

traveling:

across

through

down

in(words

by Daniela Bouneva Elza

“The city carries such a cargo of pathos and longing
that daily life there vaccinates us against revelation.”
—Pain not Bread
(Introduction to the introduction to Wang Wei)

Vancouver

we start here	by leaving.	the coffee taste of
early morning	streets.	
		the neon
effort of	signs	to summon
emptiness.	the mist	
	that	cools
the day's	unwanted	
	news—	charcoal
smudges		across
the white		noise of the
yawning		sky.

“So I blurred my eyes
and gazed towards
the brim of my hat
and saw a new world.
I saw pale white circles
roll up, roll up, like
the world’s turning,
mute and perfect,
and I saw
the linear flashes,
gleaming silver,
like stars
being born
at random
down a rolling
scroll of time.
Something broke
and something opened.
[...] I breathed
an air like light;
I saw a light
like water.
—Annie Dillard
(*Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*)

“Whatever the thing, heart or mind,
it is easily made glad when unobserved.”
—Karen Solie
(*Modern and Normal*)

Osoyoos

the poplars are a mountain river
rushing over through
into the sky. under

leaves in eddies of silver wind
words come face to face with
iridescent fish nipping at their meaning.

in our confusion through time
water
rushes.

poplars understand space—

fluid wind sky earth

roots leaves.

or are they

schools and schools of fish?
bodies dreaming
through viscous light.

syllabic ripples as seen through
tiny lenses
(where one grain of sand
distorts) time

beneath

the rushing

"The swindler has gone before us
and has left the doors of words open."
—Lyubomir Levchev
(*Ashes of Light*)

on the way to Nelson

I have not seen even one crow today.
afraid
to land in
the sound of
the river
all I have is
(this moment)
wrapped
around me—
a memory
in which I spend my days
remembering
how I have
been here
before.
this distance
re-named.
afraid
to enter the words I have
laid out for the crows: poisoned
little traps their teeth sharpened
polished
by history.

“The main battlefield for good is not
the open ground of the public arena,
but the small clearing of each heart.”
—Yann Martel
(The Life of Pi)

drawing	maps	with bones
we have white raven	a language has died.	but we repeat.
pour deep cups	wine as if it were	in ceremonial words read.
to remember	this white bird. we bury	
a journey taste bitter	in gratitude. in the back	past sounds of the throat.
a song	stomped	underfoot.
time: talisman	a detailed lost	totem in sand.
fossilized graffiti—	songs unreadable	turned inaudible.
only the beat	the fingers that raged	can feel in the feet
(the tip of red	white feathers) in a cage.	the pulse a memory of
black earth	between	the toes.

"No sutras, no hymns, no doctrine,
but nature with its personal implications."
—Pain not Bread
(Introduction to the introduction to Wang Wei)

the Kootenays

in search of flowers	wildness	we picked
memories hand.	here. in the open one petal at	childhood
a scent		a time.
	(surprising me)	
a sound		a word can be
	what I have. misplaced)	filled with
in the light we sit with our	of the hands	moon
blooming.		

“What glitters in things is a mountain, it can’t be held in the mouth.”
—Tim Lilburn

through The Rockies

again

car trunk packed tight. the kids
drew maps of black bear moose

long-horned sheep
camouflaged on the rocks.

breath- taking peaks.

there

bright red flower—

Indian

paint

brush.

“The acquisition of knowledge is not only a process of transformation
for the one who comes to know; it is also a process of creation for the world at large.”

—Shimon Malin
(*The Eye that Sees Itself*)

the way (of the r i v e r

I take the path by the river. stop
where the willow bows its head

to the water. *I am*

the passing of time. a shifting.
point of view. slender fragile branches

sweep the surface *of this m o m e n t*
in a permanent caress.
(N (o) w)

flickering a string of

moments where I remember myself
as before

this moment. l i n g e r here
in its making.

again

pop.cans. cups. bear.bottles. butts.

I bow my head to the r u s h i n g
*
the (p (o (o) l i) n) g

where the water s t y r o- f o a m s.

each time

the shiver
(*of knowing.*)

"We need to find our own way to take this place into our mouth;
we must re-say our past in such a way that it will gather us here."

—Tim Lilburn
(*Going Home*)

pilgrims of light

venture inland and
you know

(luminous

before
naming—

shifting iridescent
surfaces.

where we lay our heads
on the edge of glaciers.

where

we are ancient

dreaming.

every moment is distance—

a light intake of breath,
a slight startle.
names are

after- thoughts—
the bones

of small things.

the distances between us— the breaking
of light on the tongue.

