

RTP ublication

Recueilli par le programme de transition et rétablissement
Assembled by the Recovery Transition Program

Limini



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HUITIÈME ÉDITION PRINTEMPS 2024
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Institut Allan Memorial

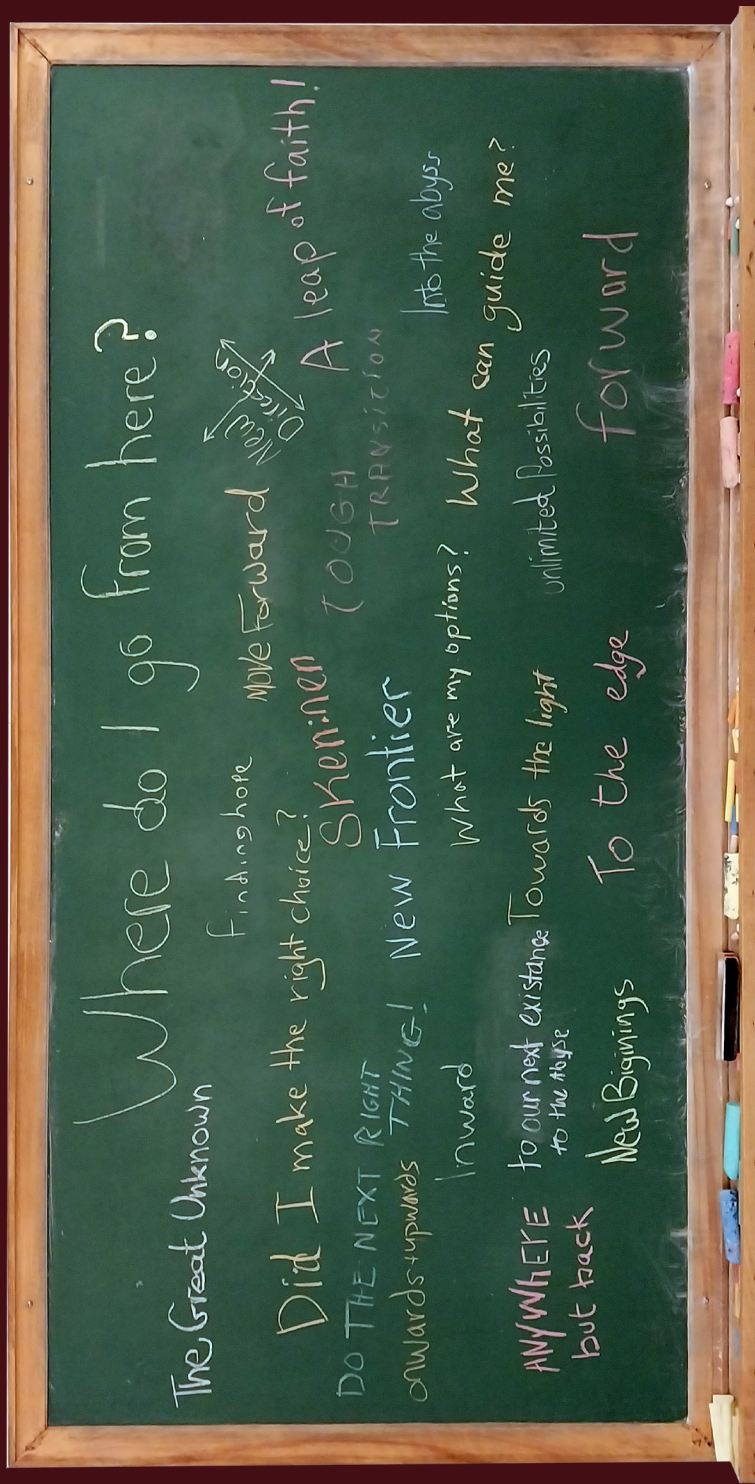


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Bienvenue à notre Huitième Édition

La liminalité fait référence à la transition d'un espace ou d'un état à un autre. Il s'agit d'une porte ou d'un seuil qui transforme le passé en une nouvelle expérience ou identité. Les bâtiments abandonnés, les couloirs, les ascenseurs, les ponts, les tunnels, les arches, les voyages sont autant d'exemples d'espaces liminaux. Des exemples d'état liminal sont les changements que nous vivons pendant la maladie, la perte d'un emploi, le divorce, la puberté, les études, l'obtention d'un diplôme, la grossesse, la ménopause, l'immigration et la retraite.

Eric, un étudiant bénévole membre de notre équipe, a suggéré le thème de la liminalité. Ce thème a trouvé un écho auprès de tous nos membres. Un grand merci aux membres fidèles de l'équipe du Zine, ainsi qu'à tous les contributeurs de poèmes, d'histoires et d'art visuel qui font vivre notre voix!

Les éditeurs de RTPublication

Vous êtes actuellement ou anciennement un patient de l'Allan Memorial Hospital et vous souhaitez soumettre du matériel à la RTPublication? Veuillez nous contacter par e-mail à l'adresse rtpublicationzine@gmail.com.

La Publication du PTR est également disponible sur notre site Internet à recoverytransitionprogram.com/RTPublication pour être lue ou téléchargée et imprimée

Tout le matériel soumis utilisé par la RTPublication paraîtra dans notre Zine papier ainsi que dans sa version électronique disponible sur notre site web.

"Nous reconnaissons que nous existons et opérons sur le territoire ancestral et non cédé des Kanien'kehá:ha, le peuple est le silex, qui est la porte orientale de la confédération Haudenosaunee.

Équipe de RTPublication:

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Welcome to the Eighth Edition

Liminality refers to being in transition from one space or state to another. It is being at a doorway or threshold which transforms the past into a new experience, or identity. Examples of a liminal space would be abandoned buildings, hallways, elevators, bridges, tunnels, archways, travel. Examples of a liminal state would be when we go through changes during illness, job loss, divorce, puberty, studying, graduation, pregnancy, menopause, immigration, and retirement.

Eric, a volunteer student member of our team, suggested liminality as a theme. It resonated with all our members. A big thank you to faithful members of the Zine team, and all the contributors of poems, stories and visual art who keep our voice alive!

The RTPublication Editors

If you are a present or former patient of the Allan Memorial Hospital and would like to submit material to the RTPublication, please contact us by e-mail at rtpublicationzine@gmail.com

The RTPublication is also available on our website to read or to download and print recoverytransitionprogram.com/RTPublication

All submissions used by RTPublication will appear in our paper zine as well as in the electronic version on our website.

"We acknowledge that we exist and operate on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Kanien'kehá:ha, the People is the Flint, who are the Eastern Door of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy."

RTPublication Team:

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Benoit Bolduc
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Institut Allan Memorial Avenue des Pins



Bureau du PTR—RTP Office (P2.036)



Salle de conférence du PTR—RTP conference room (P2.010)



Maison Griffith Edwards House (Institut Allan Memorial)

Le Programme de transition et rétablissement

Le Programme de transition et rétablissement est une initiative unique en santé mentale conçue pour améliorer l'expérience des patients au sein de la Mission de santé mentale du Centre universitaire de santé McGill. Notre objectif est d'intégrer au système de soins un programme de mentorat axé sur les patients, dans le cadre duquel les mentors et les intervenants en matière de santé collaborent pour leur apporter un soutien pendant leur rétablissement.

La relation pair aidant-mentoré

Nous sommes d'avis que le savoir expérientiel est un atout inestimable qui permet à ceux qui vivent avec une maladie mentale ou une addiction de donner de l'espoir et de l'encouragement aux autres. La dynamique est différente de celle d'une relation médecin-patient : aucun diagnostic n'est posé et il n'y a aucune obligation de divulguer des diagnostics antérieurs. Nous écoutons, mais nous ne sommes pas des thérapeutes. Les réunions sont l'occasion d'un contact qui profite autant au mentoré qu'au mentor.

Le pair aidant et le mentoré travaillent ensemble sur un pied d'égalité pour déterminer comment la relation peut être la plus bénéfique. Les séances peuvent apporter un soutien émotionnel de la part d'une personne qui peut comprendre vos difficultés et qui s'est déjà trouvée dans la même situation que vous. Les séances peuvent également permettre de résoudre des problèmes, de fixer des objectifs, d'établir de nouvelles routines et de tisser des liens avec des communautés extérieures.

About the Recovery Transition Program

The Recovery Transition Program (RTP) is a unique mental health initiative designed to improve the experiences of patients within the Mental Health Mission of the McGill University Health Centre. Our goal is to integrate a patient-based mentoring program into the system of care, in which peer mentors and health care providers collaborate to provide support to patients during their recovery.

The Peer Mentor—Peer Mentee Relationship

We believe that experiential knowledge is an invaluable asset which allows those who live with mental illness and addiction to give hope and encouragement to others. The dynamic is different from that of a doctor-patient relationship: There is no diagnosis made and no obligation to disclose any previous diagnoses. We listen, but we are not therapists. The meetings are an occasion for contact that benefits the mentee and the mentor.

The mentor and mentee work together as equals to determine how the relationship can be most useful. The sessions can provide emotional support from someone who can relate to your struggles and who has been where you are now. The sessions can also provide a space to solve problems, set goals, establish new routines, and find connections to outside communities.

Comment devenir un pair aidant

Toute personne souhaitant accéder aux services du PTR doit être référée par son fournisseur de soins de santé. Pour plus d'informations sur le PTR, le processus de référence ou la manière de s'y impliquer, veuillez consulter notre site web : recoverytransitionprogram.com et/ou contacter par courriel la coordonnatrice du PTR à l'adresse suivante : Patricia.Lucas@muhc.mcgill.ca.

Activités de groupe du PTR

En plus du mentorat individuel (à la fois en personne et virtuellement), le PTR organise des activités de groupe pour aider les mentors et les mentorés à entrer en contact tant les uns avec les autres qu'avec l'ensemble de la communauté. On retrouve parmi ces activités :

- Un club de lecture mensuel (Lectures PTR ?)
- Visites de groupe à des ressources extérieures telles que la Ruche d'Art du MBAM
- L'atelier RTPublication (la réalisation de ce zine)
- La lettre d'information mensuelle du PTR (abonnez-vous à rtpublicationzine@gmail.com)
- Les garden-party du personnel et des bénévoles
- Ateliers RAP, DIALOG et SMART
- Discussions arc-en-ciel ?- groupe de discussion LGBTQ
- Événements de sensibilisation du public (Pharmaprix Run, Montreal Walks, Mend Our Mind)
- Sensibilisation et diffusion (inviter d'autres institutions à lancer leur propre PTR)
- RTPPerformance ! (performances musicales et orales pour la communauté), par exemple enregistrement de musique dans le studio de musicothérapie de l'HGM.

Voir les photos sur notre site web : <http://recoverytransitionprogram.com/events-page/> ou visiter notre page Facebook à www.facebook.com/RTPProgram

L'équipe de RTPublication tient à exprimer ses sincères remerciements à **Isabelle Fortin** pour son travail exceptionnel de traduction de certaines sections de la publication en français. Votre dévouement et votre savoir-faire pour assurer l'exactitude et la qualité de la traduction sont profondément appréciés. Votre contribution a été inestimable. Merci beaucoup pour votre travail assidu et votre engagement.

Cordialement,
L'équipe de RTPublication



How to Become a Peer Mentee

Anyone interested in accessing the services of the RTP must be referred by their health care provider. For more information about the RTP, the referral process, or how to get involved, please see our website: recoverytransitionprogram.com and/or contact the RTP Coordinator at: Patricia.Lucas@muhc.mcgill.ca.

RTP Group Activities

In addition to one-on-one mentoring (both in person and virtually), the RTP organizes group activities to help mentors and mentees alike connect with each other and the greater community. Activities have included:

- RTP Reads (a monthly book club)
- Group visits to outside resources such as the MMFA Art Hive
- The RTPublication workshop (the making of this zine)
- RTP monthly newsletter (subscribe at rtpublicationzine@gmail.com)
- The staff & volunteer Garden Parties
- RAP, DIALOG, and SMART workshops
- Rainbow Chat - LGBTQ+ Discussion Group
- Public awareness events (Pharmaprix Run, Montreal Walks, Mend Our Mind)
- Outreach & Dissemination (inviting other institutions to start their own RTP)
- RTPPerformance! (musical and spoken-word performances for the community) eg. recording music in the MGH music therapy studio.

