

Two Poems by Loretta Diane Walker

And Then

“W,” we’ll gather again Tuesday,
after the resurrection of twilight,
after the A-Train clickty-clacks
into the shapeless bronze horizon
and my daughter stops washing her hair
in the baptismal pool of her tears
because the boy who used to rake
dead leaves from *our* garden
said the magic is gone between them
and he feels fire in the gully of his
bones, blood, breath, and the moon beats
in his chest when he watches “X” walk
through the city in her red mini,
butt rotating like two planets
in a sky seeded with stars.
I tell her love awakens the first layer of our lives;
the heart has pebbled-stones, people come, go—
sadness is like this, too.
And then, without a whimper, she drags out
letters “Y” wrote last year on whiskey-colored paper,
tosses his words in the dark jungle of this week’s
garbage,
announces in her elegant voice, *This is “Z.”*
He’s from Orlando, before that Charleston.
There is no somberness in the seams of her skin,
no need to fill her mouth with violets.
“W,” let’s gather before Tuesday, under the white
canopy of morning; we can listen to bluebirds gossip
about America’s knotted stomach.

Jesus In Cowboy Boots

For Colton

I don't know if it was a Tuesday or Wednesday
when dawn cracked the darkness
and fell into the wide open road of morning

a perfect offering,
like my friend's freckles-less son.

Veined with shadows of telephone wires
he slanted his face upwards,
shut his eyes, unsealed the smile on his lips.

Look, Mama. I'm Jesus!

With arms extended, his babyish body
was an imperfect crucifix.

Sun-spikes nailed his hands to air.
Cowboy boots anchored him
to the top of a slide.

Robed in his daddy's T-shirt,
his dispensation was tasting
the warmth of a blue west Texas day.

A skinny wind rose like an omen,
blew gently across his open hands,
as light hung on him beneath an ebullient sky.

Loretta Diane Walker, a three-time Pushcart nominee, has published three collections of poetry. Loretta won the 2016 Phyllis Wheatley Book Award for poetry, for her collection, *In This House*. She was recently elected as Statesman in the Arts by

Odessa's Heritage Council. Her manuscript *Word Ghetto* won the 2011 Bluelight Press Book Award. She teaches music in Odessa, Texas. Loretta received a BME from Texas Tech University and earned a MA from The University of Texas of the Permian Basin.