



SKY LOOM

Native American Myth, Story, and Song



EDITED & WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY BRIAN SWANN

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He Became an Eagle

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Introduction

“He Became an Eagle” is a story about desire, transformation, journeys between worlds, marriage, separation, and loss. It is set among the Western Apache people “in the old days,” when people lived in mobile village encampments across the mountains of Arizona and New Mexico. Apache marriage conventions required that husband and wife come from distantly related clans, each associated conceptually and sometimes physically with different places on the landscape. In this context marriage often involved spanning geographic as well as conceptual distance between the families of husband and wife. No doubt this story speaks to some aspects of that experience. Paul Ethelbah, who lives on the White Mountain Apache Reservation in eastern Arizona with his wife, Genevieve Ethelbah, and family, performed the story in 1998.

An elder now, Paul Ethelbah spent a good deal of his young life on horseback, first as a cowboy and then working for the tribe’s forestry department managing cattle herds and forest resources. But at the center of his life is his role as a *dighín* (dee-yin), or “holy man,” performing Apache healing ceremonies for those who ask it of him. Paul Ethelbah began his long training in Apache verbal traditions at a young age when his verbal and intellectual gifts were recognized and encouraged by his father and by elders in his community. Learning Apache ceremonies requires that the initiate retain very long sets of stories, songs, and choreographed ritual actions and be able to perform these flawlessly. Paul Ethelbah describes what was for him a supportive educational environment around his family home and community:

I learned a lot of things in my young days, you know, because there’s a bunch of elders sitting around, you know. Sometimes they’d teach me. I was sitting right by my dad. I was little, about eight years old. And they talk and they sing, and then they want me to repeat. So I come out and make a speech like they say, and I sing, the way they do, you know. And

they look up: “Hey, that guy is good!” you know. All the way around, you know, nine of them sitting there, elders, talking to me. I never got nervous, you know. I know what to do, I feel it, you know. I did that.

Recognizing his son’s ability, his father, also a *dighín*, taught Paul Ethelbah many stories and songs, trained him in the ceremonies that he knew, and sponsored his training by *dighín* in several other White Mountain and Cibecue communities. Today Paul Ethelbah is one of the most important practicing Western Apache *dighín*, a status that frequently takes him to other Apache reservations in Arizona to perform ceremonies. While he knows many stories and songs in conjunction with his work as a *dighín*, none of these is likely to appear in print because their use is restricted to very particular, ceremonially defined contexts. The story presented here, “He Became an Eagle,” is one that would be told in a more relaxed home environment, though still proceeding according to certain formalities. Paul Ethelbah describes the protocol followed when he was a young adult: “If we wanted a story from my dad or my mom, we usually get together and make arrangements for what day we should get together and let my dad or mom tell us a story. It would be a legend. And we have to pay them to do that too [i.e., bring groceries, something for them], so that way they are willing to do it. So, that’s how we used to do it.” This is the environment in which “He Became an Eagle” and other, similar stories would be told. Today, however, the conditions of storytelling and prevalence of this kind of storytelling performance within Western Apache homes have changed.

Genevieve Ethelbah is roughly ten years younger than Paul and describes herself as typical of many people her age in being familiar with these kinds of stories but not enough to perform them confidently: “And beginning with me, my age group, I don’t think we know how to tell stories like this anymore. I don’t know a story of my own. These are all Paul’s stories. I don’t have any. I just remember bits of it here and there but not a complete story.” There also appears to be less demand for these kinds of stories from the younger generations. Paul Ethelbah said he hadn’t been asked to tell this story for about fifteen years.

Many Apache people link the scarcity of stories like this and the requisite knowledge to tell and understand them to a profound difference in Apache language fluency between older and younger generations and to changes accompanying this difference in the language used in everyday life. While most adults over the age of twenty-five speak Apache fluently, many perceive a precipitous drop in fluency among young school-age kids.

For example, as we were working on the translation together, Genevieve Ethelbah commented,

A lot of these words I guess were just everyday words at one time, but now we don't talk like that too. That's why it's hard to translate it. We throw in a lot of English words to make it easy for us to talk. Then, now we try to talk with our kids and we have to talk English with them and that's hard. And we can't tell stories like this to them because it loses the meaning, or the fun part in it, the joke in it, you know. It loses that as you try to speak it in English because it's meant to be told in Apache, I guess. It has more meaning in Apache. We can't even tell our grandkids stories like that anymore. They don't understand. They don't speak the Apache language. It's just sad.

