

The Red/White Plays:

A Playwriting and Dramaturgy Showcase

2019/2020

Editor: Gunes Agduk

Land Acknowledgement

The creators of these pieces take this space to acknowledge the past, present and future of the land on which we create. By taking this time to be mindful of the process of colonialism that has occurred and continues to occur in the traditional territory of Tkaronto, we are also acknowledging the Indigenous communities that continue to thrive in the present despite their current and past mistreatment.

With that, we acknowledge our presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. Tkaronto has been taken care of by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat, and the Métis Nation. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement originally made between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

We commit ourselves to the struggle against the systems of oppression that have dispossessed the Indigenous people of their land and denied them of their right to self-determination and tradition.

The Red/White Plays were originally presented live at the Joseph G. Green Theatre in the Centre for Film & Theatre at York University on Sunday January 12th 2020.

All works are original, created and performed by playwrights in the 3290 and 4290 Playwriting and New Play Dramaturgy classes, with dramaturgical support and inspiration from the class dramaturgs and project initiator/ Course Director, Professor Judith Rudakoff.

The process began with twenty minute in class audio-visual presentations by the dramaturgs, focusing on the meaning and impact of the colours red (3290) and white (4290) in different facets of natural and social life.

Some class members chose not to participate in this publication. Their important contributions to the original class project must be acknowledged: David Browne (dramaturg); Cara Baum, Britney Seo (playwrights).

Each playwright retains individual copyright of their material. Requests for permission to perform or publish the work should be directed to the specific playwright.

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The Red/White Research

Red in Womanhood by Sara Masciotra-Milstein

- As the colour of blood, red represents three rites of passage in a woman's life: menstruation, sex (due to the myth of the hymen breaking), and childbirth
- Due to this association, red connotes the sacred power of creation in a woman's body in goddess-worshipping communities
- While red used to be a source of power for women, in patriarchal societies that shame women, blood and its power of creation are seen as grotesque and taboo; think of period shaming, and movies that associate the bleeding female body with horror
- In terms of inspiration for playwrights, those who chose to write about red in womanhood were most inspired by stories of menstruation trauma in young women

Red in Politics by Madeleine Vogelaar

- In most parts of the world, political views and voting options are on a scale of liberal (left) to conservative (right)
- Humans use colour to identify themselves politically
- In many countries, the colour red is used to symbolize more liberal, or leftist views
- Examples of this include The Liberal Party of Canada, Sweden's left party, and the Popular Democratic Party of Puerto Rico.
- Each of these parties use red as an identifying characteristic in campaigns, logo design and other political purposes.
- Red is so commonly used by left leaning parties because of one of the most recognizably red left leaning views: Communism
- In communism, red represented the blood of the labouring class as they were taken advantage of
- In contrast, of today's most prevalent political parties in Western politics utilizes red in their campaigning: The Republican Party of the USA
- Christian religions often associate the colour red to the blood of Christ
- The Church in the time of the monarchy, was closely linked to the government, granting rulers their power through the "Divine Right of Kings."
- This was the bloodline that granted the royal family their right to rule, given to them by God

Red in Psychology by Julia Murphy

Colour Psychology

- Colour is an incredibly powerful communication tool
- Can be used to influence mood, action, physiological reactions
- Colour Psychology is the study and research of this method of communication and its effect on human behavior

Red Psychology

- Red is an incredibly versatile colour
- Meant to evoke strong reactions in humans, both physically and emotionally
- Red is at the end of the visible spectrum of light
- Has the longest wavelength on the spectrum
- In the past, red was psychologically associated with the human being's need to survive

Eg. in fire, the sun, blood and heat

- Some common modern psychological associations:

Courage, strength, energy, survival, stimulation, masculinity, excitement, passion, defiance, aggression, strain and anxiety

Red also stimulates physical reactions

High heart rate, blood pressure, energy, metabolism, and it can activate the 'fight or flight' response in humans

Red in Mythology by Gunes Agduk

What is Red?

- Creation: Sometimes through destruction both people, and geography
- Destruction
- Blood
- Purity

Japan

- Izanami and Izanagi:

Husband and wife, parents to Kagu-Tsuchi, Incarnation of Fire
Kagu-Tsuchi burns his mother during childbirth and she perishes
In anger, his father Izanagi cut his child into 8 pieces. The pieces that fell became the volcanoes of Japan, and the blood that poured birthed the god of the sea and rain. This murder was also the first death and created the underworld.

Omushkego:

- Wendigo:

Wendigo are humans transformed into monsters through a satiated hunger for human flesh.

Once you have eaten enough human flesh your body begins to transform into a Wendigo

Wendigo can only be killed by burning their bodies to ash, so they may not come to life again. But their frozen hearts take much longer to burn than the rest of their bodies.

Red in Science by Alex Gouvis

General Definition of Science:

- Science is a broad term that can be defined as knowledge or a system of knowledge that covers the operations of general laws and the physical world and its phenomena

Biology

- Red Sea

Algae blooms called “trichodesmium erythraeum” can turn the sea red at times

Red could be a term meaning South, as old languages assigned colours to cardinal directions

Noctiluca algae “sea sparkle” did a similar thing in Australia

Chemistry

- Litmus Testing

Litmus paper (red and blue) can tell if solution is acidic or basic

Red for acidic, blue for basic

Reaction with hydrogen either creates or absorbs blue pigment (in this case, red is absence of blue)

Physics

- Colour Spectrum/Wavelengths

Human eyes can see colour from 400-700nm – red’s wavelength is from 620-750nm

Red has longest wavelength, lowest energy, and the shortest frequency

White in Spirituality by Araceli Ferrara

White Aura

- Unlike other types of aura, a white aura can have multiple meanings– this is usually described as “it can be both a beginning and a destination.” It’s a quite uncommon aura, representative of someone who has purity shining from within them

Religious Deities and Associations

- White is traditionally associated with deities and other figures in religion. Angels are often depicted in white robes. However, the idea that the gates of heaven can be found amongst the clouds isn’t only limited to Western beliefs

Death: Part One; Mourning

- In some Asian cultures, the colour white is associated with death, mourning, and bad luck

Death: Part Two; the Horsemen

- Seeing a white horse in your dreams is a premonition of death

Death: Part Three; Ghosts

- White is the colour associated with ghosts and phantoms. This could also be due to the fact that the dead were traditionally buried in a white shroud, hence the infamous bedsheet-ghost
- The woman in white, or *dame blanche* in French ghost stories, is an apparition of a female specter who wears white clothing. She would often lurk in places such as ravines or bridges. If you passed her, she might have required you “to join in her dance or assist her in order to pass.”

