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Anita T. Sullivan

SILENCE

Silence is not something you wait for
to arrive in a coach
shiny black from brushing between the stars.

It lies around

as the dust which dust adheres to
as the curl at the beginning of a line.

You may have ceased to remember
its power is like all the world's winds
from Now and Then
spun out and wound backwards into one pearl
inside you.

But should you face the right direction
it will start a honey drumming in your ear again
when it unfurls.

Mervin Mecklenburg

FOUR POEMS FOR GRANDFATHER

1. THE VALLEY

I'm sure that first day
his wagon bumped down the road
that he knew winter would come one
flake at a time,
covering the fence-tops.
And beneath the dull mass
of the creek, frogs. Their skin,
opening, closing, passes the slow
subterranean air
out and in as fence-rails
bend and limbs crack,
and trees slash black
across the snow.

Scattered through the swale,
empty cabins sink
into bogs of creek beds,
the orchards wild with grey branches, barns rotting
above rusted frames of harvesters
and plows. He watched them leave, pack beds
and dishes, but their names
stayed on -- Francis Place, Butler Place, Bang Tail --
more durable than wood or metal.

Others were older. I watched
as he bent once to lift
a chip of obsidian. Bright
as cracked ice, Indians brought it fifty miles,
carved it down to the shape
of flight
then left it broken.

The new owners do not own
a horse. They have traded
salt smells and warm nuzzles for gasoline.
Still, they must hear
as he heard,
through the black trees bent
under white, the roar
approaching, the chinook
crashing through as ice
cracks from every branch.

2. THE FLOWERING OF GRANDFATHER'S HEART

Hospital doors have the same grey
as Grandfather. His face, reflected
in the room's chrome corner
is split. He has departed inward --
there the grass that nourished
his sheep stiffens. With his good hand
he points to the land
cradling the creek, the willows
beside the creek.
He places his foot
on a stone that again
blooms from the ground.

3. GATHERING THE STRAYS TOGETHER

-Photo taken in Clyde Park, Montana,
circa 1919.

A line of grey men in hats, they squint
from the frame, lassos coiled
over their shoulders. This is the last roundup
of the year, and they have chased steers
through coulees for days
to this stockyard of thin, faded boards.

Now that all the bawling beasts are in,
some of these men will tire of beer
and walk to their wives,
their cabins by the river.
Others will lay down on what
they most surely own, a bedroll,
and think of the next morning,
riding ponies toward home, listening
to meadowlarks and the distant huff
of the engine carrying away
the strays they just gathered,
over black, tarred bridges,
down greasy rails to the auction block.
Stiff in this picture, the men can no longer
unsmile themselves though
the meadows where they slept are plowed up,
even the rails ripped from the ground.

4. GRANDFATHER'S COAT

Sometimes through the crack
of my closet door, I see
your shoulders
as if, while I sleep,
you stand watching.
Last week, when snow bent
the blackberries to the ground
and the only heat to be had
was next to the body, I was warm
with your shape wrapped around me.

Joan Edwards

A YELLOW ROSE

is morning breaking over the breakfast table,
butter licked from a child's finger,
morning air before the window is closed,
blossom on my mother's casket sealed

like memories of my childhood only heard about:
mornings blurred by aching knees,
touches gentle as a tongue sealing a letter,
and in the air, liniment, pity.

I don't remember, even when old enough
to remember, ever being jammied, hugged
and settled into bed with a tickle or story.
But it's the hugs, I miss knowing if there were hugs.

I have one picture, a frame from a home movie,
my father pulling me into his lap. I laugh
at the visible moment, wonder about his comfort;
there were braces on my legs.

When my father lay dying, he could not hug me.
The hospital bed was not built to be lowered
and I was unable to climb the step.
I relive the home movie.

But now, years later, memory opens
with the yellow rose: Mother's arms around me
as she prepares to die, giving me the flower
that embodies morning's embrace.

Joan Edwards

EPIPHANY

I spot the brightest star this January evening--the 6th to be exact--outside the hospital. Inside, my shadow leads me along the walls to Mother's bedside. Nothing but mucous gurgling greets me. Mother communicates with notes or with her hands.

