

# FIREWEED

Poetry of Western Oregon



Volume Three, Number Three

April 1992 \$2.50





**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 with sufficient postage. We also need a biographical note. Inquiries about submission of reviews or essays are welcome. Subscriptions are \$10 for four issues. All contents are copyrighted 1992 by **FIREWEED**, 1330 E. 25th Ave., Eugene, OR 97403

Editors: David Laing, Ann Staley, Erik Muller  
Cover art: Darryla Green-McGrath



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION		/ 4
Jane Thielsen	SPRING WORK	/ 5
Dan Berne	HOW THE LOVER COMES TO KNOW THE BELOVED	/ 6
Bennett Tracy Huffman	THE THINGS	/ 7
Kristen Lindquist	YOUR HAIR	/ 8
Stevan Allred	BETWEEN LOVE AND COFFEE	/ 9
Raina Dey	FOLKSINGER	/ 10
Rebecca Shine	DEMOLITION OF DESIRE	/ 11
Abd Younis Lafi	TALKING STEPS	/ 12
Clint Frakes	NOTICE THE JAYS	/ 13
Mary Scheirman	ON DARK NIGHTS	/ 14
John F. Sollers	COMING HOME	/ 15
Ellen E. Moore	MID APRIL, COOKING BROCCOLI	/ 16
John Addiego	MAKING PESTO	/ 17
Barbara Baldwin	THE BRIDEGROOM	/ 18
Emile Snyder	AT SIXTEEN	/ 19
Alana Buch	FIRST MOVEMENT	/ 20
Stephen R. Jones	BLOODBROTHERS	/ 21
Ray Melvin	AT THE ABANDONED HOMESTEAD	/ 22
Randall Payton	THE TELEVISION WILL NOT BE REVOLUTIONIZED	/ 23
Lou Masson	RALPH	/ 24
Amedee Smith	BREADWINNER'S WINE	/ 25
Melanie A. Holen	FAMILY	/ 26
Kelly Sievers	BLOODLINES	/ 27

Michele Thompson	THE WOMAN RACE	/ 28
Michael Foley	BLACK PORTER	/ 29
Neal Gill	BLACK AS CROWS, AS BRIAR	/ 30
Sydney J. Thompson	CRAB	/ 31
Katherine Salzman	KAPUNA WAHINI/ <i>grandmother</i>	/ 32
Linda Bowman	GRANDMA AT THE SPA	/ 33
Barbara Conyne	WEDDING PRESENT	/ 34
Tim Van Ert	ANNULARITY	/ 35
C.A. Gilbert	SWEET PROMISE	/ 36
Andrew Beckham	THE COMING OF FALL	/ 37
Susan A. Carlsen	NOT HERE	/ 38
David Weakley	DISAPPOINTMENT	/ 39
Laura Steinert	THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW	/ 40
Dan Dillon	WHEN THE SINGER VISITS	/ 41
Ray Burleigh	THE OLD LAMA DRAWS WATER FROM THE WELL WHILE A NOVICE WATCHES	/ 42
Nancy Henderson	THE FORMING	/ 43
Casey Bush	VISIT OF THE STAR NOSE MOLE CONCLUDING WITH THE GOOD DOCTOR DEMONSTRATING HIS PRACTICE OF MESMERISM	/ 44
Tara Starr	TO ADORN WITH AUSTERITY	/ 45
John L. Wagner	JANIS	/ 45
	CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES	/ 46



## INTRODUCTION

It is finally spring, and all is a-budding and a-blooming. Accordingly the editors are pleased to present a "Newcomers' Issue". The poets represented here have never appeared in these pages (though many have appeared elsewhere). We first began discussing such an issue six months ago, and by our deadline of March 1 we had received submissions from over 60 poets. We accepted a poem apiece from 43 poets for this issue (we also accepted several poems from some newcomers for later issues).

We would like to draw the reader's attention to the notion that there is a sequence to these poems. One editorial pleasure is linking up individual poems in a given issue. These poems came together very easily in a natural kind of order, a life cycle.

