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the bottom line: “It’s enough for me to be sure that you and I exist at this mo-
Here, now, we exist.
We don’t know why. We can’t say how. But in this moment, we are here. Fi-
nite beings, we cling to this earth for so short a time before being swept away.
And as we walk our paths, we cannot escape the fact that there will be an end.
Time’s arrow marches on.
The ancient Greeks had a word for this: chronos. Linear, objective time, pulling
us into the future when we’ve barely processed the past. And though we cannot
escape chronos any more than we can escape ourselves, there is another force
that pushes and pulls at our senses, turning minutes into years, days into seconds.
Kairos, subjective time, measures moments. Losing yourself in another’s song, in
peace, in love, in laughter. Or breaking down at the end of the day, trapped until the
next morning. Religion and spirituality sew a comfortable fabric of reality that can
guide us through these moments, leading us to the divine, to the universal:
to meaning.
This desire for meaning in a muddled world can also be satisfied through cre-
ation. We create to prove that we exist. We create to express and merge our
myriad of perspectives, to gain a sense of the space that fills our differences.
We create; therefore, we are.
Creation is contained within these pages. Jiameng Xu captures the light of life,
Alice Damiano, its darkness. Kacper Niburski writes of everything in between.
In this edition, existence is contemplated, questioned, and pulled to its limits.
Open your mind to all that you are and all that you can be. We will end with a
quote from Lucas Coque, in the hopes that it will stay with you as it does with us:
“your permission to be/ is Being.”

With light and love,

Katharine & Mackenzie
Co-editors
the Law and Reason

Lucas Coque

I cried to God
To all the gods:

What can I do?
I read not -
but heard:

“Your permission to be
Is Being.”

This illustration is by Chloe Dolgin, a U3 student in Cultural Studies whose mission is to care about the tiniest things that mean the hugest amount.

I’m not alive for that purpose. My existence is not about how desirable you find
exist/exits
G. Sanguine

Someone told me
I had lilies for feet
So I kept falling through the earth
Over and over.

Borderline apocalyptic smiles
Sing we to thee, harking, breathing
So loud that the stars
Shudder and wane
With thirst.

Uncovered us in this heat
And someone told me
I had shovels for feet
So I dug further into the ground
Over and over
Again.

G. Sanguine is a Master of Music in composition student from Antigonish, Nova Scotia with interests in film and poetry.

Lucas Coque is a Brazilian who has been living in Montreal for the past 8 years, currently in the B.Th. program at McGill. Coming from a conservative evangelical background, today he identifies as an Existential Christian Agnostic, embracing all its contradictions.

me.” - Warsan Shire • “La plus belle des ruses du diable est de vous persuader
Each pack I buy I tell myself ’s the last.
They soothe and humble; briefly they reveal.
And when it’s been a while, I choke and gasp.
And cling to pang of death; at least it’s real.
I peel their cellophane and tear them wide.
With spark and flame and smoke they burn away…
Heartache and ash accumulate inside.
What else was ever in me anyway?
I try to quit; they always call my bluff.
And clearly smell the others in my hair.
I’d never leave; the next can’t be enough.
But stabbed by shame to hear them say they care.
If love is pain, then what does that make hate?
My way of justifying an escape

Lucas Paulson is a U2 Sustainability, Science and Society student on an existential quest for meaning in an absurd world.

In 2008, Heydar Ensha went to South Dakota with his father for a week.

qu’il n’existe pas.”- Charles Baudelaire • “It is good to be a cynic - it is better to be
The above photograph was taken by Angad Sharma, a U3 Civil Engineering Student at McGill University.

Tube top purveyor, existential extrapolator
Armchair instigator, chronic masturbator
ASL interpreter, Richard Pryor impersonator
Weekend interloper, Old Yeller referencer
Amateur rooftop investigator turned yeller

Yelling “to be comfortable is to die”
Questioning how one can “thrive and not just survive” among other new platitudes
‘You still seek greatness my son,’ was said to no one in particular.

