Postcards from Liliane

Outside my window a mourning dove
repeats like a stuck record.
Church chimes, a flurry of ambulance,
a radio. Mist steams
from this city of the plain
each summer after summer.

My sister sends me postcards: mountain skies
untarnished by jets or minotaurs,
pure forests, shadowless
cloud photographs, an unreal West.
Smog trickles up her canyons: trash
litters the shrinking glaciers.

And from your handsome Dolomites
where mountain gods
linger in tatty overcoats,
you send me their pictures, their bald heads
fierce above cracked balconies,
those bare, pathetic tyrants,
highway fringed.

They are still alive, you tell me, the gods,
sealed in their chipped, stone monuments.

I can send you a postcard of Fredericton
with its shallow leaves,
its squeaking warblers, its river flats
with five white ospreys, ten cormorants,
innumerable eels, and its gravel pits.

The doves are making their second nest.
Doorkeepers in the temple of each dawn,
they do not mourn.