

Interdisciplinary Studies MFA Application
Supplementary Documents – Portfolio of Creative Work
Arlysse Quiring

Music: Websites and Recording Links

- ENGL386AL Project:
 - *Elegy For Who We Were Before* by Arlysse Quiring: <https://youtu.be/0lr19YgEmzs>
 - Composed as a bassoon trio with intentions to arrange a violin, bassoon and double bass trio. The piece has three movements: Chronic, Acute, Trauma. It explores different components of these experiences through selected musical techniques.

- Bite-Size Bassoon Recording Series, Personal Social Media Project, Select Samples:
 - *Au fond du temple saint* by Georges Bizet : <https://youtu.be/mxAjA-uj4QQ>
 - A piece originally written as a duet in an opera, here performed for two bassoons. The piece is a reflection on the past, and one of the best known and beloved duets in classical music. The range is excellent for bassoon, as are many tenor and baritone opera solos, and operatic voice shares useful similarities to bassoon vibrato technique.

 - *Before You Go* by Lewis Capaldi: <https://youtu.be/D4KgW5SR4mc>
 - A pop ballad written about the loss of a relationship. The piece offers a poignant selection of harmonies. Playing a piece that necessitates lyrics created an opportunity for emotional portrayal on an instrument like bassoon that does not allow for verbal lyrics.

 - *Carry On My Wayward Son* by Kansas: https://youtu.be/JVNp_TQa-8Y
 - A rock classic, the piece has had a 21st Century revival with the popular dark fantasy television series *Supernatural*. The song carries messages of adversity and resilience that has resonated with generations. Musically, it offers remarkable bass rhythms.

- *A Dark Knight* by Hans Zimmer: <https://youtu.be/mO7MTAi0Rjs>
 - In what has become a classic of modern film scores, this main theme was written for a film examining humanity's grey moral dilemmas, including the idea that our heroes are not always who we think they are. A repetitive broken chord rhythms offers challenges in the bass line, contrasting with a poignant and heartbreaking harmonic line featuring several deceptive chords patterns.

- *Earth* by Hans Zimmer: <https://youtu.be/aHOaHAVtDR8>
 - This piece was written in honour of the children found in unmarked graves near Canada's residential schools (at the time of recording it was a heartbreaking 215, which has notably increased to over 3200). The piece itself is from the *Gladiator* film score, and is used as a theme representative of the character Maximus' loss of his wife, son and home. A deeply reflective piece, it suggests chronic grief as it is repeated in poignant moments during the film.

- *Hocus Pocus Bassoonus*, arrangement from Hocus Pocus:
<https://youtu.be/iKId4qwsYqA>
 - From a uniquely lighthearted film about Salem witches and Halloween, the duet was arranged as a blend of Bette Midler's cover performance of *I Put A Spell On You*, and Sarah Jessica Parker's solo *Come Little Children*. The arrangement was a thorough challenge to both write and play, with contrasting rhythms and tone.

- *Hurt* by Trent Reznor as arranged by Johnny Cash: <https://youtu.be/datIZj3VAj8>
 - Originally written as a metal piece for Nine Inch Nails, the piece was covered by Johnny Cash and sung as a country ballad. An excellent example of genre crossover, it also has remarkable lyrics describing struggles with drugs, failure, and deeply regretful introspection.

- *Jupiter Hymn* by Gustav Holst: <https://youtu.be/e2GowX8YiZk>
 - This piece was an arrangement from a piano reduction of Gustav Holst's orchestral score for the larger work, *The Planets*. The bassoon arrangement was performed in memory of Greg McLean, an influential and greatly missed music educator in Saskatchewan. A particular favourite of McLean's for its harmonies, it was a particular challenge to play an orchestral score for a small ensemble of bassoons.

- *October Sky* by Mark Isham: <https://youtu.be/0iyzvNNB92w>
 - A film score from the film of the same name and based on Homer Hickam's novel *The Rocket Boys*, the autobiographical coming of age story is about the progress of technology, traumatic community losses, and the challenges of family. The original piece has an unexpected bassoon solo, and was personal inspirational in the study of bassoon. The video was created in tribute to the successful landing of NASA's Mars Rover *Perseverance*.

