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## Teepee Rings

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## TEEPEE RINGS

(For the old ones, for Stephen)

Many  
stone circles sink slowly in the earth,  
this bluff along the Missouri,  
dried cow chips now,  
thunderheads for a hundred miles.  
Find a flake big as your thumbnail,  
given back.  
Stone hammers, battered at both ends,  
fit the hand smooth as river water.  
And a big grindstone, stained red berries,  
or clay.

Sit in this stone circle.  
Ancient people scatter along the bluff.  
Stone circles sink in the earth.  
This wind and the antelope do them no harm.  
This sun and small cactus, no harm.  
Touch old hands that held these stones,  
held grindstone, held scraper, held cutting stone  
and pounder—  
held the meat and berry and seed bodies.  
They are gone,  
yet this sky contains them,  
this vast, blue sky filled with wind.  
These red ants carrying grains of rock contain them,  
this dusty sage,  
that buzzing-yellow-diamond-beauty,  
moving like lava in the river-brush.  
Touch their fingers, touch their hands.

*Roger Dunsmore*

Touch the mouth of their hunger  
in the belly of these smooth stones.