



Writing as Resurgent Presencing: An Urban Coyote Curriculum

*Aubrey Jean Hanson
University of Calgary*

Abstract:

In this article, I contemplate the importance of writing to my wellbeing; I reflect on how urban Indigenous presence is enacted and theorized; and I consider an encounter with a coyote during a daily walk. These three narratives are brought together through a textual weaving or *métissage*. Through this interweaving, and by enacting place-based, relational storying, I undertake a curricular inquiry into *presence* and *presencing*. This contemplative inquiry emerges from a particular time and place: from deep in the second winter of the COVID-19 pandemic, from my positionality as an urban Indigenous person, and from my day-to-day existence as a scholar and human being.

Keywords: *métissage*, writing, coyotes, urban Indigeneity, resurgent presencing, Indigenous arts

L'écriture : la présence renaissance d'un curriculum « coyote urbain »

Résumé :

Dans cet article, je réfléchis à l'importance d'écrire pour mon bien-être ; je réfléchis à la manière dont la présence autochtone urbaine est mise en œuvre et théorisée ; et j'envisage une rencontre avec un coyote lors d'une promenade quotidienne. Ces trois récits sont réunis à travers un tissage textuel—un *métissage*. Grâce à cet entrelacement et en mettant en scène des récits relationnels basés sur le lieu, j'entreprends une enquête pédagogique sur la *présence* (en tant qu'état) ainsi que l'action *d'être présent*. Cette enquête contemplative émerge d'un moment et d'un lieu particuliers : du deuxième hiver de la pandémie de COVID-19, de ma position en tant qu'Autochtone urbain et de mon existence quotidienne en tant que chercheuse et être humain.

Mots clés : *métissage*, écriture, coyotes, indigénéité urbaine; présence renaissante; arts autochtones

Suggesting that everything is teaching you—that it has a *story* to tell if we are able to learn how to hear it—is a profoundly ecological, scholarly, and contemplative act, and an act of refuge.

(Seidel & Jardine, 2016, p. 1)

Wondering, wandering and weaving, this article is a meditation on presence and writing, sparked by an encounter with an urban coyote. Storying this coyote encounter helps me to interpret and understand my circumstances in *the present moment*. This particular present moment is the early months of 2021, when the world is deep in the COVID-19 pandemic, and I am seeking balance, reaching for wellness. I am a scholar of Métis and Euro-settler ancestry, living in the city of Calgary and working in the broad field of Indigenous education. This writing is a curricular inquiry, one that functions through place-based, relational storying, and which teaches me about knowing, being and doing. With this piece I hope to practice radical self-love and acceptance of my own limitations and gifts. I also hope to share with others one way to spend time with the interpretability of our daily encounters. I hope to centre a practice of writing and reflection at the heart of my existence as a scholar and human being in this time and place. Additionally, I hope to break trail for upcoming work that I will be doing on Indigenous arts in urban spaces. As I explore these experiences, I extend my gratitude to the coyote for guiding me toward a curriculum of presence.

I share these interpretations and understandings through the method of *métissage*, by which I mean textual weaving, as articulated and practiced within curriculum studies and Indigenous education circles (Chambers et al., 2008; Donald, 2012; Hanson, 2017; Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2009). In coming to enact *métissage* in their 2009 collaborative book, Erica Hasebe-Ludt, Cynthia Chambers and Carl Leggo describe their intentions with this approach:

Performing a *métissage* of texts . . . is a singular and collective act of re/creation . . . [in which] we assert the relevance, the legitimacy, indeed the necessity of including the full range of our humanness in our work of re/membering ourselves in/to the world, embracing the world, with all our relations. (p. 10)

The type of *métissage* work that these scholars describe is polyvocal and relational as it weaves together diverse voices and life stories. While I am writing on my own, I nevertheless invoke this relational spirit by storying my encounters with others. Following in the footsteps of these scholars, and others such as Dwayne Donald (2012), my explorations here take shape through a textual interweaving, a braiding-together of distinct lines of thought.

