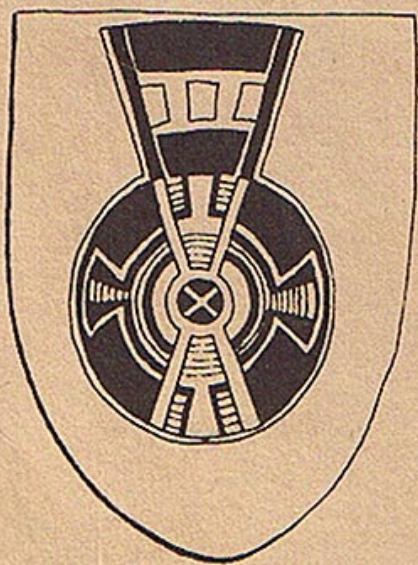


EYE
OF THE
HEART



Gary David

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Invocation On Harney Peak

"Eye of the heart..."

"... cry for a vision!"

Out

Leave the Missouri
behind, the sun & the night
before, you blink
at something black &
double-take to shake out
of your head the mirage.
The mind could foresee nothing
to break the prairie's gentle
swelling presence you became
over the miles one
breath with, the opening
of the telescope out. The drive
west confirms your eyes'
insight as they pick the Black Hills
out of the haze & place
them on the map—as once
they were hard put
to do at first gaze, confusing
"The Dreary Black Hills" of the Laramie range with what
you see now.

The Verendryes might have been the first whites to see
this sleight of mind on Bear Butte off the eastern slopes,
1743. The order of things of the mind would reign
over the eyes, since their red guides would take them
no farther. And Paha Sapa of the Dakota would remain
secretly green for the years
of the fires in the blood to come.

A Short History of the Fall River

Across the street from the old soldiers home along
the shortest river in the country flows the hot
springs the Cheyenne & the Sioux once made
war over. The Sioux won. Only to lose the whole
of the Hills after the gold find. The river rushes
& the grass greens & the trees yearly bare leaves
still. The treaty's broken. But who knows
what savages will come to take
what can be salvaged from these Hills
black with God. The god that once lived
or died in the rough winter
hide of the buffalo
has passed on—
naked & afraid.

Flash of Blood in the Prospector's Pan

-1-

Lead, South Dakota
(a few miles & over a century
from Deadwood) is proud today
to proclaim within its boundaries the site
of the largest operation
of the Western Hemisphere: the Homestake
Mining Corporation. What it takes: the ore

is gold. Or what it takes to make it
is money. The Motherlode's vein
is slashed

& drained
of honey. Her unearthed blood
is held

on altars of commerce up
to the sun: the God made
jealous reigns—an enraged King blinded
by his own molten image men
have thruout the ages

fashioned
to adorn their women, praise
their Queen ripening under the Hills. She wants

to go back, past knives & lightning
to the heart: mirror of the sun
at the center of the earth stands
empty, but Her breasts are heavy . . .
apples of gold bending Her boughs.

Lead, by the way, would rhyme
with all the steel-eyed greed
under the sun, only
His shafts of light fall dead
at Her passage leading
the underworld's dark way down.

Thunder turned upside down under
the sun blazing a deep blue
over the Black Hills. A clear sky
cut by these blasts the Sioux would leave
in wonder what they valued most
on rocks & yellow pine to appease.

These dark thunderbeings

(1833) departed southward
along the ghost road the Milky Way paves
from Paha Sapa. Their existence ever
since has been explained
away by the escape
of hydrogen from burning coal

buried below. The prospector, one Ezra Kind
("You can pan it outta my talk.")
the following year engraved in sandstone
his last will &
only epitaph: *Got all*

*of the gold we could
carry our ponys all got
by the Indians Have lost
my gun and nothing to eat and
Indians hunting me.*

To the Brave Men of All Nations or Tribes

As reported by Col. Richard I. Dodge
on the Black Hills Expedition of 1875:

*the "squaw men"
living on reservations*

*were the ones who made all the hoopla & big to-do
about giving up (or not)*

*Paha Sapa. These were not the true
men of the Sioux, who'd really call them "Bad*

*Medicine", & would (like him)
have hawked the real estate deal*

*all the way to the White House—so making it
their first killing together, mixing their blood*

with gold. Over 100 years later, brave men are taking
a second look at the Black Hills to get an even

heavier oar. Men brave enough to carry to the quick
the weight of centuries down on their enemies

with overkill, or otherwise blow the slow growth of cancer
to the 4 winds. The Ghost that once had been

danced for dances still with fire beyond
the Earth to the dirge of its own death.

A vision of a land as enchanted
as love when it chances into your life
first time around, this eye-land lured
'fore words the first men to enter the hoop
of the world toward its center. The heart
of the dance

chants:

Chante Ishta!
Chante Ishta!!
Chante Ishta!!!
Chante Ishta!!!!

A trance to raise the Ghost of Paha Sapa
shines like dew on the evergreens in the eye
of the first morning & lights the way
to the cold air of mountains where
men may seek sacred visions, burning
deep within the oldest blood pooled

beneath the peak the Fat Takers have come
to call Harney, highest point east
of the Big Horn range, the heart of the eye
of the heart, dead-center, buffalo bull's
eye, where the sky's gold bullets enter
molten from the sun. But way under the earth
the blindspot & the muscle of love

melt

to become one.

The Winnebagoes Invade Deadwood, S.D.

