



# NEWS





FAKE NEWS

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November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

# FAKE NEWS

This issue is dedicated to the art of speculation.

What does the future look like? What can it look like? What should it look like? Some politicians denounce realities with terms like “fake news” and others produce hopeful slogans like “build back better.” But what do these words even mean?

We find ourselves at a critical moment in history in the fight against racial injustice. In this golden hour of change, what does ‘change’ look like and how do we get there? How might we evolve in the physical and metaphysical senses?

This issue values a simple truth about imagining a future world, in that everyone is equally qualified to do so. There are no rules.

***“The truth is rarely pure and never simple.”***

***Oscar Wilde***

In times of crisis, maintaining community is vital. QT brings together our collective projects to create that sense of shared space. Queer Toronto Literary Magazine is a non-profit dedicated to elevating and celebrating queer voices in Canada.

Thank you to all the writers, poets, artists and makers for allowing QT to share your work with the world. Thank you to all the volunteers at QT without whom we would not have a magazine.

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# A hope for future quiet

**Matthew Hague**

Toronto-based writer



I'm not happy about the virus. I don't want anyone to die. Let's get that clear first.

Sometimes, though, I must admit, I smile about how my life has changed since the shutdown, since the end of "normal." Here's what I mean.

Three years ago, when I was hired for my job, straight out of university, to be a junior marketing manager at ———, one of my professors told me: "Matthew, it's not that you aren't smart enough for the role. What worries me is the incessant meetings, the hustling. You might get worn out. When I used to be the VP of marketing at ———, before I started teaching, I wasn't so dissimilar. I was, like you, a bit of an introvert. I got drained by all the conversation, all the team stuff, all the people constantly dropping by my desk, asking me for input, insights, advice, promotions, money."

"Sounds stressful," I said, palms sweating, sipping a chamomile

tea. We were at a Panera in a pumpkin-coloured booth.

She said: "My advice is this. Between meetings, hide in a bathroom stall for five minutes. Sweat. Hyperventilate. Then go back to your desk, the boardroom, whatever. That's how I got through."

Since then, I've spent more time hyperventilating in bathroom stalls than I care to recall. Grey walls, beige tiles, incessant reek of bleach. Toots and farts coming from the neighbouring stall. Between my trips to the loo: "Have you seen the numbers?" "What do you think about what Deborah said?" "Is it actionable?" "We need to schedule a meeting." "Can we level set, here?" "Let's level this up." "We aren't hitting our KPIs." "Can you brief me on the KPIs?" "Pssst. What does KPI stand for?"

"Unfortunately, we're an in-person, participatory culture." I was having panic attacks, wanted to work from home, at least a few days a week. HR, in a meeting in a grey room with beige carpeting, said "no."

"You're being so extra," a friend told me when I confided that my hands were shaking, heart racing, every morning before I left my apartment. "I just feel exhausted by people, by life," I said, sniffing, crying. "Working from home is for lonely losers," my friend replied.

"You've gone old before your time," a different friend told me when I said my dream night was reading a book, not sitting in a bar. Another friend, after I turned him down to go out dancing, said I was the "worst gay ever." Clearly, I had a hard time meeting like-minded, aspiring hermits.

The lockdown upended everything. Which, I can appreciate, is probably hell for lots and lots of people. Parents, you have my sympathies. When you had kids, you surely thought: well, at least for eight hours a day, most of the year, this little bundle of energy

and sass will be packed off to school. I also feel for my opposites — extraverts. I imagine the lack of company probably hurts, and can't be replicated by Zoom, with its awkward lags and inconstant audio quality.

But as I said, I'm not taking joy from other's suffering. I'm joyful because after the shutdown, my company's "in-person, participatory culture" stopped. We all got orders from HR, telling us to stay home, work from home. "For the next three weeks." "For the next three months." "For the foreseeable future." "We've given up the lease on our office to save money. You will have a chance to pick up your plants, photos and other personal effects later this month." By the time that last message was sent, I was too far away from the city to care about picking up my ficus.

I spent the first few months of the lockdown, stuck 24 hours a day in the too-small apartment I couldn't afford, missing sunshine. My space was lost in the shadow of dozens of tall skyscrapers, low enough to the skywalk that I could hear the inane patter of everyone walking by. "I love Starbucks because it is just SO reliable." "Is that woman peeing on the sidewalk?" "We need to pick up more Solo cups."

