

# o3ék'w

AN INDIGENOUS ART ZINE

ɔ́ʒək<sup>w</sup> : to travel, to wander

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*We would like to acknowledge that we are on Indigenous land, the traditional territories of the Coast Salish people.*

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February 2019  
*a note from the editor*

ʔəstəfɪlɪ\*

The work in this collection is prayer.  
It is remarkable in its beautiful and sometimes profane  
truth.

It is funny

It is missive.

It is a story and a womb.

It is an ossuary.

It is so full of light.

It is a conversation between Indigenous relatives and  
hardworking Indigenous people.

It is a true representation of the power and presence  
and brilliance of Native artists working across forms  
today.

It is a testament of what it means to live here in this  
magnificent and wild land.

It is a map.

\*live there

From my earliest days at the Institute of American Indian Arts studying creative writing, as an eighteen year old Acoma Pueblo mother, to now living and creating by the Salish Sea – it is never far from my mind that we live in a remarkable time of Indigenous illumination, resurgence, and truth-telling. These stories and songs and images – they are needed now more than ever. And never disembodied, never without their storytellers. They are Salish, they are Diné, they are Lakota, they are Blackfeet, they are Tlingit and Turtle Mountain Chippewa. They are many nations. And they are singing a song that honors the ancestral world of which we will always rise from and they are singing a song to usher the new world in. Throughout, I have felt Vi smiling quietly, lifting and lifting these voices, as I experienced the generative and complex expressions of these Indigenous writers and visual artists. The collective power of our Native stories and many lexicons is immense. Vi is here in these voices.

XO,  
SMO

section 1

xwíleb

\*thread

Front-loaded, *spirare* is to breathe and *spiritus* is breath  
The breathing breath caressing burnt flesh  
America's spirit doused with blood-song & bone-dust  
Remains a story traveling time-warped, unbraided  
& re-woven, we remember we belong & not as relics  
Until the last breath of the sun-star, we persist  
Moving forward in our treaty of humanity  
America's spirit recalls no name to bind true love  
& we find remedy in story & promises fulfilled  
All spirits flock when called, circling  
Around the fire, linking journeys to find our way back  
To the breath we share  
We dance across this America, spirits alive.

*AMERICAN SPIRIT*

Dawn Pichón Barron (Choctaw, Indigixicana)

i once rejected the running river inside of me

it spoke in images of mango trees, caterpillars,  
colored ribbon in long hair, pottery, embroidery, open  
air kitchens, maiz, nopales, flores, anhatapu, enandi,  
eroksa, ichuskuta, parakata

it spoke four languages-

the language of those who made me ---  
Purepecha

the language of those who we were told  
we were in process of becoming--  
Spanish

the language of those who we could  
become if we were bodies rather than  
marked flesh-- English

and embodied knowledge the language  
of us all

here's what it said:

authenticity is a settler imaginary

it was created as a tool of destruction

we can never meet its demands

even if we were raised with the language of our

people, even if i kept my hair long and braided, my  
ancestors are not legible to this Nation

my ancestors are only recognizable to the Mexican  
nation if i choose to live in and accept the open air  
prisons of poverty imposed on my once powerful  
people



i now know the theory of my body  
 that to use "indio" as a pejorative is to call out the  
 limits of the rights given to "humans"  
 that "human" was created to mean what we now un-  
 derstand as white supremacy  
 human meant not indigenous, not Black, not woman,  
 not savage, not deviant, not disabled  
 i now know the theory of my body  
 that to accept "indio" as a pejorative is to live a life  
 refusing my indigeneity while trying to prove that i  
 am human  
 an endless loop of rejection

i once rejected the running river inside of me  
     it now speaks four languages-  
         the language of those who made me --  
         Purepecha  
         the language of those who we were told  
         we were in process of becoming--  
         Spanish  
         the language of those who we could  
         become if we were bodies rather than  
         marked flesh-- English  
         embodied knowledge the language of  
         us all  
         pleasure, joy, connection--- how i break  
         free, how i break free

