

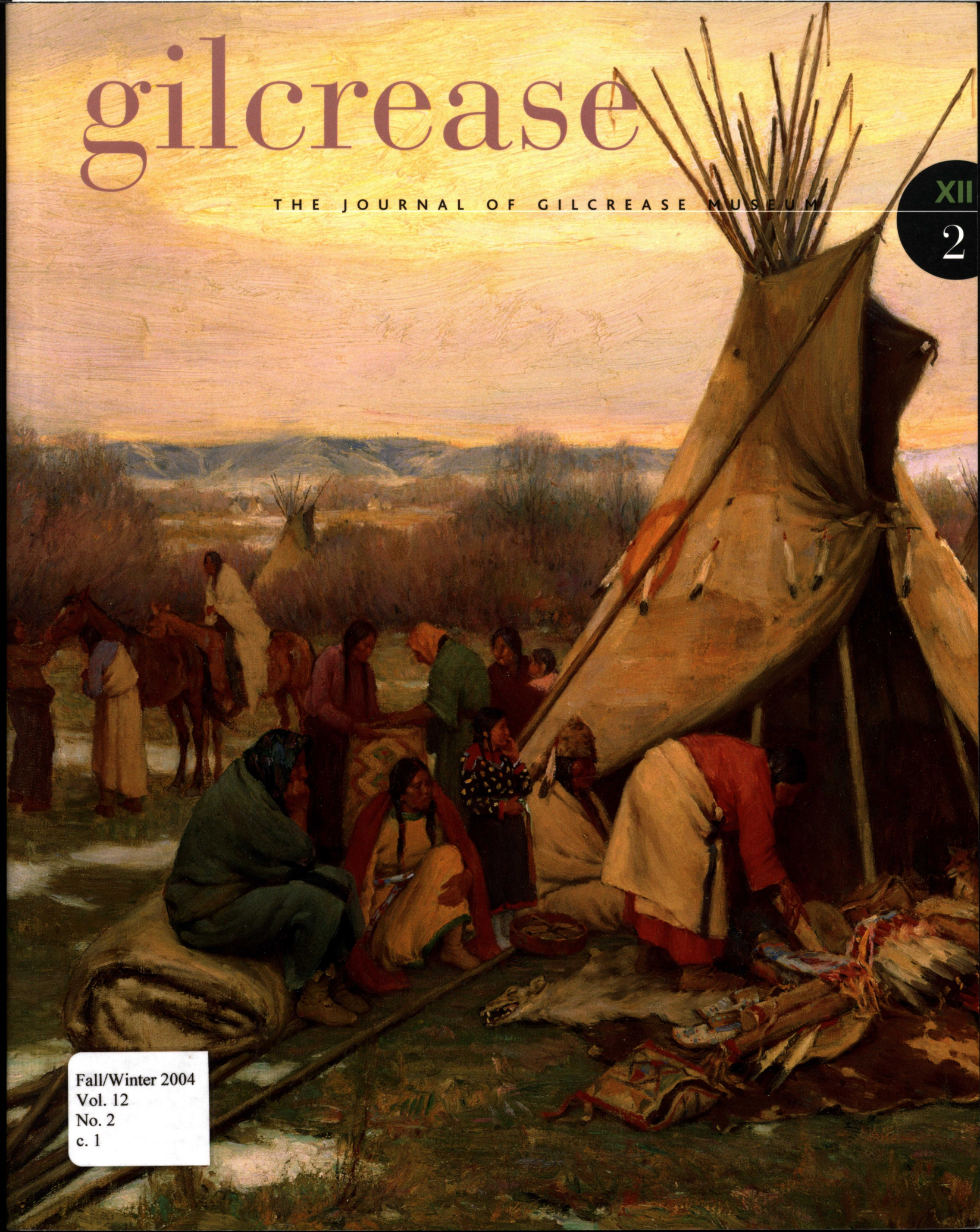
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THE JOURNAL OF GILCREASE MUSEUM

XII

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Fall/Winter 2004
Vol. 12
No. 2
c. 1



Gilcrease Journal
Fall/Winter 2004
Vol. 12, No. 2
c. 1

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Lalapaloozas: Nine Extraordinary Western Jewish Women

la-la·pa·loo·za. Something outstanding of its kind. *American Heritage Dictionary*

BY HARRIET ROCHLIN

Harriet Rochlin

has spent the last 35 years researching and writing western Jewish history and fiction. Her landmark social history, *Pioneer Jews, A New Life in the Far West*, is currently in its eleventh printing at Houghton Mifflin. The Rochlin Collection of Western Jewish History, 2,455 files gathered to write this distinctive work, is housed at UCLA's Young Research Library. The Harriet Rochlin Collection of Western Jewish Photographs, some 2,000 images, will be ready for contribution in fall, 2004. For the inner lives of her pioneer predecessors, Rochlin turned to fiction. Her hybrid pictorial social history, titled *A Mixed Chorus: Jewish Women in the American West, 1849-1924*, is scheduled for release in 2005.

Jews were among the first Europeans to settle in what would become the American Far West. After the Spanish conquered Mexico in 1521, Iberian Jews evicted from Catholic Spain and Portugal clandestinely began to seek new homes in colonial Mexico. As their numbers rose, so did arrests and trials by the Mexican Colonial Inquisition. In the late 16th century, some sought refuge in the wilds of Spanish Texas and New Mexico. Others followed, indelibly weaving into the region a secret Jewish strand. In 1821, the new Mexican Republic granted non-Catholics provisional entry. Jewish traders trickled into Texas, New Mexico, and California. In 1835, Jews joined the Texans in their rebellion against Mexican rule. When the resulting Lone Star State invited all comers, the first openly Jewish families settled in Texas. One prolific couple added twenty to infant Houston's Jewish population.

By 1848, the United States had seized much of the Mexican West. To lure settlers there, the government offered fertile land and political and religious freedom. In 1849, California's gold fields ignited a rush. By that year's end, some 62,000 fortune-seekers had arrived, including a thousand Jews, some of them female. Abraham Abrahamsohn, a ritual circumciser, said " . . . the Jews of San Francisco [in 1852] rivaled in increase their ancestors in Egypt." His less sanguine words recounted fires, crime, constant rain, and cholera.

"Come, it is richness," one Jew summoned his brother. For a few, it was. Unable or disinclined to stay where they were, Jews in growing numbers rushed to the newly American region. Like other pioneers they endured the back-breaking, hope-crushing hardships of frontier life in camps, supply towns, and infant cities. Beset with options and dangers, they helped transform the West and, in the process, themselves.

THE WEST WAS HOME BY BIRTH, RESIDENCE, OR INCLINATION TO THE WOMEN PRESENTED HERE. SEVEN WERE BORN OF PIONEER PARENTS. TWO ARRIVED AS SMALL CHILDREN. MOST ATTENDED CO-EDUCATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOLS WHERE THEY WERE TAUGHT TO HONOR THE EGALITARIAN WESTERN ETHOS, DESCRIBED BY CALIFORNIA NATIVE JUDAH L. MAGNES AS "THE GLORIES OF THE REAL AMERICA, NO BADGES, NO TITLES, NO SPECIAL UNIFORMS." AS YOUTHS THEY ASPIRED TO QUALITIES POPULARLY THOUGHT OF AS WESTERN—INDEPENDENCE, SELF-RELIANCE, CANDOR, A LOVE OF NATURE. AS ADULTS, THEY IGNORED THE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON THEIR GENDER AND PRESSED INTO SOCIAL, SPIRITUAL, ARTISTIC, AND INTELLECTUAL FRONTIERS WITH THE FERVOR OF THEIR PIONEER PREDECESSORS. SOME ATTRIBUTED THEIR IDIOSYNCRATIC BEHAVIOR TO THEIR WESTERN UPBRINGING, ONE TO HER GENIUS. INDIVIDUALLY, THEY WERE AS DIFFERENT FROM EACH OTHER—including TWO ENTWINED IN A LESBIAN MARRIAGE—AS THEY WERE FROM THEIR CONVENTIONAL COUNTERPARTS. ALL SUFFERED SELF-DOUBT, LONELINESS, ALIENATION, SOME WITHOUT SURCEASE, BUT MOST FOUND FIRM GROUND IN THE PURSUIT OF AN IRREPRESSIBLE TALENT OR DESIRE. EACH ACHIEVED RENOWN—LOCAL, NATIONAL, OR INTERNATIONAL—DURING HER LIFETIME. ONE BECAME A WESTERN JEWISH FOLK HEROINE POSTHUMOUSLY. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE REPRESENTED HERE IN EACH OTHER'S COMPANY, IN TRUTH THEY DEFY GROUPING, EXCEPT AS EXTRAORDINARY JEWISH WOMEN OF THE WEST, AND AS EXTRAORDINARY HUMAN BEINGS—LALAPALOOZAS.

Ray Frank Litman (1861–1948)

TEACHER, JOURNALIST, AND ORATOR. "SHE IS NOT A MERE SPEAKER, A TALKER, BUT AN ORATOR . . . WHO CAN STEAL INTO THE MOST GUARDED RECESSES OF THE HEART, AND AWAKEN NEW IMPULSES, LOFTIER ASPIRATIONS, NOBLER SENTIMENTS."

—SIMON LITMAN, RAY FRANK LITMAN: A MEMOIR

Ray Frank was a handsome and high-strung Californian of humble origins, high intelligence, and winning presence. Throughout the 1890s she enchanted audiences with her seemingly extemporaneous command of Jewish and general subjects—the arts, nature, the role of women. Admirers saw her as the new western woman personified—unmindful of class, with opinions that cut through scholarship and struck at the heart. Detractors saw her as an opportunist, crassly promoted as "The Female Messiah," "The Modern Deborah," or "The Girl Rabbi."

Ray's parents, Leah and Bernard Frank, were liberal Orthodox Jewish immigrants of moderate means. Her father was a fruit peddler, her mother a dutiful and pious homemaker. In a letter to Reverend S. T. Willis, now in the archives of the American Jewish Historical Society, Frank described the effects of growing up as a Jew in the California hinterlands: "Although reared among non-Jews, I at an early age became much interested in all that concerned the Jews. Living where prejudices of a theological kind were unknown, one of the prime factors of this early interest was the desire to understand the cause and meaning of prejudice against the Jew as recorded in history and accounted in the secular press. . . ."



RAY FRANK LITMAN
Courtesy of the American Jewish Historical Society

Underpinning Frank's own account of her rise as an inspirational speaker is a dynamic blend of western and Jewish cultures, the former fixed on the future, the latter on the past. Combining the two, Frank transformed age-old Judaic precepts into practical solutions to the communal problems of a new and radically diverse Jewish ingathering. What appeared to be her meteoric rise was preceded by a decade of preparation. After graduating from Sacramento High School in 1879, Frank spent six years in Ruby Hill, a Nevada mining town, teaching children by day and their parents at night. In Ruby Hill, she also began to write for Pacific Coast and eastern newspapers. In 1885, she rejoined her family in Oakland, California, where she worked as a journalist, a teacher (eventually superintendent) of the First Hebrew Congregation Sabbath School, and as a private instructor in public speaking.

Her first experience as a preacher occurred in September, 1890, while she was in the Pacific Northwest writing stories on boom towns and prominent Indian leaders. In Spokane Falls, Washington, on the afternoon of Rosh Hashana eve, Frank was dismayed to discover the city had neither a congregation nor plans for a service. Asked to conduct one, she agreed. Jews and Christians filled the opera house to witness a Jewish woman preach, a rare, possibly unprecedented sight. The following week she returned to lead the Yom Kippur service, the holiest day of the Jewish year. In her wake, she left a congregation and plans to construct a synagogue.

Word spread, and Frank was soon speaking throughout the West to hundreds, occasionally thousands. In 1893, she delivered the opening prayer and an address at the Jewish Women's Congress, a section of the Parliament of World Religions at the Chicago World's Fair. She was even asked to serve as spiritual leader of a Chicago congregation. Her longtime literary mentor and friend, the controversial journalist and author Ambrose Bierce, pressed her to take the post and "advance the cause of woman." But Frank declined, maintaining, as had her teacher, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, founding president of Hebrew Union College, that women were as yet unprepared to head a congregation. Given her sensitivity to criticism, it was appropriate advice for Frank, if not for all women.

In 1898, nerves frayed and sorely in need of a rest, Frank went abroad. Two years later, she married Simon Litman, a Russian Jewish doctoral student in economics. As the wife of a university professor, she wrote, worked for Jewish organizations, and counseled students, but rarely again mounted a podium.

Emma Wolf (1865-1932)

NOVELIST OF SOCIAL ISSUES. "WHAT WAS THE USE OF IT ALL, I QUESTIONED. WHY MAKE A STAND FOR SEPARATE JEWISH IDEALS? WHY NOT CHOOSE THE EASIER WAY AND BE LIKE ALL THE REST? THE STRUGGLE WAS TOO HARD, TOO BITTER. EMMA WOLF WAS UNDERGOING MUCH THE SAME INNER CONFLICT. IT MEANT REAL SUFFERING TO BOTH OF US." —REBEKAH BETTELHEIM KOHUT, *MY PORTION*

Between 1892 and 1916, Emma Wolf, a native San Franciscan, wrote five novels: *Other Things Being Equal* (1892), *Prodigal in Love* (1894), *The Joy of Life* (1896), *Heirs of Yesterday* (1900), *Fulfillment: A California Novel* (1916). She also produced a novella, *The Knot*, short stories, and poems. Her works were acquired by New York publishers and enthusiastically reviewed by leading critics, including Israel Zangwill, an eminent English Jewish novelist and playwright. Nine of her short stories ran in

Smart Set, the leading national literary magazine of the period, and others appeared regularly in local and national Jewish periodicals.

The fourth of eleven children of Alsatian immigrant parents, Emma Wolf suffered all her life from the effects of childhood polio. Even so, she trained for a teaching career, as did her seven sisters. All the Wolf girls found positions as schoolteachers except Emma, who was too frail for regular employment.

Her first story was published when she was thirteen, and she continued to write, accruing a significant body of work. By osmosis and imagination Wolf daringly dramatized the conflicts erupting in her acculturated middle-class Jewish San Francisco milieu. Should Jews and Christians socialize? Dare they intermarry? Would women's pursuit of higher education, employment, the vote, endanger Jewish home life?

Wolf's first and best-known novel, *Other Things Being Equal*, went through six editions between 1892 and 1916. In choosing intermarriage as its theme, she dove into a dilemma facing Jews, and by inference all Americans committed to democracy in love as well as politics. The book was republished in 2002 with an illuminating biographical, literary, and sociological introduction by Barbara Cantalupo, Ph.D. In the following scene, Ruth, a Jew, and Herbert, a Unitarian—well-educated, intelligent, genuinely in love—confront persistent threats to their interfaith marriage.

Sometimes things—little things—have come to me. Little in which even you showed that, subconsciously, you felt differences."

"Differences?"

"Racial differences. As if—at root—you thought Jew and Christian were inexorably asunder, made of different clay."

"Jew and Christian! I don't know them. Men and women, yes. But you are you and I am I, and we met and loved, without prejudice. And so, individually speaking, we know there is no difference."

Ah, individually speaking! Do you note your fine distinction? Always the one Jew, the exceptional, who has found favor in your eyes! Involuntarily the Christian mind always rears its ghettoes. And in that mental ghetto, I want you to know, I belong—and proudly."

"Ghettoes! I am not a medievalist, my darling. Have you forgotten your story of Rose of Sharon? You see, I've learned my lesson too, and it can never be unlearned again. Let your father remember that when next he brands the abstract 'Christian mind,' as you put it—with ghetto-building. Some of us can learn to build higher. And you—such as you—are our divine teachers."

Again she did not answer. Her head was bent and he saw her tears were falling.

"Am I hurting you again?" he asked miserably.

"N-no—not hurting me. Only—he doesn't see it as we—as you do. He thinks of—the general prejudice—the outside—the social distinctions that might creep in to separate—. But tonight—oh tonight, can't we just be friends?"



EMMA WOLF
The American Jewess, 1895

Josephine Sarah Marcus Earp (1861–1944)

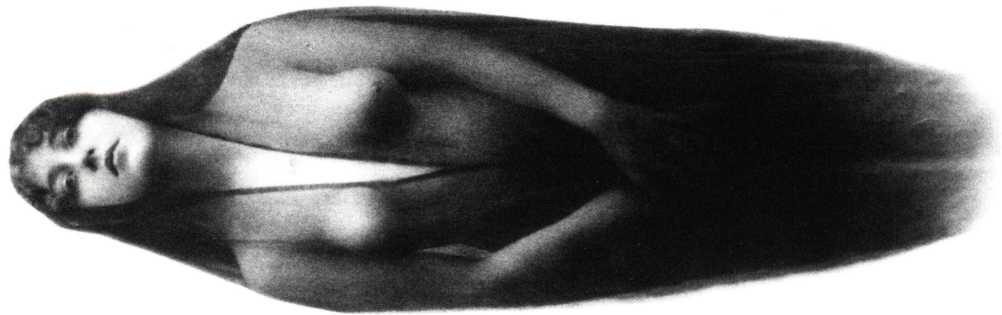
WESTERN JEWISH FOLK HEROINE. THE CALIFORNIA GRAVESITE OF JOSIE AND WYATT EARP IN THE MARCUS FAMILY PLOT IN THE HILLS OF ETERNITY MEMORIAL PARK, NEAR SAN FRANCISCO, IS THE MOST VISITED GRAVESITE IN THAT JEWISH CEMETERY. VISITORS OFTEN LEAVE OFFERINGS OF FRESH FLOWERS, FOOD, COINS—EVEN BULLET CASINGS.