I never wanted to live in a place like that. I was born and raised in rural New Brunswick, missed the rolling green hills, the lush woods. I moved to Toronto reluctantly, for university, for work, because there were jobs, opportunities I couldn't find at home. Not that I'm passionate about my job. I keep it to pay my bills. Boring, unsexy, honest. At one point I had wanted to be a writer. That was my original dream. "You'll never make any money." Thanks, mom.

What does the future hold for all of us after COVID-19? Who knows. "Focus on the things you can control." That was maybe the best advice I've ever received. I didn't get it from my professor.

I think I read it in a fortune cookie.

Anyway, let me tell you where I'll be in the future. You'll find me at the little cabin, way up north, I rented after I ripped up my condo lease, after working remotely became standard for office hacks like me, after I no longer felt tied to the city. It's where I am writing this, where I intend to stay.

The cabin is made of honey-coloured logs. It's small. The size of an elementary school portable. No larger than my old condo. But it smells like cedar and has big windows that look out to sprawling forests. I can't see my neighbours. In the morning, birds wake me up. All summer, I picked wild raspberries, have learned to make jam.

From my cabin, I can see a lake in the distance. On sunny days, it sparkles white on azure waves. On overcast days, I get lost in the calming navy tones. If I'm stressed, between Zoom meetings and Slack messages, e-mails and DMs, I swim, cool down. No one has asked me to go dancing lately. Yay. Instead, I've read so many great books, written in my journal. I'm being a bad gay, the worst gay ever, but laughing, smiling, enjoying more than I ever have before. My hands no longer tremble.

Winter is coming. With every falling leaf, I feel It's almost here. I won't miss the muddy slush that builds up on Toronto roadsides, my wet boots squishing as I climb up into too-packed streetcars. Winter might be tough here, too. That's fair. There will be fewer birds, no raspberries. But my future is filled with plans. I'm going to snowshoe, ski, build fires, listen to the crackle of the flames, pen and paper in my hand. And when the embers dim down to nothingness, and the night gets pitch dark, the silence I've longed for will envelope me, bring me the peace I have never seemed able to find in the hustle, in the crowds.



Pax  
Santos

# SOLITARY REFINEMENT



I actually quite enjoy my solitude. I am not completely alone of course; my roommate sleeps quietly in the master bedroom. In truth it is the only bedroom of this condo. The condo is small, and very narrow, and very clearly intended to home two people who are in a couple that might share the singular bedroom. My room is technically a den.

However my mother and I spent thirteen hours arduously defending the integrity of our filial relationship in erecting the most spectacular Brimnes Ikea bed. The bed overwhelms the den but I hadn't had a new bed since I was twelve, twelve years prior. There are no windows in the room. The ceiling is exposed concrete which women like my mother think appears dirty and unkempt and women my age are supposed to think is minimalist and chic.

One dirty mirror hangs on the back of the door to the shared bathroom. Due to this fortunate technicality however, my den is now an ensuite. I'm thankful for the splotchy mirror; it's the closest thing to a window. The walls are entirely white, but the exposed concrete ceiling serves a slick grey accent wall. If the mirror can be a window, the ceiling can be a wall.

But I'm actually quite enjoying my solitude. The unexpected quiet of a rental in the city gives me space to think. When the lights are off, the absolute darkness of the windowless room is only unsettling until it's not. I have my books, and journals, and guitar that goes guiltily unplayed, behind which hides the even more timid keyboard, presently serving as a shelf for not unclean clothes.

There's plenty of room for one's thoughts to divide and multiply within the cell. An ideal repose really. A philosopher's cave for the modern woman living in downtown Toronto for under \$1000 a month. These days a moment alone is more valuable— Oh Thank God, a spider.

Pax is the Founding Editor at QT.  
Hate mail strongly encouraged.



# IN THE FUTURE

Gabriella Marquis

"In the future," she hissed, picking up her orange juice and swallowing down her morning medication, "I won't need to take these pills."

She picked up the intra-USB from where she had flung it onto the kitchen table the night before and plugged it into her wrist. She watched as it tapped into her heart rate, her body temperature, and her brainwaves, displaying them all on her phone screen. She did box breathing and meditated until the intra-USB beeped softly, indicating that her stress levels had calmed and that she was no longer in danger of an Anxiety Episode.

Then she went to work.

"In the future," she sighed, swallowing her afternoon medication dry while she rode on the Z-Line between her work and her therapist's office, "I won't need to take these pills."

