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We call it *tradition*

Linda Hogan

All over the earth the faces of all living things have been
created by Mother earth with great tenderness.
Luther Standing Bear (cited in DeMallie 1985: 288)

At night, outside, I watch the constellations move across the curve of black sky. The Great Hand moves toward the horizon. This is the hand that offers help for the souls of the dead to step on the path commonly called the Milky Way, or the way of nurturance. This is where they begin their journey along this Path of Spirits to the world of souls. In Greek astronomy this hand would be a part of the constellation called Orion, but we have many different skies, all held with equal respect. I like the compassion offered by the Hand to the dead.

Indigenous astronomies vary for different indigenous nations. My Navajo sister, Nancy Mary Boy, uses a travelling planetarium to teach others the Navajo sky world. What is most fascinating to me in her stories of the night sky is the constellation called The Feather. When The Feather touches earth, lightning strikes. Lightning wakes the beetles, the bears, every sleeping creature dwelling inside their dens of winter earth. They emerge into the time of rising plants. Farther north, people say two constellations must come together to create this same lightning that opens the season of spring.

Our astronomies come from our own environments and ways of comprehending the world through knowledge systems and mythologies, and through many thousands of years of sky observances. All of these are based on the unique ecosystems of each nation of people, and sometimes from stories shared with our friends and allies as we journeyed long distances by water and across land. With the many indigenous habitats, numerous ways of knowing and storying exist. Indigenous knowledge is also an authentic science gained from direct observation and relationship with the world around us.

This night, as the sky seems to cross this spinning, tilted world, I think about the word, *animism*, and what this newly accepted area of study means to those of us whose cognitive and spiritual worlds are already created by our rivers, mountains and forests. For those who have always prayed with, to, and for the waters, and known our intimate relatives, the plant people, the animals, insects, and all our special relations, the field of animism is a belated study. It has not gone unnoticed that without these relationships, a great pain

and absence has been suffered by humanity, an absence and loss we ourselves have felt as a result of the determinations of the Western mind to separate us from our homelands, and which has created great destruction to the living body of the continent. We know our own pain as we have been forced, often through violent means by the governing politics, to take up values vastly different from our own.

As a descendent of the mound-builders of the Southeastern United States, I stand in awe that along bends in the rivers, on flood plains and other regions, our ancestors created thousands of earthworks. Each effigy mound, burial site or pyramid took many hundreds of years and many generations of people to create. Our ancestors were people who loved the sky and creatures of the world so deeply that they expressed their care over time and space, using their own hands to carry baskets of clay from riverbanks to make mounds and pyramids, some white clay on one side, red on the other. With an extraordinary knowledge of geometry, the world has been shaped into the forms of frog and turtle and even the water spider in one region, all animals who dwell in two elements, land and water. The habitation of more than one realm is significant to a culture which takes notes of both the sky world and that beneath water, worships both sunlight and the night sky. In other locations mounds are shaped as birds with smaller birds flying beneath the wings of those larger. Bear mound effigies have been created not far from the mountain lion and deer. No species has gone unnoticed. The Great Serpent Mound, based on solar, lunar and other cosmic knowledge, continues to astound the tourists who visit, as does Cahokia and other remains of America's early cities or ceremonial centres which were as large as London or Paris in earlier times.

I call these earthworks a literature which remains as testimony of our presence, each a letter to the sky, a statement of earth love. These mounds were created by a people in constant observance in the ecosystem and stories of every angle of light, movement of life across the land. The mounds that haven't been overly explored, dismantled, numbered and reconstructed are still felt sites of living power and energy. These places of special energy on the earth reveal an evolved consciousness at work in creation, the accumulation of knowledge, spirituality and myth we do not often recollect today because the history of the country has transpired in the loss of such qualities.

Other earthworks have been found in Peru with the intriguing Nazca lines, in the Amazon basin, and numerous other places, even those unremembered by us in the Northern Plains of our own country. The cosmic worlds of indigenous peoples on all continents are yet to be revealed and perhaps best kept in secret since many of these have unfortunately been discovered as forests and other water-preserving environments have been destroyed.

