



reclaim rewild

FREE!

*a vision for going feral &
actualizing our wildest dreams*

I just spent a full turn of the seasons living outside at a primitive wilderness camp in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. I'm still processing the experience but I've come out of it inspired to continue on this path. We have been told time & time again that it can't be done, but we'll have to see where our dreams lead us. I can remember one of my most powerful realizations of a deep desire to live beyond civilization:

I was drinking malt liquor in a run down abandoned house that my friends & I had been squatting for a few weeks, contemplating the various repairs we wanted to do in order to make the place functional. We had been traveling for several months & were excited about the prospect of creating a home base. The sudden reality of all the skills & resources we would need in order to do the simplest things like turn on the water came crashing down. We didn't want to spend years learning to be plumbers, electricians & carpenters: **we didn't even really want to live in a city!**

It seemed as if without a car & some cash (both of which we were ideologically opposed to at the time) we had no choice other than to live primarily in an urban area. Our "survival skills" at the time relied mostly on rummaging through dumpsters & shoplifting for food, hopping freight trains for transportation, living in abandoned buildings or camping in train yards for shelter, busking & scamming for cash (which mostly went towards alcohol) & taking advantage of various forms of charity (soup kitchens, food stamps, food banks, etc). We were all intentionally broke & jobless, some of us even tattooing our faces to lessen the probability of future employment. This was urban hunting & gathering, our liberation from a life of hollow drudgery. It was hard to imagine not living this joyful existence. Our leaving the city was dependent on either eating food provided by others, or finding a dumpster on the edge of town. Our interactions with the natural world were usually as campers or spectators. We saw a lot of beautiful scenery but were always somehow removed from it. We wanted more.

We left our squat the next day determined to reconnect with wilderness. On the way out the door I was struck with an inspiration & pulled out a black marker & scrawled **'NO CURE FOR CANCER'** above a drawing of a burning city. Though written

several years ago, the essential message behind that simple piece of graffiti still speaks to me:

“These cities & the way of life that they represent are a passing thing, a cancerous glitch. I am a child of the Earth but my true self is buried beneath many layers of civilized conditioning. I have no choice but to follow my heart.”

##GRIFFIN##



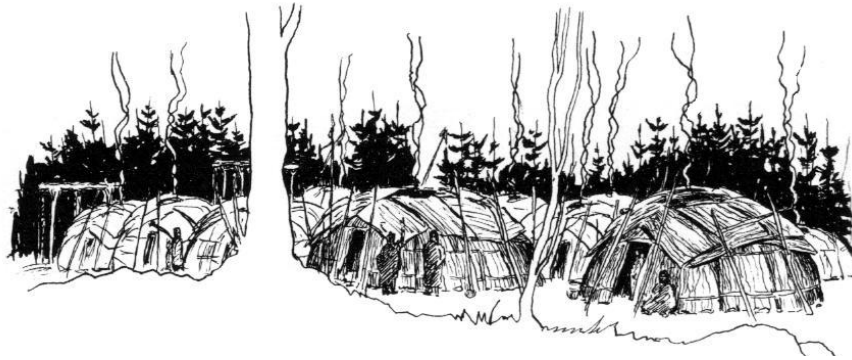
A few definitions for clarity:

civilization *n.* a lifeway based on a deep mistrust of nature & a belief in the superiority of the human species above all other forms of life. It is used here referring to a (civilized) way of thinking & not to the supporting infrastructure (i.e. cities, prisons, military) that this mindset creates for itself.

domestication *n.* To adapt life to intimate association with and to the advantage of humans. A sickness.

rewild *v.* to heal from domestication & rejoin the community of nature; redefining a relationship with nature on nature's terms; to return an area to a more natural or wild state; to return a captive animal to its natural habitat.

.OUR VISION.



We are forming an intentional community focused on rewilding. Our passion lies in living simply and forming a close, unmediated relationship with the Earth. We want to find a piece of land, live on it with a group of people and become a clan of hunter/gatherers. We want to know if it's still possible to get there in a single lifetime. We want to see if we've been hypnotized for too long. It is our goal to eventually sustain ourselves entirely (food, clothing shelter, tools) with materials we harvest from the wild. This will be a garden, pet, livestock, drug, alcohol & electricity-free environment. We want others with the same desires and visions to join us. We don't want this project to be solely "ours".

We are cultivating a trust that the Earth will provide for all our needs. This zine is us reaching out to the world to see who might have a similar dream of redefining our relationships with Nature on Nature's terms.

We have the funding to buy land. Right now we're in the process of finding an area that fits our criteria: clean & wild. We're looking for land that is completely surrounded by public wilderness & has access to clean water. Owning land is not our primary goal for this project. We see "owning" land as a necessary protection against eviction & harassment in this modern reality of private property rights. We see ourselves as being caretakers rather than owners. All we really anticipate needing is a legal space to build a winter camp & a place to store some tools & books. Other

small temporary camps will be used for scouting, seasonal food harvests, hunting & fishing.

The single most important aspect of this project is the circle of people that will comprise the community. We've been putting far more emphasis on outreach & correspondence than anything else. Without a circle to work with, that is dedicated to rewilding together, we are left in the position of making all the decisions about location & content of public outreach at this time. We don't want to see a dynamic evolve where we become the "owners" of the land with more perceived authority over the destiny of the community.

This cannot be done alone.

Any level of commitment is welcome, from those with a desire to live long-term on this land to those who wish to support this project from afar. Anyone with any level of experience is welcome to join us at any time, free of charge, to try to actualize this vision.

-Sky & Griffin



Human Domestication **sickness of separation** by Griffin

Domestication is the systematic process of removing a plant or animal from the rhythms & cycles of the natural world. Domesticated beings exist in an environment created & controlled by the human species & function for the sole benefit of human endeavors. The human animal is just as much a part of the circle of life as any other mammal & to be removed

from this circle creates a climate of perpetual stress. The effects of a stark disconnection from nature can be observed in zoo animals & pets, manifesting as neurosis, depression, anxiety, apathy, codependence & a host of other psychological reactions to an unhealthy environment.

In the tigress pacing her cage we see our reflection.

Fortunately, humans have not lived this way long enough to become genetically adapted to it. Our place for countless generations has been as close to the earth as we can be. Even as agriculture drew us slowly from our trust in the bounty of the Mother, & temporarily allowed our populations to swell beyond carrying capacity, we still retained a diminishing connection with the cycles of wildness. It is only very recently in human history that the break from nature has become so complete. Industrial manufacturing & monoculture farming have become our surrogate Mother.

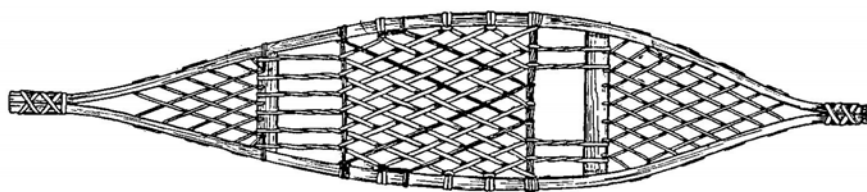


Each one of us is a wild animal suffering, isolated from our true livelihoods & homes in the arms of our true Mother. Our civilized conditioning makes us dependant & weak but we still yearn for the freedom of wildness & the deep satisfaction of living out our feral destinies as a part of the community of life. What we are trying to create is an environment conducive to healing from our self-perpetuated domestication:

- We want to relearn the life skills that allow us to shed our dependence on civilization & put new trust in the Land to provide for us.
- We want to release our addictions to the many activities & substances that make civilized life bearable.
- We want to relearn how to live with others & create a life built on honor & respect.
- We want to reawaken our atrophied senses & experience the full lushness of life.
- We want to heal our damaged minds & bodies from the trauma of domestication & live in balance as our ancestors once did.

We are born wild. It takes years of socializing to subdue the power & beauty of a child's primal instincts. This process is reversible. It is possible to become feral by overcoming the numbness of the civilized condition & become fully human. We can be wild again.

For more information about rewilding & comments, questions, or feedback about this article contact Griffin at feralhuman@ziplip.com





There is no need to wait around to begin breaking your domestication. Do-it-yourself now! There are many things you can be doing in your daily life regardless of your living situation. If you are planning to make the big move into the wilderness and learn the skills to live primitively, start pre-

paring today! Even if you have no plans of leaving the city, you can be rewilding wherever you are.

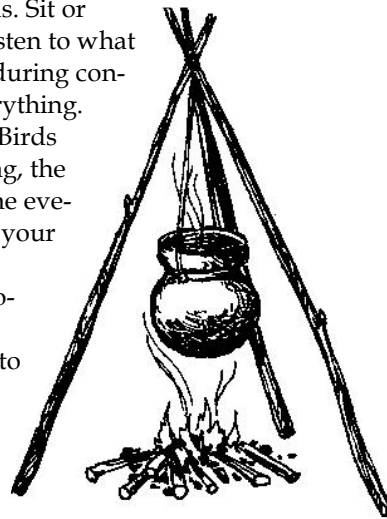
One way you can reclaim your wildness is through diet. The “civilized” diet is based on starch/carbs, white sugar, processed foods, excess salt, low quality fat, processing, and on and on. Even if you’re on a budget of zero, eating out of the trash, you can make choices to heighten your senses, raise awareness, have more energy, boost your immune system, stabilize your mood and blood sugar, keep Mosquito at bay, and stay warmer during the colder months of the year. By reducing your salt, pepper, vinegar, and spice use, you can reclaim your sense of taste. You begin to taste the vegetables and meats actual flavors. This also increases your sense of smell, which heightens your awareness. Staying away from bread, especially processed starch, coupled with eliminating sugar and sweets in general (except fruit & berries) can be very helpful. This is a big one, I know. If your anything like me, you were raised on low quality bread, margarine, a largely starch based diet, soda pop, ice cream, etc. Try fasting with just water for 24 hours every week or two. Fasting can raise awareness & increase metabolic efficiency. Also, watch how much you eat. Try not to over eat. A well-fed animal is a lazy animal. These things are the biggest struggle for me personally in the rewilding process. But I’ll continue to try because I can feel a difference. The more I pare these things down the more sensitive I become and the more I can *feel* in general. I could go on and on about diet but it’s already been done. If you want to learn more check out Weston Price’s book “Nutrition and Physical Degeneration”. It’s not the most exciting read but it’s well worth reading the studies in the beginning. Reading half of it was enough for me. The beginning of the book documents studies done by a dentist in the 1930’s comparing trends in health and diet in isolated Hunter & Gatherer tribes, isolated Pastoralists, and small-scale Farmers around the world. Another excellent book about “Native diet” and nutrition is Sally Fallon’s “Nourishing Traditions”. She’s really into the whole organic pasture-fed

dairy thing which isn't very wild, however, quality wild fat and organs aren't readily available in the store so I still believe it's worthwhile information. Check out the section on "Diet" in the Rewilding Resources in the back of this zine.

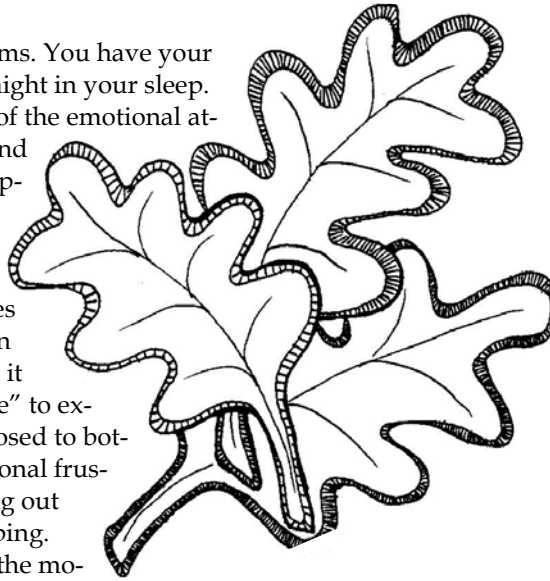
Prepare your food over an open fire. If this is too much, cook outside and work your way to a fire. If you're in the city I know there can be loopholes to fire regulations. Sometimes open fires are legal for cooking, but not for recreation. If not use a grill or a camp stove. If cooking outside isn't an option, eat outside after you cook. If you already cook on a fire, start practicing some form of friction fire. Stick with it and practice.

