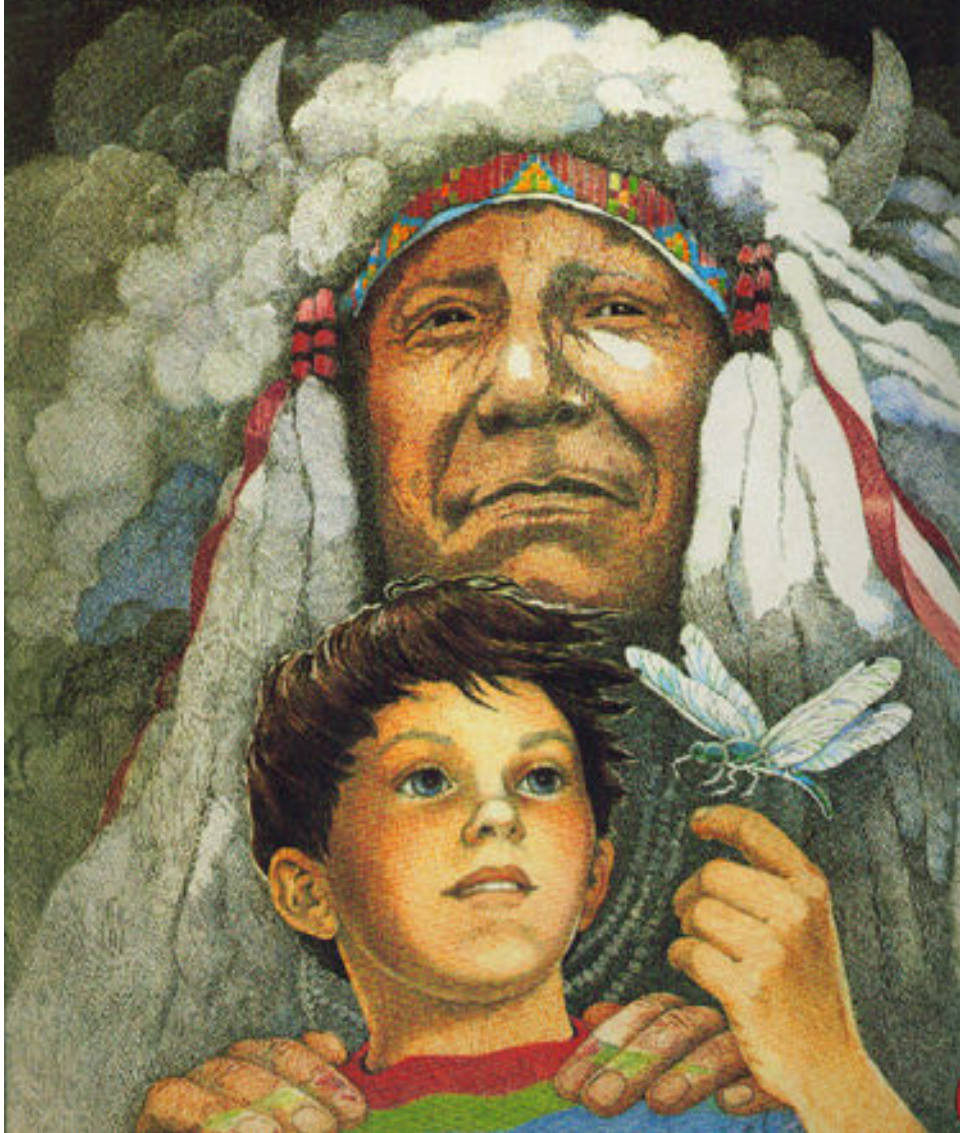
