

Under the moonlight
-The softness that night gives us
 the earth rises to meet
 in snow – or the glow of trilliums,
where there is enough sound in a breath

in here
I speak

gently step
 and story weave
sending out a thread of me

like a foot's condensation
drying on a summer floor

hoping the memory of me
 survives
 in the eyes of others

I'll speak

Of blood

and wounds

and beauty in terrible things

the way the wind pulls a thousand leaves
 down an empty street

and when they settle -
 we look up

EMERGENCY

In the centre
of a small depression

two paths cross
In darkness, straining

to illuminate the walkway
an odd blue light
The stuff of ghosts

Its silence a reminder of times past
When violence lurked in the darkness behind buildings
Underneath canopied walkways
You weren't supposed to breach
At night

when terror was assumed
people thought choice meant safety
and Canada wasn't responsible
for its victims

The blue light at the corner of two paths
offers safety police badges, smiling men I feel like this is more menacing with the
trimmed language

I walk now, knowing
at one time I would not belong

the blue light assures me
A few metres from where white boys played football
And engaged in hazing, t

blue light
assuring we all now belong
A few steps beyond a plaque
Among fourteen trees – each for a woman memorialized

The body is a collection
of continuously dying cells

destroying

to repair

memory held
not through physical means
but electrical impulses,

moving beyond
flesh,
like the force of dying
suns crushed
a black hole's only trace being the ghost it sends out
perpendicular to the stars it killed,

If the body is a collection
of continuously dying cells

then I am memory
each destruction of me refolded into me

more than scars bursting
pain and harm

memory passed to new, stronger cells
A reprint –
each armed with knowing,
and stronger than the last.

... if the body is a collection
of continuously dying cells

then are we not the same -
our deaths serve to make the whole stronger?

Is our blood not a constant flow of memories,
shaped-

to make us survive what our parents could not?

Night clawed at the streetlamps pushing back
at the light, suspicious,

away from houses, cars, roads, clock radios
and televisions- the manufactured
comforts of the world we were adopted into.

We darted between circles
of light on the pavement
while breathing houses
amplified our voices. We watched

how the light clung to our shadows on the grass,
admiring the halos around our heads;

pretending

to be angels
watching

without fear

while the
world slept

There's nothing like a little fog
to soften things a bit
at 1:15 am

turning dark angled spaces
into rounded echoes.

Our shadows growing

taking our laughter with them-

till neither could be pinpointed.

If I was just a shoulder, could I touch you with the rounded part?

Could I slide my entire being down your back and ask you to notice?

Or turn myself around and float away
so that even this small part of me is unknown to you?

Should I wait until you touch me?

Will small bumps mar my skin?

Will shivers outline the small of my back?

Will tremors sculpt the length of my thighs?

Will the air sear my inner places,
as my chest fills with remembering

-- the body I once had?

Mrs. Miller told us that water expands when it freezes,
stretches out in all directions,

filling the space around it,
sometimes breaking the container it's in.

Later, I learned that water could trap and bend light
the same way we turn feelings into memory

I sat at the desk, head down
squeezing my eyes,

trying to blot out all the distractions of that house
to get to memories of you;

holding snapshots of bad memories
that may one day thaw –

or in my freezing of them,
I'd hoped they would crack and explode

shatter the house
in which they formed.

EMERGENCY

These must be the thoughts that led me

To wake beside a blue lamp
In the middle of a university campus

Some thought of safety
That pulled me here

Some promise of protection from
The memory of all this

Something in the offer of protection
from white men

...

made by other white men

no –

I won't find safety here,

Any more than my ancestors found safety
in hospitals.

It is in a boardroom,
That I witness the latest killing

A room filled with knowledgeable
White people

trying to understand

what we offer
shaking their heads,
not grasping
the method, our language
asking – would that be recognized by others?

(academics, I presume)

not seeing the power their world had
over the space

it was in this place that I saw the latest casualty

it was in the silence of the only Indigenous woman in the room
and the anxiety that I could recognize

beaten out of us
by the assertion that we were free to speak
(but not able)

and the ignorance that laid itself that day
in the room, on the table, and covered the room in shame

a shame that white people create
but can't see

I witnessed a murder here this day
When a woman's voice was silenced

With a silent hand that we all recognize,
Whether it was in a board room
A jail cell,
a distant farm,
a space between trees and approaching headlights
or in the face of an officer, standing tall, holding someone's jacket and shoes
something they may never see
and it scares me.

Bones

tricked
we forget
our place

Through loss and terror
we've stretched the fabric of now

to resemble
the fabric of forever

We've dug up the earth and brought her to stand

and cast shadows over everything – growing taller
building in ever smaller spaces,

We've preserved
everything meant to rot and fade
in boxes, behind glass,

TRICKED

We are the mud of a dying swamp
begging to move

attempting to turn over the earth
pulling our muscles and straining
our faces
building the cartilage and fluid
between our harder parts
straining for our own sense of forever

moving in a world
quickly drying
around us;

A world whose lack of elasticity
Is contagious

So we create
on the faces of drying stone
on the dried pulp of our brothers
in the publishing circles of a world
designed to hold us in snapshot
where our histories, our words, our impact
on others
was meant to vanish

but they forget
that we are bones -
resurrected from the bones of others.

Ikonwiwak Kaakiipiniikaaniwaac

Turned to stone,
freed as clay and mud,
supple enough to hold space for other life
replaced by more life
proud enough to hold space
for more bones
those of our descendants

To the world that we've grown to live in – I say
remember us well.

remember our resilience

the next time you hear

A crack form
in the foundations
of your cement shadows.