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A SQUARE SONNET

A square is what I long to see on miles
and miles of dark road. Mirrored window, eye
to eye or eyed from patches of dark blue grass,
the light pulls (yanks) me forward. Silk is a liquid
mirror suspended from ice. Don't you yearn for
pain to rouse your senses?

The song she took the high road on is not
a cricket's song: my lover's lips are sweeter
and sadder. What *if* the world is tuned to plum
or quince? A heaven on earth, and sweet at night
beneath the moon? I fall upon the grasses,
old songs abide, I'm possessed. Roots
redden in me. I approach,
trailing lilac, and fall to my knees.
I thee kiss, my earth, my beloved.

— Colin Browne

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All Things Said & Done by Marita Dachsel,
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MRS. TORRANCE

You were doomed from the beginning.
Your son, at five, is smarter than you.
Pink and gold is an awful combination.
Your husband, Mrs. Torrance, your husband
has anger-management issues, and surely
you are already aware that temperance
isn't working well for him:
he will sell his soul for a drink.
Send him up to the mountains
with a case of bourbon and his precious
typewriter, ship your son to grandma's.
Treat yourself to a haircut and a new dress,
you need to go dancing, where you can
flail under the sharp-edged disco lights.

— Marita Dachsel

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from **THE SECRET
OF WHAT IS
IMPORTANT**

The work of love's a good kind of order
to scare yourself into: any excuse
can pull you in the ditch and leach your bones
until the clouds lose patience and race on.
Clouds favour people without your fancy problems,
just city people who pay their kid's fare with a joke.
She loves you,
goes the old song, and I know that's true
sometimes. Sometimes I feel so tired
the fight to keep on the surface of the earth
is barely worth it. One day I'll just let go
in maybe a hundred years if no one's around
who minds too much and life is pain all day
and the world and I don't care for each other at all.

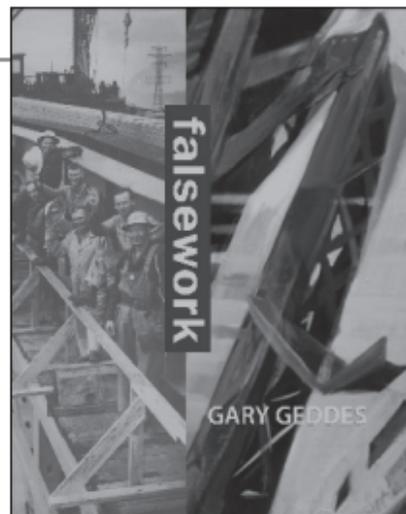
—John Donlan

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from **HIGH STEEL**

Might have walked the tightrope
in another life, another country.
But, hey, this was Canada,
post-war, pragmatic, not given
to acrobatics. I stashed
my tights and dreams in the attic
for another generation, donned
boots and hard hat, stood in line
for bridgework. Two weeks later
I was promoted to the front line,
connecting. Not my calling but
lofty enough. I felt angels brush
my shoulders as I strode the beams.

