



THE SONG OF SWEET GRASS

**The Great One gives the blessing
The Sweet Grass gift is given
The shaggy monarch sees their coming
The People and prairie are one
The prairie is at peace
The Circle is complete**

**Marvin Hass
April 2009**

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SWEETGRASS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“The Song of Sweetgrass” would not communicate my message without the support of the following generous artisans:

Daniel Coburn - Photographer

Daniel’s work appears at Select Juried Exhibitions, in many Museum and Corporate Collections. He also conducts Select lectures and Presentations. Daniel has many honors and awards and a long list of impressive credits.

Daniel’s work can be found at www.danielwcoburn.com

Marcia Baldwin – Renowned Louisiana Artist

This excerpt from her website communicates why she loves her work; “I am a professional full time artist living in Louisiana. I work mainly in oils and love to create new and expressive compositions exploring all of God's creations that we have been blessed with. Nature explodes with those blessings and I hope that I can portray some of the beauty found in nature through my paintings of flowers, animals, landscapes, still lifes and abstracts. My art is my passion. I hope you find that you can share this passion with my life’s work.” "Capturing a moment in time, one painting at a time."

Find Marcia Baldwin at marciabaldwin.artspan.com

Judith Mackey - Artist of the Tall Grass Prairie

Over her 40 year career Judith has won many honors. In recent years, she has been in the top 200 in Arts for the Parks competition three times-almost every time she entered this prestigious national juried show.

The last two years she was juried into Salon International, an important exhibit for artists of the west. Her paintings have been used as cover illustrations on magazines and books. She was featured in the Spring 1997 issue of Persimmon Hill, the official publication of the Cowboy Hall of Fame. In 2004 she was a featured artist in the New York Times article titled "Sowing Art on the Kansas Prairie and was filmed in her studio for inclusion in a CBS documentary on the same subject. Judith’s work can be found at www.flinthillsgallery.com

Ryan Skidmore – Artist of the West

Ryan travels widely to participate in shows including the C.M. Russell art auction in Great Falls, Montana and Nature Works in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he was awarded a best of show, 2-D in 2003, best of show overall in 2004, and best of show 2-D again in 2005. Ryan was a top 100 finalist at the 2004 and 2005 Arts for the Parks competition in Jackson, Wyoming, where he received the 2004 wildlife award of merit and the Grand Canyon purchase award as well as the 2005 Stephen L. Aschenbrenner award. He was honored to have a painting included in the Artists for a New Century show in Bennington, Vermont in 2002. Ryan was featured In the Nov/Dec 2006 issue of Wildlife Art Magazine and in September 2000, he was featured in Southwest Art’s first 21 under 31 issue. Find Ryan at www.ryanskidmore.com

Robert Taylor – An Artist of the First People

Robert is a favorite artist of the First People that paints Native Americans. Robert’s work can be found at www.firstpeople.us

Edward “Mike” Duiven – Website Designer

Finally, I want to extend a special thank you to my friend, Mike Duiven. Mike is the reason “The Prairie Poet” website exists. My work would be gathering prairie dust without his expertise and on-going innovation. This is all done as a gift to me, the site visitors and the featured charities.

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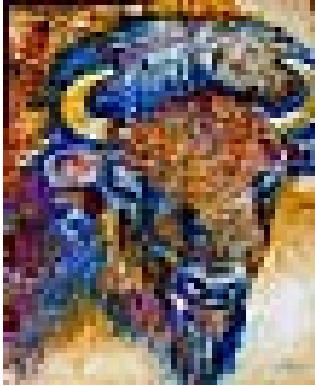
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Introduction



The Song of Sweetgrass invites you to the prairie before the First People. Experience the plains through the eyes of the prairie dwellers. Welcome the People. Hear how it was they became a horse culture. Know the Circle of Life. Witness their loss of livelihood and their civilization. Find hope in the blessing of Sweetgrass.

Marvin Hass



**"Hear the prairie whisper
quiet healing for your soul."**

SWEETGRASS

Come listen to the great one
See creation all around
Hear the prairie whisper
Quiet healing for your soul.

Sense the red-tail bird above you
Walk this ocean and its waves
Let the spirits join together
Find the way to heaven's gate.

