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## Missoula, September, 1996

Brenda Tao Lee Nesbitt

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BRENDA TAO LEE NESBITT

MISSOULA, SEPTEMBER, 1996

Even here in Missoula,  
I find my way to water,  
to the streams that run  
through dark, ribbed shadows  
of culverts, to a willow tree  
that bends, leans out  
over liquid space, indented  
with the dangling shadow  
of my own two feet.

Fishes  
circle in the shallows. Ducks  
swim up stream. A gold leaf  
falls, drifts down in lazy  
circles, shivers  
through the thin, breathless air.

In Missoula,  
I find my way to the rivers: the Clarkfork  
and Rattlesnake; find  
my footsteps weaving, pushing  
through the overgrown tangle  
of paths, crawling  
through the scratching arms  
of snowberries, asking for forgiveness  
from the Grandmothers, the Spiders,  
whose webs I unweave.

And then  
I am there, with the water  
glinting off the smooth, round bodies  
of stones. The water rippling,  
pooling in the shallows, welcoming me  
with bright laughter,

like a daughter, like a sister,  
who has finally found  
her way home.

*In memory of our friend, Brenda Tao Lee Nesbitt.  
We miss your singing and your dancing.*

1952-1996