



Upriver to Morning

A JOURNEY TO WISDOM

by Tish McFadden

Cultural • Environmental • Bilingual • Educational

Upriver to Morning Introduction

Tish McFadden

Over the past three years, and with the support of local educators, editors, and classrooms at Walker Elementary in Ashland, I have created an outdoor/cultural educational program called, **Upriver to Morning**. The cultural context inspiring this series is rooted in the universal teachings of **Agnes Baker Pilgrim**, native Takelma elder from Grants Pass, and at 94 years, she is the oldest of her tribe. This project has her endorsement and blessing.

Upriver to Morning includes a 11,000-word bilingual illustrated book series in English and Spanish. Educational components include: story theatre scripts in English and Spanish, audio books, original songs, classroom activity guides for teachers using art, movement, and music, Common Core curriculum alignments across the grade levels, and writing prompts. A dedicated website will conveniently bring these features, and more, to teachers, students, and parents.

Upriver to Morning evolved from my life's work in archaeology, writing, and music.

This five-book journey-to-wisdom story is set along the Rogue River in the native landscape of the Takelma Indians of Southwestern Oregon. From seaside beaches to riverine woodlands, interior valleys, the Table Rocks, river gorges, and ultimately to alpine springs, the story is rooted in universal life lessons that can deepen our capacity for compassion, our sense of belonging, and our connection to nature.

The story opens at sunset at the mouth of the Rogue River where Salmon is preparing for his long swim upriver to Boundary Springs, the home of Morning Star, and where all things begin. Not to be left behind on this adventure, and for their own motives, Coyote, Red-Tailed Hawk, Deer Woman, Jackrabbit, and Bear, one-by-one, join Salmon on his trek.

Common to folktales from diverse cultures, the animal and earth element characters in **Upriver to Morning** possess identifiable personalities that we care about, laugh about, fear, and admire. Throughout the narrative, and woven into the adventures, we uncover ancient Takelma teachings that convey universal wisdom for all ages.

By way of background, in 1980, I came to Oregon to work as Cultural Resource Specialist for the Siskiyou National Forest. I was tasked with identifying and protecting historic and prehistoric sites, artifacts, and cultural traditions of the Takelma people and neighboring tribes. It was paramount that I familiarize myself with the lifestyles and

practices of these earliest human inhabitants who thrived and survived here as hunter-gatherers for over 15,000 years.

As part of my initial research I met **Agnes Baker Pilgrim**, revered spiritual elder of the Takelma people. Years passed before I would auspiciously meet her again in 2016 at her book signing in Ashland at Bloomsbury Books. At the close of her talk that evening she looked out at the standing room only crowd and said,

“The best thing you can do for me is to spread these teachings to children, to teenagers, to all ages everywhere, so that we, and the planet, may continue to thrive and survive. Help me pass my message on to future generations. Ripple it out.”

In response to Grandma Aggie’s heartfelt plea, **Upriver to Morning** weaves cultural, environmental, social, and inter-generational themes within the context of Salmon’s journey upriver from the Pacific Ocean to the Rogue River’s source at Boundary Springs.

Strong interest and positive reviews have been expressed by Ashland School teachers, reading specialists, parents, and educators who have read the curriculum, participated in its development, or had **Upriver to Morning** storytelling sessions in their classrooms. The project promotes literacy, serves bilingual children, and encourages creativity through reading, drama, music, movement, and art across the grade levels.



