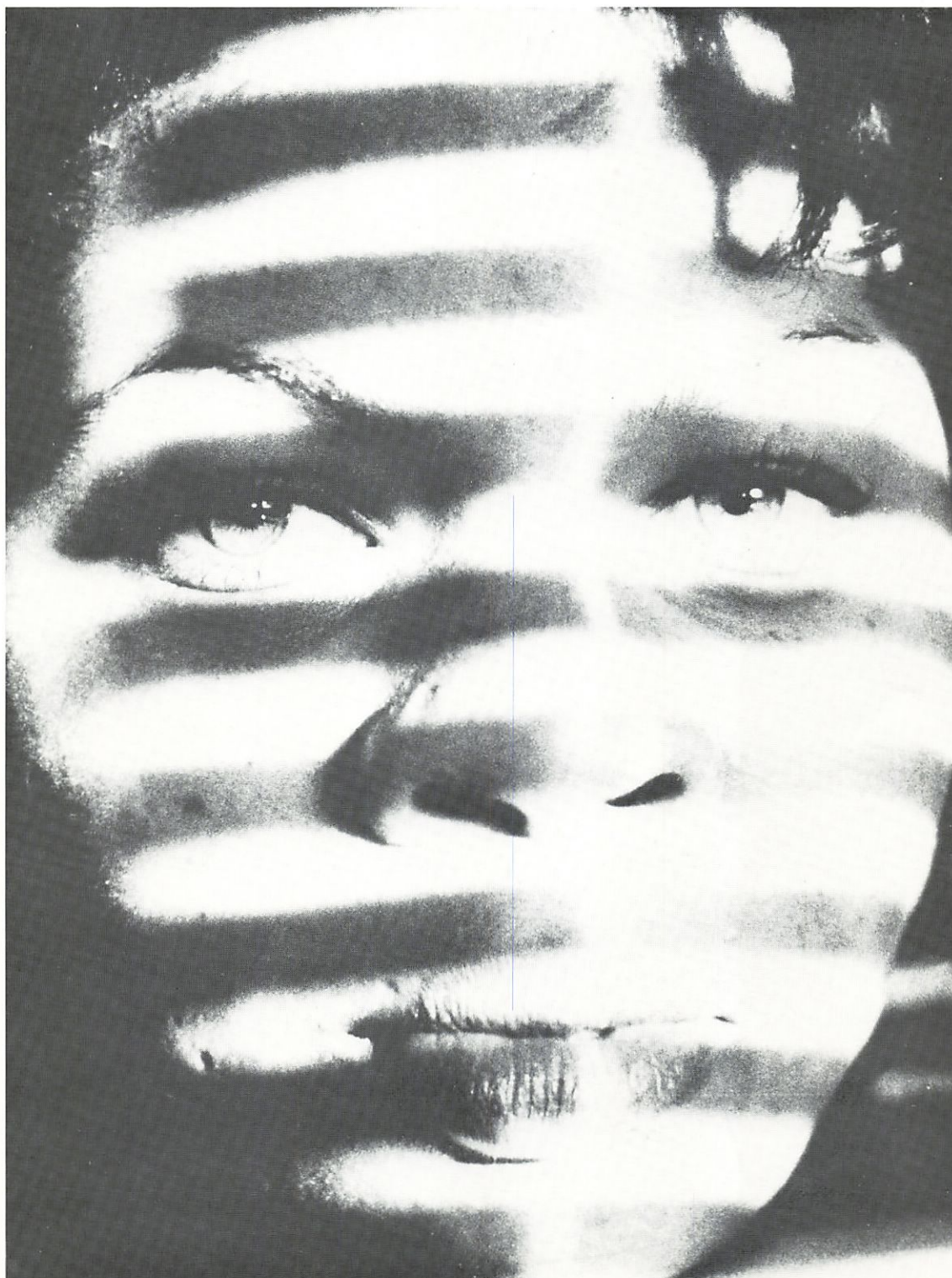


Denali

magazine

Lane Community College

Fall 1993



Denali

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Fall
1993

People say we're crazy
and you know that's fuckin' true
when we turn to look at you
with laughing eyes
flashing insane stares
stares growing longer and longer
and our eyes begin to glow
yelling children
running through the streets
happy people all in heat
it's time to see
the monsters inside
that's why we're here
to unlock your heart
RELEASE
the poems in your mind

-Rachael Meador

Lane Community College
4000 East 30th, Eugene, Oregon 97405
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Spring 1993. Volume XVI Number 1

So — here it is, the fall issue of Denali. No theme, no restrictions, no connection between the art and the written word (or at least not much of a connection).

This term several people who had never had their work published in Denali braved the stiff competition and can be found in the following pages. I hope that lots of zany fun people come out of the woodwork and submit art and/or poetry for our next issue. The theme for winter term is "The Fantastic." So, submit your work that deals with science fiction, fantasy, or any larger than life crazy fun happenings that will bring people out of

their winter depressions. Deadline for winter term submissions will be February 11 at 5 p.m. in Cen 479f.

Thank you to all those who entrusted the Denali staff with their creations. I hope you will submit again next term even if your work was not published this term. There are lots of talented people out there in Eugeneland.

Hope to hear from you soon,



Sonja Taylor



Denali Staff



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by Mickey Stellavato

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November

You tell me that you're tired,
but your eyes tell me you're bored.
You drift off to the bedroom
and I flinch
as I hear the door close.
And we sleep restlessly,
miles apart in a Queen-size bed,
Waking in a cold house
no heater can warm.
We sit across from each other,
smoking more than usual,
our coffee growing cold, unnoticed,
Until you rise to leave,
forgetting that it's Sunday, Our-day,
and that you've nowhere to go.
You stamp a cold kiss on my cheek
and take your coat - not the one I gave you,
but the old one you like better.
I hear the door shut tiredly,
and I turn from the window
to avoid the now-familiar sight of your back
as you walk away.

