A Streetcar Named Nostalgia

1903, great-grandfather then 30 came to this country walked in a tweed blend coat among the grey flannel, a feather in his houndstooth hat, slipped to work each winter day, missed Christmas waiting for an epiphany, lived alone choking on tea and English biscuits until the day a streetcar named Nostalgia almost clipped him there flat on his back on the ice vision of a red iron madonna a great bell ringing in his wife’s womb across an ocean a bell ringing alarm relieving him of a vital decision in his frigid paradise and he jumped a steamer back to where my mother was born married a man and in 1954, my father, then 30 sailed to Canada’s Toronto...

Mary di Michele

...from Bread and Chocolate (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1980).