

MY MI'KMAW BODY

Margaret Robinson

I have a proud survivor body, a Mi'kmaw body. My ancestors migrated across the Bering Strait over 15,000 years ago. The people who survived this long walk did so because they were good at getting fat.

As a kid, my dad didn't have enough to eat, so his love takes the form of food. He lurks by the wood stove holding a carton of eggs. He believes in the power of eggs. Hungry... have some eggs. Sad... have some eggs. Angry... "I could make you a couple of eggs. It'll only take a minute."

I eat them. Boiled, fried, runny, rubbery. I am filled with eggy love. In my imagination, I'm Lauren Bacall in a sports car. Tall, sleek, and dangerous, but in reality I'm the shortest kid in class, infantilized, uncoordinated, chosen last in sports, shaped like my people.

As colonists forced the Mi'kmaw from our territories, my people suffered from malnutrition, disease, and starvation. Two hundred years ago, there were only 1,500 of us left. Again, those who survived did so partly because of their bodies' ability to store fat well.

If only they'd have bologna, thin and fried. Forget fry bread, moose butter, eel, or venison. I know fried bologna hats as the food of my people. My genes rejoice and store the fat. My ancestors seem to like their women soft and round with.

With my short, stubby fingers, I sew the pointy hat of our people. It makes me visible, feminine, retro, a Mi'kmaw femme fatale. Like I can grab my culture and pull it through time and into my life. On my round eggy head it sits, proud like a bologna hat.

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My ancestors would have been impressed.