

About the Author

David Martin works as a literacy instructor in Calgary and as an organizer for the Single Onion Poetry Series. His first collection, *Tar Swan* (NeWest Press, 2018), was a finalist for the Raymond Souster Award and the City of Calgary W. O. Mitchell Book Prize. David's work has been awarded the CBC Poetry Prize, shortlisted for the Vallum Award for Poetry and *PRISM international's* poetry contest, and has appeared in numerous journals across Canada. His next collection, *Kink Bands*, will be published by NeWest Press in 2023.

GULL LAKE

DAVID MARTIN

when i see my grandfather
it's dust-light

pool hall

he's behind the eight
drenched in jukebox
repeats

baize's grain
threshed as thin as
the chalk

scraped bare
which he clicks on the table's
gunwales

angles and spheres
aren't his strong suit



but he enjoys the sounds
as if in a stable
clacks like hooves
low chat

~

but too quiet
at poker,
men lying in silence
his day's wage
eroding
the river turning against him

~

on the rare occasion he has one
then two then two too
many
his cap tips
back
over his crow hair
and when he finally
shows
for their
date
my grandmother
knows straight away
and shuts the door

CALGARY RACING PIGEON CLUB

DAVID MARTIN

He says don't believe the theories they put out:
not sense of smell that guides them home to loft,
magnetic field that kites their beaks like soft
anchors, not maps inside their brains to shout
for left or right at landmarks as they scout.
Not infrasound: what we can't hear that wafts
through air to lure them, bleating from a croft,
back to blooms, hens, their coos moulting doubt.
But just as when a blade beside your neck
is one you trust, his homers have a spirit
that leads from chaos at such great remove
to find his hands, no matter spans they trek.
He used to puzzle at their power, now fears it,
for there are things he doesn't dare to prove.

