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## SAVAGE LOVE

Name me a native exile, but not with ordinary words, not suicide similes, not with pushy adjectives over the brink of meaning. I am an exile and write to an absence, not to the cultural nostalgia of a presence, not to some sentimental reminiscence of shamans or natural words, and never to editors or grace favors. I write to eight native exiles never fairly named in archives and libraries.

I was born in exile, and stay in exile.

Exile is my natural motion.

Names can name no lasting names, a paradox ascribed to Lao Tzu and the *Tao Te Ching*, or the ironic contradiction that the many names of natives never lasted. Natives were named in discovery, named in conversions, in mission and federal schools, renamed over and over again in histories, and the exiles without a name endure with the anomalies of nicknames.

Nicknames were stories of motion not presence.

My words were an absolute native absence, and never named a presence. The pretense of presence ran wild with delusions, and once was considered a tease in trickster stories, the tease and wit of provocation, or the grudges of irony. The nostalgia and literary romance of presence, the pokey of presence, would hardly continue in my name, or with these words of my absence. Native names were exiled in a hoax of presence, and the deceptions were moody and ironic.

The ancient words were almost dead on arrival in the woodland, and the high and mighty missionaries reined back native visions. Yes, the churchy words were cut and run in translation, a new rendition, and with no seasons of irony. The treaty words were disabled, dead and buried outback with the bloody nouns of liberty.

Rightly worried, lonesome readers turn over the same order of words dead on the page and stage. Presence must wait at the elbow of every

reader to be revealed in some subject, or the fakery of an object, and the righteous words must at least deliver the shadows of presence, or a better ghost or totem to bear our nicknames.

I write to silence, to the end of language, to the dead, not to the book. I am in the book, not the object, and write only to evade the nostalgia of native traditions, the teases and hesitations of the moment, to beset the hokey promises of urgent words, the hoodwinkers of the now, and to escape the sinister now for the obvious reasons that natives ran out of traditions and stories more than three centuries ago with the fur trade, the many, many diseases, and the bad breath of missionaries.

The romance of that native moment, the natural native now, was a deception, not a presence, and not a now, never now, now, say now. Po-seurs and the lonesome couriers of the words might never endure the contrived treasure troves of the now moment.

Trace the now as empty. That wordy entrance to a sense of presence was the deception of tradition, turn around and the entrance has vanished, not a trace of the entry to the now. Natives were never more than exiles and must write in the past tense, write to an absence.

My words were not the tease of silence or some race to an original moment of the past. No one can remember the past names, stories of the past, or native origins. The next stories were the origins, but natives were not the outright origins, not the delivery notice of muskrats or monotheism.

The origin stories of tricksters were high water nostalgia for the absence of the earth. No one, no poets, no shamans, no artists ever heard the original chant to soar, the creation set to swim, or held the evolutionary strings of that great kite of native traditions. The promises of the past ganged up on absence, ganged up on the overnight boredom of shamanic hoaxers, and became high feigns of presence and concocted originality.

The words of our denatured democratic governance were never about the now, no one would dare to ratify the now, only the distance of meaning was drafted, so abstract in concept that the absence rode high in the cockpit of the preamble and every article of the Constitution of the White Earth Nation.

The constitution was never a presence, only a collection of promissory

notes and abstract articles, but those ratified egalitarian words have always been an absence, beholden to the territorial borders and jurisdiction provided by the treaty of 1867, and continued with the plenary power favors of the United States Congress.

The abrogation of the constitution was the start, not the end, not the absence and not the creation of a fake presence. The actual story of the constitution started with termination, the abrogation, not the delegate ratification or referendum by native citizens. The forty sworn delegates at the four conventions created a fugitive constitution, only the articles of native motion, and the delusion of a secure presence, but notions of the here and now passed with humor and the free meals. The actual story of the constitution started with the exiles.

Yet, the elusive words of absence in the constitution were worth the bother, worth the delusions, and worth the poses of the now, worthy at least until some greater absence overcomes the conceit of the words and articles. That premier notion of continental liberty in the preamble of the constitution was created as the evasion of the now, the escape of the tedious civics of the now, the political absence of the gist and action of now and liberty.

