

into it and beheld his fathers' fathers beyond counting emerge from Her belly and step up into the bright gaze of their loving Great Father. And he looked up at a Sky Snake billowing like a mushroom, and his own throbbing head buzzed with the screams and cries of sandy-skinned, hooded-eyed brethren pictured in the cloud burning alive from the touch of a giant sparkling bird's droppings. And he saw this clan, far, far greater in number than the Puma Clan, recover from this wound and prosper for moons beyond counting. And there was nothing that had been or would be that Running Snake could not see with open eyes.

He saw his son and daughter bent over from their burdens trekking toward the flatlands where the rivers never ran dry, where they and their children's children would prosper as long as they remembered their debt to their Sacred Parents and their kinship with all that was alive. And Running Snake wept with the fullness of the Sky Father's blessings, with His having chosen him, a man of only nineteen springs, as Dark Moon's successor and the Puma Clan's new Wise Man.

An eagle swept into view with a shrill whistle and perched on an unseen column, its rocking wings speaking to Running Snake who understood. And he raised his arms and blessed the Awakening Mesa on behalf of his Great Father and asked Her to prepare for the embrace of Her beloved spouse. And with deliberate steps Running Snake turned his back on the

canyon and followed the hovering eagle to the great rock wearing the sacred blackness that the Sky Father's downpours over the generations had painted there. And he took the Sacred Mano waiting in his Earth Mother's sandy hand and quickly scraped the paint away to let the figures he saw beneath the dark mask shine through. And thus he traced the Puma People's history—from their emergence in their Sacred Mother's belly, through their journey to the Sleeping Mesa and their future trek to the flatlands toward the sun. And thus he recorded the dependence of the Puma Clan, like that of everything that had ever existed or would exist, on their Great Parents whose blessings knew no end.

And when Running Snake had finished and laid down the Mano, the Sacred Father flashed across the Sky and roared. And He let loose His blessings that poured down and drenched His beloved Spouse and all the grateful children to which They had given birth. And Running Snake stretched his arms out like his eagle brother and threw back his head and opened his parched mouth and drank of the Great Spirit's abundance. Overhead on the mesa top, droplets joined into drops that became trickles that became rivulets that became streams that became a raging torrent rushing off the cliff to smash against Running Snake's prayer, the Sky Father's blessed caress neither smudging nor blurring a single line in the page of stone.

Fireflies

Not yet beautiful,
They rise like seeds at your feet

Where the first dark of the evening
Lies down in the damp grass.

Their wings beat beneath tiny shells
The color of earth.

Now it is night and they fly
into the darkness, wholly beautiful.

They flash and they float.
They are the stars of the earth

And you hold them in your hands
Beneath a sky of stars.

Kathryn Winograd