

Hear the Old Ones

Nicole Miller

I hear voices in the night.
I sit up in the dark and stare into my past.
I see the mothers and fathers of my generation.

Grandfather was Shoshone. He was still: he knew quiet and it protected him.
His quiet is my guard, and in that window of silence I know myself.

Grandmother ruled a great castle hidden in the clouds.
When the English came, she did not know surrender.
Her strength is my shield and in my battles I hold my head up high.

Old Mother drew water from the Nile.
Miles from Cairo, she refused to know thirst.
Her journey is my drive and my step has yet to falter.

Honorable Father knew battle. His sword was swift and his spirit clear.
He gave his life to the kingdom of the Sun.
His offering is my loyalty. It keeps me true.

Good Mother knew healing. The Earth was her guide and her tool.
In the smoke of a witch's pyre, she knew only peace at going Home.
Her trial is my faith, her knowledge steadies my hand.

Great Aunt of my father's people had a voice that taught joy.

She lifted it up high into the sky to be carried in the wind on the backs of
Eagles and Ravens alike.

Her song is my anthem. Her love keeps me blind and lets me see.

They are what move me to run out into the midnight.

They are the pride of my heart: my spirit, my past and future.

Their strengths are my birthright and my legacy.

With their fears and their battles behind me,

I conquer my foes and seek new challenges.

I forge my own path and take my place beside them.

The praise in their voices comforts me.