A Letter from the Editor

The release of Plenitude Magazine’s first issue coincides with the full moon.

This reminds me of an essay I read recently. In the collection Lesbian Self-Writing (edited by Lynda Hall), Betsy Warland writes:

*With the exception of a handful of nights a year, the moon appears to exist in various stages of always being “unfinished.” It is easy to forget that it is, in fact, always full. With the enabling of one another we enable ourselves. We are not on a quota system. Sharing our power as a writer and professional only creates more power for [queer] writers in general.*

I want to thank everyone who has shared their powers as writers and professionals with Plenitude Magazine.

Thank you:

To everyone who submitted; reading your work is the most exciting and rewarding part of editing this magazine. Whether your piece was selected or not, you have informed the editorial process with your views and experiences.

To the Advisory Editorial Board for all your advice and suggestions: John Barton, L. Chris Fox, Arleen Paré, Maureen Bradley and Sara Graefe.

To Cliff Haman, the technical lifeguard. In Hasselhoff-esque fashion, he grabbed his metaphorical buoy (which is actually a mac mouse), and saved me many times from metaphorical undertows (Wordpress and Adobe Creative Suite).

To Lynne Van Luven who acted as the supervisor to this whole endeavour. I met Lynne four years ago when I asked her, out of the blue, for advice on publishing *Walk Myself Home*. She didn’t know me – we’d never met, nor had I been a student at UVic where she teaches — but she helped me anyway. By following her advice, I found a publisher with Caitlin Press. Lynne has so generously “shared her powers.”

Finally, thank you to all the contributors for their poems and stories.

Here is the moon, always full.

We present Issue 1.

— Andrea Routley
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Mars in Love

(i.)
You think you’ve staked him
then one night the geography shifts
under fingertip.
   No warning
just upturned freckles
on previously unspotted flesh
   and then
the new points of interest, not
the usual,
not those tourist traps,
but places off-road, places
perfect in their wildness
unearth themselves and rise up.
   Suddenly
his body becomes ancient,
a confession of creation,
or its apology. Like the moon
his skin tells a story
in scars — friendly fire
he says
and as you bring your lips to each
you name them after
the continents, and claim
to see a shape in the array
of hairs, pock marks, burns, and creases.
He’s your secret soldier.
And there’s an empire in each
embrace. You wear his scent
as foreign spice, drape his arm across
your chest like silk in some imperial
night vision. You tell your friends
what his name means,
its origins
the same language as yours.
(ii.)
In the motel room
TV images of the Mars exploration
turn the room appropriately red, swirl the angry
red dust over his desert-sunned skin.
His body, not a place
on Earth or its moon,
but now, in this light,
a place we haven’t been
in person
just dreamscape and theory, the probed
and imposed upon
new found land.
That is the place, wind-whipped,
uninhabited —
You’ve known red nights
that flicker on the screen,
four-wheeling all-terrain over-hauled.
This love,
a cartography between planets,
the map laden with the marks
of desire, that search
for life, the future.

(iii.)
You tell him that you saw
two men wrestling
on the beach early morning
and they looked like
two men fucking,
and then you realized
they were two men kissing
against the violent surf and
you weren’t sure which
version was the translation.
Makes you anxious, doesn’t it,
when even you can’t see the other
possibilities of a man’s body.
Discretion

The cock shot up-close and personal ads are now known as Casual Encounters in the corner of the touch screenings held at the clinic available Married White Male seeking NSA fun with masculine men a plus and negative as of March 1 drug and disease free-loaders need not apply stats available upon request that you be str8-acting too much cologne is a turn often available on weeknights after work out 6 days a weak sissies need not a requirement but a plus-size queens step to the back doors open at six bring your own condoms are an absolute musclebear seeking same for none of the gay stuff just time next week available for companionship and possibly more leather the better cuz I love me some uncut guys are OK to contact this user directly press 200 pounds on the bench 150 max. since I don’t do fat ass is high and willing to please be discreet.
It was clearing that night, the earlier clouds of grey disappearing like a freak mist behind the forlorn rocky slope of the North Shore mountains. While I walked over the water the music that played in my head was soothing like an orchestra, soft brutal strings and beautiful big brass instruments arranged by a guest conductor in the sky. The cars made their way in a tiny parade over the aging Burrard Street Bridge, heading towards downtown and the sleek towers of glass where so many lives were lived, and so much love was squandered.

It was nearly perfect. I was high as a kite. The moon was cut rough into the sky like some school kid’s weekend project, a yellow crude felt, jagged on one edge, pinned onto a black fuzzy backdrop by a shaky hand. I was admiring this powdery moon and the stars that rarely seem so gifted to Vancouver as the way they were that night. Also the dive-bombing seagulls, God’s little helpers, climbing up to these twinkling stars before spiraling down into the muddy bowels of False Creek, splashing into that icy gut like dark mechanical props on a second-rate Hollywood set.

I was God’s little man in my own right. I knew without a doubt that I could fly if I wanted. So I didn’t think anything of it, hopping onto the ledge that bordered the old bridge. It was a high stone ledge, with pillars and columns and lots of fancy millwork. I’d done it a million times, sometimes with a friend, usually alone. The Burrard Street Bridge is the oldest in Vancouver, built on a blanket of land stolen from the Squamish. It’s because of this I think it’s haunted.

I was thinking about all of this. About the stolen land. Also about my date.

I could taste him still on my lips. Not love. Just the crude salty resin of whatever trace was left of him; his elemental essence, lust, the residual forensic evidence.

The edge of a bridge so high up, it’s like God whispering lullabies in your ear.

\textit{goodnight do it do it do it goodnight goodnight goodnight}

When I was a little kid, my favourite book was \textit{Jonathan Livingston Seagull}.

I didn’t jump. I want that in the record. When they fish me from the Creek, trawling at first light for my slowly swelling body; when the students of art and sculpture lumber onto the ferry heading for Granville Island, and the soupy Vancouver rains erase any nocturnal memory.