Fibonacci
Sequenced strings
Of the rooted vegetables
The Philosopher King
Is both fruit and farmer
As he plucks and gives
The many sweet shapes
Of The Good

The Window

Kelly Aiello

The boy pulls his chair up to the window. He does this every Wednesday night and watches the woman in the pink towel in the apartment across the tiny alley.

He keeps the lights off. Wednesday nights, his mother works in the diner in Cabbagetown. She leaves just after dinner and doesn't come home until the early hours of the morning. Sometimes the hint of the rising sun leaves the apartment with dusty tones of pink and velvet. Wednesday nights, the apartment belongs to him.

The anticipation of the moment is intoxicating: moving through the rooms of the small apartment, flipping the lights off, hearing the satisfying click, then dragging the chair in front of the weathered window. Like watching a chocolatier tempering sheets of glossy chocolate, followed by that prickling feeling in that spot just under the tongue. The boy smiles.

But the woman is late tonight. The boy reaches down beside the chair and pulls out a package of cookies—the kind with mint cream inside. His mother doesn't like him eating them, says they are for little boys. He takes one out of the package, dusts the top off with the flick of a clean finger, and places it on his tongue. He lets the cookie sit there for a moment and then one crunch and the pleasure spreads through his mouth. Dark crumbs flicker down his chin. His head roves back towards the window.

The woman in the pink towel lives alone. From the moment he first saw her soft, plump body wrapped up, he has felt drawn to her. He sees her through the window sometimes, mouth moving, eyebrows furrowing, as she inspects her form in the long mirror behind the door to her boudoir.

Sometimes the woman flips between dresses on hangers. *The black one tonight? No, always the red—you look beautiful in red. Like a cardinal: big breasted and soft with the sweetest voice.* Then she will drop the towel from her body and the boy will watch her move over to her dresser, hints of a fold on her back, near her waist. He watches as her naked bottom moves with each step. He can even see the dimples on the back of her thick, pale thighs.

The boy takes another cookie from the package, brings it to his mouth and bites. He leans forward and rests his elbows on his knees which are just visible through the thinning cloth of his jeans. The boy

particularly likes when she slips into her underthings. She always has the most beautiful underthings—not like his mother's ratty, cotton, and yellowed. The woman in the towel has underthings that a real woman should have. He likes to watch her move over to her vanity table and slide her lacy bottom onto the chair. She will then gently lean over onto one bum cheek, like she is only perching there for a fraction of time—she is too busy, too beautiful to want for plucking, tweezing, cosmetics. The cardinal woman in her boudoir. The boy wonders if there is another woman in the world quite like this one.

He likes watching the woman apply lipstick. She takes it out of the golden case and slides it along her lips. Puckers, smoothes her lips together. Then, after tossing the golden tube aside, she plucks a tissue from the silver tissue box and gives it a kiss. He imagines her mouth. Her lips. He loves watching ladies and their lips. Years ago, he felt a girl's lips when playing kissing tag on the playground, but they were a cold, wet fraction of experience that felt like slugs across his mouth.

The boy takes another cookie from the package, slides it into his mouth and crunches. The woman is late tonight. What will she wear? Will she hum to herself as she sometimes does, flipping between silk and diaphanous garments, lazily pondering without a care of real extravagance?

She is never late. But tonight, she is.

The boy sits on a bench—a ripped vinyl bench which would probably have been elegant (or at least clean) at one point—and waits for the arrivals. His mother, perched on her tiptoes, chin thrust in the air, scans the passengers flooding out of the frosted glass doors from the beyond. Suitcases wheel behind them as they rush to embrace loved ones with kisses, cuddles; the only place where affection is ever unabashedly shown.

“Get over here!” the boy's mother spits at him. “She's here.” Her attention turns back towards the ramp and doorway, his mother spots an older woman in the sea of passengers, flowered suitcase trailing behind her. The woman's face and perfectly permed hair look distinctly like the boy's mother's.

“Mom,” the boy's mother says as she throws her arms forward to embrace the older woman.

“My, we've been living happily, have we?” The older woman pats her daughter's round hip, like a chef slapping a piece of prime rib. The older woman's eyes swivel to the boy. “And there he is. My Pooky-bum, how big you've grown. You're practically a man.” She swoops in, both hands forward, and pinches each of the boy's cheeks, thrusting his face this

way and that. She plants her wrinkled lips on his, smearing coral lipstick and leaving behind the aroma of rose and bad breath.

