

Berry Picking

One day near the end of July my mother told me to go to the woods and pick her some wild cherries. Grey Eagle and his family were always encamped upon our homestead during the berry picking season. So I sent Silver Cloud our signal, for I liked to have her with me when I went berry picking, because she always insisted that I hunted with my bow or climbed trees while she picked the berries for me. I used to feel ashamed when I took them home to my mother, for she always praised me for picking so many and keeping them clean and free of stems and leaves.

Singing Heaven vs. Happy Hunting Ground

It was on that berry picking trip that Silver Cloud and I were drawn into a discussion about our Heavens. It started when she tried to reach a tall cherry bush loaded with very large cherries that were beyond her reach. So I climbed up and held the top down while she picked the cherries off. It was then she told me wild cherries and saskatoons grew the size of large goose eggs in her Happy Hunting Ground. I then asked her what her Happy Hunting Ground looked like. She told me there was no night there. Neither were there clouds or rain; the Heavens were always bright and had two suns; as one rose in the east the other sank in the west. And the mountain peaks were covered with beautiful emerald moss soft as down and embellished with sweet scented flowers that were white as snow. The waters of the lakes and rivers were crystal clear, and the shores of the lakes were covered with golden sands that were fringed with beautiful flowering rushes. Among the rushes sang countless birds with plumage of lovely color. And while they lilted their sweet notes magic echoes rose to the Heavens and when they reached the mountain peaks fell on the flowery moss, then turned to water, and it dripped through the moss and trickled off to join the brooklets and the brooklets sang and danced to the canyons and the canyons shouted and leaped to the rivers and the rivers murmured