

Poetry Series

**Richard Provencher**  
**- poems -**

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# Richard Provencher()

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Richard L. Provencher has many story-poems published and in Print. His writing is about everyday situations and his work gives voice to the not so noticeable. He and his wife, Esther live in Truro, Nova Scotia and are married since March 27,1975.

They are co-Authors of numerous e-Books. A Direct Link to their Author Page on is:

Richard was a member of the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia for many years, until his stroke in 1999. He had been a Writer-in-the-Schools Program under their auspices for eleven years. Esther enjoys art-painting, and her church work. Richard enjoys writing poetry, as he continues to recover from side effects of his Brain Aneurysm, which gob-smacked him in 1999.

Esther & Richard Provencher created many of their stories & novels from experiences in raising four children, as well as being foster & adopting parents. Richard was born in Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec. Esther was born in Cape Spear, New Brunswick. They were married in Sarnia, Ontario and later moved to Wyoming, Ontario in 1980 and then to Truro, Nova Scotia, in 1986.

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# A Balance Of Opinion

is writing about bears and  
feathery friends, humans too.  
Also fine words award  
recognition in the value  
of a beautiful land

misshapen clouds, dew from  
morning's calm demanding space  
in the world of muses

rabbits, beaver, eagles and  
an army of crawling,  
scurrying, trotting subjects  
upon which to expand. I include  
all in the repertoire of my  
literary pronouncements. So

let the eagle screech from ridges  
high, down to a lower level  
where chick-a-dees chant  
familiar songs:

Chick-a-dee-dee-dee  
Chick-a-dee-dee-dee.□

Richard Provencher

# A Recipe Of Love

Today is precious, and  
very difficult without our  
little sister, Susan. She is  
not gone from our lives;  
simply awaits us, and one  
day we will be reunited.

Those hospital days were  
filled with pain, laughter  
and sisters reminiscing -  
growing closer together  
with prayer showers as  
a background from many.

·  
Susan told me a year ago  
she loved both of you so  
much, long before any  
sad health storms began.

Now our dear Susan is  
in God's beautiful flower  
garden and she is the  
prettiest among them all.

Richard Provencher

# A Rose In Blossom

Whispers above her wheel chair  
create a new world.

Later, she'll remember  
He was here, today or perhaps  
a week ago, Alzheimer's  
digging roots.

She'll be gone soon  
from the nursing home, eyes  
fixated on the overhead lighting,  
her green dress an impact  
in the room, wheel  
chair at attention, scratching  
her leg, routine.

Tummy is full, dinner was - peas,  
or chicken, potatoes cut  
into little hunks, good too  
she thinks, and  
bread with dessert, ice cream  
a cherry on top,  
red like the setting sun.

Tilts her head, attentive  
to One voice, sensing  
she'll be going home soon.

Richard Provencher

# A Safari Of Desire

In South Africa hyenas  
signal they  
too are part of  
this precious landscape

lions meditate in pride, crocodile  
snouts protrude, guarding  
watery temples  
and the Marula tree a guide,  
spirit of ancestors  
released -

Whipping Whettle leaves,  
feathery in comfort  
Mopane trees, scrubby  
bush, gorges, sliding hillsides  
on this Nyalaland Trail of  
abundance.

Thatched-roof huts  
in a circle, leafy trees  
understanding Nature's need  
for privacy.

In the darkness memory  
baskets  
bathe in blessings  
touching your scent  
gathers in a night of loving.

Richard Provencher

# A Spiritual Banquet

Our canoe allows a feast of pleasure  
its sleek hull an arrow  
piercing the stillness of a greater plan  
as reflections shunted  
from stately trees where cozy cottages  
are a ring of jewels

this lake created from cups of freshwater  
a sanctuary from grasping  
life, woes and errs of human contact  
left behind. We step up to Nature's  
table and absorb these vegetables  
tempting us

birth of a baby-blue sky,  
shush of quiet ripples against  
our fiber glass prow, the thrill of a  
loon's lament. We hold firmly  
to these moments-

dip of cherry wood paddle, our  
J-strokes moving us forward  
to future feasts.

Richard Provencher

# A Swim In Sentiment

My heart plucks stories from TV,  
a medium of anguish:  
Taliban turmoil in Afghanistan  
rebels in the Sudan  
terrorists on Malaysian soil,  
further havoc  
within cities of Iraq  
notwithstanding  
US troops departing.  
Yet tormented people are  
not diminished,  
their lives a testament  
of struggle within  
a new frontier of  
adverse circumstances.  
We share anguish in those  
tortured faces -  
victims of Mexican drug wars  
failures in food shortages  
escaping from  
Zimbabwe retribution.  
Tired souls possess a passion  
for survival, to reclaim the  
land of their ancestral  
domain, and I am  
in bondage to their spirit.

Richard Provencher

# Agra, Northern India

Children dash through Yamuna River shallows  
beside the Taj Mahal, young legs more like  
spider appendages skipping through splashes

in the morning of their childhood, away from  
grownup tales of "moshka" in the Ganges, a  
spiritual liberation where parents practice  
Hindu and Buddhist culture.

