Meeting

Joy Harjo
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I am fragile, a piece of pottery smoked from fire made of dung,
the design drawn from nightmares.
I am an arrow painted with lightning seeking the way to the name of the enemy.
But the arrow has now created its own language. It is the language of lizards and storms and we have begun to hold conversations long into the night. I quit eating. I don't work.
My children are hungry and the animals who live in the backyard are starving.
I begin to draw maps of stars. The spirits of old and new ancestors perch on my shoulders.
I make prayers of clear stones, of feathers from birds who live closest to the gods.
The voice of the stone is flute born of a meeting of yellow birds circling the ashes of a smoldering volcano. The feathers sweep the prayers up and away.
I, too, try to fly but get caught in the crossfire of television signals and my spirit drops back down to earth. I am lost.
I am looking for you, muse, who can help me walk this thin line between the breathing and the dead.
You are the curled serpent in the pottery of nightmares. You are the dreaming animal who paces back and forth in my head.
We must call a meeting. Give me back my language and build a house inside it.
A house of madness, a house for the dead who are not dead.
And the spiral of the sky above it. And the sun and the moon.
And the stars to guide us called promise.