SCINTILLA

DECOY GALLERINA

SCINTILLA

My body draped with minute scintilla, spider web silk
Reclining in darkness, tears for you are gone
Light in passageway beyond sheer tapestry
Shadows configure erosions in grained paneling
Long memories, draped lace filaments in corners out of reach
Candle lit heart in near dark
I entrust myself to the even fall of night, this solitude
Other forms play now at the fringes of this veil
It's only in these moments that I hear you
Fan of songbird feathers directs a breath, faint rustling
These strands wrapped about me
The imperceptible flight before touch
Tears for you, like filaments of ancient lace fall away
Deep recesses, only in the deepest darkness
Candle lit heart, the lament and rapture
Fingertips on your neck, on your hips
Trace the touch through the veins, through the veil of sleep
Haunting…the almost entwining

Sitting in daylight, children laugh
Sigh of dream haunting me
No words on lips, face to face

Full moon horizon, sheer moment next to dawn
I awaken, the scent of something lingering
Traced through the veins and veils of sleep
I find you

STRIPMINING

On this bed, in a temporary room we inhabit after the fire, my eyes closed, I see the flames.
And, I see her wipe a tear from her face, open palms, she presses the inside of her hand over her eyes, down her cheeks.
I wipe fatigue from my forehead, eyes, rest my head on thick, warm blankets covering this bed, in a room, in a house not my own, feeling displaced, weary.
Fatigue, I lay her, in my palm I fell her tears for the hundreds of years and ties about to be broken.
Speaking the ancient tongue, she tells of 'relocation', what it will mean to her, her family, their way of life…displacement to a world not their own.

WHEN YOU SAY ADAPT,
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANS??!!

How easy to change a seater, shoe, an apartment, a phone number, tires.
She takes the smaller rock in her hands; she has placed the corn upon the stone. She sits, her knees tucked under her, on earth covered by thin cloth. She presses the grinding rock to the stone; corn is readied to be food.
This stone has been in her family for generations, as has this bit of land, this family has been this land's for generation, has been this land's for generations.

"…when your fingernails are frostbitten…'
Oneness with the sheep; she endures what she must. Wrapped in long worn wool garments, woven by her sister's hands, she feels the winter cold while she stands there beside them.

Waves of flames beneath my skin, I awaken in an unfamiliar room, the softness of down pillows beneath my head, fatigue, I drift…

Sleeping a small one room dwelling, entrance facing east, she and her family greet the new day with pollen, living a harmony not of 'this' world, in a time, not of 'this' time, timeless.
The floor of the hogan is hard packed earth, watered down and swept often. A stover is located center, a table near it. Crates near one wall house various cans of fruits and vegetable, jars of corn. Some seasoning, herbs and dried meat are on the shelves built by the doorway of this circular dwelling.
To one side a raised plank serves as a base for bedding, it is covered by a blanket in red and grey clan design; a gift from kinfolk living a few miles away. Above the bed is a deep-set square window looking out over a corn patch. The sun outside is in the descending phase of it's daily journey…heat. Inside it is mildly warm.
Two children are away at school, as parents tend to daily chores. Out the window of this dwelling can be seen their father, dark, muscular, his long, black hair above his shoulders in a red wrap. He is bending over small stalks of blue corn, just a few inches out of the cracked earth. Over his shoulders, distant but still recognizable, can be seen fuzzy blotches of white and beige, sheep and a woman in long skirts, holding a stick, sitting on a large rock. She is staring away over the sheep towards a vast open chaparral, signing quietly to herself and the sheep. She feels the coolness of coming evening, thinks of the last shearing time, of covering the hogan with earth, of her children, their father. She is peaceful with the chant she is singing

In humbleness, they use only what they must. In this is the maintaining of the balance, the mutual respect between them and their environment.

