

# **AFTER PHYLLIS WEBB'S POETICS AGAINST THE ANGEL OF DEATH**

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*I am sorry to speak of death again  
(some say I'll have a long life)  
but last night Wordsworth's "Prelude"  
suddenly made sense—I mean the measure,  
the elevated tone, the attitude [...]*

*Last night I thought I would not wake again*

Dumb iamb—  
I don't understand you, and feel so facile  
in my thumb-stump stupor of plea:  
your nobility is permission  
to mourn, though I find myself  
*sorry to speak of death again*

Webb & my mother share a Christian name  
but Winnipeg took its toll on the latter;  
I reread the emails about my grandmother  
in the hospital, where kimo was chemo  
and looked at my palms for clues  
*(some say I'll have a long life)*

When my dad took us for bike rides  
along the Ottawa River, I cried because  
I didn't want to be seen in a helmet—  
When the paths flooded every Spring  
I felt mystic  
*but last night Wordsworth's "Prelude"  
suddenly made sense*

Why do I invoke anyone—  
We think we are graceless, free immigrants  
no relics to bear but memories  
of Christmas dinner, and

I know I am not formless:

*Last night I thought I would not wake again*