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Change and Persistence in Chipped Stone Tool Traditions of the Northern Bay Area



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First, the Haida brought their ancestors home from museums around the world; now, they've come for their belongings. Marsha Lederman examines what the...

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Indigenous Storytelling at Standing Rock

Ed Rampell, Earth Island Journal: Myron Dewey is a Paiute-Temoke Shoshone filmmaker who co-directed *Awake, A Dream from Standing Rock*, which documents the struggle of Indigenous Water Protectors at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. In this candid conversation, Dewey discusses everything from Hollywood's depiction of Indigenous people, to the Standing Rock struggle, to his pending court case. [Read the Interview](#)

Fear is the main source of superstition, and one of the main sources of cruelty. To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom. Bertrand Russell

Sherman Alexie's heartbreaking reason for pausing his book tour
By Sherman Alexie •



[Author and filmmaker Sherman Alexie waits with dancers backstage for his turn on stage as the keynote speaker at a celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day Monday, Oct. 10, 2016, at Seattle's City Hall.](#)

[AP Photo/Elaine Thompson](#)

Sherman Alexie, the author and friend of KUOW, [posted this letter to his Facebook page](#) on Thursday.

If you're reading this open letter then you're probably aware that I recently published a memoir, "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me." The memoir is mostly about my relationship with my late mother, Lillian Alexie. She was a complicated and difficult person. She was sometimes cruel and often cold. I loved her, yes, but I sometimes hated her, too. She was brilliant, funny, beautiful, generous, vindictive, deceitful, tender, manipulative, abusive, loving, and intimidating. She was one of the last fluent speakers of our tribal language. The language is being taught again. And that's wonderful and life-giving. But when my mother died, she took with her so many words, stories, and songs that will never be heard again. Lillian was a storyteller in Spokane and English. She was also a quilter, an amazing artisan and artist. She was industrious and visionary.

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Sherman Alexie speaks with KUOW's Bill Radke about his mother and his book, 'You Don't Have to Say You Love Me.'

And, after writing this memoir, I am able to proudly admit that I inherited many of my mother's best qualities and ruefully confess that I also inherited many of her worst.

I am my mother's son.

Lillian haunted me when she was alive. And she has haunted me since her death in July, 2015.

And she has haunted me in spectacular ways since I published my memoir a month ago. She has followed me from city to city during my promotional book tour.

On three consecutive nights, in three different cities, police and ambulance sirens rang out as I told the story about the moment I learned of my mother's death.

Read and listen: [The honest eulogy Sherman Alexie didn't give his mom](#)

In another city, in a hotel whose decor can best be described as Bram Stoker's Ikea, I stepped out of the elevator to see a handmade quilt hanging on the wall. Why was such a quaint piece of Americana being displayed in such a trendy hotel?

"Hello, Mom," I said to that quilt each time I walked by it.

Last night, as I returned to Seattle, I stepped off my plane to see an airport valet waiting with a wheelchair for one of my fellow passengers. That valet held a sign with a familiar name—a name that made me laugh. That valet was waiting to ferry somebody named Lillian.

As I write in the memoir, I don't believe in ghosts, but I see them all the time.

As I also write in the memoir, I don't believe in magic, but I believe in interpreting coincidence exactly the way you want to.

I don't believe in the afterlife as a reality, but I believe in the afterlife as metaphor. And my mother, from the afterlife, is metaphorically kicking my ass.

Two weeks ago, during a private academic event, I was speaking to a man from another country. The room was crowded and busy and loud. That man and I had to raise our voices in order to hear each other.

I loudly told him about my memoir. I loudly told him about my tribe. I loudly told him about my mother. I loudly told him that she was a ghost who haunted me.

And then, suddenly, all of the conversations in the room stopped. The silence was abrupt and surprising. Thirty strangers were acutely aware of this awkward silence. Thirty strangers laughed together.

"Sherman," the man from another country said to me. "In my culture, when those kind of silences happen, we say that God just passed by."

"That's beautiful," I said.

The man talked about his tribe. Then he asked me more about my tribe,

"Sherman," he said. "Your tribe's name, Spokane, what does it mean?"

I said, "It means 'Children of the Sun.'"

At that moment, the gray summer clouds parted and a bolt of sunlight shot through a small window and illuminated me.

I narrowed my eyes against the glare.

But my new friend, the man from another country, looked at the light and said, "Ah, Sherman, I think your mother just arrived. It is good to meet her."

I laughed. But I wanted to sob. I did sob later that night. I have been sobbing many times a day during this book tour. I have sobbed in private and I have sobbed onstage.

I have been rebreaking my heart night after night. I have, to use recovery vocabulary, been retraumatizing myself.

Last week, I fell ill with a terrible head cold and had to cancel events in Tulsa and Missoula. But I also fell ill with depression. I medicated my head cold. I quickly healed from that simple malady. But I couldn't medicate my sadness—my complicated grief.

I sobbed and sobbed, and then I got on another airplane and continued my book tour.

But then, in the fifteenth or twentieth hotel room of this summer, I dreamed.