Liberty was nostalgia, never the moment.

We, so named *we*, the pronoun poseur *we*, the exiles in natural motion on cold water, we cruise on national borders, as we once cruised the boundaries of creation and federal treaties, and we were named the exiles of liberty. The exiles became the purse of native liberty.

Pronouns were borrowed with no sense of person or presence, no second nature of first, second, or third person in the past tense. Only the fourth person created a sense of an elusive presence in stories. Pronouns deceived readers, no *me*, no *you*, no *he*, *she*, or *them*, but then who cared or carried on the stories? Right, social media, network blogs, and the pronoun demons of gossip theory.

The word *exile* was inscrutable, the tease of ordinary banishment, an absence, not a presence, and the actual pronouncements of our exile were ironic, because there were no exiles of that notion of presence named liberty. *Exile* was a courier word, a breakaway from cultural simulations. The politics of entitlements were always ironic in native stories,

the fount of ancestors, ironic in gestures of presence, and in the steady pretense of cultural memory.

These words, the silence and absence of these words, were my only publication. Archive directed me to write, and to honor the absence of the constitution, our exile, and these words of absence landed in the book, *Treaty Shirts*, but not now, never now, never at the moment.

My exile was a fugitive pose, and this autocritical essay was a venture, not a structure, a contention, a resistance, never a tradition, and my essay was more trickster story than native exposition of exile or the winsome and ironic declaration of natural motion and continental liberty.

These native essays were a declaration of absence, the start of the story, not the end, not a literary lament. The exiles resisted the new sectors, the new synthetic narcotics, the black teeth of tradition dancers, and the concocted notion that our exile was a revolution. The exiles were naturals at wordplay, the tease of reason, contingencies and ideologies, and the ironic demise of final vocabularies in the spirit of the philosopher Richard Rorty.

Archive deftly conveyed that our exile was a presence, a moment of actuality, and yet he never truly simulated the nostalgia of presence over absence, or the pinch of now, that elusive aura of existence. Exile was not a choice of presence, or absence, never a now of eight native expatriates. We were the storiers of exile, not the presence or the now or political expatriation.

These words were the tease of now, not the presence, and only the ephemeral appearance of the moment. The exiles were an absence, and the now was underwater, in the natural waves and ancient stone, and the stories of a native presence were in the stones of trickster stories. The stones wait to burst apart in campsite fires.

Archive knew we might never survive the winter on Lake of the Woods. Fort Saint Charles was never a native commune or presence, only a crude moment in the rush of the fur trade, one more colonial enterprise, and remained a concocted absence of continental liberty. The exiles were the prey of winter, similar to the celibate and exiled monks without an animal to stimulate, only mongrels, chickens, and the unruly words of our exile, and our absolute absence. Natives have always been the prey of cozy traditions and the lousy now of treaties and the endorsement sector.

Exile doubles the evasion of the now.

No worries, none, because my last word was silence, not the words in the book. My words of absence have no native memory that would turn me into a story. I resist the tease of now, the literary toggles of the now, the fakery of now, the fusions of now as much as futurity.

My absence runs with the mongrels, with a bump and whistle, an instant pant and pose of presence, the loyal touch and heal of a wet nose, but not that memorable now, the big now of native shamans, hairy visions, or the great presence of the seductive ice woman beyond the pale of winter.

The mongrels were in the book only as the nostalgia of their presence and loyalty. The mongrels bay and bark and were the absolute absence of some tricky eternity. That wild sound of absence and irony could be my only story.

Desperate natives turned that sense of absence over to the spirit fakers, shamans of the now and then, and finally left their hearts out to dry with the missionaries of the moment and eternity, and their totems out for the voyageurs of the fur trade, the ironic stories of presence out for the commerce of ethnography. The curators at museums and universities convened the simulations of that silence at the start of the seasons, the natural motion of stories, and creative images on stone and leather, canvas, and paper. Native creative art became an absence in the museums.

Now, the ever modernist now, waits around with no spirit or heart of native stories. Native spirits have always been an absence, the heart of tradition a prison, and bodies have been weighted down with centuries of sugar, fry bread, salt pork, and the bad food of the now and civilization.