- *Remember When It Rained* by Josh Groban: <https://youtu.be/OcpMxJuQDRA>
 - A pop ballad from the early 2000s, Josh Groban's voice is within excellent range for a bassoon cover. Another exploration in deceptive chord patterns, the lyrics also describe loss and regret. This particularly ballad offered an opportunity for ensemble exploration in non-rigid rhythm and tempo expression.

- *River Driver* as arranged by Great Big Sea: <https://youtu.be/57CEbQBvStM>
 - The classic Canadian folk-pop-rock band arranged this folk favourite, and this bassoon arrangement is based upon their particular Celtic stylings. A basic percussion technique with the bassoon bell was utilized to significant effect. The piece itself is a story of homesick colonial workmen.

- *Stay Alive* by José González: <https://youtu.be/8to9oFZEhtA>
 - The piece is originally the credit theme song from the film *The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty* (2013). The movie is about a man learning to take risks and live a meaningful life, and the song reflects on the passing of time and grind of day-to-day life while missing out on profound experience. This bassoon ensemble was based on a quartet arrangement for the ensemble Arttime.
- *Time* by Hans Zimmer: <https://youtu.be/vqpTf1UKMVU>
 - Another profound piece by Hans Zimmer, this is an arrangement from the film score for *Inception*. The movie explores the concepts of reality, but at its' core also questions more deeply the topics of trauma, sacrifice and suicide. The recording equipment created particular challenges to capture the true resonance of bassoon during extended chords, but was also an excellent harmonic exercise.
- Concertino Regina: <https://concertinoregina.wixsite.com/home>
 - A grassroots volunteer chamber ensemble offering free concerts and online educational programs and lectures.
 - Service as President (2019-2020, 2020-2021) and past-president (2021-2022, 2022-2023). Regular performer from the ensemble's inception to present day.
 - Sample Recordings:
 - *Woodwind Quintet Op. 43* by Carl Nielsen: https://fb.watch/hp_maFSpTo/
 - Performed as part of a recital for Robin Tinani's Master's Degree, the ensemble performed the piece again for Concertino Regina. The quintet consisted of Robin Tinani on Flute, Madison Engen on Clarinet, Wing Lok Soo on Oboe, Peter Sametz on French horn, and Arlysse Quiring on bassoon. Notable in the bassoon literature.

- *Hymn for Bassoon and Strings* by Bill Douglas:
https://fb.watch/hp_whBjR1t/
 - An unusual arrangement of string accompaniment featuring bassoon solo. Performers include Adrian Casas on violin, Colleen Grubb on violin II, Shalva Chabukiani on Viola, Jeanie Kim on cello, Brent Gelsing on double bass, and Arlysse Quiring on bassoon.
- 5 Minute Bassoon Online Masterclass Recording: <https://youtu.be/sgr-VJ-B95c>
 - Curated during the Concertino Regina presidency within the first year of the pandemic, this was an outreach initiative to share basic educational information about different instruments.
- *Lapis Lazuli* by Jenni Brandon (short): https://youtu.be/-288WC_TL4U
 - Due to challenges with recording equipment, this is a shortened selection of clips from this movement of a larger piece called *Coloured Stones*. This concert was the first in-person return for the ensemble in 2022. The piece was also part of a larger personal project to play the works of living composers, and female composers who are under-represented in bassoon literature.
- *Danzas Barracoas* by José Elizondo: <https://youtu.be/97IK5SsInbY>
 - Elizondo is another living composer who explores multiple genres relevant to Latin American culture, including traditional Indigenous melodies, classic Mexican rhythms and dances, and Baroque-era Spanish style. This recording was a selection of two of the dances as part of the larger work, as another pandemic initiative during the Concertino Regina presidency.

- Arttime Music: <https://www.artimemusic.ca/index.html>
 - A co-founder of this classical fusion ensemble, the group consists of a combination of duets, trios and quartets, providing performances ranging from library concerts and wedding music, to corporate events and casino stage shows. Musical exploration includes classical, jazz, rock, pop, tango, and more.
 - Instrumentation includes but is not limited to violins, violas, double bass, bassoon, piano, vocals, hand drums, flute, penny whistle, ukulele, etc.