I smooth the sheets, frightened by her hands and fingers chilled as if by January's blazing cold. I'm stabbed by memory: Mother in mink, her suitcase packed. I recall exactly the railroad tracks, her goodbye waves. At bedside, once again I fear a long, shadowy

departure. I shake off those distant shadows, reassured by clinging, warmer hands, hands that question. Standing at her bedside I silence my questions. It's January. Will she survive till March 14, to be exact? to wrestle 79? Will you, Mother?

Are you dying? Amazing me, my mother smiles despite her punctured throat shadowed by scars enveloping her mouth, exacted by cancer's prow. Gurgles deepen. Her hands plead for help. This holy January day, replete with prayers, beside her bed

I tremble, afraid, inexpert at bedside nursing, unlike Jan who met our mother's needs while she was able. This January I reach for the solution though shadows worry my face, paralyze my hands. Panicked I ring for the nurse. She exacts

cooperation, practiced in exact procedures; her voice, tissue-soft at bedside. Tranquilized once more by skillful hands and waving her final goodbye, Mother sinks into her pillow, to sleep. But shadows beckon like the Star of January.

On January 6, at 7:00 exactly, I, my shadow with me at her bedside, watch Mother slip beyond the grasp of hands.

Virginia Corrie-Cozart

THE ESTATE OF MISS CORRIE

I open the door at 9:00
for strangers whose marauding eyes
adjust for a mean desire.
At first the small things go --
an ivory caribou,
gift from a beau,
a fan from The Golden Rule,
out of business since 1945,
her tatting shuttle.

A naked display,
chemises, white leather gloves,
drawers ransacked for doilies,
souvenir towels from The Commodore,
a complete set of Royal Doulton.

Women, never invited for tea,
climb the curving staircase
to the bedrooms,
a footprint on each polished step.
Her camphor box of love letters
is emptied onto the bed.
"Went to a shindig over to Belgrade,
sure was lonesome without you."
A 3-cent stamp carried it
from Montana to Oregon.
The bed itself is knocked apart,
Circassian walnut headboard
gouged by the night latch.
The matching chiffonier goes later.

Good sale, says the auctioneer,
lifting up the summer dresses
embroidered in the Philippines.
His smoldering Camel threatens
the oak mantel,
abuses the potpourri.
The missing Axminster shows
that for all these years
the floor beneath was unfinished.

I search for something white,
clear for remembrance,
a prism overlooked from a window shade,
a linen pillowcase to tend her dream
of a well-bred gentleman of wit
who would show her every kindness.

Celia Piehl

NEARING EIGHTY

This is not her day to hold court
from her bed in the nursing home.
Instead, the regal lady implores me
to cradle her hands, whimpering,

"They say, I don't try."
I cover restless hands with mine
as she bends close to watch
like a child fascinated

by little moving things.
I decide her hands are like children
who crawl into small, dark spaces
to feel safe.

Tom Crawford

AZURE

Dear Sarah, today I put on your father's socks, the blue ones you brought back from Tennessee after he died, not necessarily to remind us we would too. He was tired, that's all. Bill, my step-father, who I've told you about, smoked two packs of Camels a day and left behind his railroad watch. An old goldplated Hamilton which, before she died, my mother handed to me. "Carry it son," she said, "Bill would want that." Hazel, my sick Rhode Island Red, sailed off last night under the towel I put over her, it was so cold. She didn't tell me what to do with the nine brown eggs she left behind. What are we to do? The monks at Guadalupe face each other every day and sing the same song, Lord have mercy. It's like the rain, unlooked for, streaking the window right now, and we need it. Me, I cry about almost everything: light through the glass doors, my old cat with half his teeth gone, the smell of geraniums. In the other room Ella Fitzgerald is singing "Azure." I've turned it up so you can hear it too, wherever you are. Sarah, sing with me.

Tom Crawford

PRAYER

The best prayer is small, its eyes closed.
In odor it resembles nutmeg.

If it can fly at all it's like the blackbird
going out a few feet, then back
to the bulrush.