These children are vaguely aware of tourists  
who arrive in blurry shapes, to hear drums and  
tambourines celebrate the cremation of loved ones  
in pyres of banyan wood

but one day, they too will be interested in  
learning about a bull lying in the middle of a  
pashmina shop, or visit the village of Khajuraho  
where Kama Sutra temples abound, then drive  
between fields of mustard seed plants on their  
way to Orchha.

Much later, these same children who once  
splashed in the Yamuna River, will struggle and  
barter goods in the crowded streets of Delhi,  
as they remember summer days from their childhood  
of innocence.

Richard Provencher

# Among The Nations

No stone throwing children  
will die tonight  
in the war of Middle East

feet tucked beside  
brothers  
and sisters,  
in love with their country. The  
day spent scurrying  
door to archway  
enemy tanks  
soldiers In battle gear  
the thwack of helicopter gun-ships  
guns  
bombs  
and rockets  
like expectant rainfall. Some  
were heroes and death the reward  
for others  
children a reflection  
of life's serenity.

Wrapped in widows and fear  
wisdom abandons the  
battleground.

Richard Provencher

# At Dannemora Prison

Cement walls march  
to the sky,  
visitors staring at

guard-turrets every fifty  
feet, coiled wire  
christening the top, glistens  
in the sun.

Behind those walls,  
a son cries for his mom  
and dad

wonders if they'll ever  
forgive him.

Richard Provencher

# At St. John's, Newfoundland

Ships at bay  
meander in joyful play  
awaiting the crunch of boots  
thump-thumping across  
these docks

awaiting the stench of  
fish-catch  
bread to feed his babies  
to say, screw the UIC  
don't want pogeys no more  
just fishing, that's my  
style

my granddaddy and poppa before  
me and now my turn.

The Narrows protect the boat-fleet  
of all sizes, tethered as goats  
swaying with the swells  
waiting for the fishermen.

And the babies and the wives  
hope today's catch is gosh darn good.

Richard Provencher

# Be A Man

he said. Stop your moaning  
men don't cry -  
especially over a cat  
a flea-bitten pile of fur  
with claws. Imagine.  
I raised you to be tough  
to stand up to any problem.

What do you say boy?  
Say something. You're seven  
years old now - speak up.  
The boy wiped  
away tears and answered -  
I love you daddy.

Richard Provencher

# Beauty In The Seeing

He strides boldly upon  
a forest path  
softened by  
the loveliest of deer  
with hooves like poetry  
sensing safety  
in an ancient trail.

I am he and do believe  
these sights are  
meant for me -  
the spread of trees  
gently against the sky  
leaves crouching  
under a whiff of snow

and I press an image  
of peace against my heart  
and bring it home.  
Pasting it upon my wall  
I want to share  
with those needing  
a resting place  
within their own hearts.

Richard Provencher

# Bedouin

Thirst is an impediment  
for hooves  
across the Sahara,  
eyes as stars

breakfast among the  
dunes, shifting ridges, windy  
nudges challenging  
our camels, their

throaty calls streaking  
across the terrain. A  
dust storm spirals  
from the sky, creates

a stamping on the  
ground, the  
measure of sun's anvil.

Richard Provencher

# Blueberry Picking

August is a blue haze of  
ripened fields,  
hurried over by swarming pickers  
this year of plenty. The Rakers eye  
profits with stiffened backs,  
juice-stained hands their colour  
of success, bodies browned by the sun.  
They scoop in delight, white  
and blue buckets filled  
to overflowing-

In my return to this land I can  
smell the burning fields and  
see their scorched October attire.  
Once a breezy sea of blue  
fertilized by bumblebees, now  
picked clean from summer marauders.

See the fire, the scent of  
tortured fields. Renewal is a  
flaming serenade supervised  
by accountants, anxious  
for this cash crop to return  
in bountiful supply.  
In the shadow of another season  
winter's frost chases about.

Richard Provencher

# Cape Spear

empty the ocean 'cause  
sandbars are coming,  
as echoes

slimy rocks expose  
their slippery touch, as  
lonely friends

furnace-stocked sun

uncovers razor fish  
clams and crabs,  
drying out forever

seagull territory, their  
white-splotched shore  
and erk...erk cries

wind and soaring

Richard Provencher

# Cleaner, County Building

He comes each afternoon  
mop in hand and a warm  
bucket of water, nicely lathered  
uses the old ways to keep  
our floors spotless, gives them  
a tired wash, his face appears  
so drained of emotion,  
same old job  
same old floors  
same old hi and lately  
only grunting as we walk by  
as if the effort to acknowledge  
our passing grows less important.

Richard Provencher

# Come Home

son of mine - - I did not  
understand the way you felt  
now I see and read  
about others who share the pain  
of parents who feel  
the blame

for something they did not  
understand  
and now I think I do -

come visit soon  
son of mine.

Richard Provencher

# Cpr Freight To Rosspport

A penciled line moves along  
noticeably dark, crookedly  
tap dancing around curves of track  
then charges the northern skin  
of Ontario sky

wilderness, a carpet of snowy landscape

mining machinery, furniture and  
oil, car parts, paper products and  
meat, all heading for a friendly stay

up front an engineer keeps a wary watch  
couple of horn blasts just in case,  
last time a silly moose side-swiped the run  
he must be up to the Tundra by now

anxious means getting home soon  
telegraph poles counting off the miles,  
can't wait to feel the warmth of wife and kids

beneath his feet the clank and grind  
of steel reacts to the muscle-pull, powerful  
engines straining to make the schedule

at the end of the string an old caboose  
bumps along while men of experience  
circle a pot-bellied stove, joking  
and laughing at their tall-tale telling

faces peering through dirty windows  
see shadowy blends of birch and darker spruce  
as partridges thump out their evening songs,  
a signal for the woods to come alive

ahead are warning lights, barriers down  
and distant through the haze of diesel fumes  
a hill smiles at their coming.



