

Sacred Hills

Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people.

Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove

Has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished . . .

The very dust upon which you now stand responds more lovingly to their footsteps than to
yours

Because it is rich with the blood of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of the
sympathetic touch.

Even the little children who lived here and rejoiced here for a brief season
Still love these somber solitudes and at eventide they greet shadowy returning spirits.

And when the Red Man shall have perished, and the memory of my tribe

Shall have become a myth among the White Men,

These shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe.

And when your children's children think themselves alone

In the field, the store, the shop, upon the highway

Or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone . . .

At night, when the streets of your cities and villages are silent,

And you think them deserted,

They will throng with the returning hosts

That once filled and still love this beautiful land.

~ from Yellowstone Country by Richard Phillips

(attributed to Chief Seathl)