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will list here. She is currently at work on a film, “Red Dust: Resiliency in the Dirty Thirties,” a new CD, and, always, new poems.

This interview was conducted via email in February 2020.

*You have origins in many different places, but in one interview you claimed to be “North Carolina-centric.” Can you tell us about your North Carolina roots?*

I came of age in North Carolina. Coming of age places people in a way little else in life does. I was a child, teen, adult there, spent the most time in my life in any place in North Carolina and our roots predate statehood by eons. My children were born there, my ancestors from my paternal grandfather were all from there. My dad raised us. That knowledge is strong, and it shaped me and mine. It is our heart in many, many ways, and I am never really away from the land and waters there, the air, in my mind. Closing my eyes, it is always present. How could it not be? Everywhere I have lived since is always in comparison. The mountains surrounding Mānoa Valley feel like the folding peaks swaddling and cradling me from blue-est ridge of home. So, the feeling of home accompanies me finding aspects of familiarity to what is known to be North Carolina, always. Etic/emic correlations that give us belongingness in new spaces by fielding all we know into a relational field we can move into. Walker, Hyde, Leatherwood, Whitaker, Shearer, Morton, Morgan, Reed, Hedge Coke, Hedgecock, Hedgepeth – these are all familial names anyone from North Carolina could call familiar. This is who we are, and then some. My brother is still there, never left since elementary school. Never will.

*What does it mean to you now to write about North Carolina? Are there stories and poems yet to write about North Carolina?*

There will always be poems and stories for North Carolina. The beauty is unmistakable and relevant, and the deeper knowledge is somewhat yet unfolded, maybe. There is so much in here, brimming. When you are present in life, it gifts you with memory that carries you. What it means is simply that my awareness is also present and ready to offer some of the wealth there.

*Is there a friction between the places you’ve lived and where you call home right now, in how you write about these different landscapes?*

I am teaching this semester on Oahu and my home university is University of California Riverside. I have a place there and kids, and



ABOVE TOP The poet as a preteen in North Carolina

ABOVE BOTTOM Stick barn, 1976