

## Two Poems from College

Harry Strachan

In a college creative writing course needing to write something in my journal, I began experimenting. One of those earliest “No Parking Any Time” gave me enough pleasure to include in *Finding A Path*. Many though, particularly around ill-fated love, were so embarrassing that I stopped writing poetry for a long time.

### No Parking Any Time (1961)

In early spring I walked the damp warm road  
That rested weary rut-holes in the therapeutic sun,  
And saw green shoots of lily stalks lift up  
And shake their stubby heads in love of life  
    And read with wonder a metallic sign  
    That said, “No Parking Any Time.”

This dark warm bed was overlaid with brittle stalks  
Whose rusty blades lay still—a previous summer’s fallen giants  
Unmummied kings disintegrating midst decaying leaves  
Who never again would feel the surge of life  
    And yet in death obeyed the sign  
    That said, “No Parking Any Time.”

I couldn’t help but wonder what the new shoots thought  
When they viewed the wreckage of a winter they had never known,  
And saw ancestor’s fate. Did it mirror their own?  
Or did they only feel the tender sun and thrill of life  
    And maybe puzzle as they read the sign  
    That said, “No Parking Any Time.”

My guess—that knowing clearly of their end,  
They still believed God’s winter would be good,  
And until then would grow and bloom  
Thrust up at first by love of life  
    And then because in God’s design  
    There is No Parking Any Time.

**The Falling Snow**  
(December 1963)

The snow falls quietly on the mountain  
The never moving, rock-ribbed mountains.  
Mountains, who in silence watched a thousand forests come and go,  
Now watch without pity, without rage, a thousand generations.  
The snow falls on the mountain covering all.

"We wish you a Merry Christmas... "

A sleigh begins to climb the mountain.  
Bells ring and there is laughing.  
One girl cries, "Oh John you shouldn't."  
Another looks away to the mountain and sees a blur.  
The snow continues to fall covering all.

"We wish you a Merry Christmas..."

A car coming down the mountain road  
Begins to slide slowly to the left.  
Inside they see the guard rail, the steep drop and creek;  
Then a sharp crack and the slow arching of a car downward.  
The snow continues to fall covering all.

"We wish you a Merry Christmas..."

In the lodge a family sits around a fire.  
One child whines, "Mommy, Mary's got my toy."  
The mother shushes the child with her hand and continues,  
"George, you won't believe what she was wearing. Pink...."  
George leaves the lodge, walks quickly to a lighted cottage.  
The snow continues to fall covering all.

"And a Happy New Year!"

The snow falls quietly on the mountains.  
Mountains that unmoved watch the passing of man's day