

Sqeltús: The Mountain



**Qiyenes re Mike Bowden, Secwepemc
Written by Mike Bowden
Kwellqiyenes re Kelsey Jules, Tk'emlups
Illustrations by Kelsey Jules**

**In Honour of the Day of Suwentwecw
Honouring the Role of Indigenous Knowledge:
Reconciliation through Recognition
April 6th, 2018**

There are hidden pictographs

in the illustrations

Can you find them?

Kye7e

Sla7a	(Sla-ah)	Grandfather
Kye7e	(Key-ya-ah)	Grandmother
Sqeltús	(Skell-toos)	Mountain

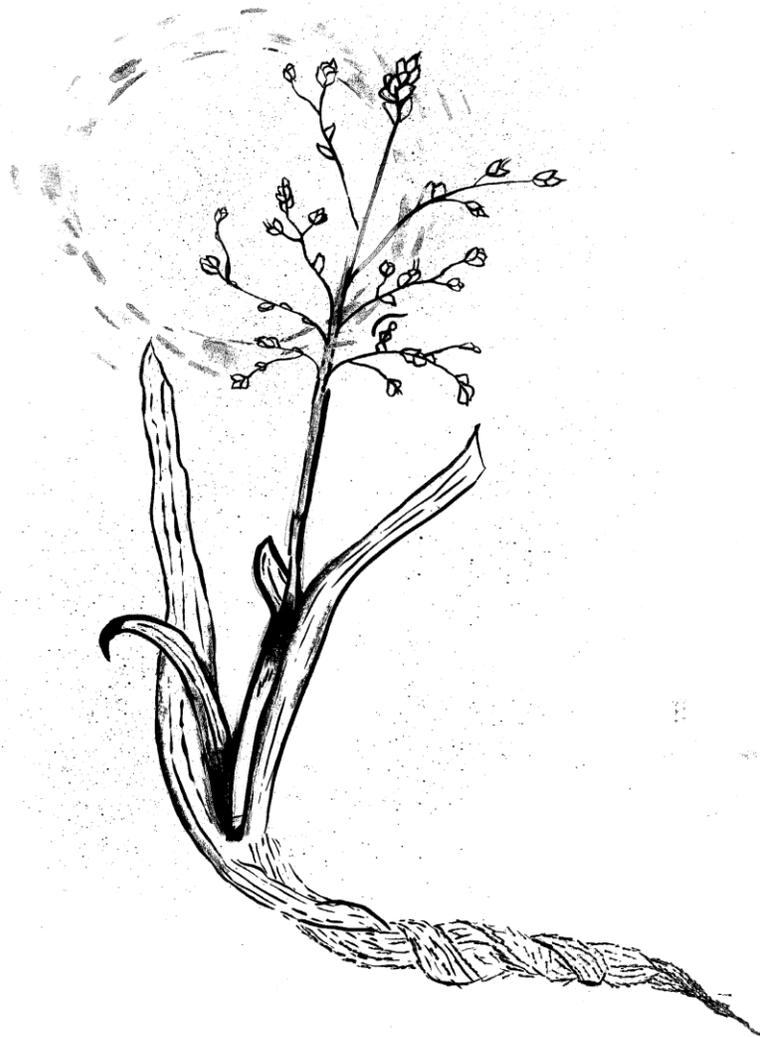


Sla7a and Kye7e sat by the creek surrounding the village fishing. They wondered why Salmon would not come to see them anymore and they were hungry. They looked at Crow who always sat on the other side of the creek calling to them, "Where have my people gone?"

Sla7a and Kye7e were scared of Crow and scared of the mountain. They heard stories about the people who used to cross the creek and go to the mountain.



One day the people stopped going and the path to the mountain disappeared, swallowed by the woods. Sla7a and Kye7e did not want to be swallowed by the woods. The people used to know how to travel on the other side of the creek safely, but Sla7a and Kye7e forgot those teachings. They were scared and they believed Crow was teasing them to make them cross the creek and be swallowed.



As Sla7a and Kye7e were wondering how they will get food and not starve, they found themselves standing in sweetgrass. They could smell the sweetgrass and it made them feel a little brave. They knew that sweetgrass could bend, but it never broke. Perhaps if they accepted their fear but not let it control them, they could bend but the fear would not break them.



