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Native I Am, Cocopa

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Native I Am, Cocopa

Now once-great events fading
into seamless history,
I am a mother, proud.
My native numbers are few.
In my heart digs many memories
forty-one relatives left in 1937.
Decay is all left of their bones, memories.
I pinch my dark skin.
I dig earthworms
farm dirt from my fingertips
grab native
Baja and Southwestern California,
its soil and sand wedged between my spaced teeth.
I see the dancing prayers of many gods.
I am Cocopa, a remnant of the Yuman family.
I extend my mouth into forest fires
Colorado rivers, trout-filled mountain streams.
I survive on corn, melons, and
pumpkins, mesquite beans.

I extend my mouth into forest fires
Colorado rivers, trout-filled mountain streams.
I survive on corn, melons, and
pumpkins, mesquite beans.
I still dance in grass skirts
drink a hint of red Sonora wine.

I am a mother, proud.
I am parchment from animal earth.

Michael Lee Johnson