Plumb thru the Indian summer
they will parade, waving
their way thru the narrow streets, race
barge or bust in to repossess
a place in the blank back pages
of a homesteader's family Bible, the gold
diggers' disclaimed ledgers, buffalo
burgers or the missing ace
of the Deadman's Hand. An inbred yen
for the meat & potatoes the olden
years raised hell with. Meanwhile

back of the El Rancho Motel, the 1876 jail
duely houses the ghosts of the daily killed. Wild Bill
as ever will show up at the Old Style Bar tonite at 8
sharp to be shot down by Jack McCall as the shots are called
from a bullhorn atop a rusty red Dodge. Nightly jack
must be caught in the street front of Goldberg's Grocery
& brought down to the wax museum for mock trial.

From his room in the Franklin Hotel, Deadwood
Dick's taken in this show
for over a century. Deadwood Dick,
road agent, lays low, collects
dusty photos of Calamity
Jane, his beau-to-be. He awaits
his comeback, oils his Colt.
Down the street the upstairs girls'
Green Front has been shut down
for good: "public nuisance". Chinatown
still echoes thru the tunnels
under Main St. The opium dens
charge 50¢ admittance to the tape
recorded tour thru black light.
Ghost dreams of Xanadu live on &
mingle with the incense, escape
in the pockets of the Winnebago breed.

Now the announcement is made
plain on the silent movie's marquee:
DEADWOOD DICK'S EARSHOT COMEBACK!
He was last seen high
above the town in Mt. Moriah cemetery
giving pep talks to the tombstones:
"Don't fire til you see the whites
of their tires!"

The Cartographers of the Heart

The men of Murphy's Bar Mount Rushmore
Road of Rapid City make maps. (The map
is a schematic of longing.) An unused napkin
is used with ballpoint precise delight delineating
the subtle ducts the hungry air will take as it shoots
thru Washington's nose. Tho those men of the earth are men
of their deed, they contest hotly the rights of passage

of even a cold water main. (The heart is always the heart
of longing. What is called love is simply a complex
invention of the cerebral cortex.) These men are concerned
with deep structures the surface reflects. Charges
hidden in the Hills await their footsteps. Precarious business
is in the making. Between men & women, the Great

Plains unchanging/exchange of places once prolonged
the space in time before the heart's founding. The mapping
proceeded from that day to this & will. It's well
known women in this bar make napkins & men
follow the lines they draw their blood with.

Obligatory Mount Rushmore Poem (A Posthumous View)

“Not a damn word
for over a grand
of years now
2980 A.D.
the 4 heads
of state long fallen
into ruin the rock
faces worn & still
stonewalled . . .

Hush! But look,
“all around them great
spires of granite yet
whisper, conspire
with weirds of wind &
water—what the ancients used
to call the sisters of
the evergreens, or what was left
of them after the massive
deforestation policy issued in order
to cull from the masses
the World Tree
cults & kill
off the last stands
of shaman worship, the tribal uprisings
of the late 20th century (of course
measured by the old rule
of years after their last
so-called ‘God’.) Those shams
all went by the board
in the Great War ultimately
creating a better idea
for us all, won
in the name of our Lord
General Ford Motives, UnLtd.

Now if those damn stones
would just clam up, we could
get some peace

& quiet like those old guys
up there, whoever they are.
Kind of quaint—their funny hair all
falling out. Seen from here
you could say they didn't have a care
in the world—the lack of lines
in their foreheads being
their only statement.”

The Black Hills, A Prairie Dawn, & Between . . . Me

Up all night brooding an offshoot of Blake's sunflower
poem I quit the house mount the hill & wake to
the first bloom of sage over the city. The west wind sends
pine scent to greet the sun. Blades of grass wave
their open mouths bobbing hungry as baby robins.
Beyond this green mass I walk a sentience of song
lingers in the air. From a stand of milkweeds the liquid warble
of meadowlark rises like rivers of dew to the deep
blue above. The moment wavers like a wind-borne seed.
The moment all things flow into one

leaves the moment I try to grasp it, hold it
up to the sun to see if I can see
the juice of the leaf sluicing thru it.
The moment caught just
one time flees beyond the earth
in a bird's breath. Catch it
once more & what one is left
standing with is but in the hand
bloodless bone & mute feather.

As the sun rises, the shadows
pull me down the hill, heavy
& ready to pull the shades to
fall into a sleep deep as stone.

In Place of a Vision: A Prayer For Direction

Reflections of an empty sky cast shadows
of thunderheads buried in anger. The eye
of the mind being shattered
looking glasses, up a second time
Harney Peak to seek out the heart
of granite—one of the oldest ways
fire is balanced within

air. After the long climb, I drink the purest
pooled rainwater I've ever tasted, & the coldest as well.
From the backbone axis of the world disc, stare
into the center of the circle of the sun: its rim
(just now kissing the horizon's rim of the world)
whirls sunwise a white arc of fire
around its heart. "See the ball moving in
the sun?!" the child says. "No, that's just the *ball*
of the sun sinking," his mother remarks blandly.

Far below the Black Hills flash (my negative) like lightning
along the black arc of the western horizon. To the east
the tip of Harney's triangular shadow creeps across the prairie
into the deepening sky. I raise my palms to catch the last rays
of the sun in silent suspension. At last it dips beneath &
I can breathe again.

The full moon rises on the descent, my path
flecked with mica: mirrors by the millions flash
like the lifetimes of stars, the faces of spirits long
gone from their bodies turned to stone. Countless reflections
flow from the night's looking glass remembering the face
of morning now beaming the globe's backside. I carry the glow
of the sun's heart down with me: I close my eyes & see.