Sweetgrass could see what Sla7a and Kye7e were thinking and Sweetgrass offered some of themselves to take. Sla7a and Kye7e took the gift from Sweetgrass and their fear felt cleansed from their minds. Crow did not seem so scary and they wanted to visit mountain.



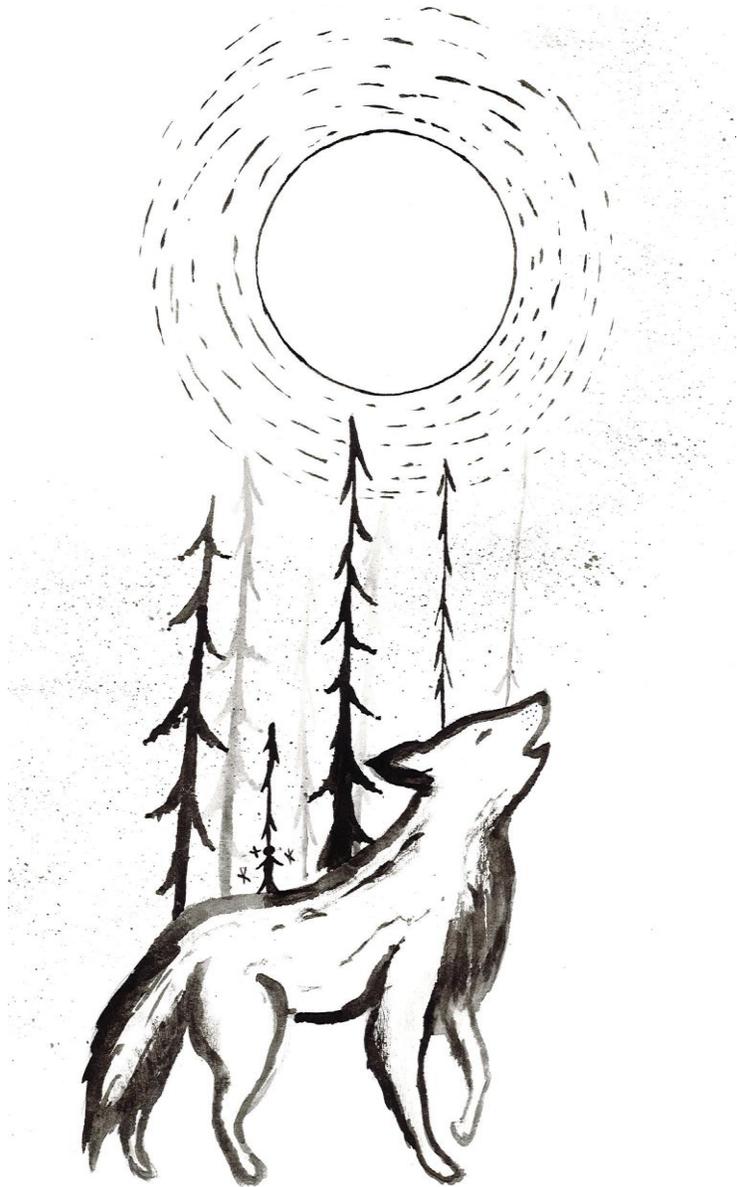
Sla7a and Kye7e walked to the edge of the creek and remembered they did not know how to swim. As they were looking into the water, Salmon swam up. They hadn't seen Salmon for a long time.



Salmon said, “Walk beside me and I will teach you to swim.” Sla7a and Kye7e held on to their sweetgrass to give them courage and got into the water. Salmon swam beside them and soon they learned to swim and saw the path to the other side. When they left the creek, they thanked Salmon and gave Salmon some of their sweetgrass as a gift.



Sla7a and Kye7e had more courage so they entered the woods. The woods were made of giant cedar trees. One of the cedar trees offered them some of their bark. Remembering the gift from Sweetgrass, Sla7a and Kye7e took Cedar's gift and immediately their emotions calmed.