See photos on our website <http://recoverytransitionprogram.com/events-page/> or visit www.facebook.com/RTPProgram

The RTPublication team would like to express our heartfelt thanks to **Isabelle Fortin** for her exceptional work on translating sections of the publication into French. Your dedication and skill in ensuring the accuracy and quality of the translation are deeply appreciated. Your contribution has been invaluable. Merci beaucoup for your hard work and commitment.

Sincerely,
RTPublication Team:



WARRIORS

—Ilsa

Let me introduce myself. I am 70 years young and I have been on my pain journey for 30 years. I have a diagnosis of ATYPICAL FACIAL PAIN -a form of trigeminal neuralgia. I have neuropathic constant pain to a branch of my trigeminal nerve. It feels as if I have intense dental pain where two teeth have been extracted. The pain causes dizziness, balance issues and jitteriness. It isn't similar to phantom limb pain. I am a retired nurse, a wife, a mother of four, a grand-maman and a cat mom.

I have had several failed root canals, dental surgeries, extractions, and implants all of which aggravated the branch of that damaged nerve! It has created escalating episodes of pain over the many years. I don't have a swear jar but a dental fund jar! Unfortunately at this time there is no CURE for this type of pain.

I have opted out of invasive procedures due to the risk of intensifying the pain. I choose to live with the DEVIL I know verses the DEVIL I don't know. So I depend on lots of tools for pain management and control that I have collected and researched over time. My pain used to be in the driver's seat on a daily basis. But thanks to treatment and psychological support which has been KEY, now it is in the passenger's seat even on extreme pain days. It takes a lot of will power, courage, and practice. My main goal is always to maintain my pain level adequately in order to enjoy a better quality of life. I have discovered lots of tips and tools to share with you and I invite you to share any of your tips and tools as well. These are some of the tools I have found helpful and I use them often.

1. SELF CARE. Engage in a self-care routine. It has been clinically proven to reduce or eliminate anxiety and depression, reduce stress, improve concentration, minimize frustration and anger, increase happiness and

improve energy. Here are some examples of self-care.

- Eating a healthy diet
- Exercise
- Daily walk
- Drink enough water
- Good sleep habits
- Sunlight elevates the mood
- Avoid drugs and alcohol (except for prescription meds)
- See and keep in contact with friends to maintain a sense of belonging, as chronic pain can cause isolation.

Do something you enjoy EVERYDAY. Even if it's for a brief period, make it a priority. Call it self-reward. So to summarize, self-care means literally caring for your whole self. It includes anything that we do to care for our physical, psychological, spiritual, and emotional health. Self-care allows us to maintain a healthy relationship with oneself, to better relate to others.

2. SELF COMPASSION. Being warm and understanding towards yourself when you suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring your pain or berating yourself with self-criticism.

I AM GOING TO BE KIND TO MYSELF, REALIZING BEING IMPERFECT AND EXPERIENCING LIFE'S CHALLENGES IS INEVITABLE! BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF!

This care-giving system works on the hormone and neurotransmitter OXYTOCIN. Oxytocin increases levels of calm, safety, generosity, connectedness, and the ability to feel warmth and compassion for ourselves. Touching, hugging, and petting a pet are good examples of ways to elevate oxytocin. More examples of self-compassion are comforting your body and eating healthily. For example, I make a smoothie every morning.

3. JOURNALING, write about things that are or have been bothering you.

4. GIVE YOURSELF ENCOURAGEMENT. Acknowledge when you have succeeded in maintaining a tolerable pain level or completed a task.

5. MINDFULNESS. Live in the moment. Try not to judge, just let thoughts enter and exit your mind. Along these lines, there is also yoga, tai chi, and deep breathing exercises.

6. POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS. Such as:

“Change is never simple but it is easier if I stop being hard on myself.”

“Mistakes show I am growing and learning.”

“It’s ok to make a mistake and forgive myself.”

“I am free to let go of other peoples’ judgements.”

“I accept the best and worst aspects of myself.”

7. PACE ACTIVITIES. Routine and organization create a sense of stability.

8. REACH OUT TO FRIENDS OR SUPPORT GROUPS. Schedule weekly chats or Face Time with friends.

9. THE ARTS. Including music, have been shown to be a calming and healing mood elevating tool.

10. CREATE YOUR OWN CRAFT MEMORY BOX.

11. WALK AND TAKE TIME. Smell the roses or enjoy nature.

12. BE POSITIVE. For example instead of thinking of the pain as a beast or a dragon, consider it as an annoying roommate you must tolerate.

13. ACCEPTANCE. We have all been transformed into new versions of ourselves. Focus on what you can and are able to do at this moment.

14. PERSEVERANCE. Keep on trying to do the best you can with the tools you have and don’t give up. Find new and different ways to achieve tasks.

15. GRATITUDE. There are blessings in our life, no matter how small, like a favourite pillow or soft sheets. Some examples of gratitude include:

“I appreciate your help.”

“I am grateful for your friendship.”

“I am grateful for your time and effort.”

“Thank you for your opinion.”

GRATITUDE TURNS WHAT WE HAVE INTO ENOUGH!

16. BE THANKFUL. Be thankful for every chance you get—not because life has been easy, perfect or exactly as you anticipated—but because you choose to be happy and grateful for all the good things you do have and the problems you don’t have!

17. BELIEVE IN YOURSELF.

18. MEDICATION. If indicated and tolerated.

19. TRY NEW AND DIFFERENT THINGS OR IMPROVE SKILLS. For example I improved my computer skills by making a BITMOJI.

20. MAKE NICE MEMORIES. For example I have played with a hand puppet with my granddaughter and her laughter was contagious.

21. HUMOUR. There is nothing funny about chronic pain, but open up to finding humour in life.

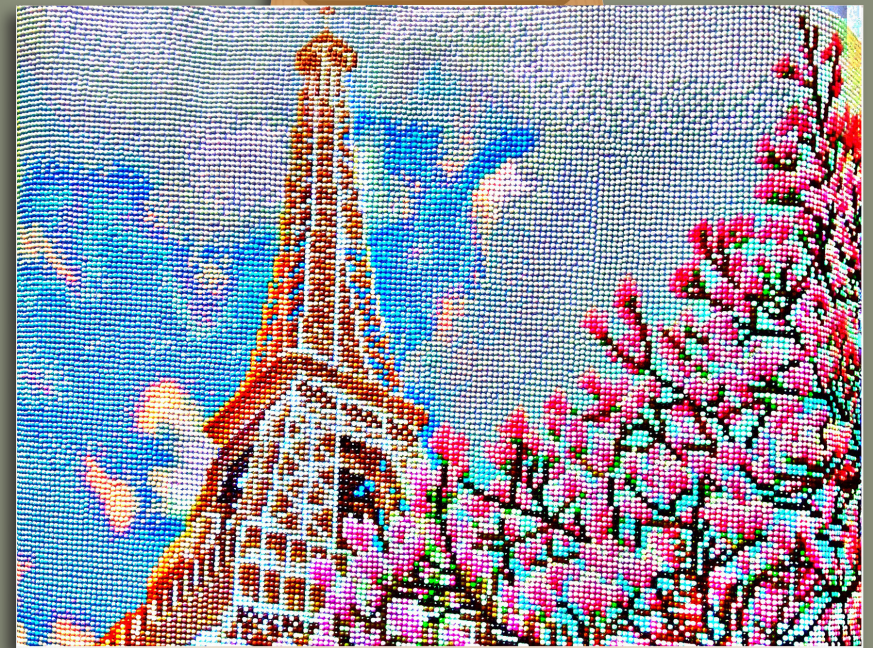
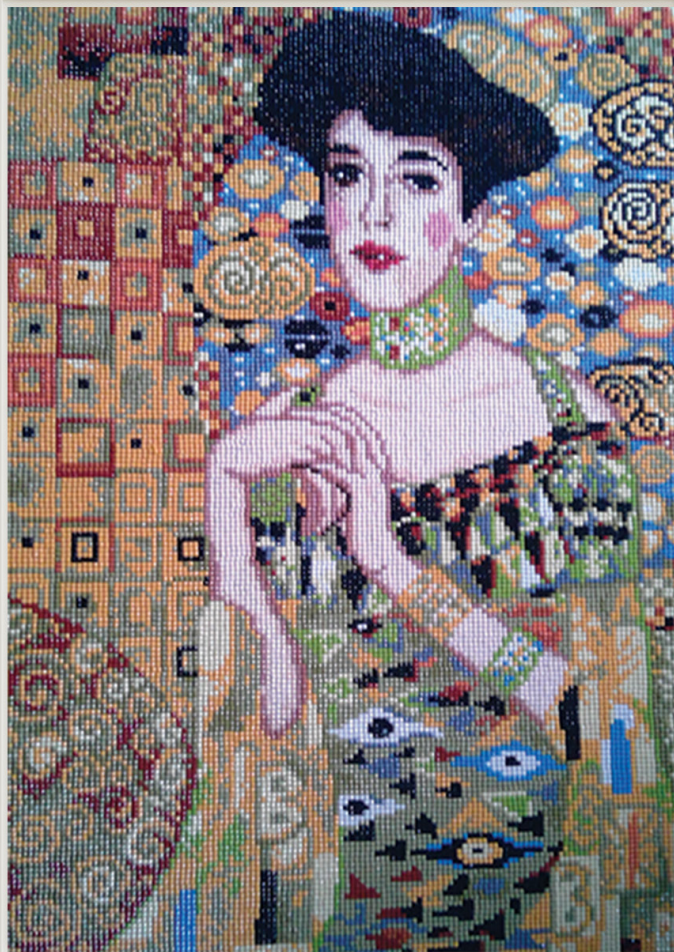
So my words of encouragement are to believe in a better day, and that we are capable of creating one with the help of our tips and tools. Keep adding new tools to the tool bag. It’s never too full! One day at a time. It is difficult to maintain and nurture old and new friendships but do your best. There are people that will stand by you. They may be few but they are there. Reach out and share. I have made several true friends with chronic pain. I am not a seasoned motivational speaker like Tony Robbins or Michael, but I have struggled a very long time being a vintage senior, and I encourage everyone reading this to:

FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD AND FIND YOUR POT OF GOLD AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW.

Try to keep smiling as it gives a message to our brains that we are doing well. Take pride in all achievements big or small. Don’t wait for everything to be perfect to enjoy your life.

LIFE’S BATTLES DON’T ALWAYS GO TO THE STRONGEST OR FASTEST MAN, BUT SOONER OR LATER, THE MAN WHO WINS IS THE MAN WHO THINKS HE CAN.

Diamond Painting



Diamond painting is where you have a pre-existing canvas that's sticky and you apply crystals or diamonds onto the surface with a magnetic pen and glue to ensure that the crystal stays on. It's very relaxing and calming. I started doing these since the beginning of Covid because it was a good way to pass the time during all those hours with nothing to do. I was stressed and needed an outlet and I've never stopped doing this hobby. I tend to partake in its soothing ambiance an hour before bed so that I have no worries to think about. I've completed around seven pieces these are examples of my most recent completions. Enjoy!

—Diana Kubesch

La Binveillance de Wendi

—Benoit Bolduc

Ce n'était pourtant qu'une simple opération d'une hernie inguinale, mais pour moi, c'était la grosse affaire, l'enfer. C'était pourtant ma troisième opération du genre, mais d'une fois à l'autre je n'arrivais pas à me mettre dans la tête qu'il n'y avait pas là de quoi fouetter un chat et qu'une opération à cœur ouvert représentait un véritable challenge en comparaison de l'opération d'une hernie inguinale.

