

# TAHLEQUAH

## TRIBUTE



Imagine  
by Thorly James





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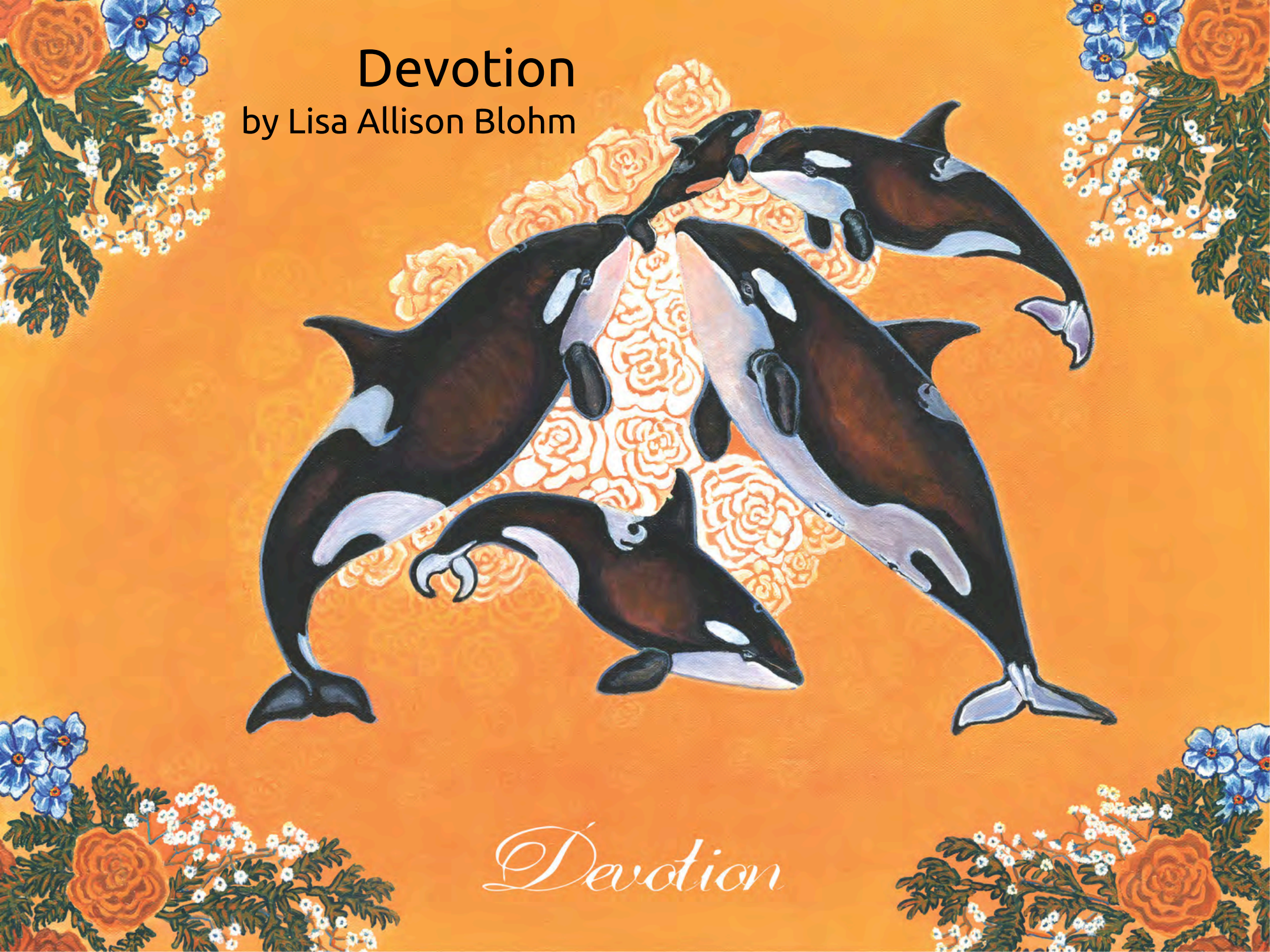
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# Devotion

by Lisa Allison Blohm



2018, Acrylic on canvas

**About the Art:** This is my depiction of the live birth of J35-Tahlequah's female calf, TiTahlequah ("little Tahlequah" in Salish language) ) born in July 2018 and survived for half an hour. Tahlequah is the Southern Resident Orca that carried her deceased calf for 17 days and over 1,000 miles through the Salish Sea on what many called "a tour of grief." Assisting J35 is her mother, J17-Princess Angeline and young J46-Star, daughter of J28-Polaris. Also close by his mom is her male calf J47-Notch. Since the painting also serves as a commemoration to the loss of the calf and her mother's devotion, I have included floral arrangements of Cedar Boughs, Cedar Roses, Baby's Breath, and Forget Me Not's. The White Roses surrounding mother and calf are symbolic in many ways, they were added to represent the beauty of Birth, Purity, Innocence, Sympathy, Spirituality, and Pure Love.



# We Know

by Lisa Allison Blohm

## *"We know"*

*Dear Tahlequah, once again we all see and feel your profound grief  
We know that J61's birth was a beautiful and precious event  
With help from family you brought this precious life into this world  
helped her to take her first breath*

*We know that the bond happened well before this,  
that it was fused in that moment, your love was all encompassing  
We know that you sensed something was wrong,  
when your calf's buoyancy and life slipped away  
you had to hang on for as long as you could to this precious soul  
So, you supported her and held her close on yet another tour of grief  
We are teary eyed witnesses to your unfathomable love and devotion.*

*We know it is without limits, it is transcendent.*

*We know that your clan lost 3 beautiful babies this last year,  
3 tragic deaths, we know these mothers are also grieving this loss  
we share in this grief too*

*We know we need to do more*







# Guided by Matriarchs

by Lisa Allison Blohm

2015, Acrylic on canvas

This Devotional/ Commemorative style work titled "Guided by Matriarchs" is dedicated to the Southern Resident Orcas mothers and the 3 calves they lost in 2024, now guided by matriarchs of the past, also gone to us.

*L47 Marina is at left with calf L128;  
J17 Princess Angeline is at right with calf J61 and  
J2 Granny is at bottom with calf J60*



# Orca J35 Sings to Her Dead Calf

by Tina Blade

I will move you gently through the long days  
of water I cannot move through without you.

I will push you before me like the moon,  
carry you through fog and muffled night.

When you slip, I will dive, catch, and lift you up  
to break again the broken surface against

the broken sky. I will push you in a silver wave  
before me, tell you each and every story

of clouds and kelp and waves and salt  
and fat salmon and stars—that would be ours.

I will carry you—my deepest joy of this  
sad water—deeper than the deepest water can go.

*NOTE: This poem honors the journey of grief orca Tahlequah (J35) took with her dead calf in 2018. After giving birth to the calf, which lived for only about 30 minutes, Tahlequah carried the calf's body for 17 days before finally letting it go.*

Tina Blade's work is featured in Best New Poets of 2023. A Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee, she currently lives in Duvall, Washington, in the Snoqualmie River Valley. Her poems have appeared in *Apple Valley Review*, *The Moth*, *Bracken*, *Sweet Tree Review*, *Mid-American Review*, and elsewhere. "Orca J35 Sings to Her Dead Calf" first appeared in *Sweet Tree Review*.





# Under the Sea

by Caroline Brugge

2014, charcoal

Everything in this mandala is a creature of the sea - from lionfish to manta rays, sea horses, jellyfish, octopus, coral and orcas.



can we meet beneath the sea?  
underneath our beliefs  
we are the same breed  
none of us evil at our core  
each of us wanting to feel safe and secure

when can we meet beneath the sea?  
does it have to get so bad before we can see?  
our pain our hurt our hoping for a better world  
crushed by the waves of reality

please can we meet beneath the sea?  
where we share our fears hopes and dreams?  
it might get painful scary and clear  
to sit with the source of our suffering

how can we meet beneath the sea?  
i wish i had an answer  
can we learn together?

- caroline brugge





## Be Her Voice

by Jen Bowen  
2025

**Artist note:** J61's passing is heartbreaking, but the global attention her story has drawn is a chance to speak up for her and the Southern Residents. We must lift her up along with Tahlequah—be her voice and push for change!





**Killer Fun**  
by Kris Buenger  
2023  
acrylic

**Artist note:** I was inspired by the Orcas that swim into Depoe Bay, Oregon every year.



# Take Out the Dams

by J-51, Nova  
aka Ed Chadd,  
North Olympic Orca Pod

I'm J-51, they call me Nova,  
I'm black, and I'm white, and I'm shiny all ovah!

My mother's number 41,  
They call her Eclipse, because she outshines the sun!

I'm a growing boy, and I live on chinook,  
But when there's no fish to eat, I get that lean and hungry look!

You formed a task force to solve our situation,  
But when push came to shove, you got stuck in hesitation!

You say you took steps so in the long run we'll get fed  
But what's the point, if in the short run we're all dead?

There's one simple step you coulda' took:  
You could get us a school of Snake River chinook!

They swim to the Arctic and they get so fat,  
Then some take the inside passage, on their way back.

That inside passage, it's called the Salish Sea,  
It's where we call home—my relations and me.



Others come back by way of the ocean,  
And we fish out there too, when we get a good notion.

Those Snake River Kings make the best salmon steaks,  
But their smolts gotta'migrate downfour dammed-uplakes!

Those lakes are hot, they're stagnant and exposed,  
A lot of fish die from allthe dangers they pose!

Those lakes were formed by the Snake River dams,  
And everyone knows that they're the big jams!