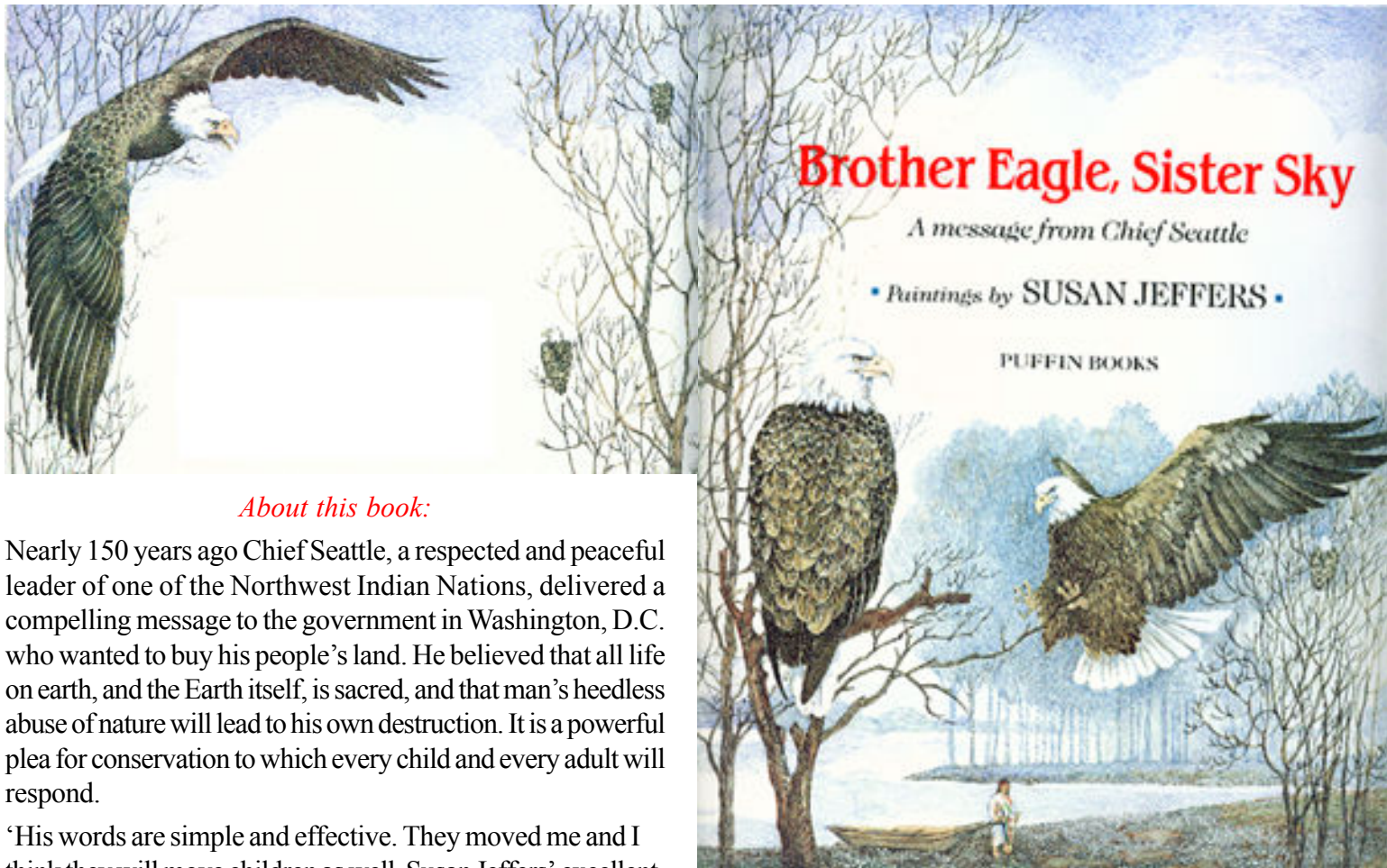


