

Senior Division, Poetry  
Bernard Wills, Corner Brook  
**Igor (an excerpt)**

The Baker and his wife Irena  
and Ratko his son  
and Jelena and Ana his daughters  
left Knin for Halifax in 1989.

I never asked him why.

He read the signs I suppose.

Heard the thump, thump of mortars,  
The ominous clank of heavy tracks  
rounding the slow pitted turns.  
Heard panic in the towns-  
braying of the drunk-ass soldiery  
mixed with cries of the banished-

and got to hell out before that crap hit the fan.

Now he's up before dawn-  
downs a bit of schnapps, cheap, rotten stuff  
that smells like shitty cologne

and lumbers slowly, fighting  
a Nova Scotia January blowing slush

simply to get to Alfredo's  
to work  
and work  
and work  
crazy baker's hours that never end-

on pastries, pies and tarts

that his thick butcher's hands scroll and illumine  
with the slow piety of an Irish monk

then ferry to the cooler for the evening crowds to gobble.

In six years he has never dropped one.