

SAMPLE POEMS FROM
South Side of a
Kinless River

By Marilyn Dumont

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A nation of Indigenous midwives delivered this country

Brown bent women
singing water circles
rain-suckling
minnow-threading

babies licked to sleep swinging
threading
through wēwēpison

awāsisak
flannel-wrapped cradle
suspended between long ropes
strung corner to corner

within easy reach of a tired brown hand
lulling awāsis to sleep

Dark women circle
brooding litters
women with strong minds
and swings across their beds
suckle minnows to sleep
through water veins

Water-webbed
suckled minnows threading
through swoop-fluid diving
brown hands massaging
belly of the motherland
steeping wild raspberry tea
for the coming labour

The colonial gaze

*every language, even yours,
is a partial map of the world*
—Kei Miller, from “xx. in which the cartographer tells off
the rastaman”
in *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion*

The colonial gaze deserves a pair of thick glasses
generic black frames and heavy lenses correcting
tunnel vision: the blindness outside
its own centering

Think outside the Empire

Erase the whiteboard of:

to discover: to pretend it's uninhabited

Verbs in the infinitive:

to colonize: to enter someone's house and start renting the rooms

The colonial present:

to civilize: to repeatedly construct the imaginary abject savage

I am starved for language that doesn't erode
doesn't sand away
swift syllables of gone

terra nullius

the haze
the gauze
leaning on brittle tropes
zealous phantoms
enter the ghosts that never leave the table
their gluttonous colony