



Gorden Schweers

**SUMMER RAIN -
ON HAIDA GWAI**

1.

As a young farmhand from a Norwegian fiord
Brenner tried out *Immigration*
to the logging camps on the Queen Charlottes,
drawn by the virgin
stands of spruce and cedar
(destined for rusty barges under the relentless
bite of mercantile steel) Yet his intentions
were soon distracted
by a more taciturn concern.

They called him *Old Viking Brenner*
watching him squander his life
building a rambling farm house
in the tradition of *byggeskikk*
with a fireplace of stone and private bed chamber
facing the wind flecked inlet and Moresby's bays and
islets.

During the winter's lowest tides
with a strong back and wheel barrow
he'd pour truckloads of beach scree
on to a pathway
from the township road to his veranda:
*This white shell will shine under the fecund light of a full
moon.*

Then as a man with any sense would do
the *Old Viking* stopped working and - waited.
Word was passing slowly
amongst the women to their daughters:
Under the diamonds of northern constellations,
Carol Anne loosened her waist length hair
before approaching the farmhouse and
an old man's hesitant proposal of wedlock:
L'amour hacer amour Librar

2.

A generation later this derelict
seaward facing house of ghosts
was forgotten - though yet a legacy
to honed yew and alder,
mortar and stone for the mantel,
and panes of paper thin glass reflecting squalls
and bays opaque with spawn.

3.

Hiking the rural highways
this is my hiatus of freedom
thumbing rides and visiting friends on Haida Gwaii.
After someone in the township replies

*You'll find the Walkers living
at the landing in Brenner's old place*
I trek out a few miles along the inlet highway
watching gyrosopic gulls spinning around a distant
updraft;
columns of light cart wheeling across a pelagic landscape:
*Why do we live in the midst of such beauty? Why do I
breathe but this once?*

Finally, there's a pathway leading
to an old house roofed in moss,
and I'm standing like a pilgrim
before a trunnel door.
Cisco's inside barking until
Evan answers smiling
all the nine months of her pregnancy.
Richard is working on the Skidegate dock
packing ice in to fish holds -
his lunch simmers on the wood stove.
Evan and I talk of having been friends before
and about this house, how it's still held together
by the old Norwegian's tenacity.
In the solace of the parlor, honeysuckle
has brailled an open casement. Evan says -
*We worked our butts off getting
this place cleaned up and painted...*

Over lunch Richard talks of moving
across from the mainland, ballads
on their guitars, their children,
the war in Asia and
his own work on the docks.
In a poignant exchange of silence
between husband & wife
I sense it's time to leave.
Summer rain has returned
when Richard and I part on the pathway
Goodbye! Good Luck!

4.

Early next morning before daybreak
Grace is born in good health
L'amour hacer amour Librar