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et al.: Camas, Summer 2018

THE NATURE OF THE WEST

Camas

SUMMER 2018

WITH RICHARD MANNING

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Camas

THE NATURE OF THE WEST

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Camas cultivates a community of writers and artists dedicated to land health and cultural resilience in the American West.

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OUR TITLE *Camas* takes its name from the plant *Camassia quamash*, which is native to the American West. *Camas* has historically served as a staple food and medicine for Indigenous communities. Its harvest continues longstanding reciprocity between land and people.

OUR HISTORY Founded by Environmental Studies graduate students at The University of Montana in 1992, *Camas* provides an opportunity for students, emerging writers and artists, and established voices to publish their work alongside each other.

OUR FRIENDS *Camas* received support for this issue from the Associated Students of The University of Montana, the Clark Fork Coalition, the Wild Rockies Field Institute, the Missoula Writing Collaborative, Montana Natural History Center, the University of Montana Environmental Studies Program, and donors.

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MICHAEL ANTHONY



From the Editors

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Created to protect our nation's unmarred, beautiful rivers, it now protects over 12,000 miles of rivers throughout 40 states. While this is a significant conservation victory, it's important to note that rivers protected under this act constitute less than 0.25% of rivers nationwide.

We chose the theme of rivers for this issue to celebrate the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and to acknowledge the vast amount of work left to do. When submissions began rolling in, we were unsure of what to expect. Odes to the beauty of unobstructed streams? Fly fishing tales from our backyard river, the Clark Fork? Or commentary on the dams and disappearing habitat we see so much here in the West?

What we found, overall, was transformation—pieces that speak to the roles that rivers play in transformation: amplifying, aiding, nourishing, and guiding. Our featured author, Richard Manning, who has written extensively about rivers in the West, calls for a transformation of thought in which we understand ourselves to be "held by our environment." In Jenny O'Connell's "Unseen Canyon," the river imparts the courage to see ourselves as capable and powerful. Loneliness serves as a well of memories and grief in Melissa Peterson's "To You, O Fire" and is reconciled on a riverbank in "Places Lost" by Marvin Shackelford. Jan Clausen's "By the Light of Distant Fires" grapples with the earth's precarious combination of fragility and resiliency, wreckage and beauty. And in "Nymph," Patrick Watson pays tribute to his mother Vicki, guardian of the Clark Fork and mentor to hundreds of environmental stewards.

In an effort to reflect the many ways we affect rivers and rivers affect us, we've chosen a broad range of voices. We're especially proud that over half of the art and work in this issue is from women, minorities, and indigenous communities. Together, these voices speak to a collective landscape that is ever-evolving to be more peopled, more manufactured. The result is a statement of our human relationship with rivers that resounds with courage, hope, heartbreak, and change.

Enjoy, Jess and Jane



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Mid-February, Austoria Pier | SUZANNE BURNS

IF RIVERS WERE ROUND

A CONVERSATION WITH AUTHOR RICHARD
MANNING ON THE ENVIRONMENT, POLITICS, AND
OUR PLACE IN BOTH.

MARKO CAPOFERRI

Richard Manning is an award-winning author and journalist based in Missoula, MT. He has written ten books, including One Round River: The Curse of Gold and the Fight for the Big Blackfoot, Rewilding the West: Restoration in a Prairie Landscape, It Runs in the Family, and most recently Go Wild: Free Your Mind from the Afflictions of Civilization co-authored with neuroscientist John J. Ratey. One Round River was named a significant book of the year by The New York Times. A short list of publications where his essays and articles have appeared will undoubtedly ring many a bell for readers of Camas Magazine. These periodicals include, among many others: Harper's, The New York Times, Audubon, Outside, High Country News, and his work has appeared in the Best American Science and Nature Writing 2010.

He landed his first writing job with the local Alpena News in his native Michigan at the age of 25, and there he got a crash course in old school journalism. The bootcamp atmosphere of that newsroom propelled him to journalism gigs around Idaho and eventually to Western Montana's Missoulian. He's called Missoula home ever since. After getting fired from the Missoulian in 1988 (more on that below), he's reveled in his independence, writing the kinds of articles and books that appeal to his wildly curious nature.

Manning has lectured at Stanford, Harvard, Oxford, and Makerere University in Uganda. His awards include: the University of Montana Mansfield Center's Lud Browman award for science writing, Richard Margolis award for environmental writing, Montana Audubon Society award for environmental reporting, Montana Wilderness Association award for writing, and the C.B. Blethen Award for investigative journalism.

He was a John S. Knight fellow in journalism at Stanford

University in 1994-95, and is the current Distinguished Kittredge Visiting Writer at the University of Montana. William Kittredge has said about him: "Richard Manning is the most significant social critic in the northern Rockies and short-grass plains... We're fortunate to have Dick Manning as he continues his demands for fairness while casting light on our future."

On a late winter day this past March, I drove up to Richard Manning's house in Missoula's Rattlesnake neighborhood to talk with him about writing and the natural world and his life with both. From his front step, the land spills away to the south and west. You can't see any rivers from there, but you can sense them in the undulating shapes of the land: the tight swale of Rattlesnake Creek in the foreground flowing to where the nearby hills break cleanly along the Clark Fork and, in the hazy distance, the looming Bitterroot Range with its namesake river crawling along the base of the mountains. This kind of place-based perception is a way of adapting oneself to a particular landscape and adopting its rhythms and sensitivities. It's a variety of sight that Richard Manning fully believes in, one that he has strengthened in his travels and writings, and one he sees as dangerously devoid in a hypermediated, disconnected age.

Our conversation ranged widely, from national politics ("it's not just the president who's a narcissist, our whole society is narcissistic") to neuroscience to wilderness, but like a stream that doubles back on its course, we returned again and again to the subject of rivers, a central thread in Manning's extensive body of work. He's written about degradation and sometimes redemption on Montana's

Blackfoot, Michigan's afflicted Flint River, the Des Moines River in Iowa, and the Snake that runs through Southern Idaho's Big Ag country, all the while applying a wide-lens perspective that touches on everything from human evolution to the foods that we consume.

In the introduction to his 1997 book *One Round River*, his paean to the Big Blackfoot, Manning writes: "Just as rivers organize rain, they organize us." It's a fascinating idea, so I asked him to elaborate on it.

"I think we're all this way, but Westerners tend to know it best: everyone can say what watershed they live in. You identify with the Blackfoot River or you identify with the Clark Fork River, and the stories you tell about yourself over the years tend to be sorted out in those places. That's important, because water flows through every single thing in our place and it all comes together in rivers. They're a method of accountability. You can take a look at a river, and it's the sum total of human existence in that place. It's reflected there because so much of what we do is soluble. Literally, it dissolves and there it is in the content of the river, and if the river's in lousy shape then we're in lousy shape. It's a way of making us understand and orient ourselves to a place."

Embedded in this is the idea of a "round river"—which Manning admits he "stole from Aldo Leopold, who stole it from a Paul Bunyan myth"—an idea that regards the accountability that he speaks of.

"Our lives would be very different if rivers were indeed round and we had to deal with the consequences of what we put into them: if everything came back to us in some way."

Manning, who first came West in his late 20s, writes that upon first visiting the mountains of Montana, "suddenly, there were possibilities." Over time he has come to see those possibilities as including a type of intimacy and coexistence with landscapes that is unique to the American West, a view that could provide something of a country-wide template for learning how to exist with and not against the places

is Mar-a-Lago, then you're not part of a place. These are symptoms of our disease."

Manning believes a broad environmental awareness can be a remedy for some of our ills. It's really a matter of getting that awareness out to a wider number of people, which he admits is an uphill climb.

"Coverage of environmental issues is a difficult sell to a national audience. The corporatization of media has enabled a one-size-fits-all kind of approach. Everybody in the national media is chewing on the same bone, and as a result, the kinds of issues that resonate with us in the West aren't getting covered at all. If we could get a tenth of the coverage for the environment that the Oscars received in the newspapers yesterday, we'd be doing really well."

Manning is no stranger to the effects of corporate takeover of media: in the late 1980s, his incisive reporting on unethical logging practices in Montana cost him his job as environmental reporter for the *Missoulian*, an experience that led to his first book *Last Stand: Logging, Journalism, and the Case for Humility*. There is little space in the corporate newsroom for someone like Manning, who is fiercely inquisitive and justifiably distrustful of the machinations of power. He possesses an uncompromising instinct to seek out and report on the truth, and, as he often reminds his readers, the truth has a tendency to be uncomfortable.

As much as Manning's writing is bound to raise the ire of those he might disagree with, he spares no one, including himself and those who would ostensibly agree with him. He consistently acknowledges our collective complicity in the same systems that are doing damage to the world we live in. He's not timid about rocking the boat a little bit (or a lot) and sees utility in "challenging the views of people who already think they know everything."

"I always try to bring a new angle that will at least give them some cause to bicker among themselves. I like to undermine the smugness that goes with that holier-than-thou attitude: 'I dress in all the right green clothes and eat

...water flows through every single thing in our place and it all comes together in rivers. They're a method of accountability. You can take a look at a river, and it's the sum of total human existence in that place.

where people live.

"People just think differently in the West, and we have something to say to the rest of the nation. We have something to say because of our attachment to nature, and we've figured some things out. Part of what needs to happen nationally is an identification with place and rivers and the environment. It's the kind of thing that can bring some sanity to national politics, to say: 'It doesn't matter who you are, we are held by our environment.'"

"If you live in New York City or Washington, D.C., it's easy to think you're not part of a place. If your idea of nature

all the right green foods.' Well, fine. You're doing that, but you're still screwing up the planet with all the rest of us."

With ten books and ten times that many articles and essays under his belt, Manning has covered a broad array of topics such as the history of agriculture, American prairies, rewilding, food systems, and much more. A thru-line that connects this bibliography is Manning's deep and abiding respect for "who we are and where we came from," an anthropological, ecological view of human history and human nature and the threats put upon that nature by modernity.

"I'm not much concerned with preaching how we should live according to some artificial principle. Instead, I mostly think about how we might live more successfully by respecting evolution's design. It's astounding how far we've strayed from our evolutionary conditions, even in simple things like our diet. That's why there's a health crisis in this country. We have the same constraints on us as all other animals, things that make sense in terms of our evolution. When we stop making sense, we get sick; and we

with trees in them."

"It goes beyond commitment to the environment. It gets down to how we sustain communities, how we can learn to live together peacefully. Then we can have the kinds of lands held in common that we have and access to those public lands with an understanding that they're not just for resource extraction. That becomes a part of the legacy, part of the value of life."

Manning's work doesn't shy away from asking hard



Borden's Culvert | KYLE BRADFORD

are now very sick as a result. That's not a moral imperative but a matter of self-interest: if you want to feel better, stop screwing with what evolution designed."

At one point the conversation turned, as it often can among environmental writers, to Henry David Thoreau, whose more incendiary acts and words tend to get paved over when we consider his legacy as strictly a "nature" writer. Manning sees in Thoreau a synthesis that we would be wise to take heed of.

"As soon as the transcendentalists turned to nature and began thinking in those terms, up percolated the abolitionist movement out of that, a subversive political movement. It took a lot of will power to sustain that in the face of controversy and imprisonment. They were true subversives, and I like to think there is a connection between the two: nature and subversion. Exposure to nature supplies the clarity and will to challenge the venality of the oligarchs. Thoreau was an embodiment of that. What can we learn from those people, what can they say to our time?"

Some of the lessons that we can learn from Thoreau are at the heart of Manning's writing: that environmental writing can and should be much more than just "stories

questions about our condition, and if you put together the pieces you might find some cogent answers. While he acknowledges that writing can do some work in support of a cause, he's not necessarily writing with any concrete ends in mind. He tells me that simply seeing a problem and going forth to explain how to fix it is "not reason enough to write, and it's probably a really lousy reason to write."

"I try to back up and not worry about fixing things. As long I can help set people on a path of inquiry, I'm fine. I am trying to stimulate their curiosity so that they'll ask questions in their own way. It's that motive for inquiry that I'm all about. I want to try to make people see familiar things differently. That's always the challenge for me: make them see another layer in their own existence that brings meaning to their lives. I trust in that."

At the same time, he admits to the slipperiness of truth, both the idea and the word itself. "I'm not necessarily trying to bring people to the truth," he says. "When I try to write the truth I never will, because it's unattainable. But I'll never stop trying to attain it. Yes, I still believe in the truth, but it's like a unicorn: I'm never gonna see it, but I'll keep chasing it."



Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Channels | ADDYSON SANTESE

Following the River Home

RICHARD MANNING

This essay was originally given as the keynote speech at the Norman Maclean Festival, which is held each fall in Seeley Lake, Montana, to celebrate the man, his works, and the landscapes that inspired them. Richard Manning has graciously given permission to reprint it here for a broader audience.

I grew up in Michigan but moved West as a young man because I wished to live among mountains. I brought with me a red Winnebago-sized backpack made by a company called Gerry, a pair of waffle stomper hiking boots that weighed about fifteen pounds (each), a plexiglass compass and a miniature aluminum tea kettle stamped on its top with what I assume is a brand name. It says "Hope." H-O-P-E. I still have and still use the tea kettle in the backcountry. I probably should replace it with one designed better, but against all contrary evidence that has accumulated in the intervening years, a lifetime, I somehow cannot abandon the message stamped on its lid. The three other items are gone. I no longer need them, although I am in the backcountry now more than ever. I have lighter boots and a more compact backpack. I discovered I can do without the compass altogether in the mountains, although I needed it in my deep woods Michigan childhood home, the flatland where a guy could and did get seriously lost. This simple fact derives from a profound truth slowly revealed to the hyper-observant pilgrim, the serious student of wilderness ways, and it is this: water runs downhill. Everything I have to say today derives from this sublime and elusive fact.

You are not lost if you follow the water because it invariably leads to a stream and then a river, and the river will tell you your place in the world. This is how everything merges into one, and the rivers run together and run across

all things, all places, all people's places and all people's sins. Good newspaper reporters of my generation were told in straightforward terms to follow the money, but I have made my living following the rivers. Rivers keep an account of our sins. I got this idea from mountains and from Norman Maclean.

Early on, I didn't have enough faith in this notion to test it elsewhere, so I strayed not even a single solitary inch from my source of inspiration. I wrote a book about the Big Blackfoot. Even now, I haven't strayed all that far. On my last magazine assignment, an editor at *Harper's* sent me to Flint, Michigan to try to understand how poverty, racism and government malfeasance poisoned an entire city the size of Missoula, once a city twice the size of Missoula, and of course I began by looking at the Flint River. But there it was different. There my debt to Maclean ran deeper still. I was born in Flint. My family history is intimately entwined in the poisoning of the Flint River. My intent was to ignore that fact and instead do my journalistic diligence by writing the general story, not my particular story. But as I sat in a motel room when I first arrived in Flint, there arose an irresistible urge to probe the private, to find the house where I had been a toddler, the creek I had played in, my father's records as a city cop, some trace of my dead brother and my family's crushing dysfunction. My first reaction to this impulse was to fight it. After all, I was not being semi handsomely paid by *Harper's* to indulge my own story, I thought. But then it occurred to me this private matter was the story. And this is literally true, that I gave myself permission to report my family's story when my thought train tripped on the name of Norman Maclean. Isn't there a river running through Flint too?

