

It hasn't been easy.

The summer brought a second blow to my ordered life with the arrival of a new computerized inventory system at the Hungry Mind Bookstore. I'm the 'computer guy' there, and shifting to the new system has been a huge challenge, doubled because I was also wiring our newly acquired text book annex, eight doors down the street. This was further complicated by a telephone workers' strike which prevented linking the cash registers in the textbook store to the inventory computer until *after* we started textbook rush in early September.

Ugh!

I have come through this with a sense of accomplishment in the face of adversity but emotionally exhausted.

Finally, in October I began to restore myself with nine days with Betsy on Madeline Island, *preceded by a tour of the Menominee Forest.*



a project because it is clear to me that we humans will only be able to accept a supporting role in the Gaian system if not being the hero is understood in a spiritual context.

A forest is an ecosystem which spontaneously tends toward balance. Unlike a coral atoll, it *can* stay balanced despite a fairly high level of human activity. In fact humans have always gravitated toward forests as sources for many of the things we need.

The Menominee tribe in Wisconsin has demonstrated a spiritual and harmonious relationship with their forest for many hundreds of years and has even been able to maintain it in the face of being squeezed into a small

and with a spell of old age. (I was so weak I had to spend eight additional days in a nursing home before I could go home.) I fear nothing less than this would have allowed me to accept sufficient limitation on my aspirations as a Gaia Troubadour. Now I find myself willing to focus on the more "narrow" goals of a Quaker Community Forest.

Movement

And my role in such a forest project? As a poet, a dreamer.

I used to aspire to the organizer role, and have discovered that my skills are prohibitively intermittent.

And at the Fall Equinox I found myself challenged to bring forth a book of poems about a Community Forest. A collection to touch the hearts of others susceptible to this dream, quickening among us *a shared dream.*

Of course I've not had a lesson in verse since high school; time to study up!

But beyond the technical aspects, this feels right for me. **I've got the heart for it.** Here is a specific, goal-oriented effort which has captured the imagination of members of my spiritual community. Here is an opportunity for me to try and articulate my vision of a living wholeness with humans as devout and devoted gardeners—tending, improving, shoring up—a miracle of which we are a small and significant part.



Meanings?

I have a painfully clear understanding of myself as an "everyman" of Industrial Civilization with an over-large view of myself, seriously lacking a sense of limitation based on larger realities.

An indication of my ego inflation as it applies to this newsletter is printing it on three-hole paper. The message hidden in my mind as I started this practice with the first issue was "I have a lot to say; you'll need a ring notebook to contain it!"

Under these circumstances I might say I was "blessed" with a brush with death close enough to keep me nine days in the hospital,

A Quaker Community Forest?

The visit to the Menominee Forest in Wisconsin was prompted by the interest of several Quakers in the upper Midwest, inspired to think we too might become stewards of an ecosystem, protecting, preserving and profiting in a unified, spiritually-based relationship. I am drawn to such