

Senior Division, Poetry
Roger Power, Newfoundland & Labrador
Coming Upon a Moose Accident on the TCH

black wet night
the lights of opposite travellers
the only guide
divided highway, divided destinations
but not all lines are parallel
In the merging distance

slow line of red, red, red
a sad string of untidy Christmas lights
flashing, braking, flashing
its uncoiling confusion
sinks into the valley
a newly orphaned darkling, lowing from the
edge
culled from its blind, trusting trot
a shy trespasser on this desire path,
the salt lick upon the road, untasted
Shielded by the thin distance

suddenly, no coarse-haired husk
no leggy death spasm
in the half-shadow of revolving lights
we pass only a reflective phantom
waving all rubberneckers on
into the bleak nothing
promises of horizon homes and relentless rest
In the dwindling distance

on the low-sun return
proof of an innocent's flaying
a flat, fading graffiti
spreading and thinning,
from rich red to congealed copper
each intruding tire taking away
its pilgrim's portion
the rest of the spillage,
adorned with sand and sawdust confetti,
makes a blood pudding slurry
that sloughs off the sloped highway
returning to marshes and ponds
In the barren distance

this is the story of foundlings
transported then by rail and ship
disembarked at a siding, a century past
a brood stock of meat and sport
for heavily moustached great gentlemen
in great coats
now, one hundred thousand roam
browsing the untrammelled fat of the land
taken readily into sentimental songs
and on thankful tables
decorating hearth and heraldry alike
despite the merciless collisions
That ignore distance

past the arrivals hall at YYT
there hangs a slogan
after the Mary Brown's ads
'our home on native land',
searching for more, the land inhales
arrivals and departed alike
those here now, for now
those who have lasted, and the ones lost
wielders of spear, harpoon, hook and drill
capturing the Seal, the Whale, the Fish, the Oil
That which the hunter covets
From a grasping distance

now, subcontinent scholars, Tim's TFWs,
survivors of the steppe,
seek their lot on these round-bouldered
shores,
clearly seen on wall murals and in glossy
brochures
assembled from afar by great institutions with
clever purposes
these bright academic mills and other
franchises
have fashioned a three-stranded withe
from diplomas, demography and distress
for our modern menagerie
To overcome the tyranny of distance