

**When the moon came to see us**

*Umi reta memby ou ñanderendape ko asaje ha  
oguereko heta mba'e oheise.  
Umi retã memby ogueru hendive jasy kuña mimby.  
Jasy ojahe'o ha itesay oñe'e ñande sy arandu mba'ekuera.  
Jasy omombe'u se ko retã tembiasakue:*

*Guilili, guilili, y ha jasy ojahe'o ñande sy ndive.  
Imembykuera oho petei barco guasu ari.  
Imembykuera ojahe'o...  
Guilili, guilili...guelele, guelele... heta tesay oime yndive.  
Jasy kuña ha ñande sy ojahe'o. Reta memby ojahe'o. Sy oñe'e ha he'I :  
Ndorombopy'apy che memby. Jasy kuña mamove ohesaraita ñande tembiasakue.  
Guilili, guilili...guelele, guelele... heta tesay oime yndive. (\*)*

The children of the land came to see us, and they had a lot to say.  
The children of the land brought the Moon Woman with them.  
The Moon woman cried, and her tears spoke our Mother Earth's voice.  
She told us a truth that she will never forget...  
Guilili, guilili...the waters cry and move with the Moon Woman and Mother Earth.  
Her children are being taken on a big boat. The children cry...Their mother and the Moon Woman cry...  
They can't change the waters because their tears drop and merge... guelele, guelele...  
Guilili, guilili ...the waters cry and move with the Moon Woman and Mother Earth.  
The children of the land cry and their mother say: Don't worry, my children, the Moon Woman will never forget."

On March 3, 2022, the Squamish Moon Woman came to see us. Her tides are hidden on this land, but her voice is not. Her voice is clear, loud and certain to tell the truth.  
She told us that this land real Indigenous name is *Señákw*. It is commonly known as "False Creek", a name that comes from the "mistake" of a colonizer surveyor George Henry Richards who thought that he was following a creek. She continued saying that many decades ago, in 1913, the children of this land were taken and moved by the colonizers on a barge to a land up North from here, in the Burrard Inlet which we now know as the "Squamish Nation lands".  
The colonizers "stopped" the tides and put concrete on the waters to silence their cry. But the truth speaks by itself. We can hear the water. We can hear the voices of souls that never left.  
It is the truth. A truth that we now carry as witnesses of the Moon Woman and Mother Earth. We witnessed their tears reclaiming the land taken and the children taken.  
We will also never forget.  
Guilili, guilili...guelele, guelele... heta tesay oime yndive.

(\*) I offer to the peoples of these lands the voice of the Guarani ñe'e: my Guarani Paraguayan native language. As a Paraguayan Guarani Mestiza my soul cries for the memories that are yet to come. My land also was stolen, and my people were murdered to let me believe that a new "race" belong to us. But the truth is one and I can hear the voices of my ancestors. **We shall not forget. I will not forget.**



# When the Tide Is Out

Recollection from a Sharing Circle  
Laura Kozak, Spring 2022

*Have you met before?*

*Oh yes, many times, we know each other well...*

Looking at a tree growing in an unexpected way, kQwa'st'not<sup>1</sup> reminds us that learning in context is different than learning by pulling things apart and separating them: to see what's around and how each part relates to another is an important part of noticing and coming to know. Being in a room with people, watching everyone move around, greet each other, rearrange and settle into a circle is like that too.

*They're coming to talk about the land before it was filled in*

On March 3, 2022, we gathered at Emily Carr's Aboriginal Gathering Place for a sharing circle with Splash, or Aaron Nelson-Moody, Meagan Innes and Jamie Thomas. I'd been quietly waiting for this gathering for days, months, years even – a gathering to turn and look together at where we are: Skwácháys – how it changed, and how it's changing still. The date fell just one week after a violent invasion of Ukraine, an affront that tugged at ancestral threads in me so deep I didn't know they were there. Awash in recognition of the land disputes and violence that my great grandparents and grandfather, Toby Kozak<sup>2</sup>, left behind in Ukraine only to repeat those patterns of harm here, I felt suddenly more specific in my responsibility to be here in a different way. It's a different thing to enact that responsibility in a real room with people whose names I know than to commit to it silently, alone and in the abstract.

<sup>1</sup> kQwa'st'not~Charlene George is a T'sou-ke artist and cultural guide with the Sierra Club BC. In the spring of 2022 she led Emily Carr's Place-Based Field School on a series of four walks.

<sup>2</sup> My paternal grandfather, Toby Kozak, immigrated from Ukraine as a child, and worked as a plumber. I never got to meet him, but I know of him to be kind with animals.

### *This feels like a ceremony*

Splash called us in with a song and I felt my shoulders let go and my nervous system slow down to match the sounds of the drum. He told us the story of where the song came from and that it was a newer one: I wish I could remember it, but only the image of a boat stayed with me, and came back to me later when he described being out fishing nearby as a kid.

Meagan told us parts of the story of this place that we all know in fragments: this area – Skwácháys – is the home of eelgrass and mollusks and clams and fishes; a stopping spot for migrating birds. *Place where water is drawn down into a hole; water spring; water coming up from ground beneath* (Kwi Awt Stelmexw)<sup>3</sup>. Recollections passed to Meagan by her grandfather John Cordocedo<sup>4</sup> brought flashes of focus to the ways I could see through the layers of where we are, gathered right now on a brittle slab of concrete sealing up a layer of toxic industrial waste piled on the marshy intertidal zone that should be teeming with life and activity. Splash reminds us how thin this layer is, how all that life is still under there, waiting to come back up. As Meagan tells us of Xwméltststn úxwumixw, her home community, and relatives, she reminds us these stories are the truth: they are true things that really happened, and we need to think of them that way. ‘False Creek’ is a name defined by a mistake – an expectation of finding a river and instead finding (but not really understanding) Skwácháys, a *place to catch the tide*. Maybe this mistake is also like entering someone’s home without properly introducing yourself, or knowing whose home you’re in, or asking why somewhere has the name it has.

