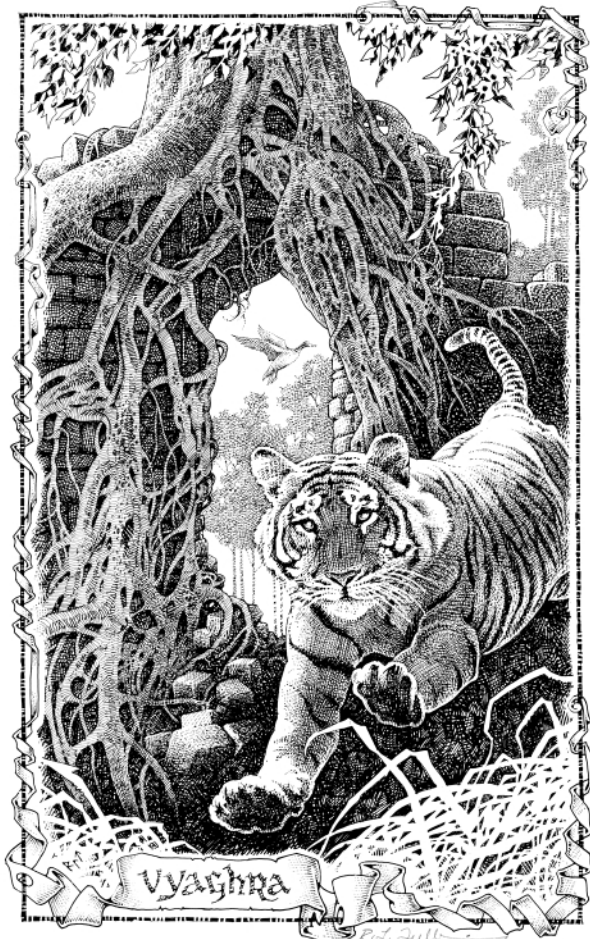


SECTION I



OUTSIDE  
CIVILIZATION



*Neandertals did not paint their caves with the images of animals. But perhaps they had no need to distill life into representations, because its essences were already revealed to their senses. The sight of a running herd was enough to inspire a surging sense of beauty. They had no drums or bone flutes, but they could listen to the booming rhythms of the wind, the earth, and each other's heartbeats, and be transported.*

—James Shreeve (1995)

**S**his collection opens with some reflections about what it was like for our species prior to civilization.

In a literary vein, the pages from Roy Walker's classic treasury of poetry, *Golden Feast* (1952), remind us that from Ovid to the American Big Rock Candy Mountain folk legend, the memory or vision of an uncorrupted original wholeness persists. In fact, utopian anti-civilization longings reach back at least as far as the earliest Greek writings. From Hesiod's *Works and Days*, dating from the early seventh century B.C., came the canonical description of the Golden Age, the bitterly lamented vanished epoch of Kronos' reign, when humans "lived as if they were gods, their hearts free from sorrow, and without hard work or pain," when "the fruitful earth yielded its abundant harvest to them of its own accord, and they lived in ease and peace upon the lands with many good things."

Obviously this refers to the vast Paleolithic era, comprising more than 99 percent of our time span as a species. Current anthropology tells us that the pre-agricultural foraging life did not know organized violence, sexual oppression, work as an onerous or separate activity, private property, or symbolic culture. Reworked by Virgil and Ovid as the lost age of Saturn (the Roman Kronos), Hesiod's Golden Age reappeared as Arcadia, and the idyll has persisted in cultures everywhere. Richard Heinberg's *Memories and Visions of Paradise* (1995) is, by the way, an unexcelled recent exploration of this theme.

Fairchild's eminent study *Noble Savage* (1928) introduces the innocence of native New World peoples, soon to be lost to disease and warfare, upon the arrival of early conquerors. Rousseau, the

origin of Fairchild's title, describes the felicity and freedom that once obtained.

The excerpt from Thoreau is a brief but lively one: "the most alive is the wildest," is his heartfelt conclusion. Perlman's intensity, in his superb *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* (1983), leaves little doubt as to the nature-based authenticity of those not subdued by civilization, as seen in their sense of play and autonomy, for example.

DeVries summarizes features of nondomesticated robustness and vitality in sharp contrast to later degeneracy in health. Sahlins' offering is an early statement of the central point of his *Stone Age Economics* (1972), namely, that paleolithic peoples are truly affluent, with no artificially produced or unmet needs.

Lynn Clive objects to the sacrifice of birds to skyscrapers and jetliners, while Landau offers a personal response to all we have lost. In a marvelous meditation, Adorno describes the utopian component of children's make-believe play. He recalls the pretamed stage of humanity in which productivity as a value is clearly refused, and exchange disregarded, as such nonutilitarian activity "rehearses the right life."

Ramona Wilson's moving poem and Marvin Harris' questioning of the inevitability of hierarchy augment the section.