



TOWER POETRY SOCIETY

presents an

Ekphrastic Experience

Local poets have created works in response to the AGH's permanent collection.

- Use this brochure to self-guide through the gallery during April, National Poetry Month; the permanent collection is always free to visit.
- Hear local poets read their works in the gallery:

Saturday April 5, 2025 1 to 4pm

Saturday April 26, 2025 1 to 4pm

Ekphrasis - \EK-fruh-sis\ • noun. :

a literary description of or commentary on a visual work of art. This mode of writing can be used in both verse and prose. An ekphrastic poem is a vivid reaction to a scene or, more commonly, a work of art.

Through the imaginative act of narrating and reflecting on the “action” of a painting or sculpture, the poet may amplify and expand its meaning.

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Hero Chiaroscuro

Framed in gold acanthus and grape
the gilt frame brags,
barely containing the broad shoulders,
handsome in bullion epaulettes,
scarlet jacket, full throated necktie.
Unbuttoned, his team shirt
identifies him as a Black Loyalist.
There were those who had heard
the word freedom and knew
who it excluded. Here a black man
could own land which was a step up from
the land of the free. But this is no easy home.
His beautiful body claimed by a number
His hairless head and close shave
a hallmark of current trends. He almost squints,
furrowed brow to the difficult.
His hands carry the light
though he is obscured by shadow.
One for the team,
the nameless, faceless teammates,
so many bodies sported for trade.
We want to claim him, count him as our own,
railroad him into our history.

Elizabeth Tessier

*In response to Gordon Shadrach's **Trade**, 2021
oil on canvas, antique frame, Bob and Maggie Carr gallery*

Profound

Impervious as a rock
she stores information
she upholds her sources

a dare in her eyes
she will never divulge
secrets that she knows

she dresses her robust
form to appear
demure in blue

she keeps tradition
true and close to her
in a headwrap

she will not let loose
her profound knowledge
she is whole

bold and powerful
as the sea
that surrounds her

as blue in keeping
with the mystery
the turning of time and tide

Jennifer Tan

*In response to John Wentworth Russell's **Woman in Blue**, 1908
oil on canvas, Bob and Maggie Carr gallery*

Altered Relations

Jaws of metal divide in length
to deliver the patron from the
vacuous, middle world
of a lift, to one
of colour and calm
that slows pulse and breath
on view, a gathering
of the familiar - framed
 had been shifted
 altering relationships
a new one caught their glance
too familiar - seen
on book jackets, film, a fine work of art
'The Girl with the Pearl Earring'
 is strangely present
 the room disappears
the face – blank, is unfamiliar
still oval, ridged by long brush strokes
the surface - that of a cornhusk doll
the pearl - is no longer
as wampum dangles, disturbing the usual
the gallery transforms to fields of corn
then its box of rooms
a story told, worthy of comment
great art - makes us think

E.J. Cardno

*In response to Elizabeth Doxtater's **Cornhusk Girl with Wampum Earring**
2021, acrylic on canvas, Bob and Maggie Carr gallery*

Girl in the Dotted Dress

That's my last daughter
 hanging on the wall
Her mother painted that image
 just before she died
Saucy, sullen puss, a challenging one, that one
 to get her to sit still
 to pose her just how mother wanted
 like trying to mix oil and water
With good reason, my wife's insistence, to capture
 a certain kind of light upon her face
One that could illuminate the poise and dignity of that visage,
 a likeness my wife so wanted for our daughters

The frumpy polka dot dress
 she insisted on presenting herself like that
 a child playing dress up, lost in mommy's measurements
She would only ever wear that spotty dress
 wore holes in it, she did
 and full of holes she grew to be
Even fought her mother to tame that unruly hair
 to keep it pinned down just so for the portrait

Ever the contrarian, that girl even went so far as to insist
 on the rough-hewn chair of sticks
 uncomfortable as hell for such a slow execution
 why not just sit on the damned sofa
The frame, now that was my choice,
 a dull demeanor duly displayed
 I keep the gilded frames for the other three
 the presentable ones

