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Author

Allen, Paula Gunn

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IKCE WICHASA: NEW BLOOD

Elusive sense of you after years; noise
around you I remember, no
eagle on your god-side
shoulder, no peace, a stolid
vision.

Today, message: hope gotten
into you somehow, ceremony,
time. I wonder at your face, the silence
around your chair. What
ever is said, you say
"Black Elk,"
"the ghosts of old Wounded Knee stand
again in the moonlight"
"Inipi," you say: close and smoke-dark,
sweet sage I guess is what contains you
fragrant wakan smoke now: and
moonlight spirits walking under five eagles, and
Black Elk still calling, still
making things happen out there.

—Paula Gunn Allen

A RECOGNITION

My brother beside me
rides his new blue Corona Mark III
like Thunder rides the clouds; his
straight haired long eyed children ride
with him, straight and sure, looking
right ahead, on the freeway
going east.

Yesterday some guy told me Indians
are only human, just like whites: they
murdered buffalo wastefully in old times, drove
herds over cliffs and took
only warm livers, or tongues, to eat.
And Indians put Pampers on their papooses,
he said, and television antennas on their pueblos.
They pave the reservation, plumb the square,
just like whites. No Indians left now,
he smirks, and none before.

But still,
my brother beside me rides straight,
sure of his own place in Things
even at 70 miles an hour, in 5 o'clock traffic
on the freeway, going east.

—Paula Gunn Allen