

Script for

“Coming Home to North America Ritual”

written by Connie Barlow

This version was performed at Earthome in Baltimore County
December 2003

FOR ADULTS AND OLDER CHILDREN

TIME: 1.5 to 2.0 hours

Setting and Props:

- Use a long ROPE to trace the outline of the North American continent, including Mexico, on the floor. Narrator will sit up in the Arctic. Rest of group will sit in semicircle at the south and sides. Make sure there is a good pathway for animals to enter and leave via the Bering Land Bridge with Asia.
- A BLUE CLOTH to signify the Bearpaw Seaway; a WHITE CLOTH for the glaciers.
- You might want to have a FLIP CHART to write the geological epochs and times on as the story advances. (Connie uses a 60 million year clock she made.)
- Bring a BELL or chime, and maybe recruit some DRUMMERS; bring recorded MUSIC to play as people assemble and during the part where people are adorning faces with clay paint, or ask drummers to play).
- COSTUMES For face painting, bring local or purchased powdered CLAY, and mix with a little water into a mud consistency. Maybe bring some scarves or other props. A rattle of some sort is nice to give to Rattlesnake. Use your imagination! People tend to feel less self-conscious acting if they have some element of costuming.
- See if lights can be DIMMED or use candles for the closing part where participants enter the continent as their humans selves.

Narrator Role:

1. PRINT out 2 COPIES of this script: one for yourself, and the other to cut into pieces to distribute to volunteer readers/actors. (Make sure that you staple together the several parts for whatever characters come on stage two or more times: ROCKY MOUNTAINS; CAT; BEAR.)
2. FAMILIARIZE yourself with other versions of the North America ritual that have scripted out the beginnings (65 million years ago) and ends (13,000 years ago), so that you can extemporaneously deliver these key parts. Also, survey the number of people in the group and determine which version of HUMAN ending is most appropriate for that size.

3. WELCOME, GREET, AND establish context, and help people feel comfortable in participating. Let people know that this ritual is scripted because, as yet, we tend to know so little about the DEEP TIME story of our continent, that we must first learn the events before we can, at a future date, have more freedom in what our character says.
4. Distribute the volunteer reader/actor roles. Connie sometimes does it by putting them face down on the floor, with more active roles toward the left, and less active to the right, so you can advise people to choose which end to select from, depending on their zeal for role playing. You can also simply ask, "Who loves cats?" "Who would like to play bear?" "Who wants to be a plant?"

INTRODUCTION.

- WELCOME people and generally let them know what to expect. And how long, so some may wish to use the bathroom during the event. Give people permission to NOT choose a part, if they wish, or to team up with another. Depending on size of group, the most enthusiastic participants may have a chance to choose a second character too.
- Explain the importance of learning the DEEP TIME STORY OF THIS CONTINENT. How Thomas Berry has said that we need to learn our story at all levels: the Universe Story, the Earth Story, our bioregional stories, our continental story, just as we have learned our cultural, political, and religious stories. Explain how this ritual was written by Connie Barlow and is available on her website for others to use and adapt in their own ways. It is based on the science story of the continent told by Tim Flannery in his 2001 book, *The Eternal Frontier: An Ecological History of North America and its Peoples* and on Connie's 2001 book, *The Ghosts of Evolution*. The hope is that by learning this deep time story, those of us who are not "native Americans" can find hope and guidance for becoming native to the this continent, as many creatures have done before us.
- Explain the ROPE, and the importance of entering the stage from the direction that the character actually is supposed to come from. Explain the role of CHARACTERS, and how these will be chosen.
- DISTRIBUTE CHARACTER ROLES.
- ALLOW TIME FOR PARTICIPANTS TO PREPARE: painting selves with clay, choosing scarves, maybe finding some props outdoors. Be sure to give rattlesnake a rattle. Drummers or recorded music during that time.
- BELL OR CHIME TO BEGIN RITUAL.
- NARRATOR TELLS THE STORY OF WHAT WAS GOING ON IN NORTH AMERICA 65 MILLION YEARS AGO: (You can learn the whole story of what to say by referring to

the 8-character, original version of this ritual.) Here is the outline that Connie uses to keep me on track:

- begin our story 65 million years ago, Cretaceous Period of the Mesozoic Era
- no North America: Asiamerica on the West (Beringia), Euramerica on the east
- Bearpaw Seaway runs down the center of the continent
- Appalachians are already old; there are no Sierras, Rockies, Cascades
- South America is isolated from all other continents.
- no polar ice, greenhouse conditions
- dinosaurs! Mammals are no bigger than a squirrel.
- flowering plants almost all small; no grasses yet
- Then, off the Yucatan Peninsula, a METEOR IMPACT!
- **PERCUSSION SOUND**
- DESCRIBE DESTRUCTION (the sky rains fire, as rocks exploded into the sky catch fire from the friction of returning to earth.) North America is torched! Smaller particles stay in the upper atmosphere, and are joined by tiny particles of ash as volcanos are triggered around the world. The sun is blocked for at least six months, maybe 2 or 3 years. There is utter darkness at noon. Photosynthesis ceases. Plants die, but will resprout from seed and spore, so there is no mass extinction of plants. But for animals who cannot wait out the dark, cold, and hungry times, the situation is different.
- Dinosaurs and the great reptiles of the sea go extinct, along with many other creatures.
- CENOZOIC ERA BEGINS at this moment of lowest diversity (like today, when the Ecozoic Era is beginning)
- Who survives?

PALEOCENE 65-57 mya:

YOU ARE THE FIRST CHARACTER. ENTER THE CONTINENT, WAFTING IN ON THE WIND FROM ANY DIRECTION, RIGHT AFTER NARRATOR DESCRIBES WHAT KILLED OFF THE DINOSAURS AND THEN ASKS, "WHO SURVIVES?" TURN TOWARD AUDIENCE, AND BEGIN TO READ:

FERN: I am Fern. Immediately after the meteor impact, my spores arrive in North America from everywhere in the world, carried on the winds. For thousands of years, until seeds can arrive, the regions of North America most devastated by the meteor impact will continue to be The Land of Ferns. I am Fern.

NARRATOR: [Even though it is not written in the script, after a new character is evolves or immigrates in, encourage the whole group to repeat after you, "Welcome, Fern, welcome!" when they finish reading. And lead a similar refrain for each character. If a character goes extinct or emigrates, says something like, "Goodbye, name, goodbye!"

