

Bone Light



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Orlando White explores language from a Diné (Navajo) perspective. One idea that interests him, inspires him to think and write, is the idea of the English language as a forgotten language.

Imagine if we as a people, all people in the United States, are speaking an Indigenous language rather than English; that the English language exists merely as a language of the colonial past. White explores and experiments with this particular colonizing language, because that language remains a kind of cultural/intellectual/social threat to Indigenous thought, as English was imposed to dehumanize Indigenous peoples from their culture, language, and consciousness.

White's Diné perspective poetically reveals audience notion of linguistic dehumanization within the Bone Light volume. Non-Natives, throughout American history, have documented the Indigenous Americas using the dominant written word of English. Thus, as an artist, White writes what he writes to document as well, but also to create something a bit more beautiful (intriguing) than harmful (erasing). White is not attempting critique of the English language; he is working with it to gain a better understanding of viewpoints, veritably creating a relationship by way of exploring

language.

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