

Grey

Table of Contents

2.....	About the Grey Zine
4.....	Vapour Light by Carmel Garvez
6.....	Which Direction by Meghan Mackay
7.....	A Pastime Moving Picture by Yvonne Mensah
8.....	As a Friend by Will Jarvis
9.....	Ode to Air Ocean by Will Jarvis
10.....	Whale Teeth by Réa Sowan
12.....	3 rd April 2026 by Alexander Arvelo-McQuaig
13.....	4 th April 2026 by Alexander Arvelo-McQuaig
14.....	Disclosure by Carmel Garvez
15.....	There's a Greyness in Me by Christina Wang
16.....	Smokers' Grey by Annabelle Bernard

In April 2025, a most Vernal time, a writing group was born.

It emerged from having the same conversations about feeling the affinity to write while simultaneously finding the act to be paralysing at times. Some friends, others acquaintances, we shared the same love for expression and felt the call to the page while also guiltily being susceptible to avoiding it.

So we decided to gather every Saturday morning to show up and overcome the push and pull of choosing to write as a vocation. Over time, word of mouth, endless cups of coffee, along with individually self-imposed accountability, our little container grew.

This zine is one of the things that sprouted from those Saturdays.

Conceived by artist and New York transplant Olivia Kusio, the Grey Project began with her observations of Toronto in winter and the strange ubiquity of grey. Together, we spent several

weeks contemplating grey as a colour and as a way of seeing, considering what it means to occupy liminal space, in between pendulum swings of opposing states instead of settling at either extreme.

In these reflections, we talked about grey as a threshold between certainty and what is still taking shape. We write about where it exists in light and shadow, in what's felt and what's seen, and the condition of waiting, especially during the slow transition from winter to spring.

Fittingly, a project about grey gave life to something unexpectedly vibrant. These Saturday mornings made it possible for friendships to deepen and creative projects to evolve. Grey ended up revealing itself to be fertile ground.

The publication you are holding in your hands is a collection of what was seeded and grown there.

Vapour Light

When turned on, shortly after dusk, the sliver of silvery mercury vaporizes, dancing with metal compounds and whispers of noble gases. This small assembly and spark of magic powers the towering structures that dot the whole block of slate and concrete.

The rays from these street lamps skim exteriors, bouncing off cement. Quietly, like a thief in the night, the beams slip inside through seams of heavy drapery.

In low light, everything looks grey. Dark, medium, light shades blend into each other like softly smudged charcoal. Drawing back the curtains on an overcast day lifts the brightness, but it's grey all the same.

I fear I've been here so long that I've grown to love it. It's funny because I thought this was only temporary. I've taken my time getting

comfortable. I think I really do like the cold. It helps me sleep. I'm not lonely, I'm learning to love my own company. Solitude is underrated. Though lately...

I've been rearranging furniture in the dark. Late at night. In my sleep. I've been moving things around, letting go of talismans and grails that were once holy. I'm closing old loops, dissolving old hopes of the selves I wanted to be. I'm unburdening the material and the ethereal, releasing thoughts that hover and haunt.

What if the things that used to protect me are the very things keeping me in place? What is this place, and how did I get here? I don't know what I don't know.

And yet, somewhere, somehow, unknowingly and unknowably, an ember glows in the abyss.

Which direction
do I point my anger
if there's no victim
and no perpetrator?

A pastime moving picture

Streaking shadows on the wall

The blur of the world spinning

Round and round and

Conjuring a static squall

There's a doubt that settles within me

Lands like sedentary stone

It forms a chasm, seemingly empty,

But full of space, starts to feel like home.

As a Friend

Oblivion becomes him
As a friend, it rests upon his shoulder
And whispers ancient horrors
And claims his days and nights in triumph
It gallops through his nightmares
Gleefully braying
Taunting every moment into decay
As a friend, it humbles him towards the broken cliffs
Washed in seaspray, bleached by moonbeams
He tumbles forward into flight
Alighting upon the wind and cast into Evermore
He wakes
He shudders
He climbs to his feet once more
Captured by the spell of nothing
The absence beckons him to moss and soil
I join him in the sylvan chorus
And praise the Roiling Bloom
As a friend

Ode to Air Ocean

Sullen and bleak
the concrete scuffs the soles of the passers-by
Each footfall slowly wears them down to skin
Every single heel ground into mulch
The coarse stone artifice takes its flesh by the tonne
It lies indifferent, resilient
It stands hollow, girded
It meets the wind and rain with identical disdain
Shrugging off the onslaught in mute defiance
Brittle and weak
The pools that gather form cracks and fissures
Jagged flakes fall
exposing skeletal rebar
Water driven by the gusts
brings the iron bones to rust
Torrents descend in pulsing regularity
yearning to join the buried rivers
Creeks carving caverns below the thinning crust
hum beneath the spectral threshold
pronouncing subtle tones
sung gently for familiar stones

The crumbling into dust began
the day the form was poured and cast

Whale Teeth

My friend wore a tinfoil skirt,
said she wore it when she got lost in the grey of this city
so unlike her New York dressed in its leafy greens,
waving its hand-shaped branches.

