

STONE TELLING

PART THREE



I HAD THOUGHT Tsaya House in South City very rich and splendid, but it was much less so than Terter House. Because the Condor households keep without giving, their furnishings are numerous and complicated; and because the servants and slaves that work for the household all live there, the people are also numerous, and their relationships complicated. Terter House was a village in itself, a nomad tribe settled down and staying in one place. Since I seldom got outside of its walls, I took it to be as prosperous and thriving as it seemed, once I realised that the Dayao counted wealth as what they had, what they kept.

The closer a True Condor is by birth to The Condor, the more power and dignity he has and reflects upon his household. The Teters were cousins in the second degree of The Condor through the male line. Terter Gebe had been a chosen companion of The Condor in youth and an adviser to him for many years, and was still in favor with The Condor's son, who would become the next Condor. But the father had become jealous of his power as that son grew older and had turned against the son and so against Terter Gebe, and the mirror of the Teters' glory had become clouded.

As well as I could understand from the talk of the Daughters, some of whom were shrewd and knowledgeable people for all that they were shut inside so many walls, since they had settled in Sai the Condors had purposed to glorify One by increasing their wealth and power by taking land, life, and service from other people. For three generations their armies had done this in the Volcano countries. But the people living there were few and elusive; the coyotes and wild horses, the humans and the rattlesnakes, none of them made very good slaves; and all the land wanted to grow was bunch grass and rabbit brush and sage. So the

present Condor had ordered his soldiers to go south and west till they found rich, fertile lands and places worth "winning." My father, Terter Abhañ, was one of the soldiers and then one of the chiefs of those armies that were sent out to discover such places. He had gone the farthest southwest of all, first to Clear Lake and then to the Valley of the Na. His army had not destroyed and made war as they went, but had gone along like traders or like the Pig People, staying here and there for a while, sometimes asking for food and sometimes stealing it, learning the ways and properties of the various countries they went through and stayed in. From his first journey to the Valley, that time when he married my mother, he returned to Sai saying, "The Valley of the Na is the most beautiful place we have seen." His father, Terter Gebe, went to The Condor and said, "The armies should go south and west, making a way clear, so that soldiers, yon, and women can be sent to make a new City in the Valley for the glory of One."

The Condor followed that plan at first, making war with the people that lived southwest of the Black Lava country; but because the Volcano country people had dispersed rather than stayed to fight and because everyone praised and flattered him continuously, telling him that the Mirror of One could do anything, he believed that his armies could do whatever he told them to do. So he sent one army northwest into the Six Rivers country to subdue the river towns, and another down along the Dark River to bring in tribute from the people there, and then another one, under my father's command, far to the southwest again to conquer the Valley and bring back cartloads of Valley wine on roads that the enslaved peoples were to make. They were to build a great bridge across the River of the Marshes and another across the Dark River. When they told me that, I thought of my father trying to make that bridge across the little Na.

Terter Gebe and Terter Abhañ had both told The Condor that his soldiers and people could not do all this at once and "win" all these vast lands and various peoples, but must move more slowly out from their center; but The Condor took such counsel as offensive to the One-Spirit in himself and paid them no heed. When his son argued for them, he took this as an excuse for anger and had his son locked up in a part of the great house they lived in, the Palace; there he had lived for years, as far as the women knew. Some of them believed he had died of poisoning, others that he was alive but had been given poisons that had weakened his wits till he was docile and imbecilic. Terter Zadyaya Bele would hear no such talk, and punished the talkers; The Condor could do no wrong, nor could the Son of the Son be in any way defective. She knew perfectly well, however, that the household she had married into was in disgrace.

When my father left the Valley the second time, he had expected to





Sinshan Mountain

return to it within the year with a very large army, all the True Condors and all the soldiers, to found a new City there. Instead, The Condor had sent him south to conquer the Valley with an army of one hundred and forty men.

By this time most of the human peoples that lived in the lands between the City and Valley were ready to go to war with the Condor soldiers as soon as they saw them. My father had spent six years getting back to the Valley. When he got to Clear Lake he had made a more or less safe way that far, but he had forty men left of his one hundred and forty. Many had been killed in wars and ambushes, others had run away to become dirt people. My father had gone alone to the Valley, to Sinshan, when he knew that he would never be going there again. He knew that he had to come back to Sai and show The Condor that he had gained little and lost much. Those who take power must take blame, and he was ready to do so.

At first, things were not so bad as he and the other Terrors had feared. The Condor was of course displeased, but the bad news had already come to him little by little through messengers and through the Exchange—which only he, in all the City, was allowed to use. It was in his house, the Palace. Meanwhile his advisers had been putting new plans in his head, and he was intent on these rather than on his defeats.

I do not understand why the soldiers allowed him, who never left his house, to make all these plans and arrange for so many people to be killed; but that is how it was there.

The plans were still all for war, but now instead of sending out men with mere guns, they were to have more destructive and terrible weapons still. I heard about these plans when I lived with my husband.

I should tell here about getting married.

Living in Tenter House I became ill. My skin became pale and I could not sleep at night, while in the daytime I was always sleepy and had fits of shivering. If I had been home I would have slept and sung in the hey-mas for four or five days, or asked the Doctors Lodge for a bringing-in. If I had been home I would not have been ill. In Sai, I was

ill, because I was living indoors all the time, outside the world. When I saw my father I would ask him to take me out of the house. Twice he did that: he brought the dear sorrel mare and rode his dun gelding, and we went for the whole day out into the snowy, black wilderness of the lava beds. The second of those times, he took me down into one of the caves in the lava, long tubes where lava had flowed like water through the rock, now cold and black as fear itself. The winds in winter scraped that barren land, but it was beautiful, and even when I was so cold I cried, it was better to be in the wind than in the warm rooms of Tenter House. Even in that black desert I was closer to the Valley than I was indoors. Indoors I felt stranger all the time.

When I was ill, the Condor's Daughters were kinder, and Tenter Zadyra Bele had a room curtained off where Esiryu and I could stay by ourselves. We talked there while we spun or sewed. I could talk about my home and so be there in the mind. I told Esiryu about Spear, and she told me about a young man who had gone as hostler with the army to the Six Rivers country. We talked often about those young men, telling each other what they were like and what they might be like when we saw them again.

My illness worried my father, but so did many other things. I knew that he regretted having brought me to the City. My presence was not a good thing for him. Other Condors said, "Men fuck animals, but they don't bring the cubs home, they don't bring dirt persons into the house." Tenter Zadyra told me directly that so long as I lived in it, Tenter House could not be as glorious as it had been.

I said, "Then send me away. Let me go back to the Valley. I know the way!"

She said, "Don't talk foolishness."

"Then what is it you want me to do? To die?" I said.

She said, "I want you to do nothing—to be quiet for once. Let Tenter Abhao be. He cannot be troubled with a girl's wants and follies. He is a great warrior."

I had heard that song before.

She went on, "You are a human person now, not an animal. If you will behave as such, a husband can be found for you."

"A husband!" I said, shocked. "But I'm still a virgin!"

"I'm glad to hear it," she said.

I was entirely confused, and said, "But what does a virgin want a husband for?"

Then she was shocked. "Be still!" she said. "Dirt!" She went out of the room, and did not speak to me or look at me again for a month.

My father was sent at about the time of the World Dancing in the Valley to the Six Rivers country to help an army there come back to Sai through hostile regions. It was a dangerous journey and there was no



question, I saw, of my going with him. Spring and summer passed and he was still gone.

The times of the great dances came and passed one by one, and there was no dancing.

I tried to sing the Two Quail Song and the other songs of the Summer. My voice sounded wrong, alone and in that place. When it came towards the time of the Water I thought about the bowl of blue clay in my heyimas and about the spring of Shishan Creek under the azalea and sweetshrub on the steep ridge of digger pines and dark firs and red madrone. I tried to sing the Water songs of my House, in that dry land. I thought of the blind woman, now dead, Cave, who had seen me here. I went nearly crazy with grief then. I took out the feather of the great condor that I had kept in my pouch, put it on the tiled hearth of the electric heater of the room, and set fire to it. It burned with a stink, shrivelling. Where it was I saw a man in Condor warrior's clothing lying head downward in a steep canyon among fireweed and dead thistles, his mouth and eyes open, dead: it was my father. I began to cry with an owl's hooting, and could not stop.

A doctor was brought to me, a man, who gave me some poison to make me sleep. When I woke up the next day very tired and confused, he came back and felt my pulse and examined my body. He was half-respectful because I was a Condor's Daughter, and half-jokingly contemptuous because I was a woman; and when he found that I was menstruating he became nervous and disgusted, as if I bore some dreadful infection. I was most uncomfortable when he touched me, but I tried to be still. I was so terrified by what I had seen in the Four Houses that I



wanted only to be still and hide. I thought I should tell Tetter Zadyaya so that she could tell my grandfather, and so I asked to see her. She came and stood across the room in the doorway. The doctor stayed to listen.

"I saw a very bad thing in the mind's eye," I said. She said nothing. I had to go on. I said, "I saw Tetter Abhao lying dead in the mountains." Still she said nothing.

The doctor spoke to her: "The girl is very nervous; this is mere womb-sickness. Nothing a young husband wouldn't cure!" And he smiled at her.

Tetter Zadyaya went away without speaking.

Within that same month, one of the other Daughters told me that Tetter Zadyaya was arranging a marriage for me with a True Condor of Retlorok House. She praised him to me as a handsome man and of a good disposition. "He never beats his wife," she said. She wanted me to be happy about the marriage. Another woman, a spiteful one, said, "What kind of man would marry a dirt person to try to get close to 'The Condor'?" She meant that he was marrying me to become related to the Teters. Esryu got to work and told me everything she could find out about this man, Retlorok Dayat. He was the youngest of four sons, and neither a soldier nor a One-Warrior and so not of great account, but the Retlorok family was wealthy. He was thirty-five years old—the Dayao were always particular about people's ages, because they had a numerical system of lucky and unlucky days that started with your birthday—and had five children. I was to be what they called his pretty wife. After their first wife had had a lot of children, Condor men often took a second wife, a pretty wife. A pretty wife did not have to give the husband's family goods and money, as a first wife did, and was not expected to have children, or at most one or two. I thought I was lucky. Since Zadyaya had spoken of marriage I had been afraid. Condors' wives were expected to have babies continuously, since that is what One made women for, one of the Daughters of Tetter House had seven children, the eldest of them ten years old, and for this incontinence she was praised by men and envied by women. If they could have borne in litters, like himpi, such women would have done so. I suppose this is again part of the Dayao being at war with everyone else. Himpi have big litters, after all, because most of them get killed young.

If I had to be a wife, then, I was glad to be a pretty wife; and since I had seen my father dead and did not know how to get away from Sai, I thought it best to marry. As a motherless and now fatherless daughter I was entirely without power in Tetter House. As a Condor's wife I might have some strength in Retlorok House. Really I did not care very much what I did at that time. Having lived for a year with people who believed that animals and women were contemptible and unimportant, I had



begun to feel that I did was indeed unimportant and could not be mindful or worthy of respect.

So I was married to that man, as a Condor's Daughter, wearing all pure white clothes, which the Dayao use to mean that the wife is a virgin. The clothes were beautiful and the wedding was cheerful. It went on all day long, with musicians and round dances and acrobats and masses of good food and drink. I drank honey brandy and got drunk. I was drunk when I went to Retforok House with my husband, and drunk when we went to bed. We stayed in that bedroom five days and nights. My fear and grief and shame and anger all came out into sexual passion. I would not let him go, I filled him up and emptied him out like a pitcher. I learned fucking from him and then taught him his lessons back in forty different ways. He was crazy for me and could not stay away from me for a day, all that year long. Since I had little happiness I wanted pleasure, and took it as often as I could.

My husband's first wife, Retforok Syasip Bele, was afraid of me at first, through jealousy of course, and because people had told her that I was an animal person, dangerous and crazy, like a wild dog. She was afraid I would hurt her children. She was not stupid at all, only ignorant. She had never been anywhere but the women's quarters of two houses in Sai, and had been having a baby every second summer since she was seventeen. When she found that I did not bite, and did not eat babies, and even talked her language, she began to make me welcome, and to see that both Esiryu and I were treated well by the other women of the house. She was a talkative, funny woman, not very thoughtful but quick and perceptive. She told me she was glad I was there for Dayat to fuck, because she was tired of his appetite and never interested in having sex when she was nursing, anyhow; but she said, "When I want another one, you'll have to send him across the passage, one night, at least!"

I said, "Another baby!"—disbelieving.

"These are all girls but one," she said.

I said, "Well, at least you could get pregnant by some man you liked?" That made her stare in disbelief, and then she laughed and said, "Ayayyu, you really are dirty! I don't like any men in this household, anyhow. We've got the best of the lot, I think." I agreed with her. Our husband was not a bully, and was good-natured and good-looking. She said, "But don't you let him know you even think about other men, he's very sensitive about that." And she told me that a woman who slept with a man not her husband would be killed by the husband's family. I did not believe that. Of course people kill each other out of jealousy and sexual rage, I knew that; but that was not what Syasip meant. She said, "No, no, you would be killed in public, to get the shame out of the house. You belong to Dayat, don't you see? You belong to him, I belong to him, that's how it is."

I thought of my father saying in the common place of Sinshan, "But she belongs to me!" Now I had two eyes to see him with.

Early in the spring my husband said, "Ayayyu, good news from the west. Terer Abhao is back with the Victorious Army."

I said, "My father is dead."

Retforok Dayat laughed and said, "He's at the Palace now."

This too I did not believe, until I saw my father. He came to Retforok House to see me. He looked gaunt and fearfully weary, but he was not lying with his back broken, head downward, in a canyon in the wilderness. Still when I saw him here I saw him there also, as in images painted on glass placed one behind another.

