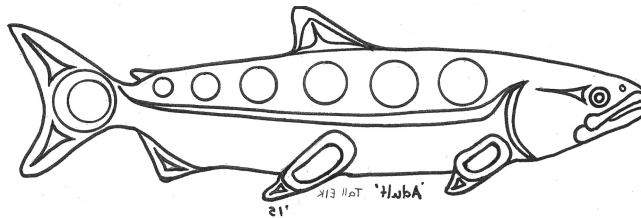
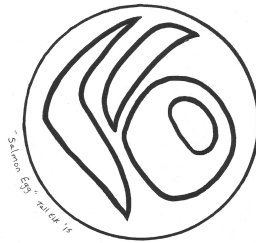
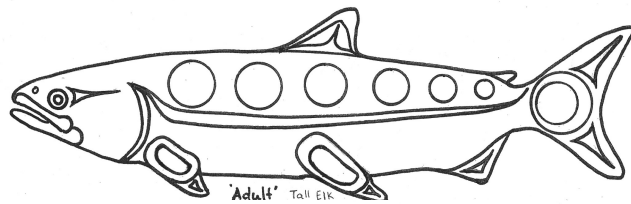


Aboriginal Salmon Cycle



West Coast Design
By Rob Cowie

Aboriginal Salmon Cycle (West Coast Design)

Teacher notes: The salmon is the most important food resource for the West Coast, Plateau and Interior First Nation people, Not only do the salmon feed a variety of sea, land and air animals, they also are the most important source of nutrients for the plant life following the creeks, streams, and rivers.

The West Coast artistic style pays homage to the salmon. Most shapes and designs can be traced to the many shapes one can see in a salmon. The three most common designs are the ovoid, u-form, and the s-form.

Ovoid - the ovoid is the most important design in west coast art. The ovoid is the shape of a salmon egg, either floating or resting on the bottom of a river. The ovoid can be circular or have a flattened, concave look. Ovoids are typically used for heads, joints, and eyes.



U-form - The u-form is the second most important design element in west coast art. The u-form looks very similar to the cross-section of an adult salmon. This u-form can also be filled in with an interjecting line or block of colour creating a split-u. U-forms are typically used for noses, limbs, and feathers.

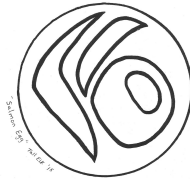


S-form - The s-form can be found on the layers of meat of a sliced salmon. The s-form is used as a filler design. The s-form can be used for ribs, claws, arms and legs.

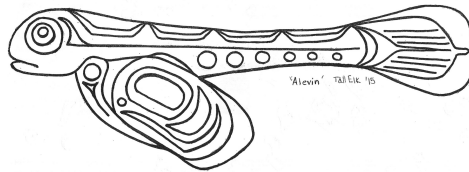


The Salmon Cycle

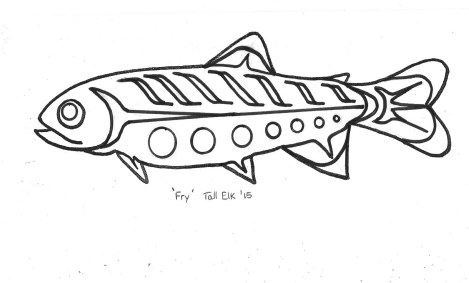
The Egg - The egg is a bright orange to red colour. The dark eye is the most prominent feature of a fertilized salmon egg. Here I used an ovoid for its eye to highlight the importance of this stage.



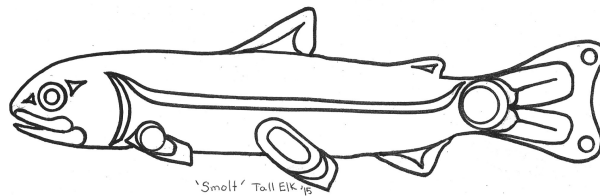
The Alevin - The alevin has hatched from its egg and is now getting used to its new water world. It survives this stage by feeding from its yolk sac. Here I have depicted the yolk sac as a salmon head representing the spirit of the male and female salmon nourishing its young.



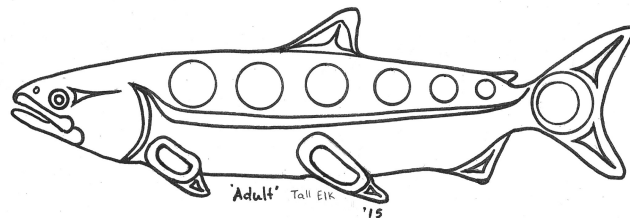
The Fry - The fry are now eating solid food by hunting for insects. However, predators are hunting them to. At this stage their fins and bodies have developed enough to withstand the strong currents from their river. Here I have used s-forms and ovoids to depict the fry's ability to camouflage with the rocks and pebbles in their surroundings. I also used u and split-u forms to show the development of their fins.