L. Borkovich

*In response to Emily Coonan's **Girl in the Dotted Dress**, 1923
oil on canvas, Bob and Maggie Carr gallery*

Sisters

Two as one
bound and bonded
for life

Trust never fails
secrecy kept in secret
secrets kept in secrecy

Fashion and shared style
desires and suitors abound
When a dispute arises
stand back

Nuclear eruption squall
accusations in jealousy
Emotions breach protocol
into an all-out catfight

Then exhausted sisters
in front of family photo
tearfully toast champagne

Ed Woods

*In response to William Brymner's **The Vaughan Sisters**, 1910
oil on canvas, Bob and Maggie Carr gallery*

Black Beauty

In this portrait, the artist moves beyond
tradition from oil paint and canvas
to photo-based beyond
the unimaginative and artificial
of Victorian avant-garde
She reimagines the painter's muse
as subject of her own lens

She recreates the narrative
makes visible the invisible
behind an ornate frame of gold
to offset a domestic servant's bearing
A symbol of black femininity
captured with fresh vision
Inverts the stereotype *exotic*
in a language of her own

The artist's creative spark re-visions
a renaissance in portraiture,
the de facto artist-muse dynamic
breaking with custom, confusing lead lines
and focal point refines in white silk taffeta
Her artist's eye inverts value
carefully shifts the viewer's perspective
Demands interlocuters of cultural exchange

Fanny Eaton transformed
Her side profile speaks volumes
gaze pointing outside the framework
of the viewer's expectations
She does not give herself away
in front of the lens behind the lens

L. Borkovich

*In response to Janice Reid's **Transforming Fanny Eaton**, 2021
photographic print on Hahnemühle hemp paper, Bob and Maggie Carr
gallery*

Strong and Holy

Women dream
of metamorphosis. We must
transform somehow. How else
to escape these cages? Liberate
the body over which
others lay claim? We are
usually trapped in one binary
or another, angel or demon, human
or animal.

Both an angel and eagle
have wings and can take flight.
We can only be considered divine
if we are virginal. Forget
the angel, wings dragged down
with religious myth,
oppression. Transfigure to
an eagle - able to fly high, thrive
on its own, be free. Capable
of being seen as both strong
and holy. Able to fly
away.

Jennifer Lynn Dunlop

*In response to Oviloo Tunnillie's **Woman transforming to angel/
eagle**, 1989, serpentine stone, Bob and Maggie Carr gallery*

Trinity

Unnoticed
I do
daily chores
seek water sources
find rich soil

Tribal woman

Unobserved
I soar
determine battle strategies
the best rival position

Eagle

Miraculously
I know
the battle's outcome
angel wings take me
to spheres beyond

Angel

Not just a woman
nor an eagle
nor an angel
but all three

I am Trinity

Gaiyle J. Connolly

*In response to Oviloo Tunnillie's **Woman transforming to angel/ eagle**, 1989, sculpture, Bob and Maggie Carr gallery*

All Together Now

Are we lost in our days?

our usual ways representative props
socially stood, in finery some, in simple dress
seated still, stiff a book dropped by one,
edification - secondary,
leisure, a status to show

shadow of self darkness hiding reality
bright light shines upon the young,
innocent, of dark, though no joy is present;
a face neutral, perhaps readying a Mona Lisa Smile
or aware of the encumbrances of adulthood.
then we wish to be all hero and champion
revered, in intercultural contexts
epaulets and fringe surround the 'Four-in-Hand'
yet the stiffened arms - slung low,
are disengaged while muscle memory
of ancestors does betray

see our hands - large and small
revealing seen and unseen gifts
their artfulness of work or unpaid labour - passions
in between the real and necessary
some centered, others off
framed partial or elaborate

now, all together, then
we individuals lived then and now
framed separate – put together
we learned, shared edification
grew and got caught for a moment
loved in creation of our alternate life
viewed now in quick glance
or analysis, for any number of fractal reasons

