

Totems

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Generations of peace pass down understanding
of salmon, elk, eagle, and buffalo
binding languages and tradition by
building in honor and *continuance*—
the elders speak, story speaks.

Meanwhile our bellies are full of huckleberry
and we gather together to dance and the story is
heard but not written, it is oral, it is tradition.

The mud moves in the riverbed as salmon swim
and we, like them, must return to take our place at the
tables of discourse in ecology, biodiversity, natural history and other
disciplines so that we might tell our stories to those who will still
listen.