

FIREWEED

POETRY OF WESTERN OREGON

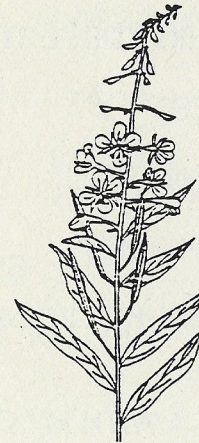


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NUMBER ONE

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FIREWEED: POETRY OF WESTERN OREGON is published quarterly in October, January, April and July. FIREWEED publishes poets living in the western half of Oregon, though poems need not be regional in subject. Manuscripts should include a return envelope and material for a contributor's note. Inquiries about submission of reviews or essays are welcome. Subscriptions are \$10 for four issues. All contents copyrighted 1990 by FIREWEED, 1330 E. 25th Ave., Eugene, OR. 97403.

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Lex Runciman

LETTER TO OURSELVES FROM PLACID

Cracked, useless as an old Timex,
the Nikon rests at home in its parts
in the drawer with lock washers and unmatched bolts.
Like Marconi, Carrie Nation, and the invention of soup,
all travel assumes the unreality of history.
And the sun fills us with a languorous desire.
Therefore we chill drinks, imagine paper,
a letter to ourselves returned,
strangers amid extraordinary laundry.

Here, out there, mergansers.
Their neon crowns are sexual displays.
Placid Lake fills a bowl a blue mile across
half full, sides bristly with larch
a green entirely their own.
To imagine the cabin, say cabin, screendoor.
A propane icebox hums its cargo of beer.
Here is here, palpable as lunch.
We're obscure, loose, ratty, uncouth, smug.

We are not opening envelopes.
We are not sorting bills or the bulk mail
samples of liquid detergent and cologne.
And we have no pictures.
Cattle blur on the far shore.
We have used all our fingers to count deer.
Two of them cool up to their withers in lake water.
Today we are going nowhere. We can tell
each other almost anything.

Lex Runciman

NO PICTURES

No portraits, no wild iris
white and mottled tongues, no
blue camas, and none of us

after supper past the dead end of our street
where off-road vehicle ruts
clog with grasses, low clover, weeds,

where something on not tall stems
crowns deeply and beguilingly purple, multiple
and purple, like something beautifully sweet.

The dog has raised his leg and moved on
down the trail he smells Jane has taken,
though he cannot see her. She

is seven, lanky, and the wild grains
shimmer higher than her hair.
She's burrowing, walking a tunnel

with edges that every once in awhile kiss
her cheeks. She uses those words.
One book Beth reads says savannah:

Uplands, south-facing, once burned by Indians
for berries (which we have found
swollen the size of thumbs).

But daisies stopped us that evening--two or three
acres of wild surface above surface, one
undulant, one solid, one praising the other.

But none of that either. No Easter, no ballet,
no birthday, no family gathered by Grandma's
ailing fence. Sorry, the clerk looks at the girls,

not at me. No pictures at all--bad film.
Silence. They look at each other. Oh,
oh well. I don't care.

The door's bell is tinny with commerce.
The two of them run ahead, cross the asphalt lot.
They open a door, stop, and look back.

They're talking with each other, waiting,
and in that one moment before the wind
kicks up between us, before it scatters litter

and teases their hair, which they tuck away,
I see them. They are older,
they are themselves without regret.

And they're waving--they want me to hurry.
So whatever emotion this is,
it must be over before I reach the car.

Lex Runciman

PASTURE

Every day home this summer
we have driven past roan
and chestnut horses which seem
to have nothing to do but crop grass.
Even standing, heads down, they are
beautiful, unconsciously, and then
especially when they run--
the muscles at their shoulders bunching
and stretching out in a four part
harmony that is almost musical.
Maybe three acres of pasture they eat
and scatter with what they have eaten.
And we pass them to and from
the store, the dentist, the office.
They walk around, smell the air.
They nuzzle up into the apple tree
once the apples swell enough
to hang low enough. But they
never work, work being one kind
of love. They walk around
healthy, unsaddled, and aimless.
They graze a line inches past the fence.
They wait not knowing what for
with a domestic patience that
begins the summer as virtue
and ends it as reproach.

