



# Going Home

*Ken Norris*

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## **Going Home** Ken Norris

If, as Robert Creeley said, “form is never more than an extension of content,” what happens when we lose form? Does content retreat into its ruins, its absences? Can we never go home because it retreats from us as relentlessly and unfathomably as our future? Is the imagination of “our” future as illusory and unreliable as the memory of “our” past? If, for the young man, “going home is the first defeat,” the first violation of a burgeoning autonomy, is the very imagination of “home” an abrogation, a transgression? These are the questions that the deceptively simple lyrics of this book ask, that we encounter as we navigate our way, “room to room” through their stanzas—from the poet’s New York childhood, his Montreal mentorship with Louis Dudek, to his volitional adoptive “home” of Asia. The world changes in *Going Home*—9/11 happens. In that singular, extended historic moment all of our working models of representation on our North American Island turn to paper and dust, and now we know history always had other plans for us. The whole manufactured unreality of our world falls away in these poems, leads us both toward and away from being “at home” in the moment. “We’re all here and not here,” the poet reminds us: an index of time and the true nature of existence—a present impermanence.

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