She notes that this drop in fluency is not across the board. Families are different, and there are differences in perceived fluency among different communities: "I think, and good for them, more people in Cibecue speak Apache. Here, I don't know what our problem is. My grandkids spoke Apache but later on picked up English on their own, and now they don't speak Apache anymore. My niece is married out there, and all her kids speak real good Apache."

Many people were involved in the preparation of this manuscript. The central contributor is, of course, Paul Ethelbah, who knows the story and has license to perform it. He performed "He Became an Eagle" in the Apache language at his kitchen table to an immediate audience comprising his wife, Genevieve Ethelbah, and two graduate students from the University of Virginia, Tom Nevins and Eleanor Nevins. Also present was a potentially wider audience, anticipated by earlier discussions among the four of us about the desirability of publishing bilingual editions of some of the stories that Paul Ethelbah knows. In the days after the performance, we prepared a rough transcript and took this, along with the tape-recording, back to the Ethelbahs' kitchen table. There the four of us worked together on the English translation. A year or so later, we worked with the materials generated from these kitchen-table sessions to prepare the presentation of the story for this volume.

Acknowledging that translation involves an inevitable loss of meaning and, as Genevieve Ethelbah put it, some of the "fun part" of the story, we nonetheless endeavor to convey something of the beauty and meaning of the spoken Apache in this written presentation. Following Dell Hymes (1980, 1981), we have presented the story in print in a way that mirrors the rhetori-

cal features of the spoken Apache. And like Keith Basso in his treatment of another Western Apache oral narrative (Basso with Tessay 1994), we identify the smallest rhetorical elements of the story as narrative passages, which comprise one or more sentences or lines. In the Apache version passages are defined by pauses and intonational contours, and they are bounded by initial particles, final particles, or both (discussed later). To reflect these features in the English print version, passages are separated from each other by an extra line space, and we make an effort, when possible, to include a rough English equivalent of particles as they occur. A doubling up of several particles marks the boundaries between larger divisions or episodes within the narrative, and these are marked by section symbols (§).

Paul Ethelbah makes regular use of particles, which act as a kind of punctuation. Many have meanings very similar to "and then," "and so," or "from there." But some particles are notoriously difficult to translate inside the text without disrupting its narrative flow because they convey understandings that have no comparable shorthand equivalent in English (see, for example, Young and Morgan 1948; Pepper 1993). For example, *leni* (Lenny), "it's said to have happened," conveys the sense that this is something people know, not from seeing it around them today but from stories about a time and place removed from the present here and now that people know about only through generations of storytellers. A related particle, *shaq'* (pronounced "sha," with the *a* pronounced quickly through the nose and ending abruptly with a sharp closure of the glottis) is peppered throughout the narrative, often employed just before the speaker introduces a new point of focus. Outside of storytelling contexts this particle conveys the sense that the speaker is not speaking from personal experience or basing what he says on the surety of patterns of everyday life but is describing something that has potential or hypothetical reality. As it is used here, the particle indexes the relation of the story as a whole to the everyday life of its listeners as well as the relation between the two realities described in the story between the life of people on this earth and that of the Eagle People in the sky. The repeated movement from one of these narrative scenes to the next, and between the story and the everyday life of its listeners, implies a relationship of similarity between what are different places constituted in very different ways.

These relationships are crucial to the motivations of the characters described by the narrative. More than a simple story, the tale is an intellectual exercise, replete with cosmological and philosophical meanings. It is addressed to the fascination of the unknown and the desire to transgress

the boundaries encountered in the course of ordinary experience. What motivates the tale's protagonist is curiosity, aroused by stories he has heard, which has the ability to elevate him from his usual universe of experience to another, very different one.

The story starts off by drawing a contrast between the world of a man and his people, who live on the surface of the earth, and the Eagle People, who live, it is said, on the surface of the sky. The man is curious about this sky world of the eagles and inquires of all around him how he might find his way to this place. He finally approaches one of his people's elders. After hearing his questions, the elder instructs him to lie down at a spot where the river flows over a sandy bank and at this place between water and earth to pray to be transformed into an eagle. This he does, and after repeating his prayer four times he effects his transformation and begins to soar upward. He flies, as the story is careful to point out, in the manner of the eagle, wheeling through the sky in four circuits. After the last circuit, he comes to a door made of black obsidian, the passageway to the east. The people who live there open the door for him, and he passes through, completing the first leg of his journey. There he spends the night. The next morning he resumes his journey, making his way to the turquoise doorway to the south. Once there, he passes through and once again spends the night. In a similar fashion he continues through the remainder of his journey, coming next to the red shell doorway of the west and finally to the white shell doorway to the north.

