

TECUMSEH — THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CAPTURE OF DETROIT
By Marty Gervais, *Windsor's Poet Laureate*

What could he have known
the night before
when he slipped outside
beyond the camp and down the
river's edge

deerskin coat and fringed pantaloons
and walking where fate would take him
past sleeping soldiers and
wakeful sentries

What could he have known
amidst fires burning
by the open water
or pacing the river's bank
to study the rigid stroke
of shoreline darkness

or seeing the British general
scratching out the terms of surrender
in the lighted house upon the hill
the night before

What could he have known
of the morning ahead
rousing from troubled sleep
to voices of cannons
in the stilled air of an August dawn

What could he have known
of a river's mist swallowing them
in such eerie silence
and the blood of his blood
thundering into a battlefield
less than a mile away

What could he have known