In this dream, I entered the movie, *Smoke Signals*, and became Victor Joseph as he ran through the night to save a woman injured in a car wreck. I ran through the desert night. I ran through fire and the memory of fire. I ran until my feet bled. I ran until dawn. I ran until I collapsed exhausted to the road.

In the movie, the collapsed Victor Joseph reaches toward a vision of his dead father. But it is a hallucination. Victor is actually reaching toward a highway construction worker.

In my dream, I am the one fallen to the road. And I reach toward a vision of my dead mother. But she is also the highway construction worker. And she is holding a sign that says STOP.

I think the meaning of that dream is obvious.

It means I am supposed to stop this book tour. Because of the short notice, I'll still perform at my gigs in San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco this month. But I am canceling all of my events in August and I will be canceling many, but not all, of my events for the rest of the year.

Dear readers and booksellers and friends and family, I am sorry to disappoint you. I am sorry that I will not be traveling to your cities to tell you my stories in person.

But I will be writing.

When I told Diane, my wife, about my mother's ghost and about my plans to cancel so many events, she said, "Maybe it's your mother taking care of you from Heaven."

"Maybe," I said.

"But I think it's probably your subconscious taking care of the rest of you. I think it's probably you being a good mother to yourself. You are mothering you."

So here I am—the son and the mother combined—who needs to take a big step back and do most of my grieving in private. My memoir is still out there for you to read. And, when I am strong enough, I will return to the road. I will return to the memoir. And I know I will have new stories to tell about my mother and her ghost. I will have more stories to tell about grief. And about forgiveness.

But for now, I can only apologize again for my unexpected retreat. And I thank you, over and over again, for your time, energy, and understanding.

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[The honest eulogy Sherman Alexie didn't give his mom](#)

By [Bill Radke](#) & [Jason Pagano](#) • Jun 12, 2017

AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Listen

Listening...

23:37

In Sherman Alexie's deeply personal memoir, "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me," he tells the story of growing up as the son of Lillian Alexie on the Spokane Indian Reservation.

Federal Water Tap:

"I urge my Republican colleagues to reconsider and ask themselves if we can do better to the EPA. These cuts are just, in my opinion, too deep and unnecessary." — Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN), a member of the House Appropriations Committee, who said that she cannot support in its current form a House budget bill that levels a 6.5 percent cut to the agency.

\$US 528 million: Cut to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's budget by a House Appropriations subcommittee. In relative terms, that is a 6.5 percent decrease from 2017. The bill maintains Great Lakes restoration spending at \$US 300 million, but a sewer loan fund is funded at roughly 20 percent less than this year. The budget, however, is not final and there will be negotiations throughout the summer as committee spending bills are reconciled and the parties work on a budget agreement. ([House Appropriations](#))

0: Number of Asian or silver carp found in the Calumet River during an intensive two-week trawling. The search was initiated by the discovery, on June 22, of one of the invasive fish below a dam that sits 9 miles from Lake Michigan. Preventing the species from entering the Great Lakes system is a state and federal goal. ([U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#))

70 percent: Reduction in salt loads to the Dolores River, a Colorado River tributary, since 1993, when salt-removal facilities began operating. ([U.S. Geological Survey](#))

Columbia River Treaty Update

In late June, a group of seven House Democrats and Republicans from Oregon and Washington [sent a letter to the president and the secretary of state](#) asking them to begin as soon as possible treaty negotiations over the use of Columbia River dams.

Circle of Blue asked the State Department about the status of the treaty negotiations. “We correspond with our Canadian counterparts regarding this matter, but the Canadian government has not yet agreed to begin formal negotiations,” said Frankie Sturm, a spokesman.

Sturm confirmed that Brian Doherty, appointed by President Obama in 2015 as the chief negotiator, still holds that position.

Signed in 1964, the treaty largely governs the use of Columbia River Basin dams in Canada for holding back flood waters and generating electricity. Renegotiation of the treaty will take into account new hydropower benefit calculations and probably include provisions related to salmon and ecosystems.

California Water Bill Passes House

House Republicans moved again to get more water south of California’s Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, [approving the GROW Act](#).

A day earlier, California Gov. Jerry Brown wrote [a letter to Rep. Paul Ryan](#), the House speaker, in opposition to the bill. His main concern: that the bill strips state authority over water.

That’s ironic because a section in the bill includes water rights language from Rep. Scott Tipton (R-CO), which prevents the transfer of water rights to the federal government as a condition of renewing a permit for using federal land, such as for ski resorts or cattle grazing. The justification for that section: state control over water rights.

Energy Bill Moves Quickly In Senate

Senate leaders resurrected energy legislation that nearly passed in the last session of Congress. The [892-page bill](#), similar to its predecessor, was sent directly to the Senate floor, without committee hearings. It authorizes

- A water-energy nexus office that will coordinate federal actions and carry out research;
- A water supply and fish passage program in the Yakima River Basin of Washington;
- The EPA’s labeling program for water-efficient products, called WaterSense;
- A grant program to upgrade energy systems in order to save water;
- The state of Wyoming to tap the lower reaches of Fontenelle Reservoir, which are currently unavailable for use. The reservoir stores water from the Colorado River Basin.

