

John Miatech

Stone Woman

Stone Woman, whose wrinkles
were canyons,
felt the coolness where the shadows were lengthening.....

Sun lowered Himself
toward the horizon
as a breeze began to move across the earth

A cook-fire sprang up in the camp of
Woman-who-sings,
the smoke from which floated into the hills,
mixing with sage

Coyote called out to Woman-who-sings:
“What are you cooking in the darkness, Sister?”
To which there was no reply, so coyote
called again.....

And the moon rose.....

Place of Great Water

I have been on the long ride
Around your body,
And while I have seen into your clear waters,
It was impossible
To see all of you at once

Your waters are cold and deep, but not unwelcoming
The wind that blows across you is powerful
And it reminds us that you are a path that we tread on
Only with your permission

Someday, I will come back to listen to your secrets,
The ones the bears along your shores protect,
The ones the wolves sing about when the weather grows painful,
The secrets the Anishnaabe and Cree live by

I will climb your rocky shores,
Look out over the swells of your body,
Search the deep water of your heart.....

I will come for your beauty
Gichigumi,
And I will marry it
To all I know

I will tell my daughter;
“Here is where your blood came from,
And you must remember this
To know who you really are”

Stories from the Ground

Tom Grant stopped the tractor
In the middle of the potato field
“There, see that?” he pointed
Hopping off the old grey Ford
He stooped to pick up a rock

“Grinding tool” he said
Dropping a rounded stone in my hand
“I find these things all the time
You keep it”

The tractor lurched forward,
Discs cutting into the soil
To turn out the potatoes that lay under
The old Pottawattamie Trail

“This was a trade route,” Tom yelled
Above the noise of the tractor
“I have sacks of arrowheads in the house”
I stood on the hitch behind the big metal seat,
Holding onto the wide fender and the words Tom spoke

I watched the soil turning behind us,
Looked for more history to be brought to the surface
As the tractor calmly plowed ahead,
Watched for more stories from the old ones,
Who called out from the ground:

“We are still here...”

Still Something to Do

Laying in the darkness, I listen to the rain
It is already a river in its own mind, all these tiny drops
The rain rejoices knowing this and comes down harder

Sometimes I am a river too
Once you are a river, everything changes

The rain moves over the roof,
It goes down the drainpipe in mighty gulps
Hurries to become what it always was

Even at this late hour there is still something to do

The Christine Poems: Poem 1

She said:

“If I go back now,
I’ll have to be apart from you.”

He said:

“I’ve always loved you.
I never stopped.”

She said:

“That was a great kiss,
Not a little whimpy thing..”

He said:

“Wait ‘til we’re alone -
No, why wait?”

She said:

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

He said:

“It broke my heart when you got married.”

She said:

“But that’s over now. I don’t
want to leave you for a second.”

He said, squeezing her hand:

“You won’t.”

Not even when the dream ends,
Not even for a second.