

kiwetinohk ohci

Samantha Nock

stop at the edge of everything—
bend down and stick your hands in the dirt.
grab a fist full of soil and pull it close: inhale.

this earth has been here
since before nicâpân set
one foot in front of the other.

southerners from the city keep calling these lands a wasteland
because in the south all they can see
is bountiful opportunity everywhere
but north of Hope.

i come from where frost explodes trees
where grandpa makes coffee on the campfire,
grounds spilling into fried eggs.
i come from hunting seasons
and midwinter snow drifts.

if you listened to me you would hear
that this place is where the world begins—
you can stand at the edge of the bluff
and see where muskrat danced.

the knowledge i have from surviving northern winters
has helped me in this city
but i would be lying if i said i didn't
dream of whiskeyjacks and grandpa's alarm clock
roaring the CBC at 6am.

if one more white environmentalist
tells me that
the north is a lost cause
i will show him
a lost cause

if you lay on your back along the sukunka
you can see every star
this is where nipapa
pointed and said:
“that’s the north star. if you’re ever lost
you can follow her home.”