

## 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.



*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 cigarettes                      you never see your three-year-old  
 girl and deny                      everything when our people are experts at remembering                      jalen  
 i'm never coming to the powwow as a bystander                      and be embarrassed by every move  
 you make                      I just want to watch in peaceful ceremony                      so don't ride your  
 rusty beach cruiser to my house and                      crying callously for attention all day                      you  
 just 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 commod.

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.