

Joanna Beyers / THREE POEMS

EVERY MORNING PETER GZOWSKI

We heard it first on Morningside:
Intelligent Raven ambushes Dog
from above with icicles
for sheer pleasure
in villages across the North.

During the grease-trail centuries
and now too, when ships line up for harbour
the length of Burrard Inlet, Highway #1
sinks mutely into the waters of Howe Sound,
and ferries cross the Strait of Georgia,
to bestow identity the land must be earned.

Hedge-like along that arbitrary border
or loosely between three oceans
we carve onto the surface
with the fixed-width cut of a chisel
shallow marks of uncompromising presence.
Also our greed.

On the scaled backs of traveled fish,
drifting soil, denuded slopes,
the country rests.
Our short view drains into the stream
of permeable history along with the water,
the long-lived toxins.

National unity is not opening night at the stage,
not special dress worn once a year
on July 1st with fireworks
and otherwise before commissions.
Instead we have time zones
and links of human invention.

When the stubborn dismantling is complete
what will remain is the Newfoundland half-hour.
Meanwhile a giant ear covers
the great distances daily
& we listen.

RE: THE GREEN RIVER MURDERS

Based on Pacific Report, CBC-TV, Jan.19, 1987

When I carried you
I made you
skin with bone together

In death they separate
Bone is the more durable
And teeth in a broken jaw
identify you

JOY KOGAWA AT LA QUENA
April 24, 1986

the poem about the English lord
unlike the others
generates laughter
and indignant whispers
from the nearest tables
just so you will know
we understand here
we are an audience
wise in the ways of racism
so you will know
we bring an audience of our own:
we come to the correct places
say the right things
love to be seen where it matters