

## the transit rider's notebook

### **Crowded sidewalks**

Crowded sidewalks, salted  
cod and navel oranges boxed  
and well preserved by December  
in front of Portuguese grocers.

Down near Mave's on James  
the social smoke and spit  
outside established bars  
and seafood restos.

Two-way traffic masses  
aging dialects and regiments  
of young civic canvases  
dismissed to serve and love.

What was, is scabbed unlit neon  
or bent metal lettering  
and painted to wall advertisements  
that souvenir heritage and graffiti.

Still, the orange brick sticks  
ethnicities, canes, widows, prayer,  
slim jeans and studios with origins  
and art's crawling brush.

## **Edmonton or Hamilton**

the same moon floats over skylines  
the same fire burns above refineries, factories from  
the same grid patterned one-way arterials  
and road reasoned geography

the same games hosted  
the same stadia still central to old neighbourhoods with  
the same hard working class bungalows  
and multilingual masses parallel to train tracks

the same skinny kid made coliseum myths when  
the same eighties fashion dressed downtown  
and by-laws tailored short skyscrapers

the same drive east, looking north I see  
the same bulbs bleed goldenrod and  
the same postcard panoramas from  
Saskatchewan Drive and the Sherman Cut

## **bus ride home**

long cold wait past rush hour  
watching window blading  
Volvo after Volvo  
scratch free asphalt

grocery girl sits groceries  
turns - asks first - to sketch  
the long ponytailed woman texting  
agrees to move closer

a couple seats back  
radio hosts like debate  
    'gainst the Czechs  
    Gretz' should've shot

others play with phones  
thumb scroll everything  
blurs close to the nose  
some reading photocopied pages

driver lets him off (and on)  
to checks bins every stop  
knotted bag outside the door  
inhaling minus double

an exit ready glance down  
finding the rock salt to walk on

## **street life**

second cup first dates  
at the corner

poems being sold  
by bearded male

drinking water  
from bourbon bottle

character type-  
writer little desk

and chair O'Hara'd  
appreciate

a gentleman asks  
a by-law officer to clarify

soap displayed like cheese  
in chunks on wood

incense burning scents  
past wandering dads

arm extended to absorbed  
daughter looking back

## **Remembering Hamilton's Brow**

Out the window of his '87 Caprice classroom  
up the Sherman Cut  
cloth of trees and roof tops

miniature cars drive  
a long  
necklace of street lamps

Ivor's bright eye on game nights  
burning in the north end  
an Olympic flame for factories.

The escarpment lends its shoulders  
kneels like a man bends to lift his son  
wanting to show him the panorama.