Specifically, in this contemplative piece, I weave together three narrative strands. In strand one, I share my moment with the coyote and meditate on how her presence is entangled with mine. In strand two, I reflect on how the current pandemic has drawn my attention back to the urgency of my daily writing practice. In strand three, I sit with recent theorizations of Indigenous resurgence to consider urban Indigenous presence. Through this narrative weaving, I work to understand how my story, as an urban Métis woman, comes to be shaped in relation to the lives of others—and through the meaning-making work of writing.

Strand One: Encountering the Coyote

On our morning walk with the dog, my partner and I see a coyote, just there. A magpie bobs along behind her as she stands still, regarding us. I've seen coyotes in the city before, but never in our neighbourhood, which is fairly urban, a busy part of the relatively inner city. I suspect that the magpie is, cautiously, trying to chase her away. The magpie recruits a friend, and they chatter together, giving the coyote a swoop with their glossy wings before retreating to the safety of a nearby spruce tree. I regard the coyote, taking in her calm, silent demeanour, keeping an eye on my dog, who is equally still and calm, simply watching this creature he has never before seen on our morning route. I am briefly grateful, as I often am, for how docile, how unexcitable our dog is—115 lbs of slow, quiet pleasantness. And so we stand, the three of us, my partner snapping a few pictures, texting the kids to keep their eyes open when they pass near this spot in a few minutes on their way to the school bus. Watching the coyote, I wonder at her stillness, and try to ascertain whether she is lost.

Strand Two: Writing Matters

When the world went sideways, I stopped writing. Admittedly, I had struggled to find time to write before that. To be more honest, I should say I struggled to *make* time. There's always time, but it is a question of what I prioritize. In *the before time* I prioritized many, many things. I am, after all, many things: partner, mother, daughter, sister, cousin, auntie, friend, teacher, supervisor, mentor, scholar, academic community member, member of the Métis Nation, emptier of inboxes and slayer of to-do lists, just to name a few. Was writing in there somewhere? I know that, for many, the pandemic has been a time of reckoning. It has become a time for laying out what our lives were like before and examining them with some difficult honesty. During this uninvited, unwelcome halt, I am realizing (not for the first time in my life, but with a particular urgency) that I need to be more intentional about what I make time for. It is hard for me: I am positive, and creative, and enthusiastic. A divergent thinker, I am into everything, and I get excited by everything. I want to do everything, but I cannot do everything all of the time, especially not when it means that the most essential, nourishing things are the things sliding down the to-do list.

Strand One: Encountering the Coyote

In the slow march of seconds that is our silent companionship with the coyote, my brain takes many paths, pulls up many associations. I recall the last coyote I saw in the city, a bigger, bushier-tailed one I saw closer to the parks along the river. The difference in size is what makes me think this one is female, but I do not know that for sure; I am guessing, really. That bigger one, months before, seemed less out of place, loping purposefully across the curved road and disappearing into the brush on the hillside. I remember my partner's stories about the coyotes out on the family farm in northern Alberta, who would romp with the dogs in the daytime but then lure them out at night, into the woods, where any incautious dog might be torn apart. I remember what I know about wild creatures in the city, recall an exhibit we went to one time in England that documented the growth of the London fox population. I remember the late night in Dublin, Ireland, when, after listening to

Indigenous Elders and storytellers over an international conference dinner—four Elders, four stories—we had tumbled out into the humid, dark night to stroll back to our hotel. Along our walk, we saw foxes—one, two, three, four. The first one had trotted after the car full of Elders as if he had been tasked with ensuring their safe arrival home. Remembering the four foxes makes me remember the bats we saw the night after that. Building on the success of our walk the night before, we had stepped out once again into the Dublin night. On that much longer walk we watched for foxes again but, instead, as we put our feet onto the bridge to cross the river, we found bats, dozens and dozens of them, completing their complicated aerial loops over the water. We stood and watched them, marvelling at how the lives of so many other beings go on without our knowing of them, all around the world. What a gift it is to be able to encounter someone or something new, even for a moment.