The trades have prayers: for a roofer
a square of 3-tab means three bundles
weighing 80 pounds each, carried up
the long ladder, one at a time. It's dirty work.
Mostly you hear the grunts, the huffing
and Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to have a prayer life?
Hard to generalize. Sun. Water. Dirt--all gifts.
(Some people do.)

The poor are more disposed to prayer. It's a train
they want to catch.
Lots of bright, comfortable seats.
A view toward the blue mountains.
The food hot.

But it's not very pretty to see
the prayer up close,
the pale face pulled forward
and down. Affliction, the oldest painting,
untoward, red.

Howard W. Robertson

THE PROFOUND TENT

everything is profound is what
Susan says the third night we're
there at Tahkenitch around the
campfire after Eleanor has gotten
sleepy and crawled into her new
red sleeping bag in our old large
tent and after three days without
bathing I know I'm essentially
more than ready and authentically
good and ripe for a profound shower
but the stars are so immaculately
and constantly bright overhead
in the clean black sky with no
moon and with the clouds streaming
past them before the enormous wind
from the ferocity of which we are
sheltered by this sheer wooded
hill isolating our tiny campsite
from the dunes and the beach and
the incomprehensibly vast and dark
ocean beyond,

and Susan has stopped roasting
the marshmallows and apple chunks
and hot dogs and Fun Fruit candies
and Ritz crackers and whatever
else she could get her hands on
and she stares into the campfire
and says that's profound too and

I look around at the enclosing walls of huckleberry and salal and myriad other species of flora woven into what surrounds us in the flickering light and it seems profound to me and then she looks at the empty raspberry New York Seltzer bottles and says maybe pop bottles aren't profound, so maybe not everything is, and then she looks at the tent where her sister is and points to it with half-outstretched arm and says decisively that the tent now the tent that's definitely something that's profound;

soon after that she kisses me good night and crawls into the tent to sleep beside Eleanor and I'm left in solitude with the primordial starlight which never fails to drive my little thoughts as the wind the enormous low clouds and I recognize Draco and Hercules and Cassiopeia and wonder at how chaotically fast the clouds are now being driven by the primeval wind from which we are protected and at the fabulous shapes into which the clouds change and change and keep changing without cease or predictability and I remember

our hike on the dunes this afternoon with the wind lashing the sand up four feet high which is unfortunately about where Eleanor's face is but Susan and I loved it the natural violence and elemental power of it and Susan had written the day before to her mom now in Hawaii the one-page letter mostly telling her mom about Devil's Punch Bowl and Devil's Churn and Devil's Elbow and Devil's Lake and about how there's sure a lot of devils on the Oregon Coast,

and it's kind of funny how buying the girls new school clothes and taking them on a six-day summer vacation at the coast makes them feel so pampered and thankful especially Eleanor who is such a grateful child anyway and it's strange and wonderful how now suddenly they're going to be with me the whole coming school year and it's also kind of strange and profoundly fantastic that now Sarah is talking as if she wants me to come visit her on Kauai and as if we're partners in parenting and as if maybe just maybe she secretly, hintingly wishes we could get back together when we've been such bitter enemies since the divorce and have fought

so fiercely over our daughters
and it's wondrous how quickly the
violent gusts of worry passed me
utterly by after the lump in Susan's
young breast proved to be benign
last week when the test results
came back and it also seems kind
of funny to me and even a trifle
embarrassing how fundamentally
pleasurable even ecstatic is the
thought of a slow long very warm
shower and a luxury room with a
view in Cannon Beach where we'll
be the next three days yet it truly
is divine now how strangely at
home I feel in the whole violent,
vast, savage, and exquisite universe
as I crawl into the tent to sleep
in the dreamless profundity my
loving and deeply beloved and serenely
dreaming daughters have caused
to dwell there.

Stephanie Van Horn

IN WINTER

1.

Crucibles of flooded fields--leaden.
And where the metal flows, a silver river.
Pewter mist rising light as a dream,
And gilt cobwebs bound to fruit tree branches.
It is my conceit to be
Sole prospector of winter mornings.

2.

I have left pitch
 From the fir logs
 In the black woodstove
On the pages of the poems I write.

3.

