

*a beautiful rebellion*

rita bouvier

Thistledown  
Press

© Rita Bouvier 2023

All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher or by licence from Access Copyright. To obtain a licence, visit [www.accesscopyright.ca](http://www.accesscopyright.ca) or call toll-free to 1-800-893-5777.

Thistledown Press Ltd.  
Unit 222, 220 20th Street W  
Saskatoon SK S7M 0W9  
[www.thistledownpress.com](http://www.thistledownpress.com)

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: A beautiful rebellion : poems / Rita Bouvier.

Names: Bouvier, Rita, author.

Description: Text in English; includes some text in Michif.

Identifiers: Canadiana 20220481008 | ISBN 9781771872348 (softcover)

Classification: LCC PS8553.O8893 B43 2023 | DDC C811/.54—dc23

Epigraph from Linda Hogan in *The Radiant Lives of Animals*, Beacon Press, 2020.  
Used with permission.

Cover image by Mark Duffy / Alamy Stock Photo  
Cover and book design by Tania Craan  
Printed and bound in Canada

Thistledown Press gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of The Canada Council for the Arts, SK Arts, and the Government of Canada for its publishing program.



Canada



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des arts  
du Canada

Saskatchewan

“The cure of susto, soul sickness, is not found in books. It is written in the bark of a tree, in the moonlit silence of night, along the bank of a river, and in the voice of water’s motion. This cure is outside of our human selves, but it becomes the thread that connects the outer world with our own.”

Linda Hogan in *The Radiant Lives of Animals*, Beacon Press, 2020.

*for Matthew Joseph*

## Table of Contents

<i>a beautiful rebellion</i>	11
today is the first day	13
in retrospect	14
a beautiful rebellion	16
like children	17
holy, holy, holy	19
ode to the jack pine	21
welcoming bear	22
deeper than bone	23
the mirroring of the soul was always there in front of us	25
<i>a place I know</i>	27
soundscape	29
a place I know	30
he hasn't entirely lost his touch	31
a winter's day in Île Bouleaux	33
nîso lí batô	35
at the skating rink with my cousins	36
mama son totom	37
dark skies over South Bay	38
listening to stone	40
in a valley of endless time	42
one late autumn day	45
<i>supermoon rising</i>	47
blood on the snow	49
facing the monumental	51
something about her	54
how many times can you pick up the downtrodden	
before you say it is enough	55
an awkward moment	58
oh how my body trembles, how my mind reels	60
a magnificent failure	61

a controversy on prayer in public spaces	63
L'dzimâsh	65
supermoon rising	67
October mist	69
like Kumalo	70
<i>when the moon is full</i>	73
I will show you my flower	75
father and son	76
at Spadina and 21 <sup>st</sup>	78
those deadly beasts	79
daylight thief at Amigos Café	81
the weather channel	82
night thief on 11 <sup>th</sup> street	83
words and beads, lines and silk threads	84
when the moon is full	87
a new day is here	89
<i>the rest of us will carry you along</i>	91
in the quiet of an afternoon in isolation	93
ode to Albertine	95
a table in the sky	97
the rest of us will carry you along	98
sorrowful sky	100
Notes	102
ninanâskomon—I am thankful	103

## a beautiful rebellion

women across the land  
are dancing  
the mighty nahannie  
dehcho—the Mackenzie  
misinipî—the Churchill  
kâ kisiskâcowa—the Saskatchewan

the dance the music  
it goes like this  
miyo-sâkihitôwin—  
a sacred love for all  
a round dance revolution  
all can join

don your moccasins nosisim  
join in the nîmihitowin movement  
restoring the art of gathering  
sweet wild berries  
mint and ginger root  
restoring the art of harvesting  
making dried fish  
scraping and tanning moose hides  
restoring the art of visiting  
recounting the memories  
adding to the story  
like old times around the fire  
giving thanks always give thanks

grandchild  
dancing

iyakôma the wise people said this is it  
î miyôsik ôma this is goodness  
kâwiya wihkâc wanikiskisik don't ever forget this

## I will show you my flower

(another one for my dear Emerson)

*come auntie* he says  
taking my hand into his tiny one  
*I will show you my flower*

*your flower?* I ask *I love flowers*  
*what colour is your flower?*  
*the colour of red oranges* he says  
what can I say? he is four years old now

in slow short choppy steps  
we walk across kohkom and moshôm's yard  
across the road and into  
a thicket of brush and bush

he points *see!*  
and there is his flower  
a wild orange-red Wood Lily  
stem a whorl of leaves at the top  
cupping its petals and sepals  
tapered tipped leaves scattered  
along its entire upper stem

hand in hand we stand quietly

*don't touch!* he commands

## a new day is here

she awoke a mantra in her head  
*wan'skâ n'dzânis! wan'skâ!* wake up  
*birds have finished their morning songs*  
*and kohkoms their morning invocations*

in the news this morning  
an eagle was released after being nurtured  
by the caring hands of a young man

he and his workmates had found the eagle  
dying from toxic poisoning

the young man said of the eagle:  
*he just flat out couldn't eat*  
*or speak*

*he couldn't use his legs*  
*couldn't even stand up and*  
*he was vomiting quite a lot*

but the eagle was a feisty one  
fighting back in the throes of delirium  
finally submitting to his captors

today he was released  
he took wing soaring  
high into the sky



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, journals—print and online—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.