



## Ancient Creek: A Folktale

By Gurney Norman

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### Ancient Creek: A Folktale By Gurney Norman

Norman's novella-length folktale tells the story of resistance among the folks against an evil King. Using the Appalachian region as a model, the tale describes a mythic hill domain that has been exploited by the forces of a colonizing empire. The hero Jack, familiar from the Jack tale tradition, is the fugitive leader of the people's revolt and the nemesis of the King. Wounded survivors of the revolution find solace and healing on Ancient Creek where old Aunt Haze is the guiding spirit.

Told in mock-heroic language, *Ancient Creek* employs satire, comic irony, regional speech and the voice of a storyteller as it moves toward its hopeful conclusion. "Ancient Creek is an idea as well as a physical place in the Hill Domain that has not been spoiled by humans," says Norman. "It is so pure, so far back in the mountains, it does not appear on the King's maps. Ancient Creek refers to the old stream. It's an actual stream but also a river of words, a stream of consciousness that bears the old legends and lore and the old wisdom. There are forces in the world that want to destroy that river, to destroy all native and natural life, bring it under control for whatever profit that may be in it. That is what the resistance is about."

First recorded as a spoken-word album by Appalshop in 1975, *Ancient Creek* appears in book form for the first time in this Old Cove Press edition. In addition to Norman's original tale, the book includes essays about the story by Annalucia Accardo, Dee Davis, Kevin I. Eyster and Jim Wayne Miller. A digitally remastered CD of the 1975 reading is being published concurrently with the book by June Appal Recordings, a division of Appalshop. The book and CD feature cover art by noted Kentucky artist Pam Oldfield Meade, who painted her vision of Ancient Creek.

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

Gurney Norman is Professor of English at the University of Kentucky. He is the author of the folktale *Ancient Creek*, the novel *Divine Right s Trip*, and *Kinfolks*, a collection of short stories. He is co-editor of *Back Talk: Confronting Appalachian Stereotypes* and *An American Vein: Critical Readings in Appalachian Literature*. Norman is widely recognized for his writing, teaching and cultural work in the Appalachian region. He was appointed Kentucky Poet Laureate (2009-2010).

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##### Arnold Browning:

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