

Rishma Dunlop

Birthday Poem For Rachel

I want to whisper you awake
this morning
your body warm in a nest of sleep

the sky is a smile of light
the sun's breath rising,
writing the lyrics of your limbs
into the still waters of the bay

water birds are calling your name
steeple stemmed herons ankle the wetlands
white cranes stilt across the mudflats

scarlet poppies seed themselves
in wild grasses for you

seaweed glistens,
wraps the beach with
streamers of emerald ribbons

Child, you are my hymn
my anthem
my bloodline calling

I wish you gifts:
to feel along the heart

Rishma Dunlop

to sense with the pulse
to find the light that breaks
through secret places
unbolting the dark

to dance fleet-footed
through corridors of dreams

on your year's turning
may you find the map of love
charted in these shores
whispered in winds
and in the sleek mouths of seals.