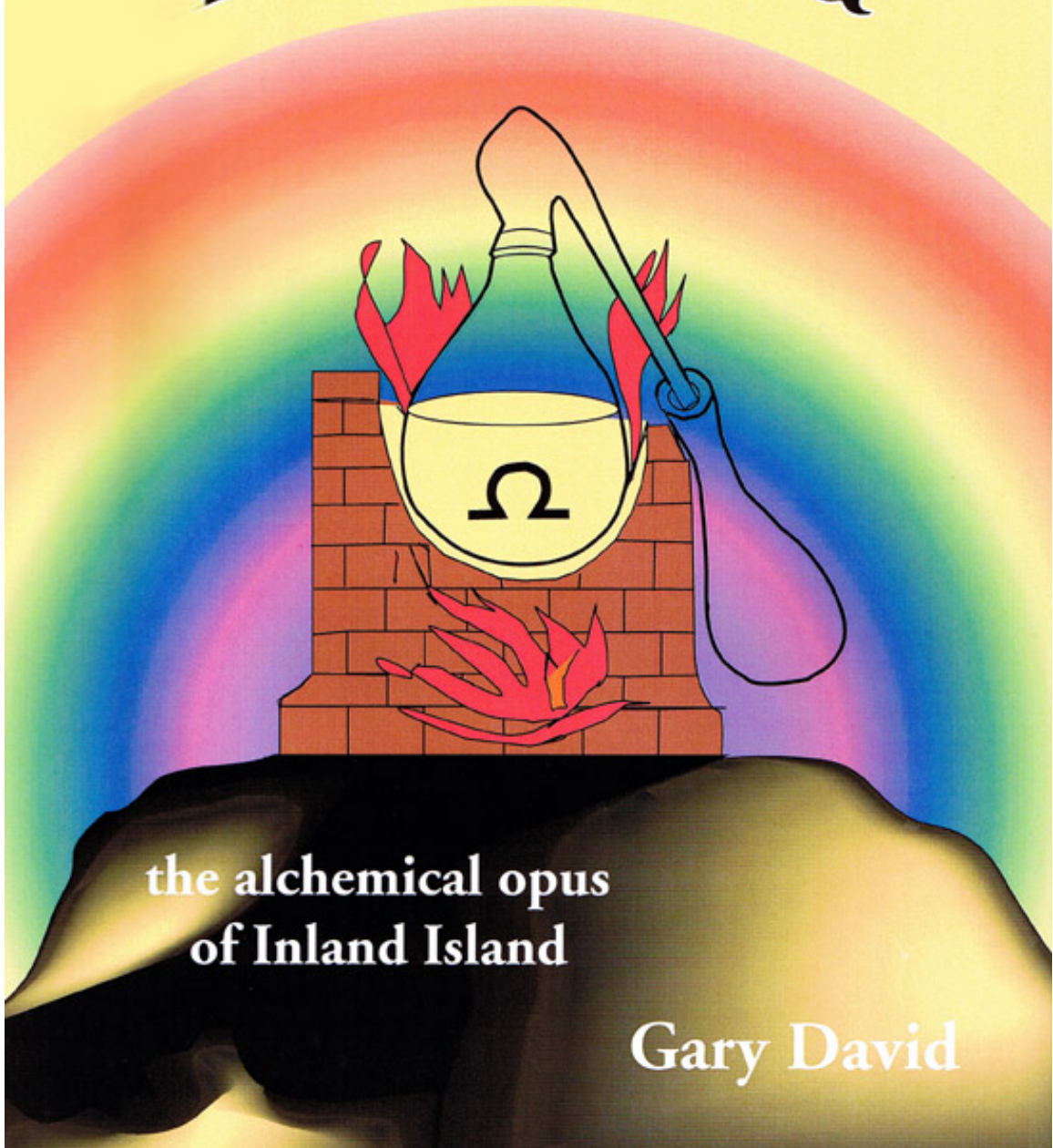


Terra Kota



the alchemical opus
of Inland Island

Gary David

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IH Island
Hills
Books

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Terra-- Latin (Indo-European) for "earth, land"
Kota-- Lakota (Sioux) for "friend, ally"
Inland Island-- a poetical/alchemical sublimation of the Lakota phrase
Wita Paha, "island hills," i.e. the Black Hills of South Dakota

"...it seems that the central secret of *opus alchemicum* is related to the adept's mastery of cosmic and human Time. One can distinguish in Nature three important temporal rhythms: geological time, vegetal and animal time, and human time. In other words, Nature is a gigantic living organism. Everything in Nature --from ores and stones to plants, animals, and man-- is the result of insemination followed by germination and growth. But the temporal rhythms differ from one mode of existence to another. The maturation of minerals requires thousands and thousands of years, while plants grow, bear fruit and wither within a few months. To master Time means to be able to control its different rhythms, that is to say, to be able to change one temporal cycle to another. As we have seen, the early miner and metallurgists thought that, with the help of fire, they could speed up the growth of ores. The alchemists were more ambitious; they thought they could 'heal' base metals and accelerate their 'maturation,' thus transmuting them into nobler metals and finally into gold. But the alchemists went even further: their elixir was reputed to heal and rejuvenate men as well, indefinitely prolonging their lives and making them into immortal beings. In sum, for the alchemists, life was an epiphany of organic Time."

Mircea Eliade 1.

"By its structure Omega, in its ultimate principle, can only be a *distinct Centre radiating at the core of a system of centres*; a grouping in which personalisation of the All and personalisations of the elements reach their maximum, simultaneously and without merging, under the influence of a supremely autonomous focus of union. (It is for this central focus, necessarily autonomous, that we shall henceforward reserve the expression 'Omega Point'.)... The peak of ourselves, the acme of our originality, is not our individuality but our person; and according to the evolutionary structure of the world, we can only find our person by uniting together. There is no mind without synthesis. The same law hold good from top to bottom. The true ego grows in inverse proportion to 'egoism'. Like the Omega which it attracts, the element only becomes personal when it universalises itself."

Teilhard de Chardin 2.

"Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and round about beneath me was the whole hoop of the world. And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell and understood more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being. And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father. And I saw that it was holy."

Black Elk 3.

Prelude: The Ur Text Writ With Spirit Ink (Foreplay For an Alchemical Couple)

1. Inspiration (Psyche at Nadir)

The vector of Under: Nether-never land
of shadows without light, phantasmagoria
without form, fire without heat, desire within
desire hopelessly without
surfeit, a host of simulacra
without sense. Within the holographic theater
of laser dreams, beams
shoot through a dense forest
of lost intentions. Medusa-like
snake roots of the Flowering Tree
dangle down from the stars
on the floor of the Middle World--
crystals studding her arched ceiling
of dark earth above.

