BOY OF TWO MONTREALS

Glen Siebrasse

The people live in blue-veined houses
an empire of neighbours
crouched to the wall,
here, they sell out their lives.
Above them, breasting the hill,
Saint Mary's mountain,
the brick by subtler book
is stone, the lampposts genuine,
grass swaddled in burlap,
protection from the roadman's salt.
Westmount and Saint Ann's,
queen and the village dunce,
keep to their separate countries
save when someone, suckled
of the river and the hail
of shadflies in August,
displaying his art like gold bugs
between thumb and finger,
should excite the court
and cause majesty to reach down
with wax and cleansing stamp.

But these are minority men.
Rather I see,
without display or the tricks
of legitimate poverty
(rats at the Waterloo of tomorrow's supper)
men, satisfied in the gains of the office week.
So with their sons,
born of no simple hunger,
without device to register want or satiation,
depart from their middle village
and in the Anns
argue for adoption, the ragged child of Marx.
Ah! To believe again in the Brotherhood,
and lose on the soapcrates or revolution
all wondering pain.

So have I, child of the middle kingdom,
read of these wonders—
societies where art may promenade
without baggy pants;
gawked like any suspendered yokel,
and stamped my feet in a winter line
to give them my dollar.

Now the balding years force me to graduate,
If indeed I show the outward signs
of adult, slightly tired body,
this nature must communicate to my designs;
and I, leaving behind the drama
go
to build a house
in one of the middle lands.