

DANIEL ROWE

WANDA

1. Wanda sat plump and grey
on the yellow-green couch,
slothful; furniture blessed
with disappointment and
dread. Outside was weary
grey. Hochelaga. She
sat waiting, patience boiled
in poverty like cheap
cabbage, for the postman.
It was Wednesday, the
day that felt like a fix,
on Wednesdays was when she
was rewarded.

2. A Zenith, well beyond
its name's promise flickered
fake stories removed from
Wanda. They walked slowly
and purposefully, staged,
towards each other in
confidence, and Wanda
sat and proceeded no
more. Hochelaga went
nowhere; to nor fro. The
Iroquois had left well
before Wanda. A poor
man's beaver dam.

3. Cars rebounded angry
off potholes outside on
the road, drivers cursed their
luck. She wished they were black
holes. Let someone else feel
pain! Let the holes swallow
them! The golden calf, and
Reuben's Korach incite
rebellion against
Moses. Consequences
follow our decisions,
a poor woman waits
for the postman.

4. Wanda touched her head. Her
piano-wire dull grey
black hair, long lost style, felt
stale, dreadful under her
dry sepia-stained hands,
baron of pride, callused,
rinsed, unclean, and she hummed,
finger combed gracefully
without serenity,
an old game show theme song
she had watched before her
husband left or died or
both; she forgot.

5. A cat that could have been
happy, but felt dead, pawed
at a bowl crusted with
unclean food. Not really
hungry. Bored. Poverty
is boring. A view of
her young soul's reflection
mockingly beamed through a
window unable to
keep heat and life in. An

unstable tower of
bottles cluttered a stoop.
A refund wage.

6. She sat on her sofa
and waited for the post.
Wanda, a woman born
of woman, worthy of
wisdom and wealth, passed by,
passed on, and worn to the
womb. Wishing now that she
were wiser or the world
understood why she chose
certain trajectories.
Choices were made, paths turned
in the sand, a turtle crossed behind.
She missed a turn.

7. And her sofa remained
stationary to catch
her. To hold her without
judgment, for she wanted
this most days. On others
she craved escape from her
Hochelaga. She wanted
anything but this. This
cycle that in any
language said I'm poor and
I am irrelevant.
Wanda waited for the
postman to come.