

**Untitled**

**Working Title 1: My Great Northern Dream**

**Working Title 2: An Ode to Creamsicles**

Chris Tse

The day they let Colten Boushie's killer go  
My professor wept  
It is hard to explain, she explained  
The depth of pain one feels to be hurt over and over again  
Like a wound that never heals, but scabs and peels  
And scabs  
And peels

A week later I am marching in a rally in downtown Victoria  
As three women in regalia collapse into a sobbing hug,  
trudging forward like a three-legged race  
The good looking couple walking next to me discusses their  
lunch plans for after  
I want to grab them by their Patagonia jackets and tell them  
there is a demon in demonstration  
But truth be told I am already thinking of my paper that is due  
for my Indigenous Policy and Practice class  
How ironic, to mourn and celebrate in the same weekend  
Just days ago I was clustered on Fisgard Street for the Lunar  
New Year celebrations in Canada's oldest Chinatown  
I watched silently and chewed a tic tac as a good looking  
couple climbed on top of the memorial commemorating

Chinese Head Tax survivors in order to get a better view of the  
parade

A spectacle

When they found the bodies of 215 small ones in the soil this  
spring

I wonder if Earth Mother gave them up willingly or if it was  
merely the peeling of a scab

These tiny skeletons in Canada's closet whisper loud secrets

They peer up at us through grated sewers

We often like to be scared, but never held accountable

What does it mean to bear witness?

My phone autocorrects witness to whiteness and I laugh

Then start to cry

There is a thin line between Colten and Christopher, at least to  
the eye

A shared history of resistance and guidance, survival and  
silence

Severed and split by lateral violence, made thicker by a trench  
of our own digging

Drunk natives stumbling through Chinatown, were we all not  
once relegated to these ghettos with the dogs?

When I struggle to form sentences in broken tongue to my  
family, I am reminded that more than words are lost in  
translation

We all pay the price of joining this nation

When they ask me about what it's like in Whitehorse, I tell them I have never met so many well-meaning white people in my life

What I mean by that is,

Do you get your latte at Baked before or *after* the vigil at the totem pole?

Solidarity is convenient at 12pm on a workday.

What I mean by that is,

I am only ever explaining to allies, and rarely to comrades

What I mean by that is,

The NDP needs a bit more PPC

Progressive People of Colour

What I mean by that is,

There are 5000 Filipinos in this town and I refuse to believe not *one* of them doesn't want to learn how to ski

I tell them

It can be lonely to be the only one who looks like me and yet

There are many brown and black faces in town

Which begs the question

What spaces am I around

Where do I play, with whom do I break bread? Who is down?

I have been told I make content for white people, and though it stings, wasn't that always the goal?

Birtherd to blend in, my traditional name burns in a black hole

My father's clan is TSE, Anglicized to See, my mother's clan is

NG, Anglicized to Ing

So I guess I'm finally See-Ing that TSE, NG

Is not a curse, but a tattoo

It roots me in this turtle's back - back to railway tracks and internment camps

When I braid my hair, they tell me my roots are showing

It is a speaking back

A taking up

A note to self

And others

Back to friendships of old, through the mud and the gold

Solidarities ancient and tethered,

Of crowsfeet on ravens and freckles of wolves

All these laugh lines frostbitten and weathered

To wrap a moose dumpling, from tundra to table

A bead through itinerant leather

Perhaps we relearn

How to truly bear witness

And picture this freedom / together.