Many have tried, but the story of Josie’s forty-seven-year-long union with Wyatt Earp is too colorful to kill. Or even to sanitize, as she tried to do in an unpublished memoir. Or to edit, amend, and expand as Earp biographer Glen G. Boyer attempted in *I Married Wyatt Earp: Recollections of Josephine Sarah Marcus Earp*. This widely circulated version—part true, part concocted—further popularized the enduring western romance. Photographic historians were long certain, but couldn’t prove, that the gorgeous Brunette Silkscreened suggestively on the cover of *I Married Wyatt Earp* and shown near nude in *Pioneer Jews: A New Life in the Far West*, could not be Josie. In the late 1990s, a new wave of Earp biographers assailed the work, overall and in detail. They convinced the publisher to terminate its bestseller, but it was too late to snuff the story.

As Josie cum Boyer tells it, she was an eighteen-year-old San Franciscan, good-looking and restless, when she ran away with a theatrical company headed for Arizona Territory in 1879. There she met Johnny Behan, fortyish, unemployed, and a divorced father. A year later, still Miss Marcus but now also known as Josephine Behan, she was living in Tombstone, Arizona Territory, with Johnny, the newly appointed sheriff of Cochise County. When Johnny Behan’s charm gave way to infidelity and abuse, she left him. By July, 1881, she was involved with Wyatt Earp, then a deputy U.S. marshal, mining investor, gambler, and part owner of the Oriental Saloon in Tombstone. Earp was still living with his common-law wife but neither the heat nor the wife mattered. As the romance between the small, expressive, Brunette Jewess and the tall, laconic, blond gentle blazed, so did a local imbroglia that on October 26, 1881, exploded into the West’s most studied and dramatized shootout, the gunfight at the O.K. Corral.

Gaps and discrepancies abound, but the story’s framework stands, supported by documented details. Josie Marcus Earp was born in New York to German Jews, and she grew up in San Francisco. She was the second of three daughters; the Marcuses also had a son. She did run away, she did live with Behan in Tombstone, and she did fall in love with Earp. When the conflagration at the O.K. Corral erupted in a series of new killings, Earp persuaded Josie to retreat to San Francisco. When the final murder had been committed and adjudicated, the lovers were reunited. They lived intermittently in San Francisco, at times with Josie’s family, and roamed the Far West together, mingling with gamblers, prospectors, promoters, and celebrities. They spent three years in the Alaskan gold fields, prospected in the Southern California desert, and finally settled in Los Angeles, where Wyatt hoped to turn his lawman exploits into a book or movie.

When Wyatt Earp died in 1929, journalist Stuart Lake was just completing *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal*, a



THE DISPUTED PORTRAIT OF JOSEPHINE
Courtesy, Harriet Rochlin Files;
Earp gravestone photograph at right
courtesy of Truman Rex Fisher



biography in which he expected to immortalize Earp as the West’s legendary lawman and at the same time make his own fortune on a bestseller and film rights. After her husband’s death, Josie went at Lake like an enraged goddess. Even with scores of rancorous letters to draw on, her motives remain unclear. If she aimed to kill Lake’s story and leave her own scoured account for posterity, she failed. Ironically, her selective recollections, Boyer’s love of history and storytelling, a misidentified photograph, and the second wave of the women’s movement have earned her coverage in publications ranging from *True West* to *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*. More recently, the Josie story reached Great Britain via postmodern English novelist Clive Sinclair. His novel, *Meet the Wife*, takes no chances. On the cover is the folkloric Josie, proffering a great read.

Harriet Lane Levy (1867–1950)

ACUTE OBSERVER AND RACONTEUR. “WHEN HE LEARNED OF MY ADMISSION TO THE UNIVERSITY, MY FATHER KISSED ME. HE GAVE ME SOBER ADVICE ABOUT CROSSING THE BAY ALONE AND PRESENTED THE DISADVANTAGES OF INTERMARRIAGE.”

—HARRIET LANE LEVY, 920 O’FARRELL STREET

Harriet Lane Levy was born and raised on San Francisco’s O’Farrell Street in a residential district favored by well-established pioneers. (Sarah Samuels lived on the same street; Alice Toklas was for a time a next-door neighbor.) By the time she was thirteen, San Francisco’s population approached 250,000, making it the nation’s ninth largest city. Possessors of great wealth reigned in mansions at the top of Nob Hill. The moderately rich occupied a tier just beneath them and the upper-middle class a tier slightly lower. Below them the middle class ranged all the way down to the poorest, who lived in bayside stench and industrial smoke on the flat, crowded, polyglot streets south of Market.

With more than 16,000 Jews, the city by the bay was the largest Jewish ingathering in the West. A Jewish Gilded Circle composed of German, French, and Sephardic American cliques linked by blood, marriage, and commerce defended its exclusivity with rules resembling those of other newly entrepreneurial families of the period. How they conducted their businesses, whom they married, how they groomed their children as their successors—all aimed at preserving newfound wealth and position.

Harriet was the youngest of the three daughters of Henrietta “Yetta” Michelson and Benjamin Levy, a successful forty-niner. She attended Girls’ High School, and, after overcoming her parents’ fears that higher education would ruin her chances of marriage, she enrolled in the University of California, Berkeley. She graduated in 1885. At the risk of shaming her status-conscious family, she contributed to an avante garde literary journal, *The Wave*, in the 1890s and



HARRIET LANE LEVY, LEFT,
WITH ALICE B. TOKLAS
Courtesy of the Bancroft Library,
University of California, Berkeley



HARRIET LANE LEVY
*Courtesy of the Bancroft Library,
University of California, Berkeley*

served as drama critic for the *San Francisco Call*. She is best remembered for her memoir, first published in 1947, when she was eighty. In *920 O'Farrell Street*, Levy detailed the wounds and wonders of a gifted girl of Polish Jewish heritage growing up in socioeconomically stratified turn-of-the-century San Francisco. She was dubbed the western Jewish Jane Austen for her biting depictions of the mating process. Equally searing are her bull's-eye shots at local applications of the European Jewish caste system, as the following passage from *920 O'Farrell Street* will attest:

Many of Addie's [her sister] friends were of the superior caste; Evelyn Taussig was Polish, but Proudly Dinkenspiel, her aunt, who lived next door to her, had married a Bavarian in a mining camp in those early fifties when girls were few and a dance was divided among five partners. We knew that the Taussigs had aspirations to break through the walls of their set and we feared their success Though Evelyn was not comely, but large and bouncing with blue eyes leaping from a florid face, her social potentialities commanded respect.

Leopold Stone, tall, handsome, erect (a tree, Mother said), man of the world, was known to have visited the Taussig home twice in two weeks. Anything might happen. The possibility of a marriage was often discussed in our family.

"If he needs the money badly enough, he might," Mother said, and then followed the blighting dictum that condemned us within the pale forever: "No Baiern [Bavarian] marries a Pole unless he is krumm or lahm or stumm [crooked or lame or dumb]."

"But if one fell in love with a girl?" Polly protested.

"If he fell in love, he'd fall out again," came the answer.

Levy's remarkable powers of recall included detailed events and intimate glimpses into the lives of other residents of her block. Among these were Alice Toklas, who became a traveling companion and lifelong correspondent.

Sarah Samuels Stein (1870–1953)

INTOXICATED WITH MODERN ART. "EVEN IN SAN FRANCISCO, SARAH WAS NOT BOUND TO DOMESTICITY. . . . BY THE TIME [HER ONLY CHILD] WAS THREE, SARAH HAD RETURNED TO SCHOOL, TAKING COURSES IN ART AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE, ATTENDING LECTURES, GOING TO THE THEATER AND CONCERTS, KEEPING UP HER FRIENDSHIPS WITH LIKE-MINDED YOUNG WOMEN. BUT IN SAN FRANCISCO, THE MOST SHE COULD BE IN THE EYES OF HER WORLD WAS A BRIGHT, OUTGOING MATRON. . . .

IN PARIS, SARAH STEIN WAS THE CENTER OF HER OWN SALON."

—LINDA SIMON, *THE BIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOKLAS*

Sarah Samuels, also once a resident of San Francisco's O'Farrell Street, was Harriet Lane Levy's longtime friend. In 1895 she married Michael (Mike) Stein, the oldest of the five Stein children. Eight years later, Sarah, Mike, and their small son joined Mike's sister and brother, Gertrude and Leo, in Paris. Introduced by Leo to leading artists, Sarah bought paintings by Cezanne and Renoir. Henri Matisse was an unknown painter when he and Sarah met. Captivated by his work, she became his premier



SARAH AND MICHAEL STEIN
*Courtesy of The Baltimore Museum of Art;
The Cone Archives*

patron and collector, as well as his student. Her work was praised by Matisse, and she focused on painting for several years, then abruptly abandoned it. With equal zest she became a proselytizer and a practitioner of Christian Science.

In her unpublished recollections, Harriet Levy, who for eight years had been unable to walk without distress, recalled being healed by Sarah. One morning, Sarah came to treat Harriet at the villa where she was staying. Sitting outside with her longtime friend, Sarah quietly spoke to her of the capacity God had given her to walk and to do anything that was necessary for her happiness. Never mentioning Christian Science, Harriet recalled, she spoke as one would to a child, assuring her that she was able to walk as were all God's children. The next morning, Harriet walked two miles. Two days later, the disabling pain returned. Enraged by the news, Sarah ranted, "You walk. For the first time I have convinced Gertrude and Leo of the Truth of Christian Science healing. . . Don't you dare to go back on me. Now walk!" Harriet walked, then and thereafter.

ignored or sponged out by a laugh Her strange, austere beauty passed over them unsuspected. Alice was odd, they said, and forgot her.” Fatefully for Alice, the Levinsky home on O’Farrell Street was next door to the home of Harriet Lane Levy.

Louis Levinsky and his two brothers, John and Mark, had reached California in 1849 and rushed to the northern gold fields, where they operated stores in mining supply centers. They brought their wives from Europe, raised children, and buried their dead (five of the clan’s offspring are interred in the Jackson Jewish cemetery). In 1869, when the gold was gone, Louis, his wife, and their children had joined the parade of the prosperous to San Francisco. In 1875, their oldest child, Emma, married Ferdinand Toklas, a Polish Jewish immigrant who succeeded in reclaiming in Seattle and then in San Francisco the affluence he had been accustomed to in his homeland. “Despite an ill-fitting ideal of womanhood,” wrote biographer Linda Simon, Alice would inherit their “daring for adventure, their lust for quick success, their insatiable longing for freedom.” She would know “their strength and their special willfulness. She inherited their legacy of hope and spirit.”

In 1907, San Francisco was still in turmoil following a great earthquake and fire. Harriet Lane Levy’s friends Sarah Stein and her husband Michael were staying in Paris, where they urged Harriet to visit them. Harriet extended the invitation to Alice, along with an enabling thousand-dollar loan. Annette Rosenshine, another of Sarah’s friends and a relative of Alice, preceded Alice and Harriet to Paris, and by the time they arrived was on intimate terms with the Stein family. So intimate that Annette was being counseled by Sarah’s sister-in-law, Oakland-bred Gertrude Stein, who had studied psychology. (Annette, who had endured four operations to correct a harelip and was viewed in her circle as emotionally fragile, eventually became an accomplished modern sculptor.) Annette’s treatment by Gertrude Stein included reading letters Annette had received from Alice. Already impressed with Alice via her letters when they met, Gertrude Stein was instantly captivated. Alice, in turn, was awed by Gertrude’s large, composed, omniscient presence.

In the words of Annette, quoted in *The Biography of Alice Toklas*: “Alice. . . had found the brilliant personality worthy of her talents; now she could concentrate her efficiency and cleverness both in furthering Gertrude’s literary career, as well as catering to any indulgences that this spoiled child craved to advance her success.”

Gertrude Stein (1874–1946)

TOO GIFTED, TOO DIFFERENT, TOO DRIVEN TO BE OVERLOOKED. SHE PROCLAIMED HERSELF A GENIUS, THEN SET OUT TO PROVE IT WITH INNOVATIVE NOVELS, PLAYS, ESSAYS, MEMOIRS, AND LECTURES. BEST KNOWN AMONG THEM ARE *THE MAKING OF AMERICANS*, *TENDER BUTTONS*, *EVERYBODY’S AUTOBIOGRAPHY*, AND *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOKLAS*.

Shortly after Amelia and Daniel Stein moved from Baltimore, Maryland, to Allegheny, Pennsylvania, their fifth and last child was born. They called her Gertrude. Two older brothers were to play key roles in her life—Michael as her financial mainstay after her father’s death, and Leo, first her intellectual and artistic guide, then her nemesis. When Gertrude was five, her father purchased a San Francisco cable car company and moved the family to a lush, rural section of Oakland.



SARAH STEIN
Courtesy of The Baltimore Museum
of Art; The Cone Archives

had turned it down—and that he and Sarah had agreed that the painting should be bought by the family. Matisse publicly denied Gertrude’s claim that she had discovered him and Picasso. His repudiation was published in *Transition*: “Madame Michel Stein [Sarah], whom Gertrude neglects to mention, was the really intelligently sensitive member of the family.” As to the painting, it ended up in the Sarah and Michael Stein collection.

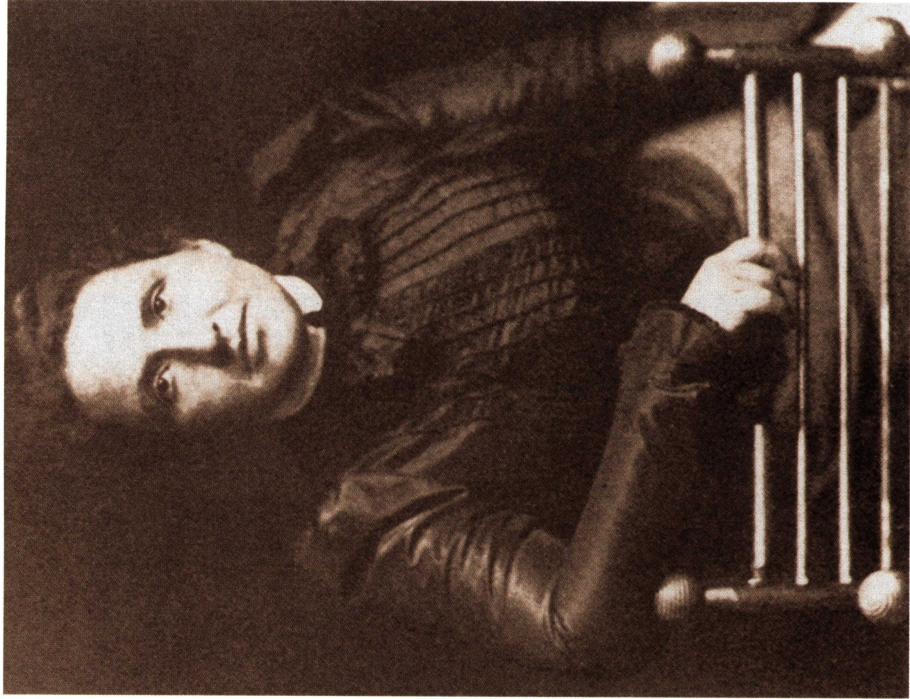
Alice Babette Toklas (1877–1967)

PIANIST, COOK, IMPRESARIO. AUTHOR.
COMPANION TO WRITER GERTRUDE STEIN.
“I LIVED IN MY. . . YOUTH THE GENTLY BRED
EXISTENCE OF MY CLASS AND KIND.”
—HARRIET LANE LEVY, 920 O’FARRELL STREET

When Alice Toklas’s mother died, her father brought her to her grandfather Louis Levinsky’s home at 922 O’Farrell Street in San Francisco, and “dropped her and his responsibility for her among the aggregation of family relatives,” as Harriet Lane Levy wrote. Twenty-two years old and the only female member of the household, Alice was pressed into service as a housekeeper and “provider of food and of general comfort. Any opinion that she might venture at table was

ALICE B. TOKLAS
Courtesy of the Bancroft Library,
University of California, Berkeley





GERTRUDE STEIN
Courtesy of the Collection of
American Literature, Beinecke
Library, Yale University

In *Eminent Women of the West*, Elinor Richey notes the importance of the westward move to Gertrude's distinctive character and work: "Gertrude was convinced she was as she was because of having had a western upbringing. She believed the West had emboldened her to be wholly herself. Her largest, most ambitious and favorite novel, *The Making of Americans*, was devoted to a comparison of the [eastern and western] branches of the Stein family, only faintly disguised. The . . . Easterners, who were unable to be wholly themselves, and Westerners possessed of the courage to go their own untethered ways. . . ." Leo went to Harvard, and Gertrude followed, enrolling at Radcliffe, then the Harvard Annex. While studying psychology with William James, and briefly, biology, Gertrude began making notes on her bifurcated family and developing her theory that the kind of American an immigrant became was determined by where he or she settled.

In the following passage from *The Making of Americans*, Stein employs her hallmark reiterative style to shoot down traditional obstacles to going one's own way.

There was a man who was always writing to his daughter that she should not do things that were wrong that would disgrace him, she should not do such things and in every letter that he wrote to her he told her she should not do such things, that he was her father and was giving good moral advice to her and always he wrote to her in every letter that she should not do things that she should not do anything that would disgrace him. He wrote this in every letter he wrote to her, he wrote very nicely to her, he wrote often enough to her and in every letter he wrote to her that she should not do anything that was [a] disgraceful thing for her to be doing and then once she wrote back to him that he had not any right to write moral things in letters to her, that he had taught her that he had shown her that he had commenced in her the doing [of] the things that would disgrace her and he had said then when he had begun with her he had said he did it so that when she was older she could take care of herself with those who wish to make her do things that were wicked things and he would teach her and she would be stronger than such girls who had not any way of knowing better, and she wrote this letter and her father got the letter and he was a paralytic always after, it was a shock to him getting such a letter, he kept saying over and over again that his daughter was trying to kill him and now she had done it and at the time he got the letter he was sitting by the fire and he threw the letter in the fire and his wife asked him what was the matter and he said it is Edith she is killing me, what, is she disgracing us said the mother, no said the father, she is killing me and that was all he said then of the matter and he never wrote another letter.

