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from There Are
The Romances
That Stick

to that song, that baby toe, that particular
hue of blue, that constant
twister of cherry blossoms in April on the corner
of Second and Commercial,
romances that stick to you long after they've ended—
and then there are the romances you barely remember at all.

They turn up in your memory like a key
found in the pocket of a coat you haven't worn for ages,
or a phone number scribbled on the last page of the self-help
book written by the Buddhist nun from Los Angeles
which you always fell asleep while reading, even on the bus,
and there is no name beside the number.

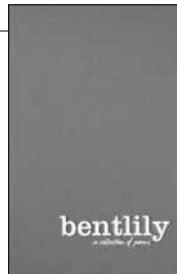
— Amber Dawn

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The short story

I know people who hate short stories. I don't blame them. They are arrogant and gorgeous. They are literary one night stands. All intimacy and no commitment. Just as you are falling in love they disappear. You knew all along there was no future but you can't help it, the wondering.

— Samantha Reynolds

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[untitled]

- I'm waiting to write.
- It's like waiting for the bus. You know the bus will come.
- I don't know the bus will come. All I know is there's a sign here that says "bus stop."
- You may have to flag it down.
- I'm not flagging it down. I'm waiting for the bus that stops at this bus stop.

— George Stanley

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Lions Gate Bridge

You can see her from the sea. You can see cars
inch north and south under the gift of lights
a beer man gave to Vancouver's sky at night.
Strung tighter than a junkie at either shore,
she's nightmarish. The *idea* you can't get across;
slight; anachronistic; from a distance,
thin as a hair crawling with pestilent traffic.
But in the evening, cool air curls in through the narrows
and the traffic calms,
and lovers sit in one another's arms
at Prospect Point and behold her. How we love
to look at what we keep and what we have.
When she comes down at last, the future comes.
With it, other lovers. Other charms.

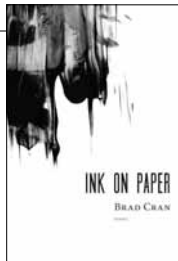
— Elizabeth Bachinsky

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from Normal *For my daughters Micah-Sophia and Rory Sarah*

I'm fighting normal. I'm choreographing this other dance, where you spin across the floor and out the door while the other kids are still jumping on the spot, popping up to learn ballet. From an outsider's eye, you might call ours the dancing raccoon disco, or perhaps we are the hip hop squirrel brigade. Or are we the bears who hold up signs saying, *Will work for honey and funk!* What I'm saying is: go barefoot. Or walk out with a handstand. Live in possibility and in constant proximity to desire. Don't just dream; burn your dreams. Heat your life with that fire.

— Brad Cran

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from Mountain View

We are born into
wood sea fire metal stone

Where we lay our head
stencilled onto a burning sidewalk

Sails tack and billow
roofbeams couple in the touching sky

Wire fences rust, are tossed aside
till moss bog swallows them

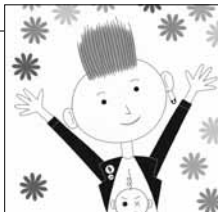
Mottled granite
fastens us to sleep

— W.H. New

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Rainbow Shoes by Tiffany Stone, Illustrated by Stefan Czernecki,
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The Blues

I don't care what clothes I wear.
Why not? Because I've got **blue** hair.

In my ragged jeans, I'm a beauty queen
with my spiked-up hair dyed **ultramarine**.

Brother's hand-me-downs never make me frown.
Baby blue hair's better than a lace ball gown.

Even stains and holes don't bother me—no—
when my hair's streaked **cyan** or **indigo**.

Cobalt, **peacock**, **sapphire**, too.
I'm well-dressed cuz my hair is **blue**.

—Tiffany Stone

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All Souls by Rhea Tregebov,
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Perspective/Parallax: Son

I picked you up. I picked you
up and put you under my arm.
I tossed you in the air.
You were that small.
Nothing had hurt you.
You didn't know hunger,
you didn't know cold.
For a little while I kept you
from harm.

— Rhea Tregebov

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Birds, Metals, Stones & Rain by Russell Thornton,
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from *Burrard Inlet Ships*

At a window overlooking water—container ships
and bulk carrier ships lying at anchor
framed in front of us. *They're always there,*
I hear a voice say. As if the ships were the same ships
that sat there twenty-four or forty-eight hours ago.
As if, in the middle of the night, the ships did not
arrive and drop anchor at exact latitudes and longitudes.
And tugboats did not come and bring the ships to dock,
and other ships not arrive and take the first ships' places—
in the middle of the night. As if the ships were not
emptied of what they brought here and loaded up again
while the ships' sailors took their hours' shore leave
to go to a bank, visit a doctor, talk with a priest,
buy a blouse or bracelet for a woman back home.

— Russell Thornton

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This Isn't the Apocalypse We Hoped For

the trains bend and bend and follow the recursive river
and they carry everything I need

fat bees hover above satellite dishes ultraviolet in colour
while I jump in my car for more

my pockets are stuffed with receipts of corporate failure
and blister packs of synthetic gum

cloud stacked on cloud a set design
for my irresponsibility, my frustration with the weather

somewhere in the North Pacific, my plastic obsession
is being stirred into the brine by an invisible finger

— Al Rempel

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