

JENNIFER HOULE

URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLES

Now this word—*poles*. Distracting. I know what happens with poles. What's lost in the division stays lost, eh? Thing about poles—you can't have three, but I defy you not to contemplate

the poly-polar landscape's sad tryst with urbanity. Who doesn't love a dirty, multi-focal love? Still. What happens in Moncton, stays. Gets a shitty place off Elmwood and starts applying

for jobs. Once, I tried to leave and Calgary spat me back, a wayward fishbone. My grandmother warned me I'd be raped, but she was wrong. And I was never anybody's waitress, for that matter.

So, what brings you home? An overdue apology, le littoral, a death? I knew it was time when some guy started calling my cell, asking for Mathieu. And I don't know any Mathieu—well, I knew twelve.

Then I started dreaming about Shediac deformed—where Main Street was, I put a potato farm. Twitched: a stand of pine. A pharmacy. A pet store. Witch, a spectral biker hissed. I raised my finger to the moon (a Shell sign

I mistook) and blinked again. Cultural Imports. Please Apply Within hung on the door. Now this word: *tolls*. I'm strung along, gliding the sinuous colonnade of posts along the transport corridor. Back and forth—

what's gained in the exchange? The thoroughfare becomes
the fling that shifts the poles at home. What's been
misplaced turns up when you begin to pack your things.
What's lost washes ashore, bloated, after the sea change.