

Welcoming Home Living Beings

Today, we welcome home beloved Living Beings

No one alive today has seen them at home, except in dreams

No one we ever met saw them at home, except in dreams

Yesterday, they were stolen, many generations ago

Yesterday, they were prisoners in private houses

Yesterday, they were locked in university basements

Yesterday, they were poisoned and smothered in museums

Yesterday, they were branded with numbers and price tags

Yesterday, they were violated by prying hands and eyes

Yesterday, they were tortured and deprived of all that nourishes

Yesterday, they were alone, many generations ago

Today, we welcome home beloved Living Beings

They come home to us, their many relatives

They return after surviving a long, hard war

They never were meant to be warriors

They were created with holy purpose

As teachers and doctors

As visionaries and guides

As children and parents

As artists and lovers

They were created to balance our minds

To settle the Spirits

To solve difficult cases

To make a peaceful way

To make themselves beautiful

They were created by Creation and loving human hands

As pots and baskets and boxes

As claws and feathers and teeth

As hides and furs and antlers

As hooves and shells and baleen

As pouches and bundles and gourds

As drums and rattles and bells

As clay and cedar and paint

As grasses and reeds and pollen

Today, we welcome home beloved Living Beings

We, their many relatives, have known them all our lives

We, their many relatives, have missed them all our lives

We feed their memory with sacred foods

We nourish their memory with sacred waters

We keep them in our circles

We seek them in the darkest places

We sing the songs they sing

We dance the dances they dance

We pray the prayers they pray

We dream the dreams they dream

Tomorrow, after we welcome home our beloved Living Beings

It will be as if they never left home or us, their many relatives

It will be as if they never left home or us

It will be as if they never left

It will be as if they never

It will be as if

It will be

It will be as if there were no yesterday

It will be tomorrow

—Suzan Shown Harjo