The above photograph was taken by Angad Sharma, a U3 Civil Engineering Student at McGill University.

a contented cat - and it is best not to exist at all.” - H.P. Lovecraft • “The proper
i am a cloud losing my people
i am a man jumping off a cliff to end his life
who is bored on the way down
i am the umbrella broken
holding the rain in a hug
when i once let it go free
i am the loneliness we feel together
but avoid mentioning
when we see each other standing there
in the elevator
wishing that we were already home
where we don’t feel so alone
i am the deer’s head above the fireplace
still dreaming of running
still afraid of the orange glow below
i am a planet not yet discovered
with a life not yet known
i am a species that has had sex
with far too many mates
who ended up as a different breed
i am a dog
i am a cat that has more credibility than some people
i am that elevator still holding those conversations
and those two there who are only on floor two
and are cursing me
cursing them
for not being able to afford a better place with a faster elevator
i am a whirlpool in a toilet that is trying too hard after your dinner
i am a tree bare and beautiful
undressed but left standing with my arms holding up the sky
i am the telephone call in another language
where you pick up flustered and
apologetic that you don’t understand
even though i was just trying to flirt
i am not i always
i am always not always either
i am a drunk you met who tells you he’s having the time of his life
though he isn’t wearing a watch
i am an immigrant standing in an airport in a new country
with skyscrapers and all-you-can-eat-buffets and hope
and i am the entry officer ahead noticing the no-fly list blinking
i am that elevator still
even when i’m weighted down
by the two people who look to the heavens
but only find numbers of judgment and expectations
and who are now realizing they don’t need to curse themselves
but the other person who is too fat and too ungainly and too unlike them
for they are slowing the system
i am a long poem said in three words under the covers
i am a laundry machine wishing it were a dishwasher
i am a dishwasher wishing it were a blow dryer
i am hair
full and furious
covering the wrong spots
picked away for being
i am nothing on sundays
i am a killing in the street that hasn’t happened yet
but that will when the homeless rise up
butcher the rich
then tire of war
and look for a place to rest among the destruction
i am the cardboard box for a bed
a bed’s bed
and i am itchy
just as the elevator comes to my floor
i leave
say nothing
and i wish i were more
than what i am

Kacper Niburski is a twin who is convinced he would make
a good triplet. Don’t ask his brother, though.

find it nauseating.” - Jean-Paul Sartre • “You are afraid to die, and you’re afraid
The above artwork is by Alexis Vo. It is a 9x6 ft painting of every single star that humans can see from the earth with the naked eye. It is composed of rusted confetti over layered oil paint.

to live. What a way to exist.” - Neale Donald Walsch • “In one drop of water are
Over roads crowded with souls
Going home, trees borrowing colour
From a reddening sky, windows
Reflecting the sun’s retreat,

A pink glow falls. As day’s light
Fades from the world, I wonder:
Have I done what I could?
Have I done as I should?

Watching where I saw dawn
Now darken, I am borne
Away from a familiar shore.
The person who

Sees sunrise and sunset
Does not remain the same.
I am no longer that person
Who watched the sky

First glow. How strange that I can
Hardly remember what hopes
I have had then. On clouds tinged
With the day’s last light, streaks

Of red and gold recede west
Like the front of a bushfire,
Leaving a field of gray.
The light that I see

Is a light that persists. What
Of myself, my actions and my
Speech has stayed in the world
And now fades? Light

Will return tomorrow. At
Sunset thinking of two dawns,
One past and one yet
To come, I pray:

May the best of me
Be like the light that endures,
That travels between
Days, that promises to return.

Jiameng Xu is a MD-PhD candidate in Rehabilitation Science, who often cannot
tell the sky apart at dusk and dawn.
Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle says that the more certain you are of an electron’s location, the less certain you must be of its speed… or something like that.

I’m still not sure where I am or what I am. I’m not a pretentious self-declared philosopher undergoing a tumultuous quarter-life crisis; I’m just genuinely not quite sure.

Where do I end, and where does the air begin? If you trace me, my outline is an estimation – a guess as to where I was and what I had been: a poor two-dimensional substitute for the solid three-dimensional masses we call bodies. Make an iron cast of me and memorize its facets then tell me that you know what I am. When you hug me, your lines will merge with my lines and then what?

