

KAWNIPI

Charles Campbell

I see you wild man,  
I see you great Kawnipi,  
I see you at last -  
    stare into your gaping maw,  
        your twisted gullet,  
        your vastness, blackness.

I hear you earth monster,  
    grinding teeth, thunder roaring,  
    and tiny voices deep inside wimpering.

I feel you Kawnipi,  
    breathing gusts on my back,  
    your cold naked splashing on my belly.

So I am welcomed!

Kawnipi, I know your intentions.

Others have been here,  
    and your intentions are legend -  
    to make men mere mortals,  
    and to make the mortal fearful  
    that they should pass away.

We were told that, Kawnipi,  
    and stil we come  
    and present ourselves at your shore.

Devour me beast! I dare! I dare!

This is not suicide.

I swim well.

I dare! I dare!

I dive into your bowels, Kawnipi.

and play in your coldest waves.

With my friends I make a home

here inside you

and make love in your forest.

I am devoured.

Here am I, Kawnipi,

deep in your splendor.

In the elegant silence of your night

I see by the stars and the moon

the rocky alter of your serene power.

I stand here upon it,

my flesh pressed to you

and take your sacraments.

Take, Kawnipi, take!

But I am not a thief, Kawnipi,

And you know I am not a child.

I baptize myself in your water,

no one touches me but you.

I wrap myself in your sunlight,

tare garlands from the wind,

hold tightly to edge of stillness.

And I sleep, Kawnipi, sleep content,

soothed by sound of the shore,

and caressed by the summer wind.

I awake, Kawnipi,

and fuck in the eye of the rising sun.

You and I, Kawnipi, we know,

this is not mere beauty.

Kawnipi, let me ask you a question.

Am I so strong as you?

You laugh, beast!

Your waves would pound me?

Your storms destroy me?

Your waters freeze me?

Make the mortals fearful - eh Kawnipi?

Well then, great one,

here is my challenge,

I am so strong.

Let us fight to the death.

Destroy me, Kawnipi,

if you can,

rage and pound, earth monster,

destroy me, Kawnipi,

if you have the heart,

if you dare!

I dare! I dare!

Ha, great one! Here!

I huddle here,

by the alter,

close to the bosom.

I am safe forever.

Kawnipi, are a mother?

You are!

Strong perhaps, but not so strong  
to extinguish the son.

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I have been here before Kawnipi,  
I have always been here,  
I have died here a thousand deaths,  
born and reborn in these waters.  
I have never left you,  
my ashes are in you  
cold, silent, strong and serene.  
And you are in me, Kawnipi.  
So it always shall be.

But now, today, my lover, mother, my friend,  
come away with me.

Let us leave the glitter of the afternoon sun,  
the magic loons, the wild fish,  
come away.

We can leave this place,  
we are not the rocks and wind,  
we are not those clouds and stars,  
the trappings of splendor.

Let us go, you and I, other places,  
other nights, to inhabited spaces.

I have you, Kawnipi,  
in your deepest, darkest, coldest wildness,  
I have you.  
Gusting, howling, raging  
I have you.  
Profoundly silent, warm embracing,  
heart of my heart,  
I have you.

Take my hand, Kawnipi,  
come away.

You will always be here.  
I will always be you.  
But come away with me.  
Come.