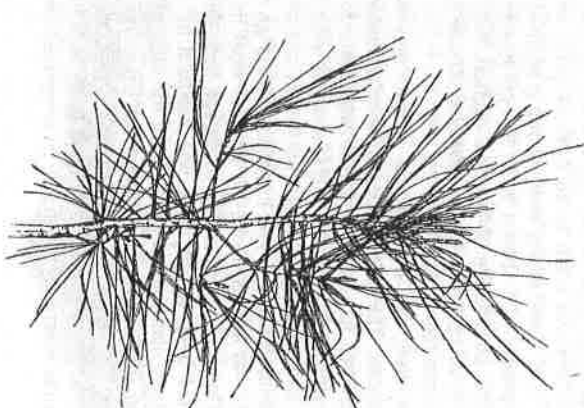
We talked with pleasure and tenderness. He said, "I'm glad you have married, Ayayyu. Is it all right for you in this house?"

I said, "Yes, it's all right, and Dayat is kind. Is there any way I might go home?"

He looked at me and away, and shook his head.

"If you could taken me as far as South City, I could go alone from there. I know the landmarks," I said.

He considered it only a moment before he said, "Listen, Ayayyu, since you chose to come here it can't be undone. If you run away from your husband, you put me into shame and disgrace. You belong to the Retforoks now. Better stay with them. You're well out of my house;



things are not going well for us there. Make this your home. Put the Valley out of your mind!"

"My mind is not that small," I said. "It holds the Valley and the City and still I don't know where the end of it is. But it's only you that can make the City my home."

"No," he said, "I think only you can do that."

That was fairly said. And I continued to live as Dayat's pretty wife, knowing that what my father had said was true: he was living in disgrace, and any further disgrace brought upon him would endanger him. What I could do for him was to behave quietly and with patience until The Condor and his advisers no longer wanted somebody to blame for the loss of the war in the Six Rivers country.

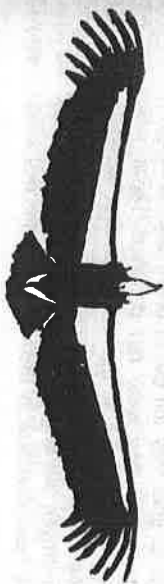
It sounds strange when I say that disgrace could put a person in danger of his life: disgrace and shame are quite bad enough by themselves, among us in the Valley; but there, where every relationship was a battle, they were deadly. Punishment was violent. I have said that I was told that a honk could be blinded for writing or reading, a woman killed for having sex: I did not see such things happen, but every day I did see or hear about violent punishments, striking children, beating slaves, locking up disobedient honk or yon; and later on, as I shall tell, it grew worse. It was frightening to live in this kind of continuous war. The Dayao seemed never to decide things together, never discussing and arguing and yielding and agreeing to do something before they did it. Everything was done because there was a law to do it or not to do it, or an order to do it or not to do it. And if something went wrong it seemed never to be the orders, but the people who obeyed them, that got blamed; and blame was usually physical punishment. I learned caution daily. I learned, whether I wanted to or not, how to be a warrior. Where life has been made into a battle, one has to fight.

The Retforoks were not in disgrace; indeed they had become favorites of The Condor. The chief of our household, Retforok Aremar, and his youngest brother, my husband, Dayat, went often to the Palace, that tall house where The Condor lived. My husband, who liked talking as well as he liked sex, told me all about what he did and saw and heard there. I liked to listen, because it was interesting, although very strange and often as horrible as a ghost story. He told me what had happened to the son of The Condor: when he tried to escape from the part of the Palace where he had been walled in he was betrayed by people who had pretended to help him, and as punishment for disobeying the Law of One he was killed. The manner in which he was killed Dayat described at length. No mortal hand could kill the Son of the Son, so he was tied down and a strong current was run through his body until his heart and brain stopped; thus the electricity killed him in accordance with the Law

of One. All his wives, kept women, children, and slaves were also killed. I said, "But then who will be the next Condor?" and Dayat told me that there was a second son, still a young child and still alive.

He told me also about the weapons the Dayao were building. The armies going out from Sai now were not making war to gain land, but to take copper, tin, and other metals from towns and peoples that had any store of them; and they made slaves of the Sensh, who worked the iron mines where Cloud River comes into the Dark River, and took all the instructions for the materials needed and the making of the Great Weapons came, as well as I could tell, from the Exchange; and the Dayao were very skilled artisans in metal and machinery, and excellent engineers, who could follow such instructions with understanding. I am not sure that their understanding of the use of the Exchange was very good, since no one but The Condor and his High One-Warriors were permitted to learn the use of it at all, and restricted knowledge is perverted knowledge, as they say at the Library; but having little skill with the matter myself, I cannot be certain. In any case, the gathering of materials to make the Great Weapons and the making of them took four years.

During that time I became pregnant twice. I aborted the first pregnancy, because my husband had raped me when I told him I did not want him and though I had no contraceptive. A Condor's Daughter would go on and have the child of a rape, but I did not. It was easy to get abortifacient from the yon, who aborted more often than they bore, and Esiryu helped me. Two years later, when I was twenty-one years old, I wanted to become pregnant. Esiryu and Syasip were good friends, but I was always bored, because there was nothing to do but spin and sew and talk, always indoors and always among people, never alone and therefore always lonely. I kept thinking that a child would be like the Valley; it would be part of me and I part of it; it would be beloved home. Maybe that part of my soul that was like a tight string stretched between the City and Sinsan would loosen and come back into my body if the child consented to come into my womb. So I ceased to use the contraceptive, and after three months Dayat and I opened the door to the child. It took that long because neither he nor I were living so easily or eating so well as before, and though he still liked to talk to me he did



not have so much energy for fucking. Being a favorite of The Condor was as difficult a life as being in disgrace with him. And all the wealth of Sai was now going to The Condor's one purpose of getting the materials and making the Great Weapons. Everything was sacrificed to that. The Dayao were a people of true heroes.

The first of the Great Weapons was a hut made of iron plates mounted on wheels that ran inside linked metal treads so that it could climb a rough course clinging to it like a caterpillar without getting the wheels stuck. The wheels were turned by a powerful motor inside the hut. It was so strong that it could push over trees and houses, and mounted on it were guns to fire large shot and fire-bombs. It was huge and magnificent, making a noise like continuous thunder when it moved. It was displayed to the people of the City outside the walls. I came veiled with all the women of the Retloroks. We saw it push through a wall of bricks, thundering and shaking through the ruins it made, huge and blind, with a thick penis-snout. Three Condors inside it emerged from it like maggots from an ear of corn, small and soft. It was named Destroyer. It was to lead the army, making a path for the soldiers called The Way of Destruction. I went into my corner in Retlorok House and lay there on the red rugs, imagining the Destroyer pushing against the oak trees named Gaiga in Sinshan, pushing them over, pushing against High Porch House, pushing its wall in, pushing against the roof of the Blue Clay heyinas, pushing the roof in. I imagined its metal treads, caked with adobe, crushing cornstalks and cattle and children into the dirt, grinding them as millstones grind. I kept thinking about the Destroyer even after it broke through the roof of a hidden cave a few miles south of the City and destroyed itself with its own great weight, thrusting and wedging itself into the lava tube. Even then I dreamed of it moving in the cave, pushing the earth in, crushing darkness.

The Condor then set his purpose upon the machines called Nestlings. They were flying machines, condors with engines. The Dayao did not use balloons, but they knew how to make and fly light gliders, soaring off the cliffs above the black lava fields on the summer thermals like the buzzards and condors. Such gliding was a sacred sport, much prized and enjoyed by the young warriors. So there was great excitement over the planning of a self-powered flying vehicle. Dayat, however, did not share it. The Retloroks had worked and planned for the Destroyer, and when it came to grief they fell out of favor, and no longer went daily to the Palace, though they were not punished. Dayat was rather sore and gloomy, and sneered at the plans for the Nestlings and the people building them. They required much less metal in their construction than the Destroyer, but they needed a good deal of fuel, and that was, Dayat said, a fatal weakness in them. The Condor had sent an army clear to

the Range of Heaven to trade for petroleum fuel; it took them nearly a year to go and return, and then there was enough only for one Nestling to fly for a few days. But they began to make fuel out of alcohol from grain and shit, and two Nestlings that carried two men in them began to fly to Kulkun Erian and back. The first day they did this was a holiday in Sai. Again we women all came out in our veils, and even the hontik cheered and danced when the Nestlings came flying over on their stiff black wings. That day I saw The Condor. He came out onto the balcony of the Palace to see his Nestlings fly over him. Women were not supposed to make him unclean with their eyes by looking at him, but I did not care about that, and was careful only not to be seen seeing him. He was dressed in golden cloth and wore a gold and black Condor helmet with the beak-mask, so I did not see the man at all, but only casings and surfaces, nothing of what was within. To be The Condor is to be outside.



The child was staying inside me that day, but thinking about coming out into the Second House. A few more days and it decided to be born and make me a daughter's mother. She was small, strong, and elegantly formed. Whenever I saw her pink flower-cunt I said heya in my heart, for if she had decided to be a son, that son would have "belonged" to my husband and been a Condor. Since she had decided to be a girl she was unimportant and did not matter to anyone but me and Esiryu and Sysap. Her family name was Retlorok, and their priest named her Danyu, which means Woman Given to One. The sound of it is pretty, and I used it before my husband and the others, but when I was alone with her I called her by one of the names quail have in Sinshan: Ekwertwe. Watching Quail, the one of the covey who perches on a branch and watches out while the others are feeding on the ground, in the rainy season, before the birds pair off. Her eyes were bright like the eyes of a watching quail, and she was plump, and her hair made a little topknot, like a quail.

The rest of us were not very plump. The food in Sai was poor and scant in those years. One had ordered The Condor to make the City in the lava beds to be safe from enemies, but nothing much grew in that black desert, and they had to bring food in from places where food was. As they kept breeding, having as many children as possible, they kept having to go farther to get food, and many Iyon and hontik that had



used to grow crops, or herd, or hunt, were employed on the great labors of making the Weapons and supplying them with fuel. Grain that animals and humans would have eaten was eaten by the machines. The One-Warriors paraded through the streets of Sai in sacred procession, singing,

"Our food is Victory,
Battle is our wine,
In One we win all things!
One is our wealth!
There is no death!"

But I held mortality in my arms and suckled her, gave food to her, the person who was born because she would die, Watching Quail. And she fed my soul with her being, her needing. If One is anything other than a word, what can it be but food?

The sacrifices the Dayao were making were to win them wealth and comfort when the Nestlings went out to war. The trouble with the plan was that all the human peoples living anywhere near Dayao country had already moved away or, if they remained, stayed to make war, not to give tribute of food, slaves, or anything else. Anyone could see this, and as life got harder in Sai, the advice of the Terter family to move as a whole people southward into more prosperous lands began to be spoken of again. The old restless spirit of the Dayao was still in them, and many of their ways were better fitted to a nomad life than a settled one. Some of the Retlorok women talked about going under the Condor's wing to the south where there would be plenty to eat, grass and trees and cattle and new things to see, and the men listened; though the talk of women was supposed to be ignorant, foolish babble, they listened. But since the Dayao did not talk decisions over in public council, as people usually do, there was no way for disagreements to come together into agreement. So ideas became opinions, and these made factions, which diverged and became fixed opponents.

The Retlorok Condors were among the faction that said the City must remain where it was, where the finger of light had pointed, and only the soldiers would follow the fire-track of the Nestlings when they went to war. And though the women kept talking of their wish to find a better place to live, they were also frightened of moving, since most of them had lived their whole life inside the City, inside the houses, inside the rooms. They were as ignorant of other places and people as I was when I first went to Kastoha-na. Even the soldiers were ignorant about how other people lived and thought, though they had been among them for years. In the Finders Lodge they say that trading and learning go together, as do ignorance and war. And I think also, because the Dayao

said that everything belonged to One, they forced themselves to think in twos: either this, or that. They could not be among the Many.

Before Ekwekwe was a year old, there began to be trouble among the enslaved people who worked in the fields and mines and workshops, and even some of the farmers, the tyon, had begun to steal off to become forest-living people, or back east into the Basin to live with the jackrabbits in the sagebrush. At a mine up in the Crater Lake country a group of honk men killed the Condor soldiers who were commanding them, and went off into the Silver Mountains. I knew about this because The Condor ordered that ten honk of the City be killed as punishment or payment for the deaths of the ten Condors killed at the mine. This was fair, if all Condors were one and all non-Condors the other: either this, or that. The ten honk men were tied to posts in front of the Palace at the end of the wide, beautiful street. The One-Warriors prayed aloud to One, and Condor soldiers armed with guns shot the men dead while they stood there tied. I did not see this, but was told about it. It was called the Execution of the Law of One. When I heard about it, I felt my head turning. I saw the sunlight in the common place of Kastoha-na, but it was not my mother I saw there: I saw the black vultures stooping to tear at their own bellies, pulling out their own entrails and eating them. I ran into the room where Ekwekwe was and took her in my arms, and we sat on the floor in the corner for a long time till the vision and the sickness passed. But from that day I had no more heart to be a woman of the Condor or to follow their way. I was living among people who were going the wrong way. All I sought was to get my daughter and her mother away from them, to any other place.

It was a long time before I could do that, for Sai was more and more like an ant-hill against which another ant-hill is making war, closed and desperate. When The Condor sent the Nestlings out to drop fire-bombs on the forests and villages of the Ziaun people southwest of Kulun Eriaun, several other peoples joined with the Ziaun to fight the war. They had made plans ahead, meeting and talking and communicating news through the Exchange. They could not hurt the Nestlings when they flew, as they went above the range of guns, and the field from which they flew and to which they returned was protected by a great number of Condor soldiers; so one person, probably a man or woman who had been a honk slave and knew where things were and how to behave and talk, came at night and set fire to the fuel storage tanks. They exploded. The person was burned to death, but the Nestlings were left without fuel. While more was being made, The Condor sent young warriors on gliders to fly over the Ziaun villages, but the gliders were easy to shoot down, and none returned. So much of the harvest of that autumn, not only grain but potatoes, turnips, and so on, went to make fuel for the Nestlings that the storehouses of the City were emptied out;



they used the seed grain. All the songs were about the glory of dying for One. All the men of the Dayao were intent to kill all that they could kill, and the women to praise them for it.

