

Lynn Ciesielski

INFLAMED

Seneca—keepers of the Western Door
 dwellers of Gowanda—under the cliffs

Cattaraugus—rushing, fierce like Seneca
 carves channels
 through Zoar Valley spilling cascades

burning stream
 careens
 a quarter-mile over splintering, shale slopes

Forests—
 Chestnut Oak Red Oak Pine

Stomping grounds for the Clawfoot people—tale told
 a century old

This British bawd, it unravels
 fell prey to the syph her progeny
 punished—hence with fused extremities
 generations carried the curse

Until—
 ultimately, they made a pact—to squelch the stream, the gene—mate no more

FORGIVE ME

I digress diverge DISASTERS
 still befall the splendor
 deluges drownings deaths in this daunting

PLAYGROUND???

STRANGERS ignore the warnings—

Slippery shale mudslides drastic drops

Deh-he-wa-mis grouses—

*They trash our lands— our mother sya di:tgeh¹ them, angered
In turn we deliver them from their gaiwane'aksha²,
their brash defiance*

tears searing our cheeks like lightning that ravages our methane-infused creek

¹evicts

²wickedness