

Ode to Montreal

By Wailana Kalama

I love you Montreal, because when you speak your feelings pour out unfiltered, and usually in hot pink.

You sound like drummers on the streets. You sound like the barebreasted lovers who shout from one coffee umbrella to the other in the Village district, men in tight minishorts, men in heels.

You tell me all about your plans to open a vegan food tour company. You switch between English, French, Spanish like a hungry linguist while you devour spicy salami crusted with peppers.

Your lovers are the leather wine flasks that hang from the spine of a bicycle. Your children are the bikers flitting in and out on your coiling streets, through glaring red lights; they are the purple silk clad acrobats sighing on the shoulders of men in tuxedos.

You stink like soot, syrup, gas, a special tropical sweat that can only pour out 90 degree humidity. You taste like sour microbrews and fresh baklava and the stringy sweetness of Chinese Dragon's beard candy.

I love you because you remind me how much I love my limbs, and my eyeballs, my prancing feet with which I flutter across your curving spine. I love you Montreal, because you make me and everyone remember how we once danced as children, dizzy and wild as if the whole world stretched out under our feet like red velvet carpet.