

t\here

two-homed tales
by katie o'brien

when blinding storm gusts fret thy shore
and wild waves lash thy strand
thro' spindrift swirl and tempest roar
we love thee, windswept land

– Sir Cavendish Boyle, *Ode to
Newfoundland*, 1902

born and bred Calgarians are kind of like the
Snuffleupagus

– some kid on the internet, probably

acknowledgments

many thanks to Lisa Murphy-Lamb for initial prodding and this incredible opportunity; to Catherine Beaudette of 2 Rooms Contemporary Art Projects, without whom this project would still be a muddle in my notes app; to Colette Laliberté and Margaret Ryall, who convinced me that this art is worth sharing; and to Vivienne Wilson, my love, a constant support and inspiration.

some works contained herein have appeared, in various capacities, in *The Murmur House* and *Riddle Fence*.

smokesick

nightfloating houses
boiled crickets and menstrual blood
the tormented file glitches

not your hair in the sink
your cobalt crimson lips last year's
hips on the bush

listless plastic bags rolling
tumbleweed across pavement
we were born lovers

the hike

sea salt lovage
sweet slate peas
and juniper

tiptoe driftwood
tuckamore faultlines
my a(r)ches

rusty fingernails
a sentinel outhouse
and radiator fluid

saskatoons

baked seagull pie for birthdays

a recipe for homesickness – fifteen years later taste like

bruised knees fresh-picked scrapes on my ankle

Signal Hill's most popular night

to get drunk

felicity

crunching moss pilgrims
olive lichen on pink granite
: the original patriot

the scent of seaweed reminds me of
six names four dan
two and some degrees

lonesome boots on smoked out boilup
we are chicklet teeth warm sweat
this was your incense

my grandmother
never wanted to be Nanny
but Nanny she became

nowhere steps

magic baking powder
by once throne chimney
graveyards

mouselike boardwalk
twisted foundations and abandon
ed root cellar

pink rust truckbed
drinks dandelion wine for
strong livers

crux

my father hates the neighbour
's crimson cat

do you remember the stag on the lawn
my brother running inside
doe across the street

in the shadow of Nose Hill
it's the closest we got to reindeer

t(w)o Lethbridge

princess alberta

49°41'39"N 112°49'58"W

population 83,500 some

my Nan talked about

little pills for seasickness

water and brandy

oldest newfoundland

48°22'06"N 53°52'10"W

population 900 none

oddities

dusty condom takeover
would make a good band name
giggling – we collapse

our ground molars
and eggplant-bruised nailbeds
ruminant on legends

centuries pass and
ageing cassette tapes yodel
in this northsloped house

skerwink

dig holes in my skin
peels it flakes drying cod
on forgotten wharfs

geological uprising
rock walls bleed water
old man's flowerbeard

wearing stolen orthotics
at the stone site of capelin
suicide squads

a Friday morning Fuck you

the Kensington clinic spits out protesters
like broken teeth after a boxing match
seems I'm only ever around when it rains

my tiny car floating in the downpour
downtrodden solitary signholder across the street
whispers – serves you right

northbound

I always forget the second e in 'acknowledgements'
the one-way street by your place
Crowchild's orientation

I always forget how cold it is in the morning
the sound of her laugh
her middle name

(there isn't one

muddertongue

sun hits the hills the
gullies of your abdomen
your spine sweat
glistens

orange wax and
orange juice

abandonment issues

pearly gray fog on the harbour
all-terrain vehicles of retroactive birth control
fiddleheads and turnip greens

wedding gifted toaster from
the piano-fingered grandfather emeritus
he forgot about Saturdays

by the lone public payphone
an abandoned smoothie, like vomit,
sweating in the late June heat

eight o'clock (for Jessie Ida)

water and
stool softeners
then prune juice

raisin bran
tea and toast
with butter and
marmalade

soon be time
to have a bite
to eat

eardrumming

house

less a roof

less a room full of

rum found with beachcomb

my Lord jumpin' dyin'

this throat coating tumbling

this less-than-accented tongue

rock on rough

seafoam symphony on smooth

this tune will bring you

home

oh! Claire

twenty-four checkmate
memories of did I know her band camp
last night we smoked them out

a car2 nowhere
your aggressive read receipts
please, rate this app ★ ★