

EDITING PORTFOLIO

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HELLO, I'M
NICO
MARA-McKAY

I have been writing and editing professionally since 2010, and in that time I have copyedited print and online magazines, managed freelancers, assessed pitches, assigned stories, scheduled content, and developed an in-house style guide and lexicon for two magazines.

As an editor, I use my education, experience, and expertise to address copyediting issues like spelling, grammar, and syntax, as well as substantive issues like content, clarity, and flow.

My role as an editor is to help make manuscripts more accessible to readers. This is a collaborative process with the author and publisher. My job is to help the author's voice ring clear, not to impose my own writing style and preferences, while also adhering to the house style guide and lexicon.

BROKEN PENCIL

SECTION HEADER

listen, not participate. The only person he still enjoyed conversation with was Ethel, at the cemetery on Holgate. And there, Ethel was always the voyager. She couldn't help but be.

It wasn't until Lionel found himself using the middle of three urinals in the bathroom of a downtown bookstore, that he wondered if he'd purposely put himself in this compromising position. And why?

When Lionel had first entered the restrooms all the urinals had been unoccupied, the entire bathroom had been unoccupied, and he'd told himself that he just happened to walk to the middle urinal. But his actions were absent-minded. But Lionel had known, and practiced, correct urinal etiquette for his entire life, even after his proximity affliction. He deeply understood that you should try to put as much porcelain and hanging metal half-walls between piss streams as possible. And for some reason, he hadn't done that this time.

Sitting next to someone on the bus or in the theater was one thing, it was innocent, but pissing next to them was certainly another.

If someone walked in, with him pissing in the middle urinal, and wanted to pee as well (without having to aim into a toilet) that person would be forced to piss in one of the urinals directly on either side of him.

Lionel told himself that the ghost bookstore wasn't very busy, that he'd be okay. But what if someone did come in? He couldn't just wipe it up all quick and rifty like the prostate of his younger years. And wouldn't that person suspect him of being a "claire pisser," of being guilty of purposely positioning himself at the fulcrum urinal? What if they thought he was the kind of person that wanted to taunt his head and speak directly into their ear, or glance down to see what they were *working with*, or comment on the quality of the streams they were producing?

When Lionel was a child, his father had been a voracious bathroom connoisseur and Lionel had hated him for it.

"Look at you! You're pissing a rope, son!" his father would proudly proclaim to a restroom full of patrons at Fanny's Chicken Shack, or the ball game, or whatever public bathroom they happened to be in together. And it was true. Lionel had pissed ropes back then, but he'd always known it was strange for his father to comment on it. He'd try to hold it until they got home, but he was never able to. His father would tell him that that was the curse of having a man's urethra coupled with the bladder of a Girl Scout.

A Girl Scout, he'd said that.

Lionel wondered if he shouldn't just scoot over to the next urinal—what his father would have called *switching lanes*—just in case somebody did come in from the bookstore. But he was already going, and it didn't seem worth it, or necessary, to pinch off and

reposition now. Plus, he was pretty sure nobody really cared what old people did. Nobody had cared what Ethel did toward the end. That she stopped smiling or making any sense only him.

Lionel was still staring at the wall in front of him, still thinking about *switching lanes*, when the bathroom door behind him opened and closed, and a bearded man wearing a black T-shirt and green scarf walked in. Lionel turned his head momentarily, gave a little nod, and immediately questioned this action. He didn't want to stand out. There were secret codes he didn't want to transmit. Maybe he shouldn't have done that. He wasn't his father. He wasn't paid about urinal pissing.



The bearded man paused for a second, then walked to the urinal on Lionel's right. The man smelled like mild cigar and sweet tobacco. Like the thin cigars the neighbor's dog smoked. He had a wallet chain jangling from his belt, a pocket that connected to a belt loop at the end of the chain. He kind of beamed when he untapped, and he sounded like a high school jester or laden heavy when he was being down the hallways. The man put his right hand on his hip and his left hand on the wall, creating a barrier between himself and Lionel with his body. Lionel wondered if this was a deliberate move, or some kind of genius detour to prevent someone from moments like this. It was a smart move.

The man had worn work boots with the boot toes protruding outwards. There was dulling metal beneath the boot soles. Lionel guessed the man's feet were probably a little wider apart. Lionel looked

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down at the black and white checkered tiles below his running shoes. They were comfortable, but stained. Maybe too comfortable. He'd need a new pair.

