

## Ursa Major

Robert Bringhurst

**Celestial Janitor** (as soon as Arcturus has spoken):

Merak and Dubhe, the lip of the dipper,  
the dugs of the Bear, point to the pole,  
where the Cub is still sucking what once  
was the nipple of heaven. Licking what then  
was the mill and the churn. Biting what then  
was the point of a spear. Chewing what now  
is the radar screen, bombsight and crosshair.

Alioth, Mizar, Alkaid: those are the Great Bear's  
throat, not her rump and her tail.

She is stretching her neck and her tongue  
to Arcturus, her son, who is clutching  
the butt of the spear: Arcturus the man,  
who is Arkas the cub, who is biting the spear  
that is piercing the throat of his mother the Bear.

Things that exist but do not have  
a substance - mind, for instance -

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are usually fire. As for history,  
that nightmare, it is fire;  
as for what you call technology,  
it offers you the wherewithal  
to cook the feast, the guest, the host,  
the dining hall, the whole shebang.  
How long till done, it seems that no one  
knows. Nor who might be here to digest  
that last, long supper when it's served.

Earth, water, fire, air, coyote, raven, bathe us.

Clean our bones.



1. invisible ceremonies, Robin Poitras

**Celestial Janitor**

... earth is climbing a ladder of water  
and water a ladder of air,  
and air is climbing a ladder of fire,  
and fire descending a stair  
of air and water into th earth  
that is reaching and climbing with tiny hands  
a ladder knotted of water, fire and air.

The wounded mother  
clammers up the spear shaft,  
shinnies up the tree,  
transforming earth and water, fire and air,  
to fire and air and earth and water:  
air transforming into air and earth to earth  
and fire to fire and water to water  
and blood to water and blood to snow  
and hunter to hunted and breath to air  
and over and over and over again.

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Photo Credits

1. *invisible ceremonies*: 2002, Artistic Director Robin Poitras,  
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