# Custodian Of Flavours

Squinting eyes open the valve  
of time's cycle as a morning sun  
brightens into life

a drop of one foot, then another  
upon the floor, like a threat of thunder  
announcing from beyond,  
alerted to a new day -

we clothe ourselves in spruce  
branches which protect  
all creatures who seek sustenance

and when day fills with flavour  
we take pride in the bliss  
of one more sunshine journey.

Richard Provencher

# Daylight & Evening Sense

Heads bow in supplication  
prayers heard by the One above

grace for Aunt Tammy's arthritis,  
mercy for nephew George  
that his cold be erased

and a job for our neighbour. Mike's  
family in dire straits,  
food not so plentiful these days -

We arose after early breakfast, a  
daily walk health's plan. Then  
shopping - - from our  
apartment to Sobey's grocery

a total of six blocks; twenty  
minutes - - 4,281 steps.

Friends read at the Library  
Beth needs a coffee,  
coins handling the transaction.

The food store greets  
our wallet - - bread, ice cream  
some other groceries. Somehow  
the day ends, with a lasting

memory. Journey turns  
to twilight; later nightly prayers.

Richard Provencher

# Day's End

Tall-masted schooners  
arouse the bay, are  
messages in the inlet  
quietly nudging  
darkened silhouettes,  
like pages from a diary  
their worlds to ponder, and  
dreams to encounter

shoreline's a hilly ridge  
rippling at water's  
edge, as  
sunset splays one last outburst  
of gleam, her warming breath  
...serene

lay your troubles aside while  
earth turns a tired cheek-  
her last gasp of solitude, a  
soliloquy of peace.

Richard Provencher

# Don'T Go, Momma

Watch momma place an arm  
reluctantly  
into her coat  
chilly outside she says

we know she'll be away all night  
with the waitress job  
has to do it since dad is sick

means food on the table  
when the paycheck arrives  
end of the week

five children and husband  
depending on her

saw tears close her eyes  
have to go she says  
kisses her little darlings then we look  
at each other  
me the oldest and wanting to cry  
don't go momma

she has to  
and I know she needs one more hug.

Richard Provencher

# Dusk

Clouds are stacked in streaks  
of colour as evening  
smiles survive another  
day within the forest -

gone are front end loaders  
that tormented  
an expanse of prime timber.

Now burnished pines  
are guarding silhouettes  
atop ridges, where wilderness  
is a domain  
among ancient sunsets

and from its natural menu:  
prodding wind, reddened sky  
and yellowish tinge.

Richard Provencher

# Earthquake

You cannot chasten  
mountains nor  
energy within - - books and art  
combining to create  
a parallel dynasty within  
the land of Emperors.

Richard Provencher

# Easter Island

Eyes peer from three storied giants  
ancient stone men, Moais

look at how the tourists gawk,  
cameras clicking  
beaches at Anakena and Ovake  
enjoy the laughter,  
white sands.

Not since the Long Ears and Short Ears  
battled at Poike Ditch in 1680  
has there been so much  
energy wasted.

Be careful,  
Orongo is sleeping  
for now.

Richard Provencher

# Feeling 40 'n Foxy

Feeling 40 'n Foxy

'cept Nora is 81  
yet still knows how  
to get a man-

now she's at her  
favourite spot  
front foyer of the  
nursing-home.

Words across her  
chest say it all:  
Feeling 40 and Foxy.

Today's her birthday  
and that's just fine  
to her way of thinking.

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Richard Provencher

# Follow Your Own Heart

as you listen to our Lord's  
Voice. His wisdom comes forth  
through the Word provided  
in anointed writings from Paul,  
Matthew, Mark, Luke  
and John - and the Holy Spirit  
is eager to dwell within your  
heart. You belong to Jesus.  
Listen and He will guide you  
in your march for true life.  
But you must learn from each  
rung on His ladder as you  
elevate yourself by His teachings.  
Listen, learn and do His Will.

Richard Provencher

# For My Sister, Susan

Family and friends, we lay the remains of:  
Susan Provencher

into this place of rest, knowing  
she is with Jesus, watching from above.  
Although remnants as ashes  
represent time on earth  
we know she is now a firefly in the night  
and ray of sun by day.

We remember you Susan, as a darling  
sister, wife, and mother who loved life and family

- someone with passion for others
- and caring about community

who loved her son, Anthony, deeply on earth  
and continues so from Heaven above.

We gather you into our hearts and minds;  
Forever.

Richard Provencher

# For The Sake Of Memory

A shyness at sunset peeks  
across faraway hills, descending  
in layers of fire, mosquitoes  
skittering as pinpricks  
of movement,  
piercing lake's casual surface.

Surrounding forest continues  
its mantle of protection  
patterned for canoe visits -  
pup tent solitary among  
shore-silhouettes  
where bullfrogs burp, loons  
lament and coyotes howl.  
All served on Nature's napkin.

