

# THE EARTH UNDER SKY BEAR'S FEET: NATIVE AMERICAN POEMS OF THE LAND

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tell the name of the Nation the poem is attributed to, and the main idea of the poem:

1. *The Earth Under Sky Bear's Feet*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. *Sky Bear*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. *Song to the Firefly*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. *Flute Song*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

\_\_\_\_\_

5. *Wababanal: The Northern Lights*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

\_\_\_\_\_

6. *Mouse's Bragging Song*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

\_\_\_\_\_

7. *The Scattered Stars*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

\_\_\_\_\_

8. *The Seven Mateinnu*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

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9. *The Trail of Piñon Gatherers*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

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10. *A Summer Song*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

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11. *The Old Wolf's Song*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

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12. *Dawn House Song*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

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13. *Spirit Dance Song*

Nation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Main idea:

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# KEY THE EARTH UNDER SKY BEAR'S FEET: NATIVE AMERICAN POEMS OF THE LAND

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tell the name of the Nation the poem is attributed to, and the main idea of the poem:

1. *The Earth Under Sky Bear's Feet*

Main idea: Grandmother is teaching a small girl (her granddaughter) about Sky Bear and is going to tell the stories orally. The stories are the poems in this book.

2. *Sky Bear*

Nation: MOHAWK

Location: Northeast

Main idea: This is the story of how Sky Bear went into the sky. Hunters were trying to catch a bear who was fast and ran up a hill and through the stars, and stayed in the sky as stars.

3. *Song to the Firefly*

Nation: ANISHINABE (Ojibwe)

Location: Great Lakes

Main idea: The Anishinabe children run and try to catch fireflies before bed. The fireflies are like a clock which signals time for sleep. Gitchee-gummi is Lake Superior and fireflies "up north" are still huge and beautiful in the summers.

4. *Flute Song*

Nation: PIMA

Location: Southwest

Main idea: A young man plays his flute to a girl he likes, after dark to have his song be in her heart. Music is a language and helps communicate.

5. *Wababanal: The Northern Lights*

Nation: MISSISSQUOI

Location: Northeast

Main idea: This is a story to explain to children why there are Northern Lights in the sky. If a child sees Northern lights and asks about them, this story would be told. Chief Morning Star's child wanders away to the land of Northern lights, and when the Chief went to get him, two birds brought them home along with some Northern lights.

6. *Mouse's Bragging Song*

Nation: WINNEBAGO

Location: Great Lakes

Main idea: Because the mice went out after dark and knew no other creatures, they think they are the best. One mouse thinks he alone can touch the sky. When you don't know what others can do, you may think you are the best.

7. *The Scattered Stars*

Nation: COCHITI PUEBLO

Location: Southwest

Main idea: This is a story grown-ups would tell a child who asks, "Why are there stars in the sky?" It is also a gentle warning not to be too curious. In the story, a child has a bag of cotton and becomes tired of carrying it. She wants a look inside the bag and most of the stars pop out, scatter, and most could not be placed in the sky in patterns because of her curiosity.

8. *The Seven Mateinnu*

Nation: **LENAPE** (Delaware)

Location: **Eastern Woodlands**

Main idea: Seven wise men were so tired of giving advice they decide to hide, and they turned into stones. The people found them and kept asking for advice. So they went in the sky and now people have to look to the sky and themselves for answers.

9. *The Trail of Piñon Gatherers*

Nation: **CHUMASH**

Location: **West Coast**

Main idea: The piñon pine group grows in the southwestern United States and in Mexico. The piñon nuts are still widely eaten. In this poem, the advice is look to nature to find what you need, such as following the geese. Sky Coyote is the North Star (it never moves) and the Morning Star (Venus) are to be thanked for helping the people have food.

10. *A Summer Song*

Nation: **INUIT**

Location: **Subarctic**

Main idea: Sky Bear is still important even when it cannot be viewed during summer in the far north. The night sky changes with seasons and time of day. It means summer is here and welcomed. There is more food such as caribou. (God is watching and caring for you even when you can't see him)

11. *The Old Wolf's Song*

Nation: **LAKOTA**

Location: **Great Plains**

Main idea: Wolf gets up early carefully and watchfully roams. He has more freedom early in the morning; survival is easier at that time. Sky Bear watches over wolf. Sometimes people need to be careful, too.

12. *Dawn House Song*

Nation: **NAVAJO**

Location: **Southwest**

Main idea: The dawn sunrise is colorful, bright, and beautiful. The way it colors and lights up the surroundings is to be appreciated. This is a morning prayer for beauty outside and inside (within me).

13. *Spirit Dance Song*

Nation: **PAWNEE**

Location: **Great Plains**

Main idea: This is a song of appreciation to the moon (Mother Moon), Venus (Star of the Morning), and daybreak (Father Sun). The song goes on all night as there is so much to be thankful for.

Be sure to read the author's note at the end of the book for some interesting thoughts.

[By Carolyn Wilhelm, Wise Owl Factory Book a Day Blog](#)