

# Dear Spencer Hot Springs

David Fenimore

I'm passing by tonight, giving you a two-fingered wave!  
Can you see our headlights across the Big Smoky like  
Slow-motion meteors heading east on the Loneliest Road?  
Hey, Spencer! First time we met was 40 years ago!

By my second visit that concrete bathhouse had vanished,  
And we could steam our bodies pink, naked and unashamed  
In dawn's early light, Toiyabes towering a mile above us  
Hiding and seeking through the wind-whipped sulfurous mist.

Another time: pickups parked by pools, RVs beached, careless  
Bottles and cans scattered like casual obscenities. We skedaddled,  
Over Pete's Summit to Potts in Monitor Valley, there neck-deep  
In hot water, frost biting hair, wild horses grazing close by.

One night, after fresh tracks down Kingston Canyon,  
And drinks at the Lucky Spur, we shared your cowboy tub  
And a cold Coors with two bearded buckaroos and a miner  
From Eureka: "Tell me that shit on your car ain't skis."

Remember when you hosted the whole cast of *Hamlet*?  
Reno college kids splashing and strumming guitars  
All night, daybreak puppy pile, beers for breakfast,  
Soaking away the heartache that flesh is heir to.

Last time, it was just us, and you. Then—dinner in Eureka,  
A prayer in passing for Louie's Lounge ("Where the Fun Is"),  
A bar fight at the Owl Club. We dodged that one, and down the street,  
Drinking at Jackson House, decided to go to Dublin. *Sláinte!*

I wonder what Paiute and Shoshone called you way back then.  
Not Spencer, that's for sure. Were you always a pool?  
Or just a trickling spirit of silence, stillness, and distance?  
Looking southward, the Earth curves, bare like our breasts, and honest.

David Fenimore, 11-14 Nov 2022