

“All My Relatives”

a gift from a dream



words and images by Jane English

Dreamer
is walking
deep in a forest

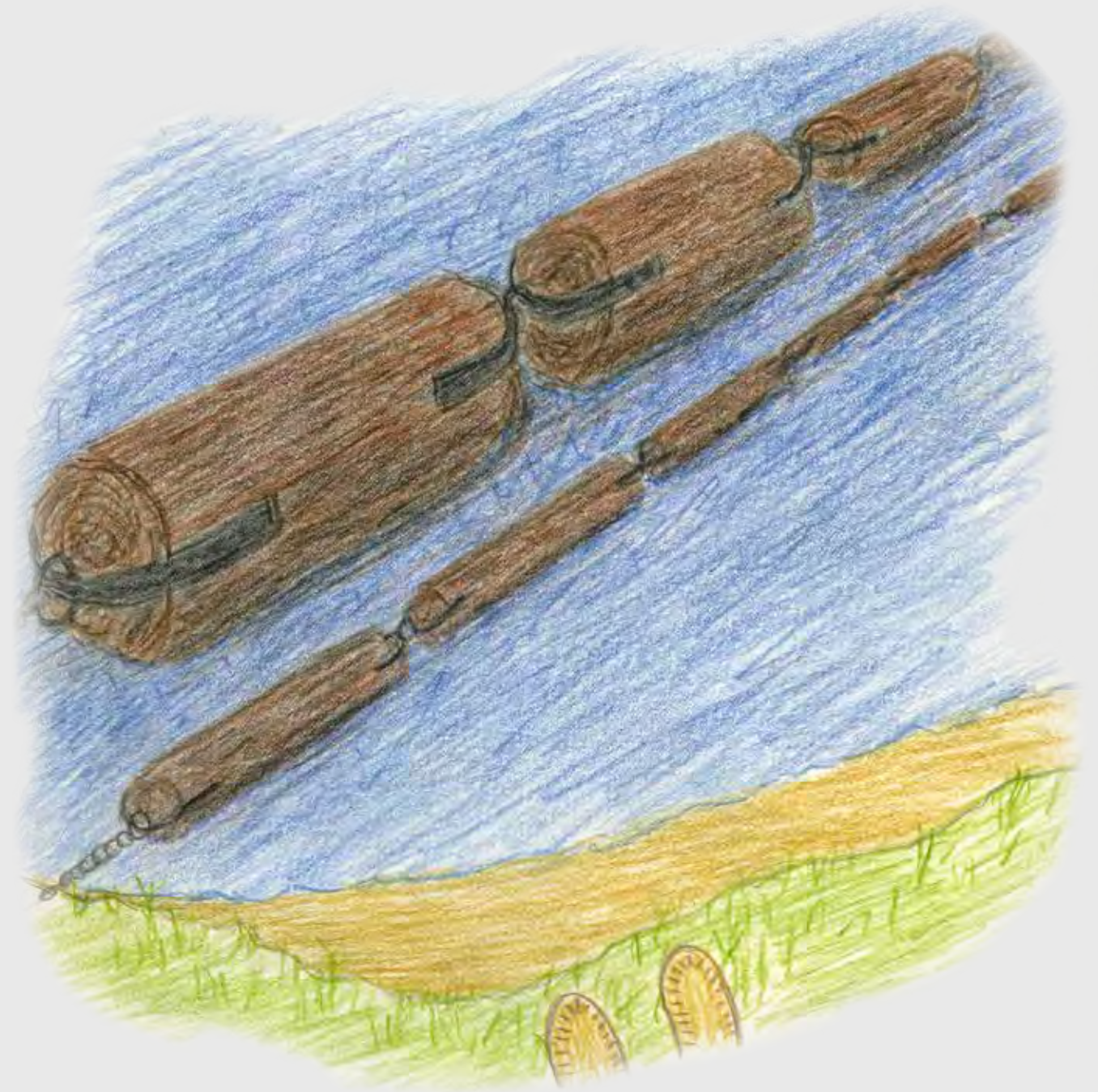


*she comes out of the woods
at the edge
of a big river*



*stretching across the river are two lines of logs
with a line of small logs just downstream
of one made of really big logs*

*Dreamer thinks of crossing the river
by walking on the smaller logs
while holding onto the big ones
but she is afraid she will fall off*



farther downstream she sees another line of logs

that seems to be more stable

however the river is much wider there

and that line of logs is very long

being an old woman of 80 years

Dreamer is afraid she will not be able

to walk that far on the logs

how can she cross the river?



