

Loren Eiseley, the well-known author, is Curator of Early Man at the University Museum. This poem "Flight 857" is re-

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Nosing in through a blizzard over Denver
 at thirty thousand feet
 I think what the earth covers at Lindenmeier there far away to the north
 those men we never found
 of ten millennia ago
 but still
 finding the heavy-headed
 beasts of the gone time, finding
 in the end
 how short one's own existence,
 one pauses.

I suppose, beyond the low clouds and the snowfields,
 lie the marks of the trenches where forty years ago we dug
 and we found them, found
 the Ice Age long-horned bison,
 the deadly point buried still
 in the massive vertebra.

We proved something;
 they write about it in books now
 but that lost doorway of snow
 through which the hunters were enticed to venture
 will eventually
 close behind us also.

Staring north through the falling flakes,
 the hills invisible,
 I think just once of the moment
 when the fluted chalcedony
 dropped into my hand
 but really
 I know now
 it should never have been resurrected
 any more than these wheels and wings and electronic voices
 should ever again be lifted
 from oblivion.

I hope they do not find us:
 the point should remain in the vertebra,
 the offering by the dead child in the cave,
 the pterodactyl in the slate,
 the poet in the lost book,
 the singer as song in the grass.

Why must we usurp
 the autumn leaf's prerogative
 or the cancellations of running water
 or the erasures of the dust?

Like the hunters, we will leave deadly slivers of glass
 where they left flint,
 the metal will oxidize.

We will be dangerous if found
 by anything wiser
 than a field mouse.
 I hope he will take it upon himself to betray no secrets
 nor resurrect even
 that little artifact
 the mousetrap
 lest it be

disastrously reactivated.
 It would take a glacier to pulverize us completely to chalk dust,
 but even at Lindenmeier
 the hunters had the grace to tiptoe
 away with the last mammoth.

We never found them,
 only their flints.

So be it forever
 with us
 and all those who come after.
 Amen.