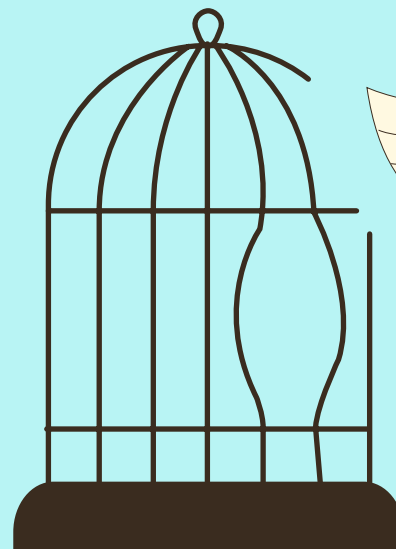
Et mon angoisse était décuplée lorsque je me demandais où j'irais après son opération. Pas question de demander à Lilie, ma sœur, que j'adore et qui m'avait hébergé pendant la récupération de mes deux premières opérations. Déjà que Lilie était très fatiguée de prendre soin de sa blonde qui souffrait d'une hernie lombaire, en plus de prendre soin de moi qui souffrait d'une dépression depuis près de cinq ans. Non, il n'était pas question d'accaparer Lilie davantage. Mais alors qui ? Je dressai une liste de tous les gens que je connaissais en essayant de déceler qui pourrait bien avoir la bonté pour assumer une pareille tâche. Une seule personne ressortait du lot : Wendi. Toutes sortes de questions me traversèrent alors l'esprit : étais-je assez proche de Wendi pour lui faire une telle demande ? N'était-elle pas trop prise par son travail ? Et si elle refusait, cela mettrait-il notre amitié en péril ? Comment allait-elle interpréter une telle demande ? Et ça n'en finissait plus, jusqu'au jour où je me suis dit : « Bon ça suffit, puisqu'il n'y a personne d'autre, aussi bien tenter ma chance, on verra après. »

Eh bien, je ne l'ai pas regretté, loin de là. Il y a de ces gens sur cette terre dont on se demande d'où ils viennent tellement ils sont bienveillants. Ils sont nombreux pourtant, mais quand on les rencontre c'est comme une expérience nouvelle à chaque fois. On ne prend pas l'habitude de la bonté. Lorsqu'elle vient vers nous, il faut la saluer, très bas, pour que l'autre sente qu'on l'apprécie.

Wendi fait partie de ces gens, non pas rares, mais spéciaux. Non seulement m'a-t-elle accueilli chez-elle alors que son nouvel appartement n'était même pas encore aménagé, mais elle m'a cédé son propre lit, elle a cuisiné pour moi et fait des courses à la pharmacie. J'étais stupéfait devant tant de bonté. Et je ne savais pas comment la remercier. Rien ne me paraissait suffisant. Je souhaite ardemment pouvoir lui rendre la pareille un jour.

La liberté, c'est quoi ?

—Lise Mainville



Aujourd'hui, en ce moment, c'est avec mon crayon et un papier que je me sens heureuse, libre et de bonne humeur. J'écris ce que je crois, ce qui donne un sens à ma vie.

La liberté implique que nous n'ayons pas de contraintes dans notre quotidien, ou du moins le moins possible, car il y a des limites dans ce que nous voulons et pouvons faire. Comme nous le savons, nous vivons en société et automatiquement il y a des règles à suivre, des règlements. L'ordre et la loi

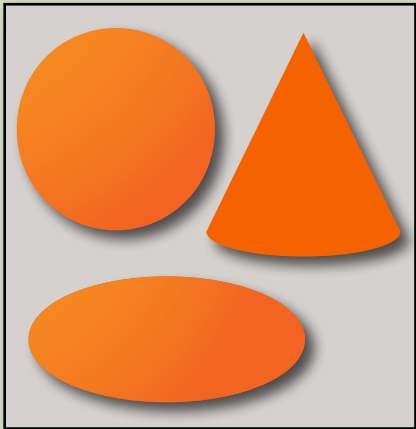
sont opposés à la liberté. Rappelons-nous que nous pouvons brimer la liberté des autres si nous dépassons une certaine limite, l'un ne va pas sans l'autre. La liberté commence où les règles finissent normalement. La liberté est aussi une sensation. Nous n'avons pas besoin de se justifier pour autant. Comme on dit, tout se passe entre les deux oreilles. Décider de poser une action plutôt qu'une autre et de se sentir bien là-dedans en ne faisant évidemment pas de tort à personne. Bien là, nous vivons un bien-être que seule la liberté apporte. La liberté, c'est aussi ne pas avoir à demander la permission à personne et marcher droit. Marcher droit, peut être de marcher croche pour une autre ou un autre, sans pour cela, éviter de faire un choix éclairé approprié pour soi-même. Autre chose, un don d'amour de soi nous rend libre lorsque nous sommes bien dans notre peau. Cela apporte un plus à la liberté. Notre entourage s'en porte mieux, vraiment. Il s'agit de passer de mauvaises secousses pour s'en rendre compte. La maladie particulièrement affecte beaucoup sa propre liberté et celle de la famille et amis. La solitude n'affecte pas la liberté si elle est bien vécue. Elle peut être une réussite en soi, un tour de force, car nous ne sommes pas faits pour vivre seul. L'être humain a besoin d'interagir avec les autres pour se prouver qu'il a des opinions, un certain vécu par exemple et de se créer des buts pour lui-même et avec les autres. Puis le désir d'être juste et bon avec son prochain apporte la liberté que nous trouvons dans la croyance envers un seul Dieu. Comme un bambin, nous pouvons trouver le bonheur, dont la liberté dans le moment présent, dans de petites choses comme nous le démontre la pureté, l'innocence de l'enfant. La liberté, c'est sentir qu'on dit et qu'on fait les bonnes choses.

From Idea to Reality: Exploring the Basics of 3D Printing Technology for EVERYONE

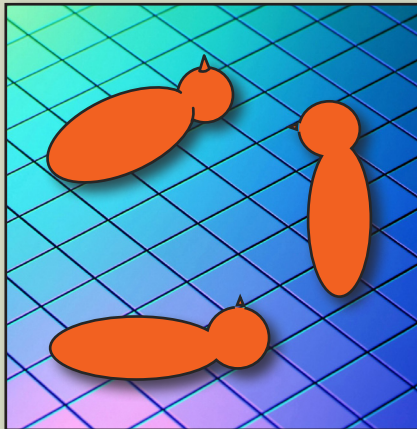
FabLabs or MakerSpaces are available for free, with a valid library card, at several Ville de Montréal facilities including the Benny Library, Grande Bibliothèque, and Pierrefonds-Roxboro Library.



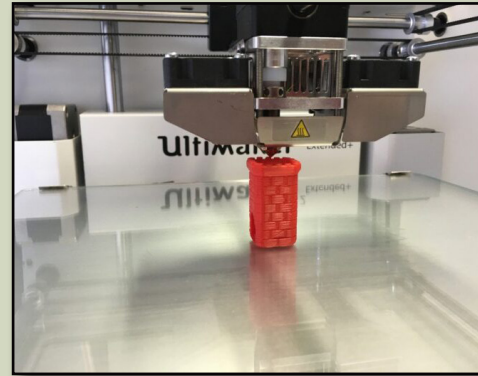
Chronic pain advocate, CPPMP mentor, and artist Sandra Woods took a free 2-hour “Introduction to 3D Printing” workshop at the Pierrefonds (library) MakerSpace. This 3D project was inspired by her recent chronic pain awareness painting: “One in 5 Canadians live with chronic pain”.



The basic shapes in her 2D painted orange creature are a circle (head), triangle (nose), and oval (body), so she selected a 3D sphere, cone, and ovoid using a MakerSpace software and computer.



After manipulating each 3D shape to match her painted creature, she merged them into place, then checked from all angles. It’s tricky to “think in 3D”, so at first the nose was the same size as the head and facing sideways.



After fixing these beginner 3D design hiccups, with the help of a MakerSpace Facilitator, all Sandra had to do was wait for the 3D printer to finish the job using orange filament!

When there are many print jobs in the queue, they print overnight. Hers was ready the next day.



City of Montréal FabLabs and MakerSpaces often provide on-site Facilitators to help bring your ideas to life. Reservations may be needed, and some equipment requires a free introductory workshop.

Some FabLabs offer music technology tools, or vinyl-cutting (for t-shirt designs), or 3D printing, or sewing and textile machines.

https://montreal.ca/en/places?mtl_content.lieux.installation.code=FABL

—Sandra Woods

The Town at the Edge



— ANDREY KLYATSKIY

The bus slowly wheeled next to a derelict stop. I was the only passenger and felt special for it. As I got off, a fragrant smell assaulted my nostrils. It was a flowery scent, with hints of nausea hidden behind sweetness. Before long it will make me want to puke.

There was a slight breeze, and it was the only thing I heard. Just whistling as air passed through houses, high-grass, leaves... The sky was on fire from the setting sun, and the fields stretched for leagues in every direction, tall grass swaying and softly rustling. An occasional cricket would make itself known by chirping vigorously, announcing hot summer days. It was one of those lazy late-spring evenings on which the streets would be deserted, everyone just staying at home, trying to find some purpose to their day but ending up laying lazily on the couch with a soda in hand. Thus was my arrival to the Town, end of the bus-line, and frankly, the edge of the world.

I know it is a grey zone between civilization and savagery. But I will never learn which side is which.

No one greeted me here, and I was unknown to all but my uncle. There was no gate separating the nothingness from the Town, out there the air shimmered and danced. Over here it was still. Humanity began with low grey buildings and a dirt path that turned into a neat cobblestoned road. At the same time, the houses seemed deprived of any sense of consistent architecture or symmetry: windows would hang here and there, the walls

would take the strangest of curves, and the roofs were dropping and rising seemingly haphazardly. Far down the street a bunch of kids were playing, their voices echoing among deserted streets.

‘In fact, what street is that?’

I looked up, down, at the streetlamp and at the post both. There was no sign anywhere. I just knew my uncle’s house was on Garovski street. Which one is it?

As I passed a tiny alleyway between two houses, I saw a masked man blocking the way.

“Hey, what street is this?” I asked.

The Stranger answered in a soft voice that caressed my ear-drums like a feather on skin.

“Why, this is the No-Name Street, can’t you see? There is no sign.”

“Oh, well, how do I get to Garovski street then? I’m on a trip to visit my uncle but all I know is the street name.”

“Ooooh, You must be Peter? Dodorovski? Yes, that’s you!” he replied, “Your uncle sent me after you, told me to show you around as we walk to him, he lives on the other side of the Town.”

The Stranger had a comforting aura surrounding him. He was warm and seemed cheerful under that mask. The mask itself wasn’t anything special, just a plaster disc with two eye-holes, attached by a string to the back of his head. He spoke without any particular accent, slowly and deliberately.

“What’s the mask for?”

“To hide my face, of course” He cackled slightly. “I am but a guide on your journey, and I am here to tell you more about our town. It would be distracting if you had to look at my face while doing so.”

I nodded. It wasn’t much, but somehow, his demeanor and his voice made this answer satisfying. We were now walking down the street and the Stranger was looking somewhere far ahead.

“You must’ve noticed the smell.” He began after a silence.

“Huh?”

“You know, the nauseating aroma from the Khratcha flower. It is spring and they are blooming now, spreading their pollen over this quaint town like a slow dust-storm. Don’t you feel tired yet?”

I shook my head.

“You will. Soon. The pollen makes people weak and sleepy, that is why most folks stay indoors during this season. It is quite a problem for a town of miners, you know, heavy labor and all... production is slow around this time. Everything is. Even time seems to slow down. But it’s not the case... I think? Although what is time if not our waking moments. We don’t see much time when we’re asleep, and believe me, there’s a lot of sleeping going on right now. Then, I guess, Khratcha does slow down time as it does our miners.”

“Is it poisonous?”

“Huh, well, those little buggers aren’t poisonous per se. That won’t be

your cause of death, no, dehydration will though. If you get too close to Khratcha, its pollen will overwhelm your senses and put you to sleep then and there. Forever frozen in time.”

“That’s the first time I hear about something like that. I know some herbs can help you sleep better, but to do so permanently...”

Suddenly a twitching sensation invaded my insides, my mouth watered and I spewed my lunch on the ground. The Stranger waited, looking at me.

“Oh, don’t worry, this is common for new arrivals, they have difficulty tolerating the Khratcha smell for any extended periods of time. Call it a rite of passage.” He laughed softly.

We were now approaching a bridge curving over a canal where water gurgled. Slowly. Somewhere up the stream, coming towards us was a solitary barge filled with crates. Its driver was a small figure, slumped over the rudder. We stopped on top, leaned on the handrail, and watched it approach.

