

My Nebraska
By Mackenzie Welch

My Nebraska is has been forgotten in the vastness of the world,
But I would like to show it to you.
It cannot be described with numbers in a book, only familiarity.
This land bears the marks of time,
Sculpting earth and people.

Nebraska is the first of the month.
When legendary warriors and dancers flood Walmart's cold tile,
Where European civilization has brought obesity and social breakdown.
The former masters of the plains are thrown green slips of paper;
Filling gaping holes with fast food and plastic.
A proud culture nearly extinguished.

But here too is where Crazy Horse drew his last breath.
At Fort Robinson, between that barrack and green field.
Here still is that fighting spirit,
Working to regain what has been lost.

My Nebraska is far from a flat, unbroken prairie.
Here we careening down steep hills on broken sleds,
Letting shrieks trail out behind us,
Tumbling in powdered snow.
Pine Ridge slopes surpass the magic of Disney.
These snowy ridges require only a sled.

The sunset eludes description.
Hues of orange and red flood the skyline,
With ripples of purple woven within.
An idyllic painting comes to life, instilling awe and renewing hope.
No smog mars this perfect horizon.

The Badlands protrude from native grasses,
Where ridges of hardened mud form miniature mountain ranges.
Loose dirt tumbles beneath greedy fingertips and striding feet,
Sliding down walls of soil so carefully sculpted,
By years of rain and wind.

My generation dwells in little enclaves of technology,
Roaming the streets in beasts of steel.
We often ignore our Nebraskan landscape,
Unable to appreciate the wonders around us;
Claiming none exist.
We are wrong.