

**An Historical
Overview of the
Whereabouts of
Gnomes and Elves,
Fauns and Faeries,
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Nymphs, Sprites,
and Dryads,
Past and Present.**

by Buck Young

An Historical Overview of the Whereabouts of Gnomes and Elves, Fauns and Faeries, Goblins, Ogres, Trolls and Bogies, Nymphs, Sprites, and Dryads, Past and Present.

by Buck Young (pseudonym, he works for Greenpeace)

A long, long time ago, the Earth belonged to the creatures of the wood. By creatures of the wood I mean gnomes and elves, fauns and faeries, goblins, ogres, trolls and bogies, nymphs, sprites, and dryads. They tended it and took care of it, played in it, danced and sang in it, cared for wounded animals, worked out disputes between species, sat on mushrooms discussing matters of import and drinking Labrador tea, rode down streams on leaves and bark, and parachuted from trees with dandelion seeds. This was the world into which mankind was born. These early days, when man was but a newly arrived dinner guest who hadn't yet taken over the entire house, are fairly well documented in the literature and folklore of the world, so there's no need to go into it here. What I am interested in, and what I am asking you to be interested in, is the question, "Where did all the gnomes and elves, fauns and faeries, goblins, ogres, trolls and bogies, nymphs, sprites and dryads go?"

The friction between man and the wood creatures began with the discovery of agriculture. With the discovery of agriculture, civilization arose and spread. The forests were cleared to provide wood for shelter and fields for pasture and crops. Mankind had set up camp. No longer just a visitor in someone else's world, he pushed the wild back from his newly built doorstep. At first this wasn't a problem. There weren't many people and everyone else felt that it was only fair to allot them their own little half acre to do with as they wished. Some of them even decided to help out. Gnomes moved into the barnhouses and helped out with the gardening chores. The devic spirits of the vegetables helped the humans better organize their crops and plan rotation, and taught them the correlation between planetary and lunar cycles and the agricultural year, plant radishes when the moon is in Cancer, harvest when the moon is in Taurus. Many trolls felt that the heaping piles of manure were a change for the better, and decided to stick around too.

The rest of the wood creatures just backed off into the wood, occasionally playing mischievous tricks on the new settlers, like turning the milk sour, rearranging furniture tipping the cows, tickling people's faces in their sleep, and occasionally stealing babies and leaving bundles of wood in their place.

But man's dominion spread (and spread and spread and spread), and the forests got smaller and smaller and smaller. Things got real crowded in the woods, and things were getting worse in civilization. Most farmers weren't listening to the devic spirits anymore. People found that they could increase their output by disregarding the needs of the Earth. They were raising productivity and killing the soil. Petrochemicals were just a step away. Most of the devic spirits and the gnomes fled. The trolls stayed. Today they live mostly under bridges and in the shallow, mucky ditches beneath the metal grating on farm roads that cows are afraid to cross. Be sure to honk your horn before driving over one of these. A troll may be hanging from the grate, swinging over its living room, as they are apt to do after rolling in muck and manure. If you don't give a warning honk, you may run over its fingers, and it's not a great idea to get either your name or your license plate number on a troll's shit list.

Now there is little wild land left at all, and even that is shrinking at an unprecedented rate. There is simply not enough space for all the gnomes and elves, fauns and faeries, goblins, ogres, trolls and bogies, nymphs, sprites, and dryads.

So where are they?

Are they dead?

No.

So where did they go?

The answer is a bit surprising. They didn't go anywhere. ***We did.***

Early humans had an intuitive knowledge of their role in nature, just as bears and raccoons and mice and every other critter does. They understood, from the ways of the wild around them, that nothing ever comes from nowhere and nothing ever just disappears. Things change form. Death is necessary for life to continue. They offered up their kills as sacrifices to the gods of nature. They offered praise, prayer, sacrifice, and song to the spirits of the wild, to brother buffalo, brother deer, brother fish, and brother tree.

Now we know that everything that has ever existed continues to exist, in one form of another, and as far as we can tell, they were more aware of that back then than we are now. So the sacrifice, song, praise and prayer did not ensure the immortality of the slaughtered, either in body or in spirit. That was already taken care of. What it did ensure was the continuance of the connection between the spirit of the slaughterer and the spirit of the slaughtered. Killing is risky business. The membrane separating the internal from the external is not necessarily as thick or as dearly defined as we have come to believe. Every time we kill, we risk killing the reality of that thing inside ourselves as well as

outside. We risk breaking the connections that lead in and out of the membrane. Taking life to feed life requires a keen understanding of the natural law of give and take. When we lost that understanding, gave up the songs, the sacrifice, the prayers, the praise, we lost the connection. Saying grace is not enough.

When we lose those connections, everything becomes dead - fish, rivers, frogs, mice, even each other. There is no way they can reach inside us any more. The five senses we are left with are not enough. We have given up those connections in exchange for the freedom to clearcut forests with skidders, turn cows into milk machines and chickens into egg factories. We can experiment on animals, club seals, wear mink coats, exterminate passenger pigeons, dodo birds, whales, bear, dolphin and condor. Not a twinge of guilt. The lines have been severed.

And we are all under the impression that it is the forests, the creatures, the spirits, and the wildlands that are disappearing from the universe and not us. Not so. Thinking that is like thinking that if you stand on the end of a limb and saw that limb from the tree, the tree will fall and you will remain standing. Bugs Bunny might be able to get away with that, but we can't. When a marionette cuts its strings, the puppeteer doesn't collapse to the ground. When a spider severs the lines that connect its web to the trees, the forest doesn't fall away.

