

Skylight is a just-published Dalhousie Journal of Maritime Poetry and Prose, edited by Glenn Walton and Deirdre Dwyer. The following are selections from *Skylight*, which is now accepting (c/o the Dalhousie Gazette) contributions for the next issue.

Christopher Edwards

Mississippi Moan

got them ol'
miss you, miss
you tall grass rustle
cool breeze tender, laughing chime

got them ol'
heat wave, heat
and stillness cryin'
oh so lonely, lonely tired

got them ol'
big river whisper
ah, soon be comin'
lost in lazy, swirling eddy

got them ol'
miss you, miss
your lovin' blues

Paul Tyndall

A Failure of Will

Watching the flocks fly
Suddenly upward
On the edge of the field
I realise it is not at all
A matter of misfire
Which has set them
So poundingly free
But a failure of will.
I am simply not so eager to kill.

On Breughel's Hell

fish-eyed fear
stares
solemnly
into
the horse's mouth

Jim MacSwain

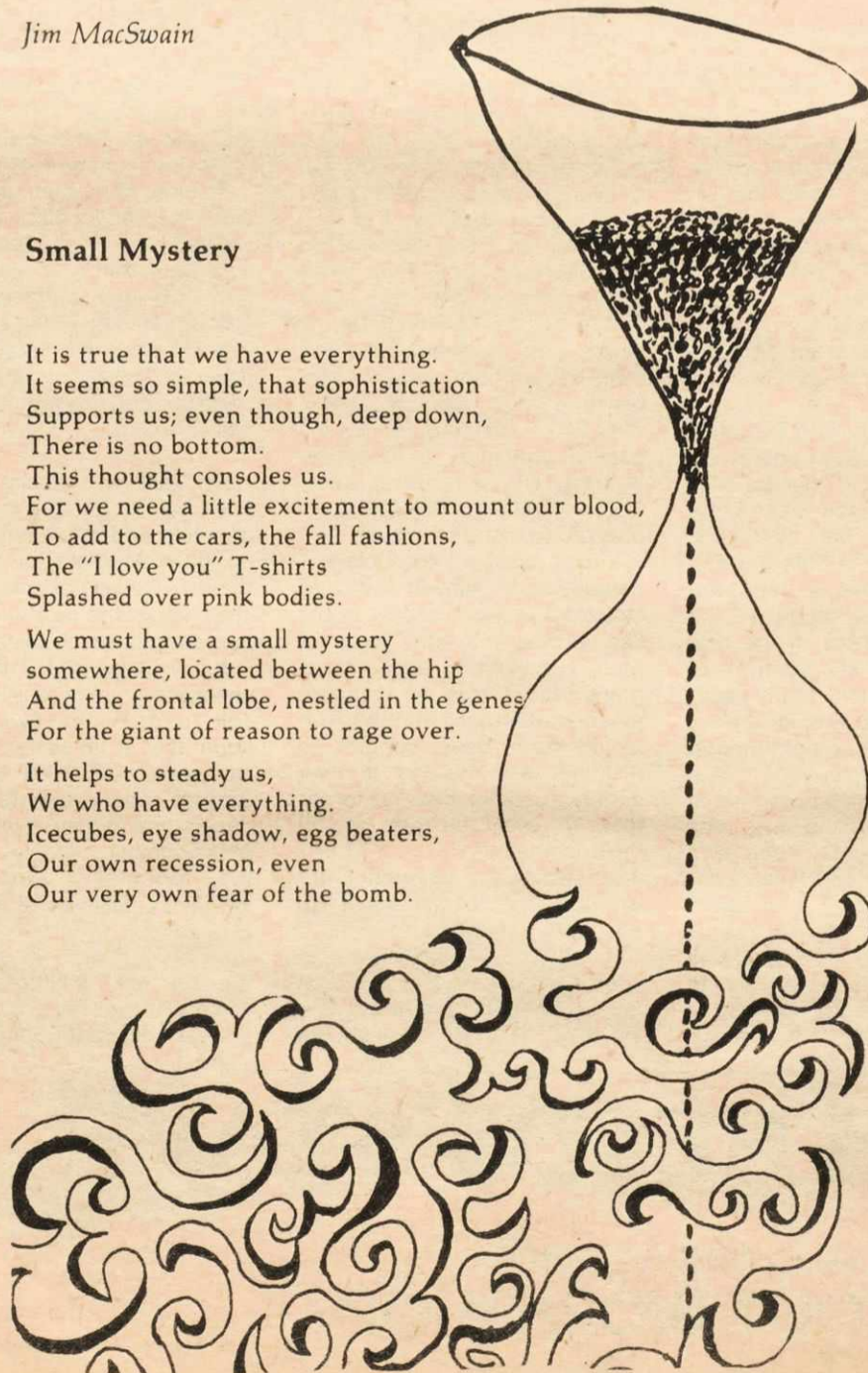
Small Mystery

It is true that we have everything.
It seems so simple, that sophistication
Supports us; even though, deep down,
There is no bottom.

This thought consoles us.
For we need a little excitement to mount our blood,
To add to the cars, the fall fashions,
The "I love you" T-shirts
Splashed over pink bodies.

We must have a small mystery
somewhere, located between the hip
And the frontal lobe, nestled in the genes
For the giant of reason to rage over.

It helps to steady us,
We who have everything.
Icecubes, eye shadow, egg beaters,
Our own recession, even
Our very own fear of the bomb.



Greg Graham

Parables From The School Of It

The post-existential, post-Zen school of It is firmly based on the philosophical traditions of the east, that is, the eastern part of Canada. Like Zen, it uses 'koans' or riddles beyond logical answers. Examples of such questions are "What is the difference between a duck?" or "What is the nature of sovereignty-association?"

The parables below from the Ash Inn Monastery will serve as an introduction to this school of thought.

I.

When the master Allan was still a young man he lived in Saskatchewan where the earth is flat and the ocean is the moon on the wheat fields.

In spite of his diligent study of it he could not find enlightenment. Inspired by an ancient text written some forty years ago he decided to undertake a pilgrimage, a journey to the far east.

Arriving in Newfoundland he sought out a teacher on a tiny wharf in Rose Blanche. This master, whose name we have forgotten, drew the young Allan to him by way of his simplicity as he mended the tools of his trade.