To forcibly remove them, to gut the earth on which they live, the home of their hearts, to take the little they have, is to upset the balance…
IS TO KILL THEM, IS TO KILL HER!!
STRIPMINING LEAVES NOTHING!!
'SACRIFICE AREA'…to greed, not to need

The donations made to 'worthy' tax deductible causes will not absolve you, will not absolve you of your great emptiness the sense of inadequacy you try so desperately to bury, the crimes you commit denying the name of it…
WILL NOT ABSOLVE YOU
You see, the death, after all is your own.
Two Mercedes SUVs in the garage of your three-story home. LCD screens casually left on; six-foot screen ablaze. Endless apparel in a hogan sized walk-in closet. Gold bars and fine jewelry in a safety deposit box downtown, continental cuisine delivered on demand, trips to Las Vegas, Mumbai, V.I.P. tickets to the opera, opening night sequence and tux, skydiving and scuba lessons, catered cocktail parties, oriental rugs, open plan spaciousness, red-wood floors, inherited silver ware, four kids. The insulated safety of especially patrolled gated communities, the maid, the gardener, the cook…
All the cliché' accoutrements of success, excess, comfort and convenience.
THE ENERGY AND RESOURCES SPENT

The imbalance of pain for pleasure
The state of envy you create and exist in

THE EMBALANCE OF PAIN FOR PLEASURE

STRIPMINING, STRIPMING
STRIPMING LEAVES NOTHING…nothing

Staring at the ceiling of this room with softwood floors,
unfamiliar mahogany furnishings, braided rugs;
The smoke which expelled us from our two-room nest still
strong in my clothing…we are lucky to have a place to rest
I fell the fatigue, disorientation
And the woman's tear in my hand

FADE BLACK

They come back, how young we were
They come as we've turned away
Fade black
Mist kisses in the twilight's waning description
Silhouettes in fog while slipping into slumber
Mist kisses in twilight's waning light, silhouettes in fog
While slipping into slumber
Smoke tentacles weave yearning through core reverie
The underside of memory
Never summoned at will, the whisper a call

Subterranean desire
A cold and still white fire
Never summoned at will
Subterranean desire

MUST HAVE BEEN

I saw myself sailing on a teal blue sea, on a white cruiser
Beneath a sky that stretched forever
I saw myself standing on the deck with that sky
All around me, all around me
And you keeping rhythm, keeping rhythm
I saw the daylight, the color of your eyes
Your eyes like the air, keeping rhythm
And, looking into the sea, I saw the dancing of your eyes

It must have been the sky, it must have been the sea
It must have been your eyes dancing with me
We must have been on the Caribbean, the sea was so blue
The rhythm so good

I saw myself dancing with your eyes keeping rhythm
Dancing with me

FLOWER FIELD

So many people, a field of flowers
How could you pick…just one?
All of them so beautiful, loving the sun and rain

BEAR CLAN HAT

THAT Bear Clan hat of yours…
200,000, for 200,000 I will buy it, take it to New York
That hat which contains all your history
The passage of your lineage
The marking totems of your fathers, mothers
All the changes in your history
Give it to me…I will sell I sell it sell it
I will quickly take it to a New York City museum
And SELL IT

I will take all you are for a profit you will never see

THIS BEAR CLAN HAT IS WHO I AM
IT IS MY MOTHER, MY FATHER
IT IS MY GRANDMOTHER AND GRANDFATHER
IT IS ALL MY ANCESTRY

NO!!!
I WILL NOT SELL IT, NO I WILL NOT!!!

I have enough to eat despite all you have done to stave us
It is enough to be who I am, who we are
I was born, I was born, I was born
And with this Bear Clan Hat I am at peace

NOT THE FIRST

They say Columbus is coming…he arrives next year. I'm here scanning the horizon, looking for him. He won't be the first to tumble, to accidentally stumble onto these shores. LOST.
We'll smell him off the coast, the smell of rot emanating from his ship, a rancid cargo of disease, greed, arrogance mingled with spoiled blood and the sweat of dying slaves. A smell neither old nor new to us. We are familiar with the way it singes the fine hairs on our faces, in our nostrils.
He'll come begging for food, water and after we help him, when he's stronger once again, he will turn his eyes to our women, our treasures. In treachery, a sharp and dark knife covered with betrayal and the blood of slaughtered animals. Turn his knife to our men and women.
Not the first like him, not the last to come seeking anything of value to steal, our metals, our animals, our wives and the virgin state of our daughters and territories, our lives, our identities.
We saw him stumble onto our shores, we saw him off the coast, we saw his torn rags, sun ravaged skin, ragged sails dangling from corrupt masts…shadows on the horizon.
We said to each other "Another…another, another one lost."
Not the first, not the last to touch shores already inhabited
Not the first to speak with us, to eat with us,
To share our bounty.
Not the first glory many with gory heart and hand.