If you look at me, I am blurry, especially if you squint. A discerning observer will see me shift in and out of phase. After all, I’m never fully where I claim to be, but nobody seems to mind.

If I stay still you will see me.

If I unstrap my boots, will I float away… or will I just be here, barefoot? Can I feel you through the earth, or is that just dirt between my toes? I guess I’d better wash my feet and disinfect my brain while I’m at it.

The Japanese philosophy of Kintsugi says that broken objects with visible evidence of healing and repair are made all the more precious and I think that’s beautiful. I am practically held together by saran wrap and I think that if you tried you could see right through me. I must be invaluable beyond measure.

I’ll wear a speedometer and give you a GPS and maybe I’ll no longer be a mystery.

-aspects of existence-” - Kahlil Gibran • “The part of life we really live is small.
The below photograph was taken by Chloe Dolgin, a U3 student in Cultural Studies whose mission is to care about the tiniest things that mean the hugest amount.

Hannah Seo is a student of science, literature, and everything in between. The prospect of graduating and moving on to the unknown has scared her into writing a lot of existential material, the scattered collection from which this piece was birthed.

For all the rest of existence is not life, but merely time.” - Seneca • “I am not one
The artwork below is titled “rusted family memoir” by Alexis Vo.

and simple, but complex and many.” - Virginia Woolf • “Sensible people get the
we turned grey

Berton Herschel

We turned grey.
There was nothing else
To do when we re-
alized there was no
Black and white after all,
Just colours – not even
Colours – just shades – one shade –
And in it were
the limits of our world.

No more speaking;
(“Language is a social construction.”)
No more meaning;
(“Values are social constructions.”)
No more thinking;
(“Concepts are social constructions.”)
No more being;
(“Identity is a social construction.”)
No longer there

Except – from the comfort of our cells
With rebuilt umbilical cables we
Connect the only way we know,
USB cords into naval ports,
And in the fire-walls of our new wombs,
Past where the sun’s light reaches, we
Don’t see – can’t see – no light –
Except the light glow from our screens.
(“Let there be light
At the touch of a button.”)

Berton Herschel is either the pseudonym used by Canadian novelist J. Olson Orbeck when writing poetry or a Canadian poet who writes novels under the pseudonym J. Olson Orbeck.

greater part of their own dying done during their own lifetime” - Samuel Butler
the fields of choice

River Ludwick

He dragged his sulking body into the middle of the green, grassy field. On his knees, he begged the universe to answer. “Why?” he cried into the air. Being the universe, it gave no reply. “Answer me!” The anger grew in his voice as it replaced the sadness. This sadness was again replaced by doubt as he asked a final question. “Do I even exist?” This intrigued the universe, and she sent down a capsule in human form to interact with him. “This depends.” Her voice startled the man so badly that he fell from his knees onto his back as he half-twisted to face the woman who stood behind him. She was without description; all encompassing. She looked like everything, or rather, was everything. “I… I have to exist, right?” he stammered. Suddenly doubt flooded every crevice of his brain, making him question every memory. Suddenly he didn’t understand what he was anymore, or where his place was. “Either,” she spoke. Or didn’t speak. But he understood her. “You exist. Or you do not.” “Well… which is it?” “Which do you want it to be? Either, you do not exist. Everything that you have ever done or accomplished is meaningless, in which case you must accept that, for there is nothing else you can do. Or, you exist. Everything that you do is done by your own hand. All the choices you make, be they good or bad, are yours. In which case you have two options. Accept who you are, or cease to exist.” With this ominous phrase she extended her starry-cloaked arm. Underneath the cloak looked like a doorway into something black and infinite and empty at the same time. She did not have to explain where it led. He already knew. “If I choose to cease to exist, does that mean that I exist currently?” “No. Your existence is your choices. Something that doesn’t exist cannot choose, and its path is lain before it.” “But things that do not make choices exist. I can pull this grass out! I can

• “Mi existencia es incomprensible y ridícula” - Michael Ende • “Not the power
run this dirt through my fingers! What is that if not existence?”