"Hi Gramma," the boy mumbles to the floor as she releases him. She turns back towards her daughter who is grasping the flowered suitcase in her hand. "Is he doing well in school? Good grades?" the older woman asks the boy's mother.

The boy's mother nods, struggling with the case as they move towards the exit. "He's just fine, Mom. You know he's more athletic than academic."

The boy recalls the first—and last—sports game he ever played: he was punched in the nose by one of his own teammates.

"He's getting a little rotund, don't you think dear?" the older woman whispers as she leans into her daughter a bit, but the boy can hear her anyway. The boy's mother gives him a quick glance.

"Well," she is breathless with the weight of the case, "I hadn't really noticed."

They move through the giant sliding doors and the air becomes clogged with the scent of gasoline and jet fuel, and incessant noise. The older woman turns to the boy while her daughter hails a taxi.

"Any girlfriends? Any lovely young ladies capture my grandson's interest?" the older woman asks with a wink. She has lipstick on her teeth.

"Maybe. There is this one girl," the boy says to his feet.

"Is she pretty?"

The boy nods vigorously. "Oh yes, yes she is. Very pretty."

The boy's mother has gone to work again. He sits on the couch in the small living room in front of the television with the older woman. He can feel the springs sagging, depressed, apathetic underneath his bottom. They watch the evening programming, the news, then settle on a crime show.

The boy waits until he hears the soft snoring of the older woman. He looks at her with the blanket his mother had knitted tucked around her chin. The boy stands. He inspects her face and watches as her eyes shift, staccato-like, underneath the crepe lids, the turquoise shadow creasing in the multitudes of crevasses in the skin. Satisfied, the boy shuts off the television and moves over to the window. He'd have to forgo the chair and the delicious temptation of snacks.

Tonight is Wednesday. He wonders what she will wear tonight. He waits, kneeling in front of the window. She arrives, towel of the softest periwinkle wrapped around her. She moves into her boudoir, bare feet padding along the carpeted floor. He can just barely hear the sound of

Otis Redding wafting over the narrow alley and seeping into his quiet living room.

The woman opens her closet, flips between items that are out of his line of sight. Reaching a soft arm into the closet, she pulls out various items. Elegantly tosses them onto the bed.

The boy raises himself off his knees pads through the living room and into the hallway and enters his mother's bedroom. He moves to the closet, opens it. The boy knows the items in this closet. He looks behind the grays, the browns, the muted and faded blacks. Moving hangers aside, he reaches into the back. He sees it. A gown of the softest lavender. He feels the fabric clinging to his fingertips as he runs his hands deliciously over the material. He smiles. Pulls out the dress.

The boy moves to his mother's tiny vanity table. He holds the garment out, inspecting it, running his other hand down the fabric. He likes the carefully constructed bodice; the way the silk folds as it moves to the waistline and flares out at the hip. He can't imagine something so beautiful, so ethereal, on his mother's used and worn form.

The boy looks into the vanity mirror, brings the gown to his neck, and places the fabric around his shoulders. He watches himself as he tightens the fabric around his hips. He looks into the mirror for some time, moving slowly, inspecting the drape of it.

He places the gown on his mother's bed, smooths the fabric with care. He steps back and unbuttons his shirt, peels it off his body. Looking down, he sees the beginnings of down on the centre of his chest. He loosens his belt, letting his trousers drop onto the floor. He steps out of them, he lifts the gown over his head, arms raised through the armholes, and lets it drop over his body. He runs his hands down his hips and thighs. Turns to the vanity. He looks at himself in the mirror. He touches the silk. *It's not red, but it will do.*

He moves to the vanity and sits in the low stool. Looks at the small collection of cosmetics and creams that belong to his mother. He picks up a tube of lipstick, twists the bottom, inspects the colour. Replacing the cap, he sets it down, opens the drawer to his right. Inside, two more tubes of lipstick roll to the front. He pulls one out, opens the cap. A deep, rich shade. Twisting the tube, he leans forward and slides it across his lips. He likes the feel of the texture on his mouth. He places the lipstick back in the drawer. Plucks a tissue from the box with no silver box cover. Dabs his lips. Leans back, looking at himself. He likes how the lipstick makes his lips look larger, like lips he would want to kiss.

“What are you doing?”

The boy turns. He drops the tissue and it falls to the floor silently. His grandmother stands in the dimness of the doorway. The streetlights

behind her cast a sodium glow on the side of her face, which is blank except for her eyes. They are wide. “What are you doing?” she says again.

