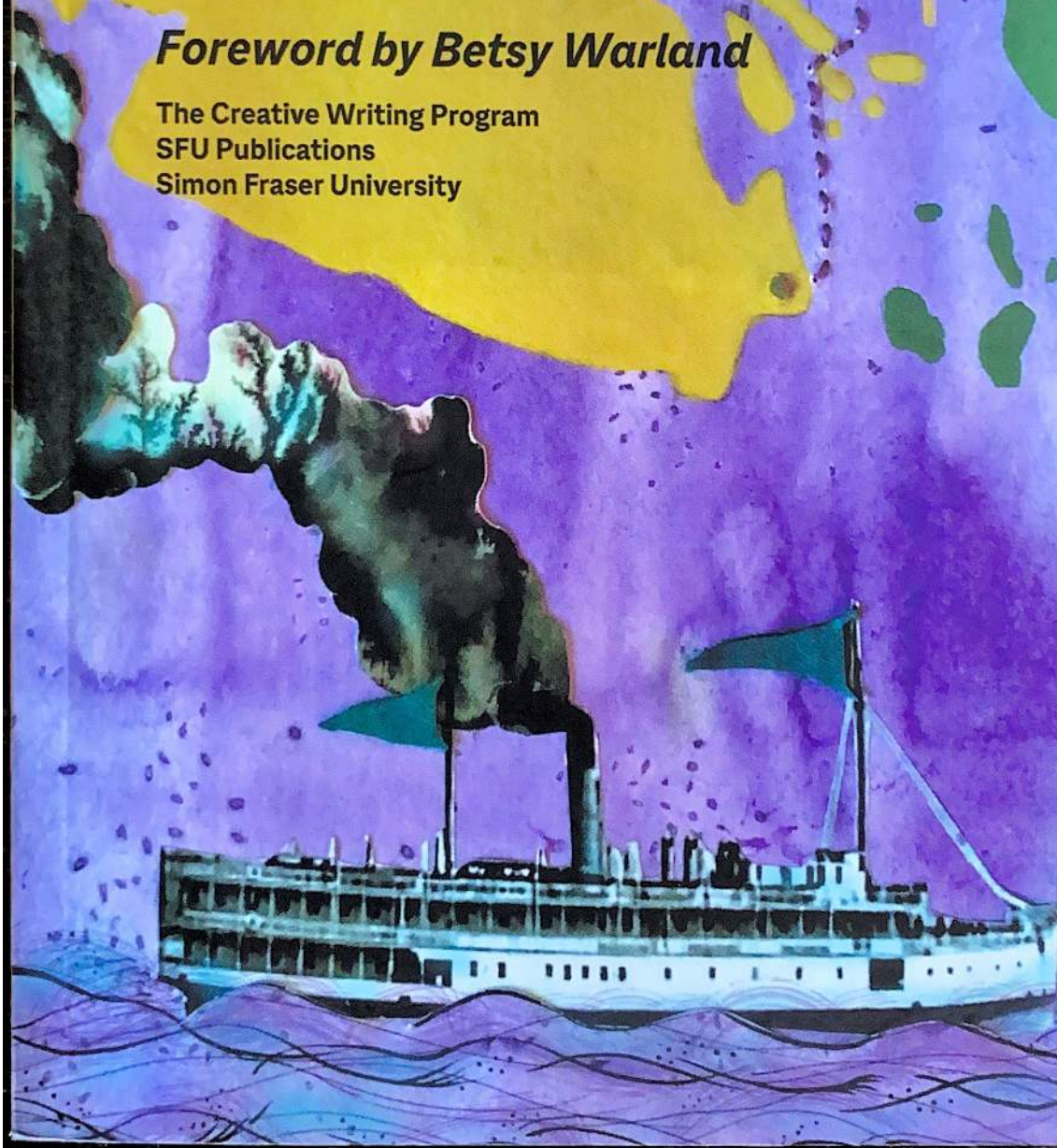


The Writer's Studio Anthology

emerge 20

Foreword by Betsy Warland

The Creative Writing Program
SFU Publications
Simon Fraser University





Sarah Jessie Tucker

Climate Crisis Within

I was born with glaciers for eyes
and when they started melting
my ancestors showed me a way of coping
by running a pipeline through my nervous system
drinking the oil will cure my pain they say
but now the carbon emissions of my mind
have sped up the melting of my eyes
and as I triage a leak in my line
picketers squeeze at my chest
pointing to the crystal-clear shores of healing
so I jump into the melted waters of my being
but the fracking in my fingers
vibrates me to a tread
my mind immobilizes in the toxicity
I'm lost for days in the leak
suddenly a Thunberg of protesters gathers in my throat
here to demonstrate that treading water puts me
at a 50 percent risk of the next leak being my last
but I'm petrified of swimming to undiscovered shores
so protesters start diving into my belly
urging me not to give up
so I start swimming

