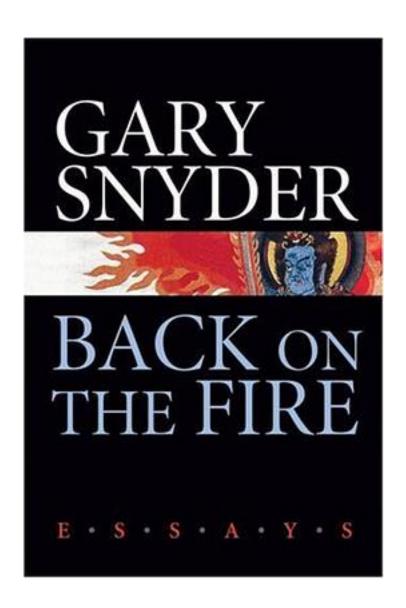
Back on the Fire



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Following The Practice of the Wild, this new collection of essays by Gary Snyder blazes with insight. In his most autobiographical writing to date, these essays employ fire as a metaphor for the crucial moment when deeply held viewpoints yield to new experiences, and our spirits and minds broaden and mature. Snyder here writes and riffs on a wide range of topics, from explorations of southwestern European Paleolithic cave art to his own personal poetic history with haiku; from reminiscences of youthful West Coast logging and trail crew days to talks given in Paris and Tokyo on art and archetypes. He honors poets of his generation, like Philip Whalen and Allen Ginsberg, and meditates on art, labor, and the making of families, houses, and homesteads.

This is a work that requires us to make friends with impermanence and error — to make "wildfire" a partner — and to keep burning the hazardous, the excess, and even one's own dreams and attainments, over and over again. The final impression is holistic: We perceive not a collection of essays, but a cohesive presentation of Snyder's life and work expressed in his characteristically straightforward prose.

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