

CHANTS, PRAYERS AND MANTRAS

INTRODUCTION

The texts collected here are all excerpts of works that have become classics due to their scientific value in their domain. This can be seen by the specific references accompanying them.

A direct translation into English from the original native American language would undeniably have been preferable. But almost all the ethnological studies related to the natives of North America are the work of French-language scholars who lived among them to study their ways of life, their beliefs, their rituals and their oral traditions.

Indeed, their unsurpassable efforts would be impossible to reproduce today because of the significant evolution that the American Indian peoples underwent from the moment that their fading traditions were recorded.



**"All people who
have achieved
success at first
had something
they dreamed of."**

MANCEPA SAYING

Thus, it seems that the only way to put the public today into contact with American Indian poetry is through the many admirable studies of American scholars. To these we would like to express our deepest gratitude, as to the academic associations and publishers who have erected similar monuments of scholarship.

The works containing the songs and prayers cited here often include two translations along with the native American text: one interlinear and one "comprehensible". We compare the two in order to get as close as possible to word by word accuracy. This explains certain rare and slight divergences between the English text and the French translation.

CHANT OF THE BLUE CORN DANCE

Hi — ah-hai, elu!
Shi — eelu!
Lowi-yuteapa, Meteona kesi,
Lowi yuteapa Awiyane Litla



According to M.C. Steverson of the Bureau of American Ethnology in Washington, the "Thlah-Hewe" is a ceremony for rain and the growing of corn. The singular of the word is "Thlaha", rabbit-skin blanket. The name means fertility. This song is used in the "ThlahHewe" ceremony, one of the most sacred among Zuni festivals. The words are spelled "Hlahewe" and "Hla'ha", according to the Bureau of American Ethnology.

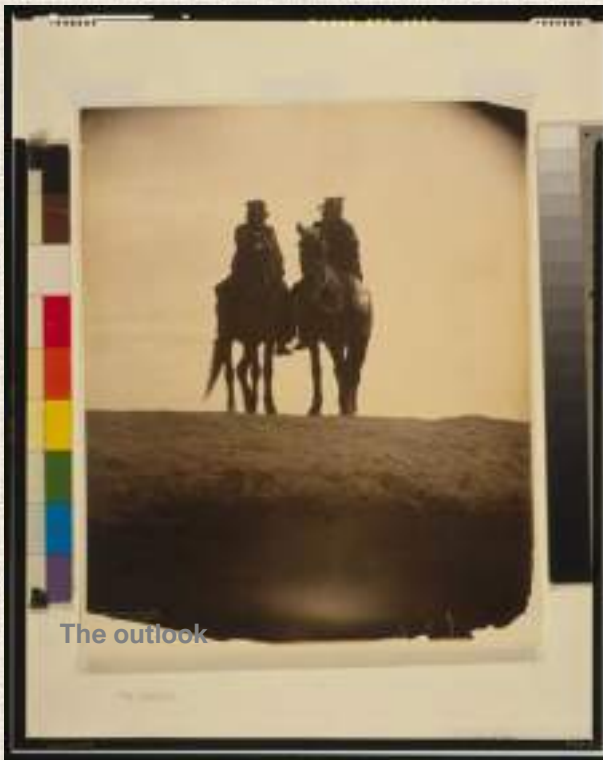


Hi — ah-hai, beauties!
Look, beauties!
Right now, right away,
flower-clouds,
Coming here.



