

# PASSPORT POETRY



Union Gallery Poetry Event  
Saturday, September 30, 2017  
4:30-6pm

THE UNION GALLERY APPRECIATES SUPPORT FROM



Cultural Studies Program  
Queen's University



Kingston  
arts council



## About This Publication

The poets featured in this “poetry passport” were selected to perform at Union Gallery’s Passport Poetry event on September 30, 2017. The event was held in celebration of Culture Days and the Kingston WritersFest.

Selected poets were asked to reflect on a significant moment in their lives. This could take the form of a memory, a lesson learned, or a physical object. When we as individuals enter an experience of something in our lives - much like when entering a new destination - we rarely exit in exactly the same state of mind.

The Union Gallery exhibited *Espace plausible; Plausible Space* by Mathieu Léger in the Main Space and *THE IMPOSSIBLE BLUE ROSE* by Lisa Lipton in the Project Room when this event took place. The exhibitions created commentary on the experiences of travel, place, and identity, which thematically linked the poetry readings to the works.

The Union Gallery would like to thank the poets who participated in Passport Poetry for sharing their work:

Michelle Allan  
Travis Canadien  
Allison Chisholm  
Alyssa Cooper  
Alex Dawson  
Shauna Haugen  
Chu Yue Jing  
Devon Runions

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UNION GALLERY  
101 Union St.  
Stauffer Library, Queen's University  
Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7L 5C4  
(613) 533 3171  
E-mail: [ugallery@queensu.ca](mailto:ugallery@queensu.ca)  
Website: <http://uniongallery.queensu.ca>

## Devon Runions

Devon is an aspiring inspirational poet. Born and raised in Kingston, his poetry career began while he was attending the University of Toronto. While in Toronto he fell in love with the culture of battle rap. Having attended a few events as a fan, he was, and still is, in awe of the level energy the battlers can create with their words and delivery. Alex tries to take their techniques and energy and put it towards a more positive means. He performed at U of T coffee houses during the school year, as well as Kingston Poetry Collective open mics over the summer. He plans to participate in upcoming performances in the future. While he does not have any published poetry, he is a self-produced musician whose songs have undoubtedly benefited from the expansion of his artistic vocabulary. You can find his current album at [devonrunions.bandcamp.com](http://devonrunions.bandcamp.com), as well other content at [youtube.com/runnyonions](http://youtube.com/runnyonions).

## Chu Yue Jing More Than Just An Entertainer

I'm an artist  
But I'm not just an entertainer

When I stroke the strings on my violin  
I harmonize the notes I play with the lullaby movement in the sea  
I can heal wounds  
My notes Brushing ointment onto painful scars  
My music, the remedies of the natural kind

My job isn't just entertainment  
It isn't easy  
It's every stroke of my pencil, brush and bow orchestrating the inner  
movement of hope  
Of pure passion  
Of wanting to heal  
Pooling from within me  
In all the colours of the rainbow

When this love is gushing out of me  
When falling in love is way too easy  
Because every interaction with my art is unique  
And I'm bound to my brothers and sisters through something deeper  
than blood  
A sense of understanding and unity

The strokes of my brush and pencil  
Allows my creativity to flow  
So that things I can't put into words are gushed up pretty on a canvas

So I have a bit more of myself to leave behind

My art is a teacher, where I'm constantly growing  
It's like when you plant a seed, but you are the one to develop  
patience and care when you are tending to it, to help it grow  
You help it develop values rooted deep into the earth's soil, these  
are the initial guidelines you set  
And it allows you freedom to help it grow, step back and watch it's  
unique beauty blossom, like any art masterpiece I ever attempted  
My art is never quite the same, just like the ever changing me  
The girl still trying to find herself

The arts let me tell stories through methods deeper than words  
It's the beacon of light leading Belle to her father in the deep dark  
forest Like how tattoos tell the greatest stories and victories without  
words it's also the fuel to light up a city, to bring hope and a sense  
of direction  
It is my compass star

It's the only way the blind mute and deaf can all communicate  
Because u don't speak with words but rather with the heart with  
the arts

It's the only universal language, and somehow, I was lucky enough  
to have harvested this tool

So, when I tell you I am an artist  
I'm telling you I am so much more

## Chuyue Jing

Chuyue Jing is heading into her second year at Queen's University. She has always been involved in the performing arts. Since she could remember, she has had countless notebooks filled to the brim with poetry. In high school, she was involved in the various bands, choirs, and theatre troops. Though these clubs contributed a lot to her life, when she discovered Slam Poetry, she truly blossomed and found a voice to bring up issues of sexual assault within the community. In her first year at Queen's, she went to various open mics in the community, and became a part of the Kingston Poetry and Slam Scene. She was lucky to qualify for the Queen's CUPSI team, and compete with her team mates and represent Canada and Queen's University in Chicago this past April. There she participated in various workshops and open mics to share her work with like-minded individuals. These two poems express exactly why she loves the power of poetry. She learned how abuse can be covered with rose tinted glasses and uses poetry to spread awareness on what abuse can really look like, and why she adores the performing arts. Poems bond those who have experienced the same hardships and help those same individuals reclaim their past and heal.

