



## **POWER OF THE POETS 2**

1-30 April 2021 (National Poetry Month)

*co-presented by The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery and  
Toronto International Festival of Authors*

Results from Judge Elder Duke Redbird

### **Inspired by Nathan Eugene Carson: *Cut from the same cloth***

Winner | LAID BARE by Darian Razdar

Honourable Mention | Same Cut, Same Cloth by Vanilla Being (Victoria Atteh)

### **Inspired by Manuel Mathieu: *World Discovered Under Other Skies***

Winner | Hung Up by Peter Gillies

Honourable Mention | Seen by Anna Jane McIntyre

Honourable Mention | Wake by Kim Mcghee

### **Inspired by Howie Tsui: *From swelling shadows, we draw out bows* Winner |**

a whirring sound pinged off the walls by Javier Fuentes

Honourable Mention | ACTS OF SURRENDER by Shanan Kurtz

## Winner | Inspired by Nathan Eugene Carson: *Cut from the same cloth*

### LAID BARE

#### I. Shine On

Only so much here  
two eyes can show you  
yet so much to know, perceive.

Look in the mirror  
find your self there – wait!  
Your eyes, perhaps, deceive you.

In that mirror, see  
Black skin, white mask shrouds before  
you, I was just me.

#### II. Divine Feminine

Leave me alone,  
don't you see?  
In these blues  
my body craves its extremities.

Let this be,  
where I stretch hand to foot  
folding toward my beingness  
alive and divine. You see –

the small of my back,  
these heavy shoulders and tired  
hands, both raying legs, my gilded  
skin haloing do not serve you, but me.

I see you  
implore you,  
the depths of the blues  
were meant for few.

Yet you are all here  
a staring contest  
I was born to win.  
You see me,

leave me alone.

### III. Encounter

Breath. Stop and stare  
lay in wait, do no crack,  
stay strong, soft, and still  
now – if not until infinity.

In such silence become comfortable  
my sentry pose even bearable  
and yet, as cause arrives surely at effect,  
shall I blink and betray my glare?

You there! How familiar so you seem  
our bodies both shine divine and shimmer  
your eyes match mine – finally, fragile  
as if we were meant to be.

Cut from the same cloth  
of nights in hurt and pain, or so they say,  
come closer, closer and between us we  
may stitch together a new, golden day.

– Darian Razdar

## Honourable Mention | Inspired by Nathan Eugene Carson: *Cut from the same cloth*

### Same Cut, Same Cloth

Through my screen, I found myself  
In that room with faces and figures  
he didn't make them clear  
yet I saw Them  
and with Them, Black Athena  
who sat like a beacon  
calling across the room to the Divine Feminine  
and the room echoed  
like their white eyes  
on red, on green, on blue  
more colours feeding and filling  
And I became hungry for more  
and I wandered with the white walls  
To a starker room  
where the whites in frame  
dared the walls to speak  
or breathe,  
Against the noose  
As the children watched  
Unsettled  
by the scenes of unrest  
where they reside  
Did he scratch them into place?  
Or cut?  
I too unsettled, think to flee  
but the figures seem familiar  
they are Negro like me  
At the end of the hall  
It is evident I started  
at the end of this story  
Bright yellow frames the beginning  
Perhaps to prepare you  
for this coloured journey  
of faces and figures  
That are blots with voice  
who whisper to you  
From behind a mask,  
with their backs to the wall  
"Can you see? We are cut from the same cloth."

– Vanilla Being (Victoria Atteh)

## Winner | Inspired by Manuel Mathieu: *World Discovered Under Other Skies*

### Hung Up

(incidentally, between *Rivière Froide 1* and *Rivière Froide 3* for the first time)

You are spending an unusually long time  
being here, in my face.  
Such presence sometimes signals curiosity,  
an intense data sensory process and attention span.

I take this as a friendly posture,  
a desire to “understand the artist’s meaning”,  
which must be grounded in empathy  
for the form, for the context.  
Mustn’t it?

This is how dialogue develops right?  
Something presents.  
Your feet may flirt around the hall,  
but when they arrive there is a settling in  
and a respectful stillness.

Then there is resonance. It tugs.  
A gravitational attraction of sorts—  
or more precisely, a perturbation  
of my relationship with Earth.  
Though I cannot physically move.

This sense of your presence, however, can be illusory.  
An adaptation, I imagine,  
from centuries of mankind’s polite surveillance of the masters.

And as you may rightly observe,  
I am but a naïve youngster.  
Inexperienced, with only a handful of hangings.

What’s one to do?  
Isn’t an emotional reaction inevitable?  
Notwithstanding the “do not touch” sign.

Let us imagine for a moment  
that I am the master, the object of respect,  
the reason you and I are here.

Or, perhaps I am the brush,  
connecting intention with interpretation,  
elevating poses, entering fantasies.  
Many bristles, one point.

Either way, I might have something to say.  
And you might not shuffle along quite so  
soon. And leave me hanging.

– Peter Gillies

Honourable Mention | Inspired by Manuel Mathieu: *World Discovered Under Other Skies*

## Seen

Look  
Look longer  
See me.  
*See me See me See me*  
So that I may see myself.  
*Mmmmmm*  
Drop  
  
and  
  
Breath.  
  
Come closer,

but not **Too Close**,  
Just close enough to see,  
The whites of my eyes,  
The span of my arms,  
The curve of my lips,  
The kink in my hair,  
The jump in my step,  
The width of my spirit,  
No dreams deferred.  
My Black body aliveness.

– Anna Jane McIntyre

**Honourable Mention | Inspired by Manuel Mathieu: *World Discovered Under Other Skies***

Wake

the violence that clawed through the city  
tore through your soul  
you could kill yourself with sorrow you said  
god forgive us for what we do

and what we don't  
on another side of the sky  
victim of vaccine proxy wars  
the good friend you always were, to remember

time pauses today, in the lull  
memories of people and places  
dulled and blurred by the years  
return in living colour

from that distant place  
where lives touched  
time pauses, then moves on  
weary of our grief

the war charred earth  
that holds you now  
is mutual ground to stand upon  
in our collective guilt

see the faces  
drained of hope or fired with courage  
do you hear them  
raise their voices

– Kim Mcghee

**Winner | Inspired by Howie Tsui: *From swelling shadows, we draw out bows***

a whirring sound pinged off the walls

somewhere in the labor of ruin\*

ghostly marauders peaked through the scaffolding  
lit up by myths and folktales

those carriers of memory  
were as strong as the arms that held the bow  
while the shadows carried our attention

through that cavernous silence  
when we dissolved our intentions  
a whirring sound pinged off the walls

– Javier Fuentes

\* Sadek, W. (2016). *The ruin to come: essays from a protracted war*

## Honourable Mention | Inspired by Howie Tsui: *From swelling shadows, we draw out bows*

Inspired by Howie Tsui  
"A Geomantic Corridor" installation  
*From swelling shadows, we draw our bows*

### ACTS OF SURRENDER

you found us, pressed into  
the lapsed embrace  
of a slur  
a pinprick coil sprung  
forth, still writhing

as if you called for our return  
steady on through  
scorched cling and  
the breath of years,  
loose shells, assailed

with remembering  
mountains to the north  
an ochre lash sea to the south  
and the wince from  
black petal tongues

still smouldering  
how dare you seek passage, now  
to lull and cross, inviolate  
the trail of ghosts left  
wandering the streets

while a million hearts exhale  
in the darkness  
telling us the night  
is still young

– Shanan Kurtz