where family language
was spoken
often
listen as
ghost words surface
revealed along midnight’s tide

Salish syllable sounds
decorate swelling clouds
here spirit knowledge is practiced
it strikes like
fires that cleanse
tears transformed to
precious land lessons
before territories
traded for fortunes
stolen

ornamental butterfly
grand fur
chocolate lily
Indian celery
white head
iron wood
ocean spray
whale vertebrae
poisons
medicines

slow burn
trade relations
define cultural connections
descriptive liquid harvest
salivating nature
divided by stories
memories and manmade
histories

slow burn

white-capped answers
extended backwards
in time the cries
of hunger burns holes
through thick mist
kissing and caressing

water waking
skin relations
move in unison
flowing up
descending down
flowing up
descending down
flowing
up
up
up
oregon grape  
arbutus root

Indigenous yellow dye  
slow burn

pit cook  
eel grass

digging black ash

reverse falls  
here Xa:ls  
casts food in directions  
foreign  
hidden middens  
time travellers  
vibrational energies collecting  
moving through  
bottle neck wreckage  
it seems so long ago

it was just then  
and now  
and here

   slow burn