

from *Jeanne Dark comes of age on the prairie*:

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i.

*Stuck in the middle*

*of open space somewhere\**

my only companions the restless winds with airsong names –  
Chinook, Mistral, Cers, Foëhn, Santana, Harmattan, Sirocco –

winds the only music, polishing snow into crystals,  
scratching hieroglyphics on stone, etching sand

into dunes, skiffing poplar leaves  
and riverwater into whitecaps. Only the winds answer,

their ciphers more enigmatic than the oracles,  
why it takes so long to learn the mariner's compass,

true north of the soul always dyed  
a darker indigo than death. On this breeze rides the possibility

of what to (be)come, couched in the mutable

language of spirit, the whistle of excitement that marks creation:

be the goddess-queen draped in green amber, in green vines,

in green leaves, the birthmother of yourself.

\*by William Robertson, "Father" from *Standing on My Own Two Feet* (Coteau, 1986). Used with permission.