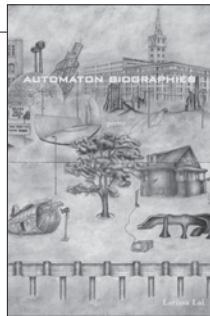


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sup baht

on the musqueam reserve  
by the flag shop at burrard and fourth  
at bayswater and point grey road  
out by jericho beach  
down by the grandview superstore  
undercurrents fishy beginnings  
the upstream ladder  
move from salt water to fresh  
what the city covers it also  
remembers  
anadromous  
symbiotic  
scrambling latin to find real beneath estate

— Larissa Lai

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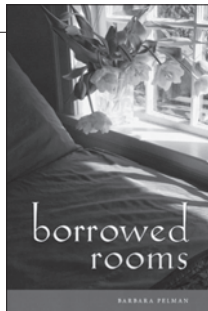
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## *from Instructions for Dreaming*

Approach the dream like a lover,  
scrubbed and empty, hands open:

lie down with blessings, pray  
for light, a good dream,

one that wakes you in the night  
with a clear voice, your own,

not one that leads you down a path  
you have already been on and learned nothing.

Are you ready? Have you bathed in cool water, brushed  
the day from you, dressed in clean robes?

— Barbara Pelman

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## Vuillard Interior

Against brown walls, the servant bends  
over the coverlet she mends —  
brown hair, brown flocking, a dun hand  
under the lamp, the servant bends  
over the coverlet she mends  
draped across her broad brown skirts;  
knotting, nodding, the servant blends  
into the coverlet she mends.

— Elise Partridge

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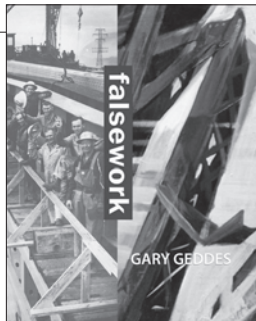
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## from An Educated Guess

There was this girl on the food-floor at Woodward's  
who studied Fine Art. I used to take my groceries  
to her till and chat her up. Katie, her name was. I drove  
Katie to North Van and showed her how work was coming  
on the bridge, two spans inching closer by the hour. Very  
dramatic, she said, removing my hand from beneath her blouse.  
Then she began to describe a painting on the ceiling of a building  
in Rome, a sort of pointing-match where a whole lot of energy  
crosses over between the outstretched, almost-touching  
index fingers of God and Adam. Sounds to me  
like the sparks in an arc welder, I ventured. For that,  
she replied, you deserve a kiss. A promising start,  
I thought, something to build on. Katie read my mind.  
It takes more than the laws of physics, she said.

— Gary Geddes

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## from *I Cannot Read All the Purple Books*

I cannot read all the purple books  
yet left, nor can I manage  
the green ones, the blue ones  
the slim red volumes  
that speak an author's innards  
as if he's taken a penknife...  
but I will not give away  
the secret endings of the  
yellow and yellowing more  
old tomes stuck in rows  
that make me think here at last  
is life, better life that life itself  
I lay them upon my chest  
as I lie dreaming in the world

— David Zieroth

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'86 I was ten years old the year Chernobyl burned,  
the very same year that Expo '86  
came to Vancouver and the city changed forever.  
For I will always think of China, the China pavilion  
to be exact, each time these years later I pass  
the China Gate at Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's Classical  
Chinese Gardens. We were moving then, all of us,  
from one place to another. Now, I'm haunted  
by the SkyTrain doors' perfect open fifth, then that smooth  
electronic contralto programmed to reassure one rides  
the *Expo Line to Waterfront Station*. That line stretches out  
behind us: concrete contrails left over from '86. Eighty-six,  
the year Chernobyl burned hot as the centre  
of the earth, the sun, and men hurried in.

— Elizabeth Bachinsky

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## Perseid Meteor Shower

You wake up  
your son at two  
in the morning  
so the boy  
the dog and you  
can leave the city  
drive to the beach  
just out of town  
where you lie on the sand  
to watch the night sky.

Your three heads  
touching in the dark.

— Kelly Parsons

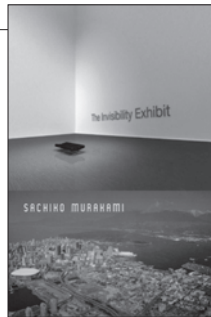
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## Accounting

At Carrall St. she eases into the seat beside me  
her bulk of leather and scarves, heavy  
with the scent of wet concrete. From her purse's folds  
she pulls a pencil and notebook, begin to track  
each lurch of metal and flesh, marks the time  
against a schedule, tallies passengers, shopping bags,  
redheads. There are names that she checks twice  
against faces fading into cotton, soaked wool, linen.

She snaps her fingers, licks the eraser tip, but no.  
They're all but lost. Her ledger will not balance. The bus turns:  
the downtown skyline, visible, and then hidden.

Before we reach Mt. Pleasant and the greener  
ascension she reaches her page's end,  
packs up, steps down into the streets  
and finds her place among them.

