

Winter, the Unwelcome Visitor

for CD Laatz

Winter comes like an unwanted visitor
I cannot turn away.

Burning snow pelting me
with a thousand memories,
scalding me with cold.

Go, I say, I wait for African sun,
to be held by a man, a continent away.

* * *

But do I regret:

the rain that hails on flooded highways
the biting air that brittles the bones
the wind that breathes your breath astray

the poverty that pursued us
relentless as the vagrants at the door

the summer that sweats in the shade
baking the tin roofs of corroded shacks
hungry light eating the skin away

wandering like lost street children
walking to hope miles delayed

mountains with rocks for foliage
tired shifting of the grey skies
battling with the wearied tides

eyes wide in the darkness
waiting for the murdering thieves to come?

* * *

And, I thought I wanted you, Canada.

I remembered you,
like a lonely man recalling a lost love

believing that after all this time
you could still want me
burns and wrinkles, scars and shame

I fantasized about you
like a young girl enchanted with a future to come

But, the golden roads are just asphalt promises;
the welcoming arms are limp and tired;
all hopes and dreams are bogged and mired.

I chafed at my exile
like a refugee aching to return home

to deep forests where I could hide my eyes
night skies as velvet as egg yolks
the winter warming me despite the cold

I remembered a breeze that enlivens each breath;
I remembered a sun that takes forever to set.

What are you to me:
oh husband-less wife, fatherless child,
and pregnant forlorn lover?

Perhaps I do not remember you as you were—

for, the wind tears my cheap coat;
the streetcars scream in clanging ears;
the roaches await their turn in every corner;
as I stare at the snow by the window alone.

* * *

I cannot know when he will come;
I watch as the seasons turn me away.

The ocean like a great eye,
in False Bay harbour still staring at the sky.