Carol Willette Bachofner is Rockland’s new poet laureate. She reveals in today’s poem that injustices toward Native Americans, a longstanding feature of our national history, continue in the present day. Carol writes: “As an Abanaki poet, I heal the hurt and honor my culture by writing.”

Unknown Algonquin Females, Circa 1800s

by Carol Willette Bachofner

Pasture, stone wall, and steeple,
They dug up my grandmother, moved her
to the museum. No one stopped them.
I had no say. De-recognized by government,
filed at the BIA under “I” (Indian, former),
she’s been reduced to anthropology, curated
by bureaucrats, her bones on display
with the bones of a woman from an enemy tribe:
(Unknown Algonquin Females, Circa 1800s)
No one sang a travel song for her to ease her bones
along the way; no giveaway, no mourning strings
to soften the sorrow. I have watched their grandmas
prayed and cried into the ground, names cut
into marble, bodies preserved under stones safe
behind iron gates. The governor’s announcement claims
today: There are no Abenaki Indians left in Vermont.