

# BLUE METROPOLIS FESTIVAL - DREAMS & PEACE FORUM FESTIVAL METROPOLIS BLEU – FORUM RÊVES & PAIX

**Lauren Turner**

## **1. What are, in your view, the utopian ideas of the moment that may become the reality of tomorrow?**

I'm a bit mistrustful of the word "utopian," because it implies impossibility. What interests me about the post-pandemic world is whether we will do away with individualism in certain areas of society. To control the spread of Covid-19, many people have adopted a way of life that prioritizes the collective good, rather than simply themselves. For one thing, as a disabled person, I'd like to see the work-from-home model of employment continue, as it provides a viable alternative for individuals whose health or disability create incompatibility with on-site jobs. The pandemic has proven that remote employment is widely possible, and it should be prioritized post-Covid, too.

## **2. If we were to introduce but a single important, even radical change to our societies, what would it be?**

Mandatory accessibility. In my experience, accommodations often fail to meet the needs of the disabled community, so they come off as performative and hurtful—even if the offerer's intentions are good. For instance, a literary event will label itself as accessible because there's a ramp leading into the venue, but then the washrooms aren't outfitted for an individual with a mobility disability. The solution is twofold: we would collectively need to educate ourselves on what accessibility entails, in consultation with the disabled community, and then commit to providing it. If these things occur, the resulting actions could bring about radical, yet very achievable, change.

## **3. Where do you find peace in your own life?**

Right now? Only in writing, which is a bit funny since my poetry can't be described as peaceful. Writing requires my full presence, a state I don't embody anywhere else in my distraction-filled life. I used to be able to power down my mind by going on long, aimless walks. But since the pandemic began, I find myself on high alert, glancing around the sidewalk for whoever I'll have to dodge next.

## **4. Reading: What book changed the way you look at one aspect or another of reality? Please provide the name of author, title, publisher, and a brief explanation of your choice.**

Domenica Martinello's *All Day I Dream About Sirens* (Coach House, 2019) is the first book that comes to mind, as it speaks to the slipperiness of perceived reality. It has the fantastical, glittering veneer of being a poetry collection about mermaids, but it's anchored in bedrock topics like female subjectivity, the male gaze, and capitalist consumerism—even the book's title spells out *ADIDAS*. This work, in my opinion, is a strong example of a book that creates and subverts its own reality by tearing apart patriarchal narratives and mythology, and using the pieces to build new, women-driven agencies.

\*

Lauren Turner is a disabled poet and writer, who lives in Tiohtiá:ke/Montréal on the unceded land of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation. She is the author of *The Only Card in a Deck of Knives* (Wolsak & Wynn, 2020) and *We're Not Going to Do Better Next Time* (knife | fork | book, 2018).