

Carrying Our Words

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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.

Sunset at Sea



Thomas Moran (American, 1837-1926). *Sunset at Sea*, 1906. Oil on canvas, 30 3/16 x 40 3/16 in. (76.7 x 102.1 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Gift of the executors of the Estate of Colonel Michael Friedsam.

Classroom Activities

1. Look at the image of the painting "[Sunset at Sea](#)." Write down what you notice in the painting. If you write "the ocean" or "a sunset," you should also note which aspects of the painting (lines, color, brush strokes) led you to conclude this. If possible, turn and talk with a friend to share what they noticed. What specific words would you use to describe what you saw and felt?
2. Look at the poem "[Carrying Our Words](#)." Read it silently and then write down all the words, phrases, and structural elements that jump out at you. If possible, have someone read the poem aloud while looking at the list of any new words, phrases, and structural elements that you hear. Repeat this process with a second person reading aloud.
3. If you can, gather in a small group and share what you noticed in the poem. Which words and images do you think are the strongest?
4. Whole-class discussion: How does the speaker in the poem feel about the ocean? What evidence in the poem tells you this? Why does the speaker call the ocean her relative?