“The mines are the only reason this town exists in the first place. They extract all kinds of precious metals in the hills up the stream. Pack them. And send them on these barges to somewhere far off. Exports have been slow though...”

At this point the barge was passing under us.

“What happened?” I asked.

The Stranger sighed and spread his hands.

“You know, A human life is a fragile thing. It dies from time, it dies from pox, it dies from self-inflicted violence, and so on. There is a new kind of disease around, for now it affects only miners. They call it ‘stone-rot.’ Quite a gruesome thing it is. Turns your internal organs to stone and then the rest of the body but by that time the poor sod would be already dead. It is something about those mines. I think they dug greedily and this is payback for their avarice, but what can we do, the Town must survive somehow. And those exports are what keeps us afloat.”

We were now past the bridge and on a small square. On the corner was a grocery store, proudly wearing a sign with a picture of fruits, vegetables, and bread in a basket.

“Is there really no other value to this town than those mines?” I wondered

“Well... a number of years ago, during the Great Revolution, many intellectuals fled to this part of the country to escape persecution. Now they are the pride of this town... Their ideas are grand and their conferences over a cup of coffee are insightful, but what’s the point of ideas in a void? Here their projects of social betterment, medicine, physics, and so on, are just exchanged air, as much valuable as Khratcha pollen. That’s all they can do, talk among each other, flaunt their ideas before the uneducated masses but few find resources to make anything useful out of them. Ideas in a vacuum. So, yes, our mines are indeed our only lifeline.”

I almost took offense to these remarks. After all, my uncle was one of

those intellectuals. He was a psychologist back when it was still an obscure science. On the inside, however, I knew that the Stranger was right. My uncle probably didn’t have much success with his theories and experiments here. As a machine, when you have to wrench the means of your survival from earth inside of a cramped shaft, few will wonder how it works as long as it does.

There was some commotion ahead of us. People were shouting, soon becoming a cacophony of sounds. As we moved closer to the crowd, I heard accusatory voices screaming insults, and sending death threats to a group of three who stood in the middle. They were dressed in loincloths and pelts hung from their shoulders. On their heads they wore sacks and on their necks were beaded necklaces. Some in front of the crowd were menacing the three with knives, others with sticks.

“What’s going on?” I asked, alarmed by the sudden change from a sleepy town to violent unrest in the streets.

“Oh this? This is the result of a wrongful death done by malicious hidden hands.” The Stranger’s voice didn’t waver despite what we were seeing. The crowd got more and more agitated by the second, and the three were getting closer to their doom. “When people are faced with death, they often tend to put blame on whoever’s different from them. First, it’s a few individuals, and soon the whole tribe. You know, sometimes it is better to not finish things, rather than finishing them too much and falling prey to your own ambition. If they kill these three, it’ll be war, one we have no chance of winning. The Natives here are the real masters of the plains, they know every path, nook, and crevice. They even found a way to navigate through Khratcha fields.

“Something has to be done then!”

“And what do you want to do? Waltz in there and convince the crown not to lynch them with a couple of nice words? I would suggest taking one of the barges out of this town and forget it ever existed. Take your uncle with you of course. Speaking of which, Garovski street.”

I felt pangs of sympathy for them. After all we were akin in that I too was a stranger in the Town.

Later on, I will do something. It would be a mistake and I will have to flee the town on one of the barges. But we’re not there yet.

For now, the nauseabonde smell still persisted in the air. The sky was orange. And the time seemed to stay still.

The Chronic Pain Peer Mentorship Program (CPPMP)

—Robert Glesinger



GROWING THE RECOVERY TRANSITION PROGRAM

Part of the mandate of the RTP is to disseminate the program to other units in the MUHC that deal with long term health issues, where patients with lived experience can help other patients faced with similar challenges. It was foreseen that this program could be relevant to patients with more than one diagnosis. For instance, it is common for those with chronic pain to have clinical depression at some point, and vice versa.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CCPMP

My chronic pain journey began in 2007 when cutting tree branches. I fell 22 feet off a ladder onto the side of the road, dislocating and fracturing my shoulder which required a total joint replacement. Seeking ways to better cope with consequent pain and lack of function, my GP referred me to the Alan Edwards Pain Management Unit (AEPMU). I was admitted in 2011 and immediately referred to the Griffith Edwards Addiction Program, and then on to detox on the ward from heavy dependency on opioids. I felt very isolated and alienated by my circumstances, and very much kept to myself.

It was there that I first received help from fellow patients who reached out to me by seeing and understanding what I was going through even though I didn't. It was a completely spontaneous act of compassion on their part. I do not know how I could have gotten through it without that help. There was no formal mentoring program. Their help came through a desire to share experiences, to help me know what to expect, and to see a fellow human have success in their quest for better health. This fuelled my desire to give back. To pass along lessons learned, and to better understand chronic pain, drug dependence and addiction.

I began attending the AEPMU'S Pain Management Course in 2012, led by Dr. Gamsa, as well as the Stanford Pain Toolbox course. For ongoing support I joined the Quebec Chronic Pain Support Group where pain patients share their lived experiences and knowledge. I invited doctor Kathryn Gill from the Griffith Edwards Addiction Clinic to talk about the use and misuse of opioid painkillers. A couple of months later we invited one of her interns at the time, Clare Foa, to come and talk

about self compassion and it's role and value in recovery and maintenance of well-being.

PLANTING SEEDS OF THE RTP

In 2015, Dr. Gill invited me to be on a team of fellow patients and healthcare professionals from the Griffith Edwards Addiction Clinic and the Allan Memorial Institute. We created a peer mentoring proposal that won the Q-Plus Challenge Competition which granted us the funding to start the RTP.

By 2018 I was well enough to be trained as a peer mentor, and the following year became a trainer myself.

STARTING THE CPPMP

In 2019 we had interest from Dr. Yoram Shir, Director of the AEPMU, to adopt the RTP program format. The Outreach & Dissemination Team, including Cecelia, Patricia and Kathryn, went there to give a presentation. Given my background I was enthusiastic about the opportunity. As it happens, another of Dr. Gill's interns, Ashley Reynolds, had transferred to the AEPMU to complete her PhD. Ashley's experience with the RTP showed her the benefits and applicability of the program to chronic pain, and helped her become a champion of the program and our first Program Coordinator. Two pain patients, Donnalyne and Michael, were trained by the RTP as the first CPPMP Peer Mentors. They formed the first Steering Committee with Dr Gamsa and Dr LaHaie, Ashley and myself, to establish the foundations of the CPPMP. A keystone to this was the work they did to adapt the RTP Mentor Training to be relevant to AEPMU patients. The two programs have been working alongside each other ever since. The new director of the AEPMU, Dr. Marc Ware, is a keen sponsor of the program, having seen the emergence of more patient involved programs while attending national and international conferences.

HOW THE CPPMP HELPS

The CPPMP helps patients who are typically approaching discharge from the AEPMU. The pursuit of a diagnosis and treatments that work can be a solitary all-encompassing pursuit. It helps to know one is not alone and to be able to relate in an expansive way to someone who will listen non-judgementally. A mentor can offer different insights and perspectives from their own experience. This can help one feel better and accept that chronic pain may always be with them, but also help them assemble a toolbox of ways to cope, and of ways to find support and to advocate more effectively for what they need. Importantly, the CPPMP can be a trusted and compassionate environment for mentees where there is no need for facades, and no need to try to meet others expectations other than being their true selves. At the same time, mentors often find that it gives a purpose to the suffering they have endured.

My 'Great' Uncle Doug

—Ross Harvey

Doug Harvey. To the younger set, this name might not mean much. But to older sports fans, it elicits huge smiles. Almost everyone has/had a story about my uncle Doug. I witnessed a great many of these stories when helping out my cousin Glen 'Buster' Harvey at his bar/resto, Buster Harvey's, on Sherbrooke in NDG. People from all over the U.S. and Canada would come to visit the bar while in Montreal to see Buster, Doug's son. They usually just got to meet me, as Glen was seldom there in the evening. Their stories were rich - and generally described a man who was a star hockey player, but an even better human being. I'll tell a couple of my stories, but first I want to give you an idea of the athlete my great uncle Doug was.

Many people of the older persuasion, who were able to experience Doug's greatness in person, believe that my uncle was the greatest athlete in history. Their reasoning is understandable. He played professional hockey (the captain of the Montreal Canadiens), professional baseball, professional football and professional lacrosse. On top of this, he was generally the top player on each of his teams and he led each team to win the respective

end of season championships. As a hockey player, Doug was arguably the greatest in history. Defensemen are the captains of the team and the consensus is that it is between he and Bobby Orr as the best defensemen of all time. In addition to playing 4 sports professionally, my uncle also beat the all navy heavyweight boxing champion in a bout! The only sport he couldn't master was golf - and it caused him no end of frustration!

A couple of stories.

The first is a cherished memory of mine. Regularly, my uncle used to drive by our family house and pick me up. We would go down to the Forum on Atwater where he would double-park and go inside to pick up his NHL Pension cheque. We would then go to the bank where he would cash some/likely most of his cheque into \$5 bills. We would then head into the laneway behind Toe Blake's Tavern. As my uncle drove his pickup truck slowly along the lane, you could hear people saying 'Doug's here.' He would stop the car and the people who were sitting and lying in the laneway would form a line next to his driver's side door. They would come single file up to him and he had a kind word for each and a \$5 bill, telling each and every person to go into Toe's Tavern and to get themselves a good meal. The amazing thing to me was that he knew most if not all of these people were going to

spend the money on other things (beer, liquor, cigarettes...), but he honoured the fact that they were adults and had the right to choose what they needed most to feel good. This is a lesson I have taken with me. A \$5 bill does not go anywhere near where it did in the mid '70's, but I try to help as many people as I can by giving them this money.

My Dad was a professional hockey player along with both my uncles. Actually, when people confronted my uncle Doug saying they thought he was the greatest hockey player in history, his

"heck I wasn't even the best player in my family"

common line was; "heck I wasn't even the best player in my family" (meaning my dad was). My dad played pro hockey in England. He was a player/coach for the Brighton tigers. He met my Mum there and they both returned to Montreal to be married in the early '50's. My uncle suggested to my Dad that he get him a tryout with the Canadiens. My Dad was reluctant, but assented. When they got on the ice, Toe Blake, the coach shot the puck into the corner and said; 'Alf - go get it - Doug go get Alf.' My Dad barrelled into the corner and Doug landed him with a booming check which shattered the boards and even shattered my Dad! My Dad picked himself up from the ice and skated off, saying 'this isn't for me!'



Doug Harvey

As I mentioned, my uncle starred at many sports, but golf was his bugaboo. My Dad on the other hand had taken up the game while he was in England and was an avid and quite adept golfer, with his handicap hovering between 10 and 12. One day my Dad and Doug were playing at our golf club - Ile Perrot golf and Country Club. Doug was coming in with the score of his career - if he would have made a 5 on the final hole, a par four, he would have broken 80 for the first time in his life. On the tee of the 18th hole, Doug pulled out his driver and proceeded to hit it deep in the woods. He was able to find his ball, but ended up taking a 7 on the hole and missing this opportunity to shoot his best score. My Dad said to him; 'Doug, in every other game you use your head. You didn't need to hit a driver on that hole. An iron down the middle and you would have

almost guaranteed a 5 for the hole and a 79 for your score!' But that was another hallmark of my uncle - he was VERY stubborn!

My Dad owned a sporting goods store on Queen Mary Road called Harvey's Sport Shop. It catered to all sports. Often my uncle Doug would come by just to hang around. When he was there, fans who were coming in to get their skates sharpened would ask to have them sharpened by him. The skate sharpening machine has a contraption which you fix the blade in so as to ensure there is no movement of the blade and to guarantee an appropriate sharpening. My Uncle omitted that step and did the sharpening by hand - with the obvious consequences of a poor sharpening, But no one complained - after all they got a hand sharpening by a star hockey player!

On the same subject, in 1984 my Dad went into the Jewish General Hospital for a hip replacement surgery. Would I have been in Montreal at the time, I would have been in the Sport Shop helping out. Instead, my Uncle Doug was there. Jim Atchison was my Dad's right hand man at the store. My uncle Doug and Jim didn't often see eye-to-eye. Saying that there can only be one captain on a team, my uncle Doug fired Jim and asked him to leave the store! Jim made a beeline straight up to my Dad's room in the hospital to tell him what had happened, whereby my Dad had to call Doug and ask him to step down and he sent Jim back!