The passage hammers home a refrain most children, especially those of unconventional tendencies, will recognize: If I do as I wish, my father will die of shame. That threat placed alongside the daughter's determination to follow her own course, palpably demonstrates the collision of two mighty forces. Given the author's "region-determines-character theory," we might assume the daughter was being her own independent, outspoken western self.

Toklas and Stein lived and worked together for thirty-nine years, begetting a body of writings that won for Stein an international literary reputation, and for the two women a lifestyle that made their relationship a model of enduring and fruitful lesbian devotion.

Annette Rosenshine (1880-1971)

SUFFERER, SEEKER, SCULPTOR. "WHILE I WAS THERE [IN PARIS], I MET GERTRUDE STEIN WHO GAVE ME MY FIRST PSYCHOLOGICAL AWAKENING . . . THE DAY SHE SAID 'NO MEMORY, NO CONSCIOUSNESS' AND IT BECAME A PURSUIT OVER MY LIFETIME." —

ANNETTE ROSENSHINE, *LIFE IS NOT A PARAGRAPH*

Born in San Francisco in 1880, Rosenshine began life with a harelip and a cleft palate, untreatable at the time. It would take four operations, extensive psychological treatment, years of work with blind and deaf children, and decades of devotion to the practice and theory of art for her to find her inimical means of artistic expression.

Rosenshine's progress toward this richly rewarding expression was both assisted and hindered by her association with the Stein family entourage in Paris. She entered this assembly via Alice Toklas, a greatly admired distant relative and friend. The youngest of the Paris group by more than a decade and painfully insecure, Annette was criticized, coached, and inspired by her passionate, opinionated companions. After a year of exposure to Stein family punditry and to budding 20th-century masters Picasso and Matisse (she spent some months in a Paris art class taught by Matisse), Rosenshine returned to San Francisco too intimidated to paint. She began instead to work with physically and psychologically impaired children. Her perceptions deepening but her pain still palpable, she turned to psychoanalysis with Dr. Trigant Burrow in Baltimore. Dissatisfied with the results, she traveled to Zurich to the Carl Jung Institute. There, at the suggestion of one of Jung's colleagues, she experimented with sculpture.

The psychoanalysis failed but the sculpture flourished. In her unremitting pursuit of healing, Rosenshine created eighty-one poignant works that eloquently address her own and the human condition.



ANNETTE ROSENSHINE
Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Frieda Fligelman (1890-1978)

SOCIOLOGIST, LINGUIST, POET. "LANGUAGE IN SOCIOLOGY, A VOLUME OF ESSAYS PRESENTED IN THE SUMMER OF 1974 AT THE WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY IN ONTARIO, CANADA WAS DEDICATED TO FRIEDA FLIGELMAN, A PRECURSOR [IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS] WHO MORE THAN FOUR DECADES AGO WAS RECEIVED BY CLOSED MINDS . . . AND WHO, NEVERTHELESS, NEVER LOST HER VISION BUT LIVED TO SEE IT VINDICATED." —ARNIE MALINA, FRIEDA FLIGELMAN: COMMEMORATIVE NOTES TO A LIFE COMPLETED

Frieda Fligelman was born in Helena, Montana in 1890, the older of two daughters of the Hungarian Jewish founder of Fligelman's, a mining town version of Saks Fifth Avenue. She spent the first seventeen and the last thirty years of her life in her hometown. After completing college, she left the Midwest for New York City to study sociology, anthropology, and economics at Columbia University. When she tried to enroll in a males-only graduate course on the Constitution taught by renowned historian Charles Beard, she was asked to present a valid reason why she, a woman, should be admitted. Arnie Malina quotes Fligelman's response: "Dear Sirs," she wrote, "It seems indeed unnecessary for an American citizen to give reasons why she should wish to study the constitutional law of her country. But in view of the fact that it has been suggested I do so, I will state that since so many laws which are considered desirable by civic-minded people have been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, I have a great desire to know why." Responding with logic and wit, she opened the door for herself and for all women.



FRIEDA FLIGELMAN
Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society

Her outstanding record at Columbia led to a year-long fellowship to study economics at the University of California, Berkeley. Back at Columbia in 1915 she completed exams for her Ph.D. and began her dissertation. Inspired by relativist anthropologist Franz Boas, she set out to refute philosopher Lucien Levy-Bruhl's theory that the white race had superior powers of rational thought, and as such was obliged to dominate and colonize non-Western cultures. Eventually she abandoned the topic as too complex for a single work, though later she drew on her research in developing a model of societal reform called Social Logic. Her plan advocated analyzing belief systems around the world so as to illuminate and change irrational beliefs.

At thirty, supported by a trust fund, Frieda sailed for Paris where she studied with Professor Henri Labouret, director of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. There she began an unprecedented study in sociolinguistics in which she demonstrated that Fulani, a purportedly primitive African language and by inference other non-Western languages were sufficiently well developed and flexible to adapt to the demands of 20th-century life. This groundbreaking work was published in two scholarly European publications. But to Frieda's disappointment, when she submitted the study as her dissertation, her doctoral adviser at Columbia, a sociologist, rejected it as linguistics, not sociology.

Never granted a Ph.D. or a university teaching post, Fligelman remained an avid, productive scholar. She maintained a wide correspondence with social scientists, writers, and friends; participated in scholarly conferences; wrote on social issues and international policies; self-published two sociological treatises; and translated into English Lope de Vega's play, *The Discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus*. She also fell in love repeatedly, at times madly, with brainy men who were married, or otherwise committed, and addressed her disappointment in the composition of verse.

After living in Berkeley for more than a decade, in 1948 she was summoned home to care for her ailing stepmother. In Helena she occupied adjoining apartments, one her living quarters, the other an office; both were jumbles of books, journals, newspapers, and letters. Clear-minded, she immersed herself in Helena's cultural affairs, engaging with anyone and everyone, lively and amusing, until, at eighty-eight, while she was in mid-sentence, the heart of Helena's most illustrious woman of letters stopped.

+

LINED UP SIDE BY SIDE—in a way that would never have happened when they were alive—these women dissolve the stereotypes of Woman, Jew, Westerner. That alone qualifies them for study, but there are other reasons. In their written, oral, and artistic expressions, they dwelled on matters eschewed by their more tradition-bound contemporaries. And the chunks of their lives they chose to misrepresent or omit have kept their biographers at work and at war. The products and personal histories of these lalpaloozas cast new light on their time and place. I, for one, see the pulsating core of the entire Jewish westward migration in these women who out of desperation or desire pole-vaulted out of tradition and into modernity.

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by Sarah Erwin

In the late 1880s, William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody exploited the allure of the American frontier for Europeans as he toured Europe with his Wild West Show. The show was organized around spectacles featuring exotic and fearsome Natives people, hard-riding cowboys and cowgirls, and wildlife from the American frontier. Dramatizing the West as a place of adventure and romance, the show captivated audiences and inspired sculptors and painters throughout Europe. The image of the West it portrayed left an indelible mark on the world of European art. For the first time, images of subjects from the American West became plentiful on the continent as depictions of western themes increased in popularity. A number of sculptors created bronzes of American subjects, although they never actually traveled to the West.

The Italian sculptor Raffaele Monti (1818-1880) often worked with subjects that were in the realm of fantasy. He specialized in veiled figures, but also produced many tomb sculptures and monuments. Monti’s work became extremely popular by the middle part of the 19th century. In his later years Monti focused on applied arts—making porcelain busts and statuettes, as well as designing silverware.

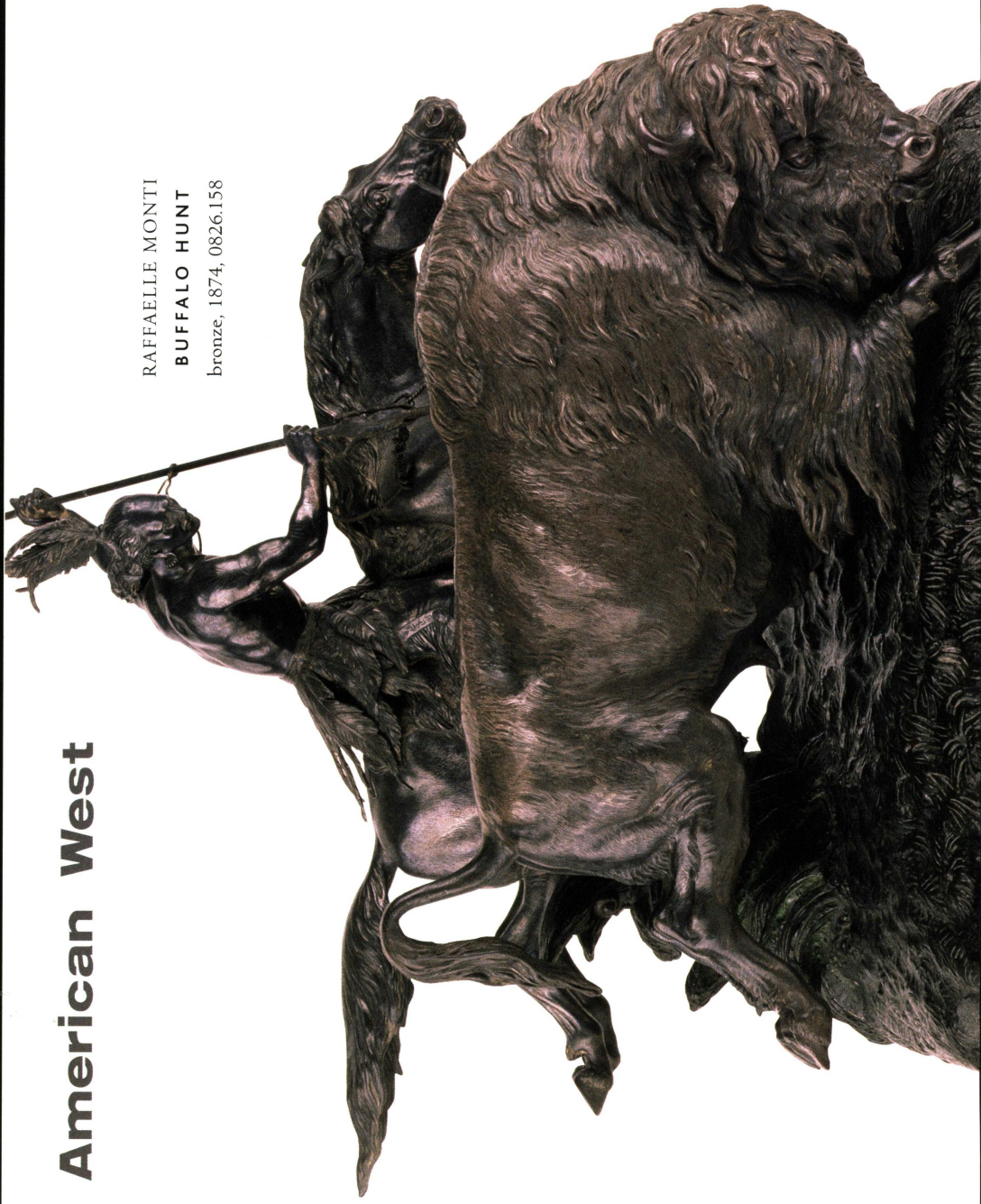
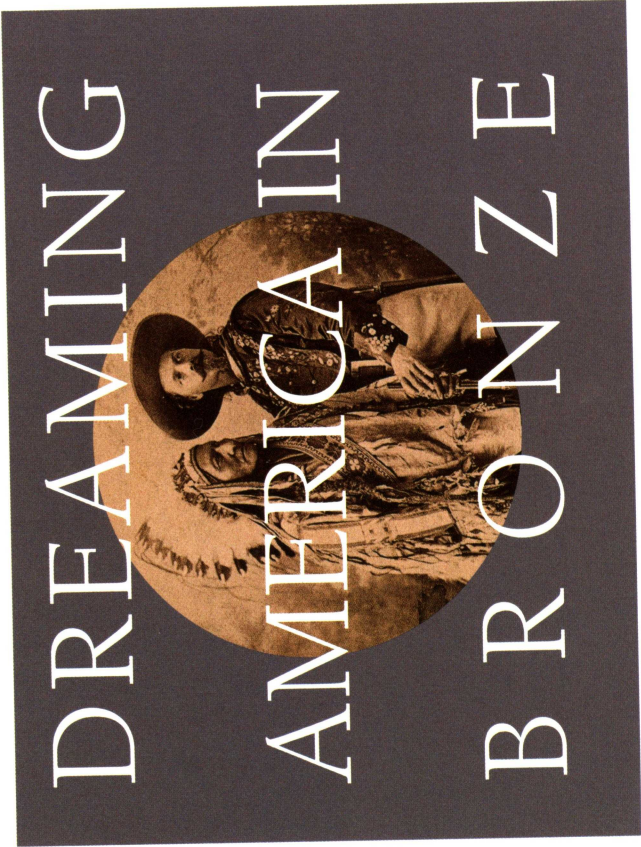
The paintings of George Catlin (1796-1872) provided the inspiration for Monti’s sculpture *Buffalo Hunt*. Throughout the 1840s Catlin exhibited and promoted his artwork in England and France. He also published several accounts of his travels on the American frontier that were widely read throughout Europe. Including depictions of Native American hunting scenes, dances, and sporting competitions, Catlin further disseminated his artwork in published

portfolios of lithographs and “Albums Unique” of original watercolors with handwritten text. Monti’s sculpture was presented as the trophy for the Belmont Stakes race in 1874. The winner of the race (which at that time was a mile and a half in length) was a horse called Saxon, with a time of two minutes, thirty-nine and a half seconds. The first Belmont Stakes, held in 1866, was financed by August Belmont, Sr. (1816-1890). Throughout the second half of the 19th century, August Belmont was recognized as the most influential man in American racing, serving for 20 years as president of the American Jockey Club. A successful Wall Street financier and political organizer, Belmont was also a patron of the arts and one of the foremost art collectors of his time.

It is not known how Raffaele Monti came to do the *Buffalo Hunt* or when it left the possession of Saxon’s owner, Pierre Lorillard. Since 1926 a trophy made by Louis Tiffany and donated by the Belmont family has been the perpetual award for this oldest race of America’s Triple Crown.

Édouard Drouot (1859-1945) was born in Sommevoire, France. In the 1880s he studied in Paris and was influenced by the Beaux-Arts style. Deriving its name from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris where it emerged, this style of art and architecture involves Neo-Classicism and is characterized by formal planning and lavish decoration. Most influential in France and America, the style flourished from the mid 19th to the early 20th centuries. The style reflects designs of ancient Greece and Rome, but combines them with other styles such as rococo and romantic naturalism. Many of the early sculptures of Native Americans and American fauna originated in the Beaux-Arts movement. During the 1890s and early 1900s Drouot won several awards for his sculpture. He also received numerous private and public commissions. Depicting an extensive variety of themes, Drouot’s sculptures are known for their movement and expression.

19th-Century Europeans Sculpted Icons of the American West



RAFFAELE MONTI
BUFFALO HUNT
bronze, 1874, 0826.158

The rider's face is classical European.

On the Trail is a beautifully executed and patinated bronze of a Native American hunting. However, the sculpture does not present an accurate description of Native peoples of the Plains. The rider's face is classical European. His hide horse blanket, headdress, feather garment, and lance decorated with feathers are all unconventional. But the final contradiction is the skull that both rider and horse are gazing upon—not that of an American bison, but of a water buffalo.



EDOUARD DROUOT
ON THE TRAIL
bronze, 0876.138



CARL KAUBA
HOW-KOLA
bronze, 0876.90

Carl Kauba (1865-1922) is a unique figure in the history of bronzes of the American West. One of the most important portrayers of such subjects, he is often considered to be in a class with Frederic Remington and Charles Russell. He was, however, the only artist of his time to create western bronzes in the Viennese style. Born in Vienna, he received extensive training at Austrian academies. Kauba worked by sketching an idea, then creating his own clay model. He worked with local foundries in Vienna, personally directing the casting of his bronzes by the lost-wax method. Between 1895 and 1912 many of Kauba's bronzes were exported to the United States.

It is debated whether Kauba ever traveled to the U.S. Undoubtedly, he was inspired by tales of adventure in the American Wild West written by best-selling German author Karl May, and it is believed that a friend in the U.S. with whom he corresponded sent him Native American and cowboy attire and artifacts to help with the accuracy of his work. Many of his sculptures drew upon photographs or illustrations in circulation throughout Europe during the late 19th century.

How-Kola (which among the Lakota people is a greeting that translates as "hello, friend") is a scene of broad action and drama. Yet Kauba includes minute details of the dress and accoutrements of both the Native warrior and the trooper. Kauba also created numerous portraits of Native Americans.

Two of the artist's most effective works are the portraits of Chief Wolf Robe and Sitting Bull. The composition of each is exquisite;

It is debated whether Kauba ever traveled to the U.S.



CARL KAUBA
SITTING BULL
polychrome bronze,
0876.88

PHOTOGRAPHER
UNKNOWN

SITTING BULL
photograph, 4326.4832



both are lifelike, yet are artistic interpretations. Intricate images with polychrome finishes, they are excellent examples of Viennese bronze work. The patina implies skin tone, the hair and beadwork is exactly detailed, and each wears a clearly distinguishable Benjamin Harrison peace medal. The photograph of the Cheyenne leader Chief Wolf Robe is obviously the model for Kauba's bronze. Sitting Bull, one of the most famous members of the Lakota tribes, was often photographed later in life. In 1885 he was a star attraction in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

... each wears a clearly distinguishable Benjamin Harrison peace medal.



