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**THOMAS MORE**  
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# More News

Welcome to the Winter 2024 edition of MORE News! We hope that you enjoy reading about TMI's programming for the new year, as well as looking back on the many events we experienced together.



The staff at TMI wish you a joyful holiday season with family and friends and all the best for the upcoming year.

## In This Edition:

### Upcoming Courses and Events (P.2 & P.6)

Learn about some of the featured courses we have planned for the upcoming Winter Term, as well as our upcoming events!

### TMI Volunteer Profile: A Conversation with Anne Fitzpatrick (P.3)

Anne Fitzpatrick has been an active member of the TMI community since the late 1960's. As a course designer, course leader and long-serving TMI Board member and Chair, Anne's contributions to TMI are immeasurable. Reflecting on the length of her tenure at the Institute she says: "You come for the serious courses, but you stay for that and for the friendship." Discover more about her life and her longstanding involvement with TMI in the interview with Dominic Varvaro, writer and TMI student.

### Looking back at our community events (P.4)

TMI's 2023/24 academic year got off to a busy start with a varied calendar of events complementing our fall courses. Experience the essence of these events, whether you missed them or want to relive them, by reading our article on page 4.

Winter Edition  
**2024**

## Upcoming Events

### TMI at the Côte St-Luc Library

February 28th 2024  
2:00PM

### Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

May 2 2024  
Afternoon

### Photography Talk with Ezra Soiferman

May 23 2024  
Evening

**For full details  
see inside.**

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# Upcoming Courses

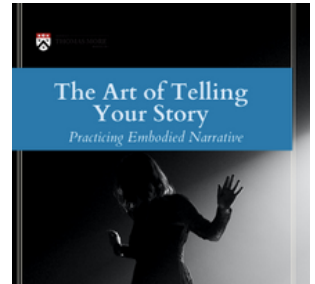
## Consider a Course to Warm Your Winter

Our winter term begins in less than a month, and we have a variety of course lengths and topics coming up! Still seeking the perfect holiday gift for a loved one who adores learning in a community setting? Consider gifting them a TMI course! See some of our featured ones below:

### [The Art of Telling Your Story: Practising Embodied Narrative](#)

*Tuesdays, 6:15 – 8:15 p.m., Six Weeks, January 16 – February 20, 2024, Atwater*

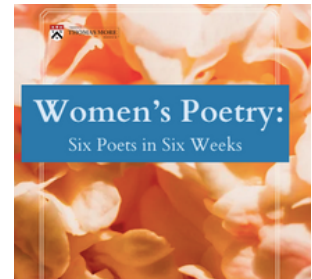
Instructor Matte Downey, whose latest book, *Go Wide: Reimagining the Landscape of Theology* was launched at TMI last spring, is offering a fascinating workshop this winter that focuses on self-expression through embodiment and narrative. Students will study the components of a monologue, engage in movement and voice exercises, and practice creating, editing, and presenting their own narrative within a supportive communal setting.



### [Women's Poetry: Six Poets in Six Weeks](#)

*Wednesdays, 6:15 – 8:15 p.m., Six Weeks, January 17 – February 21, 2024, Online*

Imogen Brian and Claire English are back with their very popular winter course on women's poetry. This year they will be looking at the work of six poets, one per session: Emily Dickinson, Anne Carson, Ellen Welcker, and more. The course will look at their work, asking to what extent women's lives shape their poetic output. Are there ways they take up language that are especially "gendered"? Or does poetic language transcend any simple question of gender? This course is open to persons of all genders, and one need not have taken previous courses in this series to participate.



### [On Photography](#)

*Tuesdays, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m., Eight Weeks, January 30 – March 19, 2024, Atwater*

In the age of Instagram and Snapchat, photos have never been more ubiquitous. What makes this artform so meaningful for us? Now that decent photos are possible with any smartphone, what constitutes a "good" photo? Is it the expressive quality of its visual structure? Its composition, line, and combination of colours and tones? How has photography, originally treated as a tool for painters and drawers, become and remained a major force in contemporary visual art? Susan Sontag's *On Photography*, will be the textbook for this course as participants consider the photo and share some of those most meaningful to them.