She scratched at the spot above her left elbow where the therapist would place the psilocybin patch, and mentally steadied herself for the Trip to come – where the therapist would help her locate her traumas, stand by her as she re-lived them under sedation, and gently counsel her through them, one by one.

She wondered, if this week's Trip wasn't too intense, if she'd have the energy to stop by the supermarket on the way home.

"In the future," she whispered, pouring a large glass of chocolate milk to take with her bedtime medication, "I won't need to take these pills."

Then she picked up her tablet and flicked back to the listicle advising of all the new treatment options coming out soon. There was targeted light therapy, mineral restoration, and even a very updated take on what was essentially a lobotomy. All promised to be the one – to be the thing that would finally cure her.

"In the future," she prayed, "I won't need to take these pills."

Gabriella is a pansexual woman with too many stuffed animals, nowhere near enough cats, and an ambition to be a published novelist.



# How Will We Remember the Soundtrack to the Apocalypse?

JESSE BOLAND

You never really know what to make of yourself once summer ends. Much like the transformative state of mind known as *post-nut clarity*, the moment immediately following sexual climax in which every debauchorous thought leaves your head in an instant, the come down from summer often leaves you looking back at the former episode of your life with feelings of fondness, embarrassment, yearning, disappointment, humor, nostalgia, and dehydration. Albeit in reality most of our summers typically consist of drinking warm wine in parks, learning the hard way where you forgot to apply sunscreen, finding out how many of your friends actually have cottages they never told you about, and hooking up with people named Alex. Yet still, those handful of humid months nevertheless succeed in cementing themselves as the most romantic chapters of your life every year to be romanticized and longed for while staring into the abyss of a black January sky at 4 p.m.

What gives those weeks of pit-stained euphoria such lionization tends to be the music of the season. These catalogues of songs serve as our internal soundtracks to give us the confidence to bop triumphantly through our everyday lives whilst establishing ourselves as the main character of Trinity Bellwoods. I will never forget the summer of 2017 when SZA's *Ctrl* came out and waking up every morning in June feeling like a misunderstood mean girl in a 90's coming-of-age movie experiencing a moment of unexpected vulnerability while applying her brown lipstick in the mirror; or in 2016, cursing the trifling husband I never had and vowing to never trust a man again because my commute to work ended before Beyoncé got to the forgiveness portion of *Lemonade*. Yes, the music of summer truly is the catalyst as to what memories are engraved in our hearts like a tender yearbook signature from your highschool best friend who you never saw again but remember warmly for sharing her Hot Cheetos with you. With that being said, despite the unprecedentedly consistent abundance of excellent music that has emerged this year, it is unknown if that alone will be enough for us to one day look back fondly on 2020 and the summer that never was.

It is hard to believe it was only seven months ago that we were asked to stay home to help flatten the curve of the COVID-19 virus as it officially reached pandemic status. At first I actually found it to be a bit of a guilt-free staycation, a shameless excuse to get day-drunk and throw my ass in a circle at home to Tame Impala's *The Slow Rush* in anticipation for their concert I was supposed to be attending just three months later...so I thought. Still, for many people such as Gal Gadot and her circle of celebrity peers who lasted four business days before recording themselves singing John Lennon's "Imagine" at home instead of donating money, quarantine proved a challenging tribulation for many who struggled to find use of themselves after being derailed from our concepts of normalcy.

The trajectory of not only our New Year's aspirations were shifted, but those too of musicians plotting the meticulously calculated releases of their eagerly anticipated projects. Both Lady Gaga and The 1975 pushed back the releases of their albums from April in the hope of being able to properly promote their work once normal life resumed. Contrasting to this, British singer Dua Lipa instead pushed her sophomore album *Future Nostalgia* forward as a memento of hope to her fans that they may be able to find some glimmer of joy amidst our modern plague to help wait it out. Despite her best efforts, we're still waiting.

In a cruel twist of fate, much of the music reluctantly pushed out following the lockdown beginning in March proved to be some of the most uplifting and cheerful tunes that I could recall hearing in ages. Lady Gaga transported listeners from their confined homes to a planet of wonder and synthesizers with *Chromatica*; Megan Thee Stallion teamed up with her idol Beyoncé to tempt us into scheduling a tentative dick appointment with her "Savage" remix; and Carly Rae Jepsen gave us the B-side follow up to her 2019 album *Dedicated* that was initially developed under the working title *Music to Clean Your House To*, an eerie foresight into its ultimate purpose. No matter how much glee this music brought me as I strutted across my living room to the kitchen for the seventeenth time each morning, it never escaped me how much better this music could sound being blasted over the speakers of a sticky bar at 12:45 a.m while my friend asks the bartender working if they have a phone charger he can use.

