

**Dawson City, July**  
**By Alison Atkinson**

Walking home late some dark Vancouver night  
a stick snaps beneath my feet and I'm back  
to that summer, the one  
in Dawson City. You remember. The river  
ferry, the kids who lived out on the barges,  
and us, in out blue tent under the yellow sun.

Those twilight nights the bar would end and we'd spill out  
like the overflowing river, an over-poured pint of beer,  
onto wooden boardwalks and dirt roads,  
into unlocked trucks or up to some kid's house,  
too late to go out and too light to go to bed. Up in Dawson  
night was never axiomatic;

We'd walk home late as this, or late  
– take the gold rush path  
to where the Yukon and Klondike rivers  
connect – and what I'm thinking about now  
is how soft the night seemed, how the darkness  
was like a first draft, luminescent and ragged.

By the time we were alone together  
it was dark as it would become, and I remembered  
midnight, when it was bright  
as we were young, and in love  
with the North and way we lived –  
on the verge or the wild, the edge of wonder.