My Dad worked very hard at the sport shop - often omitting family obligations. In the winter however, we never missed Sunday ski trips! One Christmas, Doug came by our house in his pickup truck with his dog Wolfie in the box. He saw that we didn't have our tree as yet and said he was going to remedy that. He jumped back in the truck and inside a couple of hours was back. He had gone to a place he knew where there were beautiful evergreens and cut us down the biggest and greatest tree we ever had - not because it was the biggest and greatest, but because of the love which came with it through his efforts!

In his final years with the Canadiens my uncle used to go out to the park at the corner of his street - Coronation Park in NDG. He would put on his skates, take the puck and dare a number of young, aspiring hockey players to take the puck away from him - which despite all their efforts - they were unable to do!

I hope this story gives you insight into my 'Great' uncle, who while being a great athlete in every sense of the word was an even greater human being. Doug was thought to have suffered from bipolar disorder most of his adult life and was plagued by alcoholism. He died of cirrhosis of the liver on December 26, 1989. He was so strong willed he stayed alive until after Christmas, then succumbed to his illness.



Wings

How do we survive when the pain takes a front seat
We won't admit defeat
Sometimes it's one step forward and 2 steps back
It is definitely a balancing act
Yet we fight hard not to crack
Believe tomorrow brings better things
Maybe I can grow some gossamer wings
And send the pain flying away
Forgetting to haunt me another day
But there is one thing I know
And that is I will never let go
Even though I can't outsmart the pain
My positivity and resilience shall remain

—Ilsa

MONSIEUR ROBERT

—André Dumaine

Quand je raconte mon histoire, les gens sourient. Ils doivent se demander si je n'ai pas le cerveau un peu fêlé. Ce sera à vous de vous faire une idée. Je crois être un type normal mais on pourra toujours objecter que je manque d'objectivité. Je vivais depuis dix ans dans le même immeuble. J'occupais un modeste trois et demi au rez-de-chaussée. Le coût du loyer était raisonnable. Mes voisins, je ne les voyais que très peu, ce qui me convenait parfaitement car je suis du genre solitaire. C'était calme au point où je pouvais entendre le chant des oiseaux à l'extérieur. Les locataires faisaient preuve d'une grande stabilité.

Au début d'octobre, mon voisin immédiat est décédé. Peu de temps après, un homme d'aspect bizarre l'a remplacé. Il m'a à peine salué pour ensuite s'engouffrer dans son appartement. Aussitôt, une musique tonitruante s'échappa de chez lui et se poursuivit durant quelques heures. J'étais furieux. J'appelai tout de suite la concierge pour me plaindre. J'avais toutefois oublié que nous étions vendredi, sa soirée de bingo. Son mari, une espèce de traîne-savate, était parti à son meeting de A.A. sans grande conviction, comme d'habitude. J'ai donc laissé un message sur le répondeur en demandant à son épouse de me rappeler. Le lendemain, je recevais sa visite.

- Monsieur Robert, j'ai quelque chose à vous dire. Remarquez que je suis pas obligée, mais, quand même, vu qu'on a toujours eu de bons rapports, je vais vous le dire. Le nouveau locataire à côté de vous fait partie d'un programme de réinsertion sociale. C'est de même qu'ils appellent ça.

- O.k. C'est un ancien détenu ?

- Non, mais il n'est pas comme tout le monde. Je sais pas si vous avez remarqué quelque chose ...

- Oui ! Il a fait un tapage épouvantable hier soir. C'est pas un homme malade toujours ?

- Voyons donc ! Il n'est pas malade. Il est schizophrène.

- Pardon ?

- Le gouvernement a mis en place un projet d'intégration sociale pour voir si ces gens-là avec de bons médicaments et un environnement normal peuvent fonctionner avec juste un contrôle extérieur. Comme un remote control pour la télévision. C'est un projet pilote. Apparemment, faut que ça marche parce qu'y a plus de place pour les enfermer. C'est un docteur qui m'a dit ça.

- Je peux pas dire que ça m'enchantait d'avoir un fou comme voisin immédiat. Y a vingt-cinq pieds qui nous séparent, c'est pas beaucoup ! S'il fait une crise, je vais être le premier visé !

- Calmez-vous, monsieur Robert, il est pas nécessairement dangereux, c'est plus qu'il est pas là.

- Ouais, mais comment je peux le savoir s'il est dangereux ou pas ? Un fou, ça peut avoir l'air amical mais quand on se retourne, il peut aussi bien nous planter un cou-teau dans le dos.

- Écoutez-moi bien : ce que vous dites, je l'ai connu avec des gens dits « normaux », des gens qui m'ont terriblement déçue.

- Ouais. Mais est-ce que je pourrais, je sais pas, négocier une baisse de loyer ?

- Non, non, le bail couvre pas ça.

- Le propriétaire est quand même pas obligé de louer un appartement à ce monde-là ?

- Écoutez là vous...

- Oui.

- Je suis Constance Leblanc. Je suis présidente de la ligue ...

- Je vous suis pas.

- Laissez-moi parler ! On a eu une conversation vous et moi tantôt si je me rappelle bien. C'était à propos des coupures d'eau d'aujourd'hui. C'est ça ?

- Pas du tout ! Je sais pas ce qui vous prend. On dirait que vous êtes ailleurs.

- Justement, on y arrive. Monsieur Robert, je suis votre concierge depuis dix ans. Et je suis schizophrène. Mon mari aussi et, comme de raison, nos enfants le sont également. Le gros Normand au 206 qui attache son Harley après la borne-fontaine, c'est pareil. La petite madame Cardinal au 303, voulez-vous connaître son histoire ?

- Ça m'intéresse pas ! Je suis en train de réaliser que je vis dans un milieu particulier !

- Le temps est venu de mettre certaines choses au clair. Depuis les dix dernières années, cher monsieur, vous vivez entouré de malades mentaux. En plus, vous-même, vous êtes un cobaye.

- Un instant ! Comment ça que je suis un cobaye ? Vous pensez pas que vous exagérez ?

- Le gouvernement a subventionné ce projet-là pour savoir, entre autres, si à long terme une personne normale pouvait avoir une influence sur ... comment ils appellent ça encore ... une clientèle fragilisée. Je me trouve bonne de me rappeler de ce mot-là, neuf fois sur dix, je l'oublie.

- C'est bien beau mais les médecins, est-ce qu'ils se sont questionnés sur l'impact que pourrait avoir une clientèle fragilisée sur un honnête citoyen comme moi ?

- Ça, monsieur Robert, je le sais pas. Je suis pas au courant de tout.

- Qu'est-ce que vous faites là ?

- Je prends mes petites pilules jaunes. C'est pour calmer les voix. Vous savez, c'est pas si pire que ç'en a l'air. Des fois, j'entends la voix de ma mère qui est morte il y a quinze ans. Quand ma mère me parle, je lâche tout. Je me concentre. J'ai la chance de parler avec elle. Je veux pas manquer ça.

- C'est ça votre maladie ?

- En gros, oui. Pour moi, c'est pas vraiment une maladie, c'est plus comme mon monde à moi. Quand j'étais petite, j'ai toujours été fine avec les autres. Je ne voulais pas faire de mal à personne. On en a profité, on a abusé de ma naïveté. J'ai eu mal. Le monde normal, je ne l'ai jamais compris mais je suis certaine d'une chose : il n'est pas meilleur que le mien. Moi, la folle, je demande pas grand-chose à la vie, juste qu'on me laisse tranquille, c'est tout.

- Vous aimez quand même jouer au bingo ?

- J'y vais mais je ne joue pas vraiment. Je sauve les apparences. Je regarde les autres, ça me suffit.

- Vous devez vous sentir seule.

- Oui, j'ai des pensées qui reviennent tout le temps. Des obsessions. Les médecins m'ont dit que j'étais démente et que ça se guérit pas. Si j'avais eu une étincelle d'espoir, elle venait de s'éteindre complètement ! Ça voulait dire de ne plus jamais espérer mener une vie normale. Je sais que je comprends pas toujours ce qui se passe à l'entour de moi. Souvent, c'est flou. Quand les voix me parlent, je m'arrête pour les écouter. Je suis pas comme les autres, je l'ai compris il y a longtemps. Vous savez, monsieur Robert, ce qu'il y a de plus difficile à accepter ? L'injustice qui fait qu'on est exclus parce qu'on est malade.

- Je sais pas quoi vous dire, madame Leblanc, ce que vous venez de me dire me bouleverse.

- C'est correct. Votre voisin d'à côté qui fait du bruit, je vais m'en occuper. Vous avez ma parole : il ne vous dérangera plus.

- Je peux pas demander mieux.

- Vous savez, les locataires me parlent. Ils vous aiment bien même s'ils vous trouvent différent. Certains aimeraient vous proposer pour devenir leur représentant officiel.

- C'est un vote de confiance qui me touche mais il faudrait que j'y réfléchisse avant de vous donner une réponse.

- D'accord. Ce n'est peut-être pas le temps de vous le demander, mais allez-vous renouveler votre bail cette année ?

- Madame Leblanc, je n'ai aucune intention de déménager. Après tout, je suis bien ici.

- C'est parfait. L'ouvrage m'attend. Bonne journée.

- À vous aussi.



Imagination (from “Walking Together”, an upcoming memoir)

—Orenda Boucher-Curotte

Sock puppets, Barbies, War, and Records. That’s how I remember my youth. The 80s were a great era in terms of music and having a record player got me friends. So did the others. My cousins and I would put on little plays and skits for my mom and whoever happened to be visiting at that time. Sometimes it was scripted but, often, it was improv. We had the basic premise. King puts his daughter away until she’s ready to marry some god-awful man, and a prince comes to save her. If I wasn’t sure I was affected by Disney princess movies, writing this out cinched it. From there we would make up the story as we got along. I remember one moment, when the princess confronted her father, they had a yelling match in which she declared upon learning her fate, “No! No! NO!” to which the King replied, “Yes! Yes! YES!” I don’t remember if the princess ran off with the prince, but what I do remember is how much my mother laughed when we did it. She laughed and laughed so much that we had to pause the play. I don’t know why she found it so hilarious other than that this came from a 10-year-old I suppose, but for years she would recount that story with people visiting, a thing that happened regularly.

And yes, I do realize I basically just described Shrek, but alas I was ahead of my time. Barbies. Oof are there so many cute stories about this time when I became obsessed with being a fashion designer like Vera Wang. My cousins and I – I was related to practically all my Rez by birth or marriage – would use scotch tape or staples with fabric and Kleenex. You know all those drag queen shows where they create outfits with crazy items? Again, ahead of our time. We’d sneak into my mother’s fabric stash and cut pieces off in hidden places. She would see our end result, and never said a word whether she recognized them or not.

There was the essence of childhood amidst all the trauma of my early years. These fond memories are the ones in which I envision what it would be like to go back in time and play those games with my cousins and my friends so that I could imprint it in my brain better. Then I could revisit those thoughts as I heal. Unfortunately, the time machine has yet to be unveiled, and I work with these short snippets of memories. I want to feel like I’m there, in that moment with young me. Because despite these fractured memories, the ones that are clear as day, are the ones I carry with my pain every day. They are the ones that remind me not to trust others, be afraid to be vulnerable, and close myself off from the world. They are the ones where I felt abandoned by my mother, where I cooked for myself long before a kid should even use a stove because my mother was never home. They are the memories of me being beaten by my neighbor for weeks before anyone did anything about it. They are the memories of my father doing unspeakable things to me.

The good ones are of my mother and I being together in one another’s presence, doing mundane things like housework (I was the Queen of dusting) and road trips. Sometimes I remember her leaving me with my grandmother for a week at a time, and crying because I missed her. She was the only person I could trust at that age, and I think I’ve always been a mama’s girl. That’s why losing her has been so hard, and the pain too much to bear that I hid inside a bottle. Those memories are slowly fading away and I don’t want them to. I want to hang on to that memory of my mother giving us water balloons on my

birthday, which was in July, and then promising one of us a prize if we were the ones who collected the most balloon parts at the end. My mother was brilliant at that. Same as she would offer my friends and I a chance at a full-size chocolate bar if we could beat the other doing speed addition tests. To this day I have my entire multiplication table memorized.