Tish McFadden and Agnes Baker Pilgrim
at her 94th Birthday Celebration in Ashland, Oregon. September, 2018

Here's the Team

- **Tish McFadden:** Author of *Upriver to Morning*, Concept Design, Songwriter, Project Manager, and Educational Outreach.
- **Thomas Doty:** Editor, Scriptwriter, Audiobook Narrator, Cultural Consultant, Website Consultant, Classroom Educator.
- **Agnes Baker Pilgrim (Taowhywee):** Inspiration for *Upriver to Morning*, Takelma Spiritual Leader, Source of 25 teachings.
- **Laura Winslow:** Artist and Illustrator.
- **Kris Kibbee:** Educational Consultant, Common Core Specialist, Spanish Translator, Editor.
- **Irina Summer:** Webmaster and Web Designer.
- **Don Harriss:** Sound recording engineer (audio books), Music Producer (songs), and Book Designer.
- **Julie Norman:** Outreach Consultant, and Copy Editor
- **Stephanie Craig:** Grand Ronde Tribal Member, Oregon Folklife Network's Oregon Culture Keeper, and 7th generation Takelma Basket Weaver.
- **Jesse Jackson:** Cow Creek Tribal Member, and Teacher.
- **Dr. John M.H. Kelly:** Skidegate Haida Elder and Tribal Member, Adjunct Research Professor at Carleton University in Ottawa, Co-Director of CIRCLE (Centre for Indigenous Research, Culture, Language & Education), co-author of *Encyclopedia of Native American Music of North America* and *We Interrupt This Program: Indigenous Media Tactics in Canadian Culture*.
- **Four Arrows (Wahinkpe Topa),** aka Don Trent Jacobs, Ph.D., Ed.D., Professor in the College of Educational Leadership at Fielding Graduate University, and author of *Point of Departure: Returning to our More Authentic Worldview for Education and Survival*; *Teaching Truly: A Curriculum to Indigenize Mainstream Education*; *Unlearning the Language of Conquest*, and *Primal Awareness*

- **Michele Warrence-Schreiber:** Ashland School District Literacy Coach, and Editor.
- **Dylana Garfas:** Walker Elementary 4th grade teacher beta tested the curriculum in her classroom.
- **Amy Kneeland, Kathleen Mateas, Lauren McGowne:** Walker Elementary 2nd grade teachers who beta tested the curriculum in their classrooms.

Upriver to Morning Testimonials

Testimonial by Dylana Garfas, Grade 4 Teacher, Walker Elementary School:

Tish is a truly gifted storyteller! The students were deeply engaged by her story, and as she read, they were mesmerized by the themes and symbolism in Upriver to Morning. Now more than ever, the connectedness to our local native cultures and appreciation for the wisdom of our elders is of utmost importance.

Her beautiful story perfectly weaves information about the Takelma tribe, local geography, and themes of friendship and caring for one another, which is perfect for elementary aged children. Thank you for offering your book and reading to my class. We absolutely loved your book!

Testimonial by Amy Kneeland, Grade 2 Teacher, Walker Elementary School:

Thank you so much for coming in and sharing your amazing story, “Upriver to Morning”, and songs, with my class. What a gift! I so appreciate your ability to engage students with your clever characters, the excitement of the story, and the movements you included.

Testimonial by Thomas Doty, Storyteller, Cultural Consultant, Editor:

Upriver to Morning is a journey into interiors. As readers, we travel with Salmon through the interior landscape of the wild Rogue River world of the Takelmas – the lifeblood of their homeland – with all the wonder that getting to know an ancient place has to teach us.

It is also a journey into the interior of each reader, guided by Salmon and his friends who know the way. The journey awakens universal life lessons that live in each of us, eager to emerge, there at journey's end, in the wise light of Morning Star.

Testimonial by Gold Hill Friends of the Library, Gold Hill, OR:

Gold Hill Friends of the Library was honored to recently host author Tish McFadden and storyteller Thomas Doty at the Gold Hill Library. A large and enthusiastic audience was excited to hear about this upcoming journey to wisdom story based on the universal teachings of Takelma elder Agnes Baker Pilgrim. We look forward to the completion of the Upriver to Morning project so we can have them return and share its success.

Testimonial by Michele Warrence-Schreiber, District Literacy Coach, Editor:

Upriver to Morning sings! The language is rich and purposeful; the story is native and true. Supplemented with story theatre, Upriver to Morning can be used to build fluency and deepen comprehension. Songs accompanying each chapter ring out, are catchy, and seep into your heart. Upriver to Morning is a multipurpose text, used across the curriculum to enhance learning. Children need story and music, and Tish offers them both. Children will grow with Upriver to Morning. They will ripple it out.