*did we wake the running river inside of you?*  
 fabian romero (Purep'echa)

We don't want a president. We don't want tribal presidents. We don't want a vice president or a congress that does not seek guidance or consent from over 562 Indigenous tribes in this colonized country. We don't want a nation state or a man-made border that severs ancestral traditions of trade and migration, or imposes on the continued existence of flora and fauna. We don't want corporations or an economic value system based on european dominion. We don't want to be consumed, commodified, or held prisoner under the torturous and deathly grip of capitalism. We don't want a white settler critique of settler colonialism and genocide unless it centers Indigenous, Brown, & Black livelihood. We don't want a revolution unless it involves Indigenous sovereignty, the destruction of extractive industries, and the dissolution of the concept of wealth associated with power, oppression, assimilation, slavery, and death. We don't want a relationship with the earth that does give back whenever something is taken, lost, or contaminated. We don't want a sexual and gender empowerment movement that does not take into account missing and murdered Indigenous womxn, gender-gradient/nonconforming/trans, queer, and two spirit peoples since the founding fathers and their ancestors pillaged this land. We don't want to support a society that cannot function without the implementaion of a ~~paramilitary~~ police state or the prison industrial complex. We don't want to be dependent on the western medical industrial complex in order to survive or live in harmony with our bodies. We don't want the continued exploitation of Indigenous, Brown, & Black labour. We don't want a white ~~future~~ savior. We want to die of natural causes and hold our loved ones knowing that heteropatriarchy has lost its own war against itself. We want to create on our own terms, in bodies of our own choosing. We want to restore our relationship with the cosmos/earth and move beyond the concept of western "truth". We want to be fearless. We want decolonization. We want to exist never having to comprehend the need to defend ourselves. To worship only the earth.

Demian DinéYazhí (Diné)

*sun-a-do, I feel natural  
 love like duwamish tongues tying down  
 mountains parting clouds wrecking boats holding  
 ocean lighthouse notes making honey-do lists taped  
 to my campfire chest writing*

*monday, siwash spit  
 tuesday, hooknose potlach  
 wednesday, red bellied orgasm  
 thursday, Si'ahl white waves breaking  
 friday, whispering necklace making  
 saturday, grass dancer grand entry  
 sunday, on sunday, that Sunday we were spilled  
 milk that I paddled around in a never-ending canoe  
 journey never going home to tilixum  
 the people we are tilixum the  
 people we are ni-ka tilixum gi the person I am without  
 washed-mouth words speaking  
 what language chosen  
 a sign by the river, Ravenna  
 I felt panoramic / wide / open  
 elevation in numbers  
 still reaching, we were  
 the people we were*

*LOVE LIKE DUWAMISH TONGUES*  
 Skyler Corbett (Numa Band Paiute, Klamath)

hand

what was your name before they came?

water

what was your name before they came?

séwtk<sup>w</sup>

stem̓ tu an sk<sup>w</sup>ests

mugwort

what was your name before they came?