After eating comes digestion and what's next, you guessed it, pooping! This happens to be one of my favorite subjects. You can begin the rewilding process right now by altering your approach to your bowel movement. Start "going" outside. This goes for urination as well. I hear that squatting is a much healthier position for this than sitting upright as far as aligning your colon. But also very important to consider is: it gets you outside. Find a wooded lot nearby or some bushes to tuck yourself into if you're in the city. Maybe you'll have to get on your bike. It's worth it. Wipe with snow/moss/leaves/ferns/a smooth stick, etc. just make sure you don't use poison ivy! Ouch! And bury it good (it breaks down faster in the topsoil), so no one has the unpleasant misfortune of stepping in it. And if you're already living near or in the woods this is a perfect way to get you out in the bush every day. Pick one general area and watch it change over the seasons. Learn the plants, animals, insects, rocks, etc. that live there. Try sitting there & being quiet, don't just poop & run. You might be surprised at what you see. If this sounds way too adventurous for you but you still want to improve your pooping, try squatting on the toilet. It's easy, I do it all the time. Lift up the seat, stand on the toilet, squat and the rest comes naturally. Start there and work your way outside.

Listen...this is easier than it sounds. Sit or stand or better yet squat quietly and just listen to what is around you. Pay more attention. Listen during conversation. Try to be more conscious of everything. Try to think before speaking. Listen to the Birds singing around you, the Squirrels chattering, the Frogs singing, the Flies buzzing. Spend time everyday listening. Turn off the radio. Protect your ears when around loud music. So much is happening around you that you'll never notice. This is helpful no matter how you're living. Pay attention to your intuition. Try to feel it. This part of the rewilding process is especially difficult for me. It's not easy to listen. But when I do, I learn more.



Listen to your dreams. You have your own personal guide every night in your sleep. Try to become more aware of the emotional atmosphere in your dreams and connect that with what's happening in your daily life. Learn to express your feelings and emotions in the moment. Civilization teaches us that emotional expression and honesty is weak. Often it seems to be the "wrong time" to express yourself. We're supposed to bottle these feelings up. Emotional frustration often ends up coming out through gossip. Stop gossiping. Strive to be more honest in the moment. Honesty and expression are essential to having healthy relationships and communities.



Park your car. Let's face it- cars suck! They're a great tool to perpetuate your domestication. Ride your bike as much as possible in place of your car. Walk or jog in place of riding your bike. Take your time. Rewilding requires slowing down your pace. So this is a great opportunity to cultivate patience. This will get you outside, strengthen your muscles, give you more energy, and raise awareness as to what's happening around you. It's easier to listen when you're not moving 30 miles per hour with the stereo blasting. I do realize that some people are not going to quit driving. Try turning off the radio/tape/CD. Roll down the windows even if it's cold or hot outside. Let yourself feel the temperature and breathe the fresh air.

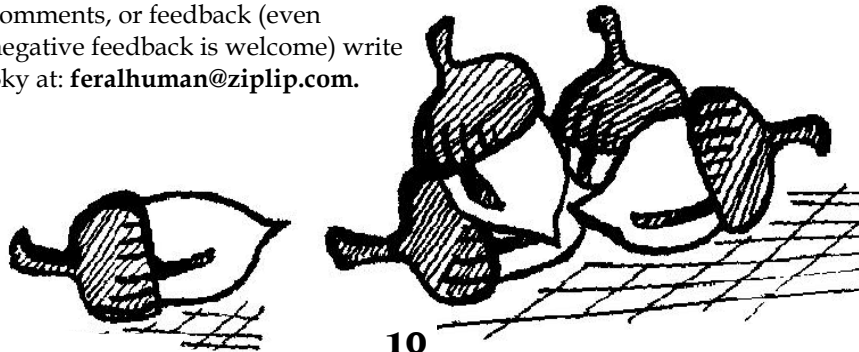
Balance is useful for navigating rocks across creeks, staying on snow-packed trails, and bringing yourself into the moment. Practice by standing on one foot, walking on logs, walking on railroad tracks, curbsides, whatever you can find. Wear shoes with thinner soles so you can feel the earth underneath you. Large tread shoes cause trails to erode more quickly. Set up balancing areas to practice. Check out Tamarack Song's "[Journey To The Ancestral Self](#)", particularly the section on awareness and attunement exercises for many great suggestions for rewilding.

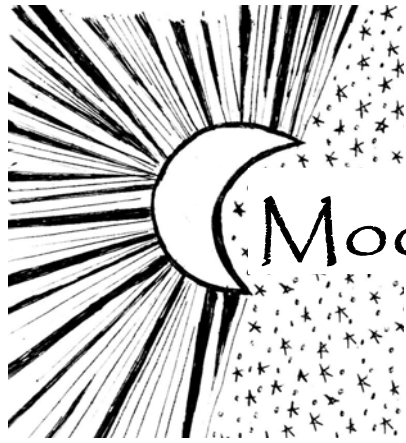
Spend time with Children. These little folks know how to be in the moment. Spend time with them doing what *they* want to do. Follow their example. This shouldn't be too difficult. Seems like there's plenty of parents out there looking for a break, or someone to take care of their kids so they can go to work, or go out with their friends.

Do you know what phase the moon is in? Keep track of how the Moon affects your mood with a journal. You can also track how the Moon affects your body by recording your basal temperature (both men & women experience temperature changes that fluctuate with waxing & waning Moon phases). Do you know what direction is east? South? Where does the Sun rise & set? How does this change during the course of the year? Where is the North Star? What trees grow on your street? Can you identify them with no leaves? What animals live near you & what do their tracks & sign look like? What do they eat? What do their homes look like & where are they most likely to be? What birds live near you? What do they sound like when they are agitated? Mating? What are the most common fish near you & what kinds of water bodies do they prefer? What plants grow in your yard? Which are native & which are invasive alien species? Which are edible & which are poisonous? How did indigenous peoples of that area use them? Learn this stuff. Keep track of the direction the wind blows at different times of day (this is most accurately observed by looking straight up at the clouds). Keep a journal of wind direction & learn about prevailing winds at different times of year in your region & what they mean. Pay attention. Read less, listen more. Try to make emotional exchanges in person, rather than by phone or mail, if at all possible. Try to eliminate or minimize alarm clock use and any clock use for that matter. Know what time & day it is only as a necessity. Try keeping time by Moon phases, rather than by a calendar. If you sleep inside, sleep with the window open. Feel the night air. Walk familiar routes blindfolded to utilize different senses. Learn about the aboriginal peoples that lived in your area & how they lived. Study the language of any indigenous peoples because language shapes your perception of the world. Look into your own ancestral roots. There are endless ways to reconnect with the rhythms & cycles of the natural world that are constantly going on all around & within you.

If you're resisting some of these things strongly or if you feel challenged, good. Push yourself. If you start to start to feel really comfortable mix things up a bit and always challenge yourself. Just in case you haven't noticed this re-occurring theme already-*be outside as much as possible.*

For more information about rewilding, questions, comments, or feedback (even negative feedback is welcome) write Sky at: feralhuman@ziplip.com.





Historically a Moon Lodge was in some ways the female counterpart to the Sweat Lodge ceremony. It was believed that women found their balance

Moon Time by Sky

through menstruation in the Moon Lodge and also through honoring their Moon time.

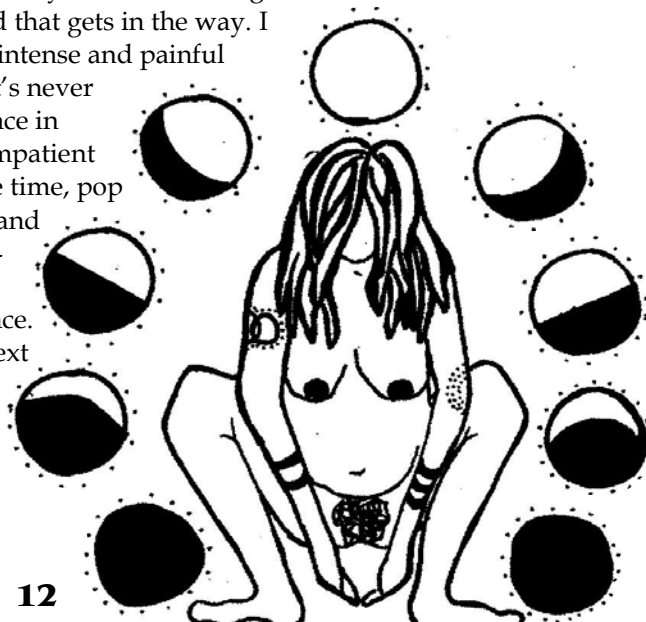
I spent the past year taking special care of myself during menstruation. I typically spent 1-3 days alone in a primitive Birch bark and Marsh Grass thatched wigwam constructed for women to spend their Moon Time in. Anyone, women only if I preferred, would bring me hot cooked meals, bring water to drink from the lake, sit and keep me company if I so desired. I was taken care of. All the women in my community would come upon my request to share emotions and stories in a circle and sing songs. I spent time writing in my journal, drawing pictures, reading, and lots of time just being. I felt and still feel that Moon time offers me an amazing gift of introspection. During this time I've had the clearest insight as to what my dreams are telling me, where my emotional struggles are rooted, and what I need to happen in my life. It's become a time I look forward to in place of dread.

This monthly ritual wasn't easy. I struggled a lot with this concept, especially in the beginning. Knowing that this was a tradition that women followed in many indigenous cultures, but having little to no information about it and what it all meant confused me. I would sit there some nights wondering what I was doing there, what I was supposed to do. I was bored. I connect this feeling to how I've felt in other instances alone in the wilderness. Sometimes I would grow angry and blame others for my struggle. I wished there was other women or an Elder from my tribe to show me the way. But that's not the world I live in now. I've had little success finding information about Moon lodge traditions. I listened to an audio tape by Brook Medicine Eagle about creating the Moon lodge ritual in your home that was somewhat helpful.

I know now that just quietly being alone is the hard part. A lack of distraction is frightening. It's not easy to break your routine & go be alone

without distractions. Once I was able to recognize that this was no one's fault I could begin to work through the feelings that were coming up.

I believe the most important part of this ceremony is time alone, and time to feel emotions and where they're coming from. I found having women's sharing circles with a talking stick to be very fulfilling. Spending time alone in your bedroom, in the backyard, a tent, a shack made from scavenged materials, a cabin, debris hut, primitive lodge, etc., or going for a walk at a nearby nature trail are all ways to bring this ritual into your life. Collaborating with other women and making a place that could be shared might work. It doesn't have to be a moon time only space. As long as other folks can respect a space designated for this purpose for as many days as you need it. Try bringing this idea up with the people you live with. Maybe you could avoid the responsibilities of cooking or cleaning for a short while. Indigenous people didn't always have a special lodge for this time. This can be a lot of energy and materials if the tribe is small. So a lodge for sleeping or a room in your house could be set-aside for a woman to spend her Moon time. Write, draw or just be. Eat well during this time and take good care of yourself. Some women I know enjoy fasting for short periods during menstruation. Try to have a positive attitude about menstruation. Give it a shot and don't let that voice in your head tell you that you have better things to do. Stick with it through the boredom and confusion. If you love yourself this can be more important than anything else you may have planned. Try to see it for the gift that it is, rather than something to dread and that gets in the way. I myself have very intense and painful moon times and it's never easy. But every once in awhile I'll grow impatient and skip the alone time, pop some painkillers, and pretend that nothing's happening. I notice the difference. And I crave my next moon time.



The following is an excerpt from:
Direct Action: Memoirs of an Urban Guerrilla -Ann Hanson

The three of us sat quietly for a few hours, until it was almost dark, watching Couchee haul in one Salmon after another. Each time he mercifully clubbed them on the head before dumping them into a bucket. Finally he put down his pole and walked back to us. He sat down and rolled a cigarette from a pouch of tobacco. Out here, far from the smog of the city, just like the night before the sky was pitch black and covered with pinpoints of light. We sat silently for awhile, listening to the roar of the water pitching in front of us and letting the coolness of the night air refresh our tired bones.

"That river looks just like a big black body of water doesn't it?" asked Couchee, blowing smoke rings into the air. "But to the Salmon, it's a roadmap of eddies and currents that they use in their journey to their spawning grounds. Where I was fishing, there's a current runs against the stream, and the Salmon catch that on their



in a protective plastic coating. If you think about it, to produce a computer you need mines and copper smelters, plastic and silicon chemical plants, and a transportation network to move these products from the different parts of the globe where they originate. To live in harmony with the Earth, this industrial base would have to be pollution-free, all those minerals would have to be replaced, and when the computer finally becomes obsolete, it would have to be recycled. Take any consumer product and think through the incredible industrial base required to transform the raw materials from the Earth to the finished product in your home.