Strand Two: Writing Matters

When the pandemic first struck us, I was in the middle of a teaching term. I mark that time by that weekend in mid-March of 2020 when I had managed to get my partner home from Spain on an early flight just as Madrid had gone into its first lockdown; and when we had just had a big family dinner at my mom's house to celebrate her birthday—an event that is hard to imagine now, in these early months of 2021. It was the weekend when my kids and I moved out of our house so my partner could self-isolate at home upon his international return. The weekend when we learned that schools would not reopen on Monday, so that my one child was happy-dancing in the living room while the other one took to her bed in despair. In the shock and turmoil of those initial days and weeks, I focused on taking care of others: children, students, grad students, colleagues, friends, family. I showed up, made extra time, was kinder. I was clearer about what I needed from others, flexed some expectations for students, found new modalities, stayed informed, stayed home, stayed isolated. I felt, and knew, that prioritizing others was the right thing to do, the necessary thing. I stopped writing.

Strand Three: Enacting Urban Indigenous Presence

As a scholar in Indigenous education and Indigenous literary studies, I find myself continually drawn to the writings of Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. With her fierce mind, rigorous logic and quiet refusals, Simpson has been articulating challenging and inspiring visions of Indigenous resurgence for more than a decade. Particularly compelling for me and my work right now is her notion of *presencing* (Simpson, 2017, p. 20). This notion arises in the context of bringing Indigenous knowledges and traditions, or ways of knowing-being-doing, into the present tense and into action. Indigenous languages are verb based; the world in Indigenous knowledge systems is shaped by webs of inter-relationality and interdependence between animate beings. Indigeneity is not just a state of being, but rather one of doing. Indigenous knowledges and lifeways, in Simpson's (2017) formulations, are kinetic. She turns Indigenous presence into a gerund, into the present continuous, into an action, an ongoing state of doing: *presence-ing*. *Presencing* ties the past and the future together with the present into an eternal stream of continuous Indigenous presence: here on the land, in relation to our Peoplehood, in relation to our self-determination. The resurgence of Indigenous lifeways is about the continual assertion of Indigenous presence.

Indigenous Peoples have been and continue to be here. We live out our lives through our ways of understanding the world, our ways of governing ourselves, and our ways of living in relation with other beings (Simpson, 2017). Indigenous Peoples are present, presencing. We are still here, living as we always have, despite centuries of attempted genocide and erasure. We are still here and going about our Indigeneity, she says, “as we have always done” (Simpson, 2017, p. 247).

Strand Two: Writing Matters

A while after the world went sideways, an uncountable number of weeks into the alleged new normal, I started to hear rumours that others were using their extra time to write, were in fact getting a lot of writing done. In the relative quiet, amidst the urgent halt, they were catching up on articles, submitting pieces to journals, succeeding in publishing. These rumours enraged me. I am a relatively calm soul, and I work hard on my positive disposition, on bringing good energy to those I encounter every day, but I do have an angry streak. I simply could not forgive these imaginary people who were merrily writing away while the world around them struggled with collective crises and increased responsibilities. I could not fathom what it would be like to have the extra time to get ahead on articles. *Who were these people with no ties*, I fumed, *with no children or friends or community members or students to take care of? Who had no physical or mental health issues to struggle with? Where were these rumoured people who were “acting as if they had no relations”* (King, 1993, p. 351)? *Writing*, I raged! *Getting ahead of the rest of us*, I ranted! I was indignant and I said so to anyone who would listen, hollering over Zoom screens and phone lines. I imagined ahead, to the CVs and performance reviews and job applications and funding proposals of this glossy, able-bodied, dependent-less, privileged crowd, and I seethed at how they would get ahead of their peers who had more going on, more obligations. I knew in my heart that I was doing the right thing by taking care of the people in my life and that the rest would follow. Nothing was to be done about it. Leaving my anger unresolved, I went back to looking after my family, classes and students.