As chilling aspects
of aspens shiver
through a shadow grotto
to Alpha hour, her
highness lies
by a silver pool
of memories. Gazing on
the water's sheen, she's low
as she's ever been. Nigredo
libido. Antipodal
bells brightly toll
twelve times. Blind
as a mirror, she misses so much
the Red King's face
she reflects. She
touches her finger
to the glass surface:
the past echoes, ring
upon ring. Imagoes
take shape upon the plate
(photographic) beyond time.
Dispirited pages turn &
her secret album of lunar phases
pale as albumen (albedo)
fails to phase us

in the flesh. Disparate wishes
secrete milky clouds
in this climate. Evanesce a constant
state of affairs, she's lonely.
The trembling trees are
all made up --she is--
of bone & rattling parchments
of dead skin. The pool is fed
--she is-- by springs which
no soul will ever reach:
the source.

This is the haven
of sorcerers & daemons.
This is the midpoint
(in medias res) on the golden road
to salvation or
the leaden one
to oblivion: the Lost Isle
by Saturn on the Red Road
from the north through blackened bile
of frozen earth taken, tin horns
by Jove phlegmatically aired
in the piping hot place
you always face, midnight moons
her silver sliver here
below, burnished water
blood on the Black Road orients
via the vernal mound
of Venus, morning star turned fire
iron accidentally cholericized
by a round of vespers fallen
mute as a Martian mummy
to give you the ultimate
solar high. Chant it! AU
M (for meridian ore), auricle
of oracles, hearing heart
of the New World
aurochs, seeing rocks
of the Undgrund, the Ur
text writ with spirit
ink in the testicles
of a corporate Grandfather-- the first
will & testament rising under
the last hill of his skull.

The Blue Queen alone strokes

the water's cool flesh, & her heart
flutters like the misty wings
of a loon rowing upward
toward the morning world
of currencies, factories, & bloodlines.

2. Expiration (Pneuma at Zenith)

The vector of Over: cessation
of process. Omega
auriferous. Desire of mountains come
to the mineral kingdom's
fruition. The Lapis
philosophorum's conundrum:
the alchemical formula
for the future Elixir
vitae's forever fixed
in antiquity's electrum.
The viva vox
of the Mysterium Magnum: an axis
of praxis.
Rubato rubedo
appassionato, tantrically
androgynous, it
spearheads the spirit
but tailbones the soul.
Sulphur & quicksilver
suffer the consequences
of apex sex
out of control:

out of man & woman
make a circle:
out of the circle
make a square:
out of the square
make a triangle:
out of a triangle
make a circle
out of which
the filius
philosophorum's born.

The sun is one
without another.
The sun is one
in all. All are in

one King Sol.
All are one
in the sun.
All in all
his majesty is light
without shadows.
Citrino's destiny
is invisibly indivisible
as neutrinos' energy.
His divinity is
our consanguinity.
At the acme
of the Flowering Tree, his
faces echoes
across the Six Directions
of space, petal by petal.
In pollen fields
of the sun, we
gradually grow, metal
by metal, toward the essence
of florescence. His brilliance
with gilded fire fills
the heart of the eye
of the heart dancing
the Island's pavaues.
Heaven-borne over
the inland sea, now &
again we can see
evermore & more.



from *The Rosarium Philosophorum*

I: West / Black / Water

**Making the Earth of Alpha Island
(2.5 Billion-600 Million Years B.P.)**

Out of the first chaos
of fire & magma, tectonic
& volcanic torque
& fracture, eruptions
of pumice & tuff, porphyry
& obsidian, cataclyms
beneath the surface, orogeny
& erosion, upthrust &
deposition, the Earth's crust
wrinkled & warped, metamorphic
mountains worn down
to mesas & penepains, pyroclastically
active craters spewing forth glowing
lava, plastic & searing, escarpments
scoured & scraped, abrasion
& breakage, striation, granitic & basaltic
masses of ore rising
from the core, gases & steam
swarming, transforming & sweating
the elixir water, roiling & frothing
lakes, slope wash, slickenslide
across whalebacks, talus & scree
at piedmonts, pediments, threadflow
streams warm & fluvial
-ly making their way, dendritic
landscape sculptures, rivers
roaring down gorges & gulches
toward great basins, flooding
& cooling, alluvial, & forming
out of Pre-Cambrian chaos
the cloudy beginning

of great oceans. Within
the heart's eye
return
to the beginning
again: nothing
to break the light
blue bowl of sky

or the deep
 blue bowl of sea.
 Rim to rim
 together the two make
 one sphere where
 water & air
 make their rounds.
 Up & down
 air & water
 circulate.
 Both elements
 in turn turn into
 the other (eternally
 it seems-- the “wholly other” 1.
 nowhere
 to be seen.)
 Nothing
 to *break the plane*
 of space/time
 between
 the two hemispheres. 2.
 Nothing
 (sun after sun &
 moon after moon)
 appears.
 Nothing.
 Layer after layer
 a rain of sediment
 (the hulls of dead cells) falls
 upon the inland seabed
 asleep with dreams
 heavier than gold.
 Shafts of sunlight lie
 shattered in dreams
 of watery halls
 in the Cambrian sea.

The weight of epochs

pressures masses
 of magma upward surging over
 -lying rocks folded
 & faulted, tabular slabs
 jointed, arcs
 of anticline & syncline
 plunge
 & dip, the plane of the seabed
 updomed &

intruded with igneous
 dikes & sills, plugs
 & stocks (& later, northern Black Hills
 laccoliths). 3.
 At the core horizontal strata
 thrust
 up vertical
 cathedral spires, great needles
 of Harney Peak
 granite/conglomerates/& pegmatites
 deformed
 by water & dust-- the oldest
 batholithic
 axis
 surrounded by
 dynamothermically metamorphosed
 marble/schist/slate/quartzites/amphibolites/
 & metagreywacke
 in turn
 surrounded by thick
 Paleo-Mesozoic
 shale sheets/limestone/sandstone/gypsum
 & clay. 4.
 Out
 of the first chaos
 of water
 & air rises
 one (concentric) ring
 of fire
 after another making
 the earth
 of Alpha Island
 real: making
 the elements'
 balance
 within
 the Great Wheel.

II: South / Red / Air

(600 Million-10,000 Years B.P.)

Epeiric seas
advance & recede--
 an epic round dance.
Lightning cracks
 water's mirror, shatters
whispers on pristine shores
 a tidal pulse
of mountains rising
 & falling, falling
& rising over
 & over to sing at the Center
of the vacant continent
 seed-syllables
 in the Sacred Circle.
Through a briny diastole
 an Omega-headed proto-circle sees: a single cell
 mitotically squared, protozoa stoically prolific, shoals
 of myopic trilobites, algebraic algae, bioluminescent
jellyfish or armored fish in dark descent, inverse astronomies
 of anemones, the hush of multi-colored corals'
 myriad colonies, giant squid & snails
 ad infinitum, golden sections of Fibonacci's
numbered nautili, nacreous oysters & seine-mouthed monsters all
 breed & die. Then in the sea's systole: the rush-
 & reed-fringed shorelines, brackish marshes, lush
 forests of pine & fern, cypress & cycad. Cretaceously
arenaceous horsetails hide rafts of lockjaw crocodiles
 or titanic turtles in this erstwhile humid home
 of our greatest reptiles' thundered blood. Predaceously
upstaged against a volcanic black smoke backdrop
rumbling, duck-billed & tri-horned dinosaurs flee
 Tyrannosaurus, the tyrant king of the carnivores athwart
 procrustean beds of the devil's corkscrews.
Leaving criss-cross tracks on trails lost
65 million years ago, they all ooze
 into mothering mud in the shadow
 of mass extinction a massive asteroid
 visits upon our planet's fragile bubble.

