



Works by Trevino Brings Plenty, Poet and Musician. Reading Tuesday October 29th, 7:30pm, UP Bookstore.

A longtime resident of the Portland area, Lakota poet Trevino Brings Plenty has two poetry collections *Wakpá Wanáǵi*, *Ghost River* (2015) and *Real Indian Junk Jewelry* (2005), and was featured in the recent anthology *New Poets of Native Nations* (2018). His influences include classical music, Beat writers, Jordan, and the urban Indian experience. (*Poems reproduced here with author's approval for classroom use*)

“The Kid I Fear” (from *Wakpá Wanáǵi*, *Ghost River*)

1.
Brown hands sweat onto a leather basketball,
body moves uncertain, it could fall or fly.
A balance of success and failure
is created in each shot attempted.
The world darkens when the ball
leaves palm, fingertips, emptiness.
Time pauses, breath freezes.
The ball crosses the sky,
ignites a sunrise.

2.
Passed around from Alaska to Portland.
Stop before throw,
maybe it was his father he saw,
a ghost reflected in his glimpsed image
or his sister dismembered, burned alive,
still aflame in a silhouette somewhere he can recall.
He runs back and forth, brown face glistens.
He says he never played against his father.
Anger builds its rules around their bodies.
Fifty tries from across the whole court.
He makes one basket and gives up.

3.
I instruct angles, trajectory,
the cold facts to guide home.
Baseless words for the poisoned blood
circulating from his heart to his brain.
Synapses peel apart, open violence,
grasps in his fingers.
I watch him transform before me,
sliding back and forth from child to adolescent,
to contained emotions to a hard fist punching
to a boy crying to a defeated scream.

4.
My body lumbers across the court,
I effortlessly make my close-range shots.
I know not to attempt difficult baskets.
I shoot from half court
knowing it won't make it home.
I release on faith alone.
My hands are empty.

“Northeast Portland”

In seeing a woman weep on her doorstep
the loss of her children
to child welfare for a second time
and knowing the difficult road
yet to navigate, my brain maps crisis.

My brain foretells her children
penetrating deep into the system
and her grandchildren
entering the system; my brain maps crisis.
This is the second time for this mother,
in this state, that her children were removed.
There is her home rez where
her other children are placed elsewhere.
She pines returning home. Some safety.
Her father lives there; my brain maps crisis.

I can only offer a few words of encouragement and
support,
suggest consult her doctor for med adjustments;
make required appointments and supervised visits,
try not to break down.
My brain wanders elsewhere
to a friend on the borderline
of disenrollment from her tribe.
I think liquid identity
scalping extermination: my brain maps crisis.

I return to my car. Start the engine,
power on the radio – the static feels
comforting. I drive this city, see tornadoes
in households. I can point out
people's pain traced across streets,
the many histories of removal:
socio-economic, racial, generational
mental health states. My brain maps crisis.

“Will” (from *Poetry* 2018)

Small red tin box sealed in shrink-wrap, cut open
with pocketknife, pried apart, its goods aerate the
office. I pluck white sliced chalky cylinders; let them
simmer in my mouth. I exhale peppermint scent
through my nose. Cut open the official letter. A map
in letters on a white page. My teeth grind mints.
Photocopies slightly off alignment, I blur lines.
Equations disperse family through land documents,
position each generation. I am only fourth in line.
Some plots are gumbo after winter thaw. Sections
stitched together with extended relatives. This ritual,
personal death papers drafted. I am partial to this
grassland; the place of deer marks and porcupine
quills, ledger extrapolates history. I refold estate
document, place it back into its envelope.

“For the Sake of Beauty” (from *Real Indian Junk Jewelry*)

On the phone I asked her to wear a full buckskin outfit
and she could
be the beauty that would make me steal horses.

She said she didn’t have a buckskin outfit.

I said I would make her one, but use pages from books.

A week later when she came over to my place, she asked if
I had made
an outfit.

I said no. I couldn’t bring myself to hunt the books on my
shelf, even if
it were for food or clothing. I couldn’t bring myself to kill,
even for the
sake of beauty.

“Unpack Poetic” (from *Poetry* 2018)

Can’t hear things well if they are things whispering. Nothing gentle to
hand on back of hand. A horsehair bow across gut string.

A heart is a physical object singing in the chest. Chamber doors
oxygenating blood rushing through. Salmon through river climb.

When one writes of *light* as a painted smile across face. You call ~~bullshit~~
to the interpretation. A post re-posted significant meme image locked to
words.

Speak of Soul? Sounds like a grifter’s hustle. Don’t do it.

Anyways, you try to place yourself into the nature poetry experience.

In your nature placement, you’re constantly thinking of how you don’t like
to ~~shit~~ outdoors. You like a toilet throne and a stall and toilet tissue.

Your mind ruins beautiful poetry expressions by expressions before a
flush. Yes, if you see a nature painting you ponder a spot to express self.
Think of hole digging and burial afterward. A courtesy thing. Some mass
crushing flowers. Or smeared across a granite slope. Is not a waterfall one
constant flush?

You mean, if you were to see this world through black-light vision,
knowing everything covered in ~~shit~~, this planet would be a beautiful glow.