

# The Little Library Magazine

Hamilton, Ontario



Volume 1, Issue 1 | Fall 2025



*In this issue:*

*Like Moss Between the Concrete by Giamedin,  
Five Steeltown Delights from @wakulatr,  
Oh Valley of Hamilton by Furlanetto.Ga,  
The Bicycle Boulevard by D.S.*

# Like Moss Between the Concrete

by Giamedin

I didn't love living in Hamilton at first. It grew on me, like the never ending algae that grows on our fence. Or like the tumour I'm probably getting every time I drive to work on the QEW and the air tastes like sulphur. We moved here as a compromise. Halfway between work in Toronto and my husband's family in Brantford.

It was the dog people that started it. I have no idea what their names are, but I know their dogs names. We see each other at least once every week while walking around the neighbourhood so our dogs can pee on all the things. A strange community of people who I know without knowing, all united by canine friends.

A lot of small things added up over time. The young lady in hijab cruising down the street on a long board. The old guy at the end of the block who greets me by name and keeps dog treats in his pockets. A person I have only met online who was so earnest about building community. The trees growing apples and saskatoons that are tucked away in the corners of the neighbourhood. The family that has a backyard concert every summer. The smell of curry or pasta or stew spreading from someones open windows.

It's a quiet neighbourhood. None of us are rich or famous, we all live in our little ticky-tacky boxes, people from all walks of life and different means all bounded by four main thoroughfares. Twisty streets and pass throughs making a maze of loosely associated people. We keep to ourselves mostly, but still push the snow blower a little further down the street than we need to. Maybe making an extra pass to clear the windrow from someones driveway.

Maybe that's all it takes to build a community. Going a bit further, saying hello, appreciating each others lives. Maybe all it takes is agreeing to live with each other and overlook our difference. Except for that guy with the car alarm that goes off all night, he can piss off.

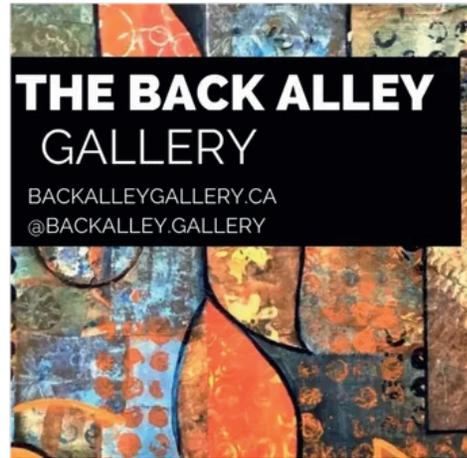


# Five Steeltown Delights ----->>> :)

Each community has its own set of hidden gems. These are some things a Toronto transplant particularly appreciates about his new-ish hometown.

----->>> Brought to you by @wakulatr <<<-----

1. ----->>> *Back Alley Art Gallery*  
(@backalley.gallery)



2. ----->>> *Beasley Neighbourhood Canoe Lending*  
(@fortelgin)