After passing through the last doorway, he finds himself among beings he recognizes as people. These, he concludes, must be the Eagle People and the place where he has found himself is the land of the Eagle clan. After spending some time with the Eagle People, he finds that they are at the mercy of what to him are fairly innocuous hazards—tumbleweeds and wasps. He confronts these threatening presences and quickly routs them. The Eagle People marvel at his display of unnatural strength and masculine virtue. No doubt as a result of his good deeds, the Eagle People welcome him among them and soon have him married to one of their own daughters. The man and his new wife have a child together and in time decide to return to visit the man's family below the sky world of the Eagle People, in the human world.

Just as the man had done several years earlier, they lie down at a place where water flows against a riverbank. They pray, are transformed, and fly through a hole in the ground into what the people below think of as the sky. Downward they fly, traveling in reverse the path the man had previously

followed. Over the next four days they pass from north to west and south and finally to the eastern doorway and then find themselves at last on the surface of the human world. Transformed into human form, the couple and their child are greeted by the man's family, who ask him where he has been these past years. The couple lives with the man's family until such time as the wife decides she must return to her people. The man states that he must stay with his people, and they part.

The woman returns to her home, where she tells her people of her time among the people below. After some time, however, she decides to return to the human world to see her husband. She and her child transform themselves and once again descend to the earth. The woman inquires after her husband, only to learn that he has died. Deeply saddened, she spends four days with her former affines, a period of time that marks the ending of their relationship to one another. She and her child return sadly to her family in the sky. While consoling her, her family observes that her time on earth has brought her much sadness.

Along with its air of contemplative melancholy, part of the attraction of the story is the attention it pays to the processes by which first the man and later his wife and child travel back and forth between the human and the eagle world. Anthropologists have often noted that in many Native American cultures animals are considered to be, at least in some sense, kinds of people (Brightman 1993; Fienup-Riordan 1990, 167–91). A given species of animals, such as the eagles of the story, by virtue of their "eagleness," perceive a world unique to themselves, and it is in this world that they seem to one another to be persons, much in the manner humans do. In this story we discover that some individuals are capable of moving between the different worlds that humans and eagles respectively occupy. This wonderful ability allows the unnamed human protagonist to discover for himself what kind of place it is where the eagles fly.

Another striking feature of the story is the importance of four—in the form of the four directions, the four prayers uttered by the man, and the four circuits of the sky the man flies through to pass from one gateway to another on his way to the eagle world. Each of the four directions is always associated with a quality that is both color and substance: black obsidian in the east, blue turquoise in the south, red shell in the west, and white shell in the north. The symbolic power of four and the associated power of repeated sunrise, circular movement obtains from the way in which these images evoke ideas concerning the place of human life in the larger cosmos. The place of the individual person is always situated at the crossroads of

two movements: the sun's passage from east to west and the shifting pre-eminence of north and south signaled by the change of seasons. In Apache religious thought, this holy tetrad of paired cardinal points is understood to map not just the place of the person on the landscape but also the place of life in a larger encompassing reality. The cyclicity described by the passage of days into seasons is a metaphor for both the finitude of individual lives as they progress from birth to youth, maturity, and old age and the importance of this progression to the infinitely regenerative power of life itself. Considering this, it is not surprising that the characters in the story must move through the domains of each of the four directions in order to effect the transformations necessary to their journeys between worlds.

But the story Paul Ethelbah has related is not an adventure tale, and it concludes with an obliquely cautionary message. The ability to literally move between worlds leads to a relationship that ultimately ends in sadness. Curiosity drives the characters of the story to break through the barrier separating earth and sky, but the joining that is the result of this cannot overcome the need of the human man for the world he was born to and of the Eagle woman for hers. The relationship of the two was possible and even desirable to them and their families, but it was not in the long run sustainable. The story does not pass judgment on the efforts of the man and his wife; it only lays bare the consequences of them. What curiosity leads to may seem at first to be remarkable, but in the end humans and eagles cannot easily inhabit each other's worlds. The passage from one world to the other can be a lonely journey, as the characters of the story discover, that separates as it illuminates.

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He Became an Eagle

PERFORMED BY PAUL ETHELBAH

TRANSLATED BY M. ELEANOR NEVINS, THOMAS J. NEVINS,
PAUL ETHELBAH, AND GENEVIEVE ETHELBAH

A man was living with a village of people here on the earth's surface.

From here he heard people say that eagles live in a similar way up in the sky.

"Where the eagle circles through the four directions,
that is the home of the Eagle People."