Animism is the word scholars now use to define the worldview and intelligence that went into such creations and that "begins" to understand other than Western ways of knowing. However, it is not a term traditional indigenous peoples would use to describe our relationship with, and love for, the world around us. Nor is it a word that fully defines the complexity of knowledge systems we have had of the world around us. At least on the surface of its new territory, the study doesn't yet take in the thousands of centuries of historical relationships and intimate kinship with the land and our companion species. Nor does it consider how diverse indigenous languages contain and hold within them the embedded knowledge and deep science of our natural habitats, some containing more meanings in a single word than could be held in ideas written in a book in the English

language, others with more verbs and ways of using them than the entire number of words that exist in the entire vocabulary of other languages.

For tribal peoples, our relationships and kinship with the alive world is simply called *tradition.* We are either traditionally minded or we are still in the process of decolonizing ourselves, in various locations of the stage of learning where we have been in this long history. Some of us are still shedding the long and violent process of acculturation. Some have not yet begun. Many of the numerous losses we have had are due to Christianity. We had little choice but to be converted, and the Papal Bull called for the annihilation of many millions of Native peoples. Other losses are due to stolen lands with which we kept our knowledge, and to the many forms Western education took, none of which any of us have escaped, and which is part of the same world now teaching classes called "animism".

These invasions, not just of the land, body and spirit, but the cognitive invasions, are what Yupiaq Oscar Kawagley (2006) calls "cognitive imperialism". In his book *A Yupiaq Worldview*, he says that the people's consciousness has allowed them to survive in a good way for centuries and asks why outsiders should try to change that thinking.

The traditional knowledge of the environment, history and language, and relationships in all of their intricacies must be taken into the new animism, and its roots continue to grow. For indigenous people on all continents, these worldviews have been a way of cultural and physical survival, each one a way so complex that it might be a lifetime of study. Our sisters and brothers around the world have been participants within these worldviews long before European contact or other invasions which we were not meant to survive. Nevertheless, throughout all the changes in the world our relationships of equality, our values toward other species are remembered as much as has been possible throughout the fur trades and other times when we broke with our own traditions.

This beautiful way of seeing was recalled in words spoken by Onondaga elder, Oren Lyons, at the first meeting of international indigenous peoples with the United Nations NGOs in the 1970s when he said in Geneva, "I see no seat for the eagles". Nor did he see a place for the rest of creation, and since their voices were not heard, his words were a reminder that we humans stand somewhere between the "mountain and the ant, there and only there, as part and parcel of creation". How greatly we have overvalued ourselves and ignored the other intelligences around us.

Our realities were established in the long ago and our relationship with the other life forms has held together the worlds of those who are traditional. Our care for the land is a non-negotiable treaty. It is natural law and one that requires spiritual responsibilities as well as a way of being with the land, on the rivers, the ocean, our treatment of each life. As a writer, I consider it part of my work to re-member[1] all this, to even state how the world knows us, the human people. The animals and even the insects see us. The panther, one of our own Chickasaw clan animals, is the focus of my novel *Power* (1999). One section, reproduced here with some editing, is seen through the eyes of Sisa, the most endangered species, the Florida panther. Sisa sees the other species lost, a world changed, places of loss and destruction due to agriculture, ranching, golf courses, and the new ways of the people:

> The panther misses its companions, the blue-green crocodile, the many silver-sided fish, bear, and the delicate wood stork, all nearly gone. It wants to believe they will return. Sisa sees now that in place of the red wolf, the damp fur of the

> bear, the world has given way to cleared and empty space where the poor awkward cattle have no sheltering shade to lie down in but their own; they are clasped to the ground and along with their human-bred shadows they are eight-legged creatures of doubleness. Sisa knows that to eat them, even when she is hungry, is to be killed, but nevertheless they are food, nothing more.

The world has grown small where Sisa lives. It has lost its power and given way to highways and streets of towns where once there were woods and fens and bodies of water. The world is made less by these losses. Because of this, humans have lost the chance to be whole and joyous, reverent and alive. They live in square lots apart even from one another. What they've forgotten is large and immense, and what they remember is only a small, narrow hopelessness.

The panther remembers when humans were so beautiful and whole that her own people admired the way the two-legged people stood beneath trees with leaves leaning down over them as they picked ripe fruits, how their eyes were fully open. How straight they walked! How beautiful the beads around their necks, the dresses women made in fabric that was the dark green of trees and the colours of flowers. How good they were at devising ways to catch fish with simple bone. They stood so gracefully and full of themselves, they sang so beautifully, it remembers all this, how they sang. The whole world rejoiced with their voices. They were her little brothers and sisters.

