

## Small Cloud

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IN THE BEGINNING there was Small Cloud's mother, Singing River, and her father, Big Sun. One day, Singing River called to Big Sun. Big Sun smiled and warmed the heart of Singing River. Singing River danced in the warmth, and a mist rose slowly into the air. One drop at a time, Small Cloud was born. When she was grown, she called to Singing River, "I want to go over the mountain."

"Yes," Singing River sighed. "If Whistling Wind will help you, and if your father, Big Sun, will watch over you, I will wait for you."

"What lies beyond the mountain?" Small Cloud asked.

"The world," Big Sun told her. "What is the world?" Small Cloud asked.

"Come," said Whistling Wind, "I will show you."

And he lifted Small Cloud up over the mountain and into the valley. "Here corn grows," Whistling Wind told her. "Someday you may help it."

Small Cloud's shadow swooped down over another mountain to a desert. Whistling Wind blew her across the hot earth. "Go quickly," Big Sun urged her. "Here there is no one to help."

Small Cloud sped over the desert and came to a lake where other small clouds played.

"They are just like me!" Small Cloud exclaimed.

"Go to them," said Whistling Wind. "They will play with you."

Small Cloud and her friends chased each other above the lake. Then with a great gust, Whistling Wind lifted them high over the mountains and into another valley. "

The corn is dry, and the creatures are sad," said Whistling Wind. "

The earth needs rain Small Cloud and her friends moved across the sky and into each other.

Together, they became one great cloud, and rain began to fall.

Drop by drop, Small Cloud and her friends gave themselves to the earth. When the earth was full, and the corn satisfied, Small Cloud gave her last raindrop to a river. As Small Cloud disappeared, she heard Singing River call out, "Big Sun! Small Cloud has come home."

Big Sun smiled and warmed the heart of Singing River. Singing River danced in the warmth, and a mist rose slowly in the air. One drop at a time, Small Cloud was born again.