

RETURN TO FREDERICTON

By DOUGLAS LOCHHEAD

And I sit in the green branches
skelter of elms on my grandad's lawn;
here I sit a piping poser of words,
weeper of wet wounds
clawed from the desolate dreams
in the tiger dawn
in the knuckle of knot
of my mirror hands.
O hot June of harp-winged rhyme,
my minstrel-throated time,
thoughts of a whistle ago
running a sun-suit boy
through sweet-pea lanes,
a dimpled fancy, laughing legs
leaping my heart
in its pod of love.

II

Old Uncle Bruce
a bit of a loose—
end brings *Pot of Gold*
to the fanning aunties
with an ice cream laugh
and the bank pays well.
Old Uncle B. shoots
ducks Alberta-way
and leaves a trail
of *Pot of Gold*
driving the last truth
home with sweet
on the breath.

III

Pass the peppermints
my khaki-suited boy,
say my Grandfather.
I cut ice freezing
the axe-tip, the saw-tooth
frosting a scream

your Grandmother
heard in a dream
reserved for Saturday
night. It was that loud.
Pass the peppermints.

IV

The wind spells a noise
of childhood in the sacred elms,
in the churchyard's green dead,
where stones, white-drowned
in crumbling age, look at night
like someone sitting up
suddenly in bed, white
nightshirt and all.

O laughter and tears of inevitable past,
of my grandfather snoring salvoes,
a peppermint in cheek,
and the Presbyterian bench
creaking the last salvation.