One day early in the autumn of Ekwerkwe's third year it was possible for me to visit Terter House with another Rettorok woman who had relatives there. We had asked to do this many times, and at last the Rettorok men gave us permission and ordered several slave men to accompany us. Ekwerkwe walked beside me from Rettorok House between the blind walls of the City street to Terter House. That was the only time she ever walked that way.

Terter Gebe had died the year before, and my father was the chief of his household, but he had been living hidden indoors like a Dayao woman so as to remain forgotten by The Condor and the One-Warriors, who were *executing* people called enemies of the Condor every day now, tearing out their own bowels. Terter Abhao had not seen his daughter's daughter for two years.

He was in the room where I had been taken to see Terter Gebe years ago. He looked old, being very pale and entirely bald, and stooped in his bearing. My heart sank when I saw him, for I had hoped that he might not be as sick as all the other men in this place. He looked sick, but when he looked at Ekwerkwe his smile was from the Valley, it seemed to me.

"So this is Danaryu Belela," he said when she went to him. She was not afraid of him; she liked all men, as little girls often do.

I said, "This is Danaryu to Da," that is One, "but also she has a first name of her own, Ekwerkwe. That's the quail that calls its name when it sees danger, and then the covey runs, or rises up and flies."

He looked at me.

The child patted his hand to get his attention and said, "I'm Ekwerkwe."

"That is a good name," he said. "You, Ayatyu, how is it with you?" "I'm bored," I said. "There's nothing to read here." I used our Valley word for read.

He looked at me again awhile. "Owi," he said, in the Valley language, and smiled again. "Do you get enough to eat? You're very thin."

"My stomach can fast, but my mind is starving," I said. "Father, we made half a journey together, once."

He nodded his head very slightly. He watched the child for a while,



and talked to the other people in the room, Condors and Daughters of his house and Rettorok House. Presently he said to me, no one else hearing, "When they remember me, you might be remembered too."

I saw that place in front of the Palace in his face, the stakes and the bloody pavement.

"After all, the child!" he said.

My heart gave a great leap, and I said, "You will come—?"

He shook his head and said, "Wait."

Presently, when the Rettorok people were making ready to leave, he said, "This night Ayatyu Bele will sleep here; I have not seen my grandchild for so long."

The Rettorok women were uneasy, and fussed; the eldest of them said, "Great Condor, the woman's husband the Condor Rettorok Dayat might be displeased, since he did not give permission for her to stay," and another of them said, "It is only a granddaughter," and another one, malicious, said, "The Great Condor Terter Abhao might enoble Rettorok House by visiting it sometimes."

There is no way that men could make women into slaves and dependents if the women did not choose to be so. I had hated the Dayao men for always giving orders, but the women were more hateful for taking them. I felt as if all the anger of all my years in Sai was swelling up in me, and that I could no longer keep it back; but fortunately my father—always a good general—said, "Well, the Great Condor Rettorok Dayat will not be displeased with the woman if she stays here a few hours longer. I will have her sent home after dinner tonight." They could not argue much over that, and so they left me, and Esiryu with me. The moment they were gone my father sent for this man, and that woman and made us ready to depart. In the little time we had, all he could do was send two men of his household with me and Ekwerkwe and Esiryu; he could not take us himself or send soldiers with us as he had hoped to do. I said, "Will they send men after us?" and he said, "Early in the morning I will go out with a patrol, and they will follow me, thinking I look you as I brought you."

We had dressed as yon, and were standing in the hallway of Terter House. I said to my father, "Will you come ever?"

He was holding the child in his arms. She was sleepy and rested her head against his neck. He spoke with his head bowed to the child's head, so that I do not know if he spoke to her or to me. "Tell your mother not to wait, not to wait for me," he said. Then he stroked Ekwerkwe's hair with his big hand and carefully gave her to me to carry. I said, "But you will be punished—you will be—" I could not say that word, the stakes and the ropes and the blood.

He said, "No, no. You ran away when you left my house. And I won't be here for punishment. I was ordered to take a patrol west to



White Mountain; we'll leave a little early, that's all. I'll be out of trouble, over there."

Then I knew he was going to the canyon where I had seen him lying. But that is the kind of knowledge that cannot be said or used; so I embraced him and he held me and the child closely for a little while, and then we left him in that house.

We went out the back gate quietly in the early dark.

One of the men with us had been with us when I came from the Valley with my father, a capable, grave man named Arda. I did not know the other, Dorabadda, who had served with my father in the Six Rivers wars. They had the loyalty prized by the Dayao; they were like sheepdogs, trustworthy, tense, brave, and mindless, doing what another person thought, minding him.

The gate of the City was always guarded and people entering or leaving were questioned, but there was no trouble there. Dorabadda said that Esiryu and I were tyon belonging to some high official at the Palace, being sent back to the farms because "they're no good anymore, both pregnant," and there was a lot of joking about the One-Warriors, who are supposed to be lifelong celibates, and whom the soldiers detest and fear. Dorabadda talked easily and got us out without suspicion or delay. So we left Sai. The lights of the City glittered brilliant in the black plain and the dark air, a wonderful shining. All that night as we went slowly across the lava desert the City shone behind us. We passed the sleeping child among us; sometimes she woke for a while and looked into the darkness, watching. She had seldom seen the stars.

At the first lightening we left the great road and struck off across the lava plain, and at day's coming we took shelter in a cave and slept there all day long. We talked, and I learned a great deal I had not known living in Reitorok House. Arda said that we would have to stay away from the villages and farms of the tyon, because they would very likely attack us to rob us or to kill the men and rape the women. I said, "But you're Condors, you give orders to tyon!" He said, "We did." So I found out that outside the walls of the City all that giving and taking of orders had ceased and there was only disorder. We travelled at night through all the Dayao lands, hiding, going on the desert ways.

Then it was, as they say, from the meat grinder into the chopping bowl. Leaving the farmlands of the Dayao, we came into the countries of the victims and enemies of the Dayao.

When we came to Dark River, Arda said we could travel by day, and I said, "Then you should go home, Arda, Dorabadda. Go tell Terter Abhao that you left his daughter on the way to her home, and all was well with her."

Arda said, "He ordered us to take you there."

I said, "Listen. You are good friends of mine now, but if you stay

with me you'll do me harm. With you, Esiryu and Ekwerkwe and I are Dayao. Without you, we are two women and a baby, not having a war with anybody."

The men, following their orders, refused to go back. I refused to go on with them. I did not want them killed for us, or to be killed because I was with them. Since I would not even get up from where we had camped by the river, they had to talk about it, and we talked about it for hours. They found it very hard to disobey my father, or to listen to a woman; but they saw it was true that their presence put us in more danger than their absence. At last they decided, on Dorabadda's suggestion, to follow us, an hour or so behind us, as if they were pursuing us. It was a good solution to the disagreement, except for one fault: it left them still in danger. They would not count that as of any weight in the matter; so we embraced them and left them by the river. We went on, Esiryu and Ekwerkwe and I, following along the northern shore of the Dark River towards the high hills.

We came into the country of the people who call themselves Fennen. We were careful now to do just the opposite of what we had done at first: we travelled in broad daylight and in the most open ways, and if we came near any human place we made noise and spoke aloud so they would hear and see us coming. We spoke with people by sign language and the little TOK that I had learned in Shshar. Ekwerkwe's prattle was better than ours, since babies all speak the same language and everybody understands it. On the fourth evening after we had parted from Arda and Dorabadda, a family living in a wooden house by the great springs at Wallwell took us in for the night, sharing sweet milk and acorn mush with us and giving us warm beds. I slept sound and well for the first time since we had begun travelling, but in the morning waking I heard the people of the household talking outside and by the sound of their voices knew something bad had happened. By TOK and signs I found what it was. They had killed one of our friends from ambush; hearing them talk Dayao, they had shot without waiting to hear more. One was dead, the other had escaped them. I do not know whether it was Arda or Dorabadda that was killed, nor do I know whether the other got back safe to Sai. When I left that City of The Condor no word, nothing ever came to me from that place again.

I could not help crying for the grief and guilt I felt, and Esiryu tried to make me stop, fearing that the Fennen people would guess that we were Dayao women. Esiryu lived in great fear every hour of our journey. But the mother of the Fennen household, seeing my tears, wept too, and said to me in signs and words that there was too much war, too much killing going on, that the young men of her house were sick and carried guns, like crazy people.

We went on, very slowly, for Ekwerkwe's legs were very short.



Though it was autumn, it seemed that the days grew brighter as we went. Down near the confluence of the Dark River with the Great River of the Marshes, at a hilly place that is called Loklatsa on the maps in the heyminas, we met some people coming northeastward. I saw a person on the side of a hill, and thought he was a dream, a ghost, a Four-House person. I knew his face. He was my cousins' stepfather, Changing Always of Madidinou, who had taken the Warrior Lodge name Maggot. I had known this man all my life. I did not know the men with him, but they were dressed in Valley clothes, and were short and slight and round-limbed, with round faces, Valley faces, and wore their hair in Warrior Lodge braids; and one of them called back to the others in my language, the language I had heard only my own souls speak in dream for seven years. "Some women are coming!"

I came on towards them and called out, "Changing Always! So you are here, my cousin's husband! How is it in Madidinou?" I did not care if they were ghosts or living. Warriors or friends—they were from the Valley, from my home, and I ran to them and embraced Maggot. He was so amazed that, Warrior though he was, he let me do so, and then peering into my face said, "North Owl?"

I said, "Oh, no, no, no longer—I am Woman Coming Home!"

So my name for the middle of my life came to me.



We camped that night with the men from the Valley in a willow grove of the hills of Loklatsa, and talked a long time. I asked them to tell me all they could about Sinshan and the Valley, and they asked me to tell them all I could about the Dayao, for they were going to Sai. The slave mind that I had learned to have in Sai was still in my head, thinking like a slave, and after we had been talking awhile I began to lie to them. I was afraid they might force us to go with them as guides and translators. They asked me to do so once, and I said no, and that was all right, but then they asked me again, and then again, and by then I distrusted and feared them as I did Dayao men, and as I had never distrusted or feared Valley men.

At first I had told them plainly what I knew: that the way to Sai might get more dangerous for them every step, and that the Dayao people were living in great disorder, in violence and hunger.

Maggot listened with a Warrior face, that expression that had always exasperated me, of one who has superior knowledge; and he told me, "The Condor have great weapons. Flying engines and fire-bombs. They have great power, the greatest in this part of the world."

I said, "That is true, but also they are killing each other and starving!"

One of the others, a man from Telina-na whose name I do not remember, said to Maggot, "A woman, running away," and shrugged.

A younger man, that one's son, wearing undyed clothes, asked me, "Have you seen the Great Condor One fly?"

I said, "There is a man called The Condor, but he doesn't fly, he doesn't even walk. He never comes out of the house he lives in."

I did not know whether the young man meant The Condor or was trying to talk about the Nestlings, but it did not matter. They did not want to hear what I could tell them, any more than I wanted to hear why they were going to Sai. But I saw that Maggot, for all his superior look, was beginning to be uneasy, and I stopped telling them that the Dayao were a sick people destroying themselves. I began to behave the way Dayao women behaved with men, smiling and agreeing with everything and pretending not to know about anything except their own bodies and babies. The thought of taking one step back on the road to the City made me act this lie. So Maggot would ask, "Are there any Condor armies on this road along Dark River?" and I would answer, "I don't know, I think we did see some soldiers somewhere but I don't know the names of places. Maybe we were in some pine forests then? Or near the volcanoes? But maybe they weren't Condor soldiers, maybe they were somebody else. And you know, we came onto this road just by luck, we were wandering for a month eating roots and berries, that's why we're so thin. I don't really know where we've been." All this so they would not take me with them for a guide.

When they asked about Esiryu, again I lied without plan or hesitation. Esiryu had kept as much out of sight as she could; she was in terror of the men, I said. "She left her husband, and had to run away. So did I," and then I said, "You know the Condor kill women who leave their husbands. And they kill the men they find with such women."

That was my best lie, because it was true. It did the trick. Next morning the Valley Warriors went on their way towards the City and let us go on southwestwards. When we parted I said to them, "Go carefully, be mindful, men of the Valley!" To the young man, who was of my House, I said, "My brother, in the dry land, think of the creek running. My brother, in the dark house, think of the bowl of blue clay." Those words Cave had given me were all I had to give him. Maybe they would be of use to him, as they had been to me.

I do not know what became of those men after we parted at Loklatsa.

From Loklatsa on, we were coming through countries that had not been much infected by the City's sickness. When I had come through them with my father and the soldiers years ago we had kept away from human settlements and travelled like coyotes. This time I travelled like a



human person. At each town or farmstead we came to, they would speak to us. I knew very little TOK, and many of the people living in those places spoke only their own languages, but with signs and expressions everything needful can be said, and hospitality is the flowing of the River itself. Not all of them were generous of heart, but not one of them turned us away hungry. The children of the farmsteads and small villages were excited to meet a new child, one they did not know, and sometimes they were shy and hid away. But Ekwerkwe, meeting strangers every day and playing with children she had never seen, had become bold, and would go looking for them. They all shouted their different languages at her, and she shouted back words of Dayao and Kesh and Fennen and Klatwish, and they taught one another songs that they did not understand the words of. It was a very different journey with her from the journey north with my father! Only Esiryu found it hard. She was leaving home, not going towards it, and she was afraid of people: not cautious and mindful of difference, but afraid like a stray dog, expecting to be hurt. To a Dayao woman outside the walls of her father's or her husband's house all men are dangerous, because to Dayao men all women unprotected by a man are victims; they call them not women or people, but cunts. Esiryu thought of herself that way, as something to be raped, and so she could not give any trust to these strangers we stayed with. She always stood behind me, and I called her Shadow Woman. Often I thought that she should not have come, and that I had done wrong to bring her with me; but she would not have let me go without her, on that evening that we left Terter House, she had said she would sooner die than live there without me and Ekwerkwe. And her companionship was a great comfort and help to me on our journey. Though her fear sometimes infected and troubled my feelings, sometimes it made me braver than I really was, when I had to say to her, "See, there's nothing to fear from these people!" and go forward to meet them.