Owls continue their hoot  
for attention. Deer call.  
Rabbits escape trails leading  
somewhere - - a land  
of symphony and pride.

Richard Provencher

# Fort Louisbourg

The sentinel is happy on guard  
duty  
over the fortress.  
His belly is full of fish and  
beans and  
a fine woman in la maison  
nearby  
promised to meet him  
later.  
He's proud of this new  
land,  
one day he'll marry  
and  
raise strong sons,  
but to-day  
his eyes are alert for Les  
Anglais.  
They're coming to steal his  
dreams.

Richard Provencher

# Hey There Mr. Sandman

Dampen the shadows `cause I still want time to live  
and follow nectar paths of wandering honey bees  
to trill with loons on the edge of moonlight's glow

I am strength and power  
with imagination to plow fields of sorrow  
and bring a message of hope.

Children play and adults roam  
across a field of vision  
as I enter a lullaby for a baby's kiss.

I do not long to visit days of yesteryear  
but only wish to build on dreams unattained  
and continue to call my wife my own.

Richard Provencher

# Hidden From View

We came upon a clearing in the woods  
a little cemetery, private  
in its surroundings

three obelisks in a row, one  
in two parts, the others  
weathered from changing times

here a young lad aged six  
there Adeline, only two

within the family plot they rest  
a mom and dad and uncles too  
McPherson, Robertson and  
Dunn by name

we came upon a clearing in  
the woods and left with thoughts  
a hundred years ago.

Richard Provencher

# I Am A Feather

soaring in the wind - - from  
BC's Sulphur Mountain  
I sprint

one thermal to another  
claiming height  
as my mentor -

the tallest of coniferous  
surrenders  
to a 'whoosh' in my speed  
descending as an arrow

- I am an eagle  
in flight  
yet a victim  
within my journey.

Richard Provencher

# I Am A Spoon

Sometimes I want to  
go to a fish market  
and disappear among  
the scales. To test  
the waters of life,  
where misfortunes  
await me

and circumstances  
anoint me.  
To mock despair  
surveying advantages  
in your desires,  
wanting more than  
you are willing to send  
in my direction.

I am a spoon  
and you're the soup.

Richard Provencher

# I Am Cast To The Sky

Nightfall scans the landscape  
brush shimmering  
rocky shore a reflection of nature's gleam

a forest at night  
never calls it sleeping.

Today's struggle upstream meant  
cut to the edge of shore where sharp  
would not slice bare feet -

wellness in my life  
is a smile I had for her  
the return not to be for me  
once it was -

coming winter too short  
to say goodbye.

Richard Provencher

# I Am Me

I am a lover of life, a poet  
living three score and ten plus two  
with years of struggle, then a  
contentment with words which seem  
to flow as a river in my  
mind - - and a desire to share the  
impressions and smells of a beautiful  
world in spite of the pimples  
that threaten my mind; yet, an attitude  
of delight remains in my soul -

Writers of Poetry:

savour your words, create scenes and  
phrases as if the moment  
of muse is taking place right now.  
Create layers of understanding  
for your audience - - allow them a peek  
into your world where the human  
spirit never surrenders.  
Use your dictionary and thesaurus often  
with new words to re-create a scene  
written about in a thousand other poems -

and when you press your head to pillow  
at night you will reflect:  
pen and pad recorded precious smells;  
episodes and impressions  
following your path; sounds  
of thunder in your life not really tragic,  
but an illumination. Love of family,  
friends and anger from foes established  
your muse;  
only then will you sleep in peace -  
since you have followed a journey  
where life fulfilled to  
its fullest. After resting, hurry and wake  
up, another poem is erupting from your soul.



# I Spy For Reason

From my view upon  
the hilltop trees carouse  
upon the wind,

shoreline overrun  
by the clash of waves.

Campers seek shelter,  
any hideaway  
from early winter flakes

summer departing?  
Winter muscling in?

Reason advises us  
to stay and face truth,

clouds shuffling in a  
parade of clumps

day not done, for better  
or worse on this occasion.

Richard Provencher

## In This World

are words of thunder, slivers  
of glass beneath relationships in  
life, a reminder of our imperfections,  
sinful and destructive natures.

Yet we know there is Someone.  
Above all the broken hearts, promises  
and unfulfilled dreams, He is  
our perfection, the One who holds  
us close to His bosom

who cares for us in the midst of chaos,  
vanquished dreams. He is loving,  
a Father, and in Him  
we surrender our woes, our  
afflictions and rise once again to live  
as vessels in His Honour.

Richard Provencher

# Journey Of The Return

scraggly bunches dip  
and twirl, one direction  
then another

an  
organized confusion

wingtip advantage  
riding each gust of wind,  
gliding to ecstasy  
on northern's flight, swoop  
and turn again

V-ploughing  
playing chase-the-leader, a  
feathered flying wedge

geese families  
three squadrons strong  
heading for summer

wind-chopping along

Richard Provencher

# Leaves Of Season

The wind is a whorl of movement  
frisky alongside an ancient trail  
marking time on Autumn  
leaves once clumped in an estate  
of tribal planning -

the wind elevates its myriad  
of colours  
calico twists and turns  
spiraling within a windy velocity

a mighty burst  
followed by mini-toreadors  
dashing and clashing

snaking rashly between poplars  
from one trail to another

until bliss is a windless kiss.