She enters the the room. “That's your mother's dress.” She reaches out to touch it, but lowers her hand before her fingers reach the fabric. The boy notices liver spots on her hand. He feels frozen, distanced from the room, from his grandmother. From the lavender dress and the private moment he was having with silk and lipstick.

The older woman raises her hand again and the boy shrinks. Her finger outstretched, she points to his face.

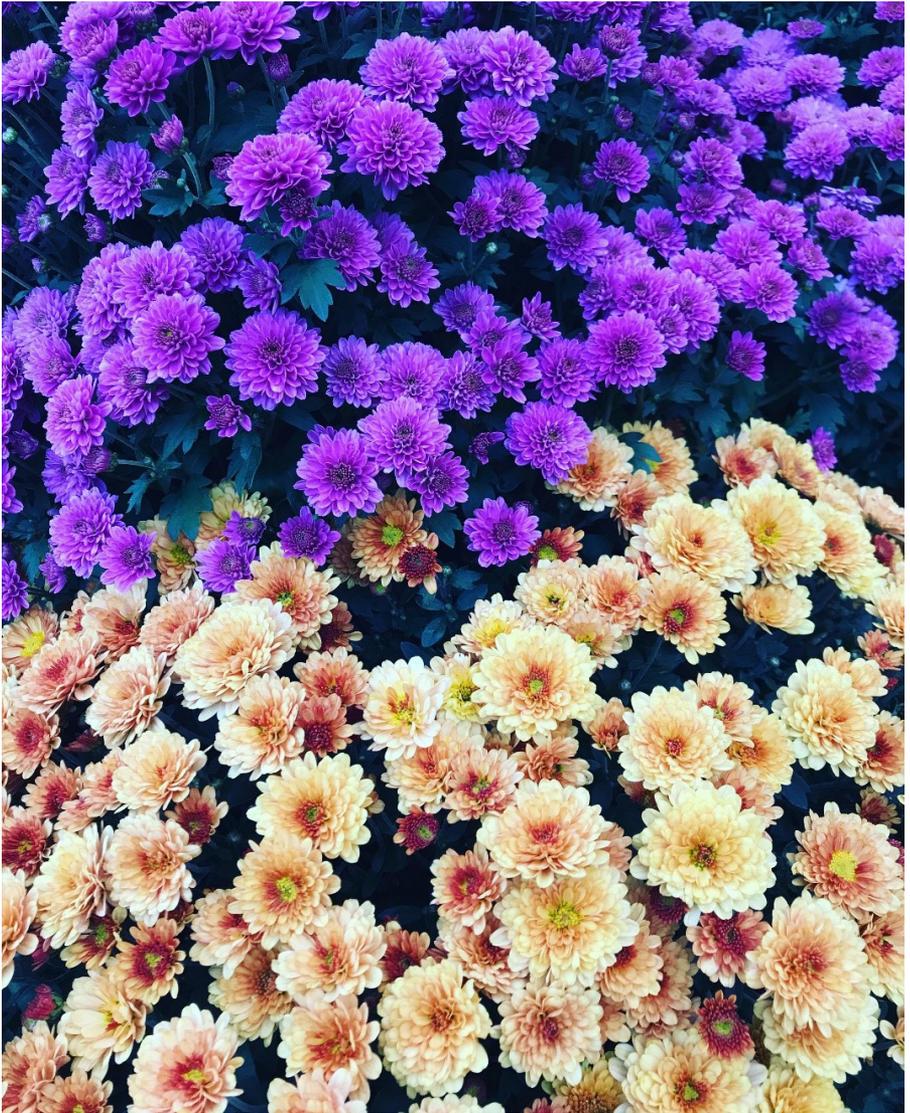
“That's not your colour.”

The boy doesn't respond. He sees a smear of the coral lipstick on her mouth. She turns to walk out of the room. Before she leaves the doorway, her head turns slightly over her shoulder.

“A lighter shade, perhaps. Rose.” She looks at him fully, body half turned, hand on the door frame. “Would look better with your skin tone.”

She leaves the room.

School of Athens
Photograph
Reanne Cayenne



Incoming TTC
Photograph
Julia Balm



Firebird

Julia Balm

i watched the cardinal fly away
and wondered if he would recognize me again,
if he would perch on this porch again
and listen to the bending wind,
but i am just another urban child
waiting to be remembered for more than the seeds i leave
in the feeder each sunday.

