

highest mountain

by Black Elk

I was standing on the highest mountain of them all,
and round about beneath me
was the whole hoop of the world.

And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell
and I understood more than I saw;
for I was seeing in a sacred manner
the shapes of all things in the spirit,
and the shape of all shapes
as they must live together like one being.

And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people
was one of many hoops that made one circle,
wide as daylight and as starlight,
and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree
to shelter all children
of one mother and one father.

And I saw that it was holy.

Black Elk, Oglala Lakota (Sioux) (1863-1950)