Strand One: Encountering the Coyote

I talk to my mom later that night on the phone and tell her about the coyote. She lives here in Calgary, too; this city has been home for us both for most of our lives. My maternal grandparents moved here from Saskatchewan in the 1960s and made it home for their lively crew of nine children. As someone from a Métis and German-settler family, I will always be a prairie person, called to the wide-open grasslands and expansive skies of the plains. But here in this city, I sit nestled with the prairies to my east and the reassuring backbone of the Rocky Mountains to my west, comfortable in the rolling foothills, with valleys drawn by the Bow and Elbow Rivers. Calgary is a massive urban centre in terms of sprawl, and while we have a lot of park space and even wild places, it is not common for me to see coyotes where I live. However, I have heard more and more stories lately about wildlife sightings in local neighbourhoods. A couple of weeks ago, my neighbours even spotted a bobcat who had been successful in catching a jackrabbit under the trees in our communal courtyard. I wonder if it is the lockdown that is causing this growth in urban wildlife stories, or if it is

a slow-moving dynamic brought on by habitat destruction and climate change.¹ Or maybe my perceptions are simply off; maybe these animals were always there, and I am only now beginning to pay attention. On the phone with my mom, she tells me about a show she watched on TV that told the truth about urban wildlife, that they are here all the time, that the coyote you catch a glimpse of only-so-rarely might in fact be spending its nights in the quiet corner behind your garage.

Strand Two: Writing Matters

I can see, now, that my anger about other people writing during the pandemic needed to be unpacked. There is clearly a social justice issue present, and others have been taking that issue on directly (Flaherty, 2020; Oleschuk, 2020; Peters, 2020; Viglione, 2020). However, there is something else that all my stormy feelings have uncovered, and that is the default assumption that writing is like dessert, to be eaten only after I have finished my main meal. What if, contrary to my own self-destructive logics, writing is not dispensable, not a thing to be done when the necessary work is finished? What would things look like for me if I acknowledged its central place in my lifeworld? I know, in fact, that writing is not a luxury. Audre Lorde (1984) taught me this truth years ago in her essay "Poetry Is Not a Luxury", but, apparently, I keep forgetting. Writing is something essential and enlivening that sustains everything else I do. It is the proverbial oxygen mask that parents know about from airplanes and from keeping themselves alive amidst the innumerable responsibilities of family life. It is like the urgent, necessary ties that humans forge and sustain through chosen family and intentional kinships when we do not take family for granted. It is like love. It is the thing I need to do to keep myself well so that I can be there for others. The oxygen mask analogy teaches me that I cannot support anyone else if I am unconscious in my seat, so to speak. If I am so brittle and angry from burnout that I cannot see straight, cannot remember who I am, how can I really show up for anyone else? It took me months and months into the pandemic, maybe until this moment just now, to realize that the way forward is not to stretch myself further and further to support others, to grow and extend my capacity outward, but rather to return to my centre. To lean on the language of yoga instructor Adriene Mishler (n.d.), who has also been helping me learn to survive as a whole human in the pandemic, I need to strengthen and nourish my core, so that I can be stronger and surer of my balance when I reach outward each day. I need to write. This practice is an enactment of my very own "Curriculum for Miracles," which "knows that life is this fragile *inhale* and *exhale* that encircles the planet" (Seidel, 2012, p. 280).

Strand Three: Enacting Urban Indigenous Presence

Simpson's (2017) notion of presencing is heavily influenced by the thinking of Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014), in particular by his formulations on *grounded normativity* (p. 13). Building on the work of the Black and anti-colonial theorist Frantz Fanon, Coulthard takes a materialist-informed approach to understanding Indigenous resistance. Grappling with notions of *recognition* for Indigenous Peoples, such as those provided through the mechanisms of the state,

¹ A while after drafting this piece, I heard this line of thought pursued in a fascinating episode of the CBC science show *Quirks and Quarks with Bob McDonald* (McDonald, 2021), which I recommend to readers.

