

Gathering

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Late September heat breaks
like a fever: we are all appetite.
Our familiar hunger beckons us
to old-growth. We forage
through leaf litter, root amongst
den trees on hands and knees.
Old white pine, rock maple
and bur oak offer us acorns,
pine nuts and delicate whirlybirds,
bark star-crossing our palms
with lines we are not yet able to read.
We gather riverbank grapes,
gently pry chaga blooms from yellow
birch for tea. Deer have marked
the finest crab-apple trees with deep
runes and garlands of antler velvet.
Their tart fruit tops off the yield,
pomanders scenting our procession
from forest to feast. Place settings
are simple: knife, fork, book.
Under harvest moon we break bread,
break into the wine, salt liberally.
Each morsel is garnished with a story,
words passing around the table
like half-sour pickles, canned beets.
Lips pink from ripe elderberries
and poetry, we savour the creative
juices lingering on our tongues.

Translated to French and Wolastoqiyik