—Maureen Kemmy

Rambling

I see my body
as a map of Oregon
feel your fingers
driving
up around Yamhill
searching
your eyes a light
as you reach
my rib
cocksure
it's yours

—Kathryn Steadman

Burn All

It is a little room, mine, sparse of bed.
Not more, much than a narrow cot or coffin.
Yet here in early morn, and sunset red
I lay aside my puny gods of tin,
Build up the fire of life so love may take
Brittle cares, iced tears, daily knotted woes
Burn all; at last assume his rightful place
Beside the burn, ashes scatter as flows
To the distant sea the glimmering stream
Made pure by journey's length, and salted wave
Till my old sins are but a fading dream
When I emerge unbound from this gray cave
To feel the surf, its wash about my feet
And with Love, boldly stride into the deep.

—Bonita Rhinehart

S.O.S.

For Leslie

when wakefulness has come

and i have gathered myself together
this myriad of scattered emotions
so long deadened by nightmares
in liquid form

will you look for me

across this ocean of time we have lost
i will send you another message
in another empty bottle
another empty promise

of change.

—Uhuru Black

Poor Souls

I weep for the poor souls
Boring lives trapped forever
In a cauldron of emptiness.

A great honor to live
with happiness and pain
Taking risk as clear as day.

Do not weep when I die.
A new venture, not misery,
seen forever in my eye.

—Peter Knox



Photo by Daniel A. Slovic

Waiting for the Sun

By John Last

Old Jack sighed and stooped to sit in his favorite chair. Its smooth, wooden seat was well worn and fit him well. Returning to this chair was like returning to the memory of an old friend. From his porch, the vast Australian Outback opened before him and seemed to glow under the early morning's star filled sky. Grunting, he slowly took off his glasses and with the efficiency of routine wiped the fog from them. He placed them back on firmly and continued his scan of the horizon with tired, ancient eyes. He settled back in patience for it would be some time before the sun began its crest.

It was cold, too cold for a man of his age to be sitting in the still morning air. The chill tried in vain to cover him, to engulf him. It surrounded him and pierced his flesh with thin, delicate needles, but Old Jack gave no notice. Old Jack was long since immune to the cold for he was already spoiled inside. He had lung cancer. Terminal lung cancer. It was during one of these continuous reawakenings to his condition, that Old Jack fumbled through his pockets, struck a match and lit a smoke.

He was a simple man with simple pleasures. Was it really his fault that he enjoyed the demon weed so much? As he sat contented by his last remaining indulgence of a tired lifetime, he saw the sky begin its subtle shift from black to blue. He would die soon after the sun rose. He knew with an uncanny certainty

that he would. His only wish was that Emily were here to walk with him into the dark. Into the void. Into that eternal night. But before that final journey began, he would feel the sun's rays one last time.

Emily had passed away a little over seven months ago. Natural causes. Passed away, what an insult! There was no use in trying to pretty it up, she died. It was that simple. It happens to everyone, so why should he try to skirt around the truth. It had taken her, and it was going to take him. He would soon follow her into the realm of sweet oblivion.

As he sat, memories of that cold morning fled back to him. In his present condition, the strength that he used in the past to wall the memories out failed him. He had awakened just before dawn to find she was gone. In the night she had grown wings and silently took flight. Only her shell and bitter memories were left behind. Cigarettes were not the author of his disease, Emily was. The loss of Emily was the disease killing him, and cancer was merely its symptom.

He ground the butt out on a window sill, its surface scarred with countless other burns. He had over the many years transformed a simple window sill into an alien landscape. An almost identical reflection of the surface of the moon, which now set for its shelter behind the mountains. As he was about to light another cigarette, he was overcome by a severe fit. He coughed and shook violently as the chair trembled on its unsteady legs. The pain in his throat was unbearable, and when he swallowed, it felt as gritty as the sand which lay beneath his feet. Moments later, he calmed and spit. Without even looking he knew that it was red. It would not be the brilliant, glowing red of a rose, but a pale, sickly red.

A wave of weakness overcame him and he bowed his head to pray. His leathery voice seemed deafening in the still air as he whispered, "I just want to see the sun. Just one more time. Take me, but just let me see its light. I don't want to die in the dark. I want to see."

All around him a dark tide began to rise, and he knew it was almost over. Slowly he raised his head, a silent plead still clinging to his lips. A tear fell as he saw a dim halo that nestled the horizon. It was as faint and fragile as a veil.

He sat in silence as a fiery orb crested the horizon. Time fell away swiftly and the orb rose high into the sky. It burned a lustrous white, and Old Jack knew that night would never again smother its light. He rubbed his eyes in disbelief, for it seemed that the orb was growing. It was and had by now obscured almost all of his vision. It was his reality, and there would be no turning from it. Within moments, it would engulf him.

Tears fell freely and were no longer laced with pain. They were tears saturated with joy, like those shed at a homecoming. Maybe there was a place waiting for him after death? Maybe he would be able to see Emily again? The world had shifted to absolute white, as immaculate as a dove's wing, and Old Jack felt a calming sense of passage. His eyes lit up and in his excitement called next to him, "Do you see it Emily? Don't you see it?" Somewhere deep inside he felt the sharp pain from the absence of her voice. He tried again, "Don't you see it? Please tell me that you see it."

Then it happened. She spoke, "Yes, Jack, I see it. I see it."

He couldn't understand it. How was she here? He had never expected to ever see her again. He had thought that he had lost her forever. He couldn't see her in the angelic light, but he could feel her near. He called out, "Where? Where are you? I can't see you."

Her reply came back soft and sweet. He had always loved the sound of her voice. She had a strong beautiful accent that turned even a shopping list into an epic poem. She consoled him, "You don't need to see me; you only need to feel me. I'm here. I've been waiting for you."

All Jack could say was, "Why? Why didn't you pass over? Why did you wait for me?"

When she spoke again, Jack finally passed from the dark and into the light. He understood the subtle bond between death and love. Emily's last words were, "You are about to make the most important journey since your birth. We walked together in life, we will walk together in death. So below, as above, my darling. So above, as below." He whispered her name once and fell still.

