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Layli Long Soldier

grind the nose into a mirror
flatten the head
I to eye to I
am a door to a room I smear to enter
fog from the mouth as:

noitci **DD** iction

LAYLI LONG SOLDIER holds a BFA in creative writing from the Institute of American Indian Arts and is pursuing her MFA at Bard College. She is a two-time recipient of the Truman Capote Creative Writing Fellowship. She is also a recipient of Naropa University's 2009 Summer Writing Program Scholarship and has served as editor-in-chief for *Native Language Network* and other publications for the Indigenous Language Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her first chapbook of poetry is *Chromosomory* (Q Ave Press, 2010).

I understand *yes* I
intuit a ken
a style of speaking
or writing depend
ent upon choice
or words an accent
inflecti on
speech-sound
quality

I cogitate I
tune up to
terms of pre
vailing stand
ards
accept
ability
enunci
ation

be-
cause
Stein
helped
me her
diction-
ness her
corner
placement:
certain that
and do they.
when you con-
or has felt, it is
them makes it con-
ing that is different
is seen depends upon
the thing we are look
who describe it make
it is, it looks, it likes
Nothing changes from
and that makes a com-
generals before the war
a nineteenth-century war
weapons. That is because
it is to be done. It is pre-¹

although I come from a small world a lifted paragraph from one or other book:

Romanticism is ~~not~~ a confusion but an extrication. Culture is a ~~transformative composite~~ separate from individuals. The quality in the creation of ~~expression in the composition~~ has to do with the unique entity, being in balance and moving as it ceases to be identical with itself. This has to do with apprehending what occurs now. ~~With it being always now, which constitutes being in a state of turmoil.~~²

or other-wise put

then I heard a poet trouble and say:

I'm a straw man for leftist critique.

to respond
I separate I
culture and
romantic it:

straw man

a person set up
top button open
as a cover a front
amber body
for questionable enter-
prise an argument
such straw hair goldly
easily refuted
I listen
to corners mouth shaded
vowel black eyes
this false stillness
an opponent rigged
defeated as a bundle
I admit I vaguely get
this world its sudden
colors aromas scratching
bombastic straw
formed into the likeness
a man a scarecrow
in rows of the growing
hard gaze back³

leftist

a per

son on

the far

left side

of the

poli

tical

spectrum

not mere

ly lib

eral

but more

radi

cal in

support

of so

cial

change to

create

ega

litar

ian

soci

ety

its left

ist left

I

a vowel
a speaker
referring
to himherself
denotes
narrator
of literary
work writ
in first person
ic, ik, ih, ahám
a symbol for
electric
current
something
having the shape
of *i*
ego

I
denote
a vowel
ego

having the shape
of literary
referring

narrator
to himherself

something
electric
of *i*
used

current
work writ
a symbol for
ic, ik, ih, ahám
amen

NOTES

1. Section 3 text extracted, as seen, from a page corner of “Composition as Explanation,” by Gertrude Stein. First delivered by Stein as a lecture at Cambridge and Oxford, this essay was first published by the Hogarth Press in London in 1926.

2. Section 4 block quote from Leslie Scalapino, *How Phenomena Appear to Unfold* (Brooklyn, NY: Litmus Press, 2010).

3. Section 6 inspired by the poetry of Sayat Nova as quoted in *The Color of Pomegranates*, directed by Sergei Parajanov (Soviet Union: Armenfilm, 1968); specifically, “Many have come ahead of me, and vaguely known this world, they’ve extinguished and expired ahead of me.”