Respectfully the young Allan approached and asked "How shall I find enlightenment?"

"Get out of my way!" the old man replied.

Again Allan asked "What is the nature of it?"

The old man looked at him, rolled a cigarette, and finally spoke "It is a lobster trap, the net forms a funnel, if it passes through you have trapped it."

Allan bowed and watched in silence before venturing to question the sage again.

"Master," he said, "I have been unable to know what my face looked like before my parents were born."

For a long time the old man remained silent, but when he had finished his cigarette, he threw the butt in the water and said very slowly "Kiss my arse."

Again Allan bowed for now he knew he was in the presence of a true master.

"Tell me," he ventured, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

At this the old man knocked him off the wharf and he hit the water with a splash.

And true the young Allan achieved enlightenment.

II

Once while the master was enjoying a bowl of seafood chowder, he was approached by a vegetarian who offered him a handful of mung-bean sprouts.

"Will this not better feed the spirit?" the vegetarian demanded.

"I suppose the spirit of self-righteousness must have something to gnaw upon," the master responded, "As for me, I am feeding the family of a fisherman."

III

A woman, who was a member of a Fredericton Humane Society, upon hearing that the present master was a Newfoundlander, approached him with this riddle.

"Is it right to club baby seals for their furs?"

The master yawned and responded, "What is the sound of a budworm screaming?"

IV

A psychologist, wishing to test the master, asked him the now famous koan, — "What is the theory of cognitive-dissonance?"

The master and his companions began to laugh uncontrollably.

The psychologist, frustrated, shouted over the laughter, "So that's it, when you cannot answer a question you laugh it off!"

Now a bright student who was with the master spoke, "How can you be so blind? Is not our laughter evidence of cognition? Is not your frustration evidence of dissonance?"

It seems that when the psychologist became cognitive of his dissonance a change came over him and he again began to shout, "Now I get it...(Ha-Ha!)...Get it?...I get IT!"

And he too fell into laughter and was enlightened.

Espresso Satori

Watching the harbour dissolve into mist
as morning like a January rain
leaks into the Ash
while the strongest coffee this side of Hell (or Halifax)
bursts through the express
with orgasmic delight.
Singularity in reverse.
The black hole creating the universe.

The chicken or the cosmic egg?