Primeval Dawning

Robert B. Wallace*
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By Robert B. Wallace

Umlak, child of Northern silence,
Broke the silence with a grunt;
Slapped his thigh in thick-skulled stupor;
Chewed a twig of early maple;
Puckered face to pensive wonder.
Up till now he knew but muscle,
Fur and struggle; lived he beast-like,
Thrilled he to the forest's wild smell,
Smell of spruce sap, April's ice brook,
Purple flowers wafting tonic;
Heard the small birds warble sunshine;
Felt the joyous youthful muscles
Glide when leaping stone and pine log.
Thus he breathed with wakeful senses,
Till the seed that nature planted
Sprouted in the soul of Umlak.

As a rock sits, so sat Umlak,
Musing at the awesome puzzle.
"Feel a thing which cannot see;
Trickles icy down the backbone;
Belly quakes and holds its breathing;
Hear the sound of inner music.
Never know I why this, why that,
Where the spirit dwells that moves me.
Feel a thing which cannot see;
Grasps me breathless, flings me skyward;
Insect in the sweeping spring flood.
Call great power—Mighty Spirit.”