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## Two Poems

Clea Roberts

*University of British Columbia*

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## Riverine

Where the Nisutlin grew shallow  
and swift, we rested our

paddles on the gunwales,  
only dipping them to steer.

We watched the riverbed,  
the astonishing velocity

of the round, green boulders  
passing beneath us,

and the red-backed spawners

slipping upstream through  
the shadows cast by clouds.

And the kingfisher  
we startled into flight, gliding

furtively from one sweeper to the next,  
while the small bruin raised its snout

in the air, and catching our scent,  
turned back into the forest

as we drifted by  
and around the bend.

---

Every night the wolves called  
into the unreachable parts of us

and you laughed in your sleep.  
It wasn't your usual laugh—

it belonged to the woman  
who walked naked into the river

each morning, right to the top of her thighs,  
and sunk down, purposefully,

kneeling on the soft gravel to bathe, to see  
every heartache suddenly flattened

and carried away on the river's  
sun-scalloped surface,

a driftwood fire  
blazing on the shore.

## Mountain Walking

These early mornings  
ravens dismantle

my dreams, dropping  
pine cones, then

their quivering, watery  
questions, the tent

translucent as an eyelid.

---

Rustle of goose down, growl  
of sleeping bag zipper,

sweat and woodsmoke  
in Linnea's morning hair—

mountain heliotrope's slow  
acquisition of the rising sun.

---

A slow walk  
between  
the krummholz  
and dwarf birch.

Lichen-painted scree  
to the lookout

where the soul tightens  
and pulls in the wind.

---

Spaciously—

this is the way  
the living walk

after they pierce  
the firmament

with their heads.

---

Dust on my boots, a black  
stream edged with ice,

and the whistle of the pika,  
so unadorned and fierce

it tugs at the sky  
where the cranes kettle

always on the verge  
of an alphabet.

**CLEA ROBERTS** lives on the outskirts of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Her debut collection of poems, *Here Is Where We Disembark* (Freehand Books, 2010), was a finalist for the League of Canadian Poets' Gerald Lampert Award, was nominated for the ReLit Award, and was translated into German and Japanese. Clea's poems have been published in journals and anthologies in Canada, Europe, the United States, and Australia. She facilitates a workshop on poetry and grief through Hospice Yukon and is the artistic director of the Kicksled Reading Series.

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