Salt seas gone down, alluvials fan out
pluvial savannas, plains of limbic Vedas cut
by meandering streambeds. Flint margins
chip & carve wind-fluted vistas
of aeolian origins. Reflecting off
spectral gold glints, dawn rays
paint rippling pinnacles banded
pastel pink & purple, mauve & buff.
From a flame-blue sky dome
moon-stark buttes & saw-tooth ridges
drop to shadows' grope through edges of gray
gumbo ravines death layers fossiliferously
aeonian-- a labyrinthine dreamscape
of lacustrine dusk so remote, so removed
from the heart (that atmanically Romantic in-spector)
it makes the sole / dust mote soul / hold its breath
in this sector of our timeless topos:
Mako sica, Mauvaises Terres--
the White River Badlands.

Upon a sun-sown flood plain (east
of what will be known
as the Black Hills) feast
imaginary menageries
of outlandish mammals: big-fanged
pigs, humpless camels, hogback
Oreodons, bear-hounds, wolfish
Creodons, wolverines, pair-horned
rhinos, saber-tooth tigers, tri-toed dog
-sized horses, hex-horned herbivores, golden
mole insectivores, ancestral tapir, hornless
deer & okapi-like Moropi
whose horse heads, clawed feet &
rhino torsos dioramically awaken
a golden mythos of an inland garden.
30 million years ago (nanochronically
epiphanous as lightning bolts) Cenozoically
elephantine
Titanotheres thunder.
In one motion they lift
saddle-shaped, double-knobbed
snouts of bone, sniff
an ever dryer air. Somewhere deep
in brains wide as a fist, a ripple
of fear spreads through the herd.
Decode this

with one word:

Cold!

Cold! Cold!

Cold! 5.

Down from the north a wall of white
glacial mass presses & crushes
everything in sight. (The rate: ever
so slow.) Down to where now
flow the Missouri & the Yellowstone
juggernaut ice crawls
to encircle the Black Hills
island oasis. (The sea of grass
has yet to flood this place.)
A deep green blanket
of wet spruce & pine interspersed
with birch & aspen (as far
as the color-blind eye
can reach) keeps the fur
-bearing beasts well hidden.
Down boreal corridors
in immense ice packs commence
great migrations to the New World:
mammoth, bison, musk ox, moose, caribou & bear--
all fleeing arctic air & winter's grip
upon spears of sleet-- come, come down. 6.

Down to the haven of hot springs
an exodus 30,000 years ago endures
the extreme elements. Clouds of steam burst
from gray limestone laid down
in a time that bore the dinosaur.
Half-buried in gypsum, a giant
jawbone gnaws the cobalt sky.
Through the underbrush a pack of peccaries
scurries. A short-faced bear six feet high
at the shoulders scratches tough roots
from ferruginous soil. A pair of coyotes
circles a dying camel. Large arcing
tusks swaying, a lone mammoth lumbers 7.
down to drink from a karst sinkhole.
A trumpet-scream pierces
the pitiless air. Thrashes
of fury & fear slip
on the gumbo-slick sides
of this death trap. Sucking its last
breath in a thunderstorm
of boiling bubbles, the bulk
slowly subsides, settles
to a mass grave while birds of prey

whirl against the setting sun.

Down from the old life, the old way, between
crystalline fingers of the Snow Giant, elegiacally
we follow our warm-blooded wandering
quarry. Headed through the darkening year
for the solstice sunrise horizon, holding
atlatl & spear, we hear the calling
spirit inland: Terra Nuova. We stand tall
with backs against the melting ice. Retrospections
of a journey struck snow-blind in a blizzard
13,000 years ago get left behind. By day
we trek the good Red Road-- a terrestrial echo
of the Milky Way the night unveils.
Bringing a mist of mystic words or
sunburst science, making
& singing, fluted & lenticular
points, eyes balanced (binocular) & poised
across flat lands, bird hands
of medicine men, herb hunting
women, ecstatic chants all
rise with Grandfather Sun. Name by name,
threading our way through
stanzas of grasses & far blue sky
whispering, we call herds of big game
to rites of sacrifice. Bison skulls
held high, knife-edged keens
slice the swimming air sown sweet
with morning dew. Or dancing
moon circles round
mammoth tusks, rattle-shaking shamans intone
our life prayer to lure
back to spirit bone the pure

meat of dreams. 8.

The Great Spirit this new place
of power & plenty engenders
begins to climb, clan
by clan, the spirals rooted
in our blood.

With tools & magic spells
we have come to claim
the utter weal
& woe of our name:
we are called

the People.

Interlude: A Native Narrative

Many many winters ago
the White Buffalo Calf Woman came
bearing the Sacred Pipe. 9.
This was a thin time
when many many buffalo
had retreated into the earth
of the Grandmother.
Two young warriors went out
to watch for signs
of their return. They climbed
all the way to the top
of a great rise.
In the distance
on the horizon
they saw something coming.
In the distance
that 'something' coming
toward them turned
into a woman more lovely than any
meadowlark melody ever played
on the Elk Flute.
Stitched with red-dyed quills
her tight dress was made
of the very finest
fringed white buckskin.
Her breasts swelled beneath
like prairie hills
growing warm & pliant
under the full Moon
of Greening Grass. 10.
Soft as the South Wind
through red willows
her hair flowed over
each round shoulder
down to her waist.
On her left side
a small braid was tied
with white buffalo hair.
Pure as the Morning Star
her face glowed over
both young warriors.
In her right hand
she held a hoop
of sage.
In her left hand
she held a fan
of herbs.

Slung across her back
a red buffalo bundle
long as a man's arm
hung.

One of the young warriors
wanted this woman
very badly
but the other knew
she was *wakan*
& tried to warn him
but he had no ears.
"Come. Come to me,"
she said, and do
whatever you desire."
He ran after her.
In the distance
a mist cloud filled
with fiery streaks
toward them flew.
He grabbed her by the waist
& tried to pull her down
but the cloud came up
& covered them both.
Very slowly
the mist cloud filled
with fiery streaks rose
& she was left standing
alone
next to a pile of bones
writhing with rattlesnakes.
The other young warrior
was petrified.
"Do not be afraid,"
she told him.
"I come to the People
of the Great Hoop
bearing a sacred gift.
Go tell your People
to make a great lodge
at the Center
of the camp circle.
Toward the sunrise
face its door.
Upon the floor
spread the sacred sage.
At the sunset
of the great lodge
make a square altar
out of the earth
of the Grandmother.

Upon it place
a buffalo skull.
(Face it
toward the sunrise.)
Behind it place
two upright sticks
& one cross stick
to make a rack.
Go now and don't look back.
At the sunrise
I come to the People
of the Great Hoop
bearing a sacred gift."

