

FOIL LITERARY JOURNAL

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PROJECT RATIONALE:

Foil magazine is a literary journal focusing on Canadian short stories. *Foil* intends to attract a mature audience interested in literature, art, and culture. The *Foil* logo was created to represent the ink droplet from a fountain pen. The aesthetic of the magazine was based around the logo; quirky and different while still maintaining a sense of maturity and sophistication. The use of original abstract illustration brings vibrancy and visual interest to the stories, without distracting from the author's narrative.

The primary objectives for this project were to brand and design a multi-spread issue of a magazine aimed at an educated, mature audience. Unlike other literary journals, *Foil* focuses on creating a mood through illustration instead of aiding in the narrative, creating a unique experience for the reader. *Foil* bridges the gap between classic literature and progressive, bold imagery.



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TENTCITY

ALIX HAWLEY

Would it help to imagine the mice were here all along? I think it helps. Let's say they were always around, living frugal lives in basements and grey corners. Waiting for a signal to go forth and mousify the joint. They're here now, anyway enjoying the predator-free life in all the new grass. Their nests kill car engines. Their corpses clog swimming pool filters at the houses that have already been rebuilt, re-pooled. Sometimes at night, I think you can hear their hearts all whipping along together like rotors. In the day, their squeaking sounds like phone music when you're on hold.

This is no way to say it. This sounds like a dire warning about the future, with bad jokes. An apocalyptic Disney script. Beware the Mouse, ha. But then everyone did use the word apocalyptic. That and holocaust. The reporters all peppered the news with the black syllables, positioning themselves against the ripping red seams of Okanagan Mountain. I'm here live at the scene of the apocalypse, Peter. It's a veritable holocaust as the forest fire continues to rage. Who can say what is going to happen here by morning?

They couldn't help themselves. No one could. Some of the churches, handing out bottled water and blankets, hoped for the real thing. The army squatted at the football stadium. Up in the treeline, firefighters pushed through the snowing ash, dragging tails of hose. I wanted to say that someone wrote on the foundation of your house. You were always good at saying things. Making pronouncements. You used to take up so much space in my brain. So. Are you coming back? I hate that question. I hate that flat opening So. I keep asking. You would say, All unmarried people are the same kind of so-so, but the married are all so-so in their own way. People are moving back in as the insurance money comes through and houses get rebuilt. The noise and activity make the days go faster. There are efforts at rodent control. The spca reports a run on cats. So the cats are new. The houses are all the same as before, only a little shinier, with new roofs and siding and repositioned sundecks. Everyone has the same sunglasses. The same eyes. That's how it looks. Everyone looks like a gang of terrible twins, conjoined at the optic nerve.

I set up sprinklers on your roof the night we had to get out. That was me, for what it's worth. I got up there with your hoses and left them running. Ellen had asked me again to get the computer and the box of the kids' baby things from the crawl space. She was already strapping the kids into the car, not looking at the house, as if it were already gone. I went out the back and jogged down the road until I was gasping in the smoke. You'd been off on your cruise for ten days. We'd joked about it. The cruising. When I got back, the fire was branching down the hill. The air was hotter, and my lungs hurt. My ribs hurt too, from when I'd fallen off the ladder halfway down from your roof. In the car, I could smell myself under the smoke. The cold scent of your wet grass, your evening soil, your flowerbed. The kids' baby teeth were in the box of old stuff I didn't save. Ellen never reproached me. But lost blankets float in, trying to suffocate me in my sleep sometimes, still. Everyone but you is back now. The parties rise from the ashes. Game on. Brett Schimpf slaps the back of my shoulder in the same place every time I run into him on the cul-de-sac. Brenda has some kind of auto-immune disorder. She runs in a white blood cell

costume to raise awareness. We are all aware. The street is still like a boot. The sweaty, laced-in feeling. But there's no foot inside. Sometimes I dream that I can't walk, that my feet are burned away. I wake up on the floor, groaning and trying to crawl, or shuffling my legs around like a dreaming dog. Then there are worse dreams, when I know I used to be able to walk, and now can't. The slap of realization, over and over.

The school took the kids to the old heritage site where the missionaries first set up camp in the 1890s. They told me about how the priests nearly starved to death the first winter, and how they were eventually able to survive on apples, once the trees they planted got going. I felt it: bludgeoned by cold and heat, flattened by unrequited love for the place. The glaring and hissing of Canada geese in their highwayman masks. The pleading replies: I'm not from here. This place hates me. I can talk. And walk. Before the rebuilding, the foundations looked like jawbones stripped of their teeth. Two hundred houses gone. The hills scalped and scorched all down the east side of the lake. When we drove up and saw what was left of our place, Ellen sighed and said, Okay.

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The Pollocks pulled up next to us in their rv, wanting to compare destructions. I said I would check out the property. I got out of the car and went around what used to be the side of the house, crunching and slipping on the fire's droppings, and then through the burned backyard, over the blackened retaining wall, up the hill into the corpse of the forest. My feet felt flat and loud as cymbals. The trees were black quills poking up from the ash. The ground was still warm, a blood temperature. I touched it, so my hand was black too.

It's still there. You can still see it. The circle of rocks on the little plateau, black like everything else, but visible. Our huddle of trees now bare-boned around it. Our shuttered view blasted wide open. Anyone would be able to see it was a campfire, if they were looking for it. Your idea, but my construction. So. Ours.

What they wrote on the foundation of your house was about us. The words were obvious, pointed. Suburban adultery, the same old scarlet letter, but here in itchy black charcoal. Someone felt the need to make the point, to write it down. Everyone must know. Everyone must know: that's the prim sentiment behind the writing. You were probably aware of the knowing. But you always had that layer of downy obliviousness, as if you were born in a snowsuit.

At barbecues, everyone eats and drinks and mentions how sad it is that you had no house insurance, and how ironic, given that Tim sells it. You, of all people. Their matching eyes brighten when they say this to me. One of the kids dropped a field-trip report on the kitchen floor. The missionaries had allot of courage. They also had tentcity. The drawing below shows a couple of figures huddled in a snowy dugout beside a pitiful fire, modestly hiding their nakedness, but still smiling tenaciously. Tentaciously. Tentcity: something makeshift, flapping, a necessary evil until something firmer can be built. But present. Necessary, yes. You wanted me to. ●



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