

# Ancestral Voices

By Jeffrey R. Paine

Daylight fades as Earth rolls East  
Darkness falls as stars emerge

Moving West in constant  
Change repeating as  
We have so often done  
I build a fire that holds away  
Darkness, fear, and mystery

As I build a fire around me  
Gather ancestral spirits  
And other kin  
Spectral unseen sharing  
As we have done  
Habitual ritual fire  
Contained retained  
Many hundred million  
Nights, generations, lives  
There is no counting  
Except for keeping time of  
young and old children aged  
They press close I feel this night  
Ancestral voices I hear around me  
Echoes ephemeral gatherings

Future past and present

At first, one must be quiet  
Quite still to hear  
Their voices carried  
Sigh of the wind  
Crack of flame  
They sing with me this night

So long a time it's been  
But each night every night  
Ancestral voices I have heard  
Hear join them chanting singing  
Clapping stomping drumming  
Echo through the distant  
Time chanting out our  
Reasons stories singing out  
Our rhyming voices raised in joyful song  
    repeating illumination  
    repeating revelation  
    repeating the common call  
    the constant story in all time  
Ancestral voices are one sometimes  
United in our strength  
Briefly one rises above the rest  
Unnamed exclaiming experience unique  
Then resuming  
Just unison in voices  
    in rhythm in rhyme

in time in mind  
They sing with me each night  
Each night of what they did  
What they knew  
What I do and know

And what those who one day  
Come later to the fire?  
Are they heard as well?  
I do not know,  
And what it all should mean  
To them and to me and other  
Times I do not understand  
And sometimes they do not  
Understand my chant my song  
But continuing, we sing on

Come then! the voices call  
A million generations deep  
So primordial dating  
back to sea warm shores before  
our ancestors could conceive  
of fire tamed on the eve

Come then!  
Let us immerse ourselves  
In the dream entropic taking  
In this the story we now know:  
Long Long Ago...

In the Dreamtime...  
In the Beginning...  
Once Upon a Time...

So then engage  
Our egos in the dream  
Chaotic as ancestors have  
In unbroken sequence done for ages  
Innumerable linked by fire  
Perception ritual genes myth  
A common thread a story  
Our shared humanity

Ancestral voices chanting  
Today in the distant  
Time both past and  
Present and once to be  
Poem endless of emotions  
Sounds with colors  
Mixed in fluid  
Motions falling  
Leaves bare trees warming  
Sun grown forth across  
The land we are living  
Once again we are  
Ancestral voices they  
Sing with me of life  
Of what they did  
What I do and

What it all could mean  
One day of generations  
Chanting in the distant  
Time chanting out our reasons  
Chanting out our dream divine