



SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2021
Winnipeg Free Press

poetry

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PHOTOS BY MIKE DEAL / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

Alero Tenumah relaxes in Ken Oblik Greenway Park. Each poet was asked to choose a location, inside or outside, that was their refuge during the pandemic.

RESILIENCY IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

FOR the sixth year in a row, we're showcasing Manitoba writers for National Poetry Month in partnership with the Winnipeg International Writers Festival. As always, we're taking a page from the League of Canadian Poets, who have announced that this year's theme is resilience.

As we read the submissions, co-editor Tamar Rubin and I asked ourselves: what does it mean to be resilient in the face of the second or third wave of COVID-19, with its job losses and mental health struggles?

What does it mean to be resilient in Treaty 1 territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation? What does it mean to be resilient in the face of climate change, when we keep on breaking records and there's no such thing as normal weather?

We're pleased to present wide range of poets that attempt to answer those questions or at least to document their responses.

Most of all, we're happy to be reading and celebrating poetry in such uncertain times.

— Ariel Gordon

Please join us for the launch of **Writes of Spring**

Tonight at 7 p.m. via Zoom

Get your free tickets here: <https://tinyurl.com/2w7c5esz>

Exist loudly

by Alero Tenumah

Tired of being in spaces with people who simply refuse to acknowledge my existence.
Avoiding eye-contact will not make me disappear.
Refusing to shake my hand does not move me.
Refraining from saying my name does not deter me.
My presence may be an affront
But I owe it to my ancestors to sit comfortably at this table.
I will not dishonour them by shrinking or retreating.
They have sacrificed too much for me to play small.

Alero Tenumah immigrated to Canada more than 10 years ago and now calls Manitoba home. In her spare time she enjoys writing and cooking.



Carolyn Hoople Creed on the front porch of her son's house.

Return of the Swallows

by Carolyn Hoople Creed

Each year through April day-watch,
one question presses: will skies raked
with searchers' pointed gazes unveil
the grace of swallowtail flight?

Carolyn Hoople Creed is a poet and Associate Professor at University College of the North.

January

by Alison Wong

is an open palm and hanging rope, the gap
between monkey bars, step between
stones. The edge of a cliff I am watching get smaller as I fall.

January is butterflies in my stomach after finally
leaping off the diving board I've spent years toeing
the edge of.

I guess what I'm saying is:
I've finally met gravity in person.

It feels nice to set wheels into motion you can't take back.
I am falling through open air,
going somewhere, which is the important part.

Alison Wong has performed spoken-word poetry at open mics in Winnipeg and Kingston and was a top-ten finalist for CBC's 2019 First Page Writing Contest.

Un extrait de Polaroids urbains

par Scream

Winnipeg mouillée
au déluge qui nous guette au printemps
Winnipeg animée
à minuit qui cherche les heures troubles de la nuit dans les
ruelles étroites aux briques colorées de hiéroglyphes urbains
Winnipeg amplifié
au drapeau symbole d'infini et je comprends pourquoi
Winnipeg créditée
sous les projecteurs quand Hollywood illumine
Winnipeg injectée
au prix de l'essence qui change tous les jours
Winnipeg résistée
sans les franco-manitobains et sans la langue française, ça ne
serait pas Winnipeg
Winnipeg centrée
au coeur du continent tout neuf

This poem appears in Mont Blanc-Winnipeg Express, published in April by Les Éditions du Blé.

Scream est un poète, performeur et comédien qui est arrivé au Manitoba de la Haute-Savoie en France avec sa famille en 2017. Il est directeur de la Maison Gabrielle-Roy.

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