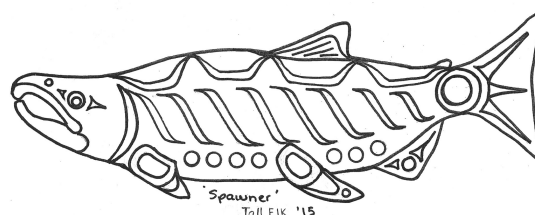
The Smolt - The smolt has grown large enough to leave its birth river and begin its long journey down to the estuary where the river meets the ocean. The smolt will spend sometime swimming in the estuary while its gills get used to breathing saltwater. The smolt's begins to change to a duller colour to blend in with the silt in the river. Here I have designed the smolt with a more powerful tail and fins using u-forms connected to ovoids. He has a streamlined body and his gills are more pronounced.



The Adult - The adult is now fully developed and is left to defend and feed with his brother and sisters. His markings are forming and his body is a lean eating machine. He will use his sense of taste and smell to find his way back to river of his birth after a few years in the ocean. For the adult salmon I have used a variety of ovoid (circular and concave) and u-form designs to highlight the power of the adult.



The Spawner - The spawner has made its long journey back to its birth river living only on its own fat reserves. Her body has made the transformation from adult to spawner. Her hump is now more pronounced and her jaw has become hooked so that her teeth can be exposed in order to fend off any challenger to her territory. I have used s-forms and u-forms to distinguish the change in colouring of the spawner. I used circular ovoids in the belly to hint at her motivation to spawn.



Activities:

1. Design a salmon cycle mural or hallway display using the pictures of the various salmon cycle provided. Be sure to add any habitat or predators to your design.
2. Create a 3 dimensional display by hanging examples from the ceiling of your classroom. Photocopy the 3 dimensional pictures; colour the designs (traditional colours: black, red turquoise; white; and yellow) or with the students own choice of colour. I sometimes ask the students to do traditional colours on one side, to show the past, and modern colours to show the present. Staple or glue one side of the salmon, then be sure to use the scraps of paper to fill your salmon's belly before stapling or gluing the rest of its body.

