

## Water Is Siwkw

*Jeannette Armstrong*

siwkw she murmured is an emergence the subsequence of all else  
a completeness of the design transforming to be lapped continuously  
onto long pink tongues in that same breathing to be the sweet drink  
coursing to become the body a welling spring eternally renewing  
a sacred song of the mother vibrating outward from the first minute drop  
formed of sky earth and light bursting out of the deep quietness  
siwkw is a song she breathed awakening cells toward this knowing  
that you are the great River as is the abundant land it brings to carve  
its banks then spread its fertile plains and deltas and open its basins  
its great estuaries even to where it finally joins once again  
the grandmother ocean's vast and liquid peace as are the headwater glaciers  
of the jagged mountains waiting for the yearly procession of thunder beings  
bearing the dark cloud's sweep upward as spirits released from green depths  
cradling whale song dance on wind as are the cold ice springs feeding  
rushing brooks and willow-draped creeks meandering through teeming  
wetlands to sparkling blue lakes as are the silent underground reservoirs  
coursing gradually up toward roots reaching down to draw dew upward  
through countless unfurling into the sun's full light as much as the salmon  
and sleek sturgeon sliding through strong currents even the tall straight  
reeds cleaning stagnant pools equally are the marsh bogs swarming  
multitudinous glistening flagella and wings in high country holding dampness  
for the gradual descent through loam and luxuriant life to drink in siwkw  
she said is to remember this song is the way it is the storm's way driving  
new wet earth down slippery slopes to make fresh land the river's way  
heaving its full silt weight crushing solid rock the tide's way smoothing  
old plates of stone finally deciding for all the way of ice piled blue green  
layer upon layer over eons sustaining this fragment of now so somewhere  
on her voluptuous body the rain continues to fall in the right places  
the mists unceasingly float upward to where they must and the fog forever  
ghosts across the land in the cool desert wind where no rain falls and each

drop is more precious than blood balancing time in the way of the silvery  
hoar frost covering tundra where iridescent ice tinkles under the bellies of  
caribou her song is the sky's way holding the gossamer filaments  
of rainbow together guarding the silent drift of perfect white flakes where  
the moose stop momentarily to look upward her song in the forest ensuring  
a leaf shaped just so captures each glistening droplet to celebrate  
the vast miles of liquid pumping through the veins of the lion parting  
undulating savannah grasses lifting great Condor wings soaring last circles  
in the mountains of Chile accumulating in the places it chooses to pool  
in subterranean caverns moving through porous stone seeping and wetting  
sand deep inside of her caressing thunder eggs and smooth  
pebbles at her heart

This song is the way