**The Rainbow, A Sioux Myth**

A long time ago when the spirits walked the Earth, one of them was telling

how he helped the winged creatures and the four-leggeds who are brothers and

sisters of the Indians.

“I have made feathers for the birds to keep them warm and to flee their

enemies and to dance before their mates,” the Spirit said.

“I gave the turtle his house, the muskrat his fur coat, and the bear his strong

claws and keen nose. To the elk I have given antlers; to the bobcat I have given

the color of trees. I have given strength to the mountain lion. I know of none that I

have not helped.”

Just then a mother deer look up. “You have given me to run like the wind,”

she said, “but how will the fawn be saved from the sharp teeth of the coyote?”

“I will help you,” the Spirit said. He took his brush and painted and colored

the fawn with spots of sunlight and ever since the fawn can hide safely in the

leaves and shadows.

In the bright days of summer the flowers danced above the grass like a

carpet of sparkling jewels. Great was their gift of pleasure to the runners who

carried news from village to village. Happy were the feet of the maidens and

joyful were the winged ones (birds) of the air dancing among the blossoms. But

the flowers were bowed in sadness.

The Great Spirit was puzzled and he listened.

“Where will we go when the white giant (snow) comes from the north and

we all must die?” the flowers were saying. “We too make the Earth good to look

upon. Should we not go to a Happy Hunting Ground of our own?”

The Spirit nodded his head smiling. So now after the rain clouds of summer

you may see the lovely flowers of last year arching across the heavens in a

rainbow. That is how the rainbow came to be.