

H11 SPECIAL PORTFOLIO

SETTLER CITIZENSHIP

NO MORE

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Alan Pelaez Lopez (Zapotec)

June 2024 marks the one hundredth anniversary of the Indian Citizenship Act, which officially assigned U.S. citizenship to Indigenous peoples of the connected forty-eight settler states (Alaska and Hawai'i weren't yet annexed). I use *assigned* because not all American Indians wanted U.S. citizenship since it legally foreclosed Indigenous epistemologies of belonging, kinship, and sovereignty. Two weeks after American Indians were assigned citizenship status, the Immigration Act of 1924 was enacted, limiting the number of visas allotted to migrants seeking entry into the U.S., leading to the formation of the entity we now know as "U.S. Border Patrol." These acts marked a new legal regulation of Indigenous and migrant aliveness.

The curation of poems that follow rejects the notion that U.S. citizenship has ever been a gift. U.S. citizenship is a looming reminder of conquest, but it also begets attention to the quotidian ways in which Indigenous peoples are resisting and imagining alternative ways of living and being outside/in/through/against occupation. In this issue, *Huizache* celebrates Indigenous refusal, the active practice of rejecting the authority states believe they have over Indigenous kinship and Indigenous aliveness. Spearheaded by the work of Mohawk anthropologist Audra Simpson, we understand refusal as the declaration that Indigenous peoples speak for themselves/ourselves and say: "this is who we are," and, *we know who we are not* (Simpson 2007: 73).

Inspired by the work of Yankton Dakota writer, composer, and Indigenous rights activist, Zitkála-Šá, this portfolio brings together six poets whose literary and political work are foundational to understanding the stakes of Indigenous and/or migrant refusals, as well as practices of being alive amidst the ongoing settler occupation and accumulation of land, water, spirit, body, and epistemes. As Diné writer and visual artist Demian DinéYazhi' teaches us, these forms of refusal take practice. In the opening poem, DinéYazhi' braids their hair for "days weeks months," confronting a legal past of Indigenous children sequestered from their communities and sent to American Indian Boarding Schools where their braids were violently cut off. Through braiding their hair and rendering a photograph of their braids behind the text, DinéYazhi' leans into the "frustration" of refusal. To refuse, for DinéYazhi', is to attend to frustration, an affect that settlers have told us is bad, uncivilized, and unproductive. It is in this affect, which I refuse to name as *negative* affect, that DinéYazhi' braids Diné and Palestinian aliveness together, drafting a constellation of Indigenous resistance across hemispheres. Most importantly, this type of braiding is not romantic; it is tolling and rare.

Braiding may be the best way to describe the methodology of these poems. By braiding resistance and refusal, each poet cuts through the circuit of domination that has gaslit us into

believing in the power of U.S. citizenship. For example, Cherokee Filipinx poet and visual artist Zoë Keeler offers a concrete poem shaped as a cross. In “Dh RG.Ə,” the cross is fragmented by negative space, almost as if the poet has physically cut through the anatomy of the wooden object. The title of the poem, “Dh RG.Ə,” refuses English to also confront the illegalization of Indigenous languages during the assimilation era. Taken from a Cherokee translation of the Lord’s Prayer that was found on a Cherokee soldier in Manila, Keeler brings attention to the fact that citizenship for Indigenous peoples demands that Indigenous bodies become weapons for the state that claims to protect them. Keeler says No. No to the state. No to the cross. No to settler sins. Instead, Keeler says yes to herself/themselves.

Keeler’s *No* echoes through Jennif(f)er Tamayo’s poem / performance documentation / alternative archive. In “Form N-400,” Tamayo takes U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to battle. By restructuring Form N-400, the legal document whereby residents apply for U.S. naturalization, Tamayo can be accused of falsifying a government form, thus making poetry a criminalized activity. This is conversant with Marwa Helal’s poem, “THE ONES WHO WILL NEVER ABANDON YOU WILL DIE FIRST,” which argues that “the poet is nothing but a broken thought.” Under the surveilling eye of the state, the migrant poet must be careful not to expose too many of their “broken thought[s].” As a result, Tamayo and Helal dissect and bring the practice of poetry and the role of the poet to question: is poetry enough? Perhaps, this is why on the first page of “Form N-400,” Tamayo hyperimposes a photograph of themselves in a black dress with a headpiece that reads “NO” in huge black letters. Much of the poem centers on the legal treatment of migrant

U.S. government. The U.S. needs an enemy alien so that it can sell U.S. citizenship as necessary. Through many historical moments, the enemy alien has been the Asian diasporic subject. We don't have to go as far as the Chinese Exclusion Act to know this. We can go back to just a few years ago when the initial outbreak of COVID-19 resurrected some of the worst anti-Asian actions we have witnessed this century.