Yellow Bull – Nez Perce Tribe

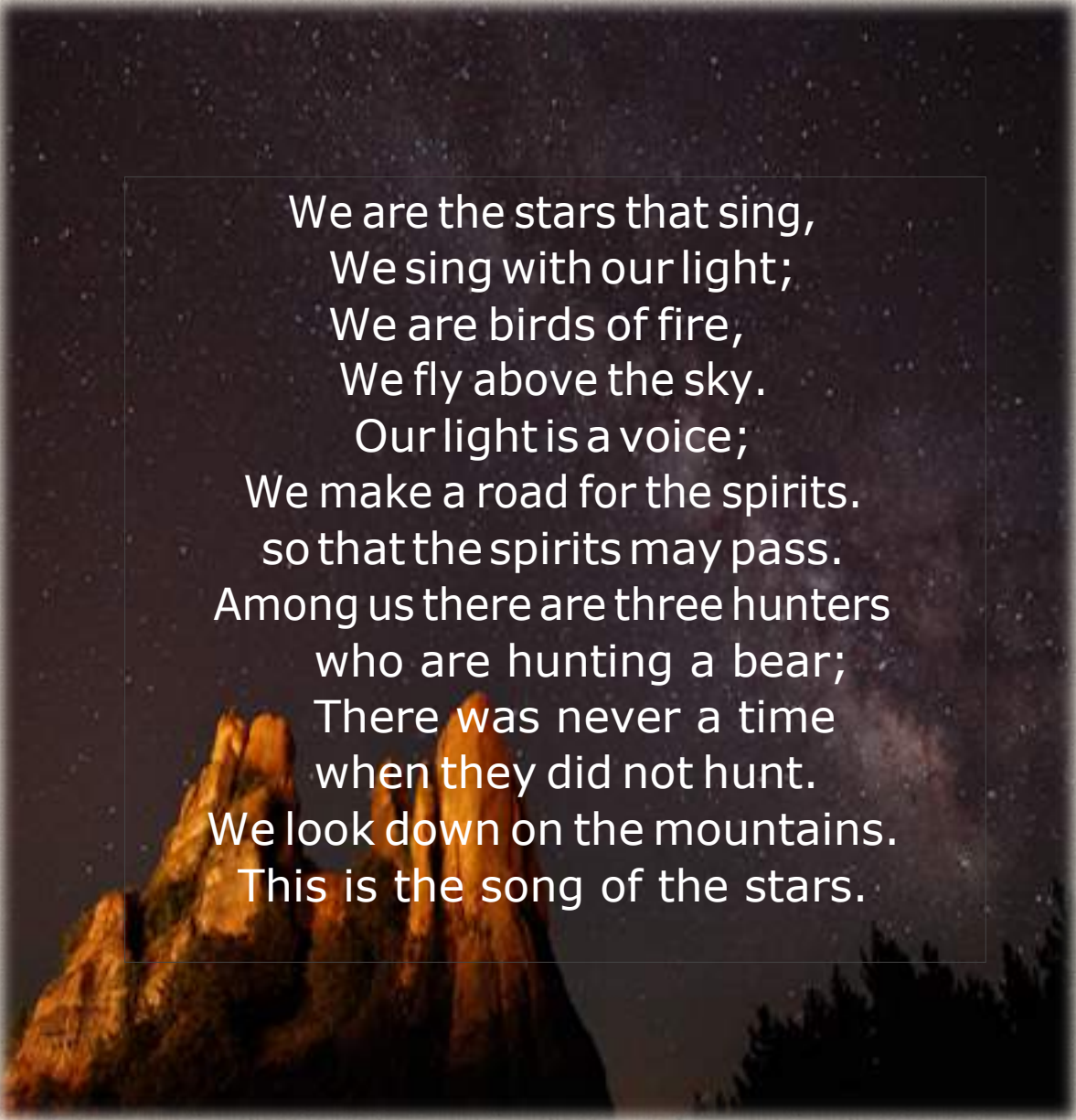
MOUNT KOONAK: AN DARSUT SONG!



The outlook

I look to the south, to the great Mount Koonak,
To the great Mount Koonak, there to the south;
I watch the clouds that pile up around him;
I gaze upon their gleaming brilliance; They
spread over the great Koonak; They
climb up its seaward flanks; Look how
they change and transform; Watch
them, there to the south;
How one makes the other beautiful; How they
climb his southern slopes, Hiding him
from the stormy sea, Each lending its
beauty to the other.

