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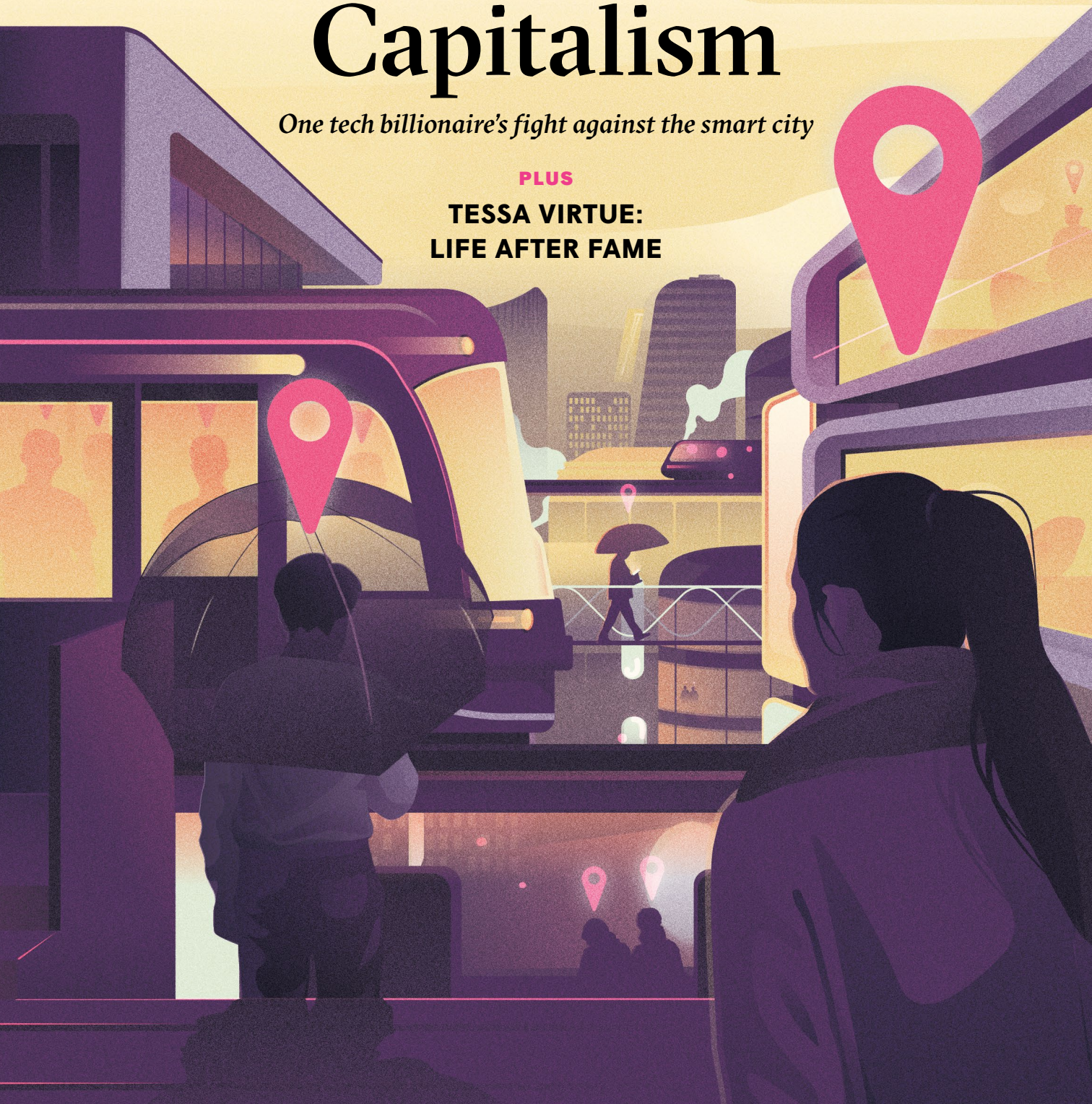

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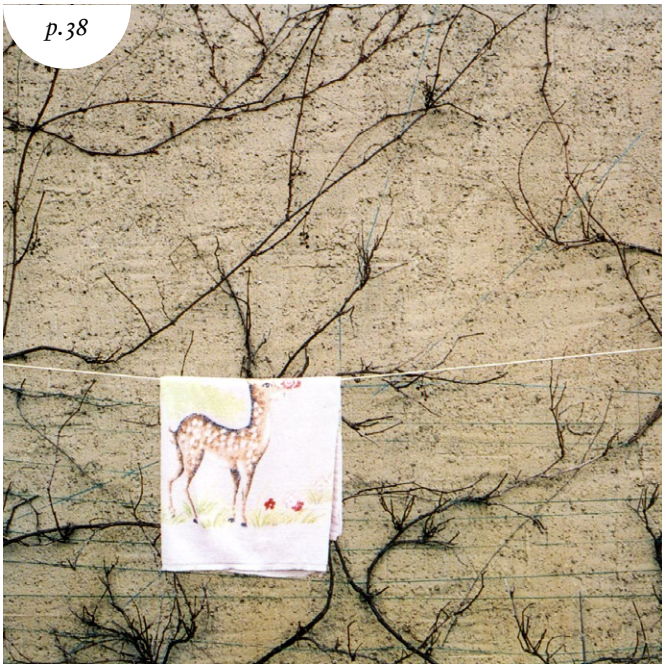
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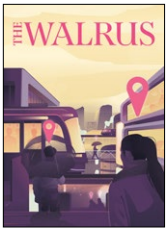
DEPARTMENTS



ON THE COVER
Illustration by Zachary Monteiro

Zachary Monteiro is a Toronto-based illustrator and designer.

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PHOTOGRAPHY (ABOVE LEFT) BY FRED HUENING AND (RIGHT) RENATA KAVEH

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Editor's Letter

In may 1937, the *Hindenburg* caught fire and crashed outside a New Jersey military base. Ninety-seven people were on board, and eventually, thirty-six passengers, crew members, and ground workers died. At the time, there were various theories about the cause of the fire, including everything from sabotage to malfunction. It was the most famous such disaster of its time—a *Titanic* of the skies. Fallout from the event resulted in airships being used only as floating billboards (like the Goodyear blimp) ever since.

In their early days, such vessels represented a dream—gentle giants, ideal for transporting people and freight. In the *Hindenburg*'s inaugural year, the company's ads promised North American passengers they could reach Europe in two days, a fraction of the time of an overseas crossing. There was a piano covered in yellow pigskin on board, roast gosling on the dining-room menu, and even a smoking room (which, fortunately, was double airlocked). Good times, until they came to an end.

The *Hindenburg* serves as a tragic reminder that technology itself is neutral—and that even the most promising inventions have the potential to go horribly awry. That's a fitting introduction to this issue of *The Walrus,* in which a number of stories look at the looming implications of data governance in the internet age.

As the chief data regulator in the United Kingdom, Elizabeth Denham has investigated the Cambridge Analytica scandal—the consulting firm was revealed to have harvested Facebook users' personal information to influence the Brexit referendum as well as the 2016 US presidential election. For her profile of Denham ("Data Driven"), London-based writer Leah McLaren catalogues Denham's concerns that current laws are insufficient to address the infiltration of technology into our lives.

In his cover story, "Tech Defector," Brian J. Barth profiles Research in Motion (now BlackBerry) cofounder Jim Balsillie, one of a number of industry insiders (such as former Facebook executive Chamath Palihapitiya, who regrets the platform's influence on users' emotions, for example) who have profited greatly from the rise of the internet, personal computers, and mobile phones but also acknowledge the excesses of the data-driven world they helped to create.

Meanwhile, the degree to which social media has changed our lives is felt in Trevor Shikaze's wry short story "Going Up the Mountain," in which the protagonist debates the rewards of real versus virtual experiences (my favourite part is when they struggle to program the clock on a vintage-style microwave).

All this change has consequences for the media. Traditional revenue sources, including advertising, have been transferred to platforms such as Facebook and Google—and many publications, especially those outside of big cities, are dying. With the added role of algorithms in determining what we see and read, we risk living in a time of "news privilege," when only some of us have access to reliable information and a range of views. The internet promised us freedom. It's ironic that digital technology has come to threaten democracy itself. According to the 2019 Trust Barometer Report by marketing firm Edelman, 73 percent of those surveyed are concerned about fake news—an increase of 6 percent since last year in Canada.

The development of our understanding of science and technology over the last century—which includes everything from the adoption of seatbelts in cars to warnings about the risk of smoking on cigarette packages, with corollary improvements to human life and safety—shows that most people don't make poor decisions because of *wilful* ignorance. We make them because we can't always see the dangers. In the case of the *Hindenburg*, the cause of the disaster was that the invisible contents that fuelled the vessel—hydrogen, not the original helium for which the engine was designed—fanned the flames.

We are only beginning to understand what we don't know about the future of the digital age. What is clear is that we need more immediate discussion—as voters, as consumers, and as readers—about where to go next. As always, we welcome your feedback at letters@thewalrus.ca. And, yes, please follow us on Instagram (@walrusmag), Twitter (@walrusmagazine), and Facebook.

—Jessica Johnson

ILLUSTRATION BY GRAHAM ROUMIEU

Contributors' Notes

MICHAEL FRASER
"Three Poems," p. 58

"When I learned African Canadians enlisted to fight for the Union in the American Civil War, I was astounded. I researched Civil War–era slang to write these poems and learned that the same word might mean one thing in New England and something else in the South. I imagine soldiers learned those different meanings while going from place to place—an echo of what happened when slaves were taken from Africa and were all speaking different languages."

Michael Fraser has been published in Paris/Atlantic, Arc Poetry Magazine, *and* The Caribbean Writer.

BRIAN J. BARTH
"Tech Defector," p. 26

"Jim Balsillie is not necessarily against smartphones—he *is* the cofounder of BlackBerry—but he's against the excesses of the tech industry, especially with how user data is monetized. Interviewing him made me realize I'm on Google all day long—it's an addiction of convenience. But now I'm thinking about changing my online behaviour."

Brian J. Barth has had his work published in the Washington Post, *the* Guardian, *and* The New Yorker.

TREVOR SHIKAZE
"Going Up the Mountain," p. 54

"I went on a mountain hike in the Gulf Islands with a friend some time ago. He's into meditation, so when we got to the top, he suggested we try meditating. He had an app. I'd never meditated, and it felt amazing. After that trip, he kept pushing me to meditate for twenty minutes a day. I realized things that are good for us don't take that long, yet somehow we can't find the time. My guilt about that percolated for a while, so I sat down to write this short story."

Trevor Shikaze has had his work published in n+1, The Puritan, *and* Electric Literature. *He is based in Vancouver.*

TAJJA ISEN
"Re-creation Myths," p. 61

"People complain about Canadian fiction being boring, and they're not always wrong. But Ian Williams's *Reproduction* and André Alexis's *Days by Moonlight* are both funny, vicious, and epic in scope. Their humour comes from a place of great knowledge. *Reproduction*, for instance, shows both the comedy and the discomfort of lives colliding in the Greater Toronto Area, where people are coming from places of tremendous difference—racial difference, class difference. Williams is alive to the energy of that. It makes me excited to be a Canadian writer, excited to be writing in Canada."

Tajja Isen has written for Longreads, BuzzFeed, *and* Literary Hub. *She is the Cannonbury editorial fellow at The Walrus.*

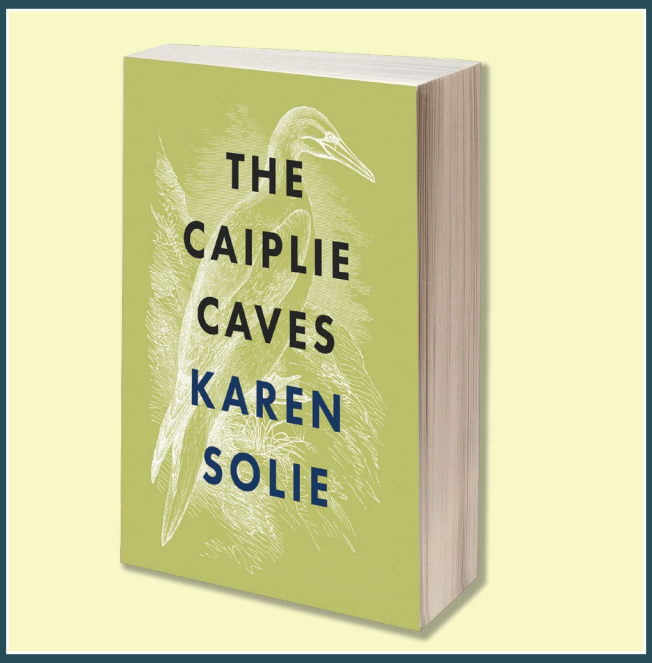
ALEXANDRA KIMBALL
"The Loneliness of Infertility," p. 38

"Intimate and honest discussions of infertility happen in closed communities, whether in in-person support groups or in online forums and on social media. But the public discussion of the politics of assisted reproduction—everything from 'should IVF be funded' to 'should we have legal surrogacy'—is led by academics and journalists who do not necessarily have the lived experience of being infertile. How infertile women talk about these issues to one another is very different from how these subjects are publicly debated. That's how stigmatized infertility is."

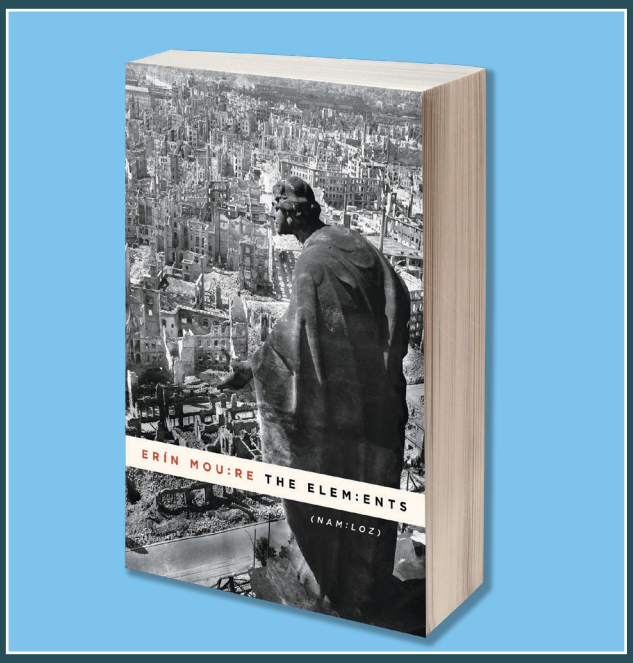
Alexandra Kimball has written for the Globe and Mail, Hazlitt, *and* Toronto Life. *Her essay was adapted from her book,* The Seed, *which is out in April.*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELENA VILTOVSKAIA

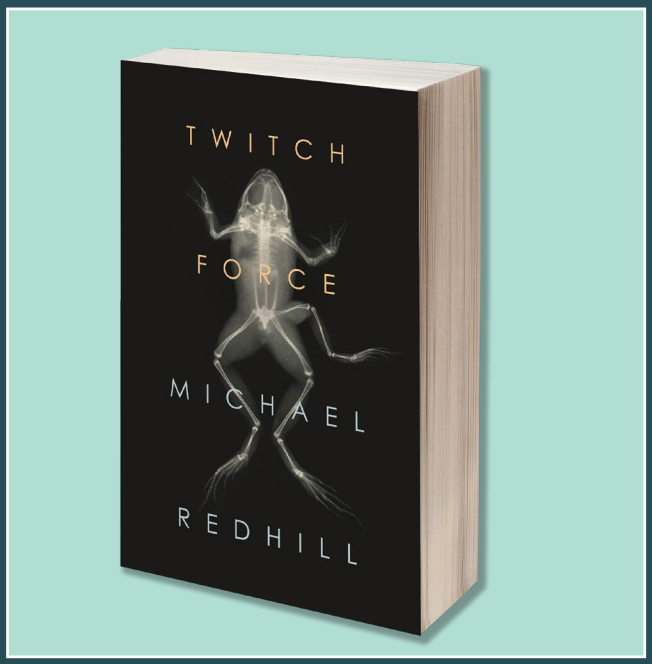
CELEBRATE POETRY WITH HOUSE OF ANANSI



The Caiplie Caves, from Griffin Poetry Prize winner **Karen Solie**, interrogates power, self-delusion, and belief in poems that orbit the Caves of Caiplie in Scotland.



The Elements, the new collection from Governor General's Literary Award–winning poet and translator **Erín Moure**, is a tender book about The Good, in the face of destruction.



Twitch Force, by Scotiabank Giller Prize winner **Michael Redhill**, is a stunning volume of original lyric poetry concerned with love and loss, despair and hope, aging and timelessness.

The second collection from award–winning poet **Kayla Czaga**, **Dunk Tank** is an imaginative and at times absurdist exploration of the landscape of the body and of adult life.

Letters

NOT ALL RIGHT

In Jen Gerson's essay about Alberta politics ("What We Get Wrong About Alberta," March), one quote from pollster Janet Brown caught my attention: "If you want to understand Alberta, understand this: we love our social programs, we want to live in a fair and equitable society, we don't like taxes, and we don't trust Ottawa." This is what I've been wanting to scream from a rooftop. The province was in a shock after the last election, which saw the NDP win unexpectedly after more than forty years of conservative rule. But, in reality, it's always been the politicians' actions and beliefs more than their party lines that matter to Albertans. Gerson's piece puts everything into perspective.

Tess Mazurek
Lac La Biche, AB

WHO GOES THERE?

Kate Harris's essay about ethical tourism ("The End of Exploration," March) is typical of the way Canadian society reacts to anything approaching traditional Christianity. She deploys the stock phrases of "colonialism" and "imperialism," but what Harris doesn't trouble herself to do is understand the motivation of American missionary John Allen Chau, who went to North Sentinel Island last year to try to convert its inhabitants and was killed. He had made a long study of the islanders and underwent a regimen of inoculations and quarantine. Chau's religious motive matters, but Harris dismisses it as "too easy a target." *The Walrus* doesn't have to like Christianity, but it should at least trouble itself to comprehend it.

John G. Stackhouse Jr.
Moncton, NB

Kate Harris urges us to reconsider travel by honouring restraint, reverence, respect, and consent. Consent is also key to two essential twenty-first-century issues: climate change and surveillance capitalism. Does anyone doubt that future generations would not consent to our callous destruction of the stable climate that human civilization evolved within? And who among us has given Facebook, Google, et al. informed consent to monetize our private lives? I applaud Harris's questions. Let's apply them to our century's greatest challenges as well.

Duncan Noble
Killaloe, ON

UNEQUAL MEASURES

Bruce Mau's essay on the future of the world ("Two Revolutions," March) featured illustrations showing various global trends. One seemed to graph "slavery" against "democracy" around the world since the 1800s, showing that the former has decreased while the latter has increased. But the end of official slavery does not mean worldwide "freedom"; equating the two ignores—among other things—the fact that bonded servitude continues to exist in many countries, including our own.

Russell Mawby
Ottawa, ON

NUMBERS GAME

As a long-time hockey fan, I appreciated Nathaniel Basen's article on data analysis ("Game Changers," March), which helped illuminate a very confusing time in the sport. I remember many of the events described in the article—I was a newly minted Canucks fan when the Vancouver Canucks and Los Angeles Kings playoff series was announced in 2012. The Kings barely made it to the postseason, grabbing a last-minute spot. But, after that, they blew through the Canucks and the St. Louis Blues like a hot knife through butter. No one really knew what made them so successful until recently, and Basen's article explains it clearly.

Catherine Garret
Burnaby, BC

TUSK, TUSK

In the March issue, the article "What We Get Wrong About Alberta" attributed a recent poll about Albertans' attitudes toward immigrants to the *Globe and Mail*. In fact, the poll was conducted by the Environics Institute and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. *The Walrus* regrets the error.

"The time has come," *The Walrus* said, "to talk of many things." Send us a letter, email (letters@thewalrus.ca), or tweet, or post on our Facebook page. Comments may be published in any medium and edited for length, clarity, and accuracy.

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Introducing the 2019 TD Chair on Disability and Inclusion

TD and The Walrus are pleased to announce the appointment of Sarah Trick as the inaugural TD Chair on Disability and Inclusion.

Thanks to generous funding from TD, in this newly created position, Sarah will assist The Walrus in exploring issues related to disability and inclusion across all platforms in 2019.

The Walrus thanks TD, our national inclusion partner, for its meaningful commitment to a more inclusive tomorrow and for its belief in The Walrus as a vehicle for change.

SARAH TRICK is an Ottawa-based writer who has covered disability, politics, and the arts—and sometimes the intersection of all three. She is a previous contributor to *The Walrus*, the *Toast*, and news websites *tvo.org* and *globalnews.ca*.

