

Gratitude

(For Kay Grouhel, Ladysmith Mayor 1964-1975)

A landscape of sailboats and kayaks,
ice cream cones dripping
onto a child or grandmother's hand.

Seals and otters glide
through the harbour's blue welcome,
and stones skip from here to there
like dreams.

And listen: that is the symphony
of spray park splashes
and playground laughter. Gull cries.

Intergenerational picnics
on beach blankets. Live music
at the amphitheatre, where someone is always
compelled to be the first to dance.

I revere the beach in all of its hours.
Coffee in hand, I witness dawn light
creep over the coastal mountains
to burnish the spirit-lifting beach
and thriving, historical town.

2\LeedahI (stanza break)

In the afternoon heat, hands stained with blackberries,
I disappear beneath the clean, cool ocean.

And at twilight, serenity finds me
on the soft green bank—heart light as a bird's
above the blossoms that spell Ladysmith.

Thanks to you, Kay, Transfer Beach Park
is an oasis for everyone.

-Shelley A. LeedahI