

ALL

ALL

TOGETHER

TOGETHER

deCoy Gallerina

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"WHAT THE FUCK, DAVE!!!!?????"

we hear the hard violent smack  
hard fist to tender flesh  
Older brother attacks younger  
...thud  
...impact  
body to hard ground  
two tents away

"WHAT THE FUCK, DAVE!!!!?????"

Young wife horrified  
all of them 'buzzed' to the max

Dave screaming

"She's MY WIFE, stay the fuck away from her!!"

"That was a long time ago!"

"Get off of him!!!"

Ripping in my belly

fear tears through my stomach to my diaphragm

the violence effects all in proximity that can hear, sense it

Sorrow in my heart

how can they hurt each other

this is our tribe, our relatives...

Such sadness permeates soul

My black matter

The matter is infinitely

Black

Dark

Hellish

Hell

Beyond the escape of booze

Drugs

Denial

Ceremonial fire burning  
Its heart at the center of yucca fronds  
Beneath sky opening centered above  
Tipi poles spiraling to stars  
Delicate smoke wafting upwards

Maidens eyes wide  
Great their effort  
Dazed  
As heavy fringe dashes quickly  
With the fast rhythm of their jerking bodies  
Hands forward, before their bodies  
Hips responding to the diagonal motions of their feet  
Hips leveraging inertia  
Heel toe, heel toe, heel toe  
They scoot across the mat beneath their feet  
From one edge of it to the other  
About two feet across  
Sweat pouring from their skin

One prayer, one chant, then another  
Attendants murmuring encouragement  
The pit's fire  
Sending a tinge of warm light  
To their faces  
Glistening with moisture

Then the signal to sit

Relatives, friends, visitors  
Gathered just beyond the circle  
Of medicine people surrounding  
This intimate, sacred space

Beyond these people  
With their backs to the girls  
Facing outwards in the opposite direction  
Singers chant to the Spirits and fire  
Layer one

The next layer is the women in rough shoes  
And, many colored shawls  
Dancing, single file around the Spirits and fire  
Wearing traditional camp dresses, wide tiered skirts billowing  
As the kick of their feet  
Sends the cloth furling about their calves and ankles  
Some wear worn jeans and sweat shirts bearing tribal emblems  
Faces directed forward towards the head of the woman dancing in front of them  
Some with their faces angled askance, to their right towards the fire and Spirits

Brisk steps on the balls of toes  
levitate women  
a miniscule, all but imperceptible, distance from earth  
Chiricahuas

Mescaleros  
Heavy, sure, steady marching step  
Lifting their knees  
Letting their feet fall to connect solidly with earth  
Lift again and again  
Step after step, hour after hour

Within this clockwise circle  
Prayer expressed through their being  
Prayers expressed through the Spirit's being

Tinkle of thousands of metal jingles  
Slap of sabers hitting hide skirts  
Drum, rhythm, focus  
Thighs and sabers create a force of sound  
Grabbing attention, directing it

Resounding, high pitched, owl like call  
Guttural in throats  
Freed through lips and leather mask

Dust, flames  
Sacred fire  
Center

Arbor to one side  
Boughs woven high  
People around grilled fires within  
Vats of bubbling grease  
Hands covered with white flour  
And rubber like dough  
Placed by long sticks  
Into oil to cook

People sitting on benches  
In shadows  
Greeting each other  
Quietly conversing

Further, beyond the grounds and arbor  
Huge caravan like rooms covered with canvas over wood beams  
Filled with benches, large tables  
For eating, visiting, food preparation  
Spigets for water  
Containers of sugary, red colored beverage, some sort of 'kool-aid'  
Which has been a part of this gathering, ever since I can remember  
At what point does something become 'tradition', formal or otherwise?