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POLITICS

Too Close to the Sun

Four years ago, Justin Trudeau promised us "sunny ways." In this election, he's offering something decidedly less lofty

BY MARTIN PATRIQUIN

LEFT
Justin Trudeau at a rally in Quebec City in 2015

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Three and a half years ago, in the bowels of Montreal's Queen Elizabeth hotel, Justin Trudeau put down a nearly empty bottle of Molson Export and ascended to a nearby stage in his first public appearance as Canada's twenty-third prime minister. The ensuing twenty-three-minute speech, in which Trudeau spun Wilfrid Laurier's "sunny ways" catchphrase into a harbinger for his imminent tenure, was a particularly ebullient variation of what you'd expect from a man who ran and won on his own conspicuous optimism. Hyperpartisans in the room became visibly verklempt at his words; many journalists rolled their eyes as they shovelled quotes into their copy.

As a mantra, Trudeau's "sunny ways" had surprising longevity: the government continued to peddle the conceit that it was inherently nicer, more wholesome, and less cynical than its opposition throughout most of its mandate. In turn, at least according to most polls, a majority of Canadians were prepared to give the benefit of the doubt to this article of faith.

Then, in early February, we learned the government had allegedly acted in a decidedly unsunny way. Former justice minister and attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould testified before a parliamentary committee that the Prime Minister's Office had pressured her to go easy on SNC-Lavalin, the Quebec-based engineering and construction behemoth facing a multitude of fraud and corruption charges. Wilson-Raybould described this pressure as inappropriate, political interference in a criminal prosecution—an allegation the prime minister and his aides denied.

For the Liberals, the fallout from the scandal was all the more precipitous if only because they had put themselves on such a high perch. Having sold Canadians on change and optimism, the party instead stood accused of indulging in the kind of old-school, rank political interference and Quebec-centric corporate favouritism associated with the Liberals from long before Justin Trudeau walked onto that stage in 2015. Polls dived, pundits waved fingers, Conservative and NDP partisans gleefully predicted Trudeau's imminent implosion.

But another, parallel narrative has also been playing out much more quietly: one in which many voters think that, screaming headlines notwithstanding, Trudeau's approach to SNC-Lavalin was right all along. It's a narrative in which the prosecution of SNC-Lavalin is treated as a conspiracy and the great victims of that conspiracy are ordinary small-town workers and the province of Quebec.

A truism of federal politics in Canada: as Quebec goes, so goes the nation. The province is the crucible of Liberal fortunes in the next election, where wins would offset at least some of the expected losses in

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neighbouring Ontario. And SNC-Lavalin looms large in Quebec, a province where homegrown corporations are jealously guarded and easily slighted—which is why many Quebecers saw SNC-Lavalin's treatment as Quebec bashing at its worst. One columnist went so far as to suggest the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin was part of a conspiracy (executed by whom, he doesn't say) to favour the company's out-of-province competitors. "Who would benefit if not the other large Canadian companies like Toronto-based Aecon?" wrote Jean-Robert Sansfaçon in the French-language *Le Devoir*. He added: "Seen from the other provincial capitals, Quebec isn't only a capricious and spoiled province, but above all very corrupt."

This abject provincialism makes sense only if we recall SNC-Lavalin's significance in Quebec. Like Bombardier and Couche-Tard, SNC-Lavalin has the weight and heft of a cultural symbol—proof positive to Quebecers that they can succeed on the world stage. The converse holds as well: when US home-renovation giant Lowe's purchased Quebec-based Rona for $3.2 billion in 2016, it was seen less as a homegrown success story than a shame visited upon the province. "Rona isn't a business like the others. It is at the heart of Quebec manufacturing, like a ventricle," wrote *Le Journal de Montréal* columnist Michel Hébert at the time. To stretch Hébert's maudlin simile: if Rona was Quebec's corporate ventricle, then SNC-Lavalin is its lungs that gave rise to Montreal's Olympic stadium, the Ville-Marie Expressway, and many of the hydroelectric dams in the province's north.

SNC-Lavalin's veins run well beyond Quebec's borders. The company has refurbished two nuclear-generation facilities in Ontario, built a hospital in New Brunswick and the Canada Line in British Columbia, and spearheaded dozens of other projects. SNC-Lavalin is Québécois in spirit but Canadian by design. In fact, a large majority of SNC-Lavalin's 9,000 Canadian employees live outside of Quebec, and the people of Sarnia, Ontario—where 175 employees work at SNC-Lavalin's operation—are probably at least as worried about the company's fate as Quebecers are. These jobs are stable, well-paying exceptions in an area ravaged by the collapse of Ontario's manufacturing sector—some of the approximately 3,000 SNC-Lavalin jobs in that province. They also complicate the notion that Trudeau was *merely* concerned with favouring Quebec (the anglophone mirror of Quebec's narrative of victimization). Making a public display of saving these jobs—though there are unanswered questions about how imperilled they would really be—and indeed, of saving SNC-Lavalin itself, is the kind of brass-tacks political decision that, in the Liberals' electoral calculus, outweighs Trudeaupian pleasantries about openness and fairness.

Another political truism: beware of partisan histrionics. For all that Andrew Scheer and his Tory colleagues have been relentless in their criticisms of Trudeau on this file, coming to the legal or financial aid of politically important corporations is old, bipartisan hat in this country. Consider that, in 2009, Stephen Harper's Conservative government lent a total of $13.7 billion to General Motors and Fiat Chrysler as part of a bailout to save the two companies and thousands of Canadian jobs. Last year, the government wrote off $2.6 billion related to its loan to Fiat Chrysler and, about a decade after taxpayer dollars kept it afloat through a protracted economic downturn, GM announced it was closing its headquarters in Oshawa, Ontario, eliminating about 2,500 jobs. Supporting SNC-Lavalin is a sure bet by comparison: the company is proudly, almost stubbornly, mated to Quebec, and its employees aren't beholden to the whims of some foreign-owned conglomerate.

Helping SNC-Lavalin avoid criminal prosecution has always been a dubious proposition—even if it turns out Trudeau didn't violate proper procedure to do so—if only because the company has behaved so poorly in the recent past. Put aside the nearly $48 million in bribes the company allegedly ladled out to Libyan officials between 2001 and 2011 and the roughly $130 million it allegedly defrauded from the Libyan government and other agencies in that country during the same time period. In doing business in Libya, it slavishly aligned itself with Moammar Gadhafi's institutionally homicidal regime. When I interviewed then SNC-Lavalin CEO Pierre Duhaime about this for *Maclean's* in 2011, he defended the company's relationship with Libya and heaped praise on Saif Gadhafi, Moammar's son. When I mentioned that Saif had referred to anti-Gadhafi rebels as "rats," Duhaime shrugged. "When you are in a war you say some things that maybe you wouldn't repeat later on, and you don't really believe it," Duhaime said. That same year, the International Criminal Court charged Saif Gadhafi with two counts of crimes against humanity for his role in the torture and deaths of civilians demonstrating against his father's regime.

Justin Trudeau doubtless won't run the same campaign this year as he did in 2015. Boundless energy and heedless optimism are tough sells after the shortfalls, broken promises, and casual hypocrisies that always come with governing. Instead, expect a campaign in which Trudeau represents himself as the least bad of those vying to become prime minister—a man not without faults, sure, but who suffered scandal only to save well-paying Canadian jobs. Trudeau himself said as much in his first major press conference on the issue, in which he notably didn't apologize. "I've spent my entire political career fighting for justice and for people. Social justice. Protecting Canadian jobs," he said. At least implicitly, the suggestion will be that the competition would be no better.

"Come autumn, there's a very good chance people will say, 'What was that thing with SNC-Lavalin, again?'" political scientist Jean-Herman Guay told *La Presse* in February. "In almost all democracies, the electorate shrugs and makes a choice based on its relative disgust towards each candidate." It's a far cry from sunny ways, but Trudeau may yet turn out to have read the electorate correctly.

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PROFILE

Data Driven

An archivist from British Columbia is now one of the world's most powerful information regulators

BY LEAH McLAREN
ILLUSTRATION BY NATALIE VINEBERG

ELIZABETH DENHAM, information commissioner for the UK, sits in her office on the top floor of a bland low-rise tucked in back of a drizzly car park in Wilmslow, just south of Manchester. Unassuming in a simple sheath dress, she has a habit of pushing a pair of rectangular spectacles up the bridge of her nose as she talks. It is a librarian's gesture, which is fitting: the Vancouver-born Denham worked for years as a professional archivist in Victoria, BC, before moving into what she now describes as the "sleepy, technical" world of data regulation back in the 1990s. Since then, the information and tech worlds have become utterly unrecognizable, and Denham has become arguably the most powerful data regulator on the planet.

Charged with protecting the UK's data, Denham is responsible for ensuring that corporations and political parties are transparent in their use of personal information. Her office also has sweeping prosecutorial powers: Denham has the ability to seize servers with little notice, shut down companies, issue subpoenas, investigate political parties, and levy significant monetary fines. For corporations, the ceiling on those fines was recently lifted to 4 percent of global revenue—a dollar figure that's currently in the low billions for Facebook and Google. "It's a big beast of a job," she says. "But what I care about most, at the end of the day, is the fair and ethical use of data."

Denham was recruited for the role in late 2015, after serving in several privacy commissions in Canada, just a few months before the UK voted to leave the European Union. She laughs ruefully at the memory. "Everyone said, 'Yeah there's this referendum vote, but don't worry, it's going to be status quo.'"

Her investigations have made waves around the world. Most recently, the one into Cambridge Analytica, the data-mining firm backed by US billionaire Robert Mercer, which, with the help of Facebook, was found to have illegally misused the personal data of millions of Americans and Britons in the course of both Trump's presidential campaign and the Vote Leave Brexit campaign struck a nerve. Denham, you might say, is Mark Zuckerberg's worst nightmare.

SHE GUIDES ME over to a wall of her office that is decorated with framed original newspaper caricatures depicting her past career exploits. One shows Denham as a swashbuckling sheriff kicking open a saloon door on what looks to be a corrupt game of poker. In another, she's a skirt-suited Old Testament David brazenly wielding a slingshot against Goliath, who is wearing a blue tunic emblazoned with the letters *FB*. It's dated 2010, during the aftermath of Denham's first major report on Facebook, which she completed during her tenure as Canada's assistant privacy commissioner in Ottawa.

That landmark investigation would in many ways foreshadow the extraordinary arc of Denham's subsequent career. It was published when most of the public still viewed big social-media platforms as, in Denham's words, "friendly Silicon Valley companies all about making friends and connecting." What she anticipated and reported on with urgent clarity then has now proved broadly true: the advertising model by which the big-data companies eventually planned to turn a profit is one that risked compromising the privacy and personal data of millions of people. She recommended that Facebook be legally required to be far more transparent with users about the ways in which their data could be potentially used and passed to third parties. The world would be a different place had we listened to Denham back then. Instead, she began her regulatory career as a kind of Cassandra, the Greek oracle who could see the future but was cruelly fated to be disbelieved.

In Canada, Denham's hands were tied: with the notable exception of BC's, our privacy and information commissioners have no enforceable powers. "That's why I like being where I am now," she says, settling herself at a boardroom table. "To actually see people prosecuted." Denham tells me that one floor down from where we sit, analysts are still sifting through no less than 700 terabytes of data the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) seized last year in its raid of Cambridge Analytica. That's the equivalent of 52 billion pages of documents. Given that the consultancy was working on many as-yet-undisclosed political campaigns around the world, this data cache has the potential to be explosive on a global scale. "We have regulators calling us up all the time saying, 'What have you found out about Argentina?' 'What have you found out about Australia?'"

On the subject of Canada, she's particularly scathing. For the most part, our privacy laws still don't extend to political parties or charitable organizations: if you called up, say, the Liberal Party of Canada and asked it to disclose all the personal information it has collected on you and how it's using that data to target you as a voter, it would have every legal right to ignore you. In the UK, that's not the case. "Canada is really behind on this stuff," she says. "Especially now that we know what can happen."

Charlie Angus, an NDP MP and vice-chair of the House of Commons standing committee on access to information, privacy, and ethics, has long been a fan of Denham's work both at home and now abroad. Like her, he has pushed for an update and toughening of Canada's privacy laws. "Watching her in the UK with her order-making powers," he says, "has been a marvel." Denham is still investigating the data-processing practices of all the UK's major political parties. She also has a team compiling a research report on the best way to safely regulate apps for children without curtailing learning and creativity.

DENHAM BEGAN her career as a professional archivist, the kind of high-level librarian who asks visitors to put on cheesecloth gloves to ensure the safe care of antique maps. This was back in the era of card catalogues and microfiche, when protecting and caring for information was a hands-on job. But, in the 1990s, federal and provincial governments were developing new freedom-of-information and privacy laws, and Denham suddenly found herself an accidental handmaiden to history. "It was a natural transition for me because I was dealing with records and making them available, moderating the access to records, and mediating between the depositors and researchers." In the early aughts, she took a job with the Alberta privacy commissioner as the head of enforcement for the private sector. It was there she discovered her love of hunting down bad guys—or, as she might put it, the importance of upholding human rights and transparency.

Denham followed that up with a stint as assistant privacy commissioner of Canada (it was in that position that she authored that prescient report foretelling the dangers of an unregulated Facebook), after which she was appointed privacy commissioner of BC. She was mulling over the possibility of a second term there when the UK called.

Before assuming her appointment in July 2016, Denham was grilled by British parliamentarians in a mandatory scrutiny hearing, an experience she describes as "intense—and perhaps not as respectful as it could have been." At one point, a male MP she declines to name asked her what sort of animal best described her management style, given that she came from "an island full of strange animals" somewhere off the west coast of Canada. "I realized later I should have said killer whale," she says. "But I just said, 'I'm not going to pick an animal.'"

The role was a huge promotion. Denham went from managing a staff of forty in Victoria to managing 750 people spread across five different branches: the ICO also has offices in London, Cardiff, Edinburgh, and Belfast in addition to the one near Manchester. "As a woman from Canada with a librarian background, I wasn't necessarily someone people would think was a natural for the job." Perhaps not, but Denham's record since 2016 speaks for itself. In Britain, she's become a fixture in the press and is regularly called to Parliament to testify on everything from facial-recognition technology to content regulation. Late last year, the Queen conferred on her a Commander of the Order of the British Empire. (Denham plans to take her mother as her date to the Buckingham Palace ceremony.)

IN THE fifteen years since Denham went into data regulation, the digital world has been remade, and what was once a largely overlooked matter—the domain of telemarketers and census bureaus—has become one of the chief public-policy concerns facing governments around the world. Today, information regulators grapple daily with the basic legal and moral questions of what it means to be human. Denham's mandate, to uphold information rights in the public interest, is often directly at odds with an increasing number of seemingly malign forces conspiring to undermine the values of liberal democracy and the rules-based international order.

But what really preoccupies Denham's conscience—the thing that actually keeps her up at night—is the desire to understand and get out ahead of whatever is coming next. Our cultural blind spot, she believes, is our inability to grasp and grapple with the inevitable emergence of artificial intelligence and other sophisticated data-processing and surveillance tools. "There's a risk that AI could undermine all our laws and everything we are as a society if we just look at it with big sparkly eyes," she says.

So how do we safely regulate a world in which war machines operate autonomous weaponry and cars drive themselves? How do we anticipate and, when necessary, mitigate the effects of AI on everything from journalism to government to jobs? "There are really big questions right now that are going to make the issues we've faced with information technology look like kindergarten problems," she says.

Denham rises and shakes my hand before settling back into her chair. Turning back to look at her, I find myself unexpectedly hopeful; I tell her I found our conversation quite comforting. She laughs and shrugs like she gets that all the time. "I bet it's just the Canadian accent."

LEAH McLAREN is a journalist and novelist based in London, England.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

ECONOMICS

Boomer Bust

Millennials are getting one of the biggest tax bills in history

BY MAX FAWCETT
ILLUSTRATION BY DREW SHANNON

For the first time in their history, baby boomers are now outnumbered by another generation. When Canadians head to the polls in October, millennials—roughly 10 million of them—will have the numerical edge. And with that edge, as research firm Abacus Data recently noted, comes the power to "disrupt the status quo." Millennials are already directing that power towards things they're allegedly killing (like mayonnaise and motorcycles) and ones they're apparently saving (like postcards and RVs). But when it comes to public finances, their impact is conspicuously absent—and if a recent report from the C.D. Howe Institute is any indication, they might want to get busy disrupting.

In that report, researcher Parisa Mahboubi focuses on so-called generational accounting, which measures the taxes each generation pays against the services they receive in order to reveal the long-term impacts of current fiscal policy. "The main question for generational accounting," Mahboubi writes, "is who pays for an increase in government spending: current or future generations." Borrowing from the future in order to pay for the present has long been a popular political strategy, but the numbers laid out in Mahboubi's report are sobering. Her projections reveal that a Canadian born in 2017 will pay $736,000 in taxes over their lifetime—a sum that will go disproportionately towards subsidizing health care and other age-related costs of baby boomers and other older Canadians.

This hidden subsidy is mostly a function of demographics, which have long been a tailwind for the baby boomer generation, tilting the stock, housing, and job markets in its favour. But those demographics are a major headwind for the boomers' children and grandchildren, who have to deal with the fiscal consequences of a rapidly aging population. In 1972, you had almost seven tax-paying adults for every senior. Within the next decade, that ratio will be down to just over three. Because older people tend to pay less in taxes and demand more in services, a large cohort of them, like the boomers are, naturally puts stress on a country's capacity to fund other priorities, like education and child care.

That stress is only going to increase. As a percentage of GDP, both health care spending and elderly benefits, like old-age security and the guaranteed-income supplement, are projected to increase over 50 percent from current levels by 2045. That's an increase of over $107 billion in spending using nominal 2016 GDP figures, which is more than the federal government currently spends on the military, employment insurance, and servicing the national debt—combined.

Kicking fiscal cans down the road may be something we've all grown accustomed to, but for current and future generations of Canadians, this particular can looks a lot more like a live grenade.

Paul Kershaw, a professor with the School of Population and Public Health at the University of British Columbia and the founder of young adult advocacy group Generation Squeeze, has been studying the impacts of this demographic imbalance on public policy for years. He argues the present state of affairs is violating the "intergenerational golden rule"—treating our children as we would want to be treated when making decisions about our world. "Governments are investing in later life stages at a faster rate than early life stages and doing so on behalf of a group of people who enjoyed more affluence compared to both the old people that preceded them and young people today," says Kershaw. "That doesn't fit with the

Canadian sense of fairness, and it's not the kind of legacy my mom wants to leave for her kids and grandkids."

His 2018 paper on intergenerational justice in public finance lays this out in detail. In it, he notes that, as a proportion of GDP, spending on seniors went from 4.57 percent in 1976 to 9.09 percent in 2016. At the same time, when adjusted for inflation, the median earner pays $1,244 less in taxes than they did in 1976. So how did the government close the gap between higher spending and lower taxes? It piled on half a trillion dollars in debt (which constrains the ability of future governments to fund programming) and underinvested in other areas of social spending. For example, if spending on those under forty-five had kept pace with what governments have shelled out for seniors, there would be over $20 billion in additional dollars available each year—more than enough to fund a national child care program, for example.

This disproportionate growth in spending on seniors might be defensible if the boomers had experienced financial hardships that younger Canadians didn't. "Generations that lucked out in the lottery of timing might have a good reason to contribute more than other generations that had more challenging economic realities," Kershaw says. But it's the boomers who won that lottery, of course—and who now appear to want their children and grandchildren to cover the four-course meal with a glass of prosecco. The median house now costs more than twice as much as it did in 1976, after adjusting for inflation—and the spread is even wider in markets like Toronto and Vancouver. That increase in value, combined with the longest bull market in both equities and stocks of the twentieth century, has put the boomers in a very comfortable place. As noted in a 2014 BMO press release, "Seniors today have never been better off financially, and are four times richer than their parents were at the same age in the mid-1980s."

Their kids, on the other hand, aren't doing as well. Yes, they're more educated on average than their parents, but they don't have much to show for it, other than the ever-expanding pile of student-loan debt, as wages for Canadians under fifty-five have more or less stagnated over the last four decades. And yet, Kershaw notes, those same kids are being asked to give back in ways their parents never did. "Baby boomers came of age when they made pretty good earnings, especially relative to their major costs of living. Young people today have lower earnings and a way higher cost of living but are being expected to contribute considerably more than today's aging population paid towards their own elderly."

IT'S NOT TOO LATE to do something about this. Indeed, we've been here before, when in the 1980s and early '90s it became clear that the Canada Pension Plan's so-called pay-as-you-go model, in which the contributions of younger workers paid the benefits of older ones, wouldn't work in a world where there were ever-more retirees and ever-fewer workers to support them. In 1997, contribution rates were raised significantly in order to allow aging boomers to effectively prepay for their pensions, while the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board was created to invest those contributions more effectively.

And while it's now too late for boomers to prepay for their soaring health care costs (which, left unchecked, could consume more than 40 percent of total program spending by the provinces in 2030), it's not too late to tap the asset class they own that has added almost $280,000 to the net worth of the average senior boomer household (and multiples of that in Toronto and Vancouver). "We shelter housing from taxation like we shelter no other asset," Kershaw says. "It's time to revisit that."

