

## Place of Clay

i.

All mornings break  
with a painterly smudge past the causeway—  
an orchestra tuning, drowned out  
by the first azure bus  
raising a slush wake down Bagot.  
From tree crowns and eavestroughs,  
the hoarse, ragged chorus of crows.  
Your walls blush in lilacs  
the stone held. An almost city,  
built for a war, watching the lake  
for phantom frigates.

Every sunrise raises a brief saffron flare.  
How inexperienced you are  
against those boundless eastward cloud migrations  
drifting over angled streets,  
the shards in the earth  
of Belle Island. Rustle of marsh reeds,  
bottom of clay. Your stone faces bloom  
interiorly with shells  
the shape of ginkgo leaves.

Dawn raga where river and lake merge,  
the masts of docked sailboats playing the wind's  
tinkled song. You wait for a war  
and it doesn't come. Swim  
in a pool called Artillery Park. Your child  
is climbing a cannon. A shell can be a bullet casing  
or the house a creature makes  
from the water itself,  
untroubled, awake, tuning its breath  
to the light-spilling waves overhead, and the war  
doesn't come and it's morning.