

STREET CAKE

experimental writing magazine

issue 74

part 1



@józsef bíró

contents

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COVER józsef bíró – in remembrance of tibor hajas

fizza abbas – just stop

doug bolling – equation 005

rebecca burton – in the beginning white

elizabeth m castillo - beneath the waves of tamarin bay

yuan changing - vancouver in rain

seth crook – look inside

shiksha s dheda – in every intrusive thought

roy duffield – that is why rivers change their course

peyton ellas – house full of bugs

federico federici – warten auf god

ameek – never have i ever

mark goodwin – i

jasmine kaur - not even the image of a poem

michelle moloney king – 6am shannon yanks

elee kraljii gardiner – woolf cut

martha lane - a-z of skimming stones

Just Stop!

You can't write
 You can't you can't write can't write
 write you can't write you can't write
 You can't write
 You can't write You can't write you can't write you can't write
 You can't write you can't write you can't write you can't write you can't write you can't write
 You can't write you can't write You can't write
 You can't
 write

and it doesn't stop,
 the cassette plays in an infinite loop,
 (infinite!! is this too bold a choice here?)
 forwards, backwards, forwards, backwards,
 just a tape loop,
 no reel to put a stop,
 i am always taken back
 to where it all started from -
 a loop.

i want to change the cassette,
 or play another song,
 sometimes, "i am a creep, i am a weirdo"
 or maybe a skyscraper by demi lovato,
 or if i'm feeling too gleeful, how about brooklyn nights by gaga,
 but it all gets lost.. my desire to focus on words torments
 my love for frivolity,

like i am made of glass
like I AM MADE of glass,
groove lost in simile.
the voices surge me forward
and urge me to not leave the place of
my their being.
i trip on the floor, hit by the objects
but they don't stop following,
i always have to choose between a pile of blank papers
and a tape recorder placed on my writing desk;

the pen moves and the loop continues.

equation .005

a coincidence among the
assembled

the uncertain wind
 just there
I remember you from times
 in France

we the vagabonds in loosened mode

All by chance
the vectors awry

How could we have known
what the sudden door revealed

I have lived with words you
 said then

how they swarm over the vacancies
how they buy & sell you before
 you can write it down
so much unknown
a sudden wind off the point

as though we two had
 never existed.

a belonging to th e
 not w ghost arms
 tbut two sets of arms /
 not ghosts in the as in fence, by
 belonging the
 she slipped of foxes
 through the where
 the and dark gap
 p a s s a g e
 to the dead but ghosts / of
 generations
 almost alive, coming
 forwards
 out of the temotional range
 that is human (my) body
 erremembers those
 arms cressing me wit h
 light

Beneath the Waves of Tamarin Bay

I found some
things you wouldn't
believe what I found
as I held myself beneath the storm /
beneath that raging / murky blue that knows to break/so innocently along the shore /
I found a continent to itself /
I found my pride and the fault line
that connects this small island / to the rest of the world / I found
diamonds and I found / myself down there /
thrashing / struggling to breathe /
Beneath those waves cradled by / the curve of the beach I found broken glass /
still sharp from days before /
I found more regrets than I care to admit /
I found blood spilled /
black and brown blood / of my people that even sharks
respectful as they are of injustice / and
not their own / From beneath those waves I looked up / I looked up / I
on a board from which / unwieldy /I will never be untethered /
Looked past the children and their peals of laughter / past the women and their bodies that could scream no more /
past the thick coat of oil that clung / slick to the surface and I saw the southern sun and its struggles / battling to reach me / to take purchase on the dusty seafloor /
saw half my face in the turquoise sky /
I and felt the coral clutching my heel / and the pull of the earth beneath the sand / and the salt at the core / calling me home