In the same way that quarantine had taught those working from home the hollow tediousness of their jobs without the sense of purpose their social office setting awarded them, the absence of community given to us through attending concerts and dancing with loved ones deflated this once unifying experience of emotion through music to an austere vibration within our ears. Song lyrics clearly written before March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 describing sex, partying, dancing, and love began to feel like folklores of a

fantasy world long gone with little promise of returning. More so, artists themselves revealed their own tone deafness as many of them failed to recognize the spectacle of opulence in their performances no longer allured an audience of predominately unemployed listeners. Watching Drake prance amidst original Warhol paintings and a quarter mile long dining table in the wings of his 50,000 square foot Toronto manor in his "Tootise Slide" video didn't quite connect with me as I waited on hold with EI for three hours to beg for \$2,000 so that I may avoid going homeless in a global pandemic.

The memories we attach to songs and albums upon our initial introductions to them have the power to trigger memories of elated nostalgia or crushing trauma depending on the associations we create with them given the current state of our lives at the time. Like a sleeper agent, I store deep down within the crevices of my subconsciousness the cursed memory of pretending to be trashed out of my mind off of one Mike's Hard Lemonade that can only be awoken by the lyrics, *now I'm feeling so fly like a G6*. But as I anxiously walked through the produce section, cautious of those standing within six feet of myself during my bi-weekly grocery shop, I noticed that my heart was nervously pulsing in synch as "Rain on Me" played over the store's sound system; this would eventually prove to be a lasting connotation to the Gaga x Grande duet.

For me, I had the luxury of being able to enter and exit these premises at my own will depending on how quickly I could grab my groceries. But for the essential workers tasked with the unsolicited mantle of *heroes* for working eight-hour shifts in plague centers, they were forced to have the songs comprising mandatory work playlists engraved into their minds for five days a week as they non-consensually compromised their health and safety so that we could maintain ours. As a former retail employee myself, I know the dread of hearing "One Dance" and remembering hearing it up to eleven times during a six-hour shift, but I will never know the

trauma of one day being reminded of the fear that I may contract a fatal virus to be spread to my family members every time “The Box” comes on the radio.

The fatal coronavirus was not the only contributor to widespread death in 2020. While COVID shut down almost every component of American culture this year, it did little to end the systemic violence of police brutality and white supremacy. Following in the wake of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor’s murders, the music industry needed to take a pause so that the voices of the Black community could be heard in its place. The contributions made to the history of American music across all genres by Black artists cannot ever be understated, yet still in 2020 Black artists were forced to band together to assert that their lives mattered after having devoted their souls and minds to a society that views them as disposable commodities. In an effort to avoid taking focus away from the modern civil-rights movement being led by Black Lives Matter, sister-duo Chloe X Halle pushed back the release of their aptly titled sophomore album *Ungodly Hour* as the United States lived through its own. Many Black artists wrestled with the unfair conundrum enforced upon them of being told to step aside to allow focus on the political conversations at hand, or to appear optically vain and self-centered for promoting their impassioned work during a political uprising defending their right to exist. While the civil rights movement of the 1960’s gave the world unforgettable music such as Marvin Gaye’s “What’s Going On” and Aretha Franklin’s “Respect”, it is unknown just how much longer touching lyrics and soothing melodies can attempt to heal Black suffering.

