

“Five Minute Speech”  
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*I would like to tell you a story about this place.*

*All of us have those places where we are inspired, be it a library, a symphony, a quiet place in nature, and I for one have a hobby of making pilgrimages to recognized inspirational places. I've made pilgrimages to visit the Taj Mahal, Gettysburg, Hiroshima, the little Big Horn, pupfish ponds, mountains in various parts of the world, and recently, Leopold's sand county shack. And this place relates to me in those terms.*

*Remember another era and Thomas Wolfe's statement, "You can't go home again."*

*After returning from several years of wandering alone in the world I thought the natural thing to do was to return home and take root in the alter place of a childhood image, a beautiful lake, green overstory, clean waters. I went back to that lake and there it was, a ripped up, cemented landscape, summarized best by the sign on the beach that said, "Polluted. No Swimming." So I moved on, drifted sad and bitter at our mad technological binge: the wiping out of the passenger pigeon, Glen Canyon dams being built, the loss of neighborhoods in our cities.*

*And then for me came this valley. We might have accepted a new town that was planned by Eastern developers for the place. It was to be huge, a new plastic, chrome, cemented ugly call Marincello. But the developers' cruelty of cutting our soils, of buying our friends, of destroying our fought-for zoning was too much, so we rebelled, we dozen, that Sunday, years ago. We decided to stand, to draw a green line and say, "no further".*

*Following that, there was courage. Gray haired, elderly sisters locking arms, blocking US highway 101, getting gifts and getting petitions signed. There was sacrifice, unpaid young attorneys facing formidable odds of society's best paid, largest law firms and winning. There was sorrow, good politicians who sold out and were never trusted again.*

*Somehow, we persevered and here we are today, and it's even more beautiful than it was then, and, more important, it will be even more beautiful a thousand years from now. I've thought, "what else can we do in life that would possibly be here a thousand years from now?" And obviously, it is very important to me. But beyond that, I suspect for a few of us, we accomplished more than we knew for each of our lives those years ago. It was a shift of cosmic gears, a new value, a new green line stand. By the presence of this place, I know how, today, I can go home again.*

*I've been here since and have seen the poetry of fog relating to lichen on rocks. I've surprised a badger and seen its strength as it frantically disappeared into the earth, digging a new hole, watched young lovers, loving themselves and the landscape, their freedom as they hiked through the valley. So, I know this place will be here and persevere and my children and their children, and your children in the future will enjoy it too.*

*So, I know that we by this gentle rebellion of drawing green lines can help ourselves and our future. Similar involvement in other rebellions has given us some successes such as cleaner air and water, redwood forests, and an increasing reverence for life. The issues get more complex and victories more difficult, but the same green line rebellions are now winning against nuclear madness and other cancer-causing pollutants.*

*Ultimately, we get enough green lines to form a political force, which I believe some of us are starting now in Sacramento.*