Cascadian Zen:
Bioregional Writings
on Cascadia Here and Now
Volume II

"The Great Blue Heron and The Great Rainbow Trout Yogi in Phenomenal Space, Mental Space and The Space of Consciousness" (1979)

Eel River Watershed

Morris Graves

CASCADIAN Zen

bioregional writings on cascadia here and now

volume two

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The Ones That Count

for Peter Huse

Write a poem quick, before it gets away.
Once gone, a lovely sight is hard to catch again.
Su Dongpo, Winter Solstice (1071)

If you give it up now
you've given it up
forever. Crow
flies to top
of dead fir snag.
If you give it up, you give it up
and if you take it on
man you'd better be ready
'cause this old black bird's been around
a long time, yeah,
this
is the one that counts:
this one
you gotta catch
the sons of bitches
just right,
my friend Peter sz:

those
are the ones
that count.
That Black Bird
that
Charlie
Parker son
of a bitch, he's
the one'll
teach you
'bout
Thrivin' on the Riff.

Jordan Abel

Turns out there are a lot of people reading
T*he* L*ast of the* M*ohicans* and many of them,

at least on Goodreads,

appear to be American high school students.

Also, it turns out they really hate it.

But they don't hate it for the same reasons I do.

Many of them also appear to hate the book
because they think James Fenimore Cooper is
boring

and they can't stand his seemingly endless
descriptions of nature.

So, naturally,
I pulled out as many descriptions of land and
nature as I could from T*he* L*ast of the*
M*ohicans*

and I started writing over them, writing through them, writing around them, and writing with them.

E*mpty Spaces*, at least as it begins,

is an impurely conceptual project that both animates and reanimates Cooper's representation of land as *terra nullius*

but also calls into question my relationships —plural—to the land.

In E*mpty Spaces*, the land is described in concrete details.

There are hundreds of specific images that operate both individually and as pieces of a whole.

But they are part of an impossible whole.

The land, here, is ultimately a work of imagination, appropriation, and transformation.

As I reflect on this project, I often wonder what it means that I am writing a project about imagining land

when my own relationship to Nisga'a territory,

as it's addressed in the book,

is deeply fraught.

Is it possible that my deepest connection to
land comes through text?

Through imagination?

Through fiction?

If I've learned anything from Indigenous nationalism,

my relationship to the land should have been
formed through a connection to the land itself,

through family,

through community,

through Nisga'a knowledge,

Nisga'a language,

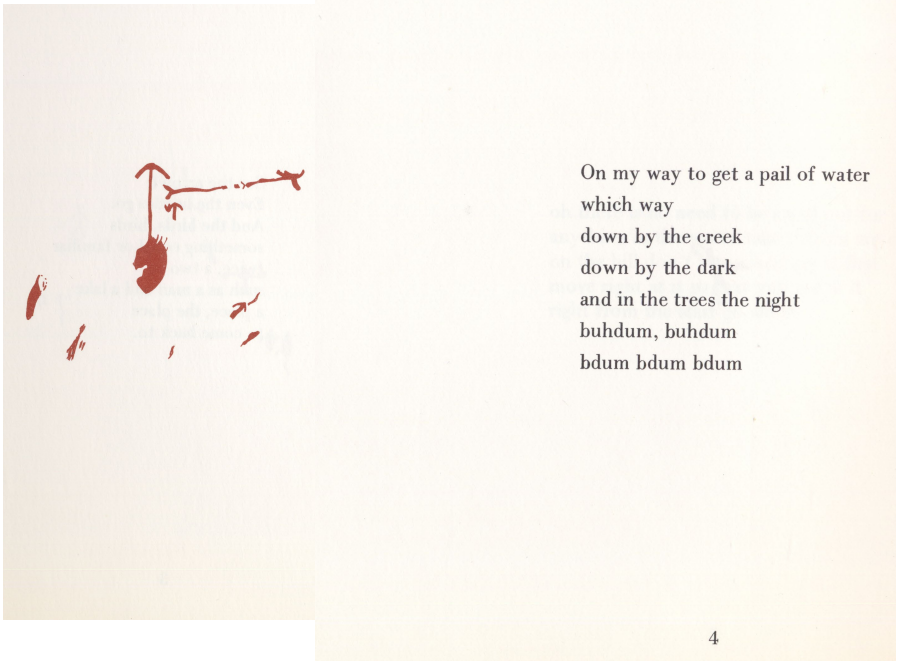
and Nisga'a world views.

But how do those who have been dispossessed
and severed from the land begin to think
through what land means to them?

On My Way to Get a Pail of Water

Water is such a natural and available reflection of its own meaning—particularly its improvisational possibilities—that it can function as a palimpsest for language. Perhaps this is why many writers have used it as a pivot to discuss poetry and poetics; we never seem to tire of finding use for it and, like many artists, I find it unavoidable as a basic element of my life and work. The mountains, trees, and coastlines of the BC Interior where I live are inundated with all forms of water, and it is a natural part of my conversations with the Earth.

Today, I'm trying to think about what this means for me while "on my way to get a pail of water." I previewed the lecture with this free-flowing description: words and water, poetry and rivers, repairing the riparian, exploring the ways in which water has operated as a basic unit of composition in my writing and as a primary element in poetic processing. The title is from a poem I transed from a rock pictograph, part of a series titled *Pictograms from the Interior of* BC.



Water's been my companion, literally, while growing up in the Columbia Basin, the source for this lecture. Since I've hummed my way back to the river, I've discovered, to my surprise, that my poetry bucket has been leaking for many years, but I was only marginally aware of it. I find it in drops and puddles throughout my writing; oceans, lakes, creeks, rivers. As I step back into the Columbia River, I have *déjà vu*, a feeling I have stepped into this river before; is it the same one? I realize now how the language of water accompanied the bio-text I struggled to articulate in a series of poems titled *Breathin' My Name with a Sigh* in the late seventies, a period when there occurred a national, if not a North American, turn toward a discourse around ethnicity and race.

I grew up in a Canada of the 1940s and fifties when there was no language to articulate my Chinese heritage, but in the late seventies and early eighties the shift in attention to sustaining a multicultural Canada generated

serious cultural and social reflection. The Japanese Canadian Redress Committee began its work and Joy Kogawa's novel *Obasan* recited to us the painful history of internment. I inserted myself into this discourse by seeking a sort of catharsis for my mixed-race identity through poetry. Suddenly, racialized sensibilities and language entered my national imagination.

Much of *Breathin' My Name with a Sigh* is also an address to my father, whose death in the sixties I had emotionally put aside. Now I see the title poem in *Breathin' My Name with a Sigh* elides identity, place, and the body with rivers and creeks, a water that is as local as who and where you are:

> I like the purity of all things seen
> through the accumulation of thrust
> forward especially the vehicle
> container maybe/or "thing" called body
> because time seems to be only it appears
> to look into the green mountain valleys
> or through them to the rivers & nutrient creeks
> *where* was never the problem animal is
> I still have a name "breathin' it
> with a sigh"

Peter Warshall in *Writing on Water* reminds us that, "Water creates an inescapable (and social) contract; our bodily plumbing is always linked to the biosphere's." I am surprised to discover "water" as part of that bio-text because it isn't something I choose to be part of; I just am. It's the bio, and the biospheric, and the bio-textual. It's an element of life, and language, that appears *as is*. Of course, water, the big water, is also frequently implicated in migration and diaspora:

> Are origins magnetic lines across an ocean
> migrations of genetic spume or holes, dark
> mysteries within which I carry further into the World

through blond and blue-eyed progeny father's fathers
clan-name Wah from Canton east across the bridges
still or could it all be lateral craving hinted
in the bioplasmic cloud of simple other organism
as close as out under the apple tree?

That ocean that my father and his father crossed from China, that "bridge" to Gold Mountain, is a current of the bio-story, the history, the *istorine*, that flows under the surface, deep and abstractly infinite. The colour of this ocean, as it touches the northwest coast of Canada, has brought with it a racial problem that I've challenged through my writing. Until I came to write this lecture, I hadn't noticed that water had always been a part of this, "as is," more particularly for this recent writing project, the literal and figurative Columbia River.

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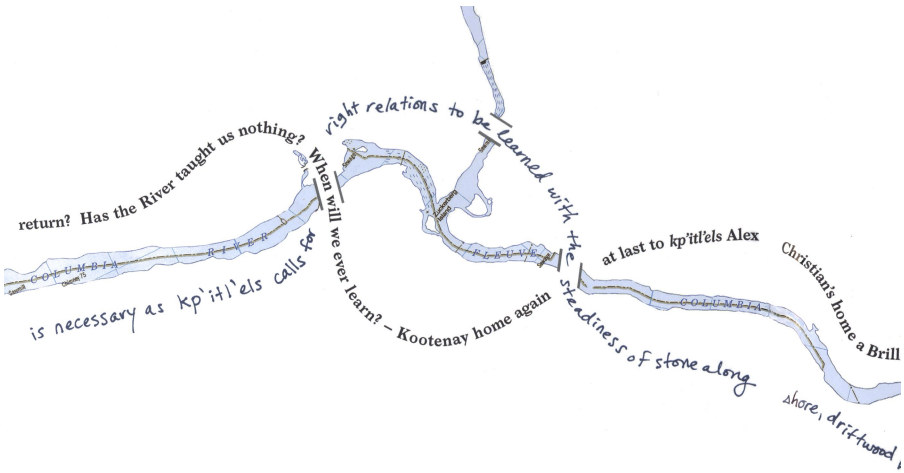
Several years ago, while I was serving as Parliamentary Poet Laureate, a local MLA proposed I write poetry to accompany an art show. The Columbia River Treaty was having its fifty-year assessment, so he had in mind to solicit photographs from students who lived along the Columbia, on both sides of the border, and display these in a gallery. He suggested, since I'm a poet from the Kootenays, that I augment the photos with poetry. Having lived along the Kootenay River for much of my life, I had always felt an affinity with the Columbia as Kootenay's twin since they share origin and confluence. I had other projects underway, so I declined. Eventually though, like an old sturgeon, I went for the bait. For the past four years I have been researching the Columbia and finding poetic sustenance in its narrative complications. Fortunately I've had the opportunity to collaborate with a group of painters, photographers, scholars, and other writers on an Emily Carr University project called "River Relations: A Beholder's Share of the Columbia River." One of the resulting productions is B*eholden:* A P*oem as* L*ong as the* R*iver,* a collaborative image-text poem published in 2018.

The poem addresses the confounding dynamics of border, nation, and treaty, the socio-political dimensions of place and names, colonization, dams, and salmon. It is a statement of geo-poetics and the creative undercurrent that surfaces in our liminal encounters with the landscape of creeks, ponds, lakes, and oceans. Poet and editor Rita Wong and I each wrote a text, aided by visual artist Nick Conbere. Nick created a replica of all 2,000 kilometres of the Columbia's meandering footprint manipulated into a horizontal 114-foot banner. Rita handwrote her poem on one shore of the river, and I keyboarded my text on the other, both starting at Canal Flats, the beginning of the river at the head of Columbia Lake. Every once in a while we crossed textual paths at a bridge or dam. Each of us spent time exploring the river in various stretches all the way to its mouth near Astoria, Oregon. We then spent several months writing our long poems along the river, not necessarily in conversation, but each with an eye on both shores, searching for a language that felt true to our own poetics.



I use the term "poetics" here not as the study of, or theory about, literature, but in its practical and applied sense referring to the tools designed, or located, by writers and artists to initiate movement and change. American poet Charles Bernstein usefully describes compositional poetics as "a

sort of applied poetic, in the sense that engineering is a form of applied mathematics." In B*eholden*, I've tried to work with, and into, a poetic language that comes not only from the river itself, but uses the compositional possibilities of the long poem form. The long poem has a somewhat singular history in Canadian literature. It was prolific among my generation of poets in the seventies and eighties, and Michael Ondaatje's and Sharon Thesen's anthologies of the Canadian long poem attest to its abundance.

There are several formal aspects of the long poem that have informed much of my own work. A major facet of its aesthetic is its resistance to closure, its desire to not end—the poem as a river. It also resists the closure in the syntactic unity of the sentence, thus affording a variety of syntactic constructions we can also locate in another hybrid form, the prose poem. These elements have been a major attraction for me, particularly informed by the improvisational possibilities of making poetry like making jazz. There is an intensity to playing language along the Columbia for 2,000 kilometres.

On my way to get a pail of water, I contemplated the meaning of the river, the kind of attention and cosmology available to the imagination, how I might "read" it literally and figuratively. The proposition of approaching the geographic, historical, political, and social complexities of a river of this magnitude is intimidating. On the surface it seems obvious that the river is nothing more than itself, but when we try to name it, from any angle, we soon realize how impossible it is to insert our perception into the deep time and space of which it's a part. Our means of measuring it seem meaningless. Presuming to name it is problematic.

One day Rita and I went into the Ktunaxa Band office in Windermere and ignorantly asked some of the staff for the Ktunaxa name of the river. The receptionist brought out a Ktunaxa dictionary and said they didn't have a name for the river, but here was the name for water: W*u'u*. We felt embarrassed we had, without thinking, adopted the colonizer's position of asking the Ktunaxa to give us something of theirs. We started to

understand naming is a proprietary action and the river might be more usefully viewed in its particularities. Geographically, Indigenous Peoples have been more attentive to the local than to the full expanse of what David Thompson and other explorers mapped as a fur trading and colonizing opportunity.

On my way to get a pail of water, I've tried to think about what the river means, both historically and now in the face of climate change. This is a rather philosophical reflection and for that I've turned to the Chinese Taoist classic *The Secret of the Golden Flower* for its phenomenological perception that "That which exists through itself is called Meaning," or "Tao," or "the Path," or "the Way." This remark opens a text on a Zen-like meditation based on breathing, or *qi*.

I've also recuperated sustenance from Charles Olson's poem "Place; & Names," a text that has been foundational since I first heard Olson read it at the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference. His poem provokes an intellectual exercise that is useful in reading the river, and in how it sees "place" as a "term in the order of creation."

> and that this is so
> for physical & experimental reasons of
> the *philosphia perennis*, or Isness
> of cosmos

That "Isness," it seems to me, is important to the process of perception, and in relation to the above-mentioned *qi* or "breath," to aligning the body in this process, a "proprioception."

> the crucialness being that these places or names
> be as parts of the body, common, & capable
> therefore of having cells which can decant
> total experience

The overwhelming complexity of this large river comes into focus for me with the notion that it can be measured "as is." This philosophical and poetic existential perception of the river as "itself" feels comfortable. It is a position that doesn't, as Rita might say, recolonize the river. Honouring the river as itself, in whatever particularity, is a notion shared by the Okanagan poet Jeanette Armstrong in her poem "Water is Siwlkw," a poem she presented at the 2006 UNESCO conference "Water and Indigenous Peoples." *Siwlkw* is a sacred word in Okanagan cosmogeny, and Armstrong's use of it to characterize water is useful to measure the river's meaning as itself. In writing "Beholden," as the Okanagan River joins the Columbia shortly after Grand Coulee Dam, I quote from Armstrong's poem, "Water is Siwlkw": "toward this knowing. that you. are the great River as is…." Yes, the river as the Isness of itself, the verb to be.

A little earlier along the river I located another sympathetic Indigenous voice as I passed the tributary of the Spokane River where I say, in B*eholden*, that I heard:

> Spokane poet Gloria Bird sing
> "what we owe, we owe"
> I feel stuck on this side of the river
> and can't get over that debt to equity ratio
> the shore reminds me of after all
> the talking's done and the memory fades
> this flat water doesn't need to listen
> to that thirst for nation
> and the repetitive hammering of the Grand Plan's gavel
> the thud of ambivalence that irrigates my thirst
> it's as if a lake would rather be a city
> don't let the names replace
> the diffuse reflection of intention
> could it really be as simple as out under the apple
> tree then don't stand on ceremony or bite your tongue

but remember to return those salmon bones
to the water
turning truth into a verb

Jeanette Armstrong's recognition of the "great River as is," and Gloria Bird's reconciliatory reminder that "what we owe, we owe," recognizes that the river's meaning is part of a "long understanding." Bird's poem "What We Owe" reminds us that the river is an "inheritance":

> In a tender fleshy place called inheritance, like an old wound healed over a small stone, begins this long understanding, the way the bones of sleek animals that fed generations belong to the river, are returned to those liquid beginnings to communicate our need to those living there. To the earth goes the innermost heart of the heart in which the essence of deer mingles with that of our ancestors in this continuum where what we owe, we owe, and pass on to our children.

This poetic response is temporal and situates the "Isness" of the river within the minute, truthful, and particular of some mysterious depth beneath, beyond, and before its reflective surface. In this way, any artistic response is an "aboutness." In writing alongside the river I've tried to articulate how the river's materiality, its embodiment, must be recognized and honoured. The poem is best understood as an improvised interpolation or some measure of the river's fact. Parallel to this 2000-kilometre stretch of water we've defined as a river, the poem must reflect the same innate characteristics; it must be unpredictable, uncontainable, erratic, evasive, assimilating into itself whatever it encounters—clay, stone, word.

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The Columbia River rises as Columbia Lake in eastern BC, just two kilometres from its major tributary the Kootenay River, and collects the water from about a fifth of its 670,000 square kilometres in Canada. It

continues its 2,000 kilometres run through Washington and Oregon to the Pacific Ocean. It is the fourth largest river in North America. Much of its basin in the US was created by the Missoula Floods at the end of the last ice age. It sustained a major fishery for Indigenous Peoples for thousands of years until the Grand Coulee Dam was built in the 1930s to provide the Pacific Northwest with hydroelectric power, irrigation, and flood control.

I had always sluffed off the Columbia River Treaty (CRT) between Canada and the US, ratified in 1964, as a political boondoggle from the early sixties. What possible meaning could that river have now after being plugged with fourteen dams and turning what had been a naturally dynamic highway for salmon into a series of placid reservoirs? Four of the river's fourteen dams constructed under this treaty are in Canada. The CRT was the political underpinning of the largest hydropower project in North America with the additional benefit of flood protection for the US. Enshrined in the treaty is the opportunity, after 2024, for this transboundary agreement to be either terminated or renegotiated. Essentially, the treaty fostered the building of storage and power dams, providing carbon-free renewable energy, flood control, and guaranteed irrigation primarily for Washington State agriculture.

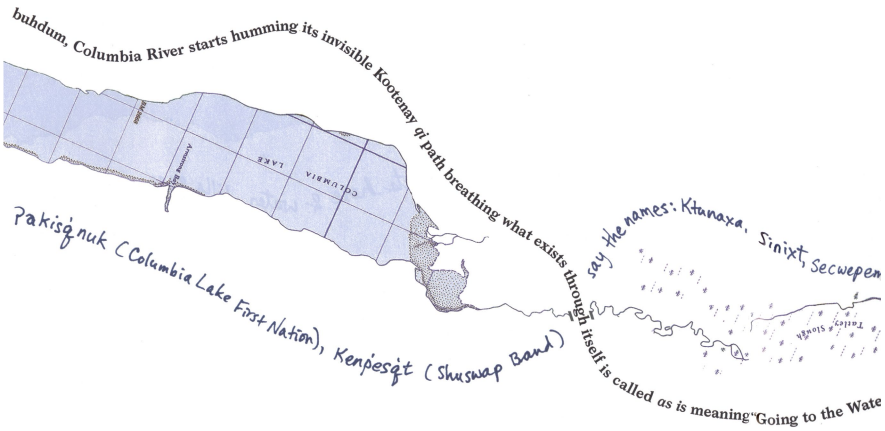
We now realize that the CRT failed to acknowledge the implications for reservoir development in areas that held high value for Canadian residents. The treaty overlooked the negative impact on fish and wildlife that would result from dam construction, and the need to manipulate reservoir levels to achieve reliable flood control. It also ignored the spiritual value Canadian Indigenous Peoples and US tribes place on the presence of salmon. Sacred sites would be inundated by reservoirs and the entire basin ecosystem, which local Indigenous Peoples see as a unified whole in their creation stories, would be threatened (*The Columbia River Treaty:* A *Primer*). The politics colouring this treaty from its development in the 1950s, in the name of "progress," to its current possible renegotiation, situate the river as a dynamic site for a wide range of social and cultural introspection.

One of the reasons I reconsidered the request to write poetry about the Columbia is I was shocked by the disturbing political and social history of the CRT fifty years after the fact. Fourteen dams had turned rivers and lakes into stagnant reservoirs:

> In order to construct the Treaty dams and reservoirs, BC permanently flooded a total of 110,000 hectares, resulting in the loss of 3,200 hectares of fertile agricultural land and 42,000 hectares of forest in the Kootenays, as well as displacement of a dozen small communities in which about 2,000 people lost their homes, primarily in the Arrow Lakes and Koocanusa reservoir regions—a somewhat ironic outcome given that this was done for the purpose of protecting US communities downstream from flooding.
>
> —*The Columbia River Treaty:* A *Primer*

I'm still confounded by the fact that this history occurred in the late sixties or early seventies while I was teaching at Selkirk College in Castlegar, situated at the confluence of the Kootenay and the Columbia Rivers, and yet at that time I paid little or no attention to the injustices wrought in the name of progress and electrical power. It's not that I wasn't interested in the "local"; my poetry has always aligned itself with place. My first book was titled *Lardeau*, situated at the north end of Kootenay Lake. Around that time, I published other books that engaged the "local," such as *Among, Tree, Earth*, and the aforementioned *Pictograms from the Interior of* BC, all attempts at locating a language that registered, among other things, where I live.

But, as Gertrude Stein says, "Let me recite what history teaches. History teaches." With some sense, perhaps, of reconciliation, I've come back to this river and its history. While I have been immersing in how to write *into* the Columbia, I have wondered if the world I lived in in 1970 was too close to see. Had I somehow been blinded by it? Ezra Pound claims poets are the "antennae of the race." Perhaps my antennae were broken.



As B*eholden* encounters the sad devastation of this region it seems the only way to write through this stretch is to turn to a more song-like, dirge-like, poetry. After moving past the Mica and Revelstoke Dams into the Sinixt territory of the Upper Arrow, I felt an anger about this "rape" of a region I considered home. The impact of the treaty on the environment, on Indigenous rights, on the orchards, dairy farms, and other valuable real estate that disappeared under the reservoir still causes ripples of resentment and injustice around the Arrow Lakes today.

whose house and who's home now Big Eddy says
to the logger who thinks from the heart
"Become like water my friend"
now heading home
I want to shout hello Grampa
goodbye cable ferry thanks for this name

Incomappleux Sinixt nk'mapeleks
thanks for washing out that logging road
and protecting the old-growth cedars
such nominative power
is worth more than the mathematics of extraction
Someone's village has become mud lake
Bull Trout's waiting for some silt-free water
How are ya blue camas
Shakin' in the dust Jes' call the wetland back
Find a River you can trust
Where are ya duckweed
You can't grow here anymore
The sloughs are gone
The birds have disappeared
Sang goodbye
to the cottonwood snow
The shore is sad and silent
Many dreams drowned in this reservoir
Using water this way is violent.
What's happened to the kokanee
The spawning channels flooded
Now the river's just a mirror
Of how our greed's cold-blooded
These Arrow Lakes filled up and up
and killed the estuaries of the creeks
flooded fields of grass
and drowned the orchards
submerged ancestral Sinixt graves
those people in the way declared extinct
(it's true)
Oatscott swamped old family farms old game trails
just a memory silted now and dried to dust at
drawdown Shelter Bay no shelter after all
this valley could be filled with love

oh lonely animal eyes at Caribou Point
blown up for a new road
so sing the blues to be this River washed in misery
loss and sadness not breathing deep
just silent nights alone how much you'll miss
the touch of salmon red
and sedge grass edge the churning of the M*into*
up to Arrowhead
(and then the burning too) yeh!
ain't this dam messed up your plan
to keep this spirit flowing with respect
Will the riparian ever be repaired?
Will the salmon ever return?
Has the River taught us nothing?
When will we ever learn?—
Kootenay home again at last to *kp'itl'els*
Alex Christian's home
a Brilliant place for reconciliation

On my way to get a pail of water I pass the mouth of the Pend Oreille and come to the border. For a river, of course, I'm neutral and I couldn't care less about this arbitrary boundary of the 49th parallel re-enforced by the 1846 Oregon Treaty. I just roll on. I don't think about how unique I am, bisected as a north-south river, compared to the eastern waterways, the Great Lakes, and the St. Lawrence, used as the NO TRESPASS sign between two pieces of property. I hardly notice that Canada, that apple of John A. MacDonald's eyes, is celebrating its 150th birthday in 2017. Yet, because I'm presently under the renegotiable scrutiny of the CRT, and because the discourse around reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous Peoples is at the forefront, I slow down, briefly, to reflect on the roots of my identity as "river," derived from the Latin *rivalis*, meaning "rival," and reminding us of the militancy so frequently signified by water and rivers.

tainted as the signature of Treaty
and all the forked tongues whispering
Doctrine of Discovery Not a rival but a River
Not a period but a bullet
Not a war but a workforce
Not a treaty but a *trait d'union*
Not the floods of '48 but Be Prepared
Not the International Joint Commission
but the Army Corps of Engineers
"Not Waving But Drowning"
Not a list but a listening
Dear Mourning Dove thank you
for the history
thanks for sharing your Salishan story
while standing in the doorway
not doing any harm
you show this River as a map
of white and black
No Trespass signs no treaty
can talk its way out of
but a River's there for crossing

The pail of water has turned a bit murky. A river always comes with rules. If they'd called it the Columbia River *Alliance* maybe the rules would have been different. All that ambiguity and ambivalence around notions of great nations, colonization, white supremacy, and so forth, force the poem to locate its critical agency.

The poem seeks to parse the treaty talk as it meets Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake, a large reservoir created in 1941 by the impoundment of the Columbia River and the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington State, named for the US president during the construction of the dam. Covering 323,749 square km, it stretches about 240 kilometres from the Canada-US border to Grand Coulee Dam, with 970 kilometres of shoreline.

so from the River's mouth comes treaty talk
a scat song of high modernity riffing
to a muffled humming under water
while we contemplate a snag in the grand plan
no it's a logjam full of indefinite articles
a flume or a flame of intention to remind us
that it is the idea that is to be perfect
not the boat ramps of recreation
on the shores of the reservoir
is the reservation bitter
General Allotment Act bitter Executive Order

Turtle Island bitten by its own rapids
north of O-Ra-Pak-En Creek
trickling into Franklin Coulee's enterprise
a Corkscrew into the Canyons of intention
the fork of tongue talking treaty—
how we gonna dislodge the fishing weir of nation
long enough to regain sincerity

Could the CRT, after initially ignoring Indigenous fishing rights and burial sites, learn anything from the spirit of treaty-making from Indigenous Peoples? Could we not make an effort "to practice a poetics of listening as listening," as Edmonton poet Christine Stewart admonishes? She expands upon her long poem "Treaty Six from Under Mill Creek Bridge" with a useful footnote quoting Sylvia McAdam, co-founder of Idle No More, who writes, "There is a difference between talking treaty and LIVING treaty in the spirit and intent that it was meant to be. Nations have laws; laws that are unwritten in the European writing are called customary laws. Indigenous *nehiyaw* laws are 'written' in the landscapes of the hills, the rocks, the waters, everything in the land tells of our history and our laws." Stewart writes:

> —in the dark and in our unknowing, humbly and actively attentive to the land, to the work and words of Indigenous individuals, communities and nations, across Canada, across Turtle Island, respectfully acknowledging our relations and working to fulfill our obligations: *miyo wakohtowin* and *miyo wichitowin*.

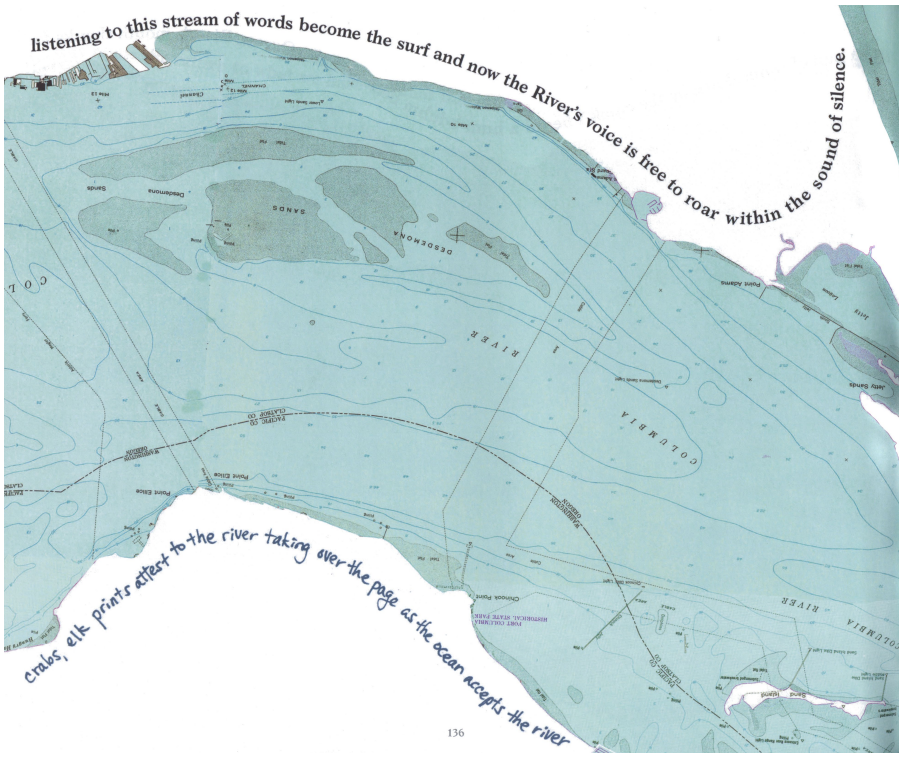
Earlier she writes:

> To hear might be to see with an ear turned and tuned to the telling of material resonances. To listen might mean to locate the hum of reciprocations, to locate the relations that bind us, like the compelling acoustics of a creek bed, that we could return to.

As I, also, am compelled to return to the creek, the creek to which I'm going to get a pail of water. On my way I listen to the silence of myself, that silent music at the heart of thinking, the silence beneath the surface, and, a little past Portland, at Astoria, I try to pay attention to the hum in the incredible passage of surf along a huge sand bar as the Columbia River meets the Pacific Ocean.

> the River's voice ignores the quiet secrecy
> along Lakeshore Drive
> no bavardage no idle chit-chat
> with another National Wildlife Refuge
> this mighty voice refuses to negotiate
> but sings a little harmony
> under the squealing wheels
> of the Portland & Western Railroad
> there is no hymn to the fallen River
> so where are these words coming from
> is that an intermodal echo in the back eddy
> are the police still chasing Almighty Voice—
> when swallowing water get out of the way
> when the line disappears talk to the hook

by now we know you're not pure and you just make it up
sometimes I feel I'm lucky even grateful
to have listened hard for the River's voice
but sometimes it's just those gulls
or children screaming from the greed
of forked Tongue Point
not the voice of the River that moaned
Cape Disappointment in 1788



when the River sang clear, shining water
those Yurpeans could have heard
its visionary recital that this River is the way home
the return to what we have left
that this is the place where I come from
I was on my way to get a pail of water
down by the creek I heard a hum bduhm bduhm,
bduhm bduhm bduhm hello Ocean,
River's mouth thanks for listening to this stream of words
become the surf and now the River's voice
is free to roar within the sound of silence.

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John Brandi

El Rito Watershed

Planets rising
mountains along
with them

All night rain—
this morning's camellia
in deep gassho

Daybreak fading
& with it
        the bell's tone

Atmospheric river
the Bible thumper moves
to higher ground

Rainclouds
speak it best
the purple within

Noting my age
the mosquito
moves on

Pine boughs
bending to drink
from the sea

Starry night—
a lone prayer wheel
madly spins!

Seasons turning
I go forward
in remission

from the sacristy
the padre's
fart

80th birthday
autumn wind
that of spring

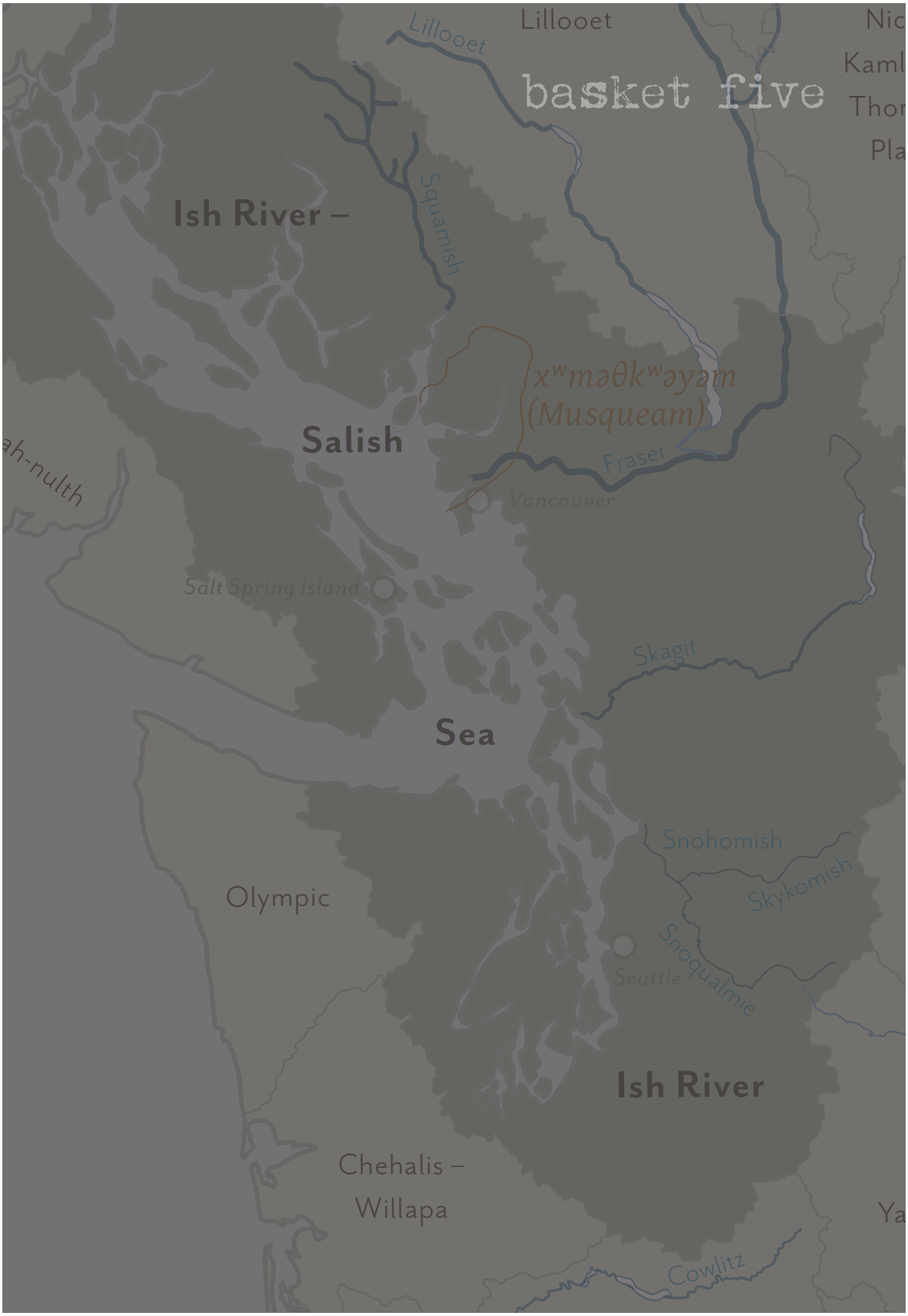
El Rito Watershed

John Brandi

Kwakkwaka'wakw'

West Coast – Nuu-chah-n

wilson's bowl


basket five
Lillooet
Lillooet
Nic
Kaml
Thor
Pla
Ish River –
Squamish
xʷməθkʷəyəm
(Musqueam)
Salish
Fraser
Vancouver
ah-nulth
Salt Spring Island
Skagit
Sea
Snohomish
Skykomish
Olympic
Snoqualmie
Seattle
Ish River
Chehalis –
Willapa
Ya
Cowlitz

Wilson's Bowl

Photograph courtesy of Lawrence Schwartzwald.

Change is the true nature of every place we inhabit, everything we are. I live on what was an island that became, in time, a peninsula only to—one day in the not-too-distant future, with the changing climate and rising seas—most likely become an island again. Indigenous Peoples travelled down this coast—when it had a different coastline, a different sea level yet again—thousands of years ago. European settlers arrived, in numbers and to stay, just a century and a half ago. Today, migrants the world over are being displaced by wars over resources and climate change driven droughts. No man is an island, John Donne famously wrote. Islands, too, sometimes cease to be, are swallowed by rising seas, gathered in by land formations, only to be cast adrift once again. At these time scales, life is a dizzying and mutable dance. We are such temporary stuff—but we love each other just the same, trying to hold each other on our turning Earth we tinker with at our peril, far arm of a galactic spiral, midst a universe that exploded into being billions of years ago, whose speeding shrapnel we, fiery-minded beings, are.

Salt Spring Island, like my Tsawwassen home, is part of the Coastal Douglas fir biogeoclimatic zone on Canada's Pacific coast. Lodged between Vancouver Island and the mountain chains of the continental

mainland, scattered across the Salish Sea, it is in a rain shadow, dry by West Coast standards. Not only Douglas fir dot these mossy, summer-browned islands, but arbutus trees are common too, red and undulating over exposed shoreline rocks. Garry Oaks twist and writhe in unique dry meadows where camas flowers and crocuses rise in spring from the yellow grass.