"For thousands of years, many different tribes and races of people have lived on this Earth without technology and have had rich cultures with advanced music, art, story-telling, and even science. Of course, no culture has ever been perfect, because humans, as a species, are not capable of perfection-and would we even want that? But just because we have a lot of junk, does that mean this point in human history is superior to any other time?"

I think we all agreed with him-it was something we had all thought about, talked



trip upstream. That's how they do it. All the way up the river, there's currents flowing in circles and backwashes that the Salmon catch so they don't just have to swim straight against the current upstream."

"I wish I could live like this," I said almost inaudibly.

"You could," offered Couchee. "Humans have been around for thousands of years, and it's only been since the industrial revolution that people have become alienated from the natural world. That's only about a hundred and fifty years—a tiny percentage of human history. But people seem to think that the reality of the modern technological age is the only one worth living."

"Do you think we could combine living in harmony with the natural world and yet still have a technological society?" I asked.

"No," he said. "I've heard people say we could use computers in a conserver society, but think of the industrial base necessary just to build a computer chip. To my knowledge, computer chips are basically tiny photographs of electrical circuits burned onto silicon chips and covered

about, but maybe had never heard so well expressed. To gain all the material goods we had at our disposal in North America we had sacrificed many species of living beings and were destroying the Earth in the process.

We had forgotten that the Earth was our natural habitat and that we couldn't live without it. People were living in cities, like we were, inside their concrete dwellings, isolated from the natural environment and preoccupied themselves with creating even more artificial forms of life-like the computer. We had become alienated from the simple truth that we needed clean air to breathe, water to drink, trees to produce oxygen—all things the Earth produces as a matter of course for us to survive; or at least it had done so far.

"No," Couchee said, "the answer to your question is that we can't live in harmony with the Earth and continue living in this kind of technological society. You don't need a university degree to understand that simple truth, but with all our intelligence it seems to be the one truth we are trying very hard to hide from. In time that simple truth will become apparent to us when the effects of all this pollution begin to take their toll on the Earth."

Wild Peace: Healing Relationships through Primal Awareness

by RedWolfReturns



“It is a silence out of which
the tracker listens...”

Tom Brown, *The Tracker*

For those of us raised in the matrix of post-modern industrial civilization, the sad reality is that the vast majority of our relationships are simply in tatters. We have come to the point in history where it is the norm for us to experience little, if any, respectful intimacy between ourselves and our wild relations (i.e. “the environment”). Subsequently, we have gotten to the point where we experience little, if any, respectful intimacy between ourselves and the people that surround us each day. And not surprisingly, we also experience little, if any, honest intimacy with our own deepest selves. We live at a time when the “existential crisis”—the feeling of being ultimately alone in a meaningless universe—is considered to be simply a core aspect of the “human condition”. In response to such an empty “human condition” as well as the many impersonal forces that dominate our lives, we compulsively seek ways to escape the reality we are faced with. Our escapes come in the form of various addictive behaviors ranging from full-blown alcohol & drug abuse to the American average of 5+ hours of “zoning-out” in front of TV’s illusions each night. What all this amounts to is that real life is slipping by, moment by moment, and we are simply not there.

So how do we begin the process of healing these broken relationships? The answer is simple, yet profoundly difficult for most of us raised & conditioned to a domination-oriented society. The answer is—in my opinion—for us to learn how to “shut up” and “listen”. To put it more diplomatically, we must re-learn the skills of respectful silence, and non-judgmental attention that have been fairly characteristic of our own primitive ancestors from countless millennia past. In a domination-oriented society, the operative rule for achieving power over others is; “I talk, you listen”. As each of us internalizes this rule, we get more and more caught up in our own voices—often voices of argument, judgment and rationalization—whether these are the chattering voices inside our heads, or the chattering voices coming from our mouths. This is “symbolic thought” in its most insidious

form--the lawyer & judge we have been conditioned to make a part of ourselves. We then get caught up in the battle between our own voice and all the other human voices out there vying to be heard—and just like people caught up in any argument, we rarely even hear the people we are arguing with, let alone voices outside the discussion. Often then, when the struggle becomes too much for us, or is not going our way, we begin to simply avoid the topic and the people involved--we break off the relationship. How many times have we been in conversations where we find ourselves compulsively interrupting each other? Or even if we are silent outside, inside we are usually focused on judging what is being said while either “checking out” or thinking about what we are going to say in response. How many of us have experienced relationships that disintegrated into power-struggles where nearly everyone came away feeling wounded & misunderstood?

These same dynamics (not surprisingly) then pervade our relationships outside the human sphere. How many times have any of us gone for a hike in the woods and found ourselves completely absorbed in our own thoughts without seeing or hearing much of anything around us? Often these thoughts are about some political drama or conflict (whether personal or impersonal) in our lives, or they are made up of judgments about the world around us as well as our rationalizations for those judgments. Sometimes they are made up of fantasies that enable us to escape from reality (i.e. relationship) almost as effectively as if we were watching TV. The dynamic even dominates how we relate to our own bodies—how many times have we been so carried away by our thoughts that we failed to be aware of getting thirsty or tense or fatigued until the situation had gone too far?

Scribbles on paper.
You're thinking they have meaning.
Stop. Feel your eyes now.

So how do we go about cultivating silence & awareness (i.e. “shutting up & listening”) in order to begin facilitating the kind of respectful communication that will heal our relationships and put an end to our existential crisis? Here are a couple of practices that come immediately to mind;

1. The Talking Circle:

"It does not require many words to speak the truth" --Chief Joseph, Nez Perce

Get with the people you care about and who are willing to pursue an intimate & honest relationship with you & each other. Any time there is an important issue to resolve or a decision to be made, sit down together in a

circle and talk it out. Only one person may talk at a time while everyone else gives them their full attention & presence—using a “talking stick” is a good idea to help facilitate this. Consider speech within the circle to be sacred speech—worthy of paying close attention and full consideration to. Go around the circle so everyone has an equal chance to speak. While listening, respect the person who is talking enough to give them full & undivided attention—especially when what they are saying is not something you already agree with or see any value in. Also, while speaking respect those who are listening—speak truthfully, clearly & concisely. Use “I” statements—i.e. “I feel...[hurt by what you said]” or “I perceived...[what you said as an attack]” rather than you statements—i.e. “you are...[an asshole]”). These types of statements allow us to respect the sovereignty of others and the validity of their perspectives while owning our judgments as our own. Be as brief & straightforward as possible—speak out of the feelings of the moment, not from scripts planned out in advance. Continue around the circle until the topic of conversation is exhausted, the conflict resolved, or the decision is made—hopefully to everyone’s basic satisfaction. Integrate the lessons learned in these “talking circles” into your interactions with people in any other situation you might find yourself, and eventually, into your interactions with other species as well.

2. The Walking Circle:

"When you are in the woods, you cannot ever be lost. You are surrounded by friends and surrounded by the Divine." Joe Coyhis, Stockbridge-Munsee

Go for a walk in the woods & whenever you find your mind wandering (i.e. lost in symbolic thought), gently re-direct your focus to your breathing. Feel the air go into your nostrils and down deep into your body—breathe into your lower belly. Then slowly expand your awareness from your breath outward to your whole body. Feel any body-sensations (aches, pains, heat, cold, the ground under your feet, etc.) and just experience them fully. Notice any tension in your body & gently relax it as you feel each out-breath. Now expand this awareness out to your external senses (vision, hearing, smell, etc.) and maintain your focus on them for as long as you can. If you slip back into focusing on mind-chatter, then re-start the process. Be patient with yourself when practicing this & don’t bother judging how well you are doing. Remember that no matter how much time you spend lost in thought before you catch yourself, every time you notice your mind wandering and then redirect your focus to your breath-body-senses, that is one more time you practiced. The more times you practice the sooner you will get better and the easier it will become, no matter how “bad” you might judge yourself to be at this.

3. The Circle of Our Relations:

"...give me a wildness whose glance no civilization can endure..." --Henry David Thoreau

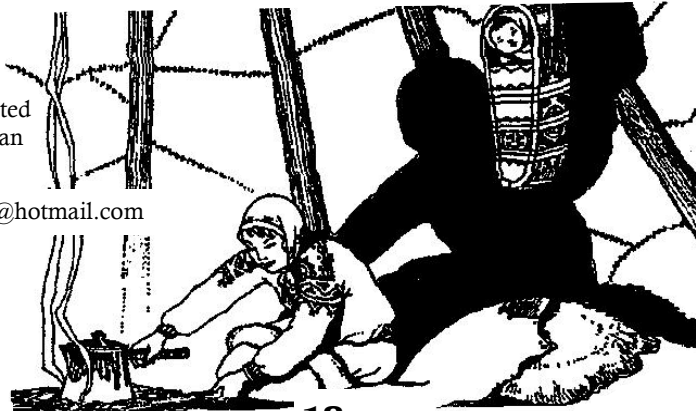
Get outside and break your dependence upon the civilized matrix as much as possible. Spend as much time as you can, & do whatever you can, to live your life outside of climate-controlled house-boxes, clock-time, work, industrial technology, the mass media & the cash economy. These all come together to create a false environment where the politics of domination make the psychology of alienation not only inevitable, but absolutely necessary on many levels. Learn the various arts of primitive self-reliance—tracking, gathering, hunting, trapping, fishing, shelter, crafts, calling Fire, etc—and integrate the lessons into your whole life. Also, be open to having your encounter with these arts change you in fundamental ways—primitive survival is often a question of being, not of technique. Let your resistance to civilization spring naturally from this fundamental shift in being, and the revolution in which you take part will be Primal in both character and effect.

As our primal awareness develops through these (& other) practices, walking through the woods eventually becomes a constant conversation—the wildlings are always communicating with us. The time when “animals talked to people” is not really some far-off era known only to ancient mythology, it is here and now. However, their messages are often subtle, intuitive, and very easy to miss—unless we have developed the skill of respectful “listening”. Even though this skill is seriously lacking in a dominant culture where the politics of control are supported by judgmental ways of thinking and argumentative ways of communicating, it is not impossible for us to reconnect with it and gain a glimpse of a better way of being in the world. So in other words, to re-connect with All-Our-Relations in a primal way, don't just kill the cop in your head—kill the lawyer & the

judge as well.

Anyone interested in these ideas can email me at:

redwolfdreturns@hotmail.com



excerpt from: **SAVAGE GIRLS AND WILD BOYS:**
A HISTORY OF FERAL CHILDREN by Michael Newton

"At St Maur, they began the next step in her reclamation, first attempting to wean her off her savage diet. The viscount d'Epinoÿ had taken great care to keep her fed with the root vegetables and raw meat that she so loved, but as she began to spend more time in the hospital of St Maur she was fed increasingly on cooked meats. At first they gave her wine to drink and food preserved

with salt. The unforeseen result was the loss of her teeth and nails – all of which were kept as treasures for the curious. Salted bread pained her; biscuits and cooked meat made her vomit, even cough up blood. A physician came and bled her severely, saying that it was necessary to get some French blood into her veins. She began to experience terrible pains in her stomach, bowels and throat, and soon her health was so bad that they hurried to receive her into the Roman Catholic Church, lest she should die unbaptized."





Things Don't Have To Be This Way

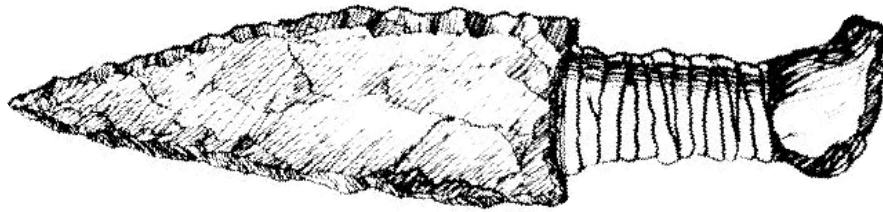
by Laurel and Skunk

I don't know why, but I really hate turning around. I can't stand going back the same way I came. It feels like such a waste somehow. I also don't like apologizing, changing my mind, or losing an argument. I will forge ahead long after I've realized I'm going the wrong way. Then, I'll make an elaborate loop, though I'm already late, rather than accept the shame of a U turn. My friend Vince taught me that backtracking is bad luck unless you count to thirteen out loud first. That makes it feel a bit better, but I still hate having to go back.