The capital-gains exemption on the sale of principal residences, for example, costs the federal government an estimated $7 billion each year in forgone tax revenue. That revenue, or some portion thereof, could be directed towards the health care bill for seniors. And, Kershaw says, by making home ownership a less lucrative investment, it might also help to make housing more affordable for a generation that continues to struggle with the high cost of shelter. "There's the win-win—the same tax measure that slows down housing prices generates revenue to address the medical care needs of an aging population. That's where we need the debate to go—immediately."

The catch is that it can't until one of Canada's major political parties chooses to go there. While US politics has Pete Buttigieg, a thirty-seven-year old Democratic presidential candidate who's running on a platform of intergenerational justice, the issue has yet to become politically salient in Canada. Yes, voter turnout among young people surged in 2015, but the percentage of people under thirty-four who said they were "too busy" to vote was twice as high as the percentage of those over fifty-five. "Politics responds to those who organize and show up," Kershaw says. "So it's not a surprise when we see the world of politics direct new spending disproportionately to those that do."

Samantha Reusch, the research manager with Apathy is Boring, a Montreal-based nonpartisan charity that educates youth about politics, says that there's a sort of chicken-and-egg aspect to the relationship between millennials and Canada's political parties. "The baby boomer generation was a massive force. I don't think people have realized the power that the boomers' children have in that political space. But it's also become this vicious circle. We've never turned out, therefore the politicians have never responded to us, therefore nobody turns out."

But in what will almost certainly be a close election, paying attention to a huge voting bloc still waiting to be heard could pay off in a big way. "If you look at research on why young people don't turn out," Reusch says, "one of the big reasons is 'politicians don't care about people like me' or 'they don't speak to the issues I care about.'" There might be no bigger political motivator for millennials than a party offering to fix a system that has allowed boomers to move from advantage to advantage and left their children—now the biggest demographic in the country—facing financial disaster. ☑

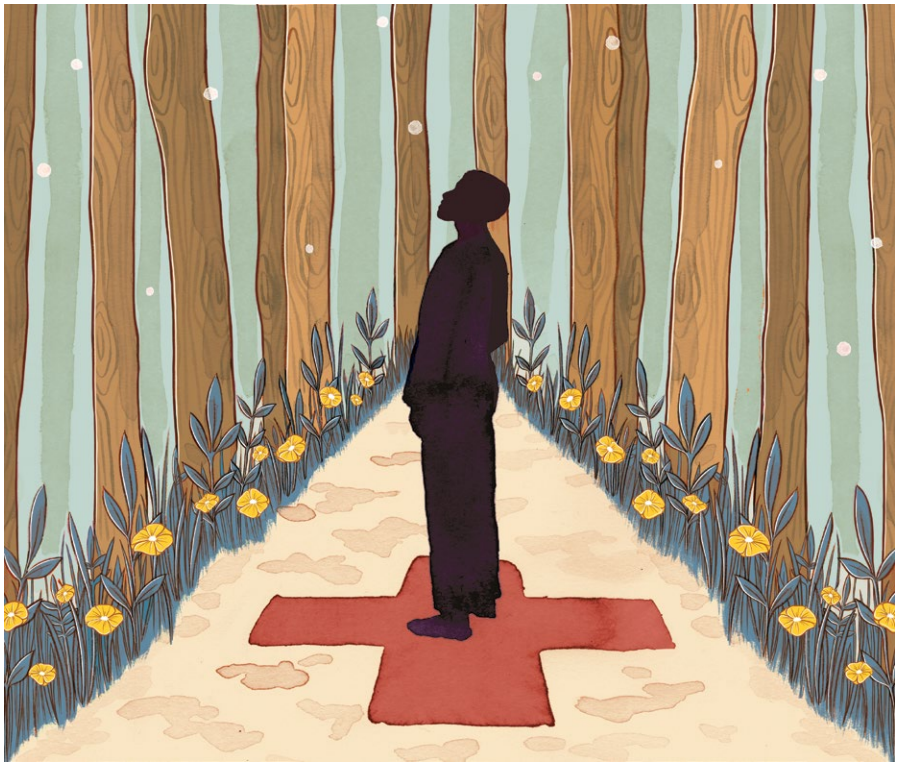
MAX FAWCETT is the former editor of *Alberta Oil* and *Vancouver* magazines.

HEALTH

Pine Solved

Treating ailments with a walk in the woods

BY PETER KUITENBROUWER
ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHANIE SINGLETON



In the early 1940s, while embroiled in the Second World War, the government of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King faced a PR problem back home: injured soldiers were being sent to a Toronto cash-register factory that had been hastily converted to house the wounded. *Torch*, a newspaper for veterans, heaped scorn on what it called the "chief orthopaedic military hospital in Canada." It described "ramshackle, inflammable additions" and observed that the vets lacked adequate light or recreational areas. The Canadian government had asked the City of Toronto for land to erect a new facility. Milton Gregg, minister of veterans' affairs, called for "rural surroundings (that) can have a beneficial effect upon morale." In 1948, Mackenzie King opened Sunnybrook Hospital, then the largest hospital in Canada, on a forested plateau north of downtown. Sunnybrook's principal architect, Hugh L. Allward, noted that "a clear-running stream adds charm to a broad valley available to patients and their friends." The founders of Sunnybrook recognized something ancient and intuitive: the healing power of forests.

Seventy years on, a quest for bigger and better buildings (and more parking) has driven Sunnybrook's patients and staff further and further from nature. But, even as Sunnybrook pushes green space to its margins, researchers elsewhere have proven the value of therapeutic landscapes. Clinical trials show that time spent in the forest can boost white blood cells, which can attack tumours, improve cardiovascular health, reduce stress, and lift depression. The Japanese call this *shinrin-yoku*, or forest bathing. In Canada, during a typical forest bath, participants stroll through groves and sometimes lean against trees. They feel rocks and smell soil. They lie down on carpets of pine needles. It sounds like a hippie fad—but it might also be a simple, low-cost way to address some of the challenges facing our health care system.

Although Western medicine has succeeded in limiting communicable diseases and extending life expectancy, increasing rates of depression and other mental illnesses suggest that, in the developed world, well-being is on the decline. In Canada, three in five people over twenty now live with chronic, noncommunicable diseases. As hospitals overflow and "hallway medicine" persists, contact with nature may be one of our oldest and least-appreciated treatments.

The nature cure dates back centuries. European monasteries in the eleventh through fourteenth centuries featured therapeutic gardens, where monks grew food and medicinal plants. Henry David Thoreau, in his essay "Walking," published in 1862 in *The Atlantic*, said he required four hours a day sauntering through the woods and fields to preserve his health. People in Victorian England, including Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, believed that miasma, or bad air, caused disease; the cure was clean air.

While medicine has made enormous advances, research suggests nature therapy still has value. Between 1972 and 1981, researchers studied thirty women and sixteen men recovering from gall-bladder surgery in a suburban hospital in Pennsylvania. Half the patients looked out at leafy trees; the other half saw a brick wall. Patients with the tree view recovered more quickly and required fewer drugs. In 2012, scientists from the University of Michigan, Stanford University, and Baycrest Health Sciences Centre in Toronto asked twenty people diagnosed

with major depressive disorder to recall a negative memory. The study group was then asked to walk through downtown Ann Arbor, Michigan, and to visit a local arboretum during a separate session. Subjects returning from the forest showed mood improvements compared with results after the urban walk.

In his 2018 book, *Forest Bathing*, Qing Li posits that a walk in the woods—often in groves of towering Japanese hinoki cypress—can also reduce blood pressure, lower blood-sugar levels, improve concentration, improve energy, boost the immune system, and increase anticancer protein production. One reason may be due to oils called phytoncides, which trees produce to protect themselves from bacteria, insects, and fungi. When Li incubated natural killer cells (white blood cells in our bodies that attack unwanted cells) with phytoncides from the trees, he found an increased presence of anticancer proteins.

"When we are in a meditative state, we benefit in a different way than when we are on a hike."

The touted physical- and mental-health benefits of forest bathing have led to a nascent industry. Forest bathing arrived in Canada in 2015 and has grown quickly: today, this country counts at least fifty forest-therapy guides. Ronda and Gary Murdock live in Parksville, BC, about 150 kilometres north of Victoria. Ronda grew up in the forest, and Gary is a retired forest technician. Giant, centuries-old Douglas firs and western red cedars and a soft, needle-covered forest floor offer the perfect environment for a forest bath not far from their house.

Although the Murdocks have led nature hikes since 1999, it has only been in the past two or three years that a market has grown for forest bathing—a different experience from strenuous trails. "It's about assisting people to slow down and use their senses to connect with the forest," Ronda says. "When we are in a meditative state, we benefit in a different way than when we are on a hike or a jog." Ronda invites participants to "shake off the road dust," take off their shoes, close their eyes, and pay attention to sounds and smells. Some of her customers are grieving or fighting heart disease.

In Atlanta, Georgia, a hospital has recently begun offering forest bathing to its cancer patients in the woods of the fifty-one-hectare Chattahoochee Nature Center. Other patients act on their own initiative. In the summer of 2017, doctors diagnosed Robyn King Edgar, a mother of two from Okotoks, south of Calgary, with stage-four cancer, which gave her a 22 percent chance of living five years. To reduce stress and improve her health, King Edgar sold her dance studio and swore off dairy, sugar, and red meat. She also joined a three-day forest-bathing retreat in the pine forests of the Rockies near Golden, BC. When she returned, King Edgar says her white blood cell count had nearly tripled. "I can't say with certainty that forest bathing made my counts go up," King Edgar says. "My doctor says it's not consistent enough. I'd really love to see some more research on the benefits that forest bathing is having on my natural killer cells."

Forest therapy also raises questions of accessibility. On Vancouver Island, many of the Murdocks' forest-bathing clients are guests at the Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort and Conference Centre, where a two-night "reconnect" package in a spa bungalow with a forest view includes two hours of forest bathing and costs $650; King Edgar's forest-bathing weekend cost about $500.

But forest bathing is not only a recent fad for the wealthy. The use of forests to heal the sick is second nature to Canada's First Nations. Shelley Charles is Ojibwe Anishinaabe, raised by her grandmother in the forests of Ontario's Bruce Peninsula. Charles learned to make balms from balsam fir and spruce gum boiled with bear grease and to get vitamin C from cedar, pine, spruce, and balsam.

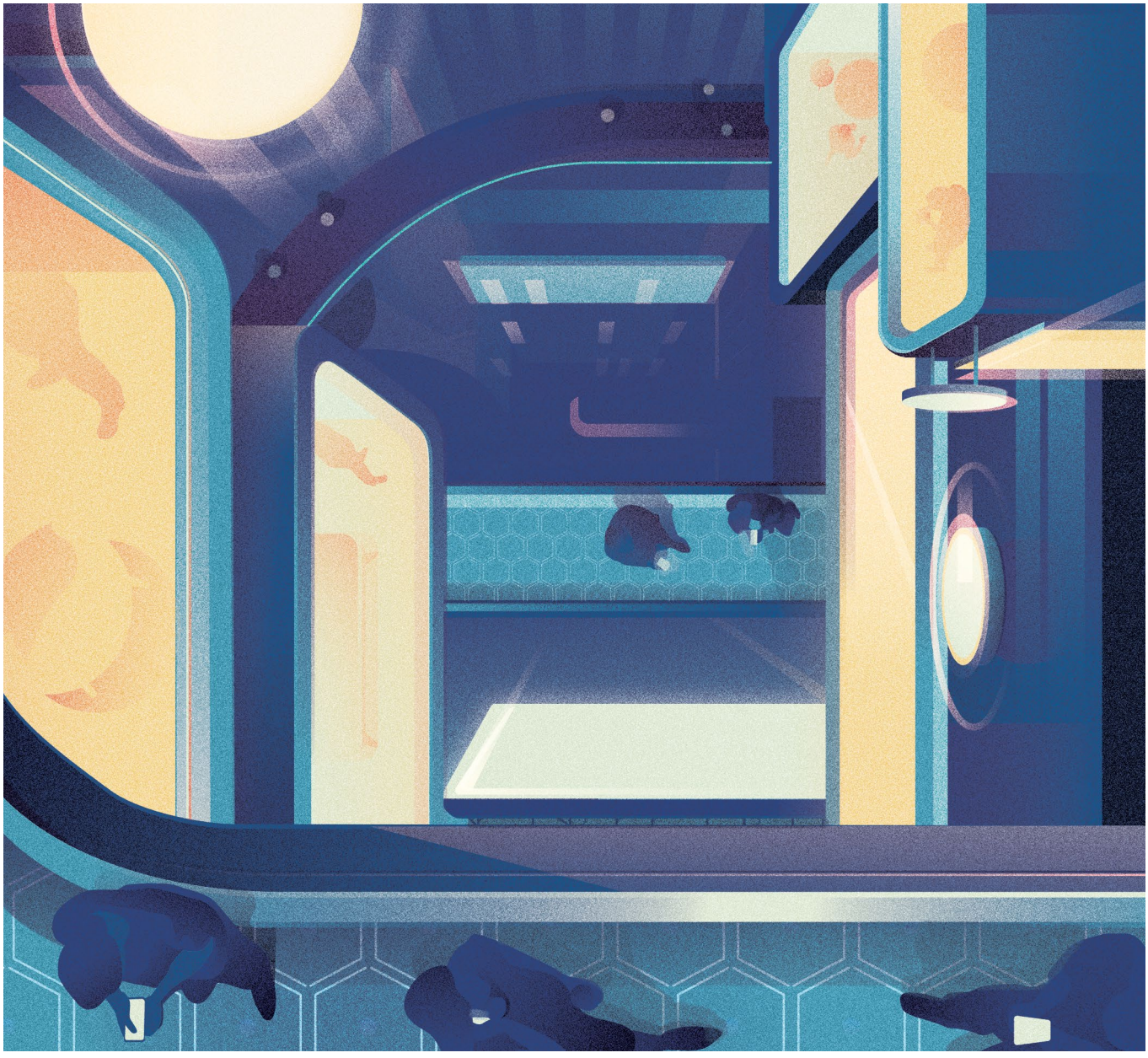
Today, Charles is dean of Indigenous education and engagement at Humber College, the north campus of which backs onto a forest along the Humber River in Toronto. Charles, with students and staff, plants native species of trees and plants in spring and uses the forest to teach her students about the power of trees as healers. "It contributes to our overall physical and spiritual health, having a place where we can walk right down to the river and be immersed in a natural setting," she says. But when Charles asked staff who signed up for her workshop to meet her at the nearby Humber Arboretum, no one could find it. The forest does not appear on the Humber College map.

Despite more interest in the restorative effects of forests, fresh air has fallen out of fashion in North American hospitals. One hot day in late July at Sunnybrook, I met Antonio Pergola, who had pushed his ailing mother, Giuseppina, in her wheelchair, into the shade of an Austrian pine tree looking out at a forested ravine. "This is where she likes to go," explained Antonio. "It reminds her of the village where she grew up, outside Napoli."

A sign stuck into the lawn nearby announced that this shady spot is soon to disappear. The city has granted Sunnybrook permission to cut down this pine and twenty-two other mature trees to build its new Brain Sciences Facility. When the hospital opened, 12 percent of its grounds were paved; hard surface now covers 52 percent, much of it for parking.

Sunnybrook has shown some commitment to its woods. Last fall, it planted a new grove donated by the Canadian Medical Association Foundation, in partnership with Tree Canada. Trees, of course, are not a panacea for the complex illnesses doctors are now able to treat. But amid sprawling facilities and overcrowded wards, Sunnybrook and other hospitals have a simple option proven to lower heart rates and blood pressure, reduce stress hormones, and boost immune systems: take patients for a walk in the woods. ⁂

PETER KUITENBROUWER is working on a master of forest conservation at the University of Toronto. He has written for *Toronto Life*, *Maclean's*, and *Chatelaine*.



BUSINESS

Tech Defector

RIM cofounder Jim Balsillie pushes back against the world he helped create

BY BRIAN J. BARTH
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZACHARY MONTEIRO

Shortly before ten o'clock on the morning of May 10 last year, Jim Balsillie, co-founder of Research in Motion (RIM), the Waterloo, Ontario, company that created BlackBerry phones, took a seat in a conference room across from Parliament Hill. Next to him sat Colin McKay, an executive from Google, the company whose Android operating system was responsible, in part, for BlackBerry's fall from grace. RIM (now BlackBerry) was an industry powerhouse a decade ago, but the success of Android and Apple phones cut its share of the global smartphone market to nearly zero by 2016. Despite this history, it was Balsillie, sporting a neon green tie, who exuded confidence.

The men had been called to testify before the House of Commons ethics committee about the Cambridge Analytica scandal, triggered less than two months prior by Canadian whistle-blower Christopher Wylie when he revealed that a British firm had pilfered the personal information of up to 87 million people on Facebook, which was later used by Donald Trump's 2016 presidential-election campaign. But the hearing quickly devolved into an interrogation of the data-collection practices of a tech industry that, for years, has been hell bent on fending off calls for oversight. McKay, visibly uncomfortable, an uncooperative strand of his combed-back hair dangling above his glasses, was there in part to convince the MPs that Google was not guilty of the negligent privacy practices that Facebook had been accused of. Balsillie, who had cut ties with RIM in 2012, joined in the takedown of his former industry, his zeal scarcely concealed.

The data-driven economy, Balsillie warned, was developing faster than the ability of policy makers to reckon with its consequences. "We are cascading toward a surveillance state," he said, conjuring a world divided into the watchers and the watched, a world where Big Tech piles up astronomical profits by distilling our everyday experiences into data to monetize—in some instances, doing so "without a moral conscience." He mentioned how, in Australia, Facebook had been caught designing algorithms to identify stressed, overwhelmed, and anxious teenagers on its network, presumably to assist advertisers who might want to target them. Google has faced its own parade of scandals, which include the accusation that it illegally collects children's personal information through YouTube, a subsidiary with algorithms that can push viewers toward increasingly polarizing and vile content—from neo-Nazis to Trump-bashing conspiracy theorists. Why? Because that's likely to keep us most engaged, thus maximizing Google's ad revenue.

"History offers sobering lessons about societies that practise mass surveillance."

But the privacy overreaches and the betrayal of consumer trust are, for Balsillie, sideshows to the real scandal: that Silicon Valley's main business model is founded on the exhaustive monitoring of human behaviour—a revenue stream it is loath to give up. The five most valuable corporations in the world are all tech companies, and the top two, Apple and Amazon, recently became the first trillion-dollar enterprises, which put their worth above the GDP of all but sixteen countries. Balsillie, like many, refers to this new economic order as "surveillance capitalism," which he described at the hearing as "the most powerful market force today."

The subject of surveillance capitalism seemed to hit a nerve with McKay. "Despite what Mr. Balsillie said," he countered, "we do not sell the personal information of our users." Google's business model, he explained, is based on "services that are provided free to Canadians and everyone else in the world through advertising. It's advertising that's targeted at aggregated groups, not at individuals, and there's no exchange of personal information between Google and advertisers."

Don't be "tricked by platitudes," Balsillie urged the MPs. While Google might not sell user information per se, it certainly monetizes it in transactions with third parties. Nearly 85 percent of the revenue generated by Alphabet—Google's parent company—comes from advertising, so the levers between personal data and profit making are plain to see. The relevant question, said Balsillie, taking off his glasses, is, "Do you exploit information?" Given that Google fields around 90 percent of internet searches worldwide, the company's search algorithm represents a source of power with few historical precedents. In an age of fake news, cyberwarfare, and toxic online culture, it would seem reckless not to be concerned that such power is accountable to shareholders rather than elected officials.

It's a recklessness, Balsillie believes, the prime minister flirts with. Several months before the hearing, Justin Trudeau had conducted a charm offensive in Silicon Valley in the hope of wooing Amazon and other tech giants to set up shop in Canada. And, in October 2017, he presided over a lavish press conference in Toronto to announce that Sidewalk Labs, a Google sister company specializing in "smart-city" infrastructure, would be building a high-tech neighbourhood from scratch on the city's waterfront. For Balsillie and others, the project—which would employ a sensor-laden network of connected infrastructure—could turn our public spaces into massive data-collection tools. But Trudeau has shown little interest in regulating such invasive ventures compared with the growing chorus of political leaders elsewhere who have begun to demand stricter rules.

Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe said he intends to use his country's time as chair at the Group of Twenty summit in Osaka, in June, to advocate for a global system of data governance. European Union lawmakers have put Google on notice for its monopolistic behaviour by slapping the company with enormous

fines. France recently lost a years-long battle with the company to expand the EU's "right to be forgotten" rule and give Europeans the power, in certain circumstances, to have their names scrubbed from their online search results around the world, not simply in Europe. Some branches of the French government are mandating that Google no longer provide the default search engine on their employees' devices, opting instead for Qwant, a made-in-France search engine that claims it does not track users. In Berlin, Google recently abandoned plans to build a new campus after withstanding two years of a local "Fuck Off, Google" campaign.

