

Much like those of *Always Coming Home*, the text fragments in the following appendix may be read in any order, or not at all. They are referenced sequentially in the main text with the code [X, Y]. Most of them are extracted from *ACH*, to allow the reader a brief visit into its world, but a few are from other relevant sources.

CHAPTER ONE

There was a wall. It did not look important. It was built of un-cut rocks roughly mortared. An adult could look right over it, and even a child could climb it. Where it crossed the roadway, instead of having a gate it degenerated into mere geometry, a line, an idea of boundary. But the idea was real. It was important. For seven generations there had been nothing in the world more important than that wall.

Like all walls it was ambiguous, two-faced. What was inside it and what was outside it depended upon which side of it you were on.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*, 5) [A, 1]

THREE POEMS BY PANDORA, WRITTEN SIDEWAYS FROM THE VALLEY TO THE CITY OF MAN

THE HIGH TOWER

Noble the Tower built with stones of Will
on the rock of Law: eternal that habitation.
In the House of the One may dwell the multitudes.
But the heathen are cast out to die as animals.

So we said, very well then,
and came away from the Kingdom
to the fields of grass, where we made small houses.
We build with dirt and wood and water.
We live with the animals and plants,
eating and praising them, and die with them;

their way is our way made mindful,
a river running over stones and rocks.
We live in the low places
like water and shadows.
Our houses do not last long.
We have lost sight behind us
of the spiritual Tower.
We go on down along the river.

NEWTON DID NOT SLEEP HERE

I don't care if I am possible.
What are the bridges between us?

Wind, the rainbow,
mist, still air.

We must learn to step on the rainbow.

(Even Old Jealousy
called it a covenant.)

We must learn how to walk on the wind.

What links us (O my sister soul)
is the abyss between us.

We must learn the fog path.

What parts us (O my brother flesh)
is our kinship of one house.

We must learn to trust thin air.

NOT BEING SINGLEMINDED

No god no king no One no thing
that comes one at a time
no dupli repli multi identiplication
prolifer proliferation same after same
so no city. Sorry.
Here
is no away to throw to.
A way with no away.
Some people, not very many,
trying to keep a lot of things in mind,
going beside the water,
singing heya, hey, heya,
heya, heya.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 558) [A, 2]

CHAPTER 10

"I heard about Grand Valley." He now looked at the passenger with the respect due a survivor. He saw the dry look of the man's tanned skin, a kind of weathering to the bone, which he had seen in others who had come through the famine years in the Dust. "We shouldn't have tried to keep those mills running."

"Needed the phosphates."

"But they say, when the provisions train was stopped in

Portal, they kept the mills going, and people died of hunger on the job. Just went a little out of the way and lay down and died. Was it like that?"

The man nodded. He said nothing. The driver pressed no further, but said after a while, "I wondered what I'd do if my train ever got mobbed."

"It never did?"

"No. See, I don't carry foodstuffs; one truckload, at most, for Upper Sedep. This is an ores run. But if I got on a provisions run, and they stopped me, what would I do? Run 'em down and get the food to where it ought to go? But hell, you going to run down kids, old men? They're doing wrong but you going to kill 'em for it? I don't know!"

The straight shining rails ran under the wheels. Clouds in the west laid great

shivering mirages on the plain, the shadows of dreams of lakes gone dry ten

million years ago.

"A syndic, fellow I've known for years, he did just that, north of here, in '66. They tried to take a grain truck off his train. He backed the train, killed a couple of them before they cleared the track, they were like worms in rotten fish, thick, he said. He said, there's eight hundred people waiting for that grain truck, and how many of them might die if they don't get it? More than a couple, a lot more. So it looks like he was right. But by damn! I can't add up figures like that. I don't know if it's right to count people like you count numbers. But then, what do you do? Which ones do you kill?"

"The second year I was in Elbow, I was worklister, the mill syndicate cut rations. People doing six hours in the plant got full rations—just barely enough for that kind of work. People on half time got three-quarter rations. If they were sick or too weak to work, they got half. On half rations you couldn't get well. You couldn't get back to work. You might stay alive. I

was supposed to put people on half rations, people that were already sick. I was working full time, eight, ten hours sometimes, desk work, so I got full rations: I earned them. I earned them by making lists of who should starve.” The man’s light eyes looked ahead into the dry light. “Like you said, I was to count people.”

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*, 256) [B, 3]

CHAPTER FOUR

Abbenay was poisonless: a bare city, bright, the colors light and hard, the air pure. It was quiet. You could see it all, laid out as plain as spilt salt.

Nothing was hidden.

The squares, the austere streets, the low buildings, the unwalled workyards, were charged with vitality and activity. As Shevek walked he was constantly aware of other people walking, working, talking, faces passing, voices calling, gossiping, singing, people alive, people doing things, people afoot. Workshops and factories fronted on squares or on their open yards, and their doors were open. He passed a glassworks, the workman dipping up a great molten blob as casually as a cook serves soup. Next to it was a busy yard where foamstone was cast for construction. The gang foreman, a big woman in a smock white with dust, was supervising the pouring of a cast with a loud and splendid flow of language. After that came a small wire factory, a district laundry, a luthier’s where musical instruments were made and repaired, the district small-goods distributory, a theater, a tile works.

The activity going on in each place was fascinating, and mostly out in full view. Children were around, some involved in the work with the adults, some underfoot making mudpies, some busy with games in the street, one sitting perched up on the roof of the learning center with her nose deep in a book. The wiremaker had decorated the shopfront with patterns of vines worked in painted wire, cheerful and ornate. The blast of

steam and conversation from the wideopen doors of the laundry was overwhelming.

No doors were locked, few shut. There were no disguises and no advertisements. It was all there, all the work, all the life of the city, open to the eye and to the hand. And every now and then down Depot Street a thing came careering by clanging a bell, a vehicle crammed full of people and with people festooned on stanchions all over the outside, old women cursing heartily as it failed to slow down at their stop so they could scramble off, a little boy on a homemade tricycle pursuing it madly, electric sparks showering blue from the overhead wires at crossings; as if that quiet intense vitality of the streets built up every now and then to discharge point, and leapt the gap with a crash and a blue crackle and the smell of ozone. These were the Abbenay omnibuses, and as they passed one felt like cheering.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*, 98) [B, 4]

PANDORA WORRIES ABOUT WHAT SHE IS DOING: THE PATTERN

PANDORA DOESN’T WANT to look into the big end of the telescope and see, jewel-bright, distinct, tiny, and entire, the Valley. She shuts her eyes, she doesn’t want to see, she knows what she will see: Everything Under Control. The dolls’ house. The dolls’ country.