YOU ARE THE SECOND CHARACTER, FOLLOWING RIGHT AFTER FERN LEAVES THE STAGE. MAKE SURE YOU START IN THE ARCTIC AND WALK SLOWLY , FACING THE AUDIENCE, AS YOU READ.

GINKGO: I am Ginkgo. I evolved long ago with the long-neck dinosaurs, during the Jurassic, in the far north where there was seasonal darkness but no bitter cold. Soon I became circumpolar, thriving in the higher latitudes of all northern hemisphere lands. After the meteor impact, I joined the other northern trees in slowly spreading south to bring forests to the incinerated parts of the continent. I am truly an old one: I am Ginkgo, the very same tree that you humans now plant along sidewalks, and whose leaves some of you may swallow in capsule form, in order to help you hold onto your memory too! I am Ginkgo!

YOU ARE THE 3RD CHARACTER, FOLLOWING RIGHT AFTER GINKGO LEAVES THE STAGE. STAND IN THE APPALACHIANS AND FACE AUDIENCE, THEN BEGIN READING.

SALAMANDER: I am Salamander, and, like Ginkgo, I have long been native to this land. In Euramerica after the dinosaur extinction, salamanders become the most diverse of anywhere in the world, and we will remain so in the Appalachians through modern times. Tiger Salamander, soon, will originate and become the biggest land salamander in the whole world. I am Salamander!

NARRATOR: Who else survived the impact? Well, some LITTLE MAMMALS survived. Perhaps they survived in small populations gathered around hot springs, where they could stay warm, venturing out into the cold and darkness for months on end, perhaps years, to feast on frozen dinosaur dinners! After sunlight returned and plant growth resumed, the little mammals rapidly diversified in a world without dinosaurs. The story of who these little mammals became will be the core of our story to come. But first, let us hear from another survivor who also benefits from the temporary loss of diversity. Let us hear from Old Turtle!

YOU ARE THE 4th CHARACTER, COMING ON WHEN THE NARRATOR ASKS, "LET US HEAR FROM OLD TURTLE." BEGIN BY CROUCHING ALONG THE BEARPAW SEAWAY, HEAD DOWN, AS IF YOU ARE IN A BURROW. LOOK UP, THEN SLOWLY STAND, EMERGING INTO THE WORLD. THEN BEGIN TO READ:

TURTLE: I am Turtle. I am an Old One. I survived the meteor impact by burrowing into the mud of the Bearpaw Seaway and continental rivers and ponds. After the fires and the darkness and the cold subsided, I looked out upon a vacant continent. What an opportunity! I rapidly reproduced and diversified, because there was almost nothing else my size that survived along the Bearpaw Seaway. Never before, never again, and never anywhere else in the world would there be more abundance and diversity of us turtles. That's why scientists call this time, in this land, "The Golden Age of Turtles." I am Turtle!

YOU ARE THE FIFTH CHARACTER, ENTERING AROUND 60 MILLION YEARS AGO, AND YOU WILL ALSO COME IN AGAIN MUCH LATER. BUT AT SIXTY MILLION YEARS AGO, DO THIS:

ROCKY MOUNTAINS: [Don't say anything. But come into the continent and lie or crouch down along the Bearpaw Seaway when the narrator talks about it being 60 million years ago, and that the Bearpaw Seaway is receding because of something happening in the West. Act out your rising. And jump for joy when the narrator talks about North America being born because of you. Then return to your seat.]

- 60 MILLION YEARS AGO (still in Paleocene):

NARRATOR: Yes! It is the Golden Age of Turtles! But now, we come to 60 million years ago, and the Bearpaw Seaway is receding because of something happening in the West. [WAIT FOR ROCKY MOUNTAINS TO COME FORWARD] Why, it is the Rocky Mountains! The Rocky Mountains are beginning to rise, and with them, a land bridge appears across what is now Montana and the Dakotas. East and West are united. North America is born!

Halleluia! North America is born! [encourage celebration].

[Continue with IROQUOIS CREATION STORY: turtle, muskrat, toad. Birth of Turtle Island. Golden Age of Turtles. See the original version of this ritual for 8 characters for the storyline here, and extemporaneously deliver it. The important point is that Native American and science story come together here: turtle is a character in both!]

EOCENE 57-34 mya

- 55 MILLION YEARS AGO, early into the Eocene.

NARRATOR: The clock turns to 55 million years ago. We enter the Eocene Epoch. This is a time of warmth, of global greenhouse conditions similar to those of the warm Cretaceous when T. rex thrived. During the early Eocene, North America is receiving a wave of immigrants from Asia, across Beringia, which is ice-free. Who are these immigrants? And how does one become native to a continent?

YOU ARE THE 6TH CHARACTER. YOU ENTER AFTER NORTH AMERICA IS BORN AND THE EOCENE EPOCH BEGINS 55 MILLION YEARS AGO. YOU ARE THE FIRST CHARACTER OF THE EOCENE, ENTERING WHEN NARRATOR ASKS, "WHO ARE THESE IMMIGRANTS? AND HOW DOES ONE BECOME NATIVE TO A CONTINENT?" BEGIN IN ASIA, AND START READING THERE. AND THEN WALK ACROSS BERINGIA AND DOWN INTO N.A. WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT IMMIGRATING.

BRONTOTHERE: I am Brontothere. I am a huge and formidable plant eater who evolved in Asia from little mammals after the meteor impact. And then some of us immigrated to North America, where we will soon become bigger than elephants.! I look a lot like a rhinoceros. I am big and bulky, and most of my kind has some sort of horn on the snout. But I am not rhinoceros; I am Brontothere!

YOU ARE THE 7TH CHARACTER, ENTERING RIGHT AFTER BRONTOTHERE LEAVES THE STAGE ABOUT 55 MILLION YEARS AGO. BEGIN READING WHILE STILL IN ASIA AND THEN WALK ACROSS BERINGIA AND DOWN INTO N.A. AS YOU SPEAK.

RHINOCEROSSES: Brontothere might LOOK like a rhinoceros, but I AM one! [pause for laughter]. I am Rhinoceros. My kind evolved in Asia too, coming across Beringia during the Eocene, but we will reach our glory here in North America. My kind will thrive on this continent for tens of millions of years. My bones will fill your museums as an example of an ancient creature who became native to this land. I am Rhinoceros!

