

KEN BELFORD / Hindsight

For George Stanley

Most of the risks I take are voluntary
but I remember disasters I lived through
that still can't be understood.
I didn't live at the wrong time
or in the wrong place
like along the Skeena flood line
or even in a dangerous place
but I saw the wildfires of the Nass
and lived in a handmade home
on a steep slope
that looked like the upper Volta.
Income continues
when the canyons of the rich slough away in flood.
It takes money to buy design
but risk is the common thread.
I lived in a flimsy economy
and made my home where settlement had been
and I still live near the genesis of change.
Everything varies from occurrence to disturbance
but the gap I mean is widening.
Systems of class are more dangerous
than natural disasters
but our families were failures
and we needed to get away from them
so we took refuge in the mountains.