That's what people said; they would tell stories about it.

8

And so then, the man started talking like this:

"How is it possible for me to go over to where the eagle lives?"
He started asking many questions like that.

The elders, there,
he was continually asking them questions about it.

"I want to go where the Eagle People live. People say that they live in
the sky; so
how is it possible for me to go over there?"
he would talk to them like that.

Well, he goes to this elder and talks to him about it.

This elder says:

"Well, if you really want to go there, there is a way,"
and he tells him how to do it.
8

Following these instructions, the man goes to the river's edge,
to where the current has left its path in the soft sandy soil.

He rolls around in this sand praying:

"Let me become an eagle."

He prays like this four times while rolling in the sand.

And then, following this, as he was told, he becomes an eagle.

He becomes a golden eagle.

At this point, transformed, he gets up in the manner of an eagle.
And flies from there as an eagle flies.

Upward from that place,
circling,
circling,
circling.

From there, farther on, to a place with an obsidian passageway, just as
he was told,
a doorway was there, as he was told,
an opening in the blackness,
a passageway to that world was there.

And then, as he was told to do, he asks the people who are there:

"Is this the way to where the Eagle People live?"
this man says.
"Yes, go on through here, the path goes through this door,"
those people tell him.

And from there they open the way for him,
he passes through this doorway.

And once through, he spends the first night of his journey there.

After that first night, the next morning, he flies as an eagle flies once
again.

He flies, circling along the path of the sun:
upward,
upward,
upward,
and upward.

He is flying as the sun moves along its arc across the sky.

Flying down,
down,
down,
following the sun as it goes down.

And from there he comes to a turquoise passageway.

And again, the people let him through.

And he again spends the night.

From there, the next day he starts flying again as the eagle flies,
circling,
circling,
circling,
circling.

He comes to a place where there is a passageway made of red shell,
where again a doorway is opened for him, and again he passes
through.

From there, he spends the night in the same way, for the third time
during his journey.

The next day he again starts flying as the eagle flies,
circling,
circling,
circling,
circling.

From there he comes to a place where there is passageway made of
white shell.

The people there open the way for him, and he passes through.

And then, he spends his fourth night over there, having passed through
the white place.

And in the morning, here he sees people living all around there, they say.
These people living there, they are Eagle People, the Eagle clan.

They are living just everywhere around there.
He had finally made it to them.

§
And then, he starts to make his living among them, according to their
ways.

And so, time passes.
He's been living with them there for two years, it's said.

And it happened to be that there were things called "tumbleweeds"
that were being blown around all over the place.

It happened to be that if Eagle People are hit by one of these, they are
killed, they say.
If the tumbleweeds hit them, they are killed, they say.
This is how it was there, and then he arrived.

And so, this man, he goes to them and jumps up and down on these
tumbleweeds that were rolling around, flattening them out.

He completely flattens them out.
And in doing so he makes it much easier for the Eagle People to live.

After what happened there, people had seen what he did, and so:

"Truly, this is a strong man!"

"Truly this is a powerful man!"

they said to one another about him.

"We are proud of him."
they said, it's said.

§
From there, as more time passes,
It turns out to be the same with wasps,

when Eagle People are stung by them, they are killed.

So he pulled out a bunch of grass, and as a great many of them flew at
him, he used it to knock them out of the air, it's said to have happened.
He knocks down great numbers of them, killing them, it's said, with
grass.

Now, when an Eagle person is stung by a wasp it kills him;
but not for this man, if he is stung, it's no problem.
So he really killed them all, it's said.

§
And so from there, after more time has passed,
A man who lives there announces that he wants to give his daughter to
this man in marriage:

"You and my daughter should become married to one another.
You are truly a man of great strength.

You are a man who inspires good will.
You have shown yourself to be a man of truly great strength.
You can bring happiness to this place.
Marry my daughter;
he says to him, talking about what he hopes for them.

After this, they got married, it's said.

§

From there, after they were married, one year passes.
A child is born and lives with them there.

"Let me take you back with me to the earth's surface,"
he says, hoping to persuade her.

"I want to go back there."

His wife:

"I also want to know how it is over there."
this is what she says to him.

"So, let's go then,"
she says in agreement.

§

From there, the three of them go to the river,
to the sandy riverbed along its edge,
praying in just the same way as he did before.
Here they roll around and around in the sand.

And they become eagles; his wife turns into an eagle, and their little
one too.

§

And, from this, they fly in the manner of eagles,
circling down through an opening in that earth,
flying down through it.
Flying down, they come to the white shell passageway.

