

**Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry:  
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**No Return**

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**A MEMORY**

Black punctuation on the page of a white storm.  
Two crows perched back to back  
Keeping a tall watch  
    on a leafless branch suspended  
    in a snowy dream of separation  
    from its sleeping trunk

In visible:

The foreground, snow biting the nouns of the landscape at 45 degrees.  
The background, a monotone of lazy grey verbs beyond  
    the treeline, a strange sentence of ragged words, curled and yellow tipped  
    foreshadowing the horizon---  
    a summary statement without a conclusion---  
    an odd backlit metaphor playing  
    the illusion of possibilities

I remember  
the journey, the train, the imperative,  
that took us away through a winter storm  
=====

Mother and I  
Two crows looking through the windows of our passing history waiting for our story to turn us into the next page.

Mother and I  
    looking for father  
    watching for danger

**DI-SAPPEARANCES**

on the day  
father disappeared  
mother bled her tears into a narrow grief  
and buried that other life:

    in my mattress  
    stuffed full of jewelry, and nervous kitchen silver  
    a few American dollars  
    documents and pictures.  
    I slept---  
    a restless princess  
    in a child's fairy tale  
    the hard pea beneath a bed of stories  
    in my head  
    feathered in dreams  
    our treasure---  
    a crown of secrecy

hidden  
from them.

**LINES OF AGGRESSION**

The city  
fell.

oblivious...  
a hungry ration line  
kicked greedy threats  
bullied,  
tried  
to push me aside

and around.  
two hours  
I stood

my ground.  
my place  
in the dragline  
that pulled me closer  
one chit at a time

to my loaf.  
the bakery  
crossed the battle lines  
while I was there,  
white flour chalked the division;

marked conquest; blurred boundaries.  
me, triumphant girl (with bread)  
exits  
to  
staccatoed  
street fire  
dotted lines  
of sound  
traced to  
ground  
troops  
running  
guns  
and  
bullets  
everywhere.

hiding  
behind a sign of broken text.

me, crouched and silent  
with no sense

of danger.  
my mother  
searching  
frantic ---  
for  
a missing daughter

is pistol whipped.  
to her knees, into submission  
the soldier  
just another slick line of hate inside her  
so  
she prays  
as she waits to be discarded  
that I stay.  
missing a little longer.

**LEARNING TO READ**  
**(THE TIMES)**

RED e fine D: read

Re: ad names

re<sup>A</sup>d DIVISIONS  
A

RE<sup>A</sup>D VISION

^

di

blood read

REVISIONS

reRE<sup>A</sup>D blur-red

**NEW SHOES**

the new order  
    ordered the doors  
    opened  
to old order outcasts

recast as masters again  
redressed  
re-provisioned  
ready to take  
    from already meager stores

In the aftermath: looting  
After looting: the math  
Of poverty.

No dollars: I looked for new shoes.  
No sense: I find only one.

**TYRANNY of CIRCUSTANCES for TY, ANNY, and ARCHY****try Anny's revenge**

aftermath and  
new order...  
lips and fingers of young  
streets painted  
a glossy silent red  
anger,  
solicit and  
kiss  
a betrayed peace  
fix  
a price  
for rape

**Ty Ran to NY**

under city lights,  
aftermath and  
summer storms,  
young lips and fingers  
part;  
good byes pave  
streets  
in kisses of anger.  
black rain  
solicits  
the glossy  
endless sidewalks of night.

**Tears and Archy's sleep**

nights' punctured  
aftermath  
awaits  
the cold words  
the tongue  
speaks in blue breathe.  
a long street sleeps  
without blankets.  
finger tips  
syringe the frozen memories from  
sidelined cigarette butts  
and gather up  
metal sheets and cardboard  
dreams  
into bed.



## THE PARTY

Party bullets were sewn into skull caps everywhere---  
Those red badges delivered indiscriminately like paper streamers on New Year's eve.  
Everyone dressed to kill or dying to dance.