E.J. Cardno

In response to the portrait wall, Bob and Maggie Carr gallery

Strange Venture

A poor choice
rural drive is unsuitable
but you know me
Any challenge is a good one
so why let snow stop me

Unusual a pedestrian ahead
How did he get here
Was he dropped down
after an alien abduction

He looks none the worse for wear
and energy to spare
No backpack amenities
nor recent tire marks ahead
nor discarded parachute

Instincts tell me to help
rationale tells me to be careful
Mind-bending curiosity motivates me
tells me to stop and solve this

Ed Woods

*In response to Alex Colville's **Traveller**, 1992
acrylic polymer emulsion on Masonite, Nova Steel gallery*

Unchained Dream

Let us loose
Let us move up
 past the ceiling
History has put us here
Let us loose

Keep us out of constant servitude
Keep us from being thrown in jail
 more often
Let us loose

We wait for the time when
 nothing confines us
Not heavy chains
Not shoelace bowknots
Let us loose

Not cruelty
Not the darkness of our skin
Not the ranked power of the
 white and few
Let us loose

Halyna Koba

*In response to Esmaa Mohamoud's **Chain Gang 2**, 2018-2019
chain and used football cleats, Nova Steel gallery*

The Meltdown

Like insignificant matchsticks
bodies sprawled on the ground
with worms and cockroaches

The torch blooms a fulgent flower
its intensity blinds and burns
all organic living matter

desperate cries and curses
in the rubble of
last prayers and pleas

for mercy and deliverance
from red peeling skin
for swift wipeout of senses

but superheroes are
defenseless against powers
that beget greed and insanity
uncensored hatred and wars

the little people sweated blood
served their masters for pittance
as an end to living
and are now left to suffer

to die as the meltdown collapses
upon its own fabrication
a fiery annihilation of humankind

Jennifer Tan

*In response to William Kurelek's **This is the Nemesis**, 1965
mixed media on masonite, Nova Steel gallery*

Walker in the Snow

Just in front of me now

I see him

at times windblown snow

obscures him

but his presence pulls me on

draws me toward him through

wind and time

My voice hoarse with frost and ice

bids him hold for me

I chose him over the call of the compass

persuasive compelling

wholly convincing

and near, quite near

just in front

I see his shadow

only steps out of reach

Rebecca Clifford

*In response to William Blair Bruce's **The Phantom Hunter**, 1888
oil on canvas, Nova Steel gallery*

Help Me

My aircraft off course in a blizzard
fuel tanks ran dry too soon
Survival depends upon rationality
and survival kit provisions

No rescue is on the way
to this desolate landscape
due to no filed Flight Plan
Magnetic compass destroyed
now left unto self-instincts

Exhaustion overtaken strength
in fade from alertness
and plunge into snow

I taste and scent metals
a dangerous level to reach
This apparition stands tall
Seems to show me direction
that leads to needed safety

His pace of walking too fast
leg strength fails me to stand
as this phantom leaves
my chances seem fatal

Ed Woods

*In response to William Blair Bruce's **The Phantom Hunter**, 1988
oil on canvas, Nova Steel gallery*

The Pull of Sapphire

They told me
the difference between being
a Stoic and an Epicurean

They told me
wisdom is a gem
still waters run deep

They told me
to listen to their advice
choose to be a good girl

Until

Your sapphire eyes reached
the silence deep inside me
with a stir beyond control

Your pull was as strong as
boulders surrounding that dark pool
I wanted to jump into

Reflections of your still waters
enticed me to be open
to let loose wild pleasure

Being alone with you

Jennifer Tan

*In response to Anne Savage's **Dark Pool, Georgian Bay**, 1933
oil on canvas, Milton Harris gallery*

Laurentians - Sunset Swim

Providing I would wait for Dad
it was two paths down before the water's edge.
The lavender beds
turned smokey grey by nightfall.
The bright green trees and shrubs were now the colour charcoal
yet somehow still inviting.
As we both eagerly competed
the diving board bleached white
for us became Olympic silver.
With fluffy cloths
we toweled off
feeling smelling savoring
these Laurentian moments.