“The grass has chosen to accept that it is grass, and so it is grass. The dirt has chosen to accept that it is dirt, and so it is so.”

Less of a word and more of a sigh came out of his mouth as his mind grappled with the options in front of him.

“So either I exist, in which case I can make the decision of whether or not I want to. Or, I don’t exist, in which case the outcome is inevitable and equally meaningless?”

She nodded.

“Okay,” he said, and moved forward.

The empty field of grass blew in the breeze, disturbed only by a trodden line running from the road. There were no sounds in the night as the stars shone bright.

The above photograph was taken by Angad Sharma.

River Ludwick is a lover of adventure. He travels from place to place going with the flow and writing stories on the side.

to remember, but its very opposite, the power to forget, is a necessary condition
Rasha is just another being overwhelmed by the beauty of nature and dimension of thoughts.

The above photo was taken by Mackenzie Roop in NSW, Australia.

for our existence.” - Sholem Asch • “Aside from myself, there was no sign of me.”
je suis une actrice

Rasha Lama

hello? hey can you hear me? peux-tu me comprendre? sorry i don’t speak english. can you hear me? oh yes yes i am an actor. quand? où? i act on stage, yeah it’s a horrid place. how? well i mean, the skies are blue and the sun is bright but the stage is hidden. it’s overexposed just like a photo would be. um how do i explain this, can you understand me? le scène est ici. c’est ironique parce que la pluie tombe de mes yeux et non du ciel. you can’t understand? i’m sorry i don’t speak english, i can’t understand you! anyways, i act. it’s ironic because i’m under harsh spotlights and this painted false ceiling with glow-in-the-dark stars and damp cloud tissues. i’m under all that but i see no crowd when i speak. the camera man looks confused when i ask a question and the make-up artist simply cannot find my look. i can’t connect with anyone while i’m in my own body. you know body? le corps? i’m sorry i don’t speak english. yea just continue to nod your head, haha look at that! you’re an actor, too!

can you see through that window? yea thumbs up, it’s a good view? well there’s no clarity no point and the heat is insane but i’ll just nod and smile with you. i mean, the heat is unbearable! my face melts and my clothes burn. i can’t have people see the real me. i’m an actor for christ’s sake - my role is my only purpose! oh. sorry. you look quite frightened. i’ll just smile now and “oui, je suis bonne et heureuse.” i’m sorry you can’t understand me but i’m used to it by now. everyone speaks english but i just can’t understand. yea, me. moi. i don’t understand you. yea you, how can you live this way? are you safe? how can i be naïve like you? oui ignorante comme vous. wait are you asking if i act? yeah i told you i’m an ac- you think i’m real? you think this stage is real? i bought the stars in a dollar-store clearance aisle. the clouds are my tears. i don’t understand you. i told you i don’t speak your language. you know what it’s fine. no no really just continue to smile and nod at me. here, i’ll smile back for you and say “je suis bienne et heureuse.”
that room with the green wallpaper

That room with the green wallpaper
with printed flowers now a little faded
and a light brown wardrobe
on the left side
and a darker trunk
lying just behind

never opened, because
it holds secrets
forbidden, because
it belongs to the past
I never played with the dolls it contains
I am not admitted
to the world of memories
– somebody else’s memories
that nevertheless hit me
and tie me in their ropes
that tie me up
and then release me
giving me the illusion
of being
me
in the present
worthy of existence
as myself

but it’s just a lie
they tell me to be kind
it’s a fake cuddle that actually says
that the memories rule
and I must obey,
ask no questions,
and remember to stay
only in the limited leftover space

An obeying little girl
that’s what I’m supposed to be…
submissive and careful…
—careful!—
not to touch anything
—you never know!—
I may spoil the memory.

cowardly existence.” - Charles Bukowski • “I’m only happy when I forget to exist.
Alice Damiano is a PhD student in Renewable Resources, Economics for the Anthropocene project (https://e4a-net.org/), with interests in human-Earth relationships and climate change.