Recently I met an old acquaintance and had a chance to hear her story. I mentioned the work I was doing to learn old skills such as brain-tanning deer hides. "The only thing I remember about tanning," she said, "is that it was really stinky." Heather's parents moved out to the Brooks Range in Alaska, 250 miles from the nearest road. It was 1960. They brought along their three-year-old son, Dion. Fred and Elaine Meader were determined to find a better life than any they were offered. They wanted to become hunter-gatherers.

Over the years they learned skills from books – how to tan caribou hides, make jerky, and weave rabbit blankets. They learned some things from the land – the cycles of plant foods, the beauty of northern lights. At first, dissatisfaction lingered, itching at the back of their minds. Domestication made it difficult for them to feel at home in the wilds.

Dion felt immediately at home. After four years, he guided Elaine on a canoe trip around the edges of the lake. "I was amazed at how much Dion had learned about the life along these shores, simply by paying



attention,” she says in a film the family made, *Year of the Caribou*.

All the ability of Dion’s young mind to absorb information was not wasted on advertising jingles. He used it to understand the human place in the world. He learned to live. One generation was all it took to begin the return.

Domestication is a disease. Yet even in the poodle, wolf genes remain. Given time enough and freedom, wildness returns.

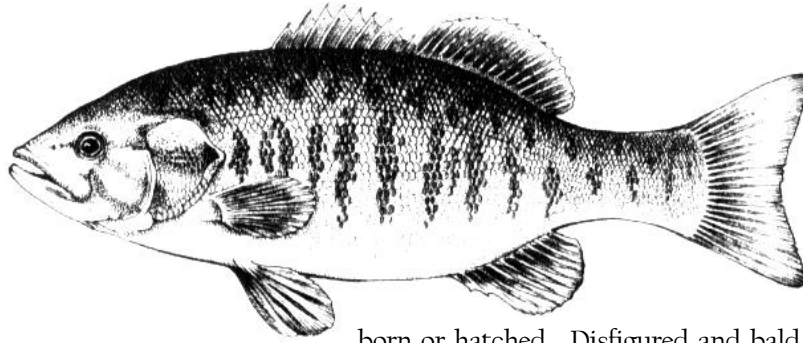
Dion left the lake to attend high school in the artificial world. Before long, he came back forever. He built a cabin and spent seven months traveling in the mountains. On a visit to his parent’s home, his canoe overturned and he drowned in the lake.

Heather was born just before her brother’s death. At the film’s end she is learning to twist sinew into thread by watching her mother, who herself had to learn from a book. The final words in the film are spoken by Fred. “Man (sic) has another wilderness, his own consciousness. What we need, what challenges us, is to come into relationship with a world that is completely alive. And our children can still be our teachers.”

There’s another way to live. There’s another, older world beneath the asphalt of what’s mistakenly referred to as the “real world”. We are not aliens; we’re of this Earth. We need not be ashamed. Humans are not inherently evil. We’re not even naturally stupid. We too can be beautiful. We have gifts to offer. Humans can belong as certainly as any forest, worm or wolf. The trouble is we’ve forgotten who we are, what we’re for, and where we came from.

We’ve forgotten how to live.

Underneath all the layers that I was taught are “me” –under the manhood, the public schooling, catholic fear, and shame; under the excuses and defenses; behind the sunglasses and uniforms- is a little slimy creature, newly



born or hatched. Disfigured and bald and bruised from all those years of being squashed inside me, yet surviving still: my wild nature. The one I was meant to be lays there, barely breathing. Almost lost forever. My heart. That is the one who is not a man. He is not white, not American, not sexist or racist or destructive. He is purely human. He can listen and feel. He's the one I want to rehabilitate and set free. He's the one I want to be.

Even as I am distracted and unaware, my body exists in the real world. I only need to stop and feel my breath to reenter life. This isn't new age bullshit – we are connected in a very literal way through the air. It touches the mountains and I draw it into my lungs, exhale, and it enters the bodies of trees. I start to notice those around me and the way we affect each other. I enter the world of truth. I begin to feel.

It can hurt, this transition from the detached and delusional false world to the reality of connection. I am forced to see the effects of what I have done and what I continue to do.

Worms help rot. They eat the dead and decaying and crap out food for plants. They feed robins, turn the soil, and bury civilizations.

Trees hold up mountains. They make air with their breath, fruit and nuts from soil and sunshine, store the sun's warmth in their wood, and the very ancient ones may sustain all life with their silent singing.

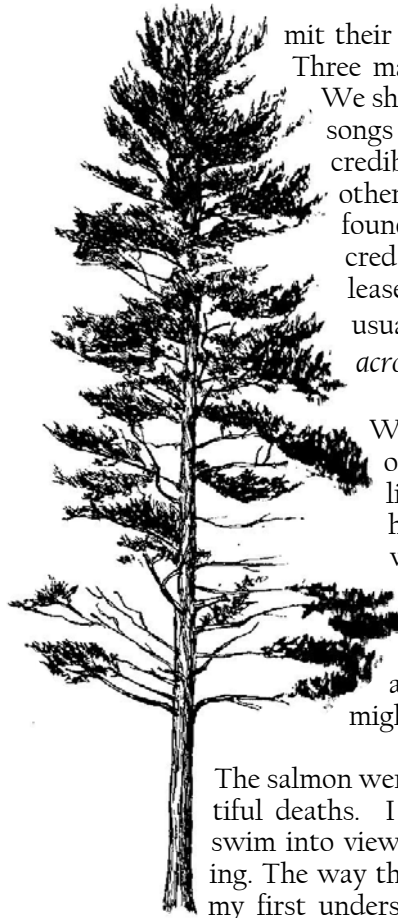
Wolves keep the caribou strong, lend the deer their speed, feed the ravens and worms, and human imagination. They play with their pups and add beauty and shy grace to it all. They may be the fur and flesh house of hope on the planet.

I went to see the salmon. At a place where they were blocked by a waterfall thousands crowded together waiting for a chance to jump. One by one they came to the front of the crowd and threw their bodies wholeheartedly into the rock. The water level was not yet high enough to per-



"Tranquil Anger" -Spinky





mit their passage upstream, but they kept trying. Three made it out of the hundreds I saw jump. We should sing, I thought, we should know the songs and words and what to do in this incredible situation. Instead we grinned at each other and stared into the rushing water. We found things to say, words already made sacred by their repetition in our lives but released for once from the grief and loss they usually carry. *Wow, we said, you could walk across the river on their backs.*

We too have a place and role. We're made of the same muck and magic as the rest of life. But it's been long since most of us have asked what a human's for, and how we can be beautiful. Simply asking can hurt worse than tear gas and rubber bullets, but some of us are beginning to ask with our lives. And having begun to ask, we're beyond the time when we might have done something else.

The salmon were impatient to continue on to their beautiful deaths. I sat beside a deep pool watching them swim into view in groups of four or five, circling, waiting. The way they kept swimming silently past gave me my first understanding of abundance. Once I heard a loud splash and turned too late to see its source. I kept watching the pool, and soon a huge Chinook broke the surface. It - he or she -- jumped straight up into the air. It fell and jumped again, with all the strength in its muscle body, falling and jumping so it seemed to be dancing upright on its tail across the surface of the water. It danced a few feet in my direction and then sank back to wait. Waiting for death, it danced.

Maybe it jumped to escape something. Maybe the fire of gill rot was driving it out of its mind with pain. This is not what I believe. I know it was dancing. Something in the curve of its body spoke of pure joy in being salmon, an immense joy that could not be held by the river. I saw determination to live beautifully until the last moment and impatience at being blocked from the final explosion of life in eggs or milt before death washed yet another spent body into the tepid shallow water to rot. Even in death there was life, a fecund stink that would draw flies to

feed the next generation. I could see it all in the salmon's short dance. It was the dance of someone who knows exactly what they are and moves with that joy and confidence.

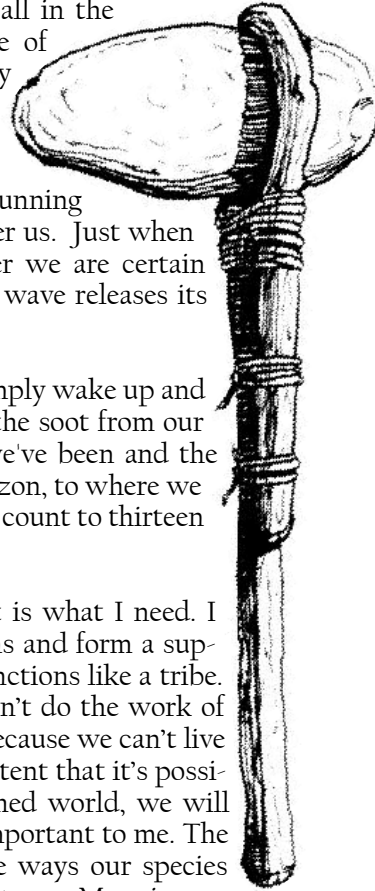
A day may come where we finally stop running from the truth and let the wave wash over us. Just when we think we'll tumble forever, just after we are certain we'll drown... we feel the bottom. The wave releases its grip and we inhale precious air.

Perhaps we reach the crest of a hill, or simply wake up and realize that all those tears have washed the soot from our eyes. Suddenly, we see clearly where we've been and the long path, stretching out beyond the horizon, to where we need to be. There's nothing left to do but count to thirteen and start walking.

I know where I am going. What I want is what I need. I will find a group of other healing humans and form a support group that feels like a family and functions like a tribe. We will live in the forest because we can't do the work of healing in a city. We will do that work because we can't live in the forest as crazy as we are. To the extent that it's possible for ignorant people in an impoverished world, we will hunt and gather what we need. This is important to me. The skills we will learn and practice are the ways our species successfully lived for over 99% of its existence. More importantly, they are the ways to physically express the values of sane human beings.

From this vantage point, certain things are becoming clear. We can see where this "progress" leads. We've been down that road far enough to know we do not like where it is going. The lights of Las Vegas have lost their allure, as has every glowing bug zapper promise of civilization. We know the enemy now, and what we've lost. We know what's at stake. We have the freedom and courage that utter desperation can lend. We will not fall for their tricks or make them any deals again.

I don't believe in "just" coincidence, and I don't believe in accidents. Too many times what I thought was a random event has become meaningful once the connection could be seen. For a while, though, I still thought my own species could be just a huge and tragic evolutionary accident. It's not true. We have a reason for being here. I will remember



it, and then I will move like that salmon.

I hate having to start over in what should be the prime of my life. But no matter how late it is, it's never as late as it's going to be later on.

It may as well be civilization's mantra: "you can't go back." It's repeated by academics who are usually meticulous about presenting their arguments and citing every source. But the statement is never explained, and they offer no supporting evidence.

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13.

I want to live in the woods. I want to go feral. I want to be a hunter-gatherer. I want to be human. I want to slurp water from streams, and sleep under spruce trees. I want to scratch out little holes in the light forest duff to shit in. And I want to listen as the birds sing their names.

I don't care who says I can't. I'm not asking for permission. The best argument against returning that I've heard is that the wild cannot support all six billion of us. Good thing I only know about six monkeys who actually want to go for it. If the teeming masses decide to join us later, we can worry about solutions then. For now, it seems like most people would prefer to be buried with their microwave ovens.

We cannot resist all the time, they say. We must sometimes objectify to survive. It's true – within the prison walls, total resistance is not possible. Neither is total relatedness. But if we go down through the hole, if we leave the prison, the sky begins to do amazing things. What we could never imagine accomplishing while fighting the system, chasing our tails, or trying to drag the whole broken machine along behind us suddenly becomes possible. Who are we to say it's not? Don't you see the sky –how beautiful it is?

Again and again the experts will present the facts: *The hunting and gathering lifestyle is the healthiest, happiest way for humans to exist. Tribal community is best for meeting the needs of people from childhood to old age. Lose weight now with the Paleolithic diet!* As Marshal Sahlins wrote in his widely cited Stone Age Economics, "...there is a greater amount of sleep in the daytime per capita per year than in any other condition of society." What more do you need to hear?

But almost everyone recoils from the truths they have presented. "Of course," they say, "you can't go back." This reflex is so universal that it has rarely been questioned. Of course, we can't really go back. But

that's only because we never went forward.

