



*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!*

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## VENERABLE KATERI TEKAKWITHA

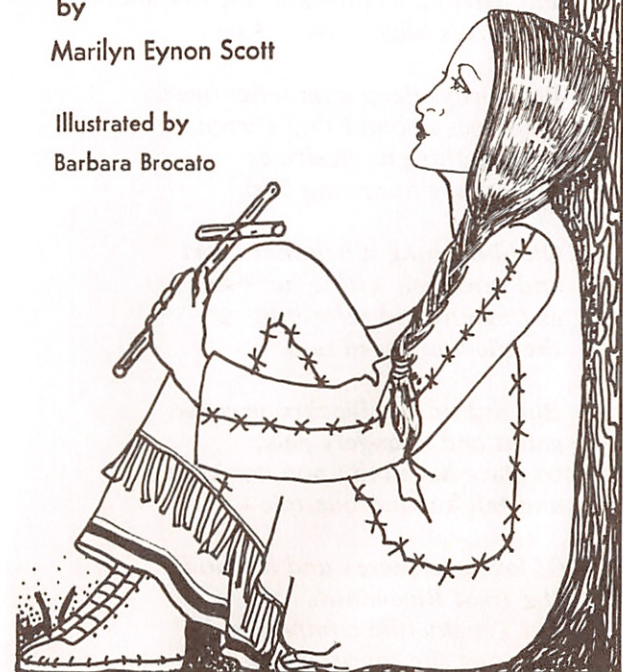
- Saintly Mohawk Indian
- Most Renowned Native American
- Patroness of Ecology

by

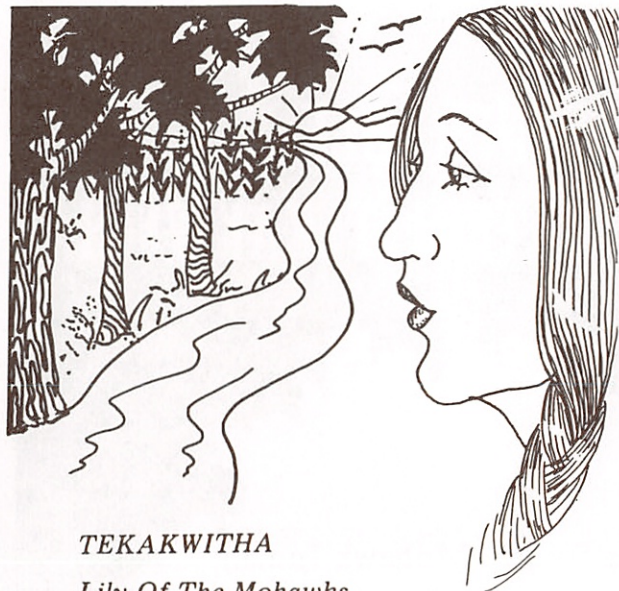
Marilyn Eynon Scott

Illustrated by

Barbara Brocato







## 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 Rawenniio,  
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.*