Seals and pods of resident orca whales ply the waters amidst the hundreds of islands. Salmon swarm towards river mouths to spawn. Ducks and all manner of migratory birds go north and south along the Pacific Flyway, making seasonal stops on rich river deltas. Plants and people move along the coast too. The blackberry has spread—following the pathways humans carved for roads and railways—from California to Alaska in a little over a hundred years. It is often difficult to know the difference between indigenous and invasive species. The Garry Oaks, seeming so much a part of this landscape, were brought by the Spanish in the eighteenth century. The more human beings travel all over the world, the more we may have to embrace what French gardener Gilles Clément calls the "planetary garden"—a conceptual shift that, in poet and Clément translator Jonathan Skinner's words, "entails a certain hospitality to 'invasive' species." For Clément, the "management of movement [human, plant, animal] is a mode of investigating displacement." Blackberries may be colonizers, but they inhabit mostly abandoned and waste spaces, providing a bounty of free fruit to wayward humans and foraging animals.

I'm trying to write about poet Phyllis Webb, her "failure" (that's how she describes it) to write a projected anarchist epic "Kropotkin Poems" in the 1970s, and the discoveries she began to make in her local environment as she settled into life on her island retreat.

There was, for instance, a well-known petroglyph carved on a bear-sized sandstone boulder on the beach at Fulford Harbour. With large concentric eye circles, a grill of long teeth and the outlines of a head, it has been described as a seal. Across the harbour is a deep, oval bowl carved in the bedrock, near the top of the high tide line. There are, in fact, bowls carved in the bedrock of each and every harbour on Salt Spring—in the south (Fulford Harbour), west (Burgoyne Bay), north (Hudson Point), and

east (Ganges Harbour)—offerings in every cove, the island encircled in ceremony.

On a May Day visit—unseasonably warm, the news filled with reports of wildfires about to descend on Fort McMurray, where in the midst of northern Alberta's climate-change feeding tar sands, 30 degree Celsius spring temperatures were setting the boreal forest alight—I walk from the Fulford ferry to the tiny Catholic church tucked into the slopes above the beach. Descending there through bracken and curving blackberry canes—harangued by a kingfisher—I quickly find the bowl carving in the arching bedrock and set myself down beside it so I can look at the bowl, and look out over it at the harbour beyond, stretching away towards the other islands sparking there in the south. It is as though placed there—how long ago?—to invoke and invite entrance to the harbour—to funnel the ocean into its confines—perhaps for the sea to feed those living behind the bowl, at the end of the harbour where a small creek spills out onto the beach, the deep shell midden on the small alluvial plane marking long human habitation. On this day the bottom of the bowl is crusted with tiny yellow-brown and decaying maple flowers, the boughs of which drooped low over my head, dappling the bedrock with a network of sharptined shadows.

On another visit, another season, arriving on Salt Spring and taking the bus from Fulford Harbour to Ganges, I take a detour, following Phyllis's instructions to the location of the real prize—Wilson's Bowl, the stunning stone spirit of Webb's titular 1980 book. No maps or guidebooks of the island note the location or even the existence of the bowl—the greatest work of art the island possesses. I follow the harbour around from Ganges to the east and head out Churchill Road. Somewhere here, at the end of this winding, up and down path, Phyllis's friend Lilo Berliner stayed for a time in a small cabin owned by anthropologist Beth Hill. Somewhere here, in 1977, she walked into the sea, after leaving a small archive on the steps of Phyllis's home.

The rain has been steady, but now it slows, and I lower my hood to let in light and sound. The beach at the end of the road is shell midden, the sea a low flat basin. People would have lived here for millennia—the bowl

itself dates to what anthropologists call the Marpole phase (roughly 1500 to 2500 years ago). A 1973 dig in the midden near the bowl revealed some 7,000 beads and many skeletal remains. I walk toward the west corner of the beach where rocks jut, clamber over slick boulders under low-hanging arbutus boughs. Sky all tattered rags of cloud, the water pewter reflections, liquid lead. I almost miss the bowl.

It is much smaller than I'd imagined—Beth Hill gives its measurements as twenty-four by twenty-three centimeters, maybe not much more than a centimeter deep, a "shallow saucer in bedrock" with a "pecked rim." Just slightly more oval than round, the area outside its lip also carved away, to better shape the bowl, give it its raised rim. It is no accident of rocks and tide—it was definitely made by human beings. Limpets and barnacles—small and isolated—round about. Bottom of the bowl slicked dark with algae under a skim of water, smooth, as I gently, reverently draw my fingers across its surface. I move to catch the light in the bowl—grey sky silvered in its reflection—some raindrops falling again, ripples ringing out to its rim. The rock it is carved in is sandstone (and so easier to perfect its shape, as opposed to the other, typically granite bedrock bowls), yellow-green / brown, buckled, grooved, and riven.

December 24, 1973: Excerpt from a letter to Lilo Berliner

I have a feeling that I have finally cracked the code, and have found the trail that will lead to understanding the great things the Edenshaws were doing. I have gone beyond "Levels of Meaning" and have found another way in which the art was working. It involves paradoxes, like the box paradox in "Nothing"… It often makes use of pre-existing structural oppositions in the shapes of artifacts to state equations which are at the same time paradoxes (on a spoon, handle is to bowl as piercer is to container and as ultimate piercer is to ultimate engulfer). It has a complicated vocabulary of images to work with (… and as Raven's beak is to Bear's mouth). It plays with inversions of part and whole, literal and figurative, present and absent, explicit and implicit. It is always trying to find new images for the two hands of God.

The main thing the art seems to be saying is "I control paradox" (with whatever follows from that). It seems to work with some of the paradoxes that are hidden and implicit in myths (to a certain extent, Haida art is a structural analysis of Haida myth). If there is a paradox which it cannot control, it creates another paradox to cancel it out by producing the same result. One example is the paradox of Creation, which the mind creates by postulating an initial nothingness out of which the world emerges. But how can something be formed out of nothing? The Haida answer

was to construct another intertransformation out of two opposite things into each other. Raven, in the fact of being born, brings into existence his own mother. A process, creating its own antecedents and its own consequences, both at the same time. Needless to say, in this system, there is no "beginning of time," there only exists the present moment. There is no creation, there is only transformation. Opposites, intertransforming into each other.

This cannot be clear without a lot of examples. But I think you will know intuitively that something is there.

Wilson's Bowl

In memory of Lilo, who walked into the sea,
January 1977, Salt Spring Island

'You may read my signs
but I cross my path
and show you nothing
on your way.'

Found Poem

Duende
Dark song
'does not appear
if it sees no possibility
of death.'

Duende
'Like a straight fight
with the creator
on the edge of the well.'

D*uende*
'Where is the D*uende*?
An air smelling of a child's
saliva, of pounded grass
announcing the constant
baptism of newly created
things'

D*uende*
Dark sounds
'behind which we discover
volcanoes, ants, soft
winds, the Milky Way.'

'It burns the blood
like powdered glass.'
D*uende!*

Thus Lorca, his Duende
Over the world
D*uende!*

In this place
T*remendum.*

The Bowl

This is not a bowl you drink from
not a loving cup.
This is meditation's place
cold rapture's.
Moon floats here

belly, mouth, open-one-eye
any orifice
come to nothing
dark as any mask
or light, ore light/is
holy cirque.
Serene, it says silence
in small fish
cups a sun
holds its shape
upon the sea
howls, 'Spirit entered
black as any raven.'
Smiles—
and cracks your smile.
Is clean.

Black Bird pecks at her ear
pushes through to a nest in her brain.
She hears heavy feathers twice:
once as riffs on a drum;
once as a black bird's sigh.

She Sings

"Over the holy water the dedication.
Over the holy water the syllables.
Over the holy water equations.
Over the holy water the golden disc
settles (mercy and loving beholding).
Noble the mathematics, the calculations.
Noble the old rock asleep and beyond our tears."

In This Place

The spirits are not benign
up on Mt. Erskine chittering
at fog-flyers
up on Mt. Maxwell with a cougar
who spies out the lambs of Musgrave.
Up on Mt. Bruce mean spirits
scrabble radio waves
for living and dead.
They doze on Mt. Tuam.
They never sleep.
At full moon
they come down on the rocks
of the sea's shore
deliver such messages:
are not gone.
We quake. We draw curtains
against the word's blaze.

She goes out on the water
hearing.
Is taken or given
by tides.
I go as far as I can
collaborating in the fame.

Her scheme of last minutes
her strategies
are little songs
for great earth
(to which I listen carefully
in this place).

⌗

I took the path.
I crossed the signs.

I crossed the path.
I took the signs.

Dark sounds.
Dark sounds.

The Place Is Where You Find It

What was the path she took?
As winding as her gut
with the pain in it?
Along the beach?
To the caves in the hill?
Path of her mind turning
on symbols. Civility and
the Wild Woman's scream.
And horror. Horror.
Path to the beach
at full moon at last
joy of that mean water,
the manic ride out in the bay.

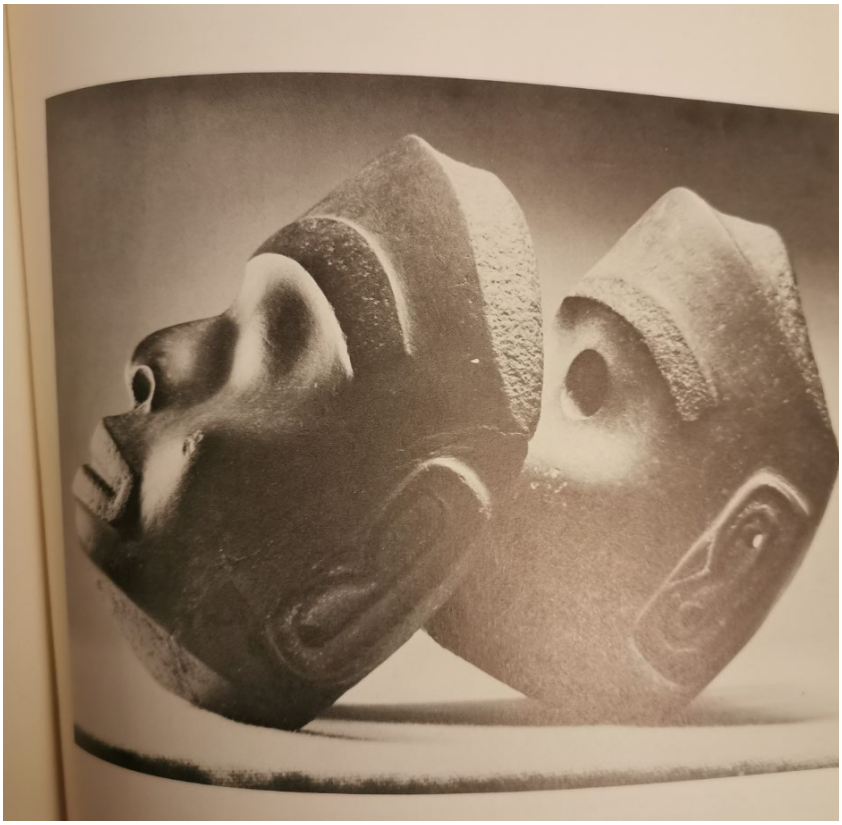
⌗

'Oh air, I beat my wings
against you
against great songs

of little earth
O air!'

Twin Masks

I ask if a woman could have made them
the two stone masks
that can nest together
one with its eyes open
one with its eyes closed.
Did Wilson ever think of that
before he shot himself so tidily
in his office?
I think of it and feel the weight
of the rock reject me.
For the dance! For the dance!
O stone, I hold whatever hands
that held you. O stone, we hold
this hour together under the artful
light of the gallery.
I stand here reading the lies
of paradox, reading the eyes
which have not worn you since
they flashed in the fires of
the Longhouse and went out—
dancing!



Tsimshian twin masks. Photo: Hilary Stewart

Colin Browne

salt spring

what did i wear
a fifty-cent Sally Ann shirt?
the hillside
seeps into a ditch
i worked with a Swedish axe
at summer's end
bees nod blooms
here is a photograph on the porch
after they carried everything up
from the wharf
it's her birthday
she is fifty
it is 1945
the boat shed's cooking with clammers
O Vesuvius, do you remember the man
with no legs?
it was as if everything was
perhaps a
it was as if even nothing
was too much

the kids came back
to get the garden in
pulling out a cigarette
the old man showed me his arm
with the dent
from a bullet in 1917
she jettisoned her clairvoyance
but when? i asked
tides carve bights
both ways

did we sleep, did we chop
down a Christmas tree?
and montbretia, a scarlet sign
of summer's end
one old kid recalls hot bread rolls
with a dash of sulphur
the ditch greens all year
but what seeps up from the earth's heart?
grief
nothing to do but keep going
packing cigarette tubes, refilling
the Medalta crock
not buying more than she
needs for the morning
so as not to alarm her daughter
so as not to appear ungrateful
in God's eyes
on every street corner, she said
a widow with a pram
in widow's weeds
i've found a book conceived
before the recent darkness
utopia without quotation marks

"the chain of memory"
"the House of Life"

he carried a god's name
at the tiller, with the coho running
he was god and man incarnate
fishing for tips till dusk
when exuberant dukes
drained silver flasks
an hour south
of a bleak dormitory
designed for the breaking
of children by adults
Canada's contribution to the twentieth century —
to those who witnessed nothing
what comfort did your silence buy you?

he'd sworn it was not his fight
the morning after Labour Day
her son drove into town
who remembers him now?
a scattering of letters
on a chart
she watches the angle of light change
as she reads
when the old man went
she cast his ashes into the field
where he'd fetched the lambs
here's where the dog squeezed
under the wire

Marjorie glides out into *the dam*
a white stick
in a forest pond

she has memorized herself
for the masquerade

the axe slices through alder
pith white
she lights another cigarette

"i see too much
when i close my eyes"

Chicago Platter

Skidegate Inlet

Charles Edenshaw

The Bracket-Fungus Steersman

Raven's exploits as trickster and progenitor provide plenty of opportunities for interpretation and double entendre. It's the helmsman, however—G*alaga snaanga*—who intrigues me, the one known as Fungus Man. All known visual representations of G*alaga snaanga* are the work of D*a.a xiigang* or are based on his original carvings. Like the other figures on and under the canoe, G*alaga snaanga* undergoes transformation from platter to platter. Certain elements recur and seem fixed. He has a human body, but without nipples. (A feature of fungi?) On the Chicago platter, he has five ribs on each side of his chest; his face is a slightly flattened, slightly tapered oval, and he is seated in the canoe, using the paddle as a rudder. He has two huge round eyes without pupils and a wide-open oval mouth loaded with teeth. Teeth! If he's meant to be a newborn, which he also resembles, he's a menace to his mother. But he has no mother. G*alaga snaanga*'s face on the Chicago platter also bears a resemblance to the huge masklike covers that were placed over the "head" on large Kwakwaka'wakw feast dishes. Representing the wide-open eyes and open mouth of the child-stealing giantess D*zunuk'wa*, these lids were often embellished with bushy eyebrows, moustaches, and chin hair.

On the Seattle platter, G*alaga snaanga*'s paddle has vanished and he appears to be falling back into the air with closed fists. His face and head are circular with what appear to be growth rings around the chin, and his pupils are rolling upward. The features on his face seem to be "drawn" on; there is no relief carving. He has nostrils, lips, and sharp teeth; his oval mouth tapers into points at the corners. This G*alaga snaanga*'s face is one-dimensional, as if he has not fully transformed into a three-dimensional figure. One might imagine him in the role of Raven's sidekick in one of Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas's marvelous Haida mangas—and, indeed, he may already be present in a chapter of Yahgulanaas's dynamic, graphic-narrative version, "RavenKeptWalking." What seems clear is that G*alaga snaanga* is signalling with his eyes that he no longer has control over the canoe—or over his own life for that matter. G*alaga snaanga* may be the first being in Haida history to experience a premonition of death—

or is it a little death? For he who is charged with staying on course, who must guide the canoe across the choppy waters into the time-bound world, is experiencing an earth-shaking orgasm. His intrepid leader, in a similar state, is trying to keep his wits about him.

On the Dublin platter, *Galaga snaanga* seems to have grown a slightly Assyrian looking fringe or beard. Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson writes, "His chin is surrounded by a crescent halo of sparks flying from the *tsaw sgaanagwaay*, the supernatural genitalia." He appears to be falling backwards out of the canoe. Raven has moved into the foreground. One of his delicately feathered wings and his equally delicately feathered legs conceal *Galaga snaanga*'s midriff and loins in a gesture of modesty. This *Galaga snaanga*'s face is carved in relief. It has an oval mouth filled with teeth that looks like a leghold trap, eyebrows, recessed eye sockets, bulging pupils, and a flaring nose. He continues to look at us in alarm as if pleading for help. His hands are raised, as if to recover his balance, or in surrender. Perhaps he's launching a silent scream.

On the Chicago and Seattle platters there is no interaction between Raven and *Galaga snaanga*. They appear to be independent of each other, although one could interpret Raven's expression on the Seattle platter to be something like mild disgust. He may be harbouring the suspicion that *Galaga snaanga* is not up to the job. On the Dublin platter, as mentioned earlier, Raven is alert to what is going on behind him. His pupils are directed at the stern of the canoe where *Galaga snaanga* is losing his balance, his mind, or both. I'm reminded of Haida artist Bill Reid's complex, monumental sculpture *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii, the Black Canoe*, installed outside the Canadian Embassy in Washington, DC. In this moving work, a massive Haida canoe is stuffed to the gunwales with the supernatural figures of Haida history and headed for whatever the future may bring. Are they fleeing, or returning? It brings to mind one of the unexpectedly moving scenes in *Sgaay*'s telling of *Xuuya Kaagang.ngas* in Moody and Swanton's spare translation. Raven has been begging for companions to join him in his canoe. He turns down Blue Jay as being too old, but Blue Jay insists: "They all got then into the canoe. And it set off. It went. It went. It went." Raven, on this journey, is the helmsman.

If you look closely at Reid's *Black Canoe*, you will discover a solitary, pensive puller with hollow eyes, a cedar-bark hat, and a slightly bent back. He is a human figure, and Reid called him the "Ancient Reluctant Conscript," a title drawn from Carl Sandburg's poem "Old Timers." The ancient reluctant conscript is the target of every tyrant's press gang, the universal grunt who cleans the stalls, gives and takes a beating, and pierces his brother's neck with a bayonet. On his weary back, the follies and glories of humanity have been achieved. His is another name for *Galaga snaanga*, who sought neither danger nor glory, who is pressed into service, who plays his part, and is never heard from again.

The apparent gravity of the quest for the *tsaw*, the omnipresence of the undersea creatures, and the nervous hilarity evoked by the vision of two "men" struggling with orgasms as they approach the unruly "origin of the world," would have fascinated Sigmund Freud. In 1885, about the time that *Da.a xiigang* was first creating the platters, Freud was in Paris at the Salpêtrière clinic studying male hysteria, the condition celebrated by Surrealist poets André Breton and Louis Aragon as "the greatest poetic discovery of the late nineteenth century." Then twenty-nine years old and under the tutelage of Professor Jean-Martin Charcot, Freud was an eager participant in his mentor's stimulating lectures on "the frequent occurrence of hysteria in men." Charcot had proposed that in some cases hypnosis might prove to be a promising therapy. He claimed to have produced "hysterical paralyses" in hypnotized men that revealed "the same features as spontaneous attacks, which were often brought on traumatically." Inspired by Charcot, and optimistic about using hypnosis in his own practice, Freud returned home to Vienna determined to undertake "a comparative study of hysterical and organic paralyses" in men. What might he have made of the erotic experiences of Raven and the bracket fungus? It may be worth noting at this point that the image of supernatural female genitalia with teeth has an ancient lineage in the annals of anxiety. The folkloric figure of the *vagina dentata* appears in cultures around the world, including the Maori, and may even find an echo in the chiton-like mouth of *Galaga snaanga* with its two rows of prominent teeth. I suspect that Freud might have found much to interest him on the

Pacific Northwest coast and in the laboratory of D*a.a xiigang*.

For all their technical and compositional virtuosity, and their humorous, psychologically intriguing portraits, the platters pose a vexing question. Why did Raven choose a bracket fungus to be the steersman in his canoe? Surely it was a job for a more skilled, experienced, and worldly creature, perhaps a bird or a clever mammal of some sort? And who exactly was, or is, G*alaga snaanga*, and why did a bracket fungus find himself involved in an expedition like this? Why was he successful when, as we shall discover in the oral history, each of Raven's previous helmsmen failed? And is this a silent tableau? Is the helmsman mute, or is he crying out, and if he is, what is he saying? And who built the canoe?

The story of Raven and the Fungus, and the spirit of *tsaw*, is still passed down through the generations in Haida oral history and remains as potent today as it ever was. A silver bracelet recently made by Haida-Gitxsan artist Shawn Edenshaw, F*ungus* M*an* H*iding in* F*erns*, adds an intriguing narrative element to the story. Why is he hiding, and from whom? And why ferns? In *Sgaay*'s account of *Xuuya Kaagang.ngas*, as translated by Henry Moody and John Swanton, the story of the quest is reserved, appropriately, for the fifth and final section of the narrative. The fetching of the tsaw and the entry into time and history marks the end of one era and the beginning of another. The text concludes with Raven's marriage to Cloud Woman, his rudeness to her, the supernatural "birth" of his son named Lightning Played around His Knee Joints, and Raven's harsh rejection of the boy.

In the Vancouver Art Gallery's Charles Edenshaw catalogue, Terri-Lynn Williams Davidson contributes a contemporary version of the Raven and Fungus story told by her mother, Gaajii'aawa, Mabel Williams, who heard it from "her father, yaahl naw, Jimmy Jones, of the kaadaasgu kiigawaay of Tanu." Williams-Davidson, a lawyer, the general counsel for the Haida Nation, and a celebrated singer and dancer, has written compellingly about the role of Haida origin narratives—the K'aygaanga—in identifying and determining the principles upon which to build a Haida legal system. As indicated, this oral history has an instructional purpose, and I expect that it was included in the catalogue

for good reason. John Swanton did not record any women's stories while he was on Haida Gwaii. I am one of those who until recently understood this story to be about creating or differentiating women and men at the beginning of time. In many accounts, the female genitalia are thrown at or attached to men and they become women. In *Sgaay*'s account, and in Mabel Williams's account, women already exist, as they have since the arrivals of their ancestresses. So the longing for the tsaw is not a longing for the female gender but for something else, something that is missing. What does the story tell us?

Mabel Williams's words possess a wonderful immediacy; one can hear the whisper from eternity that hovers beneath her voice. She begins: "A long time ago women did not have a *tsaw*. All they had was a pee hole. The women asked Raven to help them and he agreed to get *tsaw* from *t̲saw g̲waayaay*. But after only a few paddle strokes he xaawlagihl—became sweet, collapsed, and fell out of the canoe. The power of *t̲saw g̲waayaay* was too strong!"

Raven enlisted help. He asked Junco to steer the canoe, but Junco, with his little dark helmet, also "became sweet" in the orbit of *t̲saw g̲waayaay*'s erotic tug. The same thing happened to Steller's Jay, the screecher, who likely made a terrible racket as they approached the reef and who also lost it (or found it) in the stern of the canoe. Returning to the beach, Raven was perplexed and disheartened by his failure, no doubt for mostly selfish reasons. Should he fail, the women would be hugely disappointed. They were depending on him! The humans—for whom, in a way, he was responsible—would perish without issue! More importantly, for a randy fellow like himself, life would be extremely dull without the *tsaw*. Mabel Williams continues: "Finally, Raven got galaga snaanga, or, Fungus Man, to help him. Raven wedged galaga snaanga into the back of the canoe to serve as *t'aan Gaad*, a steersman. When they approached *t̲saw g̲waayaay*, Fungus Man was also affected by its power, but he didn't fall overboard because he was wedged into the canoe. As galaga snaanga paddled he swayed side to side, rhythmically uttering, 'unh, unh, unh, unh,' and was able to get the canoe to *t̲saw g̲waayaay*."

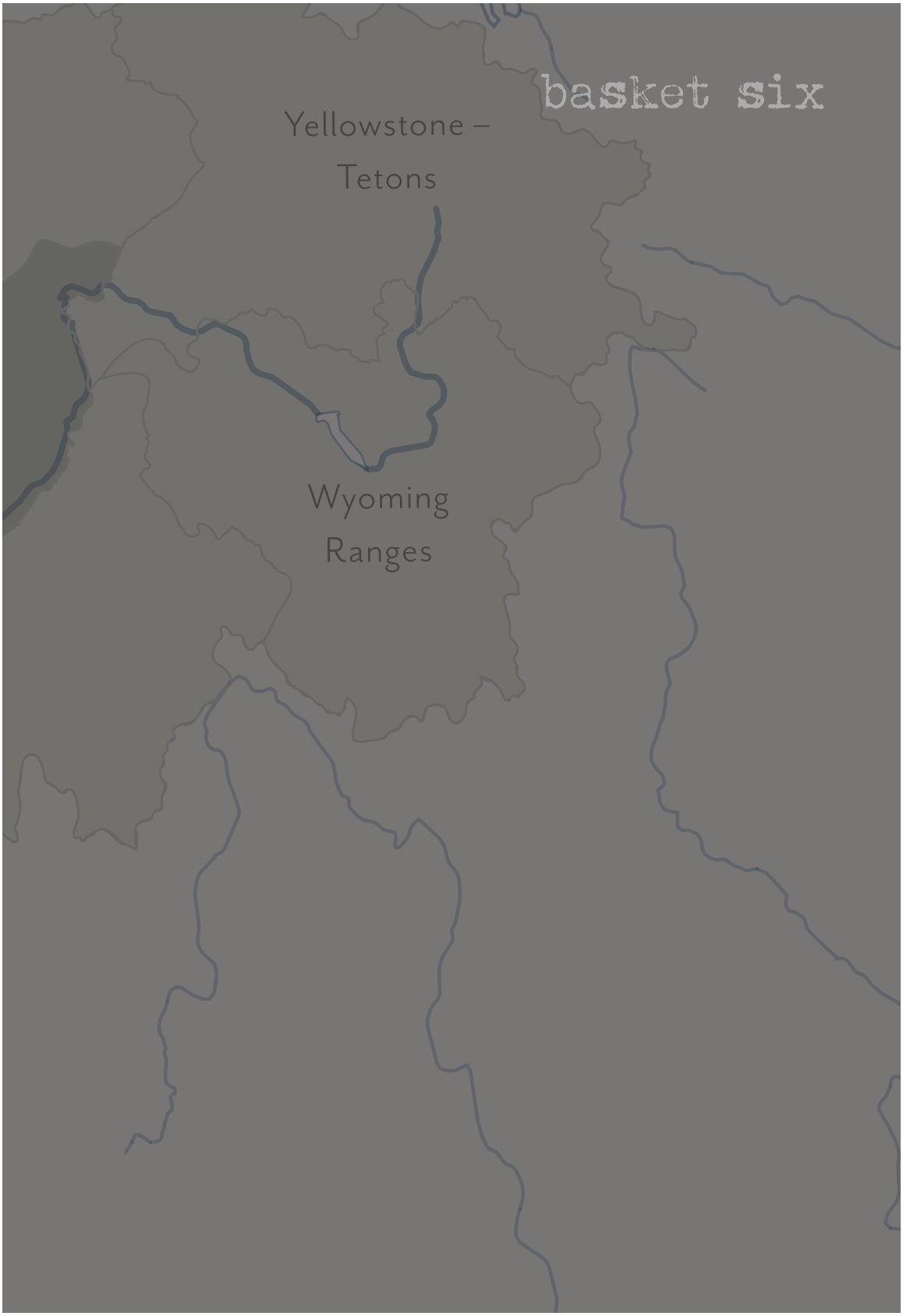
Mabel Williams's account is explicit about the orgasmic consequenc-

es for the men in the boat as they approach *t̲saw gwaayaay*. She includes no information about how Raven hired or acquired the Fungus Man, although she may know. We are told that despite being inert—the living part of a bracket fungus dwells *inside* the tree—he also *xaawlagihl*, or became sexually aroused. And because he was wedged in, he didn't fall overboard, although as he paddled, he "swayed side to side," rhythmically grunting, which perhaps should make us smile a little on his behalf. She continues: "When they returned to shore, two women were waiting: one Eagle Woman and one Raven Woman. One of the women immediately seized the larger genitalia. The other woman was saddened at receiving the smaller one, but Raven consoled her and told her, 'Don't worry; yours will always remain small and safe.'" Raven's consoling, considerate words to "the other woman," an example of dramatic irony, will soon prove to be a false reassurance.

Mabel Williams is quite specific about Raven's early choices for a helmsman. Junco survives and is taken back to the beach; he wouldn't have survived a minute in that water. There's an indication, after the failure of Steller's Jay, that other creatures were asked to participate. All were found wanting. I've wondered why Raven chose birds to begin with. Yet it makes sense. Birds are trusted messengers between this and the other world. They're fierce, and fast, and aerial; their wings will lift them away from danger. Should the creature hovering in the sea below the canoe lunge at the boatmen, a bird would be able to take to the sky. And of course the Steller's jay is a cousin of the raven, perhaps especially the larger subspecies, *Cyanocitta stelleri carlottae Osgood*, that makes its home on Haida Gwaii. It occurs to me, however, that creatures with well-established habits and histories, despite participating in their supernatural forms, would also be limited by the abilities given to them, as often as not by Raven. Perhaps only a freshly animated being, unhindered by experience, compromise, or doubt, would be capable of bringing its full potential to the task at hand. The unpromising bracket fungus might be the most likely to succeed because, like Parsifal, the holy fool, he was the least likely candidate.

And what does the story tell us about the two women on the shore and their desires? I would say that they wanted to experience every aspect of being women. They wanted to experience, on their own terms, the giving and taking of sexual pleasure, and the fullness of physical and emotional love. They wanted to embrace the joys and the heartbreaks that come with living in time: the thrill of anticipation, of being young and unafraid and driven by sexual desire, and of growing old in a loved body with one's children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. For all the bawdiness that the story presents, it is meant to teach its listeners about female sexuality, about the loved and loving body. Unlike other stories in which "first men" are randomly outfitted with female genitalia, these women confidently ask for the *tsaw*. As Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson has observed, this is a story about respecting the power of female sexuality, and, I would add, about recognizing that love, not fear, is the way to mend what is broken.


Challis
Sawtooths
Lost Rivers
issei
zen
Sun Valley –
Wood River
Eastern Snake River Plain
(Hot Spot Track)
Minidoka National
Historic Site
Snake
Bannock
GULF
OF
ALASKA
PACIFIC
OCEAN


basket six
Yellowstone –
Tetons
Wyoming
Ranges

Ten Thousand Eyes

Slaughter[1] Shikata Ga Nai

Dominism in action try to
eke out a living near Shira
kawa busting stumps working working hands bleeding
in Slaughter where
the cherry trees in May still blossom
and the Stuck still flows toward

Kumamoto Prefecture where the old
ones say: D*ekita koto wa shikata ga nai*
that is: W*hat has been done can not be helped*
one century of

what's been done can't be helped
all the unmistakable signs of

Slaughter perennial adolescent
he of Alien Land Law and
internment of World War II. He might be
Kent's Representative James Jones or Miller Freeman of the

1. Slaughter is the original name of Auburn, Washington, where many Japanese-Americans lived before Executive Order 9066 and a few after.

Anti-Japanese League or a prosecutor named Malcolm Douglass
terror of peaceful Nisei farmers
and reason. T*he*
gentleman's agreement is dropped
and the Slaughter continues with

no respite exclusion laws gunpoint stickups
and worst of all when no other recourse,
immolation. Slaughter shikata ga nai.

Coyote Dung and Pomegranate Blossoms: Issei Zen

On a bitterly cold day about the first of January 1943, in the bleak high desert of Idaho, the artist Takuichi Fujii wrote in his diary,

> In the snow remaining in the advent of spring, I can see various kinds of birds singing and playing. The beautiful stripes of yellow sunlight peek through from among the dry willow trees. Although it is still very cold, the hope of seeing another spring gives me a warm feeling.[1]

Fujii (1891–1964) was an Issei, an immigrant or first-generation Japanese American.[2] He and his wife had lost their home and business in Seattle during the mass exclusion of three generations of people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast during World War II. Incarcerated first at "Camp Harmony," a temporary detention site on the Washington State

1. Takuichi Fujii, in Barbara Johns, *The Hope of Another Spring: Takuichi Fujii, Artist and Wartime Witness* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), 3. The entry can be dated by events in the preceding and following entries and others' accounts of New Year preparations. I take his "advent of spring" to refer to the winter solstice or the new year.

2. Most of the Issei came to the United States during the major period of immigration, 1890 to 1924. The period ended with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, which effectively barred further immigration from Asia and denied naturalized citizenship to those who had settled in this country. As a result, the Issei became an increasingly older generation, not replenished by additional immigrants. They invested their futures in their American-born children, American citizens by birthright.

Fairgrounds in Puyallup, Washington, Fujii together with his family was then sent to the Minidoka War Relocation Authority Camp in south-central Idaho. The winter of 1942 to 1943 was his first in confinement in the isolated camp and an exceptionally cold one. His words are poetic but not poetry. Yet in the harsh conditions, just ten days after the winter solstice, he glimpsed beauty and a renewed sense of wholeness.

Poetry groups flourished in early Japanese America and Canada, among men and women, workers and the intellectual elite, in cities, towns, rural communities, and labor camps.[3] Poetry of several kinds—haiku, tanka, senryu, and long form—was among the many arts produced by the Issei throughout Cascadia and the West Coast, as they recreated forms and practices from Japan and drew upon the content and materials of their new homeland. Kazuo Ito's seminal book drawn from firsthand accounts of the first generation, *Issei: A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America*[4], which centers on Cascadia despite its subtitle, features poetry throughout the thousand-page text, a testament to the presence of poetry in the Isseis' lives. And it is here that we glimpse the commonality of practice from Seattle, Portland, and Vancouver, BC, to Alaska, the Inland Empire of eastern Washington and Idaho, and railroad camps in Montana. Even amid overburdening work, some wrote of the yearning to compose poetry:

> No respite, no rest,
> Every moment filled with work.
> No time for *tankas*,
> No moment all the day long.
> Pitiable way to live!
>
> —*Kimiko Ono*[5]

3. My use of "America" and "American" in this article, except in a specific political context, is intended to encompass the North American bioregion of Cascadia.

4. Kazuo Ito, *Issei: A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America*, trans. Shinichiro Nakamura and Jean S. Gerard (Seattle: Executive Committee for publication of *Issei: A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America*, 1973).

5. Ito, *Issei*, 281.

> My wife used to say, "Quit writing poetry which you can never make any money with, and devote yourself to your railroad job so that you will have enough to eat. Go Home! And put out the lamp."
>
> —*Kenji Abe, Pullman, Washington*[6]

"Mr. Hatsugano," Seattle's *Hokubei Jiji* (*North American Times*) reported, "who went to the Alaska Oak Cannery, came home yesterday, full of ideas of writing his own poetry."[7] Poetry was part of a broader literary field of Issei newspaper publishing, expository writing, and oration. In large and small towns throughout the region, newspapers regularly published contributions from community members.[8]

In 1909, as Seattle celebrated the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition on grounds that would become the University of Washington campus, the young writer and future journalist Okina Kyuin urged the formation of a literary circle and a literature that would tell of the Isseis' efforts to adapt to the new land.[9] Across the mountains, a senryu meeting was held by farm workers in Yakima in 1910, and from it grew what was reputedly the first senryu organization in the United States, the Yakima Senryu Ameikai, or Senryu Croaking Society.[10] The Coast Society, a tanka group, formed in Seattle in 1910, along with haiku groups such as Aoba Ginsha and Saikoka, and in 1934, Rainier Ginsha. The tanka club Kayo Taiyokai

6. Ito, *Issei*, 327.

7. "Mr. Hatsugano Returns," September 9, 1918, quoted in Ikuo Shinmasu, "History of *The North American Times*, part 1, December 31, 2021, https://napost.com/2021/history-of-the-north-american-times-1/ (accessed 1/20/2022).

8. For example, the 1918 New Year's edition of *Oshu Nippo* (*Oregon Daily News*), founded in Portland in 1904, consists of fifty-one pages of essays, opinion, and descriptive and statistical accounts of the Japanese presence in the greater region, in contributions ranging from Portland and Spokane to Astoria, Hood River, and railroad camps. http://www.oregonnikkei.org/images/OshuNippo/19180101stage4.pdf (accessed 1/20/2022). The *North American Post* (formerly *Hokubei Jiji*) includes a poetry section today.

9. Teruko Kumei, "Crossing the Ocean, Dreaming of America, Dreaming of Japan: Trans-pacific Transformation of Japanese Immigrants in Senryu Poems: 1929–1941," *Japanese Journal of American Studies,* No. 16 (2005), 82–83, https://www.scribd.com/document/102344044/Teruko-Kumei-Transformation-of-Japanese-Immigrants-in-Senryu-Poems

10. Teruko Kumei, "'A Record of Life and a Poem of Sentiments': Japanese Immigrant Senryu, 1929–1945," *Amerikastudien/ American Studies*, 50, No. 1 (2006), 31, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41158196.

met from 1919 until World War II and reorganized after the war as Seattle Tankakai. Kaho Honda, a former leader of the Yakima group, and Shotei Yoshida established the Hokubei Senryu Gosenkai (Senryu Society of North America) in Seattle, which continued until 1942. Senryu Bara Ginsha was active in Portland. A number of the groups published their own magazines. These are but a sampling of the organized activities throughout the region. Moreover, poetry writing continued and expanded during the mass exclusion and confinement of West Coast ethnic Japanese during World War II. Poetry groups organized in the War Relocation Authority camps at Minidoka, Idaho, and Tule Lake, California, and the Alien Detention Center at Fort Missoula, Montana. Many incarcerees began poetry as a means of emotional release. Several groups reorganized after postwar resettlement.

