

radix

McGill's Student Spirituality Magazine



green
Spring 2016

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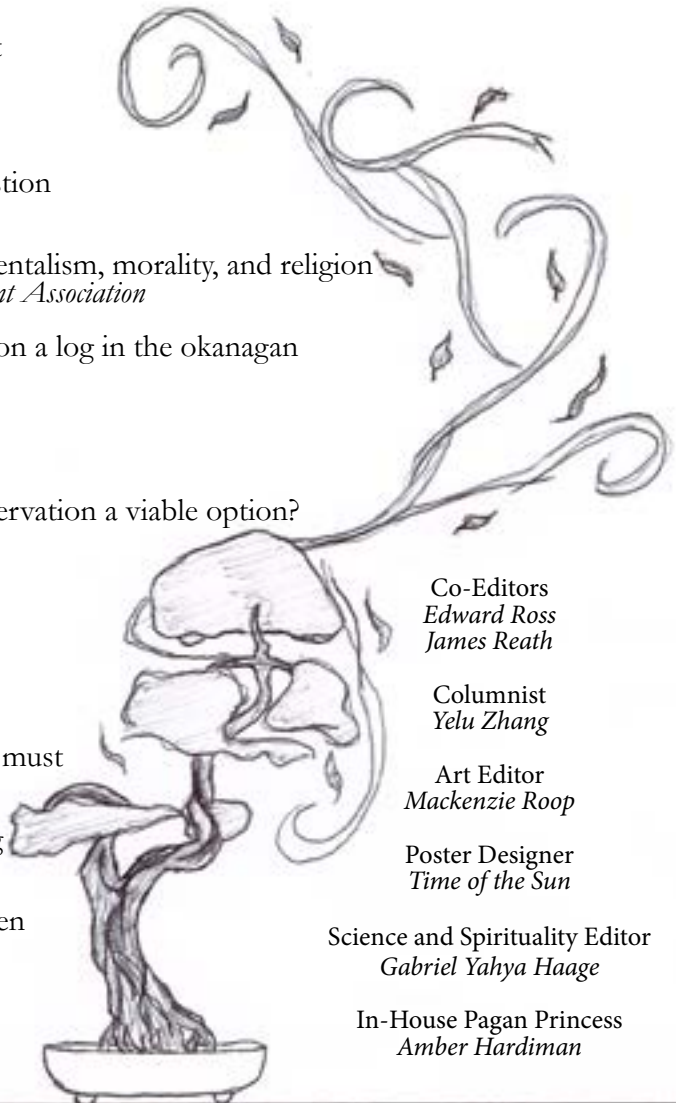
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the bottom line: "The garden of love is green without limit and yields many fruits"

One archaic use of the word “green” is particularly fitting for modern times. In the 14th century it meant “to desire earnestly, long after, for, or to do something” (OED). In these uncertain times of environmental instability, agitated by a political class confined to the concerns of corporations’ content to defend temporal profit margins over the maintenance of a global ecosystem, the foundation of the foundation of environmentalism is very much rooted in just such an earnest desire for us “to do something,” to do anything.

That McGill has decided to continue to invest in fossil fuels is shameful, but unsurprising. The Principal and her CAMSR coterie, have reasoned that the weight of the shame will not outweigh the various financial “benefits.” It is our job now to convince them that the shame cannot be so easily swept aside.

This overwhelming consensus for action, that stands in defiance to the passivity of a powerful few, is quietly evidenced in this edition of *Radix*. From the short experimental stories of Alexandre Daigle, Niketan Valapakam, and Andi Antal, and the poetry of Mackenzie, Farah Islam, Lucas Garrett, Heydar Ensha, Yelu Zhang, and Edward Ross, to the statements from societies including Divest McGill, The Socialist Fightback Student Association, and EcoSikh. Special thanks should also go to Nicole Zhu for providing the cover photo, to Amber Hardiman for creating the horoscopes, and to Mélanie Asenault and Charlotte Zaininger for providing such wonderful images.

James is a first-year graduate student in English Literature.

We hope you enjoy.

James and Edward
(Co-Editors)

The cover art, Lost Garden, was made by Nicole Zhu, a U2 Marketing and Information System student, and a freelance graphic designer based in Montreal.

other than sorrow or joy. Love is beyond either condition: without spring,

tree of life

Alexandre Daigle

This is not right. This will not do. Questioned about what I will do with my life, yet I barely know my true nature. This is not the right question to ask. It is clear that I cannot continue on this path... A path that was chosen for me, into a society that promises security, a system of grey walls and conformity – all of this, all I know is that it's not for me. I, tree, have other skies to see.

Growing up, my branching curiosity and natural trunk curvature were straightened. My roots were taken. Unearthed from Eden's garden. My leaves were trimmed. Conditioned to fit the paradigm: "You shall grow. But you shall grow our way," is what I could hear, even though they didn't explicitly say. So I was potted away...

Here: this restless pace numbing my face; this fertilized food affecting my mood; this artificial light stunning my sight; this falling rain tasting global pain—here is not my place. To stay in these engineered soil conditions, where the Spirit of Things is slowly receding, I feel my sap weakening; tree is surely wilting. This pain... how to explain?

Looking around me, I see it developing clearly. Not just me, but rows and rows and rows of standardized trees. A push for monocultures killing global diversity. An exploitative paradigm backed by military and bureaucratic authority. If capitalism, sustained economic growth, and mass-consumption society are regarded as holy, with money as their priest, then allow me to question their sanctity. Allow me to question this insanity!

"We, fellow trees, in what kind of forest are we?"

"The forest of comfort."

"Unsustainably so."

"That's how things are. What more do you want?"

"This way of life...it doesn't feel right. My roots are not here. Neither are yours. All there is here is desensitizing gray it seems. You feel it too, don't you?"

"I can't feel that which I don't connect with. This is my home now."

"But a home that has been denaturalized, yet it is not a reason to be demoralized! This is the reason why it is so vital to reconnect. Come, let's empower ourselves and reclaim our green. Let's change this forest."