SONG OF THE STARS



We are the stars that sing,
We sing with our light;
We are birds of fire,
We fly above the sky.
Our light is a voice;
We make a road for the spirits.
so that the spirits may pass.
Among us there are three hunters
who are hunting a bear;
There was never a time
when they did not hunt.
We look down on the mountains.
This is the song of the stars.



THE SONG OF DARKNESS FOR THE INVITATION RITUAL

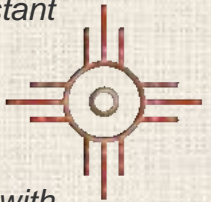
The Chief of the Invitation Ritual asks all the nocturnal creatures of the forest to protect his people during their journey to the morning.



We wait in darkness! Come, all of
you who listen,
Help us in our
journey to the morning: Now there
is no sun shining; Now there is no
star twinkling;
Come, show us the path; Then night is
not friendly; She shuts her eyes;
The moon has forgotten us, We wait
in darkness!

THE MORNING STAR AND THE DAWM THAT HAS JUST BEEN BORN

*Morning star, it is you we are looking for! Weakly comes your light from the distant
skies; We see you and then you are lost.
Morning star, you bring us life.*



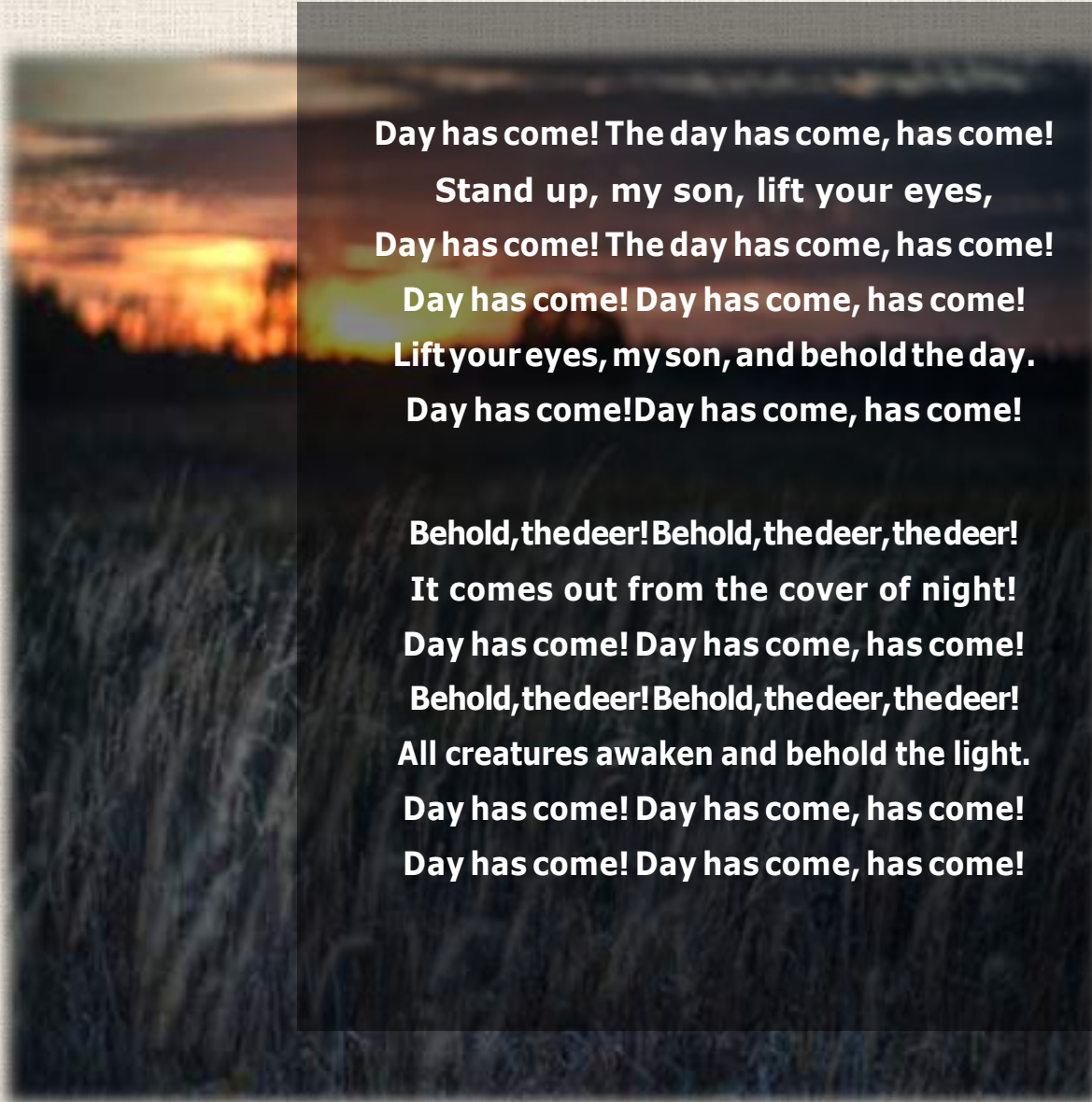
*Morning star, we see your form! You come in radiant clothing, Your halo tinged with
pink light. Morning star, you are vanishing now.*

