

The war is not over! What the people of Minnesota demand is that the war shall now be offensive. In God's name let the columns of vengeance move on until the whole accursed race are crushed. (St. Paul Press)

Somehow it was so casual - that's why I wasn't ready. He was all passed out but I was watching him out the side of my eye (always did - had to - habit) and just eating cornflakes (my little twin sisters had just started to eat cornflakes, I liked to feed them and we'd make a big mess that would end up being caked-up and hard in a few days) when he jerked his head up looking straight at me but with his eyes still half closed and his beer still straight up in his hand.

There suddenly arose such a shout as is never heard unless upon some battlefield; - a shout almost loud enough to raise the roof of the Opera House. - "Exterminate them! Exterminate them! Exterminate them." (Senator James Doolittle)

Whatever was on TV was frozen - there was a black hole in front of my eyes and out the sides was big and clear like through a magnifying glass. I saw him lunge up and the coffee table went flying with all the crap on it exploding everywhere, but slow, like I could see every beer bottle and cigarette butt and the half-empty cups falling softly before they splashed and shattered all over.

"I have come to kill Indians, and believe it is right and honorable to use any means under God's heaven to kill Indians." (John Chivington, preacher-turned-soldier)

I'd moved too slow, I hadn't been ready, my brain was all foggy - my baggy socks and pajamas were tying me up and tripping me as I tried to run and he grabbed me and hoisted me up like a limp puppy, flailing me all over. He was yelling at me and snarling so close I thought he was trying to bite me - I think my face did bash into his teeth a couple of times. He kept shaking me and yanking me all over and I was all dizzy and fucked up and crying snot and disgusted at his shitty breath and spit all over me and I was mad because I couldn't even hit him or fight back. He kept yelling stuff right into my face like he was trying to bite it into my head, into my brain - and he didn't make any sense either (didn't most of the time) - but this was weird like he was demanding something or begging me and screaming he'd punch my head in.

So then, I shall tell another legend. I'll tell a story, the legend about ourselves, the people, as we are called. Also I shall tell the legend about where we came from and why we came ..., why we who are living now came to inhabit this land.

Suddenly, from out of one of her long and peaceful nods, my mom was up and screaming and flying through the air just like a cat (ha ha, maybe a *junky* cat, real crazy and desperate all of a sudden like they get - like a 'fucked-up crazy freak' switch got pulled) her eyes not really seeing anything - just like somebody in a coma - but her body totally set on 'kill' - fucking totally scary when she got like that - her body spinning in a jerky blur, trying to destroy anything it could touch.

So that is the land above which is talked about from which there came two people, one woman and one man, ...they dwelt in that land which was above. But it was certainly known that this world where we live was there. ..."If you wish to go there, however, you must go see the spider at the end of this land where you are. That is where he lives."

Even though I didn't think she could see me (or even knew I was there), when I went flying, it was as if she was being careful - just getting me out of the way. She was after his eyes, his balls, his throat - anything to bring him down.

"Very well," said the spider. "I shall make a line so that I may lower you." But there will certainly be someone there who will teach you, where you will find a living once you have reached it. ...Only one must look," he said to them. But [the other] one must not look until you have made contact with the earth."

Not like when she was just provoking him - when she'd start yelling at him. They'd fight and he'd slap her around and she'd slap him back and cry and they'd go to bed and she'd tell him how to do it all night - seemed like the only way they ever did it – until now.

Then they both looked before they arrived, as they were right at the top of the trees. Then they went sideways for a short while; then they went into the great eagle-nest. That's where they went in, having violated their instructions.

This was different and he was afraid and stumbling around and trying to protect himself and yelling at her to stop and kind of moaning every time she got him one. Just out of normal instinct I scrambled toward my sisters but then quickly jumped away. I hid my head and could hear him hitting the walls and everything breaking and Mom's growling and his wet crying sounds and grunting.

They saw all the creatures which live there on earth; the bear, the caribou, the beaver, the otter, the fisher, the mink, the wolverine, the lynx. ... "Come up and help us. We cannot get down." ... "No. I never climb up." [they all said.]

I remember I squeezed my eyes and my whole self tighter - I was so sore and tired - I was trying to get to where it was deeper and darker – some place far away inside... there was no-place else I could go - no-one to help fix this.

[Except the] bear didn't listen for long; but then he started to get up on his hind legs to go and see them. Also another one, the wolverine as he is called. They made one trip each as they brought them down.

I guess they picked Mom up trying to pull a trick. I heard she was swearing at the johns and staggering around and all desperate for a fix. Someone who was picked up with her said they put her in a cell and she started screaming about what had happened in the apartment and begging them for a fix or anything to help her. No-one listened. Then I guess she had a seizure and passed out.

