

# MEYOTZI

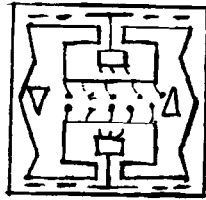
by

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## Meyotzi

In October of 1867, on the Medicine River of Kansas, representatives of five tribal nations met to hear plans for peace on the Plains. Included among the attendees were Black Kettle, head chief of the Southern Cheyennes, and William Tecumseh Sherman, commanding general of the U.S. Army, and the equally famous General Philip Sheridan. They sat down to assure one another of the means for lasting peace among the peoples whom they represented. The Cheyennes had brought their subchiefs to Medicine Lodge that day: among them, Little Rock, a young leader whose wife was named Medicine-Woman-Later, and whose lovely daughter, the talk of that encampment, was named Meyotzi. She was sixteen that year, celebrating life with her family at a camp not a day's walk from her birthplace on the Ninnescah River.

Late the following year, on Thursday morning, the 26th of November, 1868, Thanksgiving Day, General William Hazen, the U.S. Peace Commissioner for Indian Territories, met with Black Kettle and other Cheyenne chiefs on the Washita, in present-day Oklahoma. In the bitter cold of that late autumn, Hazen assured the chiefs that the Washita Valley was a good place to camp, a place where the Cheyennes could safely stay in peace. Because General Hazen was well-known as a peace builder, the Cheyennes trusted him and felt some relief in his promises, despite many past troubles and the light, biting snow of an oncoming winter.

### *Meyotzi*

During that very night, troops of the U.S. Seventh Cavalry encircled the camp, and dawn broke on Friday to the crack of cavalry rifles in the attack of Colonel George Armstrong Custer—"YellowHair." Custer's men devastated Black Kettle's camp, destroying almost one hundred lodges and slaughtering the braves.

No Cheyenne male over ten years of age escaped; among the dead was the subchief, Little Rock, father of the lovely seventeen-year-old princess: *Meyotzi* (= Green Grass of Springtime). *Meyotzi*! By noon two days later, on Sunday the 29th, the chief's sister, Mawissa, had brought the beautiful *Meyotzi* to Custer's tent. Fort Sill records show that *Meyotzi* (= sometimes called Mo-nah-See-tah) lived with Custer in 1868-69; she was "learning English," so he told Missus Custer.

With his power, dash, command, and handsome uniform—it is no surprise that *Meyotzi* felt married to Custer, provided with a two-blanket bed. Afterward, she found tribal men inadequate, calling them "one-blanket braves."

Men of the Seventh Cavalry saw her as a most beautiful woman, even at eighteen summers. Smooth of face, bright-eyed, *Meyotzi* overcame Custer, too, for he wrote that "she has the loveliest hair—silken tresses, raven black—a sleek crown that falls to her waist." Continuing, he penned, "Primary beauty is not the end of it: A great Gladdening lies between her thighs, and the March winds of each year ahead should transport sighs from my body swelling across great distances to her glorious welcoming."

### THIS, then, IS THE TALE OF MEYOTZI

"By the Washita, the river,  
Colonel Custer, seeing smoke,  
Custer heard the Cheyenne babies,  
Heard a child of Chief Black Kettle;  
Then in dark before dawn's redness,  
Before the blood-red dawn broke forth,  
YellowHair released the signal

*Meyotzi*

For the butchery, the plunder,  
Modeled on the games of war,  
Of the War Between the States.

“This we learned:  
The fruits of plunder  
Spoil and spill and flood with sorrows.”

Thus reflects this Cheyenne woman,  
Maid and Mother—Bright Meyotzi:

“I was born of Cheyenne woman,  
I was born within the river;  
Ninnescah, the winding river;  
Ninnescah, good-water river;  
Many months I swam her river;  
My abode was Time the river;  
Drove me down my mother’s river;  
Ninnescah, my mother’s river;  
Waters rushed and bathed my borning,  
Cheyenne river-babe, Meyotzi,  
Golden Sprouts of Grass: Meyotzi,  
In the tumbling river water  
Of Medicine-Woman-Later.

