



LEANNE DUNIC
TO LOVE THE COMING END

FIRST EDITION

Copyright © 2017 by Leanne Dunic

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Financé par le
gouvernement
du Canada

Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

The production of this book was made possible through the generous assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council. BookThug also acknowledges the support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund and the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Book Publishing Tax Credit and the Ontario Book Fund.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Dunic, Leanne, 1982-, author
To love the coming end / Leanne Dunic.

Poems.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

ISBN 978-1-77166-282-6 (softcover).--ISBN 978-1-77166-283-3
(HTML).--ISBN 978-1-77166-284-0 (PDF).--ISBN 978-1-77166-285-7
(Kindle)

I. Title.

PS8607.U535T65 2017

C811'.6

C2016-907803-5
C2016-907804-3

cover photograph by Andrew Neel
author photograph by Ronnie Lee Hill

PRINTED IN CANADA

SIN. After worrying that a stranger has planted drugs on you, that you will be found out and sentenced with the death penalty, after, the next thing a visitor notices upon arrival is the fastidiously clean airport. Inhale. A verdant flora wall towers over the customs gates, absorbing carbon dioxide, releasing oxygen. Exhale. A full day of travel has come to an end. A sterile taste settles in the mouth, a hint of humidity on the arm.

This November features a series of elevens: 11-11-2011. Slender ones paired with their likeness. Posed together and apart, forever parallel. Is one still the loneliest number, or is it eleven? Only you and I can see this significance, the curse of 11.

When you and I were born on the 29th, which one of us said *jinx*? $2 + 9 = 11$. We can't escape.

November: our birth month. Late autumn, we are. When dark comes early.

In Singapore, there is no need to hoard daylight. Year round, the sun rises and sets at nearly the same time every day. The seasons are unchanging—maybe a degree or two cooler or warmer, maybe more or less rain. I'm here for two weeks, promoting my book *Performing Asian* at the Literary Festival. I haven't practiced my presentation aloud. Who needs to prepare? I talk about this shit daily.

I listen to the radio to immerse myself in Singaporean music. Every station plays the same song by Rihanna. My fingers hurt from opening too many beers. No matter how many I drink I am not cooled in this heat. I've become a distended porpoise.

Respiration is forgetful.
Circulation refuses my hands.
Pain in my skull is equatorial.
Wake with vessels broken in my ear.
No cocaine, but heart palpitations.
Jaw is fixed.
Walk, toes curled.
Denude cells like a mountainside.
Skin births freckles worth watching.
Strands of bitter brown turn to bone filaments.
The cinch of a muscle bends me in half.
Shoulder is electric.
Eardrums resound frequencies.
Eyes closed, I see music in black and white when we all know
 there is no such thing.
Ribbs restrict the ability to sing.
Memories become dreams, and dreams are where I peel dry
 sections of lip.
Sleep leaves imprints of fingers round my neck.
Looking behind is a physical impossibility.
Why my tail still twitches in your hand.

Dentist: *Do you wear your mouth guard every night?* Doctor: *These ailments—stress.* Chiropractor: *Torsion. Tension. Relax.* Massage Therapist: *You need a counsellor, not an RMT.* Counsellor: *Not stressed, sad.* Heart: *The work is too much.*

I hate November. Especially in Singapore. I've given up on aging, on anniversaries. I've given up on freshness. Showers are pointless when you step out of the bathroom and into fortified humidity. Despite the heat, I leave the flat to gorge on noodles oiled with meat fat and yeasty goods from BreadTalk. I'm readying for tropical hibernation.

I try to count the russet-coloured panels on the fan pinwheeling above me. I'm unable to anchor the fan's moving parts to tally them. My body is still—at least, I think it is. Who can be sure of anything? A chrysanthemum shadow plays behind the fan, while two bobbled chains sway below the lights. The fan spins silent. I question its stability.

Beside me are the pills I never took. You gave them to me, promised me they would take me places. Now, the pills are all that's left, and they expired two months ago. This humidity hasn't helped their longevity. I wonder about their potency.