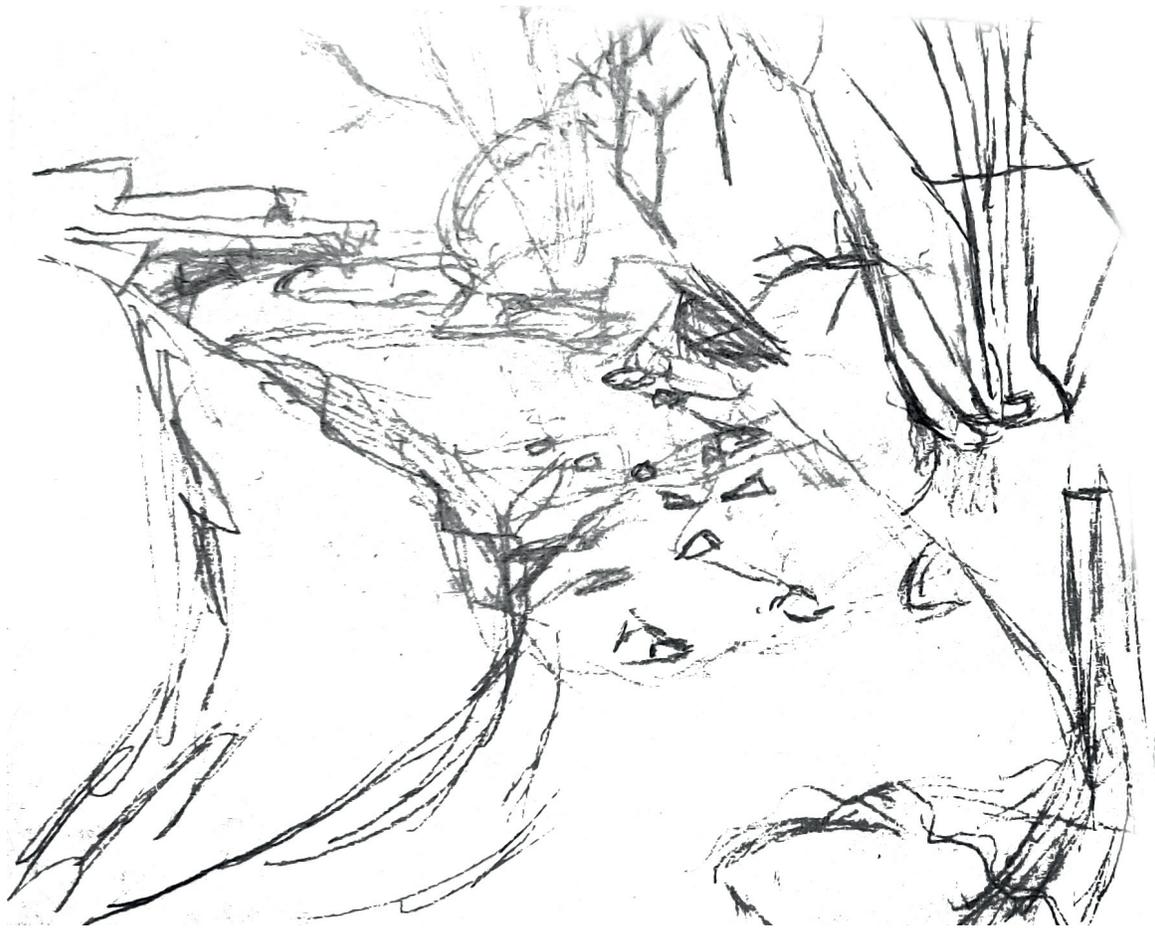


3. ----->>> *Decolonial Little Library*  
(@decoloniallittlelibrary)

4. ----->>> *Community Choirs Galore*  
(@bachelgarchoir,  
@chorushamilton,  
@hcclisten, etc.)



5. ----->>>  
*Shady Grove Lukaya Cafe*  
(@lukayacafe)



## *Oh valley of hamilton - Furlanetto.Ga*

Oh valley of hamilton

A piece of my home  
my hiding place  
reminders of memories made in childhood  
and an opening to another little world

A place to walk with a cat, dog, friends or alone.

A crevice cut through a mountain  
- watching the creek sparkle and flow, down in an  
ever continuing stream

Rocks  
paths  
an echoing tunnel  
and baseball diamonds  
and a staircase going back up to the start

- a home when needing a place  
- a way to come back to nature

My mind is able to flow as the serene river does.  
Calm and quick but still with  
imperfections and obstacles.

I close my eyes to focus myself  
To become one with the sounds surrounding me

Trickling water,  
sung by the birds of flapping of wings, squirrels  
chirps, chatting and rustling through the branches,  
footsteps from and animals or people passing me by,  
crunching leaves and snapping twigs,  
Cars whooshing on the nearby highway,  
a gentle wind and other times harsh

and if quiet enough my own breathing.

Other than the connections that I have made  
This is the piece of hamilton that feels the most  
comforting to me

# The Bicycle Boulevard

by D.S.

It seemed to have happened overnight, and who knows, maybe it did: One morning I looked out the window and saw the brand-new "bicycle boulevard" markings on the pavement outside.

As far as public infrastructure goes, it's not a lot of material - just some paint on the ground, really. But it signals something important: cycling matters in Hamilton.

It's a message that hadn't hit home to me previously. Which is odd, because I used to bike everywhere: for a decade, I flew around Toronto, a warrior on two wheels, bombing down University Ave, weaving among the streetcar tracks on College St, doing grocery runs in Kensington Market, riding to school and to work, and - as is tradition - flipping off the drivers parking their cars in the bike lane.

But when I moved back to Hamilton a dozen years ago, my bike started collecting cobwebs. For one thing, my commute took me up the mountain. As for the other trips: the thought of riding on urban highways like King St or Main St terrified me. Even on streets like Ottawa or Kenilworth, drivers seem oblivious to cyclists. There aren't that many of us, especially compared to Toronto, so people don't always think to look. How long before I'd get doored? Or run off the road by someone making a right?

So my spouse and I would drive most places. My beloved ten-speed kept gathering dust. The seat post rusted into the frame, the tires went flat and started cracking. But I couldn't bear to get rid of it.

