

## In Gratitude

A cold time you had  
skinning the beaver for gentlemen's hats  
the blood and meat freezing on the blade

And later, after the hats  
when you knew this was it  
and there was nothing to fashion but snow balls  
no hope now of running back  
to master and the servant quarters of Green England  
(where hats of beaver soon fell from grace)

A colder time it was  
waiting in cold  
staring at fire locked in a hearth  
thinking of cracks to stuff  
shutters to nail  
prayers to keep  
the wind out and the soul in

And a colder time still  
teaching the children your business  
kids having a thing for spring  
play and fornication  
telling them no, harden, survive  
and getting the message back  
when young arms at length learned the trick  
and refused to embrace  
your old age of forty below.

Imitate Nature

say Horace and Big Foot and Lao Tsu  
and people do, you know, they do.

The Irish, my own, studied and became their mist.

You Canadians have done it too.

You the victims of winter are now its people.

You blizzard us who come to you

with our mist and memories

of sun dances in Greece

Roman madonnas

orgies under hot Caribbean moons.

Freezing in your courteous snow

we know how it must have been with you

those days of beaver kills

and thank God we are not your children.

HOMER HOGAN