The broadness of this making
Beyond the cardinal points
A far off ridge invites you
"Come and see that I am more."

Watch the demon in the whirl wind
Roars a threat, then it is gone.
All is still... a quiet moment
Then the lark, again says, "Come!"

A buzzing shows the palette
Flower wreaths are everywhere.
All around is celebration.
Prairie songs are sung in joy.

Calm your fear about your being
But a speck upon this sea.
Even clouds are small before him
Bow your head and sing your
praise.

Breath deep the great one's
goodness
his perfume, the prairie shares
gather sweetgrass to your bosom
know in you the great one lives.

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THE ANGRY ONE

The creatures of the den and earth
Seek their homes in haste.
Then a wayward child stands gazing
soon it's lifted up and taken deep.

The birds are flying in great clouds
Uncertain where to flee.
Their waves of color fill the sky
Needing to be gone.

The shiny backed old ruler
Sends his message in disgust
As he lopes across the prairie
In a jerky rolling gait.

The shaggy ones are coming now
With a roar much like the terror.
Running toward a far off sky
That is welcoming and safe.

The Killdeer and its tiny brood
Have no direction to their fear.
The mother calling, crying out
To her young to stop then hide.

The Angry One is nearing now
With chocking smoke and roaring voice
Its searing heat explodes the gifts
That feed the prairie life.

Its voice is roaring death,
fingers grasping in their search,
wicked tongues flick everywhere
Its appetite unquenched.

Soon all that's left is the path of hell
Where the Angry One ran wild.
The Killdeer young emerge and look
Their gentle martyr makes no sound.

The prairie mother's hair is black
Destruction rules this land.
Where is the sacred sweet grass
does prairie spirit breath no more.

THE CALLING

"A Big Bull snorts
then Blows."



You feel the beat inside you
From the message on the wind
A call for your awakening
Join the brotherhood of life.

The prairie dwellers hear the call
Their bodies strain to know
An answer to this ancient sound
It stirs the in-most soul.

The prairie dog barks once, then waits
A big bull snorts then blows
They sense that now their Maker speaks
Timeless worship has begun.

Like a spirit cloud inside you
Over flows with untold awe
Echoes ask for prairie kinship
Reaching deep within all life

All the living sense their oneness
And the prairie earth responds.
Sends a message through its vastness
Feel at one...but yet alone.

Little man upon the prairie
Playing out this age old song
You are calling out for wisdom
Yet the wise ones know the path.

The maker's voice speaks softly
"Join with all that I have made.
Be uplifted by the drum beat
Let the circle be complete."

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"Be Up-lifted by the drum beat."



THE WATER GIFT

The far off sky is turning black,
White light flashes, then is gone.
A distant answer barely heard,
The hint of what's to come.

How can this power be so near
Yet hide its mighty face.
The prairie hen calls to her brood,
Then spreads her wings with care.

The shaggy ones now gather,
An old cow test the breeze.
She smells the heaven's water gift,
That soon will bless each soul.

A wall of white from earth to sky
Is walking o'er the plain.
A nervous mouse upon its quest,
Stops and stands with head askew.

The gift with power now is near,
For a moment all is still.
A blinding hand cleaves wood and stone,
As the cedar tree explodes.

Its fingers glow among the rocks
The thunder claps in praise.
This mystic dancer is not bound,
In its dance across the plains.

Now all is covered with the gift
Prairie creatures hide or bow,
In a timeless meditation,
Knowing now the common bond.

All is quiet for a moment
But the prairie ones now stir.
The life that was near dying
Now lives to feed its own.

The sweet grass stem was waning
But a new shot soon appears.
It gives the sacred blessing
And the prairie is at peace.

