Where I Am From

Angela Mashford-Pringle

I am from the dirt, from Tembec and water.
I am from the hearth where it is warm and cozy.
I am from the birch, the Quebec forests.
I am from berry picking and Bear Clan, from the Hunters and the Robinsons and Youngs.
I am from the “dem there people’ and “take yer time and figure it out.”
From the Algonquins close to the land and those crazy French guys.
I am from Toronto and my family’s from Quebec, with rabbit stew and moose roast.
From the canoe builders of my grandfather, who built a canoe for a Prime Minister, and the trapper, and the bush educated.
I am from Creator, the grasses and trees, the two-legged and the four-legged,
We have introduced ourselves over our lifetimes,
But now I say hi to concrete and asphalt in their place.
Balancing precariously between concrete and nature,
I am forced to make decisions about who I will be.
There is a stillness sometimes,
When I sit and listen to everything that surrounds me.
You see, not only do the living speak, but everything can.
I have trouble sometimes hearing,
As there is so much change and interference in my life.
I must balance between colonial and traditional,
Which doesn’t seem right that I have to choose.

I am from a lot of places,
Temiskaming, Hunter’s Point, Niagara Falls, Toronto,
Etobicoke, Kitchener
These are all places, but I know there are spaces.
Spaces in time, environment, and heart.
I am from my parent’s love, which grew from a chance encounter
That Creator put in their path to allow me a chance to come to Earth.

I am from the land,
Which raised generations of my ancestors without a cellphone present.
I think of my space as a start and an end with so many loops.

Trees, birds, plants, animals are a part of me too.
I relish the days that I can be among everything that is a part of me.
For you see, I am Aboriginal.