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Old Town

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Old Town

by C. Prudence Arceneaux

Vern swears that he is four-eighths Zuni
but doesn't think he can prove it.
Jabbing his arm with a screwdriver he lets
dull red drops fall, telling you they make
the sounds of running horses or mating frogs.
He has done this before, draw a crowd, murmuring
in Hopi and Navajo, stepping up to a wide-eyed
to explain what he asks Kokopelli for is
rain-rain that will fall thick and heavy like his blood
to nourish this cold grey ground he stands on.
The neon sign behind him buzzes
The Shepherders Cafe as he prances
back and forth under the shop window,
collects the coins thrown at his face,
even as they pebble to the ground.
Thanking one and all, he tightens the rope
belt around his waist and pulls his three-
wheeled cart across the bubbled blacktop
moving always on his way to Old Town.

