# Summary of “The Council of Pecans”

*Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Kimmerer

The author recalls the story of two small Indian boys who are out fishing to get something for their supper. They catch grasshoppers for bait, but the first pool they go to is very thick, mostly sludge...there had been a drought that summer. They tried the second  pool, but it was no better. BUT, barefoot as usual, one of the boys felt something prickly underfoot..A pecan....and, LOTS of pecans. full of protein, vitamins and good fat. But, how to carry them??? They stuffed them into their pants, and used  the cord to tie the ankles of their pants. So they had plenty of pecans to make a kind of stew, and also they knew that there were plenty more pecans for the squirrels...so they would have squirrel stew also, come winter.

One of the boys was the author's grandpa......and he was always remembered by his greatchildren  from that story, even though he was a decorated World War I veteran, and a skilled auto mechanic.

Quotes:

The pecan trees and their kin show a capacity for concerted action, for unity of purpose that transcends the individual trees. They ensure somehow that all stand together and thus survive. How they do so is still elusive.......In the old times. our elders say, the trees talked to one another. But scientists decided long ago that plants were deaf and mute.

There is now compelling evidence that the elders were right. Through unity, survival.

How generously (soil, fungus, tree, squirrel, boy) they shower us with food, literally giving themselves so that we can live. But in the giving, their lives are also ensured. Our taking, returns benefit to them in the circle of life making life, the chain of reciprocity. Living by the precepts of the Honorable Harvest - to take only what is given, to use it well, to be grateful for the gift - is easy in a pecan grove. We reciprocate the gift by taking care of the grove, protecting it from harm, planting seeds so that new groves will shade the prairies and feed the squirrels.