HO YEKIYAPI
OKICICUPI
Sharing Voices

A publication of the
Oglala Lakota College
Humanities and Social Science
Department
2011-2012
A WEEKEND IN THE HILLS
BY ANGEL WHITE EYES

It had been a long week, and the newly engaged couple was excited to get away for the weekend. They had been planning a trip to the Black Hills for months and Ishmael finally was able to take time off his hectic schedule. He was a medic for the Oglala Sioux Tribe’s Ambulance Service. They were heavily understaffed with the second most calls in the whole state of South Dakota. Angela was lucky if she was able to see Ishmael for more than a night. The trip meant everything to her and if Ishmael were to cancel he knew it would be the end of him.

The only thing Angela wasn’t excited for was the process of packing. Ishmael had to pack everything that was needed for survival, even if they would only be gone for the weekend. They packed the necessities like food, clothes, and sleeping bags, everything that was needed for a camping trip. But Ishmael had to have his guns, which consisted of a Glock 17, his AR-15, and his new shotgun. Angela thought he was being absolutely ridiculous, but his logic was “You never knew when there could be a bear or a wolf still lurking in the Black Hills.” He also had to have his medic pack along with his every day carry pack. Angela grew frustrated with him but knew if she said anything, he would just have an answer to everything. So she gave her long deep sigh hoping he’d get the hint.

They finally started on the hour and a half trip to the Black Hills.

Their weekend had been quiet. They felt like they were the only ones in the whole Black Hills. It was both nerve racking yet peaceful. They hiked the hills, cuddled up to a fire, went swimming, and noticed there wasn’t another soul in sight. They had figured an event was going on elsewhere, so they shrugged it off and enjoyed it.

At the end of their weekend they decided to go into the city to have dinner before taking the long trip home. They noticed that there were no other cars on the highway. “Maybe tourist season isn’t in full swing yet.” Ishmael thought out loud. “Yeah I’m sure everyone’s just in Rapid. There’s probably a stock show going on or some shit,” Angela replied.

As they pulled into Rapid City, it seemed that time stopped, everything stood still. Cars were deserted in the middle of the road, nothing was moving. “What the fuck?” Ishmael exclaimed.

“What’s going on?” Angela asked wearily. “We need to check this out” Ishmael replied calmly.

“No! maybe a tornado was coming or something.”

“You why would people leave their cars in the middle of the road?” Ishmael asked.

“I don’t know! Let’s check Walmart, there’s ALWAYS people at Walmart.”

“Fine.” Ishmael gave in so an argument wouldn’t suffice. As they drove through town, they noticed the silence that befell among the busy streets. “This is creepy!”

When they got out of the car, Ishmael loaded his Glock and carefully placed it in his holster. They slowly walked through the doors of Walmart, looking every way to see if there was any life. Everything in the store had been trashed. Food was spilled all over the floors, clothes and products were out of place. Ishmael insisted they look around the store to see if they could figure out what had happened. They began to walk down the aisles slowly. The only sounds they could hear were the echoes of their shoes hitting the floor. As they got to the back they could hear rustling.

“Hello? Is anyone there?” Ishmael called out, keeping his right hand over his pistol. He knew something wasn’t right, in his mind he was freaking out but wouldn’t dare to show Angela, knowing it would only cause her to panic. Ishmael could feel Angela’s arm grip around his left arm squeeze tighter as they walked forward. Suddenly they heard footsteps slide against the tile.

“Hey are you all right? What happened here?” Ishmael called out again. They began to hear moans. Angela’s grip grew tighter. “Do you need help?” they moved closer, and finally saw a figure making its way toward them.

“I’m going to check them out, they might be hurt” Ishmael said after he pulled his arm away from Angela. He ran down the aisle to meet the figure. Angela noticed the figure was moving in a peculiar way, almost like it was inhuman. Then without warning Ishmael shot his Glock three times.

“Holy fuck! It’s here! It’s finally here!” Ishmael yelled in the distance. Angela ran to him, “What just happened?” “Angela it’s here!”

They both sat in silence as Ishmael sped down the highway back to the rez. You could see the horror that was engraved in their faces. Finally Angela broke the silence. “What are we going to do when we get back?” “Well we first need to see if our families are okay. Then once we group with them we can start our plan.”

Once they got into Oglala they could see that there were still cars on the road. They pulled into Ishmael’s mother’s house. He ran up the stairs and banged on her door. “Ina, answer the door!” She opened the door slightly. “Ishmael? What’s going on?”

“I don’t have time to explain you need to come with Angela and I.” he said hurriedly.

After what seemed like the longest 20 minutes in all their lives, they finally made it into Pine Ridge. They drove up to the stoplight. Everything seemed normal. Cars were still on the road, teenagers were still walking the streets in their snaggling gear, and Big Bats was packed like it was the 10th of the month. After what Ishmael and Angela had been through, they couldn’t believe it.

Angela ran into her house.

“Mom, Dad there’s a zombie apocalypse going on!” Angela’s parents both looked up from their movie and began to laugh. “I’m serious!” They noticed the terror that had struck her face.

“What are you talking about? There are no zombies here!” Angela’s father claimed. “Check the T.V.!” she demanded. “The cable and internet have been down all day.” Angela’s mother said. The only survival this woman needed was the Internet to play her Facebook games.

“We need to do something!” Angela whined.

“Should I run sweat?” her dad asked jokingly.

“Rapid is deserted!” Ishmael chimed in.

“What are we going to do?” Angela cried out.

“Let’s just prepare, then once it hits Pine Ridge, we’ll be ready.” Ishmael replied calmly.

A week went by and there still were no effects of the world crumbling around them. While the whole world was collapsing, Pine Ridge stayed safe.
THE THIRD TIME IS THE CHARM
BY MARGI BETTELYOUN

It is my third one. I wore the first two down so far that they broke. This one is wide enough to stand up to life, it is encompassing, and it is experienced. They all came from the same man, my husband. The first two were like we used to be, fragile. This one can take anything and keep on shining. It is my wedding band.

We met the day after my 19th birthday. We were married 10 days later in the back of a furniture store by the Justice of the Peace. That was the first ring. It was an $11.00 blue light special from Kmart. It was pretty but ordinary and not very well made; like the people it united. It did not stand up to scrubbing cloth diapers, washing glass baby bottles, gardening and housework. That was 38 years, 3 kids, 5 grandkids and a half a lifetime of experiences ago.