White in the Animal Kingdom by Cassandra Weir

Albinism, Leucism and Isabellinie

- *Albinism* is the absence of any pigmentation or coloration in a person, animal or plant, resulting in white hair, feathers, scales and skin and pink eyes in mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish
- *Leucism* is a condition where there is partial loss of pigmentation in an animal which causes white, pale or patchy coloration in skin, hair, feathers, scales but not in the eyes
- *Isabellinie* is a pale grey-yellow, pale cream-brown or pale tan colour that is primarily found in animal coat colouring.
- These colours appear white within the animals coating

Beluga Whales

- Most popular whales due to skin colour and “smiling” upturned mouth
- An extremely sociable mammal: they hunt and migrate in pods together within the Arctic seas
- Their large foreheads are called melons which are extremely flexible and capable of changing shape. This allows them to make different facial expressions, chirps, clicks, whistles and squeals which gives them their name “canary of the sea”

White in Fashion by Céleste LaCroix

- The colour white is something we see, in its many shades, often simple and authentic. Most fabrics are a natural shade of white or cream before they are dyed
- Fashion is what we wear, how, and why. Art, culture, and trends affect how we decorate and represent ourselves. We wear to protect, cover, and identify
- Colour can be a tool in fashion, used for contrast, emphasis, accents, and bold statements

White clothing means different things in different places and to different people:

- In Egypt, it represents empty deserts, and is used for religious attire and showing high status
- In China and Korea, it represents death, mourning, and bad luck
- White clothing represents angels in human form and is worn for baptisms in Christianity
- In Hinduism, it is worn for respecting the dead and by widows
- In Judaism, it represents purity and is worn on religious holidays
- In Islam it is the purest and simplest colour .It is worn for religious practices and for shrouding the dead

Some staple white garments or trends in Western culture include:

- Wedding dresses - traced to Queen Victoria in 1840, symbolizing girlhood, virginity and purity
- Lab coats - for doctors and scientists, to symbolize the healer
- “No white after labour day” rule - functional, hot summers, messy winters, to separate the working class from the ultra-rich
- White hair is known as a representation of age and wisdom
- White face makeup has been a representation of flawlessness, beauty, and wealth

White in Nature by Francesca Falcone

Gypsum

- A soft evaporite mineral found in the sedimentary layers of crystal and gypsum rock
- Located near lagoons since the water has high levels of calcium and sulfate
- Humans eat 28 pounds of gypsum during their life span in food additives, such as beer, spaghetti, and vitamin pills

White Caves in Italy

- One of the largest caves in Italy. It is 70 metres deep and 3 kilometres long with temperatures of 18°C and humidity levels around 90%
- No factual evidence on how the cave was formed
- Made from alabaster, and adorned with crystals

White Sand Beaches of Hawaii

- Parrotfish have beak shaped teeth that aid with chewing off and eating the coral into small sediments, then the fish expels the crushed coral into a haze of white sand
- All this sand piles up reaching above the surface of the water, creating white sandy beaches
- One fish can produce hundreds of pounds of sand per year

The Red Plays

Melanie Thompson

Inspired by: Red and rebirth

You're five and I'm four when we take turns giving each other haircuts. Every time I cut off a strand of your hair, I pass over the pair of scissors we stole from the drawer under the sink and you cut off a strand of mine. And we go back and forth and back and forth until there's a haystack of blonde covering my bathroom floor. My mom calls your mom, our babysitter is fired, and we're the only girls at school with mushroom cuts for the next seven and a half months.

I'm in grade two and you're in grade three when you get home from Girl Guide camp one weekend and say you've mastered the art of French braiding. I ask if you can teach me how, and your face goes all serious. You say if you show me, then you won't be special anymore. So I sigh and then you braid my hair into two pigtails. When you finish, neither of us can find a matching set of hair ties, so we settle on one that's purple and one that's red. You say it's what makes me special. Two differently-coloured hair ties.

I'm eight and a half when I'm finally allowed to dump two months' worth of allowance on the lip gloss launched by Macbarbie07 on YouTube. You ask your mom and she won't even entertain the subject. So after the most exciting trip to Shoppers of my life, I pull the sparkly tube out of my pocket. Shade: GLOSSAHOLIC. All caps. Cherry flavoured.

You ask if you can try it on, I say, “Of course”, and then you say “You know a few coats of this stuff are sure to make Andy finally notice you.” The next day you ask if you can borrow it again, and then again the next day, and then again the next day, and that’s the last I ever see of it. We go to a One Direction concert in middle school. Section 417 Row Z Seats 48 and 49. My mom takes Seat 50. We spend half an hour helping each other put on mascara and agree that when the boys notice us, you get Liam and I get Harry. When Louis hits his high note in “Gotta’ Be You”, your hand ends up in mine and it stays there for the rest of the show. By the end of the night, you say my palms are sweaty and insist on walking ahead of me to the car. I’m in grade nine and you’re in grade ten when we have our first drinks together. Cherry vodka and orange Kool-Aid. We trace shapes onto each other’s thighs with our fingertips and you say you’re embarrassed you haven’t had your first kiss yet. I ask why that’s anything to be ashamed of and you roll your eyes. You say you’re turning fifteen in two weeks and already know girls who are having sex. Then my eyes meet yours and you ask if it would be weird to practice on each other. Then you’re kissing my face, twirling my hair between your fingers, and then one of your hands is up my shirt and the other down my jeans. I take a breath and tell you you’re beautiful. Then you’re across the room throwing my overnight bag at me and your phone is in my hand so I can beg my mom to come pick me up.

Two years later we're both asked to prom. By the time we're finished getting ready and our moms have their cameras out, you try saying I'm beautiful but can't quite look me in the eye. I tell you we should just say fuck it to our dates and go together, and then your smile falls, your cheeks go all pale, and you're pulling out the pins I spent two hours putting in your hair. When I ask what the hell is wrong you say you've decided to stay in for the night. You tell me your six hundred dollar dress doesn't mean that much to you anyways. The next week you show up at my house crying. You say you're sorry and I say you're full of shit, then you try to kiss me and I slam the door in your face. I'm the one sobbing at your front porch the next day. First you kiss my forehead and then you brush my hair out of my eyes. You roll up the sleeves of a shirt I know isn't yours and tell me I'm the best friend you've ever had. Then I look up at you and I don't see anything at all. No rosy cheeks, no sweaty palms, no twirling hair between drunken fingertips. Then I'm running as fast as I can. Seven blocks to get rid of sparkly hair ties under empty vodka bottles, rusty bobby pins under old movie stubs, red marks in every picture we've ever taken and red scissors to snip off anywhere you've ever touched with your red, red hands. My hair is the first place I start.

Cadence Bishop

Inspired by: Red in loyalty

LARA : I'm so excited for tonight, Anna. It's been too long since I've been to a house party. What time is it? Nine already? Shit, we're going to be late. I'm sorry, I always do this, I'm so slow. My hair's not even halfway done. I'm sure it'll be fine if we leave in half an hour instead. Why don't you start drinking while I finish up? Ew, I don't know how you handle those shots without barfing it back up. I'm such a wimp I only drink coolers. Do an extra shot for me, will you? You know, it's so crazy how we didn't become friends until recently. I've seen you all the time at parties and stuff. My boyfriend is going to be there tonight. It was so hard to convince him to go, he rarely ever goes to parties. He's really focused on school right now. It's funny that he hates going out because that's actually how we met. I used to be the biggest party animal. Clubbing downtown every weekend, blowing all my money on alcohol. Actually, that's not true. I'd blow all my money on clubbing outfits. The guys at the club would always buy me more than enough drinks. Speaking of drinks, do another shot. Here, I'll pour it for you. Don't worry I'll catch up later. Anyways, I'd pick whichever guy was cutest to bring home for the night. But only for the night, I was never a fan of keeping anyone around long enough to get to know me. Until I met him—my boyfriend.

