



SONGS FROM THE  
EASTERN WOODLANDS



### *EARLY MOON*

The baby moon, a canoe, a silver papoose  
canoe, sails and sails in the Indian  
West.

A ring of silver foxes, a mist of silver  
foxes, sit and sit around the Indian  
moon.

One yellow star for a runner, and rows of  
blue stars for more runners, keep a  
line of watchers.

O foxes, baby moon, runners, you are the  
panel of memory, fire-white writing  
tonight of the Red Man's dreams.

Who squats, legs crossed, and arms folded,  
matching its look against the moon-  
face, the star-faces, of the West?

Who are the Mississippi Valley ghosts, of  
copper foreheads, riding wiry ponies  
in the night?—no bridles, love arms on  
the pony necks, riding in the night, a  
long old trail?

Why do they always come back when the  
silver foxes sit around the early moon,  
a silver papoose, in the Indian West?

## *THE PARTED LOVERS*

(*Abanaki*)

### I

#### THE MAN SINGS

My parents think they can separate me  
from the girl I love;

We have vowed to love each other while  
we live.

Their commands are vain: we shall see  
each other while the world lasts.

Yes! let them say or do what they like;  
we shall see each other while the rocks  
stand.

#### THE WOMAN SINGS

Here I sit on this point, whence I can see  
the man that I love.

Our people think that they can sever us;  
but I shall see him while the world  
lasts.

Here shall I remain, in sight of the one  
I love.

## II

## THE GIRL DESERTED BY HER JEALOUS COMPANIONS SINGS

Now I am left on this lonely island to die—  
No one to hear the sound of my voice.  
Who will bury me when I die?  
Who will sing my death-song?  
My false friends leave me here to die  
alone;  
Like a wild beast, I am left on this island  
to die.  
I wish the wind spirit would carry my cry  
to my love!  
My love is swift as the deer; he would  
speed through the forest to find me.  
Now I am left on this lonely island to die.  
I wish the wind spirit would carry my cry  
to my love!  
My love is as swift as the deer; he would  
speed through the forest to find me;  
Now I am left on this lonely island to die.  
I wish the spirit of air would carry my  
breath to my love.  
My love's canoe, like sunlight, would shoot  
through the water to my side;  
But I am left on this lonely island to die,  
with no one to pity me but the little  
birds.

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My love is brave and strong; but, when he  
hears my fate, his heart will break.  
And I am on this lonely island to die.  
Now the night comes on, and all is silent  
but the owl.  
He sings a mournful song to his mate, in  
pity for me.  
I will try to sleep.  
I wish the night spirit to hear my song; he  
will tell my love of my fate; and when  
I awake, I shall see the one I love.  
I am on this lonely island to die.

III

HER LOVER SEES HER IN A DREAM AND, GOING  
TO SEARCH FOR HER, SINGS

Come, my beloved, let us go up that shining  
mountain, and sit together on that  
shining mountain; there we will watch  
the Sun go down in beauty from that  
shining place.  
There we will sit, till the Night Traveler  
arises in beauty about the shining  
mountain; we will watch him as he  
climbs to the beautiful skies.  
We will also watch the little Stars follow-  
ing their chief.  
We will also watch the Northern Lights  
playing their game of ball in their  
cold, glistening country.

There we will sit, on the beautiful mountain, and listen to the Thunder beating his drum.

We will see the flashes from the lit pipe of the Lightning.

We will see the great Whirlwind race with Squall.

There we will sit, until all creatures drowse.

There we will hear the great Owl sing his usual song: "Go-to-sleep-all," and see all animals obey his call.

There we will sit in beauty on the mountain, and watch the small Stars in their sleepless flight.

They do not mind the song, "go-to-sleep-all"; neither will we mind it, but sit more closely together, and think of nothing but ourselves, on the beautiful mountain.

Again, the "go-to-sleep all" will be heard, and the Night Traveler will come closer to warn us that all are sleeping, except ourselves and the little Stars.

They and their chief are coursing along, and our minds go with them.

Then the Owl sleeps; no more is heard "go - to - sleep - all"; the Lightnings flash afar; the great pipe is going out;

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the Thunder ceases beating his drum;  
and though our bodies urge us to be  
sleeping, we sit in beauty still upon  
the shining mountain.

