Kitsilano
By G. Maria Hindmarch

For Judy Williams Fraser

1963-69 I lived on
the corner of Yew & York
on the 2nd floor
above a corner store
with my sister Leni & soon her boyfriend-husband Neap Hoover
her friend Jo-Ann Huffman & her boyfriend Mike Sawyer
then Else Young (just left Robert who was with Maxine) now Xixa Huang
but Jack Wise moved in with her first
then my sister Mary
and my boyfriend soon to be (later to unbe) husband Cliff Andstein
below us
bill bissett & martina & oolya then painter-jogger Gordon Payne
& Merrilyn (who becomes my friend later) then bill again then Gordon again
next to us
Bing Thom, Jay Bancroft & often Marian Penner, Rick Clarke
across the landing John and Susan Newlove & children sired by gerry gilbert
later the Ridgeways
and next to them directly opposite us many of those years
Gerry Geisler (New Design Gallery)
and Helen Sturdy & children

our kitchen faced theirs
apple pies in my oven & stew or toast in theirs
we cd smell everything like the afternoon Cliff and I fell asleep as Joan's pork hocks
(cleaning them for an art project)
simmered in my big red pot
charred and burned almost caught on fire
would have if Gerry hadn't barged in to wake Cliff and I up
and that building a total tinderbox
always worried bill wd start one

my bedroom / study faced
the Molson's sign and Burrard Street Bridge
and I watched the west end and highrises and planetarium grow
and white sheets on a clothesline across Yew Street dry
as I'd sit at my bay window
and write and mark
on a smooth board cut to fit exactly the sill

I'd glance up and see
people like Judy & Bobo and Jamie & Carol & Joan & Marcia & the Trumans
and the Gadds and the Lathams
walking up or down Yew Street or Lanny in his car
open the window & shout
drop by on your way back
dropping by
everybody did it
days filled with coffee, tea, poetry, cigarette smoke
crises, trips, talkedy talk talk
painting hard edged strong coloured
also intricate silver point mandalas
and collages

a gallon of Calona Red
one summery October night
became a party
of 100 or even more
dancing in my bedroom to music on a tape recorder
dancing in the other bedroom to a transistor radio
two bongo drummers in the kitchen
talking in the room with the blue-tile fireplace
so many bodies—students from art and architecture and law schools and poets I
couldnt hear the music just the drums
from inside the hallway
just saw the taller heads
moving together to different beats
in almost darkness

wild like that crazy night at the Wahs' place
if that wasnt a party
everybody landing on that bed
everybody kissing everybody
Creeley and I had to go outside to pee because line up for the bathroom was so long we
were about to burst so we pushed our way through people down the long staircase and
peed in grass at the back of the RCMP building

something to do with that small space
that it was so tight that everybody had to rub every
body simply to go anywhere
gorgeous

after the Vancouver Poetry Conference (1963)
Roy Kiyooka started
dropping by on his way home from his studio in under the Granville Street Bridge
there'd always be a light on
somewhere in our building
and he could visit any of us
separately or clustered

one time
he told me he had a painting he wanted to give me
but it was big and heavy
he borrowed a truck and someone probably Dallas Selman helped him
up the dusty always dirty long stairs
with Hoarfrost
which we hung on a wall in a room just big enough to hold
my round oak table
(used to be Bowerings' they bought a whole household of furniture for $80 and
when they moved they gave it to Joan and then when she moved she left it with me)
a wall that later Else and I tore apart with a screwdriver and hammer
shouting angry hexes at Robert all the way

after and during that conference--
Olson, Creeley, Duncan, Levertov, Avison, Whalen, Ginsberg--
Roy and I became friends
and there were readings in my room
every second Sunday
red cast iron pot full of bean soup, corn chowder, spicey meatball vegetable stew
simmering and then cheese scones in the oven
people would come and read their new work one week
and the next week there'd be a Tish meeting
with Daphne Marlatt, Dan MacLeod, Pete Auxier, David Cull & David Dawson

rent $60 a month didnt change
and some years it was cold
the wind so cold on side facing the beach
that Hydro was $60 per month
and that wall behind my pillows had a thin layer of ice

the police were something else
they felt they had a right to question anybody so
Cliff would in the laundromat on 4th and they'd question him or just up on 4th to go
to Jackson’s to get some hamburger and be walking back with an
economics book in one hand and meat wrapped in brown paper in the other
and they'd stop him and ask him what he was doing and our friend Ray Wargo
would get stopped almost every second time he'd drop in to visit
where are you going—why---how long will you be

someone was always getting busted
someone was always tripping out
someone was always visiting from or going to Europe or Japan or Tibet

here is a journal entry on June 9, 1968
evening of the first ever national leaders debate on TV
“I am looking forward to seeing Trudeau—hope he gets pushed into/onto
answering more directly than he has in the past. I, like many others including
every gay man I know, do have a crush on him: he has much more style than
any Canadian politician so far. I mean style in the true sense of the word, it is
him, not affected… Cliff, of course, doesn't trust him at all and thinks he's a sell-
on. I don’t go that far, yet. But I do think that compromising is the only way a
politician can work this country and I do not like all the PR, razzmatazz,
fundraising, and allegiances that go into just getting elected: our system seems
to be based on gullibility…”

coming home at night up Yew Street
whether from downtown or Kits Beach or Paul the butcher’s or Elsie the baker’s
I loved looking up at my North-facing windows
goldy gold mesh curtains
light filtering through
so warm and so inviting