The pretense of now was absolute in native casinos, and the gamers played to the now, now or never. The trivial tease of natives on skateboards became a more memorable scene of originality. So many native doctorates of the now, the sacred academic now, doctorates of presence with heavy sources form the pale of libraries, and then turned back to nurture a fake now of casino virtue, employment, and the literature of victimry.

There were too many ceremonies and heart dances to keep track of the fake healers. So, some natives turned back to the mongrels, to our

oldest companions of absence on the road, the teasers and healers with a better nose for sources of sex, food, and the absence of irony.

White Favor and Sardine never pointed to the now, or ran with the empty words of presence. Mongrels run on the margins of absence, only the sleeve dogs favor a stake in the fakery of now and a presence, a pedigree now in the games away from home.

So, who can create an original native story? Maybe the natives on skateboards were the new tricksters of absence, or the risky now timers with stained teeth, the ones who traded the desperate duties of the now for the ecstasy of untraceable synthetic narcotics.

Yes, of course, the tease of now was our escape, as it has been since the very first contrary natives survived the severe winter and returned in the spring with inscrutable visions, songs, and elusive stories. Even then the notion of a native presence was no more than a season at a time.

The coywolf was my totem, a creature of absence as a descendant of wolves and coyotes. The name coywolf was a double absence, a natural resistance to the now, to presence, to the academic delusions of pure and true creatures. The coywolf has become my absence in a totemic name, and an eternal trace of absence, not presence.

“Where now? Who now? When now?”

These three queries, these words, the absence of my voice, the clauses of my literary absence, and the past tense must start with uncertainty, mockery of presence, the tease of now, and the eternal silence of words in the book. Tease the unnamable in the *The Unnamable* by Samuel Beckett, my favored book of ironic words of prey. He wrote, “I, say I. Unbelieving. Question, hypotheses, call them that. Keep going, going on, call that going, call that on.”

So, call this going, going on with an exile soliloquy, unnamable, and an absence, unbelieving. My nickname now, my steady tease of treaties and governance now, and my exile of absence.

Treaty now? Sector now? Exile now?

The chickens danced, mongrels nosed the night air, and the music was haunting over the cold water, an exile scene but not the now or a presence, nothing now but our absence as exiles on Lake of the Woods.

Samuel Beckett was a partisan of ironic actualities, a native shaman

of the unnamable, the master of silence and slivers of words, the disguises of color and meaning, and the elusive tease of resurrection and enlightenment. Beckett told Raymond Federman "it is worse not to write than to write," shortly before his death about fifty years ago in Paris.

Beckett might have declared that gossip theories were as memorable as rush hour trade and traffic. Hearsay was broadcast at every intersection, count the cultures, mothers, brothers, sisters, teachers, shamans, bartenders, bankers, and doctor scouts caught in the rush hour of hearsay, and with no turns to escape the crude scuttlebutt theorists of the past and ethnology.

I write to an absence, to the actualities of an absence, not now, not the now, never a presence, and my stories were unnamable and unpublished. Beckett delivered his literary mockery to publishers, and tormented the readers with an elusive gesture to the absence of meaning, the fake scent of meaning, but he teased the absence of actuality, the images of words, pronouns, and the trite favors of now.

Samuel Beckett travels with me, but not now.

Beckett had nothing to say about the now, he said so, words were exiled in an equivocal now, the now words of the subject, but there never was a subject to name the now. The word exile has been out, nothing more than an absence since Dante Alighieri, Alfred Dreyfus, Oscar Wilde, Émile Zola, Marc Chagall, Sigmund Freud, Lion Feuchtwanger, Pablo Neruda, Albert Camus, and Samuel Beckett.

Lake of the Woods became our new empire of absence and continental liberty. The dominion was overstated, but certainly an empire of necessary delusions when the federal treaty of our constitution and sovereignty was outsourced to a turnkey sector, and we were deported, mere pronouns of a national political ruse, exiled with a broadside on the water, counted out by clauses, the crack and crease of clauses, the means handed down by clauses, and nothing more critical or ironic that morning than the ruins of sector commerce and the native nostalgia of an empire war.

