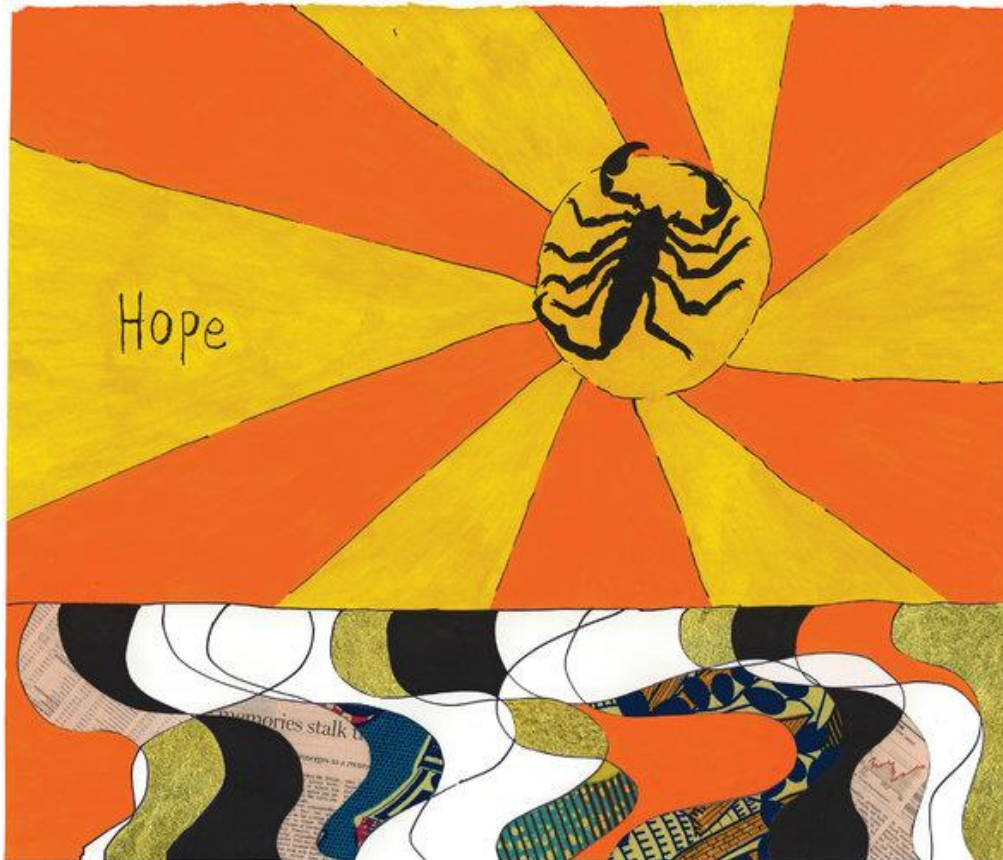


"Of Darkness and Light," *T Magazine*, 14 July 2015

## Of Darkness and Light

*The artist Yinka Shonibare shines a ray of hope on the poet Natalie Diaz's allegory of drug addiction and despair in the Mojave Desert.*



"Hope" by Yinka Shonibare, 2015. Credit Courtesy of the artist, 2015. Pen, Dutch wax-printed cotton textile, gold leaf, newsprint and acrylic paint on paper. Poetry Editor: Meghan O'Rourke. Art Editor: Gay Gassmann

### ALACRÁN – SCORPION – CUT

My brother has a knife in his hand.  
He has decided to stab my father.

This could be a story from the Bible,  
if it wasn't already a story about stars.

# JAMES COHAN GALLERY

I weep *alacrane*s — the scorpions clatter  
to the floor like yellow metallic scissors.

They land upside down on their backs and eyes,  
but writhe and flip to their segmented bellies.

My brother has forgotten to wear shoes again.  
My scorpions circle him, whip at his heels.

In *them* is what stings in *me* —  
it brings my brother to the ground.

He rises, still holding the knife.  
My father ran out of the house,

down the street, crying like a lamplighter —  
but nobody turned their lights on. It is dark.

The only light left is in the scorpions —  
there is a small light left in the knife too.

My brother now wants to give me the knife.  
Some might say, *My brother wants to stab me.*

He tries to pass it to me — like it is a good thing.  
Like, *Don't you want a little light in your belly?*

Like the way Orion and Scorpius —  
across all that black night — pass the sun.

My brother loosens his mouth —  
between his teeth, throbbing red Antares.

One way to open a body to the stars, with a knife.  
One way to love a sister, help her bleed light.

— NATALIE DIAZ