So with that knowledge, why don't people act?  
It looks like money talks more than plain old facts!

The profits are private, the government's skinned,  
We'd do a lot better building solar and wind!

So get this straight: If to save us is your vow,  
Enough with focus groups ... Just breach those dams NOW!!!



# What They Might Know

by Ed Chadd

Today while hiking in the snow I saw a mouse track.  
It crossed from a little hole on one side of the trail to a little hole on the other.  
I stopped for some time musing about what story lay in that track.  
Down the trail, I wondered if the little critter was cowering in there while I mused,  
If its cortisol levels or heart rate had risen,  
Whether I might have impacted its survival.  
We are, after all, so clueless in so many ways,  
And other critters might know so much more about us than we know about ourselves.  
I know it's a conceit, but I wonder if something like that is on Tahlequah's mind,  
Carrying her second cold orca baby on a mourning tour around the Salish Sea.  
Tahlequah knew Granny, who had witnessed the whole arc of colonization here,  
From endless forests and salmon to relentless chainsaws and bulldozers.  
Would Granny not have found a way to tell that story?  
Do the orcas carry the grief for our clumsy footprints?

Tahlequah &  
Tokitae Vigil  
Banner  
Alfe Pasquale





# After Reading About the Orca and its Calf

by Patricia Clark

Maybe it isn't saltwater  
that heals—

my mother's theory—

but the mere going down  
to the sea, removing your shoes,

a way of humbling yourself

before forces larger than,  
deeper than, stronger than.

Once I body-surfed in Lake Superior.

When a wave smashed me,  
I crawled out of the water.

Maybe it isn't that we're cruel—

if we believe that all the other  
creatures hurt too, what a weight

of grief. I regret killing the spider

on the gray dashboard of my car.  
It looked for a home—

*The Seattle Times* said the orca carried her  
calf for a week, refusing to let the dead thing

go. Finally she let the sea take it.





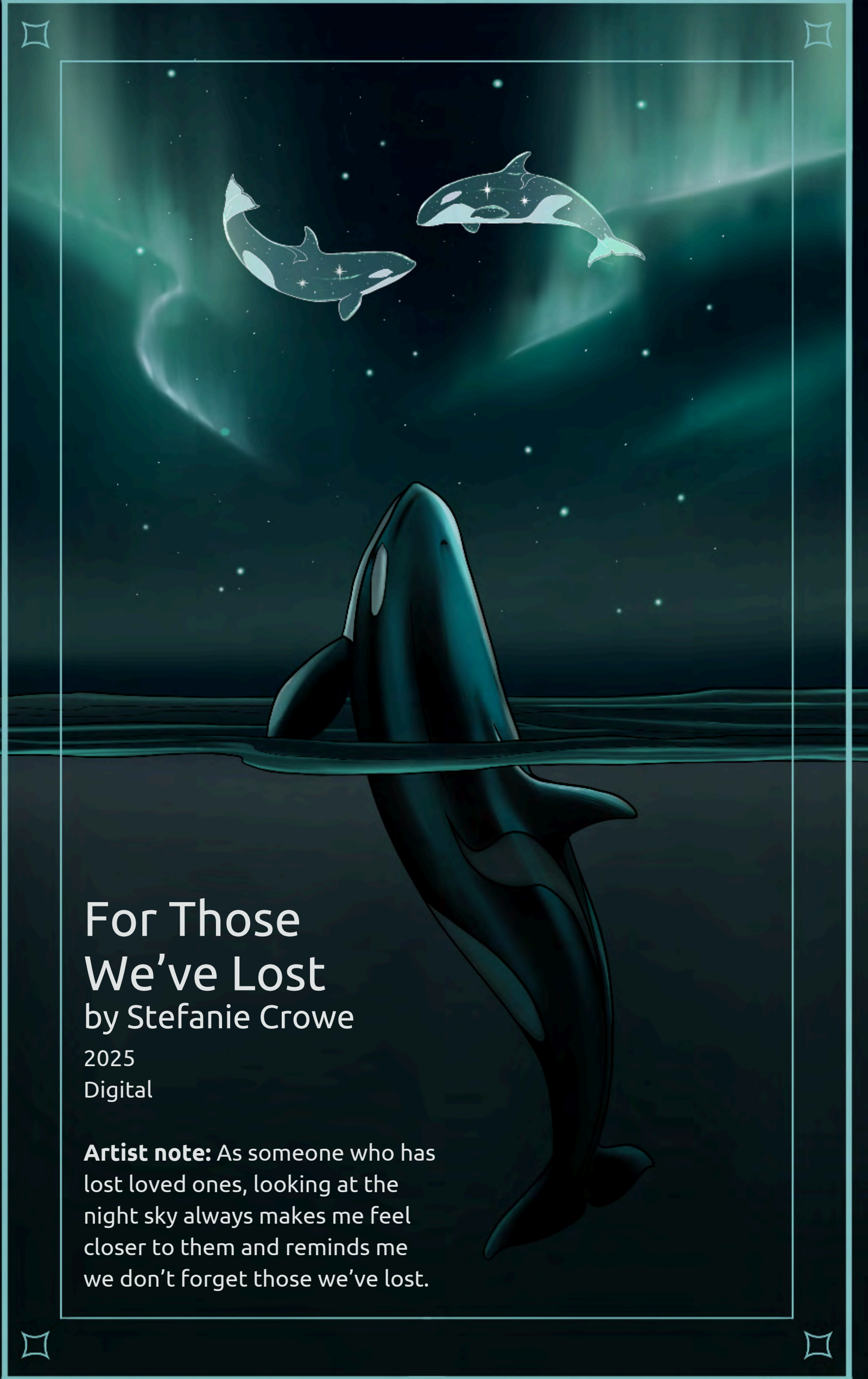
# Tribute to Tokitae

by Lauren Churchill

2024, oil on wood

I was moved by a workshop I did in 2022 on the capture of the juvenile Orcas in 1970 at Penn Cove. I followed the progress of efforts to bring her home and mourned her loss when she passed. This painting came through as I processed this and felt solidarity with those who feel her loss even more deeply than I.



A digital artwork featuring a large orca in the foreground, looking upwards. In the background, two smaller orcas are depicted in the sky, their bodies filled with stars. The sky is dark with a green aurora borealis and scattered stars. The entire scene is framed by a thin white border with decorative corner elements.

# For Those We've Lost

by Stefanie Crowe  
2025  
Digital

**Artist note:** As someone who has lost loved ones, looking at the night sky always makes me feel closer to them and reminds me we don't forget those we've lost.





# Baby Orca

by Sue Frank Coccia

2025  
pen, ink, acrylics

I was having a visit from my mother (who has passed) she loved Forget-Me-Nots, the little blue flowers, and I thought of the Baby how we must not forget weaving through her and around her.





## In Search of Salmon

Leanne Dahlquis  
2024, paper collage

I made this piece to call attention to the hardships our Orcas face due to our negligence in our care for our earth. We live in such a beautiful place, here in the PNW. We need to look beyond our human needs and consider the ecosystems we are destroying with our carelessness.





# Tahlequah and her Spirit Calves

by Fiorella Josephine De La O  
2025, pencil and crayon

This artwork honors Tahlequah, the Southern Resident orca, and her profound journey of grief and love. Sea lanterns illuminate her sorrow, representing the collective empathy and hope of those who share her story. The salmon, a symbol of the Pacific Northwest, remind us of the urgent need to protect the Chinook salmon that sustain the Southern Residents. Within the eye of the spirit orca, Tahlequah's two calves reside in the spirit realm, forever remembered by her and all who carry her story in their hearts.



# The Nagging Itch

by Evelyn V. Jackson

Salmon swims upstream, fights the current.  
Deep inside her DNA, a memory  
nagging as an itch she can't scratch,  
pushing her further, harder, an obsession.

Deep inside her DNA, a memory  
embedded in a double-helix chromosome  
pushing her further, harder, an obsession  
that only reaching her birthplace will satisfy.

An embedded double-helix chromosome  
that holds an ancient unrealized memory  
that only reaching her birthplace will satisfy,  
only then will memory become reality again.

Tiny pearlescent orbs waiting inside push  
Salmon to swim upstream, fight the current.  
Desperate to be spawned, is their DNA  
is the nagging itch she can't scratch?



# Pod of Orcas

by Anee-Lise Deering  
2022  
cold cast bronze

**Artist note:** This medal was created in relation to the concerns about the survival of the orcas in the Pacific Northwest, their impact on the environment and our fragile ecosystem.





# Angel Calves

by Adriana Diaz

2024, digital art



# J35

## Tahlequah

+ her 2 angel calves

*Adriana Diaz*

**About the Art:** Learning about J35 “Tahlequah” and her calf, J61, broke my heart. What hurt even more was realizing that so many people don’t know this is happening. Living where these incredible animals call home, I felt compelled to spread awareness about how human actions are impacting our oceans.

This piece is a tribute to Tahlequah and her calves, who I like to imagine now swim alongside her. I hope this artwork not only honors their story but also sheds light on the struggles faced by the Southern Resident Orcas. My wish is to inspire change and encourage others to help protect these magnificent creatures.



# Letter to My Sister from the Backyard

by Suzane Edison

I'm lying in a hammock a month after  
the orca Tahlequah birthed her stillborn calf  
bearing it on her nose 1000 miles,

her pod swimming alongside like a Shiva,  
before letting it sink.

