

Through the Eye of Raven – The Lost Patrol by Eric Shaffer

From the Sky Spirits haven, descended the black powerful Raven,
to care for the earth universe.
The wise Raven first waited, then the great Wolf he created,
granting spirits of powerful verse.
The Sky Spirits expressed, the need of a creature more blessed,
something he could adore.
In the great Raven's new plan, was the gallant creature called Man,
gifted with powers galore.

To Dawson four Mounties did go, the mercury sat near sixty below,
on the shortest day of the year.
The Gwich'in people did say, let us show you the way,
Spirit Helper is always near.
A sign the Raven did know, the police were foolish to go,
when the forest is cold silent and still.
It was a poor decision of man, not the Sky Spirits plan,
arctic blunders can cost and will.

The fifteen dogs with three sleds, the patrol forging ahead,
the snow-covered mountains in sight.
The trek half way done, three hundred miles they'd come,
deciding to rest for the night.
Amid the cold blowing storm, bannock off the fire was warm,
the last bacon turned with a knife.
The Mounties breath did freeze, in the cold polar breeze,
a reminder how precious is life.

In the grey light of dawn, their rations now gone,
find a route to the great Eagle Plains.
They explored several streams, a pass thru the mountains not seen,
lost - their search was in vain.
In a howling blizzard like storm, only fur robes to keep warm,
eating the dogs for food each day.
Raven's shrill cry, echoed in the cold night sky,
for their errors the Mounties now pay.

To feel sharp rib and bone, so thin these men have grown,
not even a dog to eat today.
The leather harness straps, the Mounties boiled to eat last,
in silence not a word to say.
The Mounties illusions to strive, they pray to survive,
hoping a miracle will appear.
The four now deathly ill, suffering frostbite and chills,
starving their end grows near.

On this clear starlit night, the powerful Raven in flight,
watched the shivering Mounties below.
In this survival game, life's last flickering flame,
as two lights no longer glow.
Flying low to the ground, the black Raven swooped down,
here Taylor and Kinney's snow-covered bodies lay.
With no energy left, they had succumbed to death,
the spirits now gathered to pray.

Carter starving with pain, had long hoped in vain,
for a fire to warm his soul.
On white relentless ground, a lonely whispering sound,
as the devil Carter's life stole.
Fitzgerald a comrade and friend, right to the end,
witnessed Carter's last shallow breath.
Lost beneath an arctic sky, will Inspector Fitzgerald die,
a painful haunting starving death.

Deep snow on the ground, the great Raven circled around,
as Fitzgerald weak and stumbling fell.
Lying in graves of white snow, where the arctic winds blow,
the lost patrol's story history will tell.
As the aurora lit the night sky, through a buttonhole eye,
watching the earth universe is the Raven.
As dancing green light streamed down, in a crescendo of sound
the lost souls ascended to the Sky Spirits haven.