

The Universe Is Our Holy Book by James D. Forbes

The Universe is our Holy Book
The Earth our Genesis
The Sky our sacred scroll
The Animals our teachers
The Mountains our prophets
The Winds our equations
The Birds our prayers
The Flowers our miracle
The Sun our source
The Moon our messenger
The Waters our testaments
The World our study
The Great Mystery our Grandfather and
Grandmother, indeed
Our Beginning and our End.

And it is said that
our Garden of Eden is
Elami hakimik
which is the entire world
and we have never
been expelled from it
for,
in the magic garden
of the Creator
we are living still
with all of our relatives
as the Old Ones say,
the four-leggeds
the winged ones of the air
and the creatures of the waters.

The philosopher-teachers of this Native
America,
The American philosophers,
tell us,
above all, they say,
we must be relative-like
with the Universe
and with all of the other
creatures
which are, together,

our Sacred Family.
And our Mother and Grandmother is the Earth
upon which we graze
upon whose breast,
it is said,
we suckle all of our lives
never being weaned

And our Father is the male
power, coming from the Grandfather-
side of the Great Mystery
nourishing us with the colossal
immensity of the Sky, of the Sun,
still also of male rain,
without which the Earth
could feed us not
and all would die.

And the Old Ones say:
look outward seriously
look inward intently
look outward carefully
look inward diligently
look outward respectfully
look inward humbly

The Old Ones say
outward is inward to the heart
and inward is outward to the center
because
for us
there are no absolute boundaries
no borders
no environments
no outside
no inside
no dualisms
no single body
no non-body

We don't stop at our eyes
We don't begin at our skin
We don't end at our smell
We don't start at our sounds

I can lose my legs
and go on living
I can lose my eyes
and go on living
I can lose my ears
and go on living
I can lose my hair
my nose
my hands
my arms
and go on living
but if I lose the water
I die
If I lose the air
I die
If I lose the Sun
I die
If I lose the plants and animals
I die
For all of these things
are more a part of me
more essential to my being
than is that
which I call "my body."

A mountain for seeking visions,
An ocean for getting dreams,
A lake of mirrors to give us names,
Sacred Circles surrounding us.