

## When Water Came To Me

*Land of Memories Park in Mankato, Minn. USA* | Photography by [Bernadette Fox](#) | @dettesnaps



There is a silent epidemic taking place in the United States—the widespread killing and disappearance of indigenous women—and there is no comprehensive, federal database tracking these cases, nor is there any significant focus on solutions. The consequence is that indigenous girls today are facing an uncertain future of race and gender based violence without consideration or protection. In November 2018, the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) released a report on this nationwide emergency, stating that 5,712 cases of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) were reported in 2016, but that only 116 of them were logged in the Department of Justice database, due to limited resources and poor data collection. Coverage has been devoted to public events and activism around this issue, however, very little attention is given to the daily lives of the individuals who are directly experiencing this crisis—female indigenous girls and teens—and who currently face murder rates up to 10 times higher than the rest of the country.

Special collaboration with and thanks to the Mdewakanton Band of Dakota Lower Sioux Indian Community in Minnesota. All images made with 120 medium format Kodak Portra film.





### **When Water Came to Me**

For a moment, all that once ribbed between us fell still,

In a moment, all that once ripped between us falls still,





So I thrust my thighs forward, curls to break our still.

These aren't natural occurrences for me, he said.



This is how nature occurs in me, I said.

We had enough drip between us to run off and shed—





I thought to weigh in, to starve myself off in ~

I thought to wade in, to stave myself off with ~



But when my hair is down, I stand as a horse in ~

I thought I had learned to wade without waiting.





Yes, I thought I had learned to wait without wading,  
When my legs are wet up to here, I come close to fading





in— water: it's so oblivious; it eats through my coat hair,





eats through my coat hair and leaves me winter bare.





Poem by Tacey M. Atsitty



## WHEN WATER CAME TO ME

Land of Memories Park in Mankato, Minn. USA | Photography by [Bernadette Fox](#) | @dettesnaps



There is a silent epidemic taking place in the United States—the widespread killing and disappearance of indigenous women—and there is no comprehensive, federal database tracking these cases, nor is there any significant focus on solutions. The consequence is that indigenous girls today are facing an uncertain future of race and gender based violence without consideration or protection.

Special collaboration with and thanks to the Mdewakanton Band of Dakota Lower Sioux Indian Community in Minnesota. All images made with 120 medium format Kodak Portra film.