## Tribute from a friend

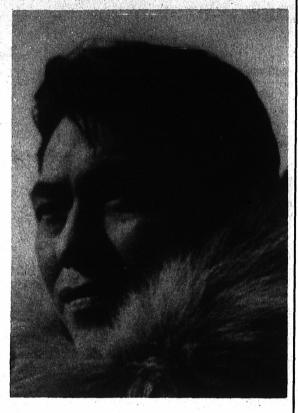
(Note: August 10 was the 68th birthday of Howard Rock, artist and editor. Howard died on April 20, 1976. This poem records some thoughts of a friend on the occasion.)

Incredible how many lives you touched. gently, unforgettably. An artist, first of all, but so many other things. to your people and me. Editor, poet, philosopher, teacher, and, most of all. true friend, Howard. A man, Inupiat! Alaska Native! Such a will. determination and faith on a foundation of solid Rock. Honest and humble. stirring the conscience of a nation. And such a heart, soft as ivory or gold. Friend to so many lonely men and women away from home. Source of pride and strength. How many hours, days, years, you let me sit at your side? Hardly a spoken word. A smile, or frown, and I learned and understood. Such an education vou gave! Quietly, softly, gently. By example. I haven't felt you near lately, like when you visited a few times, late at night. to look over my shoulder.

It's not like

we don't need you

anymore, you know?



Things have changed since you left. That soft voice no longer reassures us. nurturing spirit and confidence. Telling us of amazing things done by our people. encouraging us to remember these things in difficult times. A legacy, an example, too fine for commoners and mere mortals such as we. When people speak of limited abilities of Native folks, I ask, "Did you ever meet Howard?"

And they hadn't. "Oh, Gee! Well! By golly!" Didn't vou add so much to that list of amazing things? Three years gone and still I can't write your obituary. You taught us to celebrate life. Tell me more about things done in the old days and now. Come near. just one more time. And, by the way, Happy Birthday! Old Friend, Howard, Dear Friend! - THOMAS RICHARDS, JR.