Gaiyle J. Connolly

*In response to Anne Savage's **Twilight, Laurentians**, 1959
oil on masonite, Milton Harris gallery*

I stretch a little

but miser logs render
only such warmth as keeps me cramped

on this kitchen chair

one oak chunk upon another
charred consumed
heat released dissipated

failing to reach
less than a foot away
where I sit
 fleeced fluffed
fraüzy in a pilld woolen cocoon

a pane shows me a cheerless sky
fog the frugal vestment of the day

paucity winnows meat from my bones
wizens cheeks wicks up phlegm
sucks hollow my body

Rebecca Clifford

*In response to Lawren Harris' **Ice House, Coldwell, Lake Superior**
c 1923, oil on canvas, Milton Harris gallery*

Settling

the revolving wind brushes into this frame
like a waterfall on your back
it takes the tree's gold cash again
lets them fall at will

today it does not
listen to the children playing in the shadows
it stares at the sun dares it to object
you too, do not stop

you dab your paintbrush in more gold
find uninhabited spots to keep going;

the lonely ground, the skinny pavements,
the cold chimneys,
embracing immovable companions
as if to repay a debt
as if to return shadows to forgotten footprints

the sky watches at a distance it approves
the windows flutter in applause

the woman,
she's been here before
she watches as your brushstrokes
fade into settling,
waiting for footprints
in place of leaves

Chiedozie

*In response to Lawren Harris's painting, **Hurdy Gurdy**, 1913
oil on canvas, Milton Harris gallery*

Music and Colour Splash

A patchwork day of watery sunshine
illuminates autumn trees of canary yellow
splattering their colour onto row-houses.
Rusty orange leaves brighten the road.

Bisque brick prints a line of homes,
anchored in front by grey steps and sidewalk,
sober, foursquare, windows and doors
capped by tiled brown rooftops.

A sedate street.
Except for one alluring corner.

Stealing the show, a woman,
a street musician,
fiery red hair streaming down her back,
music streaming from her fingers
as she cranks the hurdy gurdy
and the air shakes and shimmers.

From stolid houses, life is lured.
Children escape the tedium of lessons,
drink in music like rain from the sky
loosening parched tongues to laugh and sing,
play and dance together,
in a splash of colour and sound.

Fran Figge

*In response to Lawren Harris's painting, **Hurdy Gurdy**, 1913
oil on canvas, Milton Harris gallery*

Inspiration

Winter brings out the power in me
incentive for zest and challenge
Nature's beauty for colour hungry eyes
captured cold inspiration thoughts
appreciated more than from Humidex

Lungs vent puffed misty breath
pure air celebration of the north
It dissipates as an arctic Phoenix
in renewal of crystal atmosphere

Thankful to live in an era
of accessibility to remoteness
once this was a vision of amazement
for a few well-funded explorers

Transportation gives life new meaning
in mandate to care for Earth

Ed Woods

*In response to Lawren Harris' **Icebergs and Mountains, Greenland**
1930, oil on canvas, Milton Harris gallery*

Dundas Peak

We were hellions all,
the most juvenile of delinquents,
disobeying all the “thou shalt nots”

using Steetly quarry as our playground,
carousing through the woods, making our footprints
matter on the trails between Webster’s Falls, Tews,
and Rock Chapel.

We death-defied everything,
clambering up geriatric trees that clung
to outcrops with dull, arthritic roots.

Those limbs held their breath as we,
in our green boldness,
climbed down the face of the peak

like grubby-kneed geckos, hand over hand,
easy to do on the limestone.