I was at the club alone and had gotten way too drunk. There were so many people all around me and I was starting to panic, when I felt a hand grab mine and pull me out of the crowd. He brought me to the bar to grab some water and stayed with me until I calmed down. He didn't try anything he just sat with me. I remember he complimented my dress. He said he liked the shade of red it was. He was so nice. I'd never met a guy like that before. He eventually got me to call one of my friends to pick me up. We exchanged numbers before I left, and we've been together ever since. Almost two years. Until I met him, I didn't think I'd ever meet a boy who was kind. Every other boy feels cold now compared to him. He's a good one. The only good one I'll ever be able to find. Come on, do another shot, Anna. You don't want to be sober at the party, do you? Okay, yeah you're a little tipsy, but you're going to be no fun when we get there if you don't do another shot. And maybe a couple more after that one for good measure. Anyways, the only issue with my boyfriend—Charlie is his name, the only thing with him is that he's been so consumed with school lately. He's always at the library studying late at night; he wants to go to grad school next year. He barely has any time for me anymore. I wait up for him but he always comes home exhausted. I thought something was off, so I followed him to the library one day.

I found him studying, like he said, but he wasn't alone. He was with a girl. I didn't think anything at first because I trusted him. But then I watched him kiss her. I watched him pull away and look at her with love that used to belong to me. At first I was furious at him. But then I realized that Charlie never would've been the one to cheat. He's too good. This was her fault, not his. So, I went through his phone, found out the girl's name, bumped into her at a party and became friends. And he doesn't know any of that. There's actually a lot he doesn't know a lot about me. Like how I like to get way too crazy with my new friends. And how sometimes my new friends get so drunk when we're trying to pre for the party that they pass out. Do another shot. Come on, stop crying, do another! Here's how this is going to go. You're going to keep drinking until eventually you pass out on your back and start to throw up. Then you're going to choke. I'll try to help, but I'm way too drunk! There's nothing I can do when your breathing slows and eventually your heart stops beating. What a shame. (*beat*) I can't wait for the party. I think I'm going to wear my red dress, the one Charlie really likes. Maybe he'll ask me to dance. Doesn't that sound fun?

Alexandra Gaudet

Inspired by: Red in impulsive choices

I tell you I love you for the first time on Christmas Eve. I don't blame you for not saying it back yet. You're still grieving your husband and we've only been reconnected for two, three weeks at most. But I trust my heart. And to show you my love, I get you a goddamn gift card. I know your family sees the exchange. How embarrassing, right? Amazing first impression. Especially with your dad. He must think I'm the greatest. I can see the disappointment in your eyes as you pull out a Stephen King novel, tied so nicely with a bow. You remember the box full of books my mom left me, and how much I wish I could read them, but they still smell like her and I'm not ready for that. I hope my first impression won't be a lasting one. Your family makes me feel like I am home for the first time in years. I don't want to disappoint them. You put so much thought into my gift and I can't even go pick something off the shelf for you. I have to make it up to you, you deserve so much more. A grand gesture on a day of importance.

I fell in love with you for the first time thirty three years ago today, on New Year's Eve, when we were both in high school. You took my breath away. I was fourteen. Standing here! And there you are in the center of the party. Nearly every dress around you is pink with puffy sleeves out to here. And the ring in my pocket tonight.

But you're wearing that red dress. It screams, "look at me, I'm different!" and boy do I look... along with every guy within ten feet of you. I wish I spoke to you that night. Maybe things would be different. Maybe we would already be married and your son would be our son and I wouldn't have to be in the situation I'm in now. I don't want to be alone anymore.

I've really missed my mark, I think. I have wanted that life with you ever since I realized I've never had it. So I'm jumping for it. I don't know how to stop making impulsive decisions like meeting your family on Christmas day and early I love yous...

Sydney Sziraky

Inspired by: A red rose

JULES: I walk into the nearest Starbucks because my day is already so shitty and it's not even noon. I'm late and the sun is burning me alive. I get up to the counter, I'm a total mess and then I see you. I think that you're way too hot to be working as a barista but I'm more interested than turned off. When you give me my iced coffee, I spot your number on the cup immediately, it's very hallmark but I'm a sucker for a meet-cute. We go on two dates and you start sending me flowers. First they show up at my house, then at my work and then at my parents house that I visit every other weekend.

I come home after one of those weekends after dodging questions about my new boyfriend who keeps sending me these beautiful roses. I open up the door and there you are, just sitting on my couch watching some stupid reality show. You turn to me and smile but I just fucking scream. Natalie was in Mexico for the week so there was no way she let you in. I grab an umbrella like I'm going to hit you with it but you're already running. I just sit on the floor, clutching that umbrella while my neighbours try to get me to talk to them. I don't move until my family gets here, one of my neighbours calls them with the number I leave on the fridge. They help me up and take me to the police station.

I sit there for about an hour, holding my sister's hand, before an officer speaks to me. I tell them about you, about how you've been sending me unwanted gifts, how you've been following me and how you broke into my house. He doesn't laugh at me but I can tell he thinks I'm full of shit. He asks if I lead you on, if I broke up with you or just ghosted you. It's really funny how you break into my house, take my safe place away from me, but it's my fault that you did that. They post an officer outside of my house for a week but you stay away so they stop coming by.

My parents stay with me until Natalie comes back and they make her promise to never leave my side. But it doesn't matter, because you are everywhere. I go to a Second Cup but just when I order my drink there you are, in the window watching me. I can barely make it to work because you are always outside of those glass doors just staring at me when I work reception. Only one good thing comes out of this, I meet someone who understands me.

His name is Will and he trades shifts with me because he knows how it feels to have your space violated. He's lucky, the police actually arrested her. You already know him though, because you're the one who put him in the hospital. I went to see him, but they aren't letting anyone in. I just stood there, arms around his sister as she's sobbing and then I see it.

A bouquet of roses in his mother's hand. After I saw that, I just needed to talk to you. That's why I sent you that text, so you would meet me here. So, now that I have your undivided attention, where should I put the first of your roses? In your eyes or down your throat?

Connor Williamson

Inspired by: A red coat worn by a child on the Toronto subway

Well, Officer Bird, Ashley comes to me about throwing a birthday party for Warren, Mr. Everett's son. I've never been to a real party, much less planned one, but I still say yes. Warren could use a fun night and I want to help. I think it's mostly what my friends were expecting. Music, drinks, and games. Sometimes even a mix of the three. And Warren looks like he's having fun. He's dancing on the coffee table; I assume that's what that means.

