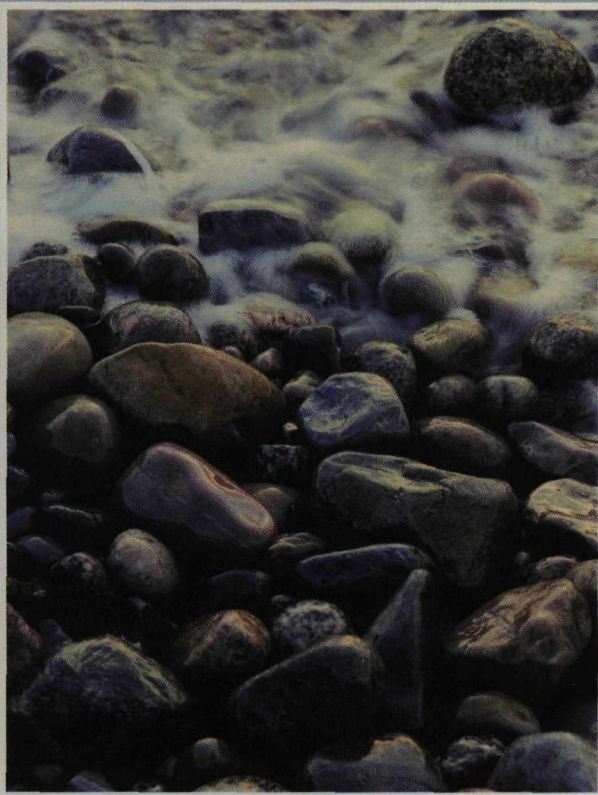


We close *Health Progress's* last issue of the year with a poem. It evokes the sense of community and connectedness CHA has fostered among its members throughout 1996, particularly in the New Covenant process and at the Annual Assembly. Poet David Whyte will speak at CHA's 1997 assembly in Chicago, June 8-11.



The Shapes of the World

Stooped low on the beach gathering firewood,
round, bleached and shaped by a gracious weather,
I find the eyes of mythical totems,
the shapes of fish and orca's fins.

My friend tends the fish, I tend the fire.
Slowly the fish fries in its round black pan.
Beneath, the innumerable shapes of other fish
salted by many years, burn blue and red and
yellow.

Our two kayaks are turned on a gravel beach,
steel grey light on their upturned bows,
while woodsmoke drifts out beyond them,
smudging the islands guarding the cove.

Through those small islands we coasted
skirting the wild weather chasing our sterns,
and I remember, that as we struck gravel
I felt the shape of things to come.

It was as if I remembered how all things fit
one to another and the sound of gravel
was the sound of home, and at the place where
water meets land I could meet all things.

On the cold beach we made a nest, a tent
shadowed by trees, a small fire, a place to sit.
The pure silence of honest work,
twigs cracking in the moist air.

Above us the young eagle circled
seeking a glimmer in the sea.
The waves murmured on the beach,
the gravel's voice rising and falling.

When we find a home like this
it must be that the old ones come by,
join us on the rough log seats,
throw their arms round our shoulders,

speak lovingly of the eagle,
laugh between mouthfuls of fish.
Tell us to go back, tell the old stories.
How the shapes of the world can speak.

—David Whyte, in *Where Many Rivers Meet*,
Many Rivers Press, Langley, WA, 1993