

native

*my tribe glides the spirit realm
now our clan walks the sky
like scattered stars tracking moon
or conversations carried on the breeze
when you walk barefoot on the grass
feeling us, but can no longer see*

*all for nothing
lost in something
outside the ring
wearing snake's skin
our dreams making messengers of the winds.*

i've heard it all before, grandfather.
if you take your elders' words as law
they become written in stone.
rocks at the head of your final bed
I want no words there but my own.

*then head west my son, chasing dawn
wander 'cross clouds like salmon spawning
roar like brother bear, going nowhere
lost time's a wound you can't repair
so rest only in the evening's yearning
find "walks in moonlight," dreamer in twilight*

*might be mother,
or maybe my bride
cries like sea brine
blind to sunshine
her silhouette drawn all curves and light.*

when you're destined to return to mother
it's natural to cry to father sky
"take me away to the sun." but
grandfather, every time I ride the mountains
to chase the clouds, they run away.

*you're only ever as fast as yourself
you're only ever trailing yourself
all just hunting against ourselves
how far you must run, little one
before you feel you've had enough to
find you've lived the life you wanted.*

I want to look down from the clouds.
you'll look down from heaven.
but I want to look now.

I can only struggle to hear
the choir of the evening's churning
“where is my daughter the moon
she only comes out at night”
lighting the way in whisper-tints.

*wouldn't you shine twice as bright
to lead your loved one to the light?*

I never knew that pink made gold
til the sunset painted my way home
where circle stands, I plant my paws
like mists and fog retract their claws
as though retreating from the mountains.

*when you survey their surrender,
heed the phrase of your footsteps falling
their words cutting like flint arrow
sear the conscience from your brow
and the sweat from your soul. so stabbed,
tread where you mean, and say where you go*

*mind your footfall,
they betray us all
paving our faults
'til we mind the call
to be borne on the back of father crow.*

we sleep to remind ourselves
that we won't always rise
so wake up hungry,
lifted up to city rains
where sidewalk sprinkler stains
leave traces like concrete animals
on pavement laid to hide the way
once smooth as river rock,
like the tongue of a man with something to sell
we navigate this metal forest hell
beating the skin, the drum within
where pump the notes of loneliness
and how they always echo.

*but you can always return to the meadow
to trade memories in stories heard before
falling on blades of grass.*