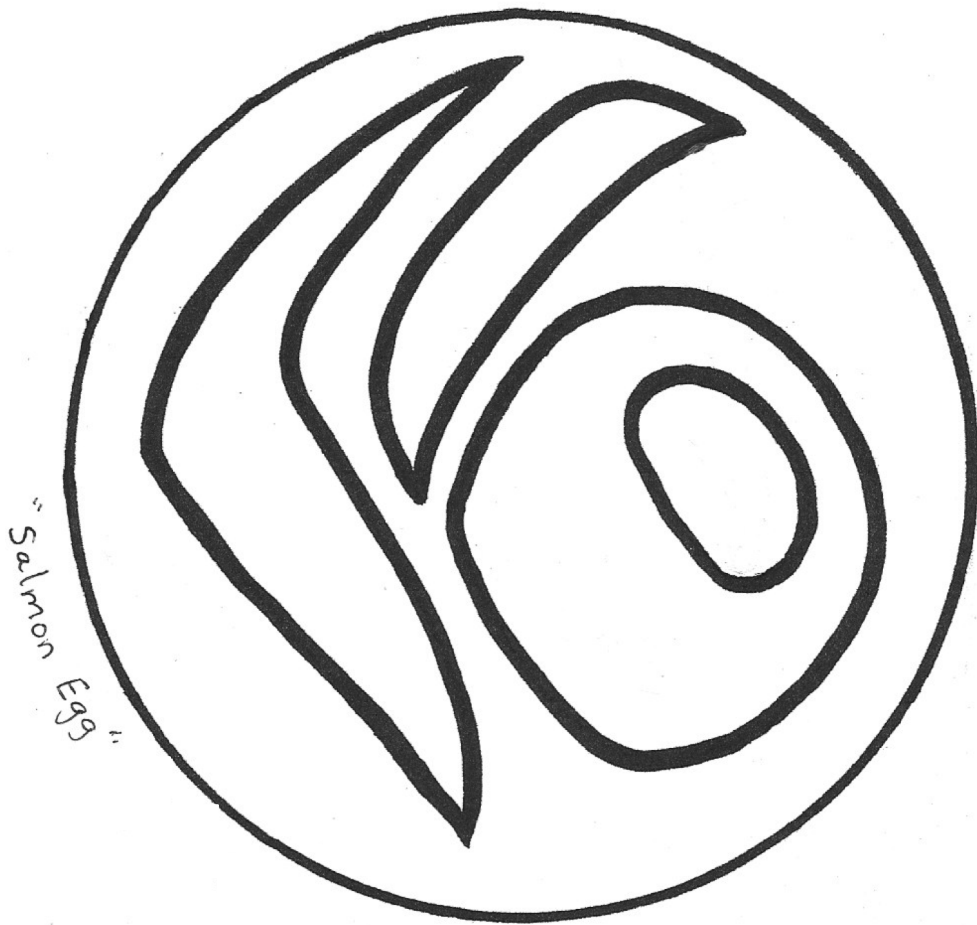


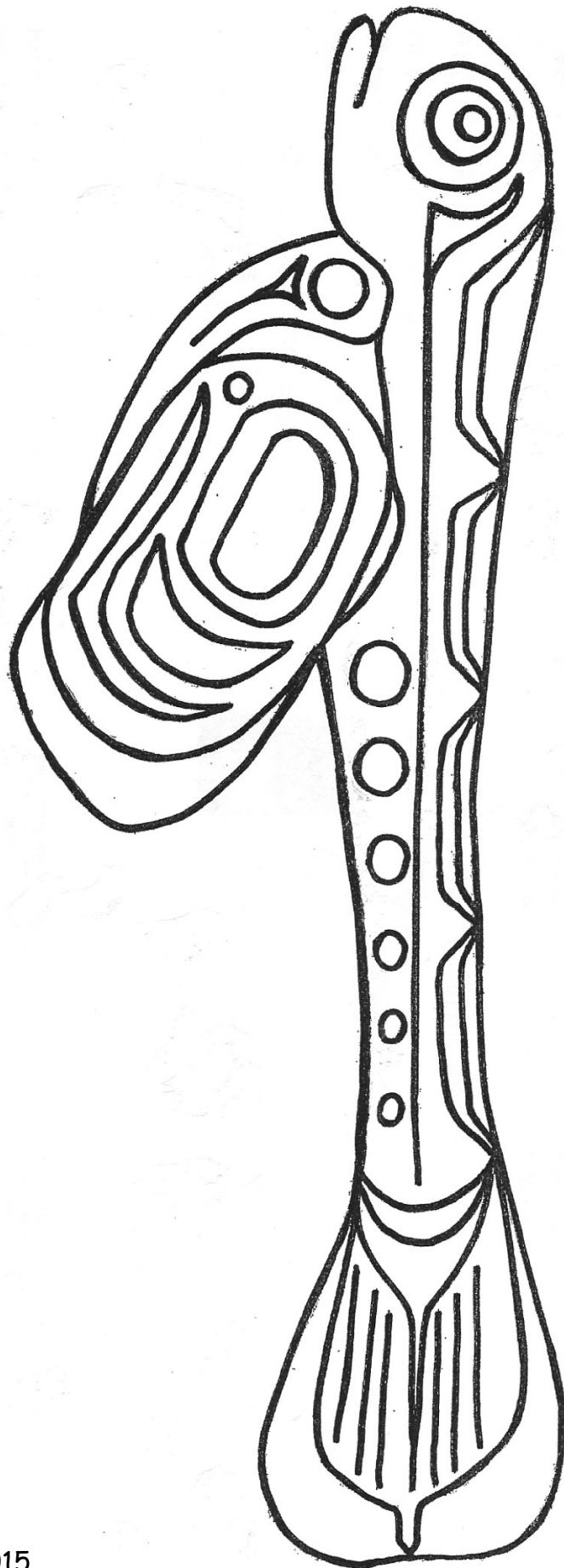
Suggested Reading:

