

Mark Trechock

Ojo Caliente

Ojo Caliente

He came in with his rodeo veteran's limp,
belt buckle the size of a horseshoe,
tugged his hat and said to us, "Provecho,"
as we hunched over our green chili and eggs,
and carried his pride and pain to the counter,
where his compadres sat with their coffee,
discussing bulls and thunderstorms in Spanish.

Mexico came a long way north once,
ending in lines on a map that said "enough,"
spread with earth that pleaded for rain,
just like the border of North Dakota
where I crossed it near Bowman heading south.

At the baths after breakfast we covered each other with mud,
and while it cracked on our flesh,
forming fissures like dry creeks drawn on a county atlas,
you said we were the same color as the mesa
looming indifferently in the distance.



A native of inner city Minneapolis, Mark Trechock has lived in western North Dakota since 1993, where he served as director of a rural community organizing project, Dakota Resource Council, until 2012. Nearly 100 of his poems have appeared in numerous journals, including *Limestone* (Pushcart nominee), *Canary*, *Snowy Egret*, *Shark Reef*, *Radius*, *Badlands Literary Journal*, *the Christian Century*, *El Portal*, and in the book *Fracture: Essays, Poems and Stories on Fracking in America*.

Still, in the photographs we look pale and out of place,
aliens as usual, wherever we go.