Supplies, food, vegetables  
Bowls of stew, fry bread  
Styrofoam plates, cups  
White, plastic utensils  
Everyone standing around, or moving quickly to get the next thing done  
Fire in one corner for cooking meat  
Someone and a friend standing there tending pots filled with bubbling  
concoctions

Children, cousins, nieces, nephews, brothers, sisters, babies, mothers, fathers,  
grand and great-grands  
Lineage  
And spirits of the centuries and mellenia  
Present

This large open, covered room  
Lends access to the private tipis of each girl  
Being honored in the ceremony this year

Teepees in which the girls are prepared for each step of her task  
Teepees for her privacy and comfort  
Teepees conferencing with her medicine guides and helpers  
Teepees for safe keeping of her privacy and private things  
Teepees in which she and her helpers can rest and re-coop their focus  
Chairs, suitcase, cot, sacred items, supplies, clothing, presents

Beyond the Teepees, parked cars, a private road, campers, tents, a field, the  
tribe's rodeo grounds  
A four lane highway, Ruidoso, Alamagordo, Roswell, Carlsbad Carverns, White  
Sands...

Water is passed to all within the dark ceremonial tipi  
All are tired, exhausted from this long vigil  
Dry leaves on the long pine tipi pole sparkle with the light of the fire

The signal to sit  
With dignity and full, though fatigued, awareness  
The girls sit formally in their designated positions  
Feet extended straight out before them, hands in their laps  
Some adjust fringe, arrange their skirts

As this ceremony goes, so does her life  
The force and dignity with which they complete and execute this ceremony  
Is theirs for life  
As is the blessing it bestows upon all to whom they are connected  
And all present, as well

They become Sacred White Painted Women  
The vehicles of her presence  
White Painted Women the sacred being and central feature of their culture  
White Painted Woman, in their purified flesh,  
White Painted Woman manifest in matter and this material world

The grey rawhide soles of their finely crafted boots  
Facing the fire  
The sole's smooth surfaces shining in that light

Face shining with sweat  
A medicine helper  
Wipes her forehead with a small, colored cloth

Her helper sits by her side  
Eyelids drooping with fatigue  
Fighting off drowsiness  
Pulling her feinting head to upright  
Whispering a few words to the girl

A long, rigorous vigil  
An arduous journey

The signal to dance again

The girls are alert, quickly up on their feet  
Even in their exhausted, sometimes wavering state  
They exhibit intense strength and intention

This offering to the spirits

Fragments of memory  
In sparks of fire

Nieces, nephews, grand ones

Different families  
All related  
In this remote place  
In this center of the universe

Police sirens blast speeding uproad, on a hill above the scared teepees, campers  
tents  
Which surround the ceremony

Drinkers, drinking, getting high throughout the day, night

Ceremony

My niece and her friends drink beers  
Maintaining a constant, insulating buzz  
The culture they learned  
From their father and mother  
Which they in turn learned from the hell their culture experienced  
Their father's face blue-grey and bloodless  
Reflecting his life of alcoholism and his liver condition  
Sometimes with love in his eyes  
And at others mouthing a slightly slurred indictment of age old rage  
"You're not Ind!"  
This routine acted out mechanically, on cue...absently menacing  
His drunk on so long, he doesn't get a buzz  
Just services his addiction  
Passed to his children

I love him  
I love them  
Deep is my compassions and the emotion  
Burning my breast

I remember the kids  
When they were so tiny  
Little round faces staring up happily at their auntie  
Innocence  
Crazy lil Ndn kids running around, play fighting like maniacs

Sitting, chatting, helping, heaving heavy tubs of beverage, water, stew  
Everyone working hard or resting, visiting  
With one intention  
Supporting the girls in their journey

Coming and going, sitting, eating, conversing, sharing  
All in good will and good thought

Washing hands, dishes, faces, arms  
Water spilling from the single spigot at the center of the room  
Its been a 'wet' year  
And,yet, it rains for ceremony most every year

Meals served on tables many yards long  
Long lines of people awaiting the feast on one side of these tables  
Opposite them on the other side of the table  
People with large serving spoons  
Dish out pasole and beef stew, potato salad, baked mescal  
The line moves along  
Again and again during this seven day long gathering

~Some do for love, some for money  
It's a good thing  
Some come to party  
Some to pray  
Some lost, some knowing  
This is the way of it~

Comprised, mostly of people of brown skin, all hues  
Before and behind you  
In the hot sun of the day

No one sleeps, not really  
There is the 49 til sunrise  
Boys whooping coyote yelps  
Back and forth songs loud and clear, though slurred  
The rustling of people preparing the morning meal  
Gourd dance beginning  
Sirens and yelling  
Snoring and chill

