

HE SAW

written by Chrystos

his roots/went back to the reservation old
pain/old hunger
None of the ghosts were there
He went fishing caught
one or more every
day The fishing is what he needed to do
Gathering wild rice, remembered after years of suits, ties, clocks
adjustments
what he began
& left
He writes me about the fish
I grow hungry

He gave me all the whitest advantages
square house, football school, white mother baking white bread in a
white oven

He wanted to spare me his pain
didn't
Silently our misunderstandings shred rage clouds our blood ties
I stare at his words wonder who he is
Lonely red daddy cradling ghost of his mama died when he was nine
pretending he was born without a father without straightjackets
Daddy you write in a painfully practiced scrawl
you learned learned learned beaten down a dying fish
You go back & can't stay
Bring me a sack of rice
I want your wildness, what the boy who left on a freight car
I want a boy who cried because his mother is dead
& his daddy's gone crazy
I want the one who gathered water & wood
I don't want this man who cut off his hair
joined the government
to be safe

We are both in danger
of your ancient fear
I learned to fish on my own
stopped
Now I'm learning to weave nets