

**Body and Soul: Queering the Western Romance Novella**

by

**Kay Bowring**

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

Department of English

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

Copyright © 2006 by Kay Bowring

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA**  
**FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
\*\*\*\*\*  
**COPYRIGHT PERMISSION**

**Body and Soul: Queering the Western Romance Novella**

**by**

**Kay Bowring**

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of  
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree  
of  
Master of Arts**

**Kay Bowring © 2006**

**Permission has been granted to the Library of the University of Manitoba to lend or sell copies of  
this thesis/practicum, to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell  
copies of the film, and to University Microfilms Inc. to publish an abstract of this thesis/practicum.**

**This reproduction or copy of this thesis/practicum has been made available by authority of the  
copyright owner solely for the purpose of private study and research, and may only be reproduced  
and copied as permitted by copyright laws or with express written authorization from the copyright  
owner.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Dedication.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Preface.....	1
Body and Soul : A Novella.....	16
Bibliography.....	105

## Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Alison Calder, for her patience and assistance over the past three years. Her comments, insights and ideas have proven to be an invaluable asset to me in completing this project. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Robin Jarvis Brownlie and Dr. Stuan Sinclair for their participation in my thesis defense. Their questions and suggestions were both stimulating and challenging. I am certain that many of their ideas will find their way into future drafts of this work, which is still in transition. I would also like to thank Dr. John O'Neil and Dr. Paul Hackett with the Department of Medicine at the University of Manitoba for clearing up an eleventh hour inquiry into the nature of TB outbreaks on Lakota reservations at the end of the nineteenth century.

Second, I would like to thank Dr. Joanna Brewis of the University of Leicester for her invaluable assistance in editing the final drafts of this manuscript. Her help, encouragement, energy and unwavering belief in my writing ability have been an important source of support for me over the past year. Josey, you're the best!

Other friends in Beeston, England during this process – Mitch and Paula – also provided food, artistic encouragement, coffee, beer, prayers, good thoughts, tea, chocolate, cheese, music and laughter. I wish to thank Tony Scott for many stimulating and thoughtful discussions at the Crown, over a pint of 'Old Trippe', regarding the need for greater collective social responsibility in an increasingly individualist society, a theme that is at the heart of much of my work. Further, I would like to thank Mr. Peter Brewis of Newcastle for rigorously editing my manuscript for English grammar and spelling, and

for wanting to know “what will happen next.” I hope to satisfy his request as soon as humanly possible.

Third, I would like to thank Dr. Kelly MacKay and Dr. Malcolm Smith for being at my defense to hold my hand and listen to the proceedings. Additionally, Dr. Janet Morrill and Dr. Cameron Morrill gave me a place to stay during the defense itself, and hand-delivered copies of the thesis to my committee. Moreover, Janet’s map proved an invaluable asset in sending me in the wrong direction on Dalhousie Drive on the morning of my defense. Two anonymous and unsung heroes, returning a malfunctioning plasma television to Cosco, assisted me at the corner of Milliken and Dalhousie, and got me to my defense on time. Long may their televisions function!

Finally, I would like to thank my long-suffering wife, Professor Michele Bowring, who never planned to marry a writer. Many dinners have been burnt, late or gone unprepared during the time I wrote this thesis. Bravely, she understands her life probably will include many more missed or shoddily prepared meals, unmade beds and un-vacuumed carpets as I continue to transform this work into a full-length novel and continue to write new works. She has been there throughout my creative process with encouraging words and assurance. Her pride in my accomplishments has pushed me forward on more than one occasion when I had lost faith in my own ability to write. Michele, you are always my biggest source of inspiration and the most important member of my audience. Thank you for remaining true to the promise you made to me when we first met almost twenty years ago. *L’audace, l’audace, toujours l’audace!*

## Dedication

In memory of Mary Frances Popham & Laurence Barnard Popham, my grandparents, who gave me the gift of books and a typewriter with which to write. It has been a long journey to this place, but I have not forgotten you. *Resurgam.*

## Abstract

This creative thesis is an exploration of one man's struggle with gender identity and unacceptable sexual desires/needs in the west in late nineteenth century America. The novella, "Body and Soul", is an amalgam between the western and the romance. From the western, it derives many of its central themes including: the meaning of frontiers and borders, the problems of inclusion and exclusion and the need to move beyond the narrow, socially-defined perimeters of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in love relationships. From the romance, the novella derives another major theme: the need for and the power of, love. Yet, the novella ultimately is neither a western, with its emphasis on retribution and violence. Nor is it a romance, where love ultimately saves the day. However, like both genres, it ends with a series of openings or possibilities for the main character.

It is the story of Liam O'Connor, a successful gold miner and can be seen as a latter day expression of the rags to riches theme, a theme at the heart of the 'American Dream'. Yet, this story isn't really about the American hunger for things such as land, gold, money and power that characterized the push westwards. It is meant, at heart, to be an articulation of the impossibility of achieving satisfaction through the acquisition of wealth and social influence. It is a novella about the failure of gold to provide love. It is about the way in which the aforementioned "closing" of the frontier was paralleled by a closing of the way in which love was deemed acceptable in the meeting place between white and aboriginal cultures. It is also about how we don't choose what kind of love we each, as human beings, need to experience.

## Preface

I began planning “Body and Soul” with the intention of writing a gender-bending love story that explored different meanings of “frontier”. By frontier, I do not mean just the geographic western frontier of North America, as it was pushed ever outwards in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. I wanted to explore other frontiers as well: sexual, social and political. In many cultural, sociological and literary commentaries on this period, the importance of the frontier is emphasized as marking the American, and to a certain extent the Canadian, experience of the west.<sup>1</sup> Hine and Faragher (493) point to the growing American concern about the “close of the frontier”, a “catchphrase of the day” which can be understood in a literal sense relating to the need of the newly unified country to expand westwards for economic reasons. However, as George wrote at the time in Progress and Poverty, the Pacific coastline represented an insurmountable barrier in this respect. Moreover, there were concerns about the possibility of economic hardship and the depletion of natural resources at stake. The physical expansion of the

---

<sup>1</sup> It may seem strange that as a Canadian I have chosen to write about the American west as opposed to the Canadian west. As I explain later in this piece, on the one hand I have strong feelings about the west of Canada due to my own experiences as a lesbian in – at least as I see it – the homophobic context of Edmonton, Alberta. For me there would have been a profound discomfort even in fictionalizing a territory which represents a personally difficult and problematic episode in my own biography. Second, I was committed to writing about the late Victorian period, a time when sexuality as a concept (as opposed to individual sexual behaviours) was under intense scrutiny and we begin to see struggles emerging around what it might mean to love someone of the same sex. This entailed that I situated “Body and Soul” in the United States and not Canada, because the Canadian frontier at that time was not closing in the ways discussed in the main text. I should also point out that there is no intention on my part to draw any connections between the two territories, given their profound differences in terms of the ways they were settled, in the availability of natural resources and in the ‘colonial’ relationships of the white men to the aboriginal communities. Had I set “Body and Soul” in the Canadian west, it would have been a completely different novella in both temporal and spatial terms.

union also mediated class tensions against a backdrop of ongoing “farmer-worker protest”, as well as providing reassurance about the persistence of the “Land of the Free” and all that it stood for.

In his essay, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”, Turner discusses the nature of the American response to the “closing” of the western frontier. He examines the way in which Americans searched for other frontiers to conquer. My novella explores the way in which a man at the edge of the geographic frontier of the West, in that time and place, comes to understand that he must move off not only the physical map, but also those which delineate social, gender and sexual boundaries in order to come home to himself. The themes in “Body and Soul” therefore contribute to our understanding of what the Land of the Free as physical and symbolic territory might have meant to the various individuals who populated it. Although Liam on the face of it is white, middle class and heterosexual, his own experiences and those of the people he encounters during his life mark the ways in which frontiers of many kinds were being challenged and rewritten at this time in history. In other words, the “Western experience” was not in any sense a homogeneous one, and our latter-day stereotype of this space as pre-eminently heterosexual and white is insufficiently nuanced to capture its many complexities.

These inter-related issues also explain why the novella relies on flashbacks, which include a deliberately fragmented, almost hallucinatory dream sequence, as opposed to unfolding in a conventional, linear way. It is, in the main, the reminiscences of a man who, in spite of his prosperity, has not managed to form a deep and lasting sexual attachment with another human being. Liam’s own origins in the slums of Boston, and

his father and mother's earlier experiences as impoverished immigrants to America, need to be set against the "present day" of the late 1800s to signal his own tentative <sup>2</sup>embourgeoisement as well as his gradual (but never total or assured) occupation of the ethnicity "whiteness" as opposed to the category of "Black Irish" Other. Thus he emerges from a position of disadvantage both economically and ethnically – and the flashbacks are used to foreground his 'upwards' trajectory. The stories of John Brown Lincoln, his father Abraham and his wife Hortense, intersect with this emphasis on ethnic categories as unstable. The post Civil War Reconstruction was a time of great change for black people in the United States both socially and materially – and their expectations rose in accordance with the mood of the day. But it was also a time of great disappointment, as Democrats who were much less committed to these causes replaced the forward thinking Republican government, who had promoted education and enfranchisement for black people. As the South reverted to its sharecropper, base agricultural roots, then, so began a black diaspora across the Midwest, facilitated by the burgeoning railroad and hotel industries (Hahn 303-31). A similar function – of signalling the instability of ethnicity during the late 1800s - is served by the depictions of the aboriginal bands in the novella, and the tensions between aboriginal peoples and settlers, as well as between, say, the Lakota and the Ute as individual bands. Again, the flashback strategy allows the juxtaposition of different decades of this century in order to make this important point in another way.

---

<sup>2</sup> The term embourgeoisement is a sociological one that means 'to rise to the middle-class from the working-class'. I first encountered it in a sociology course on Marx & Durkheim at the University of Alberta. It arose again in a discussion of the novella with one of my editors, and seemed to capture perfectly the change in Liam's status in the novella.

Then, of course, there are the very striking ways in which gender and sexual delineations blur throughout the novella – Liam’s attraction to men, Annie’s uneasy relationship with femininity and Two Deer Dancing and Skins Crow as two-spirited *winkte*.<sup>3</sup> Again, the chronological twists and turns in the story are employed to mark out the many and varied nodes of gender and sexual identity – the abundance of what we understand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as “queer” subject positions – which existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century American west, in contrast to perhaps more standard historical depictions of macho cowboys and sweetly passive women back at the homestead.

Finally, the flashbacks signify Liam’s struggles to understand what is troubling him, and how he came to this juncture in his life. Clearly, non-linear narrative presents a series of challenges both to author and reader, and one of the biggest difficulties I have had in writing “Body and Soul” has been to articulate how time funnels in and out during the novella, without detracting from its appeal as a piece of fiction. Initially, I had decided to write this piece as a straightforward third person narrative – and certainly did not anticipate the problems I would run into in a clear presentation of the dream sequence and flashbacks, although these are things I like playing with in my other writing, which is mainly science fiction.

Continuing with the idea of my own experiences as author, I have learned a great deal about the West while writing this novella. This is ironic, because writing about the West was the furthest thing from my mind at the start of my journey, as my own experiences of this territory – in Canada at least – have not been entirely positive. Before

---

<sup>3</sup> I deliberately haven’t identified these individuals as ‘transgendered’ or ‘cross-dressers’ either in the novella or in this critical piece. These terms belong to the late twentieth century and describe particular individuals in that particular time and period.

I came to Manitoba in 1999, I spent seven years in Edmonton with my wife. Alberta was not a congenial environment for a lesbian couple. In the small town outside of Edmonton where I worked, the ugly spectre of homophobia was never far from the surface of daily life. One of my co-workers used to post poetry on the filing cabinets that detailed what would happen to “gays” and other “unbelievers” on the Day of Judgment. To be fair, I’m sure she had no idea that I was one of the people she was consigning to eternal damnation, but it was unpleasant nonetheless.

Years later, when my supervisor suggested using a western frontier theme as a fundamental, rather than peripheral, aspect of this novella, I gulped. As much as I had enjoyed the actual geographic scenery in the west, I wasn’t sure that I could write a story that dealt with the issues I wanted to explore, set in this place that was so big and, yet, so confining for those who are different. However, my research on the West showed me that there were many things I had to learn about this landscape. As I read about the ways that the cultural landscape of the west changed over time and how the American government mishandled the settlement of the west (Stegner & West), I began to see how it was the perfect setting for a novella that explored the frontiers that I mention above.

The experiences of my main character, Liam O’Connor, as he moves off the map and into the contested territory of the Indian Wars of the late nineteenth century, form the nexus of this story. Yet, the story isn’t really about the American hunger for things such as land, gold, money and power that characterized the push westwards. It is meant, at heart, to be an articulation of the impossibility of achieving satisfaction through the acquisition of wealth and social influence. It is a novella about the failure of gold to provide love. It is about the way in which the aforementioned “closing” of the frontier

was paralleled by a closing of the way in which love was deemed acceptable in this meeting place between white and aboriginal cultures. It is also about how we don't choose what kind of love we each, as human beings, need to experience.

Liam is different from most men in 1890's Colorado. He is handsome, rich and powerful; he lives the American dream of his time and place. Liam is different from most men in another way as well; he desires, sleeps with and loves men. All of Liam's money cannot make him desire men less or make that part of him more socially acceptable.

So, where specifically do I situate my story? Before gay community and the rhetoric of gay politics after Stonewall, indeed at least as far back as human records began (and therefore certainly further), men and women have sought out the company of others who, like them, desire contact with the same sex in intimate relationships. This is the territory I explore. My story begins in 1893, at a time when the American frontier is closing, and values and norms are tightening into the values and norms that, however problematically or stereotypically, we now tend to associate with the Midwest – conservatism, heterosexism and homophobia.

This process of 'tightening', then, as many people have pointed out (American West 313-14; The Spirit and the Flesh 157-164) and as I have signalled earlier in this piece, makes it clear that the cowboy culture in the west functioned differently. At one time, the west was a place where men went who sought physical and sexual companionship with other men. It was also a place where women were free to dress and deport themselves in a masculine fashion, a place where different selves became possible and boundaries could be redrawn in ways that were not possible "back east".

My character Liam is initially torn between three vastly different cultures. At the beginning of the novella, he briefly reflects on his origins in the slums of Boston with his mother Kathleen. His father Timothy is away at war and his mother is dying of tuberculosis. Liam's physical strength and good fortune help him survive. By the time that Timothy comes to find him, his mother has died and he is living in Provincetown with his mother's closest friend Bridie. His father promptly uproots him and takes him out west to help him work a mine claim that he inherited from a fellow soldier who died during the war. However, Timothy's insistence on taking his young son out west results in a very bad start. They leave too late in the season and get lost in the area between the western shore of Lake Superior and the Missouri River. Their guide, who is doing a little map-making for the army on the side, leads them directly into a Lakota Miniconjou settlement where they wait out the winter.

Liam's time with the Miniconjou influences his development and strengthens his inability to conform to social expectations, thus alienating him still further from his father. Although these are not in themselves new themes, I worked to give them a unique gay twist. While with the Miniconjou, Liam develops a deep friendship with a wintke, Two Deer Dancing, who remains his friend long after the winter is over. Liam is most strongly influenced by the Lakota understanding of gender, which is not as simplistic and binary as that of his Irish Catholic beginnings. As he comes to realize that his feelings for Two Deer Dancing have turned to love, both physical and spiritual, he moves beyond the frontier of the hegemonic view of sexuality, as the Victorians understood it. Katz neatly summarizes that view: "...the arbiters of nineteenth-century culture put spirit at one pole, flesh at the other (333)." Spiritual love, which was not

physical, was seen as pure and virtuous. Gender was seen as an intractable condition of being. However, for Liam, both spirit and flesh are united in his love for another man who is not like the men of his white culture. A further complication in his relationship with Two Deer Dancing is that, at the time of the story, the *winkte* figure in aboriginal culture is under attack by the proselytizing priests of the mission schools, or the “black shirts” as one of the characters in the novella calls them. This ideological campaign is beginning to make itself felt amongst younger aboriginal people, although the older members of the bands still revere the *winkte* as a spiritual mentor.

In the small town I live in presently on the outskirts of Nottingham, the poster that advertised the release of the movie version of E. Annie Proulx’s story Brokeback Mountain stated: “Love is a force of nature.” Indeed, it is; the heartbreak of Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist’s love story left the audience, in the cinema where I saw it, silent and teary-eyed. However, as anyone who is gay will tell you, coming to terms with being gay is also a force of nature. This event rips through lives of individuals and families like a tornado, taking up everything in its wake. Although he lacks our vocabulary to describe what is happening to him, Liam is also coming to terms with these same feelings of same-sex love.

This view of the ‘coming out’ process, as we tend to refer to it today, as a force of nature is also strongly supported in Guy Vanderhaeghe’s novel The Last Crossing. In the mid-nineteenth century, two brothers, Charles and Addington Gaunt, set out to find their brother Simon who is lost in the North American wilderness. An aboriginal woman called Talks Different finds Simon in the carcass of a dead horse, at the end of a snowstorm. She is a bote, the Crow name for a person who is born a man, but who has

been called to live the life of a woman - that is, one of the two-spirited like Two Deer Dancing and Skins Crow in “Body and Soul” - and a member of the Crow tribe. Talks Different takes Simon to her lodge and cares for him. By the time that Charles finally finds his brother, he is living in the bote’s lodge, and he has bonded with her. They are, in essence, a family. They have adopted a child, Red Calf. Simon has taught Talks Different the essentials of Christianity, and she, in turn, has given him a Crow name, Born of a Horse. Yet, their relationship has serious problems.

When Charles discovers that Talks Different is a bote, he is shocked. The Crow also don’t want Simon to stay with them, and beg Charles to take him away. They are angered by the changes he has wrought in Talks Different - by the bote’s refusal to have sexual relations with them, and by her new found Christianity. Who, they ask, will select and bless the pole for the June Sun Dance, the most important ceremonial occasion for the native tribes of the Great Plains? However, Talks Different is strong and powerful, both physically and spiritually. She savagely beats a Crow man who attempts to hurt Simon, and dotes on her white lover. He, in turn, offers her tenderness, love and trust. Simon refuses to leave her and tells Charles: “We are not boys any longer, Charles. We are men. Each of us has our path to travel. To turn from it invites nothing but disaster (Vanderhaeghe 368).” Like Liam, Simon cannot change who or what he is. He cannot turn away, even though the path forward is murky and dangerous.

Katz stated : “...there is no such thing as an unchanging essence of homosexuality or heterosexuality... (11).” In The Last Crossing, gender is bent by the very existence of the bote who loves Simon Gaunt. Simon refers to their union as a “spiritual body” (Vanderhaeghe 350), which transforms the actual physical lodge in which they live.

Spirit, in the biblical sense, becomes flesh, and flesh is revealed to be an essential part of the spirit. Truly, you cannot have one without the other – therefore spirit and love purify the physicality of the union of the two men.

