Speaking Through Sediment

Poems By
Michael Cooper & Cindy Rinne
From Michael, for Ted Porter (for Blake, and love of Verse) and the ever-patient Ted Norene (You gave me my first book on form, despite being a ruffian—Love Holden) may the universe be kinder to you, than I knew how to be to you back then.

From Cindy, For Dan, Three Sticks, And A Tigress
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† Work by Cindy Rinne
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I

Singwyrd
Not The Haves  

Not The Haves  

We gasp  

in the sky (and its oh oh seven F F  

F on the  

monitor) they had  

us with our backs against the river a karate  

chop through the mayo wall what makes a river  

worthy of drowning  

in—2 feet in buck-  

ets full of dish detergent this sojourn of  

The Misfit’s  

daydream a tele-  

type machine chatters like a belt fed machinegun of  

promises for a healthy liver a drop  

of indigotine  

E1 thirty2  

in each eye makes the heart race an arm discolor-  

red by food  

dye and these colored  

eggs that promise rebirth for that bandit spring the rock:  

tomb door open wide like Lady Magde  

lens it’s when she tried
to touch my face that

I shot the grandmother in the face you laugh

at these pitiful followers

but in this moment they believe I blew into the
kitten’s pout I pound against the surge and tide
froth like a handful

of kidney beans gone
bad 1 MegaBite of information ran
the Space Shuttle Challenger—smell your
hand—this GSR my what big teeth You—the dominant wavelength of 488 NanoMeters—this old

husk sleeps in the silt.
Identity in Collage

This art combines textiles from many cultures and generations saving from extinction the voices of those who share their fabrics with me. You touch a threadbare textile.

A geisha discloses what they wore, how they made it, the symbolic colors. You will hear her narrative. Some people do not get this. Listen I am a storyteller bringing attention to the ancient, the sacred through ribbons with words you cannot read, variegated threads, and vintage buttons.

You must look closer at my gingko leaf drawings of ink, paint pastels and the stitch of a spiral. Do you think about piercing the cloth? A woman waters her orchids for beauty and symmetry. You take this sojourn chasing the iridescence of dragonfly wings. You should hear my unique sounds and find identity in collage.
and rollbars?)

(Must we inhabit
the rusted place where the white paint flakes
on submerged cages
Watch Out for a Spider with a Red Hourglass

Bali, Caspian, and Java tigers roam extinct. Your grandma flies home in 15 days. Granddaughter menopausal at 24.

The spider web bridged the silver door handles. Does this work as a lock if one is afraid of spiders? She had cancer and cannot survive a hot, stuffy room. She visited death and it was comforting not dark and scary. I saw meteors whisk by the western sky near Polaris, not in the east where they were supposed to be. Sanskrit flashed across the wall like comet dust. The quartz bowl spoke a message, *Seek words from a goddess lost*. Not sure this is your mother’s kind of movie.
You made us coffee with honey

once, amber pouring from
your lips. Love you is 51 and a half pairs of
running
shoes in a round
plastic laundry bin plastic—like
the corner of my grey breadpudding cell
purple
I hear you behind the door listening to me
write droplet letters to the
orchids
they tug their long beards, they drink
they lay down
among the crumbs on the countertop I
sat in a park once with your vase
for four hours, so Easter bloom
would not
smell of mother’s smoke.
Purple
My father taught me the best way
To say I love you is to never say
My father said
I love you
elaborate excuses. Protect
the attacker. Grandma jealous
mirror
orrin
of mother’s “seduction.” Her back to
What everyone knows is that I
I am
ma I
am unlovable. Shave the side of my
head maybe I thought you would notice I
drove 2 hours to give you chocolate
and port to cure unbearable witnesses
I am un
lovable, I would have donenod evah dlouw
Og tel, gnihtyna
anything, let go
I am unlovable
7 am. Scoop 6 inches of snow off the wind
shield bare handed to get to her
practice
Mom worked 13 hour days her
Boss flipping up skirts—she chainsmoked
dad throws away her dinner—no one will
ever hire you—I didn’t
understand
the timeline for all relationships winds
down to zero.
The airsock
directionless
unfilled flight
god help you
when he switched
to the buckle side
of his belt
Menagerie

*What is there in proving that one has had the experience of carrying a stick?*

Marianne Moore

Zookeepers are collecting wildlife clues. Kids know how to cheat by age ten. Stan throws food across the middle of the table to eat with his fingers. The orangutan with disc-like cheek pads crushes the bananas. I used to throw peanuts at the elephants.

The family is against selling the alpaca farm. Incas wove the wool. Brother needs money for his healthcare cage. One sister cares about this endangered species. We need to have a propensity to grace like the case of Tiger Woods. He was set up to be a hero for our children. All moments matter.