YOU ARE THE 8TH CHARACTER, ENTERING RIGHT AFTER RHINOCEROS LEAVES THE STAGE IN THE EARLY EOCENE. [NARRATOR DOES NOT ANNOUNCE YOU, SO COME IN RIGHT AFTER RHINOCEROS.] FLY IN FROM SOUTH AMERICA LIKE A TWEETY LITTLE BIRD, AND THEN TURN TO AUDIENCE AND BEGIN SPEAKING. PERHAPS BEGIN WITH A HIGH VOICE, AND THEN IT GO LOW AND SCARY AS YOU EVOLVE INTO SOMETHING BIG AND SCARY.

DIATRYMA [Dye- uh-TRY-ma]: I am a little marshbird, a rail, who flies into North America soon after the meteor impact. There were no big predators on this continent then, and so my descendents seized an opportunity! Each millennium, we marshbirds grew bigger and bigger and bigger. Soon we got so big and heavy that we could no longer fly— but we didn't need to. We became the scariest creatures around! We looked like a 10-foot tall T. rex, but with feathers and a bill like an eagle, but huge! I am Diatryma! I am the Terror Bird of Turtle Island! [DO SOMETHING TO LOOK SCARY.] I stalk mammals big and small. Many I swallow whole! For several million years, I remain the top carnivore on this continent. And soon I will migrate into Europe, terrorizing the mammals there too. ! [CROSS INTO EUROPE, LOOKING FIERCE.] I am Diatryma!

NARRATOR: It is still the Eocene, now 50 million years ago. I sense that some magnificent creatures are about to evolve right here in North America, and, unlike Diatryma, these creatures will survive into modern times – though not on this continent. Who are these creatures?

YOU ARE THE 9TH CHARACTER, COMING IN 50 MILLION YEARS AGO, AFTER DIATRYMA, THE TERROR BIRD. NARRATOR WILL ASK, “WHO ARE THESE CREATURES?” BEGIN BY GALLOPING INTO THE CENTER OF THE CONTINENT AND THEN START READING YOUR PART.

HORSE: I am Horse. And I have an amazing story to tell, because I originated right here on this continent some 50 million years ago. I did very well here in my land or origin, until recent times. Later, you will learn why I vanished from this land, and why you humans should now welcome my descendants as true natives of Turtle Island whenever you see them grazing in a pasture! But for now, slap your knees or stomp your feet, and let me hear a herd of horses galloping through the Eocene with me! [GALLOP AROUND THE CONTINENT, WHINNEYING, AND THEN RETURN TO YOUR SEAT.]

NOTE: At 3 million years ago, the narrator will ask you to do something. Nothing to say, just follow directions!

YOU ARE THE 10TH CHARACTER, 50 MILLION YEARS AGO. YOU COME SLOWLY, UNDULATING YOUR NECK, INTO THE CENTER OF THE CONTINENT AFTER HORSE FINISHES. THEN TURN TO THE AUDIENCE AND READ YOUR PART.

CAMEL: Some of you may have been surprised about Horse, yes? But I bet all of you will be surprised to hear who I am. Like horse, I originated right here in North America, some 50 million years ago. Who am I? I am Camel! [PAUSE AND UNDULATE NECK.] Oh yes, you are surprised that I am very much native to this continent. But it is mine far more than yours. How recently you humans arrived! Sadly, your arrival spelled my demise! But, you will hear that story later. I am Camel! [SLOWLY UNDULATE BACK TO YOUR SEAT.]

NOTE: At 3 million years ago, the narrator will ask you to do something. Nothing to say, just follow directions!

- 40 MILLION YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: We now move ahead to 40 million years ago. We are still in the Eocene epoch of North America. Oh, who joins Horse and Camel in evolving right here in North America, in being deeply native to this land?

YOU ARE THE 11TH CHARACTER, FOLLOWING CAMEL, AT 40 MILLION YEARS AGO. NARRATOR WILL SAY SOMETHING AFTER CAMEL, AND THEN WILL ASK, "WHO JOINS HORSE AND CAMEL IN EVOLVING RIGHT HERE IN NORTH AMERICA?" RUN INTO THE CENTER OF THE CONTINENT, WHILE BARKING, THEN TURN TO AUDIENCE AND BEGIN TO READ. BE VERY EAGER, LIKE A PET DOG.

DOG: Woof! Woof! I am the ancestor of all members of family Canidae [CANE-id-eee]. That means Wolf, Fox, Dog!. I evolved right here in North America! I am just as deeply native to this land as horses and camels and salamanders are! Woof! Woof! It will be another 30 million years, however, before I disperse into the other continents of the world. Till then, I am not only native to North America; I can be found *ONLY* here. Listen! Do I hear the Spirits of the Dog Clan celebrating my birth? [CUP YOUR HAND TO YOUR EAR TO ENCOURAGE THEIR BARKING AND HOWLING, THEN BARK OR HOWL AND RETURN TO YOUR SEAT.]

NOTE: AT 10 MILLION YEARS AGO, THE NARRATOR WILL ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS. YOU HAVE NO SPEAKING ROLE, BUT MAY WANT TO BARK OR HOWL, BUT MAKE SURE THAT NARRATOR'S VOICE CAN BE HEARD.

YOU ARE THE 12TH CHARACTER, ENTERING AFTER DOG IS FINISHED ABOUT 40 MILLION YEARS AGO. YOU BEGIN BY STANDING IN ASIA, MEOWING, THEN BEGIN READING YOUR PART WHILE STILL IN ASIA, THEN WALK ACROSS BERINGIA WHEN YOU GET TO THAT PART. BE VERY HAUGHTY, VERY SOPHISTICATED, VERY LAID BACK.

CAT: Meow! Meow! Oh, if there be dogs, there must certainly be cats! I am Nimravid [Nim RAH vid]. Not a true cat, mind you. But a cat look-alike. Forty million years ago, we Nimravid cats evolve in Asia, and then slink across Beringia into this land. [SLINK ACROSS NOW.] I was not born Native to Turtle Island, but we Nimravid cats will rapidly become native to this land. In fact, we will be the cats of the whole world until true cats, family Felidae [FEE-lid-eee], evolve many millions of years from now. Do I hear a chorus of cats greeting my arrival? [ENCOURAGE THE AUDIENCE TO MEOW OR ROAR, THEN SLINK BACK TO YOUR SEAT.]

- 35 MILLION YEARS AGO (still the Eocene)

NARRATOR: We come to 35 million years ago, and we are nearing the end of the warm Eocene epoch. Oh my! I sense that a terrible storm is happening in South America right now. Huge trees are falling over and are being washed out to sea in the great rivers. Now ocean winds are pushing those tangles of trees northward, northward, until they wash ashore in North America. But look! Something is crawling out of those branches and roots. Oh my! I see not one but THREE kinds of small creatures, climbing out of those branches. Who is joyfully disembarking and preparing to make this continent their new home?

