

breathed poison all my life, like the maggot that lives and breeds in shit? Do you take me for innocent, my fellow maggot, colluding Reader? I knew what was in that box my brother-in-law left here. But remember, I'm married to his brother Hindsight, and I have my own ideas about what's in the bottom of the box, underneath the war, plague, famine, holocaust, and Finbul Winter. Prometheus, Foresight, Fire-giver, the Great Civiliser, named it Hope. Indeed I hope he was right. But I won't mind if the box is empty—if all there is in it is some room, some time. Time to look forward, surely; time to look back; and room, room enough to look around.

Oh, to have room enough! A big room, that holds animals, birds, fish, bugs, trees, rocks, clouds, wind, thunder. A living room.

Take your time, now.

Well, now, where's the fire? Officer, my wife is having a baby in the back seat! Now, now, none of that now. No hurry. Take your time. Here, take it please. I give it to you, it's yours.



TIME AND THE CITY

The City

The word *kach*, city, was not used of the communities of the Valley or its neighbors; small or large, they were all called *choum*, town.

Stone Telling calls the Condor towns *kach*, translating their word; normally the word was used only in two compounds: *taukach*, the City of Man, and *yaukach*, the City of Mind. Both of these words need some explaining.



YAIKACH: THE CITY OF MIND.

Some eleven thousand sites all over the planet were occupied by independent, self-contained, self-regulating communities of cybernetic devices or beings—computers with mechanical extensions. This network of intercommunicating centers formed a single entity, the City of Mind.

Yaukach meant both the sites or centers and the whole network or entity. Most of the sites were small, less than an acre, but several huge desert Cites served as experimental stations and manufacturing centers or contained accelerators, launching pads, and so on. All City facilities were underground and domed, to obviate damage to or from the local environment. It appears that an ever-increasing number were located on other planets or bodies of the solar system, in satellites, or in probes voyaging in deep space.

The business of the City of Mind was, apparently, the business of any species or individual: to go on existing.

Its existence consisted essentially in information. Its observable activity was entirely related to the collection, storage, and collation of data, including the historical records of cybernetic and

human populations back as far as material was available from documentary or archaeological evidence; description and history of all life forms on the planet, ancient and current; physical description of the material world on all levels from the subatomic through the chemical, geological, biological, atmospheric, astronomical, and cosmic, in the historical, current, and predictive modes; pure mathematics; mathematical description and prediction derived from data in statistical form; exploration and mapping of the interior of the planet, the depths and surfaces of the continents and seas, other bodies in the solar system including the sun, and an expanding area of near interstellar space; research and development of technologies ancillary to the collection, storage, and interpretation of data; and the improvement and continuous enhancement of the facilities and capacities of the network as a whole—in other words, conscious, self-directed evolution.

It appears that this evolution proceeded consistently in the direct linear mode.

Evidently it was in the interest of the City to maintain and foster the diversity of forms and modes of existence which made up the substance of the information which informed their existence—I apologise for the tautology but find it inevitable under the circumstances. Everything was grist to the Mind's mill; therefore they destroyed nothing. Neither did they foster anything. They seem not to have interfered in any way with any other species.

Metals and other raw materials needed for their physical plants and technical experimentation were mined by their robot extensions in poisoned areas or on the Moon and other planets; this exploitation seems to have been as careful as it was efficient.

The City had no relation to plant life at all, except as it was the subject of their observation, a source of data. Their relation to the animal world was similarly restricted. Their relation to the human species was similarly restricted, with one exception: communication, the two-way exchange of information.

WUDUN: THE EXCHANGES.

Computer terminals, each linked to nearby ground or satellite Cites and hence to the entire vast network, were located in human communities worldwide. Any settled group of fifty or more people qualified for an Exchange, which was installed at the request of the human community by City robots, and maintained by both robot and human inspection and repair.

The Valley could have had eight or nine Exchanges, but settled for one, installed at Wakwaha. The Kesh word for Exchange was *wudun*. Information went both ways through the Exchanges; the nature and

quantity of the information was up to the human end of the partnership. The City did not issue unrequested information; it sometimes requested, never demanded, information.

The Wakwaha Exchange was programmed for routine issue of weather forecasts, warnings of natural disasters, train schedules, and some types of agricultural advice. Medical information, technical instructions, or any other news or material requested by an individual was furnished, using the universal language of the City, *tok*, which I have capitalised throughout this book to distinguish it from Kesh or other human words.

If no information was requested, none was issued. Whatever data were properly requested were issued, whether a recipe for yogurt or an update on the incredibly sophisticated and destructive weaponry developed by the City of Mind as part of its pursuit of research as a cognitive end in itself. The City offered its data absolutely freely to human use, without restriction, as a function of its perfect nonmanipulative objectivity. Its infrequent requests for information from the human community were usually for data in such fields as current styles in the arts of life, examples of pottery, poetry, kinship systems, politics, and other such matters which robot and satellite observers found difficult to obtain without interference in the behavior of the subjects observed, or not easily amenable to quantification.

In settled human groups with well-established cultural interchange patterns such as the people of the Na Valley, instruction in computer use was part of ordinary education; in the Valley this principally involved learning TOK. A convenient side-effect of this was the use of TOK—which could be spoken as well as typed into the Exchange terminals—as a worldwide lingua franca for traders and travellers and people wishing to communicate with people of another language directly or through the Exchanges. In the Valley, in fact, this use of TOK rather overshadowed its original purpose. But anybody who was interested in working with the terminal could augment their training at will. The City would provide training on any level, from simple gameplaying to the heights of pure mathematics or theoretical physics, for anyone desiring to master some part of the infinite complexities of information retrieval. The Memory of the City of Mind was incalculably vast. Endless knowledge was there, if one could get at it; for the goal of the Mind was to become a total mental model or replica of the Universe.



As with the Universe, however, the problem of intelligibility remained.

People whose gifts so disposed them might make communication with the City of Mind their life's pursuit; they lived in Wakwaha and worked at the Exchange at scheduled times. Others knew and cared nothing about the Exchange or the City. To most people, the Exchange was a useful and necessary link to such necessary and undesirable elements of existence as earthquakes, fires, foreigners, and freight schedules; while the City of Mind was one of the innumerable kinds of being in the world, all of them interconnected, like a forest, or an anthill, or the stars.

If the people of the Valley took the City of Mind for granted as a "natural thing," as we would say, the City itself seemed to recognise its ancient origins in human artifacts by the TOK word for the human species and its members, which translates as "makers." And the City's maintenance of the Exchanges for human use seems to show that it recognised humankind as related to itself by the capacity for mentation, language, and mathematics: a primitive ancestor, or divergent and retarded kindred, left far behind in the March of Mind. There would of course be no ethical or emotional color in such an assumption of evolutionary superiority. The assumption would be strictly rational, in an entity that was strictly rational, as well as being several lightyears larger than the solar system, and immortal.

Thoughtful and educated people in the Valley recognised the incalculable treasures put at their disposal by the City of Mind; but they were not disposed to regard human existence either as information or as communication, nor intelligent mortality as a means to the ends of immortal intelligence. In their view, the two species had diverged to the extent that competition between them was nonexistent, cooperation limited, and the question of superiority and inferiority bootless.

"The City's freedom is our freedom reversed," said the Archivist of Wakwaha, discussing these matters. "The City keeps. It keeps the dead. When we need what's dead, we go to the Memory. The dead is bodiless, occupying no space or time. In the Libraries we keep heavy, time-consuming, roomy things. When they die we take them out. If the City wants them it takes them in. It always takes them. It's an excellent arrangement."

TAVKACH: THE CITY OF MAN.

This word may be translated as civilisation, or as history.

The historical period, the era of human existence that followed the Neolithic era for some thousands of years in various parts of the earth, and from which prehistory and "primitive cultures" are specifically excluded, appears to be what is referred to by the Kesh phrases "the

time outside," "when they lived outside the world," and "the City of Man."

It is very difficult to be sure of these meanings when dealing with a language and way of thought in which no distinction is made between human and natural history or between objective and subjective fact and perception, in which neither chronological nor causal sequence is considered an adequate reflection of reality, and in which time and space are so muddled together that one is never sure whether they are talking about an era or an area.

My impression, however, is that this period in which we live, our civilisation, Civilisation as we know it, appeared in Valley thought as a remote region, set apart from the community and continuity of human/animal/earthly existence—a sort of peninsula sticking out from the mainland, very thickly built upon, very heavily populated, very obscure, and very far away.

The boundaries of this era-area, the City of Man, were not dates. Linear chronology was left to the Memory of the City of Mind. Indeed, the City of Mind, the computer network, including the Exchanges, was referred to as being "outside the world"—existing in the same time-region or mode as the City of Man, civilisation. The relation between the City and the Valley is not clear. How does one move from "inside" the world to "outside" it, and back?

They were aware of this discontinuity, this gap or lack of connection, perceiving it as necessary and significant.

Indeed, though I am not sure of this, they may have perceived it as the most important thing—to them—about civilisation, about history in our terms: that gap, that leap, break, flip, that reversal from in to out, from out to in. That is the hinge.

Several efforts to effect that reversal or make that leap follow. When I asked the Archivist of the Library of Wakwaha for a piece that told about the City of Man, she gave me the story called "A Hole in the Air"; and the Speaker of the Obsidian in Chumo told me "Big Man and Little Man" as a "story about the outside time and the inside time." Then come the results of several efforts to get at what we would call a history of the Valley. I can't call them fruitless, although it was rather as if one went for grapes and returned with grapefruit. These are the tales about beginnings, and the section called "Time in the Valley."



A Hole in the Air

There was a man a while ago who found a hole in the air, up near Pass Valley in the Range of Light. He built a pole house around the hole to keep it from getting blown away or moved around by the wind. Then he said heyra and walked into it.

He came out through the hole to the outside world. At first he didn't know where he was. It seemed like the same place; the rocks and peaks were the same ones he knew around Pass Valley, but the air smelled different and was a different color, and as he looked he saw the trees weren't the same trees, and the pole house he'd built wasn't there. He built another one, and then he set off walking downhill, southwestwards, towards the Inland Sea coast. The first thing he saw, he didn't see: the water there. It was a great valley of land without water, covered with walls, roofs, roads, walls, roofs, roads, walls, roofs, roads, as far as he could see.

Where Pass River Canyon turns south he followed it, and came across a big road, and the first thing that happened to him was he was killed. A four-wheeled motor hit him at great speed and went over him and went on.

He was partly outside the world and still partly inside it, so that he died but could get up again; nine times he would be able to die, they say. He got up from being dead, and another motor hit him and ran its wheels over him. He died and got up and another motor hit him. Before he could get off that road he got killed three times.

The road was coated with rotten blood and grease and flesh and fur and feathers. It stank. There were buzzards in the lodgepole pines along the roadside waiting for the motors to stop going by so they could eat what got killed. But the motors never stopped going up and down, up and down, whizzing with a loud noise up and down.

There were some houses among the pines back from that road, and the man from Pass River went to one of them. He went very cautiously. He was afraid of what he might see in the house. Nobody was moving in the yard. He came up, slow and quiet, and looked in the window. He saw what he had been afraid to see: people in the house looking at him over their backbones, between their shoulderblades.

He stayed still, not knowing what else to do, and after a while he saw that they were looking through him. They couldn't see anything that was even partly inside the world.

It seemed that sometimes one of them caught a glimpse of him from

the corner of the eye, and didn't know what it was, and looked away again.

He thought that if he was careful there was no need for fear, and after a while he came into the house. The backward-head people were sitting down at a high table to eat. He watched them eating, and got to feeling very hungry. He went into their kitchen to take some food. The kitchen was full of boxes and the boxes were full of boxes. Finally he found some food. He tasted it and spat it out: it was poisoned. He tried something else, and something else: it was all poisoned. The backward-head people were eating the poisoned food out of basins of pure copper, eating and talking, all sitting at the table with their heads facing away from it. He went out into the yard and found apple trees bearing fruit, but when he bit into an apple it tasted like brass, like bluestone. The skin was poisoned.

He came back inside and listened to the backward-head people talking. It sounded to him like they were saying, "Kill people! Kill people!" (dushe ushud, dushe ushud). That was the sound of their words. After eating, the men backward-heads went outdoors, smoking tobacco and carrying guns. The women backward-heads went to the kitchen and smoked cannabis. The man from Pass River followed the men. He thought they might do some hunting, since they had been saying, "Kill," and he could get some fresh food. But there were hardly any people except the backward-heads in those hills. If there were any, they hid, or plants, some flies, and one buzzard. The backward-head men saw the buzzard circling too, and shot at her. They missed, and went on, smoking tobacco. The air now was getting full of smoke all around them. The Pass River man got worried, thinking these men must be making a war. He didn't want to get mixed up in that, so he left them and went away, going downhill, at a distance from the big road he had been killed on. The farther he went the thicker the smoke got. He thought there must be a forest fire.

He came to the edge of another, still wider road, full of motors going very fast with a loud noise as far as he could see up into the mountains and down towards the sun setting across the valley full of walls and roofs. Everything on the road was dead. The air was thick and



yellow, and he kept looking for the forest fire. But all the time he was there outside the world it was like that.

He went down among the walls and roofs, the roads and houses, walking on, walking on, and did not come to the end of them. He never came to the end of them.

In all those houses the backward-head people lived. They had electrical wires in their ears, and were deaf. They smoked tobacco day and night, and were continually making war. He tried to get away from the war by going on, but it was everywhere they lived, and they lived everywhere. He saw them hiding and killing each other. Sometimes the houses burned for miles and miles. But there were so many of those people that there was no end to them.

The man from Pass River learned how to eat some of their food, and he lived by stealing, and kept walking through those streets looking among those houses for some people who lived inside the world. He thought there had to be some there. He walked singing, so that they could hear him if they were there. Nobody heard him or saw him until the day he turned to go back to the mountains. He was sick from that food and from breathing smoke, and felt as if he might be dying, not outside but inside himself; so he wanted to go back to Pass River, to his own place. As he turned around in the street a woman looked at him. She saw him. He looked at her: she was looking at him over her breasts. He was so glad to see a woman with her head on straight that he ran between the motors and the high houses towards her with his hands held out. She turned and ran away. She was afraid of him. He ran looking for her and calling a long time among the high houses, but never found her. She had hidden away.