### VENGEANCE SONG (Micmac)

Death I make, singing  
Heh-yeh! heh-yeh! heh-yeh! heh-yeh!  
Bones I hack, singing  
Heh-yeh! heh-yeh! heh-yeh! heh-yeh!  
Death I make, singing  
Heh-yeh! heh-yeh! heh-yeh! heh!

### IROQUOIS RITUAL OF FIRE AND DARKNESS

*The members of the Ho-no-tci-no-ga Society  
assemble. Now the Medicine Doctor or Shaman  
casts the sacred tobacco on the medicine-blaze,  
and in a low voice he chants:*

Great Spirit who puts us to sleep in dark-  
ness,

We thank thee for the silences of darkness.

(Singer)

Now I ask blessing and make prayers.

*(He sprinkles sacred tobacco on the fire. Then  
he speaks to the Invisible:)*

Now I give you tobacco,  
You, the great Darkness!

*(To the Thunder Spirit)*

Now we act as we offer you tobacco!  
You love it most of all offerings.  
With it you will hear us better  
And not tire of our talking  
But love us with all power  
Beyond all treasures  
Or spreading of words through the air!  
All men traveling under great heaven  
You have invited, your grandchildren and  
all nations;  
Oh you, maker of noise,  
You, the great Thunderer!  
Your grandchildren wish to thank you!  
All your grandchildren have asked me  
To offer this tobacco upon the mountain  
to you!

*(Speaking to the Great Spirit)*

You the All-maker,  
Above-all-high  
Best Friend of people!  
We ask you to help us!  
We implore your favor!  
I have spoken.

*The lights are extinguished, leaving the assembly in total darkness. The Watcher of the Medicine uncovers the bundles, exposing it to the air, and as he does so a faint luminous cloud hovers over the table and disappears. Now the Chanter gives the signal and the members sing:*



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### THE CHANT OF DARKNESS

Wait here in the darkness!  
Come, all you who listen,  
Go the magic journey:  
Now the sky is empty  
Of all sun-and-star-shine;  
Come, we lose our footing.  
Night no friend of ours is;  
She has shut her eyelids.  
Moon who has forgotten  
Lets us wait in darkness!

*Now the chiefs take their rattles, shaking them  
softly as the Chanter sings and members of the  
clan give the whip-poor-will cry.*

### THE CHANT OF INVITATION TO THE WHIP-POOR- WILL TOTEM

(Chorus)

Thus sings the Whip-poor-will,  
Follow me, follow me!  
Thus speaks the Chief to him,  
Yes, I will follow you!  
Lo! the night darkening  
Stalks through the shadow-land;  
No light to beckon us  
Murmurs the waterfall,  
Thus sings the river-voice!  
Someone is nearing us,  
Creeping upon us close,  
Two fires of eyes are close

Lighting the forest path—  
Hear how his breath blows by!  
Fol-low me, fol-low me,—  
So sings the whip-poor-will!  
Yes, I am following—  
Thus the Chief answers him.

*Cries announce that the Wolf and his mate  
have entered the room.*

Hark the trees whispering  
Bend their old bodies low,  
Not the strong North Wind's hand  
Nay, but One great and swift  
Parts them with whistling breath!  
Hark! how the thickets snap!  
Fearless the footfalls pass  
Pushing the trees apart  
Great horns dividing them.

*(Again the Whip-poor-will chorus)*

*Now Buck and Doe, with cries, enter. The  
song continues:*

How I go shivering!  
No snow is falling now,  
Where hides the sun his fire?  
Something swift-footed comes  
Roaring and warning me!  
Eyes of the night it blinds,  
Falling like heavy mist!  
Now it creeps close to me,  
Warning and beckoning  
Where the black forest looms.

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*(Whip-poor-will chorus)*

*The Bear and his mate have come and the song goes on:*

How the wind whistles now!  
No one dares race with it.  
Great trees bend low to it,  
Rivers fight back to it,  
Roaring and splashing it!  
Hear how its strong wings beat  
Deep in the gusty sky!  
High through the night it flies  
Whistling and screaming, still  
Hunting the prey that runs!