The human story is the same as that of the natural world with its animals, water, the movement of the sky, rising plants, and even, as evidenced in our diverse artwork and ceremonies, the mountain and the ant.

About mountains: many mountains throughout the world are sacred sites. These great earth creations are visited regularly. In their majestic being, they are the boundaries of worlds, nations and memories. Dogen, a monk, wrote in *The Mountain and Rivers Sutra* that the mountains walk, it is just that they walk in their own time, not ours. This is a wisdom to be daily remembered about the world around us.

Long before the people of China suffered their movement from village life into the despair of Chinese capitalism with its overly long hours of repetitive factory labour for the production of cheap goods, there was once a time when it was thought that different gods lived in each part of the human body. Each human was sacred. It was, and in places it still is, thought that mountains were immortals. As they are.

The Tibetan Buddhists recognize their mother mountain, a sacred site, one climbed often in order to deliver prayers and prayer flags of red, yellow, blue, a rainbow of prayers, language and song on the mountain. Yet now the mountains are melting at a rapid rate due to global climate change. As the snow melts more rapidly it flows down the river toward the sea, and, like our own Mississippi River, it picks up agricultural chemicals, human waste, trash and illegally dumped toxins. It rushes through and past Cambodia into the ocean where all these toxins combine to create a dead zone in the great ocean, only one of many dead zones, each a place with no oxygen where not even the smallest form of life can survive.

On our continent, we have the same problems with every river that flows into the ocean, but as for the mountains, over four hundred mountains have been bombed in the Appalachians to reach coal seams to continue our form of energy use. One of the sacred mountains in the Southwest has become a recreational ski area using recycled sewage as

snow, another has a well-travelled road to an observatory that would have been better placed elsewhere. This is where our way of learning has taken us.

About the ants: some of us care about the small, the minute, such as the beloved water spider made into a mound on the earth, or the ant. These are significant parts of creation. Ceremonies such as the Red Antway of the Navajo attest to the importance of this insect with great oratory, prayer, song, accounts of tribal history and myth. The sand paintings that accompany this one ceremony are in themselves works of significant art. It was a copy of one of these that directed me into a study of the Navajo Chantway itself. Years later, in Australia, I met the head of the Red Ant clan, and we spoke a bit about the Ant Dreaming that exists on that continent. I had already studied the Honey Ant Dreaming and read about the Green Ant Dreaming, but I know dreamtime is a way of understanding the world so complex that it would take a lifetime to comprehend, to make the true leap into a cognitive structure so vastly different than what outsiders have learned. In a small way, Werner Herzog's film, *Where the Green Ants Dream* (1984), is a study in this cognitive difference between the Western mind and the indigenous. In the film, the Native persons understand the qualities of a living place on earth, the significance of the Green Ant, and their relationship to something the outsiders see as mere object. In contrast, the HydroQuebec Energy company sees the James Bay land not as a rich, living place but as vacant space. They therefore felt empowered to remove the indigenous people from their homes quite unexpectedly one morning, waking them while bulldozers waited outside their door.

And all of these, mining, the changing of rivers, the dumping of toxins, have added to the climate change. Where I live, with my interest in ants, I find that fire ants have made their way into Oklahoma from South America because of global warming, just as the pine beetle has also moved north. A swarm of the tiny, almost invisible, fire ants can kill a small animal or a child by covering them quickly and intelligently signal one another to sting all at the same time, creating toxic shock syndrome.

It is because of this that we need the new animists. We need change.

A cognitive dissonance exists in our world, the corporations, the people, one often founded on nothing more than beliefs. We already know which view has dominated since the invasion of the Western way of thought; that is the very reason we need the new areas of study for learners. Environmental education should begin with the very young, because, in truth, we really do stand somewhere between the mountain and the ant in a world coming undone.

The introduction of the studies of animism to academe was a surprise to me. I left university to work for my own tribal nation, for the people and for the land. Since then, classes in Paganism and animism have been offered in universities. Hearing this for the first time at a conference, I was horrified. We were killed in great numbers for being called Pagans and animists. Now one of the very institutions that disavowed our original relationships with the environment has studies in its return. Those of us who suffered from the colonizing forces in our lives, and from "cognitive imperialism", are now no longer the ostracized. What once victimized us is now a special area of religious studies. And yet to know that any small part of our knowledge is being taught in colleges and universities is significant, even if it is only a small portion of the intellectual knowledge of our traditionalists. It is, in some way, the fulfilment of the circle of life, as painful as it may feel to many of us.