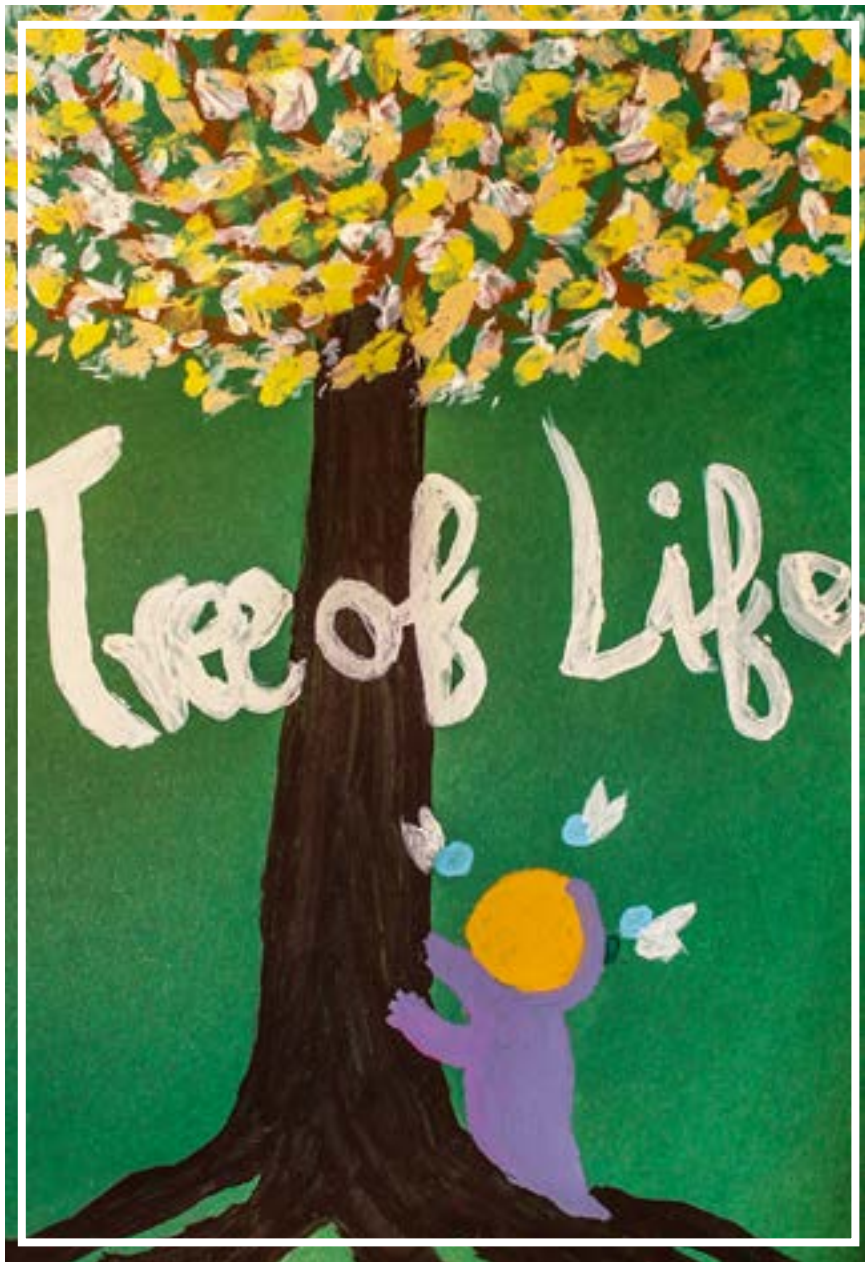
"But I am just a tree among billions. I change nothing."

"Yet, without you, the forest is different... Well, within me, I cannot remain indifferent. Though you won't follow, I must go."

I indeed must go... but where to? What to turn to? Intuition, show me direction... a vision... the Spirit of Things. That's it! Within, I feel it even though

without spring, without autumn, it is always fresh." - Rumi • "When the green

it's faint. A journey into I; surely I will find something. Therein I turn for guidance. Digging deep in the soils of consciousness, underneath layers of dirt and hurt and sedimentary thought pattern polluting my awareness, delving deep into the darkness. Finally, a dim light in the distance; an awakening in my conscience...



woods laugh with the voice of joy, And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;

Standing there with all its might—my Tree of Life. Naturally pulled closer and closer, I sit under the embrace of the shaded canopy; already a flourishing feeling of familiarity and equanimity. In this cove, whispers of love. Radiating with light, woody aroma of delight. A taste of its fruit—instantaneously a great healing is produced. This past inner gray of dismay transmuted into green, at last pure and clean. A reconnection to a profound inspiration. A reconciliation with my natural disposition. A return to my roots; I've found my truth...

“I see that you are back, tree.”

“Yes and free.”

“How come you're covered in dirt?”

“I've been searching. I've been digging. To the middle of the Earth.”

“Did you find what you were looking for?”

...

“Why are you back?”

“Though I have gone, ultimately I realized that it's here that I belong. I've found peace with this inner divide, between essence and existence. I don't feel alienated anymore. This system, I no longer feel the need to fight. I now see this place in a new light.”

“You certainly look like you've changed. Your gaze is different. You seem taller, your bark stronger. Your leaves seem wilder too. I see you branching, expanding, evolving. Even your flowers are in full bloom!”

“In my heart, for this place I've made room. I now recognize this forest as my home. Here is where I put my roots. Where I am to bloom and bear my fruits. Within them, seeds of change to cultivate and germinate, knowledge and wisdom to propagate. With one hope—making this world a better place.”

“Do you forget that you're just one tree?”

“Do know that once ignited, a tree among billions is enough to burn the whole forest to the ground and fuel a revolution! Living by example is thus what I found to be the solution. To create new foundations, fertile ashes for future generations... Remember that one tree at a time is all it takes to make a difference. So that's why I don't believe any words regarding my insignificance.”

“I think I see...”

“Look around you, and then look within you. What is it that you see? Is this forest in alignment with your roots? Is this world in alignment with your truth? Fellow tree, I can only ask these questions... if you discover who you are, the rest will follow naturally.”

Alexandre Daigle is a U3 Environment and World Religions student who is seeking a unifying philosophy through the study of science and spirituality, a path currently being manifested through a lifestyle of barefoot farming, solo travelling, and inspirational writing.

When the air does laugh with our merry wit, And the green hill laughs with the

the (im)perfect self

Farah Islam

My soul is tempted by the devil
My spirit is saturated with desire
And my body is a prisoner to its cravings

I am the imperfect self

I am drowning into my flaws
I am devoured by my imperfections
And I am fully consumed by my obsessions

I am the imperfect self

My soul is captured by an angel
My spirit is saturated with purity
And my body is a prisoner to You

I am the perfect self

I am drowning into my passion
I am devoured by my infatuation
And I am fully consumed by You

I am the perfect self

*Farah Islam is a U3 Psychology student from Montreal
who has a passion for learning about World Religions.*

fear of spring

Mackenzie Roop

before i learned how to speak
i learned how to live in silence

calm unbroken in a frozen wave
i sit on a swing like a pendulum

pupating in wallowed impermanence
i forget to water my plants

vines grow from my skull, heavy
i tie them into knots

my father gave me a double-edged sword
i didn't mean to blunt it

Mackenzie is a U2 student in International Development with a wandering soul and adventurous mind. She takes a long time to walk to campus and likes to dance along the way.

meaning to most people in the affluent nations of the privileged world than to



those in the developing nations of the forgotten world.” - Norman Borlaug • “I

divest mcgill statement

On March 23, 2016, McGill's Board of Governors rejected fossil fuel divestment, despite Divest McGill's campaign demanding they stop investing in dangerous fossil fuel companies. To inform our readers about what the Board of Governors chose to reject, we decided to print this original statement by Divest McGill's people of faith, asking community members from all world religions and spiritualities to come together and demand divestment. To read more statements by Divest McGill and to pledge to take action, visit <http://divestmcgill.com/>. Our involvement is needed now more than ever.