Pandora rushes out of the observatory with her eyes shut, grabbing, grabbing with her hands.

What does she get, besides cut hands? Bits, chunks, fragments, Shards. Pieces of the Valley, lifesize. Not at a distance, but in the hand, to be felt and held and heard. Not intellectual, but mental. Not spiritual, but heavy. A piece of madrone wood, a piece of obsidian. A piece of blue clay. Even if the bowl is

broken (and the bowl is broken), from the clay and the making and the firing and the pattern, even if the pattern is incomplete (and the pattern is incomplete), let the mind draw its energy. Let the heart complete the pattern.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 60) [D, 5]

TOWARDS AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE FUTURE

HOW THE PATIENT scientist feels when the shapeless tussocks and vague ditches under the thistles and scrub begin to take shape and come clear: this was the outer rampart—this the gateway—that was the granary! We'll dig here, and here, and after that I want to look at that lumpy bit on the slope...How they know true glory when a thin disk slips through the fingers with the sifted dirt, and cleared with the swipe of a thumb shows, stamped in the fragile bronze, the horned god! How I envy them their shovels and sieves and tape measures, all their tools, and their wise, expert hands that touch and hold what they find! Not for long; they'll give it to the museum, of course; but they did hold it for a moment in their hands. I found, at last, the town I had been hunting for. After digging in several wrong places for over a year and persisting in several blockheaded opinions—that it must be walled, with one gate, for instance—I was studying yet once more the contours of my map of the region, when it dawned as slowly and certainly as the sun itself upon me that the town was there, between the creeks, under my feet the whole time. And there was never a wall; what on earth did they need a wall for? What I had taken for the gate was the bridge across the meeting of the creeks. And the sacred buildings and the dancing place not in the center of town, for the center is the Hinge, but over in their own arm of the double spiral, the right arm, of course—there in the pasture below the barn. And so it is, and so it is.

But I can't go digging there and hope to find the curved fragment of a roof tile, the iridescent foot of a wine goblet, the ceramic cap of a solar battery, or a little coin of the gold of

California, the same, for gold rusts not, that was weighed out in Placerville and spent on whores or real estate in Frisco and then perhaps was a wedding ring awhile and then went hidden in a vault deeper than the mine it came from until all security proved illfounded, and now reshaped, this time round, into a curl-rayed sun and given in honor to a skilful artisan: no, I won't find that. It isn't here. That little sun of gold is not, as they say, dwelling in the Houses of the Earth. It is in thin air, in the wilderness that lies beyond this day and night, the Houses of the Sky. My gold is in the shards of the broken pot at the end of the rainbow. Dig there! What will you find? Seeds. Seeds of the wild oats.

I can walk in the wild oats and the thistles, between the houses of the little town I was looking for, Sinshan. I can cross the Hinge and come onto the dancing place. There, about where that Valley oak is now, will be Obsidian, in the northeast; the Blue Clay quite close to it, dug into the hillside, the northwest; closer to me, towards the center, Serpentine of the Four Directions; then the two Adobes on a curve down towards the creek, southeast, southwest. They'll have to drain this field, if they build the heyimas, as I think they do, underground, only the pyramidal roofs with their clerestories elevated, and the ornamented ends of the entrance ladder sticking out of the top. I can see that well enough. All kinds of seeing with the mind's eye is allowed me here. I can stand here in the old pasture where there's nothing but sun and rain, wild oats and thistles and crazy salsify, no cattle grazing, only deer, stand here and shut my eyes and see: the dancing place, the stepped pyramid roofs, a moon of beaten copper on a high pole over the Obsidian. If I listen, can I hear voices with the inner ear? Could you hear voices, Schliemann, in the streets of Troy? If you did, you were crazy too. The Trojans had all been dead three thousand years. Which is farther from us, farther out of reach, more silent—the dead, or the unborn? Those whose bones lie under the thistles and the dirt and the tombstones of the Past, or those who slip weightless among molecules, dwelling where a century passes in a day, among the fair folk, under the great, bell-curved Hill of Possibility? There's no way to reach that lot by digging. They have no bones. The only human bones in this pasture would be

those of the first-comers, and they did not bury here, and left no tombs or tiles or shards or walls or coins behind them. If they had a town here it was made of what the woods and fields are made of, and is gone. One may listen, but all the words of their language are gone, gone utterly.

They worked obsidian, and that stays; down there at the edge of the rich man's airport there was a workshop, and you can pick up plenty of chipped pieces, though no one has found a finished point for years. There is no other trace of them. They owned their Valley very lightly, with easy hands. They walked softly here. So will the others, the ones I seek.

The only way I can think to find them, the only archaeology that might be practical, is as follows: You take your child or grandchild in your arms, or borrow a young baby, not a year old yet, and go down into the wild oats in the field below the barn. Stand under the oak on the last slope of the hill, facing the creek. Stand quietly. Perhaps the baby will see something, or hear a voice, or speak to somebody there, somebody from home.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 3) [D, 6]

**PANDORA CONVERSES WITH THE ARCHIVIST OF
THE LIBRARY OF THE MADRONE LODGE AT WAKWA-
HA-NA**

PANDORA: Niece, this is a beautiful library!

ARCHIVIST: In the town at the Springs of the River, it is appropriate that the library be beautiful.

PAN: This looks like a rare-book cabinet.

ARC: Old books, fragile ones. Here, this scroll—what strong calligraphy. And good materials. Linen paper; it hasn't darkened at all. This is milkweed paper, here. A good texture!

PAN: How old is the scroll?

ARC: Oh, four hundred years maybe, five hundred.

PAN: Like a Gutenberg Bible to us. Do you have a lot of such old books and scrolls, then?

ARC: Well, more here than anywhere else. Very old things are venerable, aren't they. So people bring things here when they get very old. Some of it's rubbish.

