



SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2022
Winnipeg Free Press

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A National Poetry Month Project with the Winnipeg International Writers Festival and the Winnipeg Free Press


Writes of Spring

ARIEL GORDON

WHEN the League of Canadian Poets announced that the theme for this year's National Poetry Month was "intimacy", a poet-friend wondered if all we'd be reading would be kissing poems.

Luckily, the poets who submitted to — and were selected for — this year's Writes of Spring defined intimacy differently.

We call having sex with someone "being intimate" but intimacy isn't only found in romantic relationships. It's about connection, moments of vulnerability, and those can happen between any two organisms or even in an instant of clarity alone.

But the coronavirus pandemic has meant that we've either been too intimate or not intimate enough with our families, our neighbours, and our wider communities for more than two years. Co-editor Duncan Mercredi and I wanted the poets to tell us what it means to be intimate in this strange place we've found ourselves.

LAUNCH: Today at 2 p.m. at McNally Robinson Booksellers Grant Park in-person or via YouTube.



PHOTOS BY MIKE DEAL / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

Poet Brigitte DePape

Excerpt from "What Direction is North"

by Brigitte DePape

show me your mom tattoo
i want to see under your socks
i am pedaling so hard but i don't know where i'm going what direction
is north? i forgot my mittens but it's your fault
if i lose you i feel your ribs when we're together and they feel like
i need you a mountain that i climb and i don't want to stop
but so what if i know how to play the tambourine in your band with your cousin
you don't know what bells are
you think tigers and tiger lilies are the same thing
you weren't there when the grass stopped growing when my elbow broke
and so did my bed and so did the plane and so did the sun
when my skirt ripped
when my freckles fell off

This poem appears in Sun Compass, published in April by At Bay Press.

Brigitte DePape has written plays for fringe festivals across Canada. *Sun Compass* is her first book.



Poet Roewan Crowe

Self Love

by Bryanne Lamoureux

"I just want to be loved"
She tells me.
"You are loved", I tell her.
I wrap her up in clean sheets, and place
Heat on her sore shoulders.
I caress her and hold her and tell her
she is the most beautiful human, that she is
Everything, and that I love her.
When she comes to, I feel her once more,
Slowly, tenderly, I remind her of how
strong she is to have made it through so much,
that she is safe enough now to rest.
I wrap her up in my arms and hold her until she
Falls asleep.
I remind her that within
Her is a whole world which holds all that
She admires in others and more. That
She deserves to feel safe, to feel held, to feel loved, to receive
Back all that she puts out into the world.
I whisper this to her as she sleeps, and still I
Hold her, give her all that she has given, and remind her
that she is the universe and that the
Universe cradles her back. She is safe.
She is enough. She is everything.

Bryanne Lamoureux is a queer Franco-Manitoban rooted in southern Manitoba (Treaty 1). She is currently completing her Masters in Environmental Studies and writes poetry to make sense of life.

Oh Borage: an excerpt from "hum of the blue hive"

by Roewan Crowe

Starflowers open from bristled stems. Orient themselves toward the earth.
I lie on the ground with my lover. We look up into their faces.

The nectar-rich flower is architectural, brilliant. Triangular, curved, pointed
blue petals alternate with green sepals. Purple-black anthers merge
around a fuchsia-tipped stigma. It's reaching out.

I wonder. Do the flowers mind that we are gazing at them in this way?
I feel something I might describe as the beginning of closeness
or kinship or friendship.

I wonder. What would I need to do so that the flower might sweeten its nectar
when I approached, as it does for the bee?

Artist and writer **Roewan Crowe** is currently writing, *Violet's Impossible Garden*, a queer sequel to the gritty, poetic western, *Quivering Land* (ARP).