

ARTIST STATEMENT

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Poetry has always been a method of sharing the ideas and feelings that straight prose cannot. It is a means of explaining the abstract. Poetry has been, to me, the art of pressing myself into the blue-ruled lines of notebook paper and watching myself grow into an entity of ink.

With the task of highlighting the history of Port Moody through poetry in front of me, my first poem, “Opus”, came naturally. In a way it tells the story of how Port Moody, my city since birth, has shaped me. It contains snapshots of the precious memories I hold from my younger days, the places and colours of each event that my childish heart had thought fit to preserve until my youth—memories which, with all likelihood, will persevere through my adult life as well. I still remember vividly the first time I saw the tree lighting ceremony at Suter Brook. But my story is only a small part of the story of Port Moody. “Opus” is a celebration of this; the imagery of a city. The feelings, the sights, and the sounds, each of which are most beautiful when taken alongside the other, the way that even the most impressively cut or coloured pieces of stained glass are most beautiful when arranged into a mosaic, something which means more than the sum of its parts.

Upon completing my first poem, the second proved harder as inspiration proved scarce. I had already covered within the first poem, to an extent, my experience as a citizen of Port Moody. I knew that, for the second, it would be important to look at a more literal interpretation of the city’s history. But I knew very little of what it would be like to live here a hundred years ago. And although I could *imagine* what it could have been like, my first drafts for poems carried an air of falseness—as if a child who grew up after the millennium was pretending, putting on an act for his history class. And it wouldn’t do. My second poem, “Found”, blossomed out of an idea; the idea that, perhaps, the story of life one hundred years ago was not one I could believably tell. And so, as the title suggests, I found it. The text itself is borrowed from the official website of the city of Port Moody, under the heading of “History”. As the poet, I searched through the included articles in order to find what spoke to me—the images. And, no longer trying to ‘create’ a vision of the past, I allowed myself to be an instrument through which the older narrations of the city’s evolution could be given new voice.

It is the spirit of this second poem that I wish to maintain in my work if chosen as the Youth Poet Laureate—and, perhaps, in all of my future poetic endeavours. I wrote above that poetry is a means of explaining the abstract. In my experience, however, the abstract worlds of meaning and sentiment are often hard to explore, and even a craftsman who is an expert with a given tool cannot accomplish a task if the task itself is outside the scope of the person’s understanding. As such, no longer will I view my poetry as a tool I can use to explain the abstract. Left to its own devices the poem seems to do the explaining of its own accord.

Perhaps the poet is the tool.