“This papoose they named Meyotzi—  
‘Sweet Green Grass of Springtime’—  
‘Though quite obviously,  
I am Springtime Green no longer.

“In the village by the river,  
Reddened by Black Kettle’s bleeding,  
Many Cheyenne men were murdered—  
Sleeping with their fam’lies, sleeping—  
Massacred, they were,  
Given not one chance for battle;

*Meyotzi*

Custer gave no call for battle;  
Custer hoped for no survivors.

“How was I brought to YellowHair?  
On the Sunday after battle,  
Black Kettle’s massacre, the battle;  
At the Washita, the battle;  
Mawissa brought me to the long knives;  
Mawissa, sister of Black Kettle,  
Friend of Little-Rock, my father,  
Little-Rock, whom Custer murdered—  
Mawissa took me to his wigwam,  
Charging him to hold and help me,  
Giving me to YellowHair.”

In a change of pace and to show Meyotzi’s modesty,  
We permit this pause. . . . To insure that hearers’ ears  
Remain crisp and open channels,  
Certain portions of this tale—  
Most private pages of her life—  
Should fall from others’ tongues.

Meyotzi whispers:

“Mawissa has a favored voice,  
Raw and roughened on a grief that few have known.  
Mawissa-wise has many gifts.  
From far outside this tent—Meyotzi’s tent—  
Mawissa heard our songs  
More clearly  
Than mem’ry can carry back. . . .

“Tell of them now—my Friend, Mawissa.”

“Yes, Meyotzi, soft songs hide well under blankets.  
What ear can capture them  
In a wigwam full of barking dogs and gunsmoke?

*Meyotzi*

"Mawissa, myself, I shall go back to early days—difficult days—more than a hundred moons ago, since the Battle on the Washita. That was, in their counting, Eighteen and Sixty-Eight; the sorrowing times we suffered, began then, when you first came with me to the tent of YellowHair.

"Tell-I-may of times of trial under full control of Gen'ral Grant, Great Chief-President of the Pale Face Peoples, and of other chiefs from the eastern camps and rivers. Yes, My Friend, I shall be with you as we make widely known some of the other hardships you and I took on long before Custer (showing all his madness) led Horse soldiers of his Seventh Cavalry into the perilous shallows along the Little Bighorn's bloodied banks.

"I think you have become mild and docile, Princess Meyotzi, and you will want to speak on that. You nod and grunt. . . . Before you add to those affirming grunts, let me send signals about dreams and wishes that move up and down our paths. . . . I hear from black-robed spirit sages, some peoples from the Pale Face camp (and not all are pale, I know!). Some people from that camp have set up wish tents and dream lodges, filling the sky of afterlife. I worry: since our Happy Hunting Grounds have seats and beds for every tribe and every color, is their sky-heaven dressed up for them alone, perhaps a reservation with guns in place along its fences; So??

"Yes, Meyotzi, speak; speak of mildness and change. Speak as clearly as the coyote barks on cold nights. . . ."

Touching her shoulder, Meyotzi leans toward her old friend—"Mawissa, sister of Black Kettle: You have gathered wisdom, and have become a great sage of the Cheyennes. From you we learn how to mend our captors' ways as we have been forced to change our own.

Have I become the mild Meyotzi?  
The well-tamed Cheyenne Princess,  
Princess deprived and now deserted;  
I lived as tent-mate to Chief Custer,

*Meyotzi*

Reckless GeorgeGeorge Armstrong Custer;  
How did they ridicule Meyotzi?  
'Camp Comfort' was the name I bore;  
'Cluster Bride,' his soldiers called me,  
Before we left and hurried northward,  
Before we joined the bravest people—  
Crazy Horse's bold Lakota;  
Before Sitting Bull, Sioux Shaman,  
Designed a trap for Custer's soldiers;  
Before nine months had made his baby—  
YellowBird, fair Custer's offspring,  
Taken from my body wailing  
As we would wail on Custer's body."