Outside this winter clearing,
Mid-morning fogs
Climb down the ridge.
The screen door slams
And deer rise soundlessly
On puppet strings,
And like the cabin smoke
Float toward the woods.

Ken Zimmerman

WOODSTOVE

I lay more wood on your fire, my only source
of winter warmth. Who am I to speak
to you, who cannot speak? I love the creak
of your stovepipe swelling, the snap of sappy heartwood
in your belly. Whatever I feed you, you eat,
passing back the ashes that I scatter on the garden.
Yes, you are worth the small burns on my hands,
trying to angle in a log cut too big, dark
creosote stains on your sheetmetal, hardening,
while the smell of smoke fills the house. Friend,
I need you even in my sleep, because you know
what I have always hoped to know, although
you sometimes sound half demon, half force
of nature, all wind rush and angry roar, still
you hold the blaze and give off a powerful heat.

BENEDICTION

I'm stupefied by this clear light slanting into the kitchen,
shadows from the window sill against the wall:
copper teapot, vinegar jar, and cheese grater
reduced to outline, pure form, elongated and distorted
by the angle of the sun.

The season is winter:
magic spells to sour the milk, the window
catching fire with sunset, smear of orange
across the pine trees, a painted sky soaked
in roses, snow-blue at the horizon,
a long line of white clouds washing in.
I think this must be my last time driving
up the dirt road to the house this year.
From now on I'll track mud in on my boots,
listen to the beaver bogs beautifully filling with silt.

Barbara Drake

I AM LETTING THE SHEEP OUT

I am letting the sheep out. They stand
behind the battered door
in their August wool, six months growth
of it, to go to pasture.

Training the dogs I tell them,
let's go put the sheep out.
The dogs run with more energy than this
small flock warrants. The sheep
would let themselves out, given a chance.
All morning they browse the pasture
like millers' daughters,
turning grass into wool, lounge
in the shade of the oaks at midday
till the sky cools,
and then go back to mouthing
wild oats, the vetch drying, sixteen
kinds of grass I counted in the spring.

Sheep, you bear the weight of so much body,
like great loaves, wool
more comforting than any other fibre,
feet small, knees knocked a little, daintily.
I never knew sheep had front teeth on the bottom only
grinding against the tough, top plate,
wondrous machines of animal dentistry.
And their breath, like a vat of
green beer working up from those four stomachs,
a gas of eternal process.
That breath startles me with what a sheep is.

Putting them away at night
I call the dogs again, clapping to make Mollie brave
in the face of the old ewe
who can take even the young ram against the wall
of the barn like a basketball pounded again and again
and could tackle Mollie too.
They are greedy for cracked corn and wheat
from the basins, their bedtime snack,
so they're easy.
Easy to be popular with sheep--it takes
just this pan of grain to rattle, then
watch your feet.
Toffee and Why, old matrons, ewes.
Aurora and Amity, ewe lambs.
Ajax, little black ram, ram lamb,
on account of them,
at forty-nine I am,
without billowing skirt,
without bonnet or curl
of porcelain or dainty crook,
I am, incredible, a shepherdess.

Barbara Drake

NEAR FRENCHGLEN

In early October, near Frenchglen,
the whistling swans maneuver in pairs
on the ponds and lakes of Harney county.
We get there late, this year, for cranes.
Day before, over a thousand sandhill cranes
left for California, their winter grounds.
Hunters shoot them in season. Not here,
but in California.

Sandhill cranes mate for life, as do the swans.

Life for a crane
may mean fifty years or more.
Cranes, "the color of ash or wet sand,"
with red-capped heads.
They go along, eight years or so,
migrations, transmigrations, feeding,
jostling, flocking, stalking the small
frogs and other items of their menu,
without so much as laying an egg.
Then, all of a sudden, comes the
trumpeting call.
Love, the rhythmic dance, takes them.

Love.
Smack of two halves joining,
if only cranes. If only?
What am I saying? Amazing cranes.
To mate for life, taking that grand
implacable risk of being incomplete
without the other
in a world that shoots cranes.

