



**TOO MANY HORSES
NOT ENOUGH SADDLES**

Richard Denner

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TOO MANY HORSES,
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for Richard Running Deer

Where do you come from?
Before anything
there was dirt
a breast-shaped mountain
a valley, a plain
just dirt

Mother Nature wearing
a dress with many pockets
looks over the land
and bends low
moving her hands
she makes clouds

Taking seeds from her pockets
she throws a few here
some there, some in the valley
pfff, pfff, pfff
some on the plain, pfff, pff
and on the mountain, pff
she stands up and the clouds leave
and she calls Father Sky
"bring the sun over here"
this is on the first day

On the second day
she takes a look
and makes adjustments

she says to Father Sky
"take the sun back
back further, over there!"
and she takes some seeds
from a pocket way in the back
that she's never used before
pfff, pfff, over here
pfff, pfff over there

Mother Nature is a lot like us
she's never satisfied
always making corrections
pfff, pfff, pfff
Then she takes the water people
from a pocket near her hem
and sets them to one side
and the winged people
and the four-legged people
from yet other pockets
she takes the two-legged people
and sets them to one side
and says, "pay attention
don't say anything
watch what I do
and I'll explain later"

This story goes on

Mother Nature adds
and subtracts, she points
the water people toward the valley
and the four-legged people
to the mountain and the plain
the two legged people
beg her to have their place
but first she tells
the winged people
to fly over the land
and report back to her

She invites the leaders
of the peoples to a circle
the Bear tells the humans
"I will give you wisdom
but you can't hunt me"
the Elk offers bones
for tools and hides for clothes
and meat for food
the Fish promises
to keep the river water clean
and the Eagle to carry
messages to the Great Spirit

And the story goes on
for a long time
and I may have forgotten
a part, lie about Coyote
promising to be a teacher
The Conquistadors come
with their firesticks
and the Bluecoats with their rifles
now, we're in the time

of the third language, T.V. land
and Mother Nature looks over
the breast-shaped mountain
at Bobcat bounding
from an alter at Tara Mandala

A new moon
yip yap and yowl of Coyote
screech of Hawk
and drumming sounds
from a yurt at the base
of the Continental Divide
east meets west
we're back to basics

wood and water, water and wood
the energy of Vajra
song and dance

Our love of the land
is our comfort and strength
this the Ute people know
this the Buddha people know
the Sangha is a circle
here is where we are from
awake to the scent of rabbit ear sage
ears hear fire, eyes see light
all one taste
garden of fire, garden of stars
garden of air