

# THE RIVER REMEMBERS

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The river remembers our voices

**Paddles up!**

**Bow to stern!**

**Two Row!**

**Wampum!**

**Honor the Treaties!**

**Protect the Earth!**

The river remembers our paddles  
Sunrise glowed on our faces  
as we gathered for morning meeting  
A worried ally asked about the forecast  
Chief Edwards told us his forecast

Our paddles remember the river  
Our faces reflected the light  
as our minds became one  
50% chance of rain  
“100% chance of awesome.”

Paddlers gathered from the Four Directions  
The Wind remembers our flags  
Our teachers said, “Be kind to each other.”

Strength flowed in the Four Directions  
and the stories we carried back home  
Our kindness remembers our teachers.

The Shore remembers morning launch  
Bow to stern, two rows of boats  
Hearts and eyes followed Hickory

canoe after canoe, many hands helping  
natives on the west, allies on the east  
waiting for the signal: paddles up!

River remembers laughter and water fights  
Safety paddlers with orange bandanas  
Coast guard and Sheriff boats

Skin remembers river washing away sweat  
encouraged us, made us feel safe  
followed us, ready to help

Elders remember the young people  
Winds carried our voices  
The people remember the bridge  
The Unity Riders joined us

The young people remember the elders  
Our singing celebrated the wind  
Two rows paddled beneath  
The bridge remembers the horses

Sun remembers the tips of our noses  
Solar power charged our phones  
Willows offered us shade

Nose remember the kisses of sunburn  
Our phones carry the pictures still  
We paddled with gratitude

The canoe does not steer the ship  
We honor each other’s sovereignty  
We passed snacks from boat to boat

The ship does not steer the canoe  
and agree to live side by side  
We shared trail mix and cookies

The riverbank remembers the chanting  
The anti-war songs, the protest  
We gasped at dead fish floating

The chanting remembers the riverbank  
The way sunlight led us forward  
Fish remember when the river was clean

The air remembers the music  
the drumming, the voices

The music celebrated the air  
the singing, the words

We ate in circles, slept in circles  
The Thunderers came to protect us  
The canoe remembers the shaping hands

Sometimes we paddled in circles  
The young ones danced in the rain  
Hands remember the gift of the tree

The little dog Huxley remembers hands petting  
Hand remembers hand  
Grandmother Moon saw us dancing  
Our feet remember the rhythm

We all remember the little dog  
the clasp of friendship  
counterclockwise around the campfire  
the moonlit circle of singing

We remember the joyous greetings  
when our boats touched the shore  
The shore welcomed our feet

helping hands, open hearts, open minds  
we felt loved  
Our feet welcomed the shore

Our bellies remember buffalo stew  
Our hearts remember the ground crew  
Our leaders guided with the Good Mind

Blisters remember the gentle gift of bandaids  
their muscular backs, their generous hands  
We placed trust in our leaders

The Grasses softened our sleeping  
Strangers took us into their homes  
cupcakes frosted like a wampum belt

in tents where we talked and we dreamed  
offered showers and stories and tea  
a yacht club welcomed our sweaty flotilla

Skyscrapers remember two rows of boats  
Our backs remember the tides

and the people who cheered us on  
The wind remembers our backs

We send thanks to the River  
We send thanks for our journey  
Together we brightened the Covenant Chain  
Every stroke a prayer for peace

The River that runs both ways  
together on the River of Life  
of Peace and Friendship forever  
Every mile a step toward justice

The Eagle circled above us in prayer  
Ancestors paddled among us  
The children speak of our vision  
The wampum remembers the promise  
we made to each other

Our prayers remember the Eagle  
We paddled among the ancestors.  
Our vision speaks of the children  
We honor the wampum, the promise  
we make to each other

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