

*Rising from Winnipeg*

*Rising from Winnipeg  
we see the houses  
pink and blue match boxes beneath us  
and then the land  
an abstract painting  
in green and yellow squares,  
the roads like rulers*

*And up we rise  
through miles of white fog  
to a glimpse of sky  
with clouds beneath us  
foamy as detergent  
on a washday.*

*We are poised over sky  
as though it were the sea  
blue, spray-tossed;  
and on the far edge  
are white icebergs  
motionless  
over which the plane  
seems to stand still.*

*Now they have disappeared  
and the foam is solid  
so that you think you could step  
from the plane window  
and snowshoe over  
a field of drifted white.*

*A woman sits opposite  
sipping lemonade  
and eating a cherry  
on the end of a stick.*

*A new old song*

*Those whom I loved, I love no more;  
those who loved me no more love me.  
I'll be like that miller of ancient times  
who lived beside the river Dee.*

*I'll sing a song, a happy song.  
Why should I need your company?  
Last winter's snow will soon be gone  
and new leaves come on the leafless tree.*

*I'll buy fresh tulips for my room,  
red petals streaked with lines of white.  
I'll buy a book of poetry  
and read it for my own delight.*

*I'll pour red wine into a glass  
and drink a toast to myself alone.  
I'll say to the silly world, Go by,  
God by, you lifeless ball of stone;*

*I never loved you much, and now  
I like you less as each day goes by;  
I wash my hands of your blood and sands,  
and say, You silly world, goodbye.*



*Thirty below*

*The prairie wind sounds colder  
than any wind I have ever heard.  
Looking through frosted windows  
I see snow whirl in the street  
and think how deep  
all over the country now  
snow drifts  
and cars are stuck  
on icy roads.  
A solitary man walking  
wraps his face in a woollen mask,  
turns his back sometimes  
so as not to front  
this biting, eye-smarting wind.*

*Suddenly I see my dead father  
in an old coat too thin for him,  
the tabs of his cap pulled over his ears,  
on a drifted road in New Brunswick  
walking with bowed head  
towards home.*

*Games in an institution*

*I carry my heart in my hand  
in a pink plastic box.  
The floor is slippery and slopes upward.  
I am afraid I may drop my heart  
in the midst of the crowd,  
but I do not think it will break.  
It is made of durable material  
and may perhaps bounce.*

*We plan to play games with our hearts.  
We have all lined up  
outside a box office  
in order to get our hockey sticks.*

*The woman standing beside me  
decides to take off her clothes.  
She makes faces at us.  
We ignore her, as politely as we can,  
and someone says, "Poor soul, she can't help it.  
She'll be as sensible as can be  
tomorrow."*

*A few people slide on the polished floor.  
Somehow, however, no one  
ever gets around to playing games.*

*Dwarf highrise*

*From this angle  
the apartment building  
looks pie-shaped  
though I know it is a rectangle.  
Also it is small, made with a child's blocks—  
no, made with dominoes heaped up,  
a black slab of wall with dots of light.*

*Inside are people  
also small,  
so small I can't see them.  
They walk around behind the lighted dots,  
fiddle with the minute knobs  
of toy television sets.*

*They cook, eat, make love, do pushups  
with precise cardboard motions.*

*Maybe someone has even  
taken a sheet of paper  
from a doll's house desk  
and sits imagining*

*a Lilliputian poem  
smaller than a speck.*

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