

Ballad of the Bead and Thread

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In days before the settlers came,
Before the maps were drawn.
The beading hands of elders worked,
From dusk until dawn.

With the sharp quills of porcupine,
shell, and stone, made a sacred sign.
Their histories lived in thread and cloth,
In every bright design.

The Lakota, Métis, Inuit,
Cree and many more.
Wove their dreams and stories deep,
In patterns legends wore.

Beading marked a ceremony,
A rank, a clan, a dream, a vow.
Sparked songs like the fire,
And dances like powwow.

When traders came from far away,
They brought glass beads, for designs and trade.
Native hands created symbolic items,
So that history would not fade.

But then came schools that tore apart,
Cut their hair, and took away culture.
But still they hid their beading work,
Keeping eyes out like a vulture.

Through silence and through sorrow deep,
The art was never lost.
For every beaded belt and bag,

All that pain was worth the cost.

A voice, a bond, a pride,

It's not just art it's like a shield.

A way to say, "We still are here,"

As well as a way to cope and be healed.

So when you see those beads,

In circles, stars, and flame.

Know you aren't just seeing art,

It's history and somebody's name.