

I map the city's narrative. French words a tidal flow – bellying out
now and then
in recognition: *éleganté* or *équilibré* or *velouté et volupté*. The
architectural signatures
of grey-rippled cubes and spirals – doors weighted against the cold.
Maple sugar. Ice hockey.
Snow removal services. I thread differences on a rosary string: the
absence of apostrophes,

and reassurance of possession.

Arrêt. Arrêt. Arrêt. The wind is a fistful of nails. In the old town, I enter
Notre Dame, feeling
the pull of incubation a graduation from embryo to foetus. I
think again of sea
ice, blooming across the Gulf of St Lawrence. Prayers flicker in red and
blue glass – a safe
edifice – warm and calm. Newness stirs. Questions form. Deep-coded
thought fragments;

nothing I understand yet.

I came here, hemisphere-distant to shake my uncertainty loose. To run,
to stay moving. At
the marketplace, a woman sells Inuit art from behind an ultrabook.
Moose. Maple Leaves.
Loonies. Rain blooms, darkens the grey: 70s Olympic infrastructure
and its futuristic shapes
of concrete and murals, streets not built for prams. A
yellow school bus approaches,

brings bright relief.

Je suis Australienne. I walk on, watch well-dressed college students
ribboning through urban
corridors. Near my lodgings, I watch two children chase off a skunk
with sticks. *Pepé le Pew.*
I'm foreign and heart-sick, thinking of tactile things that centre and
cradle. Thunderstorms:
purpling skies. The click of Asian geckos. Rain on tin roofs
lifting out the steam.
Cane toad veneers on wet bitumen.

I can't imagine this place under snow, can't imagine any place.
The wild is the cold, is
the wild. The howl of the wind is an SOS. Puffins. Penguins. Otters.
Bearded Atlantic fishermen.
Où est la sortie? Disappear, to find your way home. All-hour nausea
swings: a pendulum,
marking each day of this desperate sentence. When this star is birthed,
it will be mighty.
I too, will be recast.