Our faith:

Our shared faith traditions call us to careful, humble, and grateful stewardship of the Earth.

One tenet across many faith traditions is to treat others as we would have them treat us.

Climate change:

The Paris agreement called upon Canada and the world "to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change." Climate change is included in our stewardship of planet Earth, as it threatens not only lost habitats for endangered animal and plant species but also erratic weather which will bring about grave injustice and suffering for humankind, including tens of millions of refugees and millions of premature deaths.

We acknowledge our own shortcomings and inadequacies, and we commit to continuing life-giving actions in the service of the common good, in this case, by reducing our financial and material dependence on fossil fuels.

As people of faith:

As people of faith at McGill, we see the spiritual devastation of students who see a bleak future for themselves and others, and a previous generation who takes tepid action to protect them.

The disreputable behaviour of many fossil fuel companies

Fossil fuel companies invest over \$600 billion annually in infrastructure, such as coal mines, oil wells, and pipelines, none of which can be justified within a 1.5°C, 2°C, or even a 2.5°C framework.

This industry uses its financial power to prevent legislation and binding agreements to reduce carbon emissions, for instance, spending over \$400,000 per day to lobby the US government alone and meeting with the government of Canada

long for the countryside. That's where I get my calm and tranquillity - from being

twice as often as any other industry.

Certain fossil fuel companies have financed well-documented disinformation campaigns that go against the mission of McGill University, which aims to further the dissemination of knowledge and render service to society. For nearly three decades talented leaders—including legislative and shareholder advocates—have implored political and industry leaders to take serious action on climate change.

The fossil fuel industry's lobbying, advertising, campaign financing, infrastructure, and exploration spending has a significant chance of profoundly worsening the climate crisis.

It is no longer ethical to profit from companies engaged in these behaviours.

Divestment:

In the past, when our communities (including McGill) decided that profiting from certain economic activities was incompatible with our values (from the tobacco industry to racial apartheid), divestment made a meaningful difference not just in corporate thought and action but also in the political realm, resulting in positive social change.

Many nationwide and local churches, such as the United Church of Canada, the Unitarian Universalists, the Quakers, the World Council of Churches, and the Quebec Anglicans have divested from fossil fuels.

Therefore, as people of diverse faiths, we call on McGill University to end its unseemly complicity in the climate crisis by divesting from all fossil fuel companies who:

- Use extreme extraction methods (mountaintop coal removal, open pit bitumen mining, Arctic drilling, fracking), or any other extraction that cannot be justified within the globally unanimous goal of 1.5°C, such as coal extraction and burning
 - Fund disinformation campaigns (as distinguished from genuine debate or error), attempting to distort public debate or thwart or delay changes in behaviour or regulation
 - Fund significant publicity, lobbying, or campaign financing efforts with the goal of thwarting or delaying necessary action on climate change
-

This statement was written by Divest McGill in consultation with some of the MORSL chaplains.

able to come and find a spot of green.” - Emilia Clarke • “Green in nature is one



Edward Ross is a U2 Religious Studies and Classics student from Cornwall, Ontario with interests in spirituality and papercraft, and also Co-Editor of Radix Magazine.

thing, green in literature another. Nature and letters seem to have a natural

growth

Edward Ross

The breeze flows by,
and I bend to the side.
The sun warms my face,
so I spread my petals wide.

The energy flows down
from my face to the stem.
Around it tumbles and stirs
lightening me like a gem.

I stretch my long leaves
as far as they will go.
Draw more light in my arms,
and it joins the energy flow.

My feet are below me
in a deep, rich darkness.
They search near and far
for nutrients I must harness.

When they find those I need,
these small drops of life,
I draw them inside me,
a useful tool like a knife.

The parts that I take
I let flow through my body.
They mix and they blend.
All of their strength I embody.

This new power spreads
through my legs, feet, and head.
I no longer feel small.
I am growing much larger instead.

I am greater than before,
but now I must give back.
I release oxygen in the air
as a thank you for this snack.

a continuing: tale, question

Niketan Valapakam

I don't know if you folks have heard but there is going to be a remake of 'The Jungle book'!!! Watching the trailer, I was able to absorb the metaphoric significance of each character, while recalling how my six-year-old self enjoyed the tale primarily due to its cultural familiarity and catchy tunes. Most importantly, I was reminded of the adventures that my young dreamer self and Baloo used to take in the 'jungle' aka park-near-my-house almost every other day. Yes, I was crazily frightened when I picked up my first Calvin and Hobbes comic. Except my dreamer had more than just one 'fictitious' character – there was occasionally Shere Khan (when the neighborhood bully used to transform into an agonized lion every time he displaced his anger on a shorter kid) and Kaa (through the spiraling hypnosis that was projected whenever the ice-cream man opened his huge ice-box of those delicious kulfi's).

Anyways, sorry for going on a tangent there...

The most important setting for my dreamer was the jungle. The jungle had thousands and thousands of different types of trees (about 2—bamboo and neem), spread as far as the eyes can see (about 1km in radius) and had an uncountable number of different species of animals and birds (there were some crows, pigeons, and a few stray dogs).

All grown up now, and the dreamer buried deep inside, I visited the 'jungle' this summer break. There were about a few bamboo and neem trees (there was no park), the park was spread as far about as a 1km radius (the land was flattened and sold to the highest bidder) and had a few crows, pigeons, and stray dogs (no sign of life apart from the squeezed families within the small apartments).

While we balance/learn/adapt our dreamers with time, who is taking care of our canvases?

Niketan Valapakam is a U2 management student from Bangalore, India with interest in social entrepreneurship and mystical spirituality.

Woolf • “And the needles of the pine trees, freshly washed to a deep, rich green,

marxism on environmentalism, morality, and religion

Socialist Fightback Student Association

Environmentalism is currently a hot-button issue and all religious traditions have had something to say on the matter. Unfortunately, we tend to ignore that there are complex secular systems of thought that can add to the conversation. One such view is Marxism, of which most people only have the vaguest of understanding. So, to get a better handle of Marxism's positions on environmentalism, morality, and religion, we reached out to the Socialist Fightback Student

Association. While their piece can't claim to speak for all Marxists, it does offer a fascinating glimpse into this ideology.

G.Y.H.

Marxism and the Environment

The environmental crisis is one of the most serious crises that we have ever faced. From a Marxist point of view, the root cause is the fact that the means of production are owned by a tiny minority of individuals who produce for profit.

