



Toronto Zine Library

Newsletter



**EVENTS, ZINE REVIEWS AND
PROJECTS**

**THE SNOW HASN'T STOPPED US
YET!**

Winter 2026



A jam packed newsletter follows with updates on our history project, a zine review, and news from a panel on food and memory politics! Read on to hear about a zine spot in Victoria, a new zine subscription, and ways you can support TZL!

And while the weather may be cold, TZL is staying warm with a Zugzwang reading and upcoming Valentine's events. Plus, don't forget to mark your calendars for this year's Paperjam with additional celebrations for TZL's 20th Anniversary!

Finally, a huge thank you to all our contributors and volunteers who help put this newsletter together. We couldn't do it without you! Without further ado, enjoy!

-Karennna

TZL HISTORY PROJECT



Ever wondered how TZL became TZL? After months of researching and reconnecting with former TZL members, we created a quick history to showcase major milestones that formed the building blocks of the Toronto Zine Library we know and love today.

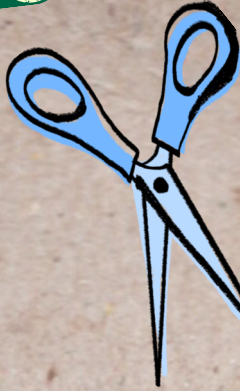
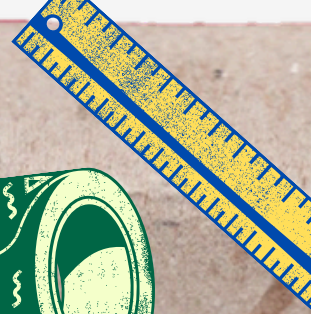
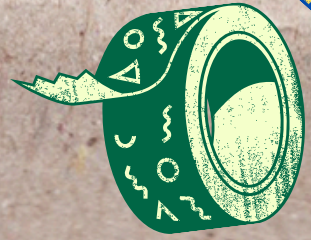
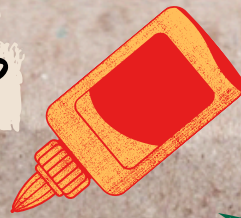
We reached out and interviewed former TZL Volunteers about what it was like volunteering at TZL; we were especially keen on the highs and lows of TZL and how they managed it all. A few other important resources referenced were Zine-o-Files (aka IRL the newsletter that was created and regularly published), the TZL official website, and the TZL email as it was used as the main communication between TZL Volunteers and with the public.

The interviews with former TZL Volunteers described the environment and the types of zinesters that would frequent the library in the early years. And Zine-o-Files and the website showcased events. Since there were so many events, we thought, what better way to display everyone's hard work than to create a webpage listing all of the events TZL created and participated in!

Both the history of TZL and the list of all TZL events live on our [website](#). Hopefully you'll check in from time to time to see the new events current TZL Volunteers are working on and milestones we've passed! If you're interested in reading more about TZL activities, we still publish Zine-o-File annually. Reach out to torontozinelibrary@gmail.com to inquire.

UPCOMING TZL EVENTS

Valentine's Day Edition!



toronto zine library
presents...

tranzac - 2nd floor
292 brunswick ave



masks highly encouraged!
materials will be provided / donations always welcome



Nihilistic about Gender Nihilism

A Zine Review by Leone

[Opinions expressed in this review are the author's own and are always open to discussion. Please see the TZL website for our volunteer manifesto and community commitments.]

The zine I picked up at Camas books was "Gender Nihilism: An Anti-Manifesto" by Alyson Escalante, distributed by Warzone Distro in 2017. It is well thought out, clearly written, and seeks to create space for an as yet unimaginable future. Gender nihilism is a form of gender abolition that posits a method of complete rejection as the only possible response to the current gender apparatus. That is, they see no way to salvage gender through reconstitution, no salvation through revolution. The radical acceptance of a current impossibility, of gender as nothingness, is nihilism.