Going with the little quail's legs, ten miles was a good day's journey for us. We came on down to the rope-and-boat ferry at Ikul and crossed the River of the Marshes there with some Amaranth people taking gold home from the high mining country. We three went west across the marshes, then south along the foothills to the place called Uuid where the Chinyan Road begins, and came through the hills on that road. That is wild country. Not a human person was on that road but ourselves. Coyotes sang all night, the crazy-old-woman songs and the high-moon songs, up on the high hillsides: the grass was full of mice; deer sprang aside, or watched us from the thickets, all day long; mourning doves called continually, and the air at evening would darken with the vast flocks of pigeons and other birds; always at noon we looked up to see the redwing hawk, circling. I picked up feathers on that way as we went

and saved them, feathers of nine kinds of bird. As we walked there the first rain fell. I walked singing a song that came to me out of the rain and the feathers, the words given to me:

"There is no knowing,
only going on,
only going by, ah ya hey.
I am the great being,
the grass bowing."

When I came back into the Valley of my being I brought this song and the feathers of nine birds from the wilderness, the coyote's way, and from the seven years I lived in the City of Man I brought my womanhood, the child Ekwerkwe, and my friend Shadow.

We came down Buda Creek into Deep Valley, then down Hana-if Creek to the River, singing heya at every step. We were very hungry, having lived off seeds and gatherings up in the hills, and I had not been willing to use our time in gathering, which is slow work even when there is plenty; I had hurried us along. We turned downriver and came past the Geyser and the Baths to Kastoha-na.

We went to the Blue Clay heyimas there. I said to the people there, "I am Woman Coming Home, from Sinshan, of this House. This is Ekwerkwe, from the Condor's City, of this House. This is Esiryu, from the Condor's City, of no House, our friend." They made us welcome in that heyimas.

While we stayed there I spoke of the men we had met at Loklatsa, and was told that there had been a meeting of the Valley people about the Warriors, and that that lodge had stopped being. Maggot and the others had said nothing about this.

The scholars of my heyimas in Kastoha said that I might do well to go up to Wakwaha and give to the Libraries and to the Exchange what I knew about the doings and intentions of the Dayao people. I said I would do that, but first I wanted to go to my own town.

So we walked down the southwest bank of the River along the Old Straight Road to beautiful Telina. There we slept at the heyimas and went





on very early in the morning. It was raining thick, fine rain. We could hardly make out the grey hills across the Valley, and on our right the hills nearby coming down from Spring Mountain, Sow Mountain, and Sinshan Mountain looked vast in the mist and moving rain.

Going there, going there,
Going where we went
Dying into the Valley.
Going there, going there,
The rainclouds down the Valley.

We turned onto the Amiou path through Sinshan Fields, and came past Blue Rock and the outer paddocks, and crossed Hechu Creek on the cattle-bridge. The creek was already running lively in the rain. I saw the rocks, paths, trees, hills, fields, barns, fences, gates, stiles, groves, places that my heart knew. I told Ekwerkwe and Shadow their names, and said heya to each one. We came to the bridge over Sinshan Creek under the high alder and the oaks at the side of Adobe Hill. I said to Ekwerkwe, "There, do you see, in the path by the paddock gate, that place is where your grandfather, my father, Terter Abhao, stands for us now. There he came once on foot to me. There he came again for me, riding a great horse, leading a mare for me. Passing this place may we have him in mind in the days to come."

"There he is," Ekwerkwe said, watching. She saw what my memory saw. Shadow saw nothing.

We walked across the bridge into the town. It is only four steps long, that bridge.

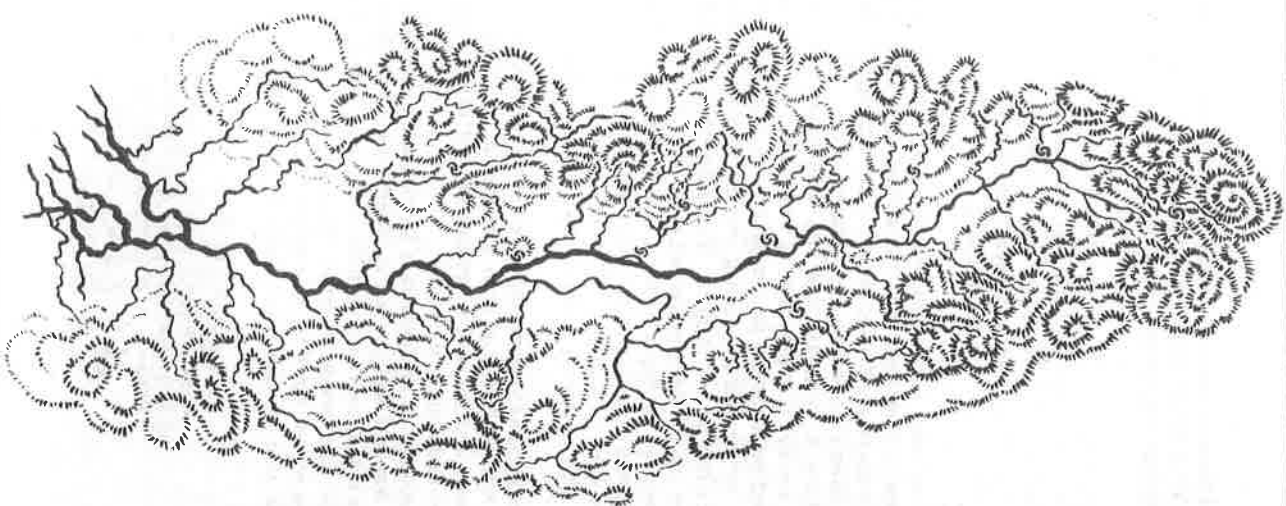
As we turned right along Hard Canyon Creek, some children came by: I did not know them. That was strange! That made me go cold through my body and soul. But Ekwerkwe, who had learned to greet all strangers, let go my hand and looked at the children, greeting them in a small voice in their language. She said, "So you are here, children of the Valley."

Two of them ran away behind the smithy. Two were courageous and stood to face the foreigners. One of them said, in an even smaller voice than Ekwerkwe's, "So you are here," but she did not know what to call us.

"In what household do you live, children of the Valley?" I said, and after a while the boy, who was eight or nine, motioned with his head to Clinbam House. Then I thought of Ready's baby, born the summer before I left Sinshan. I said, "Perhaps you are a brother of my House, and live in Ready's household?" He nodded yes. I said, "Tell me, please, brother, are there Blue Clay people living now in High Porch House?"

The Nine Towns on the River: I

A talismanic map given to the Editor by Following Through of the Serpentine of Chukulmas



He nodded yes again, but was still too shy to speak. So we went on, I with my new fear inside me. Why had I not thought that seven years had passed in Sinshan as well as in Sai? I had not asked Maggot nor the people in the heyimas in Kasioha and Teina about my household, because I had not been willing to think that any change had come to them.

We came to the foot of the northeast staircase that leads up to the balcony of the first floor. I looked at my companions: the little wet quail ragged and shining in the rain, the thin, bright-eyed Shadow standing wrapped, as I was, in a black cloak. My father had given us these cloaks the night we left; they were such as the soldiers wore. They were the color of the lava beds, the color of the Condor, the color of the night we left that City. I took mine off and folded it on my arm before I went up the stairs of my house. My feet knew the distance between the treads. My hand knew the rain-wet railing. My whole mind knew the smell of that rain-wet wood. My eyes knew the door frame and the door of oakwood standing ajar for the rainy wind to enter. The Bear had gone before me. The Coyote came with me. I said, "I was born in this house and have come back to it. Shall I come in?"

For many breaths no one replied. Then my mother, Towhee, came and opened the door wide, looking at us with frightened eyes. She had become small and strange-looking. Her clothes were not clean.

I said, "So you are here, my mother. Look here, this Ekwertwe has made me her mother and you her grandmother!"

She said, "Valiant is dead. She has been dead a long time now."

She let us come in, but she did not touch me, and drew back when I would have touched her. For some while I think she did not understand who Ekwertwe was, and that she was now the grandmother, for when I used the word, again she spoke of Valiant. She did not look at Shadow or ask about her; it was as if she did not see her at all.

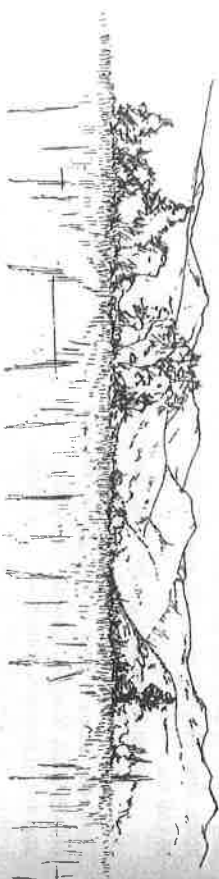
My grandmother had died two summers after I left. My grandfather had gone back to Chumo after that, and had died not long after, people told me. Towhee had lived alone in the household for five years. Since the Lamb Lodge had stopped having meetings and wakwa, she had

stayed much alone, not coming to the heyimas, not dancing the great dances. In summer she went no longer to Gabheya meadow, but farther up the ridges, staying by herself. My grandmother's old friend Shell and my side-grandfather, Ninepoint, had been mindful of her, but she did not want to be with people, neither human nor the sheep of our family nor even the old trees on Sinshan Ridge, the grey-leaved olives. Her souls had shrunk away and unmade themselves. That is the danger of going backward in the way she had done when she took back her child-name. She had not gyred, but had closed the circle. She was like the sticks of a fire put out by the rain. She neither wanted us to live with her in the household nor wanted us not to be there; everything was much the same to her. She would not let things change any more for her. I gave her a last name in my mind: Ashes. But I never spoke it until all her names were given to the fire in the Night of Mourning of the World Dance in the year she died.

Some people of Sinshan came to greet me with much kindness. Turning, who had been Cricket and had played the games of Shikashan with me, came hurrying and weeping to meet me, and later she made a song of my journey and return and gave it to me. Garnet, who had been Lark, Rising when he played with us, had married an Ounnalin woman, but he came over to talk to me. Old Dada who never learned how to think kept giving me feathers to tell me he was glad I had come back; for days, whenever I went to the heyimas he was waiting around with his head down, holding out a chicken feather a little way towards me, and when I took it and spoke he would smile with his head bent down and go on along. Some of the older dogs remembered me and greeted me as a friend. But among the human people, there were some who were afraid of infection and would not come anywhere near me and Shadow, or even Ekwertwe. Some very superstitious men blew at us whenever we passed them, so that they could not breathe in our outbreath. They believed their heads would turn backwards on their necks if they caught the Sickness of Man from us. Sinshan is indeed a small town. People in small towns have beliefs the way caves have bats. But there were also people of generous understanding in that small town, and what they offered me I was now able to take, without the fear and false pride of my adolescence.

My father was a no-House person, and my daughter's father also, so only through one grandmother was Ekwertwe of the Valley and the Blue Clay. But nothing was said of that in the heyimas, and the children did not call her half-person. Truly I think some illness had gone out of the Valley that had been there when the Condor was there. There were people there who had been crippled, like my mother, but they were no longer sick.

Soul Mountain

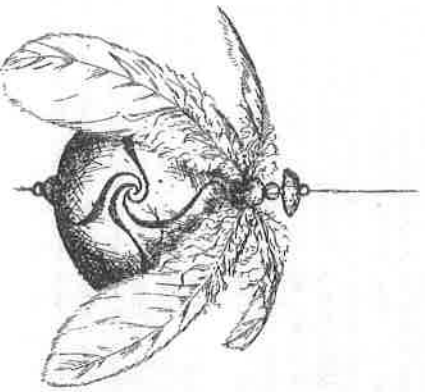


Esiryu would not be called Esiryu, but took Shadow for her name, and for a long time it seemed she wanted to be a shadow, there and not there. She was tense and distrustful of herself and all other people. She did not know how to stroke the cat, and the sheep might as well have been wild dogs, to her; she took a long time to learn our Valley language, and she was bewildered by our ways. "I am an outsider, I come from outside, and you are all inside your world!" she said to me, when they were singing the Sun, and all around the common place and the dancing place the trees stood wonderfully flowering in winter with feathers, shells, gilt oakgalls, and carved birds. "Why are there children in the trees tying wooden flowers to them? Why do people in white clothes come to the windows to frighten Ekwerkwe at night? Why don't you eat beefsteak? How can Jay and Stag Alone be married if they're both men? I will never understand anything here!"

But she was in fact quick to understand; and though a number of people returned her distrust, many came to like her for her good humor and honest generosity, and some even valued her because she was a woman of the Dayao, not in spite of it, saying, "This is the only woman of the Condor that came to us; she is her own gift." After she had lived a year in High Porch House she said to me one day, "It's easy to live in Sinshan. It's easy being here. In Sai it was hard; everything was hard; being was hard. Here it's soft."

I said, "The work here is hard." We were weeding cotton in Amhechu Field when she said that. "You never worked this hard in Sai. And I never worked at all there, except for that damned sewing."

"Not that kind of hard and soft," she said. "Animals live softly. They don't make it hard to live. Here people are animals."



I said, "Honik!"
 "Yes. Here even the men are animals. Here everybody belongs to everybody. A Dayao man belongs to himself. He thinks everything else belongs to him, women, animals, things, the world."

I said, "We call that living outside the world."

"It's hard to live there," she said. "For the men, and the others."

I said, "But what about Valley men?"

She said, "Soft."

"Soft like jellied eels," I said, "or soft like pumas walking?"

"I don't know," she said. "They're strange. I'll never understand any of the men here!"

That, too, was not strictly true.

All the years I lived in Sai, before I was married to Dayat and after, from time to time my mind would turn to my cousin Spear, not with pain and anger as when I left the Valley, but with a kind of aching that was welcome to me because it was not like anything I felt there in Sai or ever would feel there. Although Spear had turned away from me, yet as children and again as adolescents we had sought each other's company, and our hearts had chosen each other, and even when he was so far away and I could not expect ever to see him again, still he was part of myself and part of the Valley, he was in my soul and familiar to my mind. Sometimes in the latter months of my pregnancy I had thought about dying, as a woman occupied with giving birth must do; and when I had thought about my own dying, that I might die there in the foreign place, outside the Valley, and go to that earth, such a dreaminess would come into me that my heart sinks even now recalling it. At such bad times my help was sometimes to think of Gahheya meadow, the shadows of the wild oats against the rock, and sometimes to think of my cousin sitting on the bank of little Buckeye Creek looking for the thorn in his foot, saying to me, "North Owl! can you see this damned thorn?" And those thoughts were life to me.