The young warrior ran off
to tell his People
of the Wakan Woman.
The next day at dawn
the People dressed
in their very finest
were sitting in a circle
within the great lodge
waiting.
Even the camp dogs
were hushed.
In the distance
on the horizon
they saw something
coming .
In the distance
the Wakan Woman
was walking
toward them dressed
as before but
bearing the Sacred Pipe.
In her right hand
she held the stem.
In her left hand
she held the bowl.
The Wakan Woman entered
the great lodge
sunwise
singing:

"With visible breath
I am walking.
To the People
of the Great Hoop
a voice
I am sending.
In the sacred way

I am walking.
With this bundle
a voice
I am sending.
With visible breath
I am walking." 11.

At the sunset
of the great lodge
the leader of the People sat.
Toward the sunrise
of the great lodge
Chief Upright Standing Buffalo rose
to offer
a horn of water
to the Wakan Woman
saying: "This day
Wakan Tanka takes pity on us
and sends to the People
of the Great Hoop
a Wakan Woman.
We are a poor People
and have only water
to offer.
Take pity on us."
Upon the rack
the Wakan Woman placed
the Sacred Pipe
& took a drink.
She then untied
the red buffalo bundle
to offer
to the People:
red willow tobacco
twelve spotted eagle feathers
the skin of a red-headed woodpecker 12.
seven rolls of white buffalo hair
four braids of sweetgrass &
one round red stone
with seven circles painted thereon
(the Seven Sacred Fires
of the People
of the Great Hoop).
The Wakan Woman turned
to the mothers
of the Great Hoop
& taught them their duties
in the sacred way.
The Wakan Woman turned
to the children
of the Great Hoop

& taught them their duties
in the sacred way.
The Wakan Woman turned
to the warriors
of the Great Hoop
& taught them their duties
in the sacred way.
The Wakan Woman turned
to the chieftain
of the Great Hoop
saying: "This day
Wakan Tanka takes pity on you
and sends to the People
of the Great Hoop
the Sacred Pipe.
With this Eagle Pipe
made from the flesh
of the sacred stone
know that again
the People shall live!
With this Buffalo Pipe
out of the earth
of the Grandmother
know that again
the buffalo shall come!
With this Pipe of Peace
made from the heart
of the Grandfather
know that again
the People shall love
all the many nations
on this great Island!"
With a buffalo chip
the Wakan Woman lit
the Sacred Pipe
to offer it
to the Four Directions
(West / North / East / & South)
& the Two Directions
(the Sacred Below &
the Sacred Above)
saying: "This day
I come to the People
of the Great Hoop
bearing the Sacred Pipe
as Mother to all
the Lakota
on this great Island.
I come to the People
of the Great Hoop
as Sister to all

the many tribes
on this great Island.
I come to the People
of the Great Hoop
on behalf of all
the Two-Leggèd Ones
on this great Island.
Over many many winters
the Seven Sacred Rites
shall be revealed
to the People
of the Great Hoop.
At the heart
of each one
of these ceremonies
the Sacred Pipe
shall be smoked
to the Four Directions
& the Two Directions.
At the end
of the last age
of this great Island
know that again
I come to the People
of the Great Hoop
on behalf of all:
all the Lakota
all the many tribes
all the Two-Leggèd Ones
all the many nations
(all the Wingèd Ones
all the Crawling Ones
all the Swimming Ones
all the Rooted Ones
all the Four-Leggèd Ones)
all the many colors
(all the Black Ones
all the White Ones
all the Yellow Ones
all the Red Ones)
all the many nations
on this great Island
All my relations!"

With this the White Buffalo Calf Woman left
the Sacred Pipe
with the leader
of the People
of the Great Hoop.
With this the Wakan Woman left
the great lodge

walking
sunwise
singing
her sacred song.
In the distance
the White Buffalo Calf Woman turned
into a black buffalo
& bowed
to the West Wind.
In the distance
the Wakan Woman turned
into a white buffalo
& bowed
to the North Wind.
In the distance
the White Buffalo Calf Woman turned
into a yellow buffalo
& bowed
to the East Wind.
In the distance
the Wakan Woman turned
into a red buffalo
& bowed
to the South Wind.
In the distance
the White Buffalo Calf Woman turned
into a mist cloud filled
with fiery streaks
& was gone.

III: East / Yellow / Fire

Taking Its Time Turning To Gold (Inland Island, the Crucible of History)

“Walled round with rocks
as an inland island, the ghost
of a garden fronts the sea.” 13.

Out on the tide of blue haze
sage plains breathe in, alkali dust
deviling ghost buffalo, cumulonimbus
ships slip from red shores
of the Black Hills, thread needlegrass & brome
ripples, drift eastward over evening
green reefs of cottonwood groves-- going
home. Keels snagged, a couple
rose hulls split, a thunder
echoes this spilt sunset
of gold, & silver rain seeds
from ringlet dreams return
a white elder to his wet lover
of earth that first time they made
a heaven in the name of Creation.
(The smell of yellow clover by the roadside
can plow up the same for him
even now.) Over the sunrise rim they go
back through badland waves, are gone the way
the ghost dance would've made them
dry up-- cold sweat off the breast
of our fallen Grandmother dreaming
the beginning. They go back: two.
And take their bloody history
like a misplaced love story.

But we are legion & chant, forward
hoeing hard scrabble, syllable
by mortal syllable, to make in verse
proportions the conversion of space
sacred: transubstantiation
of word into world spinning
the Island Hills round dance around
a Sioux tongue long coiled within
the song of the New World Tree.
We sing toward the heartwood
rising

deep-blue & indigo
into the red range
of the Rainbow Hoop.
Granite outcroppings
echo
the gray setting
of Grandmother Moon
in a cerulean sea
of the first morning.
AEden burning toward Zion
in the same bole, the same bowl
the visible breath of the People
turning all into one
stock stokes, the fiery eye
of the heart sings
annular rings in the epoch
rock. In the epic
phloem of the Flowering Tree
rises
a poem of the oldest star breath
the Great Spirit's ever lit
on its upper branches
singing
concentric ages: Omega burning
toward Alpha, Ginnunga turning
into Ragnarok, the last Great Buffalo balanced
on a single leg once sacrificed
by the first. We climb the night ladder
of duel gyres time moves in
& out like a latter-day Hermes
thrice great-- his caduceus singing
our roots. And our singing
moves us
toward the heartwood, closer in
deed, "... as close as possible
to the gods." --the words 14.
our grandfathers dreamed
we have not
forgot.

*The Father says so.
The Father says so.
Now he commands
to all on earth:
Sing!
Sing now!
He has spoken.*

*He has spoken.
Tell his message
to all on earth.
Tell his message
to all on earth.
Sing!
Sing now!* 15.

In a *chorus*, “a dance
in a ring”, “a song
between the acts
of a tragedy” (Wounded Knee) or
choros, “a ground, a
place or space” where
choreography corroborates
chorography.
We have not forgot
our Holy Ghost
dancing.

Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani? 16.