*a small boat comes up the river
and is beached on a little crescent of sand
just below the big and small lines of logs*

*it is a most curious boat
the bottom is an indigenous dugout
made from a single log*

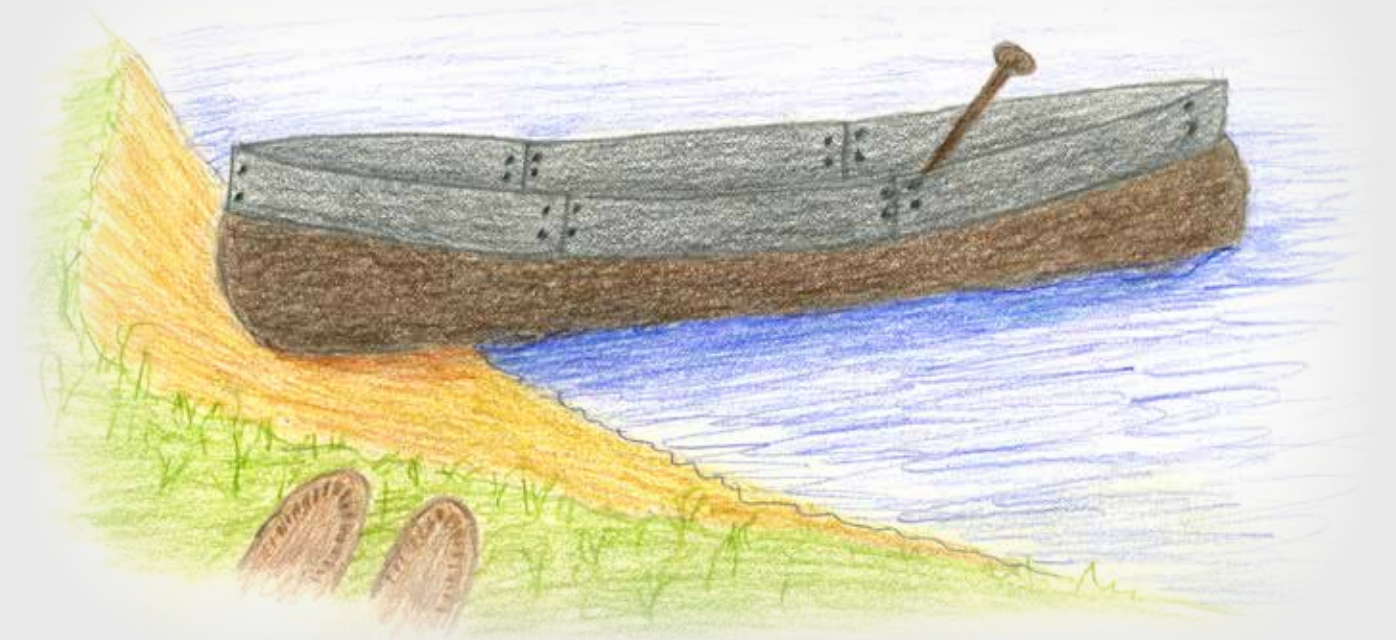
the upper part is made of modern boards

the whole boat looks very old and weathered

the man who gets out of the boat

has native ancestors

he seems friendly



*he encourages Dreamer to attempt the crossing
he shows her that the water level has gone down
and now she can see stones
in the shallow water between the lines of logs
she can walk there more easily now*



*Dreamer walks out onto the logs and stones
and sees people who live in a small new wooden building
at the far end of the lines of logs*

*a man comes toward her and rearranges some logs
to make it easier for her to walk to the platform*

