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From Mōnadenok

David Crews

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from Mônadenok

The living mountain that is Mount Monadnock has a long history of people and artists who have engaged with it. Poet and editor David Crews is currently at work on an extended lyric poem that responds to and in a manner revises Emerson's 1847 poem Monadnoc, updating the poem with current themes, form, and focus. Like Emerson's poem, Crews's poem will have exactly 427 lines. What follows is an excerpt from the introduction to his project, and then part of the poem's opening.

It is not the tallest mountain. It does not record the coldest temperatures, nor windspeeds of the highest degree. For those are the oft-talked-of mountains—mountains climbed, summited, ones that give allure. Mountains that become songs, mountain songs. Monadnock's peak was burned by colonial settlers, multiple times. The trails, it has been said, have been carved by more bootsteps than mountains around the world. From an ecological standpoint some might call it somewhat of a modern catastrophe. What remains: spruce, mountain ash, cotton sedge, sheep laurel, rhodora, mountain sandwort, and cranberry. Monadnock sits nestled between the Connecticut and Merrimack River watersheds, in the heart of western Abenaki ancestral lands. Its bedrock holds a history. The schist and quartzite have aged some four-hundred million years and extend the Devonian Littleton Formation of the Appalachian range south. *Aden*, mountain. *Kajigapskw*, steep rock. Rock that stands alone. *Mônadenok*—Silver mountain, 3,165 feet above the sea.

The three italicized words are from *New Familiar Abenakis and English Dialogues* written and translated by Chief Sozap Lolô, Abenakis, alias Jos. Laurent (St. Francis, Québec, 1884).

Δ

Ice crystals form
on shrubs above treeline
and the laurel
look like bleached sea
sponge
under an ocean
of dense gray cloud
one might think
the frozen mountain sleeps

Δ

Trees, they say
grow from thin air
filter molecules
of carbon, oxygen

usnea, like hair

the bedrock split
clefted, once a crucible
under an ancient sea

in crevice and jag
bog and tarn

dormant root below
yellow, gold
lingering snow

David Crews

DAVID CREWS is a writer and editor currently residing in southern Vermont, the ancestral land of Mohican and Abenaki peoples. He cares for work that engages a reconnection to land and place, wilderness, preservation, and nonviolence.

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