They are also the ones of my playing with puppets and Barbies, with my records where my cousins and I coordinated intricate dance moves and had competitions to things like Salt N’ Pepa, Nineh Cherry, and, oddly enough, Chris De Burgh. They are in the ones where my brother would take cardboard and tape and make us all weapons. Then he would take thread with chalk and weave it between trees or on rainy days, throughout the hallway, and like the spies we were, we tried to get through the obstacle courses without chalk on our outfits. I always lost. You know, kind of like laser tag. Once again, ahead of our time.

Now I deal with the sadness using my sobriety. I want her to be proud of the daughter she raised, and I haven’t been the last few years. I am ready to be vulnerable, to let people in, to accept help when I need it and to take up less space with my problems. I’m ready to celebrate Christmas again, something I haven’t been able to do since she died. For her, Christmas was everything. It meant cooking and baking, family, celebration, and love. I miss those days and I’m ready to do them again. I’ll bring my mother with me in my heart, and she will sit across from me. I will make a plate of food for her, because that is what we do in my community for the people we love.

My community, Kahnawake, is a small reservation. The land we are on right now, Tiotiá:ke or Montreal as you probably know it, is Onkwehonwe land (the First Peoples in Kanien’ke:ha). This was the foundation of the last thing I remember fondly of her – my mother’s activism. She fought hard for our land, our traditions, and our language. I remember my mother was a warrior, challenging anyone she met with all their stereotypes. She wanted me to see the world as it really was – unequal and full of suffering – and help change that. I too now fight for my people, especially as I’ve been sober nearly two years and I have the energy and mental capacity to do it.

My sobriety is something my mother would have been proud of had she been alive when I started drinking. She never saw the ugly side of me, thank goodness, because she would have died in pain. She died still believing I was a successful version of her, a woman making changes in the world one student at a time. My sobriety is for me, but knowing how much my mother took care of others – she would know how hard I fought to get here.

Konnoronh:khwa (I love you, or literally translated, you are as precious to me as the rain.)



Wishes

—Ilsa

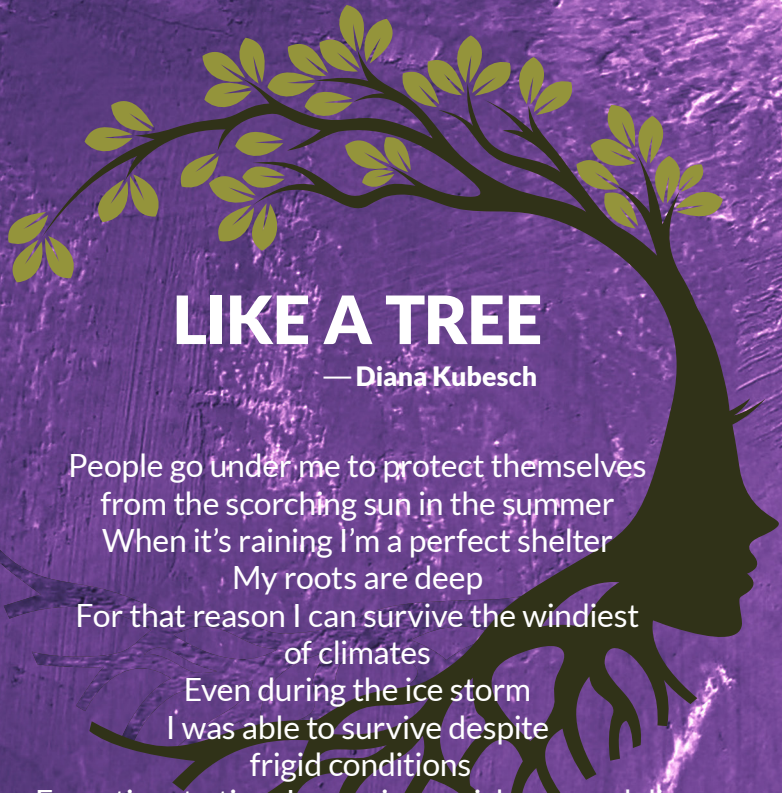
I close my eyes
And wonder why
I can't foresee
A life that's pain free
It feels so wrong
It has been too long
I want to run about
And give a loud shout
How relieved I'd feel
It would be surreal
All the tips and tools to cope
Anguish turned into hope
Sleepless nights racked with fear
Is relief of my pain almost near
To start a new day
In a normal kind of way
And make a plan
Like other people can
My wish to be free of pain
And dance without a care in the rain
To put to rest all my fears
Wipe away years of tears
Maybe it's just not meant to be
A life that is pain free
Stop the screaming in my head
Close my eyes and go to bed

—Painting By; Sandra Woods



LIKE A TREE

—Diana Kubesch



People go under me to protect themselves
from the scorching sun in the summer
When it's raining I'm a perfect shelter
My roots are deep
For that reason I can survive the windiest
of climates
Even during the ice storm
I was able to survive despite
frigid conditions
From time to time I experience sickness and die
but for the most part I'm a survivor
Underpins bolster me up when I need them to
Wildlife love to nestle in my branches
Grace me with your presence
Oh, mighty tree!
I yearn to be like you
Majestic and proud
I'm impressed by your splendor
Oh, I'm like you!

For The Love of Chemistry & Physics

—By Rhona Solomon, B.Sc., G.E.P

Who has made this universe?
The one that can never quench my thirst,
For knowledge and understanding,
To my parents I was quite demanding.

My love for chemistry is unmatched,
I'd love to see the electrons dance,
Nobel² was simply dynamite!
From his conscience came the Nobel Prize,
Of which many of those mentioned here are laureates.

Oppenheimer was the father of the A-bomb,
Fermi lent his name to Fermium,
Of course there was Millikan, and his oil-drop experiment,
Which determined the value of the electron charge³, I can just imagine his merriment.

Pierre and Marie Curie along with Antoine Becquerel
Won the Nobel Prize for radioactivity,
Marie would win again for her discovery,
Of the elements Polonium and Radium.

Rutherford discovered alpha (α) and beta (β) particles,
Shrödinger and his wave equation⁴
Of course there was Oppenheimer,
Father of the atomic bomb.

A precursor to the Enola Gay,
The name that spelt dismay.
The plane that delivered the deadly payload,
That caused those mushroom clouds, which did in turn cast a shroud.

Over the doomed cities, of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, with their death-producing profanity
They were to cause great deformity
To this unsuspecting population,
America's response to Pearl Harbor.

¹ Chemistry and physics were my passion when I was younger but if I were to choose, chemistry would win by a landslide. I wanted to study Chemistry but decided to pursue my degree in Clinical Exercise Physiology instead. It's not exactly Chemistry, but Exercise is Science.

² Alfred A. Nobel was the Swedish inventor who made enough money from manufacturing dynamite to found the Nobel Prizes in peace, literature, physics, chemistry, physiology and medicine.

³ Electron charge = 1.60×10^{-19} C where c is in Coulomb.

⁴ Erwin Shrödinger (1887-1961) described the electron as a wave (not a wave that travels through space like that of light, but rather a standing wave such as that of a violin string).

Who can forget Albert Einstein?
Arguably the best mind of all time,
He graced the Institute for Higher Learning at Princeton,
He also collaborated at Los Alamos, with most of the geni of his time.

Under the direction of J. Robert Oppenheimer, that was indeed the primer,
Two young physicists were to expire.
From exposure to super radioactive uranium,
The main ingredient for the atomic bomb.

Einstein helped us to take the Quantum⁵ leap
To Quantum Mechanics along with a whole heap,
Of other scientists⁶ of his day, he coined the phrase Wave-Particle Duality⁷,
Of course his real claim to fame, was his Theory of Relativity⁸

As well as the Photoelectric Effect⁹. What God given creativity!
As if he descended from deity. Pardon my blasphemy.
Sure came a long way from Alchemy,
Oh how I wish the Alchemists, could all see the light of today!

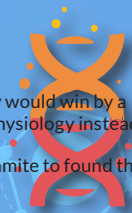
⁵ Quantum Theory states that the energy of an atom's electron shell is quantized i.e.; it must come in packets of certain energy value. These packets are called photons or quanta.

⁶ Einstein, Plank, Shrödinger, De Broglie, Bohr, Heisenberg (known for the Uncertainty Principle) their ideas lead to the development of the Quantum Theory.

⁷ Louis de Broglie showed that light behaves both as a wave and as a particle, wave-particle duality ($\lambda=h/mv$) where h is Plank's constant ($=6.63 \times 10^{-34}$ J/s), m is for mass and v is for velocity. The product mv is called momentum.

⁸ Einstein's Theory of Relativity (which showed that space and time are relative to each other) states simply and eloquently, that $E=MC^2$ where E stands for energy, M is for mass and C stands for the speed of light which is equal to 3.0×10^8 m/s.

⁹ The Photoelectric Effect is observed when the energy of radiation observed in matter causes electric charge.



$$E=mc^2$$





Lancement du troisième Cd de MusiArt: Résilience

C'est dans la joie et l'enthousiasme que s'est déroulé le lancement du troisième CD de MusiArt intitulé Résilience au théâtre Plaza de la rue Saint-Hubert le 12 octobre dernier.

— Benoit Bolduc

On se souviendra que ce lancement qui devait avoir lieu le 25 mai dernier au théâtre du couvent Bon Pasteur avait dû être annulé dû à un incendie majeur qui a complètement détruit les étages supérieurs de l'établissement. Mais qu'à cela ne tienne, le découragement fit rapidement place à la résilience. Tous, les membres de la chorale, le groupe de musiciens

accompagnateurs, mais surtout Dany Bouchard, et Julie Mignier-Laurin ont redoublé d'efforts pour que le spectacle ait lieu coûte que coûte et qu'il fasse oublier les démêlées avec les compagnies d'assurance, les pertes de matériel et la tristesse qui a suivi l'annulation du concert.

Et ce fut tout un spectacle : quatorze chansons avec, en fond de scène, sur

écran géant, les photos de Jennifer MacKlary, une membre de la chorale, un éclairage reflétant l'atmosphère de chacune des chansons, mais surtout un public complètement gagné à la cause de la lutte en faveur du mieux-être des individus frappés par la maladie mentale. Comme le mentionnait Dany Bouchard, qui dirige la chorale avec Julie Mignier-Laurin, lors d'une entrevue et aussi lors de sa présentation avant le spectacle : « Ce soir nous renaissions de nos cendres. C'est le cas de le dire. Après ce que nous avons traversé, c'est le temps de relaxer et de se réjouir. »

Les membres de cette chorale ainsi que tous les musiciens sont des patients externes de l'Hôpital Général de Montréal et ont écrit toutes les chansons exécutées le soir du 12 octobre.

Le processus de composition comme l'explique Dany rappelle beaucoup le remue-méninges (brain storming). « Une nouvelle chanson est le résultat d'une idée, d'un poème, ou d'une bribe de mélodie amené par un des membres de la chorale auquel vient s'ajouter d'autres paroles, lignes mélodiques, idées d'arrangement émises lors de sessions de (brain storming). » Par la suite Dany et Julie, et parfois d'autres musiciens, ou l'auteur même de l'idée originale, vont travailler à l'élaboration d'une mélodie qui sera soumise à l'ensemble des membres de la chorale. Une fois la chanson terminée on passe à l'enregistrement en studio avec Dany qui guide un à un les chanteuses

et les chanteurs. Ensuite viennent l'édition, le mixage, le mastering du CD et le tour est joué. Le produit final, quant à lui, sera inséré dans une pochette, encore là, choisie par l'ensemble des membres de la chorale, et comme étape finale, le spectacle. Tout ce processus demande une somme fabuleuse de travail de la part de Dany et de Julie qui, pour sa part, donne le meilleur d'elle-même lors des répétitions de groupe et des sessions individuelles de coaching et participe, bien ancrée à son piano, aux arrangements des chansons.»