*brightly-dressed native people
are sitting on the rocks
to the right of the building*

*Dreamer talks with them and feels honored
when they invite her to visit their homes*



*Dreamer stands at the upstream edge
of the platform
that is now quite high up above the water

from there she sees
that the water level in the river
is now even lower

she turns to her own brother
who is now there with her on the platform
and tells him
that before people came from across the ocean
the rivers were the super-highways
for native people to travel on*



*she sees many native people
walking down the river towards her
wading in the now-shallow water*

*one woman with long graying hair
is wearing a modern cotton dress*

*people of all ages are walking together
in a group that stretches across the river*

sun sparkles on the water

these Ancestors carry beautiful ancient wisdom

Dreamer's heart opens



then something changes . . .

*Dreamer sees the native people
now walking toward her on a broken-down wooden walkway
to her right above the boulders along the side of the river*

*the woman with long gray hair
is dragging a green plastic garden hose*

*she pulls the hose past Dreamer
and goes on a ways downstream*

others are doing a pipe ceremony

*they come to where the walkway meets the platform
and invite Dreamer to pray with the pipe*

to do her own pipe ceremony



*before doing a pipe ceremony
Dreamer wants a drink of water
but has none

so she asks for water

the woman with the hose
brings the end of it back to Dreamer
but no water is coming out of it

the woman goes back along the hose
and opens a valve so that water flows

Dreamer drinks*



Dreamer asks where is the pipe she is to use
the woman points to an older man — her partner
he is a ways upstream along the wooden walkway
and is busy cleaning the pipe and then filling it

he hands it to Dreamer
it slips a bit in her hands

she is afraid she might drop it
shattering it on the boulders below the walkway

but she gets a good grip on it



*the bowl of the pipe is made of pipestone
of a color she had never seen — not red or black
it is a warm greenish clay color
the stem is a bit longer than on her own pipe
Dreamer does not want to make a big show
of doing a pipe ceremony
so she simply smokes the pipe*



*Dreamer prays in the four directions
East, South, West, North
then to Earth and to Sky

when she comes to
“Heart — the Center that is everywhere”
she realizes she needs to spin the pipe
as native people do
. . . at least this one time*



*she spins the pipe
saying "all my relatives"*

*as she does this she feels welcomed
at home and at one with
the trees - the rocks - the river - the people - the sky
embedded in a wonderful community
of living relatives*



Dreamer (and I) awoke as she was spinning the pipe.

As I lay there waking up,
I found myself saying the Abenaki word "wijokami" - "help me."



In the time since this dream was given to me,
many of my relatives of all kinds have helped me
begin to bring to life in the ordinary waking world
the essence of the dream which is
– *a living sense of being in community with all our relatives* –

Kchi Wliwni – Many Thanks

More literally, "kchi wliwni" might mean, "*great goodness flows among us.*"



About the Dream — that came in January 2022

Who is this one who dreams?

I was born in Boston in 1942 to a family most of whose ancestors came from England to New England eleven generations ago, between 1630 and 1650 as part of the “Great Migration” of Puritans. Many of them were settler farmers who lived in Chelmsford in Massachusetts, and Dunstable in New Hampshire (*now Nashua*). Those two towns adjoined the “praying Indian” village of Wamesit at the confluence of the Concord and Merrimack Rivers at what is now the city of Lowell, Massachusetts.

Family history shows ancestors fighting in King Philip’s War, and there were women and men captured by native people—some escaped and some died. The book, *A History of Chelmsford*, shows one ancestor asking for permission to trade with the Indians at Wamesit.

There is also a story in my maternal grandfather’s family. On their farm in Portsmouth, New Hampshire in the late 1800’s, they let “Indians from Old Town” camp on their farm in summer in exchange for some basket-weaving repairs of seats in some chairs they had.

This dream came to me in late January 2022 at a time when I was questioning my relationship with indigenous people. I was attempting to find a way to respect the traditional native ways without diminishing myself and my own ancestry.

