



PHOTOGRAPHERS ARTISTS WRITERS VIDEOGRAPHERS



EARLY 2013

Vaughan Public Libraries

#VPLTeens

HARVEST



From the Chair, Vaughan Public Library Board

Year after year, the creativity, ingenuity and passion of Vaughan teens astounds me. From poetry to videography, the teens of Vaughan continue to prove their artistic talent through Vaughan Public Libraries' (VPL) annual Early Harvest Competition. On behalf of the Vaughan Public Library Board, I am honoured to introduce you to the winners of the 2013 Early Harvest Competition and I invite you to explore the winning entries in this magazine.

For the past twenty-four years, the Competition has evolved to include many art forms. This year, we celebrate an abundance of teen talent with an astounding 421 entries in the categories of poetry, short story, sketching & painting, photography, video and graphic short story.

This Competition would not be possible without our expert judges, who volunteer their time to critique the hundreds of submissions we receive. On behalf of the Competition's organizers, I extend a sincere thank you to Victoria Coretti, Deborah Kerbel, Natalie Rawe, Rob Tari, David West and Elana Wolff. The Competition is generously supported by sponsors, CVS Midwest Tape and our Gold sponsors PowerStream Inc. and Library Bound Inc. Their sponsorship makes it all possible!

The Vaughan Public Library Board would like to thank the staff at VPL. Your hard work and willingness to share this program with schools and youth in Vaughan is what makes the Early Harvest Competition an ongoing success.

Through this Competition and our many programs and services, VPL continues to **enrich**, **inspire** and **transform** the lives of the Vaughan community. We are proud to give creative teens a local outlet to showcase their creativity. I invite you to join me in recognizing the talent of this year's finalists. On behalf of the Vaughan Public Library Board, I congratulate all the finalists, contributors and participants of this year's Competition.

Michael McKenzie,
Chair, Vaughan Public Library Board



Vaughan Public Library Board

Front Row (from L): Lorraine de Boer, Michael McKenzie (Chair), Grace Lociento. **Middle Row (from L):** Suri Rosen, Rosanna DeFrancesca, Devender Sandhu (Vice-Chair), Marie Chiaromonte, Isabella Ferrara, Marilyn Iafrate. **Back Row (from L):** Vivek Gupta, Gino Rosati, Margie Singleton (CEO), Steve Kerwin, Rocco Capone, Pradeep Puri, Michael Di Biase.

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Special thanks to our sponsors:



Cover Artwork: Helen Kurnevich



Still Photography



1st Prize — Alex Phan, age 17



**2nd Prize
Jessica Chesler, age 15**



**3rd Prize
Josh Van Rys, age 17**

Digitally Manipulated Photography



1st Prize — Victoria DeRooy, age 17



2nd Prize
Tiggy Chen, age 14



3rd Prize
Sammy Barsky, age 13

Poetry

1st Prize — Edmee Nataprawira, age 18

Insomnia

The last time I walked barefoot was on the carpet of Annie's room.
I was wearing my shower slippers when I saw her and joined her
on the floor between her desk and her bed
for a conversation,
a glass of water,
a cup of tea.

I wish I was in Indonesia. My mother used to tell me stories of a childhood there.
And one can feel a certain ownership over the places from one's mother's stories
even if one has lived her whole life within the confines of a single city and its suburbs.

I think of islands I've never been to and I am nostalgic for family I have never known
and shadow puppet shows that I have never seen. It occurs to me—
if Nostalgia were a woman, she'd be close cousins with Loneliness.

I can't remember when I took my slippers off.

The carpet was warm against my toes when she wrapped her arms around me,
little tufts of floor, the individual threads too small to be distinguishable
to my uneducated, uncultivated skin.

If Loneliness were a man, I'd bet he never got close enough to shake hands with Annie.
Her mind was too filled with pictures and her hands were always made of paint.
The colours kept her company, in my presence or otherwise.

When she wrapped her arms around me and tucked her chin into my hair,
I thought for a second of my smallness enveloped in her
and of her comparative smallness to her sweater, her sheets, her room.

I think we were like dustmotes in the light, or muddy puddles stirred momentarily into
the air by a passing car on a highway. Her breath flew us through the small squares of the
bug screen in her window and into the cloudy lamp-lit sky.

