

ALISTAIR MACLEOD

JUST PASSING THROUGH

Alistair MacLeod (1936-2014) was born in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and grew up in Dunvegan, Nova Scotia. After graduating from high school in 1954, he earned a teaching certificate from Nova Scotia Teachers College and taught for a year on Port Hood Island, near Cape Breton. He then earned a bachelor's degree from St. Francis Xavier University in 1960 and a master's degree from the University of New Brunswick in 1961. He taught English at Nova Scotia Teachers College for two years before earning a doctorate from the University of Notre Dame in 1968. He taught English at Indiana University from 1966 to 1969 and then returned to Canada as a professor of English and creative writing at the University of Windsor, where he remained for the rest of his career. While he was primarily known as a fiction writer, he also wrote numerous poems, such as the following, which was published in the spring 1971 issue.

Sitting here across our drinks
For the first time in the eight
Years since "it ended," I find
My voice once more rising
And my wild hands waving as before
Turned on by you and *David Copperfield* together.

And suddenly I *really* look
Full in your face (which I have
Somehow dared not do for this past hour):
The salt-wet tears are streaming
Quietly down your cheeks to lose themselves
Within your dress of coolest blue.

Once more my sea-cliff coldness knows
The oceaned washing waters of your love;
The moon-maid sea against the rock-hard wall.
Water on rock, if constant, may make
Granite into sand. But rough, rock cliffs
Are constant too. They are not one-night stands.