*O young Dawn, it is you we are looking for.
Weakly your light comes from the distant skies;
We see you and then you are lost. Young Dawn, you bring us life.*

O young Dawn, we see you coming!



THE DAY



**Day has come! The day has come, has come!
Stand up, my son, lift your eyes,
Day has come! The day has come, has come!
Day has come! Day has come, has come!
Lift your eyes, my son, and behold the day.
Day has come! Day has come, has come!**

**Behold, the deer! Behold, the deer, the deer!
It comes out from the cover of night!
Day has come! Day has come, has come!
Behold, the deer! Behold, the deer, the deer!
All creatures awaken and behold the light.
Day has come! Day has come, has come!
Day has come! Day has come, has come!**



SONG TO THE TREES AND WATERWAYS



Dark against the sky, there's a distant line.
Stretches before us.
We see trees, long is the line, bending, swaying in the breeze.

Dazzling with a brilliant light, there a distant line.
Runs before us, runs swiftly, runs towards the river, Twisting,
flowing upon the earth.

Listen! O listen! A sound over
there, a distant sound.
Come to greet us, come
singing, weak is the song of the
river.
Rippling gently under the
trees.



PAWNEE SONGS



**"Father, to you we cry!
Father of powers and people;
Father of all that we hear;
Father of all that we see;
Father, to you we cry!"**

**"Father who art above, father of powers,
Those thatcandraw near and touch us,
Order them tohelp us.
Weare in need of help. Father, hear us!"**



PRESENTATION OF THE OMAHA



Ho! You there, Sun, Moon, Stars, all of you who move in the heavens, I ask you to listen to me!

A new life has arrived among you. I beseech your favor!

Smooth out her way so that she may reach the summit of the first hill!

Ho! You Winds, Clouds, Rain, Fog, all of you who move in the air, I ask you to listen to me

A new life has arrived among you. I beseech your favor!

Smooth out the way so that she may reach the summit of the first hill!

Ho! You Hills, Valleys, Rivers, You Lakes, You Trees, You Grass, all of you of the earth! I ask you to listen to me!

A new life has arrived among you. I beseech your favor!

Smooth out the way so that she may reach the summit of the third hill!

Ho! You birds, large and small, who fly in the Sky,

Ho! You animals, large and small, who dwell in the forests.

Ho! You insects who crawl amongst the grass and dig into the soil, I ask you to listen to me!

A new life has arrived among you. I beseech your favor!

Smooth out the way so that she may reach the summit of the fourth hill!

Ho! All you of the heavens, all you of the air, all you of the earth: I ask you to listen to me!

A new life has arrived among you. I beseech your favor!

Smooth the way -- and she will journey beyond the four hills!