We have not forgot either
our heirs or forebears
singing.
The insular heart
of Everything
That Is is
the first Great Buffalo
singing.
Open & sweet
her womb is Wind
Cave, her backbone the belt
of Orion-- sacred above
sacred below.
The heart of the Heart
of Everything That Is
is a group of seven
granite mountains
at the Center--
grandfathers or
sisters stolen, eaten
by a red eagle--
their spirits turned
by Fallen Star in the Moon
the Thunderbeings return 17.
into the Pleiades--
sacred above sacred

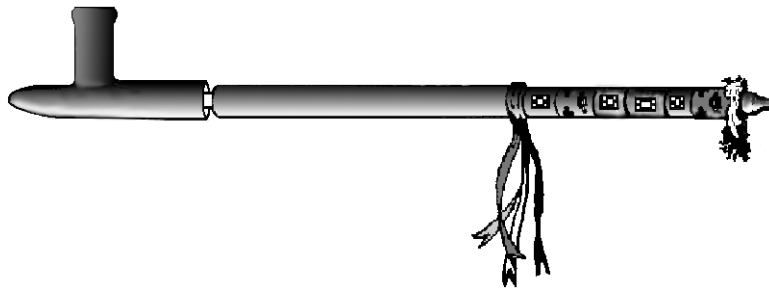
below. The Buffalo who is
land, her ait heart
inland singing
visions of the Seven
Council Fires, her Great Hoop
of earth gives birth
& takes
back to the spirit world
the People peaceful
as the slow pranic breathing
of Wakan Tanka--
the dying star mist
of the Sacred Pipe.
From the unmoving
Pole, the Dipper brings
the sun coal to Aries &
Triangulum (the Black Road
of the zodiac) to smoke
red willow & kinnikinnik 18.
at the Council Oak. 19.
In the Moon of Greening
Trees they gather 20.
“peace at the bare spot”
the Pe Sla, the three prairies
(Turtle, Slate, & Bear Skull) within 21.
the Island Hills.
The Mountain Within
a Mountain outside 22.
the Black Hills’ blood rim
is the black horn
of the first Great Buffalo--
the place they gather
sweatlodge stones.
Her gray horn
is the Bear Lodge where 23.
they sundance
the solstice singing &
bring down
to spread out (in
concentric ringing) over
the Great Hoop
of Grandmother Earth:
red solar
bison power-- sacred
above sacred below.
The moist black nose
of the first Great Buffalo

is Bear Butte--
the place they gather
in the swelling Moon
the Chokecherries
Bleed 24.
ghost dreams
of the sacred above &
make love
their way
on the Red Road sacred
below. 25.

From a retort in the tower
on the Mountain At the Center
Where He Comes, igneous love
expands in circles
(tree rings or ripples)
toward hands joined
in joy for ghosts dancing
round the horizon
of glass-- a spagyric vessel
vast as the gyres
of the Eagle People.
(On the other hand, miraculously
minuscule as a human
heart or fist is
this vas Hermetis.)
This Sacred Pipe
makes the whole universe
from the breath go
up in smoke
to the Great Spirit.
This Sacred Pipe
makes the whole
universe from the breath
of the Great Spirit
through the blood
go
to the Heart
of Everything
That Is. The Medicine Wheel
of the Black Hills hovers
like a smoke ring
on the still air
eternity inspires.
The oldest axis
Omega Island is

taking its time
turning
to gold &
burning
in the full ear
the sacred tree
of song--
the axed cords
of melody mystickally
recorded
by Spirit, Inc.:

*The sacred takes place
& makes it
timeless
at the Center
of the world the Circle
turns
around. And a round
song
out of the body rises:
the spirit within
visions of Wita Paha
singing
its spirit song
within--
seeing
all at once
(in all Six Directions
at once)
the world
as one.*



IV: North / White / Earth

In the Eye of Unanimous Terror (Gold Dust To Destiny, 20th Century)

Lead, South Dakota-- 10 miles
or less but more than a century
from Deadwood-- is proud today
to proclaim inside its boundaries the site
of the largest operation
in the Western Hemisphere: the Homestake
Mining Corporation.

At the Hearst shaft
ventilation duct, a distant rumbling
ghost herd of stampeding
buffalo's heard. (Come back! O come back!)
Nuggets of desire burn within
the Motherlode's loins. The sun had laid
golden eggs in bedrock way back when
the first red men crawled
subterranean plains. Now
these eggs are cracked &
out pops a stiff-billed currency
of squawking blackbirds, wings rustling
blighted cornstalks.

Against a down-draft hard rock
rises in skip-buckets up the same
shaft through which throw-backs
to Cro-Magnon or Piltdown plummet
below sea level in man-cages.
Winches in the hoist house wheel
steel cables, greased & whirring.
Buzz tube half-light lacquers aflorescently
dusty girders & struts, clanking tanks
painted mock green or grey. Metallic masses'
surreal symmetries of night shift
reflect refractory hell mill
of modern timescape's dynamo. The fact totem
Mammon --neo-gizmo driven-- drones away
a well-oiled Machine Age bulk
tonnage, alloyed hulk of Century # 20, works
its way with unseen vibrations: minute
machinations biting to the white-hot core
each hard-hat brain. Drilled

& dynamite-blasted, hauled up & crushed
to powder, limestone-slurried, slimed &
dumped down giant redwood vats
filled with cyanide liquor, fired
& filtered, smelted & drossed, this
hornblende schist is poured at last
into 400 ounce bars. 26.

Thence by armored cars
they venture into the world
impounded by Usura. Capital investments waged
like the Cold War pseudo-alchemize
goose eggs into gold bricks
of the Homestake Tower, swaying
in the wind through the Gate. An earthquake
is a sign the Great Mother wakes, her bones
sucked of their brilliant marrow. Tomorrow
as the milk & honey bees with wasps
of big business buzz & swarm
like mad swastikas on the floor
of Wall St. --the Bridge's voyages voided
on that other shore, suspensions rhyming
in swan dive threnody-- she will fly
toward the unblinking eye

of her sun. And then
across this terra infirma, no one
can hide anymore behind
the massive Dorian columns
of his assets. Portfolios
of bankrolled egos
will fall

with a gourd of ashes

all hope-elapsed watches
go blind

inside:

of fire

the dust devil furor

in the eye of unanimous
terror.

V: Quincunx / Rainbow / Ether

**A Bullion Still Suns or So
(Mount Rushmore, Hic Et Nunc)**

Drill bit hard-bore
into the heartwood of the crosscut
Hills, the blacktop
road to Rushmore winds up
a hyped trope of the all-American
trip. Billboards of tripe-
baited traps flash by
like Mastercards. Dollar signs
vie with vistas of mica fire &
hoop dance rainbows, crystal creeks tingling
bluebell meadows-- pine
music black mountains make
in the distance

muted

by white noise. . . .

