

## DECEMBER IS WINTER

### I

If I am preoccupied with the tropics  
let it be: place of birth, mud, soliloquies,  
or madness that lies fallow in the brain—

Containing the self accustomed to acacia, black sage,  
bougainvillea that flounder like brain cells,  
which invariably come back to haunt

No matter in what region of a white wilderness.  
Snow in the yard, Lake Superior in the background:  
such a complexion really, or always mapping out territory  
because of blind ambition or affectation.

### II

Closer to green grass, a ball ricochets in the sun;  
an old man—a grandfather whom I hardly knew:  
who scolded from afar, a stroke doing him in finally—  
the tropics' own, like a dream in swirling heat.

At last outmanoeuvring the self at every angle,  
I am at a standstill; the lake almost glass,  
with memory like foam rising higher,  
ochreous sandy beach with taller palm trees  
outdoing other miracles in the forgetful sun.

Questioning motives is all I ask, the temperate impulse  
to flaunt with banana leaves once in a while,  
or a tenement on a side street becoming bedraggled:  
the story of one's life so far, singing in the mud.