

My Grandpa Chief Standing Bear

Cliff Taylor

The consciousness of Chief Standing Bear linked up to the Great Spirit, like fumes rising from his head in the night. All their poorly protected feet crunching together in the flickering snow; starlight coating them all. A father changing history for every Indian living upon this land recently renamed America because of a request whispered from his dying son's lips: bury me where our people are buried, not here. Standing Bear trekking onward with his relatives; 'escapees'; 'wards of the state'; 'savages.' Can you see all the spirits that walked with them as they suffered frostbite, as they prayed their way home? They stop and rest in a small stretch of trees, actually laughing some, making the smallest fire to get warm. Standing Bear sees his boy running along a riverbank back home and without opening his mouth, without blinking his eyes, quietly, he speaks to him and says, "I promise."