

THE BONFIRE

Robert E. Bear

It was 9:08 p.m. On this October eve the gelid air impassioned pathos of a primordial glacial era long since experienced by an antediluvian community. Before me the gentle temperament of nature's theater was softly lit as the full moon caressed the lake with its awakening. The stage was set and chairs positioned. Oak, willow, and cedar actors were poised, silently awaiting the cue to commence the command performance. All was ready; the ambience for a perfect production.



With the motion of the sulfur-tipped baton in my hand, the entertainment began. Slowly, unrehearsed golden dancers embarked on dazzling displays of leaping and pirouettes in synchronized undulations of radiance. Visual crescendos of intense rapture ensued. No choreographer, past, present, or future, could devise a cotillion so astounding! During the entire optical splendor, the scintillating embers provided the overture while the cool north breeze orchestrated the trees' background interludes.

I settled in with a cup of hot tea and was joined by the feline family pet. From time to time, as the resplendent ephemeral ballerinas mesmerized this audience of one, the four-legged companion on my lap silently demanded attention and I was not obliged, but happy to give it. He sighed with contentment of congenial petting and I from affectionate reflections on a new found friend.

The performance tenaciously grappled to an unwelcome finale. Regrettably, an encore could no longer be coerced and the coals abated, becoming unresponsive, tacit. Only the beating of my heart applauded the exhibition. It was time for repose. And, I ponder; "Could this sensory serenity comforting the soul be a familiarity threading through successive generations since Neolithic humanity huddled for shelter in limestone grottos guilelessly weathered by the elements?"