That ring broke because it wasn’t us. It was fragile. Most new marriages are fragile, but ours gathers steam with every passing year. In the first 5 years of our marriage we learned how to be parents and orphans. We buried our parents and our oldest daughter. It is all in the circle of the band. We enjoyed the little lives of our son and another daughter. And then, a few years later, we welcomed another son. They were such cute, interesting little kids, but then they became teenagers! And now they are these amazing adults! How did that happen so fast? The answers lie in the circle of the band.

Somewhere in this time came the next ring that was much like the first except that it came from a jewelers not Kmart. It would not stand up to our lives. Our lives were always changing and always staying the same. This man who gave these rings was a “jack of all trades and master of a few.” His jobs, the kids’ lives, and my life were all encircled in this band. So the rings were college students, accountants, Tribal Treasurers, farmers, business owners, football players, wrestlers, straight A students, home-makers, woodworkers, business managers and postal workers. That is quite a bit for a simple little ring to endure. We still needed something with substance that would symbolize our strength, endurance, our commitment, our love.

So for the last 25 years I have had this wide, gold, capable band that can handle anything, like the people it unites. It has outlasted the other rings by decades just like we can outlast any trouble that comes our way. It has not come off my finger in all these years through surgery, slop, troubles, and joys. The story is in the circle of the band. It still has shine and a little of the original pattern. It endures...like the people it unites. It is all in the circle of the band.

I will never rip a single bird
From among its flock, spread out low over the field,
And devour it raw
There amongst the ankle-high autumn cornstalks.
I am not that specific.

But it’s possible
I’ve been pulled so hard
From above and below
At one time,
Stretched even by my own doing,
That near my belly button
There could be a single Fine Strand Of me
Stronger than the guts That holds together stubbornly.
This piece may be So fine
That if you were to twist, You could paint what I am
This story is about a family in a band of Northern Sioux. Long ago, a battle took place that would be remembered for generations to come. The Cheyenne, Arapaho and Northern Sioux gathered for a Sundance in the valley of the Little Big Horn River. There were scouts up on a hill, doing their duties. The scouts noticed something shining in the distance.

The scouts ran back to camp to inform the people. They told them that something was coming. The shining object was believed to be a sword from a cavalry soldier. They knew this to be true.

The scouts told the people to gather the elders, children and women and move to the west end. A day or so later, the people were preparing for a battle. The scouts went out on the hills to do more surveying. The scouts returned to camp again to warn the people that the soldiers were indeed coming. The people knew what was going to happen and soon, gunshots were heard over the hills. Some were crying, others singing death songs. The people could hear horses neighing and the sounds of battle.

Among those in camp was a family with a brother and a sister. The brother was younger, maybe fourteen years old. Being the only boy, he wanted to join the fight, but he was denied because of his age. However, he was granted permission to watch the battle to learn. When he got there, the battle had intensified. All of a sudden there was a deafening silence. Nothing was heard.

Some of the warriors returned. They told the people that they killed all of the soldiers, but there were still more out there somewhere. They went to get the wounded and dead soldiers, as they have always done after a battle. The boy had not returned.

When the people went searching for loved ones, they found the boy. He had been shot and killed. When they picked up his body, the ground beneath him was soaked with his blood. The blood was red, or “luta.”

Since the only surviving child of that family was a girl, they named her Red Earth Woman—Maka Luta Win. They named her this to remember and honor her brother who had soaked the earth with his blood in his first battle. The name Red Earth Woman has been in my family for generations since the Battle of the Little Big Horn. This is the way it has been and will always be.

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Maps in my car, maps at home, is this a map in my purse? My mind is already on the highway. Across the plains, over the badlands. I don’t have much money but that doesn’t worry me. Hell, my little Toyota is my pal. Not much oil or gas, no matter how long the trip. Powwows, rodeos, art shows. Who cares? I yearn to be on the highway. Each trip brings a new adventure. Friends, strangers. So many people to meet.

Their eyes were watching god Pleading, beseeching, imploring Their eyes were watching god Praying…

Their eyes were watching god Moving, dancing, singing Their eyes were watching god Favoring his divine love and attention Their eyes were watching god…
Imagine warm summer sun, not hot, just warm. Imagine just mowed grass smelling like the fields of heaven. Imagine air so soft you can feel it on your skin.

Now imagine children who are both innocent and rambunctious, naïve and yet experienced in their little corner of the world. They are not poor, nor are they rich. They know security so well that they do not know what it is. They live happily in a world of everything... and nothing. I know, because I was one of them.

We had nothing, no game boy, no MP3, no x box and very little television. We had everything, our minds, our imaginations, and our energy. On this particular warm summer day with soft air upon our faces and the sweet smell of grass implanted in our brains, we decided to put our riches (minds, imaginations, and energies) to work.

I lived in a neighborhood of children. There were two Meyers, one Lubshough, four Massas, five Shorts, four Finleys, and four of us Lewandowski’s. And we all had friends who lived in other parts of town! There was much imagination in our group coupled with tireless energy. We roamed the neighborhood from morning ’till night on these summer days. But most of the time the majority of the kids were in our yard. We had a big yard that served many purposes and adventures.

Just outside of the western edge was a railroad track. The freight trains usually hauled sugar beets or bentonite. The engineers and conductors knew all of us kids. We had lots of adventures in our yard, we wanted to do something different. There was no whining “I’m bored” in our group. We decided to put on a backyard circus. We spent several days planning, making posters and general plotting. No parents were advised of our plans. Especially not ours; my Mother was a Registered Nurse and worked nights. We didn’t know that then, we just thought she slept a lot. We were always under strict orders to be quiet. Putting on a circus is not a quiet project but we managed to keep it under wraps. We put our posters all over town, robbed all the Kool-Aid, sugar and popcorn we could from the other houses and stored it in one of the woodpile cabins.