Liam in “Body and Soul”, however, is struggling with the physicality of his need for other men. As hard as he tries, he cannot change himself into a man who desires women. His marriage to his late wife Annie, in the final analysis, only happens because Annie is unlike any woman he has ever met. She is plain, forthright and lacking in typical girlish accoutrements. She treats him with a simplicity of manner and an honesty that is almost masculine. Just as he secretly yearns for the love of another man, Annie secretly wishes she could wear men’s clothing and ride horses and shoot guns like a cowboy. It is her eventual sickness and death from tuberculosis that allow Liam to access his inner compassion and love. Thus, his love for Annie transforms the passion in his heart into a deeper need for love and attachment in a lasting relationship with another man.

However, unlike Simon in The Last Crossing, who can live with Talks Different, Liam cannot choose to marry Two Deer Dancing. This is because, just as Simon’s brother Charles Gaunt predicted, the frontier – here meaning in a cultural sense - has closed. As suggested above, aboriginal peoples are being forced into residential schools run largely by clergy who reinforce the western view of gender as opposing dualisms – male and female, yin and yang, black and white.

But Two Deer Dancing could not have lived with Liam even if he were physically a woman. This is supported by documentary evidence. West’s The Contested Plain deals extensively with the failure of white/aboriginal marriages in the latter half of the

nineteenth century in the area of Colorado and the surrounding Midwest. Many white traders allied themselves to powerful native women in the Lakota and Cheyenne tribes in the early part of the century. These alliances initially prospered and the traders were respectable founding members of the Denver community. However, in the latter half of the century, these relationships failed. Traders who were allied to aboriginal people through marriage lost lucrative political positions and their children – such as Jack Fitzpatrick, who appears briefly in a conversation in my novella - were treated as pariahs. A few men left the white community to live with their native wives, but still more either died or killed themselves. Their wives returned to live with their families, as did their children.

Liam is not just different from the majority of men in his world; he is also different from the protagonists generally depicted in stories that deal with these themes. Unlike Ennis in Brokeback Mountain, or Simon Gaunt in The Last Crossing, Liam is not marginalized by social class, economic status, or health. He is a prominent member of the white community. He is rich and powerful. His adult life is one of material comfort and cultural prowess. But these are, at the same time, characteristics that bind him as surely as they free him from the concerns of mere survival. As Liam tells us, with his money and position, come many responsibilities. On the one hand, these responsibilities are encumbrances that force him to live, at least publicly, within the strict moral confines of Victorian society. This existence, moreover, is always an uneasy one, given his regular ‘lapses’ – such as the visits to Michaela at Little Vera’s – and these ‘aberrations’ earn him epithets like the “bugger on the mountain” from the local white community. Nonetheless, his critics do not display their opprobrium to Liam openly, because of his

social status and wealth, although he does remain somewhat isolated from the settler communities in both Cripple Creek and Denver.

On the other hand, the responsibilities enable him to form his own community with the people who work closely with him, and also with the Ute to whom he donates a parcel of his land. Liam's right-hand man John Brown Lincoln and Lincoln's wife Hortense are part of his inner circle. They are fiercely loyal to him, even though they have ambivalent attitudes toward his sexuality. When Hortense implies, during their conversation following Liam's dream, that the solution to his problems is to present one face to the world and maintain another in private, we are already aware that this is also Liam's view. Yet, he finds himself more and more unsatisfied with his life, and with this need to hide who he is and take his pleasure furtively and without emotional attachments in order to satisfy society's expectations. Liam cannot walk away from the trappings of his wealth; at the very least because it would mean financial hardship for all those he employs. He can no longer choose to marry Two Deer Dancing, yet he must find a way to reconcile all the parts of himself: Liam the successful businessman, Liam the member of middle class white society, Liam the man who wants to love another man, Liam the child of poor Black Irish parents, Liam the employer of a black couple, Liam who misses his dead wife desperately.

Thus, the story is meant to be a story about struggle. In the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, as I have established above, there was virtually no space where men could live with men openly – at least not in white society. There was not even yet any language to describe such an association. In his book about the male/male love relationships of such famous men as Abraham Lincoln and Walt

Whitman, Katz suggests: "All of these men struggled for words to use against the dominant, condemnatory sexual terms of the nineteenth-century (333-34)." These are the issues I tried to portray in "Body and Soul." The main character seeks to find a space to explain who and what he is in a world that has no place for him.

While writing this story, I also made new and interesting discoveries about the difficulties in the novella form. The other stories I've written have been quite long, and I therefore haven't had to cut sections out or refine the material that I've chosen to retain so carefully in the past. This has been, like the difficulties with the flashbacks referred to earlier, something that I had not anticipated at the outset. As a writer, I find it relatively easy to produce long pieces of work. There is, in fact, another chapter to this story that I haven't included with this piece. However, I have learned that I can make my writing leaner and produce a better effect. This was a surprise. Although this novella was only tangentially about form, it has still made me examine the issue of form in writing the final product. Indeed, since I originally intended to write the introductory chapters of a longer novel rather than a novella, when the decision was made to produce a self-contained piece, this required sustained attention to theme and continuity, as well as closure, in a way that would not have been necessary had I stuck with my initial plan.

Nonetheless, "Body and Soul" does in many ways conform to the typical western saga – it contains all the themes of sacrifice, hardship, roughness and toughness, the conflict between white men and aboriginal communities, illness and death, which we have come to expect from the genre. As I suggested above, though, this is a queer western – it takes the standard tropes of this literary form and peoples them with new and unexpected characters. The novella, in the final analysis, is also a romance – but a

*frustrated* one, which again turns this particular genre on its head. In the ‘conventional’ Harlequin romance, boy meets girl, boy either falls in love with girl and gets separated from her through some bizarre quirk of fate, or they hate each other on sight, but in the end boy and girl are reconciled - and everyone lives, as the old saying goes, happily ever after. In “Body and Soul”, however, although there is love and passion, as well as several separations and a great deal of grief and pain, the novella ends on a series of openings, not closures or resolutions, and we are left not knowing exactly what the future holds for Liam.

As for my inspiration, in the final analysis, while the source of the fiction came from several places, it was Jonathan Katz’s book Love Stories: Sex between Men before Homosexuality that made me see how I could write this story. Katz cites the poet Allen Ginsberg, who was moved, at the trial of the Chicago Seven, to discuss the issue of sexuality and America in the latter half of the twentieth century. Ginsberg said:

As part of our nature, as part of our human nature, we have many loves, many of which are denied, many of which we deny ourselves. [Whitman] said that the reclaiming of those loves and the becoming aware of those loves was the only way this nation could save itself and become a democratic and spiritual republic. (Katz 343).

Whitman himself was forced to write about his homoerotic desire in secret, using the long pointed leaves of the *Acorus Calamus* as a phallic symbol. In his “Leaves of Grass”, published in the late nineteenth century, we are therefore seeing an articulation – albeit disguised – of the need for sexual freedom from the repressive bonds of the mid-Victorian world. So the tribulations faced by Whitman’s fictional contemporary Liam in

“Body and Soul” are reflected in Whitman’s own biography – at least if we leave aside the difficulties of revisiting poetry written over a century ago through the 21<sup>st</sup> century lens.

By the mid-twentieth century, Ginsberg does not have these difficulties in speaking publicly about homosexuality, even though in the US it remained classified as a mental illness until 1977. Yet he recognizes that these issues are truly important, and also confirms Whitman’s sense that it was only through the reclamation of all possible sexual configurations that a nation can truly be at peace with itself. Here we might again recall Liam’s individual journey, and his struggle for that very same peace.

So, Whitman dreamed of a very different America, an America which would save itself through the democracy of love. And of course, he was right. When people accept some share of responsibility for their neighbours, people don’t sleep on the streets. When we believe our neighbours are as human and deserving as we are, it matters whether they receive healthcare. If we truly cared about the world, then we would ensure that everyone could eat. As Simon Gaunt observed, our physical body will transcend into a spiritual one.

Liam eventually understands this. His money enables him to take what he wants out of the world, but also to put back into it what he wants. He has one uneasy foot in both the aboriginal and the white worlds. The white world cannot give him what he wants, and the aboriginal world is changing around him. Like Whitman, who sought new words and new connections in poetry to express feelings that were illegal and/or forbidden, at the conclusion of the novella he too goes forward to search out a better life.

Body and Soul : A Novella  
by Kay Bowring

*For of the soul the body form doth take:  
For soul is form, and doth the body make.*

Edmund Spenser – Hymn in Honour of Beauty

Everything loose rolls west. The dream of the frontier lures both the luckless and lucky. It is a place of beginning and imagining, a region where boundaries fade and rules are meaningless. It is an unpredictable land. The air is filled with the essence of sagebrush, fir and pine trees. The mountains rear up: one part shining like a new penny while the rest is obscured by purple and blue mist. The clouds close in suddenly without warning, bringing rain or snow or sleet depending on the season. Rams with their curly horns stand aloof at the heights, and bears amble sleepily around distant corners.

A man rides a dark brown thoroughbred with white ears. It is late summer, and the year is 1893. Grover Cleveland is the President for a second, non-consecutive term. The man considers the green picturesque hills, and doesn't think much about the government except in a passing, contemptuous way.

His back is up against the gateway to the Pacific as he faces the expansive prairie horizon. This is where he lives, Central Colorado. His father had had a dream to move off the map, and to go far away from the crowded slums in the east. But the man is in an area of the foothills known as the Piedmont that lies wedged between the Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains.

Like the country itself, it's a place of compromise. It's neither mountain nor prairie, but something in between. Although it seems greener and more fertile than the drier prairie, it receives less rain than parts of the southeastern plain in some years. The area's reputation for being the most desirable land in Colorado is not completely deserved. Yet, there is something about the Piedmont that demands attention, and suggests that compromise is not necessarily the desired currency in all transactions.

Sometimes, it is better to choose between mountains and the prairie and forsake compromise.

A hot wind blows up from the south and ruffles the man's smooth black hair. Leaning on the horn of his heavily tooled Mexican saddle, the man pushes his broad-brimmed hat back from his forehead, pulls off his blue kerchief from around his neck and wipes his brow. He touches his horse Commander's neck affectionately. To anyone viewing him from a distance, he is dressed like any other cowboy, with a denim shirt, soft leather gloves, leather chaps and boots, and a western saddle with carved wooden stirrups covered in leather to combat the heat and cold of working the range on a daily basis. He could be searching the northwestern corner of the Morning Star Ranch for some stray cattle or a lost herding dog, but he isn't.

A passing observer, travelling in the direction of the Ute camp this day, notes that his boots are not those of a hired hand; they're expensive, soft, English riding boots and quite new. The man himself is handsome, with startlingly soft dark eyes, and a clean-shaven, well-formed face with a square chin and wide forehead, and a sudden scorching smile. He's taller than his father, six foot two, long legged and sinewy – a man to be reckoned with in a fight. The observer sees these things and turns away, being occupied by more immediate concerns – the pursuit of a large jackrabbit or the search for a missing horse – it doesn't really matter. The errand that brings Liam out on this day is unimportant to him.

Liam Rory O'Connor's destination on this sizzling day, which is at least another two hours from the point he's at now, is a tiny white-fenced cemetery at the tip of his property. It contains only six bodies, two hired hands who had the misfortune to die

while working at the Morning Star, and four others. However, it isn't Buck Witherspoon, the range hand he'd hired four summers ago to work the southwest pastures and who died quite suddenly of appendicitis in the middle of the night, that he has come to see. Neither is he curious about Dan Sibley, the wrangler of less than twenty who died in his sleep. He's going to see his wife. He feels a need to talk to her about the confusion in his mind, and the direction he should take. He's thinking about his own life, and about how the closing of the frontier and the arrival of the railway have brought radical changes to this place, changes that touch his life. In particular how he's increasingly cautious about how often he goes to the whorehouses in Denver, and needs to go further away, to New York or St. Louis, to satisfy his less socially acceptable urges.

Of late, too, there has been a tendency by some of the local ranch owners to be picky about exactly whom their cowboys get together with on their nights off. They no longer tolerate the old-time men's dances, when a few of the men would wear a towel to signify that they were the ladies. After a few drinks and some harmless fun, there was a little enjoyable mutual groping. As long as nobody considered 'stemming the rose', there was no harm done. That was the rule. Need brought on by isolation was something the cowboys and the ranch owners of the past understood. Not today.

Now, ranch owners want no undesirable contact between the men. Going into town, getting drunk and whoring isn't a problem for them, but they are becoming annoyed with the cowboys who pair off with each other. Liam has a reputation for not caring about that kind of thing. Some people say that the cowboys are naturally drawn to their own kind, that they are men who like other men - that it's part of a cowboy's

wayward, wandering nature. Others claim that there aren't enough women in the west.

Whatever the reason, Liam doesn't really care.

What a man does with another man is none of his business. Liam's own sexual nature is as unpredictable as the west. He knows that he needs companionship, and that his marriage to Annie didn't cancel the burning need he had in his gut for other men. He doesn't worry about other men, their desires and longings, but he does worry about himself. He wonders if there is something he can do about his desire for male companionship that goes beyond what he only had for a few blissful moments when he was sixteen. He's tired of being rich, responsible and lonely. He's sick of feeling like the only one of his kind. He still isn't sure what to do about these feelings of loneliness.

For a short time, Annie had made him think that he could control these feelings and control his losses. There had been so many losses: the deaths of Annie, his mother and his father, and the loss of the man he loved, Two Deer Dancing, to another man in marriage. The culture of the old west was dying. Now, the high plains tribes who had made the Great Peace of 1840 at the crossing of the Arkansas River – Cheyenne, Arapahoes, Lakotas, Comanches, Kiowas and the Plains Apaches – were mainly restricted to small squalid reservations. Here, they were utterly dependent on US government agencies for food and clothing and the other essentials of life. Moreover, the time of the traders and backwoodsmen, who had made once powerful alliances with the Cheyenne and Lakota women, was also passing. The land died as cities like Denver, St. Louis and Colorado Springs sprawled outward. He feels all of these things chewing at his roots. He feels lost, depleted in spirit. He thinks back to his first meeting with Annie.

He'd met her in Denver six years earlier while visiting a business associate called Dick Johnson, a local banker. When he had finally struck gold, after a dozen years of grubbing in the interior valleys of the Rockies, he'd suddenly acquired a bunch of new friends among the settlers in Denver who previously had had no use for him. He'd steadfastly ignored their interest for many years before turning up suddenly at Johnson's house on that particular Friday night. Liam's reason for going was more of an accident than anything else.

When he'd first hit town, he headed as usual for Little Vera's, his favourite whorehouse, where he could satisfy his secret urges discreetly. Hoping for his usual action, he found to his disappointment that Michaela had left town for parts unknown, aided by some of the same righteous citizens who'd used her services. Then he remembered that he'd had an invitation to Dick Johnson's. He debated going; he knew what people said about him behind his back, and that his invitation was only because of his money.

After being greeted uneasily by his host and hostess, who were clearly unsure what they should do with their unwelcome guest, he'd made his way to the hot parlour, a glass of weak punch in his hand. By the piano, he found the strangest woman he had ever met. Tall and gawky, Annie Brooks MacDougall stood out like a horse in a chicken coop.

After some initial awkward conversation, they moved to the front steps of the veranda of the Johnson house and talked for a while, or did what passed for talking with Annie, which involved several false starts. Yet after she got going, she showed an

interest in the business of mining that encouraged further conversation. She was plain speaking and direct, a quality that intrigued him.

Liam understood women like his young housekeeper, Hortense, or the Lakota women that he'd met when he was encamped with his father on the banks of the Missouri over the bitter winter of '65. However, his experience with white women settlers had led him to see them as simpering and foolish. Annie was neither. She was both direct and straightforward; these weren't qualities that he'd come to expect from Denver women. He decided immediately that he liked her.

Her family was Scottish and Roman Catholic. They'd come to America from somewhere in Canada, and had moved further west, following the settlers and their land-hunger. Her father ran a prosperous dry goods store. Annie's simple faith reminded him strongly of his mother. Like his mother, she seemed slightly frail too. She made him feel wanted. He thought perhaps he could take her out to his ranch where her pale cheeks would fill out, and she'd get some colour and become healthier.

He was reasonably confident that the townspeople and her family would think she was much too good for the likes of him. The faint singsong lilt in his voice was a dead giveaway that he was Black Irish: this was no recommendation in itself and then there were the other stories about his life. He knew far too many Indians. He had hired a black man and his father over ten years ago. He had been seen more than once visiting Michaela from Little Vera's before they'd run her out of town. He certainly hadn't expected anything to come of their discussion on Johnson's front steps on that hot June evening.

Once he was on the steps, he sat down feeling distinctly uncomfortable, and he took off his hat and looked over at her. She had a long face, light red hair and long legs. She was trying her best to make conversation with him. He leaned in to hear her voice better. Occasionally, she made a slight cough and gasped for breath, but he paid close attention to her words.

"I hear it took you over a dozen years to strike gold," Annie said after a long pause. He could feel her tall, rangy body pressed just slightly against his hip. He would come to like that about her, a tendency to say what was on her mind in spite of polite conventions, but there was nobody else there to tell her not to speak out about what she was thinking.

"That's right." He started talking about his mine, the Gold Spar: the words were tumbling out of him fast and hard. "My Da and me, we worked it since '65 when we first reached the Shining Mountains, you know, the Rockies. We were lucky, you know, had good help after ten years. Hired the Lincolns, and John is a mighty hard worker. His Pa, Abraham, was doing poorly, but John more than made up for it. But we were just scraping by. We'd found a few veins of silver and that kept us going. We'd also found some copper, but it wasn't worth spit. At least not without making it a big concern. And we were after gold, not copper."

"The Rockefellers have made money from coal mining," she commented as an aside.

He despised the Rockefellers and their coalmine, but he decided against saying anything. The thought of working in their dirty mine was too close to the realm of possibility to make him comfortable. He made it his business never to say anything

about another businessman in public, no matter what he thought privately. Besides, she was so young and naïve. "Coal mines are death traps!" he said matter-of-factly. "If you dig in the wrong place, you get a gas leak or a cave-in. Wherever you find a coalmine, you find a fight with a bunch of angry miners just waiting to happen, and that isn't something that I relish much. So we kept on digging until we found gold six years back. Da had passed on by then, and John Lincoln and me were working hip-deep in ice-cold water in the spring season, the run-off being what it is. Some of the animals we found in that hole! You, being a lady and all, I won't tell you all about it, it being sort of disgusting..." He glanced away in embarrassment.

Her freckled hand lightly brushed against his. "I'm not afraid of rats," she said with spirit, giving him a level glance with her light blue eyes. "I admire you for your persistence. We've got a lot in common, you and I."

Startled, he shook his head. She was a lady, and he was – well he wasn't exactly a gentleman. Still, he nodded encouragingly at her words, "Oh, and what would that be?"

She gave him a shy smile and he was a lost man. "We don't exactly belong. Mama says I look like a donkey done up for a Sunday afternoon picnic." She rolled her eyes in mock exasperation, to indicate the problems her mother had had in dressing her up for the party. "Ribbons and lace aren't exactly my fancy." She shook the front of her stylish yellow silk dress with its fashionable bustle for effect: their eyes met and they both laughed.

