

MERRIDAWN DUCKLER

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Letter to James Luna

(in memoriam, d. March 4, 2018)

Dear ~~James~~ Mister Luna, dear James you ~~don't~~ maybe remember me? We met at ~~Black~~ the gallery. I wrote the grant to bring you. I am a member there. Your ~~talk~~ lecture talk lecture was inspiring goddamn. I won't forget it. I can't forget it. ~~Forget it.~~ I am not ~~Indian, native, first~~ American. No ~~reparitions reparations~~ ~~retarains~~ nothing is possible to forget about it. I liked best when ~~that time~~ you said you were the ~~most~~ most photographed Indian ~~native~~ first American on the planet. People ~~took~~ your picture at your invitation ~~request~~. Your great joke. ~~But I wondered~~ ~~then and now~~ is this about stealing the soul ~~thing?~~ Idea of stealing the soul with a photograph. How the soul is stolen by a photograph. The soul and photograph thing. Endless stubborn wish to photograph you and how you turned that around and owned. And you owned the impulse. My impulse to thank you for this insight. In sight. Insight. Vision. ~~Vision. Question. Quest. Quest.~~ I had this question I ~~wanted~~ to ask, do you think this idea that the soul is stolen by taking a photograph. I mean some of these people on facebook and their children are doomed, if so. Is true. Since we stole ~~stole's~~ ~~told~~ robbed everything else? Yet that idea was ~~right.~~ It preserved ~~destroyed~~ your people. I wonder. You opened my eyes to that. ~~Might take me while to send this~~ letter. I plan to send this letter right away. I figure I have ~~time~~ to get it ~~right.~~ I mean my gratitude that you came. And spoke. What you said. My mind's a jumbled mess. So much clarity in your way of speaking. I don't even have a picture. ~~Idiotic assertion I know.~~ I kinda wanted something to remember the ~~moment.~~ If you answer, I will.

~~Ever,~~ always

M.

HERON TREE  
27 May 2018  
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Merridawn Duckler is the author of *Interstate* (forthcoming from dancing girl press). Her work has appeared in *The Offing*, *DMQ Review*, *Gris-Gris*, and *Ninth Letter*, as well as in *Weaving the Terrain: 100-Word Southwestern Poems*. A teacher, editor at *Narrative*, and senior fellow at the Attic Institute, she lives in Portland, Oregon, and can be found online at [merridawnduckler.com](http://merridawnduckler.com).

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