They begin from the premise that gender, and humans more generally, do not have an essential internal being (i.e., an "I" with a stable sense of self-identity), but are constituted by one's continual participation and reference to external discourses that are constantly in flux. They problematize the once-radical non-binary identity by claiming it still operates in direct contrast to the binary, and is thus "only subversive through their reference to the norm" that they paradoxically reinforce, even via negation (6). The author does not want to contract, reduce, or essentialize the gender spectrum, but neither do they wish to expand it, which would only expand the ways in which one can be identified as deviant and thus punished. So, categorization itself must be abolished. Their claim that "it is not merely certain formulations of identity politics which we seek to combat, but the need for identity altogether" is in line with other ways of thinking stereotypical of the West Coast, such as certain branches of esoteric or ecological spirituality and meditation that aim towards ego-death and/or communal consciousness (7).

The potential dangers the author sees in embracing absolute (gender and self-)negation is confined to its effect on the radicals who can fully commit to embodying it. However, I want to challenge the idea that the biggest threat is a loss of self. Instead, I think the real danger of gender nihilism is putting it in the hands of those who never "believed in 'pronouns'" in the first place.

[cont.]

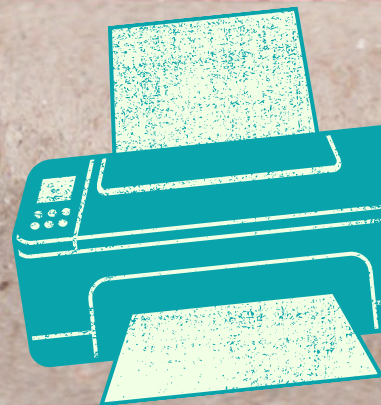


In the wrong hands, radical negativity—a rejection of all identity—can too easily be co-opted by those looking to erase hard-won progress in the acceptance of gender diversity, and lead to re-inhabiting the invisible norms of gender that have not been sufficiently done away with. Indeed, beyond the relatively small community of gender deviants who rely on alternative queer spaces to exercise and affirm the full extent of their identity, gender roles have barely been loosened in the wider world. That the layperson's grasp of gender remains rudimentary is seen in the heterosexual dating advice that proliferates online. Their new awareness of, and renewed insistence on, traditional gender roles is evidence that they are only in the first steps of becoming-conscious about what gender means and how it operates. Because marginalized experiences are often at the forefront of change, it is easy to forget, situated within our contrastingly utopic and nuanced queer worlds, that the average person is not at a place to understand the implications of a complete refusal. The broader population will instead experience the refusal as a return of their normal, where gender is absent not because it is abolished, but because it is invisibly entrenched. They want gender to become an automatic, unquestioned assumption again. They want it to go away; to be able to say 'I don't use pronouns' and for it to be true. The potential harm of gender nihilism is not solely the loss of self in the undifferentiated abyss, but that those who always maintained that gender does not exist will be able to state their case with renewed conviction, by appealing to quotes from radicals as their supporting evidence, thus using the language of queer theory to undermine its own cause.

So, though the discourse in queer communities has come full circle from affirmative celebration to complete nihilism, there has not been enough progress in the normative realm to round the first corner of their square understanding. That is not to say that radical ideas should not exist—I ultimately agree with the (unironic) hope of gender nihilism. But I cannot in good faith recommend the theory be introduced into the mainstream, lest we give the normies precisely what they want: an excuse not to engage in the difficult process of unlearning the language of gender, wrapped up in a map leading them right back to the golden age of their treasured traditions. While there are times to leave open the question of gender to create space to imagine a better future, we must also permit using an answer as armour against the ascription of assumed identity that is automatically applied by a public who encounter silence not as active resistance, but as an acquiescence to assimilation.

This zine will be entered into TZL's catalog in January and can be found on the shelves soon after. Come by and give it a read for yourself! 5/5 stars, highly recommended.

ZUGZWANG, ZUGZWANG, ZUGZWANG!



On Thursday January 29th, TZL's literary workshop, Zugzwang, launched its 3rd Issue, featuring Elisabeth Dorion, Gitanjali D. Bal, Jairan Gahan, John Nyman, Miles Forrester, Nevada-Jane Arlow, & Violet Cortés. We filled the Living Room of the Tranzac again, with six excellent writers/readers drawing crowds out from the safety of their apartments and through incredibly perilous weather. We actually lost one of our readers the week before due to the slush (Gitanjali's ankle is recovering by all accounts), but she was able to join us via a stop motion video that she made for the reading.

