

Editor's Note

Initially, I thought about collaboration as working together, as what it took to get work done. As I went through the process of guest editing the Collaborations issue of *TCR*, I thought that as long as every contribution showed evidence of collaboration, we would be good. Now I have come to understand that collaboration, like many words, is malleable, slippery, and sometimes contradictory in itself.

The Oxford English Dictionary provides two definitions of collaboration: to work together to create something of artistic endeavour and to work with the enemy. As we invited folks to contribute work, we remembered, considered, debated, hesitated, ate, laughed, and had moments of clarity and brilliance, some tinged with regret and sadness about what was not possible given our restraints, which I could call “the enemy.” Time confined us, as did page counts, a budget (*what?*), and life.

As I reflect on my experience as guest editor for this issue, I think about how to hold both definitions. I also consider how *co-elaboration*—a process that allows for creation between artists, writers, and doers of all types, with elaboration being the focal point—has come to define us much more.

Definitions of collaboration and co-elaboration can and should include the process and production of generosity. Erin Moure brought to our attention Shanzhai Lyric, the collaborative work of Ming Lin and Alexandra Tartasky that focuses on the meeting place between fashion and poetry. And Renée Sarojini Saklikar introduced us to the work of Akem, an illustration of collaboration as “cooperation with the enemy” and the relationship between silence and complicity.

Co-elaborations might look like Chris Turnbull’s “slow unfolding,” Cecily Nicholson, Junie Désil, Mercedes Eng, and Hari Alluri’s “gatheration,” or Jacqueline Turner and Jami Macarty’s “scaffolding of poems.” Elaborations move us from the mythic to the elemental with Hana Amani’s gilded paeans to “defiant women with unpopular opinions,” Dariush Alexander Ghaderi Barrera’s alchemical etchings, and Genevieve Robertson’s elegy of the remains of forest fire.

Relationships are the undercurrent of collaborative efforts. Erín Moure, Deanna Fong, and Karis Shearer talk about who is included in the “we” in G. Maria Hindmarch’s *Kitsilano*, Jónína Kirton asks us to consider our relationship to the sacred, and ReMatriate Collective reminds us that “water connects us all.”

It may be an act of contrition to end this note with a co-elaboration between the words of Toni Morrison and Binyavanga Wainaina, two artists who passed this year, leaving me bereft in the wake. “I am feeling so almost,” Binya writes in *Since Everything was Sudden into a Hurricane*, while Morrison says, “Look at this thing we have created together” in a moment of awe shared in her 1992 Nobel laureate speech. This issue is evidence of the time and generosity, skill and artistry, and ultimately, privilege and space that it takes to create together. I am grateful to everyone who contributed to this issue for the feeling of “so almost”—this is as close as I want to be, given the restraints we had. Thank you so much *TCR*, for this privilege.

—Juliane Okot Bitek