

Bittersweet Mantra

feathers fall to ashes
in my hands
running through my fingers
like water
poisoned water that tastes
bittersweet

I gather the ashes
and make paint
I paint open the skies
I had shut
I bridge skies to rivers
born of springs

my belly is a field
of flowers
seeded by flutes and pipes
by dancers
and drummers and tellers
of old tales

flowers burst into fruit
sweet bounty
that weights and wearies limbs
to breaking
so they let go, sated
by giving

songbirds capture stray thoughts
for their nests
braided among bluestem
and sunbeams
so I no longer need
to home them

I am the riverbank
where deer rest
my soil holds roots and skulls
with soft hands
I have learned to make clouds
of my tears

Cassandra Windwalker