Zugzwang is conducted every other season for six weeks on Wednesday evenings in the Toronto Zine Library. Zugzwangers bring in their own work for close reading and critique and we subsequently do writing exercises inspired by that week's pieces. That free writing is the material that will create the next Zugzwang. Here's an example of a writing exercise based on Nevada-Jane Arlow's "Burning Captain Canuck":

Whether it's by you —

Your own routine,
Imagined or in the past,
Or from a review, a manifesto
[maybe] which proposes —
Is there a performance
That is possible [by you & me —
maybe] That accomplishes what
Performance can only
Produce. Can you articulate this?
I'm confused, but not as much
As I could be. Do this.



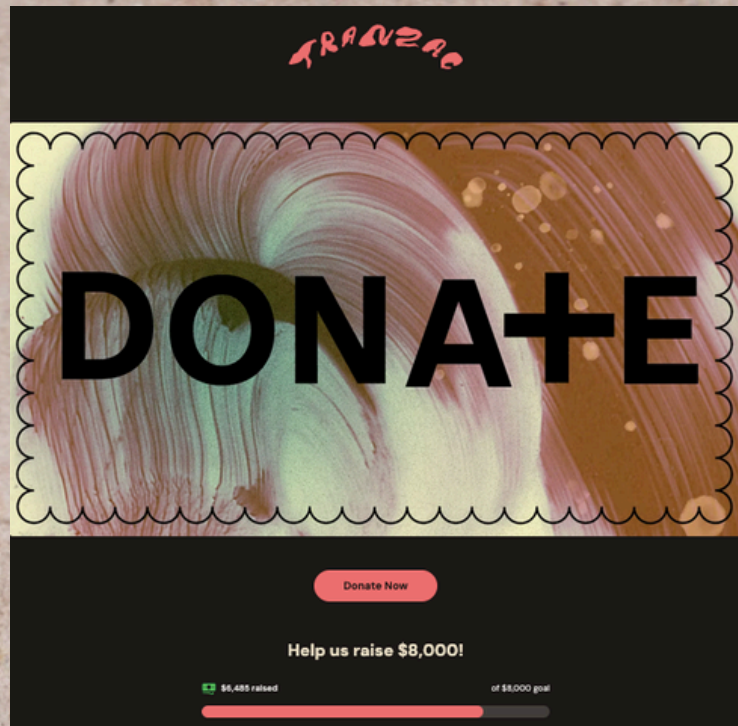
Our fourth session, Zugzwang, Zugzwang, Zugzwang, Zugzwang will run in Spring (late April to early June). If you're interested, email Miles before the end of March at mi.st.n.for.rest@gmail.com with a 1-2 page sample of your writing, a short bio, and a statement of intent. We hope to hear from you!

SUPPORT THE TRANZAC

Did you know that the zine library is only able to operate because the Tranzac lends us their space?

The Tranzac is raising funds to keep its doors open (in advance of an emergency)

Funds raised help keep a great venue space afloat and are needed to keep us running as well!



The best way to support the Toronto Zine Library is to support the Tranzac!

Here's how you can support:

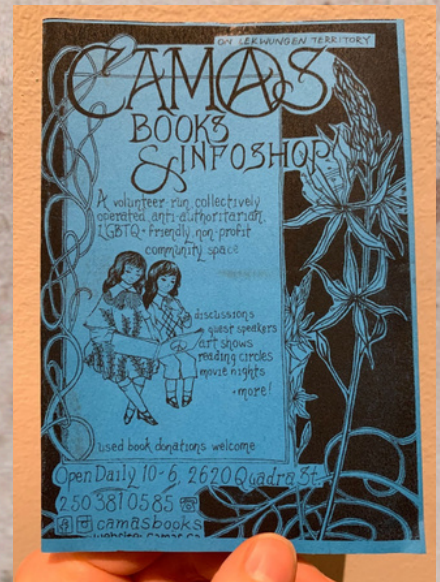
- 🎵 [Donate](#)—every contribution makes a difference
- 🎵 [Become a member](#)—help sustain the Tranzac for the long haul
- 🎵 [Rent the space](#)—book for an evening event or for weekday rehearsals