PAN: How do you decide what to keep and what to throwaway? The library really isn't very large, when you consider how much writing goes on here in the Valley—

ARC: Oh, there's no end to the making of books.

PAN: And people give writings to their heyimas as offerings—

ARC: All gifts are sacred.

PAN: So the libraries would all get to be enormous, if you didn't throw most of the books and things out. But how do you decide what to keep and what to destroy?

ARC: It's difficult. It's arbitrary, unjust, and exciting. We clear out the heyimas libraries every few years. Here in the Madrone of Wakwaha the lodge has destruction ceremonies yearly, between the Grass and the Sun dances. They're secret. Members only. A kind of orgy. A fit of housecleaning—the nesting instinct, the collecting drive, turned inside out, reversed. Unhoarding.

PAN: You destroy valuable books?

ARC: Oh, yes. Who wants to be buried under them?

PAN: But you could keep important documents and valuable literary works in electronic storage, at the Exchange, where they don't take up any room—

ARC: The City of Mind does that. They want a copy of everything. We give them some. What is "room"—is it only a piece of space?

PAN: But intangibles—information—

ARC: Tangible or intangible, either you keep a thing or you give it. We find it safer to give it.

PAN: But that's the point of information storage and retrieval systems! The material is kept for anyone who wants or needs it. Information is passed on—the central act of human culture.

ARC: "Keeping grows; giving flows." Giving involves a good deal of discrimination; as a business it requires a more disciplined intelligence than keeping, perhaps. Disciplined people come here, Oak Lodge people, historians, learned people, scribes and reciters and writers, they're always here, like those four, you see, going through the books, copying out what they want, annotating. Books no one reads go; books people read go after a while. But they all go. Books are mortal. They die. A book is an act; it takes place in time, not just in space. It is not information, but relation.

PAN: This is the kind of conversation they always have in utopia. I set you up and then you give interesting, eloquent, and almost entirely convincing replies. Surely we can do better than that!

ARC: Well, I don't know, aunt. What if I asked the questions? What if I asked you if you had considered my peculiar use of the word "safe," and if you had considered the danger of storing up information as you do in your society?

PAN: Well, I—

ARC: Who controls the storage and the retrieval? To what extent is the material there for anyone who wants and needs it, and to what extent is it "there" only for those who have the information that it is there, the education to obtain that information, and the power to get that education? How many people in your society are literate? How many are computer-competent? How many of them have the competence to use libraries and electronic information storage systems? How much real information is available to ordinary, nongovernment, nonmilitary, non-specialist, nonrich people? What does "classified" mean? What do shredders shred? What does money buy? In a State, even a

democracy, where power is hierarchic, how can you prevent the storage of information from becoming yet another source of power to the powerful—another piston in the great machine?

PAN: Niece, you're a damned Luddite.

ARC: No, I'm not. I like machines. My washing machine is an old friend. The printing press here is rather more than a friend. Look; when Mines died last year I printed this poem of his, thirty copies, for people to take home and to give to the hey-imas, here, this is the last copy.

PAN: It's a nice job. But you cheated. You didn't ask a question, you asked a rhetorical question.

ARC: Well, you know, people who live in cultures that have an oral literature as well as a written literature get a good deal of practice in rhetoric. But my question wasn't just a trick. How do you keep information yet keep it from being the property of the powerful?

PAN: Through not having censorship. Having free public libraries. Teaching people to read. And to use computers, to plug into the sources. Press, radio, television not fundamentally dependent on government or advertisers. I don't know. It keeps getting harder.

ARC: I didn't mean to make you sad, aunt.

PAN: I never did like smartass utopians. Always so much healthier and saner and sounder and fitter and kinder and tougher and wiser and righter than me and my family and friends. People who have the answers are boring, niece. Boring, boring, boring.

ARC: But I have no answers and this isn't utopia, aunt!

PAN: The hell it ain't.

ARC: This is a mere dream dreamed in a bad time, an Up Yours to the people who ride snowmobiles, make nuclear weapons, and run prison camps by a middle-aged housewife, a critique of civilisation possible only to the civilised, an affirmation pretending to be a rejection, a glass of milk for the soul ulcered by

acid rain, a piece of pacifist jeanjacquerie, and a cannibal dance among the savages in the ungodly garden of the farthest West.

PAN: You can't talk that way!

ARC: True.

PAN: Go sing heya, like any savage.

ARC: Only if you'll sing with me.

PAN: I don't know how to sing heya.

ARC: I'll teach you, aunt.

PAN: I'll learn, niece.

PANDORA AND THE ARCHIVIST SING:

Heya, heya, hey,

heya, heya.

Heya, hey, heya,

heya, heya.

Hey, heya, heya,

heya, heya.

Heya, heya, hey,

heya, heya.

(That is the five/four heya sung four times. It may be sung four times, or five times, or nine times, or as many times as you like, or not

at all.)

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 359) [D, 7]

PANDORA GENTLY TO THE GENTLE READER

WHEN I TAKE you to the Valley, you'll see the blue hills on the left and the blue hills on the right, the rainbow and the vineyards under the rainbow late in the rainy season, and maybe you'll say, "There it is, that's it!" But I'll say, "A little farther." We'll go on, I hope, and you'll see the roofs of the little towns and the hillsides yellow with wild oats, a buzzard soaring and a woman singing by the shallows of a creek in the dry season, and maybe you'll say, "Let's stop here, this is it!" But I'll say, "A little farther yet." We'll go on, and you'll hear the quail calling on the mountain by the springs of the river, and looking back you'll see the river running downward through the wild hills behind, below, and you'll say, "Isn't that it, the Valley?" And all I will be able to say is, "Drink this water of the spring, rest here awhile, we have a long way yet to go, and I can't go without you."

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 389) [D, 8]

THE SERPENTINE CODEX

This text provides a compact summary of the structure of society, the year, and the universe, as perceived by the people of the Valley.

The beings or creatures that are said to live in the Five Houses of Earth and are called Earth People include the earth itself, rocks and dirt and geological formations, the moon, all springs, streams, and lakes of fresh water, all human beings currently alive, game animals, domestic animals, individual animals, domestic and ground-dwelling birds, and all plants that are gathered, planted, or used by human beings.