Thirty minutes later, over the Australian Outback, the sun rose.



Reprieve

Tan rocks, black road, yellow dashes dividing the car in two
Flat straight lonely moon or maybe
Arizona

Wind flurries heat waves from my naked wet body
Radio gone, thrown out past Vegas
Cacti passing as fast as my thoughts
Speed past pain, speed past pleasure
Drive away from this physical earth
Drive away the memories

While she sleeps in the passenger seat.
I rid myself of the world at least for a moment
Weightless and calm hypnotized by the desert
The weight of the world lifted

No crying in my head of wounds in my soul
Life irrelevant, I must be dead

I am my perfect self, as I was
after my death, before I was born, as I will be again.
Sounds and blanched light slowly fade back to me as she stirs
The dreariness and splendor of life creep into my mind

Heat and pain reenter my bones
She wakes up and I ask for a beer and act as if nothing happened
But she sees my faint smile.

—Ryan-Charles Trundle

Red Haze

I met you in the garden where the flowers are made of stone
you courted me in twilight and took me beneath the moon
You stopped the painful beating of my heart with a kiss so bittersweet
I thought that we were bound forever by that coldest cruelest heat
Our communion was more than sacrifice, it was more than christening
It was birth and death and love and hate and the beginning and end of everything.
I thought that we were more than lovers, more than siblings in the reddest wine
I am without understanding how you could leave me for the rest of time.
I stand here in the garden listening as wolves sing to the moon
and I cry until the morning when I must close my eyes against the dawn
I can't believe you brought me here, to this timeless shadow place
just to walk into the fire and leave me in disgrace.

—Cassandra Tyson

Candle in the Window

For Yasmin

I imitate the candle
As it slowly drips its wax
Down upon the table.
Its heat tirelessly melting
my solid composure.
Flame searing my mask.
My face falling into puddles.
Half my length spent and still burning,
I have yet to catch a glimpse
Of the hand which struck the match
And lit the flame
Whose embrace endures with the
Persistence of time,
Ceaselessly dissolving me.
Every drop pleading for the hand
To return, pinch the wick
And snuff the flame.

—John Last

Redwood Regeneration Rag

Dear great, great, ever-so-great grandchildren
Welcome to the 1000 year old garden
Cultivate well and
Harvest Wisely
With your eyes & your hearts

—Mountain Lion Following

Bosnia: No Man's Land

A Serb boy and a Muslim girl--
or perhaps it was a Muslim boy
and a Serb girl--how could I know?
packed their suitcases to leave
the war, but in No Man's Land,
he was gunned down by the Serbs,
and she went back for him
only to be killed as well. Or

perhaps it was Muslims who
shot him first, but it is certain
that she crawled back to him
and was shot,
and both their bodies lay
beside their dropped suitcases,
and no one entered No Man's Land.

So the bodies lay there side by side
for the long range TV cameras
to show us as the wind ruffled
her dress and tousled his hair.

And all night they lay there,
as they had once on a date in a park
giving new meaning to sweet Shakespeare's
old phrases about lovers
as their stars crossed in the dark.

—Peter Jensen

She walked in
Distrust.
Slowly
against her better judgment . . .
She began
pulling down the zipper.
Teeth coming apart,
uncovering her.

She
ignorantly . . .
invited the stranger
who she thought she knew . . .
inside.
Step in.
she said.
Let me cover you.
she invited.
Look around. Pick things up.
Hold them in your hands.
Know me.
she insisted.
Picking up her possessions
the stranger walked away.

Wait!
she cried out.
You have taken parts of me!
The stranger did not turn.
Did not flinch.
Just kept walking
further away.

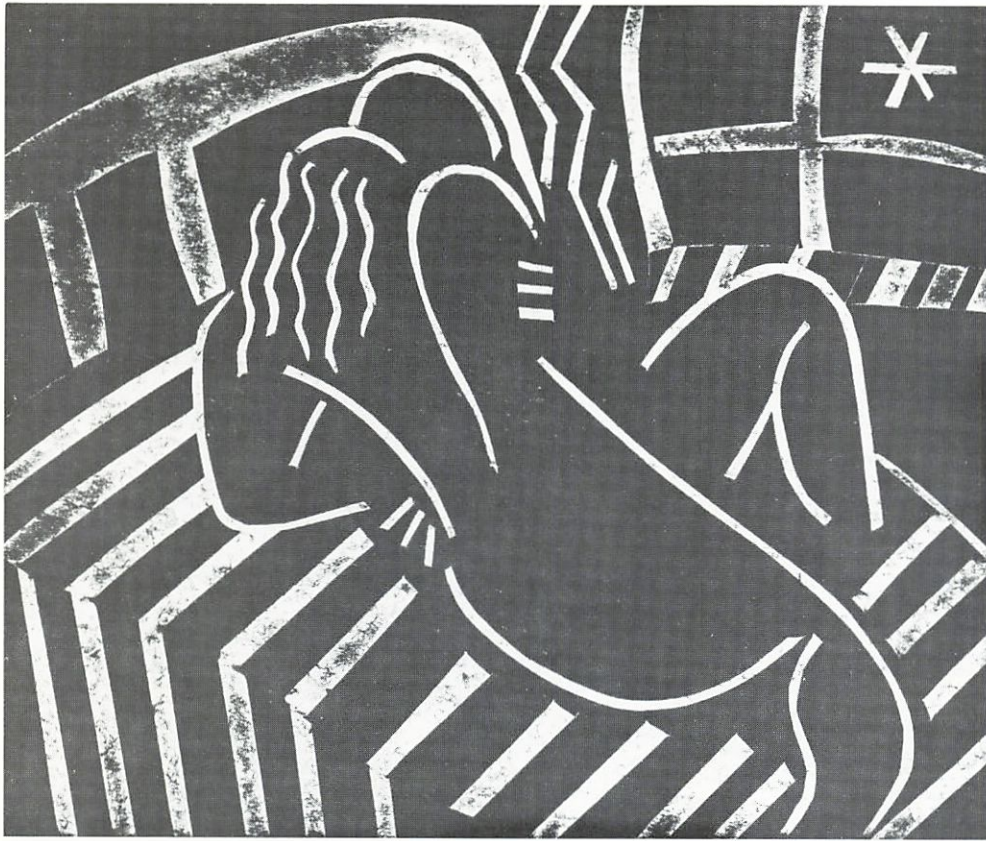
She zipped herself up,
covering herself in shame.
Teeth coming together,
hard.
tight.
cement-like.
Protecting the emptiness that had been left.