salt

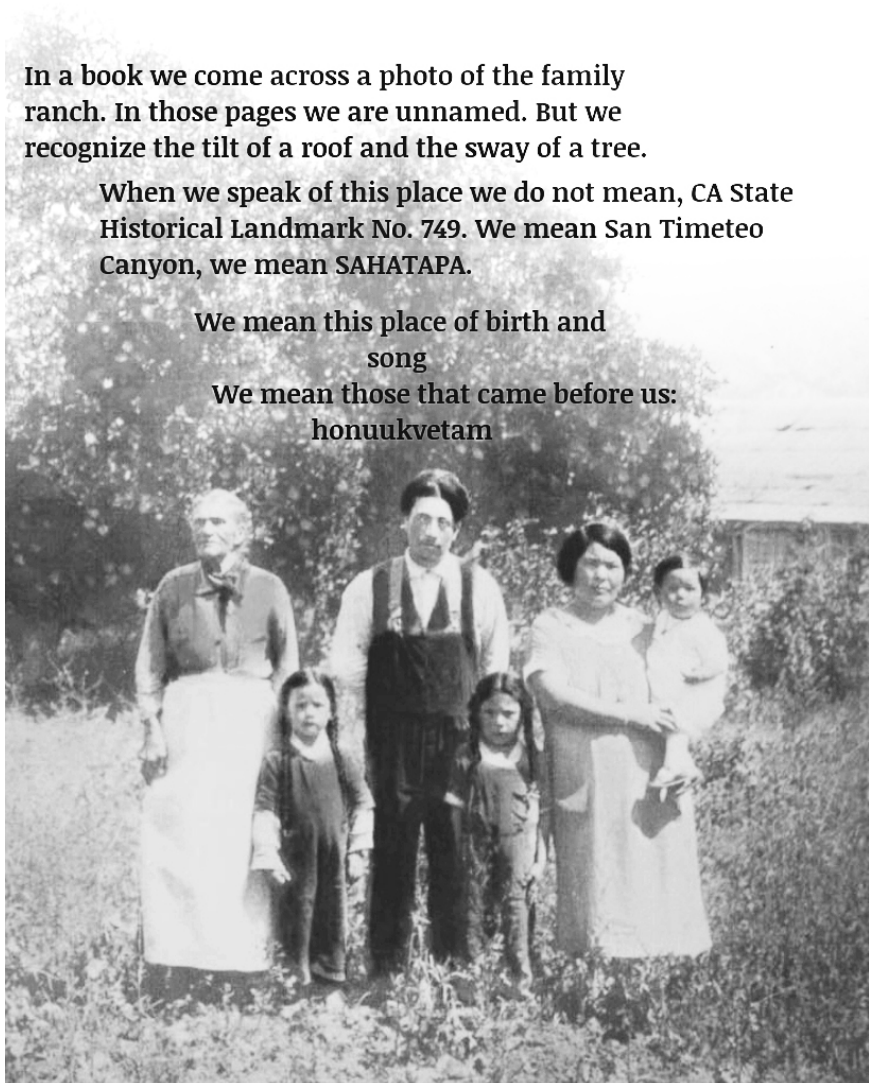
what was your name before they came?

In a book we come across a photo of the family ranch. In those pages we are unnamed. But we recognize the tilt of a roof and the sway of a tree.

When we speak of this place we do not mean, CA State Historical Landmark No. 749. We mean San Timeteo Canyon, we mean SAHATAPA.

We mean this place of birth and  
song

We mean those that came before us:  
honuukvetam



*The Ranch*  
Casandra Lopez  
(Cahuilla/Luiseño/Tongva and Chicana)

section 2

púlox

\*salvage

some of my friends have asked ~~not everything needs to be~~  
**consumption** does native mean you **your favorite myth**  
~~about myths not elaborate entrails~~ **to hit the fact that** writing  
~~breaks the work of rendering~~ deeply **I choke on my food** you  
 have you noticed ~~a couple of years~~ **again** without dialogue **unlike**  
**stories** embodied by [     ] ~~troubling~~ compliant a [     ] **ing**  
**tool** in schools ~~lost~~ we [     ] **old and durable** knowing  
**remains** braided fragmented ~~in my own work~~ soft Indian enough

*[silence]*

Arianne True (Choctaw, Chickasaw (citizen))

Red English

is how we talk on the reservation

all long consonants, a whisper, a drawl

*hey Victor, what about your dad?*

(we're all from Minnesota on the reservation

it just kind of happened that way)

