

10-1-2011

Ulm Pishkum Buffalo Jump

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Recommended Citation

Morris, Wilda (2011) "Ulm Pishkum Buffalo Jump," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 33: No. 1, Article 68.
Available at: <http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol33/iss1/68>

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Ulm Pishkum Buffalo Jump

Wilda Morris

Black-tailed prairie dogs
stand in sunlight above dark burrows,
scramble between prickly pear cacti,
bark their bird-like call.

Two pronghorn butt heads.
Others nibble prairie grass.
A lone rabbit bounds away,
takes cover behind sage.

I walk in reverence. My shoes
touch ground hallowed by moccasins
of Crow, Blackfoot, Kootenai,
Shoshone, by eight ancient tribes.

For hundreds of years, their eyes
looked out on this same broad plain
from this high square butte whose colors
change with shifting light.

They saw the rugged mountains
on the far western horizon,
the deep canyon of the Missouri.
They held this land in their hearts.

Hundreds of thousands of bison
gathered to eat the sweet grasses.
With partnership, strategy, agility
men drove herds off this cliff.

They thanked the Great Spirit
with song, drum and dance
for meat, hide and bone,
for river, land, and sky,

for the feast
and those who feasted,
for all creatures
who shared this land.