I remember my mother folding baby clothes,  
colorful as heart-shaped Valentine's candies.  
The onesies lay stacked for weeks  
in my childhood bedroom,

before she returned them to a drawer.  
For months she eddied in loss, women whispered  
in our kitchen or late nights on the phone.

They creaked like branches rubbing ceaselessly against each other.

\*\*\*

Now, in these knotted, fraying strings, I cradle muteness.  
The only psalm, a motor-less whirr  
of blades as my husband mows a tapestry

of stark, green swaths flecked with dandelion's shocked heads:  
a field-spray of prayer flags. No afterbirth  
to fertilize the birch tree.



\*\*\*

If only the crowpreening its slick self  
on the wire over my head could lend me  
its bird's eye view. If only *as the crowflies*

was the way through this mourning forest; instead  
my flapping in trial and error.

Maybe there is only one practice: not like Sarah prostrated  
in the desert beseeching God to fill her womb,

but the language of gift; the way I trade peanuts  
with the crow for a gold bead, a red paper clip, and last week,  
the half shell of a robin's blue egg, missing

its hairless, curled remains



# Toki, L25, L128, J61

by Jennifer Godfrey

Reclaimed cardboard and paint

**Aritst note:** Trees are nature's bioremediators and bioretainers, filtering and reducing polluted stormwater runoff. According to NOAA, pollution is one of the SRKWs to three threats.







# We are Sorry Tahlequah

by Sabina Vasudevan, Fiona Hale & Evelyn Wood

5th grade students from Pacific Crest Montessori School

2025, Mixed Watercolor Image Collage on Acrylic

5th grade teacher **Erin Gubelman** submitted this art piece for the girls who want to raise awareness and help save our resident orcas. "This work is entirely their own creation, representing all the members of J pod and Tahlequah carrying her second baby."





©Amy Gulick

# Sympathy Card

by Amy Gulick



With Love  
by Britt Freda

2025  
acrylic, gold leaf  
and graphite  
on birch panel  
84" x 48"





# I Make a Wish For Her

by Ingrid Hugo

At first all I see is the small body, the lifeless soul, and then  
I see her burdened heart  
I see she won't let go, her love too strong  
I see she gave all she could yet it was not enough  
Its nature I tell myself  
But is this really how it is supposed to go?  
I see her pain I see her grief and so I make a wish for her  
I wish our screeching voices wouldn't mask her desperate sounds  
Her pleading calls for life,  
Going unanswered  
I wish I could stop us,  
From stretching our long toxic fingers till we grasp her skin  
Sinking, seeping, slowly killing  
Forcing her to pass down the burden  
Of our unforgiving lies  
I wish I could revive the snake that holds the key to her hunger  
Make the salmon split three ways not two  
I wish she could spent her time living and loving, breathing and playing  
Instead of searching, searching always hunting for the ghost of a big enough meal  
I wish I could take her pain,  
But really I know she needs it to heal  
And to prove to us  
I wish I could show the world what we don't know  
that within her is  
The salt of gently swaying kelp  
The fulfilling nutrients of a dead salmon  
The soft rhythm of the tide  
The life of so many  
Because when she breathes, she breathes the ocean  
Its blanket of life woven around her, in an unrepeatable pattern  
I wish I could help her  
I wish I could stop us  
I wish you would listen  
The sun rises and the sun falls  
Day after day she is strong  
The matriarch, cannot give up  
From the tip of her head to the end of her fluke I know she will tryTry for for her  
family, her pod, her life, her ocean, her world  
It is all she has  
If only we could see that.





# Play Time

by Brennah Hammer

2025

Acrylic

Tahlequah enjoying a moment  
with her two deceased calves.