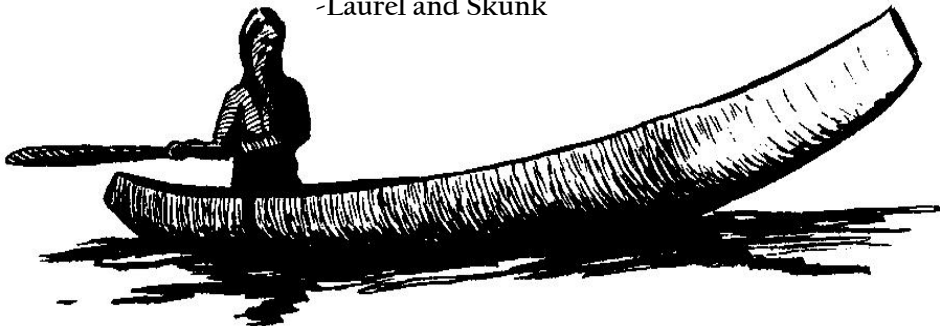
Though I can build a debris hut, I know a few wild plants to eat, and my pants are usually buckskin or military surplus, I am not a survivalist. I don't give a damn if I –or my kind- survive. As Audre Lorde wrote, “we were never meant to survive.” I want to learn to live, or die trying. It takes discipline to live surrounded by so much death. It would be far easier to learn how to blow up the world.

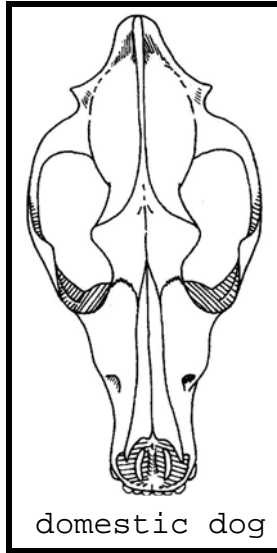
I don't want to simply live; I want to live *absolutely*.

How many times have I gone “camping” only to feel a distinct nausea of betrayal when I returned to town? How many times have I had “mountain top experiences” in the wild, and wondered why I had to descend back into the smog? How many times have I been shocked by silence? Conversely, how often I've been surprised by the toxic taste of tap water when forced to drink it again for the first time. I know I could climb higher. I could grow accustomed to stillness and bird song. With what time I have left, I might yet quench this thirst in many mountain streams. I could follow that lovely smell that lures me. It smells like dinnertime at a home I've never known. It's just a little further, just beyond that rise, closest always when “responsibilities” force me to return. I want to walk deeper into those dark mossy woods and discover the source of that smell. I want to keep going until I don't know if I'm lost or freshly found, but I know – this time for sure – I'm not going back.

This is a snippet from our winter's work, a book called *Fire and Ice: Disturbing the Comfortable and Comforting the Disturbed While Tracking our Wildest Dreams*. It's due out in September 2004 from Apeshit Press. We wrote it to connect with others who dream of going feral, so please get in touch with us through Apeshit if these words blow yer tinder bundle.

-Laurel and Skunk



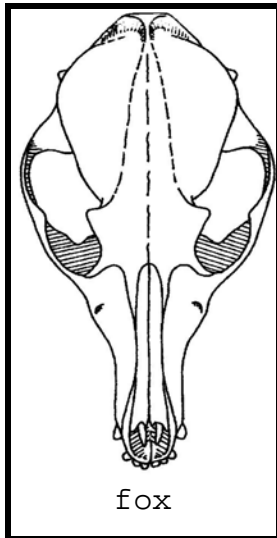


***This excerpt is reprinted from
The Tracker*** by Tom Brown Jr.

It took weeks to disentangle myself from the pattern of the world, but I had begun in early spring, and by the time unofficial summer came, I had lost my sense of time and obligation. I had my knife, and the Pine Barrens gave me everything else I needed. For amusement, I had a sky full of fascinating riddles moving whole nations of animals through the intricate patterns of their daily life. For enlightenment, I had the question of how.

I don't know exactly when I took off my clothes, but I believe it was early summer, though the whole season came and went so smoothly and so quickly that a day was indistinguishable from a week. But I remember it as a conscious act, a declaration of freedom. I did not put my clothes back on again all summer, except to watch the dogs.

They were my obsession for a time, and I studied them, crawling so close that if the wind changed direction they would have been on me before I could run. I watched the 140 dog pack coalesce and then separate, according to some canine logic, into foraging groups that went out from the dump for days at a time. I watched the hierarchy of bite and bluster work out its differences as dogs gained and lost their positions in the pack.



I saw the hard, older dogs break in the new ones, reteaching them the things civilization had taught them to forget. I watched the new dogs learn what their teeth were really for, and I listened to them practicing their growling in the dark. When they stayed in the dump, I watched them, and when they went out along the four looping runs that formed a propeller with the dump as its hub, I watched their trail. Only once did it lead out of the woods completely.

In the second week I watched them, four dogs broke from the pack unobtrusively, as if they were sneaking away to share some common secret. I followed them out of the dump and through the woods until they came to four houses set almost beside one another, where they fawned and begged and wagged their tails at masters who had no idea that they had even been gone. Near the houses,

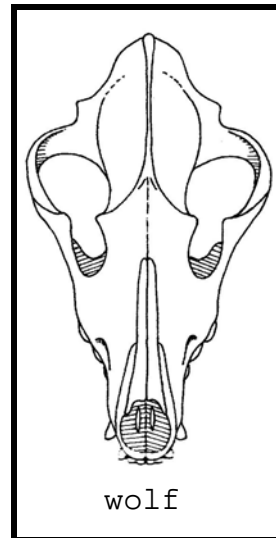
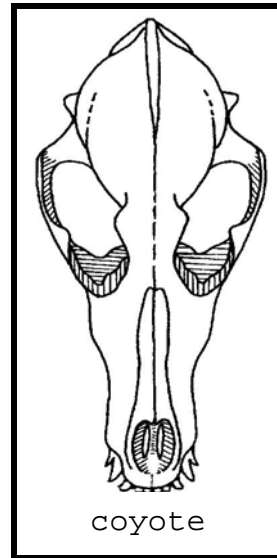
they were docile, friendly dogs that anyone could go up to and pet, but I could not go close to the house. I was not that kind of animal anymore, one that could live in the woods and still go home and beg for handouts. Months without the clock had made me a wild creature with no tolerance for civilized things.

The sight of houses made me nervous and when the people came out, opening the screen doors with one hand to set down a beggar's bowl of food, I had to look away to keep from being drawn back into that waking dream. I knew that whatever I did, I would never completely be a part of that tameness again. I might, when times got hard, drift back into the world my parents considered real, but in my depths, the only truth was the passing moment and its infinite variety.

When the four dogs came back, they were sniffed and surrounded like strangers, and I knew what the wild dogs were smelling, the groveling loss of substance that was the price of living easy off the machine. None of those dogs rose to first bite, or even fifth. They ran a little behind the rest, deferentially, as if they knew that they were only pretend dogs, some human being's *idea* of a dog.

But one or two other new recruits would stay when the summer ended and the foraging got hard and the winds cold. One in five would regain its heritage and become a true carnivore again. The rest would stay man-dogs, half creatures, with no sense of themselves or their proper place. Dogs of the interface, they would run the between-world, too adventurous for the lawn and a short chain but too humanized to make the break complete.

I think that of all the creatures I saw in the woods, those half-wild dogs were the least natural, their reflexes slowed by command, their senses dulled but the odor of machines and the apparatus of mankind. Nothing they did ever had the style of true dogs; they always seemed to be holding back, as if they thought the discovery of their clandestine life would cost them their pension. I was no longer like that. I had become animal in some important and irreversible ways.





HOW GREED BROUGHT THE PEACE DRUM TO THE BUFFALO PEOPLE

-AS TOLD BY TAMARACK SONG

When I was young I remember our Old Ones telling us stories about when Buffalo ran free over the teeming Prairie. I had visions of great brown hump-shouldered animals, as abundant as the Prairie Flowers, moving in endless waves upon a sea of grass. The Old Ones said that this was the time of the Blessing Way—a time of plenty and contentment for our People. Buffalo gifted us with all our needs—skin and fur for shelter and clothing, sweet meat and rich fat for nourishment, and bones and teeth for tools. We never had to worry or toil long to feed our Children or bring comfort to our Elders.

Our life has changed since then.

One morning near the end of that time of abundance, one of our revered Elder Women named Holds the Willow woke up agitated from a dream. She called her camp together, and here is what she said.

“My Sisters and Brothers, I must tell you about this time from which I just returned. I was in this valley, beside our River, but much had changed. Buffalo was no more, and the howl of Wolf no longer pierced the night. A new people who we called the No-hearts had come to the valley. There was no longer enough food, even when our bellies were full and we had ample provisions for the coming Snows. Goods were piled high upon one another until there was no more room, and still we wanted more. We were living in peace, yet we were not content.

“It was not the diseases of the No-heart People that did this to us, because we were strong in spirit and we rose again. Nor was it their great weapons, because—even though our bodies fell—our spirits lived on and we rose again. It was the No-heart’s Greed that conquered us.

“I watched the Greed infect us. First it killed our ability to reason, and then it killed our hearts. It blinded us to the misery we caused and deafened us to those who cried out in pain because of the misery. We grew numb to everything except what fed our greed. It was an addiction that made us crazy when we fed it, and crazy when we didn’t. It took only a few winters for the Greed to conquer us.

“The Blessing Way that we had known all our days as a People, had become the way of scarcity. The continual waves of abundance that once came flooding over our Hills were replaced with the stagnant murky haze of Greed.

“There my dream ended.

“Before I awoke, I heard a voice that said, ‘After you give this dream to your people, give them also this message; “Watch our Brother the Buffalo

Wolf, because he follows and hunts the Buffalo just as we do. As goes the fate of Wolf, so goes ours.”

“Aho”

And so it came to pass. The Old Ones told us that the Greed first sent scouts, just a few smiling evangelists and traders, who then left. Not long after that, just as foretold in the terrible dream of Holds the Willow, the Greed rumbled over the Prairie just as Buffalo once did. No longer were the Greedmongers content with our souls and our furs, they now wanted to use our Women and take our Children. Soon not even that contented them—they wanted to take from us our way of life.

The Old Ones told us stories about how we rose in defense of all we knew, of how we rose in defense of Brother Wolf. They said the War Chiefs would come to the mothers and ask for their sons. Four times they came to one who was called Rising Cloud Woman and four times she gave them a son.

And then they came for the fifth time. “I am honored that you have come to me so that I might have the privilege of again serving my People, she replied. “I have given birth to four sons and they have each become brave Guardians of our People and of our Way. Four times they have been brought back to me, for me to prepare them to be laid high on the Platform of the Dead up on the hill. Now I must tell you that I have no more sons, no more of my flesh and blood, to give.”

The Old Ones said that soon another wave of Greed came storming over the hills down upon their camp. Lodges were set ablaze, Women were carried off and Children and Dogs were hacked to death.

In the middle of it all, Rising Cloud Woman heard a voice that called her down to the River. She ran through the mayhem and dove into the Water, hiding under the Lily pads. Taking a hollow reed to breathe through, she lay there for four days.

The Elders of the camp were neither of service nor a threat to the Greedmongers, so their lives were spared. This was not so much out of generosity as it was for economy—the lust for greed left little time or energy for anything that did not directly feed the Greed.

At the end of the fourth day, after the survivors had finished tending to the wounded and laying the slain on the overburdened Platforms of the Dead, the Elders were called by an inner voice to go down to the River. There, from under the Lily pads, rose up Rising Cloud Woman. The last time they saw her, her hair was black as Raven. Now it was the color of the billowy clouds that rolled over the sunny Prairie sky.

They helped her out of the Water and sat with her in a circle on the sandy shore. After she relaxed and got her bearings, she spoke these words.

“My honored Elders. I feel like I have been gone for a long, long time. I have changed, our world has changed, and I was told that we must change with it. I was just brought back from the land where the Seven Grandfathers who originally gave us the Drum, dwell. They asked that we remember the prophecy of Holds the Willow that we had heard retold long

ago by the Grandmothers in the Storytelling Lodge.

“Brother Wolf is gone,’ the Grandfathers said. ‘You cannot stop the Greed. It will be here throughout your lifetime, and it will be there even in the time of your Children’s Children to the seventh generation. If you continue to meet the Greed with Greed for the Old Way, you might well perish as a People. If you let the waves of Greed pass over you like wind over the grass, you might rise again as does the grass after the wind passes. And then, when Buffalo returns, there will be Buffalo People to greet him.’ ”

“That made no sense to me,” said Rising Cloud Woman, “because we had always defended ourselves. I felt a cloud of confusion drift over my face. My four sons died honorably while protecting the People; that is our way—the way of the Warrior! My confusion turned into a stormcloud of anger, which furrowed my brow.

