

(stanza break)

Guess you've been shoeing a long time, I say, wanting
him to say his father taught him. Wanting him to say
he's at least part Indian. Then I see the sign
burnt in wood: Dr. Basil Cauldron. Veterinarian.
Four years, he's saying. One more year at this
and I'm off to New York.

He reads me as I frown at the sign then the iron oval
he's nailing. The vet's my grandfather, he says.
We make a good team. But I want to see the East.
My mother was from New York. The old man's betting
I won't stay long. He may be right. He usually is.
Basil straightens, committing his eyes to a grin.
Granddad's a full-blooded Navajo.

The picture is perfect again with the far mountains
and free-ranging horses in the foreground. You speak
his language? Was he in the war? The big one?

Yeah. But I can't speak Navajo worth a road rose.
I speak my mother's tongue well enough though.

You sure do. You sound like an Oxford graduate.

USC, he says. I didn't mean English. Mama was a Mohawk.

--Glenna Holloway