## Alex Dawson

Alex Dawson is a second year Queen's student studying Philosophy. His creative writing experience entails several reading events, including Union Gallery's reading last year, as well hosting poetry readings in Orillia, ON. He has also been published in Free Lit Magazine and is a member of the Queen's Slam Poetry executive team and will help organize poetry events and foster a writing community at Queen's University and in Kingston.

## Shauna Haugen

Shauna has been writing for many years, working to hone her craft through reading, writing practice, workshops and mentors. Her poetry is inspired by the land, nature and light; by what she sees and experiences through her eyes and body; by human relationships, feelings, and the mystery of life. Shauna's process explores the interweaving of heart and mind connecting as echoed in A Poetry Handbook by Mary Oliver.

Most recently, she participated in the poetry reading on the theme of Time at Union Gallery in April 2017. In 2016 she was in a group exhibition at Blizzmax Gallery in Prince Edward County that paired visual artists with poets. She was also included in its published chapbook.

That I have travelled the world without crossing borders  
Because my love of the arts is a gift  
It gives me imaginary wings to freely explore

When I tell you I am an artist  
I tell you that I can make magic

That I'm ever changing and unique  
That I am so much more, than just an entertainer

# Devon Runions

## Oh Brother!

Little Brother, I take my title from my sister  
She named me and aimed me  
But that don't mean she raised  
She provided me with a projection  
A direction  
Scoreboard wise she gets half a dime because  
She gave me a place I wouldn't mind to be in five years time  
Constant content creator  
Mixed with classically trained ballerina  
Strongest gladiator in the arena  
Life couldn't get much sweeter  
Next to her nectarines look like green beans  
Jelly beans kinda taste as listerine  
It's hard work to make soul food  
Collared shirts meet collared greens

## Allison Chisholm

Allison Chisholm lives and writes in Kingston, Ontario. Her poetry has appeared in *The Northern Testicle Review* (Proper Tales Press) and *The Dollhouse* (Puddles of Sky Press). Her photography has been exhibited in *The Tiniest Gallery*. She has been involved in Kingston's literary community for five years, and regularly attends and participates in the open mic event "and the journey continues" reading series.

## Alyssa Cooper

Alyssa Cooper is a poet, author, and spoken word performer, and has been living in Kingston since 2014. She is an active member of the poetry and spoken word communities in the city, and frequently attends local open mic events, including Bruce Kauffman's "and the journey continues" monthly reading series. Alyssa is an executive member of the Kingston Poetry Collective and the Queen's Poetry Slam Club. She was most recently invited to Toronto to give a showcase performance as a part of the Voices of Today spoken word festival. She was also one of the performers included in past poetry shows at the Union Gallery. She is a staff writer for *Free Lit Magazine* and has had work published in a number of other established journals and anthologies, including *Emrys*, *Ottawa Arts Review*, *From the Wellhouse*, *SLAB Literary Magazine*, *Chuffed Buff Books*, *Cede Poetry*, and *NorthWord Magazine*. Her first poetry collection was publishing in 2013 by Ontario publisher Hidden Brook Press, and her most recent chapbook was published by local letterpress book artist Hugh Barclay of *Thee Hellbox Press*.

## Michelle Allan

Michelle Allan has had her work published in The Undergraduate Review, Boston Accent Literary Journal, The Avocet, and has been a featured poet at Kingston Artfest. She was part of last year's Th(read) s event at Union Gallery. Michelle has participated in many readings, slams and open mics during her time at Queen's, such as the monthly "and the journey continues" open mic (previously Poetry at the Artel), CESA Equity Outreach open mic, Kingston Poetry Collective, and Queen's Poetry Slam. She is a founding member of the Queen's Poetry Slam Team, with whom she's attended international slam poetry competitions, such as the College Unions Poetry Slam Invitational which took place at the University of Texas in 2016. She was a student in Carolyn Smart's creative writing class last year.

## Travis Canadien

Travis Canadien has performed his poetry at open mics, Artsfest, 100 Thousand Poets for Change, and many other literary events in Kingston. Poet Laureate Helen Humphreys selected one of his poems to be featured on her Poetry Blackboard at the Kingston Frontenac Public Library in 2016. This is Travis' second time sharing his poetry at Union Gallery.

