

## Brother Older than Myself

Brother older than myself,  
Do you remember when you were Chief Mighty Cloud and I  
Was Little Wing?

Ah ah

I will tell you what is in my heart.

Even before recorded history  
The legends tell of how you took me by the hand  
And guided me across the fields to the place  
Where the earth no longer lives.  
Through all the days of all the wintercounts of my childhood  
You guided me.

You showed to me the beauty of the land.

Early, when the sun was waking up,  
You took me through the sinew grass  
To the little water place.

And I became friend to:

the little stripped back  
the tall ears  
the swims-carrying-stick-in-mouth creature  
the shell that walks  
the double wing with red shoulders  
and  
the bird who knocks on wood.

You taught to me the secrets of the little-people-of-the-air.

I learned to read the music of their wings.

And find their home among the sticks that point toward sky.

I learned to blow the smoke so they would not stab

And raise a lump.

But always, you taught, leave to them their winter food.

When the winter voice sang strong across our land,

You placed your deerskin robe across my shoulder

And stoked the fire in our lodge to drive away the bitter cold.

When the fever burned within my brow  
And evil spirits owned my tongue,  
You gathered and mixed the healing herbs  
    the snakeroot  
    and borage  
    the milkweed  
    dock  
    and coneflower.  
    and the mint  
    meadow rue  
    and  
    calamus.

When the bone-setter had worked his magic on my foot,  
You played with me the games of childhood.  
    the guessing game with cherrystones  
    secret of the soft voice  
    paint the parchment with many colors  
    and  
    hide the moccasin.

And you taught to me the legends of our ancestors.

Brother older than myself  
My heart is grateful.