"So what's your fancy then?" he asked her.

"I like to ride, to be outdoors. And - promise you won't be shocked."

"I swear," he crossed his fingers and held his hand on his heart.

"I'd like to dress like, you know, like that Annie Oakley woman with Wild Bill's sideshow. You know, a proper hat like a man, and a six-shooter and pants. I guess it's kind of shocking." It came out on a long breath.

"Oh I don't know, you'd look kind of nice rigged out like that," he said reassuringly.

Then she gave him a sideways glance. "You have nice eyes, real dark. They say that you're Black Irish."

"That's right," he gave her a defiant glance. "You have a problem with that?"

"I don't mind that you're Irish," she said after a thoughtful pause. He could have sworn that she'd moved just a fraction of an inch closer to him. "We all come from somewhere originally, but we're all Americans now."

"My Da fought in the Civil War," he told her with a brief show of pride. "He was at Gettysburg, and everything. Heard old Abe Lincoln make his speech. Da said he was a mighty fine man, mighty fine. He was all cut up when that actor fella shot him, said he was a man of vision. Yes, that's what he said, he was a man of vision."

"Your supervisor is black," she said quietly. "People make a lot of talk about that around here. Guess they haven't got much else to talk about."

"John Brown Lincoln," he narrowed his eyes, "is a cultured man. I've had to hire a man whose sole job is to keep order at the mine – Skinner Rhodes. He has another guy who works with him, Muggs Morrill. Muggs just does what Skinner tells him. Rhodes is tough; the men do what he says. John takes care of everything else."

"People say Skinner Rhodes killed a man in Alberta for shooting his dog," she'd said breathlessly. "Nobody would dare to cross him."

He smiled slightly. "Well, it was a herding dog I heard tell, and Skinner was mighty partial to that animal. I heard that his dog could cook, clean and mend clothes as well."

"You're teasing me," she said reproachfully. "So why did your Da leave the army?"

"Oh he got shot at Cold Harbor, in the backside. But it was from an Enfield rifle musket, and they never could get all of the pellets out. The Rebs were using just about everything and anything for ammunition by then. He got hit by a bunch of buckshot and pieces of glass. That was it! He got sent home. He used to get a bad turn every now and then from the doses of calomel he'd had when he was with Grant's army. That nurse, Clara Barton, she favoured using calomel to fight the dysentery. They say the calomel left many a soldier with a wasting sickness. Nobody exactly knows why."

"So when did you come west?"

"We left Boston in late '64. We had a guide, a frontiersman by the name of Joe Cutter, but he wouldn't go no further than South Dakota. It was real cold, dead of winter. So, he took us straight into the camp of the Lakota Miniconjou band. We were looking for one of them who could get us to the Shining Mountains."

"The Sioux, the Miniconjou, are Big Foot's people." She shuddered slightly.  
"You met him? They say he was at Little Big Horn."

He gave her a dark, impenetrable look. His voice was carefully neutral. "He was called Spotted Elk when I knew him first. They were good people. We stayed with the

Lakota all that winter. They shared what they had with us and fed us, and I played with the other kids there. I even made some friends. I'm not exactly sure why they took care of us because it was a real bad winter, '65! Still, they didn't have to do it, but they did it anyway. Food was right scarce. I was just nine. In the springtime, we got a guide to get us through the mountains and past the Cheyenne, the Kiowas, the Apaches and the Ute. His name was Far Cloud."

"How did your Mama manage in the Lakota camp?" she asked, puzzled.

"She didn't," he said matter-of-factly. "She died when I was only seven. I don't really remember her too well."

"That's sad. But she's in a better place." Her eyes were innocent with her inner conviction. He found it very appealing.

"I guess," he said doubtfully, thinking about his mother's lonely grave back in Boston. All he remembered about her was her illness, and the look of fear on her face every time a stranger came to the door. Kathleen had been terrified that her husband was going to die in the war, and that she and Liam would be left without any support. Although he'd never say so, he thought that, from his mother's point of view, almost anywhere was better than the stinking crib that had been their home at Half-Moon Place.

"They say your homestead was never attacked by the Indians, even though your home is really out of the way, and everyone expected to hear news that you and your Papa or you and the Lincolns had been scalped by the Apaches or something," Annie ventured.

"No Apaches around these parts," he stated firmly. "Just Ute. We leave them alone, and they leave us alone. We don't do much farming, just a little cattle in the past

six years." Still, he knew that it wasn't exactly the truth. They hadn't had any trouble with the Ute because of his close friendship with Two Deer Dancing.

Annie's purity and gentleness drew him in. Her body was flat and hard, like a man's. Like his mother, she'd understood and was bound to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic religion. She was good, whereas Liam thought that the state of his soul was in some doubt. Her carefree laugh and bright smile reassured him that everything was all right with the world. He'd never much cared for any woman before, but her sweetness seemed to penetrate him right through to the bone. Perhaps with her at his side, he would never have to worry about finding another she-man again.

He glanced at Annie's pale red hair and her long, sincere, freckled face. He coughed in embarrassment. "I only go to church on special occasions. Our ranch is a long way out. Why, it's more than a half a day's ride south of the base of Pike's Peak, where all the tourists go."

"Who is we? The ranch belongs to you, doesn't it?"

He grinned and stretched his lanky legs in front of him. "Oh yeah, she's mine all right – in a way. But you know the land; she's like a mother. She doesn't really belong to anyone. She just is. And I wouldn't have gotten anywhere without John Lincoln: he's my right hand man. He's honest, reliable and hard-working. And his wife, Hortense, she pretty well runs the house. I just live in it, and try and stay out of her way."

"It sounds like a congenial arrangement."

"Well, although Hortense has been with John for five years now, it seems like she's always been with me. They have a little boy, Carver."

"I guess any woman you marry would just have to go along with that," she said in a half-joking tone.

"John is a great manager, and the ranch is very large. I'd think any woman would be glad not to have the burden of taking on the daily work that Hortense does," he said genially.

She stretched her hand out toward him. "Perhaps you're right. Now, Mr. O'Connor, they're dancing the polka inside. And if there's one thing I do like, it's dancing the polka."

"I've got two left feet. Not so good at social graces." Liam hung his head slightly, and glanced down at her through his dark eyelashes.

She gave him an indulgent look. "Why, Mr. O'Connor, you come with me and we'll make out fine. You just follow my lead," she reassured him gently.

He held her hand awkwardly and accompanied her inside, into the small parlour that had been partially cleared for dancing.

In spite of his slightly dubious social status, Liam was wealthy, and so Annie's family had encouraged his visits with an eagerness that never became cordiality. At this time, Annie had been almost twenty-three, and had had no suitors until he appeared on the scene. Six months later, he walked up the aisle of Our Lady of Redemption Church in Denver, where she was waiting for him in front of the altar.

~\*~

When Annie sickened later, and became as fragile as a bird, he'd found his secret need for men had grown in the dark, in the back of his mind; it weighed on him like a stone. He hardly understood it. He felt as helpless as he had when his mother had died

so long ago in the slums of Boston. He hated that feeling of helpless. He wishes that he could have saved them both in some way. When Kathleen died, he could do nothing but accept it. In spite of the strength of his mother's beliefs, he had not believed she was going to a better place then, and he didn't believe it about Annie either. Dead was dead.

He hardly understood it. One moment he was at his wife's bedside, and the next he was back at Little Vera's, getting sweaty and naked with a she-man in an upstairs room. He had lost the fight without even a struggle. It wasn't the same thing as some men's need for a quick grab and pull from another man: he was everything they'd warned him against - a sodomite, a pervert. Maybe, somewhere else, these needs could change, or he could change.

Originally, he'd planned to take Annie to Europe. They would see the paintings at the Louvre, walk through the great cathedrals and perhaps take a gondola in Venice. They would bring back pictures and statues. He would make Annie happy by trying to obtain an audience with the Pope. Their daughter would be introduced to high society in London and Paris. But it was all a fantasy.

Liam gazes at the ghostly outline of a distant mountain, and muses on his deep attachment to this western landscape. But he is lonely. He has been lonely all of his life. Is he going to flee from the Morning Star like a raptor in search of new prey, flapping his dark wings as he reaches out to the coastline of the eastern seaboard and beyond? He laughs bitterly as he thinks about it. He thinks about his father in the graveyard, and Timothy's conviction that his son was a pervert. He shudders.

He remembers how their relationship evolved into a great island of silence surrounded by a cold, glacial lake. How his father, Timothy, had discovered the twist in

Liam's nature when he was still a teenager, when he found him with Two Deer Dancing. How the local gossip about Liam's visits to Little Vera's in Denver had made Timothy withdraw further from him.

His mother wasn't like this with him. Like Annie, her love for him was unconditional. Like Annie, he couldn't save her. He remembers her work-calloused hands holding a pathetic stump of candle in their tiny Boston crib. The crib had been an enclosed space on the third floor of Half-Moon Place, barely big enough to hold a bed for two people, with only a tattered curtain for privacy. And they had been among the lucky ones.

Last night he'd dreamed about his mother and about the beginning of his journey. His dreams aren't usually in colour: in fact, his memories of the Boston slums are almost always startlingly black and white when he thinks of them at all by the light of day. He tries his best never to think about Boston or his mother if he can help it; how she had died so painfully, how an anonymous city health inspector had taken her away. The man had propelled her dead body awkwardly down the ladder-like staircase, swearing loudly as the steps had moaned at the heavy load on their half-rotten timbers.

When he closes his eyes, he can still hear the muffled scrunch of her body being hefted out of the crib in the early hours of the dawn by the man with worn fingerless gloves and dirty, broken fingernails. Even as a child, he had known better than to look out through the oilpaper window as she was taken away.

He had tussled with the linen sheets last night, trying to push the dreams away. The top sheet twisted into a cord around his right leg, and he sweated freely into the pillow. The bottom sheet was wrinkled from the places where his sticky, slick hands had

clawed them. He had thrown off the heavy, hand-made wedding quilt, with its interlocking ring pattern, earlier in the night in an effort to get comfortable, and had only one fine woolen blanket to keep warm.

During the past week, he had awakened his housekeeper, Hortense, three or four times. This happened when his cries and shouts became loud enough to wake up the whole ranch. This dream cycle repeated itself every few months. It had started after Annie died and would continue until he dealt with the issues that her death had dredged up in his mind. Loss and death were his constant companions by night.

~\*~

In his dream, he moaned and held his hands up as he watched something dead, wrapped in a winding sheet, stumble across his path. It couldn't be, it wouldn't be his Annie. Annie went to her grave garbed in her ivory wedding dress of heavy cream silk. The dress had been a challenge for the dressmakers in Denver, a thing of wonder to the small mining town. The covered satin buttons sloped over her bosom to a standing collar reinforced with hand-made lace. A small, gold, seed pearl and amethyst brooch proudly stood on the collar, and on Annie's chest were two long ropes of pearls that Liam had bought for her in St. Louis for the wedding day. The populace was suitably impressed, and for a time the whispers of Liam's strange sexual predilections died away. But just for a time.

Annie's tall figure had looked good in the long, tiered skirt that tucked up into a fashionable bustle. Two smart white-buttoned kid boots completed the outfit, along with a train of Brussels lace. The ropes of pearls were now in a depository box in a bank in Denver, but he'd slipped the golden brooch into his wife's cold hand just before the top

of the dark oak coffin had been screwed down. He was alone, and the pallbearers were just preparing to take her to the carriage that waited outside for her final ride to the cemetery. Annie was so wasted from disease that she was almost unrecognizable. The undertaker was forced to pad out her outfit and apply a generous layer of makeup for the viewing.

But Annie never came to him by night! She was his bright angel, and he had other, more vicious demons to wrestle with in the dark. The thing in the winding sheet was his mother Kathleen, dead so long ago from the same cause as Annie that Liam could barely remember her face. He remembered how she had worried about him and his wanderings in the back streets of Boston in search of work. He turned away from the thing in the winding sheet. He didn't want to think about his mother by the light of day, never mind by the tortuous paths of his nightmares.

Instead, his dreaming mind followed another path, down the dark, cold, tumbling waters of the Missouri. Since his childhood and his stay with the Miniconjou, he had thought frequently about the Missouri. Then, its waters had reached out into the landscape of the west like a hand.

He drifted back to his first winter in the west – the winter of the terrible cold. He saw his shadow, reflected in the grey-blue water of the Missouri, and remembered half-forgotten lectures from his father about the standard of behaviour he expected from Liam. He squinted up into the sunlight and saw his father as an unsteady shadow in the autumn sun. Then his father shrank down into the older man of his later years. They were still living in the old bunkhouse near Cripple Creek, and they'd had another silent disagreement about Liam's periodic visits to Denver. His father was shuffling away.

Liam had neither the words nor the power to hold him. Timothy turned away from him, as he always did.

Liam ran after him, opening a door into the outside, and found that he was at Little Vera's in Denver. Michaela was waiting for him with a knowing smirk in the upstairs hall, her makeup perfect by gaslight. Unless you knew, you'd never guess that, underneath her petticoats, Michaela wasn't a woman. She was tight and hot, and he needed her so badly. There was nothing new about this. He told himself over and over that, since he was the one putting his cock inside another man, it made it all right. But it didn't. Even in his dream, he wished he'd wanted Annie like this, with a heat that was so visceral it threatened to burn him from the inside out, spontaneously melting his flesh with the pain of his desperate need. He tumbled into Michaela then spun into a free fall downward until he hit hard solid grassland – and then the prairie.

Now he was on the open prairie beside a cold dark river. He saw the white buffalo calf. He was tracking it alone with a rifle for some inexplicable reason. It was a sacred animal, part of *Wankhán Thánka*, the great mystery of life, as the Lakota called it. Normally, he wouldn't even consider tracking and killing it, but a force that was canned up inside of him drove him onward to his goal.

His father would be pleased that he was going to kill the calf. Killing it seemed like the best solution to his problems. Otherwise, he'd have to go back to the Miniconjou and tell Lone Horn, the chief, about seeing the calf in his dreams. He had been told, many times in fact, that the white buffalo calf was a call to young men to put aside their weapons and become *winkte* – the two-spirited ones. He knew that Two Deer Dancing

had seen the white calf, and told his father, Far Cloud. Far Cloud had spoken to Frozen Owl, their spiritual leader, about it.

Disregarding such a powerful dream image, he knew, would only bring bad fortune. Lakota legend was rife with tales of men who'd tried to disregard the call of the white buffalo calf to put aside their hunting gear and become one of the two-spirited ones. To ignore the call of the white buffalo calf would bring bad luck. He'd been dreaming consistently about the white buffalo calf since Annie died, and that could only mean one thing. He was being called.

In his dream state, he became muddled. His father would surely kill him if he didn't kill the calf. But that was wrong, his father was dead. Or was he? Liam might actually get a hiding if his father wasn't dead. If his father was alive, he would invoke the rules of the church, the angels and the saints and even the Pope to condemn Liam's behaviour. No, the only thing he could do was to kill the damned thing!

He crept closer to the white buffalo calf as it ambled toward him with the strolling gait of a baby animal, then turned into the Double Woman - *Winyan Nonpapika*. This was even worse. He couldn't kill her because she was almost a goddess. If the meaning of the white buffalo calf delivered one clear message, the appearance of *Winyan Nonpapika* shouted the same message at a much higher volume. Lakota legend said that, at one time in the distant past, *Winyan Nonpapika* had been a mortal woman who'd offended the Gods with her extreme vanity. The goddess *Anuk Ite* had transformed her into a being with two faces – one beautiful and one hideous. When young boys dreamed of her, it was a powerful sign that they should embrace the life of a *winkte*.

Among the Lakota, there was no shame in this. The Cheyenne, the Kiowas, the Blackfeet, the Crow and the Navajo all valued the two-spirited ones who were now a dying race, as did Liam. They were valued for their fine beadwork, their skills at negotiation and their reputation for bringing good fortune to those who married them. The great chief, Sitting Bull, had had two wintek wives, as did the great warrior Crazy Horse. Even as Liam dreamed about it, he knew it wasn't for him. He, unlike the Lakota, was caught between two worlds.

He tossed and flailed. He put his hand in his pockets, and turned them inside out. Inside he found his father's gold pocket watch, his most cherished possession. Then his hand closed on his mother's carved, ebony rosary, buried deep inside the inner lining.

"Go away!" he shouted at *Winyan Nonpapika*, dangling the rosary to ward her off. However, much to his surprise, it wasn't the rosary in his hand. It was the gold watch and fob, but it seemed to be as effective as the rosary. The two-faced woman vanished into thin air with a loud snap.

Then he was standing alone on the prairie, again. The wind was kicking up fine, blood-red dust that was getting in his eyes.

Spotted Elk was standing there, but that was impossible - he was dead. He'd been dead for over three years. "The soil is the dust and blood of our ancestors. You are not one of us, Laughing Coyote," he commented sadly before he walked away into the haze of the storm and was lost to view.

In his dream, Liam turned around and found himself in the barn of their first home in Colorado, the house near Cripple Creek. Sunlight slanted down through cracks in the walls of the grey wood of the structure. His worn boots scuffed over the dusty floor as he

turned to climb the ladder to the loft where he knew what awaited him. When he pulled his body through onto the floor of the loft, he realized to his disappointment that he was alone. The light through a broken window revealed that nobody was waiting for him in the hay.

A sudden movement attracted his attention. No, he was not alone. Out of the corner of his eye, he caught the flash of white buckskin and the scent of clean and aroused flesh was in his nostrils. He whirled around.

"Why have you kept me waiting, Laughing Coyote?" a high tenor voice queried him in Lakota. It was punctuated by a gentle giggle. The white buckskin was her best dress, beautiful, soft, but impractical. It was intended as a wedding garment, to be worn only once. White buckskin became hard when it was wet because it had not been treated with smoke and white cedar or buffalo chips. It was only for special occasions, and this was, after all, the day of their union.

The braided black hair, the mischievous dark eyes and knowing laughter that stoked a fire in his bones – it couldn't have been better. It was what he had always wanted, and yet he was aware that something was wrong. Liam knew that this wasn't the way that Lakota weddings happened, but he couldn't seem to help himself. Their passion was white-hot.

All they could do, under the circumstances, was to touch each other. And it didn't feel like nearly enough. He stank of sweat, begrimed with mud and filth. His friend was dressed in his wedding clothes – their wedding clothes. She pulled the ties at the top of her garment, and it dropped to the ground. Her body was beautiful, so

entrancing that Liam almost wept. They were young, and had all their lives in front of them.

Time shifted. Now, they were lying in a naked tangle of limbs on the hay. It would be easier if Two Deer Dancing rolled over – but then he wouldn’t be able to watch her face as he entered her. Then, he was inside, taking his pleasure from the silken, tight heat of his partner, riding her. As he closed his eyes, Liam suddenly realized that he was now the one on the bottom, with his friend inside of him.

“Khola, friend,” Two Deer Dancing breathed in his ear, “you will like this. You trust me, don’t you?”

