Singing at my Laptop
Half an hour and my tongue is sore
The sometimes unfamiliar geometry of this language
Turns soft parts of my mouth temporarily to stone
I’m picking sand from my back teeth hours later
The outlaws who defied school rules
Stood quiet or crying or screaming through the
Beating
Must taste smiles at this sight
So many things I can’t say
Can’t think about
Around these busy busy verbs
Sip medicine from a lightning killed tree
Slips grow green around the stump
Shrug shoulders
Loosen neck
Start singing again

A Blanket as Map
Art is territorial
These assemblies of things
Collected from my world
Lifted from yours and reworked
Until they have a place in mine
No less a statement than the cat
Face rubbing scent mark
Might feel good
Might flatter
Purr might please
Don’t be fooled
This is about turf
These bloody pawprints
I stitch across our shared quilt

To a Different Watershed
I make sure to pack a
Map turtle shell
Make sure
I bring my hands
Tools maybe
Pen
Sharpened stick

Pack poems
Voice
Tiny bits of glass
Sorted into small
gourds
Something soft to
Carve words into

I make sure to pack
With care
Processing equipment
Things I use to
Know the shadows
Of angles
The geometry of your place

Lesson on Packing Light
I dream of learning
Checkers from Ulisi
Who giggled as we teased the dog
With a tennis ball
Between moves
A mystery to me these days
Who, in that small town, ever played tennis?
I don’t think I invented the ball though
Off on a tangent I imagine it
Bouncing down the Will Roger’s Turnpike towards
Indian housing
Gram’s dog
Our checkers game
BarcaLounger
Exotic trappings of
My father’s family
Bright orange metaphor
Congested with
Dog spit
Mud
Etta Mae’s elderly giggles
The magic of a woman with three names
It fit so neatly
Into the dog’s mouth
Kid Game
I played hide and seek
Because I wanted someone to find me
Laying under the stairs
Of the house two doors up
As a hiding spot it was
More a slight of hand
Trick of the angle
Than any real
Nook of concealment
I’d even laugh sometimes
When the other kids would run over me
But they never looked properly
Just using them to get to other
Better known spots and
Although I wanted it more than anyone
I was never found

Kim Shuck is a mixed Tsalagi, Sauk/Fox and Polish educator, writer and weaver. She has an MFA in fine arts, weaving from San Francisco Statue University. Shuck has had myriad jobs, which include writing math curricula, frothing cappuccino, teaching at the university level and being the parent of three. Greenfield Review Press published her book Smuggling Cherokee in January 2006. That manuscript won the 2005 Diane Decorah award.