Carrying Our Words

We travel carrying our words.
We arrive at the ocean.
With our words we are able to speak
of the sounds of thunderous waves.
We speak of how majestic it is,
of the ocean power that gifts us songs.
We sing of our respect
and call it our relative.

Translated into English from O’odham by the poet.

‘U’a g T-ni’oki’

T-ni’oki’ att ’an o ’u’akc o hihi
Am ka:ck wui dada.
S-ap ’am o ’a: mo has ma:s g kiod.
mat ’am ed.a betank ’i-gei.
’Am o ’a: mo he’es ’i-ge’ej.
mo hascu wud. ida gewkdagaj
mac ’ab amjed. behê g ņe’i.
Hemhoa s-ap ’am o ’a: mac si has elid, mo d. ’i:mig.

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Ofelia Zepeda, a member of the Tohono O’odham Nation of southwestern Arizona, is the author of three poetry collections: Where Clouds Are Formed (University of Arizona Press, 2008), Jewed ’I-Hoi/Earth Movements (Kore Press, 1997), and Ocean
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