At the hearing in May, Charlie Angus, the NDP's ethics critic, acknowledged that he had once been seduced by Google's visionary aims. "I was someone who was deeply against the regulation of Google because I wanted to see it develop. Imagine, me, a socialist, and here is an entrepreneur warning us about surveillance capitalism," he said, looking over at Balsillie, who let out a deep belly laugh.

Not long ago, issuing such a warning would have branded Balsillie a fringe activist, if not a conspiracy theorist. But post–Cambridge Analytica, fears about Big Tech's data addiction are seeping into the mainstream. A Nanos poll, conducted for the *Globe and Mail*, at the end of 2018 found that 83 percent of Canadians show some level of concern with how social-media platforms manage their personal information. Balsillie's worry, however, is ultimately less about privacy than about control. "History," he said to the MPs, "offers sobering lessons about societies that practise mass surveillance." For Balsillie, bringing those sobering lessons to light, and bringing to heel an industry he helped create, is a deeply personal fight—a mission tinged, perhaps, with a touch of revenge.

One month later, I sat in the boardroom at Balsillie's offices overlooking Toronto's city hall. I remarked that his performance at the hearing in Ottawa was likely jarring to those who knew him as the billionaire executive who once got into a flap with the National Hockey League after several unsuccessful bids to purchase an American franchise and move it to Hamilton, Ontario. Some may also remember Balsillie from the stock-options scandal that engulfed RIM just as it was losing its grip on the smartphone market. In 2009, he and another RIM cofounder, Mike Lazaridis, were fined millions.

Balsillie, now fifty-eight, is stoutly built and deeply composed, with not a thread out of place. He is fond of debate, and when he gets going, his voice goes up an octave and he holds his eyes wide open while blinking repeatedly. He claims he is "the largest commercial IP protagonist in the history of the country," citing the 44,000 patents he commercialized during his career. Nicknamed "Ballsy" in college, Balsillie's relentless drive can be traced back to his upbringing in a rough working-class neighbourhood in Peterborough, Ontario. The son of an Ontario Hydro electrician, Balsillie became increasingly ambitious as a child and teenager, taking on a series of jobs, including delivering newspapers and working as a house painter and a ski-lift operator. Long before graduating high school, he envisioned himself becoming a member of the elite. He would accept nothing less from life than fame and fortune. "I was pretty sure they were going to put up a statue of me," he told the authors of the 2015 postmortem on RIM *Losing the Signal: The Spectacular Rise and Fall of BlackBerry*.

You'd have to live in a cave to avoid having information about your whereabouts, purchases, vital signs, and vices harvested.

The book painted Balsillie as a cocky, sharp-tongued corporate shark who frequently manipulated competitors and regulators in his quest to dominate the smartphone market. Some employees feared him. His bible in business was the ancient Chinese text *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, which preaches a stoic and ruthless brand of mental stealth as a tactic to overcome outsized opponents—sage advice for a tiny Waterloo company attempting to take over the global mobile-phone market. Balsillie now wields this same predatory expertise in his war to rein in the tech industry and awaken Canadians to the dangers of concentrating too much power in the hands of a few companies that have become rich by knowing more about us than we do about ourselves. Your likes, status updates, and other activities on Facebook can be used by researchers to predict your intelligence, satisfaction with life, emotional stability, and sexual preferences. The platform could even be used to assess the strength of your relationships.

A brash public figure, Balsillie prefers to work in the medium with which he is most comfortable: backroom power broking. He's a familiar face on Parliament Hill, having once advocated for policies to support BlackBerry's interests. More recently, he has been advocating, as a kind of father figure of the Canadian tech industry at large, for anything that might help domestic innovators better compete globally. To advance his agenda, Balsillie claims to communicate daily with federal and provincial ministers, policy advisers, business leaders, and other global influencers. The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), a sprawling think tank he founded in 2001, has become a data-governance proselytizing machine, circulating white papers on the subject by the dozen. Beneath the nerdy veneer of titles like "Fluctuations in Uncertainty and R&D Investment" one finds theoretical arguments and mathematical proofs that help reinforce Balsillie's rants.

In the fall of 2017, Balsillie began pushing for the federal government to protect the data created by Canadian

citizens and institutions, going as far as to spend two months holed up in his Georgian Bay cottage to draft a twelve-page national data strategy, which he then forwarded to "the mandarins in Ottawa." The "mandarins" did not take his ideas seriously, he says, until after the Cambridge Analytica scandal exploded last spring. A few months later, Navdeep Bains, minister of innovation, science, and economic development, began consultations for a strategic plan for the digital economy. It's likely to be a multiyear process, but Balsillie expects it will yield sweeping legislation similar to the EU's recently enacted General Data Protection Regulation, which gives Europeans unprecedented control over how their personal information is collected and used, including the power to force companies to delete it. The new law will subject violating companies to fines of up to 4 percent of their annual global revenue. If Balsillie has his way, the future regulatory environment will put tech companies operating in Canada on an even shorter leash.

Balsillie isn't alone in his fight. The term *surveillance capitalism* was coined by Harvard Business School's Shoshana Zuboff, who was one of Balsillie's professors in the eighties when he got his MBA. Her recent 700-page opus, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, describes the rise of "a parasitic economic logic" that regards human life as "raw material." Now that our internet overlords have mastered online advertising as a revenue tool, Zuboff believes their next step will be to redeploy their predictive algorithms for social engineering. They will do this, in part, by shaping our real-time actions, from shopping to voting, via the so-called Internet of Things—the catch-all phrase for web-connected objects that include not only computers and smartphones but cars, lawn mowers, thermostats, wristwatches, and washing machines.

Virtually everything we use now could be plundered for information by surveillance capitalists.

All this sounds extreme, but in Balsillie's view, it is extreme only in proportion to how the tech landscape has evolved since the mid-2000s, before smartphones went mainstream and data collection, still in its infancy, largely involved pinpointing your location. Today, you'd have to live in a cave to avoid having information about your whereabouts, purchases, vital signs, vices, and love interests harvested. Sensors as tiny as a grain of salt have been developed to track our movements. Facial-recognition technology has been employed in some Canadian malls to monitor the age and gender of shoppers. A 2016 Georgetown University study found that half of American adults were already in facial-recognition databases compiled by law enforcement agencies from security-camera feeds. Among Google's recent patent filings are camera-embedded bathroom mirrors (to study your appearance for changes in health) and smart toilet seats that read your blood pressure when you sit down. Toilets that analyze urine and feces are in the works at other companies.

For the full-blown dystopia, go to China, where a "social credit system" is being enforced through facial recognition and other surveillance tools. Say bad things about the ruling party, and it could, some warn, punish you, whether by reducing your internet speed, preventing you from buying a train ticket, or perhaps hauling you off to a "re-education" camp.

This is not the world Balsillie set out to build. One of RIM's core values, as exemplified by BlackBerry's legendary security system, was the protection of personal data. For Balsillie, the private sphere is the bedrock of liberal democracy, which is why he believes this new mutation of capitalism—where human behaviour is the key asset—is wrong-headed. Over the course of numerous conversations in the past year, I came to view Balsillie as not simply a businessman but as a scholar and provocateur who happened to have spent twenty years as a CEO. His capitalist mind and socialist conscience are in creative tension. Although part of the inner circle at Davos, he dismisses the World Economic Forum as a self-congratulatory club "where billionaires go to tell millionaires how the middle class feels. It's like Kentucky Fried Chicken—every now and then, it feels like a good idea, and then you feel sick for a long time afterwards." Tech evangelist and tech reformist—apparent contradictions are not necessarily at odds in his cosmos.

In many ways, Balsillie is late to the tech-reform party and is aligning himself with grassroots privacy activists who have been demanding stricter legislation since long before it was fashionable. One group he has partnered with, through his think tank, is Digital Justice Lab, established early last year. The partnership has doled out microgrants—$1,000 to $3,000 apiece—to groups and individuals working to educate the public on digital rights, with a focus on minorities and marginalized communities. Balsillie put up the funds for all of the grants; thirty-five in the partnership's first six months. "I believe there is a need for diversity of tactics," said Digital Justice Lab's director Nasma Ahmed. "I'm learning about the corporate side of things. And he's learning about what folks are saying on the ground. It's a good way of actually moving forward."

Our every thought, word, and deed can be resold to companies that want to anticipate our needs—or produce them.

Balsillie's metamorphosis from tech executive to tech skeptic may not be quite as dramatic a change as it seems. He has never had a social-media account and reads the newspaper "because I don't want my world view curated for me," he said, scrambling his hands around his head to illustrate the so-called filter-bubble effect—the state of intellectual isolation that can result when online search algorithms selectively assume the information a user wants to see. At one point, I glanced down at his phone—still a BlackBerry user. Though these days BlackBerrys are a different beast: the phones are made and sold by a Chinese company and run on Google's Android operating system, which extracts data from your phone even when you're not using a Google service and can record your movements even after you pause the location-history setting.

Balsillie hasn't lost faith in technology or in the free market—he just thinks it best if it's not too free. "I'm a capitalist," he said repeatedly during our meetings, as though he felt the need to remind himself. "But capitalism needs guardrails to remain a force for good."

BALSILLIE'S MOST ARDENT beliefs about tech and society come together in his condemnation of Waterfront Toronto, a public corporation established by the municipal, provincial, and federal governments to redevelop 800 hectares of former industrial land across Toronto's downtown lakefront. In March 2017, Waterfront Toronto issued a request for an "innovation and funding partner" to develop five hectares of an area dubbed the Quayside. Sidewalk Labs—a New York–based Google affiliate that specializes in data-based urban planning—beat out local and international firms with a proposal to build a neighbourhood "from the internet up." A small number of smart-city projects of this nature have been proposed and started elsewhere, but if realized, the Sidewalk Labs project would be an incursion into city building with little global precedent. For Balsillie, it's an Orwellian nightmare in the making.

Sidewalk's proposal is peppered with phrases like "comprehensive data collection," "an enormous amount of data," and "fine-grained data." The data it desires runs from environmental

(localized weather conditions, noise levels, and pollution) to social (everyday actions that paint a detailed picture of what residents are doing and when). The futuristic district would be outfitted with features like robotic garbage collection, autonomous vehicles, and ultraefficient heating and cooling systems. An array of sensors, possibly including ones capable of picking up signals from the smartphone in your pocket as you walk by, would underpin the project. The company also envisions a digital identification system for residents, workers, and visitors through which access to public services could be controlled. Marc De Pape, a Toronto tech executive, has claimed in a blog post that Sidewalk Labs is, among other things, looking to connect its technologies with Canada's voting systems—information he says he gleaned from a job interview with the company.

While all of this data would ostensibly be used to improve urban life and municipal efficiency, Balsillie warns that the sum of what Google will know about our every thought, word, and deed can be resold to companies that want to anticipate our needs—or produce them. Perhaps Google will want to steer pedestrians to stores that advertise on its platform. Nothing especially insidious about that, but the Cambridge Analytica scandal showed what can happen when third parties attempt to weaponize behavioural data for purposes other than those it was collected for. "The leaders of Waterfront Toronto have committed an absolute, irresponsible folly by entering into a contract with Sidewalk Labs," Balsillie said, bobbing his head and looking around as if he'd like to find a big stick and put it to use.

The smart city envisioned by Sidewalk Labs would put Google's algorithms into action on a vast scale, creating a techno-urban enclosure. Sidewalk Labs has already said that it wants Quayside residents to double the number of hours they spend outdoors. "Hands up if you want some engineer deciding how you should feel today," Balsillie said, "or what you should do every hour on the hour or how you should manage your social relationships."

Balsillie believes that cities—their transit systems, infrastructure, and real estate—are the next frontier for companies on the hunt for industries to disrupt. Worldwide, the smart-city market, already overflowing with companies hawking sensors and data-analytics services, has been predicted to grow at a rate of nearly 30 percent annually to reach $2.3 trillion (US) by 2023. No single entity, however, has mastered the entire smart-city ecosystem. That would take not only a deep R&D budget but a city willing to be the guinea pig. Just as Amazon dominates online retail and Uber dominates ride sharing, Balsillie is convinced that Google is positioning itself to dominate smart cities. In his view, collecting data about people as they move through public spaces—where one can't accept or decline a privacy agreement—isn't a privilege that Canada should be turning over to a global platform like Google.

Balsillie says he voiced his concerns to high-ranking members at all three levels of government and to Waterfront Toronto leadership on phone calls and in closed-door meetings throughout

2017. While he claims that some people he spoke with privately agreed with his concerns, the Sidewalk project lurched forward, even as a chorus of activists threatened to derail it. One such activist is forty-year-old Bianca Wylie. The de facto leader of the movement to send Sidewalk Labs packing, Wylie cofounded the advocacy group Tech Reset Canada and is now a senior fellow at Balsillie's think tank, CIGI. With her gritty, hacktivist vibe, she cuts quite a contrast next to Balsillie. "It's so funny," Wylie told me, "to come from totally different sides of the table and have a shared irritation of the progressive hubris of those unwilling to question whether more technology is always better." While Balsillie worked the back channels, Wylie was a constant presence on local radio, print, and TV outlets, countering Sidewalk Labs's PR blitz with an alternative narrative about an industry peddling utopia but trafficking in deception.

It's irrelevant to Balsillie whether Google has even remotely nefarious plans for the data it plans to gather from the Quayside project, because he believes that once surveillance technology is in place, it's difficult to prevent personal information from being exploited. Sidewalk Labs has pledged to anonymize data, but it's well known within the industry that anonymous data can often be reidentified by cross-referencing it with other pools of data—and Google has the biggest data sets in the world. "Policy makers are being played," said Balsillie. "They're being played in my town, in a country that I care about. These officials, who have no sophistication about technology, are making major, irreversible decisions. They're in it for the photo op." For Balsillie, the Sidewalk Labs project represents a do-or-die moment for Canada: "If they breach the data dike in Toronto, it's over. We're toast."

After playing the inside track, Balsillie waited until October last year to launch a full offensive on the Sidewalk Labs project. In a *Globe and Mail* op-ed, he lashed out at the smart-city plan as a "colonizing experiment in surveillance capitalism attempting to bulldoze important urban, civic and political issues." Balsillie called for the deal to be terminated and a new request for proposals initiated. "Of all the misguided innovation strategies Canada has launched over the past three decades," he said, "this purported smart city is not only the dumbest but also the most dangerous."

The steady stream of negative headlines about the Quayside scheme turned into a flood, with Balsillie spending much of the next week giving interviews. Helen Burstyn, then chair of the Waterfront Toronto board, quickly reached out and invited him to be an informal adviser, hoping to calm the waters. (Burstyn also chairs the board of the Walrus Foundation, the charitable non-profit that publishes *The Walrus*). "I understand why Jim fears that this gives a Google-related company some advantages," she said when I spoke with her at the time. "But we are negotiating rigorously to make sure that this benefits public interest."

In December, the Ontario auditor general released a value-for-money report that found irregularities with how Waterfront Toronto assessed the appropriateness of the project. The report cited an email from June 2016, nine months before the request for proposals was issued, in which Waterfront Toronto officials wrote to Sidewalk Labs expressing an interest in having the company do a project in Toronto. Other emails showed that the board felt it was "urged—strongly" by federal and provincial officials to approve the agreement with Sidewalk Labs. Yet another email discussed pushback that might arise from the fact that Sidewalk Labs wanted to "control ALL data" related to the project.

Following the report, the province dismissed three directors of Waterfront Toronto, including Burstyn. Ann Cavoukian, the former Ontario privacy commissioner who was brought on by Sidewalk Labs as a paid consultant, resigned out of concern for how the data collection would be managed. This February, a leaked slide presentation obtained by the *Toronto Star* caused a stir when it revealed that Sidewalk Labs's original plans spanned much more than the five-hectare site and that it wanted a cut of property taxes, development fees, and the rising value of land in the region. The presentation, which Sidewalk Labs gave to executives in November at the offices of Google's parent company, Alphabet, included a section titled "Shaping Public Opinion," which states that "the majority of the negative press coverage is rooted in an anti-global tech giant narrative being spun by former RIM co-founder Jim Balsillie."

Balsillie said Sidewalk Labs's lobbying activity dwarfs anything he's seen from domestic tech companies—according to the company, registered lobbyists made twenty-plus visits to members of Parliament, the Prime Minister's Office, and other federal offices last year, with similar-scale efforts at Queen's Park and Toronto city hall. Balsillie, however, doesn't fault Sidewalk Labs for its efforts to push the Quayside project through. "It's the job of businesses to maximize their profits within the rules," he says. "And it's the job of society to put the rules in place."

It would be easy to dismiss Balsillie as an opportunist surfing the so-called techlash in order to launder his post-BlackBerry image. But Sidewalk Labs is, for him, the most visible expression of a far bigger problem: how Canada's flat-footed reaction to the rapacious data appetites of multinational tech companies endangers our democracy, security, and economy. He is especially troubled about what he considers Canada's poor record of commercializing homegrown innovation. Over the last twenty years, the global economy has become less dependent on physical assets, such as factories and merchandise, and more dependent on intangible assets, such as patents, databases, copyrights, software, and algorithms (nearly 90 percent of the value of the "big five" tech companies comes from their intangible assets). Such assets are often grouped under the term *intellectual property*. Poor IP stewardship, claims Balsillie, costs the Canadian economy more than $100 billion annually in lost revenue. He believes

that if we can't protect our IP, we risk becoming a "client state" to countries who can.

Balsillie points to the Toronto-Waterloo corridor, often referred to as Silicon Valley North. The area is globally renowned as a producer of cutting-edge technology. World-changing tech companies? Not so much. For example, Geoffrey Hinton, the University of Toronto professor known as the godfather of artificial intelligence, started a company in 2012 to develop his revolutionary approach to machine learning but sold it to Google a short time later. Hinton's discovery transformed Google. Eric Schmidt, the company's former CEO, publicly thanked Trudeau at a 2017 event in Toronto for the gift of Canada's AI innovation. "We now use it throughout our entire business, and it's a major driver of our corporate success," he said.

Owning Hinton's IP allows Google to capitalize on it in any way it sees fit. "They can sell something that somebody else can't," says intellectual-property lawyer Jim Hinton (no relation), "because of the work that was done by Canadian-funded research." Meanwhile, says Balsillie, Ottawa rolls out the red carpet for foreign tech firms, dangling tax breaks and other incentives and offers comparatively little support for local companies. Adam Froman, the CEO of the Toronto data-collection company Delvinia, describes a moment shortly after the Liberal government's election in 2015. "About fifty CEOs trucked up to Ottawa to meet with a bunch of politicians, while Trudeau went to Toronto to open up an Amazon distribution centre and have a photo op," said Froman. "Then Bill Morneau came to our dinner and said, 'We're all about attracting foreign investment.' Do you realize that you're sitting with fifty Canadian CEOs? You're supposed to be getting behind us."

It's an attitude that drives Balsillie crazy. "The current government thinks Canada's future is cheap foreign-tech branch plants. I think the only way we're going to pay for this country is by participating in the wealth effects of domestic innovators—the taxes they pay, the head-office jobs, the philanthropy." Balsillie has pushed this point relentlessly since long before his BlackBerry days, and in 2015, he cofounded the Canadian Council of Innovators, an industry group aimed in part at rectifying the IP drain and securing a more favourable environment for domestically born and bred tech firms by fine tuning regulations in their favour, providing access to capital, and prioritizing Canadian tech firms in government contracts.

For Balsillie, it all circles back to surveillance capitalism: he believes a weak Canadian tech sector effectively cedes national sovereignty to foreign powers, including potentially hostile ones. Other countries, including China and Israel, actively restrict the export of domestically produced IP for economic or national-security reasons. "In the data-driven era, we need to think of prosperity, cybersecurity, and sovereignty as an integrated whole," he says. If Canada were a country that took IP seriously, Balsillie believes, the Sidewalk Labs negotiations would have been very different: more competent, tougher, smarter.

Balsillie also worries about the technology implications of the deteriorating

trade relations with our neighbours to the south. "Colonial supplicant attitude" were the words he used in a January 2018 *Toronto Star* op-ed to describe Canadian policy makers' approach to the data and IP provisions of agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership and CUSMA, the new NAFTA.

CUSMA negotiations focused largely on auto exports, steel and aluminum tariffs, and the dairy, egg, and poultry markets. One of its lesser-known provisions prevents any party from passing laws that restrict the cross-border flow of data. So if an American firm sets up shop in Canada, it would be free to transfer any data it collects to servers back home. The same is true for a Canadian firm operating in the US, but the arrangement, says Balsillie, benefits American firms almost exclusively. Balsillie used the theory of economic asymmetry to explain that whoever possesses the biggest data set (like the one Google has gleaned from two decades' worth of Canadian internet searches) has an effective monopoly over the players with smaller data sets (such as Waterloo-based Miovision, which possesses traffic data from cities that use its sensors). The economic implication is that smaller countries cannot prosper in an economy based on intangible assets without sovereign control over their data. He's not alone in this view. Documents from the National Research Council obtained by the Canadian Press last summer stressed that domestic companies were in danger of becoming "data cows" for foreign tech platforms.

