

Akia

I am staring at this wall

those giant mountains

A vision passed down to my spirit from my father
my own memory in that cradle, drifting in from far away

I am staring down this wall, like a veil
concealing all we've lost

Eclipsed into the spirit world

for both the balance and safe keeping

Months ago, an undertow

pulled me into hidden depths

Growing belly, swollen breasts

insatiable and heavy as the moon

Body, spirit expanding with new love

the way they shrunk from trauma

demanding the fruition of all my stolen dreams

Mountain vision, erupting faintly at first

like an earthquake on some other earth

Motherland from long ago

rumbling faintly in my bones

I remember it, yes,

but *this* is not my memory

Then, in unknown throws

tears overflow like a tide that wont stop rising

bringing up my need to know:

Why did they call her *Akia*?

I ask him for this small piece of my mother

I might inherit if I place my feet along old ground

if he'll walk with me there

Akia, the other side

I know him like the deepest part of myself

and barely at all

For people from Pond Inlet, he says
it means *beautiful Bylot Island*
Deep and strong and silent, my father, an arctic ocean
Me, of him, but adrift

“*Why* was she called that?” I press
Sometimes we find the current
timeless and unbroken, like those ancestral lines
...but mostly we are swept by amassed brokenness and time

“*I* called her that” he says, and I break
Communication for us has always been subsurface
Love and resonance and everything we cannot overcome
expressed through instinct more than words
Talking is like peering into fluid darkness
a world of life and complex depth
estranged as all my birthrights

Another wall I’ve stared down and returned to, all my life
am still staring down, and trying to return to
while terribly afraid of causing pain
with my longing
and my ignorance
This time, something inside feels like whales nearby

If you remember Bylot Island is very beautiful,” he said
with high mountains
When people from Pond were away at school
when they get homesick – that’s what they saw
beautiful Bylot and its mountains
When people asked me what is her name, I told them
her name is *Akia*

I don’t know how to answer
Tears in place of words
like water over whales as they curl back under sea

So much I did not know – his depth of love, and what she meant
What we meant, where did it go? What is held within the distance?

What is held in the expanse of all of that distance?
Hidden inside the way he kept our language alive – silently, in spirit
Buried with that landscape, all those years
while he was worlds away and breaking
forging into stone to survive

I could never ask, and he could never speak
He suffered the unthinkable, survived
Some things remain intact because
he knew how to hide, how to keep them alive
though he himself could not return from stone

Now that dormant seed is waking
shifting my sense of what I (need to) know
forcing me to grow, calling me back home

I'll never understand what was lost, what was endured
Right now that's unimportant
It is blinding

I am learning how to see, I am searching
I am staring down this wall
these mountains and this mirror
with vision I don't comprehend but trust
is capable to guide me

I'm afraid of all the distance
everything I do not know
but I am here

I want to reach across *the other side*:
take my place in the bridge
for all that waits to come
full circle

I am finding
being found