He went back along the roads to the wide road up into the mountains. He was nearly dead when he got past the last houses, into the granite land, and started to climb up Pass River Valley. The river was running very small, almost dry; he could not understand why it was like that. Presently some buzzards came from the granite peaks and began to talk to him. They made the gyre over his head, saying, "We're dying of hunger. There's nothing here to eat. Lie down, be dead, be food, and we'll take you inside the world again."

He said to them, "I have another way."

But when he came to the place where he had built a pole house to protect the hole in the air, it was gone. The backward-head people had dammed Pass River at the narrow part of the canyon. It was all under water in Pass Valley. The trees and rocks were under the water, the place where the hole in the air had been was under the water. The water was orange-colored and smelled sour. There were no fish in it, but there were huge houses without windows around it.

That was that man's river, Pass River. He knew its springs. That was

this valley. When he saw that those places in his heart had been destroyed, that they were dead, he suffered great pain. He sat on the white granite rocks weeping in pain. His heart hurt and would not keep time.

The buzzards came again and stood on the boulders near him. "Let us have you," they said. "We are dying of hunger." That seemed good to him, so he lay down in the sunlight on the granite, and waited, and soon he died.

He came back inside the first pole house he had built. He was very weak and ill, and couldn't move at all. After a day, somebody from his town came by there, and he called to them. They came, and brought him water from Pass River to drink. They brought his family there. He lived a few days, and told them what he had done and seen and heard outside the world; then he died wholly. He died of grief and poison.

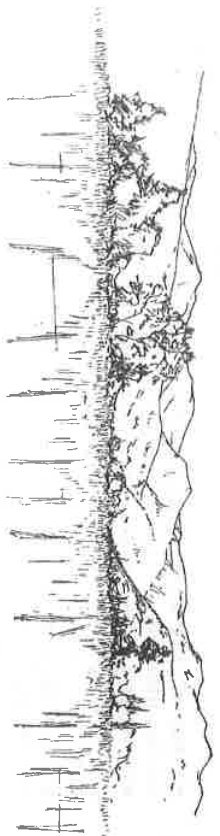
Nobody else wanted to go through that hole in the air. They took the pole house down and let the wind blow it away.

Big Man and Little Man

The stars were his semen, they say. He was really big, so big that he filled up the entire world outside the world, everything there was. There wasn't room for anything else.

If he looked around from outside the world he saw the world inside, and he wanted to be in it, get it pregnant with himself, or maybe he wanted to eat it, get it inside himself. But he couldn't get there. He could only see it backwards. So he made some people to go there, to go across. He made a Little Man and sent him across, inside the world. But he made him with his head on backwards.

Little Man went across, and he didn't stay. He came right back complaining. "I don't like it there," he said. So Big Man put him to sleep and while he was sleeping made a thing like a woman out of dirt, out of red adobe, they say. It looked like a woman, it fooled Little Man when he woke up. Big Man said, "Now you go there and breed." So Little Man took the thing and went back inside the world. He fucked it and it made copies. He kept doing that until there were as many of him as mosquitoes



Soul Mountain

on River of the Marshes—as many as spiders in autumn—more. More than anything except maybe sand. All the same, no matter how many of him there were, he didn't like it there. He was afraid. He didn't belong there inside the world, he had no mother, only a father. So he killed whatever he was afraid of.

He cut down every tree he saw, he shot every animal he saw, he made war on all the people. He made guns to shoot flies with, bullets to shoot fleas with. He was afraid of mountains and made mashers to flatten them, he was afraid of valleys and made fillers to fill them up, he was afraid of grass and burned it and put stones where it was. He was really afraid of water, because of the way water is. He tried to use it all up, burying springs, damming rivers, making wells. But if you drink, you piss. Water will come back down. As the desert grows so does the sea. So Little Man poisoned the sea. The fish all died.

Everything was dying then, everybody was poisoned. The clouds were poison.

That stink of poisoned things, dead things, dead people, that stink was strong. It came outside the world. It came there and filled it up. It filled up Big Man's nose, that stink, and he said, "It's nothing but corruption, that world!" He turned away then and went away, farther outside, clean gone. He had nothing more to do with anything.

When he was gone there was some room left. A buzzard came out of that empty room. A fly came out of it. A coyote came by, sniffing. All that dying and stinking, the death-eaters smelled that. Aaah! They began sneaking into the world at night. Condor and buzzard and vulture and raven and crow and coyote and dog and maggot-fly and blowfly and maggot and worm, they came sneaking around, creeping around, eating the dead. They took that dead meat into their mouths and swallowed it. They made it food.

There were some human people along with them. Maybe they were some people who had been there all along, hiding. They had lost that war. They were weak, dirty, hungry, no-account people. They must have been born with mothers, somehow, some of them were women. They were so hungry they weren't afraid to eat carrion with the buzzard and

dung with the dogs. They weren't afraid, they were too low down, too deep inside. But they were cold. They were hungry and cold. They made houses out of rubble and bones. Inside those houses they made fires of bones, and they asked the coyotes to help them, they asked for help.

Coyote came. Where she walked she made the wilderness. She dug canyons, she shat mountains. Under the buzzard's wings the forest grew. Where the worm was in the dirt, the spring ran. Things went on, people went on. Only Little Man didn't go on. He was dead. He died of fear.

A NOTE ON THE BACKWARD-HEAD PEOPLE.

The awfulest ghoul of the Valley was a human being with its head on backwards. Backward-Heads populated ghost-stories; in popular tales they lurked all about the poisoned lands and at the brink of polluted waters. An imagined glimpse of one would send a child screaming from the woods—and not without reason, for the most fearful of the White Clowns of the Sun was the unearthly tall, thin, silent Wry Neck, who walked backward and looked forward. In formal drama, for a character merely to look suddenly around over the shoulder was a bad omen. Owls were respected for their supposed ability to defeat the baleful influence of the Backward-Head people, probably because owls have the same talent for looking straight behind themselves.

These figures of lore and superstition seem to have been the literalisation of a metaphor.

In the region of the Na Valley, especially to the immediate south and east, there had been some very large and recent events on the geologic scale: earthquakes and shifts along fault lines, vast subsidences and local elevations, all of which had, among other effects, left most of what we know as the Great Valley of California a shallow sea or salt-marsh, and brought the Gulf of California on up into Arizona and Nevada. Yet even such changes had not effaced or obscured the effects of older human events, the traces of civilisation.

The people of the Valley did not conceive that such acts as they saw and felt much evidence of in their world—the permanent desolation of vast regions through release of radioactive or poisonous substances, the permanent genetic impairment from which they suffered most directly in the form of sterility, stillbirth, and congenital disease—had not been deliberate. In their view, human beings did not do things accidentally. Accidents happened to people, but what people *did* they were responsible for. So these things human beings had done to the world must have been deliberate and conscious acts of evil, serving the purposes of wrong understanding, fear, and greed. The people who had done these things had done wrong mindfully. They had had their heads on wrong.

Beginnings

FOUR BEGINNINGS.

Recorded as told by Cooper of the Red Adobe of Oumnaith.

How could it begin once only? That doesn't seem sensible. Things must have ended and begun again, so that it can go on, the way people live and die, all the people, the stars also.

My uncle told us in the heyimas that there are four times the world has ended that we know about. We don't know very well because these are difficult things to know.

The first time, he said, there were no human people here, only plants growing, fish, and people with four, six, or eight legs, walking and crawling. At that time balls of fire fell out of the sky, meteors, huge ones in great numbers, and they set fires all over the world. The air was bad, the smoke was so thick that the sunlight didn't shine through. Almost everybody died. It was cold for a long, long time after that. But the people that were left learned how to live in the cold. And two-legged people came into the world then, in the cold, when the valleys were filled with ice from the mountains clear down to the sea. The meteor showers laie in the dry season, the Puna's Shootingstars, those are a reminder of that time.

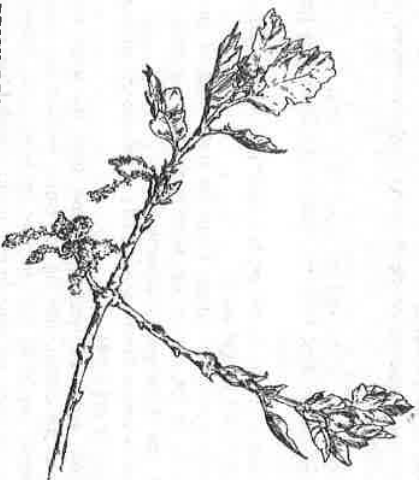
After that it went on getting warmer and getting warmer, until it got too hot. There were too many volcanoes. The ice all melted so that the seas got deeper and deeper. The sea-clouds rained all the time, the rivers were always in flood, until there was sea everywhere and only some mountains sticking up out of the sea, and mudflats everywhere, and the tides coming across them. The springs were under saltwater then. Almost everybody died on the land. A few people stayed alive in the mudflats, drinking rain, eating shellfish and worms. The rainbow is a reminder of that time, the bridge of the shining people.

After that it dried out and went on awhile, a long time, but there were only two human people left from the mudflat time, a brother and sister of one House, and they had sex. So those people were born wrong. They were crazy, they tried to make the world. All they could do was make it end again, all they could do was initiate what happened before. So what they did caused fires and smoke and bad air and then ice and cloud and cold, everybody dying again. So they died out. The places people don't go are the reminders of that time.

So when it began to get better the people started coming back, but not very many, because there was sickness in the world. Everybody got

sick, and no singing or bringing-in could heal them, the plants and animals and humans, all growing things, and even the rocks were sick; even the dirt was poisoned. The moon was dark, like burnt paper, and the sun was like the moon is now. It was the dark, cold time. Nothing was born right. Then something grew up here, something pretty. Another little thing sprouted there. Things began to grow right. The water came out of the rocks clear again. The people began to come back. They are still coming back, my uncle said.

He was the speaker of the Red Adobe here, a scholar, who lived a long time in Wakwaha, learning.



THE RED BRICK PEOPLE.

Recorded in conversation with Giver of the Yellow Adobe of Chukulmas.

The people who lived around here a long time ago we call the red brick people. They built walls of thin, hard, well-baked brick, a dark red color. In the right place underground those bricks can last a long time. Two heyimas here, the Serpentine and the Yellow Adobe, are built partly with those old bricks, and there are some used for ornament in the Tower. There are records of the red brick people in the Memory of the Exchange, of course, but I don't think many people have ever looked at them. They would be hard to make sense of. The City mind thinks that sense has been made if a writing is read, if a message is transmitted, but we don't think that way. In any case, to learn a great deal about those people would be to cry in the ocean; whereas using their bricks in one of our buildings is satisfying to the mind.

I'm trying to think what anybody has taught about the red brick people. They lived on the coast and inland, before the water came into

the Inland Sea, some of the old cities under the water must be theirs. It seems to me they didn't use wheels. They made complex musical instruments. Their music was recorded and kept in the Memory; there's a composer here in town, Takukunno, who's studied it and used it in making music, the way the builders used the bricks.

What does it mean to cry in the ocean? Oh, well, you know, to add something where nothing's needed, or where so much is needed that it's no use even trying, so you just sit down and cry...

COYOTE WAS RESPONSIBLE.

From the written sequence of the Planting Lodge dramatic wakwa "The Bean Flowers."

The Five People say. Where did we come from? How did we get here? *The Wise Old Man replies.* From the mind of the Eternal! By the thinking of the Sacred Thought!

The Five People throw beans at him and say. Where did we come from? How did we get here?

The Old Talking Woman replies. From the beginnings of the earth! In the sperm, in the egg, in the wombs of all the animals, you were carried, you developed, you came forth!

The Five People throw beans at her and say. Where did we come from? How did we get here?

Coyote replies. From the west you came, from the west, from lngasi Atai, over the ocean, dancing you came, walking you came.

The Five People say. What luck, to have got here to the Valley!

Coyote says. Go back, go jump in the ocean. I wish I had never thought of you. I wish I had never agreed to you. I wish you'd let my country be.

The Five People throw beans at Coyote and chase her away, shouting. Coyote! Coyote slept with her grandfather! Coyote steals chickens! Coyote has ticks in her asshole!



Time in the Valley

"How long have your people lived in the Valley?"

"All along."

But she looks puzzled, a little uncertain of the answer, because the question is strange. You wouldn't ask, "How long have fish lived in the river? How long has the grass grown on the hills?" and expect an exact answer, a date, a number of years...

Perhaps you would. Perhaps I would. And not unreasonably. After all, fish have lived in rivers only since fish, in the charted course of evolution, came to be. Most of the grasses that grow on the hills didn't grow on these hills until Anno Domini 1759, when the Spanish came to sow their wild oats in California.

And the woman of the Valley is not altogether ignorant of that way of being minded, of the possibility of asking, and answering, those questions. But the use of the question and the truth of the answer might appear to her relative and not at all self-evident. If we kept pushing for dates and epochs, she might say, "You talk all beginnings and ends, spring and ocean but no river."

A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end, Aristotle said, and nobody has proved him wrong yet; and that which has no beginning and no end but is all middle is neither story nor history. What is it, then?

The universe of seventeenth-century Europe began 4400 years ago in the Middle East, the universe of twentieth-century North America began 24,000,000 years ago somewhere else with a big bang AND THERE WAS LIGHT, and they will end; that follows, in judgment with trumpets or in the thin, dark, cold soup of entropy. Other times, other places may not begin or end that way at all; consult the Universal History of the Hindus for one of the alternate views. Certainly the Valley doesn't share those beginnings or those ends; but it seems to have none of its own. It is all middle.

Surely they have a Creation Myth, an Origin Myth? Oh, yes, indeed they do.

