



Cloud Blankets

I am writing this article during a week of almost constant rain accompanied by a thick blanket cloud cover; no Sun breaking through, no Wind carrying clarity. During the course of this week I have started writing article ideas for two other articles but I kept rejecting the continuation of both. At these times I find myself poised, waiting for the message that will eventually come in

order that I may convey some information, some teaching, some thoughts and words coming at the right time and in the right measure for someone to hear.

Alas, the message that came was indeed a tragic one. A news report, sad beyond belief. I am compelled to write this, for this is a story that has been repeated throughout our history. This week an 11-year-old Navajo girl was abducted, assaulted and beaten to death on the Navajo Reservation. These were the facts that were consistent in three articles. Reports of what time of day and where the abduction took place seem to vary. As the story developed the young man being held is also a member of the Navajo Nation. He admitted hitting her with a tire iron when she began to cry out. As I write this hundreds of mourners have come together to express their love and grief for this young girl.

I go back in time a few hundred years to witness the story of a young Navajo woman. She is busy gathering herbs in one of her favorite places. Lost in her thoughts, she drops her guard, and is unaware of the approach of a group of men until it is too late. Their dress and paint were of a different tribe. They tied her and dragged her over a distance of rough foliage and rocky dirt, tearing her clothing and her skin along the way. Her thoughts racing, 'at best, she was being taken to become 'the woman' to one of these men, at worst, she dreaded to think'. When they stopped dragging her bloodied and aching body she was picked up and taken to a concave area inside a canyon wall. This is where these men, she would not refer to them as warriors because they were not noble warriors, subjected her to the unthinkable. Showing them she was more of a warrior than they were, she did not utter a sound. The longer she remained silent, the more the

group became enraged and continued their torturous acts. Their finale being to dangle her along the side of the cliff wall until they finally dropped her.

Fast forward to a time in the recent past, April 14, 2014, the militant group killing and kidnapping thousands in Nigeria, kidnapped 276 girls from a secondary school. A few escaped but 216 still remain missing two years later. These militants are known to use the young men they have kidnapped as fighters and the girls as sex slaves and suicide bombers. Their parents still cry out with unbelievable sorrow.

The US State Department estimates 800,000 victims, mostly women and children, are trafficked across national borders for use in the sex trade industry. Millions more are trafficked within their own countries. Human trafficking yields an estimated \$32 billion per year. National and international attempts to stop this practice have been chiefly ineffective.

I do not presume to have the answers and yet my heart continues to sob. I only know that whether it be one, 219, thousands, or millions these are the children that have been cheated out of their future and ours. Silence is not an option.

And still the rain persists.

Kai