When I was in Flint on that assignment, I heard a quirky, two-word phrase that instantly rekindled a flood of recognition and memory, a common phrase in Michigan.

It is this: “up north.” The people of Flint used it exactly as it had been used there when I was a kid, that to experience nature, one needed to go up north. Then and now, it is widely believed, with cause, that there is no nature in the industrial city of Flint in the south of Michigan. The Flint River is really not a river. It’s poison. It’s a sewer. So on weekends, people go up north where nature is. Where real rivers are: the Au Sable, Pere Marquette, the Fox River, which in literature became big and two- hearted.

I mostly grew up not in Flint but in a little town up north, and when I was a teenager, an unknown, starving poet, a young man not all that much older than I was, also from up north, a fellow stump jumper and cedar savage—he lived a couple of counties west of mine—came to read his poetry to a squirming audience of adolescents captive in my high school auditorium. I have no memory of what the poet read that day. I should have probably paid closer attention. No doubt he included an early version of a poem that later appeared in his collection *The Theory and Practice of Rivers*. Maybe it would have taught me something important about what would become my life’s work, as only poems can do. Jim Harrison later would title one of his most important books, a novel about family and exploitation of nature, *True North*. I know what he means. A compass to a Michigander is like rivers in mountains. It is how we find our way in the world, a moral compass, and it points True North.

This is exactly what Norman Maclean means to tell us about rivers, and he does so in what is the pivotal passage toward the end of *A River Runs Through It* when the father, who is a preacher, and two sons are fishing the Blackfoot near Belmont Creek. Norman’s father is reading his New Testament in Greek. And when Norman asks him what he is reading, his father answers: “In the part I was reading, it says the Word was in the beginning, and that’s right. I used to think water was first, but if you listen carefully you will hear that the words are underneath the water.” Norman answers: “That’s because you are preacher first and then a fisherman....if you ask Paul, he will tell you that the words are formed out of water.”

Maclean of course lets us know what is at stake in this conversation, the very foundation of Judeo-Christian theology, Gospel of John, first chapter, first verse: that in the beginning was the word and the word was God. How else could it be for a people of authority, autocracy, laws and literacy, a contractual people. To a preacher, morality is the word on stone tablets and has nothing to do with compasses and rivers. Both Norman and Paul know otherwise, and Paul, in this very scene, asserts the primacy of rivers over the word with a literal Baptism made all the

more miraculous because he lands his fish, and he keeps his cigarettes in his hat dry in the process. What is most clear, though, is that when Paul submerges in the river, he becomes the river, becomes nature. He slips beyond Norman’s and his father’s comprehension, beyond their ken, clearly beyond their words. We know this because of a single word, and it is the word that settles the debate as to whether nature or the word is primary and foundational.

Paul holds up his fish, and the father can only say: “He is beautiful.” He means the fish. Maybe. It is usefully and tellingly ambiguous here. But the same word resurfaces later when Paul is dead: he was beautiful.

Beautiful? Come on, Maclean. Is this all you’ve got? An empty, vague word that signifies nothing so much as the powerlessness of our words, a hollow placeholder of an adjective that announces we have come to the edge of our abilities as writers to describe, to name, to delineate the ineffable, to match the power of nature.

Exactly so. That’s the point. The words come from the river, just as beauty does, but the power of our language and words will always fall short of the ineffable. Otherwise, we wouldn’t need the word ineffable. The word beautiful marks nothing so much as a writer’s surrender in the face of a greater power, which is why it is so important here and everywhere. It marks the edge, but it also urges readers to peer beyond that edge to perceive what might lie in that vast, mysterious space beyond this word and beyond all words. As writers, we say this: don’t take my word for this; come see it for yourself.

Norman Maclean is not the first great writer to tell us our moral compass is set by rivers with a power that supercedes the word. Oddly, though, and maybe not

The words come from the river, just as beauty does, but the power of our language and words will always fall short of the ineffable. Otherwise, we wouldn't need the word ineffable.

so oddly, the tradition of doing so brings us straight up against that exact word of surrender that Maclean used. Late in his life, the original in these matters, Henry David Thoreau tackled the exact same issue in a single sentence.

And now you are probably asking what business I have bringing Thoreau into this, he being a certified pond man, an easterner certainly and, as a result, suspect because he lived some distance from Missoula, Montana, and was likely a bait fisherman to boot. It’s a bum rap. Book titles notwithstanding, Thoreau was in fact a river man. His time on Walden was short, but he lived a whole life surveying, combing, walking, and canoeing rivers. But we don’t need biography to tell us this. He told us himself in a single, miraculous declarative sentence. Here it is: “The perception

of beauty is a moral test.” Again: “The perception of beauty is a moral test.”

There is no more succinct statement of that uniquely American idea called transcendentalism. Thoreau believed it, lived it, knew that our moral instruction comes not from creed, theology or law; it comes directly from nature. He believed we gathered that instruction not in words but by daily contact with nature, by walking, literally by walking. All of his stories had trees in them. He walked among them daily.

For Thoreau, this whole idea came to head, an eruption that exploded into public view in a speech he gave in his hometown of Concord, Massachusetts on July 4, 1854, in one long fit of fury that would consume most of the last decade of his short life. As was his habit, he came to his message that day by reporting on his walks in the woods. “I walk toward one of our ponds,” he said, “but what signifies the beauty of nature when men are base?”

And then he gave us a sentence some of us will find depressingly useful today. “The remembrance of my country spoils my walk,” he said, by which he meant his nation, his government, these United States. And in case there was any doubt he added this: “My thoughts are

the opening battle in the war against slavery, but then our country judged it to be sedition—Thoreau personally drove the wagon that smuggled one of Brown’s co-conspirators out of the country. If Thoreau had been caught doing this he certainly would have been imprisoned, probably executed.

We sit today more than a century and a half distant and a continent’s worth of rivers away from this event yet it seems so near and relevant. Recall now that only a few weeks ago, when white supremacists marched on Boston, thousands on thousands of good Americans, stolid Yankees cast in the spirit of Henry David Thoreau, took to the streets and silenced them, this only 25 miles from where Thoreau spoke in Concord that day in 1854. Only 25 miles distant, but on the exact same issue, the American stain, the arrogance and racism that permits us to enslave, lynch, exclude, impoverish and subjugate people who are not white. This is not at all irrelevant. Thoreau tells us nature’s moral compass points out a straight clean line from rivers to abolition and resistance to a government gone wrong.

So does Norman Maclean. Many of us read *A River Runs Through It* as an imperative to defend the integrity of rivers and, by extension, all of wild nature. I do. But

this message is derivative in Maclean. He did not directly charge us to be environmentalists, but he did directly state a separate imperative that in the final analysis is not really separate. It was a simple

Do we have a duty to help one another? Can we understand one another well enough to help when it is needed?... Like Thoreau, Maclean shows us that rivers charge us—each one of us—with this very responsibility.

murder to the State and involuntarily go plotting against her.”

He meant this quite literally and so too did the hundreds of stolid Yankees gathered that day at Concord to hear him. It being the Fourth of July, there were American flags on display, but they were flown upside down and draped in black crepe. Someone burned a copy of the U.S. Constitution on stage, and Thoreau stood in its ashes when he spoke. These Yankees—Thoreau and his audience—were abolitionists, and they were gathered that day in protest of the recently passed Fugitive Slave Act. That law had sent federal marshals into Massachusetts rounding up freed slaves living there, sending them south into slavery, and jailing any white people who resisted. Thoreau and his neighbors were actively and directly engaged in the Underground Railroad, smuggling slaves to freedom in Canada, beyond the reach of the Fugitive Slave Act.

Thoreau made it abundantly and explicitly clear that his contact with nature, his walking, his rivers, instilled in him a moral imperative to resist, and he did. With more than speeches. He personally harbored escaped slaves in his house. He knew and befriended John Brown. When Brown was hanged for his attack on Harper’s Ferry—really

question so achingly and directly stated throughout the story: Do we have a duty to help one another? Can we even understand one another well enough to help when it is needed? The literal question: Am I my brother’s keeper? Like Thoreau, Maclean shows us that rivers charge us—each one of us—with this very responsibility.

These two duties—to each other and to the environment, to community and to place—are not really separate. Like rivers, they flow into one, and yet I can think of no greater measure of the peril of our times than to realize that these two issues alone profoundly frame the challenge before us right now. Today. Both of these bedrock values are under siege. These are the two primary pillars of American integrity, and it is not an accident these are the very two issues under full frontal assault by the right-wing cult that has commandeered our nation.

Here’s my proposal: that we the people do establish and ordain a new standard for our democracy two new articles of confederation: first, that we have a duty to help each other, and second, that the integrity of our people is properly and best measured and sustained by the integrity of our rivers. These are the truths we the people hold to be self-evident.

RIVER SKETCH — MONTE RIO

VIRGINIA BARRETT

small cairn
on beach cackle
of birds under
 bridge

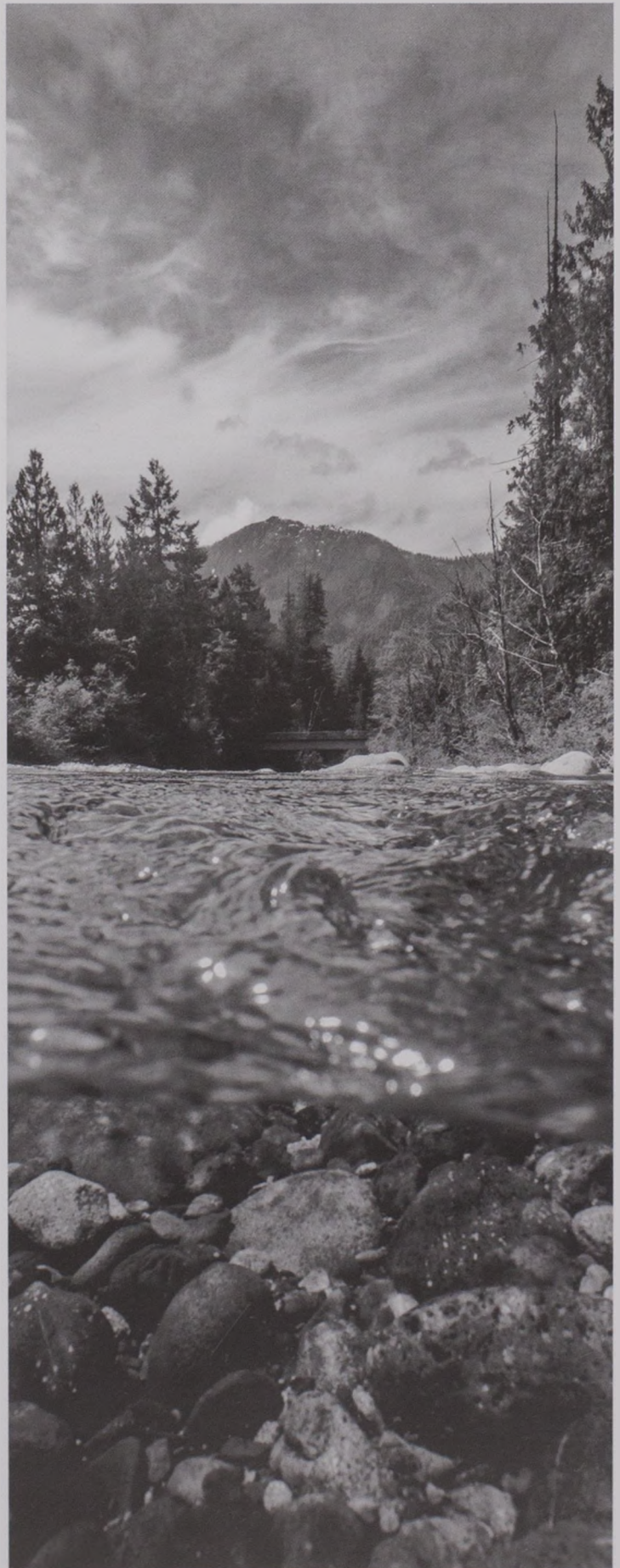
old pine old pine
HOTEL
sign

Mother paddles a green
canoe Child scouts
crouched in the bow

the current's low flow
 this drought

a line of ducks
drops of rain minnows' thirst

one seagull's
screech follows
 the river to
 the coast



Under the Surface of the Heber | BRENT BARNES

OEDIPUS ONCORHYNCHUS

The eyes are always the first to go. August's colonies of gulls and terns squabble over the nutritious orbs, swarming creek mouths and spawning beds to feast on the sudden wealth, sometimes plucking both eyes from still-swimming chum arriving en masse to do their final deed.

By April, all that will remain of these salmon are the bleached out jawbones. J-shaped and sharp with incisors, these sturdy mandibles emerge from stubbornly melting snow banks just as skunk cabbage punches through thawing earth here in Southeast Alaska's temperate rainforest. Delicate vertebra and potato-chip-sized gillplates washed out to sea with spring freshets, jawbones litter the riparian intertidal zones, too, becoming play knives for spring's mittened children with eyes sharp enough to spot the toothy bones on the banks and among the driftwood and popweed.

Reminders of summer's abundance, harbingers of what will soon return, these synecdochic bones stand-in for a system that has sustained life here for ten thousands years. As August flesh is torn away from bone, fertilized eggs cling to the same recently dug gravel where these bodies come to rest. Sustained by their parents' flesh and fresh water coursing over them, tiny-eyed globes of eggs become alevin; egg-sacks absorbed, alevin become fry; fry swim up out of the gravel, flushing out to salty richer environments. As August's death brings wild spring rebirth, avian and piscine predators gather again, this time to snatch up the inch-long fry on their outmigration, welcome protein after a lean winter. Fry that survive the gauntlet of gull and dolly venture out to sea to fatten up for before returning to restage this same gory freshwater spectacle, annually

replanting our watersheds with life-sustaining energy.

To be sure, the flesh and bone not consumed by their offspring is absorbed through the autumn and winter, marine-derived nutrients literally become tree, bird, bear, boy-shadows of salmon embedded in the DNA of everything in Southeast Alaska. This seasonal spectacle of blood and gore courses through all of us here, annual reminders of our own fleshly limits.

While I prefer to imagine this wild summer scene as yet another act in this seasonal drama that's played out again and again over millennia, it is more than likely that this fish was born in a bucket under fluorescent lighting,

far from any natal gravel, nourished to the fry stage on ground-up anchovies shipped north from Peru instead of our temperate rainforest's riches. Very few adipose fins are clipped here, so only an expert examination of the otolith bone can determine this chum's point of origin—a physical pattern baked into his phenotype by a heat regime in incubation the only tell of his hatchery life history, and visible only to those with time and microscopes.

