

## Ode to Vancouver

4500 k from Hamilton, Ontario  
to spend my hard-earned money on finally having a future I deserve  
in a city of ancient trees and beautiful mountains  
and unattainable housing.

Three great roommates, one shitty roommate  
but my bedroom is my sanctuary.  
Told I'm here to be great, and if I just want to be good, I can go to SFU, and disturbed by  
how many TCs applaud.  
Most of them find out soon enough the error in their optimism.  
Haikus on our house blackboard for Annie and Kari, but can't convey my love in 5-7-5,  
even when I start with "A red-headed fox," and end with "Haiku-ku-ka-chu." (It's only  
funny when you know that they're dating much younger men.)  
Try to make Annie laugh with the worst possible similes: "Her hair was blonde like a  
light-yellow tea towel."  
Pick her up late one night when she calls me in tears after a cyclist collides with her car.  
She's physically sick over it for two weeks.  
Sad when she leaves for Bali, and Kari for Uganda  
still have Chris with his booming laugh, which echoes loudly through Queen Elizabeth  
Theatre for Sarah Silverman.

Sushi. Sushi. And more sushi. The best I've ever had.  
Vietnamese restaurants – I think Ontario has better vermicelli bowls, but I had to come  
here to learn that there are amazing Vietnamese stews – like beef stew with tomato broth  
and curry beef stew with big chunks of potato and carrots.  
Never do find a great shawarma.  
Peaceful Restaurant!  
I'm going to look like a pretentious asshole when I go back home and my family wants to  
take me to Mandarin Gardens.  
again.  
Well, *more* of an asshole.

Spending more time on writing for Carl Leggo than all of my other classes combined.  
Can't speak when I have to comment on Joanna's piece because I'm too choked up.  
I go for cheap laughs while those around me bare their souls.  
I'm told later that most of my writing is just mean.  
Yep.  
Though I prefer to euphemise it as "an exploration of the absurd."  
I go out that night and get Bukowskied anyway.

Nick Cornelius Leopold Janzen.  
I sit with him sometimes.  
He says guys with faces like me and him have to work harder to meet women, not like  
handsome Kane (who doesn't even have nemeses), though I counter and tell him I've

been told I look like a young Joseph Stalin. It's been well-documented in at least two different unpublished Renga poems.  
He says I look like an old Joseph Stalin.  
I concur and we get Bukowskied.

Called the "least friendly city in Canada," but I haven't seen it -  
met a real friendly guy in Stanley Park on Remembrance Day at noon, worthy of a haiku:

Strolling in the park,  
an odd duck lurks among trees.  
Fool me once, fella.

Stay here for Christmas, but the house isn't empty.  
The shitty roommate is here too.  
Probably should have went home.  
A real Canadian winter though, but I may be the only person in the city enjoying it.  
And with the trees in my front yard stripped of their leaves, I see all of downtown lit up every night.  
I go to check out Bright Lights in Stanley Park at Christmas, staying safe on the crowded paths.  
Rudolph's nose is burnt out.  
That's the most important one.

Outnumbered by subletters for four months, but luckily it's during practicum and my room is my sanctuary.  
Experiment with a lot of soups, which comes in handy when Kari returns from Uganda with her jaw broken in three places.  
Glad she's alright,  
But maybe more selfishly glad that she's home again.  
I missed my friend.  
Power dynamic stabilizing back to normal.  
Her plants aren't looking very healthy.  
Oopsies.  
But she's happy for the soups and the patio table I get for her from the hoarder's house down the street.  
It's unclear whether or not he's giving it away because of all the other shit on his lawn but it's proximity to the road makes it seem as though it's up for grabs.

Try and use poetry to make women's panties fall off.  
Nick would approve with a face like mine.  
Oddly enough it works!  
I miss class because elegant arms are draped across me and soft sleepy moans beg me to stay.  
I don't bother filling out an Absence Report Form because I know they won't consider "beckoned by a lover's flesh at morning's light," as an acceptable absence.  
But shouldn't they?

Susan, the 60 year-old Asian woman who lives two houses down finally learns my name after 9 months.

We ride the bus one day to UBC.

The volume of her voice allows everyone to know exactly what we're talking about.

More accurately – what she is talking at me about.

Surprised to hear her yelling my name up to my window on a Sunday afternoon:

Michael!

Michael!

Michael!

Michael!

**MICHAEL!**

