

Back in Canada

*"The bowl is not empty.
It is still filled with air."
- Wynter Jones*

Being in despair is no excuse for living a life of sadness.
Even in San Francisco where you once stepped on the carcass of a swallow.
If you want to capture loneliness, you have to remember meteors that stabbed
into the earth at Spruce Beach in Elliot Lake, & that her eyes shut when
stung by pot smoke & the disease she was born with, seen only distances.
You miss being on the road more than you miss your deflated sense of self-worth.
Now, a Zen Master of Greyhound Bus travel, getting stabbed with a pen knife
& watching a teen mother feed her baby cold chicken McNuggets seems less
than the gust of wind in Utah that cooled the pit sweat beneath your arms.
You feel a little guilty now having littered the shores of the Bow River
in Canmore with half-smoked cigarettes. But it was necessary.
Taking the biggest dump of your life in an unclean Kentucky Fried Chicken bathroom
somewhere in Ohio was essential if you were to keep going.
Back in Canada they thought you were a tank for drinking Grey Goose
vodka straight from the bottle. You used to proclaim that monogamy was a myth.
You also proclaimed, to the dismay of high school kids, that Rancid were posers:
"Those lily dicks would freeze out there in the Rockies with their cut-off denim jackets,"
you would say, "with their anthem slogans written for the already dead & barely living."
Before you left Mount Robson, David told you he was writing a book that he knew
one day would be mentioned in the same breath as... another book.
That was Lake Louise, where you had to learn stone masonry to cut through the pork chops,
where writers washed dishes & tried to grill the perfect steak rather than write.
It was bliss. Alcohol & Australians. Kiwi's guitars & trips to Banff.
You are really uninteresting if people would just get to know you.
Being socially awkward is easy if you work hard at it every day.
The three girls from Gatineau, Quebec made all of this clear after you hit on them
in a downtown Chicago hostel. The wine was bitter. Your beard was long then.
Too long for the Japanese girl who you tried teaching Thumb Master to
before getting drunk at Club2Go with drinks on the house courtesy
of the bartender who "loves his neighbors to the North."
You had your long-johns on & they stank of cigarette smoke & dried up love.
It wasn't like Omaha where the only girl in sight was a 17-year old lesbian
on the run from Las Vegas for attempted murder.
If you want to capture loneliness, you have to remember the hug she gave you before
the cops chased her down behind a convenience store with handcuffs in tow, tasers set to kill.