Spear's sister who had been Pelican when we were children and now was Lily lived in their household in Madidinou with an Obsidian husband, but Spear had gone to live in Chukulmas at the time the Warrior Lodge stopped being. Late in the dry season, that year I came home, he came back to Madidinou to his sister's house. We met when he came to Sinshan to dance the Water.

I danced that year. I was dancing the deer-hoof music, the Water Shaking. I saw him standing with some Blue Clay people and Shadow and Ekwerkwe. After the dance I went over there. He greeted me, saying, "That's a good middle name that came to you, Woman Coming Home. Do you have to go away again so that it can go on being true?"

"No," I said, "I'm learning to be my name."

I saw that he had in his mind the last words I had said to him in the vineyards in the evening in late autumn years ago: that I had given him a name in my heart. He did not ask for that name now, nor did I give it to him.

After that night he came often to Sinshan. He was a member of the Wine Art, a skilled vintner, and worked in the wineries of both towns.

He had lived some years with a woman in Chukulmas, but they had not married. In Maddinou he lived as his sister's brother. When I kept meeting him in Sinshan, I saw that he was beginning to think about making our old friendship into a new one. That touched me, for I was grateful to him for having given me the memory to help me when I was afraid of dying in a strange country, and also it pleased my self-esteem. That had been hurt badly by his turning away from me, and it still craved satisfaction. But aside from that, I did not want him very much as a friend or lover. He was a handsome man with a straight back and a little walk, but I felt the Warrior still in him. He was too much like a Dayao man. Not like my father, who though a True Condor and soldier all his life was in mind and heart no warrior at all. Spear was more like my husband Dayai, who though he never fought with his body or weapons made all life into war, a matter of victory or defeat. Most men who had been in the Warrior Lodge and had stayed in the Valley had let a new name come to them, but Spear had kept his. When I looked at him now I saw that his eyes were restless and troubled; he did not look clearly at the world, as the puma gazes. That had not been the right name for him; Spear was better.

After I had made it clear that I was not interested in him except as my old friend and cousin, he still kept coming around, and Shadow was always glad to see him. That worried me a little. Bold, restive, strong-willed Esiryu, often in trouble for disobedience or insolence with her "superiors" in Sai, was the gentle Shadow in Sinshan, always hanging back and looking down. It was that behavior which suited Spear. Perhaps he was trying to make me jealous, but also he liked talking with Shadow. People who make life into a war fight it first with people of the other sex, I think, striving to defeat them, to win a victory. Shadow was too intelligent and too generous of soul to want to defeat Spear or any man, but all her education among the Dayao had fitted her to play the already-defeated one, the loving enemy. I did not like the way Spear began to strut when he walked with her. But she was growing stronger; there was more of the puma in her eyes than in his. I thought he might end up her hontik and never know it.

If Esiryu became another person as Shadow, so Ayayyu was becoming another person as Coming Home, but, as I had said to my cousin, I had to learn how to do that. It took me a long time.

In Sai I had been restless, longing for work to do. In Sinshan I found

it. There was a great deal to do for the household. My mother had not kept up the house or the spinning or the gardens, and had let the family sheep go with the town flock. The pleasure of doing and making had died out of her with all other fires.

Maybe it was because I had seen what the passion of love did to my parents' lives that I kept shy of any man who might have brought such passion to my life. I was just beginning to learn to see and I did not want to be blinded. Neither of my parents had ever truly seen the other. To Abhao, Willow of Sinshan had been a dream—waking life was all elsewhere. To Willow, the Condor Abhao had been all the world—nothing had mattered but him. So they gave their great passion and their fidelity to no one, not truly to one another but to people who did not exist, a dream-woman, a god-man, and it was wasted, a gift to no one. My mother had gone out of her own being after that nonbeing, had spent all passion on nothing. Now nothing was left of it or of her. She was empty, cold, poor.

I decided I wanted to be rich. If my mother could not warm herself at least I would keep her warm. Even that first year that I was home, I made a dance cloak to give to our heyimas. I wove it on Valiant's loom, which had stood unused in the second room of the household. As I wove I watched the silver crescent bracelet on my arm shine across the warp, forth and back.

Shell had looked after our ewes in lambing time, and at shearing had given the wool of them to the storehouses; there were still five sheep in the family, two wethers and three ewes. When I went to work with them I always took Ekwerkwe with me. She was ready to learn from them and the other animals of the pastures and the hills. In the City there had been nobody but human people, and her education had been grossly incomplete. On our journey to the Valley she had walked all the long way among the living Four-House people; she had tasted Coyote's milk. Now in the Valley she wanted to be with the sheep and in the barns with the milk-cows and in dogtown with the puppies, like the other children, all day long. She did not like the gardens and the gathering-places so well; the work there is slower and harder and the results are not so easy to see, except at harvest time. That learning comes slowly.

Ninepoint's household kept himpi, and they gave us four young ones from a litter. I built up the old pen under the balcony and gave Ekwerkwe the himpi's care, and she nearly smothered them with mindfulness at first and then forgot to give them water so that they nearly died, and she wept with remorse, and learned; she also learned to whistle like a himpi. The cat downstairs in High Porch House had kittens, and a couple of tabbies spilled over into our household. One day near our gathering trees I found a half-grown kid, lame and bleeding; wild dogs had killed the mother and mauled the kid. I doctored her as best I could, carried her



down the ridge to town, and kept her penned till she recovered. As she was a stray, she became one of our household, and presently five of us were goats, very pretty tan-and-black longhairs, giving excellent mohair for weaving.

I had always liked potting more than any other skill, but with sheep, goats, and a good loom, it seemed that weaving was there to do, so I did it. I took what was given, since I wanted to give. The trouble with weaving was that I did not like to stay indoors. I had had enough of roofs, for seven years. But all through the dry season, from the Moon to the Grass, I had the loom outside on the balcony, and it was pleasant, working there.

Shadow, brought up as a "dressing-maid" in Sai, did not even know how to cook. She and Ekwerkwe learned that skill together. My mother got used to her company; she spoke very little to Shadow, but came to like being with her and working with her. Shadow learned gardening with her and with Shell. After a while she began talking to women in the Blood Lodge, receiving instruction, and with women and men in the Blue Clay heyimas; and in her third summer in Sinshan, at the dancing of the Water, she became a Blue Clay person, living in my House, my sister, as she had been in love and loyalty since we met as adolescents in Terter House. Later on she joined the Planting Lodge. Once when we were spading the heavy black adobe of our garden plot at planting time, when the clay clogged the spade in masses so that one of us had to dig one spadeful and hand the spade to the other to clean while digging one more spadeful with a second spade, which the other then cleaned so that it could dig one more spadeful... while we were sweating at that in a fine, cold rain, she said to me, "My father was a tyon, a farmer. He sold me to Terter House when I was five to be trained as a maid, to be spared that work. Now look at me!" She tried to lift her foot, and it too was clogged and clogged with the sticky black dirt. "I am stuck in the mud," she said. She scraped a great weight of adobe off the shovel and handed it back to me, and we went on digging. We did not often talk about the City. Even for her, I think, those years now seemed like a feverish, restless night, which is long and dark and full of thoughts and emotions and miseries, a travail of the soul, but which will not let itself be remembered when the daylight shines.

I have forgotten to say that in the year I came home, after the Sun was danced, I left Ekwerkwe and Shadow and Towhee, and went alone to Kastioha-na and to Wakwaha to relate my story of living with the Dayao and to answer questions that people wanted to ask concerning them and their weapons and plans for war. At that time much information was given and taken at the Exchange concerning the Condor's armies; they told me that the Nestlings were flying again, and had set towns afire in the country southwest of Kulkun Ertan, but that there were no Condor

armies outside the Condor's lands. While I was there, a message on the Exchange from the Six Rivers country said that people there had seen a Nestling fall out of the air on fire; and the Exchange itself confirmed this when the scholars asked it. So many peoples were using the Exchange, from the Basin and the Inland Sea up the coast and clear round to the Crater Lake country and north even of that, that everything the City's armies did was reported and known at once, they told me, and no one could be taken by surprise or left without aid if they asked for it. I listened to what they said and answered what they asked as best I could, but at that time I did not want to hear anything about the Dayao, but only to put them behind me; and so I left Wakwaha as soon as I could.

I went back with Ekwerkwe when she was nine years old, but we did not go to the Exchange. We went to the Springs of the River to dance the Water where the water begins to shine.

After I had been home two or three years, when the household was prospering and the day's work did not fill my whole mind, I began to listen more carefully in the heyimas, and to talk with my side-grandfather and with Shell, who were both thoughtful and magnanimous people. They had always been careful of me. Now they were getting old; it was time that I be careful of them, and take at last what they offered me. I was happy with the giving that flowed in and out the doors of our household now, and Shell and Ninepoint praised my wealth; but I knew they did not consider me wealthy, because I was so poorly educated in matters of history, poetry, and the intellect. I had no songs except the mud wakwa the old man had given me when I was a child at the Geyser, and the rain and feather song that was given me in the high hills coming home. Ninepoint said, "If you want it, I will give you the Deer Gyre, granddaughter." This was a very great gift, and I considered a long time before I accepted it, distrusting my ability. I said to Ninepoint, "That is a great stream to pour into a small bowl!" He said, "The bowl's empty, so



it can hold a great deal." We took all that rainy season, meeting in the heyimas at early morning, to sing the Deer Gyre until I knew it. It is still the greatest thing in my keeping.

After that I began reading at the Archives of the Madrone Lodge, and later I went to the Madrone of Telina-na, and to the Blue Clay in Wakwaha, continuing my education. I had not much gift, but much was given me.

When Spear and Shadow married, that put two families in our two rooms of High Porch House, which was a crowd. Also I was not very comfortable living under one roof with Spear, whom I had once desired. I did not quite trust him or myself. Though I sang the Wedding Song for them with all my heart, still, old feelings can be there suddenly and swallow you up, like the caves in the lava fields. And I had not had a man in my bed since I left those black fields.

That spring I danced the Moon for the first time.

For the summer Towhee and Ekwerkwe and I went to Gahneya, while Shadow and Spear went across the Valley to a summering place near Dry Falls. After the Water we were all together again in High Porch House, and I decided to go to Telina for a while. Ekwerkwe asked to come with me. We stayed in Hardcinder House. My half-uncle's wife, Vine, was ill with seval, and going blind; she liked to talk about the old days with me. She had no daughters, so her house was very quiet now, that had been so noisy with children. She liked to tell Ekwerkwe how I had called her house a mountain, and how she had asked me to come stay with her in that mountain; and now, she said, "not only the Owl but the Quail has come to stay in the mountain!" Then Ekwerkwe, though she knew, would ask, "Who is the Owl?" So they got on happily, rattling along like two creeks in the rainy season.

While I was in Telina I went every day to the Madrone Lodge to read history. A person of the Serpentine of Chumo came there also, and sometimes we talked together. He had not been away from Chumo before, since he was somewhat lame from a boyhood fall, and it was hard for him to travel unless he got a ride on a horse or on a cart. He had not thought about travelling at all until he had lived about forty years. By then he had practiced for many years in the Doctors Lodge; he had a gift of healing, so great a gift that it burdened him beyond his strength. He had made so many life-debts in Chumo that he was worn out trying to pay them. So he had come to the Madrone in Telina to rest awhile, and went to the Doctors Lodge only to sing. He was a very quiet man but his talk was always interesting. Each time we talked I wanted to talk again.

One day he said, "Woman Coming Home, if we could make one bed, I would be in it; but I don't know where to make it."

I said, "I have a large bed in Sinshan, in High Porch House." He said, "If I came into your household I would rather come as your husband. Maybe you don't want a husband, or this husband."

I was not sure, so I said, "Well, I'll speak to Vine. She was a girl in Chumo. She might like to have a Chumo man around her house for a while."

So he came into Hardcinder House to live with us, before the Sun. We both danced the Twenty-One days. Ekwerkwe slept with Vine, and I with Alder. What I felt was that if I wanted a husband, this was a good one; but maybe it was better that I not marry. My mothers had not been very good at being married, and I had already had one husband whom I had left without a word or a thought. Alder and I certainly got along well, and by marrying me he could leave his creditors in Chumo fairly and start fresh at the Doctors Lodge in Sinshan. That was a good reason for marrying. But I kept thinking about it. I was still the Condor's daughter and the Condor's wife, ignorant, poor of mind, only beginning to be a person. I was raw, and needed a lot of cooking yet. Though I had lived twenty-six years, I had lived only nineteen of them in the Valley. Nineteen is young to marry. I told Alder these thoughts. He listened carefully, without answering. That was a thing I liked very much in him and admired, his careful and silent listening. It was his gift and way.

Some days after I had spoke to him, he said, "Send me back to Chumo."