Brother Eagle, Sister Sky

• Paintings by SUSAN JEFFERS •





About this book:

Nearly 150 years ago Chief Seattle, a respected and peaceful leader of one of the Northwest Indian Nations, delivered a compelling message to the government in Washington, D.C. who wanted to buy his people's land. He believed that all life on earth, and the Earth itself, is sacred, and that man's heedless abuse of nature will lead to his own destruction. It is a powerful plea for conservation to which every child and every adult will respond.

'His words are simple and effective. They moved me and I think they will move children as well. Susan Jeffers' excellent illustrations will help to hold their attention' - Wendy Cope, *Daily Telegraph*

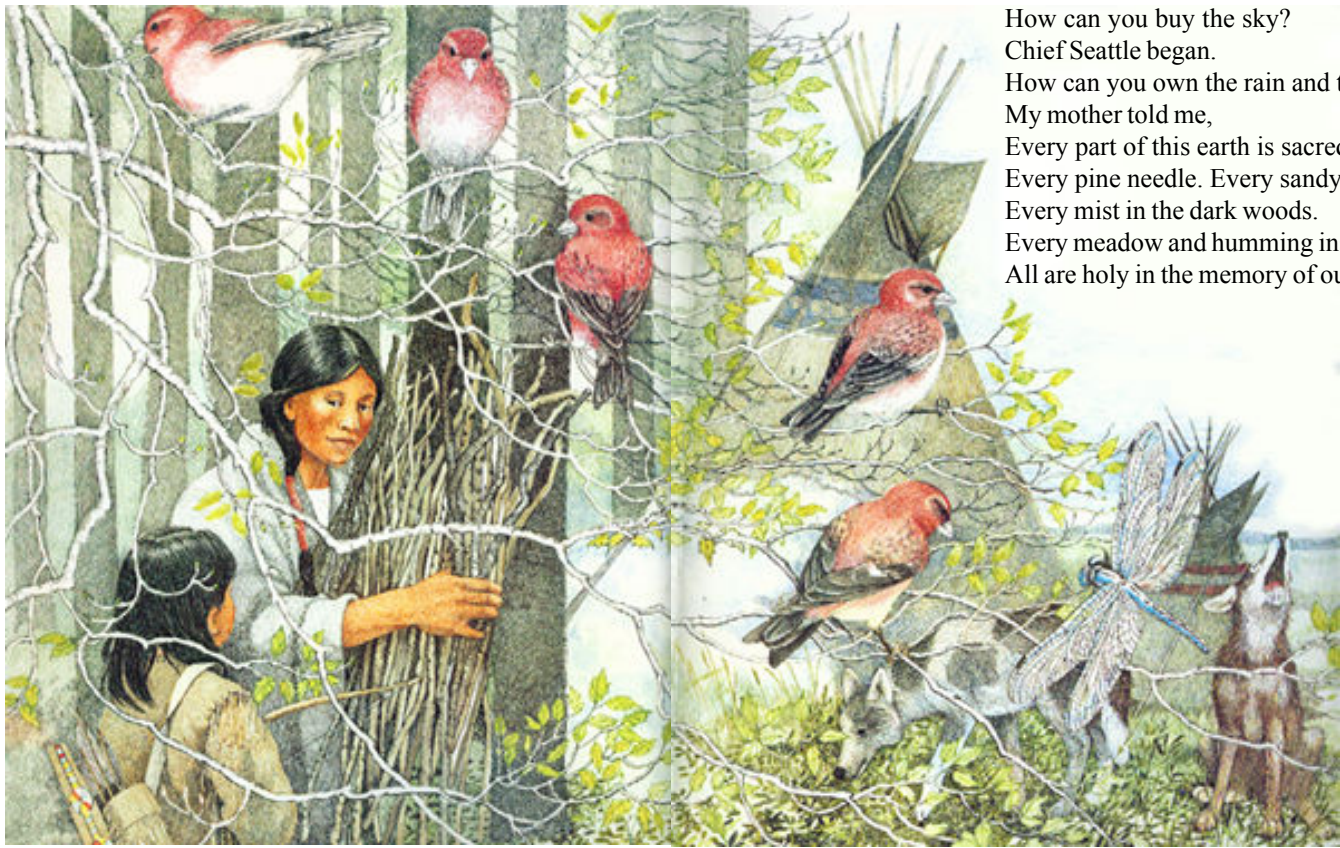
'Each page is bursting with colour' - *Early Times*



In a time so long ago that nearly all traces of it are lost in the prairie dust, an ancient people were a part of the land that is today called America. Living here for thousands of years, their children became the great Indian civilizations of the Choctaw and Cherokee, Navaho, Iroquois and Sioux, among many others. Then white settlers from Europe began a bloody war against the Indians, and in the span of a single lifetime claimed all the Indians' land for themselves, allowing them only small tracts of land to live on.

When the last of the Indian wars were drawing to a close, one of the bravest and most respected chiefs of the Northwest Nations, Chief Seattle, sat at a white man's table to sign a paper presented by the new Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Territory. The government in Washington, D.C., wished to buy the lands of Chief Seattle's people.

With a commanding presence and eyes that mirrored the great soul that lived within, the Chief rose to speak to the gathering in a resounding voice.



How can you buy the sky?
Chief Seattle began.
How can you own the rain and the wind?
My mother told me,
Every part of this earth is sacred to our people.
Every pine needle. Every sandy shore.
Every mist in the dark woods.
Every meadow and humming insect.
All are holy in the memory of our people.



My father said to me,
I know the sap that courses through the trees
as I know the blood that flows in my veins.
We are part of the earth and it is part of us.
The perfumed flowers are our sisters.

