

Sung by Dan Hanna (1912? -1968), collected by
Leanne Hinton & translated in collaboration with
the singer. Poem's landscape is Grand Canyon.

HAVASUPAI MEDICINE SONG

The land we always wanted hey, heya
The land we always wanted hey, heya

It is right here hey, heya
It is right here hey, heya

Red rock wall hey, heya
Red rock wall hey, heya

Spotted with brown hey, heya
Spotted with brown hey, heya

Shooting up high hey, heya
Shooting up high hey, heya

All around our home hey, heya
All around our home hey, heya

Red rock wall hey, heya
Red rock wall hey, heya

Shooting up high hey, heya
It is right here hey, heya

Down at the bottom hey, heya
A spring will always be there hey, heya

The spring has been ours hey, heya
The spring has been ours hey, heya

A very long time hey, heya
A very long time hey, heya

In the land that is ours Right down the center	hey, heya hey, heya
Bright blue-green A blue-green line	hey, heya hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya hey, heya
Right beside the river The water-girl reeds	hey, heya hey, heya
Water-girl reeds Water-girl reeds	hey, heya hey, heya
Bright blue-green Bright blue-green	hey, heya hey, heya
All around the river This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya hey, heya
Right beside the river Water foam is forming	hey, heya hey, heya
Water foam is forming Right beside the river	hey, heya hey, heya
Moving all around Moving all around	hey, heya hey, heya
Right beside the river Right beside the river	hey, heya hey, heya
Silt layers forming Silt layers forming	hey, heya hey, heya
Right beside the river Lines along the edges	hey, heya hey, heya
Lines along the edges This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya hey, heya

This is what I'm thinking A water-walking beetle	hey, heya hey, heya
Water-walking beetle On top of the river	hey, heya hey, heya
The water spreads around him This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya hey, heya
Grasses of the water Grasses of the water	hey, heya hey, heya
Bright blue-green Bright blue-green	hey, heya hey, heya
Under the river Under the river	hey, heya hey, heya
Waving to and fro Waving to and fro	hey, heya hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya hey, heya
Under the river Pebbles in the water	hey, heya hey, heya
Tiny little pebbles And there sliding over them	hey, heya hey, heya
Spreading out on top of them Is our drinking water	hey, heya hey, heya
On, gliding on On toward the north	hey, heya hey, heya
On in that direction And now it is gone	hey, heya hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya hey, heya

The song brings us here The song brings us here	hey, heya hey, heya
My body is bleeding My body is bleeding	hey, heya hey, heya
Here I sit down Here I sit down	hey, heya hey, heya
I sing me a song I sing me a song	hey, heya hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya hey, heya
Medicine spirit Medicine spirit	hey, heya hey, heya
Man who is a shaman Man who is a shaman	hey, heya hey, heya
I am just like him I am just like him	hey, heya hey, heya
My body is bleeding My body is bleeding	hey, heya hey, heya
Here I sit down Here I sit down	hey, heya hey, heya
I sing me a song I sing me a song	hey, heya hey, heya
The things I have named The things I have named	hey, heya hey, heya
I leave them behind me I leave them behind me	hey, heya hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya hey, heya

The song brings us here	hey, heya
The song brings us here	hey, heya
We're leaving the canyon	hey, heya
We're leaving the canyon	hey, heya
Out on the mesa	hey, heya
Out on the mesa	hey, heya
Horses that are mine	hey, heya
Horses that are mine	hey, heya
The place where they feed	hey, heya
The place where they feed	hey, heya
There by the junipers	hey, heya
Short, shrubby junipers	hey, heya
Small, bushy trees	hey, heya
They are right there	hey, heya
Horses that are mine	hey, heya
Gathered in their shade	hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya
The song brings us here	hey, heya
The song brings us here	hey, heya
We all swing around	hey, heya
We all swing around	hey, heya
Going down the wall again	hey, heya
Going down the wall again	hey, heya
White rock wall	hey, heya
Spotted with brown	hey, heya
Down at the bottom	hey, heya
A spring will always be there	hey, heya

Spring that's never dry	hey, heya
It will always be there	hey, heya
It will always be there	hey, heya
There I bring my horses	hey, heya
They are drinking water	hey, heya
The spring will always be there	hey, heya
White rock wall	hey, heya
Spotted with brown	hey, heya
Shooting up high	hey, heya
It is right there	hey, heya
Right down the center	hey, heya
Right down the center	hey, heya
The horses that are mine	hey, heya
The horses that are mine	hey, heya
There is their trail	hey, heya
There is their trail	hey, heya
A tan-colored line	hey, heya
A tan-colored line	hey, heya
A zig-zagging line	hey, heya
A zig-zagging line	hey, heya
It leads to the bottom	hey, heya
It leads to the bottom	hey, heya
It is right there	hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya
The song brings us here	hey, heya
We're going down the canyon	hey, heya
Red rock wall	hey, heya
Going down the canyon	hey, heya

They are right there	hey, heya
Down in the canyon	hey, heya
Many red rocks	hey, heya
Not very tall	hey, heya
I am right there	hey, heya
I have arrived	hey, heya
I go along	hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya
Red rock wall	hey, heya
Spotted with brown	hey, heya
Shooting up high	hey, heya
It is right there	hey, heya
Down at the bottom	hey, heya
Red fallen rocks	hey, heya
Red rock boulders	hey, heya
Spotted with brown	hey, heya
Down at the base	hey, heya
They are right there	hey, heya
Now my bleeding ends	hey, heya
It ends right there	hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya
This is what I'm thinking	hey, heya

NOTE. There were once, and may someday be again, Hava-supai medicine men who dream songs and sing them as part of the curing process. But the composition of medicine songs was never solely the prerogative of the professional. There have always been a few people around who dream their own songs in time of illness, and sing them to cure themselves.

Most of these personal medicine songs are never heard by other people; they die with their composers. This song, however, was created for the informal and highly social sweathouse curing ceremony; it has therefore been heard by many people over the generations and has survived. The singer, Dan Hanna, learned it from Supai Shorty, who died a few years back at an age estimated to be close to 110. Supai Shorty in turn had learned it as a young man from an old relative of his. The original dreamer is not known.

In spite of its use in the sweathouse, this song has the formal structure and stylistic characteristics of the true medicine song. Also, like many Havasupai songs, it takes the form of a long narrative poem with a partially improvised text. Depending on the mood of the singer, it may be shortened or stretched out to an hour or more. Motifs may be glossed over or left out altogether in one performance, or dwelt on in great detail in another. Words may be stretched out by the addition of extra syllables, varying from performance to performance in sound and placement.

The song uses no instrumental accompaniment.

--L. H.