

The Earth is Our First Teacher

Lushootseed Research
March 16, 2007

FORWARD

Vi taqšəblu Hilbert commissioned this work in the Spring of 2006. She asked people to write a one-page essay about, "The earth as our first teacher" and to include a brief bio so that she would know who submitted each essay.

When she gave this assignment to a group, one of the boys present raised his hand and said eagerly, "*I know! The earth teaches me to how to get worms, so that I can go fishing.*" Responses have come in over the last year and are listed here in the order they were received. As Auntie requested, these essays are being printed without any editing to preserve the original voices.

Ron Hilbert worked at Small Faces Child Development Center for 10 years. He loved working with children and believed that the strength of the Lushootseed culture would help them become the best they could be. When this book was being developed, students from Small Faces were asked to provide artwork. Their drawings are interspersed randomly throughout this book and we thank them for their help!

We give you this body of work to remember Ron's spirit and the legacy he left behind.



Small Faces Child Development Center

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REMEMBERING...



Ron Hilbert 1943-2006

Native American Artist, Story Teller and teacher of young children at Small Faces for 10 years.

Ron comes from a long line of cultural historians including his mother, Vi "taqseblu" Hilbert, noted a "National Treasure."

Ron's work was to use his artistic gifts to honor his culture through his artwork and through stories with the children.

Ron believed it was important to honor his cultural history through his artwork thereby preserving it for future generations.

His work can be seen at Daybreak Star, the Burke Museum, Seattle Art Museum and Seattle Center.

Ron created a character for the children at Small Faces and named him "Snickelfritz".

Many stories were told of Snickelfritz's adventures. Ron's loving spirit will be with us always.

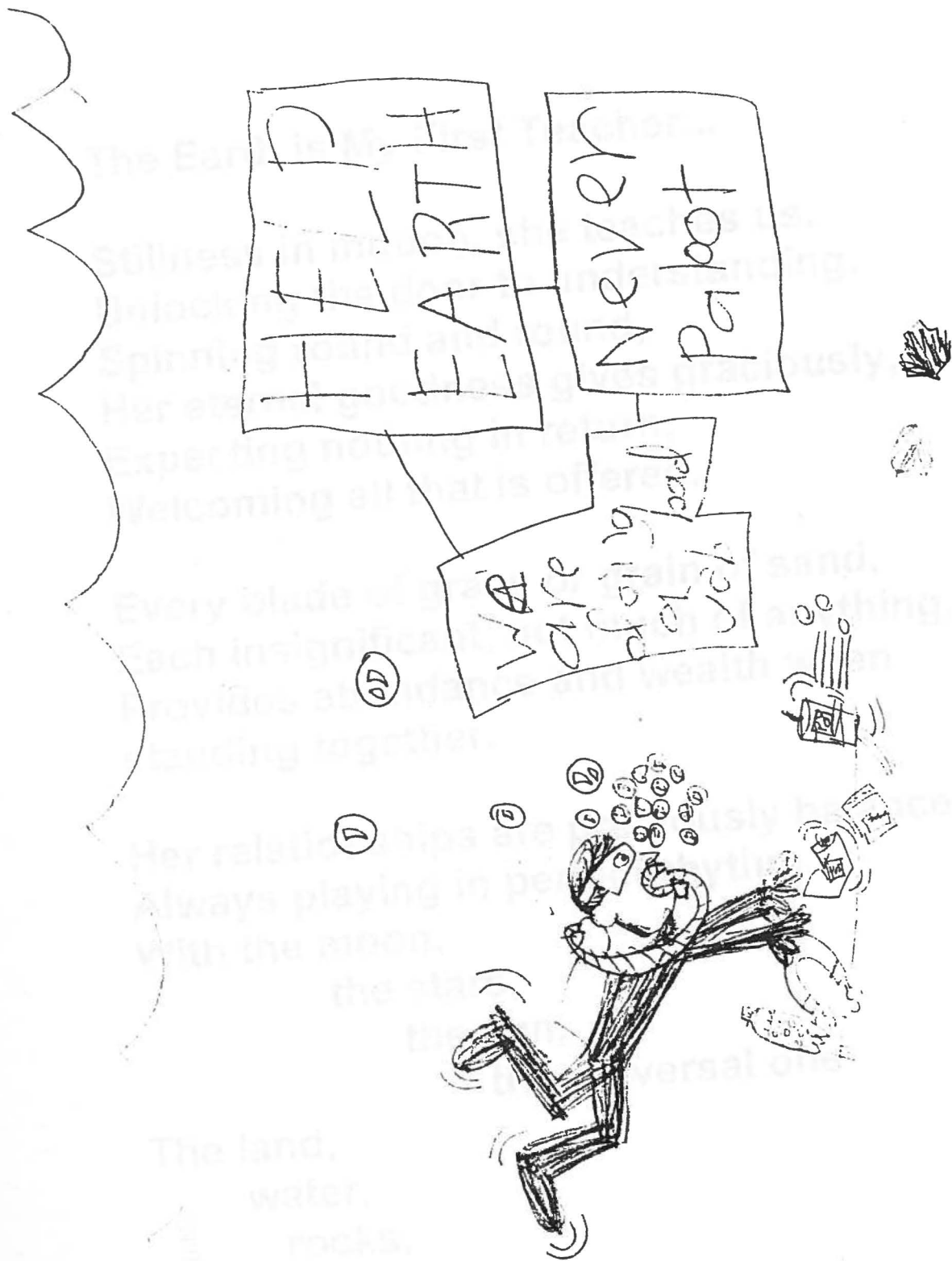


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[Click here for directions!](#)



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The Earth is My First Teacher...

**Stillness in motion, she teaches us,
Unlocking the door to understanding.
Spinning round and round,
Her eternal goodness gives graciously,
Expecting nothing in return,
Welcoming all that is offered.**

**Every blade of grass or grain of sand,
Each insignificant, not much of anything,
Provides abundance and wealth when
standing together.**

**Her relationships are preciously balanced,
Always playing in perfect rhythm,
With the moon,
 the stars,
 the sun,
 the universal one**

**The land,
 water,
 rocks,
 trees,
 me.**

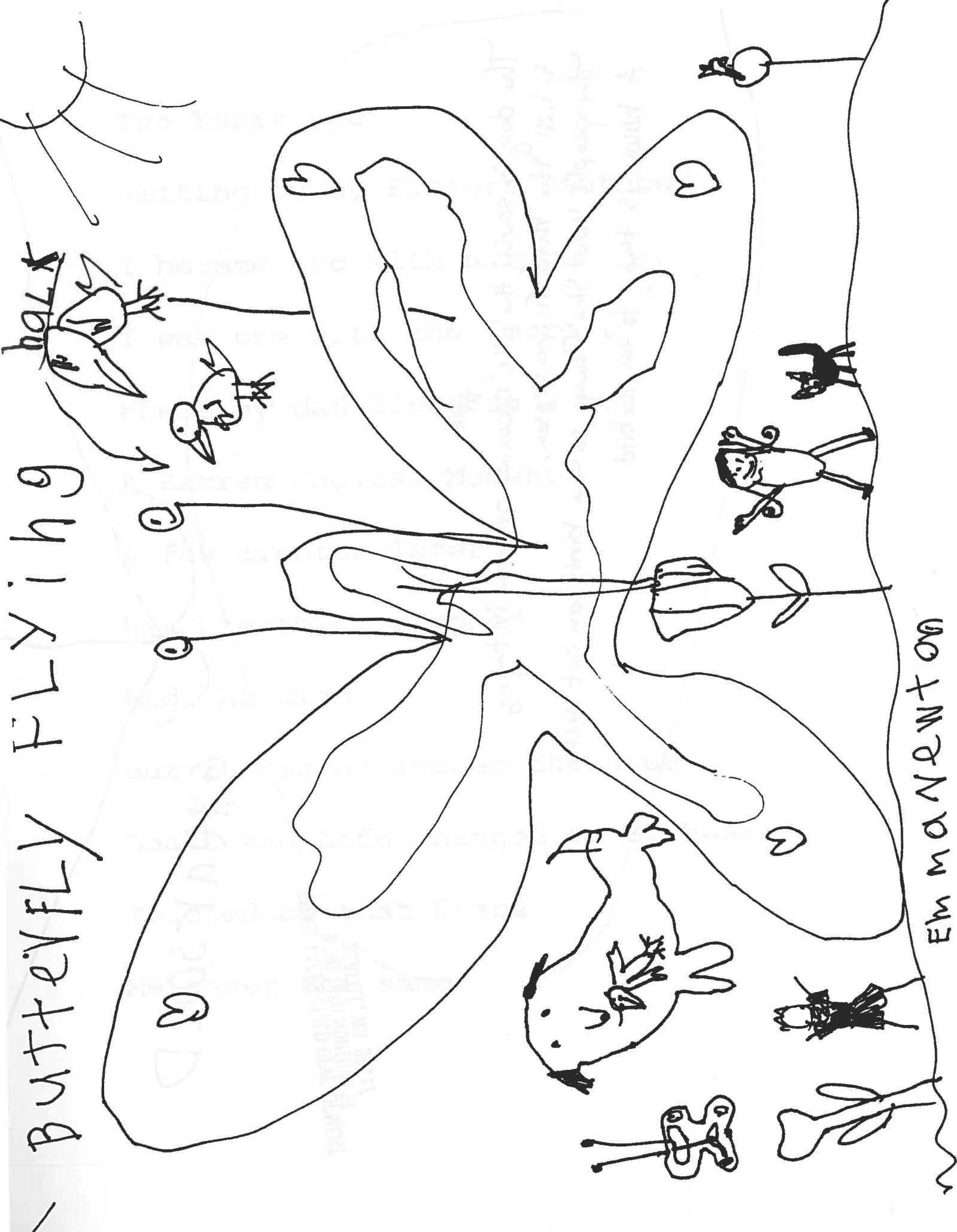
**Molton fire burns at her core which she
contains in her womb**

**In order to give birth to the life above,
And everything in between.**

**Her beauty is simple.
Her mystery extraordinary,
Her wisdom unending.
My first teacher and mother...earth.**

Patricia Costa Kim 2.06

- Butterfly FLYING



Emmanuel Newton

6 YEAR OLD

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The dog is saving the little ^{bird} because someone is trying
to kill the bird for no reason,
the people have the flowers so the birds can get nectar.
A hawk is trying to eat the bird.

Two Years ago

Sitting by my Fathers Deathbed

I became one with nature

I was one with the forrest

Where my dad lived as a boy

A Sacred Magical Moment

A few minutes later

His breathing stopped

And he died

But it was no longer the same

Death and Life changed in my heart

Touched by that Grace

Me never the same

Still life fills me

With words and emotions

But passion or memory take me back

To that moment

Ineffable

In thousands of moments

I find that life with people

Fulfiills and confuses me

Each moment alive

And in some indefinable way

Since the blessing of that Moment

With my father

Death and truth mix with the
mundane

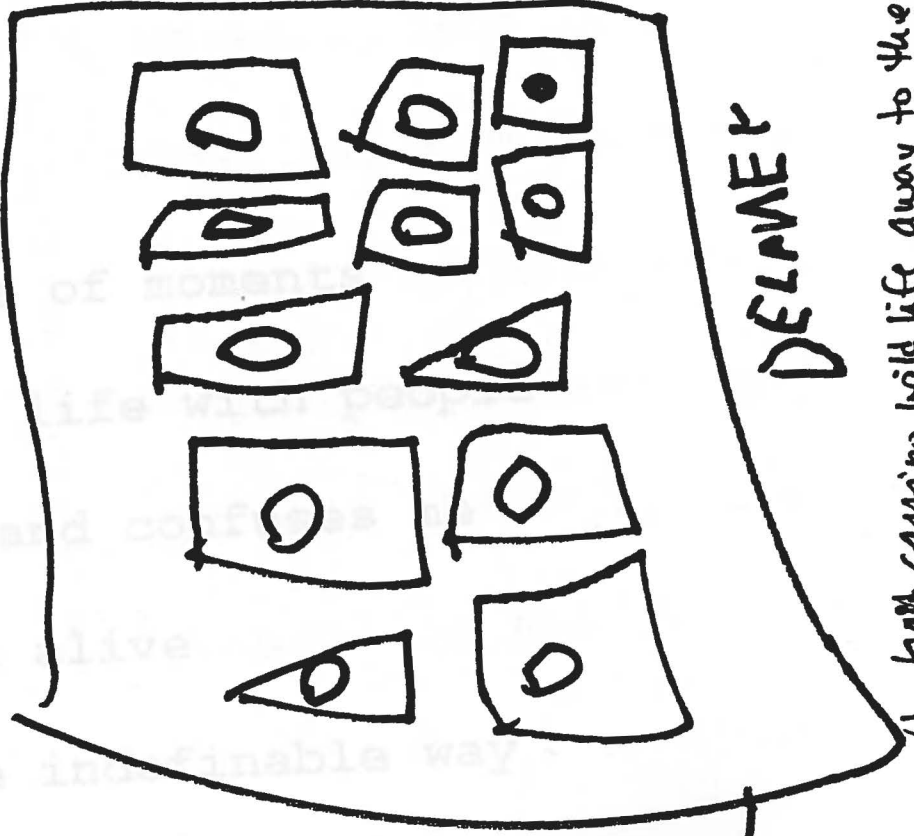
→ Disposed

In this miracle of life

Love Chal.Si.Nam.Men

DERIVATIVE



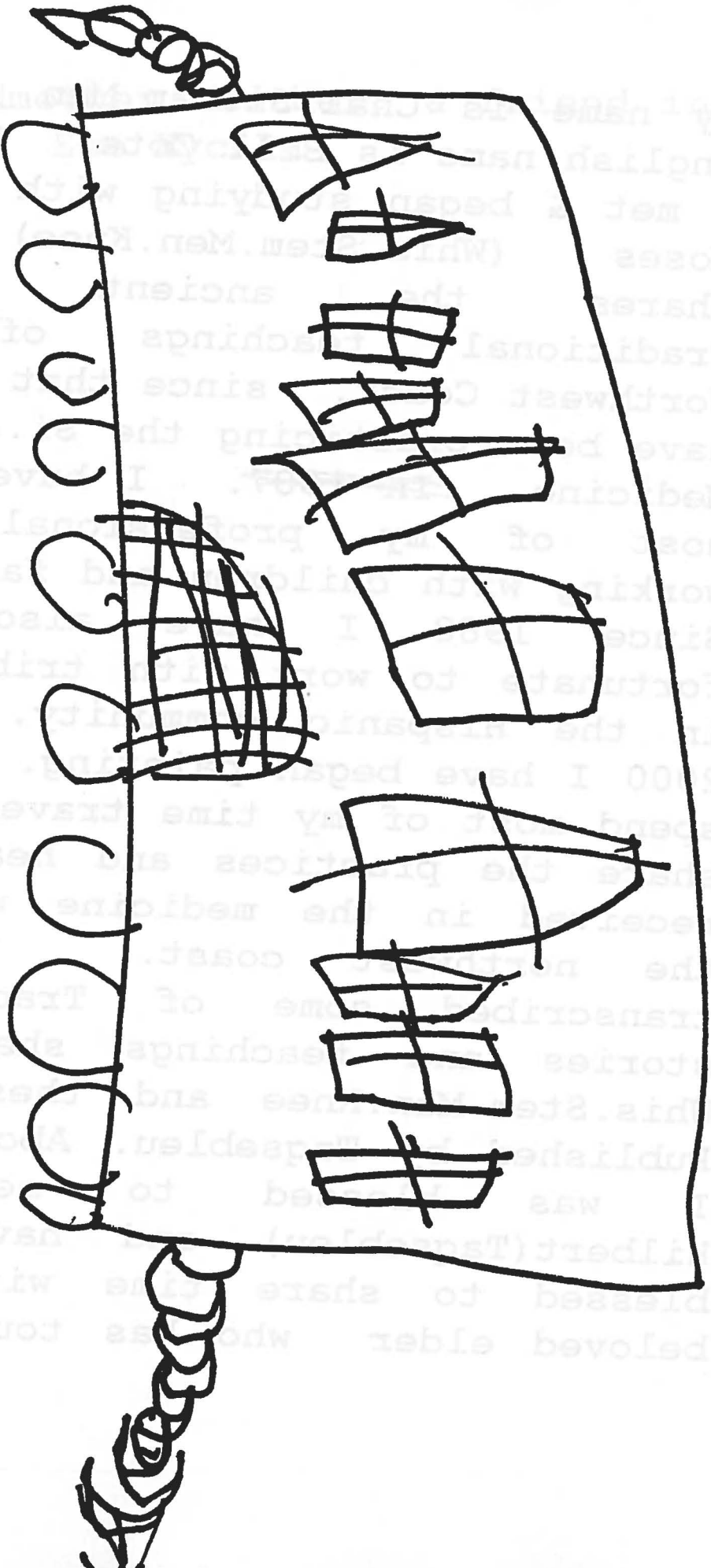


DELAVER

A path carving wild life away to the forest where they belong



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My name is Chal.Si.Nam.Men and my English name is Bill Cote. In 1987 I met & began studying with Johnny Moses (Whis.Stem.Men.Knee) who Shares the ancient Sacred Traditional teachings of the Northwest Coast. since that time I have been practicing the Si.Si.Wiss Medicine. ~~In 1987~~. I have spent most of my professional life working with children and families. Since 1988 I have also been fortunate to work with tribes and in the Hispanic community. In 2000 I have began painting. I now spend most of my time traveling to share the practices and healing I received in the medicine ways of the northwest coast. I have transcribed some of Traditional stories and teachings shared by Whis.Stem.Men.Knee and these were Published by Taqsebleu. About 1990 I was blessed to meet Vi Hilbert(Taqsebleu) and have been blessed to share time with this beloved elder who has touched me

as grandmother, mother, & friend in
my life. Eee Hychka

A little girl's drawing
of her grandmother



A little girl's drawing
of her grandmother

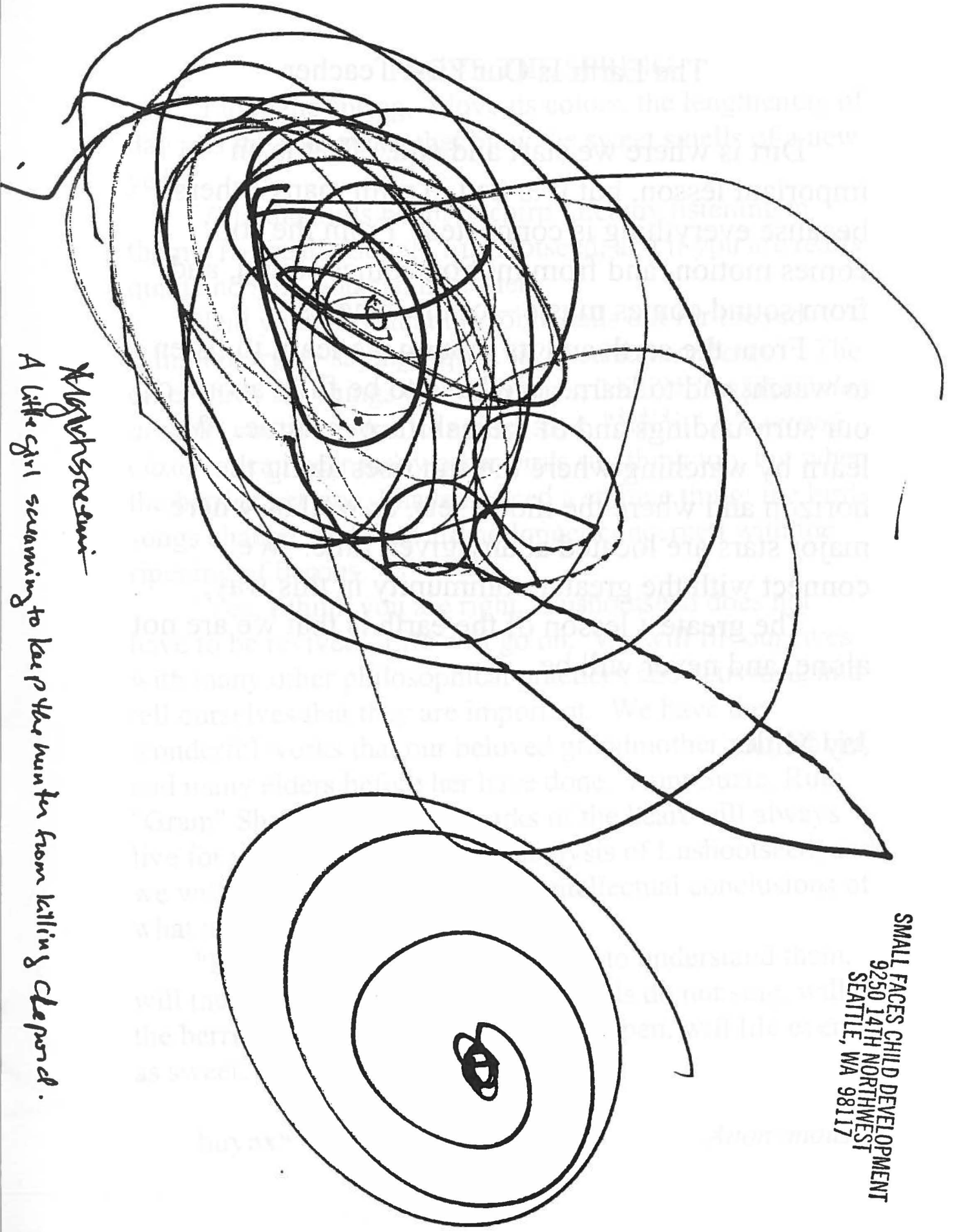


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PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540



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Alphascene
A little girl scanning to keep the hunter from killing leopard.



The Earth Is Our First Teacher

Dirt is where we start and end. That is an important lesson, but it is tied in with many others because everything is connected. From the soil comes motion, and from motion comes sound, and from sound comes music – of the spheres.

From the earth and its motion we learn to listen, to watch, and to learn. We have to be fully aware of our surroundings and of their shifts over time. We learn by watching where the sun rises along the horizon and where the moon sets, as well as where major stars are located at any given time. We connect with the greater community in this way.

The greatest lesson of the earth is that we are not alone, and never will be.

Jay Miller

I LOVE THE SPRING

"I love the spring. I love its colors; the lengthening of day and the soft winds that blow the sweet smells of a new year.

"And the birds begin to chirp. I enjoy listening to them. They really do talk Lushootseed, and if you are really quiet and still, you can hear them.

"Did you know that the robin calls out for the red salmonberry by saying, "qlitx^wa?" *red salmonberry?* The other birds say things too. One says, "didiʔt ʔəsxiɣiɕ" *they are still not quite ripe.* Another says, "čičičit" *It's getting closer.* I can hear many other birds say things too, but when the berries get ripe, I have noticed a strange thing: the bird songs change, and they are no longer concerned with the ripening of berries.

"Yes, I think you are right. Lushootseed does not have to be revived. Life will go on. We will fill our lives with many other philosophical practices and activities, and tell ourselves that they are important. We have the wonderful works that our beloved grandmother, taq^wšəblu, and many elders before her have done. Aunt Suzie, Ruth "Gram" Shelton and other works of the heart will always live for us to do our analytical analysis of Lushootseed, and we will be able to draw our own intellectual conclusions of what it is like to be an "Indian."

"But I wonder, if no one is there to understand them, will the birds keep chirping? If the birds do not sing, will the berries ripen? If the berries don't ripen, will life ever be as sweet?

huyəx^w čəd.

-Anonymous

John + Bob



Dot Po Theat!

Cat Teaches Swimming

Once upon a time there was a little boy, he was very young. He saw the big people swimming and it looked like a lot of fun, he wanted to do it too. Every time he went into the water he would sink, the water would come over his head and his mother would have to pick him up. He was frustrated because he saw other people swimming, but he didn't understand how it was done; every time that he went into the water he sank and sank.

Then one day Cat decided to go for a swim. Now this was a fairly ordinary cat, but he was extraordinary in one important way. Cat liked the water, Cat loved to swim. Cat was also unusual in another way; he liked to go for walks with his family. One day Cat's family walked down to the beach, where they often went, and Cat had gone with them, as he often did. When they got to the beach, Cat thought it would be a fine day for a swim so he went down to the water and jumped in. Cat paddled out away from the shore and then he paddled back again. Boy watched intently as Cat paddled. Cat meowed as if to say, "You see? See how I paddle with my legs?"

Boy became very excited; as he watched Cat a flash of understanding came to him. Finally he understood the secret of swimming! He just had to paddle with his arms like he had seen Cat do, and then his head would stay up out of the water. Boy was so excited he wanted to jump right in and start swimming. But on this particular day it was cold and he was not wearing a swimsuit. They were just out for a walk when Cat had decided to come with them and go swimming. Boy was very frustrated because he didn't understand yet about swimsuits and cold weather. Boy just knew that he had learned something extraordinary; that Cat had shown him the secret of swimming. And he was anxious to try it. But his mother was quite insistent, she did not understand what Boy had just learned, and she would not allow him to go into the water.

A short time later the family moved to a new place. Boy never got a chance to go back to the water where Cat had taught him how to swim. The new house, in California, had a swimming pool. Boy had never seen a swimming pool before, but he knew immediately what it was for! Boy had not forgotten that Cat had taught him how to swim, or his intense desire to try it. Boy saw the pool and said to his mommy, "I want to go swimming!" But she would not allow it; it was the middle of winter and Boy was wearing a coat, not a swimsuit. And besides, he didn't know how to swim and the pool was too deep for

him to stand.

But this time Boy would not be stopped. He was very little and didn't understand yet about winter, or coats and such. But he was certain that Cat had taught him how to swim and he just had to try it. So he ran over to the pool and jumped right in. Boy didn't mind the cold at all, and being winter in California, the water was actually much warmer than the water up north where they had just moved from. Paddling hard with his hands, his head stayed above the water. "I'm swimming! I'm swimming," he shouted with glee! Cat had been right. Cat had taught him how to swim.

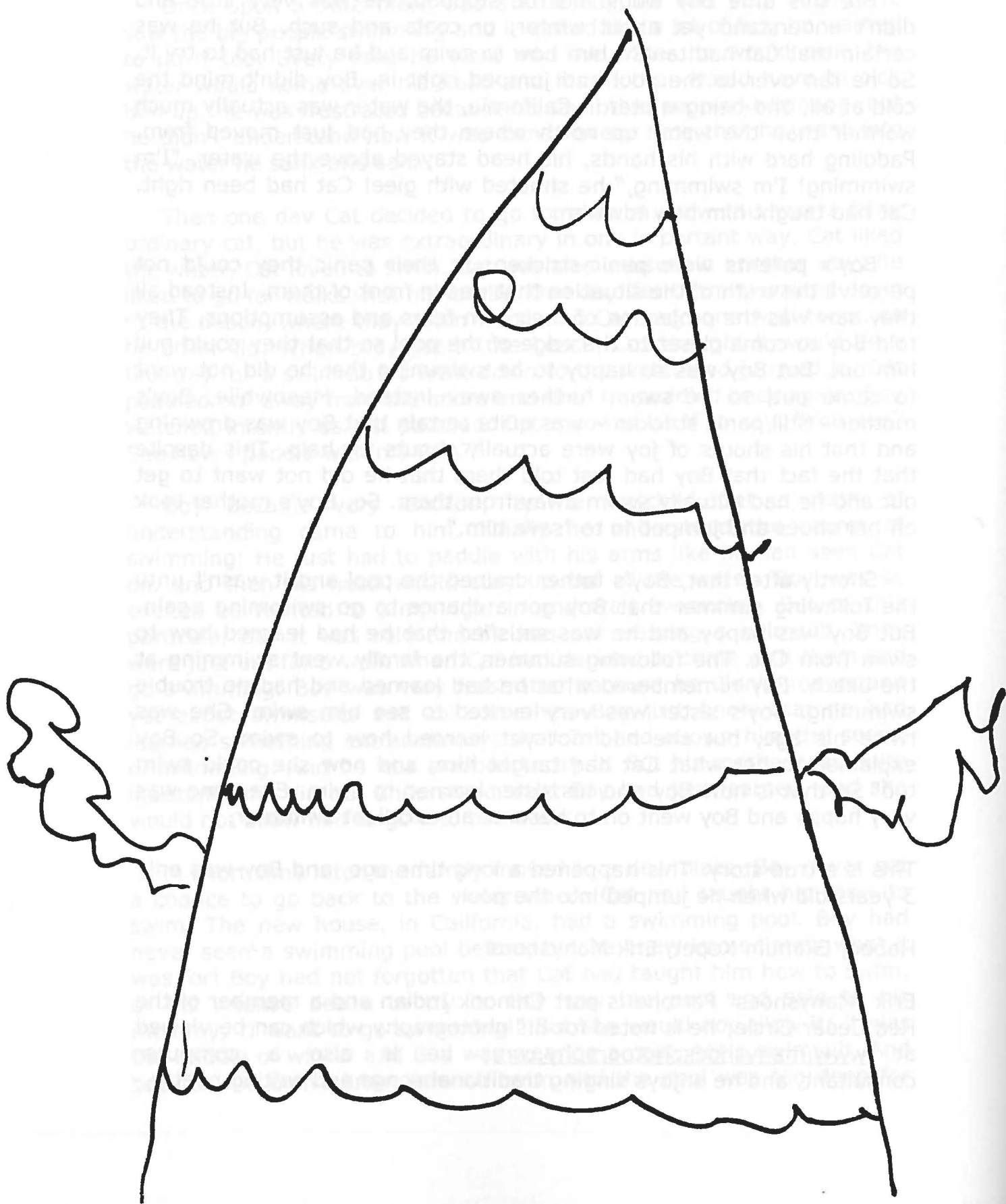
Boy's parents were panic-stricken. In their panic they could not perceive the truth of the situation that was in front of them. Instead all they saw was the projection of their own fears and assumptions. They told Boy to come closer to the edge of the pool so that they could pull him out. But Boy was so happy to be swimming that he did not want to come out, so he swam further away instead. Meanwhile, Boy's mother – still panic stricken – was quite certain that Boy was drowning and that his shouts of joy were actually shouts for help. This despite that the fact that Boy had just told them that he did not want to get out and he had actually swum away from them. So, Boy's mother took off her shoes and jumped in to "save him."

Shortly after that, Boy's father drained the pool and it wasn't until the following summer that Boy got a chance to go swimming again. But Boy was happy and he was satisfied that he had learned how to swim from Cat. The following summer, the family went swimming at the beach. Boy remembered what he had learned and had no trouble swimming. Boy's sister was very excited to see him swim. She was twice his age, but she had not yet learned how to swim. So Boy explained to her what Cat had taught him, and now she could swim too! So that is how Boy and his sister learned to swim. Everyone was very happy and Boy went on to become an excellent swimmer.

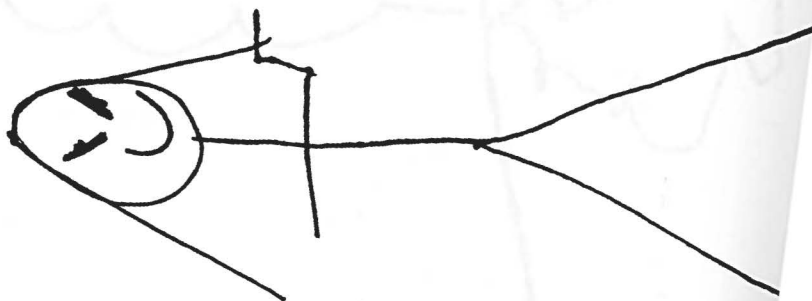
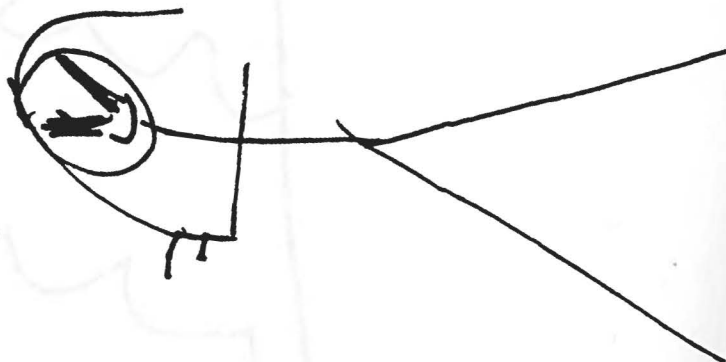
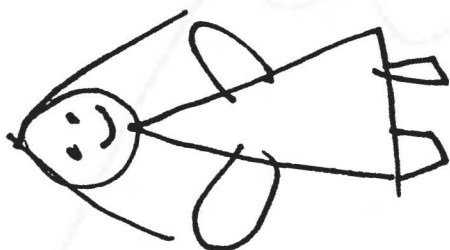
This is a true story. This happened a long time ago, and Boy was only 3 years old when he jumped into the pool.

Haboo, Ekanum Kopet, Erik Manyshoes

Erik "Manyshoes" Perrohe is part Chinook Indian and a member of the Red Cedar Circle; he is noted for his photography which can be viewed at www.manyshoesphotography.com; he is also a computer consultant, and he enjoys singing traditional songs and writing poetry.



Sci Art



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The little girl is going to save a Raven that two little girls want to hurt.
Seleni

Nature is our First Teacher

The most significant teachers in my life haven't done much direct instruction. But when I asked direct questions, the answers have been worth noting.

My mother told me it was OK to not believe everything I recited during services at the Episcopalian church. "Just take the parts that work for you," she said, giving permission to think of religion as something that might be different for each person.

My sailing coach told me I didn't need to understand everything with my head. "Don't worry about studying the physics of why it works. Go by the seat of your pants," he said, offering the freedom to trust in the direct experience of wind and water.

My dear friend and mentor said "I've been to lots of churches in my life. Lutheran, Catholic, Shaker, Methodist. They were nice people, nice community." This simple comment released me from worrying that church needed to reflect *me*: directly, completely, or constantly. She intimated that church is about community, while spirituality is something that happens alone.

