

## Two-sides of a Coin

I shared with a man  
about the piercing of arms or chest  
while tethered to the Sacred Tree.  
We danced, pulled, released ourselves.  
Others pulled taut ropes, pegs  
skewered on their backs, they dragged  
buffalo skulls  
around the Sun Dance arbor.  
We watched, blew Eagle whistles,  
let them know  
the community stood with them.

The man choked.  
His face twisted.

They were taught  
to kneel in front of a man  
who wore a crown of thorns,  
hands and feet pierced, nailed  
into a dry tree. His body  
dripping blood.  
The community jeered.

In his home country  
I've seen their torture chambers,  
heard about the slaughter  
of their witches. Child  
chimney sweeps, suffocating  
from the ashes  
of the rich.

I have seen spirits walk in the heavens.  
Heard their laughter, their voices  
in lodges, the forest and in the wind.  
I have smelled their visitations.  
We were taught  
before the disappearance of those ways  
that language was shared  
with all Creation. We are not strangers

to Manifestation.

We are from the stars.  
Plasma, atoms, electrons,  
a microcosm of the universe.  
Infinite energy.  
Infinite being.

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Parliamentary Poet Laureate**