Sunrise  
Continuum  
Constant  
Circular  
No sleep  
Night  
Day  
Parade  
Heat

PunkGoth teens  
Purple hair  
Stretched ear lobes  
Meander the grounds  
Walk in the parade alongside  
Their aunts and uncles in cowboy boots, hats, jeans  
Their black T-shirts branded with counter-culture messages and  
Old punk or death metal band logos "Christian Death"  
This IS 2015.....  
No more worshipping our oppressors by wearing cowboy gear  
The intent is clear  
And, I am so glad

Candy, constant candy, candy  
Tossed in bucket fulls from elaborate floats  
Time to change this and the confused attachment to grease laden, nutritionless  
'fry-bread'  
Which arrived when we were taken hostage, with non-food commodities that the  
military gave us  
Causing us illness through mal-nutrition  
OK, that's my call to change, to wake up advertisement for the day!!

The parade continues  
A large float with a life sized diorama depicting the ceremonial teepee and  
grounds  
By which are seated two living children in traditional clothing  
Boy in pants, loin cloth, white shirt, red head band, brandishing a shield and  
spear  
Girl wearing a light blue calico camp dress, beaded Mescalero knee high buckskin  
boots with her hair down  
Then come  
The San Carlos Spirits dancing to the chanting of their medicine men  
Young, sinewy bodies, high on their toes, jumping as they dance in the air  
The whirling and deep drone of their rain maker  
Spinning powerfully with centrifugal force and the strength of its dancer  
Down the road  
Behind  
Girls in traditional camp dresses of red and golden hue  
Bearing a banner of brilliant colors  
"Mescalero High School"  
Before them  
A punk band on a wide truck bed  
Belligerently and melodiously belting  
"LET IT GO!!!"  
More messages indicting the future to be present now  
And the present to move forward  
Wiser than the wisest, these youth  
Of progress

'Indian' Princesses in fine buckskin ceremonial dresses  
sitting atop their families car's hoods, on Pendleton blankets of fine wool and  
elaborate colors  
Followed by  
A truly strange exhibit atop a float featuring  
A prize winning girl of almost three  
In a red stripper dress, tiny lips painted bright crimson, dark blue makeup on her  
eyelids  
Bazaar, truly of the shadow of the shallow American culture which surrounds the  
reservation

Folkloric Mexican dancers from a nearby town, in red and white full and furling skirts  
Heeled shoes stamping out percussive rhythms on the hot black asphalt

Earrings of beaded and turquoise nature pinned to a velveted board  
Are held up for all to see by their owner, a pre-teen, boy, tall and lanky  
Hawking gently the jewelry's availability for sale

'Indian' cowboys, jeans tight and sexed on prancing show horses  
Smile inticingly at cute, giggling girls in tight pink t-shirts and stretch jeans

The sun's heat sears my forearms as more candy comes tumbling from passing vehicles  
And the little nephew are have momentary charge of storms quickly into to the street  
To rescue....so much candy!!

Then a float promoting healthy eating, depicting bright posters of luscious greens  
And fruit and vegetable salads passes by  
The brown skinned women in it also wielding unhealthy handfuls of yet more candy to eager children  
Who stuff the seraned gems into bags, pockets, mouths

Candy, hitting cars, umbrellas, my knees, friends, cement  
Some candies melting as they cook in the hot plastic bags they've been stuffed into  
Unedible, sticky,unappetizing blobs  
Which some mother will later have to wash out of her child's cloths, hair, hands  
Ack!!!! DIabetese and rotten teeth, its late 2015 already, come on!!!!

Fold up chairs lugged back up the hill to camp by our little nephew and my friend  
On the secret back trail  
For relatives only

As we head back  
We see the older and younger brother, the girl  
Standing in front of their tent, leaning on their car  
Tense still buzzed from booze  
Award, embarrassed, strained  
The younger's face distorted like a melted plastic doll  
Eye swollen over his eye blocking his vision  
Swollen from the assault to his face  
His lower lip puffed out hugely, drooping, bruised, reddish blue  
As if stung by some mammoth wasp  
Swaying there, in a hungover stupor  
The three of them  
Forcing themselves to be there  
Together in that bond  
Unable to be

Anywhere else

My heart is so  
Torn  
Shreds  
It is weeping  
Pouring a flood of sorrow  
My chest bleeds  
I am helpless  
I see them

