

FoundLand

This isle and land
That has never been lost,
Has been found, found and found again.
For all their bluster
Sea and waves,
Fog and ice
Did not overly deter.
The first laid no claim
Their soft glyphs
Of red ochre fire pits
Gentle as a wet bough
Erasing footfalls in the sand
Ere long, longboats and longhouses
Completed a great circle
Though they all returned to the bog.
Cabot, de Gamma, Guy, Gilbert, Cormack and the rest
Their caravels, galleons, planters and muskets
Threw forward, a strong braided rope
Worn by the indentured waifs of the West Country and Erin
A line of bondage that chaffs us still.
The extinct made poor servants
But good fodder for tales of the noble savage.
You know the names of those who pulled on that hemp
A cordage made smooth and stronger by the damp centuries
The head tax and the thumb on the scale at the merchant's store
The innumerable little dorps
Tenanted by whispering and taciturn casualties
Cogs in a fish gut greased mill
Keening women lamenting loss with vulgar regularity
This the place where the fishermen gathered
Gathered and withered
With the weathering
They were bent, bound and beholden
Denied modest drops of medicines and mercy
And when a welfare was offered to the people
These same lords
Came down to pronounce

‘Our sealing ships and tin cans will get you through the winter’
Live proud with your rickets and hard tack.

The grandchildren of a fearful Victorian underclass
Murmured as one, “Enough of the bastards!”
And found common lot with the Canadian Wolf.

We have not been wronged
No truth and reconciliation nor reparation
Can even that score.
From a foreboding place
To short years after
“Canada’s Happy Province” would not be in complete jest
Terra Nova
New Founde Land
Newfoundland and Labrador
What she was will be never again
The past is well broken
Now unfettered
There is more ahead of us than behind
Could it ever be any other way?