This is why there is a constant downward pressure on wages and benefits for workers but it is also the reason why horrible environmentally destructive practices are widespread. Companies are forced to compete on the world market and whoever can produce at a lower cost will dominate the market and destroy its competitors. If this means attacking unions, slashing wages, using child labour and environmentally destructive practices then this is what companies will do.

In fact, this is more and more the norm.

All of the market-based solutions have at best completely failed, or at worst caused all sorts of other problems. For example, the drive to create a renewable vegetable-based automobile fuel in ethanol led to a drastic increase in the price of corn, as the demand for corn increased due to much of it being used to produce this new bio-fuel. This led to starvation, particularly in Latin America where corn is a staple food. This shows the limitations of solutions that base themselves on the capitalist market. This is why Marxists believe that we cannot separate the fight against climate change and the environmental crisis from the struggle for a better world, that is, a socialist world.

We cannot control what we do not own. Our lives, and the fate of the environment are determined by blind market forces that we do not control. Marxists believe that the environmental crisis is simply too serious to leave it up to the market to work it out. The endless number of conferences like the COP21, group together world leaders who fall over themselves to try to make sure

shimmered with droplets that blinked like clear crystals.” - Billie Letts • “Our

that any 'solution' that they agree upon does not hinder the profiteering of the capitalists in their country. This is the reason why, that in spite of the fact climate change has been scientifically proven and the vast majority of people see this as a serious problem they want to solve, there is not only no progress but regression.

The development of technology and the means of production in general has reached heights never before seen. This potential exists to use the vast productive capacity and technological advancements to solve the environmental crisis. Unfortunately, all of these advancements cannot really be used to solve the environmental crisis under capitalism. What socialists propose is for us to take the main levers of the economy out of the hands of the parasitic capitalist class and into public ownership. We fight for a democratic plan of production that would allow us to pool together the immense wealth, productive potential, and technology existing in our society and develop a rational plan to tackle all of the major problems that we face today, the least of which is the environmental crisis.

Marxism and Morality

It is often said that Marxists, being materialists, have no morals and therefore do not care about things like the environment. This is false to the core. Marxists have morality and we do not believe that you need to believe in a supreme being or a higher power to have morals. Actually, any attempt to do so is an attempt to freeze morality in time and tear it completely out of its historical context, quite often leading to very immoral consequences. This is seen in fundamentalist versions of modern religious movements where those who believe that the Torah, the Bible, or the Qur'an are the literal word of God are forced to defend blood myths relating to human sacrifice and genocide which were written down in a certain historical epoch, hundreds or even thousands of years ago. Morality is always concrete. If someone tells me, "thou shalt not kill," Marxists would agree with this. But given certain conditions, many devout Christian would agree to violence and even killing. The question would then be, why and under what circumstances and conditions would taking the life of another be justified. Any modern justice system has provisions for this sort of thing. The fact that a racist, lying, war-mongering bigot like Donald Trump is so popular with Christians in the United States should be enough to shatter the myth that you need to believe in a higher power to be moral.

Morality is not abstract but is relative to each society, to each epoch and above all, to the interests of different classes. The official morality of society is not innate or natural as is quite often thought. The ruling class forces its morals onto society and habituates it into believing that anything that contradicts its ends is immoral. Marxists believe that what is moral is what leads to the emancipation of humanity and therefore the working class. From a Marxist point of view, it is not moral to destroy the planet because the working class cannot be emancipated on a dead planet. We wish to emancipate the working class, destroy capital-

green valleys will be greener once we fully grasp the infinite vitality of the green!"

-ism and build a socialist society where human beings can live in harmony with each other and their environment.

Marxism and Religion

Religion developed during a certain epoch in the development of humankind in which humans were struggling to understand the world around them. It has therefore been subject to the same material forces that impact, influence, and shape all ideas in our society. Christianity for example developed as a movement of the poor and the oppressed against the domination of the Roman empire. This can be seen in many progressive aspects of early Christian texts which contain communistic ideas. But once the ruling class of the time adopted Christianity as the official state religion, it became manipulated and distorted in order to morally defend the rule and exploitation of the ruling classes. This led to splits in the Christian movement, the most notable being the split between Protestantism (coming from the word “protest”) and Catholicism which was the product of a peasant rebellion against the feudal lords and the Vatican which was the ideological justification for their domination. More recently, we’ve seen the development of liberation theology in Latin America as a result of a revolt of the lower classes which led to a split of the lower clergy (which was closer to the poor) with the Vatican and the catholic officialdom. Therefore, from a Marxist point of view, religion is nothing more than a human creation and is therefore subject to all of the same material class pressures of society as everything else. Marxism is an atheistic philosophy. Therefore, we do not philosophically agree with anyone who believes in a supernatural being that suspends the laws of nature or responds to prayers etc. However, the majority of the working class of the world is religious in one sense or another and we believe that any philosophical disagreement is secondary to the need to unite and fight against the common enemy in the ruling class which cynically uses religion to divide us so that they can continue to profit, rule over us, and destroy the planet. Actually, we believe that religious individuals should also be in favour of socialism for the betterment of their own religion. Freeing society from the domination of the capitalists would also free religion from the distortion and mutilation of religion by the ruling class. On top of this, a socialist system would allow us to provide free education, free public daycares, free public green transportation, good jobs for all, and a shorter work week without loss of pay. Heaven on earth! This would free up millions of ordinary people to be involved in art, culture, politics, philosophy, religion, and spirituality.

The Socialist Fightback Student Association, a local chapter of the Marxist organization, Socialist Fightback, seeks to analyse historical and current events from a Marxist perspective. They can be contacted on Facebook (“Socialist Fightback at McGill and Concordia”) or by email at fightback@marxist.ca.

- Mehmet Murat Ildan • “The landscape here was strange. It was some type of

thoughts while sitting on a log in the okanagan

Andi Antal

Walking through a wooded area behind the cherry orchard, I stop on a log to tie my shoes and pick thorns out of my socks. Pain is not the enemy—the enemy is the suffering. Accept and acknowledge your pain, do something about it if and when you can—as I do here, now, perched on this log—and move on from it if and when you cannot do anything. Suffering is an attachment that must be released from the tight clasp of our self-deprecating souls. We dig deep with long, twisted fingernails into the interwoven complexities of our self. We bite on to our path, attempting to dominate the road that lies ahead.

I am alone but not secluded. The wind murmurs in the language of the universe and the leaves listen, swaying in agreement. They are free. We are all connected to the earth in the same way: our spirits must sway, whistling with the wind, in order to be free. I call to the birds and they respond because they know who I am. Together, on this rock, we spin around the sun, soaking in her rays and breathing to her rhythms.

I am both as vulnerable and as strong as a tree—in love with the sun and impacted by her presence. The earth moves around the sun due to a gravitational pull that her energy creates, drawing earth inescapably in. Gravity: two entities' attraction to one another; a force, an energetic pull. Earth continuously falls in toward the sun but is pulled back up and around by the same gravity that draws her in. Love: two entities' attraction to one another; a force, an energetic pull. When in love, we continuously fall in toward each other, tangling up and back around each other, as our spirits intertwine and become caught in the endless spin of existence.