Like his cousins filling the gillnets of the commercial drift net fleet or washing up, post-spawn, on one of our many short freshwater systems like this one, odds are that this fish was bucket-bred.


Unironically branded as "Wild



KETA

KEVIN MAIER

Alaska Salmon” by the marketing experts, hatchery chum certainly pay the bills now, but those with an eye toward history can’t help but see Washington and Oregon’s century long failure with manufactured salmon in a fish like this one. Hatcheries appear in virtually every postmortem of the human failures of salmon throughout their former range, one of the dreaded Four Hs of the familiar story of salmon decline. If hatcheries are as bad as their destructive cousins of harvest, hydro, and habitat, why aren’t we worrying about their impact here in Alaska?

If salmon are the king of fish, who’s to say this one isn’t our own rotting Oedipus, eyes gouged out to reveal our own human hubris? 



August | MARK HIERONYMUS

Because You Like Names

KRISTIN FOGDALL

I tell you a delta, *Nisqually*.
About the gray whale,
prone on a lip of silt, one day dead.

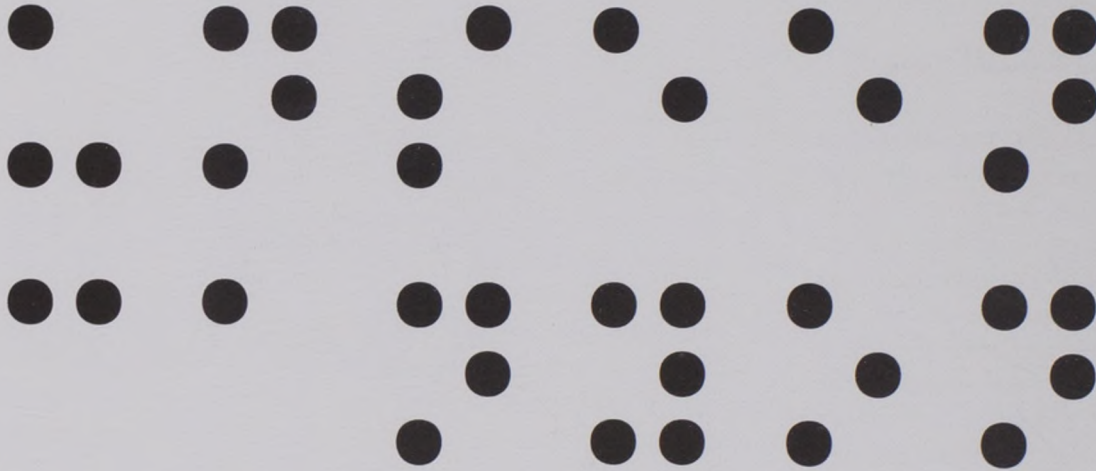
I tell you how things looked
like other things:
boat’s metal ribs, his pleated throat;
blade a steel flipper,

baleen a loom,
and then how we opened him up.
I’m not sure what’s there
I said *where to begin*

But you left and I remembered
this whale’s heart
washed in river:
lobes pure red, bright in my hands.

As if whale and *Nisqually*
had to be yours
before I could bind them;
as the liquid heart

once was bound
—see, I hold it out to you.



Unseen Canyon

JENNY O'CONNELL

It's day one of a twelve-day expedition down the Grand Canyon. I'm standing in terminal four of Phoenix International with nineteen high school students and their luggage when my phone rings. Elly has arrived. I rush across the airport to greet her.

She's waiting for me next to the desk attendant, all frizzy red hair and nervous smiles. Her right middle finger clicks against her thumb in a nervous tic. A long white cane rests in her other pale hand.

"Elly, it's Jenny. I'm so happy to finally meet you." I have learned from the others to say my name when I enter the room.

At my voice, Elly's smile widens. Her eyelids flutter, but do not open. Before we arrived, these twenty high school students—nine of whom are blind or visually impaired, the other eleven facing their own barriers with immigration, family trauma, tragedy, et cetera—and I spent hours getting acquainted with each other on conference calls.

"Your voice—" Elly exclaims. "It's like meeting your favorite Youtuber!"

Until this moment, I didn't know a Youtuber was a thing. I offer Elly my elbow, which she accepts, and we begin the long walk back to terminal four. Elly rolls her cane back and forth across the marble tile in front of us. When she hears the escalator, she stops. Her smile vanishes.

"No. I'm so afraid of escalators," she says. "I can't."

I take a hard look at this fourteen-year-old girl who is about to raft some of the gnarliest whitewater in America. An escalator? I've been guiding expeditions for the past ten years, but never something like this.

"You want to find an elevator?" I ask.

Elly exhales in relief. "You are my favorite Youtuber," she says.

After loading everyone into two twelve-passenger vans and driving five hours to the Grand Canyon; after setting up our tents, sleeping beneath stars, and waking up on the canyon rim, we pile back into the vans and drive to Shoshone Point. A woman who works in the company office has come along on the trip. She lost her vision from a Western Diamond Rattlesnake bite over three decades ago, when she was nine years old. I listen to her tell the students how to advocate for themselves, and think about how she's learned downhill skiing and taught Full Contact Self Defense. Here on the trail to Shoshone Point, on our first practice hike as a group, there are snakes in the boulders and she knows it. She handles her fear with the air of someone who's been doing it all her life.

"Your blindness does not define you," she says. "You can lead." She gives blindfolds to the sighted students and ties a bell onto my backpack so they can follow the sound. White sticks are traded for trekking poles, and then we're on our way up the wide and bumpy path, the blind literally leading the blind.

Molten ponderosa pine resin drips from the scaly trunks of the trees around us, smelling of brown sugar. The air shimmers between their long, green needles. No breeze today. As we approach the lookout the path narrows, suddenly uneven and treacherous. The sighted students remove their blindfolds. They offer their elbows.

We scramble over roots and around boulders, narrating every step.

"I feel like a badly-trained stunt double," Elly says, reaching for my arm.

My charges—all of them—have passions and hobbies, likes and dislikes, problems and joys. I distribute my love equally, for that is my job. But when I hang around Elly, I take a pen. Everything she says either cracks me up or cuts straight through me.

We emerge from the trees to a 360-degree view of a canyon so deep and complex even my imagination fails: red, purple, black, tan, Vishnu Schist, Coconino Sandstone, Bright Angel Shale. It looks two-dimensional, like someone has gone through a lot of trouble to paint an earthen still-life onto an enormous canvas. Perhaps it's a trick of the light, how the colors bleed into the sky above them. From here, I can't begin to understand it.

Elly gasps and gives my elbow a squeeze. She waves her right hand toward the abyss.

"It just opened up over there," she says. "There's all this space."

The night before this trip began, I fell senselessly in love with Jake, who works in the company office. In reality it probably happened months before that; while walking home from the park in Colorado at dusk, the singe of electricity when he placed two fingers gently on the nape of my neck, the honeyed smell of the lilac I picked from the neighbor's bush and pressed into his hand. When I left I drove eighty-five miles per hour to the airport, afraid if I went slower I'd turn around. But back then things were complicated and I was unavailable, so the night before this trip is the moment I point to, clutching my phone in

to launch. The green sheets of the Colorado River cut through the rock walls around us like layered ribbons.

"You ever heard of Lava Falls?" asks our river guide as we take our seats on the rig. He tilts his wide-brimmed straw hat back so we can see his face. His plaid shirt is unbuttoned all the way, every inch of his arms and chest golden brown as if they've been slowly baking for the last ten years. It's more like forty, actually—he's been rafting this river since he was a boy. Seen everything, he says. Rapids changed by erosion. People taken out in body bags.

As a guide I've treated my fair share of cuts and sprains, concussions, altitude sickness, hypothermia. I am haunted by memories of close calls: the girl who lost consciousness on top of a ridge in a storm, the boy who fell off his horse on a mountain pass. But I've never seen a body bag. On most rivers the rating system goes from a small class one riffle up to class six, an un-runnable waterfall. The Grand Canyon rapids have their own rating system, ranked from one to ten. Lava Falls, the maelstrom of whitewater where the river falls 37 feet over the span of several hundred yards, is a ten.

Eight miles downriver we hear it, the urgency of the water. Our first rapid: Badger Creek. I poise myself between the students, ready to grab a life vest if someone loses their grip. They yell and cheer at the bucking raft and cling to the bowlines. I watch fear and joy register on their faces and feel nervous. I've been a raft guide for eight years—I know what happens when you go over the side in a big rapid: the tilt in your stomach when you lose your grip on the boat, the scramble to find up from down, the choke and sputter as you wonder if you will breathe again. You hear only the water. Which means that if you already can't see, when you go over the side you have nothing to

We emerge from the trees to a 360-degree view of a canyon so deep and complex even my imagination fails: red, purple, black, tan, Vishnu Schist, Coconino Sandstone, Bright Angel Shale.

a Phoenix hotel room. *Remember when I told you about the butterfly that landed on my chest?* he wrote. *That's how I feel right now.* He's taller than me, with curiously long arms and fine, dark hair that always falls into his eyes. His hands are perpetually cold. He collects rocks and clouds and cries when he eats too delicious a meal, or when the sunset is too brilliant an orange, or when he sees a whale. Those eyes, luminous and blue. When they go absent with thought I take his cold thumbs into my palms, feel the soft arc of them. He says I'm being cute, but I'm being serious. *Come back,* I whisper. I look for him in the clouds today, but there are none above Lee's Ferry.

It's a bluebird sky, and our boats are packed and ready

help you find your way back.

"That was a four," says our guide, when we've made it through. "This river is no joke."

That night, colossal iron clouds roll in out of nowhere and a thunderstorm rips down the canyon, catching us off guard. Too hot for tents, the students and I are sleeping out on the beach. Wind whips sand into the darkened faces now looking to me in terror. A few are crying. In seconds, we are drenched through.

"Go!" I yell to the girls, and toss them a tent. We can barely hear each other over the sky. Their fingers fly as they scramble to connect poles and hooks into shelter. A



House Rock Rapid | ELIAS HANNON

few of the boys shamble slowly to their feet. They pull their sleeping bags beneath a slab of undercut clay and go back to sleep.

The river guides, the trip photographer and I pitch tents as fast as we can, yelling assurances. When the students collect their sandy things and climb inside, the photographer and I stand at the edge of the river and holler into the storm. We laugh until we weep and dangle off each other's shoulders. I can feel his heart beating against my arm. I excuse myself, hike out to the metal groover we use as a toilet on the river's edge. My survival is not up to me. If I die tonight, it's not going to be with shit in my pants.

In the morning, we wipe sand from our eyes. I find a rock that looks like a whale, and put it in my pocket to give to Jake. Later I will send it to him in the mail. He will call in the middle of the night when I am at my uncle's house in Massachusetts. "I think you are it," he'll say. "I know," I'll say back, and then I'll ask him to wait a minute. I'll go out and lie down on the flat rock in the backyard and cry. It will start to rain. He feels like a sure thing, Jake, as sure as the rock in my pocket.

It's as if the river and sky have switched places—around us a murky brown, above us a clear blue-green. I try to describe it to Elly as if I'm not seeing it for the first time, as if I know it by heart. The way these colors touch, the

difference between shade and shadow. Always the canyon, the red canyon, the slowly creeping rocks.

"I can see it," she says.

Before I came to Arizona, I read a poem by Miller Williams about curators of an art museum in Leningrad during World War II. When the war descended on the city, they shipped the canvases away to safety but left the frames hanging on the walls. The soldiers came through and asked for a tour anyway. It became known as the Unseen Collection.

We pointed to more details about the paintings, I venture to say, than if we had had them there, some unexpected use of line or light, balance or movement, facing the cluster of faces the same way we'd done it every morning before the war, but then we didn't pay so much attention to what we talked about.

I wonder what painting Elly sees today.

It's happening to all of us, the transformation. We no longer worry so much about the sand, or the bugs that fall on our faces as we sleep. We toss a football back and forth and when it lands in the river we shriek and laugh and hope to get it back but know we might not. We've already lost the frisbee. Our hair, streaked with river silt, stands up on its own. Our bodies are brown with sun,

except for Elly, who alternates between pink and freckles. The contrast between August in Arizona and the freezing current still shocks us.

The list of chores is always the same when we get off river. Unload the boats. Clean the groover. Help the bat scientist set up her data collection station. Cook dinner. Wash the dishes. We make sense of this place with our hands. I watch the students, their eyes shut or staring straight ahead, concentrate on their work. They dig into the soil, rub rocks between their fingers until red clay dust gathers beneath their fingernails. They turn their heads toward the sun, faces softening as it sinks behind the canyon walls. Their nostrils flare when a breeze whips up the warm, sharp scent of sage. Always, always they are listening to the river.

The sun disappears quickly in the canyon, but one can watch it set backward up the layered wall, a pinkish glow sliding over colors of sediment on its way toward the darkening sky. The moon rises backward, too, announcing its arrival in slanted shadows on the rock face like an old-time movie. A small thing but it feels important. The students scoop water from the river to boil and drink. The river moves through our veins.

When we reach Vulcan's Anvil, the huge protrusion of lava-rock sacred to Native Americans that juts up out of the middle of the river, our guide announces that Lava Falls is less than two miles away. One of the sighted students declares he's going to do it blindfolded, in solidarity. The others follow suit. I help tie cloth around their eyes, marveling at the way they lean toward the seething water. Yesterday when we practiced swimming a wave train, Elly breathed in all the wrong places, came out coughing and spitting. Then she walked up and did it again.

There's a rock at the bottom of Lava Falls called Cheesegrater Rock, which I know is named that for a reason.

"Just hold on," I tell Elly. Her knuckles stand out white against her freckles as she grips the hand line. I promise to close my eyes, and I do, but I peek just before we hit the first ledge. When our raft drops into the rapid, the impact sends us spinning sideways. Feeling a jolt of fear in my stomach, I reach for Elly, but quickly retract my hand. This moment is hers, I will not take it. Whooping in glee and terror over the frothing, raging whitewater, we are thrust and thrown against each other and then the raft slides left, away from the churning hole. Cheering, the students untie their blindfolds. I feel guilty. Perhaps I have become too much of an adult. Perhaps I am not as brave.

Our last evening in the canyon, I take out the stack of blank white postcards I've been saving in a plastic bag at the bottom of my duffel. I pass out watercolor pencils, and with river water we paint ourselves something from here.

Elly asks me for the green. I hand her a green pencil. "Will you tell me how you experience colors?" I ask her. She thinks for a moment. "Well, green is emerald, earth," she says. "Blue is the sky and clear blue water. Red is bright. Fiery. I don't like red. But my hair's that color, so I guess I have to like it."

Months from now, the students will each get their own postcard in the mail. They'll hold it in their hands and remember a time they felt powerful. Maybe it'll make a difference. Maybe. "Pink is a shallow color," Elly continues. "You know, like, if colors had personality."