It is opened for them, and they pass down through.
Down from there, they spend the night.

The next morning they fly down through white shell earth,
flying in the manner of eagles,

circling down,
circling down,
circling down,
falling,
falling.

Then they come back to what must be this same red shell passageway.

From there, just down from this, they once again spend the night.

The next day they take off flying, through the red shell earth,
flying in the manner of eagles, following the arc of the sun,
circling,
circling,
circling,

following it down, all day.

There they fly through an opening to a passageway made of turquoise.

From there they again spend the night in the same manner as before.
The next day they take off flying again, through the turquoise earth,
flying,
flying,
circling,
circling,
falling downward for the rest of the day.

And then an obsidian passageway is opened for them, and they pass
through.

From there they again spend the night.
The next day they fly again in the manner of eagles, through the
obsidian earth,
circling down,
circling down,
in this manner circling down to that very cave into which the sun
sets here on the earth's surface.

And so, after the fourth day of their journey they make it to the earth here, it's said.

From there they roll around in the sand made soft by the currents at the river's edge, and they turn back into people.

And as people, the three of them start off from there, to find where his family is living, to visit his father where he lives.

At a certain point they come to where his father has been living.

"Hey, a long time ago you went away from me, my son. Why did you go like that?"

His father wants to hear him talk about how he has been living.

"I left so that I could go to where the Eagle People live.

This earth is one of many.

I have lived over there,"

he said, wanting to tell him all about it.

And then, his father:

"We cried over you because we didn't know what had become of you, and now the three of you have come to us."

And so, from there, time goes by.

His wife was living with his family on his earth according to their manner.

"I would like to go back with my child, to where my Eagle People live,

I would like to go live with them again,"

she said to him.

"Even though you are both dear to me, as for me, I will stay here. Will you two really go away from us?"

he had said.

8

From there he went with them to the sandy riverbank where his wife and child rolled around in the sand, and becoming eagles, in that manner, flew off. Sadly, they circled down into the sunset.

They fly through a passageway made of obsidian. There they spend the night.

The next day, going up, they fly once again in the manner of the eagle.

And flying even so, until coming to a stop at the passageway made of turquoise,

and the two of them just go through it, at the opening.

And so, there, again, they spend the night.

From there, upward, the next day,

using their transformation to eagles to go upward,

using their eagle's bodies to fly in that way.

There that red shell passageway,

where he alone went through the first time,

where the three of them had gone through together,

here the two of them went back through it again.

There they again spend the night.

From here, through this land, they again fly in the manner of eagles,

flying back up,

flying back up.

They go through the opening in a passageway made of white shell.

And so from there, again they spend the night.

The next day, through white shell earth, they again fly in the manner of eagles,

flying back in this way,

flying back in this way.

Up just right at the place where the sun goes down, flying through that opening

they go through the cave there to arrive at the place where they live.

8

And so, they roll around in the sandy riverbank.

From there, they become Eagle People again
so that they can go live with her father and mother there, it's said.

And so, her father questions her about it:

"A person should stay home. Why did you three leave?"
her father said to her.

"Truly, I'm staying here at home. We two have returned to you. And when
we go indoors, I'll tell you all about those with whom we have been
living.

We'll speak about it many times."

"You speak truly,"
her father said; they were speaking like this with one another.

And so, time passes,
many years go by.

And then:

"The man who is married to me, I really want to go back to him.
And so, my child and I are going to the earth's surface.
In the past you have said of me that I am given in marriage.
You have said that I am not doing anything here."

And so, the two of them start off and prepare themselves to fly back
over there.

§

There: "We two are going back again."

From that place in the sandy soil,
from rolling around in the sand,
from becoming eagles again,
they are able to fly back again in the manner of eagles.

There they get up as eagles, and they fly as eagles through an opening
in the earth.

They go back down through the passageway made of white shell.
And there they again spend the night.

That next day they fly in the manner of eagles down through the white
shell earth,

flying back toward us,
flying back,
continuing
flying back toward us,
still.

They go back down through this red shell passageway.

From there they again spend the night.

The next day they fly back again in the manner of eagles through the
red shell
earth,

down from there,
downward,
down,
flying down to that person.

They go through an opening, a passageway made of turquoise.

And from there again they spend the night.

And from there the next day they fly down through the turquoise
earth,

flying back for him, through the passage there.
They go through a door made of obsidian.

And so, from there they spend the night again.

And from there, again, using the next day to fly back through the
obsidian earth.

Going downward again for a reason,
they follow the way downward
until they fly again through an opening onto this earth, it's said.

