

MARIE ANNHARTE BAKER / Poems

as if one bear

tempted to make a small stuffed black bear replica
 gaudy girdle of feathers
 around waist every colour
 use a button for the eye
except modest embellishment of a thin curved red
arrow spirit line through his torso more humble a project
saw such a brooch at an art gallery store summers back
too expensive to buy too much coin for a senior to spare

a party invitation would stimulate creating the bear fetish
 with a wild polka dot dress up suit
 not only would I trash my heritage
 give approval
 adorn protection
 display consumer spirituality

with protective talisman I better ward off trauma

suspend decisions

 bare breast my feelings
 or sport this trendy trophy

debate outcomes

 favorable for instant group therapy

free interpretations of my medsin might cure onlookers
control intermittent unknown fears for the curious

engage beneficial conversation by stating I am quite proud
my inner terror yet fears about men caution me not to brag

as small occasion it is to exhibit celebrate realistic fears
disability might be a mixed blessing over and above survival
expressed gratitude must be the greatest condolence cure ever

entitled to the residual fears earned
privileged to retell abuse litany
forego advice: mustn't point finger or name predators

bear images are essential to inner call for familiar guardian
given courage never had when first threat showed ugly face

understand what I felt wasn't only one fear
therapists or counselors guide past insight
flash fear of violence also opposite such fear
gathering my own precious bundle of power
temporarily knock self out of a balance with surge
what used to be uneasiness around men likely momentary
adjustment between feeling confident and slipping back
chronic shyness
or stare down at toes blink mechanism
awkward unresolved rage toward all men because of past
trauma makes me hateful man hater I say I am not close
first memory of death in still sleepy eyes goes far back
mother is dragging me by the arm middle of the night
we run up to a policemen and she tells him about berserk
whiteman landlord chasing us with a butcher knife
three or four years old when brutal racial incident takes
away restful sleep options
layered memories accrue

how a simple bear fetish won't always remove the dread

need a stronger meds in to blur the fright of sober husband

at the time attempt to ram the hunting rifle under my chin
forced away was a murder
inside wreck fought to hold
back the barrel point it up
ceiling light over our heads

wasn't too damn exceptional
replay and replay and replay
thoughts of never retribution

foreground of monotonous activities
skeletal body weight of 116 pounds
losing steady interest in life death
endurance await the next beating
accept pain and suffering of others
more apologetic starving and helpless
woman will not let the murder plot
unfold even as aggressor bears down
she counters bears up bears with
knock out champion four bears blow

as if one bear when bear clan intervenes

first time I never lied

if it was medication talking
dare I often express viewpoint
deflect hand pinched throat
inhabit controversial space
I argue against immediate death
may take up impossible position
anti – depress tongue in chat

stop passive insane response
panic cry eyes out feel sorry
crush pathetic self debates
useless points idle away hours

lie body down again somber
reality returns get back edge
very mellow patient parasite
pharmaceutical conspiracy may
reconfigure a world afloat
full flagrant of constant bitch
polar ice cap melted down
polar bears washed up ashore
unable to surf global survival

when I never lied rarely
trouble spoke as lesser mind
I chose diplomatic words
gibberish jargon idiom
parlance dialect drivell
faced up to all alone put up
glare shut up stare defiance
put people in tell off place
shot careful at knee caps
disturbed and/or upset others
I quit buggy busy bee buzz
nectar full smile then supposed
sting of unwanted critical ideas
perforce patter to prevent lunge
fisted flick toward my person
I numbed out objective stance
engaged in less intense harangue
assumed another dense dialectic style

Breed Apart

if bechance haggle over personal identity issue haunts
avoid taunts follow this homemade recipe to be hi bred

beat half breed self down to pulp & use necessary force
to mash identity until fluffy when if a slight peak forms
beat vigorously & use more Indian herbal ingredients
special dried wild stuff in cupboard for darker colour crust
add whiteman essence last for texture of this mad mix up
expose concoction to wind & sit long enough to get sun burn
eventual doneness test may well be stiff hard to the feel
so let's get real about who is real deal hard core indin

Indians and Half Breeds beat up each other with frequent accusation
suspect breed in the family tree especially the one hanging upside down
on a branch calling for help getting down just may cause too much
attention deserves a good smack but what if that type goes red road
devotee enters the sweat lodge special care taken not to trip over
pile up of non-native identity cluster of euro yearnings for acceptance
to avoid rejection must follow proper preparation advised by leader to max
“leave cultural baggage at door” or “prescription note from therapist”
along with offering to qualify for enhancement & no fail guarantee certificate

she ate lard & gophers diet for weeks to boost native awareness & potentially
heal the split within while reserve relatives had similar cuisine available except
the odd rabbit then seasonal obstacle to get born again on a trapline just vicarious
Indian Act of 1951 partitions family one cousin part Ukrainian has full status
mother & aunt are enfranchised with moniakwe label before Bill C-31 restores
rights for exiles to assume former existence as consenting Indian adults except
who wants to hear more “bs” which stands for “before status” revelations not
unlike self-identification but provable and demonstratable using this formula