Archive taunted the toadies of the sector and declared our exile a second totemic empire war. Yes, the first totemic war was the fur trade. Three centuries later eight exiled natives were afloat, armed with an

anthology of political delusions and resistance words, tricky stories, clauses, a solar powered houseboat, laser prominence, nightly panic broadcasts, nine chickens and five irony mongrels that avoid the now in a perfect cluck and lick and tease of presence. The second totemic empire war was with the sector cringers, toadies, tradition fascists, and the privileged parolees of *Rendition de Gentillesse* entrusted with the distribution of federal sector resources.

Native novelists ought to tease the latest visionaries, the strict conventioners, the mighty shamans of shame and the raw, consorts and grieverers over the abuse of natural motion, and that vital tease and uneasy sway of liberty. The wild and evocative native writers breached the truce with ordinary words, overturned the masters of precedence, chased the transience of seasons, shouted out loud to the clouds, turned away the totemic unions of nostalgia, and created ironic stories over the mortal set of monotheism and the summer graze of enlightenment. The literary cringers and casino lackeys waited and witnessed the outcome of late-night courses on the now.

Samuel Beckett cracked the enlightenment and tricky truce of words with double teases. The cracks exposed the collusion of poseurs, literary, cultural, and commercial, but once again the shamans of presence were decorated with cedar and sage, and the necessary stage of mockery and irony was conveyed to the casino gamers of the restated now, and to the electronic visions of the moment.

The great teases of the heart were in nature, not set in books, not in diamonds or traded at pawnshops, or in the rave of academics. The eight exiles were in the book, forever teased in the book *Treaty Shirts*. My firsthand words were a pitch and tease of absence, a provocation of the now and native nostalgia, the unrevealed scenery of now, and the counter ceremonials of exiles. My words were the runaways of presence and the truants of the now. These words of mine, and the tricky scenes were my first publication, by exile and chance of absence, not by choice.

Exile was never a now, never an actuality, or even a simulation of authenticity. The stories of exiles started at the end, not with portraits, surreal expressions, or conveyed in the ordinary tone of traditions. Our experiences of the constitution cannot be depicted as a native state or



entreaty, and the short clumsy clauses of cultural memory and history were rightly overturned by irony, mockery, and my teases of absence. The sector governor, sentries, and mongers of the now dishonorably terminated irony and the constitution.

Truly my stories were an absence, nothing, and started at the end of presence, yet my words were printed and bound in a book for eternity. We were in the book, forever, you, and me, the five mongrels of irony, nine fancy chickens, agents and envoys, the dead governor, surveillance sentries, sector minions of the casino now, and eight exiles of liberty.

No one has come closer to that woeful threshold, that turnstile of emptiness, and the absolute dead motion of printed words, the nostalgia of naturalism, than a native novelist. Maybe a literary shaman on the rebound from abuses of the sacred, or a sly getaway of contrition was closer to the traces of dead voices in the book.

The first native words were an absence, not a creation, and at a time without silence, a rage of gestures, and then the whispers and shouts of abstract names. The native rage of absence was overcome with tricky words of salvation and enlightenment, the pure reason of presence, and the absence of now in stories became the mighty slights of monarchies.

Patrick Henry never published that repeated phrase, "Give me liberty or give me death." No, these words were not exiled in print and then shouted out later as cultural slogans. The words of liberty and death were in the air and broke the silence of mundane politics, and changed the season that year, but never created a now or presence. "Give me liberty or give me death" was the ironic tease of a master storiier, and he was wise not to have turned the sound of his voice, and gestures of an audience, into a precious moment, or dead voices in the book.

Patrick Henry never intended to write and publish the phrase, the dead voices. Yet, some readers have created the scene, the intense and ironic play of his voice that gave the words new meaning, the mirage of a moment, but there was no moment or now of liberty that we agreed with that cold and clear morning of exile on the international border of Lake of the Woods.