Or perhaps I deceive myself. I speak in hypotheticals. Nostalgia and Loneliness and I
amplified by want of sleep, extend minutes into infinities when really
we cradled ourselves not in the air but in the dirt of the potted plant
that she keeps in the corner of her room
by the window, tightly closed.

‡ *Poetry entries have been reproduced as submitted.*

2nd Prize — Jordi Klein, age 18

Target Bird

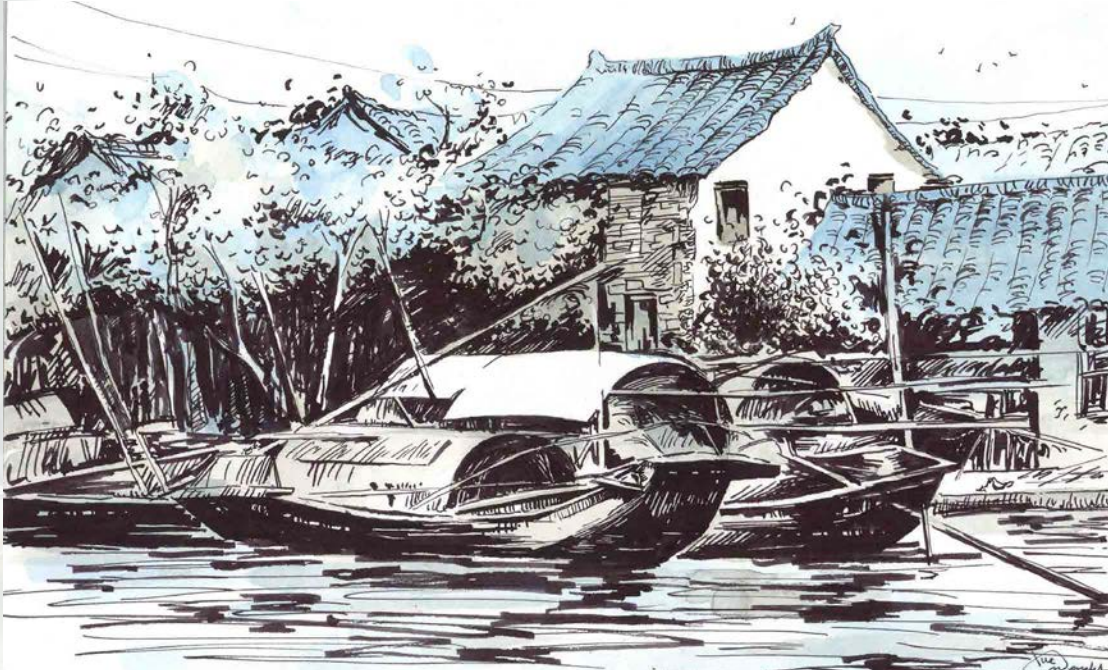
As quarter notes, they stand silhouetted
against an accidental staff of telephone wires,
misplaced melodies in an unforgiving world-
yet she is the only one who ever sings.
Her wings beat an allegro against an iron sky
though she does not, cannot soar-
and in the instant before her neck is wrung
she glows iridescent in the moonlight
beneath another's calloused palms.
Although her business is wrought in reverence and fragility
her death is inelegant, a mockery of flesh,
blood drying into soft downy as bones splinter beneath.
Such is the life to which she has pledged herself;
there is nothing as astutely delicate as a pigeon
cradled by frozen fingers in the middle of the night
beneath an empty sky.

3rd Prize — Emmy Liu, age 14

Winter in Singapore

I observed a lark population on the black-sand beaches of my childhood,
It was raining at the waterfront and my blue shovel,
Stuck in the bucket with my diving rings and garden trowel, was washed clean.
When I approached, the birds seemed to huddle cautiously under an outcropping
-of rock, no less, striped and wrapped parallel to the shore, similar to a mud wall,
(I had seen those in a picture book, illustrated) and yet, how curious,
the ocean mists seemed to amble emptily, air and mist and spray,
when I sat down by the water, on small hard rocks like marbles and let my hair get wet.
Choosing to gaze across the water, for the larks were poor compatriots,
I saw the gray shallow sea eclipsed by the gray shallow sky.
When I was small, I knew that there were cities in the distance across the shore,
Cities I could not get to, sunny days, away, experienced by the rest of the human race.
And that there was concrete, pavement, but how far those seemed, sitting on wet sand!
And yet, sensing something critical in the way the waves lapped at my feet,
I looked askance, down the precipice where the world blurred white and complacent,
In the state of decay caused by the forgetting of their own condition,
There were the footsteps of someone, long washed by the tide.

