

At the Base of the Black Hill: What We Share, What We Carry
by TC Tolbert

Culture is a word rooted in *care* – from the 15th century *an honoring* – Art goes further – another 10,000 years back *to prepare* –
Here has always been – only one small step from there – Beside each other – tomorrow calls to us today – Where
Under an oceanic sky we live in a desert wet with life – ‘The Ha:sa:n dancing in their personal pools all night – ‘They especially
Know that borders are useless – The line impossible to know between coming and going – Even our bones are
Sculptures moving – Growing from – Growing into – Becoming always – something else – This morning I
Opened my door to a curve-billed thrasher in the chain fruit – a car taking the curve a little too quickly – a
Neighbor’s phone call with his mother – *todo lo vivo es música – me encanta* – each day a concert carried by wind –

To be a city is to be a confluence of cultures – A community – ‘To be a community is to be made of people – beloved –
Ultimately each person in this community is water – held loosely behind a dam of skin – We share what we
Carry – When we quench the thirst of another – When we remember all water is borrowed – at best –

Şu:dağî ‘O Wuḍ Doakag – Same as land – same as body – same as breath – May we live

Our lives as poems of gratitude – that we may create the future – here in the present – in reverence to the past – May the
Names of every water – body – sky – we’ve ever loved – be the blessings that bind us to each other – the song that sings us back –