

EXTRACTS FROM A NEW DICTIONARY OF ARCHIVES TERMINOLOGY**By Jody Baltessen****First place in the 2025 On Creative Writing Poetry Contest**

accelerated aging test – **noun** – use of surrogate materials to mimic vulnerabilities and negative interactions

I follow my shadow
down the dreaming road, past open water, glacial erratics, white birch
peeling scrolls
of faithful text – up above the sky is a fever, an arc of light fracturing red
orange bronze

the road curves into a meadow wet with recent rain
I pass a grazing deer, her nose pushing into lowbush blueberry

she
looks up
regards my posture, something about my shoulders, the way they curl
forward
as if to cradle my heart, save it from the downward pull of gravity

heat mantles / time escalates / the earth beneath our feet unfastens

"It's just a dream," she says

outside the window, daylight tempers the fractious sky

I think about
our prospects
the science of surface heat – anomalies / short-term variations / long-term
trends
the faint hope of ingenuity – count backward from projected life expectancy
tally my meager allotment of future days

all the while terrestrial migration, meadows deer blueberries trending north
glaciers collapsing, moving slowly toward cessation

– on cold days
I ache in my bones, calcium leaching into flayed cartilage, each hairline
fissure
a further compression, my stature diminished

and ice, her blue heart
 exposed
 keens over stillborn firn, over lost compaction, what can she do but melt
 and melt and calve her lovelies into the welling sea –

slow archives – **noun** – practises that support flexibility
 build relationships and collaboration to remediate prior harm

a
 campfire
 inside a rusted grill free burns through scavenged wood, follows its nature
 a hunger, points a blue finger toward aspen pine willow birch

between the trees, heat hangs translative, burdens the high loft of leaves
 the sugar and green of cells dividing, a lineage ripening

somewhere in this elegance, a pine beetle sinks its mandibles into tender
 bark
 tastes the heady lager of phloem, follows its nature
 a hunger, carves its place

smoke billows up from the smoldering char of
 our fire
 flattens under a lip of cool air descending

– in the all black, our eyes
 tear up
 dilate into a darkness tempered by fragile faith –

spirit duplication – **noun** – method of copying
 using aniline dye ink dissolved in alcohol
 and bound with resin; unstable, soluble in water

in the country
 of my mother, plain of shadow and light, a line of time unites us

I try to map our chronology – cheekbones, the bridge of her nose
 sage green eyes, the dappled skin of her belly – all I remember
 is how she moved, the weather in her wake

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