The people of the Sky, called Four-House People, Sky People, Rainbow People, include the sun and stars, the oceans, wild animals not hunted as game, all animals, plants, and persons considered as the species rather than as an individual, human beings considered as a tribe, people, or species, all people

and beings in dreams, visions, and stories, most kinds of birds, the dead, and the unborn.

The chart following shows the Nine Houses, the color and direction associated with each, the annual festival for which each is responsible, and the Lodges, Societies, and Arts associated with each. The chart is schematic and the discussion that follows is simplistic. It may serve as a gloss to certain words, phrases, and unstated assumptions in the Valley texts in this book, and an introduction to their thinking and the themes of their arts. But it is important to know that there is no Valley original for this chart, or anything like it. Although the numbers four, five, and nine, and the representation of the Nine Houses, and their arrangement in the *heyiya-if* or hinged spiral, and the colors, directions, seasons, creatures associated with the Houses are constant motifs of Valley art and thought, and the division between Earth and Sky, mortality and nonmortality, is connected with a fundamental grammatical maneuver of the language (Earth and Sky Modes), still the actual listing and charting of the nine divisions and their various members and functions would strike the Valley mind as somewhat childish and—in fixing and “locking” the information—as risky and inappropriate.

The Five Houses of Earth were the basic divisions of the society, the Kesh equivalent of clan or moiety. Non-Kesh were called no-House people. The Houses were matrilineal and exogamous. All human members of a House were considered first-degree kin, with whom sexual relations were inappropriate (see the section on “Kinfolk”).

The Houses were not arranged in any hierarchy of power, value, etc., nor was there rivalry among them for status; they were called First, Second, etc., House, but numerical order carried absolutely no implication of ranking, rating, or importance. Some rivalry did attach to the festivals held annually by each House—not so much among the five Houses, as within them in the nine towns. The word I usually translate as dance—*wakwa*—may also mean rite, mystery, ceremony, celebration. The annual round of the *wakwa* constellates the Valley year:

Along in November when the hills begin to turn green the Red Adobe dances the Grass. At the winter solstice all nine Houses dance the Sun. At the equinox of spring, the Five Houses dance the Sky and the Four Houses dance the Earth, the whole dance being called the World. At the second full moon after this, the Obsidian dances the Moon. At the summer solstice and after it, the Serpentine dances the Summer. In early or mid-August, the Blue Clay dances the Water at springs, pools, and streams. At the autumnal equinox, the Yellow Adobe dances the Wine, or Getting Drunk.

These seven great *wakwa* may be found pictorially arranged as the *heyiya-if*, with the World in the center (the Hinge), flanked by Sun and Moon immediately to left and right, Grass and Summer next outward, and Wine and Water at the left and right ends of the figure. Such a nonsequential image of the year is characteristic of Valley chronography. And since the two-season climate did not lend itself to dating by season, in conversation events were usually referred to in relation to the *wakwa*: before the Grass, between Water and Wine, after the Moon. (The section “Time and the City” [F, 12] pursues Valley ideas of time.)

The material manifestation of each of the Five Houses in each of the nine towns was the *heyimas*. Finding all such translations as church, temple, shrine, lodge misleading, I use the Kesh word in this book. It is formed of the elements *heya*, *heyiya*—the connotations of which include sacredness, hinge, connection, spiral, center, praise, and change—and *ma*, house.

The *heyiya-if*, two spirals centered upon the same (empty) space, was the material or visual representation of the idea of *heyiya*. Varied and elaborated in countless ways, the *heyiya-if* was a choreographic and gestural element in dance, and the shape of the stage and the movement of the staging in drama were based upon it; it was an organisational device in town planning, in graphic and sculptural forms, in decoration, and in the design of musical instruments; it served as a subject of meditation and as an inexhaustible metaphor. It was the visual form of an idea which pervaded the thought and culture of the Valley.

In a Valley town everybody had two houses: the house you lived in, your dwelling-place, in the Left Arm of the double-spiral-shaped town; and in the Right Arm, your House, the *heyimas*. In the household, you lived with your kinfolk by blood or by marriage; in the *heyimas* you met with your greater and permanent family. The *heyimas* was a center of worship, instruction, training, and study, a meetinghouse, a political forum, a workshop, a library, archive, and museum, a clearinghouse, an orphanage, hotel, hospice, refuge, resource center, and the principal center of economic control and management for the community, both internally and in regard to trade with other Kesh towns or outside the Valley. In the smaller towns the *heyimas* was a large, five-sided, underground chamber, subdivided with partitions, with a low, four-sided, pyramidal roof showing aboveground. Stairways went up the roof at the corners, and the entrance was by skylight and ladder. In Telina and Kastoha both the underground rooms and the ornamented roofs were very much larger; and in Wakwaha, on the Mountain, the five *heyimas* were great underground complexes, their splendid roof-pyramids surrounded by secondary buildings and plazas. The public area within the curve of dwelling-houses was called the common place; that within the curve of the five *heyimas* was called the dancing place.

The *heyimas* buildings are, as you please, the Five Houses, or material manifestations of them, or representations of them. Of the Four Houses, the principal material manifestations are meteorological: rain for the Sixth House, clouds, fog, and mist for the Seventh, wind for the Eighth, and for the Ninth House still air, thin air, which is also called breath. The other great symbols of the Four Houses, Bear, Puma, Coyote, Hawk, may be seen as mythological devices, imaginative configurations, not to be taken literally; yet one cannot discount the literal aspect. To go into Coyote's House is to be changed. Again, the Four Houses are the Houses of Death, Dream, Wilderness, Eternity. All these aspects interconnect, so that rain, the bear, and death may each symbolise either of the others; verbal and iconographic imagery flourish with this interlinking. The whole system is profoundly metaphorical. To limit it to any other mode would be,

in the judgment of the people of the Valley, superstition. It is for this reason that I do not refer to the system of the Nine Houses as a religion or the *heyimas* as religious houses, despite the obvious and continuous relation of Valley living and thinking with the sacred. They had no god; they had no gods; they had no faith. What they appear to have had is a working metaphor. The idea that comes nearest the center of the vision is the House; the sign is the hinged spiral or *heyiya-if*; the word is the word of praise and change, the word at the center, *heya!*

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 51) [E, 9]

TEACHING SONGS: ORDERS AND DANCES OF THE EARTH AND SKY

Such songs were spoken or chanted to the tongue-drum, often with much repetition of lines or words, as part of children's education in the heyimas. They varied from House to House and from town to town; this set is from the Serpentine of Madidinou.

