The Peace of Wild Things (Wendell Berry)

When despair grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting for their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

The Dream (Wendell Berry)

I dream an inescapable dream
in which I take away from the country
the bridges and roads, the fences, the strung wires,
ourselves, all we have built and dug and hollowed out,
our flocks and herds, our droves of machines.

I restore then the wide-branching trees.
I see growing over the land and shading it
the great trunks and crowns of the first forest.
I am aware of the rattling of their branches,
the lichened channels of their bark, the saps
of the ground flowing upward to their darkness.
Like the afterimage of a light that only by not
looking can be seen, I glimpse the country as it was.
All its beings belong wholly to it. They flourish
in dying as in being born. It is the life of its deaths.

I must end, always, by replacing
our beginning there, ourselves and our blades,
the flowing in of history, putting back what I took away,
trying always with the same pain of foreknowledge
to build all that we have built, but destroy nothing.

My hands weakening, I feel on all sides blindness
growing in the land on its peering bulbous stalks.
I see that my mind is not good enough.
I see that I am eager to own the earth and to own men.
I find in my mouth a bitter taste of money,
a gaping syllable I can neither swallow nor spit out.
I see all that we have ruined in order to have, all
that was owned for a lifetime to be destroyed forever.

Where are the sleeps that escape such dreams?

For All (Gary Snyder)

Ah to be alive
on a mid-September morn
fording a stream
barefoot, pants rolled up,
holding boots, pack on,
sunshine, ice in the shallows,
northern rockies.

Rustle and shimmer of icy creek waters
stones turn underfoot, small and hard as toes
cold nose dripping
singing inside
creek music, heart music,
smell of sun on gravel.

I pledge allegiance

I pledge allegiance to the soil
of Turtle Island,
and to the beings who thereon dwell
one ecosystem
in diversity
under the sun
With joyful interpenetration for all.