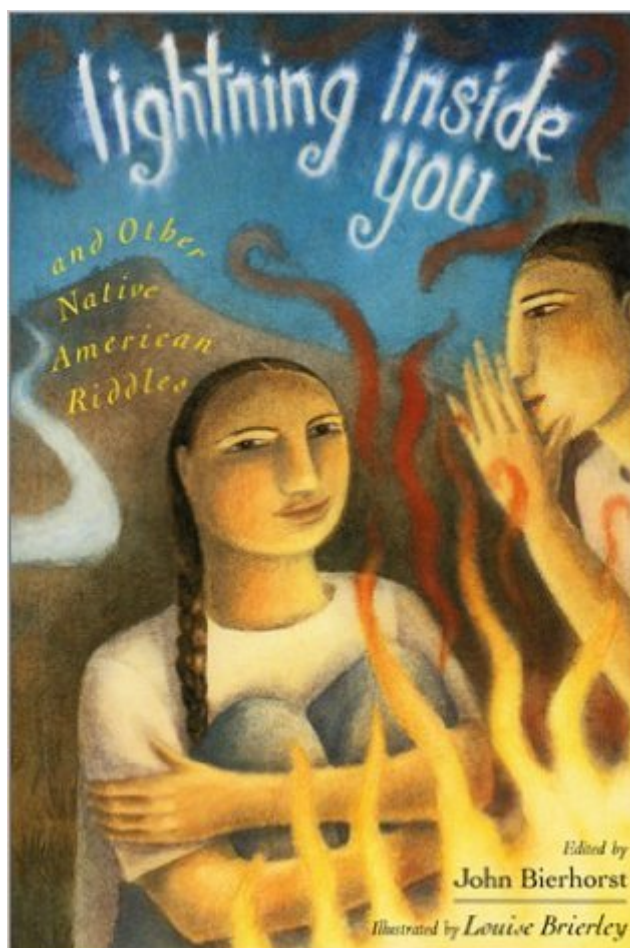


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# Lightning Inside You



## Synopsis

Threads of seven colors are stretched on the great prairie. What is it? It runs through the valleys clapping its hands. "Rainbow" and "butterfly" are the answers to these two Native American riddles, typically drawn from the world of nature. Long hidden from view, the American Indian riddling tradition is revealed in all its variety in this carefully researched collection -- the first of its kind -- presenting 140 riddles translated from twenty different languages, including Aztec, Comanche, Maya, Onondaga, Pawnee, and Quechua. Here are examples of courtship riddling, hunter's riddling, dream-guessing, life-or-death riddling, and story riddling. In his introductory essay, editor John Bierhorst shows how such "games" are linked to the life and customs of the people who originated them. He also offers pointers to help non-Indian guessers come up with the right answers. With sweeping strokes and deft touches of humor, Louise Brierley's illustrations capture the spirit of mystery and inventiveness characteristic of this most unusual, most unexpected of Native American traditions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I always trust the work of Bierhorst; he is excellent at making Native American culture accessible without trivializing or idealizing. In this book, he takes advantage of children's affinity for riddles (not neglecting that adults can enjoy riddles as well). Some of the riddles are unlikely to be solved by a child, but the answers and the riddles themselves give insight into the culture from which they come. Note that the cultural source is always given. Other riddles are accompanied with pictures that give a

hint so that the child can answer some of the riddles - a nice touch to keep the child's interest and confidence. An example: "Wonder, wonder / Who can she be? / The dark lady on her golden chair." Answer: a pot on the fire (Guarani from Paraguay). The source of the riddles ("Who the Riddlers Are") is a clever mix of information useful to a child - pronunciation of the tribe's name, a more detailed description of their location, an index to the riddles attributed to them, and the source of the riddles. "Sources" provides a traditional bibliography. There is a wonderful introduction to riddles and their cultural place - in gambling, dance, initiation rites, within stories etc. A wonderful addition to a child's multicultural library.

It is misleading to promote this book for 9 to 12 year olds! My spouse and I sat down one evening and read the riddles, trying to see which ones we could figure out....much better than spending the evening in front of the tube! The Native riddles get your brain thinking in different directions. Soon I found myself making up my own riddles, using the same sort of "twist" in the descriptions. I plan on getting several friends this thought-provoking, inexpensive book for Christmas, and I'm in my 30's!! I highly recommend it for anyone who is interested in Native culture or who enjoys tricks of the spoken word!

Many references to Alaska and many Alaska native riddles are included. Riddles from South America and Mexico are hardest, because answers aren't familiar things. Black and white illustrations were very good. They gave away the answers to the riddles. I would like to recommend this one to the 2nd through the 12th grade, along with a recommendation that teachers and parents also read along with the younger students.

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