

Poetry Contest Winner



Where I Am From, a photo by Ms. Keovorabouth that accompanies his poem and captures his home of Chinle

“Yá’át’ééh, shí éí Souksavanh T. Keovorabouth yinishyé. Kinyaa’áanii nishli. Nááts’ózi Bashishchiin. ‘Áshjiji Dashicheii. Nááts’ózi dashinalí. My name is Souksavanh T. Keovorabouth, I’m an enrolled member of the Diné (Navajo) Nation, and a third-year Ph.D. Student in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Oregon State University. I am originally from Chinle, Arizona but grew up in Mesa (Phoenix), Arizona, with the pandemic still in effect, I had the privilege of moving back home from Oregon to be with family. I received a dual Bachelors at the University of Arizona in Sustainable Built Environments and American Indian Studies then a Masters in American Indian Studies and now I’m at Oregon State University. My research is in Two-Spirit identity, Native American urbanization/relocation, Native American urban experience, Indigenous Urban Planning practices, and Black and Indigenous Solidarities. My career goal is to either work as a professor in Native American Studies, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and/or Urban Studies or work in an urban planning firm to bridge Native American urban experience with Urban planning practices to build improved infrastructures for our urban communities.

“Displacement” is a piece that I wrote about my own Two-Spirit multi-racial urban identity and the complexities behind that within a settler-colonial society. What inspired me to write this piece is from my own experience but also to critique the ways we begin to understand Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in our society. We are often erased or

unheard and this was a way for me to bring voice to our peoples.

I enjoy poetry because it is a critical lens of understanding the world. It is a form of art and expression that tells truth, our truths, and I believe that poetry is a form of theory that should be heavily embraced, especially as a praxis, methodology, and epistemology for our communities to enjoy; it is that extension of storytelling and prayer.”



Souksavanh T. Keovorabouth