

# Poems Read at the 2000 Ceremony

## Scholasticism in Iceland

by David Arnason

Seven angels are dancing  
on the head of a pin  
on my table in Hofsós, Iceland.

They are dancing a Gavotte.  
I think, though it's hard to tell  
with all the earthquakes.

And I cannot stare at them  
Because the heat of my gaze  
might set them on fire.

So I watch them aslant  
catching them dancing  
out of the corner of my eye.

Three pairs whirl,  
and one lone dancer  
rhumbas by himself.

There might be room for more,  
But then it would be a disco  
and they don't want that.

Over on Drangey,  
Grettir is preparing  
For a midnight swim.

The passionate bishop of Holar  
is awake half the night  
writing new psalms.

The east of the country  
is coming apart, stone by stone,  
rock by rock.

Sometimes Shania Twain  
dances with them  
because she is an angel too.

And lying awake  
in the cleft of the night,  
I am thinking of you.

## Canada

by Gísli Jónsson

read by Bill Hurst

O land of mine with open arms,  
With all thy plains and mountains high,  
To thy glory sang the sages  
Songs that never die.  
Is it strange that I, a minnow,  
In that minstrelsy,  
Am loath, yet long to be?

Fain would I in flaming verse  
Thy fame inscribe upon the earth;  
Still, forsooth, can offer only  
All my thanks are worth.  
But after almost half a hundred  
Happy years and free,  
My love belongs to thee.

In thy blessed bosom rest  
The bones of all our next of kin,  
Copious tears of grief and gladness  
Glow thy visage in:  
Mem'ries from the fount of life  
Thou fostered through the years  
---Sacred souvenirs.

Oh land of youth, accord and courage,  
Coursing o'er thy wide domains  
Is the balmy breeze of hope  
That brought us to the plains:  
And one can look so far afield  
And feel so unconfined,  
It opens up the mind.