On the big day, every kid in the neighborhood was up early. At our house, we couldn’t wait for our Dad to leave for work and our Mom to go to bed. As soon as they were out of the way my brothers went out and mowed the grass with the old push mower so it would look nice. My sister and I rounded up blankets and sheets and started making Kool-Aid and popcorn. Soon our house and yard was a swarm of busy, but quiet, little bees. The first thing was hanging blankets and sheets on Mom’s clotheslines which were strung between trees in the upper part of the side yard. These blanket compartments were to be housing for our “side-shows”. Next we had to move our swing set to the yard. This was to be our trapeze. We carried out our kitchen chairs and blocks from the woodpile. Kids stuck random chairs from their houses. We set this oddball assortment under the pines for our audience. The charge to get in was 10 cents each which was collected at the driveway.

My sister wore heavy, forbidden make-up and lots of old jewelry and sat in her blanket room staring at a clear glass bowl turned upside down filled with rumpled tin foil and plastic wrap. For 5 cents she would tell your future which was always happy. My oldest brother wore a wrestling singlet and lifted a broomstick that had hub caps attached to the ends. He had used his model car paint to put “500lbs” on each end. For another 5 cents you could watch this amazing 10 year old lift this astonishing weight! One of my friends and I had borrowed one of my Mom’s old housedresses. My friend stuck out her left arm and leg and I stuck out my right. For another 5 cents you could see a truly freaky two headed girl, one was red-headed and the other was brunette.

For our big top show we had trapeze artists do death defying leaps with net from a frightening 5 feet. Yippy, our funny little dog did tricks like jumping through my hoola hoop. He wasn’t really talented, just always hungry. His “trainer” had bits of liver that was supposed to have been eaten at supper the night before. My sister and I and our friends did every tumbling (gymnastic) move known to mankind. There were also kids wandering around selling Kool-Aid and popcorn. We used my Mom’s juice glasses and cereal bowls. You could get a glass of semi-cold Kool-Aid and a bowl of buttery popcorn for 10 cents. Unfortunately, the refreshments were our undoing. We had no idea that any one would come to our game, let alone pay. To our surprise, the yard was packed with adults from all over town! The frequent and sloppy trips into the kitchen for more Kool-Aid finally roused our Mom. The scariest sight of the day was not all the people looking at me for entertainment, it was the sight of the sunlight reflecting from a pool of Kool-Aid up into my Mother’s face that was a cloud of confusion, curiosity, and Mom-type anger! She stood there in her nightgown with her bare feet stuck in sugary Kool-aid. I took advantage of her hesitation and did what any kid would do. I ran! Naturally, she followed. Another neighbor was wowing the crowd with his unicycle so they didn’t see my Mother in her summer nightgown, hair all askew, and red Kool-aid feet. She saw them first. I tried with all my might to stay as far away from the house as possible. I also tried to alert my brothers and sister but they were caught up in the magic of putting on the show. They were not in the habit of listening to their little sister anyway. The next time I saw her, she was presentable. The anger was gone; it was replaced by, surprisingly, wonder and pride!! She told us over and over that we should have let her know so she could take pictures. She was amazed that we could have pulled the whole thing off.

I was one of the youngest conspirators that day so I was not informed of any profits. All I know for sure is that it was a memorable event. We learned what can happen when you mix a warm summer day, the smell of grass, and soft air in a big welcoming yard together with innocent, rambunctious, energetic children...a mess with so many memories.
When people think of businesses, they think of big establishments like Wal-Mart, Runnings, and McDonalds. Although these businesses can be found pretty much everywhere you travel, they aren’t the only companies out there. Rogerson Business Services says small businesses make up 98 percent of the nation’s economy. According to Robert Longley on About.com, they also make up more than 99.7 percent of all employers. They can be found in every town and city in America. Chances are, every tiny community out there has at least one small place of business.

Dictionary.com says an entrepreneur is “a person who organizes and manages a business undertak- ing, assuming the risk for the sake of the profit.” Entrepreneurs are a big factor to a community’s economic success. They are ambitious people with ideas that they believe can benefit not only themselves but also the people around them. They have the drive to succeed in anything they do. They are risk-takers who provide not only products and services, but jobs for local communities.

The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation lacks small business. Most businesses that have been opened in the past have failed within the first year. There have been tattoo shops, clothing stores, movie rental stores and even dollar stores that have been opened. None of them are still here today. The reservation has some large employers like the Oglala Sioux Tribal Government and Red Cloud Indian School, but with so few small businesses to help, there just aren’t enough jobs. With each new government census, Shannon County is declared one of the poorest of our nation’s 3,143 counties. According to Remember, in 2007 the reservation also had an unemployment rate in the 80-90% range. In this paper, I will tackle the question of how small businesses fail or succeed by interviewing local business owners. I will also be looking at companies that promote small businesses in Pine Ridge and other reservations.

Lakota Funds was founded in 1996 with the help of Oglala Lakota College and First Nations Development Institute. Lakota Funds became the first Native American Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). Their mission is to reduce the poverty level and increase the number of businesses on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Today, they offer classes in financing, success training, and business planning. These classes educate entrepreneurs, young and old, on what to expect when the business opens and how to handle the hurdles that they may face. They not only offer classes, but loans to entrepreneurs who wants to start a business of their own. They started out small loans of only $500. Today, the biggest loan they offer is $200,000. Their loan portfolio is now more than $4.4 million. Since their beginning, they have created over 1,000 jobs on the reservation and have assisted in the development in hundreds of businesses.

Although Lakota Funds is making a big difference on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, but we are still one of the poorest places in the whole United States. Why haven’t more businesses succeeded with Lakota Funds’ help? In short, it is one thing for a person to learn about business management and how to write a business plan. Actually operating a business is a whole different ball game. There is still a lot of work to be done on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. In order to change these statistics, entrepreneurs need to hang on to their motives and ambition that got them so far.

Kim Trujillo is a local business owner. Lakota Funds helped her get her bakery/flower shop off the ground in October 2010. She opened Bow K’s in Pine Ridge, South Dakota and it is still going strong today. Kim sells floral arrangements along with a variety of baked goods. Her plan from the beginning was to make nachos, baked goods and floral arrangements. Since then, she has added breakfast burritos and lunch specials to her menu. Before Kim opened Bow K’s she worked at the local Indian Health Services (IHS) for ten years in business administration. She also has a college education and already had some knowledge in business management when she began her business venture. She began taking classes with Lakota Funds during her preparation for the shop’s big opening. Lakota Funds taught Kim how to properly write a business plan. It only took her six months after completing her classes with Lakota Funds to finally open her dream shop.

