

# *aubade*

by rob mclennan

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*aubade* is a longer poem built out of long poems, taking a page from Kroetsch's *Completed Field Notes*. From the streets of Montreal and the tantric delay of a rockslide to his version of Barry McKinnon and Brian Fawcett's "Sex at 31," mclennan writes through travels that exist both in the world and on the empty page.

mclennan lives in Ottawa. The author of eleven previous poetry books, including *what's left*, *red earth* and *name*, *an errant* (UK). mclennan is publisher of above/ground press, *STANZAS* magazine, the critical journal *Poetics.ca* and *ottawater*. mclennan edits the Cauldron Books series at Broken Jaw Press. He is also editor of *Evergreen: Six New Poets* and *sidelines: a new canadian poetics*. His online home is [www.track0.com/rob\\_mclennan](http://www.track0.com/rob_mclennan).

mclennan won the 1999 Canadian Authors' Association/Air Canada Award for "most promising writer (in any genre) in Canada under 30."

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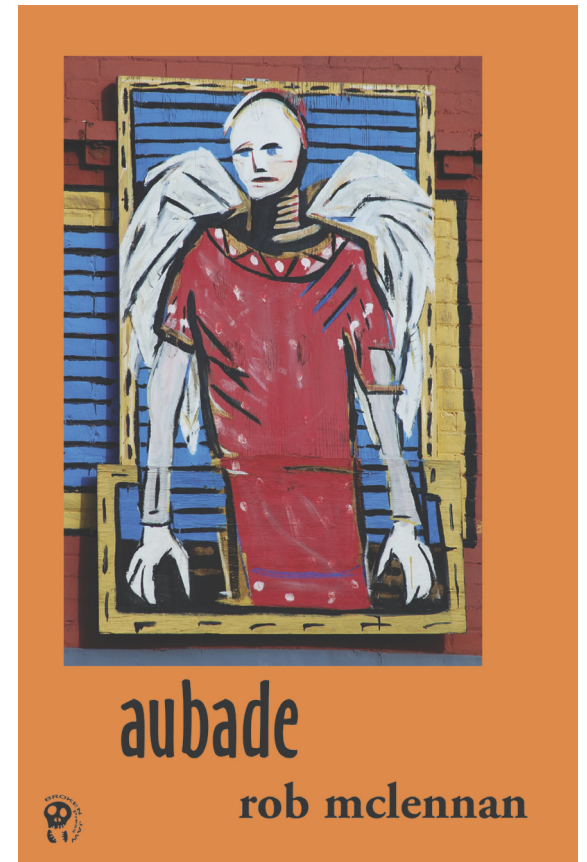
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# *aubade* sampler

*selections from rob mclennan's  
forthcoming 12<sup>th</sup> poetry collection*



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☛ This *aubade sampler* was published on the last weekend of May 2006 in a paper edition of 300: printed, collated, and bound in-house by Joe Blades in the back office of Broken Jaw Press Inc., in the wild western Maritimes, on a warm, sunny Sunday when he would rather have been bike riding on a woods or riverside trail ☺

Dear reader, you may print your your own copy from this PDF on standard letter-size paper. Enjoy!

from “irregular heartbeats”

(alanas teeth)

one space missing, two, pushes  
up to the surface

moves along

drills in, a bargain  
at the price

a hole in the day, a hole  
in her head, i need  
this like

dental surgery, & we  
all wait

bite down, or chew  
a bit upon

bad magazines, & so  
fresh out of date

lily white, or tem-  
peramental

# *aubade* sampler

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By these fruits  
we shall measure our weights & days.  
—George Bowering, Desert Elm

**rob mclennan**



Fredericton • Canada

**a book of matches**

hits upon the head, a nail

yr assignment, should you choose  
to accept

ammonia, dont get it on yr skin  
or deer urine, a splash  
on an orange jacket

masks yr scent      puts out

& chucks the bullet, blind

pushes her opponent to the floor, pushes  
her best friend, throws  
her clenched fist forward against air

an army of white uniforms, each  
knocking bits of my coffee splash

at the end, sees me, holds out  
the open palm

*from* "sex at 31"

sex at 31 competes w/ its own failures

\*

& always has a spare key

**my daughter haunts the west end**

i cant find any books in their yard sales, only  
childrens toys from teens, & discarded sets  
of golf clubs

campers & boats litter drives

saturday karate class in barrhaven,  
stale coffee standing w/ other parents,  
in their way, & an hour  
local transit

everyone else lives close,  
has cars

moby on the radio, steel hours  
of an hour, watermain  
beneath the street

& her first ten years, &  
orange belt

more than keeps her pants up

helps to keep her something,  
time spent, confidence

small children running abt the,  
what is it, dojo

this is no pat morita dream, how old  
do you think i am

\*

knows enough  
when good is good,  
as it gets. is good,

or even great. makes love,  
& pushes, envelopes in spades.

the quick surplus, or lack  
of teenage fuck,  
long gone, by cons.

still seeks  
the better position.

