Song of the Sky Loom

TEWA INDIAN

O our Mother the Earth, O our Father the Sky,
Your children are we, and with tired backs
We bring you the gifts you love.
Then weave for us a garment of brightness;
May the warp be the white light of morning,
May the weft be the red light of evening,
May the fringes be the falling rain,
May the border be the standing rainbow.
Thus weave for us a garment of brightness,
That we may walk fittingly where birds sing,
That we may walk fittingly where grass is green,
O our Mother the Earth, O our Father the Sky.

Navajo sand painting rug, early 20th century.
Handspun wool. Denver Art Museum, Colorado. (1950.185)
This Newly Created World

WINNEBAGO INDIAN

Pleasant it looked,
this newly created world.
Along the entire length and breadth
of the earth, our grandmother,
extended the green reflection
of her covering
and the escaping odors
were pleasant to inhale.

Developing Comprehension Skills

1. What time period in earth's history is the poet referring to?
2. Who is the grandmother? Why do you think the poet uses this name?
3. What is the "green reflection of her covering"?
4. What feeling do you think inspired the poet to write this poem? Find at least two lines that prove your point.
5. What can you guess about the writer of this poem? What is the writer's outlook on life?

6. Do you think that people today have the respect for nature that is shown in this poem? Explain your answer.

Reading Literature

1. Understanding Oral Literature. For centuries, some literature has been passed from one generation to the next by word-of-mouth. This is called oral literature. Oral literature has many purposes. One purpose is to provide entertainment. Oral literature is also a way to pass along religious beliefs, rituals, customs, and even tribal history to
I Have Killed the Deer

TAOS PUEBLO INDIAN

I have killed the deer.
I have crushed the grasshopper
And the plants he feeds upon.
I have cut through the heart
Of trees growing old and straight.
I have taken fish from water
And birds from the sky.
In my life I have needed death
So that my life can be.
When I die I must give life
To what has nourished me.
The earth receives my body
And gives it to the plants
And to the caterpillars
To the birds
And to the coyotes
Each in its own turn so that
The circle of life is never broken.