Counterstory as Research Method and Genre: Bean and the Epic Workshop Fail

*Keywords: counterstory, writing workshop, antiracism, decoloninzation, whiteliness*

In June of 2013, my youngest daughter, Grace, and I crossed the border into Canada from the United States, our applications for work and living permits in hand. We were directed by border agents to the immigration centre, and when our turn came to speak with an agent, as she completed our paperwork, she asked Grace what she most looked forward to about becoming Canadian. Grace said confidently, “Tim Horton’s!” This produced laughter among every agent close enough to hear. As our agent returned our documentation, she told us we would find a Tim Horton’s at the first exit after the border and welcomed us to Canada. The relief I felt was palpable. I had already promised my family that I would never uproot them to change jobs again. But more than this, I felt the anguish of living in a nation now adrift on rising tides of white supremacy and racism, now sinking in a sea of right-wing extremism and protofascism receding. Some time would pass before I allowed myself to see, to hear, to know that not all border crossings were as easy, as welcoming as ours.