### [Democracy at Risk? Disinformation in the Age of Social Media](#)

*Mondays, 6:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m., Twelve weeks, Starting January 15, Atwater or Online*

The rise of social media in the twenty-first century has created a fertile environment for the propagation of false information and lies, what is often referred to as "disinformation." Whether taking the form of former President Trump's "big lie" of massive voter fraud or Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's false accusations that George Soros was planning to flood Hungary with illegal immigrants, disinformation destabilizes democratic governments by using lies to support political parties more interested in gaining power than preserving democratic values. Such lies can be easily disseminated on social media by party supporters and foreign governments, making democratic populaces vulnerable to anti-democratic propaganda and their countries at risk of democratic backsliding.



## TMI Volunteer Profile: A Conversation with Anne Fitzpatrick

By Dominic Varvaro, November 2023

Not long after we meet on a November evening in the Thomas More Institute conference room, I'm struck that I've encountered a soul whose whole is much greater than the sum of its parts and whose gregarious smile instantly draws me in.

Anne is an accomplished educator. We discuss her Masters concentration at McGill—her favourite author Jane Austen. “She found her own way,” Anne tells me. Although she wouldn't say it herself, it's clear, if her accompanying smile is any indication, that Austen's quiet determination and non-conformism are attributes Anne embraces. Then she relates the values of “conversation versus debate” first encountered when she was a 17-year-old college student at a Sacred Heart school near Boston.



Doctorate in hand in the 1970s and in the midst of the baby boom, she moved into a teaching position at Marianopolis College— “in the right place at the right time,” she tells me. Serendipitously, the college was adjusting to accommodate the pre-university CEGEP model. “We set about designing and teaching humanities courses...it was something new.”

Her interdisciplinary role was fostered by her English doctoral professor Phillip Stratford. “It was his range of interests that were a particular strength,” she says. “Combining liberal arts with other areas...not just pulling things together” opened the doors to creative thinking and the hands-on role Anne played in the college's evolution. After Anne became associate dean in 1998, she “learned a great deal about student success and disappointment, student-faculty interaction, the role of advisors and counsellors,” she recounts. This was a relatively recent position at the college, and it created the opportunity for renewed personal cooperation and ongoing learning. Our discussion takes on a philosophical nature as we remark on how even the smallest interaction can make a difference. Marianopolis Chair Sacha Haque recalled in the Marianopolis 2018 Millennium Foundation newsletter how, as an associate dean, Anne “set her on a career path that has led her to become General Counsel.” Susan Anastasopoulos, a Marianopolis colleague whose teaching career parallels Anne's, talks of the esteem that Anne commanded. “She was well liked and respected at the college,” Susan tells me and then recounts how Anne joined with two colleagues in proposing the Marianopolis Retiree Association and coordinating its bi-annual pot-luck celebrations.

Anne's involvement with Thomas More parallels her teaching career. She was among its youngest volunteers. “It's been part of my life since the late 1960s.” But it's no coincidence that Anne has stayed with Thomas More for so long: there's a palpable synergy between Anne's sense of community and the Institute's maxims of open-ended discussions and cooperative learning. “Without much ado, we were leading courses—my first was *The Ballad*,” she explains of the one she helped develop in her early twenties. She revisits familiar themes in our discussion—collaboration, continuity, the institute's communities, and of course how these experiences are mandatory ingredients in the Institute's recipe for success. “So much of what I learned about teaching I had absorbed from the Thomas More approach.”

She tells me that her favourite course design is 2021's *Three Score and Ten*. It's the third installment to 1990s *The Pivot of Being 50* and 1970s *To Be 30*. Their content and continuity are telling of her persona: transformation, long-term commitment, and, like the course description for *To Be 30*, “vision and revision.” Anne remarks on the amount of new program development that goes into the TMI experience. She asks me what the length of her tenure at the Institute says about her, but then answers her own question. “You come for the serious courses, but you stay for that and for the friendships.”



## A Conversation with Anne Fitzpatrick (continued)

Eventually, Anne assumed the TMI Board chair position in 1996, holding it for 12 years. Anne is currently the longest-serving member of the Board, having joined it in the '60s and, with a few short breaks for life events, still serving in the 2020s. As we wrap up our meeting, Anne tells me of a recurring passion, that of watercolour painting. She hands me a greeting card with an image she had crafted—of a time-tested earthenware planter boasting fall flora in an explosion of autumn pastels. “It’s a Dazzleberry,” she explains with her lovely and gregarious smile.



