Who are the strong womyn?
Where have they all gone, battered, bruised and beaten?
Do you remember the ones they called witches,
who in the burning time were really womyn of wisdom, doctoring and healing was what they did.
My tears want to spill over for their persecution and innocent deaths.
They burned and cried, for other womyn they died.
Earth lovers, plant lovers, nature's instruments of peace who sought to heal with their medicine.
What is the medicine, you say?
They say the womyn is the medicine. By this I understand it to mean that the womynly ways are the medicine, the healing.
What are the womynly ways and gifts?
The kindness, the loving gentleness we show to all living things, our softness, being in touch with the inner self.
We as womyn are healers, we carry the medicine as Indian womyn.
For long centuries now we have held our children and our men to our warm red bodies, comforting and healing.
We have sounded our war cries and stood on the battlefield, dying for our people.
We have stood through the ages in our buckskin dresses watching our people die, with tears in our round black eyes.
Our children died in the battles of sand creek, wounded knee and others before our eyes.
Long has the white man raped us.
Long we have starved and held our hands in our heads.
But we have survived, and we are beautiful.
So hold your head up high, Indian womyn, you've made it, you're beautiful, and you're whole!
The power of your life giving force is shining through.
I watch you as you sing your beautiful brown baby to sleep in her cradleboard.
Aah! Sweet ancient songs which lull the babies.
May their animal spirits always protect them as they sleep.
For the children, the future generations to come, we go on.
Our hearts never stop hoping, even when they are in the ground.
The waterdrum soothes our womyn's hearts.
The eagle whistle sounds and awakens my soul
It says "Keep loving, keep healing."

Though our men have fallen by the wayside, and many have given up on us Red womyn, still we must make ourselves strong, pick up our bundles, and someday they will walk beside us again.
Oh yes, I know those white womyn too well who come into our community to get a handsome Indian buck.
Sadly the men fall into the trap
Of money, white money. And status. The status of the white man's world.
Sometimes they forget that of a Red womyn they were born.
But our day will come, when we take our rightful place in the sun.
Our respect will be restored.
We who remember.
The grey and beautiful grandmothers in their beautiful wisdom sit and spin the webs of live, knowing the outcome long before her young daughters.
O, Grandmother spider womyn, help us naive children.
Spin us webs of harmony and balance so that there might be peace between men and womyn
Make all violence and torture stop, and let gentleness stand in its place
Let forgiveness be in the hearts of every human being
Let men regard womyn as sacred, to be cherished, not dominated and controlled
Grandmother moon, help your Nishnawbe Kweuk to know their purpose
Help them to honour and respect themselves so that they in turn will respect men
Teach them about the water, the life force
We walk with you but for a short time Grandmother moon, o nokomis
Then we ourselves become the Grandmothers, and your visits are over
O how we'll miss you, but our destinies are fulfilled as we become the Grandmothers, the teachers
For that I say megweteh
Megweteh for this beautiful life, this red sweetgrass road.
Megweteh for making us strong Indian womyn.

Bobbi Nahwegahbow is from the Manitoulin area. She is an activist in the feminist community where she tries to integrate her beliefs as a Native womyn.