

## THE HUCKLEBERRY MEDICINE

This story comes from the Puget Sound Region of Western Washington.

Along time ago, in a village on the shores of Puget Sound, there was a family. And the man, the father of this family, had a daughter that he loved very much. She was very dear to him. But one day that daughter fell ill. She became very sick, lying in bed, feverish and in pain. The family didn't know what to do but they brought in their traditional medicines and tried to help her. But nothing worked. She became more ill, she became sicker, and the family became worried and they called in Indian doctors from all around and each doctor tried their medicine, but nothing changed her condition. In fact, she got worse and worse as time went on. Now the family was very worried. She might leave them, she might die. The father prayed for some kind of help every night. And one night he prayed to the spirits and the ancestors for some kind of message, for some kind of way of helping his daughter, to bring her back safer. While he slept that night, he had a dream and in that dream a voice came to him. And the voice taught him a song and said to remember this song. And the voice told him to leave his village and go up to the mountain. Follow the trails up to the mountains singing that song. When the time was right, he would know when to stop singing. And when he would stop singing, he was to look down and there would be the medicine for him. The man remembered this dream as he awoke. He got up and remembering that song, he left the village singing. He went up to the mountains singing that song. He went high up in the mountains and the time came when he knew he should stop singing and he did. He looked down and beneath him was a green plant, and on the green plant were blue berries. The man knew this was the plant. This was the medicine. And he picked the berries and brought them back home. He mashed the berries into a juice, and she drank that juice. This was all she could do barely drink some things and she drank that juice. She became better. And as she became better over the days, she was able to now eat those berries and she did. The fever broke, the pain left her body. She was becoming better and better. And the people were surprised. They wanted to know how he got this medicine and he explained about the dream, the song and the plants. But the people were skeptical. They didn't believe this was how it happened. The man tried to explain it to him. And finally, he had another dream and that dream this time told him that the plant is a huckleberry. The Huckleberry is the blood of the earth and the plant itself; they are the veins of the earth. So, the people say that the Huckleberry, besides being a wonderful food for us, is a powerful medicine that comes from the earth itself. And that is all.