Mawissa has returned, and recollects:  
"Stripped of the grasslands,  
Robbed of the Buffalo, the Prairies;  
Stripped of all our hunting grounds;  
Bereft of braves and warrior brothers,  
We Cheyenne women left the Washita,  
Escaping to the upland meadows;  
We took our babes, our worn-out elders,  
Our colored scarves and warming blankets;  
We kept in view the muddy river;  
To walk beside the wide Missouri.  
She would give us our provisions—  
Water, food and transport give us.

"Among the pale-faced men and women  
Meyotzi found both fear and friendship;  
Some were Lords; some others, Ladies;  
But all found life an upward struggle.  
Can I comfort those who struggle:  
Who contend with joy, while sharing;  
Who till the seeded soil, weed-threatened;



*Meyotzi*

Who harvest and replant the field—  
The field which lies quite near the river?

Can you explain? . . .

When they came to this land—lush-lovely, They said,  
Only to sketch and to survey its sloping sand;  
Now, if you can, set aside their campsite ravages,  
Take note that they ignored our native plants,  
And now, plant crops we never knew;  
Corral and crowd their flocks and herds  
Far from running rivers,  
Then they drive hollow pipes  
Deep into the breast of earth, where a deeper river flows,  
Seeking water they can raise with bucket pumps.

Meyotzi says, 'Embrace the river!'

"Beside the River :: Did I not tell You??—  
Custer and his men had connived a shabby peace,  
'That's it!! We will use Meyotzi!  
Here, Meyotzi, YellowHair has a plan for peace  
Which you should "CHEYENNE" to Cheyenne braves.' "

Thus, she brought the plan and Custer  
To the tent of Cheyenne chiefs. . . .  
She entered their tent alone, royally;  
She tried to build a case for him.

Medicine Arrow and other chiefs looked away, doubting. . . .  
"Young Sister, it wears the sticky webbing of 'veho';  
Veho, the pale-faced spider," the chiefs observed,  
"But bring him in";  
So, she beckoned Custer enter. . . .  
When they then promised one another peace,  
If Cheyennes would lay down their arms—  
(Lone Wolf suspicious on that point!)

*Meyotzi*

CHANUPA, the pipe of peace, then was passed,  
Chanupa, its prayer smoke rising,  
And when the fuel of Truth had burned,  
Gone all to ash,  
Lone Wolf lifted the cold pipe,  
Turned to YellowHair,  
And emptied every ash on Colonel Custer's boots,  
To remind the BlueCoat officer  
That Death marks those  
Who fail their promises sealed by pipes of peace. . . .

Custer smiled and took Meyotzi from the tent. . . .  
In a "by the way" he told her  
His wife Elizabeth will arrive from Kansas on tomorrow,  
And Meyotzi must give way.

She had no jealousies that he owned another woman:  
He would have her perpetual love and loyalty,  
But  
She asked a souvenir:

Smiling, as he ALWAYS smiled!  
Custer took his shaving mirror from his kit,  
and gave it to Meyotzi—  
"That you may see what I can see, = your lovely face."  
She had already saved aside one of his yellow scarves,  
So:  
Meyotzi held three Custer souvenirs: Scarf, Mirror and Memories.

Let us now hear Kathleen Malone, Meyotzi's friend from Kansas;  
she tells us: "Meyotzi had occasion to come back tuh the Ninnescah  
Valley before Custer's troops campaigned in the Montana territories.  
She coulda made a holding camp above the Ninnescah and gardened  
in that freshet spring. She coulda learned a lot about quicksand there;

*Meyotzi*

coulda taught them lessons tuh Custer, had he paused to undertake his occupations in peace.