Months from now, I will go to Colorado to be with Jake. I will be too much: too loud, too expansive, too silly, too strange. When we make love, he will go vacant. It will almost be easy to pretend everything's fine, the tang of partnership on my tongue. *He feels like home*, I will tell myself, and I'll believe it because I am someone who is always searching for home. We will halfheartedly look for clouds. In November, when we visit his family for Thanksgiving, I will squeeze my eyes shut and think, *this is not how two people kiss each other*, pressed up against an RV wall in Iowa City between work calls and the interrupting father, alcohol on our breaths. I will sleep with a rock from Colorado in my hand, remember the rain in Massachusetts, tell myself it's worth it.

I've told you nothing truer than this, I will write to Jake in December: *It's you. It's Colorado. I need you to come alive.*

He will write back: *I don't feel like I am meant to be your partner*. In the morning I'll throw the rock from Colorado into the Atlantic. Drink wine instead of water. My sister will stay home from work and lie across from me in bed, her forehead to my forehead the only thing I'll understand. I will stitch myself closed. Too afraid to love again. Until one day, over a year later, when I'll find a rock from the Grand Canyon on my windowsill and remember the way we angled our bodies toward the river. I'll hear Elly's voice at my elbow:

"It just opened up over there. There's all this space."

I lean back against a boulder and close my eyes. Vishnu Schist. Coconino Sandstone. Bright Angel Shale. I breathe in dust from ancient canyon walls. The only time this place makes sense is when I do not know where the canyon ends and my body begins. When I cannot tell myself apart.

I can feel something gathering like river sediment way down in the bottom of my chest. Something I will need later. Something that's mine. I open my eyes.

Elly takes the green pencil and draws strong lines in an arc across her postcard. "I was trying to make the rapids," she says, with a trace of sadness. "You did," I say. She puts down the postcard and turns her head toward the current. I close my eyes again, and together we listen for the river. The rocks, constant until caught by water. The walls, slowly rising to meet the sky. 🌊

CALL IT, ONCE MORE, A RIVER

DIANE RAPTOSH

Instead of "Dere's an ol' man called de Mississippi /
Dat's de ol' man that I'd like to be" Paul Robeson chose to sing
"There's an ol' man called the Mississippi /
That's the ol' man I don't like to be"
Instead of saying Snake Like a Snake
that turns ever swiftly
Shoshone hand-signs
made to white men
meant to state Fish meant to say Salmon-like
riverswerve Something like this ~ ~

Fish in turn
and over years came to mean
breed of young man : prison newbie ~ ~
When the lights went out the whole cellblock
started to chant Fish Fish Fish

Instead of off to prison
we send these swimmers up the river "He jes' keeps rollin"
as in Hudson and instead of say
Ossining State Correctional Facility "That's the ol' man
Sing Sing strums the name of I don't like to be"
for that tribe of Mohegans
Sinck Sinck from whom the British bought
the land in 1609 This Native
Nation also called itself Sin Sinct
Cinque Singte and Sin-Sing

Instead of "Git a little drunk /
An' you land in jail"
Robeson came to sing
"Show a little grit and / you lands
in jail" Salmon
those hand-curves tried to chant
for Fish contour River-swim
Fishblaze zigzag and Listen to me

"There's an ol' man
called the Mississippi /
What does he care
if the land ain't ~ ~ " Sing

To be in prison
is to be said to be
on the inside
"Show me dat stream called de river Jordan"
"Old Man River / he jes' keeps rollin"

One Mississippi : Sing

Prison hands produce
the braille transcriptions of
almost everything 100%
of military helmets
ammunition belts bullet-proof
vests ID tags bags
tents and "He don't plant taters"
93% of paints and paintbrushes
46% body armor "He don't plant cotton"
36% of home appliances
21% of office furniture
Pack and process
every Idaho potato.

But a poem is supposed to be
succinct isn't it? Sans even five needless syllables
Should it not then contain
something in synch with largess maybe whiff faintly
of balm? Instead you get this national sin-song /riff on
"What does he care
if the land ain't ~ ~ " Listen to me

Every poem intones
a live braille
this series of rills
of shook feeling Every poem's
an inside roiling toward peripheries
Each poem a Mississippi
re-nearing the slow release sea
of Robeson's baritone

the *other* brown poets

MIGUEL GARCIA

most of their poems evoke the river
their mothers crossing with them in their first waters
the coyotes

& starvation

the heat

thirst

sun-dried earth

learning to speak a new language
the rejection of the mother-tongue

& santa maria, madre de dios
watching over them

but mine evoke the desert the way I've seen it
the mountains & the sky
the moments I've remembered in my life
in language I've learned

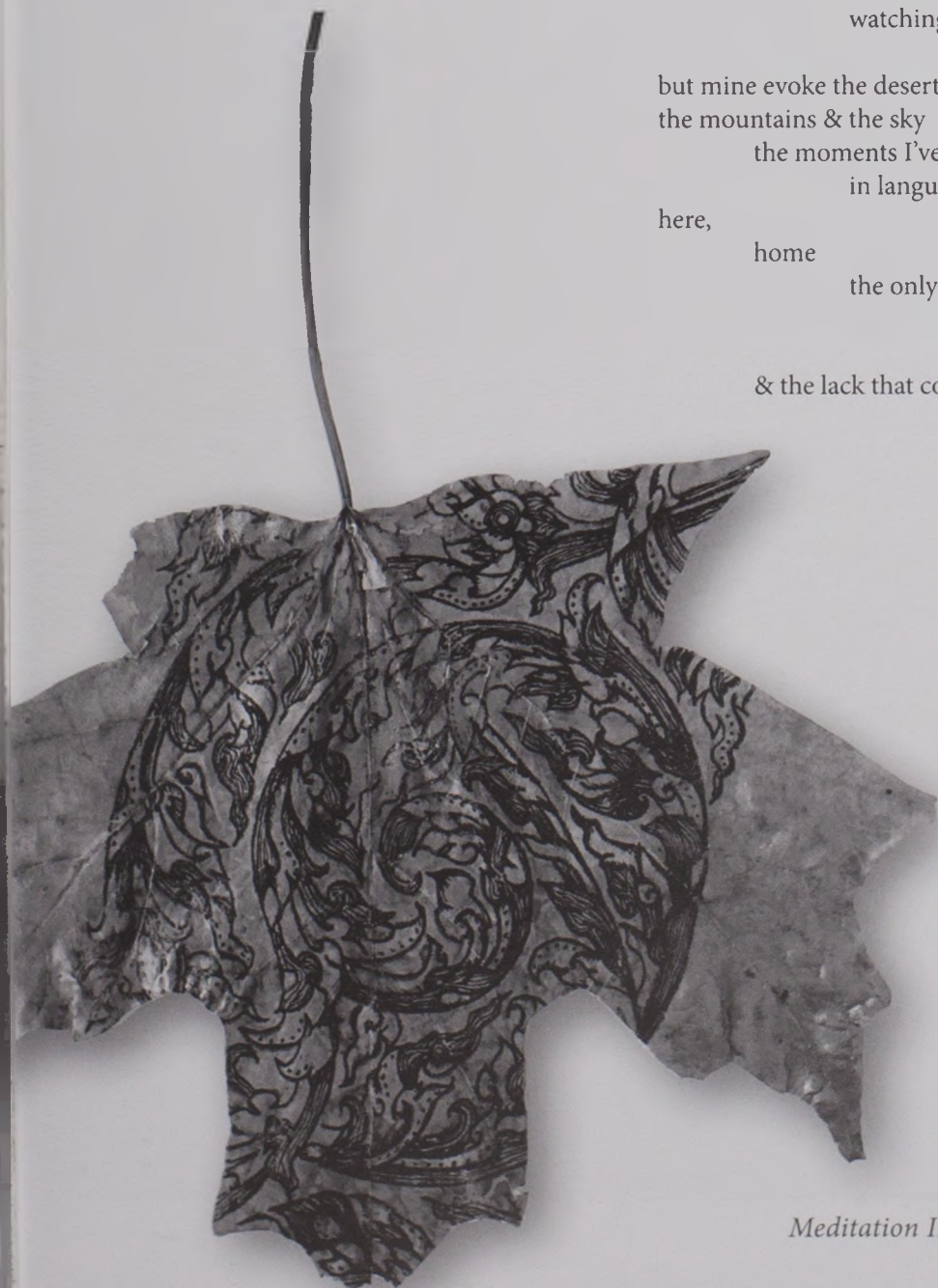
here,

home

the only home I've ever had,

the only tongue

& the lack that comes.



Meditation II | AUBREY PONGLUELERT





Chuckwalla Lizard | ELIAS HANNON

PLACES LOST

MARVIN SHACKELFORD

I met Marcus for drinks at the VFW just before noon. We were the first people in, and we sat at a table up against the wall while the bartender mopped the floors. I hadn't seen Marcus in three or four years, since he'd gotten the itch and split, and when he called to tell me he was back in town we decided to go fishing. He said he knew a spot, somewhere we'd never been. Sandy had taken the boys to Helena to see her parents, so a boy's night out, such as it was, seemed okay. We ordered a pitcher of Canadian beer and ate sandwiches from a shop down the block. He kept saying it was good to be back where the simple things were simple.

"Mexico makes you tired," he said. "Can't drink the water. Most basic thing. I mean, come on. Sometimes I'll buy it bottled, but they want you to drink. So you drink.

"But the women," he went on, and then he laughed. "You know me."

I did know. Marcus was a huge man, bodybuilder and erstwhile professional wrestler. He'd spent five years in the business, showed up on TV fighting big names at big events. He was six feet and a half but prettier than you'd expect. Since high school he'd married and divorced three times, collected women like memorabilia. He launched into a story of a married woman in Acapulco. Her husband was old and rich, in oil and stocks, and never home. For six months he romanced her. Made love to her on secluded beaches and at sea on her husband's boat. Took her inland to a quiet hotel where they confessed secrets and promised small acts of love, hinted at larger. But then her husband returned for an extended stay, and he followed a spring-breaking coed north again.

"I miss her," he said, his look far-off. "Danna." He shook his head. "But that's life."

He asked about Sandy, the boys. I told him they were good. Sandy had signed on with a new firm in town, as a partner, and it looked good. The kids were doing kid stuff—coming off baseball and gearing up for football. We had season tickets for the Griz. I watched Marcus's eyes glaze as I spoke and realized it was all probably pretty boring, too. I quit talking, and he started asking about people we'd known, mostly women one of us had dated or men we'd fought for them. Most I couldn't tell, didn't know. I'd never

left Missoula but in some ways had stayed less grounded in our home than he had.

Business around us picked up, mostly old men killing their day, and we decided on another pitcher. We were old men too, we halfway joked. We were getting there. We sat trading stories, all his inevitably funnier or meaner or more meaningful than mine. He was just like that. Before we finished a girl came into the bar. I watched her move to each person along the bar, around the tables. Asking for something, not getting it. She wore a University of Montana sweatshirt and jeans. She was pretty, but the curl was falling out of her hair, and she was pale. Had a hard night, maybe hadn't slept. Marcus trailed off from his story as she made her way to us. She gave us a flat, lopsided smile.

"How you guys doing?" she wanted to know.

"Pretty good, Babydoll," Marcus told her. "What's a girl like you doing in a place like this at a time like this?"

"Looking to get home," she said and sat down in a chair between us. "Here to Portland. Trying to make some money." She paused and looked at me. Then looked at Marcus. "Make it worth it for you," she said. "You have anything you need done?"

"No," I said. "Sorry. Don't carry cash." I wouldn't have given her money if I had had it. I didn't believe her, wasn't sympathetic to the plight. I turned back into my glass and waited for her to go, but Marcus chuckled.

"What do you think we need done?" he wanted to know.

"I'm flexible."

"Are you?" Marcus laughed again. "We'll see." He leaned forward, laid a meaty hand delicately on her forearm. "How much you need?"

"Twenty," she said. She bored her eyes into him. They'd forgotten I was there. "Fifty if I'm really going to get there."

"Come on," he said. He stood and nodded her toward the back of the bar. "Excuse us, Benny," he said to me.

They walked toward the back room, the pool tables and other half-used furnishings, and Marcus took a look back to see if anyone was paying attention. We were all staring, but he ducked into the men's room with her anyway. I didn't know what to make of it. Even for Marcus buying it from a desperate girl in a bar was hard. I poured another

beer and sat very quiet, seeing if I'd hear something, but of course I didn't. The other men in the room murmured for a moment, chuckled, and then went silent again. The bartender mopped behind the bar. We waited.

Years ago I'd known a girl named Vicki Flanagan who'd slept with men who did things for her, got her stuff. She popped into my head, waiting there. She'd been nice, tall and redheaded and pretty enough, and she wasn't shy about what she did. Showed no shame. Guys bought her clothes, books, jewelry, they took her places, and she returned the favor. Vicki spent most my sophomore year with my roommate. He'd been a rich little shit from California, slumming in the mountains. She'd grown up poor over in Butte, was coming to college on loans, and I think it tickled her to live how she did. It seemed fair enough, everyone willing. I wondered if that was what I was seeing now, while Marcus was in the bathroom with that girl.

They emerged after ten minutes or so. She exited first, pulling at her shirttail, and Marcus followed. He wasn't smiling at all and whispered something to her in his big bass rumble. He took her by the elbow and led her to the door, past us all, and they stepped out onto the sidewalk. We watched him talk to her another moment before pulling his wallet from his pocket. He fished her loose some bills. She tucked them into the collar of her shirt, and Marcus touched her arm and then her face. She turned and disappeared. He watched a moment and then came inside again, back to our table. He emptied the last of our pitcher into his glass. Gave me a wink.

"Had to pay her extra," he said. He laughed and shook his head. "Every day you find a reason to wake up."

"Jesus, man," I said, not knowing what else there was.

Marcus finished his beer, and then we headed out. He wanted to take his truck, so I moved my gear and left my pickup on the street. He was excited about his spot, a stream off of Rock Creek on land owned by a lawyer he'd used for some work.

were apart so rarely. Seeing Marcus with that girl, then sending her off like he did—it seemed like something that wouldn't have happened if Sandy had been there. We were the opposite of that. We could have prevented it, even if I alone hadn't. I thought to try to give her a call, but when I checked my phone we were already out of reach of the towers. Between the tight valley walls and their stretching evergreens, their stacked rock and steep, smooth streaks of bare stone.

"This takes me home," Marcus said. He pointed at an old log house boarded up in a field, gray with age and emptiness. "Audra Miller. Can't believe they let that place go."

"They went down to Hamilton," I told him. We'd both dated her, been drawn helplessly into the woods through two winters. Him junior year, me senior. "After Audra got married."

"I thought she got divorced."

"That was later."

We ran the pavement to its end and then went several more miles, higher up. He finally slowed, watching for a turnoff, and found it. The narrow, rutted drive wound us deep into forest, occasionally in sight of a slim, swift creek. We were in the neighborhood of Sliderock Mountain, but I'd never been this way. Marcus gripped the wheel with both fists, stared straight ahead and drove without slowing. We lost the creek and crossed a rocky, ugly ridge. We made our way up its side and down again, bouncing along for what felt like miles but couldn't have been.

