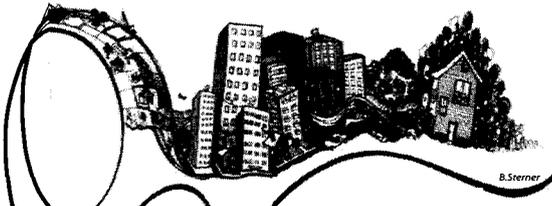


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MELANIE CAMERON

Excerpt from "Between Dream and Open Eyelid"

We are used to looking
out, locating ourselves against
the wall across the room or
the willow across the field, reaching
its arms into the air and
down again, toward earth. We believe that
the wall and the willow
are real, understandable
in all their parts, though we can't see
inside them, that the earth is real, though
we can't see
her body beyond the horizon,
how it curves. That the sky
is real, though our gaze
can't fall hard
against it, but pierces
light and dark, or maybe the sky
is illusion, though it's the only thing you can
trust
to lay its body over you
all day and all night.

Losing your eyes, you lose
day and night, you lose
your understanding of wall and willow
across the way, but you find
the earth under
your feet, completely
understandable, you find
the sky you thought you looked up toward
doesn't know
boundaries
of skin, you find the sky
you thought was out there, is
also around
and inside
you. And the wall. And the willow.

Melanie Cameron is a Canadian writer currently living in Winnipeg. This poem first appeared in her book, Holding the Dark (The Muses' Company, 1999; finalist for the Eileen MacTavish Sykes Award for Best First Book by a Manitoba Writer). Reprinted with permission of The Muses' Co./J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing Inc.