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## Enduring Sense of American Selves

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## Enduring Sense of American Selves

**INDIAN PEAKS**

But how am I to tell you  
you who . . .  
walk up my side  
your lug sole boots sinking  
into berry seeps  
do you see how a heavier mark  
you leave than she who walked  
in deerskin not so long before you—  
in your years 12,000 or so—  
over the notch of my shoulder  
into Middle Park to summer  
with her people along Willow Creek  
in beauty all around she walked  
you follow the same path  
in beauty you walk . . .  
your voice of white fire  
not yet lit.

**ENDURING SENSE OF AMERICAN SELVES**

A window particular  
carved of water and the wind  
from an ocean of sandstone

People emerging from the earth  
four levels into the Glittering World  
four sacred mountains

Opening to the east homeland opening  
women to the north men to the south  
center-west ancestors

Changing Woman at the source  
mother and child  
corn-pollen blessings

Grandmothers Grandfathers saying  
middle-mountain horse wagons  
sheep bells clanging in the distance

Teachers testing Red Lake waters  
journaling Little Colorado poems  
walk the long walk back

Fifty arrowheads for the States  
for the Navajo Nation  
blue yellow red

Three bands of the rainbow  
at the circle's opening dwell the Diné  
people of the sacred mountains

Hesperus and Blanca  
San Francisco Peaks and Taylor  
red rock heart of the Colorado Plateau

Conquered removed returned abiding  
spiritual practical patriotic optimistic  
creative citizens of clans chapters states

Nation within a nation celebrating  
sovereignty in all its forms  
enduring sense of American selves

Free and responsible communities  
acknowledging and protecting  
each other's existence.

### LONG WALK BACK

Civil War is tearing ourselves apart  
for belonging together

*In the year of 1868 by the Treaty of Fort Sumner  
by adopting the 14th Amendment*

Peoples of the United States promise  
to become two nations returned to their homeland

*This week friends will journey back  
to their place of exile*

Founded as we were on a slave constitution only white  
property-owning males may vote

*Where Pecos snakes into the plains a cutworm place  
of saline water*

No Indian or Chinaman may bear witness against a white man  
no woman may vote