

GROUNDWATER

The Way of Water

Raven, the Bringer of Light
and Maker of Man, was lonely
and descended from the sky
to search for a wife.
Seeing his reflection
in a sundappled creek
he fell in love with a stream
in the shape of a young woman
who held blades of cattail rush
with nails of copper, drawing hummingbirds
in the sand at stream's edge.

Together, they caught Coho and Chum,
cooked on skunk cabbage.
He rolled Creek Woman
and her family,
streams, rivers and lakes,
into a blanket
for a move to his Island,
but as he flew towards the heavens
all water, except Creek Woman,
spilled out, spreading
over the land.

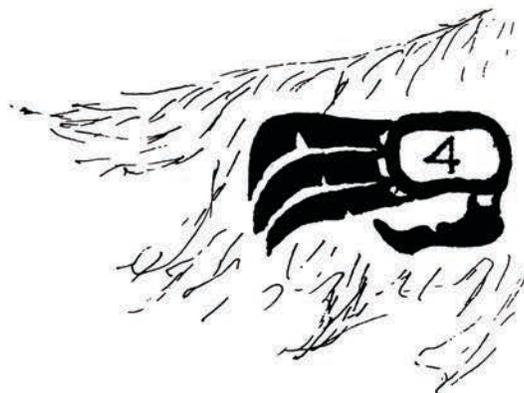
This water fed new streams,
rivers, lakes, and shores
covered with ferns and alders,
salaberries and huckleberries
to be pressed and dried
while cedar canoes and paddles
eased by listening men
cut silently through dark water
searching for salmon,
in the way of bear
otter, and eagle.



Today a single red cedar stands
witness among scatter conifers:
People have come to live
close to edges of water
and higher, on gentle slopes
well-holes for homes and humans
reduce the flow of water
to a distant inlet, forcing
the surface water beneath
the ground where roots are deep
and there are no fish.

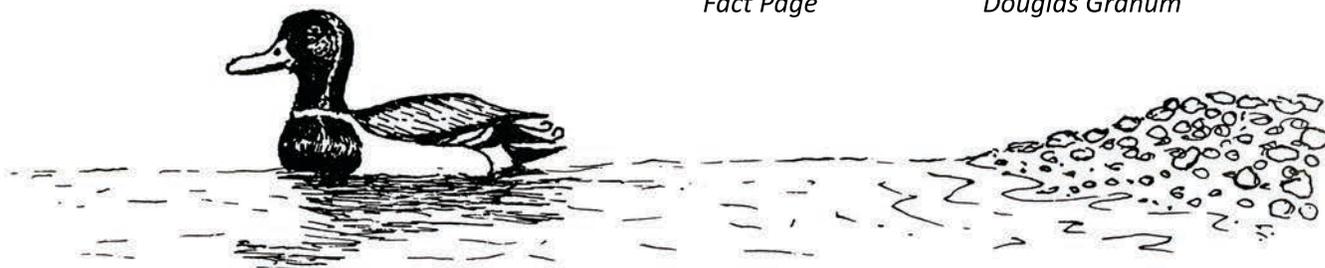
*As I sit in the sand tracking
V-signs left by ordinary mallards
I imagine Raven's raucous cry calling:*

*Head South on the road of three names.
I am fed by groundwater
and my name has been mentioned before.
I am a lake, an oasis
in the midst of civilization
covering forty three acres.
While you have lunch
on a wooden table near the shore
you may see a kingfisher,
a blue heron or an osprey alight
on my sun-reflected water.*



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GROUNDWATER FACTS

Water moves underground very slowly depending on the porosity and permeability of the earth. The porosity is the total percentage of void or open space in the earth material to hold water. Permeability is the ability of earth material to let the groundwater flow. This very slowly flowing groundwater can hold pollutants for centuries. These factors are extremely important in our ability to drill wells and remove the clean life-giving water in the amounts that we all need. Kitsap County depends on 80% of groundwater for its potable water.

Beneath our feet lie the pages of our earth's historical dictionary, cracked and wrinkled, twisted and broken, melted and rotted. Through the pages of this underground dictionary, water moves at every moment of every day. As continents shift and move, so does the course of subterranean waters. Where today we have Old Faithful Geyser, tomorrow we may have a dry hole in the ground.

The blood of our beautiful earth is groundwater. Flowing sweetly, purling through rich mineral sands, rising in hot spring. Floating in cool fogs, gathered by forests, slamming in large drops in dusty summer gardens to arrive miraculously once more in your well. The hydrologic cycle is ageless and has inspired painters and photographers and has made rainbows. Gone mad, it has destroyed civilization, and leveled mountain ranges. For all of its power the water of our earth is tender and delicate. What is more precious than a spring shower? When you see a salmon stream, protect it! When you water your garden enjoy the happiness of you plants. What better way to show love for our earth than through caring. Fall in love with mother earth, above and below her delicate surface, and she will hold, care and love you always.

Can you draw a picture of a world without groundwater?

