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People from the Stars

John Joseph Mathews

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PEOPLE FROM THE STARS



Volando Arriba del Caracol
Marco Hernandez

Wahzhazhe come from the stars
By their choice, not by falling
Or being thrown out
Of the heavenly bars like Satan
Into Europe,
And we are invited back whenever we
 may choose to go;
But we joined the people of death
And moved to another village
(we call it, *Ho-e-ga*)
Where time began; we made our fireplaces
And made our bodies of
The golden eagle and the cedar tree,
Of mountain lion and buffalo,
Of redbird, black bear, of the
Great elk and of thunder so that we
May live to see old age
And go back to the stars.

Meantime, the Europeans pay us royalties
For oil that lights their midnight highways
Dangling across the land in
Star-strings through the night.
We trade our royalties for time enthroned
On wings of shining metal
To look down at the stars beneath
Or up at stars above
Before we touch down in the desert
Creation of Las Vegas and wheel off
To shoot craps at the Stardust Inn
And talk of Indians and their
 Trickster Tales,
Of Manabozho up
In Wounded Knee.

John Joseph Mathews' *The Osages*, Ch. 1
Ponca War Dancers by Carter Revard

FOLLOWING SPREAD

Negative and Positive Plates B20667 and D16409, Nebula in Orion, Oct 26, 1897
Anna Von Mertens, courtesy of the artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery

