

david michael gillis / THREE POEMS

OH LITTLE TOWN OF DRAINAGEBROOK

Ignore this suicidal homosexual  
passing through your night on a Grey Hound  
past your doublewides and satellite dishes  
on land tilled first  
by nineteenth century women and men  
whose collective mind  
languished in the eighteenth century,  
Old Countries,  
different coloured soil  
& spiralangular weather systems off other oceans  
of different wind.

This is it.  
You love it as those who came before you did.  
All that remains is a left at Parksville  
and straight on to Tofino: land's end.  
Japanese garbage.  
The bodies  
of WWII airmen in rubber rafts caught  
in open ocean currents for fifty years.  
Released slowly  
one at a time.  
There are millions of them to be washed up on those shores.  
Their children  
dead  
or otherwise statistics.  
Paunchy,  
middle aged,

fatherless &  
circumstantially arrogant.  
They have buzzed me with their motorhomes  
as I've hitch-hiked this island highway.  
I've met them in truckstops and in provincial campgrounds.  
They give me beer and advice.  
Husbands cruise me as hungrily as the neglected wives.  
What is so appealing about a man with nowhere to go?  
There's this couple I meet up island during the off season.  
They're from Flagstaff, Az.  
He's out to fish.  
She's "...just taggin' along."  
Like the time in '58 when they got married.

We're waiting for a road crew to finish blasting.  
Everyone has left their vehicles  
and are talking, arms folded, heads nodding,  
on the gravel shoulder.  
I'm hitching to Port Hardy for no good reason.  
It is January, but the sun is shining.  
Up the road warning whistles sound.  
Explosions occur.  
Flagstaff Man asks if I want a ride. Asks  
if I'd like to suck his cock —  
"...for spendin' cash."

His wife is unaffected by this.

I'm looking for the local beat cop  
a drugstore clerk or postman:  
someone to phone my mother  
and take me home.

## BOYS' TOWN

Every boy in this town's got messy hair  
because the wind blows all the time.  
Wind chimes going mad.  
Birthing sound.  
The mount,  
    the nod,  
        the exclamation.

Reluctantly  
we are out the french doors.  
Sheers flapping  
wild on the brick patio.

Tonight  
the view.  
Lights  
dark patches of ocean.  
Civil systems.  
Bus routes. Cops on Harleys.  
Prohibition & celebration.  
Immigrants still waltzing in the sewers.  
Accustomed to steerage  
if this city sinks  
they know their doom.  
We know tonight is the last of its kind.  
Sucking up the dregs  
    of the Santa Annas California spares us,  
night things will go mad.

I will drive my Cadillac headlights off  
down alleys  
over garbage cans  
past back doors where boys meet.  
I'll park  
choose a door  
and stroll in with the manhole steam  
following me  
like Chinese New Year.

Welcome to Boys Town.  
Welcome to Hallelujah.

Tonight  
what rifts?  
What words will be ode  
to the next man I grab  
and steal to the floor  
to this last night  
we experience in such light?  
We could love, but better  
will I know a name?

In this dark  
who could linger on any threshold?  
A passage  
standing  
handed  
on to another.  
With all we know  
we are still sacrificial  
and prone to surrender.

## DEAD

dead come  
dot matrix across grey morning vision  
forming words from snowy light  
dancing their hands dryly  
as weed bodies at ballet  
& slip back through drafts  
where boundaries separate us

dead are not angels  
*dead are dead*  
it is a gender  
we cannot know  
dead mock angels as god's inorganic frivolous invention

dead visit their caskets crypts cremation urns  
& the bellies of their destroyers  
nostalgically view their remains  
reflect upon their state of decay  
enthralled by beauty & logic

dead are giants seen from earth marching  
upon the horizon of the moon during an eclipse  
& the third unseen  
partner in procreation