We will help, that is our way
We will give, this is our way
The way we follow

I discovered this next vessel as it rose high on a stormy crest.
I went down from my place to inform the village as to the hearts these next ones held.
His foot, filthy with the poison of decaying rats, fell onto our shores, then his limp body, on rocks and boulders
The sands of our hemisphere
His famished face gaunt with hunger, his eyes the same
Skin and bone on the shells and shale
A flag from his scurvied hands trembled as it fell
Lodged into crevices and hovered just above the ground
In a parched voice, barely audible, he muttered some curse
An inane proclamation of his domination
This man with flesh colorless and ill as a ghost
Not the first, not the last
Come to take…come to leave a mark
Come to mark with the piss of his kind
Come to possess any and every spirit, any man, any thing

In the distance the stench of the hull wafted, desperation
Men lost, desperate dreams and lies, come to enslave
And, devour all in their path, come to enslave
Come to enslave the hearts of other lands
To offer slaves hell through their priests' litanies

What is his name, we are looking for him
He arrives next year
His, a name not worthy of praise
One whose maps and intent were inadequate
Whose ignorance did not include the whole of the world
The world we know and love
A fool, an ambitious man filled with lies, one who got lost

We discovered him unconscious, nearly dead, starvation, thirst
Covered in scabs, nearly drown in gentle shoreline waves
We could have left him there for the raven and wolves
For the vultures and insects to harvest
That's not our way, not our way
That's not our way, not our way
Not our way, not our way
Not our way, not…our way

METEOR TRAILS

When you gave me your number
And, told me to call...
So long ago
I never did

PETE'S POEMS

If only you could see your moon face, pale, bright, clear
In the smooth blackness of this pool

Holy of holies, when I take this sacrament in

Fast, silent
Not even the sound of the wind, their chariot
I will dream of dancing with you

Out line; black in black
Particles behind closed eyelids we float, seamless

Riding my pony on a hill, California grasses blowing
Thigh high lavender flowers, water everywhere
Oaks and moss, riding my pony, he's riding me

HUNGER FOR INDIAN

In a mirror, another bloody image, like an aborted fetus
Repulsive, conclusive
It cries above a cylindrical image, my own reflection
The bloody one is my own ghost; I hear it but cannot respond

I am a cylindrical smoke which rises, within the mirror
To the calling of that death, within the glass, behind the surface
And, in this smoke rising there is a hollowing; it is a hunger
Which your lips, teethe, eyes taste again, again, again
OH, you have hunger

And, when you look at me, I am more empty, more hollow
So hollow the empty protrudes, a distention
Which pressing the glass breaks through and leaks beyond
To me here standing
Now a starving, a convulsing spasm, a mounting contraction
A tightening, a vertical line…stretching until
I am no longer a woman, but a thread thin line
Almost disappearing
Drawn from Earth, desperately struggling towards Heaven

You witness this tightening and you leave me here
The voice of starvation
Your arms wrapped about me, howling
And, where there once was the form of humanness
The curves accentuating womaness
There is now emaciation, a thin starvation drawn from Earth
A thread thin line you draw

Your arms binding me, your fingers upon flattened nipples
Leveled navel…mine, you taste once again
And, will not be sated until you have wasted me
You take another bight, here, there
Leaving your saliva to rot into me
And, leave me now a segmented line drawn from Earth

OH…YOU HUNGER!!
I am the voice of it, oh you hunger
I am the smoke and the ghost above

Oh, you hunger

AMERIKKKA!!!!!

CLOSET FASCIST

He's a closet fascist, doesn't like anyone not just like him
She's a closet fascist, looks just like you and me
It's what she says when no one's around
Say:

FUCK THEM PEOPLE
IN THAT THERE GHETTO
Fuck'em
Fuck'em
Fuck'em
FUCK'EM ALL!!!