When it comes to trade agreements, Balsillie feels that Trudeau's government has been far more interested in dairy quotas than protections for data, and he has sparred openly with the minister of foreign affairs, Chrystia Freeland, over the terms of the country's deal with the Trump administration. "We got clobbered on USMCA, no matter how much the politicians want to spin it," he says. Balsillie seems incapable of perceiving the world through any lens other than that of the tech economy. This is no doubt a source of friction with politicos who have dairy farmers, auto manufacturers, and other constituencies to appease. But Balsillie's hyperbole is based on where he thinks the market is headed—toward a data-driven economy based on intangible goods—which is harder to refute. Canada's tech market ranks dead last among the G7 countries, according to an internal government report obtained by tech magazine *The Logic*. Balsillie thinks that's because federal economic policy is too focused on propping up traditional industries, such as manufacturing. Not behaving as though the world revolves around data and IP, he told me, is no way to "run our company—uh—country."

"If you had created BlackBerry and watched Apple and Google wipe you out, how would you feel? [Balsillie's] a rich man, but he failed."

In January, Prime Minister Trudeau abruptly joined the techlash. "We need to have a broad reflection on the Facebooks and Googles of this world, which have started to recognize, very belatedly, their responsibilities toward our democratic space," he said during a speech in Quebec City. He stopped short of promising new regulations but hinted at "high-level discussions" to find ways to protect citizens against "invisible algorithms."

As the public's skepticism of Big Tech grows—a February survey done for the *Globe and Mail* found that more than 60 percent of Canadians believe Facebook will have "a negative or somewhat negative" impact on the upcoming federal election in the fall—so does the number of Silicon Valley executives giving lip service to its concerns. Salesforce co-CEO Marc Benioff has called for Facebook to be regulated like tobacco. For Apple CEO Tim Cook, the industry's refrain—that endless amounts of personal data are needed to optimize digital services and devices—is a "bunch of bunk." Elon Musk, purveyor of Teslas and space rockets, has called AI humanity's "biggest existential threat." His desire to move to Mars could be said to stem, at least in part, from his fear that "a fleet of artificial-intelligence-enhanced robots capable of destroying mankind" may soon prey upon us.

The ranks of tech contrarians include some surprising names, including that of Balsillie's friend Roger McNamee, a sixty-two-year old American venture capitalist who was an early investor in Google and Facebook—and one of the first of the tech elite to turn against them. McNamee mentored a young Mark Zuckerberg, but these days, "Zuck" doesn't return his calls. McNamee's new book, *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe*, chronicles his transformation into an industry critic. Maybe the most influential dissenter is Balsillie's friend and adviser George Soros, the eighty-eight-year-old Hungarian American philanthropist, long-time muse of right-wing conspiracy theories, and recent target of a pipe bomb allegedly built by a Trump fanatic. Soros's views of the tech industry made headlines last January, when, in a speech at the World Economic Forum, he referred to Facebook and other giant tech companies as a "menace" to society. "They deliberately engineer addiction to the services they provide," said Soros. Facebook executives promptly hired a public-relations firm, which worked to discredit him.

According to Balsillie, he, McNamee, and Soros meet regularly at Soros's estate in the Hamptons to strategize alternatives to the surveillance-based business model. At a recent session, a new startup called Inrupt was a hot topic. Founded last year by Tim Berners-Lee, the Brit who invented the World Wide Web in 1989 (and has cautioned against its corrosive powers almost since then), the company is trying to create a decentralized, open-source internet platform on which individual control of personal data is baked into the system, undercutting data-driven companies. "Tim never thought the internet would go this far," said Balsillie.

Balsillie, of course, helped transform RIM from a small company with expertise in pagers to the $80 billion maker of "CrackBerries," which were playfully celebrated for their addictiveness (it's "the heroin of mobile computing," said a CEO in 2001). But if his activism stems from any sense of complicity in an industry that makes addictive apps contributing to a global mental-health crisis, he hides it well. Balsillie suggests that there is a moral distinction between profiting and profiting at all costs. When protests broke out in Cairo's Tahrir Square in January 2011, he got a call that Egyptian authorities had pulled the plug on BlackBerry's messaging service, which the revolutionaries were using to coordinate their efforts. The Egyptians demanded the encryption keys to help them track down protesters, said Balsillie. This was in the midst of his nearly nonstop globe trotting to keep BlackBerry from imploding—the company's US sales were in free fall in early 2011, but overseas sales, including in Egypt, were keeping the company afloat. "Tell them to go fuck themselves," he says he instructed his team in Waterloo. "I didn't grow a tech company to help terrorists kill protesters."

Balsillie contrasts this with a story from last year about Zuckerberg, who was accused of not reacting quickly enough when military personnel in Myanmar, as far back as 2017, employed Facebook as a propaganda tool to encourage the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims, a persecuted minority group. Facebook has made a major push in emerging markets like Myanmar to get everyone on its platform before competitors can establish a toehold. In his reply to an open letter from activists, Zuckerberg cited the steps that Facebook was taking to "better identify abusive, hateful or false content even before it is flagged by our community." A year ago, however, United Nations investigators had criticized Facebook for its role in whipping up hatred against the Rohingya, but the company didn't admit culpability until last November. "The executives knew all about it," said Balsillie, turning angry. "They could have stopped it! They could have very, very easily stopped it!"

BALSILLIE'S ADVOCACY has netted him many new friends—and some enemies. After Balsillie's October op-ed assailing the Sidewalk Labs project, Adam Vaughan, the Liberal MP whose Toronto riding includes the downtown waterfront, shot back on Twitter: Balsillie's "attack" on Waterfront Toronto, he said, "was not only raging nonsense, it was wrongly dismissive and arrogant to a point of being reckless." Gil Penalosa, a prominent Canadian urbanist, took to Twitter to point out that RIM "was no model of transparency under [Balsillie's] leadership." Mark Wilson, a former IBM executive who was the chair of the Waterfront Toronto board from 2007 to 2016, chimed in to say that Balsillie was having "a temper tantrum like a child that isn't getting enough attention." CIGI, he said, was becoming Balsillie's "propaganda arm."

I called Wilson to ask what he thought Balsillie was getting wrong. He agrees that digital governance needs greater attention and that Canadian tech firms need government help to scale up and become globally competitive. But he does not believe that courting foreign firms

runs counter to either. Fear that a smart-city project could result in something like the Cambridge Analytica scandal is unfounded, he said, adding that Balsillie comes across as "kind of a Donald Trump Jr., like we have to protect Canada from the bad guys out there in the world." But, mostly, Wilson felt that Balsillie's "nastiness"—in a letter to the editor of the *Star*, he called Waterfront Toronto "Google's lapdog"—obscured any valid points he had. "I mean, if you had created BlackBerry and watched Apple and Google wipe you out, how would you feel? He's a rich man, but essentially, he failed."

Geoff Cape, a friend of Balsillie's and the CEO of Evergreen, a Toronto-based urban-ecology organization, shares Wilson's revenge theory but sees a more redeeming angle. Balsillie's views, he says, "have been coloured by his experience with RIM where he saw and experienced first-hand the dark side, so to speak, of the technology industry and how manipulative and conniving the strategies are within the sector." One reason why protecting domestic interests by developing a national data strategy, Cape suggests, might be such a deeply personal issue for Balsillie is that RIM spent five years in the early aughts fighting a lawsuit brought by NTP, which some call a "patent troll"—an entity that acquires patents for the sole purpose of suing potential infringers. Fending off the accusation that RIM's wireless-messaging network infringed on existing patents was a crisis that nearly forced the company to fold just as it was taking off. RIM eventually settled the case in 2006 for $612.5 million. "He's been in a battle that very few of us have, so we should be listening to him on this," says Cape. "We're losing the game right now in Canada, and we need to get our shit together."

Balsillie refers to his haters as "faux elites." I asked him what he means by that. "People who pretend that they're knowledgeable about things that they're not"—things like the business of technology, he says, and the game of commercializing IP. "The people who attack have two things in common: one, they've never done it," he says, meaning they are generally not people who have built $80 billion tech companies. "Two, they never address my arguments, because they're sound, because they're born out of extensive experience globally."

I wondered aloud if perhaps he's harbouring some startup poised to come out of the wings and grab market share once public distrust hobbles the current generation of tech giants. He has invested in a half dozen Canadian companies, but he assured me that neither payback nor entrepreneurship are the goals. Does he have political aspirations? "I'd be the worst politician in the world—if I don't like people, I can't hide it," Balsillie replied, claiming that attempts have been made to recruit him, unsuccessfully, by all three major political parties.

Balsillie also told me that representatives from Sidewalk Labs have made numerous overtures to bring him onside (Balsillie has declined their invitations). The CEO, Dan Doctoroff, acknowledged as much and then punched back. "Jim's argument about IP—and 'everything gets sent back to America'—is an incendiary sound bite," he says. A former investment banker at Lehman Brothers who became a New York City deputy mayor, Doctoroff said that people have jumped to the conclusion that Sidewalk Labs's business model revolves around commercializing data it collects. This is false, he said. Its business model is designed to "meaningfully improve urban life on virtually every dimension" and to "connect people in communities to new ways that give them greater levels of happiness."

But the corporate shark in Balsillie gives him zero faith in Sidewalk Labs to do anything that might undercut its business interests without regulations in place forcing it to.

With the Smart Cities Challenge underway—a federal competition that will soon award a total of $75 million to help four Canadian cities roll out their own version of the Sidewalk Labs project—he believes this is *carpe diem* time for data governance. "We're at a tipping point."

BRIAN J. BARTH has contributed to the *Washington Post* and *The New Yorker*.

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MEMOIR

The Loneliness of Infertility

I never felt more isolated than when I talked to other women about trying to have a baby

BY ALEXANDRA KIMBALL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRED HUENING

The summer after our third miscarriage, Jeremy convinced me to go to a fancy party for his work. He thought that dressing up and eating a nice meal in a ballroom with other dressed-up people might distract me. I sat in my cocktail dress—too tight on my post-IVF bloat—and held my husband's hand under the table. Occasionally, a waiter would pass by with canapés and I'd grab one with my free hand. The table was buzzing with wine-leavened conversation, with introductions and interruptions and compliments, especially for the women, who wore a lot of modest necklines and black and navy—the assured unchicness of women who do not need to impress. They generated an air of capability and confidence, of success.

I desperately, desperately did not want to talk to any of them. Over the previous four years, socializing had become my biggest problem, second only to infertility. If you had asked me about my social life, I would have said, 'It does not exist,' though, in fact, all I did was talk to other people—in support groups on Facebook and the forum sections of infertility websites. I'd wake up in the morning and log on and read and write all day with hundreds of infertile women, sharing details of our miscarriages, our IVF results, our searches for surrogates, and replying to one another's queries and stories in turn. But as soon as I logged off, I'd forget all about these women. Not to say I found these groups useless: though I wasn't happy about my condition, I was certainly grateful to have a place I could discuss it. But the circumstances of these conversations left them feeling ghostly and unreal, in a way that talking with other women, even about other shitty and gendered topics, never had.

Still, the outside world—I thought of anything non-infertility-related as "outside" and still do—was way worse. Somewhere along the four-year way, my outside friends had retreated. I'd see them every once in a while, but they felt remote, far off in their own galaxies of pregnancy, baby raising, or simply not being infertile. I backed off too. Not infrequently, I'd think of one of these women and feel a sudden hurt, but I preferred this pain to the sharp vertigo I experienced whenever they said something to remind me of my new difference, my distance. Social life presented an agonizing conundrum: my infertility was the only thing in my life, and no one, apart from other infertile women, ever wanted to talk about it.

At Jeremy's work party, I was trying to silently project a sense of my private agony, but eventually, the woman seated beside me tapped me on the hand and asked me my name. "Do you have any kids?"

"No," I said.

"Do you plan on having them?" she asked. Her expression was quizzical, slightly amused.

"We can't," I said. "We've had three miscarriages."

Despite being clinical, correct, the word *miscarriage*, like the word *infertility*, suggests the particular unruliness of the female body. And even given our culture's nominal feminism (I would be shocked if any woman at that party would have rejected being labelled a feminist), there is a perpetual undercurrent of disgust about female genitals and organs. They are, in the words of French surrealist Michel Leiris, "unclean or as a wound…but dangerous in itself, like everything bloody, mucous, infected."

Saying *miscarriage* out loud was like putting my uterus on the table, bleeding and scarred and radiating misuse. Tears and death and not a small amount of sex. I felt vulgar dropping this bit of feminine gore into the lighthearted civility of the room.

I understood the irony: I had no more exposed my uterus by talking about my lack of children than any other woman who mentions "having kids" does. All children, living or dead, come from bloody uteruses and vaginas—things polite people don't discuss—but the logic of misogyny, which carves out a space of relative respect for some mothers (especially the wealthy, white, and married), means we usually agree to forget this. The beauty of the child erases its origins in the female body and sexuality. But when these parts go wrong and there is no child, nothing is redeemed. It's just the spectre of the female body and sexuality: blood, mucous, infection. Death.

A few moments passed. The woman's mouth opened and closed over the empty air. The waiter came by again, and I plucked a canapé from a round tray. Open, closed, open, closed, like she was gulping air. "Oh," she finally said before rushing off to the washroom or something. I didn't see her again. I still don't know who she was or why she responded the way she did. Her chair remained empty all night, and whenever I looked at it, I wanted to laugh. It was funny, really: a literal instantiation of my isolation.

From her first recorded mentions, the infertile female was a monster. The Babylonian Atrahasis epic, from the eighteenth century BCE, describes a conflict between the gods and the overpopulated world of men, during which the gods flooded the Earth. Eventually repenting for this destruction, the deities restored humankind to the Earth, with a built-in safeguard against overpopulation: "Let there be a third group of people. [Let there be] fertile women and barren women. Let there be the Pagittu-demon among the people and let her snatch the child from the lap of the mother." The demon, writes the University of Pennsylvania Museum's Erle Lichty, was the lion-headed demoness Lamashtu, barren and envious, who caused infertility, miscarriage, and infant death.

The Hebrew Testament of Solomon describes the demon Obizuth—her name in Middle Eastern mythology, Abyzou, is derived from the word for abyss—as a fusion of woman and beast: "her glance was altogether bright and greeny, and her hair

was tossed wildly like a dragon's; and the whole of her limbs were invisible." Abyzou was barren, and she confessed that her envy of women who could bear children motivated her murderous hauntings: "[B]y night I sleep not, but go my rounds all over the world, and visit women in childbirth.... [I]f I am lucky, I strangle the child."

The art of this period depicts these demons as serpentine, the unruly, unnatural appearance of such female forms symbolizing their rebuke to traditional femininity.

Beginning in the Renaissance, many Europeans became absorbed in representations of witches, who were frequently accused of kidnapping children and causing miscarriages and stillbirths. The witch hunts in Europe and North America were a touchstone for late twentieth-century feminist historians, who rightfully noted how the accused often defied the conventional female gender roles of the era: many exhibited the unwomanly characteristics of anger or promiscuity, for instance. But fewer have emphasized how prominently female barrenness figured in the witch trials, how infertile and childless women were considered both particularly vulnerable to infestation by Satanic spirits and prone to acts of witchcraft themselves.

A seeming bright spot: the Old Testament had, on its surface, a good deal of sympathy for infertile women. (The invocation "Sing, O barren woman!" compares the plight of the chosen people of Israel to the sorrow of an infertile wife.) But in these tales, women are described as passive instruments of their reproductive fate: "self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands." Thus emerged the only acceptable image of the infertile woman: the pining religious supplicant, barren but virtuous.

As with the portrayal of women as a whole, the infertile feminine was split into two opposing archetypes: Abyzou, and the pious Hannah, who after many years of infertility and prayer would go on to mother the prophet Samuel. Angry and vengeful versus passive, silent, and hopeful—public images of female infertility are one or the other to this day.

Feminism—and, in particular, the movement for reproductive rights—has long been either dismissive of or outright hostile to the plight of infertile women. The roots of the reproductive rights movement are not actually in choice—at least, not in the universal, expansive way in which modern feminists talk about choice. Rather, some early advocates of birth control and abortion in the West were concerned with limiting maternity, especially for poor, disabled, and racialized populations (particularly Black and Indigenous women).

The infertile woman enters the public imagination not as a woman, not even as a patient, but as a spectacle.

In the early and middle twentieth century, feminists fought for and celebrated new technologies in birth control—first, barrier methods like cervical caps and condoms, and then the first generation of contraceptive pills. However, this early feminist project was inextricable from the larger cultural anxiety about the precariousness of race and class in an era marked by mass immigration, incipient civil rights for Black Americans, and the rise of unions.

Margaret Sanger—best known for starting the American Birth Control League, the precursor to Planned Parenthood—founded birth-control clinics and published pamphlets on sexual education during an era when even the idea that women might want to have sex for reasons other than reproduction was blasphemous. But her ultimate enthusiasm for contraception was inseparable from a larger conversation about how modern nations might better society through population control. "If we are to develop in America a new race with a racial soul," she wrote in 1920, "we must not encourage reproduction beyond our capacity to assimilate our numbers so as to make the coming generation into such physically fit, mentally capable, socially alert individuals as are the ideal of a democracy."

Sanger's statements would later be regarded as foundational in laws, often motivated by eugenics, enacted in the US in thirty-three states, which forcibly sterilized at least 65,000 citizens, a large proportion of whom were Black, from the 1900s to until as recently as the 1970s. In Canada, similar laws saw the compulsory sterilization of thousands of women—the majority Indigenous—up until the 1970s; Indigenous women report that coerced sterilizations continue to this day.

Mainstream attention—not just among feminists but across our culture—continues to focus on upper-class white women's infertility even now, usually in the context of scientific advances in fertility medicine. This makes it easier than ever for the public to view infertility not as a general women's health issue but a type of malaise of the privileged. It also plays directly into racist and classist beliefs that poor women and non-white women are "hyperfertile"—unthinking reproducers who are closer to fertile nature than white women and should be encouraged to have fewer, rather than more, children. (Black women actually experience higher rates of infertility than white women.)

But as a matter of policy it is primarily white middle- to upper-class women who can access health care services to address their infertility. Across North America, free or low-cost women's health clinics—themselves all too few and far between—will provide birth control, early pregnancy care, and abortion-referral services but rarely treatment for infertility. (In Canada, only Ontario and Quebec cover some IVF treatments, for instance.)

This exclusion from our public narratives about and public policies for infertility is self-reinforcing: because most academic studies on infertility draw data from fertility clinics, which are

frequented by the patients who can afford to access them, white, upper-middle class women are overrepresented in the academic discussion of infertility as well as the one in popular culture. This is not just a question of the collective imagination: it also limits much-needed investigations into conditions that are specific to marginalized demographics. For example, the treatment of fertility-impairing fibroids, which Black women experience at significantly high rates, and are still underresearched compared with conditions that are more commonly diagnosed in white women, such as endometriosis.

In March 2018, a Liberal MP, Anthony Housefather, introduced a bill that would decriminalize paying for donor eggs, sperm, and surrogacy in Canada, bringing us into line with US states where third-party reproduction is legally commercialized. The decision was met with support from infertility advocates and the LGBTQ community—and scathing op-eds by some feminist academics and journalists who were concerned that lifting the payment ban would commodify women's body parts and lead to their exploitation.

Since then, I have read dozens of accounts of surrogacy as womb renting, as animal husbandry, as slavery (whatever issues I have with these writers, I can't deny them their flair with metaphor), all of which take for granted the noncapacity of the surrogate to freely consent. A documentary about surrogacy as baby buying permanently screens on Amazon Prime Video, while a non-peer-reviewed study about the harms of donor-sperm conception on children was covered approvingly on *Slate* and NPR. And the sentiments survive in a diluted, everyday form, like the self-described feminist in a parenting group I joined who proclaimed that it was gestation that made one a mother.

When I read this work, I feel disoriented. If anyone were an expert on female infertility, surely it would be me—at thirty-nine, I'd spent five years trying, and failing, to have a child. I'd racked up almost every diagnosis in the book, seen half a dozen specialists, and had five surgeries. I recognize nothing of this experience in the feminist debates around reproductive technology. It's the tone of them: the bloodless, objective, anthropological approach to the question of me and what to do about the problem that is me. It says something—though I'm not sure what—that I never felt the insult of being objectified as a woman more keenly than when I was infertile and reading feminist analyses of infertility: in framing infertile women as problematic consumers of technology that they despise, many contemporary feminists ignore the actual experience, the meat and pain, of infertility. They ignore the *grief*.

Her emotional and existential experience erased, the infertile woman first enters the public imagination not as a woman, not even as a patient, but as a consumer of biotechnology. A specific kind of consumer: the consumer as spectacle. With her grief reduced to a vague "desire" for a baby, and the efforts of making this baby rendered as so extraordinary, so risky and costly and scientifically improbable, it's difficult to see her as anything other than a curiosity of capitalism, akin to people who undergo cosmetic surgery.

