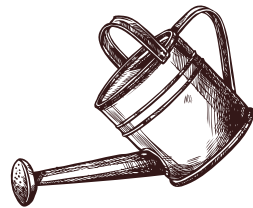




# Emerging Voices



2019 Inaugural Edition





# Foreword

Here at the Students of English Literature and Film, our goal is to create services that meet the needs of the English and film community at UTSC. This year, our team wanted to respond specifically to the ever-growing group of creative writers on campus, which included reaching beyond our cohort of English and film students. The writers in this magazine are students of all disciplines, ranging from psychology to environmental chemistry to theatre. The mission of this magazine is to spotlight new and emerging writers in the UTSC community, and we're thrilled these writers come from so many different areas of expertise.

For our inaugural issue of *Emerging Voices*, we received submissions that were thoughtful, original, and engaging, and we're so proud to present them here for the first time in print. From poetry to flash fiction to prose, these pieces are the products of hard work and great care; we're happy to give them a home and excited to see what else these talented writers will produce in the future.

Ultimately, as fellow students and lovers of the written word, we hope to encourage the tradition of supporting new voices by giving them a platform to share their stories.

Thank you so much for joining us in this endeavour.

Keep blooming.

-The Editors of *Emerging Voices*

*Thank you to our editors:*

Grayson Chong

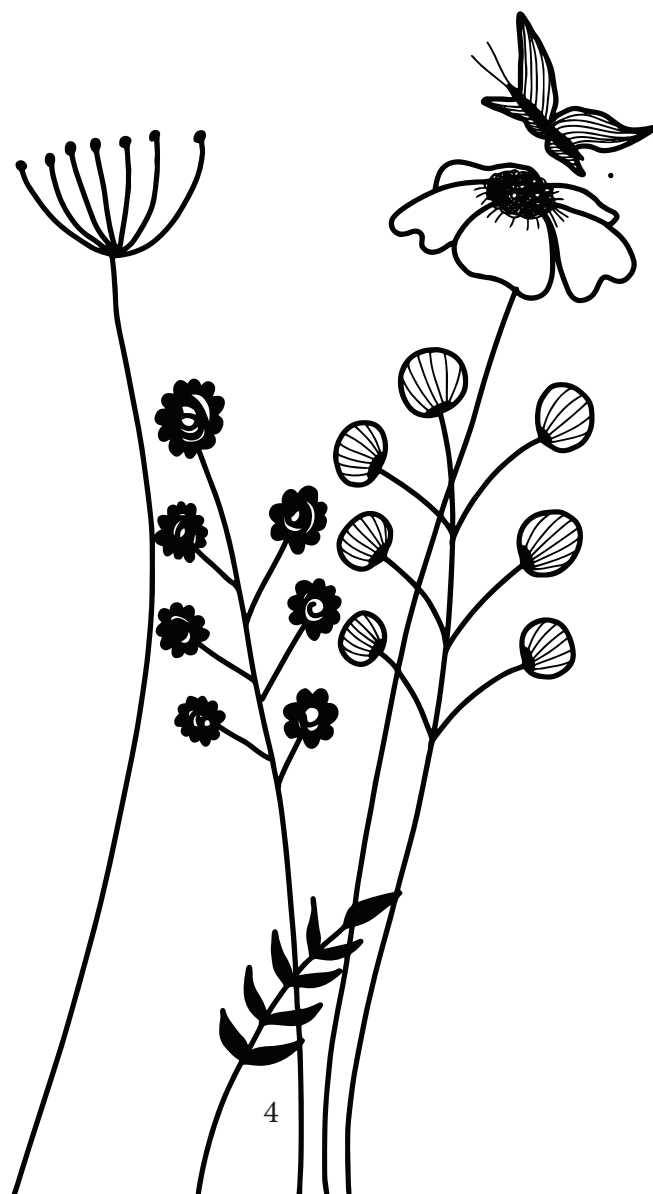
Noor Gatih

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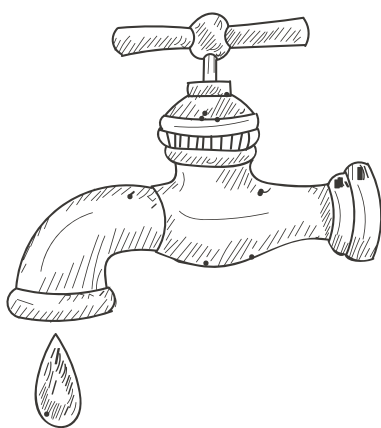
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# POETRY



an unwritten letter to you,

despite unsaid apologies  
craving the sound of validation,  
marked by the hands clean of sheer honesty.

