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## Lance Henson

### Poems

So alone  
Even their pain abandoned them ...  
Knowing their pain was the pain of the world ...  
They waited for its return ...

Their light still trembling

Within them ...  
(*Entities. From the Stronghold, 23/12/21*)

\*

Just before dawn

Where I thought I heard you call my name

Wind forming patterns of beings in the wintered trees

Gray mist rising on the back of a sleeping wolf ...

Far from where demons wait

As the temperature drops to its knees

We watch from our hidden balcony

Inside a veil of rain ...

Men folding themselves into paper planes that cannot fly ...  
(*Entities. From the Stronghold, 22/02/22*)

\*

And there  
Behind our eyes  
Nets of light

Folds of consciousness at rest  
Upon a floating field of brightened memories ...

That dim at the shoreline  
Where the ships of the dead are drifting ...  
(*Entities. The War Poems*, 26/3/22)

\*

Here is a place where nothing can die  
Darkness that lives beneath the leaves

We bring our nights there without knowing  
We bring our fear there before the singing begins  
We bring our silent names there hoping we are forgiven

We bring our hands there scented of a river

We bring our prayers that hide and watch us  
The landscape where we have held the loose feathers  
Of a fallen bird

And awakened in the land of the unseen

Here is a place where nothing can die ...  
(Bologna 24/05/22)

\*

At the well of solitude  
Where the dead and the living link hands ...

We see when the clouds open and the sun  
Shines through

They are smiling ...

Whispering of windows shuttered  
On an unknown plain ...

The ones with ghosted eyes  
stand

Within our dreamtime  
to watch ...

The bones melt on the window pane ...

And the one song that has followed us  
All this way ...

Is playing ...  
(Poem for not turning away, Bologna 13/01/23)

\*

Here is the place where the ones who have vanished awaken us

This is the place where dreams come to die she said  
A veil of ashes falling through her voice ...

My grandfather told me removing a screwdriver from the heart of a river  
You are surrounded by eternity ...

Whispering a prayer away from men my grandmother spoke the word *veho*<sup>1</sup> ...

She looked at me lighting  
A camel cigarette

The words they use have dead eyes

Memory is the shadow that stays ...

*Eh maiyun ah huhta*<sup>2</sup> ...

(A spirit whispered this to me in dream)

Walking badger dog soldier said this ...  
(To Nob and Bertha Cook, *Entities. From the Stronghold*)

**Vo'e**<sup>3</sup>

These are the ones who enfold light  
Causing it to strike the earth

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<sup>1</sup> *Veho* in Cheyenne refers to "White Man" and to the black widow spider. The Cheyennes named white people after *veho*, territorial and deadly like the spider.

<sup>2</sup> "A spirit whispered this to me in dream".

<sup>3</sup> Cheyenne for clouds.

The ones who  
Caress silence  
Their older sister

The ones that hover over  
The wintering water

The ones who spin  
Their angry eye upon us

The ones who gather above us  
As we dream

These are the ones who unfurl  
The grown moon ...

**Entities**

Raven watching  
Words float by  
Words without wings

Dreams on fire at the edge  
Of a winter camp  
In a soup of blood and ash ...

*Eh maiyun ah huhta*

You will see only one of you  
Without eyes ...  
Singing in a weeping rain ...

**Dog Soldier Song**

When hunger and fear left them  
To search for other ones

They turned to one another lying down

Lights shimmering still  
Within them

Now the wind arrives scented of rainfall  
And evening opens

Its shadowed palm

Who will speak within the language of the other

While the folded birds in the burning forest sing ...

(To Olga Hiiva, Russian artist, *Entities. From the Stronghold* 22/02/22)

### Five Poems for Ritsos

I first read your words in an Oklahoma

Rainstorm in 1968

Now I am here with

Drifting birds in sea wind

Water jars of clay

Cretan knives

Small poems on the handles

And a photograph

Women in black holding

Their diminished dreams

In their aprons

A mauve light upon your weathered face

In the prison where

Your bowl of watered grains

Rotted under the windowed moon

Your resistance an ochre

Color of grace

Rises again

In this troubled time

As a tolling bell

Bursting upon the eternal sea wind

My brother

Nothing can defeat the human heart ...

(Island of Crete, 14/06/2009)

**Lance Henson** is a Cheyenne headman of the dog soldier clan, Sundancer and member of the Native American church of Oklahoma. He has 41 books published and translated into more than 25 languages. He currently lives in Bologna, Italy.

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