§

And so, from there, they roll around again
in the sand where river currents have left a path,
And from that, they turn back into people.
Thus, it came to be that they were once again people on this earth.
In this way the child also became a person again too.

To find out about her husband,
just for this purpose,
they went back looking for where his father's village had moved,
to talk to people about it.

§

And so, from there, despite going back to the very place where they
had lived,
they have to travel all around before they come to some people who
were
living there.

When they come to them,
She starts asking them questions about her husband's whereabouts:
"Where is my husband, the one I am searching after?
Where is this person, the one who is married to me?
They used to live here, they used to stay here.
This is where we found them when we stayed with them before."
The woman was talking to people like this:
"We have just come for this person, to see how he is doing."

And so, at last, they come to the man's father, and he was the one who
tells
them about him:
"He has been dead."

And because of that they only stayed there for several days.
They spent four nights with them.

They had come there because they had loved him.
The boy also spent four nights, and his sufferings there were truly
great.

"My son, this one has gone from us, he has gone from you.
What can we do here? Nothing,"
she says to him.

Their sufferings were great.

And so, from here they stayed over through four days and nights,
going through a hard time, feeling down, before going back.

Then,

"We are not happy here, I am not happy, it is of no use for you two to stay
here. You have lived as one of us here, but now go back. You want to do it.
Go back because there is nothing you can do for him."

From there:

"These two should leave this place where they used to live with him.
There is nothing to do, there is nothing but to let the customary time
pass."

And so, it was decided that they would stay over for the expected
amount of time, and then they would start back.
There was nothing else to do but spend four days with them; it would
be four.

From here, they stayed over four days and nights at that place on his
behalf.

§

And then, there, they started back.
They went back to the sandy bank of the river.
There they would again become eagles.
Upward, flying in the manner of eagles again, up, they just go back.

They fly through an opening in the passageway made of obsidian.
Right here they spend the night.

The next day, they fly upward again through the obsidian sky,
still flying around, still in this way.

They fly through a passageway there made of turquoise.
They fly across it, they go through it once again.

From there they again spend the night.

From here, they fly back up again in the manner of eagles,
the next day, flying through this turquoise sky, going on still.
They pass through this passageway made of red shell.

Again they spend the night there.
The next day, they fly back upward again in the manner of eagles,
through the red shell earth, and they keep flying.

From there, a white passageway, they just fly across here.

And so, they go through it, and they spend once again spend the night
there.

The next day they fly back upward, in the manner of eagles,
through the red shell earth,
flying up,

aaaaahhh . . .
to the passageway where the sun sets on their earth.

Thus they return on the fourth day to the village where the Eagle
People live.

§

They roll around in the sand at the river's edge,
and turning back into Eagle People,
they just go back home.

They go back to where her father and her mother are living.

"How is it there is no man with you, why is this so?"
people say.

"Where is your husband?"

"There is no longer such a person."

"How long has it been?"

"When did it happen?"
they talk to her in this way.

"There was nothing for us on the earth, so we two came back here,"
she says.

They were very unhappy about what happened to the man on earth,
it's said.

They stood there grief-stricken.

"Hey, that's terrible! What has happened is no good!"

They were very sad about it.

"For what reason did you stay with them for a while over there?"
they ask her.

"We stayed with them a while to mourn for this one before coming back."
She told her father's village about it there.

From there,
here my yucca fruit lie piled up.

Charley H. Chuck (Meskwaki), was born in 1867 and died in 1940. A member of the Thunder clan, he served as tribal secretary and tribal policeman. His stories were published, in Meskwaki only, by the State Historical Society of Iowa in 1905.

Reverend Stan Cuthand grew up on Little Pine's Reserve in Saskatchewan. He was ordained in the Anglican Church and worked for the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Center as writer and translator. He has taught at several colleges, including the University of Manitoba. In 1998 he retired from the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (now the First Nations University of Canada) and is working on a translation of the Bible into Cree for the Canadian Bible Society.

Nora Marks Dauenhauer was born and raised in Alaska. Her first language is Tlingit and in 2010 she was given the title Naa Tlaa (Clan Mother) as the ceremonial leader of the Sockeye Salmon clan. Her own writing is widely published, and with her husband, Richard Dauenhauer, she has coauthored and coedited several editions of Tlingit language and folklore material, including *Classics of Tlingit Oral Literature* (1994).