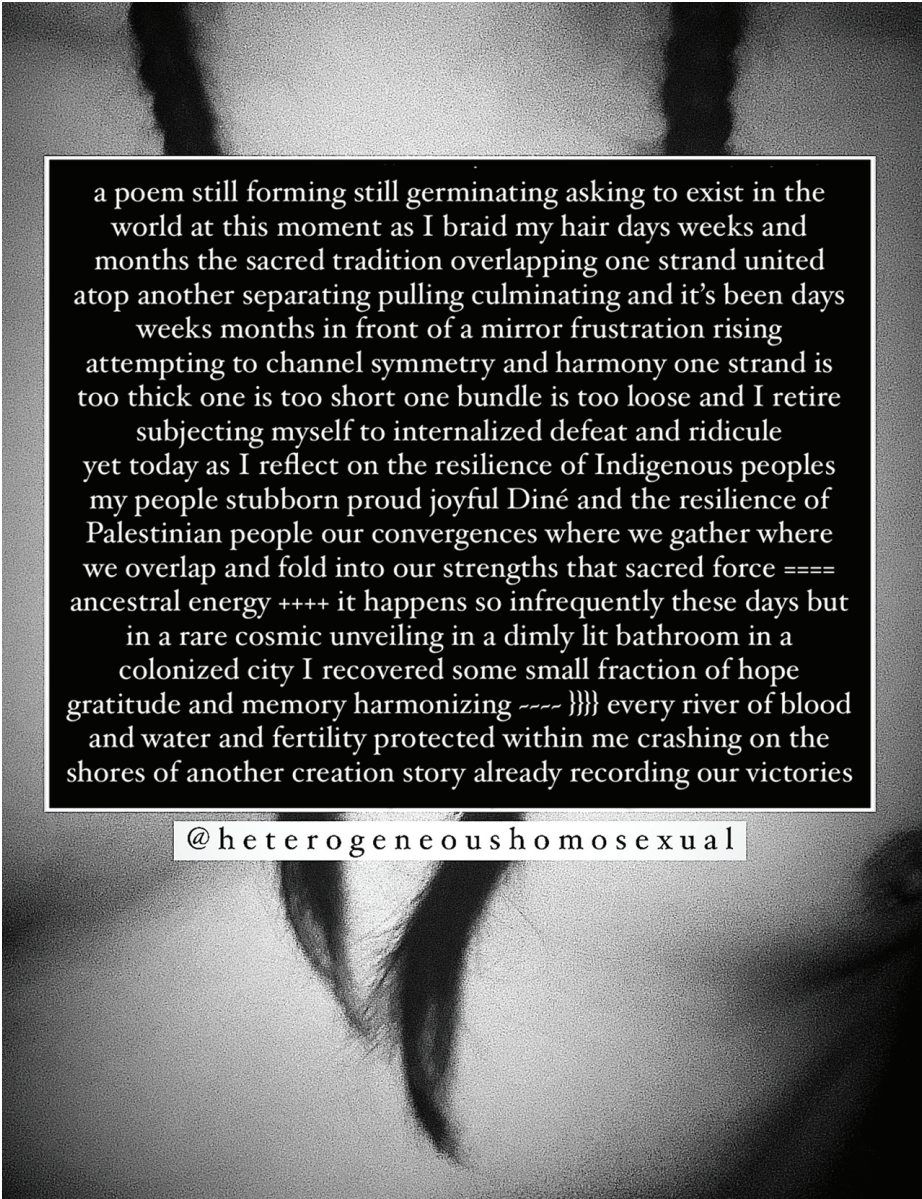
Dreaming, for Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen poet Deborah Miranda is one of four Indigenous elements that can lead us to a decolonized future. The three others are story, dance, and song. When combined, Miranda argues, these elements "hasten the decay of Colonizatum." And so, she proclaims, "Start with Story. / Work your way / home," a reminder that even amidst dispossession, we can lean on story. I leave story singular because a single story can save a life. A single story can draft a future. A single story might avenge us. A single story might be what brings us back to ourselves. So chase the story. Insist on the dream. Search for a song. Sing it. Practice it. Render it to others. And in that process, dance. Dance in whatever way you are able.