Coulthard advances the contention that Indigenous Peoples instead need to be rallying for *resurgence*. And we are, he contends, if you look at recent movements like Idle No More (Coulthard, 2014, pp. 154-165). Grounded normativity, then, is the everyday, place-based practice of resurgence in Indigenous lives. It means living out each day through Indigenous lifeways, seeing the world through our own lenses, shaping our actions through, and in the service of, Indigenous self-determination, in relation to land. Simpson (2017) builds on this notion to show that we are bound together in webs of relationality that entangle the myriad other beings in this world, that connect our ancestors and our descendants, and that carry our stories forward and backward through time. Living out Indigenous presence means enacting Indigeneity here and now, bringing the enduring ways of our Peoples into the present, to make space for Indigenous futures (p. 228).

Strand One: Encountering the Coyote

After that phone call with my mom, I reflect back on my quiet moment of stillness, standing there watching the coyote and wondering if she was out of place, watchful for any signs of distress or agitation, expecting that she was off her usual route since she had made her way into mine. But what if she was just as at home as I was? What if she was an urban coyote, adept dodger of city buses and swift catcher of plump hares? Why had I assumed she was out of place? After all, she had not stood there for long, but had trotted off through the spruce trees and dodged down a side walkway, evidently on her way to somewhere. She had given off no sign that she was lost. My partner and I, in turn, had continued on our loop with the dog, around the park and back home, and had not seen the coyote again. Presumably she had gone about her business, just as I had gone about mine. These reflections pulled me up short, “break[ing] the spell of [my] own fore-meanings” (Gadamer 1960/2004, p. 270). How could I know what *home* meant to that coyote? The central thread of my current research, which I am undertaking with Métis scholar Vicki Bouvier,² pursues the misconception that Indigenous people are out of place in Canadian cities, by looking at how Indigenous artists are expressing their creativity and presence in urban spaces. Bouvier and I are looking at how Indigenous arts might unsettle the settler colonial city, reasserting that this has always been, and continues to be, Indigenous territory, and that Indigenous people belong here, integral within the webs of relationships that make up contemporary urban life. Urban Indigenous Peoples are, of course, not the same as urban wildlife. But still: why had I had viewed my friend the coyote with the assumption that *she* did not know her way around *my* neighbourhood?

Strand Two: Writing Matters

When I was in the thick of finishing my PhD, years ago, I understood the urgent business of making space for writing. Due to a constellation of improbable circumstances, the year I did the bulk of the writing on my dissertation was spent in another city. My partner had a full-year sabbatical and a visiting scholar position at McGill, so I went along to Montreal and organized my life around writing. We got up each morning and walked our kids to school, then went for a run. (Or something

² A significant focus in Bouvier’s research is what it means to be Michif/Métis in urban places. Please see her 2019 article and her 2022 doctoral dissertation, as a start.

that looked like a run, as I navigated myself—wheezing, asthmatic and ever afraid of twisting my ankles—cautiously over the uneven sidewalks and oh-so-slowly up the enormous, leaf-strewn bulk of the mountain.) Ready and energized, two hours ahead of the time zone of my colleagues on campus, I sat down to write. First thing in the day. Before opening my email. Before doing anything else related to work. I treated it as the most essential, non-negotiable, urgently necessary task. I made it pleasurable, with coffee shops and French pastries and a colourful city to roam and write in. I made it connective, doing creative writing alongside, to energize my academic prose and find an alternate venue for all my angst. I made it sheltered, with my windowless office room in our rented apartment, where my laptop’s heat alone could render the small space warm and airless. I cultivated my environment, buying a better chair and a full-spectrum light and covering the walls with inspirational or vaguely threatening post-it notes. But above all, I wrote first, every day, almost without fail, no matter what else was going on. Because I knew it was necessary. And while it began as a task of necessity, the dissertation that needed to be written, and was, oh-so-slowly, oh-so-painfully getting written, turned into an exercise in self-nourishment. The truth is, I love to write. No matter how murky the task or plodding my thinking, no matter how anxiously or agonizingly I must extract the ideas from my mind to manifest them on the page, no matter the writing task, I love the act of wielding words. Searching my inner self for the things that I know and pairing them with the words that suit them soothes me. It calms my various forms of *overexcitability* (Piechowski, 2006, p. 128). It reassures that vibrating, anxious intensity in my body. It brings me back into my core and stills me. Crafting the words and phrases that will convey an idea with clarity and conviction is healing for me. I need to do it, I learned. I need to do it first, before I begin the work of each day. I need to do it to be my best self. In recent years, racing away on the tenure track, I seem to have forgotten that.

