

The Miracles That Didn't Come

Beside the bitter water lay bison skulls,
Rancid pools stalked by carrion birds;
Water, stale and green blanketed,
Promised no healing, but death.

Pioneers passed the pools
Watching for an Elisha.¹

Food ran short. No culinary skills
Could compensate for nothing. Birds
Ate more. A pall of hunger blanketed
The camp, stalked by death.

Looking for their provisions,
They waited for an Elisha.²

Sallow children, skin tight to their skulls,
Strained against the air. Like tiny birds
Their heads bobbed loose in the blankets
Until they fell into death—

Buried on the trek by parents
Who wished for an Elisha.³

—Sally T. Taylor

¹2 Kgs. 2:19–22.

²2 Kgs. 4:7.

³2 Kgs. 4:32–37.