Belva Matthews also owns her own business in Pine Ridge. She opened the Higher Ground Coffee Shop on the 15th of May in 2005. She used to be a teacher at Pine Ridge Elementary School before starting her business. After tragedy in her life struck and she lost her daughter and mother in the same month, she took a break from teaching. Dealing with such a big loss and big changes, she began selling coffee from her church. She called it “The Nook.” The building she now owns used to be a small house right next to her church. She says she has been very fortunate in terms of making her business a strong foundation for her family and community. Volunteers have been a big help in making Higher Ground a success. They have painted the building, gotten decorations, and fixed numerous things around her shop and she is extremely grateful for everything they have done. It only took her a few months to move her small coffee business from her church to the newly formed space next door. She never thought she would ever own her own business. Now that she runs one, she says she enjoys her work and what she does for a living. She says it’s not just her coffee shop, it also belongs to the community of Pine Ridge, and she takes pride in keeping the shop nice and neat from the inside out.

Looking into the future of businesses on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, I personally hope to see a huge spike in numbers, especially in the number of jobs available. But Pine Ridge doesn’t just need more jobs, it needs more people who will show up for work and be professional every day. There are lots of good, hard-working people in Pine Ridge, but sometimes we let personal lives interfere with our work ethic. It’s not just that we need more groups like Lakota Funds, the rest of us need to keep up our end of the bargain. Even though 80% of the reservation is unemployed, many businesses have trouble hiring dependable workers. And sometimes when a hardworking entrepreneur does defy the odds and open a business on the Rez, the community doesn’t do a good enough job shopping there. People will drive all the way to Rapid City or Chadron or Rushville to buy products they can buy right here at home, and support a local business in the process.

It is always exciting to see a new building going up or a new business opening somewhere in town. People are always interested in change. People just don’t want to do the changing themselves. We need to think about how the youth and future generations will benefit new businesses, and it starts with us: students here at OLC who will be the next generation of entrepreneurs.
Dear Jimbo,

I missed my chance again. He came into class today looking for me—I know he was! He's got_ to have my attention, but she's not much: real skinny cow that looks great in daisy dukes, baby tees, and wears a delicate cross pendant necklace. Not because she’s some devoted Catholic, but because it’s fashionable. It’s one of those non-devote crucifixes laying horizontally, nicely nestled right below her clavicle. These delicate, uninteresting skinny b—s always get the cute boys.

I think my revenge is that the cute boys are not always the good ones. They’re just the cute boys. Cute. Boys. That’s all they are. Still—I can crush hard on them. And in secret.

Not even Jimbo is in on all the time. BTW, Jimbo is my ‘code name’ for Journal. I’d rather call my secret writing a Journal (for all intents and purposes) because writing in a ‘diary’ is not fancy enough to say. ‘Journal’ sounds more mature, more adult, more intelligent. Right, Jimbo? Hey, I’m talkin’ to you—ha! Jimbo never talks back, thank goodness.

TANGENT (again): I honestly don’t know what the phrase, ‘for all intents and purposes’ means. I hear my dad say it a lot: “For all intents and purposes, these are the rules for house chores”; “For all intents and purposes’, means. I hear my dad say it a lot: “For all intents and purposes, these are the rules for house chores”; “For all intents and purposes, these are the rules for house chores”.

Anyway—yes, I've got some short stories that I thought would be perfect for a Christmas time prior to”. When he says it, all things begin to sound official, adult, and whoever utters the phrase should be taken more seriously—well, at least when the phrase is spoken.

And in secret.

To most at school, it’s a pipe dream to think that kind of social rule could ever be followed. I’m not giving up on that idea, though. Celibacy isn’t a realistic thing at my high school. I think it’s time we turn the clock back and resurrect some simple, moral rules: Lay off the physical.

To most at school, it’s a pipe dream to think that kind of social rule could ever be followed. I’m not giving up on that idea, though. Celibacy isn’t a realistic thing at my high school. I think it’s time we turn the clock back and resurrect some simple, moral rules: Lay off the physical.

Gee, whatta high horse I ride! Ha ha! But I don’t have to worry about some dang STD, or baby because of the way I think. That’s my story. That’s what I’m stickin’ to. It’s too bad I can’t confide in anyone that that’s how I truly feel about intimacy. Jimbo, thank Gawd for you and your loyalty!

On the other hand, I wonder if I attach myself to moral rules like ‘no sex’ so I can feel better about myself being too shy to actually try to land a boyfriend. Even if I did date Wendell, I wouldn’t let him have much more than cuddling and kissing (no tongue, please! Ugh!).

Ewwo! Just thinking about Wendell and that girl—I mean, even if it wasn’t true, aren’t they at all worried about people are saying? Whatevz, Wendell. Whatevz. I’m on to you and I know it’s really me you want—not Leyla.

But I gotta play it really cool, and make Wendell think I’m not interested in him. That makes him want me more, right? And that will work in my favor sooner or later, right? Makes me nervous just thinking about what I would say if he approached me.

I would just DIE!

April 13, 2012

Dear Jimbo,

I was right. Wendell likes me. I was walking down the hall (totally saw him coming my way, and I pretended I didn’t see him, though. I couldn’t keep the butterflies from flapping their wings so hardcore in my stomach; my throat got dry and squeezed up; my eyes looked down at my books to pretend like I was looking for some assignment in some weird critical inquiry moment; hands got shaky; dropped my pencil; was a complete and total mess).

He slowed down when he passed by me. My heart racing like some bat outta hell (title of one of dad’s old CDs). A sigh of relief when he passed me, but also deep heartache that the moment our bodies were next to each other didn’t even last an entire second. Utter dismay, sheer bliss. Whatta combination. I kept walking, looking down at my books and pretending they had some intellectual answer to a difficult and sophisticated Calculus question. What an actress!

Then—I heard his voice speak my name before I turned right toward the next hallway to disappear from his eyes (in the case he stopped and stared at my back while I walked away in theatrical ‘acting’ of oblivious after our quasi-shoulder-to-shoulder encounter only moments before).

“Misa!”

I gulped. Had to. Nervous. Surprised. Too much excitement for one day, let alone for an entire lifetime. He said my name a second time.

