

Ms. Shin
English 11 Honours



From East of Main: An Anthology of Poems From East Vancouver
Edited by Calvin Wharton and Tom Wayman (1989)

All through the eastside
the blackberries wind
in a barbed tangle
in unguarded spaces
Through backyards
empty lots
along fences
in the ravine
behind the wire
by the bridge
above the trains
I walk the wood sidewalks
worn boards, brown gray
carved by the shuffle
of countless feet.
mine
friends
my parents
their parents
the smell of warm dust
the buzzing when trains pass

Ms. Shin

English 11 Honours

fruit trees wave overhead

the apples out of reach

At night, the coffee scented air

the restaurants

the music

the traffic

I feel safe

here in the wild east side

the newspapers

people from 'Kits'

they tell me it's dangerous

the best Portuguese/Italian/lesbian

feminist/radical/punk/working class

middle/class/coffee drinking/pool

playing/food shopping/district

here we cling

hang on

despite the condos

the malls

fast food

bulldozers

contractors

hack their way

trying to smooth us

into neat shops

blank concrete

We will remain

blackberry vines

Ms. Shin
English 11 Honours

with fruit and thorn

we will hang on

we won't be transplanted

by Pauline Leah Rankin (May 5, 1957 - December 13, 2011)



My sister, Pauline Leah Rankin, pictured here in front of The Kettle Society, 1725 Venables, in this undated picture from the seventies or eighties, loved everything about East Vancouver where she was raised and lived until her untimely death in 2011 at the age of 54. She was a poet, a feminist, a volunteer, and a strong advocate for mental health issues. Her poem "Blackberries" captures the essence of East Vancouver as it grapples with the changing times. East Enders will recognize the references to "the cut" and "the Drive". "Blackberries" is one of my favourite poems.

- Lee Rankin