

"March of 1981 found me on sabbatical on the other side of the world, where the sun was. As I left for Canada, a newspaper report of world weather caught my eye and prompted the following fantasy as I soared homeward over the Pacific. (Senate in my time met on the 8th floor of Leacock, with a great view over the city if only one was allowed to look at it.)" (*Over the Hill: Disasters of a Poetaster or The Senator's Revenge*, p. 38)

Lines Written in a Sunnier Place

(*Sydney Morning Herald*, 17th March 1981.
"Montreal: -13, -3; snow")

*A long way away, on the slopes of a hill,
and thoroughly buried in snow,
Lies a deep university known as McGill
Where I really would rather not go.*

*High over the rooftops, from stadium to hall,
A shining white radiance lies spread:
A subject for once (it's admitted by all)
That is well over everyone's head.*

*Above rue McTavish it brims without flaw.
Far below, like a termite or grub,
Some bright young professor from English or Law
Goes boring his way to the Club.*

*In bursts episodic, though smothered, near Roddick,
Crawl the usual protesters and pickets.
Near the French Language Centre some little green mentor's
Still breathlessly giving out tickets.*

*But elsewhere in all of that great talking ship
Is a stillness, the stillness of death:
The flow of true wisdom congealed to a stop;
The lecturers all out of breath;*

*All meetings long muffled; all reason long frozen;
All arguments over, save one.
The Senate's still voting defeat of a motion –
The top floor of Leacock's in sun.*

John K. Harley