

LEO KENNEDY

## EXILE

Leo Kennedy (1907-2000) was born in Liverpool, England, and moved to Montreal, Quebec, in 1912. He attended the Montreal campus of Laval University (now the University of Montreal), where he joined a group of intellectuals known as the “Montreal Group.” He also co-founded the magazine *Canadian Mercury*, where he published his manifesto “The Future of Canadian Literature” (1929), which encouraged writers to follow the examples of James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, and Ezra Pound. The magazine ceased publication after the stock market crash of 1929, but Kennedy continued to publish poems throughout the Depression. The following poem was published in the January 1932 issue and included in the collection *The Shrouding* (1933) under the title “The Haunted.”

If I speak charily of wheeling gulls,  
And coast winds blowing freshly at low tide,  
It is because a sea-bred fit annuls  
My sober preference for this safe hearthside;  
And if with glib lip service I abjure  
The bobbing hulls of dories in the cove,  
It is because my peace is insecure,  
Assailed by everything I truly love.

I am reminded how the rain's tooth gnaws  
Through oaken planks of hulks along the beach;  
I am waylaid at every turn and pause  
By mutterings of water out of reach;  
And taste, as ghostly mew's wing strongly south,  
Salt in the heart, and sand against the mouth!