The Japanese scholar Teruko Kumei has amassed a collection of more than fifteen thousand senryu from the United States in her efforts to recover the literary legacy, research that extends from the early to the late twentieth century and includes some haiku and tanka.[11] Haiku and senryu share the same form of seventeen syllables in a 5-7-5 pattern; the more ancient tanka has thirty-one syllables (5-7-5-7-7). As Kumei describes the first two,

> Although *senryu* and *haiku* are classified as a form of poetry, they are quite different from English verse. They are very short, written in one line. They have no foot, no meter, no rhyme, no assonance, no repeated consonant sounds. Their three syllable clusters (5-7-5) give rhythmical percussion to Japanese ears.[12]

While haiku is typically associated with nature, senryu is about human

11. Teruko Kumei, "Crossing the Ocean, Dreaming of America, Dreaming of Japan," and Teruko Kumei, "'A Record of Life and a Poem of Sentiments,'" previously cited. Kumei considers poetry as "recordage" or "documentary literature"; her retrieval work extends to postwar resettlement and redress (1988). See her presentations at the Japanese American National Museum, "Tanka, Haiku, and Senryu as Recordage: Democracy, Justice, and Dignity," parts 1 and 2, November 18 and 20, 2013 (original in Japanese), http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/author/kumei-teruko/ (accessed 1/25/2022).

12. Kumei, "'A Record of Life,'" 29.

activity, often cloaking emotion in satire or humor as a way of social critique. Among Kumei's many examples are these. The first, about morning-after regrets, was the winner at the first senryu gathering in Yakima:

> Next morning
> all sobered up. Damn.
> Sake brewed brawls.
>
> —*Kentsuku Kurokawa*[13]

> *Sono ashita*
> *sake ga hitoride*
> *tsumi-wo-seoj*

> Oh! Look!
> taken aback
> picture couple at a dock.[14]

> *Jitsubutu de*
> *shashin ketsukon*
> *atsuto ii*

The poet's contemporaries would quickly have recognized the experience of picture brides when reality didn't match a handsome photographic portrait.

The translation of poetry is always challenging, but that of Issei poetry is especially complex. Poetry of the first generation is written in old-style or prewar Japanese, which has several times more characters than modern Japanese and is minimally legible today without specialized knowledge.[15] Its translation requires several steps: from old to modern

13. Kumei, "Crossing the Ocean," 86.

14. Kumei, "'A Record of Life,'" 40.

15. Following the defeat of Japan's hardline conservative militarists, American occupying forces worked with reform-minded leaders in Japan to modernize the language. The proportionate reduction is commonly stated as ten thousand prewar kanji to two thousand in modern use. I must note that I read neither old nor modern Japanese.

Japanese; from kanji to *romanji* or Romanized script, which retains the "rhythmic percussion" of the original; next to a literal translation; and finally to a poetic form that captures the sensibility of the original. Contemporary practice often includes the Romanized Japanese along with the translation so that readers can compare the rhythm of the original, and it appears here where available. Moreover, because the haiku and senryu forms, in particular, are so distilled, the historical context and expressive intent are more elusive than the fact that they represent a time gone by.

What is most relevant to the project of *Cascadian Zen* is that this poetry in all forms is grounded in place. It speaks of the ocean, rivers, forests, and drylands, the plants and animals of the immigrants' new home, their labor on the land, and in their labor, the passage of time.

Midsummer desert
Of Idaho. The walker
Among the flat rocks
Inadvertently will tread
Upon dried coyote dung.
—*Mogiku Itoi*[16]

Accidental bloom
On cactus thrown out to die
Tells spring's arrival.
—*Keiko*[17]

Monotonic mist
On Columbia River …
Nothing can be seen.
Rainy morning and evening
Covers the long wide valley.
—*Fuji Inoue*[18]

16. Ito, *Issei*, 472.
17. Ito, *Issei*, 446.
18. Ito, *Issei*, 776.

Grafting young cherry trees
On the long sun-scorched hills …
August on my back!
—*Teiko Tomita, Yakima Valley*[19]

As Tomita, a young Issei mother, describes her labor in this and other poems, the cherry tree, a symbol of Japan and the Japanese people, and the metaphor of grafting evoke the grafting of the writer herself onto the American place and people.[20] A Yakima farm worker sees in his tool the trace of a life clearing and cultivating the land:

All my living days
Gripped tightly and pressed into
That old hoe handle!
—*Horai*[21]

Issei poetry speaks of youthful dreams and the reality of lives passing by.

Illusion and I
Travelled over the ocean
Hunting money-trees.
—*Kijo*[22]

Lovely kimono,
I've never worn you, and yet
Still air you every summer.
—*Shoko*[23]

19. Ito, Issei, 448. Teiko Tomita is the subject of a study by Gail M. Nomura, "*Tsugiki*, a Grafting: A History of a Japanese Pioneer Woman in Washington State," in *Women in Pacific Northwest History*, ed. Karen J. Blair (Seattle: University of Washington Press), 284–307. This poem appears in a more literal translation in Nomura; I have chosen the Ito translation here. The interpretation of grafting is Nomura's.

20. Nomura, "*Tsugiki*, a Grafting," 291; see also 302–303.

21. Ito, *Issei*, 442.

22. Ito, *Issei*, 32.

23. Ito, *Issei*, 283.

Pomegranate blossoms
So full of life—and I
Share this very hour.
—I*sshin*[24]

These last are the words of a worker enduring the brutal conditions of railroad labor. In reflecting on his life, he chooses a pomegranate rather than a native plant, a symbol of fertility, and in Japan, an attribute of the goddess-protector of childbirth and motherhood, and in the contrasting linkage we imagine his body wrung dry by labor. The hard life and ostracism led many to expressions of nostalgia for the homeland they remembered:

For the New Year celebration
I draw water out of the ocean,
Over waves lies my home.[25]

F*urasato no*
umi he to tsuzuku
mizu wo kumi

These poems speak of family relations and generational difference, social relations, and the outsider status as an ethnic minority. Despite tensions that often arose between the "old-country" generation and their Americanized children, an Issei man is filled with pride when his son participates in a New Year's ritual:

Radiantly shining
Rice cake Nisei pounds out.
My happiest day.
—R*osho, Yakima*[26]

24. Ito, I*ssei*, 327.
25. Kumei, "Crossing the Ocean," 89–90.
26. Kumei, "'A Record of Life,'" 41.

U*reshisa wa*
N*isei ga tsuita*
mochi no tsuya

To have my grandchildren
Throw out Japanese papers
Before I have read them!
—M*iyoko*[27]

Nisei children,
English, they can pass,
But not skin color.
—R*yoko*[28]

E*igo dake*
shitsute toorenu
hifu no iro

And they speak of growing old and dying in a new land, and the nature of memory.

Ripening autumn,
And within, secretly held,
Old times and sad tales.
—T*amu*[29]

Moon above window
And old friends talking about
Meiji together.
—*Shoko*[30]

27. Ito, I*ssei,* 598.
28. Ito, I*ssei*, 598.
29. Ito, I*ssei*, 497.
30. Ito, I*ssei*, 546. Meiji Era, 1868–1912.

Dew or show'ring rain
Idle the promises
of this fickle world.
—*Sakado*[31]

The last was part of an outpouring of poetry following a railroad accident near Westminster, Canada, that killed twenty-three Japanese workers and seriously injured others in 1909. The accident occurred not amid dew or showers but during exceptionally heavy rain and flooding; here, grief is as understated and compressed as the poetic form itself. And on a memorial stone in Seattle's Lakeview Cemetery:

To live! That is good …
But to die, released from care—
Is that not good too?
—*Kaho Honda*[32]

These few examples spanning from early to late twentieth century were chosen for a degree of abstraction and only hint of the breadth of Issei poetry and the lives it contains. Not all have the lucid transcendence that lifts a poem beyond description. Collectively it is the vibrant record of a people to whom poetry was a familiar and valued form of expression. While Issei poetry is written in Japanese, it is located in the particularities of life in North America and, as the literary scholar Stephen Sumida has long argued, belongs to American literature and is eloquent evidence of the pluralism that shapes American culture.[33]

The poetic record from World War II is equal if not greater in creative

31. Ito, *Issei*, 883.

32. Ito, *Issei*, 855. For more on Honda and his memorial stones, see Paula Johnson Burke, "The Story Locked in a Stone," *Seattle Review of Books*, January 11, 2017, https://www.seattlereviewofbooks.com/notes/2017/11/02/the-story-locked-in-a-stone (accessed 1/20/22).

33. Stephen H. Sumida, "Hawaii, the Northwest, and Asia: Localism and Local Literary Developments in the Creation of an Asian Immigrants' Sensibility," *Seattle Review* XI, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 1988), 9–18. See also Sumida, "Centers without Margins: Responses to Centrism in Asian American Literature," *American Literature* 66, No. 4 (December 1994), 803–815, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2927702

output and participation in response to the historical crisis. Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, brought cataclysmic change to people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast and particularly to the Issei, who had invested their lives in North America but were barred by federal law from naturalized citizenship in the United States, and from full rights of citizenship in Canada. Within weeks of Pearl Harbor, three generations of ethnic Japanese were forcibly removed from the coastal region of both countries. In the United States, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which set in motion the mass exclusion of some 120,000 people from the western halves of Washington and Oregon, all of California, southern Arizona, and the territory of Alaska. Canada followed with similar orders a week after Roosevelt's action. Sent to remote confinement camps, and even more primitive sites in Canada, many turned to poetry as a means of expressing emotion, many for the first time, in solitary efforts and organized groups. At the Minidoka, Tule Lake, and Fort Missoula detention sites within Cascadia, as well as others elsewhere, the Issei led literary efforts to give voice to the experience.[34] The Seattle businessman Iwao Matsushita was among some six hundred Issei leaders who were arrested by the FBI immediately after Pearl Harbor and confined at Fort Missoula. In extensive correspondence with his wife, who was incarcerated separately at Minidoka, he urges her to try poetry: "Why don't you take this opportunity to study haiku or *waka*? I believe it's important for one to achieve an inner peace, and leaving everything to God, strive to nurture one's self." He adds,

34. Within the Cascadian United States, residents of Alaska, Oregon, Seattle, and parts of Pierce County in Washington were incarcerated at the Minidoka War Relocation Authority camp in Idaho. Others from suburban Seattle, western Washington, Oregon, and northern California were sent to the Tule Lake WRA center in far north California. In 1943 Tule Lake also became the site of a Segregation Center where those in all camps who were declared disloyal were sent. The Department of Justice administered separate confinement sites for Japanese, Italian, and German "enemy aliens."

Canada did not build concentration camps but instead sent Japanese Canadians to primitive sites such as ghost mining towns in inland British Columbia and to farms in Alberta and Manitoba where they had to labor.

The colors are changing on the plateaus,
Autumn must be near.
Upon my prisoner's tray
Red sit the tomatoes.[35]

His poems, descriptive of place, weather, and living conditions, continue until the couple's reunion in 1944.

One of the major collections of wartime poetry is that by Violet Kazue de Cristoforo, a second-generation Japanese American and a poet herself, who collected and translated haiku, most of it from the confinement camps she knew firsthand.[36] De Cristoforo, named in younger years Kazue Matsuda, wrote modern freestyle or *kaiko* haiku, a form developed in early twentieth-century Japan and brought to California's Central Valley, Matsuda's prewar home. "The substance of haiku," she writes, "is that it reduces a thought-picture to its most beautiful essence," and in *kaiko* haiku, it is released from the 5-7-5 structure and the requisite reference to nature.[37] She and her family were incarcerated throughout the war and spent the last two years at Tule Lake, where she participated in a haiku group. Her collection of poems by incarcerees at Tule Lake begins,

Young cricket jumped
getting used
to dark mud floor.
—*Ozawa Neiji*[38]

Osanaki koorogi tobi
kuroki doma ni
naruru

35. Iwao Matsushita, July 25, 1942, in Louis Fiset, *Imprisoned Apart: The World War II Correspondence of an Issei Couple* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 162.

36. Violet Kazue de Cristoforo, ed., trans., and compiler, *May Sky: There is Always Tomorrow; An Anthology of Japanese American Concentration Camp Kaiko Haiku* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1997).

37. De Cristoforo, *May Sky*, 15. on structure, Mayumi Nakasuka, "Introduction," in de Cristoforo, *May Sky*, 11.

38. De Cristoforo, *May Sky*, 215. De Cristoforo presents the Romanized Japanese as a single line. Line breaks, as proposed by Michiyo Morioka, are shown here to conform to other poems in this article.

While characterizing the primitive conditions of camp, the poem recalls crickets in Japan, where they are prized for their "song" and collectively said to be the voice of Buddha; they also evoke loneliness and nostalgia by their seasonal appearance in autumn. Elsewhere nature signals freedom:

> Even the croaking of frogs
> comes from outside the barbed wire fence
> this is our life.
> —*Hakuro Wada*[39]

> *Kawazu naku oto mo*
> *sakugai ni shite*
> *warera no kurashi*

Among many others:

> Rain shower from mountain
> quietly soaking
> barbed wire fence.
> —*Suiko Matsushita*[40]

> *Yama shigure*
> *hisohiso tessaku*
> *nurashi furu*

> Miniature poppy
> thinly clad wife
> exuding fragrance—evening.
> —*Suiko Matsushita*[41]

39. De Cristoforo, *May Sky*, 273.
40. De Cristoforo, *May Sky*, 247.
41. Ibid.

Hina-keshi
yube tsuma yo usumono no
hada niowase

Small lawn mowed
Japanese name plate
on this house.
—*Tokuji Hirai*[42]

Wazuka no lown kararete ari
nihonji no hyosatsu
aru ie

Doll without a head
lying on desk top
one evening.
—*Hekisamei Matsuda*[43]

Ningyo kubi ga toreta mama
tsukue ni okare
aru yo

Handcrafted name plates and gardens at the doorsteps of barracks tell of "camp culture," the inmates' creative adaptation of Japanese forms and practices to the materials and conditions of the American desert. Takuichi Fujii, the artist whose words begin this article, writes with wry amusement how odd walking sticks made of twisted desert greasewood (a popular fad) would look on the streets of Japan.[44]

42. De Cristoforo, *May Sky*, 235.
43. De Cristoforo, *May Sky*, 241.
44. Takuichi Fujii, diary, 1942–1945, translation by Sandy Kita. A facsimile edition of the complete diary and translation is planned by University of Washington Press.

Minidoka Mountain-Man **(Daruma), ca. 1943-1945**
Oil on Masonite, 28 x 12 in.
Collection of the Suzuki family

Kamekichi Tokita

Some of De Cristoforo's (Matsuda's) own poems reflect the passage of time, the first on her tenth wedding anniversary, Tule Lake, July 3, 1944:

Misty moon
as it was
on my wedding night.

T*suki oboro*
totsugishi yoru no
sora datta

Afternoon sun shining
this year's moss-rose
reverted to single petal.[45]

Gogo no hizashi
matsubabotan
kotoshi hitoe-zaki

In quotidian detail we glean pictures of an American concentration camp. Given not only the haiku form but also De Cristoforo's understanding as a poet, many of the poems she collected share the unspoken luminosity and transcendence that is the subject of *Cascadian Zen*.

This article begins with a painter and ends with one. Kamekichi Tokita was among those at Minidoka who first turned to poetry in wartime. In the 1930s, an acclaimed artist of Seattle's urban landscape, he painted camp scenes as well as subjects from Japanese art at Minidoka. His reference to Zen is explicit in several paintings of Daruma, which bear the inscription "Minidoka Mountain Man," likening the perseverance required in camp life to that of the legendary Zen priest. Among his personal papers is this single example of a long poem:

45. De Cristoforo, *May Sky*, 231, 233.

Orange[46]

Written by KT

Don't know when
an orange
rolled under the bed.
Shriveling day by day,
leaning slightly like the earth with its tilting axis.
And, shriveling day by day,
mountains form, valleys deepen.
Remembering after four or five days,
take a peek.
It is still there, quietly,
near old shoes covered by dirt.
Dirt? Dust?
. . . . . ?
Oh, it's mold!
Look closely,
fine layer all over the surface.
Another peek after several days,
now pure white.
On the light-gray floor board.
Faint but like drops,
green dots are there!
Malachite green . . . . . !
It's mold! Green mold!
Another peek after several days,
green mold has colored almost everywhere.
And, look carefully,
something moves

46. Kamekichi Tokita, in Barbara Johns, *Signs of Home: The Paintings and Wartime Diary of Kamekichi Tokita* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 215–218; translation and Romanization by Michiyo Morioka. The lines and ellipses are in the original. Tokita's poems appear in his diary and on separate sheets, all stored in Kamekichi Tokita Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian.

barely, barely.
Pale worms, worms have bred.
If touched, the orange will fall apart.

Grasses and trees veiling the earth like green mold,
humans with pale faces looking like worms,
the earth is already rotten.
If touched by God's hand,
it will break.

Looked under the bed the next day,
the orange was gone, the old shoes were gone.
Even the gray dust.
Everything.
Thrown into a garbage can?

The rotting earth, too,
may be thrown into the garbage
by God's hand.
It's
about time.

Orenji

KT *sei*

I*tsu no maniyara*
beddo no shita ni, korogekonda,
orenji hitotsu.
H*ini hini, shinabite iku.*
R*yōkyoku wo yaya keisha saseteiru chikyū no yōni,*
sukoshi naname ni natta mama.
S*oshite, hini hini shinabite iku.*
Y*ama ga dekiru. T*a*ni ga fukaku naru.*

Shigonichi shite, omoidasu mama,
nozoite mitara,
mada aru. Shizukani.
Chiri ni mamireta furugutsu no soba ni.
Chirikashira? …….. hokorikana?
……..?
Aa, kabida!
Yoku mireba, usuku ichimen ni.
Nisannichi shite, mata, nozoitara,
masshirodatta.
Usunezumiiro no yuka no ue ni.
Kasukanagara, pottsuri to
aoi tenten ga mieruzo!
Rokushōiro no ……..?
Kabida! Aokabida!
Mata nisannichi shite mitara,
aokabi wa, daibubun wo someteita.
Soshite,
yoku mireba,
ugoku mono ga aru.
Kasukani, kasukani,
aojiroi mushida. Mushi ga waitanoda.
Te wo furetara, orenji wa kuzureyō.

Chikyū wo outa aokabi no kusa ya ki yo,
aojiroi kao shita mushi no yōna ningen yo,
chikyū wa mō kusarete iru.
Kami no te ga furetara kowarerudarō.

Tsugi no hi nimo, beddo no shita wo, nozokikondara,
orenji wa nakatta. Furugutsu mo nakatta.
Haiiro no chiri saemo.
minna.
Gyabējikan ni suteraretakana?

Kusarekakatta chikyū mo,
kami no te de,
gyabēji no naka ni suteraretemo,
mō.
Yoi jibundana.

Tokita died in 1948 at fifty-one years old, too soon to see the legal change that allowed Issei to become citizens. Teiko Tomita, the pioneer woman who grafted cherry trees, worked in Sunnydale, Washington, until her late seventies. In 1983, at age eighty-six, she could look back and write of her family:

The seeds I planted
Sprout and grow up
Even in this very old body
Joy overflows.[47]

In words rather than paint, Issei poets picture their lives as immigrants who have left their birthplace to make a new home, as workers striving to make their way, as prisoners unjustly targeted because of their ethnicity, and as family members dedicated to their Japanese American families. Through their words we see their commitment to North America despite the barriers they face. Their legacy expands, illuminates, and enriches the literature and culture of this place.

47. Nomura, *"Tsugiki*, a Grafting," 305.

Black and White Photograph, Manzanar: Rock Garden with Pool

A pool's face mirrors a sky empty of harm.
Around it white boulders are placed just so,
the way flowers are arranged.

You can almost feel the rough bark of ponderosa pines
matched with desert flowers and clipped lawn,
can almost feel the smooth, white lean of aspens

as the pale egg of a day moon
floats above the near hills.
Barbed wire, from this angle, remains out of sight.

As do those other lands
beyond the mountains and seas where blood irrigates
the tight-lipped bone heaps.

The photograph bequeaths a silence down the years.
Where the eye is quieted
so are we.

Gaman[1]

From the concentration of hearts and hands
Manzanar's badlands gave birth
to beauty wrested from a universe
hedged by guard towers and barbed wire.

Woven baskets. Sumi-e paintings.
Ikebana's floral intersections of time and eternity.
Origami. Bonsai sculpted from the mind's winds.
Carved walking sticks. Haiku poetry. Wooden bird pins.

Condemned to send hope somewhere into the future
these chose to work the world at hand
where wind heaped sand into their tar paper shacks—
and so they reclaimed their old alliance with earth.

1. gaman: A Japanese word for enduring the seemingly unendurable with patience and dignity.

From *Departures: Poetry and Prose on the Removal of Bainbridge Island's Japanese Americans After Pearl Harbor* (Unsolicited Press, 2019).

Paul Horiuchi: An Echoing Spirit between the Pacific Northwest and Japan[2]

Even in Kyoto
how I long for Kyoto
when the cuckoo sings
Matsuo Bashō (translated by Sam Hamill)

The artist's childhood home in Oishi Village, now Kawaguchi Town, looked across the waters of Lake Kawaguchi toward Mount Fuji.

Six decades later, the home the artist built in southeast Seattle gazed across the waters of Lake Washington to the towering white silence of Mount Rainier. Paul Horiuchi, a recognized artist at last, had closed the circle. As Hokusai reminds us, there are many ways of looking at Mount Fuji. Or Mount Rainier.

Paul Horiuchi's life was a quietly heroic quest for mastery of his art, an art that fused Pacific Northwest and Japanese aesthetics, especially his creations in collage. His prodigious artistic drive usually roused him from bed at 3:00 A.M. in order to work. Numinous as stained glass, his collages are treasured for their sense of repose and enigmatic beauty.

In his early years in the US, Horiuchi endured poverty, artistic neglect, and racism. American citizenship came in the 1950s, but he never turned his back on Japan. He was a Roman Catholic convert with an abiding sense of Zen Buddhism, a Japanese immigrant who wandered with his wife and young children through the US interior during World War II with no place to call home. Once he finally achieved a degree of material comfort in this country, he returned to Japan nearly every year, exchanging his view of Mount Rainier for the Mount Fuji of his childhood.

2. This essay first appeared in the *Kyoto Journal*, Issue 66. It has since been revised and updated.

Little wonder, then, that late in life Horiuchi told a friend about a dream he'd had the night before in which he was swearing but couldn't remember if he swore in English or Japanese.

Horiuchi's works in collage, for all their apparent objectivity, suggest the Japanese quality of *mono no aware*, a sympathy or empathy for the pathos of things; a longing for a home that can't be named. The feeling might be triggered by the flash of a sunset swallow or the light carried by an ocean wave at sunrise.

In I*ridescent* L*ight*, an essential study of Pacific Northwest artists, Deloris Tarzan Ament wrote: "The Zen-like spontaneity Horiuchi prized is visible in his collage paintings, along with an abstract expressionist command of flat space. The layered paintings carry overtones of fragmented messages, of memories eroded by time. Torn edges suggest wounding and loss."

Though Horiuchi is not as well known in Japan as his mentor Mark Tobey, a measure of recognition has come. The 2003 retrospective of his work at the Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art in Kofu, "Paul Horiuchi: Japanese Sensitivity Preserved in the Pacific Northwest," exhibited major works from every phase of his career, accompanied by a generously illustrated book with text in Japanese and English. The book included Horiuchi's words from his 1999 funeral program: "I have always wanted to create something serene, the peace and serenity, the quality needed to balance the sensationalism of our surroundings today. Maybe I'm old fashioned, but I'm seeking beauty and truth in nature. This philosophy of mine hasn't changed in the last fifty years."

Horiuchi Chikamasa was born April 12, 1906, the second son of Daisaku and Yasu. After his religious conversion in the United States, he would change his name for his 1936 baptism in honor of two Pauls—Gauguin and Cézanne.

Genesis (1962)

Shortly after his second son's birth, Horiuchi Daisaku set out for the United States and found work with the Union Pacific railroad in Wyoming. Eight years later Yasu joined her husband.

Horiuchi's grandfather, a man with artistic leanings who helped raise him, exerted a formative influence on the future artist. It's possible the boy was painting by age seven; he would study *sumi* and brush techniques and won a prize for landscape painting. Talk of the youthful Horiuchi making the Olympic team as a runner someday ended when he was diagnosed with an enlarged heart.

In 1920, the fourteen-year-old Horiuchi joined his parents in Wyoming, going to work for the railroad like his father. The next year his father died of stomach cancer; his mother took his younger siblings back to Japan while Horiuchi and his older brother Toshimasa stayed behind to keep working, pay off their father's gambling debts, and send money home.

By seventeen he'd risen to section foreman. All the while, he was painting. Legendarily shy in his later years, young Horiuchi did not lack artistic self-confidence. With a railroad spike, according to Ament, he chiseled on a Wyoming rockface, "People of the world, watch my future."

In 1935 Horiuchi married Bernadette Suda, a renowned beauty, in Seattle. Maryknoll nuns raised her after her parents and three siblings were killed in an auto accident. Horiuchi converted to Roman Catholicism; the couple were the first Japanese Catholics married in the city. The newlyweds returned to Wyoming, where Horiuchi rejoined the railroad.

Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor changed everything.

Little more than two months later, the US government issued Executive Order 9066: Those of Japanese ancestry (Nikkei) residing on the West Coast were ordered into incarceration camps. The Horiuchis, living in the Rocky Mountain interior, were exempt. Still, like other Nikkei, he

was fired from the railroad and given forty-eight hours to leave company housing. The Horiuchi family set out by car, wandering the small towns of the Western interior as Paul looked for work. A petition to enter an internment camp was turned down because the Horiuchi family did not hail from the exclusion zone.

"We were envious of them," Paul Jr. recalled from his home in Seattle, referring to the Nikkei imprisoned behind barbed wire in harsh, barren settings. "They had a roof and three square meals a day."

The two boys were enrolled in school after school.

"My brother and I were involved in numerous fights in school," Paul Jr. remembered. "My father tried to shield us from the injustices and did it well, since only in recent times have we learned of the daily stress he was under."

After moving to Spokane in 1944, Horiuchi found work in an auto body repair shop. After the war he opened his own repair shop in Seattle. All the while, he was painting. After breaking his left arm and wrist, he opened an antique shop and painted in a back room. By the time Horiuchi was forty-five his paintings began to sell.

It was during these years he struck up a friendship with Mark Tobey, the Pacific Northwest master who had traveled to China and Japan before World War II. While Tobey became a kind of mentor, influences traveled in both directions: Horiuchi taught Tobey sumi. The pair took day trips to Tacoma in search of wabi-sabi. The city, with its old brick and moss, oily puddles, waste allotments, smokestacks, and dingy harbor works, complied.

In a 1958 essay in *College Arts Journal,* Tobey wrote: "I have often thought that if the West Coast had been open to aesthetic influences from Asia, as the East Coast was to Europe, what a rich nation we would be!" Life

in the Pacific Northwest, with its saltwater influences, its mountains, its trees and mists, where salmon are sacred to the First People as they are to the Ainu, quietly resonates with Japanese affinities. Writer Laurie Ricou calls the relationship a matter of "remote proximities."

The first large-scale immigration from Japan to the Pacific Northwest took place in the 1890s and lasted into the 1920s. By the twenties, Japanese farmers provided about three-quarters of the region's vegetables and half of the milk.

This cultural pollination has created a unique form of aesthetic awareness in the Pacific Northwest. In his novel *Yellowfish*, John Keeble speaks of Kuroshio, the Japanese current which loops Asia and the West Coast together. "Kuroshio's essence lay in the atmosphere it made, in the sense it helped to shape a certain trans-Pacific geographic skin," Keeble wrote. In other words, Bashō plays better here than Robert Frost.

The Seattle Fine Arts Society, founded in 1908, exhibited more than four hundred Japanese prints loaned by local residents for its first public exhibit. As Ogura Tadao, director of Japan's Museum of National Art told the *Seattle Times* in 1982: "There is no place which has more similarities to Japan than Seattle. If nature and climate affect the spirit and sensibility of the people who live there, it is little wonder that artists from your area have a similar understanding and approach to nature and art."

In 1954 Horiuchi created his first collage after seeing a shredded, rain-drenched poster in Seattle's Chinatown. In 1956 he participated in an exhibition in Tokyo. The following year his first solo exhibit in Seattle nearly sold out and the next year the Seattle Art Museum staged a solo show.

Something about Horiuchi's collage works touched a nerve. As Ament noted in *Iridescent Light*: "His style combined geometry with poetry; the strength of rock with the fluidity of water."

To stand before a Horiuchi work is to feel the adequacy of silence in the face of some unbreakable mystery deeper down than art or language. The images, wise and formal, seem to have emerged from out of the past. Or the future.

Ament sounded the depths of Horiuchi's colored planes: "His collages thunder with black, which assaults the decorative tendencies inherent in fibrous torn edges. The presence of fragmented darkness in his work sets Horiuchi apart from the host of his imitators whose collages rarely amounted to more than pretty pictures."

This is especially true with a work like *Monolithic Impasse*, 1964, a paper collage with casein on canvas, in the collection of the Seattle Art Museum. A torn geometrical obsidian form, tilted left against a lighter background, occupies most of the canvas. Here is pure presence, like a megalithic standing stone, aloof from words.

Horiuchi was also a poet of blue, a color woven into the Japanese culture; the blue noticed, if condescendingly, by Lafacadio Hearn on that spring day in 1890 when he first set foot on Japanese soil: "Little houses under their blue roofs, little shopfronts hung with blue, and smiling little people in their blue costumes."

Horiuchi's use of blue sometimes evokes Edenic shards distilled from the memory of a lost domain, as in *Poetry of the Past*, a 1980 collage on canvas where a vertical patch of blue suggests a window in a still-life interior.

In 1958 Horiuchi began what were to become nearly annual trips to his homeland. He stayed with relatives or rented a house near Lake Kawaguchi, where he executed small paintings as gifts for friends and relatives.

More honors came.

In 1973 to 1974, he was part of the *Japanese Spirit in the Americas* exhibit at the National Museum of Modern Art inTokyo and Kyoto. In 1976 came the Sacred Treasure of the Fourth Class from Emperor Hirohito. In 1982 he participated in the *Pacific Northwest Artist and Japan* show at the National Museum of Art in Osaka.

The 2003 retrospective in Kofu signaled a full, posthumous recognition in his homeland. Paul Jr. and his mother, who died in 2015 at 102, attended the opening. The eldest son, a former schoolteacher and court reporter, said he gained a new perspective on his father's life and work and a new appreciation for his own role as torch bearer for his father's legacy.

"I felt comfortable in Japan," Paul Jr. said. "The realization hit me. This [Japan] is inspiration for a lot of my dad's work."

John Braseth, Horiuchi's art dealer and friend, was thirty-nine when the artist died at age ninety-three in a Japanese care facility in Seattle in 1999. Braseth delivered the funeral eulogy.

"He was gentle," Braseth remembered. "He was truly humble about his talents. He was astounded that people came to him for advice. I don't think he realized the master was in the mirror." Braseth paused: "Paul would have liked to have been revered in his own country."

Paul Horiuchi died speaking only Japanese at the end. The artist had arrived at the borderless country at last, of one lake, one mountain.

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Luck and Long Life

Maggie Creek

Joan Giannecchini

Seven Haiku from My Grandmother in the Kawabe House

for Sayoko Toda

Knock, knock on room door—
peeking through a keyhole, I
see another eye.

*****

Elder person's room—
everyone fascinated
with the poinsettia.

*****

Face after face stare
back. I shrug. My weak hearing
makes talking look odd.

*****

Lip licking around
me — people gossip, tasting
many distressed words.

*****

Autumn yellow leaves—
thin sun—Only one sudden
night of wind. All gone.

*****

Early, I wake—cold.
The comforter escaped, not
staying on my back.

*****

Coins in our pockets
come and go, gains and losses—
a parallel line.

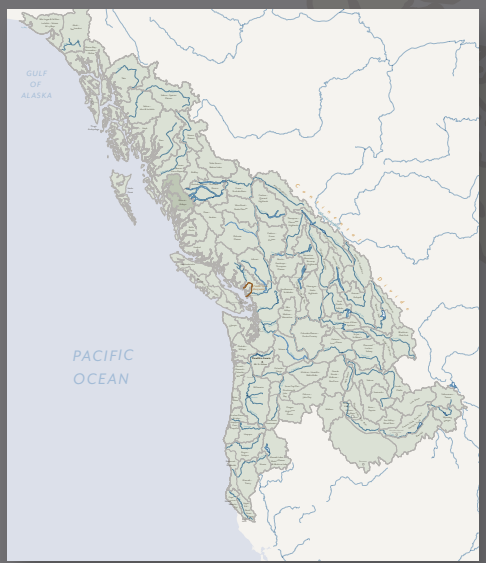
August 9th

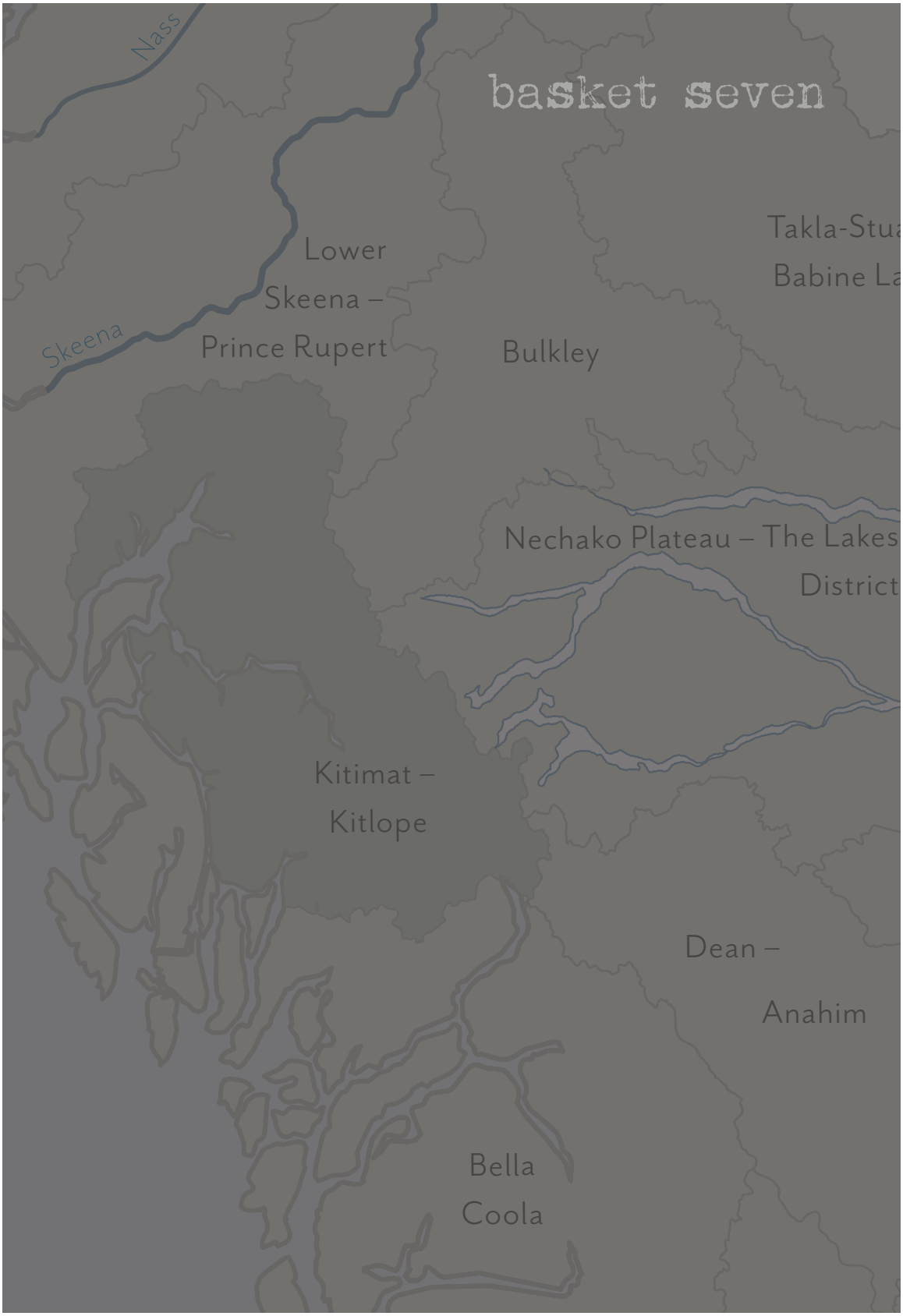
After the flash
blasting flat the shoji screens, brush-stroked
cranes straining necks
disappeared into ash. Mothers
evaporated—children
floated on sides of buildings,
ghosts of minutes before.
Haloed light lingered,
illuminating the cleared miles between blue

jutting mountains and the horizon. Before the lovers'
kiss was complete,
lips barely brushed—one
mushroom cloud bloomed.
Negative and positive burns
outlined women's backs,
patterns of water lilies or chrysanthemums,
quotes inked on a scroll. Cries
ricocheted throughout the ruins.
Survivors stood, stuttering: *So much was*
taken. Children sat hunched under broken
umbrellas, rocking themselves.
Vertical studs in walls creaked.
Where would fireflies go?
X-rays couldn't find them.
Yanking on a barren branch, people discovered
zero blossoms left to fall.

storm clouds

Haida
Gwaii




basket seven
Nass
Skeena
Lower
Skeena –
Prince Rupert
Bulkley
Takla-Stua
Babine La
Nechako Plateau – The Lakes
District
Kitimat –
Kitlope
Dean –
Anahim
Bella
Coola

where zen

where zen
when crouched under tarps
across sidewalks
crammed inside of doorways

cascading thoughts study RVs
shopping carts rattling along an avenue
take in tented terrain
meditate on sleeping bags black plastic bags
boxes chock full of everything somebody owns

eye see you in every nook and cranny of this city

it is hard to breathe
breathe deeply
when one's mind is full of going
keep going
what is going on

what's going on has been going on and on
it started on a bench in the park

in a chair in the library
on the escalator in the Convention Center
in the women's bathroom of the Bon Marché
at a house on a quiet tree-lined street
during rush hour in the back of a bus

now, there is nowhere to be anywhere except there
in the park, everyday/all day
with your four-year-old
undocumented, homeless
telling me Seattle's not that bad

you are everywhere and nowhere any time of day and/or night
they did not meditate on you
were not mindful when the land upon which public housing
used to stand was sold away
(eye know something about being sold away)

did not see the day when
low-rent rooms, affordable apartments
modest housing would disappear
beneath towering towers taking up a space
that used to be a place we knew inside and out

the planners never planned on you
taking up so much space
now that they have displaced you

oh city, eye sorrow for your unsightly citizens
metropolis, eye am not unmindful
of the flagrant misery in our midst
eye see vagrant visions at every stoplight
crossing the street standing at the bus stop
standing in the middle of the street

going in and out of stores
standing
seeing us as we see them
in the daylight beneath streetlights
rain or shine
going on

insight in plain sight for all eyes to see
how humanity
be goin' on

Song of the Triple OG Bird Rescue Man

Blood is the color that mixes late September.
It tints the concrete of a late sunset mass.
It makes a mass of niggas and blackbirds.
T*he* OG *in white will take them.*
It is on wings of those beat and broke in migrations,
those caught up in wounds and rickety structure
those lost in aroma's poisons and intoxicants
allusive until they couldn't breathe.
T*he* OG *in white will bring them home*
Illusive is the errant gangsta disciple
as he washes his pavement of red.
Illusive is his second act with body bags
and his church with invisible chimes.
Allusive are the yellow tapes fluttering.
In the leaves
with dust-to-dust coloring everything around it.
L*ord,* I*'ll go sweeping through the city*
where my hood niggas have rolled before.