Strand Three: Enacting Urban Indigenous Presence

I have been sitting for a few years now with Coulthard’s (2014) writings on grounded normativity and with Simpson’s (2017) writings on presencing, thinking about how they relate to Indigenous arts in Canadian cities. As Bouvier and I will explore in future work, Indigenous artists are using their creative practices to express Indigenous presence in urban spaces. For instance, in his *Urban Indian Series*, Kainai artist Terrence Houle challenges notions of contemporary urban Indigenous identity through a photographic collection that depicts him going about the business of everyday life—riding public transit, working in his cubicle, shopping for groceries—in full traditional regalia (Smithsonian, 2010). Métis writer Katherena Vermette (2012, 2016, 2021), in her novels and poetry set in Winnipeg’s north end, foregrounds very urban matriarchal kinships that enable Indigenous women to endure and transcend ongoing impacts of colonial violence. These everyday women are remarkable—they remind me of my mom and my maternal aunties, her five sisters. The work of these artists unsettles the colonial city. In these sites where Indigenous Peoples are thought to be out of place—because Indigenous Peoples are supposedly part of a long-lost past, or because they allegedly live elsewhere on distant reserves, as Lenape and Potawatomi scholar Susan Dion (2009) might put it, or because they have apparently assimilated—Indigenous artists are *taking* place in the city, not out of place. The fact is that more than half of Indigenous people now live in cities in these lands claimed by Canada (Statistics Canada,

2019). More than that, Indigenous people are mobile and adaptable and resist the static understandings of urban versus reserve or remote (Andersen, 2013, p. 60; Andersen & Peters, 2013, p. 287). Through our everyday acts of being here, Indigenous people are undoing the narrative that we do not belong in urban spaces. We are living out our lives here, carrying on our lifeways. We are already here. And when we tell each other our stories, show each other our paintings, see each other's bodies in motion and listen to each other's voices in song, we are engaging in that urgent, resurgent work of presencing.

Strand Two: Writing Matters

As I write this piece, we are one year into this world-wide pandemic. After what feels like decades of murky struggle with how to navigate this time, the before time, the after time, I am returning to this essential task of nourishing my inner self, of breathing deeply so that I can be alive. Clutching desperately perhaps at that proverbial oxygen mask, I recognize that I cannot bring much to others if I am gasping and blue, or else railing and raging. I need to strengthen from my centre out. I am grateful to the understandings that have come to me in eclectic, embodied moments: amidst the trees on my morning walks, inhaling in my morning smudge, balancing in my afternoon yoga practice, dreaming in my night-time sleep. I was upside down and sideways after teaching four terms in a row and navigating the COVID-19 era. With a little space thanks to a research term this winter, I am returning to this deep knowledge: I need to write to live well. The words of Indigenous writers such as Sharron Proulx-Turner and Lee Maracle echo through my mind, reminding me that writing is tied to survival, that stories cannot be divorced from the urgent business of life (Hanson, 2020). And so, I am writing this métissage now. I am writing it for you, absolutely, but this urgent business of sitting down, first thing, at my keyboard, with my email not yet open and my to-do-list pushed aside, is not only for you. It is for me, for that unslakable thirst for life inside me, for that inner self that needs to begin each day with composition, by composing myself, as David Jardine (1998) might say, or, to echo Paulo Freire and Donald Macedo (1987), by weaving together the word and the world. I can bring you my moment of stillness with the coyote and the strands I am weaving together because I sat down to write, to do the thing that nourishes me. I can only give you something if I have first gathered something.

