



RIVERFESTYYC

Presents:
ROOTS/ROUTES

Stories By:

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NICOLE KORENDA TRITTER

BE. BRYAN FAUBERT



*“To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need
of the human soul.”*

(Simone Weil)

WE ARE VISITORS TO THIS LAND

CHERYLE CHAGNON-GREYEVES

We are visitors to this land, the lands of the Treaty 7 people.

The lands before...

this place we call Calgary, Mohkinstis, the meeting of the Bow and Elbow rivers, the joining of the waters, firmament and fluid left by ancient glaciers and melting waters, land rising, dripping and drying into dust and dirt.

The Siksika-Itsitapi, the original peoples of these prairies, foothills and mountains. The Blackfoot of Siksika, Kainai and Piikani, sustained by iinnii, nomads walking, walking in the footsteps of their ancestors.

The Dene of Tsut'ina, peoples from far north stretching south across Turtle Island, separating, following the land and waters, walking, trekking, heading north, heading south, forward, onward.

The Stoney people, Iyarhe Nakoda, horse and hooves, hunting, hiking, seeking, searching for life-giving living food and provisions for their families.

The proud, hard-working Métis, newer to this land yet still connected to their relatives, their ancestors, to those who came before.

Following, following the Bison, the sustenance of the Peoples, footprints in the blackened earth, footfalls forming paths through grasses and forests, climbing hills and mountains, forward, onward.

Connected to land and spirit, ancestors and future kin, those who have been on this land for millennia, living, dying, fighting, thriving, sharing, close to spirit and to land always.

We walk in their ancient footsteps, footfalls now paths, hooved earth now roadways, routes linked to those ancient roots of family, of blood, of remembering, of spiritual connection to those before.

We are visitors to these lands. We must walk these lands with respect and humility, gratitude and appreciation, recognition of those who have come before. The lands of the Treaty 7 people.

Thank you, Creator for blessings received...

ROOTS/ROUTES

NICOLE KORENDA TRITTER

I was born in a rainforest
under a canopy of Western Hemlock,
Douglas Fir and the mighty Red Cedar
Their seeds locked in my heart for safekeeping
right next to the vast Ocean that anchors me
and continually, incessantly, calls me home

I was born on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish People
Where the Musqueam, Squamish, Sto:lo, and Tseil – Waututh Nations
have cared for the land and waters since time immemorial
And where Salmon returns, as always,
to its birthplace

I too, try desperately to swim upstream
from windswept prairies
over rolling hills, mountain passes
through valley bottoms
to lay in beds of moss
deposit my eggs
let tree roots grow over me

My Mother was born in a small, turquoise house
high on a cliff above the Atlantic Ocean
Her father was a fisherman and made his livelihood
pulling lobster and swordfish from the depths of that Ocean
Her mother was a feminist
Forever shocking that small fishing village by doing outrageous things
like, driving a car or wearing negligee without drawing the blinds

My Mother grew up near her Mi'kmaq community
but was never a part of it
Those were the days when you kept your blood a secret
especially if you could pass as white
But those Mi'kmaq roots reached deep underground and
penetrated her Acadian ones
Where a supper table always had an extra plate
and your children were minded by the community

My Father was born in a refugee camp
in Aschaffenburg, Germany in the aftermath of World War II
His parents were stolen from their villages in the Ukraine
and transported, like cattle, on freight trains
to work as slaves for the Nazi war effort

His Father made passage to Canada before he was born
His Mother struggled to keep food in their bellies
and arrived on Pier 21
a year and a half later. December 24, 1949
Some 68 years after that
my father visited that same pier
and he kissed the ground

So, where are my roots?
The Pacific Ocean that gave me life?
The Bow River that currently sustains?
The Motherland from whence my eastern relatives came?
The Land of the Fog here on Turtle Island?