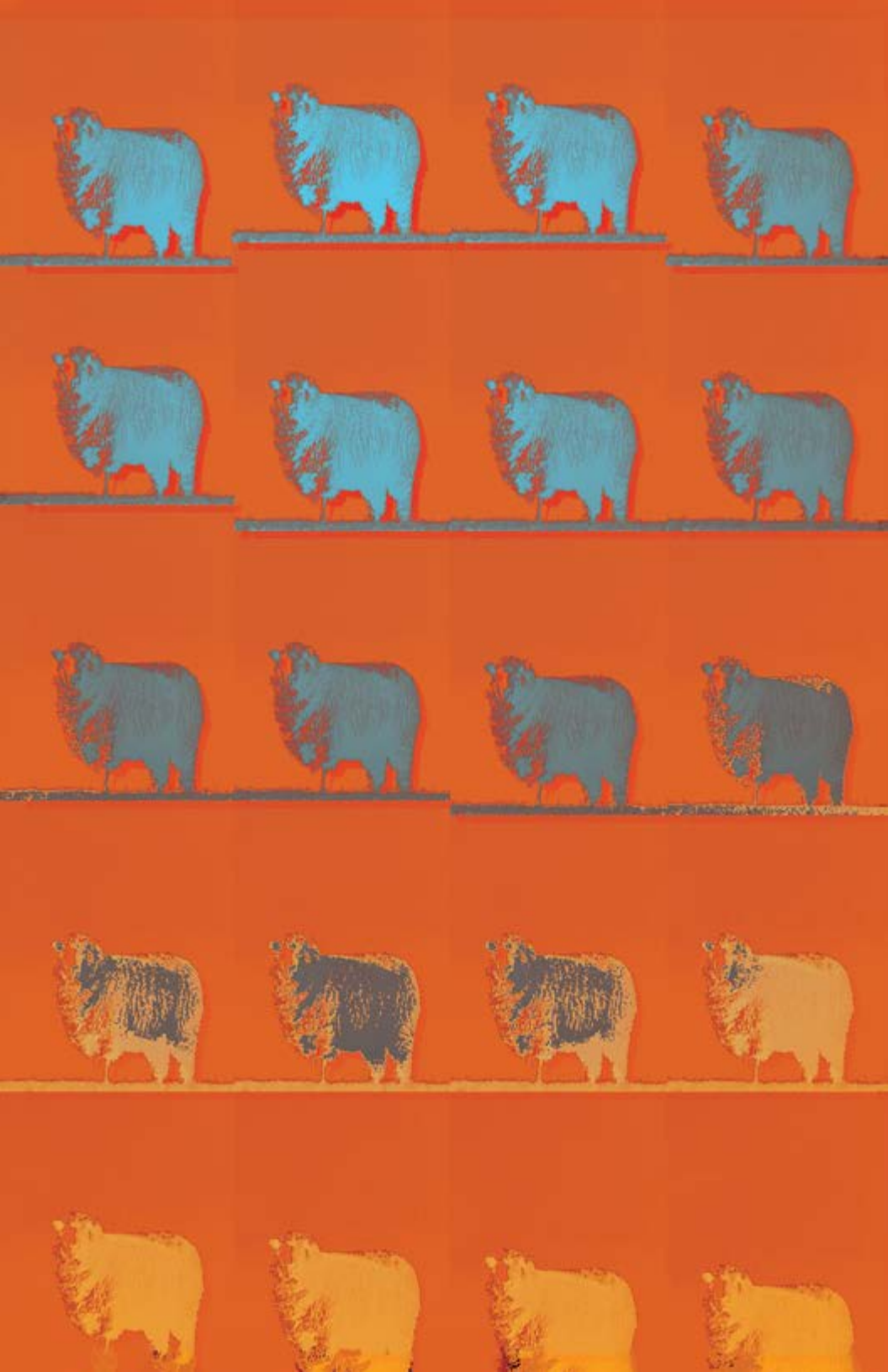
As quarantine slowly lifted during the eye of the COVID storm prior to the second wave’s arrival, summer began to feel like an unnerving purgatory of guilty festivities. Parks, beaches, and patios filled up like they would any July despite our knowing there’s no vaccine or treatment to a virus that has killed nearly 1 million people worldwide. Sweat covered our goosebumps as we

pretended everything was OK while purchasing wine to be enjoyed in the park with friends from service workers we had called heroes just weeks prior. I remember yearning to listen to the jubilant music put out from the months of April through July over portable speakers on the beach with my friends once the pandemic was over. After finally caving in to my desires and relinquishing all care for logical safety, I took to Hanlan's Point Beach to bask in the sun with my friends. As I lay in the sun surrounded by a legally permitted group of ten people hearing the songs of quarantine played for the first time, my joy was still not enough to absolve me of my guilt.