And Ashley is here, with her friends. They've already started to party a little too much, but I don't see a drink in Ashley's hand. God, she's incredible. I want any reason I can find to go over and talk to her. But I'm also looking for any reason not to. How do I tell her how I feel? Everything I think I should say sounds wrong in my head. Maybe if I... and, she's walking away.

The party starts at 8:00. Before I know it, it's 9:43, and the party is getting crazier. Someone must have broken into the liquor cabinet, because there's booze floating around that none of us can afford. I try to get people to slow down. I'm worried Warren will be blamed for it, but no one's listening to me. I just hope we can replace the liquor before his father comes home.

It seems like it's my imagination, but I'm pretty sure we have more people now than we started with! I don't think I invited them. The party spirals out of control, as the new group moves the furniture against the window, turning the living room into a dance floor of what seems like a hundred people. Warren takes control of the music, so he can get everyone singing along to "Home for A Rest," I would laugh, but I can't hear myself think.

Thankfully, the crowd forces me to move into the kitchen, where I see Ashley walk by again. I might say everything right! But what if it's not what she wants to hear? 9:43 becomes 11:02. The dance party ends, but the music still shakes the walls. People start to leave, if they can make it through the drunken crowd that blocks the door. Or if they can even find their coats. Warren has been trying them on, and I doubt he put them back where he found them. No one seems to mind. They enjoyed it too much when he turned the living room into a catwalk to show off his new clothes. The party's almost over now, ...and I still haven't talked to her. She's my friend! I'm not going to blow it! Take a leap of faith! She's chosen a spot in the hall, where for the moment, she's alone. I turn the corner into the hallway, and.... I'm in the closet now. Why? She looked at me before I was ready. Ashley and I can talk for hours after class, but why not now? Because I want to tell her how I feel, and if she doesn't feel the same way, I'm not sure I can handle that.

I leave the closet after a few minutes. 11:02 becomes 1:38. I wander around Warren's party, trying to not gag on the smell, or lose my hearing from the music, and I really don't want to know what's happening in the bedrooms. I guess I didn't do a great job keeping the party under control.

The night reaches its end. How did that even happen? The living room's empty, except for the people who are looking for any reason not to go home. Warren lies drunk, in the corner, singing, where he'll probably stay until morning. It's a bit of a depressing scene but I actually had fun tonight. And Ashley's still here. It's almost like it's only the two of us left. I've been waiting for this all night. I could practically feel the world saying, "Just do it, idiot!" I have to take this step, or I'll never know. I walk towards her; wondering am I really walking in slow motion? It certainly feels like it. There are so many ways to escape drifting past my sight, but I resist them all. Other people keep walking past Ashley, and I beg that none of them stop to talk to her. Then, she finally turns and notices me. She smiles, and I freeze. We're face to face.

"Hi" I say. six hours to prepare, and that's the best I got. I half expect her to walk away, until,..."Hi," She says. And for the first time that night, we're sitting and talking, like any other day, but this is different. I'm making her laugh, where sometimes I couldn't before.

I wish I could pretend I felt more confident, but every time she smiles, I forget what I was going to say. Ashley says, it's part of my charm. That's a very generous way to describe it. "Miles, you're different from anyone I know."

She says to me. "Sometimes I'm not sure if you're real." Where do I go with that?! The only thing I can think to try is a joke. "To be fair, you don't know for sure that I am real." I hope she laughs at that. I want her to, but instead she just pauses, her eyes meeting mine. "I think I know how to find out." She kisses me. Sorry officer, did you have any other questions?

Samantha Uhl

Inspired by: Red in memory and menstruation

QUINN: It isn't the drinking that scares me so much about parties, it's all the noise. The distant screeches from the most plastered girls, the hollering and cat calling, but the worst is the exclusivity. When you don't know anyone in the crowd it's not the easiest thing in the world to just approach someone to chat. It is truly this constant state of being that is being afraid. Does anyone else ever wonder why we think this way? Wow, all that after just one raspberry vodka spritzer! He pours me another drink, so I take it. He tells me that his name is Braelyn and that I have pretty eyes, and I don't know if it's the spritzer or what, but we continue to talk so easily. I tell him I don't go to school around here, I'm just here by association. My cousin Beck goes to Lakefield High, and he thought I should try to embrace the beginning of my junior year by going to my first ever party. When he asks why I've never been to a party before, I freeze. I honestly don't have a straight answer to give other than I don't have a social life outside of school! I could list all of the irrational reasons that I avoid talking to most people my age because of some traumatic childhood memories that I am still trying to process. And before I know it I'm drunkenly spewing about the time when I was younger and was bullied after getting my period, but instinctively tell him it's my sister.

The kids in her class were so cruel to her, and she was only nine. She didn't even realize what was going on, what else is a nine-year-old girl supposed to think when her vagina starts spilling blood in the absolute darkest shade of red she's ever seen? Crap, did that just come out of my mouth? This may be where I lose him. I attempt to segue into how I usually don't drink this much...or at all. He just laughs as I continue. I tell him that this is my second drink, ever. How crazy is that? I'm a sixteen year old girl that up until tonight had never been to a party, never had a drink, never been kiss-kicked. Nice save Quinn. He finally stops laughing and pours me a third drink, then he fills a separate cup with water and tells me to drink this one slowly. It should last me the rest of the night he says, before he heads for the door, uttering the simplest of words, I'll see you 'round, Quinn.

Shaughn Clutchey

Inspired by: Red juice that has spilled

KYLE: I approach Dad’s bed and try to wake him up. He seizes my wrist and opens his eyes, nearly spilling the cup of cranberry juice I hold in my hand. “Watch where you step,” he croaks. A shoelace is tied around his arm. I guess he doesn’t want the juice. Dad wakes up today because of the ceilidh tonight. Beginning when the seasons change and running every second week until the last Saturday before Christmas, Mum organizes them at the church. She finally started letting me stay up the whole time this year, and tonight will be the first ceilidh of the season that my Dad is playing. Tonight, I know Julia will be there as well. I saw her for the first time two ceilidhs ago, but I know she is in Mum’s class this year at Spring Park. She’s from Charlotte-town: word of mouth usually brings in young people from the city and tourists from Savage Harbour for “a night of rural extravagance,” as Mum writes on the bristol board she tapes to the windows at the arena. Families from around Canavoy and Mount Stewart are regulars. The musicians tonight are mostly Dad’s friends and some of their students who treat the event as a jam sesh. The man who leads the jigs, reels, and waltzes is apparently a second cousin; I only ever see him at the church, and every season he returns balder and fatter.

Sometimes Mum lets Jack play too, but tonight he's supposed to be grounded for taking cigarettes from her purse again. We'll see what happens. In summer, Dad is able to live at home, spending his time composing music for television shows and working on books of music collections with other musicians. With this time of year comes his scarf, coat, and travelling binders of sheets; I see very little of him in the time leading up to and following Christmas because his lectures at music programs, and residencies with symphony orchestras across the country, keep the family afloat. He usually tries to come home for a weekend every two weeks. Earlier this week Dad returns, tells us he's going to be home for the next seven days, which made Mum kind of jittery. Since then, he's pretty well slept through three of those seven days.