BN





# Orca Salmon Lifecycles

by Linda Hanlon

2025  
Gouache and digital

**Artist note:** Our resident orcas need more, big, fat Chinook salmon!





# Orca and the Mountains

by Linda Hanlon

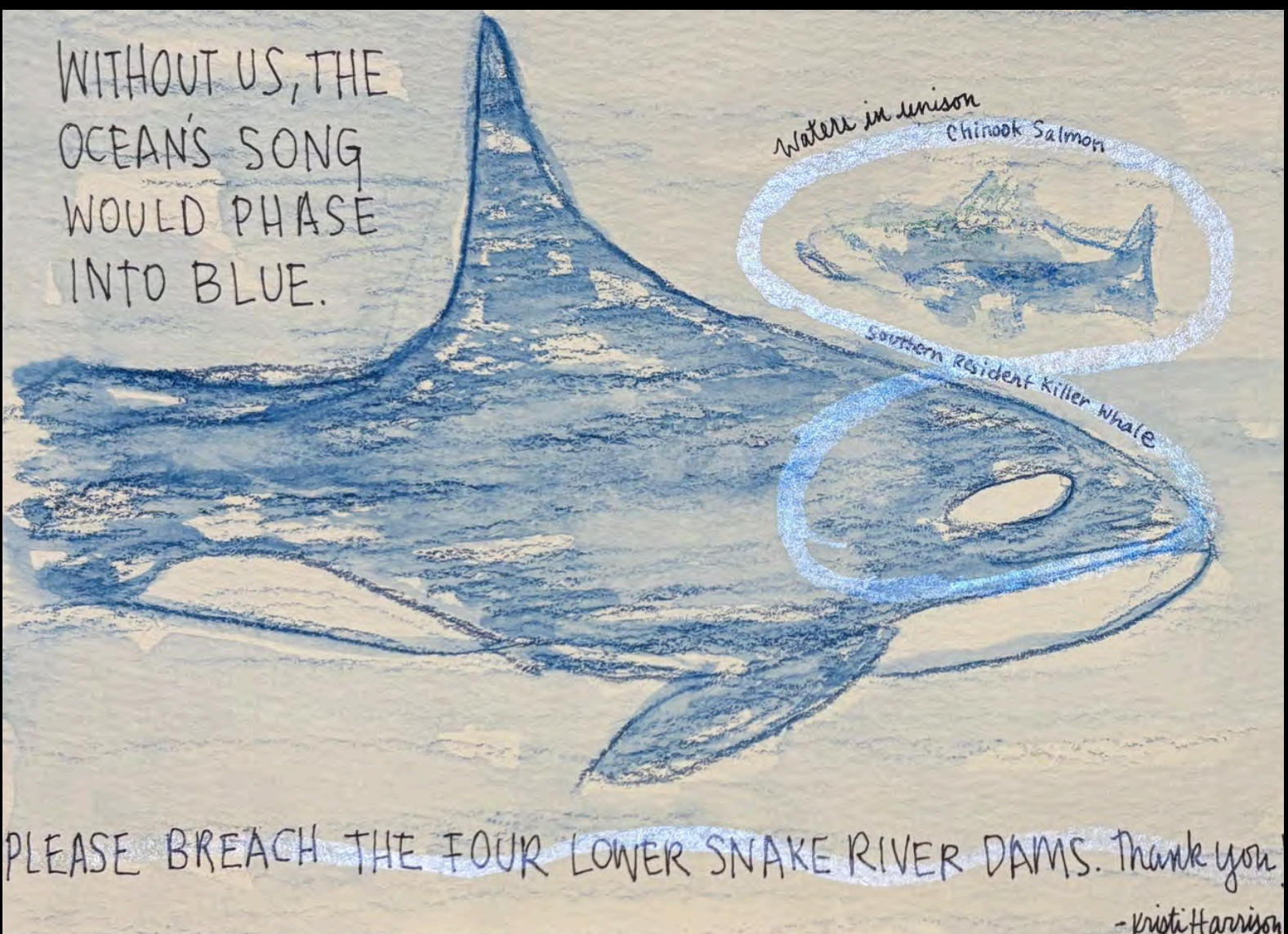
2020  
Gouache on wood panel

**Artist note:** Because being wild and free, and with family is where they belong.



# Heart of a Flowing River

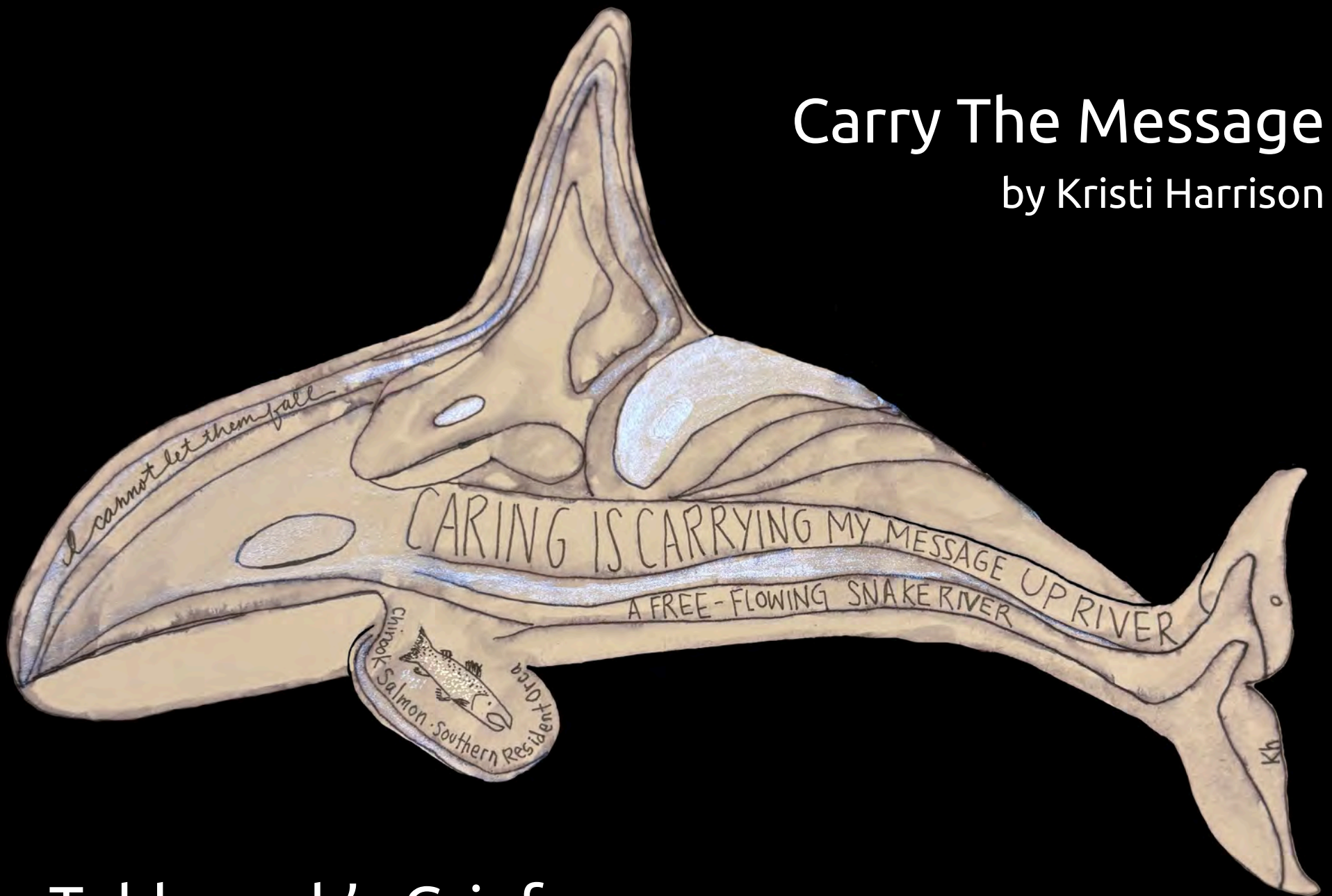
by Kristi Harrison





# Carry The Message

by Kristi Harrison



## Tahlequah's Grief

by Richard Meadows

It was Tahlequah who carried her dead calf for 17 days and a 1,000 miles. A long length of moments observed by many humans causing a boundary-crashing entry into empathy, in which a large portion of humanity was connected as Tahlequah's story became news to millions.

A plight of a mother and of  
the coming peril of people  
if they don't get with  
a  
new way of being that is ancient to this mother,  
swimming with a deep knowledge, who  
understands why bad things have happened.

She, a key member of her pod, that wants to  
do nothing more than eat abundant salmon, give birth, breach for joy, and be  
an  
orca.





# Lost to the Stars

by Jade

2025  
Prisma colour

**Artist note:** May we witness the loss of these Sacred Beings and know we are needed now. May we hear the cries of the silent ones and become their voices. Made in honour of Tahlequah and all Mothers who have children in the stars.



# Towards Harmony

by Jade

When you feel the pain of the Earth  
deep in your body that is a part of her,  
And it stings your heart that is both yours and hers;  
That is the first step.

When you know and see our human ways are hurting her,  
ourselves and each other and it feels like it's all too much;  
Know there is a better way.

When that way feels too hard, too far;  
something you can only see in the distance  
on the other-side of a precipice;  
And you fall to your knees and grieve;

Do not sit with your pain and weep at the edge of a cliff.  
Rise, tears falling like light from your eyes,  
and become the Bridge to the Otherside.

Go ask the whales;  
Where are the answers your children cry out for,  
Who has the power to free the salmon?  
Go ask the forest;  
What vines are choking it,  
What saplings are fighting each other for light,  
What branches are heavy and dragging down tired trunks.  
And from the vines;  
Weave a rope.  
From the branches;  
Build a Bridge;  
One step at a time  
Towards Harmony





# Imagine

by Thorly James

2024  
ceramic sculpture and  
kintsugi-inspired repair  
with metal leaf



# Imagine

by Thorly James

2024  
ceramic sculpture and  
kintsugi-inspired repair  
with metal leaf



Some of the philosophy of kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending with gold, is to integrate brokenness with beauty. Kintsugi encourages us to repair rather than discard.

I made this trio several years ago to honor J35 Tahlequah and her calf whose body she carried for 17 days, as well as four year old J50 Scarlet who also died that season. I dotted their metallic-glazed ceramic skin with crystal rhinestones to evoke stars or twinkling water droplets.

The trio shattered last year when I was setting up a display and a shelf collapsed. As I gathered up the pieces, I felt the sudden congruence: Tahlequah's heartbreak, that I'd put my heart into this work, and that my heart was broken too.

I spent months putting the pieces back together. I meditated on our need to imagine a future where our grandchildren's grandchildren, human and whale alike, are thriving, a future with plenty of salmon, clean air and water, and safe places to live. I hope humanity will see themselves reflected in the glazed surfaces and through the gaze of these whales and do what it takes to bring about the future we imagine.



# Say Their Names

by Amanda Kelly

2025

There are two named species,  
by which I mean each has their own.  
Ours, by which I mean human,  
and this specific family of orca.  
Southern residents, fourteen of seventy-three left,  
unlikely to survive much longer.  
We current homo, human. dwellers,  
are starving them to death,  
damming. damning  
Denizens, Cascadia. Salish Sea,  
continent's jagged edge, northwestern.  
Here is the nature of things.

Black and white bodies,  
theirs and ours, family.  
The jails, the plastic, what wars we fund.  
Golf courses watered,  
mountains burning.  
the list goes on and on,  
this grief and that heartbreak,  
the impossible possible summit of every day.  
When we look in the mirror  
what lies before us.

Still, there is visible from the terminal  
this bright morning Tahoma,  
mother of waters, volcano.  
Snow peaked, about to blow.



Here. Tahlequah, Cherokee  
for two is enough.  
Tahlequah, named mother Orcinus,  
killer, whale, relative,  
pushes the bodies of her dead calves,  
on her head for days.

How in our grief her name became known,  
how she sliced through salt water,  
the faces of her children, shining.  
How some survive yet,  
how all hope is not lost.

What it takes to stay in it, people,  
what we are going through,  
the courage to keep swimming,  
what we are, in fact, doing  
with our singular, familiar,  
wild and precious  
lives.

***Amanda Kelly** is a poet, essayist, activist and mother of five beautiful (and grown) children living on Vashon Island in the Salish Sea. She has been published in Soundings East, Arnazella, Cranky and was twice awarded the Marcia Doehner Award for Poetry at the Marblehead Festival of Arts. Her poem Morning Regret was the South Seattle Festival of Words and Art winner in 2008. Recent work can be found in Pivot & Pause: A Poetry Anthology of Resilience, Remembrance and Compassion edited by Azure Antoinette, Open Space's the Literary Project Volume 6 2021, and Fishtrap's Fall 2022 Circle of Seasons. Two of her poems about the Anthropocene can be found in 2024's The Nature of Our Times: Poems on America's Lands, Waters, Wildlife, and Other Natural Wonders, originally envisioned to be a companion to the First National Nature Assessment anthology and forthcoming in Fall 2025 from Paloma Press in collaboration with Wick Poetry Center at Kent State University and Poets for Science.*





# Tahlequah's Love

by Sarah Koten

2025  
acrylic

This painting was made in honor of Tahlequah's life and love for her offspring. In the style of stain glass as a way to commemorate the spiritual aspect of nature and its deep connection to all living things.





Sending Love  
to Tahlequah  
by Robin Koontz  
2025  
fabric and raw edge quilting



# Leaping Toward Recovery

by Leslie Kreher

2024  
Colored pencil

The leaping salmon and orca depict the circular ecology of these two iconic species in the Pacific Northwest. When salmon thrive, so do orca.

## **Artist notes:**

As an artist activist, I have been working toward the removal of the Snake River dams for many years in an effort to save both salmon and orca.





# Tahlequah

by Starr Levesque

I wonder on what day  
The other mothers  
Told her to put it down -  
The body Of her dead baby

I wonder if she gave up carrying her  
By choice or exhaustion

Does she know it was us  
Who caused it?  
Is that why she holds her up  
Above the surface  
To show us what we have done?

The March of Grief  
They are calling it  
Carrying the body of the first  
For 17 days  
Now already on day 11  
For the second  
With no end in sight

I wonder on what day  
The other mothers  
Started holding her too -  
So she could feed or rest

Which one was it  
Who tried to convince her  
Begging not to do it again -  
Too unbearable, this,  
To carry

And while I,  
Who has never lost a child  
I, who am only beginning to learn  
The powers of my own anguish  
Take heed of this lesson-

Grieve as spectacle  
Do not suffer in silence  
Grieve the depths of the ocean floor  
When whales cry  
Where do their tears go?



# A Cry For Help

by Dawn Nocuñ

Majestic and beautiful creatures  
Deserving to be wild and free,  
And for this one special mama  
All she wants is her babies alive and to just be able to be.

But in a heartbreaking act  
For the world to see,  
She cries out for help  
And pushes them thousands of miles throughout the sea.

It shouldn't be this way  
They should be able to just exist,  
It's our turn to act  
Remove the dams and restore the fish.

We see you Tahlequah  
We see you in all your might,  
Your tour of grief  
Has inspired us all to fight.

Be apart of the change  
It's time to do the right thing,  
We can't stay silent anymore  
Action is what we need to bring.