—Adele L. Wilson

Plains Dayze Summer's Eve

Noontime sunshine splashes down and a rustling cheer
rolls across the field pushing up wafts of clover and sweetgrass
The melodic banter of crickets whispers me toward the
ranging peaks of mile high clouds that slowly crumble and wash
into the colossal sea of air
Certain few meadows of grass yield sweeter harvests, like season
spanning deer beds softer than a me sized bowl of feathers
In these dream pockets are the calmest introspection, the clearest
philosophy and a shimmering river of passion bound only for the
ocean of stars
As the golden sun falls to the west and the moon rises dazzlingly
red maroon, a cold lonely coyote sings his sorrows to the night
sky, sings for redemption and sings wanting reason

—Orpheus Irving



Afternoon Delights

Linocut by Jeanette Nadeau

Find the Good and Praise it*

This love for a man,
his body a blue pool,
And out of this water
the fragile stem that grows
'till it flares to a red tip
the way Indian Paintbrush on a hillside
startles my eye, won't leave me alone.

I'm not in wonder
of what is flesh, blood, muscle,
than I am in awe
of a kestrel in flight.

I lower my head
to the smell of ripe melons,
my long hair tangles
into the curling fringe of yours,
down to where you are swollen
and thick.

This is not me kneeling
to false idols, false gods.
This is me
finding the good
and praising it.

*Inscription found on the back of a greeting card.

—Kathryn Steadman

Gypsy Dancer
bound
against music
taunting
inner flame yearnings
to be free.
Starlight
seems forbidden
behind
smoky haze,
and so
lost
as dead lovers
we choose
to walk away.

—Tami Ewing





LIFE
PIEE

Forest Nymphs

Naked heathens run on furry feet
eclipsing shadows left by a full moon
laughing as they dart in and out
weaving through the forest trees.

Straight and tall they stand
sure of their imposing stride
never a care has rested on their shoulders
no worldly weight has held them back.

With abandon and ecstasy they run
giddy and drunk from life
enchancing each thing they touch
with uncontrollable joy.

—Sonja Taylor

Illustration by Jenny Moon



Tangled Web

Photo by Sonja Taylor

Fall Haiku (Acceptance)

If only these leaves
could turn their beauty to words
and teach me to die.

—Sarah Banyard

Low and rumbling
a dog's throaty growl begins
anticipation

Leaves rise expectant
straining to be free from trees
which hold them captive

A visitor comes
formless, with nature's glory
harshly caressing

Wind blows bodiless
silent footsteps across a
well traveled dirt road

In sleeping houses
windows rattle proclaiming
winter's arrival

—Sonja Taylor



Self Portrait

Illustration by Sarah Fabbri

Samson Retrograde

Each morning I tied it back, bound up, under control
 but it was there, at the back of my head.
 All day it tried to escape.
 And it grew.
 It grew tangled and broken and split
 and long.
 Until it all grew out.
 Snip
 the weight of years off my head.
 Snip
 cut free from my disease.
 Snip
 denial fell to the floor
 to be swept up and thrown away.
 In the mirror someone I've never seen
 young and strong.
 Ready to heal.

—Jeff Lehman

Abilities weigh underfertile, yet overgrow.
 Acquaintance a quiet auditorium.
 Self once for granted whole, now partial.
 Beam of tomorrows substance supported posture,
 Broken by defalcation of the same.

My house is broken,
 I'll build another.
 I'll mow my sheep,
 and pickle my brother.

—Aaron Fabbri

Future of the Past

My grandfather likes to tell stories
 He was at Pearl Harbor during the attack
 Inland though, not on a ship
 One of the tanks under his command shot down a plane
 A Kamikaze plane
 In the wreck they searched
 Appeasing their curiosity
 For them it was their first glimpse of war
 They found a bottle of sake next to the charred warrior
 And drank their conquest
 And swallowed their fear
 Until numb
 I wonder what I will tell my grandchildren
 Of What
 can they learn from me

—Ryan-Charles Trundle



Fire Minion

Painting by Devin Miller and Aaron Danielson

Empire

The empire's crumbling
Fading away
Our mistreated fortunes
in ruin and decay

A world full of anger
sorrow and pain
A world full of hatred
emptiness, shame

This world void of hope
Without love or trust
This world without laughter
All ashes and dust

The end now is coming
Only one step away
When all will be nothing
No more yesterday

An end to the violence
An end to the tears
An end for the lonely
The end of our fears

—Charles Dieball

East African Port

Cow boats crossing on seas to continents west to east
and back.

Fare traded for an able back.

Coal shoveled, thrown into the steel gut, I put my
foot forward to port.

New soil, new smells, eyes wide watching shapely
black bodies, black as the coal I pitched last night.

I shout but the sounds of my foreign tongue are lost
in the dealings of the native market.

—Chad T. Kessler

Sailor's Tale

A relentless and musty wind pushing at my face . . .
Carries the voices of timeless tenants cries . . .
Rising and falling to the monotonous chanting . . .

Fading in and out of the watery tides endless waves . . .
Listen . . . a voice . . . grisly, wary-wise . . . it spoke . . .

Make way . . . fair winds of sea . . .
Flurry of wings . . . Slip us lea . . .

Like and echo, trails the constant response . . . keeps answering . . .
and answering . . .

Set off . . . smoke-fires of Isles . . .
Ration a spot . . . lest it beguiles . . .

Out of the gray gloom . . . groaning from the eternally twisting sea . . .
The helmsman bites out his challenging command . . .