He looked confident, this man that stood with his shoulders leaned back and his hips pushed slightly forward. The first word that came to Lionel's mind was *regal*. It was a strange word to use to describe urinal technique, but it seemed fitting. More than fitting.

- Regal.
- Solid.
- Regal.
- Proper.

Lionel was positive that this was the way kings of



the past had posed in an open, yet unslippy, stance. He wished he'd posed that way more often as a young man. He wondered if he could start now, if it was too late for him to change everything.

Then there was the quality of the bearded man's stream. It sounded thick. Hearty. Masculine. If Lionel had been a urinal talker he would have had to comment on it. If this man had been his son he'd be damned proud of him. Plus, the silver of water he glimpsed at the base of the man's urinal wasn't the least bit yellow. He probably made a good point to stay hydrated. Probably ate foods that were good for his prostate, and plenty of greens. It seemed as if this man could piss, would piss, forever. There was no way that he got up multiple times a night to urinate. No way there were piss speckles left in his underwear after he'd tucked himself back in.

It wasn't until the man had stopped pissing, and shook off, and zipped up, and turned to face Lionel, that Lionel realized what close attention he'd been giving this guy. Realized he'd been peering between the man's arm and the metal divider for too long.

Not that he was looking at anything in particular. He couldn't have seen that if he'd wanted to. He was just evaluating flow pressures from more than just an auditory standpoint, just appreciating this man's urethral vitality. And that stance was powerful. But only Lionel's father would understand that kind of reasoning. And Lionel's father was strange by most standards and dead by years now. And suddenly he wasn't looking under the bearded man's arm, but at the bearded man's chest and face and beard, his eyes continuing upward. He stopped as the man's thick eyebrows arched over his piercing, blue eyes.

But this wasn't a man. It was a boy with a man's height and width, and facial hair, and lead pipes for arms, and tattooed veins. He couldn't have been more than thirty, tops. A child, really.

He had hoop earrings in both of his earlobes. Not big hoops, but small hoops.

What did that mean, exactly?

Lionel couldn't remember.

Two small hoops? It was code for something that Lionel didn't understand.

Then just as quickly as he'd taken this all in, Lionel shook his head back towards the wall in front of him, his uncircumcised penis still in his right hand, and this bearded stranger standing next to him. The man continued to stare at him, breathing on him. Lionel knew how guilty his turning away looked. An innocent man doesn't turn away like that, not while using the middle urinal.

Lionel wanted nothing more than to put his shriveled penis back in his pants. But he couldn't, because first, he had to shake. And a proper shaking was an endeavor at his age. He didn't want the man-boy to think he was finishing himself off or something. How many shakes were considered masturbation nowadays? What constituted a shake over a jiggle over a felony offense? What kind of message was he sending by looking, or not looking, at this man right now? Was it better to say something or remain silent? Didn't a senator play footsy with someone in the stall next to him once? How many earrings did that man have? Were they big or small? Whatever became of that?

Lionel refused to turn from the wall. His pride wouldn't allow it. He willed himself to pass through the wall and into wherever.

This wasn't anything like the other positions he'd recently put himself in. This was uncharted and unwanted territory. He wished there was some way to go back in time and choose the cemetery over the

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bookstore. He felt beads of sweat sprout all over his body. The man-boy next to him shook his head and blew one last, long, hot breath through his nostrils like some dragon on that HBO TV show everybody couldn't get enough of. The dragon-man-boy bashed his shoulder then turned and slowly walked to the sink; his wallet-chain jangling at his side like a tiny broken shackle. Lionel heard the water running behind him, the gushing stream being broken by hands, the knob squealing shut. A paper towel dispensed and was torn and was crumpled. The water turned on again. The metal lid of the garbage can stopped hard enough to keep it swinging on its hinge.

Lionel jumped and screamed (a polygonal high pitch scream, rising and falling quickly, becoming a whispering, spattering out) as he felt the splat and ooz of a wet and crumpled something hit and slop down the back of his head. Felt it slide off. Heard it splat on the linoleum.

Instantly, he felt stupid, knew that he hadn't been hurt, only scared. Not scared, but humiliated by this bearded dragon-man-boy throwing a wetted paper towel at him. Still, just to make sure he wasn't hurt, Lionel reached his fingers back to where the balding was taking over. His hand felt wetness soo cold to be blood. This was his penance for using the middle urinal, for seeking seats next to people on buses, for wanting a hand to accidentally grate his in the theater for going to the grave and telling Ethel all about it.