Like a tree, connected to the sun through a gravitational love, I change with the seasons. In the winter, I lose my colour and become bare, exposing the most twisted branches of my tumbling forest, with giant vines that grew into spirals, round and round, growing up fifty

My leaves sway with the wind, listening to her song, accepting the pain I cannot change.

spirit and the sturdiest, thickest sections of my trunk. My bark marks form eyes which peer within, down to the expanding roots of consciousness, sucking in water and life. In the summer, I explode with leaves; they cover my being with warmth, breathing in sunlight and energizing my whole, my soul.

Although, I am much smaller than a tree. Perhaps I am the chloroplast in the leaf that transforms the sunlight into energy for the tree.

Perhaps I am the water molecule, sucked in by the roots of the tree only to travel up the length of the trunk, through the tangled branches, and escape as water vapour through the stomata at the tips of the leaves.

Yes, I am water vapour. I rise up into the blueness of the sky and condense into a cloud, cumulus and capricious. I take on shapes of cotton-candy kingdoms atop carefully crested islands, threatened by blue whales soaring through the sky, fooling people who see sheep in my shapes about the location of heaven as I float on by. I condense further and become rain, falling down toward earth with the gravitational pull of love. I penetrate the soul deep in the ground, get sucked up by the roots and travel up the tree, evaporate, rise and fall again, in the endless cycle of existence.

I am the tree, the leaves, a water molecule, and clouds. I flow with the way of nature, up and down with the cycles of my lunar heart.

My leaves sway with the wind, listening to her song, accepting the pain I cannot change. As I pull the thorns from my feet, I feel grateful, humble, and free.

Andi Antal is a U3 Environment student who has found a spiritual passion within nature which she enjoys expressing through art.

metres toward the sky. They were massive. Some were fifteen metres across,



The above photo was provided by Charlotte Zaininger.

narrowing as they rose.” - Stephan von Clinkerhoffen • “The courtyard kept

closed curved circles

Heydar Ensha

everything is gestation and then birthing
everything that I've said now
has been said before
and will be said again

sticks were thrown and
they came back curved
with suburban worry
unsure how to throw themselves

a cosmic joke, an infinite jest
who knows, but who's to say
the only thing we know is that we know nothing and
linear time heals all

feel not as though it's a sphere we live on
rather an infinite plane
which has the illusion of leading yourself
back to the point of origin

it takes a village to raise a child
Mama Rossi gave birth to three sons
who became butchers
they went to school in various cities and states

they read Rainer Maria Wilkes and listen to Reggie Watts and
moss continues to grow

*In 2008, Heydar Ensha went to South
Dakota, USA.*

changing, dazzling her with the flowers that bloomed between one day and the

is compassionate conservation a viable option?

GYH

“After [the atomic bomb] went off, after it was a sure thing that America could wipe out a city with just one bomb, a scientist turned to Father and said, ‘Science has now known sin.’ And do you know what Father said? He said, ‘What is sin?’” ~ Cat’s Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut

The quote above is a satirical reference to the notion that science is amoral, that ethics are not the purpose or the driving force of the scientific process. For those, we have religion and philosophy. Of course, anyone even somewhat familiar with science knows that ethics does play a role. There are some fields, however, where there is the impression that basic ethics must play a stronger role.

Enter Compassionate Conservation, a relatively minor position in conservation biology. Compassionate Conservation is an attempt to bring a new ethical dimension to the effort of conservation. All conservation methods should start from a basis of compassion and avoiding harm towards individual animals (Tobias & Morrison, 2014, p. 232). It seeks to apply ideas of compassion to a field that is sometimes seen as being somewhat heartless. In fact, it is even argued that conservation methods that cause animal suffering tend to fail (Tobias & Morrison, 2014, p. 233).

Compassionate Conservation offers a strong link between many religious traditions and the biological sciences. Buddhism, which emphasizes compassion and the alleviation of suffering in sentient beings, springs readily to mind. The necessity of focusing on individual suffering in conservation has been argued by Christians traditions as well (Cobb, 2001, pp. 226-227). In general, focusing on individual distress is common in most religions.

In fact, Compassionate Conservation is an area where conservation and religious or ethical views can intersect to the benefit of both. Religion and philosophical systems can add compassion to biology. As Michael Tobias explains, “Every major ethical tradition of which I am aware speaks of sentient living beings. I often wonder why so many of my fellow conservationists and conservation biologists shy away from sentience” (Tobias & Morrison, 2014, p. 241). Unfortunately, this is not strictly true, with some religions still maintaining a dangerous anthropocentrism towards other life. In such cases, Compassionate Conservation could encourage traditions to move away from these tendencies. Expanding the realm of ethics can benefit both.

Certainly, conservation was never without compassion. Eliciting sympathy for elephant poaching and drowning polar bears has helped get the public inter-

next, with the bare branches of trees that were swollen with the buds of new

ested in conservation efforts, at least for the photogenic animals. Conservation scientists also feel great emotional bonds and an ethical responsibility for their animals of study and the ecosystems they protect. Compassionate Conservation goes beyond this and seeks to put compassion at the very forefront of conservation. It bases itself on the dictum to “first do no harm” (Bekoff & Ramp, 2014, p. 26). The main goal is to avoid causing suffering or death to any animals, whether wild or domestic.

The main benefit of Compassion Conservation is that it avoids compartmentalization. No longer must the welfare of animals in laboratory experiments be seen as a different issue to the welfare of an elephant in the wild. One way of scaling from the suffering of one animal to the conservation of a species is the understanding that while all animals suffer in the wild, there is usually more suffering in ecosystems that have been detrimentally affected by people (Paquet & Darimont, 2010, p. 186). In a sense, this is the hinge on which the whole idea of Compassionate Conservation must rest.

However, there is a major stumbling block in this Compassionate Conservation, namely the effects of invasive species (culling due to overpopulation is also problematic, but less so). When non-native species spread into a new area, they can cause havoc in the novel environment, often resulting in the local extinction of native species. As a result, it is often seen as necessary to eradicate the invasive species to save the ecosystem and biodiversity of a region. From a Compassionate Conservation perspective, this can be an issue. Is it ethical to kill one animal to save another? Some would answer with an emphatic “No” (Bekoff & Ramp, 2014, p. 26). Trying to prevent an invasive species from arriving at a new location is not an issue, since Compassionate Conservation advocates can view this as an anthropogenic effect on a region, which leads to greater suffering overall. After all, human destruction of the environment is said to cause greater suffering for individual organisms than they would feel naturally (Paquet & Darimont, 2010, p. 186). Once the invasive species is established, however, options become limited. Advocates often reject terms like pests or invaders because they cause people to have an unwarranted bias against these animals

it is a deep flaw to assume there
will always be a technological
solution.

leaves and then fuzzed with green. Every day, she drove a familiar road through

(Tobias & Morrison, 2014, p. 240). In certain situations, Compassionate Conservation advocates argue that certain invasive species should simply be “given citizenship” in the place they have established themselves. This has been suggested for the Australian wildcats (Wallach & Ramp, 2015). To many biologists, this may be seen as inappropriate, even dangerous behaviour. Equating invaders with native species runs counter to many biologists’ understanding of ecosystems.

