

# Coulee Kids

TEGAN DALY

We rode the winding hilltops out

to warehouse parties on the ridge where driveways were entire roads  
of gravel rumbling undertire. Sometimes in the winter,  
if it snowed, we'd be stuck, talking till sunrise,  
then piling three or four deep  
in a bed.

We were not yet cautious of our form, of skin,  
of strumming another human's breath. Watching cartoons ill the sun warmed  
the ice enough to gain traction. And Annette was everyone's  
other mom, stirring steaming vats of oatmeal on the stovetop,  
attentive to our teenage sorrows.

"Listen to your heart of hearts," she'd say, gesturing across the smoky coils of American Spirits.

We strove to mis-fit.  
We sewed our own clothes,  
died our hair and went to  
punk shows,  
protests and  
Buddhist meditations.  
We came home  
to politics and poetry,  
woodstove and astrology.

And in the summer we'd be out  
at Bloomingdale swimming hole  
or Star Valley,  
skinny-dipping  
or spelunking,  
smoking pot, knowing we were lucky.  
Barefoot in the vegetable garden, minimum wage at the secondhand store.  
Strapping the family canoe to the rooftop.

Farmer artists, we breathed watercolor. We painted the toilets blue one spring.  
Our parents' children, we rolled up our sleeves. Dramas in three acts.  
In our heart of hearts, we were tragic comedies.

We foraged sugar-sweet icicles dripping from maple trees.