Testimonial by Kris Kibbee, Curriculum Specialist:

As an educator with more than 25 years' experience I see myriad applications for the Upriver to Morning book series in the classroom, across content areas and grade levels. The series lends itself to thematic teaching combining science, social studies, language arts, drama, and music. The alignment to the Common Core State Standards makes this even easier.

One advantage of Upriver to Morning is the fact that the books are available in both English and Spanish, making them useful in an English-Spanish bilingual classroom. Teachers in early elementary can use the series to teach students expressive ways to describe their local geography, both in the community and surrounding areas.

Testimonial by Julie Norman, Cultural Ecologist, Geophilosopher, author:

Listening to stories is how we are built to learn. The nuggets of wisdom in Upriver to Morning sink in and help us know how to live as Earthlings.

Testimonial by Jennie Englund, MS Ed. English Professor:

I cried at the integrity, wisdom, truthfulness, and purity of voice. I wish all kids access to these marvelous creatures. This is the kind of world I crave kids' return to: nature, animals, interdependence, and respect. The honor of and appreciation for nature is what America so terribly and immediately needs. McFadden fuses fiction with biology, history, and cultural anthropology. Her prose is simply beautiful. The reader recognizes the significance of Salmon's journey.

Testimonial by Four Arrows: Ph.D., Ed.D., Professor, published author:

These five carefully crafted teaching stories, sourced from a beloved Takelma Elder, bring forth an ancient wisdom that will touch the hearts and souls of all children. Guided by other-than-human sentient life forms, from the salmon to the stars, they offer ways to augment school curriculum and instruction in ways that will serve to bring back foundational understandings for how to live in flowing balance once again.

Testimonial by Agnes Baker Pilgrim:

*This is Grandma Agnes Pilgrim, the International Grandma. I'm your Grandma. Someday I pray that you will hear my voice and that you will grow up and be grey-headed like me. When you read this book, you will become an instant teacher. And you will tell people, young and old, to ripple it out so it will spread around, because this is true stuff. These are the true teachings. And so, with all the love in my heart, I pray that you can do just that. Ripple it out. – Transcribed from a recording of Grandma Aggie speaking about **Upriver to Morning**, February 2017.*



25 Teachings Inspired by Agnes Baker Pilgrim

found in

Upriver to Morning

Collected and Summarized by Tish McFadden

Chapter One: *Salmon's Quest Begins*

1. **YOUR GIFTS:** Everybody, from the time they were little, was given a gift. A gift of life, for one thing. But we all have our very own gifts. I don't believe that there's anybody that's ever told me that they don't have any. I got a lot of them. I bead. I make clothes. I have done a lot of stuff. I was a musician. I could play violin, piano, plucked a banjo, guitar. I sang all over the country. I was a racecar driver. I was a boxer. I did a lot of things. When the sun goes down, feel good about your accomplishments. Use your gifts for the good of you and others.
2. **LAUGHTER AND PLAY:** How do you use your time? Every day you need time to romp and play. Tickle the funny bone. Love to laugh – it's the best medicine! You know your immune system goes down if you don't put a little sunshine in it. When you are laughing, you are up in the sunshine belt, and your body heals, and your mind comes along. Laughter. Lightness of spirit. It's the cheapest medicine we've got. You owe it to your body to give it a good laugh at least once a day.
3. **CHORES:** Give children important tasks that matter and help the family, daily tasks such as taking out trash, feeding chickens, brushing the dog, helping with meals, washing the dishes, filling the water bottles.
4. **RESPECT:** It's a great thing to have respect for yourself. If you have respect for yourself, then you have complete control over your behavior and you're doing well with it. Learn to stop bias and prejudice; stop being judgmental about yourself and your neighbors.
5. **MUSIC:** Learn how to play music, because life is a beautiful thing if you can put some music to it. It will make you fit in and belong anywhere you go. If you can teach your children to sing, or if you can give them a musical instrument, you are creating good qualities inside of them.