Art by Anne Fitzpatrick

*About the Author: Dominic Varvaro is a writer, photographer and TMI student. His foodie creations can be found on Instagram: @thesauceison*

## Looking Back at TMI’s Fall events

### TMI’S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TMI’s Annual General Meeting held on October 30th was the occasion to review the successes and challenges of the 2022/23 year. A significant marker for the year was the full return to in-person activities and the opportunity to re-connect in classrooms and at events. To review the highlights of the year, you can [consult our 2022/23 annual report here](#).



### September Events

**Poetry Evening** - We had a very busy schedule of events this fall. Following the Fall Open House, we kicked off the term with a poetry event organized by Munirah Amra. Munirah brought together five poets, whose work featured different approaches and themes, to create a memorable evening of readings and discussion.

Olivia Tapiero (latest work: *Rien du tout*), Jerome Ramcharitar (*The Wrong Poem and Others Like It*), Sarmara Garfinkle (*Dual Realms*), Devon Gallant (*Bootleg Sake*), and Sophia Devi (*Grit in Her Veins, Grace in Her Soul, Poetry for Bold Women*) each read two poems and then responded to questions from Munirah and the audience. At the event and the reception after, there was a lively exchange of thoughts and appreciation for the poets.





## Looking Back at TMI's Fall events (continued)

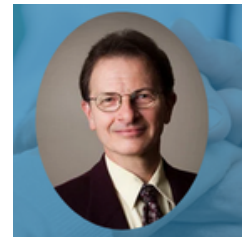
See the final page of the More News for Sophia Devi's poem that brought down the house, "Fierce Warriors." We are grateful to Munirah for putting together and serving as host and main interlocuter for such an inspiring evening.

### October Events

**Fall Webinar** - October brought a fascinating discussion of medical assistance in dying during [the latest instalment of our webinar series](#). Martin Baenninger and Christine Jamieson interviewed Dr. Eugene Bereza on the topic: "What Constitutes a Good Death? Exploring Questions around Medical Assistance in Dying." Dr. Bereza provided fascinating first-hand experience on the thought that went into Québec's pioneering of medical assistance in dying (MAID), followed by that of Canada. He spoke with great compassion of the suffering of the patients who seek to be treated under MAID, while also making clear that decisions concerning who should and should not qualify can be extremely challenging. It was a memorable conversation that showed the complexity and human urgency behind this question.



Sophia Devi and  
Munirah Amra



Dr. Eugene Bereza

### November Events

**Book Launch** - In November, TMI was proud to host the book launch of Art Historian Sandra Paikowsky's latest work, *James Wilson Morrice: Paintings and Drawings of Venice*. Anyone who has seen the Gallery Wall of paintings from TMI's Art Collection that Paikowsky selected and arranged in TMI's north classroom or who had the pleasure of hearing her speak about those paintings at our Fall Open House knows the passion Paikowsky brings to art history.



Professor Emerita Sandra Paikowsky

Paikowsky's book, organized around the places he painted, provides a beautiful tour of the city, and the author took us on our own mini tour. Venice, Paikowsky noted, taught Morrice to be a modernist painter. The comfort of Quebec and Paris were gone; there were no grand vistas in Venice to paint. Instead, Morrice gave us a sense of momentariness in these paintings, showing us Venice "at a glance," rather than "at a stare".



With the tight composition of his paintings, we are brought into "the honest representation of Morrice's own eye." They are cropped, but true. The evening left many of us eager to study Paikowsky's book and to rediscover Morrice's paintings of Venice at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and at other Canadian museums.

## Looking Back at TMI's Fall Events (continued)

### November Events (continued)

#### **TMI at the Westmount Library**

On November 30th, TMI partnered with the Westmount Library's "Literature Circle" in an evening discussion around a short story. The event was part of broader initiative to raise awareness of TMI and provide opportunities for new audiences to experience the TMI discussion method first hand. TMI's Carol Fiedler and Imogen Brian led a lively discussion around a story from the collection *How to Pronounce Knife* by Souvankham Thammavongsa, which explored themes of trauma and displacement for a Laotian family in Canada.