"You really wanted a baby," people who have had no trouble conceiving sometimes say to me, thinking themselves supportive, affirming. And while I've tried many times to pinpoint why this offends me, there's an element I always have trouble explaining. It's not that it's trivializing; it's not that they have underestimated my grief. Rather, it's that they don't get the particular nature of this grief, how it's less about the loss of a potential child than it is about the endless possibility that there may yet be an actual child. The next procedure might work, the fallopian tube could always clear, the next fetus might not miscarry. As per the saying: miracles happen.

In my digital infertility groups, a meme is often posted beneath stories of the poorest prognoses: an image of a dandelion or a rainbow, below which is written, in cursive font: *Always Hope*. "I fucking hate hope," a friend who struggled with infertility before having her daughter told me recently. "Hope is how you tell women to shut up. Hope is weaponized."

It's not that motherhood is out of reach, it's that it's just out of reach. It's not that motherhood didn't happen, it's that it almost did and, in fact, still could. The difference between the grief of infertility and other reasons for mourning is in that promise of "just," in "almost," in "still could." This does not make it more or less livable than other forms of grief, but it goes a long way toward explaining why it is expressed in ways that seem so desperate and even alien to the casual onlooker, why a woman might put herself under the knife ten, twelve, twenty times to get pregnant, why she might spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in the effort. The end to her grief is just so near.

Jeremy and I met the woman who would give birth to our son in January: bleak weather, waning hope. For almost five years, we had been on what insiders call a "surrogacy journey." Our first and then our second surrogates miscarried our three remaining embryos in turn before deciding not to continue. Around the same time, I had an ectopic pregnancy that required surgery. My infertility felt less like the absence of something than like a malignancy spreading from one part of my body to the next, from me to these other women who had tried to help.

In my panic, I had emailed a number of family members and friends, asking if they knew anyone who could help. It was a desperate email and one I'd sent many times to no avail. But then, as I was fear googling surrogacy expenses, a message popped up from an address I didn't recognize. It was from a woman named Mindy who worked in college admin with my cousin and had posted about her desire to be a surrogate on Facebook. She'd been thinking about it since she and her husband had had their first child the previous year. "Having Charlotte was one of the most important things I've done," she wrote. "I really want to help someone who can't…experience that for themselves."

When Jeremy and I met Mindy and her husband, Eric, we felt not only a rush of relief at how kind and trustworthy they seemed but also a shock of familiarity at their dynamics: their dark-humoured banter, their love of animals, the fact that they'd named their daughter Charlotte Elizabeth—the name Jeremy and I had for years on our list of names for girls. As the four of us sat in their living room and agreed to go forward, Charlotte popped up and down over the edge of her playpen, peering at me, like a tiny firecracker with pigtails shooting straight up from her head.

By the fall, Jeremy and I had nine frozen embryos—we also found Anna, our egg donor, online—but, eager as we were, the gravity of the situation hadn't fully impressed itself on me. Jeremy, Mindy, Eric, and I slogged through the routine of clearing medical, legal, and psychological screening and then the wrenching process of thawing the best embryo and, after Mindy had undergone a trying regime of injections and monitoring, transferring it to her uterus. It worked on the first try. But as the pregnancy went on, each blood test promising, each series of heartbeats measured and deemed perfect in frequency and strength, I had to accept something multiple losses had made seem impossible: we were having a baby. In gaps in my days, I found myself saying this to myself silently, over and over, like a mantra: we're having a baby. But there wasn't excitement, just relief that he was still alive, that this one wasn't dead yet. And as long as he was alive, I would not have to keep trying for him. Waiting for my baby felt less like anticipation than a break from prolonged effort and pain.

Mindy narrated what I couldn't feel: he kicked a lot, mostly at night, and he moved around when he heard music or when she'd play Jeremy's and my voices for him using headphones she'd stick on her belly. Every visit, the baby was more and more present, pushing Mindy's belly out the front of her parka, making it difficult for her to sit or run. But despite these signs of life, he was still mostly a theory, an idea. The baby that hadn't died yet.

Since he's still alive, maybe I can start buying things, I rationalized when he was still a few months away. I bought onesies with prints of ponies and hamburgers and a big soft toy bunny, because years ago, in a dream, I'd seen a little curly-haired boy holding one. I put the things in the Room, the room that every infertile couple has, the one that is supposed to be for a baby, then fills with sad junk, until (if) luck changes. I moved around some of the junk and spread out the new cute things. But it still didn't look like stuff for a real baby in a room for a person that would actually exist. It felt provisional—stuff for a baby that hadn't died yet.

A familiar pattern of anxiety for an infertile parent-to-be, but luckily the baby himself would have none of it. He came five weeks early, quick as a flash flood, before Mindy's epidural had a chance to work and while Jeremy was in line at a Walmart, hurriedly buying a car seat.

I had spent years lamenting how invisible I felt in my infertility, how little understood, but in truth, no one would ever be more indifferent to my neuroses than my newly born son. No one cares less about your trauma than a baby does. But how quickly he eclipsed it, and us, and everything else. He changed so much in those first few minutes: at first, just a head between Mindy's thighs, then a wiggling eel, yellowish, laid down on her belly. Then, wiped down, a squalling red silhouette with a rubbery cord I cut myself and the doctor clamped with a plastic clip. Then a series of measurements—six pounds! Twenty inches!—that the doctor shouted into the room from the tiny basin in which the newborn was prodded and measured. The room collectively sighed: despite being born premature, he was healthy and robust. Then, finally, a tiny little baby in a diaper a nurse laid between my bare chest and my hospital gown.

Apparently I was crying so hard I could barely stand; I don't remember that. What I remember is the screaming red child, the way the exact pitch of his voice had an immediate and indescribable meaning to me, the way he plugged into my chest in a very exact and deliberate way and instantly fell asleep.

Eventually, Mindy turned her head and we caught each other's eye. Oh, I thought. This is what she wanted me to have. This is what she was talking about. The fact of this—that there was so great a feeling I had not known and that another woman had been willing to give it to me—overwhelmed me as much as Charlie's existence.

A common objection to surrogacy (as well as to labouring with the help of epidurals) is that it separates motherhood from the bodily work of pregnancy and childbirth. I already knew this was bullshit. The medical experience of my infertility—all the miscarriages, surgeries, tests, and IVF, as well as the physical burden of the attendant grief—was as much a part of the process of conceiving Charlie as Anna's egg retrieval or Mindy's pregnancy. I was less prepared for how bodily early motherhood was, how the combination of fatigue and a newborn baby would produce an effect that was hormonal, almost postpartum. My stomach cramped; I was sweating buckets.

Most surprisingly, my breasts were sore. Curious, I let Charlie latch and suckle and immediately felt milk pull down to my nipple. The nurse told me that, having been pregnant multiple times, I already had the plumbing to produce breast milk, and now my body was responding to the proximity of a baby. Jeremy, too, got folded into this biome, a three-person constant exchange of touch and skin and hormone-steeped sweat; soon, we all smelled the same, like slightly sour breast milk. I did not need to go through labour to learn, as all new mothers do, that the term *labour* is an insulting misnomer that implies it begins with your first contraction and ends after birth.

Some people say the condition of modern womanhood is one of navigating contradictions and clashes: between the personal and the political, the said and the done, the body and the heart. For me, every time I saw Mindy, or Charlie, or even Jeremy, and every time I texted with Anna, I was aware of two stories: the one in which I had to have other women help make my baby (how sad!) and the one in which I got to have a baby with other women (pretty cool!).

A few weeks after Charlie was born, I found myself going back to my old IVF and surrogacy message boards, wondering what these communities of women could have been like in a different world. If earlier feminists had seen us as sisters rather than patriarchal dupes or oppressors of other women. If infertility lobby groups had embraced an idea of infertility as an issue of medical, emotional, and spiritual health rather than a type of consumer identity. I imagined a feminist movement parallel to the one for abortion access, in which women would call for more research into the causes of infertility, the potential efficacies and risks of various treatments.

We could call for expanded access to proven reproductive health care for all Canadians—not just the rich ones, not just those in cities who are partnered and straight—by demanding it be brought under the auspices of a properly regulated health care system. We could align ourselves with, rather than against, surrogates and egg donors in lobbying for a system in which policies around third-party reproduction are shaped by them, for their own safety and interests, which opens up the possibility of them organizing as workers. We could support infertile women who do not conceive in either finding other forms of family or healing into satisfying lives lived without children. Truly patient-centric clinics could bloom under our watch.

Perhaps most importantly, infertile feminists could embrace our status as different kinds of women—as the kinds of women who eat people in folk tales—to challenge the idea that motherhood is unthinking, automatic, and instinctual, instead of a thing that is both worked at and worked for.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER WAHL

SPORTS

Gold Standards

It's been one year since Tessa Virtue became the most famous figure skater in the world. How do you move on from being the best?

BY GENNA BUCK

TESSA VIRTUE seems frozen in time. Forever twenty-eight, forever dressed as the fated seductress Satine from Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge!* in a sparkling, backless, slit-to-the-hip burgundy dress. Her legs are perpetually wound around skating partner Scott Moir's thigh, or his hips, or, famously, his face, in the practically pornographic lift she says they learned from an acrobat. Photos from the day Virtue and Moir won gold for Canada in ice dance illustrate nearly every news and non-news story about the pair since then, of which there are so many that superfans call discovering the cache of content "falling down the rabbit hole."

Even now, video of their victory at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea—their final Olympic Games—is still being watched and shared online. There she is: trembling down to her skates, smile splitting her face in half, hands coming up to cover her mouth. He roars and scoops her up, lifts her high, buries his face in her neck. Minutes later, they snagged their second gold medal of the Games, the first being for the team event, becoming the most decorated Olympic figure skaters of all time.

That was February 20, 2018. It's been quite a year—possibly the busiest of Tessa Virtue's young life. She's spent much of it trying to define herself beyond that golden moment at the Games. Since the Olympics, Virtue and Moir have been riding a wave of national and international media and fan attention that has yet to crest. In the spring, they led the Stars on Ice Canada tour to its best sales in fifteen years and skated in months of shows in Japan and South Korea. In the summer, they threw a county-fair-style victory bash in Moir's hometown to thank their families, friends, and fans. In the fall, they published an update to their 2010 biography, *Tessa & Scott: Our Journey from Childhood Dream to Gold*, and travelled across Canada again as coproducers of their own show, the Thank You Canada Tour.

And, while Moir has retreated more to private life, disappearing from the public eye for months at a time, Virtue has ascended from the realm of famousish Canadian to actual celebrity. She was the most mentioned Canadian female athlete on Twitter last year and the most googled Canadian by people in Canada, period. She's appeared in major magazines, from *Canadian Living* to *Vogue Japan*, and has launched a career lending her image to megabrands such as Nivea, Adidas, meal-kit service Hello Fresh, the Brick, and Air Miles, with more deals in the works. Fame has propelled her to a natural series of next steps: influencer, show skater and producer, social-media maven. Yet none of those labels feels like a perfect fit to her. Then again, neither does "Olympic figure skater" anymore.

Over the course of ten months, starting shortly after her 2018 win, I had many conversations with Virtue in person, by email, and over the phone. I watched her perform in skating shows and talk shows and spoke with her teammates, mother, and friends. In that time, I saw that, after pursuing a goal with relentless focus for two decades, she is grappling with

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what it means to let it go and face whatever's next. Sports psychologists call it the "Olympic comedown"—that moment after the competition ends and an athlete realizes the one thing that defined their day-to-day-life no longer does. During one interview, we started half-seriously drafting Virtue's obituary, knowing that, at just shy of thirty, she has almost certainly already lived its first line. "Whatever I take on next, I'm never going to be the best in the world," she says. "How will I get that rush when it's not the Olympic Games?"

I FIRST MET Tessa Virtue at a Toronto PR event in March 2018, where she was celebrating her debut as a brand ambassador for Nivea. Gaggles of beauty bloggers and influencers filled a swanky venue replete with photo-friendly backdrops: a doughnut wall, oversized blue and silver balloons, an ice-sculpture replica of a tin of Nivea cream. Virtue's outfit—powder-blue pantsuit, fuchsia lipstick, artfully messy braid—suggested Queen Elsa from Disney's *Frozen*. But she was pale under Instagram-optimized makeup, and her smile did not quite reach the tightness around her eyes. She'd been home from the Olympics for about a week and had spent much of it sick in bed, insulated from the media firestorm. It was bound to settle down soon, she told me. People would move on.

They didn't. Still haven't. Instead, Virtue found herself in a new reality, at once gratifying and terrifying, in which just going to the grocery store or getting gas is, "like, a *thing*." It's not her first brush with fame: Virtue and Moir have been household names since their first gold at the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010, and they even starred in a reality series ahead of Sochi in 2014. This time, though, it's different. Fame itself has changed. The pair have spawned a full-fledged internet subculture with its own lingo, in-jokes, art, and fanfiction.

The outpouring of love has been touching, Virtue says. After one fan coordinated a video project that saw more than 100 people from over twenty countries film themselves wishing her a happy birthday, she called her mom, crying happy, overwhelmed tears. It's also a lot of pressure: one group of girls showed up to a postshow meet-and-greet carrying phone cases with the slogan WWTVD for What Would Tessa Virtue Do? The clear subtext: we should all do what Tessa Virtue does, because Tessa Virtue does everything right.

ABOVE Virtue and Moir perform the goose, which has become their signature move.

Virtue strives to embody the values of the Olympic movement. Fans revere her winning combination of skill, beauty, and sweetness. But maintaining that public persona is a minefield of double standards. It seems like she is expected to be a paragon of Canadian niceness. To be a role model but also be *real*. Beautiful but relatable. Sexy but not too sexual. Her Instagram is a pink-tinged utopia of fresh-cut flowers, heart hands, sponsor posts, inspirational quotes, and white-bread, girl-power feminism. A few selfies, some skating, not much #RealTalk. Though she is deeply concerned about authenticity, she peppers her interviews with stock phrases: "incredible honour," "what a thrill," "wonderfully heartwarming."

PHOTOGRAPH BY MYRA KLARMAN

Once, when I pointed this habit out to her, she grumbled that the support she and Moir have gotten from Canadians *is* wonderfully heartwarming. Later, she caught herself saying it again and sniped, "You can put that quote in!"

Behind the scenes, even Virtue herself doesn't always know the answer to WWTVD. After a semi-trailer crashed into a coach bus on a stretch of highway in Saskatchewan, killing sixteen people, many of them members of Humboldt Broncos junior ice hockey team, Moir posted a short message of remembrance on his rarely used Twitter account. Virtue, though, was uncharacteristically silent. She wrote and rewrote social-media posts, saving and erasing drafts, before finally deciding too much time had passed. She was thinking of saying something about her first boyfriend, a one-time star of the OHL's London Knights. At seventeen, a disaster like this would have derailed her life. She felt so acutely for those left behind but didn't want to come off as "totally self-absorbed." It felt wrong to get likes or retweets for something like that. She donated to a fundraising campaign for the victims' families but processed her feelings in private.

Her desire to do the right thing—the perfect thing—seems to run deep. And though Virtue says the trait is just part of her personality, it may also be a product of her training. From her earliest years, Virtue was intense and competitive, reaching elite levels in skating and dance. She says that, at nine, she was a "perfect candidate" at the National Ballet School's camp, which functions as a weeks-long, live-in audition for its academic program. Virtue was obsessed—in a way that might seem unhealthy, she says now—with making sure she was good enough. There's an entry in her diary from that summer about the time her flawless ballerina bun came unglued, how bad she felt, and how she apologized to the teacher, promising it wouldn't happen again.

Virtue got into the ballet school but chose skating instead. She'd already been partnered with Moir by then. Virtue was born in London, Ontario; Moir grew up in the tiny nearby town of Ilderton, which is the home of the skating club where, in the fall of 1997, Moir's aunt Carol, the pair's first coach, asked an eight-year-old Virtue and barely ten-year-old Moir to stand side by side to compare their heights to see if they made a nice match. Before long, people picked up on their potential. Veteran coach and CBC skating writer Pj Kwong remembers watching Virtue and Moir skate at an Ilderton carnival when they were little and thinking, "Wow." "You see kids who work hard, kids who have a little something," she says. "But you don't often see talent that makes you go, 'Hmm, I'm interested to see where these two end up.'" They had everything: musicality, technical skills, and that much-discussed connection.

Soon, their parents started driving them to Waterloo, over an hour away, for extra training several times a week. At around thirteen and fifteen, they moved in with families in Waterloo to be closer to their coaches, and then, two years later, to Canton, Michigan, to train under Russian coaches with other Olympic hopefuls. They narrowly missed qualifying for the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin but took gold at the World Junior Figure Skating Championships the same year.

For Virtue, though, success bred isolation. Making friends outside of skating was hard while attending high school part-time in an unfamiliar city. At the rink, she was targeted with nasty rumours by other girls. These experiences were part of why she decided to treat skating as a job, not her identity.

Then, in 2008, Virtue was diagnosed with chronic exertional compartment syndrome, a severe overuse injury to her lower leg. She had her first surgery to correct it at nineteen, but the pain persisted. Virtue didn't let herself think she and Moir could go all the way until a month before the Vancouver Winter Olympics were held in 2010.

In their spectacular, gold-medal-winning skate to Mahler's Symphony No. 5 at the Vancouver Games, Virtue appeared to float around Moir, weightless. Off the ice, just hobbling across a room could be agony on her calves. She kept quiet about the pain during the Olympics, for fear judges would see signs of discomfort in her performance. She underwent another surgery at twenty-one, then did extensive physiotherapy to learn how to skate and even walk differently to manage the injury. When asked if it was all worth it—moving away so young, all those sacrifices—Virtue says yes, she thinks so, but that it doesn't matter: there was no stopping her or Moir. She also admits she might have said no if asked the same question in 2014, after winning two silver medals at the Sochi Winter Olympics under a pall of allegations that judges and their own coach were biased. But now, with trademark Virtue positivity, she frames the heartache and hiatus after Sochi as a prelude to a final, triumphant comeback.

In the run-up to their final Winter Olympics, Virtue and Moir changed coaches, moved to Montreal, and became the de facto CEOs of Get Scott and Tessa the Gold Inc. They managed their own schedule and a veritable cottage industry of sports professionals funded by the non-profit B2Ten. They monitored and fine tuned every aspect of their lives, from food to sleep, and spent hours with a mental prep coach, honing their discipline in preparation for the few minutes of skating that would make or break their Olympic legacy. Virtue learned to quiet competition nerves by telling herself "I'm unstoppable"—whether she always believed it or not. The rise of this kind of targeted investment has undoubtedly helped Team Canada dominate. Virtue and Moir are endlessly grateful for it. But the intensity of the ramp-up has also made the return to regular life all the more jarring. "I don't think there's such a thing as a well-balanced athlete, I really don't," Virtue says.

Virtue's mother, Kate, put it this way: "A few weeks before the Olympics, she was telling me she would look at a grape and think, 'How does this affect my Olympic experience? If I eat it, will that be healthy? Will that help me? If I take time out maybe for an hour and take a walk instead of a nap, will that hurt?' Every minute of her time mattered." And then it didn't. Today, there is no equivalent coaching team to guide Virtue to become the best brand ambassador or

social-media superstar. For all her preparation, she always shied away from media training, fearing it would turn her and Moir into "robots." She wants whatever she does next to be "genuine, not forced." Though her job is endorsing products, she says she doesn't want to get "swept up" in crafting a lifestyle brand—it's not like her to "pretend to be an expert." She's a private person, a perfectionist and a malignant people pleaser—ideal traits for Tessa Virtue, Elite Figure Skater, but perhaps not for Tessa Virtue, the Brand.

On a sloppy, snowy evening in April 2018, two months after the Olympics, I met Virtue in the lobby of the downtown hotel where she stays when she's in Toronto. It's a grand place. Someone wheels an enormous concert harp across the room as two different bridal parties tarry between ceremony and reception, shivering in skimpy evening gowns. Virtue greets me with a hug, then turns to embrace a concierge, who asks how she slept (twelve hours, she says, the most since the Games). During the 2014/15 season, the first of two she sat out of competition, Virtue packed her schedule with so many media and corporate gigs in the city that she practically lived at this hotel. Once, her mom, who had barely seen her for months, came for a visit and watched as staff met Virtue at the door, exclaiming, "Welcome home, princess!" and "We have your clothes in storage!" "I thought my mom was going to cry," Virtue says. "Because it was like they were my family."

As we walk to get dinner at a nearby Italian place, she rattles off a long list of commitments she has squeezed into these few days between the Japanese and Canadian Stars on Ice circuits: an all-day takeover of CTV shows, a keynote speech with Moir at a sports symposium, a marathon twelve-hour interview for their updated book. "I like to be busy. If I can do things, I will. I fill my days. Do you do that?" she asks, adding that she's looking forward to a vacation in France in August. Wait, August? It's only April. Doesn't she need to decompress before then? Well, probably. But she has taken a day off, and it was a "game changer." One day? In the two months since the Olympics? Yes, she took a single day in Los Angeles when they went to film *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. By then, she was starting to fray.

