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Homeric Hymn to Pan

About Hermes' dear child tell me, Muse, the goat-footed, two-horned rowdy, who roams about the wooded fields together with the dance-merry nymphs: along the precipitous crag they tread the summits, calling on Pan, god of the pastures with splendor of rough hair, who has been assigned every snowy hill, the mountain peaks, and the rocky tracks. This way and that he roams through the thick brush, sometimes drawn to the gentle streams, sometimes again passing among the towering crags as he climbs up to the highest peak to survey the flocks; often he runs through the long white mountains, and often he drives the wild creatures through the glens, killing them, keen-sighted. Towards evening his solitary sound is heard as he returns from the hunt, playing sweet music from his reed pipes; his melodies would not be surpassed by that bird that in flowery spring among the leaves pours forth her lament in honey-voiced song.

With him then the clear-singing mountain nymphs, tripping nimbly by a dark spring, dance and sing; the echo moans round the mountaintop, while the god, moving from side to side of the dance rings, or again in the middle, cuts a nimble caper, a brown lynx hide over his back, delighting in the silvery singing—all in a soft meadow, where crocus and fragrant hyacinth spring up inextricably mingled with the grass. They celebrate the blessed gods and long Olympus; and they tell of one god above all, Hermes the courser, how he is the swift messenger for all the gods, and how he came to Arcadia with its many springs, the mother of flocks; it is there that he has his precinct as Cyllenian Hermes. There, though a god, he pastured dirt crusted flocks beside a mortal man, because a surging desire had come upon him to unite in love with Dryops' lovely-tressed girl. He accomplished the fruitful coupling; and she bore Hermes a dear son in the house, at once a prodigy to behold, goat-footed, two-horned rowdy, merry laughter. She jumped up and ran away, nurse abandoning child, for she was frightened when she saw his unprepossessing face with its full beard. But Hermes the courser quickly took him and laid him in his arm, and the god's mind was exceedingly glad. He went rapidly to the abodes of the immortals, wrapping the child closely in skins of mountain hare, and sat down beside Zeus and the other gods and displayed his son. All the immortals were delighted, especially Bacchic Dionysus; and they took to calling him Pan, because he delighted them all (pantes).

So I salute you, lord; I seek your favor with my song. And I will take heed both for you and for other singing.