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MICHELINE MERCIER

Tu remonteras la rivière,
le calme de ses flots laissera miroiter
les rayons du soleil de son réveil
à 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.

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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pursuing a graduate degree in law at the University of Toronto.*