### December Events

**Holiday Gathering** - Finally, December brought TMI's annual celebration of our community and of the holiday season with our Feast of Lights party. Here are some photos from that delightful event, organized by TMI volunteers Jennifer MacGregor, Irene Menear, Len Richman and Sharon Poissant, with support from many others during the evening. A big thank you to all involved in bringing together this wonderful event.



## Upcoming Events in 2024

#### **TMI at the Côte St-Luc Library**

*February 28 2024, 2:00pm*

A second "Literature Circle" discussion, similar in format to the one held at the Westmount Library this fall. If you know someone who may be interested in our courses, this will be a perfect opportunity for them to find out what a TMI discussion is like. Stay tuned for more details that you'll be able to share with friends and family!

#### **Volunteer Appreciation Lunch**

*May 2 2024, Afternoon*

Volunteers are the driving force of TMI, touching every area of the organization from leading and designing courses, to running committees and events, to supporting staff with editing, translation and office administration. We look forward to celebrating them at this event! More details to come.

#### **Photography Talk with Ezra Soiferman**

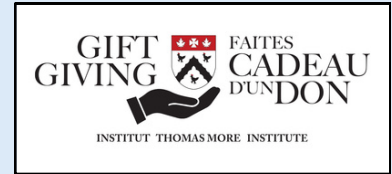
*May 23 2024, Evening*

In view of our Spring course *Awakening to the Wildness Where We Live*, join us for a talk with Montreal-based filmmaker and photographer Ezra Soiferman! Soiferman shoots and directs documentaries and photo series in which themes of urban life and environmentalism often emerge in ways that often warm hearts and uplift spirits. More details to come.

## Spotlight on TMI's 2023/2024 Annual Appeal

Donations from TMI's community provide vital support in sustaining the ongoing operations of the Institute, particularly during these inflationary times. Government grants cover only a portion of our costs, and we rely on your support to provide much needed funding in key areas. Please give generously to help sustain our community of lifelong learners.

**How to Donate:** by phone at 514-935-9585 •  
online at [thomasmore.qc.ca](https://thomasmore.qc.ca) • by cheque



## Office Notices

We are delighted to announce that Lucía Linaje Ferrel will be joining TMI as our Marketing and Community Relations Coordinator as of mid-January. Lucía has worked at TMI as a student intern over the past two summers and more recently has been supporting marketing initiatives two days a week. In this newly created, full-time role, she will be helping to develop and expand TMI's marketing and outreach activities while also supporting our community of students and volunteers. Lucía is a cultural events coordinator and an active member of the Montreal spoken word scene. She is graduating from McGill with a Major in English Literature and a Minor in Communications.



## In Memoriam

We remember and honor the lives of the following community members who passed away in 2023. We are grateful for their varied support and commitment to TMI which helped foster a community where the timeless values of lifelong learning, curiosity, creativity, and collaboration thrive.

**Jaroslav “Jerry” Vilem Bures**

**Amy Eisenberg Shulman**

**Laurie McRobert**

**Margaret Anne Nicoll Griffith**

**Hari Thakur**



We look forward to  
welcoming you  
this winter semester!





# FIERCE WARRIORS

Written by: Sophia Devi

Does my bossiness upset you?  
Did you want to see my demise?  
Are your insecurities triggered  
Every time you see a woman of colour rise?

You better get used to me...

Boundless

Alive

And

Free.

I am in every one of my fierce warrior sisters...

Armed with fearlessness  
Bleeding through every hardship  
Building only the finest characters  
Amongst our allyship.

Like a candle sparked in the dark  
Each one of us burning so bright  
Coming together as a source  
Of collective consciousness  
To share our universal light.

Fierce warriors ...  
The sisters that see me in them  
We fight every trial on our warpath.

For we believe, there's more to us  
than just surviving  
The bloodshed and aftermath.

Pouring every ounce of substance into our journey,  
We do not need anyone's permission  
To conquer as we rise.

Fierce Warriors...  
Thriving, with grit in our veins,  
Grace in our souls,  
As our God-given right.

Purchase books from: [www.sophiadevi.com](http://www.sophiadevi.com)  
Request a signed copy from the author via email:  
[sophia.devik@gmail.com](mailto:sophia.devik@gmail.com)