Recently, I've been thinking about the Earth's teachings. About how at an early age I lay on the deck of my grandfather's boat and listened to the slosh of the waves, felt the power of the wind, heard the swish of the eelgrass slipping by the hull, and experienced a deep sense of rightness and belonging.

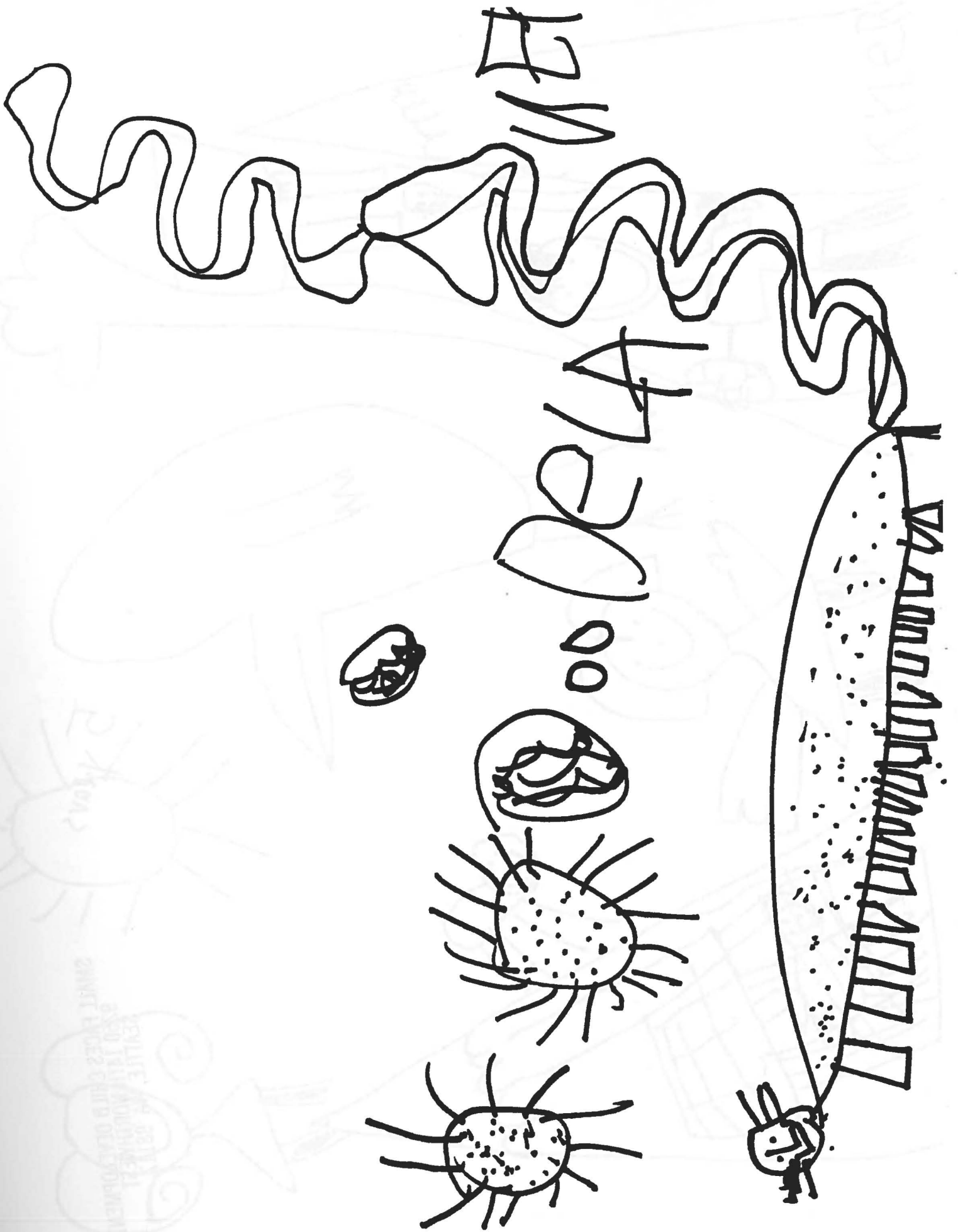
I've been thinking about my one steadfast friend of middle childhood: the catalpa tree in our back yard that grew along the ground. Its branches served as balance beam, picnic table, reading chair, and pew.

I've been thinking about how the excitement of an urban career kept me for many years in "that jeweled cage we call the city." My husband and I began rail at the sameness of concrete and plant a fierce thicket of bushes, flowers, and spikey weeds in our tiny city plot. But it wasn't until our second son was born, and pronounced his first word -- "owoo" or "flower," -- that we began to search for a way to surround ourselves with trees, water, open space, and that feeling of rightness.

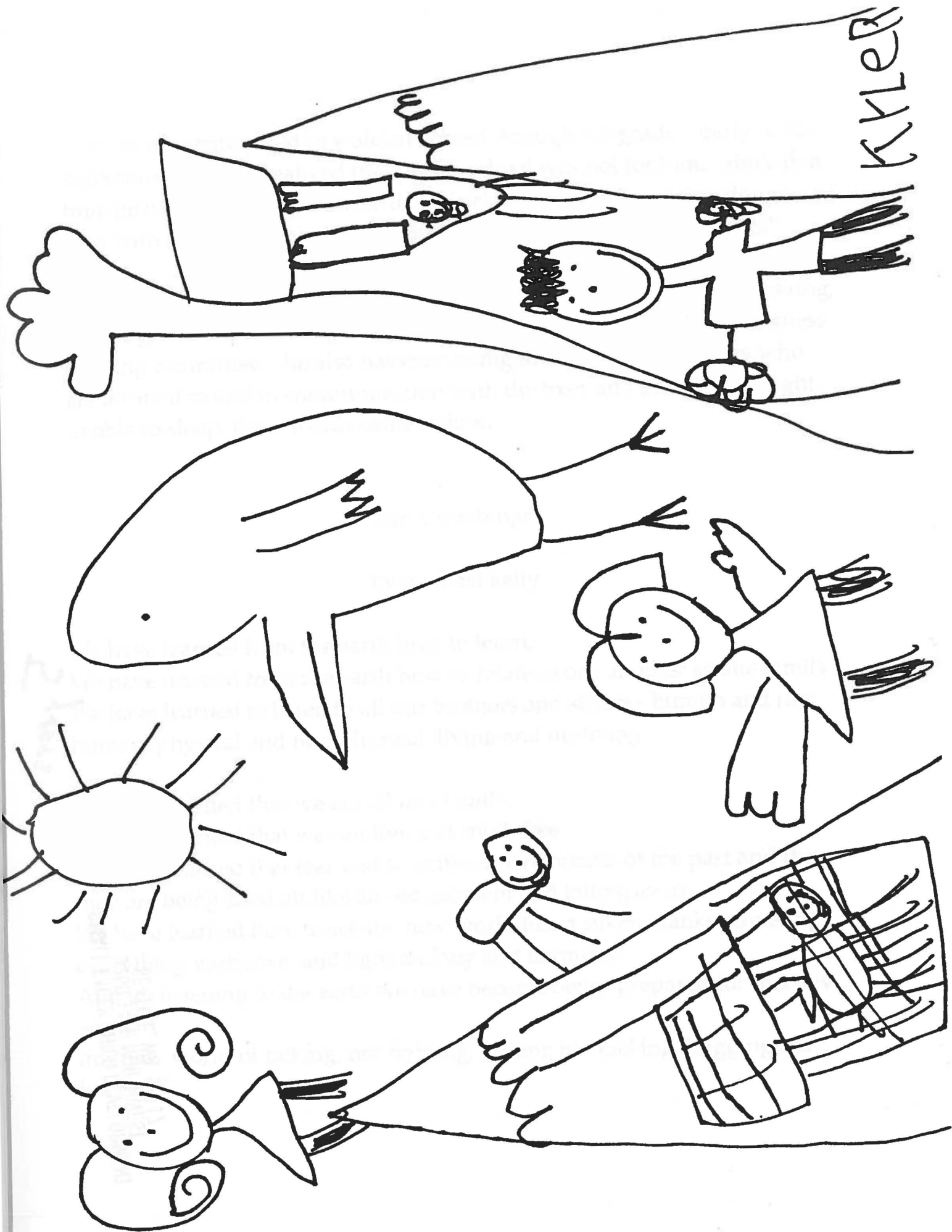
These days I measure important decisions against that feeling of belonging and connection, which we all know but find difficult to describe. I've begun testing the practice of sending out a question and listening hard for the answer, which might not come

right away. I notice how, like my other teachers, the Earth is teaching indirectly all the time. And the answers -- when they do come -- are like the teacher: tremendous.

Katie Jennings is a filmmaker, artist and educator; formerly with KCTS (PBS) and currently with IslandWood Media. She has been fortunate to study and make films with Vi Hilbert (taqseblu) and Bruce Miller (subiyay).



KYLER



michael participated in waldorf school through 8th grade. early in his sophomore year he realized that public school was not for him. since that time he has recognized the world as his classroom. a very large douglas fir tree, with an active eagles nest at the top, is now one of his "teachers."

michael is now a young man of 19 years. he has been working, sharing, learning, and experiencing with a member of the quaker earthcare witness steering committee. he also has continuing interaction with others who are attuned to and in communication with the trees and earth. one night, unable to sleep, these words came to him.

earth teachings

by michael kelly

We have learned from the earth how to learn.

We have learned from the earth how to relate to one another as one family

We have learned to listen to all our brothers and sisters - human and non human, physical and non-physical, living and un-living

We have learned that we are all one family.

We have learned that we can live and think free

We have learned that fear and scarcities are remnants of the past and that they are being shed off like an old garment and falling away.

We have learned how to see the new world like a silken blanket covering everything with love and light and joy and harmony.

And by listening to the earth we have become better prepared for this new world

this new world of talking, not fighting, kissing not kicking, hugging not hitting.

Because we have learned to listen to the earth, we fear nothing - for we know that the mother will always be there for us and protect us when we are in our greatest need.

By learning the songs that the earth has taught us, we have learned how to communicate with other levels of existence beyond the third and fourth dimensions.

We have learned to love everything, as we now know that everything is a part of us and the suffering of one is the suffering of all and the love of one is the love for all.

We have learned by using these ears - the sounds of this earth.

We have learned by using this vision - the expanse of this earth

We have learned by using this touch - that everything has feelings.

We have learned by using our spirit - that we can heal this earth of her pain.

We have learned

We have learned all this because the earth taught us how to listen.

All this, by learning how to learn
one step at a time.

We have learned of love - from our hearts

We have learned of pain - from our bodies

We have learned of the height of this universe - from the depth of our consciousnesses

We have learned of sorrow - from listening to the trees.

We have learned of hate - from watching the wars.

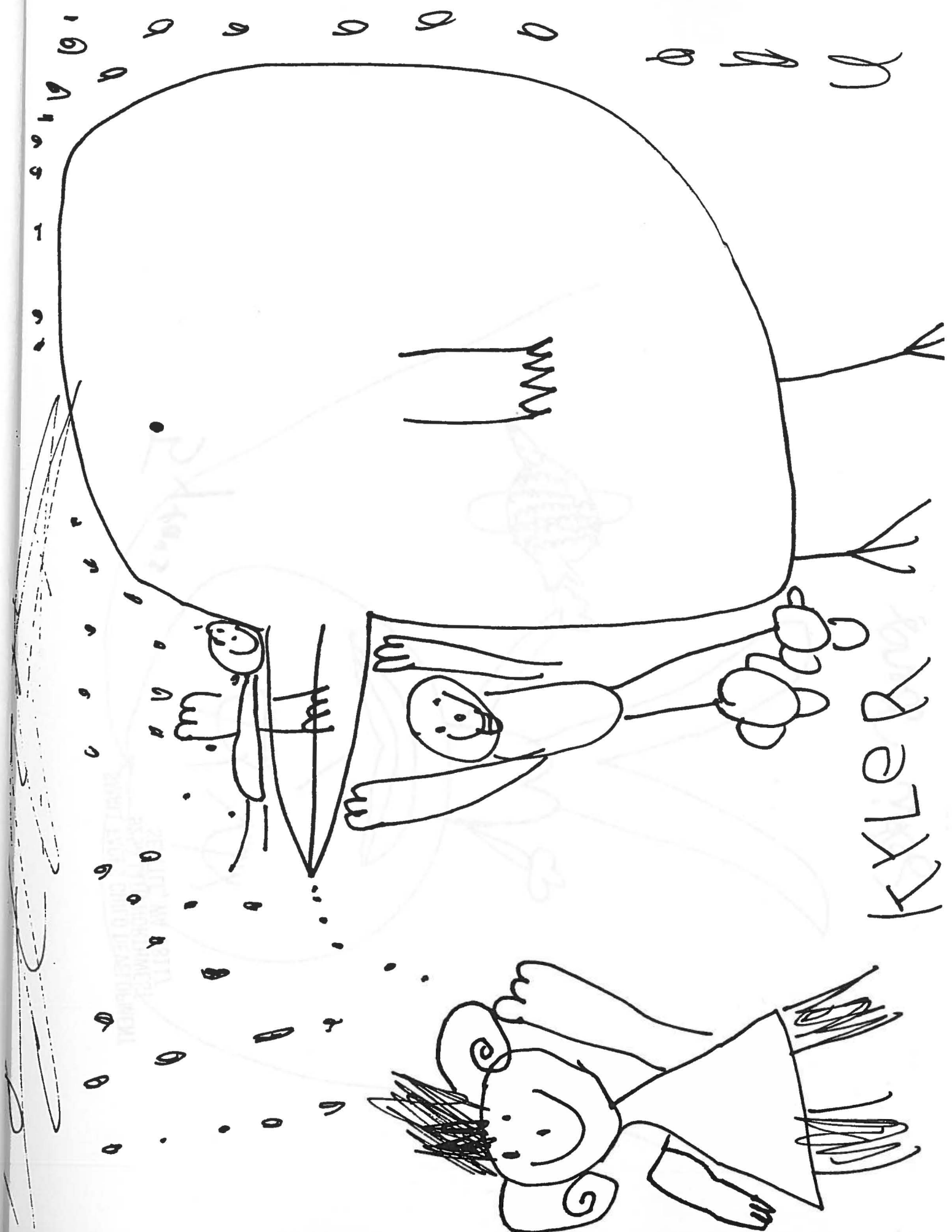
We have learned of light - by seeing it

And we have learned of darkness - by feeling it

Everyday, we learn, and un-learn, and learn again

We learn by listening and seeing and feeling and tasting and smelling.

We have learned all this because the earth taught us how to learn.



KYLE R

Save the Earth



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Some people are shooting at the bird so the little girl is protecting it.
Sera

love idg

The Earth is our
first teacher.

Life flows from her warm
fingers, and
from her we learn to
nurture.

In her eyes, we see ~~the~~
love and respect for all life,
and we would do well
to follow the
gentle path
she has set out
for us.

Eleanor
Garvard

Earth is our First Teacher

On the first day of school, Earth rolls down the hall and rotates into her classroom. She hitches up her continents and faces her new students. To Earth, they look younger each year: girls in low-slung jeans and tight tops that pull apart like tectonic plates to reveal shifting midriffs; boys in loose T-shirts, baggy shorts, and flip-flops.

“Welcome to my class,” Earth says, “to my world, as it were.” A couple of students pull ipod earpieces out and cease nodding their heads. “Is it warm in here, or is it just me?” Earth asks. The students shrug. Earth trundles over to the window and swings it open, though the sultry air brings little relief.

Earth stands again in front of her students. She tightens her equatorial belt, then points at herself with both hands. “Do you see how much of me is ocean?” She revolves slowly, feeling another day slip by. “Do you see what happens when my temperatures rise?” Earth switches on her warm-display function. The students watch her glaciers recede and her oceans lap over the edges of her continents.

“Hey, look at Florida,” one boy says. “Miami’s completely under water.” Students giggle nervously and click quick words into their laptops.

Earth switches off the display, but still feels flushed and bloated. "What happens to the cold-water salmon when my waters warm?" She looks around the room.

"They swim further north," one girl posits. "Or maybe they die?" a boy asks.

Earth nods at them and feels water drip from Antarctica onto the classroom floor. "Please open another window." A boy does her bidding; yet, she still feels overheated. "Now, what about my mountain forests?" she asks, "the Douglas firs, red cedar and maidenhair ferns?" She runs her arm down the green of her coastal mountain chains. "What about the animals who live here?"

A couple of students stare out the windows where Frisbees fly across the campus under bright sunlight. "They adapt," a boy says. "They move higher up the mountains," says a girl. "Or north." Earth wheels forward to reveal the receding ice at the top of her, her shrinking north. Dense glacier water drips onto her students.

Earth wipes her brow. "Is the heat on in here?" she asks. A boy goes over to the thermostat. He studies it, then nods. "Turn it down please," Earth says. The boy tries but it won't budge. Earth sees her students slump sleepily in their seats; even they are too warm to think clearly. She shakes her head. Salt water splatters the first two rows.

Dizzy with fever, Earth tilts. She leans on her desk and fans herself. Finally, she tugs her poles back into alignment

and addresses her class. "Thank you for your attention." Earth sees bemused stares and a few looks of concern. "That is the end of our first lesson." She gives them a moist nod, then sloshes out the door.

The students wipe down their laptops and sling bright packs over their backs. They head to their second class, trailing through the puddles of Earth's wet path.

END

Bio: Janet Yoder lives in Lushootseed Territory with her husband, Robby Rudine, on a floating home in Seattle. She is currently at work on a book of personal essays about Upper Skagit elder, Vi Hilbert, called **Being in Vi's World**. Janet was fortunate to be a student of Vi's and continues to learn from this beloved teacher.



The Stars at Night Are Big and Bright, Deep in the Heart of Texas

hik^wbid g^wəl g^wəqil k^wi tətəwaʔs ʔal k^wi
słax^w, ʔəsłəp ʔal k^wi yədwas ʔə təkəs.*

Arnie vs The Black Racer

Our Mothers are our first earths, our first salt seas, their hearts, our first drums, with our own – our first teachers. My Mother's heart beat deep in the heart of Texas on an ancient seabed littered with shell fossils. Two others (who lived) shared my Mother's heartbeat from deep within and became my siblings. Last of these was my late younger brother, Ricky, bright as a star child, as muddy with mischief as star child before revealed.

My Mother's Texas heartbeat was certainly my first earth-ocean teacher but my brother was the one on this side of the belly button who taught me to love this earth and its creatures. Ricky, a Czech, Cherokee, Viking Anglo-Teuton Texan, a masterfully stealthy hunter could sneak up on any living breathing thing and capture its heartbeat in his hand. Just a kid. A suburban sandman to the horny toad; he could put the tawny blood spitting little pancake dinosaurs to sleepy-eyed siesta in his palm, the lefty palm with its too short life line. Ricky kept a pharmaceutical factory of pill bugs, some of them not treated according to prescription. He farmed ants by jelly jar firefly lantern light. He even invented an Empire of Flance that was ruled by ants. These six-legged imperialists experimented with solar power sometimes magnified with eye-poppingly disastrous results. Deep in my brother's heart lived animal love and little boy cruelty but mostly love and abiding curiosity.

Two, four, six, eight, odd, and especially no-legged, he gathered them all into his backyard menagerie. Neighborhood girls, led blindfolded into Ricky's playhouse, shrieked at the

revelation of the glory of Ricky's bestiary – the snake pit! Garters and racers, a writhing nightmare of hair-raising medusa dreads twisted and squirmed at the bottom of a barrel that looked like a core sample from living hell. But credit my brother, he knew his snakes and none were poisonous, though I smacked him when he tricked me into letting one of them bite me. "Get it off! Get it off!!!" – my song rivaled the girls. Mother made him thin the snake population by promulgating a merciful amnesty and emancipation.

One day Ricky came shouting out his newest alley find. I didn't get too excited – probably just another snake. I *was* jealous; I never found anything bigger than a garter you'd be lucky to have wrap around your next door child bride's thigh. He found genuine four-footers of a long variety of species. But today my brother had found no snake. Instead, he came huffing and puffing, slamming the chicken wire back gate. He was cradling the very emblem of Texas animal weirdness, unrivaled by either peccaries or horny toads, the depression era main course known as Hoover Hog, the four legged humvee of it's time (equally prone to mishaps on mean streets), the tail-chasing accordion handbag of redneck high fashion, the very star of the Lone Star State's catalog of critterdom the nine-banded armadillo of country song fame. "His name is Arnie." said Ricky.

Arnie, a youngish specimen of his species, as unimpressed by his dubbing as by the yipping of our two fearless Pekingese, took a nap. He might not have slept so well had he known what plans my menace of a brother was already cooking up for his innocent guest.

Ricky's snake races were neighborhood famous. Two at a time he set snakes side-winding across the waters of our kidney-shaped pool. Wagers were placed and real nickel candy money was won or lost at the betting pool. Even though there wasn't a clear finish line, Ricky always declared a winner. Just don't bet against the house!

One day my brother unveiled an inspired stroke of showmanship, worthy of a 12-year-old P.T. Barnum, the idea he'd

been gestating since the advent of Arnie. "Come one, come all, gather round neighbors and witness the truly astounding race of the century. Today *Arnie the Armadillo* will undertake to best the champion of champions of swimming snakedom, none other than... *the Black Racer* in a race to go down in history. The appreciative audience duly hissed the snake and applauded Arnie.

Ricky wrangled the snake and I got to start Arnie, an assignment I much preferred. A neighbor kid manned the cap pistol. Bang! No sooner had Arnie hit the pool water than he *did* go down in history, capsizing like the flagship of the Spanish Armada in the stormy Irish sea of 1588, and sinking to the bleached bottom of the pool. Ricky was in a rare panic. He dived in to save his armadillo. But before my brother could get to him I noticed that nine feet down nine-banded Arnie, far from gasping for his last breath, was sedately walking along the bottom of the pool toward the shallow end. But my brother was in full out hero mode. Before Arnie could cheat the meandering snake with his own version of tortoise and hare, Ricky brought Arnie up in the sweep of his arms to the light of the blazing Texas Lone Star, otherwise known as the sun.

That night the other stars were big and bright, deep in the heart of Texas, and Arnie slept off his great race, dreaming perhaps of the great escape he would eventually make. So, what do we learn from our first teacher the earth and from this peculiar earthling named Arnie? Certainly that armadillos don't swim; but maybe we have a hint at how they cross to the other side of a creek. Still the deeper lesson, like a good Lushootseed student of Vi's, I leave to the reader. The Earth is our first teacher.

When, a year or so later, I held Ricky's fleeting last heart beat in my teen-age hands and he slipped away, he became my teacher. I learned to love the earth and its creatures in a reflection of his way. Is death then our last teacher? I think not. At least Chief Seattle would say there is only a change of classrooms. There are other worlds.

* At the recent funeral of Ron Hilbert Coy, the great Tulalip artist of the Lushootseed longhouse and winter dancing tradition and Vi's son, a Shaker minister who packs the treaty signer's name, spayqəm, provided a light moment when he recounted how his father used to sing "Deep in the Heart of Texas" to him in Lushootseed. This is my attempt at translating the lyric of my youth into Lushootseed. I am sure Vi will correct my grammar. I claim Vi as one of my elders and one of the finest teachers I have ever known. She gave the assignment that reawakened Arnie from his longish nap in my memory.

Ta.Meh.Tha.Lia

Suzanne Dyer Cray

hear the trees talk

She began to get bored. In her distraction she
yipped and barked at the small birds and squirrels
commenced looking at her surroundings. There were so many
things to see and do. She began to feel like a child again.
Trees growing in all directions. Some were pines reaching
up. Some were oaks and maples. Some were struggling to
further than she could see while others were struggling to

THE EARTH AS MY FIRST TEACHER

They say the trees can talk. They say that human beings can hear them, but only if their ears are open. She wondered why the trees had never talked to her. Maybe, she thought, it is because I have never asked them.

One day she decided to go out into the forest and ask the trees to talk to her. She rose early, left her home and found a place in the middle of some cedar and fir trees out in the middle of an old forest. She sat on the soft moss under a big cedar tree, said her prayers, made her offering, and asked the trees to talk to her. She shut her eyes and waited for what seemed like a very long time. She opened her eyes and waited for what seemed like an even longer time and still she did not hear the trees talk.

She began to get bored. In her distraction she commenced looking at her surroundings. There were so many trees growing in all directions. Some were giants reaching further than she could see while others were struggling to

Like trees, human beings stretch out their hands to one another to touch, to receive, to give, and to greet.

Human beings are more like trees than they realize, she thought. Perhaps the difference is that trees do not spend their time on this earth judging their experience, they just do their work-they grow. They are born knowing their purpose on this earth, while human beings too often spend a lifetime trying to discover their purpose. As she gathered her things to leave, she thanked the trees for their lives but it was not until she neared her home that she realized that the trees had been talking to her ALL THE TIME. Mother Earth WILL give us teachings if our spiritual ears are open, we take the time to listen, and we do not judge what we hear.

**Ta.Mah.Thee.Lia
Suzanne Perritt Cravey**

Suzanne has a home in Olympia, Washington but currently lives in Puerto Rico developing a business to grow the islands native and endangered trees and plants for repopulation. She

A submission to the Earth as our First Teacher series

As a child I spent my summers on Samish Island, on the beach, where every day I heard the sound of gulls crying, waves lapping, and smelled the beach; clams, oysters and that certain, special smell of seaweed that you can only find on a salt water beach. I rode my bicycle and took in the sweet ripe smell of blackberries in August. I went fishing in my little row boat and I walked in the woods, always intent upon finding a feather that some heron might have left behind. I took these things for granted, never knowing that they would become a part of me which when absent, I would find almost unbearable.

Much later, as an adult who had lived in the city for many years, I had a dream of awaking on that same beach, as if from a deep sleep, and slowly, gloriously, coming to know that if I were to stop my busy life, to take the time to listen, to truly see, and feel, what the beach and the many forms of wild life that made their home there were telling me, that I would hold the keys to the universe – that there would be nothing, literally, that I could not know. It was an epiphany of sorts, one that would begin a ten year odyssey of returning me, physically, to that same beloved beach on Samish Island.

Shortly after that dream I encountered a young teacher, Johnny Moses, Whis-tem-en-nee, who himself was part of the Coast Salish tradition, and I began to learn the stories of the first peoples of this land. As a student of comparative religion I had studied many different traditions from far away places. Here at last was something I could study from my own land – a “homecoming” of sorts. There was, in fact, a whole rich tradition of songs and stories that came directly from the Samish peoples. In the learning I myself changed. I began to realize the symbiotic relationship of humans to plants, animals, and nature in a way that was not purely intellectual. I began to walk in the woods and realize that I was treading in the living room of some very magnificent creatures – both small and large. I grew to respect the trees for the work that they do, and to thank them for the sacrifices they make. I began to feel that all around us a wonderful, living world exists where creatures are being their authentic selves, not just put here for the human beings. I guess you could say I came to understand something of the sacredness of all life.

When at last I did return to Samish Island, I was very lucky to be able to live once again on the beach. Each morning I woke up to the sounds of the eagle's nest not more than twenty or thirty feet behind me. I sat at my kitchen table and watched the movement of the waves, and listened to the seabirds. I thought about all the beings who live in the water, or on its edge. And I sat, very humble in the knowledge that in my own small way, I was part of this wondrous whole. And with this knowledge came responsibility – to help those who have no voice to tell us of their plight. They need our help – now. May those that have ears to listen – hear, and be called to action.

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Constance Mears
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360-715-1123

A submission to the Earth as Our First Teacher series
where to begin

so far, i have learned – nothing
that the earth has taught me
will hold still on a dry piece of paper
or start at a place called a beginning. it spirals
like a hawk floating in the sky
while its shadow makes circles on the hills below;
spirals like the song of the woodland thrush,
sung twice to the rising sun, sung twice
to the vanishing stars.

what the earth has taught me is woven:
wild grass twisted in my beak with wet moss
and bent twigs, mud and a spider's web,
masterpiece of concerned architecture,
a basket tucked in a tree's arm.
what has been taught broods in the hollow
of this nest waiting for my not-yet wisdom
like the heron who, not by calendar
or calculation, but by calling, waits
for a hatchling to emerge, all mouth and hunger.

what the earth has taught me shimmers
between the hollows and the hills
the hunger and the beak
the sun and the circles
the hawk and the hatchling

the beginning and these last bent twigs
holding still on a dry piece of paper.

nestwoman



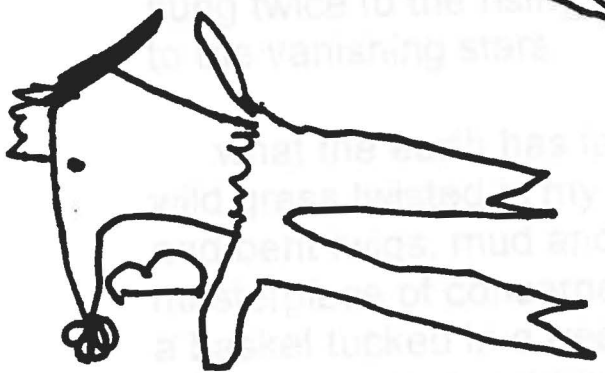
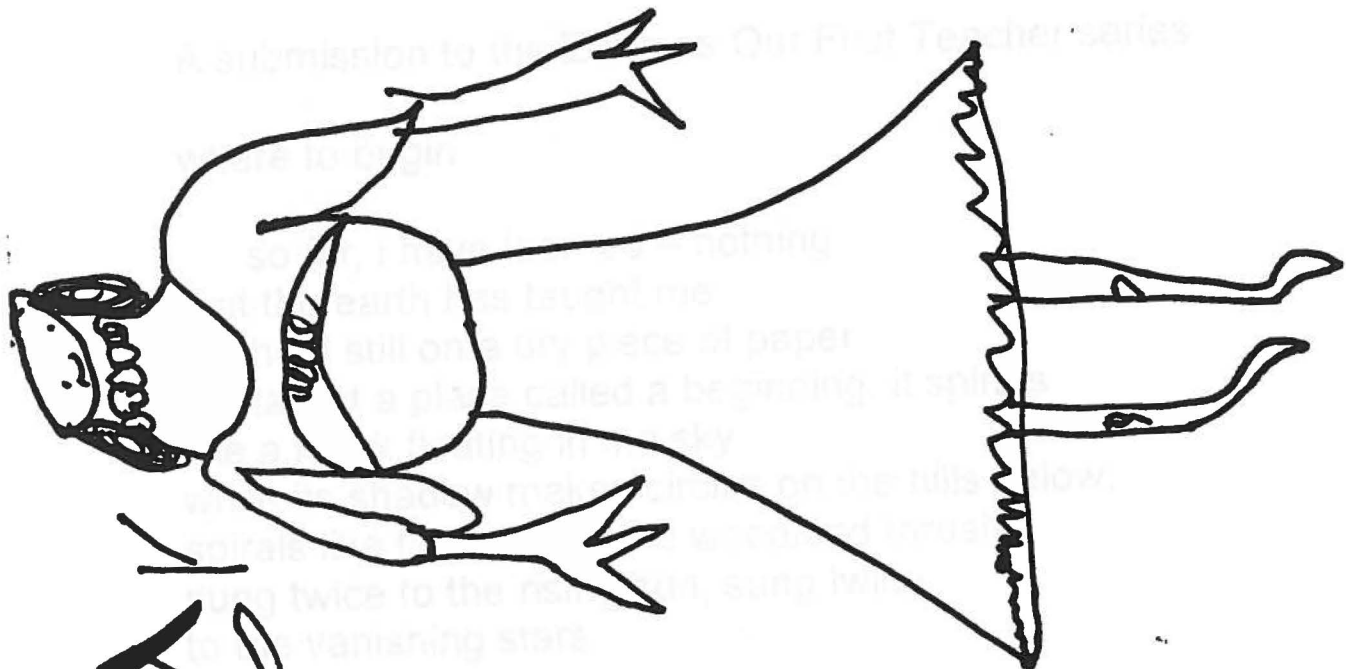
Wm

Constance Mears
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the beginning and these last bent twigs
holding still on a dry piece of paper.