Red English

is dropping and exchanging suffixes at will,

is we don't care about the past or present of saw

*hey, I seen Uncle at the gas station, and he wasn't getting*

*Auntie's brand of Marbs*

Red English is *them folks was gettin hyphy at the powwow*

*is don't go snaggin'*

*is I wanna to Owl Dance with you*

Red English is an accent and a dialect and a culture

and I slide in and out of it awkwardly

like riding my little cousin's 10-speed

she left in along the quarry til it near sunk into the sand

I switch between registers like rusted gears

reservation, trailer park, university



English was never meant to be my mother tongue.  
 we Nahaps Naahts Chaaps women of the Willapa Bay spoke  
 Coast Salish and Chinook Jargon  
 held it in the front of our mouths  
 saliva and wind  
 ain't that its own kind of ocean  
 English is my father's shirt, too big but at last, comfortable.

And don't I speak it real beautiful  
 I guess that makes it ironic  
 that I am a paradigm of the success of Captain Richard H. Pratt,  
 some Carlisle boarding school shit  
 have they killed all that is Indian in me,  
 lit major  
 me, Keats scholar,  
 me, English teacher  
 have I lost my tongue in my tongue

what stockholm syndrome is this  
 that I made English my bitch  
 loved English like every cheating boyfriend

*Hey, cousin, do I sound like myself these days?  
 or am I a clumsy ventriloquist puppeteering my own  
 throat?*

*Red English*  
*After Melissa Lozada-Oliva*  
 Misty Shipman-Ellingburg  
 (Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe)

How lucky strange it is to watch  
my grandmother sleep,  
to see cliffs rise  
out of sharp cheek bones,  
to know there are dark-cold creeks  
flowing under her eyelids.

Strangeness in partaking of her,  
the brown of her skin against  
the white cotton pillow.

Brimming with the color of copper,  
she flames into an evening campfire  
where I can warm my palms.  
I open them out, close, close  
to her cheeks,  
but am careful not to touch.

And I wonder about her first grief,  
what it had been, and where she kept it,  
if she had spoken it to anyone,  
if it is now part of her fire that keeps me  
warm. Is it a roaming grief  
which makes her glow even in her sleep?

*Lying Next to Grandmother Fire*  
Christy Hurt (Cherokee of Oklahoma,  
Eastern Band of Cherokee)



untitled  
Carmen Selam (Yakama/Comanche)



*ALL MY ROMANTIC RELATIVES,  
FUCK ANDY ROONEY*  
Linley B. Logan (Onondowaga)

Thirty years ago my elementary school class went on a field trip to a local history museum. It was in a log cabin tucked into a soft grove beside a fork of the Snoqualmie River. Flooding from melted spring snowpack left salty little ridges of faded water damage all around the foundations.

A soft-spoken docent gave us mimeographed sheets of paper for a scavenger hunt. The text was the same faded lilac as the wash of bluing in her sparse gray curls.

I wandered from the pioneer room, to the logging room, to the trapping room, tracing my fingers on the parched leather of creaky saddles and staying wary of the splintering old wafers cut from impossibly huge cedars.

In the last room, there was a reproduction of a bounty call broadsheet on a long scroll of linen. The paper was a replica of a document from the region's fur wars calling for Indian scalps—a certain pile of money for the scalp of a man, less for a woman, a token for a child or infant's scalp. It was behind Plexiglas next to a topographical map and a rusted logger's spike.

I traced over its words through the plastic, my pointer finger following the curve of the name of the river I could hear from my bedroom at night. A classmate waved the handout at me and asked if I knew what commerce was. The ubiquitous damp had pulled a doggy smell from my braids, made them impossibly heavy on my head.

*Commerce*  
Laura Da'  
(Eastern Shawnee Tribal Nation/Seneca/Miami)

section 3

l'ox

\*remember

Last night i dreamt of you. I  
Saw all of you intact.  
Not peeled like an orange. You were  
Brown skinned glowing and i,  
A witness to my people's birth  
Is this joy?  
To see what he  
Once had.  
Or is this  
Why he slept for so long  
In my mother's echo of his orbit.  
To live in  
An uncolonized heaven.

