Gary Snyder was born in San Francisco, California, and is associated with the Pacific Northwest, the setting for much of his poetry. In 1956 he began an extended sojourn in Japan and India, where he studied Zen Buddhism in a monastery and visited sacred sites. His thoroughgoing interest in Asian philosophies and his concern for wild nature, meditative states, and alternative ways of living made him one of the most popular of American poets of the 1960s.