PLANTING SONG

The woman plants, grows and harvests the corn... When the planting season approaches, she clears the fields of dead stalks and grass, softens the earth with a simple hoe, and thus "raises the little furrows (upright with their surface to the receive the sun's animating rays). When all the little furrows are ready, she begins planting by sticking her sharp rod into the sunlit side of the furrow, and in the hole so made, she drops five, six or seven grains of corn.

Thus she completes this final act which is considered the most significant and the most sacred; she marks the mound, atop the hole, with the imprint of her foot. This must be her right or left foot depending on the tribal group to which she belongs. It is to this particular act that the eleven stanzas of the Planting Song refer..."

I have made an imprint of my foot, a sacred imprint.

I have made an imprint of my foot, and crossways, the shoots push towards the sky.

I have made an imprint of my foot, and crossways, the shoots spread out. I have made an imprint of my foot, and above, the shoots wave in the wind,

I have made an imprint of my foot, and above, the cobs lean in towards one another.

I have made an imprint of my foot, and above, I pluck the cobs.

I have made an imprint of my foot, and above, I bend the stalk to pluck the cobs.

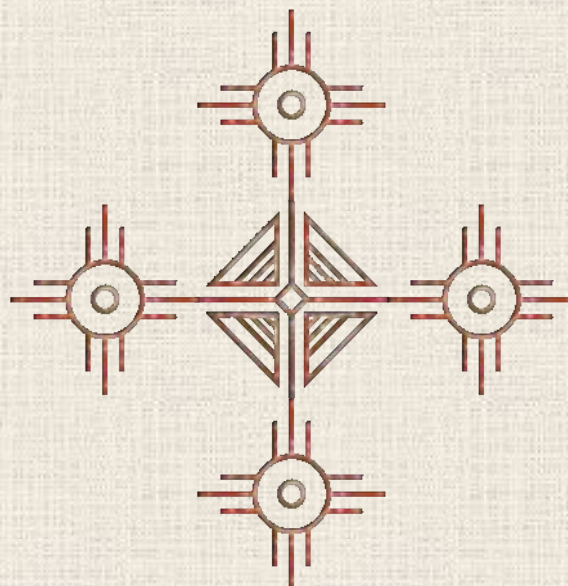
I have made an imprint of my foot, and above, the flowers lie grey. I have made an imprint of my foot, smoke rises from my home.

I have made an imprint of my foot, there is joy in my home. I have made an imprint of my foot, I live in the light of day.



A SPRING SONG

As my eyes scan the pasture, I smell
summer in the spring.



VOICE THAT MAKES THE EARTH BEAUTIFUL

A voice that makes the earth beautiful!
Voice above,
Voice of thunder,
Among the dark clouds,
Again and again it rings out, Voice that
makes the earth beautiful.
Voice that makes the earth beautiful!
Voice below,
Voice of the grasshopper,
Among the flowers and grass,
Again and again it rings out, Voice that
makes the earth beautiful



PRAYER OF THE FIRST DANCERS OF THE NIGHT SONG CEREMONY

In Tse'gihi (O you who live there!) In the house
made of dawn,

In the house made of evening light,

In the house made of gloomy clouds, In the
house made of manly rain,

In the house made of gloomy fog,

In the house made of womanly rain,

In the house made of pollen,
In the house made of grasshoppers,

Where the gloomy fog cloaks the doorway,

Whose path is on the rainbow,

That jagged lightning dominates on high,

That manly rain dominates on high,

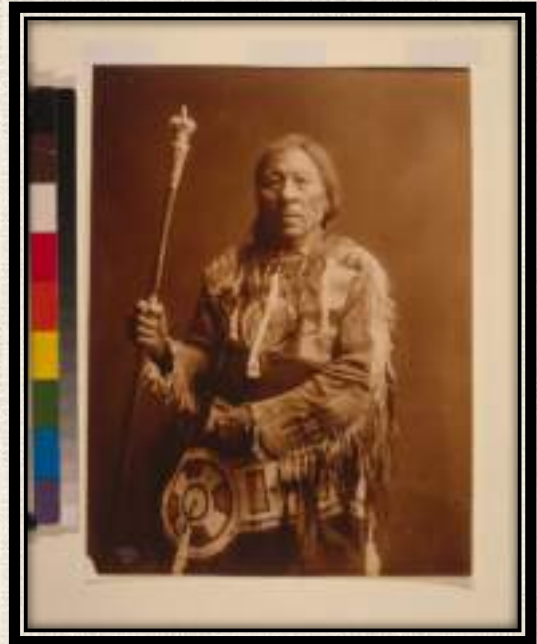
O Manly Godhead!

