

Dear California,

I Write to You From an Island in the Niagara River

It's the light in the sky that reminds me of you,

the summer blue flowing by. But the clouds remind me

more of Paris, the calmness of them as though

inside a painting. Goldfinches on the feeders

no longer flee from me, cardinals tell me

where I live. California, am I in denial?

Will I miss you when the snow falls and falls

on this quiet island world? If I returned to you

would I miss the train whistle across the river,

the 10 p.m. fireworks from the Falls,

the Niagara that is San Francisco Bay green one day,

Monterey blue the next, the rush of ice in spring

crashing gorgeously into the gorge, bumping along its path

until it melts back to its source?

The answer Hastings gives is *yes*. Though she gets homesick for California on occasion, especially her long term friends, she realizes she just might miss this region more were she to leave. As she says in another poem,

I am home with a new language

of waterfalls and bird whistles,

*graupel* and *gorge*,

*ice boom*

the language of this water that calls for us

to leap in summer

to go with the flow

Katherine Hastings