

## *shorelines*

a boy wakes from a dream  
of drowning  
his skin is blue  
he is coughing up water  
and jellyfish  
his mother throws her arms around him  
holds his head above the waves  
their tears are saltwater pools

a man dreams himself awake  
after a lifetime of bleeding  
he pulls a fishhook from his chest  
laughs for the first time he can remember  
starfish fall from his mouth  
into a black sea

a spirit shivers into being  
takes the form of a baby boy  
swims from his mother's embrace  
into the belly of a whale  
gulping air he swallows starlight  
until he becomes everything  
he clenches a grain of sand in his fist

an old man plunges into sleep  
his eyes are pearls set in abalone  
he breathes sandcastles and lightning  
wrestles misheu-pisheu to floor  
his wife waves from the shore  
builds an inukshuk with her bones  
and exhales a stone labyrinth  
he has found his way home

*kateri akiwenzie-damm*