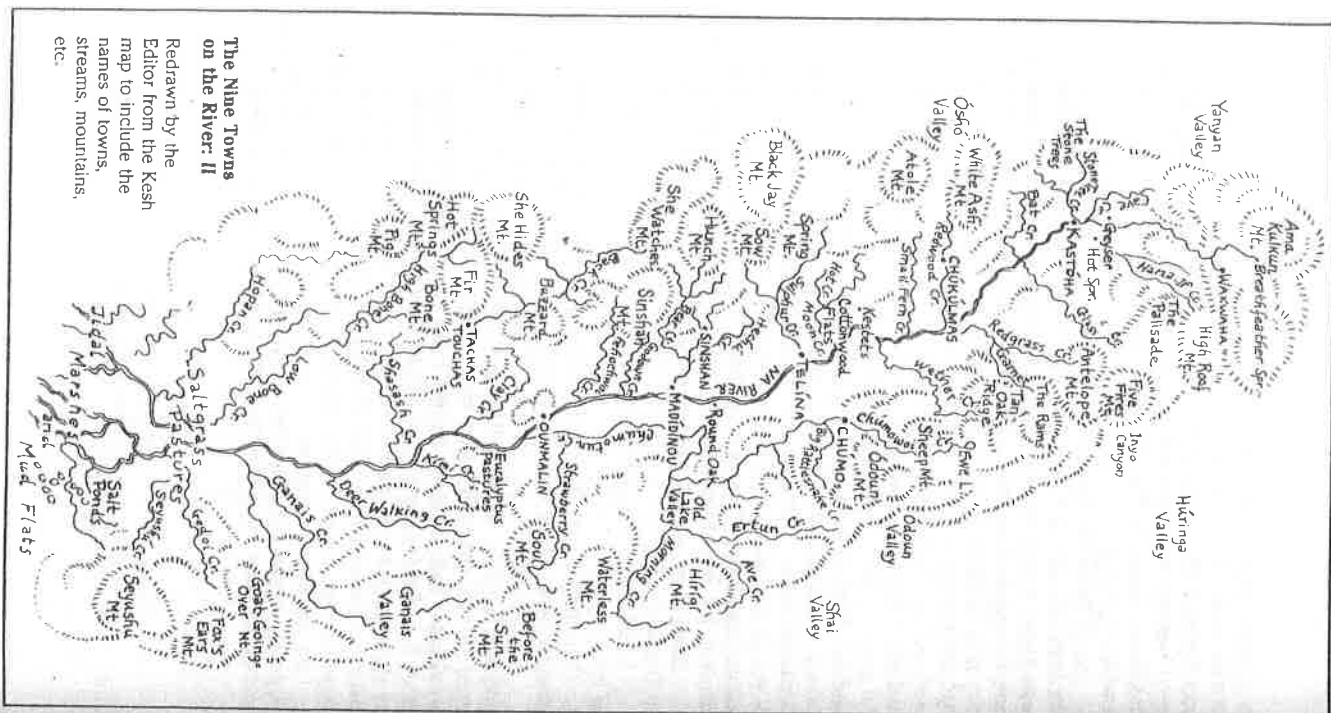
I said, "This is not my mothers' household. I can't send you out of it."

He said, "I can't leave you and should leave you. I am taking your strength. What I have to give you, you don't want or need."

What he meant was his need of me. He spoke with great passion and with as great restraint. What he said was true. I did not want his need of me. But there was more than that that was true. Once a waterskater had given me the gift I did not want or understand; I had taken it, and it might yet be my wealth. I said, "The husbands in our part of High Porch House don't seem to stay long; one of them kept going back to Chumo and the other went back outside the world. You needn't stay long. You can go back to Chumo when you like. Come for a while."

So we went to Sinshan to dance the World, but not the Wedding Night. Ekwerkwe stayed another month with Vine, and after that Shadow and Spear went to live in Plum Trees House, where a room on the





The Nine Towns on the River II

Redrawn by the
Editor from the Kesh
map to include the
names of towns,
streams, mountains,
etc.

second floor was empty since Shell's grandson had married Shopiwe of Up the Hill House. The other family on the first floor of High Porch House moved out of one small north room and let it come back to our family, so Alder and I slept there. In Sinshan we got along even better than in Telina. He never spoke of marrying, however, or behaved in any way that would remind me that he had said that if he came into my house he had wanted to come as my husband. I remembered it, but I kept thinking, "I will not be caught as my parents were caught. I will not let his need eat up my life. I must come to be myself by myself. When a man comes, under the Moon or in the sunlight, that I like as well as this man, I will have him if I wish." So it was. Only I did not meet any man I liked as well as Alder.

In the Doctors Lodge of Sinshan he conducted himself with caution, and I learned a good deal from watching his mindfulness. He knew that some smallminded people in that lodge would be jealous of his skill, and look care never to compete with them. And he did not want to pile up life-debts as he had done in Chumo in the pride of his art; so the people he asked the lodge for the care of were people who had mortal cancers or were seaxi, those for whom there was little relief and no cure. At one time there were three such people in Sinshan, and he would go and sing and care for all of them. In the lodge an ill-natured person said, "The Chumo man hangs around the dying like a buzzard!" He heard that, and was ashamed. He would not tell me why, but I saw something had shamed him, and found out from Woman Laughs what it was; I was angry for him, but to him I laughed. I said, "My husbands are all condors and buzzards!"

I had called him husband. He heard it, but he said nothing.

In the household, he got on very well with Ekwerkwe, and Towhee was as much at ease with him as with anyone. Sometimes in the evening he would sing, almost under his breath, one of the long songs of his art, and when my mother listened her face grew soft and deep, without strain. Though because of his lameness he had never gone with the flocks on Sheep Mountain, still he was a Chumo man, and the sheep trusted him; and the she-goat whom I had found on Sinshan Ridge would come to him whenever he was in the fields. As they were both tame, it was a funny sight, one hobbling along quietly after the other, and the rest of the goats of Sinshan trailing along behind.

When Ninepoint died I was the Deer Gyre Singer of my heyimas, and other responsibilities followed upon that. I felt quite wealthy enough, after a few years, and sometimes, like my mother, I wanted to go spend the summer away up in the hills away from human people. I did not do that, but I did walk in Coyote's house, always some time after the Summer dancing or before the Grass.



Sometimes a person would come across from Chumo to stay with Alder in our household. One of his creditors was a child whose inflated appendix he had cut out when the boy was six years old. There was no denying his responsibility for that life. The boy was an adolescent now, and the mother would come with him to visit his side-father every season or so. She always said to Alder, "When are you coming back? So-and-so needs you, such-and-so asked me to ask you, when are you coming back to Chumo?"—all people who were alive because Alder had cured or healed them. He was fond of his side-son, whom he called Cutgut, an intelligent cheerful boy, but the mother always left him very cast down and uneasy. I could see him thinking about his life. At last, one day after they had been visiting and had left, he said, "I think I should go back to Chumo."

I had been thinking too, and I said, "Alder, those people are looking after one another in Chumo. Here there are people who need you now. How will the old man in Northwest House die, without you? How will this woman in High Porch House live, without you?"

He stayed in Sinshan, and our people sang the Wedding Song for us on the second night of the World that year. After that, he joined the Black Adobe Lodge and became a scholar of that learning. Twice he rode to Wakwaha for the Western Gyre. When my mother fell ill he cared for her, and when she began dying he went with her as far as it is appropriate to go. I came with him, following him like the lame goat, and my mother went on, and he and I came back together, into our house.

So there is no more history in my life after that: all that I could bring into the Valley from outside I have brought, all that I could remember I have written; the rest has been lived and will be lived again. I have lived in this place until I have become Stone Telling, and my husband Stone Listening, and my quail has become Shining; and in this house Acorn and Phoebe have made me the grandmother weaving at the loom.

NOTES:

pp. 371-372. *I was happy... much was given me.*
 "To be wealthy," "to give," are *ambod*, "to learn" is *andadob*, and "gift" in the sense of talent or capacity is *badab*. Stone Telling does a little wordplay to show that her education was not entirely wasted.



Messages Concerning the Condor

Most messages and notices coming into the Wakwaha Exchange were held in short-term memory for about twenty-four hours and then self-effaced, as they were of practical and immediate significance—notifications from other peoples of the region of goods and foods to trade, or changes in train schedules, announcements of festivals to which strangers were welcome, weather reports from the City satellites, and warnings of impending flood, fire, earthquake, volcanic eruption, or remote events which might affect local conditions. Occasionally reports concerning human doings perceived as concerning the peoples of a large area were printed out on paper for circulation and perhaps for preservation in the Archives.

The following reports are of this latter kind. They were kept in the Archives of the Madrone in Wakwaha. (Of course all such records, along with all other data that passed through the computer network either by human agency or as part of the City's process of existence, were stored in the permanent Memory Bank of the City, but the retrieval problem was considerable.)

DOCUMENT 1.

A notice concerning the Condor people, made and sent by Shor'ki Ti' of Long Farms with Willows of the Rekwit People:

The annual council of the Farms of Rekwit agreed that a report should be made and sent to all the Exchanges in the westward drainage of the Range of Light and all drainages into the Inland Sea and all drainages into the Ocean southward of the mouth of the Su Nhooc. I was told to make the report since I proposed the idea. People in Rekwit think it important that we stop the Condor people from making trouble.

You can get a summary of information concerning this people from the Memory using Codes 1306611/3116/5/16 and 1306611/3116/6/442. This is a synopsis of that summary. They call themselves Dayao or One People. They are related to people living in the Great Lakes area by language, and may have been sent west from that area a long time ago. They lived as nomads in the Grasslands and in the desert countries north of the Omorn Sea. About a hundred and twelve years ago they began to become civilised. A man named Kaspyoda took their power. They followed him west towards the Dark River country. He died near the Dry Lakes. His son took his power and started to give it back, but was killed by a cousin, a man named Asyoda, calling himself The Great Condor. He led the people down into the Lava Beds saying that a finger of light had

pointed to the place where they should settle down. They made a town there. Their name for it is City. They have become entirely civilised, aggressive, and destructive. They have done much harm and will do more if we do not prevent them. A council is requested.

DOCUMENT 2.

A response to the notice concerning the Condor people from Shor'ki Ti' of Rekwit from Reads of the Serpentine of the Valley of the Na:

Your request is entirely appropriate. We have talked about it here and have seen that we have been self-concerned to an excessive degree, and have wanted mindfulness. Condor people, all men without women, have been coming into this Valley from the north for seventeen years. We have shared food and roof with them at request but have not worked, married, or danced with them. Nevertheless much infection has taken place. Culls have arisen. When a large group of Condor men stayed in the Lower Valley for a half-year, much dissension arose, superstitions were increased, and trust was weakened. If fighting a war is necessary people will come from here to the fighting. If quarantine is possible it would be better. We request the peoples living northwest of us and near the Lava Beds, and the Information Services of the Exchange, to notify through the Exchange of any aggressive acts by the Condor people.

DOCUMENT 3.

From Vavals of Tahets concerning the Condor people:

We have been fighting a war with these sick people for two lifetimes.

From this point on there was a flurry and then a steady crossflow of messages through the Exchanges of twenty-two different peoples of the region. Many of these were recriminatory or panicky; the bitterest was from Wenewe Mag, a village southeast of North Mountain:

Two years ago they killed eleven people and stole eight women and all the horses. They come every winter and take our food. If you try to fight them you had better have guns and bullets. They do.

Ethical counsel from the Under White Mountain people, far down the eastern coast of the Inland Sea, was not very well received. They advised: "Do not fight these sick people, cure them with human behavior," to which Rekwit responded tersely, "You come up north here and do that."

In the event, no war was mounted. If the Condor's City had made an attempt to increase its territory or to move its people southwestward, it would have met with concerted resistance by an alliance of all the people of the region. But the Condor dreams of empire were self-defeated.

The causes of this collapse may seem obscure, particularly when the Condor people had all the resources of the Exchange to call upon. For one thing, the Condor could in theory follow all the discussions and plans of the other peoples in the Exchange. There was no "classified information" in the Memory, and no way to seal information off; a coded message was accompanied by the explanation of the code. It would appear that the Condor's use of the Exchange was very limited; only a priest caste was permitted to use it at all, and they apparently drew upon it for information on material resources and technologies, without listening in much on the local section of the endless flow of worldwide messaging. The Condor people seem to have been unusually self-isolated; their form of communication with other peoples was through aggression, domination, exploitation, and enforced acculturation. In this respect they were at a distinct disadvantage among the introverted but cooperative peoples native to the region.

Again it might be asked why they failed in their attempt to make powerful weapons of war, and why that attempt was so inept, when they had available in the Memory of the Exchange instructions for the production of every imaginable weapon from Greek fire through machine guns to hydrogen bombs, and beyond?

Templing answers come to mind: the great City of Mind had decided long ago that such toys were not good for mankind, and would not release instructions for making them. . . . Or perhaps would release only garbled instructions, thus ensuring ineffective weapons. . . . But the City of Mind took no responsibility for its parent stock. If the humans got hold of nuclear weapons and blew up the planet, so be it; the deep-space stations of the Exchange would survive, each of them containing the Memory and capable of replicating the rest of the network, and indeed a good part of the universe—though, if humanity did dispose of itself, there is some question whether the computer would see fit to duplicate it. It was not the City of Mind, then, that kept the City of the Condor from success with its tanks and airplanes. Undoubtedly, if asked, it would have produced for the Condor a study of what we would call the cost-effectiveness of tanks, airplanes, missiles, or other elaborate weaponry, and demonstrated the hopelessness of the project, in the absence of the worldwide technological web, the "technological ecosystem," of the Industrial Age, and on a planet almost depleted of many of the fossil fuels and other materials from which the Industrial Age made



itself. All that had been replaced by the almost ethereal technology of the City, on the one hand, which had no use for heavy machinery, even their spaceships and stations being mere nerve and gossamer, and on the other hand by the very loose, light, soft network of the human cultures, which in their small scale, great number, and endless diversity, manufactured and traded more or less actively, but never centralised their industry, did not ship goods and parts far, did not maintain roads well, and were not engaged in enterprises requiring heroic sacrifice, at least on the material plane. To construct, say, a battery to power a flashlight was not an easy matter, though at need it was done: the technology of the Valley was completely adequate to the needs of the people. To construct a tank or a bomber was so difficult and so unnecessary that it really cannot be spoken of in terms of the Valley economy. After all, the cost of making, maintaining, fueling, and operating such machines at the very height of the Industrial Age was incalculable, impoverishing the planet's substance forever and requiring the great majority of humankind to live in servitude and poverty. Perhaps the question concerning the Condor's failure to build an empire with its advanced weapons is not why did they fail, but why did they try. But it is not a question to which the people of the Valley could provide an answer.

Again, we may ask: since the Condor had access to the principal iron, copper, zinc, and gold mines of the Inland Sea area, and did not scruple to take what they wanted by force, why did they not use their superiority in metals not in a misguided effort to build anachronistic tanks and bombers, but in building up a good arsenal of guns, grenades, and other "conventional" weapons until they were invincible among the almost defenseless and poorly armed peoples about them? Then they might truly have made history!