Richard Provencher

# Life As A Feather

I would like to be  
in the present tense  
where actions  
create special moments -  
hovering angels  
contributing to peace.

Richard Provencher

# Life Is A Flavour

In a minute before  
the next  
life is a ticking  
clock -

moments turn into  
affairs  
and an hour's time  
means  
adventures on the way.

Tick - Tick.

It is now one  
more minute passed  
away.

Richard Provencher

# Life Is A Knuckle

My eyes follow a  
young lady  
as she meanders  
through aisles

her smile a lure for  
my worldly ways

cares not for the  
crinkle of packaging  
nor hand-reach  
for all wants.

I am a voyeur that  
risks everything

my career  
community standing  
so I may study  
her secret.

At times grocery-laden  
carts block my  
view

seeking is a journey  
knowing she is  
homeless

said so as we chatted  
on the street  
one day.

Her trademark  
no cares it seems

how does she do it  
stacks against  
my brain.

She's coy  
knows I watch  
sees my groceries  
she has none

just a grin  
on her no-need-to  
worry face.

Richard Provencher

# Life Should Be Full Of Smiles

Eyes cower

and limbs extend  
to movement.

Snarls deride  
as words describe

morning's agitation.

Ps.

Get back to bed  
and try again.

Richard Provencher

# Little Dyke Lake, Nova Scotia

Lily pads are scattered  
as green flakes  
in reckless abandon

from my Fiberglass bow  
their green diameters  
hide under the push  
of visiting waves,  
pancake edges curled in  
annoyance -

my canoe is an intruder.

Richard Provencher

# Manitoulin Island, Ontario

Family memories capture the time  
we crossed Lake Huron waters  
on the Chee Chee Maun  
ferryboat alert to the holidays  
of our desires -

Sue fending off seagulls anxious for  
a crust, Troy laughing with  
youthful squeals  
Walt, subdued and serious at  
fourteen year's of age  
Esther and husband sharing  
their excitement.

Our tent soaking in heavy rains;  
a cottage beside Little Current;  
travels along gravel roads  
on dusty trails of history;  
and fishing, tarred boat carrying  
us into the bay, small mouth  
bass servings never to  
be forgotten.

Ah memories, the past a  
tray of remembrance.

Richard Provencher

# Memoirs

Life is a tap dance -  
a necklace of radiant sun

a poem begun with surroundings  
never finalized.

I am proud to be like you  
Dad -

an echo to your voice.

Daddy is a Preacher dancing  
with angels.

Richard Provencher

# Memories By The Moose

River, its wooden bridge  
a-creaking as we enter the park.

The river is a swirling soufflé  
of foam-filled bubbles,  
loose branches  
meandering in the stream

a southerly flow.

Around the bend, rock-poking  
ripples  
overcome a small sand dune.  
Aware of my presence  
a squirrel skitters tree-upwards.

I am a child of my past,  
peanut-butter fingers  
fishing with a hooked worm  
dangling low.

Upon a nearby plaque:  
&quot;In '36 three men entombed  
141 feet below, seeking crowns  
of gold within the granite,  
one man died.&quot;

Paged in time the village  
is somber, at attention  
stapled to a gravel road

where peace and simplicity  
are not easily forgotten.

Richard Provencher

## More Than Words

Sidewalks are community minded  
their cement fingers meandering from  
house to cat-on-porch home  
bringing people together  
for a cup of tea, perhaps a welcome  
wagon party -

new neighbours with whom  
to chew the fat  
shoot the breeze or  
share good and bad news,  
continued until tongues tire  
or friendships cemented.

Richard Provencher

# Neon Sign

Sidewalk's neon sign overcomes twilight  
- its torchlight showing flashy wares  
in our modern society - - muscle  
cars and 30-story glass towers  
bragging of man's prowess - - more valuable  
than a homeless man's cardboard hut  
on the sidelines of a busy street

looking up in awe at the tallness of jeweled  
buildings - - where am I? he asks  
in the business of another  
day's traffic - - its higher than  
someone's prayer path from  
the backwoods of a small village  
whence some men first sought success  
where the wilderness of life  
has a capacity for dysfunctional  
living and harshness on spirits. Love  
them much in your climbing to the stars.

Richard Provencher

# No More Space For The Pain

Thunder disturbed a mirage of peace; lightning painting  
the sky, and his head felt severed from an explosion -

He was like an irregular lump on the hospital mattress  
similar to the way he and his brother fooled  
mom with a couple of pillows modeling  
two young boys and toys packed under bed blankets  
O so long ago -  
mom laughed at that and the time she found  
her boys climbing trees just to watch the sunrise.

It grew into a passion  
the outdoors  
where a canoe pursued hidden creeks leading  
somewhere

and if you were really quiet a moose with  
its gangly ways stood proudly -  
a majestic  
king of the bay  
content with his domain.

The IV identified a hospital look  
nurse coming in often to check his credits  
BP okay, drip doing fine  
and no discomfort for the time being -  
body parts numb from the stroke.