Releated in history, turmoil, pain, past  
Melded, as if rubber dolls melt by todays hot sun  
Together that way  
One  
In that

I pray for them  
For us  
~~~~~  
Ceremony

Gourd dance rattling shakers  
Thump of heels to ground  
Weight of body emphazing the beat  
Sunrise, through the morning, til lunch  
Bodies filled with rhythm  
Heels up, heels down  
The whole body shaking with the rattles  
Hitting the beat full  
Murmur and chant constant  
The healing of the Kiowa, Comanchee and other tribe's Gourd  
On the ceremonial ground of morning

Connect the system  
Chaos to semetry  
Hear heart calling  
All existiting at once

Arbor opens to ceremonial grounds  
Large doorways  
She sits to the side of one of these entrances  
In a metal fold up chair  
Heavy buckskin covering her  
Its jingles and fringe silent

Eyes heavy, watching passing people and dances on the grounds  
Heat of the day weighs on her  
Young friends greet her  
She can bestow the blessings of White Painted Woman  
Just ask her  
Her friends greet her  
The girl  
The sacred being

Excited cousins laugh with her, then wander

She sits silhouetted against the background  
Of smoky mystery  
Inside the arbor people work

Just behind her, to her left her helper stands  
In her calico camp dress  
Keeping an eye out, offering support  
Being present

White buckskin, yellow pollen, tarnished tin jingles  
Grease smell wafting past her

On the food table a rare salad, I indulge with relish

Fruit  
Dust  
Sweat  
Animated child's laughter  
A mother calling "Sonny!"

Narrow, fine, straight nose  
Full lips, long bright eyes  
A vast, distance of innocence between her eyelashes and brows  
Warm forehead  
Wavelike hairline  
Sleek black hair  
Nde' girl

Not me  
"...She's one of those who doesn't look Apache."  
As I overheard my sweet niece murmur through her cell phone to one of her  
friends lovingly, about me  
I was supposedly asleep in our tent, right...with all the noise and activity....tried  
to take a nap  
No, I don't look exactly Nde'...I've had to live with that, was one of the first  
hybrids, red hair, light skin  
Now, I'm not such an abhorration, there are many of us in many degrees, all  
beautiful, yes?

A few nasalized words  
Directed at a father's son  
Then a glass bottle to baby's lips

New 'levi' jeans, a crisp light blue yoked blouse, with long cuffed sleeves  
Simple brown leather work shoes  
Moma cradles her baby close

Three tents down  
A ruckus disturbs  
In a drunken stupor one inhabitant wields a blade  
Threatens another  
Tribal police

Sometimes they just talk to them  
Sometimes they haul them to the drunk tank  
This is a family  
Everyone is familiar  
So are the issues

Intergenerational, internalized

Scores of spirits dance  
Against a backdrop of radiant flashing fire  
Streaking, waving, blazing high above

Bowing their horns, shaking them menacingly at all that is harmful  
Charging with their horns leveled towards that  
Sabers wielded against disease and witches

Arms wide above and before their heads  
Sabers extended to the deep blue of night sky  
Open to fire  
Arms, body and being  
In worship and offering

Loud slapping of these sabers on leather skirts  
Their thighs  
A raw, intense sound that draws you

Approaching the fire  
They bend deeply at the waist, frontally to one side  
Then the other  
impeccable rhythm, their movements same

Guttural utterances  
The journey around the flames  
All directions

Searing flames seething  
Spirits dance  
Heat rages  
Spirits dance  
Sacred fire  
Purifies

Heat is absorbed into my cheeks  
The scene into my eyes  
The ceremony into my psyche and beyond

The heat from the massive bon fire is sometimes seering even at this distance  
many feet from it  
I wonder how the dancers can stand it  
Yet when I dance  
In the women's configuration  
It burns and lifts me  
Though thirsty, I still dance  
Burning

I wonder how the Spirits dance as they do  
They are much closer to it  
Often almost touching it  
Yet they do, as if unaffected  
Their energy unaffected  
