

## Salmon River

Cry a song, shed a tear, for a Northwest salmon  
Sockeye streak of muscle, brawn, and steelheaded will  
Swimming salt water, fresh water, feast or famine  
Their battle is uphill

Cast an eye of wonder at a river fast and long  
It is a highway, it is a maiden voyage, a swan song  
Feel a force that against the rushing ripples flow  
As the fish on a survival death journey go

Salmon River winds its way through Idaho  
And it sparkles as it runs and it glistens as it flows  
Many rapids bubbling down cry a last farewell  
Where the sockeye will go now, no tongue can tell  
There is a sad song in the crystal water's flow  
Where have my salmon gone, the river wants to know  
In spring came salmon, gave the river its name  
Shimmering salmon, one day no more came

Say a prayer with the Indian, came here to offer thanks  
For this bounty, this feast, fill the river bank to bank  
In this life-giving dance of ten thousand years  
Cut short now by the plans of a corps of engineers

Cry your many angry words at an arrogant race  
Got to have all the land, all the water, all the space  
Got to take, got to make, got to get, got to plunder  
Got to dam it up, got to chop it up, got to plow it all under

Swim upstream a thousand miles just to spawn and helpless lie  
With new ones being born around, the old ones, spent, will die  
In this never-ending circle of a life-giving dance  
Stands me before this miracle, do the sockeye stand a chance?

For the salmon is a journey  
It is a first and a last journey

Down the Salmon River to the Snake to the Columbia River  
To the cold dark Pacific this teeming life delivers  
If not swallowed in the web of a toxic grip  
They'll be following that scent on a neverending trip

If not taken in the driftnet factory ships  
Through the krill-laden Arctic Sea waters they'll slip  
If not slaughtered for the worth of their bright orange roe  
Back to the waters of their birth salmon doggedly go  
Back to the dams the electric rate payers built  
To the Cascade clear-cut river turned to silt  
Against a current of water, against a current of time  
Against a gotta get yours, gotta go get mine  
Against a plenty, plenty of blame to go around  
Against a river been so tamed that you cannot hear the sound

Of the salmon's journey  
Is it the last journey

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**Composed by: Dean Stevens**

**Appears on *River Run Wide***

*I fell in love with this song since I heard it from the singing of Cindy Kallet. I spent years working in Western Washington to restore salmon habitat, and while their plight is not as dreadful as it was when this song was written, there is still much work to be done.*