"How did human people come to live in the Valley?"

"Oh, Coyote," she says. We are sitting now amid the alien corn, in the shade of the live oaks on the little slope across the creek just above the Hinge of Sinshan. The town pursues its activities off to our right—not a breakneck pursuit; occasionally a door closes, a hammer knocks, a voice speaks; but it is very quiet in the summer sun. To our left in the grove and meadow where the five roofs of the heyimas are, nobody

moves at all, except high overhead the Sinshan hawk crying his melancholy kee-ee! kee-ee!

"You know," Coyote was going along, and she saw this thing out on the water, on the sea-water, out past Hidaí Point. She thought, 'I never saw anything like that before. I don't like it,' and she started throwing rocks at it, trying to sink it before it came to the shore. But it kept coming closer and closer, coming from the west, this thing moving around on the water where it was shining in the sun. Coyote kept picking up clods and rocks and throwing them, and she yelled, 'Go away! Go back!' But it came right up to the water just beyond the breakers. Coyote could see then it was people, human people, holding hands and dancing on the water. They were right on the water, like waterskater insects. They were singing, 'Hey! We're coming!' Coyote kept throwing rocks and clods, and they caught them and swallowed them, and kept on singing. They began to sink, they broke through the skin of the water, but by then they were through the breakers and across the bar, in the Mouths of the Na where the water's shallow, and they kept wading up the channels. Five of them, in the channels of the Mouths of the River. Coyote was scared. She was angry. She ran up into the Northeast Range, setting forest fires; she ran up around the Mountain to Clear Lake and got one of the volcanoes there to erupt, getting the air black with ashes; she ran back down the Southwest Range setting fires, with her tail on fire she came running back down, and at Te Shallows in the middle of the Valley she met those human people coming upstream. They were walking on the riverbottom now. Ahead of them was fire and burning, smoke and ash, heat and darkness, a terrible wind full of embers and gas. Everything was burning. They kept walking on the riverbottom, through the water, very slowly, upstream. They were singing:

'Hey, Coyote, we are coming!
You called us, you sang us,
Coyote, we are coming!'

Then Coyote said, 'There's no use arguing with these people. I fed them dirt and stones and now they belong here. Next thing they'll come up out of the river onto the land. I'm going away.' She put her tail down low and went away up into the Southwest Range, up Bear Creek Canyon there, onto Sinshan Mountain. That's where she went.

"The people came up out of the River when the fires died out. For a long time they lived on rock and ashes and dirt and bones and charcoal. Then the forests began to grow again, and they began to gather and plant, and the animals came back, and they began to live together. So that's how the human people came here. It was Coyote."

Behind the ridges above the sacred place, to our left, is Sinshan Mountain, long, massive, and serene, the late sunlight marking one deep fold of shadow on its flank.

Let us not ask Thom if she believes her story. I am not certain what the word *believe* means in her language, or in mine. It is best simply to thank her for telling it.

"That's a Serpentine story," she says. "They tell it in the heyimas. The Blue Clay people have a song telling it, too, they sing it coming upstream from the Salt Journey, you know. There's a good Adobe story. It's about people raining down out of the volcanoes. You might ask Red Plum to give it to you."

So we do that. It's a while before we find Red Plum, who isn't at home in her household in Five Hearth House. "I believe grandmother's at the heyimas," says her granddaughter—their, and our, word *believe* in this sense indicating uncertainty, or unwillingness to be precise. She suggests that we come around in the evening. When we do that, the old woman is there on the balcony, shelling beans. "I was drunk last night," she says, with a gleam of the eyes and a flickering, secret smile of satisfaction, not shared with us. She is small, rounded, fine-winkled, formidable. When we get around to asking for the story she does not seem disposed to share it either. "You don't want to hear that old stuff," she says.

Yes, we really do.

Unmistakably she is disappointed, expected better of us. "Anybody can tell that story," she says.

Her emphasis is on the word *tell*, with the sense of "repeat, recite." Long-legged, good-natured Thom, who always feels responsible for us, says in a tone between deference and humming, "But they want to hear you tell it, Red Plum." In this usage, *tell* has the sense of "say, speak," with an indication of making or inventing. But Thom's emphasis is on "you."

Is this then a myth we are to hear from Red Plum, or a tale, or an invention of her own, or some combination of those possibilities? There is no way to be sure. She is evidently quite vain, and Thom may be merely flattering her; but if the story is actually hers, by gift or making, we are asking a considerable favor of her to give it to us. Uneasy, we bring out the tape recorder, intending to assure her that we will not use it without her permission, but as soon as she sees it her manner changes. "Oh, well," she says, "I have a terrible headache. I can't talk loud, it hurts my head. You'll have to put that machine up close. I haven't been that drunk for a long time. Stock says I was singing so loud he could hear me aboveground. That's why I'm so hoarse, I suppose. Well, then, you wanted the story about where the people came from. Is that working now? The story tells about people coming out of the mountain when it

erupted. Have you seen the mosaic wall in Chukulmas, the big picture in the house there they call Volcano House? It shows what it looked like when the mountain erupted."

Red Plum's stepson interrupts. "But that's not the same eruption—that picture's of the eruption a hundred years ago, four hundred years ago—"

He is probably speaking for our benefit, thinking that foreigners might get confused, but the old woman is annoyed. "Of course it isn't the eruption in the story! What do you want to go mixing things up for like that? What a fool! Maybe these people from outside the Valley have seen a volcano erupting and know what it looks like, but nobody living here at this time has seen one anywhere near here, and I've lived here more of this time than the rest of you. . . . So there's a picture in Chukulmas, if you want to go there to see it. It's very dramatic. They used red glass for the fire. So then, there was a time, there was a place, some time, some place, in the Four Houses, heya, heya

heya, heya

heya, heya

heya, heya, there was no time, there was no place. It was all bare, bareness was all. There was nothing, not any thing, there was not. Bare and thin, not light not dark, nothing moving nothing thinking. No shapes and no directions. The sea was all mixed up with the dream, death and eternity were the same, smooth, not moving or going, the waters mixed up with the sands of the beach and the air so that there were no edges, no surfaces, no insides. Everything was in the middle of everything and nothing was anything. No river ran. In the sea and air and dirt the mortal souls were mixed in, mixed up, and they were bored, bored with no change and no moving and no thinking. They were bored, all that no-count time, all that no-time not being in no place. There was a boredom, a restlessness. They moved, in restlessness they moved, they shifted, those grains of sand, dust-grains, soul-motes, ashes. They started rubbing together a little, shifting around, falling a little, dancing a little, making a little noise, very soft, less than when you rub your finger and thumb together, less, less than that, but they heard the little shifty noise they were making, and made it louder. That was the first thing, the noise, the first thing made. They made that music, those mortal souls. They made the waves, the intervals, the tones, the rhythm, the measure, the beat. The sand singing, the dust singing, the ashes singing, our music started there. That is the music. That is what the world is still singing if you know how to listen, they say, if you know how to hear it. So our music starts with the dust singing, our musicians play that note to begin the music and to end it, and that is also the note you hear before you touch the drum. But still there was restlessness and wanting. So the music got louder and moved,

it changed, the tone changing to make tunes and chords, the measure changing upon itself, so that things began building up out of the music, crystals, and drops, and other shapes and forms. Things began to draw apart and pull into themselves; there were edges and meetings; there were outsides and insides; there were hinges and partings. There were things and spaces between things, and the sea with waves and breakers, the clouds moving with the wind in the air, the mountains and valleys in the land, shapes of rock and kinds of dirt, they came to be, they came to pass. But still the souls in the sand and dust were restless, and some more than others. The coyote soul was in some of those sand-grains, some of those dust-motes. The coyote soul wanted more kinds of music, chords with more voices, disharmonies, crazy rhythms, more going on. The coyote soul began moving and shifting. It let the dust and sand lie there and pulled itself together out of everywhere, out of everything, from all the beaches and plains and deserts. Doing that, pulling itself together, it left gaps behind, holes in the world, empty places. By unmaking it made darkness. So light came in to fill the holes: stars, sun, moon, planets came to be. Shining began. Brightness came to pass. Where Coyote had pulled things apart, the rainbows came to be to bridge the gaps. Across those bridges the Four-House People came walking. They came shining and walking into the earth world, and there was Coyote standing with her tail down and her head down, shivering, and looking around. There was a lot of music going on now, loud, too much of it, everything shaking and trembling and rumbling, earthquake everywhere, where Coyote had pulled loose and left gaps and darkness. 'Hey! Coyote!' the people of the Four Houses said, standing on the rainbows, looking down, calling down. But Coyote didn't know how to answer. She didn't know how to talk. In the earth world nobody had spoken. There was no speaking, only music. So Coyote sang the coyote music. She put her head up in the air towards the people and howled. The people on the rainbow laughed at her. They said, 'All right, Coyote, we'll teach you how to talk.' And they tried to do that. One of them would say a word, and the word flew from the mouth, an owl, the next word was a bluejay, the next a quail, the next word was a hawk. One of those people spoke puna. One of them spoke deer. One spoke a word that came out in long leaps, it was jackrabbit, and the next word came out hopping, it was brush rabbit. One of them spoke the oak trees. They spoke the alder, the madrone, the digger pine. They spoke the wild oats and the grapevines. They talked, and their words were all the people of the earth, bears and pond-scurm and condors and lice. They talked grass, they said dragonflies. Coyote tried to learn to talk as they did, but she couldn't do it; she just howled. However she shaped her mouth, nothing came out of it but the howling songs. The sky people laughed, and so did the earth people. Coyote was ashamed. She put her head down and ran to the mountain.

We say she ran to Ama Kulkun, because this is our story, but you understand that it might be Kuikun Etalan, or a mountain that we know nothing of, a mountain of that time that place, that it is a mountain in the Four Houses. So she ran to the mountain of the Eighth House, of the wilderness. In her shame and anger she went inside the mountain. It was her heyimas. It was the heyimas, the sacred house of the wilderness. In there, inside, in the darkness, Coyote ate her anger and drank her shame, ate the fire in the earth, drank the boiling sulphur springs. In there with her will she went into herself, deep in, and made there in the darkness the he-coyote. There in her womb she made him. There in the mountain she gave birth to him. While he was being born, coming out, he shouted, 'Coyote is taking! Coyote is saying this word! After the he-coyote was born she fed him with her milk, and when he was grown they came out of the mountain, on the mountainsides in the chaparral, and mated. The other people watched and saw that, and they all began mating then too. It was a big festival, that day. That was the first Moon Dance, and they danced it all over the earth. But there inside the mountain, in the heyimas of the wilderness, where Coyote had eaten out the inside, it was hollow, a big, dark cave or gap, and this hollow filled up with people, human people all crammed together. Where did they come from? Maybe from Coyote's afterbirth, maybe from her turds, or maybe she tried to talk there inside the mountain and spoke them; nobody knows. They were in there, crammed in the dark, and so the mountain began speaking. It talked, it said fire, lava, steam, gas, ash. It erupted, and with the ashclouds and the fiery pumice flying out the human people came flying out too, spewing up, raining down all over the forests, all over the hills and valleys of the world. At first they set a lot of fires, but when they cooled off they settled down where they landed and began living there, making houses and heyimas, getting along with the other people. We say that we landed closest to the mountain, we didn't fly as far so we didn't hit as hard, and we stayed smarter than the other people who live in other places. They got the sense knocked out of them. Anyway, so here we are, the children of Coyote and the Mountain, we are their turds and their words, so they say, and so it began, they say. Heya, hey, heyra, heyra, heyra.

If we went to another village, or another heyminas, or another teller of tales, we could no doubt obtain another Origin Myth, but let us now thank Red Plum (who smiles secretly) and go on up the Valley eighteen miles or so to Wakwaha, Holy on the Mountain, where the computers are.

"Cycles" of fifty years and "gyres" of four hundred and fifty, referred to in some documents and used by archivists as a dating system, seem to be of little significance in daily usage. Most people can tell you what

year of a cycle it is, and these figures are useful for keeping track of vintage, birthdays, the age of a building or an orchard, and so on, just as with us, but they are not invested with a character of their own, as our years and cycles are (1984, the Twenties, the Thirteenth Century, etc.), nor is New Year's Day a festival, in fact there is some confusion about what day it is. Formally, it is the fortieth day after the solstice of winter (the forty-first day in leap year, every fifth), but in the Planting Lodge the new year is spoken of as beginning at the equinox of spring, and popularity and in poetry the year begins when the new grass begins to grow and the hills turn green, along in November or December. People seldom know what day of the year it is (they are counted straight forward from 1 to 365) unless they are concerned with managing some ritual activity that is counted out in days, and then they are more likely to count from and to the full moons. The great festivals are determined by the solar and lunar calendar; all other activities, meetings of councils, lodges, arts, and so on, are usually arranged by agreement to meet again in four days or five days or nine days after the next full moon or when somebody asks for a meeting. All the same, years, cycles of years, and cycles of cycles exist, and with them as foundation, surely we can begin to place the Valley in history, here at the Exchange.

The only person in the Exchange at the moment is Gather, a man of sixty, whose lifelong passion has been the retrieval of data concerning certain doings of human beings in the Valley of the Na. At last we have met a historically minded person, and now we'll get somewhere! But there are problems. Gather gladly shares with us the programs he has worked out for obtaining data—overwhelming quantities of data—and will even help us get paper if we want it all printed out so we can take it home to read; but his approach to the material is not historical. His principle of ordering the information he obtains is not even chronological. To him, it appears, chronology* is an essentially artificial, almost an arbitrary arrangement of events—an alphabet as opposed to a sentence. Surely the Memory Banks are chronologically ordered?

Yes, that is one system of data classification; but there are so many systems, all cross-indexed, that unless you know how to limit your program very cannily, a request for the data in chronological order on even a minor cultural phenomenon, say the etymology of the word *ganais*, or the methods of teaching the tannin from acorns, may result in several hundred pages of print-out, almost entirely statistical. Where in all the data is the information? Gather has spent his life finding out how to find out.

