

A Poem From Boulder Ridge · *James Galvin*

The skeleton of a tepee stood on Boulder Ridge in the winter of 1950. The first year Lyle wintered on Sheep Creek with his brothers, sister and mother was 1939 and the dried elk hides still hung from the lodgepoles like the shirt of a starved man. A wind was eating his clothes. Rain licked the bones clean.

In the year I was born it fell and was covered by branches. By now it has sunk into the earth like goose down into snow.

A family of renegade Utes had left the reservation and come home to hunt where their fathers had taught them hunting. They died in the first winter, but I still feel them here, perhaps in the wood of an old ponderosa, their faces grown into pine bowls: round eyed, round mouthed masks. Lyle's family is here too, who fell from him one after another.

Lyle's mother was a water witch for arrowheads. She showed the children where to look, near the petroglyphs on Sand Creek, or at Bull Mountain Spring. We found a few chips and scrapers, but the perfect points seemed to grow beneath her fingers as she stooped to pick them up. She peered into them and turned them over like names.

She said you have to listen to find a good arrowhead. It lies on top of the gravel and hisses with patience. You must look with eyes like flint. You pick it up, almost touching the hand that held it last, that gave it flight. You turn it over in your palm. It is like opening the door to a warm house. Someone is passing through it as if it were made for him, as if he made it.