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Squash Blossom Necklace

We all gather around the earth-sky gift
spread against bleached cotton. The Zuni
who curl these small pomegranate petals
and inlay sunburst turquoise clusters
once filled orders from Mexica kings.
That time-piercing blue can only come
from the Cerillos trenches, tree-line high
where water and sun run cold and clear,
topsoil returned to hide them from the Spanish.
There the lightning fancy-danced for the earth,
her silver glints catching his eyes. Blue veins
rose where mountain and sky coupled. At a spring
where bag water broke, the People were born
out of a cliff crack.

Those silversmith angles
can only fit a left-handed man
and a right-handed woman stonemith
made these gillcuts. When "MB" married "L"
she said if these bezeled fingers are chipping
all those damn little rocks, you're adding
my initial. He didn't say anything to
his young hell raiser or look up from working
on the rope braid detail, but "LMB"
became their new signature.

My wife,
daughters and I take turns mirror preening
by the window, matching bear-claw necklace
with our finest clothes. I decree it looks best
with my black wool shirt and stone washed jeans.
Hooting and jabbing, they tumble over me
like a litter of backyard pups. Cradle-slow
we pass the sandcast silver pearls neck
to neck, their long-dead forge fires of mesquite
flicker-dancing in flame-orange sunset.

— Ken Goosens

Ken Goosens (Cherokee) works for Fannie Mae on behalf of housing for Native Americans. His poetry has appeared in *Antietam Review*, *International Quarterly*, and *Riverwind*, among other journals.

Thanksgiving

Yes, I have one of your prestigious PhDs.
Visit your Disneyland. Work monumental cities
of fist raised skyscrapers paving once soaring forests.
Reassure you I too enjoy turkey and take no
offense when you wish me happy Thanksgiving.

But we're not two trunks of one landscaped birch.

Understand, friend, if we had it to do all over again
as you wade ashore, kneeling in frothing surf, arms raised,
the new tide, letting yourself at long last hope and weep,
thanking your god for deliverance to a homeland—

one of the stone arrowheads shattering your heart
would be mine.

— *Ken Goosens*

Snuffled

That shadow shambling behind you,
that was a bear once,
wasn't it?

And all her brothers and sisters,
didn't they, just now,
recognize her scent?

How else explain the hot wet air
you feel pawing lightly
at the nape of your neck?

—Michael Thompson

A Poem Maybe for Tina Deschenie

There will be a time months from now, maybe years,
probably when I'm driving in some heavy LA traffic
with some crashing music on the radio
and spouts of fire from the Wilmington oil refineries
erupting alongside the freeway,
when my stomach will grow tight like a fist,

and I will want to remember
that there is a beautiful Navajo woman living in New Mexico
with her family close about her,
who helps keep all our lives in balance
and fills the blue sky with her beauty

I will recall the snapshot of the woman in the red dress smiling

and I will be thankful for women like Tina Deschenie
who is a woman made of beautiful words
who is a woman made of beautiful words
who is a woman made of beautiful words
who is a woman made of beautiful words

I will be watching Disney's *Pocahontas* with my grandchild one day
and I will turn off the VCR and say,

Hoka Hey, little one, let me tell you a story about a real Indian woman
so beautiful she would make Pocahontas hang her head
want to chop off all her hair and go back to England
with her blonde aerobics-lookin' husband

I will remember that she would have this way of tilting her head to answer
like a pinion tree with full dark branches who, thinking its reply so gently,
the little canyon wind would have time to brush lightly through her beautiful
hair and that she would incline her neck so slightly toward earth so
that her eyes would be peering up behind her dark lashes with curiosity
and regard for the beauty around her—around her in all directions—the
beauty that moves outward from her Diné eyes always shining forever and
speaking with a voice as soft as sage smoke or the little wind whirring always
just above the desert floor

I will recall the snapshot of the woman and her child
standing beside the big truck which had the tires with the heavy mud-grip tread
She looks small but meaning business, boy
You better damn believe it—and I think
maybe she's the reason, the real reason, they started
giving all those jeeps and trucks those Indian names—
Some guy in Detroit musta seen something like that picture, huh

There will be another memory I have of her too,
like a dream of Marilyn Monroe,
but with thick brown hair and a crooked Navajo smile
pulling her mouth upward to one side—
that smile dragging my eyes along like a just-roped calf

I still remember her sitting on the floor of her Chicago hotel room,
there for a seminar on Native American Lit,
her books in stacks around her
her books in stacks around her
her books in stacks around her
her books in stacks around her
her pose relaxed, her small feet tucked under her long soft skirt
drinking some good ice-cold beer out of the bottle,
having her own mini-vacation from all the rest of us,
taking off her jewelry piece by piece and rubbing the little
lobes of her ears between her fingers,
a book open in her lap and her eyes blessing the pages

And you know I'm probably thinking, if I was twenty years younger
and not married more than once or twice yet,
I'd be sure trying hard to snag that Tina Deschenie

—Michael Thompson