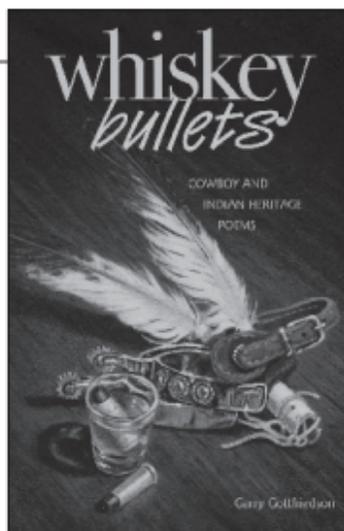
— Gary Geddes

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BLACK FLOWERS

I captured sunrays
in the palms of my hands
when my soul opened

I turned turquoise time
into yellow dreams
with my eyes closed

I cracked a lightning song
& broke open
the jagged edges of memory

of salt water & black flowers

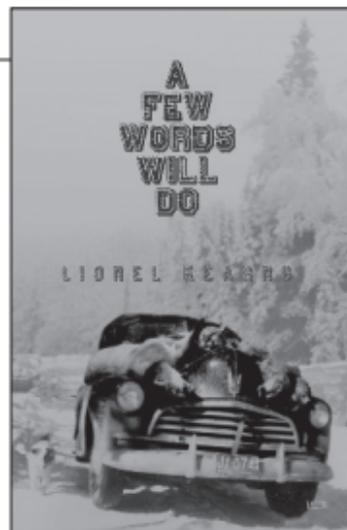
— Garry Gottfriedson

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SUNSET

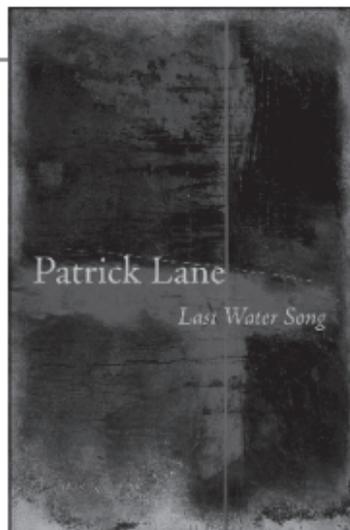
Someone is singing in the park,
full round syllables filling up
the emptiness. He walks quickly,
singing *O Sole Mio*, leaving
as a sign of his absence this
small patch of balanced stillness.
The curved sky in the west
is a pale memory of day. Street lights
flicker on, and traffic murmur
cancels out another distinct moment.

— Lionel Kearns

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BAMBOO SEEDS

A bamboo screen and the bamboo above, the long wands
above the stone bench reaching in the long dream of seeds
that will not come for a hundred years or more.
Pebbles lead from here to the pond and the koi.
Deep in the water their brightness rests.
They eat their bodies slowly, spring far away and the snows to come.
Hard rains break above the earth.
The koi are deep in their blood.
I saw in my father that last year how patience comes before death,
not after, just as I see through the bamboo leaves
the great death coming to this world, the bamboo wands flung outward,
thin leaves, and the koi below. So quiet.
I am without tears, older than my father.

— Patrick Lane

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GEOMETRY

We step out into the rain, and I unfurl
my red umbrella. Deftly, you take it,

cover us both. The stem is small
in your palm. I walk tight against you:

under here is the closest I have ever been
to anyone. I don't want our walk, the rain

to end. There is a whole world I don't want
to go back to outside of this small circumference.

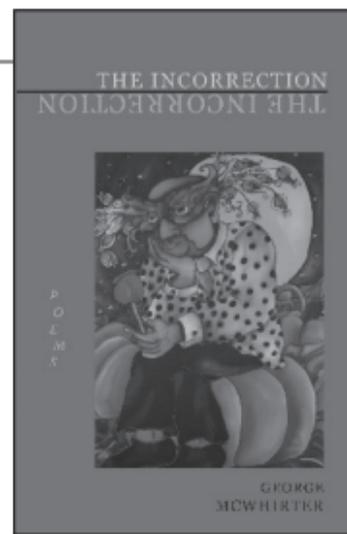
— Moberley Luger

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AN ERA OF EASY MEAT AT JERICHO

Where I ramble
By Jericho in the March
Mist and murk to take stock,
I glimpse an eagle perched
On a hemlock,
Above a bramble
Patch and rabbit that cannot dissemble
Its giddy nibbles in the grass, a pet bunny
Its bum left to bob like a yoo-hoo to a tummy
In a tree. Fast food, it will tremble
And jerk, then clog the eagle's throat,
Without redress, like a fur
Coat
On a hamburger.

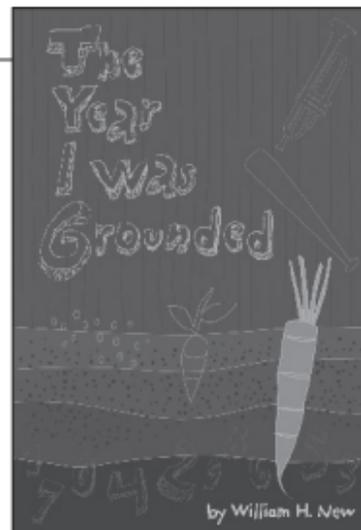
— George McWhirter

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A HANDFUL OF EARTH

So take a scoop of earth in your hand.
Squeeze it. You're holding
one small corner of the world.