Vincent Wixon

FAR FROM WATER

The summer my brother and I took lessons
at the Tracy pool we never got in
but shivered on the side crying,
skimpy towels over our shoulders,
blue-white bodies with farmer tans,
while brown town kids
floated and dogpaddled
into power boats and cabins
lining Lake Shetek fifteen miles away.

My brother finally learned in the Navy
when they threw him in. Once
at a motel pool to please his children
I dived off the board
and went down twice before
he realized I wasn't kidding.

I still can't swim,
though I've promised two wives.
"Swimming isn't a sport," they say.
"It's a life skill. Someday you'll need it."

When I walk into water
and it works up my chest
I stand on tiptoes,
at the edge of a field
watching waves of corn
far from water.

Vincent Wixon

HINDSIGHT

To say you didn't ever love
your first wife is a sacrilege
calling you and those feelings
long ago into question.

There were reasons you went
with her, married, had children,
stayed nearly ten years. Good reasons.

At the time who's to say
what you needed, or thought
you needed. Not even you.

Now you can't believe you
ignored the signs--stinginess,
outbursts. You thought
by marrying her you became serious
about life instead of simply losing
your sense of humor.

Now that you've regained it,
your jokes about her
don't show you got what
you wanted--like the columnists
say about the presidents we elect.

I don't believe them either.
But do we have more control
over selecting wives? One thing
leads to another and soon
you have a license to err.

You have to say, though, looking
back after a couple of drinks
that without her you wouldn't be
what you are today, and you're
sure you know what that is.

Joan Dobbie

BILL IS A HUNTER & AN OUTDOORSMAN

& he likes good red meat
on the table but he'll never
raise a butcher pig again he says
because it's too close it's too damn
close he says telling about the time
he had this damn porker & it got so
god awfully attached to him it just
followed him around & fetched sticks
like a dog & carried wood & kept
his kids out of the road & he just
couldn't bring himself to butcher it
until that one time he went out
to the shed & there it was that damn
porker snout stuck up to the eyeballs
in a bucket of lead paint & then
he had to kill it quick before the
poison got into the meat so he got out
his gun but didn't that damn pig carry
the wood out for the butchering
& all the kids home on vacation
& god help him he will never never never
raise a butcher pig again

THE PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING PHOTO

What was a girl is now
a medium for art,
like clay, or paint.

It has to do with light
& dark, how perfectly
the fine white petals of her hair
flame out

like the unbearable white heat of fire
frozen.

Her white
naked skin is perfect against
the black

of the fireman's suit, his tender
anxious face, her open
mouth --

He is desperate to breathe
life into this body, this innocent white

flower
of a body, for whose sake
he has driven his own dark
tormented body & soul

into the heart of the fire.
But he is only a man,
and she is dead.

Joan Dobbie

THE BACK IN SCHOOL TERM PAPER

After she finally got it done
After she finally got it all done right
Mr. World leapt up on his spindly legs
Clicked his heels
Clapped his patent-leather gloves
And cheered!

And cheered!

Mrs. World, chortling, joined him
bobbing
Her grand

Oceanic

Belly
He took her in his arms
Swung her 'round

and 'round

Gleefully

Gleefully

Somewhere in the vast
Emerald sea
Two hundred and 51 infant whales
Of several different species
Emerged from their mothers' wombs
Nearly a thousand bottle-nosed dolphins
Rose in unison

And dove!

While over a million (at least)
Grizzly sharks
Polished their teeth
--took to grazing on seaweed--
(Sea anemones swayed the hula and)

High in the heavens
Nine generally innocuous planets
Danced the cha-cha-munga
Billions and zillions of giant
Unnamed stars flared grandly and whitely
Singing as one in glorious harmonic
Soprano and

down on dry land

In a small yellow room
In a cottage on 25th Street
A thin little girl
No older than seventh grade
Pulled a sheet of paper
Out of the typewriter
Stood up
Turned 41
And made herself a cup of coffee

Nancy i. Forsberg

THE PRECIPITOUS SLIDE
A father's talk with his daughter

Outside, wind moves thorny bands
of yellow gorse.
Inside, my father sits on my couch
and tells me about my grandmother.

