WHAT BETTER WAY to start off the Global Climate Action week in San Francisco than to participate in an indigenous-led water ceremony at the time of the new moon. We met at the water’s edge, at Cupid’s Span—a large, bright red sculpture of cupid’s bow and arrow firmly rooted in San Francisco soil. The sculpture may be a contemporary way to show love for this space where the City meets the Bay. The water ceremony is meant to deepen our connection to the natural world and empower participants to live fully into that spiritual connection.

Love for each other and for our land and water was abundant for all of us participating in the ceremony. We were led by Penny Opal Plant, of Yaqui, Mexican, Choctaw, Cherokee and European ancestry, and Casey Camp-Horinek, from the Ponca Nation in Oklahoma; both women are known internationally for their spirit-led activism.

We were gathered at first in a large circle, that through the steps of the ceremony, grew closer and closer together. The center-most circle of women reached out to a basin of water—this water had been gathered from many of our home lands. The rest of us connected to the inner circle with our hands on the shoulders of the women in front of us. The men stood in the outer-most circle, facing outward.

At this point in the ceremony, my physical body responded in a way that was new to me. The power of our group (possibly several hundred) became physically present. I felt actual warmth in my heart that soon spread to the rest of my body. It wasn’t scary and it wasn’t dramatic; it just was what it was. I was calm and amazed at the same time.

I have felt a mystical connection to nature from time to time, and I have felt a mystical connection with Friends in gathered meetings, but I have never felt the phenomena of warmth spreading
throughout my body as a result of a group experience like this. The experience left me feeling an outpouring of love for all of us committed to creating a new relationship with our natural world. I also gained a new understanding that our Earth will be helping us as we forge that new relationship. The week started off for me with the glow of love.