

**Paul Weinman**

## MOUNTAINSIDES YOU SEE

Mountainsides you see all around? ... hardly a patch of land such as should be seen. And that sickly green what you call trees? Nothing but scrub and bitter cherry next to what used to be.

The dark rock there ... scars of the land gone lame — headstones bare until the tall stands grow again.

Fire's what done it. Raged through here like the angry breath of God hisself. Burned the hemlock black as the pits of hell rose up to pay us back.

We took fast to boats, saving hardly the clothes to which we slept. Wind it was blowing flames no man was to run or try his way across the land.

Broke the lumber barons but good. They heard cursed words on wireless reports. Probably clutched at their gold goblets of wine. Choked as they drank, counting bank books curling as ash.

Most all of us had told them what of the woods. Father in the sky, he's not going to lay by as his earth is ripped up the way they did. Leaving it like a plague passed through and working us men no better than limbs to trim that get in the way.

We got to see some of them great men when they come up to scan how many more mountains there were to clean cut. Course they'd shoot some moose and have us cringe all about. Them with women and liquor enough to sink any scow.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not gloating over what's done. Just look to the land and you'll see the shadow I feel. But they got what they took and we're all left to wait.

Time to turn back to the good book where the word can't be cut. Where the way is water to put cry any fire ... nourish seeds to sprout.