

Elegy for Richard B. Wright

Language has faults—if one is casual:
But that's not the fault of Language. Mr.
Wright knew so, and taught so. The Actual
Promotes aesthetic values that blister,

Demanding one recognize Good and Bad—
Even in Ontario the Good—God's
Country, where Stendhal's relevant as Sade,
That too-Gothic Shakespeare. What are the odds

That Wright knew such Bibliomania,
And was no "unkard"—no ignoramus,
Unaware of mad Upper Canada,
Nor bibliopoles' louche, "Bestsellers" lists?

Truly, his Clara Callan makes one think—
Small-town Ontario versus New York—
The elegant architecture of ink—
Sacred cows slaughtered like blasphemous pork....

Morals produce stories, just as food is
"Belly-timber." What else? Richard B. Wright
Understood that every vineyard exists
In Niagara, due to Patiences. The plight

Of years of severe fever is that grapes
Overheat and fail, and if you tear em
Too late, they decompose. But what escapes
The provincial is God—and who may fear Him.

I want to imagine Richard B. Wright
As being a bit like Robertson Davies—
Liberated, an industrious sprite,
Who, like sunlight, will never know Caries.