Walking Fire

The quiet noises of night, a clock ticking, black cricket friction, an aircraft smudging stars, and the rise and fall of blankets comfort my solitary nest.

Stucco half-moon white clouds on the ceiling and walls the color of sky before full sunrise bleeds across earth, hold me in. My heart crackled with unknown fire the day I heard my mother’s voice after nearly four decades.

I hoped she would show me how to be Indian I wanted her to speak truths or confess secrets—

Distance and this other life keeps me rooted off the reservation, in a double plumb line. I wait like the sleepless night to go home again.

Once in a vision from a deep well of prayer I stood arms outstretched before me palms open, facing up and Spirit placed a wooden box wrapped in gauzy ribbon, with gilded edges, the weight of a feather in my hands.

Inside, an ember dusty-white at the four points burning molten orange, yellow, red. I took the ember, fingers unburned and placed it in my mouth and swallowed. Even now the ember glows deep in the core, inextinguishable.

Kimberlee Medicine Horn Jackson
Mother Earth

Somewhere along
the grassy banks that nestle swift
water before it plummets the rock
edged cliff, God laughs. He breathes
life into dusty red earth as easy as sunlight warms
green leaves to yellow-green and calls his creation
Adam: the first indigenous man.

Paint my red earth with water and a Bloodroot poultice
to draw out the cancer of greed, mend
these puncture wounds impaled by man
with comfrey, chamomile and yarrow.

Cleanse me with a Holy Sage and Cedar smudge,
apply steady pressure with a fig leaf dressing for I
am naked, ashamed, and unworthy of Eden.

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