

Excerpts from *How I Learned to Run*
By Kinnie Starr

House of Parlance Media Inc.

A LAKE

On my surface
I am boats
Roaring engines
Teenagers driven
By anxious pace
With burnt faces
I stare down the sun
Unaware of race
Of grandparents
The spill of gasoline
This stain upon me
At my centre
I am your clean lake
Deep water
Full of quiet history
Lost legends
My arms are weeds
Indigenous
They grow
Toward you now
Thin as sun rays
Strong as time

I WALK

Flip me onto belly
Onto firm tabletop
Yes that is me
Those are
My autumn
Leaves
City lights
Cross my chest
Illuminate these
Noble high breasts
Delicate and full
Tipped rosebud brown
You unlock
My origin
With hot sighs
Of impulsiveness
We push into
Unknown places

YOURS

Take me
Underneath you
My legs
Those of a fawn
Achingly long
I know
You've noticed
I am a woman
A child
A bird
A single word
Yours
I am yours
To lead and follow
I am yours
Beneath and above
I am yours
With a fight

And with love

I am yours

CROWS

These bones are arid

Like prairies

These legs are sunrises

Long shafts

Of yellow light

These arms are Chinook winds

Tucked diagonally

Into angular

Winter skies

These eyes are crows

Clever on telephone lines

Watching over

This life

HAVING FULL LIPS

The lips of my face

Are like another place

Dark flower

Fruit fresh

To devour

Have the good sense

To go south

Unmeasured

Quiet

Intelligent

S L O W

Inquisitive

Now wait

With two hands beneath

Then kiss

Where lovely

These thighs meet

Paced by empathy

We share sighs

Petals bloom

You know why

You know WHY

And oh HOW

I am a lady

I flush ripe red
While we go round

I LEARNED TO RUN

Hands loose
In half-fists
Falling
I learned to run
This year
From holding
Onto nothing!
I carved greater range
Into my heart's
Perimeter
I broadened
My tiny
Circumference
I swung keen
These bony arms
With their
Very own charm
I hung frail
These deer legs
Elegant
From this ribcage
I dug in
These thin feet
Heels down
Into
Shaky ground
My feet pounded the earth
I kicked up dirt
Rocks
Ice
Bits of cedar
Combed my face

One step
Two step
Three step
Four
Five
For the way my dad
Used to chide me
Ride me
Until the room
Split with laughter
Like a good
Half-breed father
He made fun
Of his
Funny looking daughter
Skin and bones
And even back then
I preferred
Being alone
Six
Seven
Eight
For the most
Magnificent
Heartbreak
For the way
He paraded her
Round the city
Knowing
How best
To derail me
Nine
Ten
Eleven
Twelve
Thirteen
For my mom's birth date
Lucky thirteen
To be born of her

Fourteen
Fifteen
Sixteen
Seventeen
HOW LONG will this take?
Eighteen
Nineteen
Twenty
Twenty steps
I see my breath
Twenty steps
I passed the test
Twenty steps
I learned to run
I learned to run
I did my best