And then we found the beauty in it, what he'd promised. A small meadow opened, five or six acres covered in tall, thin, browning grass. The creek split the middle, and a half-built cabin rose practically right on its bank. Marcus parked by the abandoned construction and rolled down the windows. He killed the engine, and we sat in the gorgeous, flowing, high-up silence of the mountains. Just water and air for a moment. It was the earth that made you believe

"This takes me home," Marcus said. He pointed at an old log house boarded up in a field, gray with age and emptiness.

"He never even goes out there. Doesn't fish. Just owns it." He snorted. "People."

I rode along in the passenger seat, still too stunned really to speak. Marcus drove a little too slowly on the Interstate out of town, and when he took the exit to Rock Creek he drove a little too fast on the back road. We passed the small bar and campground just off the highway and followed the creek up the valley. Sandy was a hundred miles away from me right at that moment, and I suddenly missed the hell out of her. I thought about how strange it was to miss a meal with her, not wake up beside her. We

in God, or want to. A temple in the wild. Places lost to the rest of the world. We stepped out of the truck, shut the doors and listened to their echo in the trees beyond. Took a moment.

"Told you I had a spot," he told me.

We got on our waders and loaded up with our gear, set out his cooler full of beer. I had some synthetic flies I wanted to try, new from a shop in town. Guy there was an idiot savant. Couldn't hardly talk to you, even about fishing, but he knew bait every possible way. I looked out over water and tried to get a read on it. Always hunt, I was

taught. Don't shoot blind. I walked the bank searching for the good lines. The water had some decent ripple to it. A little shallow but the movement on top gave fish the cover they wanted. No boulders or deep pools, but gray and black melon-sized rocks were scattered throughout, large enough to hide behind. Insects out over the water, thin clouds. I watched for the white-ringed mouths of trout coming to the surface to feed and couldn't spot any, but I had a feeling. They'd be there.

I looked for scat or other sign of anything big out of the water. Always hoped to spot deer, maybe a small bear, and I didn't want to be surprised. Marcus moved upstream, intent on business. I felt a little relieved as he stretched away from me. I stood at the edge of the water and cast

"That's a pretty spot," I said. "Your friend's a lucky guy."

"A rich one. And he's just pissing it away." He spat out the window. "We ought to do this again before I go. He said whenever."

"Sure. Anytime."

"I mean it. Been a good day. Top to bottom."

"Sure," I said again. I'd kind of put our day out of mind, the top part anyway. I thought about the scene at the bar and wanted to ask Marcus about it. I didn't understand why he'd done it, how he'd done it. I wondered where she was right then, on her way to Portland or wherever. I looked out the window and then at my friend again.

"How much did you give that girl?" I said, for lack of a better tactic. "At the bar."

Always hunt, I was taught. Don't shoot blind.

my line, felt its zip and float carry me out into the world. I spent a while near a cluster of stones just below the half-made cabin. I tried one of the new lures. It looked vaguely like a peacock and made me wonder how anything looks from below. I tried up and down the banks, keeping my shadow off the water, and cast into a thicket of insects low over a riffle. I caught a small trout, ten inches or so. Tan and spotted a darker brown, a little red to its sheen. Pretty. He gasped and mouthed as I lifted him from the water, savoring. I had him. Then I got the hook loose and set him back into the current. Held him a moment and then felt him slip and dart free.

"What the hell," Marcus shouted. He'd made his way to me, passing downstream, and seen my release. "I've got a bucket. That could've been supper."

His face spoke too much anger. I didn't know what to say. He hadn't been worth keeping. I was happy for him to go. Marcus went on, bitched his way down the creek and entered the woods. He cast his line every few steps without looking or thinking. I worked back upstream. We'd ridden together, but we were there to be alone. I never went in for the fishing zen, but it was a way of emptying out. We were as far from the rest of mankind as we could get, or felt like we could get, and there was a joy in that. Marcus probably would've called bullshit, said he just wanted to catch some damn fish, but I thought it'd do him good all the same.

We spent the rest of the afternoon on the creek, and as dark approached I realized we should have come earlier, started sooner. I caught a couple more small fries, released them. I finally took off my waders and packed everything back into the truck, had a beer. Marcus appeared not long after, grinning and pleased. He'd caught a twenty-inch rainbow, out of a pool, he said. Stroke of luck, but a fine one. We had another beer, took in the sky's turning orange where it met the high-up trees. Then we climbed in the pickup and started back to civilization.

"Oh. Oh. Couple hundred. She was going home," he told me. He sat still a moment. "Listen. I wasn't that bad on her."

"Sure."

"No, Benny, seriously," he said. "I felt bad for her."

So did I. We mounted the ridge again and started back down. Marcus stopped short halfway off the rise. A small, metallic-blue pickup sat in the path, blocking the single set of tracks. He switched on the headlamps and lit the other truck up in the highlight. An old Datsun, barely big enough for a grown man to ride in. Empty, just parked there. The road cut into the small hill and left no room to pass above, and the bank dipped away into the trees below, too steep to drive over. We watched the truck a moment, nowhere to go, and then Marcus laid on the horn.

"Hey," he shouted out the window. "Hey, hey, hey. Truck's in the way."

"Nobody supposed to be up here," he said to me.

He blew the horn a while, and then we got out. I tried the door and found it locked, wondered who'd bother with that. Why not just leave the keys. We shouted, waited for our echoes to subside and listened for an answer. Got none. Marcus pushed at the little truck, tried the doors again, and swore up and down.

"Not supposed to be here," he said. "I've got to go. I'm ready to go, already."

We climbed back in his truck, called out every so often and blew the horn here and there. No one appeared. The dark settled, took away the view of the woods around us and left only the truck ahead, stubbornly pointed at us. For half an hour I watched Marcus grow angrier. I told him it was all right, we weren't in a hurry, but he seethed. I could see it on him. He finally blew the horn one last time. Then he stepped out, walked around the Datsun and bent down. I didn't realize what he was doing until I saw the back end of the truck rise. He was picking it up. I jumped out,

hollered at him to stop. His face was strained and shadowy in the headlights, and he paid me no mind.

Marcus took a sideways step, pivoted the rear bumper of that little pickup toward the embankment. He let go, and the rear tires bounced and slipped. The truck fishtailed, kind of. He moved to the front, bent down and put his shoulder into the grill. The tires were locked but had no traction. The truck slid from the trail, grinding and crunching over rock and dirt. It slid ten or fifteen feet and bumped into a small cedar and stopped. We could just make it out in the dark. Marcus stood panting, and I waited, awed and confused, for him to do something next. He only walked back to his truck and climbed behind the wheel. I followed, found him slumped in his seat, crying. He wept weakly at first, but then he sobbed, shook, shoulders bouncing. Marcus wept, and I watched. I reached out, grabbed hold of his shoulder, and then let go.

"I haven't made love to a woman in eight months," he said. "That girl, she just sat there. I sat her on the toilet and told her just to be quiet. I'd send her home. She said some things you just had to do, and I said I understood that. I did. I do."

"So you didn't?"

"I wanted to." Marcus wiped at his eyes. "Goddamn wanted to."

He shook his head. I didn't understand the outburst, what he'd let that girl take from him, but I felt relieved by it. Thought surely this saved him. We sat a few minutes, and then he put the truck in gear. He drove on down the hill. The little truck Marcus wrecked disappeared in our wake, and we saw no sign of

its driver. We drove down Rock Creek, took the Interstate toward town. The lights shone up from the Bitterroot Valley, reflected against the sky. Clouds had come in, and it was chilly in the dark. Winter creeping closer. I checked my phone, found texts from Sandy. She and the boys were fine. They were going to dinner with her folks and then a movie. Hugs and kisses, make sure I ate, love. I told Marcus to take us to the Depot, let me buy him a meal. Grilled salmon, beer. He begged off, said he was tired.

"I've got supper, anyway," he said. "I'm not an asshole and didn't let mine go."

He drove to the bar and dropped me at my truck, where we'd started our day. The VFW was busy now, filled with drunk locals like us and college kids singing karaoke. I loaded my gear into my pickup and then shut the door of Marcus's. He rolled the window down and I leaned in on my elbow, patted at the frame with the flat of my hand. I looked across the seat at my friend and tried to read his face. Composed now, unworried for all anyone looking could tell. I watched him and tried to think what to say aside from goodbye.

"You did good," I said, and he shrugged. "When you going back?"

"I'll call you," Marcus told me. "I like being on the ocean down there. You can see out over it forever, nothing but blue and then the sky blue. Not like here where the earth's overhead and anything else makes you dizzy."

"I always hate coming home, kind of," he said. "But this is what you come home for. It was a good trip. Good day."

"Yeah," I told him. It was.



Top: Pelts, Bottom: Shack | TRICIA LOUVAR



SHE DROPPED FROM THE *Clouds*

(A GOLD RUSH MYTH)

VIRGINIA BARRETT

She dropped from the clouds
into Eagle Creek and washed
her newborn body clean in the first pool.
Each full moon she bathed
in a different pool, ate of the deepest
sound, drank from a fresh small waterfall.

Her body became smooth and bold
like the rocks, while her hair grew the color
of the ancient wood—
it flowed behind her in currents as long
as the giant trees. Birds nested in the ends
at night, carrying word of her beauty
each day to the sea, squirrels flew
overhead, and the ferns each
moved like feathers at her passing.

When she reached the river and the dam
of man where she could bathe no more,
her tears opened the floodgates
and water rushed through
the mammoth pipes of the mines
forcing great pieces of the land away.

No one discovered gold.

On the hills stripped bare
blossomed thousands of rusted flowers.

TO YOU, O FIRE

MISSY PETERSON

"To you, O Fire..."

(In the Name of God)

"...and for that lofty Ahura Napat-apam (the son of waters)"

- Yasna: Sacred Gathas, Hymns of Zarathushtra

Let's start on the muddy playground of Bordeaux Elementary School during a timber recession in 1988. I was in second grade. Bordeaux was in a poor part of town directly above the tidewater mill. Fifth grade girls snuck cigarettes behind the back fence in view of the smokestack. Boys played football in the rain. A slice of old growth timber made into a sign announced the name: *Shelton, Washington*. The town smelled like sawdust.

I leaned against the brick wall of the school reading *Misty of Chincoteague* for the seventh time. I huddled back under the eaves out of the rain. Occasional swollen drops caught me in the face, but I stayed dry enough to read.

And then, something important happened.

At first, I saw the beautiful part: the new boy with long, almost black hair cut into a scalp lock at the back of his head. He was taller than most, without a scrap of body fat, stoic for a 3rd grader. His name was Gabe Devereaux. The solid sons of timber workers stood around him. Gabe was outnumbered 5-1, but he looked anything but troubled. He seemed, instead, to rise to their taunting with silent glee. He didn't respond to their slurs. Instead, he measured each of them as they took turns coming after him. While one boy went at him from the front, another attacked from behind.

But they couldn't get him down.

He aimed short kicks at calf muscles and swift punches at soft parts with such skill two of them were instantly limping and the others looked frustrated. Each time it appeared Gabe might fall, the earth seemed to reach up and hold him.

One of the bigger boys finally jumped on Gabe's back and hugged his knees around his middle with his arms around his neck. Gabe struggled valiantly for many seconds before succumbing to the heavy weight of the town boy. I saw one knee dip, and in that instant the biggest boy, who had been leading most of the taunting, made a dash for him.

I closed my book then and put it on top of my backpack out of the drips. I took a breath and barreled towards the boldest of them. I was not a big girl, but I had surprise on

my side. I grew up on a small farm, and I was used to heavy work with pitchforks, hammers, and hay bales. I was not afraid of blood.

With a running start, I slammed my right shoulder into the bully. My aim was high. I rammed his chest and pushed him back a few steps, but it did nothing to incapacitate him. I backed off a little, staying out of the way of his fists. I kept an eye on his belly. His friends watched silently. He swung at me with a right hook and pivoted on his lead foot. As soon as his belly was exposed, I lunged at him, hard, with both fists. I heard the satisfying "Swukkk" of his breath leaving his body. I saw the pain and the panic on his face, and I knew he couldn't breathe.

I also knew I had about thirty seconds.

Before he could recover, I bowled him over. With both hands, I pushed his face into a mud puddle. Shallow water the color of chocolate milk soaked his hair. When I heard him gasp, I kicked him hard through his hands protecting his belly, and he stayed there limply—face up on the ground. I rose and dashed back to Gabe. He had used the surprise of my attack to somehow, miraculously, throw the oaf clinging to his neck, and we stood back to back while the other boys continued to circle. The focus of the group was fractured. Their leader rolled groaning in the mud. Each time they charged they met fists. They were growing reluctant. Using my protection, Gabe crouched until his hands met the ground that was littered with rocks. Quickly, he grasped two chunks of granite tightly, took aim, and threw them one after another. *Thud* (cry). *Thunk* (ow!). I picked up more rocks and threw them hard.

The town boys scattered.

And I was in love.

Many years later I married Gabe Devereaux, and it turns out wedded life is a lot like fighting back to back while small terrorists try to jump you. Ten years passed. One day I was in the closet of our master bedroom, putting away folded laundry. I was alone in the house and as I stood in the

dark stacking work shirts on a shelf something changed. A wave of hormones rushed through my body. I looked in the full-length mirror on the wall and everything was different. Instead of piling my clothes on my shelf space in our shared closet, I placed my essential items into a backpack.

I felt that I had to go. Just like I knew on the playground that I had to fight, I knew then, that I had to leave.

My good friend Alejandra told me that for two months after this I slept on her couch in her small house on Budd bay close to downtown Olympia, Washington. I do not remember this particular set of events. When I asked her what I did at her house for two months she answered, "You worked a lot of overtime."

I have the following three remnants of affirming memories: First, I remember stepping out of her door at 6:15am, wearing a backpack filled with field gear, Danner boots, a fleece hat, and a Carhart jacket. My hot coffee spilled steam over the side of my travel mug as I walked along Budd Bay to the government office on Jefferson Street where I worked as a Scientific Technician. Morning mist drifted out over gray water and sailboats jogged across chop as my crew chewed tobacco and waited in green work trucks.

Secondly, while Alejandra was out of town on business, I played my Martin acoustic to the bay—letting the notes ring out over homeless hippies and septic water.

I sang:

*"I've seen you naked
and I've had you clothed
I've held you shaking
And still as a stone
I loved you as a young man
And I watched you grow old
I've had you married
And you for my own"*

In the third memory, I struggled to explain myself to Gabe at the edge of Budd Bay. He stood with his tall muscled body and tattoos, his hat pulled low. He had never looked so strong and helpless. We would never again talk about our baby—her memory a deep, deep river we had both almost drowned in. And just like that, ten years of romance slipped away.

I thought he would sell our house and go back to the reservation. I knew he would go back to the river. I know he is there now.

Filleting fish. Filleting fish. Filleting fish.

I look at these memories across floodwater, wildfire smoke, and the cloudy haze covering a winter sun.

For three years after Alejandra's, I lived in a timber worker shack on Wildcat Creek in Grays Harbor County. A house built by the timber company to accommodate seasonal workers. It was old. And moldy. And small. It felt like dead people.

