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POEM IN ENGLISH

FRANCINE CUNNINGHAM

ON IDENTITY

/ Ancestral Power

it's hard to feel power from my ancestors when i don't know

who they are,

where they come from,

what their stories are

we share blood

blood shares memory

but i want us to share so much more

my breath over the phone line

but who did they come from?

what are their stories?

i don't know, my girl

nighttime thought: what if my ancestors, or at least a few of them, were dicks?

worth derived from knowing where and who you come from

but would it really matter if i did know

because at this point all my knowing would be contained to names

lying dead on pieces of paper

does anyone truly know their ancestors anymore?

did they ever?

do these thoughts make me a bad ndn?