



In the PINES

By T. Lee Brown

Writing my own verse

My girl, my girl, don't lie to me! Tell me where did you sleep last night! In the pines, in the pines! Where the sun don't ever shine! I did shiver the whole night through

When *The Nugget* asked me to start a new column, my husband suggested I call it "In the Pines." I laughed and agreed. I'd been involved with a couple events using the phrase, like Writing in the Pines.

I've long loved the song. It's dark and sticky like molasses, like pitch. Maybe you know the classic Leadbelly version, or Nirvana's famous MTV Unplugged set.

Maybe you know the other big branch of this shadowy American tree, the "longest train I ever saw" songs popularized by Bill Monroe and Dolly Parton, filled with lonely "hoooo-hoooo"ing:

I asked my captain for the time of day! He said he threw his watch away

My favorite versions are in the Leadbelly tradition. It isn't clear what, exactly, is going on in the pines. Wandering lost? Prostitution?

Tell me where did you get that pretty little dress! And those shoes that you wear so fine?! I got my dress from a railroad man! And my shoes from a driver deep in the mine

Some versions, her husband's been decapitated by a train. Other versions, it's her father.

His head was found in a driving wheel! But his body never was found

The Ellison clan's version of the song, circa some hundred years ago, tells of a young Georgia girl raped by a soldier. It's his head on the railroad tracks this time.

And the girl? She flees to the comforting anonymity of the pines.

My girl, my girl, where will you go?! I'm goin' where the cold wind blows

I came to Sisters Country sick all over. The ponderosas provided a place of shadow and solitude. Where darkness and mystery lie? There lies the potential for transformation. There I began to heal, physically and spiritually.

I picture the Georgia girl undergoing a mythopoetic underworld journey in her pines.

Race issues cling to the song's lineage, which includes versions titled "Black Girl." To those issues I bring only my privileged, white-lady consternation about cultural appropriation.

Gender issues? They're here, too. The person being interrogated in this song is always female.

I grew up during the 1970s and '80s, wearing my pink glitter T-shirt that read "Girls Lib." Theoretically, the existence of that shirt means I am a fully liberated woman in an equal society. "Anything you can do, I can do better," as the "Free to Be You and Me" song exulted.

Out here in a little place I like to call Reality, that childhood fantasy doesn't play out. Gender equality is still a new idea, hastily slapped over millennia of keepin' women in our place.

Sometimes I like being in my place. I love cooking meals from scratch and hanging out the laundry, caring for my menfolk, spending time with kids.

Other times, though, I get uppity. I grew up reading the same books and watching the

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Fair loaded with experiments, demos

"The science of today is the technology of tomorrow," said physicist Edward Teller.

This year's Sisters Science Fair is loaded with scientific experiments, demonstrations, competitions and much more to steer us into the technology of tomorrow. The fair will be held at Sisters High School Saturday, March 16 from noon until 4 p.m. and everyone is invited to come and experience the fascinating science of today and tomorrow.

St. Charles Medical Center will educate about healthy eating habits and will bring information about intriguing health careers. They will also bring their resuscitation dummy to teach or refresh knowledge about the correct method of resuscitation in the event we are witness to a person who has stopped breathing or has no heartbeat.

Sisters High School biology teacher Rima Givot will have plenty of activities to keep everyone enthralled with the science of today and technology of tomorrow. Microscopes allow visitors to investigate the world in miniature and there will be plenty

of microscopes and students to interpret what is seen. As skills increase, visitors can move onto micropipetting, chemical pollutant research, or perhaps explore the fascinating mission of the RECON Asteroid Citizen Science Project.

Then they can move further along to the skies for some technology of tomorrow. OMSI will have a sophisticated planetarium and high school students will have telescopes set up. Outlaw Aviation and Sisters Airport will have a demonstration of their flight simulator starting at 1 p.m. The Rocket Club will offer an opportunity for students to build and launch rockets at the high school. If this seems too astronomical for you, then head over to participate in the paper airplane contest. It's a fun challenge open to all ages to try their hand in folding, launching and flying the paper gliders that originated in ancient China.

The world of critters will not be forgotten, with an exhibit on the migration of mule deer in Sisters Country from Project Animal Migration (PAM). They will

be showing movies every half hour so be sure to check out their schedule. Then make sure to learn about the evolution of horses at an exhibit from COCC along with a captivating display of fossils. Mike Reile, from the Sisters Ranger District, will have a fish exhibit that includes live fish.

The SciArt Contest challenges students to use their imaginations and "find the art in science." Stop and see a display of elementary, middle and high school entries and marvel at the creativity and inspiration of these potential scientists of tomorrow.

Once again, the Design, Construct and Compete (DCC) Contest will take over the high school gym and this year the elementary students will be racing balloon cars, and middle and high school students will participate in a complicated and challenging tennis ball launch. Cash prizes will be given to the winners, so don't miss out on this challenge.

To find out more about the Sisters Science Fair visit the Sisters Science Club website at sistersscienceclub.org.

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