I. THE TOWN OF EARTH

Adobe, blue clay, serpentine, obsidian:

floors and walls

of the houses of the town of earth.

Cloud, rain, wind, air:

windows and roofs

of the houses of the town of earth.

Under floorboards, under cellars,

above roofs, above chimneys,

to the left of the right hand,

to the right of the left hand,
north of the future, south of the past,
earlier than east, later than west,
outside the walls:
the limitless,
the wilderness,
the mountains and rivers of being,
the valley of possibility.

II. THE ROUND TOWN

Ballround, earth-town.
Each street meets
itself at length.
Old are the roads,
long are the ways,
wide are the waters.
Whale swims west returning east,
tern flies north returning south,
rain falls to rise, sparks rise to fall.
Mind may hold the whole
but on foot walking we do not come
to the beginning end of the street.
The hills are steep,
the years are steep,

deep are the waters.
In the round town
it is a long way home.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 454) [E, 10]

THREE SHORT POEMS

THE POEMS IN this group are spoken or written offerings to the author's heyimas or lodge.

The Kesh idea of property was so different from ours that any mention of it entails explanations. What one made, or gained, or owned, in the Valley, belonged to one; but one belonged to one's House, and house, and town, and people. Wealth consisted not in things but in an act: the act of giving.

Poets owned the poems they made, but the poem really did not exist until it was given, shared, performed. The identity of owning and giving is perhaps easier to see when what is involved is a poem, or a drawing, or a piece of music, or a prayer. The Kesh, however, saw it as holding equally true for all property.

IN FIRST HOLLOW

A great whicker of air,
the flicker's wingbeats.
The hawk of Sinshan cries
like a dream going away.

A NINTH HOUSE DAY

Between my eyes and the sun
windless clearness.
A buzzard moves

high up in this house
of the still air.
On the rock wall
a lizard does not move.
There is no roof.

THE VALLEY OAK

(FOURS)

No one has built
so beautiful
a house as this
great heyimas
deep-towering.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 288) [E, 11]

LONG NAMES OF HOUSES

Often the houses of the nine towns of the Valley had quite long names, which I have sometimes shortened in translation, through cowardice. I was afraid that these long names—Rain Falling Straight Down House, Here With Its Back to the Vineyards House, Danced the Sun a Hundred Times House—might sound quaint, that they might sound “primitive.” I was afraid that people who lived in houses with names like that could not be taken seriously by people who live in places with names like Chelsea Manors Estate, An Adult Community, or Loma Lake Acres East, a Planned Recreation Development. Though the adage runs the other way, the unfamiliar also risks contempt.

The length of some of these names might also make

them seem improbable; would anybody actually say, “Do come see us, we live in Nine Buzzards Over the Mountain House in Kastóha-na!” In fact, they probably wouldn’t, since anyone they talked to would very likely know where they lived. In the uncommon event of inviting strangers, they would mention the house’s location or looks—“in the southeast arm, with red doors on the porches”—by way of address, as we might say, “2116½ Garden Court Drive, you take the second San Mateo exit going north and turn right at the third stop light and go two blocks.”

Anyhow, the people of the Valley had no objection to long names. They liked them. Perhaps they enjoyed the fact that they had plenty of time to say them. They were not ashamed of having time. They lacked drive, that great urge to get done which powers us, sending us forward, ever forward ever faster, reducing San Francisco of the slow settlers to Frisco and Chicago of the even slower natives to Chi and the town of the mission of our lady of the angels becomes Los Angeles, but that takes too long so it becomes L.A., but jets go faster than we do so we use their language and call it LAX, because what we want is to move on quick, to go fast, get through, be done, done with everything. To get it over with, that’s what we want. But the people who lived in the Valley and gave interminable names to their houses were in no hurry.

It is hard for us to conceive, harder to approve, of a serious adult person not in a hurry. Not being in a hurry is for infants, people over eighty, bums, and the Third World. Hurry is the essence of city, the very soul. There is no civilisation without hurry, without keeping ahead. The hurry may lurk invisible, contradicted by the indolent pose of the loungeur at the bar or the lazy gait of the stroller along the hotel walkway, but it is there, in the terrific engines of the TWA or BSA supersonic planes that brought her from Rio, him from Rome, here to NY, NY for the IGPSA conference on implementation of GEPS, and will rush them back tomorrow, hurrying across the world of cities where there is no tense left but the present tense, every second and tenth of a second and millisecond and nanosecond clocked, the readout moving always a little faster, and the

A rising. Mozart's A was a hundred and forty cycles a second, so Mozart's piano is out of tune with all our orchestras and singers. Our A is a hundred and sixty, because the instruments sound more brilliant tuned up higher, as they all rise like sirens towards the final scream. There is nothing to be done. There is no way to heighten the pitch of the instruments of the Valley, no way to abbreviate their institutions and addresses and names to capital letters, no way to get them to move ahead.

As their names tended to spread out and take time to say or write, so the houses themselves tended to take up room and elaborate themselves, a porch added on here, a wing there, so that the essentially simple plan might, over the slow lapse of years, burgeon and bulge and exfoliate like an old oak tree vastly gnarled and spacious. The basic plan was usually an oblong or a shallow V shape, the foundation being of half-sunk fieldstone on which two storeys in stone, adobe brick, or wood were built. Washrooms, workrooms, storage rooms, and such were in the basement. The first and second floors—they counted down from the roof—were divided into hearthrooms, kitchens, and sleeping rooms and porches, four or five rooms to a floor in the small houses, twelve or fifteen in the big ones. Such a house might contain one numerous household, or as many as five different households; generally two or three households shared a house, often for generations. Each family had at least one private entrance, so there might be several outside staircases to the upper and lower porches and balconies. It was on these porches that most of the life of the house went on, except in cold weather.