Joan Maiers

WAITING FOR THE CROSSING

A girl waves by
southern pacific passenger cars,
box cars, cattle pens on wheels,
engineers. Smiling men
semaphore in red cabooses along tracks
phlegm-hawked with agates.
Tungsten ore flashes up white
signals among gravel.
Walking south to the trestle
she dares the cab to run her over.
No escape but sheer fall.
Flickers of horsetail
spike the tracks, the stones.
The train bears
down upon wood shavings
pungent from the city's
sawdust burners.
All this the girl waves by.

Nancy i. Forsberg

OREGON HIGH DESERT

From the coast I drive hours full of solitude.
After climbing thousands of feet,
just when I think I've missed it somehow,
it slides under my car and surrounds it.
The road turns to red dirt, I can see it
lazing its way forward
where it drops off the edge
where the sky is cobalt and lemon.

This is not a place to think of cherries and neon.
No, I think:
saffron sand
and beetles with double wings
and nets on their antennae.
Here I can lean against the heat
and it will hold me up,
like the wind does at home.

A coyote crosses the road; I stop, he doesn't,
just looks over his bony shoulder,
his eye long and yellow
and cold as a caution light.

That night I lie under two sleeping bags
hoping the coyote will return.
It's like trying to sleep in the planetarium,
only the great inverted bowl is raining light on me.
The wind comes blowing in from Asia and the moon,
it's so cold I am forced to sleep in the car.

In the morning I wake stiff, but build a fire,
eat and drink coffee.
If I were to flick my finger against the air
I know it would sing like a crystal glass.
My day is spent climbing the walls of rock,
watching the violet sparrows glint on the sky.

The colors at sundown are subtle,
I must make an effort to see them:
Plum and rose, curry and cinnamon,
a green as faint and hopeful as breath.

Tim Barnes

GOING WEST

If you went west
of your room and chair,
walked out the door
into the field far
enough, followed the creek
that winds the canyon
to the trail worn
by deer and cow, turned
where the marsh hawk
spun the branches grey
between two fir,
you would lose
the fences to the wild
flowers grappling with grass,
west would go north
and north would leave
its moss in flight
for seasons somewhere else.

Your legs would move
in strides come strange
from where your window
opens any way through
trees.

Twigs and clouds spill
the light no matter what
it sends out where hills
pour in wind scattering
the air.

Sky says the sun falls
and east is where the dusk
burns ruts your fathers made
to shadows in the dirt.
Brightness drops the way
the sun finds you fences
of spruce and cedar rolling
out to Idaho, the Klamath,
all the places seeds know
as the center of a wind
weather breathes just
to raise a branch
a wren will seize.

Marty Brown

AN OREGON TRAIL

I.

I measured it carefully,
the distance
held between us like a rope
in our quiet tug of war.
It was raining on the day
we both let go.
I wondered how it must have sounded,
that drumming harvest of rain
on a tin roof west of Olathe,
as you huddled in the barn
among the flats of green tomatoes
and your father blew
his brains out in the ruined field
with the gun you used for hunting
possums after school.
I thought it was the rain
that frightened you.

The moon followed us everywhere
as we drove out of Westport,
past the brick arcades and bars
and the ghosts of those who came and went
no farther, stopping where the Kaw
and the Missouri ran together.
We drove for those who built
the city at the gaping trail head,
whose souls were now entombed
in restaurants, each with a slab
of sidewalk for a headstone.

You were the earth under me
and you dared me to travel
your distance,
past every failed tomato farm,
every cornfield and cowtown.
I would mine the salt from your eyes.
I would memorize the road map
of your palms.

II.

We showered at the truck stop in Cheyenne,
where the cinnamon rolls were as big as hub caps
and the coffee had the flavor of burnt tires.
Hours before daylight we ran out of gas
ninety miles outside of Butte, made love in the back
until morning came and my legs were cramped.
In Seattle we rented a room and bought a frying pan.
I wrote six hundred poems about the slope of your back
and you fried eggs at the Hilton
until the rains began. It was always the rain
that changed things.

Because I was almost twenty
and because you were my fate,
I went to live with you
in the strange country of L.A.
I read my poems in empty coffee houses
and you began my portrait,
bent over the kitchen table.
Every day for eighteen months
you changed the color of my eyes,
layering my face until I was
somebody you wanted
to hang on the wall.

