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Kootenay River & the Brilliant Dam

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Kootenay River & the Brilliant Dam

This body instrumentalized
turbulent through turbines
howls electric under
clear skies in early spring

As the flood
unearths bones that
swirl in eddies dislodged
from the riverbanks

As sorrowful songs rise
from its body its currents
and gather in the pools
where the water slows

And this body sings
electric reluctant
aqueous and acquiescing

As it runs through systems designed
to store-manage-display-analyze
all types of geographic and spatial data

that render this place
these bones pliable
a *matériel* for extraction

Still, as it ever was
this body moves south
its voice raw with the flood

its flow velocity
pounding against barrages
that will one day fail
or be dismantled

And I am small
by the side of the highway
drowned by the steady roar
of water through turbines.

Note on the Text

*matériel: "To make things into tools in the first place, we remove them from autonomous existence and conscript them as servants, determining their immediate futures" (McKay n.p.).

Works Cited

McKay, Don. "Baler Twine: Thoughts on Ravens, Home, and Nature Poetry." *Studies in Canadian Literature / Études en littérature canadienne*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1993.

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