Many houses had no front and back: the front of the top floor might be the back of one ground-floor household and the side of the other—it depended on where your front door was. The foundation storey was often set out to get the light on the northwest side, and retired under the upper floor and balconies for summer shade on the southeast side, which gave such houses a lurching look; but they were soundly planned and built, and often stood for centuries.

A house was oriented to the local terrain and lightfall—

hillslopes, other houses, trees, creeks, shade and sun patterns—and secondarily to the compass, the corners pointing N, E, S, W, which meant that the walls faced the preferred half-directions.

The siting of the house was determined by the ideal plan of the town—the heyiya-if figure. Each house made part of that pattern, an element of the Left Arm curving to meet the Right Arm of the five heyimas buildings at the Hinge of the Town—which was always running water or a well. The pattern was not neat or orderly (neither was the town), and nothing was in rows; yet the shape was there, and was felt, the interlocked curves springing from/returning to the center. In Kastóhana and Telína-na there were several Left Arms, for to build so many houses in a single curve would either have crammed them together or strung them out inconveniently.

The area within the loose curve of the houses, planted with some trees and perhaps containing a few sheds or booths, but mostly left open and mostly either muddy or dusty, was the common place of the town. The corresponding empty area within the curve of the five heyimas on the Right Arm of town was called the dancing place. But both places were common, and they danced in both.

One town of the nine did not quite fit this description. Tachas Touchas was (notoriously) settled by “people from outside”—from the northwest, traditionally. Certainly the village architecture showed a likeness to the styles of towns far north of the Valley on the west-running rivers of the redwood lands. The houses of Tachas Touchas were all wood, redwood or cedar, with shallow cellars, and no use of adobe. They stood so close that they shared rain-gutters, in a tight curve, all facing inward. The Hinge of the town was a lively falls in Shasash Creek, and the Right Arm was laid out and built conventionally. But the circle of dark, tall, steep-roofed houses under the sheer rise of Bone Mountain, black-green with fir, was somberly impressive and quite different from any other Valley town. Disapproval of the “tightness” of the town plan was frequently expressed outside it; inside it, the people of Tachas Touchas rebuilt, when, from century to century, a house must be taken down and re-

placed, in their immemorial and peculiar fashion; which perhaps did express or encourage a “tight,” aloof, inturned quality in the character and manners of the townsfolk.

Wakwaha, at the other end of the Valley world, was also exceptional; being the Benares, Rome, or Mecca of the Valley, much visited by people from the other towns, its Left Arm included five long, single-storey hostels, maintained by the Five Houses, where visitors could housekeep for a few days or for months; and the Right Arm took in more area than the Left, containing not only the five great heyimas, but a dozen or more buildings of public and sacred use and significance, such as the Archives, the Conservatory, and the Theater. The Hinge of Wakwaha was one of the high sources of the Na, a beautiful steady spring rising from the volcanic rocks of a deep canyon-head of the Mountain. The site was a difficult one to put a fair-sized town on, but the steep, uneven ground and the sweep of the mountain slopes and canyon walls above and below the town gave it both grandeur and charm. Some of the houses of Wakwaha were very old, built of the stone they stood on and seeming to have grown from it; the madrones that shaded their roofs and walled courts were immense, but the walls had been there long before the trees. They had old, long names, these houses. Rising Up From Where the Quarrel Ended was one of them. Another was called Jackrabbit’s Grandmother’s Hole House. But then some equally old had very short names; there was a house called Wind, a house called High. And others had names that had lost their meaning over the years, worn away by the changing of the language—Angrawad House, Oufechohe House.

Though people in a small society may talk slowly, their language is likely to change quickly; even written, it keeps flowing, leaving the old spellings and usages high and dry. So the names of the nine towns, being old, had no translatable “meaning,” except for Wakwaha-na, the town at the holy spring of the Na (but it could also mean the dancing way of the Na). Chúkúlmas probably meant Live Oak House originally, and the -mal- in Ounmalin is hill or hillock. The people of Tachas Touchas insisted, without offering evidence, that the name of their

town in their forgotten northern tongue meant Where the Bear Sat Down. But why Sinshan and its mountain were Sinshan, or what Kastóha meant and why it changed, as it apparently had done, from Hastóha, and why the oldest house in Madídínou was called Madídínou Animoun, nobody knew. No doubt the etymologies could have been traced from data in the Memory Banks of the City of Mind, with a few weeks or months of work at the Exchange. But what for? Need every word be translated? Sometimes the untranslated word might serve to remind us that language is not meaning, that intelligibility is an element of it only, a function. The untranslated word or name is not functional, It sits there. Written, it is a row of letters, which spoken with a more or less wild guess at the pronunciation produces a complex of phonemes, a more or less musical and interesting sound, a noise, a thing. The untranslated word is like a rock, a piece of wood. Its use, its meaning, is not rational, definite, and limited, but concrete, potential, and infinite. To start with, all the words we say are untranslated words.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 469) [F, 12]

ORGANIZATION OF TOWNS

Yurok houses, or their sites, had names descriptive of their position, topography, size, frontage, or ceremonial function. Many of the designations reappear in village after village. The names of abandoned houses were remembered for at least a lifetime, perhaps nearly as long as the pit remained visible. If a family grew and a son or married-in son-in-law erected a new dwelling adjacent to the old, the original name applied to both houses. Sweat houses were usually but not always called by the same name as the house to whose master they belonged, and seem normally to have been built close by.

The habit of naming house sites appears to have been restricted to northwestern California. It is but one instance of many of the intensive localization of life in this region, of its deep rooting in the soil. The origin of the custom is scarcely

discernible, but the Yurok made frequent use of it to designate persons without naming them. A person referred to as “the old man of ‘Trail Descends” would be absolutely defined to his village mates, and even in distant villages might be better known by that description than by his personal appellation.

