

Introduction

It was January of '96 when I put out *Gaia Voices* #4, reporting on my adventures as a Gaia Troubadour. It was a hard time, then, and much of the time since has also been hard, in my inner life. My outer life has been going well, until the motorscooter accident in April. I have planned to write about the dark time and my brush with death in *Gaia Voices* #5. However, blessedly, I think the pole of my inner axis has swung to point at a new star, and so I leap ahead over my planned *GV* #5 to #6, devoted to a project that feels to me to be a good next step for this Troubadour: A Quaker Community Forest.

Those of you who don't know me from before should know that my redeeming vision has been the interconnectedness of all life on this planet and with it, a sense of a guiding awareness, a wholeness uniting it all. The following poem is one of my best attempts to date to share some of this vision.

Richard

Whiskered Doe

The head of the Florida Key Deer
bristles with a finely tuned awareness
I am just learning to see.
Large eyes
(Yes, I saw that already)
One pointed directly at the camera
(I guess you could say the neck
muscles are also an organ of

perception)
Large ears
(Aligned to receive from different but
overlapping ranges, yes.)
The nose.
(How much more there is than seeing.)

It's the whiskers that get me,
Under the chin,
Where she can't see,

Whiskers pointing toward origin.
The creator?...
The foresighted hand of evolution?...
Insisting,
"From this quarter too I shall have
knowing
For the close work, too dirty for eyes."

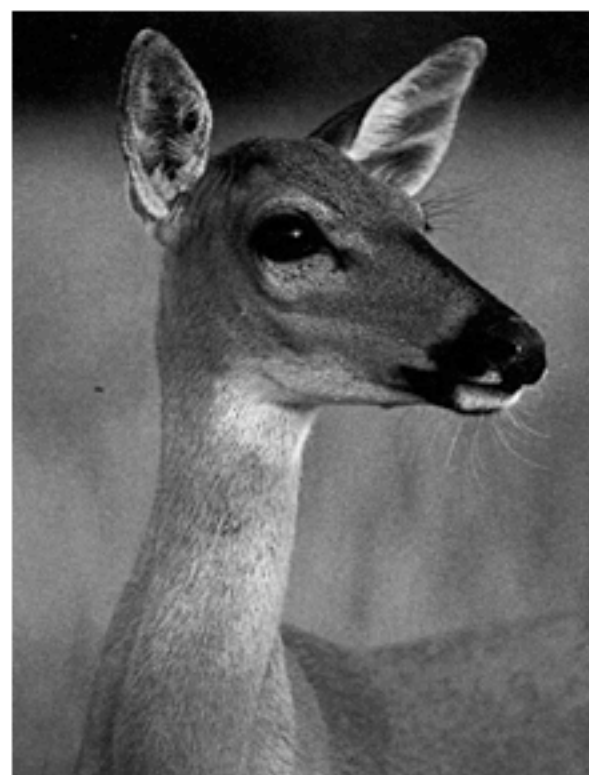
Doe's head is the center of a field.
Whiskers, eyes, are the details,
Orchestrated elements, ready each, for
their moments.

And within that halo of perception...
An orchestrator, equipt for
Awareness itself.
And also,
Behind the particulars of this being,

A pressure to know
So powerful it will grow whiskers where
needed.

Can I see myself,
And all my species

As whiskers?



"Gaia" is a semi-scientific way of naming "mother earth." It's a way of talking about the entire planet as a single living organism. This newsletter may be available at the Meeting House of Twin Cities Friends Meeting and in the backroom of the Hungry Mind Bookstore. I'll always have copies of current and recent issues with me. I mail it to friends whom I don't see often. Let me know if you want to be on the list.
AND, I want to know your Gaia-related thoughts. Approach me face to face.
Alternatively, there's 612-228-1550, 1081

This Gaia Troubadour's dream of A Quaker Community Forest

Ralph Jacobson has developed a vision of a possible Quaker Community Forest. He's been a full member of the Twin Cities Friends Meeting since age 11 and is widely known in the upper Midwest Quaker community.

I find this vision thrilling, an opportunity to nurture in particular ways some of the grand vision that has opened to me. I wish to join my voice with others in calling this dream into being. To learn by doing, so that we may say to others,

"This I know experimentally."

Scenes for a video

Here's my proposal for the short term:

I challenge those of us who are excited about the idea to develop a script and a set of images for a 10-minute organizing video. The eventual goal would be to use this video around the country, starting conversations in a multitude of Quaker communities. The immediate challenge, however, is for some of us to ask ourselves,

- "What are the core points..
- "What are the reasons for the heart and for the mind...
- "What can we say in 10 minutes of beauty, inspiration, music..

If we want to offer our most stirring arguments to our most susceptible audience, what will we say?

Please share your ideas

I urge those of you who find yourselves interested in this project to sketch your scenes for inclusion in this video and to get them to me.

Once I / we have a multitude of suggestions we will be led naturally to the next steps:

What can we agree upon to say?

And of course,

(See "Who are we" on page 2)