

What They Don't Tell You

Daniel Enrique Pérez

What they don't tell you about Nevada
Before you come here
Is that there are many secrets

Some are a delight to discover
Others are better left buried

When I moved here
I expected to stay
No more than two years

Twenty have passed
And I remain

Aquí en esta tierra

Once a territory of the United States
Once México
Once fully Native American
Once an ocean with sea animals that lived deep

Now in a state
Of strict boundaries
That divide

Wondrous lakes, mountains, rivers
And people

What they do tell you about Nevada
Over and over again
Is that there is only one way
To pronounce the name of the state

It's not true

People from all over the world live here
And they speak many languages
It's one of the most beautiful things about this place

That's why I stayed

Like me
They probably expected to stay

No more than two years

Many more have passed
And they remain

Aquí en esta tierra

What they don't tell you about *nevada*
The word
Is that it comes from the Spanish verb *nevar*
To snow

And it does

La Sierra Nevada
The snowed mountain range
I like the sound of it

That's why I stayed

Living on stolen land
Now divided
With many secrets
With people laying claim to it
Calling it home

Some pretend their ancestors
Sprang from Nevada soil

It's not true

Most all came from somewhere
They migrated here, too
Speaking many languages

Like me
They didn't plan to stay

But they did
And they have secrets

Some are a delight to discover
Others are better left buried



Photo of Lake Tahoe by Daniel Enrique Pérez