It is we who have fallen away from the real world into a world where we may carry out our twisted sterile dreams without threatening the Earth and its inhabitants. Ever wonder why the trees and stones and rivers and streams, the birds, the snakes, the bears and the frogs no longer talk to us as they did in the early tales of the Native Americans, the Hindus, the Africans, the Bible? It's because we're not around to talk to any more. Every clearcut, every vivisection, every mechanized slaughter of cow, pig, or chicken moves our dreamworld farther and farther from the tree, making a reunification, which is still possible, more and more difficult.

Somewhere not so far from here, in the real world, the ancient forests are still standing, the buffalo roam the prairies, the sky is full of condors, the deer and the antelope play, and dodo birds wander the sandy beaches, bumping into things.

Where there are still wildlands in our dreamworld, strong connections still exist. Bridges, tunnels, and portals. Occasionally a traveler will get lost in the wilderness and find himself in the real world, returning the next day to find that a hundred years have passed, or never returning at all.

There are more ephemeral connections as well - brooks and waterfalls where you can still hear voices from the other side, if you listen carefully enough. When they sit by these waters they hear loud clanking and screams. When they eat psilocybin everything stops glowing, and condos rise where forests stand. Our children can see their world in their dreams. Their children see ours in their nightmares.

And there is another connection. Sometimes agents from the other side infiltrate our world in an attempt to expedite the reunification. Believe it or not, they miss us over there. Sometimes - more often than you might think - they send souls over to our world to be born as human babies. Sort of like a socialist, communist, or anarchist entering the American political arena and running for office in an attempt to effect change from the inside. There are quite a lot of them actually - gnomes and elves, fauns and faeries, goblins, ogres, trolls and bogies, nymphs, sprites, and dryads - running around in human bodies, doing crazy things like writing on walls, working in co-ops, running inns in the mountains, talking to themselves in the streets, making pottery, illustrating children's books, spiking trees and blowing up tractors. They are planting bio-dynamic gardens, sitting in the back yard naked, arguing with Satan. They are in asylums pumped full of thorazine, in the classroom on Ritalin and lithium. They live with Indians. They run recycling centers. They are starting revolutions, corrupting the young, inventing paranoid conspiracy theories, making up religions. They're directing movies, gobbling acid, drinking heavily and writing poetry.

The transition from their world to ours is not an easy one. Intricate rituals and incantations are involved. The transition is not easy on the soul. A great deal is lost.

They may have no idea who or what they are at first. They may or may not find out. They will know that they are not like everyone else. They will know that this world is not theirs.

They will faintly remember something better, where things made sense and worked like they ought to, where love and magic had the power to heal.

They will know that what makes other people happy does not make them happy, and that what makes them happy makes them happier than anyone else alive.

They will see things others cannot see, hear things others cannot hear, feel things others cannot feel, and know things others do not know.

They will laugh a great deal or cry a great deal or both.

They will love humans individually, but have a hard time with humanity as a whole that may occasionally approach loathing.

They will have a handful of very close friends, and often be very lonely.

They will be unhappiest when forced to act like a human and do the things that humans do, want the things that humans want, or when they are convinced that they actually are one.

Things will not be easy for them. Because of their memories of the other side, the world will seem to them to be a wondrous calliope with just a few teeth missing on one of the cogs, and because of this tiny deficiency, the music is all off key, the horses are crashing into each other, and the children are frightened, bruised and crying.

The solutions will seem obvious and no one else will listen.

They will be repeatedly punished for shouting FIRE! in a crowded theater when the buildings are in flames no one else can see. They will get slapped on the wrist for pointing to the EXIT signs when everyone else is running around screaming and trampling each other.

They will be zealous, fanatical, and didactic about their beliefs. They will feel utterly confused.

They will have ecstatic visions and babble incoherently. They will be extremely articulate. They are prone to long periods of silence. They have no idea how to say what they really mean.

They will spend a lot of time with children and animals.

They will become drunkards and dope fiends, organic gardeners, Essene soapmakers, carpenters, madmen, magicians, jugglers and clowns, lunatic physicists, painters and scribblers, travelers and wanderers.

They will dress in bright colors, frumpy sweaters, or all black.

They will smoke too much and drink too much. They will eat only macrobiotic foods. They will develop addictions to Mountain Dew.

They will often be accused of living in their own fantasy world.

They will make great lovers. Yeah, even the trolls.

They will spend too much time either making love or thinking about it.

They will speak to inanimate objects.

They will have much brighter eyes than everyone else.

They will expect their magic to work in this world and their love to heal, and they will be crushed by this world, and often they won't expect it.

It will come close to killing them.

They will visit the places where the connections still exist: the waterfalls, the mountains, the ocean, the forests. They will draw on all the power they have, and sometimes, sometimes, the magic will work. And everything will be wondrously easy. The teeth will grow back on the calliope's cog, the tune will right itself, the horses will bob gracefully up and down, around and around, and the children will giggle and sing with cotton candy stuck to their cheeks and noses.

They will spend their days trying to reconnect a branch that millions are still busy sawing away at. Often it will be more than they can bear.

While the rest of humanity is busy working on new and more efficient ways to lay waste to the Earth with the push of a button, they are saving it, a handful at a time.

They will share a common conviction that they are the only sane individuals in a world gone mad.

They're right.



Special thanks to Buck Young for permission to reprint.

Pamphlet courtesy of Criss Ittermann, Eclectic Tech, LLC. Emphasis mine.