With your moccasins of gloomy clouds, come to us. With your leggings of gloomy
clouds, come to us.

With your shirt of gloomy clouds, come to us. With your headgear of gloomy clouds,
come to us.

With your spirit wrapped in gloomy clouds, come to us.

With the gloomy thunder above you, come to us in flight from on high. With clouds
formed at your feet, come to us in flight from on high.



Chants, Prayers and Mantras

With the distant darkness from the gloomy clouds above your head, come to us in flight from on high. With the distant darkness made from the manly rain above your head, come to us in flight from on high. With the distant darkness made from the gloomy fog above your head, come to us in flight from on high.

With the distant darkness made from the womanly rain above your head, come to us in flight from on high. With the jagged lightning hurled into the heights above your head, come to us in flight from on high.

With the rainbow hanging in the heights above your head, come to us in flight from on high.

With the distant darkness made from gloomy clouds on the tips of your wings, come to us in flight from on high.

With the distant darkness made from manly rain on the tips of your wings, come to us in flight from on high

With the distant darkness made from gloomy fog on the tips of your wings, come to us in flight from on high

With the distant darkness made from womanly rain on the tips of your wings, come to us in flight from on high

With the jagged lightning hurled into the heights on the tips of your wings, come to us in flight from on high.

With the rainbow hanging in the heights on the tips of your wings, come to us in flight from on high.

With the nearby darkness made from the gloomy clouds, manly rain, gloomy fog and female rain, come to us.

With the darkness on earth, come to us.

Chants, Prayers and Mantras

With this I wish for the foam floating on water that flows over the roots of the great corn. I have made your sacrifice.

I have prepared smoke for you. Restore my feet.

Restore my limbs. Restore my body. Restore my spirit. Restore my voice.

Deliver me today from your spell.

Carry away your charm from me today. You have carried it far away from me. Far from me it has been carried away. You did so far away. In joy and beauty, I heal.

In joy and beauty, my inside becomes fresh.

In joy and beauty, my eyes recover their power. In joy and beauty, my head becomes fresh.

In joy and beauty, my limbs recover their power. In joy and beauty, I hear anew.

In joy and beauty, the spell has been lifted. In joy and beauty, I walk.

Impervious to pain, I walk. Feeling myself light inside, I walk. With keen sensations, I walk.

In joy and beauty, I long for abundant gloomy clouds. In joy and beauty, I long for abundant gloomy fog.



Chants, Prayers and Mantras

In joy and beauty, I long for abundant
passing showers. In joy and beauty, I long
for abundant vegetation.

In joy and beauty, I long for abundant pollen.

In joy and beauty, I desire abundant dew.

In joy and beauty, may the beautiful white corn
come to you, to the far ends of the earth.

In joy and beauty, may the beautiful yellow corn
come to you, to the far ends of the earth.

In joy and beauty, may the beautiful blue corn come to you, to the far ends of the earth.

In joy and beauty, may the beautiful corn of all kinds come to you, to the far ends of
the earth.

In joy and beauty, may beautiful plants of all sorts come to you, to the far ends of the
earth.

In joy and beauty, may beautiful goods of all kinds come to you, to the far ends of the
earth.

In joy and beauty, may joyous beauties of all sorts come to you, to the far ends of the
earth. With those before you, in joy, may they come to you.

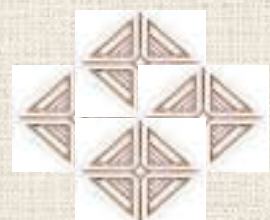
With those behind you, in joy, may they come to you. With those below you, in joy, may
they come to you. With those above you, in joy, may they come to you.