That rock gave us our handholds easy as falling
asleep.

We were fleet and immortal; gravity cost us nothing.

Rebecca Clifford

*In response to Robert Whale’s **View of Hamilton**, 1862
oil on canvas, Milton Harris gallery*

Night Leaf

Off-brand, she stands out like a black crow
on a white field of snow –
realizes that failure is her leitmotif.

Recurring nightmares and repeated mistakes
brain loops keep her awake –
realizes that she is a night leaf

at home, in darkness, waiting for sunlight's
eventual victory –
realizes that she has to believe.

Through her work, she explores her complicated past,
fractious present, and anticipated future –
realizes that Art is her relief.

Nicola Schneider

*In response to Louise Nevelson's **Night Leaf**, 1969
plexiglas, Gaibreith Memorial gallery*

Blue bundt

Perfectly executed
but inedible
its undulating shape
pleasing to the eye.
The shape of cake
or Aunt Sally's jellied salad
perfected into a masterpiece
of buttered and floured.
Turned just so
upside down so the weight of it
pulls free of the mold.
Here she sits in plexiglass
a permanent display
of encased symmetry.
A kind of monument
to the hours of a woman's
life spent preparing
and hoping
it will come out right.

Elizabeth Tessier

*In response to Svava Thordis Juliusson's **Blue Bundt**, 2020
plaster and blue pigment, Galbreath Memorial gallery*

Night / Morning

Body resists rest. No relief.
Blankets tangle and strangle
like the wanton wire of my well-worn poem-book.
Nerves twitch and tingle, itch and groan;
body throes, pillow thrown.
Feels crunkley – slightly more than crinkly.
Frenetic, frantic zappy, zippy finger zingers;
pain grows as if gripping a rose.
No sleep, brain screams.
I give in to the doomscroll –
thumb thumps brightly blinding iScreen,
countless possible & probable disasters,
and real-life nightmares and
my love screeches beside me,
revving his moaning melody and
I've seen the ass-crack of dawn a thousand too many times and
I finally fall asleep in time to be jarred fully awake
by the sweet dream shattering, nail scratching cuckoo croon.
I shake dreams from my head, and
talk myself out of bed; body begrudgingly awakens,
limb to stiff limb – strike a pose & I'm froze;
as if my skeleton has attempted a full-body escape
like an underdog trying to settle a score;
like the morning after without the night before;
I rally to face the day ahead.
I shall slay this foe by force & fire
cuz I'm a mighty feisty fibro-fighter!
To be dead is not a good thing;
I'll take all that being alive will bring.

Nicola Schneider

*In response to Christina Sealey **Transitions 1 (Self-Portrait)**, 2001
oil on linen, Gaibreath Memorial gallery*

Mirage

This whole existence feels illusory
like walking toward people and places
so much possibility just ahead
dissipates so that you never actually arrive

like so much black laid atop
fragile moments of luminosity
like the sere of scattered leaves
or slivered bone fragments sun-bleached
concealing hope

makes you feel
when you'd really rather not
you want your life to be realistic, something recognizable
a painting that perplexes, but one you can ultimately decipher
not a pastiche of textures and values
not random brush strokes without apparent meaning

L. Borkovich

*In response to Rita Letendre's **Mirage**, 1958
oil on canvas, Galbreath Memorial gallery*

All These Things that I've Done

It's my life. I thought it was all mapped out. We were merely blind pilots. Accidents led to other ends. Turns out, there was a wolf at the door and this little game led to a long flight to anywhere but here – I gotta get away! You said, “Baby, please don't go.” I will remember you. I will remember... I wonder if you could read my mind. Where is my mind? Migration and movement, each moment out of reach. Life is a riddle and I'm really stumped. Everybody's changing. Changes are no good. Everything will be alright. On the verge of mystery. Courage to change (in the house of flies) I feel fear and I am fearless.