"For quicksand she would have instructed: 'You must have the skill to rescue yourself from quicksand: First, stay calm, since quicksand does NOT pull you down. Fall on your back; If you can, find and grasp a long branch and put it below your shoulders, pushing it on down, below your hips. SLOWLY, Pull your legs out of quicksand, one-at-a-time; Do not try to dance. Rest; Use the branch as a "float" and Roll out slowly to solid ground. Again, Do not attempt to dance until you have lifted your feet out of the quicksand, nor yet until you hear the piping and the beat of drums. . . .'

"Oh, I hoped Meyotzi'd stay in Kansas—far distant from the savagery the Seventh Cavalry could inflict upon the Northern Tribes,

Brutalities far worse  
than the storms  
that rush through the skies of Kansas,  
that lift the sands of Kansas on the Southwest Winds of Kansas,  
that bring floods to swamp the pastures along the Ninnescah,  
Flood waters which cannot assuage the thirst  
Of the trait'rous dust of Kansas (such ferocity!).

Oh, if she had but found a steed,  
A mount, a great stallion or a sturdy mare,  
And brought YellowBird to Kansas!  
(On those prairies,  
She could have told him  
The tale of Crazy Horse—once called Curley Boy;  
Crazy Horse, Son of Crazy Horse, who—at 15 years—  
Took the Vision Quest.  
When Curley Boy identified his vision, he changed his name  
To Crazy Horse.)

Oh Wind and Water! Oh Meyotzi!!"

Kathleen Malone then inquires:

"Don'tcha know I spent many weeks, many suns

*Meyotzi*

Prowlin' the forts,  
Searchin' for loving soldiers  
At the general store and concessionaire?  
I stopped that useless trek,  
Prepared a green garden;  
Stood in the sun so demurely, in my bonnet!  
Captains and Majors came up the unmarked trail,  
A buff'lo path that led them to this heifer woman:

"Mc,  
And all my appetites.  
In my cot, I heard yer Gen'ral Sherman moan in gratitude,  
Dream-murmuring: 'War's Hell an' all its rumored glory  
Is horse manure 'n' moonshine;  
Kathleen Malone is ripe on the vine;  
Go, get'er boys!' "

Meyotzi interrupts, speaking to the wives of cavalymen:

"Heyyup, Hear! Kathleen Malone has had her struggles, Yes, but  
women of the Cheyennes have had worse, she would say so herseff.

"Let me point to my royal Cheyenne heritage: take note of the war-  
bonnet rights I gained from my father, Chief Little Rock. Today, I have  
taken back the headdress and feathered tail of Cheyenne princesses;  
someday soon wear them, now hanging at the door of this good kiva.  
Better if my father'd lived and were now wearing his full splendor,  
instead of dead on the banks of the Washita. Pause with me, in tribute  
and then, *hear* my inquiries.

"Indeed, I do have questions, Pale-Faced Women!!

Permit Meyotzi entry to your ears

And Answer—if you can—Oh Sisters::

Why do your blue-eyed Sons

Blind my dark-eyed Brothers,

Remove their long, adorning hair, and

Deny their tongues their chanting?

Yet, demand sweet comfort

*Meyotzi*

In the fleshy pleasures of the bed  
With Pocahontas,  
or Sacajawea in her cot of straw,  
And Along Meyotzi's river, which runs between her open thighs?  
Does not the tribal soul of humankind  
Enjoy a rainbow-colored lust  
To promote Meyotzi's dark-brown love of Pale-face YellowHair?

