

BEHIND THE PICNIC BENCH

Only five at the swimming party  
making waves until  
the beachball fell

outside the pool  
where bottles waited coolly  
to be opened  
like closed conversation.

And from the picnic bench  
of oddmatched couples  
I saw you standing

behind the greyed ashtrays  
and bent beer caps.

Smiling through a thousand watts  
of white light glare  
saying hello

over wetted heads  
and damp beach towels.

I watched you wade  
through pool-side talk  
and polished driftwood  
until you found my hand

holding cigarette and drink.

donalee moulton

Pictures At the Beginning Of Spring

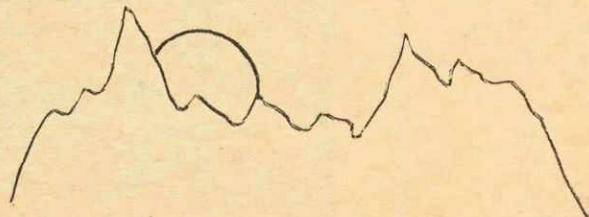
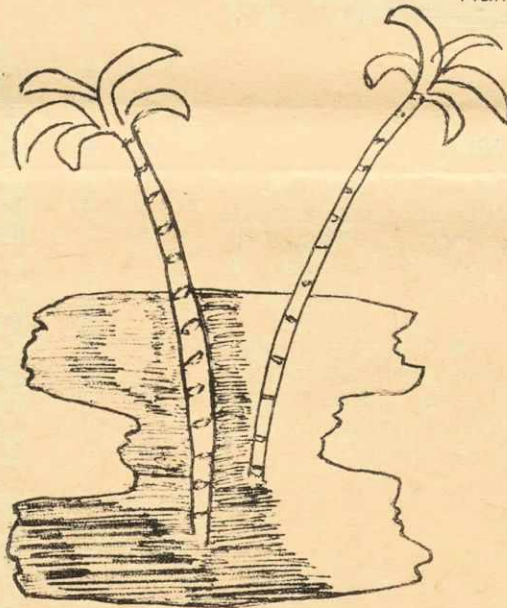
The making of angels  
is quite an easy task:  
spray can of blue paint  
just fire at the figure and there.

Winnipeg is rather cold in winter  
Halifax is quite cold enough for me

Red empty milk carton sits before me  
on a yellow squared table cloth  
books and papers scattered  
around a digital clock radio  
Sunday morning baritone  
announces the beginning of Spring.  
the snow only fell to melt  
to keep up appearances.

Brown dog leavings left beneath the tree  
next muddied orange peel.  
Copper wire butterfly speaks of love  
never returned by me.  
Auden's lines stare out at me  
glass covered in four suits  
reminding me of a book so old  
leaves rarely turned.

—Gordon Coombes



Cavendish

The east wind sweeps over the beach,  
Whispers and lifts the dune-drifted sands:  
The crystals glisten, flying, as each  
The east wind sweeps over the beach.  
Both wind and sands seem within reach,  
But as we stretch the capturing hands,  
The east wind sweeps over the beach,  
Whispers and lifts the dune-drifted sands.

—R.L.R.

Spring Day in Winter

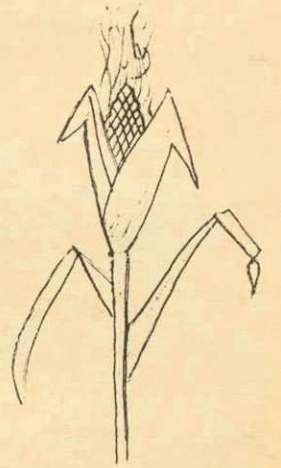
She sits in parka  
says I remember last winter  
and February the best  
so silent/cold hung vacant  
surprised blocks of air  
says I remember last winter  
and February the anguish  
and the coming home  
the way that one when he turned  
might have had your face  
became night in night  
says I remembr last winter  
and Februry the night

—Dawn Rae Downton

Muse: for R. Z.

Bearded young ghost  
child/man your daughter  
threads needle neat  
through a country of lies  
& lifts her whisper-filled  
hand to make the hard  
dark script you want,  
divinity of death,  
the bright life of dust  
startled in a wind.  
Keep her song.

Ken Snyder  
English Department  
St. Mary's Univ.  
Halifax



from the Glace Bay Series

His hair was sickly-red.  
His face was pimpled and twisted.  
His eyes were dull and watery.  
He was tall and lanky;  
A retired coal miner's son.

His eldest brother reaches success;  
Was supposed to be a priest,  
Became a professor instead.

Sickly-red haired boy  
Was never meant to be anything.  
One success story is enough  
For a retired coal miner's family.

The sickly-red haired boy and I  
Were once companions.  
We drifted away from each other;  
We may have reminded each other  
Of too much that had been forgotten.

His eyes were dull:  
My cat's eye became dull too;  
That morning my cat returned  
To collapse and lie at my feet.  
His low muffled cries made me cold.  
His body was heavy  
as I carried him outside.

My cat I could hold ;  
My friend I never held.  
So many sleepless nights  
We spend in futile worry.

Then one evening he clumsily  
Picked up a rifle and it fired.  
The family was astounded;  
The newspaper reported an accident,  
And the family missed Christmas.

We were strangers by then  
Though we had shared a lot  
I felt numb at the news  
No more than for my cat.

— Gordon Coombes