6 Poems by Shannon Webb-Campbell



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Shannon Webb-Campbell is of Mi'kmaq and settler heritage. She is a member of Flat Bay First Nation (No'kmaq Village) in Ktaqmkuk/Newfoundland, Canada. Her books include: the forthcoming *Re: Wild Her* (Book*hug, 2025), *Lunar Tides* (2022), *I Am a Body of Land* (2019), and *Still No Word* (2015), which was the recipient of Egale Canada's Out in Print Award. Shannon holds a PhD in English/Creative Writing from the University of New Brunswick, and is the editor of *Visual Arts News Magazine* and *Muskrat Magazin*.

The selected poems offer a representative sample of Shannon Webb-Campbell's poetics. In these poems, the body cannot be conceived as separated from the land: both are sites where memory, kinship and the history of the Mi'kmaq Nation are inscribed. Through images that intertwine the landscape of Ktagamkuk (Newfoundland), spirituality, and the more-than-human world, the poet moves between contemplative reflection and a critique of the enduring legacy of colonialism, exploring questions of identity, belonging and resistance.

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~ Siwar Mayu, August 2026

PINK UP PARCHED EARTH

rustic delicacies formed by soft hands
textured mosses become abstract vessels
pink and white earthen echoes
biological formations
waterlogged bark where barnacles grow
reshape stone's breath

you harness jagged cliffs
dig up frosted forest
foggy lichen under your fingernails
rocks peeling back the ocean floor
a deep philosophy of wabi-sabi
shallows in the tidal pools of your palms

water rushes over cracked earth
you retrace tides through clay
grounding mud with reversing rhythms
you see nature's aerial view minds algae
an organic process surfaces

what flows in
must flow out

"Pink Up Parched Earth" from *Re: Wild Her* (Book*hug 2025)

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COSMIC WOODLAND GUIDANCE

you came to me as a valley
dreamlike in your twenties
vixen of the hunt
moon spells and birthing
begged me to let go
gather my skirts
dying is not the end
seven generations rallied
you lived out every little onslaught
now you are a new woman
wilder than motherhood

"Cosmic Woodland Guidance" from *Re: Wild Her* (Book*hug 2025). Recorded "Cosmic Woodland Guidance" at It's OK Studios in Toronto on Queen Street West 2024 for the forthcoming album Pine, a musical collaboration between Canadian hip hop artist Ice Tha One and rapper Junia-T.

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NITAP

you are made of rocky earth
run steadily through the seasons
gather strength in the woods

sun-sharp
wake before first light
honour each day

you remind me I'm made of wind
wild like a partridgeberry
born of moose calls

in our kinship conversations
your voice fills me with *island*
a dialect that calls me back

"Nitap" from *Re: Wild Her* (Book*hug 2025)

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LETTER TO JOSEPH R. SMALLWOOD

After Marilyn Dumont's "Letter to John A. Macdonald"

Dear: Joey: I'm still here and mixed
Mi'kmaq after all these years.
you're long dead, yet
confederation couldn't stop
Newfoundland's ongoing
colonial violence.
you continued to unapologetically,
telling Ottawa there are no red Indians
Nancy April, we killed them all.
and you know, Joey,
after all your declarations
bowing to the settlers,
we're still here, we remain
Mi'kmaq despite stolen status cards,
none of us landless,
all of us Caribou.

"Letter to Joseph R. Smallwood" *from* *I Am a Body of Land*,
edited by Lee Maracle, Book*hug 2019.

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IF I WASN'T A FURY

I would know where I come from
I wouldn't believe my bones
were made of shit and shame

I could walk the land
speak with ancestors
know what to carry forward

but I don't know which plants
are good medicines
or how to braid sweetgrass

I can't speak my language
hold a drum or sing myself home
without crying

If I wasn't a fury
I would know where I come from

"If I Wasn't a Fury" from *Lunar Tides*, Book*hug 2022. Recorded "If I Wasn't a Fury" in Toronto with Rae Spoon as part of Stewart Legere's forthcoming album and collaborative theatrical production *The Unfamiliar Everything* at the Toronto Theatre Centre in 2027.

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ECOLOGY OF BEING

in this thinner air
there is no need to ingest crystals
we are surrounded by the boreal forest
at the breakdown of natural order
within the great chain of chaos

we exist as intervention
between land and sky
only to return from a journey
to a place of familiarization

forgot the power of selfhood
paint is singular –
it triggers memorable experiences
if you embody new occult poetics

between the self and this other thing
we make a clearing to find meaning
travel to trembling aspens
and come upon medicines

we remember this leaf
make connections
experience seasons at their breaking point
and reinvent our skin cells

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“Ecology of Being” from *Lunar Tides* (Book*hug 2022.) Duo Concertante, *Ecology of Being*, Marquis/Amazon, released March 22, 2022. Duo Concertante plays the works inspired by the climate emergency by Melissa Hui, Dawn Avery, Carmen Braden, Ian Cusson, Randolph Peters, and Bekah Simms. Poetry by Shannon Webb-Campbell. Listen in Spotify. Duo Concertante also released *Ecology of Being* in 2019, a short-film directed by Nicola Hawkins.

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