

# Four Poems

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glowing words

          cement  
pillars tapestried  
paved  
      over  
      ruptured earth  
supernatural serpentine  
      Two Head  
writhes  
      below  
      we feast  
forget to feed  
these      beasts  
      more than  
      tablescraps  
or      memes  
      or cigarette butts  
      tossed  
      from balconies  
could've gifted our ceremony  
      our words  
now it's our young

## Meeting Minutes: 01/25/18

red people rounded up  
red tape lasso  
red tape gags & blindfold  
adhesive admonished shared in common  
red warrior instructor  
elders chosen by the people  
beading basics brought beginners  
brought mukluk makers  
hide handlers leather lacers  
gardening gatherers cedar carvers  
dreamcatcher dreamers

our peoples as organizer  
new word for matriarch  
cultural carriers strategic

we move  
    our movement  
our choice  
resilience  
resurgence

we dance  
    but first  
we feast  
    but first  
we cook  
    but first  
we cycle schedules  
kitchen as community  
travel there & back

tobacco give homage beseech  
cedar brush-down drop weight  
sweetgrass & sage cleanse refresh  
give gratitude frayed permits pop  
while white smoke rises  
red tape melts snaps apart

## In Time of War

i haven't felt like me recently  
where am i  
right here  
where i've sat  
for one generation

different now, height higher  
moving over the ridge  
take a breath  
a break  
into the canyon  
still same  
as before

i hurt more, heal more  
carry forward  
don't worry  
still me  
from before

i am...  
not going to  
explain myself  
to you

i have words,  
tenets but  
i crafted  
them  
in time of war

unhand me,  
open palm  
integrity  
hold me  
account—  
able

crack wrist,  
colonial  
rhymes with  
all they stole

i reclaim, hold stake

i repatriate, sold fakes

appropriated  
inappropriate

discontent  
where's the rent  
complacency  
what i spent

to get me now  
get these threads  
well-dressed Native  
what's my status?  
c 31 Native

rare to see  
thirty-one Natives  
and no cops  
present

where's our rent  
what they spent  
to get weapons  
renamed  
mass destruction  
to  
tomahawk  
with whose pension?

who i am now  
marking symbols  
carry forward  
sealing  
wounds soar  
rising  
wings sore  
don't worry  
still me  
from before

even if  
i haven't felt  
like me  
recently

where am i?  
right here  
home away  
from —  
diaspora

this shell  
is named  
Justin  
Tawahum's  
headed to  
Lutselke Dene

carry forward:  
open palm  
integrity  
i reclaim  
who i am now  
i'm a poet  
in time  
of war

## Dragging Dusk

I am sick of sunlight in the distance  
dusked glows on the urban horizon  
from Surrey, Westbound down town  
SkyTrain nears the end  
of its cemented line. In transit,  
looking out the window  
like that sunshine will be here. Soon.  
Eventually. *Yeah, fuckin' okay.*  
I'm just tired of always being *in it*, y'know?  
Rainy days and regressive moods,  
that fuckin' day-to-day, deadlines draw  
closer like Eastbound to Scott Rd Station  
and my train is always fucking late. Prepare  
for another class, another Uhaul,  
another kindling of hearth and hall—  
SkyTrain simulation  
separated from the land,  
instant messages, phone calls, scheduling sequiturs—  
seriously wondering where to rest my hyper-stimulated  
headphones—I'd hang them up with my coat  
but no hangers on transit. Damp dreams  
of sunny days and I awake asthmatic, smoke  
another cigarette, walk moulded frame hallways  
to apartment rooftop and see  
another day,  
another misted cloud-roof, another goddamn dusk  
shining away in the distance and I'm still *in it*.  
Rituals of coping,  
videogames or mental health days  
from work or missed messages, stressed strings  
of desperate Facebook statuses. On the phone,  
at home, in bed, on my walk to the train,

in between Nanaimo and Commercial/Broadway,  
I start to wonder if chronic pain is giving rise  
in crick crack, neck crack, knuckle crack,  
unsatisfied snap—please don't let it be that.  
Weather passes down  
intergenerational trauma stored  
in my bones, tendons strained  
by hypertension. I'm reminded to keep track  
of my blessin's, take stock of the lessons,  
cut the bus-loop, change direction. If the dusk  
drags down shimmering light in the distance,  
I'm only *in it*  
for as long as I stay stationary, repeating  
transit cycle, 56 km, two river crossings  
from Downtown to Newton and back. I seek  
a sunrise I must fly to find. Either steel hawk  
or peregrin falcon—

I am Lutselk'e Dene's sigil,  
falcon over  
lake at  
sunrise  
and I'm coming home.

Marsi-cho.