Native American Poetry

Sun, My Relative
-Havasupan Indian

Sun, my relative
Be good coming out
Do something good for us
Make me work
So I can do anything I wish in the garden.
I hoe, I plant corn, I irrigate.

You, Sun be good going down at sunset.
We lay down to sleep
I want to feel good.
While I sleep you come up.
Go on your course many times
Make good things for us men.

Make me always the same as I am now.

I Have Killed the Deer
-Taos Pueblo Indian

I have killed the deer.
I have crushed the grasshopper
And the plants he feeds upon.
I have cut through the heart
Of trees growing old and straight.
I have taken fish from the water
And birds from the sky.
In my life I have needed death
So that my life can be.
When I die I must give life
To what has nourished me.
The earth receives my body
And gives it to the plants
And to the caterpillars
To the birds
And to the coyotes
Each in its own turn so that
The circle of life is never broken.

I Went to Kill the Deer
-Taos Pueblo Indian

I went to kill the deer
Deep in the forest where
The heart of the mountain beats
For all who live there.
An eagle saw me coming and
Flew down to the home of the deer
And told him that
A hunter came to kill.
The deer went with the eagle
Into the heart of the mountain
Safe from me who did not hear
The heart of the mountain beating.

Song of the Sky Loom
-Tewa Indian

O our Mother the Earth, O our Father the Sky,
Your children are we, and with tired backs
We bring you the gifts you love.
Then weave for us a garment of brightness;
May the warp\(^1\) be the white light of morning,
May the weft\(^2\) be the red light of evening,
May the fingers be the falling rain,
May the border be the standing rainbow.
Thus weave for us a garment of brightness,
That we may walk fittingly where the grass is
green,
O our Mother, the Earth, O our Father the Sky.

1. warp: the threads running lengthwise in the loom.
2. weft: the horizontal threads crossing the warp threads in a loom to make a woven fabric.