Of this there was no doubt, but this wasn’t what had happened that day. A winkle wasn’t supposed to ever penetrate another man, and he was a man. The tenor of the dream shifted again, as Timothy’s dislike of Two Deer Dancing, and of the winkle’s influence over his son, washed through Liam’s subconscious. Then his body spasmed as his father’s head appeared through the trapdoor of the hayloft.

Timothy’s blue eyes burned into Liam like a firebrand when he found the pair of them together. “You wicked pup. For this, our family went into exile, *deorai* - from our rightful home in the old country? You’re a rotten, little Boston slum Arab, you are!” All pleasure eroded in the whirlwind of his father’s anger.

He moaned in his sleep, then wailed aloud, and his yell penetrated the night.

~\*~

Sitting forward in the saddle, Liam absent-mindedly scratches between Commander’s ears. The dream begins to fade in his mind, and he thinks about the cemetery, his destination, and his wife’s grave. He takes out his handkerchief, and wipes

his forehead. The action soothes him momentarily. Then his thoughts turn back to the events of the night before.

~\*~

Somewhere between the dream and consciousness, he felt a firm hand shake his shoulder. "Sir, wake up! Wake up! It's Hortense." He opened his eyes and saw her small, heart-shaped, dark face staring at him, her eyes wide pools of alarm. She was a light sleeper, and seemed to have a second sense about when his nightmares were going to occur.

He could, if the nightmare continued too long, scream loudly and repeatedly – and wake her husband and children. It was just easier to nip the nightmares in the bud the minute they started. After waking him, she stayed to offer him some comfort. He thought that she'd probably be happier if there was somebody else in his bed, somebody who would allow her to sleep through the night, but he was glad she was there.

"Hortense?" He was confused. Where was Two Deer Dancing? Where were Far Cloud and his father? "My Da?" The question left his lips as he fell back against the pillows, trying to grasp what had just happened. "The white buffalo calf, I tried to kill it again." He rubbed his temples wearily. No, this couldn't be right! He'd never commit such an atrocity: the white buffalo calf was sacred. He'd never kill a sacred animal. His bewilderment escalated: he had never been a fit husband for his young two-spirited friend. And the bridal outfit had been for another man, another ceremony at the Ute encampment, which was only about fifty miles from Liam's house. On the actual day that Two Deer Dancing had offered himself to Liam, and Timothy had interrupted their

passion, Liam had fled. On his return, Two Deer Dancing was lost to him forever.

Timothy had been right: the situation was impossible.

"Mr. Timothy's dead, sir." Hortense's oil lamp cast a halo of bright light that reflected back on the adobe walls of his room in the large ranch house. It was barely ten years old, and had been deliberately built several hours' journey from Cripple Creek, the nearest town. He'd had enough of snakes from cities like Denver or even Colorado Springs, and preferred the company of his manager and his wife, to the flattering hypocrisies of the white settlers. Only Annie had been different.

"Dead," he echoed. Then the full memory of the last few years came rushing at him in a wave of pain. "Of course Da is dead. And Two Deer Dancing is out at the Ute settlement on the corner of the property."

"She's married to Black Eagle, sir. She's his second wife," Hortense said a trifle stiffly, a trace of disapproval letting itself be heard in her tone, but she would never voice this to Liam. She also respected Two Deer Dancing's knowledge of herbs and plain lore in spite of what he was. She often asked him to prepare an herbal tea from the purple coneflower for her father, which she sent back to St. Louis. It was the only remedy she knew of that could ease the pain of his arthritis.

"Of course she is," Liam nodded at her. "I'm very sorry for waking you."

"It's no problem, sir. Is there anything I can get you? Some warm milk?"

"Not really." He shook his head like a big dog coming out of the water. "Go back to bed, I'm real sorry for waking you up again. It's just that the white calf bothered me. Do you remember your Mama, Hortense?"

Her small, dark hand touched him on the wrist gently. "Yes sir, she taught me everything I know. She showed me how to take care of a fine lady and how to dress her hair, and how to make her up to appear in society. How to take pride in everything I do."

"My Ma used to spend most of her time praying that I'd stay out of trouble." He looked over at Hortense to see if she understood, but she shook her head. "I hardly remember her. She died when I was seven. I had a baby sister, younger than me, but she died even before that. My Ma said that she was better off dead, and in the arms of Jesus. Then we moved to Boston, to Half-Moon Place. We was, we were," he corrected himself, "real poor." He bent his knees and wrapped his arms around them. "The river used to flood the basement, and the stink of waste was everywhere. In the spring, you had to walk into the crib across wooden boards that were shored up with rocks."

Her eyes widened at his words. He wondered if her husband had told her that he had been born in the notorious slum, the Five Points, in New York. Indeed, it was only in his adulthood that Liam had acquired a thin veneer of western culture from books and a language and etiquette tutor. John Brown Lincoln knew where to find such people, and Liam understood that this cultural veneer would be an advantage in dealing with other wealthy men. John had acted almost as a mentor to him in this respect. He had attended a small black college back east in the years following the Reconstruction after the Civil War. Liam had realized immediately upon meeting him that he could make use of John's education.

John and Abraham were itinerant blacksmiths, skilled in the use of metals, but neither man could manage to get work in Cripple Creek. In spite of the stories about Liam, John had gone directly to the O'Connor claim to look for work while his father

remained in town. The residents of Cripple Creek had indicated, somewhat sarcastically, that their only hope for food and shelter was from the “bugger at the top of the mountain.” And Liam, impressed by what he saw as a capable and knowledgeable man, had hired both John and his father on the spot.

John proved an excellent manager of Liam’s assets, and together they had doubled and redoubled the money from the initial gold find. Liam gave John a position, respect and money – advantages that very few black men had at the time.

Eventually, Hortense responded to Liam’s recollections about his childhood, “Yes, sir. I’ve been told about places like that.”

“Of course you have, Hortense,” he softened his tone. “It’s just that you and John have so much more schooling than me. I forget, sometimes. And I’ve never even been to places like Harlem.”

“You’re the only person I know who doesn’t seem to care that I’m black.”

“I guess.” he said wistfully. “But it’s strange; I envy your memories of your mother. I just can’t remember my Ma. She was *álainn* - that means beautiful in Irish Gaelic. It’s about the only Irish I remember except for ‘*Dob éigean dom i meacht fo Meirice,*’ and ‘*deorai.*’”

“What does that mean?”

“Oh, my Da used to mutter it all the time when he got old. It means, “I had to go to America.” He used to say it over and over again, like it was the worst thing that ever could have happened to us. And *deorai* - it means exile. Like there was anything in Ireland for us after the Famine! You know,” he elucidated, “most of the Irish came

because of the potatoes, the blight. My Ma, she was a religious woman, a good woman. I just wish I could remember her face."

"I think," Hortense ventured, "if you stopped thinking about it, it might come to you. At least, that's what I find." She touched his cheek with her finger very tentatively then drew back when he gazed at her in surprise.

"Excuse me." She looked away. He thought she was probably embarrassed by the apparent liberty she'd taken, and he immediately tried to reassure her.

"No, I should apologize. All the dreams, all the nights you've spent up talking to me. It's not really right, you being in my room at night."

"John isn't worried."

He smiled sadly. "Of course not, there's nothing to worry about. I don't care about you in that way, Hortense."

"I know," she swallowed. "In New Orleans, there's just about every kind of thing you can imagine. I have a cousin who plays the violin in one of the brothels. He told me about things. Men with other men, even men who like hurting people."

"I'd never hurt anyone."

"I know, sir. I trust you."

"What am I going to do, Hortense?"

The question hung in the air, and she answered it in the only way she knew how, "I just wish you could bring home another woman, sir. Someone I could dress up. Miss Annie, she wasn't much for dressing up – even though she was a real nice lady. I remember my Mama saying how her ladies would wear the latest dresses from Paris, and come down that big staircase. Sometimes I'd really like that."

"I don't think I'll be able to do that."

"I wish you could."

"I wish that too – but I don't know how."

"Maybe, if you think on it, it'll come to you. If that's all, sir, I'm going to go back to bed. Perhaps your friend, the Indian, knows about some herbs to stop your dreams. You could ask him. Do you want me to leave the lamp then?"

"Yes, please," he said abstractedly.

"Good night, sir," she said gently and he could hear her feet pass over the polished pine floor, which creaked faintly as she made her way to the rear courtyard of the Spanish-style ranch house.

He stared at the thick, fringed curtains of his room, and the dark mahogany bedroom furniture with its heavy, Victorian, carved, clawed feet. Beside the window was a large rosewood table with octagonal sides and lighter inlaid cherry on the top. He got up and stroked his hands over it. Even imagining such an item in the slum dwelling he'd come from was unthinkable. It had been a horrible place.

He pushed the curtains out of the way, and felt the coolness of the night air against his face. He longed for a freedom he'd never had, a freedom he thought he might find in Europe – if he decided to leave. In cities back east like New York, in the past ten years, places had sprung up for men like him, men who had a hunger for other men. He'd been to those places, and there he'd been told that in Paris it went even further. In Paris, there were social gatherings where men who loved men and women who loved women could meet each other openly.

Was it wrong to want something more? Liam thought not. He couldn't go on this way. He was desperately lonely, and he wanted some kind of more permanent companionship. His need was so strong he was afraid, and there was nowhere close at hand where he could satisfy his desire for passion, for love, from another man, even if it was wrong. He clenched his hands.

He breathed in the freshness and faintly piney scent. Just living in the place, this house with all of his belongings should be enough to satisfy him, he thought. It should erase the stink of the slums. But no matter how far he ran, how much he accumulated, how clean he made himself, it was always there just under the surface. It was the flotsam and jetsam of poverty, and the dream of a new life in the new world gone wrong. How could it not be so? How could America truly save the millions of needy that the home of his parents, Ireland, had belched out from her rotten underbelly? It was impossible. His dark needs arose from his past and hit him in the face.

He took a deep breath and he remembered. His máthair was beautiful. Her hair was as black as his own, a raven's wing, with the brown, secretive eyes of the Black Irish. His face was mirrored in the window. He saw the face of Kathleen Deidre O'Connor in the serious thoughtfulness of his eyes, his flared, clean-cut nostrils and his wide mouth.

He breathed on the window, and he wrote on the pane *deorai*. He was one of the thousands of wild geese washed away from Ireland's green shores, but he didn't feel it. From the moment he'd seen the pale blue and purple Rockies outlined in the distance, he'd known he'd finally come home. The shame, the pain of being Irish, was washed away, and he strove in every aspect of his being to be part of the new land. Yet, he still

knew what it was like to be *deorai*. It was part of what he was and, as he remembered it, the memories of his childhood flowed past him like cold water from a running stream.

He stirred the waters of his memory and the acrid stench of human waste came back at him. It had been like that everywhere - in the open sewage drains that had lined the streets, in the basement where spring melt had not yet dried up and in the very timbers of the building. Half-Moon Place was a slum, the worst slum in Boston. As much as Liam detested having coming from there, he had a certain sense of pride about it as well. There is, however, no pride in the dim memories he has of Kathleen. He thought harder.

~\*~

The smell of sagebrush and pine jolt him into the present. He stretches his neck, and tries to clear his head. The horse moves forward. Liam is aware once again of the tumult in his mind. He tries to dam the torrent of his recollections, both of the night before and of the distant past. But it is useless.

~\*~

His best friend, Sean Michael McBride, skittered across the greying, sun bleached planks like a small squirrel. They'd been going somewhere. Yes, he recalled, they'd gone down to the dock to work that day. At the end of the day, an older, stronger boy, from a gang of young Street Arabs, had snatched the pennies out of Sean's pocket and pushed him in the water off Lewis Wharf where the fishing boats came in.

The February grey seawater was ice-cold: nevertheless, Liam had gone in to pull Sean out. He had no choice because Sean could barely swim. By the time Liam reached him, the other boy's lips had turned blue. Liam was scared because Sean was always ill. A dose of pneumonia from cold water could finish him. Captain Stan Cooper, the man

who owned the boat that Liam and Sean had worked on that day, saw what had happened and came to their rescue. Along with his younger brother Emmett, Captain Cooper carried Sean home to Half-Moon Place. The Captain even insisted on going to fetch – and pay for – a doctor.

The doctor arrived and looked at Sean. He told Bridie, Sean's mother, that she needed to keep her son warm throughout the night to prevent pneumonia. Kathleen helped out by contributing a meagre, well-worn stock of her extra blankets for Sean. Then Captain Cooper insisted that the doctor should look at Kathleen. This was unexpected. A doctor, in the slum dwelling of Half-Moon Place, was an unheard of luxury.

"There's no need for that." Kathleen said quickly. This started a bout of coughing, which ended when she spat something into a piece of cloth in her hand.

The doctor, who, Liam thought, was called Wilson or Watson or something like that, looked thoughtful when he heard Kathleen cough.

"While I'm here, Ma'am, and being paid, I might as well look at your chest," he said persuasively. They went into the O'Connors' crib, which was across the hall from Sean's. The doctor asked her several questions. After he finished, he buttoned her chemise up with careful finality, and then put his stethoscope down. "You know what it is, of course." He was brusque and business-like.

"It's the consumption. It came on last spring," Kathleen said dully. Liam stood in the doorway, watching their interaction with concern. "The consumption?" he thought. Whatever that was, it didn't sound good. He was sure that he'd heard that people with consumption died: his mother wasn't going to die, was she?

The doctor left shortly afterwards, having suggested to Kathleen that she write to Timothy. Liam was curious. "Why does he reckon you should write to Da?"

Her only reply had been to get out all Timothy's letters from the hatbox where they were kept. His father's penmanship, and the tiny drawings, made each one unique, although generally Bridie had to read them to Kathleen because she could only read slowly and hesitantly.

"Bridie can read these for us again in the morning if we want, and she'll help us write a letter back. But look, remember these little pictures your Da sent us." She opened up the last letter, which was dated two months back, to show him. Bridie had been a supervisor at one of the silk mills in Lowell, and she'd taught Liam and Sean some of the rudiments of reading and writing. He could read the occasional phrase in the swirling strokes on the heavy paper, like 'My darling girl' and 'tell Liam'. His father always spoke to him like that, in a tone of instruction. Life with the army, it seemed, had made this tendency worse. In fact, when Timothy returned to Boston on leave, Liam found himself caught off guard by his father's constant orders. Only once had they enjoyed each other's company.

They'd gone down to the India Wharf to look at the big ships, which were bound for the Far East. His father pointed out the John P. Jackson, a naval steamship whose outline he could just see faintly far out in the bay.

"Ain't she the Minnehaha?" Liam asked his father, pointing out another ship. "Didn't you come over on one of them ships from the McCorkell Line, Da?"

His father's face closed down, "Don't say 'ain't' Liam! And it's one of 'those' ships, not one of 'them' ships."

"The other boys on the dock say 'ain't' and 'them'."

"And you aren't one of the boys, are you? Listen and learn. It's better not to dwell on the past, lad. Even though we're exiles, we shouldn't think too much about the old country." And that was the way it was with his father. It was seemingly impossible for Liam to share any emotional memories with him. It was only in the little pictures that he'd drawn in his letters to Liam and his mother that Timothy seemed to temporarily let go of this rigid control.

Liam knew the contents of these letters by heart. His mother turned the page.

"Those are the soldiers' tents along the Potomac," he said, pointing at the picture.  
"And look yonder, that there's the crescent moon."

"Yes," she smoothed over the well-worn paper. "And here is a picture of a hill by moonlight. See, there's a wolf pack at the edge."

"I like this part best," he said breathlessly. He turned to another page, and a tiny deer was disappearing into a wood. His father had no coloured inks to bring the little drawing alive, but a few lines and some cross-hatching with his scratchy pen and a well-placed stroke made the deer seem as though it was moving right off the page.

His mother's arm went around him. "Your Da says he'll be back, Liam, and what he says he'll do, he'll do. He keeps his word. He's a hard man, and he's had a tough life."

Liam sucked in his lower lip. "What do you figure will happen to me, máthair? I don't want to go to no state home."

"Say 'any state home', not 'no'. It'll be all right, Liam. Bridie promised to take you in. She gave me her word," Kathleen whispered.

"Why can't you be good again? You ought to be just dandy, with all of the cough medicine...." His voice trailed off and he looked up at her dark eyes.

She shook her head decisively, "No Liam, I'm not going to get better. Listen," she raised her voice as much as she could without coughing, "there are some things only God understands. Some day, a long time from now, we'll be together, and there will be no pain then, only joy. But I want you to be strong for me. Strong for many years."

"Okay." He had said it then because he was barely capable of understanding the meaning of her words. He knew that she was sick, and he had to be brave. If he cried, she would just feel worse. There would be time for crying later. One thing that he'd learned in his seven years was that there would always be time for crying later.

She pulled him closer to her, "If you hadn't been here, I wouldn't have made it this far. Your father is so far away in Virginia with the cavalry. I'll send for him, but he'll never make it. Liam, listen to me, son. Don't cry for me because my pain will be over soon. I want you to save your strength for yourself. Promise me that."

"Yes máthair," he'd promised, breathing in her essence.

She'd lasted another two months until the spring. There had been no money for a funeral, and his father hadn't come to help him. His mother was taken away to the mass grave at the Central Burying Ground. By now, Bridie was working as a housekeeper for the Coopers out on the Cape at Provincetown, and he had gone to live with her and Sean. For a time, he'd forgotten about his mother's death and his absent father, especially because for the first time in his life he had enough to eat. Bridie, having a strong sense of propriety, helped Liam write to Timothy, explaining that Kathleen was dead and that his

son was now living with the McBrides. This pushed Timothy to send a small amount of money, but the letter that accompanied it was as terse as the man himself.

Liam grew taller and stronger. Captain Cooper took him to visit the whaling boats in New Bedford, and Liam decided that when he turned fifteen he would sign up as a harpooner. His memories of his father were fading and, despite his occasional efforts to cling to them, they receded inexorably into the shadows.

One bright summer Saturday, Captain Cooper's boat, the Indigo Ocean, was coming into the harbour after depositing its catch at the market in Boston. Sean, worn out by dancing to Emmett Cooper's hornpipe, was sitting in the stern. Liam was bent over a net, straightening it out for use the next morning. As they came into Macmillan Wharf, he looked up.

There, on the waterfront, was a tall man standing by a dark brown horse. He was pacing up and down. From his strong limp, it was obvious he had a gammy leg. When he saw the fishing schooner, he stared at it fixedly.

For one moment, Liam thought that he'd stopped breathing. He screamed. "It's my Da!" He waved his arms and jumped up and down. The man on the pier stood stock still, staring into space.

"It is, himself," the Captain said in a strange tone that Liam didn't really understand.

"It's my Da!" Liam yelled again. He leaped into the raised seat in the stern. As the Coopers took down the sails and the boat edged towards the mooring, Liam launched himself onto the wharf.

He threw his arms around his father, "Da, you came!"

"Liam lad, you stink of fish. Stand back. I hope you have another change of clothes."

Liam stood back and looked over his father. Just then, he noticed that his father had a long moustache, and that he had a preoccupied look in his eye.

"Da?"

"You need to change those clothes," his father repeated quietly.

A silence hung between them. Finally, Liam spoke. "But I haven't seen you in almost three years, Da."

