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Lakira Ferguson
August 6, 2020

Visions In Euphoria

*Looking is the Heart's form of reaching for connections
Without vision, We are blind to our own Love*

I see the respect exchange between Mother and Daughter
I am both the protector and explorer
Part worried with concern; Part ambitiously naive

I see the design upon my weathered moccasin
I am both the diverse beaded piece and thick string
One isolated; One uniting

I see the footprints of my Ancestors in the Hawk that soars
I am both feathered wing and bare chest
Part Bold Mahogany; Part Piercing White

I see regalia dancing for the mighty rain and rainbows
I am both sides of the weather cloud
One gray heaviness; One colorful beam

What I cannot hide are the Dualities that I pride

I seek Honor for those I cannot see!
I seek Redemption for those who refuse to see Me!

*Written for my Tita,
The Great Ancient Moonbeam
Kuwamonush "I Love You!"*





We are Mashpee Wampanoag of Cape Cod and Kanaka Maoli of Nanakuli Hawaii

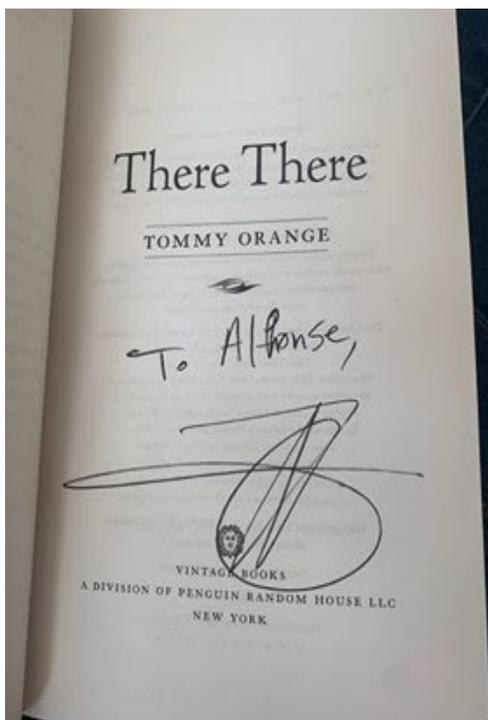
This is our story, this is our truth.
We will always belong to the land and the land guides us to great epiphanies.

Our trip to Kona Hawaii is inserted above. The most ancient of the island showed us the respect for volcanic rock and the plants that thrive from the ash.

The Art included was honored in a local Hawaiian artist shop made with love and spirit for our people.



It was also discovered that my sister Samara, who resides in Oakland, has met Tommy Orange in a book discussion and received a signature for her professor!



Interpretive Essay

Visions in Euphoria captures the lens that Tommy Orange portrays in the duality of the self identity and the images portrayed in the native community. I chose to pick the art of poetry to emphasize each stanza in the symbols of the Great tribes of the land. The symbols that I have grown to respect deeply, as well as my Wampanoag family, all have a uniting factor of power and are the harmonious flows that follow the poem from beginning to end. As I wrote the prelude in italics, I revealed the purpose of the lens being the reason for the narratives in “There, There”. The lens that we create is thus derivative from your heart seeking connections while also warning that leaving the lens and disconnecting from seeking connections can strip the heart from love. Setting the tone, this prelude resembles the purpose of Native storytelling, the prelude is always to tell the roots but it also poses as a lesson. Looking at the structure, I also wanted to start the vision off with a distant view of my culture from an outsider looking in. Then in the indented line to follow I get to my core thoughts to reveal the connection I will see in both the most insecure and confident parts of my identity. The dualities that the “I” sees in the native community are also the dualities that I saw in the characters from Orange’s narrative. When the sight of the mother and the daughter resembles this represents Opal and her great struggle to be a protector of her grandchildren in the midst of violence at the Powwow and the innocence she remembers being a child witnessing her mother guide through Alcatraz and life from her communal perspective. When the moccasin is in perspective focusing on how isolating each bead can be however the string ties them as one represents how Tony Loneman has always felt different and held down by the ‘Drome’ and his

identity, however Blue and Edwin were united under the search and investment in their Native community. The sight of Ancestors speaks to how Opal has had two shoes when she was younger and the impact of spiders to give her and her family signs of either spiritual visions or messages in their presence. The grandmother of Octavio also resembles the great impact of Spiritual guides and the rituals that tie us to our Native traditions. The color of the Great Hawk soaring is both unmistakably White while also boldly Brown. This touches upon the complexity of dealing with not feeling or looking “Native” enough to your own community, while also unmistakably sticking out like a sore thumb when being stereotyped by the white community with impressionable judgement. Dene specifically speaks of this physical duality by saying that as he presented his idea for the documentary of Native voices, he felt the Native judge did not think of his as “Authentic” enough or appeared to look the part. This is also show in Blue’s story where she reveals her background of “ “Because while my hair is dark and my skin is brown, when I look in the mirror I see myself from the inside out. And inside I feel as white as the long white pill-shaped throw pillow my mom always made me keep on my bed even though I never used it[...] I kept on feeling white while being treated like any other brown person wherever I went.” (part III p.368) As this duality settles in, I end the lens with the Regalia scene and this demonstrates the frustrations and clouds of generational trauma that rains down as well as the rainbows that come to remind the tribes that unite of the beauty their people stand for and the importance of prevailing against all storms. This resembles the ending of Tommy’s piece where we see the looming cloud of Tony Loneman who does not realize behind his Regalia holds a storm of tragedy and suffering, and then a brief picture perfect images of the natives at the Powwow in regalia all rejoicing and ready to celebrate their greatest unison. Finally I close the poem with an italicized resolution that finds that what I seek to

find the most were embedded within the complex different aspects of my identity that make me much more of my culture than I have seen because it is in those dualities that further connect me to what I see. Thus the lens has accentuated my confirmations and answered the unknown questions that seem to linger. I then finalize the lens realization with a response of two lines confirming to see me as an individual and Native people completely and to seek redemption for those who refuse to see Native Indians for who they truly are past their regalia, oppression, and societal stereotypes.