Transformers

Rachel Schloss

when my friend got home
his mother made him his
beans and rice
he put hot sauce on it

when someone I
work with got
home they kissed
their partner and
kissed their dog

when my favourite
musician got home
she took the trash
out and it dripped
juice on the floor juice

when my next door
neighbour got home
he smoked a joint
in bed and ate
lucky charms

when my best
friend's sister
got home she
went upstairs
and took off
her makeup

when my friend got [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] hot [redacted]

when [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] they kissed
[redacted] and
kissed [redacted]

when [redacted]
[redacted]
she took [redacted]
[redacted] it [redacted]
[redacted] on the floor juice

when my [redacted]
neighbour got [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
lucky [redacted]

when [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] she
[redacted]
[redacted] took off
[redacted]

in case you're scared

Shania Perera

There's a great sense of solidarity when everyone walking down the same street stops to take pictures of the sunset. To be able to witness the process of beauty together is a gift we should treasure as we make our way across galleries, dance among a raving crowd, and wake up next to loved ones in the early hours of morning. One day this will all be worth it.

through the gale.

sun rey

a wet palm opens up in the
middle of the woods

it asks, "have you seen
my eye?"

but it is talking about your name

two fingers pull a song
across your teeth
and you feel your cheeks
throb

your wear this feeling like a hat
or an umbrella you aren't sure

you pour some rainclouds into your mouth
and gurgle out a prayer

Miasmatic Lamb

Julia Balm

Our malady served on white porcelain,
chipped edges but not wounded enough
for blood to seep into fat clots

I had to leave before it was dinnertime,
forced to run through the vacant pasture
where grapevines entwine

Abandoning the half-cooked roast
we cultivated using the
sharpest knives
and
most lethal spices

What will I remember of this
Grecian tablecloth?

Weekend Trip

Sana Mohtadi

I'd like to take a weekend trip to the Caspian Sea
 And when I say I'd like to take a weekend trip to the Caspian Sea
 I mean I'd like to take it with you
 (If you'd also like to take a weekend trip to the Caspian Sea, with me)

We can buy overripe fruit on the side of the road,
 furry peaches and apricots
 I'll carry your wet clothes in my bag and rub sunscreen that smells
 like bananas on your freckled back, so you don't burn in the sun

I don't burn in the sun
 (So you won't have to rub sunscreen that
 smells like bananas on my crooked back)
 But my legs will be dotted with watermelon seeds, smooth and black
 like beetles
 And perhaps you'll brush them off, absentmindedly
 Scattering the pesky vermin while turning a page in your
 paperback classic

If the paperback bores you, I'll point to the oil rigs
 at the shimmering horizon,
 Greedily feasting from deep, ancient wells
 And we'll pretend they're ruins left by our ancestors, like Persepolis
 (One day they will be)

So when the weekend fades with the refrain of city,
 traffic, and eraser shavings
 Perhaps you'll give me a sideways sunburnt glance that says,
 "I liked our weekend trip to the Caspian Sea"
 (And you'll know it's likewise, with me)





Christ's Watchmen
Photograph
Julia Balm

Afterthoughts

Josh Scott

① That is, long past the point of any effectiveness in a preventative sense. (This in mind of the sheer number of years—never mind the cost—it takes any of these bureaus to complete a “thorough” investigative report, whose results most often, though not always, confirm what is already known and/or suspected on a widespread level).

② If you resent a particular organization, whether you realize it or not, it takes less imagination (and much less energy) to bear the brunt of your frustration on the nine-to-fivers behind the counter, with whom you (likely) share more in common than you’d care to admit, than on those faceless movers and shakers in suits and boardrooms (or on yachts) who control everything past whether so-and-so smiled at you/asked how your day was/shoved the product you asked for in your general direction politely or rudely—all things that, in and of themselves, tend to be less a result of the factors at hand and more so a consequence of circumstances independent of the entire interaction, including, but not limited to, a deep (not to mention shared) dissatisfaction with the sheer stasis of their own lives and the whole ordeal (i.e., system) in which they are simply passive participants.

For decades it’s been so, and right before our eyes. The opposition party, regardless of its political affiliation, complains publicly about a “lack of transparency” and calls for “increased oversight,” which in turn functions as reason enough for it, when elected, to force another layer of administration into existence, thus quietly and significantly inflating the number of public servants and government bodies whose sole purpose and *raison d’être*, at least on the surface, is to oversee other government bodies—improving accountability by approaching the supposed “problem” indirectly, not at its root but, if the entire system were a tree, long after its leaves have already hit the ground and decomposed.¹ This charade tends to go on for roughly two years (half the traditional four-year, single-term cycle). Following this, the target of the manufactured discontent shifts, leaving in its crosshairs the more general “government waste.” In response, the attacks on the so-called “bloated bureaucracy” begin anew, and just in time for the unofficial start of campaign season. First in focus come the wages and benefits of the lowest cogs, which make easy marks in a large part due to their visibility;² alongside come public denouncements of the whole distended arrangement of endless administration³ and a more concentrated offensive aimed at certain high-level “administrators” who have either a) blatantly refused to toe the party line, or b) unabashedly circumvented it. Should said party win a second term (which, when it does, often owes thanks to the inadequacy of

