

I just finished reading Mike Madill's poetry collection, 'The Better Part of Some Time'. I really enjoyed his poems with their vivid cinematic details - like the array of items in 'Grandfather's Garage', at first just a hardware list but at the end the personalization of "the popsicle-maker we built together" and the transformation of 'a tangle of fishing rods' into 'lost summers' lures and hooks'. As a reader I could feel the love and the loss of the grandfather. After reading the poem 'Red', especially the line 'He showed me which tall shoots of grass to chew', I could feel the spirit of Raymond Carver hovering with his line from 'Photograph of My Father in His Twenty-Second Year' - "Father, I love you yet how can I say thank you, I who can't hold my liquor either/and don't even know the places to fish." - both poems evoking the unspoken relationship between fathers and sons. The most poignant poem for me was 'Night Crossing'. The last verse is a gem: "Embrace the blackness / squeeze until the light / burst from the pores / and the fear of falling / falls away." It evokes a montage of Leonard Cohen's 'there is a crack in everything but that's how the light gets in'; Joyce's 'the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling...upon all the living and the dead'; and of course John's Gospel 'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.' (1:5) Madill has created a brilliant verse here - a prayer of hope! (Robert O'Meara, Humber College Professor/Media Studies, (Retired)).