"I know, lad. Did you keep my letters to your mother, after she died?"

"Yes, but I..."

"Good, I'd like them back."

Liam stared up at his father in disbelief. Then he noticed a hard look in his father's eye. "What are you doing here?" he asked quickly.

"I've come to take you out west. I have a claim to a mine in the Rockies in Colorado: the Indians call them the Shining Mountains."

"In another four years, I reckon I can go to sea on a whaler," Liam told him. "It's good money and a sure thing. Hard work and good pay."

"Whaling's dangerous. I inherited this claim from a friend of mine who died in the war." His father patted his front breast pocket. "It has Joseph Meagher's blood on it from the day he gave it to me in the army hospital. It's your future lad, and the future of this country. We're going west."

"I like it here fine."

"You'll like what I tell you to like boy, you hear," Timothy grabbed his shoulder and glared at him. "And you'll tell your mother's friends, these Coopers and Bridget McBride, no different. Go and find some clean clothes. Tomorrow, we pull out."

"But Da," he protested.

"You understand me, boy," his father's slate-grey eyes glared at him. "Say you understand."

"I understand." Liam said with a trace of hurt in his voice, "but I thought you wanted to see me."

"You," Timothy smiled coldly, "you couldn't even keep your mother alive. Now, you move yourself when I say so. And find those letters for me, double quick."

The rest of that evening Liam worked hard to stay out of his father's way. There was something unsettling about Timothy's manner. He didn't seem like the man Liam remembered from before the war. He was cold, angry, and hard. Liam thought his father was a changed man, and he didn't understand why.

That night, Liam and Sean crept into the big house to listen to the adults talk. They'd never done this before, but then again Timothy had never been there before either. Timothy had brought a big jug of corn whiskey with him, and the discussion grew loud and animated.

"I don't want you to leave," Sean told Liam in their room on top of the stable where they usually slept.

"I don't want to go, either."

"Aren't we going to get into trouble, listening to the adults?"

"I reckon I want to know what's going to happen to me," Liam said.

"Sounds good to me," Sean agreed. The two boys shimmied over the rooftop and into one of the windows next door. Then they crept onto the landing to listen.

They could see the three men around the table. Emmett was seated on the left, almost out of their line of sight, but they had a clear view of the Captain and Timothy. Timothy was on the far right, and the Captain was in the middle. Bridie sat behind the Captain's left shoulder, listening attentively.

"Look," Stan Cooper said after a long pause, "all I'm saying is this. The west is a dangerous place for an adult, never mind a child. Liam's just eight. Emmett here had friends who went out there in the Gold Rush of '48, and came back busted flat with nothing more than blisters and dusty boots to show for a load of work."

"Liam's my son: he goes with me."

Emmett pulled the bottle toward him. "This here is good whiskey, the best I've had since the war started, mister. But smooth whiskey doesn't make you a smooth talker. You don't make a lick of sense! Like Stan says, Liam's a hard worker, but he's still a kid. Nobody's denying your right to take him, but everyone knows that a mine is a hole in the ground you pour all your sweat and tears into. You have to be real lucky to get anything more than dust out of it."

"And what if I was to say to you that this mining claim here," Timothy waved a bunch of papers with a lot of writing on them, "this very one I just placed on this table, was given to me by a fellow soldier, one Joseph Meagher, who was out in Colorado before the first gold rush. What would you say to me then?"

"I'd still say that the boy should stay in school for a while yet," Stan Cooper said evenly. "He's a strong lad. Better a sure thing on the whaling ships than death by a

hundred other ways out on the Great Plains. Good God man, there are wild Indians out there who'll kill you as sure as look at you! And they're not that pleased with all the settlers who are turning up, ready to take their land."

"I've got no quarrel with Indians." Timothy tossed back his whiskey. "And I've got a Huron guide, Joe Cutter, to help me when we get to Fort William."

"He speaks all the Indian languages, does he? There are as many of them as stars in the sky," Emmett said. "And even if they don't kill you, you have to watch them all the time. They'll take all your horses and equipment and hoof it directly."

"Look mister, I have so many pieces from an Enfield rifle musket in my backside I really don't care. I've stared at the enemy for over two years, a real enemy with a gun straight in my face. I've got my own horse, a map and a mining claim with the lifeblood of a man who died holding my hand, on it. Liam and I will deal with it."

"Look, all my brother is saying is that a mine isn't a sure thing," Stan Cooper tossed out. "And Bridie and me, well, we're going to get hitched come next spring. Michael will have been gone two years then. If you leave Liam here, I'll treat him like my own."

"I appreciate that, but come morning I'm going to take the boy and get him a horse. Then we're going to meet Cutter in Quebec." Timothy said decisively.

~\*~

Commander shies as a jackrabbit runs across his path, and Liam is startled. Even now, decades later, in the green landscape of hillocks and evergreens, he has to remind himself that his father can no longer hurt him. When Timothy returned to Provincetown, Liam didn't want to leave the east behind, but he'd been glad, ecstatic that his father

hadn't forgotten him. At that point, he didn't understand that his father had dragged him out west because he was a source of untapped labour. The conflicts of the future were yet to come. They would lead him to the realization that the sole reason he'd been taken to Colorado was to haul rocks out of a hole in the ground.

It was ironic that Timothy's decision, arising from his own selfish needs, resulted in the ultimate discovery of an enormous gold mine. He'd been willing to ignore almost any aberrant behaviour from Liam, if only his son would keep digging at the mine. Timothy's long and, for Liam, painful silences, highlighted his father's reluctance to do anything to change his son's actual behaviour as long as Liam worked. Still more ironic was the timing of the discovery of the gold seam, nearly one year after Timothy's death.

Last night, after his nightmare, Liam realized the heavy weight of his losses. In truth, he'd lost his father right after his mother. His father came back from the war a hollow man, with no love left in his heart. All the way out west, Timothy had been hard on his son. Now, Liam understands that his father was angry about the loss of Kathleen. His father never loved anyone again after she died. He considers Annie, and thinks that, by not loving anyone again, he might be doing her a disservice. Thinking about his dead wife prompts further recollections of his mother, the only other human being who had ever loved him without reservation or hesitation. Even Two Deer Dancing had eventually capitulated to the ancient traditions of her heritage, marrying Black Eagle and leaving Liam bereft.

When he gets to where he can see the Ute settlement, he shoves this problem – who or when he will find such love again – into the recesses of his mind. He'll think about it later.

In the distance he sees the smoke curling up from the campfires of the Ute on the far corner of his property. He allows them to settle there for his own reasons. He only has a few head of cattle, but the fear of the Ute keeps other claimants off his property. His will gives this part of his land, about two thousand acres, to the Ute upon his death. He gets off his horse and sits down on a rock to wait. Yet, he reflects, there is more to the reason he lets them stay on his property. He has never, not from the moment he first struck gold and purchased a bigger spread, felt like the land belonged to him in the same sense that many other rich men did. As he told Annie when they first met, he believes that it belongs to no one. This is a feeling he doesn't normally share with the other settlers.

A brown mustang appears, trotting toward him at a steady pace from the direction of the Ute settlement. A smile crosses his face when he sees who is on the horse. It's Two Deer Dancing. She is as happy to see him as he is to see her, her dark eyes squinting in pleasure. He knows that she's out almost every day foraging for wild herbs and food.

"It is you, kholà, Laughing Coyote," she calls out to him.

When the Ute deal with the government agencies that portion out blankets, clothes and food, Two Deer Dancing modulates her voice to a higher, mezzo tone, leaving them with the clear impression that she is a woman. Among the bands, it is understood that there is no need for the agencies to know the truth about the two-spirited ones. Some of the younger people, who have been to missionary schools, are not happy that their elders haven't discontinued this custom – but they too are willing to keep it a secret.

The bride price for Two Deer Dancing, over twenty years ago, had been eight horses and two iron pots. This was relatively expensive, but Liam knows that her husband considers he's gotten the best part of the deal. Two Deer Dancing counsels Black Eagle to remain uninvolved in the difficult world of negotiations with the whites. When a small group of Ute decided to leave the White River Agency to roam into Wyoming in search of game, she recommended that they stay on the land they are presently occupying. The desperate needs of other tribes, driven by spiraling starvation into dangerous confrontations with Indian agencies, haven't touched them.

Black Eagle sends food and medicine to Two Deer Dancing's tribe, the Lakota, when he can. Sometimes he even sends her, his winkte, to help with the sick and hungry. When a tuberculosis outbreak occurred on the Lakota Reservation at Rosebud, a couple of seasons back, he'd allowed her to leave; she'd eased the suffering of many of her people at Rosebud and Pine Ridge.

Liam also knows that Black Eagle firmly believes that he's avoided starvation and poverty simply through marriage to a two-spirited wife, or a *Tuwasawits* as they are called in Southern Paiute, the language of the Ute. Two Deer Dancing's association with Liam has brought this breakaway group of Ute good fortune. They are living on land containing streams full with salmon, forests with rabbits and deer and a small stand of bison. But the missionaries and the residential schools have spread stories about the evils of the two-spirited among the young Indian people. Two Deer Dancing is part of a dying breed.

When she is with him, Liam understands that, although she is technically a male, the term has no real meaning. Her two-spirited gender is a gift from *Wankhán Thánka*,

and a blessing to all who know her. Among the Lakota, the winkte has a special role in the June Sun Dance during the picking and the blessing of the poles. Liam has seen the Lakota Sun Dance, something only a few outsiders have been privileged to witness. But he isn't exactly an outsider. He finds Two Deer Dancing attractive and exciting, and not in the way that most white men do. He wishes with all his heart that he could have married her.

Two Deer Dancing slides off her horse and he stands back to greet her. His eyes pass shyly over her body with the knowledge of what he'll find underneath the clothing. She is having none of it. With a sigh of pleasure, she closes the gap between them until they meld in a bruising hug. He closes his eyes and leans into the crease of her neck. He breathes in her essence, the smell of tanned buckskin and clean flesh. He always reacts to her in a visceral way. The smell brings back the welcome presence of his friend and her people.

"It is so good to see you! You have not come out here since last spring, since Annie died." The strength of their bond had turned what should be a reproach into a fact, without guilt or difficulties. Her English is perfect, but she speaks it with the slightly flat accent of her people. She shoots him an anxious glance. He wonders if he appears weary and over-tired to her eyes. She had stopped by the Morning Star a month back to bring herbs for Hortense, but Liam had been away. He'd gone back east to Sean's wedding in Provincetown, trying to run from his failure to deal with Annie's death. Two Deer Dancing sits and waits for him to speak to her.

"I'm sorry." He dips his head slightly, and stares at the ground.

"Are you angry because I couldn't save her?" His mind flashed back to Annie's illness just over a year ago, and Two Deer Dancing's abortive attempts to do any more than make an herbal tea to relieve her pain. "I saw you in the spring, but I still wasn't sure how you felt. I thought maybe you were angry and avoiding me. You were walking like an angry bear."

He scuffs the ground in embarrassment. "Of course not. Annie was sick for a long time. Nobody could save her. When you came a month ago I was at a friend's wedding." It had been the end of an era. He loved Sean, and he would still miss those nights when they'd occasionally shared a bed because there was no other room in the house. They'd sit up and talk, and very rarely something more might happen which they'd never discuss later. Now it would never happen again. He sighs.

He and Two Deer Dancing sit side by side on the ground. Her long hair is groomed as carefully as any woman's, decorated with ribbons and shells, and tied in two decorative braids. Her tanned, reddish buckskin is decorated in shell and embroidery, as are her leggings. She says nothing for a very long time, then directs the conversation to the subject on her mind. "You are going out to the cemetery to say goodbye, for a long time perhaps?"

"Why would you say that? I haven't made any plans as yet."

"It has been," she struggles for words, "six months since I saw you last at the ranch. But I can see in you now, that perhaps you should leave."

"I don't understand."

Sliding sideways, she puts her arm around Liam's shoulders, "You do not need to go so far to find *Wankhán Thánka*, the centre of the universe here, Laughing Coyote. But maybe, you need to find the centre of another universe, far away."

"Another universe?" Liam is puzzled.

"The centre of the other world, back where your ancestors came from. You were going to take Annie there, do you remember?"

"But Annie is dead."

"Yes, but you still need to go far away. Everything will be here when you return. You remember when I gave you your secret name?"

He grins. "Silly wolf who pees on all the trees. I'm not likely to forget it. Laughing Coyote I can handle. Everyone called me that after I saw that coyote pack at the edge of the village the winter we spent with the Miniconjou, and I howled and laughed at them. But only you know about how I peed on the same trees as the red wolf we saw in the springtime. Annie's the only person I've ever told that name to."

"That's why you've stayed so powerful." Two Deer Dancing says this with the power of certainty. They both believe that the secret name given to him by the winkte makes him strong. It is a carefully guarded secret, and like all secret winkte-given names, is faintly embarrassing.

"I have everything but what I want, and it doesn't get any better. It just stays the same. I don't feel any different than I did before I married Annie. I'm still running after something I can't have."

"It wouldn't have been better if I could have married you. But even the children of mixed marriages like Jack Fitzpatrick, the son of the rich white trader in Denver and

his Cheyenne wife, have returned to live with their Lakota families now. They have no place in your world. Life is too complicated. And if they are rejected by the whites, there would have been no way that you and I could have been married. My father understood that. And I think you did too.” Two Deer Dancing shrugs her shoulders and looks melancholy, “Yet, nobody complained when you married a woman who looked like a man. Sometimes I just don’t understand the rules, but our young people in the residential schools say the same things about winkle. They are afraid to follow the old ways.” She looks away. “I know you feel it was unfair that I couldn’t marry you.”

“Life’s unfair. And Annie wasn’t no man. She was a real lady.”

“She may have been a woman, but she didn’t look like one.”

“But she wasn’t a man! And that’s what counts. She was the daughter of an upstanding member of the community, and a good woman.”

“I’ve never said she wasn’t. I guess people care about these things, even if you only sleep with she-men from time to time? If you can find she-men?”

Liam pushed the dark hair back from his eyes and snorted in exasperation, “Oh, I can find them, but I have to be careful all the time. A rumour that I’m a bugger who likes men on the side is one thing, but anything more than that could ruin me forever. My father once told me that he wasn’t going to have a pervert sod for a son. That I’d end up dead or worse. The people I’m in business with care very much whom I’m married to. Even how I take my pleasure isn’t really just my own business! I walk a fine line.”

Two Deer Dancing put her head on his shoulder and left it there for a time. It was sadder than words could express. Suddenly, he saw the inevitable truth. The wind

was blowing through his life, and it was blowing him straight out of the west into another place. How he'd find his way back here he didn't know.

The past reaches out and begins to tug him down once more. His adolescence had been barely better than his childhood. It was several miles to the nearest school, and he'd only been allowed to go to school long enough to learn how to read fluently, write and do some arithmetic. His father wanted him up at the claim. That had been the reality of Liam's younger years, hard work and long hours.

Occasionally, a large, gold, placer nugget would be washed down by the spring melt into the larger river at the foot of where their claim was located. These discoveries would push Liam to keep looking for the gold seam that he knew lay deeper inside the mountain. This, and the discovery of a significant deposit of silver, was all that kept them going until '81. The find of the gold ore had only happened after years of digging out the claim, after Timothy had died, on a Friday when he and John were about to stop for the day.

He still remembered how his pick had sunk into the softer gold vein, after years of digging out stone and the harder silver ore. They couldn't believe the elation they'd both felt when they got some of this ore out of the mountain and down to the house. They piled it high on the old, painted table in the kitchen. It was hours before the two men could even think about what exactly they'd found, and how it would change both their lives. And they went back the next day for more.

They'd found this deposit long after all the other flea-bitten miners of '58 had already left the Shining Mountains, although the O'Connors stuck it out in South Park. Liam and his Da had found the silver seam in '67. By '69, Liam was hauling silver ore

and rocks full time. He was sixteen. That summer Far Cloud and Two Deer Dancing came to visit the O'Connors. That summer was ... and the past pulls him down still further.

~\*~

After Timothy came across him with Two Deer Dancing in the hayloft, Liam disappeared for three miserable days. When he eventually trudged back into the house, Two Deer Dancing and Far Cloud were gone. His father was cooking some dinner.

"So, I see you've decided to honour me with your presence again," his father said acerbically.

"Where are my friends?"

"You mean the girly-boy and his pa?"

"I reckon you liked Far Cloud well enough when he gave you advice about where to buy property in Colorado," Liam retorted. "Then he was your friend too!"

His father put down the cast iron pan with the bacon, and stared at Liam open mouthed for several moments. He shook his head, "I beg your pardon?"

"What did you say to them?" Liam repeated.

"What do you think I said?"

"What?" Liam took his father's shoulder and turned him around to face him. Suddenly, he realized that he was stronger and more powerful than Timothy by now. He towered over his Da by almost six inches, and his arms were muscular and lean. He could have knocked Timothy to the ground. "What did you say?" he demanded, standing directly in front of his father.

His father's face froze, "We're not talking about this, boy. That girly-boy is married now, to some big shot chief out at the Ute reservation, and that's all there is to it."

"You sent him away?"

"Aye. And I'd do it twenty times over!" In his rage, spittle flew from Timothy's mouth.

"I love him."

"You're sixteen years old for God's sake! He is not a girl. It's wrong and perverted. And if you hadn't gone native when you were eight, you'd know how wrong it is."

"This is my house, as much as yours. I've hauled most of the ore out of that stinking hole in the ground you call a mine."

"If you want a man so much, why don't you go and find one in one of the fancy whorehouses in Denver? What you do there is your bloody business, and won't affect us or the claim!" Timothy's angry suggestion, Liam thought, seemed out of character for his father who usually had nothing to say on this particular subject, a subject that was so intensely private. Perhaps, it revealed his father's inner turmoil about Liam's relationship with Two Deer Dancing. He was unsure.

Liam shrugged his shoulders irritably. He was uncertain why his father had made this novel comment, but he spat out without thinking. "I guess you learned about that from one of your old Civil War buddies who come to visit from time to time."

"You take that back, boy!"

"Make me!" Liam responded. They had been standing hip-to-hip, when suddenly Timothy seemed to realize how big his son had become. They stood there, each trying to stare the other one down, and Timothy's eyes dropped to the ground. Liam pushed past his father and went to pack a bag. When he came back, his father was standing there watching him.

"Where are you going?" his father asked him carefully.

"To Denver," Liam told him through gritted teeth.

"What for?"

"Well, Pa, I reckon you know exactly what for. You've just told me to go, haven't you?"

"You sodding bastard!" his father responded.

"Yeah," Liam snickered, "but I'm the sodding bastard who digs out your mine for you." His father said had nothing at that, and ignored him in icy silence on his return to the claim a week later. This pattern of Liam's regular disappearances was one they maintained until Timothy's death, although they never again discussed the actual issue of Liam's sexual preferences.

~\*~

Liam thinks about these things, and about the dreadful anger that threatens to swamp him. He shakes his head, and then he changes the subject.

"Hortense thinks I should ask you for some herbs for tea to help me with my dreams."

