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**BEING A STATEMENT ON POETICS FOR THE NEW**

**POETICS COLLOQUIUM OF THE KOOTENAY SCHOOL**

**OF WRITING, VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA,**

**AUGUST 1985**

I've never been one for intellectualizing. Too much talk, never enough action. Hiding behind the halls of theories writ to obligate, bedazzle, and torment, it is rather for us to tantalize with the promise, however false, of speedy access and explanatory compensation. A poem should not be but become. And those who so disgrace their pennants, however and whomever so deafened, shall tar in the fires of riotous inspiration and bare the mark of infancy on their all too collectivist breasts. Terrorism in the defense of free enterprise is no vice; violence in the pursuit of justice is no virgin. This is what distinguishes American and Canadian verse—a topic we can ill afford to gloss over at this crucial juncture in our binational course. I did not steal the pears. Indeed, the problem is not the bathwater but the baby. I want a poem as real as an Orange Julius. But let us put aside rhetoric and speak as from one

heart to another words that will soothe  
and illuminate. It is no longer 1978, nor for  
that matter 1982. The new fades like the shine  
on your brown wingtip shoes: should you simply  
buff or put down a coat of polish first? Maybe the shoes  
themselves need to be replaced. The shoes themselves: this is the  
inscrutable object of our project. Surely everything  
that occurs in time is a document of that  
time. Rev. Brown brings this point home when he  
relates the discomfort of some of his congregation  
that formulations of a half- or quarter-, much less  
full-decade ago are no longer current to today's  
situation. The present is always insatiable because  
it never exists. On the other hand, the past  
is always outmoded and the future elides. Light  
travels slowly for the impatient humanoid.  
Half the world thinks the night will never end  
while another half sweats under the yoke of unrelenting  
brightness. It's time to take our hats off  
and settle in. The kettle's on the stovetop, the  
centuries are stacked, like books, upon the shelf.  
Bunt, then buzz.

[pages 21-22 of the Poetics Statements publication for the New  
Poetics Colloquium of 1985]