YOU ARE THE 13TH CHARACTER. YOU WILL ENTER AFTER NIMRAVID CATS FINISH, AND AFTER NARRATOR TALKS ABOUT A STORM IN SOUTH AMERICA LAUNCHING YOU OUT TO SEA ON TANGLED ROOTS 35 MILLION YEARS AGO. NARRATOR SAYS, "THREE KINDS OF SMALL CREATURES JOYFULLY DISEMBARK AND MAKE THEIR HOME RIGHT HERE. WHO MIGHT THEY BE?" YOU COME UP FROM SOUTH AMERICA AT THIS POINT AND CREEP INTO THE CONTINENT, THEN TURN AND READ.

WHIPTAIL LIZARD, TREE FROG, AND TOAD: Oh, that journey was frightening! Fortunately, it rained a lot so we never got too salty while adrift at sea. Who are we three, you ask? We are WHIPTAIL LIZARD, TREE FROG, AND TOAD! You see, North America had none of these fine creatures until 35 million years ago, but like so many others before us, we easily became native to your land. So next spring, when the peepers begin to sing in the evening, please think gratefully of your continental neighbor to the south! For it was South America who gave you Whiptail Lizard, Tree Frog, and Toad!

NARRATOR: Let us close out the Eocene epoch by honoring an extinction. I am sad to report that it is time to say goodbye to our native terror bird, Diatryma. Please stand, Diatryma. Your kind is about to go extinct worldwide, and so we bid you farewell. Goodbye, Diatryma, goodbye! [chime]

But as one bird vanishes, another one appears! This bird flies into North America from very far away. It originally evolved in Australia and has been expanding its population from one continent to the next. Even into modern times, it will remain a citizen of the whole world. Oh, do I see a big black bird approaching in the skies of Beringia? Who might that bird be?

YOU ARE THE 14TH CREATURE, AFTER AFTER THE NARRATOR HONORS THE EXTINCTION OF DIATRYMA AT THE CLOSE OF THE EOCENE. THEN THE NARRATOR TELLS OF A BIG BLACK BIRD FLYING IN FROM AUSTRALIA, BY WAY OF BERINGIA. ACT THIS PATHWAY OUT WHILE CAWING. THEN STAND IN THE CENTER OF THE CONTINENT AND READ YOUR PART.

RAVEN: Cawwww! Cawwww! I am Raven! You think me native to North America? Ha! I am a citizen of the world, born an Australian. Even in modern times, I continue to enjoy traveling so much that Ravens throughout the world all remain one co-mingled species. I am, of course, a master Trickster, and have found my way into many Native American stories. I know that you humans love mimicking my call, so let me hear you now! [LET THEM CAW FOR A MOMENT] I am Raven! [THEN FLY BACK TO YOUR SEAT.]

OLIGOCENE 34-23 mya

- 32 MILLION YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: Let us advance the clock to 32 million years ago. The Paleocene and Eocene Epochs of Earth history are over, and we are now into the Oligocene, which geologists playfully refer to as the time of "THE BIG CHILL." It is not cold enough to be an Ice Age, but it is considerably colder than it was during the Eocene. Many kinds of warm-adapted TURTLES will go extinct in North America, but LAND TORTOISES will prosper. The MULTITUBERCULATE MAMMALS, who co-existed with dinosaurs and who are squirrel-like relatives of Australia's duck-billed platypus, will finally go extinct worldwide. So, too, will one of Earth's biggest land mammals of all time. Please rise, mighty BRONTOTHERE, and stand, for we must bid you farewell:

Goodbye, Brontotheres, goodbye! Oh, we love to tell your story, and we pledge to honor your memory forever.

Rhino, where are you? Don't worry, you have more than 25 million years still to go on this continent. Your time is not yet up!

The Climate is so cold that Beringia is no longer an easy corridor for intercontinental movement. And the Atlantic Ocean has recently widened enough to destroy the old land route between Canada and Scandinavia. Climate is cold everywhere in high latitudes. Meanwhile, the landforms of North America create weather conditions that outpace all the other continents combined in one powerful way.

[PUT DOWN YOUR SCRIPT and explain how the north-south trend of the Rockies and Appalachians means that there are no barriers to movement of air masses north and south through the center of the continent. This creates ideal conditions for a particular kind of storm? What might that storm be?

[Encourage WIND SOUNDS from audience as Tornado twirls.]

YOU ARE THE 15TH CHARACTER. YOU COME ON 32 MILLION YEARS AGO, AFTER RAVEN. BUT THE NARRATOR HAS A LONG PASSAGE, HONORING BRONTOTHERE EXTINCTION, BEFORE YOU COME ON STAGE. YOUR CUE IS WHEN NARRATOR ASKS, "WHAT IS THIS KIND OF STORM?" AT WHICH POINT YOU COME FORWARD AND TWIRL IN THE CENTER OF THE CONTINENT.

TORNADO: [YOU SPEAK NO WORDS, JUST TWIRL, WHILE NARRATOR ENCOURAGES AUDIENCE TO MAKE WIND NOISES.] NARRATOR WILL TELL YOU WHEN TO RETURN TO YOUR SEAT.

NARRATOR: *Thank you, Tornado, thank you.* We are astounded to learn that 90 percent of the world's tornados occur right here in North America! And in modern times, when humans foster a greenhouse period once again, these storms, born of a violent meeting of hot and cold air masses, are sure to grow in abundance and intensity.

But we are still in the Big Chill of the Oligocene. It is not only cold 32 million years ago; it is intensely SEASONAL, especially here in North America where we have a CLIMATIC TRUMPET. Winters are real winters here, yet summers still have exceptionally warm spells. Intense seasonality encourages trees to evolve leaves that fall away in the fall and regrow each spring. May we hear from the representative of DECIDUOUS TREES?

YOU ARE THE 16TH CHARACTER, COMING AFTER TORNADO. BUT WAIT FOR THE NARRATOR TO CALL YOU FORWARD. BEGIN BY STANDING IN THE ARCTIC, THEN SLOWLY MOVE SOUTH AS YOU READ.

DECIDUOUS TREES: I am Deciduous Trees. During the Big Chill, deciduous trees that had lived in the Arctic during the warm spells of the Mesozoic and early Cenozoic migrate southward into Washington and California. Two kinds of deciduous trees are true elders of the plant world, as they were both here in North America during the dinosaur era. These elders are Ginkgo and Dawn Redwood (which is also known as Metasequoia). Both migrate south into Washington State and California during the Big Chill of the Oligocene.

