

OUTRÉ

Summer 2020 Issue
REFLECTIONS

**A Journaling Journey to
Awaken Your
Inner Artist - Pg. 8**

**This Month's Feature
Poet: Beth Mar - Pg. 6**

***BONUS
GIVE-AWAY!***

**Find your own
tear-out journal
enclosed.**



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Letter From the Editor



Photo Credit: Luis Ruiz

When we self-evaluate, we enlighten. There is no reflection without light. This, perhaps, is why some of the brightest souls we encounter seem to be those that spend ample time on introspection. To see clearly is to illuminate not just what is easy to look at but also what's in the shadows.

For LGBTQIA2s+ Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC), the matter of reflection is a political one. So often, we are in the shadows. We don't see ourselves in the media. When we do, we see our identities reduced to tropes and plot devices. It's so common that many of us avoid becoming attached to the characters we identify with. We know how often they exist only to die, to disappear, to further the story of the cisgender, heterosexual, white protagonist. As much as reflection is about seeing in a new light what is, it's also about seeing what isn't and asking why. Why are our stories not told? Why do we so often get to see our stories only in niche media and not popular media? How can we change this so that a new generation of queer BIPOC can see themselves and the positive possibilities for their lives? We must keep asking these questions to change the landscape of our media.

In this issue of *Outré*, get lost in Beth Mar's poetry that explores different aspects of reflection. And tune into your own powers of reflection as you learn tangible ways to build a meaningful journaling practice from Lex King. We have included some convenient blank journal pages to help you get started!

Before you dive into the stories that follow, please join me in reflecting on this land we call Canada and its origins. **Outré is produced of and on the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat; and the treaty territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. These lands have been and continue to be cared for by First Nations, Métis and the Inuit peoples. I am humbled and grateful to be able to share the stories herein with you, thanks to the resources of this unceded land.**

Sincerely,

Rachel Ramkaran

Rachel Ramkaran
Editor-in-Chief
Outré Magazine

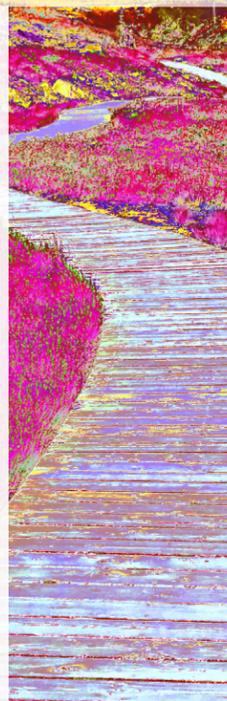
OUTRÉ FEATURE POET: BETH MAR

Beth Mar explores themes of reflection, introspection, mindfulness, and connection through their poetry. They see art as an accessible form of stress-reduction and mindfulness. Their upcoming poetry collection *Paint Over It* focuses on themes of mental health and art therapy in a colourful and playful way. Enjoy Mar's submission of micro-poems on the topic of Reflections.

Patience

So suddenly stationed
for this masterclass in patience
Nowhere to go except
within for integration

of recent years' enlightenment
Tend mental environment
Dial down outer volume
to take this space for quiet



Driftwood

Like a wedge of driftwood
nestled in the bank
cradled in the arms of rocks
and weeds
I wait for passing castaways
to join me

Delirium

Maybe it's just dizziness from all the circles I walked in to get here but this neoteric path has me delirious. Hues awaken and astound, inviting a gaze into refreshing springs. A trick of light shimmers in the rippling glacial stream. How amazing. I recognize what sparkles on the surface to be my own reflection.

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A Journaling Journey to Awaken Your Inner Artist

Written By: Lex King

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a sample of journaling or poetry.

A journal is a valuable tool for an artist. Complex concepts can first take shape in the pages of daily journals. Any medium of expression can be bolstered by this practice and yet, it can be intimidating.

For years, I struggled to keep a regular journaling practice. I still regret not having a better record of certain life experiences. Far too many of the entries I did make began with woeful statements about how I needed to write more. I know I'm not alone.

There are many potential barriers to writing regularly. The hurdles I experienced can be summed up as procrastination, a perceived lack of time, and overthinking my organization. These hurdles reinforced one another and it took me years to figure out a way to knock them down.

