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Elaine

***Please submit a short bio (approx. 50 words).***

Elaine Levitt is a writer from Ontario.

Elaine Levitt is an Asian-Canadian writer.

Elaine Levitt is a Chinese-Canadian writer.

Elaine Levitt is a writer (?).

Elaine Levitt is Chinese (?).

ELAAAAINE!

Elaine Levitt is a Chinese-Canadian writer from Ontario. Her work has appeared in *PRISM International*, *Ricepaper*, *The Fiddlehead*, and elsewhere.

Is it important to mention *Ricepaper*? It's the only Asian Canadian magazine she could find. They accepted a poem about being adopted, which she thought was cool of them.

Elaine Levitt was raised by a white woman. The white woman is married to a white man whose grandmother's name is Elaine. The End.

Elaine Levitt has misunderstood the point of this bio, which is not to overshare but still communicate that she is a writer of colour so you won't think she's a white woman who writes poems about her grandmother or something. She really needs you to know that's not the case.

Elaine Levitt has just won a fancy award for a story she wrote, which you just read because this is the bio that happens after the story. The story is shamelessly autobiographical, which you will realize once you have read this bio.

Is there supposed to be shame, about drawing from real life? Elaine's professor always said, "You don't have to reinvent the world when you write. There's no shame in drawing from what you know. The challenge is to tell us what you know in a way that feels new."

Elaine Levitt has never had an original thought.

The story is a loose sketch of last summer. It's about the first of July, which she spent with her friend Amanda. The climax happens after the fireworks, although the word "climax" is generous. It's mostly flashbacks to all the different Canada Days before. The protagonist, who is Elaine with a different name and hair colour, is obsessed with the idea of belonging and identity and origins. And the fireworks are supposed to help her have some kind of grand realization about it.

The protagonist is Chinese-Canadian too, and so there's this thing about where fireworks come from, which is this musing on where *she* comes from. The feeling of the story is suffocation. Stuck in place, belonging nowhere.

The fictional Amanda is white and she's an awkward soundboard for the protagonist. She says typical white girl things and it's supposed to be funny. Elaine doesn't know if it comes off that way.

She hasn't shown Amanda the story. She would've recognized the dialogue, because it was all stuff she'd said to Elaine. If not during that summer, then over the ten years they've known each other.

Amanda Clarke is a name without any caveats. She's blonde and blue-eyed and she's read more books than Elaine has. She pronounced Martin Amis right the first time. She won the creative writing award in grade twelve. Elaine wanted to win that award more than anything, but all she could submit were poems about being adopted, which did not have pretty words because she did not have pretty feelings. Once she realized that making real feelings sound fictional was a more lucrative venture, she switched genres.

Elaine Levitt is a short-story writer from Stratford, Ontario.

As in the hometown of Justin Bieber. Elaine Levitt has never met Justin Bieber, please do not ask.

Stratford is home to swans, too. If you were to visit Stratford's website, you would learn that the swans are called mute swans. It is not because they are silent. You would also learn that, if circumstances permit, you can purchase the Stratford swans in pairs or singles.

If you were putting off submitting a bio for your award-winning story, you would Google "mute swans" to figure out why they're called mute when they can and do make a lot of noise. You would discover that "the exotic Mute Swan is the elegant bird of Russian ballets and European fairy tales." They were imported from Europe in the 1800s to be pretty decorations for rich people's backyards.

You might feel some kinship for these swans, because in your most dramatic moments you imagine that you, too, are an accessory for your parents' glamorous lives. By Stratford standards they are rich, and when they got you, they were the

only ones in a 30-mile radius with an adopted Chinese baby, which made their rich neighbours fascinated because Chinese babies were all the rage in the 90s.

Elaine Levitt is the new SKY Lee.

Will they let you say that in a bio? Will the ghost of SKY Lee haunt you out of spite?

If you were still procrastinating on a very simple task, you would do another Google search and realize, to your embarrassment, that SKY Lee is still alive.

Elaine Levitt is a storyteller from Stratford, Ontario.

All adoptees are storytellers. Your trauma is the thing you rehearse. If you're good at it, you can do it in 50 words or less.

Elaine Levitt had two mental breakdowns writing the story you're about to read. She's not convinced it was worth it.

Elaine Levitt is a fraud.

Elaine Levitt is an imposter.

Elaine Levitt is an impulse purchase.

It takes a lot of time, actually, to adopt a child. A lot of paperwork. A lot of money.

There was no impulse.

Except for the impulse to save. The compulsion for heroics.

In the story, the protagonist's parents buy fireworks for their private party. The parents are kind of vapid. They say similar things as the fictional Amanda. They love their daughter like a dog.

Elaine has not shown her parents the story either.

Elaine Levitt is grateful to be here.

Elaine feels the urge to tack this on like a disclaimer to everything she's ever said.

*I am contractually obligated, she wants to add, to acknowledge that this story had a happy ending. You are looking at it right now.*

Elaine Levitt is well-adjusted and writes angsty stories to exorcise all her negative emotions.

Elaine Levitt is going to finish this damn bio.

Elaine Levitt is still haunted.

Elaine Levitt is a writer from Stratford, Ontario. Her work has appeared in *PRISM International*, *Ricepaper*, *The Fiddlehead*, and elsewhere. She is pursuing a BA in English at the University of Western Ontario. This is her first award.

The story ends like this:

*It strikes her, then, that the ache will never stop. The fireworks echo all night long.*