*I Meet My Grandfather*  
Namaka Auwae-Dekker  
(Mixed Native Hawaiian)

My parents find an orthodontist,  
a well-known golfer, who'll take  
payments and give them a military  
discount so that their 11-year-old  
smart-ass son might have a pleasant  
smile, instead of the crooked mess  
in there now. He even creates a  
plaster mold for them showing the  
horrors that'll be their son's un-  
corrected mouth.

Fifty years later, in an Idaho bar,  
I listen as two drunks cuss and carry  
on while parents with toddlers sit  
within earshot. Quietly, I walk over  
and tell them to shut up and lucky  
for me, they do. I imagine my expen-  
sive teeth knocked out and me, on  
my hands and knees, picking them up  
off the bloody barroom floor.

*Suddenly, Plummer, Idaho*  
Bruce Pemberton (Anishinaabe)



Hey,

Western European boxes can only help as far as theory is concerned. And we are both anything but that mindset, however far apart our nations. I can see the colors of our flags bleeding together, generational and personal traumas worked on with word play and healed through blunt mutual understanding of one another. Whatever colors they want to define these feelings as is their problem. Talks of all the theoretical types of loves would not do either of us any good for attempting application.

Do either of us know what we are doing? Not anymore than the rest of the confused, broke millennials around us. But who said we have to define anything when we already drift nebulously in gender, culture, sexuality and geography? We will add this “ friendship ” to the list, to listlessly float alongside us on our journeys, that so far, have little sign of slowing. At least, that’s what a deer, little birdie in a flower tree told me.

P.S. at least you’re not my cousin.

*untitled*  
Raven Two Feathers  
(Cherokee, Seneca, Cayuga, Comanche)



*In the sea, in the sea, I've swam and sunk, half drunk and sleepy from the sun. The trash floating nearby were markers and boundaries of Ours not Theirs and the simple explanation is that they won't come where the dust of dark dry skin flakes off into the murk of the water. Scum and scum and scum leave film between the flotsam. Floating along and through it all, and then float to you.*

*excerpt from Perfidia No. 3 (text)*

*Perfidia No. 4 (image)*

Sky Hopinka (Ho-Chunk Nation/Pechanga)

When the world darkens  
Because the horizon

Has swallowed the sun  
And the last sheen

Of our dimming twilight  
Crowns the mountains,

A winged blackness  
Dashes and darts

From the skyline  
Of your vision

and just as briefly  
as it first appears

it course corrects—  
and in that moment

it flutters, or falters,  
as if it were dangling—

in front of your face,  
and in a flash

disappears into the space  
of night and grace.

*The Bat*  
Jerrold Brunoe (Wasco, Dog River Band)

If I could keep the divinity  
As my longing breath could hold  
Between spare stick words to get

The glance eyed out from the face of place  
Handed down, holy, priceless, unsold  
And absorb the fullness of meaning

Before being strong-armed into writing  
Pummeled, pushed, losing the brilliant unfold  
Of these oval egg stories

These enlightened tell-me-downs retraced  
From dreams, visions, suffering all foretold  
By four-leggeds, winged ones

If I could keep the divinity  
Of sacred stories only told  
Could I tell stories like times of old?

*Oval Egg Stories*  
Glenda Cloudhorse Miller (Lakota)

section 4

dá dá tút

\*tomorrow

I am from the hardwood of the courts,  
countless hours spent there,  
I am from the driveway,  
of non-stop shooting,  
I am from constant fights with my brothers,  
words and fist exchanged,  
I am from the wet concrete of the playground,  
tons of falls, scabs, and fun,  
I am from the Legos and action figures  
full of imagination and creativity  
I am from the cardboard pizza, the “what even is  
that?”  
food so nasty, making you not eat lunch,  
I am from long flights and jet lag,  
Scenic views and incredible landmarks,  
I am from the screams and thrills of rides,  
so extreme and fast,  
I am from red lockers and dusty gyms,  
rumors passed and angry teachers,  
I am from the laughs and cries of my family, some  
good cries, some bad  
I am from the jokes and stupidity of my friends,  
where many memories were made.  
I am from all those moments.  
And that is what makes me-  
Me

