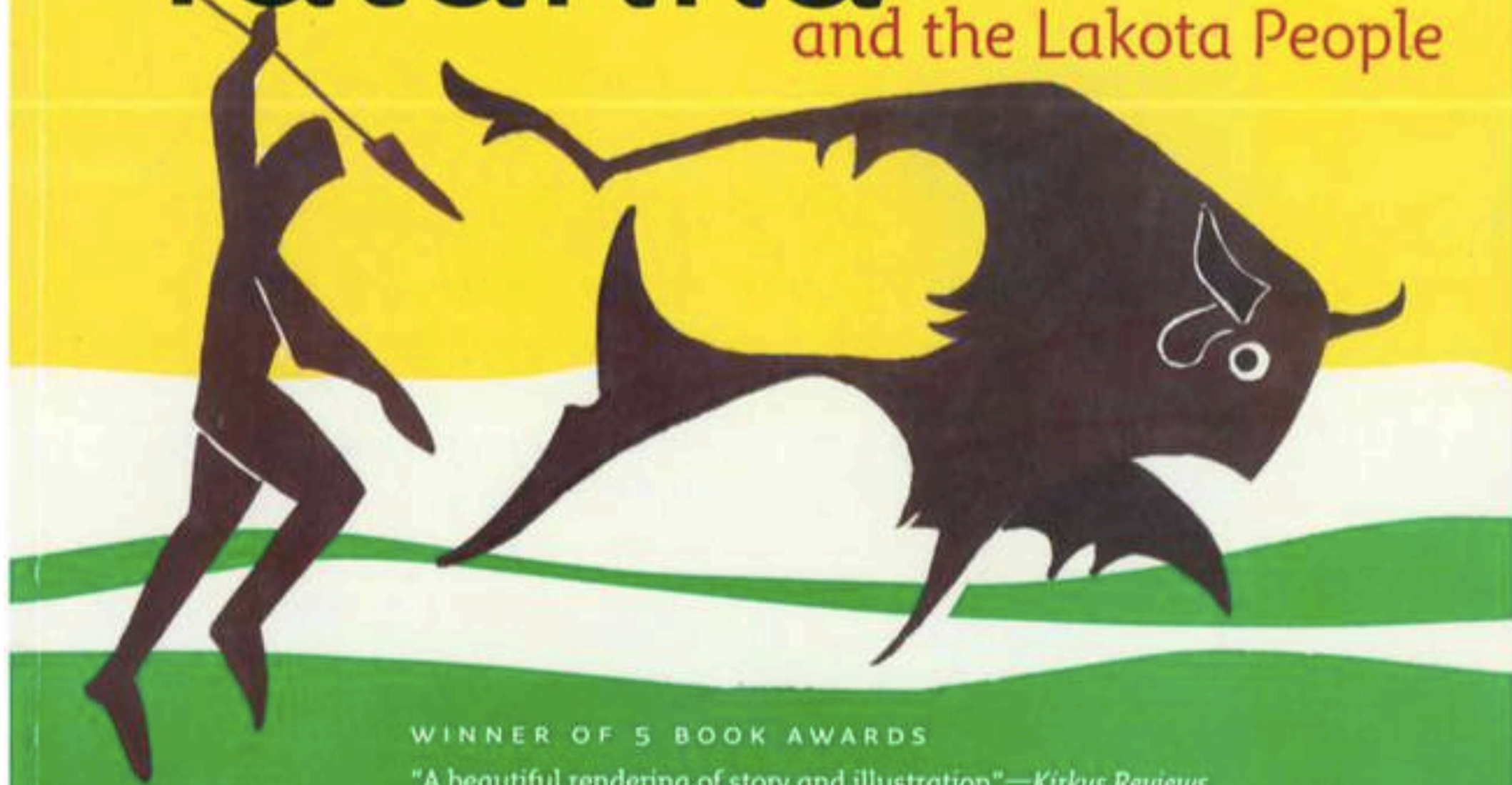


Tatanka

A Creation Story

Illustrated by Donald F. Montileaux

and the Lakota People



WINNER OF 5 BOOK AWARDS

"A beautiful rendering of story and illustration"—*Kirkus Reviews*



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Introduction

This story is one part of the Lakota creation legend. It tells how Tatanka—the buffalo—came to the Lakota people—the *Ikce Wicasa* of this story—so that they would have food and warmth. The full creation story is made up of many parts and is much longer. It also tells how the sky, the earth, and the sea came to be.

