



*Axon: Creative Explorations*, Vol 11, No 1, July 2021

## CRAYONS MELTING

Merna Lomack Wharton

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Here I am travelling alone

Here I am stepping

up into passenger plane with mail in the back with letters

jet fuel and odour, gagging for clean air

My eyes filled with tears,

I see with my glass eyes

the wetland and lakes full of fish, uncut for dried fish to eat

Come with me to a journey

where city is made from crushed rocks

prone to earth moving underneath

My friend Sleeping Lady across the wide river

I've entered the Dena'ina land before on a stretcher at 5.

This place with a military asbestos chemical painted walls—it was like a zoo with a medical chart. No colours on the walls, Alaskan art pieces coming and going through the door made with nature

hands full of money—mine goes to unpaid bills!

There were other village kids, hair like mine in white gowns

the summer with no rain

no tear stains to leave the plastic covered pillow

dropping crayons and little metal cars from the hospital pediatrics triage,

window that faces the wide river

hot summer days melt the crayons on the window sill

A young boy died in a wheelchair while I pushed his wheels in the hallway!

I am alone again with crayons in my hand and a blazing orange truck to ride around this town.

Here I am traveling alone again, stepping up and still

the crayons melting under the sun.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Merna Lomack Wharton**

Merna Lomack Wharton is a Yup'ik artist who grew up in Akiachak Alaska, currently a resident in Anchorage. Merna enjoys finding art in natural elements and shares her experiences through her website, [nasektaq.com](http://nasektaq.com). She enjoys preserving her traditional culture and art, gathering berries, greens, catching, cutting and smoking salmon and traveling in Alaska's rivers and roads with her family and friends. Merna shares her worldview from a village girl's perspective to today's experiences in her poems that mostly arrive with raw emotions, river motions and erosions of change. Merna was one of the recipients of the 2017 Rasmuson Foundation Project for Folk and Traditional Arts and had several poems published in Alaska Women Speak. Additional information about Merna Lomack Wharton Nasek'taq's traditional art project can be found at <https://www.rasmuson.org/49writers/artist-profile/merna-wharton/>.

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