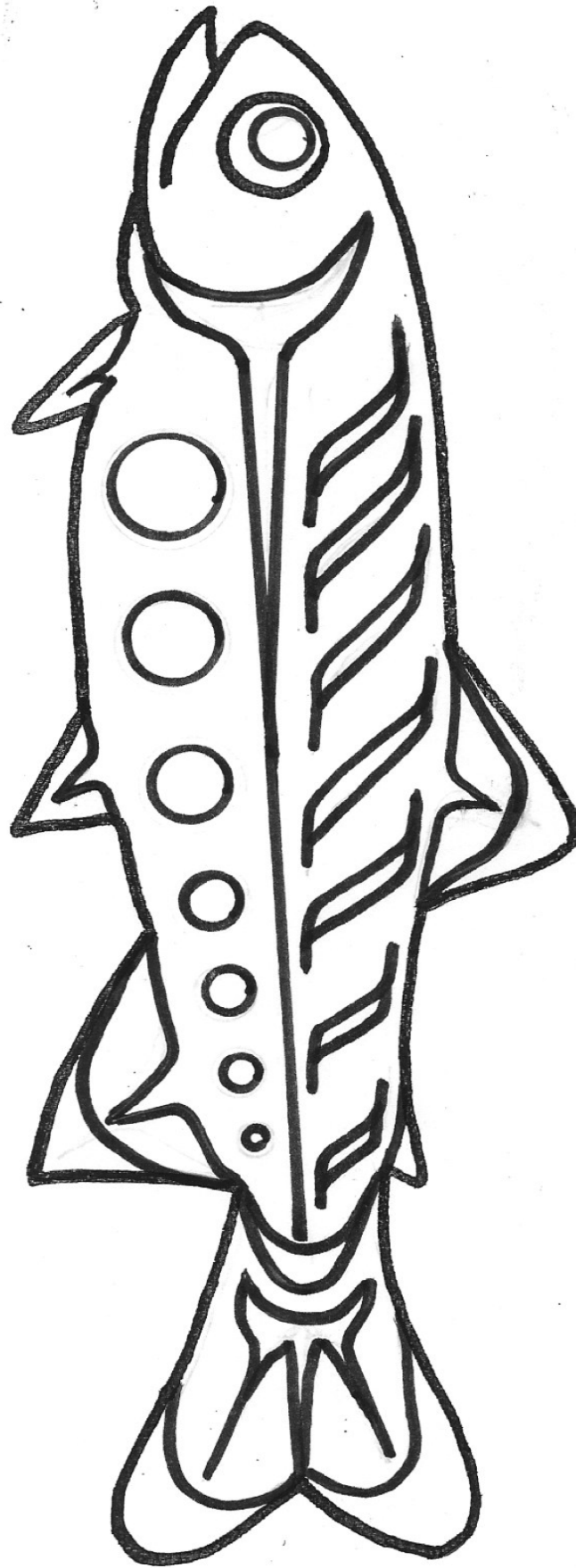
A Salmon for Simon; by Betty Waterton; House of Anansi Press.

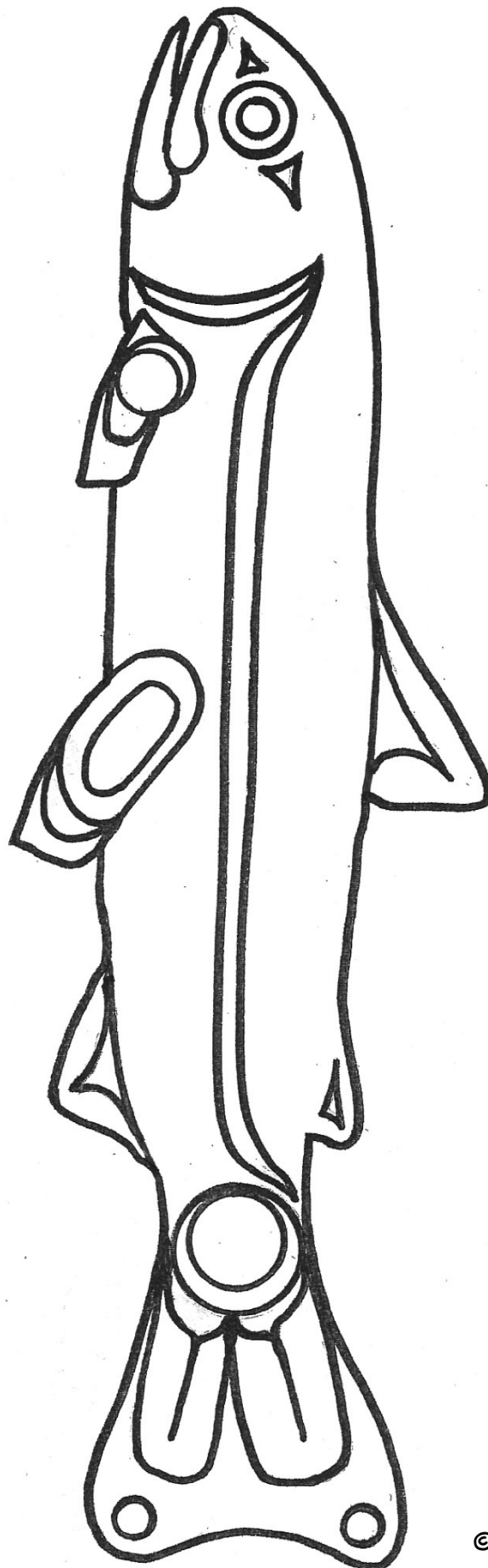
Salmon Boy; by Donna Joe: Harbour Publishing.

