traveling:

across

through

down

in(words

by Daniela Bouneva Elza
“The city carries such a cargo of pathos and longing that daily life there vaccinates us against revelation.”
—Pain not Bread
(Introduction to the introduction to Wang Wei)

Vancouver

we start here by leaving. the coffee taste of early morning streets.

the neon effort of signs to summon emptiness.

the mist that cools the day’s unwanted news— charcoal

smudges across the white noise of the yawning sky.
past Hope

the sign said:
find out what lies beyond hope
we are beyond Hope.
the crows behind the number 3
behind this their highway.
the crows on every sign
behind this their highway.

my kids
in the back chanting:
when are we gonna be there?

we spend
the night at Nk’Mip camp grounds
(as overflow) on a corner that all night seemed
where

people needed
to start
fights:

confession after

confession.
the Okanagan valley

such distance
as if time grows clearer with
the silences between—
a space where
the vineyards are heavy
again:

    remembered   dark grapes.

a deception sticky with the flesh of light
the taste of missed rain. the pulse—

embryo of past earth. the seed—
the one thing I can save resists

the pressure of thumb and
    index finger.

to run through rows and rows
of vines away from someone’s voice

holding the wind in my hair.
fingertips soaked crimson.

is this

    my grandmother’s vineyard

or mine?
“So I blurred my eyes
and gazed towards
the brim of my hat
and saw a new world.
I saw pale white circles
roll up, roll up, like
the world’s turning,
mute and perfect,
and I saw
the linear flashes,
gleaming silver,
like stars
being born
at random
down a rolling
scroll of time.
Something broke
and something opened.

[...] I breathed
an air like light;
I saw a light
like water.
—Annie Dillard
(Pilgrim at Tinker Creek)
Osoyoos

the poplars are a mountain river
rushing over through
into the sky. under

leaves in eddies of silver wind
words come face to face with
iridescent fish nipping at their meaning.

in our confusion through time
water
rushes.

poplars understand space—

fluid wind sky earth

roots leaves.

or are they

schools and schools of fish?
bodies dreaming
through viscous light.

syllabic ripples as seen through
tiny lenses
(where one grain of sand

distorts) time

beneath

the rushing
on the way to Nelson

I have not seen even one crow today. afraid
to land in the sound of the river
all I have is (this moment) wrapped around me—a memory
in which I spend my days
remembering how I have been here before.
this distance re-named. afraid
to enter the words I have laid out for the crows: poisoned little traps their teeth sharpened polished by history.
“The main battlefield for good is not
the open ground of the public arena,
but the small clearing of each heart.”
—Yann Martel
(\textit{The Life of Pi})

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\textit{a song}  \hspace{1cm} \textit{stomped}  \hspace{1cm} \textit{underfoot.}

| time:       | a detailed       | totem         |
| talisman    | lost             | in sand.      |
| fossilized  | songs            | turned        |
| graffiti—   | unreadable       | inaudible.    |
| only        | the fingers      | can feel      |
| the beat    | that raged       | in the feet   |
| (the tip of | white feathers)  | the pulse     |
| red         | in a cage.       | a memory of   |
| black earth | between          | the toes.     |
“No sutras, no hymns, no doctrine, but nature with its personal implications.”
—Pain not Bread
(Introduction to the introduction to Wang Wei)

the Kootenays

in search of flowers
wildness we picked
memories here.
childhood in the open
hand.
one petal at
a scent
a sound one petal
(surprising me) a time.
a word can be
filled with
what I have.
misplaced)
in the light of the moon
we sit with our hands

blooming.
through The Rockies

again

car trunk packed tight. the kids
drew maps of black bear moose

long-horned sheep
camouflaged on the rocks.

breath- taking peaks.

there

bright red flower—

Indian paint

brush.
“The acquisition of knowledge is not only a process of transformation for the one who comes to know; it is also a process of creation for the world at large.”
—Shimon Malin
(The Eye that Sees Itself)

the way (of the river)

I take the path by the river. stop
where the willow bows its head
to the water. I am
the passing of time. a shifting.
point of view. slender fragile branches
sweep the surface of this moment
in a permanent caress.
(N (o) w)
flickering a string of
moments where I remember myself
as before
this moment. linger here
in its making.
again

pop.cans. cups. bear.bottles. butts.

I bow my head to the rushing

* the (p (o (o) l) i) n) g

where the water styrofoams.
each time the shiver
(of knowing.
insists. 

haunts

(the river.

steals my gaze.

my eyes drink.

(and knowing is a loss

I have

to mourn.)

mourning

is recognizing

myself

ever transformed.

as my heart

(b e (a) t s)

in the

s l i p p e r y

m o s s y

hands

*

of the water

*
“We need to find our own way to take this place into our mouth; we must re-say our past in such a way that it will gather us here.”

—Tim Lilburn

(Going Home)

**pilgrims of light**

venture inland and you know

(luminous

before naming—

shifting iridescent surfaces.

where we lay our heads

on the edge of glaciers. where we are ancient

dreaming,

every moment is distance—

a light intake of breath,
a slight startle.

names are

after-thoughts— the bones of small things.

the distances between us— the breaking of light on the tongue.
“We grieve only for what we know.”
—Aldo Leopold (A Sand County Almanac)

pilgrims or mapmakers (of being Here
and we will travel together again.
chase
the road’s inconclusive end. and then
walk on gravel.
educations here get vague.
the eddies harder to read.
but we will walk
until we know the crow that comes
this far.

where the black road narrows
the black road to a path. Uncertain.

we push the vines brushing
our faces until we can almost
hear the splash of feathers.

if we walk on we walk
in circles

if we leave now

no one will know we were here.