

A.A. Norton

POW WOW IN TAOS

North of the pueblo,
the sky loses heat in quilted frames.
Belt buckles and bolo ties,
fetish necklaces and medicine wheels
avoid the road

where dirt creeps like little black ants
into jerkied nostrils.
The dust is psychotic —
even after young Indians
sporting heavy metal concert tee shirts

hose it down.
Tepee tops announce the mountains.
Toddlers in feathered leather
groom the pasture in play.
A superman logo is sewn to a traditional costume.

Willy Wonka flavored feathers
look out of place.
Like a spaceship with wood paneling,
the pow wow is anachronistic.
When the clockwise dancing begins,

the music is a violence
sewn together with sharpened animal bones.
Drums and feet are bound together
by a simple thong.
But after an hour

of what looks like repetitive dancing,
I am drawn away by the Indian fry bread
that tastes like my grandmother's
blackened kettle
enfolded in a pillow.