

## At Tower Peak

—By Gary Snyder

Every tan rolling meadow will turn into housing  
Freeways are clogged all day  
Academies packed with scholars writing papers  
City people lean and dark  
This land most real  
As its western-tending golden slopes  
And bird-entangled central valley swamps  
Sea-lion, urchin coasts  
Southerly salmon-probes  
Into the aromatic almost-Mexican hills  
Along a range of granite peaks  
The names forgotten,  
An eastward running river that ends out in desert  
The chipping ground-squirrels in the tumbled blocks  
The gloss of glacier ghost on slab  
Where we wake refreshed from ten hours sleep  
After a long day's walking  
Packing burdens to the snow  
Wake to the same old world of no names,  
No things, new as ever, rock and water,  
Cool dawn birdcalls, high jet contrails.  
A day or two or million, breathing  
A few steps back from what goes down  
In the current realm.  
A kind of ice age, spreading, filling valleys  
Shaving soils, paving fields, you can walk in it  
Live in it, drive through it then  
It melts away  
For whatever sprouts  
After the age of  
Frozen hearts. Flesh-carved rock  
And gusts on the summit,  
Smoke from forest fires is white,  
The haze above the distant valley like a dusk.  
It's just one world, this spine of rock and streams  
And snow, and the wash of gravels, silts  
Sands, bunchgrasses, saltbrush, bee-fields,  
Twenty million human people, downstream, here below.