

PRAIRIE GOD

by Dennis William Hauck (www.DWHauck.com)

Published in *Poet Magazine* (Summer 1991), *In the Company of Poets* (July/August 1991), *Down Peaceful Paths* (1991), *Poet's Series Anthology* (Vol.2 1991), and *Poems That Thump in the Dark* (Summer 1992).

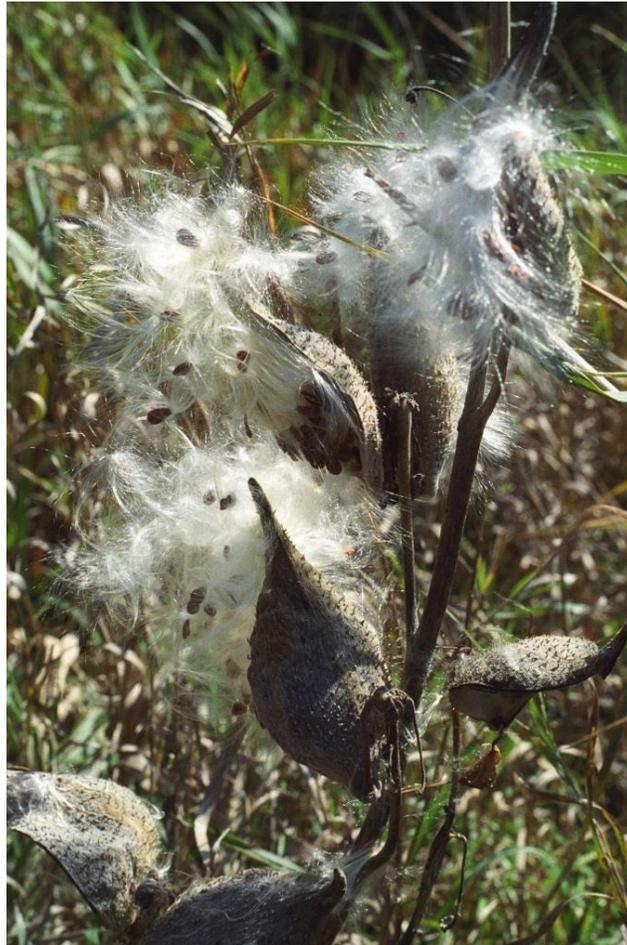


Verdant sea of waist-high weeds,
wind-blown waves that pass like goosebumps over her skin.
Here Nature took her stand and forbade the adult caste.
No concrete squares guide your steps,
but long, meandering paths furrowed by children at play,
leading to hidden treasures.

The tall grass waved invitingly:
Leave the backyard!
Enter the secret prairie!
Forsake the lawn and garden
and the structured mindset bearing down hard,
molding me all my eight years.

Freedom there beyond the fence
to have any thought I choose.
This August day seduced me.

I desert my father's house
and jump the fence where no man rules,
where no one cares that I lost the shopping money,
or that we live beyond our means.
All that matters is how we can be as One,
this boundless prairie and me.

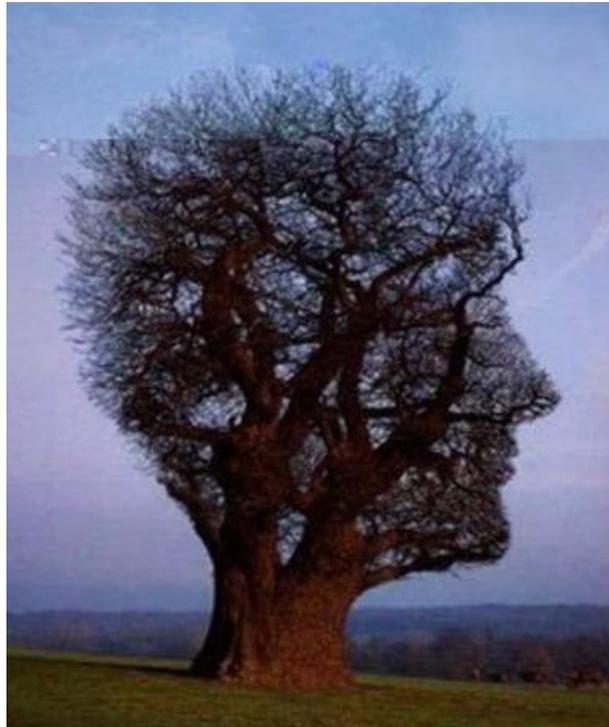


Milkweed thistles reigned that day.
I tasted their cloudy dew.
Soon their prickly pods would burst,
and deck this field in white silk,
– each seed fighting to be first.

Oh, thick sweet air,
moist summer wind!
The earth smells so pungent here,
it can choke you.

I follow on beyond the bluff,
not remembering distance,
not measuring anything.
Deep in the heart of the prairie
I discover a gaping hole
in the virgin earth before me.

No weeds grow here,
but a great oak shades the pit.
If I step forth,
its steep, smooth walls would trap me,
perhaps slowly dissolve me,
absorb me in its clay flesh.



At the edge I paused
for minutes, or days, or weeks.
Slipping down but not moving,
– changes not in space.
Nothing else but two great holes,
one in the earth and one in me;
and by our similarity,
our edges merged like mercury.
I should have ran away.

But how to tell of energy,
of power hid in me, now free,
like liquid fire melting the dross away.
Inner and outer overlapping.
Coming and going – now one action.
Nothing and everything in the same place.
It exceeded any question I could make.

Then I pulled back,
my mother whispering in my ear,
offering television, dinner, and Dad.

Then I pulled back,
choosing the manicured lawn and garden
and all the loving comforts of home.

And I never returned to the Prairie God again.