its challenger and the oft-misplaced public consensus that the status quo remains so when a party stays in office for a long period of time), the aforementioned cogs become the real scapegoats—and are then made subject to a wage freeze/cut—while the a’s and b’s of “upper management” (who make the real money) are fired in order to make room for key friends/supporters, thus solidifying the breadth of the party’s hold and leaving the system at “no net-loss.”⁴ Whether you care is a different matter. The remedy appears to lie in a more critical approach⁵ (which involves not just “reading,” but actively engaging with what is often truly tedious stuff⁶) because, truth is, the whole apparatus atrophies with apathy.⁷ Then again, perhaps that’s too much to ask and, better yet, the kinks will eventually work themselves out.

- Ⓒ Which it’s responsible for, as by then most have forgotten, some willfully.
- Ⓒ Just as bloated as before, only with a new cast of characters—perhaps more accurately: *no net-loss to a scheme that dulls most of us dry.*
- Ⓒ Past the mere surface dismissal of things determined as having been “spun” (things that, not coincidentally, you disagree with).
- Ⓒ Such as: the—*obscured but ultimately accessible*—fine print.
- Ⓒ i.e. without our attention and active participation.

Chicot

Anna Stabb

There is life in dead trees; I know because I can see
the eyes of my grandfather looming in between
cracked fingers of bark. Extending my palm, I
reach for him but only grasp air, thick with dust.
Hollowed, disembowelled, our concentric rings
of history lie on the earth and decompose.
And new soil invades before our roots germinate.
But there is life. A pulse hums between these
two generations. Despite the flux and threshold
of time, my grandfather will inhabit this tree—
watching as dawn paints my forehead with fresh light.

traverser*sun rey*

And in stirrups ring
 the melody children sang to

rasool

the melody children called
mawla ya *salli*

in a red

yathrib

and he called back

sweet

Allah-u-Akbar

but

silver eyes a thousand odd
 years later watch
 with bricks in your hands
 the boy with thick feet and blood
 coated like lacquer under his
 lips feet like baskets

draped in blue

tender bones do not scare
 you just black
 admit it
 tender bones do not scare you
 just black



Toronto / 4.03
Photograph
Brenda Gomes

Pillow Between Thighs

Rachel Schloss

pillow between thighs

t pi h
i ll g
h ow s

pillow between thighs

t — pi — h
i ll g
h ow s

pillow between thighs

t pi h
i ll g
h ow s

pillow between thighs

t pi h
i — ll — g
h ow s

pillow between thighs

t pi h
i ll g
h ow s

The House of Broken Sunlight

Leyland Rochester

We left our hearts—
dried-up and beaten—
in the corner of the bedroom,
withering like a cornfield in November.
The window shaped a square of light,
the sun's final rays
gingerly caressing them
with dull and fading fingertips.
We packed our suitcases
in silence, dragging with us
old mementos and stale regrets to
the taxi waiting at the gate.
You did not dare look back but
I did: I looked to the darkened
window on the top floor
and instantly I remember everything...
A hollow emptiness fills the house:
the wind has shattered the windows,
the rain has rotted the floorboards,
and we came back one day to find it—
but had forgotten where we left it.

**"Go as far as you can see; when you get there, —→
you'll be able to see farther."**

Photograph
Aaron Ng



Filling Station

Julia Balm

the stench of gas stains the vest of the man without a car
but he is alone in the world and lost in his amaranth mind
at home his wife basks in sunlight with
whiskey on the rocks in hand
puffing her cigarette smoke into the

transient abyss of her shadow—
she scoffs at the coffee table sketches

the infinite despair of gas station attendants
crystallized behind the optic gaze that
man divulges
when he reaches for that liquid
American Dream.

