We are used to looking out, locating ourselves against the wall across the room or the willow across the field, reaching its arms into the air and down again, toward earth. We believe that the wall and the willow are real, understandable in all their parts, though we can’t see inside them, that the earth is real, though we can’t see her body beyond the horizon, how it curves. That the sky is real, though our gaze can’t fall hard against it, but pierces light and dark, or maybe the sky is illusion, though it’s the only thing you can trust to lay its body over you all day and all night.

Losing your eyes, you lose day and night, you lose your understanding of wall and willow across the way, but you find the earth under your feet, completely understandable, you find the sky you thought you looked up toward doesn’t know boundaries of skin, you find the sky you thought was out there, is also around and inside you. And the wall. And the willow.

Melanie Cameron is a Canadian writer currently living in Winnipeg. This poem first appeared in her book, Holding the Dark (The Muses’ Company, 1999; finalist for the Eileen MacTavish Sykes Award for Best First Book by a Manitoba Writer). Reprinted with permission of The Muses’ Co./J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing Inc.