

## Ellen Dooling Reynard – Two Poems

### Montana

The mountains remember to watch over this hill  
where my parents lie. Over the years,  
three sisters, one brother, and my husband have joined their rest.

Blue-shouldered and white-peaked, the giants look down,  
faithful to their task, uncaring in their majesty,  
while an eagle screams, then dives to snatch a gopher.

The wind whispers each inhale, sighs each exhale through the lodgepole pines.  
In the meadow below, the creek winds around the hill's base,  
so clear you can see trout dart through the water like errant thoughts.

In the shade of its elderly ancestor, baby sagebrush dares to grow;  
from the branches of the dying white pine, cones drop like a waterfall.  
Carried by snowmelt and May rain,

deer droppings, bear scat, and cow manure feed  
wildflowers' young roots. Elephant's head, buttercups,  
shooting stars paint the moist earth purple and yellow.

In late June when spring's melt gives way to stone-hard earth,  
wildflowers wither, parched by the sun. On chiseled granite,  
lichens spread to cover my mother's name.

I pick up rocks, gritty with warm dust, to fill the badger's hole  
near my husband's grave. A breeze bites my cheek with the prickle  
of snow from mountains that never sleep.

### Old Age

These are the best years when it is no longer  
necessary to prove anything to anyone  
when it is safe to let go and enjoy  
the free fall from obligation to exploration

everything past is yet to be discovered  
in memory's watchful reconsideration  
this moment is yet to be savored when we step  
onto the slippery rocks of an unknown passage.

Leave it to the young to ford new crossings climb  
higher dive deeper know the unknowable so we  
old ones might step out into a new world as immigrants  
hungry for opportunity thirsty for life yet to be lived

**Ellen Dooling Reynard** spent her childhood on a cattle ranch in Jackson, Montana. Raised on myths and fairy tales, the sense of wonder has never left her. A one-time editor of *Parabola Magazine*, and co-editor of *A Lively Oracle: A Centennial Celebration of P.L. Travers, Creator of Mary Poppins* (Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation, 1999), her poetry has been published by *Lighten Up On Line*, *WestWard Quarterly*, *Inscape*, and *Current Magazine*. She is now retired and lives in Nevada City, California where she continues to write fiction and poetry.