Mother

Sana Mohtadi

I wish you wore mannish slacks and blew smoke in my face
Like a sitcom mom talking on
One of those cellphones with the antennae
attached to your arm like a prosthetic

Instead you pour your love over me like syrup
You're Carol Brady;
It's a love shaped like apple slices
Tough to swallow like the fish oil capsules you make me take
Because you know I won't remember on my own
And also you want my hair to shine and my nails to grow long
It's a matter of maintenance, a battle against preservation

I know if you sculpted me out of clay and fired me in a kiln
You'd keep me on the mantle and dust me forever

The rope tying us together frays a little,
Every time you march into my room
Your black clogs like two anvils,
Bruising the hardwood hallway in pursuit of a little affection
Some sort of reciprocation that I can't give you

Titanic

Alex McCulloch

i lie in the lifeboat
and want to scoop
my heart
crushed cranberries
at dinner
when we straddled tectonic plates
stilled, for the moment
until i spilled the milk
a tremendous tide
of white
suburban tsunami across antique table
the one that grandfather gave us
the one with wings like an ancient angel
me, a little mooses
in my little dressing gown
flailing my hands about, useless
fragments at my feet
and you, an old testament god
fracturing the evening
with your inferno
me, in my confusion
i wonder how the sweetness of a voice goes sour
why skin becomes suddenly brittle and thin
mouth sinking downward
eye a fearsome grey
a sea standing in my way
i want to part this sea
scoop my heart to make room
for the air
swimming upwards out of lungs
slowly filling up
with weights
too quickly
suburban shipwreck
leaky ark
swallowing cranberries

and childish deification
you found the breaking point
and broke in half
sank
piece
by piece
suburban scuba divers
make a 'tut, tut' sound
as bubbles escape sadly to the surface
while they gaze at treasures lost
the wonder of your existence
and your disappearance
and the new world
you will never reach

Blue Lake
Photograph
Julia Balm



Lily's Dream

Vivian Li

banquet in the isle swinging in sweet rain
demarcations of honey and silt on paths
stretching to the clouds,
Lily waits by the river, heart open at
her chest—
on her waist, a red sash curls into a spiral—
the moon on her hair
as cold as photographs
of city lights—
fireworks
in her eyes and heart—
trapped by the expression of freedom
on the other side of the river—

give me a Lily
and I will fold her for you,
I'll flip her inside out
and cut her once, twice—
you can keep her in a pocket
of a man's shirt—

but never let her dream
her dreams are the feathers of birds
molting—

at every breath a thin needle of perspiration
slides through her sash
and slithers into the rocks—
they are
red like roses—

she lifts her eyes towards the isle
and
waits—

she is me, wondering
aren't they simply train tracks?
and won't they only hurt

for a second?

on the left bank,
Lily folds up her skirt
and stumbles into the river,
eyes fast upon that star

A Personal Essay on Finding Home

Vivian Li

After I finished typing up the title of this essay, my brother smartly told me that his personal essay on finding home would have consisted of three steps:

1. Acquiring a phone
2. Calling home
3. Getting picked up

However, for many of us, finding our way home isn't easy—especially if we don't know how “home” can be defined, and we aren't sure where we belong.

I arrived from China on a plane to Canada thirteen and a half years ago. I vaguely remember my earlier years—as someone who arrived in a new country, I had trouble with my homework and constantly had to ask my parents for help. In one of my earlier assignments, my parents and I were debating about the use of the word “poisonous” as an adjective, as we were uncertain whether or not a frog was described as “poisonous” or “poison.” However, I slowly became acclimatized to the environment and before long, the only memories of Chinese traditions were embedded in my Chinese Mandarin classes, or my early morning Saturday classes, where the teacher repeated words written on a piece of lined paper, checked our homework, and occasionally prompted us to speak Chinese greetings on stage. The earliest memory I have of a Chinese tradition was during my elementary school years, where I learned a traditional song by heart and sang it in front of my class. But it was all snippets of Chinese practises—I participated in them while distancing myself from them, like an extra sticky note you tack on to the refrigerator—a reminder to yourself of who you are supposed to be.

The first time I went back to China was in Grade Nine. I felt foreign to everything—I only believed that I had once lived there because everyone seemed to recognize snippets of me from my childhood. But even family members were strangers, as their voices and mannerisms were different than what I saw on cell phone screens. Most of all, I was estranged from the person they expected me to be. Although I could communicate fairly well with them on the surface, I couldn't feel anything similar beating in our hearts. We were called to different arms, indoctrinated in specific values, and hence could only connect as far as language allowed us without touching upon cultural boundaries.

I thought that I'd outgrown China, that I'd left it in the past. The country seemed as obscure and hazy as the number of people with "Li" as their surname. Then one day, my maternal grandmother told me something startling—she still had a collection of Tang dynasty poems, or *táng shī*, that I read when I was little.

