

Senior Division, Poetry
Bernard Wills, Corner Brook
Pictures

Well THAT is me...at least I'm told it is.
Shirt and shorts. Cropped hair
and those are my bee-hived aunts
in horn rims, knee length skirts and pillared hair.
The car behind me has tail fins and there is my father
with a blunt stubbie in one hand and an *Export A* in the other.

This I guess is Toronto 1970, my buried life,
though it might as well be the hanging gardens of Babylon
or maybe marbled Rome for all I can place myself there
when the world was simple black and white or garish polaroid.
There I was, there and not there. Alive and not alive.
Armstrong had walked on the ash pit of the moon.
The *Leafs* had skated to mortal glory on a fractured leg.
Can lit was up and running thanks to Raymond Souster.
It was an era of expansive nation building.
That rakish prick Trudeau had put a rose in his lapel
in that let them eat cake kind of way
that infuriated every Doug and Gordon in the land.
That froggy bastard! That effete homo!
There were executions on TV, that sort of thing,
and I saw it all through a haze of pipe and cigarillo smoke
bursting ashtrays, bitterness and beer
encased in paneling with pin prick burns on a puke yellow carpet.
My house was as ash strewn as Armstrong's lunar dunes.

Can one tie a knot that links, one end of life to another?
By 'natural piety'? By brute force? By lies?
I can thread it all on a single string: lax parenting.
I already mentioned the clouds of boozy cigarillo smoke.
I mentioned the bursting ash trays and the cheap, stained carpet.
There were, in the un-buried world of memory, pop tarts for breakfast,
endless T.V. violence with potatoes and a Salisbury steak on the side.
There weren't really seatbelts either plus a man had his privileges.

Can you blame a man for wanting a drink in these inflationary times?
And how do you suppose he's getting home?
Thump, thump, thump on a lonely highway
and it's someone else's kid not yours so what the fuck.
Actually, it was my Aunt Edie's boy Johnny
and there was some fuss about that for sure
but he kept his privileges, he kept his status as a man
who did man things because, he brought home bacon from the mill...