smallpox, anyone

i. the blanket

she wrapped a woman up
in a blanket from the bay
and rolled her down a hill
to remind everyone
that blankets are for swaddling
and not for smallpox.

i went down the very same hill
with wet mittens and soggy boots
on a plastic toboggan,
a foodland bag,
a cardboard box
and my raincoat.

the teacher is telling me i should feel proud because toboggan
is an indian word. i am telling the teacher that out of every-
thing, this is a strange thing to feel proud about, but she
disagrees: “i think your cultural heritage is a mighty fine thing
to feel proud about leanne and i think it will lead to great success in your studies.”
ii. rising to the occasion

the duke and duchess were coming to visit
and all she had to wear
were ripped jeans and black t-shirts
so she made a dress with saucers for nipples and
a beaver lodge for a bustle

    if you would just read more post colonial theory, you'd un-
derstand that your anger is part of the history of colonialism
and therefore colonial and if you'd just take some of the things
from settlers and some of the things from your ancestors, you'll
find you can weave them into a really nice tapestry, which
will make the colonizers feel ambivalent and then you've
altered the power structure.

i liked the saucers for nipples idea so much that i start
wearing dinner plates around the house
over t-shirts

i liked the idea of wearing dinner plates
over t-shirts
so much that i start wearing dinner plates
over t-shirts and
under plaid shirts

mom starts shouting
into the phone
“she’s wearing those dinner plates again”
accelerating into a crescendo
of “plates again!”
iii. fountain
after the dress,
she made a fountain
but not the kind you throw money into
and wish to fall in love in or win the lottery
the kind that says
hey, anishinaabekwewag are stuck in this
endless goddamn loop
and nobody gives a shit.

*your work is polemic, if you could re-write the tone of this article to avoid shaming canadians into a paralysis of guilt and inaction we could move forward with the publication of your article.*

...

by leanne betasamosake simpson, in *islands of decolonial love: stories and songs* (pp. 33-34)