"Now, quiet! I recite my father's chanting; Hear his prayer,  
The prayer of Little Rock—my father:

" 'Great Spirit, You gave this sacred pipe to me:  
The pipe with which I pray to say thank You.  
Oh, Great Spirit and Grandmother Earth,  
We come to You this day, Thanking You for the good things,  
The Good Things we see and those that are beyond our eyes,  
We make our supplications known to You.  
For those who are in this teepee;  
For those who live under your stars—  
Give us your blessing  
That our words and actions be one in unity,  
That we listen to each other,  
That we come to understand one another,  
That we with good heart walk hand in hand,  
From this day on.  
So be it.  
We pray your blessings run with us  
From the spring at the beginning of the creek,  
To the place where the river runs  
To the final settings of our suns—  
Brothers and Sisters now and always.  
So it be.' "

>> Lame Bear speaks now:  
"I gather sunflowers,

*Meyotzi*

Squash blossoms and sprigs of sage  
To decorate Meyotzi's gloss-black hair,  
And add colors to her tent. . . .  
Lame Bear am I,  
Cheyenne of the Northern Clan:  
Friend Forever of Meyotzi;  
Who brought her cooling water to imbibe;  
Who heated water to give her warm relief  
While she birthed YellowBird,  
Her Custer Son—Yellow Swallow  
Born on an August afternoon  
Along the wide Missouri.  
Much later, many Winters gone,  
She stands on a wind-blown hilltop  
Quite near a settler's farm,  
On the river bank, beside old Cheyenne campsites  
On the Ninnescah;  
Caught in grey,  
Hidden within thuh mists that hang between two eagles' beaks—  
Eagles that bring rain—  
Knowing the murkiness that mixes attitude with facts,  
Murkiness that makes some assertions baseless lies,  
Shows others as startling truths," says Lame Bear.

"Ycs,  
Some memories sear flesh and seep sorrow," observes Meyotzi;  
"They cause puzzles in my mind:  
WHY do these newcomers men and women grow anxious  
Over things that matter not?  
Would they show astonishment  
If a flock of white crows swooped down and sang love songs  
and—as they soared overhead—  
Became a changeling flock, a troop of Cheyenne warrior women?  
Till the sun sets forever, I shall doubt it!" says Meyotzi.

*Meyotzi*

"Dull Knife, who led some Cheyenne legions,  
Supported us beside the campfire;  
Supported Tis-Tsis-Tas, the People;  
Named in Pale-face talk: Cheyenne.  
Dull Knife, he counseled us to caution.  
'Care and Caution': words of Dull Knife."

>> Dull Knife now steps in to say: "Yes, this Cheyenne  
We did name Dull Knife, my name, Dull Knife, myself. . . .  
Taken from my vision quest, that vigil, where I beheld  
That I had lost my footing in a struggle;  
That I had fallen from a cliff topping  
To a sandbar on the river far below;  
That I had dropped my bow,  
My inventory of arrows a jumbled mass of useless sticks.  
This knife, My only useful weapon, hung from my shoulder belt.  
My only tool, this short, unsharpened knife,  
It but little longer than my hand, now broken by the fall,  
And prone to dulling from but little use.  
Against a raid by blue-coated cavalry,  
Dull Knife could not defend Meyotzi."

Now, Lame Bear here again, "I return  
To make straight a tangled story:  
I speak of unc customary days—  
When the sun stayed long, in days of June,  
During your Centennial. . . .

"My people yielded land,  
Saw our treasured gold, our eagle feathers disappear  
Into your connivances, your whiskey wagons.  
We shared our willing, trusting women;  
We gave you our HERITAGE.  
You thought us animals.

*Meyotzi*

We thought you gods.  
Both you and we were wrong.  
Four Thousand Moons passed on!  
Yes, Oh! We had learned your ways long before June, Seventy-Six.

“Your people know many things;  
Many ways to kill;  
Many ways to lie, prevaricate and falsify;  
Many ways to steal from us,  
Then, you lace our lips with silly water.  
But there are skills and ways you do not know,  
And will not pause to learn.  
One of these:  
To love the land and all its creatures;  
Another:  
How to read a trail,  
To know some old coyote passed by, to die, two suns ago,  
Or that a lovely maid had crossed your path within the hour;  
But, Most importantly—  
No one from across that great wide sea can HEAR;  
You,  
Who are their children’s children, harbor deafness most profound.  
You do not listen;  
Not only are you deaf to storms and thunder,  
But also to children’s cries.  
You fail to hear pleadings;  
Lack the skills to capture your own lies. . . .  
In consequence,  
Great Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse and I, Lame Bear,  
Sent YellowBird to chant into Colonel Custer’s ear.  
Two days before the battle,  
At dusk,  
We rode ahead with YellowBird  
To meet with YellowHair,



*Meyotzi*

To drive back the Seventh Cavalry  
With information;  
But—don't you know this??  
None are so deaf as those who will not hear."

