

Living Nations, Living Words: A Map of First Peoples Poetry
Poem commentary by Jake Skeets, 2020

Speaker: Jake Skeets

Date of recording: July 17, 2020

Location: Tsaile, Arizona, poet's home

Length: 4 minutes, 43 seconds

START OF RECORDING

[Salutation in Diné (Navajo)]

Jake Skeets: Hi, I'm Jake, and I'll be reading a poem to you called "Daybreak."

[Jake Skeets reads "Daybreak"]

JS: This poem was inspired by Boderra Joe's poem titled "Handful of Courage." Boderra described morning time as "coral mornings" and that image stuck with me. The simplicity of the language conveys this vast phenomena and sacred time for Diné people. My poetry is really interested in the idea of land, landscape, and the energy that exists within them. Energy finds its way from the land into the language into the poet into the poem and finally into the reader. I have so much faith in this energy that I wanted to write poetry where the speaker is not really there. Of course, it's hard to do with the Diné language because the language itself is very systematic and precise. However, I came across some simple phrases in Diné that could convey these vast fields, landscapes, phenomena, and energies. I normally don't use Diné in my poems but I felt this poem existed or exists in a specific place and space. It's really a dailyness poem, a poem about the everyday, and I think it has gravity because of that.

[Salutation in Diné (Navajo)]

END OF RECORDING