

Fire Tiger Forever

By Cathy Lau

She started out a black cat — judged for the black of her fur, because people are shallow like that. She was small, because she spent her life trying to hide herself. So people thought bad thoughts about her and her black fur, and she didn't even think to defend herself.

But, one day, a unicorn touched her with his horn, and opened her eyes so that, for the first time, she saw the good in herself, and felt love for herself. And then, her mind opened, and she finally believed in herself. And, as her belief grew, she grew in size, and she grew stripes: stripes that blazed bright orange, and stark streaks of white, each signifying a truth she'd hidden until she rediscovered it.

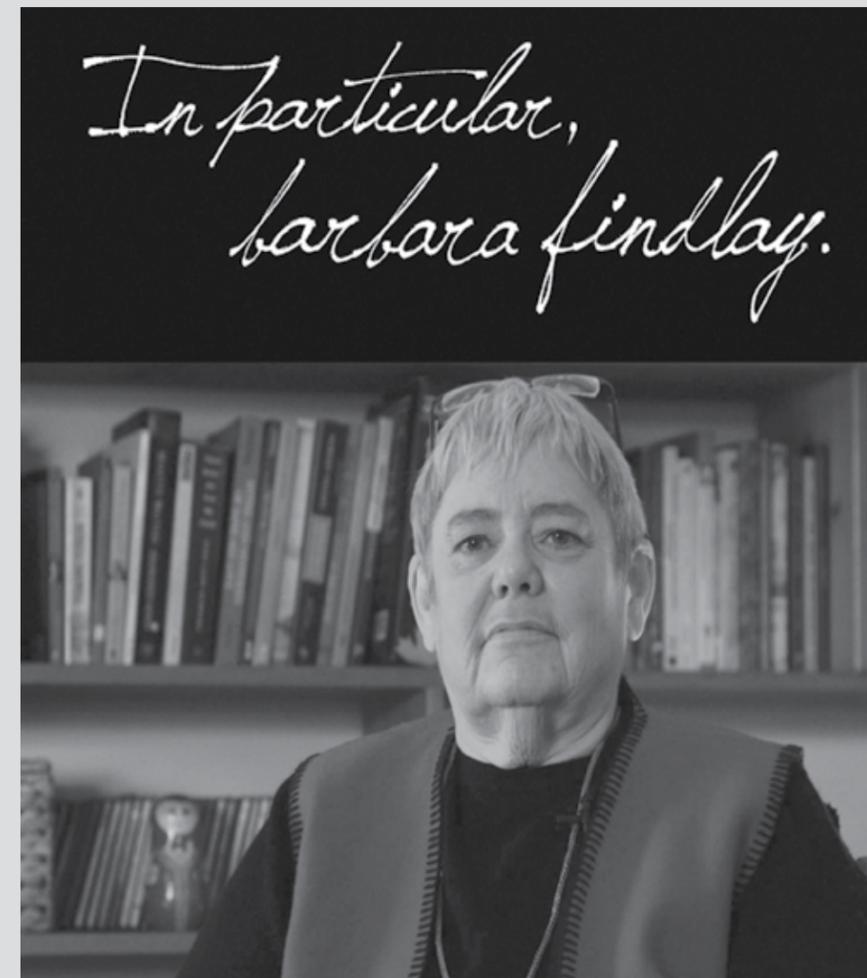
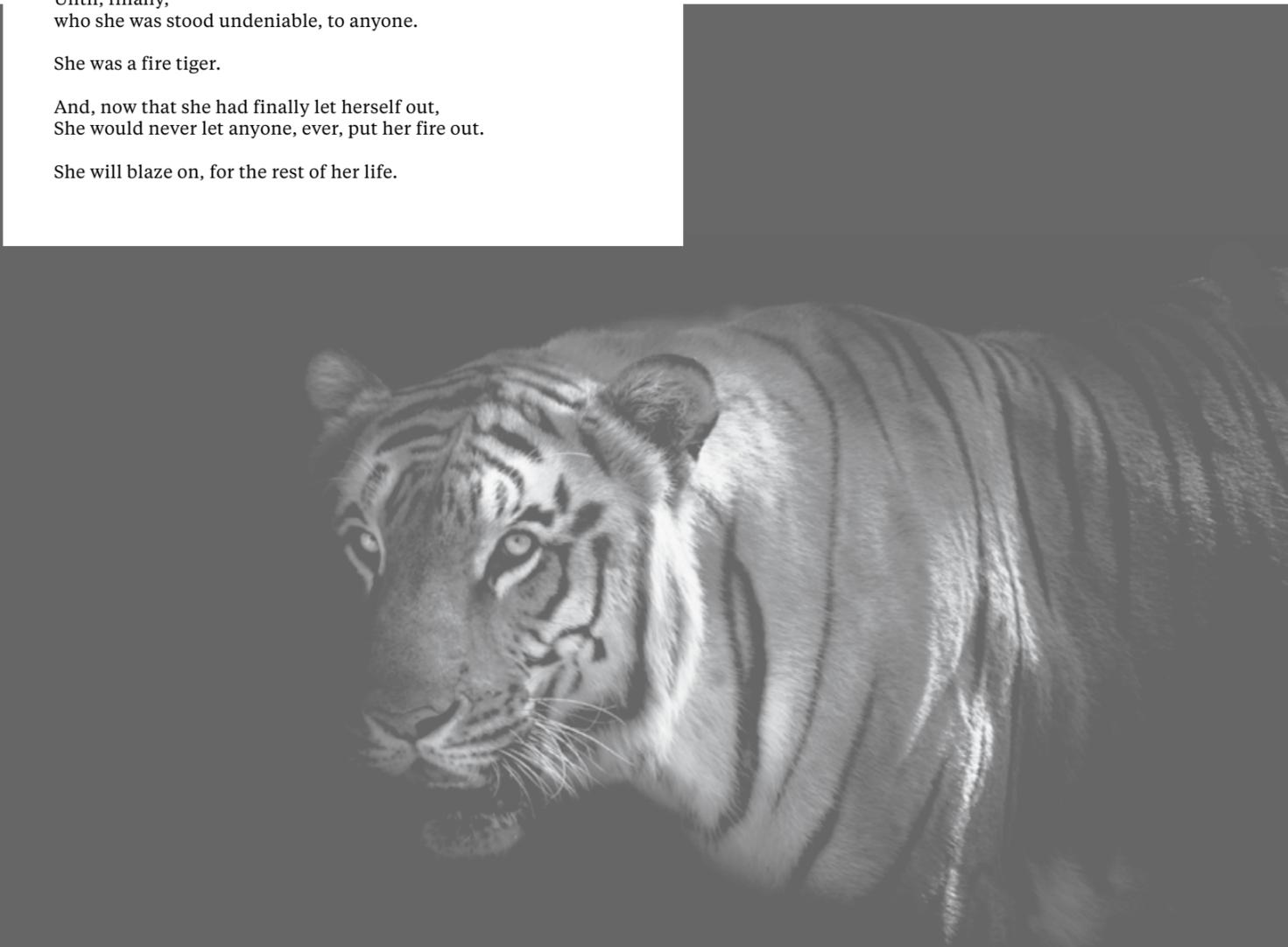
As she revealed more and more of her true self, her real self came out. Until, finally, who she was stood undeniable, to anyone.