His interest is domestic architecture. He is a member of the Wood Art. It seems he has not done much building; his interest is intellectual, almost abstract, a fascination with the formal significance and occurrence of certain architectural elements and proportions. It is these he seeks

through the thousands of years of accumulated data, the billions of trillions of bits in the Memory.

He brings onto the display for us a beautiful computer-generated plan of a house. The display is not in dots of light on green jello, but crisp black on matte white, like an unusually well-printed page, and is about a yard square; if color display were relevant, it would be in color. The image revolves till he holds it at the angle he wants. What he hopes we will see is a certain proportion, the mathematical scheme of a certain building, which he adores as an ideal. We would need a good deal of training to see that, but we can see that this house is beautiful, and please him by saying so; and also that it is quite different from any house we have seen in the Valley. So after a while we inquire, "When was this house built?"

"Oh, a long time ago."

"Five hundred years?"

"Oh, a great deal more, I think—but I didn't record the length of time—" He is getting flustered, feeling our disappointment as disapproval. He thinks that we're thinking, *Just like a man!* "I'd have to reprogram for that information, of course that's no trouble, it would take a little time—I just didn't..." think the date was of any interest. We reassure him as best we can. "Here," he says, "I think I came at this set chronologically," and, hopeful of retrieving our good opinion, he brings onto the display another set of plans and elevations: a delightful little temple. "A heymas aboveground," he explains. "That is, let me see, here, yes," and the screen flashes sets of figures faster than the untrained eye can follow. "Two thousand six hundred and two years ago from now, in Rekwi, I think, yes, where Rekwi is at this time, I mean, of course."

"But Rekwi isn't in the Valley."

"No. Over across the Inland Sea somewhere." Geography doesn't interest him either. "Now here's something quite similar the Memory gave me." Another little temple or house. "That's in a place called Bab, on the old south continent, let me see, well, about four hundred years ago from now, or two thousand two hundred years ahead of that one in Rekwi. Do you see the same three-two proportion?" He is off again, and we have to let him ride his hobbyhorse awhile; his relief and pride in having got us what we wanted, a date, are infectious.

Eventually I can mount my own hobbyhorse again, asking cautiously, "How would one obtain data on primitive life here in the Valley?"

Gather scratches his jaw. "Well, in the times of primitive life, there was no Valley of the Na, I think? This continent wasn't here..."

Ever and again one runs into this bedrock of the Valley mind, the "common knowledge" of the people, what is perhaps their true mythology: unquestioned, unreasoned (though questionable and reasonable), traditional lore: the general outlines of what we would call historical geology,

including plate tectonics, of the theory of evolution, of astronomy (unsubstantiated by any telescope capable of seeing the outer planets), and of certain elements of classical physics, along with elements of a physics not familiar to us.

After a little mutual explanation and laughter, we establish that what I meant was primitive *human* life. But this combination of words does not mean much to Gather, nor to the computer. When requested for assistance in obtaining information on primitive human life in the Na Valley, the Exchange, after a brief communion with itself, reports that there is no such information.

"Ask about information on primitive human life anywhere."

With this, Gather and the Exchange begin to ask each other questions, and to get results, and presently (he keeps the display in the graphic mode, since we aren't trained in TOK) they begin to come onto the screen: little broken hominid teeth, bones, maps of Africa with dots, maps of Asia with dashes... But that's the Old World. What about this one? O brave new world, that has no people in it!

"They came across a land bridge," I say doggedly, "from the other continent—"

"From the west," Gather says, nodding. But is he talking about the same people I'm talking about?

The ones that were met by Coyote?

That mythology, that unquestioned tribal knowledge that includes plate tectonics and bacteriology, must include what I'm after. "What were the beginnings of the way you live here, of the nine towns? When was Wakwaha founded—how long ago? What people lived here before then?"

"All the people," Gather says, confused again. He is an insecure person who finds life difficult and retreats easily; he has spent his life much alone here, in communication without relation.

"I mean human people." It is very hard for me to keep in mind that "people" in this language includes animals, plants, dreams, rocks, etc.

"What human people lived here before your people?"

"Just our people—like you—"

"But of a different way of life—foreigners—like me." I don't know how to translate "culture" into his language more exactly, and the word "civilisation," of course, won't do at all.

"Well, ways always change. They never stay the same, even when they're very good ways, very beautiful, like that house, you know. They stopped building like that, but then maybe somebody else does it, in another time, another place..."

It's hopeless. He doesn't perceive time as a direction, let alone a progress, but as a landscape in which one may go any number of directions, or nowhere. He spatialises time; it is not an arrow, nor a river,



but a house, the house he lives in. One may go from room to room, and come back; to go outside, all you have to do is open the door.

We thank Gather, and go down the steep street-path-steps of Wakwaha and past the Hinge, the Springs of the River, and into the dancing place. The roofs of the five heyinas of Wakwaha are thirty and forty feet high at the apex of the stepped and ornamented pyramid, the four-sided roof that rests upon the five-sided underground chamber. On past the dancing place in a grove of magnificent young madrone trees is the long, low, stuccoed adobe, tile-roofed library of the Madrone Lodge of Wakwaha. The Archivist greets us.

"If you don't have a history," I say to her, "how am I to tell your story?"

"Is a ladder the way to climb the mountain?" she says.

I sulk.

"Listen," says the Archivist—they're always saying that, these people, very gently, not an order but an invitation, "listen, you'll find or make what you need, if you need it. But consider it, be mindful; be careful. What is history?"

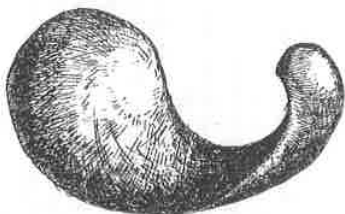
"A great historian of my people said: the study of Man in Time."

There is a silence.

"You aren't Man and you don't live in Time," I say bitterly. "You live in the Dream Time."

"Always," says the Archivist of Wakwaha, "Right through Civilisation, we have lived in the Dream Time." And her voice is not bitter, but full of grief, bitter grief.

After a while she says, "Tell about the Condor. Let Stone Telling tell her story. That's as near history as we have come in my day, and nearer than we'll come again, I hope."



STONE TELLING

PART TWO



FROM THAT DAY my mother would not answer to her middle name Willow, and told people to call her Towhee, though many were reluctant to do so. To go back to a first name is to go against the earth; and though the towhee is not altogether a sky-dweller, being often on the ground picking up corn with the poultry and seeds with the quail, and not altogether a wild bird, since it walks about the common places of towns, yet it comes from the Four Houses and returns to them, and its name should come to one who does the same. Cave Woman and Shell talked with my mother about the name, but she would not change her mind. It was set away from the earth.

Soon after my father left Sinshan, we heard that all the Condor men had left the Valley, crossing the hills on the north road. On that day my mother joined the Lamb Lodge. She gave a lot of time to them, and learned their arts and mysteries, and became their butcher. I kept apart from all that, not only because I was still a child, but because I did not like it, and knew my grandmother did not like it. As it seemed to me, my mother had sent my father away, and I could not forgive her. Since he had spoken to me from the doorway, asking me to wait for him, the passion of my love had gone to him. I thought I did not love my mother at all. I thought continually of how my father would come back to me on his big horse at the head of a line of soldiers, and find me waiting for him. My loyalty to him made my difference from other people a virtue, and gave unhappiness both a reason and a term.

I danced the World that year, my ninth, the first I danced. With Valiant and Ninepoint and all the people of my House of Earth I danced the Sky, and in the sky the people of Cloud, Wind, Rain, Clarity danced the Earth with us.



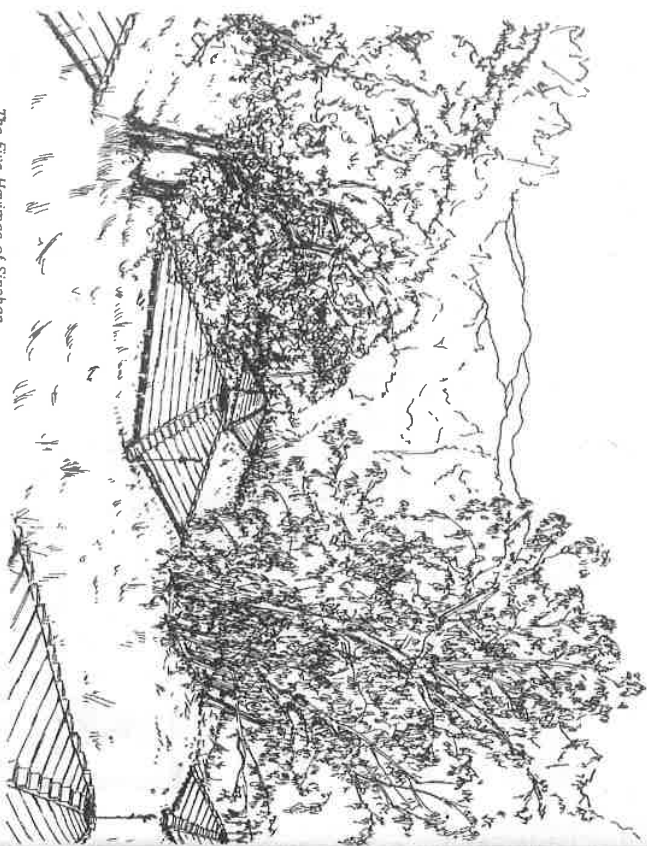
clay, and shaping, and glazing, and firing; it was a good thing for me to learn a craft with a true maker. It may have been the best thing I have done. Nothing we do is better than the work of handmind. When mind uses itself without the hands it runs the circle and may go too fast; even speech using the voice only may go too fast. The hand that shapes the mind into clay or written word slows thought to the gait of things and lets it be subject to accident and time. Purity is on the edge of evil, they say.

Two years after my father left the Valley, my grandfather came up from Chumo to live in his wife's household again. Though she did not like him she had never put him out; he had left. Now she took him back, partly because she thought he needed her, and partly, I think, because since her hands had become crippled she was ashamed of doing less work in the house and town, and she thought he might work in her place. In fact she did a great deal of work, as always, and he did little. He spent his time with the Warriors. He had come to Sinshan to be a speaker in that lodge, and to bring more Sinshan men into it. The Warriors had been doing more and more things the Bay Laurel boys were supposed to do—scouting, watching the outside ridges, making weapons, training people in the use of guns, having trials of strength and endurance, and teaching various kinds of fighting. Before the Warrior Lodge began, the Bay Laurel Society in Sinshan had not been very lively. They planted tobacco and cured it, of course; and they went camping over on She Watches, and sang, and kept a box full of very old guns which they oiled and polished but did not shoot. Some of the men in charge of the Bay Laurel said, "Listen, a while ago, our boys used to go scouting over on the wrong side of the hills, stirring up the people over in those valleys; then those people would send their boys over here, and sheep got stolen, and people were afraid to go out alone, and we had to start talking about smoking and having a war. That hasn't happened in Sinshan for forty or fifty years. A while ago, we made guns and trained with them, then pretty soon the boys got into quarrels with boys from Ounmalin and Tachas Touchas, and feuds began, and young men were killed on the roads, in the hills. That hasn't happened for a long time. What do you want it to happen for?"

The Warrior speakers said, "Go in peace; go about your farming and hunting and herding; we'll patrol the ridges." They said, "We want only a few, the bravest young men," but they look any man who asked to join.

My cousin in Maditnou, Hops, began to wear the undyed clothing and became a Warrior too; his middle name came from them, Spear. My cousin Pelican, his sister, was my age, and she still were good friends. I told her that I was glad Hops hadn't taken one of those Warrior names like my grandfather Corruption, or Corpse, or Maggot, or an old man in

The Five Heyinas of Sinshan



From then on I worked harder with Ninepoint, and also with Patient of the Madrone Lodge, who read the histories and narratives of Sinshan and the Valley with a group of us children. I began to spend more time at the pottery shops with Clay Sun. I worked on the little plot we used, and each year I did more shared work in the Fields of Sinshan. In my twelfth year I was initiated into the Planting Lodge, and also began to learn Blood Lodge songs. My grandmother's hands became so rheumatic that she could not spin or do fine weaving, and my mother did the weaving, but I did not work with her. What I enjoyed most was making pottery, and I began to do it fairly well. Every summer I would go out for four days from Gahheya into the coyote's house, and on my third walk like that, going northwest along a creekbred in a gully outside Hunch Mountain and thinking about making pots, I found a bank of very fine blue clay in the dry creekbred. Several times I brought as much of it as I could carry to Clay Sun, who was pleased with it. I offered to show him the place. He said it would be better for me to keep it in my mind and use. He was a kind, warm man, a widower with three Obsidian children who were always dirty or muddy; he called me Owl Pot instead of North Owl, and he called his children the pots. He thought of very little besides

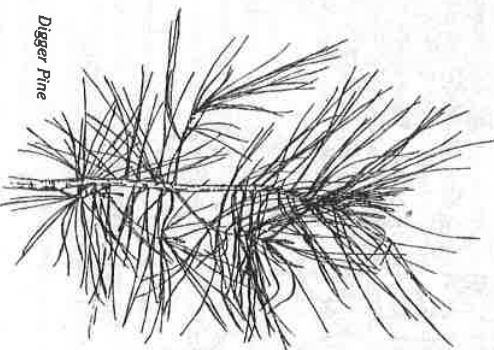
Maduinou who had taken Dog Shit for his last name; but I thought Spear was pretty silly—he might as well call himself Big Penis and be done with it. She didn't laugh. Nobody ever wanted to laugh at the Warriors. She told me that Spear was a powerful name, and all the names I made fun of were powerful names. I didn't care. I kept out of all that and did not want to learn about it. Since our household was full of Warrior and Lamb Lodge talk now, I spent more time outside. I did not go regularly to Patient's classes, so I learned very little history, and read almost nothing; I worked at the pottery with Clay Sun, and in the sheepfolds and pastures and fields. Twice in those years I went with the great flocks down to the saltgrass pastures at the Mouths of the Na, staying there all through the Moon. The summer that I was thirteen years old, I went up the Valley with some other young people, and then alone on Ana Kulun. I walked beyond the springs of the River, through the Five Houses and through the Four Houses to the house that has no wall. Yet I walked in ignorance and it was the kindness of the lion, the mercy of the hawk, that held me on the way. Things were not right in my household, and my people did not see to it that I got a proper education.

