

# Editors' Note

It is uncommon on this unceded Coast Salish land called “Vancouver” to see the radiant faces of so many black people in one room; more familiar are we with those rare, unexpected moments when we see another solitary “i” in this city, as Ian William so aptly notes in “Our eyes meet across yet another room,” that the on-stage dialogue last June between Dionne Brand, Christina Sharpe, and David Chariandy felt like a long-awaited gift. We left invigorated. What was the work of words for us as students, activists, creators? How do we do the work of words in the climates that we find ourselves in? David Chariandy—our professor for only three months that summer but someone we now envision as a lifelong mentor—encouraged us to follow this thread. He connected us with *The Capilano Review*’s former editor, Andrea Actis, another new mentor, and thus this special issue of *TCR* on “the work of words” was born.

When we began to curate this issue, we were unsure of how the submissions might come together, as might be the case with any collaborative venture. We’d invited contributors with the prompt *What is “the work of words” for black creators now?* and excitedly awaited their interpretations of the question. Despite our uncertainty, we were awestruck by the conversation that we saw between the pieces. This issue is not just held together by blackness, nor does it attempt to provide a definition of blackness. These pieces capture a multiplicity of black joy, fear, desire, communion, sorrow, and life.

Our cover image, a close-up of a sculpture by Marika Yeo, seems to carry this multiplicity. The sculpture is visibly cracked, but rather than being unworkable, the parts are carefully pieced back together in a motion that signals a radical vulnerability. This radical vulnerability, encapsulating an openness and a hope, however fraught, seems to permeate the contributions this issue holds. To quote Caleb Femi, “supernovas are in fact dying stars,” and it is amidst the prospect of dying stars that we fight and live, as the inscription “Black Lives Matter” on the activists’ shirts in Joy Gyamfi’s images remind us. At the same time, that image cannot be read apart from the smiles that surround it. We know that we must find the time to “dance calypso an roll,” as Sonnet L’Abbé so beautifully writes—to live whether it “is or is not history” (Wayde Compton).

This issue is dedicated to those living, multiplying, dreaming, dancing supernovas. We hope that wandering through these pieces is as nourishing for you as it is for us.

—Emmanuelle Andrews and Katrina Sellinger