Two Deer Dancing tilts her head inquisitorily. "Why don't you tell me what you're dreaming about?"

He clenches his hands helplessly, and shrugs his shoulders. He stares into the distance, and then cuts at the dirt with the heel of his boot irritably, “For you, dreams always have to mean something. My Da would’ve said that they were caused by evil thoughts. I don’t know what they are, but they’re making me exhausted.”

She takes his hand. “Dreams pull us to where we belong. They aren’t good or bad, they just are. They show you the path you need to follow.”

“You see! This is why I didn’t talk to you about my dreams before!”

“What do you want me to say?”

“Make me like everybody else.”

“I can’t do that, I can only give you an herbal tea to help you sleep.” Two Deer Dancing laughs, and then Liam laughs as well.

“Well, I guess that would be a start.”

Then she asks, in genuine puzzlement, “And what about all those cowboys in your bunkhouse who go off in the bush together? Why can they do what they want?”

Liam gazes at the purple-blue mountains impassively. “Because they’re nobody. I’m Liam Rory O’Connor, the owner of the Gold Spar and a working ranch. People depend on me, the men at the mines, the cowboys in the bunkhouse, the Lincolns who keep everything going. Even the Ute you live with that I allow to live on my property, they need me too. I need to be respectable. I have no choice.”

Two Deer Dancing leans forward and puts his hand on Liam’s cheek. “But what about you?”

Liam’s heart fills with the painful realization of how much he cares for his two-spirited friend, who has a power inside him to understand people. A great hand squeezed

his heart with fear, the same hand that had squeezed his heart when Annie died, the same hand that had squeezed his heart when he'd read the news about Wounded Knee two winters back. He'd ridden like a madman that day. He'd grabbed his horse and come out to the small band of Ute on his property. When he found Two Deer Dancing emerging from Black Eagle's tepee by the campfire smoke in the morning light with a half-smile on her face he had been jealous, but he was also relieved.

Sometimes, he forgot that, as much as Two Deer Dancing had changed him forever, he had also changed her. She knew that the brightly painted shirts of the Ghost Dancers wouldn't repel the army bullets of Seventh Cavalry at Pine Ridge, and that the days of the huge herds of bison were over. They'd talked about it many times, and he'd said nothing to her that day three years ago. Words were insufficient to tell her about how he felt about the killing of Sitting Bull at Standing Rock, and the massacre of the Ghost Dancers at Pine Ridge. So he had said nothing and had turned away.

Today is different. Now, because of what she has said to him, he knows that he must leave, must run for the coast, in the hope that he can leave his pain somewhere behind him. She has no remedy for his agony. There is no herbal tea for a broken heart. Her words for what she is cannot help him define what he seeks to be. His words for what he is are like hard stones – words like sodomy and buggery – they are words from law books and cannot define the experience of affection, the bonds of love. Neither can they help him with the meaning of his dream because he cannot become what she is – a wintke. He is white, and so must find another way.

"What you said before, you're right. I need to go away, far away. I am lost."

"Poor Laughing Coyote." She takes his hand sympathetically. "How long will you be gone?"

"I don't know," he shrugs. "A year, maybe two. You be careful when I'm gone. I've heard that there's consumption out in the reservation at Pine Ridge again. My Ma died of consumption, and it's an ugly death."

"I must do what I can for my people at Pine Ridge. If my medicines will help them, I must go. You know that," Two Deer Dancing says softly. "But I'll still be here to greet you when you return with your new family."

Liam's brown eyes crease and narrow. "After Annie, I don't think I'll ever get married again."

Two Deer Dancing is silent, studying the ground for a long time. Then she makes a philosophical observation, "Annie was like a meadowlark in the hill country, singing her sweet song in the bright morning sunlight. The time of the meadowlark is short for the coyote. She flutters by the campfire as he passes by. But the coyote hunts in packs, and he follows the deer. They will bring life to back to him."

"So I should watch out for another coyote and a deer?"

"They'll be in disguise, where you least expect them," his friend says quietly.

"And the tea for my dreams?"

"I'll bring some to you tomorrow before you leave."

They sit for a long time in silence, and then she rises to go back to her band. He feels reluctant to let her go, although he knows somehow he'll see her again. He sits and watches as her mustang picks its way carefully over the scrubby grasses, and finally disappears in the direction of the curling smoke.

Liam gets back on his horse. He puts his hand on Commander's neck, and strokes it. His love of horses was one thing that he'd had in common with the Lakota from the beginning. Horses had transformed their world. The Miniconjou had had nearly a hundred and fifty horses at the beginning of the winter of 1864-65. There had been almost two horses for every man, woman and child.

It had been a frigid winter with deep, cold snows. The Miniconjou had done what they could to uncover the grasses under the snow, and the shoots at the bottom of the cottonwood trees for the horses, but it hadn't been enough. More of the horses with the white ears had died than any other kind. No one was clear why this was the case, but the Lakota had placed special value on the horses with white ears, and had recorded the details of their deaths with deliberate accuracy in their records.

Horses were a more important part of their transformation than guns. Guns were only good for killing other men. Moreover, guns were practically useless for killing the bison, which were necessary for the continuance of life on the Great Plain. The clumsy musket rifles had taken too long to reload, and had left nasty pellets in what could have otherwise been a perfect bison robe, a well-tanned piece of parfleche or perfectly dried pemmican.

Liam recalls his first meeting with the Miniconjou band, the Lakota who farmed the land by the Missouri River. He had known Big Foot, when his name was still Spotted Elk, and when his father Lone Horn was the chief of the Miniconjou. He considers himself fortunate to have seen the Lakota nation before Little Big Horn and Custer, before Standing Rock and the murder of Sitting Bull, and before Wounded Knee.

He had taken Annie to see the drawings and paintings of George Catlin in a private gallery in San Francisco, and had been greatly humbled by the experience. He is a lucky man, he thinks, to have seen so much of the Great Plains Indian culture before it changed so radically. He stops his horse, and dismounts. The cemetery can wait for another half an hour. He closes his eyes and he remembers the trip to the west.

~\*~

The train from Montreal to Toronto, where he and his father stopped for supplies, was bristling with activity. But the long lake voyage to Fort William was dull. The schooner contained a mixture of sports fishermen and immigrants headed for Ohio, and Timothy instructed Liam to keep to himself and not reveal too much information about why they were taking this circuitous route to Colorado.

The captain of the boat looked dubious when they'd told him that they were headed further west. He informed them that the weather could get nasty, even in late September. He had also been clear that he thought that heading out into the open plains in early October was sheer madness. Wild Indians had left settlers in Minnesota scalped, or worse, in the not so recent past. He stared hard at Liam, and suggested that it would be a fate worse than death if the Indians captured him. He said that it would be kinder if Timothy would just shoot his son if this emergency should arise.

Their guide, Joe Cutter, was an established frontiersman and fur trapper. His father had had enough gold saved up to pay well for Cutter's expertise, a fact that made Liam angry when he thought about how poor he and his mother had been when she died. The realization that his father had deliberately held out on them, had allowed them to live in extreme poverty while saving all his money for this expedition, created further distance

between him and his father. At Fort William, fresh gossip about a silver mine that lay just beneath the water line near Sibley Point, underneath the large stone outline of a sleeping giant, made Timothy edgy. He'd already decided not to make the journey to his claim by train. The claim was a day's ride from Pike's Peak. However, Timothy was exceptionally wary of claim jumpers. If the gossip about the silver at Sibley were true, it would take an established company with considerable financial resources to pump out the ice-cold lake water of Superior to mine the claim.

They were hung up on the Canadian side for a week. Finally, they paid a Finnish fisherman called Lamppinen to take them as far as Fond du Lac on the southwestern side of the lake. Getting as far west as the Missouri River was more of a challenge than they'd expected. Freak snowstorms slowed them down, and they got lost more than once. Timothy didn't blame Cutter, but Liam thought that their guide had led them astray on purpose. Although it was true that Timothy could be quite insistent about the direction they should take, and that he was often wrong, Cutter did not take a very active part in correcting his misdirection. They went around in circles. Timothy became angry with Liam. This made no sense, but Liam had begun to discover that he was the common target for his father's anger.

So, he held his tongue. Perhaps, Liam thought, Joe was doing some kind of bizarre survey of the land. Time passed, and the poor weather led to a shortage of available game. By the end of October, they were worried about getting lost and running out of food. By early November, they were actually lost and hungry. Then, there was a long argument between Timothy and Joe, after which Joe coolly informed them that he was planning to leave them at a nearby Lakota village of the Miniconjou band. His

father was infuriated, but he couldn't find the village by himself. He needed Joe to find it for him, so they made a truce for the time being.

By Liam's reckoning, it was mid-November by the time they rode into the Miniconjou camp. Joe told Liam that the Miniconjou were planters, like the Hurons. Apparently, the name Miniconjou meant 'planter by the river' in Lakota. For Liam, the visit to the camp turned out to be an early Christmas present.

The day they arrived in the camp was impressed forever on his mind. Perhaps it was because he'd been so scared. He wondered whether his father was scared, but Timothy O'Connor made a point of not showing much emotion. He had also made it understood that Liam would have to do the same thing.

Later, Liam learned from the children in the Miniconjou band that they been tracked for at least fifty miles. There had been a lot of debate about whether the Lakota trackers should shoot the two grown men. Apparently, they hadn't considered shooting Liam because he had still been young enough to adopt. However, after extensive discussion, the council decided they wouldn't shoot any of them. They hadn't wanted to chance harming the horses. Fine Bays, Appaloosas and Pintos were the source of life itself to them: horses needed to be captured from another tribe or rounded up on the Great Plain. This small group of three individuals was headed directly for the Miniconjou band on the Missouri in any case. They could always take the horses from them later.

The small party appeared to be lost, but the Miniconjou couldn't understand how a Huron guide could be so lost that he would make the mistake of travelling in circles. One of the braves who had been trailing them, Brings Them Back Alive, believed that

Joe Cutter had gone mad. Perhaps, he'd said in the council, it would be more merciful to shoot him in the head. Another brave, Ten Bears, had pointed out that a guide with no money, no tepee and probably no wives would be no risk to them. So it wasn't necessary to shoot him in the head because he clearly had nothing anyone could possibly want. Liam also learned later that everyone in the Miniconjou band knew that the Huron nation back east had spent far too much time with the white medicine men in the long black shirts and, if that didn't make you crazy, nothing would. So the council had smoked their pipes, and concluded that Cutter was looking at the land with more than just the usual Huron tendency to nosiness.

Fat snowflakes were fluttering down listlessly on the day the three travellers arrived. However, they'd had enough experience with the weather lately to know that it wouldn't remain mild. It was clear from the flat, slate-coloured sky and the dark clouds clinging to the distant horizon that a dangerous blizzard was closing in. The temperature continued to plummet moment by moment as well. Liam rubbed his cheeks and his hands to keep warm. As they came into the Lakota encampment, the sounds of dogs barking, children screaming and women running in all directions were his first dazed impressions of the camp. However, there was one young boy who was not running away from them.

The young boy stood his ground and looked boldly up at the three white strangers. Liam thought that the boy was about his own age. He had intense, smoky, dark eyes and a sweet face. Liam noticed that his father was watching him attentively.

"I told you to keep your eyes to yourself, boy," Timothy snapped. "These wild heathens will kill you as soon as look at you. We have to find a guide here, thanks to Cutter."

"If we don't make friends with them, I don't think they'll send a guide out with us, Da."

"It's always some back talk with you, isn't it? Can't you shut your mouth for once?"

Liam glanced shyly at the dark eyed boy again, and smiled to keep the peace. Timothy was, after all, irritable most of the time. "Whatever you say Pa," he said with a cheerful obedience that made his father shoot another dirty look in his general direction.

"Well, stop staring at that girly-looking boy," his father ordered. Liam sighed. His father wanted him to work like a man, and to be as pliable as a young child at the same time. It was unreasonable.

"Tim, why don't you leave the lad alone for once?" Cutter asked quietly.

"Because he behaves like a little Boston slum Arab. He's always looking at things that don't concern him. You wouldn't even know that his *máthair* raised him to be a good Irish Catholic. He always has something to say about everything. Liam," his father ordered, "just look at your horse and do what I tell you." Liam shrugged his shoulders, which made his father give him another angry look.

Liam wondered, if his father felt this way about him, why he'd brought him out west. Then he thought about the mine, and he felt sad. There was no way his father could excavate that mine alone, as he had made plain during many discussions. He sighed: he was his father's property until the day he turned sixteen.

They finally got off their horses in the middle of the compound. By this time, every man, woman and child in the band had circled around them. A group of braves yelled some words in Lakota at Cutter, and Cutter yelled something back at them defiantly.

"What did you say?" Timothy asked.

"I asked them to take me to their chief. I've met him before, although I haven't met everyone here." Joe replied evenly. He seemed unperturbed by their hostile reception. Maybe, Liam reflected, he knew something that they didn't.

"It sounded like you said a lot more than that," Timothy observed.

"It's as much as you need to know, Tim."

The Lakota braves pushed and chivvied them toward a large, painted tepee in the center of the compound. It was covered in designs of the hunt, depictions of many and varied animals in different coloured paints running all over its surface. Liam ran his hands over a picture of a bison in light blue, and discovered the paint felt hard under his fingers. He saw some discarded arrows on the ground: they had sharp metal heads. He thought that he wouldn't care to be hit with one. He'd heard rumours that the Indians used poisons in their arrows when they attacked people. He'd also read many accounts of people who had been taken prisoner by these people in the newspapers back east. But he didn't feel as terrified as he thought he should.

To his unfamiliar eyes, the Miniconjou looked very different from the other Indians he'd already met, Joe's Huron band. The Huron reservation near Ancienne Lorette, in Quebec, appeared to look the same as any other eastern village, although the Huron were clearly Roman Catholic. Liam had liked their tiny village near the St.

Lawrence River with their silver-coloured, steepled churches, their houses with wide, shiny curved roofs and their orderly fields. These people, however, were quite another matter.

The Lakota braves pushed open the bison skins shielding the entrance from the cold, and shoved Cutter, Liam and Timothy inside. It took several minutes for Liam's eyes to become accustomed to the smoky darkness. By that time, he realized that there were three Lakota facing them, close to the fire in the middle of the tepee, blinking at them calmly. Clearly, their presence was no surprise.

Dressed in durable buckskins that were either yellow or red from the tanning process, they were the very embodiment of what Stan Cooper had warned him about – the unpredictable west. Although their garments were still intricately decorated with traditional porcupine quills and embroidery and their long braids were still tied with buckskin and feathers, they were very different from the natives that had presented Coronado with melons two centuries earlier. Now they had had iron pots for their fires for many years, iron pots they had traded for what the white men called 'buffalo skins'.

Iron didn't break like clay, and had many other uses. Iron could be forged into arrowheads for hunting. These new arrows were more lethal and easier to use than the clumsy Enfield rifle musket that had penetrated Timothy's backside earlier that year. Moreover, the Lakota had learned a great deal about white civilization since Coronado's bewildered search for El Dorado on the Great Plains. From Coronado, they learned that a white man in search of gold and land would not be content with melons for very long. Once the white men had stopped killing each other by the thousands in an insane war back east, the Iron Horse and the white soldiers would be headed directly into their land.

To Liam, with his half-frozen face and hands, however, the warmth and the smell of the tepee seemed amazingly congenial after the sweeping winds outside that were threatening to engulf them in a storm and possibly kill them. He concentrated on the three people who sat opposite him in the tepee, calmly smoking long red clay pipes.

Two of them sat on either side of a much older man. The first was a tall, strongly built woman, the second another man whose eyes became wary when the white strangers appeared in their midst. The man with the wary eyes, Liam would learn later, was called *Si Tanka* or Spotted Elk. He was tall and impressive with strongly carved nostrils. He had a mild manner when he spoke, but he continued to shoot concerned looks at the strangers. Liam wondered if he was worried about something. His deerskin-bound braids swayed as he spoke slowly and rhythmically in Lakota. The older man was called Lone Horn: he was the chief of the tribe and the father of *Si Tanka*.

The strong-looking woman looked up and smiled at gently at Liam, and he smiled back at her. She leaned across the tepee, placed her hand against his cheek and made a comment in her native Lakota. "*Lila oh snee,*" she said in a voice with a low timbre. She rubbed her hands over her arms, and mimicked shivering with the cold.

He grinned shyly up at her. Then he glanced over at his father, recalling that Timothy had told him not to talk. He bit his lower lip, and then he looked at up her shyly through his eyelashes again. She was examining him. For one moment he lingered, deciding whether to reach out to her. They had been communicating, and he knew what she was saying. She was asking him if he was cold. He nodded at her.

"*Han,*" she instructed, moving her head in a gesture of acknowledgement to show him the Lakota word for 'yes.' "*Han,*" she repeated.

"*Han*," he repeated after her.

Then she smiled at him, taking pleasure in his attempt to speak her language. Her hand was gentle against his face, and no one had been this gentle with him since his mother died. The woman's dark eyes reminded him of his mother. He grinned again, and noticed that the tall man furthest away from him was studying their interaction with care. The woman gestured to him to come closer, and repeated a phrase he didn't understand. He started to move, but his father's hand stopped him.

"Stay where you are!" Timothy ordered.

"Let him go, Tim," Cutter said softly. Liam glanced over at Cutter. Sweat was beading up on the guide's forehead. Cutter seemed to be worried about something. Sometimes his father could be the most stubborn man alive.

Cutter's tone became more insistent, "She wants to see him. The *winkte*, Skins Crow, likes the boy, and that's very good news for us."

"I thought that it was a man," his father said. The word "it" sounded harsh to Liam's ears. She seemed very nice, no matter what his father thought of her. She was certainly a welcome contrast to Timothy's constant barrage of criticism and unkindness.

"I'll explain later," Cutter insisted quietly, "Let the boy go to her." It seemed to Liam that everyone held their breath as he moved carefully over to her side. He heard Cutter heave a sigh of relief. The woman gestured to her wide lap. Liam thought carefully.

He was so tired and cold. For the last hour, he'd barely been able to feel his feet. She leaned forward and stroked his hair, speaking to him softly in a singsong voice. Then she fell silent, but continued to stroke his head with a gentle hand. He felt her

maneuver him slightly closer. He met her dark eyes; a flicker of something kindled inside of him. He was so very, very tired. She smiled at him. The smell of the pipe smoke inside the tent seemed to lull him into a semi-hypnotic state.

Her bracelets jangled as her arm pulled him closer still. He felt his resistance begin to evaporate. She was clean and warm, and her lap was wide and comfortable. He knew, from when he'd been working on the docks in Boston, who you could work for and who would leave you skint. It was his instinct, well-honed and finely developed in him as a means of survival. He scrambled up into the shelter of her lap and his body finally relaxed. She slipped a warm coyote skin over him, and smiled down at him.

Joe Cutter translated the ongoing Lakota conversation while Lone Horn's eyes stayed fixed on the ground. There was a long pause, during which the chief smoked thoughtfully. Finally, he cleared his throat and made a comment to Cutter. Then he turned to Skins Crow, and he asked her a question. Her fingers played with Liam's hair, and she gave the other two men a short, thoughtful glance.

