

LEST WE FORGET THAT NATURE IS NOT OUR FRIEND

part i:

it is the beginning
of summer & the rain still

has not arrived

so, we gather
 in the mouth of an arroyo

singing dust into grass

sprinkle sacred water
collected from our travels
 —*pacific, cascade creek, & atlantic*

onto clay concretion
 brought to us

by the merging of earth & sky

the soil has been
seeded & still the rain

has not arrived

so, we come
 bearing our gift of voice

singing dust into grass

sprinkle sacred water
with the broadleaves of cattail
 —that provided our passage from water

onto clay concretion
 our offering sung

only by those, who are also *born for water*

the merging of earth & sky

part ii:

haschélti/talking god
it is calling me, *my child*
 —they have blessed me

abíní/morning light
it is calling me, *my child*
 —they have blessed me

naadáá algaii/white cornmeal
it is calling me, *my child*
 —they have blessed me

tádidiin/yellow corn pollen
it is calling me, *my child*
 —they have blessed me

aya'a'sh doot'izh/the blue bird
it is calling me, *my child*
 —they have blessed me

they are talking to me
 they are teaching me

haschélti/talking god
it is calling me, *my grandchild*
 —they have blessed me

abíní/morning light
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part iii:

in our language
we say, *tó'éí'íná'át'é*

—that *water is life*

the scorching heat
unfamiliar, arrives
to us like a stranger

summons the monsoon rain
earlier in the year than usual

a fuming penumbra
bruises the prairied
skyline ultraviolet

gone are the soft apparitions of virga
that touch down from heaven

their blessings the gift of water

instead, there is only carnage
a panting of warm rain, sways in cutting ribbons
their swells swallowing civilization whole

downing electrical utility poles
landslides grasping the highway
tearing through the cement effortlessly
—the failed bracing of nature

we wait for hours to cross the arroyo
near our house, that is now a raging river

when night falls gently, we are exhausted

the flooding is now low enough to cross
so, we make our way through slowly
the water nipping at our tires
—a humble reminder of our lashing

frogs croon in the darkness
as lightning flickers in the distance
beyond the pale halo of our porch light

we say in our language
with bated breath, *tó éí íná át'é*

—that *water is life*

this is rapture, but not of the biblical sort

nahasdzáán
our mothers' mother

provides for all her children

part iv:

the earth moved
the atmosphere moved

i was raised in the clouds
i am the lightning
the lightning is black

when i walk
there is going to
be black arrows
shooting from my feet

in front of my feet
in front of my calves
in front of my knees

this is my armor

i have all this
power inside of me

it can't be penetrated
it can't be damaged
it lives inside of me

it is going across my chin
it is going to be yellow
it is going to be my bow

white across my brow

i have two horns
lightning coming from each of them

all these people who harm me i will destroy