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Meeting an Unknown Threat

Shyamkant Kulkarni

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A wreath of leaves to crown—
Clad in silken cloth brown,
Face and chest painted
With black, green, and red.
He is dancing
On the rhythm of ancient beat
Waving hands in the air
Along with others in the circle
Around the spirits and souls from the unknown.
Shrill shrieks and tender voices
Whistle from an eagle bone—
Tender touch of a brown piece
Leading through the time to
Reach eternity
Underneath an ancient cliff
With bare skin, offering and praying
Voices traveling along the drift
To a distance far
Like this Sundance
Throwing everybody in the stance.
Makes me wonder
Why I am here—
Why do I compare
When heart is thumping, pulse bounding
To catch up with the beat.
My face is wet with the sweat
Like all others around
Standing in circles in a daze
Watching this Sundance.
This sweat is proud
Making and reaching beyond oceans great
To meet an unknown threat. *

(DR. SHYAMKANT S. KULKARNI, age 52, is a physician in Watonga. He recently published a poetry collection titled THE SONG OF SEED AND OTHER POEMS, and others of his works have previously appeared in WESTVIEW. His compelling urge as a writer is to portray ever-changing life through poetry and fiction.)
Unknown Threat

Illustration by Duane Andrews