

Three Poems

Paige Cardinal

earthworms

Seams like weaving worms
on a plain full of grass. Flat.
Wrote on the sky with my ball point pen
over scattered clouds
Trees suffered, blown down
a word tornado written on the ground

Sonic: leaves ruffling Green
Yellow
Red
An intersection
Woman
Indigenous
Middle class
Sad

No sound
A plain between the reservation and the city
The winter night sky resembles any populated space;
faint orange hues paint clouds that are barely lit from our moon
Energy fades. Bare.

Earthworms don't belong here; they were brought in by settlers
The land will never be the same as my ancestors'

topography

Mountain grey coloured dreams
of ravines and meadow trails.
Moss glaciation burns your treed silence
Wind voices—wild but smooth
Your soft edge cutting jagged blue nights
Your lying slopes, quick blurs of my dreams
Poem of life:

- word
- letter
- voice
- whisper
- secret
- cries

—a timberline

Cracks always utter sweet sky-like music.
Tree, slits her sides
Earth-covered semen sludge
Morning, anew.
North of the mountain
where the birds hang
my arms rise and fill the spaces out
Wherever you are, Earth's enough.
Tonight—the moon is gold. Ice shines.
A cold white space, a black void hole—fucking.
Snow leaves the roots worn
So the eyes move time, bend creeks, scan lake weed and beach sand
Even as the boundaries creek
the map makes the mountain spring up
My skull blazing green of scree and trees
Your peaks flower
Kootenay waters flow and rise.
Beat, my heart, quivering at the tree's roots.
Flowing cloud by the river
Valleys screwing mountains

I stand in gravel ways, turn and twist the nerves
Gentle
Sinking my body warm in sunlight
Bite the burning roots
Take the skins of the mountain's earth along the gravel road
Quiet burning evening. Still.
Birds' wings fluttering
Set roots in my legs.

Erasure of "Mountain" by Fred Wah (1967)

seven minutes

I watch my daughter as she finds a neat pile of clean diapers. She pulls them one by one. Licks every single one and throws it behind her. While I write this I remember the poem that I haven't written yet about something one of my professors said about botany. At 40 below, ice starts to form in every cell of a tree. My daughter, or Gorgeous, as my partner calls her, reaches for my pen. I think, then say, "no, baby. That's dangerous." And so I wonder... When will I trust her with a pen? Why does anyone trust children with pencils? And sharpeners? I guess when you're a child you don't have the constant reality of possibly committing suicide with razors.

Except if you're in a northern Inuit community where children as young as 8 years old are killing themselves. The world is not the same as it was when I was a child. With Internet access young children are able to Google *Suicide*, and *How to commit suicide* with the click of a fucking search button. Not until I was 11? 12? I don't know what the fuck was happening in my friends' lives or why they would expose me to that. I don't know what kind of parental controls they had. Or didn't have, I suppose. But holy fuck do I wish I had some given to me. My baby's cardigan has three tiny heart shaped buttons.