>>"Young YellowBird I am, Son of Meyotzi and pale-faced Yellow-Hair. One day, I went with Lame Bear, who can build fires.

"Lame Bear told me that he set fire to the tent of some  
Star-striped warriors in far-away Dakota hills, during a time of  
Winter. He said he'd tried to caution them,  
By placing stone-on-stone-on-stone that morning,  
But those soldiers paid no care,  
Gave no attention to the warning  
Which told them of danger.

"On that day, I witnessed it;  
I cannot call it courage;  
I saw a disregard for light and life—  
A failure to marvel at miracles. I SAW THEIR DEAFNESS!!  
I hope day soon, Great Spirit visits them  
With lamps; With drums that they can hear  
Before their *last sun* sets. . . ."

Now lend ear, once more, to Lame Bear. He gives reports from  
other chiefs:

"We know that In the White House, far away:  
Custer's chief-chief,  
U.S. Grant, called Gen'ral FireWater,  
Met with Sherman-called-Tecumseh;  
Oh, Yessir, Yer Gen'ral Sherman.  
Thirsting for the blood of Johnny Reb,  
He did not campaign  
As a champion of dark-skinned, red-skinned peoples;  
He scorned all tints but pinky tans;  
He lacerated us in rage  
And utter ruthlessness.

*Meyotzi*

"Not in sympathy for the Lakota  
Or the Tis-Tsis-Tas/Cheyenne  
Did Grant call Custer into question;  
Pale chiefs thought YellowHair unwise and reckless.  
More than they knew, They were correct!!  
Custer, Love of Meyotzi, lacked humane wisdom.

"Perhaps they thought of mismatched armies  
Along the Little Bighorn River?  
Perhaps they thought of mismatched ethics?  
(Did Custer have a tribal chaplain?  
Did Custer let the SEVENTH pause  
To contemplate in prayer?)  
Perhaps the Sioux of Sitting Bull  
Would have asked the Northern Bear  
To mush and mash the quicksand in Little Bighorn's river bank. . . ."

On Sunday, the 25th of June, 1876, ten days before the trophy of victory might be welcomed at the U.S. Centennial in Philadelphia == Sunday—just after all the masses of the priests and bishops had concluded with prayers for victory over the savages, Colonel George Armstrong Custer led five companies of the Seventh Cavalry on some two hundred horses down the valley of the Little Bighorn in southern Montana for the battle that was to provide the ultimate solution to the Indian problem. Six thousand Cheyennes and Dakota lay in wait on that hot afternoon.

Meyotzi saw dust rising from the hilltop east of them, and ran to get her souvenir mirror and her yellow scarf. Full well the encampment knew whose troops were approaching, and Meyotzi realized that Custer/YellowHair had completely lost his sense of hearing. It was too late to look for cures for deafness.

The impressions of her feet in the damp sand of the river bank could have been seen by an alert cavalry officer, but it was also too late for Custer's journey on life's river.

*Meyotzi*

It was a day for Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse  
To sink the troops of YellowHair;  
And it was true,  
The troops of Custer  
Gained terrain along the Bighorn—

Ho! They gained a quaking quicksand  
Which took two hundred horses down;  
But it was insubstantial AIR—  
Trustless air that savaged them:

Air, floating bullets;  
Air, transporting Cheyenne arrows;  
Air, charged with death  
And a Gathering of Wrongful Motives  
To soak their blood  
And sink their lives

In quicksands of human treachery.  
Nimbly moved the Northern Bear;  
Great Northern Bear who sleeps in Winter  
Now softly came on winds of Summer;  
Came with YellowBird and Dull Knife,  
With Mawissa and Meyotzi  
To watch the flight of Custer's spirit. . . .

