

LANDSCAPE

Dorothy Roberts

Canada grows out of its deeps now
and the snow burns off in the glow
and the snow is make-believe on the vast stretches between
but make-believe enough to fill a child of the past with shivers and cold love
passing at night over the rail that may leave no track
through the wooded and white land of the broken birch
and pine and spruce locked down and the quietness
sheeting by peculiarly to itself yet lasting so long
that it is there travelling too, a ghostly companion.

This Canada cold and huge is at the window
of the calm train all night but for the breakthrough
of occasional place, far spaced, while its stride is unbroken,
cold land, cold conditioning for thousands of its children of the remote past—
so that time seems to them—
in their burial places here and there to the top of the tombstone
or as the traveller returned breathing the warm air
against the window of cold and the sliding companion
that does not even breathe for the crystalline silence
waylaying one for hour on hour in tree shape and snowdrift.