Chris took the lower paying job. Her angry brother wants her to live in a wildlife park. She gets paid to help homeless people.
The middle-aged man rides a creaky bicycle and dreams
of cheetah swift speed. Three sticks clamped
to his back. These wooden bones
speak to him

of the moon, fire,
and holes torn in the sky.
Floating red

the roadkill
pecked at the 3
crows hopping

away each time a car
drove by curiosity
feeding brake

light hunger.
Peppermint & Ivory

in process: breathe out
completely don’t tense
don’t squeeze

and here you thought
this very best part
of you was

don’t kick your leg keep

was temperance

keep your cheek to stock
contact

and moderation

become the life you
are taking—let them move you

close one eye

the muzzle lifts—you speak
neither of you know when

this intimacy comes but you
both let
go:

hummingbird or tether
ball it’s not your choice
now Voit you must under
stand that you fly-twist

around

your feathers are like
the downy fur of the
tomb guardian cat

the fixed point of the snap
dragons. Your feathers

you spherical beak—your
skin has been known
to break noses invisible
wings a fist two people
toe to toe nectared kiss
and the thrumming throat
girls sing song through

the cloven foot horned man
lifts his snout
points god’s finger

the twirling rope your whole
life is jumprope

let us drink.

To a happy war
corespondant & a hang
glider
after Sean Waer bit me
in the face with the rotary
phone
I will never forget what
children are capable of

Remember Ender’s Game?

There were whole days
contemplating grass

blades

and leaves.

Later
the mouth of a bottle turned
upside down lilies
dirt & sweet dript
we found a home in the ribbed
cage in the cross hares dript
on the merry go round
we spin how two bodies
merge on the merry go round
happy! Happy Chiasma
the peppermint
the peppermint of ivory
and blood peppermint gently
the peppermint of ivory &
blood gently licking us out
of existence the spin
spinning O the spinning
Happy gently O Happy.

Gently.
O passion!

I panic kick as the passionfruit flower grips my arm takes me into its rolled eyes—shaking side to side the distended sepals sink into my suit jetting violet into her strobe toothy corolla my dive light seizure reaching for your stigma—your under standing—this is not your fault—a finned miss

under the vine

O the goblinshark clings to the wall his lateral line shivrelctric with my bloom and the bee’s circle to bring the flesh cove-red seeds O sticky sweet hands touching O stay awhile and smell them with me these jaws this life this spirit this inox—burning this stone gaze of thee O this love

under these violet waters.
the blood was never blue

the blood was never
blue
what was stitched inside a frog mouthed owl’s
cheek—was it our friend who
put it there?—lay
breathing in the muddelicious crick for 17
hours while
the dogs circle there are 7 indigo stained
elephant
statues at the downtown library—heads
butted against a wall.
Wildlife Clue #1

A wooden bone spoke –
*Tiger lungs were given
by the moon. Tiger
eyes by the stars.*

Goodman’s wife asked
him on Saturday to gather
sticks for the fire
so she could cook
dinner
the next day.
He cast a line
and fished instead.
Goodman secretly
collected branches
Sunday morning
wishing not to be
found out.
A voice told him,

*Put the sticks down.*
*It is Sabbath rest.*

Goodman said.
I must pile up sticks
for the fire or my wife
will be angry and I will
be hungry.

If you refuse, you will
carry the sticks forever.

My wife will kill me.

Goodman began to be
lifted up until
he was in the moon.
There he stayed –
The man in the moon
with sticks on his
back forever.

After death, all men
turn into Tigers.
Wildlife Clue #2

A wooden bone spoke –
_Tiger skin was given
_by the earth, Tiger
_breath from the wind._

In the beginning
of the world Bear owned
fire. Bear set fire
to the edge of a great
forest so he and his
people could eat
acorns. They left fire
to find more. Fire nearly expired.

_Feed me._

Bear and his people kept
going deeper into the
woods. Man saw
the flickering
flame.

_Feed me._
Man fattened the fire with sticks. They became friends. Bear and his people returned, but fire drove them away. Fire belongs to Man now.

*After death, all men turn into Tigers.*
Wildlife Clue #3

A wooden bone spoke –

*Tiger blood came from water. Tiger bead from the heavens.*

Earth began as water.
Birds and animals swam.

Way above was Skyland with a Great Tree full of seeds.
The tree had four white, roots in the four directions; its branches grew flowers and tasty fruits.

A young, pregnant girl married to Skyland’s chief had a dream:

*The Great Tree was uprooted.*

Believing the vision as a sign, her husband and a helper uprooted the tree. It left a big hole in the sky. The pregnant
wife clutched a branch, 
gazed through the hole, and saw 
water. She lost her balance and fell. 

The animals 
brought earth up from under 
the water for her to land. 
Opening her hand, seeds 
from the Great Tree fell 
to the ground.

*After death, all men* 
*turn into Tigers.*