- Educational Webinars Sample:
 - Saskatchewan Band Association Online Bassoon Masterclass for the Prairie Music Residency, 2020:
 - Part 1 Intro and Warm Ups: <https://youtu.be/fK4LrhXwzsk>
 - Part 2 Main Masterclass: <https://youtu.be/7U8-CTIKCoI>
 - Part 3 Performance Samples: <https://youtu.be/3kOiN0UZKNU>

Creative Writing: (External Documents Below, all samples from ENGL 252)

- *Kitchen Tables*, Creative Non-Fiction Prose (page 9)
 - Written as a creative exercise in finding “the extraordinary in the ordinary”, the piece is an exploration of the uniqueness and familial memory found in a common kitchen table.

- *The Definition of Witchcraft*, Creative Non-Fiction Reflection (page 11)
 - A piece of semi-autobiographical creative non-fiction which shares and discusses the author’s experiences with religion, spirituality, self-expression, family dynamics, and personal conceptions of feminism.

- *Rose*, Fiction Short Story (page 16)
 - A short story written in a minimalist style, about a young woman who finds joy in life’s small pleasures and the beauty of jazz.

Additional Materials: Artwork, Illustrations, Drawings, Paintings, Photography

- A number of drawings, illustrations and paintings viewable for general interest through Instagram @arlyssequiring Media is primarily ink, pencil and watercolour.
- Selected photography and artwork also viewable on personal website (some sections under development) <https://arlysse.weebly.com/>

Kitchen Tables

Kitchen tables are self-portraits. A family, an individual, a home. Is the table wooden, cheap plastic and particle board, or glass and steel? Is there a table at all? One might find a table in a prominent part of the living area, displayed with pride and honour. *We value family and tradition here.* Is it shoved in a corner of the room with mismatched chairs where the cat sleeps, strewn with empty plastic bags and coupons from decades gone by? *We're distracted and busy, with a deep and unshakable sense of loss.* Is it a family heirloom, polished to within an inch of its life, a glass bowl of resin fruit displayed proudly for judgemental guests and never used except at Christmas? *If mom wants to piss herself she should look at the underside of the precious and forbidden table, where generations of wax crayons have born the art and stories of small hands.* Is a dining room table more important than a kitchen table, and does the name always match the location? Kitchen tables bear unpaid bills, letters of foreclosure, court summons and homework. *If you visit a stressed friend who says they're doing alright, do you believe the spoken words or the written ones on the table?* Is the table covered in sticky toys, broken crayons and science projects? *Time has no meaning in our home, because yesterday it was diapers and tomorrow it will be college applications.* The kitchen table is married to the tea set. *We sat at the table and shared tea when dad was sick and we asked each other what to do, because none of us knew. I warmed my hands over a warm cup while the kids played outside, and I realized how deeply unhappy I was, and the sturdy table supported my shaking hands. He felt achingly alone for the first time with his cup of tea, sitting at the table they had picked out with their small savings on a rainy Saturday, as he stared at an empty chair.*

What does my table show? *Our table is etched with memories. Mass produced but made of real wood, it is a miracle of modern capitalism. The table was the table of the first apartment, the first heartbreak, the first home together. There are advanced calculus equations pressed beyond the varnish and wax, right into the grain. This is the table where I taught him how to make an apple pie, and we didn't have enough cutting boards. We hosted our first barbecue as a family with food covering every inch of the oak. There are other numbers, fainter, but more haphazard as bills were paid and budgets calculated. No matter how many times it's cleaned there's usually a single piece of cat litter mysteriously on the surface, because the cats know it's their table at night when they watch the moon, the bats from the sanctuary, and maybe a ghost or*

two. If you look at the right angle in the light, you can see dozens of little circles where he used a cookie cutter to make crackers. The dough was thin. The table smells of crayons from music lessons. The underside of the table smells of oak still, like the tree's spirit is part of the family. It's the least we can do. No matter how many folks we have in our home, for Christmas or Thanksgiving or a busy Monday night, there's always just enough room at that table. It's Mexican, it's Irish, it's Canadian, and it's of no nationality because it's ours. The table's crown is always, always, always a bowl of fresh fruit. For the downtrodden, hungry and dispirited who enter our home, students, musicians, friends, plumbers, family, we and the table offer food.

Kitchen table observations strike me as particularly useful for the style of storytelling I'm nurturing. I can visualize the utility this will offer for a particular story I'm writing now, but generally I can see it as a useful adaptation in many contexts. I don't think it will always need to be a table specifically, but it's giving me many ideas about passive information. What do we do, say and show about ourselves without the intention of doing so? What we are not aware of displaying speaks volumes, possibly even more than what we chose to show the world. This is particularly useful for character development, including subtle hints and clues for plot. What becomes a self-portrait that we do or don't chose to create? It's quite literally "what's on the table", and it's writer's choice.