"You missed your E flats and you're still butchering that second trill," Jacks says as he enters the kitchen. I tell him to shut up as I circle the flats on my page. I take a sip of the cranberry juice and place my cup on the upper harp, just above the faded inscription. I need a break from sight reading, and I trace the gold lettering with my finger. Grand Piano in Upright Form. I begin the piece again and Jack stands beside me, hovering, playing the melody with his right hand in the air. It's annoying and he knows it; as I approach the second trill, he throws his arms up like an

orchestra conductor then slams them down hard on the high octaves. I stand and my fist goes for a shot below the belt. Before I connect he shoves me backward, tipping me into my juice which splatters all over the boxes of Dad's books beside the piano. Angry tears on my cheeks; Jack slaps them off hard. Too hard. "Look what you did!" Jack sneers - quiet, but piercing, so I feel on the inside what I've done. Only I didn't do it.

Bedheaded, face grizzled, and one eye stained red like his boxes, Dad emerges from the bedroom in his bathrobe and stares silently at the mess. On my knees by the top box, I open it. Dad looks at the smeared ink on the fresh copies that still slightly resembles his name. "Well, we weren't exactly burning through these," he says, and a sob escapes me as Jack's eyes meet mine. Dad tells me to stand up. Then he turns swiftly and catches Jack under the nose with the back of his hand. Jack's head goes back, then comes down slowly. Tears on his cheeks. Jack is hard... not hard enough.

Like every Saturday, guests start arriving as the sun is going down, bringing with them food, drink. The opening jig begins and the hall grows warm as bodies move, the sound of footsteps pounding the hardwood floor providing a not so steady backbeat. The jig transcends to a reel as the tempo increases, and I notice Dad's pale face becoming laced with sweat.

My face flushes as I spot Julia by the pews that have been moved against the left wall. She has come with two of her city friends, but I approach her anyway. “It’s warm in here, we should go outside.” She doesn’t want to go; it’s cold out and she’s having fun. I plead and she feels bad. We sit on the frosty ground, dressed in sweaters and boots, backs resting against the apple-shaped boulder that bears the name of the church. The stars are out and she rests her head on my shoulder as the step-dance high wears thin. I feel frosty and happy, and I laugh out loud. The yelling from the ceilidh starts soon after. At first I don’t notice, but Julia does. The second cousin rushes out through the heavy double doors towards his car as we approach the church. I don’t realize anything is wrong until I enter the hall and see my father’s head resting still on the keyboard he had been playing.

Meaghan Fennell

Inspired by: Red in loss and relationships

I hear him all the time Josh. First, I hear him in my dreams. Sometimes we're in his canoe on the Red River, sometimes we're climbing trees and he's yelling at me to come up with him. But most of the time we're in the big field outside the community centre. We just sit there on a blanket and look up, watching the clouds. And when the clouds clear and we can see the wide open sky, it slowly fades into black and reveals the stars. He whispers in my ear. Then I wake up and I think his voice is gone. But I hear him all the time Josh. I roll over to my other side and he says "Wake up, sleepyhead" just like he always did when I drifted off. And then when I take a shower I hear him whistling, or when I'm in the drive-thru at timmies I hear him say "Wanna share those donuts there Jay?" Even when I'm talking about fricking algebra at school he's in my ear, saying, "You know the zero doesn't go there, crazy." Most days he just jokes around like that. But sometimes he says other stuff, just out of nowhere. Like I'll just be walking down the street – like yesterday I'm my way home from Sev, drinking my orange Slurpee and then some of it spills on my shirt and he just says "Oh hey Beautiful." Just that. "Hey Beautiful." You know, I never really knew what it was like to love someone until I met him, Josh. Mom and dad aren't really the best of parents.

And I know you're my brother and whatever, but seriously we didn't really start talking until he died. But I didn't have that "Oh, I'm in love with you" moment with Sam, you know? Like it was natural. It was easy. It just made sense when the "I love you" left my mouth. He was steady, he never wavered from what was right. And now the world is so much bigger and expects so much that it feels like my lungs are being pushed together and then set on fire. And then he says, "Hey, Beautiful," and then I wish that I was there with him when he was picking up his sister from Brandon. I wish I was there when he got hit by that semi truck. But he's never going to tell me his stupid fishing stories with his dad. He's never going to look into my eyes or touch my hands or kiss me. He's never going to know that we created something. I need him out of my body to move on. So I'm taking these pills.

Erin Dagenais

Inspired by: Red in shame and girlhood

CHARLOTTE: My mom nearly refuses to take me to buy my first bikini. “You’re still a little girl, you don’t need to be wearing bikinis,” she tells me. Of course, I fire back with “mom I’m twelve years old, I’m basically a teenager and all the girls at the party will be wearing one. Please mom!” What I don’t tell her about Tomas McInnis’ party is that he just so happens to be the boy I have been “in love with” since forever and that I have been looking forward to his end of the year pool party, all year long. This is not just any pool party and Mom just couldn’t understand how crucial this is to my entire existence. Besides, it’s not like I’m just wasting birthday money some silly purchase. No, this bikini will be an investment that will pay off once Tomas McInnis sees me in it and finally realize he is in love with me. So, mom and I go to Walmart to buy my first bikini and she spends the whole time trying to convince me to buy the one-piece that says, “Girls Rule!”. Sorry mom, but that isn’t exactly what Seventeen magazine says everyone will be wearing this summer. As we browse the swimwear department of Walmart, Mom reminds me that maybe I need to look in the girl’s section because I’m still so “petite”: her words not mine. Believe me, I don’t need the reminder.

She loudly asks me if I want to grab a chicken nugget happy meal before we go home and if Lacy and I are still having a playdate on Thursday while we look through the racks of bathing suits. Needless to say, mom is not a big fan of me growing up. Still, I insist on the two-piece turquoise bikini with yellow polka dots. I stare at myself in the mirror, “now this”, I think, “this will definitely make Tomas McInnis notice me.” Cut to the day of the pool party. Mom drops me off at Tomas’ house and I am so nervous. Which of course she just about changed her mind about the whole thing! She says that she doesn’t know if I should be going to some boy’s party. Oh mom, if only you knew that Tomas McInnis isn’t just “some boy”. The whole drive there my palms are sweating and my heart is pounding. “There’s no turning back now” I think as I knock on the door. Mrs. McInnis opens the door “You must be here for the party. Go on back Hun, everyone is by the pool.” Jeez, my entire house could fit in Tomas McInnis’ front hallway. No. Focus, Charlotte! You just have to let your new bikini do the work and, of course, follow Tiger Beat Magazine’s “six steps to get your crush to like you back”. I’ve been at the party for almost an hour, Justin has only been playing The Black Eyed Peas off of his new iPod, all the popular girls are gathered by the pool house and Tomas McInnis hasn’t even tried to talk to me.