Some say it's a sin to grieve this way. Some say, you should have faith. I say, there is no ceremony for grief. Sometimes,

there is not even a funeral. There is no coming to terms or settling of scores. And white people are so chagrined, we carry the dead with us.

Some would call this madness. And some did. Not just the old house on the small creek but the drinking alone and refusal of all contact. Friends visited even when I told them not to. Once, Alejandra found me after I cancelled plans we had made together. I was on the riverbank reading *Yasna: Sacred Gathas, Hymns of Zarathushtra* with a pack of cigarettes and a six pack. My fly rod almost assembled. I lounged on a beach chair in the sun. An open beer in my right hand.

"You said you were busy," she said.

"I am busy," I told her, gesturing to the book. I threw a towel for her to sit on.

She looked at the book and said, "Before all of Nature was taken from God." She sat on the towel. "You don't fish anymore." She motioned toward the rod.

It was true. When I moved into the shack on Wildcat Creek, I developed a torturous empathy. Especially for fish. I couldn't shake the feeling that I might hook the last wild steelhead migrating from the Chehalis, after 50 other people downstream hooked her and she would be so tired she couldn't spawn in the creek, and she might die with her perfect eggs still inside her.

And even if I caught a hatchery fish I wouldn't kill it. It was useless: fishing and me.

"I brought dinner," she said.

"Thank you." I told her gratefully. I handed her a beer.

"I also brought you this."

"What is it," I asked without taking off my sunglasses.

"Chocolate from the dispensary."

"Whoa."

I hadn't smoked marijuana since I was seventeen. Now in my thirties, chocolate laced with THC sounded overwhelming. She broke off one small piece from the bar and wrapped it in tinfoil. She told me not to eat more than that one small piece. I promised not to, and Alejandra whistled and smoked and took off all her clothes and swam with my dog.

I was happy to see her.

The next day I ate the chocolate. First thing in the morning after coffee. I had a list of things I was going to do that day. Mostly involving cleaning. I didn't get to one thing on that list. But I opened every window in the small timber shack. Sun streamed in bright orange swirls, washing my curtains and furniture in ecstatic golden hues. I felt the rays roiling through my skin and into my hot blood. And I looked around at my house and packed a lunch and threw it and more chocolate, and a bottle of water into my backpack.

I hiked down the lonely highway toward Preacher's Slough Road. I thought of how, in the 6th century BC, Zarathushtra was pulled into the sky. At the top of a mountain, Ahura Mazda, who created all good things, came

to him in fire.

I got on the trail that leads to the Chehalis River Surge Plain Natural Area Preserve. The “surge plain” is a tidally influenced estuary just upstream from where the Chehalis empties into Grays Harbor. The preserve is cloaked in dark Sitka spruce and western redcedar.

That day I noticed things: there was a new interpretive sign, a boardwalk, and someone had planted Nootka roses. I spent the entire day rambling the riverbank, exploring the grassy backwaters and watching juvenile salmon jump from brackish water. I hiked past red-osier dogwood and willow. Near the water, I could see softstem bulrush and cattail. Each time I reached up to feel my face, I was grinning.

I went home that night and slept like I had not slept in a long time—a dark and otherworldly sleep that made me feel like I had traveled a great distance. It was as if a storm had been raging, raging, raging against a seawall until I woke up and it wasn’t. Scattered on the shore was debris washed clean, but the waves had receded leaving the beach drying with waterlines edged in seaweed.

I went outside and looked gratefully at the dry cottonwood leaves skittering across my front walk. I sat on my front step, hugged my dog, and smiled. I knew I was done grieving, and I loved my husband with my whole

from wildflowers, helped with butterfly surveys, sprayed herbicide, and drove my ATV around mima mounds while marking weeds. And then it was fire season on the prairies, and I spent weeks working on prescribed burns.

Most of the plants and animals that live in prairies around Puget Sound evolved to use burned areas to their advantage. Without prairie fires, weeds and trees crowd out habitat, so we purposefully started fires in a controlled setting. That summer, I mowed fire breaks, hauled water, and lit burns with a drip torch. Afterward, I scanned the prairies with binoculars to make sure the fires were out. The other fire fighters brought me cigarettes and iced coffees. They saved me a seat during lunch. They gently reminded me to rest and told me when it was time to go home. Everyone pretended not to notice when I sat upon the smoking black earth and cried.

When I returned to my regular job duties, my field partner, Natane, was happy to see me. On my first day back, we gassed up the work truck and entered a nearby convenience store for hot coffee. I bought us both fortune cookies. We ate the cookies and unrolled our tiny fortunes. Mine said, “You will receive an unexpected windfall.”

“Yeesh, that sounds bad.” I said, balling up the fortune.

“No,” Natane said. “I think a windfall is good.” She

I went home that night and slight like I had not slept in a long time a dark and otherwordly sleep that made me feel like I had traveled a great distance.

heart. This assurance released me from a great weight that had been resting heavily.

I got dressed and drove to my old house. But there was another family living there now. There were clothes on the line, and toys in the driveway. I slowed down long enough to look inside the dining room window. And then I left.

A few miles down the road I pulled over because I was shaking. Inside my house, I’d seen my husband, bright and handsome against the warm glow of a busy kitchen. He was leaning down to kiss a slender dark-haired woman. But the part that hurt the most was the children. They were not his children but must be hers: A grade-school-aged son and daughter. A toddler boy.

A baby.

As I drove home I tried to imagine another woman cooking in the kitchen my father built, another woman serving her children on my dishes. Another woman, hair tousled on my hand-embroidered pillow, resting peacefully in my bride’s bed. As I tried to sleep that night, the only argument I could eventually manage was, “But you were mine for so long.”

The next day at work I volunteered for all available overtime. I worked through the weekend. I collected seed

looked it up on her phone. “A windfall is like fruit blown from a tree after a storm.”

All day I looked for a windfall and saw nothing. At the end of the day, I told Natane she could leave early. I had to call another wildlife area manager, Pat Hanes, about borrowing some brush cutters, and I decided to talk to him while I was driving home. I had never met him. All I knew about him was a paper he had written on little brown bats, and the path he’d built at the surge plain near my house. Natane drove off, and I made the call. I talked to Pat while I was driving home. And while I walked my dog, and while I cooked my dinner. We talked about our dogs, and special places we had traveled to, and biology, and birds. Finally, we said goodnight with the sunset. And made plans to meet in person, soon.

Pat’s supervisor told him he could have a designated workplace anywhere on the coast within his region. So, his house on Steamboat Island was his official place of business, and he parked his work truck there.

He lived alone with his dog and falcon. He lived there for seven years without really thinking time was passing. He moored his white and blue sailboat at the marina. His job was lonely. But the management of land and wildlife was a

thing that seemed to fill him. And his care toward beaches and estuaries, a passion that tightened in my throat. Like the cormorant wrapped in a jacket that we drove to the wildlife rescue before dinner.

After a month, I agreed to go camping with him at Diamond Head in the Central Cascades near Blewett Pass. We camped in Wenatchee National Forest, at the top of a ridge dotted with pines. We set up camp, hiked Mount Lillian, and returned to heat up our dinner of beef burgundy stew that we ate with bread and salad. After dinner, we opened the wine I had brought. We sat on our camp chairs to watch the sky over the pass and look down the scree at stunted pines.

The year before, the ridge had burned. The older pines survived and surrounded an incinerated research station. At the edge of the burn, fed by the rich nitrogen of the ash, wildflowers bloomed. The sky was clear except for one dark cloud that loomed in the valley in front of us.

As we enjoyed a balmy breeze and sipped wine on full stomachs, the weather changed. A chill seeped up from the valley below. The silver thunderhead opened up and showed me radiant light. Inside the stormy gray cloud, I saw a being arranged in gorgeous fiery plumage. Orange and yellow and red and white was haloed in purple and blue. Every color you could imagine was consumed in a boil of electricity and fire. The cracking sound of thunder exploded from the cloud instantaneously. I saw Pat cringe, and the archangel stepped out, once, to punch the earth. The lightning strike was the width of a school bus and stretched across the valley in front of me. The rocky slope and wind-gnarled trees were lit up by an intense flash of brilliant white light.

Pat jumped straight up from his chair, grasping the handles protectively. His six-foot four-inch body cowered. He'd been sitting in a camp chair facing me with a plastic cup of wine. He couldn't see what was going on behind his back. Just the boom of thunder in his ears. I told him lightning struck the mountain, and he rose, still shaken, and said to get in his truck.

"But..." I stammered. "But," I rose and looked out toward Blewett Pass.

I wanted to see it again. I would have done anything to see it again.

He gently took my arm and led me to the truck. I was still awestruck, but I climbed inside. I breathed out slowly, and as Pat scanned the ridge for more thunderheads I told him, "That was...beautiful." He looked at me, the whites of his eyes showing, and didn't answer. I don't blame him, really.

He didn't see the archangel.

The thunderhead passed through the valley and before we could even get out of the truck a teenage boy ran up the path to our campsite and approached the vehicle. He slapped the windshield, the passenger window, and screamed. We couldn't hear or understand him, and even after opening

the doors and standing up we could only make out scattered words. The one I picked up on first was, "FIRE!" and he gestured toward the woods, his campsite, and for some reason his forehead.

"Where is the fire?" Pat asked him, and the boy pointed to an old pine between our campsites, which, sure enough, was burning. Next, the boy pointed, with a trembling finger, to his forehead.

"Right here," he said with gravity. "This is where the lightning struck." I poked Pat to remind him not to laugh.

"We're getting out of here," the boy said then. "The whole range is probably on fire!"

As we walked with him back to his campsite, we could see his friends wildly packing up cases of beer, tent stakes, dirty socks, and a dog into a rattling Ford Ranger. We watched as they pulled out, bumping along the dirt ruts. They left a camp chair with a cold beer in the cup holder beside their fire ring.

Pat was certified as a wildland firefighter, and he happened to have a rake and shovel in his truck. We dug out a small fire break around the tree and raked the ground below to clear it of any fuel. The pine was thick, wind stunted, and old. It had survived a fire the previous season and the bark was still charred. The lightning likely forked when it hit the ridge and struck several places. Even so, the tree looked as if it had been blasted with a missile or had exploded internally. Bread loaf sized splinters of pine flesh were scattered about the sand and duff near the tree. Deep roots had pulled up from the ground and created fissures in the soil. It was dusk, and we had about an hour in which to decide what to do. If we stayed, we would be alone on the ridge.

After scanning the mountainside below for flames and weighing the consequences of several scenarios, we decided to stay. We believed the natural barrier of the valley, lack of wind, and quickly rising dew point would keep us safe from flame until morning. Besides, since the ridgeline we were camped on had burned the season before, it was clear of fuel.

As darkness came, we looked across the valley to the Enchantment Mountains and the Teanaway Region. We waited. At first, there was just a glow. We scanned the skyline with binoculars. *There!* Fire crested the mountains across the valley from us. Slowly, like a sunrise, we watched as the orange glow crawled to the highest point, and rested there. We stood close together.

My thoughts never strayed far from the archangel.

I had forgotten the hymns of Zarathushtra, but I remembered the ancient words told of the entities similar to archangels: the six divine sparks of original creation, the *Amesha Spenta*. The divine sparks have different properties that mean (approximately): Good Purpose, Best Truth, Desirable Dominion, Holy Devotion, and Immortality. I believe, however, the spark that showed itself at Diamond Head was Haurvatāt, meaning, "Wholeness."

I remembered her terrible beauty all night. 🌌

The northbound train sounds
through town, announcing
over and over the end of the day
as I walk home along the river.
Its cry hangs in the cold
November air a moment
the way my breath does.
Sunset burns the birch trees
to shadows, branches black
as what remains after a wildfire.
A crow disappears
beneath the bridge.
Dry leaves drop into the water
and float downstream like boats
with the lightest of cargos:
some night wind
and evening's last embers.

DUSK

PHILLIP BROWN

The train sounds
end the day
as I walk along the river.
Its cry hangs in the cold
the way my breath does.
Sunset burns birch
shadows black
as what remains after fire.
A crow
beneath the bridge.
leaves in the water
float like boats
with light cargo :
some night wind
and evening embers. train sounds
along the river.
hang in the
birch
shadows,
what remains
the bridge
the water
some night
embers.

Minimal Sand | DANIELA SFORZA

BY THE LIGHT OF DISTANT FIRES

JAN CLAUSEN

“One writes out of one thing only—one’s own experience. Everything depends on how relentlessly one forces from this experience the last drop, sweet or bitter, it can possibly give.”
- James Baldwin, Introduction to *Notes of a Native Son*

one The world is alive; it can be killed. My first news of the Eagle Creek Fire in the Columbia River Gorge. September 5, 2017, my friend Grey emails from Portland: “We are in an end of the world landscape with ash falling and air heavy with burning trees. It feels like the hell on Earth Trump is aiming for.” On the following day: “Environmentalists who know this happens all over were brought to their knees by the loss in their own neighborhood. So many of us have memories of our hikes, our mushroom collecting, our special spots. We were breathing in the ashes of our trees. Somehow it brings all that we know about the destruction of our planet into our bodies.” At home in Brooklyn, I resist the push of sorrow, though the vanished “special spots” were my special spots, too. Why does the vulnerability of this beloved landscape feel like my oldest story?

I remember the words of Wyampum Chief Tommy Kuni Thompson, who lived in the Gorge at Wyam, up the Columbia River from Eagle Creek. The 1957 completion of The Dalles Dam—one in a series of massive hydroelectric dams that have radically altered the river’s ecology—meant doom for the ancient tribal salmon fishing grounds at Celilo Falls. As the dam’s gates were shut and the flood waters rose, Chief Thompson observed: “The Almighty took a long time to make this place.”¹

From her home in Washington State, my 93-year-old mother forwards me a message from the Friends of the Columbia Gorge. Regarding the fire’s aftermath, a supporter of the organization states: “Through all the changes of geologic time and natural events... resilience shines in the Gorge, and wildness perseveres... but it is this natural change and resilience that needs protection.”

Resilience. How I’m coming to hate this word. When did it enter the go-to vocabulary of the paste-a-smiley-face-on-climate-change-disaster crew? Doesn’t it distract us from rebelling at the pileup of events that demand so much resilience? More and more every day.

I write in my journal on Sept. 8: “My father should not have yoked himself to the timber industry.” On Sept. 10: “What does one do about belonging to a largely—if not utterly—mistaken ‘civilization’?”

two The world is alive; it can be killed. The harrowing diversity of ways to kill the world speaks to its modes of aliveness.