Liam thought that Cutter appeared nervous, and sounded vaguely apologetic. "What do they say?" Timothy asked. "Why won't they meet our eyes then? They keep their eyes on the ground. Are they hiding away some vast secret?"

The warrior on the other side of the old man put his hand on his chest and began to speak in English. "*Si Tanka*, it means Spotted Elk." Then he touched his eyes, and continued to speak, "Eyes, they are part of soul. To look into eyes without blinking is," he considered for a moment, "impolite. Rude. Not good. You stare at Lone Horn. He, he is very wise. Thoughtful. Our braves watch you for many days' journey from here as

you go to here and there, without thought, without direction. You are lost. Then you come here seeking guide with Iroquois."

"You know that I'm Huron, *Si Tanka*, not Iroquois."

Spotted Elk had arched his nose in distaste, "Iroquois, Huron – it is unimportant. The stories of a great and feared nation are told no longer. The blackshirts, who taught me as a child told me how your people had become good Catholics." Liam thought that there seemed to be much more underlying Spotted Elk's words, but he was unsure what this was about.

"Our people were killed by the Iroquois," Cutter said hotly, "I've discussed this many times with your before."

Spotted Elk shrugged, "I know that your people left the old ways and listened to the black shirts, the ones with the crosses. And you have told me at other times that they brought you prayers, not guns. The English brought the Iroquois powerful magic and guns. I learned English from the black shirts in school with my cousins who live several days north of here, as you know. There, in school I learned English to make powerful magic for my people and keep white people far away from our lands. And now you come blundering through our lands, I find this very interesting."

Liam watched as Cutter opened and closed his mouth helplessly, as though he was uncertain what to say. Liam had heard Cutter talk about his people's long connection to their community, Ancienne Lorette, and how proud he was of their heritage and their religion. Perhaps, these people some objections to this religion or perhaps it was something else. Liam puzzled this out, considering the implications of the interaction between Cutter and Spotted Elk.

Then Timothy spoke up, "I'm not interested in your land. I'll pay for a guide in gold to take me to the Shining Mountains." He pulled the deed to the mine out of his interior pocket, and slapped it on the ground in front of him.

Spotted Elk's dark eyes glittered as he lifted the piece of paper, then he ran his finger along the edge. "It has blood on it."

"Not my blood. A pal of mine, another soldier in the army, gave the map to me. I was in the army. That's where I met Joe Cutter here: he was the guide for our regiment."

Spotted Elk looked down at the ground, then Liam thought he saw a ghost of a smile flicker over his face. "You go in circles many times before you get here."

Timothy's tanned face flushed. "That's my fault. I get confused sometimes. I can still hear the guns, and I had to take a lot of bad medicine. I get sick."

The other man nodded, and drew a pattern in the ground in front of him, "So, soldier, now miner, but not farmer like the Miniconjou." He sketched a rough map on the ground of their intended destination with the mountains on the edge. "You want to go here?" he asked.

"Yes," Timothy confirmed, "We are miners, not farmers or soldiers."

"If you are working for army, maybe you send information to the government back east so they make better maps for the army. They come and kill buffalo and take more of our land."

"I was injured, and the army let me go. But not to spy for them! Look, the army was just a way of making enough money for my family. I had no steady work back east before the army -- no work, no money and no money, no food. Why do ye think I'd help the army? I may be a lot of things, but I'm not a spy. I wasn't even born here."

"Where is his mother? The boy?" Spotted Elk gestured at Liam, who was just beginning to get warm.

"She died almost two years ago. She was sick, very sick."

He stared at Timothy, nodding in compassionate understanding of Timothy's wifeless state. "White medicine no good? You should have other wives – like winkte, good mothers."

"No," Liam noticed that his father was flushed when the idea of getting married again was mentioned. "No, there won't be any more wives," he said in a determined voice.

"So, you take the boy to make a big hole in ground in Ute country?" Spotted Elk asked. The older man, Lone Horn, smoked calmly during this exchange.

"Yes, that's all I want, a big hole in the ground."

"Not spies." Spotted Elk gave Cutter a reflective glance now, and spoke to him sternly in Lakota. Then Lone Horn cut into the conversation, and made what sounded to Liam like a suggestion. Cutter replied in a more insistent tone.

"They want me to leave in the morning," Cutter said to Timothy. "It appears I have no choice. They also warned me to go straight out of their country, and not to take any – um – short cuts."

"You knew about short cuts?" Timothy stopped for a second, and then he put the situation together in his mind. "You bastard," he said softly, "you're the one. That's why you didn't say anything about getting so far off course, about getting lost. You were making a Goddamned map for the bloody army. And you were just dropping us off here, so you could go off and finish the job. That's why you won't take us any further!"

"Look, you'll be better off with a guide from here to get to the Ute country. I've never taken the trail from Fort Laramie southward," Cutter said impatiently. "They know this route well, and you'll be fed and warm. Isn't it enough that they're going to go through the supplies on my horse, and burn any maps that they find?"

"I see. Now the truth comes out. I guess we could've been here at least a week earlier," Timothy speculated.

"Two weeks," Cutter tossed out with a curl of his lip. "And for the record I was sure I could find a Lakota guide for you here."

"We give guide, good guide to the mountains," Spotted Elk interrupted. "You have supplies, you camp over there just beyond the edge of the village. You stay, help hunt until snow stops."

"How soon?" Timothy asked anxiously.

Lone Horn spoke to Spotted Elk, and they both laughed. Then they talked quietly with the tall woman.

"My father says that Old Soldier stay close to camp, no problem. Boy stays here with winkte, Skins Crow. Then Old Soldier stay in one place until the weather gets better," Spotted Elk informed him.

"But Liam's my son."

"Here," Skins Crow said slowly and insistently in hesitant English.

"He stay, you not leave," Spotted Elk said meaningfully.

"Winktes love children, Tim. He'll be well treated," Cutter told him.

"Don't worry about me, Da."

"Tsk, I told you to stay quiet. So what is this winkte?"

"She's a winkle," Cutter nodded at Skins Crow.

"So, she's a healer or has some position or something?"

Just at that instant, the young girly-boy, as Timothy had called him, slipped into the tepee and squeezed in between Lone Horn and Spotted Elk. He received an affectionate rub on the forehead from Lone Horn who asked him a question. The boy responded by pointing at Liam.

"What does the boy say?" Timothy asked.

Cutter shook his head. "It makes no sense. He said something about your son Liam being a good friend to the Lakota, particularly to him. That it came to him in a dream. They place a lot of faith in dreams."

Lone Horn raised his eyes and looked over at Liam. He shot him a friendly glance, and he motioned for him to come closer. Liam sat up and then leaned inward cautiously. The leader of the Miniconjou smelled pleasantly of tobacco, tanned leather and burnt sweet grass. It had made him keenly aware of the deplorable state of his own personal hygiene. He was distinctly grubby, a fact that embarrassed him, but the other boy's dark eyes gleamed at him in welcome.

"Kholà," Lone Horn insisted firmly, placing Liam's hand in the other boy's. Then he nodded, "Winkle," he added in a sly tone, gesturing to the other boy as though he'd just given Liam a piece of good advice.

"What's he doing that for? Now, what does he want with my Liam?" Timothy tried to move forward.

Cutter grabbed Timothy by the shoulder. "Kholà means friend. So I wouldn't do that if I were you!"

“Why, what does he want with Liam?”

“Well, it seems that *Wankhán Thánka* wants your boy to be friends with the other boy, or so Lone Horn says.” Cutter coughed slightly.

“Who’s *Wankhán Thánka*? ”

“You know – the Great Spirit, the creator of the universe,” Cutter said softly.

“I thought they were Catholic,” Timothy hissed. “And what is a winkle?”

“The young boy, his name is Two Deer Dancing. The Lakota believe that there are some people who are born both male and female.”

“What do you mean? Is the child deformed in some way?” Timothy asked in a doubtful tone.

“No, Old Soldier,” Spotted Elk interrupted. “Winkle blessed by Gods. Make strong magic, make good wives, make good friends and rich homes. Choose strong names.”

“You aren’t saying he’s going to be some kind of pervert living with men or something, are you now?” Timothy’s eyebrows lowered in a gesture of what Liam had come to understand was alarm.

Cutter sighed. “The winkle are sacred healers, prophets and negotiators among the Lakota. Skins Crow, the woman beside Spotted Elk who was petting your son, is also a winkle. Her council and advice is sought in all negotiations. She gives special names to children. If they want your son to be friends with Two Deer Dancing, it’s considered an honour.”

“Oh God, I can’t permit Liam to be friends with someone like that! It’s all very well for you, he’s not your son!”

"Jesus Tim, you're not in the Five Points or County Sligo any more!" Cutter's voice cut across the conversation with sudden vehemence. "You came out here to make your own way. If you want passage through to the Shining Mountains, you'll have to allow your son to become friends with Two Deer Dancing."

The other boy took Liam's hand solemnly, and raised him to his feet. Liam turned back at the entrance to the tepee, and shot an anxious glance at his father.

"I see." Timothy's dark eyes alerted Liam to his father's mood. "You mind what you do! Don't make me ashamed of you. Be a man," he ordered briefly. Liam felt for the other boy's warm hand.

"Yes, Da." Liam met his father's eyes. Then the other boy led him outside. A circle of curious children immediately surrounded them. He felt the hand of the tall woman from inside the tepee, touching his shoulder. She was standing behind him, and she pushed him gently forward.

Two Deer Dancing pulled him in the direction of another heavily decorated tepee, and pushed him inside. It was warm and smelled pleasantly of buckskin. He sat down, and some food in a clay bowl was handed to him. It was hot, and he recognized turnip and meat. It was the first real food he'd had since he'd left Fort William. He wolfed it down as the other boy watched. Shyly, he laid the bowl down when he was finished.

"*Ota wayáta hwo?*" Two Deer Dancing asked him. Liam gave him a puzzled glance. The other boy giggled, and mimicked the actions of eating. There was a movement in the doorway, and he noticed Skins Crow standing there watching.

The other boy repeated his words more carefully, "*Ota wayáta hwo?*"

Liam looked into two sets of dark eyes. He reflected for a moment. “*Han*,” he replied a trifle uncertainly.

Skins Crow nodded at him, and the first bowl was replaced by a second. He ate until he felt better. With more hand language, Two Deer Dancing made him understand that it was now time to sleep. He pulled Liam under the warm skins in the tepee, and crawled over to put his arms around his new friend.

Liam pushed him away and rolled away to sleep alone. “No,” he said, “I’m dirty.” Two Deer Dancing tilted his head, trying to understand. Liam mimicked smelling his clothes, and then he put his fingers over his nose. “Phew, dirty,” he told the other boy.

Two Deer Dancing came close and sniffed his clothes, “Phew dir-ty,” he said with a giggle. “*Nee chewy ta*,” he said, then he pretended to shiver.

“*Han*,” Liam nodded.

“*Oh snee*,” Two Deer Dancing repeated.

“*Oh snee*,” Liam responded.

Two Deer Dancing signalled that Liam should get back under the skins with him. As Liam came closer, he put a single finger on his cheek. “*Lila waste chi lake*,” he said, then he stroked Liam’s cheek and smiled.

“*Lila waste chi lake*,” Liam repeated. Two Deer Dancing gave a little sigh, and pulled Liam slightly closer. Liam felt it should be wrong, being cuddled in this way by his friend. Of course, sometimes Sean hugged him, but that was different. He wasn’t accustomed to actually enjoying shared body heat and closeness. And Two Deer Dancing obviously enjoyed being close.

In the morning, a less agreeable task was at hand. He was taken to a half-frozen stream. With appropriate gestures and language, he was instructed to wash. When he was finished washing, his grubby clothes had disappeared. A yellow buckskin shirt, pants and moccasins had replaced them.

Over the course of the next four months, Liam rarely saw his father, and then only in the company of other members of the band. He was glad to spend time with other boys instead of with his seemingly angry parent. He still couldn't understand why Timothy was angry with him, but his very presence seemed to upset his father.

Liam adapted well to life with the Miniconjou. Before long, he could ride a horse with no saddle. He had one fight with another boy called Cuts with Stone about who was going to ride his Appaloosa first. Cuts with Stone found Liam's boxing stance extremely funny, until Liam had managed to get in an unexpected punch. After that, the other boys wanted Liam to demonstrate the finer points of boxing, and Cuts with Stone became a close friend.

The winter was long. Hunting and taking care of the horses and the dogs were the most common activities during the winter months, although no one wandered far away because of the risk of blizzards descending on them without warning. Timothy was encamped on the very edges of the Miniconjou settlement. There were two reasons for this. First and foremost, Timothy himself wanted nothing to do with the periodic spiritual rituals that occurred in the encampment. He stayed on the outskirts, therefore, partly by choice.

The second reason was that Skins Crow had taken Liam into her tepee. If Timothy decided to flee, Liam would become part of her family. The Miniconjou felt

that the boy was still young enough for them to adopt, to become one of them. So, if his father did leave without him, this was something they would accept. But they wanted to give Timothy one more chance. They were also inclined to believe that all the Old Soldier, as they called him, was really interested in was gold, because they'd met many other miners. However, miners had caused trouble between them and the government before, and this had erupted into a Seventh Cavalry massacre of hundreds of Cheyenne women and children. Liam understood this, just as he was aware of the Lakota's concern about anyone with a hunger for 'sun's blood', as they called gold. They knew that the hunger for sun's gold had led to the first mad gold rush to California through their territory. So, they treated Timothy with caution.

Timothy was, nonetheless, a capable tracker and hunter. Along with Stands by His Horses and Running Beaver, he'd helped to down several moose and deer when the tribe was at their most desperate during the early winter months. The Lakota therefore accepted that he had his uses, despite their reservations about his motives for coming west. As the cold weather wore on, the hunts became more extended, and sometimes Timothy was gone for weeks at a time. Those individuals who remained in the camp were forced, due to the harshness of the winter, to kill many of the dogs and several horses over the course of December and January.

Even when Timothy was back in camp, Liam rarely saw him, except in the company of the Miniconjou men. His father's visits to Skins Crow's tepee were even less frequent. His father avoided the winkle. He was also unwilling to spend time with Two Deer Dancing. However, Liam was usually with his friend and, when eating

around the fire in Far Cloud's tepee, Timothy was forced to talk to the other boy no matter how he really felt about him.

Liam also understood that his father was peripatetic by nature. When they'd lived in Boston, he habitually wandered from stable to stable looking for work. Timothy's restless energy worked well for them during their time with the Miniconjou. Although at a later date, Timothy would complain about Liam having "become a pervert" because of their time with the Miniconjou, saying that he shouldn't have let his son spend so much time in the company of Skins Crow in particular, the truth was that his father was more comfortable hunting and tracking with the other men than remaining helpless in the encampment. He preferred to leave Liam behind, and enjoyed the freedom of being on the trail.

By early March, it was still snowing but the tenuous hold of winter was beginning to break. The snow had become heavier and damper, and the temperature had climbed a little. Liam and Timothy already knew that Far Cloud had been chosen as a guide to take them to Colorado. On one occasion, Timothy returned to the camp with two other men, having trapped both large bucks and moose. There had been a lot of dancing in the Miniconjou encampment to celebrate such a good kill. By now, the dances and songs of the Miniconjou had become familiar to Liam. He himself had gone hunting for small game, such as rabbits and squirrels, near by the encampment.

Late that evening, after the dancing was over, Timothy sat in Far Cloud's tepee, isolated from the activity surrounding the preparation of that night's meal. Liam sauntered towards the melee, in the company of Two Deer Dancing and Cuts with Stone.

The boy saw Skins Crow watching him from amongst the bustle of people. She frowned, and he went over to her.

"You go inside, speak to your father," she urged, directing him with her hand.

"He doesn't want to speak to me."

"You speak to him, and wait for him to speak to you, the way we discussed. He will respond to you in time." She advised.

Liam slipped into Far Cloud's tent with Two Deer Dancing, where he saw Timothy propped up against the wall. His father was writing in a journal, drawing pictures and humming to himself. He seemed to be in a world of his own.

"What song is that?" Two Deer Dancing asked Timothy in English. He had picked up quite a lot of English from Liam, just as Liam now had a fair command of Lakota.

Timothy looked up at him with slightly hostile eyes, but avoided being impolite since it was Far Cloud's tepee. "It's an Irish song. It's called 'Bonny Portmore.' It's about the destruction of a forest, by the bloody English."

Two Deer Dancing looked puzzled, but went to the other side of the tepee to see his mother, Red Shawl, who was adding wild turnip and cut-up venison to a large cooking pot, which simmered on the fire. Liam watched as Two Deer Dancing spoke about the "old soldier" with her. Philosophically, she told her son that Timothy was deeply unhappy because of the loss of his wife, and that only time would tell whether or not he would recover from this loss. In the meantime, she said, he had been a good hunter over the bitter winter, helping to provide them with food for their very survival.

She turned to look at Liam, and her eyes gleamed with a hidden understanding of his problem – the difficulty he had even speaking to his father.

Liam went over to stand uneasily by his father, “You brought back some big bucks,” he said. The English words sounded strange to his ears, almost like a foreign language.

“I see. And you’re friends with the girly-boy boy too?”

“Don’t call him that,” Liam said quickly. “I like him.”

“So, it’s like that is it? Well, we’re eating here in his tepee so I guess...” His father made an impatient gesture, blowing out his cheeks. Then he continued, “I see you outside riding on horses. These people love horses as much as our people. It’s been a bad winter for the horses: some of them didn’t make it. But once we cleared away the snow, the rest have found some frozen grass at the bottom.”

“Yeah, a lot of the ones with the white ears didn’t do well.”

“Why are the ones with the white ears different?”

“They’re supposed to be lucky,” Liam mumbled.

“Like the girly-boy being lucky.”

“He is lucky,” Liam insisted, “He has good dreams, visions.” He looked across the smoking fire at his friend, his friend who had shown him that the world was complex. Male and female, man and woman – it wasn’t the way that the Lakota thought about the world. Two Deer Dancing knew so many things, things he’d been taught by his mother Red Shawl and the other women, things that were important to his life as a winkte. Liam had no words to explain this complexity to his father, a complexity he was just now

beginning to understand. He totally accepted the wisdom of his friend, but he had no way to communicate this to Timothy.

"You don't believe in visions, do you Liam?" His father's voice insisted.

He moved closer to his father. The small notebook in Timothy's hand was closed. Liam looked at it. "Show me," he asked in a small voice.

His father's hand tightened on the book. "They're private."

"I liked the pictures in the letters you sent to us in Boston," he said, trying to reach his father.

"They were for your mother."

Liam looked up at Red Shawl; her eyes seemed to be filled with pity for him, a pity that he didn't dare feel for himself. If he did, he thought he would break into a million pieces.

His father shrugged, and tried to change the subject. "You know, you look just like your *máthair* in those damned buckskin clothes, and your hair is too long."

"Don't you like me?" Liam questioned.

"I don't dislike you. Is that what you think?