Chapter Two: *In Six Directions*

6. **BEHAVIOR:** Never take something that does not belong to you. Learn how to wash and clean yourself. Know the value of cleanliness. Learn how to eat with good manners. Whatever you are doing, do it right or do it over. Learn how to sit and be quiet with a book, or a pencil and tablet, as there are times for quiet in a household.
7. **KINDNESS:** Kind people are treated with kindness. No one can give you kindness, laughter, smiles, joy, compassion, and all this inside stuff; that's your inside job. So, if you want any of these kinds of things, kindness and love, respect, and all this, you have to have it so can give it away to anybody you meet. Teach your children kindness, respect, love, and that life is sacred. If a child can understand kindness, and can grasp ahold of what kindness means, if you have kindness in you, you will always be treated kindly. Talk to your children about all the good things they need to have inside of them, because when you teach that to your children, others will treat them with kindness, love, and respect.
8. **RECIPROCITY:** Teach children how to give back. Allow opportunities for children to not only receive, but to also offer help, kindness, love, and service to others.
9. **PARENTING:** How you treat your child with love is one of the greatest gifts that they will pick up. Every child needs love, and that is why you bring them into this world. Hug your child as much as you can. Dads too. When you're a mom, it's like you are in a world that you have never been in before. You have that feeling. Every day a new experience, being a mother. You are always aware, because you are guarding, you're watching, you're listening to what is around your child. It is a simple thing to hold your child and say, I love you. Teach them that you love them. Show them that you love them. Your behavior is louder than words.
10. **TEACHING:** A teacher is a parent away from home. A parent is a teacher away from school. Take every opportunity to show love to children by teaching them something new, something fun, and something important. Every moment is a teaching moment.

Chapter Three: *Circle Five Times*

11. **ANCESTORS:** Listen to the stories of your grandparents and great-grandparents. They are the glue of your family. Listen to them. They know the stories, and they have the knowledge. Honor your ancestors, because it took all of them to make who

you are. It took all those old ones to make who I am, and I am grateful it took all of them. You think about all the Old Ones it took to make you, and you give thanks to them – mothers, fathers, grandmas, grandpas, great grandmas, and great grandpas – all the way back to your family’s beginnings – and give thanks for all those lives that are inside of you, not yet born.

12. HOME: You know, wherever my feet put me down, I am home. I am with family.
13. NUTRITION: Baby your stomach. It’s important what goes down your mouth. Make sure your system is getting enough of the good stuff. Eat organic. Teach your children to read the labels. Make sure you are putting good stuff into your mouth.
14. CAREGIVING: Even when you are very young, you can take care of something alive. Start with four plants. Watch them grow as you do. Add more plants with each birthday. Start a garden that grows in size as you grow in years. Then care for wild birds by throwing them seed. Then care for family animals, like chickens, cats, and dogs.
14. MOTHER EARTH: The greatest impact that we adults can have is to make a better path for the little ones coming after us. Take care of the garbage, and put it in a good place. You can’t throw garbage out the car window, because that is your Mother Earth out there. You would be throwing that on her face. There is always a proper place for garbage. It is our job as human beings to keep the balance and to watch out for the habitat of all life. We have to learn to do things in moderation and balance.

Chapter Four: *The Great Animal*

16. THINKIN’ THING: It is not the adults that own the world, it’s the children. We have this “thinkin’ thing” on the top of our head, called our brain. How you run that brain is how you do your life every day. It’s a powerful tool.
17. CHOICES: You always have a choice, no matter who you are. Whatever you do, think of the consequences of the choices you make. Be grateful, for this life, and for your choices.
18. LOSS: Learn to deal with loss. Respect people and creatures when they die. There is life and there is death. Talk about it. Be gentle with those who are grieving.

