Slim, slight. Sinew and bird bones.
Cords of her hands like spruce roots.
Came from Ship Cove to Crow Gulch
with little more than the child inside her,
landed in a small shack flanked by
an outhouse, train tracks. Made it work,
had to. No surviving a place like this
without some acceptance, some yield
to the blunt force of what must be done.
Lived for a dance on the weekend, game
of Bingo during the week. Draped in her
favourite sweater, blue-green swirls on black,
three times her size. Costume pearls, earrings
to match. Heading to the Palace, all tobacco
smoke and last week’s gossip. Nights she won,
she dropped by the Padarnac Lounge to chat
with her brothers, a quick rum ’n’ coke —
warms the blood for the walk home.
Get her in the woods, she was all business.
Frantic flick of the rod whipping the hackle off
the fly long before trout ever could. Peals
of laughter against the far shore. No smooth arcs
or figure-eight false casts, just enough line
in the water to get wet. A woman most at home
without ceilings, without walls.