These are the houses of Rekwoi : Oregok (“where rolls down,” a game), Ketsketl, Oslok, Layekw (“trail”) or Erkigeri (where they prepared for dancing), Ple’l (“large,” in which the Jumping dance was begun), Hokome’r (“end”), Knau, Ma’a, Te’wira, Ma’a-wono (“up-hill from Ma’a”), Sepora (“open place, flat”), Perkweri (“behind the door”), Kekomeroi (“end, last”), Kiwogi (“in middle”), Ernerkw (“narrow”), Kitiekau (“on the brink”), Tewolek-repau (“facing the ocean”), Howey-iro’i, Olige’l Ma’ahito (“this side of Ma’a”), Nekerai. Of these, Ketsketl, Oslok, Layekw, Knau, Ma’a, Te’wira, Sepora, Kiwogi and Howiyero’i had sweat houses at one time or another; besides which there were sweat houses known as Tetl, Tsa’at’or-ka’i, and Ki’mo’le’n (“ugly, old”), the last being the sweat house used in the Jumping dance.

(Alfred Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, 469) [F, 13]

THE TOWN OF CHUMO

An oral history, related by Patience of Forty-Five Deer House in Teli-na-na.

Chumo didn’t use to be there. There was a town called Varred or Berred, on the inside of the northeastern hills, farther to the east than Chumo is. It was somewhere up in the slopes of the dry hills there, and around the dancing place of that town there were hot springs, four of them steady and one intermittent. They had that sacred water for the heyimas and for heating, but they had to pipe their water for the houses and barns and fields from Big Rattlesnake Creek. They had storage

pools and reservoirs, aqueducts, and pumps. People say you can find stonework all along Little Rattlesnake Creek and back up Tongue Draw that’s left from their aqueducts. The town was destroyed in a fire that swept over the northeast range out of Shai Valley, burning both forest and grass. There are histories and laments in the libraries about the burning of that town and the wild and domestic people that were caught in the fire and burned. Most of the human people got warning in time, before the fire came over the range. It went forward so fast, on a great wind out of the northeast, that even birds could not escape it. They fell burning from the air.

After the plants began to grow again there and the mice and other small peoples came back, the human people began to build the town back in the same place. Some of them said it was a bad idea, since the forest was gone, and going backwards is a bad beginning, but others said, “Our springs are there, so the town should begin there again.” They were digging out the Serpentine heyimas, hauling out the roofbeams and the roof that had burned and fallen in, when there was an earthquake at the place and time where they were. The ground split wide open along the line of the hot springs and then closed together again, swallowing the springs. That water never came up into the light again. Two people who had been working to clear out the heyimas were killed by the roofbeams and earth falling back in and down upon them.

After that the human people left the town to the wild people, and stayed in summerhouses or built small houses at different places or went to other towns, and it seemed as if there would be no more town in those hard hills. But a woman was herding sheep in a meadow called Chumo and she saw a lot of the old people who had lived and died in Berred dancing in that meadow. They came and danced there in the early morning, before sunrise. She told others about it, and they agreed together to make their town there. It was a convenient place, since they had begun keeping their sheep up on Sheep Mountain. So they made the dancing place and danced on it, and dug and built the heyimas, and crossed the hinge at Chumo Creek, and made their town there. They had a very famous Sun Dance

there, the first winter of that town. All the people that had lived in the old town Berred, they said, that were Sky people, came to dance with the Earth people in Chumo, and they could hear the singing between their songs.

A lot of Chumo people don't live inside the town. It's a long-armed town, as they say. They have their houses out a long way from the common place, some of them, down along Chumo Creek and clear over to Rattlesnake Creek, near where the old town was before the fire.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 148) [F, 14]

TIME IN THE VALLEY

The only person in the Exchange at the moment is Gather, a man of sixty, whose lifelong passion has been the retrieval of data concerning certain doings of human beings in the Valley of the Na. At last we have met a historically minded person, and now we'll get somewhere! But there are problems. Gather gladly shares with us the programs he has worked out for obtaining data—overwhelming quantities of data—and will even help us get paper if we want it all printed out so we can take it home to read; but his approach to the material is not historical. His principle of ordering the information he obtains is not even chronological. To him, it appears, chronology is an essentially artificial, almost an arbitrary arrangement of events—an alphabet as opposed to a sentence.

Surely the Memory Banks are chronologically, ordered? Yes, that is one system of data classification; but there are so many systems, all cross-indexed, that unless you know how to limit your program very cannily, a request for the data in chronological order on even a minor cultural phenomenon, say the etymology of the word *ganais*, or the methods of leaching the tannin from acorns, may result in several hundred pages of print-out, almost entirely statistical. Where in all the data is the information? Gather has spent his life finding out how to find out.

His interest is domestic architecture. He is a member of the Wood Art. It seems he has not done much building; his interest is intellectual, almost abstract, a fascination with the formal significance and occurrence of certain architectural elements and proportions.

It is these he seeks through the thousands of years of accumulated data, the billions of trillions of bits in the Memory.

He brings onto the display for us a beautiful computer-generated plan of a house. The display is not in dots of light on green jello, but crisp black on matte white, like an unusually well-printed page, and is about a yard square; if color display were relevant, it would be in color. The image revolves till he holds it at the angle he wants. What he hopes we will see is a certain proportion, the mathematical scheme of a certain building, which he adores as an ideal. We would need a good deal of training to see that, but we can see that this house is beautiful, and please him by saying so; and also that it is quite different from any house we have seen in the Valley. So after a while we inquire, "When was this house built?"

"Oh, a long time ago."

"Five hundred years?"

"Oh, a great deal more, I think—but I didn't record the length of time—" He is getting flustered, feeling our disappointment as disapproval. He thinks that we're thinking, *Just like a man!* "I'd have to reprogram for that information, of course that's no trouble, it would take a little time—I just didn't..." think the date was of any interest. We reassure him as best we can. "Here," he says, "I think I came at this set chronologically," and, hopeful of retrieving our good opinion, he brings onto the display another set of plans and elevations: a delightful little temple. "A heyimas aboveground," he explains. "That is, let me see, here, yes," and the screen flashes sets of figures faster than the untrained eye can follow, "two thousand six hundred and two years ago from now, in Rekwit, I think, yes, where Rekwit is at this time, I mean, of course."

“But Rekwit isn’t in the Valley.”

“No. Over across the Inland Sea somewhere.” Geography doesn’t interest him either. “Now here’s something quite similar the Memory gave me.” Another little temple or house.