Most of us have likely seen that wonderful sequence of photographs, published in the early 60s, entitled the *FAMILY OF MAN*. We would like to suggest that the contents of this issue of *FIREWEED* perhaps also amount to a portrayal of the Family of Man, Woman and Child over the life cycle.

The spirit of this issue was caught nicely in a letter-- a poem in its own right-- from the poet Joanne Jordan (used here with her permission):

To the editors:

You ask for a biographical note when submitting a poem  
I cannot send you something that isn't-- maybe I should  
falsify-- just plain lie-- there was no college for me  
not a building anyway  
my education was the depression, 2 marriages, 9 children  
hot wars, cold wars and some I can't remember

there is no list of publications  
there were never any readings  
except to family with no choice  
and deaf ears

I have no literary affiliations or  
acquaintances just everyday  
semi-educated seniors like me  
with punctuation, if any, in the wrong  
place-- like me.

I am third generation Oregon, I hold degrees in  
diapers, dishes and dirty laundry. I have held  
seminars in puberty, punctuality, politeness.  
My readings include report cards, term papers,  
progress reports, invitations and announcements.

Thank you  
Joanne Jordan

Jane Thielsen

## SPRING WORK

In April, splitting wood  
falls soft as rain,  
shallow, dry lightning.

Axe in double time  
claps one chunk into four.  
The accumulating pile,  
our plain and sweetest song.

At midday, fir pitch and shadow  
sweat the pungence of blood,  
blue copper sky  
along my tongue.

*Fair weather, fair weather,  
Four cords under cover.*



Dan Berne

### HOW THE LOVER COMES TO KNOW THE BELOVED

The dwarf flees into the forest.  
You follow because you have  
followed her from the village, masquerading  
her small, monstrous steps. The snow

is a heavy, wet linen. Pressing  
your hand over your brow, you lose  
the dwarf's shadow. Her form  
is everywhere. Rock. Wolverine. The black

hump on the willow. Its misshapened  
limb. You hear what may be  
her steps on the path, muted breaking  
of crystal. The cold whitens your breath.

You sit and are amazed by the pure  
and brutal landscape. You grow numb and have forgotten  
your lover. How you left her. Lilac  
scented shoulders and gold bracelets.

You wait to be rescued.  
There is nothing  
but the raving of black birds  
in front of your eyes.

The dwarf dances about you  
scattering locks of your hair  
along the snowfield. She chants  
your real name into the wind.

Bennett Tracy Huffman

### THE THINGS

He was born  
in Boise, Idaho.  
He was also born  
in a Venusian swamp.  
Another place  
is Algiers somewhere.  
She comes from  
Czechoslovakia,  
a sandstone village  
just in from Mombasa,  
a sightless satellite  
of Alpha Centauri.

They walk through  
snow together  
not holding one another's hands.  
They feel the smoothness of stones,  
the hot wind  
of the desert.

They smell ammonia  
and sulphur  
orange, mint and clove.  
They listen to the talking lobsters,  
the blood beneath the asphalt.

They taste the butter of jellyfish,  
the salt of the crow,  
the voice of the worm,  
the sound of vegetables  
talking softly in sleep.

They do not make love  
with each other.  
They make love with the stray cats,  
the tables and chairs,  
the mountains on Mars.

They see the patterns of atmospheres,  
the scattering of telephones,  
the piling up of Bohemian clocks,  
all the things  
that hold them together.



Kristen Lindquist

YOUR HAIR

*for J.E.G.*

We trade stories of grandmothers, lovers and birds  
as your hair falls from my fingertips  
like raven feathers loosed from their wing.  
I run my fingers through thick strands  
even blacker than your eyes,  
with their own nighttime power,  
combing from them, with a slow litany  
of movement, waking thoughts, shaking  
dreams, spells that invite love,  
each deliberate sweep of my pale hand  
part of the story-telling,  
moving closer and closer to your face.  
I am the first to braid your hair like this,  
to drape over your left shoulder  
the heavy plait-- all I can touch of yours  
and call my own.