A thousand-mile wish – A deserted voice calls, “Come home. Do you miss me?” I realize I don't feel close to you. No homecoming this time. I have an inner vision (and insomnia). Big empty — a fog blackout. I've fallen and you're falling away from me. I'm breathing so I guess I'm still alive. Everything will be alright.

Changing pilots – Read the small print buyer beware. Underneath it all into the void I'm undone. I've faded, and now, I'm fading away with another.

Interlude. I no longer know where I end, and you begin; A happy haze off the rails; Here it comes hysteria. Hell comes home; can't stop now. Am I going insane? Going nowhere fast slowly going down, in a labyrinth of lamentation in the middle of nowhere, the long road to ruin; Russian roulette. I'm running and I'm running out of time.

*Nicola Schneider – Centos (Most of this poem is comprised of Song Titles.) In response to Betty Roodish Goodwin's **Pieces of Time VII**, 1996 oil stick, graphite on mylar, Galbreath Memorial gallery*

Seaglass

a biddable liquid forgetfulness,
tangible yet somehow *un* --

pull of tides, cadence of waves,
persistent rub of emery, sand,

abrasions of our lives

wear

wear on us

on mind

on memory

til we are softened, rounded,
our corners diminished, edges mitigated,
colours muted and compelling

something small to hold in our palms
as we try

to remember

Rebecca Clifford

*In response to Melanie Authier's **Harlequin**, 2020
acrylic on canvas, Galbreath Memorial gallery*

Some Birds

rooster cockadoodles day into being
dark-eyed and grey junco peeps in earth shadows
robin announces Spring
cardinal love in air
red croons to his love
she completes him – a fine pair!
blue jay has her say
squawking talking the day away
woodpecker knocks with tapping certainty
cocksure crow butts in causing chaos and scatter
turkey vulture circles joined by a kettle looking for death

can't be that bad
chickadees chime in cheery chorus
nuthatch laughs giggling in agreement

mourning dove laments all that was before
one bird lonesome acapella night song
owl watches with knowing eyes penetrating night
to reveal clues to life —
if we only knew

Nicola Schneider

*In response to Ora Markstein's **Bird**, 1975
Italian translucent alabaster, Gaibreath Memorial gallery*

Living Depression

Her sturdy figure belies a weariness of spirit
set deep in cheekbones, in dark shadow under eyes
She carries the family burden like a pack mule
the breadbasket generation now broken beneath the plough
Her life same as the soil now – parched earth and broken roots
any moisture hidden below the surface long since dried up

She recalls the sky turning black one day and the heavens raining down dirt
the whorl of sandstorms following interminable drought
No promise of rain for endless days, no shade of green on prairie
or in pocketbook

On the horizon, a whole decade of disaster, both manmade and natural
not mere dust motes settling on the furniture in a thin film
but smothering dunes obliterating landscape, farmstead, her mind
leaving her desperate and mad, though not yet homeless

Dust clouds lapping at the sky turning morning into dusk
shaking nerves and rafters of the wind-chinked house
Particles of thick grey silt hitching rides on windstorms
grit blowing under doorsills, soot breaching windowsills
Draff chokes the pores of her weathered face, flattens her thin hair,
gravels her tongue
She struggles to spare her children's eyes and lungs
keeping wet sheets hung to catch the settlings

She could have left, packed up the family, gone west or headed east
but she remains steadfast, stalwart, feet bare and broad,
planted in that prairie promise,
not even her work-worn hands worry the future
her prairie spirit bearing the pain.

L. Borkovich

*In response to Elizabeth Wynn Wood's **Linda**, 1931
bronze sculpture, Galbreath Memorial gallery*

Embodying Grace

Linda is a strong, independent woman. You can see it too, can't you? Her wide stance, the firm foundation of her. She is not apologetic. She will not hide or shrink. She will meet you as an equal. She will take your hand; offer and expect respect, with resolve and determination. She conveys a calm, stately look. Her hands are open, and hard-working. Her face is kind, and peaceful. Can you see the countryside falling around her? The billowing fields and crouching fences. She has tended its peace. She is about to stride forward to meet her fate. There is no glamour or luxury here, but there is grace. Do you see it in her eyes?