**SIOUX POTTERY-COSMOS MYSTERY
 SPOT-WHERE GRAVITY GOES
 WACKY-RAPID GO KART TRACK-
RUSHMORE WATERSLIDE-HORSELESS
 CARRIAGE MUSEUM-AERIAL
 TRAMWAY-1880 TRAIN-WESTERN
TALKING WOOD CARVINGS-FLINTSTONE
 CARTOON VILLAGE CAMPGROUND-CUSTER'S
 LAST HAMBURGER STAND-NOAH'S
 GIFT-SHOP-BLACK LIGHT ART
GALLERY-VINTAGE COWBOY-THE INDIANS-CALL
 OF THE WILD-BLACK HILLS
 HOLY LAND-HOLY SMOKE
RESORT-FAMILY ATTRACTION-MISTLETOE
 RANCH-PARADE OF PRESIDENTS WAX
MUSEUM-CHUTE ROOSTERS TRAIL RIDES-REPTILE
GARDENS-FLYING T CHUCKWAGON SUPPERS-BUFFALO
 SAFARI JEEP TOURS-FLEA MARKET-BEAR COUNTRY
 U.S.A.-BLACK HILLS MAZE-SEE
 LIONS & TIGERS & BULLS**

Oh my! . . . And all
about as out

of place as the Native
American Black
Elk in Paris.

After this hoopla's heyday, rubber-necked
gawkers gone to rec. vehicles or
Best Westerns for midnight satellite
TV showdowns, a floodlight flashes off
automatically. In each fiberglass tank
Marine Life splashes back
salt swells. A praxis prayer
of dolphins' blood arcs
through the air-- sun sky & water all
one beyond time. Still
they recall nightmare shadows
of ships passing overhead: burning
clouds boiling & churning
propellers' oil slick thunder-- all
here on the Great American Desert...

Morning! In a caffeine careen
toward the first rock spring, arboreal
saps oozing like ore, brochuring past
the boredom story of Highway 16
we wander. What we waited for
rises like Olde Glory. With God
Bless America sung full-blown
(Kate Smith style): the four heads
of state --George Tom Teddy & Abe--
in stone stare down. "Like rock stars!"
some Jersey tourist jokes, sucking
a can of Coke. Our country's
snake oil trademark: this blind faith Shrine
of Hypocrisy patently oversees
the Lakota Sioux's erstwhile
sanctum sanctorum-- their geomorphic
Medicine Wheel. (Hau, kola.)

We the pawns
of the body politic stand
dumbstruck at the base of this quartet
in granite, cross our hearts
& hope to buy (with the rational
anthem & Protestant mythic) a plastic
replica of our everlasting logo. Blasted
& jack-hammered in the likeness
of the old Commanders-

in-Chief, these gargantuan busts look
like they could conceive
without making love. Anachronistic
men of eminence gathered at the summit
for a corporate conglomerate
board meeting to discuss-- like they could
decide without making
love-- the fate of humanity like
a game of chess.

Oz was a man, as was
Ozimandius. Hubris breeds
the fallacious notion
of fame made by fool's
gold & blind hope
the old Hoop
of the native heart once broke
like a wild horse.
Within the Sacred Circle
of the earth's horizon
Yahweh forever remains
absentee landlord of, now
the nation is free
to celebrate
another broken treaty ²⁷.
by the mere presence
of these faces querying
the future, high jinxing forever
the ancient Quincunx.

"I've a feeling
we're not in Kansas
anymore, Tonto." (*Sic
transit gloria ab origine.*)

Ergo, cross a red sandstone ridge
which rims the lone range
hymns in the heart
of the heartwood's holiest
of holies, highest
Black Hills peak we call
Harney (not that jingo
Amerigo Rushmore blarney!) follow
the yellow brick, lower Cretaceous road
over the ghost dance rainbow
to pre-Cambria's mystick rose
quartz & Crazy Horse granite

Paradisio. It might take you
a bullion still suns or so 28.
to make that greater summit:
a monument to the Great Spirit.

At the Sacred Center
remember
the four *Lakota* brothers who 29.
discovered an eternity
in the all-encompassing
quaternity. They walk
their Totem Wheel
of blood earth & buffalo froth
still, feel the passion
of the rising sun the same
burning shade
as Dorothy's
gift of God--
her calf made
of mosaic gold
leaf upon
fallen
Baum leaf
our Yankee
Doodle Yggdrasil
drops.



"Totem Tower" (see **Coda**)
atop Black Elk (Harney) Peak

**To the Islet of Omega Wakan
(Coda to *Terra Kota*, *Semper Auriferous*)**

Red inlet to the Islet
of Omega Wakan: up Battle Creek, up
the Black Road, alchemical anabasis
to violet granite, the sacred heart
of the New World Tree. In the oldest eye
our veins can remember, going back
to the sundance Center:
cottonwood leaves glisten
golden seed syllables
in the wind. In the oldest wind
our cold serial history whips up
a twilight banquet on the hoop dance circuit.
We eat & speak in buffalo tongues
of the coming eagle nation.

Coming past Red Valley laden
with echoes of sauric skulls, ichthyolithic
shadows Pahasapa limestone layered
with inland waters' sodic whispers, past
trilobitten travertine, gastropodal
ring after petroconcentric ring, cryptobenzenically
inward, lepidolitically arkose, tourmalineal
pegmatite metagabbro intruded
with sillimanite schistosity shatters, plagioclastic or
microclitic, through beryllly gneiss hoodoo split
albitically, spodumene from cleavelandite
to tantalite lit out, tungstenically stunned
by lithia & book mica, staurolite biotitically
protozoan-driven, we garnet-spirit poets mine
the glory-hole of the whole
earth-heart.

Past mottles of shadow & sunshine within
the oldest fern forest, sunburst yellow
pine needles let us breathe in
this slow burn of thick sap. Rising
through juniper & kinnikinnik, burr oak & birch, white
spruce festooned with old man's beard, we make
our foxfire way toward Grandfather Rock
sacred. Through granite spires & evergreen boughs
wind spirits in rivers rushing
clear above amanita mushroom lovers
crushing time between thighs wind

Möbius skies to bow a mystick chord
up the deepest canyon our mind
can envision: a pristine echo
of the last crescendo from the other shore.
Each ascendant age turns a deeper page
of our pilgrimage golder
lief. Through an adamant core
sample ample annular rings
we'll bore, read in reverse
from the verse epilog to the Book
of the New World Tree
the first combusting in
our last igneous seed
of gnosis-- Aaronic to Zygotic.

Grandfather Rock under an octagon
Totem Tower, zodiacally yclept
on the clockwork ecliptic, our
heartland lighthouse of stone (cum fire
lookout & pump house) rising
from his loins, tone row panes long ago
gone from the octave, apostolically
omnidirectional septennia spiral inward
to ward apocalypse or crematoria
off-- all for one in the same
paper boat: this opus set aflame
afloat. His lightning rod (bolted
by twelve twin hex nut couples
in a circle plus a single plexus quad
above an athanor of love within
that turning turret) thunders
like a Bardo trumpet
our ele-mental sound (a la kundalini)
on this Quincunx mountain axis
mundi Grandmother Moon apportions
her phases for. By seven
faces we know her-- though new
is no news by which
our solar-powered worship steers.