“I feared that my anger might dishonor the Grandfathers, yet all I saw in their eyes was kindness and understanding. They responded with this story.

‘Imagine if we were to build a dam to stop the flow of this River here before us. A great wall of water would build up behind our dam and it would eventually burst in an angry rage, destroying everything before it. In order to truly stop the flow of the River we would have to destroy it.

‘Such as the way with Greed. You cannot stop it, you cannot destroy it, yet it can destroy you. And it is. When force is met with force, there are no winners.’

“I listened,” said Rising Cloud Woman, “and I understood, because their truth sang to my heart.

“On the second day the Grandfathers began teaching me how to make a Drum. They asked me to hold the vision of that Drum, and to remember how it was made and all the words that were told during the making. They said that I was to pass them on to you as soon as I returned, and that you would know what to do with them.

“We first prepared by Smudging ourselves. And then we readied the hide of a young Buffalo who came to us to give herself to the Drum. Next we cut a section from the great hollow trunk of a fallen Elder Cottonwood.”

“We do not make Drums from the great Cottonwoods,” commented an Elderwoman. “A Drum that large would have to be played by many at once, and we have never seen that done.”

“Yes Grandmother,” replied Rising Cloud Woman. “As different as this Drum seemed, it yet felt as though it was going to be a Drum of our People. We gathered the materials in our traditional way, by giving Offerings and expressing our gratitude to our Buffalo and Cottonwood Relations. And then we blessed Drum in ceremony by laying it upon another Drum, and by playing the Drums side-by-side.

“After the Drum Blessing, the Grandfathers gave me this guidance. ‘This Drum is called *Peacebringer* and he wishes to dwell in the center of your camp. When the next great wave of Greed comes down over the hills,

ask your Guardians to grab their drumsticks instead of their weapons, and then run to Peacebringer and begin to play the old chants. They are the ones to play Peacebringer because they are the ones who are warring. The women and children shall gather and dance around the Guardians. When the No-hearts descend upon your camp, they will meet no resistance. They will find the whole camp gathered around Peacebringer and it will make no sense to them. Seeing that the camp is no threat to their ways, they will leave you alone.'

"The Ancestors then asked that, after we have made our Peacebringer, we make another and present it in ceremony to the camp up the River. We are to show the women how to prepare the Buffalo hides for drumheads, and show the men how to fashion the great Drum bodies from their Trees. They in turn will do the same for the next camp. In this way, the Grandfathers said, Peacebringer will come to all the People and that will help some of us to survive to carry on the Traditional Way.

"The Grandfather's final words to me were as follows. 'Some of the children of the Greedmongers will hear the song of their hearts and come to you. Welcome them and have them join you around Peacebringer. Together you can keep the Old Ways alive; together you can Drum and Dance the Circle back to Balance.

'In time the Greed will consume itself, the Prairie will grow lush again with Wolf pups rolling in the grass and Hawks soaring on the wind, and you will again follow Buffalo, as has been our way since the dawn of our kind.' "

"Aho."

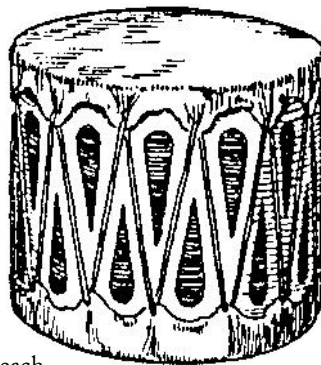
Postscript This legend was given to me along with the honor of being Drumkeeper for a community I once belonged to. We received our Peacebringer from Menominee Drum Chief Wallace Pyawasit.

Peacebringer came first to the Dakota (Sioux), sometime in the 1800s. At that time the Great Plains Natives were not only in deep conflict with the Greedmongers, they were also at war with each other and with the Forest Natives (mainly Ojibwa) to the east. They were all being pushed into each other by encroaching civilization.

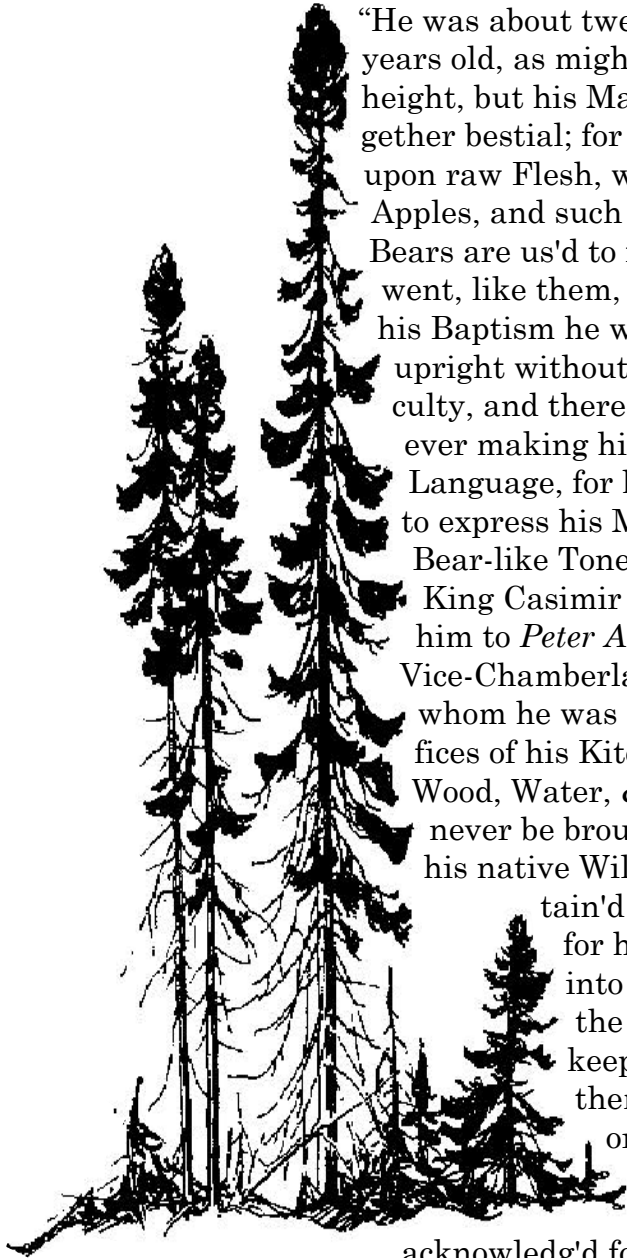
From the land of the Dakota, Peacebringer and her message spread from People to People in all directions. Religious societies have evolved around Peacebringer, and today Peacebringer serves mainly as the Powwow Social Drum.

Along the way a tradition began which asks that those sitting around Peacebringer abstain from alcohol and other alterants for four days prior. In this day another tradition is evolving—that women as well as men may drum Peacebringer. They are warring between themselves, and neither are at peace with Earth Mother, so both need to sit together around Peacebringer and feel the Mother's heartbeat.

—Tamarack Song, Teaching Drum Outdoor School, 7124 Military Rd. ,
Three Lakes, WI 54562, www.teachingdrum.org



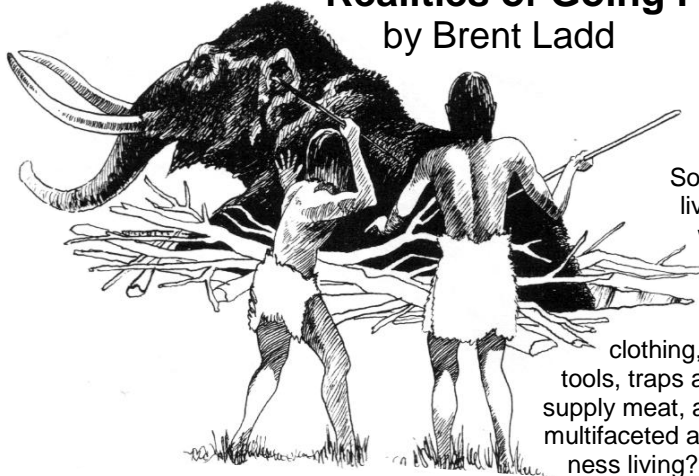
excerpt from: **SAVAGE GIRLS AND WILD BOYS:**
A HISTORY OF FERAL CHILDREN by Michael Newton



“He was about twelve or thirteen years old, as might be guest by his height, but his Manors were altogether bestial; for he not only fed upon raw Flesh, wild Honey, Crab-Apples, and such like Dainties which Bears are us'd to feast with, but also went, like them, upon all-four. After his Baptism he was not taught to go upright without a great deal of difficulty, and there was less hope of ever making him learn the *Polish* Language, for he always continu'd to express his Mind in a kind of Bear-like Tone. Some time after King Casimir made a Present of him to *Peter Adam Opalinski*, Vice-Chamberlain of *Posnan*, by whom he was employ'd in the Offices of his Kitchin, as to carry Wood, Water, &c but yet could never be brought to relinquish his native Wildness, which he retain'd to his dying-day; for he would often go into the Woods amongst the Bears, and freely keep company with them without any fear, or harm done him, being, as was suppos'd, constantly acknowledg'd for their Fosterling.”

Realities of Going Primitive

by Brent Ladd



So what is it like to live a primitive life-way, sleeping in a conical birch bark lodge, wearing deer skin clothing, making and using tools, traps and weapons to supply meat, and all of the other multifaceted aspects of wilderness living? In the following

pages, I will detail my experience of living close to Mother Earth. Again, it will not be a flowery account, but rather one that is full of compromises and hardships, and also of rewards and joys.

I do not claim to know everything about primitive living or survival, and I have not lived in this way long enough to be 100% proficient and self-sufficient. Primarily, I want to discuss the many unexpected mysteries one has to figure out and learn before progressing further.

Generally (and I emphasize generally), one cannot improve upon what has worked for thousands of years for indigenous people. We would prove this time and time again; often the hard way. Shelter has been a prime example. We exerted more energy than I care to think of attempting to build the "perfect" primitive shelter, only to return to the basics in the end.

As I write this, I am reminded of how we often forget what the primitive person had to work with for tools; namely wood, bone and stone implements. It is amazing how quickly one can destroy and travel down the wrong path with the white man's axe, shovel and saw. Prior to actually getting birch bark, we had decided to try to build earth lodges; basically underground shelters. As incredible as it now sounds to me, we dug a four feet deep by sixteen feet diameter pit (through sand and gravel) using steel shovels. We were modeling our structures after the Mandan Earth Lodges (which were not dug but a foot deep). We had axed down huge hop-horn beam supports and were figuring out the best way of placing the beams on the ceiling. It was becoming more and more apparent that the sheer amount of materials needed to construct the lodge would be prohibitive. In addition, we began questioning what structural integrity we would end up with, knowing that tons of earth would be pushing from all directions. We were trying to live primitively by using the civilized mentality.

Another reality check is the difficulty in obtaining enough food from the wild

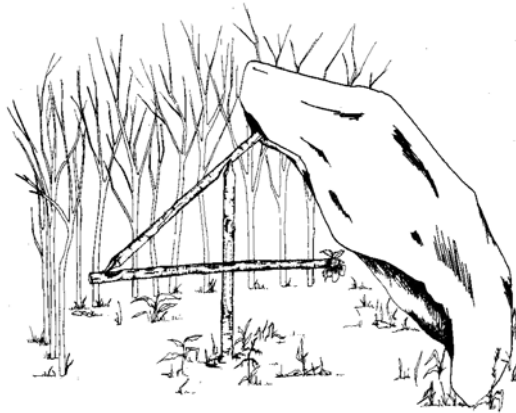
to live here in the 20th century. There are three primary factors that limit the hunter-gatherer diet right off: (1) the amount of privately owned land, (2) strict hunting and trapping seasons and (3) strict limitations on hunting and trapping methods and bag limits. What about plants? Well, getting fresh wild greens in summer is easy, and does enrich the diet. I used to be vegetarian, but that is next to impossible in a hunter/gatherer existence. The best item for living in the north is meat and as much fat as you can get. I have learned that it is possible to live quite well on spruce tea and meat, as long as you eat the entire animal. Eating organs and eyes, gives trace amounts of important minerals and vitamins A and C, not found in muscle. The spruce tea provides vitamins A and C, which are hard to get in the winter.

