

And in the racial memory, Ko-sahn had seen the falling stars. For her there was no distinction between the individual and the racial experience, even as there was none between the mythical and the historical. Both were realized for her in the one memory, and that was of the land. This landscape, in which she had lived for a hundred years, was the common denominator of everything that she knew and would ever know—and her knowledge was profound. Her roots ran deep into the Earth, and from those depths she drew strength enough to hold still against all the forces of chance and disorder. And she drew from the sustenance of meaning and of mystery as well. The falling stars were not for Ko-sahn an isolated or accidental phenomenon. She had a great personal investment in that awful commotion of light in the night sky. For it remained to be imagined. She must at last deal with it in words; she must appropriate it to her understanding of the whole universe. And, again, when she spoke of the Sun Dance, it was an essential expression, something of her relationship to the life of the Earth and to the sun and moon.

In Ko-sahn and in her people we have always had the example of a deep, ethical regard for the land. We had better learn from it. Surely that ethic is merely latent in ourselves. It must now be activated, I believe. We Americans must come again to a moral comprehension of the Earth and air. We must live according to the principle of a land ethic. The alternative is that we shall not live at all.

From Moore K.D. and M. Nelson. 2010. *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*.  
San Antonio: Trinity University Press.

## Spring's Hopes Eternal

Curt Meine

The time of renewal has arrived again in the American Midwest. In the wetlands, migrating ducks and geese find open water, silver maples bud out, marsh marigolds explode with sun-yellow blooms, muskrats jostle for territory, chorus frogs click, and spring peepers testify to their name. In the woodlands, ephemerals appear. A month ago, sugar maples sprouted sap buckets. Now the anemones and Dutchman's breeches and spring beauties emerge from below, and transitory warblers arrive overhead. Ferns unfurl. The invasive garlic mustard seizes the daylight and overtakes entire woodlots. In the prairies, pasque flowers open the season, soils and grasses dry, and human beings with torches, matches, and water cans train fires to restore the land's vitality. In gardens and barnyards and fields and orchards and pastures, we mingle again with soil and plants and animals in the year's opening acts of production; vegetables, greens, grains, fruit, milk, and meat will follow. In towns and cities, we shed, layer by layer, our winter pelage and torpor. We all come upon that instant when we are struck by the lengthening and warming of the days—and take the moment to congratulate ourselves for *making it* through the months of cold and darkness.

Every spring in Wisconsin our topography recapitulates our geology. Winter gives way to spring as the Pleistocene gave way to the

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