Would I understand where I belong
if I had dipped my feet in the Cheremosh River
Stood on the Bare Hills of Holohory
Sailed across the Atlantic to begin new life
Heard my Grandfather, Chief Membertou, speak to the Mi'kmaq People

How many routes
do I need to follow to find mine?
And if I get to them all
will I know which soil to lay upon?

Maybe I belong nowhere
But the interstitial spaces in between
Not one thing or the other
but everything all at once

I am the land, the ocean and the trees

All the trees

The ones from my birthplace
That are imprinted deep within me
But also, the lodgepole pines, trembling aspen and white spruce
from Treaty 7 where I live

The Beech and Silver Fir
from the Carpathian Mountains
Where dreams of independence grew
sprouting seeds in my veins

The Balsam Fir and White birch
From Mi'kma'ki
that formed my body
and mixed with the Acacia
that still grows in the heart of Paris

I am because they were
Not just in the biological sense
but in the metaphorical one too
Their stories weave into mine
until we become one fabric
The foundation from which
I stand to shout my truth

I come from this land
I came to this land
I was saved by this land

And maybe one day
we will walk across my bridge
to find each other
Becoming one
from a multitude

ROOTS/ROUTES

BE. BRYAN FAUBERT

I didn't know what I was doing,
where I was going,
or how I was going to get there.
But a geographical relocation was in order.
Carving a path as the turbulent rivers do,
I searched for a new beginning in the east.

Here I was greeted by the same bleak and discouraging outcomes.
Everything remained the same, just in an unfamiliar place.
Complacency and resistance to change kept me stuck,
nothing changes if nothing changes.
And then everything got much worse.

Skid Row isn't a place to soul search,
nor does it foster change.
I continued to swim upstream,
without eggs in basket, but just to die.
Roots rotting, deteriorating, disintegrating,
scrubby, shabby, degenerate.

Smoking dime bag hotcakes,
blinded by the mint monster,
selling pieces of myself, my soul, my spirit, my being.
Something had to change,
nothing changes if nothing changes.
A geographical relocation was in order.
Carving a path as the turbulent rivers do,
I searched for a new beginning in the west.

For a moment there I had it,
did the work, exposed my shame,
knuckled down.
But as quickly as I had it, I lost it.
This obsession, compulsion, delusion,
it wrote a self-serving manifesto,
would never grant me liberty until my demise was absolute.
Back on Skid Row,
nothing changes if nothing changes.

I know what I needed,
A geographical relocation was in order.
With a time-based ultimatum,
I carved a path as the turbulent rivers do,
searching for a new beginning yet a little farther west.
This was it, out of last chances.
A last-ditch effort at the eleventh hour.

I was reborn in a rainforest,
on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish People.
Snuneymuxw, the gathering place of a great people.
The canopy of Cathedral Grove was my spiritual delegate,
where the Red Cedar and mighty Douglas Fir stirred.
Great giants sending roots through the soil like an intricate network of rivers.
Interconnected, cognate and correlative.
I let tree roots grow over me,
and they did.

Shrouded by the great Willow of Iron Oxide.
Kept in check by the dissolution of my obsession.
A mindful mind.
Fear of change,
which brought on feelings of discomfort, pain, and anxiety.
Replaced by acceptance, commitment, and responsibility,
honesty is the key.

And with that change came an invitation.
A geographical relocation was in order.
Not to change, but to embrace.
On a quest for atonement and restitution,
an amends superlative in character.
I carved a path as the turbulent rivers do,
Out from under my shroud of great Willow,
away from the safety of my canopy.
Rushing with the rapids,
from Snuneymuxw to the place known as Moh-kíns-tsis,
where the Elbow meets the Bow.

And if not for a happenstance encounter,
what would have been my route?
It has brought me to the here and now,
Out from Out Where?
The Unknowing Among the Trees
I was reborn in a rainforest,
my asylum is its canopy.

So where are my roots?
As turbulent as the rivers are,
my routes take me wide and far.
No longer swim up-stream,
but race along with the rapids.
Letting go with ebb and flow,
with seeds locked in my heart,
I can plant them wherever I go.





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