Three Poems by Margie Shaheed

Margie Shaheed

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MARGIE SHAHEED

Son of Light

(for John A. Williams 1925-2015)

1
it is the last day, you do a slow dance
on the edge of a pitch-black room,
the smell of lilacs at your bedside
guide you to lost words and conversations
known to great men and women

2
i remember
the day
you held me
womb- like
as you told me
a freshman
i was not yet
ready to take
your graduate
level class
but that
one day
i would
become
a serious
writer

3
what you left behind sustains us
the man who cried i am stands
behind the walls of the academy
remaking it and tearing it up
Dreamcatcher

(for Alicia)

“don’t spend it all in one place”
was all you said to me before you sped off on a green metallic bicycle...
dreams fly away sometimes like birds when it gets too cold…i caught this one in my net…it was
my sister who had been dead for years… having gone to sleep with the excitement of receiving
one hundred dollars from a friend, must’ve left the door open…and i like a child waited
anxiously for her visit as if she was the tooth fairy…

i wasn’t there to watch you die…the others told me your eyes turned dark yellow from the
absence of the bone marrow transplant you refused…i came at the end when the cancer had
eaten your skin blacker than the night skies...

i dreamt the other night that i was on top of a mountain running when suddenly the land under
my feet disappeared and i started falling…i fought as i sailed thru air…punching…searching for
land to grab on to… my thoughts became untangled in its knot when i gave up the idea of finding
land in mid air…death was my destiny…free…i stretched my arms out and threw back my
head… letting silent songs carry me the rest of the way.
The Death of Dying

1
Before mama turned into a church
she plotted killing the six
of us by poisoning our kool-aid

2
He kept himself alive by watching
her from his bed room window
exercise in the drive way
his will to live so strong
Hospice sent him back home twice

3
Rodney’s 57 year old bull fighter’s
body pierced a hole in his river
like an over ripened cantaloupe split
wide open at the first breath of fresh air
after yanking fire and smoke from the skies
pronounced dead at the scene

4
Mama and uncle found me,
eyes opened, arms folded,
casket ready

5
Sexy table dancer
magnolias and song birds
churn star dust in this tin box
cancer mutes morning’s melody
snuffs out its bloom

6
It didn’t become final until I deleted
your contact from my cell phone today
It’s been a month since you died
I miss you dear friend, the grunt of your voice
hammering a point on the other end of the phone