*(Whip-poor-will chorus)*

*The Hawk and its mate are announced. Then rites symbolizing the dangers of the forest tangles and swampy horrors are performed. According to the legend Eagle must dismiss the meeting. His coming, which is imitated on the small flute, announces the day. As the dawn-light penetrates the ceremonial place the last chorus is chanted of*

### THE EAGLE

Deep the dew-water falls  
No one comes close to me!  
Where are you, Whip-poor-will?  
Why am I waiting now  
Calling you, calling you?  
Screaming the night away  
With his great feathers spread

Catching the darkness up  
I hear the Eagle-bird  
Pulling the blanket back  
From the east, sleeping still.  
How swift he flies, bearing the sun to the  
morning;  
See how he perches there on the trail of  
of the east-sky.  
Whip-poor-will, Whip-poor-will,  
No more I follow thee!  
When night springs up again  
Will you cry, "Follow me?"  
*The singing ends and the matrons bring in food  
and distribute it to all.*

*FIRE-FLY SONG*  
(Ojibwa)

Flitting white-fire insects!  
Wandering small-fire beasts!  
Wave little stars about my bed!  
Weave little stars into my sleep!  
Come, little dancing white-fire bug,  
Come, little flitting white-fire beast!  
Light me with your white-flame magic,  
Your little star-torch.

*CALLING-ONE'S-OWN*  
(Ojibwa)

Awake! flower of the forest, sky-treading  
bird of the prairie.

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Awake! awake! wonderful fawn-eyed One.  
When you look upon me I am satisfied; as  
    flowers that drink dew.  
The breath of your mouth is the fragrance  
    of flowers in the morning,  
Your breath is their fragrance at evening  
    in the moon-of-fading-leaf.  
Do not the red streams of my veins run  
    toward you  
As forest-streams to the sun in the moon  
    of bright nights?  
When you are beside me my heart sings; a  
    branch it is, dancing,  
Dancing before the Wind-spirit in the  
    moon of strawberries.  
When you frown upon me, beloved, my  
    heart grows dark—  
A shining river the shadows of clouds  
    darken,  
Then with your smiles comes the sun and  
    makes to look like gold  
Furrows the cold wind drew in the water's  
    face.  
Myself! behold me! blood of my beating  
    heart.  
Earth smiles—the waters smile—even the  
    sky-of-clouds smiles—but I,  
I lose the way of smiling when you are not  
    near,  
Awake! awake! my beloved.

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*OJIBWA WAR SONGS*

## I

Hear my voice, Birds of War!  
I prepare a feast for you to feed on;  
I see you cross the enemy's lines;  
Like you I shall go.  
I wish the swiftness of your wings;  
I wish the vengeance of your claws;  
I muster my friends;  
I follow your flight.  
Ho, you young men warriors,  
Bear your angers to the place of fighting!

## II

From the south they came, Birds of War—  
Hark! to their passing scream.  
I wish the body of the fiercest,  
As swift, as cruel, as strong.  
I cast my body to the chance of fighting.  
Happy I shall be to lie in that place,  
In that place where the fight was,  
Beyond the enemy's line.

## III

Here on my breast have I bled!  
See—see! these are fighting-scars!  
Mountains tremble at my yell!  
I strike for life.

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*LOVE-SONG*  
(*Winnebago*)

Whomsoe'er look I upon  
    He becomes love-crazed;  
Whomsoe'er speak I unto,  
    He becomes love-crazed;  
Whomsoe'er whisper I to,  
    He becomes love-crazed;  
All men who love women,  
Them I rule, them I rule,  
    My friend;  
Whom I touch, whom I touch,  
    He becomes love-crazed.

*HOLY SONG*  
(*Winnebago*)

(Saith the Spirit,  
"Dream, oh, dream again,  
And tell of me,  
    Dream thou!")

Into solitude went I  
And wisdom was revealed to me.  
(Saith the Spirit,  
"Dream, oh, dream again,  
And tell of me,  
    Dream thou!")

Let the whole world hear me,  
Wise am I!

(Now saith the Spirit,  
"Tell of me,  
Dream thou!")

All was revealed to me;  
From the beginning  
Know I all, hear me!  
All was revealed to me!  
(Now saith the Spirit,  
"Tell of me,  
Dream thou!")

*SACRED MIDÉ SONGS*  
(Ojibwa)

Drifting snow,  
why do I sing?

The Sun and Moon,  
Their bodies  
shine over the world  
unto me as unto you, my Midé  
friend.

*SONGS OF THE CHIPPEWA*  
HEALING SONG

They are in close consultation  
with their heads together  
Wenabojo  
and his grandmother.