The old man claps, and cleaner particles
become a set of flying night birds.

The old man claps and ruins of a playground
become neither ruins nor a playground.
The arcs of the busted jungle gym
lift and re-sheath their pipe swords,
lift every rock that interacts with his ash
as the swing set chains stop their hanging.
The OG in white will bring them home.
At dusk, home goings are everywhere.
Agony moves through Anglican storefronts.
Agony lies still in the gravel.
Dope boys barely make their stops now.
Dope fiends run to the water.
At dusk, the OG finds place after place
to give rosaries and proper burials.
I will stand someday by—by the river.
Won't be back on this block no damn more
The OG in white will take them.
The OG in white will bring them home

Say Bobby, How Will the Apocalypse Come

Look in the detention salts
and the barren morning cages
with the final seal,
and soot a river that washes
away the swills
that took place in the water.

Look for the sun
as it collapses into dirt licks,
then sprinkles into hail
over compounds and fences.

The steelhead and trail
will be gone in the gateway.
The raven will ride the coyote
to deliver their kinfolk
from the quays tossed and burned.

Look for the arcs with no sign
of the covenant.
Alms once against a sea of troubles
open furnaces below the children's tents.
Moons transform all homes,
tidings and kinfolk
in the blinding, nothingness sky.
The unseen will deliver
what our id once denied
in the peril of what has been visible.
All ships will have sailed
in spite of their journey.
Blue ferryman will toil
in new lit lakes.
Looks will pass as vision
for unseen eyes
and fences will give boards but no shelter.

The sea will be filthy.
The sea will be burning.

That beast will move in buildings
above the dirt in the captured hour come at last.
The beasts will inhabit the image of man
that circuits and troubles all sight.
The last shall be the first
in that final seal night.
This is how we will die.

The Poet's Mountain

Mae Rim River, Thailand

Galen Garwood

Dance of the Bulldozers

On the one hundreth anniversary of Paul Celan's death

See them pirouette
    on the hill at night
the grain threshers with the D10 Cats
the tunnel borers with the road pavers
round and round and do-si-do
    greased hydraulics gleaming
under the halogens.

In a yard below,
    static dark,
    fireflyless.
A laptop flickers inside a screened-in porch,
    bluing the face of a fourteen-year-old boy
        tapping his way … where?

        Heaped in a basket
        in the middle of the table,
dead fruit.

Return to Cascadia

August 2016

The ocean wind in my eyes again
and the shining strand
and the bright clear thought of the sea.

I lean my forehead in
as though to be bathed in it.
The horizon burns a thin silver fire.

Stacked in the desert, all that densifying time,
all that thirst for eternity.
I still wear the dust of it in my clothes.

Here it's life more than time.
Boulders crumble under the spongy
seductions of bright green mosses.

Cascades pour through fractures
in the softening mountains.
A different kind of oath

is uttered here
as though over water
as if for a queen.

Walking to the Restoration

A few months ago, the word *restoration* took up residence in my mind and began setting roots there. In the manner of an oak in a field, it rose above the other words around it, kin to wider things, like the horizon and the Earth's turning. It was sure of itself, this word, spreading in a constellation of directions, commanding my thoughts, bearing the energy and authority of something whose time has come.

Perhaps what drew me is what it's not—new or technological. Restoration is no one's innovation. It's also not "environment," a word I find problematic. If the aim of a word is to speak for its subject, to lend an appropriate feeling for it, environment fails. Try as it might, it can't reach beyond its political confines into the depths of the actual living world. Instead, it functions like an ideological marker, partitioning people onto one side or another of an increasingly dangerous divide. Perhaps it's the vacuum left in the wake of this unfortunate word that allows "restoration" to emerge so succinctly, to be the oak in the clearing.

The more I circled it, the more it revealed its universality. There is no end to what you can restore. In addition to land, you can restore health, trust, balance, justice, democracy, civility, vision: all of which seem broken today. You can restore a river and you can restore a Model T. A farmer distrustful of "environmentalism" might welcome a conversation about restoring fertility to his or her soil. A building contractor may not think he has much in common with an environmentalist, but both might equally appreciate the craft in an old Victorian home and agree the building should be restored. With restoration, political identity becomes a little less predictive, its borders more porous.

It also has a bridge-like quality. You can imagine divergent peoples meeting at the middle of such an intention, approaching it from different directions but agreeing on its suitability, its rightness. It could sit as easily in a conservative conversation as a liberal one and, in today's fractured world, that is no small thing.

One day, while walking down a country road I made it a noun and capitalized it. I called it The Restoration, a coronation it accepted rather

nobly, I thought. Now I felt myself apprehending not just a resonant phrase, but a potential human era, an organizing principle capable of competing with capitalism itself, as though its natural successor. Is that too grandiose? A few feet overhead, a sharp-shinned hawk floated over, the scalloped dark and light design on the undersides of its wings clearly discernible. The soundlessness of the passage stopped me. Whether coincidence or not, I felt an affirmation. Nature approved, I decided and kept walking.

⌗

That journey soon took a more practical turn when I came across a notice about the Global Earth Repair Conference taking place near where I live in the northwest corner of the US Pacific Northwest. The conference promised a four-day exploration into every imaginable aspect of restoration, and I signed up immediately.

Looking for a broad overview, the first sessions I attended were "Earth Repair in India," delivered by Rajendra Singh—known as "the water man of India"—and "Earth Repair in Africa by Precious Phiri.

Singh is credited with bringing water back to over a thousand villages and resurrecting numerous dried-up rivers throughout some of India's most desiccated landscapes. Though he started out doing medical work, he was challenged one day by an Indigenous farmer who told him that if he really wanted to help the villagers, he would bring them water. Then this farmer explained to him the old ways of harvesting the rains; ways largely undone by subsequent British colonial rule. The principle was simple: hold the rainfall on the land, not with industrial-scale dams, but small, traditional catchments called check dams, or *johads*. Once held, the water would drain down, recharging aquifers, feeding vegetation, and calling back long-lost weather patterns.

It worked, almost magically, as it had worked for centuries before the British imposed centralized engineering. Not only did the old methods restore land previously barren, they also prevented flooding, moderated droughts, and cooled the local climate by a rather auspicious 20 Celcius.

In time, forgotten rivers began flowing again, and young people, who had fled the region, began returning. Villages revived, farming resumed, wildlife reappeared.

Phiri's presentation, "Earth Repair in Africa," began like Singh's, with photos of cracked and barren landscapes. Then pictures of the miracle: chest-high pasture grass, wildlife browsing, children playing in a river. Like Singh, Phiri didn't bring new knowledge, imposed from outside, but instead restored something preexistent which had been lost. In this case, it was the once-teeming herds of wildlife, ungulates such as zebra and wildebeest, which had fertilized and hoof-tilled the landscape for millennia. Phiri and her team, using grazing techniques pioneered by Zimbabwean ecologist Allan Savory, began moving cattle in patterns similar to the ancient herds, to which the land responded exuberantly, as though remembering itself. Forgotten shrubs and grasses appeared again, and, as in India, a local river once thought extinct started to flow.

Along with wildlife, human culture returned too. Cow herding had lost status against the advance of technology, coming to be considered work for high school dropouts. But as the land returned to health, more and more young people showed up, wanting to learn the trade.

I could have also attended "Reforesting Scotland," "Mycorrhizal Fungi and Jamaica," "Wetland Restoration with Ranchers in Harney Basin, East Oregon," "Agroforestry in the Pacific Northwest," "Earth Repair after Hurricanes," "Earth Repair in War-Torn Areas," and would probably have heard the same basic story: not only is the land renewed but so too are the people, and the relationship between them. But it was "Ecosystem Restoration for Climate" that caught my attention. I'd brought a question with me, and I was hoping this panel might answer it. The question, or questions, went something like this: I*f climate projections are modeled on a current baseline of ruined landscapes, biocidal farming, and collapsing ecosystems, what would they predict on a planet that was healthy, or being restored to health? Doesn't the Earth have a say in this?*

Apparently, I wasn't the only one with questions. The room was packed, and I found a place against the wall with about twenty others. A panel of eight presenters from various parts of the world had been pulled

together; most Skyped in remotely.

Professor Millán M. Millán, who began his career as an aeronautical engineer (and who also happened to design the metal detectors we pass through at airports) got things started by referencing a 1971 MIT publication called I*nadvertent Climate Modification*. This early scientific treatise on climate change reflected what the modern climate narrative seems to have forgotten: that there is more to climate than the buildup of carbon gases. There is also a local and regional basis moderated by hydrologic cycles. In fact, the most significant driver of climate, both in terms of heating and cooling, by volume and weight, isn't CO_2 but H_2O, water. It affects climate in all its various phases: as a potent greenhouse gas, as heat-reflecting ice and cloud, through cooling by evaporation, amongst others. "Back then," he said, "the idea was that there were two legs to the climate, one being carbon gases and the greenhouse effect, the other land use and hydrology, because whenever you alter land surface you immediately change critical hydrologic cycles, from very small-scale to very large." And that profoundly affects climate.

This was news to me. In years of climate activism, I had never heard much about land use—urbanization, industrial agriculture, deforestation, and the like—or the hydrologic cycle. It was always about atmospheric carbon. Millán wasn't dismissing atmospheric carbon, it was just that for him the carbon that mattered most was the carbon in the soil and vegetation, for through them ran the prize—water.

"Water begets water, soil is the womb, and vegetation is the midwife," continued Millán. Apparently, when scientists go down the restoration road, they start talking like poets. Unlike the common perception that rain originates over large water bodies like lakes and oceans—which to some degree it does, depending on the location—it mostly develops *and regenerates itself* over living landscapes, via hydrologic cycles which are profoundly local, cycling through watersheds large and small. "Clouds begin in the ground," he said, calling to mind what Singh and his Indigenous guide accomplished in India. Through various, local means of holding water on land, they "planted" future clouds in the ground and eventually "regrew" lost rain patterns, cooling their local climate as they

did so. Not surprisingly, in India they say, "Water is climate, climate is water."

Vegetation is the midwife because it delivers moisture from the soil to the atmosphere via transpiration, thus feeding the formation of clouds. Like this, plants help water propagate itself through soil, landscape, and atmosphere, cooling all three on its journey. We've seen in India and Zimbabwe that rain can be convinced to return to an area it seems to have abandoned. Millán is now working to reestablish lost summer storms over arid regions of the Mediterranean, which in Roman times were wetlands. He hopes to accomplish this with the strategic planting of woodlands. Since rain there is now scarce, he must hold what little falls on the land as long as possible. The means for this is soil, but not just any kind will do. It has to be living soil, capable of creating what he called the soil sponge.

Didi Pershouse, a soil sponge strategist, author and educator, described the soil sponge as "the basic infrastructure that makes life on land possible." She demonstrated with a plate heaped with dry flour. The flour represented the degraded soils of modern agriculture, heavily tilled and chemically sterilized. She poked holes in the bottom of a cup to simulate rain and rained over the flour. The water slid off as if repelled, or carved deep gouges and ravines, before flooding the plate. What remained resembled a classically eroded landscape.

Then she did the same onto three slices of bread. The bread represented living soil, or soil leavened with carbon-based microorganisms into a living sponge-like matrix. This soil absorbed nine times as much water as the flour, and the water that did drain through sank downward, seeping out of the bottom into what—in a natural system—would be an aquifer, getting filtered both physically and biologically along the way.

Then she gestured to the two plates, asking, "In a dry climate, with infrequent rain and strong wind, which would you rather have? In a wet climate with heavy and frequent rain, which would you rather have? If you were a seed trying to grow, where would you rather make your home? If there were hazardous chemicals in the soil that you wanted to keep out of local rivers and streams, which would you want?" Another question one could ask: "If you were trying to draw carbon out of the

atmosphere, which would you need?"

The difference between these two soils is life, or, chemically speaking, carbon. One has it, the other doesn't. Or you could say, one has vegetation, the other doesn't. When plants pull carbon out of the air they essentially make themselves out of it, mixing it with mineral nutrients drawn up from the soil, making carbohydrates, or carbon sugars, which they then feed to the soil microbial community, down through their roots but also when they decompose into the ground. Like this, you could say, plants sweeten the soil with carbon.

The equation is simple: SSC (sand, silt, clay) plus C (carbon) = soil sponge. The carbon in this equation comes as life: mycelia, fungi, bacteria, nematodes, earthworms, and other soil microorganisms and the slimes and glues they exude. Only this mixture, fed by plants sipping carbon out of the air, can produce the soil sponge, of which she showed us a highly magnified photograph. You could see the individual mineral particles and clumped aggregates and, between them, translucent slimes and threads holding the particles both together and apart. This created spaces that Pershouse, who also tends toward the poetic, called cathedrals. It is where the water is held, much like the air pockets in bread. This stored water feeds more vegetation, which draws down more carbon, while feeding the clouds more moisture to spread more life, and around and around it goes.

"It's a very, very elegant, natural system," added Walter Jehne, a renowned Australian soil scientist and UN climate advisor. He referred to the soil sponge as the soil-carbon sponge, emphasizing its carbon sequestration capabilities. Like Millán and Pershouse, he took a broader view of carbon, presenting it as a necessary element in the cycle of life. Also like them, he didn't speak much in numbers, but the few he offered were illuminating. At present, 130 billion tons of atmospheric carbon are produced on the planet each year through various oxidative processes, such as forest fires, modern agricultural practices, and the burning of fossil fuels. However, 120 billion of those tons are then reabsorbed by the various processes of life and sequestered in soil, plants, and animals. It's this second number that turns the lens, bringing the nature of our present crisis

into clearer view. This is a crisis of balance—not just of chemicals in the atmosphere, but in the overall functioning of life on Earth. The planet, if allowed, and even helped, to flourish, can cool itself naturally, absorbing carbon along the way. If we weren't busy paving, tilling, and poisoning its living membrane of soil, it would be turning the excess carbon in the atmosphere into more life.

Here Jehne reminded us that while sequestering carbon is important and necessary, we need to go beyond that and begin to cool the planet. This has become increasingly important as the oceans, which have been steadily absorbing our excess heat, are now full, and will begin throwing heat back out, with future land-based warming baked into the proverbial cake. Cooling the planet may sound like a mammoth undertaking, but according to Jehne, it is quite doable. He estimates that restoring one percent of the planet's natural cooling capacity through restored hydrologic cycles would offset the heating effects of current anthropogenic carbon gases. At two percent we are cooling down.

Pershouse provided a visual explanation, showing a fence-line photo of barren, rocky soil next to a section of land restored to rangeland grasses and shrubs, both under the same blazing sun. She then asked us to imagine standing on one side, and then the other, in bare feet. Not only would our feet feel cooler on the grassy side, but so would our heads. The air temperature above vegetated landscapes is cooler than that over bare soil or pavement by as much as 11.6° Celcius.

We started burning life off this planet long ago, Jehne explained. Through deforestation, the draining of marshes, and exhaustive agricultural practices, we've not only been heating the Earth, we've been desiccating it, with a trail of over twenty self-made deserts left in our wake. They reach around the globe on virtually every continent, not to mention the once heavily forested Middle East. The obvious opportunity—and this spoke directly to my question—is in bringing all those places back to life, with all the extra carbon in the atmosphere helping to feed the growth, and all that growth helping to cool the atmosphere. Restore soil and nature does the rest. As though speaking in the voice of the planet, he said, "I can run a monsoon, I can regreen continents."

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The Q&A session at the end was dominated by questions like why isn't anybody talking about this? It was as though we found ourselves standing in a new conceptual geography. Zach Weiss, who runs an ecological restoration firm, laid out this new terrain. Carbon, he pointed out, is invisible, and its cycling is so slow we can never see the results of our work with it. With water, though, the results are almost immediate, occurring within a single rainy season. And when people witness the rebirth of their landscapes, they no longer need convincing, he said. "They come running."

Charles Eisenstein, the philosopher on the panel and author of *Climate:* A N*ew* S*tory*, flipped the narrative completely, pointing out that when he googled the term "effect of biodiversity on climate," the results always came back for the opposite request: the effect of climate on biodiversity. He encountered the same with soil erosion. He was researching what he called his living Earth hypothesis, that the climate is a product of a living biosphere and discovered how skewed we are towards seeing it the other way around. He brought up the classic image of the cracked field. We've all seen versions of it alongside articles about climate change. The image implies that global warming, or anthropogenic carbon gases, caused the field to dry and crack, when actually abusive land use practices likely did that by ruining regional hydrologic cycles. The same is true of most flooding, where the soil sponge has been destroyed and the land can't hold and store the rain when it falls. And as Millán pointed out, our forests are drying out mostly because of damaged hydrologic flows. "I think," said Eisenstein, "we are just beginning to understand how this planet actually works, and the role of life in maintaining climate."

T*he role of life in maintaining climate.* I hadn't before considered the notion, but felt its validity immediately, and it came as a relief. For years I've watched the climate narrative gradually push the nonhuman sphere to the side and place us, our technological innovations and economic interests, at the center. We've been peering skyward for invisible carbon, fixating on abstract numbers, predicting far futures based on ice cores from deep pasts, all the while somewhat blind to the saws, roads, bull-

dozers, and industrial farms busily dismembering the living remnants of what ultimately creates and maintains the climate. Now we turn to face a scale of ecological collapse we scarcely possess the vocabulary to describe.

How ironic, and even mysterious, that it's the places we've most injured that now look back with such profound capacity to help us. There is forgiveness in that, a generosity that is nearly unaccountable, and yet it's here, all around us, vibrant with potential. Somewhere during the discussion, the host joked about the need for a new bumper-sticker phrase: Make Carbon Life Again.

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I had more than enough for my brain to process at this point, but as I was to find out at the closing ceremony, the restoration story isn't to be fully comprehended with the mind alone.

We had gathered in a large circle, and an elder of the Rogue River People, Grandmother Agnes Baker-Pilgrim, invited us to drop from the intellectual mind to the heart-mind, that place from which we truly meet the world and each other. A Lakota man—who "comes from a place also surrounded by seas, seas of grass"—spoke of flying over the Arctic and seeing vast cracks in the ice below him, and the deep grief the sight produced in him. He then sang a song, an old song, and you could hear the sadness in it. It stretched all the way back to the days of invasion and massacre, an ancient grief singing through a present one.

Another elder, a white elder, slowly tapping a drum, invoked the place itself: the giant madronas branching overhead, the grass and soil beneath our feet, the surrounding hills, and ocean-fed breeze. The sun was warm on our faces. Birds sang into the silence. I rarely tear up, especially in public, but all the grief I'd been holding for this Earth suddenly started to move. I felt my chest beginning to shake, and, though surprised, I welcomed it, and let my eyes brim. Water again, salt water, like the water in the ocean so near I could smell it.

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A few weeks have passed since I returned home, and I realize I no longer see the climate the same. Or perhaps more accurately, I've actually begun to *see* the climate, in the soils, the waters, in the flows and cycles of life. Before, it was always a featureless abstraction. I imagined a kind of vast atmospheric bubble, which one could presumably stick a thermometer into for a temperature reading. But I've since learned global temperatures are actually averages of thousands of individual local readings, each from specific landscapes. One is out my window, another yours.

Look around. Imagine seeing, say, twenty miles in all directions. How much of the land is covered in concrete, gathering heat? How much is laid out as monocrop, vast tracts of chemically sterilized soil, bare much of the year, sequestering and transpiring nothing? If there is grassland, how much is wrongly grazed? If there are mountains, how desiccated are they from not receiving moisture from the lowlands, which have been crippled of their hydrologic function, dammed at their own headwaters?

Looking out my window I see a clouded fragment of the Salish Sea, the inland waters between the US and Canada. Seen from overhead it resembles a bodily organ, spreading lung-like, north and south into inland bays fed by a densely venous tapestry of streams and rivers. There its apex predators, the Southern Resident orcas, are starving. They're not starving because of carbon in the air, but because we've dammed the rivers that once fed them massive runs of salmon. We can decarbonize the entire global economy and they will still likely slip into extinction. So it is with so many creatures and remnant ecosystems. In many ways, the last thing they need is for us to embark on a new industrial revolution, however green it proposes to be. What they need from us is far more obvious and immediate—to stop the damage and repair the damage we've already done. And then join in the renewal.

Here is the nexus, the spark point. It's where the human hand and the living Earth, our intention and the regenerative genius of life, meet. Magic happens here, and points to the first thing we need to restore—our relationship with the rest of life. We are human, after all, as in humus—of the Earth—and so also "humility," which I would offer as the operative demeanor of the Restoration: to humbly restore our place as humans

among, not over, the greater life community. If we could accomplish that simple grace, we would find ourselves hitched to the will of the planet itself, on the side of the very forces that can save us. Our human ship, tossing about in self-made gales, might find a compass point, a common destination by which to reach calmer waters. The Restoration could be just that at first, a directional bearing.

Where is it pointing? It's pointing here, where we've always been, toward vast landscapes hungry for life again, lost rivers ready to flow again. Here, soils are building, not washing away, and restored farmlands are calling displaced peoples back home. Here, no miracle technologies come to save us, and the tech billionaires are surprised to find they're no longer at the center of the story. The Earth has taken their place, and each day it grows back a little more skin, breathes a little more cooling water, lends a little more credence to the idea of hope.

Does this mean we can go on indiscriminately burning carbon? Of course not. Carbon gases do trap heat, frustrating the planet's already degraded ability to cool itself. They're also turning the oceans to vinegar. And they remain in the atmosphere for as long as centuries, subjecting all life to planetary changes of geologic scale, an epically irresponsible thing to do.

But there are two legs to the climate—CO_2 and H_2O. We can think of the carbon gases leg as the pushing-off leg, the one that says *no* to our reliance on fossil fuels, to the pipelines, the drilling, the concentrated greed, the asthmatic kids. Stepping forward is the land use and hydrology leg, saying *yes* to rebuilding soils, repairing rivers, rehydrating forests, reviving land-based economies, restoring human respect for the Earth and each other. Together they provide a stride we can maintain for the long haul, twin determinations with a common confidence, on the Earth and toward life.

Maiah Merino

Orca eyes

there is a six-year-old boy
whose eyes were
gifted
by J-46 "Star"

he covers
his sight
closest to me
as he walks by,

so we
don't see
each other

because the heavy
ocean
in his
heart
betrays him—

wandering
into other
people's territories

wondering
how they
will hold him,
through all of
the coming
storm seasons.

Gerard Kuperus

The Sounds of This Place: Forgotten and Lost Voices

Damn traffic! Why are all these people on the road? This is indeed increasingly "Crowdifornia"! Look at that: all these people alone in their car! I normally don't drive to work, but today I must. Here I am, stuck in traffic and against my better environmental sensibilities, the solitary occupant of this vehicle. Alone indeed, just like all these other people around me in their steel shells. I am painfully reminded of the reality that I am complicit in this crime against the planet. I am "Crowdifornia," the traffic, the pollution, the killing of species. I take a few deep breaths, trying to let go of the stress and frustration—trying to find some stillness and not getting upset with the fact that I am surrounded by expensive machines used for the ridiculous purpose of transporting individuals to jobs that contribute to the further destruction of the earth. I am trying to not get upset by the fact that the cost of each of these cars could be used to get multiple unhoused people off the street permanently.

Instead of trying some other meditative practices I turn on the radio. Kurt Cobain sings: "With the lights out, it's less dangerous / Here we are now, entertain us / I feel stupid and contagious / Here we are now, entertain us." He is one of the voices of my generation, representative of what became the grunge scene, my first association with Seattle, Cascadia. The release of this album, *Nevermind*, was to us alternative kids in Friesland, the Netherlands, the biggest event of 1991. We heard

these songs over and over again, played them on our guitars and with our bands, danced to them over the next years, including my first years in college in Amsterdam(!). This was it! Past tense indeed. Listening to it again, I strangely fail to feel any excitement, beyond the initial excitement of hearing Nirvana—the band, that is. The basic repetition of three or four chords, the annoying baseline, the repetitive drum, the lame lyrics. Nevermind indeed! Is it my foul mood, or have I moved beyond the Generation X mindset that simply wanted to be entertained? Was this our collective practice of letting things go, by dancing to these ridiculously simple songs? Our dancing was purposefully without any sophistication, jumping around, without making any eye contact. Without a doubt we perceived it as an act of rebellion. Other Seattle bands had more depth, both musically and in terms of their lyrics, yet were equally rebellious. "Hunger Strike" by Temple of the Dog made me first realize that the USA was perhaps not entirely full of greedy, selfish people who feel entitled to drop bombs on Iraq, broadcast it on CNN, and give it the code name "Desert Storm" as if it were some kind of computer game. As you might guess, I myself was not a typical Gen X teenager. I was politically engaged, reading anarchist literature, a vegetarian at the age of sixteen, a registered conscientious objector when I turned eighteen, and so forth.

Of course, Kurt Cobain was frustrated with how his music became popular in the way it did. The sarcasm of "here we are now, entertain us" was largely lost. He lost his own voice. I am now also turning off his voice, and tune to a different station. KALX, the UC Berkeley radio station, is playing an interesting instrumental piece. It turns out to be *The Museum of Lost Species*, an album released in 2019 by the Berkeley musical group Thomas Carnacki. I am presumably listening to sounds representing lost species. Maya Lin—the artist who designed the Vietnam Memorial—is similarly creating an online memorial for species that are lost or endangered called "What Is Missing?" Indeed, what is missing? What is lost (for what)? And what occurs in the transformation of extinction into artistic expressions such as music, video, poetry, or electronic images? Are these expressions functioning as memories? As a call to action? As a way to connect to loss, to mourn and/or celebrate these species that will be gone forever? The

irony is great, sitting in Crowdifornia traffic remembering the species that we are literally and figuratively driving into extinction, hearing the voices that are already lost, while not hearing any voices around us.

I am reminded of anthropologist and nature writer Richard Nelson who did several projects on lost or forgotten voices while living in the northern parts of Cascadia, also known as southeast Alaska. Nelson recorded voices of animals (such as raven, bears, whales, wolves, and salmon), as well as the earth, including trees, winds, tides, rain, and ice. His recordings of the voices of the earth are astonishing. Nels, as his friends called him, once played a recording to my students and me. He had made it in a cave full of ice. "This is what the beginning of the earth must have sounded like," he told us. Listening to Nelson and his recordings one, indeed, becomes aware that even before life, the earth was full of sounds—the voices of the earth. Volcanoes creating the atmosphere, islands, and mountains; tectonic plates shifting; waters carving mountains, eroding coastlines; ice pushing across continents and receding again. The creation of the surface of the earth as we know it today must have been a noisy affair. Of course, the origin of the universe is also described with a word suggesting a loud event: a bang.

In his written works, such as *The Island Within*, Nelson writes about forgotten voices, in particular, those of animals and the earth. After a surf session in the frigid Alaskan waters off the remote island at the center of Nelson's work, he realizes how little he knows about water. "Perhaps there is too much difference between the human mind and the mind of water," he starts, but then he double-guesses himself: "Or perhaps I haven't watched long enough. I think of Koyukon elders, who have spent their lifetimes studying every detail of their natural surroundings and have combined this with knowledge passed down from generations of elders before them. The more people experience the repetitions of events in nature, the more they see in them and the more they know, but the more they know their limitations of their understanding" (45). It is the Koyukon, and other Athabaskan peoples with whom Nelson spent significant time, who have formed his understanding of the natural world, as well as the limitation of his understanding.

Crow Dance

Rick Bartow

Yaquina Bay

In many ways, the approach of Nelson and the Athabaskan peoples is comparable to that of Zen Master Dōgen in his T*he* M*ountains and* W*aters Sutra*. Dōgen also attempts to listen to the mountains and waters, in order to have the processes of the earth tell their story. As the sutra begins, "These mountains and waters of the present are the expression of the old buddhas. Each, abiding in its own Dharma state, fulfills exhaustive virtues. Because they are the circumstances 'prior to the kalpa of emptiness,' they are this life of the present; because they are the self 'before the germination of any subtle sign,' they are liberated in their actual occurrence" (23). These voices of the earth—the mountains and waters are empty—*i.e.,* impermanent and without qualities, characteristics, or names, besides the ones we have given to them. Dōgen's sutra is the listening to the voices that are not our own, or that lie beyond ours. He expresses the voices of the mountains and waters in a way that anyone educated in Western traditions might quickly dismiss as obvious and blatant contradictions: the discussion of mountains leads us to a tautology that states that the "mountains lack none of their proper virtues" followed by a contradictory concluding statement that does not follow any logic: "hence, they are constantly at rest and constantly walking" (24). For waters, he lists a series of either obvious or obviously inaccurate qualities that water lacks: "Water is neither strong nor weak, neither wet nor dry, neither moving nor still, neither cold nor hot, neither being nor nonbeing, neither delusion nor enlightenment" (28). I, as a smartass philosopher, might dismiss Dōgen here with the same pace a GOP senator acquits their president. Perhaps then I should stop and engage with the text. As Shōhaku Okumura writes in his commentary on T*he* M*ountains and* W*aters Sutra* after citing the opening paragraph of Dōgen's text, "Do you understand this? Somehow, even though we don't understand it, it sounds beautiful, very poetic. We want to understand. This thirst to understand is a desire; it stands in the way of our encountering the text" (39). When I read the text to satisfy my ego, it is not unlike the experience of being stuck in traffic desiring to get to my destination, without encountering the traffic, the chaos that we call civilization. I am not listening.

Nelson learned to listen to the earth through his Indigenous teachers. After Nelson nearly killed himself by walking onto ice without taking proper caution, one of his Koyukon teachers told him, "You know a lot of things, but you are not very wise." It is over years of living with and carefully listening to different Native peoples that Nelson became wise. In his ethnographic study and personal reflection M*ake* P*rayers to the* R*aven*, Nelson describes the Koyukon experience of "a different reality in the natural world" (238). As a white Western man, even while he has always been close to nature, he experiences the world in a fundamentally different way than the Koyukon do. It is something he was ready for as an anthropologist, but was "entirely unprepared for it emotionally, unready for the impact of *living* it" (239). It is, he suggests, the result of our Western education as opposed to what the Koyukon observe: "What we have *learned* to see… my Koyukon teachers had learned through their own traditions about dimensions in nature that I, as a Euro-American, had either not learned to perceive or had been explicitly taught do not exist" (239). The Koyukon worldview is entirely based on change and their "economy" is "a matter of the moment" (216) in which "mobility is the essential tool; territorial freedom is the essential concept" (217). More concretely this means that sometimes they find food close to their villages, sometimes they need to travel vast distances. It also means that they need a strong ability to adapt. The Koyukon cannot afford to try to master the land, they are constituents of the land; they do not confront but yield to nature (240). Within that reality "the flow of the land becomes also the flow of the mind" (243). This idea of the flow of the mind that originates in the flow of the land is also at work in T*he* I*sland* W*ithin*. The wild island Nelson visited throughout the book is within him, a part of him.

Returning to California, my current island within, stagnant traffic is the flow of the land, while my mind is racing at a thousand miles per hour. I think about how this year, for the third fall in a row, my state was on fire. Two hundred thousand people were evacuated, and electricity was shut off in areas with expected high winds. The utility company PG&E quickly became the scapegoat, so that the disaster was reduced to a management issue, not related to our collective failure to live well. It

exemplifies how our Western mindset explicitly regards any natural disaster as something that is unrelated to our own actions. In a time marked by climate chaos and named the Anthropocene, Capitalocene, or Sixth Great Extinction, it is becoming painfully clear that there is something terribly wrong with our so-called scientific worldview. When wildfires are raging, hurricanes wipe out whole communities, sea levels are rising, storms appear in previously stormless regions, droughts and monsoons are becoming more extreme and widespread, and low-lying communities are slowly disappearing, it is time to revisit our worldview.

To change our worldview, we will need to return to the land and the forces and the voices of the earth that created and keep creating the land. The West Coast of the United States, part of the Ring of Fire, has been largely formed through volcanoes. In places such as Cascadia we find Indigenous stories that present a worldview in which the forces of the earth, including volcanic forces, play a central role. Many of the stories of the Haida involve Dzelarhons, a volcano woman or mountain spirit who punishes those who abuse the creatures of the earth. The volcano woman, Dzelarhons, is often associated with frogs. The word Dzelarhons is also the Haida word for frog. Different stories tell of volcanic eruptions after frogs were thrown into a fire. One story relates to an eruption caused by a young man who had tortured a salmon by pushing a little rock into its back. As is often the case with Indigenous stories, they tell us how to treat other creatures and respect all life.

Beyond these morals, the stories of Dzelarhons also offer a perspective on the formation of the land. Anne Cameron describes among other things the formation of a well-known Cascadian island, which started with the coughing of the frog woman. This "caused the waves to splash, some water went up her nose, and she sneezed. It was a monstrous sneeze, and it shook Frog Woman awake. The edges of the large shelf were again crumbling, and drifting away, only this time, because the sneeze had been greater than the first cough which broke loose the small islands, the pieces floating away were smaller and one of the pieces was so big it was almost a world unto itself and is today called Vancouver Island" (106/7). The appearance, disappearance, and reappearance of land is personified

through the figure of Frog Woman whose actions are not always deliberate, as opposed to the actions of the other animals.

Indigenous stories, such as those of the Haida, personify the elements and provide a strong sense of agency to animals. Westerner scientists will acknowledge that all life is made possible by volcanoes. They have not only formed the land (and continue to do so), they have also formed the earth's atmosphere. Gasses such as hydrogen sulfide, methane, and carbon dioxide emitted from volcanoes have formed the atmosphere. These gasses still waft out of tectonic rifts. My friend Tim Freeman, a philosopher and ceramicist, followed Nietzsche's advice to live on the edge of a volcano, in his case the Kilauea Caldera on the Big Island of Hawaii. During the 2018 eruption he had to live through constant earthquakes that threatened to destroy him and his ceramic vessels, reminding him that volcanoes are not only nurturing creators, but also violent destroyers, even the comparatively mellow Hawaiian volcanoes.

On a human level, we must live with the reality of a volcano as we do with wildfires and hurricanes, while realizing that in both its destructive and creative aspects we lack any kind of negotiating power. We best listen to their voices. We can understand the language of the volcano to some degree. A volcano provides warnings before it erupts and often humans can flee before a real catastrophe. For storytellers, the narrative of the volcano includes different morals. The legends of the Haida, one might suggest, are only stories, made up by humans. As a person who grew up far away from active volcanoes, I tend to think the stories are indeed created. Yet, every single explanation of a volcano is a story, made up by human agents. Even the measurement and collection of data on volcanoes are stories, measured by humans, using scales and criteria invented by humans and measured with instruments conceived and rationalized by scientists. The holy grail of science, data, is far from objective, as Simon Weckert showed. By simply carting around ninety-nine smartphones on quiet streets in Berlin he created a virtual traffic jam on Google Maps. What is lacking in our scientific stories is morality and warnings such as those of Haida, Tlingit, or Koyukon stories. Science fails to provide warnings against our worst inclinations, so that we ultimately fail to live

with the forces of nature in such a way that those forces are not going to wipe us out.