"Well, not exactly read," my maternal uncle interrupted, laughing. "I asked you what the words were, but you didn't know. You just made up stories."

When I asked to see the collection of poems, I found myself staring at a book with dozens of torn pages and crayon scribbles all over the front and the sides. Curious, I started reading through the poems, realizing that there were a few classics I had sung and memorized in Chinese class—*jìng yè sī, dēng guàn què lóu*, to name a few. Though I didn't know it back then, the threads which had unravelled from years of neglect were slowly beginning to weave themselves back together. The connections between myself and my Chinese heritage slipped softly into place.

I brought the collection back to Canada, thinking I'd look over them when I had the time. But time is not a renewable resource. As high school started, events began to pile up, and I was unable to sit down and read the book until this summer, four years later.

By this time I had already acquired a healthy appreciation and admiration of poetry, and I was interested in expanding my horizons further to see what my first language could teach me. I found myself interested in things that had always been in the background: Chinese news, Chinese songs, and Chinese traditional instruments. However, what I opened up was more than a unique collection of viewpoints in Chinese, it was a world that exposed me to my limitations and forced me to re-evaluate everything that I had taken for granted. That moment was the first time I really wanted to return to my first home.

I started copying out the poems, memorizing them, and trying to understand them from the poets' points of view. I pestered my parents until they gave me a rundown of each enigmatic word and its connotations.

I do not claim to understand everything in that book, but some of the poems resonated with me—the loneliness, the appreciation of the natural world and its wonders, and the quiet acknowledgement of the golden events that must pass. Of course, I had learned these lessons from English poets, but it was strangely satisfying and fascinating to fill in the missing planks of the bridge between the English community and my Chinese heritage. I had never realized that I'd been missing steps—that I'd been skipping over them all this time.

Hence, I don't think that home has to be defined or limited to a

certain building in a specific city or country. To those of us who have multiple homes, I think it is important to understand that this is not a limitation, but a unique perspective on life that others need to know more about. I believe that most people feel at home in more than one location in the world. But this shouldn't be something we hide or change for the sake of conforming to society. Instead these multiple viewpoints open us up to the unique possibilities of the world and what it can show us—we are never one person against one conflict, but we are multiple people working to bring about change. But this is only possible if we learn to understand and to accept the different homes people live in, and recognize that many of us do not belong to one home.

In essence: home for me is a state of constant renewal.

But enough of this searching and meandering—for now, I'll take my brother's advice: I'll call home.



Night Time, My Time
Digital Art
Reanne Cayenne

CONTRIBUTORS

Kelly Aiello — 3rd year | Neuroscience, English, Psychology | Woodsworth College

Kelly is a ‘forever’ student who lives in Toronto, loves school, and loves writing even more. Her pieces have been featured in *The Varsity*, *The Mighty*, and *Minds Matter Magazine*. She is currently writing a novel.

Julia Balm — 3rd year | History, Art History | St. Michael's College

Julia is a ‘lover not a fighter’ kind of gal who enjoys studying Soviet art movements and war history. When she is not writing midnight poetry, she loves to find new ways to eat cheese—the possibilities are endless.

Reanne Cayenne — 4th year | Political Science | University College

Reanne Cayenne is currently completing her final year of undergrad, studying Political Science and History. Her love for history has drawn her to study poetry and photography on the side, something she hopes to do full-time one day.

Kimia Ghannad-zadeh — 4th year | Human Biology, Psychology | New College

Painting for Kimia is a way of sharing stories with others and she loves to experiment with different styles and mediums. She always says that if she had not chosen a career in science, she would be running a café gallery! A place to share good food and good art!

Brenda Gomes — 2nd year | Cell & Molecular Biology, Genome Biology | University College

Brenda is a music photographer based in Toronto who isn't afraid to go beyond her comfort zone, dabbling in portraiture, travel, and landscape.

Steven Han — 2nd year | Economics, Political Science | Woodsworth College

Steven is a second-year economics student who realized too late that he much prefers letters to numbers. His writing is inspired by society and contemporary events.

Vivian Li — 2nd year | English, Philosophy | Victoria College

Vivian Li enjoys exploring ideas and tries to find creative solutions to interesting problems. When she's not catching up with readings and schoolwork, she can be found reading, writing, playing the piano, composing, singing, drawing, immersing herself in nature, and attempting to play the guitar.

Alex McCulloch — 4th year | English | Victoria College

Alex McCulloch is a fourth-year English student at Victoria College, but also a musician, actor, arts educator, part-time office assistant, and occasional poet.