Rebecca LiPuma

**Artist note:** I created this piece to represent nature's natural cycles and the importance of balance. In the center of this piece I drew an orca on top of what feels to me like just a shell of another orca. This represents the feeling of grief that comes with losing a loved one. Animals are not that different than you and me. They feel things, they hurt, they grieve. It is through these emotions that we can connect to other beings, even those of a different species. The salmon circle around the orcas represents the need for stability in nature. Nature requires balance. And without this balance, everything falls apart. The circle also represents the need for community. By working together, we can be the solution. The solution becomes simple when we all work together to restore the balance that nature craves.

## Grief and Rebirth

Becca LiPuma

2025

Digital drawing



# Divine Mother

by Ma  
2025, watercolor



## Artist note:

My tribute to Tahlequah ....  
How strong this wonderful  
Matriarch is, painted with a  
powerful connection that  
embodies the essence of  
Higher Power! She is pure  
Love 💙. It was like stepping  
into the biggest motherly hug  
of loving care and  
protection.... I wanted to  
show her beautiful baby girls  
by her side and included a  
special reiki sigil that  
represents the power of The  
Divine Mother, realigning  
chakras to overcome grief and  
promote healing. I send this to  
her daily. Painted with crystal  
mineral paints, cruelty-free  
paper, synthetic brushes, and  
loads of love, light, and reiki.  
11x14 mounted and framed in  
bright white.





# Treasure Them

by Ma4theoceans

2024, mixed media

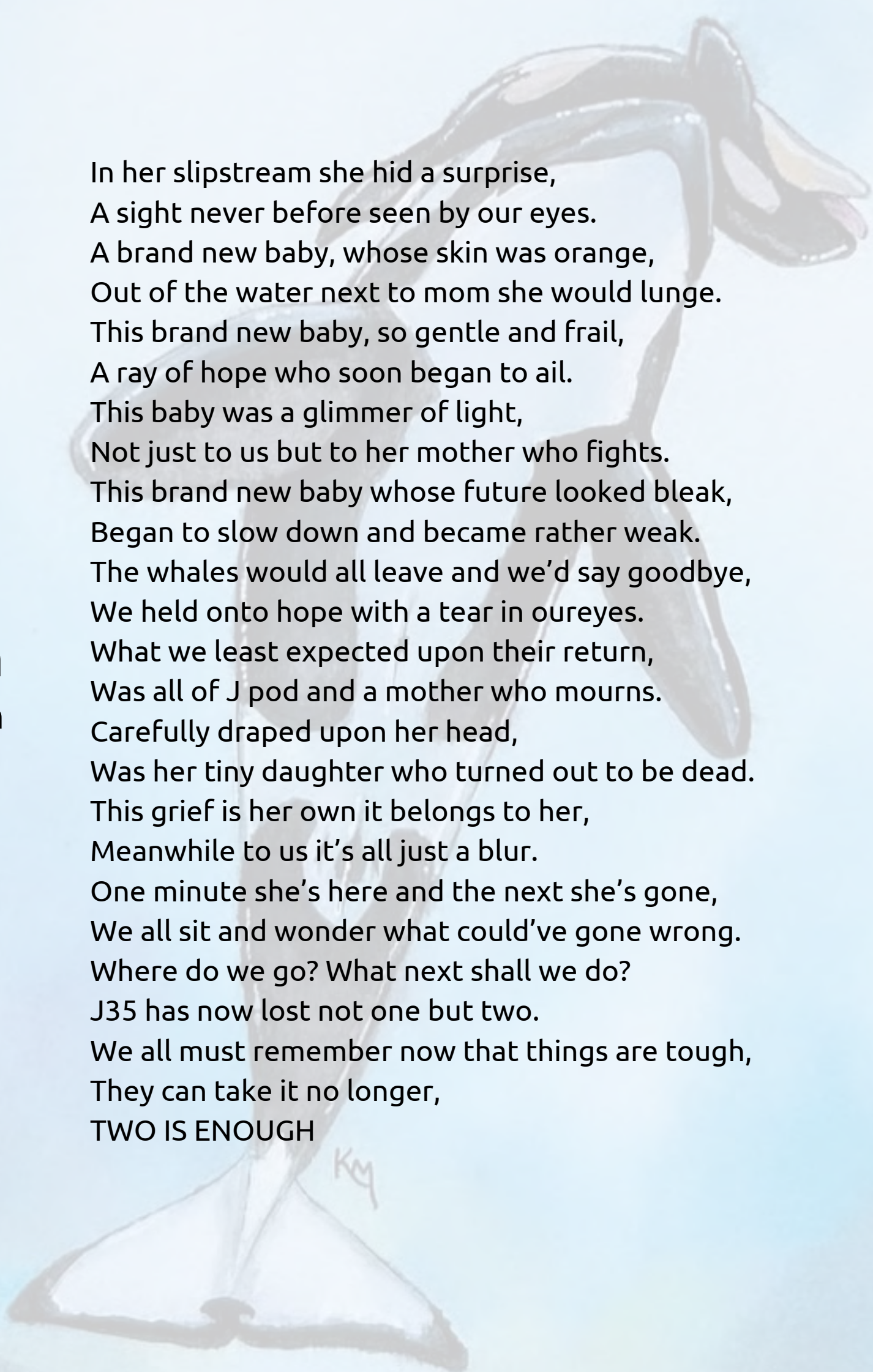
**Artist note:** This art piece comes from my intuitive connection with these beautiful endangered beings. "Treasure them" shows the struggle of The Southern Resident Killer Whales to survive due to the lack of Chinook salmon exacerbated by The Snake River dams and what humans should be doing to treasure orcas.

All my art is painted with cruelty-free paints brushes and paper, each same is donated in full to Ocean charities that are trying to help The southern residents I take nothing for time, or supplies.



## Two is Enough

by Kat Martin



In her slipstream she hid a surprise,  
A sight never before seen by our eyes.  
A brand new baby, whose skin was orange,  
Out of the water next to mom she would lunge.  
This brand new baby, so gentle and frail,  
A ray of hope who soon began to ail.  
This baby was a glimmer of light,  
Not just to us but to her mother who fights.  
This brand new baby whose future looked bleak,  
Began to slow down and became rather weak.  
The whales would all leave and we'd say goodbye,  
We held onto hope with a tear in our eyes.  
What we least expected upon their return,  
Was all of J pod and a mother who mourns.  
Carefully draped upon her head,  
Was her tiny daughter who turned out to be dead.  
This grief is her own it belongs to her,  
Meanwhile to us it's all just a blur.  
One minute she's here and the next she's gone,  
We all sit and wonder what could've gone wrong.  
Where do we go? What next shall we do?  
J35 has now lost not one but two.  
We all must remember now that things are tough,  
They can take it no longer,  
TWO IS ENOUGH



# *Two Is Enough*

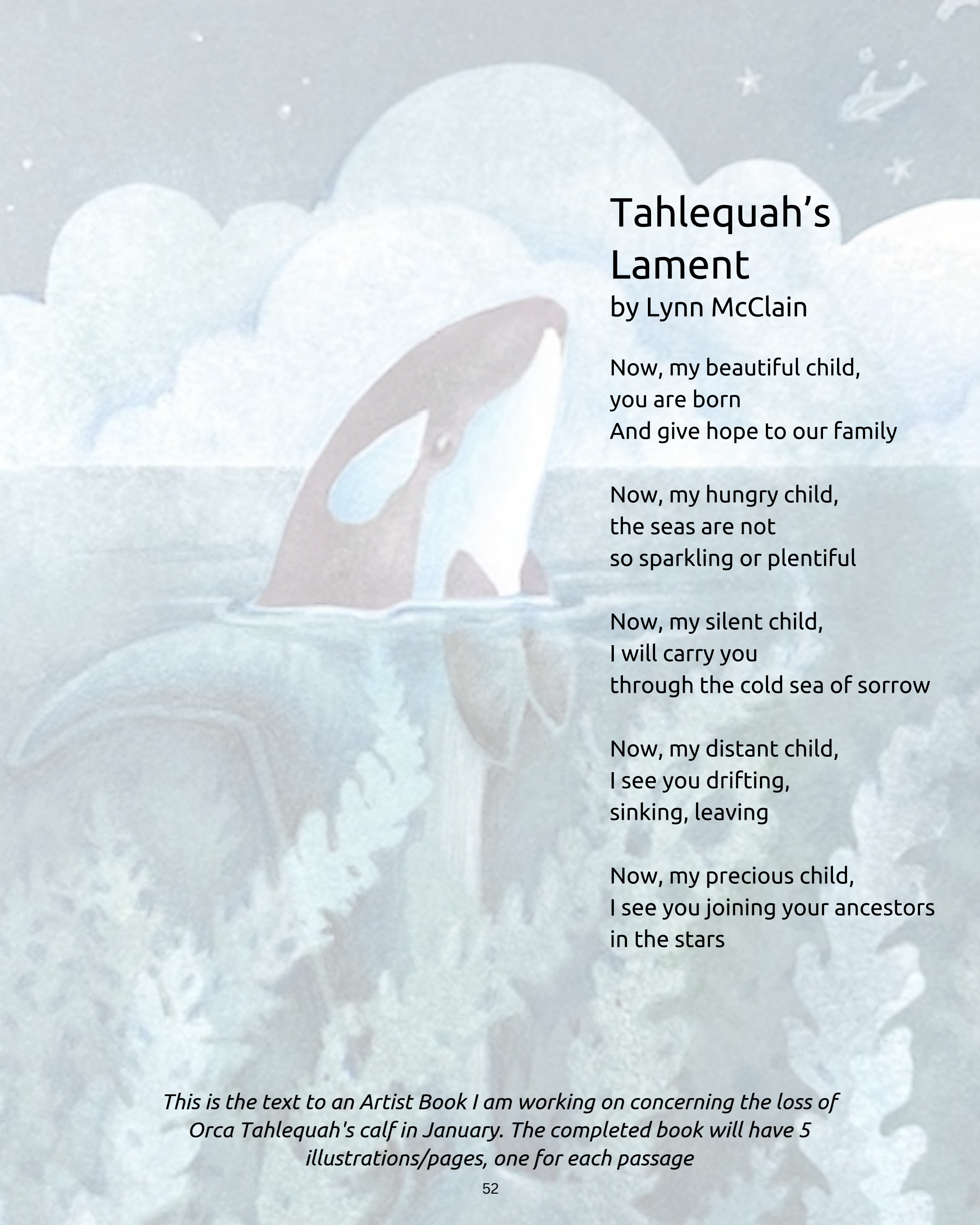


## Two is Enough by Kat Martin

2025  
watercolor

**Artist note:** This piece is dedicated to J35 Tahlequah, an orca whose love for her family goes beyond the human comprehension. An orca whose story continues to touch the lives of everyone around the world. An orca who has been through far too many times.