make me understand why i choose to forgive you  
in spite of the things i could never say.

yet you've claimed to have given the world  
stretching from sea to skies  
tell me why you were never there to love me  
to see me  
wholly and *unconditionally*,  
while i tasted the bittersweet juices of life.

**-from the daughter you never knew**  
*Francesca Pabale*



# Odin

*Yao Yan Huang*

On the branches of the great Ash tree  
He hangs upside down  
Over the pond of reflection  
And says:

“I sacrifice my eye to me  
Allow me to perceive those that I can change  
And those that I cannot;  
The deepest corners of the heart  
And the universe life flows in-  
Grant me Wisdom beyond Sight.”

And he hangs for nine days and nine nights-  
Not dead for death has not been born  
(There is no death without time and no time when the world is  
stagnant)

Waters swirl up and engulf him / he slowly dips his head in

The sacrifice has been received.  
A God is born

The branches of Yggdrasil sing  
In a hush of movement, the softest of vibrations,  
The stars and the moon start to spin,  
Welcoming inspiration.

# To colonizer, I speak English

*Rubab Ali*

You tore apart nations,  
and for centuries to come,  
generations have grown  
to violence and hunger.  
We have learned to live without;  
so if we pick your pocket today,  
we are only here to get our money back.  
You stole from us  
the playful childhood-  
that was supposed to be blind to adult  
games-  
The ears that longed to hear  
funny voices from  
favourite cartoon shows,  
instead, heard metallic bangs  
running 370m/s  
Our head was meant  
to look up at the sky  
for a kite to fly  
yellow with pink polka dots.  
Instead we rose our heads in  
vigilance  
for another drone  
strike.

In my bloodstream runs  
Urdu, Arabic, Farsi  
while my vocabulary reflects English  
French dilutes my eastern accent

Big Parts of Western Europe  
travel on my tongue

The thread of the past,  
of history,  
slides down my throat  
The passageway is

N  
A  
R Bonjour  
Marhaba R  
R Good Day  
Salam O Farewell  
W Khuda Hafiz  
Au Revoir

I  
Cho  
ke.



# HISTORY

*Terry Tan*

The ink will not bleed when it writes down the number of casualties  
The pen will not break under the weight of tragedy  
Will they tell the truth, we were sane  
Which stories do we tell when they take away our voices  
While we are left drowning in the pain  
Do we have a choice?  
Barely breaking the false narratives that sway the brain

# FICTION





# Hibernation

*Shannon Kelly*

I awake from my slumber with the familiar sensation that my skin is keeping me hostage. My muscles writhe, straining against the putrid debris that is my life. Sheets of shame lay on me, smothering any hope that I might start anew.

I know that if I tried hard enough, I could push through the last layer. Shrug the past off my leaden heart to stand tall and introduce myself to the elite who've also performed the pilgrimage. Perhaps being a beacon, as if success is not for yourself, but only exists to inspire another. It is the few I see in sparse rays of sunlight standing elegant and full of life, who give me any hope of pushing through despite the many others whose attempts to shed their habits have emerged twisted and broken.

If I could, I would. Instead I lie, learning to take comfort in the filth. I turn over and wrap myself in the foul blanket, emerging its weight and stench. I grow to resent the blinding rebirth around me. How it dares to obstruct the concession of my life among the clan of the unmotivated and resigned. In times of lesser self-hatred, I'll lie in awe of the beauty and the gift of life. Silently appreciating in a passing fancy, but never in action.



