

from the *Primal Curse* (Toronto, c. 1890), p. 312.

<sup>4</sup>See Wendy Mitchinson, "Causes of Disease in Women: The Case of Late 19th Century English Canada," in Charles Roland (ed.), *Health, Disease and Medicine: Essays in Canadian History* (Toronto, 1984), pp. 381-95.

<sup>5</sup>Alvin Wood Chase, *Chase's Recipes*

(London, Ont., 1873), p. 210.

<sup>6</sup>William Carpenter, *Principles of Human Physiology* (Philadelphia, 1847), pp. 911-12, 928-29.

<sup>7</sup>Henry Lyman, *The Practical Home Physician* (Guelph, 1892), p. 842; Alexander Skene, *Medical Gynecology: A Treatise on the Disease of Women from the Standpoint of the Physician* (New

York, 1895), pp. 72, 79.

<sup>8</sup>Skene, *Medical Gynecology*, pp. 80, 82.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 72, 79; Holbrook, *Parturition Without Pain*, p. 312.

<sup>10</sup>George Napheys, *The Physical Life of Woman: Maiden, Wife and Mother* (Toronto, 1890), p. 269.

## ALISON HOPWOOD

### Breakfast table

Too familiar to notice or think of  
the table has its everyday look  
butter is yellow marmalade orange  
creamy brown coffee steams in its mug  
slices of bread lie in their basket  
between a vase of flowers from the  
garden  
and the bright rectangular toaster

Pushed the toaster lever goes down  
but inside the firm solid shape  
some connection is not made  
black wires stay black  
shining metal stays cold  
gives no clue to the breakdown  
between yesterday and today

Changed and changing  
the flowers look different  
funnels of lemon lily are twisted shut  
bright poppies lie flat open  
pale rose heads hang heavy  
Stem leaf petal  
are intricate and various

Buds are arrayed from stalk-green to  
flower-yellow  
orange saucers show off constellations  
of pollen-tipped stamens around  
swelling pistels  
almost-grey sepals point back  
to dark-green serrated leaves  
Day lily Welsh poppy white rose  
invite consideration

### Strategies

The heron stands in the small pool  
watching for frog or fish wary of us

We sit on a lot waiting too  
our picnic lunch will not escape

Cautious we move hands to eat

the heron flies off

Rain pockmarks the grey lagoon  
white swans ride steady

With coats buttoned hands gloved  
we walk briskly

Rain comes down harder  
we leave the park head for shelter

The white feathers shine  
on the dark water

The snail retreats into its shell  
the butterfly flits elusive out of reach  
the bee stings the intruder

Lacking shell or wings  
born weaponless  
we think about survival

## LORRAINE WHELAN

### at the opening

he breathed the air in  
and never let it go  
his hand against his chest  
his body expanding weird  
the wool of his sweater  
got caught in my eye  
I was mesmerized  
no — hypnotized

he said his name was Jacob  
and I searched  
for some significance  
but momentarily  
lost my memory  
of everything but the blue  
glaring circles  
on his face

he was telling me stories

he was telling me lies  
he said he had a brother-in-law  
who was a professor of art  
or mathematics, maybe  
psychology or philosophy  
whose name he did not know  
he said he had a friend named 'Joe'

he said his family ran a gallery  
where only family work was shown  
every member was an artist  
and had been since the Renaissance  
but always, yes, always  
they had to work to live  
he said this gallery was in London  
I tried to map it in my mind

I wanted to get away  
I wanted to sip my champagne  
but could not bring the glass  
up to my face, over to my lips  
unless I could look  
and know that it was still  
held in my hand

I wanted to turn my head  
but it would not move  
and I could not move  
I stared  
I could no longer  
understand what he said  
I could no longer  
hear him  
I said pardon  
I said pardon

I thought I must be reading his lips  
I was not looking at his lips  
it was his eyes  
they were talking  
I thought he was insane  
yet he must be skillful  
to keep me there  
in stillness  
in a trance  
as he transmitted  
telepathic lies  
to me