

Aboriginal Sons

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Dream-like, she moved to crouch even further into the willow. A two-lane, very narrow gravel and very dusty road was in front of her. Way behind her, close enough to be heard, the Saskatchewan River made that noise. A forever sound slowed down lapping at the shoreline. The swiftest water no soundings just paying no mind.

Out of her repertoire of things to fear, she had just sighted one; thus, this crouching in the willow. Slow moving men, she knew them all, had firmly gripped a much younger man, choking him.

Picking berries like every summer, she had parked her truck in the shade of a familiar sugar maple grove. Knowing something from those cautionary tales told far into the midnight sun strokes. She breathed in and out ever so slowly and silently.

What was it again? The timing of everything has always meant the difference between making it and not making it.

What was the question again? The willow, yes an analgesic.

God! Was she crouching on some old mooshoom's bones, but she wasn't trembling, she was turning into stone. Every face she saw fifteen minutes ago was known to her, the darkening face, a young cousin. A northern village embraces all its Aboriginal sons.

She had no gun on her, the men known as gunslingers; men who moved like Mafioso, the picture shows told her so. How long can she crouch in this known willow bunch? Her truck covered like a dusty Indian truck with the lightning-like struck windshield. Was not in the least seen by her, but she was dealing with predators, hunters. They would know someone had been there and looked at her tire marks.

Grandma moved into her side, the knowing side, lifting memory from centuries ago.

How long did you wait Grandma? After all the men had died? After LeClerlque died on one of the horses on your way back to the mountains? You are telling me your thoughts Grandma, wait someone might come by and see me. From the road the men will come back soon to cackle about their latest kill, oh yeah, they have killed before. Maybe from the river while silently paddling by?

Why this moment and this place Grandma? Like you standing at Walla Walla, hiding with your back to that trail, Great-Grandpa in your arms, another child right beside you. How come they did not cry?

Can we settle my thoughts right now? Can we see the many ways we have survived this way? Is it keeping silent in this wood, standing on top of mooshoom bones?

Instead of a big old burial ground, you have no idea where Great-Great Grandpa died. You had to run yourself right? Right, what about me, crouching like a lynx?

Can I raise the alarm now? Can I run and get my truck? Can I chuck my berry pail in the extra cab seat?

Okay, they went west, I will go east as fast as possible before they sniff me out. Then I will come back with reinforcements, extra gunslingers of the law—the revenge troops of civil society. We will do that post-modern stuff of gathering evidence at the scene of the crime.

Oh Grandma, oh Grandma, where is the killing ground this time? Is it under the tree, in the little meadow, the open field?

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