Dash on keel . . . sever Moon's skin . . .
Mock the sky . . . red glooms din . . .
Spare not . . . the laughter's echo . . .
Eyes of fright . . . lay just below . . .

As the wind witches wail . . . on and on a constant warning . . .

Nary safe deck . . . endless pause . . .
Lesser die . . . any just cause . . .
Harms not far . . . always near . . .
Befall the nets . . . torn pier . . .
Catch tides . . . blood foam red . . .
Belly full . . . all well fed . . .
Press on . . . my brother kind . . .
Time reckon . . . stay the line . . .
Take a breath . . . hold days deep . . .
Bottom straight . . . it's place keep . . .

In songs of salty sailor's . . . wetting the lips of greed . . .
The story goes . . .

Legend maker . . . old Captain's tell . . .
Blue on whispers . . . misty spell . . .
Lost treasure . . . dead finger lure . . .
Surf sirens horn . . . to endure . . .
Warm drying sands . . . fresh slate . . .
Lost in her will . . . time to wait . . .

On into the mist we sail . . . a muted perpetual dialogue . . .
Even into darkness . . . caught in the web of our dreams . . .

—Wayne Troxell

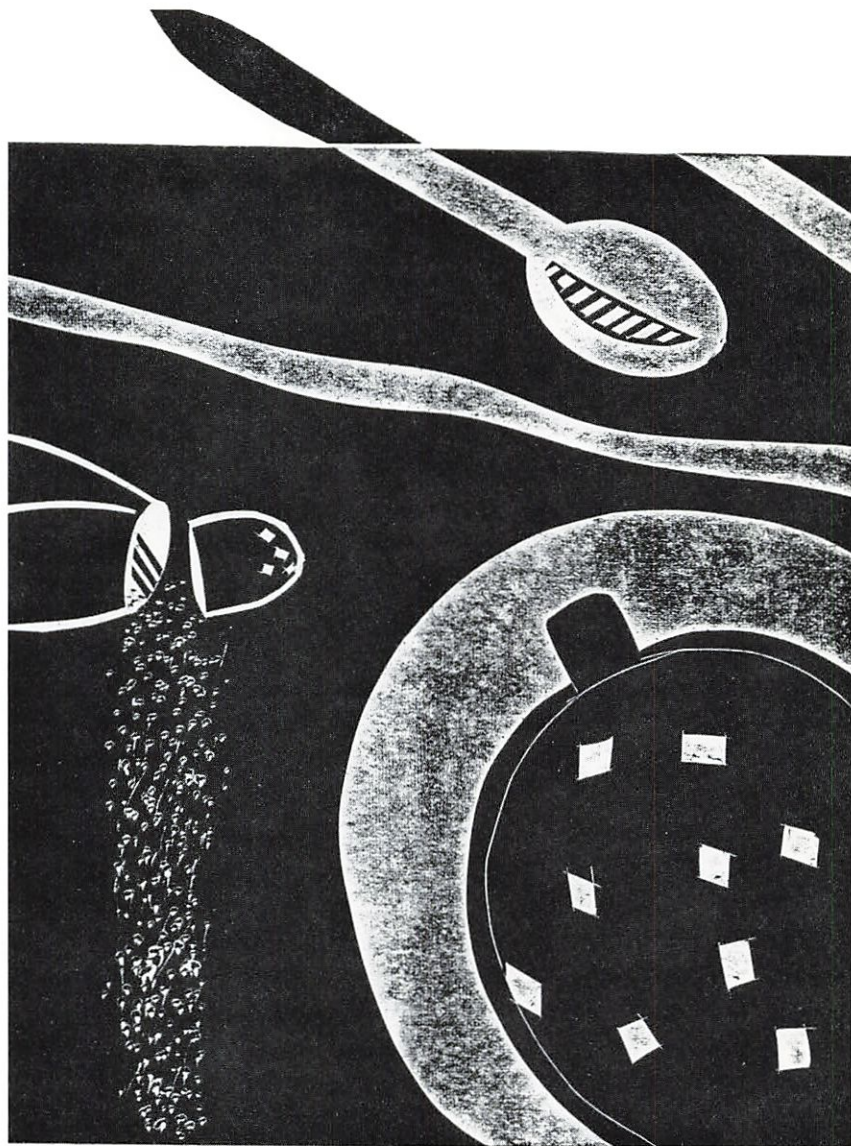
TULIP, CALLA

They grew in the grotto sometime
during the long knife of the afternoon:

fleurs de la consolation,
flores de mi tristeza,
flowers of innocent origin.

Tulip and calla,
ends cut with the same sharp edge,
I will let no anger rise against you,
nor evade that great sadness
of which your beauty reminds me.
You shall grace my grieving here until
red and white petals fall
and yellow pollen dusts my lips at night.

—Sandra M. Brown



Lunch Break

Mixed media by Jeanette Nadeau

Kitchen Song

Sometimes when I'm alone in the house
and the music changes to a sad ballad,
I see my waking life as a kind of dream.

Voices on the street rise and fall, the noise
of water running--in the kitchen, carrots
scrubbed, the lyrics softly groaning a lament,

muffling the edge of the moment's knife. Some image
comes forward: that hot, vivid night Barbara
and Janet and I barmaided

the Brazilian Celebration--the naked bodies
dancing in the pool, the untouchable
happiness, mangoes and Gran Marnier,

papaya and samba. Barbara half turns
toward the camera, Janet glamorous
in black, me popping a bottle of champagne

and laughter--the night strewn about us
like a diamante shawl we'd weave and give
each other. It is a fundamental anguish in the song

I think shifts the wind of. Time enough
to cut carrots up for dinner here
in a new and meaner land. These small

remote suns settling in the steamer
are also a kind of dream of where I've come to,
drenched in the blowing dream of where I've been.

—Sandra M. Brown

Pasta Decisions: A noodle doodle

Boil a large pot of water.
Sprinkle in salt.
What pasta do I toss in tonight?

