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## Wijiji

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## Wijiji

Someone found the ocher clay  
or ground soft stone colored by iron oxide  
and mixed it in a bowl. Someone  
cut the hollow reed from the rushes  
along the arroyo or fashioned the long bone  
of an eagle's wing. Someone pressed  
a hand on the canyon wall  
and blew the liquid ocher onto hand  
and stone. Someone a thousand years ago  
made this image, a yellow glow  
around an absent hand.

There must have been joy  
in the moment of making, and joy  
touched with sadness in the moments  
afterward, just as there is now  
in the way the glow holds  
to the shape of the hand that's gone.

On my way to this place  
I thought of you, the one I ask so much of.  
Storm clouds rose over Chacra Mesa.  
Fajada Butte stood alone with its secret  
knowledge of the sun. I walked

up the path in the changing light of the canyon  
toward Wijji, least of the greathouses  
of Chaco, place abandoned for a thousand years,  
word uttered by the body of a hummingbird.  
No one knows what it means.

Wind came up through the sage  
and brought the smell of rain.  
Somewhere in the rocks Kokopelli,  
with his burden of seeds and his flute,  
bent over and blew his hopeful music  
down on the husks. The seed of that music  
opened and rose, waved and clattered  
like green corn. Virga blew  
in tattered curtains above the mesa.  
A hummingbird hovered at a red flower.

At the base of the canyon wall  
when the wind stopped I knelt  
before water symbols and migration spirals,  
the wolf pulling down the deer, the mother  
giving birth, and the small absent hand  
lit with a yellow glow.  
I put my hand to the image  
and saw it disappear.

More than one or the other, more  
than all the regrets, more than the hand  
that touches,  
it is the touching that lasts.