(FOR PALESTINE)

Demian DinéYazhi'

a poem still forming still germinating asking to exist in
the world at this moment as I braid my hair days weeks
and months the sacred tradition overlapping one strand
united atop another separating pulling culminating and
it's been days weeks months in front of a mirror
frustration rising attempting to channel symmetry and
harmony one strand is too thick one is too short one
bundle is too loose and I retire subjecting myself to
internalized defeat and ridicule yet today as I reflect on
the resilience of Indigenous peoples my people stubborn
proud joyful Diné and the resilience of Palestinian
people our convergences where we gather where we
overlap and fold into our strengths sacred forces
awakened ==== ancestral energy ++++ it happens so
infrequently these days but in a rare cosmic unveiling in
a dimly lit bathroom in a colonized city I recovered
some small fraction of hope gratitude and memory
harmonizing ~~~~ }}}} every river of blood and water and
fertility protected within me crashing on the shores of
another creation story already recording our victories





a poem still forming still germinating asking to exist in the
world at this moment as I braid my hair days weeks and
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atop another separating pulling culminating and it's been days
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yet today as I reflect on the resilience of Indigenous peoples
my people stubborn proud joyful Diné and the resilience of
Palestinian people our convergences where we gather where
we overlap and fold into our strengths that sacred force ====
ancestral energy ++++ it happens so infrequently these days but
in a rare cosmic unveiling in a dimly lit bathroom in a
colonized city I recovered some small fraction of hope
gratitude and memory harmonizing ---- }}}} every river of blood
and water and fertility protected within me crashing on the
shores of another creation story already recording our victories

@heterogeneoushomosexual

Dh RGA

Zoe Keeler

I stopped believing in god
when I started believing in
death when church was
only for funerals only for
silence

I can feel the stiff wood
pews pushing into my spine
and hear the stiff creak of
the congregation kneeling
in harmonious devotion

I ask my mom why we pray on our knees when we're trying to speak to the sky I prefer to pray to
the ground we tsalagi are mound people we came from the ground my mom says god is
not in the sky he is within us we are not bowing we are turning inwards (is this what she
said or is this how I make peace with the memory?) memorizing incantations never stopped anyone

I loved from dying what is religion? anyway if not a desperate attempt at magic? aren't we all
just trying to be seen heard wanting to rid our hands of all the blood? confession
forgive me father for I have sinned, the lines between sinning and living are so thin
what did I do first? cheat lie steal worse has been done in the

name of god confession
I want to ask the priest if
he knows why my mother
is catholic if he knows why
my father is not I know
why church is for funerals
did the spaniards not kill my
ancestors for land? for sport?
was it not m*gellan who built
missions in the philippines?
took my (our) mother tongues?
what is indoctrination if not
being forced to beg for
forgiveness from a sinner
and call him father?

confession
I am starting to believe in
god again
something bigger than
myself

the
tennessee river
in my lola's sinigang recipe
in my people
in me

SOMETIMES, I DREAM OF NO CHINESE EXCLUSION

Jess X. Snow

no Japanese internment camps,
no Hells Canyon massacre,
no Angel Island detainees,
no detention centers,
no prisons, no police,
no Atlanta Spa shootings,
no anti-Asian attacks,
in Chinatown, in every New York
subway station. Sometimes I dream
of walking down the streets without
the fear that my kin and I
might not make it home. I light
incense and stick it
into rice,
follow
the smoke
back to
another world
where all
who we've lost
are still
here,

I want to bring back the elders, their spirits & all their dreams.
But I can't, so I leave my body for weeks at a time.

FORM N-400

Jennif(f)er Tamayo

Part 11. Information About Your Children (continued)

A-

Current Address

and Name Apt. ☐ Ste. ☐ Flr. ☐ Number

City or Town County State ZIP Code + 4 -

Your Little Form(ations) Postal Code Country

Don't Stand a Chance (foreign address only) (foreign address only)

B. Child 2

Current Legal Name

I Should Not Be Here My Presence is a Violence But While I am Here

A-Number (if any) Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) I Promise Revenge.

Current Address

America Will End. Apt. ☐ Ste. ☐ Flr. ☐ Number

City or Town County State ZIP Code + 4 -

Province or Region Postal Code Country

(foreign address only) (foreign address only) (foreign address only)

What is your child's relationship to you? (for example, biological child, stepchild, legally adopted child)

C.

Oh, I promise

► A-

I want to belong to us

To us who refuse to belong to the Settler Colonial State


Child 3
Child 3
Child 3

To Remain

"la palabra se respeta"

Country of Birth: the myth of the atipiano

Deportable (if applicable)



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**Part 12. Additional Information About You: THEY TOLD ME THE
HEAVENS WERE FUCKING THE WETLANDS, WE WERE THE CUM**

14. Were you **EVER** involved in any way with any of the following:

A. Genocide?

☐ Yes

B. Torture?

☐ Yes

C. Killing, or trying to kill, someone?



**Part 13. Additional Information: The State's dreams are revealed
through its own language. The Resistances' dreams are held in the land.**

THE ONES WHO WILL NEVER ABANDON YOU WILL DIE FIRST

Marwa Helal

the good ~~go to God~~
go to God

die young
and the world's memory is a flame
on a match

which begins a Revolution

the poet is nothing but a broken thought
trying to complete her own trajectory

She must remember
she is the director
and sometimes you have to kill
the motherfuckers in your dreams

so you can remember the BANANAS

INDIGENOUS PHYSICS: THE ELEMENT COLONIZATIUM¹

Deborah A. Miranda

1. The elimination of a substance from a living organism follows complex chemical kinetics.
For example, the biological half-life of water in a human being is 9 to 10 days, with adjustments for behavior and temperature.
A quantity of carbon-14 will decay to half its original amount after 5,730 years.
After another 5,730 years, one-quarter of the original will remain.
And so on.