Jennifer Lynn Dunlop

*In response to Elizabeth Wynn Wood's **Linda**, 1931
bronze sculpture, Galbreath Memorial gallery*

Arctic Nights

Blue blue blue
the brilliant blue laughter of sky
orchestrates stars of frost
to swirl and swish
skitter and slide
with childlike exuberance.

Flakes swell
whipped into snowballs
skate lines of rhymes
across the rolling vista
whooshing hazy waves
into breathless arctic air.

Whiplash of Northern Lights
like the tinkle of bells
zings through the blue.
Chorus hushed.
Movement frozen in time.

Fran Figge

*In response to K.M. Graham's **Arctic Nights, Whiplash and Northern Lights**, 1987, acrylic on canvas, Central Staircase*

Climatic Divinations

This rain's certain to be scarlet, vermillion,
sanguine, carnelian,
issuing from the open vein in the sky.

There's a thin white line of lightning, a pulsing scar
on the bruised underbelly of
the cumulonimbus, a roiling paroxysm.

In our arrogance to tame ungovernable skies,
we predict seed clouds alter wind
but it matters nothing
 to the storm.

Rebecca Clifford

*In response to Catherine Gibbon's **Storm Watch**, 1999
mixed media on board, Central Staircase*

Summer Escape

Breathing in this outdoor air,
serenity is palpable,
this small grove of birch
dappled in sunshine,
a perfect escape from household chores.

Soothed with book in hand,
lying on soft grass,
the earthy smell is cool and dark,
a rich and steadfast connection
to calming heartbeat.

Rustle and twinkle of leaves above,
whispered breeze through grass and hair,
the light is perfect for capturing
subtleties of sun-dried sod and moist shade
with palette and brush.

Grove and book and paint create a bubble,
obscuring the house and its troubles -
Mother's dementia, Father's gambling,
to float far in the background
wrapped in an ethereal heat haze.

Soon the light will flag.
The haze will dissipate.
The bubble will burst.
But the serenity will linger long
in memories.

Fran Figge

*In response to William Blair Bruce's **Summer Day**, c 1890
oil on canvas, Central Staircase*

if I could paint

really paint, paint the truest art,
I'd do so in winter, a time of truest white

when shadows spread violet in sunlight
 hare and deer write autographs in snow
 birds play hopscotch on the deck
 seeking crumbs snatching seeds

when scraps of sumac and cardinals
 show as scarlet trumpets in skeletal trees

but in paint box, on palette, in tube
 white is never white enough

Rebecca Clifford

*In response to Maurice Cullen's **Logging in Winter, Beaufré**
1896, oil on canvas, Central Staircase*

A Hellish 3D Quilt

Dear B-B Bus Viewer,

Under the jumble under the jumble
is you
What you see, what you think, what you feel

A rusted, overflowing VW bus
sits on a Hamilton-like setting,
with hard-to-find signs of nature:
the escarpment waterfalls vegetation

After industry hits town,
you get cranes plants smokestacks
towers galore fast-food places
modes and modes of transportation
You get superheroes – what do they do?
and other figures, including skeletons
Most are plastic

The sculptor places items/collections in
dynamic, off-beat relationships
His work continues, so
the installation is ever-changing

If life is a question, and art explains it,
this colourful pastiche is not an easy answer

All the best in enjoying,

Halyna Koba

*In response to Kim Adams', **Bruegel-Bosch Bus**, 1996 -ongoing
sculpture installation*