newswoman

A submission to Wm's "Our First Teacher" series



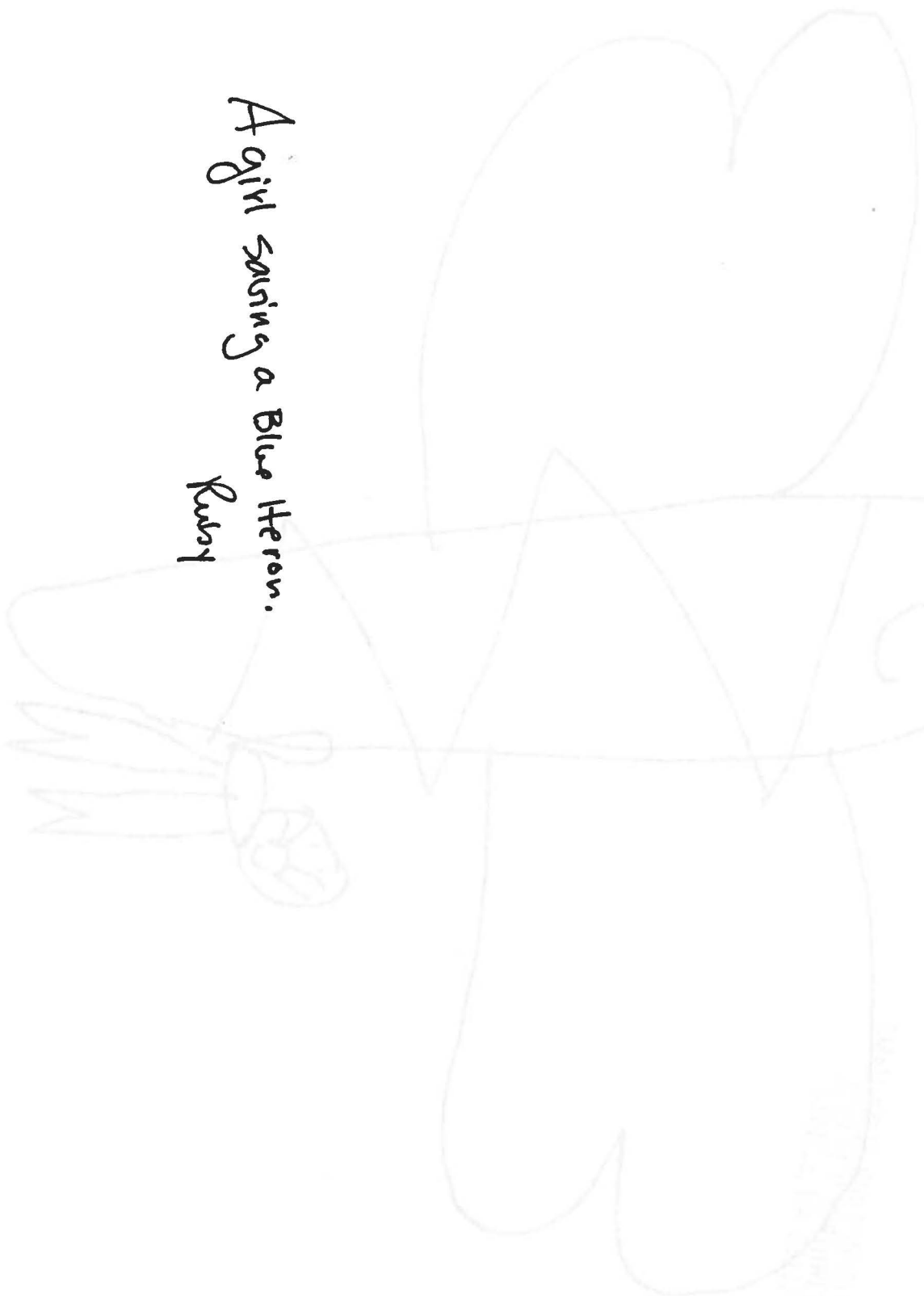
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what the earth has taught me
between the hollow and the hill
the hunger and the feast
the sun and the circles
the hawk and the hatchling

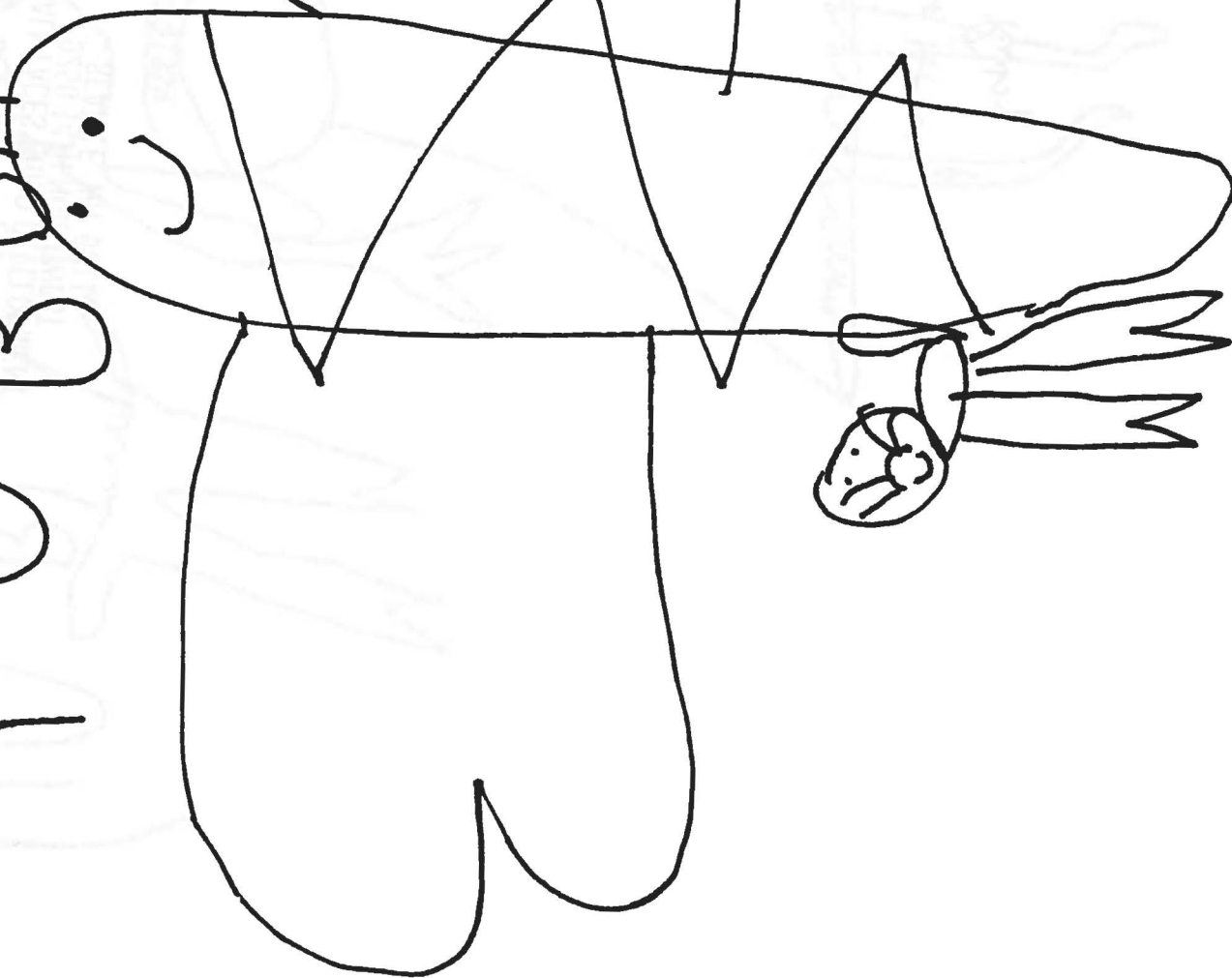
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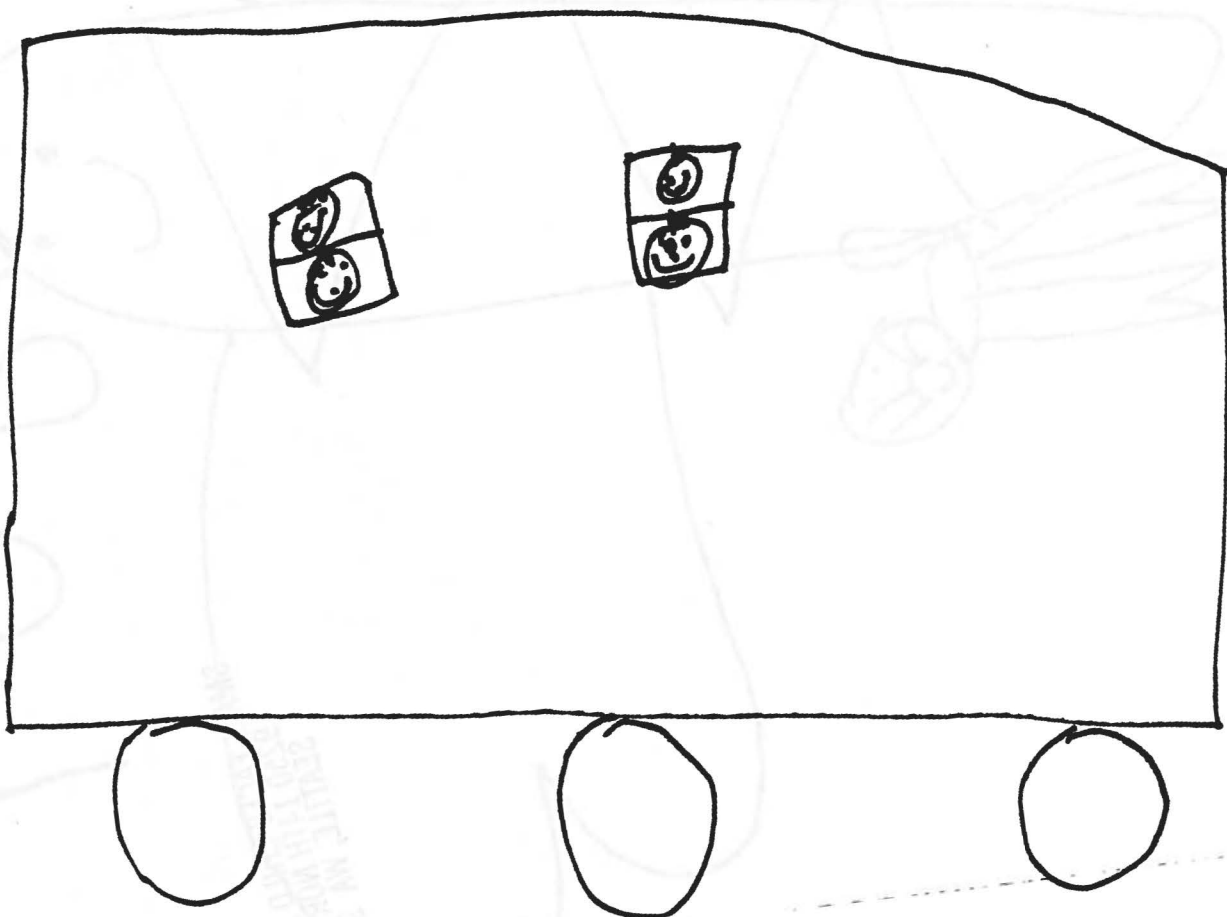
SMALL FACES CHILD DEVELOPMENT
9250 14TH NORTHWEST
SEATTLE, WA 98117

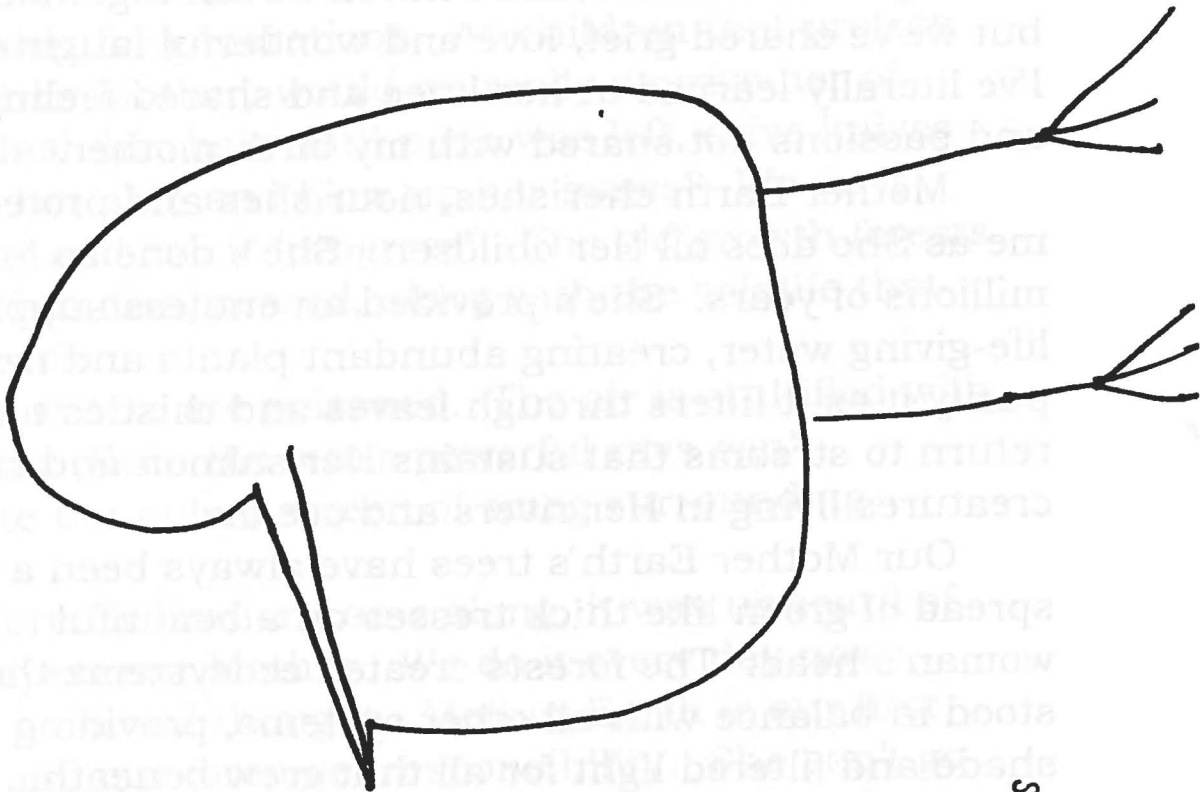
A girl saving a Blue Heron.
Ruby



BU BUB







SMALL FACES CHILD DEVELOPMENT
9250 14TH NORTHWEST
SEATTLE, WA 98117

The Earth is Our First Mother

Mother Earth, Earth Mother, Birth Mother. I've been blessed to have had all three in my lifetime.

My birth mother gave me life and did her best to give me love, substance and safety.

My Earth Mother and I haven't been together long but we've shared grief, love and wonderful laughter. I've literally learned at her knee and shared feelings and passions not shared with my birth mother.

Mother Earth cherishes, nourishes and protects me as She does all Her children. She's done so for millions of years. She's provided an endless supply of life-giving water, creating abundant plants and trees to purify it as it filters through leaves and thistles to return to streams that sustains Her salmon and other creatures living in Her rivers and oceans.

Our Mother Earth's trees have always been a lush spread of green like thick tresses on a beautiful woman's head. The forests created ecosystems that stood in balance with all other systems, providing shade and filtered light for all that grew beneath.

The soil is Mother Earth's skin. It stretches across deserts, mountains and plains to protect the bones and flesh of earth. Beneath the surface is the substance, shape, solidarity of the orb that is Earth.

That solidarity, the rocks and stones, are Mother Earth's bones. They hold everything in place so that the rain has a place to fall, the trees have a place to grow, the soil has a place to rest.

When I lay on the beaches of the ocean, I can feel

Mother Earth's heartbeat as the surf pounds to shore. I hear Her whispers in the trees and feel Her pass as trees rustle in the wind. I hear laughter in the birds, crickets, frogs. Her wrath is felt as thunder rolls across the earth and lightning courses through the sky.

Why, then, do we destroy our Mother Earth on a daily basis? The Earth has been raped, defiled and blown apart for generations. As children that profess to love their Mother, would we really deprive her of water, slash her hair until none was left, drive knives through her skin and blow up her bones? We do it every day and call it "progress". The old growth forests have all but disappeared, along with the wildlife that lived therein.

Our waters are poisoned. The air is stultified with chemicals. Even the sun's powerful rays can't penetrate the putrid screen of smog surrounding cities.

Before civilization came along, it was unheard of to disrespect our Mother. We do it every day now without a second thought. Mother Earth is our first mother and our foremost responsibility. She can't go on healing herself only to be assaulted again and again.

My birth mother and earth mother are both women of many years. They are alive, revered, respected and loved. We protect them as best we can, even from themselves.

But my heart aches for Mother Earth. So few respect Her and strive to save her life. She gives so much and receives so little.

When I lay down and put my ear to the earth, I

can feel Her breathe, move, shudder, sigh. I put my hand against Her breast and cry. When I'm able to escape to the mountains or ocean, where the bulldozers haven't reached with their sharp teeth and brutal claws, I soak in the peace that used to be and should still be.

Mother Earth, I thank you for your courageous and determined love, even for those who treat you with such disdain and disrespect. I praise you and love you. I promise you, on my life, that I will treat you gently, honor you and work to teach my children to protect and honor you so that seven generations from now, others can still escape to the mountains or run to the ocean to feel your heartbeat and hear your loving sighs.

Thank you. Thank you.

Tom

So, we sit there,
Sun filled faces
Turning tiny beach pebbles in our
hands.

Soft green, with hard white lumps.

“Frogs!” he says.

“But, only toads have bumps!” say I.

“No! These are frogs,” he insists.

We laugh.

So, frogs they become.

Waiting to croak.

Waiting to wake soft spring shoots of
fuzzy nettles,

And unfurl the fiddle of the
fiddlehead ferns.

“Listen!” he whispers

We hold pebbles to our ears.

“ They’re moving their mouths
around and around.”

Softly the sea tide seep in tickling
their bellies.

sw@l@q’, sw@l@q’,
sw@l@q’, sw@l@q’

So, we sit there,
Sun filled faces

Turning tiny beach pebbles in our hands.
Soft green, with hard white lumps.

“Frogs!” he says.

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We laugh.

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And unfurl the fiddle of the fiddlehead ferns.

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We hold pebbles to our ears.

“ They’re moving their mouths around and around.”

Softly the sea tide seep in tickling their bellies.

sw@l@q’, sw@l@q’, sw@l@q’, sw@l@q’

Nan McNutt

The Earth As My First Teacher

As a child growing up in Fresno, California, I often sought refuge in the back yard under an apricot tree. When the house of my adoptive parents was scary and threatening, I would stand near the pomegranate tree and travel into its blossoms. Hours were spent lying upon the grass seeing creatures and worlds in the clouds as they stretched across the blue. It all seemed to say, "Choose life; not despair."

Look around and we see the earth gives everything needed to live. Yet the water that keeps us alive can also destroy us, the air we need to breathe can whip up into a life-threatening storm, the fire that warms us can burn us to death.

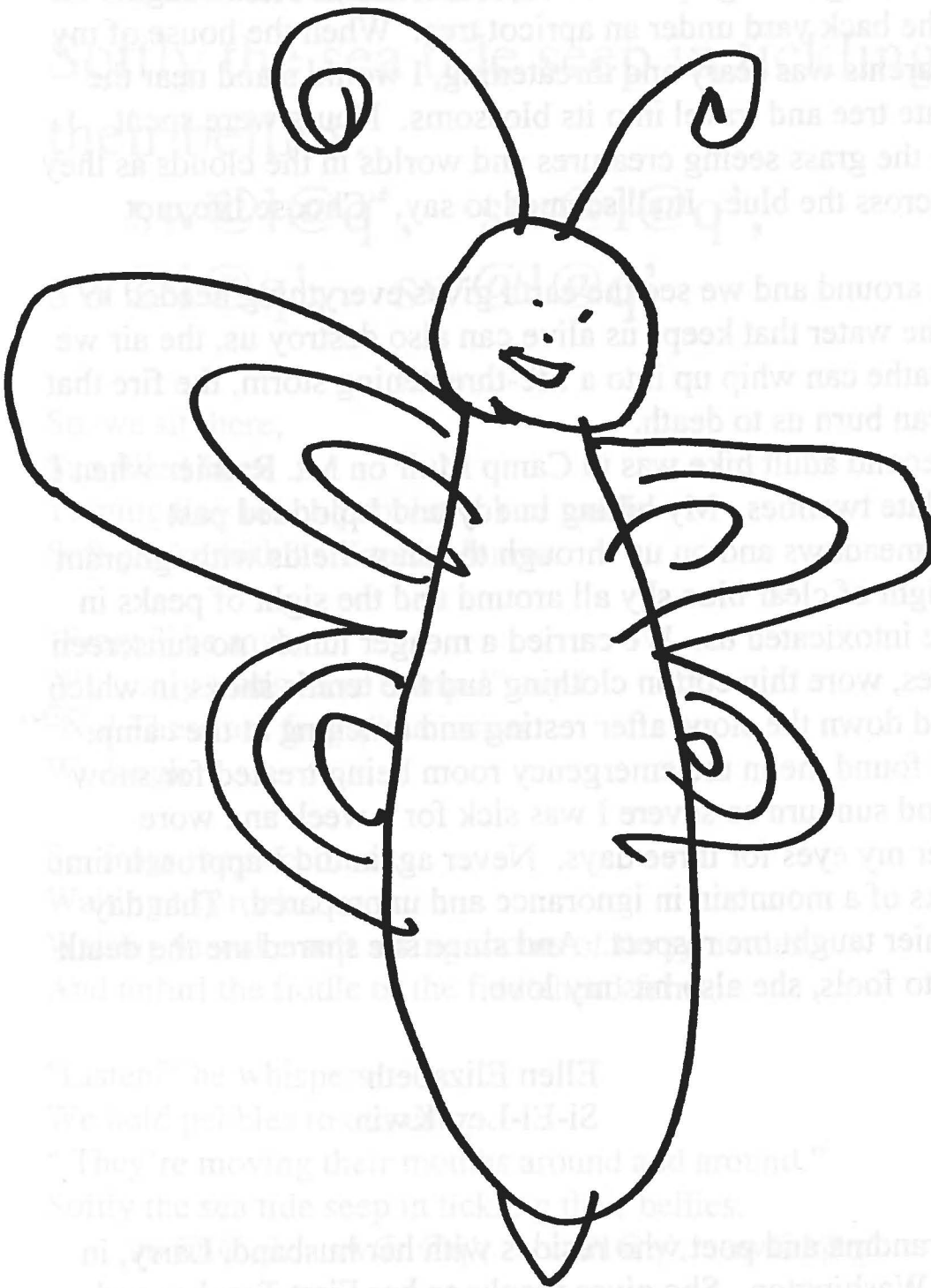
My second adult hike was to Camp Muir on Mt. Rainier when I was in my late twenties. My hiking buddy and I plodded past wildflower meadows and on up through the snowfields with ignorant feet. The light of clear blue sky all around and the sight of peaks in the distance intoxicated us. We carried a meager lunch, no sunscreen or sunglasses, wore thin cotton clothing and the tennis shoes in which we glaciated down the slope after resting and lunching at the camp.

Night found me in the emergency room being treated for snow blindness and sunburn so severe I was sick for a week and wore patches over my eyes for three days. Never again did I approach time on the flanks of a mountain in ignorance and unprepared. That day on Mt. Rainier taught me respect. And since she spared me the death that comes to fools, she also has my love.

Ellen Elizabeth
Si-El-Ley-Kwin

Ellen is a grandma and poet who resides with her husband, Larry, in Bremerton, Washington. She gives thanks to her First Teacher and all of the others besides—and that means everyone and everything past, present and to come.

Waterle





Seki



SIMON

ACQUITTÉ BY JURY
2020 14th NOVEMBER
DARTFORD CHILD DEATHS INQUIRY

Giving Thanks and Praise to Our Mother Earth

By Jill La Pointe

Mother earth, you were here long before my conception. For centuries you nourished and guided my ancestors, who laid the path for my arrival into this world. It is a path that has been walked on by those before me, who survived many hardships and endured the challenges of life. A path of celebration for the joys each one has known.

During the first nine months of my creation, I thrived in water, sustained by my very own mother. Dependent on her for protection and all that I needed in order to survive. Water is still life sustaining to my body and my soul. I am called to the water when my spirit is thirsty. There at the edge of a river, or by the rhythmic waves of the ocean, my emotions are calmed and my spirit renewed. Each time the rain falls, it cleanses the earth and nourishes the land. Just as each tear that I cry cleanses my thoughts and strengthens my heart.

Each morning I wake knowing the sun has brought forth a new day, a new beginning, and a new adventure in life. As the sun peaks up over the horizon we see a magnificent light to remind us that today is a new and glorious day. Even when I am unable to see the sun, I trust that it is there, bringing warmth and life to

everything on this earth. And as the sun completes her path across the sky and sinks back into the horizon, we see a beautiful display of color and I am reminded to be thankful for another day in this life.

I look out my window and see the trees blowing in the wind and am reminded of the air which also gives life. During these times when the wind is blowing I think about how precious the air is. And the trees who are also nourished by the sun and the rain, who give us the air that we can breath. All living things are a part of this miracle we know as life. Everything is interconnected. I watch as a single brilliant red leaf floats wisp fully to the ground where it dances round and round with other leaves. I remember that it is okay sometimes to be playful.

As a child I spent many hours happily playing outside with my brother, my cousin or my friends. These were carefree times making pies out of mud and decorating them with leaves and berries. Or building tree houses and forts, or playing hide and seek in and around the trees and shrubs. Sometimes we would lie in the soft green grass staring up at the sky finding animal shapes in the clouds.

As a young woman I have spent many years struggling to find my way. At times I am reminded of my grandmother's advice to go outdoors and be with nature. To listen to all the sounds, take in all of the sights and smells. I hear the birds singing and chattering and know that each one of us has been given our own song to sing as we will. I walk barefoot through the soft green grass and I become grounded. I sink my hands into the sand or the soil and I become keenly aware of my connection to all living things. My spirit is rejuvenated.

Each night the sky darkens and fills with the twinkling light of stars. Stars that let me know we are not all alone in this universe. The moon rises casting her dreamy light over the earth, glistening on the water and snow. The moon is a powerful force waxing and waning as she cycles through the days, the weeks and the months. I see the image of a person in the moon, seated with his head bowed as though in prayer or quiet solitude. And I am aware of a divine presence watches over us. Guiding me and helping me along this journey through life. My heart is filled with serenity.

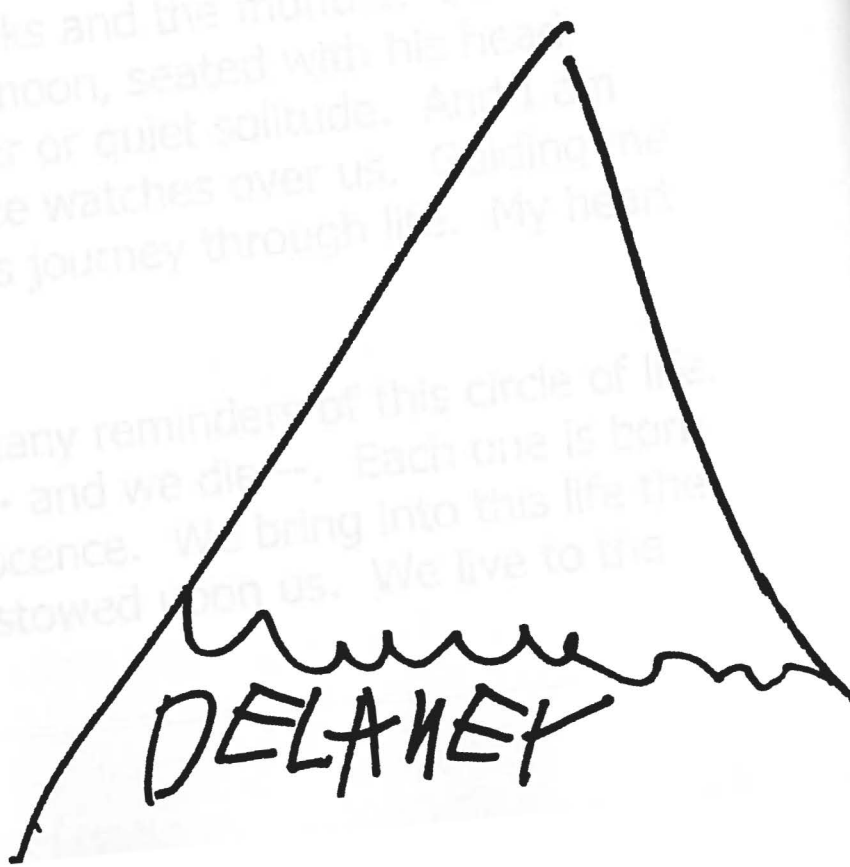
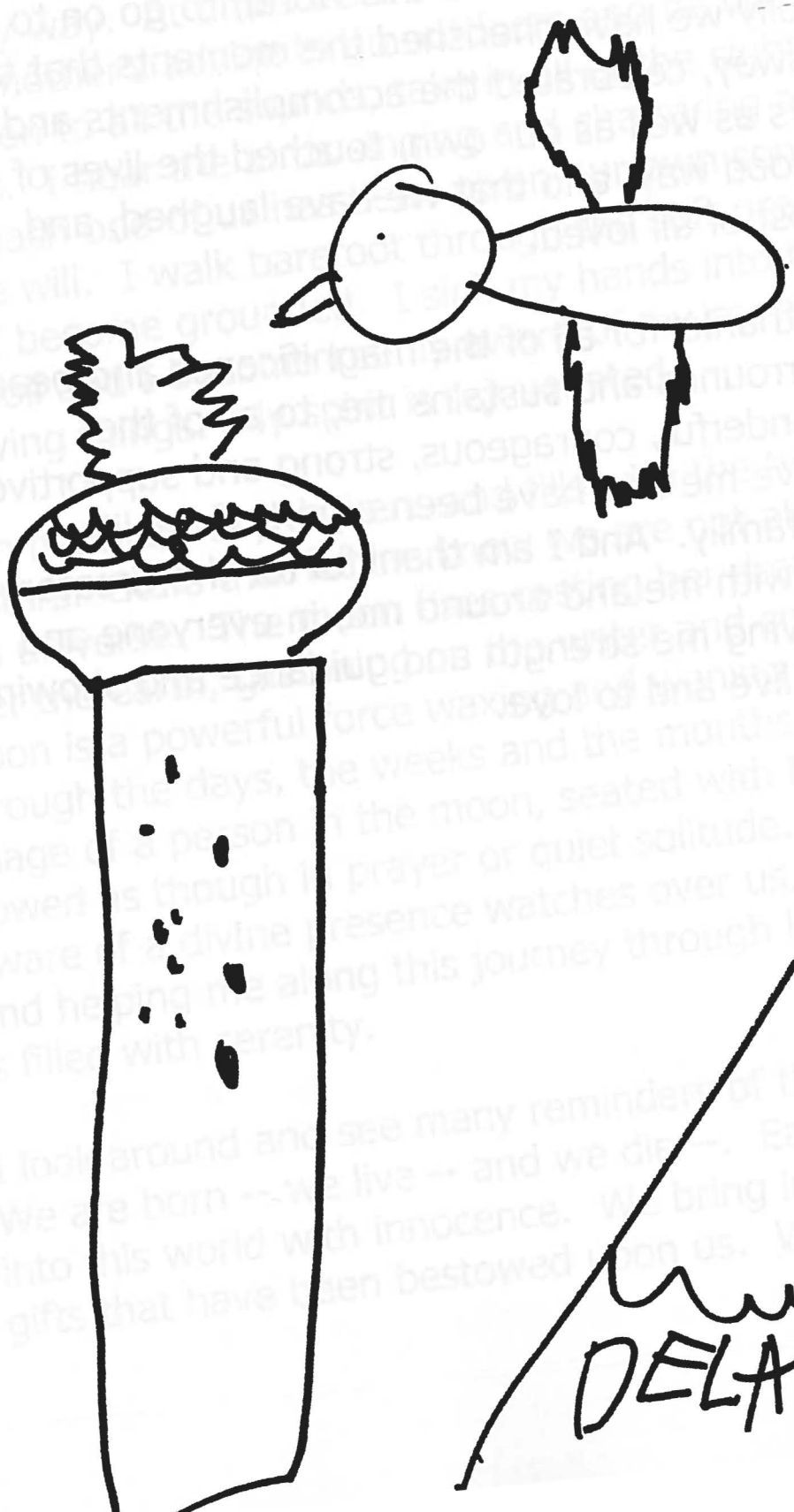
I look around and see many reminders of this circle of life. We are born -- we live -- and we die --. Each one is born into this world with innocence. We bring into this life the gifts that have been bestowed upon us. We live to the

best of our ability with the gifts we have been given and accepted. And when we leave this world, to go on to the next, hopefully we have cherished the moments that take our breath away, celebrated the accomplishments and joys of others as well as our own, touched the lives of others in a good way, and that we have laughed, and cried and most of all loved.

Today I give thanks for all of the magnificence and beauty of life that surrounds and sustains me; to all of the incredible, wonderful, courageous, strong and supportive people who love me and have been a part of my life, especially my family. And I am thankful for the Creator who is always with me and around me, in everyone and every thing, giving me strength and guidance and showing me the way to live and to love.

TTT

TTT



DELANEY

Nick





From E. M. A. N. P. U. T. S.

THE EARTH IS OUR FIRST TEACHER

We, who are one of many long-term residents, possess the longest memory of all living creatures, have no right to live as a supreme being with the arrogance that is employing waste and destruction of resources (food, water, air) that all life is dependent on.

Only a little over a year ago, many of us witnessed the results of man's arrogance while standing in the face of Katrina and Rita. This was pure arrogance by those who constructed the roads, buildings and utilities for the region. They are responsible for such tremendous, tragic destruction. Who were the teachers that said this place is safe and strong with no vulnerability to Mother Earth's power? Such foolish thinking!

This never required above-average intelligence - to stand before what once was a natural wildlife area (marshes, swamps, bayous) to think that man could tell the storms and the strength of the ocean that he is in control and will reside wherever the hell he wants to!

Our earth gives us endless examples of how to live with the ongoing challenges of its power. I have recently observed among the Quileute People, the way they live with one of the blessings that Mother Earth provides. It is easy to see that the Quileute People learned from their own ancestors the right way to live with the bounty that the earth provides, rather than interrupting it.

So beautifully located is the Oceanside Resort at La Push. It sits, elevated, yet, close to the ocean. Many tourists love to come and spend time there. One of the favorite pastimes is to build large beach fires. By summer's end, nearly all of the driftwood has been consumed by them. Yet, the endless cycle continues with the storms of winter providing the natural re-stocking of driftwood for the upcoming tourist season. Never a single chainsaw need run to provide for the beach fires.

Recognizing and respecting Mother Earth as, not only the superior teacher, but, also the ultimate provider is a constant reminder to guard oneself against arrogance.

The constant presentation of titles, dictating superior importance to one another, bolstering egos, making the constant statement "I know so much!", one should remember the hurricanes, the earthquakes, the twisters, the blizzards and the droughts. Who are

Bruce Miller often told me, while having a heart-to-heart exchange, "The plants, the trees, and all of their relatives in the world of the flora, have, perhaps, the greatest teachings. They have no words. They merely teach by example. The tree that dares to grow too close to the river's edge certainly has a fate that guarantees its arrival at the summer beach fires hosted by the Quileute People."