“Misa!”, this time a little louder since he thought I didn’t hear him before (Oh, but I did! I did hear you, my Romeo!). I turned around (still acting like I wasn’t paying attention), having ceased all walking. Looked at him looking at me. Would the Spanish omelet affect the romantic breath moment I was going to share with my love bunny? My eternal soul mate? My dear heart of hearts?

“Misa.”

“Yes”, in my romantic whimper of a response (THAT part wasn’t theatre—it just came out unrehearsed and sweet cherry like that).

Time. Stood. Still. A vacuum. At this point in timeless time. All histories of space and the creation of the expansive universe converged. Right. Then. And. There. Not even silence was silent enough. Somewhere in the distance, Beethoven played a serene violin (or was it Lil Wayne on the mic?). Can’t remember. The moment was perfect.

And short lived.

Skinny slor grabbed Wendell’s arm, ending all dreams. Ending all time with such ungrace.

Jimbo, I officially hate her.
DECEMBER 29, 1890
BY LENORA HUDSON

December 29, 1890
The first sliver of light of this new day slowly reveals itself in this space where we are lying. The bitter cold grips me, and I pray that warmth will soon be upon us. My child lies next to me, snuggling as far under my side as he can, to try to steal warmth from my body. I pull him closer into the curve of my breast and hold him tight and make sure he is fully covered so that the cold cannot get to him, but even so, I can see his frosty breath as it rhythmically flows in and out from between his lips. He sleeps soundly, seemingly unaware of this enveloping cold which threatens to take our flesh from us. I look down at his round little face, eyelashes, black, splayed across the tops of his cheeks, his eyebrows, perfect lines. I put my hand gently on his face and touch it as if to memorize its features. I marvel at this gift which has been given to me, a gift from the depths of my body and the depths of my soul. This child cannot know the completeness of my life because of his presence. He moves, as if to say, “let me sleep, do not wake me.” The milk in my breasts begins to surge against my nipples, and I uncover one breast and gently ease my nipple into his mouth. He takes it quickly and soon makes gulping noises as the first milk rushes from my breast.

Soon he is finished and lets my nipple slip slowly from his lips. I cover him, and we sleep again in each other’s warmth as we wait for the time to rise.

A loud, sharp, cracking noise tears through the crisp, cold morning air, and jolts me upright. I am confused, what is that noise?

Another sound which I cannot identify explodes outside my tent, and again, this time only louder, and again and again. Screams, I hear screams, I hear children crying for their mothers. I hear the voices of my relatives, hollering for each other and at each other, and the crunching sound of many feet running on the frozen snow. Someone falls, a cry of pain, and then more cries. I hear my name being called. “Run, run,” they say. I am too frightened to move, but finally I grab my son and wrap him then move hesitantly toward the opening of the tent, not knowing what is happening or what I should do. I peek out and everyone is running away from the campsite. I pause for a second and then I run, my son in my arms.

I am running and running and running until I stumble and fall. My son flies from my arms and screams as he lands on his back. His blanket opens, and he spills from it and rolls onto the hard, frozen snow. He is crying hard. As I crawl on my hands and knees to my son, I look and see people lying on the ground all around us in this ravine, lying in pools of red, harsh against the white, that are growing larger and larger, and all with their faces in the snow. I pick up my son and pull him to me. I struggle to my feet and begin to run again as I follow those who are running toward the early morning sun. I hear whistling sounds fly by my head and then thudding sounds and see more people fall. I continue to run, I cannot stop, I must not stop.

My chest is on fire, I cannot breathe, and I can no longer feel my feet, but I run, with my child in my arms, I run. There are screams, continuous screams, they do not stop. My child cries at the top of his lungs, but I hold him tighter and run. I am blinded by fear and by the tears streaming down my face. What is happening?

Suddenly, a searing pain in my back rips my breath away and stops me. I cannot cry out. I feel my child go limp in my arms. My back and my breasts are suddenly awash in hot liquid. I look down at my chest and my child, and we are joined together by the mingling of our blood. My knees buckle under me and I drop softly to the ground, but hold my son hard and tight to me. I hear his breath, gurgling as it leaves his body with red bloody bubbles pouring slowly from his mouth. I hold him tight, but there is no life. I try to scream – why? – but my mouth will not make the sound. I feel myself getting lighter. I cannot see the sky, and my thoughts are leaving me. Slowly I ease myself down and lie on my side on the frozen, snow-covered ground and sleep begins to overcome me as a blanket of warmth covers my body. My arms are heavy, but I hold him and touch his face as I sleep.
There was a skunk and three wild kittens that lived near each other. The skunk was different from the kittens, so they didn’t like to play with him.

Maka wan na igmu yamni watoglapi isakiyob te. Maka kin na igmuki lena ichitokab heun kici skatab sni.

They avoided the skunk at all times. When they play and run around, the skunk would watch them wishfully from behind a bush.

Maka kin toca heun keyab echub. Hena koskata na iyankapi channa, maka kin wayanya na koskata cin.

When the kittens would sleep the skunk would try to squeeze in, but the three kittens would wake up and growl at him. He wanted so much to fit in and be accepted, but the kittens kept to themselves.

Igmula kin istimapi can, maka kin inila mani ohan obkapaye eyas’ igmu kin kiktapi na kobyab. Iyecel lila cin na hecetuka ye, eyas’ igmula kin insiye un el.

One day a coyote had cornered the kittens, he wanted to eat them. They were crying, but he was ready to attack the kittens.

Anpetu wanel sungmanitu wan igmula kin najinyanpi, na igmula yuta cin. Wicaceya ans’ insiye winyeya igmula natan ye.

The skunk heard what was going on, so he ran over and distracted the coyote.

Maka kin taku inyanka nahun, insiye acunkuya na sungmanitu kin nagiyeya.

In the meantime, the kittens ran away and hid, so the skunk sprayed the coyote and chased him away.

hortigmula kin kiglekiya na pazan, icignuniyan kin el maka kin sungmanitu nasliya kin na insiye kisica habya.

After that the kittens invited the skunk into their family. He was now their brother, despite their differences.

Ohakab igmula kin kicho maka kin mahel tiwahepi. Tiblo tawapi wanna ituseka itokecapi.

A globe, when you place a finger on it, can graze with a spin the circumference of the earth.

I saw a man once with a barnacle nose walk into a bar in a sea town and I didn’t have to ask—

But what about me?

