

HO'ZHOOSI, YOUR SPIRIT RIDES FOREVER, MY BROTHER

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Honorable Mention, Poetry

The shooter is my uncle by marriage,
The one trusted, and who ate at our table.
With drink too much, he shoots himself for the crime.

Women of *Naabeeho'*, cry for my brother.
Our native son lies dead on the Sandy Hill.
Respect, he brought to our fathers and mothers.

Ho'zhoosi

Your spirit rides forever, my brother.
Ho'zhoosi all around you!

The bullets strike many times; my brother, twenty-two, dies.
Returned yesterday from answering his country's call,
Only to be gunned down on home soil.

Wild horses still grace the sacred land,
The steeds in a great thunderstorm and lightning.
You are safe from the elements on your mount with the silky mane.
You gallop over the sacred terrain; the wild free breeze embraces you.

The mid-wives' howls you heard a little while ago,
When I was born in the hogan and you were three.
The bullet in my flesh makes my sorrow deep and lingering.
My pillow soaked with tears, memory bitter sweet.

Ho'zhoosi

Your spirit rides forever, my brother.
Ho'zhoosi all around you!

You, the horseman and a herdsman with sheep on the range
Scattered with talking pinon and cedar trees,
The wilds, where antelope and deer graze.
Brilliant skies and sun, sweet song of the mountains,
On wide expanse of the tranquil land, *Naabeeho'* inspired,
We ate mutton and bread together.

In many games of sport, you brought honor; you, a wind runner!
You studied the great *Bilagaana* books by the kerosene lamp.

Bullets crack from all sides; I am hurting, I pray,
"Dear God, please don't let us die."
My mother cradles her dying son, holding him close to her breast.

Ho'zhooji
Your spirit rides forever, my brother.
Ho'zhooji all around you!