I have tried going on civilized food like rice and beans, peanut butter, oatmeal and the like, but my energy level was very low. Wild meat is what I have to have to remain healthy and strong and keep my body temperature regulated in the cold winter months.

Because of my change from vegetarian to meat eater, one thing I had to come to terms with was the fact I would have to kill to get meat. I had to come to terms psychologically with killing another living being. This would not be difficult had I been without other rations. However, I was eating well during the summer and therefore, it made it difficult to think about killing. It seemed that any other creature is out there doing its best to survive and that I did not have a right to pluck it from this world? The closer I got to nature, the more I understood it has not anything to do with rights, and everything to do with the circle of life itself. I began hunting and trapping for food.

Properly set deadfalls and snares kill an animal quickly and humanely, and without the animal associating being caught by humans. Perhaps they think they are caught in a bush in the case of a snare, and in the case of deadfalls, they never know what hit them, because it's over in a second. Snares and deadfalls are illegal to use in Michigan and most other states, but I am practicing with them on small game (meal chipmunks) to become proficient whenever I might need to use them on a wider scale. Deadfalls work on a mouse or a bear and snares for rabbit to moose.

I am often asked if I ever miss soda pop, candy bars, or pizza. Currently, I do not, but when I was first starting out, I did have cravings. Honestly, I cannot drink a soda now, because of how sugary sweet it tastes. Wild apples, blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries are native sweets and they more than satisfy me. I eventually did not miss salt. Most of the stews I made are void of salt and spices and



they still taste good.

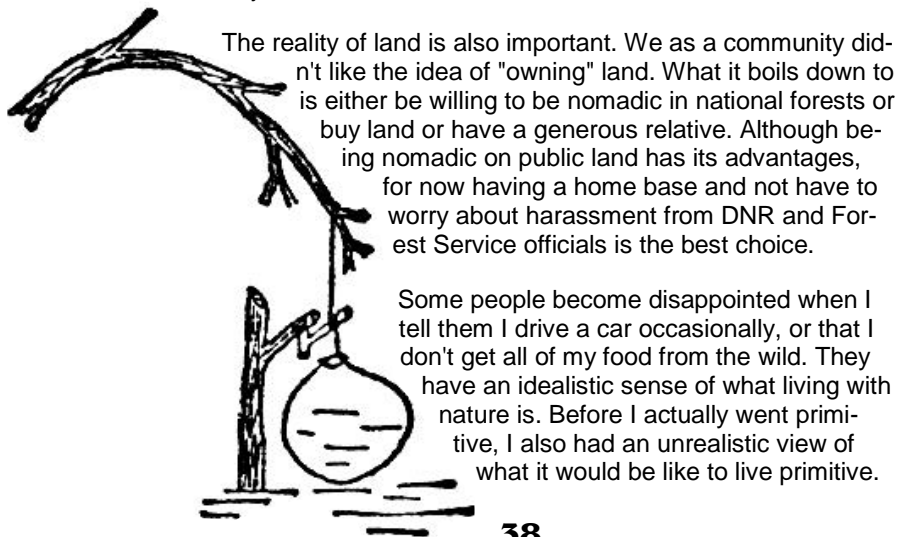
Food variety is fairly limited in the primitive diet. That does not mean it is not a good diet. Studies of pre-contact primitive peoples the world over have found that these "limited" diets meet every body requirement.

When you are back in the woods, hygiene is an important factor of all-around health. Keeping the camp clean and picked up and keeping yourself clean is a priority. Having a river or lake to take occasional swims during warm seasons is refreshing and also allows easy cleaning of cooking and eating bowls. We have a sweat lodge where periodic sweats are taken. This is tremendous at removing dirt and grease from the body and hair and also helps clean any toxins from the skin. I have never felt cleaner or more refreshed than after taking a sweat!

Since I have broken the "civilized" habit of taking daily showers with synthetic soaps and shampoos, my hair and skin feel much better. No more itchy, dry skin. In fact, taking daily baths washes oils from the skin that are necessary for vitamin D production in the body. At any rate, body oils and odor seem to stabilize after a few months in the woods. Waiting for greasy hair to "stabilize" was trying, but once it did, my hair has been very healthy.

It is not only being watched and the hunting regulations that aggravate me, but there is also the issue of housing codes and zoning nightmares. Social Services once threatened friends of mine, who were residing in a wigwam with their children, that the children would be taken away unless they were in a house that met zoning codes. This meant they had to have tar paper on the roof, a wooden floor, no open fire, and a thing called a "rat wall."

When I first embarked on living primitive, I wanted to be able to live it full-time without needing a car or extra food. For now, the reality is that I need income, just a little, to make ends meet.



At present, there is no cut and dried dividing line between modern living and primitive living. It is a grand illusion to think you can totally step from one world to the other right away. Because of the number of skills and amount of knowledge needed to live in the wild, I am having to be patient and take the time to learn. I do not always wear buckskins. I am using cast iron to cook in until adequate clay pots are made. I own and drive a car to and from certain hunting areas, to schools, to visit relatives, etc... At some point, I hope to canoe or walk most everywhere. I use wool blankets and a sleeping bag until enough fur pelts are tanned for a sleeping robe. In other words, the transition from modern society to a primitive lifestyle is just that, a transition. I have had to rely on certain non-wilderness products to survive. I am reiterating all of this because I want to emphasize that this transition takes lots of time, time to learn skills, time to heal from living in modern society, time to deal with insecurities, time to adjust to a major lifestyle change.

There is simply no cultural circle in place to help those of us pursuing the "wilderness way." We have few, if any, elders to learn from. We have been schooled and prepped from birth for the helter-skelter business world, not the aboriginal world of gatherer/hunter. I have had to refrain from being so critical of myself to avoid becoming discouraged and be accepting and as patient as possible.

I hope this lets the reader know that there isn't a ready-made primitive way of life waiting once jobs are left and houses are sold, etc... What has been encouraging for me, is the knowledge that every one's ancestor's (99%+) were hunter/gatherers. This is our true heritage. As I have moved closer toward a 100% primitive lifestyle, things seem to get easier. Ideas form quicker. A certain grasp of the whole circle of what living primitive means is being made. I just have had, and continue to have, the perseverance to believe it is possible and that I can do it.

I suppose there are levels of freedom these days. In my opinion, going primitive offers the most freedom possible. At times, it exhilarates me and definitely enhances my life. My life is my own. If I want to go explore a new wilderness area, I go do it. If I want to go scout for beaver or deer or whatever, I go do it. If I want to simply sit half of the day in the sun by the river, I can do that too. I am very flexible with what I can do and when I do it. This is a part of being free, I believe.



Another aspect I have noticed is my change in sense of time. I am relaxed and not hurrying around to beat the clock. As I have slowed down, it appears that there is more time! A wonderful paradox, isn't it? I think less of the future and live more in the present moment. I

feel more into the natural flow of life. Living in the present moment isn't something I have consciously tried to accomplish, but is gradually and naturally occurring, the longer I am in the woods.

I said I would finish by talking about two aspects of primitive living that are not found in any skills book, yet, that I believe are essential to success in long term wilderness living. They are 1.) Community (i.e., family, tribe, friends) and 2.) Attitude.

Community: In my eyes, this comes before all else. A group of people with common goals and shared interests is a powerful thing. You become like brothers and sisters, and care about each other. When someone is hurt or sick, the others pitch in. If someone is down or depressed, we talk and play music. If a lodge is to be built, we all help. If someone kills a deer or traps a beaver, all share in the meat.

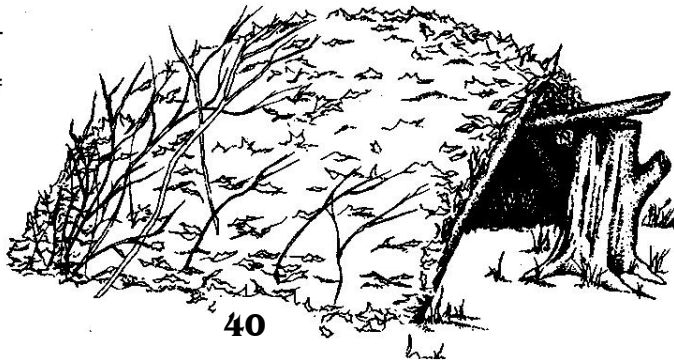
Being in a community is also like a mirror to yourself. Realizing each of us has come from a messed-up society, we each have our own personal hang-ups that we each work on. We don't always agree on everything in our community, and that is good because we have to think twice about things and hash them out.

I am thankful for the community we have, though it may be only five people now. I hope others will be able to form in the near future.

Attitude: It can make or break you. It is important to know skills like fire making, inside and out, but if you are caught in a rain storm or blizzard or whatever, and you let the weather get to you psychologically, it could mean hypothermia. I am learning that I need a sense of confidence and courage to live the way I have in the past two years. Many doubts have entered my mind about what I am doing. I have had to suck it up and get past the fears and let myself know I can do it. If I fail, I try again. I can not give up on anything and continue to live primitive.

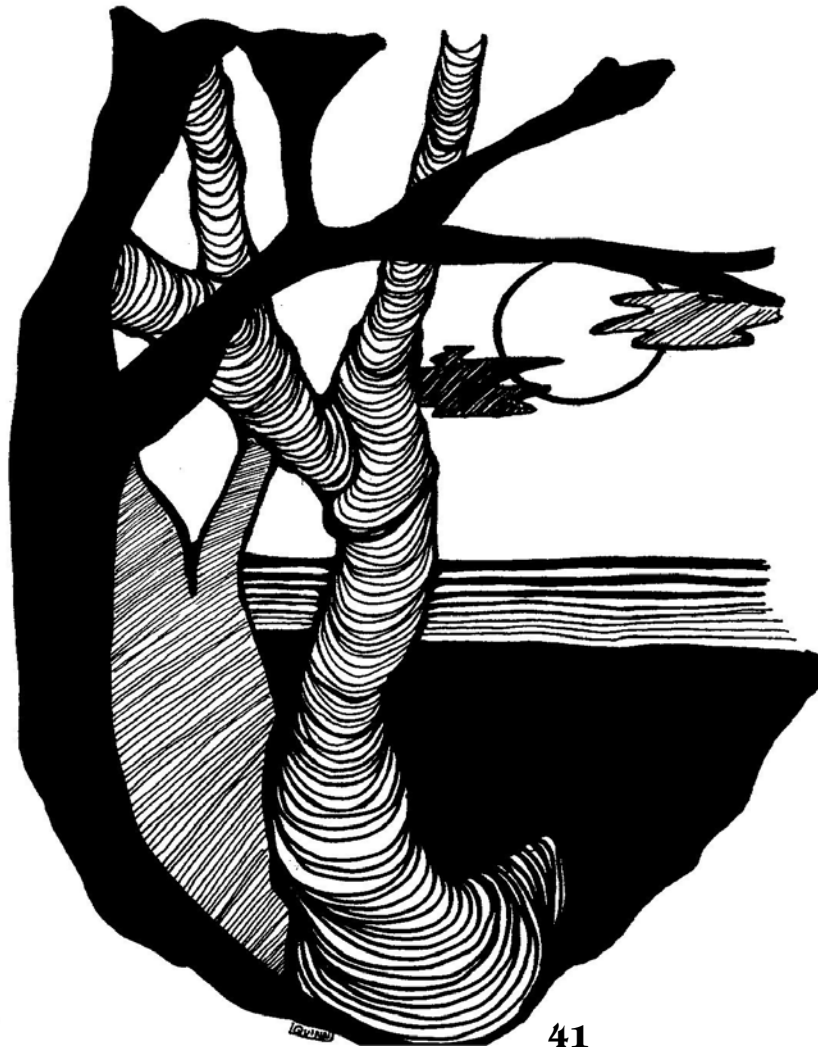
A sense of humor is a big part of the right attitude. Mine can get very sarcastic at times. I deal with the set backs and compromises with humor-poking fun. Being able to laugh at myself helps a great deal.