Sana Mohtadi — 1st year | English | University College

Sana Mohtadi was born and raised in Massachusetts. The Notes app on her phone is full of poems, unsent texts, grocery lists, and anagrams of professor's names.

Aaron Ng— 2nd year | Rotman Commerce | University College

Aaron Ng is a visual artist based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. His focus is to create images that provoke a strong emotional response in the viewer.

Shania Perera — 4th year | English, Political Science | University College

Shania is a fourth-year student who aspires to do cool things. For the time being, she'll stay in bed.

sun rey — 3rd year | Astronomy & Physics | Victoria College

sun rey is a 20-something queer Muslim student at the University of Toronto studying Astronomy, Physics, and Religion. She is the winner of the 2017 Norma Epstein Award for Poetry and is an editor with *Acta Victoriana*. She loves old green pianos very, very much.

Leyland Rochester — 3rd year | English, Sociology | Victoria College

Leyland Rochester is a third-year student at Victoria College in the University of Toronto studying English and Sociology. He is Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *IDIOM*, U of T's English academic journal, and a former associate editor for *Acta Victoriana*. His two favourite things to do are speed-read novels during the summer and dip his toes into the lake up at his cottage. He's always accessible on Twitter (@maybeleyland) and Instagram (@leylander1).

Rachel Schloss — 4th year | Archaeology, Visual Studies | University College

Rachel Schloss is a student and poet from New York City studying at the University of Toronto. She's interested particularly in memory and translation, and how they are enacted visually and materially across time and space. In the past, she's had poems printed in the *UC Review*, the *Hart House Review*, and the *Trinity Review*.

Josh Scott — 5th year | English, Philosophy, Writing & Rhetoric | St. Michael's College

Josh Scott is the Editor-In-Chief of St. Mike's *The Mike* newspaper and co-Editor-In-Chief of St. Mike's *The Grammateion* journal. He writes short fiction and poetry, and his works have appeared in the *UC Review*, the *Trinity Review*, and *Acta Victoriana*.

Anna Stabb— 2nd year | English, Anthropology | Victoria College

Anna is an avid birdwatcher and book reader.

Nazanin Zarepour — 3rd year | Political Science, Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations | University College

Nazanin Zarepour is a student at the University of Toronto studying Political Science and Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. She is especially interested in political philosophy and creating metaphorical representations of these ideas through literature.

Editor-in-Chief

Jack Osselton Denton

Design Editor

Mubashir Baweja

Senior Editors

Rachel Evangeline Chiong

Adina Samuels

Chief Copy Editor

Michael Teoh

Digital Editor

Ryan Hume

Promotions Coordinator

Natasha Malik

Archivist

Anna Adami

Associate Editors

Julie Gan

Tasnia Mozammel

Lena Schloss

Tahmeed Shafiq

Copy Editors

Megan Brohm

Hannah Sayson

Jack Sun

Estelle Tang

Producing the *UC Review* would not have been possible without the fierce creativity and reliable dedication of our journal's masthead. Thank you to: Mubashir for lending his talent to this publication; Rachel and Adina for being the most level heads in the room and always supporting the team; Michael and the copy editors for their vigilance and care; Ryan for his wit, insight, and vision for the Review's digital space; Natasha for her problem solving and championing of our social media accounts; Anna for her critical eye and enthusiasm for archival work; and Julie, Tasnia, Lena, and Tahmeed, our outstanding first-year Associate Editors, whose commitment assures us that the future of the *Review* is in capable hands.

Thank you to the University College Literary and Athletic Society. Your enthusiasm and financial support of the *Review* is crucial to our continued existence as an ancillary group and independent publication. A special thanks to Victoria Kourtis, Raye Negatu, and Kaitlyn Ferreira, who have been involved with us at various points this year. We are also grateful to our past Editors-in-Chief: Melissa Vincent, who revived the journal in 2015; and Albert Hoang, our most recent Editor-in-Chief, and one of the *Review's* greatest champions. This journal is a home that both of you were integral in building.

The recommendations and guidance from Sebastian Frye at Swimmers Group have been much appreciated since he began printing the *Review*. Thank you for being so accommodating and excited when we threw you the curveball of coloured paper.

It goes without saying that the *Review* is indebted to the support of University College and its students. We are lucky to have such a vibrant literary and visual arts community at both our college and the university at large. Your talent is astonishing.

This edition of the *UC Review* was printed with Swimmers Group Publishing.

Table of Contents and back cover images: Scans from
University of Toronto Undergraduates' Parliament,
"Torontonensis Vol. XIV," 1912.