Now, I journal every day with few exceptions. I incorporated the following four elements into my life, one at a time, to build a manageable journaling practice. Hopefully they can help you do the same!

One-sentence journal

Christmas of 2014 was a particularly hard time for me. I was engulfed in a tidal wave of grief and was struggling to find a sense of meaning in my life again. A perceptive and caring colleague gave me a beautiful gift that I remain grateful for to this day. It was a one-sentence journal. The book had 365 pages, each representing a day of the year, with five spaces for brief entries. Once completed, each page served as a five-year log of my life on any given day of the year.

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This journal was a game-changer for me. I had always been one to go on a writing rampage once I started but I found that the allocated margins taught me to distill my day into a short paragraph (always more than just one sentence, to be fair). Suddenly, under ten minutes was all I needed to make journaling a daily practice.

I still do keep a brief daily journal. I'm partial to using a paper day planner, so that's where I jot down a few notes about each day now. Whether you buy a journal formatted for this or create your own, the key is to limit how much you can write. If you're a writer, the exercise of choosing just a few words per day is very useful too. It's a great lesson in editing.

I felt was lost to the mundanities of life as 'found time' rather than 'lost time'. Suddenly, I noticed all this free time that I was able to apply to my journaling practice.

Indexed journal

I used to have far too many notebooks on the go at once. I tried to be organized and allocate certain subjects to certain books but before long I would mix them up, winding up more disorganized than ever. Compartmentalizing simply didn't work for me. What did work was keeping one or two journals at a time and using an indexing system to keep them in order. For this system, I number all the pages in my journal and reserve the first two or three pages for the index. As I make entries, I record them. It usually looks something like this:

Index

Pg. 1— Index

Pg. 3— Journal entry May 5

Pg. 6— Poem — Scorching

Pg. 7— Story idea — Brick Layer in a Storm

Pg. 8— Notes from Class May 7

When I want to transcribe poems or find a story idea, it becomes really simple to access what I need. And when I revisit a retired notebook, I can just flip through the index to see if there's anything of interest within. I have tried making an indexed notebook that doubled as a day planner as well as having them as separate items. I prefer to keep them separate. Experiment with techniques to tailor the right method for yourself.

Found time

While I had a solid habit of using

my one-sentence journal for a number of years, I was still finding it difficult to pen longer entries. I was lamenting my lack of time to a friend when she challenged me to view the time I felt was lost to the mundanities of life as “found time” rather than “lost time”. Suddenly, I noticed all this free time that I was able to apply to my journaling practice.

Time spent commuting, waiting for appointments, taking breaks at work, dilly-dallying between plans — this all became reframed as found time I could spend writing a few sentences or paragraphs. It was revolutionary for me. I gained a whole lot of time I didn't think I had and came to appreciate it so much more. Where can you find



Photo Credit: Kris Black

time in your life for your journaling practice?

Morning pages

The concept of found time is what really cracked the morning pages code for me. Morning Pages are a popular tool for artists presented in Julia Cameron's famous workbook for creatives, *The Artist's Way*. She recommends doing three pages of stream-of-consciousness writing every morning. It's a brain dump to help clear the mind and uncover subconscious ideas. The ideal way to do Morning Pages is immediately upon waking. I tried. I failed. I am not a morning person.

With the found time of my morning commute, or in the case of quarantine, my morning routine, I finally managed to regularly do my morning pages. I could still be more consistent. Morning Pages really are the next frontier for my journaling practice.

I don't think it's a coincidence that since I've been more committed to writing regularly, my creative horizons have also expanded. I find myself feeling more inspired, more energized for creativity, more at

ease in my mind, and more satisfied with my accomplishments overall.

The Takeaway

These strategies may work for you, they may not. But what I hope you take away from this is that keeping a journal doesn't have to be time consuming or stressful. In fact, it should be cathartic. As long as you establish a practice that addresses the barriers you experience and that works with your life and routine as it is, you will be successful in making it a habit that promotes healthy processing. And what is art if not a way to process experiences? Journaling and creating both help us to understand, to make sense of a complicated existence. Through these practices, we internalize experiences and anticipate what might be. Making them manageable for ourselves is one of the most beneficial things we can do for our art and our mental health.