The bill also offers a statement of belief, of sorts, called a “sense of Congress.” It does this for hydropower, stating that the country should “increase substantially the capacity and generation of clean, renewable hydropower resources that would improve environmental quality in the United States.” The bill also defines hydropower as renewable. A reminder here that the reservoirs behind dams do release methane, a greenhouse gas, and hydropower is renewable only as long as rivers run.

Defense Bill Includes Firefighting Chemical Study

The Defense Department spending bill that the House passed on Friday includes amendments that require the department to study the health effects of exposure to firefighting chemicals used on military bases. At hundreds of bases around the country, the chemicals — PFOA and PFOS — have been found in groundwater and drinking water wells.

Drinking Water Roundtable

Democrats on the Senate Committee for Environment and Public Works hosted [a roundtable discussion on America's drinking water](#).

Army Corps Approves Colorado Dam Expansion

The Army Corps [approved a permit](#) for Denver Water, the city water utility, to triple the volume of Gross Reservoir by increasing the dam's height by 131 feet. (All documents related to the permit [are here](#).) The reservoir is filled with water diverted from the Colorado River Basin, via a tunnel blasted through the Rockies.

For background on the matter, see [this Circle of Blue story from August 2016](#).

Speaking of Reservoir Expansions, In California...

The Bureau of Reclamation released [an updated draft environmental impact statement](#) for the proposed expansion of Los Vaqueros, a reservoir east of Oakland. Raising the height of the dam would increase the reservoir's capacity by more than 70 percent.

Agencies Cut Estimated Benefits of Clean Water Rule

The Army Corps and the EPA [slashed the benefits](#) associated with a controversial rule that clarifies the scope of the Clean Water Act, *Greenwire* reports. The new analysis throws out studies that were used to justify the Clean Water Rule, an Obama administration artifact that the Trump administration is seeking to repeal and rewrite more narrowly. The rule is not being enforced now due to lawsuits.

Senate Committee Hearing for Reclamation Commissioner

On July 20, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will [hold a confirmation hearing for Brenda Burman](#), selected to lead the Bureau of Reclamation, and other nominees for the Energy and Interior departments. Burman is the director of water strategy at the Salt River Project, which supplies water and power to the Phoenix area. She served at Reclamation in the George W. Bush administration.

Plains Drought Watch

Dry conditions in the northern Great Plains deepened last week, according to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#). Parts of eastern Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota rated as "severe" drought, the second-worst ranking.

To aid ranchers hurt by the drought, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is allowing cattle to graze grasslands that were designated as conservation land.

House Passes Dam Disaster Memorial Bill

When the St. Francis Dam, outside of Los Angeles, broke apart on March 12, 1928, at least 400 people died in the deluge.

Rep. Stephen Knight (R-CA) [introduced a bill](#) to set aside 440 acres of public land for a national monument to the disaster. The House passed the measure on July 11.

Extreme droughts, heat waves, and floods could simultaneously put staple crops at risk in the **world's** top producers, according to new research. The World Health Organization warned that the cholera outbreak in Yemen threatens the upcoming hajj pilgrimage in **Saudi Arabia**. A severe drought in southern **Europe** is destroying crops in Spain and Italy. Extensive flooding in **Illinois** may put thousands of buildings at risk near Chicago. Water managers in the **Netherlands** say the country is leading the global shift to reduce flood effects by accommodating rivers.

“At the moment, we are in a transition. We had a strong belief that we could predict and control nature, and we’re moving now into a period where we acknowledge that we cannot control nature. We have to deal with uncertainties in terms of climate change and socioeconomic development.” –Chris Zevenbergen, a professor at the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education in the Netherlands, commenting on the country’s shift toward [managing flood risks by making more room for rivers](#). (PRI)

[Federal Water Tap](#) is a weekly digest spotting trends in U.S. government water policy. To get more water news, [follow](#) Circle of Blue on Twitter

[An Ancient Cure for Alzheimer's?](#) By PAGAN KENNEDY

Researchers are wondering whether a dose of parasites could help prevent dementia.

[Save the Census](#) By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

The accuracy of the 2020 census is endangered by budget and staffing problems, and an administration at war with facts.

Obsidian, Chert, and Glass, Oh My! Change and Persistence in Chipped Stone Tool Traditions of the Northern Bay Area

Thursday, July 20, 6-8 PM
Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology
Kroeber Hall

The Hearst Museum of Anthropology is excited to announce the second in our new Lounge Lectures series, hosted in our newly renovated gallery. These lectures, in our Lounge of Wondrous Anthropological Discoveries, will focus in on topics related to the collections and give visitors the opportunity to learn and discuss in a homey, casual, space.

Our second lecture will be by Peter Nelson, a citizen of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria and archaeology PhD from UC Berkeley, who chips ceramic, glass and stone in order to help revitalize this practice in his community and learn more about the traditional technologies of his Coast Miwok ancestors.

Seating is limited to 30, so we encourage guests to arrive early. More information can be found [here](#).



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