

## Linda Kingston

### Escuminac

i was growing into a body  
i wouldn't recognize  
alone on Escuminac beach  
where my father ran naked  
the year i was born

i was growing into my flesh  
meekly  
unwilling to make it stretch  
over the miles  
i'd travel away from this  
place

there has to be more  
here  
it doesn't end here  
where i lookout into  
the four o'clock sun  
see the raft carrying  
my cousin, triumphant  
king of the castle  
seaweed stuck to his  
goosebumped thighs

we were sea creatures  
used to the cold blackness  
of the water concocting  
elaborate schemes  
until water-tired we crawled  
out of the ocean  
into families  
but there has to be more  
it doesn't end  
here  
in this Montreal bar  
where i grab at the stories  
rolling across our  
wet table

### Mt. Fugen

the way  
i  
stalk  
reminds me of  
the time i tried to climb Mt.  
Royal, strayed from my path

ended up getting steeper and  
steeper ranges growing out of  
grassy mud  
with the thud of my  
Nike running shoe  
my small hands grabbed at  
mouthfuls of dirt,  
finally, i lifted my eyes  
to meet  
the video cameras of tourists

on the side of the road

but now i'm the tourist  
in my cut off sweatpants  
my face covered  
in pimples and dirt  
2 cans of Sapporo in my day pack, for the summit

some perverse satisfaction from  
passing the busload of golden agers  
dissolves when they cheer me on

euphoria  
at escaping that look  
that wants to make me  
a woman

here  
i am a woman who climbs Mt. Fugen  
alone  
because she wants to

and so what  
if 'm scared of the deer  
who try to steal my  
rice crackers