19. **FORGIVENESS:** Practice forgiveness, because we can only change this moment, right now. We cannot change the past, even what happened one minute ago, or one hour ago, or one decade ago.
20. **LIFE:** Wake up; think about tomorrow. It isn't here yet, but if you run today right, tomorrow will come. Everything that has life can only do one day at a time. Stop getting mad. It's hard on your heart. You've got other things to do. You've only got from the time you get up in the morning to the time you lay your head down at night to do good. You just have to keep on moving. Take charge of your life; it's your job. The privileges we have are great and many. Use them wisely for your life and for your longevity.

Chapter Five: *Stories and Stars*

21. **YOUR NAME:** Your given name is important. Taowhywee means "morning star" which is my indigenous name. My great-grandmother Margaret, who was also called Morning Star, gave this name to me.
22. **LOVE:** Do the best you know how, with gratitude and love. Love is the whole thing behind everything. When I lie down, I know that all is well when I go to sleep, because I have that four-letter-word: LOVE. Simple. That is our job as parents, to teach our kids. What is love? Actions. Action for love is what you teach a kid. Hug. Say, "I love you."
23. **GRATITUDE:** Every day say, "Thank you for who I am." Be grateful to wake up in the morning and say, "Ah ha! One more day." Learn to be grateful for just one day at a time. That's all we can do.
24. **TRUTH:** "Walk your talk" means you are doing well in your world and you are working. You do not lie or deceive others. You speak your truth and walk your talk. From truth, we receive trust.
25. **WATER:** Guard your water. Love your water, because it's in your body. We are all water babies. We are all born in the amniotic sac in water. Water is our first medicine. Whenever you use water, give it thanks. It's in your tears, your saliva, your blood, and it coats your cells inside you so they can do their work. No matter what river, no matter what well, no matter what ocean – anything that's water, talk to it and thank it. Take a glass of water in the morning say, "Thank you for my life."

Author • Storyteller



Tish McFadden lives in Ashland, Oregon, where she is a published author (Wilderness Press, AdventureKEEN, and Anthology Works), a published songwriter (Big Round Records and Rum Tum Music), and music educator. She is also a former United States Forest Service archaeologist and historian – the career that originally introduced her to Agnes Baker Pilgrim, spiritual elder of the Takelma people. In 2016, Agnes Baker Pilgrim became the inspiration for Tish's book series and educational program, **Upriver to Morning**. Tish's occupation as an author, educator, musician, performer, and recording artist spans over thirty years. **Upriver to Morning** is a synthesis of her life's work in cultural resource preservation, writing, and music.



Thomas Doty is a native storyteller. Since 1981, he has traveled the countryside performing traditional and original stories. He learned his art and native cultural traditions from elders, including listening to Grandma Maude, the family storyteller. Doty was born in southern Oregon where he still lives. He is descended from Irish and English settlers who settled in the Rogue Valley in the 1800s, and has family connections to Takelma and Shasta ancestors of the region. He is the author of several books, including *Doty Meets Coyote*, published in 2016 by Blackstone Publishing. His

stories have been broadcast on National Public Radio, and he is the recipient of a Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award from the National American Indian Program. He has been called, "A Cultural Treasure" and "A Master of his Art."

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A Very Special Project

(from Thomas Doty's Facebook)

For over three years I have been working with author and musician-composer Tish McFadden on a native story project called **Upriver to Morning**. Tish has written a five-chapter journey-to-wisdom story based on 25 teachings of Agnes Baker Pilgrim, our Takelma elder.

This original native story follows the adventures of Salmon and friends as they journey up the Rogue River from the Pacific Ocean to its source at Boundary Springs. The project includes illustrated books, bilingual editions, songs, an audiobook, story theatre scripts in English and Spanish, curriculum materials, and more!

To launch this project into the public eye, I have created an informational page on my website. Enjoy!

From Thomas Doty's website: www.dotycoyote.com/utm



Tish McFadden performing at a benefit for
The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, October, 2018