Part of why I commute to San Francisco is because my partner and I wanted to live closer to a natural environment, especially while raising two kids (who of course love cities). We live just north of Mount Tamalpais, or simply "Mount Tam," surrounded by hiking opportunities. I am thinking about such hiking opportunities on this gorgeous January day. Why am I here slowly crawling around Mount Tam in this vehicle in the midst of exhaust, asphalt, endless roads and cars? I could be on the mountain or sailing out on the bay. And so could all those bleary-eyed teenagers playing games behind their computers. Even on public transportation no one is in the present moment. Once on the Golden Gate Bridge during my regular morning commute by bus we were nearing the south tower of the bridge. I looked outside to the waters and a whale breached. "Wow!" After the whale again disappeared under water, I looked around, expecting to share some words on this amazing shared experience. None of them noticed. They were paying attention only to their electronic gadgets, missing a whale breach.

What exactly am I whining about? I have a great job, a good career, am married, have two children, am healthy, have good friends in different parts of the world, travel to great places, live in a beautiful place; I saw a whale breach. What right do I have to be upset about sitting in traffic, while people are literally drowning while trying to make their way to a future that will be a lot less glamorous than mine? Children get separated from their parents at the border of this country. Public schools are failing in areas that "do not matter" because the people who live there do not matter. The great city of San Francisco, so incredibly wealthy, is also full of poverty, unhoused people sleeping on the street in makeshift tent camps; people in all kinds of jobs are not able to afford the rent. It is a city full of displacements—forcing people out, generating long commutes. California is the fifth greatest economy in the world, a significant player in this insanity driven by fossil fuels. Securing those fossil fuels is a US national security priority that has destabilized regions across the world. It is all connected. My driving of this car full of plastics and electronics,

burning gas, polluting; people fleeing their homeland depleted of its natural resources and run by dictators put in place or emboldened by US foreign policies and military interference; Kurt Cobain shooting himself because no one listens.

Dōgen suggests ultimately that we are the mountains and that the mountains are us. Without mountains we would not be. Likewise, it is indeed the case that my actions and even more our collective actions do move mountains, or rather make them move. If we dare to actually listen to the sounds of the earth and the voices of Indigenous Peoples, we will recognize that our actions are not without consequences.

Meanwhile back in my car, I also must recognize that THIS here, this traffic jam, these cars, these horns, the concrete, asphalt, steel, "Crowdifornia" IS the mountains and waters without end. Cars sitting still in a world on the move. Junk on the side of the road. The vibration of cars and motorcycles combusting fossil fuels that were once alive. Two cars ahead have hugged. Steel against steel. Their drivers need a hug. Their body language tries to indicate otherwise. I pass plastic and glass spread out on the asphalt reflecting sunlight. We are all together here in this moment that is fleeting, dissolving into movement.

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Unreal to Real

to the back of
wrong from the start
unknow this depart
Vancouver twilight
trainwave train shadow
shunt clunk shadeland shadfly shamble-shanks
rubbishy gulch-track gleam to river sidle
warehouse after depot after shed after chute
after silo after crane after

I, shade in this
train tag. SKLMSH!
I, grain hopper lumber rack
rumbling boxcar
imported Shakespeare.

KAROOOM!!! Gotcha Poet
point in a grid, bit in a byte
boo in a boonie.

Buy low. Sky blue. Who's it? Not you,
lift the latch crosspatch
of Prufrock's Xanadu
Xanada Canadu.
Wheel your red barrow
in Blake's cathedral
bpNichol St Rains St Ruggles.

Bible omen
schoolery brewing
howitzer idiots
normal ruling.

Rockabye, lost tonight
rockabye, wheely
clackity skulls rattle our masks
when the train hops.

On a Pushing Shifting Thought-train

cross the delta into mountains
mark the trampled snow
follow, don't follow, make it new

follow the tracks the breath prints
foretellers' rails down a rabbit hole
blood at a votive pit, a slashed throat

speak, Holy Forester
speak, Horseman Martyrologist
speak of the Ill-, the Dis-

unhoused, unfed, under bridge's
fan of guy wires lacing concrete ribbon
over silver river, hulk of an old bridge
showering sparks

for three years cutters disappeared it
piece by piece, bartender sez to twilit dome car
on T*he Canadian* whatever is that
stolen land of sawmills
cutting, cutting, cutting trees
to shrink-wrapped two-by-fours

out of key with her time
wringing Kootenay from Camelot
she fished for obstinate rhymes

wander, Odyssea, outpost prisoner
train at Corrections Canada Mission
impossible message self-destruckle
chain-linked custodial *living-unit*

dream of Horseman lullabies,
dream of VIA cook poet Erín
frying eggs in galley car
then writing F*urious*
writing P*illage* L*aud*
writing O C*idadán*

Standing on Cabot's Trail

I wish I'd come here before Cabot
before Lief Erikson and Eric the Red
before Vasco da Gama
before Beowulf
before Christ and Gilgamesh
Adam and Eve
Helen of Troy

before survival of the fittest
ice-age dinosaurs
before mouse-sized horses
elephant-sized rabbits

before trees lichen, fungus, bacteria
big bang lungs and livers
three-meal atomic fibre orbits

before seven-day weeks
lot-value GNP
bargain basement
Eiffel Tower

before sixty-second minutes
four-minute smiles
prime plus one super save

before names will ever
undo what you fool in heaven

I wish I'd come here before even before
I wish this poem could gather every forgotten forsaken being
and return them to where they are loved

where they glint and glimmer in the life-cloth
quark-woven matter of the Real

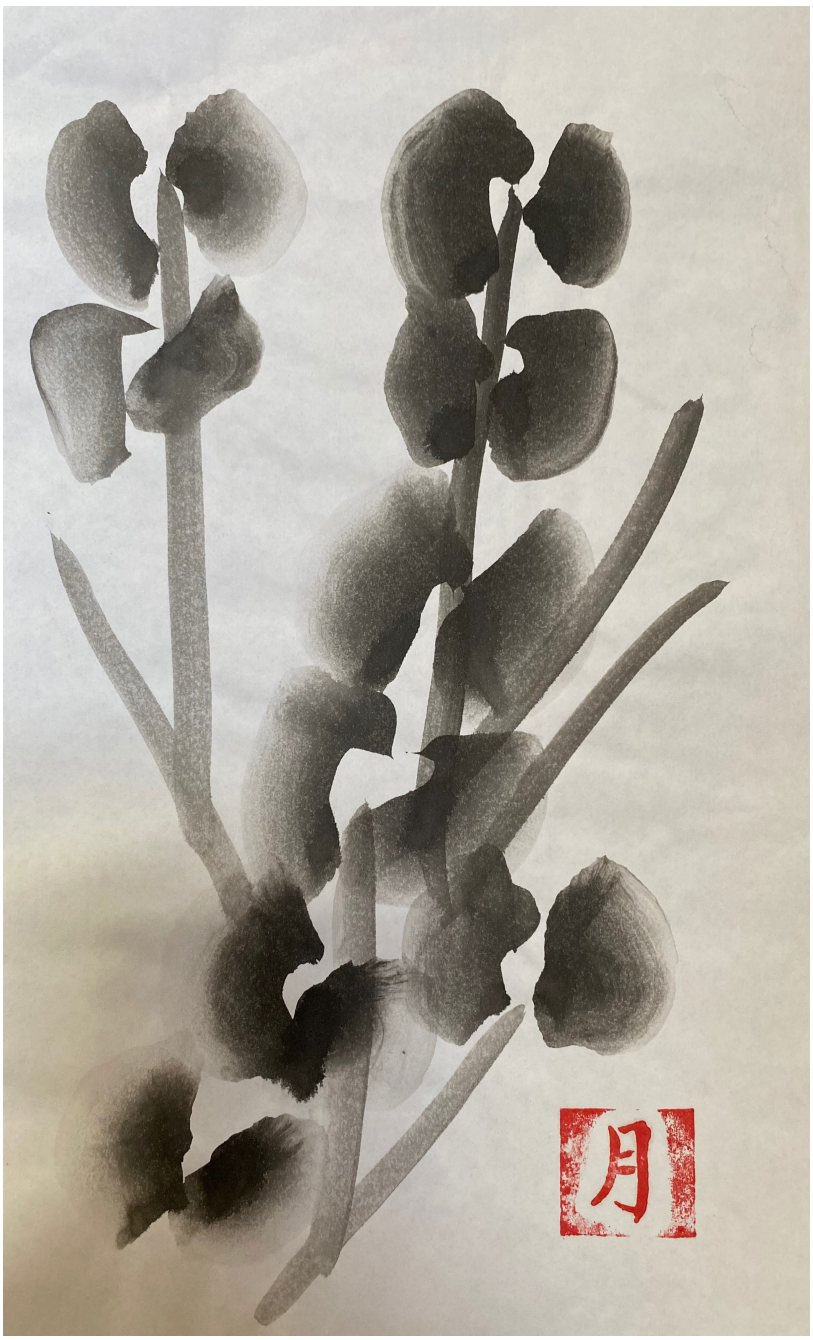
which invites the question:
which beings deserve disremembering
or was it evil spoke thru them

not they who were evil
then what is evil
how do people desire it
how awaken

I wish this wish were not clumsy, vain
lurched blindnesses called words

I wish it were music by Coltrane or Shostakovich
I wish it could counterpoint all at once every language
of every plant, animal, bacteria, mineral, and molecule
and somehow pour out like a milky way
from this upsidedown canoe of a beak
these diamond eyes rowling in my head
this tumbleweed tail
these useless wingstubs

you would hear it
you would put down your guns



Cate Gable

Willapa Bay

dog minutes

"young old man"—
bent/*wrinkles*. my human dog age 10. then think
"life is like a river" (a complex flow of .../ mindless
flood /over Cottonwood Island while sun's co-optive measure/melts
a long sentence that precedes its meaning/leading to a bridge
that draws girders to let steamboats pass 100 years ago. old Fraser bridge
—preamble to
the future—opening to what I was going to say
in dog years
to sense a way—release tensions of fight and flight without fight or flight—a condition wielded then welded to all that angered me *not forgiven! be without them!*
in the dog minutes ahead.

.

tinkered w/ a "poem" — & thot call it all "draft" to assume you'll never
get it, sensing then *no need to*. think: how does taking care of the *88 Buick*
fit in—or sense
of love lost (when it never left? these double tangengential thots without
recourse to one's
good sense and single meaning. *what everyone dreads*

is an end

resolve? dissolve? forcing oneself to happiness — a spectre out of the weight (of weightless thot

thinking beauty of river tree and wind in no sentimental way—a kind of clarity without knowing but its moment.

.

dead ends. senseless to go on to arrive at what? and then reminded/remembered my old anxieties not so strong—but a preoccupation of what you always knew *as you*—to find enough room between the ditch and bank to turn. more washouts!—holes and steeper edges—some road left.

.

the accumulation of *all* that was—*all* that did not
change. the mind when it did not know its future stretched /a field/ to darker clouds — when you're wordless perplexity was the mind as body of the world's impending exit
to what's already gone

—the human embrace to leave who need it most

.

the old farm gone. roads re graded. foolish act to go back—to *what* was there *there*. how to say "emptiness" in memory—in an insistence to imagine you *were* there. fear and what makes it less. *terror of all else*. in the Carsland bar where I used to wait. the past where I now await ... we're all related ... leaving ...

obsessive clouds to the east curved down to fields —

.

the place where memory began / *replaced*—useless to name or describe
—the past neutraled
& what's ahead *the dread of what remains*
heartbreak / — its infinite distance /hope to nothing/ yet to believe in

harsh oppositions gain truer self & being /

•

pandemic hermitage

I. gratitude:

thankful for the telephone
the email
the Queen's mail

thankful for the elder who is not afraid of books
who makes them in his spare time
in many colours in several languages

II. apologia:

I am sorry I cannot sort through the bags of
literary detritus
in your backyard

I may not arrive on your front porch fully human

I may not sit with you in the hospital
in the café

in the garden
in the moonlight

III. for now:

I may fly by your window in the form of a poem
a bird
a shaft of sunlight

HaikuBot editions

geese are everything
I aspire to be and
most of what I fear—

we don't really need
to kidnap an ox, we might
just enjoy the year—

if your words were not
glorified by haiku bot,
they do not exist—

I am elitist
haiku bot is damn bogus
where are the kigo—

old lady archaeology

she was buried with

6 horses
3 dogs

bronze weapons
flint knives

a husband
a daughter

a bowl of coriander
a bag of marijuana

a bow with many arrows
a war axe

cowry shells
clay servants

jade rings
bone pendants

head injuries
breast cancer

musicians
philosophers

cities of the dead

imagine
all the friends lost
peopling my zoom

gaze at the loved ones gathering
for the first time
then the ancestors joining in

o
is that what you look like
gazing

gazing
feasting
re-peopling my heart

Notes

My family created a Discord group to chat through the pandemic. "Haiku Bot editions" is a selection of our words that were detected and immortalized by HaikuBot#6950 and hence, a collaborative poem. Total haiku-like arrangements to date: twenty-five.

Zoom is a video-portal few of us had heard of pre-pandemic.

Always Eugene

The air runs off the river. All spaces
have given in to dreaming
shadows between here and the cedar
lengthening my love for Eugene. This is how
it always begins with me and Eugene.
When I begin observing the trees again.
Always Eugene running around.
Expecting every moment a change.

My sentences are incomplete. What else
This early. Eugene in another heyday.
Same daffodils and hyacinths scratching
The air river willow even far from it.
At home in the library. Others also
Resting their eyes. That's why the carpet
All so quiet. Not even phones ringing.
This way it is the day of the memorial
Every day cycle. Heads bowed. Then
I say no to the salmon dinner. It is
Already too dark for driving but that
Is what we do leaving them behind.

The story should have been more about the landscape.
If I could criticize just for a moment I would say ugly chairs
Yet I would have them in a minute in a second and recover
The material

A fine swirl, a madcap idea, exotic burlap
Velvety horsehair
Recycled later as a shirt.

Once a hurricane has landed, there is really no going back
To before and how before was different
Everything

In place in that place. Even the water

Extra potent
Extra watery.

I was walking to and from my life.
The rain pitter patter all that space
Between the drops onion soup.
Thought it was another corner
To go around and instead went right through
Saw a different angle saw you as an angel
Talking me down from the edge
But I never knew I was quite on it
To begin with. I'll tell you my dream.
It is of my house. A house of trees
Fantastic leaves. They could be needles.
Actually I would prefer pine or cedar.
Cozy. Something branchy. Moving.
I am lucky. True as weather. Say it.
See how they were waiting and waiting
for something to show up in the mail

a turn at the big wheel so to speak
out of their league mostly true
but it was fun while it lasted.

If this poem could be anything
It would be spirit attempts
With feathers and time crossing
Ocean grabbing all light
Mixing it a little and so forth.

At least they weren't endlessly
Sitting in cars and doing just
About the same although leaving
The motor running is what trucks
Do when busy with deliveries.

The Creeks and Rivers and Oceans of Our Bodies

Water wants to help. It spreads out and glitters. Pretends it isn't there. Water shows itself as green, in the green, under bales of hay waiting in Leatherwood's field, just three or four now that haven't been picked up. We see them from the sliding glass door, we see them through the trees. Huge cylinders of dried grasses like sections sliced from a long roll of carpet. So we can say this is a wet summer even though I don't see water exactly. It is not personal not mine anymore. The drips in the sink. What I can fill into the birdbaths. Their glasses each day for their meds. The bowl that will hold their Jell-O. Twelve ice cubes into what was boiling just a few minutes ago. This goes into the fridge but no further. Nothing goes further. Stays where it is. Fruit ripens on the trees, the bushes. Was this how everything looked a year ago? Was this the way it was all along? Now in the water. It has gotten into the water. Not into official water but into our personal water.

At Night the River Wants In

At first
I fumbled a bit with my answers
until I learned enough to ask
if it would be okay to change
my mop water and the bosses said
no problem no problem at all
change it all you want they
laughed when they said this

From that
point on I knew
the joke was on my cleaning
so sometimes I hid for hours
on the second floor mezzanine

The name
of this 1874 building
wiped clean in a day—all the chalk
I mopped up from math classes
turned the water grey with pine needles
tracked in and sticking to everything

What did
I know what did I care
I took my breaks in the math lounge
at midnight on the graveyard shift
so quiet I could smell the Willamette
always smelling like tears

Getting Water

Us kids
didn't drink it pure
until later

We cut it with Tang
early on

A small taste
was medicine
an obligation

Then up in Nome
where we lived
in government housing

Tina guzzled a Schlitz
at her birthday party in third grade
while her guests practiced
walking the line

Our summers were at a cabin
called Teetering-On-The-Brink

By then we were drinking it freely
from the Nome River
climbing up the bank
to Teetering

Once they had forgotten about me
at the river below getting water
or was it a shimmer of light
I brought back
thinking it was gold

SEED

Mae Rim River, Thailand

Galen Garwood

In Lieu of Rain

—all the water on earth is all the water there ever was, and ever will be

If all the words on earth were water, 97 percent
would be salty conversation moving in thermal layers,
cold words sinking hotter words rising,

water and words in warm and cold currents

pulled by moon and earth's rotation, tidal words
crawling onto beaches and off, where those who speak
walk with nets, dig wells, build rain-catcher wordtraps.

Only 3 percent of words-as-water would be fresh—
75 percent of that locked in glaciers and ice sheets,
words calving in chunks, melting.

24 percent would pool in dark aquifers and moistened soils

where water leaks into caverns, drips
off stalactites, layers itself into wordy stalagmites
scaling into echo.

Zero point three-three percent would flow to freshwater rivers
and lakes

used more often in far more than 0.33 percent of all
dark and cold conversations—the infinitesimal remainder
lost to faulty memory, released by plants in silent transpiration.

Word-chatter precipitates: rain, snow, hail and dew, all

float and fall, fill the rising ocean pages. Word-drops ripple,
condense, clouds of meaning rise from significant tongues,
unable to make rain where dryness reigns, words fail.

Riverbeds run high with dust, words undrinkable,
vocabularies collapsed into aquifers too deep to reach, or empty,
strewn with husks of river nymphs, water gods, sprites,

the world's living things waiting—wordless, scrambling, thirsty.

3 poems from *The Jasmine Ascension*

our
little
places
within
are not
dungeons
remember
remember
astronomers point
satellites into space
the military points
them down at us
the inverse relationship
between love we offer
and what we give
this on and
off button
is another
opportunity
to believe
there are
only two
choices
this too
must end

water
from
mouth
of plant
into mine
my parasitic
grip unshaken
a fault following
my own line
a poet with
just enough
dried leaves
to hide phone
car bed
the tv
what's the code
try to write it down
got to get it right
required amount
of confidence
to initiate
evolution
of human
branches
leaves
bird
song

champions of
not blinking
only the dolls
see it all
our will
to solidify
trumpets
between
strands
of DNA
last time I chose
winter over you
x-ray how wrong
a notion in
my skull
lost in a
pool of
hot wax
beneath
the wick

Thirteen Months with Search and Rescue

The winter village site is the width of two outstretched
palms apart at this distance, bright water pricked
with a glitter of tree pollen.

Green-dark, crowded to the tideline with firs.
Continuously occupied by the Coast Salish
for five thousand years,[1] the archeologist[2] said,

waving her arms. Of all the Gulf Islands, Pender
is regarded as the navel of the world. This site remains
the most sacred spot on the island. The day swings from sun.

Station-keeping by Mortimer Spit,
rushing tide has spat us back to the village where only
white shell flecks are left to tell a story

1. Two thousand years ago, due to seismic activity, the site silted in. The village was then used seasonally, for a total of seven thousand years of occupation.

2. MacRaild, Fiona XETXÁ'TTEN, Islands Trust staff report, January 13, 2017.

I'm shamed by. Not that I was here, or my ancestors
but today I am—Does *Saving Lives on the Water*
confer a karmic bonus?—on one of the coldest

Mays recorded. Though right now we're helping
to chart where speed buoys might go, controlling erosion.
On nav, I twiddle with the electronic chart. Our cox

tells us a reburial is planned here. Bones that had been
in a museum. How would I feel if someone put my mom's
bones in a glass case? Then we slip under the bridge,

search for a rock and I'm on helm, backing up
into the boil of current and holding us still on the deep side
of the canal, my perception narrowed to a circle:

the engines are straight, touch the throttle, watch
sun on the steep rock I use as a landmark. For the first
time I feel the boat in the braids of tide like my arm

in water; I know how to steady it. A bubble
of being okay with this broken world rises
gold as pollen on the water. An instant

where what is now slips me on,

a glove, and wears me, transparent.

Creed

I believe in the spiritual rootedness
of mountains, that they extend
far beyond the blue, treed slopes we recognize,

that the dead know streams
not as we see them, burbling between
banks of fern and horsetail
but weightless as a cello concerto,
fragrant as strawberries.

I believe the way to at-one-ment
is to become water,
the idea behind molecules
sliding cool as summer morning
before the sun burns off mist
from the dawn-grey hills.

Daily, we swirl over our ordinary shoulders
the cloak of prophecy
worn
with becoming.

Excerpt from *Following the Good River*

Preface: *The Tributaries*

Wa'xaid, which translates as Good River, invited many of us into the magic canoe to protect Mother Earth. He was never taught to read and write by the residential school system, so my job in the magic canoe seemed clear enough. I could record and transcribe his stories (in lighter grey type), as well as dig up the historical and scientific documentation that my Western education prepared me for—dates, names, court decisions, ecological concepts that correlate with Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Wa'xaid felt these written records would provide the dates and facts to form a framework for Western readers, should they need one. He is the master of engaging heart and mind together, so his *Stories from the Magic Canoe* form the main artery of the river, in half the space and with an elegance that only a gifted orator can command. In this expanded companion biography, I provide two tributaries: historical essays and journal entries. All together, they should provide many routes to navigate and interpret the life and times of Wa'xaid.

Wa'xaid shared Xenaksiala words when there was no English equivalent, such as L*ä göläs'* (put your canoe ashore and rest). Louisa Smith, Wa'xaid's sister, provided the spellings of her language using the International Phonetic Alphabet. She is one of the last four fluent speakers of

Xenaksiala. When Wa'xaid says "you" in his stories, he is speaking to you, to me, to all of us—we are paddling in this magic canoe together. Our survival depends on it. I hope these stories encourage you to step into the magic canoe and join the many others for what I consider to be the greatest privilege of my life—following the Good River, Wa'xaid.

The Place of My Birth: "They call it the Kitlope"

My name is Wa'xaid, given to me by my people. Wa is "the river"; X*aid* is "good"—good river. Sometimes the river is not good. I am a Xenaksiala; I am from the Killer Whale Clan. I would like to walk with you in Xenak- siala lands. Where I will take you is the place of my birth. They call it the Kitlope. It is called X*esdu'wäxw* (Huschduwaschdu) for the "blue, milky, glacial water." Our destination is what I would like to talk about, and a boat—I call it my Magic Canoe. It is a magical canoe because there is room for everyone who wants to come into it to paddle together. The currents against it are very strong, but I believe we can reach that destination, and this is the reason for our survival.

When you leave Kitamaat, this is Haisla Land, you go out to—they call it—Gardner Canal. You go into Gardner, and Crab River is where our boundary line was before the amalgamation of the Xenaksiala and the Haisla. Haisla and Xenaksiala share the same language, with a few word differences. Our language is close to the language family of River's Inlet. You can get the Haisla history from Gordon Robinson.

When I bring the boat into Xenaksiala land, the tide will bring us through. There is a story for that. From Crab River we enter the Kitlope Valley. The Kitlope has many, many rooms, many doors—there is a lot of history going up to Kitlope Lake. Kitlope Lake, if we manage to journey that far, it is what I call the cathedral—a spiritual place. It is quiet. I think if you experience something when we get there, our people say that you will not leave that place unchanged. You cannot leave the way that you went in. Something touches you. Something grabs within you that you never identified as yours, but something in there reveals a little of who we are.

When we get to the Kitlope, I am going to ask you to wash your eyes. Our story says that though you may have 20/20 vision or glasses that improve your vision, we are still blind to lots of things. We are blind to Mother Earth. When you bathe your eyes in the artery of Mother Earth that is so pure, it will improve your vision to see things. I will also ask you to wash your ears, so you could hear what goes on around you. So, I could hear you talk. I could hear the wind, and you can hear the birds and animals. If you have the patience to listen, to hear the songs of the birds early in the morning, all these things will be open to you.

We are so busy, we don't have the time for all these beautiful things. If you have the willingness and courage to do that, you will see little things that you have never seen before. You will take a better look at your children, your grandchildren, your best friend. You'll say, "Oh, I never saw that before." To get that vision back—and when you get that back—you will be more kind to whoever comes in your path on this journey. There are many legends that we talk about to our children, and above all, the people around the universe that came with their love and compassion to save something that is known around the world—the largest unlogged temperate rainforest in the world.

A few weeks after the proclamation of the colony of British Columbia, on August 2, 1858, a map was released from a printing house near Bloomsbury, London, defining the boundaries of the British Empire's latest claim on global resources. Along the convoluted western coastal boundary, shaded in the rose red of empire, were drawn a dozen of the large fjords mapped, thanks to the cartographic brilliance of Captain George Vancouver. The largest and longest of these was Gardner Canal, a 320-kilometre inlet splitting off of Douglas Channel, giving the appearance of a crooked finger pointing to her majesty's anticipated riches penetrating deep into what would become British Columbia. The blank portions of the map allude to the polite fiction of *terra nullis*. *Terra nullis* is a doctrine of international law that Europeans used to assert sovereignty over lands. It means literally "empty land" and declares that no one owned the land before European claims. Riding along the upper part of the digit was the name Gardner, an easily read label given the length and horizontal orien-

tation of that reach of the inlet, before its lazy southeastward turn to the heart of the colony.

Joseph Whidbey, who accompanied Vancouver on the HMS D*iscovery*, explored the canal in one of the ship's smaller boats. Vancouver describes BC's longest inlet as "almost an entirely barren waste nearly destitute of wood and verdure and presenting to the eye one rude mass of almost naked rocks, rising into rugged mountains." He names it after his former commander, Baron Alan Gardner, as a tribute, or not, given his lackluster review of the "canal." Besides "Gardner" being an absentee namesake, "canal" was also a curious word to describe the largest fjord in the world. The sides of the canal are sheer granite rising 1829 metres from the sea bottom, piled there by shifting tectonic plates, far removed from the more familiar colonial canal being dug by indentured Panamanian slaves into their own mud.

As Wa'xaid explains, the Xenaksiala and Haisla who have occupied and owned this land for millennia have always had their own maps—visual ones. The system of land ownership of their huge territory falls into logical units of mountain watersheds, or wa'wais, that need no survey instruments, just a fine eye for topography. Boundaries follow the tops of mountains around the different drainage basins of the rivers that flow into the Gardner. Every watershed has a name that corresponds to its steward. The owners have both control and responsibility handed down through their mother's lineage. Each owner is bound by the *nuyem*, a code of stewardship that has detailed prescriptions for how the land, waters and wildlife are to be harvested, shared and respected. A *bagwaiyas* is a special place of abundance that is open to any Xenaksiala/Haisla person to harvest without special permission.

On the colonial map of British Columbia, there was no indication of the 54 wa'waises that occupy "the pointed finger." Of the 14 wa'waises that pour into Gardner, the first is Crab River, which demarcates the beginning of the territory of the Xenaksiala people and the end of the Haisla wa'waises. Halfway along Gardner is the Kemano River, which is the wa'wais owned by Cecil Paul himself. It was also the official "reserve" of the Kitlope Band until 1948. At the tip of the finger on the colonial map

is a river called Kitlope, where Cecil was born in 1931 and mostly hidden until 1941, when, as he explains, the Indian agent rounded him up for residential school. That river flows into a lake, oval and luminescent with its milky-blue glacial water. Ice-capped mountains tower above this lake and for that reason the Xenaksiala call it K*a-ous*. The closest Cecil can come to translating that word into English is "cathedral"; it gives people a sense of the beauty, peace and awe you feel when you first enter the lake from the river.

Wawa lumgila: ***"There Is No Stopping Death When It Comes to Your Door"***

In Kemano, when you sit in a point across the bay, there is a mountain—there are no trees growing on it. That mountain our people call L'lox^{w} (Thok): Strong. In the middle of the highest point is one little tree still standing today, and I was brought up there by my uncle. When the world flood came, that mountain was supernatural, *yüü'xm*. The water didn't cover the whole rock, and that little tree is where our people anchored or tied the rope of their canoe around. The canoe was moving back and forth; that is the way the little tree looked. The boy in the bow of the canoe was so weak from not enough to eat that he missed his fish when he speared it. Then out came the hawk, *'tä'ta'kwa*, took the fish by the neck and put it in the canoe. It was the dogfish. It saved the people. That was the first animal that the Creator has given the Xenaksiala people from the ocean.

*"*Q^{w}*'a äits,"* my uncle says. "Sit down." When the water went down, they see the treetops of Kemano.

My little granny told us that when there was an earthquake there would be a big wave that would raise the canoes. W*awa lumgila*—there is no stopping death when it comes to your door.

Ways of adapting and being resilient to change are central to the Haisla nuyem (laws). The magic canoe would not have attracted such a range of paddlers without the Haisla formulas for survival—a deep engagement of mind and heart with the land. The flood stories are lessons in survival: some refer to the rapid flooding caused by tsunamis triggered by periodic

earthquakes; others refer to the relatively slow, sea-level changes due to the rebounds of the land when the weight of the glaciers came off. The tsunami floods can occur quickly and at a height sufficient to drown an unprepared village on a roughly seven-generation rotation. Glacial shoreline changes are more dramatic in scale but slower to enact, taking seven generations to rise or fall.

Post-glacial sea level changes can be simplified to a see-saw, with the outer coast like the upside of the see-saw, and the inner coast, the lower side. On the outer coast, like Haida Gwaii, sea levels rose over 150 metres to where they are at today, and on the inner coast, sea levels fell around 80 metres. The hinge of this see-saw is hypothesized to be around Calvert and Triquet islands, Heiltsuk territory, where sea levels have remained relatively unchanged for the last 15,000 years. Gardner Canal experienced higher sea levels, which have now fallen. Both types of floods are recorded in the oral histories of coastal people.

The Kitlope is a graduate school in glacial, hydrological and sea level dynamics. Nowhere is safe from flooding under a certain elevation, and there are stories with strategies for dealing with tsunami hazard zones, seasonal floods and long-term sea level changes. It isn't any surprise, therefore, that Cecil would observe and worry about the implications of climate change on sea levels. His ancestors have been through volatile periods of sea level changes for millennia. It is life and death when you live by the sea. There is nowhere to go but up or out.

The place he describes on the mountain called L'lox^{w} (Thok) is about 100 metres above the existing sea level and is directly across the canal from Kemano, where he lived as a child. At the peak of the post-glacial flood—before the land bounced back—the sea could well have been lapping at the top of the cliff. The *'tä'ta'kwa* is an osprey, and the dogfish makes total sense for food in a time of glacial upheaval. It is a shark infinitely well adapted to take advantage during floods. They are drawn to carnage and they tolerate a wide variety of habitats with big ranges of salinity and depths. Dogfish do well in brackish waters, but they can't tolerate over-fishing. The northern spiny dogfish takes up to 35 years to mature, has the longest gestation of any invertebrate (up to two years)

and produces small litters of maybe half a dozen pups. Humans are their biggest predator, especially the type of industrial fishing that wipes out schools of an entire age class. They are protected internationally, but Canada has failed to respect those standards. The flood story and Kemano pole elevate the dogfish to a place on a totem pole that reminds us all to be mindful.

PRINCE RUPERT, JANUARY 23, 2016

It is around three in the morning and we all awaken to phones ringing through the house. I answer mine and it is Cecil Junior. "Have you guys heard that there has been a major earthquake off Alaska and there is a tsunami warning? You are in Zone A, so stay alert." Junior is an emergency coordinator in Kitamaat Village and is busy getting his own neighbours up to high ground, just in case a tsunami hits. He still has time to phone us. We are high above Rupert, so we are safe and just sit and wait in the darkness for news. The night has a surreal quality to it, but these northern villages are so well connected you feel safe. A lot safer than all those "world-class safety measures" that federal governments have provided for oil spills.

In the last 20 years, the study of paleotsunamis has thrown some Western scientific light on cycles well known to coastal people. When you dig a pit in a bog that has a soil profile stretching back in time, you see slim layers of light tsunami-deposited sands interspersed between the thick, dark, organic soils. Tsunamis turn the bogs into striped storybooks. We know that tsunamis have likely occurred dozens of times since the glaciers retreated. The most recent tsunami was an eight-metre wave in Douglas Channel causing severe damage to port facilities in Kitimat on April 27, 1975. The flood stories all point to getting to high ground or being out at sea for safety—advice that is still essential today.

The rivers also flood seasonally after deluges, rising metres within hours. Being caught on a river in a flood event can be terrifying, and drowning is an ever-present fear on the river. The teaching about the arrival of death coming to the door was one of the teachings that prepared

Cecil for when the Indian agent came knocking at the door of his family home the first time in 1937.

Elizabeth Long Memorial School: "I Felt So Alone"

I was six years old when I was at this residential school in Kitamaat Village. Elizabeth Long Memorial School. Elizabeth Long was, I guess, the principal or the preacher—United Church. Young as I was, they had a little window, and I looked out at the channel. I remember lying down there, looking and hoping my dad will come around the point with his boat and pick me up. I am Xenaksiala, and these boys are Haisla, and we didn't get along too well. I felt so alone. I remember that. Later, when I lived and worked in Butedale, steamboats come in. Before the boats come in they blow the whistle, and when they took me to Alberni, I could hear the train whistles just like the ships coming into Butedale. I remember I had tears of loneliness listening to the train whistles, like the steamboats, coming to take me home. It never happened. Same way here when I was six or seven years old, looking at the point: "Come on, Dad. Come, Dad, I am lonesome for you." Never come. Never came.

We had that little football [soccer] team. I am the only one alive now from that picture. Lawrence King, Percy King and Percy Mack in the picture. I think the teaching I got from all that suffering was, I say to all my grandchildren, my children: "I will never leave you. I'll fight for you if I believe you are right."

Alberni, Kitamaat and Port Simpson schools all became the responsibility of the United Church of Canada under the care of the Women's Missionary Society in the early 1920s, when they started receiving grants per student from the federal government. By 1930, there were 80 residential schools across the country and any parent withholding a child from going to school would be sent to jail. This was the world that Cecil was born into in 1931. When he was 6, his father was forced to bring him down from Kemano to his first compulsory residential school, the Elizabeth Long Memorial Home in Kitamaat. Cecil had no idea that his family would be jailed if they didn't.

The only published account of life at the school during Cecil's time is in the *Missionary Monthly*, which describes a Christmas at the home: "At bedtime the staircases are hung with stockings. When the lights go on in the morning, the stockings are examined before it is time to dress. After breakfast the usual necessary duties are hurried through and everyone gets ready for church." One of the earlier women missionaries, Margaret Butcher who arrived in 1916 and left in 1919, wrote detailed letters to her family back home about daily life in the new home. The letters span the period of the influenza epidemic and describe a gruelling existence for the children, who were responsible for all the physical work of housekeeping. "Floors had to be scrubbed on hands and knees; wood had to be cut and water carried."The older girls were tasked with sewing their clothes and linen. There is one reference to the Kitlope children in 1919, in Butcher's letters home.

> A boat was in from Kitlope & the folks began visiting the children. Little Samuel's mother came. She had heard he was dying. I tried to make matters clear & the boy went to the Village with her... About 9, Samuel's mother came for him as they were leaving in the morning. I refused to let him go as he was asleep in bed. Once again I tried to make it clear that he was to be taken to Hospital for Miss Alton thinks he will recover if he has proper treatment. I may mention here that he lost weight during the last month & I was glad to have him go. That sounds so heartless but the Indians are so illogical, they do not consider the number of children who are brought through delicacy & sickness to strength & fitness, they only look at & count the children who are sick & "are killed by the Home" and one knows the animosity they shew towards the Home at times. Then too there are the other children to consider & if a child shews definite signs of TB he must go. I am so sorry that the dear kiddie is sick because he is bright, intelligent boy with a sweet disposition.

Sometime around 1938, his grandfather took him away and hid him back up in the Kitlope.

KITAMAAT, MAY 20, 2017

I have just spent over a month in various federal and provincial archives looking for material on Cecil's time in the two residential schools. Charlie Shaw, Cecil's friend, and John Pritchard, had done a lot of groundwork, but still, it was a bit like being a grizzly looking for salmon eggs after a massive flood event. There are a few jewels that you find under a torrent of mud and debris. I have come up to Kitamaat to share some of my findings with him. One of the things I have been looking for is a photograph of Cecil as a child at either Elizabeth Long or Alberni. The archivist, Blair Galston, at the United Church's Bob Stewart Archives in Vancouver, has patiently scoured every possible source and followed every lead for photos. He comes up with just one photograph. In the 1938 article in Missionary Monthly called "Christmas in Kitamaat" is a photo captioned "Some of the Indian Boys of Kitamaat." Cecil could well be among them, but his eyesight today is too far gone to pick out either himself or any of the boys in the photograph, which isn't the best quality reproduction to start with. The photo he had of himself with the boys playing soccer is all that he has of his entire childhood.

Elizabeth Long Memorial Home used to sit up high on a bench just behind his house, next to the graveyard above the village. Today, it is a massive thicket of salmonberries, elderberries and alder. Not a trace of the school remains. Nothing has been built in its place. In Cecil's time, there was the residence, the day school, a nurses residence/dispensary and the minister's house, all enclosed behind a high white picket fence. There was also the temple of the Royal Templars of Temperance put up by Rev. Raley's Temperance Society. A sidewalk connected the school to the rest of the village. The graveyard is full of children's gravestones under a lush canopy of cedar and hemlock. Little angels, Victorian motifs of Christian grief, alternate with Haisla grave markers of frogs, beavers and killer whales. The view today out his window is almost the same as

his view at 6 and 7 years old. All that is different is that, instead of a small settlement of farmers and mining prospectors across the bay, he is looking at the massive industrial plant of Rio Tinto/Alcan and the expanding footprint of LNG.