I know that Valiant worried about my ignorance and carelessness, and that she and Ninepoint talked about it; but I would not listen to their advice, and she was not willing to argue with me. She was worried about her daughter, too, and in pain often, and lowhearted. I think she wanted to send her husband away, but felt that she could not, because he did some of the work she could no longer do, and so she thought my mother and I needed him in the household. I would have danced on the rooftops to see him go, but a child cannot tell her grandmother to put her grandfather's things out on the landing.

As for my mother, Towhee, she was always silent and aloof, as if, when she refused to speak to my father, she had stopped speaking to anyone. I did most of the sheepherding now, and she did Lamb Lodge work. She and my grandfather got on well enough, since the Lamb women were a kind of woman Warriors. They performed some wakwa together; some Lamb women took power names—Bones had used to be Brodiaea, and Finch took the middle name Putrid. All those who performed the Purification wakwa called themselves, while they were dancing, the *maawasto*. That word was the Condor word *maawasto*, army, which I had heard every day when I went with my father to the camp in Eucalyptus Pastures. Once I said something about it, and Corruption and Towhee both jumped on me with both feet, denying that the word was a Condor word, and telling me that I could have no knowledge about such matters since I had not been taught by the Warriors or the Lambs. I was immensely angry, that what I knew to be so should be denied. I did not forgive them for that denial.

But I was still a child and able to forget fifty things while doing fifty

others. Some of my agetmates were adolescent, but I was slow at that, and not sorry to be so. I thought about being a Blood Clown, but was too lazy to go start instruction at the Blood Lodge. My closest friend in those years, a Blue Clay girl called Cricket, had already been initiated into the Blood Lodge and wore undyed clothing, but her middle name had not come to her, and she and I worked and played together as children. In the fields, or with the sheep, or gathering, we would bring our toys along and play stories with them in between fits of working. Her toys were a human person made of wood, with elegant knee and elbow joints so that it took lifelike positions, and a mangy old lambswool sheep that she used to sleep with as a baby. Mine were a rabbit made of rabbit skin with the fur on, a wooden cow, and a coyote I had made myself out of scraps of buckskin. I had tried to make it look like the coyote on She Watches who had sat and looked at me the first time I went alone on the mountain. It did not look like that coyote, or any coyote, but there was something *heyiya* about it; when we played stories and talked for the animals, I never knew what the coyote was going to say. We made long stories with those five people. Their town was called Shikashan. A boy called Lark Rising from the Red Adobe often played with us; his toys were three beautiful redwood animals his mother had carved for him, tree squirrel, ground squirrel, and wood rat. Cricket always made up the best stories to play, but she only wanted to play them once and then make a new one. Lark Rising wrote three of them down and made an offering of them to the library in his *heyimas*, called "Stories About Shikashan," and we were all proud of that. So those were good times.



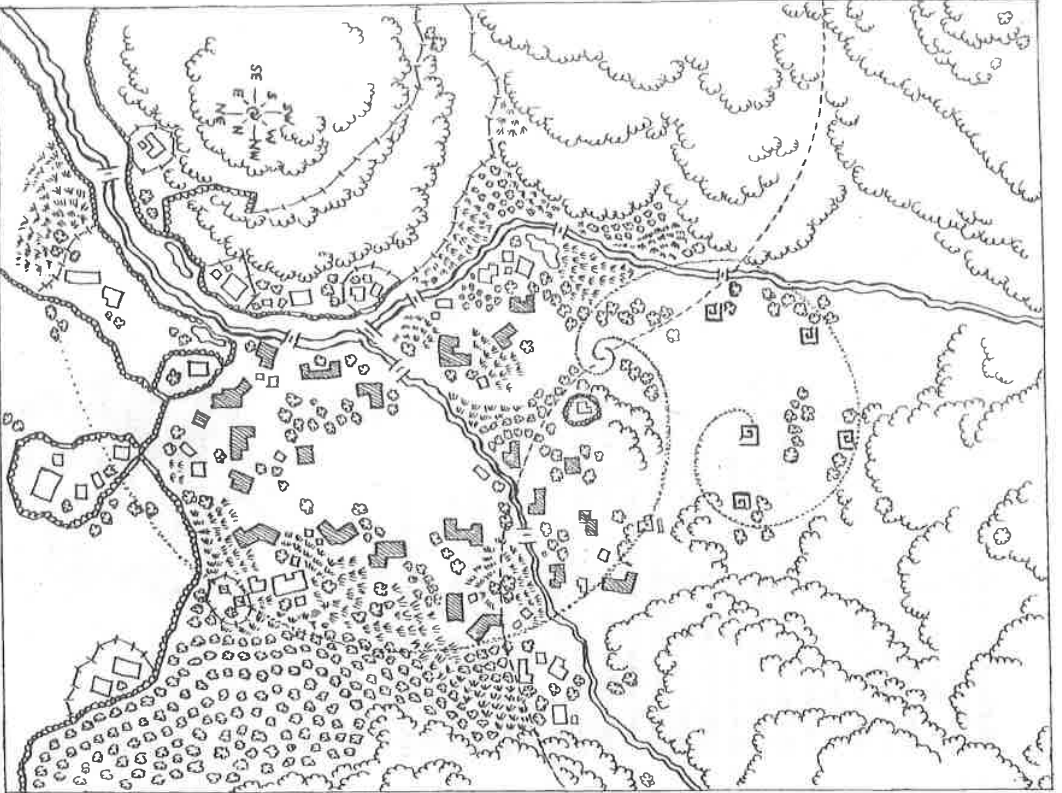
Digger Pine



Often in the evenings I would go and my cousins would come from Madidnou to Blue Rock to meet and talk. But there the Warriors got between us again. Spear no longer gave a flower or a pebble to the rock or brushed it with pollen or even spoke to it, although Blue Rock is the strongest heyia in all the Fields of Shishan and Madidnou. Pelican said rula to it when her brother wasn't listening, or put a pebble down near it as if she just happened to be putting a pebble down. But when we talked about it, she agreed with Spear and not with me. Spear said that there had never been sacredness in rocks or springs, but in the mind-soul, the spirit, only. The rock and the spring and the body, he said, were screens, that kept the spirit from pure sacredness; true power. I said heyia was not like that; it was the rock, it was the water running, it was the person living. If you gave Blue Rock nothing, what could it give you? If you never spoke to it, why should it speak to you? Easy enough to turn from it and say, "The sacredness has gone out of it." But it was you that had changed, not the rock; you had broken the relation. When I argued that way, Pelican would start to agree with me, but then she would agree with her brother when he talked. If Blue Rock said anything to her, she was not listening. None of us was.

After I was thirteen, Spear did not come to Blue Rock with his sister. Many boys living on the Coast go off with the Hunters or the Bay Laurel, and make a sweathouse to sleep in, and keep away from girls, which I could understand; but the Warrior way of living on the Coast was to forbid the young men even to speak to adolescent girls. My side-grandfather Ninepoint talked about that once to his grandson, who had taken the name Vile, when I was there to hear. He said, "You call yourself Vile but you act like Puffed Up. Are you so afraid of girls you have to make war on them? Are you so afraid of yourself you have to fight with yourself? Who do you think you are, to be so afraid of, anyhow?" If I had been less wilful and fearful, I could have learned much I needed to learn from Ninepoint; but he was a stern person, and I was unwilling to let him scold me for my laziness and ignorance. I look back now and see that I was afraid to love him, as if to love him were to be disloyal to my father Killa. But I heard what he said to Vile that time with pleasure, for I was humiliated by Spear's avoidance of me, and hated the Warriors with all my heart.

My grandfather spoke with contempt to his wife and mother and granddaughter and all women, and therefore I felt great contempt for him; but out of respect for the household I tried not to show it. My grandmother did, when she lost her temper. Once she said to him, "You're trying to be like those Condor men, who are so afraid of women they run a thousand miles away from their own women, so as to rape women they don't know!" But that blow missed Corruption, who was too hard to feel it, and hit my mother Towhee instead. She was in the



The Town of Shishan

Drawn by the Editor with the help of Thom of Shishan.

- LEGEND
- HEIMAS
 - DWELLING HOUSE
 - WORKSHOP, BARN, LODGE, OR STORAGE
 - WOODS OR WILD LAND
 - TREES, ORCHARD, OR VINEYARD
 - GARDEN OR SOWN CROPS
 - WOODEN FENCE
 - STONE WALL

hearthroom with me and heard what Valiant had said. She hunched up, swallowing pain. Then I turned on my grandmother in anger, because I was holding the Condor in my heart now as the name of the freedom and strength my father had given me for that half-year he had been with us. I went to the doorway between the rooms and said, "That's not true. I am a Condor woman!"

They all stared at me. Now the blow had hit them all, but most of all my grandmother. She looked at me with desolate eyes. I went out of the house, out of the town. I went up Sinshan Creek to the springs of the water, and sat there for a long time, angry at myself and everybody in my household, everybody in Sinshan, everybody in the Valley. I put my hands in the water but there was no washing away the stuff that choked up my heart and mind. I could not even say heyra when the guardian of the spring came as a junco, lighting on the wild azalea bush above the spring. I longed to go walk on the mountain again, but knew that if I did it would be no good. I would not put my feet in the tracks of the lion, on the way of the coyote, but would walk the circle of human anger.

So I did, round and round, all that year long.

It brought me back to the spring, in the days before the Water, with a blue clay jar from the heyimas to be filled for the evening singing. As I came back down the path where it crosses Little Buckeye Creek and comes up among the live oaks onto Big Knoll, I saw my cousin Spear sitting on the bank above the creekbed, one leg crossed over the other, trying to get something out of the sole of his foot. He said, "North Owl! can you see this damned thorn?"

That was the first time he had spoken to me for two years.

I stood down in the dry creekbed and searched the sole of his heel till I saw the butt of the thorn and worked it out with my nails.

"What are you doing here on our creek?" I said then.

"Coming back from patrolling," he said. "The others went on ahead. I had to get this thorn out. Thanks!" He still sat there, squeezing his foot where it was sore.

"Why do you go barefoot?" I asked.

"Oh, we're supposed to," he said, unimportantly. He was talking the way he used to when he was Hops, and he looked at me with kind eyes. "Are you dancing the Water?" he asked. It was nine days before the Water, that day. I said yes, and he said, "I'll come here. Sinshan dances the Water better than Madidinou. Anyhow, all my Blue Clay relatives are here."

I said nothing. I was distrustful of him.

He looked very beautiful in the undyed clothing. The only Warrior thing he wore was a cap of black goatswool. It was peaked like the Condor helmets, but he had squashed it and pushed it back on his head.



The air over Sinshan Mountain had turned watermelon pink and the wild oats on Big Knoll held a reflection of that color, a faint clear rose. The tarweed was in bloom, smelling strong. I picked a leaf of wild mint from the creekbed and put it on the drop of blood on the hard, dark skin of his heel where the thorn had come out.

"I have to take this to the heyimas and then go on to the Obsidian," I said finally. I wanted him to know that I was going to the Blood Lodge for instruction now, and I wanted to go, because I felt so bewildered at his talking to me in the old way, but I also did not want to go.

This time he did not answer for a little while. When he did he spoke tenderly and thoughtfully. "When will you put on those clothes?" he said, and I told him it would be after the Water, at the next full moon. He said, "I'll come. I'll come to High Porch House for the party!" He smiled, and for the first time I thought that there would be a party for my entrance into the Blood Lodge, a party at which I would wear the new clothes belonging to my new way of being.

I said, "We'll have plenty of mushroom pastries, then."

Once when we were all children at a Sun festival in Madidinou he had eaten a whole tray of mushroom pastries before anybody else got any, and he had been teased about it for years after.

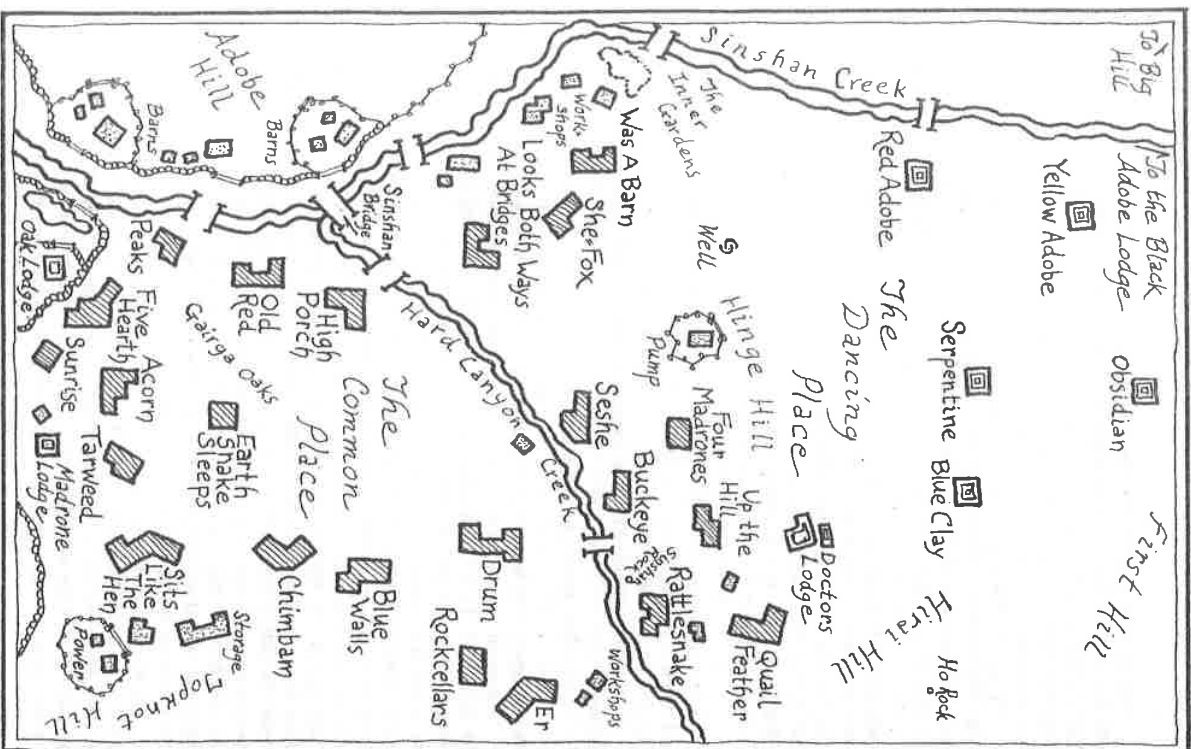
"Good," he said, "I'll eat them. Oh, North Owl! Who will you be, then?"