**EXECUTION**

In the last days  
3 ships explode  
In our harbor

Heavy hulls break  
And weep bodies  
From the swollen eyes of the sea

Roll down the cheeks  
To the shore  
Unnoticed at first

Until disbelief  
Accumulates  
With the incoming tide

Hundreds  
Pool  
Float dismembered

Gather like driftwood  
With seaweed  
On the beach

A hand  
Attached to bits of striped cloth  
Waves---  
To the rhythm of  
Lapping water---in an almost familiar good bye.

The ashored and aghast  
In a story of a thousand periods  
Ask only one question.

I never found out the answer.

**LEFT AND NO RIGHTS...**

a 100,000 lives left  
marched  
north of  
winter  
*justice...*  
knotted  
unlaced  
left out.  
outside in just  
worn out  
step after step shoes  
or  
in side  
blistered  
camps  
mending soles  
for  
those left  
behind  
waiting  
for what  
is  
right  
again

**SPRING MARCH**

in dreams  
rag dolls still haunt me:

*No, not ever as*

*enemies  
killers  
soldiers  
rapist  
prisoners*

*Only as just barely*

*men  
barely  
clothed  
just barely  
fed  
as just barely  
alive*

a line of 1400 blue feet  
bootless  
drag endless kilometers  
through a night forest,  
the twigs of their remembered prayers splintering under foot

I watched,  
their momentum---  
like rag dolls passing,  
as if held upright by the hand of a child,  
whose whim is focused on moving parts

And I watched,  
them fall---  
like rag dolls simply crumpling into soft heaps,  
as if the child, distracted, let go  
one by one

Falling over dead  
Noticed only by the embodied feet in line behind them  
Forced to step aside and around.

I see them still.

## THE LAST BOAT

A heavy dawn arrived  
dragging the weight of promise and risk  
in an unopened suitcase  
up the shore  
Into port

Hundreds had already gathered  
like a fleet of beached tugboats  
each tethered  
by a prayer  
To escape---on that last vessel

Wading the tide of dislodged travellers  
shaken by a sleepless hungry earth  
swallowing bomb after bomb after bomb  
all night  
*They* would be first to board.

I looked towards the light, facing the sound  
the artillery fire  
catching up to us  
getting brighter and louder  
shivering as it passed through the soles of my shoes  
lacing vibrations up my shins,  
I heard someone say *they* would be here soon, by noon at the latest.

**LAUNDERED FREEDOM; a BARTERED PASSAGE**

From the deep pool of crowding people  
I heard my mother's name

A woman wrung a long conversation through her lips and hands  
That tired finally  
Stopping  
In a confusing offer of complicity and guilt  
My mother accepted.

The woman's daughter, Anna, was  
on the boat... buying..... "tickets" they said.

We didn't have long to wait  
Before the captain appeared  
On deck  
Anna motioned her mother to come on board  
who motioned us to follow

I didn't understand the barter until much later.

**I WAS**

For a time  
At home---  
In a hop scotch mosaic  
A cut-out paper pattern you fold up into floor, walls, ceiling and roof.

With bits and pieces  
I try to fix  
A chalk outline  
With flour paste and crayons  
To glue the memory

I try to repair the  
long grasses that hold the cows and the summer in place.

I try to mend the fences  
of overheard conversations that bind wires to the posts of telegraphed messages;  
Stand-ins I see and see through.

I try to restore the  
Autumn to the apples before they fall  
And I fall from a happy childhood.

Again and again remembered ages:  
Five, six and seven years old  
Pull  
The rubber band of a smile to the edges of that cardboard village.

**ARRIVAL; A CANADIAN SUNSET**

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Painting itself thin, the plum horizon loses its blue  
to rose  
and melon  
and bits of  
ochre sunlight  
drifting magnificent upward towards night.

Crossing this same autumn sky  
a parallel horizon  
is drawn out,  
in the penned flight of a *lone*  
Canada goose  
its cries punctuating its own  
dark sentence

Young and lost.