The Lakota people are American Indians from the Great Plains. They are often called the Sioux Indians. They have many important stories to tell. These narratives, which are told by the Lakota Elders, help Lakota children understand the world in which they live. The stories have been told and retold for many generations. Traditionally, the Elders passed legends down by word-of-mouth. Such storytelling is called

oral history or *Ohunkakan* in Lakota. It has always been an important part of the Lakotas' lives. The details of the story can sometimes change depending on who tells the story and how often it is told, but the overall story remains the same from one storyteller to another and from one generation to the next. Many of these stories have now been written down so that more people can enjoy them.

The characters in this story also appear in other Lakota legends. Iktomi—or Spider, as he is sometimes known in English—has many tales told just about him. He is always a trickster, just as he is here. The Great Spirits, such as Skan, are also found in other legends. They control much of what happens in life. They were given

names and shapes so that they would be easy to remember.

A Lakota artist—Donald Montileaux—painted the pictures for this book. His paintings capture the power of this story of creation with dramatic colors and bold shapes. At the end of the book, he tells more about how he made the paintings. The original Lakota words for this story are presented next to the English words. The translation of one language into another is never perfect. Words in different languages do not always equal each other precisely. Sometimes there is no perfect word to match another one, and people have to make the words fit as best as they can.

Tatanka and the Lakota People



Tatanka and the Lakota People

A Creation Story Illustrated by Donald F. Montileaux



South Dakota

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The Great Spirit Skan, who
grew out of Stone after the
Earth was made, created
our ancestors.