# Silence While Watching

*Sam Cascone*

I watched Cole rush onto the soccer field. The coach finally called on him when the yellow team scored and took the lead. The player's feet pounded the ground; the yellow team called plays while Cole's team tried to stop them. My arms twitched, but no one else on the bleachers moved.

The parents of the yellow team wiggled their fingers towards them as if casting a spell. They looked like toppled beetles calling for help. It was really the only acceptable way to show praise to the team.

Other parents around me smiled, but no one moved or spoke. Enforcers stood along the bleachers, watching us for any unauthorized movements or sound. I tried to keep watching the game, but I caught myself glancing at the brown uniforms of the Enforcers. They looked like they were made of dry dirt, but certainly couldn't be stepped on.

Shouting brought my attention back to the game. The yellow team was yelling at each other, trying to stop Cole, but he was already at the net. He swerved around the defenceman and kicked the ball. It pounded the back of the net and rolled into the corner.

I jumped from my seat and cheered.

My hands couldn't move quickly enough to cover my mouth. The Enforcers were already moving into the bleachers. Other parents parted to make way for them. None of them looked at me. I tried to push my way out, just to hug Cole one last time before they took me away to wherever they took the others before me. The parents wouldn't move and still wouldn't look at me. The Enforcer's cold grip wrapped around my arms, yanking me away from the bleachers. I pulled at my arms, but to no avail. Before they dragged me away, I turned back to Cole. He ran from his team towards me.

"Mommy."

# Heat

*Chloe Troicuk*

You were illuminated by the mid-summer sun. We were dancing in the middle of the field. You grabbed ahold of my hand and spun me around. My long hair spinning in the wind, but it didn't bother me because all I saw was you. I remember you pulling me in close, bringing your lips to mine, slipping the tab of acid onto my tongue.

As it kicked in I could see your face starting to distort, those mesmerized eyes grew larger and smaller simultaneously. The colours of the trees surrounding the ranch changed to more vibrant hues, while everything around me moved in slow motion. All I wanted to do was lay down in the grass with you and feel the bristles in between my fingers.

You and I spent most of the summer getting high. We didn't have much other than each other and drugs. I wanted to spend every waking moment next to you. Your dark shoulder length hair, your soulful brown eyes, the way your shirt was always unbuttoned, every bit of you amazed me. Life may have moved on, but I can't ever forget that summer spent with you on the ranch.

Other people were there with us. They adored you almost as much as I did. They thought you were as wise as I told them you were. I wanted the world to see what you were capable of. You were the next messiah, come here to salvage this scorched earth. I would've done anything for you, anything to show the world who we were. The drugs definitely helped getting everyone on board. Soon our little family grew larger. People came to listen and admire you. You knew you had the power to make us do anything you wished.

You realized the amount of power you had over the rest of us on that ranch. You wanted to seem kind and loving but deep down you had darkness in your soul. There's no other explanation for what you made us do. But that darkness was hidden so well that we barely saw it coming. You wanted sinister things done but you didn't want your hands dirty. You wanted the rest of us to look guilty in crimes you asked us to commit. You wanted us to fry while you got off, free.

This is a story about a young girl who loved a man. A man that took every ounce of will power she had and dissolved it with one, lingering glance. But I can't think about that anymore. I can't think of the pain this caused.

I want to remember us on the ranch, dancing in the moonlight, that glimmer in your eyes before you leaned into kiss me. I want to remember the heat I felt on my skin when you were next to me. The slow moving high flowing through my body at all times. I want to remember you smiling, laughing and happy. Us, just happy.

# The Search for a Calligraphy Brush

*Helen Jingshu Yao*

It is the 1st of July—Canada Day.

She's broken her calligraphy brush, the one she brought over ten thousand kilometres from China.

She knows she has nobody else to blame but herself. There are only a few shops open on this specific day, and they are unlikely to open tomorrow. Even if there is any store in business, she wonders, how can she get the calligraphy brush she needs? New to Canada, she has very few experiences of navigating this place.