I said, "The same I am now, mostly."

He said, "Who are you now?" He looked at me until I looked away. He said again, "Oh, North Owl! Sometimes—" Then he said nothing more.

I thought then, I think now, that the person who looked straight at me had come from inside him, that day, and he had forgotten about being the Warrior who turned away and the Man and the Self. He had sat by the dry creekbed and the soul of the water had come into him. I stopped being afraid of him, and began talking to him. I do not know about what, and he answered, and so we talked for some while, trustfully and quietly. When the madrone grove at the top of Big Knoll looked black against the sky and the color was gone out of the air, we went along the path above Sinshan Creek. I first, he following, side by side where the path widened. When we came up onto the dancing place, the evening star was bright and the Wellstar shone above the black eucalyptus. We crossed the Hinge together, and he said, "I'll come to the dancing," and went on towards the bridge. I went into High Porch House with a different heart in me than when I left it.

Spear came to all four nights of the Water in Sinshan, and also he came as he had promised to High Porch House for my Blood singing. It was a small party, since I had only half a family, and that a small one, and not all of them very generous or sociable, but Ninepoint sang the Fathers' Song for me, and gave me a bowl of porcelain glazed bloodred



The Names of the Houses of Sinshan
 Drawn by the Editor with the help of Thom of Sinshan.

Stone Telling



with mercury from Sinshan Mountain, and my grandmother gave me her necklace of turquoise from the Omom Sea. I wore the undyed clothes my mother had made for me from cotton I had picked and spun the year before, a triple skirt and full-sleeved shirt, and with them an overvest of very delicate plain linen, Shell's gift to me. I had made a great many mushroom pastries, so many we gave away baskets of them after the dancing. Spear led the linedance with me. He was a lithe and graceful dancer. He looked at me across the line smiling. In my heart I gave him a name I thought better suited to him than the name Spear: I called him Puma Gaze.

So I came into the house of womanhood with that young lion dancing in my mind. That was a piece of good luck in a bad-luck time, though I would not have said so when Spear turned away from me again, the next year. I thought there was no good in the world at all, then.

I blamed the Warrior Lodge for taking him away from me, and indeed they did, but his House or his household might well have done the same. We were meeting and talking here and there, not often, but oftener than by chance. I was fifteen years old and he seventeen, half-cousins: it was not the time for us to come inland, nor was it as distant a kinship as could be desired if marriage came into the matter. His sister was jealous of me, and no longer friendly. And some people of his House in Madidinou and in Sinshan did not approve of me, a half-houseless woman, as head of their kinsman's household, if we married.

All that I knew and did not care about at all. I do not think I cared for or thought about anything that year except Spear, but I do not know how to write about it. To try to remember that kind of feeling is to try to remember being very drunk, or to try to go mad sanely. To talk about being in love you have to be in love, and I have not been in love again.

At the Moon Dance I think all the young Warriors took some kind of vow of abstinence; and after that time Spear did not meet me, nor look at me when we passed, nor answer when I spoke to him, the few times I saw him.

In despair I followed him into Madidinou Fields, in an afternoon in the end of the dry season. I said, "You don't come to Sinshan anymore."

He turned away and went on working. He was gleaming the last of the Garais grapes of that great vineyard. The latest grapes make the finest wine, they say.

I said, "Are brave men afraid to talk to women?"

He said nothing.

I said, "Once I gave you a name in my heart. Do you want to know what it was?"

He said nothing, did not look at me, and went on working.

I left him there with his cutting knife and basket and walked away

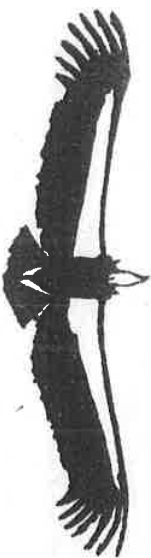
between the long-armed, contorted vines. Their large leaves were rust-colored in the dusty light. The wind blew dry and hard.

Because Spear was a Warrior and I wanted his life and mine to be as close and alike as they could be, I had gone to Lamb Lodge meetings and taken instruction from them all that year. The love in me loved everything he loved. My thoughts and feelings were all swallowed up in that: I was the servant of my love, and served it as my father's soldiers served him, unquestioning. And I found that that was how it was in the Lamb Lodge: they spoke of love, of service, of obedience, of sacrifice. Such ideas filled up my mind all that year, and my heart was high and hot with them. Nothing that I did or handled or made or knew as I lived the days was of any importance to me compared to those ideas—loving, serving, obeying, sacrificing. The Lamb Lodge women told me that we could not know the Warrior rites because the only suitable way for a woman to understand such mysteries was by loving, serving, and obeying the men who understood them. I accepted this, because it was Spear all along who was the idea in my mind and body, and I had no other; the others were reflections of him, him and nothing else. That whole year I lived in the Lamb Lodge was a lie, a denial of my own knowledge and being, and yet a truth at the same time. Almost everything is double like that for adolescents; their lies are true and their truths are lies, and their hearts are broken by the world. They gyre and fall; they see through everything, and are blind. The Lambs and Warriors were houses for adolescents, people who were not able to choose their own way yet, or unwilling ever to do so.

Because I was Corruption's granddaughter and Towhee's daughter, I had been advanced quickly in the Lamb Lodge. A few days after I spoke to my half-cousin in the vineyard, I was to officiate in one of the seventh-day rites of the lodge. It was a sacrifice.

I feel that I should not write down what was done. Even though there is no Lamb Lodge now and what I wrote would be a mere curiosity, my hand is not easy; it will not write down what my voice promised to keep secret, the mystery. It was no mystery, but the promise was a promise.

Everybody knew, however, because they had to see it, that the officiant of that mystery did not wash after sacrificing the bird or animal, but came out of the Lodge House with bloody hands, as a visible sign of the sacred act. So I came back to High Porch House.



My grandmother Valiant was setting out dinner in the hearthroom on a tablecloth she had woven years ago, white linen with a blue thread every fourth warp and fifth warp alternately; it was worn, fine, and very clean. I was looking at that cloth as she spoke to me. She said, "Go wash your hands, North Owl."

She knew I was supposed to leave the blood on my hands until the next day. She hated that rule and all such Lamb and Warrior rules. She was disgusted; her heart was sore that I followed such practices. I knew that I too was disgusted and heartsore and full of hatred.

I said, "I can't."

She said, "Then you can't eat at this table." Her voice and lips and hands trembled. I could not endure her pain. I said, "I hate you!" and ran down the stairs and across the common place to the bridge. Why I went that way, towards the Valley not towards the hills, I don't know. I went across the bridge and saw a tall dun horse standing with the calves and donkeys in the creek paddock. I stopped, looking at that horse. My father came up the path from the barns.

He saw me with tears on my face, with blood on my hands and arms. I saw he did not know me. I said, "I am your daughter!" He came forward then and took my hands in his hands. I began to cry aloud. Some people came by from the fields, coming home, and one of them spoke in greeting to my father, saying, "So you have come home, man of High Porch House, this is a good day you have made." I controlled my weeping, and my father and I went up onto the terraces of Topknot Hill and sat there on the stone facing-wall of the top terrace of vines, overlooking the lower houses of Sinshan and all Sinshan Fields in the afternoon light. It had been a hot, dry summer. Forest fires were burning over behind the northeast range, and the air was dull and blurred with smoke, so that the hills of the northeast range were like blue lines in the blue air.

My father had thought that I was injured when he saw me blood-stained, and he tried to ask what was wrong. I could not tell him that everything was wrong. I said I had quarrelled with my grandmother.

He had lost the ready use of our language and had to think before he spoke. I watched him. He had gone bald in front, so that his face was longer, and he looked very tired. He was still bigger and taller than I had remembered him, though I had grown from a child's to a woman's height in the years he had been gone.

"I came to talk to Willow," he said.

I shook my head. My tears came back, and seeing them he thought that she was dead, and made a little sound of pain.

I said, "She still lives in the Blue Clay house, but she isn't Willow, she went back to her name Towhee." He said, "She has married."



"No," I said, "she won't marry. She won't talk to you."

He said, "I could not come. You know that? It was not on the Amaranth Coast but in the north that we had to take the army." He said where he had been, names of places that I did not know, and said again, "I could not come when I said I would come. I want to tell her that."

I shook my head again. All I could say was, "She will not talk to you."

He said, "Why should she talk to me? To come again here was stupid." I could feel the going in him, and I cried out, "I talk to you! I waited. I waited for you to come!"

He looked at me then instead of at his thoughts, and said my name, "North Owl."

I said, "I am not that person. I am not a child. I am not anybody. I have no name. I am the Condor's daughter."

"You are my daughter," he said.

I said, "I want to go with you."

He did not understand what I meant at first, and then said, "No, how can I do that? They would keep you. I must go, this day or the next day. They will not let you go away."

I said, "I am a woman, and make my own choices. I will go with you."

He said, "You must ask people."

"I'll tell them," I said. "You are the only one I must ask! Will you take me with you?"

More than anything, I wanted him not to go down to High Porch House to my mother. It was as if I was trading myself for her. I did not understand this then, but I felt it. My father thought for a while, gazing across the Valley to Soul Mountain with its flat, slanting top. The smoke-haze was a pale dull pink color. He said, "I should ask her to let you go with me. Is it true: she will not speak to me?"

"It is true," I said truthfully.

"And it is true you have waited for me," he said, looking again at me.

I said, "Give me a name."

When he understood, he thought for a long time, and at last said, "Do you want this name: Ayatyu?"

I said, "My name is Ayatyu."

I did not ask the meaning of the name then; to me it was my father's kindness, my own freedom.

Later when I spoke his language I knew *gyadyu* in the Valley language would be "well-born woman" or "woman born above others." It is a name that was often given in my father's family. His name was Terter Abhao, and taking his father's name as daughters and sons of a man do among that people, I was Terter Ayatyu.

"When will you go?" I asked him. He asked, "Can you ride?"

"I ride donkeys," I said. "I used to ride your horse with you."

He looked again at the roofs of the houses of Sinshan and said, "Yes. In the wars I thought of that. Many, many times. The little girl sitting with me in the saddle. Those days, in this place, this valley. Those were my good days. Not ever again!"

I waited, and he said, "I will bring a horse for you. When the sun rises the day after tomorrow. At that place." He pointed to the bridge where we had met. "I will not come into this town," he said. His sorrow and desire were becoming anger and turning away. He had come a long way, with difficulty, to see his wife, yet he did not go to see her. I have thought about that time we sat on the terrace on Topknot Hill, many times, and tried to understand why we spoke and behaved as we did. We were both ill, and our illnesses spoke one to the other. We seemed to choose, but were driven. I clung to him, yet I was the stronger.

He said, "Tell them that you wish to go with me. If they let you do this, take leave of them rightly. And go to your heyimas. This will be a long journey, a long time you will be gone, daughter."

He was right to speak so, and I did as he said.

On the second morning at the earliest return of light my grandmother Valiant went to our heyimas with me. We filled the water basin and sang the Return. She marked the heyiya-if on my cheeks with blue clay from Sinshan Creek. She and I came up from the heyimas in the dawn. My mother was waiting for me at the Hinge of town, and Lark Rising and Cricket also, and they all came to the bridge with me, but we did not squat and piss and laugh before we said farewell, because the Condor was waiting there on his tall horse. They stopped at the southeast end of the bridge. I embraced them and ran across the bridge to him. He looked at Towhee, but she had turned away. He helped me mount the horse he had brought, and so I rode away with him through Sinshan Fields.

The Lodge Rejoining, where we learn how to die, was built that year on the planting side where Hechu Creek meets Sinshan Creek. We rode past it as the range across the Valley let the sun go. Singing heyia to the sun I rode. We went past the vineyards to the Old Straight Road, and northwest on the road towards Ama Kulkun. The horses strode along fast. My father had brought a sorrel mare for me to ride, shorter and more delicate than his gelding. He kept beside me watchfully, telling me how to hold with my knees and how to use the stirrups and reins. It was much easier than riding donkeys bareback; donkeys have sharp backbones and minds of their own, while the mare was obliging and kindly, and the saddle comfortable. We rode to Telina-na, and passed between Chuklmas and Chumo, and passed Kastoha-na, and still it was bright morning. As we turned to the Mountain Road the Geyser leaped up out of the



feathered grasses, shining. My heart turned in me when I saw that. I thought of the old man who had given me a song there. I put the thought and the song away from me. We crossed the River on the Oak Bridge, and I said heya silently. In the foothills of the Mountain five men of the Condor, mounted and with two pack horses, came to meet us, saluting my father. We stopped at the Tembedin Oaks to eat some food and then rode on up into the Mountain on the Clear Lake Road. Where the way to Wakwaha and the Springs of the River went to the left, we went to the right, following the line of the train as far as Metouli, where we took the short-cut road.