That room is full of shadows
I turned on the light,
but I wasn’t even allowed
in there…
… I turn it off,
close the door,
slip away…
… they’ll find out
I was there
they’ll decide
I was wild
they’ll eventually call me disobedient child.

Alice Damiano is a PhD student in Renewable Resources, Economics for the Anthropocene project (https://e4a-net.org/), with interests in human-Earth relationships and climate change.

The above photograph was taken by Angad Sharma.

When just my eyes or my ears or my skin exist.” - John Fowles • “The most funda-
The above photograph was taken by Chloe Dolgin.

mental tragedy of my life is that the ones who I see do not exist and the one who
I’m alone, in a grass field. A warm summer evening. People are dancing; I watch.

“Join us!” one family calls out to me. 
So I do. I join them and we dance in our bare feet, locking arms, spinning, skipping, laughing. The pulsing energy of our dancing circle silences sense of self. No me. Just us. 
The music changes, and now people must dance in pairs. As our circle breaks apart, self returns, and with self comes heavyaloneness... heavy out-of-place-ness.
I shrink away, into the trees.
A stage appears, with a single ballerina, and an audience of hundreds.
As the clapping loudens, her movements become stronger and bolder. 
The ballerina ignores the audience, and yet she is the prisoner of their gaze—her vivacity at the mercy of their applause. 
As the clapping grows thunderous, my head starts throbbing, so I rise, above the audience, above the leaping ballerina, above the stage lights’ last faint rays, until I am completely enveloped in the blackness and silence of night. Then I, too, dance. I swim around the stars, swaying like seaweed, pulsing like a jellyfish. My body disappears, invisible, as black writing on a black page. I no longer recognize where I end and where the sky begins. There are no boundaries. I am the swirling starry night. 
The alarm clock rings—I wake—I am no longer the night, I am a lump of flesh, trudging out of linen sheets. I try dancing around the bedroom, but I am burdened by awkward self-consciousness. Why? Nobody is here—no eyes are here to look at and judge me.
No, that’s incorrect. Somebody is here. Two eyes are here. My eyes.
The alarm rings again. My eyes open. I stare at the ceiling. I am already trapped in my gaze.

Yvette Wenner is a first-year Arts student from Massachusetts.
we set the bar too low

Katharine Birkness

There isn’t a male pill
because they’re still testing it
not
because it’s a woman’s responsibility not to get pregnant
- and a woman’s fault if she does

My professor is pregnant
and passionate.
When this showed,
she was told:
“Calm down,
it’s the hormones.”
- women in power are still women

You signed up for therapy,
to learn not to stalk her.
“There’s a good guy,” they said,
and I agree.
Congrats
on not being a shitty human being.
- we set the bar too low

Katharine Birkness is a U2 Cognitive Science student who enjoys playing guitar, traveling, and pretending to be vegetarian. The dream is to spend the days cutting up brains.

Mackenzie is a fish splish splosh swimming downstream, her mind a ticker tape parade. In her poem she revisits a childhood favourite, A.A. Milne’s “Now We Are Six”, in an ode to growing pains.

is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.” -
now we are twenty-two

Mackenzie Roop

When I was one
A brand new sun
When I was five
Bloody knees, I felt alive
When I was nine
I knew that death would find
When I was eleven
I first drank poison’s heaven
When I was fourteen
My way waved outta scene
When I was seventeen
Flipped homes like pages of a magazine

When I was twenty
Things got kinda heavy
When I was twenty-one
A new era had begun
Now I am twenty-two
All that was false has become true
So I must pull hard on that lever,
stay clever as ever
Or else I may stay twenty-two,
forever