BORDER

Shops full of porcelain, dolls in white skin

So…everyone comes here because it's NOT Mexico
It's warm, balmy and it's NOT Mexico
There's opportunity here, poverty there
A border in between

No one wants a border, but everyone needs a border
To insulate
A border to contain a 'promise land' of gold and glamour
Full of dolls with white skin

A border is necessary, even if it continues contracting
Moving further and further away, always just beyond reach
Containing less and less…promise
More and more delusion

Everyone needs a border, a bone of contention to focus on
And, a glimmer of hope
Those on the inside more protective
Those on the outside; more desperate
The disparity which separates the two
More and more incomprehensible

The need, the threat
What's held, what's kept
What everyone's afraid to admit

So goes the promise
The glimmer in the distance
And, the tarnish

IDENTITY

"Are all the 'Indian's dead?"

A commemoration at Black Hawk Museum, north California, honoring it's namesake, a respected man of the Sac tribe.
Many people, including myself, were invited to display our works, art, books etc. there.

A woman and her small daughter stop to look at my contemporary beadwork. The girl five or six, extended her hand, I invited her to touch the work "It's ok to touch them, to get the feel of them.". Pensively she reached her tiny hand out and handled the piece, tracing the smooth surface of the beads, seeing the brilliant colors, murmuring approval. Then, she asked sincerely 'Are all the 'Indians' dead?" I responded, nodding to a dark-skinned man in khaki pants, brown loafers, a short-sleeved summer shirt, sitting the table next to me "Look around you, that man, right there, is Native…he's an 'Indian'.". Her eyes glanced over him dubiously, as if he were not there, she didn't focus, she had no recognition. She turned to her mother and asked the same question again.

ARE ALL THE INDIANS DEAD?!!!!

Invisible, INVISIBLE
Our very names are hidden, concealed, buried
Brainwashed, browbeaten, brainwashed, browbeaten
In a most subversive and insidious manner
The uncanny, horrifying and persistent deception ingrained
In our psyches; invisible, non-existent…
Untrue this message fed to us

We call ourselves so frequently by someone else's name
It slips from our lips and degenerates us
Other people still call us 'Indians'
When they do, we respond
We regurgitate, reiterate, construct unreality
By accepting and using that word, someone else's name

I'm reading a powerful book on Native rights and his/herstory
Released in 1992. Essays written by many articulate, insightful, respected tribal leaders on strategic issues of this time. Despite the date and progressive nature of the work, it's impact, focus and implications…I have counted the word 'Indian' 445 times in just 40 of the books 500 pages. This includes essays and passages by Indigenous authors as well as extensive foot notes, lists of documentation, titles, quotations, listings of legislation, laws and dogmatic names of bureaucratic agencies.
Over and over again this work assaults my intellect, my sense of reality.
Why?

As I read, I think of our people and how we continue to enforce the underlying message of that misnomer. I think of whom it serves. 'Indian' said even once more in the context of referring to our vast and varied peoples is a destructive weapon undermining our very sense of existence.

In the name of greed, he 'discovered' the obvious curve of the horizon. Columbus set sail, Columbus set sail, his destination India…is this simply a myth? He swirled about in the wide oceans, ignorant of so many uncharted seas. He fell onto a shore unknown to he (so many of them). Being exactly who he was, he stubbornly declared everything he saw 'India' and all the peoples 'Indian'…at least, this is popular belief

IDENTITY, IDENTITY

I'm in a classroom teaching and sharing. Two students seated close to me, one's name is Deborah, the other's Rashid. I call to Rashid, but approach Deborah, I call her Rashid. Despite her protestations I continue to call her Rashid, the students exchange glances and grin. I call her Rashid several more times, she exclaims, incredulously "MY NAME IS DEBORAH!", Rashid chimes in "YEAH!", everyone laughs. Deborah has not forgotten her name, nor has Rashid.

Convenience, habit, fear, confusion.

