

Kintail Beach  
Eugenia Zuroski

for Ki'en

1.

first, the glass green lake  
rustling into daylight:  
gull, crow, song sparrow

a curve this way and  
that, the shoreline sinuous,  
the horizon sharp

I write on paper  
that cost more than I  
will ever tell you

*feel this* I tell her  
and she does—an unmarked page  
impossibly smooth

something in the house  
makes it hard for her to breathe  
we sit on the beach

too wet for a walk  
perhaps, but to be honest  
I really don't know

2.

a bird makes that sound  
like a glass bell: resonant,  
unidentified

how does one get known  
for one's lineation skills?  
someone please tell me

sources of feedback:  
reviewers, output signals,  
pen nib on paper

we walk gravel roads  
until the tired sky gives way  
jeans and sweatshirt drenched

*she lineated*  
*like no one's business they'd say*  
*oh such rectitude*

I could spend all day  
trying to master a link;  
grackle chases crow

I read *The Swimmers*  
and I want to swim even  
though I hate swimming

like when we watched that  
film about captions and I  
had to make omelettes

the way of the egg  
the way of the omelette pan  
the way of the line

house wren in the rain  
the first song of a new day  
I write it in green

3.

*your body is no  
temple; it's a forest says  
the yoga lady*

I sit on my mat  
and imagine roots spreading  
down through my butt cheeks

the rain on the roof  
the bird snickering outside  
a bespoke soundscape

today I will write from  
my forest's humblest parts  
the soft, crumbly bits

the cedars out front  
standing runnels of water  
they bow and they nod

4.

our fire is burning  
the lake swollen with rain  
driftwood in the sand

*why do Christians cleave  
God from nature? you ask me  
as the drugs kick in*

the sun a sliver  
of fierce red. I say *She's too  
unpredictable*

I take ten phone pics  
declaring *I love you, you  
photogenic bitch*

runoff cuts this beach  
from that. in the sand, jogger's  
footprints back and forth

5.

wrote a wine review:  
*it's hibiscus tea, but wine*  
this is my job now

I read your tarot:  
*Enough; A Knight's Tale; Step Up*  
(cabin DVDs)

and I want to live  
knowing you leapt naked  
into every lake

and I want to die  
knowing Keanu Reeves was  
a really good guy

6.

birds feast at daybreak  
Thursday's moody waters slap  
the rocky shoreline

wren atop the pine  
a steady, insistent song  
out a tiny bird

when we took that walk  
trees full of cedar waxwings:  
I will remember

7.

Emmerich with no  
resources: we watch  
2012: *Supernova*

*just be calm* he said  
to the corpse in the hallway  
as he saved the world

*is this porn?* I ask  
*it has the budget of porn*  
so yes you answer

8.

rabbit on gravel  
crosses the path to visit  
the shade of cedars

we watch *The O.C.*  
and you don't know what will happen  
to Marissa

oh Channing, oh Ben  
McKenzie, you embody  
unfallen angels

we stock up on wine  
to worship in the chapel  
of Saint Heath Ledger

*Adam Brody and  
Rachel Bilson got married*  
I tell you—*I think*

(I am wrong, of course  
but they did date and they seem  
like happy people)

9.

the cards tell me how  
to be: a self-satisfied  
octopus poet

every tentacle  
a muscle of prosody  
awash in spilled ink

on the sunny beach  
an embassy of geese warns  
us of coming storm

on my morning walk  
I serenade myself with  
Backstreet Boys ballads

marvel at veins of  
orange in a dark green stone  
solid gray when dry

pacing as if my  
nine of pentacles is here  
in these very sands

that I might croon my  
life's work out of myself by  
lulling it present

I took the geese for  
a sandbar or an islet—  
a whole barge of geese

the storm hits briskly  
reminds us we could blow away  
but no, not today

10.

an older woman  
joins us in the late day sun  
talks about family

she has had and lost  
so many—but only one  
to COVID, she says

she wants to be brown  
(like us) and she imagines  
you with “the right man”

*to be honest, Linda  
right now I'm more interested  
in women you say*

she tells us about  
her trans grandchild, who died young  
but not of violence

11.

Summer as Wonder  
Woman—why oh why won't she  
and Anna hook up

you have invented  
a potato meal that makes  
us so contented

the bathroom light switch  
always looks off, even when  
it's on—confusing

the box set's Disc 3  
is missing—we make great strides  
into the season

12.

sitting here with you  
finding space for routine in  
the Age of Great Lakes

however many  
particles involved in the  
glint of sun off wave

at 3:54 pm:  
I am nestled  
in its decimal points

counting for nearly  
nothing, mathematical fact  
implausibly real

I wrote this for you  
because the water arrives  
over and over

This book was written during a June 2022 visit to Kintail Beach on Lake Huron, in the traditional territories of the Anishnaabeg, Odawa, and Mississauga peoples. I humbly acknowledge that my presence in this place has been made possible by overlapping histories of colonization and submit these poems as part of an ongoing practice in relating to people and places in anticolonial ways.

Eugenia Zuroski is a poet and scholar of literature and cultural studies. An American of Chinese, Polish, and Italian descent, she grew up in a suburb of Rochester, NY, moved all around on the tides of academia, and is now back in Dish With One Spoon territory, living and writing in Hamilton, Ontario.

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