

Climate change

ni-capan, nosomis,
this is all I have to offer these days
when the *aski* - earth
suffers.

Our people have always known
the *aski* - earth talks.
It is best to listen.

Offer tobacco
to *mistassini*
Lay your ear,
your hand,
against the rock.
Listen.
She will share
how we think of her
as blind.
Yet,
like water-life
she sees through
the silk screen
of her closed eyelids.
Pebbles that children collect
giggle in their pockets.
Remember. This was once
you.

Offer tobacco.
Curl your body
around the trunk of
a *mitos* - tree.
Listen. She will tell you
how she breathes for us.
How her medicines
can restore your lungs.
She will show you
where you were born,
her many umbilical cords

rooted into the earth.
Generations of her children
reaching for their dreams.
Plant her babies.

Offer tobacco.
To the *iskotew* - fire. Feel her warmth.
Watch her dance. Know
she was the one who lit-up
when you were born.
She is the one who fuels
your love, your joy, your anger.
She encourages you
to use her with care.
Urges you toward your dreams.
She is the one
who speaks through
your eyes.

Offer tobacco.
To *nipi*, water.
The one we reach for
when the sun scorches
our breath. She will tell you
how she planted the seed
from your father's body,
travelled in the darkness
to gush from your
mother's womb. She will
ask for the droplets
that fall from the sky
to land on your tongue
as you dance in her rains.

Offer tobacco.
To *yotin*, wind.
She will sing, roar, murmur.
She carries all ancestors,
brings them to us,
the living soul
that we travel with.

She holds hands
with the earth, releases
waters, makes
room for fire when we
are delivered from the womb.

Offer tobacco.
Spread it in the garden,
where *aski*- the earth
waits
to greet
all of us.

These *ni-capan*, *nosomis*,
our grandmothers,
grandfathers, always work
together, hold their hands
to deliver
our lives.

Translations: *ni-capan*: great-grandchild *nosomis*: grandchild

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