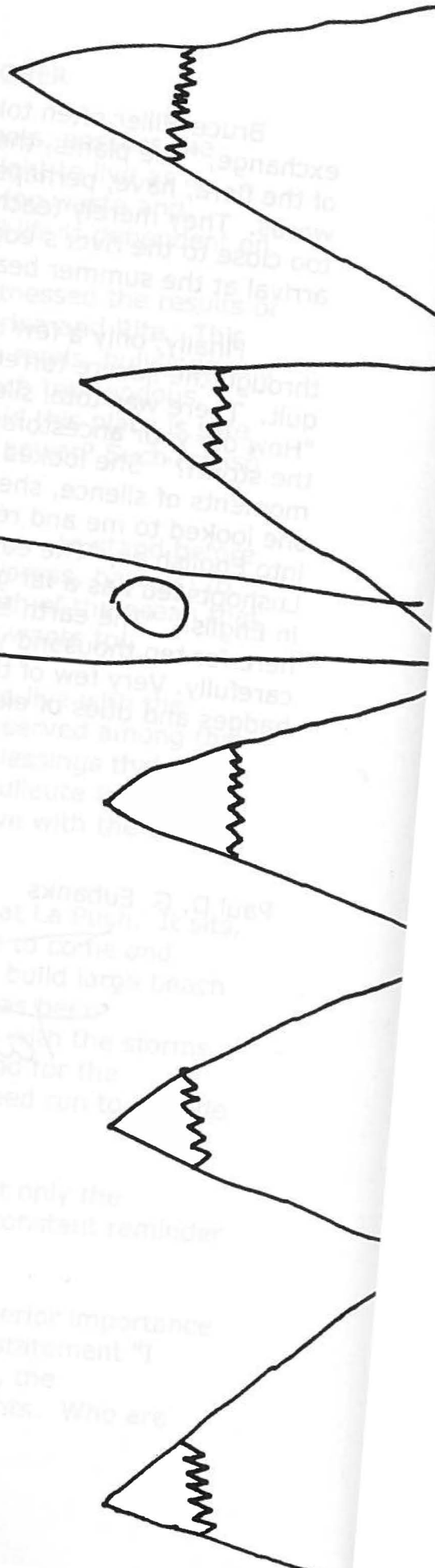
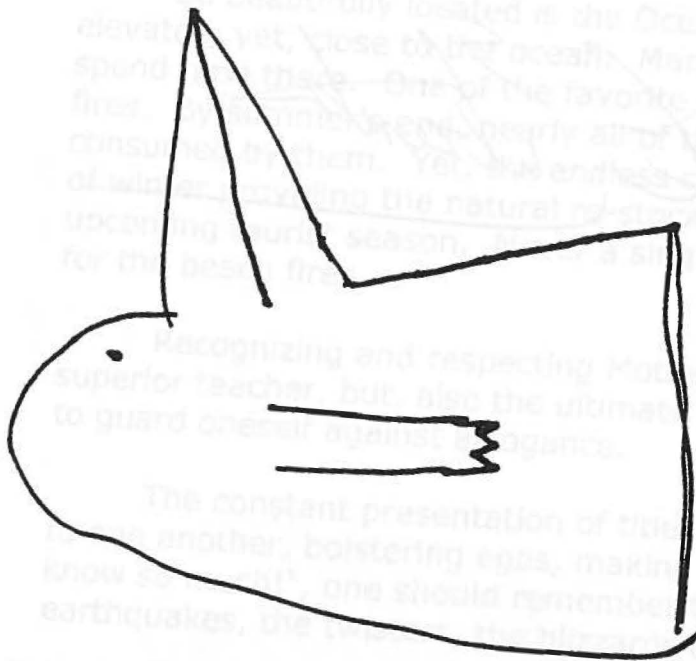
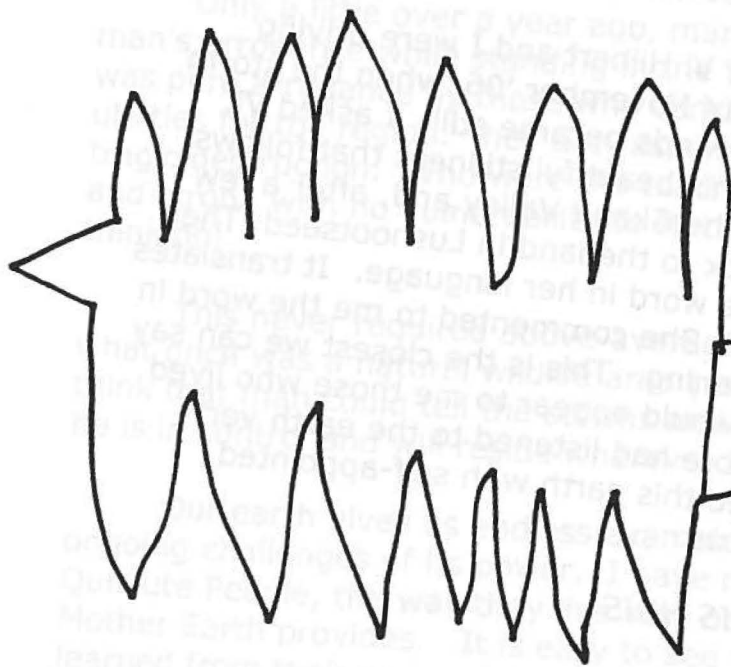
Finally, only a few nights ago, Vi Hilbert and I were driving through the severe torrential rains of November '06, when the storm quit. There was total silence. The winds became still. I asked Vi, "How did your ancestors describe this beautiful stillness that follows the storm?" She looked out upon the Skagit Valley and, after a few moments of silence, she spoke back to the land in Lushootseed. Then she looked to me and repeated the word in her language. It translates into English as, "The earth is still." She commented to me the word in Lushootseed has a far greater meaning. This is the closest we can say in English, "The earth is still." It would appear to me those who lived here for ten thousand years or more had listened to the earth very carefully. Very few of them walked this earth with self-appointed badges and titles of elevated status.

DIS HOIS

THAT IS ALL

Paul D. G. Eubanks

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul D. G. Eubanks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.



potholes

THESE LEVELS OF THE 2300 LEVELS
TO THE NORTH OF THE
STREET ARE STREETS



The Earth is Our First Teacher

As a young girl, I lived with my grandparents in the country. Without radio or television, nor even playmates, I joyfully began perfecting my culinary skills in the art of mud pie building. Singing and creating the most magnificent pies, cakes, and other confectionary delights, there was an endless array of twigs, flowers, and river rocks for me to choose for decorations. My lifelong passion for cooking began six decades ago and I still delight in experimenting, creating treasures, nurturing my family and friends with all of the wonderful things that Mother Earth has provided. It has become clear that I have always been a Child of the Earth.

The seasons change and the earth is magically transformed, reminding the human beings that time is moving onward. Our beloved little frogs sing softly announcing the arrival of Spring when all of the earth bursts forth with new life.. With every season, we are given Mother Earth's gentle and compassionate messages that all of life changes. Life will not become stagnant, dull, or predictable. Providing nourishment for all of her creatures, Mother Earth asks little in return. As humans, we learn to nurture, to be compassionate, and rejoice in all the splendors of life, for the earth has been our most treasured role model, teaching each of us how to live in this world.

Our ancestor quietly say thank you for honoring and taking care of her, remembering all of the gifts given to us by Mother Earth. And so it is finished. May we always walk in this beauty.

by Lois Schluter

THE EARTH IS OUR FIRST TEACHER
BORN IN HER WARM SEA SMELL,
TO REMEMBER WHERE WE CAME FROM
FROM BEFORE BIRTH TO HERE
IN EVERY BREATH OF OCEAN AIR.

THE EARTH IS OUR FIRST TEACHER
HER BLOOD RED IN OUR VEINS,
GIVING US STRENGTH TO WALK A LOVING PATH,
GROUNDING US.
WE STAMP OUR FEET
CALLING HER UP TO HOLD US IN HER ARMS

THE EARTH IS OUR FIRST TEACHER
ALL CONNECTED, ALL BROTHERS, ALL SISTERS
ROCK, TREE, TWO AND FOUR LEGGED ONES
AIR AND WATER ONES
INSECT, DUST MOTE, MOUNTAIN:
INTERCONNECTED, DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER

THE EARTH IS OUR FIRST TEACHER
CRUEL, HARSH, BEAUTIFUL, HEALING
FLOOD, ERUPTION, FIRE, DROUGHT
SPRING BUD, NEW BORN, HARVEST TABLE, LOVE.
ALL GIFTS

THE EARTH IS OUR LAST TEACHER
ALL LIVE ALL DIE, NO THING HELD.
NO EGO, NO SELF.
ACCEPTANCE, GRATITUDE, HUMILITY, LOVE.
OUR GIFTS TO ALL WE LEAVE

THE EARTH IS OUR LAST TEACHER
OUR TIME ON HER COMPLETE
WE GO TO HER AS WE ARRIVED
NAKED FLESH AND BONE

SPIRIT RISES
THE GREAT MYSTERY
NEVERENDING

Carole Rubin
Whis.Stem.Mah.Lia
OCTOBER 25, 2006

Carole Rubin lives in Garden Bay, on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, with her husband, Bill Astrope. She is a writer, gardener, mother, and grandmother. She has been a member of the Red Cedar Circle for fifteen years, and is grateful to our beloved Auntie Vi Hilbert, and all the elders who held this medicine, and encouraged our brother, Johnny Moses, to share the teachings with us.

E Hytch Ka Siem Mulstimoulth

May we always walk in this beauty.

Carole Rubin

My family, my grandparents especially, taught me how to listen to and love the earth. They told me stories that made me realize that the animals, the trees, the rocks and everything had life and spirit, and that we were all one and the same. So when I played in the woods and on the beach I never felt alone because I had many relatives to play with.

Even when we went to the glaciers to make oolichan grease, we played freely by the river and in the mountains and never worried that we would be bothered by the grizzly bears or wolves. They truly felt like our relatives, and you know that to my memory not one person has ever been bothered by our animal relatives.

My stepfather was a fisherman and I learned many things from the crew who were from the different villages of our nation. They taught me to read the earth I lived in. They taught me that the earth is always speaking to us and every living thing has its own language to communicate with us. The clouds, the ocean, the birds, the whales and even the stones were there to teach us and, yes, love us.

I discovered this love when I was a child playing in the fields near my home. One time when I was really sad I sat on this big rock and cried and cried. But soon I felt this feeling of love rise up through me; I felt it was the rock comforting me and soon I was very happy. So every time I felt bad I would go to that rock, and I always left it feeling happy. I felt

like this rock was my mother who protected and loved me.

My granny Kwalkyes (really, she was my mom's great aunt) also taught us through storytelling that animals were our teachers. One of our favourite characters was Little Mitsa who was the Son of the Sun. (Little Mitsa is the child's name for Son of the Sun, which is Tlisalagilakw.) In animal form he was a mink, and quite a trickster! Through these stories I also learned that there isn't much difference between the dream world, this world, the past, the present, or the future. That meant that we could travel freely in the spirit world, dream world, supernatural world in any time.

So, when I think of the earth as my teacher I realize how deep and rich my life is because of these precious gifts from the earth!

Wolthasugwila (Gerry Ambers)

Gerry Ambers is from the Kwakwakawakw at the north end of Vancouver Island. She grew up in the Namgis village of Alert Bay. Her mother is from the Mamalalikala and the Danakwdakw and her father is from the Namgis and the Kwagulth. She comes from the House of the Sun on her father's side of the family and the House of the Eagle on her mother's side of the family. Her name is Wolthasugwila – the name belonged to her paternal grandmother. She lives in Victoria, B.C., Canada.

The Sunshine Coast [British Columbia] community was receiving Johnny Moses for the first time at Copper's Green, probably around 1989. I was there with my husband and my four children. The chairs were set out for a healing ceremony. After some anxieties and hesitations, I sat on the chair, closed my eyes and waited. People were singing; I could feel hands working on me and then I was gone! At some point I heard a voice singing a song, a different one than the people were singing. It was a beautiful song. Then I recognized my voice. I WAS THE ONE SINGING THE SONG and I was lying on the floor. So I listened to my voice and the words were: "Mother Earth, Mother Earth, take me in your arms. Mother Earth, Mother Earth, take me in your arms. I am your daughter. Take me in your arms. I am your daughter. Take me in your arms." I enjoyed lying on the ground, listening to that song, feeling the joy of the healing, hearing the other songs as well, the people crying, screaming, singing. When I opened my eyes, my whole family was staring at me with round eyes. I got up, went to stand beside them. One of my kids asked me shyly if I was all right. I smiled, feeling a peace and joy I never have felt before.

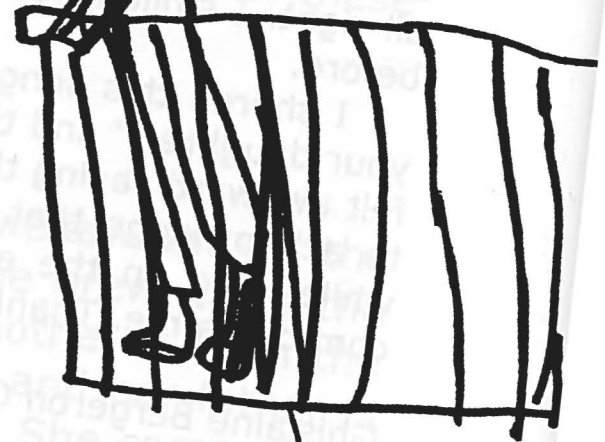
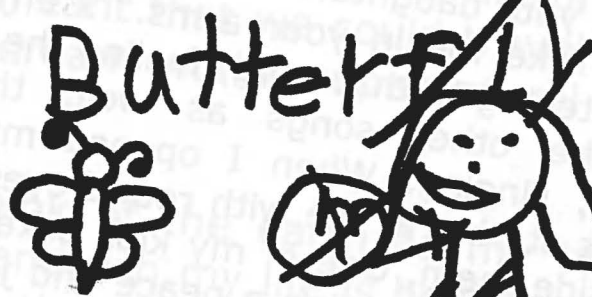
I shared this song in my home circle. Men sang, "I am your daughter," and then told me that at the beginning they felt awkward saying that but after few rounds, they felt good to acknowledge that part of themselves. Singing that song while lying on the earth, sun or rain, has always brought comfort to me. Thanks for asking me to share.

Ghislaine Bergeron Geneau/ When ne to lia

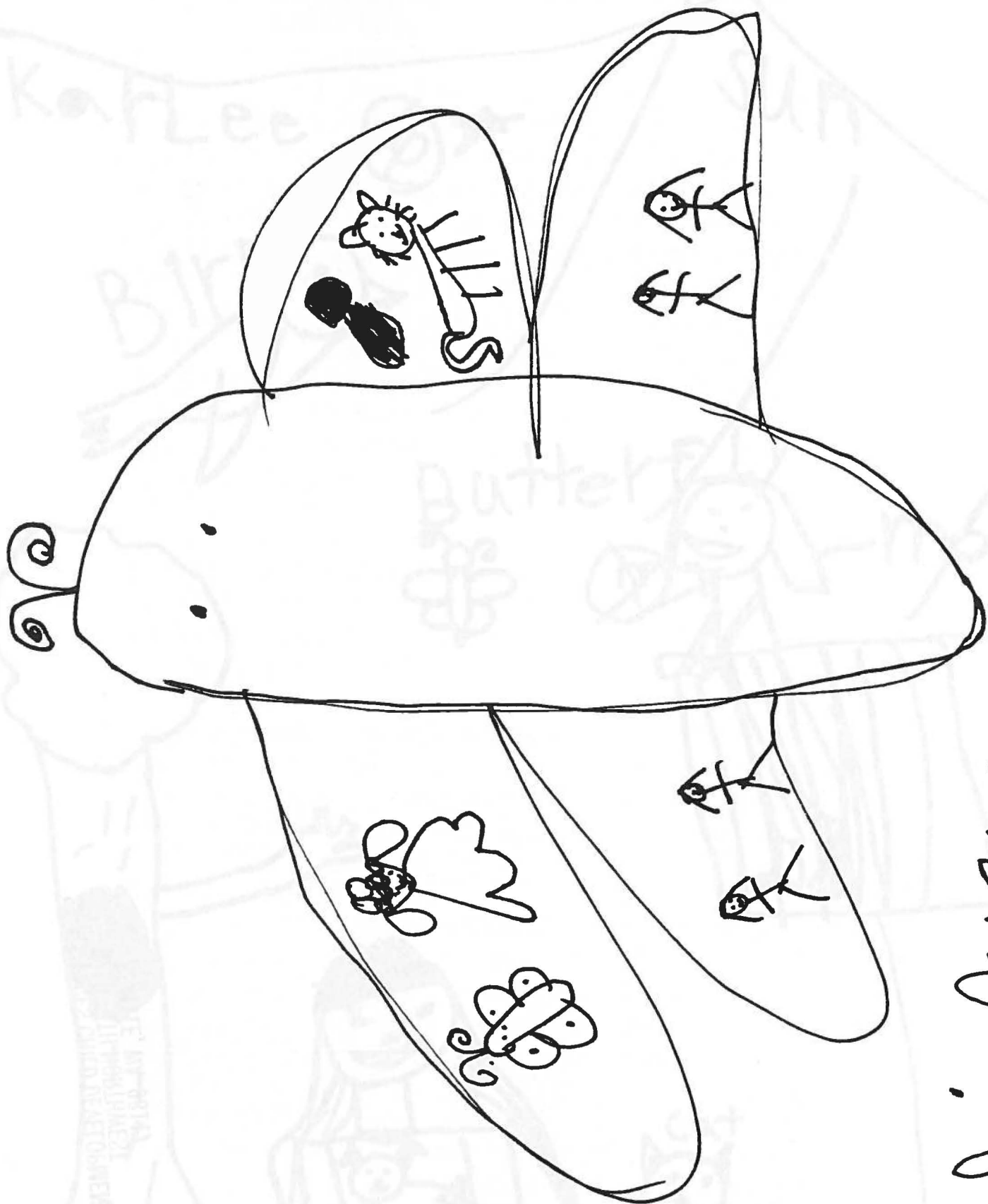
Ghislaine Geneau, born and raised in France, moved to Canada with husband Dominique in 1976. Lived in Sechelt, B.C. for 28 years where they raised 4 children. Have been traveling on a sailboat since October 2005 and are actually in Costa Rica, anchored in a little bay close to three of their childrens' residence. Enjoying life and learning from grandmother ocean, a tough teacher!

KatLee @★

SUN



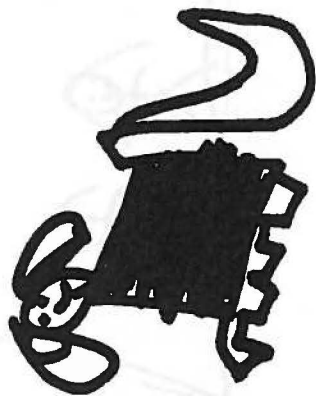
h



Sobin Buta



Kayla



Spirit Song
Shelley Lafayette

I

Almost all my life I've searched
For the answer--and the key--
That would unlock the door
To this person that is me.

What is the purpose of my life?
There's a question for us all!
I did my share of pondering
While trapped behind my wall.

I've always known there was a path--
A road for me to travel--
A path of Spirit, and the Soul--
A puzzle to unravel.

I've always tried to think it out
And read books by the score.
Thoughts, and more thoughts did I find
But not one unlocked the door!

Harder and harder did I try,
With anger for myself;
Thoughts of hate and rage for me
That finally took my health!

At last I had to face the fact
That my fighting was in vain!
There was no way to win this war
And stay alive and sane!

II

Then suddenly a change occurred--
My heart became a flying bird!
I'm not quite sure WHAT'S happened here!
I've found the world I dreamed was there
A world of Raven, Wolf and Bear,

With cedar trees and drums and song;
Another world, a place SO strong
That SEEMS just like "remembering!"

My mind does not control this space;
It's an intruder in this place!
My heart, with pure and shining light
Reflects Creator in its sight-
And drives away that awful night.
It sends its love to Mother Earth,
Then gets it back with joy and mirth
That FEELS just like "remembering"!

The circle from my light has grown
And joins with others all around-
Together we add to the sum.
"Brothers and Sisters of the Drum-
Call the Ancient Ones to come,
And ask their blessings for this land-
On mountain, lake and cedar stand!"
That SOUNDS just like "remembering"!

"Brothers and Sisters of the Drum-
see everything as part of One-
Rock People, People of the Trees,
Four-leggeds, those who swim the seas,
All live-and are a part of me,
Drawing life from one Great Mother-
None of us is ever "Other"!
That IS just like "remembering"!

"Grandmothers and Grandfathers, too,
Please come and help us learn anew."
Oh, teach us of the Sacred Ways,
Reminders of the Ancient Days
When man and animal did play
A part in the Creation Time,
And all lived in Creator's Mind
And all WAS just "remembering"!

Shelley Lafayette—Vancouver, Washington

This is a poem that I wrote in 1988 about my experiences in finding the Red Cedar Circle and the Sacred songs and teachings - it's a "thank you" for all these blessings! I gave this poem to the Circle several years later. I miss the Circle, as I am unable to travel these distances anymore. However I am finding that the Medicine grows stronger for me now, instead of leaving it behind!

And all WAS just "remembering" I lived in Creator's Mind
A part in the Creation Time,
When man and animal did play
Reminders of the Ancient Days
Oh, teach us of the Sacred Ways,
Please come and help us learn anew.
Grandmothers and Grandfathers, too, sit at your new earth
I may in saw sunlight you said
That is just like "remembering" I feel to
Plans of us is ever "Other!"
Growing life from one Great Mother—
All live—and are a part of me,
Four-legged, those who swim the seas,
Rock people, People of the Trees,
see everything as part of One—
"Brothers and Sisters of the Drum—
On mountain, lake and cedar stand," too a kind of heart system and I
And ask their blessings for this land—
Call the Ancient Ones to come,
"Brothers and Sisters of the Drum—
The circle from my light has grown
That FEELS just like "remembering" then goes it back with joy and mirth
It sends its love to Mother Earth,
And drives away that awful night
Reflects Creator in its light—
I miss the Circle, as I am unable to travel these distances anymore.
However I am finding that the Medicine grows stronger for me now, instead
of leaving it behind!

My Life of Learning from Mother Earth

A: learning that death is part of life

I was nearly five years old when I lay on my belly
at the edge of mown lawn
to stare into the tangle of wild grasses.
This was the Bugs' World.
Suddenly,
a bitty shrew rushed in and grabbed a black beetle
as large as itself and crunched down fiercely!

B: All One: separate beings

I love to listen to all waters,
especially ocean. Looking too,
at the migrating grey whales
swimming southward, softly sighing.
I breathe in their mammal exhalation
and turn to my beloved,
longing for touch.

C: gratefully, mountain and sun inside

Wy'east Mountain is on the dawn side
of my home garden
over the chards, kales, kohlrabi, lettuces and arugula.
Golden pink transparent colors of rock, snow, cloud, air
when the sun comes up behind the mountain.
Mid-summer SUN balances for an instant on the very top.
For sixty-eight years I have absorbed this and

Shelley Lafayette—Vancouver, Washington

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Mid-summer SUN balances for an instant on the very top.
For sixty-eight years I have absorbed this and

carry the dissolved rock in my bones,
snow, air and color in my hearts' blood,
mountain and dawn in my thoughts.
I was born in this place, I stayed here all my life.
This landscape is my outermost skin.

D: Creator's dance of coming and going

We are clothed by earth and see with earth eyes.
We are of terrestrial origin and there is nothing
that is not divine.

Earth, air, fire and water melded with
soul spirit. Conjoined visible and invisible
realities of dense energy
spiral in toward utterly nothing at all and
fractal out beyond infinity.

Thank you, Creator!
Thank you, Mother Earth for giving us life now!

Suzan Mayer,
Portland, Oregon

Suzan Mayer was born a Leo in 1938 in Portland, Oregon. She is a mother and grandmother (they are too far away) Educated at Reed College, Portland Art Museum School and Portland State University with a BA in 1962, an MSW in 1972; presently working as an LCSW counselor and mental health examiner. She draws, canoes, swims, gardens lightly, feeds friends and makes the house welcoming and comfortable, with George's partnership. They have been married thirteen years.

The Earth, Our First Teacher and Our Last

As a child living at the edge of town, my toys were flowers, leaves, and snow. I always played outdoors, climbed trees to the topmost branches, built houses in fall leaf piles, dug tunnels and caves in deep snowdrifts, made igloos out of packed snow. Made mud into pies, horse chestnuts into necklaces, burdocks into baskets, hollyhocks into dolls, its seeds into buttons, daisies into wreaths for my hair. Mother Earth's bounty was there for me.

But I never really felt part of the breathing land until I moved to South Dakota, to 800 acres at Pass Creek where the pines dropped off into Redstone Basin in the Badlands. Out there, surrounded by silence, I could see the sun set for 360 degrees around, look out for thirty miles, across that great expanse to the winking lights of the nearest town.

Out of that silence I learned to hear the meadowlark, the red-winged blackbird, prairie chickens, crows, the piercing cry of the nighthawk. Hear the hoofbeats of horses on the hill, the old-man's-cough of coyote in the den in the arroyo, the soft burbling of Old Lady Coldwater's spring in the creek below.

Walking the breathing land, *Maka Ina*, the Earth our Mother, I learned to breathe with her as I fixed fence, chased loose buffalo, picked wild turnips, plums and chokecherries. The Badlands were good

lands for finding sacred paint and round sweat lodge rocks amid hidden pockets of horsemint, chamomile, snakeroot, sweetgrass, sage. From Nancy Flying Cloud, the root woman, I learned to leave an offering, and never to take all, only what was needed. Never dig up her plants to put next to the log cabin, where they would die, but visit them where they grew.

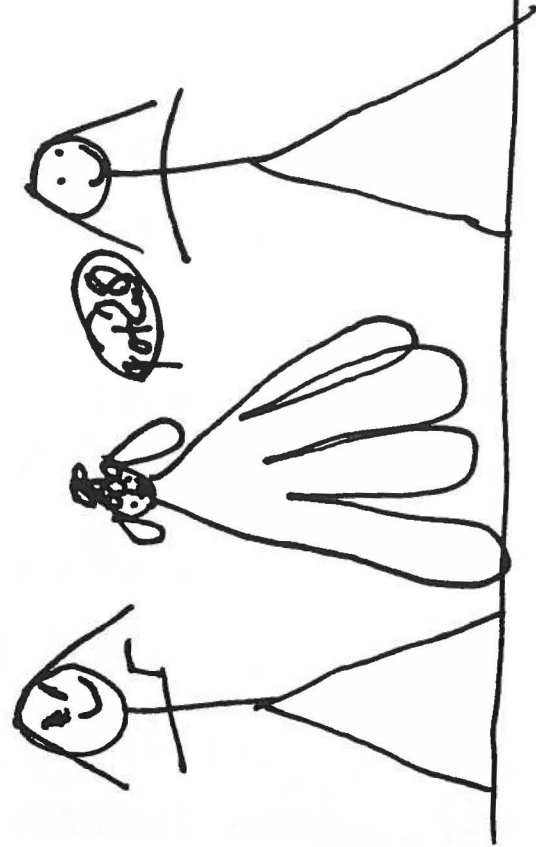
Walking on the breathing land, my feet found her paths even in the dark of night. Since then I have never felt lost, only found. I walk the land where I live now, where Earth meets Ocean -- lava rocks by the sea, shore pine and salal, sea palm and curlygrass, salmonberry and mussels. I care for them and they care for me. We do not own the land, the sea or the air, they own us.

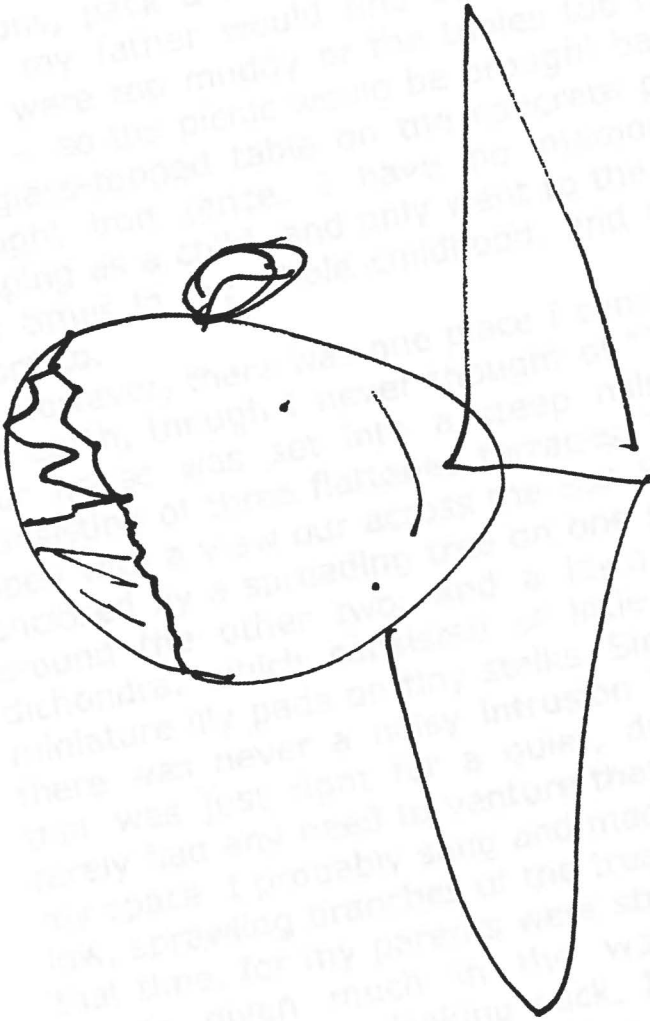
Maka shina – the Earth, our blanket – our first teacher, and our last.

for Vi Hilbert, Taq she blu
2006

Dorothy Blackcrow Mack
Depoe Bay, OR 97341

serin boy





The Earth is My First Teacher

I grew up in the Los Angeles area, surrounded by houses and streets, and parented by people whose love of Nature was, let's say, not very developed. When my mother would, on rare occasions, pack a picnic, we'd drive around to one or two city parks, my father would find something wrong with them--the paths were too muddy or the tables too dirty or the people too noisy -- so the picnic would be brought back home and eaten on our glass-topped table on the concrete patio, surrounded by a wrought iron fence. I have no memory of ever going tent camping as a child, and only went to the ocean perhaps three or four times in my whole childhood, and not because we couldn't afford to.

However, there was one place I considered my own, my bit of the earth, though I never thought of "The Earth" in those days. Our house was set into a steep hillside, with the back yard consisting of three flattened terraces. The top terrace was partly open with a view out across the San Fernando Valley, and partly enclosed by a spreading tree on one side and overgrown hedges around the other two, and a lawn of a ground cover called dichondra, which consisted of little palette-shaped leaves like miniature lily pads on tiny stalks. Since it never needed mowing, there was never a noisy intrusion in this private, shady space that was just right for a quiet, dreamy little girl. My parents rarely had any need to venture that far from the house, so I had my space. I probably sang and made up stories, climbing into the low, sprawling branches of the tree. I had no concept of fairies at that time, for my parents were strict Christians and I don't think I was given much in the way of encouragement for my imagination. But, looking back, I know I sensed something like the spirits of nature in this place.

I know there was a sense of sacredness in my life, for once, while spending time on "the top terrace" I drew a picture I called "the holy city." There were buildings, not trees, yet I connect it strongly with how this place lent itself to a sense of something truly sacred. So powerfully did I feel this, that, when I learned my mother had shown the drawing to a friend or neighbor, I felt completely betrayed. As if I had entrusted her with a depiction of something numinous, something that revealed my fragile intuition of something deeply, wordlessly spiritual, and she had

mistaken it for something merely cute, something she could casually display to an acquaintance. I stopped trusting my mother then, and never again drew anything of the kind. It was many, many years before I became the woman who would spread a tent beside a rushing river, or venture out onto ocean cliffs in a misty dawn, or camp by herself in the beauty of the desert.

For some reason, when the topic of *The Earth as our First Teacher* was assigned, the little incident that waved insistently and kept saying "write about me!" is this: I was once in a part of Arizona where there were these cacti shaped like elongated basketballs, covered with sturdy spines about an inch long with a curved tip like a fishhook. Unlike some cactus plants with fuzzy prickles, these are quite safe to touch as long as one is mindful and watches out for the pointy end of the barbs. So I was examining one closely, and noticed that when I flicked one of these spines, it made a sort of musical, ringing sound. I tried another, and got a slightly different tone. I tried out different spines then, flicking them and noting which ones made which notes. Eventually I found myself playing a simple melody on the cactus. I was so elated. Not just that I had found a unique instrument, an unusual means of self-expression. I truly felt as if I were in tune with the consciousness of the plant, and was helping it to experience itself in a way that had never before been possible for it, and was unlikely to be repeated. (I did play one or two other cacti at the time, but I've never had the chance to do it again.) I had a glimpse of how we all have structures in our own make-up that are capable of doing something far different than what we use them for; for instance, making music rather than self-protection. But until we're touched by something outside ourselves, we never know what we may be capable of.

Anita Leigh Holladay

Anita has been blessed with teachers and teachings from the Red Cedar since the mid '80s. She is a massage therapist, poet and photographer living with her teenage daughter on Orcas Island.

The Earth is My First Teacher

How sweet were the tiny blackberries that ran near the fresh water stream that I would drink from when I was thirsty from play. The wild nuggets were my lunch. My mom would ask me if I wanted to take a lunch with me when I went out in the back woods to play. "No", I'd say, "There already is lunch there, the berries!" Mother fed me. My Mothers were my first teachers.