# Tahlequah's Lament

by Lynn McClain

Now, my beautiful child,  
you are born  
And give hope to our family

Now, my hungry child,  
the seas are not  
so sparkling or plentiful

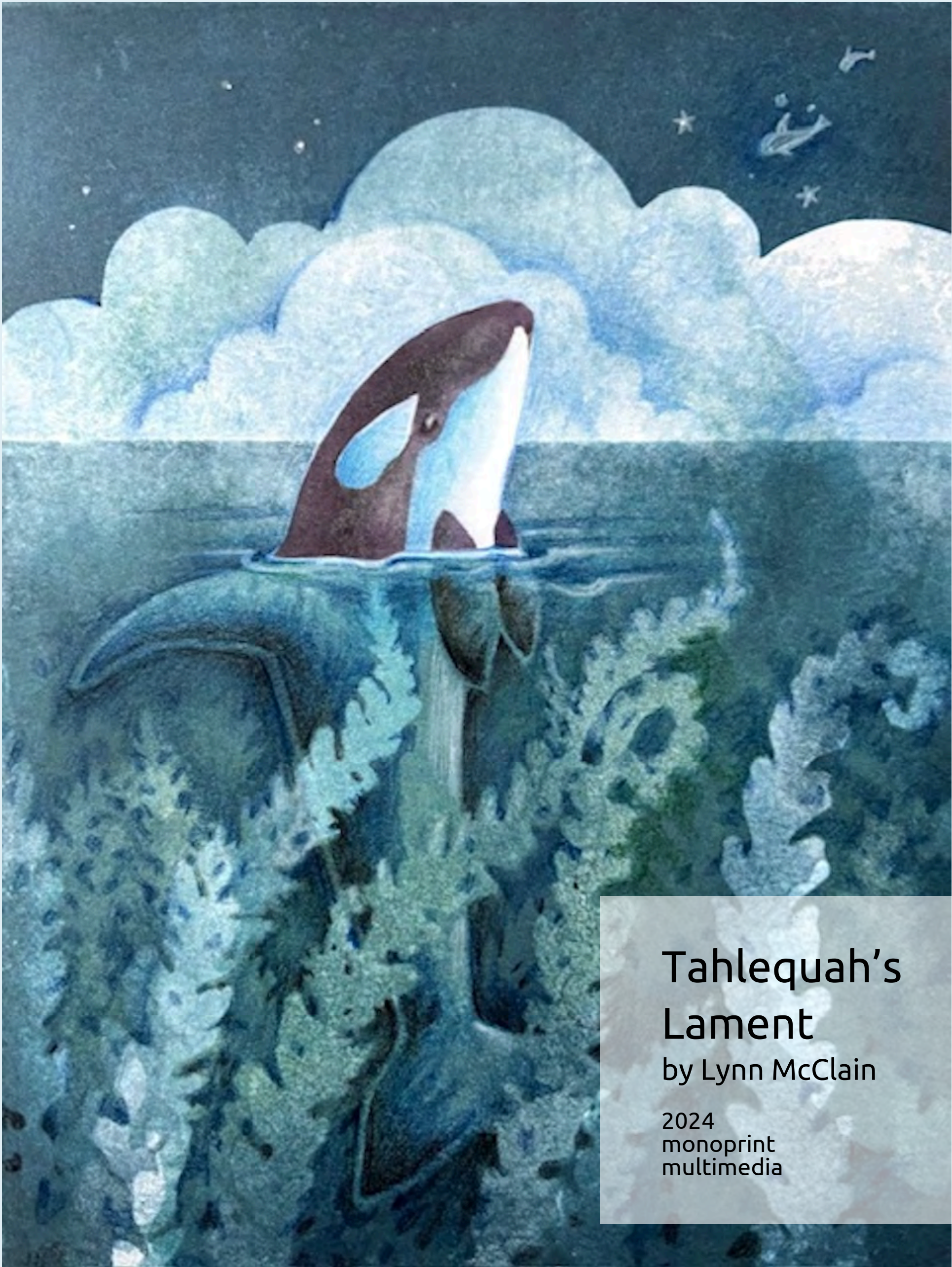
Now, my silent child,  
I will carry you  
through the cold sea of sorrow

Now, my distant child,  
I see you drifting,  
sinking, leaving

Now, my precious child,  
I see you joining your ancestors  
in the stars

*This is the text to an Artist Book I am working on concerning the loss of  
Orca Tahlequah's calf in January. The completed book will have 5  
illustrations/pages, one for each passage*





# Tahlequah's Lament

by Lynn McClain

2024  
monoprint  
multimedia



# Reflection of Tahlequah

by Grace McRae

Up,  
down,  
forward.

A small lifeless body  
pushed by a mother  
in a sea of souls  
still here.

The ebb and flow  
of empty tides,  
buoy the procession of grief  
over life gone,  
over life here,  
over life to be.

Grasping for rhythm  
after the rivers  
stopped flowing life  
back to the heart,  
a mother's pain  
accumulates  
behind concrete walls.

Up,  
down,  
forward

.

A tragedy so personal  
it becomes universal—  
a reflection  
in black and white.



# Stone and Bone

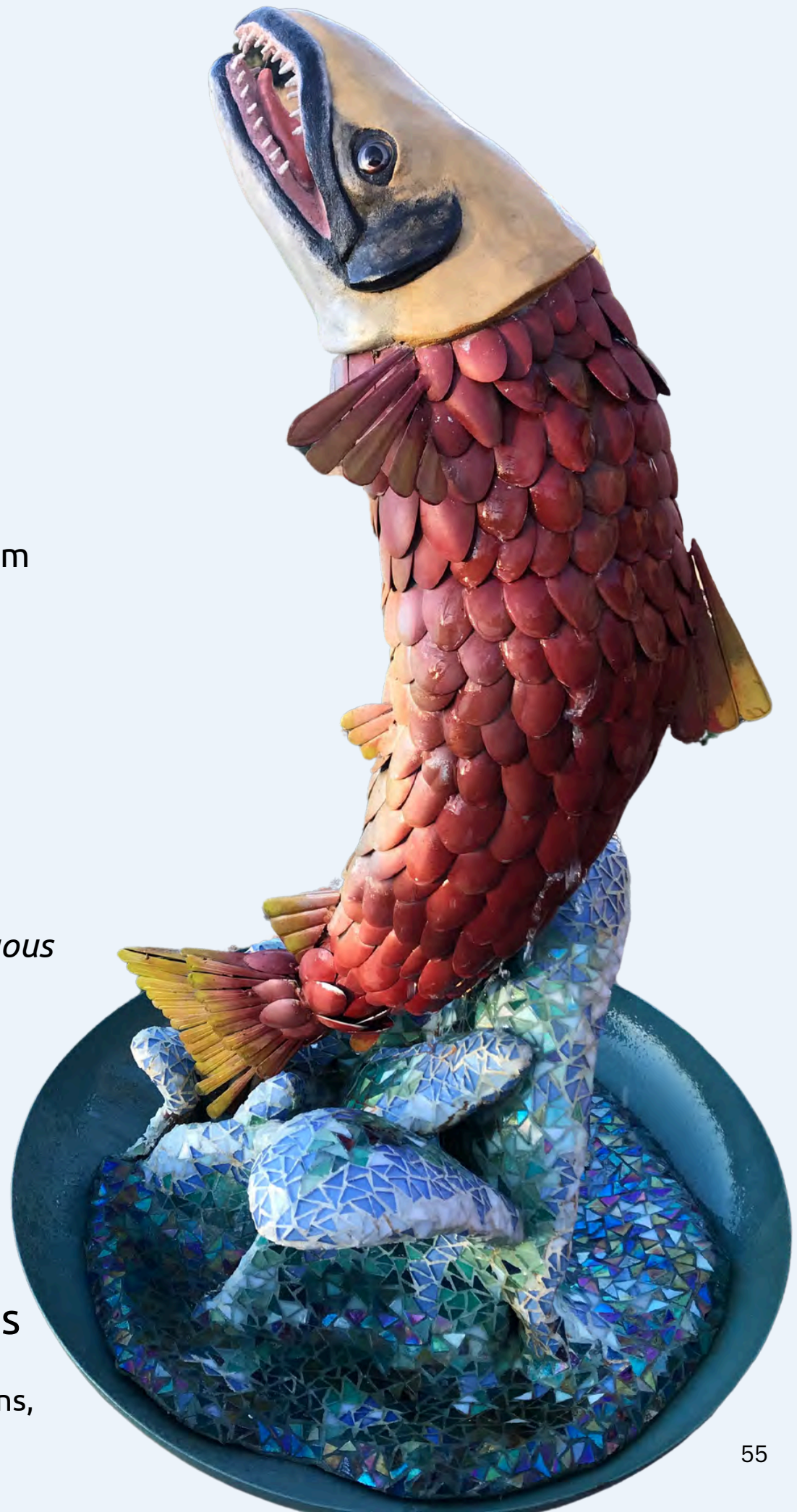
by Sandra Noel

I want to become a stone  
in this meandering river  
large enough  
to hold my place through spring floods  
small enough  
for a returning salmon to consider  
nose me gently before struggling  
a little further upstream  
where she will dig into lighter gravel  
a nest for her bright orange eggs  
attracting the blood-colored males  
already on their way to death  
until both together, open-mouthed  
mix eggs and seed together.  
And after she covers each nest  
no longer able to resist  
the relentless downstream current  
as it carries her spent body gently  
back over hard-wonrified river bottom  
to be the last place she rests  
stone and bone together  
bleached white and worn  
with weather, water and time  
inanimate, un-noticed, dreaming.

