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POETRY



Untitled

LeNeil Spotted Horse Jr.

A place I'm comfortable in is inside my
Grandmother and Grandfather's Teepee

Cobalt blue
Blessings
Happy

Singing songs of spiritual joy
making others happy.

Juniper
Water

I'm there to introduce my girlfriend to
my Mother

A place I'm comfortable is inside my
Grandmother and Grandfather's Teepee.

Smile
Meditate
Pray.

LENEIL SPOTTED HORSE JR. (Seneca and Kiowa) is a self-taught artist. As a child, he learned to draw by looking at and copying things: comic book and movie heroes, objects of interest, or various works of art. As a young adult, he grew more interested in his Native culture which became a new inspiration for themes in his art. On imprisonment, Spotted Horse reflects, "I've had many hard struggles with addiction and behaviors. It's my belief every human must face who they are and realize their faults to overcome. My artwork conveys what I have learned on my own road of personal understanding. My desire is to share these things with the world, especially those who are looking for themselves." Spotted Horse drew the illustrations that accompany his poetry.

She told me one time, "You don't worry about wives and girlfriends. If anyone wants you, they're going to have to go through me first."

She can see the intent, the makings of my girlfriend's heart.

I think my Grandmother likes her.

She was benevolent and gracious toward us. Like the flower she is.

Freedom

Freedom is the loss of heartache
Freedom is the movement of your perception,
From indulgence to silently
Being satisfied with nothing

Freedom isn't in the streets,
it's in your mind
Freedom is sobriety and
Waking up to yourself.

Freedom is loving yourself
Freedom is letting go
of those relationships and attachments
that you've wasted your energy on.

Freedom is giving in to the good and
being happy with what you've got.
You may ask, what do you have?
I have me and all that makes me, me inside.
With nothing to want or a habit to need.
Freedom is my responsibility.



 SpottedHorse
'16

A World Without Prisons

To have a world without prisons
Every man, every woman would have
To unlock the person inside themselves.
The prisons they built, the prisons they've become
Metropolitan Detention Center
Penitentiary of New Mexico
Southern New Mexico Correctional
CCA Women's Correctional, on and on . . .
These are reflections of the prisons
We've built in ourselves,
Here's another list of prisons:

Selling drugs to hurting souls and treating
Them less than, to act like a Kingpin, an
Arrogant, greedy, imbecile, who has no
Spiritual belief except money and material things
And still won't wake up—penitentiary.

Here's another "Pinta":

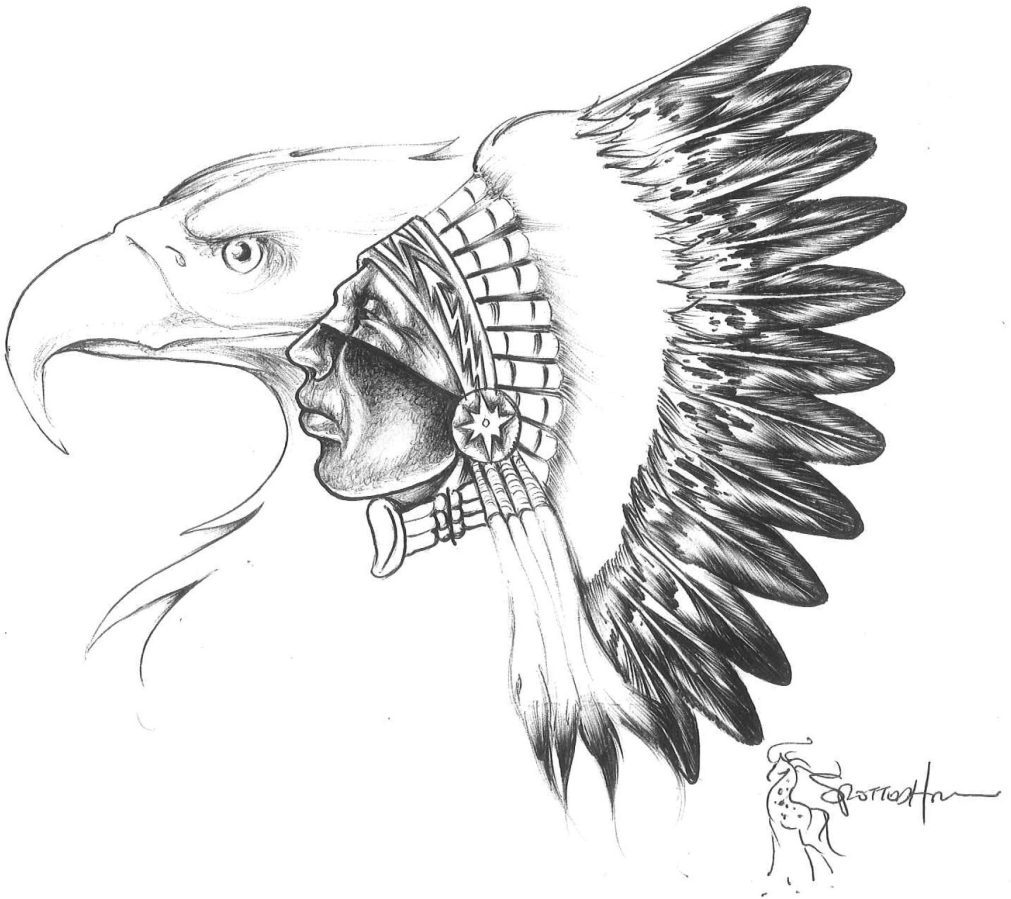
I can't control my anger because I'm a jealous coward
Who's in love with a promiscuous woman with low self-esteem
And now I've beat her half way to death,
Penitentiary in your mind—facility

