

2022

An Ode to Water

Jamaar Smiley

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/sjsj>

Recommended Citation

Jamaar Smiley, *An Ode to Water*, 21 Seattle J. Soc. Just. 287 (2022).

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/sjsj/vol21/iss1/16>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications and Programs at Seattle University School of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Seattle Journal for Social Justice by an authorized editor of Seattle University School of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact coteconor@seattleu.edu.

An Ode to Water

Jamaar Smiley

The rivers twist and turn as distance burns a place within the banks

And the many greens that grow within, and life that pass from fish to fin,
now move through channels thick and thin 'til only few are known and hold
a face within the ranks

And now the face of Rivers burnt, move through the phases of live and
learn, and life that pass will miss a turn, and fishes skip the history with fire
water sipped as tea, and life we know would pass and flow as watered down
as tonic

At times the many greens that grow would filter life to clean the soul, the
River streams would team and glow to show the sky a scene of wonder,
clouds apart remain asunder, once equipped, we come legit, but now the
distance burns in numbers, and anything that lives in Thunder once was
Super Sonic

The city was our River

And it contained all the hopes and dreams that one desires

But each domain that filled with life and every pulse that moved the sky
was snatched up out the River, now the bank remains in fire

The city was our River

And we swam from West to South

But as the Gentry-fire spreads, we watch and stand powerless as the
pressure is applied through time

We are Chinook

We flow in droves, and leagues, and swarms to mold the caste of social norms from everything we think, believe, and breathe into existence

We are Chinook

Through ancestral planes before my birth, we bring life and soul to everything we touch

There would be no river without us

Because pain, and war, and segregation fuel the flames that light my spirit, and like a beacon from the night we dance, and praise, and sing 'til lobster, shrimp, and crab across the World and Nation hear it

And fish will come from leagues away in droves and swarms to show out

Once we get together, we shine bright as the Sun, and from Light comes Life, until the scavengers come

With their hidden agendas and passive aggression

As the starve at the basin, asking for lessons

And they haven't eaten in days, so we feed them

And they love what we've done to the place, how we look, how we eat, and how we act and they want to learn more from our ways, so we believe them

Now we just keeping it Old School, and feeding them Soul Food, acting in Goodwill, so they getting the clothes, too

And while we feeding them the soul, they still digging for some more, taking everything they can to give it back to they own kind

Because scavengers would never last, they survive off appropriation, and to them we're just a cultural Gold Mine

Now the River is in flames, but the fish ain't escaping

And we stuck at the bottom, spread out through the basin

So we climb through the ranks, or we crawl to the banks, and we watch as
the River goes through rearrangement

We are Chinook

We go hand in hand with live and learn to watch the Rivers' faces burn and
when the River falls we are the first to pay the homage

But as the River twist and turn, we live inside of mystery, and all will know
the history within the Rivers faces, face the fate of the Duwamish

The city was our River

And it flowed with grace through many seasons of the rain

Carrying the hopes of Sir-Mix-A-Lot and Jimi Hendrix

Mixed with Ezell's bones and the smooth tones of Quincy Jones as it roams
from the South End to the Central District

And it twist and turns into braids and locks, as Black Panthers parade the
blocks for Langston, Dixon, Medgar Evers- read The Facts to get the
weather or watch as we flow into pieces blended through the sound

Listen close, and you can hear the River cry

The broken heart of generations bleeds into every gas station and street
corner

Every high rise and subsidized housing building

Where each family has 5 to 6 mouths of children

Every token black kid in a private school

That is scared of embracing their pride and rule

Every bus that you take is a major pain

As it rolls through the hood, cause it ain't the same

All the places you go when the party was over
Got turned into CrossFit, Pilates and Yoga
All the summers we spent hooping 3 on 3
Cut short cause the hours at PCC
All these people locked up and they stuck for life
For the same bags they selling at Uncle Ike's
And the next block over they ask you what
Should we do about the place where Red Apple was?
But what about all the Salmon,
That swam to the damn in the distance while dipping and dodging the
planning?
Turning the currents and moving through wire and twisting and turning
while burning desire, inspired by Legions of Doom of the Century,
Empathy enters the river as mystery, mixing with Mr. Miyagi and old
teriyaki, and sake in pockets of Holly Street
Honestly, we let the fire defeat us
By helping the ember grow into a fetus
To feed us the flames of rivers and banks that crumble with pressure in time
And if we continue to fuel this flame, and not stand together to build on our
trust
Then all our pain and tears, through all these years, will be packaged and
sold at Starbucks