To this I think the people of the Valley might have an answer, along the lines of "Very sick people tend to die of their sickness," or "Destruction destroys itself." This answer, however, involves a reversal from our point of view. What we call strength it calls sickness; what we call success it calls death.

Is it possible that the genetic changes worked by the residues of the Industrial Era upon the human race, which I saw as disastrous—low birth rate, short life expectancy, high incidence of crippling congenital disease—had a reverse side also? Is it possible that natural selection had had time to work in social, as well as physical and intellectual terms? Were the people of the Na Valley and Rekwit and Fennen and the Amaranth Coast and the Cotton Islands and Cloud River and Dark River and the Maristes and the Range of Light in fact healthier than I realised—healthier than I am capable of fully understanding, so long as I must look at them from outside their world? In leaving progress to the machines, in letting

technology go forward on its own terms and selecting from it, with what seems to us excessive caution, modesty, or restraint, the limited though completely adequate implements of their cultures, is it possible that in thus opting not to move "forward" or not only "forward," these people did in fact succeed in living in human history, with energy, liberty, and grace?



Stone Telling

About a Meeting Concerning the Warriors

Given to the Archives of the Madrone at Wukwaha and to the Exchange by Bear Man of the Red Adobe of Telina-na, a member of the Doctors Lodge.

A printed notice brought to all the towns:

There is going to be a meeting of people at Cottonwood Flats on the 201st Day to talk about the Warrior Lodge. We will be there: Steady of Kasioha, Chooses and Redwood of Telina, Grey Horse of Chukulmas.

What Steady of the Serpentine of Kasioha-na said at the meeting:

People of the Warrior Lodge and people in the Lamb Lodge are not very likely to agree with what I am going to say. They will deny it, and we will have argument and dissension. Because many of us dislike argument and avoid dissension, we have not said what I am going to say, and in this we have been weak and careless. It is time now, in this place, to talk about these things aloud. I say this now:

The people of the Condor, those men who have come here from that people, are sick. Their heads are turned backwards. We have let people with the plague come into our house. We should not have done it and will not do it again. But listen! The people of the Warrior Lodge and some people in the Lamb Lodge have been infected. They are sick. Maybe they are willing to be healed, to be cured. If not, if they wish to live sick, then they will have to go where the sickness is, to the country those people came from in the Lava Beds north of Dark River, and stay there. That is what I say; that is what has been decided in talk with these people who came here with me, for whom I have been speaking.

Other things that were said by different people:

Four people are going to close the Valley?
Four people are going to open discussion.

Who is sick? People are sick who talk about driving people out of their houses, out of their towns, out of the Valley! That is sick-headed talk!

Yes, who is sick? People are sick who are afraid of fighting!

It is the nature of the sickness not to know itself. That ignorance is the sickness itself.

That argument eats itself! If not to know you're sick is sickness, how do you know you're not sick yourself?

Oh, you'll tell him if he is—you'll make him a Warrior and blow tobacco smoke at him and give him a sick name—Misery, or Stinks, or Diarrhoea!

Listen, you are talking foolishly. There is no use in anger. You cannot tell what sickness is until you have become well. Weakness calls itself strong, but strength calls itself weak, glory calls itself vile, and the peacemaker calls himself warrior. Listen, only the warrior can make peace. Nobody makes peace. Peace is. Who do you think you are, to make peace? A mountain, a Rainbow Person, Coyote?

Calm down, you people. I want you to listen and hear me. I am not ashamed of being a Warrior. You want me to be ashamed of it, but it is not possible. I have found strength and knowledge I needed in the Warrior Lodge, and I would share it with you if you let me.

I too am not ashamed of being a Warrior! It is my pride! You people there, you're sick, you're dying and don't know it. You eat and drink and dance and talk and sleep and die and there is nothing to you, like ants or fleas or gnats, your life is nothing, it goes nowhere, it goes over and over and over nowhere! We are not insects, we are human people. We serve a higher purpose.

What? What purpose? Whose purpose? Listen to him! That's Big Man talking! That's a mouth on the back of a head talking! "I serve, I eat shit," that's Big Man saying "I'm better than anything else, I'll live forever, everything else is shit!"

Listen. If you wise people have thought that we were sick, why did you not ask us to come to the Doctors Lodge?

You know an unwanted cure won't cure.

You have to dance to be a dancer.

And you have to fight to be a Warrior!

Fight whom? Your mothers?

It was not the Warrior Lodge who agreed to let the Condor come here and stay here and come back again. When they come back, it is we, not you, who are ready to drive them away. Why are we Warriors? Because they made war! You let them come and go as they please, and

now you talk about sickness, shaming your own people. But you did not listen to us. We have said all along that we would drive them away and keep them away. Now you say you want to do the same thing.

Yes, I say that, but I do not say it as a Warrior.

How are you going to meet the Condor, then? With songs and dances?

I don't put a fire out with a match, Warrior.

Only strength can defeat the strong, Speaker.

Warrior, if it is war you want, you must fight it with us, your own people, and the people of our fields and barns, and the wild people, and every tree of our orchards and vine of our vineyards and every stem of grass and every stone and grain of dirt in the Valley of the River. This is the first battle of that war. You have let yourself fall sick with the Sickness of Man, and you seek to make us sick; and now you must be the one to choose whether you will be killed or cured or driven out.

Steady said this, and many other people said:

The stones speak with that voice. The earth and the River speak in those words. The Lion speaks, the Bear is talking. Listen!

A description of what happened next:

After that speech of Steady's there was a pause for a while because other people were beginning to come to the meeting.

In the evening people came forward again to speak about the Warrior Lodge in praise or blame and to discuss what others said. After that the meeting went on for four days, many people coming and going with food from the towns and sharing the food with those staying at the Flats. Much was said about the human soul and mind, and sickness and sacredness. The things which were kept secret by the Warrior Lodge and the Lamb Lodge were all spoken of by members of those lodges and made plain and no secret. After hearing these things many people said that the minds of the Warriors were indeed diseased. Some Warriors came up and renounced their membership in that Lodge. Their speeches grew very passionate. Some Madrone Lodge people and Walks Along of the Serpentine of Wakwaha, the Speaker of that heymas, said that it was better not to deny in public what one had done in secret, and that to be finished with a thing was simply to leave it and go on away from it. So the excitement was calmed down one way and another, and many people began joining in long drum dances, since there were so many gathered there, and the weather was pleasant, and there was a lot of emotion and feeling stirred up, and several very good drummers were present. But still there were more than a hundred men and women who held fast to the Warriors' way and wished to speak for it. For them, Skull of Teina-na said this:



Skull's speech:

You say that we are sick, mortally sick, dying of our sickness. You say that you fear our sickness. So it may be. Then I say this: Our sickness is our humanity. To be human is to be sick. The lion is well, the hawk is well, the oak is well, they live and die in the mindfulness of the sacred, and need take no care. But from us sacredness has withdrawn care; in us is the mind of the sacred. So all we do is careful, and all our effort is to be mindful, and yet we are not whole. We are not well, and we do not do well. To deny that is careless, mindless folly! You say that human people are no different from the other animals and the plants. You call yourself earth and stone. You deny that you are outcast from that fellowship, you deny that the soul of man has no house on earth. You pretend, you build up houses of desire and imagination, but you cannot live in them. In them is no habitation. And for your denying, your lying, your comfort-seeking, you will be punished. The day of punishment is the day of war. Only in war is redemption; only the victorious warrior will know the truth, and knowing the truth will live forever. For in sickness is our health, in war our peace, and for us there is only one, one house, One Above All Persons, outside whom there is no health, no peace, no life, no thing!

After Skull's speech.

To Skull's speech no direct answer was made. Some people wept, some were frightened, others very angry at hearing a person say what Skull had said. Feelings had run so high that Steady, Walks Along, Obsidian of Unmahn, and others who were conducting the meeting preferred silence to response, lest there be violence. Only a singer of the Blood Clowns of Chumo began singing:

"Outside the One there is nothing,
nothing but women and coyotes."

Obsidian of Unmahn told her to take the song away, and she did so, but many people picked it up and sang it later on. Then Walks Along spoke to Skull and the other Warriors, saying that she thought the open meeting had gone on long enough, and inviting the Warriors to come up to Wakwaha and go on talking and seeking what was best to do. The Warriors refused to come to Wakwaha, saying that they wanted to talk among themselves, not with other people. Steady said they should do as they chose.

Some Madrone Lodge people thought Steady and Walks Along were not being careful enough; they said that people who refused to talk to reach agreement and would talk only when other people agreed with

them had better leave the Valley and go talk with the Condor, who agreed with them. This group and the people with Steady came to words, speaking holly. The Warriors watched them argue, nodding and smiling.

The argument and the end of it.

Hawk Cries of Shinsan said, "If they will not talk they must go, and if they will not go they will be driven!" He lifted up the madrone staff he carried as speaker.

Steady in a passion of anger said, "If you drive them you go with them, driver with driven, beater with beaten!" He came towards Hawk Cries.

Walks Along said, "Sickness is speaking us."

They all heard that. Hawk Cries threw away his staff. Nobody said anything for a while. Presently Hawk Cries said, "They have gone."

Walks Along said, "Yes, I think they are going now."

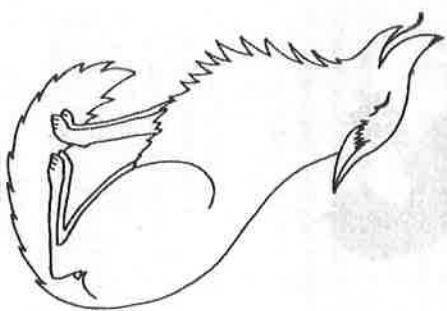
Steady said, "I spoke ill. I will be silent now for a while." He went down to the River to wash and to be by himself. The others began also to go down to the River, or back to their towns, leaving the Warriors there where the meeting had been, by the cottonwood grove.

The next day the Warriors also went home to their towns.

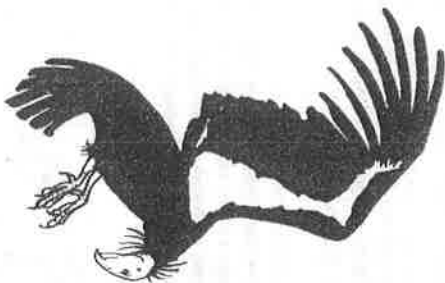
That was the end of that lodge in the Valley. It was indeed gone.

Why I have written this.

Some of the men who had been Warriors went up to the Dark River country after that meeting, to live with the Condor people. Twenty-four of them went that year, and some more the next year, I am not sure how many. No woman went. There was a woman in Shinsan who had gone



to that country earlier with her father, who was a Condor man. She came back after several years. She wrote her life to tell about those people. I do not think much else has ever been written about that time when the Condor men came to the Valley and the Warrior Lodge came to be. I was a quite young man at the meeting at Cottonwood Flats, but I have thought about it a great deal all my life. We avoid talking about sickness when feeling well, but that is superstition, after all. Looking mindfully at the things that were talked about at the meeting, I have come to think that the sickness of Man is like the mutating viruses and the toxins: there will always be some form of it about, or brought in from elsewhere by people moving and travelling, and there will always be the risk of infection. What those sick with it said is true: it is a sickness of our being human, a fearful one. It would be unwise in us to forget the Warriors and the words spoken at Cottonwood Flats, lest it need all be done and said again.



POEMS

FOURTH SECTION

The poems in this section were more or less formally used in ceremonies or in teaching, in the heyminas or as part of the seven great wakwa.



MOON DANCE SONG

Composed by Link of the Obsidian House of Ounmakin and sung there as part of the men's ritual singing before the Moon Dance.

If you should ask me,
you should ask me where
she went, that girl
with fleecy hair.

If I should answer,
I should answer you,
that she lay down
under the moon.

EYEGEONKAMA

A part-song, sung by women before and during the Moon Dance, though not part of the formal ritual singing. Many different versions and improvisations go under the title and to the tune of the "yes-singing." This version is from Sinshan.

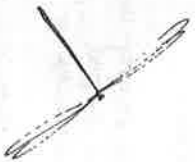
How far from lip to lip?
Wide enough for a word to get out.
How far from lip to lip?
Wide enough for a man to get in.
If the word is yes, yes,
if the word is yes,
if the lips part consenting,
enter in me, yes, yes,
enter in me, yes.

A SONG USED IN CHUMO WHEN DAMMING A CREEK
OR DIVERTING WATER TO A HOLDING TANK
FOR IRRIGATION

To the ousel, to the water ousel
may it go, may it go.
Tarweed, the corn roots
need this water also.
Buckbrush, the bean leaves
need this water also.
Way of the water's going,
we do not wish this!
Let it go to the water ousel,
to the waterskater.
Let the wild goose's wings
carry it upward.
Let the dragonfly larva
carry it downward.
We do not wish this,
we do not desire it,



only the water we borrow
on our way to returning.
We who are doing this
all will be dying.
Way of the water's going,
bear with us in this place now
on your way to returning.



COMING UPRIVER

A Salt Journey song. Members of the Salt Lodge of the Blue Clay House maintained the Salt Ponds—nine diked enclosures on the mudflats east of the easternmost Mouth of the Na, in which evaporation and crystallisation was controlled in a five-year continuous cycle of drainage from pond to pond. Both crude and refined salt were "in the gift" of the Blue Clay heyimas. A month after the Water was danced, Salt Lodge people from all nine towns made a ceremonial journey downriver to do any heavy repairs that might be needed in the system of ponds and sluices, and to harvest the crimson brine shrimp which, dried and powdered, were used as a condiment.

Coming back, coming up from the mouths of the river,
to the left, in the southwest, blue mountains.
Coming back from the coast of the western ocean,
in the northeast, to the right, blue mountains.
From the flat shores, the beaches of the unborn,
walking back between mountains, coming upriver.
From the salt place, from the edge, from the empty place,
walking back between hills of dry grass, coming upriver.

THE INLAND SEA
Spoken as a teaching in the Serpentine heyinas of Sinshan by Mica.

All there under the water are cities, the old cities.

All the bottom of the sea there is roads and houses,
streets and houses.

Under the mud in the dark of the sea there
books are, bones are.

All those old souls are under the sea there,
under the water, in the mud,
in the old cities in the dark.