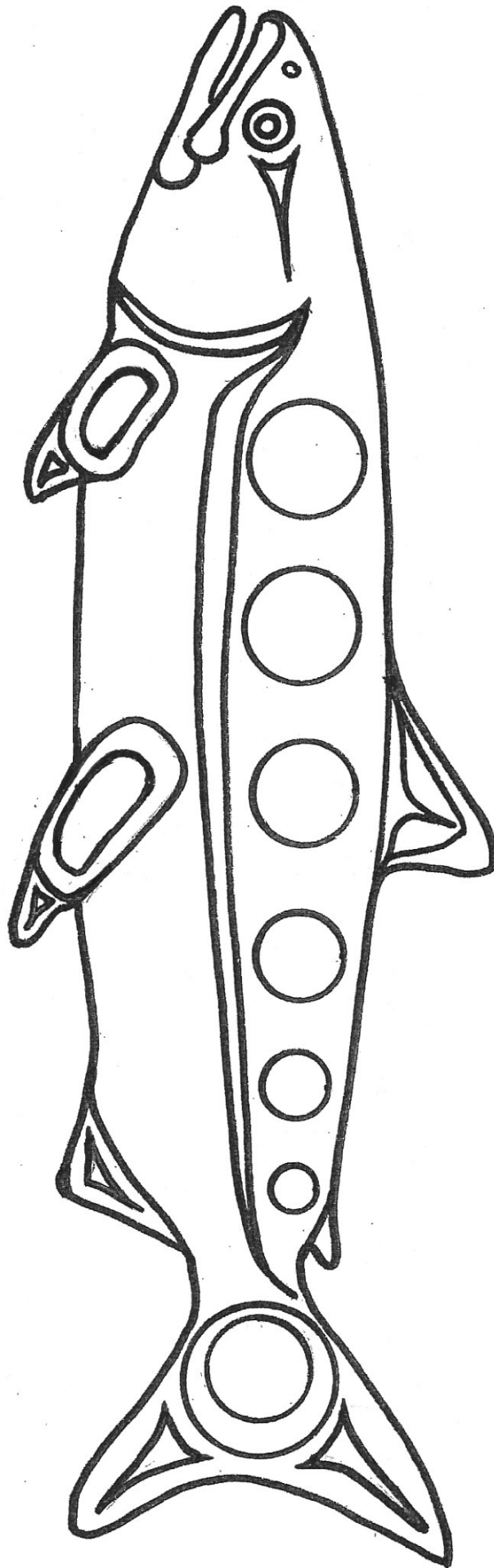
The Salmon Twins; by Carroll Simpson: Heritage House Publishing Company