Obviously, the half-life of a substance depends upon the substance itself—measure for toxicity, fierceness, sheer venom.

The research at hand for us today, then, is clear:
what is the half-life of Colonizatium?
Does Colonizatium reduce to half
its initial impact in 500 years?
In 1000 years?

¹ First published in *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 42:2 (2018) and again in Deborah A. Miranda's *Altar for Broken Things: Poems* (BkMk Press, 2020).

At what point
does Colonizatum become unstable?
Is the half-life of Colonizatum constant over the lifetime
of an exponentially decaying
Indigenous body?

2. To quote a famous Indigenous physicist, *sometimes there are complications.*

The decay of a mixture of two or more materials, which each decay exponentially but with different half-lives, is not exponential.

Take nuclear waste.

Imagine a mixture of a rapidly decaying element A, with a speedy half-life of 1 second, and more gradual decaying element B, with a half-life of 1 year.

In minutes, almost all atoms of element A will have decayed after repeated reductions by half, but very few of the atoms of element B will have done so, as only a small percentage of its half-life has elapsed. Thus, the time taken for such a mixture to fall to half its original value cannot be easily calculated.

The element Colonizatum is much like nuclear waste: an unequal mixture of toxic events with wildly different half-lives.

Start with invasion, war, starvation, rape, murder—Indian boarding schools, reservations, outlawed religion, shame.

Include an on-going bombardment of toxic events over a period of decades:

termination, adopting-out, domestic violence, poverty, substance addiction, incarceration rates, diabetes, blood quantum debates, history books, mascots, white shamanism, fake ndns, anger.

A periodic table of traumatic elements.

3. Given the difficulties
in determining the half-life of Colonizatum,
we might argue the necessity of redirecting
our efforts into other
more profitable calculations.
However,
despite the probabilistic nature of the inquiry,
this as-yet-undiscovered formula
is thought to be paramount for our research
into a chronological prediction
of the Post-Colonial state. Recent studies
indicate that the mixing of elements in unequal toxicities and
immeasurable psycho-social dynamics may best be gauged not
in mathematics
or statistics
or theoretical constructs,

but in the three Indigenous elements
Story, Dance, and Song.

In other words,
Deep Science of a pre-Colonial origin
such as
formulas and algorithms encoded
within ceremonial circles, drums or clappersticks,
the spiraled helix notes of song,
diagrams of precise footsteps
on discrete portions of empowered earth;
stories plotted like fractal geometry,
the patterned asterisms of stars,

chemical kinetics hammered out
on the bodies of rocks.

Key to such explorations—
the re-emergence
of a fourth Indigenous element:
Dreaming.

This component, long rumored to be permanently lost
or unstable fantasy of treasure-hunters,
possesses shape-shifting abilities
which have allowed it to survive long periods of hibernation,
enabling structural recuperation and regeneration.

Preliminary work that combines Dreaming
with the three known elements
reveals two astonishing facts:

First) a post-Colonizatum status is, in fact,
impossible to achieve.

Second) Story, Dance, Song and Dreaming
do not calculate nor predict
the half-life of Colonizatum.

Rather,
when applied to the Colonized subject,
these four elements
hasten the decay of Colonizatum,
pull the heavy history into themselves,
break it down

the same way maize, mustard greens, pennycress,
sunflowers, Blue sheep fescue, and canola
transform heavy metals.

The same way water hyacinths suck up mercury, lead,
cadmium, zinc, cesium, strontium-90, uranium
and pesticides,

the same way bladder campion accumulates copper,
Indian mustard greens concentrate selenium, sulfur,
chromium. The same way willow,

Salix viminalis, absorbs uranium and petrochemicals.

And—
once the willow's bio-mass concentrates heavy metals,
once Story, Dance, Song and Dreaming do their work,
the willow rods must be woven
into baskets
in what might be called
a miraculous exponential,
were we not, of course, privy to the facts.

We must revise our aim, therefore, toward rapid decay of
Colonizatium,
or, De-Colonization.

4. Start with Story.

Work your way
home.

Huwa.