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LOVE-CHARM

What are you saying to me?  
I am arrayed like the roses  
and beautiful as they.

I AM WALKING

Toward calm and shady places  
I am walking  
on the earth.

THEY THINK ME UNWORTHY

They think me unworthy  
my Midé brethren  
but look and see  
the length of my wigwam.

THE SOUND IS FADING AWAY

The sound is fading away  
It is of five sounds  
freedom  
The sound is fading away  
It is of five sounds.

DOCTOR'S SONG

I am singing and dreaming in my poor way  
over the earth  
I who will again disembark  
upon earth.

## SONG OF THE TREES

The wind  
only  
I am afraid of.

## SONG OF THE THUNDERS

Sometimes  
I go about pitying  
myself  
while I am carried by the wind  
across the sky.

## THE APPROACH OF THE STORM

From the half  
of the sky  
that which lives there  
is coming, and makes a noise.

## I AM AFRAID OF THE OWL

Very much  
also  
I  
of the owl  
am afraid  
whenever I am sitting alone  
in the wigwam.

## I AM AS BRAVE AS OTHER MEN

Men who are brave and heroic

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as you esteem them to be  
Like them  
I also  
consider myself to be.

MY MUSIC REACHES TO THE SKY

My music  
reaches  
to the sky.

FAREWELL TO THE WARRIORS

Come  
it is time for you to depart  
We are going on a long journey.

SONG OF THE MAN WHO WAS TO BE HUNG

The thunders will take me home  
whenever I mind to go home,  
my friends,  
and the wind  
it will take me home, too.

FRIENDLY SONG

I

Over there  
in the sky  
they have taken pity on me.

II

The sky  
loves to hear me.

## GAMING SONG

I will go home  
if I am beaten  
after more articles  
to wager.

## WAR SONGS

At Co'goben's  
village  
they are weeping  
the men

At Co'goben's  
village  
they are wailing  
the women.

I feel no fear  
when the Great River man  
death  
speaks of.

## THE MAN WHO STAYED HOME

Although  
Jinwábe  
considers himself  
a man  
his wife  
certainly  
takes all his attention.

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ARROW SONG

Scarlet  
is its head

SONG OF THE BUFFALO

Strike ye  
our land  
with curved horns

SONG OF THE MINISINOWUCK

It is uncertain what will happen  
to the one from whom I fly  
It is uncertain what will happen  
to the one from whom I rise.

DRUM SONG

I make them dance  
those brave men  
those brave men  
every one of them.

SONG OF WOMAN-OF-THE-RED-SKY, WHO WENT  
WITH HER HUSBAND, SINGING, INTO  
BATTLE

At that time  
if I had been a man  
truly  
a man  
I would have seized.

## DEATH SONG OF NAMEBINES

The odor of death  
I discern the odor of death  
in the front of my body.

THE SIOUX WOMEN GATHER UP THEIR  
WOUNDED

The Sioux women  
pass to and fro wailing  
as they gather up  
their wounded men  
The voice of their weeping comes back  
to us.

## THEY ARE PLAYING A GAME

The noise of passing feet  
on the prairie  
They are playing a game as they come  
those men.

## SCALP SONG

I wonder  
if she is humiliated  
the Sioux woman  
that I cut off her head.

## SONG OF REJOICING

It shall be  
that I rejoice  
O, my son

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your elder brother  
you have brought back  
O, my son  
it shall be  
that I rejoice  
O, my son.

DEATH SONG

Is there anyone who  
would weep for me?  
My wife  
would weep for me.

SONG OF THE BUTTERFLY

In the coming heat  
of the day  
I stood there.

MAPLE SUGAR

Maple sugar  
is the only thing  
that satisfies me.

A SONG OF SPRING

As my eyes  
search  
the prairie  
I feel the summer in the spring.

CARRIED AROUND THE SKY  
As the wind is carrying me  
around the sky.

THE SKY WILL RESOUND  
It will resound finely  
the sky  
when I come making a noise.

AN OVERHANGING CLOUD  
An overhanging  
cloud  
repeats my words with pleasing sound.

HEAPS OF CLOUDS  
Great heaps  
of clouds  
in the direction I am looking.

THE NOISE OF THE VILLAGE  
Whenever I pause  
the noise  
of the village.

