

vacation

*the sidewalks crack a chalky excrescence
and the city sun beats
us into submission and retreat
this year as every other
we are like lemmings
hastening to our destruction
in the country*

*we leave at dawn
the honda clotted with bags and bodies
morning already calcified with heat*

*by the time we arrive
one child is sick
the other has leaked
and the two gerbils
closeted under their feet
at the bottom of the car
are psychotic*

*the boys dive into the lake
enquiring whether the cage will float
while I inspect the shack*

*on these occasions there is always suspense:
will the toilet flush?
the tap run?
the stove burn?
will we burn? (one
of the cabins caught fire last year
and the spectacle of
the local brigade
searching for somewhere
to plug in their hoses
was the best entertainment
we had the whole month)*

*— why —
I ask my husband later
— do we have to leave a perfectly good house
in Toronto each August
and come here to live in a slum?*

*he makes no reply
just sits in our one room
reading his paper
bugs biting his back
he knows there is a significance to this ritual
and is doing his damndest to find it*

— Lynne Kositsky