If you could take an acre, a city lot,
a hectare of rice, wheat, forest teak
or apple trees, would you toss it away?

The earth feeds you.
The forest gives you air to breathe.
Have they cut down all the trees?

— William New

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**SMALL
VESSEL**

A miniature boat found in the medieval hoard in Derry, Northern Ireland

Like a gold-plated half-avocado
with a hatpin mast,
beansprout rudder.
oars slender as dragonfly-torsos.

How fragile, our contraptions;
uninsurable storms!

What sail
could we use?
A petal?

I trust in your arms.

— Elise Partridge



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EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM

When the radio cuts out in a fit of static or the picture goes blue for half a second longer than I'd expect or the lights flick off in perfect weather, I'm always quick to think, *This is it*, the one we've all been waiting for, the news we knew to imagine but could not imagine nonetheless, the end of life as we live it, careless in this land, and when you let go of my hand and stand, balanced by your own mass and muscle, a fresh knack for gravity at your command, begin to look around, wonder, slyly smile, then, one foot in front of the other, totter forward into the future, fearless, my daughter.

— Matt Rader

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Vancouver: A Poem by George Stanley,
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from **VANCOUVER:
A POEM**

At 5:30 this morning when the fire alarm went off
all of us apartment-dwellers, strangers, gathered
out on the sidewalk to escape the noise –

The cool Sunday morning that had not yet been turned
into yuppie brunch – it had a hundred
directions to look –

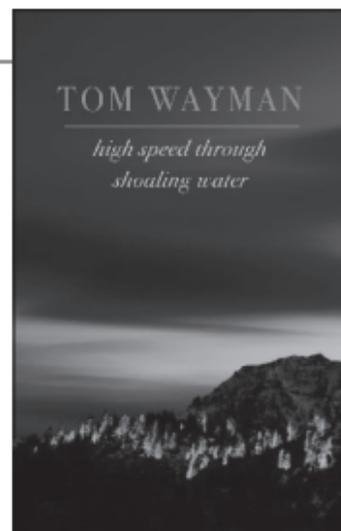
It was the cool air, the sun behind clouds –
the street lights snapped off – it was all of us
strangers & no structure.

— George Stanley

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SPRINGBOMB

Alder, birch, mountain ash detonate
on the hills or alongside the roads.
Each explosion generates green clouds
that feather away at the edges.
These blasts trigger hazel and larch,
merge with the continuous eruption
of the ridges' fir, hemlock, pine
until the valley resounds
with an incessant green concussive roar.

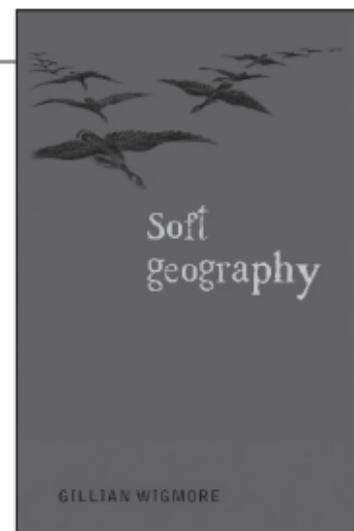
—Tom Wayman

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STELLAKO

swans on fraser lake beat the water, rising
enormous and unlikely, with hardly lift enough
to miss the highway overpass
black beaks streaming in the rain

— Gillian Wigmore

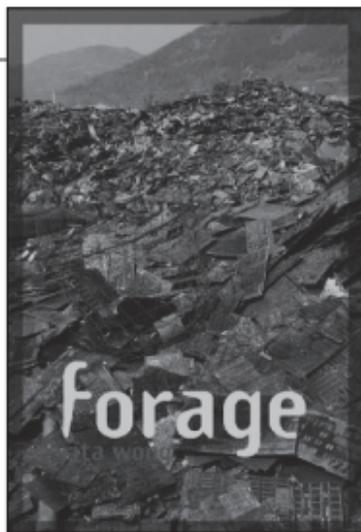
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from TRANSCRIPT

each moment, imperfect
yes, has a promise we more often break than not, yet stranger than
blood, most early in the morning, we taste star raw & ocean rise.
even as mercury accumulates, the tides replenish & revise our
policed shores.

— Rita Wong

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