Summer officially came to a gloomy close several weeks ago, and with it so did numerous establishments within Ontario as COVID numbers continue to reach new peaks marking the arrival of the second wave. It is still too early for me to say how I feel about summer 2020, not enough time has passed for me to be able to experience the post-nut clarity of summer to allow for deeper reflection. Given that neither the pandemics of COVID nor police brutality have met their ends, the conclusion of this summer was signaled only by a change in weather rather than progress of a dying world. I feel grateful for the music that was given to us during this crisis as it at times felt like the only memory of a reality I continue to mourn. How this music will be remembered is impossible to say; I don't know if this will be seen as the definitive beginning of our new normal, or will it be a time capsule for our darkest moment before things got better; and even if they do, just how many of us will still be alive to see it?

### ***Jesse Boland***

I write to give voices to people who use their passports as ID to get into the club. Gay Leo who grew up on Toronto Islands who lives life by chasing my dreams by foot because I don't have a driver's license.



# GENERATION LOSS

**S.B Edwards**

It only took you a year to write that book? And you're up for an award for it? That's amazing. It took me eight years of writing every day before I finished my first novel. Way too long, I know. But there's a reason for it. See, I had way too many ideas for stories. Still do. And I did my best to keep up with them as they come. But then I read that book, *On Writing* by Stephen King. Have you read it? You really should, it's full of great advice. But the one piece that stuck with me the most—and I don't remember the exact quote—was the idea that half-finished books are no good to anyone. If you get a new idea, he suggests, you should spend an hour or so writing down every single thing about it you think of, and then put it away. You can come back to it later, and if it's a great idea, you can run with it. But you have to focus on your current project, otherwise you end up with a hard drive full of half-written stories and neglected dreams, which is exactly what I had.

Anyway, that's what I started doing, and that's why I now have a finished novel. I got it published, too, with this little publishing house out of Ottawa. I wasn't nominated for anything, not like you and most of the others here tonight, but still, I'm proud of it. It's a proper published book on a proper shelf in a proper bookstore, which is more than most writers can say, right? But once the

excitement wore off, I had to decide on what to write next. So I opened my folder of project ideas, excited to pick one, but I found thirty seven different documents staring back at me, doe-eyed and excited for the attention. I went through them all, and yeah a few of them were terrible, but most of them could be something. But I had to find one single story to write. I shortened the list down to three projects, but each of the three was just as interesting as the others.

I mentioned my indecision to my friend Danielle one day over coffee, and she suggested I just make three clones of myself, and give them each one of the stories.

And I mean, yeah, why didn't I think of that?

I'm lucky Danielle works at a cloning lab, so I could skip over all that bureaucratic junk standing in the way. Have you ever cloned yourself? Of course you haven't, what am I saying? Unless you yourself are a clone, and the real you is sitting at home relaxing because you find awards ceremonies like this unbearably dull. I know I do, which is why I'm talking to you instead of paying attention. Anyway, the best way I can describe it is like having a vacuum cleaner made of light run over every inch of you while you're naked. It's kind of pleasant actually, but painful at the same time. A bit like acupuncture, have you ever had that before? I did, once. But I'm getting off track. The point is, Danielle and I went to the lab after hours and she hooked me up to the machine. I arrived as an only child, and left as one of a set of identical quadruplets. We got a lot more weird looks on the subway than what I'm used to.

So we got home, and I gave them the story ideas. I thought I'd be fair and democratic and let them choose. But they were exact duplicates of me, so none of them could decide which story they wanted to write either. Not only did each of them love each of the

ideas, they also loved a fourth idea I'd been planning on doing myself. We argued for hours about it, and eventually we decided to sleep on it.

Little did I know, they had other plans. Maybe they snuck out of the house while I was sleeping and broke into the lab to make more clones. Or maybe one of them just asked Danielle if she could go back, and Danielle wouldn't have been able to tell because after all they're clones of me. I don't know. The point is they cloned themselves, which means there are sixteen of us now – me, my three clones, and four each of my clones' clones, twelve in all—I call them my grand-clones. Why did they think their clones would be any more decisive or agreeable than they were to me? I guess it's because they're direct copies of me so they think exactly like I do. Anyway, their clones were... well, you know how a photocopy always looks a little bit worse than the original? And then a photocopy of that photocopy looks even worse? I guess that's the case with clones too. So my grand-clones weren't quite as sharp, but I didn't know what else to do with them so I just gave them some space to live in my basement and told them to write books. Each of my clones took care of their clones and gave them each a story to work on, while I had to work overtime to keep us all fed. But I guess they did what they were told, because that's one of them up on stage right now, accepting her award for the novel she wrote. It's weird as hell, but even I have to admit it's better than anything I've ever written. Oh, that's the award you were up for? Sorry about your luck. Shush now, she's about to give her speech.