Stevan Allred

BETWEEN LOVE AND COFFEE

Lying together in the dawn  
passion newly spent between us  
I ask you to remember the song  
I want played when I die:  
Black Peter, the Grateful Dead,  
its measured acceptance of mortality  
tinged with the perfect bluesy hue  
of sadness.  
You tell me you want no machines  
prolonging your life when it's over.  
Use my body for spare parts I say.  
Recycle my eyes, my liver, anything that still works  
and bury the rest in the compost pile.  
You nod, our deal is struck  
and then we get up, and make coffee.



Raina Dey

FOLKSINGER

we shared the acquaintance  
of a Rumanian folksinger  
who would when we  
met on the street  
kiss my earlobes  
lightly like a butterfly  
you were jealous of  
such an innocent  
gesture so pink and round  
and daily urged me to wear  
earrings of ruby drops  
or pearl clusters  
making a present of such baubles  
every holiday  
so convinced were you  
that I would think of him  
when we made love  
that you would not kiss  
me above the neck

Rebecca Shine

DEMOLITION OF DESIRE

Hammer and crowbar  
the sound of nails  
jerked shrieking from weathered wood  
or softly sunk in dry rot.  
Vertebrae grind  
muscles exert their strength.  
There is no talk, or little.  
The sounds of saws for accompaniment  
as sweat and dirt dry  
along skin in the heat.

My warm sore skin thirsts for touch  
as throats for water.  
Desire like sweat drips then dries  
along the same skin it rises from.

I opened my hand to yours last night.  
You lay it flat, quickly curled it,  
tightened into a fist.  
Have you ever dug into soil,  
found potato bugs crawling,  
that shift immediately  
into stiff shells  
when they find your skin?



Abd Younis Lafi

TALKING STEPS

Slowly you were walking,  
tired were your steps.  
They talked. Have you seen  
steps talking? Your eyes  
remained still, disturbing me,  
and you went back and forth.  
Aren't you afraid, afraid  
someone will count your steps?  
"I am afraid, but what  
can I do? God knows.  
God, be with us."  
From between her breasts  
she drew a letter.

I know what this means.  
Don't try fooling me.  
I know how to read  
unwritten lines between lines.  
I read in two languages,  
but I am confused.  
How and where do I start?

Clint Frakes

NOTICE THE JAYS

Still half aflight  
nestle their pinions  
in aster top spruce  
as the bestockinged ladies pass  
I'm selling concepts  
and the enormous sky  
doesn't blink when  
cars collide  
I can feel my wife leaving me  
from across town  
I shall shout that  
at the chinless realtors!  
The crow caws  
All is Chinese  
the ant doesn't break stride  
for the tire  
this tree doesn't fit  
my back



Mary Scheirman

ON DARK NIGHTS

The old tales say, spirits  
mimic men, to stand  
calling up at mortals.  
If I were called  
I would rise and follow  
down the stairs,  
admitting whatever creature  
wore your form.

All the while  
your cat threads  
through halls,  
searching. He snakes  
about my ankles  
singing mournful songs.

Through rain  
he calls me  
as he called you.  
In sleep I do not answer,  
and the floods fill  
his lungs with death.  
So I plant him,  
black and silken  
as the earth,  
among roots of roses  
that you did not see.

In all these years,  
although I look  
in tangled shadows  
I do not see you.  
But yesterday I saw him,  
an otter playing,  
scattering prisms.  
Rainbows bubble  
from your shining  
fur, spiraling  
to the light.

John F. Sollers

COMING HOME

After my divorce, all winter I peel  
wallpaper. Flimsy laths can't curb  
stropped winds carrying scraps of paper,  
tidbits for amusement park seals to balance  
on their noses. Winds scatter Main Street  
with translations of my life. Important  
dates, torts, bleeding mortal sins  
paid final tribute to in neon  
over the Twilight Bar and at Episcopal  
ice cream socials.

To escape I erase tracks left in photos  
on grandmother's mantel, blunder  
through coyote thistles, goat heads,  
crazyweeds, Devil's claws and revamp  
the chronicles of my life  
until the sea stops me at the edge.