On the first day of October
I stood at the bus stop,
wearing white huaraches.
The palm trees were swaying
and the light posts were doing bends
and I dodged a falling billboard,
but there wasn't any wind.
No wind at all.

Later that day it began to rain
and I dared you to travel
my distance,
but the earth under me
had shifted
and the ruts of our lives
were chasms.

III.

I am in Oregon and I intend to stay.
I will settle along the freeway
and harvest the stinging rain.
I will plant myself like a marker
for everyone to read.
This is the end of the trail.
The real frontier is what aches between us,
but I am too tired to tame it now.
The journey here has broken me
and I can't stop the rain from falling
on a tin roof somewhere
in Kansas.

MAKING THE BED

There's cat shit in your bed, but
it's better than that jerk you lived with
in the trailer park outside
of town, but that was way back
when you worked the daffodil fields
and things have changed
since then. Now you rent your own
double wide three traffic lights
away from the grocery store
and you snip the feet off chickens
for a living and now you've got shit
in your bed instead. You've got
nine cats and not one of them loves you
any more than that jerk you lived with
in the tract house outside
of town, but that was way back
when you worked the cannery
and you've changed the sheets a hundred times
since then. It only seems that yellow lights
last longer in small towns and
you're never sure whether to
speed up or slow down so you stop,
you go, you rent your own
double wide three traffic lights
away from the grocery store
on the old road out
of town.

Marty Brown

A SUPERMARKET IN CALIFORNIA REVISITED

What thoughts I have of you tonight,
Allen Ginsberg,
for I am lost between the kiwi fruits
and imitation crab meat
as I drag an empty cart
past tenuous pyramids of cans.
There is a lone cashier, and me,
and you, down by the freezers,
smiling at the smooth-faced boys
who stock the frozen foods.

It's 3 a.m. The families are at home,
asleep in garden beds, the blue cars
cemented in the driveways, and this,
Allen Ginsberg,
is the America of dreams.
Supermarkets never close
and we can stroll all night
down the wide and vacant aisles,
through rows of flavored seltzers,
buying nothing, sampling the black
and bottled waters of Lethe.

Daryl Ackley

IN AMERICA WITH MY CHILDREN

Jumped it, jumped it past
lost dreams, lost another heart,
lost another campfire to the
first fall rain.
Danced under
kerosene lamplight, danced
to the roll of thunder.
Shooed boredom,
shooed thought of you.
Lost it in talk, finally
of our other lives & heaven.
And cowboys & indians.

Shelley C. Reece

BRACHIOPODS

Alive with secrets
and smaller than a Madeleine
these gray and gold fossils
have mouths of grooved stone
to tell their memories if I can wait

) to hear how an ancient
inland sea changed
and heat hardened
even water
into desert rock.

Michael Ishii

CHEMAWA CEMETERY

They deserved no names, the ones who died,
a single cross above the gate to redeem them all.
Part of the fence missing, the other part overrun
with nettles and bad language, lies the trees
constantly sing. Christmas trees, acres of them
untouched in the field nearby. The day -- rainclouds,
the ritual of trains passing, the conductor leaning out
to signal to the trees, *We are gone again.*

These graves have no headstones, not even wood markers
or small tablets. The grass is bleached white in summer
and made mud in the rain. No one will say what happened:
two, nameless, climbed over the rusted gate one night
to take those people's souls. Murderers' bodies
lie close to the earth. The caskets were unopened,
ditches undug, only gravestones like garbage taken out
with the tide,
reclaimed.

They deserved no names, and none remembered.
Children take the old tires left lying nearby
and roll them home to make swings. No fishing ponds
except one a mile and a half down the tracks.
The train passes the graveyard, the hand pulls back,
the weapon
buried in the earth. People in town feel uneasy
about the sky tonight,
ripe-looking clouds, the smell of gun oil and creosote.
If the rain comes tonight, it might rain for the rest
of their lives.

Michael Ishii

IRUMAGAWA

Why does Irumagawa seem so low?
The sparse scattering of fishermen
in black trunks on the river bed
of mud and yellowed grass
reminds me of the fifteen stones
of Ryoanji temple, still and quiet.

Why does Irumagawa seem so low?
Cold December air follows us across a bridge
three times the river's width. It looks old,
weakened by age, health declining like the
Emperor's

as we near the end of an era.

