



11-15-2007

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Recommended Citation

Cooperman, Robert (2007) "William Eagle Feather Flees Gold Creek with the Widow Burden," *Westview*: Vol. 26 : Iss. 2 , Article 34.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol26/iss2/34>

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William Eagle Feather Flees Gold Creek with the Widow Burden

by Robert Cooperman

I crept up to her cottage,
saw her lanterned-silhouette,
packing for a widow's lonely life
Back East, leaving us both empty
as a medicine bag white soldiers spill,
laughing at Ute superstitions.

Panther silent, I stole in;
one look and she was in my arms,
then we were away, her stooping
for a sack under a floorboard.

Safely up the mountain,
she showed me that pouch.
"My husband's ghost," she whispered,
letting wind scatter the gold dust
like his soul that'll never find
the Land of Plentiful Game.

We couldn't stop laughing:
joy pure as spring winds blowing
the last winter snows away.
She kissed me, again and again,
night shimmering in the emerald robes
whites call "Northern Lights."

We were snug in that hideout:
between kissing and loving,
we ciphered our path away
from her white life, forever.