The mongrel healers were at my side, and perceived by scent and gestures, the irony of silence. The five mongrels trained with me and

were naturals at detection, and barked at the absence of irony in the pretense of sector governance, and barked in harmony over *Rendition de Gentillesse* and the conversion of the White Foxy Casino to the Coy Care Casino. The mongrels never barked at the nightly holoscenes or at our stories of exile, but Mutiny, Wild Rice, and Sardine had started to wheeze, a whistle, and a noisy mongrel sway over the notions of now and presence. The wheeze was a distinct tone of mockery.

Sardine cocked her ear to the sound of waves.

Mother Teresa was a teaser extraordinaire, a coy healer of the now, and she shivered over the mere scent of worried hearts. Godtwit Moon, the dead governor, might have been healed with a nosy bump and shiver of Mother Teresa, and put right out of the fantasy of the now by a more direct and new perceptive sense of *Rendition de Gentillesse* than the mushy conventions of great moments of cultural presence at La Maison de Torture Extraordinaire.

White Favor was also a master teaser of the now, the absence of irony, and the fugitive meaning of words. He barked at the absence of irony, of course, and whistles with pleasure at the absence of meaning. The perception of dead words and voices deserved more than an ordinary mongrel moan, and more than a decent bark over the absence of irony.

White Favor lived with me for more than ten years, a stray mongrel related to the original and memorable White Dog who served Melvin McCosh, the tricky and eccentric owner of a bookstore more than seventy years ago near the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

McCosh taught the senior White Dog to fetch books by title from the bookstore shelves, and the booksy mongrel was rarely sidetracked with obscure subjects. The mongrel trotted and wagged directly to the correct section, history, literature, religion, and pawed the book, but he could not reach above the fourth level of shelves. White Dog pranced and barked for assistance to reach books on higher shelves. McCosh was a gentle teaser, and told me that the wartime comfort dogs were the ancestors of White Dog.

White Favor, the irony mongrel in exile, was a direct descendant of the clever mongrels loyal to readers and bookstore owners. Many gener-

ations later, the mongrel perception and selection of book titles included printed words, a natural scent and critical consciousness of empty words, feigned words, and dead voices in books. The mongrel whistles were a clear commentary on absence and the dummy runs of literacy.

White Favor never moaned but smartly whistled his way through the vacant words and dead voices of arrogant politicians, managers, academics, casino gamers, and federal agents, and at times barked and whistled at the same words, and always at heavy moments of the now. Some of his very best whistles were over selected books in libraries. White Favor bounded between the stacks of native literature and whistled a lucky tune.

Sylvia Beach, a suitable nickname, was the principal librarian at the William Warren Community College Library on the White Earth Nation, and she acquired an impressive collection of first edition books by native authors. Sylvia had a steady strut on narrow feet, and she wore heavy white socks and black sandals in summer and winter.

White Favor was her favored mongrel, a brilliant literary critic. She raved about his determined trot and whistle over books that were later designated for removal from the main shelves of the library. The mongrel trotted to the library at least once a week in the early years of the constitutional government, roamed and pranced between the stacks and whistled over the hardbound copies of *Hanta Yo* by Ruth Beebe Hill, *The Primal Mind: Vision and Reality in Indian America* by Jamake Highwater, *Education of Little Tree* by Forrest Carter, *Ind'n Humor* by Kenneth Lincoln, *The Blood Runs Like a River Through My Dreams* by Nasdijj, and he expressly barked and whistled many times over *The Divine Sex and Science of Vine Deloria* by Margo Rain Manypenny. White Favor whistled three notes based on "Paperback Writer" by The Beatles.

White Favor never barked, moaned, or whistled over the *Manaboshō Curiosa*, a rare and censored manuscript that was first published by Moby Dick in a limited edition with fore edge decorations, or over the contentious and erotic novel *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles* by Gerald Vizenor. Sylvia Beach had secured several copies of both ironic and erotic books, the ancient stories of erotic monks and animals, and

the furious futurity stories of native catastrophe, but the righteous con-  
nivers borrowed and burned every copy of the two books. Sylvia Beach  
continued to acquire new copies for the library. The last shelved copy  
of *Bearheart* was removed and tortured to death a few months ago by  
tradition fascists in an extreme moment of strange cultural nostalgia  
and the sentiments of the sector now, now, now.