

## BEAUTIFUL REBELLION FEATURE

RITA BOUVIER<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** Rita Bouvier is a Métis writer and educator from Saskatchewan. Her third book of poetry, *nakamowin'sa for the seasons* (Thistledown Press, 2015) was the 2016 Saskatchewan Book Awards winner of the Rasmussen, Rasmussen & Charowsky Aboriginal Peoples' Writing Award. Rita's poetry has appeared in literary anthologies, print and online journals, musicals, and television productions, and has been translated into Spanish, German and the Cree-Michif of her home community of sakitawak, Île-à-la-Crosse, situated on the historic trading and meeting grounds of Cree and Dene people.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Rita Bouvier is a M'etis writer, editor, and retired educator with 37 years in public education at the k-12 and post-secondary levels. Rita's contributions to Indigenous education include essays, books, reports, and active support for community decolonization efforts. Her fourth poetry book, *a beautiful rebellion*, was released in April 2023. Her work appears in various anthologies and productions and has been translated into Spanish, German, and Cree-Michif of her home community of Ile-a- la-Crosse, Sk. Rita is a volunteer with the Saskatchewan ^Anscohk Writers Circle Inc., the Indigenous Editors Association, and the League of Canadian Poets.

### 2. FEATURED POETRY

#### **L'dzimâsh**

(for my childhood cousin-friend)

L'dzimâsh is a day you usually send out feelers into the cosmos. Maybe it comes from living alone or maybe it's a form of prayer – a reaching outward to make a connection to the human and non-human world on the day set aside for rest. Sure enough, your email arrives, and you are wondering “what a philosopher would say? Natural or divine order? Or no order at all?”

---

*Date:* Received: April, 11, 2025

\* Corresponding author Rita Bouvier

© The Author(s) 2025. This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of the licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

No context to draw on, I write back. I just awoke from a deep sleep! Who pray tell is asking such questions of enormous proportions? By natural order, do you mean nature's laws? By divine, do you mean God?

You respond. I am asking the question. I asked six people the same question this morning. Some views about "order" are huge, like expecting the sun to come up every morning, trees to be still standing when we wake up, even expecting the Co-op to be full of food. I was wondering about divine versus natural order after reading about how people are affected by trauma, and how trauma shakes their belief in whatever type of order they may have believed in. For instance, people who survive climate disasters or human disasters like the holocaust, wars or extreme domestic violence. It left me wondering about the kind of order I believe in, have faith in. Maybe, I need "philosopher" software to figure it out and a glass of red Beaujolais. Meanwhile, here in the boreal forest this weird climate change thing is happening. Rain in January is definitely not natural order. There is less snow than usual up here. The forests may be drier when you come this summer. Hope the blueberries aren't affected.

I offer a quick response. First off, human behaviour, judging from recent world events, would suggest we must be the most stupid life form on the planet and in the universe. Ants are smarter. And people who are traumatized by natural events or man-made disasters, of which there are so many these days, shaken in their belief about a so-called higher entity that doesn't play favourites, are sillier than silly. Let me think. I will write again.

Later that day I write. I lean toward science (from the Latin word *scientia* for knowledge)— natural laws that *kihteyak* speak of, which includes growth and eventual breakdown of all life forms, sometimes helped along by other natural forces coalescing/conspiring to speed up the process. I read something interesting recently about "consciousness" that goes beyond the understanding of an awareness that resides within us as human beings, as a state extending to all life in the universe. Now that's something to wrap your head around. Never mind philosopher software, we need a Cree etymologist. It sounds vaguely familiar to the story that everything has spirit/energy. Natural or divine order? I am not entirely certain. For now, I am content talking to plants - urging them along to maturity and beauty, singing with the birds, who seem to do so dutifully each morning. Maybe they know something we don't. I believe in purposefulness and vibration of positive energy. I believe in goodness. Most mornings, I awake happy to know there is some order and rhythm to dance to within our galaxy, regardless of where it may come from.

For the most part, the pagan in me worships the old ones - sun, moon and stars, and yes, I too hope the blueberries are large, plump and juicy. There is nothing like the kiss on my lips of northern boreal sweetness, of blueberries in my mouth! That was a mouthful.

**words and beads, lines and silk threads**

you know you are Métis when  
 you salivate  
 hearing certain sounds  
 lapocin            l'frrakasî  
 li rrababô        mîn'sâpoy  
 la kalet            l' boyöñ  
 you know you are Métis when  
 you confuse “vingt” with “l’våň”  
 your grandfather is counting weights  
 on the net    he has been mending all morning  
 you run to tell your grandmother  
 certain moshôm has drinking on his mind

you know you are Métis when  
 you weep instead of dance  
 at the sound of the fiddle  
 remembering your uncle Louis  
 late evenings on the porch  
 playing melancholic music to the universe

you know you are Métis when  
 your auntie Pauline claims  
 at a family wake  
 that *Breeze* has nothing over the heavenly scent  
 of wet    stiff    frozen underwear  
 hung on the clothesline in winter

then wrestled into the house to dry

you know you are Métis when  
your eyes hurt so bad  
at the sight of a handsome man  
who swaggers into a room  
poignantly stops      combs his dark hair back  
with his fingers in a stroke of a strong hand

you know you are Métis when  
you realize you are related to everyone  
based on the family tree  
passed down to you as a young woman  
and there is no one      I mean no one  
for miles around available to marry

you know you are Métis when  
you believe      squirrels are relatives  
you believe      when it rains  
she is crying      replenishing the earth  
revelation an on-going process  
we really do not know much

you know you are Métis when  
you greet everyone you meet with  
oh Milky Way galax-yion!      oh earthling!  
how spectacular our home!  
did you know from the vantage point of lalôn

we disappear

you know you are Métis when  
you talk about wild life  
you don't mean  
trees and plants or animals in the boreal forest  
fowl or birds or rodents you mean  
the life you actually lead or wish you did

you know you are Métis when  
you are wearing designer jeweller *Pelletier*  
gems of real stones  
intricately tangled in seed beads  
and you want the world  
to know you are

**Acknowledgement.** Thank you, Thistledown Press, for allowing us to feature Rita Bouvier's work in this inaugural edition. To purchase the collection, visit <https://thistledownpress.com/product/a-beautiful-rebellion/>