Closing his eyes recaptures  
an imaginary view -  
loon sounds continuing  
their trill climbing a staircase  
of notes heralding evening's lullaby

frogs burping nearby  
bats flying in random ecstasy  
coyote yipping ricocheting  
from hills nearby.

Getting hard to focus on those days  
eyes desperate for rest.  
He smells the pine  
hears the rustle of trembling aspen  
a current's churlish flow

and a finale of woodsy serenade  
calling him to join the scent of forever ways.

Richard Provencher

# Once Ambushed

by Katrina's wind and rain  
the dead departed  
amid the ruin of crisis- -families  
desperate for life  
caught in the swamp of despair

and through the streets in  
New Orleans a song of hope  
lingered on a guitar string

death no longer works of fiction  
nor foreign village under the  
ruin of an Afghan suicide bomber  
but this is America, a land  
of the free:

remember them in the shortness  
of memory, remember  
them to the end of their lives.

Richard Provencher

# One Night

Rain sifts through the evening light  
small town chatter at its best  
Goodnight with children done at last  
and happy thoughts at rest -

next door a baby cries in vain  
mom is unwell - - husband's not home  
and she is in pain, again.

Why does the moon not glow as  
once it did, like a torchlight  
upon two lovers who found their way?  
Yes, tonight is not the same -

only loneliness comes along this path  
where kisses once came to play.

Richard Provencher

# Our Father Who Art...

As a child I lay  
my knees to rest before Thy  
mighty name, as I do now

and bare my soul -  
asking once more; forgiveness

thankful for so many  
blessings  
and continued protection  
from the stains in this world.

Please continue to allow me  
to caress Thy Name  
reveling in its strength;  
the richness of Your blood

assigning me to lead others  
along Thy path,  
where salvation awaits.

Richard Provencher

# Out Of Stars

The sky is almost out  
of stars to wish upon as I climbed  
through life then shuffled  
into the twilight of my years.  
Breath and length of days  
began counting as numbered steps -

in the battleground of youth  
I was a player  
who acknowledged the differences  
between love  
and losing a prize.

Lessons learned through foes  
I once fought  
knowing destination  
was inching around the corner -

now I climb  
and climb some more  
with only a few stars left to go.

Richard Provencher

# Respite For My Soul

I trod upon the path this day, a place  
of respite beneath the sun  
from where I wished to quench my soul.

It is here that Jesus listened to me  
His gracious love accepting my anger  
and frustrations -

I wept and bowed asking  
forgiveness once more, and looking  
up I knew Jesus heard my plea.

Richard Provencher

# Riding For Glory

Do you want to come  
for a ride  
in my wheel chair? You could  
sit in my lap  
and watch for rocks  
or bumps on the sidewalk.  
I want you to have a safe ride  
and see all the buildings  
beautiful signs even the cracked windows  
where some nasty person felt angry  
sometimes I do  
and when it happens I use this  
short pipe. It doesn't make  
me feel good but it's better than  
whacking someone  
who is on the sidewalk even if they  
are in my way.  
Watch carefully when I cross on  
the walkway where cars are  
supposed to stop... most don't and if  
I call the cops then no one is happy  
and I do so want a friend.  
How about you?

Richard Provencher

# Sacred Pylon

I see sunset in a spire of flames  
one sacred pylon  
as a rigid silhouette amongst  
eruptions that cause the sky such pain -  
forest-kingdom assailed  
from a storm  
of fire without boundaries

its glitter moving in sparkles  
carried by the rush of August winds  
a dry crackling  
racing to keep pace  
shuffling smoke and trees  
in the scent of charred wood side.

Richard Provencher

# Seascape

is precious like silver  
under a blanket  
of stars

day's brightness  
downsized to cloudy  
and gray,  
high above a coastal village.

Son's report card showers  
earned praise,  
husband's codfish-catch  
something else.

Now she lays  
in the silence,  
her man snoring  
after a meal of loving,  
son in the next room  
wrapped in childhood dreams

counts her blessings  
she does, family  
a castle of expectations.

Richard Provencher

# Son - - If You Could See

me now. This wrinkled flesh,  
all the mis-steps  
in my slurring dialogue

and the shirt,  
missed buttons setting me up  
for a chuckle or two -

my gait unsteady as I  
cross a sidewalk or three.

This memory in flashes,  
on newsprint where phrases  
blend between the ink

and I take the train  
to where the sun  
promises a-shine forever.

Richard Provencher

# South Island, New Zealand

Piercing sunlight, sandblast  
bright  
spotlights Dusky Sound's calm

scudding clouds approach  
sky's edge  
humped hills surrounding the  
view.

A panorama of beauty.

Richard Provencher

# Sparrows And Others

Am I worth more than  
a sparrow?  
We both know love.

Richard Provencher

# That Second Hand Music

A path in shadow  
from overhead branches,  
claws launching into  
a dog's howl

one pup staring  
at the sun, warmth  
on his back  
arrows in his side

and the pain  
now bearable as  
numbness is soothing;  
an eagle heads  
for the nest.

Such memories  
tease me back  
into childhood  
dreaming.

Richard Provencher

# That Second Hand Music

A path in shadow  
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Richard Provencher

# The Author Of A Second Chance

opposes debris under bridges,  
a panhandler on  
the floor of a creek bed

as adversaries overwhelm,  
threatening -

always in a hurry  
take your time  
God really loves us  
told me so, and He forgives.