Ellen E. Moore

MID APRIL, COOKING BROCCOLI

with butter and lemon pepper  
but broccoli's not the point.  
It's been almost a year  
since she left him.  
Still she rummages through  
cupboards, looking at crackers  
and breakfast cereal. She hasn't eaten  
vegetables for months. She thinks  
she hasn't eaten at all.  
Only ten minutes from town,  
she fancies herself alone

and grows into a forest.  
She is birch and oak and pine,  
blends in until one pink dot  
shines where the bark  
peels back. She sits there  
with moss in her eyes  
as if there is something  
worth waiting for.

John Addiego

MAKING PESTO

*for Susan*

Tonight, instead of pine, we use almond  
crushed like marzipan. We use the dark  
basil which crossed the hump of our garden,  
fresh Parmesan cheese, the elephant  
garlic round as Hannibal's helmet,  
and viscous olive oil the green-gold of May  
pressed in Tuscany. And when you stoop

to give the baby a taste, your blouse  
loose, limp curls falling to her tiny fist,  
I watch hungrily, a man who feeds on your love  
until his tongue aches. You give us the good  
meal on the table of chaos: sock-monkey puppet,  
skateboard magazine, loud teen-agers with bare  
feet and Bob Marley T-shirts, carved wooden  
spoons among curled noodles. You give this to me,

a man who floats in the dark grottoes  
of your eyes and breathes the scent of your skin  
shining olive in this heat, what the Italian  
recipe meant by *room temperature*. You give this  
to us who have left our crossed signatures  
on your belly, iris scars shining  
like angel hair above your thighs.



Barbara Baldwin

THE BRIDEGROOM

Left alight in the vestibule by a girl  
going to bed, this small stone lamp joins  
scores of others in a case at the Metropolitan.  
She was fifteen. Her nipples burned  
like the wick in its basin. Stiff in fresh  
linen, belly hollow as an upturned palm,  
she lay supine, dreamed her arms  
reached his. Their embrace is history.  
This granite artifact survives, grooved  
sides stroked by her fingers, bowl forever  
cold since she tilted a twisted cord  
toward the flame and set it to watch the night.  
Smiling, he drifts from sight. In the glass,  
a crone's corrugated face grimaces.

Emile Snyder

AT SIXTEEN

His fingers are so tiny,  
    In such detail,  
Like a slide set up  
Too close to the screen.  
My thumbnail is almost  
As long as his pinkie.

I hold him in my arm,  
Against my side,  
His downy hair  
    On my elbow,  
And look at myself.  
I feel strange,

Wearing black leather,  
A spiked bracelet,  
Half a week's  
Worth of stubble.

He wears soft cotton  
Against skin unmarked  
By hair  
Ink stains,  
Or scars.

I feel old.



Alana Buch

### FIRST MOVEMENT

The wind is caught in the front doorway  
by the kitchen. My brother moves  
towards it, stumbles and falls. His first step  
broken, soundless. The night spreads  
through the house, fills his bones.  
We are without electricity.

My mother and I light candles, place  
them close to us. I listen for my brother  
but only hear the wind  
angry and trapped. In the cold  
bathroom she brushes out my long  
brown tangled hair. The mirror holds  
me in its hands, fingers throw age

and shadow. In this illusion, I watch  
my own son move towards me. His eyes  
wide and arms open, he searches for wind,  
light. But it comes too fast, too  
strong. His body blown, his delicate  
wings gone. I want to catch him, stick him  
back inside, my ribs closing around tight.

But my movement is awkward, adolescent.  
Something too large for a candlelit room  
silent now. My brother begins  
to wail, my mother combs flames  
from my hair lighting up the night.

Stephen R. Jones

### BLOODBROTHERS

I startle to see your fingers shaped as mine,  
like hands against a mirror.  
Listen to your hands, brother.  
Know the things mine do:  
shiver of nail in dry fir lumber,  
drag of handplane  
and kris of chisel.

My hands sense the buttons of your clothes,  
knots on your shoes, and the warmth  
of a woman's skin as she rises to your touch.  
Father hands teach us to reach into thirty  
years past, grope the gallused future,  
and rifle family memory and prophecy.

Let's revisit "Pig's Alley" on Pike,  
pass between hands afternoon beer,  
ease weight from the bone of family blood.



