

# ALEXANDRE

## Poems by Kimberly Blaeser

### Of Palimpsest & Vision

Against amber sky the antler of tree,  
on mound of ledge rock an ochre pictograph—  
thunder being or water bird, mythic  
silhouettes alive like refracted realities.

Here dew on spider filament glistens—  
orbs tensile with desire. Vines reach, twine  
over stone, over hooves—everywhere layers.  
Each silk trace an earth sutra, thread of knowing.

Now clouds spiral in abundance, fall air fills  
with thrum of wingbeats—with cycle.  
This vibration ancient as sky's allegiance,  
ancient as violet rivers carving granite.

Like amphibians in winter we, too, sink deep  
patient as sphagnum moss—wait, for return.

## A Catalogue of Migration

Here in the dictionary of sky  
*dagwaagin* may mean full,  
mean cobalt holding motion of wings  
wings bending clock, bending time, again.  
*Endaso dagwaagin*—every fall: breath,  
eternity blowing cycle—watch air streams funnel  
then unfurl like rivers, swirl and sing—  
*nagamon* this pouring of bird bodies.

Beneath departing talons and tail feathers  
amid the trumpeting call of *waabizii*,  
mighty wingspan of owl—*gookooko'oo*,  
everywhere mallard, oriole, checker-backed loons,  
soon air fills with echo of sandhill crane calls—  
fluted and eternal like *doodem* dreamsongs.  
Where every flap follows ancient flight paths  
*bineshiinyag* mark autumn sky, mark me.

Fall lean, the trees become tipi poles  
circled in migration, hold up the tent of sky.  
Here in a dome of belonging where each wet  
alive touches another god body, touches being,  
*noodin* blows, pine tips bow low like suitors—  
here beneath this lush, this blessed orgy.

## Winter Aurora

Boots under bath robes  
we huddle in the Wisconsin night,  
here, too, we whistle  
to stalagmite points of light.  
Sky shimmers neon  
flickers green purple green—  
*waasanoode*  
ancient woodland spirits.  
The torch of your feet  
a northern pathway,  
each footfall a spark, a call  
to beckon us to the land of *makwa*.  
There somewhere in solar wind,  
*niibaashkaa*, dark travelers  
lift their muklaks high  
dance sky.

## If Scintilla is a Flowering Luminous as Night

Our blue hunger like the skin of midnight—waits.  
Still gangly growing in curve like young trees  
we lift bark eyes, make of lips a grass whistle  
a longing. . .

Again dark is punctured: silver ~ green ~ neon  
motion spills sudden  
Aurora (all mouths agape).

How we drink from fissures—  
elegant our hope in streaks glitter  
gold when old souls dance—*niimi' idiwag*.

Sky gods make music with lights—  
*waawaateg* . . . This spiral abundance  
like a fringed shawl. Small moons,  
crescents, we love the large swallowing.

We too open  
like *bagone-giizhik*—hole in the sky.  
How trace the ancestors' steps—  
this path of souls  
ephemeral as motion, as each song of northern lights.

*Aanikoobijiganag*—yes, call them closer  
here where worn memory stretches to dome the sky  
here where night swirls  
luminous but fleeting.

The old one's feet like flint—each spark a fragment of fire,  
*iskode* like tongues burning time.

Effervescent star story—  
crossing dimensions.

Our spirits.

Kimberly Blaeser, past Wisconsin Poet Laureate and founding director of In-Na-Po—Indigenous Nations Poets, is the author of five poetry collections including *Copper Yearning*, *Apprenticed to Justice*, and *Résister en dansant/Ikwe-niimi: Dancing Resistance*. She is a UW–Milwaukee Professor Emerita, Institute of American Indian Arts MFA Faculty, and a citizen of White Earth Nation.