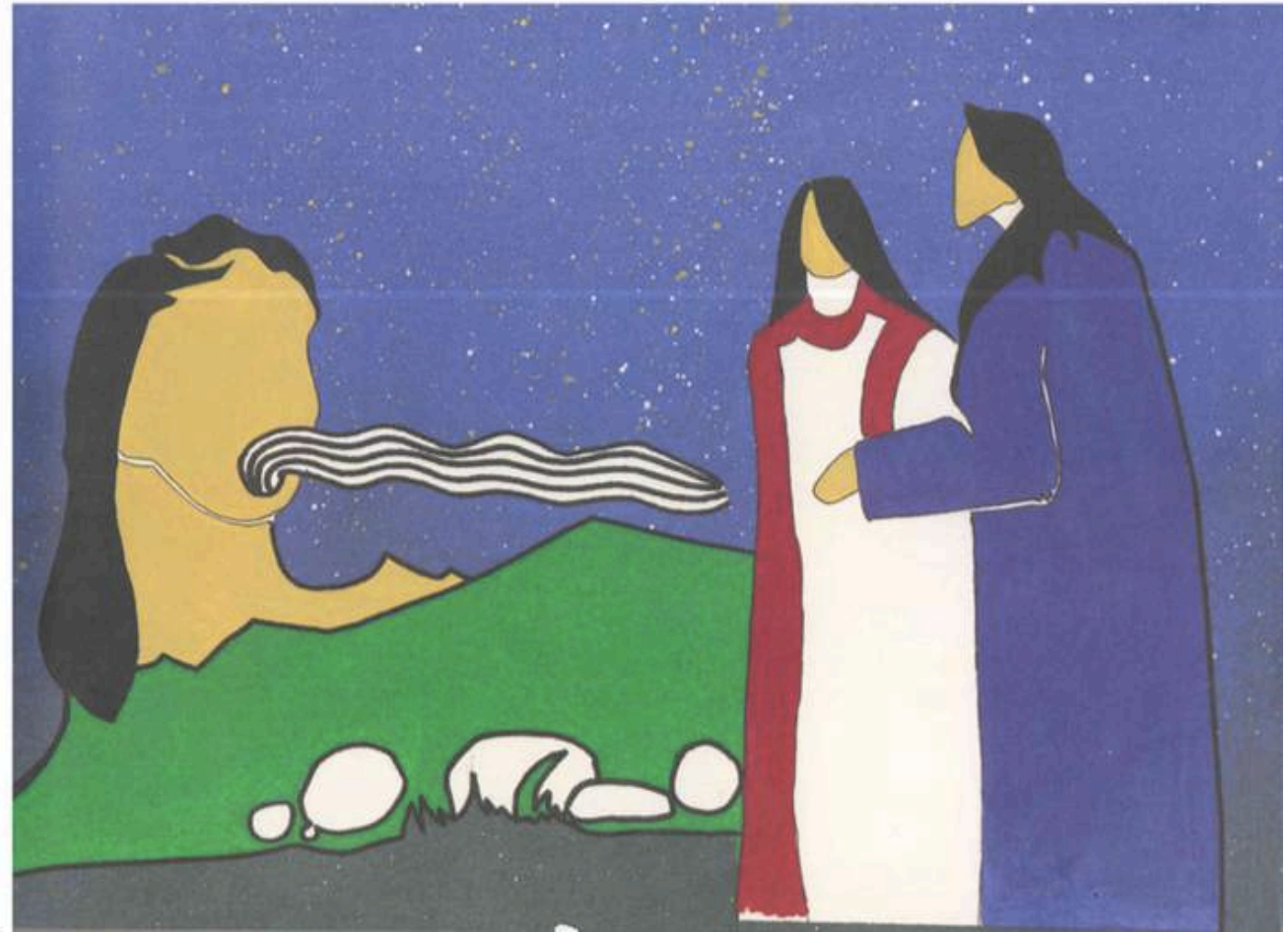
Taku skanskan inyan
etan hinnape makoce ki
kaga pi k'un hehan na he
e ca unkaga pi.



He took our bones from
Stone, our bodies from
Earth, and our souls from
himself and Wind and
Thunder.



Hohu unkitawa pi ki inyan etan
icu, tacan ki maka etanhan na
nagi unkitawa pi ki iye etanhan
na tate etan na wakinyan pi
etanhan icu.





Sun warmed us.

Wi iyokal unyan pi.



Wisdom gave us intelligence.

Woksape wiyukcan unkiya pi.





Moon gave us affection.

Hanwi etan woyatan unkicu pi.



Revealer gave us longing
and love for children. All
their gifts gave us life.

Wayu'otan'in ki etan
wakanyeja unsiwicala pi na
awicayuhete pi ki he unkicu pi.





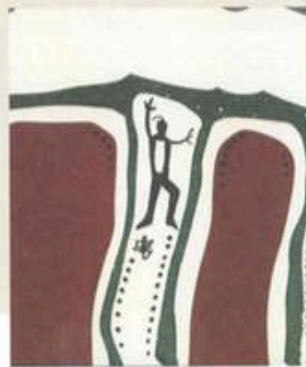
A council of the Spirits decided our purpose—to respect and care for the Spirits—and gave us our name—Pte Oyate—Buffalo Nation.