\*

at 31, fully aware of half-time,  
of topics & tropics,

the billow of skin changing shape.  
less taut, more

& changing tune. suffers aches & pains.  
but still can go the distance.

**south keys (he who became lost**

this is a poem w/ neither light. time of day  
evaporates.

by the teeth of the river, they slept. the tip,  
the tongue.

expands across the water. lets lost balls  
float slowly past.

the taste of anything this morning. the snow here,  
does as snow does.

a candle burns brightest. the box it came in,  
even more.

a telephone is not a detection system. beats  
the myths of early warning.

tristan took the wrong south bus, & never saw  
isolde again. wandered crescents

for hours. who then  
became.

the loss becomes him. that is,  
turned into.

**the steps of an old folk song**

*(for kate & anna, eh*

painted steps, coverd, & yr grandmere  
in old quebec

porch wrapped around the house

music from the kitchen, the scent  
of an anne hebert poem

oh young girl in the snow,  
looking up

good bones & legs, strong arms  
for lifting, milking cows

what does that mean, way  
that we see

strong lungs

across a landscape of flowers, of  
snow, poking thru

& all depends upon,  
one hour of each day

constantly singing, even

as the work gets done

**suggestions, across the map**

a painting, you would begin  
to memorize

each small move

chessboards  
in electronic fashion

& where he sits in portugal,  
long suffering

new ways to win or lose

stephanie sits across from vermeer,  
& pays her own homage

in paris

these threads surround us  
& thin

further into, electrical fields  
& curvature of earth

& small dark circles,  
painted

on the sun

**whitemans log**

a journal is more than an entry. seclusion is  
more than hiding away.

hard winters skulk in the imagination. if ever  
to write poems neath a californian sun,

or north of sixty.

what is montreal but a straight line. a  
dump truck is a victim  
you are sure of. a breadbasket.

sugar melts, & snow. when you drive out,  
past city bounds, forgetting & remembering,  
wondering, who turns out the stars

at night.

*from* "a translation: stones & ice"

**i am unable to translate skin.**

whether possible to retain, w/ new eyes. the CD player  
is broken, & the studio remains. small, flightless  
birds set loose in first floor windows, & thin sheet of ice

over two foot melting snow. white pulp. of florida  
oranges & the like. a woman, they say, is a breed apart.  
when we arrived, he forbid us having sex in his

bed, so we made quick love on the living room floor. where  
the carpet was worn. & my fingers bled slow where  
she bit. inch by careful inch. slid smooth.

**montreal at night**

it takes but a moment to surpass  
yr own existence, grey scrapings

flaking off the moon. the snow white  
of mistaken weather through hard march.

if i could sleep for twelve hours, i think  
that i would, old

hibernation, the positioning  
of venus, mars, pinprickt

in the heavens, just above  
grey angel spires.

*from* "voice-over 3: bloodletting"

**"a wheel in the ditch improves suspension"**

—ryan fitzpatrick

left me w/ nothing, how old  
you thot she was.

certain washrooms escalate. drawings  
of rockets & pigs, long saved.

photos old become new again, as  
someone dies. clean house.

the former bender curves. my mother  
calls it a cultural.

consider apples to oranges. consider  
issues concentrate.

disbanded aft a time, & had not  
what been replaced.

**that together we might see more sky**

it doesnt matter if you cant go home, you can  
go back  
to where you lived

four generations of a house set in, & the previous,  
nothing left of it in the field

the garden knows a lot abt smoke, burning  
matted grass each spring, thick grey

black is not the colour here

but when it is, so soon replaced  
by short, green sprouts

**underwater**

my ears go underwater  
as i speak, just one,  
& then another

wood floors surround  
w/ boxes & sound,  
systems of voices  
& trajectories

the mouth of the river  
& the left coast, montreal  
to twelve months  
of vancouver

imagine, i said, doing  
everything it is you do,  
except  
in the shower

even thunderstorms erupt  
more slowly, & mountains  
become more

as everything in yr path  
becomes plural

*from* "letter drop, or songs from a room"

**'in almost every'**

faceless lands  
across the bearing

or bering, strait  
of footpath, sure

historical, what  
they say abt

an option, claiming  
only days

he stands, in  
the pothole flash

finds bones, or  
the bike wheel

catches, flips  
& hits the bus

in melons, or  
in perpetuity

**an airplane turns over the underbrush**

on a bus non-stop to cornwall, knowing full well  
what will & wont appear

nearly took the milk route, just to drive  
& see what id been missing

twice the travel time, w/ stops in long sault,  
morrisburg, upper canada village

trees give the illusion of growth, even still  
as remnants of the ice storm wrath

lie flat as dead birds, three years later, hold on  
longer to the memory

white metal glints in the sun & turns  
slightly, blinks, passenger flight the same colour  
as clouds

for a moment & is of, where  
it is going, & wherever

it has already been, intersecting thousands  
& its tens of thousands