

THE MUSE

*

house on Tatlow Ave.,
a mile away the harbour
& Lions Gate Bridge,

would hold a place i can think of
my life ring true
in a few words

immediately outside
old cut-bank carved by Capilano River,
big rotted stumps, now
a green belt park, mostly ferns
& Vine Maple, a few Cedars
on the hill

the fence, the grass, the garden
under it, 3 feet down
brown sand, round field stone
river bed the house sits on
good drainage

this portrait includes
plants on the window ledge, the chair
an arm, elbow bent, hand
with a pen in it

white paper in a clip board, coffee

something written a moment before,
a fragment, a puzzle

“where water is ground
solid
as any act of transformation
(inside) the silence is crossed, a bridge
the crossing is called
transcendence”

*

suburban street zoned light industrial
4 storey maximum apartment &
the wrecking crews 20 years away or tomorrow

lives come & go
in the houses on Tatlow
temporary wood frame, Coast Fir & Hemlock
appears settled, permanent

lives coincide, 3 feet down
field stone, old river bed

water flowing under all the houses
into the harbour

salt air blowing through the mesh of wires
of Lions Gate suspension bridge

it sways with the traffic it carries
moves beneath the wheels & feet

water below & water falling
through the dense weave of branches
in the woods, deep texture

shade within shade of green, grey
January Coast woods colours, brown sand
& red brown

birds call, crows yell, i found one dead
the trees above thick with them
screaming while i buried it

when i looked up they'd flown away

* the suicide (Lions Gate Bridge)

i think you should not kill yourself
but you did

the waves swelling
make the contact concrete

120 feet under the bridge
usual traffic, who would notice
at that speed, another
anonymous twilight

how many times the sun sets
on the way down

17 years old in one account

its anger i feel, knowing
it comes over me in certain mornings
smirking, cowardly

what a release
to not be here

i feel despair i'm not allowed
or tell anyone

indulgence is it

you were useless, go throw yourself
off a bridge, the world's
not worth the effort

i'm a mile away
when you walk over the edge,
probably medicated or it's wearing off
long enough

i would have held you back
or help,

i mean

*

the house is a structure
of continuous tension

relaxed in balance
it celebrates, in its field of stress
& counterstress, a whole form

in this climate all leak
eventually

or soon

★

i had learned the poem a field
of action (the poem is an event
in language)

its structure rhyme, soundings
in a weave, the deep present

& fragments, a collage, a jumble, disorder

through it
another voice, almost a face forms

patient, almost smiling, not
a god but figured forth
in the act

the imagination making
of itself,

thought outside
oneself, penetrant

★

love is a house

*

muse

i woke up
with language under my finger tips

i went all the way back
in sounds words are

i woke up
with the light flashing or
glancing off the waves
in Howe Sound

it's not human but includes the human
your form, your eyes, I
will give you speech, the others,

look to the others

look at me, i'm no god you've imagined
no single sound,
I'll assume no form

but make of me what you will, here
splash this on your face

it will give you courage

*

whispering the death of poetry
like a madman

& all art useless, whispering
the death of poetry

all the news is terrible, a death of
meaning, a suicide of
meaning in the crush & noise

the poisoned hand
on the poisoned cup, drink it down —
shut up

you are nothing, you
have nothing to say
the meanness, the intolerable meanness
the voice whispering
the death of poetry like a madman
drink the poison, take
the poison cup, drink it down, shut up

*

watery one, this is no prayer
slip your eloquence into
my mouth
& i be equal
in the voicing
your gift
the human seems hardly worth it
unless it's said
use me, i wait
beyond forgiveness in an art as old
as the act of wave on rock *

let this be a drinking song
a drinking down of
that liquid your life lifts
to my lips
& you sing along
the Coast Line
lives, some human
all taken,
out of your mouth

*

muse

i looked everywhere, maybe
that was the problem

do you want to be a poet

sit down somewhere
like a human being

someone is just behind you
holding the writing up to the light

it's that transparent

a real ghost story

don't write a word or read,
what happens next
is already text

the real world is useless,
the imaginary world
is a chair at a table
& you

will never get away with this
even if you manage to leave it
alone long enough

but the attempt, that's different
that's different

*

the taking took me away,
feels like a body
riding mine

under or over, the order its
motion makes
commanding neither lead
too far into the future

exotic like otters & fir trees

leans over the struggling form
about to merge
or enter
an immense meadow

★

one hand holds you, the other
under my head
lifting it
for a glimpse of the ocean
in your eyes
it's not the same as an image
both have
the outer reaches of the body
borne by what they bear
come out of the future so fast
it's visible