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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 dommage but *c'est la vie*.

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