



**JUSTIN APPERLEY**  
COWBOYS CAN'T SLEEP

## *I'm giving you the sun tonight*

And everything it decays. Before the owls came back you fed on yourself and not much else. It was the season of spaghetti and rice, we read about someone using whiskey instead of antifreeze. We sat in the dark, sang to keep going. We were riding around getting stuck, and thought the caribou before it showed itself, it made us do that. Get back and can't start anything but there's a soda stream.

We were talking about dreams and he said why bother remembering unless they're dirty. Time to rake sawdust, the ground is gonna be warm. Sleeping under the silver sliver. A bear came and I asked it to leave, but I didn't mean it. He could tell. I stripped bark because I was mad at myself and I needed penance. The time of year when everyone was mad, we are small but contain multitudes... Lend me some sugar, I'm your neighbour. If we come and go like the seasons. If the past somehow stays in the present.

Exhaust blocks out the sun for a second. Is it a new order or something older? That sun that fills everything with blood, and fades your dirty clothes when you're toiling and running to last call. Sit at the tavern and rub your forehead till the dandruff hits the table. The place is held up by dust and work anyway. Outside there's people on the hill, making out for lost time. Somewhere south there's robots running free smacking QR codes on everything. It's the belly of the beast, but if you can just get around it. She's stuffing her shit in a black garbage bag. He's telling her she better find another hill to die on.

The sun was always setting always rising.

Trying to forget about the times you have to buy freedom. Turning days into just things that make up a season so we can be at this ugly party. Look at me in my face, it's finally tan, while I snuff whatever you give me, I'll give it to you back. I'll give all this oxytocin and my limited devotion. It's been deteriorating for a while, outside forces work on your insides. Talk to me honest no one else is listening. Where do you get a good witness these days.



## *It's a beautiful (post-rapture) life*

Like photography and the process of developing film itself, Justin Apperley's work explores materiality, and physical processes of decay, which is another way of saying time and the things that time does. Apperley's work shows and is born of direct relations to the transient, mania, the neighbouring joe blows, the neighbouring flora and fauna, and relics of life which sometimes take on lives of their own. The work never glorifies any more or less than necessary.

Born in 1994, **Amna Nour** is a writer who was most recently based in Trondëk Hwëch in traditional territory. Her book of recipes and prose poems, *Tip of Your Tongue*, is coming out eventually.

## ***Cowboys Can't Sleep***

I'm still a criminal in Texas.

..and you're welcome, I also invited that inner insomniac who feels fuckin' crazy from lack of sleep and too much adderall. working hard hardly working. we're all fuelled up. mostly on being an outlaw and always on the move, alllll the way, far away to just get stuck. stuck on one of those dizzy afternoons falling in the pit: watering woes, sun burning, pressed tin spinning, dead friends staring- better off than you could say so yourself. and ok, there you have it: barred, frayed n' sun stained, all cops really are bastards. slipped out of the tank, blissed out, sun kissed, squinting thru crows feet.. desperately manic, can't catch a wink, the morning after pulling a whisky binged solstice on the dome, inhaling camp smoke and blood stains from the mosquito bites you couldn't stop itching while singing Conway Twitty on the top of your lungs, stumbling down the mountain with red eyes, crying on your knees at 4am and holding swaying black spruce for support while the swamp puddles soak up into your leather soled boots.

*- Justin Apperley, 2022*

***Justin Apperley*** is an artist based in the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (Dawson City, Yukon Territory). Justin holds an MFA at The Glasgow School of Art and a BDes from OCAD and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Working with photography, sculpture and print media, Apperley's practice deals with emerging themes of climate change, nomadic futures and alternative survival strategies.

Justin is a former KIAC Artist-in-Residence at the Macaulay House (2013) and has work acquired as part of the Yukon Permanent Art Collection (2020). Selected exhibitions include Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2019, Leeds Art Gallery & South London Gallery, Leeds & London, UK (2019), Silver Linings, Yukon Arts Centre, Whitehorse, CA (2020), Last Futures, Tramway, Glasgow, UK (2018), and Pin-Up, Mercer Union, Toronto, CA (2011). Selected publications include Dust to Oaxaca, by Colour Code Printing, Toronto, CA (2016), and Freeze up / Break up, by Rockbottom Press, Los Angeles, USA (2015).

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