1973

Desert News

Tom Meschery

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“We’re combing the town to see if we have anything left in the way of an Indian.”
Sheriff Ernest Pepin

DEsert News

Luck brings you to a mound the size of a man. So, you dig. You hope to find the grave of a chief.

Instead, the grave is empty. You will never know who was buried. All that is left is printed on the earth like a leaf.

Perfectly, bone-threads mark their way to the heart’s cage like veins. You can see what survived, an arrow head where the heart should be, without shaft or target, the stone worn smooth as a bullet.
You leave.
Designs of centuries
close up
behind you
with the first wind.

You will never know,
or if you do
it will be later,
on the way home
with the evening news
rolled in your hand
like a totem.

RETURN TO ST. CROIX

The customs officer
studies my photograph,
my signature.
Am I the same person?
He looks at my face
and sees
I have cried recently.
There are scars.
He asks, “Have you cried recently?”
I stare at him
through eyes which
no longer bear
resemblance to mine.
And I show him my hands
where nothing has been added
and he folds my passport
into my palm
as if nothing has changed.