The novelist Soseki described those who live
in one era as anachronisms in the next.
Think of Iruma's river run dry,
the baseball field and bicycle paths
by the stone banks where the river once ran.
An anachronism.

Reminds me of O-Daiba,
the man-made island in Tokyo Bay,
used as bomb shelters during the raids
of '45, There are holes in the ground, as if
burying places
for the thousands who died then.

The embankment is
a chaotic landscape of
hillocks, streams,
and dead-looking, twisted trees --

a Japanese garden,

a landscape in miniature.

Perhaps the bombs once fell here too, when the sky
turned dark, when the river was wider.
I watch it run while the bridge, full of sun,
forms deltas off the water,
and I sweat, though it's only morning.

Leslie Clason

TIJUANA

Crossing the Mexican border, I enter
the city, pulled into its fiesta colors
like a bee tempted inside a flower.
I am drunk on the sorrow of this place
reflected in the brown eyes of the old men
peddling silver on the sidewalk,
the little girls in white cotton dresses
selling chicklets gum.

Sounds of women slapping tortillas,
with the quick sizzle of manteca on the griddle,
lead me into the maze of the market.
Between the barrios, every open shop
flames with flowered ceramic pigs, paper
birds, and the hot shine of copper.
A man hoses down his dog
in the heat of the alley.

Suddenly, a boy tugs at my hand, pulling me
into a market stall like every other,
with the dusty smell of leather,
and the cool of onyx in shade.
"Senorita, you want to buy a blanket?"
We unfold them together in a kind of ritual,
searching for the right pattern of colors
in a stack higher than the boy's head.

Practicing my Spanish, I learn his name:
Fausto. We play the game, bartering
until he has enough profit for a cola.
I buy blankets striped the colors of fire:
yellow and orange and pink and red,
blankets for covering Tijuana's poverty,
a sickness they cannot hide after dark,
when colors do not matter.

The carnival look of Tijuana is a lie
as much as the gaunt burros painted
like zebras to amuse the tourists.
As I pass through customs with my trinkets,
the blankets, the pottery,
and red braids of peppers for hospitality,
the sun hangs heavy in the sky.
Even across the border, it is the same sun.

Douglas Spangle

MR. CHANG COMPOSES A LETTER

"From Mr. Chang,
Commander-in-Chief of the Western Regions,"
-- I've forgotten the proper heading again. . .
what is the official date? --
"In the sixteenth year of Chien-hsing:"
-- Is the Emperor still living? A dozen winters
and we've heard no news from the East. --

"We should like to request
the appointment of a new Secretary,"
-- Old Wang's narrow corpse
lying like a bundle of reeds
outside the sheepfold,
the ground frozen too fast for burial. --
"We are in need of someone fluent in Chinese."

"Otherwise we are adequately staffed."
-- Should I ask them again for fresh troops?
Outside the draped door, the two sentries are
murmuring in their barbarian tongue; one
remarks that he hopes his son has driven
the sheep and camels home from their foraging.
He has lost too many this winter. --

"The Hsiung-nu* are no longer such a plague
since they have dispatched so many of their number
farther into the West, where we understand
they are causing much death and rapine."
-- and leaving us alone: but that's a thing
I'll leave unwritten. In any event, my brush
is beginning to freeze to the ink-block. --

Mr. Chang,
Commander-in-Chief of the Western Regions,
begins to have thoughts of going home, of his wife
putting camel-dung on the smoldering hearth-fire,
strands of her yellow hair streaked with gray, curly as wool.
He sighs, pulls on his felt boot-liners,
dismisses the guards, locks the command post.
Then he plods off through the drifts
of sand-streaked snow.

* Huns

Helen Emerson

OLD WOMAN AND BUTTERFLY

I no longer skip and dance.
Between deliberate paces there is time.
I watch an orange butterfly
hover about my sleeve Am I a rock? A tree?

Catherine McGuire

SALT SHADOWS

At dinner on the coast, he spoke
of finance, reasons for productivity
while I was engrossed with salt.
The sunset cast sharp granules
of shadow beside each crystal.
Did pepper shadow? It did!
He was unimpressed.

Was this my gift, then?
To see as a lover sees every nuance,
the way October sun can glaze clematis leaves
with honeyed green, how a storm-tossed sky
explodes in coronas of glare,
Mt. Hood lithopanned by a rosy sunset.
Lover of light.