Meanwhile, something is happening in the animal realm right here in North America that is creating great excitement among us trees. What might that be? [RETURN TO YOUR SEAT.]

YOU ARE THE 17TH CHARACTER, 32 MILLION YEARS AGO. RUSH FORWARD WITH TINY STEPS AND STAND IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE CONTINENT WHEN DECIDUOUS TREES ASKS, "WHAT MIGHT THAT BE?" THEN BEGIN READING, PERHAPS MOVE JERKILY AROUND LIKE A SQUIRREL, PERHAPS GATHERING AND BURYING NUTS.

SQUIRREL: Glory, glory, glory! North America becomes the continent of NUTS because of me! Yipeee!! Who am I? I am squirrel! [RACE AROUND.] Yes, I am squirrel! Recall that the horse family, the camel family, and the dog family all originated right here on Turtle Island. Well, so did the squirrel family! The squirrel family evolved during the Big Chill of the Oligocene Epoch. What is more, squirrels and nut trees CO-EVOLVED. We squirrels evoked the big nutritious nuts — like acorns and beech nuts and and hickory. And nut trees, in turn, brought forth squirrels. I am squirrel! And I will make this continent grow nuts!

- 30 MILLION YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: We come to 30 million years ago. We are still in the coolness of the Oligocene, but it is not quite so cold as it was at the beginning of this epoch 32 million years ago. Climate has warmed up enough for somebody to slither across Beringia. Who might that be?

YOU ARE THE 18TH CHARACTER. YOUR PART COMES IN AFTER SQUIRREL, 30 MILLION YEARS AGO. YOUR CUE IS THE NARRATOR SAYING SOMEONE "SLITHERING" ACROSS BERINGIA 30 MILLION YEARS AGO. IN PREPARATION, RECRUIT A PARTNER TO SERVE AS RATTLESNAKE. MAKE SURE YOU BOTH BEGIN IN ASIA, SLITHER ACROSS BERINGIA WHILE YOU BEGIN TO READ YOUR PART. MAKE SURE THAT RATTLESNAKE HAS THE RATTLE TO SHAKE, BUT ONLY WHEN IT BEGINS TO READ ITS PART.

GARTER SNAKE: I am Garter Snake. I am slithering into North America by way of Beringia and here I will diversify magnificently. I can terrify a frog, but my cousin here will soon be able to terrify even big mammals. Oh, Cousin, speak of your powers! [SLITHER BACK TO YOUR SEAT WHEN RATTLESNAKE ENDS.]

RATTLESNAKE: [RATTLE AND HISS] I am Rattlesnake! [RATTLE AGAIN AND LOOK HAUGHTY.] My Eurasian ancestors who came across Beringia into Turtle Island around this time were poisonous, but they did not yet have a rattle. But on this fine continent, their descendents will evolve into terrifying vipers. [RATTLE] Rattlesnakes will never make the return journey, however, back across Beringia. We will never spread into Asia or Europe or Africa. We will eventually raft into South America on storm-launched tangles of trees, but there will never be rattlesnakes in the Old World. Do you sense me now, slithering and coiling around the warmth of your feet? [RATTLE] I am Rattlesnake! [THEN SLITHER BACK TO YOUR SEAT.]

- 24 MILLION YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: It is 24 million years ago. We are nearing the close of the Oligocene, and something huge is happening. [Sing, like the Carol King song of the early 1970s] "I feel the Earth, move, under my feet."

ROCKY MOUNTAINS. THIS IS THE SECOND TIME YOU ENTER THE STAGE. YOU COME IN AFTER RATTLESNAKE, BUT WAIT FOR THE NARRATOR TO INTRODUCE YOU 24 MILLION YEARS AGO BY SINGING, "I FEEL THE EARTH, MOVE UNDER MY FEET." AT THAT POINT YOU COME FORWARD, LIE OR CROUCH ON THE FLOOR, SAY NOTHING THE WHOLE TIME, BUT SIMPLY ACT OUT THE PART AS NARRATOR SPEAKS.

Note to Rockies: Narrator will later call you forward again at 3 million years ago to act out the Isthmus of Panama forming.

NARRATOR: Remember the Rocky Mountains, whose rising drained the Bearpaw Seaway around the time of the dinosaur extinction? Well, those early Rockies had formed from soft sedimentary rock, and they eroded away in no time at all. So 24 million years ago, it is time to resurrect the Rockies. *Rise, Rockies, rise!* Oh, I feel the spirit movin' in my stones! Halleluia! The Rockies are born again! [ROCKIES RISE, BOW TO THE AUDIENCE, THEN RETURN TO YOUR SEAT.]

MIOCENE 23 - 5 mya

- 20 MILLION YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: Let us turn the clock to 20 million years ago. We are now into a new geological time: the Miocene Epoch. The resurrection of the Rockies is well underway, and is having a big effect on climate. The high mountains is catching moist air coming in from the Pacific. Rain falls on the West slope, creating very dry conditions on the plains to the east. And this climatic drying is urging a wondrous new family of plants to evolve. Who is this special and most advanced family of plants?

YOU ARE THE 19TH CHARACTER, AFTER THE ROCKIES RISE, AND AFTER THE NARRATOR TURNS THE CLOCK TO 20 MILLION YEARS AGO. THE NARRATOR WILL CALL YOU FORWARD BY ASKING, "WHO IS THIS SPECIAL AND MOST ADVANCED FAMILY OF PLANTS?" COME INTO THE CENTER OF THE CONTINENT AND TURN TO THE AUDIENCE TO BEGIN READING YOUR PART. [ACT OUT OTHER PLANTS OVERTOPPING YOU WHEN YOU READ THAT PART; HOLD YOUR OWN HAIR UP WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT HAIR; AND ACT OUT LAWNMOWERS AT THE END.]

GRASS: I am GRASS. I am an amazing plant because unlike other plants, I WANT to be eaten! You see, grazers (such as camels and horses and rhinos) are my friends, because they can't hurt me, really, but they nibble away seedlings of trees and other plants that might otherwise overtop me and shade me out. So I like having grazers around! You see, my ancestors spent a lot of time observing you mammals, watching how your own hair grew. It doesn't hurt you to cut your hair, does it? That's because your hair grows not from the tip, but from the base. What a great idea! So I decided to do the same. I did it by burying my stem underground, so that only the leaves show. And I keep growing horizontally underground, where it is safe, and then keep poking leaves upward to catch the sun. So I found a way to ensure that grazers could no longer hurt me. In fact, a few tens of millions of years from now, LAWNMOWERS will also become my best friends! I am Grass!