So, if we do accept that invasive species are an issue, what is the solution? Some Compassionate Conservation advocates suggest using contraceptives rather than killing the animals, but this technology is new and not readily available for many species (Tobias & Morrison, 2014, p. 238). There is a deeper issue here, however. Even if the technology were cheap, available, and easily administrable, it is a deep flaw to assume there will always be a technological solution. Just as in Climate Change mitigation, the technocratic mentality is an easy out, but often very naïve. Eventually, a situation will arise without a technical or simple management solution and Compassionate Conservation proponents will have to face the looming question. Which animals do we protect, the invasive species or the native species? The fear is that if we make this choice, we simply return to the position conservation science started with, eradicating a species to preserve another. But giving equal rights to each animal, on par to that of other animals, including humans, is only the first step. Even in human societies, where all humans are (usually) considered of equal value, we make choices one way or the other. For instance, how we allocate financial resources, whether to health-care or charities, can cause us to, implicitly or explicitly, determine who gets to survive and who doesn’t. Not all charities can be equally supported and some people will die because of this limitation. Perhaps an even more brutal example is the Atomic Bomb. Whether the scientists involved were emotionless robots or compassionate humans, many would argue the bombs had to be dropped, despite their devastating effects.

So what is the solution to this Compassionate Conservation conundrum? At the moment, there doesn’t seem to be a clear one, but perhaps we have to admit that adding compassion to conservation is only the first step. A deeper venture into the field of philosophy is necessary to create a truly Ethical Conservation.

G Y H hails from Montreal and is currently pursuing a Diploma in Environment as a supplement to his Bachelor in Biology.

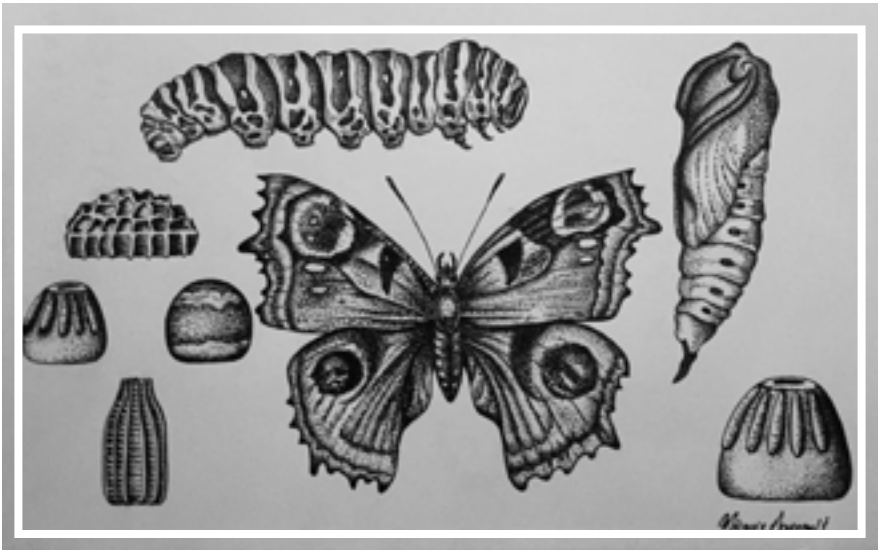
a new place.” - Anne Bishop • “I’ve learnt to gather simplicity from grasshoppers.

Circadian circles
We twist

Once upon an age of late nights and early mornings
When we became America's most wanting

Rhythmic realms
We push

The walls that we are pinned against are the ones that we'll knock down
When we become America's most wanted



Nadia G. is a U3 International Development student from New Jersey, USA, with interests in art and educational development.

The above illustration is called Metamorphosis by Mélanie Arsenault, a U1 International Development student from Montreal whose art is a reflection of herself and her spirituality.

I like their naive indecisive minds never knowing exactly when to stop chirping,

our arboreal habitat

Lucas Garrett

To that island in the west, then,
where the sun once set
into ancient cedars,
and years passed by
unnumbered,
in every nameless grove,

when we were new,
before the individual
had been invented,
together without identity
in primordial anonymity,
effortlessly,

before the trees met the fate
of becoming substrate
for consumable contemporary text,

through every effort
to there may we return.



Lucas Garrett is a first year Religious Studies student interested in the commonalities of human happiness.

The above photo was taken by Charlotte Zaininger.

and I envy their ability to be able to mingle with the green...” - Munia Khan •

we should, we can, we must

Julian Paparella

In May 2006, former US Vice President Al Gore released the ground-breaking documentary “An Inconvenient Truth.” Ten years later, the question remains: are we willing to deal with the inconvenience?

While climate change debates rage on, and concrete solutions drip slower than maple sap in March, one world leader is calling humanity to a quality scarce mentioned in the environmental discourse of our era: hope.

In his encyclical letter *Laudato si'*, published just last year, Pope Francis proclaims: “Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home... Hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems” (13, 61). “Still,” the Pope admits, “we can see signs that things are now reaching a breaking point” (61).

What are Francis’ proposals faced with such a breaking point? His first recommendation is “a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.” Science, religion, indigenous peoples, and the international community—every stratus of the human family has a role to play in this universal exchange with universal consequences.

But genuine change cannot be driven only at a societal level. The effectiveness of laws and regulations is limited, even when properly enforced. What is needed instead is a “selfless ecological commitment” on the part of the individual women and men of our time.

Using less heating and wearing warmer clothing, the avoidance of disposable products, the reduction of water usage, recycling, purchasing and preparing a reasonable amount of food, turning off lights: “We must not think that these efforts are not going to change the world. They benefit society, often unbeknown to us, for they call forth a goodness which, albeit unseen, inevitably tends to spread.” (212)

For Pope Francis, caring for our environment also entails caring for one another. How could we care for the family home without caring for our brothers and sisters, and vice versa? “We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other.” We must concern ourselves with “caring for things for the sake of others,” restraining our consumption “to avoid the suffering of others or the deterioration of our surroundings.” Spurning self-centeredness and self-absorption in favour of “disinterested concern for others... [is] essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment” (208).

What is the inconvenient truth? Something must be done. The real question is: what are we going to do about it? There is still hope.

Julian Paparella is the Associate Campus Minister of McGill's Newman Catholic Centre. A recent graduate of Biology and Catholic Studies ('15), he also serves at Saint Willibrord Parish in Verdun.

