All I Want to See is Red

I just want to see the world in bright red

> I want to see blood pouring out of the pale-faced boys who grabbed my ponytails like a barbie doll and beg for vicious mercy

> > I want to plant strawberries in my withering backyard grass to honor mother's forgotten existence due to not having funds for a headstone or a funeral just a corpse wrapped in burgundy blankets underground

I want to paint the walls the color of a stop sign to be reminded of my old man walking out whenever I awake bastard left when I threw out his Budweiser from being sick of his drunken rants

> If only I can give my whole brown body a rash so the boys see me for the red rez girl I am and want to be I may be on welfare yet I'll still dance the ghost dance tomorrow In memory of loved ones. No one else will.

The Last of the Bohannon's

Dad

Died from liver failure, Ignoring the doctor's pleas And my own tears As if I wasn't enough. Mom Passed from type 2 diabetes, Eating too much frybread, And forgetting her insulin As if losing circulation In her feet wasn't A huge hint. Brother Joey Got shot trying To rob a 7-Eleven To pay our heating bill. The manager couldn't tell Joey had a BB gun When he shot my brother. Sister Claire Was choked by her Jealous ex next door. I begged her to Call the cops, But she said Bohannon's handle shit On their own. Friends tell me I'm a survivor like My red ancestor's. I just tell everyone Being red is living Just to die when I have nothing but An empty brick house. no, jalen, i'm not going to the crowded powwow

just to see you be a self-centered ass sneaking a case of silver bullets and laugh at a little boy or girl tripping over their feathers or struggles with their regalia for the first time you like to sit in the back of the mud-stained bleachers and gawk at every girl over 20 as if you had killed a buffalo while hunting for a rabbit no, I'm not sorry for making the truth clear you love the powwow and say *I'm*

just practicing my roots i see you fight and end up black-eyed every time someone tells you to be quiet during the jingle dress dance

you may be my cousin but you reek of cigarettesyou never see your three-year-oldgirl and denyeverything when our people are experts at rememberingjaleni'm never coming to the powwow as a bystanderand be embarrassed by every moveyou makeI just want to watch in peaceful ceremonyso don't ride yourrusty beach cruiser to my house andcrying callously for attention all dayyoujust can't see yourselfjust can't see yourselfjust can't see yourself

Happiness is Extinct on a Reservation

Being on a reservation is like livin only on frybread, it tastes good, but its not healthy and you need more to survive. People always hang their head down because its all they know. I'm no different. The day I made my mother cry is the day I vowed to hate myself. Mom worked her ass off to afford gas just to take me to football games, yet one day she pulled over and cried a river as big as Lake Frederick. In-between sobs, Mom yelled: I'm Tired! Just let me die!

At eleven-years-old,

I vowed to never be happy. I stopped going to friend's birthday parties at twelve, declined offers to the prom during sixteen-seventeen, and worked in roofing within eighteen, carrying wood and hammering shingles until my fingers went numb.

Mom begged me to accept my football scholarship, yet I stayed and roofed. Dad spanked my ass so hard with the leather belt I was bruised and in agony, but it wasn't enough to forget. I had my shot, but I didn't earn it. I'm not the only one.

The Legacy of Being a Pure Blood Indian

It's in my blood to go to powwows and dance in feathers, moccasins, and turquoise beads just like my father and his forefathers.

I'm supposed to eat and enjoy salmon, frybread, and corn as that's all my great grandparents had to eat on the rez thanks to commods.

I can't ever love anyone who's not Choctaw as I would be labelled *traitor* to my people, tainting a bloodline that's almost extinct. I'm gonna work till I die, Cleaning toilets at the casino since that's where all my kind goes When no one else gives a fuck about us.