

RECIPE FOR A CANADIAN NOVEL

after Cyprian Norwid

John Robert Colombo

Ingredients: one Mountie,
one Indian, one Eskimo,
one Doukhobor.

Add: one small-town whore,
a thousand miles of wheat,
one farmer, impotent and bent.

His fair-haired daughter too,
then a Laurentian mountain
and a Montreal Jew.

Include also: a boy
with a dying pet,
and a mortgage unmet.

If this sours, sweeten
everything with maple syrup—
preferably French-Canadian,

but dilute, if foreign
to the taste.

Stir, then beat.

Drop in exotic and tangy
place names—Toronto,
Saskatoon, Hudson's Bay.

To prepare the sauce:
paragraphs of bad prose
that never seem to stop.

For distinctive flavour:
garnish with maple leaves.

Mix, then leave.

Dice one Confederation poet
complete with verse
(remove mould first).

Drain, bring to a simmer,
but avoid a boil.
Pour, place in oven, bake.

Slice in pieces, or leave whole.
Serves nineteen million
when cold.

To N. H. B., who doubted that he would write more poems

Hugh Finn

“The spring is fingering the world’s cold shoulder”?
The spring has never left these granite hills!
Although the pine-trees sigh their wintry sorrows
They strain their sounds from the winds’ breath with strings
Greener than youth itself; the death-pale grass
Hides ironies of green among its solemn
Talks with the wind on mortuary subjects;
The aloe, patient, confident, now has waited
Long months of heat and rain for its own spring,
Matured its ode to the sun in its careful cells—
Can hardly wait now for the spring’s approval
As it publishes its paeon of crimson stanzas—
Which critic sun-birds will most surely probe
For nectarous hidden meanings. Even the robin,
Scornful of Europe, stays the warm year through;
The black-footed cat, too, springs its kittens’ fury
Four times a year among the seed-plump pigeons,
While hoopoe crowns the sad black veld of winter
With hope, and all year round the granite’s warm.