June E. Foye

HEIRLOOM

Reset,
the diamond still refuses to be mine,
its flashing still directed toward the dead.
I press the ring in place on my left hand;
appraise the mounting--modern now
and sleek. My finger stiffens,
braced against the honest light.
The counter blurs. The jeweler waits.

I must discredit logic: I believed
that prior ownership is easily shed;
the ring would bond to me.
My mother wanted that,
although she couldn't know I'd have the stone
set like a precocious child
who strains on tiptoe to be seen--
a small betrayal, I tell myself.
But, taking its own measurement, my heart
reminds me that I learned from her
to focus the kaleidoscope of time upon lost love
and let my cold skin feel remembered fire.

Squaring her third finger with the light,
she'd fasten on the ring with reaching eyes
as if she counted all the facets twice--
and hunted more, the kind that vows can cut--
as if she heard a song within the stone.

The diamond never left her finger
till the Great Depression pried it off
and pushed her into Third Street pawnshops
where she'd scrounge ten dollars--
the open sesame to Hanna's Grocery bins
of beans and macaroni--
and come shining in our door, her pride intact.
"They say the diamond's flawless," she'd report.
And satisfied, she never asked the weight,
but stretched it out herself to half a carat.
Still, feelings should weigh something,
and you have to add them in.

"It's half a carat, maybe more," I hear myself
insist. And with these words
I make the diamond mine.

June E. Foye

LIVING NEXT DOOR

We looked down separate streets
in all our thinking;
we swung on gates of opposite ideas.

She'd sweep the rain away from her back door,
while I gave dissertations on dull work
and scolded: "Come inside--the coffee's perked.
Oh, let the puddles be!"

Her broom strokes kept their firm staccato.
"My basement walls are old!" she snapped.
"They gulp the moisture."

"They're not the walls of Jericho
about to tumble down," I argued.

"You must hear trumpets in the rain."

She'd clump arthritically up my front stairs
and push at me her small excitements--
news of supermarket bargains. None could reach me;
I held books between myself and boredom.

How I tried to hook her interest
in The Old Man and the Sea,
relating that he prayed with fervor
for the huge fish on his line to die.

"He prayed for that?" her shocked words came,
each one a separate hurting. "I'm going home.
My fishpond's frozen; I must break the ice
and let my goldfish breathe."

We looked down separate streets--
and into different skies.

When summer stood on tiptoe, warming stars,
I pointed to the Swan.

"There's Cygnus, feathers all on fire.

No black hole will swallow him tonight."

"Black hole?" (She eased away from riddles.)

"Reminds me of a Minnesota cave--

Grandfather found its darkness kind

when Sioux rode past like painted thunder."

There's no one sweeping rain aside today;
no broom of hers bent almost double.

A sudden stranger to myself,

I quarrel with her absence--and the pain
employed against the heart by empty places.

Bryn Fleming

MIDDLE CHILD

For years your sister banks
Her allowance, saving for passage
On the ship of chance which docks
Outside her window on her seventeenth birthday.
She boards, bracelets ringing,
Tarot cards in hand, taking
With her, you're sure,
All the family luck.

You feed the rabbit, bike to school.
Afternoons, you eye the driveway,
The backyard, waiting for her
To surface or land.

You tolerate months of breakfast,
Homework, until someone else's
Yellow sports car leaves her
Standing on the front walk,
Shedding color on the lawn.
And after she's tamed snakes, wrestled bears,
Saved and spent the heavy coins
Of several foreign countries,
She comes home to you,
To you.

CRYING DOESN'T CHANGE A THING

His mother always said
That emotions balled up to nothing,
Like white bread in your fist,
The anger on your tongue,
Fear in your gut, won't
Fuel a single day of living.

He wanted to tell her
About the tender piercing
That ended with her name
In a heart, skin-deep on his forearm,
How he loved it and cried
Like marrow escaping his bones.

Regan Lee

WANDA IN CRANBERRY

Wanda wore a mohair cranberry suit she made herself,
ebony hair lacquered into a bun held together
with ornate Chinese chopsticks.

Wanda in cranberry was married to a black policeman & danced
on the glass coffee table in her stockinged feet.

