

NAYANGANAWEH

by John Eric Gulliksen

(This was written in 1969. Nayanganaweh is still waiting.)

In the summer of the Battle
To the woodlands of his fathers
Went the son of Mighty Eagle
Nayanganaweh

For an omen sat he waiting
Looking outward o'er the valley
Crying loud so God could hear him
— Bring salvation for the Red Man! —

It has been seventy winters since
still he sits
still he waits

The iron-fisted White Man
holds
a blight upon the land
a scourge upon its people

No more the buffalo
Too few the deer

Never again may a warrior count coup
or hold his head high
Lord of all he can see
as far as the rim of the world

With his terrible devices
and the might of evil thoughts
the demon atom
together

the White Man soars through the air
burrows in the ground
makes the bountiful earth
as
hard
unyielding
metal

still he cannot live in peace
nor without fear

The young buck taunts the old man
As he carries on his vigil
The White Man throws him leavings
From his overburdened table

Still he waits alone in silence
Looking starward for a message
Retribution in the contrails
for the murder of his people

We would do well to be like him
Heed the warnings of the Spirits
Put aside our toys of thunder

For Nayanganaweh
the sky
is
burning