Maybe mostaciolli
because you can slide your fork
through the ends,
and it reminds me
of noisy family gatherings
around the big table at my grandmother's house,
with salad and fresh green beans and warm french bread
and wine in my water.

Or ravioli
with one of Katherine's recipes for fillings
that she showed me how to make
the summer I stayed with her,
when she pierced my ears
and I almost fainted.

Perhaps fettucini,
with vegetables,
like the time in California
overlooking Bodega Bay,
trying to scare the kids every time
we saw a bird fly or land nearby
after watching Hitchcock's movie.

Or macaroni,
the fat kind like my dad used to make
with big slices of yellow and white cheeses
dripping from the center
and crusty bits around the edges,
or
the skinny kind that comes in a box
that you live on
when you leave home for the first time
and have no money to buy real cheese.

Wait.
I know.

Spinach egg noodles.
Because we laughed so much
that time we decided they could count
as a green vegetable.

I think I'd like that memory tonight.

—Kathy A. Smith

Reclaiming Myself

In the wind you hear a whistle,
lilting softly through the night
Silently I am weeping,
you gaze into the window -
I have made myself invisible to you.
I could melt the ice around your heart
with the sound of my voice, yet still
I will not let you see me. You
stare into the window instead of out,
to the night beyond you are blind.
The darkness reflects my eyes,
your memories cause your throat to constrict,
a tear I pretend not to see dances slowly
down your cheek. As if cursed,
as if jinxed you lay awake in bed -
sleep will not rescue, I have prevented that.
Somewhere on the edge of dreams I call your name,
and bring you awake again. This is not about love,
even though you reach hopefully, to touch me,
only to find I have disappeared. This is about self-
preservation, and you will never catch me.
The games are reversed, our roles have switched.
Outside a storm has risen, we fight.
Deafening cacophonous thunder drowns my forced entry.
Like a beast am I - clutching, gasping, tearing through
the past, the pain, the domination -
I have come with a chalice, a soothing elixir to cool your
desperation, you sip to banish my omnipresence,
your mind, now diseased, doesn't hear the pulse of the storm,
a fitting symphony of my freedom.
The infusion trickles through your veins, too slowly -
you are drunk, in fact you have already died.
My withheld kisses have poisoned you.
I feel no remorse.

— Mary-Denise Tabar

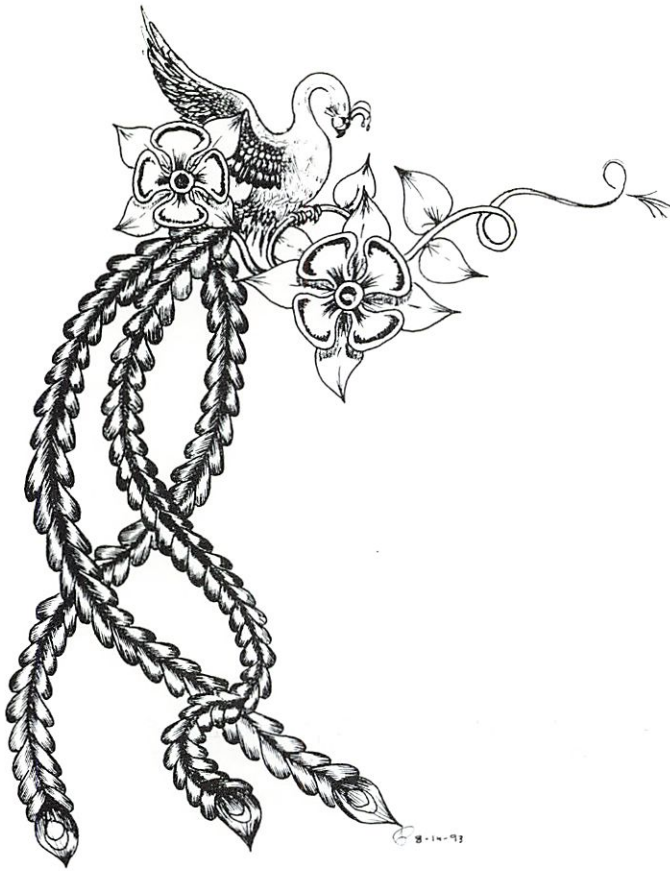


Illustration by Jim Poplinski

An Earthquake the Size of 1906

By Ali Hart

AND SO

Roni turned from under the warmth of the covers, and peeled her body away from its puzzle-piece-like fit against the back of her husband. She'd been sleeping that way, holding onto him, for some time. Rolling toward the edge of the bed, she suddenly became aware of herself when she felt the balance of her body fall toward the floor. Roni remained on her hands and knees for quite awhile, absorbing the idea that she'd fallen. The vivid and formless thoughts in her head surprised her and yet at the same time she couldn't understand the fog that drifted through her brain. Confused, time passed. As she sat back onto her heels her eyes reached up to the framed picture hanging just

above her on the wall: the Virgin Mary holding her precious Christ-child.

Sitting there, a crystalline idea did form and she thought to herself, "How ridiculous, a virgin holding her very own child. What next will 'they' have us believing?"

The fog that had filled her head returned. Roni could feel her naked body shiver from the cold which the wintry wooden floor conducted into her bones. She climbed back under the covers and neatly organized her body up against her sleeping husband. Joe shifted, probably from the sudden change of temperature that Roni brought with her from the floor.

"How warm his body is!" she thought. After a few minutes of single minded concentration, she thawed enough to release the intense coldness that her skin had gathered as a result of being on the floor for too long. She could relax a little bit now. She sank deeper into her mind settling upon the disturbing thought that now lay clear. She wondered how after five years of so-called warmth, she could somehow still feel severely frozen. Why the marriage that sparked this union hadn't become the bonfire she'd hoped it would be by this time. Being warm inside would make her feel full. She longed to feel full. Full the way a reservoir is filled after years of drought and the mad rush of one winter's particularly abundant accumulation carves new tributaries in the landscape delivering much-needed water come springtime. If Roni could have cried, she would have. She contemplated whether it would take a meltdown the size of Chernobyl, or an earthquake the size of 1906, to break up what lay so still within her.

