

Tsa'Chi Creek

For Stephen and Karen Charleson
Hesquiaht Sound, Is'icc
British Columbia, August 2007

**In our absence,
present.
A blanket on the earth,
breathing...**

**Within the deep quiet
sky swallows elephant skinned balsam
lilting hemlock
fir and sitka spruce,
yew,
and
red cedar,
the tallest ancestor.**

**Down here,
green on green on brown.**

**Silence holds us
among the red salmonberry,
blue huckleberry,
awaking us to
the yellow flash of light
on Tsa'chi Creek.**

**The red-breasted sap sucker
flits between hemlock and cedar,
squirrel chatters,
jay scolds,
all singing connection
within the interwoven home
of the Hesquiaht.**

**Black bear
jesters a pause by the creek
with a puppy heart
ignoring us...
we have nothing to offer
but our curiosity.**



**Moving like silk
through the understory
he stops to toy with ripe huckleberry,
pawing tender branches
finding fruit with his tongue,
knowledge of a thousand years.
Nothing is forgotten here.**

**Cedar and hemlock
show memory scars,
long healed,
of Hesquiaht harvests.
Bark and plank
met clan needs,
revealed totems
for tribal obligations,
ritual beauty,
and canoe passage,
harmony of tradition.**

**At Tsa'chi Creek
the earth breathes
its rhythm of oxygen and light.**

**A song
seeps from a deep silence,
glimpsing an orchestra of shadow secrets.
Song of Ancestors.**



**We crouch,
rooted
among the sweet
pungence of the fern,
a downy understory.**

**Butterfly, yellow,
floating soul,
brings flakes of sunlight
to us
where
we awake in awe,
ourselves blended into your abundance,
effortlessly,

just being.**

**Our separation
is absorbed,
uniting us in nothingness,
alchemy beyond thought.**

**Tsa'Chi,
your quiet dignity
shows us
you always were
inside of us,**

**and now,
we too
can hold the earth again,**

Breathing.

just breathing.

**Dave Black
August 15, 2007**