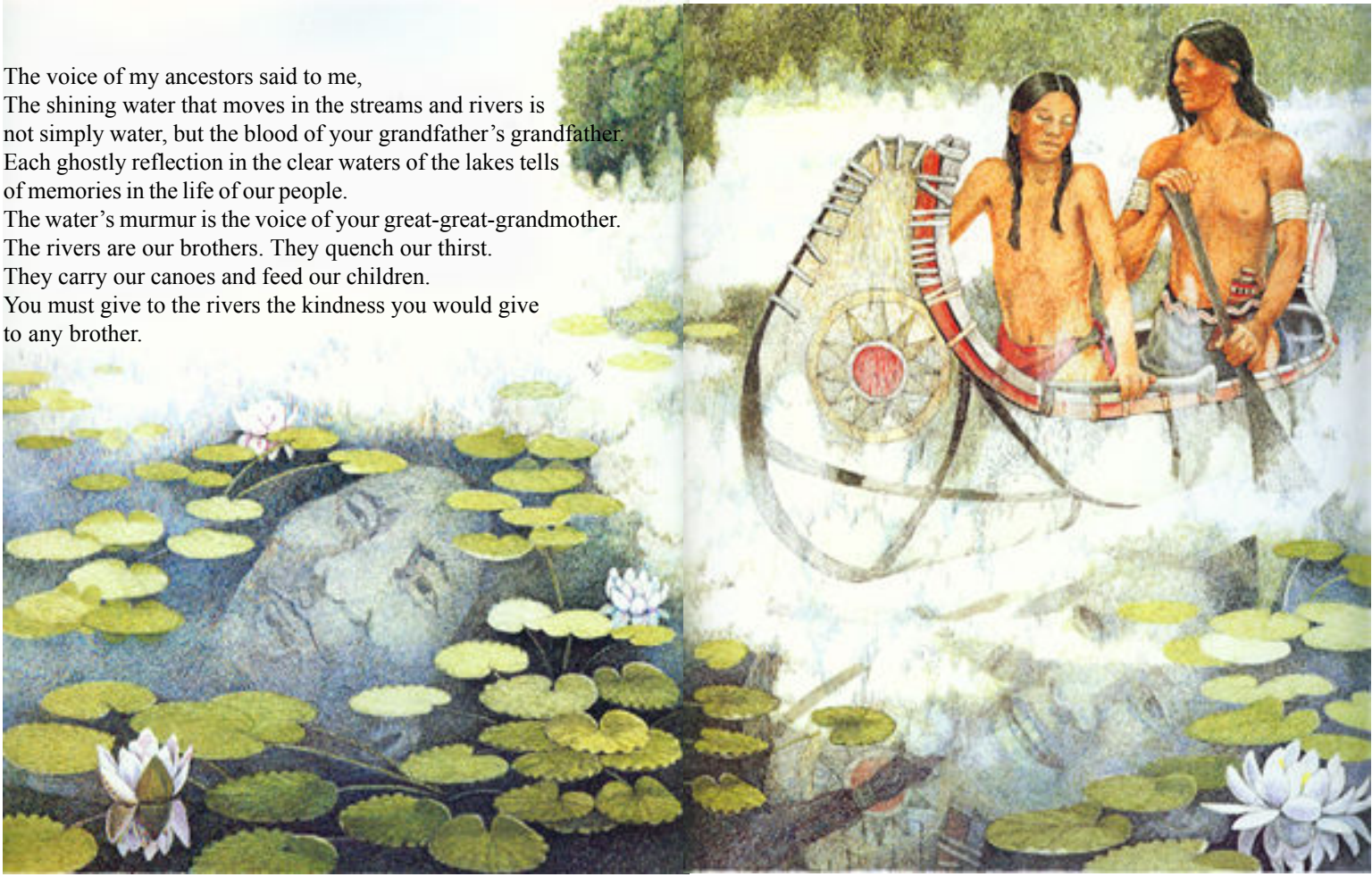


The bear, the deer, the great eagle, these are our brothers.