Yet considering the great store of knowledge held by Native "keepers", there is still a problem with the two minds, Western and indigenous. Although occasional bridges are made, the two have not yet come together. With the recognition and the acceptance that our knowledge is important and valuable, we have more of a chance to uphold the continuation of this world. We live in a time of rapid human-created changes in the climate and on land. This new old view will, we hope, create a new generation of thinkers and activists who will be policy-changers. As a part of the intellectual tradition of universities, we can include the fields of science and medicine which too often have studied things out of their natural contexts and also have seemed to believe animals suffered no pain, even while using them for pain research. Perhaps those who protest animal vivisection will no longer be considered "terrorists" and humane opposition to suffering will become a well-established value. Perhaps as these fields come to understand that all matter has life, spirit, and even consciousness, as quantum physics maintains, ours will no longer be a "primitive" way of looking at the world. The new animism, the notion that all earth is living, and that it is perhaps even a singular organism, now even matters to world economies. Morris Berman points out in his book *The Reenchantment of the World* (1981) that we must concern ourselves with continuing ecologies for the sake of economics. When once it was heresy, he says, to take up the notion of earth or the universe as alive, now it is necessity. World economies of the past depended on a dead and unfeeling world, but in the present, to continue our world trades we are increasingly dependent on the survival of each environment we are in danger of losing. Animism, where every particle in the universe is alive, is implicit in all our work for future survival.

I am grateful for the new animism, because it counts for something. Its importance cannot be overstated. It is a beginning, even without the history and aboriginal connection to this land. It says the human is searching and with a need to be in touch with this land, or other lands of origins in a time when the world is so achingly distressed.

As for the individual human in his or her own spiritual work, the words which state best what we all seek are the Navajo word for balance and harmony, *Hozho*, or our own (Chickasaw) word *Tish*, which means not only peace, but the same harmony and state of being in right relation with the cosmos. For most aboriginal people this balance is kept in check through ceremonies that are intricate and have existed here for uncountable centuries, passed down to men and women with special care and ability. Balance or healing follows elaborate ceremonies, some through days of dancing, reenactment of mythologies, or singing of place, story or history, at times even including Western religious traditions. The most significant part of any ritual or gathering is language, whether it be song, prayer, the recitation of long myths, or statements of thanksgiving. Often herbal medicines are given at the gatherings. Herbal medicines depend on those who know the plants, know when to harvest them, what season, what time of day, and from which location. Remembering place is significant, and that includes each visitor to a place, insect, plant, animal, or the passing shadow of a cloud in golden sunlight. All of this may be included to return the human to his or her place within the natural world, the human community, and the universe, a balance so much more complex than that found in European traditions so that in the past it has converted priests to indigenous ways.

Many people now belong to meditation groups to find a special state of being or a oneness with the world. Some find it by accident and become seekers, searching again for that connection. Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days. Some fast on a mountain,

although Buddha discovered that he didn't have to fast to be whole and in balance, but sought to alleviate the pain and suffering in the world, even though it is one truth of our lives. Still others commit themselves to participation in the Sundance or follow the peyote path. Lao Tzu wrote that he once had to excuse himself from a town where he was asked for assistance in returning the place to balance because it was so out of balance that it affected him. After a time away, he returned and helped the people. With many methods we are all reaching for the same thing, not power, not riches, but re-cognition of our place in the whole of creation. We know that a healthy-minded human, a healthy community, yearns toward the love and care for earth and all earth's creations. It matters little about one's notion of God. What matters is the sacred that is present in everything, everyone. This contributes the most toward humanity and creation. This requires an act of attention, an acknowledgement that all are sentient beings and of the smallness of our own being in this world of the living, ongoing, life force. Able to participate with that creation, we may make it more whole and even assist its growing and being. We are part of the ongoing process of life that is still taking place, this verb that surrounds us at every moment in its formation. Most importantly, this formation, it is hoped, includes the development of compassionate hearts.

All our literatures, not just ceremonial, have played a part in this development and in creations of important change. Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaraguan priest and poet, had no choice but to take up the cause of the Sandinistas against the tortuous regime of Somoza with its missing people and destroyed villages. He wrote that the revolution in Nicaragua was not only for the people but for the liberation of the lakes and the liberation of the plants. In another of his poems I recall that the revolutionaries in the jungle opened the cages of parrots being carried by truck to sell to wealthy Americans in the United States. They freed the birds back into the jungle from which they had come.