Now touch the wounds of His  
Being and believe.

Richard Provencher

# The Great Outdoors

Today is a slide of  
wind, soothing as stream's  
cascading surge

ducks hidden in clouds  
of evening shade,  
silhouettes and movement.

Rain continues its pounce  
of warmth, sprinkles  
like shoreline clothing

and loons create  
callings within eerie mist.

Dusk weaves between trees  
sunbeams fanning  
across ripples, the lake

providing respite, canoes  
eager, searching.

Nature's union is memory.

Richard Provencher

# The Last Flight

Soaring feathers  
hurry through November's  
storming -

below the confusion, riding lake's  
chilly crest, a Mallard lays  
in rocking stillness

wings outstretched, no  
longer part  
of journeys south

often leading season's flight,  
raised a family within  
the framework of this bay.

He'll miss the fragrance  
of Spring's return,  
the joy in swooping delight

lifeless, but never forgotten.

Richard Provencher

# The Miner

wears a cotton protective mask,  
bleached cotton scraping  
tenderness of skin

only twenty years old, man-child  
sharing a paycheck with  
mom and family

trudges two miles across quiet  
streets, listens to the breath  
of early morn, silence is

behind those windows, even  
cars and bicycles  
stationary in  
layers of contentment

humming mine continues to draw  
him into its yawn of smelter

tall stacks, molten copper awaiting  
preparations of shaped moulds

splashing heat anxious to  
become square-shaped anodes.

Richard Provencher

# The South Shore, Nova Scotia

Slender outline aside Canso's  
shore, a boy silhouettes  
open-mouthed  
harbour

gray dawn emerging.

Sharing his vision, tourists  
seek sights along the  
Marine Trail

and thoughts meander  
as high tide surges  
inland. They admire the

scenery, astonished.

Seagulls pause in private  
adventures,  
left-over signatures on  
tide-abandoned

rocks, Atlantic's view.

And cars continue  
to intrude, from cove to  
silent cove.

Richard Provencher

# The Whine Of Bad Habits

My needs were met, a great sleep to renew  
strength and overcome yesterday's  
demands for my attention; went shopping  
and found a stranger, now my friend -

he met me in the aisle between pop cans  
and cereals of every sugary content:  
&quot;I'm depressed, &quot; he said.

&quot;No job, lost my wallet, crying like a baby.  
Me a grown adult sitting here on the floor  
as if I'm giving up - - guess I am.&quot;

&quot;What are you going to do about it, &quot; I asked.

&quot;First, I'm going to scream, &quot; he said. &quot;So  
people will understand the pain I am in.&quot;

&quot;I feel like ripping the stars from the sky;  
and tear up all trees so no one will be  
happy like I used to be.&quot;

&quot;Then you will no longer wish upon a star,  
nor allow someone's childhood to climb  
a tree, or watch squirrels prepare for winter&quot;  
I said, placing my arm on his shoulder.

We talked and prayed awhile before he got  
to his feet on his own. Then it was my turn to  
get up and be on my way, and -  
left him with a smile of hope on his face.

Richard Provencher

# The Window Of Time

Many years ago being brave  
meant arms outstretched, kids flailing  
for balance as acrobats on  
the huge pipeline bringing tailings  
from the Noranda Copper Mine

impurities steered away from  
civilized society and hauled  
far into the woods behind  
our town, hidden by clumps of hills

that tinge of unsightly brown  
crust where one misstep meant  
plunging into mysterious gluck

where a young body may dissolve  
from chemicals and ascend to  
heaven sooner than parents  
believed to be humanly possible.

Richard Provencher

# Time Of Discontent

I stand before shadows  
on the wall - sodden edges  
sharpened with memories  
and contemplate  
closeness in my being  
revelations of my existence  
and attempts to gain  
the upper hand  
with this apparition  
- barrier within an alley  
of diminishing returns  
alley of loveless ambition  
a sanctuary for all my boasting.

Richard Provencher

# Time Passes By

A canoe lay abandoned  
on the beach - - I could sense  
adventure caused that keel  
to flounder from the thrill of heavy  
waves pounding against its hull:

the fury of wind directing  
a course, sterns man pointing the craft  
directly into the thrust  
of foamy crests, guiding it to safer  
rest, parallel to shore

and the loons departing as  
it came sifting through muddy  
waters as a ship of yore  
seeking the promise of land,  
determined to ride  
the next ripples to safe haven.

I pass by this memory now  
razed by the sun, baked  
dry to driftwood size gunnels  
worn thwarts rotted through  
and insides where bended  
knees once caressed the wood.  
Such pride upon a wake  
ending as memories, glad  
I am to share the view before  
passing this way again.

Richard Provencher

# Time To Get Out Of The Kitchen

and into the face of the poor  
the impoverished -  
those who feast on heaps  
of beans and hamburg  
and more beans

those faces -  
vacant without a vision for tomorrow  
no legacy to leave behind  
except leftover clothes  
from Sally Ann.

I sit here among the haves  
contemplating the future of the nots.  
My vacation via an expensive car  
with  
loads of gas

scattering smog in  
a neighbourhood of grief and sad  
lives - - moms and dads trying so hard.  
Once I was one.