I was born on the Oregon Coast, but the first place I remember is Eureka, California, in Humboldt County, where my father had taken a job with the California Redwood Association. My father was a working-class boy from Minneapolis who joined the Boy Scouts, fell in love with trees, and eventually earned a master’s in forestry. When his idealistic vision of becoming a forest ranger gave way to the need to support a family, he embarked on a career in Forest Products Research. And so my family lived up and down the West Coast, supported by his employment in an extractive enterprise that was among the most brutally reactionary forces in the Pacific Northwest if not the country as a whole. Though I don’t doubt for a moment my father’s real attachment to the outdoors, the lessons he unwittingly imparted in killing the thing you love remind me of

an old anti-war poster: "Join the Army, travel to unusual places, meet interesting people, and kill them." Substitute "timber industry" for army, "forests," for people, and "fell them" for kill them, and you get a picture of the cognitive dissonance that framed my early years, saturated with a modernized frontier ideology that said the ancient power of that self-possessed land somehow rubbed off on—yes, glorified—us. (Us being the ones who stood briefly in awe of two thousand year old giant sequoias, then grinned at the luck of a "resource" to cash in on.)

I moved to New York when I was 23 years old. I said that I wanted to try a new environment, to pursue my interest in creative writing (soon to include my interest in radical lesbian feminist activism). But even as I plunged into the relevant excitement of a politicized life in the gritty Northeast, I felt the move as an amputation. I could not, I thought, belong to both East and West. The Northwest seemed peripheral, provincial, set apart from the harshness of sharpened class distinctions, the urgency of fights for racial equity, the glory and strife of immigrant struggles—that marked scrappy New York on the cusp of a fiscal crisis.

three

The world is alive and radically endangered: mortal, like us. Which makes it a heartbreaking place. How much safer for the heart to imagine it dead already.

I never wanted to write from my origins. I was a loved child, carefully nurtured. My people, white, middle-class, and liberal-minded, occupied one of those millions of modest-sized boats that the rising tide of the post-war economy lifted as though by magic. Coming of age as a writer in a time and place where, not so different from now, the voices of women of color, queers, working class, immigrants were resonating so bravely, so full of revelation, I thought I needed inspiration from the not-me—that is, to become other than who I was destined to be, in order to have anything worth writing about.

In Brooklyn, in the mid-1970s, my life as a writer seemed to really begin, with poems whose central images are of loving women and of city streets.

I left behind something very precious. To say that the land "spoke to me" would be cloyingly romantic, so how to convey that in my childhood, I came to know my surroundings as something more essential than any so-called "environment"—a word that handily reduces all creation to a stage for the strutting human actor. The mountains, the oceans were sacred, if, as Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge writes, "Sacred means saturated with being."²

four

The world is alive; we take in its mortality through images of its murder that fractally prefigure its absolute demise more convincingly than any science fiction.

In childhood, I encountered the world's fragility in three primary ways. Most devastating because so absolute, there was the prospect of nuclear conflict that made a tremendous impression on my Cold War childhood. I absorbed, and have never got rid of, the visceral sense that my/our world could literally end from one moment to the next.

Next, there was Humboldt County's theater of ecological cruelty, created by the triumphant industry that paid my family's bills. Everywhere, the clawed, mauled, muddy land; the towering piles of slash awaiting burning; the gouges made by the Caterpillar tractors that hauled the slaughtered trees to the webwork of logging roads; the ponderously laden logging trucks, barreling down the winding two-lane highway. The shibboleths of economic growth, and scientific management—forests as "renewable resource," timber "harvested" to meet human needs, the wisdom of "conservation" providing a safety belt—offered reassurance, but Earth's battered body told the truth: destruction would have no limit.

Behind all this, unspoken, was the deep foundation of world-killing upon which rested our economic and ideological life (our identity as white people of the Pacific Northwest), that of being entitled newcomers (we never said "settlers") whose stories about how we came to occupy this rich terrain left out the central founding fact: the worlds of indigenous peoples had been horribly put to death—along with very many of those people themselves—in order that ours could flourish.

five

I have just read an important new book by California historian Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe 1846-1873*. The author documents the organized, advertised, government-sponsored slaughter of California's Native people, starting almost immediately after the U.S. seized California from Mexico, radically escalating during the Gold Rush, and zestfully prosecuted with federal resources during the Civil War. Before reading the book, I expected to learn a lot about the murderous facts of colonization

throughout the Golden State; however, given my experience of Humboldt County as a remote outpost, I certainly didn't expect that the northern California coast would figure prominently. But it turns out that Eureka and the county as a whole formed an epicenter of genocidal ideology and practice within the state. For example, in the mid-1850s the *Humboldt Times*—still publishing during my own time in Eureka—cheered on local vigilantes after the death of a white man was blamed on “Indians”: “We have every confidence that they will make a good report of themselves by the number of scalps they bring in.”³ In an especially grisly but far from isolated 1860 atrocity, whites from Eureka massacred a large group of Wyot people—perhaps 62 in all, mostly women and children⁴—who had gathered on an island in Humboldt Bay for an annual ceremony known as “World Renewal.”

What is the resonance of such events when they are not spoken of in the dominant culture and when the occupiers—the people who came after and can righteously say that they had no hand in any atrocities—continue to profit directly from the ethnic cleansing? What does it mean to create an identity based on attachment to the “wonderful, beautiful” land under such circumstances?

six The world is alive; it can be killed. No doubt it's very late for me to grasp that my obsession with this subject—the taproot of my writing—is the product of my banal white middle-class childhood in an economic and cultural backwater, far from the heroic struggles of the age. I know now how deeply I was shaped by the imagination of what Gary Snyder called “mountains and rivers without end;” but I know, too, that the land was not “ours,” that the beauty was a remnant of ancient relationships disastrously interfered with by settler impacts, and that the image of Western “wilderness,” a “pristine” place supposedly bare of human contamination, sat happily side by side with the insatiable drive to realize the price per board foot of every last marketable tree. Until at last that drive, together with the larger industrial order of which it's symptomatic—with its fossil fuel addiction, its obsession with growth and building—has pretty much succeeded in reducing the ancient forests to a relic on life support. Months after the Eagle Creek fire, a *New York Times* headline catches my eye: “Widespread Tree Die-Offs Feared.”⁵ According to the article, “the sequoias, the largest trees in the world by volume and thousands of years old, are no longer as resilient as was once thought. As droughts occur, other species of trees growing nearby suck up stored water in the ground and render the sequoias susceptible to dying. There is increasing talk of irrigating the giants.”

I sorely miss the terrain of my childhood, and even as I read about horrific acts that took place there, I'm pulled in by nostalgia at the place names: Eel River, Mad River, Arcata, Mt. Lassen, Mt. Shasta, and Yreka (where génocidaires on horseback paraded through the streets with the body parts of their victims dangling from their saddles). It all sounds so familiar: the romance of the land, the hideous history. How do the lyrics go? “Pastoral scene of the gallant South, the bulging eyes and twisted mouth; scent of magnolia sweet and fresh, and the sudden smell of burning flesh.” I wonder why, out of all the catchy tunes California has inspired, not one reverberates with the irony, grief, and anger of Billie Holiday singing “Strange Fruit.” Could it be because of something Joan Didion wrote, obviously alluding to white people's beliefs, though she tries to couch her insight as universal diagnosis: “In the South they are convinced that they have bloodied their place with history. In the West we do not believe that anything we can do can bloody the land, or change it, or touch it.”⁶

I know now that the bloodied, changed land—so terribly touched by people in denial—was never something I could leave behind.

“What does one do about belonging to a largely, if not utterly, mistaken ‘civilization’?” It's a question without an answer, but I'm bound to dwell inside it, desperate and clueless as I am, still wanting the world to live. 🐾

¹ Elizabeth Woody, “Twanat, To Follow Behind the Ancestors,” *First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim*, edited by Judith Roche and Meg McHutchison, Seattle: One Reel, University of Washington Press (1998): 78.

² Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, *In Hello, The Roses*, New York: New Directions (2013): 92.

³ Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873*, New Haven: Yale University Press (2016): 240-241.

⁴ Eureka vigilantes, “Massacre of Wyot People,” *An American Genocide* (February 1860): 282-283.

⁵ Jim Robbins, *New York Times*, (Dec. 12, 2017): D4.

⁶ Joan Didion, *In South and West: From a Notebook*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf (2017): 138.



One of a Kind | DAQI CHEN

Horsefly Dress

HEATHER CAHOON

A long wing feather propels the stunted body
of a black-crowned night heron through air,
breaking apart
the dried mouth of memory.

In an outpouring of primordial story
I hear her name: Čatnałqs

The hunting moon unearths Coyote's eldest and only daughter,
her name no longer spoken, she turned
to porous stone.

But I hear her name Čatnałqs along the river
near Revais

in the cutting of meat, its crackled
drying above smoldering cottonwood.

Čatnałqs at the edge of river, in passing water,
the embodiment of belief, she

perforates the divide
between known and unknown. Here,
she reconsiders the archeology of our suffering.

Her mouth opens in the alarm cry of a brown thrasher,
a warning: *Brace for all that's wrapped into a name.*

(Čatnałqs = From Salish, Horsefly Dress)

Nymph

PATRICK D. WATSON

Vicki Watson is a friend and colleague, a teacher, scientist, and activist. Since 1982, she has transformed landscapes and waterscapes: at the University of Montana and in its Environmental Studies Program, throughout the Clark Fork River watershed, across Montana, and scattered worldwide in hundreds of her students' careers. Vicki retired this January from the University of Montana, and this essay, by her son Patrick, is a beautiful tribute to his mother and her legacy as educator, public interest scientist, and conservationist.

- Phil Condon

In my memory, she is wearing hip waders and a fishing vest. She stirs up the silt and stones with her boots, and the current washes silt and tiny river bugs into the net she holds downstream. All around her, my classmates have little nets and do little dances and call out her name like blackbirds. "Vicki! Vicki!" They show my mother larval caddisflies, with soft bodies hidden in little houses woven from twigs and pebbles, and stoneflies with prehistoric chompers.

The most common river insect we find on that field trip is mayflies, delicate with feathery gills and tails. Mayflies spend years in the water; quietly eating and growing. They go through as many as fifty molts without wings before finally emerging for a brief mating flight. The winged adults have no mouths, and starve after a few days of wild reproduction. So impermanent that their Latin name is *Ephemeroptera*.

My mother was born on a farm in the Texas Blackland Prairie. She told me about her childhood whenever we visited her family's single-story red farmhouse. She said that when she was small, she'd go to the creek behind

the house to have picnics and collect bugs. The fourth of five children, she worked hard, took care of her baby sister, and spent as much time as she could among the vitex and cottonwoods looking for crawdads, minnows, bugs, and weeds. A shy kid who loved small things in the water who grew up to earn a Ph.D. in botany, specializing in the aquatic plants that grew in lakes and streams. She met my father in grad school. As a boy he'd run away from home, stole a canoe, and escaped down his own river, the Sangamon, in Illinois.

After grad school, while pregnant with me, she became a professor at the university in Missoula, Montana. The Clark Fork became my mother's river. She chose a house close enough to walk to the water, but not irresponsibly located in the floodplain. For more than thirty years she would spend each summer scraping algae off rocks to monitor what farmers and sewage treatment plants were dumping into her river.

There were other concerns. A few miles upstream from our house was an old dam holding back a century's worth of heavy metals from Montana's mining past. Arsenic, copper, and cadmium would sometimes escape and poison fish and the little water bugs she'd collect for science demonstrations at my elementary school.

I remember us having to let go of the *Lethocerus Americanus* that one of my classmates had caught on that field trip. A three-inch long armored bug with a poisonous bite that we called a "toe biter." Mom said it would eat the fish in the aquarium. But she encouraged me to keep some of the other specimens. "Watch them change," she said.

The water striders that balanced on the surface with spindly, hydrophobic legs, grew slightly. Wiggling, white worms pupated into hard, plant-like lozenges, from which emerged long-limbed crane flies.

Like all professors, my mother's office door had a

comic strip on it to explain her passion to passers-by. Hers was one of Walt Kelly's Pogo strips. In it, an owl tells a turtle that according to his calculations and measures, the swamp they live in is becoming "acidiferous" and "inhospitibobble" for life. The turtle gives him a wry look and says that everyone knows that already "because everything's dyin!"

Making a place for fragile river life to grow wasn't just a challenge because of mining companies and sewage treatment plants. As a woman scientist, there were more subtle currents pushing against her. Currents that would sometimes catch me too.

When I was eleven years old, I came home from school one day and snuck over to my friend Ross's house to play video games, which I didn't have at home. I had been a latchkey kid since my parents split up the year before. My mother, like every academic in STEM, worked long hours in a highly competitive environment. My father, also an academic, worried that he might not be competing fiercely enough. He departed for the Swan river in Western Australia.

When I arrived at Ross's, his nanny asked why I wasn't at home. So I came up with a lie I thought would put the nanny off the scent.

"Oh, I got locked out."

"Where's your mom?" she asked.

"At work."

When Ross's parents got home the nanny asked me to put on my coat. I knew the jig was up and she was going to tell my mom about the video games. She had me guide her to my mom's office at the University, which was just a few blocks from my house.

My mom was meeting with a student. The nanny did not wait for her to finish. She tore into my mom. I can't remember the exact words, except for one line she repeated again and again.

"This is neglect. This is neglect."

I wonder if that nanny thought she was helping. After that, I didn't visit Ross's. I'd walk myself home from school, let myself in, make a snack, and do homework until mom got home at six or seven.

That summer my mother took me out to the river with her. She set me up with a little sample kit, a razor blade and a piece of cardboard with a 2x2 inch hole in it, and left me to scrape green fibers off of rocks while she went to gather more. She always stayed in sight, but like most field ecologists, she was a prodigious walker, and I would sometimes look up to see her standing in her river far away.

And yet, in the years since, my mother's house became

surrounded by keys: buried in the garden, hanging on secret nails, hidden under rocks. Even as an adult she makes a point to walk me around and show me one. She always makes sure her son has a way to get in.

My mother refers to her science as "housekeeping." There are no breakthroughs in river cleanliness. One cleans the house with the foreknowledge that it will be dirty again tomorrow. An ecologist's task is to turn over stones until the next generation takes over.

In a moment, I grew up, left to study biology in college, and then earned a Ph.D. in neuroscience. While I was away, the EPA finished removing the Milltown dam and the poisonous heavy metals behind it. Suddenly, my mother found herself with a grown son and a clean river. She says that the hardest and best thing is to watch something you cared for become independent.

An inspiring story would end there. Pioneering woman scientist, hardened by her life in the West, fights implacably to overcome a pile of heavy metals, and a pile of heavy sexism, both left over from Montana's history. Her son becomes a scientist, and so too do her other children: over her career she trained over two hundred ecologists.

But science stories don't end. The world changes and our understanding of it can never be complete. It took a long time for me to realize what the next part of this one was. Years later, during my postdoctoral research, I was involved in an experiment on

whether exercise would improve memory. I remember my colleagues sitting around the lab excitedly discussing what we might "discover." Months passed, and our participants ran a mile in a circle three times a week.

When we measured again at the end, their memory was about the same. My colleagues seemed almost shocked. I couldn't imagine what they were anticipating. Either folks' memories would get a little better or they wouldn't. We definitely weren't going to discover a cure for Alzheimer's disease.