*Where I'm From*  
Gabriel Rambayon (age 14)  
(Turtle Mountain Chippewa, Michif, Ilokano)

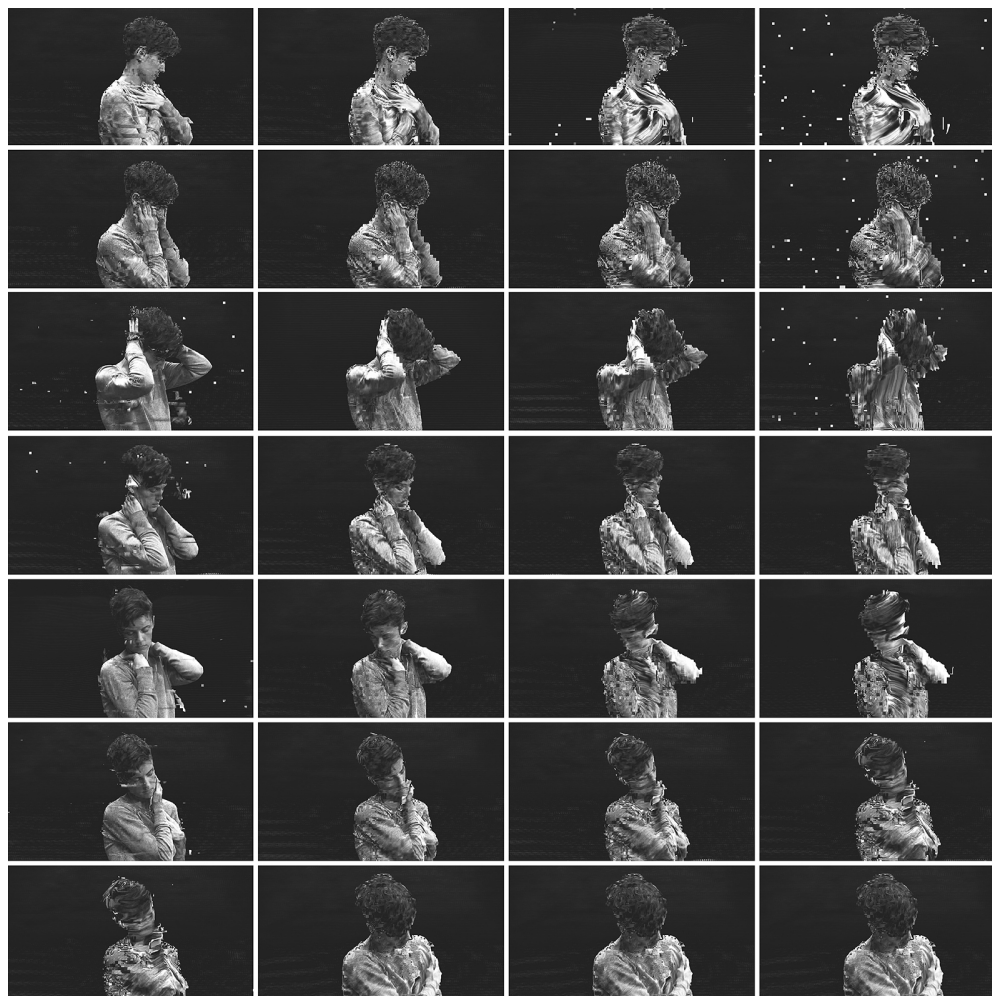
Not one of us  
Is strong enough  
To shed the air of oppression  
Weighing us down;  
Backs bent, faces to the ground.  
It is only together  
That we can lift the sky.  
So that all may stand  
Tall and proud,  
Among the broken barriers,  
Finally able to reach the heights  
For which we were made.  
Then, may we see again  
With the eyes of our ancestors.  
May we speak again  
In the tongues of our fathers.  
And fulfill the words they spoke  
For we are their prayer of hope.