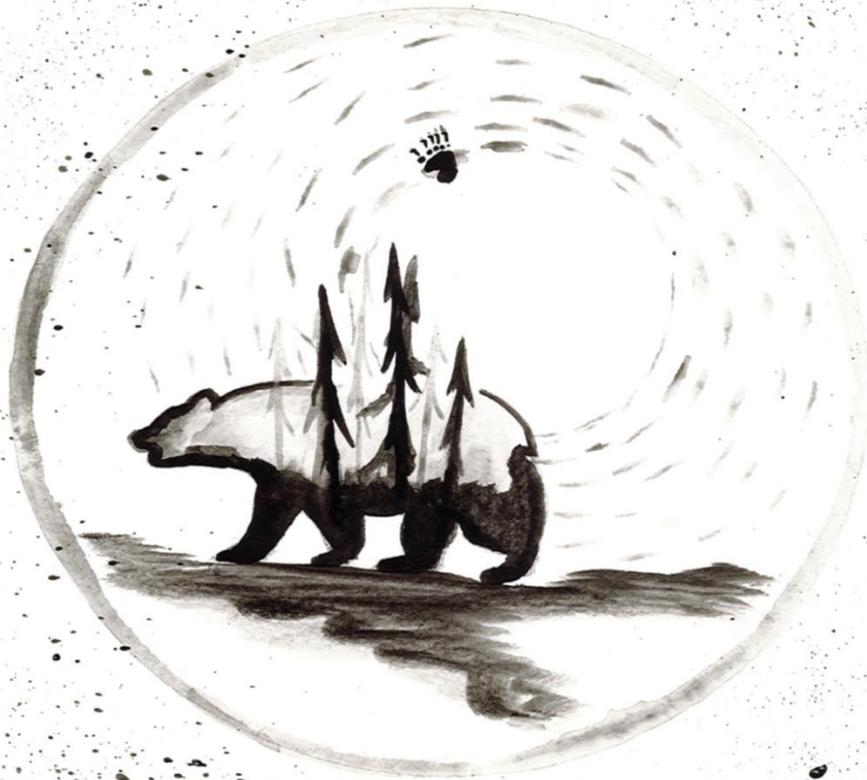
Sla7a and Kye7e were wondering how they would get through the woods. It was thick and they did not want to get lost and swallowed by everything. When they looked around again, they saw Coyote at the edge of the woods.



Coyote said, “Walk beside me and I will show you the path through the woods.” Sla7a and Kye7e held on to Cedar’s gift to calm their feelings and emotions and entered the woods. Coyote walked beside them and soon they could see the path through the woods. When they left the woods, they thanked Coyote and gave Coyote some of their cedar as a gift.



Sla7a and Kye7e stood on the bottom of a very steep hill leading up to mountain. They felt discouraged and wondered how they could get the energy and courage to climb. That is when they smelled the sage. Immediately they felt stronger and braver. They asked Sage, “Would you help us climb this mountain?” Because they asked with kindness and respect, Sage gave them some of itself to take with them. Sla7a and Kye7e held onto the sage gift and felt their energy and courage come back.



That is when Sla7a and Kye7e saw Bear. Bear looked strong, powerful and full of energy. “Walk beside me and I will share my energy and show you the path up the mountain,” said Bear. They accepted and walked beside Bear. They soon got to the end of the mountain path. They thanked Bear and gave Bear some of their sage as a gift.

At the top of the mountain, Sla7a and Kye7e could not see through the clouds. They could hear Crow still calling, “Where have my people gone?” But they could not see because of all the clouds. “We are here,” cried Sla7a and Kye7e!



No one could hear them except for Tobacco growing among the rich, warm mountain soil. “I can help you with a gift,” said Tobacco. You must promise that you will open your eyes, your minds and your spirits again to your relations and learn your path back your relations. Sle7e and Kye7e accepted the gift from Tobacco and made their promise. When they accepted the gift of tobacco leaves, immediately they knew their promise would be true.



That is when they heard Eagle. Eagle cried, “Close your eyes and walk beside me and I will show you the path to see.” They did and followed Eagle through the sky. Eagle’s wings swept away the clouds and showed them the path.

