



*When other children hunted herbs
she had to stay behind;
the scourge that scarred her copper skin
had left her almost blind.*

*And she whose eyes once followed when
Areskoi, the sun,
leaped like a hunter across the sky
with arrows golden-spun,*

*No longer watched his ruddy hair
as it skimmed the tallest tree
or touched her mat of beaver skins
and plunged in a red-gold sea.*

*Within the darkened tent she sat
and sewed and dyed the pelts
or sorted rainbow-colored beads
and wove the wampum belts.*

*But as she cooked the elk and hare
and formed a wooden bowl,
the light of God was in her eyes,
His song was in her soul.*

*And when at last the Blackrobes came
her heart was softly stirred
to hear her mother's faith once more
reecho in each word.*

*Her uncle, Chief Iowerana,
at first would not relent
but fearing she might run away,
he gave a gruff consent.*

*Then Tekakwitha, Mohawk maiden,
felt the cooling water
bathe her brow as she became
Rawenniio's true daughter.*

IV

*One day Wild Eagle came to call,
a hunter brave and bold;
her uncle smiled for he was then
many summers old.*

*The young brave's words, though eloquent,
were just as well unsaid
for Tekakwitha had resolved
that she would never wed.*

*And from that day her life became
a persecuted path
of constant torture, taunts and threats
to fit the old chief's wrath.*

*She suffered humbly, patiently,
till heart could bear no more,
and weakened by disease and pain
she died at twenty-four.*

*Then swifter than Areskoi,
in the time of the deep white snow,
she skimmed the trees, the hills, the clouds,
to meet Rawenniio.*

V

*When all the Indian tales are told
no legend will endure
as that of Tekakwitha, baptized
Kateri, the Pure,*

*Whose face in life was sadly scarred
but radiant in death---
almost as though it had been touched
by the kiss of the Bridegroom's Breath!*

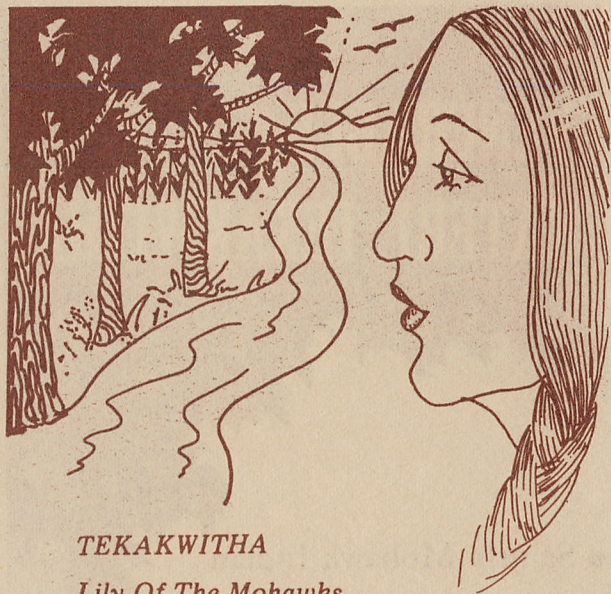
VENERABLE KATERI TEKAKWITHA

- Saintly Mohawk Indian
- Most Renowned Native American
- Patroness of Ecology

by
Marilyn Eynon Scott

Illustrated by
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TEKAKWITHA

Lily Of The Mohawks

*Tekakwitha, Mohawk maiden,
daughter of a chief,
knew the gossip of the grass,
the language of the leaf.*

*She heard the willow's shy lament,
the river's deep blue cry
and listened to the wind's white wrath,
the corn's bright tasseled sigh.*

*But always deep within her heart
there was a sound that stirred,
of something as elusive as
the darting humming bird.*

*Oh like a song it held her heart
and throbbed within her brain
as fragrant and refreshing as
the silver-arrowed rain.*

*But not until a Blackrobe came,
gaunt and strangely pale,
to place his hand upon her head
and tell a wondrous tale -*

*Of love and mercy and his God,
the great Rawennio,
did Tekakwitha comprehend
the song she cherished so.*

*Then swifter than the pale-blue lightning
there flashed across her mind
the village of her childhood and
Kahenta, mild and kind.*

II

*For deep in the Mohawk valley once,
in Ossernenon village
a proud young chief set forth one day
to hunt and burn and pillage.*

*And in Algonquin land he found
Kahenta, good and wise,
a Christian maiden with the peace
of brown hills in her eyes.*

*Kahenta bore the Mohawk chief
a slender, dark-eyed daughter
who learned and locked within her heart
the creed her mother taught her.*

*Kahenta bore a bright-skinned son
but brief the chief's delight
for through the valley stalked a scourge
whose breath was like a blight.*

*The brave, so bold in battle once,
a conquered warrior lay
and soon his wife and newborn son
fell victim to its prey.*



*But Tekakwitha, child of the Mohawks,
who could not write or read
(four summers old, in a pagan tribe)
clung to her mother's creed.*

III

*Although the epidemic left
its pock-marks on her face,
her uncle, now the tribe's new chief,
observed her youth and grace.*

*He knew her humble modesty,
her unassuming way,
would surely bring young braves to court
and win her hand some day.*

*He had no children of his own
and being shrewd and sage
he knew a strong young hunter could
provide for his old age.*

*And so it was that Tekakwitha,
orphaned and alone,
was soon adopted by her uncle,
treated as his own.*

*Then Tekakwitha, gentle maid,
obedient and good,
attended her new parents as
an Indian daughter should.*