

SHANNON WEBB-CAMPBELL

God's Lake Narrows

for Leah Anderson

first light dances over
a remote Cree reserve
reached only by air in summer
an ice-made winter road,
dry all four seasons

Leah walked out the front door,
a fifteen-year-old
who hauls sewage in pails,
men's skates slung over her shoulder,
sang out to Aunt Myra—
aunt and mother—
her own mother
devoured by addiction,
her own father
murdered when she was six

with her promise to keep curfew
her sisters knew she'd be home
before the stars got too bright

she swerved towards timberline
no one saw her at the hockey rink

enter Manitoba's thin light

snowmobile tracks carved banks
covered up boots and bones
what was found
near the water treatment plant
a body beaten so badly
it looked mauled by wild dogs

a savage rez bears witness,
come hear our lurid stories
drunken partyspeak

Leah's slaughter: unsolved,
though on that January weekend
the only road in, and the only road
out was closed