

## NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1978

ELIZABETH BREWSTER

If I had thought forty years ago  
when I asked myself where I would be  
twenty—thirty—forty years from then—

If someone had told me then,  
"On New Year's Day of 1978  
you'll be sitting alone in a highrise apartment  
in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
writing a poem to yourself,"  
how disappointed would I have been?

A fifteen-year-old romantic,  
a brainy silly goose in love for the first time of many,  
full of high ideals, religion, bad poetry, incurable shyness:  
it's easy to laugh at myself as I was then  
if I don't envy myself.

Fame, I thought.  
Love, I thought.  
Sons and daughters.  
A big house with an orchard behind it.  
Athens. Troy.  
Heaven at the end, where I would meet my friends and  
relatives  
miraculously young again.

I drink coffee, watch the smoke wreaths  
rise above clustered branches,  
imagine the delicate tracery  
of hoarfrost on red berries.

I have lived all my life in rented rooms;  
my loves have been temporary;  
my best friends are dead;  
I have no children.  
I have yet to visit Troy (Where is it?)  
My great book is still to be written.  
I believe in God  
only intermittently.  
I live (like everyone else)  
in fear of the destruction  
of my country and my world.

Yet I would not change  
these forty years,  
would not omit depressions, wars, conflict,  
death, pain,  
or this solitude in which I drink coffee.

Smoke rises. The river flows under the ice.  
There is a new blossom on my geranium.

A friend writes she is having a baby in July.  
Next week I am giving a party.

Ten years from now  
I may write my great book.  
My lover may marry me  
for my old-age pension.

In heaven I shall be a ballet dancer  
creating perfect patterns  
without words.