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The Thing About Buffalo Berries

Carolyn J. Creed

University College of the North



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The Thing About Buffalo Berries

Quantity.

On the whole property, hundreds of bushes: leaves like green-black commas,
Hide-and-seek berries, which, if they weren't so red, would defy all detection
(Seed-pearl buttons late of Victorian wedding dresses, blinding seamstresses)
Fiddly from which to harvest without water-bleed, weak-ochre-hued finger ink

OR INSTEAD

Quality.

Within each fruit miniscule, myriad sensations: sting upon muncher's tongue
Something nearly sweet, followed by bitter waves of taste that conjure poison
(Suspicion that biographers will hereafter advise, "The subject died writhing")
This from a single dot of a buffalo berry—imagine consuming a huge handful

BUT WHAT OF

Quarantine-Fare Fitness?

Under headings of "survival foods," these berries sit: reward to wild gatherers
Chock-full of vitamins, infinite in variety of use, healthy as almost none else
(Fruit of serene pickers, alert to thin-sprig laden branches in long-hour labour)
Once dried, convertible from shrivelled to edible by each off-grid connoisseur

OR EVEN

Quarrel-Silencing?

Over other berry dishes, Indigenous ingenuity raises buffalo-berry ice cream
To a height few might imagine, given the single-berry taste described above
(Sugar a requirement, but worth introduction: wholly, happily transformative)
Whip to foamy thickness, freeze, enjoy: who says "natural" means punitive?

CAROLYN CREED, a PhD. in English (UM, 1998), has taught university English since 1978. She teaches all over Manitoba, Canada, with University College of the North. Her poems appear in *subTerrain*, the *Global Poetry Anthology*, and *Poet to Poet*; her review of Rachel Rose's *Marry & Burn* may be downloaded from the Fall 2016 (vol. 15, no. 1) issue of *The Goose*, and her essay "The North as Muse" is featured in the latest issue of *Classmate*. Her poetry displays her sense of urgency over the human need to interact kinetically with the natural world.