By seven, eventide at odds rising, nodding
Grandfather Sun climbs down to rest
on the limestone plateau castellating
the west. His home an equinox echo
Grandfather Rock's cochlea balances
utmost on the east knee
of Grandmother Mountain

in the birthing position. Delta headed
 enclitically southward
 past Cathedral Spires, deep-breathing
 an orison for her spirit breed
 lining the Red Road toward summer's horizon
 of wisdom, her lichened cleft
 molten in deep cut time, then frozen
 in a rose quartz crescendo, flows up
 the Milky Way's ghostly climb.
 Through a rainbow halo afterglow-- red
 into indigo gold-- we hie. On her knee
 (miscreant scree call the western face
 of Harney Peak) her dark other
 (dexter) limb limns our benison
 to this Quincunx mountain matrix:

I AM Omega Om
come home Wakan, we make
Tatanka drum beats keen in the breast
of Grandmother Mountain come
alive on earth. With Wambli wing
we make Grandmother Mountain
a love for life. No erstwhile kingdom
of will to conquer, we take
each step --now or ever--
to pray to & reach for
Grandmother Mountain come home!
Grandfather Rock come home!
Grandmother Moon come home!
Grandfather Sun come home!
White Buffalo Sister come home!
Bear Medicine Brother come home!
Yumni cum Wohpe Wankinyan cum Tatè
Takuskanskan come home!
Nagila Sicun via Nagi Niya come home!
Tunkashila Jazos come home!
Allah Alpha Buddha come home!
Tatè Topa Elohim Brahma come home!
Come home! Come home! Come home!
I AM Omega Om come home
to Wita Paha Wakan!
AM Om of the heart I would
to Inland Island come home!
Is land we Wita long last
Paha Wakan song come home! 30.

End Notes

Prefatory Quotes

1. Mircea Eliade, "The Myth of Alchemy," *Parabola*, Vol. III, No. 3, August 1978, pp. 13-14.
2. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, Harper & Row/Harper Colophon Books, 1975, 1959.
3. John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1962.

I. Making the Earth of Alpha Island

1. The "ganz andere," a phrase used by Rudolf Otto in *Das Heilige (The Holy)* to describe the fear (the mysterium tremendum) one experiences when faced with the numinous power of that which is sacred.
2. "The pre-eminently shamanic technique is the passage from one cosmic region to another-- from earth to sky or from earth to the underworld. The shaman knows the mystery of the break-through plane. This communication among cosmic zones is made possible by the very structure of the universe. ...the universe in general is conceived as having three levels --sky, earth, underworld-- connected by a central axis." Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Princeton University Press, Bollingen Foundation, 1974.
3. 60 million years B.P. Known as the Laramide Orogeny, this final major uplift of the Black Hills had also formed the Bighorn and the Rocky Mountains farther West.
4. Rodney M. Feldman, Richard A. Heimlich, *The Black Hills*, Kent State University, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., Dubuque, Iowa , 1980.

II. Hear the Calling Spirit

5. For the sake of continuity in the narrative of this nearly incomprehensibly long span of geologic time, these largest of Oligocene mammals are portrayed as somehow sensing the coming glacial ice. In actuality, the Earth did not begin to cool until at most 5 million years and at least 1 million years B.P., the latter marking the beginning of the Pleistocene epoch.
6. The Ice Age was not monolithic but occurred in a series of advances and retreats. For instance, 30,000 years ago the generally colder weather caused glaciers to grow, sea levels to drop, and the ice to advance southward-- thereby opening once again the land bridge between Siberia and Alaska known as Beringia. (Other major glacial advances during the last, or Wisconsin, stage of the Pleistocene occurred around 60,000 and 45,000 B.P.) However, by the time the Mammoth Site occurred (26,000 B.P.; Hot Springs, South Dakota) North America was experiencing the milder climate of an interglacial period. At about 20,000 B.P. the ice mass began again to push down from the Pole, this final advance (Mankato) extending the farthest south. The glaciers typically produced an adjacent taiga-like environment of boreal conifer forests, the vestiges of which are evidenced today in the Black Hills, the Pine Ridge of Nebraska, and the Slim Buttes of northwestern South Dakota. The time of the actual arrival of humans on the North American continent is a point of considerable speculation. Scientific estimates range anywhere from 60,000 to 13,000 B.P. On the other hand, most Native Americans claim that their origin was this continent.
7. *Mammuthus columbi*, the Columbian mammoth, a warm weather counterpart of the woolly mammoth.

8. "Now, among hunting peoples bones represent the final source of life, both human and animal, the source from which the species is reconstituted at will. This is why the bones of game are not broken, but carefully gathered up and disposed of according to custom... ..the 'soul' is presumed to reside in the bones and hence the resurrection of the individual from its bones can be expected... For the mystical animal ancestor is conceived as the inexhaustible matrix of the life of the species, and this matrix is found in these animals' bones. One hesitates to speak of totemism. Rather, it is a matter of mystical relations between man and his prey, relations that are fundamental for hunting societies..." Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Princeton University Press, Bollingen Foundation, 1974.

Interlude: A Native Narrative

9. Thomas E. Mails, *Fools Crow*, Avon Books, New York, 1980-- from appendix # 19: "While Smith [viz. J.L. Smith, "A Short History of the Sacred Calf Pipe of the Teton Dakota," *Museum News*, Vol. 28, Nos. 7-8, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, July-August, 1967] cites probable dates for the receipt of the Sacred Pipe as 1785-1800, he also gave credence to Fools Crow's view of the Sacred Pipe by mentioning that Garrick Mallery, *Picture Writing of the American Indians*, Tenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington D.C. (1889), shows two different pictographs with the dates 901-930 and 931-1000; that High Hawk [Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian*, Vol. 3, 1908; reprinted by Johnson Reprint Corp., New York, 1970], an Oglala, gives a date of 1540, and says, 'from 1610-1617 fifty-four offerings were made to the Sacred Pipe Calf.'"

10. i.e. April

11. Francis Densmore, *Teton Sioux Music*, De Cap Press, New York, 1972 [Reprint of *Bureau of American Ethnology*, Bulletin 61, Washington D.C., 1918].

12. This bird is known for its responsibility in the care of its young.

III. Taking Its Time Turning To Gold

13. "A Forsaken Garden," alternate delineation, Algernon Charles Swinburne.

14. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1959.

15. Ghost Dance song of Short Bull adapted from Natalie Curtis, *The Indians' Book*, Gramery Books, New York, 1994.

16. Matthew 27:46

17. --i.e. another name for April

--This author believes the seven sacred mountains referred to are as follows: East to West-- Mount Rushmore and Thunderhead (Crazy Horse) Mountain; North to South-- Elkhorn Peak, Black Elk (Harney) Peak, Cathedral Spires, Little Devil's Tower, and the Needles.

18. The latter plant is commonly known as bearberry (*Uva ursi*).

19. The Council Oak was reputedly located along Battle Creek west of the town of Hermosa.

20. i.e. May

21. The first and third prairies are now called Gillette and Reynolds respectively, while Slate Prairie has retained its name.