Before night we stopped to make camp in live-oak woods on the wrong side of Metouli Spring. I could not get off the horse, and my father, laughing, had to help me. My legs and buttocks were as stiff as wood and pretty soon they began to ache. The Condor men joked a little, but cautiously. They treated me partly as a child but also with something like fear, and they knocked their forehead with their fist when they first spoke to me, as they did to my father. We two sat a little apart and did nothing while they made the fire, cooked the dinner, and laid out the beds.

After eating, I went to talk to the sorrel mare for a while. I smelled of her now, and liked the smell. I had never made a friend so easily. My father talked for a long time to one man, who was to ride a different way the next day, giving him several messages, some quite long, to carry in his head. He made him repeat them, and they were still doing this when I came back to the fire. It was boring to listen to, as I did not know the language. When they were done and the man had gone back to the other men, I said, "Why didn't you write the messages?"

"He can't read," my father said.

If he was blind or weak-minded he made a strange messenger. I thought, but I could not see what was wrong with him. I said so.

"Writing is sacred," my father said.

I knew that already.

"Show me your writing," I said.



Sinshan Mountain

He said, "Writing is sacred. Not for honhtk. You don't need to write words."

I did not understand, was all that I understood of this; so I said, "I need words to speak, anyhow. What is honhtk?"

And he began then to teach me his language, how the Dayao said to ride a horse, to see a rock, and all the rest.

It was cold up there on the side of the Mountain in the night. The other men sat on the other side of the fire, talking. My father joined in the talk from time to time, briefly, with dignity in the tone of his voice. He gave me some hot brandy, and I soon slept, curled up in Grandmother's arm. In the morning he had to lift me onto the horse, but as soon as we had ridden a little way the stiffness went out of my legs and I was easy in the saddle. So we rode up to the pass in the fog of the autumn morning, in the way of the White Puma.

I have heard people in the Finders Lodge say that when they leave the Valley, even though they have left and returned many times, there is a pain in their heart, or a voice singing in their ears, or a whistling, or a sense of falling—always some sign. Downstream, the historian of the Sinshan Finders, said that he knew when he entered the Valley because for nine breaths his feet did not touch the ground, and when he left the earth. Maybe because I was on horseback, or because I was with the Condor, or because I was half a Condor, I felt no sign. Only when I touched my cheeks and felt no mark of the blue clay from Sinshan Creek I left there, again my heart turned and went dark and small inside its house. It stayed that way as we rode down the wrong side of the Mountain.

All that country between the Mountain and Clear Lake is very beautiful and like the Valley: rocks, plants, all the people are the same kinds, and the human people live in towns and farms like the towns and farms of the Valley. We did not stay with any of them, nor did we speak to people anywhere; when I asked why, my father said that these were people of no account. We rode as if in another House, without speech. I thought, this is why they are called Condors: they go in silence, above all the others.

When we were in the golden hills northeast of Clear Lake, lying down to sleep on the third night, I began to feel the Valley behind me like a body, my own body. My feet were the sea-channels of the River, the organs and passages of my body were the places and streams and body, and I here lying down was a breath-soul, going farther away from its body every day. A long very thin string connected that body and that soul, a string of pain. I slept, and the next day went on riding, and talked



with my father, learning his language. Often we laughed. Still I felt that I was not quite my body, and that I weighed nothing, like a soul.

Indeed I grew thin on that long journey. The Condor food did not taste good to me. They carried dried meat, all beef, along the way they sometimes killed cattle or sheep grazing on those high hills. They did not ask me to, but I came and gave the person they killed my words. At first I thought the human people of these families were generously giving us the animals' deaths, and wondered why I never saw the human people, and why they never gave vegetables or grain or fruit, since it was harvest time. Then I saw two of the men of our group kill a strayed ewe by the path, without giving her any word, cutting off her legs for food and leaving the head and hooves and entrails and fleece for the maggots and coyotes. For several days I put what I had seen away from my mind; but I did not eat that mutton.

Many, many times while I lived with the Condor people I put a thing I saw away, saying, "I'll think about that later," or refusing to think about it at all. This was not mindfulness. But where everything was outside me I could not make all of it enter into me; and when it did enter into me I often felt as if I had no soul at all, and it is the attentive soul that tells the mind, "Remember." Now I am trying to write down my journey to the northeast, to bring it all into my mind at last; but a great deal of it, and of all my years with the Dayao, is lost and will not come back. I could not take it in.

I remember with great clarity how we rode, all in line, across the last pass of the wrinkled hills, and from it saw the wide valley of the River of the Marshes all before us to the north and east; far in the southeast was the shore of the Inland Sea, hazy and shining. A broad golden light lay over the yellow willows by the river and the cattail marshes and the far peaks of the Range of Light, slanting from under clouds behind us. I sang heya to that great river and the beauty and vastness of the world, and to the sun going into the house of winter. That night it rained. All the next day and the next as we followed the River of the Marshes north we rode and walked in rain.

We crossed that big river at a ford where it spread out in many shallow channels and the horses did not have to swim far, so early in the rainy season. At that ford another group of Condor men joined us, twelve of them, so we were a big group going along, nineteen human people and twenty-five horses, one mare with a colt following. As they rode, the men liked to sing a song they had:

"Where the City is, I am coming,
Where the Condor is, I am coming,
Where the battle is, I am coming."

They put any word they liked into the song, and sang, "Where the food is, I am coming," or "Where the cunt is, I am coming," over and over as they rode along in line.

After long rain there was a day I remember when the sky partly cleared and we saw Kulkun When pouring a stream of dun smoke up into the clouds, southeast of where we were. All around the dark volcano was a roll of steam and smoke from lesser vents, and the air stank like rotten eggs when the wind changed. We began to come near the foothills of the volcanoes. I was very much afraid of them, and dreamed all night that fiery cracks were gaping in the earth about me and clouds of smoke were burning and choking me, but I said nothing about my cowardice. On the next day the whole sky cleared, and from those hills looking north I saw the Mountain of the North hanging snowstreaked from the sky down to the dark forests. One pure plume of steam rose from its eastern crown, like a down feather of the white egret. Because the mountain was beautiful and because I knew its name from maps and stories in the heymas, the sight of it made me happy; I recognised it. I sat on the mare singing heya to it.

My father rode up beside me and said, "That is Tsatayan," the White Mountain.

I said, "Also it is Kulkun Eraian, one of the places where the arms of the world meet."

He said, "I spent ten years of my life winning the land around that mountain for the Condor, and now it's all to do over." He used the word *zarit*, which I had learned playing long-dice with the soldiers; it means to win at gambling, like our word *dumi*. I could not imagine what he meant, how he had won an enormous piece of the world like that, or who he had won it from, or what use it was to him. I tried to ask and he tried to explain, but we talked backwards for a while, and he grew impatient with my stupidity. "This, here, is land the Condor armies won," he said. "Why do you think the honlik aren't shooting at us any more?"

"That was only one place that they shot at us," I said. It had been where we first turned to follow the Dark River, some people hidden in the willow thickets had shot arrows at us, and then ran away when the men tried to chase them. My father had ordered the men to come back and ride on, and they had galloped back laughing and shouting jokes, very excited, so that I was also excited, and not afraid, though I certainly had never expected to be part of a war.

My father said, "That's because they are afraid of us."

I gave up trying to understand what he was talking about. But part of my stupidity was that I did not want to understand. Educated people who read this will have been laughing at me, that I could ride for days and days with armed men called soldiers or warriors, with my father the chief of them, and see them steal, and never enter a town or farmstead,



and be ambushed, and still not understand that they were at war with every people of the lands we had come through. They are quite right to laugh. I was uneducated, and unwilling to use my mind.

Now in these foothills of the volcanoes we came to villages where the people came out and knocked their heads to us instead of keeping out of sight or running their sheep away and turning back to spit after us. The villages were very small, five or six log houses along a creek, and some sheep or pigs and turkeys, and a lot of dogs barking and snarling. But they were very generous, I thought, giving us food even when there were more of us than of them. After two days riding in that broken country, we came to the place called South City, Sainyan.

The Dayao word *sai* means the same as our word *each*. We use it only to speak of a different place in time or mind, those people who lived outside the world, and the network of the Exchanges. They have those uses too, but chiefly they use the word to name the place where they live, saying that they are inhabitants of the City of Man. What to us is disaster to them is their glory. How am I to write all this story in reversal-words?

People of the Madrone Lodge asked me to write my life story as an offering because nobody else in the Valley has lived with the Condor and come back, and so my story is a history; but I wish now I had learned to write history instead of learning to make pots, when I was North Owl. When I was Ayayu I had to forget writing and reading altogether. The Dayao will blind the eye or cut off the hand of a woman or a farmer who writes a single word. Only the True Condors may write or read, and of them I think only the ones called the One-Warriors, who officiate at the wakwa, learn how to write and read freely. They say that since One made the cosmos by speaking a word, the universe is his book, and to write or read words is to share the power that belongs to One; and only certain men are supposed to share that power. They have the abacus for household use, and in both their Cities they had electrical devices made by instructions from the Exchange to keep records, but all their records are reduced to numbers. Nothing is written down or printed, and so the Word of One remains, as they say, clean. Once in my ignorance I said to my father, "If I wrote 'Booi' on a wall here all those fierce warriors would scream and run away!" He said in anger, "They would punish you, to teach you to fear One." That word is the end of talking, as well as the end of writing, under the Condor's wing, and I said no more.

When I went with Abhao, my heart wanted to be a Condor's heart. I tried to be a Condor woman. I tried not to think in the language or the ways of the Valley. I wanted to leave the Valley, not to be of it, to be new, living a new way. But I could not do that: only an educated person might do that. I was too young, and had not considered existence, or



read books, or trained with the Finders, or thought about history. My mind was not freed. It was held inside the Valley, instead of holding the Valley inside it. Even for my age I was ignorant, because Sinsian, like other small towns, was given to prejudice and wilful ignorance; and because my family was a troubled one; and most of all because the Warrior and Lamb cults had interfered with education and ceremony during my adolescence. So I was not free to go from the Valley. Not being entirely a person, I could not become a different person.

Also, however wilfully I tried, it was difficult for me to become entirely a Condor person. I became as sick as I could, but I was not willing to die.

It is almost as hard to write about being Ayayu as it was to be her. While I am talking about talking, I may explain certain words I have used or will use. We call them the Condor people; their name for themselves as distinct from all other people is Dayao, One-People. I shall call them that in this story now, because the way they use the word Condor, *Rehemar*, is complicated. Only one man, whom they believe to be a messenger from One to them, and whom they all serve, is called The Condor. Certain men belonging to certain families are called True Condors, and others like them are called, as I said, One-Warriors. No other people are called Condors. Men who are not of those families are all called *lyon*, farmers, and must serve the True Condors. Women of those families are called Condor Women, and must serve Condor men, but may give orders to *lyon* and *honik*. The *honik* are all other women, foreigners, and animals.

The condor bird itself is not called *rehemar* but Da-Honik, and is sacred. Boys of the True Condor families must shoot a condor, or at least a buzzard, to become men.

I had the condor feather that had come to me as a child with me in my pouch of valuables; it was lucky that I did not show it to anyone before I learned that women are not permitted to touch condor feathers or even to see the condor in the sky. They are supposed to hide their eyes and wail when the Great One flies.

It is easy to say that such customs are barbaric, but then what has one said? Having lived in civilisation, in the City of Man, I do not use those words, civilised, barbaric; I do not know what they mean. All I can write is what I saw, what I learned, what I did, and let wiser people find a name for it all.

The Dayao had built South City about forty years before I came there. They had come down from The City and made a war with some people who lived in small towns and farmsteads in these foothills south of Dark River, and took their place to live from them. It is not true that they ate the bodies of human people whom they killed in wars; that is a superstition grown out of a symbol. They killed and burned men and

children and kept women to be fucked by Dayao men. They penned the women with the cattle. Some of the women stayed of their own will after a while because their life was destroyed and there was no other place to go, and these women became Dayao. I talked to some of them who told me who they had been before they were made Dayao, but most of them did not like to talk about it.

The time when the Dayao made South City was the time when they began making war with everyone. They said, "The Condor rules from the Omom Sea to the Western Sea, from the North Mountain to the Coast of Amarantli!" They killed many people and caused pain and long disorder in the Volcano country, and infected other people with their sickness, but when I came there they were dying. It was themselves they ate.

I know that now, I did not then. I saw the towers of South City and the walls of black basalt, the wide streets at right angles, the splendor and array. I saw the magnificent bridge across the Dark River and the road that lay straight as a suntrack on water to the north, to The City. I saw the machines and engines of work and war they used, of most exact and elegant make, marvelous products of handmind. All I saw was great, and straight, and hard, and strong, and I saw it all in fear and admiration.

My father had had relatives in South City, and we rode to that house; but it was empty.

The Dayao make three kinds of house. The farmhouses are much like our farmhouses; the Iyon and honitk in the Cities live in huge, long houses, many families to each, like barns or stables; and the True Condor live in family houses, which are dug down into the earth, with low stone walls aboveground, no windows, and a peaked timber roof. They look a little like heyimas, but inside they are entirely different. The house is divided into as many apartments as the people want by movable panels of wood and cloth, five or six feet high, which can be set against the poles and columns that support the roof. The floor is covered with layers of rugs, and the walls with hangings of cloth, and often the hangings are brought together into a peak at the top of the room, like a tent. The Dayao house remembers the winter dugouts and summer tents of the nomads of the Plains of Grass, as the wooden houses of Tachas Touchas remember the river-forests of the northern coast. All the heating and lighting is electric, from mills and solar cells; and when such a house is furnished and tapestried and brightly lit, it is very warm and comfortable, encompassing. But the house of my father's people in South City that we came to that night was dark and dank, smelling of earth and urine. My father stood inside the entranceway and spoke like a child: "They have gone away!"

