

## **Water Over Stones**

By Carol Jennings – Washington, D.C.

1

The Navajo guide offers me a stone from Canyon de Chelly. I hesitate, consider its weight in my luggage, consider how much my ancestors took from his ancestors, consider the weight of his own story – forced to leave home for a boarding school where children were struck for speaking their native language. Then I accept his gift, lightly, in the way it is offered.

2

In the creek of my childhood, water over stones was my favorite season – not March snow-fed waters that could overflow banks, nor the August rivulets that ran between hot, dry stones. It was the shallow waters in early summer that urged me to come close to stones shining wet, small fish darting above, sometimes my own reflected shadow. I thought I held the future in my hand as it cupped those waters. I didn't, but water over stones is a music that runs through me still.

3

I bend to pick up a stone at the edge of a lake, summer setting of a younger self in love. Its reddish curve fits my palm, smooth against skin. I stroke it like a memory not to be let go, like a vision of myself in an earlier life, like a dream that does not end upon waking. These waters can be rough with waves like ocean surf, cause boats to capsize, people to drown. I could keep this stone to hold in times of dark or loss. Instead, I give it back to the lake.