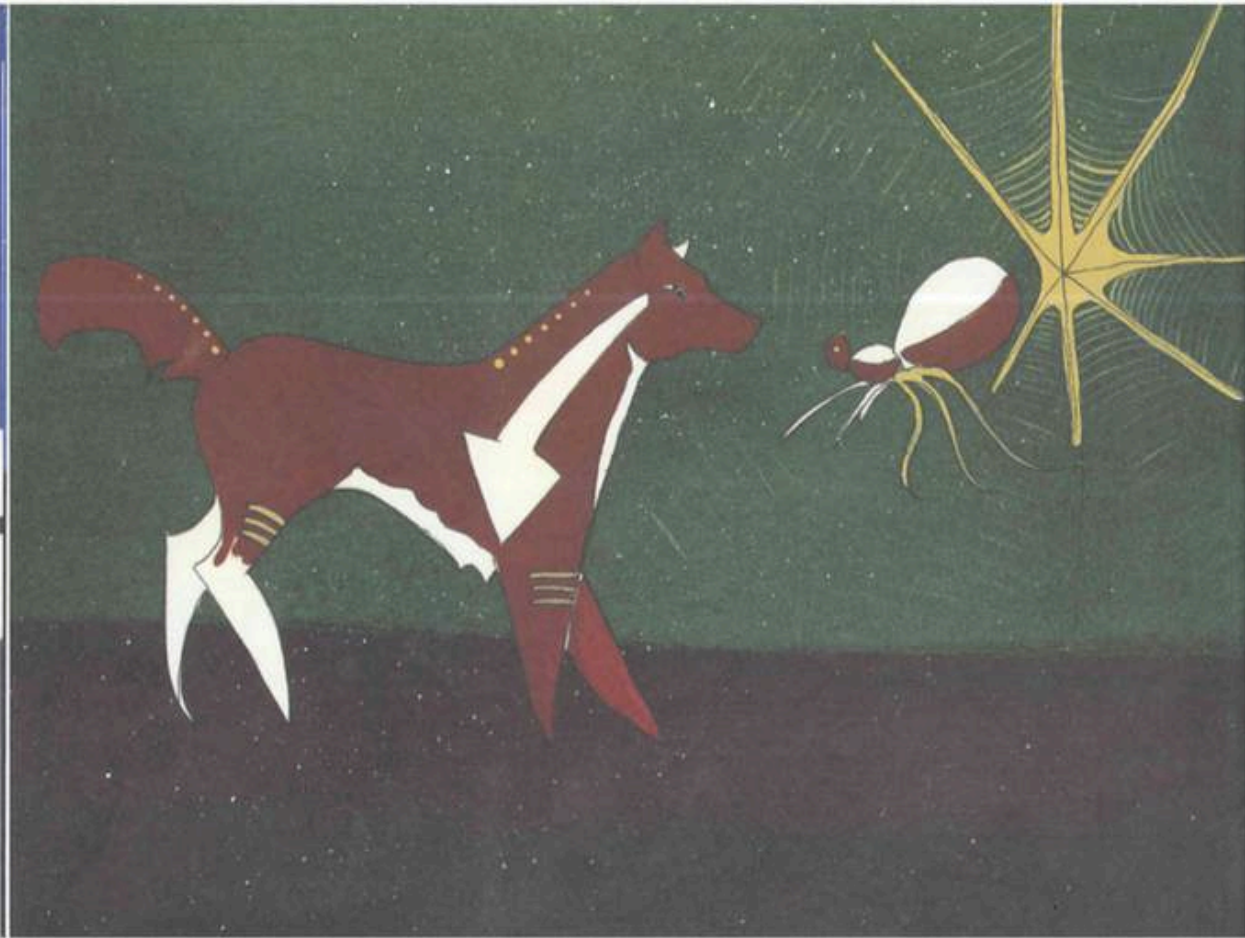
Wa'un'k'u pi ki hena iyuha un unipi. Wakan okolakiciye ki he taku un ni unk'un pi ki he yustan pi - na pte oyate eya caje unyata pi.



After the nation had
lived for some time in the
Underworld,

Maka iyohlate otohanyan
pte oyate ki o'unyan pi wan
hehan.





Spider, the Trickster, sent Wolf
to the strongest young man in
the nation.

Ikto sungmanitu tanka
wan ekta yeyin na wicasa
koskalaka wan ihankeya
s'akeca ca ekta yekiye.



Wolf told this young man,
Tokahe, that life would be easy
on the surface of the earth.

Sungmanitu ki Tokahe
okiyakin na maka akan hinapa
pi hantans to'un pi ki ihankeya
gluwaste pi kta keye.