I've been following the steps and everything! Until I'm standing by the edge of the pool, Usher's "Yeah!" has just come on, and he walks right up to me. It feels like everything is in slow motion. It's exactly like it happens in the movies. Tomas McInnis is talking to me! I remind myself to stay calm, just like I did practising in the mirror this morning. But it's hard to stay calm when the absolute cutest boy in the entire school is talking to you. I'm so excited that he's talking to me that I can barely focus on what he is saying and I can't remember which steps are which. All of a sudden everyone at the party is laughing and Tomas McInnis is staring at me, eyes wide and mouth open. I look down and there it is. This is the moment they all talk about. Mom warned me that it was going to happen soon, but no talk in the world could have prepared me for this. All eyes are on me and now all I want is to be invisible again. My brand-new bikini never even hits the water and one thing is for sure, Tomas McInnis definitely notices me and so does the rest of the grade seven class, when Jennifer points at me from across the pool yells, to make sure everyone hears: "Gross! Look at Charlotte!"

Garrett Ryan

Inspired by: Red in anger and masculinity

SEAMUS: *In ainm an Athar agus an Mhic agus an Spioraid*

Naoimh. Amen. Forgive me, A shagairt, for I have sinned. Bhuel, níl sé sin fíor i ndáiríre. I haven't sinned yet. But I really really want to. (Pausing) Do you dream while you're awake, A shagairt? B'fhéidir you'd call it "fis diaga", but no God I've been taught of would make me see the things I see. Did you ever want to hurt someone, A shagairt? Ar-mhaith leat duine a ghortú go dona? An mbraitheann tú mar sin, a shagairt? (Pausing) I've been doing better. Getting back into a routine and doing the visualization, like they said in my classes. Think about an important memory and breathe. So, I close my eyes and think of my bedroom in my old house. Of the carpet with all the stains. Of the walls with the peeling red paint. Of the last time I saw dad, laying beside me, singing a lullaby. An Bhfaca Tú Mó Shéamuisín? Mó Stóirín Óg, Mó Bhuachaillín. An Bhfaca Tú Mó Shéamuisín? Is É 'Gabháil Síos An Bóthar. I go over that in my head until I feel calm and grounded. Stained carpet, red walls, dad's singing. Cairpéad daite, ballaí dearga, daid ag canadh. And it was working, it truly was. But then a few months ago this new guy shows up in my building. He comes over and introduces himself once, and I think, 'this guy seems like someone I'd get along with. He has charm, piercing green eyes, and a beautiful smile.

He tells me he likes my hair. No one ever said that before... I think he's a real good guy at first. I actually think about that a lot. But then, *A Shagairt*, I start to get these feelings about him. Evil feelings. Evil like I'd never felt before. And I remember what you said at Mass. "*Agus ní híongnadh sin; óir cuiridh Satán é féin a bhfoirm aingil na soillse.*" Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. *2 Corinthians 11:14.*

And I try to ignore it at first, but I see his smile every time I close my eyes. So, I do the visualization. *Cairpéad daite, ballaí dearga, daid ag canadh.* I stop sleeping, obsessed with the thought of him sneaking into my room in the night, and wondering what he would do to me. So, I look to God for Guidance, *A Shagairt. Agus duirt mé, sé do bheatha a Mhuire, atá lán de ghrásta. Cloisim Máthair Mhuire i mo cheann, ach cloisim an fear seo freisin.* I start to have these awake dreams where I'm pressed on top of him, sliding my hands onto his throat, watching the life drain from his eyes. *Cairpéad daite, ballaí dearga, daid ag canadh.* Next thing I know I'm crouched beneath his window every night, peering up, waiting for him to reveal something demonic.

He sings songs to himself, and sometimes I think he's taunting me. When it's real cold I find myself humming along. *Sé do bheatha a Mhuire.*

I memorize his schedule. I start sneaking into his living room through the unlocked window on his porch and rifling through everything he's touched. I smell the cologne on his sweaters. I tear through his papers to see if he'd written about me. I get ready to be there when he returns, waiting. Waiting to do something. Just something to get these thoughts out of my fucking head. *Cairpéad daite, ballaí dearga, daid ag canadh.* (Pausing) I remember the walls, A Shagairt. Thin red walls I stare at, listening to the distinct, consistent cracks of bone to bone. *Sé do bheatha a Mhuire.* Dad comes to tuck me in, instead of mum. he reaches to my forehead and traces a little shamrock in her blood. He tells me, "*Is Éireannaigh muid, a Shéamais. Tá sé inár bhfuil.*" We're Irish, Seamus, it's in our blood. "*Ach Tabharfaidh Dia maithiúnas dúinn. Tuigfidh tú lá amháin*" But God will forgive us. You'll understand one day. Then, with the Dew on his breath, he sings his lullaby. (Pausing) So why should I fight the predestination, *A Shagairt?* I understand now. Dad's with the Lord. You forgave him. So, you have to forgive me too. When the man enters his home to find me, a man of God, waiting for him. When I walk forward, nails cutting into my palms, teeth grinding together, thousands of thoughts screaming in my mind, and I tightly wrap my arms around him and... and never let go.

The White Plays

Megi Kaca

Inspired by: *White caves in Italy*

GIDIE: You came here crawling through the sewers like rats.

You have no family here, the living do not belong here.

You might as well listen to what I have to say since I've closed all the openings to the world above. Are you scared?

Do you suddenly feel mortal? The catacombs are not a place for the living.

Please take a seat, you were comfortable enough before, knowing you were surrounded by our bones. What is the ghost of an eighteen-year-old girl going to do? Scare you? No—I really want you to be aware of what you're doing. Because I don't think you understand.

Our bodies were thrown in holes when we died. Then rearranged over a century later because we were causing collapses, of buildings. Can you picture it? Uneven grounds covering Paris, splitting the earth taking the living with us. That was our first protest. But you find a way to profit off of anything, even the dead. All five million. We'll never be people to you.

My name is Gidie, I died in the sixth century. I'm one of the only ones that kept hanging on. My spirit stayed angry. We must let go of the anger to find peace, I said "screw that." Block all their exits make them listen to my pain.

I bet it seemed like a good idea to wander around the tunnels, twenty meters underground. You even named yourselves cataphiles. Partying in some cool abandoned city of the dead. It's not abandoned. This is where I live.

Do you feel yourself missing the above? I get to see your ungrateful faces, every day, not realizing how lucky you are to be able to leave. Walking around—TOUCHING—the bones. Carving your initials. And, every night, I see people come down here to party, to drink, to fuck. And that's how I know a day has passed, the two crowds. I'm a prisoner, but thanks to you I've evolved to your time, watching you.

We are all animals. Watching free people get caged up was exhausting. They would revolt up there and more people would be added down here. When I was born things were changing. Christianity had taken over what we call France now. It was a new thing, interesting, but I didn't know how much was actually going to change, and how we would be evolving backwards. I saw people pretending that one God was enough for them. I watched their children believe their words. I have a name today, but woman's names were peculiar in my time. Our names were "wife" "daughter" and "widow". I saw women earn their names in 1944. We take a long time for good change.

I've seen everyone become less caring and more independent these last decades.

