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 beyond hope lies beyond Hope. we are the crows on every sign behind the number 3 highway. their this my kids in the back chanting: gonna be when are we there? we spend the night at Nk'Mip camp grounds (as overflow) on a corner that all night seemed to be the one where needed people to start fights: confession after

confession.

"Inhabited space transcends geometric space."
—Gaston Bachelard
(The Poetics of Space)

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?

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"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)
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"Whatever the thing, heart or mind, it is easily made glad when unobserved."
—Karen Solie
(Modern and Normal)

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

"The swindler has gone before us and has left the doors of words open." —Lyubomir Levchev (Ashes of Light)

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 (The Life of Pi)

drawing		maps		with bones
we have white raven		a language has died.		but we repeat.
pour deep cups		wine as if it were		in ceremonial words read.
to remember		this white bird.	we bur	y
a journey taste bitter		in gratitude. in the back		past sounds of the throat.
a song		stomped		underfoot.
time: talisman		a detailed lost		totem in sand.
fossilized graffiti—		songs unreadable		turned inaudible.
only the beat	that rag	the fingers ged	in the f	can feel eet
(the tip of red		white feathers) in a cage.	the pul	se a memory of

between

the toes.

black earth

"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 wildness we picked

flowers

here. childhood

memories in the hand. open

one petal

at a time.

a scent

(surprising me)

a sound a word

can be

filled with

what I have. misplaced)

in the light of the moon

we sit with our hands

blooming.

"What glitters in things is a mountain, it can't be held in the mouth.	"
—Tim Lilbur	n

through The Rockies

again

car trunk packed tight. the kids drew maps ofblack 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. ling e r here in its making.

again

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

I bow my head to the rushin g

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

where the water styro-foams.

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 transformed. ever as my heart (b (e (a) t) s) in the slippery m o s s yhands of the water

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"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

chase

travel

together again.

the road's

inconclusive walk

end. and then on gravel.

directions

here

get vague.

the eddies

harder to read.

but we will walk

until we know the crow

this far.

that comes

where the black road narrows

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.