Today I'm weaving a cedar bark canoe hat in remembrance of the wild blackberry and our ancestors, the first people. I'm adding a little bit of dyed red thinly cut strands of cedar and a whole lot of dyed black thinly cut strands of cedar so that this combination reminds me of the smell of wild blackberries. The fresh water I'm dipping my hands into to make my materials supple remind me of the stream I'd run along and drink from as a little girl. Thank you, sacred water. Mother continues to teach me, then and now.

There are a lot of people named Mary, it's a common name. My nickname in Indian country is Mary-bo-berry! That's how I know someone's calling me when I'm in a field of friends who carry the name Mary, and once again, I'm reminded of my first teacher.

Mary Snowden

I'm Mary Snowden and I have lived in the Puget Sound Coast Salish area my entire life. I am a traditional weaver. My mate Robert and I and my nieces and nephews all work together. My teachers include master weaver "Gram' Lillian Pullen, Quileute, and mother-in-law, Rose Lawrence, from Lummi. Thank you, Taqseblu!

I received this song several years ago while praying for Grandma Lillian Pullen and Seraphina Baptiste Jameson. It is for all the women who have and hold the beauty of the medicine in their hearts to protect it for future generations. When sung, there is a chant that goes with it...not possible to create for the book but great on stage.

(STOMP)

The old woman stands by the river listening to it sing.

She's been here a thousand years or more praying for her vision.

Children are born, children die, nothing stops their crying.

She dreams beauty back for them through war and genocide.

She stands on the altar we call home

Grabs her power from the source.

(CHANT)

The river stops at nothing, it laughs at every stone.

The old woman knows what the future brings. Nature will take its course.

Leaders come, leaders go, extolling God Almighty,
But they're terrified to look too deep into an old woman's eyes.

She stands on the altar we call home.

Grabs her power from the source.



(CHANT)

(Instrumental Break)

The Cedar Tree stands by the river singing to the sky.

A thousand years or more will pass in the blink of any eye

Earth groans beneath her feet as the old woman dances.

We all shake with ecstasy as her vision comes to pass.

(CHANT)

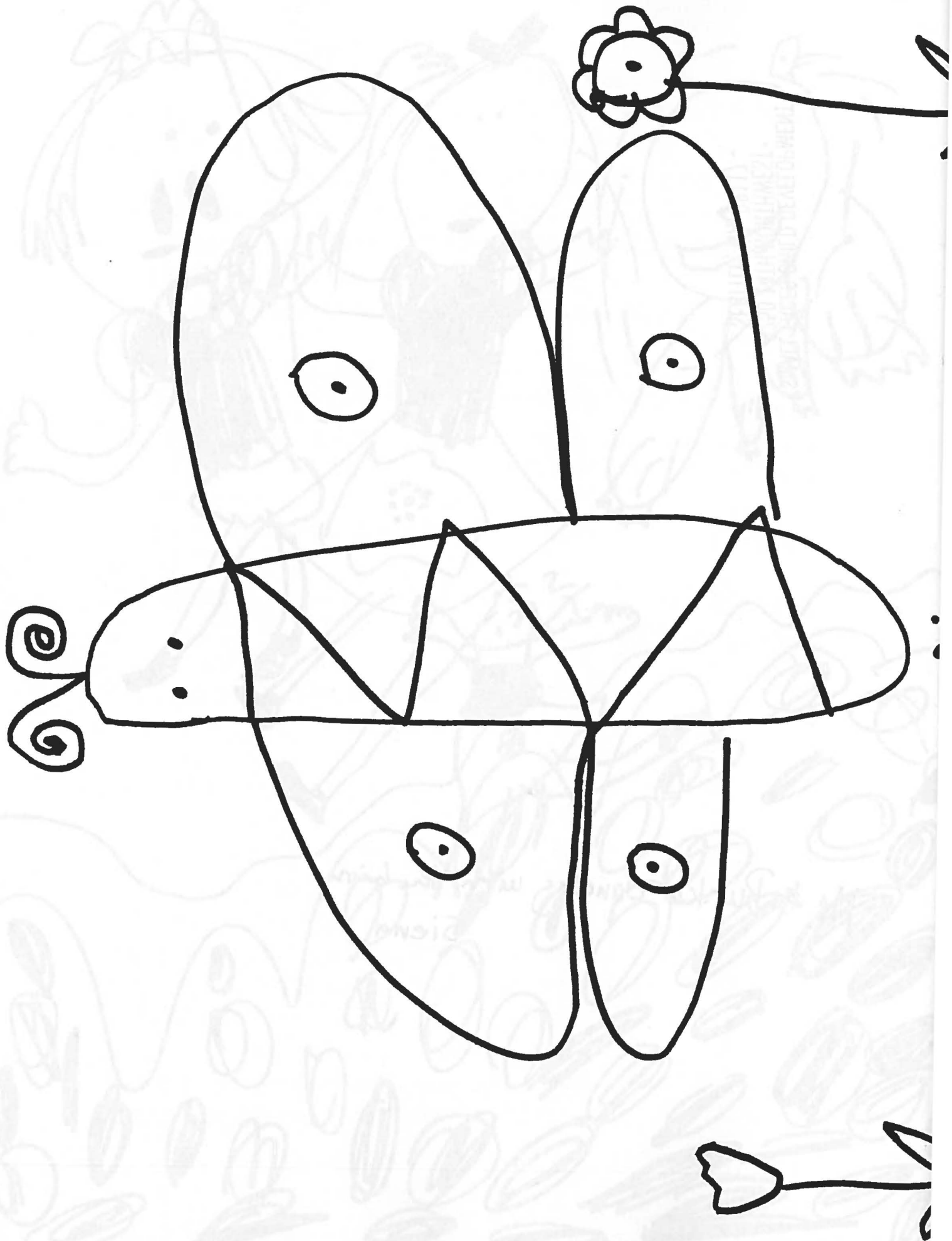
Carol Oliva

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SMALL FACES CHILD DEVELOPMENT
9250 14TH NORTHWEST
SEATTLE, WA 98117

Me & Bunka dancing with the lion.
Siena



With All Honesty

With all honesty, my experiences with "the Earth as our first Teacher" go way back, as far as I can remember. They are a lot of bumps, bruises, scrapes, falls, cuts, bee stings, poison ivy, sunburn, blisters – well, you get the idea. Just remember the saying, "Don't get too close to the fire or you might get burned."

Cheers, Pat Rowan, Port Townsend, Washington

P.S. This is my message for Vi and all the wonderful people I know around the Puget Sound.

Why the Earth is our First Teacher

I was born on Thanksgiving at the end of World War II. My first memory in life was stepping outside my grandmother's home and observing what I remember as every surface covered in fuzzy caterpillars. What a wondrous thing, that left me totally frozen and transfixed. My second memory is the earthquake of 1948, this time running out the same grandmother's door, feeling like the Earth herself had become something like an elevator, at least in my three-year-old mind. Much time was spent on my grandmother's backyard swing, rocking back and forth watching all the pictures the clouds made, much more beautiful and far less scary than the first movie I had ever seen, the "Wizard of Oz."

The Earth was and is my first and, hopefully, will be my final teacher as well, because the Earth, in all of her endless glory, is simply the only thing that seems to be real. I never tire of just sitting and observing all the natural wonders. They not only teach me about the natural world but they teach me about myself. I'm so glad that I somehow escaped the multitudes that seem to feel that the natural world is something to be dominated and used, even if it means using it up. I truly do believe in the *mitakuye oyasin* [the Lakota prayer phrase]; we are all related. Since we are all related then surely, although we live in such a divided, polarized time, we are all equal. If we are equal and related then surely we are all made of the same stuff as all the rest of life (all things made by the creator). This is

my truth. May we be granted the gift of continued life, not only as humans but all life. Especially the (Earth) Mother of us that provides for all of our needs.

Jan Cyr

I met Vi Hilbert for the first time in the early 1980s while working on a film with Phil Lucas. During my twenty-seven years in the film business, I interviewed Vi three times. Since I retired twelve years ago, I have been the guardian of Hummingbird Stands Lodge, a women's talking circle housed in a 24' tipi here on my ranch near Mount Rainier. This service work is the best work of my life, allowing me a way to give back to the people, after all that has been given to me.

Three Teachings

There are three teaching that I remember and have personally felt in my own life's path. I remember the teaching that the songs are a "cry" and that they will reach out to the people and the people will feel the healing power from them no matter where they are. I experienced this myself when I attended the symphony that our beloved Taqseblu inspired. I felt the healing power of the music and the song come over me and all I could do was cry. I had such a overpowering sense of light and love throughout my whole being. I felt as if an angel had touched me. I have many times had family and friends say to me that they could feel the [medicine] songs touching them and healing them even when they were many miles away.

Another teaching that comes to me especially this time of year is a fall teaching, that in the fall we are to look back at our last year, at all the lessons and experiences we have had and what we needed to learn from them, and then to let them go just like a tree lets go of its leaves. That fall is a time to give thanks for all our blessings in our life and to make way for the new ones that will be coming to us. I am always reminded of this when I look at the trees and all their magnificent colors; then the leaves drop to the ground, slowly dry up, and fade back into the earth.

The third teaching that I want to share is one that I have also experienced. It is hard for me to put into words but I will try. It is thought that people will sometimes lose parts of their soul in different places, maybe places where they spent time as a child, or where they felt certain feelings, or maybe something happened to them and they had to leave part of their soul to get healed before they could be whole again. Then one day they might be in the forest or by the water, and they are feeling the loss of a part of themselves. When they are praying, their soul may come back to them after it has done its work and has healed. I think I felt this once.

When I was a child I use to play in a old oak tree at my home. I used to imagine that I was riding on a horse when I sat on the branches and I would travel to all different places in my mind. Then when I was an adult I had a experience where I became very sad one day -- I felt that something very close to me had died. I also had memories of places that I had never been to but I felt like I had been there before. The next day after I had these feelings I found out that the oak tree that I had played in as a child had fallen over and had been chopped up into firewood. So I always wonder if the feelings I had were parts of my soul that had been kept in the tree that were coming back to me.

These are the teachings that come to me right now to share. Many blessings. Kathy Sundown.

My name is Kathy Sundown. I live in Grass Valley, Calif. I have been an RN for 25 years and do homecare nursing. I have two daughters, Chekota (26) and Delilah (21), who I raised basically on my own. I have been involved with the Red Cedar Circle since 1989 and have enjoyed and appreciated all that I have learned and keep learning.

By The Creek

The Pataha Creek winds its way west through the village and farms of my youth. It was my playground, an extension of our expansive back yard and enormous garden, at the edges of the bordering alfalfa fields. I loved to wade in its shallow waters, watch the water skippers flit about and toss rocks in just to watch the resulting ripples. The trees lining the creek bank provided abundant shade and sometimes dropped chunks of bark that I saw as compressed puzzle pieces. I would peel them away layer by layer, finding shapes of animals and hoping to discover they fit together to form a large jigsaw. Though I always winced a little when squishing a live worm on the end of a fishhook, just being at the creek with my line in the water, anticipating pulling out a rainbow trout that would be fried for dinner, filled me with joy.

One day I was fishing beside my brother at our favorite, deepest fishing hole. Three years my senior, Jerry ruled. He had found an old paint bucket that he was using as a stool and seemed to delight in telling me what a comfortable perch it made but he wouldn't allow me a turn at resting my legs. I was filled with envy. Eventually, he got up and I quickly plunked my six year old rump down on the coveted bucket. Being on a slight slope, it wasn't as steady as anticipated and in a flash, I found myself in the water gasping for air. In my terror as

a non-swimmer, I dropped my fishing pole. As I was hollering for help between gulps, my brother saw that my pole was slowly sinking and yelled at me for not holding onto it. I was mortified. He seemed more concerned about a retrievable and replaceable pole than his drowning sister. I was sure I would soon die when I realized my left foot was caught in a tree root that had grown out of the creek bank and twisted its way back in, forming a safety net and keeping me afloat. Jerry finally grabbed my leg and unsympathetically pulled me ashore, still mumbling about the pole. My busy mother offered no solace either, my wet clothes adding to her chores for the day. Perhaps that's when my love affair with trees solidified. Today it's the waters and trees of Puget Sound that offer me comfort and support, day in and day out, no matter what.

Carolyn Michael

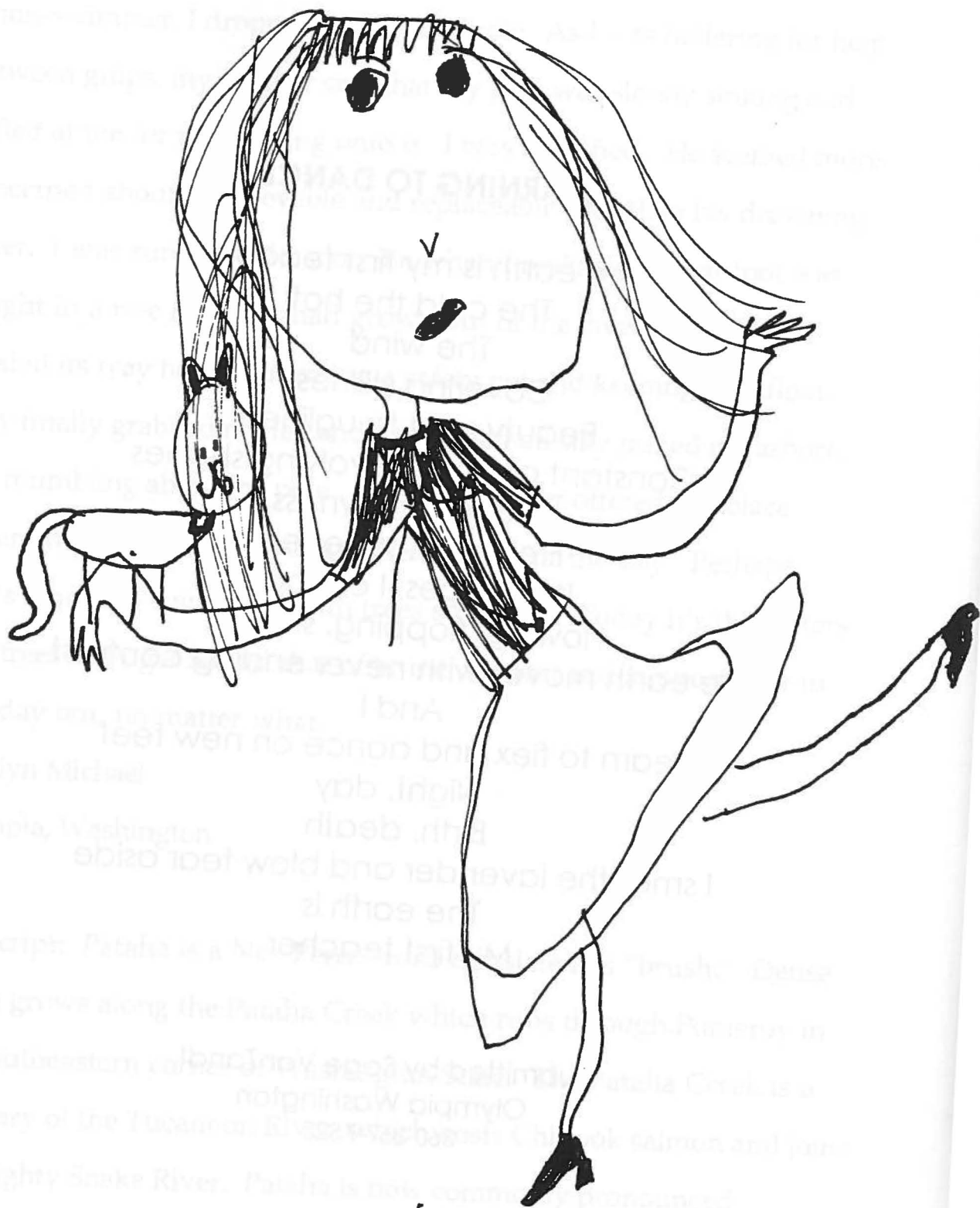
Olympia, Washington

Postscript: Pataha is a Nez Perce word translated as "brush." Dense brush grows along the Pataha Creek which runs through Pomeroy in the southeastern corner of Washington State. The Pataha Creek is a tributary of the Tucannon River, which hosts Chinook salmon and joins the mighty Snake River. Pataha is now commonly pronounced "pu TAH hah." Lewis and Clark camped along the creek's banks near Pomeroy in 1806 and describe it in their journals.

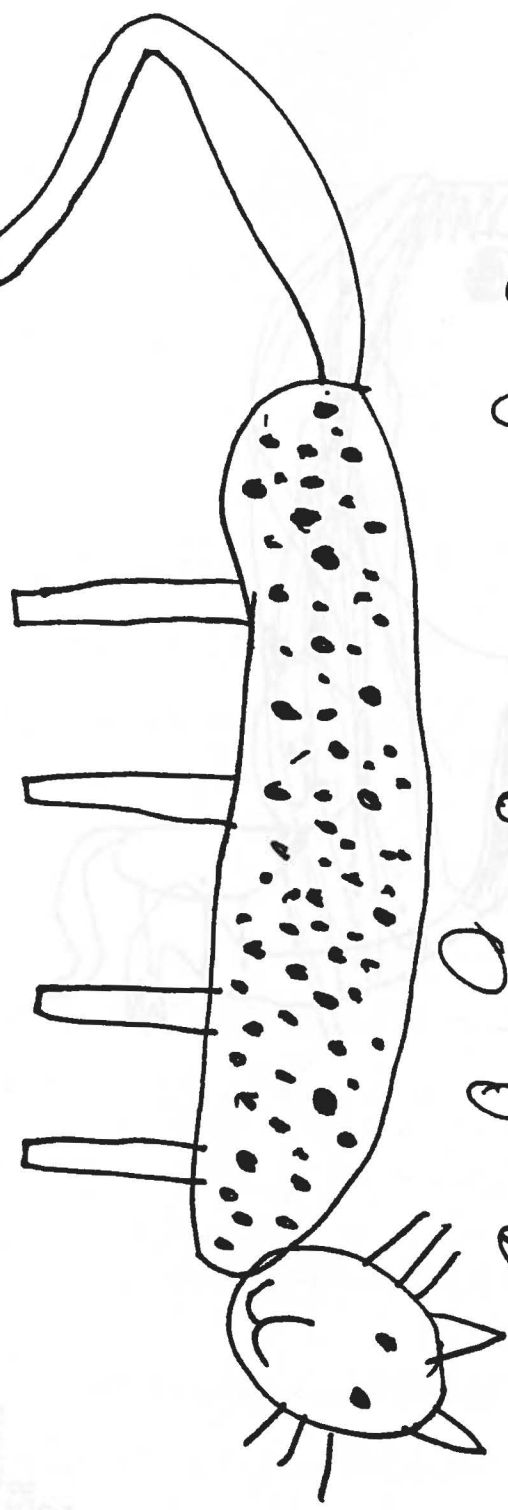
LEARNING TO DANCE

The earth is my first teacher
The cold the hot
The wind
Covering stillness
Beauty next to ugliness
Constant changes evolving shapes
Oldness, newness
Freshness, staleness
It changes, I change
Flowing, flopping, shifting
The earth moves with never ending contrast
And I
Learn to flex and dance on new feet
Night, day
Birth, death
I smell the lavender and blow fear aside
The earth is
My first teacher

submitted by Sage VanZandt
Olympia Washington
360-357-7523



SIE ~ A

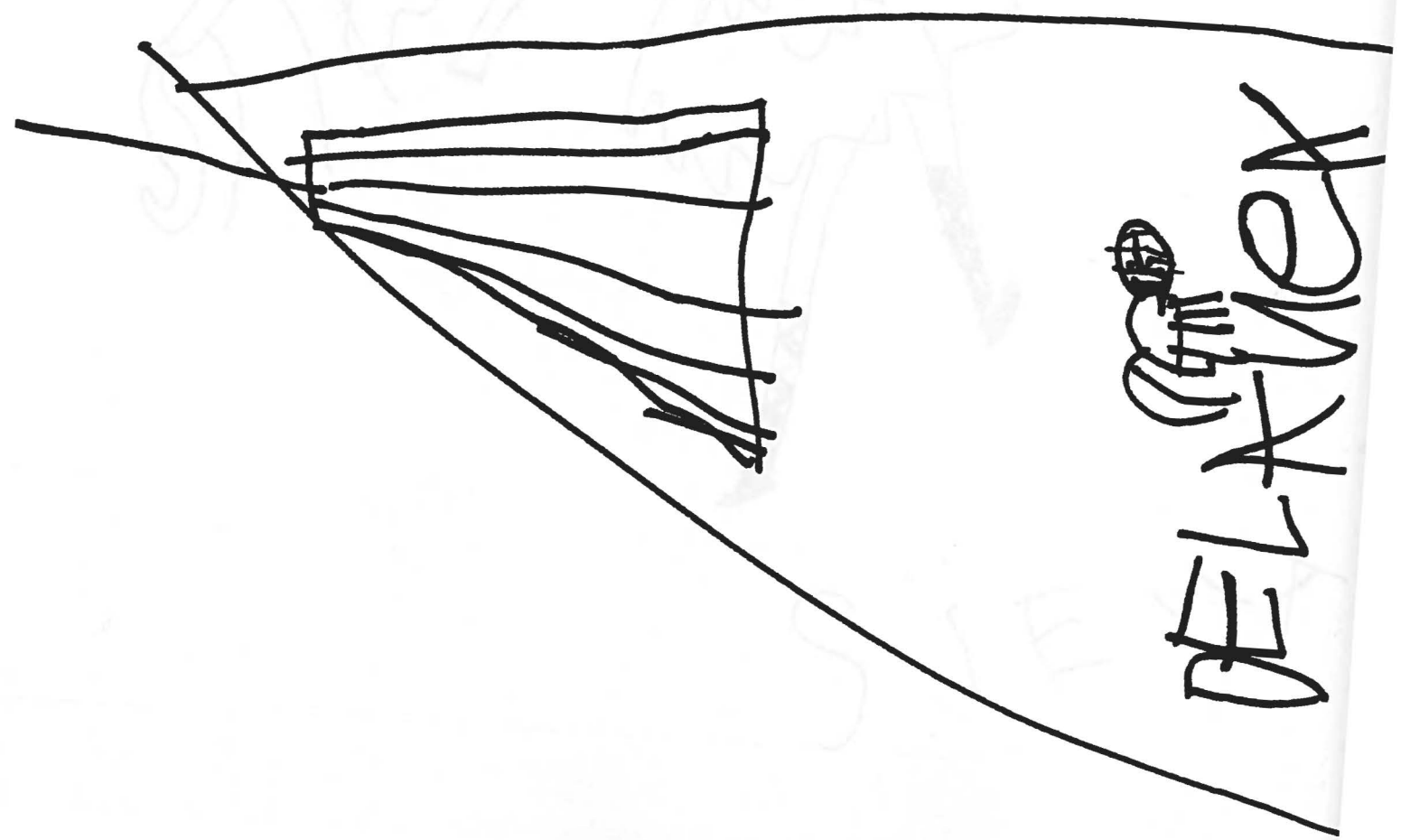
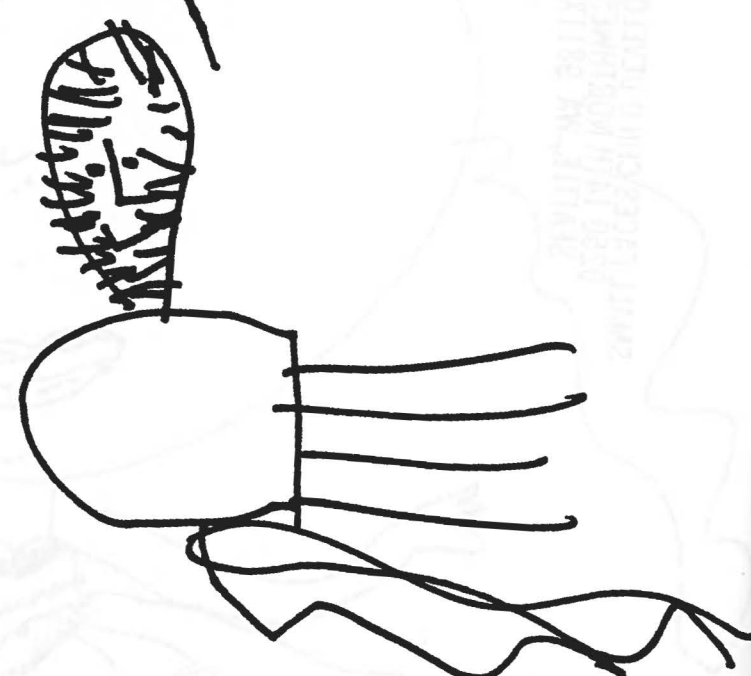
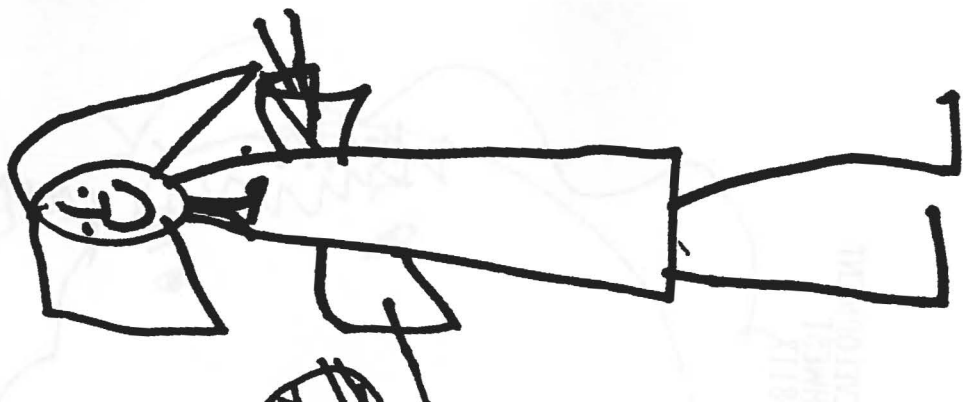


Seki

STAFF: MR. 30711
RSD: JAH NORTHWEST
TERRITORY: CHILC DRAUGHTMENT



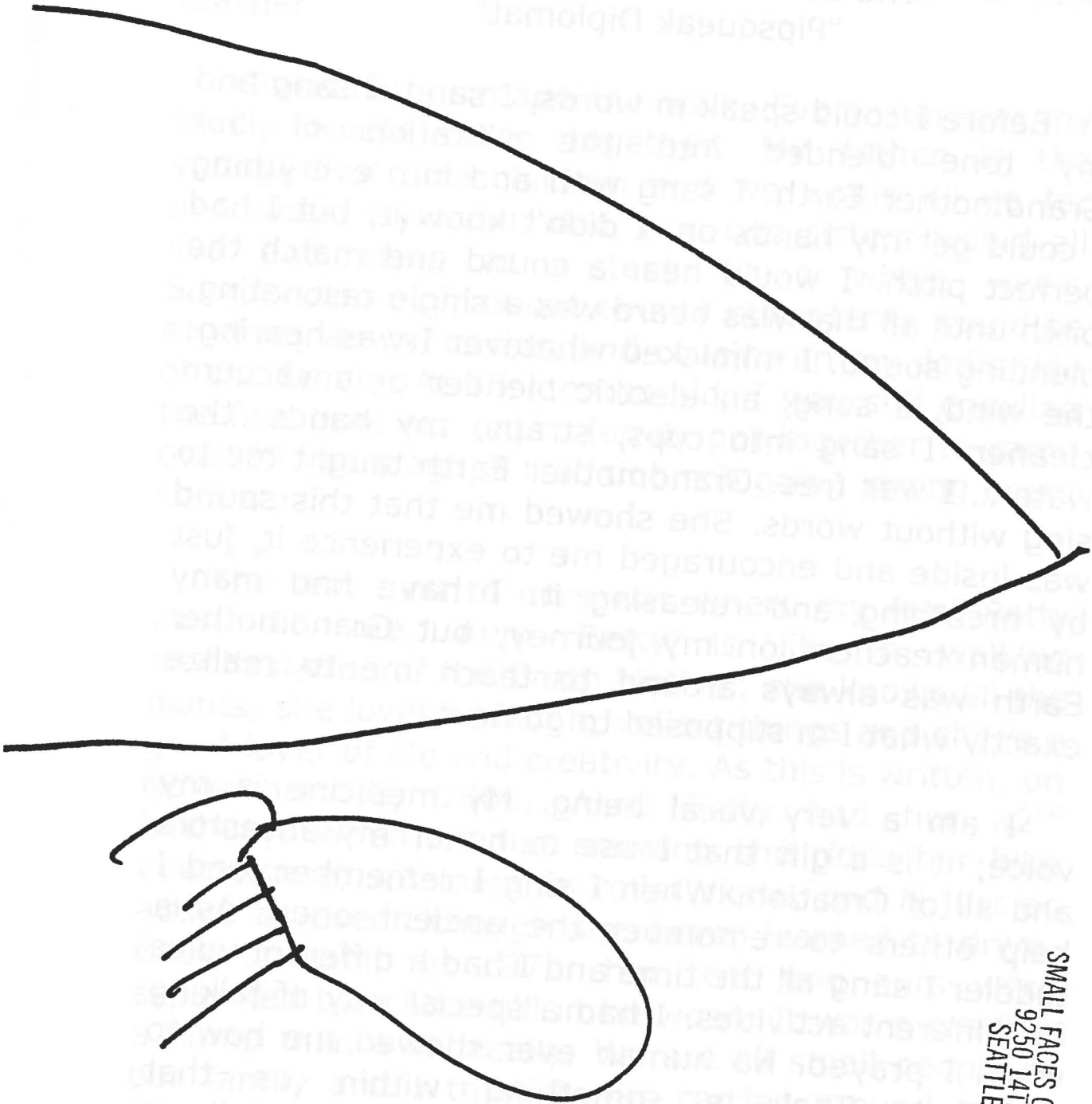
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SMALL FACES CHILD DEVELOPMENT
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The Earth Is Our First Teacher "Pipsqueak Diplomat"

Before I could speak in words, I sang. I sang and my tone blended into the vibration of our Grandmother Earth. I sang with and into everything I could get my hands on. I didn't know it, but I had perfect pitch. I would hear a sound and match the pitch until all that was heard was a single resonating, blending sound. I mimicked whatever I was hearing: the wind, a song, an electric blender or a vacuum cleaner. I sang into cups, straps, my hands, the water... I was free. Grandmother Earth taught me to sing without words. She showed me that this sound was inside and encouraged me to experience it, just by breathing and releasing it. I have had many human teachers on my journey, but Grandmother Earth was always around to teach me to realize exactly what I'm supposed to do next.

I am a very vocal being. My medicine is my voice; it is a gift that I use to honor my ancestors and all of Creation. When I sing I remember, and I help others to remember the ancient ones. As a toddler I sang all the time and I had a different voice for different activities. I had a special way of talking when I prayed. No human ever showed me how to do that. That is something within us that Grandmother invites us to share. My parents tell me that I had another voice for reading or talking to

communicates without using the words this society uses. I watch and I listen to the Earth as her first teacher.

Grandmother made me walk. Every summer my family would camp together. My father is the youngest of nine children and we would all go for one week. My mom, dad, and two sisters would all live and sleep in a tent for a whole week. Surrounding us in about twenty other tents would be all of my aunts, uncles, and cousins on my dad's side of the family. At 18 months old, I was still crawling the first time our entire family got together to camp over 32 years ago, a tradition still going strong every summer.

The tent next to ours was where my Aunt Betty was. To me, Aunt Betty is like a walking manifestation of the Earth Mother; she knows all the plants, she loves to laugh, collect things and she is a great lover of life and creativity. As this is written, on November 18, 2006, Aunt Betty had her 82nd birthday. When it's not snowing she rides her bike everywhere, still loves to roller skate, and is just as active as ever although she never learned to drive. Back at camp in 1976, her tent and ours were separated by a little hill in between. It was more like a hump than a hill really. We are all small people in our family and I think I was carried around a lot. Again and again, I wanted to go and visit Aunt Betty, but no one picked me up. That Grandmother holding us up beneath us, her grasses kept on tickling my knees. So I got up, and I walked to Aunt Betty. After

that I walked everywhere!

Grandmother Earth knew it was my time to walk then, as she knows that it is time for Little Wing to learn that now. She knows what is best for all of us. She is the most loving and giving teacher. She encourages us and nurtures us constantly. She will never turn anyone away; we are all her children. We all learn about Harmony by living upon her, together with all of our relatives, her first children the stone people, the plant people, animal people, and all the other beings. Just sitting and observing we see how little effort it takes to be in harmony with one another. We use much more energy when we fight; we resist the natural flow when we hurt another being.

She knows about healing. No matter what the two-leggeds try to do to dominate her, she will always surpass everything. She comes back stronger, living, breathing, growing. We may dig deep into the ground and after we abandon Her, something grows there. Some remind us that time has no meaning in the healing process. We may not live to see her heal completely, but we will go on from here with the knowing that she will.

Paulette LaDouceur-Frisina

Earth as My Teacher

I am writing this on a rainy day in November, sitting at the computer in the little white house where my grandparents lived all the time I was growing up. Next door is my parents' house, built on the land my great-grandfather and grandmother had farmed.

All my early teachings were here, in these eastern woods, by this great river. We played, fought, cried and laughed in these woods. The huge oak trees, now mostly returned to earth, were my models of strength; their upright huge trunks reaching up to the sky, their giant branches outstretched. Many children swung from their branches and climbed their trunks. To me they were the elders of the forest, the ones who carried the secrets of how to live, how to stay strong. The granite mounds and hills peeked out of the forest floor, hard rock, hot in summer, hidden under feet of snow in winter, transformed into sledding hills. This rock lives in me also. As a child, I used to lie on it, drawing its medicine directly into my body when I felt weak or sickly.