Vancouver in Rain

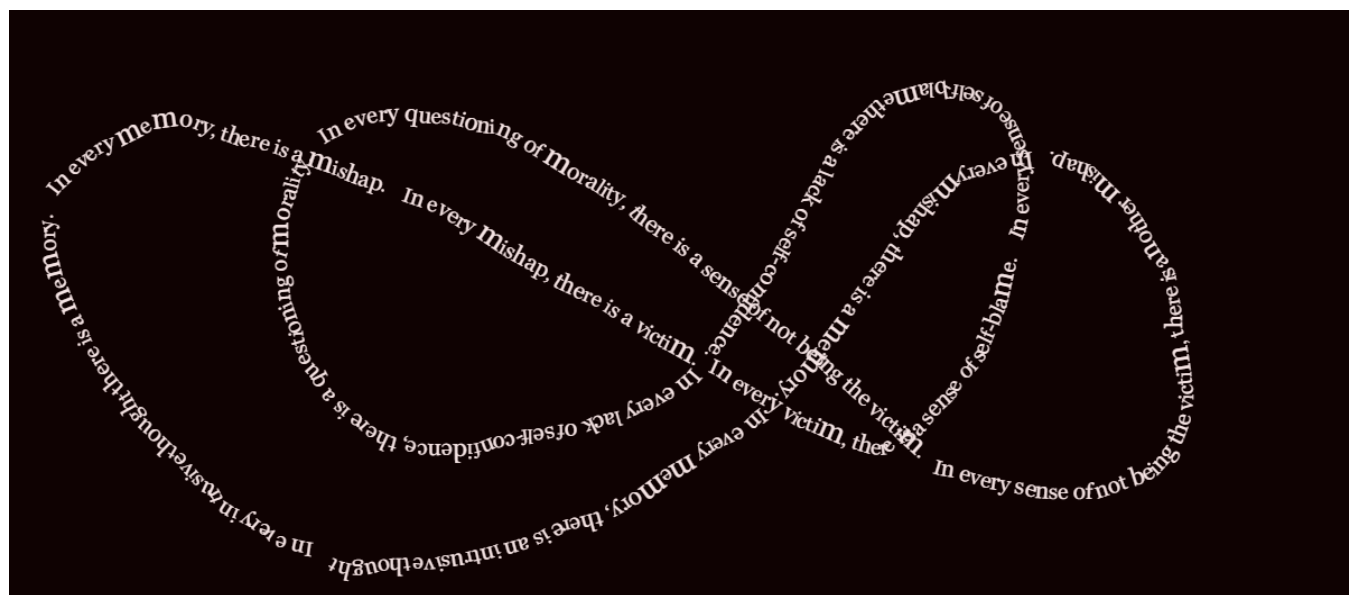
Vancouver, how they sometimes hate you
being so wet! You could leave all
your lower content in dark & cold, with yesterday's
newspapers, flyers, flowers, leaves & even
tales pickled in the pools or puddles full of vices & viruses
among unseen ghosts & monsters
as love & pain flow along runaway rainwaters &
every wing gets too heavy to flap with whims or wishes while
the whole city is taking a shower as if to prepare for a ritual, &
me? I am just standing dry close to the window
watching

Look Inside

streetc**a**ke maga**Z**ine

CWS: MENTAL ILLNESS, DEPRESSION, OCD, ANXIETY

In every intrusive thought, there is a memory



why rivers change their courses

Change [REDACTED]
Over time [REDACTED] create resistance, forcing [REDACTED] to move [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] an area of higher resistance and [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] that is why rivers change their courses.

House Full of Bugs

Mara wanted to move.

“We can spray, seal up cracks.”

“Too much work.”

Earwigs under damp cloths. Spiders in corners. Beetles lumbered across the floor.

“Moving is work too. It’s spring. Things will settle.”

Fleas invaded, took over the dogs, then our ankles, then the bed. Ants wove a trail from under the cabinets to the recycling bin across the room.

Mara left while I was at work. On the counter, next to a pile of insect carcasses: “Don’t follow me.”

A few months later, Abby moved in. She even brought a few bugs with her.

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Never Have I Ever

Stumbled upon a peacock.

Whitepeople drink. Tell us.

A walking rainbow only sold on select shades.

(Beat.)

The exotic ran from me too

(Beat.)

ran for me

(Beat.)

too as iridescent beads we smuggled as children

constellation never seen.

Seems beautiful.

Like the guy who's cocky about his cock.

(We exchange laughter

coloured pussies

trade with whiter cocks.)

What is peacock?

noun

/'pi:kɒk/

galvanizing blue cheese on a wreath of a nation

that doesn't sell the pheromone as freely as I'm used to.