A lot of people go to this other Big House:

I'm too prideful, fearful, and dishonest
That I can't stop hiding
Behind drugs and don't know how to work
Because I'm too lazy and would rather steal,
Running in circles,
Addiction—detention.
The world is what it is and society
Doesn't want us if we're not willing
To unlock ourselves from the bars and
Razor wire we've placed ourselves into.
We made the prisons; we made the law



And we can't blame society for the
Life we chose.
These things aren't what we are
It's what we've become.
Face your fear, put yourself in the light;
so you can throw all of
What locks you up and kills you away
And put it where it belongs . . . in the past.
Then you can walk in true freedom and see a new world
With new eyes
In truth.



Penitentiary Round Dance

Dawn Karima Pettigrew

This is a song about Sorrow,
scarred, sloe-eyed Sorrow,
that shadows them as they trade a number for their names.

This is a song about Solace,
chain-link, concrete Solace,
that swaths them as they forget to number their days.

This is a song about Sorry,
court-date, suit-and-tie Sorry,
that surrounds them as they pray mercy triumphs over judgment.

This a song about Surrender,
counterfeit, forfeit Surrender,
that seems like repentance as they see it from a distance.

This is a song about Wrongs,
by wonders, by war Wrongs
that spread as great terrors meted out by a mighty hand.

This a song about Warriors,
ponytailed, blue-jeaned Warriors,
that stumble as they impact the gates of genocide.

This is a song about Women,
life-giving, long-suffering Women,
that fall down, too.

In addition to poems, DAWN KARIMA PETTIGREW (Creek/Cherokee) is a prolific writer of novels, fiction, plays, and journalism. Her second novel, *The Marriage of Saints*, was a New Mexico Book Award finalist. Also a filmmaker and recording artist, her films have appeared in many film festivals, while her music CD *The Desire of Nations* won a Native American Music Award in 2013. A winner of the Indigenous Artist Activist Award and a nominee for the Indigenous Music Award, she is currently the host of both a Native American TV show and a Native American radio show. Pettigrew has taught classes at University of New Mexico, Western Carolina University, Ohio State University, Ohio Wesleyan, and Columbus State Community College. Her home is the Qualla Boundary Cherokee Reservation.

The Approximate Visiting Hours of Genocide*

Hesaketvmese, v'ohmerrvs
God, have mercy on me.

Gisgi receives a letter from his Cousin Wanetah each week. She writes in lines that loop into Cherokee syllabary. When she comes to visit him, her sweet smile weakens him. Rather than let the ice thaw and risk weakness in his cellblock, Gisgi hangs up the phone and calls for the guards. His pretty cousin still writes to him, though. Gisgi tore the throat out of an Aryan that touched the letters under his bed.

Hesaketvmese, v'ohmerrepvs.
God, please have mercy on me.

In solitary, Leonard thinks of every Lakota word he knows.

Hesaketvmese V'ohmerrvs.
God, have mercy on me.

"Amazing Grace" flows like a waterfall of Navajo in Larry's head.

Hesaketvmese purke hvlwe liketskat, Mvto, nettv etvn hesaketv vm etektvneces.
God, thank you for allowing me to live another day.

Once, Dennison's mother promised that when she got paid, she would take him to Dairy Fest for vanilla ice cream with butterscotch syrup. That was 12 years ago and he's still never tasted butterscotch. They served it in Juvey once, but he's waiting to taste it with her.

Hesaketvmese Cem Opunayis.
God, I am speaking to you.

Timothy promises Tunkashila that if he gets out this time, he'll start Grass Dancing.