She first tries to google: where can I buy a calligraphy brush. The online shopping sites pop up one by one—Amazon, Walmart, eBay. The price varies from \$0.99 to \$100, which makes her puzzled, what would be the fair price to purchase a calligraphy brush in Canada? She looks through the photos, zooming in on the details. But the calligraphy brushes are just like shoes; you have no idea if it'll be comfortable to use unless you have a try. She opens several pages and finds that the expected delivery time is usually over 10 days. Taobao in China is much quicker.

Then she looks up art supplies on Google Maps. Different shops' locations jump out. She finds a big chain called Michael's; the nearest one is eight kilometres away. 30 minutes by bus, that isn't too bad. But when she clicks on that branch's page, it shows a big closed sign for the holiday.

Closing up the windows, she sighs. Does she really need the brush so much? She began to practice calligraphy only because it is her father's hobby, and her mother made her follow. Calligraphy is not that international. It doesn't have much universal value like some musical instruments or sports do. For people who have no knowledge in calligraphy, you can literally draw some nonsense and tell them it's the work of a master and they will totally buy it. Of course, once it becomes a habit, it's a good way to relax when life is too busy. It keeps her busy when there is nothing better to do. But she never thought it was that important.

Now she's broken her brush. The fact suddenly sounds horrifying. She feels an urgent need to get a new one, without knowing where or how.

She vaguely remembers that there is a Chinese supermarket within walking distance. They basically only sell daily necessities and the price is slightly higher than those at Walmart. But if there is any shop that will be open on Canada Day and sells calligraphy brushes, it must be the one. In order to make sure, she calls the store over the phone.

Though she tries her best to actively participate in class, the daily communication still makes her nervous. The feeling grows when she hears the voice that answers the phone. The man has an accent; his voice, along with the background noise of customers shopping in the store, flows through the line. She manages to understand that the shop is open during regular hours today. But the question about the calligraphy brush is stuck in her throat. It is a strange question to ask even without the language barrier.

"Thank you," she says.

"You are welcome." He hangs up. The only thing she hears is the beeping sound that indicates the call is over.

She looks outside the window. The brightness of midday sunlight makes her eyes narrow. The temperature is around 35 degrees out there and even the clouds can't cover the shine of the sun. She has no access to cars and a taxi ride is way too expensive. The only way to go there is on foot. She pauses for a while. Heat is not something she's afraid of; her hometown back in China is in the south of the country, which makes her used to the flame of summer. What worries her is the long walk through the unfamiliar area for a small chance of getting what she wants.

The brush, a gift from her father when she began her study away from home, is smaller in size and lighter in weight than most calligraphy brushes, which makes it portable for traveling. The hair at the top is a mixture of wolves' hair and wool. Wolves' hair is too hard and wool is too soft, but together, they make the perfect calligraphy brush. It always writes smoothly, though the top is a little worn out and split due to the frequent use. But she still likes it better than the other brushes she has used before, probably because it always accompanies her. Ever since traveling became a big part of her life, she seldom keeps something for a long time. But the calligraphy brush has followed her to different cities in China as well as other parts of the world. Now, what's left there is just a single stick and some separated hairs. She needs to search for a new brush.

Quickly putting on sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses, she steps out from the cool dorm into the heat of the summer noon.

The road is almost empty. She doesn't know if it is because of the weather or the holiday. It seems most people have headed downtown to join the celebrations instead of remaining in the remote suburb where nothing exciting ever happens. The path leading to the supermarket goes side by side with a driveway, followed by an overpass above the highway that goes across the western part of the city. The whole construction is made of steel and concrete, which leaves no space for plants to expand their shade.

The heat begins to show its power, which makes her a little dizzy; under the T-shirt, she can feel the sweat squeezing its way out of her skin. The sunlight makes everything brighter. The sky seems remote and the path ahead of her endless. She walks past two blocks without seeing another person, only cars rushing by. Born in a big city in China, she is used to seeing people everywhere, crowded and busy. She feels like the only living being among the huge space between the sky and earth. This sense of loneliness has always been with her and becomes stronger as her age grows. She's never really worried by it because she believes there is no thorough understanding between people; everyone is born lonely. She even felt lonely on the most crowded street of her hometown. But the loneliness made her calm and more certain of who she was at that time, while the loneliness now somehow makes her panic.