Tatanka, the holy man, warned
Tokahe not to go to the surface.
But Tokahe and the people did not
listen. And so they found passage
to the Black Hills through Wind
Cave.

Tatanka, wicasa wakan ca Tokahe
iwaktayin na hinape sni si. Eyas
Tokahe e na toyate ki nah'un pi
sni. Ho hecel He Sapa el wasun
niyan wan ogna hinapa pi.



When the people found life on earth hard, Spider laughed at their folly.

Oyate makoce akan
iyotiyekiya pi wan hehan
Ikto awicahat'e.





But Tatanka, who had stayed in
the Underworld, saw our nation
in a vision.

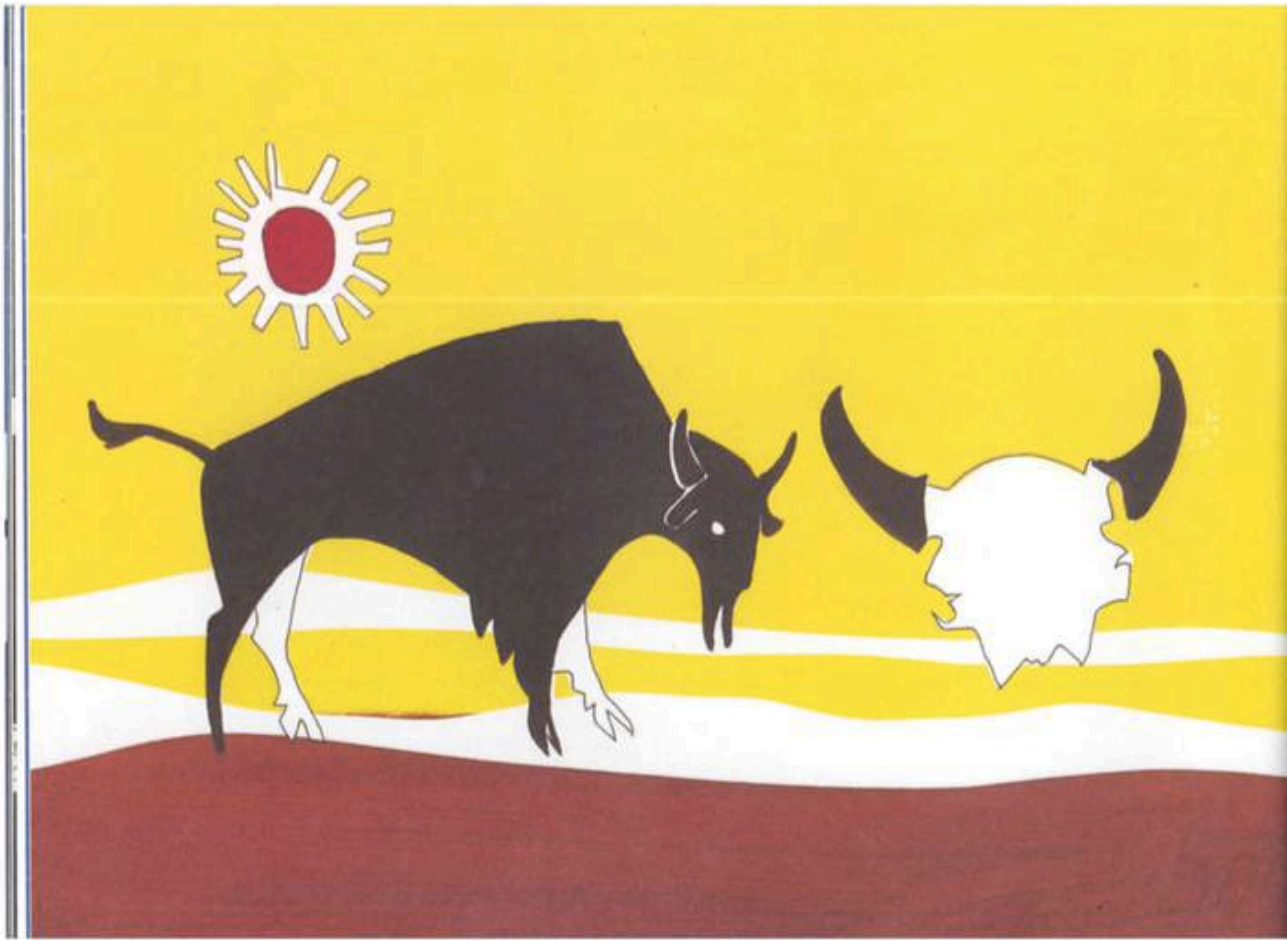
Tatanka ektani maka mahel
un ki oyate ki wo'ihanble un
wanwicayanke.