Walking on or through fire?

They are fire  
Fire and maybe everything

Heat absorbed into spectators cheeks  
Women's shawls brush spectator's shins and feet  
As they sit surrounding the ceremony

Steps carry shawled women in rhythm  
A long line a long line a long line through all time  
All our ancestors this line all our future this line

The tiniest toddler, the oldest, most aged elder  
Round faced, round eyed tots, awkwardly, curiously, courageously  
Step this dance alongside the rest  
Dance this ceremony in mother's belly  
For all time, for The People, all people

Scores of singers and medicine men flank the area in front of the ceremonial tipi  
Line upon layered line  
Chanting melodic passages, blessing, invocations  
Blue One, Yellow One, White One, Black One...Grey Ones  
Creator, White Painted Woman, Sacred Fire  
Bikehgueshtnun, Eztunehgleshe', Chazaadaa

Protection, Healing, Guidance

For the girls, their relatives, loved ones, all present, the people,  
Sacred Mountain Spirits; A Sacred Life and being

All pettiness, banality, crudeness, disease, trauma transcended  
Only good words, thoughts, actions, psyche, being

DIRT, FLESH, FIRE, STARS

Sacred being

Convergence

## DECOY GALLERINA: SHORT BIO 2022

**STATUS & ORIGINS:** Rebel Irish/Chiricahua Nde' (Chakonon, 'Fort Sill' Apache; the group Geronimo & Cochise are from), Matriarch/Elder, Culture Bearer, Two-Spirit,

Cross-Platform/Cross-Genre Life Long Artist & direct descendant of Cochise Raised in San Francisco/New Mexico/Apache/Oklahoma

**STYLES:** Psychedelic Stomp to Deep Traditional works

**GENRES:** Beadwork master, costuming, painter, installation and performance art, video, lyricist, composer, writer, performance artist, actress, singer, dancer, visual artist, perpetual student

**MEMBER:** Chiricahua Warm-Springs Nde' (Apache) Tribe of New Mexico, Theatre Movement International, Radical Medicine, Idle No More, Member/Curator Komotion Int'l SF, more...

**TRAINING:** Nde' ceremonies, several decades study and research in Chiricahua cultural aspects with Tribal Historian, Cultural Expert, Linguist & tribal member; Leland Michael Darrow, extensive private training in music, dance, arts & training with Nde' Grandmother Minnie Nicholas in writing, beadwork, painting and with mother Caroline and aunt & Mary Zurega in costuming, music appreciation and San Francisco 'Live Culture'

**INFLUENCES/TEACHERS:** diverse Bay Area culture, Leland Michael Darrow, Jill Parker, Rene Yanez, BadUnkISista, Rudradeep Chakrabarti, Charles Justin Hoover, Guillermo Gomez-Pena, Janeen Antione; American Indian Contemporary Arts Gallery, Black Panthers and their artist; Emory Douglas, American Indian Movement and Richard Oakes, AIM WEST; Tony Gonzales, La Pena, Standing Rock Red Warrior Camp, Pennie Opal Plant & Isabella Zizi; Idle No More, Upward Bound, Oakland Intertribal FreindshipHouse, Leonard Peltier, Alanon, Ceremony, David Solnit, Norm Sands, Annie Sprinkle, Malaquias Montoya, Juanita Barry, Phil Foss, Santa Fe Opera, Steven Paul Judd, American Indian Film Festival SF, BAAITS Powwow, First Nation/Indigenous culture and struggles far and wide, many more teachers and inspirations

**BFA DEGREES:** San Francisco Art Institute, California College of the Arts, College of Santa Fe, Institute of American Indian Arts

**PRESENTATIONS:** San Francisco International Arts Festival, Allan Houser Garden Gallery, Santa Fe, Studio 23, Alameda; Displacement Show, High Street Gallery London, deYoung Museum, IAIA Museum, POWPOWPOW SF, REAL FACES interviews of 500 artists (youtube), Playwriter/performer of "Homecoming" Chiricahua Nde' Apache Odyssey' and 'Haunting Our His&Herstories; Indigenous Children's Boarding School Experiences', Yerba Buena Gardens First Nation Festival, Berkeley World Music Festival, Ivy Room, Venice Biennale, Counter Pulse Theater, San Francisco Independent Arts Festival, United States Arts and Crafts Board, La Pena, Stork Club, Galeria de la Raza, San Francisco Art Institute, many more...

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