

## Poetry—

# LITTLE INDIAN SPEAKS

(From LUMMI SQUOL QUOL)

People said, "Indian children are hard to teach.  
Don't expect them to talk."

One day stubby little Roy said, "Last night the moon  
Went all the way with me  
When I went out to walk."

People said, "Indian children are very silent.  
Their only words are no and yes."

But small ragged Pansy confided softly, "My dress is  
old but at night the moon is kind, then I wear  
A beautiful moon-colored dress."

People said, "Indian children are dumb.  
They seldom make a reply."

Clearly I hear wee Delores answer,  
"Yes, the sunset is so good.

I think God is throwing a bright shawl  
Around the shoulders of the sky."

People said, "Indian children have no affection.  
They just don't care for anyone."

Then I feel Ramon's tiny hand and hear him whisper,  
"A wild animal races in me since my mother  
Sleeps under the ground."

People said, "Indian children are rude.  
They do not seem very bright."

Then I remember Joe Henry's remark:  
"The tree is hanging down her head because  
The sun is staring at her.

White people always stare.

They do not know it is not polite."

People said, "Indian children never take you in.  
Outside their thoughts you'll always stand."

I have forgotten the idle words that people said,  
But treasure the day when iron doors swung wide,  
And I slipped into the heart of Pima Land.

—JUANITA BELL

(Poem published in "Indians at Work," 1942)