“That’s in a place called Bab, on the old south continent, let me see, well, about four hundred years ago from now, or two thousand two hundred years ahead of that one in Rekwit. Do you see the same three-two proportion?” He is off again, and we have to let him ride his hobbyhorse awhile; his relief and pride in having got us what we wanted, a date, are infectious.

Eventually I can mount my own hobbyhorse again, asking cautiously, “How would one obtain data on primitive life here in the Valley?”

Gather scratches his jaw. “Well, in the times of primitive life, there was no Valley of the Na, I think? This continent wasn’t here...”

Ever and again one runs into this bedrock of the Valley mind, the “common knowledge” of the people, what is perhaps their true mythology: unquestioned, unreasoned (though questionable and reasonable), traditional lore: the general outlines of what we would call historical geology, including plate tectonics, of the theory of evolution, of astronomy (unsupported by any telescope capable of seeing the outer planets), and of certain elements of classical physics, along with elements of a physics not familiar to us.

After a little mutual explanation and laughter, we establish that what I meant was primitive human life. But this combination of words does not mean much to Gather, nor to the computer. When requested for assistance in obtaining information on primitive human life in the Na Valley, the Exchange, after a brief communion with itself, reports that there is no such information.

“Ask about information on primitive human life anywhere.”

With this, Gather and the Exchange begin to ask each other questions, and to get results, and presently (he keeps the display in the graphic mode, since we aren’t trained in TOK) they begin to come onto the screen: little broken hominid teeth, bones, maps of Africa with dots, maps of Asia with dashes... But that’s the Old World. What about this one? O brave new world, that has no people in it!

“They came across a land bridge,” I say doggedly, “from the other continent—”

“From the west,” Gather says, nodding. But is he talking about the same people I’m talking about?

The ones that were met by Coyote?

That mythology, that unquestioned tribal knowledge that includes plate tectonics and bacteriology, must include what I’m after.

“What were the beginnings of the way you live here, of the nine towns? When was Wakwaha founded—how long ago? What people lived here before then?”

“All the people,” Gather says, confused again. He is an insecure person who finds life difficult and retreats easily; he has spent his life much alone here, in communication without relation.

“I mean human people.” It is very hard for me to keep in mind that “people” in this language includes animals, plants, dreams, rocks, etc. “What human people lived here before your people?”

“Just our people—like you—”

“But of a different way of life—foreigners—like me.” I don’t know how to translate “culture” into his language more exactly, and the word “civilisation,” of course, won’t do at all.

“Well, ways always change. They never stay the same, even when they’re very good ways, very beautiful, like that house, you know. They stopped building like that, but then

maybe somebody else does it, in another time, another place...”

It’s hopeless. He doesn’t perceive time as a direction, let alone a progress, but as a landscape in which one may go any number of directions, or nowhere. He spatialises time; it is not an arrow, nor a river, but a house, the house he lives in. One may go from room to room, and come back; to go outside, all you have to do is open the door.

We thank Gather, and go down the steep street-path-steps of Wakwaha and past the Hinge, the Springs of the River, and into the dancing place. The roofs of the five heyimas of Wakwaha are thirty and forty feet high at the apex of the stepped and ornamented pyramid, the four-sided roof that rests upon the five-sided underground chamber. On past the dancing place in a grove of magnificent young madrone trees is the long, low, stuccoed adobe, tile-roofed Library of the Madrone Lodge of Wakwaha. The Archivist greets us.

“If you don’t have a history,” I say to her, “how am I to tell your story?”

“Is a ladder the way to climb the mountain?” she says.

I sulk.

“Listen,” says the Archivist—they’re always saying that, these people, very gently, not an order but an invitation, “listen, you’ll find or make what you need, if you need it. But consider it; be mindful; be careful. What is history?”

“A great historian of my people said: the study of Man in Time.”

There is a silence.

“You aren’t Man and you don’t live in Time,” I say bitterly. “You live in the Dream Time.”

“Always,” says the Archivist of Wakwaha. “Right through Civilisation, we have lived in the Dream Time.” And her voice is not bitter, but full of grief, bitter grief.

After a while she says, “Tell about the Condor. Let Stone Telling tell her story. That’s as near history as we have come in my day, and nearer than we’ll come again, I hope.”

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 181) [H, 15]

SOME GENERATIVE METAPHORS

Provided by the Editor as an exercise in cultural relativism, or in a fit of spring cleaning.

The Metaphor: THE HOUSE.

What it generates: STABILITY.

Universe as house: Rooms in one mansion.

Society as household: Division within unity; inclusion/exclusion.

Person as householder: Selfhood.

Medicine as protection.

Mind as householder: Belonging.

Language as self-domestication.

The relationship of human with other beings in the house: Inside/Outside.

Images of the House: Doors, windows, hearth, home, the town.

The Metaphor: THE WAY.

What it generates: CHANGE.

Universe as the way: Mystery; balance in movement.

Society as the way: Imitation of the nonhuman; inaction.

Person as wayfarer: Caution.

Medicine as keeping in balance.

Mind as wayfarer: Spontaneity. Sureness.

Language as inadequate.

The relationship of human with other beings on the way: Unity.

Images of the Way: Balance, reversal, journey, return.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 557) [H, 16]

COMING HOME TO UP THE HILL HOUSE

By Little Bear Woman.

My heart dances, dances,
along these paths it dances,
through these doors it dances,
in these rooms it dances
with the dust motes in the morning sun.
In words is the dancing,
in singing is the dancing,
in sleeping is the dancing,
in sweeping is the dancing,
cleaning up this old sunlit house.
This is a long dancing:
The silence in these rooms,
the quail calling outside,
the sunlight coming in the windows,
all the years it has been this way.
Grandmother's sister sweeping this floor,
father gazing out this window,
mother writing at this table,
I a child and my children
waking mornings in this old sunlit house.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 294) [H, 17]

A SONG TO UP THE HILL HOUSE IN SINSHAN

By Little Bear Woman.

House, this place,
house, this place,
I am getting old living in you.
House, these rooms,
house, these rooms,
my mother was young living in this place.
Northwest door,
southwest door,
maybe my daughter's granddaughter will get old here,
inside these rooms,
in this house.
Maybe I will come in sometimes after dying
by the southwest door,
by the northwest door,
of this house, this place,
into this house, this place.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*, 295) [H, 18]