

Lakeshore

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Arriving at the lakeshore
one morning
I came upon a poem

not of pristine sailboats
cutting into precise horizons
nor of the watercolour sunrise,
nor even of the sound
the water makes as it drags itself
like rattled chains
across a rocky shore

no, I found a corpulent woman
sitting beside the calm waters
of Lake Simcoe
shaving her legs

I'd wanted to be alone

I wasn't looking for a poem
at all but rather
working out a jealousy
chewing on it
like an old piece of gum

and so was unsurprised
to spy the plastic fork
left behind by picnickers

lazy Kleenex
floating in the water

a child's forgotten ball
bright pink against
the dawn-coloured rocks

all seemed confirmations
of what I knew already
about people

but then there was the woman
by herself shaving
unaware that I was watching
or maybe unconcerned

and somehow I found grace
in her rhythmic strokes of razor
the pull and swish
upon cathedral legs

grace is that way
it sneaks up behind you
when you thought
you'd wanted solitude
when you thought
you would choose ugliness
and refuse the poetry
of a fat woman and her razor

and the way when she's finished
she ambles up the path
to a man at a picnic table
waiting.