Everything was giving – everything with its own rules: slippery rock, fast-flowing river, ice that could delight as skating rink, or cause broken legs if we weren't careful. My grandparents were following the seasons. When the snow finally receded in the spring my grandma once tapped the maple in her yard and give me pure sap to drink – a strange taste, infused

with the flavor of earth and tree and sugar. In summer we children helped with the gardens, picking the bugs off the potatoes and later carrying apples from the tree. All winter long we ate the delicious vegetables that had dried in the late summer heat and were sent to the cool cellar and put in bins for the family to use. The earth gave and gave, and then rested in silent frozen winter, only to awaken again in the dripping, creaking spring that brought mud to everything around us.

My family saw the woods as a special place that must be respected. We were taught not to harm creatures or plants, other than picking flowers for my mother and grandmother in the spring. Many years later, visiting my cousins in Boston Bar, B.C., I was taken on a tour of their "woods" – a giant clearcut. I will never forget my feeling on viewing the devastation – I thought some great disaster had occurred. Much later I realized that my childhood woods was not a working woods – my parents made their living in the town. We were free to believe that it would always just be there, unchanging, providing colour and scent and connection and delight for all our lives. When many years later I was living in cities and traveling here and there, I felt for some time that there was no nature at all, that I would surely die for lack of green. I slowly realized, with much help from my teachers and their stories of our earth, that nature is not something that can be destroyed. Water is everywhere, rock is everywhere, not poor cousin to the pampered mossy rock of my first teachings, but beautiful, strong rock nevertheless.

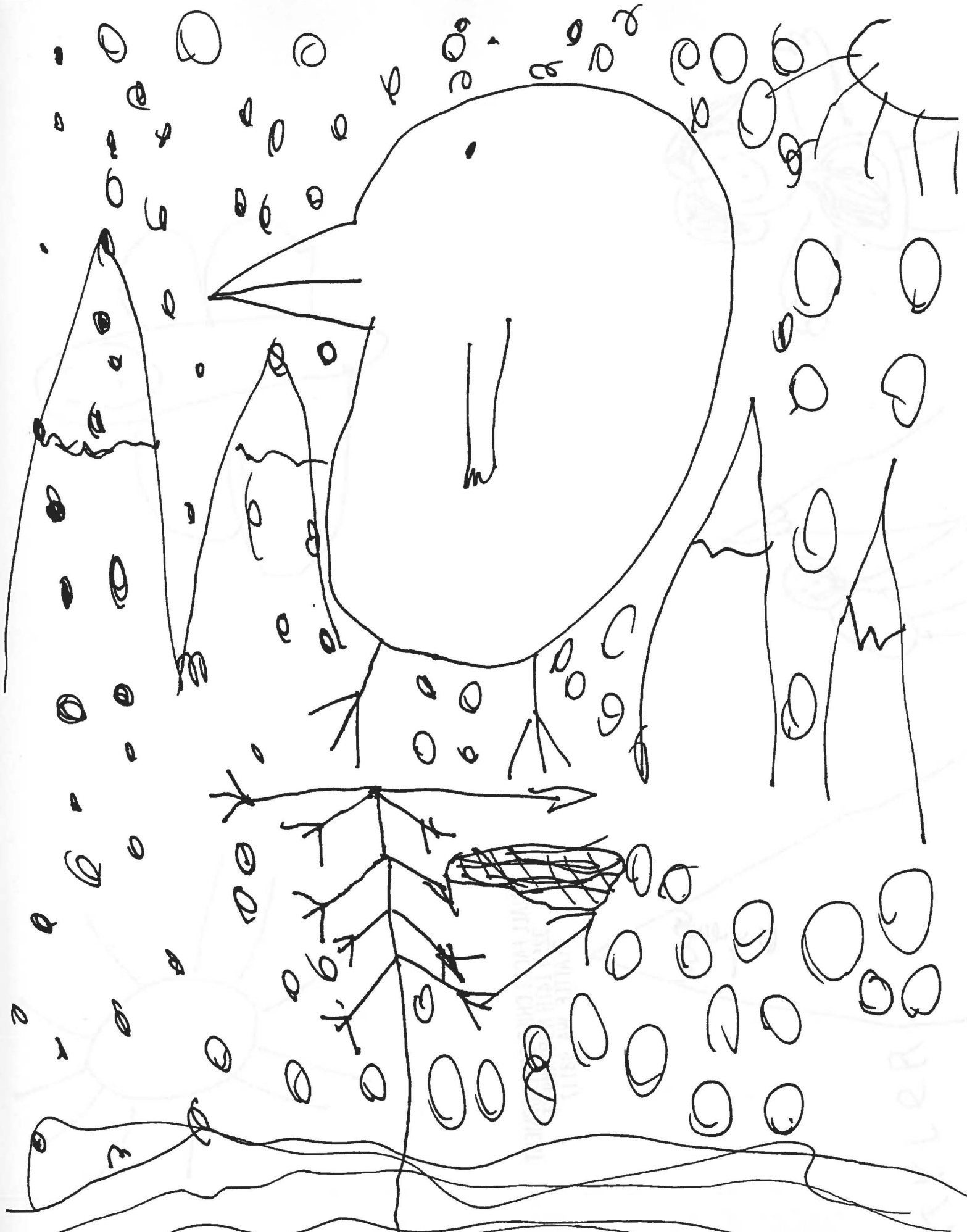
Green is everywhere, planted in boxes on a person's window shelf, struggling up through cracks, growing wherever light and earth and water meet. Flowers, for all their delicacy and shortness of life, have a way of showing up again and again.

My mother is in hospital, preparing to leave her body. We have all come, as always, bees to the flower, to enjoy her special sweetness, to be blessed yet again with her gift of bringing people together. She, although transplanted many, many years ago from her beloved ocean land in the west, taught us all how to really be one with nature, to get down and get dirty, to continue to plant and to show wonder when something actually survives and flourishes.

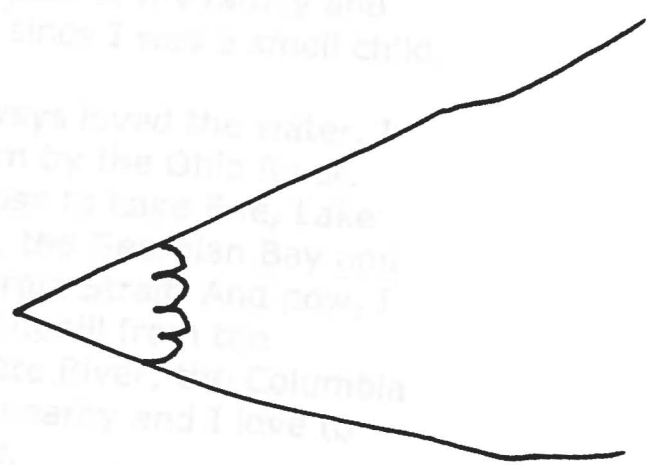
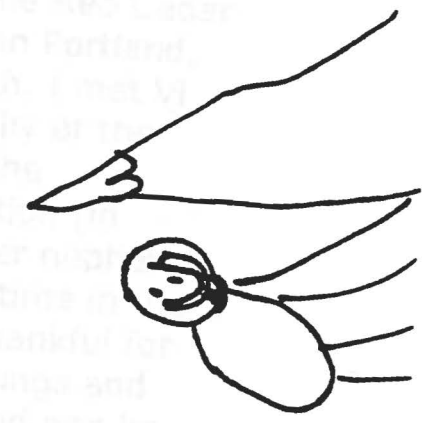
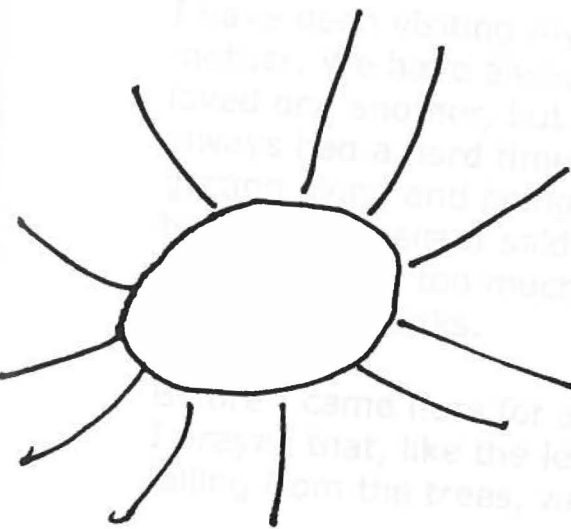
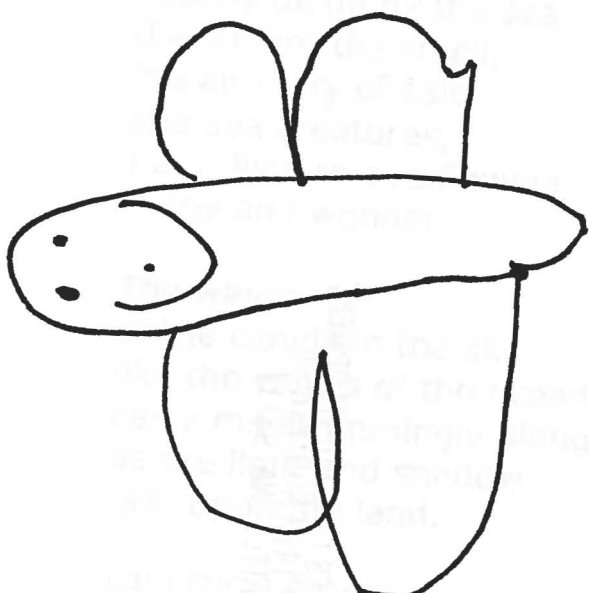
My whole family has been touched by the generosity and strength of my western elders, including our beloved Taqseblu who, like the great cedars, continues to bless all those who come near her. Auntie, may you be also blessed, by our prayers and our love, by what we carry in our hearts because of what you received, suffered for, and continue to bring through for the generations coming. We are very rich indeed. May we continue in your footsteps.

Janice Hendry Cote was born in southeastern Ontario and now lives on the Sunshine Coast in British Columbia. She is fortunate to have received teachings from Vi Hilbert, Johnny Moses and other beloved elders of the Pacific Northwest. She prays to

be worthy of those teachings, and to share what has been given with all people.



From Fm W. A. Newton



KVLER

could be the things
no longer...
seven and I am...
May the things...
go on, like the...
energy, courage and make...
wonderful good and beautiful...
to be...
to feel the...
to feel the...

I am George Mayer. My wife
Susan and I have the Red Cedar
Church at our home in Portland,
Oregon every month. I met
Gilbert and his family at the
Medford (Astoria) High School
with her...
Washington...
many...
1990's I am very thankful for
all the stories and songs and
prayers from this land and its
teachers. I've always felt that
even though we have moved
but I feel I have a part of my family and
friends since I was a small child.

I've always loved the water. I
was born by the Ohio River and
lived near to Lake Erie, Lake
Ontario, the St. Lawrence Bay and
the George River. And now, I
live just off the...
Williams River, the Columbia
River is nearby and I love to
paddle it.

THE WAVES

The whale blows and rises
with the waves.

Just by being by the sea,
the sound, the smell,
the air tasty of salt
and sea creatures,
I am filled to overflowing
in joy and wonder.

The waves
of the clouds in the sky
like the waves of the ocean
carry me swimmingly along
as the light and shadow
falls upon the land.

FALLING LEAVES

The time of falling leaves in
all the colors is when I was
born. There is a teaching to
let the things go in the fall
that you no longer need, like
the trees lose their leaves
when they no longer need
them.

I have been visiting my
mother. We have always
loved one another, but have
always had a hard time
getting along and being
together. My sister said that
maybe we are too much
alike. Gee, thanks.

Before I came here for a visit,
I prayed that, like the leaves
falling from the trees, we

could let the things go that we
no longer needed. She is eighty-
seven and I am fifty-seven.

May the things that we have let
go of, like the leaves, the
energy, compost and make
something good and beautiful
and be transformed into
something new and healthy.

I am George Mayer. My wife
Suzan and I have the Red Cedar
Circle at our home in Portland,
Oregon every month. I met Vi
Hilbert and her family at the
Medicine House at the
Swinomish Reservation [in
Washington] with her nephew
Johnny Moses sometime in the
1990's. I am very thankful for
all the stories and songs and
prayers from this land and its
teachers. I've always felt that
the earth and its places have
been a part of my family and
friends since I was a small child.

I've always loved the water. I
was born by the Ohio River,
lived close to Lake Erie, Lake
Ontario, the Georgian Bay and
the Georgia Strait. And now, I
live just uphill from the
Willamette River; the Columbia
River is nearby and I love to
paddle it.

Earth is our First Teacher

by Margo Logan

December 26, 2006

The Earth is my first teacher because she gave me Crows. The crows witnessed the assault done to me in post-Nazi Germany. The crows showed me that they were smarter than my father. In our Garten in Wiesbaden my father tried to grow corn. The crows wouldn't let him. I watched him try all sorts of means to stop the crows and grow that corn. The crows waited for him to leave and allowed me to see that this man who had so much power over us couldn't outsmart crows. All his life my father tried to grow corn, and corn would never grow for him. That little memory of Crow stayed with me through many episodes of darkness.

Crow emerged or rather I awoke from some dark place and began paying attention again to nature and the animals. My government work that led me to being a whistleblower has been guided by crows. At a juncture where I stood up to name the secrets in government, the government tried to have me cut a deal that included my having to sign a paper that said that they didn't do what they had done. Though tired and ill from being attacked I could not sign the paper. After calling the mediator and saying so I left and walked around the building. In a tree outside the employee door sat Crow. He didn't fly away. I circled the tree. Still he stayed. Looking to see that no one was watching, I asked Crow, "Did I do the right thing?" Crow started nodding his head and in a very soft, gentle breathy voice said, "hi, hi, hi", like he was speaking Japanese.

The crows at the Seattle zoo catch my attention one day. I cross the street to the park that leads to the zoo. I see crows. "Oh," I think, "crows; I love crows!" Retrieving a can of cashews from my beautiful steel horse, I return. As I throw out cashews the crows come and they come. All around and above me there are easily a hundred crows. They hop, twirl, circle and flap wings hovering airborne for a moment like a hummingbirds. None fight. They are beautiful. "I love you, you're so beautiful," over and over I say. This iridescent blue/black dancing and cawing troop of winged ones is awesome. I laugh. The can is soon depleted. "I'm sorry," showing them the empty can. "It's all gone." I continue through the park. The crows fly with and next to me. A crow on either side of my head, each gently touch the tip of their wings to my head, then fly up, landing on the next tree along the path. As I pass they repeat this ritual. With peace in my heart I "remember" my magical child connection to animals. In my car to leave, pulling out into traffic the one hundred crows take flight. Flying directly over my car, the crows complete the pass over, immediately and abruptly like a marching band do an about face, turn, fly back to the trees in a ritual of farewell and acknowledgement.

A crow friend showed up at the marina where I live. For five years my crow friend has had a feather that sticks up because I'm such a dumb two-legged it's the only way I would know my crow. Until one day last year I never thought if my friend was a boy or girl. I happened to be over at their nature place one day. My crow and another crow came close and allowed me to see them play. One would come flying in and the second one would playfully roll on the ground. All of a sudden as I looked at them I excitedly asked my crow, "Are you a boy or a girl?" I realized my mistake when my crow answered me in a very specific vocal pattern and I don't speak Crow. Then, just as intensely, "If you're a girl fly around me in a circle!" Brother, now I am being rude and demanding! The crows fly away. Dejected, I turn to leave. Taking one step I hear this joyous caw, turn back to see my crow flying in at eye level. Just before getting to me "she" flies around me in a circle.

Once Crow woke me up they introduced me to Owl. I am on top of the world, Mt Pisgah. The crows at the Seattle zoo gifted me with twelve Crow feathers and sent me on a journey the night of a full harvest moon and the Fall equinox. Unlearned and unschooled in ceremony, only my broken heart listens to the silent teachers about me. The sun begins to set leaving a vivid orange creamy sherbet painting in the sky. With my rattle, unsure of what to do especially with people all about at the top of this favorite mountain in Oregon, I hesitate. In the next few minutes all the people magically leave. I am alone. Taking out my rattle, I shake it a few times unsure of the proper protocol for rattling. I start preening a crow feather; say a prayer for the baby that died in child care. I preen each feather, say prayers, and put the feathers in a circle on the earth. The twelfth feather is preened and about to go into the circle. Swoosh! Something goes over my head! What? Swoosh, again and again. I look up. It's Owl. He continues to fly over me from all directions of the medicine wheel. If I reach up and stretch I could touch him, he is so close. I laugh, say "thank you," and my broken heart is at peace with the magnificence of this contact with Mother Earth. The full moon rises, its pulsating orange brilliance so close, the hand wants to reach out and touch this wondrous orb.

There is nothing better than this moment and these moments with the many birds that have come into my life. Earth gave me a whole tribe of birds to wake me up and teach me.

Margo Logan lives on her sailboat in Portland, Oregon. After twenty some years in state government one door shut and another opened. Ms. Logan is experiencing the spiritual rewards of being a social justice advocate for children and nature, a consultant, poet, author and screenwriter.

The Woman who Ran
from the Rain

A long time ago,
there lived a woman
who was very sad
The tears rolled
down her face
Falling endlessly
without ever stopping
Everywhere she looked
She was reminded
of her sorrow
And this made her tears
flow more and more
She saw her sadness
in the clouds
She saw her sadness
in the rain
She lived on an island that
was completely surrounded
by tears

Every day she prayed
for sunlight,
but sunlight never came
Even when the sun was out
it didn't dry up the sorrow
That completely surrounded
the island she lived on
So the sun never reached
far enough inside her
And she never felt the sun
through the rain of her tears
She tried many ways
to heal her sadness
She tried
dancing around trees
with happy crazy people
But her tears kept coming
She tried to sweat and pray

and sing her sadness away
Though the touch of prayer
was good for her
It wasn't enough
to dry up her tears

She tried moving away
from all the reminders
of her sorrow
She tried moving to the desert
thinking the heat and the sun
And her family
would chase it all away
She hoped the arid desert
with its lack of water
Would dry up the tears
that seemed to spring up
endlessly
And slide like waterfalls
down her cheeks
But even in the desert,
she couldn't escape the water
There were creeks that hadn't run
in many, many years
There were lakes
that were almost out of water
There were clouds in the sky
that she could dissolve away
Just by staring at them

But the tears kept
coming and coming
Soon the desert skies
were filled with clouds
And the rain came and came
and came
Just like the tears
cascading down her face
All winter long it rained
and snowed and rained again
The rivers and creeks filled

to overflowing with water
The lakes filled and filled
until they too
were overflowing
The clouds came
and they never left
Threatening to turn the
desert into a rainforest
For the first time in years
beyond measure

At last
she couldn't stand it anymore
I can't escape this water,
she cried
I can't escape my sadness
and my tears, she wailed
She went outside and stood
in the torrential downpour
Getting soaked to the bone
until she could no longer
Tell the difference between
her tears and the rain
She cried out
to the thunder people
to please help her
I know that the rain
and clouds
aren't my sadness, my pain
Help me to understand
that my tears are my own
I can never get away
from the water
The sacred water
is everywhere I turn
And the water
is the first medicine
There must be a reason
I can't escape
from all this water
Even in the desert

surrounded by dirt and cactus

The sadness
grew stronger than ever
She sang and cried
and sang some more
She fled the desert
singing and crying
She fled all the way to the ocean
thinking that maybe
She could jump in the waves
and drown in all her sadness
But the ocean slapped her
She tried again
and the ocean slapped her again
She sat still for a moment,
then tried a third time
The ocean slapped her again
She gathered herself up
and tried one more time
With everything
she had left inside her
But the ocean slapped her down
a fourth time
And she sat down
She lost all hope
There was nothing left

She sat for hours
Not knowing what to do
or where to go
Finally she knew
She didn't know why
but she knew it was time
To return to the Northwest
To return to all the water
and all the rain
To surrender
and let the water drown her
To let her sadness
take her life away

When her tears
stopped coming,
there was an empty void
A gaping hole in her soul
Finally
Spirit knew she was ready
The emptiness inside her
began to fill with water
With rain and clouds
and oceans and rivers
With ponds and snow
and lakes and showers
With rainbows filled
with healing waters

But this water wasn't sadness
The sadness
was replaced by joy
The Water Spirit was filling
the emptiness that had
Completely enveloped her
And the water
was changing her,
transforming her
Filling her emptiness
with her own soul
It wasn't always easy,
all the rain and more rain
But it was right
and it was what she had
Spent the last several years
praying for
And now she was praying
and singing
and crying again

But her prayers
had been transformed
Now they were tears of joy
and prayers
of heartfelt gratitude

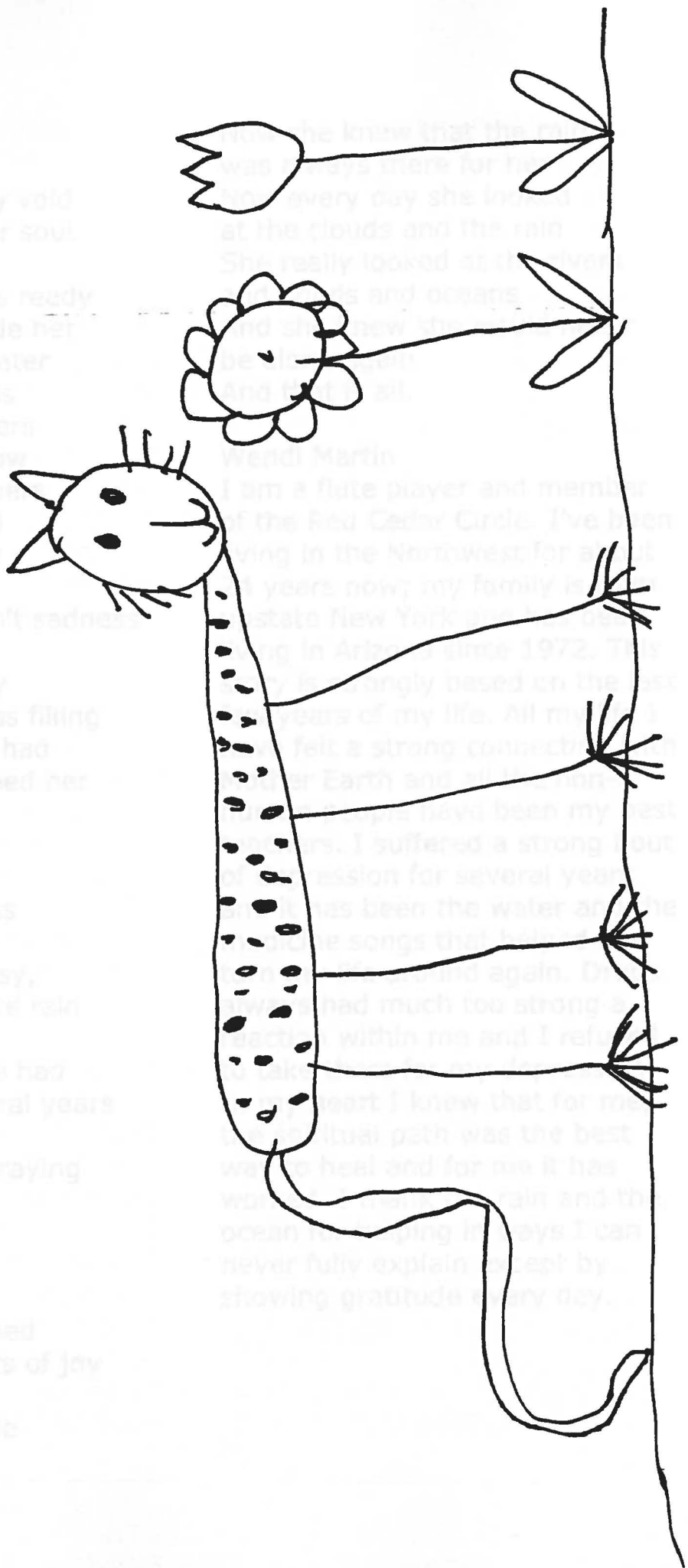
Now she knew that the rain
was always there for her
Now every day she looked
at the clouds and the rain
She really looked at the rivers
and ponds and oceans
And she knew she would never
be alone again
And that is all.

Wendi Martin

I am a flute player and member
of the Red Cedar Circle. I've been
living in the Northwest for about
24 years now; my family is from
upstate New York and has been
living in Arizona since 1972. This
story is strongly based on the last
few years of my life. All my life I
have felt a strong connection with
Mother Earth and all the non-
human people have been my best
teachers. I suffered a strong bout
of depression for several years
and it has been the water and the
medicine songs that helped me
turn my life around again. Drugs
always had much too strong a
reaction within me and I refused
to take them for my depression.
In my heart I knew that for me,
the spiritual path was the best
way to heal and for me it has
worked. I thank the rain and the
ocean for helping in ways I can
never fully explain except by
showing gratitude every day.

When her tears
stopped coming,
there was an empty void
A gaping hole in her soul
Finally
Spirit knew she was ready
The emptiness inside her
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With rain and clouds
and oceans and rivers
With ponds and snow
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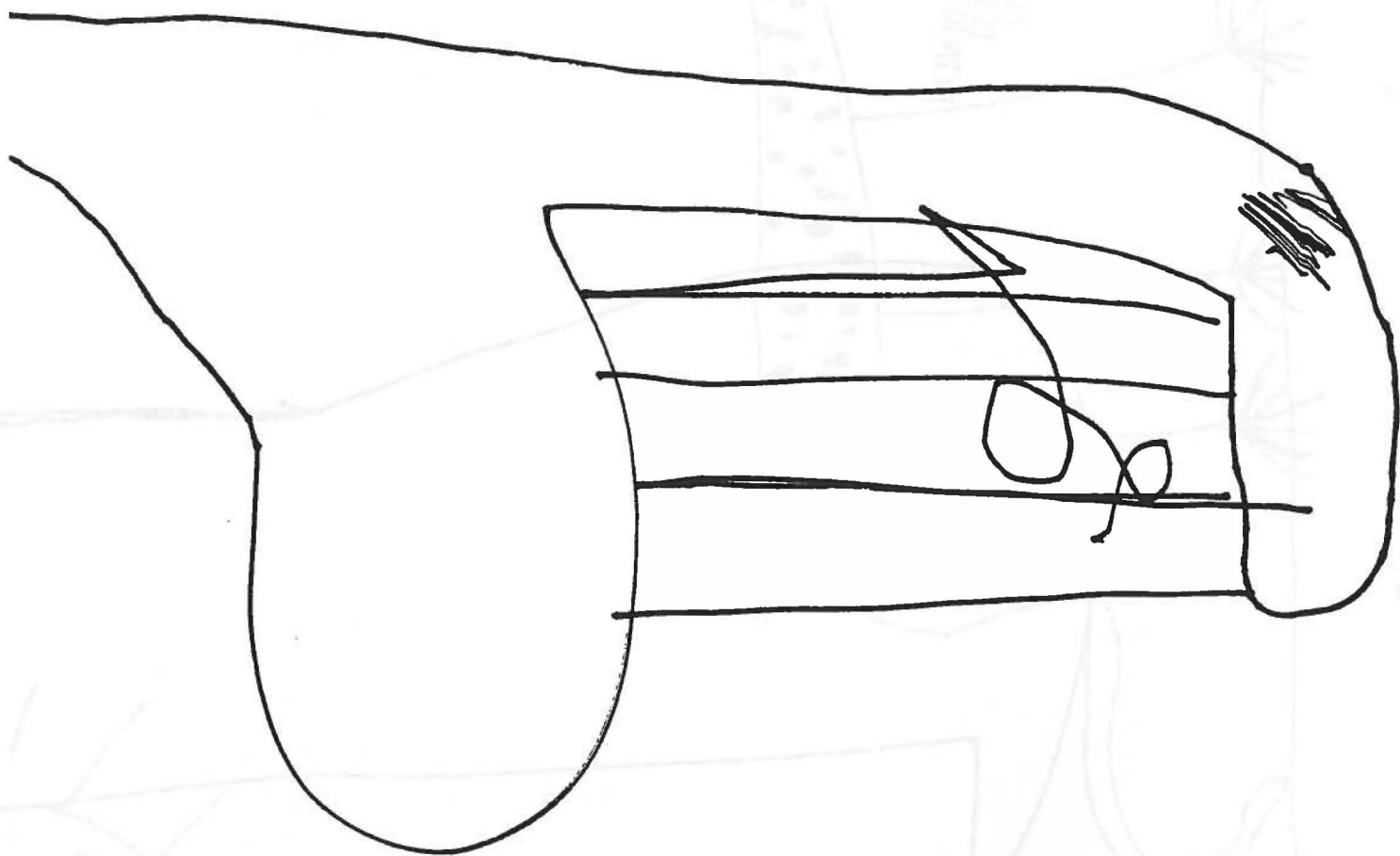
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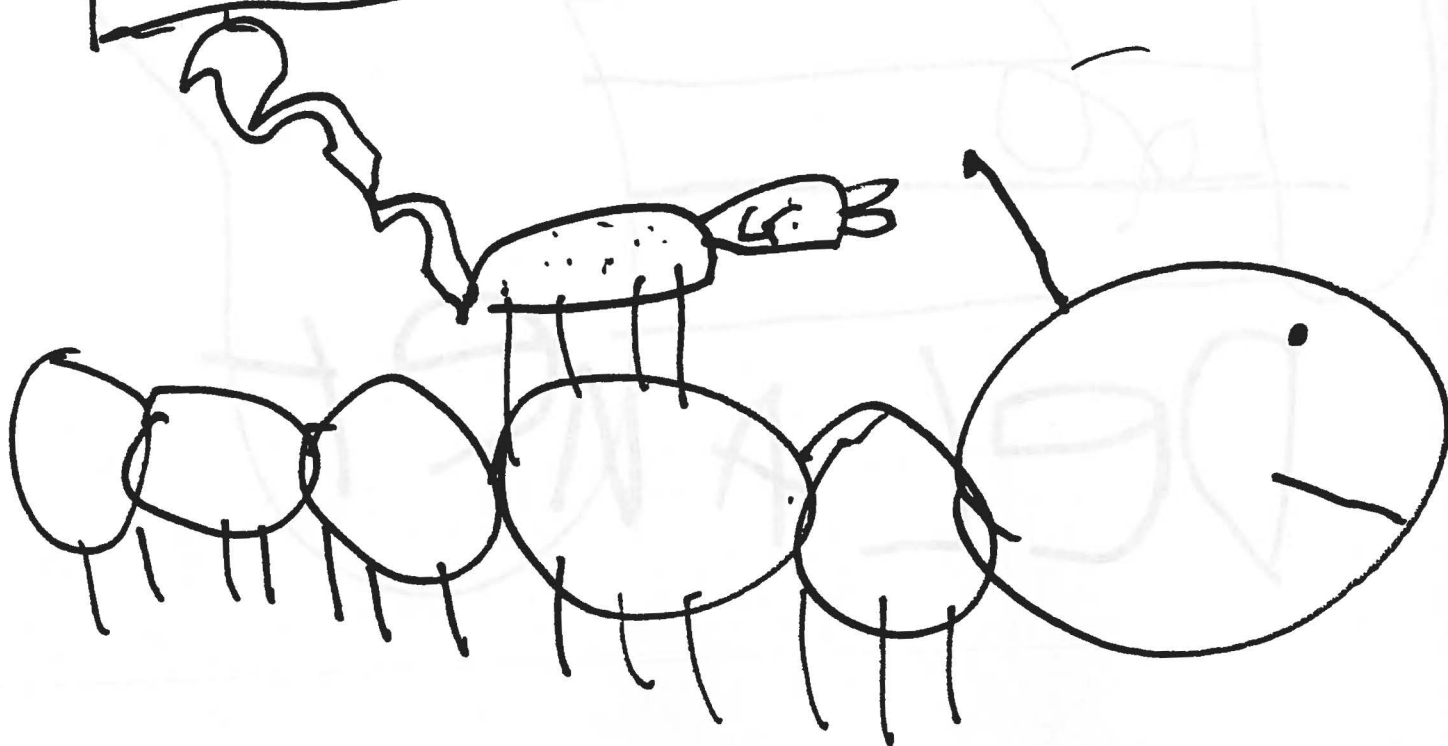
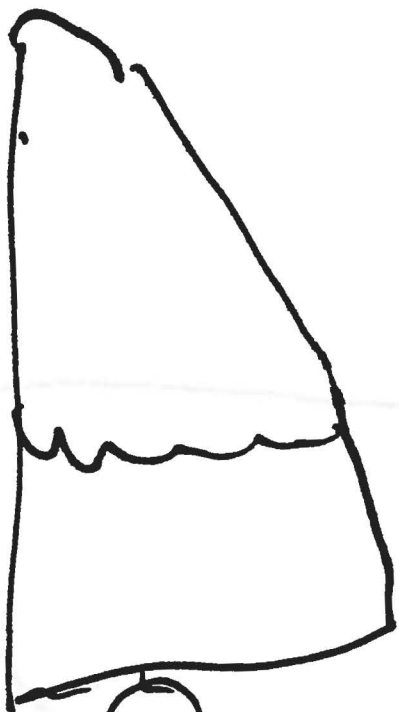
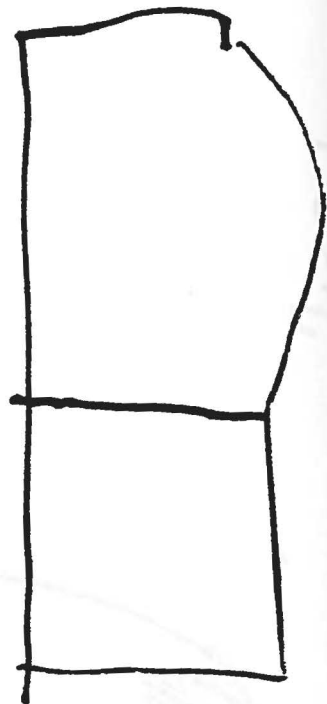
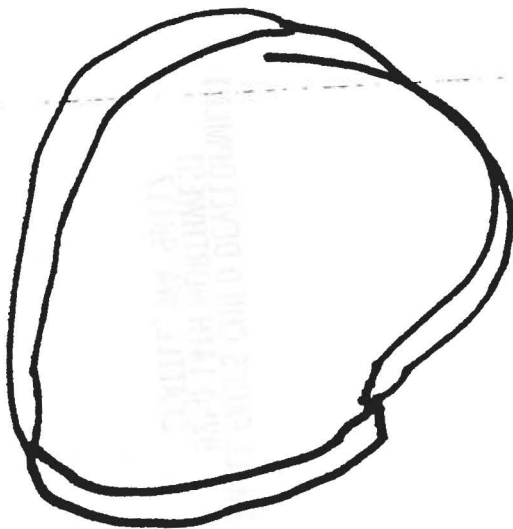
would not let us in to use their phones. Barely able to see the paved road on which we walked, we were rescued by a native man in a truck. As he got us unstuck he kept asking, "What were you doing out here?" "Oh, just running around", we lied.