"She heard the banshee wail,
she heard its howl
as it claimed her mother's soul,"
he says.

I turn inward and vision the banshee
pulling a white, linen cloth
from under crystal and silver,
without a spill or a tilt . . .
. . . my great-grandmother's soul
whipped out of her body,
riding the wind currents,
trailing in the grip of the banshee's
talons,
like a long, white dress
on the clothesline.

I'm forty-one now, and still I ask
as if he'd know.
But where did the banshee take her?

He avoids my eyes,
makes it seem ludicrous that I'd ask.
He doesn't know.

He does, though, feel the winds
rushing past his ears,
the years
pushing past his heart . . .
the precipitous slide.

The road he steps down
slides into the future.
He has become a small dot
at the point where earth and sky convene
and I can barely see him anymore.

Clem Starck

CHRYSANTHEMUMS

Yellow and orange, so heavy with rain
they have to be tied in bunches and fastened
by baling twine
to the side of the shed. And mistletoe,
dark knots of it visible now
high in the bare oaks. Underfoot,
a mattress of soggy leaves.

On my birthday I get up early,
stirred by a vague excitement.
"It's snowing!" I overhear the children exclaim.
First snow of the year.

Approaching fifty a man starts
counting backwards.
After driving the kids to school
in town I stop for gas. While Stu fixes
the loose windshield wiper
we touch on lung cancer, carburetor trouble,
this thing and that.

PRACTISING ARCHERY

Mist in the firs. Moss on the oaks.
The weather, this time of year, is impossible.
Snow on the mountains - no,
those are clouds!

Two little Chinamen, kneeling,
one is in brick-colored pajamas, the other
in charcoal-colored pajamas, each
drawing a bow . . .

What's this all about,
the young Buddha practising archery?

Everywhere dark firs
stick straight up
through lighter moss-green oaks. White
patches of mist float down the hillsides
from higher elevations.
Oregon is not so far from China.

The archers kneel, their bows pulled taut.
Their aim is true. There are no arrows
fitted to the string.
There is little, really, to worry about,
but I still do.

JOURNEY OF POET AND BOOK: MAXINE SCATES,
TOLUCA STREET

"I tried everybody," says Maxine Scates, whose book of poetry, Toluca Street, was published last year by University of Pittsburgh Press. An early version of the book received attention as a finalist in another university press screening. That was in 1982. Between then and 1988, Maxine Scates sent out the manuscript ten to twelve times a year, simultaneously to university and small presses, to first book competitions and established poetry series. She was a finalist more than once. Sometimes she did not know what being a finalist meant, interpreting her chances from messages such as, "You're one of two finalists" followed the next year from the same competition by "You're one of three finalists". Beginning in 1983, Pittsburgh began to respond positively and for the last three years she knew where she stood in its contest. Maxine Scates won the 1988 Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize. Pittsburgh's editor Ed Ochester reflected her own thoughts: "It's been a long time, hasn't it?"

Fresh from her University of Oregon MFA, 1975, Scates was placing her work in small magazines. She sent out poems, expecting little, yet had some encouraging acceptances. Then she took chances with better-known periodicals, succeeding again. Now she can describe that work as "post-MFA poems, the kind written for literary magazines. I was only beginning to deal with memory or the specifics of my experience". Such poems were chosen for a chapbook in 1980-81, but the publisher failed and they were never carried over to Toluca Street, which contains almost nothing from her MFA work. "I think it was a little early," Scates observes about her first hopes for a book. Yet, urged by her teacher, she submitted a manuscript in 1980.

Six months in Europe marked a turning point. Until 1982, her life had been lived in Los Angeles and Eugene. She

had kept them apart, "leaving Los Angeles and assuming you left your life behind". But the break from Eugene, Scates says, "put me in close touch with my childhood." She found her Los Angeles experience and began to explore it. Now Scates can describe her writing as a journey: "Writing generates change in my life. Even when I think I know the subject, writing about it helps me find something I didn't know."