"I bawled my eyes out, because I finally had time to settle," Virtue says. She knew the emotional crash was coming, and she felt pulled in a million different directions. The tsunami of attention left her reeling. She was in a fog, unable to feel present. *What did we just accomplish? What does that mean?* She wanted everyone around her to be happy, to feel they had been part of the Virtue-Moir success story, because, to her, they had. She calls training for the Olympics an inherently selfish endeavour, but she neglected, in the aftermath, to take enough time for herself: "I had nothing left."

> ***"I just don't want to be forty, putting on a costume and entertaining people. I want to do it when I'm in my prime."***

As athletes rebound from the physical and psychological high of the Games, "all the stuff that was lingering comes to a head," says Rolf Wagschal, an advisor with Game Plan, the Canadian sports system's program to promote athletes' wellness and help them transition out of competition. He says they often get sick, as Virtue did after the Winter Olympics, and feel blue for a while. But, for some, the unease bleeds into a longer-term, existential struggle, both with practical concerns ("How do I eat like a normal person?" "How do I apply for a job?") and "big philosophical questions" ("What do I want to be when I grow up?" Who am I now that this "core part of my identity" is gone?).

Game Plan launched in 2015 after an Own the Podium report on the 2010 Games found Canadian athletes were leaving sport feeling ill prepared for adult life. A 2016 review of published studies argued that retiring athletes have above-average rates of depression and anxiety and are less likely than others to seek help. It's hard for them to put into words. Olympians are, by definition, blessed. Virtue worried aloud that talking about the comedown sounded ungrateful.

Canadian super-Olympian Clara Hughes devotes a whole chapter of her autobiography, *Open Heart, Open Mind*, to the "toxic inner chatter" that grew unbearably loud without the demands of training to focus her thoughts. Meryl Davis—half of the American ice-dance duo Meryl Davis and Charlie White, who left competition after beating Virtue and Moir for gold in 2014—wrote in *Self* magazine last May that she's still feeling the comedown: "After spending my life deep in the pursuit of a dream now realized, I find myself hollow, empty, vacant, and without purpose." Canadian ice dancer Kaitlyn Weaver, Virtue's friend and competitor, said that one day, not long after the Pyeongchang Winter Games, she started crying on the way home from the rink as she contemplated life post-Olympics, thinking, "Maybe this is it for me." She worried about the feeling of "free fall" after her eventual retirement.

Amid all the rhetoric about how sports are character building and instill transferable skills, it's easy to gloss over what elite athletes need to unlearn, like perfectionism and single-mindedness. And while many manage to channel the drive they had to chase the gold-medal high into something productive, few seem to be immune to the initial comedown. Take Canadian Olympic kayaker Adam van Koeverden. After struggling with "irrational sadness," he recently announced plans to run as a Liberal in this year's federal election.

Moir told me it took him a year to get over the emotional exhaustion after the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010, and the letdown after Sochi was worse. He describes running away from the skating world and hiding out in his hometown,

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not wanting "much to do with anything." He tried to recapture a youth spent in self-denial with "crazy partying." He bought a house to fix up. He finally finished high school at twenty-seven. But he was unhappy—until he returned to competitive skating. "I needed that structure back," he says. "I didn't know who I was." Being an expert both in post-Olympic angst and in Tessa Virtue, he says that, after these Games, she was not herself. Seeing a little of the polish come off Virtue's persona convinced him something was wrong. As a partner, he says, it was hard to watch.

Like many other top athletes, to function, Virtue needs goals. Preferably too many, preferably all at once. Some post-Olympic athletes, Wagschal says, compulsively fill their days, say yes to everything, and even pursue career paths "out of convenience rather than genuine interest," just because doing stuff is what they do. They don't know how to not. Virtue made a new to-do list for her post-skating life during a rare moment at home in London not long after the Games. She says crafting it helped calm her comedown nerves and give her purpose. As we ate dinner, she gave me a partial rundown. For starters, she wants to create a line of greeting cards, with proceeds going to charity. She's already written them; she just needs a designer. ("Every city I go to, I'm always shopping for cards....I love having the right card for the right person.") She wants to do more charity work overall but doesn't want to jump into anything without first earning "credibility." She has since signed on to be a mentor with Fitspirit, an organization that promotes girls' fitness.

Also on the list: do more fashion collaborations. She already has a line with the Montreal eyewear boutique Bonlook and has designed jewellery for Hillberg & Berk. She's working on a course to finish the last of the psychology degree she's been chipping away at for over a decade, then plans to pursue an MBA—again, for "credibility." (She expects to go to Queen's and wants to start in the fall of 2019. However, she's also planning another self-produced tour with Moir for that same period—this one far more ambitious, with US stops.) She considered a master's in psychology, which she says would be personally satisfying and useful no matter what she does. But she decided against it because it "honestly would just be more for me." She pictures her future self in a power suit, driving business deals. She's "obsessed" with real estate. Aside from the Olympics, she says her greatest thrill is negotiating a contract.

Notably missing from the list was one clear *next thing*. Tessa Virtue's persona is synonymous with figure skating, but that's not how she sees herself. She has little interest in coaching. She barely paid attention to the World Figure Skating Championships in 2018. She and Moir pledged to keep their partnership going for two years after the Olympics. They'll do just one more tour together, then re-evaluate. "I just don't want to be forty, putting on a costume and entertaining people. I want to do it when I'm in my prime," Virtue says. "Because if I can't do it and be at my best, then it doesn't interest me. If I can't be *the* best, then it doesn't interest me." So she's going to hang up her skates for real? "Yeah," she responds. "Eventually, yeah."

DURING a phone conversation very late at night in June, after a long day performing in shows in Kanazawa, Japan, Virtue returned to the subject of her Olympic recovery. She'd been feeling "utter exhaustion" from skating their full Olympic program night after night and had teared up unexpectedly during a standing ovation at Stars on Ice in Halifax. A couple of months later, just before the long-awaited French getaway in August, she sent me an email saying, "I've grown accustomed to feeling unsettled. It is constant, underlying every conversation and decision—even creeping in on the rare quiet moments." She was hoping the vacation would help. She originally told me it would be unplugged and phone-free, but later said she'd need to be able to talk to the tour team. She was all over Instagram in France, exploring vineyards, floating in a pool, and looking, indeed, quite relaxed.

It was only in November, near the end of the Thank You Canada Tour, that she pronounced herself better. Tentatively. Around the same time, I watched her do a takeover of CTV's *The Social* with Moir, during which the hosts surprised them with their People's Choice Award. Virtue and Moir's fans had outvoted devotees of Shawn Mendes and Drake to crown them, jointly, the "most hypeworthy Canadian" of the year. Virtue, on the spot to make an acceptance speech, reached for a talking point I've heard her use before—the "sense of limitlessness" her family blessed her with. It wasn't the "nicest" thing for the TV crew to do to them, she told me later. She didn't have time to prepare.

This moment raised the question of why Virtue is choosing to live a public life at all. Her answer revealed her Olympian drive to *go*. She says she's eager to get into the workforce after so many years as an amateur athlete, and she needs to take the work that is available—as long as the companies have values she can stand behind. Besides, she's "obsessed" with work and loves being busy.

The last time I saw Virtue in person was in December, when she and Moir claimed their star on Canada's Walk of Fame. As they were welcomed onstage for the ceremony, a photo retrospective of their career flashed up behind them. I counted eight pictures of Virtue in the burgundy dress from the *Moulin Rouge!* program. It's the moment that turned her into an icon, and it's the one she's trying to move on from—even if we never do. She knows it sounds arrogant to say so, but she's pretty sure she'll succeed at whatever she decides to do next. That might be a naive, overoptimistic, or even privileged point of view. But it's coming from someone who has earned the title "best in the world" a few times already. She says she doesn't expect to be handed her next win, nor does she feel entitled to it. She'll work for it—as hard as she needs to. Tessa Virtue never quits.

GENNA BUCK is a freelance journalist and editor. She is a journalism instructor at Humber College and a former reporter and editor at Metro News Canada.

FICTION

Going Up the Mountain

BY TREVOR SHIKAZE
ILLUSTRATION BY LAURA BIFANO

THE MOUNTAIN sits in the middle of town. It has always been there. It will always be there. You pass by the mountain on your way to work, on your way to the store, on your way to drop the kids off at school.

At the supermarket, in the frozen-foods aisle, you run into your next-door neighbour. "Have you gone up the mountain today?" you ask her.

"Not today," she says.

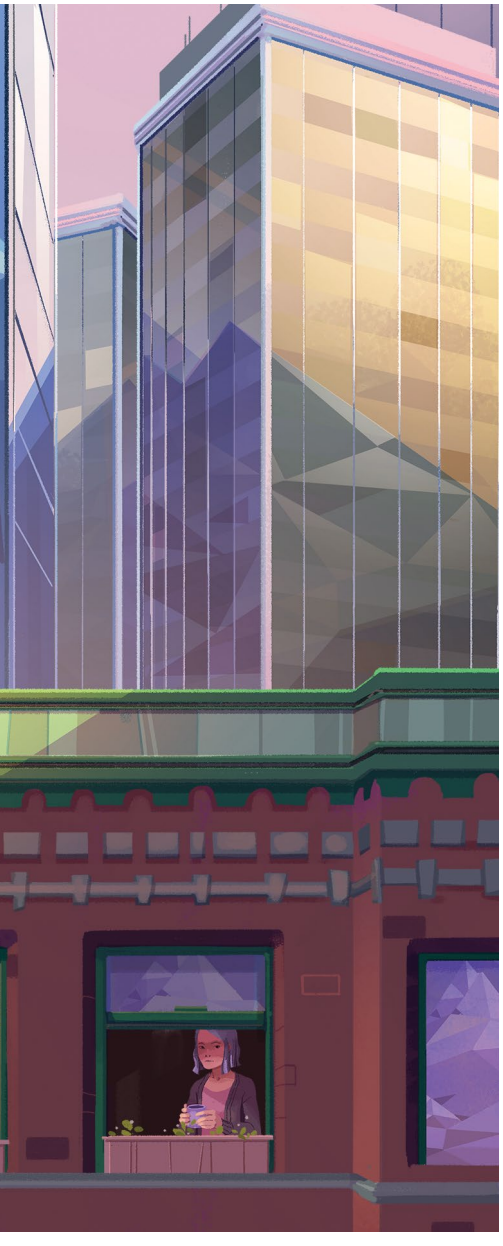
She grins a tight grin and gives the sort of shrug people always give when they haven't gone up the mountain. It's the same shrug they give when you ask about their new elliptical or how the diet is going or if they ever signed up for those night classes that were going to turn their life around. You open the freezer door and take out a stack of lasagna dinners.

Your neighbour says, "Have *you* gone up the mountain today?"

You grin and shake your head and shrug.

"I'm really hoping to go up tomorrow," you say.

Your neighbour opens the freezer door and pulls out a stack of frozen dinners. Hm. Spicy Thai. Does that make her more interesting than you? More zesty? You pretend to take great interest in the frozen corn, and when your neighbour leaves, you trade one of your lasagnas for a Thai dinner.



On your drive home from the supermarket, you glance up at the mountain. There it is, off to your left, where it always is. You think to yourself, It's the mountain's fault I never go up the mountain. If the mountain were a limited-time sort of thing, you would make time for it. You would find the time. But the mountain is always there. It is never not there. So, in terms of priorities, it always gets bumped. Anyway, maybe today's not the day. You feel too…something. Too blah. Maybe when you feel less blah, you'll go up the mountain. What's the rush? *The point of the mountain is not to rush the mountain*. You remember reading that somewhere.

"Let's watch our show tonight," you say to your husband when you get in.

"I've been thinking about our show all day," says your husband.

"Me too," you say.

You smile at each other as your dinners thaw.

"I love our show," you say.

"What's with the Thai dinner?" says your husband.

"Oh," you say, "I thought I'd try something new."

"Wow. I thought you hated spice."

"No, I love spice."

You sit down with your husband to watch your show. It begins with the two of you waking up and follows you throughout your days. The show people have added funny commentary and sound effects. There's a slow-motion replay of Cynthia from HR spilling her coffee on her brand-new blouse. Oh my god, you think to yourself, that was hilarious. You watch your husband's reaction. He thinks it's hilarious.

"Oh man, that's hilarious," he says. "That must have been hilarious in real life."

"Oh man, it was," you say. "I couldn't wait to see your reaction. I thought about it the whole drive home."

That's what you had been thinking about when you looked out the window and saw the mountain. But you don't tell him about the mountain.

Later, after you've put the kids to bed, after you've watched all the shows of all the people you know, or at least the post-game recaps or the trailers, as you lie in the dark with your husband spooning you, you say, "Hey, what do you think about going up the mountain tomorrow?"

Your husband does not respond right away. After a long silence, he says, "Well…it's Saturday…I was really hoping to relax…"

"But remember that time we went up the mountain? Remember how relaxing it was?"

"Well…but I was going to finally set up the barbecue…"

"Oh, right, the barbecue."

"And the kids need to be scanned…"

"Oh, right, we were going to get the kids scanned."

"And the dog needs reindexing…"

"Oh, right, we haven't reindexed the dog in a while."

"And our friends Ted and Kiera are streaming their wedding in Cancun, the one we couldn't make it to…"

"Oh, right, we can't not watch the live stream of our friends' wedding in Cancun. I forgot about all those things. The mountain can wait."

Your husband tightens his arms around you.

"The mountain *will* wait," he says.

And the next day, as you drive the kids to the scanning place, you glance out the car window, off to your right, and you notice the mountain there, and you think to yourself, Maybe I can squeeze it in tomorrow.

Oh, wait, but you were going to go for cheesecake with your sister tomorrow at

the new cheesecake place, the one with the 3D-printed cheesecakes. The place just opened, and you want to get in and find out all about it before everyone else does so that you can have an opinion.

"Why even bother going up the mountain?"

You look up from your cheesecake. You look at your sister's face.

"I mean," she continues, waving her little spoon, "the mountain doesn't need us to climb it. In fact, I think that if the mountain could talk, it would ask us *not* to climb it. We just contribute to erosion."

"The mountain is eroding?"

"I love this cheesecake. I love it. Everyone should come here. Five stars out of five. The service is so efficient. I feel pampered."

"Didn't you know that? Some of the trails are heavily eroded. It's becoming an issue. So my feeling is, the mountain would prefer us not to climb it, if it could prefer anything. But that's kind of my point. The mountain doesn't care. And if the mountain doesn't care about me, why should I care about it? Relationships are two way."

"Do you love me or what?" says the cheesecake slice on your sister's plate.

"I love you," she says, then digs in with her spoon.

"Why don't you tell your friends how much you love me?" says the cheesecake.

Your sister stares into space and says, "I love this cheesecake. I love it. Everyone should come here. Five stars out of five. The service is so efficient. I feel pampered."

You watch your sister spoon up her cheesecake. You look down at your own slice.

"I love my cheesecake," you say.

But, secretly, you wish you'd gotten the Black Forest.

"AND THEN she said, 'If the mountain doesn't care about me, why should I care about it?'"

"What did you say to that?" asks your husband.

"I don't remember."

You are sitting together in front of your living-room screen, watching your sister's show. The show people have edited out the discussion of the mountain. They always edit out the boring parts. On the screen, your sister eats a luxurious spoonful of cheesecake. The shot zooms in. You watch your sister's mouth open in slow motion. You watch the spoon glide between her lips. The lips close tight. The spoon pulls out, streaked with whipped cream. The shot widens. Your sister looks up and says, "I love this cheesecake."

"I've often thought myself," says your husband, "that if the mountain expects us to come to it, it should offer some incentive."

You consider this for a moment. Then you say, "But that's the thing. The mountain doesn't care if we come to it or not."

"No, it doesn't," says your husband. He sounds put off.

"The mountain is just there," you add.

On Monday, it's your husband's turn to drive the kids to school and pick up dinner. You watch him hustle them off to his car. You wave from the window. Your rooibos has steeped. You take out the tea bag. You are in the kitchen, at the screen set into the granite counter, watching everyone's weekend summary at double speed. You don't need to leave for work for another hour, and you're already dressed and ready to step out the door. A whole hour just for you. An hour of well-earned downtime. You sigh and sip your rooibos. You glance out the window at the mountain, and you try to remember when you last went up. When was that? Weeks ago. Months, maybe. You can't remember. You look at the clock on the microwave. You look at the clock on the countertop screen. The microwave clock is three minutes fast. It's always

gaining time. You feel like you just reset it last week. Maybe you should buy a new microwave.

You get up from the counter stool and poke at the microwave's settings buttons. You poke at the clock button, then the timer button to reset the minutes. You have to push the minute button repeatedly to advance the minutes; you can't just push and hold, not with this clock. So you push and push. You push and push and push. Oops, you pushed too many times. One minute too many. You can't go backwards, not with this clock. You can only push the minutes forward. You have pushed them too far, so now you have to push again. Push, push, push. Maybe you should set the clock a few minutes early so that you won't have to reset it for a while. Yes, that makes sense. How early should you set it? Not too early. If you set it too early, everyone in the kitchen will fall out of sync. Five minutes early seems like too much. Five minutes is a meaningful unit of time. Set it three minutes early. That's a negligible amount. That's a rounding error. People can live with a three-minute time displacement. Lives will not be lost.

You set the clock three minutes early and sit down again at the kitchen screen. You glance at the mountain. It's a small mountain. Ten minutes to the summit, that's all it takes. Ten minutes up, ten minutes down. Twenty minutes total. It's not really a mountain. It's more of a hill. But it looks like a mountain. There's snow on the peak, somehow, though it isn't cold up there. You remember that the peak is warm, despite the snow. Not hot, but pleasant. Perfectly comfortable. You could wear what you're wearing. You could go up right now. It's a five-minute walk to the mountain. No matter where you are in town, it's a five-minute walk to the mountain, like magic. Then ten minutes up. You only have to stay on the peak for a second. One second, that's all it takes. Then ten minutes down. Then five minutes back to wherever you started from. So five plus ten plus ten plus five. So thirty minutes total. Plus one second on the peak. Thirty minutes and one second. Surely you can carve out thirty minutes and one second in your day. Surely you can find the time. Of course, you don't *have* to spend only one second on the peak. You can stay as long as you like. You can stay forever. Well, not really—because there's work and groceries and driving the kids to school. And all the other things. Remember the last time you went up the mountain? You went with your husband, which was nice. Getting him to go up the mountain was like pulling teeth. All of the teeth. All of your teeth and then all of his. No easy task. But the two of you found some time and went up there and stood together in the snow, and you turned to your husband and said, "It's so peaceful up here. We should do this more often. Why don't we do this more often?"

You notice the time. How did that happen? It's time to leave for work. You see that Cynthia from HR has gotten the coffee stain out. She is triumphant on your screen, modelling her stain-free blouse.

"It took me all weekend," she says, aglow.

You turn off the screen and run out the door. Your neighbour is also running out her door. You both head for your cars, which are parked in your parallel driveways.

"Did you manage to get up the mountain?" she asks as she opens her car door.

You grin and shrug.

"Maybe tomorrow," you say as you get in your car.

You pull out. You glance up at the mountain. The last time you went up, you remember your husband got a look on his face. He didn't say it out loud, but his look seemed to say, This is always here? I can't believe this is always here. You wish you could replay that day, go back and see the look on his face, but the show people always edit out what happens on the mountain. You remember a tiny snowflake landed on his cheek. It was a perfectly formed snowflake, the really rare kind, so symmetrical and intricate that you just wanted to take a picture. But you didn't take a picture. The snowflake melted fast, and then it was gone. ❄

TREVOR SHIKAZE's short fiction has appeared in *n+1*, *The Puritan*, and *Electric Literature*. He is based in Vancouver.

Three Poems

BY MICHAEL FRASER

I've been working on a series of poems about the lives and experiences of African Canadians (British North Americans at the time) who joined the Union army in the American Civil War to free their enslaved brethren suffering under the Confederacy's bullwhips. As described by Canadian historian Richard Reid, these volunteers would have been recent immigrants who either had escaped slavery via the Underground Railroad or were free individuals who had moved to be with relatives in present-day Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes. They signed up fully aware of the racism and hostility they'd experience from European American Union soldiers and civilians. The African Canadians fought under awful conditions: they were insufficiently equipped for combat, inadequately fed, and underpaid. Some perished in disease-ridden and squalid training camps. Moreover, if captured, African Canadians were likely to experience much harsher treatment than their white brothers-in-arms were.

To better conjure up the spirit of the time, I compiled my own dictionary of Civil War slang. My hope is that seeing these unique words will put readers in the mindset of the soldiers themselves.

