

Akinoomaage Manidoo-giizis: Learning on the land from the land, the land as teacher in the 13th Moon (Spirit Moon)

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Abstract

In this arts-informed piece, I envision an encounter during the Spirit Moon. My Indigenous worldview reminds me that all things are interconnected in my culture as I move around the medicine circle in the physical world from the west to the north direction. Visioning our ways with *All My Relations*.

Keywords: Indigenous worldview; interconnectedness; medicine circle

Kimmage Manidoo-giizis

Nighttime at the lake lodge by Grandfather Rock. The fire begins a slow burn.

Light dancing faster now, flicker, flash, warmth. Watch shkode and learn.

Crackling giizhik, the spirits visit, first one, then two.

Waagosh calls, my brother, I smile and say “do you have to ask who?”

The stars ignite the sky above, reminding us of where we come from. Our connection to the star realm.

I count the circle of stones around shkode in our first language: bezhig, niizh, niswi . . . sadness, no longer can I count my teacher, the healing elm.

Nijji begins the drum beat, I listen, I learn, the heartbeat of our Mother. Asemaa. She is the Earth, do we care?

The sound of footsteps crunching snow crust coming closer, they stop as I hear the sound, louder now, the howl, not of wolf. I squint and stare.

The figure hidden in the darkness edge of the fire. Then gone, away.

Sabe?

Anishinaabemowin vocabulary:

Asemaa = tobacco

Bezhig = one

Giizhik = cedar

Nijji = friend/brother

Niizh = two

Niswi = three

Sabe = sasquatch

Shkode = fire

Waagosh = fox

Interpretation:

Akinoomaage, is the Anishinabek philosophy of land as teacher during the Spirit Moon. Learning from the land is a worldview often not valued in the mainstream schooling system. Art is in everything we do, in our moccasins, our identities, it moves us in holistic ways being

present and mindful. Manidoo-giizis is cold in January at the lodge (13 plates on Turtle's back, 13 moons), being away from the colonial confines (the constructs created) as the late Gatto (2005, 2009) might say "the strings that hold us like puppets" is good for the Spirit. After all, that is what we are – we are Spirits and when we meet the Creator in the Spirit World we will meet in our original languages, not the younger modern English tongue. The Grandfather Rock by the lodge has been around longer and observed more on the land than our physical human bodies can imagine, they hold knowledge like the quartz coins that western science is using to store data now. When we learn to make shkode (fire) it teaches us patience, we may learn more about ourselves in the process.

Giizhik (cedar) one of the four sacred medicines (tobacco, sage, sweetgrass) calls the Spirits. Our oldest teachers are the plants and animals, our brothers and sisters (All Our Relations) and Waagosh (fox) talks to me. At one time I was told, animals and people spoke the same language before contact with Europeans. We are connected with the Star Realm, our stories shared in winter often remind us of this. My kinship with the environment, is not always joy, sometimes it is pain shared when the environment is mistreated and looked at as a resource to be consumed. We need to take care of Mother Earth, reciprocity and stewardship (Pitt, 2022).

Walking the way of the sacred seven teachings, Honesty is always the hardest for many, each of the teachings usually connected with different animals. Sabe aligning with Honesty and a water protector. Sabe used to walk among us, perhaps one day he will return?

References

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