MIDE BURIAL SONG  
Neniwá  
let us stand  
and you shall see  
my body  
as I desire.



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*LOVE SONGS*

MY LOVE HAS DEPARTED

I

A loon  
I thought it was  
but it was  
my love's  
splashing oar.

II

To Sault Ste. Marie  
he has departed  
My love has gone on before me,  
Never again  
can I see him.

THE GENEROUS ONE

Why should  
I, even I  
be jealous  
because of that bad boy?

RECOVERY

Do not weep  
I am not going to die.

LOVE-HURT

Although he said it  
still

I am filled with longing  
when I think of him.

## GLAD-PARTING

Come  
I am going away  
I pray you  
let me go  
I will soon return  
Do not  
weep for me  
Behold  
we will be very glad  
to meet each other  
when I return  
Do not  
weep for me.

## INVITATION

My sweetheart  
a long time  
I have been waiting for you  
to come over  
where I am.

## YOU DESIRE VAINLY

You desire vainly  
that I seek you  
the reason is  
I come  
to see your younger sister.

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HE IS GONE

I might grieve  
I am sad  
that he has gone  
my lover.

SONG OF AN AMBITIOUS MOTHER

I am asking for  
Bugac's  
daughter  
My big  
brass kettle  
he is giving.

NONSENSE SONG OF THE GAME OF SILENCE

*(If you speak or laugh you are defeated)*

It is hanging  
in the edge of the sunshine  
It is a pig I see  
with its double (cloven) hoofs  
It is a very fat pig.  
The people who live in a hollow tree  
are fighting  
They are fighting bloodily  
He is rich  
He will carry a pack toward the great  
water.

*(The rabbit speaks)*

At the end of the point of land  
I eat the bark off the tree

I see the track of a lynx  
I don't care, I can get away from him  
It is a jumping trail  
sep!

WORK STEADILY

Be very careful  
to work steadily  
I am afraid they will take you away from  
me.

I HAVE FOUND MY LOVER

Oh  
I am thinking  
Oh  
I am thinking  
I have found  
my lover  
Oh  
I think it is so.

MIDÉ SONGS

*These represent the expression of  
religious ideas*

I

Is it that  
which my voice resembles?  
Even metal  
the sounding of my voice?

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II

From beneath the high hill  
my voice echoes forth.

III

The strength of metal  
has entered into my arrow point.  
A spirit  
I could kill.  
The strength of iron  
has entered into my arrow point.

IV

Beautiful as a star hanging in the sky  
is our Midé lodge.

V

I have gained such spirit-power  
that I can tame it in my hand  
It is true  
even our white shell  
I can tame it in my hand.

VI

Do not speak ill of the Midé  
my Midé brethren.  
Wherever you may be  
do not speak ill of a woman  
my Midé brethren.

## VII

We may live by it always  
my Midé brethren  
It is spiritual  
the inspiration we receive.

## VIII

In the middle of the sea  
in the lengthy room of the sea  
there I am standing.

## IX

I that hasten around  
I shoot at a man and he falls in a trance  
Then I feel with my hand  
to see if he is still alive.

## X

My Midé brother  
is searched  
In his heart is found  
that which I seek to remove  
a white shell.

## XI

Into thy body  
I shoot  
the spirit

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XII

What is this

I promise you?

The skies shall be bright and clear for you

This is what I promise you.

MEMORIAL ODE

Chief John Buck, hereditary Keeper of the Wampum, made and sung his ode in 1884 on the occasion of the removal of the bones of Chief Red Jacket from their original burying place to Forest Lawn Cemetery. The Great League is the League of the five Iroquois nations in Western New York.

*Chant*

Now, listen, Ye who established the Great  
League,

Now it has become old,

Now there is nothing but wilderness.

Ye are in your graves who established it.  
Ye have taken it with you and have placed  
it under you,

And there is nothing left but desert.

There you have taken your great minds.

That which you established, you have taken  
with you

Ye have placed under your heads what ye  
have established,  
The Great League.

*Refrain*

Woe, Woe! Hearken ye!  
We are diminished  
Woe, woe!  
The land has become a thicket.  
Woe, woe!  
The clear places are deserted  
They are in their graves who established  
it.  
Woe, the Great League!  
Yet they declared it should endure.  
The Great League, Woe!  
Their work has grown old  
We are become wretched. Woe!