— Sachiko Murakami

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# poetry in transit



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*from Great Mother*

the babe in my belly feels  
just like a great idea  
burgeoning, taking shape  
swelling up in my mind  
taking up more and more space  
until  
all that remains  
is the urge  
to express—  
but we're not there yet:  
I am singing Our Name  
laughing with a great idea  
growing in my belly

—Joanne Arnott

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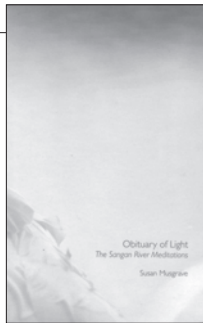
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viii We eluded beauty and went  
right to the truth, evaded happiness  
and went for the weeping. I loved you  
with the fierceness we save for those  
who can break us in all the broken places.  
Never mind the lies, the promises  
you couldn't keep. They are small  
mysteries, like the blowing milkweed silk.

— Susan Musgrave

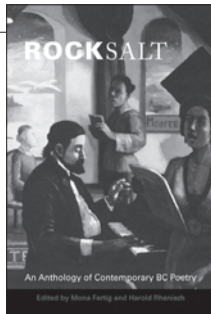
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*from You can take the  
girl out of the city*

This girl's gonna ditch her rustic frolic, this girl so wants back  
to bright light big box open late lurchy bus people shout car siren  
city siren three a.m. car car six screen butter popcorn new release  
people people busker nightschool swim class take-out pizza art  
show book club bike lane Chinatown wants to sit down Friday  
night half-caf latte frothy lip foam run mouth poet in every chair  
at the open mike read to me read to me read to me café.

— Rhonda Ganz

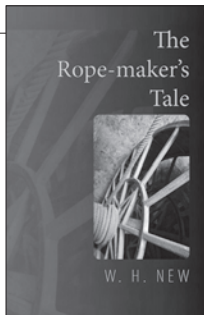
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*from The Rope-maker's Tale*

summer, like a lover's knot,  
ties us in daisies,  
eyes open, stems green—  
like a lover's knot, eyes  
open, summer befriends us,  
philadelphus, syringa, snowpetal daze—  
eyes open, like summer,  
syringa mocks us, but gently,  
weds us to oranges, stammering sweet—  
gently, like blood, mock orange  
opens, teases the summer, stumbling lovers,  
lingering green in fumbles of snow—

— W. H. New

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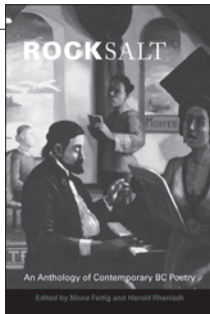
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## from Questions

I want to ask poetry where it was for all those years. Where was it when I chain-smoked my way through Vancouver bingo parlours and where was it when I traded my Penguin classics for True Crime stories? I want to ask it about waitressing in Chinese restaurants and slinging beer in Indian bars and about hitch-hiking and smoking dope and seeing the prairies for the first time. I want to ask about underground rivers and the homelessness of rain and how it knows what it knows and why it knows so much more than I do. I want to ask poetry where it goes when it disappears and if it was there when I shot pool and crashed in cheap hotels in small towns across the country. I want to ask it why it drew me close and then let go and if it led me to the dying as a way to keep me alive.

— Eve Joseph

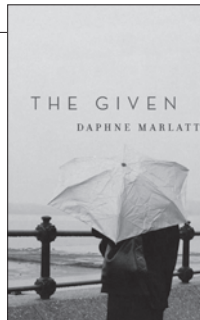
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*from Untitled*

this knot of the 50s – undone by a love that wells up for,  
as if from, the city on occasion, by surprise. as if the insistent  
views that keep us separate fade to thin air's embrace my  
heart lurches in, widening out to apparitional mountains  
in the haze, the close-up glittery smile of False  
Creek, its towers, its tugs, its 1930s bridge with glass  
flambeaux above the sea's old smell of bilge, of used-up  
sand. gull cackle. rim shriek.

— Daphne Marlatt

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Gould Poems* by Kate Braid,  
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## Burlesca

What has three legs, never walks, but transports you,  
has no arms but embraces hundreds at a time?  
What single key opens eighty-eight different doors,  
is black and white but blinds you with its colour?  
What silent visitor sits in your living room and sings?

*Burlesca* is an Italian word meaning “musical joke”.  
The answer to the riddle is a piano.

— Kate Braid

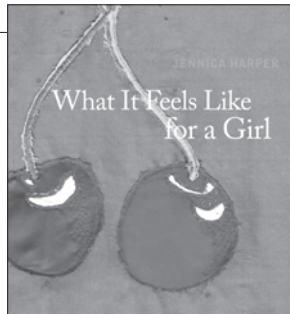
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*from* **What It Feels Like  
for a Girl**

When you are thirteen  
the world is a small room.

A bedroom.  
A locker at school.

A box.  
Gym socks, combination locks.

Four walls and a roof.  
For every difficult problem: a proof.

—Jennica Harper

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