A resigned inner child and a nostalgic inner teen arrived at the medicine case that December day to partake of epic storytelling by Johnny Moses. Magic occurred for the resident inner child and nostalgic teen. In the first giveaway, gifted to me was that very same calendar for enchanting gardens I had bought for Laura. "What a gift!" went the delighted inner child. "How cool is this!"

Johnny's powerful singing voice and his rolling laughter, a cacophony of swirling dancing rhythm and drumming washes over us. Johnny and another person distribute the last giveaway items of the three day epic storytelling gathering. One is at my feet, but my inner teen now only produces an unbacked-up stuck-out-tongue attitude that "Johnny Moses didn't give me anything!" In the next split second Johnny gives me a red makeup purse, just the thing a teen would love to have! In my head this inner teen was sing-song-singing, "Johnny Moses gave me something!" Johnny, who had turned his back to me, jumps back around in a split second after my singing-in-my-head song, with a big smile and hands me his CD of storytelling. "I think I should be adding

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would not let us in to use their phones. Barely able to see the paved road on which we walked, we were rescued by a native man in a truck. As he got us unstuck he kept asking, "What were you doing out here?" "Oh, just driving around", we lied.

A resigned inner child and a nostalgic inner teen arrived at the medicine house that December day to partake of epic storytelling by Johnny Moses. Magic occurred for the resigned inner child and nostalgic teen. In the first giveaway, gifted to me was...that very same calendar full of enchanting gardens I had bought for Laura. "Wow", went the delighted inner child, "how cool is this?"

Johnny's powerful singing voice and his rolling laughter, a tsunami of swirling dancing rhythm and drumming washes over us. Johnny and another person distribute the last giveaway items of the three day epic storytelling gathering. Gifts are at my feet, yet my inner teen now only produces an unthankful stuck-out-lip attitude that "Johnny Moses didn't give me anything!" In the next split second Johnny gives me a red makeup purse, just the kind a teen would love to have! In my head this inner teen was sing-song-singing, "Johnny Moses gave me something!" Johnny, who had turned his back to me, jumps back around in a split second after my singing-in-my-head song, with a big smile and hands me his CD of storytelling. "I think someone's reading my thoughts," thinks the delighted inner teen.

The storytelling of Johnny Moses and the teaching of Crow leads to changing how I taught the full-day child care/day care orientation class for the government of the state of Washington. Throwing off

How Teacher and Storyteller Johnny Moses Made a Difference in a Government Building

Having been blessed (through the invitation of Bill Cote) to gather at the Medicine House on the reservation outside of Anacortes gifted to me a reconnection to what was lost in my childhood: laughter and magic. Previously having had contact with the Earth's first teachers – Mountain, Crow and Owl; and then out in Montana with Horse and Dragonfly, and with George Goodstriker, Blackfoot medicine man, the events at the medicine house those cloudy Pacific Northwest days in December kept on teaching and gifting.

For Christmas I had purchased for my Nez Perce sister, Laura, a stunningly beautiful "Master Gardener" calendar. It was so beautiful and the small inner child in me cried out, "I want that calendar!" "No", said the adult, "you bought it for Laura for Christmas." "Okay," said the resigned inner child.

The drive to the medicine house was a drive back to my teen years in Anacortes. The logging roads on the reservation were where we would go to drink our drinks of alcohol, get our buzz on, then sober up to be home by midnight. One night we didn't make it. We were stuck in the mud on a remote logging road. It was nearly midnight on a moonless night and we had no flashlight. Our "own" white people living in the houses down by the beach

I start with my crow story. Taking a break from driving back from Anacortes to Portland I stop at the Seattle zoo. After parking, crossing the street to the park that leads to the zoo I see crows. "Oh," I think, "crows, I love crows." Back to the car to retrieve a can of cashews, then I return to the park. Throwing out the nuts, the crows come and they come and they come. All about me, above me, there are easily a hundred crows. They hop, twirl, circle and flap wings hovering airborne for a moment like a hummingbird. None of them fight. They are beautiful and I tell them so, "I love you" over and over again. This iridescent blue/black dancing and cawing troop of winged ones has me in awe. I laugh. The can is soon depleted. "I'm so sorry", I say showing them the empty can, "it's all gone." As I continue my walk through the park the crows fly with me and next to me with two at a time, one on either side of my head gently touching tip of wing to my head, then flying up, landing on the next tree along the path. As I pass they again honor me with touching my head. With peace in my heart I "remember" my magical child connection to animals. Returning to my car to leave I see the hundred crows perched in the trees that line the street side of the park. As I pull out the hundred crows take flight, fly directly over and just in front of my car, complete the pass over, immediately and abruptly like a marching band doing an about face they turn, flying back to the trees in a ritual of farewell and thanks for the gift of loving them.

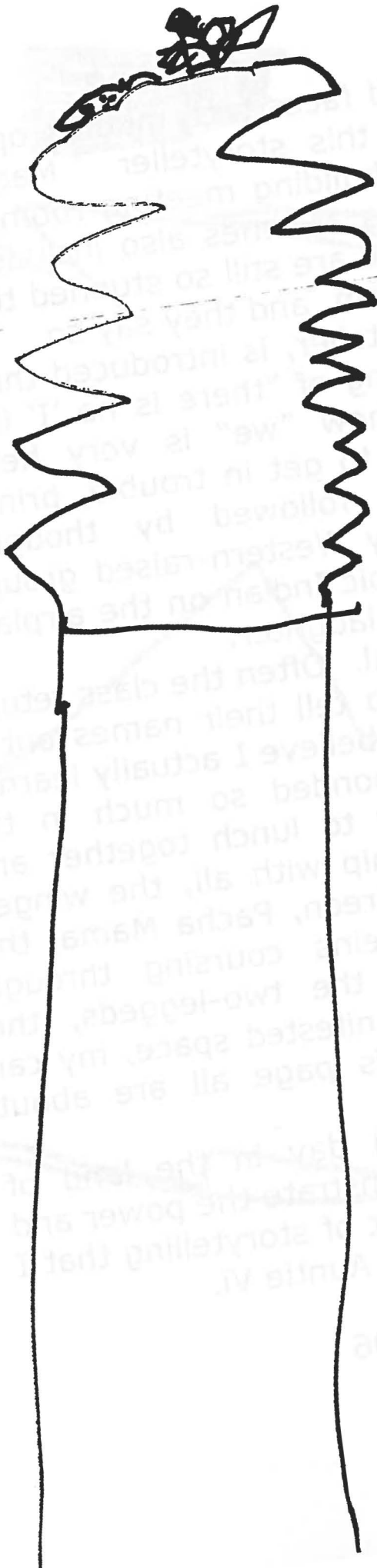
At the end of my crow story, transported inner children have returned to the reality of a government

the oppression of the bureaucracy, I simply made the decision that the day would be "fun" and "meaningful" for class participants'; laughter and magic appeared on class day.

The room is beautifully created, with fabric pieces of vibrant colors and designs adorning the large classroom table, transforming the ugly, stark government meeting room. Going to the reception area to retrieve the fifteen or so participants, I see looks of despair and unease on their faces as they contemplate being in this ugly government environment for a full day. I say, "Anyone here....looking for a fun, laughter-filled day?" A theatrical pause as people start exchanging glances with the hope I was talking to them. My next question, "Day care?" produces relieved laughter, and spirits rise as they rise to follow me.

A Russian speaking translator we utilize once in a while is there, again, months after the change has been made as to how I teach. She asks me first thing, "Are you going to tell your crow story?" "Every time", she says, "when you tell your crow story the energy in the room immediately changes, and I know that it will be a good day, that everything go smoothly."

Never in my life having been able to remember names, I now "remember" fifteen names in the first ten minutes of class. This alone amazes and engages. With introducing themselves, I ask the class for a brief story from their childhood or adulthood that was a magical, never-to be-forgotten moment in nature or with nature.



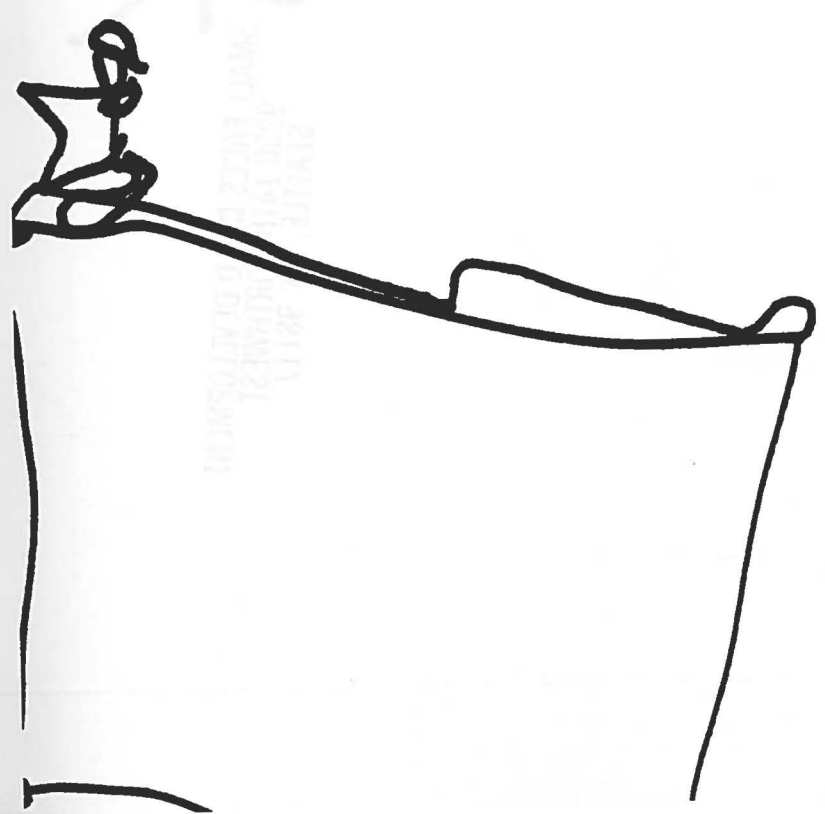
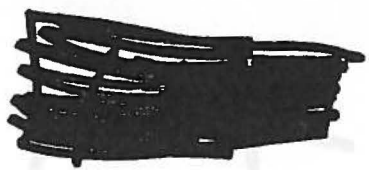
meeting room. Stunned faces with mouths open are seen and enjoyed by this storyteller. Magic has entered a government building meeting room. Their introductions and stories at times also include their contacts with crow. Some are still so stunned that no story can come out of them, and they say so.

Johnny Moses, storyteller, is introduced through his CD. Johnny's teaching of "there is no 'I' in the native language," and how "we" is very helpful, especially if you're going to get in trouble, brings a quick laugh. This is followed by thoughtful contemplation by a mostly Western-raised group of people. They love the "stoic Indian on the airplane" story and this brings much laughter.

The whole day is playful. Often the class returns from lunch and asks me to tell their names out of order, because they cannot believe I actually learned their names. One group bonded so much in the morning, they all went out to lunch together and came back late. Relationship with all, the winged ones, the four-legged, the green, Pacha Mama, the flowing blue and green veins coursing through Mother Earth, the insects, the two-leggeds, the spirits on the wind, the unmanifested space, my car and the typed words on this page all are about relationship and love.

These moments in a full day in the land of government bureaucracy demonstrate the power and love manifested by the very act of storytelling that I learned from Johnny Moses and Auntie Vi.

Margo Logan, November 24, 2006



Handwritten signature: *Val H. A.*

meeting room. Some faces were seen and enjoyed by the storyteller. Johnny Moses, storyteller, is introduced through native language, and how "we" is very helpful especially if you're going to get in trouble, brings a quick laugh. This is followed by thoughtful contemplation by a mostly Western-raised group of people. They love the "stoic Indian on the airplane" story and this brings much laughter.

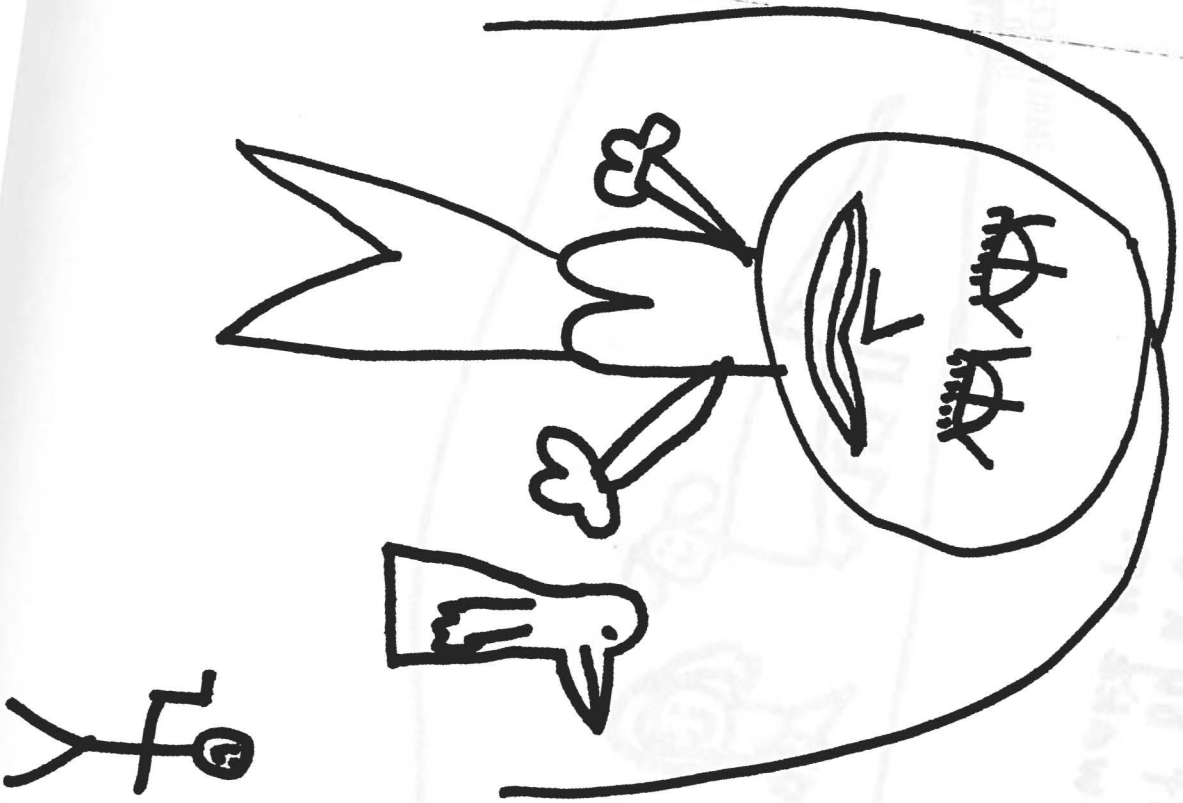
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These moments in a full day in the government bureaucracy demonstrate the power we manifested by the very act of storytelling learned from Johnny Moses and Auntie Vi.

Margo Logan, November 24, 2006

SMALL FACES CHILD DEVELOPMENT
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SEATTLE, WA 98117

Seri Bong



<ay|a:

The dog was hit by a car and its leg was broken.
A tree fell down. I didn't wake up.

SMALL FACES CHILD DEVELOPMENT
9250 14TH NORTHWEST
SEATTLE, WA 98117

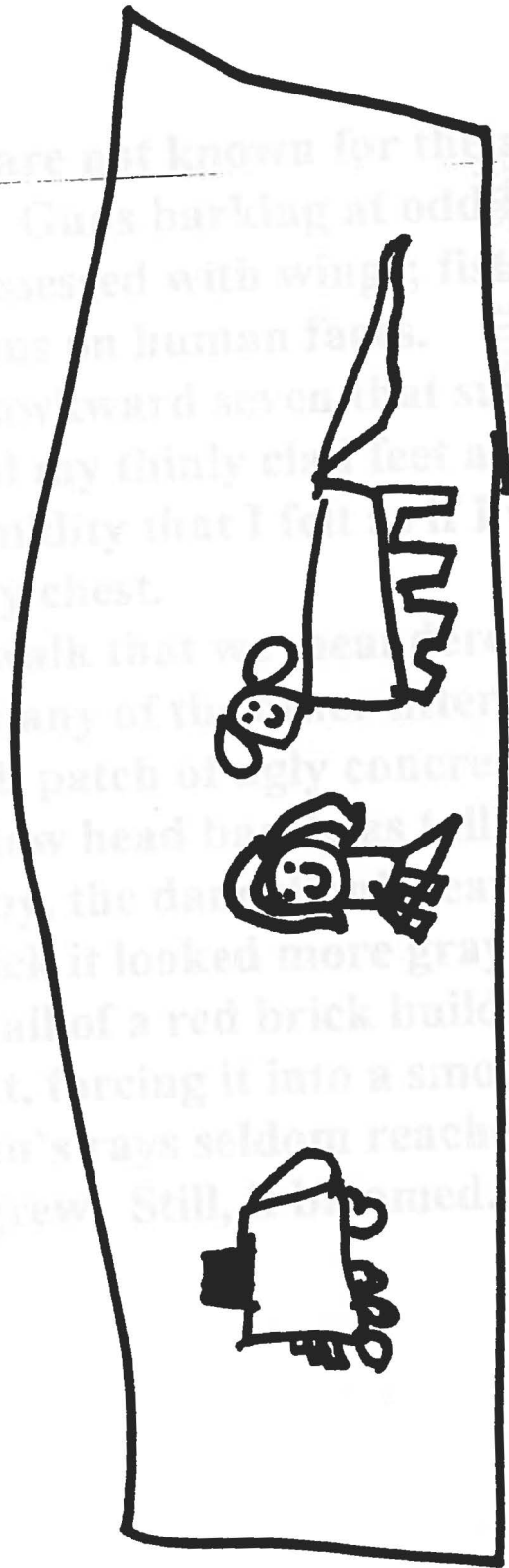
Earth As Teacher

Chattanooga are not known for their beauty. Violence, yes. Cars barking at odd hours. Bicycles flying as if possessed with wings. Feet drumming unholy rhythms on human flesh.

I was an awkward seven on that summer's eve. The streets burned my thinly clothed feet and the air was so soaked in humidity that I felt I was breathing wet towels into my chest.

The sidewalk that you could find along was no different than any of the other byways except that one small patch of grey concrete changed my life forever. Yellow head bashed into the can lying on its side closely the dark green exuded a color of dust so thick it looked more gray than green. The crumbling wall of a red brick building loomed over the tiny plant, forcing it into a smothering dark pocket where the sun's rays seldom reached.

Still, it grew. Still, it thrived.



Koy/a

Earth As Teacher

Ghettos are not known for their beauty. Violence, yes. Guns barking at odd hours, knives flying as if possessed with wings; fists drumming unholy rhythms on human faces.

I was an awkward seven that summer's eve. The streets burned my thinly clad feet and the air was so soaked in humidity that I felt as if I was breathing wet towels into my chest.

The sidewalk that we meandered along was no different than any of the other littered byways except that one small patch of ugly concrete changed my life forever. Yellow head barely as tall as the can lying on its side closeby, the dandelion's leaves sported a coat of dust so thick it looked more gray than green. The crumbling wall of a red brick building loomed over the tiny plant, forcing it into a smothering dark pocket where the sun's rays seldom reached.

Still, it grew. Still, it bloomed.

Aya Walcott

The girl is saving the raven.

SMALL FACES CHILD DEVELOPMENT
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SEATTLE, WA 98117

to save the big dog because

The girl is trying
a big track is coming.
Kayla

The Earth Is Our First Teacher

By Melissa Duffy

When laundry is hung outside to dry it smells fresh, clean, marvelous. A sweet smell is embedded in clothes exposed to sun and air. This freshness lingers when everything is brought inside. When we take ourselves outdoors, the earth makes us wonderful this way too. Even if we aren't aware of it, our Spirit sings.

The earth loves us as the best lover we have ever had. This lover is unfailing, always welcomes us with open arms, encourages and renews us, and shares everything without hesitation. Being with this Lover always makes us better and brings out the best in us.

As we simply sit outdoors and become receptive, the earth's teachings are right there for us. When our senses are open, amazing things happen constantly. Everything is communicating all the time. In the heart of dense old-growth forest woodpecker drums a melody on Douglas fir trunk. Listen to it for a long time.

If you want to understand time, live outdoors where the ocean meets the land. Real time is not measured by a watch or a clock. Real time is when the tide comes in and if you want to get across to a certain place you had better do it while you can before the water comes in to cover the shore. If you wait too long, you will be lucky if you can wade to where you need to go or you will just have to wait. When the tide comes in everything is washed away, erased, swept clean. Real time rests in the tides, sunrises, the first stars of evening and changing cycles of the moon.

Bathing in rivers, streams or waterfalls, burdens and heaviness of mind and heart are utterly taken by water that burns cold, leaving body and spirit sparkling.

We are beginning a true Golden Age of peace and prosperity where sharing, not hoarding, will be the rule, and "The Earth as our First Teacher," as Taseblu sets out, will be loved and respected for the great soul She is, and Her precious kingdoms truly appreciated, as we become integrated, and able to feel, sense and communicate with all life forms. Our esteemed cousin, Johnny Moses, Whis.stem.men.knee, Vi's gifted nephew, identified age-old Tsinook basketry designs connecting us on Mother Earth to our Star Nation families of Love, Light, and Peace. For we are:

THE LAW OF ONE

We are all one.

When one is harmed, all are harmed.

When one is helped, all are healed.

Therefore, in the name of who I AM,
and I am one with all;

I ask that ONLY THAT WHICH IS THE HIGHEST GOOD OF ALL CONCERNED happen here and now, and through all time and space. I give thanks that this is done. SO BE IT!

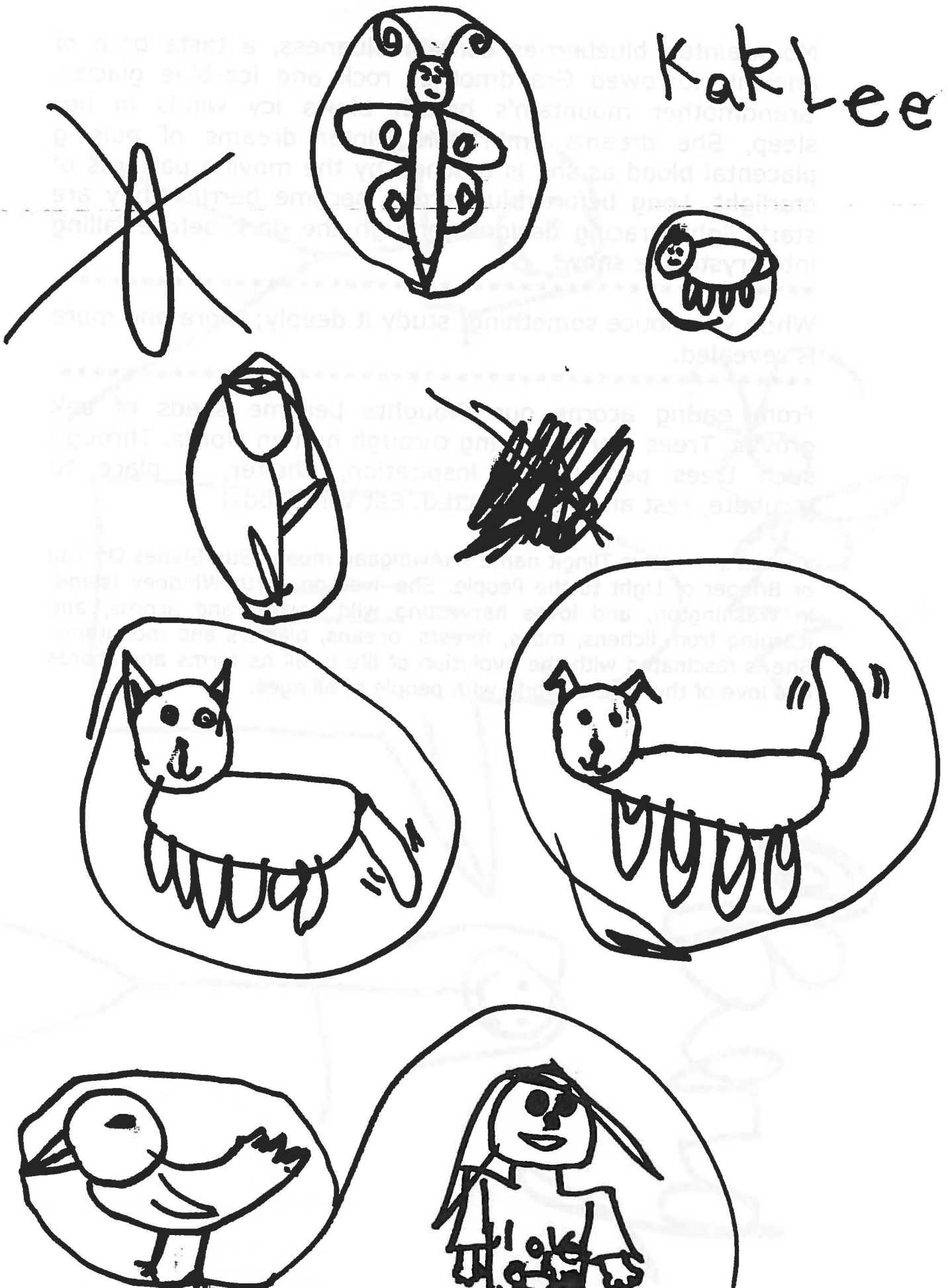
We are asked to be in mission as lighthouses beaming Mother/Father Creator's infinite Love, Light, Compassion, Forgiveness and Gratitude to all creation, Mother Earth and all Her precious kingdoms, human and non-human alike. First Contact and Lady Nesara are here to cleanse, and to heal our sacred Mother Gaia NOW. We are all spiritually connected in Love and Light energy with the entire universe. Namaste-Salu!

Arnold Neal Troeh, Ph.D.

Ashtar Beam Team Family Ambassadors of Peace

Tsinook Nation

KakLee



Mountaintop blueberries contain blueness, a taste born of ancient, furrowed Grandmother rock and ice-blue glacier. Grandmother mountain's breath blows icy winds in her sleep, She dreams embryonic winter dreams of pulsing placental blood as she is touched by the moving patterns of starlight. Long before blueberries become berries they are star's light, tracing designs through the dark before falling into crystalline snow.

When you notice something, study it deeply; more and more is revealed.

From eating acorns our thoughts become seeds of oak groves. Trees start speaking through human words. Through such trees people find inspiration, shelter, a place to incubate, rest and be protected. Eat wild foods!

Melissa's adoptive Tlingit name KaAwdigaan means Sun Shines On You or Bringer of Light to the People. She lives on north Whidbey Island, in Washington, and loves harvesting wild berries and acorns, and learning from lichens, moss, forests, oceans, glaciers and mountains. She is fascinated with the evolution of life in all its forms and shares this love of the natural world with people of all ages.

Arnold Neal Troen, PhD

Ashtar Beam Team Earth Ambassadors of Peace

Talnook Nation



Mother Earth - Our First Teacher

TreeOaks Bullock

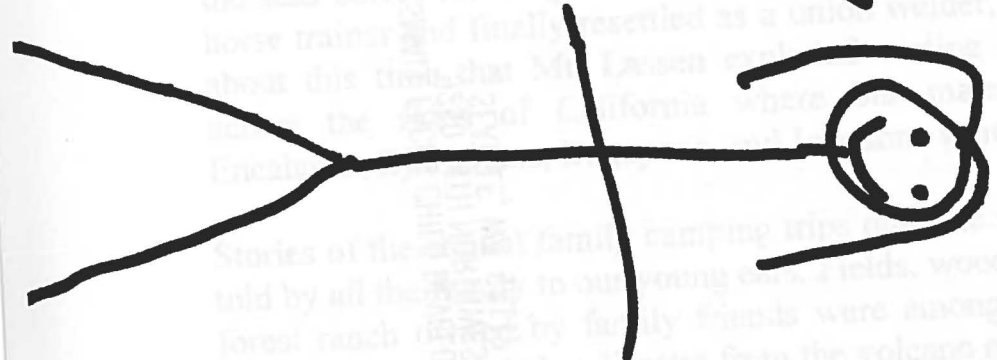
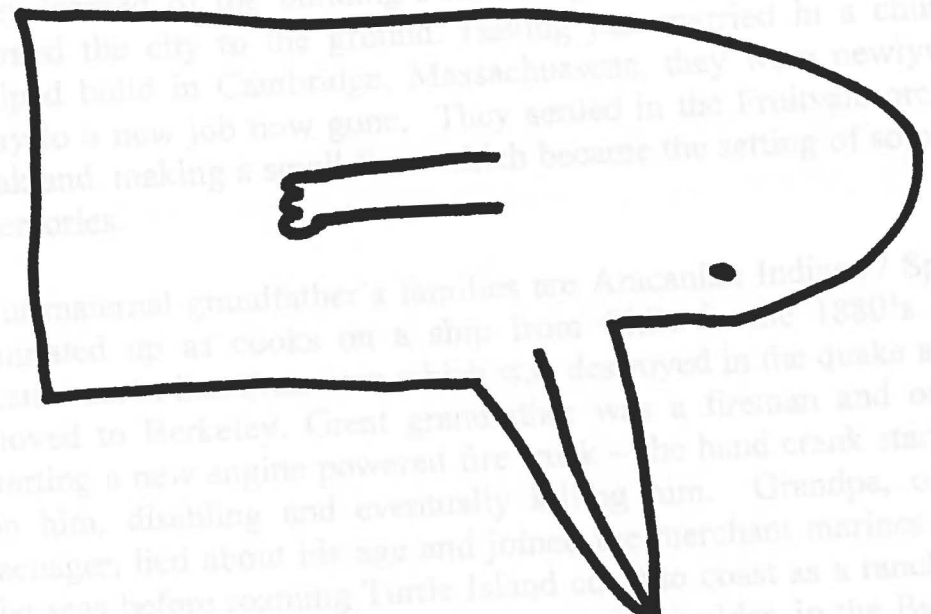
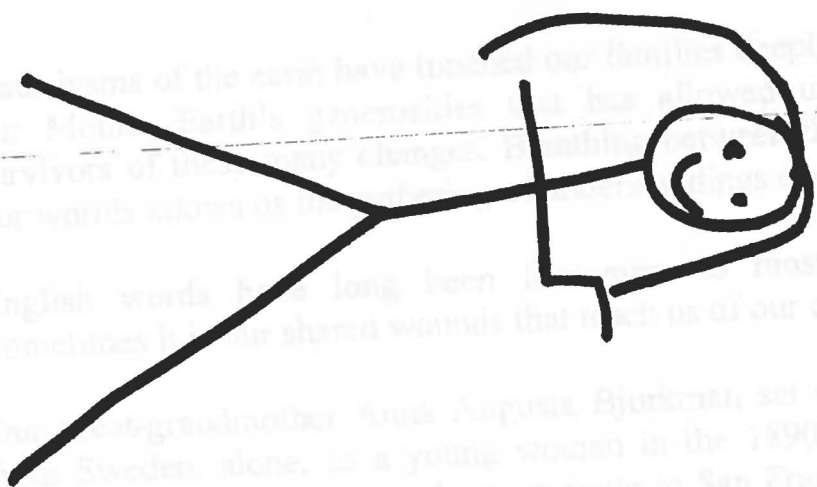
Centuries of the earth have trained our families deeply. It is the bounty of our Mother Earth's generosity that has allowed us to be more than survivors of the many changes. It is the joy and peace of our words alone as it is the joy of the earth that is more than words.

English words have long been the most of our ancestors. Sometimes the shared words that link us to our common ground.

One of my grandmother Aunt Augusta Bjorkman set out for Sweden alone, as a young woman in the 1890's. Great grandfather Alex Johnson joined her on the train route to San Francisco in 1900. The husband of the building-sawing carpenter lighting a candle in the church. They helped build in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They were newlyweds. They went to a new job now gone. They settled in the Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland making a home that became the setting of some of my first memories.

Grandfather's grandfather's grandfather was an American Indian. Spanish. He married up as a cook on a ship from 1880's. They lived in the city of Berkeley. Great grandfather was a fireman and one day while working a new engine powered fire truck, the hand crank starter back fired on him, disabling and eventually killing him. Grandpa, orphaned as a teenager, lived about his age and joined the merchant marines as a sailor. He was before working Turtle Island and to coast as a ranch hand, horse trainer and finally settled as a welder, in the Bay Area. About this time that Mr. Johnson was a fireman and one day while working a new engine powered fire truck, the hand crank starter back fired on him, disabling and eventually killing him. Grandpa, orphaned as a teenager, lived about his age and joined the merchant marines as a sailor. He was before working Turtle Island and to coast as a ranch hand, horse trainer and finally settled as a welder, in the Bay Area.

