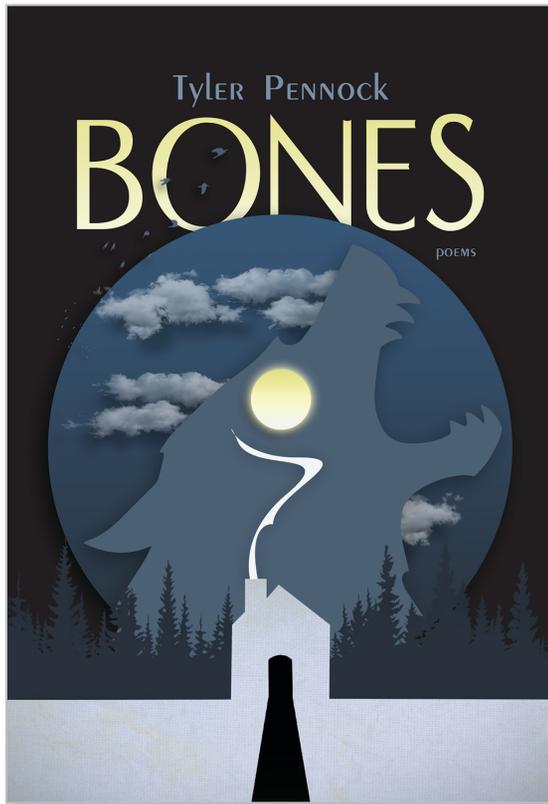


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# Bones

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Under the moonlight  
the softness that night gives us –  
the earth rising to meet  
in snow, or the glow of trilliums  
where there is enough sound in a breath –

in here  
I speak

gently step  
and story-weave  
sending out a thread of me

like a foot's condensation  
drying on a summer floor

hoping the memory of me  
survives  
in the eyes of others

I'll speak  
of blood

and wounds and beauty  
in terrible things

the way the wind pulls a thousand leaves  
down an empty street

and when they settle –  
we look up  
to trace the direction of the wind

•

Fear takes any form it can steal  
and wears it – like elegance at a gala  
replete with broad smiles

a world of comfort wrapped around you

Fear has a way of building itself  
out  
of the deepest cells  
scars breeding as a fire might  
on dry grass

It is always something inside  
that the world eventually teases out

The most hurtful things can't impact the space  
one's own nightmares hold –

(twenty years ago)  
the force of a cue ball in a shoe bag

at the apogee  
of my boyfriend's hardest throw  
wasn't enough

I was safe  
Standing over him,  
bleeding  
on his face, I knew:

*No act can harm me  
the worst has been done*

Back then,  
terror  
had much further to travel  
to get past the scar tissue

but fear is inquisitive  
stubborn

•

On your birthday I remember  
the cake she made

that we didn't expect  
our faces masks of fear

(we never liked the unexpected)

We sat staring at the cake  
and her smile, twitching

Her dark moments began to show  
a lot those days

You assured me with a wink  
something other  
than me  
would break

•

When a child learns  
amid the fear of something  
terrible

the fragility of their parent

something shatters  
inside them –  
the  
dual crush  
of fear and empathy

•

After a night of sliding off the garage roof onto piled snow  
we sat and looked up at the stars –  
a thousand eyes in night's dress

Something in me then  
wanted to live up to your kindness  
your praise and attention

I knew I could remember better  
if I closed my eyes repeatedly, like camera flashes

a suitable response for a boy who by then made a habit of hiding things  
(other signs of love were already exhausted out of me by then)

That was how I would remember that day  
to bring it back to you  
wrapped in brotherly fondness, so that

you could smile at the care I took to remember

Years later, when I recalled it for us  
you said you didn't remember that

you were too busy remembering all the harm done to me  
my witness

•

I'd like to meet the boy who dreamed me

out of the example  
left by his father –  
or mother?

Or perhaps the parents

he's seen in other families  
shadows  
cast by the outline of strangers

Ask him

what created the shape of me  
that he thought he'd step into

If he'd met me then  
would he have agreed to continue?  
Or was the shape he created

just shy of the mold, and  
if so

what helped him  
fill in the gaps?

•

We need something deeper than flesh  
on which to remember ourselves

something greater than a society  
which was never ours anyway

Something stronger than bruises  
and more descriptive of our strengths instead of theirs

something beyond the actions of angry white men  
who've long since lost their reverence for life

Something in the way the world moves  
that Canada forgot

something in the way a Wolf stays silent  
careful, observant

not for the aggressor who threatens her young  
or herself  
but for the impact on her pups

(trauma is a different death)

and safe in the knowledge that her family  
stands with her

a comfort to those  
beside her  
their way of life  
important as life itself

•

Seriously

if wolves are more *civilized* than you  
then perhaps you've got it wrong . . .