I

was a house I held

my cell ar un
til i fell in

with the wind & a

dancing tree

not even the image of a poem

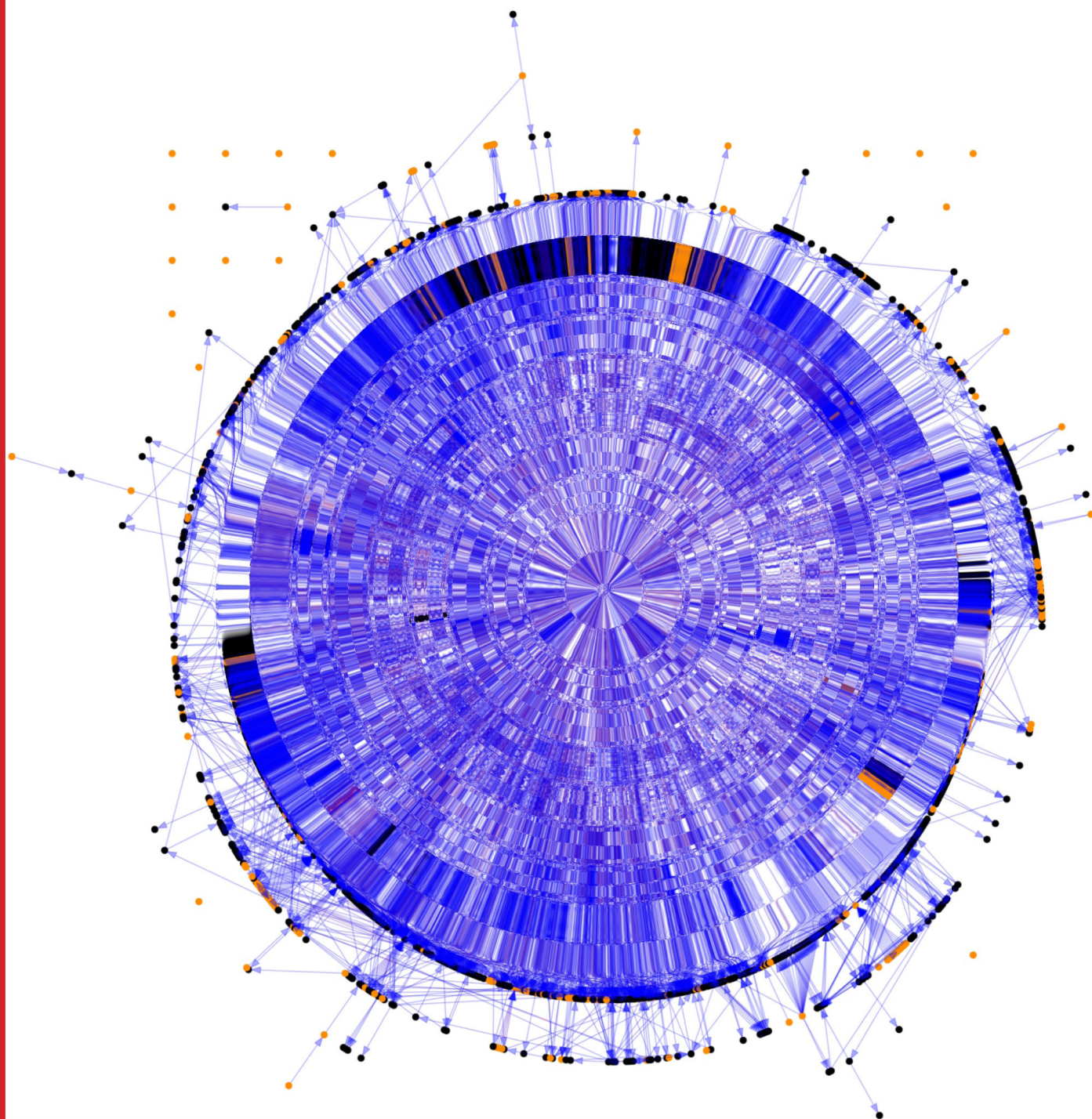
this

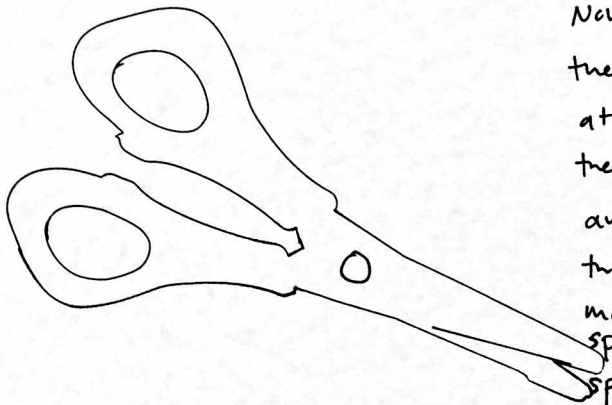
is

not

a

poem.