- **L. BORKOVICH** lives and writes in Hamilton, Ontario.
- Long after a Fall-Fair contest win, a collection of poetry has made writing poetry a serious endeavor for **E. Jayne CARDNO**. It reflects an interesting life. Publications range from “Ontario History”, to academic journals. Recently she received an honorary award from the Hamilton Public Library and Hamilton Arts and Literature.
- **Chiedozie** has a deep love for both the written and spoken word. He explores the intersection of page and stage, crafting poetry that resonates in ink and echoes in performance. Whether in the quiet solitude of writing or the electric charge of performing, he remains devoted to poetry’s power to connect, transform, and inspire.
- **Rebecca CLIFFORD** lives and writes on an Ontario farm. Her works appear in international journals and e-zines. She is supported in her endeavours by her long-suffering partner and a disdainful cat of questionable parentage.
- **Gaiyle J. CONNOLLY**, B.A., M.A., McMaster University, retired teacher, art consultant/lecturer is author and illustrator of “Lifelines”, a poetry collection. She has had works published in North America, Mexico, and India. Recently, Gaiyle received two awards in TOPS’ Long Poetry Contest.
- **Jennifer Lynn DUNLOP** is a past president of Tower Poetry Society, and a judge for the Hamilton Poetry Contest: Power of the Pen. She has been widely published, often incorporating the natural world in her poetry. Her family is her inspiration. She is a Professor at Fanshawe College and a Manager at Wilfrid Laurier University.
- **Fran FIGGE** is president of The Ontario Poetry Society (TOPS), a past president of Tower Poetry Society and editor-in-chief of the Tower anthologies. She has a chapbook entitled *hope and despair in the ark* and multiple poetry publications. *fall float fly* is a selection of her prize-winning poems.

- Hamilton-based **Halyna KOB**A has poems published in anthologies – Tower Poetry, The Ontario Poetry Society, *Writing the Rollercoaster*, *conversations* and *On Rules (Unleash)*; magazines – *Connection*, *Hamilton Arts and Letters*; a video; websites; Canadian Museum of Immigration. She has won Honourable Mentions from HPL’s Short Work Prize and TOPS’ *The Entitled Titles*.
- **Jennifer TAN** has won the HPL’s Short Works Prize for Poetry in 2016 and 2020, and an honourable mention in 2024. She has also won an honourable mention for the Ellen S. Jaffe Humanist Award for Poetry Contest in 2024. Jennifer is an amateur at art and languages.
- **Elizabeth TESSIER**’s work is informed by her 30 years working in Hamilton museums. *The Words They Cannot Say* resulted from those experiences. Elizabeth has been published in Hamilton Arts & Letters RAVE and the Spring 2021 edition.
- **Nicola SCHNEIDER**, poet, artist, teacher is inspired by nature, art, life. Her mantras include “Everyday Art Every Day”, and “EARTH without ART is just EH.” She loves telling stories, and with words, sounds, and colours her world sparkles and shines. For Nicola, every day is a perfect day to create. She is Tower’s web coordinator.
- **Ed WOODS** discovered a poetry workshop while recovering from a tanker truck collision and was encouraged to explore his creative side by delving into his work environments. From pilot to pipeline worker – all became fodder for this Industrial Poet. Ed’s poems take the common and give it a twist.

Tower Poetry Society, named for the Tower room in McMaster's University Hall, was established in 1951. Since then, TPS has expanded to embrace members of the public who have an interest in poetry. TPS is Canada's oldest continuously operating poetry group and will celebrate its 75th year in 2025-26. Tower Poetry workshops are held on the second Saturday of the academic months at the Westdale Library.

<https://towerpoetry.ca>

The **Art Gallery of Hamilton** opened its doors on June 28, 1914, with an inaugural exhibition of paintings by Hamilton-born artist William Blair Bruce. The works were donated to the City of Hamilton by Bruce's widow and members of his family and became the seeds of the gallery's permanent collection.

This collection is always free to visit.

Tower Poetry Society received permission from the Art Gallery of Hamilton to view the permanent collection and write poetry in response.

This brochure will provide visitors with a guide to how local poets interpret these fine works of art.

We hope you enjoy the experience.