

All Thirst Quenched

By Lois Red Elk

for my granddaughter, Wahcawin

I didn't want to scold the sky that year, but
Grandma's words taunted my senses. If there
is a thirst, then you need to pity the flowers

in a loud voice. Ask the frogs why they are
being punished, stomp on the ground and talk
to the dried clay about cracking open the earth.

I know challenging the storm is risky. "Last
but not least, burn cedar and pray the lightning
doesn't strike your town." That night, the stars

disappeared, so did the birds. Perhaps it was
the season for rain or the dance. In the western
distance, we thought we heard cannon blasts,

looking over we watched the horizon fill with
lightning strikes. Rain couldn't pour hard enough
over the thirsty plain. Accompanying clouds,

called to thunder's voice in extreme decimals
requesting all the water heaven could send forth,
to come. Rain and more rain filled empty stream

bottoms. Rivers who had pulled their dry banks
farther and farther from their center begged for
a drink to startle dusty beds with a flooding roar.

Lives in dormant places begin to stir and awaken.
The lives of water beings, those that swim, the
ones that hop, and the ones that fly, begin to stir.

That year all thirst was quenched.

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