

baakaani-inaadizi

Cole Alvis

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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.

Source: awanigiizhik.art, “ANISHINAABE GENDER TERMS.” *Instagram*, December 13, 2021.
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CXbxiN2vkR1/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY=.>

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.
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