

*Bill Thorpe*

*August 25, 2016*

Dear Tom,

The golden season is now almost upon us. The season where one can hear winter's footsteps, the falling leaves of autumn. I speak to you now with truth for you have always had truth in your words to me. It would seem we are living in a time of weariness. A weariness driven by continual war, a cost which is disproportionately borne by our young native men and women. A weariness driven by summer riots that divides our national soul. We seem now to only honor swagger, bluster and division. Sadly we have been far too willing to excuse the merchants of money who have built their lives on the shattered dreams of others. Where is the grace? Where is the compassion?

I reached out to you because I had heard you were a warrior for native people and that you are a man who owns himself. But what is truly beautiful is what I came to know. I came to know that we have both lost our fathers, though in different ways. I came to know that the word Carlisle was deeply personal to both of us, though for different reasons. I came to know that as a young boy you believed life was joy. But you awoke as a man and saw that life is service. I came to know that we are not only native brothers but that by also being Irish we both have a sense of the tragic, which sustains us through the temporary periods of joy. It is this sense of loss and empathetic joy which now brings us together in the autumn and winter of our lives. It is this covenant of compassion between us that will sustain me as you proceed on your journey.

By your deeds you will have demonstrated that a life of service is joy and you can truly say of that life the Blackfeet words "Suu-kop-ee"... it is good.

Your pardner,

*William K Thorpe*