Having for many years had indigenous friends (Native American, First Nation, Inuit, Kallallit-Greenlandic, Basque, etc.), my intention in learning Abenaki was to finally go deeper into an indigenous worldview by learning an indigenous language. Beginning in November 2021 I had been a student in Jesse Bruchac’s Western Abenaki language classes.

Indigenous languages are deeply connected to place, to Earth and Sky. I had been told that from an indigenous perspective everything is alive. Rather than living on Earth and under Sky, we are of Earth and of Sky. At the end of the dream I experienced that. I was embedded in life, was among living relatives of many kinds.

The larger importance of this is that from this connected perspective much of what ails our modern world, the misuse and destruction of nature, stems from our sense of being separate from what are actually “all our relatives.”

While this dream was a wonderful gift that came to me at a time when I really needed it, I do not own the dream. I have been taught by my indigenous friends that a big dream is both a gift and a responsibility. One needs to do the work to “make living” the wisdom that comes in such a dream. With these images and writings I make a small start at making living this gift of a dream.

Thoughts on parts of the dream —

the lines of logs - these may relate to the Abenaki language class I was taking, the Mincourse. In that, the 24 “landmarks” are interconnected basic parts of the language. The small logs might be the beginner level that can be expanded immensely with “loopbacks” and become the huge logs. The stepping stones might be the additional material given to us in the classes. The whole line leads to the far shore where I meet various native people and join them in ceremony. The long downstream pair of log lines may be about learning the language in a more structured way for a longer time, something that is most likely too difficult for me at my age.

the boat - this is such a clear symbol of an ancient culture working together with the modern world, and it carries a man with native ancestry who is a big help to me. That even the modern boards along the top of the boat are old and weathered perhaps points to the fairly long history of written Abenaki, written by native speakers themselves, like Joseph Laurent’s 1881 English-Abenaki dictionary.

the little new building and the platform - I chuckled when I thought of this being related to the Abenaki language school that is at Middlebury College in the summer. Also this language revival work is providing a good “platform” for integrating ancient wisdom and modern technology in our lives.

the people on the boulders - during over 40 years I have had the privilege of numerous friendships with native people from a variety of tribal groups.

the broken-down walkway - yes, the lives and culture of the indigenous people of this land have been broken over and over. The water in the river is drying up and becoming shallow. Yet native people still carry their traditional wisdom — the ceremony of the pipe and the water in the hose.

the green plastic hose - the people are using whatever structure is available to keep the old wisdom—the sacred water—flowing. Perhaps the hose is books, the internet, and the zoom sessions for language classes.

asking for and drinking water - willingness to ask for what is needed, and trusting that it is OK to ask.

the color of the pipe bowl - Green is the color of Vermont where I live, and of Earth, all of it.

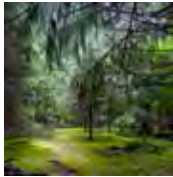
smoking the pipe - ceremony connects the visible and invisible worlds, and in this dream it connected dreamtime with waking consciousness. In the dream, native people share this ceremony with everyone.

wijokami - waking with the word “wijokami” on my lips reminds me to ask for help in “making living” this dream.

The photographs and art that illustrate the dream—



White pine by the shore of
Number Ten Pond in Calais,
Vermont - 2011



Spruce forest,
Plainfield, Vermont - 2014



New Hampshire - 2015



River near the Pacific Ocean -
1992
edited in photoshop to add the
small log booms



Boulders by a glacial river in
Greenland where we gathered
rocks for the sweat lodge at the
Sacred Fire Ceremony in 2009



Klamath River, in northwestern
California - 1992
platform added digitally
from a drawing



Sunrise and fog over Number
Ten Pond in Calais, Vermont -
2019



Waterfall at Diana's Baths,
North Conway, New
Hampshire - 2009



Pipe - January 1, 2022
pipe bowl photoshopped
to be green rather than red



Lake - near Kangerlussuaq,
Greenland - July 2011



Jane's feet at Big Pines Natural
Area of Hemmenway State
Forest, Tamworth, New
Hampshire - November 2024

