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End of the Universe 12/21/12 For My Father

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End of the Universe 12/21/12 For My Father

Abstract

This poem and its accompanying introduction address the 2012 EuroAmerican-settler hysteria over their misreading of the Mayan nation's 13th Ba'k'tun (cosmic calendar) expiring. At the core of indigenous cultures is the ethic of continuance, life, and wholeness—not devastation.

Keywords

13th Ba'k'tun, Mayan calendar, indigenous cultures, creative writing

Disciplines

Creative Writing | Ethnic Studies | Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Poetry

End of the Universe 12/21/12 for my Father

Stephanie A. Sellers

As the astronomers of our current era tell us, the rare and powerful planetary alignment of Saturn, Jupiter, Uranus, and Pluto that moved into place around the Earth Mother several years ago has created irreversible and dramatic changes among nations, individual lives, and within the earth herself. On the winter solstice of 2012, the 13th B'ak'tun of the Maya expired and another cycle of time began. When my Native father (Cherokee/ Shawnee) died suddenly that fateful morning, for me it was only fitting that a man who had done extraordinary things with his life would leave on such a powerful day. I believe he was needed in the Cosmic Spirit World to help turn the great wheel of change manifesting a world better aligned with the Divine Creatrix, with Changing Woman's and Sky Woman's original visions of wholeness. When people ask me how an illiterate, destitute Indian man accomplished what my father did, I just say, "Courage and lots of Magic." To me, he embodied the spirit of the mid-winter king: no matter how many times he fell into darkness, like the sun, he always returned. This observation is at the cultural core of who we are as Indigenous people: continuance, healing, and life..

Unraveling the Spreading Cloth of Time

worn wheel turning rusted water
he carried copper tubing, pressure
slowly corroding the bones of
his left shoulder, the vault of his heart bent
for sixty-six years. I remember his handkerchief
mopping sweat, his lunch made by
folding bread in the dark dawn, the
thermos of coffee, enough to last
to Baltimore, Harrisburg, Frederick
wiring factory buildings outside in
winter, fingers burnt red with frost,
colored scrap wire twisted on my
child's wrist. I waited for his return
every day, listening for his truck
engine upon the asphalt, my photo
hidden inside the worn wallet. before
dawn he carried water to piglets and hens,
.22 rifle against the bull's brow every January
a sacrifice enough to feed a family until next year
eyes straining in the faint pink of clouds
like childhood mornings on a dairy farm
metal tines piercing baled hay, the Indian
boy unable to read who spent every living hour
governed by the turning sun

each moment ticking toward this day
when the mid-winter solstice struck
stones tuned by ancient hands carved
by deer antler chisels, winter snow
blinding as invisible memories
in a distant land where ancient monoliths listen
for their cue to signal that the hour had come
like the valves of his heart, waiting
under a December horizon of stars
living every day on faith.

did he struggle for air
or lift up his aching head once
more that winter day of slanted light
death deep and vast as the butcher's
soothing voice as he turns the latch
not wanting adrenaline to ruin a lifetime
worth of gentleness, for fear to become
his last memory
in the barn of hay alone, the bull
long slain in his earthen stall, my father
extinguished, their lives blessed forever
by their blood flowing among the living
resting upon the great oak boards of the

Unraveling the Spreading Cloth of Time

barn floor sawed by men's hands and
passed through paper sand to smooth
what had never meant to be rough
his last day the shortest of the year.

his heart exploded between morning coffee
and ten footprints in the snow, he tied
his boots just the same that day,
draw up snugly, right over left, pull through,
tighten, make a bow, squared nails on cracked
wide hands, red bird hopping in gray branches
of the lilac. searching the bare patch he shoveled
for sunflower seed. bitter cold between breaths.
lungs prepared at conception for this moment
to fall empty. destiny encoded his vessels, angels
counted each breath. while the sacred devout
at Stonehenge, Upper Peninsula, Peru chanted,
danced all night at their end of the world
party, waiting for the earth to crack and destroy
but here in Pennsylvania is where the fates
came to call. where the last pebble fell
from the maker's hand and the mid-winter king
disappeared into the garnet red sun.