NARRATOR: The evolution of modern grasses ushers in The GOLDEN AGE OF MAMMALS. Many kinds of big mammals evolve and diversify, feeding upon the rich grasses. Big mammals are scarce in dense forests because most of the leaf matter is out of reach, far up in the trees. But with grasses: Ah!! All greenery is well within reach. So during this Golden Age of Mammals, there are HORSES AND CAMELS AND RHINOS galore in North America.

And so there is a lot of food for big predators. Who might those predators be?

YOU ENTER FOR A SECOND TIME, AS CAT, AS THE 20TH CHARACTER, FOLLOWING GRASS AROUND 20 MILLION YEARS AGO. WAIT FOR THE NARRATOR TO SAY, "AND SO THERE IS A LOT OF FOOD FOR BIG PREDATORS." KEEP THE SAME PERSONALITY AS YOU HAD FOR YOUR NIMRAVID CHARACTER. BEGIN IN ASIA WITH YOUR USUAL MEOW AND THEN READ AS YOU CROSS BERINGIA. (YOU MIGHT WANT TO ADMIRE AND POLISH YOUR CLAWS AS YOU SPEAK.)

CAT: Well, I am sure you recall that we cats first appeared as Nimravids. We Nimravids did, however, eventually go extinct. So it is time to bring the CAT form back again. You see, Earth must have her cats! Let there be cats! [pause] This time, Family Felidae [FEE-lid-eee] evolves. This is the same family that gave birth to that particular king or queen who now rules over many of your human houses, yes? We cats do a remarkable job of taming humans to serve at our beck and call. We evolved first in Asia, and 17 million years ago, we began sending representatives to your fine continent. Some will evolve long teeth: the sabertooths! Some will become even larger than the African lion. [ROAR!!!!] I am Cat! [SAUNTER PROUDLY BACK TO YOUR SEAT.]

NARRATOR: It is still the Miocene, the Golden Age of Mammals. One completely new animal family is evolving in North America right now — a family of plant eaters, which, unlike horses and camels and rhinos, will never live anywhere else except this continent. Who might this newly evolving family be?

YOU ARE THE 21st CHARACTER DURING THE MIOCENE,
FOLLOWING CAT'S SECOND APPEARANCE ON-STAGE. YOU
PRANCE INTO THE CENTER OF THE CONTINENT WHEN NARRATOR
ASKS, "WHO MIGHT THIS NEWLY EVOLVING FAMILY BE?"

PRONGHORN: I know who that new family is, for it is me! I am Pronghorn! We pronghorns may look like antelopes, but we are NOT antelopes, and we are not deer, and we are not goats. We are our own distinctive family: Pronghorn, Family Antilocapridae [ANT-ill-oh-CAP-rid-ee]. And we evolve right here on Turtle Island during the Golden Age of Mammals! We will remain true to our home of origin. We will never stray. We offer North America all sorts of pronghorn species during the Miocene. Some of us will sprout as many as 6 horns from our snout and forehead. But by the time humans learn to tell our story, only one species will remain. Only one species, and only here in North America: The American Pronghorn.

I am Pronghorn, and I shall become the fastest plant-eating animal in the world. Who may I thank for encouraging me to run so fast? Come forward, Teacher, and show us what you can do! [WHEN CHEETAH ENTERS, RUN FROM CHEETAH. WAIT FOR CHEETAH TO FINISH TALKING AND TO PUT AN ARM AROUND YOU, AND THEN YOU BOTH RETURN TO YOUR SEATS.]

YOU ARE THE 22nd CREATURE, DURING THE MIOCENE, RIGHT AFTER PRONGHORN. YOUR CUE TO COME INTO THE CENTER OF THE CONTINENT IS WHEN PRONGHORN ASKS "COME FORWARD TEACHER AND SHOW US WHAT YOU CAN DO!"

CHEETAH: [SAY WITH IRRITATION AS YOU RISE FROM YOUR SEAT AND WALK SMUGLY INTO THE CONTINENT]: I was in the middle of a nap, Pronghorn. You disturb me. But alright. I'll chase some speed into you: this time as Cheetah! Run, pronghorn, run! [CHASE PRONGHORN A LITTLE]. I am Cheetah! No predator anywhere in the world can match my speed! I am magnificent, yes? I originated right here in North America. So when you humans see pictures of me in Africa, remember: I am really a North American cat who strayed into Africa not long ago. Perhaps you humans should bring me back to my land of origin, yes? For here I could once again chase my favorite prey! We'd make a great team out in the grasslands of the American west, don't you think, Pronghorn? [PUT YOUR ARM AROUND PRONGHORN AND SAY SOMETHING LIKE, "AFTER YOU", BECKONING PRONGHORN TO RETURN TO YOUR SEATS.]

NARRATOR: It is still 20 million years ago, the Golden Age of Mammals. Oh, what fierce creature is coming into our continent now?

YOU ARE THE 23ND CHARACTER. YOU ENTER AFTER CHEETAH FINISHES, 20 MILLION YEARS AGO, AND AFTER THE NARRATOR ASKS, "OH, WHAT FIERCE CREATURE IS COMING INTO OUR CONTINENT NOW?" GO OVER TO ASIA AND ACT FIERCE OR GROWL AND BEGIN TO READ WHILE THERE, THEN CROSS BERINGIA AND KEEP READING.

BEAR: I am Bear! I am Bear! I evolved in Eurasia, but I shall periodically send Turtle Island members of my tribe. First I will send the ancestors of the bear who will become the biggest mammalian land carnivore of all time, and who will live right here and only here on your continent. This great bear is *Arctodus simus*! [Ark TOE duhs SIGH muss]. Twice the size of a grizzly bear, *Arctodus simus* will prevent the Eurasian grizzly from gaining even a toehold here until *Arctodus* goes extinct, just 13,000 years ago. But that is getting ahead of my story. For now, just know that the bear clan enters North America for the first time and is honored to join so many other creatures in becoming native to this land. [BOW AND RETURN TO YOUR SEAT.]

● 17 MILLION YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: Following Bear across Beringia is someone who has no fear of even the greatest bear or the greatest cat? What fine beast is trumpeting its entry?