Stories of the family's early days in the mountains of Montana were told by all the family to our young children. Woods and a small cabin in a forest ranch owned by family friends were among the settings. The fire after the fiery, lava-laden disaster from the volcano and the smoking chimney of the surrounding landscape was symbolic of the trials of the families. A



soft
open

Mother Earth – Our First Teacher

TreeOathe Bullock

Cataclysms of the earth have touched our families deeply. It is the bounty of our Mother Earth's generosity that has allowed us to be more than survivors of these many changes. Breathing between the joys and pains of our worlds allows us the gathering of understandings deeper than words.

English words have long been foreigners to most of our ancestors. Sometimes it is our shared wounds that teach us of our common ground.

Our great-grandmother Anna Augusta Bjorkman set out for Turtle Island from Sweden, alone, as a young woman in the 1890's. Great-grandfather Alex Johnson joined her on the train route to San Francisco in 1906 where they learned of the building-swallowing earthquake lighting a fire which burned the city to the ground. Having just married in a church she had helped build in Cambridge, Massachusetts, they were newlyweds on the way to a new job now gone. They settled in the Fruitvale orchard area of Oakland, making a small farm which became the setting of some of my first memories.

Our maternal grandfather's families are Aracanian Indians / Spaniards who migrated up as cooks on a ship from Chile in the 1880's. They had a restaurant in San Francisco which was destroyed in the quake and fire. They moved to Berkeley. Great grandfather was a fireman and one day while starting a new engine powered fire truck – the hand crank starter back fired on him, disabling and eventually killing him. Grandpa, orphaned as a teenager, lied about his age and joined the merchant marines as a sailor of the seas before roaming Turtle Island coast to coast as a ranch hand, a race horse trainer and finally resettled as a union welder, in the Bay area. It was about this time that Mt. Lassen exploded casting fire and stone and ash across the skies of California where our maternal grandparents, the Encaladas, Bjorkmans, Iragoyens, and Johnsons were living.

Stories of the annual family camping trips onto the sides of Mt Lassen were told by all the family to our young ears. Fields, woods and a small cabin on a forest ranch owned by family friends were among the settings. That time after the fiery, ash-laden disaster from the volcano and the amazing recovery of the surrounding landscape was symbolic of the trials of the families. A

**THE EARTH IS OUR FIRST TEACHER
ESSAY ASSIGNMENT
FROM VI HILBERT
NOVEMBER 2006**

"A PRAYER"

BY DELOA PARRISH

**PACHAMAMA-GREAT MOTHER
THANK YOU FOR THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH**

**MY HEART FILLS WITH JOY WHEN I FEEL
YOUR WARM SUNSHINE UPON MY FACE**

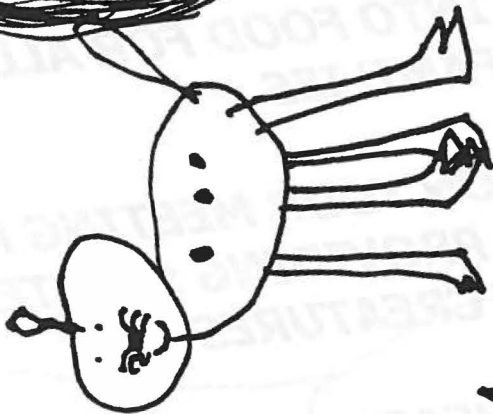
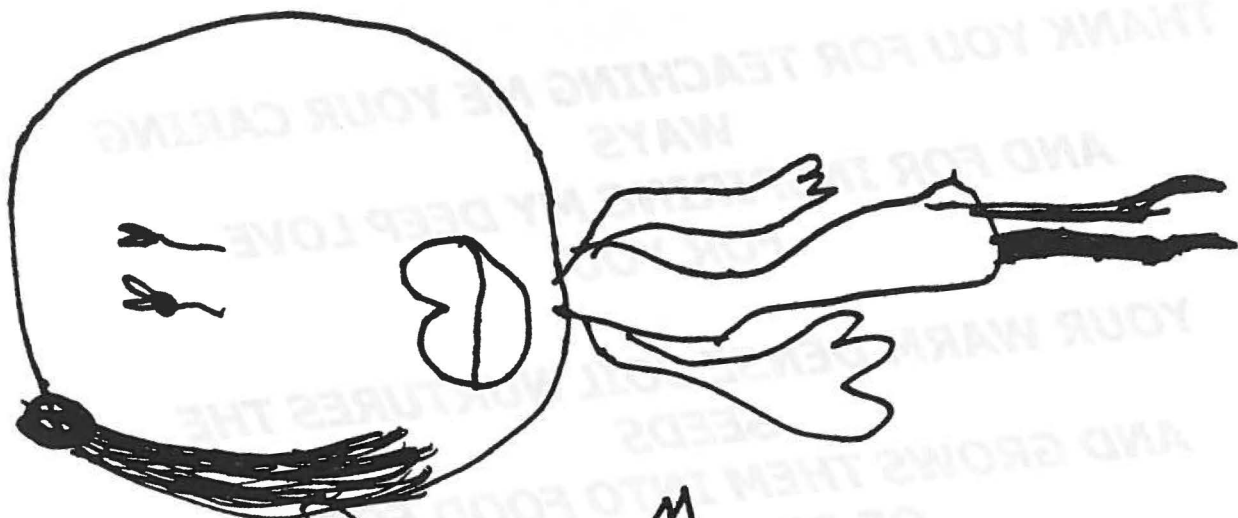
**MY EARS PRICK UP
WHEN I HEAR THE ANCESTORS SONGS
BLOWING
THROUGH YOUR RUSTLING LEAVES**

**YOUR COLD CLEAR WATERS CARRY
THE STORIES OF BIRTH AND DEATH
AND OF ALL THE SPAWNING IN-BETWEEN**

deep peace and intimacy with the powers of the earth was found on those annual journeys to the volcanic mountain forest among the sugar pine. Her ability to recover from such complete devastation was encouragement. Hunting and gathering trips supplied the family table with meats and pies. The world was starting anew. This fresh life fed the family. Mother Earth was stronger than imagination.

As a young adult I remember a visit with my grandfather August Encalada. It was during a break from a SiSiWhis men's gathering in the Oakland hills. Grandfather read from an article in the paper about all the ground waters being poisoned in Silicon Valley by computer makers. He told me about all the toxic dumping in the Bay and in the ocean by the Mafia. He told me how as a boy there were more water birds than a person could hope to count. He told of how boys in the 1920s would walk the streets with wild ducks from the Bay for sale. He wept, saying that I only have known a shadow of the beauty and wealth that once existed. He wept for the destruction he himself had been a part of. He wept with a prayer that we could listen and understand. He wept with a prayer that we might learn to change our ways. The cry of grandfathers' tears falling into the earth, for the earth and for us, keep singing an encouragement to be the changing of a long love; they sing encouragement to join with Mother Earth in a healing stronger than our own imaginations.

TreeOathe Bullock currently lives on a dormant volcano cone, Mt. Tabor, in the Willamette Valley, Cascadia. He has been a mountaineer since 1969 and recently became a grandfather. Studies with First Peoples Elders began on the Native led *Long Walk for Survival: A Prayer for the End of the Destruction of Mother Earth* across Turtle Island in 1980. His many occupations include writer, musician and gardener. He teaches alpine skiing at Timberline on Wy'East.



**THANK YOU FOR TEACHING ME YOUR CARING
WAYS
AND FOR INSPIRING MY DEEP LOVE
FOR YOU**

**YOUR WARM DENSE SOIL NURTURES THE
SEEDS
AND GROWS THEM INTO FOOD FOR ALL
OF OUR FAMILIES**

**I CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON YOUR MEETING MY
EVERY STEP, AND FOR PROVIDING SHELTER
TO ALL OF US CREATURES**

**PLEASE FORGIVE THE HEARTLESS HUMANS,
THE ONES WHO DON'T FEEL YOUR
HEARTBEAT.....**

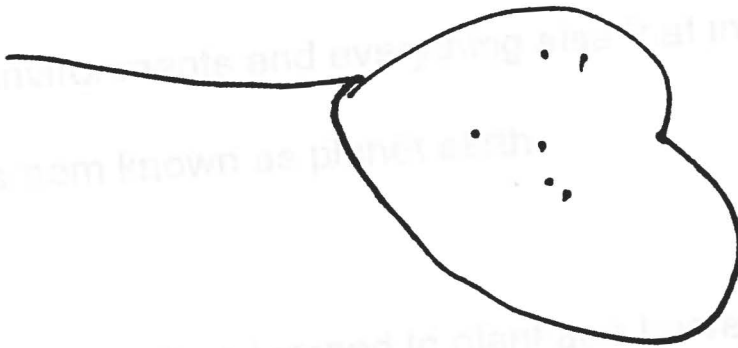
**AND TAKE COMFORT, FIRST TEACHER
IN ALL OF YOUR CHILDREN
WHO REMEMBER YOUR WAYS**

**WHO HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN,
AND SHALL BE YOUR STUDENTS
AND STEWARDS
FOREVERMORE.....**

deloaparrish@hotmail.com
19915-330th AVE NE
Duvall, wa 98019

The Earth is Our First Teacher

We are all students of the earth, no matter our age or race, for we all come from real people that once lived directly and simply from the land beneath their feet. Our ancestors were hunter and gatherers for thousands of years in the vast history of this earth. The earth was their first teacher, as she is now ours for we also learn much from our interactions and transactions among ourselves.



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SEATTLE, WA 98117

W. C. C. C. C.

A heart is a love that is...

Small Faces

THANK YOU FOR TEACHING ME YOUR CARING
WAYS
AND FOR INSPIRING MY DEEP LOVE
FOR YOU

YOUR WARM DEEP SOIL NURTURES THE
SEEDS
AND GROWS THEM INTO FOOD FOR ALL
OF OUR FAMILIES

I CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON YOUR MEETING MY
EVERY STEP, AND FOR PROVIDING SHELTER
TO ALL OF US CREATURES

PLEASE FORGIVE THE HEARTLESS HUMANS,
THE ONES WHO DON'T FEEL YOUR
HEARTBEAT...

AND TAKE COMFORT, FIRST TEACHER
IN ALL OF YOUR CHILDREN
WHO REMEMBER YOUR WAYS

WHO HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN
AND SHALL BE YOUR STUDENTS
AND STEWARDS
FOREVERMORE.....

delosaparrish@hotmail.com
1995-2000
David, WA 98117

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9250 14TH NORTHWEST
SEATTLE, WA 98117

A hunter, a lion and a girl.

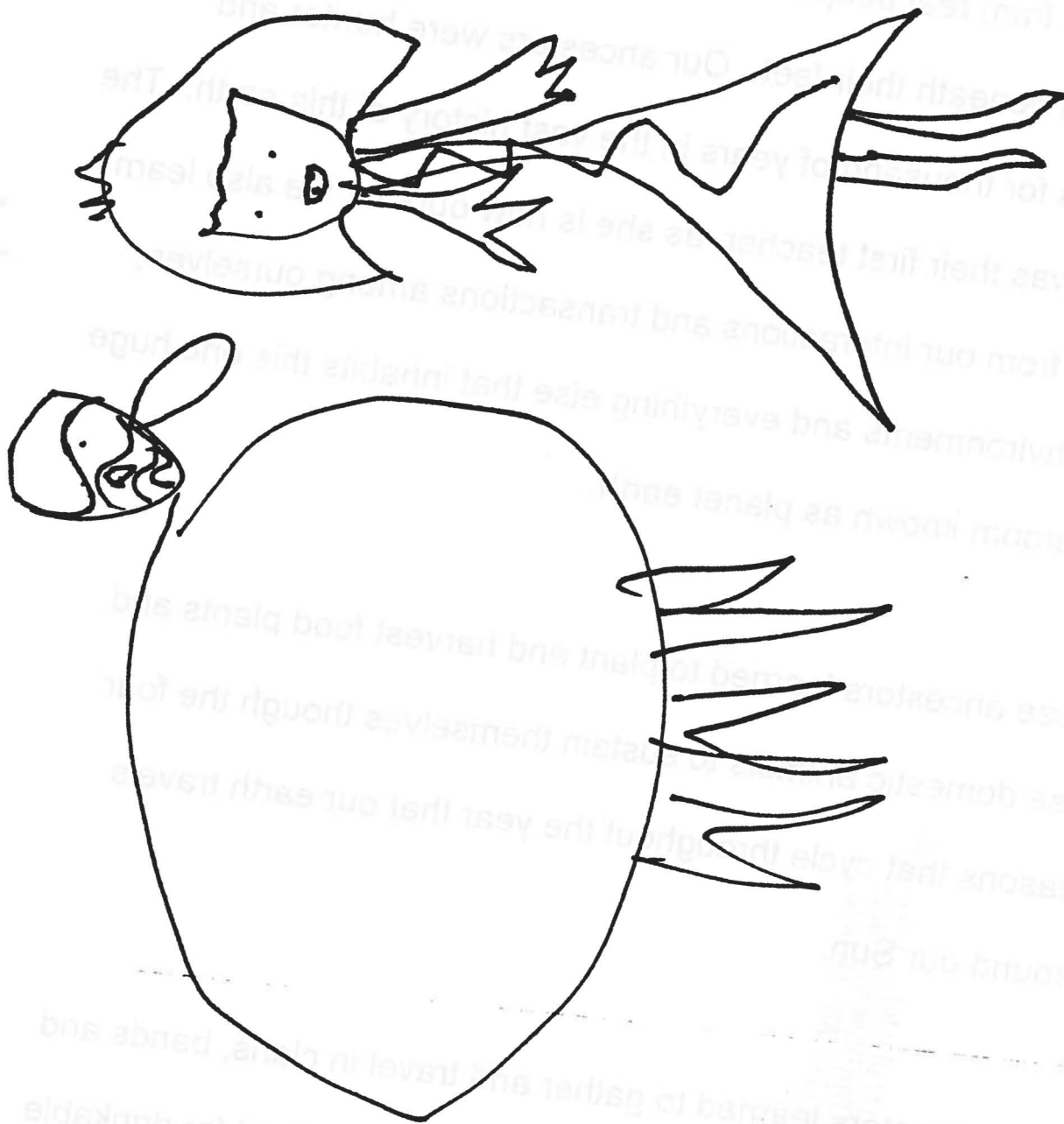
Ruby

The Earth is Our First Teacher

We are all students of the earth, no matter our age or race, for we all come from real people that once lived directly and simply from the land beneath their feet. Our ancestors were hunter and gathers for thousand of years in the vast history of this earth. The earth was their first teacher, as she is now ours for we also learn much from our interactions and transactions among ourselves, our environments and everything else that inhabits this one huge classroom known as planet earth.

These ancestors learned to plant and harvest food plants and raise domestic animals to sustain themselves though the four seasons that cycle throughout the year that our earth travels around our Sun.

Our ancestors learned to gather and travel in clans, bands and tribes for protection and survival as they searched for drinkable water, food and shelter from the changing weather and seasons



Our families still visit the places of our ancestors; hike the trails and pathways in our forests, open fields and mountains. Few of us still hunt, fish and farm the earth for our livelihood, but all of us still have our own personal connection to this earth, we still walk and play upon her and she still provides resources we need to survive as individuals, as people and as societies. Without the earth, we wouldn't have a place upon which to live and therefore she still is our first teacher as we grow from children into adults and elders.

We must remember this and continue to practice our responsibly as stewards of the earth, if the future generations are to have an opportunity to live as we now do and that our ancestors once did.

upon the lands we know as earth. Farms and small villages soon became towns and cities as these people continued to learn and discover ways to live productively upon the different landscapes of the earth.

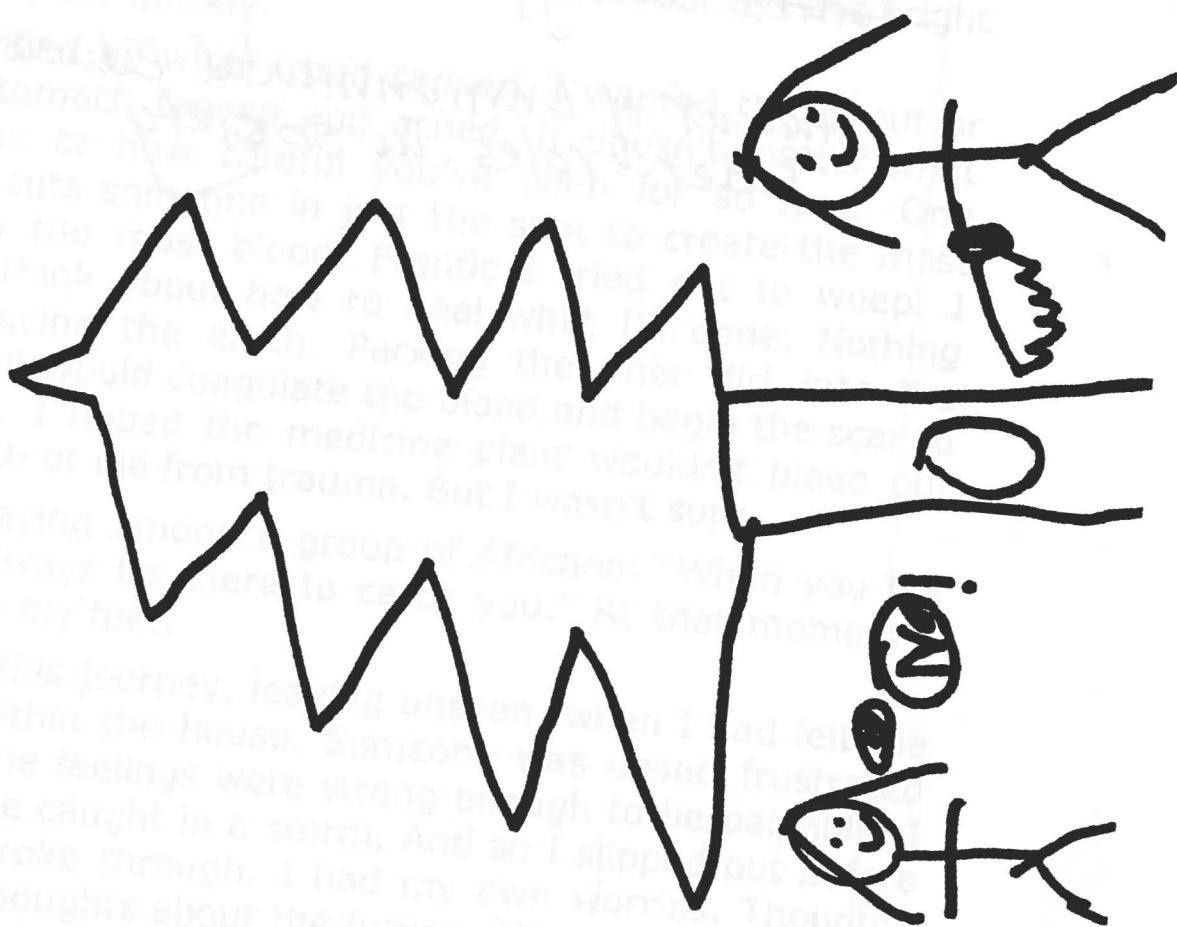
As our populations grew so did the diversity of how they created a future for themselves and their families, until today where the majority no longer live directly from the land as our ancestors once did. But our ancestral roots are deeply planted in the rich dirt of this earth, for its only been the past few hundred years that we as people no longer live directly from the land beneath our feet or drink water directly from lakes, rivers and streams that cover the surrounding mountains, hills and valleys where we now live and work to support ourselves and our families.

We now send our children to schools that teach the skills necessary for them to function successfully in the industrialized societies that we now live in, but the family is still the basic social unit that passes on the tribal knowledge of their ancestral roots.

Earth Family Lessons

I moved across the open no-man's land, down a deep cut where the creek always ran, even in dry places. Home at the black where the creek always ran, even in dry places. Home at the black where the creek always ran, even in dry places.

...a pure white flower against the dark of earth and green of friends made me stop. A glow from the flowers signified to me a pure white flower against the dark of earth and green of friends made me stop. A glow from the flowers signified to me a pure white flower against the dark of earth and green of friends made me stop.



There is a saying in my group of friends: "When you are angry, you are always in a hurry to leave." At the moment I was unhappy in my heart. I had begun this journey, leaving under a heavy pressure built within the house. Sometimes I was frustrated or even angry. The feelings were strong enough to make me not want to be caught in a storm. And so I slipped out the first waves broke through. I had my own worries. Thoughts about the new Thoughts about the future. What is correct action to be in good relationship with others? I'd come because here in the woods were more family — the family of stone people, the

Ed Harkins
Lynnwood, Washington

65 years old

3 sons 1 daughter

MA, Whole Systems Design, Antioch University

~~Retired Boeing, Retired military~~

Student of Environmental Education and
Elder roles in society

Earth Family Lessons

I moved across the open no-man's land, down a deep cut where the creek always ran, even in summer, home of the black morels. Struggling up the steeply angled other side I came upon the woodland flowers of trillium and blood root.

Blood Root's pure white flowers against the dark of earth and green of friends made me stop. A glow from her medicinal powers beckoned me over. I sat for a while enjoying the awe of simple beauty. But soon a child's curiosity overcame me. I knew the origin of the name but I just had to see. Carefully, carefully I removed earth until I began to see her tuber. I was even gentle enough to expose the thin roots off the tuber. But then the limit of child's patience and focus had been expended. With one movement from lapsed thought I nicked the tuber and the bright red blood oozed out quickly.

I was horrified by what I had caused. I wanted to cry out or cry and my stomach tensed and ached. It doesn't matter what your intentions or how careful you've been for so long. One careless word cuts someone in just the spot to create the most pain and draw the most blood. Frantic I tried not to weep. I forced myself think about how to heal what I'd done. Nothing came but replacing the earth. Packing the finer dirt into the wound I hoped it would coagulate the blood and begin the scar to cover the gash. I hoped the medicine plant wouldn't bleed out into Mother Earth or die from trauma. But I wasn't sure.

There is a saying among a group of Africans: "When you fall the earth will always be there to catch you." At that moment I was unsteady on my feet.

I had begun this journey, leaving unseen, when I had felt the pressure build within the house. Someone was upset, frustrated or even angry. The feelings were strong enough to be palpable. I did not want to be caught in a storm. And so I slipped out before the first waves broke through. I had my own worries. Thoughts about the now. Thoughts about the future. What is correct action to be in good relationship with others? I'd come because here in the woods were more family -- the family of stone people, the

A little girl is going to cut
down the daisies for her, but
the other little girl tells her
Selci No.

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SEATTLE, WA 98117

mole nation and all who dwell in the earth, the water and those that move there, the winged ones and the four-legged animals.

As before when I reached the other side of the ravine, I picked my own path through to a large spherical room created by the deer people. The floor had been made by their dancing and stamping. The diversity of plant people layered together creating the walls. The tree people reached from every side to greet each other above, forming the ceiling. Nibbling and pruning the walls and ceiling during their gatherings the deer enlarged the opening and caused the rounded features. The radius of the curves was the length of their necks. To rest after the ceremony and escape the heat of midday, they would lie down on the ground they had made smooth and soft. Earth's family gathered at this cathedral. I came in and sat near the door. The tree people never said a negative word. I could feel the rest of family sitting with me in respectful silence. This quieted me. Exhaustion from not knowing the future, from not knowing Blood Root's future, from not knowing if I would ever know proper relationship overcame me and I fell over on one side to lie down. The Earth was there to catch me.

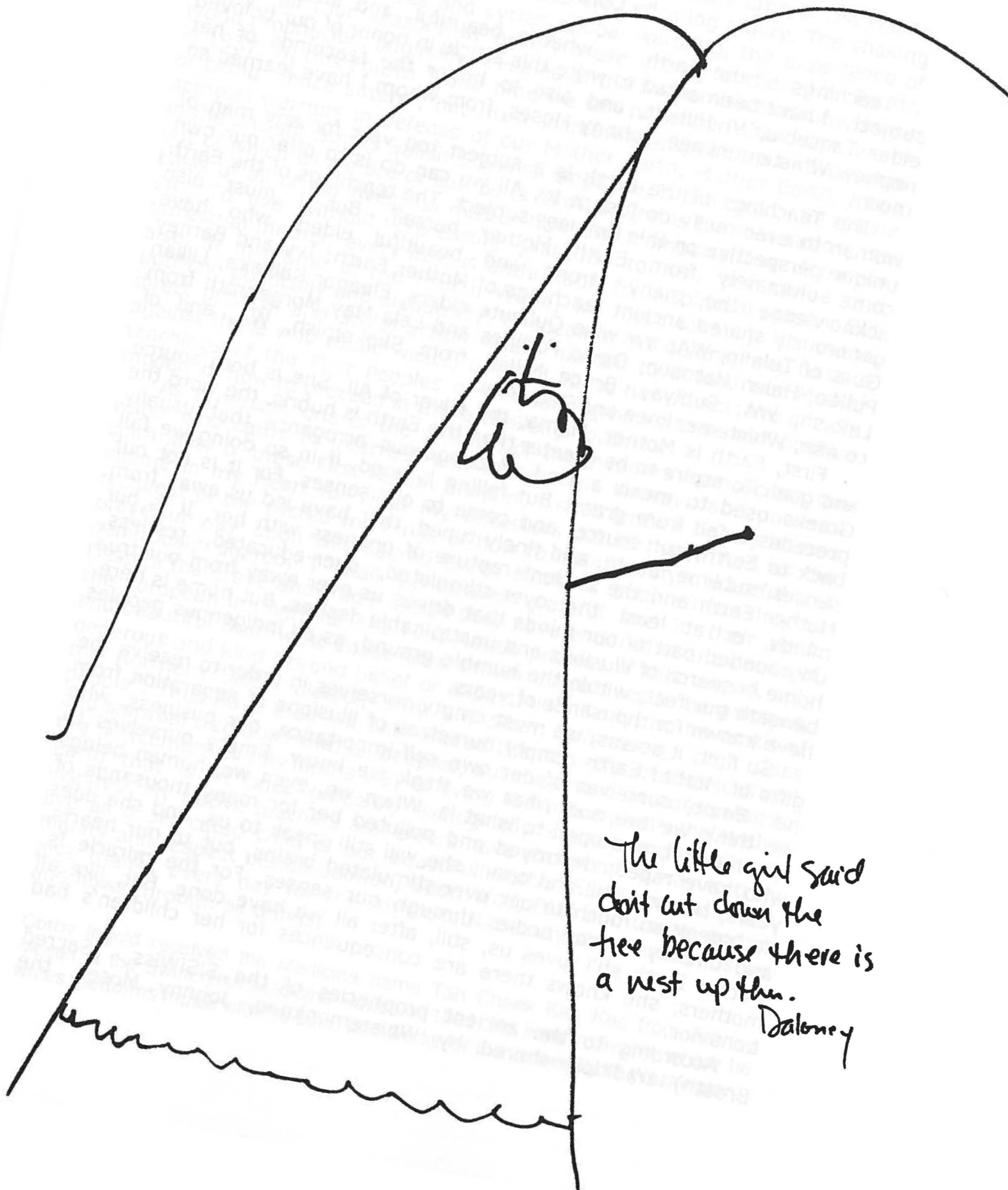
Dan Moulton

Si Si Wiss

Lakota

Son, daughter, student

Seattle, Washington, Turtle Island



The little girl said
don't cut down the
tree because there is
a nest up there.

Daloney

TEACHINGS OF THE EARTH

by Corby Ingold

Teachings of the Earth -- what a beautiful, and inexhaustible, subject. I have been asked to write this article in honor of our beloved elder Taqseblu, Vi Hilbert, and also to honor the teachings of her nephew Whistemenknee, Johnny Moses, from whom I have learned so much.

The Teachings of the Earth is a subject too vast for any man or woman to ever really do justice to. All we can do is to offer our own unique perspective on this timeless subject. The teachings of the Earth come ultimately from Earth Mother herself. But I must also acknowledge the many strong and beautiful elders who have generously shared ancient teachings of Mother Earth: Ivy and Barney Guss of Tulalip, WA; my wise Quileute elders, Eleanor Kaikaka, Lillian Pullen, Helen Harrison, David Forlines and Lela May Morgenroth from LaPush, WA; Subiyay, Bruce Miller, from Skokomish, WA, and of course, Whistemenknee and Taqseblu.

First, Earth is Mother, Mama, the Giver of All. She is both source and goal. To aspire to be greater than the Earth is hubris, the word the Greeks used to mean a kind of dangerous arrogance that usually precedes a fall from grace. But falling is good, if in so doing we fall back to Earth, our source, and come to our senses. For it is not our senses, sublime, acute, and finely tuned, that have led us away from Mother Earth and the ancient rapture of oneness with her. It is our minds, or at least the over-stimulated, over-educated, restless, ungrounded part of our minds that drives us ever away from our true home in search of illusions and unattainable desires. But home is here, beneath our feet, within the humble ground, as all indigenous peoples have known for thousands of years.

So first, it seems, we must empty ourselves in order to receive the gifts of Mother Earth. Empty ourselves of illusions of separation from her. Empty ourselves of our own self-importance, our business, who we think we are and what we think we know. Empty ourselves to become still, and open to what is. When we, even we, human beings who have raped, destroyed and polluted her for many thousands of years, become still and open, she will still speak to us. And she does not speak so much to our over-stimulated brains, but to our hearts, and directly to our bodies through our senses. For the miracle is, Mother Earth still loves us, still, after all we have done. But, like all mothers, she knows there are consequences for her children's bad behavior.

According to the ancient prophecies of the SiSiWiss (Sacred Breath) tradition shared by Whistemenknee, Johnny Moses, the

nephew of our beloved Tqseblu, we are now in the time of the Fourth World, when many of the prophecies are becoming reality. The shaking up of the Earth's tides and cycles, global warming, the experience of having "all four seasons at once", these are all part of the Fourth World prophecies, originally revealed at the Swinomish Medicine House in 1987. In this Fourth World time we can no longer afford the luxury of being "fence sitters", but must increasingly speak up and become spiritual warriors in defense of our Mother Earth. Mother Earth, *Kazili* in the ancient Straits Salish SiSiWiss language, is the basis, the matrix out of which all we are or can be is formed. She is the foundation, the basis of all of our lives, no matter how big or important we think we are. To live without expressing gratitude to her, our divine and terrestrial mother, every day, is unthinkable for a spiritual person. But also, in this time of the Fourth World, we must take up her cause publicly, politically and eloquently, to speak in her defense and to take direct political and social action where needed to defend our Mother against those who would waste, use and abuse her. Again, the ancient teachings of the First Peoples of this land give us true and positive models of how to proceed in these challenging times.

As a *pastud*, one of the children of the invaders from across the water who came to interrupt and destroy the lifeways and powerful spirituality of these First Nation peoples, I shall forever bear grief and shame in my heart for what my ancestors did to them. And as the recipient of the sacred teachings of how to truly live in a graceful and prayerful way upon this sacred Earth Mother's body which they so generously shared, I shall be forever grateful and in their debt. Despite the grave and tragic losses they have endured at the hands of the European immigrants, the First Nation peoples of this sacred, holy and beautiful Northwest Coast have shown themselves to be gracious, generous and kind beyond belief or expectation. Truly, in the words of the Northern Salish dialect, they are *Siem Mulsteemo*, "high class people". Thus have they not only shared the rich gifts of their cultural and spiritual traditions with all peoples, but they have demonstrated to the newcomers to this land a way of living in harmony with the Mother Earth that is at once graceful, ecologically sound, and spiritually inspired. My Native teachers and elders have shown me a way to truly live as a dedicated child of our beautiful Mother Earth, to walk with dignity and respect beside Salmon, Bear, Wolf, Fern and Cedar, and to give thanks every day for the mysterious Beauty that surrounds us and flows through all things.

Corby Ingold received the Medicine name Tah Chaek Kah Kae from Johnny Moses at the Swinomish Medicine House in 1991. He lives in Seattle where he writes, performs music with his band and works for the University of Washington.

The Earth is our First Teacher

A Story of Flight

by

Barbara Dannacher Russell

The summer had been warm and the deck provided a scenic view of the water beyond. I often sat here, observing movements and life beyond the railings. The bobbing of bufflehead ducks and bathing eagles in winter; double crested cormorants spreading their wings to dry in fall; the haunting call of the common loon in spring; the stealthy, silent swim of beavers at sunset; and an occasional otter every few years. This day I sat to ponder my situation and gain strength from the sun.

Bathing in the afternoon light was my retreat, my mirror on my life even as I observed the life around me. This day I wondered where my life would lead me next. Shall I take a class that my friend recommended to me? Do I want to do what she does? I certainly could not do it as well, nor with such depth and focus. It is an intriguing thought, though, to learn what she knows. But how could I integrate it with my own background and experiences; how would my personality shade the lessons and would that be good enough? Where was my true path?

These questions were not new, nor were they easily resolved. They presented themselves to me over and over again. Who am I and how can I contribute? What is my role? How do I fit? At 54 years old, these questions had become harder rather than easier. And I still did not know the answer.

Suddenly, a song sparrow flew barely 4 feet in front of me.

Then another came along and flew right next to it. The two sparrows swam through the air, coming close to each other but not touching, soaring in front of my eyes. Then, as suddenly as they had come, they flew off in different directions.

Hmm. This is just what I had been thinking about! Both were birds. Both were birds of the same type. Both had similar training. Both could fly. Yet, they each flew their own route and made their own way. Yes, despite taking the same training as my friend, it would be my own interpretation of that training that would take me on a path would be uniquely mine. Just as I could not imitate – nor would I want to—anyone else with a similar background, I had my own flight path to follow. Yes, this is a good lesson.

Wait, now what? Here comes a moth!! It, too, flies just feet in front of me. It flutters with a different gait, a different rhythm, a different tempo, then disappears. Yes, this is also the lesson.

I am my own unique person. I will apply to my life my own way of living that life based on the experiences and knowledge that only I have gained. It can be no other way. Both bird and moth are beautiful. No one has more value than the other.

Both have a valued place in this world, both are needed. It is the same with people.