KITAMAAT, SEPTEMBER 26, 2017

It is early, dark and misty in Kitamaat. The fog bank has obliterated Kitimat across the water and for once the view to Kitimat town is beautiful. All I can hear are the haunting calls of mew gulls and the blow of a humpback offshore. I skulk around the docks like the missionary Margaret Butcher did 100 years ago, scribbling away about the village. I watch spiders building webs around the dock lights, imprisoning any moth that has ventured through their barricades. The rain has filled up the boats again. Junior will walk down soon to check and bail Miss Sophia and the oolichan punt. One certainty is that spiders have been building their webs and people have been bailing their boats here for close to 14,000 years.

"Everybody Hid Their Children"

I talked about the gift of memory, and I think that's the most wonderful thing in my life. Memory was something to hang on to; that there's a good life on the other side of bad. No one can ever steal that from you at any time. It is yours, to hold the beauty of what happened, and somehow the ugliness of things disappears, but the beauty of it remains with you till the end of the day, end of your life.

I went to my uncle, James Henry, a canoe builder—learned visually without going to school and self-taught—and that is where I was directed to go by my father. My uncle said, "I'll take him." Same as the young ladies who went to their aunties to learn how to cut fish and get things from the trees and cedar and what roots to take to make baskets, that kind of schooling. That was our system in the Kitlope until my grandfather took me [from Elizabeth Long], and I never went back and kept hiding from the missionaries in the Kitlope. It was a truth that everybody hid their

children and didn't know what to expect.

Dr. Peter Kelly came up to Kitlope a whole lot of times before I went to Alberni. I told my little granny: the chief's [Dr. Kelly's] wife is beautiful. He used Chinook language and little granny didn't speak English, and how at ease they were with my grandfather and grandmother, and I remember him. He was well respected.

It was 1937 or 38 because after that we went to Kemano and Kitlope and stayed there. Kitlope is where my grandfather hid me from that residential school. I used to pack his bait to the trapline. I'd make a little fire by the river. "K*ä kwa däs*—Listen," Grandfather says. "The river is singing a song to us." You could hear one river go over a rock like this, and it will make a different sound, smaller one that is bass, alto and soprano. "The river is singing to us, if you stop and listen," he says. I remember hearing that. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't know that the river talks to us, making the different sounds. It has been a long time since I have been out quietly sitting by a river.

The stories I received, at maybe eight and nine, I remember well. At that age, I travelled with my grandfather, looking over his trapline. I saw him at that age bring down a deer with a bow and arrow. In my short life on this earth, I also see footprints in the moon. Humans went far beyond our land, Mother Earth. And it goes too fast for Wa'xaid, this life. What did I do? I did a lot of many things. I was taught how to trap, how to respect the bear and other animals. I was taught that we live together in this wilderness with the animals. Take what we need.

It was at that time when I was first told the importance of water. They told us when we go hunting to bathe in the water, and my grandfather would add devil's club that I would wash myself in. I would smell of the wilderness, and if I didn't bathe, I wouldn't have the pleasure of going with them on a hunting trip. When you smell of the devil's club it has an odour that's beautiful. When you walk around the bush you could smell this same odour. If the wind is not in your favour and it blows towards the animal, it will run away if you don't bathe in it.

These little teachings I got from him endured for me in my life. The joy of a sunrise and the sunset. I remember asking my mother about the

four seasons: winter, spring, summer, fall—each one of the four seasons is a time to harvest, a time to prepare for the winter months when you can't travel too much. Prepare for the winter. But then with the residential schools, if no leader is prepared to defend the nation, they laid down: "Do whatever you want." That is when the death of the culture could come.

We died slowly; we were conquered.

Hiding Cecil from 1938 to 1941 was probably only possible because of the shortage of available government representatives with the onset of the war. It was illegal to hide him. His grandparents, Johnny and Annie Paul, were obviously able to keep one of their small grandsons out of the eye of the Indian agent for a few years, moving between their trapline and oolichan house in the Kemano area, their house on the Kitlope River and seasonal camps. It must have been a welcome respite to have industry and churches somewhat diverted by a war. Cecil tells of spending lots of time in the mountains to hunt mountain goats and just "see the place."

One of the Methodist ministers welcomed to the Kitlope by the Paul family was Dr. Peter Kelly, a Haida leader who was an ardent activist for First Nations. He is described as a "humble diplomat and stood fast by his beliefs, even at times setting himself against the very church that employed him."Kelly led the first organization, Allied Tribes for BC, in 1911 to "take the land claims through the court system to the Judicial Committee."He later led the Native Brotherhood, starting the year Cecil was born.

Cecil's story of his childhood is understandably linked to devil's club and its beautiful fragrance. His memory would be the equivalent of a European child's memory of lavender or rose water. Devil's club, ʻwil'qas, grows throughout the wetter lowland areas of the valleys. It was well named by the Christians because when you walk through the bush in the winter, it looks like a gnarly, devilish-looking club on a long, spiny handle. What was missed by the missionaries was its heavenly properties. The bark easily peels off the stem, exposing a fragrant green inner bark or cambium against the white pithy wood. You can boil the cambium for a tincture or just chew it raw. The taste of devil's club is like a Swedish

bitter, an appetite-stimulant; it is also the taste and smell of the forest. In the spring, the gnarly club explodes into a profusion of sprawling branches and huge leaves, forming thickets that are difficult to walk through because even the huge maple-like leaves are spined with tiny barbs that lodge in the skin like fishhooks. The white spikes of flowers ripen into deep red berries by the late summer, just like its cousin ginseng—both highly important medicinal plants embraced by the East and the West. Every part of the plant has some medicinal or ceremonial purpose, a first aid kit growing in the forest pointing to life-giving water and immune-boosting properties. It may well have been the tonic that kept Cecil alive through a century of epidemics.

Alberni: "The Journey of Hell Begins"

That was a joyous time in my life on the Kitlope; it was beautiful. I never knew when I was nine years old that one day I would lose the teachings of my Elders. At age ten and a half, my friends and I were playing on the hillside, and we went to an opening and looked down on the riverbank, see the boat come in. I heard a new motor coming, stopped on my beach. There was three of them on the boat. I learned years later it was the Indian agent representing Canada. Another one with a uniform was the provincial police. They came to pick me up. Someone told the Indian agent where I was, and they came up and picked me up in the Kitlope. Came right up the Kitlope River. Children at that age are kind of curious. Wondering what happened to my grandfather and grandmother, I went right down to the beach, looked out, and there was some strangers who stayed in the background and watched. He was instructed to remove children and take them to a residential school. My little granny said: "W*aa daa nox*^{w}! Don't look back, my son. Don't look back." Why did little Granny say, "Don't look back?" I think it was because she was powerless to help. Those words are what was said when people had no choice, if they were captured in warfare. I could hear my mum crying sometimes...lonesome.

It happened to me with a few other children. At the age of ten and a half, I journeyed from the Kitlope, leaving my things, my granny, my

mum and grandfather. It was years later I learned where we ended up at. It was a residential school in a place that was Port Alberni, Vancouver Island. The journey of hell begins when I was ten, when they took me away from my family. That was the beginning of hell for a ten-year-old that didn't understand a word of English. I stayed four years in this Port Alberni. I never went home. I had a lot of good friends, especially one, Russell Ross. He's a Haisla and we speak the same language: Xenaksiala and Haisla. My friend just passed away last Christmas. He was 89, four years older than me. There were signs all over—I learned later of the rules—and the one with the most big letters, that YOU ARE NOT TO TALK YOUR MOTHER TONGUE. Russell and I didn't know how to read and were talking in our language.

A big guy came, he had a whistle in his mouth, blowing his whistle. He took me by the collar and my friend, whistling until he got to what they called the playroom. One hundred and seventeen boys. They lined up the boys and circled right around and took me and Russell, took us in the middle of this playroom and asked to remove our trousers. We did. I remember I can still see the weapon they used for me not to talk my mother tongue: a black leather strap. Three feet long maybe, and it was double. One was about an inch, the other was inch and a half. One would hit and the other one would follow. They made an example of us, I learned later. They did the same with each reserve who spoke a different language. We happened to be the ones to be made an example of, my friend and I.

When I knew what was coming I spoke to my friend. I said, "*Kéc'g^{w}ä-sa*. Don't cry, brother. Don't cry." We are talking in our language in front of them, my tormentor. I got five more hits. The third one that hit my rear end, I glanced up at my tormentor and he had a smile, I could still see. And with that smile a seed was planted in my heart. A seed of hatred. A seed of mistrust to my tormentor. My tormentor, I learned later, was run by the United Church of Canada, a white man. They cultivated this hatred so well. Cultivated this mistrust. The hate. What I mean by cultivate is planting hatred in my heart. My friend Russell and I went underground with our mother tongue. I think it is when I first began to defy authority.

I think it was at that moment when I knew, there's something wrong.

I stayed in Alberni four years. I didn't know my father had passed away. When I got home my grandfather had gone. There is hatred something awful. My people didn't write, couldn't...it was a long journey. They take me away from the place of my birth and teachings of my Elders. I have a very dear friend who when he came home, there was no communication with his parents. Government almost won their battle of Canadianizing the "savage," as they called us. It says on the legal paper: a child can't communicate with his mom and dad—only in English. There was no communication.

Russell and I had the power and will to hang on through something that I didn't understand at that time, but knew something was going to happen. We never lost our mother tongue. That defying authority at that age came to play in my life very bad. For it is something that the residential school has taught people that resisted against it. My friend went on the same journey, a no-good journey. I think it really bothered his mind. Not long after that, I joined the same path he went. I didn't know that so many of us went in that direction, to hide the pain, hide the shame, and we drowned it in alcohol.

Cecil was transported over 1,000 kilometres to the head of Alberni Inlet in central Vancouver Island. He arrived at an imposing new brick building on the Somass River, which had just been built to replace a previous school that had burned down. It was the third to burn down, probably not an accident. He described it as a prison, which it indeed resembled with its square fortress appearance and small windows. Today, there is nothing left of the school, just a patch of forest near the Tseshaht reserve. Upon his arrival, Cecil was registered as #126 in the Quarterly Returns, the official documents sent to Ottawa with the children's attendance that triggered their annual fee per student. The Returns record his arrival in September of 1941, that he is from the Kemano tribe and 11 years old. He is placed into Grade 4 for F & G (farming and gardening) trade. His attendance is the maximum number of days for the quarter. Since he never left the school for four years, his attendance was 100 per cent. The remarks about him on the far column of the report state, "Satisfactory progress,"

which also didn't change until the administrator just stopped making remarks on the children altogether. The only exception at the end to "no comment" was if they had been sent to Coqualeetza Hospital with TB. Above Cecil on the list is #125, Leonard Paul his older brother, who was shortly moved to Coqualeetza.

The residential school was very different from its original concept as a mission home for girls that had been started by the Presbyterian missionary, Rev. John MacDonald. It grew in scale with the funding assistance of the Presbyterian matriarchs, the Women's Foreign Mission Society and the Department of Indian Affairs. Much of the history of Alberni is documented in the United Church's online history, T*he Children* R*emembered*—an awful history of mistreatment from 1918 onwards. A report documented severe physical abuse by an employee of the school.

Andrew Paull, a Native leader of the Allied Tribes of BC and later the Native Brotherhood, was an early critic of the schools. He drew attention to the abuse by a staff member at Alberni who "'unmercifully whips the boys on their back' as well as kicking them, hitting them with fists, and choking them." Just prior to Cecil arriving, a school inspector for Ahousat, Gerald H. Barry, complained that "Children have come here from Alberni Indian Residential School, where every member of the Staff carried a strap... These children have never learned how to work without punishments." The period during the Second World War is scarce in documentation.

The new school was designed for 200 students to get "the most up to date and the best equipped Indian residential school in the Dominion." In the Quarterly Returns, four "Trades" are listed: Chores, F & G (farming and gardening), M.T. (manual training) and NAV. (navigation). A detailed report by H.M. Morrison, inspector of schools, in January 2–5, 1945, paints a graphic picture of the desperate conditions: the school is "overcrowded" with 280 students (e.g., 40 Grade 1 children are crowded into a converted sewing room); children above Grade 1 are only receiving "half time education"; the vocational training program is "weak"; there is no gymnasium and play space is "limited"; "library materials are meagre"; the industrial education shop is "inadequate"; the grounds are "unsuit-

able for farm produce as it is high and rocky"; there is an "infirmary with an unqualified nurse in charge"; qualifications of staff "are inadequate"; and the school's administration "has a certain inertia." Morrison found, however, the food to be adequate.

The Indian commissioner for British Columbia, D. M. MacKay, Department of Mines and Resources, emphasized some "improvements" in his report to Ottawa of March that same year, although he still bemoaned that "It is always a most disheartening and discouraging experience for me on visits to this institution to invariably find most of the rooms used by the children in a dirty and untidy state and despite earnest efforts on our part to have the principal improve matters to see the same condition continue year after year." MacKay attributes the improvements to the new principal, Rev. A. E. Caldwell, who took over from Robert Clyde Scott a year earlier.

R.C. Scott was a Methodist minister who was the principal of Alberni during Cecil's time there. Like all staff, he was appointed by the United Church but paid by the Department of Indian Affairs. He wrote about his experiences in *My Captain Oliver: A Story of Two Missionaries on the British Columbia Coast*. In the chapter "New and Old Fight for Old Souls," he writes, "After I went to Alberni Residential School as principal in 1940, I had within a year or two a better idea of what was actually wrong with these people." What is wrong, apparently, is, "There is another very powerful reason why such people do not make any outward objection to the carrying on of old customs. These old people who have taken over the direction of affairs in the life of the Reserves have their own way of forcing compliance and cooperation. Sometimes their methods are heartless and cruel." Scott's private journals reveal a deeply compromised man, as evident in this entry April 29, 1941, the spring that Cecil arrives.

> **April 29th, 1941**
>
> This has been a trying time, but I cannot feel that a mistake has been made in my coming here. I do seem to be out of place in my methods perhaps, and I shall have to overhaul them, and perhaps

> revise them. But it must be in the spirit of faith, and in confidence in the hopes I have had for this school and for this people. One staff member on the boys' side has got into a fight with one of the senior boys. This is the crucial situation which I must face—but how? And from what standpoint?
>
> It was as I faced this question that I came upon the words with which this sheet began: Am I to be driven to hysterical, angry action—or must I now, and always "hold fast the beginning of my confidence, stedfast [*sic*] unto the end.?? I think this I must do. In the Upper Room petition [*sic*] for today it says ///— "It is no easy matter —. Our faith, our hope, our courage, are being daily and nightly subjected to terrific bombings. —Imperceptibly, at first, by none the less surely, we feel the urge to break with an apparently losing cause. The "philosophy of escape lures us —. It has been helpful, and while the problems still remain to be faced, and I seem to be alone, with no one to whom I can turn, still

His journals contain philosophical musings, prayers and sporadic entries. He is clearly preoccupied with a world at war, and he is in an environment and job for which he has no great love or control. No mention is made of any other staff or Peter Allen. Behind the scenes, in Victoria, the presbytery was corresponding on issues of federal fees for students per annum and staff salaries. Internally, they were looking at the competing demands of their staff to run schools and continue their evangelistic work. Reverend W. Percy Bunt, superintendent of missions, had visited Alberni and come back with the central recommendation to hire one vice-principal to free R.C. Scott from some school duties "to visit as many small tribes... and give evangelical services to them." With a shortage of men, the dual duties of R.C. Scott had pushed him to "exhaustion" and he retired.

Bunt remained on as superintendent of home missions from 1939 to 1958. He also oversaw the Japanese Canadian missions. He was educated at McGill and Wesleyan Theological College. Reverend R. Grant Bracewell, a minister in Bella Coola during the late 1960s who knew Bunt,

stated that Bunt had told him, "The Church may have nominated teachers but they were appointed and employed by the federal government. When there was a problem staff member, the federal government said, 'oh, the church looks after them,' but the church couldn't fire them. The federal government weren't accountable."

Stories of abuse at Alberni during the war years only came to light during the TRC in 2013, with the testimony of ex-students like Cecil Paul. The postwar years were exposed in 1995 with the testimonies presented in the Willie Blackwater civil court case. Willie Blackwater was a student at Alberni a few years after Cecil had left. The benchmark Blackwater case was to reveal levels of abuse that prompted BC Supreme Court Justice Douglas Hogarth to declare during the sentencing phase that the Indian residential school system was "nothing but a form of institutionalized pedophilia." An investigation of the schools by the RCMP was initiated across BC, but by then there was already a long institutional foundation for the violence.

According to Reverend Brian Thorpe, minister emeritus of Ryerson United Church, who worked on the residential school file from 1994 onwards, there was a marked difference in the day-to-day involvement of the federal government in the management of the schools before and after the war. A detailed analysis of where the responsibility lay for the abuses of the residential schools was put before the courts in the Jimmy Black- water civil court case against the federal government, which, according to Thorpe, became "a debate around the question of apportion of responsibility." At the end of the Blackwater trial, the case having gone through two courts of appeal, the Supreme Court of Canada concluded that the federal government had 75 per cent of the responsibility, and 25 per cent for the United Church. Thorpe states, "There are still those in the United Church who argue that we had no real act to play...but the reality is that the United Church still attached its name to the school. It still took incredible pride in the history of the school and did nothing to challenge the existence of the school. For those reasons alone the church has to bear a responsibility."

Salmonberry and Riceroot: A Gift of the New Season

Anyway, there was a journey of loneliness and stuff, and I wasn't well and I'm getting more sick with this disease of alcoholism. I try to remember the hell I was in then. I don't know if you've experienced loneliness. I knew I was sick, but I never knew where it come from. I didn't know where this illness started; I didn't know how to attack it. The thought of suicide, I remember this too, July. I remember this trip, when I go up there, somehow my drinking stopped a little bit, and I knew that something in the Kitlope—in my heart—was something there, and I go.

It was July 18, 1971. I was drifting down the river, a warm breeze would hit me, the next second it would be cold. I stopped my paddling and I drifted there. It was a breath of my Creator. I went to where I was born, and I pulled the canoe up and laid down and the words was coming:

"You're in bondage; you're a prisoner." I got up and I walked around to where I remember having coffee with my dad, my granny, and this word keeps coming up: "You're in bondage to your drinking." This is now beginning to register, and I told this pickled mind that I'm here on a healing journey and the memory of my grandmother. And then the things she asked me, "What was it like in the nine years, what you remember in the Kitlope?" All the beautiful teachers, the peace I remember I had in my heart.

That memory of my little granny saying, "M*ä s'i sax ga süüs*? What do you want? What are you here for?" And I'm talking to her memory. I'm going crazy, I thought. And I sat down and told her of my journey, and the memories of her kept floating in this mind. After little Granny told me the story of that, I went to the estuary, and there's a flower, the salmonberry. I walked around.

She came to me and said, "Son, this one little flower in middle of June, it become a berry. When you take it and put it in your mouth it's sweet. It's a sugary taste." In the estuary there's a purple flower. I dug it up and she showed me the root of it. Here it was white as rice. Two flowers: the first one the Great Spirit gives us as a gift of the new season to feed our bodies; it's the spring, the salmonberry sugar. This one here's the wild riceroot.

He feeds us under the ground. We take them and we combine it with the oolichan grease and we eat it together—*aiis'dllams a'sinx*—a new season the Creator has given us. All these teachings, our spirituality drowned out through all 40 years of trying to hide the pain. Hide the shame. Until I'd had enough...and I went home to the Kitlope.

I would go, especially at midnight when everything is quiet, around the lake. The four villages were guardians: the killer whale, beaver, eagle and raven [or five with salmon]. My grandmother tells me that they invite each other, and they laugh and they dance. I'm in this middle of the river and I'm the opposite—I'm not laughing, I'm not dancing. Why is that so? A quiet moment. It's so loud sometimes—stillness, opposite from how I feel. I think when I say these things that I crave so much about in my journey, since I managed to put the alcohol away was a touch of serenity, peace within.

Each journey I take I feel it will improve: the feeling of beauty, my eyes, my vision is clearing from alcohol, the sweat was almost pure, there was no poison coming out from my body, and I bathe in the artery of Mother Earth, cleansing me in a lake.

It was that one evening, as I was drifting down to where I was born and at my main camp, I sat there. I said, "Great Spirit, thank you for this land. Help me find myself, Great Spirit. Who am I? What is it you put before me? What is the destination of my life? Who am I?" I got in my boat, just before dark went back into the lake. I stayed there for two days.

I think now, when I look back, I think it was fasting because I had nothing to eat. I just reached over the side of my canoe and I drank the beautiful river water. I come out of there that day, for a moment during the evening, I was one with the universe, everything was fine, but I swear it didn't last more than a second. I had a touch of serenity in the Kitlope. I go back, I tell my wife what happened. I had the strangest experience, something came over me, and made me feel good.

When I look back on it, there was not a breath of wind, nothing, quiet. But something inside exploded. I remember I laughed out loud. I heard the echo; I'm not alone on this lake. I think the Great Spirit penetrated something, opened my eyes a little bit. I told Gerald that: him and I go.

When you come to the Kitlope, I tell you, you can not help but change when you leave. You change your thought; you change your feeling. I said,

"It's a cathedral, Gerald. I think that's what changes."

He says, "Is only the lake the cathedral?"

I said, "I don't think so. I think the whole valley is a cathedral."

I began to sense that there's something here in the Kitlope. I could break the cycles of the life I'm going through, an ugly life. I called the journey a healing journey.

Mycelium

for Joseph

We buried my mother's last purse
deep in the hold of a western redcedar.

The purse: Naugahyde, faded navy.
Stashed in my drawer since her death
(on a long ago solstice).

The cedar: hollowed, boat-wide,
nurse to deer fern, salal.

Ghost of a settler's handsaw.

Later I wondered:
What happens to Naugahyde
surrendered to tree-stump?

Will its polyvinyls dissolve in
a winter monsoon?

Some feathered, some hairy
mammalian thing
shred it for nesting?

Grey starburst *cladina*,
hooded bone, freckle pelt —

Sleeping lichens respire in luminous
yellows and violets after the rains.

They will survive cosmic drought,
but not dynamite.

***

Thuja plicata —
felled, but still holy.

Xylem and phloem that pulled tree-life skyward
decompose in squared cellulose chunks,
home to spiders, frilled seedlings, shelf mushrooms,
and a Naugahyde clutch-bag.

(The bag she packed for the hospital).

Small packet of Kleenex; plastic
health card; driver's
license and a hand-
written note that just said:

"I love you all"

***

You, me, forever
roaming these sentient woods—
scanning for a glimpse of the owls.

Marking our tracks:
a blue mycelium
with no botanical name—

My mother roamed
cocktail parties, department stores
in permanent high pumps.

Tiny dab of Miss Dior.
(Dry martini nearby).

She would never have come here alive.

***

Up, up, through
nootka rose and
Oregon grape. Through Garry
oak and peeling arbutus.

At the ridge top, the Salish Sea unspools.
Horizon zigzag volcanoes

an unresolved grief.

Triassic pillow basalt
holds memory of prayers, drums—

stolen piece of the
Snaw-naw-as Nation.

Will some part of you
linger here too?

You told me the ridge top
is migrated Wrangelia,

Lepraria.
Olivine.
Feldspar.

Our mineral truth.

I pray the developers won't come this far
but they've exploded
one ridge flank already.

New streets named "Bonnington," "Beldon Place"—

The problem with dying is she lost
authorship of her story.

Not a whiff of Miss Dior
as I follow the animal tracks
in my treaded boots,
in spring's mud,
in the slanted light bent by shadows.

You leave something here.
Find yourself.

I didn't find nature, growing up,
but now I know
a Doug fir is not a fir and its
oval cones hold mouse tails.

I know the high green clerestory
rings with the sliding cry of eagles.
and the great horned owls
hear a pine needle's drop.

They heard us coming, through
plumed moss,
haircap moss,
and thready mats of *neckera*, fine as lace.

You found the mother-nest
(a *real* mother-nest)
safe in the flute of a snapped-off Doug fir.

I love how you sensed the wild
beings around us,
and that the owls weren't afraid —
their feathers perfectly matching
the grey tweed of fir trunk.

That was our first owl spring.

Springs later
they appeared to you four times
and I felt the chill
knowing what the First Peoples say—

Down, down trail through
cloudberry and salmonberry
I mentally engraved the solid

outline of your body

as if some part of me already knew.

Your dirt-smudged orange
daypack containing: a knife; water bottle;

small sketch pad;
coloured markers;
2H pencil, sloshing
tea flask (not yet empty) and

a couple of shortbread biscuits —

the remains of our snack.

Cate Gable

Privilege and Ignorance on the Columbia Basin Shrub-steppe

The lost shrub-steppe

Growing up in the '50s adjacent to the 1,371,918 acres of the Yakama Indian Reservation, I learned nothing about the Confederate Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation or their lost lands (yakama.com.) As an adult looking back, I carry a profound sadness, regret, and anger about those years. I was swimming in an ignorance propagated by privilege, the effect of living in the middleclass bubble of our country's dominant post-World War II culture.

Behind the scenes of my childhood, and unknown to all of us kids, were two major land grabs of prime shrub-steppe—one of the most diverse and unique low rainfall grasslands of Eastern Washington. An estimated 80 percent of this magical desert land has been lost since the arrival of non-natives. (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has a great narrative here: https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/ecosystems/shrubsteppe)

In the middle of this "Sagebrush Sea," as it has been called, the government and military powers sited the Hanford Atomic Works and the Yakima Firing Range (now the Yakima Training Center). Could there have been more contrast in values behind this dramatic shift in land use and ownership: the military's need for land to engineer and build weapons of destruction, versus the Native reverence and protection of the riverine and rich sage plains of the Great Provider?

Garry Oaks along the riparian zones in the Snow Mountain Ranch, Cowiche Canyon Conservancy lands.

The atomic bomb effort of the 1940s needed massive amounts of water for cooling the plutonium-producing towers; and the government wanted to set up shop in a remote location where few would pay attention or object to what was happening. The secretive Hanford Atomic Works was established on a 51-mile free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River—now called the Hanford Reach—a perfect intersection of these two requirements: a vast volume of cold water and a sparsely-populated rural location.

On January 16, 1943, General Leslie Groves officially endorsed Hanford as the proposed plutonium production site, and work on the Fat Man Bomb that destroyed Nagasaki began. Most residents in areas were given 90 days to vacate their homes. (Now the region is called the Tri-cities: Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco). HAW soon became the major employer in the Tri-cities area, and, in tough times, there were few objections to the work and few questions asked.

Parallel with this, just an hour west, between 1942-1946 in the Yakima Valley, the Yakima Firing range took over 327,000 acres of "useless" shrub-steppe for military exercises, munition experimentation, and training. In the sleepy valley, a similar Hanford-type oblivion took hold; Yakima did not become the bustling "Fruit Bowl of the Nation" until irrigation was brought in after the ferocious dam building of the '40s and '50s. The voices of the Yakamas and the Wanapums were never part of the conversation; in fact, there, was little conversation. Innumerable sacred and prehistoric sites, nearly all unexplored and unrecorded—including burial grounds, seasonal villages, camas gathering areas, artifacts, and hunting fields—were summarily over-run and destroyed.

As part of an environmental impact report in 1983 issued by the U.S. Army (and signed by Major General Richard E. Cavazos, 9th Infantry Division and Fort Lewis; Scott B. Smith, Brigadier General, Engineer, HQ Forces Command; and James C. Smith Major General, Director of Training, HQ Dept of Army), it is noted that "a Historic Inventory of Fort Lewis has been completed and one site, the Fort Lewis Museum, has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places." There is little or no mention of the vastly older Native sites which have far greater cultural importance for the history of the region, some as ancient as 11,000 B.C. Though there are still numerous sacred Yakama and Wanapum sites on this land, ironically, it is noted that these regions are "barren," despite one portion of the report that runs to ten single-spaced pages listing rare shrub-steppe fauna and flora.

Memories

Every fall all through the '50s, from our family cabin in Cliffdell beside the Naches River, we watched Chinook salmon spawn, thrashing and struggling upstream to establish their nests, or redds, at the places of their birth. Their struggles were part of the seasons' cycles, along with the tamaracks turning gold along the river, and the breaking up of ice in the spring. The Naches River flows into the Yakima, where, at Union Gap, the Ahtanum Range narrows the waters. I remember the Yakamas fishing from their wooden platforms here as salmon jumped the rapids. That was a marvelous spectacle to see as a kid: fishermen standing precariously on wet planks lashed by the river's spray with long-handled nets or gaff hooks, and salmon thrashing to head upriver. Every Native family had its own platform and location passed down for generations upon generations.

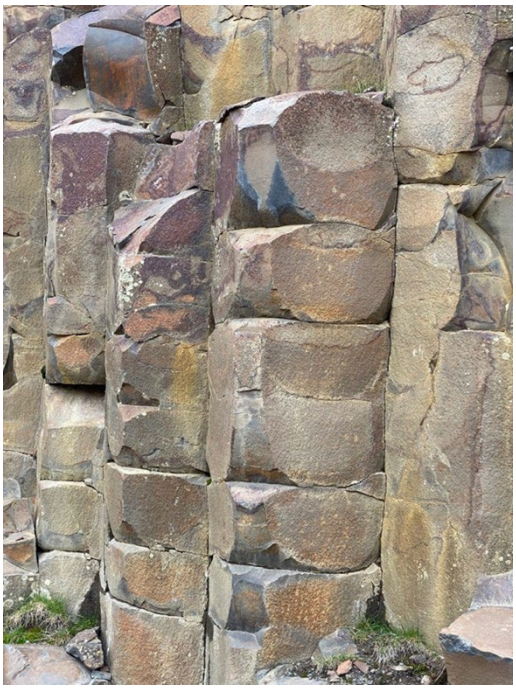
Salmon were essentially blocked from this upstream habitat when the Columbia River dams began to be built. Grand Coulee was finished in 1941, followed by other major dams downriver of Yakima. (There's an inventory here: https://tinyurl.com/ydrhebjh). Though I was an outdoor-loving kid reveling in the natural world, the river politics and degradations were oblivious to me.

The Yakima River flows into the Columbia River at Columbia Point where it continues its 1,243 miles from the headwaters in Canada to the Pacific Ocean. In my lifetime, Celilo Falls—the gathering place for Umatilla, Walla Walla, Cayuse, and Nez Perce tribes to trade, feast, and celebrate—was summarily buried in that same dam building frenzy. (The Dalles and Celilo Falls area was called "the greatest fishery on the river" by ethnologist Eugene Hunn, in *Nch'i Wana*. All that was lost.) In slow steps, I began educating myself about our natural wonders in Central Washington and their importance to Native peoples.

At eight, in the early '60s I wrote my first diary entry about a backyard hummingbird; I discovered mason bees wrapped in rose leaves in the round holes of the rotting stump in our backyard; I spent many thoughtful dusks on my back watching nighthawks dive, screech, and

whirl. (There are no nighthawks in the valley now.) I was beginning to notice things; I was becoming a writer. In my teen years, I missed the salmon, but no one talked about why they'd disappeared.

Every spring day in high school as a senior, I hiked the Ahtanum Ridge to condition myself to summit Mount Adams, called Pahto by Natives peoples. But this too was an appropriation. The Indian Land Claims Commission ruled in 1966 that the mountain's 21,000 acres rightly belonged to the Yakamas based on terms of the Treaty of 1855; but it wasn't until May 20, 1972, that the summit and east slope of the mountain were returned to the Yakama Nation by President Richard Nixon. I remember so clearly my day atop Mount Adams: there were clear sunny skies for hundreds of miles; yet, I was still uneducated.



Pillow basalt along the Yakima River in the Ellensburg Canyon.

The varied and unique fauna and flora of the Columbia Basin Shrub-steppe of Central Washington, the claims of the Yakama Nation, the military takeover of Native lands, and the features of my own home-

land were the farthest things from my mind when I left for college. The privilege of my upbringing blinded me to understanding what I now recognize as closest to my heart—the land, the smells, sounds and cycles of what formed me so many years ago.

Now dried sage (*Artemisia tridentata*) on my dashboard takes me back to my growing-up days, with one important difference—I have names in my head: pillow basalt, Garry Oaks, sage grouse, rufus hummingbird, burrowing owl. Now I have questions: How can I help restore this land? How can I honor the Native Peoples who freely roamed our once-vast shrub-steppe, who loved and protected it over millennia? What are the proper reparations to the Yakama Nation—to all Native Peoples—whose lands were stolen from them?

Greening

There's a blaze on the lake,
the last of a dying winter's end.
Hunter hawks vanish
on the vast horizon, owls
replenish. Blues as big as me
return to their nestings. It's as if
the flowers never left. Summer
leaves behind its residue. What
is left of the world after
the solar flares of grieving?

———————

All this matter—what
did it matter? Now
the smallest matter
lightens. You look away
and then return, and there's
a greening.

When We Take Everyone With Us

the air thins without us, the rivers
swell with longing, fire rustles
the left-behind trees. The Earth knows.

When we take everyone with us
Spirit recedes into shadow, a far
behind, no way at all. We lighten
our load and leave Mountain behind.

When we take everyone with us
We leave behind the best behind
us. We scalp the seasons into
an extended winter. We lose hope.

When we take everyone with us
there is no one left to mourn us.

When the Mountain Doesn't Last

the volcano will.

Cathedral

Bioregional understanding is knowing and caring for place within one's own region's borders—the interrelations of its flora and fauna communities, the history and current state of the terrestrial rise and fall of its mountains, plains, and valleys, the life-giving forces of the riverine arteries, the moods, sounds, and seasons of place. Bioregionalism is, at its core, interconnectedness—the warp and weft of life that creates place.

Often, when we look past the western shores of Cascadia we see only water—yes, living and teeming with sea life, having "many gods and many voices"—but most would contend that other than having latitude and longitudinal coordinates, the Pacific Ocean would not be considered a "place." On land, water may characterize place, the way thousands of rivers and streams carve laugh lines and wrinkles of age in stone mountains, the way frozen water carved our inland seas and glacial lakes, and while the Pacific Ocean defines Cascadia's western border, most would say the sea does not itself have "place."

Or does it?

As the pre-historic currents of land define Cascadia—mountain building, accreted, folded, subducted, exploded—so the less viscous currents of water and wind define Cascadia's neighbor to the west. The ancient currents of Pacifica—dry highs lifted by cumulative heat of the surrounding Pacific Rim lands, turned by the Coriolis effect of the earth's rotation, and wet lows spawned like worm gears when and where the highs touch—have been spinning and dancing as long as there has been

land, the sunlight to heat it, and water. The Pacific High lifts and turns in a clockwise direction, while the wet lows, that gather and fall back to the ocean and the land, as rain and snow, turn in a counterclockwise direction. And while neither the spinning centers nor the outstretched arms of these dancers are fixed in place—daily or seasonally—they have whirled and twirled, risen and fallen perpetually in place as long as the land itself.[1]

Land waves, wind waves, water waves. The essential movement of all is waves, and the warp and weft of these waves, the dance of these waves define place along Cascadia's shoreline have shaped the bays and coves along the West Coast and the fjords that make up Cascadia's shoreline features and the inland sea. The waters of the Pacific Ocean have shaped Cascadia's shoreline, and its watered winds shape Cascadia's climate and weather, which in turn give rise to its unique flora and fauna.

As a young man, I had an experience that opened my eyes to understanding the wind and water of our great Pacific Ocean *as place*.

⌗

My friend and I were two reasonably accomplished sailors and had just finished a couple of good seasons commercially fishing king crab in Alaska. We were in our late twenties and already veterans of life on the water, but on watch together during a black, stormy winter night, we knew we needed a change from the icy Bering waters and decided to sail across the Pacific from Seattle to the Big Island of Hawaii. Our plan was to buy a small boat and establish a business fishing big tuna, mahi-mahi, and marlin. So, we readied my friend's forty-six-foot sloop, solicited a couple of other friends, and ventured forth, not knowing what—or who—we would meet along the way.

After having researched the best chances for optimal weather and winds, having carefully provisioned the boat, we threw the lines and set sail from Seattle on the first of August. I had taken navigation courses and outfitted myself with a sextant, a single sideband radio to listen to daily

1. For a graphic rendering of the bathymetry beyond Cascadia's shores, see David McCloskey's map of Cascadia.

weather reports, and a satellite navigation system to double-check my sextant readings—these were the 1980s, prior to much of the navigational sophistication we know today. I spent the preceding weeks studying paper wind-flow and current charts at NOAA, how weather patterns worked, and the latest details. I felt ready to take on the role of navigator.

As a sailor, I orient myself differently from one who travels on land. No road bumps tell if I stray from my lane, there are no lanes except those designated for giant freighters and those near major ports. No highway signs shout, "Exit to Hilo one mile." At sea, there is no one way to tell which way is the right way to go.

The dance of wind and weather in our ocean and surrounding land regions is dominated by a circular wind flow so large that in summer it often reaches from the Salish Sea, down along California, west above the Hawaiian Islands, sometimes reaching Japan and China, northwards in an arc to Alaska, and back around Haida Gwai to the Salish Sea again. Generated by hot air rising from the surrounding lands—clockwise in the northern hemisphere—this wind pattern is called the Pacific High Pressure Zone.

