

Intact Spirit by: Tawahum Bige

A spade with a razor's edge excavates where babies lay,
decayed fossils, dental records on file.
Shredded document strips are kindling
a bonfire over where a playground should be.

The records, missing. The children, missing.
Our cousins, missing. Our siblings, missing.
Our parents, missing. Our children, missing.
The children, missing. The records, missing.

Page not found: sand the tooth down to gum
a generation gone.
Mouthfuls of platitude are the spade,
razor, fossil, record, bonfire, missing.

The children, gone. Families are severed
but our spirit cannot be touched
by gun, or grave, or rosary, or shovel
or disease, or assault, or hateful scripture.

No, no, our spirits only ever touched by dug-in grace
those lost flow pure freshwater river,
salmon & ice & sturgeon & erosion & mermaids
Only ever revere our origin, here: Ocean. Land. Sky. Fire.

They can burn their papers, bury our people
but intact, never fractured
they cannot destroy our spirit.
They cannot touch our spirit.