

Indian Blood
By Mary TallMountain

On the stage I stumbled,
my fur boot caught
on a slivered board.
Rustle of stealthy giggles.

Beendaaga' made of velvet
Crusted with crystal beads
Hung from brilliant tassels of wool,
Wet with my sweat.

Children's faces stared.
I felt their flowing force.
Did I crouch like *goh*
in the curious quiet?

They butted to the stage,
darting questions; pointing.
Do you live in an igloo?
Hah! You eat blubber!

Hemmed in by ringlets of brass,
grass-pale eyes,
the fur of *daghooda-aak*
trembled.

Late in the night
I bit my hand until it was
pierced
with moons of dark
Indian blood.

Translations:

<i>beendaaga'</i>	mittens
<i>goh</i>	rabbit
<i>daghooda-aak</i>	caribou parka

(Source: *The Language of Life: A Festival of Poets* by Bill Moyers, for further information on Mary TallMountain visit the TallMountain Circle, a nonprofit center founded in her honor at :
<http://www.freedomvoices.org/tallmountain/index.htm>