Cloud sneaking up

he took off so early left postmortem message for me
birds banged into windows that time at that restaurant
how about that my writer friend for that memory
I almost finished breakfast with half belief
that I saw them deliver that goodbye from him
that guy who wrote long letters also travelled
read books on long bus rides to visit check us out

later on that night phone call tells me he is gone
car accident on rez road he went by that red road
no mention I ever make of his influence until now
he just did articulate such intellectual ndn presence
he was super serious example that guy but funny
that time his chair tipped over at that strip show
in Denver was it on purpose to make us laugh

that last time I saw him drink only that beer
that last supper I fried being ignorant I ate
tough steak alone because he had no teeth left
next he showed off his carved feast spoon
he in fact ate that food that was boiled down
mushy to be easy to chew in ceremonial way
he told old scary stories good that time he chose
made me respect what I didn't know about

watch out
watch out
bear walk

he warned about the whiteman trap
yet lifted his brandy snifter proud like

made it full again he'd continue on
dare me scare me with that storytalk
his name meant clouds sneaking up
storm coming his Indian name
that credential to flash catch attention

lightening words struck me good
didn't even know I was hit that hard
he was a hanging around cloud person
he'd sneak up tease us to be smart
kept us more humble when he wasn't
big talk generous about all the stories
that we lived so he told us not who to know
just who he was to know ojibway nation

he was that first writer moctalked us through
that life he would not live to share in books

(for Francis Kewaquedo, co-founding member,
Canadian Indian Youth Council)

Cum cum how cum dat cums around even from behind

cum-fla-wid-me the skies choose exotic booze cruise wid me
transparent sway see thru gown shadow derriere sidewise flooze
cum-fla-wid-me the skies disguise our lives up size down prize
don drive dat car under influence go home alone let chauffeur
in slink white limo drive girl fla cruise fla low fla away ride way
lose exotic bluez buzz pimp da hide pimp da pride height flight
just one commercial sets off fantasia an underclass entertainment
spree a black suited charlatan pours his alcohol beverage charm
invaded by his seductive chimerical stance transforms desire
croon da tune fla da moon might fla da lady buzzard queen tiara
fancy feathers envied by whirl chancy girl shakes fateful flamboyant
headdress her legacy of privileged plumes vary light stripe to dark
rainbows don't boast aloud or brag heart uppity mobility flair self

manny booz ho cannot help notice wants her vanity to fly up his ass
his airline motto message to spread pleasure cum-fla-wid-me crass
for tricks sake he has to expose his prideful bum propel brown cheeks
stage a fatal attraction she cums slow circle wing calculated to drop
gently beside how beautiful dead he looks delicious from behind
rump saddle cause for celebration hold up silver chalice to toast
initiation of corpse composure such reeky aroma from arsehole
makes her look up close take quick peck while her beak slides
smoothly around the stink even still he does not move but to
semi-relax sphincter extra calm porno pleasure he's bit aroused
she massages tiny little circles before her beak inserts full tilt
play and penetration so perverse shaman anus is clued so cued
sacred mischievous rite to suck absorb her entire delicate head
he must adjust her thrust inside surprise when bald birdy wiggles
free of snap shut buttock hold an all star wrestler never that bold
warn tease us to celebrate life responsible grasp the turntable arm
play record music humbly show off elegance with minimal risk

her crown is wrinkled anus like the one she flew in to inspect
without a cautious glance at expensive menu stranger friction is how
manny booz ho did not once let giggle escape extent invasion caused
her early onset of baldness for culture vultures he entraps infamous

Windigo Word Feast

what am I doing here as I look around I see I must be the fattest one in a
crowd of skinniest Windigos I ever saw gathered at this feast where I am
to watch them devour words made flesh not actual people every two years
they meet so why not four well it's government funded heritage so perhaps
they might have it every year but maybe they are on a strict diet and gather
only on occasion to gorge or go to binge heaven not too puritanical either I
notice as it is not a thanksgiving event because they start off their menu
agenda with appetizers best suited for dessert but it is to tempt everyone to
have sex even without a partner just to show mind over erotica yet the big
ogema windigo wiggles his butt and thrusts his hips out to demonstrate how
hot words sound then he keeps saying 'eat me' as if he is the tasty tidbit &
not the words he is consuming well I never thought about eating a windigo
as I worried that they were actual cannibals & this advertisement about a
word feast was to catch us off guard if we wandered too close as they dined
it is an upset to my stomach and belief system as I did not know they were
now taking words out of ndn heads easy like a Hollywood cannibal might
carve out a brain from an exposed cranium and offer pieces of it to a person
to sample own thoughts but without knowing where actual words originate
at snack time or during a flight because now the airlines offer so little food