

## VIEW FROM THE BRIGHTON HILLS

*Alden A. Nowlan*

Strange fish come from this river, thumping down  
upon the bank; old tires and a town  
being two species. Let's consider first  
the town—one thousand people not the worst

nor yet the best, although our churches claim  
us to be both and that conviction flames  
here like a single flower: we have sinned—  
Christ will erect us higher than the wind!

We've believed too much. Imagination's lost:  
God is a widower, the Holy Ghost  
gone to a greener pasture, Jesus walks  
a pastel province,\* where he talks

protestant Latin, yea and thou and thee  
in sermons about cigarettes! Unfree,  
we're each the other's beadle, we confess  
our neighbours' sins with awesome silkiness.

God's not the central figure. Emptiness—  
think of a hollow that no wind can press  
full of dead leaves and dust nor freshet fill,  
think of a mine abandoned, a dry well.

Breathe on your image now—a dog thrown crying  
into whatever hole and weeks in dying.  
This is a place where such cold thoughts contrive  
animal form and move as if alive.