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Pawhuska, 1880

Cheryl Loetscher

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 SWOSUTM

Pawhuska, 1880

by Cheryl Loetscher

Call me by that other name,
the one worn like a cape
before you could read,
when I dressed you
in faith and deerskin leggings
fringed with elk teeth,
when 36 chiefs still knew the signs
for grace and peace.

Call me the name they carved
at the base of an Osage fencerow
the night you were born
in a country where bluestem grasses
and creeping groundcover
buffered the rivers, and the leaven
of solitude was still a proud legacy
in a town where hunger held the door.

