Notes from the cover a commencé comme une liste de mots, sans émotion, sans commentaire rédactionnel. Cette liste a été difficile à mettre sur papier, mais à la fin, chaque mot a pris place de lui-même, faisant naître des groupes de mots et, finalement, la structure même du poème. Notes from the cover évoque la notion de reconstruction, d’un mot l’autre, quelles que soient les cassures. Le poème évoque la plongée au fond d’un océan de vie et le geste qui consiste à s’accrocher à une branche ou à une brindille.

the woman who wanted to write this poem declined.
finding none who shared her language.
i am speaking for her.
she had no idea her seven-year-old heart would sit in a car
under newfoundland trees
while an old man had his way with her
sunday after bloody sunday
and she’d search forever for safety,
(one reason she’s not here now)

had no idea her heart would know experiences
“growing up”
so unspeakable they remain unwritten.

would be beaten by nuns wearing jesus
and sung to by others.

would stand in a hallway
trying to calm
the rapist with a knife to her head
talking
as if her life depended on it
then fall to the floor
wordless.

would stand on flatbed trucks screaming
sixties poems about napalm
and burning flesh through manhattan microphones
and years later find herself unable
to whisper the unbearable
pain in her heart.
would so often have nearby
a book and a cup of tea,
could be in any country in any century,
only the radio gave her away.

would light so many candles

know the names of so many saints
(and their addresses)
would walk through the heroin darkness
of a lover's apartment,
slap him to consciousness,
convince him to walk with her again.
she did this often
(who was convincing who, she wonders now?)
(who in god's name?)

would move her family so many times
trying to save what was already lost.

would
walk silently
on early vancouver mornings,
pick bottles from sidewalks,
go to the unquestioning chinese grocer,
exchange everything for eggs and bread,
(food for a child)
she did this while the father/husband
slept beneath detachment's blankets.

had no idea her heart could hold so many
memories.

would one day tell this father/husband
she was leaving
now and walked to the blue station wagon
under trees
with a child on one arm and rage
swept from the coals of her heart on the other.
(abuse of other human beings
is against the law)
(it took this woman an eternity
to believe she was sleeping
with a criminal)
would go running through aids wards
howling for blankets for friends dying cold.
could not keep tears from her face
as these friends turned
to skeletons, time running out,
a rolex ticking on bone,

remembered the one left dead in mexico’s desert,
a lover panicked, searching for cures, afraid now
with a dead body in the car
(how exactly do you explain all this to customs)

had no idea her heart would travel
trying to find itself again,

had no idea it would feel so invisible
could feel so afraid.

would fall in love with so many women,
so many brave healers,
and some of them with her.

would write so many poems about death
read so many
and write so many obituaries.

would take so many risks to save herself.

would one day in thin clothing
stand on her front steps
not caring what the neighbors thought,
yell with a voice pulled from the throat
of a god
“tell the truth you bastard,
tell the truth you bastard.”

the woman who wanted to write this poem
declined.
i saw only the cover of her notebook.
(what things are written inside)
her heart allowed me to see no more.

her heart wrapped in feathers
and lace,
guarded fiercely by angels.