We can't underestimate the power of language, poetry and ceremony. The poet and thinker Octavio Paz wrote about the indigenous relationship to language where the word is not an abstract but is the thing itself; there is no abyss between what is said and what it materially represents. Then too, in most of the world creation stories all things are brought into being by words, dreams, or songs. Even the Bible begins the creation with the words "Let there be".

Language is also used to communicate with animals and to sing plants through their stages of growth. In the Papago corn-growing songs, one is offered for every stage of the plant's splendid development, as Ruth Underhill documented in her book, *Singing for Power* (1938). Her informant, Maria Chona, told her the songs are so short because we know so much and that each night a man walks through the corn singing to it:

The corn comes up
It comes up green
Here upon our field
White tassels unfold

In the many pueblos in the Southwest, throughout the time of planting to the end of harvest, corn dances and songs are performed weekly for the growth of the corn; these are serious dances, the energy of humans given to the earth. And I have remembered for almost twenty years the words spoken by a Northern Cheyenne man who said that some

of their songs were lost during the times when the Americans chased Black Kettle's band back and forth across the continent for so many years as they tried to escape removal into Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, a place the US planned to send all the tribal peoples and then wall them in to keep them from their plans for our lands. But, he said, the songs of those they lost during those painful times were held in trust for them by the wolves who taught them back to the people. It is a mystery, but we never know where our songs, our knowledge, our plants, are stored in trust, waiting for our return.

The Southern Utes continue the Bear Dance and the Hopi still have the sacred Snake Dance, no longer open to those outside their own community, not even to other tribal nations. It is fortunate that there are those who remember, are taught, and are born to their old ways. Sometimes it even happens that a child is born as a traditional person, or for the Yaqui, each year a man of integrity becomes designated as the deer dancer, the one who enters the enchanted world which began in a time of magical spring when a deer with flowers in his antlers walked out of the forest where they once lived. This is only one song from the long, many-storied literature of the Deer Dance, the man and animal in worlds between the world:

> Over there, I, in the center
> of the flower-covered opening,
> as I was walking,
> here in the open green water,
> as I was walking,
> so he is the deer person,
> so he is the real deer person.
>
> Felipe S. Molina (Evers & Molina 1987: 71)

Words used in song, prayer, ritual, are a source of divinity. The word *God*, itself, means "to invoke, to call out". We are fortunate that over the centuries we have these aboriginal literatures that reveal a world all working together, all alive and worthy, all in motion together. Language and song is the inner fuse of our life.

Despite centuries of attempted acculturation and the many techniques of assimilation practised by a government which financially supported churches and educational systems, the indigenous perspective continues its long and persistent lineage of existence. This, I think, distinguishes our traditions from most of the new, returned *animism*, which is nevertheless a fresh perspective and way of knowing, grasping at last that we are all of a piece.

If what we call tradition is animism, what could be better than to renew a care for the land that we have always loved, with our old knowledge of a region's every plant. Animism is a field that has no choice but to recognize our relationship with the trees that has existed for so many years that it is an intimate one, as if we know and remember the history of each insect that set down its fragile feet on a leaf, each butterfly that opened its first wings from underneath, each bird that entered the green leaves that curve upward before the rain to capture each drop of water. It is important to remember that the Navajo know the prairie dogs call down that rain. While this sounds like a thought from folklore, when we study this keystone species we discover it anew as "scientific" truth. In addition, new studies have learned that the prairie dogs not only have a language with a syntax,

but that the holes they dig for living and journeying underground really *are* significant to the aquifer, just as trees attract rain, hold it and preserve it for the dry times. These are now facts of science, which means our old knowledge is no longer just anecdotal information. It is now "truth", but what has this truth meant yet to the animals so vulnerable to sharpshooters, poisoners and land developers who never think or care that what they kill is an intelligence with such defined brilliance? The future of the animals is for the new young animists to determine. Our Native and sovereign legal treaties, our protests, our televised statements have held little weight in what has become the world of the newcomers, even though we know that the smallest species, the least of these, may be a necessity to our own survival.

