

# Onaabani-giizis

KIMBERLY BLAESER

Beneath the snowcrust moon. Year two of pandemic sheltering, of lockdowns. Camus. This strange true.

Our lives among the masqued and Zoom-bies. A year of counting gone bodies. (How crowded the souls' road, our path to the Milky Way. How endless the blessings we send, the rising smoke of ritual.) The year when the knelt-upon die before our eyes. When we rise from our knees, our standing loud enough to topple statues.

In a Janus-faced world, we totter between our better selves and our worst, between hope and despair. Like our amphibious relatives—salamander and omagakiig, we try to grow legs. Metamorphize to survive amid our world transformed. Still. Always. We inhabit a place of between.

Evening news charts vaccinated and not, politicians rotate through approval ratings—loyalties rising and falling. While shouts alone could shatter Capitol windows.

Sometimes the crow commons in the morning trees fill our sad imagination, our silences. The duck nest in the crook of a tree suddenly blooms, olive with eggs. The alive.

How we join the right brain and the left. The fear and the follow. Our steps on deer-path days. Our nights counting COVID breaths.

How we trace each sky etching—stories spilled from stars. How they become the songs we hum through lonely and hungry calendars. Become a blanket of ancient, covering us where we rest on sun-warmed ledge rock.

If we remain. If we claim Janus as a gateway. If we sing, place aseema, lift knees in jingle-dress prayers. Nanaandaw'iwe-nagamon. If we make offerings. Repay debts older than every god. If

we enter the cleft, the broken knowing. If only. If after. If still. If together.

If holy.

Each breath a book of becoming—*anamae-mazina'igan*.

