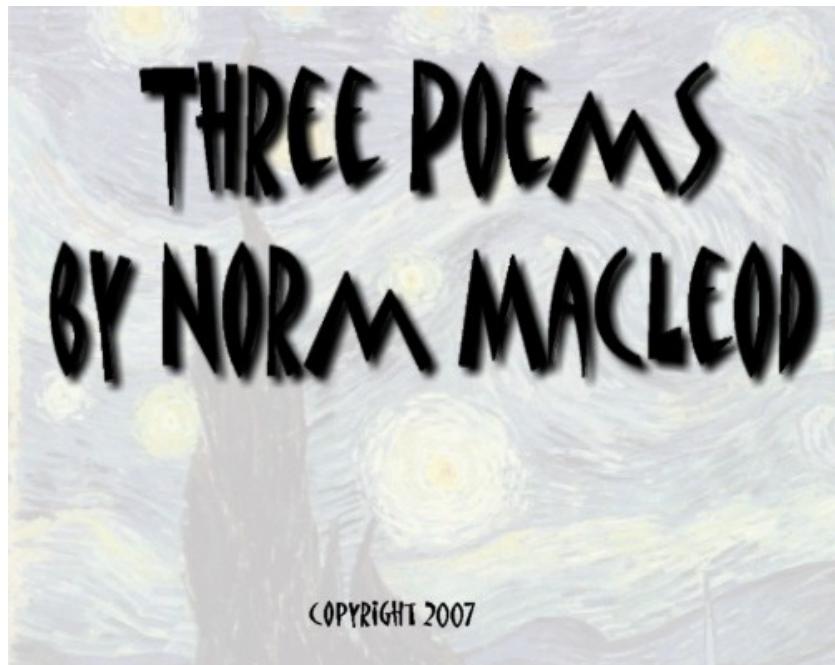


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### **Intersecting lives**

The moment has them  
at their various junctures  
under the discipline of the traffic light.

Three teenagers barricaded  
in a bouncing red Civic  
bristling with sound.

Directly across  
an urgent, up-thrust pickup  
inchng impatiently forward

Quickening a mother at the crosswalk  
alternately holding and hustling  
two anxious children

Apprehensive of a semi,  
a road-width apart, looming large.  
Time the oppressor.

And shuffling along  
with his possessions piled  
in a squealing cart

A scruffy man,  
unprotesting,  
with no place to go.

### **Harbor seal**

Grunting imperatives  
like a gluttonous Roman  
emerging from his bath,  
a seal hauls his rippling length  
from the ocean,

where he has been gorging,  
up on to the largest  
of a group of rocks.  
arranged like sofas.

Lounging indolently,  
he contemplates the squabble,  
as companion bulls and cows  
appropriate nearby rocks,  
growls contentedly,  
shifts his fleshy length,  
snorts, barks softly,  
and finally -  
sleeps.

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### Ode to a television set

Dormant  
vaguely threatening  
one eye  
mirror to  
dark shapes  
moving in  
a dim room.  
Gray lives  
circumscribed.  
Contained.

Until awakened  
to become  
mother bird,  
silently sipping  
at the cable outlet,  
dipping with  
long coiled straw  
into a brew  
concocted  
of brighter lives.

And hungry  
we gather  
in our living rooms  
anxious to feed  
on the thin

insubstantial fare  
regurgitated  
to feed  
our whetted

appetites.

Lacking  
true nourishment  
we are stunted  
limited  
in our understanding  
of the richer reality  
unable to grow  
unable in a real way  
to take wing.

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**Norm MacLeod**, with an English degree from the University of Alberta, has published in the *Amethyst Review* and *Southern Ocean Review*. In recent years he has published in local venues, “unfamiliar to someone from outside the area.”