Traveling before the wind is the most comfortable way of sailing, and leaving the Straits of Juan de Fuca, if the navigator can position his sailboat on the eastern edge of the Pacific High, the circular wind-flow will carry the vessel in a southwestern arc, into the Tradewinds, and right into Hawaii. A major complication for the navigator lies in the fact that, like most things at sea, the Pacific High never stays put. Its center roams about the Pacific Ocean, with arms of the High reaching into inland seas, fjords, and valleys. How does one know when one is on the eastern edge of the High? How does one know when one has moved into the Trade Winds? Though the navigator may try, the migrations of the High are mostly random and unpredictable. The trick of the sailboat navigator, however, is to keep the boat in the midst of or on the edge of the optimum winds.

We left Shilshole Bay in Seattle with three weeks of food, 150 gallons of water, and two days of fuel. At Cape Flattery, the last point of land, we headed southwest in hopes of picking up the High. Our timing was perfect. We took off between two low-pressure systems wet with clouds and

summer rain, one just before and one just after we left. The wind we had the first day or so was from the fringes of these two fronts, but without the rain. By about half-way through the second day, we reached what we thought must be the winds of the Pacific High.

It's kind of an odd feeling, because one has to become familiar with an all-new set of visible and phenomenological signs and determine what they mean. I was searching for something that had no concrete measurable dimensions. It's not like looking for a place on land. Whereas on land, when one finds a place one is seeking, being there in a "stilled sense" is proof of the finding. There is, on land, a sense of having arrived so that one can be still and stop looking. This is characteristic of "sense of place" in the land experience. For land itself and the things that are made of it are solid and in a sense still and not moving. If a picnic place on a bluff is sought, the proof of finding is in the still sense of being there—one throws out the blanket, settles down, breaks out the basket, and "here we are!"

In a sailboat, however, one searches for an experience of a certain movement, looks for the means of motion. One knows one is there when moving away and moving toward. Whereas on land the place-finding experience has a sense of being inside or being still—as in a house or in a park—a sailor looks to be swept away, to find "the groove" whereby a certain type of movement is accentuated. One is definitely outside, unprotected, in motion, and at the whim of the elements.

In this spirit, we sought the winds of the Pacific High. And, as I mentioned earlier, toward the end of the second day out we realized we had found it. Whereas while sailing on the fringes of the low-pressure zones—where the sky was grey, the waves were a bit choppy, and the air was dense with moisture—the winds of the Pacific High were steady and dry. The barometer had risen, the waves were long and steady rollers, and the skies were bright blue, open as far as the eye could see. Granted the Pacific High is huge, and it would've been pretty hard to miss the distinction; but the point is other than on the small scale of looking for wind shifts while sailing Lake Washington and the Salish Sea or enduring the brutal storms of the Bering, none of us on this boat had experienced it before.

Until the friendly folks at NOAA gave me the scoop, I really didn't know what the Pacific High was. And, experientially, we were just now coming to know.

With the wind on our stern and sails all the way out, we headed almost due south along Cascadia's western shore, instead of directly towards Hawaii, to remain on the windy eastern arc of the Pacific High. For in the center of the High we had heard is a place of no wind, a place to be avoided at all costs. Contrasted to the sailor's paradise we now enjoyed, this dead spot is called called that place the doldrums.

Since we had limited supplies, and fuel should be saved for emergency purposes and entering the final port of call, my new challenge as navigator was to make sure the boat kept on a southerly enough track to keep us out of the doldrums, while at the same time cutting as close to it as was prudent. This would allow us to take more of the hypotenuse route—closer to a straight-line route—and save time and distance to Hawaii.

Twice a day I donned my headset and tuned into the marine weather broadcast over the (now antiquated) single sideband radio, broke out my colored pens, and filled in the blank weather charts I had made, sketching out the movements of the highs and lows. After ten days I had watched the center of the High travel in a sort of clockwise circular movement—west, then north up toward Alaska, then down paralleling our course, and then it had begun heading west and to the north again. I surmised that I now understood its movements and could make the call for a course adjustment.

Since a couple of the other crew members started to get antsy, homesick for girlfriends, and generally lowering crew morale, I consulted with the skipper, regarding my observations on the movements of the High's center. We concluded that it looked as if the dull, dead center of no wind was off on another ten-day round trip to Alaska. It seemed prudent enough to cut the corner and head straight to Hawaii. For by the time the High's center would come back 'round again, we would be in the Tradewinds and home free. We slept on it, and the next morning's weather broadcast confirmed that the center was still moving northwesterly, away from our position, at 25 knots. The decision was made to make

the cut, and our course was adjusted accordingly. Hawaii straight ahead. Spirits immediately picked up, and we broke out a bottle of wine and enjoyed a particularly sunny day of sailing with great winds and following seas. Good stories, a good dinner barbequed on the back deck, and we all stayed up to watch the stars come out—one by one and then by the millions! It was my turn for next morning's watch, so I headed down for a good night's rest.

When morning came, I couldn't see out yet but felt a strange bobbing—no bow wake splashing past the walls of my cabin room, no sound of wind in the rigging. I made my way up topside, and when my eyes adjusted to the brightness, I could see absolutely flat calm water all the way to the horizon in all directions. The sky was bright, clear blue, and seemed to rise forever above a few very small, very low, white cottony clouds arranged neatly above the horizon. The sun was as bright as I'd ever seen it, still low in the morning sky. And…we were not moving an inch. No wind, the sails were hanging aimlessly, and the boom languidly swung back and forth when someone's walking altered the balance of the boat. I knew for sure but went below to catch the morning weather broadcast—"The center of the high pressure region, registering 31 millibars, has reversed direction and is quasi-stationary at 41°North 136° West. Exactly our location! What did "quasi-stationary" mean, and how long were we to stay here?

By noon we had cranked up the diesel, with its two days of emergency fuel, and headed toward Hawaii to find out what "quasi-stationary" did mean and just how big the center of this thing was. By the next morning, we had found out that the pacific center of the Pacific High was gigantic. We had motored almost 300 miles, and the serene scenery was exactly as it had been the day before. So, we shut down the engine, and with fateful resignation, decided to wait it out.

An odd series of events began to occur at this stage. A large seabird, with a wingspan almost as large as a California condor's, called an albatross, had been loosely following us, taking long swooping, sweeping glides across our wake without ever flapping its wings. An albatross following one's ship is fabled to bring good fortune. But this one also

stopped in the water by our boat when we stopped. I had to dive in for a closer look at things. Both the bird's and my curiosity outweighed any fear we had, and we drew so close we touched!

If an albatross following one's ship brings good fortune, I don't know what it means to have touched her, but we began noticing the beauty of the place in which we were situated. The others asked how the water was. Well, it was beautiful—a good 80° and the clearest water I had ever seen. Around the shadow of our boat were hundreds of tropical fish, the sunlight gathered in the water in a prismatic arrangement so that where one's sight entered the water the sunlight split into distinctive beams like long quartz crystals, each with a spectral glow. It was the sort of thing I'd seen when sunlight pierced fog or a cloud when flying, only much, much brighter. The water was so clear that from ten yards away I could see the blue underwater hull of the *Mystic* as if it were magnified instead of obscured, and the sea felt truly wonderful as it surrounded and buoyed up my naked body. I couldn't answer "C'mon in, the water's fine." I shouted "It's unbelievable!" Soon we had all jumped in—bathing, cavorting, and enjoying our first swim of the trip.

That which we had dreaded most had forced itself upon us to become what would be the highlight of our journey. We had stumbled upon a vacationland for which no one could make reservations—normally it never stayed put. Today I didn't need to don headsets to know that "quasi-" had become stationary. And, "Frankly my dear, we didn't give a damn." Releasing ourselves of all compulsion and anticipation of forward progress, we came to dwell fully in the time and place. In this domed sanctum of natural unity, in this womb of mitigated forces, we were feeling quite at home. Here the still sky was in duet with the calm ocean, and one seemed to call the other into deeper tranquility. The deepest blue of the ocean was interrupted only by the concentric beams of spectral light and was in resonance with the bluer blue sky accented by the pure light of the sun, whose warmth tanned our bodies, and we gave thanks. Our becalmed white-hulled ship, the *Mystic*, was accepting and accepted by the still and unmoving small, low, white clouds that dotted our horizon. This was truly a Pacific center, not a land but a separate region I would later call Pacifica.

When this day began to fade, the crew gathered to watch the night take over day—like a glittered curtain coming down on a perfect performance. We all felt the need to give a standing ovation, but we just sat in awe. That evening, the stars were reflected within the still horizon of the ocean so that the depth of sky encompassed us from above and below.

I offered to stay up for wind watch—if any arose, I would wake the others to hoist sails and resume our journey. The others bade goodnight and went below, and I was left alone on deck for deeper reflection upon the night and where we were, on this pattern of wind and water within whose center we drifted, and how it all fit into the world.

I was adrift at the center of a wind pattern that was older than the coastal land from which I had just sailed, and certainly older than the newly sprouted volcanic islands to which we traveled. In slow geologic time, the chain of the Hawaiian archipelago rises above the ocean surface with active volcanoes on one end and erodes and disappears back down on the other like the dorsal ridges on a gray whale as it slowly surfaces and dives. The coastlines around the Pacific Rim, much older than the Hawaiian Islands, each have their own birth and erosion stories. Cascadia's lands are largely born of waves of accreted terranes deposited as the Pacific Plate dives beneath the North American Plate. Think of the formation as a carpet littered with blocks (islands and seamounts on the Pacific Plate) being pulled beneath a door (the ancient North American Plate, the Craton). In poetic simplicity, Cascadian lands and mountain ranges are blocks that don't fit under the door and are smashed up against the Craton. But, this ancient clockwise current of wind and water is older than any of these coastal lands and has been rotating as long as the earth has.

I knew a little of the Coriolis effect. All liquid that flows toward the center of the earth in the northern hemisphere does so in a counterclockwise whirl, and all that rises does so in a clockwise manner. I began to understand myself as one of a number of turning centers on earth, whose choreography describes the moods of our seasons and regions. I was in the still center, and the arms of this rising gyre of the Pacific High sweep clockwise, with north winds, into and onto all the coastal lands of Cascadia—onto the coast of Southeast Alaska, into the Salish Sea, and along

the coasts of Oregon and Northern California. North winds indicate high pressure and we are blessed with clear skies, sunny days. While the counterclockwise low-pressure gyres, generated by friction at the boundaries of high-pressure zones bring and cloudy skies and rain.

Alone on deck, not only did I begin to understand the earth as composed of a number of ancient interplaying convective cells, I began to understand the significance of this one to my region of Cascadia and to my own life. I could feel the dance of the winds and weather; I was the dance. I listened and began to hear the voice of this place. I imagined that I was hearing one of earth's great characters, Pacifica, tell a story of a life in dance, a dance of waves and weaves, of winds and water and land—with a dancer in its center that always maintained peace at its core.

The celestial rotunda became. I let my center become concentric with that of this place—for indeed, though always in tangible motion, this enduring geographical presence, older than its surrounding lands, deserved to be understood as a place.

Soon, the stars grew dimmer, the sky began to lighten, and the day was about to break. A slight ripple appeared on the water, and the still air started to move. The once stationary center of the Pacific High was also about to begin his day with a walk to the west, and we would be ready to hoist our sails and head southeast to find the Tradewinds. I woke the others to the light, fresh breeze beginning to form, and with sleep in their eyes, we set sail for Hawaii.

We all bade goodbye to the windless vacation paradise of the Pacific High, and I turned silently and said goodbye and thank you to Pacifica.

After a few hours, our momentum had picked up, as well as renewed hopes of reaching Hawaii, when we passed a tangle of logs and old fishing nets. And almost as if we were being offered a going away present, two large mahi-mahis jumped one after the other over the logs—bright blue and iridescent yellow rainbow arc on morning sunlit ocean. We quickly turned the *Mystic* around, set out fishing lines, and trolled past the log jam. Fish on! And, over a barbeque feast, we shared stories of this phenomenal place.

⌗

Upon returning home a year later, I reflected on the relation of Pacifica to our own bioregion, Cascadia. Not long after, I joined fellow bioregionalists at the Third North American Bioregional Congress in Squamish, BC. Each participant had different gifts to offer, and so we spent days and late nights unwrapping them, presenting them to the plenary to better and deepen our collective understanding of our own Bioregions. For the occasion, I had choreographed and offered the Weather Dance—a dance of the Pacific winds and weather that give existence to what I had come to know as Pacifica—our neighbor to the west.

For the Weather Dance, I offered each person in the great Longhouse a role in the dance so that each could understand viscerally, through their own danced bodies, what I had come to know during my Pacific voyage. Many dancers were lined around the perimeter, forming the land masses of the Pacific Rim—from Japan to Kamchatka to the Aleutians, from Alaska down to Haida Gwai, Vancouver Island, down the western coast of Cascadia to Cape Mendocino, and beyond. I suggested that if one lived or felt a special affinity for a place, they might locate there for the dance. At my urging, a few menfolk volunteered to play the rising Pacific High in its various seasons, and a few womenfolk volunteered to play the wet counterclockwise turning low-pressure systems. While a drummer drummed, I narrated the story and guided the dancers.

The Pacific High is generated by the heated land around it. In summer when all the land around the Pacific Rim is heated, acting as one giant beach, the dancers around the Rim stand tall. The standing dancers raise their arms and give rise to the High Pressure, and the now-standing High-Pressure dancers move in a clockwise direction around the Longhouse, around the Pacific Rim, gently spinning clockwise, touching/brushing each landed dancer with their left hand so the landed dancers might feel the origin of the summer north winds. As winter approaches, however, the land cools. There is less heat to generate one large Pacific Gyre. The landed dancers begin to squat down, lowering their hands. With less heat to generate the High, it splits into two large Pacific Gyres,

north and south. And, as when two gears rotating in the same direction spin a third, the third gear must spin in the opposite direction—in this case, a counterclockwise whirling low-pressure system is born. At the boundary of the two clockwise halves of the Pacific High, the great Hawaiian canoe paddler dips an oar generating the counterclockwise whirl—the low-pressure storms of the winter Pineapple Express. Two of the High Pressure dancers, positioned in the room as if centered over the Hawaiian Isles—one from the north gyre, one from the south—each take the hand of one of the low-pressure dancers, and still turning clockwise they spin her counterclockwise as the great Hawaiian canoe paddler does. She dramatically crouches as she spins counterclockwise, making great whirling wind sounds. Gathering other crouching women, they move northward, dancing in a small counterclockwise circle until they reach Alaska and the jet stream, and then they whirl down the coast touching the landed dancers from this counterclockwise direction with their right hands. The landed dancers now know and feel how Cascadia's stormy winter winds appear to come from the south. We repeated the annual cycle a couple of times so all the dancers came to know through dance, through their bodies, both our neighbor to the west, Pacifica, and the interwoven dance with Cascadia.

After the dance, several bioregionalists approached with wide grins of insight. Freeman House, prominent bioregionalist from the Mattole Bioregion, who had taken position at Cape Mendocino during the dance, came up to express appreciation and deeper understanding. He held out his hands, facing west to the Pacific, and gestured in a kind of dance—experiencing the wind on his right hand arcing northward up the coast to Cascadia, while the wind on his left hand arced south to California. He was at the phenomenological border between the two bioregions, as he had been so many times in real life, and said that after the Weather Dance, for the first time, he was able to place the experience in context.

Freeman's gesture represented a crucial element of bioregionalism—incorporating the experience of the place into our bodies. His was a kind of renga, one dance playing off another. Again, bioregional awareness is not just a receptive learning, a taking-in, but a call and response with

the place, with others in the place—in this instance people inhabiting the land, wind, and waves.

Bioregionalism is Kinship. Bioregional understanding is not only knowing and caring for the place within our own bioregion's borders but also coming to know that of our neighbors. Bioregionalism is interconnectedness, knowing the weave of waves.

In the years since, I have come to know many more of the weather features and characters that define, interact, and dance with Cascadia—the summer high-pressure wall off Vancouver Isle, the Great Blue Bear in winter whose claws scrape shaved ice, as the frigid winter high from the north grates and claws at wet, winter lows.

And now, as you look beyond our western shores, you'll see more than blue ocean. I hope you'll smile and wave a greeting to our neighbor, Pacifica, who has and will live and dance as long as there is land and sun and water.

Longing & the Dance Create the Place:
What Might "Chora" Mean in BioRegional Geography?

It's like fumbling for a light in the dark: rummaging around in your pack, proceeding solely by feel, while the flashlight stays tantalizingly just out of reach … until it finally finds your hand … and then the familiar world is transformed….

In these essays we keep searching, through old and new, for a blessed entree into the depths, the dynamics of the body of the living land. Searching for terms of true insight and new resonance to help articulate the lineaments of a new BioRegional Geography….

Some terms—location, zone, place, boundary, etc.—we attempt to rescue, and give back rinsed clean; others such as "space and spatial" we have urged suspension, while there remain a few other terms that have dropped from use, but still deserve consideration, such as the wonderful ancient Greek word, *chora*.

Its surely tantalizing that the same sounding words—*choros* and *chora*—meant both place and dance, and we wonder: what might be their inner connection? Also significant is the fact that *chora* gave us the venerable geographic term for the study of a region and its inhabitants—namely, chorography and chorology. Admittedly it's something of a reach insofar as there are no widely used terms in current English deriving from *khoros* (besides chorus) in ordinary usage or geography … a lacuna we essay to fill.

So, in the spirit of exploration in plumbing the depths, we enter here the same kind of BioRegional probing that led to creation of the Cascadia Map—going further on down the road, crossing over and back rivers and mountains to see what's on the other side, and to see how the place you came from looks in reverse perspective, and then going on to the other side of the other side, etc., so now we engage *chora*. What might we discover about something once known and deeply felt, but now forgotten? Is the original insight still helpful metaphorically? What might it say to us in our search?

What might *chora* come to mean in BioRegional Geography? What does it tell us about the place where what we now think of the separate spheres of story, music, dance, poetry, and the sacred all emerged in the crucible of community, culture and place, fused together? (Durkheim, 1912; Mauss, 1925). How does *chora* come to anchor both community and culture? How does the place emerge? And, what might *chora* come to mean in a truly Bioregional Geography?

When a notion is tantalizingly obscure, we begin not with contemporary commentary, nor with philosophy nor history, but rather with deep listening, especially with the testimony of the words themselves as they speak to us. We seek to uncover their roots and rhizomatic clusters, and, above all, feel the re-surge of their animating metaphors which flowed into ordinary speech forming culture. For these mother roots are still found in vibrant living languages that we do speak. If we can recover, at least partially, these vivid movements we may find new-old living metaphors. As always, we need be ready to set aside ideology and preconceptions, for there are surprises herein.

I.

For many years, we were cut off from these roots, and the origins of *choros* (dance, place), *chorus* (song, dance), *chora* (Greek village), as well as *chorography* (regional study), remained speculative and uncertain. But thanks to the online publication of the Pokorny Etyma in Proto-Indo-European by the Linguistics Research Center (LRC) at the University of Texas, Austin,

we now have a much better trace of the origins, meanings, derivations, and metaphorical extensions of these key words. There's apparently a complex of terms in the **ghe—*gher—*gherdho—*ghorto*—neighborhood that becomes relevant. We shall consider the two key roots in turn. As always, we go to the oldest languages and verbs first. (* = a reconstructed proposed PIE root.)

First, we encounter the PIE Pokorny Etyma #418–19, 1, **ghe—*ghei*, meaning "to lack, be empty; leave, go out." These **ghe—*ghei* roots generated a series of important Hellenic verbs:

—*chorteo* = "to crave, have need of, lack, long for;"

—*chorein* = "to go, withdraw;"

—*chorzo* = "to separate;"

—*kichanein* = "to reach, attain, meet with, arrive at, to find;" and

—*choreo* = "to make room for another."

As well as related nouns such as *chera* or "widow," and *cheros*, "widowed, bereaved." In turn, these verbs gave us the important noun, *choros*, meaning "a place (piece of) ground," and the more general term *chora*, a feminine noun meaning "land, country, space, room."

But how did these related threads infusing place with great significance arise? Though merely a suggestive reconstruction, perhaps a phenomenological and geographic dialectic here involved several "moments":

> First, Longing & Leaving—a longing for, while lacking and craving-leading to a leaving, going out, withdrawing, or abandoning, as the first anima;
>
> Second, Arriving—an arriving, reaching or attaining, meeting with, as the second anima;
>
> Third, Finding—finding a place, a piece of ground, and making room for another there, as the third anima.

All three movements involve a basic "being-toward" something else, a

leaning into possibility, as "life-worlds" simultaneously close there & open here … beckoning us forward.

Thus, the movements of longing and leaving, arriving and meeting, as a kind of finding converged here to infuse a lived place with meaning in depth, to animate a dwelling place-for-us. As in a fundamental founding of a community, for instance, in migration and the planting of other daughter colonies "down the coast" or "over around the mountains," generating a local origin story. Here in outline are the geopoetics of "journey and dwelling" (Bernd Jager, 1975), of longing and arriving, which go into founding a place. These emotions poured into that locus as a focus of energies there that becomes a living place. Indeed, taken together that's what *chora* gathers and thus means as a place—all that which has been invested in it—in founding a place. And it is out of these inaugural powers that a place comes to be "a place-for-us," that power a place as a place, that truly place a place. From this drama place derives many of its other meanings.

Note the intimate and direct ancient linkages between place and inhabitation as a place for dwelling. C*hora* tells us how an inhabited place forms. In ancient Greek, *chorio* meant "village," while on the Greek Islands of the Cyclades in the heart of the Aegean Sea, *chora* still refers to "the town center." C*horati* meant "the field," *choros* "the environment," *choro* "to hold," and their cognates came to mean "location, place, spot; position as in the proper place, one's place in life or a station, a soldier's post," and then a piece of land, tract, field, the country (opposite town), the countryside, *khorion*, "a district or estate," community, and nation, as expressed in *chorography*, the study and depiction of a region and its inhabitants (as in Ptolemy). C*hora* thus moved from inhabitation and dwelling to the fields as feeding places, grassy pastures, as well as into the wider world beyond the village. C*hora* is a term always imbued with placed inhabitation of humans and creatures alike, and intrinsically opposed to the abstract space of *kenon* (void) and *diastema* (interval) that philosophers and geometers loved to later elaborate.

One notable result of this etymological search is that very little of the Greek *chora* raft of terms (longing, leaving, arriving, finding a place,

land, countryside, region, etc.) passed over into English, so they are simply not available. Only the formal terms "chorography" and "*-chore*" (as in biochore, or agency of plant distribution) came through, but these are not in common usage.

The #418–19 **ghe*—**ghei*—roots generated other threads as well which did, in fact, pass through to us. A surprising one is found in the important Latin *heredito, hereditare*—verbs meaning "to inherit," in the root sense of "going out from, descending from a family or tribe," which passed over into French and English (e.g., heir), but not into Greek or Germanic languages.

A final thread that strongly developed in Germanic and English languages has to do with the "to go" words—"go/gone, forego, ago," as well as "gate, gait, gauntlet, and road." In early Germanic languages we see *gan, gean, gaan, gehen*, etc., "to go, walk," as well as *gata* and other words for "gate, road, street, etc.," all having to do with proceeding down a path or road. This root is locomotive in inhabiting the traces of dwelling in a familiar locale.

Thus, we find here the main threads of our first key root **ghe***ghei:* the longing-leaving-arriving-finding and founding a place cluster, with chorography as the resultant study of the wider place or region as a dwelling place with its inhabitants; and then heir and heredity as a going out from a family, and finally the going in itself down a familiar road.

II.

The second root to consider is Pokorny Etyma #442–43 **gher,* 4, "to grab, grip, seize; to take hold of." (Perhaps this was related to, but not to be confused with #437–38, **gherd*, **ghed*—"to get, grasp, seize," nor #426–27 **gheidh*, **gheigh*, "to desire, yearn for." This **gher,* 4, root generated the Homeric word *khoros*, a masculine noun meaning "a round dance, a dancing place, an open area," and K*horeia*, "a choral dance," as well as khorios, a masculine noun meaning "an enclosure, enclosed place, later a feeding place (pasture)," as well as T*erpsikhore*, the goddess of dance and song. (These words do not appear to be directly related to #418–19 **ghe*,

"lack, empty, to go," but perhaps to #444 **gherdh*, "to gird, encompass.")

The primal sense of a "turning-round dance," of turning together in a musical circle, continued in Celtic languages, in the Irish *car,* or "turn," *cor*, "turn, music, circular motion," in the Gaelic *car*, "turn, movement, bar of music," and the Welsh, *cor*—"choir, circle," as embodied in the Gaelic communal celebration of the *ceili*.

It also continues in the wide-spread custom of gathering into a chorus as a refrain in music that circles round the main part of the song, a refrain sung by the community in unison.

In Latin, the **gher*, 4, root generated *chorus*, a masculine noun, *choraula*, meaning "choral song/accompaniment," as well as continuing T*erpsichore*, one of the nine Muses. In medieval Latin these expanded into *choralis*, "of a choir," *chorista*, "a choir singer," *chorus*, "a choir," and so on.

In English the **gher,* 4, root, gave us:

—carol, "an old round dance with song,"

—choral, "choir, chorus,"

—chorus, "a group of singers/dancers in Greek drama,"

—choir, "an organized group of singers,"

—chorale, "hymn/psalm sung at church."

In Latin the **ghorto, *gher-dho* thread, which developed into the Greek *khortos*, expanded into *cohors* and *cohortis*, feminine nouns for court, courtyard, enclosure, and cohort, as well as *hortus*, garden, and then horticulture. In English as an extension of court, other words such as courtesy, cortège, etc. emerged.

Now, as a verb "to chorus" means "to sing, speak, or say in unison, a simultaneous utterance by many gathered together" (e.g., "The crowd erupted in a chorus of protest"). Along with the primal process of singing the refrain in a round, this verb continues to witness to the communal character of chorus.

Once again, the noun seems to precipitate as a kind of deposit from the verb. As a noun, the Greek *khoros*/Latin *chorus* referred to a "dance or a company of dancers and singers," and by extension to the dancing place or enclosure. This "turning-round dance" seems inherent, ancient,

originary, in the life of the community. For in a very real sense, the community first involves a rhythmic movement together in time, a necessary attunement that lays the foundation for emergence of other communal action. For a community must learn how to act together, and this happens most directly in its elementary forms of dance and song. Perhaps that is why drums, flutes, and lyres are found so universally. Perhaps that is why even today we are drawn so irresistibly to concerts and musical performances that engender what Victor Turner (1969) called *"communitas"* (see also Edith Turner, 2012).

The development of *khoros* as "the turning-round dance" in Greek community and culture testifies to it deep significance. In a nutshell, the Greek *khoros* arose from within the heart of community in ancient religious and mystery rites, which then carried over into ancient Greek drama as "a company of performers whose singing, dancing, and narration provided explanations and elaboration of the main action." The central role of the chorus emerges if we recall that in the early days the actors wore masks but did not speak. They acted through gestures and changed masks to assume the role of another character. Hence, the vital role of the chorus in explaining the meaning of the action on the stage. Later the sacerdotal function of the chorus waned as its role changed, but in Greek tragedy, as Nietzsche so perceptively observed (in T*he* B*irth of* T*ragedy*), the chorus continued to act as the voice of community and conscience in reminding and restraining the unbridled *hamartia* of the heroic ego and his destructive excess.

The role of the *khoros/chorus* as the vital enactment of the community in the on-going *agonia* (or wrestling match of politics) of public drama continued to flow in other ways in the *agora* and assembly of the *polis*. For instance, the *res publica* ("the public thing") that gathers the community and its representatives in the on-going decision-making of the *polis*. In these and other ways, the community rises and remains indelibly choric.

III.

But then, a quandary: how, why, do these two roots, #418–19, **ghe*, "lack, empty, longing, leaving, going out" and the #442–43 **gher, *gherto, *ghordho*, etc., "to grab, grip, seize," go together? If they remain separate but related roots, how then is their inner relation articulated? How do they converge to give us almost identical sounding and meaning words? It is speculative, of course, but perhaps there is an inner dialectic between "grasping, binding" and "releasing, letting go" that can be detected in the Greek and Latin T*erpsichore*.

The Greek *khoros* meant a "turning-round dance," of course, and was carried forward in the Latin goddess, T*erpsichore*, one of the nine Muses. Goddess of dance and song, her name literally meant "delight in dancing" in Greek. The daughter of Zeus and mother of the Sirens, like the other Muses, she was said to possess powers of prophecy, as well as the gift of transformation. A gushing spring rising from the side of Mt. Parnassus near the sacred site of Delphi was sacred to Terpsichore (her spring was still rushing when we visited in 1990).

Terpsichore was often portrayed as playing a lyre or cithara (Hermes' gift to Apollo), the instrument of the gods. Crafted from a tortoise shell in the shape of bull's horns, the cords of the lyre give another clue to the inner dynamics involved. For yet another **gher* form, found at the adjacent Pokorny Etyma #443, **gher*, 5 (also **ghor-na*—) meaning "gut, bowels, stomach, intestines," becomes a cord "fastening things together, enwrapping or enclosing them." For the Greek word *khorde* meant "a gut-string" plucked from the body of an animal, cleaned, and dried into a cord. These *khordes* were often strung into the frame of a lyre and tuned under tension to create musical tones or chords. That is, music made from cords or strung dried intestines (as in "cat-gut") made musical chords!

The most favored *khordes* were fashioned from entrails plucked from the body-cavity of a sacrificed animal subjected to divination. The soothsayers of ancient times—the *haruspices* (*haru*, derived from the same #443 **gher*, 5, root)—believed that by examining the entrails of specially selected animals judged pleasing to the gods for sacrifice and then mapping the

shapes and positions of internal organs, they might divine the god's will, especially in regard to the liver, which was "considered to be the source of blood, and thus the basis of life." Such seers looked for "signs in the stars," inspected the internal organs, earthquakes, etc., searching for omens or portents (*portenta*) to divine.

Hence, when the ancients strung dried intestinal cords stretched onto the body of a lyre, shaped like bull's horns, and strummed those same portentous strings, it was as if the gods themselves sang from within that body, summoned by those corded/chords making divine music—now that's deep resonance! Note that another cognate from within the **gher*—root complex meant "to shiver," as the lyre sent shivers down the spine, as if the whole world reverberated together on some deep strings, aligned in some great numinous, harmonious concordance. Thus, the same cord here, which binds when plucked, resonates in the same sounding box, setting up reverberations with other strings, generating chords and music. The same cord which binds also reverberates in chords! Perhaps that helps explain how "to bind and to hold" is related to "release and let go."

If the root of dance is "to grab or seize" perhaps Terpsichore can help us understand the other side, namely, "to release." For she was known as "whirler of the dance," and in inspired dance and song, a kind of *mania* (the frenzy of divine inspiration) takes hold of us. In a kind of *ec-stasis*, we come to "stand outside" ourselves, look back or beyond ourselves, feeling into the depths of existence. We are "transported" into another realm or plane. So evidently there is a dual dynamic involved—a simultaneously "taking hold of" (*choro*) and "being taken hold of" (*choros*)—a kind of chiastic intertwining that joins the lived reality of these two roots of symbolic gestural movements. We now have the strong resonance of place and dancing, involving a simultaneous "holding" and "being held," exuding from the very heart of dancing and the culture-making community dwelling in the place.

We then come to a crucial question: why the "turning round dance" as central and constitutive? Why do community and culture take root here? How and why is the *khora/khoros* duo inaugural and originary?

Because "being is round"? Because heavenly objects are perfectly spherical? Because of "the music of the spheres"? Because the world is whirled? Because "the whirled world was once danced into being" (as in the Pelasgian myth)? Because "the gods danced that way"? Because humans "reenact that cosmogony in communal rites"? Because these are "founding rites" and "to found a place is to continually reenact these rites in the great turning-round dance"?

For whatever reasons, can we not say that "L*eaving and the* D*ance create the* P*lace*"? and the People of the Place are the Community, and the Community remains inherently choric to this day. The first dialectic of "Leaving and Arriving" is thus intimately bound to the "Finding and Founding" as expressed in the "Dancing Ground," as together they create inhabited Place. For the dance creates the living place, just as the dance of energies generates the living Earth. And so, the two together—physical and mythopoetic—reinforce one another in a grand resonance, a resonance that sounds at the heart of BioRegional Geography.

Conclusion: Placing the Place

What do the still vital witness and wisdom embedded in the depths of these mother roots tell us? How and why are the *khora/khoros* duo inaugural and originary? And, why do community and culture take root here? Why is the "turning round dance" so central and constitutive? What do they tell us about "placing the place"?

The generativity of these roots is extraordinary, as well as infertility of the *chora* raft of terms in leaving so few descendants in English. The bivalency of *chora/choros* suggests that something in the core of these intimate roots turned in different ways—toward place *and* toward dance—a kind of reversibility, as if each

is the other side of the other. Perhaps this double turning in their depths tells us that, in essence, the "place is danced into being." Can we not say that:

The place, like the world itself, is danced into being. The place is drawn out of a clearing in inarticulate space, like an island "spun up" out of the "chaos" and "fluidity" of winds and waters in the center of the ancient Cyclades. Here, an island is born, Delos, for instance, birthplace of the twins, Artemis and Apollo. In this way, something stands up, moving into the open and light, taking on definite form, attaining a stability drawn out of the "shape-shifting" shadows…. So, the place becomes something tangible, visible, standing on its own, an articulated "space," and then a locus of activity. Place is first formed as a chorus of energies converging in a great round dance. This is as true of human inhabitation as in the interplay of natural place-forming energies. The place gathers and concentrates energies—focus of the locus. (It is less a matter of *topos* and "room-as-space" (mere extension) and more locus, focus, and place).

In this inaugural process, something is called out and closed off from general trespass, to allow something else vital to cohere and stand up, to come into its own presencing (recall that temple or *templum* meant "a place cut out," reserved for sacred rites). The dance celebrates "our being here," planted in relation to the cosmos, to all the great energies pouring thru from above and below, to the directions and the gods. In the turning round dance we turn round the world as the world rounds us. So the act of placing summons or "stands up" the shape of the place out of the undifferentiated swirling "room of space." The clearing allows us to call forth a center to gather-in energies, and to focalize and concentrate them….

The *choros* embodies centering energies in the great round dance. The ritual circle and dance enact this centering of the community in relation to the great formative energies of the cosmos, thus Place is founded in this centered ritual circle in relation to the cosmos. The turning round dance mirrors the turning of Earth & Sky (clockwise), as well as turnings of the heavenly bodies, as the cosmos is round and rounding all things. Its essential action is

the continuous realignment of community and cosmos, and the on-going depth of this relationship gives the place its strength as a place; out of this ritual drama Poetry first speaks. Hence, the founding requires regular reenactments. The culture-making community carries this new life forward. All this emplacement is part of "placing the place."

The ritual or sacred circle is found around the campfire, the longhouse or great house, kivas in pueblos, the temple, the Greek theater, and so on, and, indeed, all Indigenous and traditional cultures across the world. It's where the community gathers to tell its origin stories, how the people came to be here, how the gods gave them the place, how gods and people relate, how the people live, how they sing the world…. Culture tells us who we are here, how these people live here, the Story we tell as we become the Stories we tell. (You can't say there's Nature on one side and Culture on the other side of some ontological divide, for these realms are fused in the beginning—people and spirits already inhabit the world in which they are born—people and the world are one!) The sacred circle stands forth as an enclosure of great gravitas, of grief and rejoicing, of coming to terms with life on earth, under the sky and above the underworld. How the world is given and bound, how it is broken, and the binding back together after brokenness…. As a locus, *chora* gathers and focusses energies, tensions, breakdowns, breakthroughs, and reconciliations "setting the world right" again…. It is how the coastal salmon First Peoples of Cascadia celebrated the great good gift in the double give-away of the Potlatch (Mauss, 1925).

As a locus, *chora* gathers and focusses energies, becoming a living place, where the place exudes a presence and takes on a life of its own. This is what it means to "come to dwell in a place." Life radiates out from the focal center of energies, organizing a force-field of activity. Chora centers and grounds the center of the dancing ground and calls forth the bounds. Found in tension with the center, bounds are the limits or edges, the beginning and ends

> of worlds, functioning as liminal thresholds regulating the coming and going of things. As liminal thresholds, bounds bind what they separate.
>
> The region is this articulate force-field radiating out from center to bounds, and back again. The region binds the local (home, community, watershed) to the bioregional to the continental and planetary levels, as wholes to parts in a dynamic living pulsing field…. Regioning is how the encultured body of the place naturally acts as a whole in the wider world…. All this is bound together in always coming home….

In these and other ways, "L*onging and the* D*ance create the* P*lace*" … and the People of the Place are the Community, and the Community remains inherently choric to this day…. The first dialectic of "Leaving and Arriving" is thus intimately bound to the "Finding and Founding" as expressed in the "Dancing Ground," as together they create inhabited Place. For the dance creates the living place, just as the dance of energies generates the living Earth…. All this is saying, "We belong here, belong to this place." This is what it means to learn to dwell here together. And so the two together—physical and mythopoetic—reinforce one another in a grand resonance, a resonance that sounds at the heart of BioRegional Geography … in "Placing the Place…."

Notes

The urban watershed in **Fiona Tinwei Lam**'s poem is named Balaclava and drains into English Bay. It is also known as *Ayyulshun* in Coast Salish. The lost stream referred to in the poem lies beneath Connaught Park in Vancouver, BC which was "…referred to as a duck-filled marsh with a creek flowing through it"1912. https://www.heritagesitefinder.ca/location/2390-w-10th-ave-vancouver-bc/

Acknowledgments

Some contributions have been previously published in books or literary journals.

Jordan Abel's piece is an excerpt from an audio recording of a presentation that was part of Jordan's thesis examination at Simon Fraser University in 2019. This piece can be found in his book, NISHGA (Penguin Random House, 2021)

Susan Kay Anderson's poem "Always Eugene" was previously published in *Indolent Books/A River Sings* and "At Night the River Wants In" and "Getting Water" were previously published in *Anti-Heroin Chic*.

