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EMILY RIDDLE

HOLY BEINGS

on the day the chief of kâ-awâsis announces they have confirmed 751
bodies in unmarked graves outside the residential “school” in their
community, i google things like:
when will the sun run out of fuel?
at what point will we run out of drinkable water?
is a nation without a language spiritually stateless?
next week, jason kenney is fully “post-pandemic” reopening the prov-
ince for july 1, so i call a bakery and ask them to write “êkîsâkihitakok”
on a fifty-dollar cake and book myself a massage covered by my city
health benefits.
the matriarchal line of my family tree reads like: prairie bourgeois,
smallpox, residential school, day school, child welfare, middle class
i wear an orange shirt to work as some kind of balm to my being,
but i’ve sat in the sun enough this summer,
that i get sympathetic looks from settlers that walk by me
they are bombarded by the reality they maintain
consider this:
i can see right through your entire bodily facade and i know
the difference between white guilt and you pitying me
for being a prairie ndn
i am so blessed to be born who i am and
i want every urban nêhiyaw baby to feel that too, to know that they are
holy beings
walking on land full of prayers for their well-being
and it is not their fault they
don’t know that