She recalls the feeling of practicing calligraphy. Taoism has many theories about calm and balance that she longs for but can never comprehend. She practices Xiaokai among the different genres of calligraphy characters, in which the characters are smaller than other genres. With the same kind of brush, Xiaokai needs more effort of the writers to control their strength. They need to write with the very tip-top of the brush hair in order to make the characters small and clear. Master calligraphers have hands as steady as surgeons. She likes the feeling of concentration. Human minds are meant to wander like a leaf flows on a creek, but whether it's anxiety for the coming midterm or the voice of the roommate next door calling her boyfriend, few things can disturb her while practicing calligraphy.

the tides rise by the sea. Water flows, crashes onto the beach and vanishes, leaving no clue of its existence like most people who live and die. The steady air moves a bit with the quick-passing vehicles. But even the wind is hot and sticky. The sweat covers her skin like a wet shell that separates her from everything else.

She moves toward the middle of the overpass, glancing over the highway from above. She is a little shocked, heart beating faster. Breathing heavily in the humid air feels like taking in thick porridge. Waves of cars and trucks flow right toward her, leaving the noise behind; it feels like looking down at a waterfall from a steep cliff or a rough river from the top of a valley. It would make a perfect video, she thinks, but she just doesn't want to spend more time in the place with no shade.

Now she can see the sign of the supermarket far away. It makes her more optimistic about the endless walking, but doubt rises as well. There is the possibility that she's walked all the way here for nothing; the closer she is to the destination, the closer she is to disappointment. A woman with three huge shopping bags comes from the opposite direction. She feels a sense of affability toward the stranger, like recognizing another fish that lives on the land. But they pass each other without saying a word.

The supermarket sells calligraphy ink, but no brushes. This makes no sense, yet it happens. She looks through the items, section by section, shelf by shelf. Supermarkets always confuse her. There are just too many options and it takes time to try to understand the information on the labels. How come they offer 30 different kinds of cereals and have 15 different brands for toilet paper but not a single calligraphy brush? She moves the items on the front and reaches to feel the inner part of the shelf. But nothing is found.

She stands there for a while, wondering what to do next. On the way here, she had a clear purpose to find a calligraphy brush. But now the end goal has been lost. Walking up and down beside the shelf, she unnecessarily glances to where the kitchen supplies are placed. She starts to comprehend the fact that she won't be able to get a new brush today, tomorrow, or even for weeks.

There is no need to stay in the supermarket any longer, even for the coolness of the air-conditioner. Having too many customers here makes this place even more uncomfortable than the streets.

She steps out of the store and the heat embraces her again; this time, it is even stuffier. Her feeling is in some way similar to the weather—unclear, at a loss. There is something unsteady there, waiting to break out.

Then she discovers it, the thick, dark clouds approaching from the West. The sticky wind and the seagulls that fly comparatively low carry the message of the incoming storm. She opens her phone and finds the prediction of a 60% possibility of thunderstorm at 2pm. She looks at the time, 1:50.

The sky somehow gets lower. It seems not only the rain but the whole sky is coming down. The sunlight is still out there, but a little reluctant; its flame, like a false cover of its cowardice, shies back in the face of real power. Then what is it that makes people who afraid of its heat? The coward scared by another coward?

She starts the way back to the dorm, a mixture of fright and excitement rising inside her. She always has a dream of walking calmly in the showering rain, letting the water run down her body without any cover. But she always has something to worry about—her bag and books, her newly washed hair, a pair of nice shoes—and it was always easy to get a taxi ride or call someone to pick her up back in China. However, this time, everything is different. It seems to offer her the chance to put this long-time deep-burden craziness into action.

She walks at the usual pace, trying not to turn back to look at the flowing clouds. But she can feel that everything nearby has darkened, and every blow of the wind becomes cooler. Lightning illuminates the grey world, and thunder comes down like the first strike on the thick ice of a winter pond. She raises her head, staring at the weakened sunlight that she dared not to look at an hour ago.

