

ENDANGERED HYDROCARBONS

LESLEY BATTLER



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EMERGENCY

UNEARTHED

Past Self added you as a friend on Facebook

*we need to confirm that you know Past Self
in order for you to be friends on Facebook*

wall-to-wall

well, i'll be damned
never dreamed you'd
remember me

still in Calgary
oil & gas & so
it goes

you soared over the
horror of high school
blue-collar scholarship
kid. honorary poet
everyone's pet

mock, if you will
but i prevailed. faked a
perfect career arc, if i
do say so myself

Director. Content
Development & Migration
Exploration & Production
Frontier. Americas

a title not even you
could have fabricated
back in Boneyard
Ontario

your stumbling stunt double

cooped up in
your body i prayed
for the day i would
elude our childhood

liberate myself from
pity. eat solid food outside
your ghetto of poetry

i stewed over
the awe in your dad's eyes
shivered as he slavered over
your As, said you could do
anything you wanted. my
father suited me up

stuffed me in a crop-
duster to seed the family
name over the Emerald
Campus

you moved to Montréal
refused to scut your ideals
& lucre-up

i tripped on the steps
of your post-structural
walk-up, scarfed down
your daily Barthes. you
bled écriture, skated

Lacanian canals. i
sprained my ankle

Skype japes

i finally seceded
relocated my head
office to Calgary

here's a secret. i
wept that first year

water sign
dumbfounded by
unbound land, i
yearned to return

but no one
could live up to you
least of all me. you

questioned the
ruthless serum
underwriting my
timeshare in this
heartless emirate
i nuked your emails
strummed a Montréal
requiem

surveillance

you pursued me
as clouds swabbed
adobe subdivisions
bobbing beyond
all suns

you watched me
totter over potholes
hooted as pirates in
sport-utes macheted
belt-line routes

quipped as i lifted
my petticoat over
the banished

starfish washed up
on the jetties outside
my citadel of oil

look, Ma

salaries race
in the streets of Calgary
sunrise braises concrete
topiaries

shredder trucks
feed. magpies haggle
fragments of degraded
spreadsheets

come *home*
you hissed. *it's not too*
late. i tossed ATM
ripostes

loser. you hosed me
where would i be
had i stayed

let me guess
Kelly girl. dispensable
office walk-on, so you
could swan in the shoals
of my moral failure. no
merci, pal

i will remain
in Calgary, generate
ectopic copy from
a template reality

kern dead
oceans. befriend
foehn winds

armistice

never suspected you'd
seek me on Facebook
but here you are, 13
years after our fatal
split, scaling my Wall
of Evil. *lol*

the school photo you
posted hooped me. i
forgot how small you
really were

& how wise to hide
in a creative blind
never caught on to
your ruse

always wondered
what worlds i lost
breaking up with you

holy fool i couldn't
follow

*this post has been
removed or could
not be loaded*

why not visit me
in Calgary. we'll
touch base

i can expense
your airfare



Lesley Battler's work has been published in *Alberta Views*, *Arc*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, *dANDelion*, *filling Station*, *Matrix*, *Other Voices*, *PRISM international*, and *West Coast Line*. She won the *PRISM international* Earle Birney Award (2012), and the University of Calgary Poem of the Season Award (2009) for a poem that became part of *Endangered Hydrocarbons*. Battler received an MA in English from Concordia University, and currently lives in Calgary, where she works in the petrochemical industry.

COLOPHON

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