

## In her blindness- Aunt Susie

The little wild blackberry called s̄x̄əḡw̄əd in dx̄w̄ləšucid - [Lushootseed-Puget Sound Salish], was and is the most important of our berries.

Dora Solomon gave us a story of its origin. Myrtle Woodcock gave us another story embracing its power to invoke and portray precious emotion.

Louise Anderson required the family to pick 100 quarts of berries each year so that guests could be offered and served the choicest of desserts when they came to visit.

Every year, Aunt Susie made it her practice also to pick and preserve an ample supply for her family and friends.

ʔal sʔubadils, λucut tsi siʔab ḡw̄əq̄w̄ul̄c̄əʔ, x̄w̄uʔələ ləq̄w̄ələx̄w̄ k̄w̄i s̄x̄əḡw̄əd. ʔa x̄w̄uʔələ ʔuʔaʔsil, dx̄w̄cutəb tiʔəʔ cədił s̄x̄əḡw̄əd, “ʔa ʔu k̄w̄i łuʔəλ, c̄əb̄əbiluł, ʔa ʔu k̄w̄i łuc̄əb̄əb. łuʔa c̄əd ʔu ləsk̄w̄ədyalc ḡw̄əl x̄w̄i k̄w̄i ḡw̄at łul̄c̄əb̄əb c̄əda x̄w̄ul̄ łux̄w̄iłil.”

As she aged, Aunt Susie slowly lost her vision. She depended on her sensitive fingers to serve her as she continued to practice and provide for her own and her family's needs. She wove rugs out of worn out garments and she continued to knit sox and other apparel from wool cut from sheep.

As July and the warmth of summer approached, Aunt Susie could be heard addressing the berries that were ripening. With a voice choked with emotion and empathy, she voiced their feelings in Lushootseed she said - “who will be coming to gather me? Will anybody be coming to pick me or will I just be hanging on these vines, wasting the purpose of my being!

Aunt Susie gave us so many things, I thank her spirit for this memory and I shall forever honor and enjoy the gift of the little wild blackberry who ripens each year, hoping to be used joyfully by those who can and do appreciate the creator's most precious gift to us. Dora Solomon says, “this berry is the Blood of the Indian”. Myrtle Woodcock reminds us that it reflects the pure and true love that is shared!

taq̄w̄šəblu shares these feelings with you that you also may anticipate the ripening of our special little blackberry and savor her beautiful gift of life.

Traditionally from taq̄w̄šəblu [Vi Hilbert] 6-15-99