CARL KAUBA
CHIEF WOLF ROBE
polychrome bronze, 0876.91

FRANK A. RINEHART
CHIEF WOLF ROBE, CHEYENNE
photograph, 1898, 4327.



REMBRANDT BUGATTI
BUFFALO
bronze, 0877.137

Rembrandt Bugatti (1885-1916) came from a family of northern Italian artists. His brother Ettore Bugatti (1881-1947) is famous for the racing cars he designed in the 1920s and 30s, considered works of art as well as being engineered for speed. The father of Ettore and Rembrandt was Carlo Bugatti, a designer of objects from furniture to tableware and textiles who developed a highly individualistic style based on Moorish, Gothic, and Oriental influences. Rembrandt displayed genius as an animal sculptor. In 1907 he moved from Paris to Antwerp. Working on commissions for the Antwerp Zoo, he created numerous animal sculptures. Following the outbreak of World War I, his commissions decreased and he returned to Paris. Overwhelmed by a combination of financial difficulties, a continuing struggle with depression, and—some say—his grief over the decimation of animals in European zoos during the war years, he committed suicide in 1916.

According to the research of Patricia Janis Broder, few animals native to the Americas appeared in bronze before the 1870s. This can be attributed to the classical tradition that mandated the study and idealization of the human form. Not until the rise of the Romantic tradition, which looked to nature for subjects, did sculptures of animals become popular. By the late 19th century, animals—preferably wild or exotic—had captured the imagination of the public and of artists. This was also the time that numerous zoos and natural history museums were founded. Many of the *animaliers sculptors* were French. The earliest of these preferred ferocious wild beasts, although gradually more serene views came to be acceptable, and eventually tamer animals were depicted. The influence of the French sculptors was far reaching, as other artists studied with them or viewed their works.

The artistry of Bugatti's animal sculptures developed from his earlier natural style, described as impressionistic, into a more studied expressionism. The sculptor maintained the spontaneity of his sketches in his finished works. Throughout his career, he instilled each piece with the spirit of the individual subject. The pieces often reveal animal characteristics such as grace, playfulness, power, timidity, or tenderness. Bugatti consistently portrayed animals as gentle creatures.

trac

BY GLEN CHAMBERLAIN

AT FIRST IT WAS LIGHT, this startling and darting of wrens in the thick of her chest, until Ada identified it for what it was. Worry. “Where’s that Jack?” she asked aloud, letting the annoyance in her voice calm her, the question reminding her of how often she’d asked it. Jack did this too much, this “checking on things,” this impatient walking about.

The old border collie by the stove cocked his ear and opened an eye, thumped his tail twice, and settled back into his snooze. Smiling at him, Ada pushed another stick into the firebox, opened the flue to fan the wood to flame, and then pressed her head against the window, staring out at the light made cataract by dusk and falling snow, scanning for Jack, then moving to the next window and doing the same, and the next, and the next, until she had searched the four corners of her world. He came from none of them now, and the worry in her chest turned to something bigger, like a magpie lifting out of its messy nest, squawking. Fear. Jack should be back by now. Perhaps as easily as he had walked into her life he would walk out of it.

She waited till the day was fully blinded, and then she slipped her feet out of her sheepskins and into her snowpacs, slouched into her parka, and grabbed the flashlight. On the porch where the snow had swirled in there was a shallow footprint, and a deeper one on the top step, another on the bottom, and then prints shadowed by the window light. “Jack!” She zipped her coat and switched on the flashlight. “Jack!” The bobbling beam illuminated and magnified falling snowflakes in the dizzying darkness. With each bobble her fear grew. “This is ridiculous.” She steadied the beam, casting it like a beacon into the vastness, a signal for him to come moor himself near her, at the table with a warm meal and then in their bed with her warm body. But the sweep of her light did not find him cutting through the snow, pushing his way homeward. Ada turned back to the door, opening it. “Tux.”

The dog lifted his head to look at her and dropped it again. “Tux, you come.”

Glen Chamberlain lives in Bozeman, Montana, where she teaches writing at Montana State University. She has received a Pushcart Prize for her short fiction, and the Rona Jaffe Foundation has named her one of the nation’s most promising women writers.



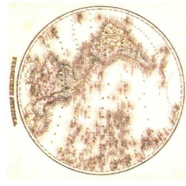
Her tone told him Ada was serious, so Tux groaned into a stance and shook the stiffness off. He walked under her arm as she pulled the door behind, hurrying him.

“Go find Jack.”

Tux sniffed the cold air, hopped down the two steps, turned, pissed on the porch post, watching Ada as he yellowed and steamed the snow.

“Come on.” Ada riveted the light to the ground now, lengthening her stride to fit her feet into Jack’s prints. The static of night and snow enveloped her, each flake becoming a point which spun into the tracks she was following. She stopped to wait for Tux, who still stood near the cabin watching her poke at the darkness with her little stick of light, and thought of turning back and calling for help. But then she’d feel foolish when Jack turned up and everyone found out how needy she’d become. Only Jack should know that. “Stay!” she called to the dog, even though he’d already decided he would.

The world was incalculable and Jack’s steps fixed. As she hurried along, trying to outwalk the obliterating flakes, Ada began to feel breathless, not only from the unnatural gait and the speed at which she moved, but because she had never walked in Jack’s tracks before, and the strangeness of it let her see the world through his eyes: how small this place was after all the places he’d been. Hinging and unhinging her long, thin legs, she felt what it was like to push through the deepening snow atop his wobbly heron knees, and how distant the earth felt beneath his turned-in-at-the-heel boots, and she came to feel her trespass into him would tell her where he had gone. Somewhere between the house and the tar, though, she slowed and stopped, because his tracks were snowed in. And she was snowed out, again just herself. “Jack!” she demanded, and then, Jack?



JACK DERITOWAS GONE. It was so simple that it defied her understanding.

Ada stood in the sun of a December morning. The brightness—both the sun’s and the day’s—belied the cold. She’d been staring at the snow in this open stand of lodgepoles for over an hour, long enough for her toes to chill. She knew how white and clammy they would look against her hot pink nails, which just a month ago she

had for the first time in her life painted. She told Jack their pinkness would forestall the encroaching monochrome of a Montana winter, even though that was a lie. She loved winter; it was Jack who, although he hadn’t experienced one yet, grumbled against its length and paltriness of color. She had really painted them to be silly—something she had never been until Jack—and to please him because he loved her feet.

More than any other part of her, he told her, he loved her feet. Other men had loved her for other things, lips, breasts, navel—they’d loved her for erogeny or for erogeny’s sake—but not Jack. “Even the bunion?” she’d tentatively asked, for she did not like to draw attention to her flaws, but there was something compelling in Jack, compelling enough that she had done something even bigger than paint her toenails for the first time. She’d married him. “Even so,” he’d answered. And he’d kissed her toes one at a time.

Perhaps that was why he was gone. Perhaps a man needed to love more than a woman’s feet to stay in a marriage.

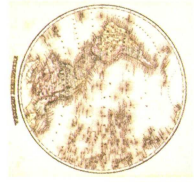
Ada wiggled her deadening toes, thinking how the lurid polish—now chipped—glowed as she so recently had felt the world glowed, not at her finger but at her toe tips. She should go, she thought, go back to the house, go back and run a hot tub and warm up and . . . live. But she could not take her eyes off of what was in the snow.

Coming out of the blue darkness of the lodgepoles were tracks, small ones of a low-bound, earthslung thing—a vole, probably, whose rounded nose, propelled by its strong little hindquarters, plowed the snow in front of it. Ada could follow the wake of its movement into the diamond studs of light, around the curve of a lodgepole, straightening out, and she imagined the tiny engine driving forward in all this blank coldness, the heart firing so fast that it hummed, it purred, as with one little foot at a time it clawed itself right to its destiny, a destiny concluded where Ada now stood. For at her feet, the lifeline stopped, just like that, and imprinted in the snow, lighter than air, was the swoop of feathers, the spread of wings and tail, the snow-fossil of an owl.

“Why couldn’t that have happened to you?” Ada asked out loud, and she was startled, not only by the noise of her self, which for a month had been a mewling, animal one of loss, but by her sentiment. She preferred Jack’s death over her abandonment.

At first, she was sure that Jack had been swooped

down upon, and for a month everyone else was, too. The search and rescue looked for Jack’s tracks, they looked for the spent cartridges of a gun, they looked for strange license plates; and when that failed, they looked for the sign of an unhibernated and desperate grizzly, for the patient pugmarks of a mountain lion, for the wayward tread of an avalanche; finally, they just looked for some coincidence of fate. They found none. It defied understanding, this fact that Jack Derito was gone.



SHEHADFIRST SEENHIM in the mercantile store in Buckle. She’d gone into the store because she was in town to replace a muffler on the pickup and had to wait. While she ate a burger and had a malt at the Dew

Drop Inn, many people she’d known her whole life came over to chat before they sat down with someone else. That she ate alone didn’t make her feel sad—she had come to believe that with quiet one could hide from trouble, and the citizens of Buckle respected her belief—but it did make her feel separate.

When she finished her lunch that spring day, she’d walked down to the mercantile with a familiar awareness of her singularity, of her self-containment, of her skin. Out on the ranch, there was no separation between her and her world; she moved through it unmembraned, unaware of her borders. Only in town did she feel the shape she had made of herself and, by consequence, her limitations. It was why she seldom dallied when she came in on errands.

But on this particular day, Art Samson at the garage had told her the truck would not be ready till two, and it was only one.

When she walked into the store, Jack was standing at the cashier’s, holding slides he’d just paid for up to the light from the big windows, squinting at them. It was his willed obliviousness, like an animal who chose to ignore it was being watched, that made Ada want to study him. And so she stood on the far side of the greeting card aisle, above the section marked “For Someone Special,” and observed. She tried to be polite, just as she tried to be when she watched the wildlife on her ranch, occasionally glancing down and pretending she was looking for a card. White tabs denoted who someone special might be. “Friend,” said one; “Date,” another; “A Woman.” “A Man.” She picked

a card out and opened it. “I need you,” it said.

Holding the card, Ada studied the man as he looked at his slides. She imagined that he came from an ocean, for the one ear she could see was large with pearly folds spiraling inward like some kind of seashell. Ada had once been told that if you pressed your ear to a shell, you could hear the sea, and she had a desire to press her own ear to his, to listen to the tides of him. His cheek creased into a beard the color of Queenie, her sorrel mare. Like her horse’s hair, the whiskers had small bursts of white in them, and she imagined how they curled back into his chin, his skin, his molecules, his atoms, his universe. The fingers that held the slides to the light were long and slender, and the nails were clean with little translucent moons rising at their bases. Ada had never seen such fingers on anyone, except an orangutan at the Hogle Zoo in Salt Lake City, that year her parents took her out of state for her sixteenth birthday. When it had put its outspread hand to the glass, she had pressed hers against it and been embarrassed, for the creature’s had been so much more beautiful. Even after they lowered their hands, the moist tracks of them remained on the glass, so all could see her deficiency. Despite that memory, Ada had a desire to walk up to this man, unfold his deft fingers, and, in the broad sunlight of the windows, stand palm to palm against him.

She looked down at the card. “I need you” was still all it said. There was a hollowness low down between her hips which Ada recognized as desire. Up higher, though, there was a different feeling—an emptiness, but with structure to it, like honeycomb, channeled and chambered. And sweet; she had never felt such sweetness. It was that sweet emptiness that made Ada understand she had shifted from separateness to loneliness. It was what made her remember that loneliness was the same thing as love.

She stood there holding the card, watching it tremble with each measured rush of blood into her fingers, considering what she might do. She put the card back, beneath “A Man.” She looked up again at the stranger, who had put one slide down and was elegantly lifting another out of the box.

When her parents died in the car accident, Ada was just nineteen. What she had felt then was a knifing desolation. Sensing that such wounding could drive her from the one thing remaining of them—the land—she grimly set about befriending those she

would need to keep it: the loan officers at the bank; the cattle buyers; the fence builders; the occasional hired men, never more than average but always young and unmarried and with bodies which could stanch—for a while, at least—the bleeding out of her emotions. Grief had given Ada a task, which was to function from a solid mental ledge of practicality. This practicality, honed for a decade, proved useful to her now.

She reached down to “A Man” again, pulled out both card and envelope, and headed for the cash register. After she paid, she reached into the inner pocket of her jacket for a pen, opened the card, and under “I need you” wrote her name and the directions to her place; her hand wavered as she wondered if she should include

her phone number. She had made it plain to everyone in Buckle it was only for emergencies. But she was turning thirty and had never been in love; this was an emergency. “If you get lost, call,” she printed above the number. “Excuse me,” she said as she walked by, reaching across him to lay the sealed envelope on top of his box of slides.

Jack arrived

that evening with a bottle of wine, and he was from the ocean. Or near it. He had grown up in England.

“On the sea,” Ada said.

“Hardly,” he’d laughed. He was from Warwick. “That’s a good 100 kilometers from The Wash,” he said, and Ada thrilled at the foreignness of him, that he thought in metrics and was so used to water that he referred to the sea as a laundry tub. “No, no,” he’d corrected, explaining that The Wash was a bay that

opened to the North Sea. She brought out an old atlas of her parents’ and opened to England. “See how far inland Warwick is?” He pointed to a dot in the middle of the country. That evening, for the first time in Ada’s life, a map came alive. The point that would have remained an impenetrable black hole took on color; it teemed with him, with Jack, of his mother and father and two sisters who still lived within it; it filled with stories of his childhood; it spilled over into trips he’d taken to London, to the North Country, to The Wash and even across the sea to Denmark. And once, he told her, he’d traveled to Penzance, the southwestern tip of the finger of England. He turned to the front of the book that showed the whole world. “Look,” he explained, “look how this finger of land points to

America,” and he dragged his lanky finger across the Atlantic, following the trajectory. “Landfall,” he said, tapping Florida. “See how it’s a finger, too? Do you know how in the Sistine Chapel God reaches his finger out to Adam’s own sleeping hand, how he’s about to charge him with life?”

Ada stared at the side of his face as he talked animatedly to the map in the book; she knew what a

chapel was because right at the Buckle Summit was a little stone hut with a highway sign that told how it was a traveler’s chapel where people could stop to pray; she knew what a cistern was, but she didn’t know about sistines. “That’s how I felt standing at Penzance, imagining the coast of the United States, my homeland pointing me in the way I needed to go, charging me with life.” He recounted how he decided then and there to cross over. He looked at her and

smiled. “So I did a sea change, eh,” and since Ada didn’t know if he was making a statement or asking a question, she just nodded.

He asked her where she had traveled.

Let’s see,” she said, taking the big book and turning to the index to find the page with the Rocky Mountains. Her finger wandered around a moment till she found the place Buckle would be if it was only bigger. “I’m here.” She tapped the paper. “And once a month I go here.” She slid her finger up and a little to the left, to Missoula. “To the Costco to get supplies. And then, when I was sixteen, I went here.” Her sensible hand traced a path through river drainages and across a plain to Salt Lake City. “To the zoo.”

She watched as his orangutan finger touched her own, which was still in Salt Lake, and she felt charged with life. Jack did not leave that night.

I T W A S A S
I F he had too much to tell her, and Ada had so much she must hear. Most nights of that kindled summer, after a day of making hay and before a night of making love, Ada would bring out the atlas and ask for stories. And Jack would show her places he had been. Once, he was turned to a page showing England and France, tracing what he said was a tunnel—a chunnel, he called it—through which a train ran. She tried to imagine such a horrible thing. “You mean the ceiling of the tunnel is the bottom of the ocean?” she asked, amazed. “Why doesn’t it cave in?”

“Because the seabed’s so deep between, eh. There’s 150 feet between the chunnel and the channel.”

“Oh, my, I couldn’t...” Ada so loved the brightness of light and the lightness of air—so loved her world of

emptiness which now, with Jack, was a full emptiness—that the thought of the damp, subterranean darkness covered over by deep, dizzying water made her tremble. “For how far?” She looked at Jack who as always was talking to the map. In their summer together her life had become so tapestried that it was quite enough for her to only hear of these places. Her feet had taken her as far as she wanted to go, which was every night in her bed with Jack as he talked of the many places he had been.

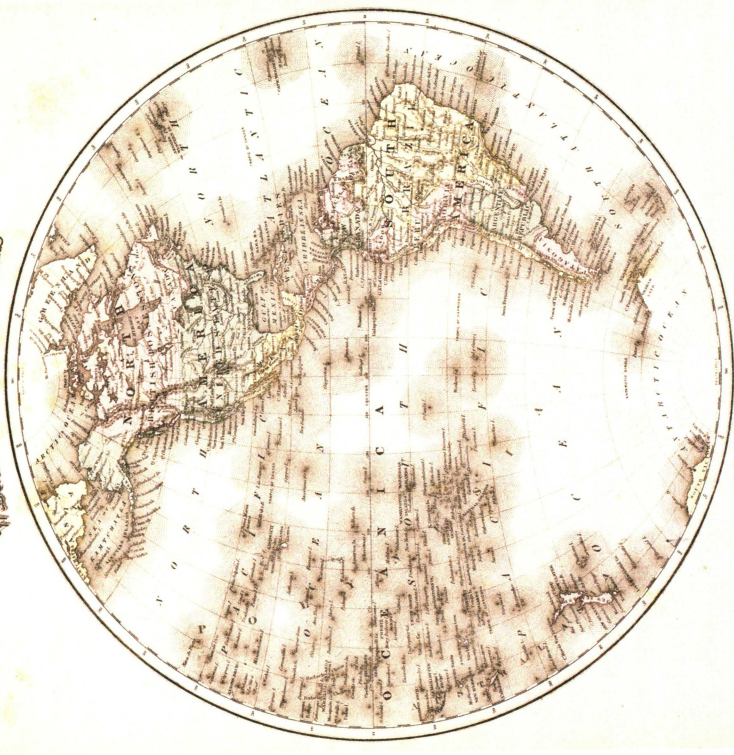
“Right under this part.” His finger ran from Dover in England to Calais of France. When he looked up and saw the look on her face, “What?” he asked. “No. I just want to be here. With you.”