There are too many souls there.

Look out if you go by the edge of the sea,
if you go on a boat on the Inland Sea
over the old cities.

You can see the souls of the old dead like cold fire in the water.

They will take any body, the luminifera, the jellyfish, the sandfleas,
those old souls.

Any body they can get.

They swim through their windows, they drift down their roads,
in the mud in the dark of the sea.

They rise through the water to sunlight, hungry for birth.

Look out for the sea-foam, young woman,
look out for the sandfleas!

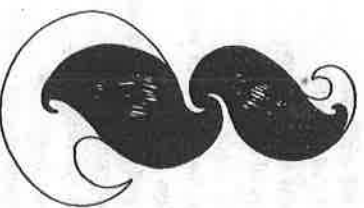
You might find an old soul in your womb,
an old soul, a new person.

There aren't enough people for all the old souls,
hopping like sandfleas.

Their lives were the sea-waves, their souls are the sea-foam,
foam-lines on brown sand,
there and not there.

TO THE PEOPLE ON THE HILLS
*Sung in Wakwaha to the Animals of the Blue Clay
on the Second Day of the World Dance.*

On four feet, on four feet walking
around the world, walking around
on four feet, you walk
the right way, you walk dancing,
beautifully dancing you walk,
carefully, dangerously you walk
in the right direction.



A MADRONE LODGE SONG

This song, with its matrix-words, takes about an hour to sing. In some songs the matrix-words are "meaningless" syllables or vowels, or are old words no longer in use; in this one they are developed out of the song-words. For instance, after the song is opened with the four-note heyra heyra, the tune is first hummed: the mmmmm of humming is the first sound of the first word, ma-invetun, from their houses, and it develops gradually into the syllable ma; this is modulated gradually through the "Four-House vowels" backwards as ma-in, ma-oun, ma-on, ma-un, to ma-in, and at last the whole first word/phrase, ma-invetun, is sung. Other key words of the song are similarly treated or "matricised." The words and music of this song belonged to Mica of Shishan and were given to us by him.

From their houses, from their town
rainbow people come walking
the dark paths between stars,
the bright tracks on water
of the moon, of the sun.
Tall and long-legged,
lithe and long-armed,
they follow the fog pumas
beside the wind coyotes,
passing the rain bears
under the still-air hawks
on the paths of sunlight,
on the tracks of moonlight,
on the ways of starlight,
on the dark roads.
They climb the ladders of wind,
the stairways of cloud.
They descend the ladders of air,
the steps of rain falling.
The closed eye sees them.
The deaf ear hears them.
The still mouth speaks to them.
The still hand touches them.

Going to sleep we waken to them,
walking the ways of their town.
Dying we live them,
entering their beautiful houses.

BONE POEMS

From the Blue Clay teaching in that heyimas in Wakuwaha.

The solution
dissolves itself
leaving the problem behind,
a skeleton,
the mystery before,
around, above, below, within.
O Clarity!

Don't break your handbones
trying to break mystery.
Pick it up, eat it, use it, wear it,
throw it at coyotes.

The bones of your heart,
there's mystery.
Clothes wearing the body,
there's a good clown.

Puzzlebits make whole puzzles.
Answers complete questions.
A whistle, though,
made from the hearbone,
plays the song the crow knows
and won't sing,
the song called Rejoining.

Oh, I am frightened,
I am afraid, afraid.
Each night I go in desolation
to a miserable place.
Is there no other way?
I wish I had died young, suddenly,
before I knew I had to make
the bones of my soul
out of cold rain and aching,
and walk into the dark.



From opaque rock
springs clear water.
The skull's hard cup
holds clarity.
Drink, traveller.
Be mindful. Drink.

TEACHING SONGS: ORDERS AND DANCES OF THE EARTH AND SKY

Such songs were spoken or chanted to the tongue-drum, often with much repetition of lines or words, as part of children's education in the heyimas. They varied from House to House and from town to town; this set is from the Serpentine of Madidinou.

I. THE TOWN OF EARTH

Adobe, blue clay, serpentine, obsidian:
floors and walls
of the houses of the town of earth.
Cloud, rain, wind, air:
windows and roofs
of the houses of the town of earth.

Under floorboards, under cellars,
above roofs, above chimneys,
to the left of the right hand,
to the right of the left hand,
north of the future, south of the past,
earlier than east, later than west,
outside the walls:
the limitless,
the wildness,
the mountains and rivers of being,
the valley of possibility.

II. THE ROUND TOWN

Ballround, earth-town.
Each street meets
itself at length.
Old are the roads,
long are the ways,
wide are the waters.
Whale swims west returning east,
tern flies north returning south,
rain falls to rise, sparks rise to fall.
Mind may hold the whole
but on foot walking we do not come
to the beginning end of the street.
The hills are steep,
the years are steep,
deep are the waters.
In the round town
it is a long way home.



III. THE COURSES.

Earth goes turning,
 earth goes turning spinning,
 spinning the day-course
 between shining and darkness.
 What lies between south and north
 is the axis of turning:
 what lies from west to east
 is the way of turning.
 In shining and darkness, so,
 turning in shining and darkness.

Moon goes turning,
 moon goes turning circling,
 moon circles the month-course,
 spinning the month-long moon's day,
 between shining and darkness
 circling the earth turning and spinning.
 Crescent is dawn of the moon's day,
 full moon full noon, waning the evening,
 dark of the moon is the moon's night
 that looks at the darkness, so,
 turning in shining and darkness.

Earth and moon together,
 together the two go turning,
 circling the sun,
 circling the year-course,
 and the slanted axis of turning
 making the winter and summer,
 the rise and fall of the year-dance.
 The dancers, the bright dancers,
 Ou, the bright sun-child,
 Adsevin, glory of morning, glory of evening,
 the dancers, see the bright dancers,
 outward from earth, red Kemel,
 Gebayu and Udin,

and the lost dancers in darkness
 seen by the eye no longer,
 turning, circling the shining,
 turning in shining and darkness.

NOTE: This description of the solar system might be acted out by young children taking the parts of earth, moon, and the five visible planets, spinning and circling appropriately around the singer, who played the sun.
 The next song was not danced or sung, but chanted or spoken to certain drum rhythms. Children learned the first section: the rest was not learned until adolescence; and so familiar and sacred were the words that often they were not spoken at all but "said on the drum"—the rhythms being as distinctive and familiar as the words.

III. THE GYRES

Around its center in an open gyre
 earth turns, the day:
 around the earth in an open gyre
 moon turns, the month:
 around the sun in an open gyre
 earth turns, the year:
 around its center in an open gyre
 sun turns, the dance:
 sun and the other stars in an open gyre
 turn and return, the dance.

The dancing is stillness,
 change without changing,
 onward returning.
 The dancing is making
 mountains and rivers,
 stars and the islands of stars
 and the unmaking.
 The dance is the open gyre
 of the gyre of the gyre
 of the dance in the valley.



To begin
is to return,
To lose the seed
is the flower.

To learn the stone
touches the spring.

To see the dancing:
starlight.

To hear the dancing:
darkness.

To dance the dancing:
shining, shining.

In the houses
they are dancing.
On the dancing places
they are dancing shining.

ASKING FOR A MESSENGER
*An old song, sung with the tongue-drum in the
Black Adobe Lodges.*

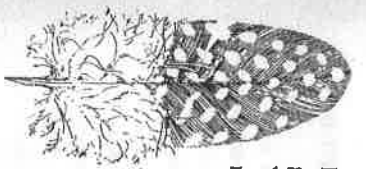
Quail, quail, carry
a word for me.

I cannot, I cannot,
I cannot cross across.

Chukar, chukar, carry
a word for me.

I don't know, I don't know
how to cross across.

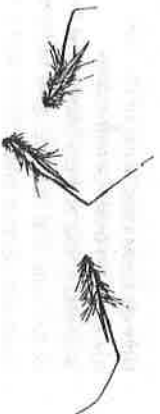
Pigeon, pigeon, carry
a word for me.



I've returned already,
gone there and returned.
Your word is my feather,
my feather is your word.

A GRASS SONG
*A Red Adobe song for the Grass Dance in Waktwaha.
The meter is "fives."*

Very quietly
this is happening,
this is becoming,
the hills are changing
under the rainclouds,
inside the grey fogs,
the sun going south
and the wind colder,
blowing quietly
from the west and south.
Manyness of rain
falling quietly:
manyness of grass
rising into air.
The hills become green.
This is happening
very quietly.



CLOUDS, RAIN, AND WIND
A Grass Dance song.

From the house of the Lion that lies on the mountain,
footsteps of the dancers approaching,
hurrying: listen, the footsteps
of Bear dancers hurrying downwards
over the foothills towards us.
Coyote, Coyote follows them,
Coyote howling and singing!

THE ANT DANCE

*Sung and danced by children in all Valley towns on the Third Day
of the World Dance, "Honey Day," along with the Bee Dance.*

A hundred hundred rooms in this house,
A hundred hundred halls in this house,
everybody running, running, running in this house,
everybody touching, touching, touching in this house,
Hey! little grandmothers!
Let me get out of this house!
Let me get out of here!
Hey! Let me out!

THE BEAR'S GIFT

*From the Black Adobe Lodge in Wakwaha: a teaching poem. The
meter is nine-syllable, a meter particularly associated with Black
Adobe verse.*

Nobody knows the name of the bear,
not even the bear. Only the ones
who make fires and cry tears know the name
of the bear, that the bear gave to them.
Quail and plumed grass, infant and puma,
all their lives they are wholly alive

and they do not have to say a word.
But those who know the name of the bear
have to go out alone and apart
across hollow places and bridges,
crossing dangerous places, careful:
and they speak. They must speak. They must say
all the words, all the names, having learned
the first name, the bear's name. Inside it
is language. Inside it is music.
We dance to the sound of the bear's name,
and it is the hand we take hands with.
We see with the dark eye of that name
what no one else sees: what will happen.
So we fear darkness. So we light fires.
So we cry tears, our rain, the salt rain.
All the deaths, our own and the others',
are not theirs, but our own, the bear's gift,
the dark name that the bear gave away.

A MARRIAGE

From the Madrone Lodge of Telina-na.

Seventh House Woman got up from the hillside.
With white arms, with white body, with white hair,
she got up from the grasses of the hillside
in early morning in the rainy season.
Where the hills fold together steep above the creek,
where the hillside are open between the oaks,
facing the southeast, the white woman stood among the grasses.
The Sun took her hand.

So was the sacred thing done,
so, there, their hands touching,
their hands holding, there, so:
she took the Sun's hand
and became transparent, entering the Ninth House.

PUMA DANCE

This song is taught in Sinshan to people preparing to go up alone on the hills on a journey of the soul.

THE DEER DANCE

*A very old and sacred song of the Blue Clay House.
Given for translation and inclusion in this book by
Madrone Red of the Blue Clay House of Sinshan.*

In the Sixth House a deer walked
made of rain.
its legs rain falling.
It danced in a spiral on the earth.
In the Seventh House a deer jumped
made of clouds.
its flanks clouds hanging.
It danced in a spiral on the rocks.
In the Eighth House a deer ran
made of wind.
its horns wind blowing.
It danced in a spiral in the valley.
In the Ninth House a deer stood
made of air.
its eyes still air.
It danced in a spiral on the mountain.
In the spiral of the deer dancing
a hawk feather has fallen.
In the Hinge of the Nine Houses
a word has been spoken.

I put down my southwest foot,
four round toes, one round pad,
in the dirt by the digger pine,
in the dust by the digger pine
on the mountain.
I put down my northwest foot,
four round toes, one round pad,
in the dirt by the bay laurel,
in the dust by the bay laurel
in the foothills.
I put down my northeast foot,
four round toes, one round pad,
in the dirt by the madrone,
in the dust by the madrone
on the mountain.
I put down my southeast foot,
four round toes, one round pad,
in the dirt by the live oak,
in the dust by the live oak
in the foothills.
I am standing in the middle
of the lion world
on the mountain of the lion,
in the hills of the lion.
I am standing in the tracks of the lion.



INITIATION SONG FROM THE FINDERS LODGE

Please bring strange things.
Please come bringing new things.
Let very old things come into your hands.
Let what you do not know come into your eyes.
Let desert sand harden your feet.
Let the arch of your feet be the mountains.
Let the paths of your fingertips be your maps
and the ways you go be the lines on your palms.
Let there be deep snow in your inbreathing
and your outbreath be the shining of ice.
May your mouth contain the shapes of strange words.
May you smell food cooking you have not eaten.
May the spring of a foreign river be your navel.
May your soul be at home where there are no houses.
Walk carefully, well loved one,
walk mindfully, well loved one,
walk fearlessly, well loved one.
Return with us, return to us,
be always coming home.



**From the People of the Houses of Earth in the
Valley to the Other People
Who Were on Earth Before Them.**

In the beginning when the word was spoken,
in the beginning when the fire was lighted,
in the beginning when the house was built,
we were among you.

Silent, like a word not spoken,
dark, like a fire not lighted,
formless, like a house not built,
we were among you:

the sold woman,
the enslaved enemy.

We were among you, coming closer,
coming closer to the world.

In your time when all the words were written,
in your time when everything was fuel,
in your time when houses hid the ground,
we were among you.

Quiet, like a word whispered,
dim, like a coal under ashes,
insubstantial, like the idea of a house,
we were among you:

the hungry,
the powerless,
in your world, coming closer,
coming closer to our world.

In your ending when the words were forgotten,
in your ending when the fires burned out,
in your ending when the walls fell down,
we were among you:

the children,
your children,
dying your dying to come closer,
to come into our world, to be born.

We were the sands of your sea-coasts,
the stones of your hearths. You did not know us.
We were the words you had no language for.
O our fathers and mothers!

We were always your children.
From the beginning, from the beginning,
we are your children.



THE BACK OF THE BOOK

Húshēy wēwēy tūshēiyē rú gèstānái
 of-two-legged-people [adj.] all [s.n.] work this [is] doing things well, art
 m duwēy gōchēy,
 and [o.n.] all shared, held in common

The Whole Business of Man is the Arts, and All Things Common.
 —WILLIAM BLAKE