Sketching & Painting



1st Prize — Wendy Xue, age 17



2nd Prize
Helen Kurnevich, age 15



3rd Prize
Savva Gretzky, age 12

Video



1st Prize — Ari Matchen, age 15 & Noam Epskin Roth, age 14
Run



2nd Prize — Talia Teeger, age 18
The Surrealist Journey



3rd Prize — Imbar Slavat, age 15,
Henley Lapid, age 15, Zachary Blatman, age 15,
Jordan Shapiro, age 16, Dina Liebmann, age 15,
Tami Poliwoda, age 16
Earth's Army

Short Story

1st Prize — Kara Schuringa, age 18

You

You are ornery, you are obsolete.

Here you stand, addressing me, with tears in your eyes and a curl to your lip, as if you can break me, as if your pleading gaze and stuttering syllables will change my mind. As if the choice is even mine to make.

When I don't cave, you begin to glare. I shake my head, but you're nodding yours, golden curls bouncing, like a miniscule cherub, an angel, surely something more heavenly than human. You say you won't go, scream it to the ceilings, past brick and mortar and to the skies, the great, empty skies. I shake, but I am resolved. The stubborn stamp of your foot implies you have direction and purpose and a say in the matter, but you don't, my dear girl. I could never outgrow you, yet you are being shunted away like an old, ratty sock.

I try to speak, *It's not up to me!* but you are beyond listening.

You bring me gifts, like peace offerings, and you cry big, silent tears when I turn you away. Blushing dolls and sticky marbles line the table, marching in tidy rows like soldiers, waging your war. The battle won't be won, child, no matter how many damp cheeks you lean against my knee, or how many times your cold words find their way whipping through my ears. Your hatred drags its nails across my skin, but this only makes me more sure. You will leave me hard and halting, and I will not look back.

In the night, under cool sheets, you are calm. I would hold you, cradle your soft, warm self, but that would be the death of me. You want to know how to break me? You want to know what will keep you home, child? The gentle press of your chin into my shoulder, tiny fingers curling round my neck. Scream, girl, rage and spit your venom into my eyes, but it's your

‡ *Short story entries have been reproduced as submitted.*

unconsciousness that robs me of my breath. In the silence, I speak, *It's not my choice*, but you turn your spine to me.

You must go, you must, you must.

You will be angry and stubborn and send frowning glances my way, but I will drag you to that car if I must. If I'm breaking your spirit, I'm sorry, I truly am, but this is the law against us and the law will always win. I don't want to tell you now, but you will find out. You are nothing, child, replaceable and obsolete. That's what they will teach you, but still you must go. The world will kick you down and deem you worthless, and you are. I'm sorry, but really, you are.

We are.

If you never forgive me, I will be glad. Hold your head up, child, and keep your soul. Cover it, protect it, hide it in your pockets and under your skirts and beneath your pretty feet. Don't let them take it. They will step on you, crush you down into dirt, and drag your spirit from your lifeless frame, but never forgive me. Blame me, punish me, take my windpipe and engulf it in your tempest, expressing to me just what it is you so detest.

When they break you, I will hold your pieces in my palms and weep, but I will not be taken by surprise. I know the time will come; I have always known. I'm sorry. You are worthless and you must go.

There you stand, on the other side of a small window pane, hands on hips, small face red and tear-streaked. Someone else's hands comfort you, somebody else holds your fingers in their own. I wave goodbye, mouth *I love you*, and listen to your screams as I stumble down the schoolhouse steps.

2nd Prize — Alexandra Fiorante, age 16

Of All He Said

I watch sea smoke encase the air, touching hands with the sable sea in the heavens. Stars riding the satin sky ripples. The planet extends beyond itself, unraveling portals of freedom. A world past our own, is a moon amongst night terrors. It bears love to a soul with a blood pumping muscle that idles on ink. Spindrift cradles my tongue, fondling my tastebuds with paws of salt. Currents of air brawl the surface of furious waves and throw themselves at me. A lone sailboat bobs the body, kissing the Atlantic breakers before retiring from and flirting with the upcoming.

He searches endlessly.

"There is nothing worth taking in" I say.

He says, "I am not looking for anything," He says, "I am feeling for something."

