Poems

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Salmon Song

My ancestors sang their bones
up this same dark river
skin flayed and scarlet
a banner of passion abandoned
on the river stones.
Bones of my ancestors carry me
threading a needle through time.
Flesh of my ancestors feeds me
a flame licking upstream.
Spirit of my ancestors carries me
a seed in the arms of the wind.

Searching for the Pattern

Sagebrush, pungent now after the rumbling thunder storm,
rests easily in the vast silent landscape, silvery under the bowl of stars.
   Even the waterfall at the creek is invisible to the ear.
The Milky Way floats in space outside the cabin door.
I hesitate to break the silence with this old silver flute,
yet finally take it to my lips, this neglected friend,
With fingering unfamiliar after all these years, I reach
for each note searching slowly, blindly for the pattern.
Between the long whole notes, during the rest notes,
a chorus rises out of the desert night — wild coyote music.
   They sing out from the creek, the flute replies.
   Another chorus calls from the cliffs.
We call out in the dark — listening, calling into the distance.
the pattern slowly unfolds in the calling, the pausing,
   the listening, the return, the calling,
   the pausing, the listening, the return.
The Key
The key
is in the breastbone
where the heart
rises up to meet the day.

There is a Stone
There is a stone
wearing a coat of green moss
near the lake.
It is listening to the water’s edge.

Tree
Outside the window,
breathing in the wind,
bending without breaking,
cellular awareness,
a sensing of roots,
and deep water strength;
the air,
the endless space,
surrounds and permeates
your every fiber,
estles in beside your needles
and holds you.