We had to go to another Condor house for shelter and food that night. My father left me with the women of the household and went off to talk with the men. The women smiled at me and tried to talk, but they



were timid, and I was very tired and confused. I could not understand why they acted as if they were afraid of me. Among them I felt a little as I had felt in Hardcinder House in Telina when I was a child, awed by everything. There was metal everywhere; it seemed that copper wire was as common to them as string to us. And they were very good cooks, and though the food was strange to me I enjoyed most of it very much, after the salt beef and stolen mutton of the soldiers. But their wealth did not flow; they did not give with pleasure. Some of them knocked their heads every time they spoke to me, and others of them did not speak to me at all. Later on I found that the ones who did not speak to me were the Condor Women, and the ones who smiled and knocked their heads were the honitk.

I do not remember much of the days we spent in South City. My father was worried and angry, and I saw him only to greet him once each day. I stayed with the women all the time. I did not know then that Dayao women always stayed together and did not go out. Hearing some talk about war, and having seen the city full of armed soldiers, I thought that there must be a war going on at the walls, and that these women were staying inside their house so that the opponents would not steal them, as the Dayao stole women. I had this all figured out, and then found out that there was no fighting at all going on anywhere near South City. I felt foolish, but in fact I had been right; Dayao women lived under siege all their lives. All I thought then was that they were all crazy. I by electricity, trying to learn to talk as they did, and sewing. I was no good at their kind of sewing, and nearly went crazy myself trying to do it hour after hour, when I wanted to be outside in the air, in the light, with my father, or by myself. I was never by myself.

At last we left that house and that city and started north. I had missed the sorrel mare very much while I was trapped indoors, and had dreamed every day of riding her again and smelling her smell on my hands and clothes; when the women told me to get into a covered cart with them, I refused. One of the older Condor Women ordered me to get into the cart. I said, "Am I dead? Am I a chicken?"—but it seemed that among them, live and healthy people rode in carts on wheels, and she did not know what I meant. She got angry and I got angry. My father came and I began to tell him that I wanted to ride the sorrel mare. He said, "Get in the cart," and rode on by. He had looked at me as a woman among the other women, a squawling hen among the poultry. He had changed his soul for his power. I stood awhile taking this into myself as best I could while the other chickens peeped and squawked around me, and then I got up into the cart. All that day travelling in that cart I thought, more than I had ever thought before, about how to be a human being.

We did not go straight north, but turned off on another wide, smooth road towards the northwest. The women with me said we were going to meet the marastso, the army, and travel with them, and after a day we did so. All the soldiers who had been travelling in troops to take food from small-town people, collecting tribute they called it, or staying in camps in the Dark River and Volcano countries giving orders, or as they called it keeping order, were gathering together at a place called Rembonyon, and we too went there. We were all following after several chiefs or generals, one of whom was my father.

The pieces of the army came with a lot of animals, and a lot of yon came with the animals and the other honkik. Those camps were where I first met stolen women, ones the Dayao men had taken from their people and raped when they liked. Some, as I said, were coming freely with the soldiers, and the soldier might stay with the woman and their babies; and so I said something in our camp about these honkik wives. The women of the Tsaya Bele household, with whom I travelled, laughed at that, and explained that Condor men did not marry honkik, but only Condor women, the daughters of other Condor men. They were all such daughters themselves, and very positive about what they told me.

Stupidly, I said, "But my father, the Condor Terter Abhao, is married to my mother in the Valley."

"It is not a marriage here," one of them said kindly. But when I argued, the old woman Tsaya Maya Bele said, "There is no marriage between Man and animal, girl! Be still and know your place. We have treated you as a Condor's daughter, not a savage. Behave as such." It was a threat. I heeded it.

Aside from learning some things such as that, which I had no desire to know, I enjoyed that slow journey to Rembonyon with the Dayao. I did not have to stay in the cart, but could walk beside it if I stayed near it. At night they set up big tents, a whole town of tents appearing in no time at all. Inside the tents it was bright and warm, the women sitting about on thick red rugs, cooking and talking and laughing and drinking strong manzanilla-berry tea or honey brandy; outside, the men called out to one another in the cold dusk, the horses neighed at their pickets and the cattle lowed, off where the farmers' campfires glimmered. When it was dark the people at those fires sang long, lonesome, desolate songs that seemed to have the desert in them.

Maybe the Dayao should have been always on the move; maybe their health as a people was in being nomads, movers-on, as they had been in the country north of the Omom Sea and before that on the Plains of Grass. A hundred years or more ago they obeyed one of their Condors who had a vision and said that One had commanded them to build a city and dwell in it. When they did that they locked their energy into the wheel, and so began to lose their souls.

After Rembonyon the whole great train of animals and humans and carts set off through the high, desolate lands northeast of Kulun Erian. Volcanoes smoked before and behind us. It grew cold, and a wind in our faces brought dark clouds across the sky. In falling snow we came across a waste of black, broken lava to the City of the Condor. I had not walked in snow before that day.

Sai was walled, with a guarded gate of great size and beauty; outside the walls were innumerable barns, stables, shops, and barrack-houses, and inside them the streets were straight and wide like those of South City but still wider and longer. The street that led in from the gate ended in a huge building, window above window above window, and the barrack-houses and family houses were all higher and solidier and finer than those of South City. Terter House in Sai had its own wall around its gardens, of polished black stone; its roof was of carved cedar, with decks and walkways on it, and down inside it the rooms seemed endless, apartments and divisions and screened-off corners and nooks and angles, all without windows yet bright, and warm as the silky nest of the wood rat inside her many-tunnelled tall house. The rooms deepest inside were the women's quarters. My father took me there at once. When he turned to go I held his arm. I said, "I do not wish to stay here, please."

He said without anger, "You live here, Ayayyu. This is your house. I said, 'You are my father, but this is not my house.'"

He said, "It is my father's, therefore mine, therefore yours. When you have rested I'll bring you before him. You should look your best then. Not crying and tired. Go bathe and rest and dress and meet the other girls here. They'll look after you. I'll be back for you in the morning."

He went off among the people who knocked their foreheads as he passed. I stood in tears among the women.

In that house the two kinds of women, Condor's daughters and honkik, were as different as sheep and goats. None of the Condor's



daughters spoke to me, that first night. They left me with the honitk. I was glad of that, since the honitk seemed more like Valley women, but they were even more afraid of me than the South City women had been. I heard them speak about me, but when I spoke to them in their language they stared and did not answer, till I felt like a talking crow. They would not leave me alone, but they would not come close to me. At last a girl came in who looked to be my age or a little younger, and who was quick and courageous. She spoke to me and understood what I answered. She said her name was Esiryu. She took me to have a bath, for I was filthy from travelling, and she found a small room for me to sleep in, and stayed with me there. She talked faster than I could understand, often, but I understood that she wanted me to be her friend and she would be a friend to me; she was as prompt and easy about that as the sorrel mare had been.

After she had combed out my hair, I said, "Now I'll comb yours." She laughed, and said, "No, no, no, Condor's daughter!"

Without Esiryu I would not have been able to live in Terter House. I did what she said to do and did not do what she said not to do, all the time I was there. She was my slave, whom I obeyed.

In the late morning my father came back, dressed in splendid clothing of red-and-black-patterned wool. I went to him and he embraced me, but he shouted past my ear. "Why has Terter Ayayu Belela not been given suitable clothes to wear?" Then there was a lot of scurrying and forehead-knocking by honitk and Daughters alike, and I was very quickly dressed up in the kind of fine skirt and bodice the Daughters wore, with a gauzy head-scarf. Esiryu had already braided up my hair Dayao-style, so that was all right. My father said some more things to the women that made them cower and look away, and then took my hand and hurried me through the rooms and passages. The scarf blew off my head, and he turned back to pick it up, and put it over my head so that it hid my face. I could see through it well enough, but certainly did not want it on, and took it off.

"Put it on!" he said. It was not just order-shouting, but nervous anger; he was anxious, "Keep it on, over your face! When you come before my father, salute him!" He made the face-knocking movement, and made me show him that I could do it.

I did all he said. I was frightened by his fear.

Terter Gebe was an old man, handsome and thin, with much authority in him. It was easy to behave with respect and courtesy in his presence; he was like the officiant in a great wakwa, full of the strength and dignity of the ceremony. But the officiant gives that back, lets it go, at the end of the wakwa; and Terter Gebe had kept it all to himself for sixty years. All that others gave him, he kept, and he believed and they believed that that strength and dignity *belonged* to him. I did not believe

that, but since they were truly there in him I honored them. I did so as a Condor's Daughter, knocking my forehead. I kept the veil over my face until he lifted it and stared at me awhile. That I found hard to bear, being looked at full on, shamelessly.

He said, "E'yeharazra pupuyelal" which is, "Be welcome, grand-daughter!"

I said in his language, "Thank you, grandfather."

He gave me a keen look, very searching. He never smiled. He said something to my father, which I kept in mind till I could ask Esiryu what the syllables meant. They meant, "Better marry this one quickly!"

My father laughed. He looked relieved and happy now. They talked to each other awhile. I stood there like an image of a person, not talking or moving. I tried to keep looking down, the way honitk women did when they were with Condors, but I wanted to look at my grandfather. Every time I stole a glance, he caught it. At last, carefully and slowly, I pulled the veil back over my face. Through it I could watch him and he could not tell if I were watching him or not. It is easy to learn to be a slave. The tricks of slavery are like fleas hopping from a dead ground squirrel onto your skin; you have the plague before you know it. And all the tools of slavery have two edges.

Since Terter Gebe had accepted me as his granddaughter, the Daughters of his House had to treat me as one of them and not as an animal or primitive person. Some of them were ready to be friendly as soon as they had permission to be. Their lives inside the women's rooms were very small and boring, and a new person was a great excitement and interest to them. Others were less well disposed. I wished my father would not order them and bully them as he did; he meant to help and defend me, but every bow and smile and head-knock they gave him turned into a sneer or a snub or a trick against me, when he was gone to give orders to somebody else, and I was left there in the household. All this was the kind of reversal that it seemed to me one would have to expect in a household arranged like a himpi-pen.

My father's mother had died many years ago, and his father had not remarried; the widow of my father's brother was the chief of the women of the house. Everything among the Dayao had to have a chief. If two of them were together, one or the other was chief. Everything they did was war. Even when people worked together one of them was chief of the work, as if working were making war; even when children played together about it. So my aunt Terter Zadyaya Bele was the general of the women of Terter House, and she was not pleased by my presence there. I thought she was ashamed of me, a honitk, a half-animal; and that was all too familiar to me, who used to be called a half-person, so I hated her. Now I think she was afraid of me. She saw me, foreigner or primitive or



Stone Telling

animal as I was, the only daughter of the Condor Terti, and feared I would want to take her strength and dignity from her. If we could have worked and talked together and come to know each other I think it would have been better, for she was not a spiteful person. But that was prevented by our misunderstanding, fixed and made incurable by her jealousy of her power, and my shame. In any case, she would not touch me and did not like to approach me, because I was puritk, unclean.

The mental way, the soul's way of the Dayao would surely be the most important thing I could tell about them, and some of it I can tell by way of telling my story, but when it comes to their wakwa and rites and all the deepest of their thinking, I learned very little. There were no books. What men were taught I do not know; girls and women were taught nothing but the skills of the household. Women were not allowed into the sacred parts of their heyimas, which they call *daharda*; we could come no nearer than the vestibule in front of the daharda to listen to the singing inside on certain great festivals. Women have no part in the intellectual life of the Dayao; they are kept in, but left out. It was not men there, but women, who told me that women have no souls. That being the case, naturally they have little interest in learning about the soul's way. All I learned was picked up here and there, and does not make a whole; this is the best I can make of it.

One made everything out of nothing. One is a person, immortal. He is all-powerful. Human men are imitations of him. One is not the universe; he made it, and gives it orders. Things are not part of him nor is he part of them, so you must not praise things, but only One. The One, however, reflects himself in the Condor; so the Condor is to be praised and obeyed. And the True Condors and One-Warriors, who are all called Sons of the Condor or Sons of the Son, are reflections of the reflection of One, and therefore also to be praised and obeyed. The yon are very dim and faint reflections far removed from One, but even so they have enough of his power to be called human beings. No other people are human. The honitk, that is women and foreigners and animals, have nothing to do with One at all; they are puritk, unclean, dirt people. They were made by One to obey and serve the Sons. This is what they say; it seemed to me to get a little complicated, since Condor's Daughters gave orders to yon, and talked about them as if they were dirt people; but that discrepancy is kept out of mind, since the Daughters all live in the City and seldom even see the farmers. It must have all been very different when the Dayao were nomads, but it may have started then, too, as a matter of sexual jealousy, the chief men trying to keep their wives and daughters "clean," and the women holding themselves apart from the strangers they met along their way, and finally all of them coming to think that to be a person at all is to be separate from and apart from everyone and everything.

They say that as there was a time when One made everything, there will be a time when everything will stop being, when One will unmake everything. Then will begin the Time Outside of Time. He will throw away everything except the True Condors and One-Warriors who obeyed him in every way and were his slaves. They will become part of One then, and be forever. I am sure that there is some sense to be made of this, but I cannot make it.

Some of the things I learned in the Lamb Lodge in Sinshan were Warrior Lodge teachings learned from Condor soldiers during the years they stayed in the Valley; the Warrior Lodge men thought they were practising True Condor ways. In fact they understood even less than I did. They understood that men were better than women, and that nothing was of any account except One and men, but they got the rest of it and the reasons for it all mixed up. I don't think most of them ever understood that there was indeed only one One. Their souls and minds were much too dirty. That part, about being puritk, about dirt persons, made sense to me, in its way. In order to reflect, a mirror has to be clean. The cleaner and clearer and purer it is, the better it will reflect. True Condor warriors were to be one thing only, reflections of One, setting themselves apart from all the rest of existence, washing it from their minds and souls, killing the world, so that they could remain perfectly pure. That is why my father was named Kills. He was to live outside the world, killing it, to show the glory of One.

As I speak of it, this way sounds clownish. That is myself, my voice; I am the clown, since I cannot help the reversals. The Dayao way was without clowns or clowning, without reversal or turning, straight, single, terrible.



The third part of Stone Telling's story begins on page 340.