She was a fire tiger.

And, now that she had finally let herself out, She would never let anyone, ever, put her fire out.

She will blaze on, for the rest of her life.

Cathy Lau is a writer from the Downtown Eastside, and recently completed Megaphone's Community Journalism 101 Class. This poem will be featured in her upcoming, self-published book Fairy Tales, For Real: Wisdom Poetry By Cathy Lau, due out this August.



Queer Film Festival // August 11-21 // Various theatres and venues // Vancouver

Vancouver's second-largest film festival and Western Canada's largest queer arts festival returns this month for the 28th year in a row, screening works that premiere at international festivals like Cannes, Sundance, or Berlinale—but the focus remains squarely on voices in the margins. The dynamic platform will light up the screens of Vancity Theatre, Rio Theatre, Cineplex Oden International Village Cinemas, and more. Don't miss it.

A Tribe Called Red // Aug. 31 // PNE Amphitheatre (2901 E. Hastings St.) // Tickets start at \$15 // Vancouver

I'm always pretty impressed with the musicians in the PNE group are consistency able to bring out to the old amphitheatre, particularly in this case, they brought in one of my favourite musical acts. The Canadian electronic music group blending instrumental hip hop, reggae, moombahton and dubstep dance, and First Nations music makes me feel like this country can be pretty damn cool sometimes.

All Together Now! Sings Champagne Super Nova! The Choir // Aug. 23 // 7 p.m. // Copper Owl (1900 Douglas St.) // Tickets \$7 // Victoria

Month after month, the Copper Owl makes the excruciating process of putting this calendar together just that much easier. Join Marc Jenkins, director of The Choir, with special guest Jessica Lydia Benini on guitar, for a drop-in choir night. What types of songs will they be singing? Well, how do covers from the Oasis 1995 album *What's the Story Morning Glory?* – Champagne Supernova. Want to learn how to sing harmony to singalong? Well, no experience is necessary!

YVR Food Fest // Aug 5-7 // Various times // Olympic Village // Tickets \$10 plus // Vancouver

Well, the tagline in my email about this event reads, "Bigger, Better, Tastier." So take that as you will. Formerly known as Food Cart Fest (I don't know what was wrong with that title), this event features some new activities such as food talks, special dinners, cocktail parties, and a Street Food Showdown. There will be beer, wine, food trucks, and a "feeding frenzy." I miss the simple life.

Esquimalt Arts Festival // Aug. 14 // 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. // English Inn (429 Lampson St.) // Victoria

Join a bunch of very talented people for this family friendly showcase of local and regional artists. You will see artist demonstrations, book readings from local authors, interactive activities aimed at kids, live music, food trucks, and apparently some amazing strawberry tea. This event is put on by the Township Community Arts Council.

Victoria Flamenco Festival // Until Aug. 7 // Recurring Daily // Various locations // Two free events & ticketed evening shows // Victoria

Flamenco dancing is pretty cool. The physical coordination it requires is something I personally aspire to, honestly. The confidence in the dancer's face while they pull off complex footwork is another life goal. The fourth annual event allows the Flamenco artists to share their passion with the community through workshops and performance. Check out www.victoriaflamencofestival.com for more information.

Band of Horses // Aug. 20 // 8 p.m. // Orpheum Theatre (884 Granville St.) // Tickets \$29.50 to \$39.50 // Vancouver

I like these folks. I've liked them for a long time. I feel a lot less old and a lot more hip when I see bands I used to go out to watch in my early 20s still touring around today. Thank you, Band of Horses, thank you for helping me with this whole aging process thing. This American rock band formed in 2004 in Seattle and has released five studio albums, including a Grammy-nominated album, *Infinite Arms*, back in 2010. Stay golden, Band of Horses.