Richard Provencher

# To Montreal

Winding wheels whistle  
across steel, coaches shaking,  
passengers  
in interruptions of rest, on

and on they rumble,  
a repetitious journey across  
miles of pasture  
trees sharing their silhouettes.

Conversations pant through  
corridors, jokes lost in the melee  
an attendant repeating:  
&quot;Montreal - - quinze minutes, &quot;  
her French accent  
like an historic banner -

crossing twilight's barrier  
is faceless, except  
for the highway, cars  
flash-lighting darkness  
as we continue life's journey.

Richard Provencher

# Today And Tomorrow

My leaves shuffle life and  
broad branches shelter shadows,  
the forest a domain -

eagles patrol as updrafts  
send them soaring  
wings trembling in their journey,

eyes glitter for feasting.

The wind acknowledges my  
presence, whistles a crescendo,  
tunes deliberate

and with meaning.

A small lake is a nest for  
mosquitoes, bats in meandering  
display - fully  
occupied in the chase

ripples among the surface  
highlight landing  
zones, ducks accommodating.

Branches droop from  
owl's arrival, its hooting salutes  
the evening in my presence -  
I am tree.

Richard Provencher

# Today Is Lazy

as willows bend beneath  
pall of winter  
doldrums and damp  
snow dragging spirits,

birch flushed white  
with worry - the season  
is not  
according to plan.

A first day of spring  
and the promise of berry  
sprouts in warmer  
days now gone astray  
as snowfall  
continues its way,

blue jay's flirting put  
off for another day.

Richard Provencher

# Tonight Is Like A Raison

Day is arrested and night  
has fallen  
parking spots sprinkled with cars  
their smoky exhausts  
at rest  
no longer fumes to protest

a light rain  
cleanses strain from today's  
furnace  
higher humidity tomorrow  
they say - - 82 C  
not the best of time for lighter skin.

Cars slaked with steady drops  
surfaces protesting heat all day.  
Grass silver with wetness  
dew worms slithering in delight.  
Tomato plants droop  
from a flood of moisture.

Apartment lights now muted  
everyone asleep I presume -

my turn to join the occasion.

Richard Provencher

# Westmorland, New Brunswick

A sickness in their eyes.  
Hanging fists clench  
and unclench  
watching my eyes of fear.  
I was in the dark and must not  
look back he said in the letter,  
strong and full of hope.  
In the visitor's room I am  
afraid, my son.  
Come home someday,  
little boy in a man's prison.

Richard Provencher

# When I Was A Birch Tree

I scaled the side  
of the highest hill  
holding fast with roots

a standout in a sea of green -  
from spruce to willow  
and poplar to a few scattered  
cedar - - I was more than  
a fist with iron in  
my demeanor -  
a moose in the forest.

Then someone came and cut  
me down - - in the mirror of their  
weakness. A hiker  
cold and alone.  
He chopped me in smaller  
pieces into kindling. Now I am  
a fire ball of warmth.

Richard Provencher

# When The Fishermen Are Gone

A wooden hull  
bumps gently  
against the dock

Slap of water  
along the  
shore

Skim of glass upon  
the lake

Distant hills outline the sky

And in the cottage  
mom and dad  
are resting

Children no longer here

Now grown into  
careers and faraway places

They remember the boat.

Richard Provencher

# While Others Sleep

fog murmurs a parade of kisses  
alongside hungry hills  
like a web without spiders  
upon mountain slides

gathers in clusters  
as eagles dare encounter  
morning's light

and sun survives in a brilliant orb  
pressing against green  
arising from a V of valleys  
not so far away

Richard Provencher

# Winterchill

morning hoarfrost and  
early caresses from your  
mantle of spider-web symmetry,  
protection for dormant limbs  
within -  
cheek to cheek we admire  
the gentleness  
of Autumn's blanket as  
splayed limbs droop with their  
frozen strength and  
creeping mist searches with tired eyes,  
togetherness a beacon as  
the river bumps along...our warmth  
glowing in the slumber of  
these woods, your gentle kiss  
upon my lips...

Richard Provencher

# Words & Thoughts On Pause

I am a voice  
with meaning

as the storm approaches  
lightning  
noise like hooves  
a thunder of

attention. I gather in  
my nerves  
afraid of the tomes that  
invade my senses.

My wife calls to me  
knowing is  
knowledge and she does  
have such notions.

I listen  
aware of the  
flickering TV  
the agitation on my computer

fingers pause  
a story line put on hold  
and I close off

time for rest  
the evening is growing cold  
and I return to my nest.

Richard Provencher

# World Deposit In Letters

The message is the same  
work-eat-sleep or forever die.  
Nourish the soul, let alone  
the body. Western ideals  
are pretenders to the throne  
of answers. Confusion re  
culture and ethnic cleansing  
in the Middle East not  
a worthwhile substitute for  
reasonable doubt.

Somewhere in the slumber of  
another trail words are dark  
and deep, a road for intruders  
on the prowl; sends shivers  
through a scene of prey.

Man, the throne-king walks  
the rant fixing rules and  
changes each comma when  
it suits ambition.

Now that one shuffles,  
a coyote stirs  
the moon is brightness  
and a rabbit  
knows its destiny - -  
tonight is a chance  
to live life. Tomorrow's  
dream is our destiny.

Richard Provencher