The Definition of Witchcraft

When I told my mom I was a witch, I was four years old and creating magic potions in the bathtub, using a hollow plastic dinosaur as a ladle. Magic's existence wasn't a question to me, a thing to be debated, or even a good use of my imagination. Magic simply was, and I was a witch. I can still see the look of alarm in her eyes, the hesitation on her lips, the question floating above her head for my dad, the teacher and psychologist.

"Our daughter told me she's a witch today."

"That's nice, dear. A relief from mermaids."

"Do you think it means anything?"

"It's a phase. Mermaids have fins you know. How on earth would she grow fins?"

"I'll talk to her about it, just in case."

The day of the magic bath was the day I learned about my mom's definition of witchcraft. Devil worship. Blood sacrifices. Hell, if the fire and brimstone turn out to be real. Black magic and the 1980s punks who wore safety pins in their ears, and listened to Alice Cooper. Women who wore their fingernails painted black, wrapped their legs in fishnet tights, and partook in questionable activities while taking drugs.

My favourite movie in that tender year was *The Wizard of Oz*. When I told my mom I was a witch, I was thinking of Glinda, but preferably with a purple dress instead of pink. I was a Good Witch. I didn't know there were any other options. My skin wasn't green, so clearly I was not a Wicked Witch.

It was in this moment of my mother's superstition that she lit in me a spark of beautiful witchy rebellion. A witch became the definition of everything I wasn't supposed to be, and oh what exciting potential there was beyond sparkly pink crowns and yellow brick roads. I grew up in a town with the highest number of churches per capita in Canada, at least in the '80s and '90s. I went to Sunday school for a while, and the teacher told me that if I became a Jew or a Muslim I would inevitably be murdered and go to hell. I wish this story about a teacher who would say

something so prejudiced to a room of impressionable children was fictional, or even an exaggeration. My dad walked me out of Sunday school that day, and we never came back except to play Christmas music as a favour to a family friend.

My parents were raised Protestant, but now only grace church doors for funerals and weddings. My best childhood friend is an Evangelist. I asked her one time, in undergraduate days, what she would do if I got pregnant while I was single. My heart didn't even have time to beat before she answered "Well I'd love to move in with you for a while to help you raise the baby, and then we'd figure it out from there." The summer I turned eighteen, my high school boyfriend (who was and presumably still is a Catholic), told me that once we were done college, we'd move back home to raise our babies while he opened a business. Four to six was his ideal (babies, not businesses). He wasn't asking for my dreams, just telling me how things would be, on that old-South porch swing on the stifling veranda. I saw him thrice more in the sixteen years since that day: once to break up, once to fail at being friends, and once more when his employer hired my quartet for a gig.

I have never, not once, felt Christian. I don't know how I'm supposed to feel to be a Christian.

When my older brother announced he was going to be a Wiccan, we had another family meeting about devil worship. None of us would admit to believing in it when pressed, but it was better to err on the side of caution. We, as a family, believed in science, education, and Carl Sagan, may he rest in peace. We could live amongst the churches without attending them. My mom told us bluntly that Wiccans gave her the creeps, and for her this was all just a hop skip and a jump to getting AIDS from blood pacts.

I am here compelled to clarify that my mom is an extremely gentle, loving, and self-sacrificing individual that would do anything for the family and friends she loves so dearly. She has spent most of her adult life in extreme pain due to incurable illnesses. Literally thirty years of chronic disease would have broken most of us, but her light still shines. She believes in humanitarianism, abhors racism, and always roots for the underdog. Witches and Wiccans are the line she will not abide.

My brother and I, together and separately, became interested in Celtic mythology, in animism, in witchcraft as a lifestyle rather than a religion. He married a French Catholic from Ottawa and his Wiccan dabbling died with the birth of his children. Now he believes in daycare

and toy-share networking. His eldest daughter, who is six years old, regularly asks her dad to text me photos of her paintings of witches.

We both still love Halloween, my brother and I. It's one of the few things we still see eye to eye on. I adore Halloween more than our secular Christmases, because Christmas is always permeated with melancholy. My brother is usually visiting his in-laws, and my spouse is usually missing his parents in Mexico. My dad is always, without fail, reminiscing about how this isn't the kind of Christmas his mom created, and we let him tell us with glassy eyes how wonderful her mince-meat tarts were, and how no one knew that the last Christmas was in fact the last. For me, Christmas is the annual tradition of my mom having an anxiety episode about cooking the turkey properly, even though I have been making them for her since I was fourteen.