His impatient shrug told her he was restive with ranchwork, with the repetition of steps, the redundancy of days. Her toes curled on their own, one set of nails digging into the sheets of her bed, the other into the top of his foot, and Ada was troubled, for one foot cleaved to home, the other to Jack.

He studied her and then smiled. “I know.” The mapmaker’s pastel pages flew beneath his hands until he came to Massachusetts, where he tapped

almost before he looked. “We’ll go here. Boston.” And he began to tell her of the Mapparium, a globe of the world in a Christian Science Center. It was three stories tall, and she would enter through the Pacific Ocean and leave through the Indian without getting wet or seasick, and while she was inside, she would stand on a glass bridge and look out at all the continents made of stained glass and backlit by thousands of tiny pinprick lights, like stars. “You’d be Archimedian!” he’d laughed in delight.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

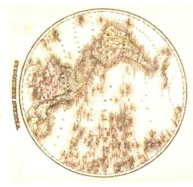


EASTERN HEMISPHERE



Ada understood him to say she would be a comedian, and though she wondered why her being there would be funny, he was so excited about the prospect that she didn't ask. For once he looked at her rather than at the map as he talked, and the tale he wove was of them, the two of them, stepping out, out together . . . not he solo, not she isolate and quiet. So imperative was he in how this small-scaled world would impact her—"It would be a trial run before the real world, eh,"—that night, the Mapparium became for Ada the symbol of the world she wanted with Jack Derito, and it beckoned as bright and shiny as a great big Christmas ball. She imagined them, arm in arm and hayfoot strawfoot, leaving their prints on a world bigger than she had ever imagined.

And perhaps that was why Jack Derito was gone: Ada had gotten greedy.



IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, the snow fell daily and deeper, and the falling came to be all she thought about—how each snowflake was a perfect and complete story. She would turn her face to the sky and feel the

flakes land on her eyelids and melt, or stick her tongue out and feel them before they warmed into nothing; when she walked, she knew they landed on her stocking cap and waited for her to give them thought, which she never could; or they fell all around her unknown, with millions of other perfect stories, piled one on top of another till they lost their shape, like bodies in a mass grave, and just became snow. She thought about how perfect and complete Jack Derito was, and how perfect and complete he had made her feel for the three months they had been married, and how their story had lost its shape, just like that, one dark November night. And though it was impossible after these months, in the mornings and afternoons when she went out to feed the cows, she looked for some imperfect remnant of him in the snow.

One day, when she came back from her feeding and tracking, Earle DeCora was waiting, leaning against his sheriff's car.

"Earle," Ada said softly, her heart falling down.

Uncrossing his legs and straightening away from the car, removing his hat and slowly turning it by its brim, Earle nodded. "Ada."

His easy, impersonal manner suggested that he

knew no more than she knew. Jack Derito was gone. He smiled at her with embarrassment. "Could you tell me about Jack's run-ins with the immigration service?"

Ada shook her head. "Weren't any."

"They didn't want to deport him?"

"Well, they did because his tourist visa was up. But when we got married, they quit bothering him."

"When'd you and Jack get married, Ada?"

"August. It was six months ago on the tenth."

"And he left in November."

"No, Earle. Disappeared."

"Disappeared, then, in November. So you were married a little over three months when he came up missing."

Ada nodded. "But what's this have to do with anything?"

Earle put his hat back on, suddenly becoming official. "Ada, I was just talking to the immigration folks, and they were telling me that a person has to be married at least two years before they'll consider him an alien resident. Otherwise they view the marriage as a sham. Seems to me Jack might have thought two years was a long wait."

He reached into his car and pulled out some papers. "Seems Jack had applied for an extension of his visa in June and didn't get it. Did you know that?" Ada felt her skin move around the frozen ribs of her body like water, and she placed her cold hand on her chest to try to solidify it again. She spoke tentatively. "I guess I wouldn't be surprised. He liked America, wanted to see it all." She gestured to her land and lied. "Particularly right here. He said it charged him with life."

"But you didn't know?"

It was Ada's turn for embarrassment. She shook her head.

"Most of us would tell, Ada."

"That's because in Buckle, all of us already know everything about each other so we might as well tell. But Jack was . . ." She tried to think of a word to describe him. "Different." She listened to how

unsteady her voice sounded. "We weren't just sitting still, you know. One of these years soon, after we sold the calves, we were going to Boston to see the Mapparium."

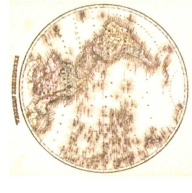
Earle's face disclosed nothing.

"It's a big globe, three stories of land and stars made out of glass and light that you can go inside of.

To look out on all the world. It's what I wanted to see first and most of anything Jack told."

AFTER EARLE'S

VISIT, Ada quit looking for signs of Jack. Once a week after chores she went to town; she went to the library, something she had never done before, to learn of England and the Mapparium and of Archimedes and of any other



fact Jack had introduced her to, and then to find lives like hers in fiction. She was aware, as she made up her mind about what to take home, that her foot impatiently tapped. After the library, she always went to eat at the Dew Drop Inn, where people, as they always had, came over and chatted and then sat down with someone else. Only now she didn't feel separate but alone. Terribly alone. And humiliated.

In March, the icicles around the cabin began to melt, and from the window she watched their tears drop onto the porch and evaporate. By April, the snow was receding from the cabin; she thought of the oceans and their ebb tides and of how they pulled back from the beaches—hissing, Jack had said—and she thought she heard hissing as the water was sucked into the thawing earth. The ice on the tar went up in steam, and the snow in the borrow ditches, which had towered above the highway with blowing snow and the detritus of the plows, sank. All the way into town there was a long green, uncurling ribbon of new grass. And just beyond that, the spring uncovered the buried legs of roadkill. The stiff legs of deer and elk punched dainty hooves into the spangly air. They would have been beautiful were they not removed from the ground. Instead, they looked amputated.

That was when a truck driver called in to say he'd seen a turned-in-at-the-heel boot on what looked like a human leg sticking out of the dirty snow near Cottonwood Creek, a half mile from Ada's ranch. When he stopped, the ravens, a whole murder of them, flew off.

In the dead man's coat pocket was found the mail, more intact than he, from a November day. There was the statement for Ada Derito from the Stockman's Bank; a bill from Snyder's Propane Company for 250 gallons delivered in October; a flyer for a pre-Christmas sale at the Buckle Mercantile; and just a friendly reminder from the Buckle Carnegie Library

that three books, all on the Baja peninsula, were overdue. That the man—Jack Derito—had been struck by a passing vehicle on a snowy night was assumed. Unknown was how quickly or slowly he died. Unclear was how he'd managed to get hit by a car at the mailbox. Unspoken was what dragged him the half mile to Cottonwood.

When Earle told Ada that Jack Derito was found, he saw just a spasm of animal anguish cross her face. That was all.

Grief has its own rules and power. The anguish came from Ada's realization that Jack had not stopped loving her. The spasm came from her understanding that this desolation, though familiar, was keener than any she had ever felt, and so she must again settle into protecting what was left—this time, though, not of land but of herself. It was oddly comfortable to once again turn away from wanting.

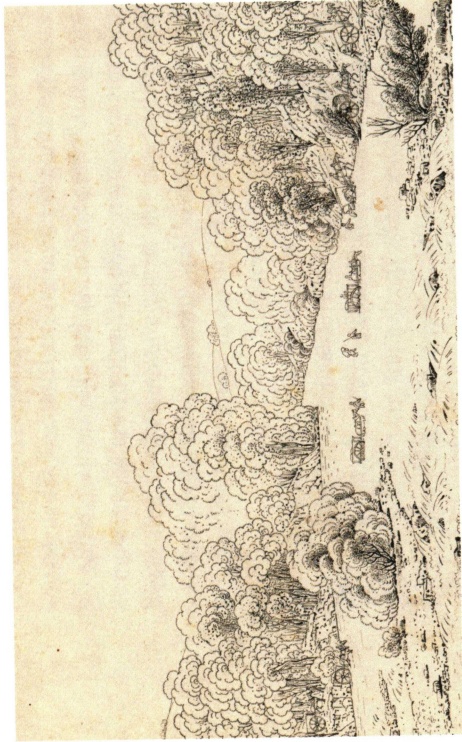
After Earle left, Ada sat in the grass of her yard, Tux leaning against her, his black and white fur warming in the brash spring sun. All around, except for the softening snow, the world shined, a great globe of hopeful green and blue. It reminded her of the Mapparium and how inaccurate, in the 70 years since it was built, its representation of the world had become. She thought of how Jack had told her she'd be Archimedian, which she now understood to mean that she was capable of moving amongst the relationships of the world. "Eureka," Archimedes had shouted in delight upon the apprehension of his sphere.

When Tux became too hot, he groaned, stood, and limped toward the shade of the red twig willow. Ada smiled sadly after him, for he left no tracks on the tender grass.

MAPS: *Gray's Atlas of the United States with General Maps of the World*, Western Hemisphere; Eastern Hemisphere, 3927.162

by Anne Morand

Canada!



THE WHOLE of the North American continent—natural world and native inhabitants—was an inspiration to 19th-century artists. Gilcrease museum-goers are familiar with images by George Catlin, Alfred Jacob Miller, and John Mix Stanley of what would become the United States. Less well-known, perhaps, but no less important were the documentary artist-explorers of Canada, several of whom are also represented in the Gilcrease collection: Peter Rindisbacher, Paul Kane, Cornelius Krieghoff, and Frederick Piercy. In oils, watercolors, and drawings, these painters recorded the character and spirit unique to Canada.

Peter Rindisbacher (1806-1834) was the earliest known artist west of the Great Lakes, working in what would become North Dakota ten years before the better-known George Catlin arrived in 1832. Born in Switzerland, he immigrated with his family to western Canada in 1821, settling in Lord Selkirk's Red River Colony in the remote wilderness (near present day Winnipeg).

Later artists—Karl Bodmer, George Catlin, Paul Kane, Alfred Jacob Miller and others—made western tours to gather material. Rindisbacher, however, was a permanent resident of the region and extremely familiar with his subjects. For seven years, he recorded scenes of daily life, helping to support his family through the sale of watercolor and pen-and-ink drawings. He also clerked in the Fort Garry store, where he received many orders for images from traders.

In 1822 Captain Andrew Bulger, the new governor of the Red River Colony, arrived at Fort Garry. Bulger took an interest in Rindisbacher and commissioned several works. *Captain Bulger's Palaver* depicts the governor meeting with a delegation of Chippewas from the Red Lake area. Members of the group are smoking pipes with long wooden stems and bowls that would later be known as Catlinite. Notable in the painting are the minutely detailed maps of Canada.

Some of Rindisbacher's most important images are pen-and-ink sketches that painstakingly record his subjects with very fine pen lines. *Red River Carts*—whose title comes from the most easily missed details of the composition, the human figures driving the horses and carts across the Red River—may have even been created using a camera lucida (a predecessor of the photographic camera).

Rindisbacher found subjects not only in the landscape, but also in the daily lives of the Chippewa and Metis people living along the Red River. Watercolors such as Canadian Artist and Indians are the earliest known depictions of Native American tipi interiors. Such depictions as this, that also show a self portrait of Rindisbacher, reveals that at least in the early years of settlement, there were amicable relations with the local indigenous peoples.



Peter Rindisbacher

CAPTAIN BULGER'S PALAVER
watercolor on paper, 0226.1339

Peter Rindisbacher

INTRODUCING THE SCALP
watercolor on paper, 0226.1340

FACING:

Peter Rindisbacher

RED RIVER CARTS
pen and ink on paper, 1326.1087



Peter Rindisbacher
CANADIAN INDIANS AND ARTIST
watercolor on paper, 0226.1341



Introducing the Scalp is a bold, though perhaps awkward attempt to capture action, movement and drama. Rindisbacher renders the clothing and accoutrements of the figures in meticulous detail, though the anatomy is ungainly and the faces generalized. He did, however, impose a feeling of grand scale on a small composition, only about seven by eight inches.

Clearly Rindisbacher's work is important in the early history of art on the North American continent. Even after the Red River Colony failed and the settlers moved on first to Wisconsin in 1826, and St. Louis in 1829, Rindisbacher continued to document the people and places he saw. However, at about the time George Catlin was undertaking his western journeys, Rindisbacher died of cholera at the age of twenty-eight. His watercolors provide evidence of events in the early history of interaction between the colonial Canadians and the native peoples in the region.

Paul Kane (1810-1871) was among the most important early artists of North America concerned with the documentation of native cultures. Kane's family emigrated from Ireland to Canada when he was a child. He later trained with the drawing master of Upper Canada College and between 1841 and 1845 traveled to France, Italy, and England to study the work of the Old Masters. In London he was fortunate to meet George Catlin in 1842 while the older artist was showing his work based on his travels among the American Indians. From this encounter came a friendship, but more importantly, Kane's resolve to similarly meet and document the indigenous people of Canada.

Upon his return to Canada in 1845, Kane made his first artistic expedition to the Great Lakes, where he spent the summer among the Ojibway. Over the next three years, Kane traveled on through Canada, making hundreds of sketches before returning to his studio in Toronto. He eventually painted more than a hundred oils based on his experiences. As had Catlin before him, Kane related his experiences in a book based on his journals titled *Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America*. Published in London in 1859, the book included twenty illustrations, and was so popular that within four years it had been translated into French and German.

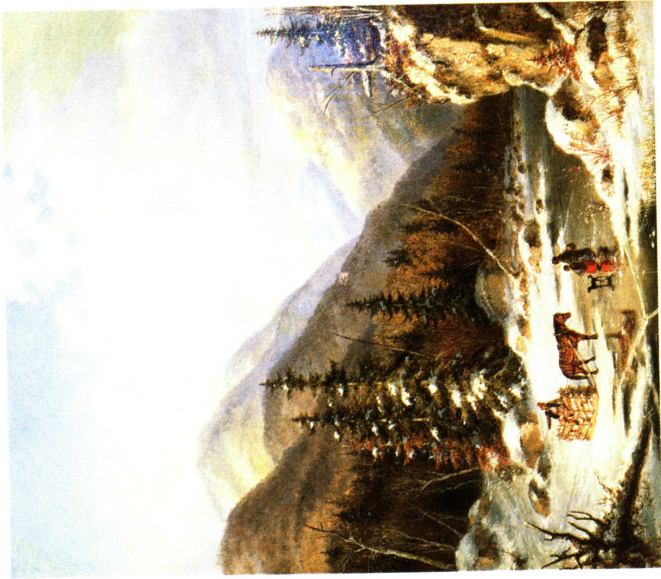
The Sault Sainte Marie area—in close proximity to three of the Great Lakes—was important to native peoples, early Canadians, and continues to be one of Canada's leading ports. In 1846, not long after Kane's return to Canada he painted *Sault Saint Marie, American Side*. In the artist's published journal, he recorded, "I took a sketch of the rapids from the American side. There is a small town called Sault Ste. Marie, on the American side, containing 700 or 800 inhabitants, with a well-built garrison, prettily situated on the river's banks." In his finished painting, however, Kane chose to include a band of native peoples in the composition. It is typical of his style in coloring and use of scenery, and also demonstrates the early anthropological interest that was sparked by his encounter with George Catlin's work.



Paul Kane
WHITE MUD PORTAGES,
WINNIPEG RIVER
oil on canvas, 0116.1157

Paul Kane
SAULT SAINT MARIE
AMERICAN SIDE
oil on canvas, ca. 1846, 0116.1158





Cornelius D. Krieghoff
LAURENTIAN PIONEERS
oil on canvas, 1872, 0116.1155

Kane painted several scenes along the Winnipeg River; the 200-mile long river, flowing from Ontario to Manitoba, was used extensively by early explorers and fur traders. A reviewer for the *Anglo-American Magazine* in October 1852 reacted to *White Mud Portage, Winnipeg River* noting, "The clump of trees in the centre of the middle ground, is very striking and very beautiful, and any one accustomed to American scenery will see, at a glance, that this is an autumnal sketch—the different hues show this at once; and we have no doubt that to an English eye, it may appear unnatural, but to persons accustomed to the gorgeous brilliancy of an American wood in autumn, the truthfulness of the colouring will be very apparent, as will also the distant wall of wood, which is very correctly painted. This picture is a very fine one: the sky and clouds—the rapids are all good, and the colouring altogether is very correct and chaste."

Cornelius D. Krieghoff (1815-1872) came to North America in 1836 after studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Germany. He enlisted in the United States Army fighting the Seminole Indians in Florida, before moving to Canada in 1840 where he began his career as an artist. After a period of study in



Cornelius D. Krieghoff
SHOOTING THE RAPIDS
oil on canvas, 0116.1154

Paris, Krieghoff returned to Canada, establishing his studio first in Longueuil, then in Montreal before setting in Quebec in 1853. Noted as the first painter in Quebec to specialize in genre painting, Krieghoff produced scenes of both the French-Canadian inhabitants and the indigenous peoples in a style reminiscent of Northern European painting.

His most popular subjects were the Canadian landscape and outdoor life, especially his winter scenes. *Laurentian Pioneers*, painted in 1862 at the end of his most creative period, combines all of his best motifs. The jewel-like color and tiny, precisely-painted elements of nature and man indicate an influence from Flemish painters such as Bruegel and Jan Steen.