We could not speak to the Spirits.
We had lost our language
and had to invent a new one.
We became Ikce Wicasa, the
Ordinary People.

Wanagi ob wo'unglaka pi
unkokihi pi sni. Iyapi ungnuni
pi ca iya pi lecala wan unkaga
pi hetan Ikce Wicasa he'uncapi.





To help us, Tatanka came to earth as a great, shaggy beast. He could speak directly with the Spirits.

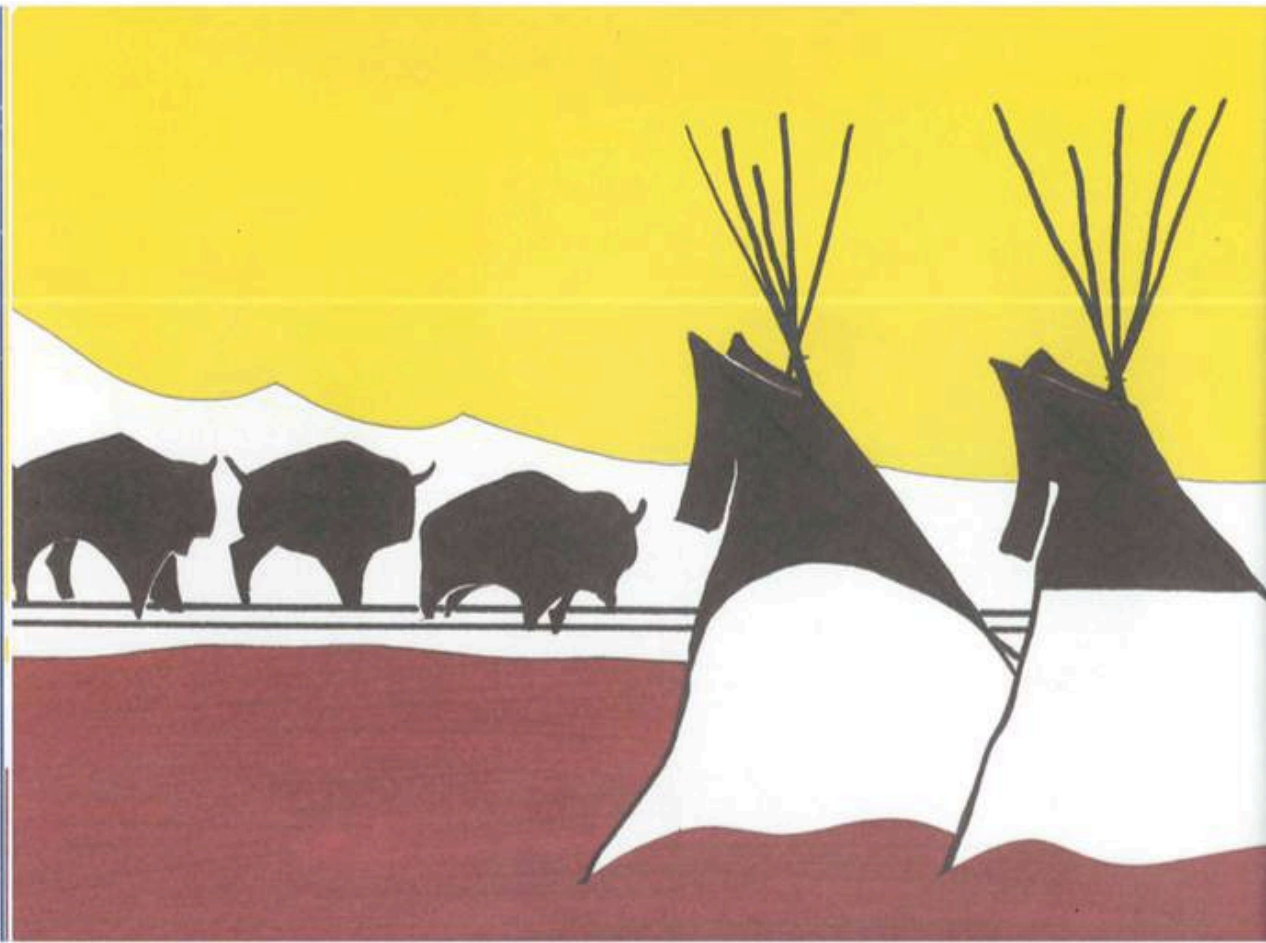
Tatanka o'unkiya pi kta un maka akanl hi wamakaskan iyecel, na nagi etkiya wo'unkiyiglaka pi okihi.