Strand Three: Enacting Urban Indigenous Presence

The challenging and immense task of dismantling the colonial structures that restrict Indigenous well-being requires a range of tools: the pen of policy; the seat of negotiation; the blockade of refusal; the oratory of community engagement; as well as the bead, sinew, brush, paint, body in motion and voice in song of Indigenous arts. Bringing the theory and practice of grounded normativity (Coulthard, 2014) into action through everyday presencing, as Simpson (2017) shows us, is a powerful process of Indigenous love and brilliance. For we so love the brilliance of our ancestors and of our great-grandchildren to come that we continue to tell the stories of our people. By remaining grounded in the lifeways and knowledges of our nations, we carry forward who we are as Indigenous peoples and as individual beings in relation to other beings (Graveline, 1998). Indigenous arts and creativity are undermining the colonial narratives that tell us we are not here, that we do not

belong, that we have lost our languages, our knowledges, our kinship systems, our means of survival, our ability to govern ourselves. Indigenous arts are, in fact, weaving together some very different narratives—narratives of Indigenous endurance, of Indigenous brilliance, of Indigenous resilience, of Indigenous resurgence. These narratives are a curriculum of hope, of transformation, of possibility. The challenge for the future is that it cannot only be our own people who are listening to and lifting up these stories of Indigenous presence. I agree with Cree scholar Dwayne Donald (2021) that for the sake of our well-being we all need something different from “the stories that are typically told in schools”—we all need “the possibility of a new story that can give good guidance on how to live life in accordance with kinship relationality” (p. 55). We must listen to what the beings around us have to teach us, and we must listen to each other. I am here now, sharing my creativity and aliveness. Will you witness my presence and, in turn, enfold it into the web of relations that shapes your everyday lifeways?

Closing Words—The Tail

I am not telling you the coyote’s story. I am telling you mine. I am composing myself, weaving a narrative that allows me to see myself standing there, taking in her presence, a narrative that I am offering to you and which you are reading now. I am hoping that, as the coyote and I did, you and I are sharing an encounter, too, and that something might arise in this space between us. Through this writing I am breathing in, sharing the air with that coyote in a moment of presence, despite the distance that now separates us both in a literal sense of time and space. I am inhaling, inspiring, being in relation. This act of composition is a weaving together of being(s), a rebellious act of inspiration and self-sustenance. I am stealing a few morning hours from the chiming emails, from the clamouring to-do list, and from the time I need to prepare for my next meeting. I am meeting myself where I am at, being here with myself in this moment, breathing in, returning to my centre and my inner knowing, telling the story of how I am surviving and maybe thriving, weaving together the threads of my present, my presence, with the threads of what has passed before and what is yet to come. I am weaving together these narratives for you, for me. In that moment of encountering the coyote I see what she has to teach me: that I am here, that I have always been here, that I am not lost, that I know my way around.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the organizers of the 2021 *Tapestries of Learning, Weaving Werklund Together* and *Landspeak: A Gathering of Indigenous and Irish Voices* gatherings for sparking me to write this piece. I presented initial versions of this *métissage* at these two virtual events. I would also like to thank the two anonymous peer reviewers and the editorial team at *JCACS* for the suggestions that helped me to strengthen this piece. And I note that this article draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