*One molten, born in a river of fire  
cooled to stillness by a river of ice.  
The other, a silver sea traveler  
until natal desire compels her into sinuous  
red light.*

Published, "Elohi Gadugi Journal:  
Narratives for a New World,"  
Vol. 1, 2012-1013

A Salmon for the Birds  
by Tony Mociun  
Water fountain: made of spoons,  
concrete and mosaic tiles.





# Reefnet Summer

by Sandra Noel

Until you sent the photograph of the two of us  
standing together on the beach, dressed to kill  
in our heavy natty woolen sweaters  
glittering in dry fish scales  
I'd forgotten that summer we spent  
waiting on the flood-tide to bring  
the salmon moving northward toward the Fraser  
listening to gulls and herons  
and the low talk of the men on the outside sets  
who laughed and hooted like teenagers  
when we'd pee in an old Maxwell House can  
and tossed its contents over the low gunnels.

We stood on slapstick-welded towers  
20 feet above swaying decks, the metal rungs  
slick with fish slime and morning mist  
stared through glare-free sunglasses  
into the dark water of the small bay  
waiting for sockeyes, chums, silvers, humpys  
and the occasional kings –money fish  
to make their way up the sidelines  
and into our empty pockets.  
We waited, patiently, quietly  
women know how to wait  
a skill embedded in our DNA  
for our men at work or at war  
for a difficult birth or a slow death.



So suddenly they'd appear  
glimmering, smooth torpedo-shaped and moving fast!  
No time to say, "Beautiful!" but we'd all think it  
and from deep in our throats -a blood call,  
"GIVER ER HELL!"  
high pitched, wild woman screams!  
Then, half-stumbling, drunk on adrenaline  
rushed down to the decks below.  
I remember your speed and timing  
as you deftly worked the wenches  
and helped us haul in the net, heavy with fish  
your gentle strength as you carried the big kings  
lovingly, like wriggling, defiant two year olds  
from the tangle of net on deck  
to the slushy ice water of the hold  
for the buyer boat with their scale  
and handfuls of cash at the end of the day.

There were orcas, almost close enough to touch  
more than once on the ride back to the beach  
eying our uncounted dinner  
loaded in the small skiff at dusk  
back to that lonely little island  
lost now to tourism and real estate developers  
where you helped me gain strength enough  
to leave a bad marriage and raise a good son  
where I learned a dying trade  
and found my ancient female voice  
the one I'd lost a few years earlier  
when a stranger in the darkness  
dared me to speak, so I lay silent  
the scream caught in my throat.





# The Weight of Waves

by Madilyn Noe

2025  
digital





## Soaring Orcas

by Richard Meadows

Dancing dominoes  
dip

and

dive

splashing joy  
in jubilation.

Salt mists sprays nasal passages

inside beats

a small drum—

Black fins glide through water canvas  
patterns of Pollock drip freely

sonar sounds feed symphony of  
whale whistling—

Jaw claps applaud  
pods' performance  
echolocation clicks and resounds.

Smooth as varnished velvet  
piano key suits submerge  
then reappear

pink salmon in mouth  
striking contrast  
to  
black & white.

Love for Tahlequah  
Emaline Porter  
2025, acrylic





# Links at Sunset

by Ridley Puntillo

2025  
Mixed media: colour pencil  
photograph, and digital

**Artist note:** “Links at Sunset” shows the decaying corpse of salmon, its energy and nutrients being funnelled into the rivers and out to sea. However, the salmon has been poisoned, the river it once gave life to has killed it in return. With the sun is setting in the background, time is running out on until it is too late to save both water and salmon.



# Sister Mother, your great love

Claudia Putnam

is a banner, rallying as it testifies.

Your public mourning—two little girls lost

to the heartless—tells humans you know our kinship.

I wished I were standing on your coastline as you

passed, my saltwater flowing to yours. My own baby's  
corpse offered up. Solidarity. Each child's death

kills a future many might have lived. Perhaps your  
daughters' deaths murder your people's whole future.

Dear Mother, multitudes who tread, fly, and swim know  
great grief is great love. Many live now in zones

flooded with poisoned tears. Dear Sister, I long for  
those futures lost. We could keep spinning in these noisy,

dirtied waters. So many paths toward life, survival,  
even as our children sink with yours. Your love focuses

mine. Your starvation, your fierce fight. I'm not yet  
adrift. Let's go. For the orcas. For the daughters.





# Tears of Tahlequah

by Corinna Ren  
2025  
digital

**Artist note:** As soon as I heard the news about Tahlequah losing another calf. My heart broke and the only way I could process it was by doing another piece of art for her. It was the first piece of work I completed in 2025.





# Orca Dreams

by Corinna Ren

2025  
digital

**Artist note:** Ever since Tahlequah lost her first calf, I haven't been able to stop drawing Orcas. It started with a simple Orca design after her first loss and has become a recurring subject in my work. This is my latest print incorporating Orcas and so many things we love about the Pacific Northwest.





# Tahlequah: A Heart Full of Relations

by Vera Schöpe

2025

Acrylic

**About the Art:** The image represents Tahlequah at the heart of her core family - J47, Tali, J57 J62, and a spirit. They all intermingle in one heart of a family surviving losses and swimming forward as one community.

The scene takes place underwater where the viewer is invited to take a peak at the intimate dance of life and death with love and loss. Tahlequah's heart beats steady and metaphorically provides oxygen to all her children, She inspires many to dance with her underwater, overcome extinction of the spirit, and persevere with courage through the noise of the world of man.

**Artist note:** This design is inspired by my experience going on canoe journeys, planting for ecosystem restoration along the Lower Snake River, and learning about the value of just and right relations with tribal friends of the Lummi, Yakima, Nez Perce, Spokane, and Palouse Nations. I am honored to work with the tribes as an Ecology Organizer with IPJC. Their wisdom about Mother Earth continues to nurture my spirit and inspire me to keep planting seeds of hope, beauty, life, and ecological justice.







# Tour of Grief

by Melissa Studdard

All seventeen days the orca wore  
her dead like a crown,

sorrow riling to a bob and weave,  
knocking her hollow.

What water and womb  
could no longer carry, she had to carry.

We watched through binoculars  
as if distance

were real. As if  
we were not also tottering

on the head of an exhausted,  
grieving mother. As if we were not also

becoming too cumbersome,  
too heavy to bear.



Surrounded  
in Love  
by Ma4theoceans  
2018, watercolor





# Forever Family

by Anastasia Seckers

2025, Digital

**Artist Note:** My artwork depicts Tahlequah carrying her baby so that the baby is closer to the sky, where they can be found by the ghosts or spirits of all the Southern Residents who have passed away before. The Southern Residents are a forever family, and they will always take good care of each other, even after life.



