

Eramosa River
by Nicholas Ruddock

Once I lived by the side of the Eramosa River
with my mother and father and the woods surround,
we'd swim in the current and fish in the shallows,
and watch raccoons hunt the crayfish down.
Cool was the water where I learned to swim,
spring by the millpond, dragonfly skim,
red-tailed the hawk plummeting down,
circle of feathers askance on the ground,
thunder and lightning, hail and snow,
calendar turning—ten years ago—
a cottage, three windows, a candle, a well,
stove run on wood, quarter-moon spell,
the heron, the waxwing, the paddle, the sigh,
mist from the cedars, kingfisher cry,
marigold, crocus, sumac blood-red,
bulrushes, catkins, asleep in our beds,
ice jam, ice cracking, the owl and the mouse
wind in the larches, branch scraping the house,
dark eyes at the window pane, river gone wild,
sweepers with fingers, awakening child
until we moved to the city, to Liverpool Street,
and all of a sudden it was people we'd meet,
a postman, a neighbour, the sidewalk back home,
fox and the marten, left on their own,
the moon rising slowly from the Campbellville Road,
bats swooping lowly as stars explode,
my parents and I, three years we would spend
on the Eramosa River, shimmer and bend.