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Aujourd'hui

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Bill Elgersma

In the land of *fleur de lis* and loonies and toonies
I am home.
Crown land, King's Highway, the QEW spill from my lips unconsciously—
I have crossed a border in both body and mind.

A closed door creaks to shape words off my tongue like house and mouth and about. Lilt and inflection cause my daughter to smile, "You're talking funny."

I am home but gone so long it all appears new.

OPP and QPP, MP's and PM's and RCMP's All initials so familiar. . . so forgotten. Hard living immigrants foreigners to make up a country of no nationality, just survival.

In clipped accents oblivious to feelings intent on principle they speak their mind they manage, proudly. Beer at 28 bucks a box smokes 6 bucks a pack, they work to enjoy living, live hard but not too long.

Returning back, green card in hand the border guard hassles me and I realize I only have the vocabulary a small wrinkle in a dusty portion of my brain.

To the door I have closed that shrinking wrinkle says, *Au revoir* and *bon chance* And to myself in the realization of what is left behind, *c'est domage* but *c'est la vie*.

aujourd'hui today
fleur de lis Quebec flag
au revoir good bye
bon chance good luck
c'est domage That is too bad.
c'est la vie That is life.