

## Snap Shots from a Family Album: Grandmother

Oldest daughter, who becomes the family drudge,  
did you marry a Cherokee to spite your white father,  
the Patriarch who said, "All my men got good women!"?  
Exiling your husband from the family for being Indian,  
while embracing his eldest son's wife, a Comanche!  
Love complicated by history and by convention.

It was that way because that way was the convention.  
When brothers show up in the kitchen the drudge,  
would hustle to feed them. While the Comanche  
enjoyed her own hearth and husband, you returned to father  
and mother without your husband, because as an Indian,  
his love couldn't heal hate and he wasn't a woman.

Your Oklahoma was a world where a white woman  
could do almost anything but by convention  
would not have chosen to marry an Indian.  
Did you, because you learned as a drudge,  
not to marry a patriarch like your white father,  
and envied the freedom of your brother's Comanche

envied his freedom to wed a Comanche  
envied his freedom not being a woman  
envied his freedom to be like his father  
envied his freedom to ignore convention  
envied his freedom from being a drudge,  
act out of knowledge and envy to marry an Indian.

You lived in a world where the only good Indian  
was dead with a living sister-in-law, a Comanche;  
So your husband fled your family and you drudged  
ironing the summer suits of baby sister, a woman,  
who was given the freedom to break many conventions  
armed with a J.D. from Yale bought by your father.

Born on an enslaved labor camp owned by her father  
your mother would never approve, if an Indian  
did with her daughter what the convention  
of marriage let her son do with his wife, the Comanche,  
and what her father could do with his enslaved women.  
So, when your Cherokee chooses his freedom, you drudge

for your father and mother, while the Comanche  
lives with your brother free as an Indian, but as a woman  
bound by marriage conventions of house work, a drudge.