Roni's mind continued to climb through the confusion of thoughts piling up in the now hours of sleeplessness. Her gaze fell upon the brightness of the digital numbers of the clock on the table next to the bed. 4:20 a.m. She could not sleep and wished that all she needed to do was to clasp her hands, the way the old lady in the commercial did to turn out the lights, to make herself fall back to sleep. Again Roni moved her body against Joe's in an attempt to wedge herself into the angles of his sleeping curled-up-ness. As she nudged herself into the shape of his body, she became acutely aware of the distinct feeling that a puzzle piece was being forced into the wrong part of a puzzle. Was this really her life? These thoughts frightened her.

Slowly rising from bed, Roni thought about starting water for coffee. She wandered first into the kitchen then to the pantry, cracked the door and flipped the switch, allowing only a thin strip of light into the kitchen. The shock of too much light

on her night eyes could bring the same unwelcome reality to her body that the realization of unfulfilled marriage had just brought to her heart. She wasn't prepared for that. She needed a dimly lit room to soften the blow.

In the kitchen, Roni faced the window that looked out into the back yard while she waited for the water to heat. Through her image reflecting on the glass, she could see her sleeping cat curled up against the chilling frost of the morning night. On an upside-down flower pot as a bed, Boots, without lifting his head, opened his eyes to view Roni's gaze; this seemed to remind him to curl up tighter against himself for warmth. Before long, his eyes fell closed again. She thought about how lucky he was to be able to provide such warmth for himself. He could lie content against the cold — he seemed to feel safe — whatever his life was about, it wasn't about being frightened.

Roni's mind flashed to the image of her sleeping husband. She imagined herself at the doorway of the bedroom looking at his slumbering body. He, comfortably breathing in cool air while his body lay toasty warm under the blankets. She, quietly walking to him and putting her face close to his to feel his breath float across her mouth and then her ears as she turns her head to each side. She could be lulled back to sleep with the rhythm and flow of these warm currents coming from him. Her hand lifts and gently strokes his hair when the movement of Boots' body standing arched against the stroke of her hand made her realize that she was naked and shivering out in the cold black dawn.

The whistle of the kettle in the kitchen blowing wildly brought Roni back to herself. She lifted Boots up and pressed him against her frozen body, then hurried back into the house.

"Shit, I've got to get some coffee in me. Time to wake up!"

AND

"What happens during the earthquake?" The words floated into Roni's head as she sat with her legs bent against her chest and her arms wrapped around her shins. Folded, she held herself together.

"Well, I'm concerned."

"Concerned or frightened?"

"Concerned, I guess. I can see that the house is falling deeper into the ground, at an angle."

"Which angle?"

"Let's see." Roni then opened her eyes; she needed to see Sam's face to know if his question were serious. Sam was staring at her face and was

surprised when her eyes flew open as if he'd been caught. "Does it matter . . . , the angle of the house?"

"I don't know, you just mentioned that the house fell at an angle; I'm not much good at this dream stuff, but I figure it could be important. I mean it was important that Jesus sat at the right hand of God."

Roni half agreed with Sam and somehow trusted him a little bit more. She closed her eyes again to see better what lay behind them. It was a while before she was willing to continue. "The top of the house leans to the left."

"Are you trapped inside?"

"Well, yes, but I don't feel like I will die."

"You can escape then?"

"No."

"No, then why do you feel like you won't die?"

"Because I seem to know that the quake will end before the entire house goes under."

"What happens next?"

"The earthquake does end. I walk to the front window and look through the small wedge of glass that can still see out."

"What do you see?"

"Feet."

"Feet?"

"Yes, feet."

"People's feet. Who are the people?"

"One person's feet. I can't really tell who it is. All I can see are feet."

Sam's attention changed suddenly, he seemed to know more. His focus shifted from questions to answers. "Maybe someone's come to help!"

Roni shrugged her shoulders, "I don't know, that's all there is to the dream."

"Someone like me maybe!" Sam moved himself from across his small, one-room studio apartment to sit next to Roni. He nestled himself into her hands, and she let his head fall onto her lap. He lay with his long legs stretched out in front of him while Roni ran her fingers through his hair. With eyes reaching up toward Roni, he said, "I can help you, Roni; I'll be your lover!"

Roni laughed. "You can't be my lover, You're like my brother."

"No," gently but decidedly correcting her. "Your

brother lives in South America."

"I said 'like' my brother. I know who my brother is. Besides I'm married."

"Yeah exactly, you might need a lover."

A very long yet comfortable silence fell between them.

"You know what really bugs me?" More silence. "The Virgin Mary probably had a lover who made her pregnant; then Joseph wouldn't marry her." Sam, lying still and quiet, knew that what she was saying would somehow eventually make sense. "And when he did finally marry her, it was only after she was stripped of her sexuality and made into a so-called virgin. Do you understand that Sam?"

"Of course, I understand, it's simple. Joseph couldn't handle that someone else fucked his old lady." Sam laughed. Then hysterically. He made Roni laugh, too, until they both were slouched into an indescribably tangled position, wiping their eyes from the unrelenting tears of laughter. It was hot. Sam kissed Roni for a long time. Roni left Sam's studio.

THEN

At the kitchen table Roni continued writing in her speckled composition book. In her on-going effort to lay claim to herself, she wrote down the bare bones of her life in her journal whenever she could. Writing what she remembered helped her feel who she was and that she was. Writing: putting down one event in front of the next, cueing up the past so she could climb to the top or bottom of herself and see that there was an entire being there. She'd become tired of feeling tossed in the mix of her life and wanted to feel the accumulation of herself without any of the pieces missing.

Roni reached for the half-full cup of coffee and lifted it to take a sip. "Yuck!" Rejecting the cold cup of coffee reminded her that it was in the initialness of most things that she drew the most pleasure. She put the cup down and thought about making a fresh pot. Coffee beyond twenty minutes old may as well be two days old, and Roni would have no part of old coffee.