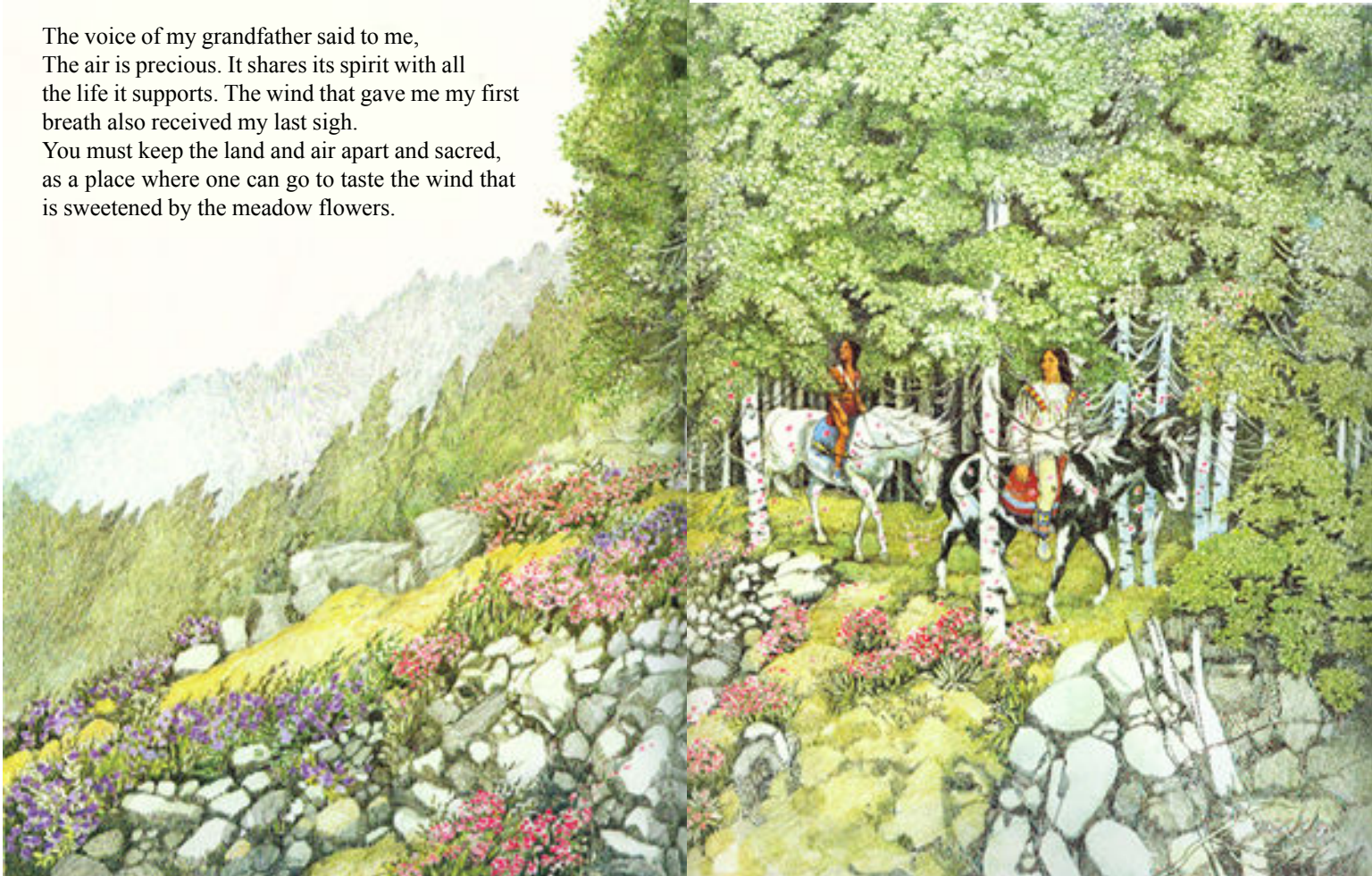
The rocky crests, the meadows,
the ponies—all belong to the same family.

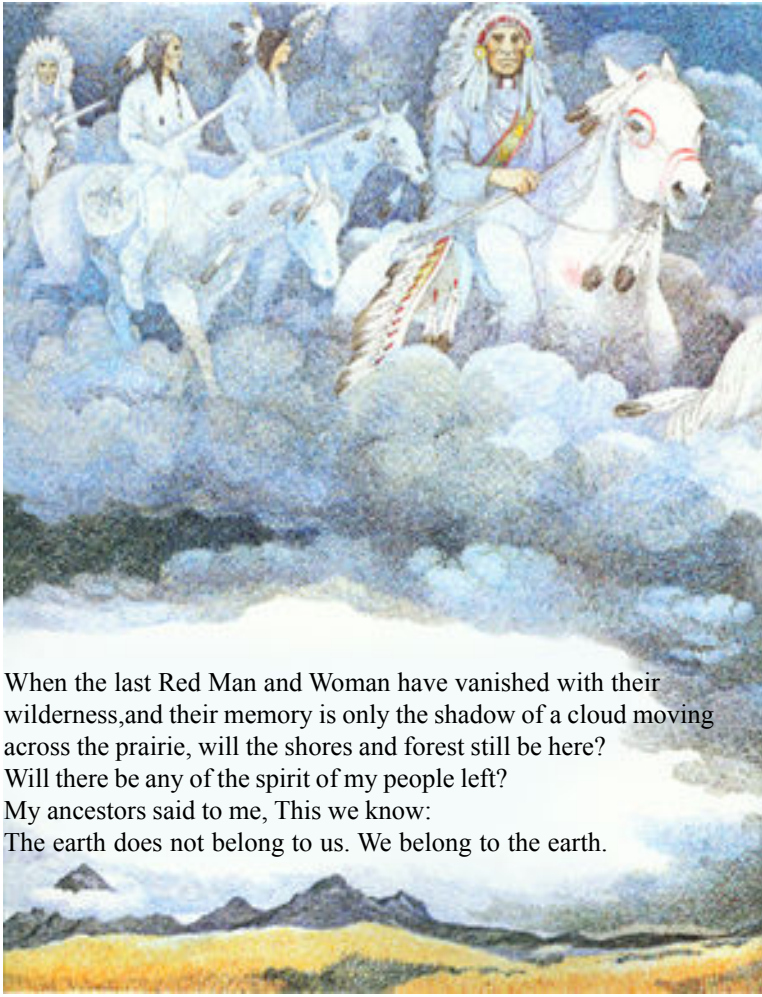


The voice of my ancestors said to me,
The shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is
not simply water, but the blood of your grandfather's grandfather.
Each ghostly reflection in the clear waters of the lakes tells
of memories in the life of our people.
The water's murmur is the voice of your great-great-grandmother.
The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst.
They carry our canoes and feed our children.
You must give to the rivers the kindness you would give
to any brother.