Shooting the Rapids, with the rich colors of early autumn, at first seems nothing more than a serenely picturesque view of the Canadian wilderness. Closer scrutiny reveals two habitants vigorously pitting their strength against the violence of the river. Although they will undoubtedly be successful in conquering the rapids, they are not only small in the physical sense in comparison to the landscape around them, Krieghoff seems to imply they are insignificant in the passage of time.

Sales of paintings like *Laurentian Pioneers* and *Shooting the Rapids* assured Krieghoff's success, both financial and critical, until the middle 1860s when tastes changed and interest in his work waned.

Frederick Piercy (1830-1891) an artist and journalist born in Portsmouth, England, traveled throughout the United States and Canada during the 1850s recording the landscape scenes he encountered along the way. In 1853, fulfilling a commission from the Church of the Latter-Day Saints in London, Piercy made the trip from Liverpool to Salt Lake City. He then wrote and illustrated, *Route From Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*, a guide for immigrants filled with careful descriptions of travel conditions and detailed images of the western journey.

Piercy is best remembered for his publication, however, his depictions of other landscapes and portraits helped create a record of western expansion. Though little of Piercy's artwork outside of his book is well known, this watercolor entitled *View of Victoria* in 1846 provides a charming painting of Victoria just three years after it was founded.

Piercy is adept at illustrating the lush vegetation. With a simplicity of shape, value, and line, he has authentically portrayed the character of the region. Juxtaposed to the flora, the water, with a wash of opaque white

highlights, provides a frame for the fort at the center of the composition. A sense of scale is shown by the figures on the bluff and in the boat. This painting was completed in 1868, long after Piercy's return to England.



Frederick Piercy
VIEW OF VICTORIA
watercolor on paper, 0226.1368

the white bees of winter

by Z a n A g z i g i a n

THE FLATHEAD RESERVATION, MONTANA November, 1969

MISSION Creek is full of green, round rocks. This morning, from the dusty bridge I saw them all covered with stringy slime. I'll be fourteen next week, and if I ever have a kid, I'm going to name it Pegasus. Not after Peggy, my mom, but after the flying horse.

My brother, Eddie and I are on the front porch putting together an airplane called "Red Chief." Pegasus is painted on each side, makes me think of flying, taking off. Being a chronic runaway landed me six months in the group home slammer. I've been back from that same group home exactly one week, even marked it on a calendar. I call my brother Dirty because he eats dirt. Through the branches of our elm November sun is splintering. We both look like broken glass.

Eddie says someone bought him the plane at the Malt Shop. He's lying. Why buy my brother anything? All he does is break it. Crows are cawing so loud across the street I can barely hear him talk his way out of the truth. There's always something louder when you're lying.

He says, "It's a gift, Sally." Adds fancy details. I don't want to hear. It's only stolen. "Shut up, Dirty," I tell him. Eddie squints as though dust just hit his eyes. I got used to being without my brother at the group home. I didn't miss him but missed seeing October leaves make yellow fire on our front lawn. Even though the sun is out, it's disappearing earlier each day, just like my parents, who flew from here an hour ago with no burdens. Eddie's pants are shredded at the bottom.

I ask him, "Aren't your ankles cold?" He says he likes them that way. I know what's gotten into him. He's careless. Alone with my parents all summer, he's learned bad habits: swearing, hitting. What our folks, Jason and Peggy Bee do best. Buzz and sting. Trash piles up alongside the old house. Grandpa Bee's abandoned beekeeping business remains a scattered mess: vacant supers and rotted frames

for Victor A. Charlo

Zan Agzigan was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and moved to the Northwest in 1986. From 1990 to 2001 she worked in collaboration with Victor A. Charlo co-writing contemporary Native American plays as the Open to All Possibilities Players All Native Acting Troupe of northwestern Montana. Agzigan is a published poet and writer of fiction who has received a number of grants for stories, plays, and poetry. She lives in Spokane, Washington.



and I call the drive Octopus Runway because wires stick out around it like arms.

Next to the shed is the Dead Cemetery that we see from our dining room window: broken stones with rubbed out sayings. Auntie Dolly says the cemetery isn't real, that no one's even buried there, just tombstones. When they moved the cemetery from there to here they only moved the tombstones, not the bones and bodies. So, it's a fake. She says that the bones of the tombstone people are resting in an empty, unmarked field, so good for them. That's more natural. The families of these stones are gone, to Lame Deer, Shelby, Miles City. The tombstones: props like plastic flowers sitting in a vase of water. I understand displaced.

These tombstones tell their own story, one of entire families shoved in one spot, some wiped out in one week. Mom, Dad, kids all stacked up.

McCuskers

November 11-15th, 1899

Here lies rested;

Joseph, aged 36

Elizabeth, aged 21

Randolph, aged 4

Theresa, aged 2

Rotten bad deal.

Take off or die. I want out alive.

When I'm done with the plane parts, a dime store idea of the world sits safe in my hands. Indian Chief pilots horse-with-wing airplane. A kid named Pegasus sits in back. I close one eye and hold it up. Already in the clouds.

I hand Red Chief over. "Here, Dirty. Here." Back at that group home, they'd tell me, "Good job."

Take off or die. I want out alive.

Eddie grabs, breathes fast through his baby teeth. He races that plane down Octopus Runway, makes it go sideways, trips over a big root. I blink. My brother plays takeoff so fast he disappears around the house as if it had swallowed him up.

Being home is old and new: old as summer, new as coming snow. Standing on our lawn, Eddie yells, "Wrong way!" And it's like being a baby, home for the first time. I lean against the elm I used to climb.

Birthdays and being born. Things seem different still they're not. My mom carried me in her stomach and I can't change that.

That group home tried to put better ideas of parents in my head. I'm supposed to cooperate, make life work and meet the folks halfway. The drive is empty. Both my parents come and go as they please, leave us alone for stretches of time. Like those bees between the rocks, my wings aren't frozen.

My brother's in the graveyard with that plane, screaming something Grandpa must have said in the army. "May Day! May Day!" Where is Grandpa, anyway? Probably at the Buckaroo Bar telling his war stories. About this time every day, hunchbacks like Grandpa go sit in the bar. After an afternoon of that, he'll come home and tell the same stories again while no one is listening.

I sneak behind a tombstone tall as a door. You walk in and out that front door. Nobody can stop you if you want to go. The road is waiting. My brother doesn't catch me hiding. He's too busy tossing Pegasus against carved granite, laughing as each wing busts off. Grandpa's been taking care of Eddie. I can tell. Washed and fed him like a pup nobody wants. Dry off rolling in the dirt.

The summer hose is detached and lying in the grass. It's early November; the Flathead River is turning to rust. Canada or bust: real boys—vets, draft dodgers.

Mom left a letter crumpled up on the kitchen table. I had to smooth it out this morning to read it. She thought she'd missed my birthday, so left a convoluted note before taking off. She haunts me with her scarred up wrists, her lack of love. The feelings I have for her are all in pieces.

Bottles of Thunderbird litter the graves. I kick one over and startle Eddie. It shatters, makes him dance the grass dance backwards. Lots of partying is going on out here. A hawk hovers over Dad's garage looking for mice. Eddie is a mouse.

If he's lucky, that hawk might just swoop down, sweep him off. In Dixon, owls lift cats from backyards.

I survey the damage. One plane crashed on Lenahan's grave.

"No survivors," my brother mumbles.

I'm a white-faced bee growing up with the Salish on their reservation. This is their home, not mine. Grandpa's house, not ours. We own nothing. When I was eight, Dad lost his railroad job in Butte over booze and Mom got all depressed. That's when Mom slit her wrists, when Dad moved us all to this res. My parents liked to drink. They made Indian friends fast. It's been downhill ever since. All the same, Indians like Auntie took me in, are my friends. But, we're not Indians. When I wasn't truant, teachers accused me of talking res at school—broken words with sounds that people can't understand. White kids teased me with a made up Indian name: Bee Sting. Adults called me learning disabled. I see things backwards, hear and think too soon. I don't think I'm Indian.

Why would I want to be that?

Auntie says you never think you're Indian. You either are, or you aren't.

White side. Indian side. The res is separated. Our house, on the border of White Town, was the old town morgue when they opened the res to homesteaders in the late 1800s. Indians didn't want anything to do with any white man's morgue because it wasn't their way. To this day, like a silent curse, no Indians ever step foot in our house. The dining room table, where Grandpa lays out solitaire, is right where the bodies were viewed.

Beyond our backyard is Mission church where Jesuits preach, where Indians were beat for speaking their language, forced to learn new ways. They've got a new priest in Mission, say he's here to comfort Vietnam vets and their families. That VW van with flower curtains parked in front of the church belongs to him. Indians live opposite of White Town in agency houses. Indian Town begins at the crossroads. This town is like paint, so spread out.

I'm in the kitchen baking cookies for Auntie. Looking out the window, scooping dough, I think of her teeth, all of them fallen out. She's as old and broken as those gravestones, around so long from another life, of here, but not here. Out the window, I see a pheasant hide behind the garage in a blackberry bramble. He thinks I don't see him. Eddie sits on the staircase wanting more cookies. The ones I gave him are gone because he inhales them with no air in between.

"Go wash your hands."

He wipes his mouse hands on the worn step. "Go wash your own."

Auntie asked to see me tomorrow. I'm in for a birthday story. Auntie Dolly's stories are Indian different, full of families and animals, journeys and rivers. She knows the history of this place and its People doing good.

"Where did Mom and Dad go, Sally?"

I lick my finger: sugar, vanilla. "Ask Grandpa."

Dirty makes a face. "I won't."

"Why?" I ask him.

"He doesn't know anything."

"Grandpa saves your butt. Don't knock him." I'll play this eight-year old game. Cookies are all that's on his mind, so he's not giving real answers. I reach for

I'm a white-faced bee growing up with the Salish . . .

the fresh-baked cookie tin. Right away, he empties his pockets for space: golf ball, string, gum stuck to a dead mouse's fur.

"Take that mouse to Grandpa. He'll tell you a mouse story." I let him dig in.

"Okay. Okay."

Eddie turns the corner, mouse and cookies in hand, and finds Grandpa on the stairs, listening in. It's hard to tell his rolled and burning cigarette from the brown-stained fingers that squeeze it.

Grandpa points. "That's where the coffins sat." He sighs. His spirit has been taken to some big tavern in the sky. "Mice like that got into those caskets at night while no one was looking."

Eddie checks his mouse. "Can I bury this one?"

"That varmint's dead. The ones I'm talking about were alive."

"Buried alive? Then what happened?"

The punch line. "The dead person turns into a mouse."

Grandpa's full of tall tales, untrue stories. Auntie Dolly's stories are the only ones with truth to what she says.

My last batch is done. I take the tin with me to bed. The spirits of the cemetery don't visit like when I was young. Maybe it takes believing in them for them to exist. I think my parents have taken over their scary business. In the dark, trucks rumble along the

highway. Under the covers, I look out on the night. Long headlights on the highway snake into the valley. I whisper a prayer, think big things drifting off: that Indians make me see things the way they tease each other when it's sad. Us whites think everything in winter is dead, think a tombstone, that there are bones underneath.

Next morning, Dad and Mom get home way too early. "Out collecting wood" is Mom's story as she heads off to bed. Swinging that ax in the dark? Dad puts me right to work while I'm still in my bathrobe. Now plenty of pine is stacked in that party shed.

After all of that, he's stomping around the house. I make him a breakfast he doesn't appreciate. Oatmeal pancakes. Says they taste like rubber. Must be all those red pills he's taking for fun.

It's my third time around him since I've been back. He's growing sideburns flat as knives. Through the screen door I see him: too stoned for sentences, popping another red pill, asking for water. Get your own water. Then he tosses riddles. "Sooner or later, someone blows their cool and rats on you, Sally. I'm behind the eight ball right now."

Dad's worried more than ever about getting caught for selling dope. His reputation's bigger than

Staring is like standing on a rock in the river looking out for fish.

he thought it'd be and the partying's too much. Makes him visible. Dad doesn't believe in ghosts but needs to be astral, somehow above it all.

He flicks his lighter open with a sweep of his leg, says nothing. The sun makes him squint in front of the fireplace.

"Why can't I get some of that pot?" Get on this front porch. I want answers.

Smoke floats through the screen door. My dad looks out, grins. The guy likes not being figured, asked what are you holding, where you been? Jason Bee was born in Butte and raised on Alaskan gold nuggets until those nuggets dried up. He signed onto the rails as a switch and that's all I know about where he's been. Those horrible pointed boots.

Fall swirls across the porch. Spider webs, frozen flax, dust. Dad steps outside, blocks the sun with his body, leaves me cold.

"Glad to be back?" He looks straight ahead, doesn't want an answer. Another step with his dry humor, and he almost crushes my finger, but I pull away. Off the porch in one stretch, he strolls to the car shouting, "Hey, you get off a my cloud!"

And then, "Come on!" he yells over the hood. For what?

He curses me for being slow, gets into his Chevy Capri. I watch every move. He pats his crotch, feels for something. Anger makes Dad forget keys and he forgets them all the time.

He yells. "Get in!"

I reluctantly get in and roll the window down. He growls to roll it back up, so I do. Don't want him leaning mad over me.

He throws his horse into reverse. Blares the radio. "Off today?"

I stare at him, want to see up close. "Yeah."

The radio gets shut off. It's quiet, except for the rattle outside of a hanging exhaust. He pulls on his nose, cocks his neck. "Didn't get your tongue, did they?"

"No." They got nothing.

He shoots into third, speeds across Mission Creek Bridge kicking up dirt. Dad has a suicide knob. His elbow always makes circles. A knob can break your wrist if you lose it at the curve. Spin out—can't let go—suicide. His has a fancy picture—

Jayne Mansfield in a sexy nightie.

We pull into town, behind the Malt Shop. Dad points to a gang down Main Street. More hippies have moved to Mission. Rich kids asking where the best drugs are.

I slump down in my seat tough as I can, stare at what those guys are wearing, colors splattered on scarves and headbands. They look like explosions. Where do they all come from? Staring is like standing on a rock in the river looking out for fish. God, I want to be free as those hippie fish.

Dad gets out of the car. "Stay put."

Jokes?

He drops his finger, goes off to the color people. On the way, he reaches back into his pocket. No, he's unsure. Giving them money, something else?

These guys make peace signs; saunter over to my father. I roll down the window, catch some of their

lingo. It's 10 a.m. The bank clock is always right. It better be, the bank has everybody's money.

The cute guy, his legs, says, "Well, what's cool? Two cool?" All the time, he's checking me out, moving slowly towards the car.

Dad drags deep, casts me a look. "Hands off. Let's get on with it."

Cute Legs says, "Oh, sorry. Hey, babe, no harm." He waves.

The group home was tough guys telling their own stories, saying I was cool. At first, I thought they were rapists, lunatics. But came to realize they were just teasing hard to psyche me out. We were always alone outback, myself and four other guys. They'd try to take my underwear off, but I'd never let them get that far.

Auntie lives on the edge of Indian Town, between our house and her daughter, Ginger's. Our houses make a triangle so each place you are can be the beginning. Ginger is my mom's best friend. But Auntie wrote her daughter off while I was gone. They drink too much, Auntie says about both women, and make the Creator angry, and I believe that. I believe her God.

Auntie says my mom is like a lot of white people who come here, haunted by guilt, restless, that she's passed that badness onto Ginger, burning tobacco can't even take it away. That's not my fault.

It's November and her marigolds are still out. Must be the way she loves them. Auntie wears flower dresses all-year-round. She's sure got one on now—brown with pink begonias erupting.

She opens the door and waves from five feet. It's been a long time since I've seen that big face.

"Get inside." She takes a hankie out and wipes her mouth, gives a hug. She smells like doe leather. My sleeve gets caught on a bobby pin sticking from her hair. "Where's Eddie?"

"Pretending to collect honey with Grandpa."

Before Grandpa went senseless, he thought it wise to keep bees because of his name but now he just bumbles, his bees are gone.

She wobbles away from the door, and I grab her hand. "I need to talk," I tell her. It's like pinching my

Indians have everything because they have themselves.

arm, where am I, am I real? Auntie makes me realize how real. She tells me the tribe gave her a new coat of paint. I look at the light blue walls.

"There's a new pool down the road. I might go back to school, become a swimmer."

Auntie shakes her head. "You should go to school." She thinks that school is safe. I'm not safe? Water is a safe place to be.

"Grandpa needs to be watched." I cross my leg and swing my foot. "I just made that up to get out of classes—He could burn the house down or something."

"You blame us old folks," Auntie tells me. "Want some tea?"

"No. No tea. Got coffee?"

"Coffee, since when you drinking coffee?"

"Lots of cream and sugar." We drank it all summer long in the group home.

When Auntie's concerned, her mouth closes shut.

"Maybe you need to sweat. You ever sweat?"

"I don't like the heat. Jokes. Heat. Cops." I pick up a TIME, flip. Vietnam, Vietnam, Vietnam.

"Come get the mugs and pour this."

In her kitchen, I tell Auntie, "Grandpa loves Eddie. He'll be okay. Mom and Dad don't love anybody." The coffee goes swish, swish against the side of the cup. It smells burnt as I hear my own words back, as though somebody else just spoke. What do I know about love? Empty as those hives, I drone through my ungrateful world.

Fifteen minutes later, I'm still searching. Auntie says she has faith that sugar will provide. When I think sweet like sugar I think honey we don't have. Her silver rings glisten and disappear in the steam. Indians have everything because they have themselves.

"Grief can make you see things that aren't there.

Think sugar—takes the bitterness away." She takes a quick sip, closes her eyes. "We have one way. Our way." She smooths down my hair. "Your feelings are hurt."