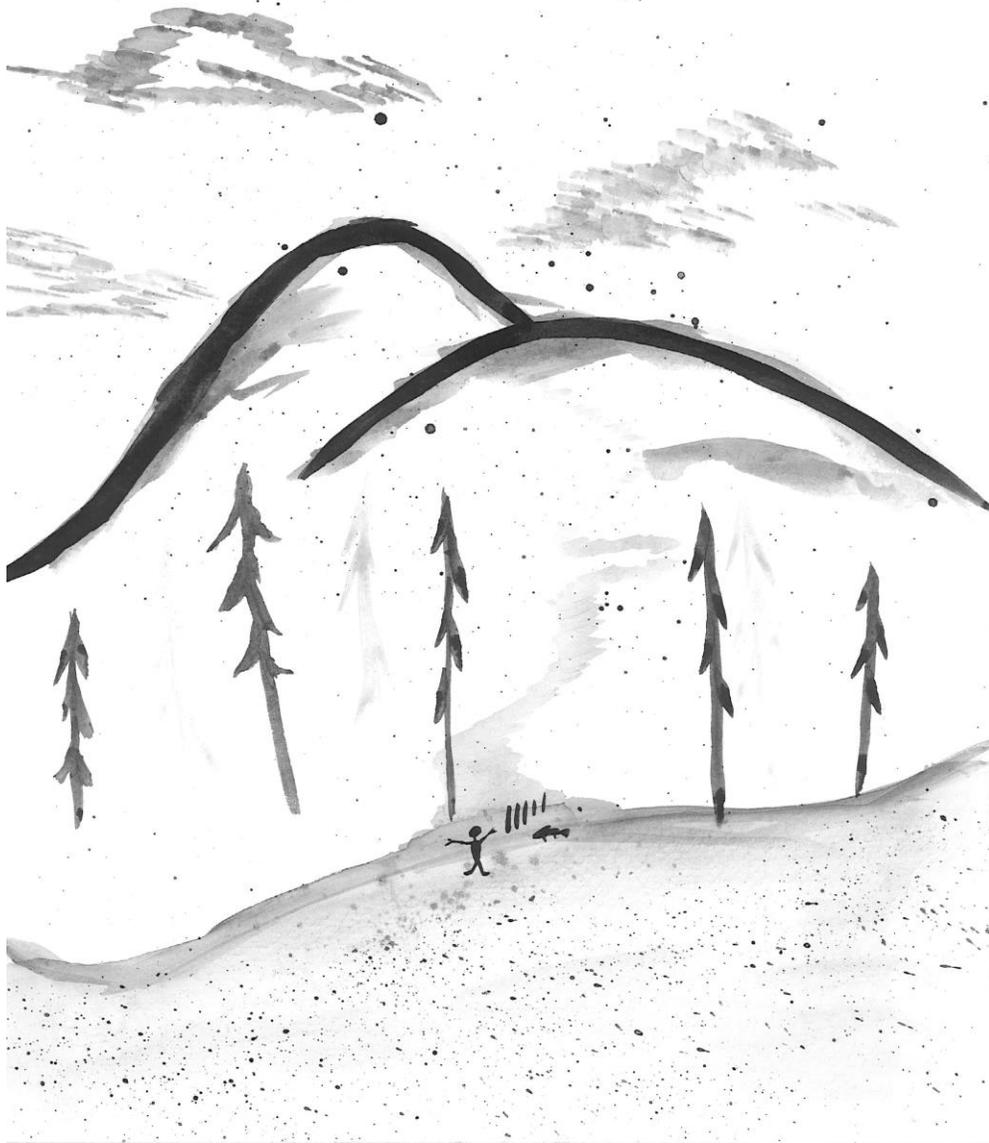
When they opened their eyes again, all the clouds were gone and Sle7e and Kye7e could see far, far away in all directions. Sle7e and Kye7e were standing on the top of Mountain.