Actually I hope I have not been too heavy on the compromises and difficulties of going primitive. It is difficult to describe the magnitude of feelings of freedom and awesome sights, sounds, smells that enliven my senses in the

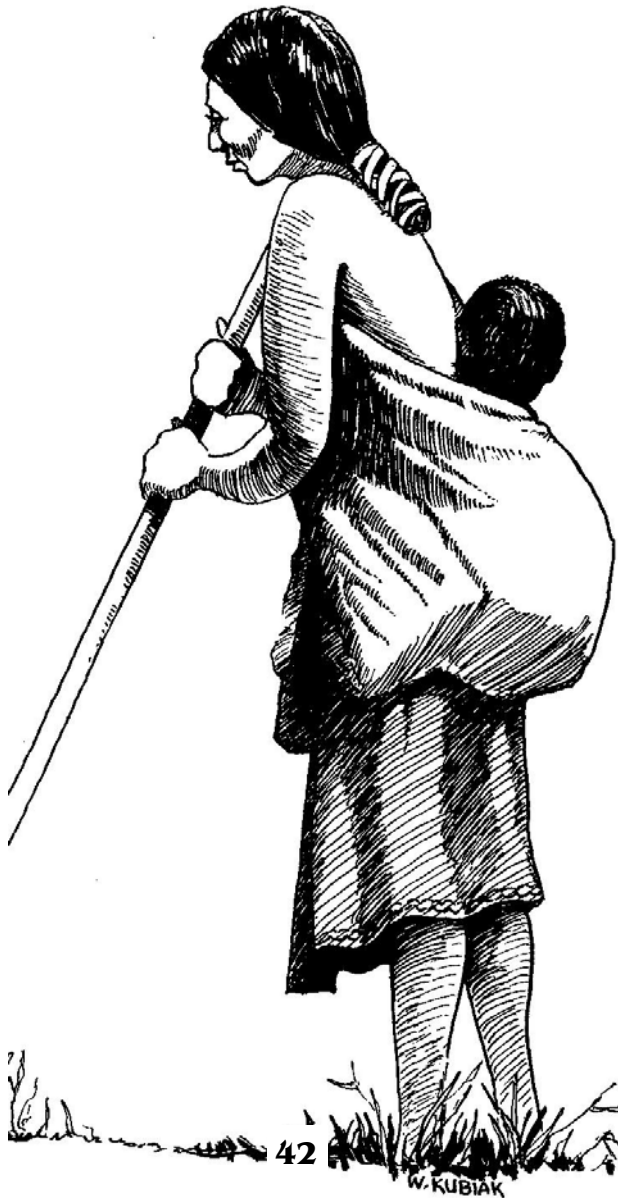


woods. The joys and rewards of this life are not things which can be understood from talking or reading about them, but are meant to be experienced first hand. So get out there. Experience it and live it!

I found this article originally in an old copy (1996?) of 'Wilderness Way magazine. I don't know if the author or other community members are still living this way. If you are reading this and are one of the folks written about please get in touch. I reprinted this because I resonate with the "realities" and have had similar realizations and experiences. The complete unabridged version of this article can be found on Wilderness Way's website : www.wwmaq.net.

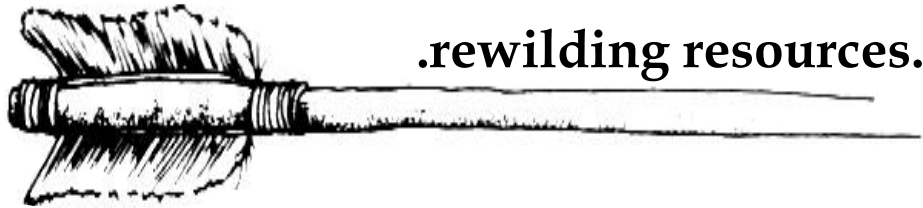


“While most colonial administrators did their honest best to educate and ‘civilize’ their Indian neighbors — hoping perhaps to tame their highly independent ways — the Indians themselves remained doubtful. In 1744, when the Virginia legislature offered free tuition at the College of William and Mary to six Iroquois youth, the Iroquois politely declined. Explaining their reasons, the great Onondaga spokesman Canasatego told why a college education made no sense at all.”



"We have had some experience with it. Several of our young people were formerly brought up in the colleges of the Northern provinces, they were instructed in all your sciences; but, when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either cold or hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, nor kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, nor counselors; they were totally good for nothing.

"We are however not the less obliged for your kind offer, though we decline accepting it; and to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia shall send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education and instruct them in all we know, and make men of them."



.rewilding resources.

BOOKS: *some of our favorites...*

DIET-

NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL DEGENERATION - Weston Price

A study done in the 1930s detailing the effects of introducing civilized foods to isolated peoples eating traditional foods. While the studies in the beginning of the book are worth reading, the conclusions Price draws from his research can be ignored without missing much.

POTTENGERS CATS - Francis M. Pottenger

THE PALEOLITHIC PRESCRIPTION - S. Boyd Eaton, et al

NEANDERTHIN - Ray Audette, et al

NOURISHING TRADITIONS - Sally Fallon

Mostly a recipe book. The beginning before the recipes is the most interesting. She talks a lot about different types of fats and sources of fat. This is definitely written for someone who is buying all of his or her food and cooking on a stove.

TRADITIONAL FOODS ARE YOUR BEST MEDICINE - Ronald Schmid

TRACKING-

MAMMAL TRACKS AND SIGN: A Guide to North American Species - Mark Elbroch

Probably the single best book on mammal tracking available. Beautiful photographs.

BIRD TRACKS AND SIGN: A Guide to North American Species - Mark Elbroch

TRACKING AND THE ART OF SEEING - Paul Rezendes

PETERSON'S FIELD GUIDE TO ANIMAL TRACKS - Olaus J. Murie

FIELD GUIDE TO MAMMAL TRACKING IN NORTH AMERICA - James Halfpenny & Elizabeth Biesiot



PRIMITIVE SKILLS-

SURVIVAL SKILLS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

- Peter Goodchild, Our favorite "skills" book.

TRADITIONAL BOWYERS BIBLE VOL. 1-3

How to make a primitive bow

DEER SKINS TO BUCKSKINS - Matt Richards

Easy to use book about brain tanning deer hides

NAKED INTO THE WILDERNESS VOL. I & II

- John & Geri McPherson

PARTICIPATING IN NATURE - Thomas J. Elpel
TOM BROWN'S FIELD GUIDE TO WILDERNESS SURVIVAL

- Tom Brown, Jr.

Of the many books & field guides by this author, this is our favorite.

OJIBWA CRAFTS - Carrie A. Lyford

PRIMITIVE TECHNOLOGY I & II: A Book of Earth Skills

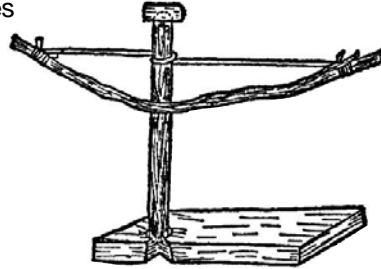
- Ed Wescott, Collection of the "best of" articles

from the

"Bulletin for Primitive Technology"

NATIVE AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE

- Peter Nabokov & Robert Easton



HEALING-

JOURNEY TO THE ANCESTRAL SELF

- Tamarack Song

An easy to read "how-to" manual for practical rewilding with a good balance of why & how. The exercises given in the second half of the book have been an invaluable resource to me. Tamarack also has several self-published manuscripts available & is in the process of putting out a bunch of new books in the near future: www.teachingdrum.org

THE CIRCLE WAY - Manitonquat

Great hard to find book about living in what he calls "The Circle Way".

This mostly deals with the Talking Circle and having healthy relationship.

RETURN TO CREATION : A Survival Manual for

Native and Natural People - Manitonquat

RADICAL HONESTY - Brad Blanton

PLANTS, ETC-

BOTANY IN A DAY - Thomas J. Elpel

A guide to learning plant families and identifying plants

NEWCOMBS GUIDE TO WILDFLOWERS

- Lawrence Newcomb

MUSHROOMS DEMYSTIFIED - David Aurora

WILD ROOTS - Doug Elliot



INDIGENOUS CULTURE-

THE EDUCATION OF LITTLE TREE - Forrest

Carter

A fictional story about a Native Boy growing up in post-contact America

THE FOREST PEOPLE - Colin Turnbull

A non-fiction book about the BaMbuti Pygmies'

INGWE - Ingwe

Written by and about a white man who grew up in the bush in Africa who was guided as a boy by a local Native African man.

VOICES OF THE FIRST DAY: Awakening in the Aboriginal Dream-time - Robert Lawler

A non-fiction book about Australian Aborigine culture

NIGHT FLYING WOMAN : An Ojibway Narrative (Publications of the Minnesota Historical Society) - Ignatia Broker, Steven Premo

This book explains the story of the Ojibway people of the White Earth reservation in Northern Minnesota.

LAME DEER, SEEKER OF VISIONS - Richard Erdoes

A very funny book written by Lame Deer through Richard Erdoes. This is one of our all-time favorite books. Lame Deer is a Lakota Elder who wanted to share his views on the world while he was still living.

OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST-

WILDWOODS WISDOM - Doug Elliot

A great collection of naturalist stories & lore set in the southern Appalachians.

JUNGLE LORE - Jim Corbett

ISHMAEL, MY ISHMAEL, THE STORY OF B - Daniel Quinn

A HANDFUL OF DUST - Marc Beaudin

A story about seeking the Ghost Dance in modern day in which the writer has an internal conflict between being a writer and a "seeker".

PETERSONS FIELD GUIDE SERIES

My current favorite field guides are mostly Peterson's. There are Edible and Medicinal Plants, Wildflowers, Birds, Mammals, and many more. If you're looking for a good field guide, consider these. They are easy to find at any bookstore.

AUDIO:

*Many good books are also available on audio.

SEEING THROUGH NATIVE EYES, ADVANCED BIRD LANGUAGE, FOLKLORE & LEGENDS OF THE AKAMBA VOL. 1, SPIRIT OF THE LEOPARD

(available as audio only)

available through the Wilderness Awareness School:

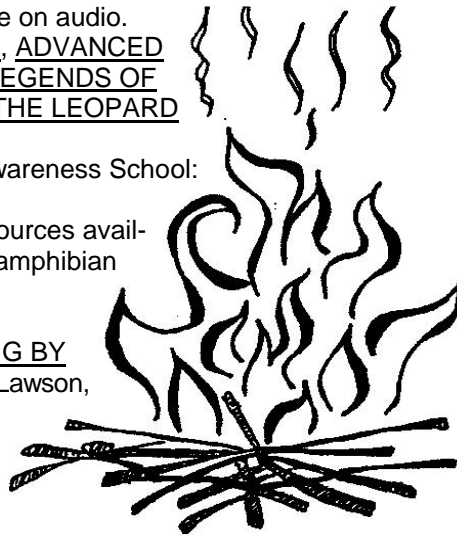
www.wildernessawareness.org

*there are many excellent audio resources available for identifying bird, mammal & amphibian calls. Available at

www.naturesound.com.

BIRDING BY EAR & MORE BIRDING BY

EAR - Richard K. Walton, Robert W. Lawson, Roger Tory Peterson



WEBSITES:

www.braintan.com

created by the author of Deerskins to Buckskins. There's an online forum great for asking questions about tanning

www.teachingdrum.org

Official website for the Teaching Drum Outdoor School. This school offers a year-long full immersion wilderness experience program and offers week-end and week long skills classes.

www.wildroots.org

website for the Wildroots collective radical homestead project.

www.primitive.org

Society for Primitive Technology

www.gowildordietryin.org

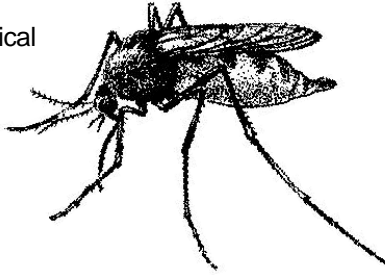
www.abotech.com

www.primitiveways.com

www.hollowtop.com

www.wildernessawareness.org

offers a "naturalist training" correspondence course called 'KAMANA' that a few folx have highly recommended.



MAGAZINES / ZINES:

Wilderness Way Magazine

www.wmag.net / P.O. Box 621, Bellaire, TX 77402-0621

Bulletin for Primitive Technology

www.primitive.org / P.O. Box 905, Rexburg, ID 83440

Feral Forager

www.wildroots.org

PO Box 1485, Asheville, NC 28801

Subsist/Resist

Meadow Bejarano, PO Box 126, Cordova AK 99574

FILMS:

*there are many "primitive skills" films available, check out www.teachingdrum.org for a few.

Year of the Caribou

the true story of a family that moves to the Alaskan wilderness trying to find a better way of life.

The Great Dance

documentary about Kalahari bushman with an emphasis on tracking

The Fast Runner

traditional Inuit teaching story produced, directed & starring Inuit peoples told in Inuit language with subtitles.

Winged Migration

A documentary following migrating birds



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