Who is this girl with the make up and the sweatshirt that came from where?

And what about a ferry boat in Manhattan that sets off across the estuary in the direction of the sea—

Should it be going in the opposite direction? Which way is home?

Which way to the island of forgotten i-pods, or forgotten disc-men, or to that mound in the ocean with the growing trash?

I am always looking.

There is something I forgot and it is probably out there. A forgotten something. I was just trying to remember—because maybe I’ve passed it here before—because if there are buoys to mark crab traps, well then—

A globe, when you press your nose against it, smells tinny and old.

How do you define the word, “castaway”?

Don’t say Tom Hanks.

Listen.
It is quiet,
Not making a sound.
Soft whispers,
Of grass and wind,
Make you feel quiet.

Are you here yet?
Beauty surrounds you,
There is nothing for you there.
Here, is everything.
Think, dream, and be.
That is all you need do.

Listen to the streams,
To the wind, whispering
Through the pine trees,
The birch leaves,
And the heartbeat,
Of the very earth.

The Ancients believed,
This place is special.
It is hallowed, holy, respected.
We must respect the land,
This place needs
Our respect now, here.

Dream.
That is all
You can do here.
There is nothing
Not worthy of your
Respect.

For here,
Is the home of
The great Spirits
The Ancients worshiped,
And your own God,
Who dwells here. Evermore.
The hills,

They gleam black,
In thrown sunlight.
The trees
Cover the land,
Making it beautiful.

Never forget,
The beauty that is here.
Value lies here,
Not only in the gold-rich soil,
But also in the land,
The beauty itself.
Of God.
Death is black news. So enormous it seems to blot even the stars from the sky. The absence of one person is enough to unbalance the earth’s axis. Too soon, every time shocking, when informed, you’ll never hear a loved one’s voice again. When notified a friend no longer exists. When confronted with the brute fact a family member no more lives, laughs, or thinks. Everything they were slowly wiped from the living into the grave. Those who miss them will move on, history crawling forward, bringing all of us closer to the dust. Death is chaos and unweaving, hollowing out of carefully laid plans. Death reminds that we are fragile, that our lives inch toward the dissolving.

I was told recently of another friend’s passing.

Karen was only twenty-four, an aspiring stand-up comedian. I remember her laughing. Laughing at a heckler of her act, laughing at her own clumsiness, laughing at the world’s beautiful morbidity.

We’d often talk late at night. Sometimes I’d laugh so hard I’d lose control of my muscles and fall off the couch. Yet other times the world didn’t make sense. Then the laughter would stop, and the empty spaces between the stars became gargantuan.

In those moments, when the masks turned from comedy to tragedy, she’d tell me of her travels.

Karen had her family. He was an itinerant, her to befriend me, an itinerant, her thoughts incomprehensible to me.

There were slow losses, sometimes a saint, no sage of lofty perfection. Everyone remembers the times he was ridiculous, the times he was mean, the times he faltered, as well as his times of wisdom, and kindness.

Rough, but in my imagination of him, there was a voice so deep, one could be blessed. It’s why her ashes are now on a Pacific island hill, though his comrades fell around him, and the odds seemed poised to send them all back in caskets that day. He was a hero. Yet he would lose honor too. Grandpa was no saint, no sage of lofty perfection. He was a common man. Everyone remembers the times he was ridiculous, the times he was mean, the times he faltered, as well as his times of wisdom, and kindness.

Grandfather returned to the reservation. He stitched the wounds of his pride, sobered up. He says coming back to Wolf Creek is what saved his life. He hoped it’d always be there through the generations for any of our family to come home to, when the world tossed them away. He talks of immersing himself in the spirituality his ancestors followed, long before skyscrapers loomed, and highways tangled across this continent. Home, coming home, the green green grass of home, these are things he thought important for my generation to hear: “You have a place on this earth, and it is good.” By his elder age, grandpa was a man respected for his wisdom. I hear things he said repeated sometimes, by people who’ve kept them for decades, kindled in their minds.

Sometimes I wish I could talk to my grandfather, just once, in my adult age. Wish I could roll down the dirt lane, and he’d be there, just once. We weren’t ready for him to go. I wish I could’ve known that deep voice in the tape reel. There’s so much we had to learn, that vanished with him, with the elder generation. I know he wanted to be there to help us through our crossroads, to be a refuge his family could seek during the tempests, but death overthrew his plans.

Now I’m left with only the memory, one of my first memories, of my dad’s vigil until midnight at grandfather’s wake. A handful of mementos, keepsakes, little pieces found around the family property, are all I can hold of my grandfather. Stones of his sweat lodge, rotted beams of his horse corral, rusted scrap of his old truck. These are all that reminds a man ever lived, aside from memories the living still carry. The last day of his life, he came home crying. He ran past his mother, wouldn’t talk to her. Kyle locked himself in his room, and as his family beat on the door, pleading with him to come out, he took his own life with a hunting rifle.

High school, Kyle moved to another town. He faded from communication. I lost all touch, as happens when friends are thrown apart. I never heard about him again until the announcement of his death. Kyle was a rarity, somewhat quirky. Every school has that guy who marches slightly askew to his own drum. Kyle was ours. Many liked Kyle, most at least tolerated him in our little town. Yet where he moved, the kids were ruthless, harassing him viciously every day of his existence there. School became a misery. Home life wasn’t a haven either. Here, I can only speculate. I suppose he felt trapped. I suppose he felt hopeless. I suppose he felt life wasn’t worth living anymore.

We shared hobbies of card collecting, listening to Metallica, reading sci fi. I remember I faked sick once in middle school. A teacher sent Kyle to my house to retrieve a textbook she had loaned me. He came over, played video games with me the entire afternoon, disregarding the woman’s orders.

The bald head of the principle was beet red, forehead veins throbbing with every screech the next day. “I’ve never seen such disrespect and blatant unconcern for rules in all my years! You kids gotta take some responsibility, you can’t act that way in your adult lives!” He hollered.

I don’t remember our response, but I remember it made that bald head go another shade of scarlet.

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His funeral was at the Methodist church. The small town he left as a high school sophomore, he returned to in a
closed casket.

Death is a question mark, upturned toward the silence of heaven. Death is prompter of many reckonings, with god, with fellow humans, with a person's own self. Death can be a catalyst of many inner struggles. The dealing with death is where much of my own character was formed.

