

Medicine Song: To Be Sung in Time of Evil Fortune

Mary Austin

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From the Paiute Indian Dialect

MEDICINE me,
O Friend-of-the-Soul-of-Man,
With purging waters!
For my soul festers
And an odor of corruption
Betrays me to disaster.

As a place of carrion
Where buzzards are gathered,
So is my path
Overshadowed by evil adventures;
Meanness, betrayal, and spite
Flock under heaven
To make me aware
Of sickness and death within me.

Medicine my soul, O friend,
With waters of cleansing;
Then shall my way shine,
And my nights no longer
Be full of the dreadful sound
Of the wings of unsuccesses.