The high-pitched sound of numbers being pressed on the microwave oven announced to Roni that Joe had come into the room. He liked, perfectly well, the coffee that remained in the pot, which was more than twenty minutes old and indeed was four hours old. It was 8:30 a.m.

"Good morning, Roni."

"Oh hi, good morning, yes!" She jumped on the words so as to save herself from seeming rude and

self-absorbed. Which she was. Self-absorbed. "You slept so well, Joe. I've been up since four."

"Writing?" Joe brushed her neck with his hand and kissed the top of her head.

"Yep." She drew this word out, stretching her yawning body against him as he remained standing just behind her chair. He moved away as Roni pushed herself away from the table to get up. She looked at Joe in a way that had never crossed her mind before, and she had no way of understanding the total sweeping feeling that suddenly fell over her.

"I'm going to make a fresh pot if you want to wait."

Joe agreed but would first drink the cup he had warmed in the microwave oven.

It didn't take long for Joe to feel his brain waves quicken as the caffeine worked on the synapses of his nervous system. He pulled Roni close to his body and held her next to him. "You are always so warm, Roni." She didn't resist his affection at all but was surprised that she could emanate warmth from a body that felt frozen on the inside. She felt the cold of the tile floor penetrate up her legs.

"I don't think it's me that's so warm but that your slippers and robe keep you from getting cold." In the very next moments Roni felt the aggregate of her life line up perfectly and for more than a fleeting instant this time. It might have been several minutes that she remained focused upon what organized in her brain. She became totally aware of what she needed to do.

As long as she had known Sam — most of his life — he had never kissed her that way. He had never revealed that kind of love. It was as if what had happened the day before at Sam's studio, last evening's sleeplessness, the five years of marriage, and even her entire life had prepared Roni for this exact moment.

The coffee pot slipped from her hands and shattered into a thousand pieces. Roni looked at the kaleidoscope of glass on the tiles and realized a lot. She loved Sam with her whole heart. She needed to see her brother in South America. And finally, Mary had a lover and wasn't a Virgin.

NEXT

Joe was cold.

AND

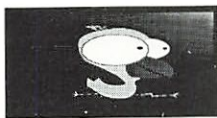
Sam became lonely.

YET

Roni got warmer.



Charcoal drawing by Jason Rackley



Contributors



Sarah Banyard—A biology major at LCC, I enjoy music, sailing, hiking and cats. I'm not a poet.

Uhuru Black—When I grow up I want to be a writer.

Sandra M. Brown is a writing instructor at Linn-Benton Community College.

Charles Dieball—First year student. I plan to get a master's degree in the writing field.

Tami Ewing—I am now 24 and happily married to my soulmate, we have a 2-year-old daughter. I have been writing poetry since the age of 8.

Aaron Fabbri—There's no place like home. I feel I am currently having a difficult time finding what I'm looking for.

Sarah Fabbri—And his boots were full of feet.

Damien Filer—A writer of poetry, prose and music, I was awarded a grant from the California Institute For Contemporary Arts in 1992 for my short story "The Dreamcatcher's Ransom."

Matthew Gettis—I'm a full-time student of photography and I plan to transfer to U of O in the fall of '94 to further my studies.

Ali Hart—When I write I call myself Ali Hart. And other times I call myself by another name. I teach at LCC, but not writing.

Orpheus Irving—True clarity comes to open eyes and open minds.

Peter Jensen's recent collaborative book of poetry, Confluence, with David Johnson and Erik Muller was a finalist in this year's Oregon Book Awards for poetry.

Maureen Kemmy is a pre-nursing student at LCC.

Chad T. Kessler—This was my first shot at having anything reprinted for others enjoyment - hope it worked for you.

Peter R. Knox—I am the ASLCC Treasurer and try to live an interesting life.

John Last—I'm 23 and have no career goals. It's the perfect background for a writer.

Devin Miller and Aaron Danielson—Any good looking people want to pose nude for our next painting? The human anatomy has always challenged us.

Jeff Lehman is a carpenter and writer, not necessarily in that order.

Rachael Meador—I couldn't live without poetry because it's a vent for all my frustrations, and it makes me happy.

Jenny Moon is a person who always looks at things from the bright side.

Mountain Lion Following is the pseudonym of a 33-year-old LCC student who believes in nonviolence, trees, & human nature.

Jeanette Nadeau—To express is to live to live is to impress.

Jim Poplinski is a student and peasant of Eugene, part-time artist, full-time caffeine freak.

Jason Rackley—I believe most people are not fit to govern themselves, people who go crazy are too sensitive, and that the existence of God is questionable.

Bonita Rhinehart—Making quilts, feeding the birds, baking cinnamon rolls - simply living is a feast.

Daniel A. Slovic—Adventurer of all sorts and musician.

Kathy A. Smith—I am back at school after being a nurse for ten years and am pursuing a degree in English. Writing has become an inexpensive escape from the world.

Kathryn Steadman—Recently I've been learning that being politically incorrect is more a way of life than a statement.

Mickey Stellavato—"What we think is chaos is an order we don't like, don't understand, or find inappropriate." - Amos Rappaport

Mary-Denise Tabar—I'm southern; Oregon is totally new to me. I belly dance. If I couldn't write I would die.

Sonja Taylor—There are no limits to the distance traveled by imagination.

Wayne Troxell—Writing is a hobby and my relaxation. My goal is to write a "short novel."

Ryan-Charles Trundle—My name is Ryan. I was born in Colorado and I assume I will die there as well.

Cassandra Tyson—Transfer student English/Psychology.

Adele L. Wilson—I'm 23, have a BS in history, am trying to publish my 1st novel (I currently hold the record among my friends for the most rejection letters received in a month), and am working on a second.



Christmas Spirit

Photo by Matthew Gettis

Drive-by Shooting

sometimes
my memories
fly by me
like a drive-by shooting

my eyes meet those
that hold the guns
that propel
my past
in metal slugs

through breaking glass
behind me

and every so often
when i'm standing there
caught unaware

shellshocked

one hits me
dead on.

—Damien Filer