

Three Poems

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LETTER TO THE DAUGHTER I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE

I still wake weeping after dreams
of my grandmothers

wonder if they would like my small dog
what they would say to the cat.

Don't ask me how the dog knows
each time I wake regardless
of my body's tendency to set hard when I think
no daughter of mine shall weep for me.

Fur fills my lungs til my own breath
won't:

Breathing is a costly act/
I wish to return
to sleep.



My black-haired grandma didn't want to be a bother
when she felt the water rising in her lungs.

My mother's mother went into the earth in her finest
leopard self.

I want to build a boat

a body
large enough to carry us all

these days these waters not fit for wading,
this mud hungers
for our living.

The blood stops
in my veins
aware of every other body at rest
and my threat to that state
of ease.

I would sooner let every particle of dust
all the dirt and salty water
seal every opening

sooner let the fluid petrify / in
my womb than risk
awaking others, but already

*arnat qutmi et'ut*¹
*imat kuingtut*²

we, the break in time —

¹The women are at the beach.

²The waters are walking.

WHEN YOU SAY THE DEER SWEEPED OUT TO SEA WAS “SAVED”

to amass
to deposit
to heap
to hoard
to invest
[a] hill
to lay aside
to lay away
to keep
to deliver
to take
to economize
to redeem
to tender

*Ayaquq egtaakait cuumi.*³

a marginal propensity [to save]
(a neck)
[possibly an] egg
a stitch in time saves nine

(to snatch)

[one requires] the ark
[otherwise a] flotation device
([a] Noah)
a people saved is a land earned
([a] reserve)

³They used to throw a harpoon before. As a drag on the wound(ed). To make the animal visible in the water.

your hide or theirs
your peach
your pinch
your stone

the key to
the human race
with the help of
the day god
killer
king
know it all—

Know it all.

I TOO GROW TIRED OF THE PLOT

In conversation with Taije Silverman's "In the Middle of the Myth"

The wind is not a river
Someday
It will end

The river or
The wind
I can't recall

But if we give that same river
The same rights as any person
We must have seen
She is vulnerable

We must have seen
The end

Meanwhile more hot air blows
Unconcerned by persons
Raising the likelihood of
Drought
 So they say

How then does the river fare?

I guess it's true
Women are still talking about the weather
One can't be too careful
With the currents
These days

Once there was a river with one hundred thirty-four ribbons in her hair

These days the river gives up
The ghost

*Once there was a beautiful river
Maligned for her long hair*

These days the river thinks
She would like to be more
Or moored

*When she left there was no more water
For drinking or for washing
When she left there were no more fish
Bones in the mud in place of ribbons*

These days the river likes to think
We all wash out in the sea

*The soles she kept of each shoe
collected on her shores
caught in her knotted hair
she held aloft and fixed
a ribbon to each small vessel*

These days the river thinks
are overdue for a flood.