

## 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.

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