



NEWSLETTER #5 | OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2023

the ponyXpress journal

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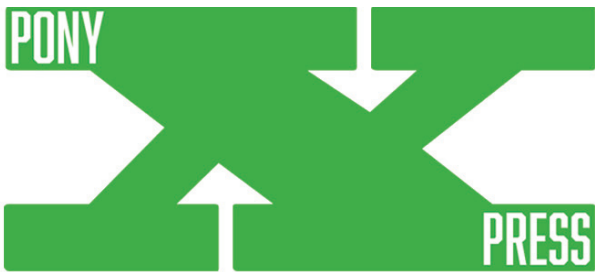
CARRY IT ON We now ask that you project forward, beyond the prisons walls to consider legacy. Think ahead to what it means to be an ancestor: What story will you leave? How do you write forward the history? What legacy do you leave outside of this time spent incarcerated? Broaden your thinking as we approach the holiday season — what traditions and feasts do you hold dear? How do you carry your culture forward? What brings you hope? What do you fear as we project into the future?

THE PONYXPRESS IN 2024

HOW MIGHT WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTRIBUTE?

Is there something that you would like to write that is outside our theme? Do you have a thematic suggestion? Send a note through the staff person who helps coordinate the PonyXpress.

- CCCF Mr. Roy
- EOCI Ms. Cuhna
- OSP Lakota Oyate Ki Culture Club
- PRCF Ms. Geddes
- WCCF Mr. Stancliff



PUBLISHING WRITERS WHO ARE INCARCERATED IN OREGON

WWW.THEPONYXPRESS.ORG

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SPREAD THE WORD TO BUILD OUR AUDIENCE

UPGRADE PAID SUBSCRIPTIONS FUND THE PROGRAM

BRIDGEWORKS OREGON

connects communities by creating art & musical experiences in prison and broadcasts the resulting work outside prison walls. The PonyXpress Project networks writers in prison through workshops across the state and a platform to publish their work and it receives generous support from Spirit Mountain Community Fund, Oregon Humanities, and Oregon Arts Commission. www.bridgeworksoregon.org

homage to her feet

BY KOSAL SO

*she could have killed the seed
sprouting inside her belly,
the nine months before it was born.*

*she could have wished for a miscarriage,
she wouldn't have to go hungry
to nourish its roots.*

*in return the son gave her pain
and contractions,
saliva, vomit, and urine.*

*yet, she wrapped her fragile child
in delicate sarong,
carried him through war-wounded soil.*

*her feet worn and torn
from dirt, rocks, hills, and mountains.
from twigs, thorns, foliage, and forest.*

*she could have left him for dead
when guerrillas gave chase
instead, she left behind her culture,
leaving behind her traditions.
seventy-five hundred miles across the ocean,
i was the child she embraced!*

*her feet peeled and bled
from sand, salt, reefs, and rivers.
from shrubs, marsh, broken glass, and asphalt.*

*a story is told of a prostitute,
"bowing at the feet of the messiah,
weeping and whipping them with the hair of her head."*

*billows of wasted tears flood the room.
i am my mother's flesh and blood
locked behind the concrete and bars,*

*without, the chance to wash the feet that carried me.
the feet, that now ages with scales dry as the desert.
the feet, that have endured time and the elements.*

*so I cry these words
for all sons and daughters to ponder:
pay homage to your mother!*

her feet are tired. | KS

KOSAL SO IS THE SON OF A REFUGEE MOTHER FROM CAMBODIA. HIS WRITING ALLOWS HIM TO EXIST IN THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

ECLIPSE: THE SHADOW

THE ECLIPSE

From the *Smithsonian Magazine*: The moon, which is 400 times smaller than the sun, is also 400 times nearer to Earth than the sun. As a result, the two objects appear to be the same size in our sky. So, on the rare occasions when the moon passes exactly in front of the sun from Earth's perspective, it blocks out the sun completely. The sky darkens, as it would at dawn or dusk, and the sun's corona—the outer atmosphere that's usually obscured by the star's glare—becomes visible. A total eclipse is the only type during which viewers can temporarily take off their protective eclipse glasses.

The moon, however, travels around Earth in an oval-shaped orbit. Sometimes, a solar eclipse happens when the moon is at or near its farthest point from Earth, making it appear smaller in our sky. This creates an annular eclipse: The sun does not get completely blocked out, but instead, a brilliant “ring of fire” forms around the moon.

A partial solar eclipse occurs when the sun, moon and Earth are not perfectly lined up. Only part of the sun appears covered in this case, giving it a crescent shape.

from the *NY Times*: “Navajo look at the universe as holistic,” said David Begay, a cultural astronomer and vice president of the Indigenous Education Institute. The alignment of the planet, moon and sun during eclipses is understood as one cycle within an interconnected cosmic order, said Dr. Begay, who is Diné (which Navajo people call themselves).

Indigenous peoples across the Americas, eclipses and other astronomical phenomena have been experienced for millenniums and have played important roles in different cultures. Traditions like those in Navajo Nation represent a call for non-Native tourists to be respectful when visiting sacred Indigenous lands and sites. Those encountering the eclipse in other parts of the Americas may also pause and consider peoples who made their homes among the canyons of the Southwest, around the pyramids of Mexico and Central America and in the rainforests of Brazil; and how the stars, planets and other heavenly bodies manifest in the lives of Indigenous communities.

EXCERPT: SHADOW BY DAVID WHYTE

To live with our shadow is to understand how human beings live at a frontier between light and dark, and to approach the central difficulty: that there is no possibility of a lighted perfection in this life; that the attempt to create it is often the attempt to be held accountable, to be the exception, to be the one who does not have to be present or participate, and therefore does not have to hurt or get hurt. To cast no shadow on others is to vacate the physical consequences of our appearance in the world.

Shadow is a beautiful, inverse confirmation of our incarnation. Shadow is intimated absence; almost a template of presence. It is a clue to the character of our appearance in the world. It is an intimation of the ultimate vulnerability, the dynamic of being found by others, not only through the physical body but by its passing acts; even as our darkening effect on others; shadow makes a presence of absence, it is a clue to ourselves and to those we are with, even to the parts of ourselves not yet experienced, yet already perceived by others. Shadow is not good or bad, only inescapable.

SHADOW WRITING PROMPTS

Shadow help us see form, it gives form dimension. This shape helps us understand what we are seeing and how it fits into space. Think of something that lives in the shadow, perhaps it is a part of your self you keep hidden — your shadow self. Now, write about how a shadow self adds dimension to the person you present to the world.

OR...

When the sun is overhead, our physical shadow exaggerates our form — a solid, elongated distortion. Write about this in relationship to something you have experienced. How has a spotlight changed how you see something? Or how has that direct light changed how you see yourself?