Halloween, for me, is a day of delightfully macabre joy. It helps me to remember the magic of my childhood. The real magic, or the closest I'll ever be to it. Now, instead of believing I'm a witch, I wish that I could believe in that magic again. Halloween isn't missing our loved ones while we hang their favourite sparkly bauble on a dying tree. Halloween is a celebration and salute to the cycle of life and death, complete with pumpkin spice lattes and plastic vampire teeth.

I've taken to reading about witchcraft, about the beliefs of my ancestors and their definition of spirit. Outside of a healthy dash of Mennonite, the rest of me is a cocktail of English, Scottish, Irish and Norwegian. All of these people believed in magic and the power of healers long before they believed in Christian sin and resurrection. Because of inscribed trees in family bibles, my Canadian family knows where we came from, but we've never quite grasped who we are now.

I feel like a Celt more than I feel like a Christian. I love reading about syncretism, about how it was my pagan ancestors who decked their halls with boughs of holly, who carved up gourds to protect their souls, and who made love under the May moon in circles of stone. Energy makes more sense to me than spirit.

When I was twenty and nearly gave up the ghost after being struck by an SUV, I would have sworn on my soul that I felt the presence of angels amongst the paramedics. When my spouse battled cancer when I was twenty-five, I regularly prayed to anyone who would listen. When I find myself in times of trouble, I find myself singing with The Beatles. I cannot reconcile

my relationship, or lack thereof, with God. I wish I could believe. Confirmed definition of self and belief would be comforting. Evolution of self is not a tenacious experience.

The more I read of witchcraft, the more I recognize and understand, and maybe feel, the souls of the oppressed and free-thinking women who came before me. The women who read. The women who lived independently. The women who preferred the company of cats to the patriarchy. All of my life, I have felt a call to the earth, to the water, to the trees who speak with the wind. I am most at peace when I am tending my herb garden. I am most content when I am reading. I am happiest when I am in the company of animals who are not human.

My father is the first one who called my eldest cat my familiar, and my spouse is the one who suggested I buy myself a small cast iron cauldron. His concern was mostly that I very nearly ruined the kitchen mixing bowls when I was burning herbs and meditating. He didn't ask why I, the agnostic, who is espoused to he, the atheist, would have need of a cauldron. He simply prefers that I have the proper fire-safe tools for my chosen activities.

I educated myself about terms like kitchen craft and green witches, the relationship to mindfulness, and the variety of consistently welcoming communities. I even dove into the parallels of Taoism and Buddhism, of other naturalistic spiritualities, and of old polytheistic religions. I learned of a conscientious life path honouring the earth and all of its inhabitants, of my ancestral history prior to too many layers of oppression, of taking time for meditation and the healing of broken dreams... This path gives me a deep feeling of rapprochement.

I don't have an altar. I'm not dedicated to a particular symbol or icon. I don't believe in Tarot cards, astrology or Ouija boards beyond their entertainment value, because I am still agnostic and I don't believe in most things. I do burn dried flowers, tree bark and herbs in my small cauldron, with scents and folklore meanings that are significant to me, while I meditate and reflect, practicing mindfulness and intention. I do grow my own herbs and flowers, I thank the bumblebees for their symbiotic efforts, and I find comfort and inspiration walking in nature. I mindfully acknowledge the food, shelter and continued wellbeing of my loved ones with deep gratitude. When my spouse has a sore throat, I brew a tonic of grated ginger, honey, cinnamon and lemon, to help wash down the Tylenol. An old Christian lady taught me that recipe.

My definition of witchcraft is, simply, my own inner peace.

Before the world changed again, this time because of a pandemic, my mom and I stole a weekend together that we hadn't made time for in years. I took her for lunch and chocolate

shopping, and for the first professional haircut in her 67 years. We talked about education for women, vegetarianism, and green witchcraft. She told me it was all just a little too weird for her, and before she could bring up devil worship I told her if I wasn't her daughter, I'd be a little too weird for her too. Me, in my chosen life of music and books, of cats and rosemary, of a marriage of science and spirituality over God and patriarchy, of homemade sun tea, and saying good morning to the spider that lives in the lavender. Eccentricity is relative. My mom agreed that I was a little weird for her, too. She asked if I had read her favourite book, second only to *Jane Eyre*.