With those around you, in joy, may they come to you. Thus in joy and in beauty you
will accomplish your tasks. In joy and beauty, the old men will look upon you.

In joy and beauty, the old women will look upon you. In joy and beauty, the young men
will look upon you.

In joy and beauty, the young women will look upon you. In joy and beauty, the boys
will look upon you.

In joy and beauty, the girls will look upon you.



Chants, Prayers and Mantras

In joy and beauty, the children will look upon you. In joy and beauty, the chiefs will look upon you.

In joy and beauty, scattering in different directions, they will look upon you. In joy and beauty, when reaching their homes, they will look upon you.

In joy and beauty, may their path home be traced with pollen. In joy and beauty, may they all come back.

In joy and beauty, I walk.

With beauty, joy in front of me, I walk. With beauty, joy behind me, I walk.

With beauty, joy below me, I walk. With beauty, joy above me, I walk. With beauty, joy around me, I walk.

In joy and in beauty, it is finished. In joy and in beauty, it is finished. In joy and in beauty, it is finished. In joy and in beauty, it is finished.



This prayer is addressed to a mythical thunder bird, which is the reason for the reference to wings. But the bird is spoken about as a male divinity who is supposed to be living with other "yéi" at Tse-gihi.



The prayer is spoken at the beginning of work during the last night of the "klédzi hatàl". The shaman utters it, verse by verse, as it is recorded here, and one of the "atsà'lei" or first dancers, repeats it, verse by verse, after him.

The word "hozo" originally means earthly beauty. Its derivative "hozôgo"

originally means "beautiful in an earthly way". "Hozôni" means beautiful on earth, locally beautiful ("inzôni" relates to the beauty of objects and people); "hozôna" also means beautiful. But

the use of these words and others of similar derivation has been extended to mean happy, happiness, in a happy or joyful way, etc. A loose translation of these terms should be rendered with several English words.

The four verses at the end were recorded at first by the author as "hozôni haslé" ("Qojôni qaslè"), but the form "hozôna haslé" is now considered more correct. This expression, repeated two or four times depending on the circumstances, comes at the end of all Navajo prayers that have been recorded up to now. It is analogous to the Christian "Amen".



A LOVER'S LAMENT

My little breeze, under the willows over the water along which we used to sit, And there, the yellow cottonwood bird came and sang;

All this I remember, and weep.

Under the growing corn we used to sit,

The little leaf bird came and sang.

All this I remember, and weep.

There, on the meadow of yellow flowers, we used to stroll. O my little breeze! O my little heart!

There, on the meadow of blue flowers, we used to stroll.

Alas! how long it has been since the two of us strolled so pleasantly together! All was well then, but alas, how long it has been!

There, on the meadow of crimson flowers, we used to stroll. O, my little breeze, now I go there by myself in sadness.



A SONG OF THE DEER CEREMONY

*To the east,
where the earth's jet black summits... To the south,
where the earth's white shell summits...
where there are so many kinds of ripe fruits, the two of us shall meet. There,
where earth's coral summits, the two of us shall meet.
where there ripe fruits are fragrant, the two of us shall meet.*



THE KOROSTA KATZINA SONG

Yellow butterflies on the untouched blossoming
corn. Their faces painted with pollen, shining,
they chase one other.

Blue butterflies on the untouched blossoming
beans. Their faces painted with pollen, shining,
they chase one another.

On the blossoming corn, On the untouched corn

The wild bees buzz;
On the blossoming corn, On the untouched beans
The wild bees buzz.

Over your field (of growing corn) The thunder cloud will hang all day. Over your field
(of growing corn)

All day long, the rain will fall.



SONG FOR THE GRINDING CORN



Butterflies, butterflies,

Now fly away to the flowers, Blue,
Yellow,

Now fly away to the flowers, Red,
White,

Now fly away to the flowers, Now leave!
Butterflies, butterflies,

Now fly away to the flowers, Now leave!