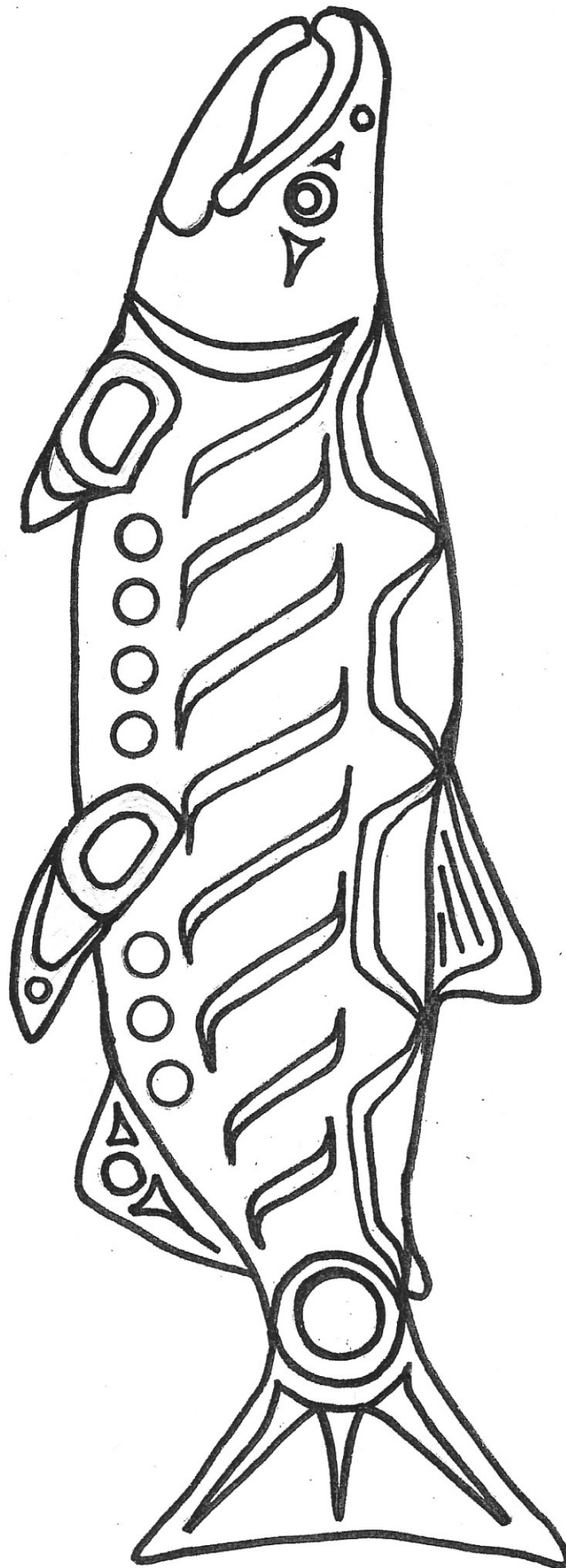


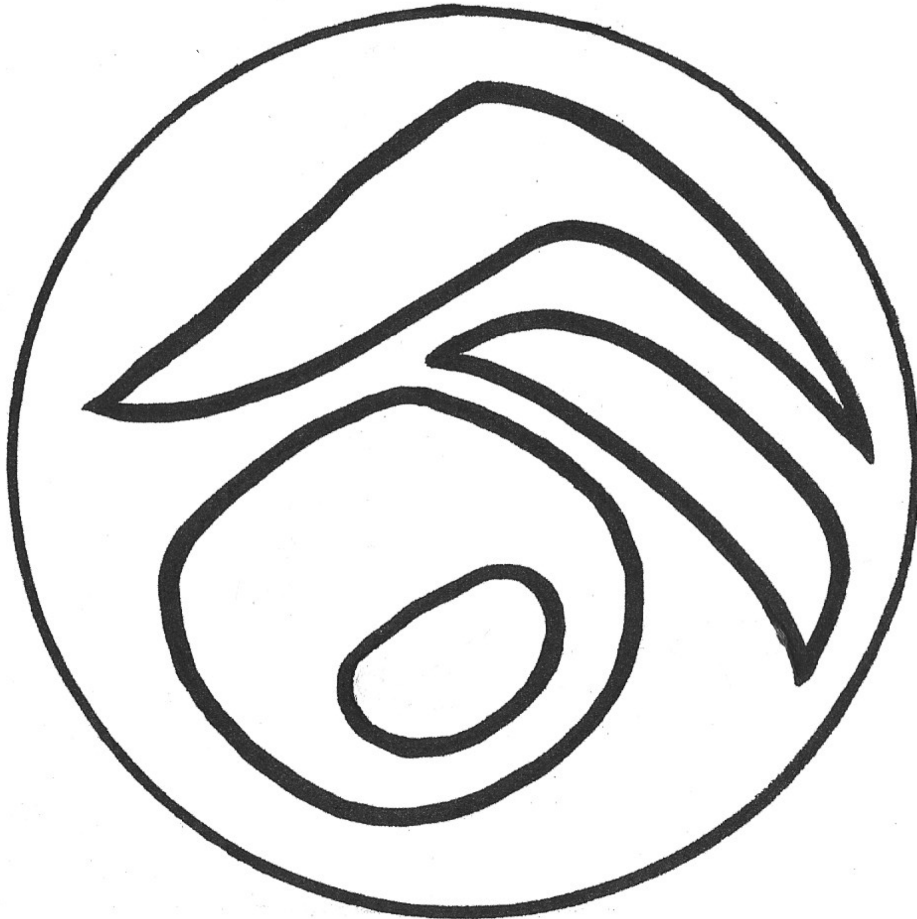












Fold →



