

Angels: 215 >, 1820 – 1979

“The Past is Always Our Present”

A cradle board hangs from a tree
A beaded moss bag is folded in a small chest
A child’s moccasin is tucked
Into a skunk Pipe bag
Children’s shoes in a ghost dance.
A mother clutches these
Palms held against her face
A river runs between her fingers.

A small boy covered in soot
On all fours a naked toddler
Plays in the water, while her Kokom’s skirt
Is wet to her calves.

“How tall are you now?” she asked.
“I’m bigger than the blueberry shrub,
Oh, as tall as an Aspen
Where my birth was buried.
See my belly-button?”

Each have dragged a rabbit to the tent, a tipi
Watched expert hands
Skin, butcher, make berry soup for dinner.
Boy falls a robin with a slingshot

He is shown how to skewer the breast
Roast the bird on hot coals.
He will not kill
Without purpose, again.

The tipi, tent, the log-shack are empty
Trees crane their heads through
The tipi flaps, the tent door
Through the cracks of the mud-shack.

A mother's long wail from 1890
Carried in the wind. A grandparent
Pokes embers, a sprinkle of tobacco,
Cedar, sweetgrass, fungus, sage
Swirls upward.

Children's creeks
Trickle in their sleep.
A blanket of deep earth
Covered fingers entwined
Arms around each other.

We have been
Waiting.

It is time to release
This storm

That consumes all this nation.

Awasis, this spirit-light, these angels

Dance in the flame.

The bones

Will share their stories.

Listen. Act.

These children are ours.

Could be.....Yours.

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