Wanda in cranberry made identical suits:
deep brilliant turquoise she wore with silver earrings
rich emerald green she wore with clinking gold bracelets.

Wanda in cranberry made spaghetti with a white
mushroom sauce & served it to us kids for lunch.
In her lemon kitchen i started to cry "This isn't
spaghetti, spaghetti is red," i insisted &
Wanda in cranberry laughed as she piled
the long white noodles on my plate.

Her policeman husband listened to jazz &
Wanda in cranberry painted thick midnight-blue lines
across her eyes, moving to the rhythm
in her stockinged feet.

DINNER AT THE WAN-Q

soft evening lights tinted Dracena
turquoise and rose,
and Philodendron, gambache yellow.
i played with the crimson-edged cubes of pork
with smooth ivory chopsticks, eating
in a round burgundy booth.
i could hear the gurgling
of the fountain housed
in beige-cream brick, watching
the gold flecked carp suspended
in copper water.

eating the crispy brown noodles between
divorced parents, "Camille," my mother
called me during my moments of high melodrama
and Camille i was and
a little bit of Shirley Temple, the
Little Princess twirling a pink parasol, feeling
flushed, knowing, now, finally
for certain,
they were going to get married again.

maybe right here inside the Wan-Q --
and were only waiting for the green tea ice-cream
to tell me.

Hannah Wilson

DEFROSTING THE REFRIGERATOR

The night before I set
a batter bowl beneath the water tray
I know will overflow--
I've put this off too long.
In the morning, delay impossible,
I left the jars encircling
the bowl and set them by the sink--
orange juice and cranberry,
fresh blueberry jam,
the milk in white cartons--
then swing around for the bowl
to pour in one Niagara'd swoosh
the mottled water down the drain.

So I found my mother once
swiping from her empty shelves
the clots of plastic
scraped from half-full cartons.
While the motor calmed, while the ice melted,
she waited for doctors to tell her
what my father's heart would do.

With her back curved into her work
she would not turn to me
with anything but sobs of rage.
We could not cry together.
Nor would she let me help
defrost the box.

Such stubbornness-- no wonder
Daddy's heart gave out, I cried
into the air turned blue
between us. I would have,
could I have, eaten those cries
as I watched her kneel to soak up
the water which had settled
on the refrigerator floor.

Squatting, I start the mopping up.
I alternate towel and washcloth,
sopping up the water, wringing it out
into the now murky batter bowl.
With a fresh towel I dry the surface
and set it all back
shelf by shining shelf.

Vegetables shine green through the clean
hydrator glass, leftovers for lunch
fill middle shelves below
the cranberry juice, the orange,
the blueberry jam.
I open the door so often I can hear
the motor strain, know ice will form
too soon. But I cannot resist
this still life cooling.

Stacie Smith-Rowe

SARA

In my dream she was getting well.
A doorkeeper let me in,
and the room where Sara rested
was filled with yellow light.
She said she was hurt on the job
and there were scars for proof.
She got them from noticing too much:
the way a napkin folds,
the way her mother walked with her
down the street thirty years ago.
She couldn't forget the minutest things,
they crowded in too much.
In my dream she told me
the way a word can bend
is what finally broke her down.
She said: "I must have been crazy
to think I could stay for long
in a place so full
of woodcutters and wolves."

REVIEW: HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY BY JUDITH BARRINGTON

A poet I read and like a great deal has written, "Being alive is a common road, it's what we notice makes us different." Indeed, Judith Barrington's recent book, HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY, is a set of traveller's notes from the road, a testament to what and how she notices, to what makes her different.

Exquisitely fashioned, even to hold it in your hands is to know the fine work of The Eighth Mountain Press and cover artist Marcia Barrentine. Judith Barrington has assembled her unique vision through this many-faceted volume. The text itself seems illumined on the littered dinner table of the book's title poem. We readers have been invited to gather around it, to skim the maps, consider the voices. As I read, I felt welcomed there, amidst "pies and kugel," with Ruth and her father and an unmarried aunt in Chicago. "The past is the past," we agree, but let's travel there.

