Tu remonteras la rivière,  
le calme de ses flots laissera miroiter 
les rayons du soleil de son réveil  
as son coucher.  
Elle s’allongera sans fin jusqu’au bout de ta vie.  
A son image  
Tu te sentiras envahie d’un  
sommeil profond. Grouillante d’un  
esprit créatif, tu sommeilleras en tes rêves, heureuse de tes choix.  
Et malgré l’orage, même si la tempête fait rage, portant le flambeau de l’honneur, ton courage ramènera le calme.

Micheline Mercier est mère et grand-mère.

for the Living: AIDS, Orphans, and the Future of Africa.”  

MICHELLE MERCIER

SIGNA A. DAUM SHANKS

I Remember your Arms (October 1999)

turning turning turning hundreds of jar tops over hundreds of rubber seals to protect all the pickles and beets that fed us throughout the next winter

shaking a broom furiously while you yelled at raccoons that would stop for a moment, with a look of understanding of what you were saying, and then continue to non-chalantly rip singles off the homestead house’s roof just before they’d grab some corn and wash the husks for lunch

zipping up my winter coat as high as it will go up my neck after telling me to take it off, put on the ski pants and then put it back on because It’s January on the prairies, not January in Hawaii!

Now I will also remember your arms half their regular size wrinkled from the sudden and unwelcome weight loss trying to wiggle out of an i.v. going even further to grasp the mask over your face that works the respirator and then facing imprisonment by the rude nurse who straps them down as if they belong to a person who should be strait-jacketed

I am left to wonder whether these actions are signs you wish to be left alone to let happen whatever will naturally ensue or that you long to show the world you still have the energy to turn turn turn to shake to zip

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