Richard Dauenhauer was born in Syracuse, New York, and has lived in Alaska since 1968. He was Alaska's poet laureate and has taught at the University of Alaska as well as being director of language and cultural studies at Sealaska Heritage Foundation, Juneau. With his wife, Nora, he has published many books, including *Haa Shuka, Our Ancestors: Tlingit Oral Narratives* (1987), and *Haa Kusteeyi, Our Culture: Tlingit Life Stories* (1994).

Steven M. Egedal has gathered, interpreted and published, with M. Terry Thompson, many traditional Salishan stories from the last, best speakers. He is now engaged in translating songs recorded by James Teit near the turn of the twentieth century and is writing a Bitterroot Salish dictionary and grammar. He is a corporate-securities lawyer in Honolulu, Hawaii.

William W. Elmendorf (1912–97) was professor of anthropology at the University of Wisconsin. As a Salishanist, he is best known for his ethnography on the Twana in the 1930s.

Genevieve Ethelbah is from North Fork on the White Mountain Apache Reservation. After studying at the Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, she worked in government agency offices in Phoenix and then at the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Whiteriver, Arizona. She is now retired and lives with her husband and family in North Fork.

Paul Ethelbah of the Nagodishgizh clan was born in Cedar Creek on the White Mountain Apache Reservation. His father was a religious leader and he trained his son. Mr. Ethelbah was a professional range technician, managing herds on tribal lands, but is now retired and lives with his wife in the community of North Fork on the White Mountain Apache Reservation.

Larry Evers is head of the English department at the University of Arizona. With Felipe S. Molina he has written *Yaqui Deer Dance Songs/Maso Bwikam* (1987), *Woi Bwikam/Coyote Bwikam* (1990), and *Hiakim: The Yaqui Homeland* (1992).

Ann Fienup-Riordan is a cultural anthropologist who lives in Fairbanks, Alaska. She is the author of many books, including *The Living Tradition of Yupik Masks* (1995) and, with Lawrence Kaplan, *Words of the Real People: Alaska Native Literature in Translation* (2007).

Ives Goddard is senior linguist, emeritus, in the Department of Archeology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. He has written extensively on Native North American languages, cultures, and ethnohistory and edited volume 17, *Languages, of the Handbook of North American Indians* (1996). Two edited Meskwaki texts, "The Autobiography of a Meskwaki Woman" (2006) and "The Owl Sacred Pack" (2007), are in in the University of Manitoba Algonquian and Iroquian Linguistics series. The Meskwaki texts reprinted in this volume are posted online at <http://si-pddr.si.edu/jspui/handle/10088/17270>/browse under "Meskwaki texts."

Dell Hymes, anthropologist, linguist, folklorist, poet, best known for his work in ethnopoetics, died in 2009 at age eighty-two. He taught at Harvard and Berkeley and was dean of the school of education at the University of Pennsylvania. His books include *Foundations of Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (1974) and the influential "In Vain I Tried to Tell You": *Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics* (1981).

Elaine Jahner was professor of English and Native American studies at Dartmouth College until her untimely death in 2003. She is best known for her fieldwork at Standing Rock Reservation and published widely on Native American culture, including editing, with Raymond DeMallie, the work of James R. Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual* (1991) and *Lakota Myth* (1983).

Maria Johns, born late in the nineteenth century, spent most of her life in the Yukon, but she also had Alaskan coastal connections. She was both a song composer and a splendid raconteur.

Anderson Jolly (Eastern Cree) lived in Waskaganish, Quebec. He worked as a translator with John Blackned and Richard J. Preston in the 1960s.

Vincent Joseph was a Pima singer from Casa Blanca, a village in the Gila River Indian community in Arizona. Besides Oriole songs, he was expert in Blackbird and Swallow songs, all of which are used for social dancing.

Herbert W. Luthin is professor of English at Clarion University in Pennsylvania. He is a long-standing member of the Yahi Translation Project and has edited *Surviving Through the Days: Translations of Native California Stories and Songs* (2002). He has translated a number of anthologized translations from Northern and Central Yana and from Ishi's Yahi.

Monica Maccaulay is professor of linguistics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who specializes in the morphology of American Indian languages. She has worked on various languages, including Chalcatongo Mixtec, Karok, Potawatomi, and Menominee, of which she has produced two dictionaries. She is the author of *Surviving Linguistics: A Guide for Graduate Students* (2011).

Marguerite MacKenzie is a professor of linguistics at Memorial University. Her work focuses on aboriginal language maintenance. She is coeditor of the Naskapi Lexicon and the Eastern James Bay Cree Dictionary, Southern Dialect and Northern Dialect, and is currently working with the Innu of Labrador and Quebec to produce language reference materials and an audio archive of oral narratives.