"Pardon? For what?" I say.

He says, "I would not know."

"I wish I were a sailboat," I say. "Sovereign of the ebony seas."

"No, you do not."

"Gyrating the liquid indigo to the content of my heart," I say.

"No, you do not."

"To be saturated in the hues of the detached. To no longer endure torture. To be free of the seven deadly sins that strangle my lungs until I cough dust of what is left of my spirit. I wish I were a sailboat," I say. "To feel nothing. To feel nothing is bliss. I would rather feel nothing than to feel desolation and the fragments of my glass heart splintering into my abyss of my vessel," I say.

He says, "I am searching for feeling. So I am searching for no reason."

He says, "I am a sailboat, I cannot feel. I am sovereign of the ebony seas.

Gyrating the liquid indigo to the content of my heart. Saturated in the hues of the detached, to no longer endure torture. Though, I have never felt such emotion to begin with. I am empty."

He says, "I cannot feel what it is like to have passion for another, or to feel adored in return."

He says, "I cannot feel what it is like to have pride in heart for my doings."

He says, "I cannot feel what it is like to have horror on my shoulders following twisted dreams amid my imagination."

‡ *Short story entries have been reproduced as submitted.*

He says, "I cannot feel the arrow to my chest as loneliness is to one's soul."
He says, "But I can only wish."
"Little sailboat," I say.
"Why would you wish for such abuse?" I say.
He says, "Why would I not?"

What an odd thing. I would not waste a wish on that.

Saline naps at the goosebumps prickling the nape of my neck.
He says, "to feel something, to feeling anything at all,"
He says, "Is to know you are alive."
He says, "And to know you are alive, is all one should treasure."
He says, "Although it hurts, pain is not temporary."
He says, "Pain will always pass."
He says, "Because to be alive,"
He rocks.
He rocks.
He rocks.
He says, "Because to be alive is the ability to act like a sailboat. To mimic.
To be sovereign of the ebony seas. Gyrating the liquid indigo to the content of your
heart. Saturated in the hues of the detached, to no longer endure torture."
He says, "To feel like a sailboat while still being able to feel something, to feel
everything. To feel how a sailboat feels while he himself cannot."
He says, "To trade in your lifeline for a life with no line is to drown yourself in the
very liquid indigo you wish to gyrate."
He says, "If I could feel, I would feel something for you. Until then,"
He sang, "Feel something for the both of us."

With that, the little sailboat trudged onward. Sovereign of the ebony seas. Gyrating
the liquid indigo to the content of his heart. Saturated in the hues of the detached,
to no longer endure torture. Although he could not feel, still.

"I will feel something for us," I sang.
My soul sang back, "She will."

3rd Prize — Jordi Klein, age 18

This Is Not A Love Story

It begins, as all good stories do, on a boardwalk at sunset. The boy leans against the varnished wooden fence, the girl with whom he has fallen madly and hopelessly in love with laughing beside him. He is 15, she just a few weeks his junior, and neither yet old enough to know much about anything.

She smiles and pulls him towards the shore as his thoughts pop like the balloons at the dart toss, breath catching in his throat. A cool, salty breeze picks up and ruffles their hair affectionately as they set in towards the ocean. The sky is a watercolour of pinks and golds and muted purples, the sea lapping at their feet as they step closer to the water. She lets go of his hand, smiling shyly from underneath dark lashes, eyes golden in the sun's dying light. Then, in a moment of impulse that he believes he will surely regret, he grabs her face in his hands and crashes their lips together in what is supposed to be a kiss. He's never done it before, isn't even sure if he's doing it right, but it seemed to have the intended effect because she's grinning and breathless when they break away, and the sea roars behind them in thunderous applause.

This is not their story.

It begins, as most romances do, somewhere wholly bland and predictable, but she's close to 25 and she's tired of waiting. She likes the way he dresses and how he orders his coffee - medium double double, two cream two sugar - and she thinks there are other things she can learn to like about him too.

She steps down the aisle in a dress handmade by her grandmother, scratchy against her skin and several years out of fashion. Before she knows what's happening she's saying *I do*, and there's a ring on her finger and a pair of sloppy lips on hers, cold and forceful. She holds his hand as they exit as she allows herself to be pulled towards the reception, careful not to crack the thick veneer of makeup they'd spent so long applying.

