

The Tinkerer

Recurring as a child,
You had a dream

You were a Mi'kmaq scout, a boy, vaulting
Off a cliff.

You were the only one of us
Who dreamt as from another person.

This gave me real chills,
Up my back, around my shoulders,
Because I knew that this boy
Was, undoubtedly, a real Algonquin boy.

Maybe he failed his rite of passage
And was ashamed. Maybe
This *was* his rite of passage;
A celebration, a leap for the rush.

And when our old friend
Chimed she had tried, when she was younger,
To will herself to dream of candy,
She explained the closest she got

Was one somnambulant night waking
To find the corner of her room
Morphing into a cross-section
Of delectable honeycomb.

Stumbling, breaking into the cell wall,
She partook.

These, along with other sublimations—retractable teeth—
Goatmother camcorders—a child's barkyard caldron—
And a final solvable scenario
Shook me—how?

How does consciousness deepen into
The abyss and fish out more than
Just images?

Clutching her neck with one hand,
My wife tells her story, gesturing with the other:
She was walking on a trail in the Finger Lakes.

I was there...our friend Hannah...
We came across a woodsman,
By a wigwam structure in a small clearing, sitting
On his heels, building
Purposeful trinkets from forest litter.

He proceeded to show us his method
Of rendering a nourishing drink
From creekwater and orange lichen.
We stood there amazed, but drifted away—

When we returned
We found him lying face-up,
Contraptions strewn about,

Splayed out like the Vitruvian Man,

Sternum split, digits methodically

Arrayed at the end of each outstretched arm, each straightened leg,

And organs missing.

Who could have done this?

Zachary Clementz

Inspiration: *Childhood Discoveries* by Nora Faber