“What book is that, mom?”

“Oh, just a little book about a lady who lives in the woods and grows herbs.”

“It's about a witch? What's it called?”

“*Thornyhold* by Mary Stewart. The main character's an herbalist. It's a lovely little story about falling in love and making your own path.”

“Mom, this sounds like it's a story about a witch.”

In a world and time that seem ever more webbed with entropy, resilience has become not just useful but mandatory for survival. Whether through prayer and God, mathematics and physics, or meadowsweet and stargazing, what seems to matter when we see that golden orange light of the setting sun is creating peace. Maybe the bathtub dinosaur potion really was magic, because it's helped me become who I always wanted to be.

Rose

Fiction Short Story

To most of the world, Rose was unnoticeable. She was gentle, as sweet as her namesake without the thorns, and not someone easily recalled if one had passed her by on the street only moments before. As might be expected, her hair was a dull mousey brown, although it was always clean and carefully curled beneath her dove-grey cloche hat. Her coat hung loosely on her thin frame. The thick navy wool had been repurposed from her father's garment, and still bore a military flair. Rose kept a small photograph of her mother and father tucked in the innermost pocket, where the lining still shined and lay flat. Her mother had passed in between the wars. In his youth her father had served in the first war, and choosing the military over widowerhood, died in battle during the second.

At twenty-one, Rose kept a small suite in a hotel for young unmarried women. The building and matron were both of impeccable reputation. The girls were all of limited means, working and living modestly until the coveted future days of marriage. Her father's pension was enough to maintain Rose's room and board, although after paying unexpected family debts she found herself in need of greater regular income. She had earned her high school diploma the year before the war ended, the same year she learned Father would not come home. Her room was her pride and joy, simply because it was hers. The bath was shared down the hall, but she had a minuscule toilet and porcelain sink in what was no more than a closet. Her bedroom, the main room, looked out onto the tree-lined street with three windows, a built-in seat nestled between them. The whitewashed walls held her mother's watercolour paintings, and the hardwood floor was protected with Rose's woven rag-bag rug. It contributed a splash of colour, along with the small indigo bud vase holding a single dried burst of baby's breath, the small white flowers now a very pale brown.

Under the cloche and mousey curls, Rose's skin was thin and pale, with an almost sallow hue. Her eyes were an unremarkable hazel, though if one had taken the time to look closely, there was within her eyes a kaleidoscope of blue and green glass in sunlight. Her cheekbones nearly protruded through that paper skin, and though red was the fashion, Rose coloured her lips in the soft pink shade of carnations. Around her throat she always wore a golden chain with a single drop pearl, a gift from her mother on her thirteenth birthday. Her dress hung as loosely as

her navy coat. Her best, it was a faded brown with small white polkadots and a smart white collar she carefully starched. In the evenings she rinsed the dress in the tiny sink and pressed it with communal iron. It was never anything but pristine for her position as a stenographer. Her only shoes were simple dark grey pumps which almost matched the cloche, but not the dress.

She had been an excellent typist in school, and she took pride in her small utilitarian desk, seventh column in from the left and tenth row down from the front of the large steno floor of the office. It was a large, respectable firm. On a rainy day one November, she had shrieked when she felt a warm palm on her bottom in the elevator. The operator nearly stopped the machine in a panic, but rather than turn and meet the eye of her assailant, Rose claimed only that she had seen a rodent. There were traps strewn about the elevators and hallways for weeks after that day, but no more warm palms.

Rose typed from eight-thirty to twelve, and twelve-thirty to four, five days a week with two breaks for coffee per day. After the use of her father's pension for the hotel, her small salary was enough to cover her even smaller necessities. Train fare, lavender soap, and other little odds and ends. Most was tucked carefully away in her bank for brighter days, and a few coins were kept in an old hat box under her bed for the rainy ones. Sundays were dedicated to church and attending the afternoon social with the other hotel girls, usually a picnic or a matinee. Saturdays were Rose's favourite days. The only morning she slept late, she would luxuriate in an extra hour or two in bed to read audacious and delectable novels. Late morning, she would put on her plain blue cotton dress, ten years out of style but comforting and familiar all the same. It had been her mother's. Rose often walked to the library two blocks down, selecting new treasures for the week. Strolling back to the park across from her hotel, she never failed to stop at the little bakery that sold sweet orange buns, and take her treat to her favourite bench under a sycamore tree. She would flip through her books, nibble on the bun, and watch the families, dogs and couples walking by. Sometimes she closed her eyes and simply let the sun warm her pale face.

