
Some Gary Snyder Poems



Gary Snyder

From Long Hair

Once every year, the Deer catch human beings. They do various things which irresistibly draw men near them: each one selects a certain man. The deer shoots the man, who is then compelled to skin it and carry its meat home and eat it. Then the Deer is inside the man. He waits and hides in there. But the man doesn't know it. When enough Deer have occupied enough men, they will strike all at once. The men who don't have Deer in them will also be taken by surprise, and everything will change some. This is called "takeover from inside."

BY FRAZIER CREEK FALLS

Standing up on lifted, folded rock
looking out and down--

The creek falls to a far valley,
hills beyond that
facing, half-forested, dry
--clear sky
strong wind in the
stiff glittering needle clusters
of the pine--their brown
round trunk bodies
straight, still;
rustling trembling limbs and twigs

listen.

This flowing land
is all there is, forever

We are it
it sings through us--

We could live on this Earth
without clothes or tools!

I WENT INTO THE MAVERICK BAR

I went into the Maverick Bar
In Farmington, New Mexico.
And drank double shots of bourbon
backed with beer.
My long hair was tucked up under a cap
I'd left the earring in the car.

Two cowboys did horseplay
by the pool tables,
A waitress asked us
where are you from?
a country-and-western band began to play
"We don't smoke Marijuana in Muskokie"
And with the next song,
a couple began to dance.

They held each other like in High School dances
in the fifties:
I recalled when I worked in the woods
and the bars of Madras, Oregon
That short-haired joy and roughness--
America--your stupidity
I could almost love you again.

We left-onto the freeway shoulders
under the tough old stars--
In the shadow of bluffs
I came back to myself,
To the real work, to
"What is to be done"

PRAYER FOR THE GREAT FAMILY

Gratitude to Mother Earth, sailing through night and day--
and to her soil: rich, rare, and sweet
in our minds so be it.

Gratitude to Plants, the sun-facing light-changing leaf
and fine root-hairs; standing still through wind
and rain; their dance is in the now
in our minds, so be it.

Gratitude to Air, bearing the roaring Swift and the silent
Owl at dawn. Breath of our song
clear spirit breeze
in our minds, so be it.

Gratitude to Wild Beings, our brothers, teaching secrets,
freedoms, and ways; who share with us their milk;
self-complete, brave, and aware
in our minds, so be it.

Gratitude to Water: clouds, lakes, rivers, glaciers;
holding or releasing; streaming through all

our bodies salty seas
in our minds, so be it.

Gratitude to the Sun: blinding pulsing light through
trunks of trees, through mists, warming caves where
bears and snakes sleep--he who wakes us--
in our minds so be it

Gratitude to the Great Sky
who holds billions of stars--and goes yet beyond that--
beyond all powers, and thoughts
and yet is within us--
Grandfather Space.
The Mind is his Wife.

so be it.

after a Mohawk prayer

SONG OF THE TASTE

Eating the living germs of grasses
Eating the ova of large birds

the fleshy sweetness packed
around the sperm of swaying trees

The muscles of the flanks and thighs of
soft-voiced cows
the bounce in the the lamb's leap
the swish in the ox's tail

Eating roots grown swoll
inside the soil

Drawing on life of living
clustered points of light spun
out of space
hidden in the grape.

Eating each other's seed
eating
ah, each other.

Kissing the lover in the mouth of bread:
lip to lip.