Why would you care if you've been somewhere if you haven't taken a photograph of it to capture the memory? Which reminds me, you in the front I can see the phone I'm not going to show up on the photo. Nobody looks at the photos. I've seen things repeated so many times I've come to the conclusion that history is taught to be forgotten. All these things I've learned from watching you.

But I'm done being grateful, today was enough. It's a little much don't you think? One hundred of you crawling around making it feel stuffer than what it's like to be weighed down by bones. Maybe I'll treat you like the bones and carve my name in your skull. Or I'll collapse the ground from above and make you stay here forever since you like it so much.

You have so much more than I could have ever imagined in my time.

If I had the freedoms, you have now...I—I don't even know what I would do I don't think it matters in the end anyways...but for the sake of in the moment pleasure. I want to try ice cream. What? We never had fridges? I wasn't allowed to leave my village either. Honestly, the time I was alive wasn't that great. I lived in the part of the history where there were no wars so nothing really happened. Just working on the land or in my case helping out at home.

But you have too much time to live, it's absurd really, I think that's why you are the way that you are.

You tell yourself that you have time to grow and learn from your mistakes. Partying in the catacombs, never in my eighteen years of living would I have thought of doing such a thing. But I never got the choice to think that far ahead.

I see some of you are crying. It's nice to talk to some of you, being that you're too drunk to be afraid. Don't worry I'll let you go I just wanted you to listen. I wouldn't want your company anyways. I just want to ask you, "What does the sky look like now?"

Robyn Mercanti

Inspired by: *White baptismal garments*

CARRIE: Hi, God. This seemed like a logical time to check back in. You know, quiet moment before the big show. I'm good. Nervous. How stupid. It's not like Pastor Evans is going to hold me under for long enough to drown. I even took swimming lessons. I can handle this.

You know, what kind of fifteen-year-old just randomly decides to go back to her family's church after staying far away from it for all this time? Me, I guess. I hope the water's not cold. Maybe that would add to the whole experience, though.

Polar plunge of redemption. Frigid enough that you can just feel your mistakes leaving your skin, and really experience whatever it is You conjure up during these things. Forgiveness, maybe.

(Beat)

How is Georgia doing, God? No, I don't want you to answer that. Maybe I do. Who are we kidding? Compared to a couple weeks ago, she's probably a whole lot better off. On your turf.

The evidence is gone. We wiped all the accounts off the face of the internet as soon as we found out what she did.

More like what we did. Inadvertently, of course. But I'm sure she wouldn't have gone through with...you know... if it wasn't for us tormenting her the way we did. No one will ever trace it back to me. But I guess You know the truth.

That's not me. I'm not like that. I don't...what kind of horrible, evil person says things like that? To another human being? "Fat whore." "Slutty joke." "Can't believe so many guys would bother sleeping around with a girl as ugly as you." Probably hit her even harder than it would have hit me.

I guess I was just going along for the ride. You know I wasn't the only person behind it. Or the one who started it. And... I swear, it was like, this total high. I could just say whatever perfect, twisted thing I wanted. It was so easy to keep myself on that pedestal. And it wasn't like it was actually real. Only it was.

What am I doing here? Putting on some old lady night gown, pretending for a single second that you're cool with me coming into Your house and making myself at home. I can't. No matter how long Pastor Evans holds me there, it's not going to be enough to rinse away the damage. No. I don't deserve to be clean.

Don't send the out looking for me, God. If you're even up there. At least don't send them down to the lake. I need to be under water. But it's got to be somewhere that I'll never come back up.

Vitoria Matias

Inspired by: White

*It's August 9th – First Day of Festa D'Espirito Santo –
Midday. At least it is for DAD. We're actually in a Toronto
apartment on Dundas. West End. Late night. BROAD is try-
ing to calm DAD down. It isn't going well.*

BROAD: (to DAD) There's no parades. It's February. She isn't crying, don't start. Just go to bed. Please just go to bed.

I don't hear any music.

No. No, we're back home, no marina, no black rock...No, you're–No bulls, no screaming wheels, No ma– 'ell I can run out and get you the massa in the morning if you really want me to, but first you gotta shut up and just try sleeping. I can't, I–I have–n't–unless–until you do. I'm getting sick of always having t–what music? No ones playing music!

(DAD lurches to the opposite wall, knocking over a side table as he does so)

My god, sit down! The glass s'all over...Don't break shit then.

Careful–here, let me. She isn't here right now ok Dad? She isn't crying. You're not ok.

Oh you're fine, you feel fine? Down your painkillers with the rest of the aguardiente, but you feel fine. You pissed yourself, you try to walk and you dance.

Oh sorry, I'm sorry, yes, yeah, you're– you're just dancing. G'head then... (*DAD dances on his own, then tries to pull BROAD to him*) Mm-mm, no. No, no, no, no. There's no music. I'm not gonna! GET OFF! NO, SIT DOWN THIS ISN'T FUN-NY.

(*Watching him shrink, DAD drops into a nearby dining chair, sobbing– little heartbroken boy*)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry Dad, I don't want to dance. I know today's hard for you but I don't want to dance. Mum can't–she, uh, she doesn't want to either. It's ok. She–she can't cry anymore. She's not crying Dad. Don't worry, she's ok, she's not crying.

(*beat*)

Ok fine. Fine. Mum's here and she's just on the balcony and there's a parade downstairs. It's not Dundas, it's...it's the marina, and there's goats, guitarras, and food for everyone poor, rich, us too. There's...there's flowers, and tobacco, and crowns there's all these crowns with doves on 'em or by them and yeah (laughing) just like that one. Crowns like the one you got on (gesturing to the bandage wrapped around DAD's head) there's a few that match that, that same kind of white. And the rest they're like that one there under the bell jar.

(*BROAD now walking to a silver crown atop the fireplace mantle*)

Get back in here! Shit. It's freezing, yo-you're coat. Dad–stop!

She never let me near it as a kid. I've never–

(DAD comes to meet BROAD by the mantle, his eyes fixed on the crown, beat, DAD grabs the crown and hugs it to his chest, slowly begins making his way to the door leading to the stairs)

Put that down! What are you doing?

(DAD quickly dashes out the door)

Hey! What're you doing?

(DAD bounds downstairs, then out and onto the street)

Dre Rivas

Inspired by: Honduran white bats

ALBA drags the village leaders to the spot where she encountered the loggers.

ALBA: They were here! The loggers. They came in from the south, from the Rio Patuca. I told you they would come back! You can stop living in denial now and finally get off your ass and do something. And don't give me that bullshit about "Our president is already doing something," He hasn't done shit to protect our forest! If he had I wouldn't have seen what I just saw. (*Beat*)

How can you stand there and do nothing!? Pretend that you can't see the destruction that's literally right before you! **THEY WERE HERE!** It's our duty to protect the Rio Platano! I know you all think I'm cursed or whatever because my hair turned white when I was little and you refuse to listen because I'm not married but I'm telling the truth! I was standing right here. I can still hear it. I can still feel their presence.

ALBA closes her eyes and relives the moment.