Perhaps, the chaplain in Fort Lincoln  
Can hear the silent squeak of Devil's boots;  
He should take note that well-shod evils walk these lands  
And demons dance inside our heads—not on the battle trails.

Quicksand, flowers, flowing river;  
Life has passed from him forever.  
Hi-ee-Ya!

To the Battleground in Summer—  
To the Killing Place—  
Come the grieving Cheyenne women.  
Meyotzi finds her hero, Custer,

*Meyotzi*

Stumbles on his naked body  
As the shadows clot and lengthen.  
Meyotzi oils his lifeless body, strokes his face,  
Then raises high her sewing needle,  
Strikes hard, to drive it deep,  
Deep inside his ears—unhearing. . . .  
So pierced, he'll hear the chants and warnings  
In the far-world Hunting Ground,  
His soul in transit from the battle  
To the Happy Hunting Ground.  
Hee-Ya! Hi-ee-Ya! Hee-Ya!!

In 1890, almost fifteen years later, meeting once again with officers  
of the U.S. Army, survivors all, Meyotzi lectured them:

“We are not unfeeling folk:  
We protest when you call us so.  
We know—my people know—  
Wounds strike any time:  
Some blows land under water,  
And the waters of the past run deep—  
They carve a coursing stream into the river bed,  
A stream that never sends back the drowned  
Nor those whose children starved  
Because of others' greed.

“Few of your tribe or mine  
Pay proper honor to all creatures.

Follow those wise ones who teach us—

The Holy Sages, Chanters;  
Permit each heart to set its way;  
Each living thing nourishes;  
Each reveals Great Manito,  
Telling tales of the Divine;  
Each—YellowHair, Mawissa, YellowBird—  
One-by-one on the banks of the Ninnescah,

*Meyotzi*

Composing books that we should read,  
About the forms of God."

Earlier, when Meyotzi was in her thirties, she had fostered a relationship of a married woman with a wild Irish-born raparee named Kevin Cabiness. The affair produced a greatly gifted child, a daughter . . . . Meyotzi found no wrong nor fault in that love affair, saying, "The world has been given great prizes, strong medicine, from the mind of this young bastard"—their daughter, AnnaBeth Cabiness. AnnaBeth Cabiness created many inventions to heal, to send messages, and to manage the wounded in war, easily enough to challenge Edison or Chief Sequoia or Florence Nightingale. . . . Meyotzi admired AnnaBeth, who later taught Meyotzi and her children how to read and how to write their names.

AnnaBeth speaks: :

"I am AnnaBeth Cabiness, from the Kansas sandhills, and years younger than the heroic Meyotzi. Onst("wunst"), we got together with Belle Starr and Prudence Crandall and Kathleen Malone—they famous women folk. 'N' in that gathering, Meyotzi— her hair now grayin' 'n' thin—Meyotzi reminded th' other women that I baked the tastiest biscuits in the Ninnescah Valley. She tacked on the flowery sayin' that my fresh-baked biscuits made the air fragrant from Rapid City to Anadarko. Hee-ii! Spare me blushes!! That seems a bit too praiseful.

"Lemme go on:

My father's father's father, an Acadian immigrant,  
Came with his family, fleeing tyrannies across two Ocean Waters  
To push their way to freedom;  
Green and wild they were—  
Their vigor such that bodies of these local tribes  
And many of their people  
Were pushed aside and trampled  
As if spongy rocks or soft-stemmed weeds. . . .

*Meyotzi*

Yes, I knew all that AND Meyotzi well;  
She entertained the other women when we met, by strumming and  
accompanying an old Spanish guitar. At some time during the treks  
and travels through hailstorms, howling winds, hunger, illness and a  
few festivals, Meyotzi learned to play a guitar that Lame Bear gave her.  
Buh-uh-ut, ask her who taught her to play!! Me!