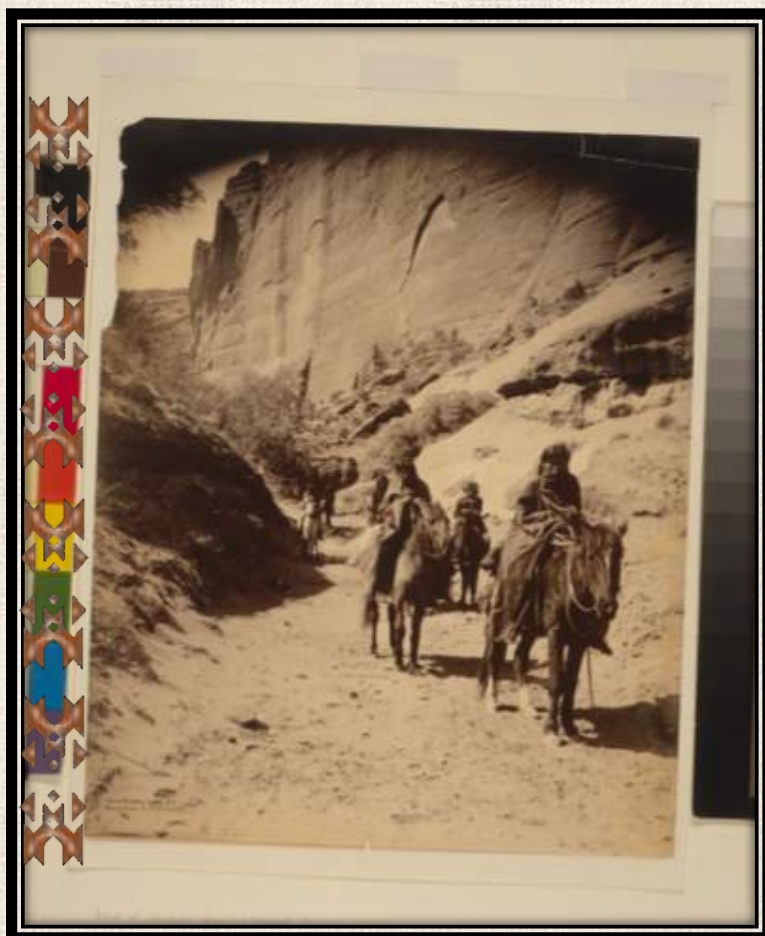
SONG OF THE WIND

Far from the peaks of the desert

Stands a cactus;

Behold, the flowers swaying,

From here, from there, swaying, swaying.



THE SONG OF THE GILA MONSTER

Although a poor harlot,



My heart glows with song When night is not yet,

My heart glows with song.

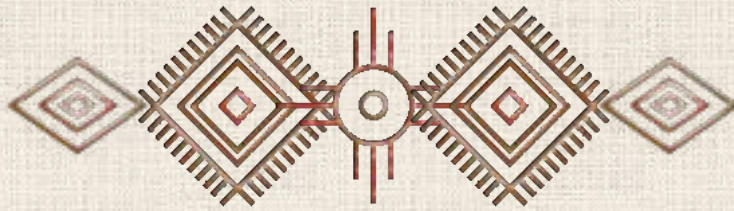
*Where the two stones stood, Black Wind
roared in awful gusts, Chasing the birds
before him,
Batting their wings, in front, behind.*

*On the summit of white Ngiwolik, There, the green frogs sing.
Crouched near the blue clouds of thunder*

There, many frogs sing



SONG OF PUBERTY



Get out fast, get out fast,

already the night falls, hear it echo.

Virgin woman, virgin woman does not slumber.
She stays awake throughout the night.

Broken giant cactus, broken giant cactus, lying
there;

my fallen feathers turn out to be higher than the
top of Table Mountain.

The boy stirred the rumbling stones;

The woman heard and could not sleep and my toenails were broken.

Night's branches fell clipping my feathers as I passed."

