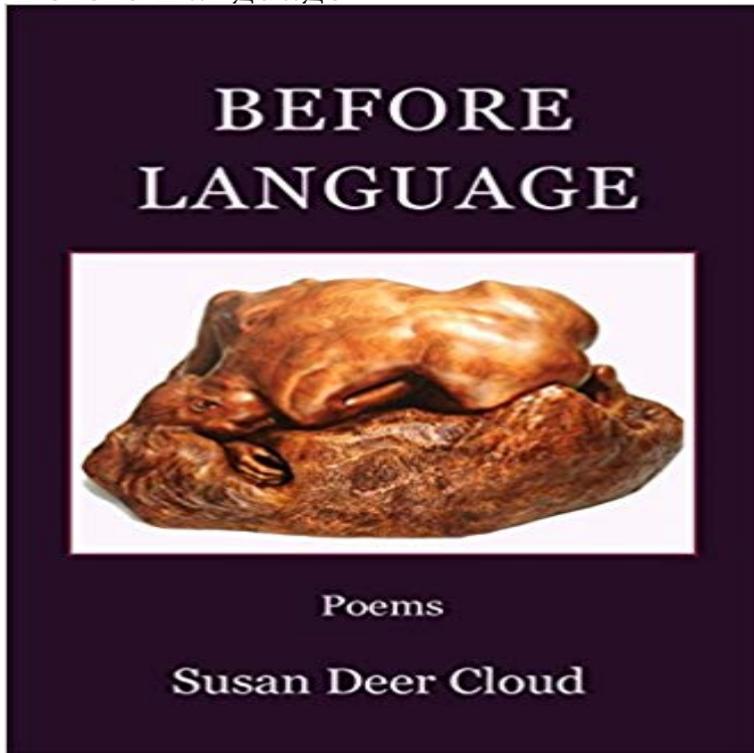


## Before Language



Susan Deer Cloud, a mixed lineage Catskill Indian, is an alumna of Goddard College (MFA) and Binghamton University (B.A. and M.A.). She has taught Creative Writing, Rhetoric and Literature at Binghamton University and Broome Community College. A few years ago she returned to her heart country Catskills to dwell once more with foxes, deer, black bears, bald eagles, and the ghosts of panthers and ancestors. She now lives as a full-time mountain woman, dreamer and writer. Deer Cloud is the recipient of various awards and fellowships, including an Elizabeth George Foundation Grant, a National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship, two New York State Foundation for the Arts Fellowships, and a Chenango County Council for the Arts Individual Artists Grant. Some of her books are *Hunger Moon* (Shabda Press); *Fox Mountain, The Last Ceremony and Car Stealer* (FootHills Publishing); and *Braiding Starlight* (Split Oak Press). Her poems, stories and essays have been published in anthologies and journals too numerous to name. In order to get out the voices of the voiceless, the poet has edited three published anthologies: multicultural *Confluence* and Native American anthologies *I Was Indian (Before Being Indian Was Cool)*, Volumes I & II; the 2008 Spring Issue of *Yellow Medicine Review*, a *Journal of Indigenous Literature, Art & Thought*; and the *Re-Matriation Chapbook Series of Indigenous Poetry*. She is a member of the international peace organization *SERVAS*; *Poets & Writers*; *Associated Writing Programs (AWP)*; and indigenous *Wordcraft Circle*. She has served on panels at writers conferences and given myriad poetry readings at colleges, cultural centers, coffee houses, and other venues. In between her sojourns in the Catskills, Deer Cloud has spent the past few years roving with her life's companion, John Gunther, around Turtle Island (North

America) as well as on the Isles (Iceland, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England) and Europe. She has been not only on a physical journey but a spiritual quest for her deepest roots tied in with ancestresses, ancient truths, and the sacred web of life. One magical part of this journey was meeting Beat Stahli, the cover artist for Before Language, who she has come to consider both a mountain brother and kindred spirit. She a daughter of the Catskill Mountains, he the son of the Swiss Alps, she views their creative collaboration as a friendship dreaming the two halves of the world together into a wholeness embodying peace and love.

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