Lou Masson

RALPH

One summer we knelt together  
a husband and a wife's father  
with odd scraps of tile in broken boxes  
all that I could afford at the time.  
And you broke them in pieces  
distributed them in patterns  
till all fit together in a mosaic  
that could not be bought  
a whole so much greater than its parts.  
I would like to do that again.  
Kneel by your side with the broken pieces  
hoping that you would break them and bless them  
once again fitting together a pattern. a mosaic.

Amedee Smith

BREADWINNER'S WINE

If everything were paid up,  
or if the bills would disappear,  
he would not drug himself to kindness.  
He would lie still, in unbelievable calm,  
let his children play doctor on him,  
and he would be fixed.

Papa has grown strange for his age.  
Working is not what he would do,  
but he works, not martyrdom, not ambition,  
only the fear or knowledge that  
if he rests too long he won't get up.

He likes his late hour quiet, dead.  
A still and silent time to mourn,  
with something sad or eloquent to moan.  
He likes a glass of wine or two, or four.  
Sitting in the dark alone, the wine,  
his throat, the silence, all the same fading color.

Everything has been work to him,  
except this time alone, its opposite.  
But even this, the still hour, is a factory of sorrows.  
Soon the bottle will empty him  
and he will sleep.



Melanie Ann Holen

### FAMILY

Father was the breadwinner:  
Every day he went downtown  
amid the throngs and mutterings  
and bought lottery tickets, a half  
dozen at a time.  
He always won bread;  
sometimes he won peas or macaroni.

Mother was the homemaker:  
Each morning she got up,  
pounded nails,  
made homes by the streetful.

She made a house for each of us  
kids:  
But we preferred to play in the meadows,  
and to eat old tin cans, not the  
bread that Father brought us.

Naa, naa, naa! we cried out  
from the grass that grew  
not only green, but pink and yellow,  
purple and maroon, so long and lush  
beneath the old-woman-moon.

Kelly Sievers

### BLOODLINES

My mother and I follow the finger  
of a visiting cousin down pages  
of linked lines. She straightens  
stories for my mother, unfolds letters.

A great-grandfather writes:  
"Dear Sir: I am sending you  
the information required of all  
Menominee half-breeds  
who wish to be enrolled.  
I am Charles Brisk son of Louis Brisk  
whose mother was O-ke-mo-kiew."

From shoe boxes  
stuffed with pictures,  
my mother claims history.  
We search for my brothers  
in a blacksmith's angled arms,  
a lumberjack's thick neck.  
Our cousin meets  
her full high cheekbones  
on the face of a seamstress.  
I find my mother  
in my grandmother's small eyes  
pulled close behind pince-nez.  
An uncle poses on a pony,  
my stubborn black hair pokes out  
from under his cowboy hat.

There are two hundred years  
that spread like a blanket  
from the feet of Okemokiew.  
How close we sit  
on these woven threads  
bumping elbows and knees.



Michele Thompson

THE WOMAN RACE

My tribal companion and blood sister  
told me to follow, quick, to come and see  
an animosity, or a wonder,  
cornered high up in the monkey tree.  
Gazing upward, unpainted and tattered,  
we squinted, cocked our heads, and finally saw  
Patti, a member, who had been captured  
wearing an outlawed, padded, Kleenex bra.  
We, small women hunters, hurled jokes and jeers,  
our ceremonial dance of conquest,  
as Patti's promised dreams caught the raw tears  
of what the cannibals could not digest:  
How Patti, against our tribal selves, should  
dare to leave for a thing like womanhood.

Michael Foley

BLACK PORTER

Before it is too late,  
talk to one who draws  
water from a spring  
by bucketfuls--  
milk-churn and cart  
wearing the road there  
and back with trotting  
and sustenance gotten  
straight from the earth--  
because that one under-  
stands patience in a rhythm  
proportional to what's being given  
-- so my grandfather Tom  
brushed his teeth with one  
cup of water, shaved  
between pitcher splash  
and kettle--  
punctuated the day with tea  
and drank pints of night  
from glasses of black porter.