Those of us who know the history of words now understand *anima* as the animating force, at times meaning, in Jungian terms, the energy of female spirit, perhaps mother earth, or Sophia, the mother of God who arranged and planned the life of this earth; *anima* is the animating force of life, the fire of being that moves everything, even the constantly birthing universe, to life. In this single word, we see a large scope of different visions and meanings. It gives me great hope to think of human beings respecting all the great diversity and divinity in the world, the morning light, the first dew, the stars of a clear sky, the visit of the deer near the mosses or standing new in a wash of trees by the river, stepping out of the enchanted forest with spring flowers in its antlers. These are special gifts, as significant as that of the many kinds of maize was to North America. The soul has its needs and one of them is that we acknowledge that the human spirit lives not just inside our bodies and thought systems but in the world outside of us. As hard as philosophers and religious thinkers have tried to define what the soul is, they have tried equally to determine its location. It has never been situated in any one place within the physical body, because it can't. And yet we rarely read the territory around us as ourselves or unfold the human map to find the region extends beyond the longitudes and latitudes of skin. Our flesh has never been a boundary for the human being. We only reach out from there to occupy the space around us. Even more significantly, it occupies us.

Traditionalist Dennis Martinez calls our work in the world kincentric. The cosmology and relationship to nature is one of equality. At a recent meeting he reminded us that, "Humans don't even have the moral authority to extend ethics or law to the land community." We are not that superior. And yet, because of our now precarious situation here, we must, and especially because we are permeable.

As a traditional thinker, which is what we Indian people call ourselves when we accept the long conventions of respect for the world, for the animals as beings equal to us, and for living in a way that is conscious of the lives of plants and endangered insects, we have work to do. We have watched the destruction of this body of earth through deforestation, mining, operations such as the greatly devastating and even unyielding violence to the tar sands of Alberta, the destruction of our water, our air filled with pollutants, and the often denied global heating, we must work to care for the earth. But we must also recognize the cruelty to our own species. That is one thing we have too often neglected in a field of animism neglect: the rights of humans, even though our rights are being denied in the suffering inflicted on the land. But if we have a spiritual responsibility to protect this living world, we also have the responsibility to work toward protecting the other humans, who have been forgotten by so many. It goes without saying that language and literature have long served that purpose; in fact, it serves both the

human world and the rest of nature. We need to extend our compassion to one another, to the thirsty countries, the child gold miners who are enslaved for jewellery for other countries, those without trees, food, safety from even their own, all part of this same beautiful world, all separated from the knowledge that allows them to keep their own environments safe and whole.

Living in a rural Conservative Christian part of the country, I was relieved to hear a Creek man recently speak about how Christianity is not our Native way. The creation gave us our own ways, he said. This is not true for many people who live around me and do not look to our own manner of being. If so, we would have a vastly different environment, different relationships all around. Our original way is not a belief system. It is a lived way of life, being a participant within the whole of the living world. Even the spoken word is alive, or has the potential to bring to life, to *re-mind* us. Everything exists in its own right. In a world of broken lives, forests, mountains, oceans, we cannot only think about ourselves, but must, at least part of the time, weave from ourselves like a spider mending the web of broken strands of connection if we are to hold to the force of the living energy with which we connect and wherein we dwell.

In the Haudenosaunee gatherings, the first words spoken are a thanksgiving address, with gratitude to the earth, wind, rain, the animal and plant lives, the ancestors, not to a world only of abstract spirit or a singular creator but an entire creation. Thinking of our moral obligations to the earth is a part of our place as co-creators with this world. Our alliance with nature is a two-way thing. It is not simply there for our enjoyment. It is up to us to take care of it. We need this gratitude for a world that, even damaged, has sustained us, and waits for us to help heal it.

In his great "Memory of Fire" trilogy (1998) Eduardo Galeano translates from a book by Lydia Cabrera (1983), a history of the Ceiba tree that protects fugitives from injustice and racism. Anyone striking it with an axe feels it in his or her own body. A person should not walk in its shade without asking permission, but it opens when asked for shelter. For fugitives it grows thorns for their protection and grows them suddenly. It is a tree with a consciousness. But then, aren't they all?

Thinking again about the night sky, I first considered the many individual astronomies of the Native people years ago when I came across the Skidi Pawnee star bundle (a collection of sacred objects wrapped together in decorated leather) in a museum in Chicago. It is decorated with constellations, that take in the living world around, the people, antelope, swimming ducks, as if uniting the universe with the earth on which we live, our one special planet in this universe of constant change and motion of its own, still unknown to us, but with nurseries of stars and new life forming.

NOTE

1. As Meridel LeSueur frequently said, "re-membering the dis-membered". See LeSueur (1990).