S.B. Edwards is a transgender woman who works as a career ghostwriter and internet marketer. An activist and lifelong Star Trek fan, she dreams of a brighter future while floating in the mud of the present. She lives in Toronto.

# FEELS LIKE CAPITALISM



## ***Derek H***

A wine-drinking dog mom who should probably stick to his day job.

Her name is  
Wait, why do you care

Stick and stones may break bones  
But religion and guns  
And drugs and thugs  
Form an agenda  
A desire to hate  
A love of hate  
Is there any other way?

Not so historical  
Rooted in the wreckage of me  
Of me? No, of the trees  
Burnt down in the forest fire  
That wasn't just another fire  
But a ritual, a slow burning  
Meant to rage and hurt  
Those who fight and claw for more  
For rent, for a cheque, for a country  
Worth fighting for, but nothing more

So save us, save me  
No, stop  
Save yourself  
Because the collection of us  
A fragile hope of the collective  
No longer exists, no breath to breathe  
No heart to beat  
Only me, all me, just me  
Praise me, reward my lust  
For a life I dream to attain  
Because you said I should

Pay me in gestures, pay me  
In words, or love me in regret  
But you don't regret  
The hands you use to use me  
In the ways you can stay high  
And lust for my use  
I am a slave  
But not to you or your ways  
So wear the mask  
Not of the virus, but of the pandemic  
That is the sickly nation  
One which fails to live  
The life he wants to live  
We fail to live  
Please  
Help me live



*Nuclear Fusion. Acrylic on reclaimed wood, 42" x 24".*

***Nuclear Fus***



### ***Kat***

Kat is a full-time employee at a marketing agency in Toronto. To cope, she makes weird and dumb art in her spare time.



Donald J. Trump  
@realDonaldTrump

Happy #CincoDeMayo! The best taco bowls are made in Trump Tower Grill. I love Hispanics!  
[facebook.com/DonaldTrump/po...](https://facebook.com/DonaldTrump/po...)



2:57 PM - May 5, 2016

143.1K 116.6K people are Tweeti

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 25 Meith 2015  
Mexican gov doesn't want me talking about terrible border situation & horrible trade deals. Forcing Univision to get me to stop- no way!

770

1k

1.3k



3:24 PM - Jul 10



Donald J. Trump  
@realDonaldTrump

The Mexican legal system is corrupt, as Pay me the money that is owed me now sending criminals over our border  
7:47 PM · Feb 24, 2015 from Manhattan, NY

1.2K 4.1K people are Tweeting about



Donald J. Trump  
@realDonaldTrump

I love the Mexican people, but Mexico is not our f They're killing us at the border and they're killing jobs and trade. FIGHT!

8:57 AM - Jun 30, 2015

3.5K 6.1K people are Tweeting about this

ump · 12h shed (and Mexico will pay for the Wall!).



Donald J. Trump  
@realDonaldTrump

Sadly, the overwhelming amount of violent crime in o major cities is committed by blacks and hispanics-a to subject-must be discussed.

4:05 AM - Jun 5, 2013

8K 7.5K people are Tweeting about this

Mexican leaders and negotiators are much tougher and smarter than those of the U.S. Mexico is killing us on jobs and trade. WAKE UP!

# THEY OFTEN DO

Sabrina Rand

I'll be honest - I'm not very good at writing about myself. I'm much more analytic than introspective. I can write fifty-page essays on issues I'm passionate about, but I've come to realize that's mostly because I'm afraid of talking about myself. I'm afraid of saying "I," because saying "I" makes me sad. It makes me mourn. It's a lot easier to say "women," "queer women," or "first-generation Americans" because then I can distance myself - be angry, objective, and even self-righteous. Moreover, *I'm so used to people questioning my experience that I default to statistics as if my own voice adds no value.*

Last year, I went through something that I've laughed off until this point, but now I can't seem to shake it. And every time it comes up, I get so angry I could almost cry. I had just finished my master's degree abroad, and I decided to move to New York City to live with a friend I knew from high school...

Wait - I feel the need to rewind, to explain my identity to you. My name is Sabrina, and I often joke that I am the whitest Latina you will ever meet. This is a defense mechanism, and I know this because when I say it I am not laughing.