C'est pourquoi le produit final est apprécié du public. Va pour la qualité musicale de MusiArt, mais disons-le, l'auditoire ce soir-là rassemblait, pour la très grande majorité, des parents, des amis et des membres du département de psychiatrie de l'Université McGill. Tous ces gens présents au concert ont jadis soutenu de près ou de loin un ou plusieurs membres de la chorale ou du groupe de musiciens dans les moments les plus sombres de leurs crises et les ont vu souffrir. C'est pour cette raison que l'enthousiasme et la solidarité manifestés sans aucune retenue le 12 octobre dernier était tangible et venait directement du cœur. C'est ce qui a fait du lancement de Résilience un moment inoubliable.

Photo by —Tldav



Woman with headscarf ©
—Ilana Shamir

Poème à mes trois petits-enfants, en les regardant...

Des sourires qui vous traversent le coeur,
Des yeux qui vous remplissent de bonheur,
De p'tites voix qui vous procurent,
Des heures entières qui vous ennorgueillissent
de fleurs, de saveurs et de douceur.

Grand-Maman

Lison xxx

D'un grand amour, l'un des
plus grand

—Lise Mainville



LA VIE SANS LA VIE

—André Dumaine

Ma mère avait l'habitude de me répéter : « Fais attention à ta précieuse santé. » J'acquiesçais par un oui machinal. Quand la santé ne pose pas problème, on n'y pense pas. C'est comme l'électricité. Tant que le système fonctionne, on le tient pour acquis. Pour l'être humain, dénoncer ce qui cloche semble tout à fait normal. Nous avons une propension plus grande à nous plaindre de notre sort qu'à l'apprécier.

En 1998, la tempête du verglas a sévi une trentaine de jours dans certaines régions du Québec. L'émoi général atteignait un paroxysme ! Mais si cette foutue de tempête avait duré quatorze ans, on aurait dit quoi ? À la fin, rien, peut-être. Le temps passe sur tout. Ceux qui auraient écopé durant toutes ces années auraient été perçus comme des survivants, des modèles de résilience. Ce qui est sûr, c'est qu'après, ces gens auraient vu la vie différemment. Ils auraient été marqués. Les moments d'adversité qu'ils auraient connus plus tard, si intenses soient-ils, auraient eu moins d'impact sur eux.

J'ai connu le malheur, la détresse. J'en ai bavé au-delà de mes capacités, je suis tombé, je me suis relevé pour replonger, j'ai abandonné puis j'ai

eu la chance d'être sauvé. Quatorze ans de montagnes russes, de chutes suivies de remontées, d'obscurité et de lumière, l'enfer, l'assurance d'y revenir malgré les éclaircies passagères. Je ne compte pas les fois où je me suis retrouvé au plancher avec un vague instinct de survie, tel un boxeur sonné qui se relève au compte de 9 pour éviter de perdre le combat. Je n'ai pas donné beaucoup de coups. Je n'en avais pas la force. Je m'accrochais en n'espérant plus rien. Mourir aurait été une délivrance.

Si on fait un survol des dix dernières années (2002-2012), j'ai été éprouvé par deux maladies potentiellement mortelles, le cancer et l'infarctus. Lorsque, tour à tour, les spécialistes m'ont informé de mon état, j'ai accueilli la nouvelle avec détachement : « Ah bon. » De fait, je n'ai pas ressenti d'émotion particulière, ni d'angoisse, ni de tressaillement dans la voix ; j'affichais un calme déconcertant et mon pouls devait battre à 110 pulsations par minute comme d'habitude. Je ne suis pas du genre à m'affoler ni à m'attendrir sur mon sort. Je ne suis ni un surhomme ni un psychopathe. Tout au plus, un peu des deux. Ce détachement qui représente peut-être un pas vers la sagesse s'explique aussi par le fait

que rien ne pouvait m'atteindre. La mort n'était pas une inconnue ; j'avais connu pire : la vie sans la vie. Certains pourront penser que je fanfaronne et que mes mots ne font que révéler un mécanisme de défense face aux épreuves. Ce serait oublier l'essentiel.

François Mitterrand a présidé aux destinées de la France au cours de deux septennats. La longévité de sa présidence est inégalée. Quatorze ans, c'est une période respectable. En 1985, j'ai commencé à souffrir d'une sale maladie qui m'a laissé dans un état de vulnérabilité et de détresse plusieurs mois par année. Ce n'est qu'en 1999 que j'ai pu la surmonter grâce à un médecin spécialiste, une autorité en pharmacologie, un petit homme frêle venu du Moyen-Orient, peu porté sur la parole mais d'une rigueur et d'une compétence professionnelle admirables. C'est lui qui m'a guéri de cette dépression qui avait pesé sur moi comme une chape de plomb et qui, il faut bien le dire, m'avait conduit à une tentative de suicide.

Au cours de cette période atroce de ma vie, je travaillais, j'avais la garde partagée de mon fils et je devais organiser ma vie comme tout le monde. C'était déjà pas mal. Mais lorsque vous dormez deux heures par nuit pendant des semaines, que votre concentration et votre mémoire sont mauvaises, que rien ne vous intéres-

se, que seuls des scénarios négatifs occupent vos pensées, que votre libido est inexistante, que vous n'entretenez plus aucun espoir de recouvrer la santé, que vous êtes angoissé, soucieux, affaibli physiquement, que vous espérez ne croiser aucun de vos voisins, parents ou amis de peur que l'on ne remarque votre état, imaginez tout ça et prenez votre attaché case pour aller rencontrer un avocat pour discuter d'une enquête complexe. J'ai fait ça. Comment j'ai pu ? L'acharnement, la pugnacité d'une teigne ? Je ne le sais pas.

Les dépressions ne sont pas faciles à guérir. J'ai fait de la thérapie. J'ai appris certaines choses importantes sur moi qui ont façonné qui je suis. L'exercice fut utile quoique très long d'autant plus qu'il n'a pas empêché les rechutes. Alors, on recourt aux antidépresseurs sauf que c'est un peu la jungle. Avec la meilleure volonté du monde, le patient et le médecin sont condamnés à faire de multiples essais. Dans mon cas, la découverte de la potion magique a pris quatorze années avant de voir le jour.

Alors, quand vous avez traversé une épreuve semblable où vous vous êtes cassés la gueule des centaines de fois avant de retrouver l'éden que représente la vie ordinaire, cela ne peut faire autrement que de vous changer en profondeur. Je n'aime

pas la vie inconditionnellement. Elle s'est comportée envers moi comme une salope, une foutue garce; alors, pour la reconnaissance, elle repassera. Je ne veux pas donner l'impression que je suis malheureux aujourd'hui, ce n'est pas le cas. Ma vie a changé pour le mieux. Mais il ne faut pas me demander d'oublier. Cela m'est impossible. Autre trait aimable de ma personnalité : je suis rancunier.

Cette parenthèse cauchemardesque a failli m'emporter. C'est envers elle que j'entretiens une aversion et une acrimonie qui demeureront toujours. Ma force est celle du survivant. Elle n'est pas à dédaigner. Quiconque a survécu à un tel abysse est prêt à affronter qui que ce soit, quoi que ce soit. Difficile de l'impressionner, difficile de l'intimider et j'avoue qu'avec un caractère prompt comme le mien, le cocktail peut exploser. Voire dégénérer. Et je ne changerai pas.

Me suis-je laissé emporter par un tsumami avec, pour seul réflexe, celui de rester vivant ou me suis-je battu contre elle un couteau entre les dents ? De ces quatorze années, les souvenirs qui me restent sont ceux d'avoir souffert, d'avoir respecté les consignes médicales, d'avoir dérapé complètement avec la crainte de tout perdre.

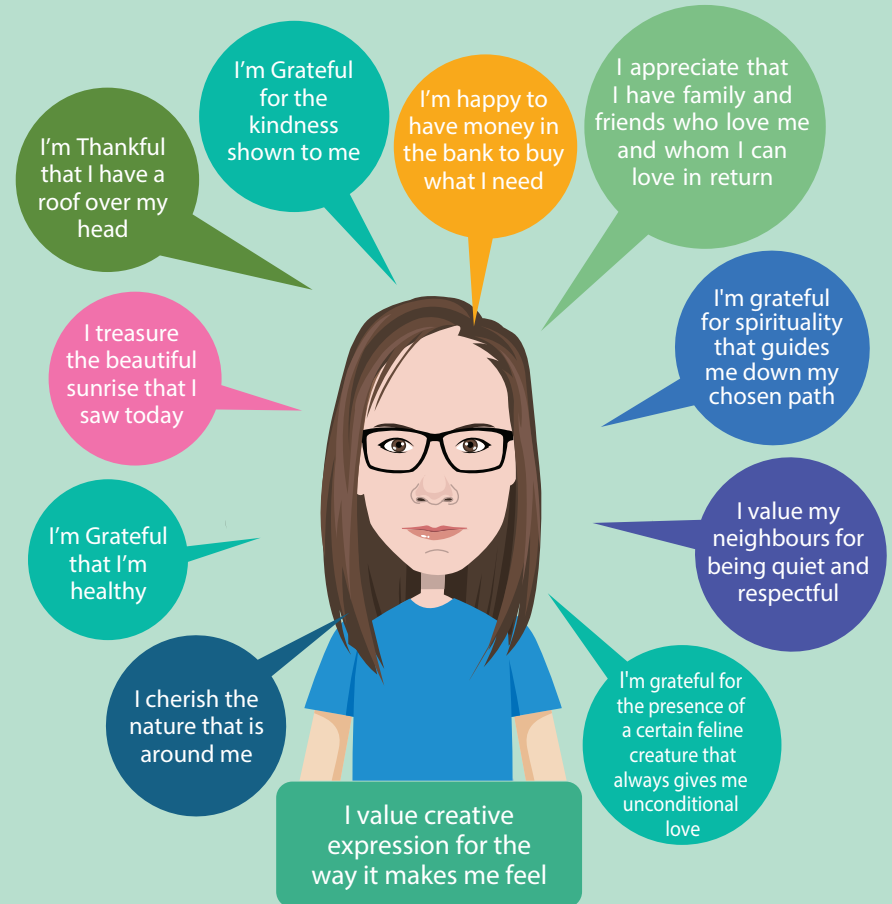
Je ne glorifie pas la dépression. Ce seul mot me fait horreur. Toutefois,

il serait faux de croire que la maladie n'a pas eu certains aspects positifs sur moi. J'ai vu des dizaines de malades hypothéqués par et pour la vie, fragiles, marginalisés, seuls, des hommes et des femmes qui demeuraient, malgré leur mal, des êtres humains attachants, démunis mais généreux, qui s'encourageaient entre eux sans se faire d'illusion. J'ai aimé ces gens-là. J'ai une grande compassion envers eux. J'aurais tant souhaité qu'ils gagnent leur bataille, qu'ils aient ma chance. On ne guérit pas toutes les formes de cancer ; il en va de même pour les maladies mentales.

La dépression permet de longs espaces de réflexion même si la lucidité est précaire. Elle déforme tout dont l'estime de soi. Elle altère le jugement et la perception de la réalité. Mais les autres n'avaient pas à payer pour mon état. J'en ai toujours été conscient. Sous ce rapport, je crois avoir été correct. Je n'étais pas la personne la plus stimulante à fréquenter mais la maladie n'a pas eu d'effet négatif dans mes rapports avec les autres.

Le soutien des proches a été important pour moi. Parents et amis m'ont offert un appui appréciable. Je m'en voudrais de ne pas souligner le support constant de ma sœur de Marie et de son conjoint, Jacques, durant ces temps troublés.

Gratitude List



I consider myself privileged to be bathed in all these gifts and each person has all of these in varying degrees without even knowing it. But, sometimes it just takes realizing it to help us feel better inside our heart! I'm grateful and eternally blessed for this opportunity to share my thoughts and feelings with you!