YOU ARE THE 24th CHARACTER, AT 17 MILLION YEARS AGO, FOLLOWING BEAR. WHEN NARRATOR SAYS, "WHAT FINE BEAST IS TRUMPETING ITS ENTRY?" RISE FROM YOUR SEAT AND GO TO ASIA, WHERE YOU USE AN ARM TO HANG FROM THE SIDE OF YOUR FACE TO LOOK LIKE A TRUNK, AND TRUMPET YOUR ENTRANCE ACROSS BERINGIA, AND THEN BEGIN READING, SLOWLY, WITH A LOW VOICE:

MASTODON: I am Mastodon! [TRUMPET!] I am the first of the mighty elephant clan to enter this great continent. My kind evolved in Africa, of course. But so did you humans. Know that I belong on this continent no less than you! I am Mastodon! [TRUMPET AND SWING YOUR TRUNK AS YOU RETURN TO YOUR SEAT.]

- 10 MILLION YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: Let us advance the clock to 10 million years ago. It is still the Miocene, the Golden Age of Mammals. Mastodons and Bears have become native to this land. The Pronghorn Family has proliferated, as have Horses and Camels and Squirrels.

Whoever was DOG, get back up here now. We have another LEG of your story to tell. [pause for Dog to come up] Oh, Dog: You have been native to this continent for some 30 million years, and finally, finally, you are ready to spread out into the rest of the world. Go forth, dog and cross triumphantly into ASIA as wolf and fox, and then into AFRICA, and finally into Australia as a dingo, while the rest of us bark and howl a cheer for you!

Pliocene 5 –2.5 mya

- 5 MILLION YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: It is now 5 million years ago. The Miocene Epoch, the Golden Age of Mammals, has ended. And we shift into the

Pliocene. I have some very sad news to report at this beginning of the Pliocene. For several of you must depart. Please rise, so we may bid you farewell from our continent: DECIDUOUS TREES please rise, to represent the DAWN REDWOOD. GINKGO: rise. RHINOCEROS: rise. Thank you all for so many millions of years of joyful participation in the life of our continent! We are grateful that you will survive in other lands, while Turtle Island must lose you now. But we pledge to keep your memory alive. *So Farewell, all. Farewell!* [pause for audience to quiet down]

[NOTE TO NARRATOR: BECAUSE THE STORY IS SO LONG, FROM HERE ON YOU WILL PRESENT SOME OF THE COMINGS AND GOINGS YOURSELF, WITHOUT A CHARACTER RISING TO DO SO. I WOULD HAVE LOVED TO HAVE KEPT ON WITH THE CHARACTERS, BUT IT WOULD HAVE LASTED TOO LONG THAT WAY.]

Back to our story: So much is happening 5 MILLION YEARS AGO, I can hardly keep track. The Colorado Plateau is rising, and the Colorado River is cutting down, down, down. The GRAND CANYON is born! The Grand Canyon is born! Meanwhile, great wounds of molten rock break open in eastern Washington and Oregon, flooding a vast landscape with hot lava. This is the great COLUMBIAN FLOOD BASALT.

And there is quite an exchange of animals coming and going across Beringia right now too. Five million years ago, Asia is sending us our first DEER AND BIGHORN SHEEP. And MAMMOTHS are entering for the first time, too. Mastodons have been here since 17 million years ago, but now mammoths join them for the first time. And soon, the Eurasian BLACK BEAR will come across and learn to become native here. Such recent arrivals, and yet they all will find ways to become native to this continent.

Oh come one and all! Welcome!

- 3 MILLION YEARS AGO

It is now 3 million years ago. HORSES AND CAMELS, PLEASE COME FORWARD. THERE IS SOMETHING YOU MUST DO: Horses and camels: Many times you have tried to venture across Beringia, and failed. But now you both finally succeed. And a good thing: because soon you will go extinct in your land of origin. So go forth! Go forth and multiply in Asia and Europe and Africa. And, horse! When you get to Africa, how about growing some stripes? We'll call you Zebra then!

Also at 3 million years ago, the Earth is shifting again, and will cause some huge changes for biology. Right now, the Isthmus of Panama is rising, connecting North and South America for the first time. Rocky Mountains: Could you come up here and stand in for the Isthmus of Panama for us?

Oh, who do I see heading north across the Isthmus of Panama 3 million years ago? Why, it is Giant Ground Sloth and giant Glyptodont, who are both huge and slow-moving creatures from South America. And what cute little ones are waddling around their slow-moving feet? Why it is Possum, and Porcupine, and Armadillo! We welcome you to our continent. *Welcome, South Americans, welcome!*

But, oh, who is heading south now? I'm going to need some help for this. Please come up here: Bear, Cat, Dog, Squirrel, and you too Camel. [PAUSE] Anybody know what form camel takes when it goes into South America? (Llama!) And let's pretend that we also have raccoon and tapir and peccary and rabbit and mouse up here too.

Now all of you, all of you, head south across the Isthmus. Go forth and multiply! As it turns out, this migration from the north is truly a crisis for South America, for that continent has been isolated from the rest of the world for 70 million years. Its native creatures have not learned the ways of the north, and most will fall to predation or competition. In turn, those dogs and cats and bears and squirrels and raccoons and peccaries and tapirs and rabbits and mice from the north will easily become native to South America. Imagine

that! Except for the RHEA birds and MONKEYS and TREE SLOTHS and ANTEATERS, the large creatures we now think of as native to South America have truly been native for only 3 million years.

What is Native? What is Native?

PLEISTOCENE 2.5 million to 13,000 years ago

- 2.5 MILLION YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: Let us advance the clock to 2.5 million years ago. The Pliocene has ended and we move into the Pleistocene, the Ice Ages. GLACIAL Ice will advance and retreat, advance and retreat, at least 17 times over the course of two and a half million years. Amazingly, throughout this climatic challenge, most of North America's creatures will survive. Several new ones, adapted for arctic landscapes, will emerge. Let us hear from one of those Arctic creatures.

YOU ENTER AGAIN WHEN NARRATOR TALKS ABOUT "ARCTIC CREATURES."

BEAR: I am bear! And only 150,000 years ago, some of my kind who are brown will evolve into an elegant white bear, a hunter of seals: Polar Bear! Yes, my Polar Bear is younger than you humans! Imagine that! If you persist in judging evolution's goal by who came last, then it would seem that evolution's ultimate aim was to make me! I am Polar Bear!

NARRATOR: During the Pleistocene, Turtle Island will welcome one more very large creature. This creature evolved in Asia, but finally enters our continent during the Ice Age. Who might this creature be?