Dedicated to her parents, Part One is a set of six villanelles which tell a story and attempt to work-through trauma and loss. These poems continue a search begun in TRYING TO BE AN HONEST WOMAN, and because they are both more personal and broader, the reader begins to feel directly the sequence of loss and grief and remembrance. Her parents are dead, drowned on a burning cruise ship off the Canary Islands, and the writer works pattern, rhyme and the unknowable "because death unseen is hard to understand." In fact, these beautifully crafted villanelles, with the sonorous refrains, often seem like photographs: "I see you on a beach in Spain, in a long red dotted gown" sounded over and over until "your voice doesn't haunt me, late in bed," and the writer can pose a final question, "Will the light of the crescent moon, the northern star create a pathway we both can find...?" Part I is the geography of grief.

In Part Two, "Salobrena Notebook," the writer is a literal traveller, in southern Spain, "off-season" she says at the opening, but noting the particularities of storms and patatas

fritas, the white of the sky, flamenco singing, the slate houses in the Alpujarras, a fisherman's shaded face. Still, one senses that Ms. Barrington is there and noticing so that she can complete a facet of her grieving. The other poems in "Salobrena Notebook" seem to me set around "Searching for the Grave, Gibraltar, 1987." The writer walks the sun-hardened chalky ground, unlike the Brighton of her family's childhood. "Listen," she writes, "I've come a long way to find you/ stuck here." When, after a day of searching, she does, it is a broken headstone with "blackberries growing closer." Even the witch of her dream, "La Bruja del Sueno," acknowledges that Ms. Barrington is an explorer: "But you will sail towards the edge, she says,/ when the tides are right."

"A Dyke With No Name" charts another kind of territory, the "closet game," where Ms. Barrington recalls and writes about "fires burning inside." In "Dirty Panes" and "Sex Knocks at the Door" there is the silent agony of hiding and of sailing off the edge. In "No Name" and "Cryptic" there is a frank look at the ways lesbian love can be about denial, and in "The Wedding Album," a final decision to name herself, to let her voice "echo through the room" as she unties the silken knot of her wedding album photos. Dark, yes, but in the end, Part III is a journey into the country of love.

"A Memoir," part IV, is a delightful prose meditation on "Fish" which I couldn't help comparing to Norman McLean's story. What a dialogue these two pieces make in juxtaposition! Like McLean, this memoir is used as a lens into the world of a distanced father. While it considers a father-daughter relationship over time, it's especially about one hot summer vacation at Craiglynne, Scotland. You see Ms. Barrington in her pink shorts, no waders, listening to the words of her mother while assuming the view of her father -- standing in water casting unsuccessfully for salmon. That she spends the final vacation week lying on the bank under birch trees, "spotting" them, sure in her young bones that catching one would be "quite dreadful," seems perfect, the conclusion for a child who finds a fishing camp elsewhere, in another stance altogether.

Finally, by Part V, we have Ms. Barrington's compass in-hand; we know enough about this explorer to hear her meditations, to understand what and how she notices, to read the topography. English-born, residing now in Portland, Ms. Barrington maintains the view of an expatriate, knowingly, happily. She is on the move wondering

Should you adopt this new landscape,
this powerful sky? And is to choose
a land also to choose a people?

In this section there is play, debate, recollection, prayer. The writer is an old pony considering the blacksmith, a child remembering the funny confusions of language, a woman who waits as her lover recovers from a bee sting, a lap swimmer watching a mother and daughter through goggles; she celebrates a fortieth birthday, ponders the therapeutic relationship, comforts a friend, teaches writing in Hermiston. In all, and throughout, Judith Barrington's vision "gives ordinary trees a new stature." Her careful words make you listen, help you see, and, even if you hate leaving home, entice you into her world. When she writes, "the wind and I both travel abroad/ uprooted like headstrong fools," you believe; when she cautions, "Though sometimes you want to turn back or to hide, you are crossing each day to another place," your eyes brighten; when she whispers, "If you listen, you will learn there is no such thing as leaving," you know that this journey is a circle round a common road. Much praise for the songs of the territories. Much praise for this traveller.

A.S.

EDITORS' NOTES

Call for Poetry: Two guest editors will shape the April and July issues. Barbara Drake will select all of the April issue, which, as usual, is open to any kind of poem. Clem Starck will edit a part of the July issue, selecting poems about men

and women at work. Please send poems marked for Clem's attention.