—Diana Kubesch

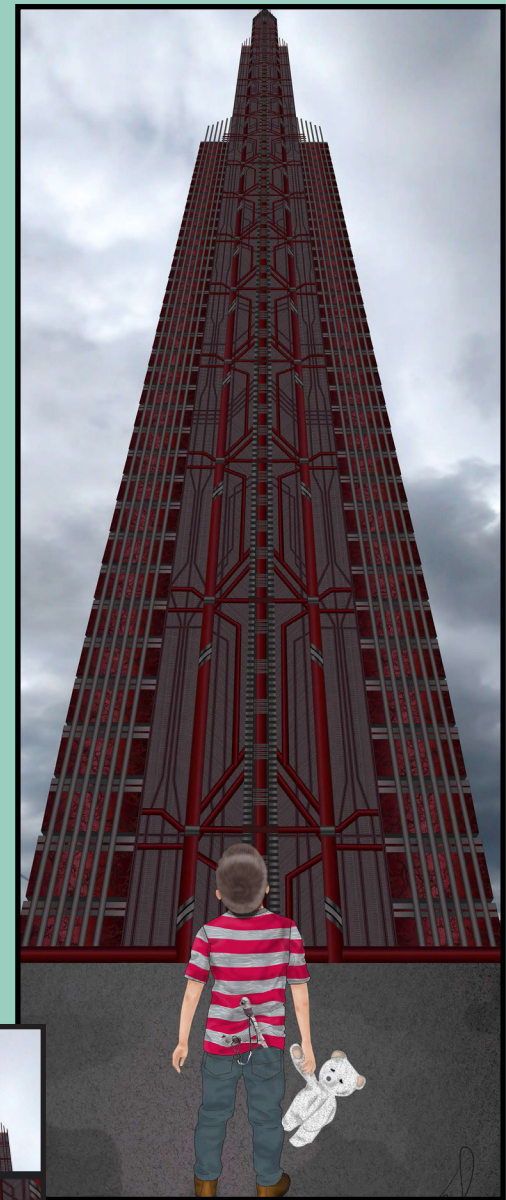


Essence

—Denise Sarmento



“**Salvati**” depicts a character who faces psychological warfare (represented by the burning house-the self) but who chooses to confront all that was/is and fights to embrace and save his essence. (symbolically depicted by the teddy bear).



“**David and Goliath**” David who is in similar situation as the previous, defeats a much stronger adversary armed with his teddy bear- all that was and is. Symbolic of his refusal to abandon himself and his most cherished beliefs (again essence).

ROADSIDE PICNIC

A book essay by: —Andrey Klyatskiy

“The Roadside Picnic” is a Soviet science-fiction novel written by the brothers Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. It deals with many themes and ideas, some of which we will be exploring in this little essay. But first things first, a little summary. In the novel, a super-powerful alien race visits earth at six different areas which are subsequently simply called “Zones.” These zones of visitation are in a way contaminated patches of land. Physical and chemical anomalies become common place, strange new plants start growing, and most importantly, the aliens left some mysterious and technologically advanced objects behind. Those artifacts range from some sort of strange, physics-defying containers, to bracelets that help stimulate human organism, to self-replicating infinite batteries. Due to the strange phenomena that happen in the Zones, it is extremely dangerous for humans to go there. Yet, we still try to uncover the quasi-magical objects from the Zones. Some, such as scientists, do it legally. And some, called “Stalkers” do it illegally, and sell it on the black market. The general protagonist of the novel is Redrick “Ginger” Schuhard, a man who in the beginning works for both the light and the dark side as he is a stalker by night and

by day works with one Russian scientist who studies the Zone in the city called Harmont, which is fictional, but from the book we can surmise that it’s situated somewhere in North America.

One of the most blatant themes bordering on the cosmic horror genre that is explored in the novel is that of human insignificance in the grand scale of the universe. One of the characters, a professor of science, explains that we don’t know why the aliens visited or will they come again, but most likely, their visit was nothing more than a pitstop. Thus, the origin of the novel’s title: for aliens it was a roadside picnic (a common practice in the Soviet Union). They came, did whatever they needed, left their trash, and left. We are mere ants scrounging in said trash. It can be easily exemplified by one of the most common artifacts found in the Zones: an “Empty.” It is two copper discs with “a space of a foot and a half between them” and nothing else, just air, yet the discs stay opposing each other no matter how much effort you take to separate them. The Russian scientist, Kirill, in the beginning of the novel examines a bunch of those and gets discouraged as we don’t know what they’re for. That is until Redrick tells him of a “full” “Empty” that

he found and stashed in the Zone. From the description of that object, we can deduce that they’re some sort of alien container. Once they got emptied, they were thrown away, again reminding us that these super-advanced technologies are nothing but trash to the aliens. The analogy I made when I read about the empties was one of an empty juice box, dropped and forgotten on the grass.

However, no matter how great the alien technologies are, they don’t bring the change that we expect. We always imagine that an alien visitation will unlock new technologies that will change human lives for the better, in a way they will elevate us to a better state of being. However, Roadside Picnic takes a more sombre approach to this idea. Our technology might change, but we will still remain human in a way that the rich will become richer, and the poor will still be miserable. The novel takes the span of some 20 years and from the beginning, to the end, human society doesn’t change much. Those in power, and those who are rich still are. And the poorer folks still struggle to make ends-meet. We can see it in Redrick who risks his life to go into the Zone to get a few artifacts and sell them to make enough money to support his family. Yet throughout the novel, no matter how much he hates the Zone, and his life in general, he still goes out there, saying each time that it will be the last, and risks his life. Human society didn’t improve! However, we got cars now that work on infinite batteries.

[HEAVY SPOILERS FOR THE ENDING OF THE BOOK, SKIP TO LAST PARAGRAPH TO AVOID THEM]

And perhaps the reason we don’t improve is because we don’t know ourselves very well. We think of humanity as a great civilization that made so many achievements and that

are so evolved... Yet the same character who explains that the alien visitations were nothing but a roadside picnic, scolds us when we attribute human characteristics to aliens in the effort to understand them. We think too highly of ourselves, yet we don’t realize what our deepest desires really are. In the final section of the novel, Redrick and another stalker’s son, Arthur, goes again to the Zone to find perhaps the most impressive object yet: “the Golden Sphere.” Supposedly that artifact can fulfill any wish. However, Arthur’s father, Burbridge aka “the Vulture” tells Redrick an important detail: it fulfills only the deepest desires of a person. And so, after numerous perils, Arthur and Redrick find themselves before the “Golden Sphere.” Arthur runs to it, shouting “happiness for everyone, freedom, and no one left behind.” Yet something’s off. In the blink of an eye, Arthur is lifted and torn to shreds. He walked into an anomaly commonly called “The Meatgrinder.” But he didn’t just walk into it, Redrick purposefully didn’t tell him it was there, so that Arthur’s death opens a path for him to the Sphere. But once before the object, Redrick doesn’t know what to ask, as he walks to the Sphere, he says that he’s an animal, and tells it to look into his soul and decide what humanity gets out of it. Yet in his lack of understanding of his own desires he repeats Arthur’s last words: “Happiness for all, freedom, and no one left behind.”

And this is where it ends. What was actually Redrick’s deepest desire is unknown, just like he doesn’t know it himself. What happens to humanity after the text isn’t known either. The novel explores a number of other themes that I have no place to talk about here. But to conclude, I highly recommend the novel even if science fiction is not something you’re particularly interested in as The Roadside Picnic is so much more than that.

Une petite fille d'exception

—Benoit Bolduc

Allez, c'est aujourd'hui que ça se passe. Aujourd'hui tout le monde dehors, pas d'excuses, par le temps qu'il fait et cette chaleur, tout le monde à l'eau. Les patrons ne nous ont pas payé un week-end quatre étoiles dans un des plus beaux sites de villégiature au pays pour qu'on reste confiné toute la journée à boire du café et à se raconter les mêmes sornettes qui font la une de nos journées au bureau. Et cela vaut aussi pour toi Lucien. Le soleil, l'eau et le grand air c'est bon pour le moral.

- Je suis désolé ma belle Roxane mais l'eau et moi on ne fait pas bon ménage. C'est bien simple, je mets le bout du gros orteil dans l'eau bouillante et je me mets à grelotter. Non, moi je vais m'étendre dans une chaise longue, enveloppé dans ma grande serviette de plage et vous regarder vous ébrouer comme des enfants bienheureux. Pauvre Lucien, c'était bien mal connaître Roxane. Elle avait plus d'un tour dans son sac. Elle s'était jurée de voir Lucien dans la piscine coûte que coûte ce jour-là. Pourquoi ? Nul ne le savait, sauf que depuis le retour de Lucien au bureau elle en avait fait son souffre-douleur. Aussi, elle s'était munie de petites pilules roses communément appelées rivotril et en avait déversé non pas une, ni deux, mais bien trois dans le verre de jus d'ananas que Lucien s'était servi au petit déjeuner afin d'être certaine que celui-ci dorme dur sur sa chaise longue alors que tous les autres s'activeraient dans la piscine.

Tout le monde était au courant que Lucien avait vécu un épisode dépressif

qui l'avait tenu loin du bureau pendant quelque six mois et qu'il n'avait jamais plus été le même par après. Et avec ça, il avait perdu pas mal de poids, d'où son refus de donner son corps amaigri en spectacle dans une piscine.

Et à peine quelques dix minutes après que tout le monde se soit amusé ferme, Roxane et deux autres collègues s'approchèrent de Lucien qui dormait à poings fermés. Roxane l'attrapa sous le bras gauche, Jean-Luc le saisit par l'épaule gauche et Paul se chargea des jambes. Ils le trimballèrent quelques pas et tout de go le précipitèrent à toute volée dans l'eau de la piscine. L'eau froide réveilla Lucien d'un coup sec comme celui d'un coup de marteau sur la tête. Il lui fallut un peu de temps à reprendre son balan, mais resta paralysé, figé de froid, le visage blanc et les yeux écarquillés comme s'il venait d'être frappé par la foudre. Tous dans la piscine étaient stupéfaits. Jamais ils ne s'étaient imaginé Lucien maigre à ce point. On l'aurait dit sorti directement d'Auschwitz. Mais qu'est-ce qu'il avait dû souffrir pour en arriver là. Ce fut Roxane qui, la première fit quelques pas vers l'arrière, puis Jean-Luc et ensuite Paul. Tous les autres se sentaient mal à l'aise pour Lucien qui était resté bouche bée. Il était tétanisé. Il tremblait de froid et de honte. Quelques secondes plus tard, une petite fille s'avança vers lui, et lui dit en lui prenant la main : « Venez avec moi monsieur, allez venez, n'ayez pas peur. » Et Lucien lui emboîta le pas sans mot dire. Ils sortirent de la piscine et se dirigèrent vers une petite

plage attenante à un petit lac non loin de la piscine et entouré d'arbres clairsemés. Tenant toujours Lucien par la main, la petite fille vint s'asseoir à proximité d'un très grand château de sable. Elle invita Lucien à s'asseoir près du château tandis qu'elle prenait place du côté opposé: « Vous voyez, dit-elle, c'est là que j'habite, et vous, si vous le voulez bien, vous pourriez venir habiter avec moi. Ce château est beaucoup trop grand pour moi toute seule. Vous pourriez habiter les deux tours de derrière tandis que moi j'habiterais les deux tours de devant. Vous y seriez bien là, tranquille, avec des soucis bien entendu, mais des soucis et des ennuis pas trop gros, juste assez pour vous garder éveillé. Vous n'auriez plus à vous baigner dans l'eau froide. Oh, s'exclama tout à coup la petite, vous savez l'heure qu'il est, maman va s'inquiéter, le soleil commence à baisser. Je dois rentrer.

Non, dit Lucien, déjà ? On commence à peine à se connaître.

Oui je sais, mais maman est toujours très inquiète quand je ne suis pas rentrée et qu'il fait noir.

C'est bon alors, au revoir.

Au revoir. À demain, peut-être, lança Lucien.

Oui, à demain, répondit la petite. » Lucien en était encore abasourdi. Qui était donc cette petite ? Puis, à un vieux monsieur portant chapeau de paille et bermuzda qui passait tout près il demanda : « Vous connaissez cette petite qui était là, avec moi, près du château de sable ?

- Mais si, tout le monde la connaît dans le coin, c'est la petite Justine Dubreuil. Elle est très gentille, mais avec quelque chose en plus, de l'amour pour les gens, tous les gens, ou du moins presque.

- Et bien, ajouta Lucien, vous savez, cette petite, aujourd'hui, m'a extirpé des griffes de l'enfer. »





Liminality—The spaces

Between the layers that splintered.
Between the shadows that lie down.
Between the rocks that rolled.
Between the burst of a leaf.
Between horizons and thresholds beyond.

—Linda Christie



"I'm telling you, it must be amazing up there! I haven't seen anyone come back down."

—Cecelia Vanier

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