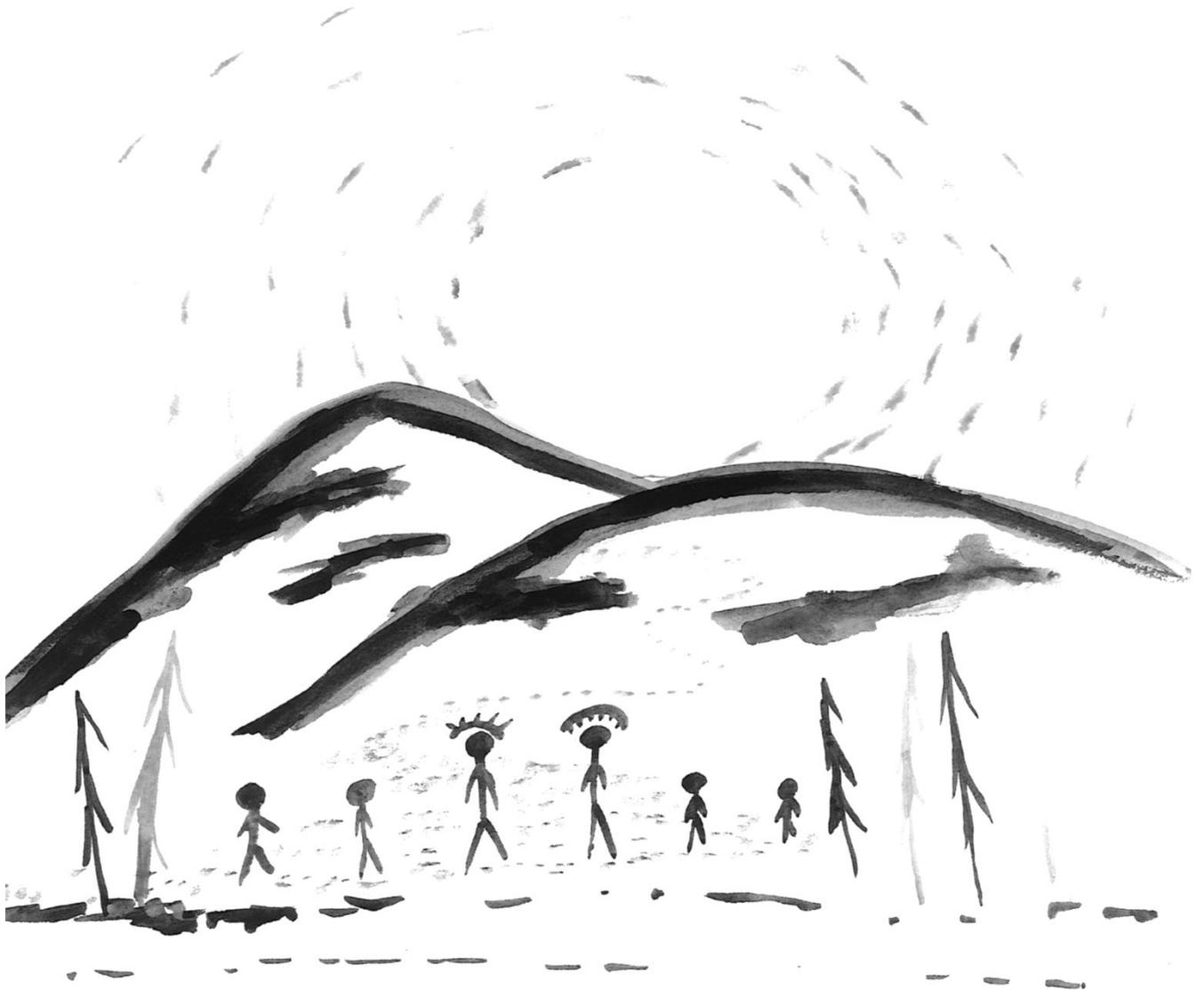
When they looked around they could see all the land surrounded by water. When they looked to the South they saw Salmon and waved. When they looked to the East they saw Coyote and waved. When they looked to the West they saw Bear and waved. When they looked to the North they saw Eagle and waved.



Sle7e and Kye7e called out to all of them and said, “We promise to lead our people back to the mountain to learn again and find our relations.” To bind their promise they took tobacco and scattered it in all four directions of the land. They knew then it would be true and binding.



When this was done, Crow appeared and said to Sla7a and Kye7e, “You have learned to accept gifts given with respect and you walked and learned beside your relations. You found the path to the mountain again and gained the knowledge to share with all your relations who have forgotten the way.”



Remember the lesson from Mountain. You will lose the knowledge of your relations if you do nothing because you are afraid. Your spirit and mind will go hungry and not remember who you are. So walk beside your relations again and honour our Indigenous knowledge and the mountain will not ask, “Where have all my people gone?” The people have come back, together with all their relations to honour our ways of knowing.



Copies may be reproduced for educational purposes without altering original text and recognizing the source.