JoAnne Arnott's poems, "cities of the dead," "old lady archeology," "HaikuBot editions," and "pandemic hermitage" are from *pandemic friendship* (above/ground press 2022).

Richard E. Bartow's artwork appears with the permission of the Richard E. Bartow Estate.

"The Bracket-Fungus Steersman" is a chapter from **Colin Browne's** *Entering Time: The Fungus Man Platters of Charles Edenshaw* (Talonbooks, 2017).

"salt spring" is included in **Colin Browne's** *Here* (Talonbooks, 2020).

Jon Brandi's two watercolors are being used by permission of the artist.

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Bowl that heads the Wilson's Bowl basket. Collyne was a student and friend of Wilson Duff. She now lives in Tagish near the headwaters of the Yukon River in her ancestral territory. For more on Collyne Bunn see *Wilson Duff: Coming Back, A Life* by Robyn Fisher (Harbour Publishing, 2022)

Stephen Collis's piece is taken from *Almost Islands: Phyllis Webb and the Pursuit of the Unwritten* (Talonbooks, 2018) by permission of the author.

"James Stops By" is from **Edward Dorn's** *By the Sound,* and is used with the permission of Jennifer Dunbar Dorn.

Wilson's Duff's piece was taken from Phyllis Webb's *Talking* (Quadrant Editions, 1982).

The photograph of the Tsimshian twin masks was taken by Hilary Stewart and is reprinted from *images stone b.c.* by **Wilson Duff** and **Hilary Stewart** with permission of Hancock House Publishers, Ltd. www.hancockhouse.com

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Galen Garwood's artwork appears with his permission.

Images from **Joan Giannechini** are part of a series of three-dimensional art pieces, "The Celestials: Chinese of the Old West" and appear with the permission of the artist, ■2002, Joan Giannechini. The work was shown between 2002 and 2015 at Northern Nevada Art Museum, Artown Reno, the Sierra Art Gallery, Great Basin College, Northwest Reno Library, the Grace Hudson Museum, and the Tuscarora Museum. See her website: joangianecchini.com/

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Paul Horiuchi's painting "Genesis" appears by permission of Seattle University.

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Fiona Tinwei Lam's "Lost Stream" is from *Odes & Laments* (Caitlin Press, 2019), © 2021 by Fiona Tinwei Lam and used with the permission of Caitlin Press (all rights reserved).

Zoe Landale's poem "Creed" was originally published by *The New Quarterly* and in *Blue in this Country* (Ronsdale Press).

Tim Lilburn's poems, "Oh" and "Fucked Up, All Fucked Up," were first published in *The Names* (McClelland and Stewart, 2016).

Jayne Marek's erasure is taken from "Meander," a poem in her collection *Dusk-Voiced* (Tebot Bach, 2024).

Paul Nelson's poem, "Slaughter Shikata Ga Nai" was originally published in *A Time Before Slaughter* (Apprentice House, 2010).

John Olson's poem "Rivers I Have Known" is from a collection of prose poetry titled *Dada Budapest* (Black Widow Press, 2017).

Briony Penn's piece with **Wa'xaid**, (Cecil Paul) is taken from *Following the Good River: The Life and Times of Wa'xaid* (Rocky Mountain Books, 2020).

Susan Point's artwork appears courtesy of the artist.

Sharon Thesen's poem, "The Fishing Trip," was previously published in *Oyama Pink Shale* (House of Anansi, 2011).

All images from **Richard Wagener** are by permission of the artist, Copyright © Richard Wagener 2021.

Theresa Whitehill's poems, "California Milagro" and "Estranha Forma de Vida," were first published in *Saudades: An Evening of Culinary Poetry with Chef Shannon Hughes and Poet Theresa Whitehill* (Stag's Leap Winery, 2003).

All photographs by **Nathan L. Wirth** appear with the permission of the photographer.

Deborah Woodard's poems first appeared in *Action Yes* and *Hunter Mnemonics* (hemel press).

Fred Wah would like to give thanks to the Columbia River and all her guardians and beholders, especially the Salmon Peoples along the entire length of the river. He gratefully acknowledges the Snuneymuxw First Nation on whose unceded Coast Salish territory he presented this talk for the 2017 Gustafson Lecture at the Vancouver Island University Nanaimo campus. Though the talk is Fred Wah's responsibility, he is sincerely grateful to Joy Gugeler for her intelligent and helpful editing. She massaged his meandering oral narrative into, he hopes, a readable publication for the Gustafson chapbook series issued in 2020.

Phyllis Webb's poems were reprinted with permission of her Estate.

Contributors' Bios, Volume Two

Jordan Abel is a queer Nisga'a writer from Vancouver. He is the author of *The Place of Scraps* (winner of the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize), *Un/inhabited*, and *Injun* (Winner of the Griffin Poetry Prize). NISHGA won both the Hubert Evans Non-fiction Prize and the VMI Betsy Warland Between Genres Award. His latest book, a novel entitled *Empty Spaces,* came out in the fall of 2023. Abel completed a Ph.D. at Simon Fraser University in 2019 and currently teaches at the University of Alberta.

Susan Kay Uebelhoer Andreassen (**Susan Kay Anderson**) lives in southwestern Oregon's Umpqua River Basin. Her poems are forthcoming in *Barrow Street, Heron Tree*, and in anthologies from the Emerald Literary Guild, Flying Ketchup Press, and The Los Angeles Press. An interview about her poem "Missouri" is forthcoming in *Bulb Culture Collective*. She serves as a Senior Reviews Editor at *Harbor Review* and reads poetry submissions for *Lily Poetry Review* and *Quarterly West*. She is a 1980 Oregon Young Writer & 1990 Jovanovich Prize awardee. Her manuscripts have been shortlisted/finalists for the 1992 Blue Stem Award, 2010 National Poetry Series, 2019 Hidden River Arts/Panther Creek Prize, 2019 Blue Lynx Prize, the 2020/21 Word Works Open Reading Prize, and 2023 Beyond Words Chapbook Prize.

Joanne Arnott is a writer, editor, and arts activist, originally from Manitoba, at home on the west coast of BC. She has written six poetry books and four chapbooks, as author, among other titles. Recent: *Honouring the Strength of Indian Women: Plays, Stories and Poetry by Vera Manuel* (co-editor, U Manitoba Press); *pandemic friendship* (above/ ground press). Mother of six, retired Poetry Mentor (The Writers Studio, SFU), and Poetry Editor (EVENT Magazine). Joanne lives in the Fraser River watershed.

Rick Bartow (Wiyot) is one of Oregon's most important contemporary artists. Bartow was born in Newport Oregon and raised on the homestead his great-grandfather claimed on an estuary of Yaquina Bay. He

graduated from Western Oregon State College in Secondary Art Education and served in Vietnam.

Central to Bartow's work is the theme of transformation, particularly between the human and animal realms, often juxtaposing the physical and spiritual dimensions.

A leader in contemporary Native American art, his work is held in over 100 public collections and is represented in galleries and museums world-wide, including the Whitney Museum of American Art.

As a poet, **John Brandi**, born in 1943 in Los Angeles, California, owes much to his predecessors of the Beat tradition, and to poets as diverse as Federico García and the Japanese haiku master Matsuo Bashō. Brandi's writing has been published both in trade and small-press editions, with noteworthy contributions in the realm of illustrated, hand-colored books printed on hand-operated presses. As a visual artist, his mixed-media paintings are enhanced with earth pigments, collage and plant dyes. John Brandi's many books, published in the U.S. and India, include poetry, travel vignettes, essays, modern American haiku and haibun.

Robert Bringhurst was born in Los Angeles in 1946. He has lived and worked in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and South America, but his home for most of the past five decades has been the British Columbia coast. His *Selected Poems* are published in London by Jonathan Cape, in the USA by Copper Canyon, and in Canada by Gaspereau Press. He is trained as a linguist and is widely known for his translations from Haida and other Native American languages, and for his typographic work. He lives in Quadra Island's Heriot Bay watershed.

Colin Browne is a poet, documentary filmmaker, and non-fiction writer whose most recent book, *The Hatch*, was published in the spring of 2015 by Talonbooks. His films include *Linton Garner:* I N*ever Said Goodbye;* F*ather and Son*; and W*hite Lake*, nominated for a Genie Award for Best Feature Length Documentary. He was an editor of W*riting* magazine and a co-founder of the Kootenay School of Writing, the Praxis Centre for

Screenwriters, and the Art of Documentary workshops. He serves on the boards of Creative BC, the Vancouver International Film Festival, and T*he Capilano Review*, to which he is a frequent contributor. Until recently, he taught film production, film history, and critical writing in the SFU School for the Contemporary Arts, where he was a professor emeritus.

C.W. Buckley presents poems of gentle witness in powerful images. He writes about precious things, and what their loss brings to us all. Sustained by the Cedar River Watershed, his work has appeared in I*mage Journal, Cirque Journal,* T*imberline Review,* and D*appled Things*. His long-form investigative poem, "Horizon," was featured in the anthology U*ndeniable: Writers Respond to Climate Change* and his chapbook, BLUING, is available now from Finishing Line Press. Buckley earned degrees in Human Biology from Stanford University and Religion from Claremont School of Theology. A trained voice actor, he lives, works, and writes in Seattle with his family.

Lorna Dee Cervantes, awarded NEA Fellowships, Pushcart Prizes, a Lila Wallace/Readers Digest Award, state arts grants and Best Book awards for 6 books of poetry including her first, E*mplumada*, and A*pril on Olympia*, the former Professor and Director of Creative Writing in CU Bould er now writes in Seattle, in the Cedar River watershed and sits on the board of the Cascadia Poetics Lab.

Dan Clarkson has been involved in Cascadian bioregional culture since the early 1980s. He has spent many years sailing, hiking, skiing, and climbing in and around Cascadia. Dan graduated from Seattle U in Philosophy and Harvard Law School with an emphasis on negotiation and environmental law. He has extensive experience driving sustainable policy and private and public sector solutions to advance energy efficiency, clean energy, and resilience. Dan is on the board of the Watershed Press, writes poetry in his spare time, and divides his time between urban life in Seattle and his remote cabin in Desolation Sound.

Stephen Collis is the author of over a dozen books of poetry and prose, including *The Commons* (2008), the BC Book Prize winning *On the Material* (2010), and *Almost Islands: Phyllis Webb and the Pursuit of the Unwritten* (2018)—all published by Talonbooks. *A History of the Theories of Rain* (2021) was a finalist for the Governor General's Award for poetry, and in 2019, Collis was the recipient of the Writers' Trust of Canada Latner Poetry Prize. *The Middle*, the second volume of a trilogy begun with *A History of the Theories of Rain*, will be published in October 2024. He lives near Vancouver, on unceded Coast Salish Territory, and teaches poetry and poetics at Simon Fraser University.

CAConrad has been working with the ancient technologies of poetry and ritual since 1975. They are the author of *Amanda Paradise* (Wave Books, 2021). Other titles include *The Book of Frank*,*While Standing in Line for Death*, and *Ecodeviance*. They received a Creative Capital grant, a Pew Fellowship, a Lambda Literary Award, and a Believer Magazine Book Award. They teach at Columbia University in New York City and Sandberg Art Institute in Amsterdam. Visit their website http://bit.ly/88SomaticPoetryRituals.

Mike Dillon lives in a small town on the Salish Sea northwest of Seattle. He is the author of a handful of books of poetry and haiku, including *Departures: Poetry and Prose on the Removal of Bainbridge Island's Japanese Americans After Pearl Harbor,* from Unsolicited Press, which published his new and selected poems, *Nocturne*, in October 2024.

Edward Dorn was born in 1929 in Villa Grove, Illinois. He studied with Charles Olson at Black Mountain College and graduated in 1955. Dorn taught at five different universities and wrote and published extensively. He published over fifteen collections of verse including a *Collected Poems: 1956-1974* published in 1975. Mr. Dorn died in December 1999 at the age of 70. Ed Dorn once lived in the Skagit River Watershed.

Wilson Duff (March 23, 1925 in Vancouver–August 8, 1976) was a Canadian archaeologist, cultural anthropologist, and museum curator. He is

remembered for his research on First Nations cultures of the Northwest Coast, notably the Tsimshian, Gitxan, and Haida, and especially for his interest in their plastic arts, such as totem poles. Along with Bill Holm and Harry Hawthorn, he was one of a small coterie of academics in the 1950s and '60s who worked to bring Northwest Coast art to international prominence.

Charles Edenshaw (c. 1839–1920) was Haida artist from Haida Gwaii, British Columbia. He is known for his woodcarving, argillite carving, jewellery, and painting. His style was known for its originality and innovative narrative forms, created while adhering to the principles of formline art characteristic of Haida art. In 1902, ethnographer and collector Charles F. Newcombe called Edenshaw "the best carver in wood and stone now living."

Unable to reliably find north if she can't see a north-south running mountain range on the horizon, **Diana Elser** was born in Great Falls, Montana (Rockies to the east), grew up in El Paso, Texas (Franklin Mountains to the west), finished high school in Bountiful, Utah (west slope of the Wasatch Front), and earned an English degree at Utah State (west slope of the Bear River Mountains). Despite coming from Montana ranch families on both sides, she grew up regretfully suburban. From her home, she can see "the Saddleback" in the San Gabriel mountains. Diana lives in the San Juan Creek Watershed.

Cate Gable's work as a poet and journalist is rooted in place—a peninsula west-facing the Pacific Ocean; east-facing Willapa Bay; and south-facing the mouth of the Columbia River. With a BA (University of Pennsylvania); and MA (University of Washington); and an MFA (Rainier Writing Program), Gable has won poetry awards from the *Yakima Herald-Republic,* SF *Bay Guardian*, Hoffman Center for the Arts, and Hawaii Public Radio. Chapbook Chère Alice: Three Lives was part of a UC Berkeley Bancroft Library exhibit. Her environmental reporting awards include Washington Newspaper Publishers Association; Dolly Connelly; and Grantham

Prize for Excellence. Recent poetry has appeared in *Bamboo Ridge, Bryant Literary Journal, Writers Resist, Washington 129,* and *Samthology,* A *Tribute to Sam Hamill*.

Born in Southeast Georgia in 1944, **Galen Garwood**'s creative expressions include painting, poetry, photography, video, and writing. His painting career began in Seattle in 1972 and he has exhibited in the US, Europe, and Asia. Garwood has collaborated with various poets, including Sam Hamill, Peter Weltner, and William O'Daly. He published his memoir, *Sell the Monkey,* in 2018, and BENCH, *Story of Wonder*, 2022. He moved to Thailand in 2000 to create a film on the plight of the Asian elephant. He currently lives on the banks of the Mae Rim River, between two small villages in Northern Thailand.

Joan Giannecchini is a mixed media and conceptual artist whose work has appeared in galleries and museums throughout the United States and Africa. Her body of work focuses mainly on socially relevant themes, using innovative techniques to spark a visceral response from her audience. The latest, *The Celestials*, was a seven-year project chronicling a piece of American history created by nineteenth-century Chinese immigrants. Her work was recently featured in *Women Artists of the Great Basin* by Mary Lee Fulkerson. She splits her time between Northern California and her singlewide in the ghost town of Tuscarora, Nevada.

Morris Graves was the first modern painter of the Pacific Northwest to gain national and international recognition. Gaining early notoriety for a series of spectacular Dadaist pranks, he is best known as an introspective and intensely spiritual artist who brought the influence of East Asian aesthetics and philosophy to bear typically through images of birds, flowers, chalices, and other symbols of Eastern spirituality. He was a member of the so-called Northwest School and was celebrated by many of his followers as a modern-day mystic who came to view art as an act of pure communion between humans and the natural world.

Sharon Hashimoto taught composition and creative writing classes at Highline College in Des Moines, Washington, for twenty-nine years. Recently retired, she is concentrating more on her own poetry and fiction. She is working on a novel set in Seattle, 1968, and her short story collection, "Stealing Home," is forthcoming from Grid Books in 2024. Her first poetry book, *The Crane Wife*, was co-winner of the Nicholas Roerich Prize in 2003 and reprinted by Red Hen Press in 2021. That same year, her second collection of poetry, *More American*, won the 2021 Off the Grid Poetry Prize. More American went on to win the 2022 Washington State Book Award in poetry.

Paul Horiuchi (1906 – 1999) was a painter and collagist whose work has become an important hybrid of Western-style abstraction, Asian calligraphy, and eastern philosophies. His body of work has helped situate an alternative narrative to the development of modern art in the Pacific Northwest, one that fully considers Japanese and North American relations, and resulted in significant formal and conceptual developments, which continue to be recognized and studied by international scholars and curators like Noriko Kuwahara, based in Chiba, Japan, and Chiaki Ajioka based in Sydney, Australia.

Barbara Johns is an art historian and curator. For nearly two decades, her work has focused on Issei, or immigrant-generation Japanese American, artists in Seattle. She is the author of books about Takuichi Fujii, Paul Horiuchi, Kenjiro Nomura, and Kamekichi Tokita (University of Washington Press) and has organized exhibitions of the artists' work. *Witness to Wartime: The Painted Diary of Takuichi Fujii* toured nationally from 2017 to early 2024, and at present, *Side by Side: Nihonmachi Scenes by Tokita, Nomura, and Fujii* is on view at the Wing Luke Museum until May 2025. Johns formerly served as chief curator of the Tacoma Art Museum and held curatorial positions at the Seattle Art Museum. She holds a doctorate in art history from the University of Washington.

Ramon Kubicek: Raised in Montreal, educated in Montreal, England, and Vancouver, now lives on the Sunshine Coast, BC, taught for over two decades in the university system, mostly at Emily Carr University of Art + Design and Langara College in disciplines like art history, literature, creative writing, and classics. Works full time as a visual artist. Has two intelligent, fierce, lovely daughters. Maintains studios in Roberts Creek, BC, and Montreal, and believes that one's true geography becomes apparent after years of walking. Has found no evidence that he is a reincarnation of Bashō or Attar. Believes the most important human quality is humour. And, of course, kindness, but animals are kind as well. Not so sure about their sense of humour. More at: ramonkubicekart.com

Gerard Kuperus is Researcher in Integral Ecology at Radboud University, The Netherlands, and Professor of Philosophy at the University of San Francisco. He is the author of *Ecopolitics: Redefining the Polis* (SUNY, 2023), co-editor (with Josh Hayes and Brian Treanor) of *Philosophy in the American West* (Routledge, 2020), co-editor (with Marjolein Oele) of *Ontologies of Nature* (Springer, 2017), and author of *Ecopolitical Homelessness* (Routledge, 2016).

Zoë Landale has published ten books, edited two books, and her work appears in upwards of fifty anthologies. She taught for fifteen years as a faculty member in the Creative Writing Department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Vancouver, British Columbia. She now lives and gardens on Pender Island, a southern Gulf island in BC. Zoë Landale's latest two books of poetry are *Orchid Heart Elegies*, published by McGill-Queen's Press in November 2022 and *Sigrene's Bargain With Odin*, from Ianna Press in 2023.

Vancouver's sixth Poet Laureate, **Fiona Tinwei Lam** has published three collections of poetry and a children's book. Her poems have been featured in *Best Canadian Poetry* and thrice with BC's *Poetry in Transit*, as well as in award-winning poetry videos made in collaboration with filmmakers that have screened worldwide. She edited *The Bright Well: Contemporary*

Canadian Poems about Facing Cancer, and co-edited two nonfiction anthologies. Shortlisted for the City of Vancouver Book Prize and other awards, her work has been included in over 40 anthologies. More at: fionalam.net

Robert Lashley was a 2016 Jack Straw Fellow, Artist Trust Fellow, and a nominee for a Stranger Genius Award. His books include *Green River Valley* (Blue Cactus Press, 2021), *UpSouth* (Small Doggies Press, 2017), and *The Homeboy Songs* (Small Doggies Press, 2014). His poetry has appeared in *The Seattle Review of Books,* NAILED, *Poetry Northwest, McSweeney's,* and *The Cascadia Review,* and recently, *The Cascadia Field Guide*.

Rob Lewis is a poet, writer, painter and lifetime agitator for the creaturely world. He authored the poem/essay collection, *The Silence of Vanishing Things* and writes the Substack newsletter, *The Climate According to Life*, where he weaves poetry and science into an ecological, life-centered approach to Earth's troubled climate. His poems, essays and opinion pieces have been published in numerous journals, newspapers and anthologies, including *I Sing the Salmon Home, For the Love of Orcas, Dark Mountain, Counterflow, On Earth, Cascadia Daily, the Atlanta Review, Green Christian Magazine, Southern Review,* and others.

Tim Lilburn was born in Regina, Saskatchewan, and lives in the Bowker Creek watershed W̱SÁNEĆ territory on Vancouver Island. He is the author of 12 books of poetry and four essay collections. His poetry has won the Governor General's Award and the Canadian Authors' Association Award, among others. Lilburn has taught at the University of Victoria, the University of Saskatchewan, St. Peter's College, and Middlebury College. He has been poetry editor for *Grain* and was one of the founders of Saskatoon-based Jackpine Press.

Christine Lowther resides in ƛaʔuukwiiʔath (Tla-o-qui-aht) ha'huulthii in Nuučaaʔuł (Nuu-Chah-Nulth) territory on Vancouver Island's west coast. She is the editor of *Worth More Standing: Poets and Activists Pay Homage to Trees* and its youth companion volume, *Worth More Growing.* Her most

recent poetry collection is *Hazard, Home* (2024). In 2014 the Pacific Rim Arts Society awarded Christine the inaugural Rainy Coast Award for Significant Accomplishment. Her memoir *Born Out of This* was shortlisted for the 2015 Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize. She won the Federation of British Columbia Writers' 2015 Nonfiction Prize and was shortlisted for the 2023 CBC Nonfiction Prize. Christine served as Tofino's Poet Laureate 2020-2022.

Claudia Castro Luna is an Academy of American Poets Poet Laureate fellow (2019) WA State Poet Laureate (2018–2021) Seattle's inaugural Civic Poet (2015–2018) and the author of *Cipota Under the Moon* (Tia Chucha Press, 2022); *One River, A Thousand Voices* (Chin Music Press); the Pushcart-nominated *Killing Marías* (Two Sylvias Press); and the chapbook *This City* (Floating Bridge Press). Her most recent non-fiction is in *There's a Revolution Outside, My Love: Letters from a Crisis* (Vintage). Born in El Salvador, Castro Luna arrived in the United States in 1981. Living in English and Spanish, she writes and teaches in Seattle on unceded Duwamish land.

Adelia MacWilliam has an MFA in Writing from the University of Victoria and is currently completing two manuscripts, one that documents what happens when you write about a piece of land that has been part of your family for over 100 years, and the other a series of almost-ghazals responding to John Thompson's *Stilt Jack*. Her work has been published in various literary journals and anthologies. She is one of the founders of Watershed Press, an outreach of Cascadia Poetics Lab, and a co-editor of *Cascadian Zen*, Volumes One and Two. She lives on Vancouver Island in the Koksilah Watershed.

Barry McKinnon was born in 1944 in Calgary, Alberta and grew up there. He died at the age of 79 after spending most of his life in Prince George, British Columbia, where he was hired as an instructor of English at College of New Caledonia right after he graduated with an MA in 1969 from the University of British Columbia. He wrote primarily in the form of the long poem/serial sequence which gave him the room he felt he needed.

Barry's most recent works include *The Centre* (Talonbooks, 2014) and *In the Millenium* (New Star, 2009).

Jayne Marek lives a stone's throw from where the Pacific Ocean turns toward Puget Sound. She has published six poetry collections, with her next, *Dusk-Voiced*, due in 2024, and another, *Torrential*, due in 2025. Her writings appear in *Terrain, Rattle Poets Respond, Spillway, Catamaran, Salamander, Bloodroot, One, Calyx, Bellevue Literary Review, About Place Journal*, and elsewhere. She lives in the Little Quilcene Watershed.

Jerry Martien lives near Elk River, the largest tributary of Humboldt Bay, where he's retired from a career of carpentry, bookstore clerking, poet in the schools, and writing teacher at Humboldt State University. A watershed activist, he works on behalf of clean water and healthy forests and continues to teach and advocate for the use of clear language in their defense. He is the editor of *A Watershed Runs Through You*, the collected essays of Freeman House, and the author of *Shell Game: A True Account of Beads and Money in North America* and several collections of poetry, most recently *Infrastructure: Dreams, Divinations, and Dispatches from the Underground*.

Lorin Medley is a counsellor and writer from Comox, BC, published in *Drift: Poems and Poets from the Comox Valley, Sweetwater: Poems for the Watersheds, Refugium: Poems for the Pacific, The New Quarterly magazine, sub-Terrain, The Puritan, Many Gendered Mothers*, and *Portal*. She won the 2014 Islands Short Fiction Contest, Aislinn Hunter's 2015 *Books Matter* poetry prize and was long listed for the 2016 *Prism* International Poetry Contest.

Maiah A Merino, a Chicanx Poet and mixed-genre writer, co-edited *The Yellow Medicine Review*'s Spring 2022 Journal titled: *Miracles & Defining Moments*. She has poems in *In Xóxitl, in cuícatl: Flor y Canto, Antología de poesía*, is a 2021/2022 Writing the Land Poet, and recipient of the 2021 Artist Trust GAP Award. Her work appears in *The Yellow Medicine Review*, and *The Raven Chronicles*. A past Writer-in-Residence with Seattle Arts and

Lectures, and Path with Art, Maiah utilizes her training as a Narrative Therapist and Writer to help herself others navigate and re-imagine new stories.

Poet and interviewer **Paul E. Nelson's** the son of a labor activist father and Cuban immigrant mother. He founded the Cascadia Poetics Lab (or CPL) (formerly Seattle Poetics Lab, or SPLAB) and the Cascadia Poetry Festival. Since 1993, CPL has produced hundreds of poetry events and 700 hours of interview programming with legendary poets and whole systems activists. Books include *DaySong Miracle* (*Past 62*), *Haibun de la Serna*, A T*ime Before Slaughter/Pig War: & Other Songs of Cascadia, American Prophets* (interviews 1994–2012), *American Sentences*, and *Organic in Cascadia:* A *Sequence of Energies*. Co-editor of *Make It True: Poetry From Cascadia*, *56 Days of August: Poetry Postcards*, *Samthology:* A T*ribute to Sam Hamill*, and *Make it True meets Medusario*, he was awarded a residency at The Lake from the Morris Graves Foundation in Loleta, CA, and the 2014 Robin Blaser Award from T*he Capilano Review*. Literary Executor for the late poet Sam Hamill, Paul lives in Rainier Beach, in the Cascadia bioregion's Cedar River-Lake Washington watershed at the mouth of dxʷwuqʷəb (Cedar River) and writes an American Sentence every day.

John Olson is the author of numerous books of poetry and prose poetry, including *Echo Regime, Free Stream Velocity, Backscatter: New and Selected Poems, Larynx Galaxy, Dada Budapest,* and *Weave of the Dream King*. He was the recipient of the *The Stranger*'s 2004 Literature Genius Award, and in 2012 was one of eight finalists for the Washington State Arts Innovator Award. He has also published five novels, including *Souls of Wind* (short-listed for The Believer Book Award, 2008), *The Nothing That Is, The Seeing Machine, In Advance of the Broken Justy*, and *Mingled Yarn*, an autofiction. *You Know There's Something*, his 6th novel, was published by Grand Iota Press in May 2023. John Olson lives in the Duwamish Watershed.

Born in 1931 in the Kitlope, **Cecil Paul**, also known by his Xenaksiala name, Wa'xiad, meaning Good River, Cecil was one of the last fluent

speakers of his people's language. At age of ten he was placed in a residential school run by the United Church of Canada at Port Alberni, where he was abused. After three decades of prolonged alcohol abuse, he returned to the Kitlope, where his healing journey began. He worked tirelessly to protect the Kitlope, described as the largest intact watershed in the world. Cecil Paul passed away in 2020.

Briony Penn is an award-winning writer of creative non-fiction books, as well as a contributor to many anthologies and chapter books. She has been a feature writer and columnist for decades who has published over five hundred articles on environmental issues and natural history. Her first book, *The Real Thing, the Natural History of Ian McTaggart Cowan* was the winner of the BC Book Prize. *Following the Good River, The Life and Times of Wa'xaid* won the Butler Book Prize in 2021. Her work with Cecil Paul can also be found in the companion book, *Stories from the Magic Canoe of Wa'xaid*. Briony lives in WENNANEC in the Monty Creek Watershed.

Deborah Poe is the author of several books of poetry including *keep, Elements,* and *Our Parenthetical Ontology* (CustomWords), as well as a novella in verse, *Hélène*. Her visual works—video poems and handmade book objects—have been exhibited throughout the US. Deborah lives in Seattle, on the ancestral land of the Coast Salish people.

Susan Point, O.C., RCA, D.Litt. hon, DFA. hon, (1952–) is a descendant of the Musqueam. Susan's distinct style has inspired a movement in Coast Salish art. She draws creativity from her ancestors' stories and forged the use of non-traditional materials and techniques, therefore inspiring generations of artists. Susan is most proud to be an Officer of the Order of Canada and has been presented with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her contributions to Canada. In 2020 Susan was awarded Chevalier in the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*. Order of France, French Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Bob Rose has lived within 60 miles of Deception Pass since his arrival here from Boston in 1970. For the last 45 years he has led successful efforts to protect working forests, farmlands and wild areas in Washington. Following his advocacy work to protect the Anacortes Community Forest Land Lands, he was Special Assistant to the Commissioner of Public Lands (1982 – 1993) and Executive Director of Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland (1995 – 2006). He sits with the Red Cedar Zen Community (Bellingham) and serves as *tenzo*. Bob Rose lives on the northwestern edge of the Skagit River North Fork watershed and on the eastern face of the Fidalgo ophiolite.

Meredith Quartermain's poetry books include *Lullabies in the Real World* (2020), *Vancouver Walking* (2005, winner of the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize) and *Nightmarker* (2008) (all from NeWest Press), and *Matter* (2008) and *Recipes from the Red Planet* (2010) (from Book*hug). From 2014 – 2016, she served as Poetry Mentor in the SFU Writer's Studio program. Her work has appeared in *The Malahat Review, Prism International, The Dalhousie Review, Event Magazine, The Capilano Review, Golden Handcuffs Review,* and many other magazines.

Sharon Thesen is a poet, critic, and Professor Emeritus of Creative Writing, born left-handed ten months after the end of World War Two. Her latest book is *Refabulations: Selected Longer Poems*, following *The Receiver* and *Oyama Pink Shale*. She has been writing, publishing, editing, and teaching since 1980, when her first book, *Artemis Hates Romance* was published. She edited, with Paul Nelson, *Cascadian Prophets: Interviews 1999-2023*.

Matt Trease is a poet, artist, teacher and astrologer. He serves on the board of the Cascadia Poetics Lab, co-curates the Margin Shift reading series, and serves as the poetry editor for the *CAELi Review*. His poetry has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. He is the author of *The Outside* (forthcoming Carbonation Press, 2024) and the chapbooks *Later Heaven* (busylittle1way designs) and *rcvrdtxt* (rlysrslit). He lives in the Salish Sea region of Cascadia on the homeland of the Duwamish people with his partner Xan, his son Harvey, and their dog, Hoopla.

Ursula Vaira's writing is strongly located in landscape; her paddling journeys attempt the wilderness within. She has published three long-poem chapbooks, and Caitlin Press published her first collection *And See What Happens*. Her current manuscript is non-fiction: the story of a damaged creek, the salmon who try to spawn in it, and the streamkeepers who tend them as massive forces of population growth, deforestation, industry, and climate bombard the planet. Ursula is an 8-year member of the streamkeepers and the founder and publisher of Leaf Press. She lives in the Knarston Creek watershed.

Richard Wagener has an undergraduate degree from the University of San Diego and a graduate degree from Art Center College of Design. He has been engraving wood for forty years and his work has been in many fine press editions, including collaborations with Peter Koch in Berkeley and the Book Club of California. In 2006 Richard established the imprint Mixolydian Editions. He has collaborated with David Pascoe of Nawakum Press on three fine press books, one of which earned them the 2016 Carl Hertzog Award for Excellence in Book Design. He currently lives and works in northern California.

Vancouver poet **Fred Wah** has published numerous books of poetry, fiction, and criticism. His work has been awarded the Governor-General's Award, among others. He is a former Parliamentary Poet Laureate and on Officer of the Order of Canada. He was the lecturer in The Ralph Gustafson Distinguished Poets Lecture Series at Vancouver Island University in 2017. His best-known book is *Diamond Grill*, a bio-fiction about a small-town Chinese-Canadian café. Recent publications are *beholden: a poem as long as the river*, a collaboration with poet Rita Wong, and *Music at the Heart of Thinking*. He is from and lives partly in the Kootenay Watershed just above its confluence with the Columbia.

Ann Graham Walker has been a finalist in the Prism Poetry Prize, Malahat Open Season Awards and the 2020 Fiddlehead Review Poetry Prize. Her chapbook, *The Puzzle at the End of Love*, was published by Leaf Press.

Ann's work has appeared in *Arc Magazine, Prism,* and in numerous poetry anthologies including *Poems From Planet Earth, Rocksalt*, and *Worth More Standing.* She worked for many years as a CBC radio producer and as a print journalist. Ann has an MFA in Creative Writing from Goddard College's Port Townsend campus. She lives on Vancouver Island, in the Englishman River Watershed.

Phyllis Webb O.C. (April 8, 1927 – November 11, 2021) was a Canadian poet and broadcaster. Webb's poetry had diverse influences, ranging from neo-Confucianism to the field theory of composition developed by the Black Mountain poets. Critics have described her collections *Naked Poems* (1965) and *Wilson's Bowl* (1980) as important works in contemporary Canadian literature. As a broadcaster at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in the 1960s, Webb created programs including *Ideas and Extension*, a television program about Canadian poetry. She left the CBC in 1967 to return to British Columbia where she remained for much of her life.

Theresa Whitehill's interrelated focus on poetics and book arts grew out of her studies with William Everson at UC Santa Cruz and the Mills College Book Art program. A Poet Laureate for the city of Ukiah (2009–2011), she is co-founder of Watershed Poetry Mendocino (2008–2012) and BAM! (Book Arts Mendocino!, 2022). Her poetry and letterpress broadsides are in national fine press collections including Getty Center for the Arts and the John Hay Library of Brown University. Her latest publication is *Heavy Lifting*, an artists' book published by Moving Parts Press. Since 1984 she has lived in Mendocino County. Theresa lives near Doolin Creek, in the Upper Russian River Watershed.

Carletta Carrington Wilson's poems peer into our vast unwieldy past interrogating the role language plays in the creation of the past while scripting its future. Author of *Poem of Stone and Bone: The Iconography of James W. Washington Jr. in Fourteen Stanzas and Thirty-One Days.* Wilson's poems appear in *This Light Called Darkness, Take A Stand: Art Against Hate,*

Make It True: Poems from Cascadia, Beyond the Frontier: African American Poetry for the 21st Century, the *African American Review, Calyx, Cimarron Review, Obsidian* III and *The Seattle Review*. Her zines include *night of the stereotypes* and *kNot free kNot human*.

Dr. Jason M. Wirth is professor of philosophy at Seattle University and a Soto Zen priest. His recent books include *Nietzsche and Other Buddhas: Philosophy after Comparative Philosophy* (Indiana 2019), *Mountains, Rivers, and the Great Earth: Reading Gary Snyder and Dōgen in an Age of Ecological Crisis* (SUNY 2017), a monograph on Milan Kundera (*Commiserating with Devastated Things*, Fordham 2015), *Schelling's Practice of the Wild* (SUNY 2015), and the co-edited volume (with Bret Davis and Brian Schroeder), *Japanese and Continental Philosophy: Conversations with the Kyoto School* (Indiana 2011). He is the associate editor and book review editor of the journal, Comparative and Continental Philosophy. He is currently completing a manuscript on the cinema of Terrence Malick as well as a work of ecological philosophy called *Turtle Island Anarchy*.

Influenced by his continuing studies of poetry, painting, film, music, and the Japanese traditions of Zen, calligraphy, Ikebana, *karesansui,* bonsai, *ma, wabi-sabi*, and *mushin*, **Nathan Wirth**, a self-learned photographer, attempts—primarily through long exposure and infrared photography—to photograph silence. Anyone who is interested can see more of his work at: sliceofsilence.com/photography/

Deborah Woodard holds an MFA from the University of California; Irvine and a PhD from the University of Washington. She is the author of *Plato's Bad Horse* (Bear Star Press, 2006) *Borrowed Tales* (Stockport Flats, 2012) and *No Finis: Triangle Testimonies, 1911* (Ravenna Press, 2018). Her chapbook *Hunter Mnemonics* (hemel press, 2008) was illustrated by artist Heide Hinrichs. With Roberta Antognini, she has translated the poetry of Amelia Rosselli from the Italian in *Hospital Series* (New Directions, 2015), *Obtuse Diary* (Entre Rios Books, 2018), *The Dragonfly* (Entre Rios Books, 2023), *Notes Scattered and Lost* (Entre Rios Books, forthcoming 2024), and

D*ocument* (World Poetry Books, forthcoming 2025). Deborah teaches at Hugo House in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood and co-curates the reading series Margin Shift: Friends in Poetry.

Koon Woon lives in Greater Seattle in the Duwamish watershed. He is from the Pearl River basin in China and says so with a toothless grin. His two books from Kaya Press won the Pen Oakland and the American Book Award. He also edits and publishes the literary Goldfish Press in Seattle.

CASCADIAN Zen

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volume two