Maxine Scates had fully discovered her subjects and methods. It would be a book of memory of her working-class Catholic family, not an Oregon book. And it would be both documentary and visionary. Her European sabbatical joined her to her past so she could see and later say:

So much is unrealized,
the distances between all of us
are filled with the bodies of memory,
our past where nothing changes
except for the way it comes into the present,
and here everything happens again and again.

She began telling herself what she told her writing students:

I teach. I tell the kids
don't censor, let the self out you didn't
know you had.

This advice helps counter the tendency not to welcome voices from the past:

Our lives are not ordered
but barely sensible,
and when these moments speak to us
we do not want them
we will not hear them--though
they are what we have always known--
those small birds twittering

against a wall
made of nothing
but what we are trying to forget
because we wish it were not so.

The poet of Toluca Street identifies with her father, both attempting, she recognizes, to interpret family pain:

. . . . I understand that even grown
you and I were still children
who stood watching,
humming a song
that froze the world in the shape of our own grief.

Or in a poem called "The Journey" she listens to someone playing the saxophone:

The player is sad.
I can hear the sad notes
but the player plays right through the sadness.
The sadness becomes something.

The poet discovers what she must make, and that involves what she must become. In "Atlas" the huge pages lie open, "as if the world had spread its secrets/benign and tactile." The book urges her to remake herself and be remade:

There, at the table,
it was close to me again,
unresolved,
the years that have to die before us
or they become our own death,
have to die before they have a chance
to make us love them, listen
to what they have to say,
old anger, for parents, lost love, loss.

In 1982, Maxine Scates began sending out versions of Toluca Street, which by 1985 had its title and many of its poems, though these would be revised through 1988. In this period, Scates added several poems a year and worked toward clearer thematic focus. About half of her magazine publications were included. At one point, determined to declare the book finished, she started another collection. Yet poems from this manuscript moved into the book in progress.

Throughout, Scates acted to overcome the poet's isolation and single perspective. Three poets whom she respected read her poems, as well as one or two close friends who do not write poetry. She read publicly and published in magazines. She used her experience as an editor of The Northwest Review to select poems best representing her themes.

"At some level, it's about persistence," getting a book published. But the business of getting it published, Scates stresses, is separate from writing. "Sometimes it was difficult to keep them separate, yet a book is about an inner journey. It's not about slapping a bunch of poems together that don't complete a journey."

"I feel like I did what I wanted to do. Sure, I was frustrated by not getting it published. The idea that I was not getting a book published weighed on my writing. It slowed me. Maybe there are other writers who give up because this part becomes a burden. It can be an embittering process. You think the book is finished. You would like this out there. But it's not happening."

Looking back, Maxine Scates can recognize that "publication superimposes closure" not necessarily in step with the writer's sense of closure. Delaying publication can also keep the poet off balance. Yet she counts herself among the lucky, as she points out, because there are so

many good poets whose work doesn't find its way to publication for so many inequitable reasons, for reasons of race or class or gender or where they live or who they know or the time they don't have, which she did have.

What about the next book? Pittsburgh is interested in seeing it. Will it be something new? "I don't believe in new directions. It's all one. One poem follows another. The writing of the first book gives me skills to do other things, but it is not closed. I will always be there, in my experience, where I come from."

E.M.

Note: All poetry quotations are from Toluca Street, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989. Other quotes are from a meeting with Maxine Scates, December 21, 1989, Eugene.

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

We've made some proofreading errors in the first issue; we apologize especially to the poets whose poems we marred. Alice Marie Evans' poem should read "pounded my windshield." They're "black-legged kittiwakes" in Chip Goodrich's poem. And the close of Clem Starck's poem should look like this:

I honor the man who taught me
the soul is a house
and you build it,
 joining the wood,
driving the nails home.

We, too, want to build our magazine with such care.

* *

Although many of you subscribe, some bookstores stock Fireweed. In Portland, Conant & Conant and The Catbird's Seat. In Salem, Jackson's Books. In Eugene, Beginnings and The Hungry Head. Ask for Fireweed at your public library, and ask them to subscribe if they haven't already!

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CLEM STARCK drives from home in Dallas to work in Corvallis, where he is a carpenter for OSU. Clem, who has read for the Vancouver Industrial Writers' Union, is interested in the connection between poetry and work.

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