

## Ishpadinaa

If I write in small characters no one will notice my grandma's lying on a picnic table in Dufferin Grove Park.

aanikoobijigan: ancestor  
aanikoobijigan: great grand child  
aanikoobijigan: great grand mother

The sign in the park says: When an Indian dies on a picnic table in downtown Toronto, call 911.

*she says to me "do not touch me. do not call 911. and get that fucking look off of your face."*

People keep stopping and asking if we want help. Like dads with jobs and espresso and buggies and couples with indoor scarves, sick in love. It's because no one is calling 911. They are trying to be nice because the scene doesn't make sense.

*she says to me "i got really smart by reading every book in the rockton library, or maybe you don't think I am so smart, little miss phd."*

I tell myself that this is a good place to die, even though there are hotdogs and cake and balloons. It's outside. There are no fluorescent lights. There's no one trying to fix the damage that can't be fixed. She doesn't want death to be like a math test, I tell myself.

*she says to me "all husbands are boring, so pick one that lets you do whatever you want".*

I notice her fetal skeleton underneath ironed polyester dress pants. The loving family is locked in a telephone booth of rising anxiety. We are stretching our necks out to take the last sips of air.

*she says to me "if you don't have 7up you can mix vodka with beer."*

The kids are digging large holes in the sand and then placing driftwood across the holes to make bridges. I don't know where they got the driftwood, its downtown Toronto, but I'm glad they are not paying any attention.

*she says to me "you work too hard, you'll never be happy."*

aanikoobijigan: to tie together, a bond, a link  
aanikoobijigan: my broken paper chain from when I was six  
aanikoobijigan: to measure loss

(Ishpadinaa means a hill.)