I am a white-passing woman in a heterosexual relationship with a man and this comes with privilege that I probably don't even fully grasp, although I'm trying to. But I also want to own that being mixed (Mexican-American) and queer (bisexual) can be a very lonely place and that *it is exhausting having to constantly define, defend, and reclaim my identity.*

My friend Karen\* is a tall, white, blonde woman from a wealthy family who, to her credit, is doing exceptionally well for herself. She is also racist. And the way she gaslighted me when we lived together was honestly impressive.

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\*Not her real name but \*cough\* you get it.

When I was cleaning her friend's kitchen after making them dinner, I was "the most useful Mexican they ever had in there." When I was debating immigration policy or refuting her insistent demands to "build a wall," I wasn't a "real Mexican" or informed enough on the issue to have an opinion.

There are so many things that are wrong here, but I'll try to break them down piece by piece:

1. When someone says "You're not a real Mexican," what they really mean is: "You do not conform to my racist stereotype of a Mexican."
2. Why do white people think they have the right to decide other people's races and ethnicities for them (another legacy of colonialism)?
3. Can someone please explain to me why a white girl from Maryland who works in real estate is telling me that she is more informed on immigration policy than a first-generation American Latina with a master's degree in International Development and Humanitarian Emergencies?

And then it dawned on me. That's how this works. It doesn't matter how qualified I am...

It fascinates me the way conservative America manipulates and weaponizes mixed and queer identities. I'm not Mexican enough to have an opinion on immigrant detention, but just Mexican enough to be the butt of every immigrant joke. Just like I'm not "really bi", but I'm a "unicorn" when you're itching for a threesome. *Which is it?*

Fast forward to Christmas and I'm at home with my uncle, Miguel. He is yelling at me - calling me a dirty Mexican - because he loves me and he wants me to learn that I do not need to defend my identity to the likes of people like Karen. Shortly after New Year's,

I move out.

Karen once said, "I wish for all our sakes that Sabrina, *and people like her*, would try to understand centrist viewpoints more and reach out to those in the center and even across the aisle, because that is the only meaningful way to create real, meaningful political change that will make lives better for minority communities, and by uplifting them, all of America."

Thank you for your concerns, Karen, but I disagree. How can there be meaningful change in America without acknowledging white supremacy? When the mere implication that wanting to build a wall might be racist offends you? When your uninformed white perspective takes precedence over my graduate education and lived experience? When you feel more comfortable telling minorities how to "uplift" themselves than *actually listening* to their needs (or, god forbid, acknowledging your complicity)? Better yet, how can we have these conversations when you don't think we have the right to be here in the first place? *When our very existence in America is up for debate?*

Since May, protests against police brutality have swept the country, demanding justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Jacob Blake, and many others. *Selective, insincere and self-serving allyship is actively harmful*, and yet Karen, and *people like her*, are posting black squares and #blacklivesmatter on Instagram. They often do.

Sabrina is a queer Mexican-American woman who works in the non-profit sector. She spends her free time confused about her identity and sending queer memes to her best friends because she knows her straight/cis boyfriend will not appreciate them.

*F O R O U R*  
**AMERICAN FRIENDS**

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***THERE IS STILL TIME,  
SO PLEASE FOR THE LOVE OF  
ALL THAT IS INNOCENT,  
VOTE.***

There are approximately 650 000 Americans living in Canada. Voting is everything. When Dictators-in-waiting make open, consistent threats and actions against free and fair electoral systems, please vote.

If you submitted your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and did not receive your ballot by October 13th, complete the [Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot \(FWAB\)](#) or download and print the [FWAB](#) here. It is a backup ballot you can use if you don't receive your ballot in a timely manner.

If your state requires you to return paper ballots, you can use a courier service to ensure it arrives on time. Some states will accept absentee ballots even if they arrive after election day.

For more information on how to vote go to:  
<https://ca.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/voting/>



# QT

Queer Toronto Literary Magazine

Queer Toronto Literary Magazine is a non-profit dedicated to elevating and celebrating queer voices in Canada.

QT was started in response to the criminal shortage of Canadian queer literary magazines. There are so many LGBTQ2SIA+ artists out there! And in times of crisis, maintaining community and connection is vital. QT brings together our collective projects to create that sense of shared space.

QT celebrates the art queer individuals make for ourselves and for each other. We accept poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, book reviews, personal essays, reflections, memoirs, as well as artwork, drawings, comics, photographs, collages, and other visual media.



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WORLD NEWS