

# IMAGINATIONS

## FALL

(Not Hanglider But Parachute)

I walked through the streets of my town, past children playing and men raking leaves and people laughing in homes, seeing all as Norman Rockwell's final joke on all of us, images of simple perfection to throw the pain and confusion of life into sharp relief against their lily-white background

My steps steady and measured, working in the mindless robotic fashion Nature provides us for when our minds are too full to properly monitor the process

I had just finished yet another long session of playing philosopher-therapist-saint for my lover, using as much love, logic, and savvy as I could to frighten away the depressive demons that dogged her and dragged at her heels

Trying to bolster her soul and block the way down for it despite the many times it had proved both too heavy and too slippery for me and fallen past

Leaving my mind laden and drained, numb and cold and hurting all at once, and bruised beyond belief

My feet brought me to a park, and as I wandered through the green and the sun, I resolved to think about something else, and let the absorbed poisons drain from my soul without my mind separating and distilling them as it did everything else

I walked over the grass and noticed a small seed, encased in its delicate green casing, lying nestled in the grass with its nose in the loose earth, stem and wings and twin seeds combining into a perfect package, graceful, simple, and pure

I picked it up and ran a finger over the smooth surface, and marvelled over its elegance, the fine stalks just enough to support its beautiful wings, so thin yet surprisingly strong

I held it between two fingers, and let it drop, watching as it fell twirling to the grass and landed by some of its counterparts

I picked it up again, and raised my hand a little higher, and gave a little toss, sending it further and higher before its inevitable plummet

Again I picked it up and again I sent it on its journey, and again and again, though my hands soon were quite dirty from picking it up so many times, and my knees ached from the stooping

Each flight brought the seed a little higher, a little further, and this spurred me on

At first I told myself it was a game, a distraction

from my troubles, but soon that was forgotten and I was concentrating on nothing but my task So I followed the seed through the park, not noticing the rest of the park around me and once or twice jostling a bemused or bewildered fellow park-goer in my single-minded pursuit Till eventually I noticed I was making less and less progress each time, till it seemed all I could do was maintain the levels I had so far achieved, and the fatigue and soreness were making even that difficult

Then, as I bent down to pick the seed up yet again, in one of those crystal clear turning cusps of life, when it seems like the roaring cacophony of your thoughts have suddenly coalesced into a single simple note, it came to me I was going against Nature

The wings were not designed to let it fly, but to allow it to plummet softly

It belonged on the ground, where it could take root and grow, and achieve its height that way All my 'improvements' had been interfering with an age-old process

The seed did not wish to fly Slowly I stood up, and looked at the seed, noticing how its wings swept downward and inward to send it spinning in a dizzying fall to the earth, where it and its brethren would perish likely, or perhaps survive and grow into a mighty tree

I looked up into the trees, at the arms outstretched to collect the sun and be caressed by the breezes, at the strong bodies to support the arms, and down at the thick penetrating roots that probably ran into layer of rock formed eons ago, and at the teeming life which lived in or on or even fed upon them

It seemed a rather noble goal, to want to join such august company, and worth the risk Wryly I thought that if such a seed was to sprout, those who run the park would soon uproot it or kill it with poison, or simply cut it down

The noble trees at which I gazed were the last generation for the park, and a new tree would prosper only if an older one had died

And even then, it would probably not be from this park, but from some aseptic nursery somewhere, where they grew saplings for just such a purpose, to be healthy and strong and perfect for the purpose of taking over the older one's spot, drinking the sun the old one had drunk, running its roots through the soil made

loose by the old one's departure, perhaps even growing from and feeding off the still-bleeding stump of its predecessor, and growing tall to get its own flock of creatures living in or on or off of its body and blood

But still, the mighty trees grew their seeds and sent them on their ultimately futile procreative journey

(I wondered briefly if the trees knew they had been rendered effectively sterile)

And the seeds fell unknowing too, till silly people like myself picked them up and tried to make them fly away from where they longed to be

Even if I judged their journey futile, they should at least be allowed that, for what else could they do? It was how they were designed Perhaps my seed had enjoyed its flights, for it had gotten to plummet again and that is something it was meant to do as surely as it was meant to take root and try to grow

But still I knew I was taking it away from where it was supposed to be, and that no matter how dirty I got my hands or how long I laboured, it would never fly, only fall further and harder I looked around me, with fresh eyes, at the beautiful world which surrounded me and the people passing by who had not existed to me while I was pursuing the seed on my fool's errand

I rubbed my knees and felt how relieved they were to not be stooping any more, though I imagined it would be a few days before they would feel like they did before

I looked at my filthy hands, covered in soil, sap, and dew, and thought about how nice it would be to get them clean and fresh again

I looked down at the seed, and once more I admired its elegance and design, but with the knowledge of just what it was designed for and how little that had to do with me except by well-meaning blunder

I pressed it to my lips gently, giving it the softest of kisses, and raised my arm high over my head, letting it fall behind me I didn't look back to see where it had fallen, for I knew that I'd just want to pick it up again and try again, and my hands were too dirty and my knees too sore for that

Instead I resumed my walk, but headed for home, wondering if my lover would still be there For now I knew exactly what I had to do.

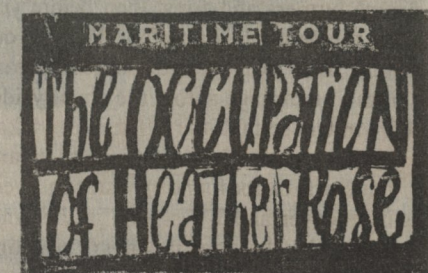
--Michael Berrand

## Melissa Mullen in a starring role

Theatre Prince Edward Island announces the forthcoming presentation of *The Occupation of Heather Rose* by Wendy Vingo. The play, which stars Melissa Mullen, is currently touring the Maritimes. It will be in Charlottetown on Saturday, September 24 at 7 p.m. in the Duffy Amphitheatre at UPEI.

The play, being co-sponsored by the University Theatre Society, is the debut production of the Eastern Front Theatre Society based in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. It is directed by the company's Artistic Director Mar Vingo. Its star, Melissa Mullen, is best known to local audiences from her appearances in summer theatre in Georgetown and in productions at Theatre PEI, most notably for the title character in Michael Hennessey's *YOUNG MAUD*.

*The Occupation of Heather Rose* is a



engrossing one-woman play about a young white nurse who works on a northern reserve. An idealistic and self-adsorbed young woman she collides with a way of life she neither understands nor appreciates. Slowly she realizes she has no bearing on the lives of the native people on the reserve, and that far from saving them, she is part of the system which has nearly destroyed them. This realization forces her to rethink her own society, with its underlying prejudices and hypocrisy. Heather's "dark night of the soul" is related with humour and compassion without trivializing the tragedy of ruined lives.

Theatre critic Elissa Barnard of the Halifax Chronicle-Herald described the production as being "full of wit, vivid imagery and poignancy". Wrote David Swick in The Daily News (Dartmouth) "The Occupation of Heather Rose is an enjoyable evening of relevant theatre ... gutsy and believable ... the best show I've seen in a long time."

*The Occupation Heather Rose* has had successful productions in Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Victoria, Vancouver and other centres. It was also adapted by the author for CBC national radio. The play was also nominated for a Governor-General's Literary Award for Drama.

Tickets for the September 24th presentation are available at the UPEI Bookstore and at the door.

STUDENTS:	\$ 6.00
SENIORS:	\$ 8.00
ADULTS:	\$10.00

The X-Press always loves to have new poets and fiction writers submit to the paper. If you ever want to have something published, drop off your work at room 06 Main