He was willing to give up his life
so we could have food, shelter,
and clothing.

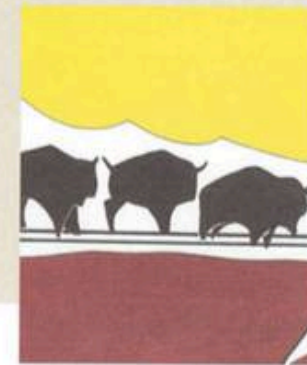
Toni ki wa'unyekiya ca woyute
na oti na hayapi unyuha pi.





And so, from the beginning,
Ikce Wicasa lived with the
buffalo in the area around the
Black Hills.

Hecetu un otokahe etanhan Ikce
Wicasa ki tatanka ob He Sapa
ita'oksan ni un pi.



A Note from the Illustrator

When I first started to research this story, I made a trip to Wind Cave in the Black Hills and walked around the entrance and the hole where the earth breathes. I had the story line and the information from my ancestors. I talked to people on the reservation and to other educators and artists. I was fortunate in the fact that I am an Oglala Lakota and from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. The Oglala Lakotas believe that we surfaced from Mother Earth through Wind Cave, where we were saved by the buffalo and grew strong as a people.

These illustrations are in a flat two-dimensional style that reflects the style of the traditional buffalo hides painted by my ancestors. I used this style in honor of my ancestors and found that it worked well in telling the story. The drawings compliment each other and, at the same time, each one can stand alone.

Donald F. Montileaux

Wind Cave

In American Indian stories, Wind Cave is often called the “hole that breathes cool air.” This cave is near Buffalo Gap, South Dakota, and is now part of Wind Cave National Park in the southern Black Hills, a mountain range in South Dakota and Wyoming. Wind Cave is one of the largest and most complex caves in the world. Apart from strange winds, it features unique formations that look like honeycomb.

Further Reading

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Koestler-Grack, Rachel A. *The Sioux: Nomadic Buffalo Hunters*. Mankato, Minn.: Blue Earth Books, 2003.

\$9.95



After the Great Spirits created the world, Tatanka, the holy man, turned himself into a buffalo and sacrificed his powers to help the Lakota people survive. With all that Tatanka provided, the Lakotas adapted to the world around them and prospered.

Oglala Lakota artist Donald F. Montileaux's beautiful paintings offer dramatic colors and forms to this story of beginnings.



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Winner of an Aesop Accolade



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"The striking and symbolic color paintings add a vivid dimension to the tale. A profound story, presented with great respect for Lakota culture."

—*The Midwest Book Review*

"Absolutely authentic"

—*North Dakota Quarterly*