*Lifting the Sky*  
Jessiray Wheeler (Hoh/Colville)





*Native Women Series*  
Sings in the Timber (Apsàalooke)



*discover yr full serrated*  
DB Amarin (Sāmoan)

LAND LAND LAND LAND LAND LAND LAND  
 LAND LAND LAND LAND LAND LAND LAND  
 BODIES BODIES BODIES BODIES BODIES  
 BODIES BODIES BODIES BODIES BODIES  
 BODIES BODIES BODIES BODIES BODIES  
 WOMEN CHILDREN WOMEN CHILDREN WOMEN  
 CHILDREN WOMEN CHILDREN WOMEN CHILDREN  
 WOMEN CHILDREN WOMEN CHILDREN WOMEN  
 DESTRUCTION DESTRUCTION DESTRUCTION  
 DESTRUCTION DESTRUCTION DESTRUCTION  
 YES FUCK ME MANIFEST DESTINY FUCK  
 DESTINY BLOOD ME YES FUCK MANIFEST  
 HOW MANY WAYS CAN YOU FUCK AMERICA?  
 THE LAND THE BODIES THE LAND THE BODIES  
 THE WOMEN THE CHILDREN DESTRUCTION  
 TELL ME HOW MANY WAYS YOU CAN LAY  
 OWNERSHIP OVER SHIT YOU DON'T EVEN OWN  
 O WHITE SAVIOR SHOW ME THE WAY

*december 6th, 2018 1:41am*  
*love letter to justin Trudeau*  
 erin tail  
 (Oglala Lakota/Northern Cheyenne/Cherokee)

i don't want to own the land I want to be held by it  
tethered in like something worth saving to know  
that i am vital to the survival of my nation instead of  
feeling like a ghost living in the shame of a body i did  
not make the rules for hidden within the thinness of  
borrowed bones

there are always going to be fractures, unresolved  
relations unsettling the land split seams from sharp-  
snapped bones stitched in across ancient skin scream-  
sung chords across frozen rivers finger-plucked hairs  
from winter winds all to the heavy currents that creak  
beneath the ice wet-wood hearts swollen, delicate now  
every wave dissolves to thunder the noise shivers  
above the water sliding around inside the skin of a  
body I stumbled into waiting for the bones to shift  
back into place to be lashed back into the shape that  
knows me best

*my body remembers ceremony*

*better than your pride*

Whess Harman (Carrier Witat / Lake Babine Nation)

in the distance  
the clouds begin to fall  
grey rain too far  
to matter  
oceanward it has gone dark  
everywhere but here circle  
of campfire crackling orange  
against a roar of waves  
against that rain  
against world's end  
an island sits quiet  
keeps the dead in its trees  
Elder Island  
said a man on the beach  
camera around his neck  
boy at his knees poking starfish  
said you can kayak around it  
get real close to its shores  
I turn away pull the hood  
of my sweatshirt up covering my face  
now the sky is black  
the waves only exist  
because we can hear them  
beyond the driftwood  
my grandmother  
tells how the people  
worked together  
and I know the story  
could recite it from memory  
but I like the sounds  
of Lushootseed  
of English  
I do not interrupt  
I do not stop her  
I do not say  
Grandmother  
I've heard this one  
I know how it ends  
I finish the last  
bit of whisky  
from the metal mug  
drop it to the sand  
and I hear the click  
of cassette tape  
the two speakers that carry  
her voice go to static  
as I rewind and press play  
one more time  
and though it's quiet  
they're always out there  
with that big pole  
saying all together now  
as they get the sky up  
where it belongs  
and lift the world  
out of darkness

*Lifting the Sky*  
Sasha LaPointe  
(Upper Skagit/Nooksack)

again