Lionel stood there now, at the bookstore bathroom's middle urinal. Not running. Wiping the towel had stuck to his head so he could focus on the point of pressure and not the spot of shame.

"What the fuck's wrong with you, old man?" the dragon-man-boy said. "What the fuck?"

Lionel nodded to himself. He deserved it. He closed his eyes around it and waited for whatever was coming next.

Eventually the door to the bathroom slammed into the rubber grommet on the tile wall and squealed shut again.

Bathrooms are always tiled. Urinals are always porcelain. Grommets are always rubber.

It was a long time before Lionel stopped shaking. A longer time before he opened his eyes. But no matter how long he stood there, before slipping up, he knew there would be piss sprinkles in his underwear after tacking in.

And that's when he started to cry. 



Jason Arias lives and works in Portland, OR. His debut short story collection is scheduled to be published by the end of 2018 through Black Beech Books. To read for free or more stories by Jason visit jasonariasauthor.com.



THE MORNING AFTER

By Charlotte Van Ryn

SHE POPS A JUICY FRUIT to combat the taste of smoke and the sting of old booze settling into her sobersided teeth. She chews and the tangy juice of spit threatens to fall from the sides of her mouth as she swallows. The coin has only just started to rise, the sky still blue and purple just like the two little bruises that have formed below her belly button, the imprint of Jake's knobby hip bones as he got on top last night with his eyes closed.

After a while, the juicy fruit loses its flavor so she spits it out onto the curb. She swings her arms as she walks. She wants a cup of coffee.

The coffee shop has a series of paintings on the wall. In the first, a black stallion is being chased by a pick-truck full of cowboys standing up in the back, lassos out. The second is of the same stallion with a harness on its head, rearing up, the rope tied to a fence. Another is of the stallion, running free, with nothing

but the wind pushing through the long grass in the background. The fourth is the stallion in a stall, biting at the wooden door. The last is of the stallion on the ground, ropes tied around its legs, binding them together, cowboys all around. She gets her coffee, puts lots of cream and sugar into it.

She knows she is bleeding into the crotch of Jake's prim grain tuxedo as she walks. Yesterday her mother had done her makeup, put hot curlers into her hair. Her father had put on a nice shirt and bought a hundred dollar bottle of champagne for her and Jake. He looked into Jake's eyes and smiled as their glasses clinked. Here's to your special day. Then they all got into Daddy's car and drove to the hotel.

She knows there is no going back from womanhood now, and for that she is glad. She knows that if she doesn't make it back home before six ~~she~~ her dad will wake up and find out and he won't be able to look at her. But she's not going home. Jake's tux fits her perfectly. She signs her coffee out on the sidewalk and

pick up truck?

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decides her plans for the day. She's going to find a pond and dip her feet in it, be hot and cold at the same time.

She finishes her coffee and steps into a pharmacy, goes to the back, buys a package of Plan B.

All the girls had bought their dresses, the boys only owned their t-shirts. Jake's was a rental, it was due back today, but he is going to have to chase her down if he wants it back. She puts the pills into her backpack and heads toward the park.

Her dress would've been blue, but Kate's dress was blue. Then she picked out a white one in the store, but her mother said no no no, white is for your wedding day. Her shoes were black and her dress was red, tight.

The class of 2018 sat down for a meal. She sat at a round table beside Jake out of obligation. She watched him, head shaved close to the scalp, and remembered when he'd arrived at her school in grade six. She remembered how he'd gotten a boner in gym class and how he'd told everybody that his brother was in the Christian rock band Switchfoot. He'd run around, jumping off the stumps of the trees in the playground they'd cut down in the summer singing, *Save You in Mine*.

On her other side at the table sat Nicky Malvers. In grade four Nicky didn't want to be called Nicky any more, he told the teachers and the whole class, he was Nick now, even Nicholas would be better. They started talking over their chicken breast and salad. Turns out Nicky was a rock climber, was going to Yellowstone with his club on a five-day climb. He talked about his club, people from all over the city, mostly in their twenties and very cool folks.

Fuck, she thought, as Jake poured half a flask of vodka into his orange soda.

Nicky smiled as he talked about the summits on the flank of Mount Washington.

Her mother had given her fifty bucks at first in case Wash, just in case she might need to halt the conception of a child. Just in case she might want to eat some cookie dough from the tube. She buys double chocolate chunk and asks the teller to cut the top for her, she does not need a bag.

