

2010 - 2011

CBC Writing Competition

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## Condolences

In a hotel lounge lit by televisions  
and drowning in karaoke renditions  
as lyrics flash, words numb and burn  
from friends, curious and consoling.  
Bitter by proxy, angry and confused,  
the injustice of it, that fact trumps fiction.  
They talk as if someone has died  
or some other loss occurred that first of August

The chirrup of my phone awoke me.  
A blue sky's clear light, harsh to my eyes,  
mixed warmth with chilled air on my face  
happy to see your name, hear your voice, ecstatic,  
deliver the inevitable. Lovely, numbing news.  
I was the fifth to be told, but the loss of hope  
would be the same, no matter the order.  
The burn of August reduced to November chill

Heavy coats on chairs, alcohol's heat inflames  
incredulity. Supportive cries and claims of aid,  
phone calls, stopped, for good reason.  
A love still breathing is better left so,  
like ideals, too hopeful, do best in a dream.  
Lights burn, night over, so much is learned,  
though Best assured, "her heart is with you"  
it's a warm consolation among condolences.