

## **Girl Joins Canada, July 1948**

Anyone might have thought she was out to drown herself,  
had anyone looked. But they had more on their minds that day  
than the way the rising wash made tidal pools around her boots,  
the icy sea sluicing in and her hemline soaked.

But she wasn't going back—not yet—  
not after what the old woman said,  
*there'll be all and sundry making their henscratches for that fool Joey,*  
and himself, hauling up his braces,  
*oh, yes, and it's us'll be damned for their ignorance.*

These are the things she carried: buckets,  
bakepots, crates of tea and biscuits, washing,  
pisspots; clinking rose-bedecked pails of filth; and as she carried, listened.  
And when it struck her they were fearful—them—  
she knew she'd put her mark on the thing  
that brought the fear in and laid it on their kitchen table  
between the radio and the butter. Can-a-day meant nothing to her—  
maple syrup, elsewhere, *dis bonjour*.

Out there, beyond the waves' creamy break.  
somewhere a far and fog-occluded shore. Larger  
and different, that was it, than anything she'd known.  
She'd made her mark. A secret in the service of a mystery.  
And waited for a great tide to wash over her.

--Carmelita McGrath