The drawings were made in March 2022
using colored pencils

A prequel and a sequel —

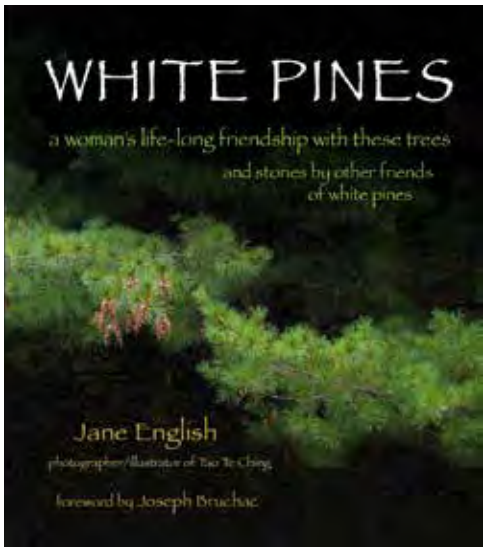
The following excerpt from my 2025 introduction to the book, *White Pines*, tells how that book was inspired by the dream recounted in this booklet. This booklet can be seen as a “prequel” to that much longer book.

“Having been taught the importance of bringing such a dream to life in the waking world, I made an illustrated booklet *{this booklet}* about the dream.

For the booklet's cover I chose one of my favorite photos, one of a white pine. I soon understood this choice—White Pine is one of the relatives I had met in the dream, one with whom I have had a life-long relationship.”

Through that photo on the cover of this booklet White Pine kept “talking” to me, insisting I tell the story of our lifelong friendship. So I began to write and to photograph. I “translated” into photographs many of the stories that white pines themselves tell. White Pine is co-author of the book, *White Pines*, the “sequel” to this booklet.

As I worked on the *White Pines* book, I spoke of white pines with many people. A lot of them spontaneously told me their own white pine stories. Twenty-two of those stories form the second half of the book.



White Pines

a woman's life-long friendship
with these trees — and stones
from other friends of pines

published in 2025

cheart.com/pines

More about the one who dreams - from Jane English's biography at cheart.com —

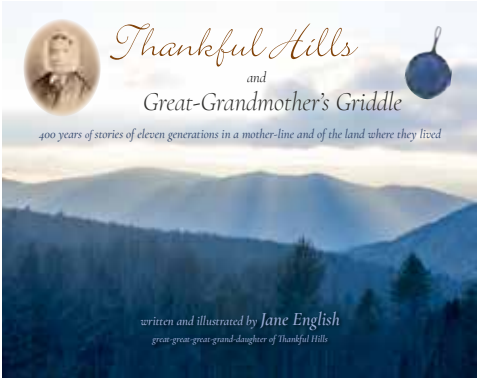
Jane English grew up in a small town in New England, did undergraduate work at Mount Holyoke College, and began photographing while completing a Ph.D. in physics in 1970 at the University of Wisconsin.

She decided not to continue in a science career but to do photography. Her black-and-white photographs of nature illustrate six books, including a best-selling translation of the Chinese classic *Tao Te Ching*, published in 1972 by Random House. Her other interests include gardening, skiing, amateur radio and hot-air ballooning.

In 1985 she founded her own publishing business, Earth Heart, to publish *Different Doorway*, her book on the implications of being born non-labor cesarean. Her 1999 book *Fingers Pointing to the Moon* is a collection of writings, photographs and art that has some autobiographical chapters. After living in Mount Shasta, California for 15 years, Jane moved back to her native New England in 2002.

From 2007 to 2015 she “walked with” the Greenlandic shaman/elder/healer Angaangaq Angakkorsuaq in North America and Europe, and has traveled to Greenland four times. *The Ceremony Cards* is the result of that time.

As of 2026, her other “work-in-progress” books are:



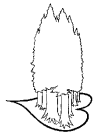
*Thankful Hills
and Great-Grandmother's Griddle:*
400 years of stories of eleven generations
of a mother-line and of the land where they lived
cheart.com/griddle



Two Wings:
Dreams and Stories of Ceremony
weaving together
the seen and unseen worlds
cheart.com/pdf/Two-Wings.pdf

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