'But now the circle breaks. Now the current flows. Now we rush faster than before. Now passions that lay in wait down there in the dark weeds which grow at the bottom rise and pound us with their waves. Pain and jealousy, envy and desire, and something deeper than they are, stronger than love and more subterranean. The voice of action speaks. Listen, Rhoda (for we are con-

spirators,
with
our
hands
on
the
cold
urn)

to the
casual

of hands, quick, the voice
They speak now without troubling on scent.
their sentences. They talk, any to finish
as lovers use. An imperious a little language such

A-Z of skimming stones

A is for angle. Apparently, mine's no good. A is also for Adam; Adam is not my dad.

B is for bonding. Bonding over bounces, tiny bridges being built, immediately sinking.

C is for calm. Stones travel furthest when the water's smooth like glass. Mum told me, no stormy surf today.

D is for Dad. He taught me how to skim before.

E is for engagement. Mum said yes. Yes to Adam. Adam who is not my dad.

F is for flat, flick, and fly. Freedom for a second, if I'm lucky two or three. Nothing but counting the flit and the flutter. Each rock a clumsy butterfly.

G is for grateful. Thank you, Adam, *if* I'm feeling generous.

H is for hops. Mum hops in the cool water, howls and shrieks. Splashes and giggles. She's flirting. She's brought a picnic. H is for homely. A homemade happy family.

I is for I eat my sandwich traipsing up and down the beach, filling up my bucket. Sand itching between my toes, getting between my teeth.

J is for just. Just do this for Mum. It's only for a few years. J is for jetty, legs like cobwebs. It reminds me of a bedtime story Dad used to read, the one about a girl whose parents don't come back, but she walks out onto a jetty and hears the whales sing and she doesn't feel alone anymore. We don't get whales here.

K is for kinked knuckles closed around the pebbles. Primed, pulled back. You've got the knack, kid. Adam winks, thinks this is my first time.

L is for level, low and close to the water. Squatting further than is necessary, Adam scores eleven, leaps for joy. Like he's not a loser. L is for learning to live with this loser.

M is for Mum. She seems happy. Merrily, she has a go. Two jumps; amazed, she cajoles us into high fives. Cheeks rosy, she mumbles 'this is nice'.

N is for nice. We're told not to use the word nice at school. It's bland, doesn't mean much. I suppose, Adam is quite nice.

O is for open. Open hand as Adam stacks his best, saved-them-til-last, stones so I can have another go.

P is for promise. A palm-sized pebble promise to Mum that I won't tell Adam I'm actually quite good at this. I can spot the perfect skimmer from nearly ten feet away. Nineteen hops is my personal best. Celebrated one sunny evening, Dad up to his knees, facing the incoming tide.

Q is for quickly; giving it my best shot as Adam's back is turned, stealing a hug from Mum. Seventeen. I hear Dad cheering, in the distance. As if he's underwater. As if he's not really here.

R is for release. Let the skimmers go, watch them rupture the surface, drift down to the seabed. Let them rest, whisper goodbye.

S is for salt. Salt-crusted shins and salt-streaked cheeks. Salty attitude ignored, drowned with vinegar, and served with a deep-fried peace offering.

T is for time to go. The tide has taken the beach. Only a strip of sand is left. Like a nearly finished biscuit.

U is for U-shaped fingers – Adam says that's the perfect shape for skimming. Dad used to call it a backwards C. U is for backwards C-shaped fingers clutching one last rock. Oval, smooth as brushed velvet, worn down by time, grit and force. U is uncooperative, unwilling, unready.

V is for vanilla. Ice cream slurped on the way back to Adam's Ford Mondeo.

W is for winding back. Following the snake of the coast, the water to our right. The car filled with words, Mum laying them like bricks until I can't move. Telling me what a wonderful day we've had.

X is for X-rays. Dad had some x-rays. Expected to last longer than he did.

Y is for yes. She said yes and that's that.

Z is for the zigs and the zags of the swifts or the swallows across the darkening sky. Fleece zips creeping up under our chins. I bury my nose into the sun-faded fuzz and tell myself I can still smell Dad there, stitched into the fabric of his old jacket. I tell him I've saved him the best skimmer I've ever seen, and slide my hand down into his pocket, not quite ready to let go.