

POETRY OF THE PEOPLE:

River Dreamer

I wandered near the River
 And in the foamy cacophony of trickling flow
 I think it whispered my name
 Its rushing tendency to a place unknown
I listened
 Like a distant flute in the night
 Playing its enticing ballad
 Its voice was effigy of something else
 I think I know
 Enchanted.....I listened
 My ear strained against the wind and rumble
 My heart a drumming beat of some Native
 place
 My need to know the message
 Drew me near the banks
 Resolute.....I listened
 The River drew me in with infinite seduction
 I went unbounded to a fate I could not
 defend against
 This Nature's thief my Scribe
 I floated in its embrace
 Captured.....I listened
 In this reverie the River taught me the
 wisdom of a billion years
 Enlightened, I have become this malleable
 me
 That now knows the meaning of myself
 And the magic of this ancient necessary
 place
 Humbled.....Still I listen.

Gayle Mountain Dreamer**Song of the Grandmothers****I am Cherokee****My people believe in the Spirit that unites all things.****I am woman. I am life force. My word has great value.****The man reveres me as he reveres Mother Earth and his own spirit.****The Beloved Woman is one of our principal Chiefs.**

Through her the spirit often speaks to the people. In the Great Council at the capital, she is a powerful voice. Concerning the fate of hostages, her word is absolute. Women share in all life. We lead sacred dances. In the Council we debate freely with men until an agreement is reached. When the nation considers war, we have a say, for we bear the survivors.

Sometimes I go into battle. I also plant and harvest.

I carry my own name and the name of my clan. If I accept a mate, he and our children take the name of my clan. If there is deep trouble between us, I am as free to tell him to go as he is to leave. Our children and our dwelling stay with me. As long as I am Treated with dignity, I am steadfast.

I love and work and sing.**I listen to the Spirit.****In all things I speak my mind.****I walk without fear.****I am Cherokee.**By *Marilou Awiakta***(from Selu: Seeking the Corn-Mother's Wisdom)*****When Earth Becomes an "It"***By *Marylou Awiakta***When the people call Earth "Mother"****they take with love****and with love give back****so that all may live.****When people call Earth "it,"****They use her****Consume her strength****Then the people die.****Already the sun is hot****Out of season****Our Mother's breast****Is going dry.****She is taking all green****Into her heart****And will not turn back****Until we call her****By her name.**