Finally, the first drop of rain hits her hand, then her face, her hair, and then strong rain pours on her. Her T-shirt, already dampened by sweat, is now completely wet and sticks to her skin. The water flows from the top of her head and becomes separated streams running along her hair. It flows down her body and joins the rainwater on the ground. She feels joy, which comes out of nowhere, but also has thousands of reasons. She runs; her shoes splash water that pours on her leg. She laughs; there is no one nearby, so she laughs wildly until the thunder covers her voice.

## Contributors

Rubab Ali is a fourth-year student at the University of Toronto doing a double major in English and French. The topics she explores in her writing are lives of the minority, such as racial groups whose identity has been compromised due to colonization. She was born in a colonized land, Pakistan. This poem, “To Colonizer, I speak English”, reflects the puzzled mental state of people like her, whose culture has been disturbed for generations.

Samantha Cascone is a fourth year student at UTSC. She is majoring in Psychology and double minoring in Creative Writing and Media Studies. She has nine years of writing experience. She is part of the Creative Writing Club at UTSC where she continues to practice. She enjoys crafting poems and writing prose, especially fiction. Samantha writes short stories, flash fiction, and nonfiction pieces. She enjoys many genres, but typically writes fantasy and sci-fi stories. This is her first published piece. When she is not writing, she watches sports, particularly the Blue Jays in the summer and Maple Leafs in the winter.

Yao Yan Huang is a first year Environmental Chemistry specialist student at UTSC. She was born in Yi Chun, China but grew up in Toronto and likes to travel around the city to try new cuisine and walk the various urban trails. She started writing at a young age and gives credit to her grade 5 teacher Ms. Auzam for her first introduction to poetry and poetry writing. Yao Yan writes poems on a variety of theme but often draws upon inspiration from nature, fairy tales, and myths. While science and the environment hold the highest places in her heart, one day, she hopes to publish a poetry book and a fantasy story that she’s been working on since forever.

Shannon Kelly is a marathoner, cyclist and aspiring triathlete who adores the outdoors, but you can always find her in bookstores and libraries. She is in her first year at the University of Toronto Scarborough pursuing a double major in English and French and a minor in Culture, Creativity and Cities. This is her first published work.

Francesca Pabale started taking an interest in poetry after joining her high school's spoken word poetry club. Ever since then the rest has been history as she was exposed to the world of slam poetry and began writing her own poetry. Writing is an outlet to express the things she could never verbalize loudly as an accessible form of therapy. A self-proclaimed individual whose perpetually in wonder, she is inspired by the beauty and pain of lived experiences in creating personal narratives and insight behind the human condition. Whenever she isn't cracking puns or binge-watching Brooklyn Nine Nine, she spends her free time listening to music or finding prompts that inspire her poetry. As a fourth-year student who specializes in psychology, she hopes to cultivate a career that intersects art and science to better understand creativity and imagination in order to improve people's lives.

Terry Tan is a fourth-year student currently majoring in socio-cultural anthropology with a minor in studio and psychology.

Chloe Troicuk is a fourth-year student at UTSC. She majors in English with a double minor in theatre and performance studies and, her true passion, creative writing. Her favourite pastimes include reading, watching Netflix, and researching serial killers. She is dedicated to writing everything from fiction to non-fiction to poetry and prose. Chloe looks forward to graduating in June of 2019 and heading off to teachers college to become a high school teacher.

Helen Jingshu Yao is a second-year student at UTSC. She studies Linguistics as a major, with minors in Economics and English to Chinese Translation. As a writer, she is most interested in fiction, with a focus on short stories. Intercultural experiences are one of the main topics in her writings. She intends to use language obstructions and cultural differences to show the alienation multicultural individuals experienced in both their home culture and host culture. "The Search for a Calligraphy Brush" focuses on the experience of "lost and found," questioning identities and purposes. Similar to the main character of the story, the answer is nowhere to be found, but the search shall continue.