“Where have all the flowers of old Singapore gone? Gone, one would imagine,

the night before spring

Yelu Zhang

In a world that is icy cold
Where can I find some warmth?
My heart is numb and frozen
Really, do I still exist?
Please, if there is anyone out there,
All I need is a soothing touch,
A comforting pat on the head,
Or even just a glance of encouragement,
I don't need much
To bloom beautifully
In this dark, dark space,
But if you choose to ignore my silent pleas
I will simply wilt away.

*Yelu is a U3 science student who lives in her own
bubble of contemplation, yet silently leaves her
footprints behind on this world.*

with the old folks and homes” - Thien • “When the grass is greener at other



people's feet, it is not because the grass chose to take up that complexion. But it is

being sikh is being green

Juss Kaur

Ten years ago, Sikh communities around the world celebrated the inauguration of the Cycle of Creation. The three-hundred-year long cycle will be a time for Sikhs to reflect upon and celebrate their relationship with the environment and all that Waheguru has provided. The past ten years have borne witness to remarkable steps taken by Sikhs around the globe. Sikhs are leaders in practicing organic and natural farming, building support for recycling programs, and targeting the socio-economic roots that plague the systemic nature of environmental injustice, among other things. Most, if not all of these efforts, share common inspiration that began with the revelations of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and continued through history up to the launch of Bhagat Puran Singh's environmental awareness campaign over fifty years ago and the continued efforts of today's Sikh eco-pioneers.

The EcoSikh initiative enables the Sikh community to address and reform the ecological problems that affect it most. However, every environmental challenge—no matter where it exists in the world—is connected to all others and dependent on the actions of all. All faiths pass on wisdom, which instills respect for both tradition and heritage. It is from this inheritance that faiths can reflect on the present and see the potential for the future. The destruction of the natural environment - including the impact of climate change—is probably the biggest challenge to the welfare of all life on earth. It threatens the survival of all communities and puts the diversity and wonder of nature at risk. The ARC/UNDP Plans for

Generational Change Project calls on all faith communities to create long-term action plans, offering practical models of engagement with these great global issues. By working in solidarity with one another across all religious communities, we can address ecological problems in a comprehensive way.

EcoSikh is an initiative that aims to build on this history and enable Sikh



because, they have deliberately irrigated it on regular accounts.” - Israelmore

communities around the world to connect their efforts and work in solidarity with one another. EcoSikh hopes to provide a plan that can be implemented over the next five years to cultivate the best practices, inspire on-the-ground activism, address issues that our communities face, and celebrate the ways in which being Sikh is being green.

Organic agriculture provides a way that can help farmers adapt to climate change through strengthening ecosystems, diversifying crop production, and building farmer's knowledge. Organic farming is seen as one of the best ways to sequester CO2 from the atmosphere and soil. Sikhs are successful farmers in many areas of the world including California and British Columbia. EcoSikh plans to pursue organic farming as an important issue to show that Sikhs are serious about saving the planet from degradation. Ravneet Singh, Project Manager of EcoSikh, said "Organic Langar is the way ahead. Each Gurdwara should serve organic langar as a part of Sikh Environment Day (SED) celebrations on March 14."



EcoSikh emphasizes the use of steel plates that minimize the use of Styrofoam and plastic plates for langar. EcoSikh will also share online toolkits throughout the world, including hymns on nature and related discourses, educational material for children, and other ideas to celebrate SED. The Sikh institutions are being urged to share the lessons from the online Low Carbon Lifestyle guidebook, which includes logistics and doable actions to save energy and water.

EcoSikh was invited by the French President Francois Hollande during the climate change deliberations in Paris and is also working closely with the White House.

A brief introduction to the Eco Sikh guide book designed to work in tandem with the EcoSikh Seed Plan, available at www.ecosikh.org.

Juss Kaur is an International Education Consultant and an Adjunct professor at McGill University with the Faculty of Education. She is from Montreal with interests in art and spiritual singing and is the Sikh Liaison at MORSL.

Ayivor • "Often I'll go outside and just place my hands on the soil, even if there's

spring 2016 horoscopes

Amber Hardiman

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S



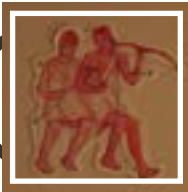
With the full-moon lunar eclipse in your opposite sign of Libra occurring on March 23rd, you're sure to be feeling tension within your interpersonal relationships. Remember that death within a partnership does not have to mean the end of the alliance itself – it can simply mean letting go of an expired way of relating that is no longer serving the growth of either party. What is lost always returns, sometimes in a way that is least expected.

T
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Arguably the most persevering and resilient sign of the zodiac, letting go of exhausted yet beloved patterns & routines might be challenging for you. Embracing change while keeping your tenacity of spirit intact is absolutely feasible – instead of mourning the end of past projects, take initiative to start a new creative endeavour while setting realistic and measured goals for yourself to look forward to.

G
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A socially sought after multi-tasker with an enthusiasm for life - be careful not to take on too many new ventures all at once. Sometimes the best approach is slow and steady work progress, finishing up one task or goal at a time before starting something new. This will allow you to focus your energy in a singular direction, as opposed to spreading yourself too thin. Taking care of your own needs first will yield the best results for your long-term relationships.

C
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While some may accuse you of disproportionate emotional sensitivity, there is strength in your fluid & creative perspective – no one sees the world quite like you do, Cancer. If you can overcome the discomfort of confrontation and self-advocate for your needs within personal and professional connections, you'll experience great success in your transition onto the next chapter of your journey, with strengthened self-confidence having directly manifested the situation you most desire.

L
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Speaking with honesty and integrity is no easy feat for anyone, least of all you, dear Leo, as you courageously adopt this method of communication by default – no other mode of relating makes sense to you. Remember that being a leader also means being sensitive to the individual needs of the team that you are working with. Before starting anything new be sure of your own motivation first and foremost, without expecting others to have their intentions lined up with equal speed and clarity.

V
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Sometimes our greatest strengths are also our most acute weaknesses. You are sure to experience this double-edged sword first hand with your incredible ability to focus and knock things off your to-do list with lightning speed. As projects inevitably come to a close though, needing to have the direction of your future planned down to the last detail can hinder your ability to relax into the moment and enjoy the process of getting there. The most rewarding experiences in life are often those that come to us spontaneously – be open to detours.

no work to do on it. When I am filled with worries, I do that and I can feel the

Gifted with the ability to see all sides of a situation, sometimes this birds-eye view can get you into trouble when it leads to indecision. Taking personal responsibility for your situation is critical right now - avoid lashing out against what you perceive to be 'injustice;' not everyone shares your vantage point, and what is true for you won't necessarily resonate as authentic for those close to you. March's full-moon eclipse in your sign will help you to release old relational patterns and re-empower you to cultivate your own wellness independently of others.