CHANGE

*Grandfather told the history
When the people met the plains
And how the shaggy monarch
Questioned who we were.*

*He looked to the sky and then began;
“My Grandfather told me long ago
how it was the people met their future.”*

*All is silent on the prairie,
only sounds of the feeding herd.
Some calves still sleep while others dance
with tails that reach the clouds.
Gray stalkers watch with hopeful eyes,
the young in their childhood games.
They shine their bellies as they slide
with life and death at stake.*

*Their tongues hang long with salty drops
As they eye a calf that’s weak.
It stands and calls for a mother
whose spirit now is gone.
Now heads lift high from eating
and Old Monarch snorts and blows.
He paws and hooks the prairie sod
with distain at what he smells.*

*The scent is new and foreign.
He is puzzled by this source.
A prairie march of creatures
that are new upon this land.
Their sounds come as a constant song,
different voices, different words.
Two legged creatures walking bold
they feel as if they’re home.*

*Grandfather pauses now to think
To remember from the past,
Then nods and draws me closer
To share what Old Monarch now would
ask.*

*Are they brothers to the gray ones
who stole the calf just now?
Or cousins to all prairie ones,
a worthy circle to complete.
Old Monarch nips the sweet grass
and asks this sacred source.
How does the Great One see this?
What does the Great One say?*

*Will this all pass like the melting snow,
or remain with each rising sun?
Will the Prairie Mother welcome them?
Is this in the Great One’s Plan?*

*Old Prairie Monarch senses change,
and change indeed has come.*

THE SPIRIT DANCERS

*My Grandfather told this story
About a great man among the People
And how it was
We received the new blessing.*

I sat upon my blanket
touched by my Mother's prayers.
I heard the Spirit voices
Whispering, "Come near."

The Spirit came in a thunder cloud
A four legged on the prairie
With waving mane and arching tail
Its banners in the wind.

It wore a wreath of sage
Around its graceful neck
Stars shown on its glistening body
It sang a new song...and it danced.

It rose up and then it knelt
We both became as one.
I spread my arms in praise and awe
Yet I could not speak.

We flew to the place of the hot wind
Where its tribe lived in the sun.
They moved like the great water
All were there...then were gone.

Now the vision ended
My medicine was strong
I returned to the elders
They would tell me what it meant.

The wise ones listened, never speaking
Deep sounds came from in their hearts.
This was a message for the People
That a blessing would occur.

My Grandfather said,
"We will send two good men
And this vision seeker
To find the Dancing Spirit."

We came to the hot wind's home
And so it was, we returned,
Singing new songs,
Riding the Spirit Dancers.

The wise ones smoked the pipe
And offered the Sweetgrass.
They gave me a new name
My name is "Medicine Horse."

I...am Medicine Horse.

Marcia
Baldwin
2019

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“...and so it was, we returned
singing new songs
riding the Spirit Dancers.”

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

The Sweetgrass rises from rich earth
Past the ribs of the shaggy one
Whose spirit floats like foggy mist
The guardian of Life's force.

The Pronghorn pauses in its quest
To eat the tender blade
Then ponders what a gift this was
When he sees a far off fancy.

The Buck now drops his heavy head
Walks out on the grassy plain
There is strange movement off a mile
It seems to call his name.

A rabbit hide on a colored staff
Waving in the wind
He moves to smell the scent of it
When his heart is filled with pain.

The hunter comes from in the earth
Like the Sweetgrass shoot, he springs
Now the Buck provides the People
Their spirits join as one.

Is the hunter now the hunted
The gray ones stalk his trail
Hunter kneels to welcome morning's dawn
He is theirs to feed their young.

Upon a rise, rib bones are bleached
Hunter's Spirit joins the mist
Soon Sweetgrass blades will reappear
Life's Circle now complete.

The Rock

We came to a place
Where the Old Ones had written
The rock was as big as the monarch
Now the monarch was no more.

We laid hands on the rock
But the signs did not speak
It seemed that our strength had gone
Our medicine was weak.

Our future was in a cloud
What would become of the People
The Circle of Life had been broken
Here we laid our weapons down.

Then came the voice of my Grandfather's father
He who had found the Spirit Dancers
"It is time for a new vision
Seek the People's road in this changed place."

I thought upon these words
My heart was filled with sorrow
Then I looked to the rock
And saw the Sweetgrass.

The Blessings would again be given
The sacred Sweetgrass is still with us
We must seek a new way
The Sweetgrass is the gift to life.

The Circle and the People are always one.

WHAT DID THEY SEE



**What did all the ponies see
That fateful day in history
When the gallant Seventh Cavalry
Rode out for all the world to see
In 1887 plus three
To a place we now call Wounded Knee
What did the ponies see?**