—Michael Fraser

PHOTOGRAPH OF PRIVATE ABRAHAM F. BROWN, TINTYPE BY UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHER, CIRCA 1862–1863
COURTESY OF THE COLLECTION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Outside Chatham

The forenoon spudges along with sposh
dew dripping down its tow-sack chist.

I walk past the cradle knoll dip, searching
for the bistre mare's upping block.
Now that Hosea is off soldiering, his tools
play hide-and-seek laying in blackberry
bramble or pickney dragged under
gnarled oak fence studs.

My mind is work boiled, and all Noah's
creatures say winter will devil us, strip hope
past its lean marrow. Chipping sparrows
and ovenbirds depart early for southern sun,
August fogs cover short lakes painting inland
meadow streams, eager mice have charged
their residence in the hayloft's mow,

the woolly worm's orange bands forth putting
flames across fuzzed hatchling backsticks,
and I've never seen more teased wool
canvas our border yard sheep.
Through leaf, pine barren, water, and sky, the Lord
is all warning, some horror is readying its time.

French Leave

I'm on dog watch,
drafting my eyes through
frayed waterlines, salted spray
moves heady pools, the ocean
bounds the flush deck, eddies,
paints the soaked dunsels.

I serve without commission
while my salary drindles.
I don't want to go on the prod
planting rippets with our sass-box
skipper, or grape up the Yankee
blue jackets, all barrel bottomed,
and deaf to negro bellyaches.

Months gale around flapping sails,
brushing the mizzen gaff,
almost makes me lay out when
trunk-wide oak booms fluke
past my head.
I am dropping stones
with shakes and quick-step,
my stomach fires and falls back,
the rib lines pronounced
beneath my shirt.

When we make home port,
and whites go down the line,
me and Silas will hoof it
through bubby bush and pine breaks,
suggin sacks slapped to our shirt backs,
hoping for abolitionist hovels.
When we daylight to Niagara swells,
we'll hitch cut sourwood, arriving
in Upper Canada no-poke penniless,
ready to tell our betters how Yanks
gaffled, tolled, and fushed us out,
hoping we'd be rat-meal flakes.

Henry Williams, Fourteen Years Old

They took me by the blindside,
asked into for help loading stoneboats.
I coonjinned decking logs and set the

tumpline down, removing sliver spikes
from my log-brushed hemp shirt.
One shiner and a redhead set into me.

Of course I can read, I says, and I
revealed the Bible page he furnished
clear as the Lord had placed the words.

His smile drummed the air, and he
produced poke-bag paper, wanting to
know if I could quill my name. Then

they asked me again, now suspicion bit
into my idea pot. Their eyes glazed fire,
cutty-eyed, insisting I had orders to follow.

I was now soldiered, bonded to march or
face the coward's cage. Mama tried to stop
the subterfuge unfolding my name, tried

the charity of higher-ups who were too
weak to lift my signature. We couldn't force
time back up its hill or make the river return

to its shy spring source. Whenever I glim
my backstick past, I know that woods-queer
moment was devilish, more engineered than

blind chance. They scrap-dog whook and trim
me, clunk me as a timber beast. One day, I'll
snap back, rip them like a haired up plott hound.

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BOOKS

Re-creation Myths

Recent novels by Ian Williams and André Alexis challenge the veneer of multiculturalism in Canadian storytelling

BY TAJJA ISEN
ILLUSTRATION BY MAIA BOAKYE

Early on in Ian Williams's *Reproduction*, readers are treated to one of the novel's many sex talks. The conversation, though, looks nothing like the classic childhood chat.

I don't want to get pregnant.
Then don't.

That's the extent of the wisdom Edgar, the middle-aged heir of a moneyed German family, offers to Felicia, a teenage girl from an undisclosed Caribbean island. The two meet in the 1970s in a Toronto hospital room where both of their mothers lie near death. Edgar's "Mutter" pulls through; Felicia's doesn't.

Felicia, alone and adrift in a new country, moves in with Edgar to act as his mother's caretaker. As the weeks pass, their arrangement slides into a volatile intimacy. The earlier sex talk notwithstanding, Felicia gets pregnant and, knowing their relationship is unhealthy, leaves to raise the child alone. She names her son Armistice—Army for short—after a word Edgar hurled in vain in the leadup to her departure.

The story then follows mother and son over the decades as they make a life together in Brampton, Ontario, attracting errant connections that form into a chosen family. The growing circle includes Oliver, their lonely divorced landlord, and his precocious teenage daughter, Heather. Edgar keeps trying to worm his way back into Felicia's life while she is at pains to keep his identity a secret from her son. All Army knows about his patrilineal roots is something Felicia once let slip during his ceaseless questioning—that his absent father is extremely wealthy. It's a detail that proves seductive, and from his teen years onward, Army is devoted to his goal of getting rich quick.

As time passes, history seems to repeat itself: Heather unexpectedly gets pregnant, and Felicia adopts the child, who is named Chariot (Riot for short). Riot also gets a version of his past that is missing pieces—instead of the truth, he is told that his birth mother is a famous film actress who put him up for adoption in order to maintain her career.

Reproduction delights in the accidental chaos of connection and the breaking and remaking of familial bonds. The sex-talk motif is just one part of Williams's keen attention to the ways a person's origins inform who they become. Just as Army single-mindedly pursues the wealth he believes is his birthright, Riot internalizes the myth about his mother and decides to become a filmmaker. Neither mission ends well. Throughout the novel, Williams, a poet and a professor of creative writing at the University of British Columbia, wrestles with two questions: Are people doomed to replicate the quirks in their DNA? And what are the consequences of getting attached to a version of history that is not technically true?

The difficulty of reconstructing one's origin story has been a long-time concern of Black writers both in Canada and abroad. How does one best represent selfhood and home, especially if what was once "home" is now elsewhere and the new terrain is hostile? Austin Clarke's acclaimed Toronto trilogy addressed these questions starting in the 1960s, staging the uneasy coexistence between newly arrived West Indian domestics and a white population that embraced multiculturalism in name alone. Dionne Brand has explored questions of displacement in much of her work over the last few decades, perhaps most powerfully in 2001's *A Map to the Door of No Return*,

Peony

BY KATERI LANTHIER

I'm the peony's spectacular collapse.
A rose withers to a decorative casting of herself,
brittle ringlets tiara-tarrying in prettiness perpetual.
But the peony's a smash hit, a one-downpour wonder,
10,000 tulle-shell loose lips,
a thunder chord of labia in major and minor.
Orchidaceous, power of ten. A flaming bedhead
downward grinning, midstride of pride,
flagrant, disinhibited with age.
Confectionary blossom, delirium *fleur du mal*.
Drowned perfume, a hurricane furled in your throat.

a poetic, genre-crossing memoir that examines the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade and the "rupture of geography" that stole an entire people's traceable beginnings.

Williams's book aims to grow upon this rich tradition of the origin story, and it's a project he's not undertaking alone. *Reproduction* appeared on shelves less than a month before André Alexis's new novel, *Days by Moonlight*. Both books tell stories of Black Canadians building lives in a country committed to the veneer of multicultural tolerance: Williams by charting the tumult of family history; Alexis with an uncanny road trip through small-town traditions. These books unearth tales that are often left untold to show that, like the family tree in *Reproduction*, the story of Canada hides some rot in its roots.

Williams is the author of two collections of poetry, including 2012's Griffin-shortlisted *Personals*, and a book of short stories. *Reproduction*, his first novel, is the recognizable child of these predecessors, sharing their interest in questions about identity and a poet's fine-grained attention to form.

The challenge of tracing one's personal history is inscribed into the novel's genetic code. Its opening sentences stutter with the trouble of settling on a story's starting point as they try to describe Felicia's mother's death: "Before she died her mother was prickly. Before her mother died she was. One more time. Before her mother died she, her mother, was prickly. One more time. Before her mother died she, her mother, prickled her, Felicia." From the start, readers see this inherent struggle to find a point of origin—the final version of the sentence is the most ungainly, but it is also the most accurate.

Reproduction is rife with these kinds of tiny, intentional mishaps and imperfect repetitions. Some are close to the surface, including Army's unconscious mirroring of the way Edgar crosses his forearms to grip his own wrists; others point to deeper currents, such as Army's pursuit of wealth

or Oliver's son play-acting, with chilling specificity, the "divorce game." Through such echoes, Williams probes the ways that history carries the risk of perpetuating past wrongs. Take Felicia and Edgar's entanglement: old white colonial Europe collides with a different culture and can't suppress its urge to dominate. We've seen this story before. Though Williams mines the couple's mismatch for comedy at first, the power imbalances of race and class culminate in exploitation. Similarly, when Edgar re-enters Felicia's life years later, he's facing workplace allegations of sexual misconduct—a pattern of behaviour that arguably started with Felicia and never truly stopped.

The novel takes its structure from the process of cell division, mirroring the course of procreation. Part one trades in alternating chapters—"XX" to denote Felicia's point of view and "XY" for Edgar's—and relays the interwoven strands of their courtship. Subsequent sections keep splitting the cell: the second part unfolds in sixteen chapters told by four characters—Felicia, Army, Oliver, and Heather—while the third fragments into 256 microchapters told by a broader range of voices that orbit this immediate circle. By the fourth and final part of *Reproduction*, Edgar is back in Felicia's life and undergoing cancer treatments as the now adult Army eagerly awaits his inheritance, and the language itself starts to metastasize: the flow of narration becomes interrupted with the fragmentary thoughts of outside characters. The result is a novel that teems with the riot of life, but it's a chaos that is anchored by deliberate formal control.

Despite its thematic savvy, the structure of *Reproduction* is sometimes less effective in sustaining the pleasurable build of plot and character. One sometimes feels shortchanged by the jolt of the later sections, which cycle through perspectives as quickly as cue cards. Still, Williams has an ear for comic dialogue, and it doesn't take him many words to convey the core of a character. Take the interstitial chapters that appear between the larger sections, presented as a series of snappy conversations all titled, fittingly, "The Sex Talk." In one memorable phone call between Edgar and a teen Army—who is now aware of Edgar's identity as his father—the enterprising son tries to sell his dad a haircut, having set up a barbershop in Oliver's garage:

> You want a cut?
> Of?
> A haircut. Best in Brampton. It's
> 55 Newcourt. Come through.
> I'll come true.

Not even two dozen words are used to deftly signal Army's posturing and Edgar's old-white-male mix of cluelessness and confidence—there's something of a familial resemblance to this. The conversation even ends with a small unfaithful reproduction. It feels almost like poetry.

THE QUESTIONS that *Reproduction* ask about how we tell the story of our lives are similar to the one worth asking of our country. This is the challenge André Alexis puts to the Canadian novel in *Days by Moonlight*, a book preoccupied with reproduction

They laughed when I picked up the violin, but…

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of a different kind. Alexis draws on the narratives of our national literature so well worn they've passed almost invisibly into a standard: whiteness, parochialism, insularity.

The fourth book in a planned five-novel cycle, *Days by Moonlight* masquerades as one of those pure Canadiana texts that a high schooler might complain about having been assigned: a young botanist, Alfred Homer, recently single and processing the anniversary of his parents' death, takes a road trip through southern Ontario with an academic, Professor Bruno, who's studying a reclusive poet. At least at the start, the plot tracks very closely to the myths of the old guard—two middle-class men, presumably white, are embarking on a quest for knowledge that entails reconnecting with their charming homeland. But the sweetness found in the novel's small towns is an illusion and serves as a counterpoint to the scenes of racist and colonial brutality that emerge as the pair's trip veers into fantastical cruelty.

Each locale that Alfred and Bruno visit partakes in a strange practice that makes sport of one of its marginalized communities. While passing through Nobleton, for example, Alfie watches in horror as the town stages its annual housing raffle. Low-income families are invited to enter for the chance to win a year's worth of free housing. The catch is that once that time is up, the winners' house is set afire and the family must race to put out the flames before all is lost. Nobleton's residents consider the tradition an act of charity, and when faced with criticism, they console themselves with the thought that "at least it's not as stupid as Coulson's Hill's Indigenous Parade." (In that festivity, a handful of people dress as the Canadian fathers of Confederation and parade through the town on flatbed trucks. The remaining white townsfolk, dressed in what they believe to be the traditional clothing of Indigenous peoples, take to the streets to throw rotten fruit at the historical figures. This parade, the brainchild of an ignorant committee, is meant to serve as a form of restitution for settler colonialism.)

As in Williams's novel, Alexis's trip through Canada's psyche probes questions of genealogy, albeit of a more explicitly literary kind. Small towns and morality tales loom large in our national literature—writers like Robertson Davies and L.M. Montgomery—and if Canadians truly consider these genteel scenes part of our self-image, then we're also obliged to see what else lies below their surface. In Nobleton, locals go out of their way to offer Alfred and Professor Bruno hospitality and helpful research tidbits; a dozen pages later, the same townspeople are gleefully watching houses burn. The people of Coulson's Hill "sometimes noticed that the Indigenous populations of Canada had been mistreated" and, in their tasteless zeal, wanted to redress past wrongs; their meaningless acknowledgement is impossible to separate from their underlying ignorance. In his afterword, Alexis writes that the novel is "not a work that uses the imagination to show the real, but one that uses the real to show the imagination."

Both Alexis and Williams are attuned to how ostensibly minor actions can turn destructive through repetition. Today's glib references to an "appropriation prize"—a real 2017 example that saw a group of white editors offer funds for a contest wherein writers would compete to imitate the voices of minorities, while Indigenous and racialized writers called out the ongoing absence of diversity in newsrooms and publishing houses—becomes tomorrow's town parade.

Days by Moonlight and *Reproduction* offer a new perspective on origin stories and show that while histories have the power to shape our lives, they can also derail them. Williams reminds us of this at the end of *Reproduction*, when he offers up what could be called the novel's last sex talk. This one is delivered to Army, as the hopeful son meets with a lawyer to learn news of his inheritance. It should be no surprise that the answer is disappointing: "You were probably expecting more."

TAJJA ISEN has written for *Longreads*, *BuzzFeed*, and *Literary Hub*. She is the Cannonbury Fellow at The Walrus.

FIRST PERSON

Chaos Theory

To understand my father's murder, I had to adapt my view of life

BY JODI SINGER

ONE MORNING fifteen years ago, in London, I woke to thirteen missed calls. I assumed they were from an ex-boyfriend who often randomly invited himself over after the pubs closed. I didn't bother to listen to my voicemails until after I had drunk my first coffee. To my surprise, the messages were from my sister back in Canada.

"Jodi! Something has happened. Call home."

"Jodi. Where are you? Call home!"

Then my mom left the message that changed my life.

"Jodi. You probably already heard that Dad's dead. He was murdered. We're going to be okay. Don't worry. We are all going to be okay."

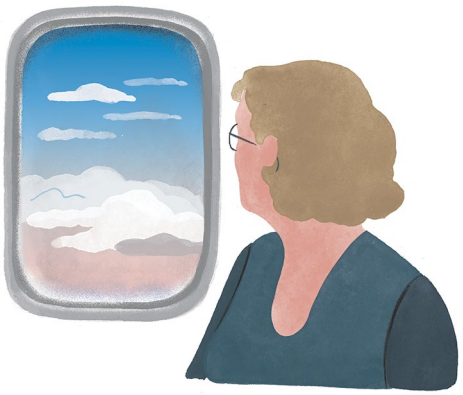
I sat at the kitchen table, stunned. I tried to call my sister back, but she didn't answer. I turned to my best friend, Stuart.

"Stuart, my dad's dead. He was murdered."

"What? What? Hold on," he said when he picked up the phone. "I just woke up."

Stuart rushed over to my house. While my siblings eventually filled me in on what they knew, Stuart booked tickets for us both to fly home.

At the time, few details of the crime were known (and, in truth, few would ever come out): I found out that my dad, on vacation in Arizona with my mother, had been shot in the parking lot behind a restaurant. The security tape, which my mother was forced to watch, showed the whole thing unfolding in just seconds. The prevailing theory remains that the killing was part of a gang initiation; my father was literally in the wrong place at the wrong time.



I was chosen for security checks on each leg of our trip to Toronto. One of the times it happened, I was sobbing so hard I could hardly hold out my arms for the security guard to run the metal detector around my body. "Why me?" I sobbed. The security guard tried to explain: "It's just random. It could be anyone." I argued and insisted through my tears, "But why do these things have to happen to me?"

Before my father's death, I had not considered that my life philosophy had been tinged with a kind of untested faith: faith in God looking out for me even though I am not religious, faith that I had a guardian angel even though I am Jewish, and an unwavering belief that good things happen to good people. Over the next few hours of the flight, Stuart, who happens to be a licensed clinical psychologist, helped me to see a new way of looking at things: existentialism. I was newly aware of living in a world where random chaos could govern events, where bad things could happen to good people. Stuart told me that whoever murdered my father did not value life. I quoted him in my eulogy at the funeral.

My dad loved life. As the owner of our family's shoe store in Hamilton, Ontario, he was a much-loved figure around town. He always told me that a good salesman sells himself and not his product. I remember watching him sell a pair of heels to a woman who was excited to dance at her granddaughter's wedding. A slow song came on the radio, and my dad danced with her to check that she was comfortable.

I was lucky to have Stuart to help me process my father's death. It took years to come to terms with my mother's reaction; she has refused therapy, suffers from frequent panic attacks, and now, when life gets messy, lashes out with "I told you so." It's hard to argue with a woman who went on a holiday and came back with her husband in a coffin. The wisdom, as I have come to see it, is that nobody is prepared for tragedy, because tragedy comes out of the blue. Losing my dad suddenly and violently made me realize that fearing death can accidentally turn into fearing life. Sometimes, I still find myself shaking in fear of the what ifs. But my responsibility is to make sense of things and move forward. I hear my dad's voice offering words of reassurance: Jodi, it's not a problem till it's a problem. ✈

JODI SINGER is working on a book of short stories. She lives in Toronto.

ILLUSTRATION BY TALLULAH FONTAINE

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ROSEMARY BROWN: OPENING DOORS

Tamara Wallace Cochrane, AB

"We must open the doors and we must see to it
they remain open so that others can pass through"
– Rosemary Brown

The year was 1975. Russian cosmonauts shook hands with American astronauts after the US Apollo connected with the Soviet Soyuz 9. The CN Tower became the largest free-standing structure in the world, while construction was still being completed. While all of these events were monumental, there was another important, yet much quieter challenge being fought for ordinary citizens. In Winnipeg, Rosemary Brown, a woman of colour, was vying for the leadership of the New Democratic Party. Brown pushed the race to a fourth ballot and came in a close second behind the winner Ed Broadbent. Facing discrimination on two fronts, Brown challenged stigmas and opened doors simply by daring to do what no woman of colour had done before. Although her leadership bid was not the only admirable action taken by Brown, it illustrates how she worked tirelessly to break down social barriers and make Canada a better place, for all.

Born in 1930 in Jamaica, Brown immigrated to Canada in 1951 to study social work at McGill University. After completing studies at McGill, she moved to Vancouver to study at the University of British Columbia. There, she encountered racism and sexism first hand. When applying for jobs or looking for housing, she was often denied because she was a black woman. However, this discrimination was not the only thing that led her to fight for minority rights. During her early years in Vancouver, Brown joined two political organizations that shaped her views and fed her determination for equality. The British Columbia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People and Voice of Women were organizations that pushed against traditional gender and race roles. These two groups lit a fire in Rosemary Brown that would lead her to fight for equality through political office.

Brown entered politics in 1972 by being elected as an MLA for the New Democratic Party. A historic achievement, Brown was the first black woman elected to public office anywhere in Canada. Her daring act to step into an arena usually reserved for white men challenged the social expectations of the time. While winning the election was a major achievement, Rosemary Brown didn't stop there. Once elected, Brown made two key pushes for the rights of women. First, she fought to remove sexism from textbooks used in BC schools. Second, she pushed for legislation to end discrimination based on sex or marital status. Both of these actions demonstrate a commitment to women's rights for all women. Brown used her political office to attempt reform at all levels of society, from the sexist attitudes taught to children to how women were treated in everyday life.

After leaving politics in 1986, Brown continued her fight for women's rights through her work with various advocacy groups. Chief among these was MATCH International, a foundation started by two other Canadian women to help fight gender inequality in developing countries. After serving as CEO of MATCH, Brown went on to become chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission from 1993 to 1996. These two roles illustrate Brown's dedication to furthering human rights and ending inequality. This dedication did not go unnoticed. Brown was appointed to the Order of Canada in 1996 and received the United Nation's Human Rights Fellowship in 1973 for her commitment to breaking down social barriers and promoting equality.

Brown moved Canadian society forward by challenging expectations for women of colour and advocating for all women during her time in office. These actions helped create a Canada that was more diverse and inclusive. Her life was dedicated to providing more freedoms for women and paving the way for others to continue the fight. She made it possible for other women to push back against social norms and continue the fight for women's rights. Rosemary Brown fought for equality not only through her career as a legislator but also in her advocacy work. Brown's actions throughout her life helped move Canada toward a more accepting and open society, making it possible for women to "pass through" doors that were once closed.

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