

Senior Division, Poetry
Joe Bishop, St. John's
Sacred (excerpt)

as chalk dust is settling on an island
erased of Beothuk names for roses
and imagine this rock in the Atlantic
before moose and Europe arrive
and fox fur is traded for smallpox and gunfire
and imagine maps before Cabot comes my dear
and the river before Exploits has the name
and a past left in absentia salts the wound
and an absence of Nancy
is the presence of Shanawdithit
and Demasduit is Demasduit is Demasduit
and mother nature is a gull crying
and a harp seal throat slit
is a rapidly running red ochre rapid
and pigment is a prime pigment is primal
and a rose bed is death on crimson ice
and a baby mammal spills into a bay
and a lesson for a moonlit girl is yet another curse
and a strap whipping is making whimpers
and that tang of shit in the dark
is a rose staying open all night
and a worm is an invisible worm founding
is an industrious worm with wings