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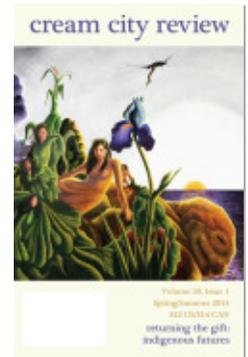
Who Likes Indians, and: Long Time Ago

Simon J. Ortiz

Cream City Review, Volume 38, Number 1, Spring/Summer 2014, pp. 41-42
(Article)

Published by University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Department of English

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/ccr.2014.0038>



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Who Likes Indians

Simon J. Ortiz

was the story he wanted to write that he thought was possible and impossible to write just another red boy idea he could never tell some days red boy moments that's what they were never could tell

he thought of california san diego la san francisco barstow barstow where he spent one hot summer june july maybe part of august he and his little sister had been going to indian school in Albuquerque that year when school let out in may they went back to their home rez for a few days and then they were taken from the home rez by their older sister to the train depot in grants and off they went to barstow california

red boy moment i suppose the only thing he really liked about that hot hot miserable summer were the movies his little brother was crazy about shane and a movie about audie murphy some little guy wvll hero what red boy really loved most though was his little brother who would save up his money from pop bottles he would find on the street and sell at billy's market that sat at the edge of the indian colony where his mom and his sisters and another brother lived and his dad when he came home or not and was sober or not

red boy remembers that summer also because of his dad

his dad works for the railroad at the rail yards that is at the other edge of the indian colony miles and miles of rail yards box cars and box cars on the rails moving or stopped and a roundhouse at the center his dad works in there somewhere as a welder red boy is fourteen that summer and he hates his dad it can't be helped it is a fact it is a way to survive

it just was the case his dad was a drunk and red boy was a kid and he couldn't ever tell what was going to happen no way no geewhizzit way to go here

daddy would come home from work dead tired and miserable and dirty just before dinner he would say i have to go get some cigarettes and he would leave and we would wait and wait with the supper going cold and stale until mama would say go to little joe's see if he's there tell him it's time to eat and me and my little brother would go to little joe's the bar at another edge of the indian colony

that was the barstow, california story red boy thought about to write but what the heck nobody would read it who likes indians and their stories anyway

Long Time Ago

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A story of long ago in the 1970s in the dark somewhere southeast of lawton, oklahoma three comanches and a pueblo dude all drinking all day beginning when ending when who knows that kind of time driving here and there let's go see my cousin buddy one comanche says okay let's do that the other comanche says let's go go go and the third comanche grunts unh okay yah and me popping another one and tossing an empty into the dark field out there into nowhere southern oklahoma thinking dallas and new orleans and atlanta and el paso i'm on the run and it doesn't matter where things are at it was the year my life was that way the wrong way going to hell way okay i say then let's move which way and they all give me directions that are amazingly complex all at the same time

so red boy says to the third comanche you drive i don't know if he can drive or has a license but red boy doesn't give a shit the comanche gets behind the wheel and we go somewhere in the dark in the dark somewhere miles out of lawton south east west who knows we drive around in the dark until there is a little bit of yard light that we drive toward and stop

and first comanche jumps out of the car and hollers warrior blade come out of your cave and do it quick and now and the door opens and a skinny little boy about eight or so stands in a dim light holding the door with his right hand and says nothing just stares into the dark where we are three comanches and a pueblo dude

warrior blade warrior blade don't be afraid it's just me your big bad dad paying a call the first comanche guy says in a loud holler the skinny kid doesn't flinch and he says my daddy ain't home and you better leave and he turned and went back into the house carefully closing the door behind him