

Handout 2. Hopi Poetry Samples

The following poem is reproduced from Ramson Lomatewama, *Songs to the Corn, A Hopi Poet Writes about Corn* (Crystal Lake, IL: Rigby, 1997) p. 12–13 by permission of the author.

In the Cornfield at 5:30 a.m.

The sunflower sways
in the early summer breeze
while the swallow sings
to the coming sun.

The daylight
slowly climbs the horizon
while the bullfrogs
turn and scurry
into the tall
slender cattails.

The crow is awake
and greets the morning.

CAW! CAW! CAW!

Its smooth body shimmering
reflects the sunlight,
'tis a black mirror
that circles above.

A rabbit looks quietly
for the shade of grass
as the sun heats
the drying sand.

This morning
I too
greet the dawn.

The following poem is reproduced from Ramson Lomatewama, *Songs to the Corn, A Hopi Poet Writes about Corn* (Crystal Lake, IL: Rigby, 1997) p. 8 by permission of the author.

Birth

Young corn breaks ground
showered by rays of the rising sun.

They grow in happiness,
become filled with warmth.

Silky tassels grow long,
like my hair,
in search of new beginnings.

Tomorrow,
itaha taawa*
travels the longest day.

With pipe in hand,
we await our elders
who bring rain.

**itaha taawa: my uncle, the sun*

The following poem is reproduced from Ramson Lomatewama, *Songs to the Corn, A Hopi Poet Writes about Corn* (Crystal Lake, IL: Rigby, 1997) p. 16–17 by permission of the author.

Birth of a Song

A beautiful dawn has ascended.
Go as you will
among the rows of corn.
With happy hearts
you will sing.
And once again
the clouds
will come forth
and rain.

Yes!
it is true
that from all directions
the clouds
will go among the cornfields
and nourish them
with moisture.

Yes!
it is true
my fathers
that the young corn
with happy hearts
will grow
and mature.

A beautiful dawn has
ascended.
Go as you will
among the rows of corn.
With happy hearts
you will sing.

The following poem is reproduced from Ramson Lomatewama, *Drifting through Ancestor Dreams* (Flagstaff: Northland Publishing, 1993) by permission of the author.

After the Rains

Sandstone cliffs
reflect the red
of the setting sun.

My hoe is caked
with evidence
of my labor.

I see clouds
going to the east.
Dark clouds.

I look to the sky.
There!
A rainbow
is arched above me.

As I walk down
the dusty road
I look up.

Again!
The rainbow
dressed in beauty
walks with me.

There is no need
for us to speak.

Silence
will speak
for us.