# It's Up To You

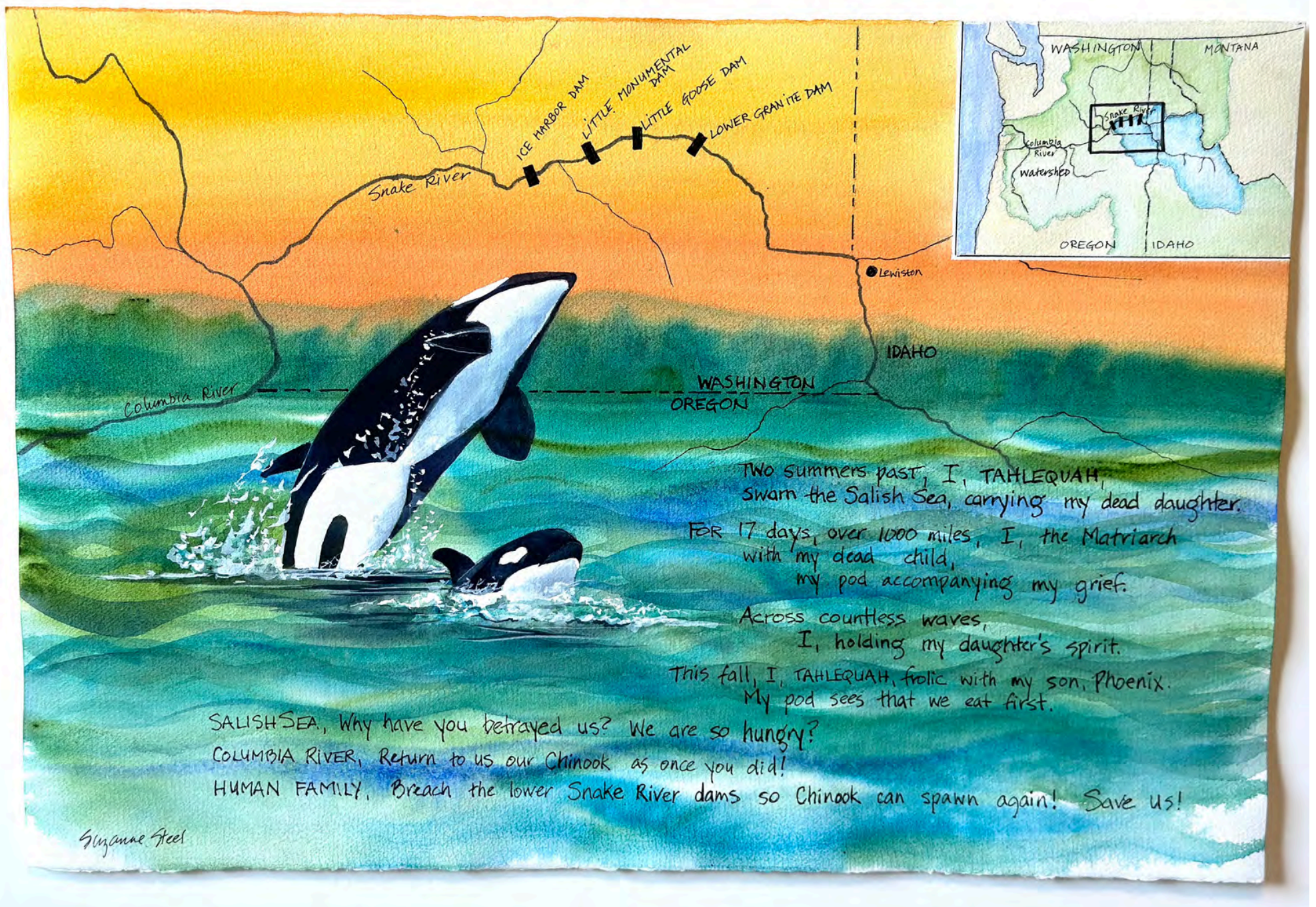
by Suzanne Steel

2021  
watercolor

**Artist note:** I made this piece as part of a project with Creature Conserve, which is "growing a creative community that combines art with science to cultivate new pathways for wildlife conservation" to spread awareness of the plight of the SRKW.

I created this piece shortly after Tahlequah's successful birth of her young son, Phoenix and about a year after her epic journey with her dead baby. We learned that the most significant thing we could do to help our SRKW's would be to breach the four dams on the Snake. I wanted to bring out this issue in graphic terms.

I collaborated with one of the poets in the group, **Janet Higbee-Robinson**, who wrote the beautiful poem.





# Prize at the End of the Sea-Slung Rainbow

Salmon Cento with Lines from Poems by Judith Roche  
(1941-2019)

by Mary Ellen Talley

This is not a song that can be made of rain  
I lay myself down  
in the small cracks where time gathers

I am a long jade mirror  
catching the image of the moon  
breathing the weight of water, sweet water

Current pulls me down  
Survival is held in syllables  
now sinking under the smooth surface

Rain so full the saturated ground  
can take no more / drag of tidewaters,  
sweet taste of reeds and rushes

I want to hear the song of the sediment  
My ghosts trail behind me  
I go with water's flow  
and trust strange rapture  
singing in my blood,  
hesitate briefly in this watershed,  
a moment on tiptoe of geologic time

In a cave-in, you know, it's not the getting buried  
that hurts so much as the getting dug out again  
We are stardust pondering our own story,

broken necklace of moon stone  
The body of fate we carry around  
with us is what we call God

The rain weaves a dense shroud  
heavy with the weight of grief  
There's plenty of souls out there  
for whom the cold is a nightly routine  
Flames flicker in a fire dance  
Red fox foraging in tall grass

The whole secret is to move fast and dance much

Crouching together we hover pulsing  
sensing every quiver  
Throbbing, our ancient dance of love  
and risk

We are broken to feed the multitudes,  
what we invent in the undressing  
and trying on each other  
Welcome to the land's insistent  
voice echoing in spirals  
My body emptied of eggs,  
milky milt settled completing the circle

Food for the stream, I feed all comers  
It's something about the bridge  
that grows between us

*Sources:  
Poems taken from  
collections  
by Judith Roche:  
"All Fire All Water,"  
"Myrrh / My Life  
as a Screamer,"  
"Ghosts," and  
"Wisdom of the Body,"  
in which can be found  
"Salmon Suite."*



# Timelines

by Til

Sometimes I let the stink of fish  
Linger on my fingers, as if to feel  
That I'm more than what I was —  
Someone important and with meaning —  
Because I know in another life,  
I am elbow deep in a bucket, and I  
Always pull out your favorites  
When you're happy, when the flat, yellow  
Nylon around my bicep is enough  
To keep you contented.

Then, in the life before that,  
I am some godly scholar, amongst  
The Fjords, and I try my best to understand  
The place — but I don't understand the reason.  
Tangled nets and crowding waves crawling  
Down my back like tar, and that  
Sense of repeated calamity — they'd  
Always surmised the end before it had  
Happened. I suppose then, in some  
After-life, even when I'd tried — it's always  
Between belonging and doom, always  
Between them and I, them and us —  
Perhaps, I was just meant to fail again.



It takes me a few lives before I realise  
That no matter which version of us is  
Beyond the river, no matter which version  
Of us made it into the museums and the cathedrals,  
And then the kind where we barely existed,  
Never met or saw or felt — (I always feel a little  
Empty in this one, as if there is nothing for me here)  
I am eternally fated to end us with the same  
Outcome, the one where I carry your memory  
Around on my shoulders like some draped, wrinkled cape,  
Stumbling over to everyone, hitching over my words —  
You this and you that, you this and you that.

Sorry for everything that seldom happens and  
Then for what forever does — sorry for the  
Show I made by the lake and for the way  
I cried into the night, longing for some sadness  
I'd never recognised. (I wish they knew, I wish  
They could understand.) I just want to know  
If they're still in love, it's been so long.  
I just want to know what part of you  
They took with themselves — and called it  
Reverence, termed it some strange devotion.



I have walked through haunted halls and  
Abandoned corridors and burnt landmarks,  
I knew how to spell your name. Let the  
Ghosts trail in my wake, as I leave you  
Everywhere — by the car accident,  
At the white marble home,  
Scratched into the wall in that scary house  
The children fear going into on seventh street,  
In the cobblestone streets  
Of that cold, vaguely familiar country.  
Watch the numbers follow me —  
Which remnant of you visits my soul?

(Time is not linear. It bends, swirls,  
Loops around itself. Ties days and  
Months and years into knots until  
There are moments — of connections,  
Of epiphanies — fragments in existence  
Where you are seeing through a keyhole  
Into the past. A half moon hook, an eye,  
In the split of glass panels, meeting a gaze  
Through the span of decades.

Did you know? Did you feel it too?)





# Winter Sighting

by Cynthia Walker

2024  
acrylic

The backdrop for this pod of orca is the mountains of the Pacific Northwest. The work is created from an abstracted base of acrylic, with orcas incorporated into the scene. The mountains in the background include some of the black and white geometrics of the orca.





# Shoal of Salmon

by Cynthia Walker

2024

Watercolor and oil crayon resist

Salmon, the primary food source for the orca, can often be found in runs or shoals. This abstracted watercolor reflects a shoal of chinook salmon swirling beneath the water.



# You Are Salmon

by Kathryn True

You graze the algae-slick rocks of the riverbed,  
nudging caddisfly pebble cases and blocking crayfish cubbies.  
Facing upstream, held by a riffle —  
you are salmon.

You watch hungrily as stoneflies race to mate before noon,  
their urgent beat rising.  
Sunlight shows the pale veins of maple leaves,  
as wind and water shimmy, exciting your anadromous heart—  
thrumming to the time of no time.

Eagle shadow passes and you retreat into a cave  
lit from within by refracted morning.  
You inhale bubbles churned in channels of metamorphosized slate,  
which emerges from the Earth a century at a time,  
with stony parables to offer those who will listen.

Across the water, the crimson tendrils of red alder root  
touch a teal pool.  
A burble of dippers arrives, eyelids flashing white.  
One dives and surfaces with a fat larva.  
As they probe the river bottom, you envy their dexterous toes.

You are not ready to leave your birthplace,  
but this desire expands with the growing moon.  
Though it's unsafe to linger in the shallows,  
life ignites around you, beckoning.  
And tonight, it will be clear enough to see your ancestors in the sky.





# Heart of the Ocean

by Debbie Welsh

2025

Acrylic/pencil

**Artist note:** The visual representation of an Orca riding the wave. Reminding each of us that their presence as being the “Heart of the Ocean” is crucial to all living beings.





# Salmon Forever

by Nicki Weber

2024  
watercolor



Southern Resident orcas face immense challenges, and chinook salmon are vital to their survival. As much as 80% of the Southern Residents' diet is chinook salmon and one of the largest historical sources of these salmon at a critical time of the year – winter – has been the Snake River. Restoring a free-flowing lower Snake River is essential to recover critical salmon runs and help feed struggling Southern Residents.

## MORE WAYS TO TAKE ACTION







Thank you