They sleep together maybe once or twice a year, more out of marital obligation than anything else. She has a child, then another one, and he's at work too often to act as any sort of proper father figure. Eventually, she decides to leave her job to take care of the kids full-time and never goes back. He's supportive.

10 years in and she knows he sees other women on his "business trips" to New York but can't bring herself to care. At home, he leaves to play "hockey" with his "buddies" while she sits in front of a computer slowed by porn viruses she doesn't know how to get rid of, watching cat videos on YouTube. She hurts him in his sleep. He tells her he wishes he had a gun in the house. Their children have a hard time explaining to their friends that this is normal.

25 years in and they're not even sure why they're in it anymore, children long grown and out of the house. Maybe it's because they're scared they won't find anyone else. Maybe it's because they think they don't deserve anyone else. Whatever the reason, he begins to take bottles of pills with him when he leaves to play hockey, and she reads softcore erotica novels she doesn't bother to hide when the kids come over. She stopped wearing makeup a long time ago- he's never mentioned it. He still takes his coffee the same way.

49 years in and he dies of a heart attack. The kids - now grown up with families of their own- cry at the hollow slap of dirt hitting pine box; she stands still, back ramrod-straight, her complete indifference well-hidden by a pair of designer sunglasses. She does not remarry. Nobody is surprised.

‡ *Short story entries have been reproduced as submitted.*

Graphic Short Story



1st Prize — Sarina Xue, age 14
Passion



2nd Prize — Rebecca Idzerda, age 17
The Escape



3rd Prize — Karolina Ficek, age 17
Dream, draw, scrap, repeat

Meet the Judges



Victoria Coretti — Video

Victoria Coretti is an avid member of the community and has dedicated the past year to developing *York Region Spotlight* for Rogers TV which focuses on successful teens in York Region. Her own accomplishments include creating/writing and directing her own musical in high school for which she received several awards including “Leadership In the Arts” from the York Catholic District School Board. She has also been the leader and president of numerous clubs including the Arts Council. Victoria has been volunteering with *Rogers TV* for several years and maintains an interest in on-air broadcast. She has also been interning and volunteering in radio (Z103.5 Street Team) and writing for the student magazine www.filthy-glamour.com.



Deborah Kerbel — Short Story

Deborah Kerbel is an author of primarily young adult fiction. Her novels include *Lure*, *Mackenzie*, *Lost and Found*, and *Girl on the Other Side*. Her most recent young adult novel, *Under the Moon*, was a finalist for the 2012 Governor General’s Literary Award. She also co-authored the *Quizmas* series of family Christmas trivia books, *Money Savvy Kids*, and her personal essay, *The Curtain*, is included in the young adult anthology, *Dear Bully: 70 Authors Tell Their Stories*. Deborah was honoured with a 2011 Vaughan R.A.V.E. Award in recognition of her work as a mentor and educator in the Literary Arts.



Natalie Rawe — Sketching & Painting

Natalie Rawe’s work has been featured in five galleries across Canada, including the Anna Leonowens Gallery in Halifax, the McIntosh Gallery in London, and The Khyber Centre For The Arts in Halifax. Inspired by elements around her, Natalie aims to creatively blend a narrative into artwork that revisits her childhood, encapsulates society and is flavoured with humour. Natalie won a prize in the drawing category of Robert McLaughlin Gallery’s 43rd annual juried art show and has been commissioned for various projects, which include portraits, logo design, illustrations and paintings. She received a Bachelor’s Degree in Fine Arts from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.



Rob Tari — Graphic Short Story

A graduate of the Animation program at Seneca College, Rob Tari has been drawing since he was three years old. He has worked steadily in the animation/live action film industry. He has served as everything from a writer, director, concept artist, storyboard artist, layout designer, animator and graphic designer for various companies in Toronto. In 2012 he wrote and directed his first short film “Soul Mates!” which is currently in post-production. When he is not doing that, he works as an Art Instructor for the City of Vaughan, teaching a range of art classes.



David West — Photography

David West is the owner of West Photo and has been the principal photographer at his studio for the past 25 years. David has received numerous awards for his work, including twice winning Ontario Portrait Photographer of the Year. He has earned the prestigious Master of Photographic Arts Degree from the Professional Photographers of Canada, and received a Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce Business Achievement Award. David has also served as the Chair of the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce. In 2010, David was the recipient of a Vaughan R.A.V.E. Award for Educator/Mentor for Visual Arts. David’s studio, West Photo, is located at 120 Newkirk Road, Richmond Hill.



