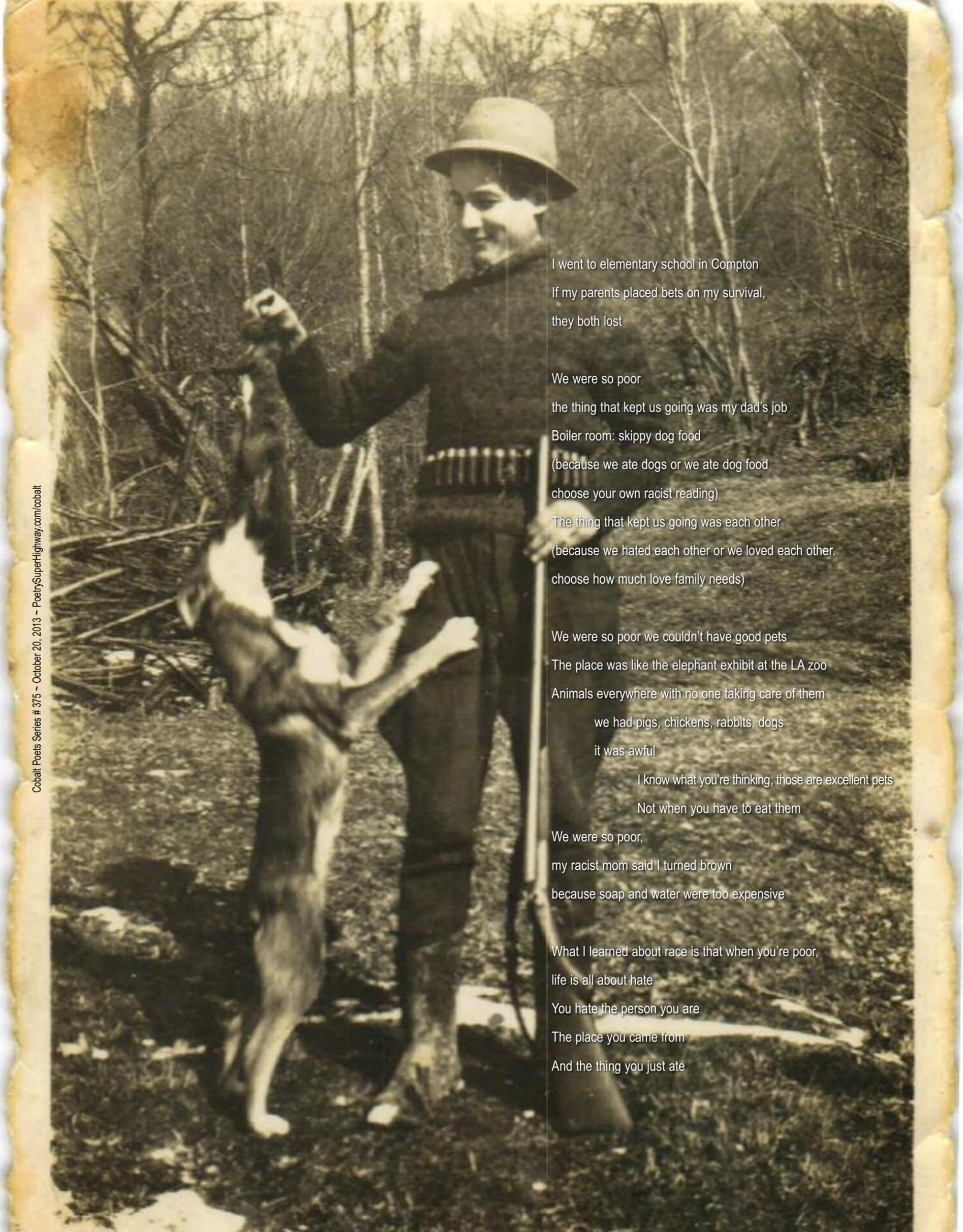


A Lesson on Poverty



I went to elementary school in Compton
If my parents placed bets on my survival,
they both lost

We were so poor
the thing that kept us going was my dad's job
Boiler room: skippy dog food
(because we ate dogs or we ate dog food
choose your own racist reading)

The thing that kept us going was each other
(because we hated each other or we loved each other.
choose how much love family needs)

We were so poor we couldn't have good pets
The place was like the elephant exhibit at the LA zoo
Animals everywhere with no one taking care of them
we had pigs, chickens, rabbits, dogs
it was awful

I know what you're thinking, those are excellent pets
Not when you have to eat them

We were so poor,
my racist mom said I turned brown
because soap and water were too expensive

What I learned about race is that when you're poor,
life is all about hate
You hate the person you are
The place you came from
And the thing you just ate

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Christian Lozada



Christian Hanz Lozada spends his never-ending commute between multiple community colleges thinking of new poems, stories, novels, and solutions to other people's problems. His words have been published in Spot Literary Magazine, Watermark, Say the Word, Conceit, various Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery procedures, and in the margins of thousands of student papers. He was a Creative Nonfiction editor of RipRap. He is a cowriter of Pictures of America: Hawaiians in Los Angeles and is currently working on a collection of short stories set on Hawaiian Homestead land. He is a graduate of California State University, Long Beach, Master of Fine Arts program in Creative Writing and is currently teaching all over creation. And that's a picture of him disrespectfully sitting on an ancient Hawaiian chief's favorite seat making chinky eyes and calling himself Mark Twain's "little brown brother" in response to some white tourist sitting in the same spot and saying "how" as if he were making fun of Cherokee. Get your racism right, buddy.