"She could set the air afire, her dark eyes flashing, when she sang.  
Yet sometimes the guitar sobbed and grieved with her for Crazy Horse  
and YellowHair; and that guitar joined her weeping as she wept for  
their families and their companies of comrades. I do agree with Lame  
Bear, who waited years for her to set her spirit free from Custer's  
unstated claim.

"In his little sweet song, Lame Bear/Isaac tells us his IMAGE OF A  
SINGER. . . . Lemme translate, and you may sing along, if you wish:

'In boyish youth, I loved a star  
Who sweetly sang to her guitar;  
I heard her song again today,  
Re-reading notes traced in my clay;  
As that lovely air began—  
Back,  
Back, my memory ran:  
I still am struck and overcome  
When I recall how she could strum  
That old guitar (she ruled its strings!),  
And when I hear that song,  
She sings.'

"No wonder that he married her. Now, let me, AnnaBeth, tell you  
about a vision that visited me a few months back:

"In the vision, Meyotzi moved with angelic grace across the grassy  
bank near the quicksands of the Ninnescah. She came northeasterly,  
down from the Bluffs south of Irish Creek; from the northwest, Lame  
Bear sauntered, his eyes as bright as a Kansas morning. Two larks flew

*Meyotzi*

overhead and turned, diving straight down, toward the river bank. Then, Meyotzi and Lame Bear touched hands, and waltzed on the soft, moist sand to a melody offered by the larks, now wheeling away and upward again. . . . 'I am Isaac,' he declares. 'Some call me Lame Bear. Now that your heart has released you from your adherent bonds to Custer, I propose to be your husband and the father of our children and the father of your son who is not my son.

" 'With the acceptance that you murmur to my ear, I shall be more than a mirror reflecting love from You, to You. More, because my eyes shall be a lens of love, borrowing from Brother Sun above, to magnify its power and its sweep across our hearts. Hao!!

" 'I declare my love by speaking of lamps and bright lights that accompany us down the path, among the bright green grasses that bear your other name: Mo-nah-See-tah.' "

"Hear me, Meyotzi! Hear Lame Bear/Isaac, professing my love:

In the dark silences,

You may slip through side gates and passages;

Push far beyond the village walls, when sun has set;

Continue

Until You have passed outside this well-lit space;

Until You know with certain certainty

That no light from lamps illuminates

That wide expanse of land;

Then,

Look above, into that limpid sky;

Take in the splendor of that roof of astral fires

Whose glow instills your lovely eyes.

Please, then hang names on every star You see:

Sunflower, White Wolf, Blue Feather, or—perhaps—

Dolly-Dancing-Deer, go on-and-on—

*Meyotzi*

If You exhaust your tagging-list,  
and one shining star remains unnamed,  
Christen it 'Meyotzi';  
When I see it, I will know:  
It will then more brightly shine."

Dying in a cold camp in January 1921, Meyotzi speaks to us:  
"Thank you, Friends: You draw my aim to Lame Bear, my husband,  
And remind me that I must prepare to go—  
Must return to our cabin by the river.  
As I leave, let us also  
Be mindful of GodManito, Great Spirit: the Greatest Mystery.  
My Mother, Called Medicine-Woman-Later,  
Gave this advice, which I repeat:  
Take your Joy from Harmonies—Ecstasies;  
From the feasts that Love cooks up  
In the campfires of hot-blooded Lust;  
Put your trust on a trinity of nested gods—  
Their spirits woven as a Cheyenne blanket.  
Open that blanket to a passage of whispers  
That may give healing pleasure  
To your lover's dreams. . . .

Hao, Farewell!!

Many moons after now, they shall call Meyotzi  
'Medicine-Woman-Much-Later.' Welcome old Age and setting  
Suns. . . . Hao!!"

Farewell, Warrior Woman, Princess Meyotzi!



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