I find a quiet spot
Shut my eyes
And breathe
From here I am looking for my light
Sometimes I sense her
Emanating outward
Other times she sways with me
In the trees
Buzzing with the leaves
Charging me up
With rays of sound
And a strength
That travels up my back

When she is with me
I am at ease
There is little thought to my breath
I’m able to sustain
With what I have around me

There’s a baakaani-inaadizi person
Who brings out this breath in me
When we’re together
I feel myself
Open
She is here
In me
Around me

How do I find her on my own?
Where does she go when I am gone?
What patience she must have
To wait for me to heal
Place my trimmed hair next to a tree
I close my eyes to be with her
With myself
With what is around me
All the time
That I tune out
Or am unable to hold
While contributing
Creating
Earning
Yearning
For me

Language Note

The verb baakaani-inaadizi is a positive, respectful term in Anishinaabemowin for “their actions different,” and it comes from Anishinaabe gender terms translated by Awanigiizhik Bruce, Kai Pyle, Manidoo Ma’iingan, and Charles Lippert.


Biography

Cole Alvis (she/her) is a Turtle Mountain Michif (Métis) artist based in Tkarón:to with Chippewa, Irish, and English ancestors. She is one of the leaders of lemonTree creations, manidoons collective, and AdHoc Assembly, and is on the board of the Dancers Of Damelahamid. Cole has performed, directed, and toured queer and Indigenous performances across Turtle Island (North America), including venues in Coast Salish territory, Treaty 7 territory, Robinson Superior Treaty territory, and Mi’kma’ki. Her first full-length play And Then They Came was developed at the 50th Playwrights Lab at the Banff Centre for the Arts. https://bio.site/ColeAlvis