

Three Poems

Matt Kingcroft

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Downtown Eastside Pastoral

Matt Kingcroft

A summer on East Hastings has been nothing
but heavy light and thick sweat. My body,
cursed by a doubled skin of scabbed blood,
rejoices when the sun finally makes its exit,
pursued by a cloud. The idea of the deluge¹
brings a kind of lightness of spirit, and after—
an alchemy. The blackberries on Glen Drive
become icons, haloes of water wrapping light
around acid-pricked blooms. Nested in pavement,
apples outside our window gain a blush of blood,
as drops of rain raise their rosy bodies for veneration,
while a blessing flows over each leaf of Honeycrisp,
each bud of lilac or ear of lamb. Acorns thunder
over tarps and tents, and alleys are pockmarked
by puddles, as sewers swallow rivers of garbage.
The sun will come again, and all will blanch
and bleed. Still, I will sing a new song—
of pickled smells rinsed sweet, neighbours hidden
together under storm-washed awnings, police
sirens silenced by heaven's let down.

¹ "Idea of a deluge" comes from Arthur Rimbaud's "After the Deluge"

To, From

Matt Kingcroft

Those first months
after moving away,
no work for me but
to think of a life,
and no visitors either,
there was a well-trod path
to the river. A river
is saturated with good.
Even as it breaks its banks,
making human life
fissure, it is home
to a commonwealth
of mercies. At the river,
a distance in me broke
like ice floes. I was carried
from home to home.
When we return, then,
and we are met by the same
grief told backwards,
I pray another river
might do the same.

Cathedral

Matt Kingcroft

We drive twenty minutes north
to Lynn Canyon, where lichen-licked trees
stipple the rock and a quickening
current cuts a trail as salmon sail up
veils of snow-capped mist. Before the drive,
we have an argument steeped in self-
obfuscation and repetition—the same dialogue
we rehearse anytime we have to travel.
We arrive, amble out of the car, and pile
the children onto our backs. Sharp light
shifts to shadow as trees unfold,
making patchwork of the sky, freckled sun
sparking as if on water. We are baptized
by a priesthood of wood and mycelium. Our heart
rates steady, despite knowing we will return
at some point to the car.