

Appalachia

Volume 66
Number 1 *Winter/Spring 2015: No River, No Life*

Article 23

2015

Call of the Wild

John E. Smelcer

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/appalachia>



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Smelcer, John E. (2015) "Call of the Wild," *Appalachia*: Vol. 66 : No. 1 , Article 23.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/appalachia/vol66/iss1/23>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by Dartmouth Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Appalachia by an authorized editor of Dartmouth Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dartmouthdigitalcommons@groups.dartmouth.edu.

Call of the Wild

Once, I was a wolf
living among wolves

on the stunted backbone
of tundra and forests

where we hunted moose
and caribou all winter

in deep, drifted snow
without escape,

where only the expansive silence
of the far north listened

as we howled at the moon
and ran the glacial earth

until I awoke again a man.
Many years have passed,

but on some still nights
I hear them waiting

above the cup of this valley,
calling to me from shadows

like a visitor who comes to my house
and knocks on the door with both fists.

John E. Smelcer

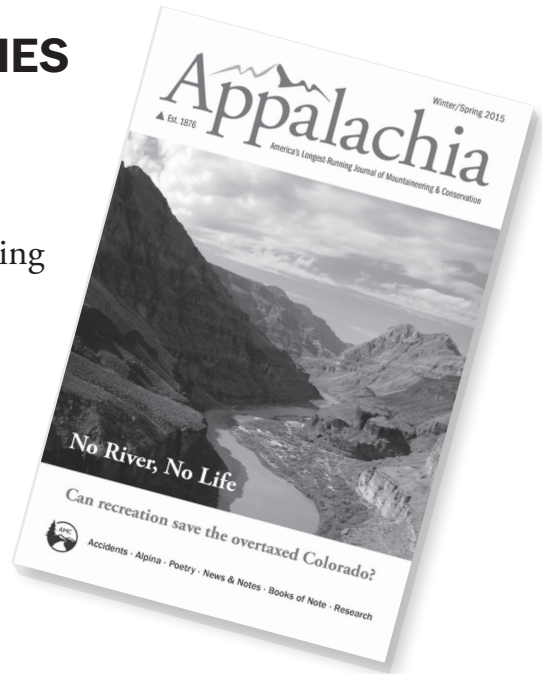
JOHN E. SMELCER, an Alaska Native American, is the author of 40 books, including *Songs from the Outcast* (American Indian Studies Center, UCLA, 2000) and *Without Reservation* (Truman State University Press, 2003), both nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in poetry. He teaches literature and creative writing at Binghamton University, SUNY.

“I started reading Appalachia for the accident reports, but I kept reading for the great features.”—Mohamed Ellozy, subscriber

SUPPORT THE STORIES YOU LOVE!

Start or renew your *Appalachia* subscription today, and keep reading America’s longest-running journal of mountaineering and conservation.

Visit [outdoors.org/appalachia](https://www.outdoors.org/appalachia) for a special offer: 36% off the journal’s cover price. That’s three years of *Appalachia* (6 issues) for only \$42. Or choose a one-year subscription (2 issues) for \$18—18% off the cover price.



Inside every issue, you’ll find:

- inspired writing on mountain exploration, adventurers, ecology, and conservation
- up-to-date news and notes on international expeditions
- analysis of recent Northeastern mountaineering accidents
- book reviews, poetry, and much more

Subscribe today at [outdoors.org/appalachia](https://www.outdoors.org/appalachia) or call 800-372-1758.



Subscription prices valid as of September 2021. Prices and offers subject to change without notice. For the most up-to-date info, visit [outdoors.org](https://www.outdoors.org).