David P. McAllester, who died at age eighty-nine in 2006, taught most of his life at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, where he founded the ethnomusicology program. His main field of interest was Native American ceremonial music, especially that of the Navajos. His books include *Peyote Music* (1949), *Enemyway Music* (1954), and *Hogans: Navajo Houses and House Songs* (1980, with Susan W. McAllester).

Catharine McClellan was born in York, England, in 1921 and died in New Hampshire in 2009. She spent much of her life in the Yukon documenting the lives of Athabaskan, Tlingit, and Tagish people. Her publications include *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* (1987) and *My Old People's Stories: A Legacy for Yukon First Nations* (2007).

Marie Meade was raised in Nunapitchuk, Alaska, and has worked as translator, teacher, and Yupik language specialist for more than thirty years. Her translations have been the foundation of a number of bilingual books, including *Ciilamita Akluik/Things of Our Ancestors* (2005).

Felipe S. Molina teaches in the Tucson Unified School District and lives in the Yoem Pueblo, a Yaqui community near Tucson. With Larry Evers he has written a number of books, listed above.

Marianne Milligan is a visiting assistant professor at Macalester College, teaching in both the linguistics and the Environmental Studies Departments. She specializes in Menominee and has published two translations of traditional Menominee stories. She is working on a Menominee dictionary with Monica Macaulay.

Silas Nabinicaboo is a member of the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach, trained as a Naskapi translator, and works for the Naskapi Development Corporation as a Naskapi language editor and technician. He is the editor of the *Naskapi Hymn Book* (1999).

M. Eleanor Nevins is assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Nevada, Reno. Her work has appeared in various journals and she is working on a book utilizing Fort Apache as an exemplary case from which to address the role of language in the mediation of indigenous communities.

Thomas J. Nevins teaches at the University of Nevada, Reno. In collaboration with M. Eleanor Nevins, he conducted three years of research on the Fort Apache Reservation among the White Mountain Apaches. His work has appeared in journals and edited volumes.

John Peastitute was a Naskapi elder and skilled storyteller who was born about 1890 and died about 1981 in Matimekosk, Quebec. His stories, as audio recordings, are now available to the Naskapi community.

Susan M. Preston's research and writing focus on culture-environment relationships, with particular attention to the expression of values and meanings. She is an adjunct scholar with McMaster University's Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition, where she completed a postdoctoral fellowship in conjunction with the Department of Anthropology.

Julian Rice has published extensively on the Lakota oral tradition. His books include *Lakota Storytelling: Black Elk, Ella Deloria and Frank Fools Crow* (1989), *Black Elk's Story: Distinguishing its Lakota Purpose* (1991), *Deer Women and Elk Men: The Lakota Narratives of Ella Deloria* (1992), and *Before the Great Spirit: The Many Faces of Sioux Spirituality* (1998). He has also written on film, with *Kubrick's Hope: Discovery and Optimism from "2001" to "Eyes Wide Shut"* (2008).

Brian Swann has published books of fiction, poetry, poetry in translation, and books for children, in addition to work in Native American literature. His latest books are *Born in the Blood: On Native American Translation* (ed., 2011) and *In Late Light* (poetry, 2013). He teaches at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York City.

Rand Valentine is professor of linguistics and director of the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has published a reference grammar of Odawa/Eastern Ojibway and a digital dictionary, with Patricia Ningewance, of Northern Ojibway. In 1998 he published *Weskî-Bmnaadzîjig Ji-Noondmowaad: "That the Young Might Hear": The Stories of Andrew Medler as Recorded by Leonard Bloomfield*.

Judith Vander has researched and written books about Wind River Shoshone music and culture for twenty years. Her books include *Songprints: The Musical Expertise of Five Shoshone Women* (1988) and *Shoshone Ghost Dance Religion* (1997). She is also a composer, and her *Powwow Suite for Organ and Flute* can be heard on Marjijn Thoene's CD *Wind Song*.

Dora Austin Wedge lives in Carcross, Yukon. She continues to transmit the oral traditions of her grandmother, Maria Johns, and often participates in public storytelling events.

Paul G. Zolbrod taught at Alleghany College for thirty years until his retirement in 1976. He continues to teach at the Crowpoint, New Mexico, campus of the Navajo Nation's Diné College as well as at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara. Among his works are *Diné Bahane: The Navajo Creation Story* (1984), *Reading the Voice: Native American Poetry in the Written Page* (1995), and, with Roseann Sandoval Willink, *Weaving a World: Textiles and the Navajo Way of Seeing* (2001).