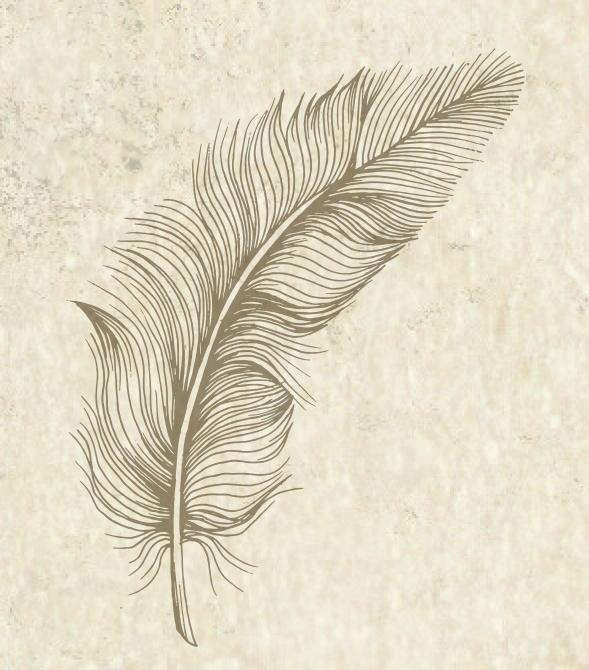
I Found Me



by Cynthia Clancy

Who will be the artist who gives their spirit back?
I don't have to wonder.
I already know.

Because our ancestors—
they had their spirit taken,
buried beneath silence,
renamed, erased,
forgotten in paper trails
and census lines that only said:
Cree Woman.

That was all she was called.

But to me,
she was never a nobody.

She was my beginning.

My whisper.

My bloodline
waiting to be claimed.

And when I followed that thread,
I didn't just find her.
I found me.

All this time,
I knew something was missing.
I carried a quiet ache—
a question I couldn't name.
But the moment I said "Métis,"
it echoed like truth in my bones.
This isn't just what I am.
It's who I am.
Deep down, always.
Even before I understood it,
I knew.

People think being Métis is a card.

A benefit.

A checkbox.

But to me,
it's a voice —
not just mine,
but my great-grandmother's,
my mother's,
my daughters',
and now my granddaughters'.
A voice long silenced,
now rising.

where you live,
what your mix is,
how long you've searched—
we are one people.
One voice.

It doesn't matter

And we're taking it back.

Through song,

through art,
through fire-lit stories
and trembling hands making beadwork—
we're giving it back to ourselves.

And me?

I thought maybe I found it too late. But now I know: this is exactly when I was meant to. That voice I couldn't name was just waiting for me to speak it loud enough for the next generation to hear. Because now, my granddaughters will grow up knowing they belong. That their ancestors were more than shadows behind glass. They were proud, they were strongand they are still here, in us. And yes-

sometimes I still fear the judgment.

That someone will say,

"You're not enough."

Or call me a name meant to shame.

But I stand here anyway,

and I say it out loud:

and I say it out loud:

I am Métis.
I am Indigenous.
I am strong.

I am proud.

And every time I say it—
every time I write, or speak, or sing—
I find me again.

And again.

And again.

And again.

f my great-grandmother could see me

And if my great-grandmother could see me now, she would place her hands on my cheeks and say, "My girl, you make me proud."

And I would answer through tears, in the only way I know how—

"Mémère... I am home."