But I had watched my mother turn over dozens of empty stones before she found a cool bug. I suspect that when my colleagues were young, they had been like my field trip classmates. To them, it was a miracle when my mother "discovered" a tiny civilization on the bottom of a rock. Before that, they hadn't really thought about what was in the river.

I remembered once laughing at one of those hagiographic STEM advertisements that said "What if we treated women scientists like rock stars?" As if scientists went into the business for the fame and attention. My

She always stayed in
sight, but like most field
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mother loves showing water bugs to kids, but she loves finding them by herself too.

Darwin didn't "discover" evolution, he described it. He noticed that organisms were passing on their traits to their offspring in an unbroken chain of birth and death. He wrote his observations down and the ideas flew off and had many progeny. It's ironic that he gets credit for the natural process that created him.

If you don't spend much time in the water, "mayfly" usually calls to mind a flying insect. The ephemeral mating swarms that blacken the sky and splatter on car windshields near the river every summer for a couple of days. Where do they all come from?

When I was small, someone showed me where they come from. For me, "mayfly" will always mean the nymphs in the water.

My mother's river, the Clark Fork, has flowed for 55 million years, since the birth of the Rocky Mountains. To a human, that's ancient. But for a river, it's a baby. When the Clark Fork was born, the river bugs were waiting and

moved right in.

We returned the bugs we caught on the field trip to the river. The cottonwoods filled the air with fluff. Blackbirds sang. A latchkey kid found his way home each day. A new group of third graders discovered river monsters. I had a son of my own.

When did the first winged insects first emerge from the water for a mating flight? Scientists aren't sure because the wings are so fragile, and the flights so brief. What's preserved isn't the flying swarms. Rather, in the silt and mudstone of river bottoms are molted exoskeletons, the patient record of daily life. The oldest of these fossils, evolutionary ancestor of all river insects, is 400 million years old. Three hundred and fifty million years before the Clark Fork. Two hundred millennia before dinosaurs. Older than the continents. This insect lived in the river surrounded by plants that were no taller than lichens. And yet, if my mother fished that exoskeleton out of the river today I'd recognize it instantly.

Ephemeroptera. Mayfly. 🦋



Peaceful Anchor, Noatak River, Alaska | ELISABETH FONDELL

MICHAEL ANTHONY is a writer and visual artist living in New Jersey. He has published fiction, poetry, illustrations, and photographs in literary journals and commercial magazines. Most recently these include *The Furious Gazelle*, *Northwest Indiana Literary Journal*, and *The Regal Fox*. The American Labor Museum exhibited Michael's photojournalism essay, "Mill Ends," on the waning textile industry.

BRENT BARNES is an emergency medicine physician in Edmond, Oklahoma who has a passion for wildlife and nature photography. He specializes in underwater and avian photography. He uses his photography to share the beauty of nature and wildlife with hopes that it will inspire others to help protect our fragile environment.

VIRGINIA BARRETT's books include *Crossing Haight* (forthcoming in 2018) and *I Just Wear My Wings*. Her work has most recently appeared in the *Writer's Chronicle*, *Narrative*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *Weaving the Terrain* (Dos Gatos Press), and *Poetry of Resistance: Voices for Social Justice* (University of Arizona Press). She has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

KYLE BRADFORD is a native New Englander with a BS in environmental science from the University of Vermont. He currently resides in Sonoma County, California, where he is a freelance photographer and naturalist. He enjoys exploring California's diverse landscape on foot, bicycle, and skis. See more of his work at kylembradford.com

PHILLIP WATTS BROWN is originally from Utah and lives in Corvallis, Oregon. He earned an MFA in poetry at Oregon State University where he also currently works as an editor. In his spare time, he manages Poetry Sparks, a social-media source of poetic inspiration.

SUZANNE BURNS is an author of two short story collections. Her latest, *The Veneration of Monsters*, was named by Kirkus Reviews as one of the Top 100 of 2017. She is currently at work on a new collection in-between traveling to wherever her camera takes her.

HEATHER CAHOON received an MFA in Poetry from the University of Montana in 2001. "Horsefly Dress" comes from her recently-completed manuscript of the same title, the work on which was supported by a Montana Arts Council Artist Innovation Award. She is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

DAQI (JENNIFER) CHEN is a junior at Bishop Stang High School. She took a half-year course in photography her freshman year. Her nature scene photography piece was awarded second place in last year's art show. She is from Shanghai, China and currently resides in Massachusetts.

JAN CLAUSEN is a poet, novelist, and most recently the author of *Veiled Spill: A Sequence* (poetic hybrid). Seven Stories Press has just reissued her 1999 memoir *Apples and Oranges: My Journey through Sexual Identity*. A longtime New York resident, she teaches in

Goddard College's MFA in Writing Program.

HANK DART is a medical writer, ultrarunner, and photographer who lives in Hailey, Idaho. He feels nature is sometimes best experienced a little tired, hungry, and out-of-breath with camera in hand. His works have also appeared in *Mountain Flyer*, *Faster Skier*, *Trail Runner*, and *Running Times*.

HEIDI DAULTON is an environmental studies and GIS graduate student. Though spatially inept in her everyday life, she has strong, personal connections to "place," which inspire her cartographic art. She also works for Vital Ground where her maps help with grizzly bear conservation. heididaulton.com

KRISTIN FOGDALL was born and raised in Seattle, Washington. She earned her MA in Creative Writing from Boston University. Her work appears in many venues including *Slate*, *The Threepenny Review*, *Poetry*, *New England Review*, and *Green Mountains Review*. Find her on Facebook and Instagram.

ELISABETH FONDELL is a writer and potter living in rural Minnesota. She was recently awarded a Southwest Minnesota Arts Council grant to develop a body of work showcasing food and the human experience. Her work is published or forthcoming in *Cosumnes River Journal*, *The Book Ends Review*, *Real Small Towns Magazine*, and more.

MIGUEL A. GARCIA, JR. is a writer and musician based in El Paso, TX. His work has appeared in *BorderSenses* and has been performed live at many Barbed Wire Open Mic nights and at the FrontEra poetry slam.

ELIAS HANNON lives in Western Montana where he's an amateur photographer and professional bike geek.

MARK HIERONYMUS resides in Juneau, AK, and spends his summers guiding fly anglers in Northern Southeast Alaska. When the salmon stop running for the year, Mark works for Trout Unlimited's Alaska Program helping to conserve fish habitat in "America's Salmon Forest," the Tongass National Forest.

TRICIA LOUVAR lives in the Pacific Northwest and studied journalism, poetry, aesthetics, and documentary photography in college and beyond. She works in publishing as a visual artist and writer. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Brevity*, *Orion Online*, *Zyzzyva*, and more. tricialouvar.com

KEVIN MAIER works summers as a fly-fishing guide in Juneau, teaches English and environmental humanities at the University of Alaska Southeast, and currently serves as an Alaska Salmon Fellow. His writing has appeared in *The Drake*, *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, and *The Hemingway Review*.

JENNY O'CONNELL's forthcoming book, *Finding Petronella*, traces her solo trek across Finland in the footsteps of a female Lappish gold legend. Her work is forthcoming from *Slice* and was featured in the 2017 island art installation *Surface First Tilts West*. Jenny

earned her masters in creative writing from Stonecoast MFA.

MISSY PETERSON works as a biologist in a rainy logging town in Washington State. She earned a BA/BS degree from The Evergreen State College and attended The University of Montana's Environmental Studies program for an MS degree in Environmental Writing. Her work has been published by *Flyway*, *Oregon Quarterly*, and *Seal Press* among others.

AUBREY PONGLUELERT grew up in the ashy greens and burnt golds of the Sierra Nevada foothills. Inspired by the patterns and palettes of the land, she is exploring the intersection of visual creative processes and sustainable food and farming practices as an Environmental Studies graduate student at the University of Montana.

DIANE RAPTOSH's fourth book of poetry, *American Amnesiac* (Etruscan Press), was longlisted for the 2013 National Book Award. She served as Boise Poet Laureate (2013) as well as the Idaho Writer-in-Residence (2013-2016). Her most recent book of poems, *Human Directional*, was published by Etruscan in 2016. www.dianeraptoosh.com

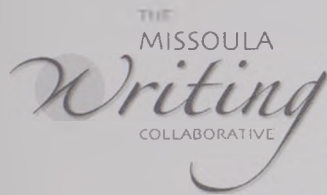
AMY RONK is a photographer currently residing in Missoula, MT. She takes a more abstract approach through photographing long exposures of lakes, rivers, and waterfalls. The cleanliness and preservation of water is something Amy greatly values; she feels so fortunate to be able to immerse herself in such beauty.

ADDYSON SANTESE is a 23 year-old fiction writer and graduate student in the MFA program at Northern Arizona University. She currently lives in Flagstaff, Arizona and often returns home to Durango, Colorado, where she enjoys hiking, camping, and exploring new places with her camera.

DANIELLA SFORZA was born in Buenos Aires, raised in Miami and NY, and started taking photos at age 11. After NYU she studied at the International Center of Photography in NYC and later at the Escuela Argentina de Fotografia in Buenos Aires. She is a portrait photographer with frequent incursions into landscapes.

MARVIN SHACKELFORD is author of the collection *Endless Building* (poems) and *Tall Tales from the Ladies Auxiliary* (stories, forthcoming from *Alternating Current*). His work has, or soon will have, appeared in *Kenyon Review*, *Hobart*, *Wigleaf*, and elsewhere. He resides in Southern-middle Tennessee, earning a living in agriculture.

PATRICK D. WATSON studies neuroscience and AI. His scientific publications have appeared in *Hippocampus*, *Neurocomputation*, and *Frontiers in Neuroscience*. His literary work has appeared in *The Kenyon Review Online*. He is an author of *Individual and Collective Memory Consolidation*, an interdisciplinary work exploring links between the human memory and history.



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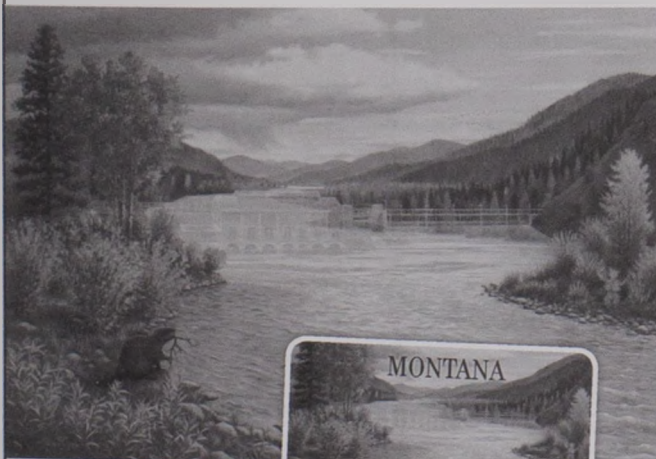
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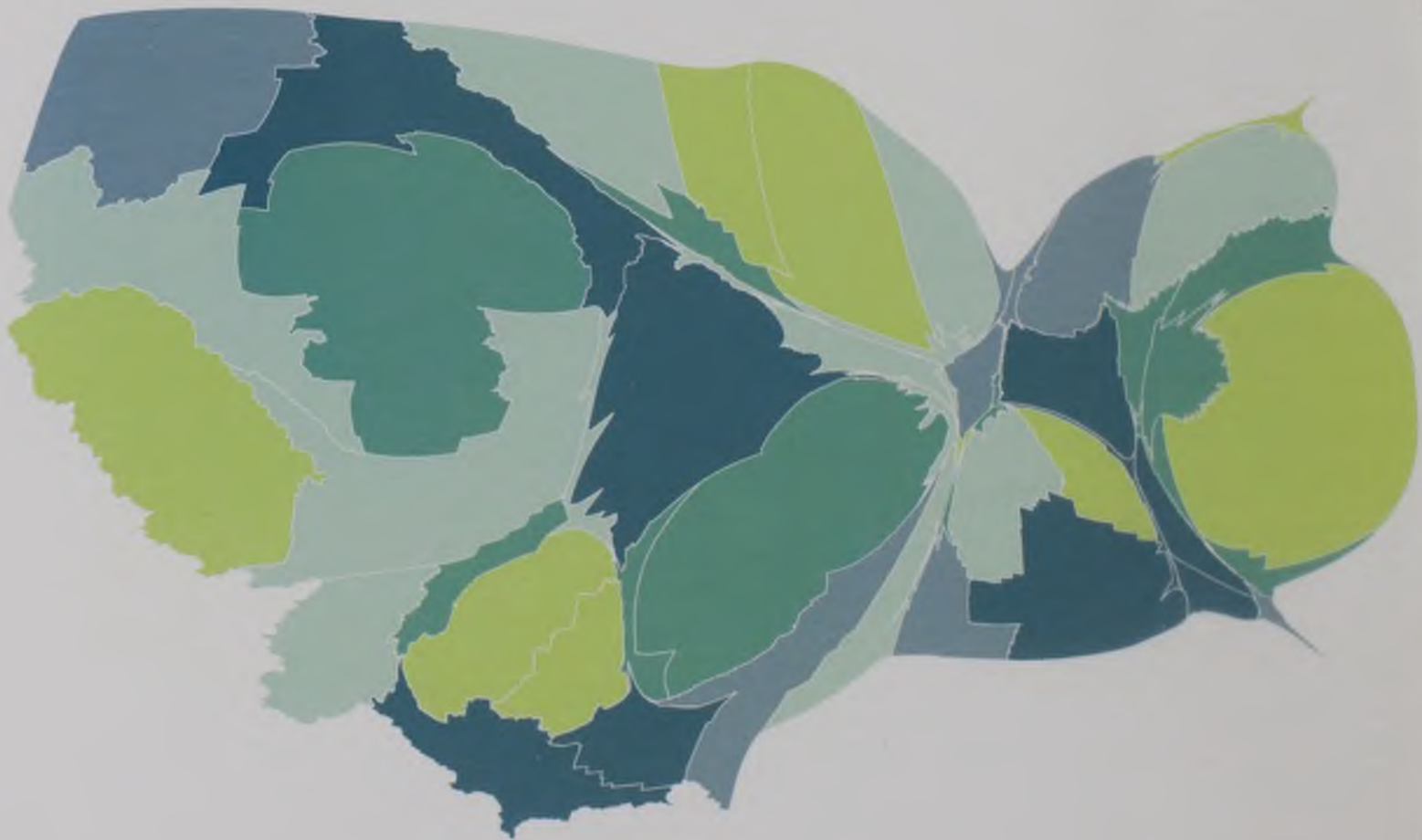
Environmental Studies Program

Jeannette Rankin Hall

Missoula, MT 59812

MST 508

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Miles of Rivers and Streams Per County



| |
|---------------------|
| 872 - 1,600 miles |
| 1,601 - 2,700 miles |
| 2,701 - 3,700 miles |
| 3,701 - 4,700 miles |
| 4,701 - 7,533 miles |

Protecting Montana Waters

Distortion depicts the density of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) inspection stations per county in Montana.

Data provided by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

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