

Call Her Muse

The guide's eye
shone on glittering water and rocks.
With bone fingers she lifted my chin
and beckoned.
I followed. We entered a cave,
sloshed through waist deep water
slipped on moss-covered rocks.
Cadavers floated by,
sprang into life.

On a ledge we came upon
a child's bones and pottery fragments
filled with seed.

I've been picking
flesh and bones
since birth.
So many caves.
So many lodges.
Their ribs bent
around hearts that bleed
with fire. Eyes of electric storms,
sun stroke heat, fog smoke.
Screaming snow white-outs
in journeys I've taken.

I've used sign-language
here. On paper. On birch.
Laid beneath a tree, taken root
moved through sap thick with want.
Crying for this vision. I have no words for
this Dream.

No way to describe
the journey toward
the moon whose faces revealed
the maiden, the mother, the hag.
The old men whose beards covered
the clouds, canes tapping their way.

The eye that hovered
within my lair.
The scent of her medicine
wafted between the branches
I followed, trying to find
where she hid.

But
she is here.
Sitting. Standing. Sleeping.
Awake. This eye.

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Parliamentary Poet Laureate**