

## *Moonlight at the Indian Boarding School*

Bette Lynch Husted



Bette Lynch Husted lives and writes in Eastern Oregon. Her first collection of memoir essays, *Above the Clearwater: Living on Stolen Land* (OSU Press 2004) was a finalist for the Oregon Book Award; her second collection, *Lessons from the Borderlands* (Plainview Press) followed in 2012. *At This Distance: Poems* (Wordcraft of Oregon 2010) reflects the land she crosses monthly to reach the Side Porch Poets, a Portland-based workshop group. She chairs the Pendleton Center for the Arts First Draft Writers' Series, welcoming Northwest writers to Eastern Oregon.



Listen to Bette talk about her work

Christ came to me,  
his bride  
in His holy darkness my narrow cot  
rising with this tide  
to float beyond the transom, past the stars—

Tonight's moon is a torn wafer.  
Shadows gather  
below my window,  
a sudden wind trembling the cottonwoods.  
Somewhere a floorboard creaks.

I did not mean to kill the boy.  
I taped his mouth closed only  
to let the lye soap burn away  
that guttural  
forbidden  
tongue.

Now, crucifix corpus  
pressed between my breasts—  
rosary beads  
turning like his eyes—  
dark, wet, wild—  
I know

He will not come again.