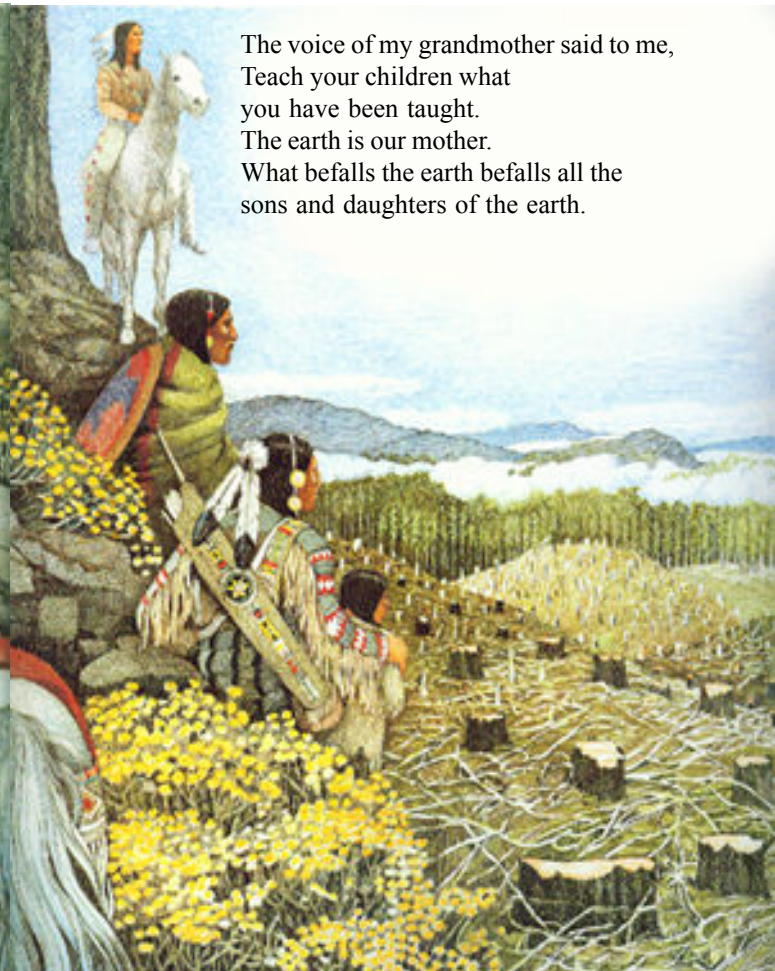
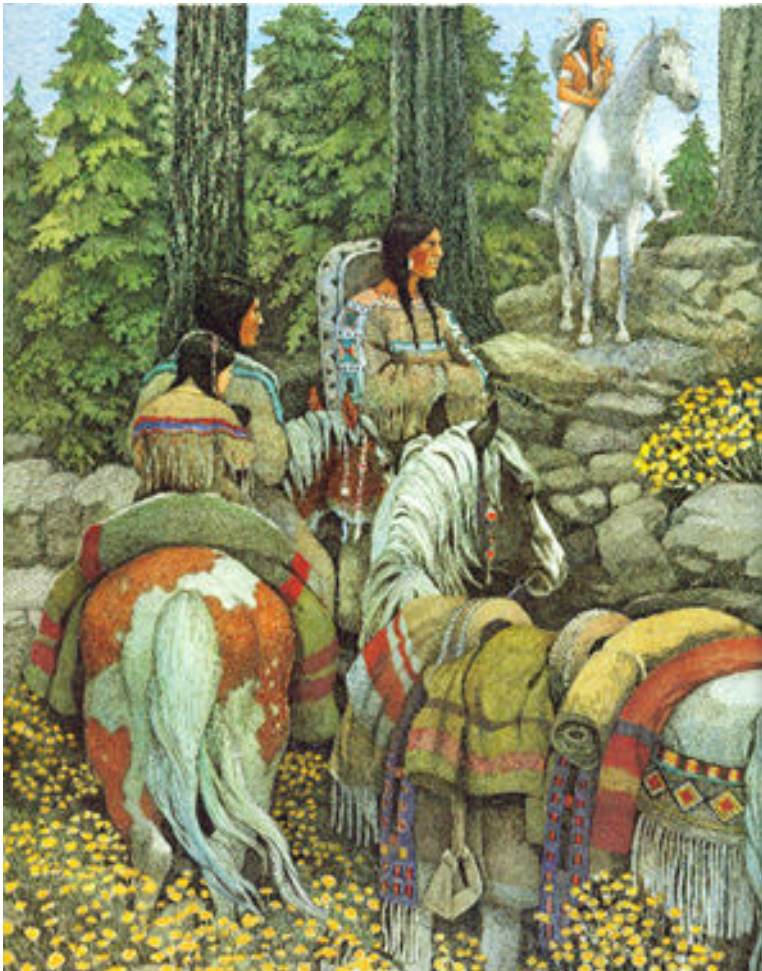


The voice of my grandfather said to me,
The air is precious. It shares its spirit with all
the life it supports. The wind that gave me my first
breath also received my last sigh.
You must keep the land and air apart and sacred,
as a place where one can go to taste the wind that
is sweetened by the meadow flowers.





