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Author

Louis, Bojan

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Trouble Shooting

Bojan Louis

She wasn't better off to drive—weave
this paved city's grid, to lie together only,
and promise on waking to search our emptiness
for a way.

We never made it to our beds, but hurried
to her backseat, improvised the friction of our thighs,
and asked blow why whiskey, morning after,
claims forgiveness.

I'm addicted to her, an inversion—one open
neutral where current can't return through—
the potential to yes, home together, pleasure and arc
off each other.

BOJAN LOUIS is a member of the Navajo Nation. His poems have been published in *The Kenyon Review*, *Platte Valley Review*, and *Hinchas de Poesía*, and his fiction in *Alaska Quarterly Review*. He is working as a service electrician in the Phoenix metropolitan area while completing a collection of poetry and another of short fiction. He has been a resident at The MacDowell Colony.

One's Own

i.

Struck cold by morning sun, the decomposed
crumble in rows of upturned earth.

Failure's given to
the toiler, who keeps earning less than promised.

Drought these months,
unfed tributaries, nourishment tilled dirt.

None of it's right—
work, now, disappeared.

ii.

He stick-frames nightmares, after spring and warmth,
into a house he'll never own; one mansion, mosaic.

Inside, what assaults
him is abstracted—mother serving
rusted pennies, jagged
from reckless use. Screams, though the edges aren't
real: only piss
relieves sweat.

iii.

All he does
is plan how
to move quick, not rush to the place
where his people are sent.
A moonless, sunless pitch burning fast
and heavy—dried fields.
Heat waves blurring memory and trauma of seasons
when thirst was a silence, kept, only to crack.

A Structure in Parts

Quiet hours since dawn; casings cooled
 on pedestrian empty
streets, dried with blood. The ghosted,
summoned by the sun, rise with dew to hear
 a photographer
murmur over beads, undulate prayer. Witnesses
lock themselves in against the traffic of trafficking.

A crew of homeless lug buckets of water,
 rinse down the storm drains, pools
 of pomegranate seeds
spilled from the ashen limbs cut from men.
 Unable shooters sent
to return with bodies on their guns. Though
begged, God has abandoned this town, others like it.

A coroner offers the obvious—
 full-leafed trees collapse in
 winter. A sergeant reads
cardboard jammed in the gouge of a lamp post.
 Manda los hombres.
Mantenga las cabezas. Here,
beyond the wall of abyss.