References

- Andersen, C. (2013). Urban Aboriginality as a distinctive identity, in twelve parts. In E. Peters & C. Andersen (Eds.), *Indigenous in the city: Contemporary identities and cultural innovation* (pp. 46-68). University of British Columbia Press.
- Andersen, C., & Peters, E. (2013). Introduction. In E. Peters & C. Andersen (Eds.), *Indigenous in the city: Contemporary identities and cultural innovation* (pp. 1-20). University of British Columbia Press.
- Bouvier, V. (2019). Ni kaakiihtwaamaan itootamihk waapamishoon aan mii wiichaytoowuk: I am practice reflected in relationships. *Book 2.0*, 9(1-2), 31-44.
https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/btwo_00004_1
- Bouvier, V. (2022). *Kaa-waakohtoochik (the ones who are related to each other): An inquiry of Métis understandings with/in/through the city* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Calgary].
<http://hdl.handle.net/1880/114846>
- Chambers, C., Hasebe-Ludt, E., Donald, D., Hurren, W., Leggo, C., & Oberg, A. (2008). Métissage: A research praxis. In A. Cole & J. Knowles (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 142-155). SAGE.
- Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red skin, white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Dion, S. D. (2009). *Braiding histories: Learning from Aboriginal peoples' experiences and perspectives*. University of British Columbia Press.
- Donald, D. (2021). We need a new story: Walking and the wâhkôhtowin imagination. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 18(2), 53-63. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1916-4467.40492>
- Flaherty, C. (2020, April 21). No room of one's own: Early journal submission data suggest COVID-19 is tanking women's research productivity. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/04/21/early-journal-submission-data-suggest-covid-19-tanking-womens-research-productivity>
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and reading the world*. Bergin & Garvey.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (2004). *Truth and method* (2nd ed.; J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall, Trans.) Continuum. (Original work published 1960)
- Graveline, F. J. (1998). *Circle works: Transforming Eurocentric consciousness*. Fernwood.
- Hanson, A. J. (2017). *Reading for resurgence: Indigenous literatures, communities, and learning* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Calgary]. Open Theses and Dissertations.
<https://doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/27541>
- Hanson, A. J. (2020). *Literatures, communities and learning: Conversations with Indigenous writers*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Hasebe-Ludt, E., Chambers, C., & Leggo, C. (2009). *Life writing and literary métissage as an ethos for our times*. Peter Lang.

- Jardine, D. W. (1998). Birding lessons and the teachings of cicadas. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 3(1), 92-99. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ569292.pdf>
- King, T. (1993). *Green grass, running water*. Harper Perennial Canada.
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Crossing Press.
- McDonald, B. (Host), with Lebens, J., Buckiewicz, A., Buyting, S., Crawley, M. (Producers). (2021, April 10). Quirks and quarks with Bob McDonald: Coyotes doing well in the city [Radio broadcast]. *CBC Radio*. <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-51-quirks-and-quarks/clip/15836259-coyotes-city-asteroid-impact-created-rainforests-minimal-organism>
- Mishler, A. (n.d.). *Yoga with Adriene*. <https://yogawithadriene.com/>
- Oleschuk, M. (2020, August 11). Gender equity considerations for tenure and promotion during COVID-19. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 57(3), 502-515. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cars.12295>
- Peters, D. (2020, July 7). Women academics worry the pandemic is squeezing their research productivity. *University Affairs*. <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/women-academics-worry-the-pandemic-is-squeezing-their-research-productivity/>
- Piechowski, M. M. (2006). *"Mellow out," they say. If only I could: Intensities and sensitivities of the young and bright*. Yunasa Books.
- Seidel, J. (2012). A curriculum for miracles. In C. Chambers, E. Hasebe-Ludt, C. Leggo, & A. Sinner (Eds.), *A heart of wisdom: Life writing as empathetic inquiry* (pp. 273-280). Peter Lang.
- Seidel, J., & Jardine, D. W. (2016). Introduction. In J. Seidel & D. W. Jardine (Eds.), *The ecological heart of teaching: Radical tales of refuge and renewal for classrooms and communities* (pp. 1-4). Peter Lang.
- Simpson, L. B. (2017). *As we have always done: Indigenous freedom through radical resurgence*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. (2010). Terrance Houle. *HIDE: Skin as material and metaphor*. <https://americanindian.si.edu/static/exhibitions/hide/terrance.html>
- Statistics Canada. (2019). Results from the 2016 census: Housing, income and residential dissimilarity among Indigenous people in Canadian cities. *Insights on Canadian society*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2019001/article/00018-eng.htm>
- Vermette, K. (2012). *North end love songs*. The Muses' Company.
- Vermette, K. (2016). *The break*. House of Anansi Press.
- Vermette, K. (2021). *The strangers*. Hamish Hamilton.
- Viglione, G. (2020, May 20). Are women publishing less during the pandemic? Here's what the data say. *Nature*. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01294-9>