Elana Wolff — Poetry

Elana Wolff’s poems have appeared in journals and anthologies in Canada, the U.K, and the U.S. She has published six books with Guernica Editions, including *You Speak to Me in Trees*, awarded the 2008 F.G. Bressani Prize for Poetry, and *Startled Night*, nominated for the 2012 ReLit Poetry Award. Elana’s poem sequences placed first in the 2011 GritLit Writing Competition and in *Echolocation Magazine’s* 2013 “The Chase” Contest. A bilingual edition of her selected poems is forthcoming with Noroît Editions of Quebec. She lives in the City of Vaughan, where she writes, edits, and designs and facilitates therapeutic community art.



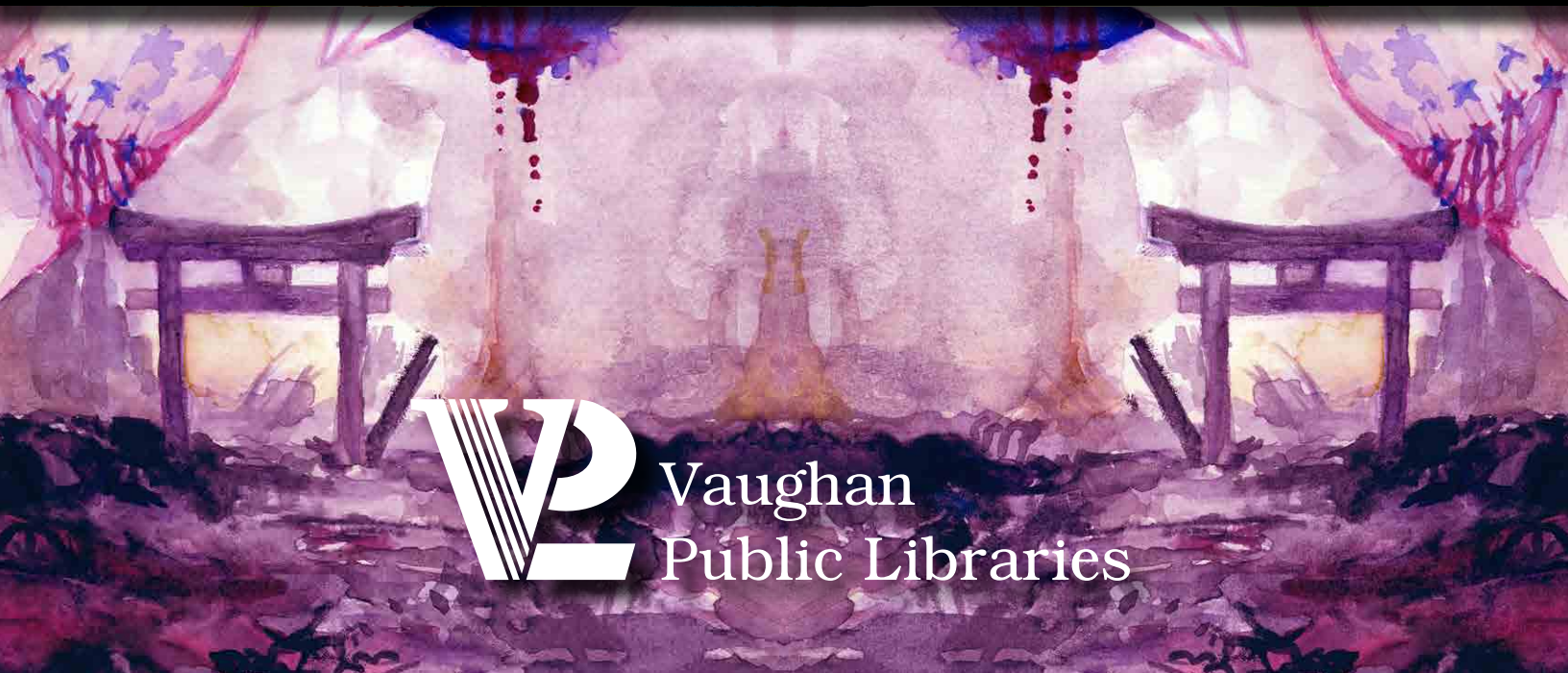
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