

**Kim Shuck**

*Poems*

***Singing at my Laptop***

Half an hour and my tongue is sore  
The sometimes unfamiliar geometry of this language  
Turns soft parts of my mouth temporarily to stone  
I'm picking sand from my back teeth hours later  
The outlaws who defied school rules  
Stood quiet or crying or screaming through the  
Beating  
Must taste smiles at this sight  
So many things I can't say  
Can't think about  
Around these busy busy verbs  
Sip medicine from a lightning killed tree  
Slips grow green around the stump  
Shrug shoulders  
Loosen neck  
Start singing again

***A Blanket as Map***

Art is territorial  
These assemblies of things  
Collected from my world  
Lifted from yours and reworked  
Until they have a place in mine  
No less a statement than the cat  
Face rubbing scent mark  
Might feel good  
Might flatter  
Purr might please  
Don't be fooled  
This is about turf  
These bloody pawprints  
I stitch across our shared quilt

***To a Different Watershed***

I make sure to pack a  
Map turtle shell  
Make sure  
I bring my hands  
Tools maybe  
Pen  
Sharpened stick

Pack poems  
Voice

Tiny bits of glass  
Sorted into small  
Gourds  
Something soft to  
Carve words into

I make sure to pack  
With care  
Processing equipment  
Things I use to  
Know the shadows  
Of angles  
The geometry of your place

***Lesson on Packing Light***

I dream of learning  
Checkers from Ulisi  
Who giggled as we teased the dog  
With a tennis ball  
Between moves  
A mystery to me these days  
Who, in that small town, ever played tennis?  
I don't think I invented the ball though  
Off on a tangent I imagine it  
Bouncing down the Will Roger's Turnpike towards  
Indian housing  
Gram's dog  
Our checkers game  
BarcaLounger  
Exotic trappings of  
My father's family  
Bright orange metaphor  
Congested with  
Dog spit  
Mud  
Etta Mae's elderly giggles  
The magic of a woman with three names  
It fit so neatly  
Into the dog's mouth

***Kid Game***

I played hide and seek  
Because I wanted someone to find me  
Laying under the stairs  
Of the house two doors up  
As a hiding spot it was  
More a slight of hand  
Trick of the angle  
Than any real  
Nook of concealment  
I'd even laugh sometimes  
When the other kids would run over me  
But they never looked properly  
Just using them to get to other  
Better known spots and  
Although I wanted it more than anyone  
I was never found

**Kim Shuck** is a mixed Tsalagi, Sauk/Fox and Polish educator, writer and weaver. She has an MFA in fine arts, weaving from San Francisco State University. Shuck has had myriad jobs, which include writing math curricula, frothing cappuccino, teaching at the university level and being the parent of three. Greenfield Review Press published her book *Smuggling Cherokee* in January 2006. That manuscript won the 2005 Diane Decorah award.