

Northern Nights

Natives warned of stolen souls,
"Beware the Northern Lights!" they told.

I saw no spirits take their flight—
just shimmering waves of golden light,
dancing wild through the endless night.

By day, I rested near a spruce,
chewing jerky, sipping cider loose.
They whispered of the shadowed ones—
Flitting like mist through hemlock trunks.
A' Kushtaka's hunger, flesh they crave,
leave no bones in an unmarked grave.

I saw neither tricksters nor *Mik' wa* crossing my sight,
just my shadow, long and tight.
Only mischievous ravens, thieves too sly,
And, eagles soaring through the ice-cold sky.

Bear, moose and deer I slew,
digging for gold—no luck came through.
Weeks rolled on in fruitless chase,
my stench of sweat, the earth's embrace—

Then—a town! Like heaven's grace:
boardwalk streets, a bustling place.

A public bath to scour my skin,
wash off the wildness soaked within.
Saloon's call—whiskey, brew, and chew, I knew;
money spent on pleasures true.

A brothel's laugh, a fleeting grin—
Need a woman? Come on in, it isn't a sin---
"Just bring your money to the Creek Street Inn!"

Oh, what a life! Raw and free,
Under lights of flaring waves that swirl wondrously for me---
my Northern Nights, of lives and legends that unfold,
—*under God's own celestial forge of swirling molten gold.*
