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The Cross for Mary Magdalene and Me

Mary Magdalene never looked so good,
a skin of lilies
a mouth of thorns
a soul reprieved

she lives at the bottom of the cross,
a head-crashing memory
a prayer worthy of love
a heart of spikes

she begged for guidance and forgiveness
as she handed me the hammer
and there was God crying blood
for the both of us

The Crow

black beak opens to
a cawing red tongue

the crow swallows
the sound of wind

leaps into the air
afraid of its own breath tracks

flips its wings
glides south searching

the highway as I pass by
no road kill today

This Drunken Universe

I was born a nightmare
in this drunken universe

I pray for the crack of dawn to break me loose
from junk piles teeming plastic and scrap and waste

I witness landfill cities building skeletons
butting splintered bone chips

I smell graveyards of rotting pollution
steel bones and mutilated appliances

I scope corporate skulls out of control
stuffing my Mother full of defilement

I bellow in a world full of blocked ears
yet tongues are laughing in my medulla

I pull a long face when I see the forests
eaten from the inside out, shudder in disbelief

I whiz to Vancouver to escape decomposing corpses
strewn in the Thompson, Fraser and Columbia Rivers

I find more walking dead skin clinging to bone on East Hastings
fishing in garbage cans, needles in flattened veins

I freeze when our eyes meet
ricocheting off the piss-stench walls

I meander back to the ostentation of Robson Street
darting in and out of wealthy consumers

I seek the refuge of my own kind
sealed to live among the drunkards
in this drunken universe

October Skin

rain-soaked and facing south
my face drops pebbles

autumn dew dampens the dying leaves
life clings desperately on

winter slows change
a time to recall

“redman” I am called
there is a graveyard in my throat

disillusion is a boneyard
closer to the sun than we think

our thoughts are silk rivers
written poetically on rice paper

my identity is mistaken Asian
white boys playing dirty politics with our lives

I am rock
wet pebbles and maps of Indians

solid northern light
sweet southern song

October skin

My Grandmothers

my grandmothers purred farewell
paused knowingly at the edge
whispered with luminous satisfaction
to souls waiting for greeting

they had done their work

in the unfettered fields and open spaces
the land where my ancestors' bones are ground to dust
confidence was reborn
from fleeting echoes spiraling amid the sagebrush and cacti

they had done their work

from the common past retold
through dream-time and oral pass-downs,
the rebirth of recognition
solidified their commitment and mine

they had done their work

for the betterment of future life-givers
my grandmothers cleansed the re-constructed landscape
kept the remains pure
despite the underhanded politicians extorting land

they had done their work

the landscape nearly disappeared
under the weight of barbwire fences
but the dust of my grandmothers still blows between the barbs
and I hear them whispering the names of my grandchildren

they had done their work