When the last Red Man and Woman have vanished with their wilderness, and their memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, will the shores and forest still be here? Will there be any of the spirit of my people left? My ancestors said to me, This we know: The earth does not belong to us. We belong to the earth.



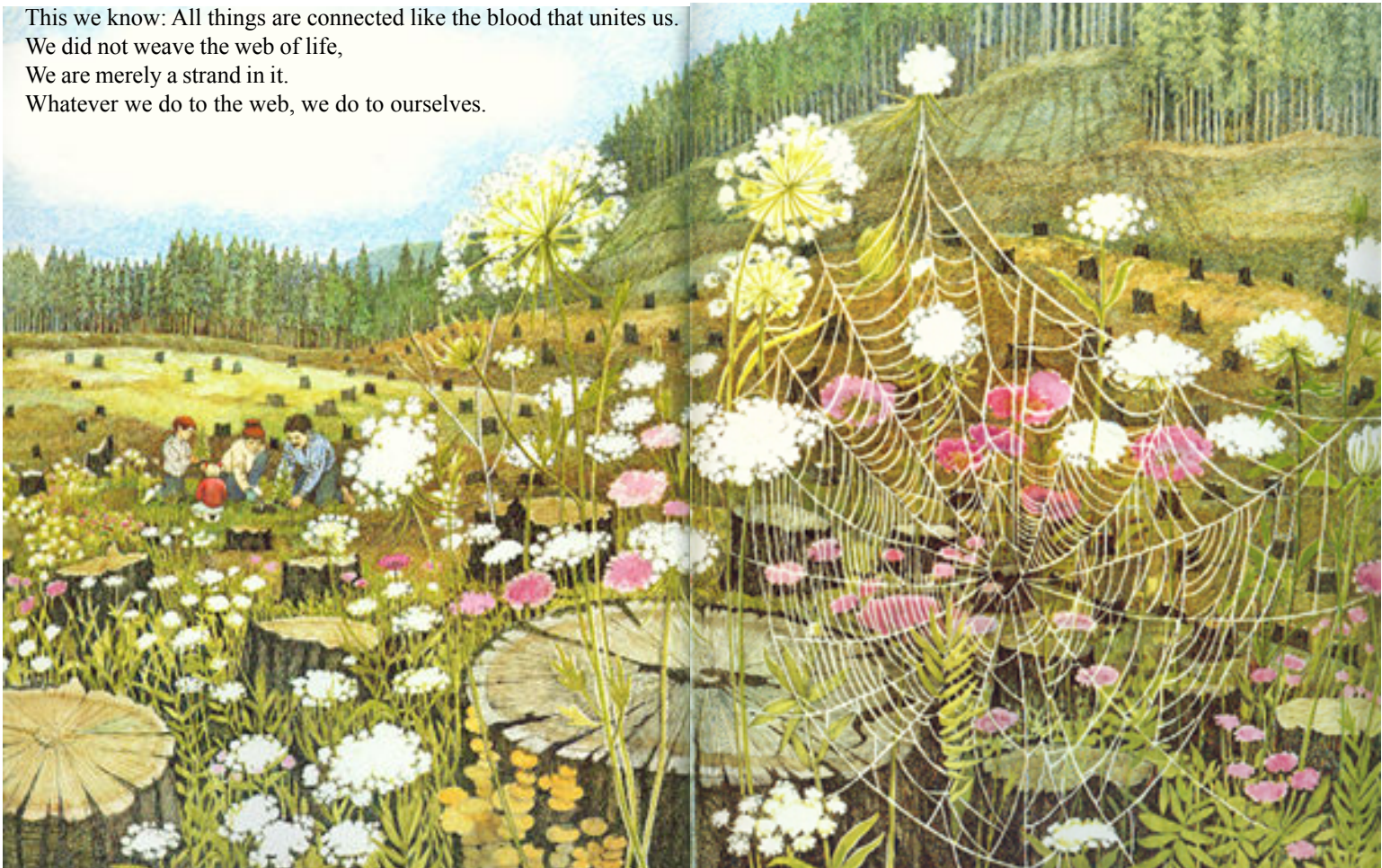
The voice of my grandmother said to me, Teach your children what you have been taught. The earth is our mother. What befalls the earth befalls all the sons and daughters of the earth.