L
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A

Often misunderstood due to your mysterious nature and intensity, now is a good time to step into your power by speaking personal truths without censorship. Since change is inevitable, it's best to take control and reject that which is no longer serving you. Taking decisive action instead of faltering on a decision with the hope that the circumstances can be manipulated to your benefit will allow you to work through unresolved problems with transparency, and move on to something new and better.



S
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Your adventurous spirit is one of your best qualities – you are more able than most to fearlessly pursue your desires without inhibition. However, if you always take a 'grass is greener' approach in life, being easily distracted by the next pretty object, the next pleasurable experience, you will find yourself repeatedly in a state of suspension, unable to start the next chapter of your life wholeheartedly. Try and channel your ruthless hunt of that which you seek into a gentler form of endurance towards greater long-term goals.



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Your work ethic is unparalleled by all other signs in the zodiac, as you are able to not only strive towards a single goal that would be considered ambitious by the most successful individual, but many at the same time. You can quickly identify past issues in order to adapt a better process today, even as you draw up new plans for tomorrow. However, this ability to look in at least three directions at once can prevent you from living in the present moment. Remember, you are human; you can be flexible with the goals you set and your expectations of others.



C
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A highly intellectual sign, your quirky and sometimes eccentric creativity has the potential to land you in positions of opportunity that the average individual couldn't dream of. And herein lies an immanent danger – sometimes the learning is in the doing, in the action itself, rather than in the pre-thinking process or undeveloped fantasy. Try not to over-think the many possible avenues before you. Use your inventiveness and wit to your advantage on a more gradual basis than your vast imagination typically permits.



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S

The most empathetic & psychic sign of the zodiac, you can feel the emotions of others as if they were your own, and sense what is coming around the corner with your naturally heightened intuition. That being said, not many are as willing to expose their soft underbelly to the world. Keep in mind that communicating vulnerability doesn't guarantee or mandate its expressive return. This will allow you to clear away unrealistic ideals and look inward for strength and truth, as opposed to demanding it from others externally.



P
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C
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S

Amber Hardiman is doing her Masters in English Literature from Georgetown Ontario, with a passion for hip hop, yoga, and full moon rituals.

The above illustrations were drawn by Edward Ross.

energy of the mountains and of the trees.” - Andy Couturier • “Commerce is the

classifieds

Radix is looking for Volunteers.

Like what you see?

Believe in student creativity, and inter-faith collaboration?

Help us do it better! We can always use help in marketing, web-development, research, distribution, writing, layout, and much more! Email us to join the community. radix@mail.mcgill.ca

The McGill Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (MORSL)

MORSL, a proud member of McGill Student Services, is located in the Brown Building, suite 2100. Please feel free to stop by our Meditation/Prayer Room any weekday from 10:00am to 4:00pm! You'll find a full-spectrum light therapy lamp, CD's for guided relaxation, a serene space with floor pillows and meditation stools, and some suggestions on how to meditate in different traditions. Take time for some serenity and zenity! Stay connected with MORSL on Twitter @SpiritualMcGill or like us on Facebook: [fb.com/morsl](https://www.facebook.com/morsl)

Newman Centre

Newman Catholic Centre, 3484 Peel Street, is a home away from home for Catholic Students. Visit www.newmancentre.org to find out more about this centre for Catholic spiritual, social, and intellectual life on campus!

The Rabbit Hole Café

Food for Thought's vegan collective, The Rabbit Hole, cooks up vegan lunches every Friday at 1:00 p.m. The last lunch will be held on April 15th. Drop by, pay a toonie, enjoy the company and eat up! All proceeds go towards maintaining this Yellow Door program (3625 Aylmer) along with their Food For Thought student food bank, sponsored by the McGill Office of Religious and Spiritual Life.

Mid-Week Quaker Meetings

During the academic year, the Montreal Mid-Week Quaker Meeting meets every Wednesday, 17:30-18:30, at McGill's Newman Centre, 3484 Peel Street in the Ryan Library (2nd floor, end of the hall). For the rest of the year (summer and winter breaks and exam periods), keep an eye on our Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mtlmidweek/>) as the location may change from week to week.

McGill Student Parents' Network

The MSPN provides a support network for McGill students who are parents. We have grown! No longer based in the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, we are now housed with PGSS. We still offer regular "Study Saturdays" at Thomson House, where parents can study while the kids enjoy free programming, and more. Interested families can contact the MSPN at mcgillspn@gmail.com.

Russian Orthodox and Ukrainian Orthodox Christian Students

Join our twice-monthly student meeting, Orthodox Christian Fellowship! We also have monastery visits, picnics, and movie nights. Contact McGill's Orthodox chaplain, Father Ihor for details: ikutash@gmail.com.

Mondays at MORSL

The Office of Religious and Spiritual Life hosts "Mondays at MORSL" – a variety of free Monday-night events, including art therapy, yoga, zen meditation, Quaker meditation, Om meditation, talks on World Religions, Orthodox icon-writing workshop, movie nights, and more! Like us on facebook at fb.com/morsl to find out more or email morsl@mcgill.ca.

Midnight Kitchen

Every day of the week at 12:30 pm in the SSMU Building, Midnight Kitchen offers free vegan lunches to students. Bring a tupperware container, and indulge in some vegan delicacies such as their famous vegan cakes.

McGill Interfaith Students' Council (MISC)

Are you passionate about promoting interfaith dialogue on campus? Join MISC to have a chance to work with faith groups and promote inter-community dialogue and religious diversity! Work on the Council to make collaborative events like the Annual Interfaith Day happen and advance religious literacy and harmony campus. For more information, contact: kripa.koshy@mail.mcgill.ca

classifieds

The Jewish community at McGill

Visit www.hillel.ca, www.chabad-mcgill.com, and ghettoshul.com for information on shabbat meals, holiday celebrations, educational programming, and fun social activities!

My Neighbour's Faith Series

This series of monthly visits to Montreal's places of worship provides a guided experience with various world religions being practiced in Montreal. Email morsl@mcgill.ca to join the mailing list.

Local Gnostic Community Meetings

The Holy Grail Narthex is a study group of the Apostolic Johannite Church. We gather for fellowship, study, discussion, ritual, and generally uplifting times. Please feel free to get in touch with our lay leader, Jonathan Stewart, at holy-grail@johannite.org or at 514-437-2948 for further information, to get details on upcoming meetings, or if you just want to chat.

Weekly Zen meditation

Every Friday morning at 8:15am, McGill Zen Buddhist chaplain, Myokyo Zengenetsu, offers guided Zen practice in the Birks chapel (3520 University Street, 2nd floor). Must arrive early or on time in order to join! The last Zen practice of the term will be held on April 15th.

JOURNEY



Poems

Radix McGill's Spirituality Magazine

Stories

Due April 30th 2016

Paintings

radix@mail.mcgill.ca

Articles

Drawings

Photos

Letters

Opinions

Reviews