

Brett Enemark / from THE SNOW MEN CLUCULZ LAKE

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You sang *let the sunshine in*, in
the car going west to the lake & I listened
yr blue Chrysler went up the hill
above the lake
at over a hundred, when my mother
again threatened to jump out. Always
she rode with her right hand poised
(a gunslinger) at the passenger-doorhandle. Ready
her door opens to eternal trees
pierced finally by the light up from the lake. Now
I remember: that's where the gravel ended
pavement began & you speeded up
to be so close & yet the highway
doesn't run straight into the water.
It lifts up the long hill & drifts back again
between two walls of trees — small jackpine — an old burn
we wandered thru, before the turnoff.

I wrote my first poem. Early spring so the ice
not out yet & laying solid on liquid known where the lake was
last year.

Writing poetry in the still frosty cabin up the steep
bank from the ice where we'd just worked together collecting
a huge pile of slash — the trees you'd just fallen.

Writing poetry while you poured the white gas on those
newly-severed branches & bucked trunks that only an hour
before had hung well above the ice. White Poplar & Willows.

Writing poetry in a parka, from the window, while you
tried to light a match with yr big bare hands shaking in the
cold, wind ripping away each flame, repeated curses at
Christ, the slash, the wind, yr hands, the match & me.

Writing poetry when a match caught the gas & the wood
disappeared behind an explosion in which I imagined the
golden spires of a city, gone in an instant. Meat in the mouths
of a pack of dogs lapping at winter's dull sky.

Writing poetry of a sea-battle so far from the sea
a fire burns atop ice & there are fishing-holes where fires
burned before me.

Writing poetry the vapour-shot of my breath was the short
steam of burnt cities the instant they disappear in black water
— a hiss-sound, like a snake.

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Many had drowned, this lake also
glacial in origin — in fact the deepest we thought
it's bottomless, yet knowing
if it was
the water'd run out the bottom
instead of out Cluculz Creek to the Nechako
& home.

People kept drowning. They'd disappear
never to be seen again. They didn't
go out to the creek.

They're bones at the bottom
too deep to be dragged. You must
as you dive down or drown you will or will not
notice the numbing constant lowering in temperature
& rise in pressure the body cannot resist. The hole
at the bottom must be plugged, plugged
with ice, plugged with
bones.

It looks much like a mountain
top only everything is black & we were sailors.