

LEN GASPARINI
IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

*Yet, patience—there shall come
Many great voices from life's outer sea,
Hours of strange triumph, and, when few men heed,
Murmurs and glimpses of eternity.*

I must borrow from Archibald Lampman
to praise this midsummer afternoon
in a country churchyard on Highway 3,
several farmhouses east of Morpeth, Ontario.

I know by heart the words on Lampman's cairn—
some fragment of a sonnet, its mood
and outlook so undaunted, so sublime,
so philosophically at odds with mine ...

I saunter past the steepled, redbrick
Anglican church (erected 1845)
and sit among weathered gravestones
in the spruce-scented shade, half in love

with death, yet loath to despair,
scornful of hope and its sanguine *sursum corda*,
per aspera ad astra chorus, knowing
(as I listen to a sparrow singing,

lie on the grass and look at white clouds,
have an erotic daydream, consider my resources ...)
life is either a deadly and unknown law,
or a business which doesn't cover expenses.

Ah, welladay! Yonder south Lake Erie
flashes. A fly buzzes about my head.
The churchyard breathes the scent of evergreens,
and the late afternoon light is golden.

At 37, Archibald Lampman died—
perhaps knowing he was most alive
buried deepest in the work he loved,
perhaps knowing he had glimpsed eternity.

