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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
inching 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.

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."