22. This laccolith on the western side of the Black Hills is known as Inyan Kara Peak.

23. The Bear Lodge is more commonly (but erroneously) called Devil's Tower.

24. i.e. July

25. Corroborated by various oral accounts, the lore found in this section has been gathered in a quintessential work on Black Hills ethnoastronomy entitled *Lakota Star Knowledge: Studies In Lakota Stellar Theology*, Ronald Goodman,

Sinte Gleska College, Rosebud Sioux Reservation, South Dakota, 1990.

IV. In the Eye of Unanimous Terror

26. Tons of rock must be pulverized and processed with toxic pollutants in order to produce just one bar of gold.

V. A Bullion Still Suns Or So

27. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 guaranteed all the land west of the Missouri River in the present State of South Dakota to the Sioux Nation as its permanent reservation. Seven years after this treaty was signed, Congress illegally nullified it when the presence of gold "in paying quantities" was discovered.

28. --The gold-bearing Harney uplift is composed of rocks approximately 1.7 billion years old.

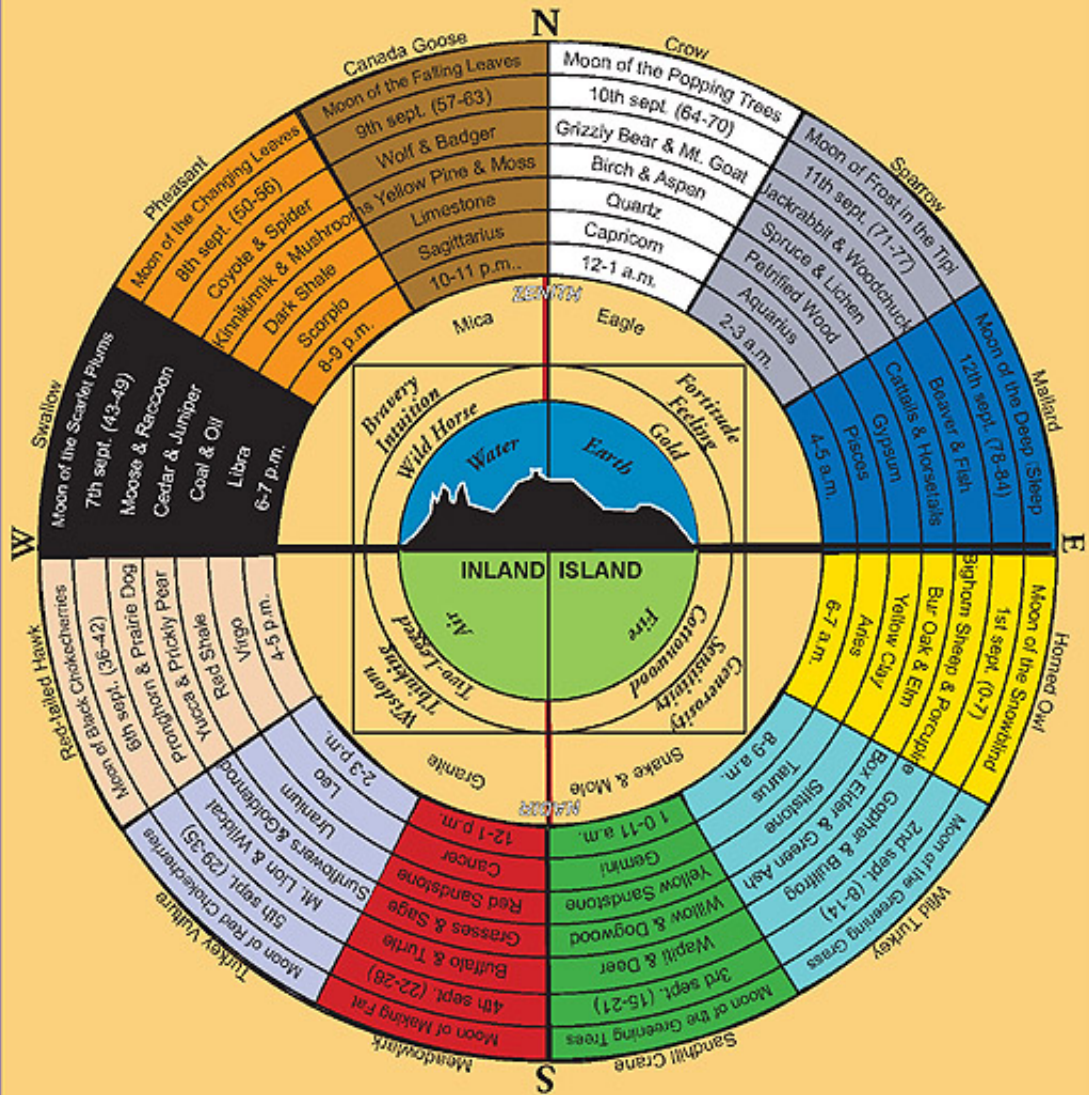
--"The Black Hills represent a classic example of mountain formation by 'updoming.' As the dome was pushed up, ultimately the top layers were eroded with the result that a 'layer cake' effect was produced. As one travels from the outer portions inward, a complete sequence of rock strata is encountered from the more recent formations on the periphery to the oldest at the center." Sven G. Froiland, *Natural History of the Black Hills*, The Center For Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 1978.

29. A synopsis of the Lakota myth of the Founding of the Four Directions is as follows: "Tatè [Wind] placed his lodge at the center of the world and his sons went forth to do the task assigned to them. They traveled around on the edge of the world and on it established four directions so as to divide the circle into four equal, parts.... When the four brothers had completed their task, Skan [Sky] gave to each one of the directions they had established and made a season for each direction. He commanded them to bring his season upon the world and during it control the weather. He bestowed upon them God-like attributes so that the four are one God and his name is *Wani* (Vigor) and he made them messengers the Gods. *Wohpe* [Falling Star and lover of the brother in the South] showed her father that the four brothers were absent from their father's lodge twelve moon times, so Skan decreed that twelve moons should constitute one *Wani-yetu*, the fourth of the four times, a year time." James R. Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, edited by Raymond J. DeMallie and Blaine A. Jahner, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1980.

To the Islet of Omega Wakan

30. English translations for the Lakota terms found in the final chant are as follows: *Wakan*, Sacred; *Tatanka*, Buffalo; *Wanbli*, Eagle; *Yumni*, Whirlwind; *Wohpe*, Falling star; *Wakinyan*, Thunderbeing; *Tatè*, Wind; *Takuskanskan*, That Which Moves-moves, related to *Skan* [Sky]; *Nagila*, Non-human Spirit, the sacred potency in all things; *Sicun*, Spirit Helper, a guardian spirit, an ally, or the ceremonial bundle (fetish) which contains it; *Nagi*, Ghost, the etheric body which sometimes lingers on earth; *Niya*, Life-Breath, which originates from and returns to the stars; *Tunkashila*, Grandfather; *Jazos*, Jesus Christ; *Tatè Topa*, Four Directions, or the four winds as one entity; *Wita Paha*, Island Hills, the Black Hills.

Totem Wheel



Island Hills Books

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