#### The Trumpeter

Journal of Ecosophy



#### **Three Poems**

#### Matt Kingcroft

Volume 40, numéro 1, 2024

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1113562ar DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/1113562ar

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Éditeur(s)

Athabasca University Press

ISSN

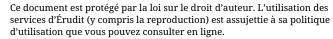
0832-6193 (imprimé) 1705-9429 (numérique)

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Citer ce document

Kingcroft, M. (2024). Three Poems. The Trumpeter, 40(1), 126–128. https://doi.org/10.7202/1113562ar





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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 deluge<sup>1</sup> 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 songof pickled smells rinsed sweet, neighbours hidden together under storm-washed awnings, police sirens silenced by heaven's let down.

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 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 1}$  "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.

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## 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 selfobfuscation 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.

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