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Circle Dance of the White Buffalo

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No eagles flew on the first new day of 1889. Prairie grasses lay rutted in waste behind wagons of land claimers. Silver mining creeks reeked of dead trout.

Brown pine needles abandoned branches where buffalo stampeded to rocky abyss. Dark storms encircled the world as a dishonored sun crouched behind the moon.

In the red butte lands beyond the mountains Wakova, a Paiute shaman, knew how to harden the sweat in his hand to ice, loosen skies to drown a drought,

summon gale winds from distances. Wakova watched for answers in the messiah-realm of light. The spirit dance came to him in troubled trance as a primal buffalo winter-white hide aglow like a sun, amber hooves pummeling a black sky. Dance in a circle, its message imprinted on the mind of the medicine man. All First Peoples were called to unite, give up war and in-fighting to pound the ground in dance beneath the sky of five straight days. Pale men, threatened, called it Ghost Dance and would not abide the Lakota who practiced, in honest faith, the dance that would bind the people to their ancestors, restore the grasses, bring bison and wild game back to the plains, return first verdancy.

It would be a scant two years until they merged with earth at Wounded Knee.