Wind whistles through her thin-framed windows. "Fakes don't have feelings."

Hearing Auntie talk “her” way “their” way, I’m convinced the ghosts that once lived in our house were once me and not any people buried outside. There ARE no people buried outside. It’s all fake. Those reckless spirits that crashed and burned when they liked were feelings I never knew I had but now I know. I faked that I believed and always ran before I saw.

Auntie Dolly quiets, says I look pretty, happy birthday. “You came to see me. Good girl. We can share stories.”

When Auntie talks stories, she forgets everything else. There’s no more steam rising from her cup, and her lap is covered with crumbs. In winter, the phone calls go dry and telephone lines bend down full of ice. Elders on the res are convinced that they can see everything while staring out their windows, rocking in their dreams.

Auntie falls asleep sitting up. She’s old and tired. There you are. I tuck a blanket up along her chin and make for the kitchen to poke around her fridge. Two new pictures stick to the side of her stove, both Mass cards of dead people.

A half hour later, Auntie wakes up and taps around the lamp for a cigarette. I offer her two strays from my pocket. She’s an elder. You’re supposed to give them gifts of tobacco or steak. Something special you’d want for yourself—you give up.

The room fills with smoke as clouds puff out her mouth. Without her teeth, she has a wicked suck.

When Auntie talks stories, she forgets everything.

Then Auntie Dolly sings one of those Salish lullabies. I stare out the window, beyond the collection of plaster raccoons she has lined up on her ledge. She has them facing out like watching, waiting for something better. Those songs, they take me back to being little. I can almost taste how thick that milk is going down my throat.

When she’s done, she brings up my Mom.

Auntie’s ankles are too fat. I reach into my pocket. “I guess this letter hurt my feelings.”

Auntie squints. “Who’s it from? Your boyfriend?”

She covers her bare gums.

“No. Mom. Boyfriend, I wish.”

Auntie Dolly lights a smoke and sets it down in

the ashtray, leaving it to burn. I pick it up, whether she wants me to or not, and take a puff.

The letter is scribbled on notebook paper. I read.

“You were late when you were born. It’s your fourteenth birthday. Don’t give in easy.”

Auntie Dolly sits silent for a long time rubbing her eyes. Then she looks at me. “You stay or you don’t. Don’t let the state make up your own mind. You’re fourteen and need a direction.”

“Don’t tell me you’re going to be a swimmer.”

Auntie Dolly calls where my parents are, “Swimming in the shallows.” She closes her eyes, continues like a prayer. “Be like those bones and bees. Be somewhere else—and not here.”

Auntie shakes her head. “Don’t you remember what I taught you when you first got here, when you were eight?”

I sit back worried and count. “I can’t remember back that far. It’s been too long.” Lie.

“Nothing is too long. I’ll tell you the story again. This time, listen.”

“Our family just moved to our reservation—white folks from Butte. I hadn’t seen my daughter for a few days so I went to the morgue to see what was up. I stayed out on the lawn for a long time and wouldn’t step onto that porch. Many worried white folks wore down those steps. I thought, ‘If I go in there, I’ll never come out.’ But this was my daughter. I was concerned, got up the nerve to knock, and there you were alone in your cute pajamas inviting me in.”

“Eddie was two years old in a cut plug box. I tried to start a fire myself because we were cold.”

“It was a sorry sight. But inside you there was warmth. I put aside what I thought I believed, and went in to babysit. The fire in that fireplace stuck its tongues out and said, ‘I’ll keep you warm. Breathe in.’”

“Then Dad came home alone.” In those days, Mom and Dad were rarely seen without each other. Something was terribly wrong. “He said, ‘She’s gone. She said she’s never coming back to this place.’”

“You were scared. I held you, asked was Ginger with her? He said yes. Then he went upstairs and passed out.”

“He passed out and you said, go get his tobacco.”

“The only night I ever had a white face, Sally.

Jokes.”

We both toss our heads back and laugh.

“I ran upstairs for Dad’s Pall Malls. The room was full of snoring. In his jacket hanging on a hook, sticking out of the pocket was a pack. They sprang out like a jack-in-the-box all over the floor. I picked up a fist full and took them down to you.”

Auntie smirks. “What’s this shit you forget? You don’t forget. The ritual went: Light up, sit in the center, and offer up that all things be safe.”

“Then you fainted.”

“My heart was sad that a mother abandoned her children. Worse that a white took my girl.”

I sat on that living room floor for what felt like forever. My heart rose up in big tha-thumps, through my throat, out my ears. The house was not the house anymore but felt hidden far back in the woods. I took a puff but didn’t inhale. I had to move or my heart was going to leap.

Auntie looks at me hard. “That day we both lost faith and hope in all good things. But now we are back. You have a greater vision because you went away. I have greater vision because I’m old.”

I’m mad. “The state sent me away.” A white bee removed from the hive.

She quickly answers. “Your government likes to do that—send people away. But this time, it taught you something. You whites leave easily. Come and go as you please. You run out of habit thanks to your parents.” Auntie seems frustrated. “This is not your struggle. This is not your survival. Go off and seek your new life. It’s time. If you don’t, you will continue the cycle and nothing will change for the good. I’ll finish the story one more time.

“When I came to, you stood over me with those Pall Malls up in smoke. I told you, ‘Swirl the smoke around.’ That night you touched a power. Everything got washed up into a new life, a new you. I blessed the floor with night sweat, fed Eddie a can of Uncle Sam milk, and prayed for plenty.”

I sigh. That night I was sucked into the shadow of what could kill me. Sure Mom and Ginger eventually returned, but not on account of any good.

Auntie smiles. “Now you trust the world, but in a new way. You have nothing to prove to your parents. I have nothing to prove to Ginger. This birthday we are free.”

I’m walking back towards our house after my visit with Auntie. The early dark is sleeping sound in its own stomach.

Hesitant, I step onto the porch and through the window spot Eddie asleep on the couch, his hair spread out around his coat pillow. A shadow on the pane: High aspens cry their leaves onto the pavement.

Streetlight catches their backs like swarming bees. I turn and look out across the yard, feel my arms and hands extend like long roots, tangled, far apart. The moon is open wide as a light bulb over the highway. It beckons me. Swiftly I walk away, want to be born all over.

Along this Mission road, I am looking for a kindness that is so strange, it is a story I think I can’t be a part of. I say goodbye to my brother under my breath as a van big and brown as a buffalo nearly runs me off the road. I can hear its songs vibrate the sliding steel door. From the rearview mirror hangs an eagle feather and dreamcatcher. Three guys fill the seats. They’re drinking and drumming to a tape of pow-wow songs, headed across the border to pow-wow in Calgary. They offer me a beer and I say no. I offer them some birthday money Auntie gave me for gas, and they accept.

They tell me curl up in the back. They’ll wake me when we get there, wherever there is, as they make up stories about kidnapping a white girl, how they’ll never make it past the damn border patrol without any documents, how it’s so hard to make it anywhere without official White Man’s ID.

by Anne Morand

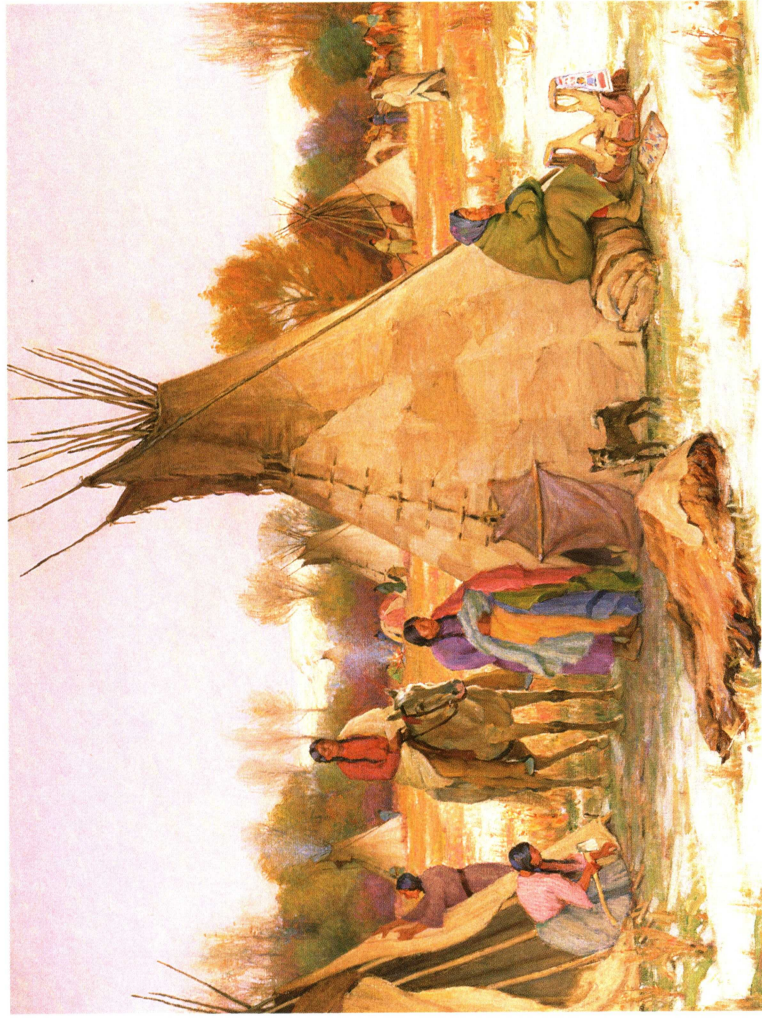
Sharp on the Northern Plains

Joseph Henry Sharp (1859-1953) created more than 10,000 paintings over his long career. He studied extensively in Europe and went on to apply his training to a unique American theme. His most significant works are those of the Native peoples of the American West. Many of these were painted in the first decade of the 1900s, during the six years that he lived in Montana. In living among his subjects, Sharp was in an environment that nurtured his talent and established a connection between life and art. He recorded events and people in a way that reflected empathy for a civilization drastically different from his own. Sharp understood that he was witnessing a culture in transition. This recognition illuminated his artwork with immediacy and urgency.

Council Call of Crows

Council Call of Crows may be the masterpiece among Sharp's views of tipis at night. In addition to the beauty of the tipis, Sharp expanded this composition to include a luminous, billowing cloud that picks up the last bit of sunlight. Although a night scene, the painting retains a great amount of color, expressed in Sharp's salient brushwork.





Setting Up Camp

In 1899, after a period of study in Paris, Sharp visited the Crow Reservation in Montana. During his time there, he documented the last vestiges of the traditional life of the Plains Indians. In ceremonial as well as quotidian subjects, such as *Setting Up Camp*, he left a remarkable body of work that included landscapes and portraits. In most of his Crow compositions, Sharp features a large tipi as the central element, emphasizing its importance as a symbol of family and community.



Crow Teepees at Night

A benefit for Sharp of living near the Crow was the opportunity to observe the villages at night in order to capture the soft, suffused glow of firelight through tipi walls. In the winter, tipis were double-walled for warmth, but in summer their single walls of masterfully tanned buffalo hides became translucent by firelight. Paintings such as *Crow Teepees at Night* were some of the most difficult to paint for an artist trained to examine life in the brilliance of the Impressionist sun.



Crow Summer Teepees and Brush Shade

Construction methods for shelters used by the Plains Indians fascinated Sharp. *Crow Summer Teepees and Brush Shade* is a plein-air study not only of a finished tipi but also, as Sharp noted, of an incomplete one "showing construction of poles." Also of note is the brush shade built at the tipi opening, which functioned as a covered porch and helped to cool the interior.

Dividing the Chief's Estate

Following a burial, the possessions of the deceased are distributed among the community. Oil studies such as *Dividing the Chief's Estate* (made on site) reveal Sharp's familiarity with French Impressionist concepts of painting directly from the subject, using loose brushwork and clear color to capture aspects of daily life. Notice also the beautiful reflections of color in the patches of snow on the ground and hillsides.



The Funeral

One of the results of Sharp's extended stay at Crow Agency was that he witnessed nearly all the aspects of Plains Indian daily life, including death and the rituals related thereto. *The Funeral* is part of a series documenting the death of a chief. The body has been prepared, wrapped for a scaffold burial, and placed on a travois. Mourners gather to accompany the body on its journey to the burial grounds.



Blackfeet Sun Dance Ceremonial Medicine Lodge

While the Crow were the main focus of Sharp's work in Montana, he also painted other tribal groups. Visiting the Blackfeet Reservation in 1902, the artist once again paid tribute to a tipi as a communal structure. The Blackfeet Sun Dance ceremonial medicine lodge is the large central tipi. Sharp described it as the "Medicine Lodge with buffaloes," adding, "Medicine is always spiritual with Indians." He noted also the lower, broader structure seen in the distant right as a "temporary large lodge for Sun Dance and other ceremonies."



Winter Sports

One of the ways people relieve the harsh monotony of winter life is by sports and gaming. In *Winter Sports*, Sharp records a dart-throwing competition between the resident Crow and visiting Blackfeet. As was customary with much of Sharp's work at this time, the human activity is dwarfed by the beautifully painted tipis. Although not captured in the meticulous detail of George Catlin, the ethnographic detail of Sharp's work is no less significant.

Sheriffs and Indians of the East

BY IBTISAM S. BARAKAT

ON THE MORNING of a summer Sunday Uncle Meena returned from California to Ramallah. Schools were out, and the fields flickered with boys who all day long ran after soccer balls. Their shouts rose to the sky like cacophonous kites, lines entwined.

The younger children searched the mud-red earth for worms, for unusually shaped stones, for answers to questions only they knew. They spoke and sang to themselves unstopably.

Girls my age kept an eye on everyone as we braided grass into wreaths and twisted dandelion and clover into rings. “Can you lisp like Miss Sana?” We lisped and lisped like our seventh-grade teacher, swayed on each other and shook with laughter.

Uncle Meena had not told anyone he was returning to Ramallah. But the loud ululations of Grandma harvested the children from the fields, leaving behind soccer balls rolling aimlessly, laughter hanging in the air, and worms harrowing safely back into the earth.

In our surprise to see Uncle Meena, we hesitated.

Then we bolted and planted a thousand kisses on his cheeks. We mixed the kisses with questions.

“Is America really far away, Uncle?” “How far is it from Ramallah, exactly?” “How is it to be on a plane?” “Do you have a lot of money?” “Can you take us with you when you go back?”

“Okay,” Uncle Meena said as he grabbed a young boy and held him up in the air. “This is how it feels to be on a plane.” He ran across the room making plane noises. We flocked after him, wanting our turns. Grandma stopped us.

Uncle Meena did not want to answer any more questions. He did not want to eat his favorite meal either, though Grandma had hurried to prepare it as soon as he stepped foot into the house. “You’ve changed, Meena,” she murmured, her hand pressed against her mouth as though to stop the words. She put aside the tray.

We ran to the food and found things we ate every day: green olives drenched in lemon juice, garden



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tomatoes red as a sunrise, basil leaves, boiled homemade goat cheese, fresh flat "taboon bread," each loaf the size of a tiny toboggan. But because it was Uncle Meena's favorite meal—he called it *Basata*, meaning "simplicity"—we ate everything on the tray.

Uncle Meena sat on the bed where he had piled up his suitcases. "Before food, visits, or any more questions, let us go for a long walk on the streets," he said. He then stood up as though nudged by his longing. *El-Manara*. He savored the word Ramallah locals give the downtown. "El-Manara feels like a piece of my body. I miss the dust of the taxis. Those drivers grow old on their seats." He now spoke wistfully.

"They're turtles, Uncle, and their cars are the shells," I excitedly agreed.

"They give rides inside those shells, and they know everyone's story," he said.

"Just like the barbers," Grandma interjected. Everyone grinned but remained intent on Uncle Meena's words.

"I want the taxi drivers to see that I am in Ramallah today. I want to walk midst the crowds at the market, listen to the calls for prayer from the mosques mix with church bells and cart vendors shouting their vegetables and fruits. We'll bring home plums and grapes, and a watermelon twice the size of a soccer ball." All the boys jumped to secure permission to carry the watermelon.

Uncle Meena's eyes now sparkled with smiles that fell on us like confetti. "I will take you anywhere you like," he announced. "Abdo's falafel shop? Rukab's ice cream? Abu-Iskendar shawerma sandwiches? Do you want Kunafa pastries too?" We looked at one another ecstatically. We were going to order everything.

Excitedly, the younger children jumped up to tackle Uncle Meena. They wanted him to lie down. He did. They then stepped onto his belly, danced on it. But Uncle Meena has always been strong. Sometimes he lifted weights, or lifted the children when he had

no weights. He jumped rope like a girl for exercise. He let the children win, pretended surrender, and looked like Gulliver pinned down by Lilliputians. We loved the story of Gulliver's Travels which we had read in school and wanted a chance to enact it. But then Uncle Meena, speaking mostly in English, wrestled all of us down.

"He has forgotten Arabic!" Grandma exclaimed in shock and amusement. But I understood some of Uncle Meena's English. He had sent me letters from America, always accompanied with cards, and I had pored over them a hundred times. Many of the cards were made of photographs glued to card paper. They covered my portion of the wall in the bedroom I shared with my sister. I allowed no one to touch them. They were written in both English and Arabic. Uncle Meena translated his writing so I could learn new words.

I wrote him back in Arabic using as many English words as I could. Often, I asked my English teacher for new words. When I wanted to say *aywalh*, meaning "yes" in Arabic, I said "okay," and that made me feel closer to Uncle Meena. When I wanted to say *shukran*, I said "thank you."

Children filed behind Uncle Meena on the street leading to El-Manara as though he was a magician and they were under his spell. He held my hand. Mother, Grandma, relatives, and neighbors had gathered from the neighborhood as soon as they heard the ululations, and they walked with us.