Then in 2022, my body fell into its own state of disrepair. I never tested positive for Covid, but everything points to a post-viral syndrome. At first, I was flat out on the couch for two solid weeks, barely coherent, in and out of sleep. Even after this acute phase, for at least a year I'd need to lie down after mowing the lawn. I struggled with words, and on bad days my short-term memory was basically goldfish-level.

Prior to March 2020, I'd also been a bit of a gym rat, and like a lot of folks during lockdown, went from pumping iron three times a week to doing bodyweight routines and running up the Kenilworth stairs - at least, right up until I suddenly couldn't.

I doubt I'll ever get back to 100%, but with medication and consistent effort, some things have improved somewhat. For example: I learned a little HTML, built a really simple blog, and started writing essays as a way to do some 'linguistic weightlifting', to retrain my mental muscles. It's fun, challenging, and I can do it lying down! An unexpected benefit was making connections with all sorts of people, scattered around the world, who enjoy thinking and writing about similar things.

The web quickly became my comfort zone. When you're hanging out on the internet, no one gives you weird looks for wearing an N95 at the supermarket or a get-together. You can socialize on your own schedule, be invisible when you want to be, respond to people when you feel able to string a few sentences together. It's a different way to communicate across time & space. One that felt easier, more forgiving.

There are downsides too, of course. A hug emoji isn't a hug. You can't borrow a drill from your internet pal who lives in another hemisphere, or have a laugh together sipping the same pot of coffee, or talk about how nice the weather is today. You sometimes long for a shared sense of physical place.

Meanwhile, you're being endlessly inundated with a barrage of information about how awful and grim the state of the world is.

And to be sure, there are a lot of really good reasons to feel scared, angry, anxious, and sad about what's happening on (and to) this planet, and what's likely to come. Making it worse are the feelings of powerlessness when you really contemplate the immense scale of the problems we're up against.

Seeing those bicycle boulevard road markings, then, felt like a small glimmer of hope. They seemed to say, "things may get worse, but the world will keep turning, and we can keep pressing forward, together."

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Likewise, on a personal level, I'd been eager to start pressing forward with some light physical recovery, to the best of my ability. So I started fixing up the bike. Dusted off the cobwebs, cleaned up the chain. Replaced a tire and learned how to patch a tube. Swapped out the hardened brake pads. And it took hours and hours, and a *lot* of cursing, but I even got that effing seat post out - albeit in several pieces!

**B**ack on two wheels again, a wider neighbourhood is suddenly more accessible than it was on foot. I try to get out for a gentle ride a couple times a week if the weather cooperates, and I haven't taken the same route twice. Almost every time, I see something that gives me a little more hope that, whatever happens, there are people all around this town quietly pursuing small acts of joyful, creative resistance, planting communal seeds for the world of tomorrow.

There are the fruit trees, grown where their limbs will overhang the public sidewalks. A 'Free Palestine' sign in a window, and a community noticeboard outside. Pollinator gardens, veggie gardens, and even a fairy garden under a tree. A talented young person's chalk drawings all up and down the sidewalk on their block. A message of solidarity painted on a fence. Some truly fantastic Halloween displays. And several examples of a specific type of community infrastructure, one that provides a unique way for us to communicate across time & space: the Tiny Little Libraries.

**A**nd so, here you are, reading the first issue of the Hamilton Little Library Magazine. With any luck, it won't be the last. Maybe this can become another way for people in our city to find each other, to forge unexpected connections and bonds of trust. Maybe you have a story that folks need to hear. Maybe you have an idea for a community-building project, and you figure there's gotta be folks out there who'd be eager to help, but you don't know how to find them. Or maybe you like making visual art, writing poetry, or hammering out odd little essays like this one, and you want to share your work with people.

If so: you are cordially invited to contribute to the next issue of the Little Library Magazine.



**The Little Library Magazine invites you to contribute to the next issue:**

## **"Food in the City"**

A few topic suggestions:

- ▶ a traditional/culturally significant family recipe you want to share the story of
- ▶ a story about the most meaningful or memorable meal you've had in Hamilton
- ▶ your favourite urban foraging spots/plants
- ▶ tips for growing an apartment balcony garden
- ▶ your top 5 places to get amazing takeout in #HamOnt
- ▶ a comic strip, collage, drawing, poem, etc.
- ▶ something else!

**Submissions due  
Jan 31, 2026**

**For details please email:  
[littlelibrarymagazine@hotmail.com](mailto:littlelibrarymagazine@hotmail.com)**

**or visit:  
<https://HotCoffeeHamont.ca>**



