

Songs of the Pueblo Indians

Amy Lowell

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WOMEN'S HARVEST SONG

I am waving a ripe sunflower,
I am scattering sunflower pollen to the four world-quarters.
I am joyful because of my melons,
I am joyful because of my beans,
I am joyful because of my squashes.

The sunflower waves.
So did the corn wave
When the wind blew against it,
So did my white corn bend
When the red lightning descended upon it,
It trembled as the sunflower
When the rain beat down its leaves.

Great is a ripe sunflower,
And great was the sun above my corn-fields.
His fingers lifted up the corn-ears,
His hands fashioned my melons,
And set my beans full in the pods.
Therefore my heart is happy
And I will lay many blue prayer-sticks at the shrine of Ta-wa.

I will give corn to Ta-wa,
Yellow corn, blue corn, black corn.
I wave the sunflower,
The sunflower heavy with pollen.
I wave it, I turn it, I sing,
Because I am happy.

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BASKET DANCE

Dance!

Dance!

The priest is yellow with sunflower meal,
He is yellow with corn-meal,
He is yellow as the sun.

Dance!

Dance!

His little bells are ringing,
The bells tinkle like sunlight,
The sun is rising.

Dance!

Dance!

Perhaps I will throw you a basket,
Perhaps I will throw you my heart.

Lift the baskets, dancing,
Lower the baskets, dancing,
We have raised fruits,
Now we dance.
Our shadows are long,
The sunlight is bright between our shadows.
Do you want my basket?
Catch it!
Catch it!
But you cannot catch me,
I am more difficult.

WOMEN'S SONG OF THE CORN

How beautiful are the corn rows,
Stretching to the morning sun,
Stretching to the evening sun.
Very beautiful, the long rows of corn.

How beautiful is the white corn,
I husk it,
I grind it.
Very beautiful, my white corn.

How beautiful is the red corn,
I gather it and make fine meal,
I am glad doing this.
Very beautiful, my red corn.

How beautiful is the black corn,
I give it to my father,
To my mother,
I give it to my child.
Very beautiful, the black corn.

How beautiful is the mottled corn,
Like the sky with little clouds,
I eat it looking at the sky.
Very beautiful, my mottled corn.

PRAYER FOR A PROFUSION OF SUNFLOWERS

Send sunflowers!
With my turkey-bone whistle
I am calling the birds
To sing upon the sunflowers.
For when the clouds hear them singing
They will come quickly,
And rain will fall upon our fields.
Send sunflowers!

PRAYER FOR LIGHTNING

My corn is green with red tassels,
I am praying to the lightning to ripen my corn,
I am praying to the thunder which carries the lightning.
Corn is sweet where lightning has fallen.
I pray to the six-coloured clouds.

FLUTE–PRIEST SONG FOR RAIN

Ceremonial at the Sun Spring

Whistle under the water,
Make the water bubble to the tones of the flute.
I call the bluebirds song into the water:
Wee–kee! Wee–kee–kee!
Dawn is coming,
The morning star shines upon us.
Bluebird singing to the West clouds,
Bring the humming rain.

Water–rattles shake,
Flute whistles,
Star in Heaven shines.
I blow the oriole's song,
The yellow song of the North.
I call rain clouds with my rattles:
Wee–kee–kee, oriole.
Pattering rain.

To the South I blow my whistle,
To the red parrot of the South I call.
Send red lightning,
Under your wings
The forked lightning.
Thunder–rattles whirl

To the sky waters.
Fill the springs.
The water is moving.
Wait —

Whistle to the East
With a magpie voice.
Wee–kee! Wee–kee–kee!
Call the storm–clouds
That they come rushing.
Call the loud rain.

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Why does it not come?
Who is bad?
Whose heart is evil?
Who has done wickedness?
I weep,
I rend my garments,
I grieve for the sin which is in this place.
My flute sobs with the voice of all birds in the water.
Even to the six directions I weep and despair.
Come, O winds, from the sides of the sky,
Open your bird-beaks that rain may fall down.
Drench our fields, our houses,
Fill the land
With tumult of rain.