

small pox, anyone?

I. the blanket

she rolled a woman up
in a blanket from the Bay
and rolled her down a hill
to remind everyone
that blankets are for swaddling
and not for small pox.

I went down the very same hill
with wet mittens and soggy boots
on a plastic toboggan,
a zehrs bag,
a cardboard box
and my raincoat.

the teacher is telling me I should feel proud because toboggan is an Indian word. I am telling the teacher that out of everything, this is a strange thing to feel proud about, but she's disagrees, "I think your cultural heritage is a mighty fine thing to feel proud about Leanne and I think it will lead to great success in your studies".

II. body language

the duke and dutchess are coming to visit
and all she had to wear
were ripped jeans and black tshirts
so she made a dress with saucers for nipples and
a beaver lodge for a bustle.

If you would just read more post colonial theory, you understand that your anger is part of the binary of colonialism and therefore colonial and if you just take some of the things from settlers and some of the things from your ancestors, you'll find you can weave them into a really nice tapestry, which will make the colonizers feel ambivalent and then you've altered the power structure.

I liked the saucers for nipples idea
so much that I start
wearing dinner plates around the house
over tshirts

I liked the idea of wearing dinner plates
over tshirts

so much that I started wearing dinner plates
over tshirts and
under plaid shirts

mom starts shouting
into the phone
“she’s wearing those dinner plates again”
starting off low and slow,
accelerating into a crescendo
of “PLATES AGAIN!”

III. fountain

after the dress,
she made a fountain
but not the kind you throw money into
and wish to fall in love or win the lottery

the kind that says
hey, anishinaabekwewag are stuck in this
endless goddamn loop
and nobody gives a shit.

*Your work is polemic. If you could re-write the tone of this article to avoid shaming
Canadians into a paralysis of guilt and inaction we could move forward with the
publication of your article.*

IV. fringe

it’s montreal
and I think it’s spring
because I remember
garbage on the sidewalk.

you start the sentence with
“the reclining figure in white people art...”
and everyone stops listening.

he’s mad because
he dropped his bagel
on the ground
and no other kids
have to go to
fucking art galleries.

she thinks the woman

in the light box looks cold
and starts talking about
growing up and
making hamster houses
out of old computers
for her job.

I'm wondering:
when I cut my back like that
can you sew me up
the same way with
the fringe and the beads?

V. gitchidaakwe's sign said:

I AM WORTH MORE
THAN 1 MILLION
DOLLARS
TO MY PEOPLE

note: the first four subtitles in this piece are taken from performances by Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore as is the phrase "I am worth more than 1 million dollars to my people."