Hesaketvmese Nettv omvlkv esyvfketv.
God, I love you every day all the days.

Walter explains letters and documents to other prisoners in exchange for cigarettes. He won't smoke, never has, but he breaks them into pieces and uses them for prayers.

*Hesaketvmese momen emonken ofv sutat os.
God is still in the sky.*

Naaman quit drinking, jail scared him so bad.

*Hesaketvmeset, omvlkvn hvttvm hvmkucvn vn'senwikepvs.
I have made many mistakes and sins. God, please forgive me of all of them once again.*

* All Native language phrases are in Mvskoke Creek.

Someday

Michael Utzler

The sound of graphite gliding across the blank page is an addiction,
The rhythm of my heart is bound to the stroke of the hand holding the pencil,
And I pay tribute for the melody of the softly sung song,
Constantly with the lines drawn from the traumas of an unstable mind,
I scratch out images with patient regard, despite my restless nature,
Despite my need for instant gratification
The empty parchment is an exodus from everything,
My life, lived in, breaths of imagination and exhibited in the finished product of my
labors,
Proof of life,
Proof undeniable that I was here,
That I live,

Yesterdays and tomorrows I see at the edge of my jaded perception,
Thin and elusive,
Like the tendrils of cigarette smoke caught in the filtered rays of the rising sun,
Today in itself, blinds me to the truth it seems,
I see it as the record written in fragmented statements
The stifling result of all the times I said, "someday,"
The someday that never came and the days I let slip,
The faltering steps I took in the wrong direction,
The staggering ballet,
Of an ego intoxicated juvenile to the drunken square dance of a lost man,
They culminate in the seconds that span my mind like eternity,

In the silent passage of rare solitude,
The past, the future and the could be run loquaciously like a conversation of lovers,
No stumbling words or uncertainty,

Born in 1979 in Gallup, MICHAEL UTZLER (Navajo) says, "Following a less-than-ordinary childhood, I spent a number of years on the wrong side of locked doors. In those years, I was filled with resentment, shame, and I felt unworthy of anything. And it was there, I suppose, behind concertina wire fences and concrete walls, that I found myself. My soul, some would say, emerged from a blank piece of paper and a black pen. Through years of trial and error, through painstaking hours of frustration and no formal training, I began to develop my own unique artwork. To date, it is still evolving, and more often than not, includes reflections of my tribal heritage."

Just the grace and fulfillment of a lifetime of practice,
The years spent whiling away the hours waiting,
Always waiting for something,

Fear remains a strangely distant abstraction even as I picture the hungry times,
Hunger, gnawing at my guts like an animal in my belly,
Home and family consisting of a brother, a father and all my worldly possessions in a
backpack,
My mother another abstraction,
Distant,
Less tangible at moments than any memory I could conjure,
Less than the fickle and fictional desires I scribble on accepting surfaces,

I say I'm addicted to the sound of graphite,
Because I tire of the countless sentences I spoke starting with the word someday,
Someday I won't be,
Someday I will be,
Someday somebody will love me,
Someday I'll not care what hurt the world holds for me,

Someday,
I won't remember the hard times the most,
The beat up, beaver fur Stetson and the pictures of a barbecued singlewide,
The clarity of pity seen in the eyes of passers-by and the shame of having to beg the
populace for spare change,
But the choice was always charity and shame,
Or feeling the pain of hunger tearing away the excuses for not begging,
I'd always say, Someday it won't be this way,
Someday there will be no more panhandling with the old man's hat,
Someday,
It passed and my someday changed,

Someday became just another day passing,
More unwanted realities,
More pain,
Some self-inflicted,
Some just there,

Someday became my excuse to do nothing,
Be nothing and strive only to keep my head from sinking below the surface,
I was not living just barely surviving,
Not quite drowning,
All the old some days,

Are now yesterdays and not much more than the crusted lesions rendering my dreams
impotent,

Someday I know in the quiet voice of a paintbrush,
In the sincere promises of a mechanical pencil,
In the fine line of my teetering thoughts,
That I will find the exit from the repetitive recital of someday,

Maybe, my attribution to living in the grips of addiction is just another excuse,
My enabling thought to escape,
To be a fugitive of my responsibility,
To let my world crumble and disappear into shadows and shapes,
The future and brittle hopes lost in the vanishing point of my framed expectations,
Or maybe it is just another someday uttered in helpless devotion to failure,

Someday I won't need to hide behind a prepped canvas,
I'll set aside my brush, pencils and charcoals and absorb the life I tried desperately to
ignore,
Yeah, someday I might recover from my soul sick addiction,
My crutch, for letting years pass steadily by,
Someday,
Someday.