



Green Path

James R. Veteto

Poetry

**Beyond the green wall
it all opens up.**

Plantae

**twining vines all around
herbaceous layer,
woody shrubs,
tall behemoth canopy
subcanopy
midstory
the forests
the deserts,
mountains and plains.
The intense greenness permeates
especially when it rains.**

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Spore plants, no vascular system

—mosses and liverworts—

sphagnum, highly acidic, antibiotic
bodies of trees, animals, humans
preserved perfectly in peat bog past

Vascular sporophytes, the ancient;
club moss, horsetail, and ferns
standing upright, reaching for sky
first forests of hundred foot horsetail trees
Spores dropping to the ground,
in thallus male and female organs unite

Gymnosperms, naked seeds
pines, cypress, gingko, sequoia
crusty old acid-loving needle spreading beings

Angiosperms, the flowering ones,
seeds tucked tight or loose in nourishing ovary.

Where the real diversity is

—stop and smell the flowers—

Over 250,000 species worldwide.

The Greenman peeks out from the forest,
his beard rife with foliage
IS the forest,
his likeness in trees and other green beings,
a spirit,
many spirits,
when we get calm and connect,
we are him
and he us.

And then his brothers and sisters,
the ents,
shepherds of trees,
Tolkien knew them well.
Tall oaks and strident ash.
Keen basswood and nutty hickory.
Nurturing the ecosystems,
order in chaos.

The trees gave the Celts ogham, a sacred alphabet,
 each rune corresponding to a green being
 and they defended the wizard Gwydion
 in the Cad Goddeu, battle of the trees
 a poem encapsulating magical system,
 trees standing for letters
 corresponding to finger tips on the hands—
 the origins of casting spells
 all bequeathed by plantae, the green ones,
 to ancient practitioners on the green path.

The Cherokee say that in ancient times
 humans overhunted the animals,
 upsetting the balance of the natural world.
 The animals gave us disease in revenge.
 But the plants felt pity on us,
 they loved humankind.
 For every disease they created a cure in their body.
 An ancient herbal book
 for us to decipher and cherish.

Old Odin sacrificed himself nine days and nights
 upon the world tree Yggdrasil
 when he tasted Oderrerir, the sacred poetic mead,
 he was given nine magical songs and nine magical runes.
 The birth of poetry and magic
 for all those who will listen.

Elixir meads made from flowers, stems, fruits;
 buds, leaves, and root.
 Sweet birch, sassafras, paw paw, sweet cicely,
 wormwood, chicory, black locust, St. John's wort
 Sambucinnia
 meads made to mood and season
 each one its own
 and the green mind wanders the dimensions.

Food → Medicine → Hallucinogen → Poison
 a continuum
 a path
 every winding, ever flowing

Psychotropics—now that's a wild ride there.
travelers must be aware.

Mother Earth breathes
and spirits talk

the plants listen and the trees walk.

Lady Cannabis Jane

an entry way

heightens the senses, the perceptions

a gateway within

to moss-covered oak pathways,

a widened lens.

The ears hear beautiful music

in the wind rustling leaves,

blowing branches,

clattering bamboo,

ringing true.

Mescaline will have you talking to spirits straightaway.

Mellow oneness pathways open to divine.

Grandfather peyote, granddaughter San Pedro

best to go on the journey

with a trusted group of fellow travelers.

Yet, the myriad living beings

can help you along solo too.

Never alone on the path.

There are angels here and demons too.

Tread lightly and give thanks

on the psychotropic path.

The Hopi met Masau, a robed Katchina-God

with a simple digging stick and satchel of seeds

in ancient times after many years of wandering.

They agreed to follow his simple way of life

—the birth of agriculture—

sowing their 'three sisters'

in desert washes

and dancing to the Gods for rain.

Agrobiodiversity, the myriad variation

of human and spirit hands

the generations through

creating vegetables and fruits

of every shape, color, and size.

Up in the Katuah mountains of Appalachia still today
they plant Cherokee White Flour Corn
with tender October Beans twining up stalks
and pale orange Roughbark Candyroaster Squash
drying in the bright Fall sun.

Plantae

This green path you lead us down
these green teachers,
these divine beings.

You give us shelter, food, medicine, spirituality,
beauty, poems.

Would that we could grace Mother Earth
in a similar way
Would that we could learn from you the way
to walk the path more greener.

When we open our hearts and minds
they are waiting there to show us—

Greenpath.

for Frank Cook

7-24-11

