

# SAINT JULIAN PRESS

**Kara Briggs ~ Poet**

## **Acknowledgement Three**

As a child my grandmother spoke three languages fluently.

She stood among adults translating.

She knew the names of all the medicine plants and how high in the mountains they grew.

She could recite the family tree from memory.

Sometimes, because she was still a child, she played poly-linguistics tricks on her parents, who laughed and worried what world would this child grow up into.

By today's standard this child would be gifted and talented.

Then she was sent to St. George's boarding school more than 100 miles and across one major mountain range from her home.

With every year she was at school her words slipped away, her playfulness slipped away, her recollection slipped away. Or she hid it like someone in a witness protection program.

When I was a child and my grandmother was an old woman, we held hands and remembered what we couldn't remember.

We cried for languages we no longer knew, names beyond memory, relationships broken on the sharp chards of time.

What stayed with her was the smell of plant medicine. She could smell it from afar and say what that plant would heal.

What stayed with her were the dreams where she heard people talking in her languages and understood them as long as she was asleep.

What stayed was our hands in each other's hands, knowing even what we couldn't remember.