SARAH JESSIE TUCKER

Shelter Dog

The only thing the human knows I was abandoned
here's to another round of hoping in solitude
this time with sensitive hackles raising without anger
the human charges my kennel door *crash clack boom*
I smear like glue to the back of my cage
maybe if I fold my pointy ears and tuck my tail
you'll see it in my eye homeless yet confined
I just want to walk the human around the block
I'm a good boy scared and don't want to snap
so listen here be gentle with that latch
easy with those fast feet and speak to me gingerly
okay stop there not an inch closer
extend your hand and don't come at me
if you only knew you'd let me come to you

Fear

It's the tears trapped under my left shoulder
like old newspaper tied in a knot
kindling for my cast iron brain
my gridlock jaw at night in slumber
fighting to stay grounded even with the sandman
but he understands my juggle between inferno or freeze
I attempt to regulate like a balance of probabilities
but my enlarged amygdala sets the fire like an arsonist
I lean so far into the pain
my toes are burnt marshmallows
the icy cold veil unravels arms up and
hoofs me down the rabbit hole
don't be afraid of your only soul
says the one walking next to me

Weathering

I paced and waited with Page. We sometimes walked around the block. When we finally sat at my desk, spring resurrected the fly buzzing in the purgatory between window and blind. Then suddenly interrupted by a hammering woodpecker.

Through open slats I spotted two ravens, gathering twigs in the towering evergreen trees. I wondered, would the hawks of summer return?

The following dawn the ravens called four crows to kick out the doves in the back alley trees. I watched as a blanket of starlings gathered, reminding me I traded city sirens for song.

Then a coven of six. Were the crows squawking for the sick? I wondered again, would the hawks of summer return?

I needed self-care and leaned back in my gravity chair. In the distance twelve crows, like kids on a party bus suddenly split into two groups, then rejoined. I inhaled their whipping wings as they flew over my head.

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The next morning I saw the raven once again
bellowing with a starling in its claw
the crows and magpie in pursuit.
I tried to distract my racing thoughts by fixing the back
porch light.

I stepped onto the first ladder rung and saw hovering overhead
in the clear blue sky, a wingspan as vast as the prairies.
She wiggled her tail feathers at me, *don't worry I'm back.*
This morning's rise I sit at my desk with Page and
she finally speaks: *be the lion.*

Unsure, I walk away. Morning fades as I watch
a raven and a creamy speckled span tango above the
evergreens. The other raven screeching
from hawks' nest of yesteryear.

Dawn falls and Page calls me back. I sit at
my desk, lean in, and Page whispers: *it's time to be the lion.*
I glance out my writing window and spot
the summer hawks nesting
across the street in the naked trees.

Artist Statement

I'm Sarah Jessie Tucker, Treaty No.13 People, with settler origins from Ireland, Scotland, and England. I'm a truthseeker, poet and memoirist. My work challenges patriarchal norms using love and lived experience growing up in a strict patriarchal family. My strong connections to music and nature are fused within my writing, leaving a lasting impression on readers. My process involves writing poetry and researching my genealogy, which then evolves into prose for my memoir.

I am at the watershed moment of my life. To live in my purpose, I must tell my story. My "late-in-life" coming-of-age poetry collection examines my guilt of being a survivor of suicide loss and looks at emotions through a crown of sonnets. Finishing my collection of poems is the first step toward writing a memoir. My memoir is a story of how my brother's suicide saved my life and how I found my healing path 11 years ago when I left Toronto for Calgary.

I was living in Gleichen, AB, when I started SJT Writing two years ago, and it's been three years since graduating from the online Writer's Studio at Simon Fraser University. When I became a creative entrepreneur, I began volunteering with Tribe Artist Society and eventually became the Treasurer. Simultaneously, I was in decolonizing training with Elaine Alec, learning her Cultivating Safe Spaces framework. I aspire to be a speaker and storyteller. Publishing my first poetry collection will propel me into public speaking and facilitation.

As I evolve as a Mohkinstsis Artist, I'm thankful my corporate background allows me to offer grant writer services to artists and organizations. The connections made while being of service have become important to my creative process and a way to develop a sustainable practice. Now, as a student editor, I am honoured to work with writers telling their untold stories.