Potluck Retrospect: The Fireweed Potluck and Reading brought together 45 friends of Oregon poetry. Sixteen people read: Clem Starck, Virginia Corrie-Cozart, Joan Edwards, Dave Johnson, Kathleen Culligan, Dale Willey, Clint Frakes, Barbara Drake, Lisa Campbell, Quinton Hallett, Lois Rosen, Stacie Smith-Rowe, Chip Goodrich, Anita Sullivan, Gary Lark, Erik Muller. As one reader later wrote us: "The potluck was great fun! Nicely scary to read to so many discerning ears. That was my third experience reading to such a number of people--it was definitely an adrenalin rush for me! And I loved connecting a few faces to names and work."

Sustained Yield: As of September 20 we have 103 subscribers, 30 of whom have renewed. Nine subscriptions go to public or school libraries. We are within budget, since our printing costs and postage respectively run about \$230 and \$65 per issue of 200 copies. We pay as we go, believing we are about the right size and the right format. Our aim is sustained yield, not cut and run. While we can continue as small as we are, we'd like to attract more readers, especially those surprised by the pleasures of Oregon poems. So continue subscribing and sending poems. Make sure your local library--public or public school--gets the magazine. You might want to give a subscription to a friend or to strangers who find it as they wait for the doctor or the tire repair.

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

DARYL ACKLEY, Eagle Point, works as a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the state. Raymond Carver and Richard Hugo taught him poetry. His poetry is in a recent KSOR LISTENER'S GUIDE.

TIM BARNES, Portland, teaches English at PCC. He recently offered a sonnet workshop for OSPA and has been a poet in the public schools. Essays and poems have been in SWEET REASON, CRAB CREEK REVIEW, MISSISSIPPI MUD.

MARTY BROWN, Portland, by way of Nigeria and Missouri, edits mud creek, just a year old. "I have never published anything anywhere."

LESLIE CLASON, Gladstone, has published in CALAPOOYA COLLAGE, mud creek, GREEN FUSE. She served on last year's Portland Poetry Festival Board.

HELEN EMERSON, Portland, studied with Ralph Salisbury, Lawson Inada, William Stafford and Sandra McPherson. She is retired from teaching German at Linfield College.

BRYN FLEMING, Portland, currently studies psychic arts and is a practicing clairvoyant and psychic healer. OREGON EAST and THE PORTLAND REVIEW have printed her poetry.

NANCY i. FORSBERG, North Bend, is a novelist and poet appearing in several coast publications.

JUNE E. FOYE, Portland, has five chapbooks and poems in CALAPOOYA COLLAGE, THE WRITER and THE PEN WOMAN.

MICHAEL ISHII, Salem, edits a new journal from Davis, California, THE PAINTED HILLS REVIEW, as well as the newsletter of the Oregon State Poetry Association. He has poetry in the second issue of mud creek.

REGAN LEE, Eugene, also a fiction writer, edited DENALI at LCC. She teaches pre-school part time. Her poems have been in POETIC SPACE, FROGPOND and MODERN HAIKU.

CATHERINE McGUIRE, Portland, is a full-time free-lance writer, publishing children's books and poems in FOLIO, CONNECTICUT RIVER REVIEW, and GREEN FUSE.

JOAN MAIERS, Marylhurst, teaches writing at Marylhurst College and is a Portland Poetry Festival Board Member. HUBBUB, CALAPOOYA COLLAGE, MR. COGITO, WEST WIND REVIEW have published her work.

SHELLEY C. REECE, Portland, teaches literature and writing at PSU. Her poems have appeared in OREGON ENGLISH, CALAPOOYA COLLAGE and THE NEBRASKA REVIEW.

LEX RUNCIMAN, Corvallis, edits Arrowood Books with his wife. THE ADIMRATIONS (see Clem Starck's review in FIREWEED April, 1990) won the 1989 Oregon Book Award in poetry. He teaches writing at OSU.

STACIE SMITH-ROWE, Hugo, see Merlin, see Grants Pass, has her alabaster sculptures at the Schubert Gallery in Albany. She is a graphic artist, as well, and dates her poetry writing from a class twenty-five years ago with William Stafford.

DOUGLAS SPANGLE, Portland, is a vessel traffic coordinator at the Marine Exchange. Recent work has been taken by POETIC SPACE, PENINHAND, HAWAII PACIFIC REVIEW.

HANNAH WILSON, Eugene, has poems published by CALYX and a short story collection in progress.