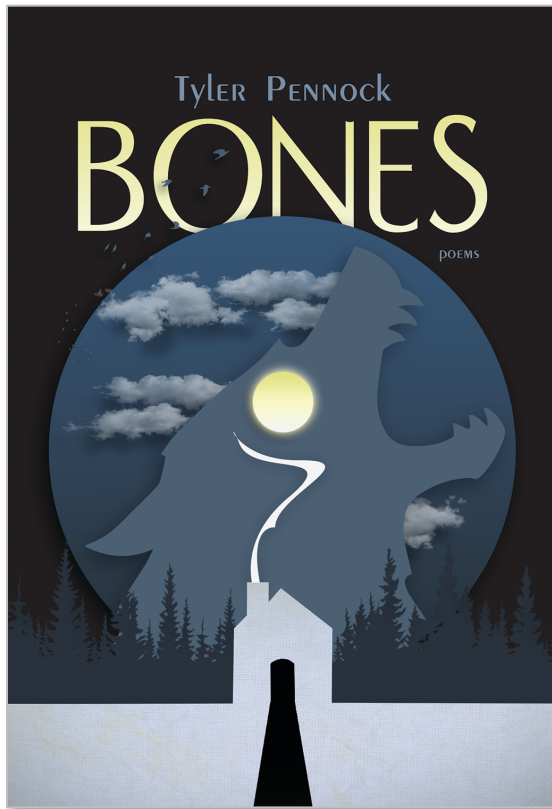


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Bones

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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 . . .