### *The ancestors are here*

Jamie’s voice and big lungs are like a conduit for an enormous invisible energy in the room, collectively confronting the hubris and sadness of what happened here; what’s happening here. His long pauses convey the effort and gravity of the things he is saying - Meagan steady beside him. They stopped the tide.

With the power in his voice, I can feel in my body the patience and endurance it took to move up and down Terminal Avenue at the speed of the tide with Marcia and Lou<sup>5</sup> a few days before, a sense of that huge gentle body of water moving slowly across this place twice every day, giving it shape and life. Jean<sup>6</sup> reminds us with her words and her hands the tide is from the moon pulling the ocean up, and that we are so small in relation to those massive forces. And yet. They stopped the tide. I think about this over and over again

<sup>3</sup> Kwi Awt Stelmexw is a non-profit organization that raises funds to support language and arts development in the Squamish Nation. Meagan introduced me to this map and resource they made: [squamishatlas.com](http://squamishatlas.com)

<sup>4</sup> John Cordocedo was a longshoreman on Vancouver’s waterfront for 44 years. I learned a little more about his work and life on Episode 33 of the [Docker Podcast](#).

<sup>5</sup> Lou Sheppard is a Canadian artist commissioned to make a new work for the Great Northern Way-Emily Carr Skytrain Station, currently under construction next to Emily Carr. In 2022, Lou worked closely with the Place-Based Field School on a series of walks, workshops and events as a form of artistic research. Marcia Higuchi was a part of this group, and together with Lou and others, we walked through this area in February 2022 moving at the speed of the tide.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Chisholm is a designer and instructor at Emily Carr, and my longtime collaborator on various Place-Based projects, including the Field School in the spring of 2022.

as I criss-cross the low intertidal bowl from home to work to daycare every day, my bike weaving its way through the tangles of construction: hospital, subway, the sounds of pile drivers and excavators clawing through that soft silt non-stop. I wonder how long it took that silt to arrive here to be softly set down by the tide, and where it'll go next. I examine the hard edge of the seawall railing next to Science World, thinking about vertical and horizontal lines and movement.

*When the tide is out, the table is set*

With a seriousness that revealed a different dimension to her joke-cracking, always-laughing-always-moving auntiness, Connie<sup>7</sup> named the feeling of energy in the room, and I thought about who each person in the circle brought with them as we took time to introduce ourselves. *When the tide is out, the table is set* connects attentiveness to the daily movement of water to a practice of gratitude for all the beings at home here; for the movement of water and land that allows for that; and for the incredible sophistication of the daily choreography that connects the smallest crab with the moon. When we pay attention, the tide sets the table for ceremony, nourishment and socializing. When we pay attention.

I think back on a story Splash told some time ago about a young person's decision not to sneak in through the back door of a ceremony, but to ask to come in through the main door, with purpose and readiness for responsibility. As the intensity and concentration of our sharing circle loosens, I watch the new and smaller circles that form – the exchanges, the two-person ceremonies, hugs, tears and snacks.

**Aaron Nelson-Moody**, or "Splash", lives and works in the Capilano Village on the North Shore of Vancouver, British Columbia. These days he is working mainly on jewelry engraving and repousse, and still carves the larger houseposts and panels on commission. While Aaron is his English name, he also has his Squamish Nation name, Tawx'sin Yexwulla, which translates as: Splashing Eagle, so most people know him simply as "Splash". He also carries the name Poolxtun, from his adopted father Gerry Oleman, which he translates as, 'the spreading ripples from a splash of water'. He has worked with community groups and students in a number of schools in the Squamish and Vancouver areas since 1995, as well as sharing in Japan and Scotland.

**Meagan Innes** is from Xwméłts'tstn úxwumixw (Capilano Village). She is a Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh slhánaý (Squamish Woman), an Educator and a multidisciplinary Artist who completed her MEd around examining connection to place, kinship and to spéñem (plant) s7ekw'í7tel (siblings) péñem (plant things). She is an emerging artist who is waking up her Ancestral skills and practicing the ways of her Ancestors. She is interested in exploring and reshaping pedagogy to embody traditional ways of knowing and being, more specifically Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh traditional ways of learning, knowing and being.

**Jamie Thomas** was born and raised snuneymuxw tun mystiimuxw. My history is with my family of Nanaimo First Nation. As I look back I find a family of resource, of servitude and leadership. I believe we are bound by blood and kinship. I have helped in many different fields. The honour is mine to continue what my ancestors have begun. The responsibility to my ancestors guides me to the work I am to complete. It is with my children and grandchildren where the work will continue. I feel an obligation to carry on the work with respect. Which is the foundation on which I stand. Hy'c~ap aywuth

<sup>7</sup> Connie Watts is the Associate Director of Emily Carr's Aboriginal Gathering Place. She is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, curator, educator and designer of Nuu-chah-nulth, Gitxsan and Kwakwaka'wakw ancestry.



(1) Image from City of Vancouver Archives - construction of Pacific Central Station, 1918; (2) Eelgrass meadow; (3) Handrail and retaining wall at the eastern edge of False Creek, next to Science World.