VISITING CAMAS BOOKS

by Leone

Camas is the local neighbourhood's number one stop for books, zines, pins, posters, and ephemera. I visited the store soon after Victoria's annual Anarchist Book Fair, and quickly encountered evidence that some of the fair's untraded titles had made their way onto the very colourful and diverse zine wall at the back of the store. The main themes included Indigenous sovereignty, Queer resistance, Anarchism, and the intersection of these ideas. Though not my first time in Camas books, it was the first time I bought anything, which highlighted its true non-profit community practices, since zines (and everything in front of the check-out) had sliding-scale pricing.

Even from outside, the spirit of the store can be seen in the front windows plastered with live music posters, community callouts, queer events, adverts for fundraising initiatives, and culturally relevant quotes. Like TZL, it is also collectively run by volunteers and operates as a venue hosting a variety of cultural and educational events throughout the year. Camas is not only a place where people can stay informed via books, but also a place where people can organize.



Camas Books Flyer



The Zine Wall



Pins I acquired.

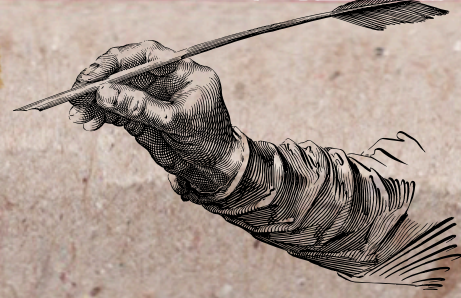
- A) One firefighter handing a rescued baby to another firefighter on a ladder, who replies, "No, you idiot! Not the kids--the zine! Find the zine!"
- B) "Antifascism is for Lovers."
- C) A punk racoon bike messenger, which could be Toronto's own mascot.



Camus outside Camas

TZL at the Tri-Campus Food Symposium

By Minh



On January 23rd and 24th, UofT Hart House hosted the annual Tri-Campus Food Symposium. The two-day event brought together "students, scholars, educators, activists, and community members across all three University of Toronto campuses who are interested in building equitable and sustainable food systems on campus and beyond"



(Hart House Student Farm Committee). TZL was contacted to speak on a panel about food and memory politics, and I was happy to take up the call for my alma mater.

With a handful of topical zines in tow, I enjoyed a fun and insightful conversation alongside panelists Taylor, a chef from Six Nations; Jade from FoodShare; Long from OPIRG; and Lizzy from the KOSA Collective. Each of my fellow panelists drew from their wealth of experience working in mutual aid and food-based community building, while I was happy to offer some perspective on the importance of zines and zine-making to independent cultural preservation. It was an honour to speak on a topic so close to my heart as a representative of TZL, and I hope zines continue to be spotlighted in conversations about community archivism. Thank you to Giulia and Kamilla from the Hart House Student Farm Committee for their great work organizing this event, it was a delight!



SAVE THE DATE!



PAPERJAM

A ZINE FAIR

MARCH 28TH, 2026

This year is Toronto Zine Library's 20th anniversary so we've booked the whole Tranzac Club building for Paperjam to celebrate!

We hope you can come by between 12-5pm on March 28!



NEW ZINE SUBSCRIPTION



GAY MAIL FRIEND!

(aka, Community for introverts delivered to your door.)

A fellow zinester from Minneapolis, Sarah Evenson, is launching a new way for folks to connect across the world! Below is a description of Gay Mail Friend and a link to the subscription.

What is it?

Gay Mail Friend! is a zine subscription service run by Sarah Evenson. Once a month, subscribers receive a cut-and-fold zine in their mailbox, either by me or by one of my cool gay friends... you never know! It is available on a sliding scale of \$5 to \$30 per month. All subscribers get the same thing, the tiers are just about accessibility. :)

P.S. Gay Mail Friend is for people who need a friend! A limited number of subscriptions are available for free. If you want one, just email Sarah to make it happen, no questions asked. gaymailfriend@gmail.com

SUBSCRIBE HERE!

For visual examples of the kinds of zines that subscribers will receive, [click here!](#)

For more info about the kinds of zines that subscribers will receive, [click here!](#)