Behind me, I hear trees falling. They topple over, as if their strength has been taken from them. The men cheer and laugh as more and more trunks hit the ground. I can't run.

As the machine draws closer, the bats flee. I see their white pelts disappear and reappear as they avoid the destruction. One of them isn't so lucky. The little *murciélago* knocks into one of the trees and falls. I jump out to catch him before he can hit the ground. The little guy, white as snow, recovers quickly and flies out of my palm. As I watch him fly to safety, I can feel the men's eyes on me.

They see me. (*Beat*) The man in front signals for the machine to stop. The engine dies and I can hear the forest. It wasn't the normal sounds of the forest. She was scared and she was dying. So was I.

The men yell at me, call me obscenities and threaten me with their weapons. I am in their way. (*Beat*) I raise my head slightly, demonstrating that I am not scared, but one of the men takes it as a threat and tries to approach me.

He pulls out his machete and steps forward until we are face to face. I will myself to look in his eyes, at the man who's about to kill me, but I don't see anything. Just an empty shell. Even as he lifts his knife to strike me, his eyes never change. I close my eyes and wait but the knife never comes down.

Instead of the cold darkness I was expecting, I feel a warm glow. The sun has come out. I open my eyes and see it shining through the trees.

Some of the men lift and cock their riffles, “Where did she go?!” they shout. When I look back at the man, I realize he cannot see me. None of them can. I am no longer there. *(Beat)*

This is my chance. I take the machete from the man and hold it up to him. When the light vanishes, I reappear. One man shouts “*Bruja!*” and they all run. I step up to the man cowering before me, look him dead in the eye and repeat his men’s words back to him. “*Bruja.*” And he runs.

She opens her eyes and faces the leaders. The sun begins to come out.

I stopped them. Me. *(Beat)* But they were wrong to call me *bruja*. I’m not a witch.

ALBA steps into the sun and disappears again.

Soy un murciélago.

Bradley Hoskins

Inspired by: *White gypsum rock*

LISA: Hi everyone. For the record, my name is Lisa Holland. I'm sure you all know that already, but I thought I'd reintroduce myself for those who don't. My husband, Gregor Holland, went on the first manned-mission into a human-made wormhole and landed on a planet outside our solar system. *(Beat)* A year ago, he also became the first man to be lost in space when that same wormhole "accidentally" closed behind him, leaving him stranded on a world on the other side of the galaxy. I've gotten thousands of messages from people all over the world *(Beat)* I am truly grateful for all your kindness. But I want to take this time to answer some of your questions and give you some real answers. No talk show hosts, no journalists, no PR managers; just me, a camera, and all of you watching. These are my honest opinions.

(Beat)

Everything I said yesterday on that talk show, Live Tonight with Larry Best, was all true. I miss Gregor so much. It makes me sad to wake up in the morning and realize that Gregor won't be there, lying next to me. Every day when he came home he'd tell me about the observations they made of that new planet through the wormhole, the signs of liquid water and earth-like minerals, and how it made him happier than I had ever seen him. *(Beat)* It's terrifying to think I'll never see that again.

We held a funeral for Gregor, but not because he was dead, there was just no way we could get him back; the agency scientists tried for weeks to get another wormhole to open but couldn't and they have no idea why. Something about "quantum adaption"—I think they were just making up words to sound smart or placate me – Not that I'm saying they're not smart, just that they think I'm that stupid. The inter-planetary colonisation program's chief of inter-stellar travel, Roland J. Arthur, came to me after the wake.

He told me all about the world and how beautiful it was, and then he said if I played nice, looked pretty, and pleaded with everyone to keep the dream alive, that the agency would find Gregor (*Beat*) or his body. So, you're telling me that you're going to tempt me like a fish so I'll make you people look good?

After I spent so many months trying to mourn him, now you're going to taunt me with the possibility that he might be alive? Oh yeah, that's rich. I knew for so long this mission was dangerous. A friend, who will remain anonymous, told me of the complications, then never spoke to me again. I asked Gregor, "Is this worth it?" He shrugged me off, saying he wanted to give the people a galaxy – we already have a world that we can barely take care of, honey, do you really think we can handle an entire galaxy? Is it worth your life when we know so little about where we're going or how we're getting there?

We discovered wormhole technology because of a fluke! A guy dropped an apple and accidentally sent it into the stratosphere; and it came back charred and covered in tumors. And it was all for a world covered in white sandy beaches with no plants. I said to him, “We have those here; what’s the point?”

He said, “White sand is made by the poop of parrot fishes here. How did beaches appear over there? Poop means life!” So, you’re basing your argument off poop! (*beat*) I have tried for so long to convince myself that I believed in this expedition, but now I’m thinking: is this what I believed? Or is this just some notion someone else wants me to believe?

And I’m not alone. There are dozens of employees who have been sworn to secrecy, threatened with legal consequence if they come out with any of their notes, and some have been pressured to lie to cover up secrets; and all of them feel the same way I do, that this project is too dangerous, and the people in charge are doing nothing to correct their mistakes. To those people; if you feel like I do; suppressed and angry, then I urge you to come forward with what you know.

Publish it in the papers, come out and speak about it online; just stop holding your tongues. People deserve to know what kind of institution they’re trusting their future with.

That's just about the end of this stream, but next week, I can divulge a few more secrets, and a few more after that. If I get sent to jail, well some friends of mine will release a few more bombshells. All I want is for Arthur and his team to stop keeping me in the dark, keeping all of us in the dark, and either let me see my husband come back home alive... or just tell me he's dead, and stop leading me on. I'll see you all then, unless I get arrested in the morning.

Amanda D'Souza

Inspired by: White worn during South Asian funerals

ANKITA: Congratulations old man, you seemed to have everyone convinced you painted the truth. See, you called this one, “Celebration at Jallianwala Bagh”. Celebration? Your painting, decorated with our freedom fighters, our women and children, has the British officials being thanked by the people. Tell me again, who’s thanking whom? A garden in the background, and right in the corner, the well. You know, the martyr’s well. This is not our Amritsar. They were safe where they were, unsuspecting of any trouble. They danced and celebrated in tune with the dhol.

What you failed to show everyone was the massacre. The stampede of people running in all directions trying to escape bullets being shot at them. Children losing their parents and mothers crying “O raba!” Oh, and the well; you drew it smaller than it actually was so you never had to imagine what it would be like if 125 people jumped in to save themselves. The thing is, you didn’t stop there.

Where are the white men who shot their guns till they ran out of ammunition at people celebrating new beginnings? People who were peacefully protesting against injustice ended up facing one of their own that day.

Our professor seems to think that your painting was monumental in India being rewarded its independence. They never gave it to us, we took it. We were told to forgive you but not forget and yet, here I am, studying at the same school that once would have shut me out. You know, you did do one thing right. You left your name out. What, you figured the wrath of a billion Indians was worse than God? I'm lucky the security guard at the entrance didn't ask me to leave my water bottle behind. It would've ruined everything, especially since it took me an hour to funnel enough red paint into the bottle. There, just enough paint to cover the faces of every man, woman, and child.