My uncle was a man fallen through the cracks of society. He was every story of self-oblitration you ever heard, endless potentials drowned in alcohol.

He crashed in the gutter, never quite pulled himself free. Those who knew him in his youth say he had a sharp mind. They say he was a basketball whiz. No reason he couldn't have been successful as any-

one. Yet his demons imprisoned him, kept him from soaring toward anything greater.

"Bunch of orangutans, life of the party, happy go lucky, free spirited" is how my uncle's sib-

lings were described.

Uncle always seemed mo-

rous though, rather than a hell raising free spirit. I felt so sad for him when I was a kid. I’d see him hobbiling on the side of the road, when they’d say “there’s uncle”, as the car passed. He became a slave to addiction, was homeless most of his adult life. Family tried to help him. They gave him money to attend school. He disappeared into the streets, never even showed for the first day of clas-

ses. They gave him places to stay. He would take a few things to pawn and leave.

Hungry demons sunk talons deep in my uncle, until there wasn’t much of the man left.

Yet he never forgot his fam-

ily. He wasn’t selfish, or a bad guy -- only addicted. He tried to keep himself hidden in his worse mo-

ments. When sober, he’d approach to chat, if he saw us around town. He always ended those conservations by saying “love you guys.” Though he had nothing in this world, the little money he got from a lease check each month, he’d offer, wanting to know if we needed anything. Wanting to know if his nephews needed something to eat, or would like a soda from the convenience store.

One stark winter evening, snow storm sweeping in from the north, temperatures plummeting below freezing, my uncle sought shelter from the cold in a dump-

ster.

The garbage collector, unable to hear his shouting, crushed him in the dump truck’s trash compacter.

They didn't find him until the truck returned to the waste facili-

ty. He clung to life, barely. The flight for life helicopter was called to the scene. My uncle died in the air, on his way to Rapid City Regional Hospital.

"Man died in trash facility accident."

A sensational headline grabbed attention in a small town that thrives on gossip. Seemed my uncle's death was on everyone's lips for a time. The Christian youth group I was forced to attend Wednesday nights prayed for his soul. There was wind bag bravado about establishing a homeless shelter in my uncle's name. The high school social studies teacher tried to incorporate his death in a lesson about poverty.

I said nothing. I don't think they knew I was the homeless man's nephew. Yet inwardly, I seethed. Because none seemed to truly care that a man had died gruesomely. It was entertainment, chatter to distract from life's idleness.

The only gesture I found poignant was a memorial someone placed in the park next to the railroad tracks. My uncle slept there often, near the abandoned rail yard. For some time afterwards, whoever placed it there faithfully set fresh flowers next to the wooden plaque engraved with his name.

His funeral was held near the baseball fields at the town's perim-

eter. Grey clouds devoured visi-

bility in their damp chills. A gen-
tle watery sky hung above, a mist clung to the air like a lump in the throat. The weather, the elements, seemed to grieve for an old friend. As if the rain herself wore a black veil, and stood at the doors, waving goodbye, to a man who knew all the faces of nature well, from making bed in the grass, looking to the cosmos above the train yard before sleep.

I don't remember much of the memorial service. My thoughts were absorbed trying to reconstruct the agony of my un-

cle's final seconds, the horror of being crushed in a machine.

I thought then god was cruel. No shepherd of stray souls, but a torturer of the broken hearted. If not, how could fate drag men like my uncle through so much pain, only to slaughter them brutally?

Yet even this trial of god seemed inaccurate, because it wasn't as if god was a war crim-

inal. God just wasn't there.

Because no divine hand waits to catch people fallen through the cracks. No force in the cosmos gives hope, looks out for, the lost causes, the lost per-

sons. There's just humanity, and my uncle was an instance where humanity failed.

Into the waters, the funeral procession trudged, bringing my uncle's coffin to his burial plot. At the graveside, singers trilled a Lakota death song. Fog thickened until we could barely see, as cars sloshed past on a nearby high-

way. Rain residue stuck to tears, until the two couldn't be distin-

guished from each other.

A man, middle aged, balding, somewhat scruffy, out of place in his suit, caught my atten-

tion. He seemed to be taking the funeral the hardest. He stood in back, crying, audibly sobbing.

After words were said, and my uncle's coffin was lowered into the dirt, I stood awhile long-

er. Exhausted, disoriented, feeling the numb strangeness that always follows burying someone. The crying man approached me.

"Were you related to the de-

ceased?" He asked. "Yeah. He was my uncle." I replied.

His voice quivered, he looked away, seemed about to collapse in the slump of his shoul-

ders.

"I was the one who drove the truck when he was killed. I'm sorry. God, I'm sor-

ry. I didn't know..." The man's voice trailed into sobbing.

He needed my forgiveness. Needed to hear -- something -- that to this day I can't quite place. I wished he'd spoken to my grandma, to my other uncles, to anyone else, yet here he was, in the rain, before me. Could I forgive him? Could I provide, whatever it was he was seek-

ing? I searched my feelings toward this man and found no bitterness. Found no ill will towards him.

So I said: "It's a horrible thing that happened. But we don't blame you. It's not your fault he was in that dumpster, or that he lived the life he did. I'm glad you came today. It means a lot." He acknowledged my words with a nod, seemed to relax, subduing his sobbing.

I walked away, toward the cars, out from the mist, back to busy routines. He stayed. How long I don't know. Alone, pondering my uncle's grave.

Death, finally, is a mirror. Death is our own reflection. Death is the destina-

tion life propels us toward, young and old, weak and mighty, great and mea-

ger. I look now, at the scheme of my own life.

I'm just a loner named Tom, am-

bling among tumbleweeds, drifting the highways. I've been without aim, direc-
tionless as spinning weathervanes. Sit with me awhile, I'll strum you a song on the guitar. Others could probably play it better, but it pleases me to warble along.
It was the fall of 1898, and the sun was just peeking over the horizon. The cool, crisp, misty air blanketed the tall grass around the village. The smell of dampened trees and wet morning dew filled the air. Joe Bigbear, a big tall Chippewa, woke up in his chilly cabin. The embers of the fire were barely glowing. Joe felt warm in his bed; he really didn’t want to get up. He dreaded the cold outdoors. After Joe dressed himself, he went outside to pack his wagon. The wagon was old, but it served its purpose.

