

Bath poems are from Islands of Decolonial Love by Leanne Simpson (2015).
Audio/Music Collaborations available at arpbooks.org/islands/
leaks
jibay or aandizooke

dirt road
open windows

beautiful one, too perfect for this world

the immediacy of mosquitoes
humidity choking breath

my beautiful singing bird

five year old ogichidaakwe
crying silent, petrified tears in the backseat
until the dam finally bursts

*you are the breath over the ice on the lake. you are the one
the grandmothers sing to through the rapids. you are the
sowed seeds of allies. you are the space between embraces*

she's always going to remember this

you are rebellion, resistance, re-imagination.

her body will remember

*you are dug up roads, 27-day standoffs, the foil of industry
prospectors*

she can't speak about it for a year, which is 1/6 of her life
*for every one of your questions there is a story hidden in the
skin of the forest. use them as flint, fodder, love songs, medi-
cine. you are from a place of unflinching power; the holder
of our stories, the one who speaks up*

the chance for spoken up words drowned in ambush
*you are not a vessel for white settler shame,
even if i am the housing that failed you.*

nishnabensowin: ogichidaakwe is holy woman.

*MUSIC BY TARA
21 WILLIAMSON



all along the north shore of pimaadashkodetyang
(you might call it rice lake)

all along the north shore of pimaadashkodetyang,
are those burial mounds.

gore landing, roach point, sugar island,
cameron's point, hastings, le vesconte.
big mounds. ancient mounds.

mounds
that cradle the bones
of the ones that came before us.

this summer
this summer some settlers

who live right on the top of that burial mound in hastings,
right on top
were excavating

renovating
back hoeing
new deck. new patio. new view.

"please pass the salsa."

this summer some settlers
who live right on the top of that burial mound in hastings,
right on top
were excavating
renovating
back hoeing
new deck. new patio. new view.
and they found a skull.

call 911
there's a skull
call 911

*MUSIC
collaboration with
"A Tribe
Called Red"
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there's more
 call 911
 jibday.
 breathe.
 we're supposed to be on the lake.
 breathe
 we're supposed to be
 gently knocking
 and
 gently parching
 and
 gently dancing
 and
 gently winnowing.
 breathe.
 we are
 not
 supposed to be
 standing
 on
 this desecrated mound
 looking
 not looking
 looking
 not looking
 looking
 not looking
 looking
 not looking
 did i see that right?
 my skull is in a cardboard box
 in that basement?
 my bones are under

an orange tarp from canadian tire,
 cracked.
 rattling plastic in the wind.
 my grave is desecrated
 my skull is in that white lady's basement
 my bones are under that orange tarp from canadian tire
 cracked
 rattling plastic in the wind like a rake on the sidewalk.
 my body is tired
 from carrying
 the weight
 of this zhaganashi's house.
 ah nokomis
 this shouldn't have happened.
 your relatives took such good care.
 the mound so clearly marked.
 ah nokomis
 how did this happen?
 what have you come to tell us?
 why are you here?
 aahhhhh my zhaganashi
 welcome to kina gchi nishnaabe-ogaming
 enjoy your visit.
 but like my elder says
 please don't stay too long.

nishnaabemowin: jibday is a ghost, a skeleton, anitkooka a messenger, a being from a traditional story, nokomis is grandmother, zhaganashi is a white person, kina gchi nishnaabe-ogaming is a mississauga nishnaabe name for our homeland.

From King, Thomas, & Short
History of Indians in Canada. 2005

Rendezvous

Thomas King

On the morning of the first day, the skunks appeared in the garden as Evelyn Doogle was having morning tea under the tree.

"You should have seen it," she told her husband, when he got home that night. "A mother and four babies. Paraded right past me as if they owned the place."

Alistair Doogle wasn't at all sure about skunks parading through the backyard. "Fred and Lucille had skunks under their deck last year," Alistair told Evelyn, "and it took months to get rid of them."

The raccoons showed up that evening, pulled the plastic cap off the roof vent, and settled in the attic. Alistair could hear them scrambling around the rafters as he watched

Monday Night Football.

At half-time, Alistair got a broom from the kitchen, and, during the commercials, he banged one end against the ceiling, and barked like a dog. Then he walked over to Durwin Milroy's house.

"I need to borrow your ladder," he told Durwin.

"Fred has it," said Durwin. "He's got raccoons in his attic."

"So do I," said Alistair.

"Now that's weird," said Durwin. "So do I. You want some coffee?"

Alistair and Durwin sat on Durwin's front porch in the dark and watched a coyote chase a cat down the block.

"It's been like this all week," said Durwin. "There are antelope on the golf course."

"Antelope?"

"Didn't you hear?" said Durwin. "They had to close the back nine."

"What the blazes are antelope doing in the city?"

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"Don't know," said Durwin, "but the real problem is the wolf pack in the park."

The next day, deer began appearing on city streets along with badgers, a family of wild pigs, a herd of mountain goats, and several pairs of wood ducks, who took a liking to Judy Melville's swimming pool.

"They're lovely," said Judy. "All those bright colours, but I really can't have them doing their business you know where."

That afternoon, the mayor called a town hall meeting to discuss the problem, and when Alistair and Evelyn arrived he was introducing a dark-haired man in a pin-striped suit.

"This is Mr. McGanese," said the mayor. "From the Department of Natural Resources."

"About time," said Durwin. "This nature thing is getting out of hand!"

"An Indian," Alistair whispered to Evelyn. "Now we're getting somewhere."

The Indian set up a series of graphs and charts on a stand and turned on a slide projector. "We've always lived with animals," he said, "pigeons, seagulls, crows, rabbits, mice, rats, dogs, cats."

"Oh yeah," said Harry Austin, "well, I have a wolverine in my gazebo."

"Moose," yelled John Wright from the back of the room. "Two cows and a calf!"

"For crying out loud," thundered Mabel Massey, who had recently retired from the stage in Toronto and could still fill a room with her voice, "this isn't a contest!"

"Quite so," said the Indian, "and it's only going to get worse."

"Worse?" said Harry Austin. "What could be worse than having a wolverine in your gazebo?"

"Moose!" yelled John Wright. "Two cows and a calf!"

Which started another round of comparisons.

"We've been warning you about this for years," said the Indian, and he brought up a new slide.

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