YOU ENTER VERY LATE IN THE STORY, DURING THE ICE AGE, AFTER POLAR BEAR TALKS AND AFTER THE NARRATOR ASKS, "WHO MIGHT THIS CREATURE BE?" START IN ASIA, ACT LIKE A BISON, CROSS BERINGIA, THEN READ PROUDLY"

BISON: I am Bison! I evolved in Asia but recently became native to North America. I bet you humans did not know that I was so recent an arrival! And yet you made me the very symbol of the America West! I am Bison! [proudly leave stage].

HOLOCENE 13,000 years ago thru now

- 13,000 YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: The Pleistocene is over. Glacial ice is retreating for the final time before the present. It is now 13,000 years ago. Something momentous is about to occur. [NARRATOR ACTS THIS OUT, BY GOING TO ASIA AND MIMING SPEAR THROWING.] The First Peoples, the CLOVIS culture, disperse out of Siberia, cross Beringia, and spread throughout Turtle Island and down into South America. The Clovis people are the Mammoth Hunters, and they are at first extraordinarily successful. This is because the mammoths native to North America know nothing of people and projectiles. Unlike the great animals of Africa, our own elephants and horses and camels and ground sloths know nothing of hurled rocks, of thrown spears, of firesticks. And so these creatures fall, they quickly fall and disappear from Turtle Island.

[Use a CHIME or BELL to punctuate each naming below:]

Please stand solemnly and be recognized as I call your name, for you are going extinct on this continent: Gone are the MASTODONS AND MAMMOTHS. Gone are the native HORSES AND CAMELS. Gone are the long-horned ancestral BISON. Gone are cousins of TURTLE: the giant land TORTOISES.

Gone too, are the GREAT PREDATORS who depend on them: Please stand DOG, as we bid DIRE WOLF farewell. Please stand CAT, as we honor several kinds of sabertooths who are departing, and a LION bigger than the African lion, and also our native CHEETAH. Please stand BEAR, as we honor the largest carnivorous land mammal of all time: ARCTODUS SIMUS, the great bear.

Farewell, creatures, farewell! [Signal for all sit]

And who will replace them? GRAY WOLF from Asia will replace Dire Wolf. Short-horned BISON from Eurasia will replace the long-horned, larger bison. ELK and MOOSE from Eurasia will wander across Beringia with the Clovis people, replacing some of our native plant eaters. The Eurasian GRIZZLY BEAR will happily make its home in North America, now that Arctodus simus is gone.

Yes! We are surprised to learn how recently these familiar animals have made this continent their home. What does it mean to become native to this land?

AND SO, WE COME TO THE CLOSE OF OUR STORY.

What do we make of this tale of extinction and replacement, of origin and immigration? What do we make of the ecological disaster wrought by the first humans coming to this continent?

It is important to understand that the Clovis Culture of mammoth hunters was just doing what comes naturally to humans. Extinction is what humans have always brought whenever we enter a new land, a land that we relate to not as a familiar home but as a new and wild FRONTIER. Time and again, we overkill the tame, slow-reproducing beasts. We did this in AUSTRALIA when we first entered some 30,000 years ago, in SIBERIA 18,000 years ago. We did it in North America 13,000 years ago. And we did it yet again in CUBA, when we canoed there some 6,000 years ago, killing off the remaining population of ground sloths long after they had vanished from the mainland of North and South America.

We did it, as well, in MADAGASCAR 2,000 years ago, when we extinguished the great elephant birds and the biggest lemurs. We did it in HAWAII 1,600 years ago, when new arrivals from Polynesia feasted on flightless geese. We did it in NEW ZEALAND 800 years ago, when the ancestors of Maori peoples overhunted the moa birds and ate too many of their giant eggs, and again on MAURITIUS ISLAND just 300 years ago, when European sailors took out the Dodo. Giant tortoises, once on all continents and islands, vanished nearly everywhere too, as soon as the first humans enter their homelands.

EXTINCTION OF THE MASSIVE thus happens well before industrial peoples evolve, well before the newest migrations of humans to the Americas, humans who will bring deadly diseases and then violent death to the descendants of the first peoples of Turtle Island. The Native Americans who fell to the first Europeans had had 13,000 years to learn how to become native to place – about as long as grizzly bear has had.

PERCUSSION SOUND

[Note: It is very important for the narrator to lay down the script here and extemporaneously deliver the gist of these next three paragraphs.]

What, then, do the CREATION STORIES of the First Peoples mean to later arrivals who choose to find meaning in the science story, too? We saw that the Iroquois understanding of the birth of Turtle Island eerily matches the science story of the Golden Age of Turtles coinciding with the recession of the Bearpaw Seaway. But what of the stories that the First Peoples tell of their own ancestry? What of the stories they tell of humans emerging right here on this continent, and living in harmony with all of life?

Well, one way is to see those stories as true, too. Perhaps as truer than the barebones science story. From a science perspective, the GENES of these people do indeed derive from ancestors who crossed Beringia, but genes do not a people make. We humans are CULTURAL CREATURES. And the cultures of the First Peoples fully emerged right here on Turtle Island. These cultures emerged out of the ASHES of the fallen Clovis culture. Each culture emerges distinctly, within a particular bioregion, and in relationship with the other creatures who have been born or grown native here. That is why the indigenous creation stories speak of coyote and bear and raven. That is how they deeply connect with the science story, too.

So, Dear Animals and Plants and Landforms, shall we INVITE the newest waves of humans — those from the other continents — to become native too? Shall we invite them to honor their own immigrant ancestors and to pledge their allegiance to this continent, to their home?

* * *

NARRATOR: There are lots of different ways to end. Perhaps dim the lights and bring candles into the center of the continent. You may wish to invite humans to enter the continent in groups, according to their continent(s) of origin. Mention that some will enter more than once. Chime after each group.

Always begin by inviting those with **Native American** heritage, and ask them to speak of their heritage one by one.

Invite the other continents: east Asia, Indonesia, Polynesia, Australia, India, Middle East, Africa, South and Central America, Europe. End with whatever continent has the most heritage.

If there are 20 or fewer people, have each person say something like, "My greatgrandmother came here from Hungary." And have the bell or chime passed to each person so they can ring it after they speak. For ten or fewer participants, you can invite each one to step into the continent from their lands of origin and speak in more detail of their ancestry AND of where they themselves have lived.

CLOSING CIRCLE. All stand in a circle around the continent and candle. Hold hands. Invite people to speak as they are moved some sort of commitment or pledge they wish to make around being native or making some sort of contribution to the future. Begin in silence and let the pledges flow naturally. Close with a song, or some other way that suits you and the group.