Joe sold fallen timber to a local logger, and managed to buy a wagon. The walls of birch bark trees surrounded him as he rode into the woods. He could often smell the dampened trees and the morning dew on the grass. Joe had to be at his rendezvous by noon that day.

Joe Bigbear and his people lived with Chief Bugonaygeshig at Sugar Point Indian Village on the Leech Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota. Times were hard for him and his people, and they would struggle to make ends meet. The people were often underpaid for the value of their fallen dead timber. The United States Army Corps of Engineers flooded their land and ruined their soil because of dam building in the area. Joe Bigbear could see this happening all around him, and that’s why he decided to become a bootlegger.

Joe Bigbear started bootlegging around the age of twenty. He started by selling a couple bottles here and there to the local loggers. Now twenty-five, he sold cases of whiskey instead of bottles. Alcohol was banned from the reservation in those days, so buying whiskey from Joe Bigbear was easier than traveling to a town off the reservation.

Joe stopped his wagon and looked all around himself into the woods. He was almost at the rendezvous. He was looking for the Indian police because he knew that they patrolled the area. Once he arrived at the rendezvous, he met a man named Smokey. Smokey was a white man from Canada who met with Joe at the rendezvous once a month. Joe had to buy Canadian whiskey from Smokey, because the local towns wouldn’t sell to Indians. After buying the whiskey, he left as fast as he could.

Joe made a camp in the woods, and then he settled in for the night. In the morning he hitched up his horse, and then headed down the wagon trail.

Joe always traveled to town before returning to the village. The loggers were burning the trees of the native people, so they could pass them off as fallen timber. The greed of the loggers was driving the wild game away and leaving the village people with nothing to hunt. The people had wild rice and fish to eat, but it just wasn’t enough. Joe knew this, so he always bought extra food before returning home. When Joe returned to the village, he handed out the food equally to the people. The people never asked where or how he managed to get the food. They were just happy to receive the generous offering.

In early 1898, Chief Bugonaygeshig was sought after by U.S. deputy Marshall Robert Morrison and U.S. Indian Agent Arthur M Tinker. Chief Bugonaygeshig, and Sha-Boon Day were sized by Morrison, and Tinker on September 15th 1898 at the Indian Village of Onigum. Chief Bugonaygeshig and Sha-Boon Day were wanted, because they were witnesses to a bootlegging operation. The people of the village saw the Marshall and the Indian Agent trying to take them away. Several villagers attacked Morrison and Tinker, allowing Bugonaygeshig and Sha-Boon Day to escape custody.

Around 11:30 am on October 5th 1898, Joe heard gunshots coming from the lake shore. Joe reached for the rifle that he kept hidden in his wagon. He ran into the woods, taking cover from the flying bullets. Joe heard somebody calling his name. “Over here!” the voice shouted. Joe ran to the voice and found out that it was his neighbor. Joe Bigbear asked his neighbor what was going on. “They’re after Chief Bugonaygeshig,” he replied. Joe and his people battled with the soldiers all night. Sixteen of the soldiers were killed, and they never did capture Chief Bugonaygeshig. None of the Native people were killed. Joe continued bootlegging and helping his people as much as he could. Joe spent his remaining years living with his people. Joe Bigbear passed away at an old age but he was never forgotten, because of his generosity to the people. Joe had become a local legend among his people. They still tell the Legend of Joe Bigbear to this day.
CIRCLE OF HONOR  
BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD  
BY SUE DEWEY

It is a strange and lonely place
A circular structure full of grace
Built to honour the Indian dead
Whose bodies on this battlefield bled
And all around those cobbled walls
The words of elders gone before
Inscriptions from a time long past
Etched in stone - their words will last
And poised before this wisdom old
Are iron warriors on horses bold
Doomed to ride for evermore
Above the battlefield they soar

So within this circle I now stand
And think of Custer’s soldier band
No glory here for his sad boys
Who breathed their last on sun baked soil
But here inside this sacred round
Where fall winds make their keening sound
The spirits rest in harmony
The elders prayers have set them free
And in honour place on steel horse frame
An eagle feather on tail and mane

So swift the battle and victory sweet
It seems that this circle is now complete
For true Native spirit runs deep through the veins
Of the steep Bighorn valley on the far northern Plains
Where young men and old fought to be free
Such a high price to pay sighs the wind eerily
No battle cry sounds
No horses hoof pounds
Just silence from iron warriors who bear
Sacred bundles of sage in their cold steely hair

SUN DANCERS  
BY MARILYN POURIER

The eagles fly, the whistles blow.
The dancers dance, day after day.
Gazing upward, following the sun.
They give of their bodies and of everything that is spiritual.
They pray, they pray, they pray.
We join them best we can.
We pray, we dance.
Our feet lightly touching Mother Earth in unison.
I pray to Grandfather, I pray to God.
I pray for these people who are giving so much.
Giving of themselves that we will be strong,
Spiritually and bodily.
There is a hush over the earth for miles around.
My heart is bursting, for love of the dancers,
for fear of the ways of this world,
for shame of the treatment of Mother Earth.
I join the dancers in prayer.
It is good to be with my relatives.
Old and young, sick and strong.
All sharing the pain and the happiness.
We hold tight to our beliefs.
These are the people who give us strength.
Our prayers move over this land, traveling with the soft breeze.
On and on.
Settling like a soft dust on all our relatives,
the four legged, the two legged, our feathered friends, over our Mother earth.
We return year after year to this our Sacred Land.

MUSIC  
BY RL KATUS

It rises, it spins
It takes you for a ride,
Flinging your soul
Hither and yon,
And lets you down, or not.

Music has been said to heal
It does, and much more
For it makes you
Live as you never have,
And love with a fullness
Never seen before.

Perfect music
Is unattainable,
Save from mother to child,
Man to wife,
Lover to lover,
Or any who love another.

Percussion is music; the heartbeat
Wind is music; the song of life
Life is music, all the world sings
The Earth is music; all time rejoices
Nothing is possible with out music.
The music of life.

Music is the song of a mother
To her unborn child,
Music is the song of the Earth
To all of Her children,
Music is life,
Let us live in Music.

Rejoice in music,
Allow its strains to fill
Your every comer,
Lift your voice,
And sing with the wind,
Sing with the Earth.