Uncle Meena had been studying American history in California. He always added slivers of history in the letters he sent to me. Grandma called him Dr. Calafonia when she forgot how to pronounce the name.

I corrected her and read aloud from one of his letters that California was the name of a treasure island in a Spanish novel written by Garcia Ordenez De Montalvo in 1510.

UNCLE MEENA HAD BEEN STUDYING AMERICAN HISTORY IN CALIFORNIA. HE ALWAYS ADDED SLIVERS OF HISTORY IN THE LETTERS HE SENT TO ME. GRANDMA CALLED HIM DR. CALAFONIA WHEN SHE FORGOT HOW TO PRONOUNCE THE NAME.



STORIES ARE LIKE PEOPLE. SOME LIVE SIDE BY SIDE; SOME CLASH; SOME ISOLATE THEMSELVES, AND SOME MARRY AND MERGE, FOR LOVE OR GREED OR TRADITION. THEY BEGET NEW STORIES.



"Why a Spanish name?" she protested. "Isn't Meena in America?" "Yes," I replied, "in North America," but I did not know how to explain the Spanish name. I asked Uncle Meena. He explained that Spanish explorers gave California its name and later occupied it. "Those Spaniards!" Grandma exclaimed. I reminded her that the Arabs had occupied Spain for about eight centuries.

"We didn't occupy it," she protested. "We were only there ruling the country against its people's will, Grandma, right?" I teased back.

She sighed and said all the reading and writing had corrupted me. "No man in his right mind will marry you," she assured me.

"How about the left?" I laughed.

"I am not certain," she laughed along. "California was occupied at various times by the Russians, Spanish, Mexicans, and then American settlers," Uncle Meena's letter detailed. "That's close to our story," Grandma concluded.

Uncle Meena had not intended to study history. He began his studies as an engineer. We did not know he had changed until he graduated. Then he wrote to me about it, and I told everyone.

His letters all started the same, with the date, then his California address in blue ink and words small as sesame. "Maybe you won't understand," he wrote, but joy filled my heart that Uncle Meena told me about his life, his thinking, his decision. I felt that he trusted me. I felt that he respected my mind.

"I want to study the entire world's history, the big and small stories," he continued. "Stories are like people. Some live side by side; some clash; some isolate themselves, and some marry and merge, for love or greed or tradition. They beget new stories. They grow old, shrink, dry out like seeds and wait. Some die. But every story has its lineage." I could see

what Uncle Meena meant and felt happy he was my uncle, not someone else's. I wanted him to tell me all the stories he knew.

"I have studied American history to find out more about the country to where people come from every spot in the world to be free. No one shoots at me in America to keep me from my freedom. There are no snipers on the roofs, army check points, or different color plates so you can be stopped. Some day you will come to study here and you will know for yourself what it is to be free, to walk on the street not feeling worried because of who you are."

As I read Uncle Meena's words I thought of the one American I had met, a tourist whose car had broken down in Beit Iksa, my grandmother's village, two summers ago, while I was visiting.

He shrieked for help. Quickly, everyone who was present in the village gathered. Women, men, boys, and girls. He pointed to his chest and said "American." We felt as though we had won a prize. An American in our midst! We spoke with him in gestures.

A group of men took him to the Madafah, the village guest house, while a few men opened the car's hood and went to work on it with tiny tools like dentists. The women cooked Maqloubeh, a meal of chicken, cauliflower, and rice, for him. He offered money. We raised our eyebrows in surprise and protest. He offered more. We laughed and gestured "no" with our hands. We wanted to explain that Arabs feed their guests before feeding themselves, that we love a guest anytime.

In the evening the car was fixed and the American left us. He was the talk of the village for days. Many women thought him beautiful, wishing they had blue eyes like his, scooped from the sea, even just for a day. They wanted to know what it's like to see the world with different color eyes.

Eagerly leading everyone to El-Manara and nodding with a greeting and a smile to strangers as often as he could, Uncle Meena walked like a lamp post, so tall we had to raise our heads to speak with him. His face was lit with happiness. But that quickly changed when Grandma reminded us that we must not walk on the tile inlaid in the street ahead of us.

“What’s this tile about?” Uncle Meena asked. Grandma explained that a tile is placed anywhere a Palestinian is killed in our struggle for freedom.

Uncle Meena knelt and touched the tile as one touches the forehead of a sick friend. His tears came out of his eyes as though his lids were hands, wringing a wet cloth.

“Things have been grueling lately,” Grandma muttered. Uncle Meena nodded his head and we walked past the tile slowly, imitating his steps, our feet barely lifting off the ground.

When we reached El-Manara, we felt the anxious air we had become accustomed to recognizing. It hung like a purple cloud. It soon would rain chaos and loss.

Walking with Uncle Meena the anxiety felt less tolerable because he seemed to have forgotten how it was to live with army everywhere and the daily threat of violence breaking out, stealing one’s day with no warning. Now, it was going to steal our time with Uncle Meena and all the foods and fun he’d promised us.

On the far edge of El-Manara three tires blazed. The thick flames and smoke danced around the edges like demons. Young men covering their faces in black gave us leaflets urging that we resist the occupation and give our lives for freedom. The word *amaleyyah*, operation, recurred.

Army Jeeps circled around El-Manara and fired into the smoky air. An army helicopter circled above. Shop keepers pulled down the shutters of their fronts. We hurtled home, Uncle Meena carrying two children on his arms and now making certain to stay behind everyone.

The news said an explosion had taken place in Jerusalem a few hours earlier and called those who did

the *amaleyyah* terrorists. Ramallah seemed to be the ground for army retaliation whenever an *amaleyyah* happened in Jerusalem.

I listened intently, knowing that if the word “terrorist” was repeated vigorously by the person who read the news, more troops were on their way to Ramallah. I disliked the word like I disliked eating eggplants.

“Tile burying history below it,” Uncle Meena spoke to himself as he paced across the kitchen.

“Are these really terrorists?” I asked Uncle Meena. He thought for a moment before he spoke.

“Anyone who uses terror as an instrument to reach a goal is a terrorist,” he answered. “Like anyone who uses comedy as a tool is a comedian, or music is a musician. A terrorist employs terror.”

“Soldiers use explosions also. They demolish homes and kill people,” I said.

“They too use terror as a tool,” Uncle Meena said. “Terror, violence, and war have been the instruments of most armies. But in history and on independence days, people tell themselves that war and violence are necessary for gaining and protecting freedom. So most peoples seem to want access to violence in order to gain and protect freedom.”

I remembered a teacher saying that history is mainly an account of wars and their outcomes, written by the winners.

“Did you know that in the courts of England a few hundred years ago, George Washington was considered a terrorist?” Before waiting for my reply, Uncle Meena nodded his head repeatedly to assure me.

I had seen George Washington’s picture on a green stamp Uncle Meena had used on some of his letters. Washington looked so keenly somber I had to draw whiskers, a cat smile, and a bubble saying “somebody make me happy, please! I can’t do it,” on the stamp.

“But using war and violence points a finger to the failing to come up with solutions, life-loving and kind. We call ourselves mankind, not manhard,” he lamented. “I wish I had not returned,” he said.

Everyone now cried. The thought of Uncle Meena not coming to see us felt cruel.



I SAID NOTHING, AS I DID NOT WANT UNCLE MEENA TO CRY ANY LONGER. “WHEN YOU GROW UP AND KNOW HOW INDIAN YOU ARE, DON’T FORGET TO CRY A LOT,” HE SAID.



Violence was near like a hungry beast in Ramallah for days. Uncle Meena stayed home with us. We were happy to be inside the house or in the yard with him although he often did not speak. For hours, his face was empty as a bus station with no one standing. “Leave him alone,” Grandma would say “He’s in Calafonia.”

But on the day he looked through a window and saw children playing Jews and Arabs, and starting a pretend fight, he walked to us and sat by the edge of the well.

“Don’t fall!” Grandma yelled out. He smiled. “In America this game is called Sheriffs and Indians, but in America you would all be Indians,” he said.

“We are not Indians,” everyone protested. “I am Indian too, and so is Grandma and everyone in Ramallah” he continued.

“Don’t confuse the children with your big talk, Meena,” Grandma shouted.

“I want to confuse them,” he shot back. “They are already confused. War is confusing. Teaching men to kill is confusing. Being a child anywhere in the world is confusing. All the death is confusing.” He began to cry.

Yes. Uncle Meena, the man with the large, muscular body, cried profusely. In the past, Grandma was embarrassed to stay with him as his tears rumbled freely like pebbles from a demolished heart. She left until he was done crying. But now she stayed with him and said nothing.

Uncle Meena went on. “Really, Mom, you in particular and the way you live remind me of an Indian. You live by the land, any land, and for it. You call the olive trees your children and love the animals even as you slaughter one to feed us and yourself. You have no desire to change the world for you think the world is divine and is guided by God. It must not be tampered with.

“And like an Indian, Mom, you bead beauty into your life with your own fingers. You embroider your dress and weave your baskets and plates.” He pointed to straw plates that adorned the walls. “You make the jar from which you drink your water. You grow your braids long like the stories you live by, and your dream is nothing but the freedom to live on the land you have been pulled out of like a weed.”

Grandma looked to the ground to conceal her tears. Uncle Meena went to his room.

I followed him. I wanted to understand. “Why do you say we’re Indians, Uncle?” I whispered.

“Because it’s the story of the Indians we live here.” He hugged me.

“What happened to the Indians?” I asked.

“The tile of America has Indians under it. The freedom I have in California is freedom taken from Indians. Freedom is a tile, under it lies war and the death of someone else’s freedom. We’re the Indians of Palestine.” He shook my shoulders as though to make me understand.

I said nothing, as I did not want Uncle Meena to cry any longer. “When you grow up and know how Indian you are, don’t forget to cry a lot,” he said.

“What do you think of freedom?” he asked. I did not have to think long. “I want the freedom to go to El-Manara with you, Uncle, to the ice cream shop and the falafel shop, and sit there as long as we want to. I want Ramallah to be free like you say America is. But it is not. So, I see freedom in the dances of the trees. No one stops them from moving and they are not afraid to be outside.

“We don’t know what freedom is,” I continued. “But we dream of it everyday.” He nodded his head, put his wide hand on my heart, then on his.

“Anything that we don’t like we sweep under the carpet in our imaginary house of freedom. My carpet has under it my dream of freedom from school, from soldiers, from seeing guns.”

"You know," Uncle Meena gazed into the floor as he spoke. "History is a serial killer. It goes from nation to nation repeating the same deadly things, killing, robbing, separating. We must arrest history and put it on trial in all nations, understand its heart, perhaps rehabilitate it if we can, not let it repeat itself, not let ourselves repeat it."

After supper that night Uncle Meena wanted to sleep on the roof, to gaze into the star-freckled face of the sky till we fell asleep. Against Grandma's warnings, I snatched the thin flashlight from the kitchen drawer, and he and I went up and lay on our backs in the dark. Carrying pillows, Mother and Grandma quickly followed us.

"Tell me about California. Do you love it?" I asked. "Yes," he sighed long and big as though he were a child blowing into a balloon.

"You say it as though California were a woman you love," Grandma whispered. "We need to find you a woman before you leave."

To reply, Uncle Meena only reached to his purse and pulled out a tiny picture, zigzagged on the edges. "This is she." He kissed the picture, turned it around to what was written on the back and read, "I love you."

"I hear this word often," Mother interjected. "What does it mean in Arabic?" *Bahebbek*, I proudly explained to Mom. "It's not a word, it's a sentence," I added.

Uncle Meena handed the picture to me. "Panu," he introduced. I turned to the side and poured the flood of flashlight on the picture.

Panu's hair was dark like the night surrounding us. Her eyes were dark also. She had a piercing smile in them. I smiled back then laughed. I knew that Grandma had hoped Uncle Meena would marry an Arab girl. She would understand if he married an American only if her hair was yellow like sunflower petals and her skin was white like snow. But a non-Arab who looked like one? "Why?" she would say. Uncle Meena knew why I was laughing. He lightly pinched my arm.



TO REPLY, UNCLE MEENA ONLY REACHED TO HIS PURSE AND PULLED OUT A TINY PICTURE, ZIGZAGGED ON THE EDGES. "THIS IS SHE."

Mother and Grandma wanted to see the picture. "Is she Indian?" they both asked. "Yes," Uncle Meena replied. "Like you and me." We all laughed. "If that be God's will, I accept it," Grandma quickly surrendered. "Tell us everything about Panu," I begged, in spite of my worries that Mother might stop me from asking about grown-up things. But she did not, perhaps because she too wanted to know.

"We were neighbors," he began. "But I had not known it until one day I heard a car screech violently outside. It then disappeared. I ran to see what happened."

"Anyone got hurt?" I asked. "A girl, perhaps your age, was on her bicycle," he replied.

"I too want to ride a bicycle," I interrupted. Mother became agitated, for she would not allow me to do that. She thought only boys should be allowed to ride bicycles.

"The girl had become frightened by the noise of the car. She sped up and crashed into a stopped car in front of her. She lay on the ground unconscious." We all sighed. Grandma said a quick prayer.

"Panu had come out also," Uncle Meena continued. "We did not introduce ourselves, but ran in and out, called for help, located the girl's house. Her parents were at work so we went to the hospital with the girl."

"Bless you, Meena," Grandma whispered. "When the girl woke up," he went on, "she could not remember what had happened. But Panu spoke. 'I saw the accident.' She comforted the girl."

"You remember for me?" the girl exclaimed. Panu nodded and went on telling the girl what had happened to her.

"When Panu and I returned to our neighborhood, the space between us had become filled with kindness. She asked me where I was from. I told her. She asked me how to say welcome in Arabic. I told her *Ahlan*, and how it means that all people are one family. How you say that to anyone who says hello to you.

"This is like the Indian pipe ceremony words

Mitaku Oyasin," she said. "All my relations. Everyone and everything in the world."

"After we spoke and I went home, I realized I had thought Indian people in America had disappeared. I had not seen them on the news, as though they had been pushed under the tile of silence. She told me that many have disappeared, but many remain.

"I wanted to learn more about Panu, all that's under the tile. In return I told her about Palestine, the Arabs, the Muslims. She knew very little about us."

"Have you told her about me?" I asked. "What do you think?" He pulled on my ear. I knew he must have told her for there is an invisible string that exists between Uncle Meena and me. We both have forever hungry minds, and are full of laughter and tears. "Early on, I assure you," he said.

"Panu let me into her world like an Arab lets a stranger stay in his home for three days before he asks him what he wants. She took me to what is called in America a reservation. 'The Rez,' she called it.

"What do they reserve there, Uncle?" I asked. "People," he said. "It's a place like the Palestinian refugee camp."

I was shocked to hear about reservations in America. I perhaps had thought that everyone in the world was free except for the Palestinians. But I also felt happy to learn a new English word and was eager to tell my friends that Amari refugee camp, at the edge of Ramallah, is like an Indian reservation.

"Panu studies linguistics," Uncle Meena said. "She wants someday to create records, perhaps dictionaries, of dying Indian tribe languages. One day she pulled a dictionary of a language called Miwok off her shelf. 'Who are the Miwok?' I asked. 'I'll tell you tomorrow,' she said.

"The next day she put on her beaded skirt, feathered earrings, large rings, and moccasins. We crossed the Golden Gate Bridge to the glorious mountain called Tamalpais."

"I have the picture of the bridge," I interrupted.

"You do," Uncle Meena patted me on the head.

"Mount Tam rose up from the shore like a giant temple that could touch the clouds. We sat facing the water. 'The Miwok tribes lived on this mountain,' she said. 'I come here when I feel lonely to see the ocean through their eyes. I hear their voices calling in the wind.' She was crying.

"What happened to the Miwok?" I asked.

"She said that most of them had disappeared. In

1851 only 250 were left. In 1880 the number went down to 60. In 1920 they became five, and then in 1930 there were..."

But we did not hear any more numbers because Grandma screamed for Uncle Meena not to say that none remained. She did not want to hear that.

She snatched Panu's picture and put it close to her face as though Panu was her daughter. She gasped with grief.

"Did you give her a ring, Meena?" she now asked.

"Yes," Uncle Meena said it timidly because he had not consulted with Grandma first. But he no longer needed to do that. Grandma had taken Panu into her heart through Uncle Meena's words.

"Panu did not want a ring of metal or stone," he said. "She only wanted my words, and a dandelion flower from the highest peak of Mount Tam to wrap around her finger.

"These flowers are the flesh of all things brought together," she said. "The Indians, the sheriffs, the settlers, the deer, the death, the cows, the cowboys, the west, the east, the bullets, the wounds, the freedom, the horizon, the healing, the mountains where one is set free and where history has a momentary breath to turn itself into puff balls in the wind, and seeds for new stories.

"Like us, they come every year to make new relations with all things. Like us, at times they break through the cracks of stones and paved street and form new relations. Every time I see them, my heart shall remember that it's rooted in yours."

As Uncle Meena spoke of Panu, cool breeze in the late night needed our toes reminding us to get inside, and the stars nodded their heads in twinkles. They became sky dandelions that grew in the heaven, searching for a girl's finger, and our eyes became those of our people who came before us and saw the same sky, and the eyes of those will come after us. Before we went inside, Uncle Meena told us that he must return to California.

The next day, he departed as he had arrived, quickly, tears filling his eyes and Grandma's.

He carried an extra sack that Grandma filled with sage, thyme, dried okra, pickled yogurt, roasted wheat, and roasted chick peas for Panu.

And I was left dreaming of California, and of the piercing smile of an Indian girl who has become my relation. Someday, she would come to Ramallah.

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Joseph Henry Sharp
Dividing the Chief's Estate
(detail)

oil on canvas

Northern Plains
Parfleche (detail)
painted bison hide