She can only eat half the tube, chucks the rest out. She's skipping a bit as she walks, is lighter now that her cherry has popped. The black jacket of the suit still smells like him. But she knows her odour is stronger than his, so she starts to run. Sweat pours down her face, her eyelid makeup runs into her eyes and stings. It tastes bad.

Jake convinced his father to put his credit card down for the hotel room for the after party. When she'd woken up that morning she looked at his little naked butt peeping from under the covers. She took his tux and loafers into the bathroom and put them on, leaving him nothing but her red dress and high heels. She poked her head into the mini bar, saw the mini bottle of champagne he'd told her not to take the night before because his dad wouldn't pay for it. Now she can hear it slosh back and fourth in her backpack. She arrives at the pond, finds a nice flat rock to sit down on. There are stripes of sweat where the straps of her backpack were resting on her shoulders. She takes the jacket off and dips it into the cool water, puts it back on with a sigh of

relief. She rolls the pant legs up and puts her feet in.

Her legs make ripples that travel all through the pond. Nobody else is around. She swishes her legs back and fourth and wiggles her submerged toes. Fuck that hard dick, you like that? he'd said, even though he was the one doing the fucking. You like that? Your pussy is so wet. His voice was raspy, dug into the pillow. His chin rested on her shoulder. She looked up at the ceiling. Earlier that day she had taken all the glow-in-the-dark stars down from the ceiling of her bedroom. The pussy is soft the sun is hot the dick is hard the water is wet the rocks are hard the air is dry. The sex had not felt good at all.

She digs into her backpack and pulls out the champagne and pops it. The cork skyrockets into the middle of the pond, splashes into the water, bobs up and down. She reads the directions for the pills. Two now, two later. She takes the dosage into her palm, raises the bottle and the pills up over her head. She catches sight of her reflection in the water and knows she looks good. Cheers, she says, to the morning after.

Charlotte Van Ryn is a fiction writer who attended the University of King's College in Halifax. In 2015 she won the Bodwyn Memorial Prize for short fiction and holds a Letter of Distinction from writer David Adams Richards after a mentorship through the Humber School of Writers. Charlotte's short story "Mabel" was long listed in Broken Pencil Magazine's Indie Writer's Death Match competition in 2018. She is the co-host of a popular reading series, the Listening Party, in Toronto, where she currently lives and works.

SPIRAL NATURE MAGAZINE

22/09/2023, 11:57

Revisions - Spiral Nature Magazine - WordPress

- Dashboard
- Newspaper
- Jetpack
- Posts
- All Posts
- Add New
- Categories
- Tags
- Calendar
- Restrict Access
- Media
- Pages
- AdSanity
- Feedback
- Appearance
- Plugins 13
- Users
- Tools
- WPBakery Page Builder
- Settings 1
- Yoast SEO
- Notifications
- Buffer - HYPESocial
- Sumo
- Theme My Login

Previous



Current Revision by Psyche
4 years ago (23 Jun @ 15:45)

Compare Revisions of "The structure of our circles: 10 lessons in community building"

Hola! Would you like to receive automatic updates and unlock premium support? Please [activate your copy](#) of WPBakery Page Builder.

[Go to editor](#)

Title

Removed

- The structure of our circles
- 10 lessons for community
building without boxes

Added

+ The structure of our
circles: 10 lessons in
community building







Content

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-  Terminal
-  Performance
-  WP-Optimize
-  Polls
-  Restrict
-  Link Checker
-  MetaSlider
-  Collapse menu



Current Revision by Psyche
4 years ago (23 Jun @ 15:45)

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- <p>Recently, I did a number of informal surveys and interviews with prominent leaders, volunteers, teachers and organizers, mostly localized in the Ontario region but practicing from a wide variety of modalities. I was rather curious about the way in which leaders operate within our communities and the ways in which the idea of a "clergy" might come about in our very loose and organic groups. In the hopes that I may provide some insight into the future of the community between Witches, I would like to share some of the insights I have gleaned from speaking to these powerful, magical women.</p>

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Current Revision by Psyche
4 years ago (23 Jun @ 15:45)

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<p>When we are first starting out in the path, we may connect with a teacher of this path or that, we might take classes and workshops but, often, there is this sense that we are called to learn and there isn't really one single person who is willing (or able) to lead us. We are left trying to locate allies, to practice when and where we can and to try to build upon our experiences until we have a practice of our own. It is this journey where we begin to build the skills and competencies that will carry us along the way for the rest of our lives. It is in this journey, that we begin to build the networks that will begin to form into our communities.

