

**“first there is the word
the word is the song”**

Notes

1

north by south, west from east
an invisible but historical line
cuts across the valley's lives
sharp like bloodlines

2

across the street nearly mute
an old woman moans alone
inside the Buckhorn saloon
cowboys drink up and stomp

3

long ago black bears
sang round our lodge fires
tonight they dance
alive through our dreams

4

in chipped and tattered
weavings of a willow basket
the voice of an ancient age
dreaming of breath

5

deep within
a feather in the sky
foam on clear water
Tayko-mol!

—William Oandasan