She decided she would enter grey like the mouth of a whale,
wrap her limbs in it, spend hours
admiring the fishscale grey-glass buildings refracting light
in the claustrophobic aquarium of downtown Toronto
where the sun, like a jazz-trumpet, wears a mute.

She said it in the cafe where we meet on Saturdays,
the one painted orange-juice-orange
where we talk about writing
but, of course, never write.

I left smelling of burnt coffee,
stuttered my etch-a-sketch path through the city,
my grey matter embracing the aloofness
implied in its name.

I thought of her fishy buildings,
towering bullies leering over me in a row
to carve between their bodies
tunnels of wind to flush me out.

I tried to see them as she does, a tender conspiracy,
rearrange them in my imagination
like neat rows of a whale's teeth
a gaping mouth,
an invitation.

Their windowed faces winked their thousand eyes at me
Like water catching light.
I winked back and pulled the cumulus duvet
again over the sun.

3rd April 2026

The kind of weather that brings
two city bumpkins out
to sit on a dry lawn in a grey
neighbourhood drinking
orange juice and eating eggs
and laughing about death
and dating and hoping
for spring to save us

4th April 2026

This is the greyest day I've ever seen
And in my mind there's a castle on a hill
Pointing upward and without me
And from there rolls down to the city
Where everything I've ever hoped floats,
caught in a hurricane before dusk
Of knowledge of what will happen
And ignorance of what already did
But then something else happened
So I march out of my casket into the cold
To see what I missed other than the obvious
And a cloud gives birth to a new shade

Disclosure

What if the little Greys depicted cartoonishly for ages as galactic intruders were actually us in the future?

What if the Greys are versions of ourselves who have quantum leaped post-optimization, and ascended temporally, elementally, metaphysically?

What if the Greys have travelled so far ahead in the timeline that they've reached enlightenment, felt its unbearable loneliness, and decided to come back?

What if the Greys are here to heal aeons of intergenerational gunk?

What if inter-dimensional travel was advancement for the avoidant? And what if reaching nirvana was actually underwhelming?

What if the Greys aren't here to invade or destroy, but in fact, quite the opposite?

Instead of towers of data centres, what if the Greys want us to commit wholeheartedly to regenerative farming, and that's why they keep leaving passive aggressive notes via crop circles?

What if money was just an agreement of value, labour, and materials? What if we didn't make it weird? What if it remained incorruptible instead of hoarded by the few and rationed to the many?

What if mutual care flowed naturally between us?

What if the universe has spent billions of years expanding in all directions only for consciousness to realize that what it wanted all along was to explode with laughter around the dinner table?

Today, I wrote in my journal about the sweetness of old friends. The comfort in shared silence, unmatched, where you both can just be. No need for explanations or having to prove a thing. Just ease, humour, implied affection, and full acceptance for your truest selves.

What if the Greys are here because they ache to be human again? What if they miss inside jokes, having knees, IBS, midnight snacks, longing, swimming pools, eating fruits in season, and crying in public?

What if awakening means losing texture in life?

What if the Greys are here to remember what it was like to live, love, and sometimes be wrong?

What if, after everything, we'd just miss us?

There's a greyness in me

This year, I named her melancholy.

I write poetry into her

To infuse her with some beauty

She smiles at her pretty reflection

I think I confuse beauty with purpose,

Which is a sad fate for women.

I want to take her for what she is

Without the pomp and flare of romance

But it's difficult when you're always in love,

with a craft, with a person,

with your suffering.

So I take her out to dance,

The lights mesmerizing on her form

When we go to bed,

We ache together;

a wanting for more.

Smokers' Grey

I ash the grey of my joint and tuck it neatly
into my pocket.

The cul de sac is ending and I need to transition
into the smell and feel of the forest,
hands unencumbered.

On the ground, little gravel rivers swirl and meld
together, liquifying my path ahead.

The wind bends the trees to allow for blinding
slices of bright grey sky from the tree blanket
above me.

Grey is what comes after burning,
the colour of the water that drags the ashes
across the forest floor.

I'm walking down these paths
after years of neglect.

Living far from the base of Seymour mountain.

Navigating the forest as a drunk teenager in
2005, I searched out the fire pit where I could find
my peers.

Shadowy kisses ended prematurely when the
wind blew the smoke in our directions.