## Shauna Haugen

### In Love Forever

*In memory of my father, who lived a long life (1922-2017)*

In the end, I simply want  
to lie down beside you  
and hold your hand,  
touch your soft skin  
and know our love  
in the silence,  
our bodies side by side.

But you've gone off to the stars,  
the glowing stars  
as if lit by candlelight,  
sparkling  
as if moonlight on water,  
dangling in the shrouded sky of Lorca  
and light years of ancestors.

In the end, I long  
to know Love in the silence,  
the resounding silence  
opening to song...

## Michelle Allan

### Have You Encountered the Softboy? (After Alan Hanson)

Have you encountered the softboy?

The softboy is a distinct breed of male found sulking around North American university campuses.

He can be identified by his aversion to organized sports and remarkable abilities-

Including, but not limited to leaping to sweeping generalizations in a single bound

Or chain-smoking while simultaneously double-fisting PBR

The softboy wears his feelings pinned to the lapel of his pea coat

Or written on the front page of his notebook

Or displayed on his coffee table between vinyl and handsome books with stuff spines

All of his ex girlfriends are crazy.

The softboy will write a lot of poems about women he definitely didn't sleep with, and definitely aren't in this workshop

The softboy doesn't understand what you're so upset about

The softboy seems to have no close friends outside of you

You convince yourself this is a compliment

He will incessantly talk over you in American Literature and hold your hand on the way home

The softboy is upset that Allen Ginsberg didn't live long enough to meet him

You don't recognize the girl in any of the love poems he writes for you.

## Alex Dawson

### Nature's Van Gogh

At the bottom of Sturgeon falls we tried our luck with the fish  
but after I lost three of your lures and you laughed in disbelief

we headed downstream to the trestle bridge

and swung our feet overtop the rushing water.

We sat in silence. The drive up North had been all smiles

radio hits and summer air

but after all these years

we have learned to accept those words that come

and those that do not.

A layer of white film floated on top of the water below;

it swirled, diverged and blended into the lake

a single crease amidst the blue.

I was mesmerized and told you the coils and winds looked  
like nature's Van Gogh.

You smiled at me

*some things never change*

and I smiled at you

*time goes by, but you and I stay the same.*

# Alyssa Cooper

## Hello

Let me introduce you to who I am  
today,  
though it is hard to say if I will be this person  
for long;  
a being in flux,  
a swirling mass of change, I am forever  
reinventing myself -  
appropriating personalities,  
absorbing turns of phrase,  
I soak in art and it  
becomes me,  
replicating like a virus in my  
DNA,  
it reshapes me -  
I am never one thing for long,  
never still,  
never settled,  
stagnation is death and I refuse  
to die,  
refuse to see these alloys harden,  
before they have taken on all this world has  
to offer.  
My end will come as  
a universe,  
with countless billions of galaxies,  
blooming  
in my flesh.

~ 11 ~

His empathy is perpetually absent,  
like his father  
or his spine

The softboy doesn't listen so much as he waits-  
For his turn to speak  
For you to say something pretty  
Something he can steal

Sometimes it feels like you're speaking different dialects of the same  
tongue  
In softboy, notebooks are called "Moleskines" and movies are always  
referred to as "films"  
His vocabulary doesn't include the term "gaslighting" so he convinces  
you that it doesn't exist.  
There is no translation for the word compromise  
He calls last night a "misunderstanding".  
Your therapist calls it sexual assault.

It will take you longer than you're proud of to leave the softboy.  
He will write a short story about it.  
It will be good enough to hurt you,  
but not good enough to convince his parents to pay for an  
MFA.  
You will never be as lonely as you were with him.

~ 8 ~

## Allison Chisholm

### Wordly Or Otherwise

On this side of the world we put things in order:

hairpins, asthma inhalers, glasses of milk.

We edit our obituaries and euthanize our old ambitions.

We underwrite our uncertainties and pause to remember a voice.

On this side of the world we believe in suicide the old-fashioned way.

On this side of the world we strike out signatures left in books.

We keep your rumours at the edge of our vision.

We cast out broken skeletons and infiltrate audible gasps.

It's another type of sinking – on this side of the world.

## Mayfly

### Travis Canadien

Why,

Why,

Do you persist ... exist?

To torment us for our past misdeeds,

Our latest slight,

Is this why you take flight?

These maddeningly frail bugs,

Smear, and cling to my page,

As if they are gaining footing on my commas,

Being crushed by the finality of my periods.

I concede, and slowly hasten my speed,

As I walk, they seem to stalk,

On a keyless chorus of wings, I hear talk

Searching for my breaking point,

My resonance frequency,

Ten thousand winged choir increase its pitch,

I drop to my knees crying broken bodies...

Frowning as their slurry fills my laugh lines