Hear my voice and the voice of my ancestors,
Chief Seattle said.
The destiny of your people is a mystery to us.
What will happen when the buffalo are all slaughtered?
The wild horses tamed?
What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are
heavy with the scent of many men?

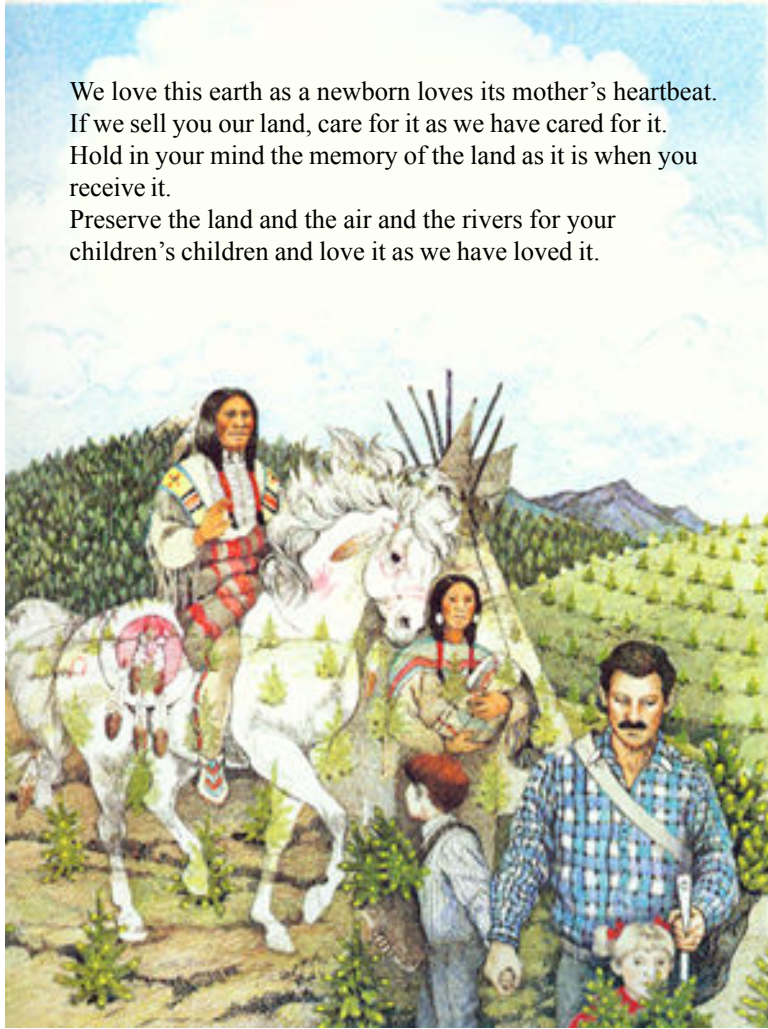
When the view of the ripe hills is blotted by talking wires?
Where will the thicket be? Gone!
Where will the eagle be? Gone!
And what will happen when we say good-bye to the swift pony
and the hunt?
It will be the end of living, and the beginning of survival.



This we know: All things are connected like the blood that unites us.
We did not weave the web of life,
We are merely a strand in it.
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.



We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat.
If we sell you our land, care for it as we have cared for it.
Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you
receive it.
Preserve the land and the air and the rivers for your
children's children and love it as we have loved it.



The origins of Chief Seattle's words are partly obscured by the mists of time. Some call his words a letter and some a speech. What is known is that Chief Seattle was a respected and peaceful leader of one of the Northwest Indian Nations. In the mid-1850s when the government in Washington, D.C., wanted to buy the lands of his exhausted and defeated people, he responded in his native tongue, with a natural eloquence stemming from his oral tradition.

His words were transcribed by Dr. Henry A. Smith, who knew him well, and that transcription was interpreted and rewritten more than once in this century. Joseph Campbell adapted and brought Chief Seattle's message to a wider audience in his book *The Power of Myth*. I too have adapted Chief Seattle's message for **Brother Eagle, Sister Sky**. What matters is that Chief Seattle's words inspired—and continue to inspire—a most compelling truth: In our zeal to build and possess, we may lose all that we have.

We have come late to environmental awareness, but there was a thundering message delivered a century ago by many of the great Native American chiefs, among them Black Elk, Red Cloud, and Seattle.

To all of the Native American people, every creature and part of the earth was sacred; it was their belief that to waste or destroy nature and its wonders is to destroy life itself. Their words were not understood in their time. Now they haunt us. Now they have come true, and before it is too late we must listen.

Susan Jeffers



END