But the bear was followed by those people. That was the very thing which had been said to them, "You will have someone there who will teach you to survive." This bear, he taught them everything about how to keep alive there.

Somebody at shift change noticed that the blood all over her didn't seem to be from any visible wounds. They decided they should check the story she had been screaming over and over - even though it was just the crazy talk of a seriously strung-out junky - maybe *something* worth their time had happened - 'didn't somebody say she had kids?' Later in the day someone else noticed she wasn't breathing.

It was there that these people began to multiply from one couple, the persons who had come from another land. They lived giving birth to their children generation after generation. That is us right up until today. That is why we are in this country.

I suppose now when I think back I can remember the door breaking in but not much else. Their voices sounded like TV, full sentences, trying to talk normal police talk but all shocked and shook up. I think someone started to heave but everything was drifting in and out - didn't make much sense.

And by-and-by the White people began to arrive as they began to reach us people, who live in this country. That is as much as I shall tell.

[Simeon Scott: Swampy Cree. Published in: Cree Legends and Narratives from the West Coast of James Bay. Ed. and trans. by C. Douglas Ellis, U. of Manitoba Press, 1955]

I don't remember the next few weeks at all. The first thing I remember was that the nurses in the hospital cried when I asked for my sisters and didn't say anything. Later on they cried again when the foster people came. I think they wanted to protect me when I ran and hid but the cop grabbed a hold of me and that was that.

When the government discovered that the buffalo was the way the Plains Indian lived – it was his clothing, his food, his shelter – nobody sat down and made a decision in a conference, “Let’s kill all the buffalo and then the Indians will starve,” but that was in the minds of people. Sherman once said if we get rid of the buffalo, we’re rid of the Indians. Then the buffalo hunters in large numbers moved out on the plains, in Kansas and Texas, and destroyed buffalo by the hundreds of thousands. [Dee Brown].

“So you’re the kid whose baby twin sisters got beaten to death by your Mom’s white boyfriend, eh?” I didn’t bother to correct him about being a kid. Being a ‘kid’ always made it easier to pull tricks even though I was seventeen but what did it matter now, here in the hospital. “I read she died in the tank before they found out she stomped him to death for it.” “I don’t remember, I was only eight for fuck’s sake.” – trying to get the nosey old bastard to shut up.

The long-term consequence of Wounded Knee is far more serious and far more tragic, because it poisoned relations between the Indians and the white people for generations to come, and still Wounded Knee is seen by the Indian community as symbolizing a disposition on the part of the white people simply to kill all Indians to solve an immediate problem. And that legacy is very strong today and is likely to be a permanent feature of relations between the two races. [Robert Utley]

Time seems to stretch and warp in the death ward – but his stories became all jumbled and I knew he was starting to slip in and out – it wasn’t just a strange sense of time. Even so he always came back to the story of the medicine man in the joint who told the ‘skins’ – the Indian brothers – the story of the Great Curse that would never go away because of all the buffalo that had been killed. It was just going to get worse and worse. “White hunters were hired to do it so the Indians would starve” he said. I dreamed that night that the curse was so big and angry that it spilled over and not even Indians were safe from it – especially not the weakest ones – and my sisters were crying and crying. I had to have a lot of demerol the next day.

Dead and wounded women and children and little babies were scattered all along there where they had been trying to run away. The soldiers had followed along the gulch, as they ran, and murdered them in there. Sometimes they were in heaps because they had huddled together, and sometimes bunches of them had been killed and torn to pieces where the wagon guns hit them. I saw a little baby trying to suck its mother, but she was bloody and dead. [Black Elk]

I never noticed that he’d started to mumble and even the nurses were ignoring him – no more stories about how the medicine man had told him to be on the look-out for people like my Mother’s boyfriend who were infected with what he called the crazy ‘Witiko’ brain-sickness – supposed to be a sure sign of the Great Curse. Then two planes flew into the World Trade Center and the hospital was in an uproar. His call light above his bed went on for the first time and hours later a nurse came by. I heard his weak voice clearly, “The Great Warriors have come – they’ve come to take revenge for the buffalo – the massacre has begun.” The nurse swore and ran out and I couldn’t help smiling when I heard him laughing until his cardiac alarm went off. No-one came to shut it off for a long time. They showed those pictures over and over all day. My good eye finished clouding over that night and all I can see now are buildings and buffalo blowing up and crashing down. I can hear my sisters and my mother laughing but I can’t get up yet – soon though.