

Key to quotes in the [PLN Thanksgiving blog](#), November 2011

Aldo Leopold, *Round River*

To keep [every cog and wheel](#) is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.

Ben Franklin, letter to his daughter in 1784 about the Great Seal of the U.S.

“I am on this account not displeased that the Figure is not known as a Bald Eagle, but looks more like a Turkey. For the Truth the Turkey is in Comparison a much more [respectable Bird](#), and withal [a true original Native of America](#) . . . He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on.”

America the Beautiful

Words by Katharine Lee Bates,

Melody by Samuel Ward

O beautiful [for spacious skies](#),

[For amber waves of grain](#),

For purple mountain majesties

Above the fruited plain!

America! America!

God shed his grace on thee

And crown thy good with [brotherhood](#)

[From sea to shining sea!](#)

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

Everyone knows, for example, that the [autumn landscape](#) in the north woods is the land, plus [a red maple](#), plus [a ruffed grouse](#). In terms of conventional physics, the grouse represents only a millionth of either the mass or the energy of an acre. yet subtract the grouse and the whole thing is dead. An enormous amount of some kind of motive power has been lost.

Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*

Once there were [brook trout](#) in the streams in the mountains. You could see them standing in the amber current where the white edges of their fins wimpled softly in the flow. They smelled of moss in your hand. [Polished and muscular and torsional](#). On their backs were vermiculate patterns that were maps of the world in its becoming. Maps and mazes. Of a thing which could not be put back. Not be made right again. In the deep glens where they lived all things were older than man and they hummed of mystery.

Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken*

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

10

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Richard Wright, haiku

Even the serpent,
magically beautiful
in silver moonlight.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

“The friendship of a dog is precious. It becomes even more so when one is so far removed from home.... I have a Scottie. In him I find consolation and diversion... he is the ‘one person’ to whom I can talk without the conversation coming back to war.”

Chief Seattle

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people.

Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man. . . .

We are part of the earth and it is part of us.

The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers.

The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man--all belong to the same family.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

Anonymous folk saying, coined in the U.S.

Live (or eat) high on the hog!

Wendell Berry, *The Peace of Wild Things*

When despair grows in me

and I wake in the middle of the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting for their light. For a time

I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Martin Luther King

I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal."

Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*

Trees, because of their moisture requirements, are our physiological counterparts in the kingdom of plants.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *The Yearling*

It was not his own voice that called. It was a boy's voice. Somewhere beyond the sink-hole, past the magnolia, under the [live oaks, a boy and a yearling ran side by side](#), and were gone forever.

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

On the mornings that had once [throbbled with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens and scores of other bird voices](#) there was now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh.

Patricia Frolander, *Why I Stay*

for awakening grass and chokecherry leaf,
a flute-warbled song from a yellow throat,
a heart, quickened, at springtime blush,
I revel in rain-drenched fields,
ramble meadows and hillsides,
seek coyote and fox,
glimpse fawns nestling in tall grasses.

I rouse to calls of Canada geese,
their vee slicing blue air,
seek the bandit who eats my winter grain,
laugh at ducklings' play in the reservoir,
rejoice at the stallion's nicker calling his mares.
I stay for the rhythm of season,
[for the land, always the land](#)
and
for a man whose hands know my heartbeat
almost as well as God knows my soul.

Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

At the time of Lewis and Clark, setting the prairies on fire was a well-known signal that meant, "Come down to the water." It was an extravagant gesture, but we can't do less. If the landscape reveals one certainty, it is that [the extravagant gesture is the very stuff of creation](#). After the one extravagant gesture of creation in the first place, the universe has continued to deal exclusively in extravagances, flinging intricacies and colossi down aeons of emptiness, heaping profusions on profligacies with ever-fresh vigor. The whole show has been on fire from the word go. I come down to the water to cool my eyes. But everywhere I look I see fire; that which isn't flint is tinder, and the whole world sparks and flames.

Ian Frazier, *On the Rez*

America is a [leap of the imagination](#). From its beginning, people had only a persistent idea of what a good country should be.

E. O. Wilson

The one process now going on that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is [the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us](#).

Gifford Pinchot

“Conservation means [the wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of men](#).”

Teddy Roosevelt, Confession of Faith Speech

["There can be no greater issue than that of conservation in this country."](#)

John Muir

[“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.”](#)

Mary Oliver, *The Summer Day*

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean-

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, [what is it you plan to do](#)

[with your one wild and precious life?](#)