

"Echoes in the Mist: Pacific Northwest Poems"

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Introduction: Unearthing the Ghosts of the Past

The Pacific Northwest, with its rugged landscapes and storied history, holds a unique power to captivate the imagination. Beneath the surface of its picturesque towns and bustling cities, echoes of the past reverberate, calling forth the ghosts of bygone eras.

In this collection, we venture into the haunted corners of the region, unearthing the spectral remnants of tragedies, triumphs, and the indomitable human spirit. From the cruel deceptions of a so-called "wellness" sanitarium to the rise from the ashes of a devastating fire, these poems bear witness to the layers of history that have shaped - and continue to shape - the Pacific Northwest.

In "Starvation Heights," we confront the chilling true story of Dr. Linda Hazzard, whose twisted fasting "cures" led to the deaths of her unsuspecting patients. The rhythmic repetition of numbers and the vivid, gritty imagery transport us to the scene of this medical horror, forcing us to reckon with the darkness that can lurk beneath the veneer of respectability.

Shifting to the urban heart of the Northwest, "The 1889 Rebirth" captures the dramatic transformation of Seattle, as the city rose from the ashes of a catastrophic fire to become a thriving metropolis. The poem's structure mirrors the cyclical nature of destruction and renewal, echoing the resilience that has long defined this region.

We then venture to the historic town of Port Gamble, where "Shadows of Port Gamble" reveals the restless spirits that haunt its buildings, unable to relinquish their hold on the past. The numbered stanzas build a sense of foreboding, as we're drawn deeper into the town's uneasy coexistence with its ghostly inhabitants.

Finally, in "Layers of Northern State," we confront the abandoned Northern State Hospital, a crumbling relic that bears witness to the region's troubled mental health history. The poem's structure mirrors the architectural layers of the building, each number a mark of the past that refuses to be silenced.

Through these poetic explorations, we unearth the complex legacies that linger in the Pacific Northwest - the triumphs and tragedies, the forgotten lives, and the spirits that refuse to be extinguished. In doing so, we are challenged to grapple with the weight of history and our own relationship to the phantoms that dwell within the landscapes we inhabit.

Welcome to the "Echoes in the Mist" - a collection that invites you to confront the ghosts of the past, and to consider how their reverberations shape the present and the future of the Pacific Northwest.

Starvation Heights

11 days
She forced them to fast
Vegetable broth, the only repast

Williamson, the elder, succumbed first
Withering away, her body cursed
By the quack's cruel, calorie-starved thirst

But Dora, the younger, managed to flee
Her sister's hollow eyes, she could not see
Escaped Starvation Heights, body finally free

Yet Hazzard, unbowed by the damning trial
Continued her twisted, murderous style
Peddling "fasting cures" for mile after mile

In Olalla she'd practice, that wretched place
Where death came slow, with agonizing grace
To all who fell under her cucumber-water embrace

How many more souls would she consume?
This monster in human form, forever doomed
To feed her dark hunger, leaving only tombs

No matter her crimes, her twisted fame
Dr. Death, they would christen her malign name
As Starvation Heights became her gruesome claim

The 1889 Rebirth

8-6-1889

Seattle burned, reduced to cinders
Ash blanketed the ravaged land

But from the smoldering ruins
A phoenix would rise again
A city reborn, forged in the flames

1,000 buildings, gone in a single day
Swept away in the blaze
Nothing left but charred debris

Yet upon the blackened foundations
New walls would soon be raised
A metropolis to eclipse the old

Today, intrepid tourists explore
The subterranean pathways
Where history lies buried underfoot

Stepping through the spectral city
Beneath the gleaming towers above
The past still clings to the shadows

8-6-1889 - never forgotten
When Seattle died, only to be resurrected
Ashes giving birth to a grander destiny

Shadows of Port Gamble

1886, the town's golden age
When the mill hummed with industry's rage
But a darkness soon began to pervade

125 years of eerie tales
Restless spirits, never to unveil
The horrors that lay beyond the veil

3 buildings, each with a sinister past
Where the dead refuse to be the last
To walk the halls, their presence steadfast

The general store, where lights flicker and fail
Whispers echo, a mournful wail
Trapped souls, forever bound to this vale

The hotel, where guests disappear without a trace
Vanished in the night, leaving no face
To grace the registers, just spectral lace

The mortuary, where the dying once lay
Now a museum, but some refuse to go away
Shadows dance, refusing to decay

Port Gamble, a picturesque town by day
But when night falls, a different sway
As the restless dead refuse to obey

125 years of haunting and strife
These buildings hold the weight of lost life
Echoes of a history, forever rife

1886 to the present day
The shadows linger, unwilling to sway
Haunting Port Gamble, come what may

Layers of Northern State

1 building stands where the mist rolls deep,
Where shadows of lost ones endlessly creep.

2 hands bound in darkness, unseen and cold,
Grasping at time, stories left untold.

3 floors rise, crumbling under weight,
Of memories tethered to a locked iron gate.

4 walls whisper, secrets thick as night,
Lamenting the souls who've faded from sight.

5 thousand steps echo down empty halls,
The groans of the past linger on peeling walls.

6 restless spirits wander at dawn,
Searching for pieces of lives long gone.

7 hundred rooms where voices once cried,
In silence now, where they lived and they died.

8 windows shattered, eyes to the past,
Reflecting faint visions that were never meant to last.

9 nameless graves lie under the earth,
For those forgotten, stripped of their worth.

10 shadows deep, layers stacked high,
In Northern's silence, old ghosts lie.

Each number a mark, each step a scar,
Etched in the bones of walls that mar,
The hushed Northern State, where cold winds moan,
In the silence of stone, no soul is alone.