

To Lincoln Hills: Our Past, Our Present, Our Path Forward  
From Marcie, in love and legacy

Dear Lincoln Hills,

A century ago, three black visionaries—Edwin Regnier, Robert Ewalt, and Edmund McMahon—looked toward the Colorado sky and imagined liberation. They carved that dream into the mountain earth and gave it a name: Lincoln Hills.

They didn't just build a resort. They built a promise.

And Black families from Denver, St. Louis, Kansas City, Tulsa, and beyond—answered. We claimed parcels of that promise with our wages and our dreams. William Pitts, Winks Hamlet, and Dr. Clarence Holmes believed in you. So did the Hendersons, the Grices, the Caldwells. Teachers. Porters. Postal workers. Musicians. Elders. Children. We built cabins and campfires. We wrote ourselves into the land.

Winks Lodge—your beating heart—welcomed the greats: Lena Horne. Duke Ellington. Zora Neale Hurston. Langston Hughes. They didn't just perform—they exhaled. Here, they weren't "entertainers" or "Negro geniuses." They were simply—free.

Naomi and Melba Hamlet turned meals into memories. Obrey "Winks" Hamlet turned vision into place. Winks Lodge wasn't a retreat. It was a resistance strategy wrapped in jazz and joy—a sanctuary perched high above a world that too often denied us dignity.

Even our daughters found space here to become. Camp Nizhoni raised Black girls to believe the world was wide, and that they belonged in it. They studied the constellations—not just for science, but for signs of their own brilliance. The camp may have closed, but its spirit still stirs in your soil.

And yet, here is my truth:

I was born in Denver, yet I didn't know your name until adulthood—until a high school friend, Robert, brought it back to life for us all.

That absence is a loss all its own.

How could I have lived so close and never known the refuge beyond the city's noise? How could so sacred a place be hidden from so many, buried beneath the forgetting?

But now I know. And because I know, I will never let you go.

Today, we return—not in mourning, but in renewal.

Youth now walk your trails with journals, cameras, and questions. Elders return with tears and stories.

Artists gather to imagine new futures on ancestral ground.

Preservation is not nostalgia. It is justice.

To steward you is to repair what was taken, to amplify what was always ours, and to ensure this place endures—not as a relic, but as a living monument to Black landownership, cultural excellence, black joy, and resilience.

You are not a memory.

You are a roadmap.

A radical act of care made visible.

And as long as we are here—so are you.

With reverence and vision,

Marcie