

New Mexico Quarterly

Volume 29 | Issue 3

Article 17

1959

Los Alamos

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Recommended Citation

Momaday, N. Scott. "Los Alamos." *New Mexico Quarterly* 29, 3 (1959). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol29/iss3/17>

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LOS ALAMOS

Steel spans and spurns our filtered vision
 To the crossed hairs of promise, the magnified self-image.
 In the near distance, audible in time,
 Exiled voices hover and collide.
 Beneath gray girders skaters groove the water
 And crumble bread for snowbirds.

Children, though uprooted and wedged from the earth,
 Humanize this statuary.

Machinery is scattered over the earth like hurled coins.
 I have heard the angry monotone
 Retching into troughs the pins of war
 When I walked in the wood to hear rain.

The stark, impersonal lamps on the bridge
 Destroy the symmetry of her straining shadows.
 The desert smiles and waits
 And there the night settles, transfixed by the moon.

Confidently,
 Uniformed men pace the corridors of Purgatory
 And every wrist and wall is shackled to a timepiece
 That, through the disinfected chambers,
 Rap against the unknown like a blind man's cane.

I have dreamed a city peopled
 By one sufficient man
 And faithful reproductions.

—N. SCOTT MOMADAY