The above photograph was taken by Mackenzie Roop.
Its subject is an excerpt from a mural by Montreal street artist
†WZRD GNG† (instagram: @truxoxo_)
Radix is looking for Volunteers.
Like what you see?
Believe in student creativity, and
inter-faith collaboration?
Help us do it better! We can
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distribution, writing, layout, and
much more! Email us to join the
community.
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The McGill Office of Religious
and Spiritual Life (MORSL)
MORSL, a proud member of Mc-
Gill Student Services, is located on
the second floor of the Presbytar-
ian college (3495 rue University).
Please feel free to stop by our Med-
itation/Prayer Room any weekday
from 10:00am to 4:00pm! You’ll
find a full-spectrum light therapy
lamp, CD’s for guided relaxation,
a serene space with floor pillows
and meditation stools, and some
suggestions on how to meditate in
different traditions. Take time for
some serenity! Stay connected with
MORSL on Twitter @SpiritualMc-
Gill or like us on Facebook: fb.com/
morsl

Mid-Week Quaker Meditation
During the academic year, the Mon-
treal Mid-Week Quaker Meeting
meets every Wednesday, 17:30-18:30,
at McGill’s Newman Centre, 3484
Peel Street in the Ryan Library (2nd
floor, end of the hall). For the rest of
the year (summer and winter breaks
and exam periods), keep an eye on
our Facebook group (https://www.
facebook.com/groups/mtlmidweek/)
as the location may change from week
to week.

Weekly Zen meditation
Every Friday morning, from 8:15 to
9:15, MORSL Buddhist chaplain, Ze-
ngetsu Myokyo, offers Zen meditation
in the Birks Chapel [3520 University
Street, 2nd floor]. Please plan to arrive
a few minutes early as one is unable to
join after 8:15.

Winter Coats Needed!
Donations of clean winter coats
in good condition are desperately
needed for the Winter Coat Project.
Smaller donations can be dropped
off at MORSL (3495 rue University)
Mon-Fri 10am-4pm and large bags of
donations can be dropped off at the
Newman Centre, 3484 Peel Street,
10am-2pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays,
and Thursdays. Please mark all bags
clearly as “Winter Coat Project” and
drop them in the Newman lobby via
the lower entrance.

• “Do you know what you are? You are a manuscript of a divine letter. You are a
Orthodox Christian Students
Join our twice-monthly student meeting, Orthodox Christian Fellowship! We also have monastery visits, picnics, and movie nights. Contact McGill’s Orthodox chaplain, Father Ihor for details: ikutash@gmail.com.

McGill Protestant Christian Chaplaincy
3475 Rue University. A multi-denominational centre for community, service, worship, and pastoral care. We have midweek worship and lunch, Wednesday night Bible studies and supper, monthly contemporary bilingual worship, and retreats. Please visit www.mcgillprotestant.ca or email Chaplain Jean-Daniel at jd@mcgillprotestant.ca to learn how to connect.

My Neighbour’s Faith Series
This series of monthly visits to Montreal’s places of worship provides a guided experience with various world religions being practiced in Montreal. Email morsl@mcgill.ca to join the mailing list.

Local Gnostic Community Meetings
The Holy Grail Narthex is a study group of the Apostolic Johannite Church. We gather for fellowship, study, discussion, ritual, and generally uplifting times. Please feel free to get in touch with our lay leader, Jonathan Stewart, at holygrail@johannite.org or at 514-437-2948 for further information, to get details on upcoming meetings, or if you just want to chat.

McGill Interfaith Students’ Council (MISC)
Are you passionate about promoting interfaith dialogue on campus? Join MISC to have a chance to work with faith groups and promote inter-community dialogue and religious diversity! Work on the Council to make collaborative events like the Annual Interfaith Day happen and advance religious literacy and harmony on campus. For more information, contact: jonahwiner18@gmail.com

Newman Centre
Newman Catholic Centre, 3484 Peel Street, is a home away from home for Catholic Students. Visit www.newmancentre.org to find out more about this centre for Catholic spiritual, social, and intellectual life on campus!

The Jewish community at McGill
Visit www.hillel.ca, www.chabad-mcgill.com, and ghettoshul.com for information on shabbat meals, holiday celebrations, educational programming, and fun social activities!

mirror reflecting a noble face. This universe is not outside of you.” - Rumi •
TRUST

time of the storm

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Pics
Articles
Poetry
Stories
Reviews
Interviews
Drawings

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