After returning the books to her room, she would venture out again into the few streets of the sprawling city she considered home. Her route took her past her favourite millinery, where she often stood and admired the newest hats with all their baubles and feathers. On Saturdays when Rose felt most daring, she would bring her carefully saved coins in her small black leather reticule, and see if today was the day she might buy the royal blue cap with chocolate trim and the single delicately styled peacock plume over the right ear. Rose would inevitably bite her lip,

burst into giggles and dash down the street so she couldn't be tempted any further. After more window shopping, she would find her favourite hot dog stand outside of the cinema, where the man with the kind eyes sold her the best frank in the whole city, with all the fixings. If her coin purse was feeling a bit heavy, she liked to investigate the movie posters of the theatre, and see whichever picture she thought the hotel ladies most likely to refuse. Whether scary pictures or scandalous romances, she would have visited the cinema every day of the week if she could have afforded it.

Saturday evenings Rose commonly walked home with a carton of popcorn and a hamburger wrapped in paper. She brought her small meal up to the window seat of her room, and opened the swing frame to let in the fresh night air. A small grey cat would climb up the rainspout to greet her. He would often share in the burger, and curl up in her lap afterward in thanks. Every Saturday the cat came to visit Rose, and without fail began to purr just as the musician on the street opened his case. The man brought out his brass saxophone, so carefully polished, and after smiling gently and tipping his felt cap to Rose and the cat, he began to play. She was too shy to smile back, but if she could have seen her own face as he played, she would have known the secret in his smile. His cinnamon skin glowed in the street lamps, his hair black and his eyes the deepest chocolate. Couples walking by dropped coins in his case, and sometimes requested a song as they sat nearby on Rose's park bench. Her favourite was *Moonlight Serenade*. As the musician's slender fingers travelled across the mother of pearl keys, Rose dared to imagine what those hands would feel like in hers. She could almost sense his strong arms around her, as they danced in their fictitious kitchen with the radio tuned to the jazz they both loved. She wondered if they could live here, on the street where he played and she listened. Rose dreamed they could be happy, and maybe the cat might come and visit them then, too. Inevitably, the night quieted with the couples having returned home, and the musician would close his case. Looking up once more to the silhouette in the window, he always tipped his hat to Rose and watched as the cat left for a nighttime hunt. Then he walked slowly home. Sometimes he paused and turned back to Rose's window, and she imagined how they might first say hello.

One chilly October Friday, Rose's desk remained empty on the stenography floor. Her absence was unnoted by her colleagues, and the office continued with military-like efficiency. Her work neighbours typed on. Her supervisor marked a small x in red ink on her punch card,

his lips pressed thin. Rose's pay would be docked, and if her absence remained unreported on Monday he planned to review his stack of stenographer applications and have her desk cleaned.

On the morning following that frigid day, the baker watched for Rose. The day before had seen a delivery of fresh oranges, and he had sprinkled chocolate shavings on the sweet buns the way she liked. When it was noon and she still hadn't come by, he saved the last bun in a paper bag to the side for her, just in case. In the afternoon, the milliner couldn't help but glance out the empty window as a woman tried on the blue peacock cap. The hat left with the customer and then stayed three years on a shelf in a closet, with other impulse hats. The man with the kind eyes at the hot dog stand looked down the street and opened the last jar of the best pickles, but in the end gave them to a little child who looked especially peaked. In the evening as the jazz musician walked along the street to the park, he heard a cat crying. He looked up, and the cat was pawing at a closed and darkened window. With a pit of unexpected sorrow in his gut unlike anything he had known, he looked to the front of the hotel building and saw two policemen posted at the door, ropes drawn across the entrance. He walked over to a young boy with a stack of newspapers. The ladies' hotel had made the headlines, with a title about a gas leak killing three young women in their sleep. In a daze he wandered listlessly back to Rose's window, pulling out his handkerchief to dry his eyes, though crying, and any of it, couldn't be helped. He played *Moonlight Serenade* until the quiet hours, while the cat slept in the saxophone case.