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**Indexical Elegies**

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Indexical Elegies

-- Jon Paul Fiorentino.

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-- Toronto.

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first edition



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*For Marisa Grizenko*



Elizabeth Conway  
(A Montreal Suite)

*the echo deferred, dispersal, the night declines its relays.  
To explore: the ultimate intimate elsewhere.*

– Nicole Brossard

*The high ones die, die. They die. You look up and who's  
there?*

– John Berryman ('Dream Song 36')

*Life, friend, is boring. We must not say so.*

– John Berryman ('Dream Song 14')

ELIZABETH CONWAY

We visit Elizabeth Conway on Sundays, select Mondays  
and stumble, habitually untied  
above Snowdon, Mile End

We take the long way on these days  
release captivating missives  
wake up later

Maybe croon names like Edith McCord,  
Ellie Dowling, or maybe not, still we  
drive ourselves civic

One day, road-tripping ourselves  
to l'Épiphanie, QC, we will  
turn around just in time

Look for home firmly planted  
on a Sunday, select Mondays, too easy to parse  
and so still, so departed

There's a Montreal I'm  
beginning to see and  
you're everywhere in it, Conway.

Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, Spring 2008

## **JOBLESS WONDERBOY**

Jobless little wonder  
needs his antibiotics

Jobber never leaves  
never earns his lesions

Got paper and markers  
and motherfucking whiteout

Listen, sent you a text  
message in 1983

One day you'll get it

## MENTHOLISM

Cold is your gift  
spend countless hours grifting

Sole proprietorship  
of these barricades

Close eyes  
pretend we have talent

Not swayed  
too into too craven

Can't hold liquor  
can't hold sobriety

Smoke Craven Menthols  
not sure why

Get frigid  
ride late night

Last call  
scratch open white scabs

Walk-in therapist sees you  
there you are

Don't have a problem  
in writing

Need a  
room in which to brood

An adjacent  
room from which to watch

So hard to keep  
the stories straight

This poem makes  
sure of that

MONTREAL SONG

And then she said  
*being despotic is almost  
as rewarding as being enlightened*

Then he said  
*I love everything about  
you except your company*

And then we all agreed  
that power politics were  
depressing

**POLICE DRIVE HATCHBACKS**

Ask for cocaine  
sane currency  
petulant  
continent

Walk the  
strip-mined outlet mall  
make eye contact  
with retailers

Enter hostel  
fall asleep  
to your  
bitmap

One weak moment  
that won't  
stop  
happening

WHAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN, COURTNEY?

She slides out of a launderette  
*No, wait.* She struts out of a café

*Check that.* She stumbles out of a bus  
*Or not.* She steps out of a bank

*Too dull.* She stirs out of a dream  
*That sucks.* She slips out of a clinic

The washer is old; the smoke is thick  
the transit is slow; the credit is wrecked  
the fear is real; the doctor is sick

Her clothes are stained; her coffee is cold  
her transfer is lost; her money is low  
her mind is made up; her pills do not work