A pregnant silence hung between them as Liam counted the minutes until his father began speaking again. What good would it do to tell his father that was exactly what he did think? His father blustered slightly, "I just want you to be tough, to be a man. It's a hard world, my son. I know. I've seen people blown to bits in front of my eyes. Burned down to the bone. You have to be hard in this world. You'll find out. You go around looking like that, and you'll soon find out. It's not just because it's wrong and

you'll burn in hell fire." His father shook his head to emphasize his words. "I've seen a lot of the world, son. It's a terribly cruel world if you don't belong."

"But I'm happy here," Liam whispered.

"Liam, listen to me son. This place, here," Timothy made a circle with his hands out to include the entire camp, "is just an island in a big storm that's coming from the east. These people, these Indians, they can't stop it from happening. No one can stop it. You heard about what that Colonel Chivington did at Sand Creek. He massacred over five hundred Cheyenne – men, women and children. A lot of children. It's Ireland all over again."

"Did you tell Lone Horn or Spotted Elk that?"

"They'd heard that some of those gold miners out there had had a hand in it," his father spat out. "So, I told 'em that boatloads of white folks were coming out here to settle the land. But I also said I had no quarrel with 'em, and that I'm only here for the gold. They've fed us through this winter, and it's been hard. I felt I owed them that much."

"So you reckon if there's already been trouble, you can't stop more trouble from coming?"

His father reflected carefully then spoke to him quietly. "Liam, these people are supposed to be our enemies. Please understand why I told them that they were in trouble, that the army would head out west the minute they were finished with the South. There's going to be a war between the United States and the Indians. And with what I've seen, the Indians are going to be in mighty big trouble. They've told me that the buffalo are disappearing. Who do you think is responsible? In Ballinglass in '46, just after the

blight started, the bloody English landlord there leveled sixty-one houses, and the tenants weren't even behind in their rents. It was just the beginning of the potato blight. People died with grass in their mouths. I was just lucky, very lucky to get out with the skin on my back. And your mother, well, she was never really the same afterwards. It's the same thing here. These people have fed us and let us stay here for nothing, which is more than the US army ever did for me. Giving them advance warning that the army is coming won't change the outcome, I'm afraid."

Liam had no idea what these words meant, but he laid his cheek on his father's coarse jacket. "Don't worry," he said softly. "I understand. And I won't tell anyone."

"That's enough, boy." Timothy pushed Liam aside, clearly discomfited by even this small physical intimacy with his son, and got up to leave.

"Where are you going?" Liam asked him, looking over again at Red Shawl.

"I'm going to sleep. I'm tired. And you - you need to save your resources for our trip to Colorado. Good night." And he was gone.

Liam was moved over to the other side of the tepee to speak to his friend, "I wish I knew what he wanted," he whispered to Two Deer Dancing.

~\*~

As Commander trots toward the cemetery, Liam reflects that he understands now exactly what his father wanted, at least once they had left the Lakota camp. Timothy had needed him at the mine all right, but that was because he was increasingly too sick to work the claim much of the time. So, Liam had gone to school for two years and then begun working at fourteen. He worked alone for most of the time until the last year when he'd hired the Lincolns to help him. Today, the irony of Timothy dying before the

discovery of the gold pleases Liam. He thinks there is some rough justice in this. His father, he recalls, was all about roughness and toughness, and the whole thing seems to fit together.

Then he sees the white picket fence of the cemetery, and his mind turns back to the more recent past. It was only by a whisker that he'd managed to follow his father's wishes for a Catholic funeral. Liam had dragged a Catholic priest out from Cripple Creek to officiate at his father's funeral. He'd dangled a large donation to the church in front of Father McClintock's righteous face, and that had taken care of any possible scruples the priest had about going out to the O'Connor spread. Liam's own son is also buried there. He had been born prematurely and therefore has no name on his small white stone marker. Annie had taken this loss greatly to heart: it had hastened her final decline and death. And if there was anyone in this world that Liam had cared about, it had been Annie. Tomorrow, he now knew, he was leaving to go far away, and he had decided what he needed to say to his dead wife before he left.

Appropriately, today is Sunday. How Annie would have laughed at that, understanding, as she did, her husband's disinclination to go to Mass except on Christmas and Easter – unless he was pressed. He would rather sit and tell her the Lakota myths that he remembered, stories about *ikotomi* the spider, about *Arikana* woman who had turned into the Standing Rocks or about White Buffalo Woman.

He looks around him. Annie had liked it here, at the farthest extent of his property. She'd frequently taken her Appaloosa, Sure Foot, out here, just to stare at the distant, pale, blue-white top of Pike's Peak and dream of secrets she never revealed to her husband.

Despite Annie being, in her own way, more masculine than any of the cowhands that slept in his bunkhouse, Liam could never have believed how quickly death had pulled her down by the heels, like a large buck being tailed by wolves. Yet die she did, hacking and coughing her way to her death by slow inches just like his mother. Even the vigilant, ministering hand of Two Deer Dancing had been unable to do anything more than soothe her pain. Liam begins to drift back again into the past.

~\*~

Annie loved the Morning Star Ranch, and won over Hortense, who never stopped grumbling that he'd brought home another boy to feed instead of a lady to groom and watch over. Yet Hortense was vigilant and devoted when Annie sickened a few months after he'd married her. He eventually found out that she'd had an earlier bout of illness that her family managed to beat back with special treatments and a long visit to a San Francisco sanatorium for tuberculosis.

As soon as he realized that she was sick, he took her to all the doctors he could find in Denver. Finding none of them helpful, he then took her and Hortense out to the clinic in San Francisco, but it was no use. The disease had his wife in its iron fist, and it wouldn't let her go. It hadn't helped that she'd miscarried their child in its sixth month, and she'd felt she'd let him down. Finally, worn out by the regimen of harsh medications, she told him that she wanted to go home to the Morning Star to die in her own bedroom that faced east. That had been a bad night.

For one of the worst hours of his life, he'd sat in an armchair in the window of his hotel room that looked out over San Francisco Bay at the top of a hill, and wondered why it was that someone as good and pure as his Annie would have to die. Liam could be a

hard bastard in his business dealings with strangers, and he knew it. However, with the people that he considered his family he was a different man. Eventually, a strong hand shook his shoulder, and he awakened in the half-darkened hotel room to see Hortense's fine-boned, light mahogany face staring at him.

"Miss Annie, she's not doing so good Mr. Liam," Hortense said, her soft dark eyes slightly blurred with tears. "She wants to go home to the Morning Star."

"She can't die," he said feebly, grasping for words. "Maybe we should take her back to the clinic."

"That won't do any good, sir." When he realized the truth of this assertion, he turned away, reluctant to share his grief.

He blinked, and tears came to his eyes. Hortense shook her head helplessly. "It's too late, Mr. Liam. Miss Annie, she was sick when she married you. You've taken good care of her, done all you could. You've been a good husband."

"I should kill her family!" He rubbed a spot between his eyes and then he gasped as a hideous pain jabbed somewhere in the vicinity of his chest. It must be, he thought, the heavy iron bands breaking around his heart. Since Kathleen's death, he'd guarded his heart carefully – only surrendering it, very much against his will, to Two Deer Dancing. And look how that had turned out! He hadn't figured on what might happen if Annie had made him care about her. He thought when his mother had died he would declare his own personal war on love: it hurt so goddamned much.

"Damn and double damn!" he spat. He knew, if he was honest with himself, that any such war was useless; and now he wanted more than ever to save them all – all the Annies and all the Kathleens. As he spoke, another realization took hold of him,

exhausted and depleted as he was. He could beg the sun to stop moving around the earth in her unending diurnal circuits, so that disease and destruction would stop temporarily. But there were no prayers to make it possible, no rituals or sacrifices – love and death were each, in their own way, inevitable.

Kneeling down in front of him on the floor Hortense took his hand, and she shook her head. "I know she's the only woman you ever loved, sir." He opened his mouth to debate that point, but she put her hand in front of his mouth. "No sir, I won't speak about it again. I know my place. But Miss Annie, she can't live, sir. She just wants to go home to her own room at the Morning Star, and not die in some medical clinic in a strange city. You got to do right by her now." He held Hortense's hand tightly, and nodded. His throat was now so constricted and dry that he was incapable of speech.

Liam hired a special Pullman car for the train to take his wife back to Colorado the following day. The long buggy ride back to the ranch from the station had been difficult as well.

Two months later, Annie died in her bedroom at the Morning Star, just as the sun came up over the eastern horizon. He sat there silently watching as death robbed the colour from her face, and the morning sunlight touched it with gold. He doubted that he would have had the strength to leave the room had Hortense not brought in John to force him out into the treacherous daylight, so that the undertaker could put Annie in the rosewood casket with the white satin lining that had been brought with in the funeral carriage.

Today, Liam sits down cross-legged on the ground in front of the small sandstone marker he'd had carved in Denver with the claddagh design engraved on it, a crowned heart holding two hands and the name 'Annie Brook O'Connor 1862 –1892' with "Requiescat in Pace" written underneath. He throws his hat to the ground and brings out a flask of water. He smiles wistfully, and tosses some water back before beginning his discussion with his dead wife.

"Hey Annie, it's me again. I've been minding my grammar, just like you taught me. I guess you know that. Anyway, you remember how I always said that we'd go to Europe and collect things to bring home. I'm doing it now, going away. It's a beautiful day, bright and sunny, just about the best kind of autumn day. You'd like it if you were here: it's perfect for riding. So I'm going out there," he gestures expansively at the east, "to see what I can find. Maybe I'll even find another wife, but she won't be a replacement for you. I don't see that I'm going to feel that way about another woman again. Since you've been gone, I've tried to fight off the urges – but you know how it is. Little Vera found a replacement for Michaela. You remember, I told you about her last time I visited you. Like I said, this one's just as nice as Michaela, and I can't really help myself. I'm human and frail."

He strokes the side of the marker. "I'm still a man, but I just can't seem to work up any interest in any woman since you've been gone. Maybe it'll be different far away. Maybe it won't, but I need to find out for myself."

The pale shadow of his wife rises before his eyes, seemingly daring him not to tell the truth. He considers it. Annie wouldn't have cared where he found love, particularly after she was gone, but she certainly would disagree with his present method of going

about it. For Annie, the whorehouses and the secretive, yet casual, pick-ups would never allow Liam to surrender his heart again. Maybe that was what was wrong with him. Not to search out for more love would demean the love that he and Annie had had together, and maybe he would need to seek out new words to describe any new love he found. The old words – sodomite, pervert, queer – maybe they had nothing to do with him. Once he'd told Annie what he'd been called, and tried to explain what it meant, but she just looked at him with her glance of infinite kindness and told him he was foolish. Maybe so.

Then he sits for a long time and thinks about the past before he turns around and heads southeast, back home. The sun strikes the tops of the Rockies, and turns them gold and pink. Long, deep purple and blue shadows appear on the sides of the mountains, and finally the sun begins to sink in the west. It is nightfall before he reaches the main house, a large low-slung dwelling faced with red stone.

From where he's sitting, he can see Hortense on the porch, waiting for his return. He gets off his horse and looks at the house. He loves this place, and however far he goes, he knows he will have to come back here – that a part of him belongs to the smoke of the campfires, the clear cold streams and the clean, piney air. It is as much a part of him as the Boston slums, the docks of Provincetown, the encampment of the Miniconjou and the life he once had in this house with Annie. He wonders if he can ever find someone he could love in the same way as Two Deer Dancing. He considers if there is anyone as sweet in the world as Annie, and he shakes his head.

His love for Annie was special. He doesn't think he will ever feel that way about any woman again, and he doesn't want any more failed experiments in normalcy. He is

what he is. Annie and his mother had needed him desperately, and he couldn't save them no matter how hard he tried. And yet it was not that simple. That spark, that act of loving, had opened up a heart that would have otherwise remained cold and alone. That alone made loving worth the pain.

He had lost Two Deer Dancing because the time had been wrong. The frontier was gone, and the west had become a different place with different people – white faces instead of brown ones. Maybe someday it would turn back, he doesn't know, but the great grasslands of flowing prairie are like an ocean with their ebb and flow. People had come, and had built cities before. He'd seen them in the deserted reaches further south in Arizona, empty rooms and houses where once a great people had lived. No one living remembered them.

The prairie, he reflects, is like a backwards mirage. In the empty desert, the mirage is an illusion of green trees and water where nothing existed. The prairie, in contrast, seems to be a vast expanse of nothingness. Yet it isn't so. Rolling out to meet the eastern woodlands, it belongs only to those who could harness its true potential – the horse and the buffalo, the Lakota and the Cheyenne. Like love, it belongs to no one. It is a gift, freely given by the gods themselves, and with its breathtaking storms and sudden springs, it would always be beyond control. It tells him everything he needs or will ever need to know about life and death.

Out there somewhere is what he is searching for, a love that will help him redefine himself. A love bigger than the whole damn frontier can hold. A love he will make up of new words, and which he will transform with his own body. He will bring it back here, after the winds blew him away, and let it loose. And like the geese, it will

come back him to him in the spring calling out to him as it moves by him in wave after wave. It will awaken his heart, and set him free while he sits and watches it under the limitless sky.

### Bibliography

American Indian Language: Lakota. Internet. Database available online.

<http://language.nativeweb.org/>. Date accessed: January 27, 2006.

Bernstein, Mary. "Identities and Politics: Toward a Historical Understanding of the Lesbian and Gay Movement." Social Sciences History 26.3 (Fall 2002): 531-81.

Boag, Peter. "Sexuality, Gender, and Identity in the Great Plains History and Myth." Great Plains Quarterly 18. Fall (1998): 327-40.

"Boston, Mass. Historical." David Rumsey Historical Map Collection. Insight Map Collections, 2004. Internet. Database available online.  
<http://www.davidrumsey.com/collections/cartography.html>. Date accessed: January 27, 2006.

Brown, Dee and Martin F. Schmitt. The American West. Toronto: Simon & Schuster, 1994.

Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Calder, Alison. "Getting the Real Story: Implications of the Demand for Authenticity in Writings From the Canadian West." True West : Authenticity and the American West. Eds. William and Nathaniel Lewis Handley. Lincoln: U of Nebraska, 2004.

Captured by Indians : 15 Firsthand Accounts, 1750-1870. ed. Frederick Drimmer. New York: Dover, 1985. Rpt. of Scalps and Tomahawks. 1961.

Dietrich, Lisa L. "Deconstructing gender dichotomies : conceptualizing the Native American berdache." Intersections Spring 1994. Database available online. <<http://depts.washington.edu/chid/intersections.php?article=1994c2>>. Date accessed: January 18, 2006.

Driskill, Qwo-Li. "Stolen From Our Bodies: First Nations Two-Spirits/Queers and the Journey to a Sovereign Erotic." Studies in American Indian Literature 16.2 (2004): 50-64.

Edwards, Elwyn Hartley and Stephen Price. The Complete Book of Horse and Saddle Equipment. New York: Exeter Books, 1981.

Emmitt, Robert. The Last War Trail : The Utes and the Settlement of Colorado. Norman: U of Oklahoma, 1954.

Faderman, Lillian. Surpassing the Love of Men : Romantic Friendship Between Women From the Renaissance to the Present. New York: William Morrow and Co., 1981.

Fitzpatrick, David. Irish Immigration 1801 – 1921. Dublin: The Economic and Social History Society of Ireland, 1984.

Fluck, Winfried. "The American Romance" and the Changing Functions of the Imaginary." New Literary History 27.3 (1996): 415-57.

Gernsheim, Alison. Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: A Photographic Survey. Rev. ed. New York: Dover, 1981.

Grant, Bruce. Concise Encyclopedia of the American Indian. Rev. ed. New York:

Random House, 2000.

Hahn, Steven. A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration. Cambridge: Harvard U P, 2003.

“Irish Dictionary Online.” Irish Dictionary Online, 2003-2006. Internet Database available online. <<http://www.englishirishdictionary.com/>>. Date accessed: January 27, 2006.

“Irish Volunteers in the Civil War.” The Irish Volunteers, 2000. Internet. Database available Online. <<http://irishvolunteers.tripod.com>>. Date Accessed: January 27, 2006.

Jensen, Richard E., Paul, R. Eli and John E. Carter. Eyewitness at Wounded Knee. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P., 1991.

Katz, Jonathan Ned. Love Stories : Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality. Chicago: U of Chicago, 2001.

“Lakota Phrase Archives.” St. Joseph’s Indian School, 2001-2006. Internet. Database available online. <<http://www.stjo.org/index.cfm?cat=1&artid=90>> Date accessed: January 27, 2006.

Lewis, Jon E. ed. The Mammoth Book of Native Americans. London: Constable & Robinson, 2004.

“Massachusetts Volunteer Cavalry 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment.” Updated 16 Feb. 1999. Internet. Database available online. <<http://hometown.aol.com/Shortyhack/1stmass.html>>

Date accessed: January 20, 2006.

McCaffrey, Lawrence J. The Irish Diaspora in America, London: Indiana U P., 1976,

Miller, Kerby A. Emigrants and Exiles : Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America.

Oxford: Oxford U P., 1985.

Osborn, Tracey. "Teacher Oz's Kingdom of History – Civil War." Internet. Database available online. <<http://www.teacheroz.com/civilwar.htm>> Date accessed: January 14, 2006.

Pearsall, Ronald. The Worm in the Bud : The World of Victorian Sexuality. Toronto: The Macmillan, 1969.

Roscoe, Wil. Changing Ones : Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America. New York: St. Martin's P, 1998.

Rowse, A. L. Homosexuals and History : A Study of Ambivalence in Society, Literature and the Arts. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1977.

Schüzer, Marjorie Anne Napewastewiñ. "Winyanktehca : Two-souls person." Conference of the European Network of Professional on Transsexualism, Manchester, England. Internet. Database available online.  
<<http://www.gender.org.uk/conf/trilogy/winkte.htm>> Date accessed: February 18, 2006.

"Slum pictures of Boston and New York." MITOPENCOURSEWARE : Lecture 4: Urban Design and the American Workplace. Fall 2001. Internet. Database

available online. <[http://www.core.org.cn/OCW\\_CN/Urban-Studies-and-Planning/11-001Jfall2001/LectureNotes/detail/lec4.htm](http://www.core.org.cn/OCW_CN/Urban-Studies-and-Planning/11-001Jfall2001/LectureNotes/detail/lec4.htm)> Date accessed: September 6, 2005; September 17, 2005; January 6, 2005.

Sonstegard, Adam. "Performing the "Unnatural" Life : America's First Gay Autobiography." Biography 4. Fall (2002): 545-68.

Steele, Philip. Clothes and Crafts in Victorian Times. Milwaukee: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 2000.

Stegner, Wallace. Beyond the Hundredth Meridian (Reprint). New York: Penguin Books, 1992.

Vanderhaeghe, Guy. The Last Crossing. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2004.

Willett, C. and Phyllis Cunnington. The History of Underclothes. Rev.ed. New York: Dover Publications, 1992.

Williams, Walter L. The Spirit and the Flesh : Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.

Wunder, John R. "Another Frontier : Law and Sexuality in the American West." Journal of the West 41.1 (2002): 3-5.