</p>

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+ <p>Related:
Creating your altar: A beginner's



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- <p><strong>Related</strong>:
  <a
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    community, and self-care at
    WomynSpirit Festival
    2015</a> by Jenna <span
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  </p>

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+ <p><strong>Related</strong>:
+ <a
+ href="https://www.spiralnature.com/spirituality/multiple-pantheons/">Working with
+ multiple pantheons: A
+ beginner's guide</a>, by
+ Donyae Coles</p>

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<h4>2. We can ask others to
pull us up, but not to carry
us.</h4>

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<p>A vitally important part
of our development as
practitioners is to delve
into our own work. We learn
from those around us and are
enriched by their work, but
in order for communities to
truly thrive and grow, we
need to be able to bring our
own resources to the table.
That's not to say that we
  
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Current Revision by Psyche
4 years ago (23 Jun @ 15:45)

expect them to carry us, we
need to move forward under
our own steam. </p>

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- <p>There may be times when
we can't walk on our own and
a beautiful thing about
humanity is that we have
people who will offer up
help to us in our time of
need, but as we heal and as
we become stronger we are
increasingly expected to not
only pull our own weight but
to become strong enough to
carry others when they
falter. The resiliency of a
community comes from our
ability to be strong for one
another in whatever way we
are able. I may not ever be
able to physically carry
another person, but I can
shoulder their emotional
pain for a time, I can help
them through a crisis, or
give advice. I develop my
resources and put them in
service of my loved ones. It
is the gift that I offer to
the collective, the gift of
myself.</p>

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expect them to carry us, we
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HIGHLIGHTS

- More than ten years writing and editing literary and trade publications, online and print magazines, community news, social media marketing, and academic writing
- Demonstrated skill in digital and oral communications, writing, developmental editing, and copy editing; developed in-house style guides for two magazines
- Passionate about community engagement with a desire to learn from and share knowledge with others

EXPERIENCE

- Copy editor for *Broken Pencil Magazine*, a quarterly independent arts and culture magazine; identified and corrected errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, layout, author and artist attribution; developed house style guide and lexicon
- Managed a roster of more than 30 freelance writers and reviewers for *Spiral Nature Magazine*, assessed pitches, assigned stories, substantive and copy editing, content scheduling; developed house style guide and lexicon
- Community news for *Dandyhorse*, *Beaches Life*, *The Medium*, among others
- Literary journalism and criticism for more than a dozen magazines and journals, including *Broken Pencil*, *Quill & Quire*, *This Magazine*, *Poetry is Dead*
- Literary work published in *Carousel Magazine*, *Vallum*, *Prairie Fire*, and *The Antigone Review*, among other journals

TESTIMONIALS

Nico is a dream to work with. They are intelligent and articulate and their reviews are always thoughtful, nuanced and elegantly written. They also adhere to deadlines and are unafraid to ask for clarification if needed.

Alison Lang, Editor, *Broken Pencil Magazine*

Nico Mara-McKay has been writing and editing online since before the word blog even existed. Their organizational, editorial and aesthetic senses are complemented by the enduring work ethic that their eloquent writing style has highlighted since the late 1990s. They are a driven, focused and detail-oriented professional that I whole-heartedly recommend for any editorial and writing endeavours.

Seamus McKeon, Social Media Marketing Specialist

There are many today that spend time writing and editing for blogs and online magazines without much proficiency in actual literary and journalism skills. Nico is not one of these people. They have a great breadth of knowledge that translates well, not only in their written work, but also in the passion they exhibit in their social interactions.

Michael Szul, Software Engineering Manager

I've been working with Nico for almost a year and have written about 10 reviews and articles for their website *Spiral Nature*. They are a topnotch editor, responsive, creative and professional. Nico's very easy to work with, too. I look forward to every assignment from *Spiral Nature* because they make it such a pleasant experience.

Susan Starr, Writer

Working with Nico is a treat: they professionally handle the writing freelancers offer, from pitch to publishing. I couldn't help but smile and nod in agreement at their suggestions for communicating my ideas on writing Tarot poetry to an audience who may be intimidated by the art of crafting verse. They helped me bring two loves together in a very polished article, and are an asset to writers.

Tabitha Dial, Poet

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