In Canada the Natives the focus of the media because of their political activities…the Natives are blamed for everything.
In the U.S., we simply pretend Indigenous peoples do not exist.
In Canada, Indigenous people identify and clarify their identity by calling themselves 'FIRST NATION PEOPLE'.
First Nation People, first on the land, first to organize, first
First Nation People, Native, Indigenous, Aboriginal, tribal…
NOT 'INDIAN'!

Paint a ruby Bindi on my forehead
I'll dawn a sari, wear a veil and sandal with the toe curled up
I'll henna intricate swirling designs on my hands and feet
Tip my fingers with deep crimson
Dance and pray to Shiva
Will I then be 'Indian'?
The third millennium approaches
According to the Christian calendar
It's later than that!

FIRST NATION PEOPLE, not 'Indian'

DARKIE

I was born
I was born
I was born

Who I was born to be
I was not born an ‘American’
I was a ‘darkie’
Remember me…’darkie’
From the other side of the reservation border
A persecuted man, not an ‘American’

I was born
I was born
I was born

I am a man
I am a man
A man
A MAN!!!

COLORS

Let's not talk, let's not talk about what's actually going on
Between us, you and me

Let's talk about silverware, the linen, shopping, paying bills

Let's not talk about what we can't locate or identify
Let's not talk about not being able to communicate

Let's just ride it like it's all so pretty
Until it throws us

Let's just talk about HBO series, putting the dishes away
The towels and washing them on cold
So the colors don't fade

MIDNIGHT

Playing on the beach at midnight, watching the full moon
Listening to waves come and go, watching the shadows
Seeing starlight, people arm in arm walking on the sand

City light playing while I'm here laying, watching the full moon
Seeing starlight

Where are you, where are you?

US

Desert
- Lakes
- Falls
- Swimming
- Hiking

Thunder
- Rain
- Dirt roads
- Hawks
- Blue jays

Mountains
- Snow
- Tears
- Groceries
- Tortillas
- Salsa
- Green chili stew
- Feast days
- Juniper

us

MEMORIES

I have these memories tattooed all over my skin
I don't know if I'll ever see you again
I don't know if it would be a kindness or leave me empty

This skin inscribed to the bone with memory
I miss you; I miss you

Sometimes though, the days pass
And, I can't tell what I'm missing, if I'm missing anything
The months keep passing, some nights are years of acid tears

These memories in my skin, every day might wash them away
After days of forgetting, something calls me back
And, here are these memories all tattooed, inscribed inside
These spells, these incantations, these prayers
Written delicately on every strand of hair, on my forehead,
    Eyebrows, temples
Tiny script printed on my eyelids, eyelashes, irises, tear ducts
Calligraphy painted boldly on my lips and tongue
Protection and love
Like a tender handprint upon my breasts, belly, hips
Like a veil of kisses over my vagina, inner thighs
A chant of love, line after line, verse upon verse
Covering, caressing, containing the nape of my neck
    Ridge of my spine, jutting of shoulder blades
Caressing, these words of love, these reminders
Written a thousand times, a thousand ways
That non shall steal my heart away
These words in my blood and bones
In my thoughts and dreams
This medicine sandpainting all over me

MASK

The masks stood; long lines held them erect
There was no one to see
Wooden stones effigies silent in moonlight
Casting long shadows to river's edge
Slivers of glass cut darkness, sharp edges of, smooth oval rocks
One statue's lips concealed two words
Rocks strewn about; fog edged nearer
A day passed, no motion, stillness
Glassy crescents in sand remain
Mask eyes stare, river currents
All as it was
Print in sand awaits a moment, new cycle
Days, years and waited
Night

Masks stood staring; moon sliced long shadows
Glassy slivers in sand

This night filled with mists was a distant movement
No one remembered

DECOY GALLERINA: SHORT BIO 2022

STATUS & ORIGINS: Rebel Irish/Chiricahua Nde' (Chakonen, 'Fort Sill' Apache; the group Geronimo & Cochise are from), Matriarch/Elder, Culture Bearer, Two-Spirit,
Cross-Platform/Cross-Genre Life Long Artivist & 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, BadUnklSista, 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 artivists (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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