Neal Gill

BLACK AS CROWS, AS BRIAR

Grandfather's eyebrows  
are anthracite  
black, black as the briar  
that fills the ditch  
beside the apple tree lightning  
split two years  
ago, the one  
that leans against  
the barbed wire that runs  
along the road past  
the dried hide of a burned out alfalfa  
field, the tree  
scarred on the south  
side of its face, mouth  
slit to a grin, the fruit  
borne here eaten  
by crows that arrive  
from everywhere  
and nowhere, beaks  
shiny as slugs.

I walk away  
quickly, unexpectedly  
heavy, feet sticking  
to the hot tar  
that covers the road's cracks.  
I do not  
look back.

Sydney J. Thompson

CRAB

Grandpa lost three fingers in a mill accident;  
he was left with only a pinky and a thumb on one hand,  
a kind of giant crab with a black, Lazy-Boy shell.  
He had gray, fuzzy blotches on his forearms  
that were supposed to be a hula-girl and an anchor.

His house was dark and smelled like old.  
Don Ho's voice seeped out of dusty coconuts  
carved into scowling gorilla-man faces,  
and in the attic, where the guest room was,  
there were two shrunken heads hanging  
in the window, their black tufts of hair  
blowing like wind chimes.

I slept up there on a cot, unable to turn over,  
watching the heads, too scared to move.  
I thought of the pair of tiny, bronzed shoes  
on top of the television set  
and wondered who they belonged to.  
No one seemed to know.  
My bladder would burn, but  
I wouldn't go downstairs to the bathroom--  
Pierre might get me.

Pierre was a French poodle and hated kids.  
He hid, in the shadows, under the dining room table.  
I was sure he was going to eat me--  
if Grandpa didn't get me first.



Katherine Salzman

KAPUNA WAHINI/*grandmother*

cocked forward  
on the white couch  
her lacy slip  
hiked up  
in the heat  
one strap loose  
on her arm

she points her hawaiian  
cigarette at me  
the smoke curls up  
an embellishment  
lazy and baroque

a gecko caught  
on the floral wall  
above her head  
like an emerald crack  
in the tropical brocade  
but so still

her freckled legs  
swoop down  
in a perfect lady's S  
so together  
so smooth  
so closed  
so sharp  
they might be  
one perfect spotted tail  
hanging off the  
poisonous lip  
of some bitter  
familiar plumeria.

Linda Bowman

GRANDMA AT THE SPA

A snapshot, an instamatic print:

An old woman crouched  
on the edge  
of a tiled pool. Eyes,  
twenty years of lonely,  
since Grandpa died.  
Dewlap flutters in the wind,  
an inconsequential blur.

She sits obediently, legs  
pegged into bilious-green bubbles.  
Sun lights long-sleeved arms  
that loiter in her lap while  
hands clasp in the seriousness  
of photography as art.



Barbara Conyne

WEDDING PRESENT

It's over in seconds--  
the antique mantel clock chimes midnight  
and today we listen to yesterday's notes  
tingle in the dark.

Worn gears whirr in a struggle to start over  
again, catch a hold on the toothed cog  
notching forward in quiet clicks.  
And as the hands shudder ahead,

an eagle above the face  
leans into a flight not yet taken  
while tarnished cherubs hang on  
to twisted vines, unaware of the numbers,  
their gilt smiles never faltering.

Tim Van Ert

ANNULARITY

A cycle-- a circle which turns, which returns  
our anniversary.

Is it this mill-wheel machinery which makes us think  
each year of overhaul?

Even as I secret seeds within, I sometimes hope  
the massive crush will expel me,

clarify the concealed germ by husking the principles  
from protective practices.

And ask you, once again, to climb into this combine  
that we may harvest our sacrifices.



C.A. Gilbert

SWEET PROMISE

Anna's stone in Stayton  
declares her born in 1832  
preceding others here.

In the midst of previous  
sorrows, silence and  
time are strangely certain.

Land, trees and sky  
serenade the spirit  
of departed souls.

Patchwork farms of color  
rust, straw and green  
fieldburns black as a bear.

Crooked tangles of alder  
cottonwood and maple  
drink from a creek.

A redtail rises above  
the creek and screams  
wind, the grass shivers.

Lying in the shade of  
another's polished granite  
words worn smooth.

Honeybees continue a quiet  
eternal gathering of sweet  
promise around our names.

Andrew Beckham

THE COMING OF FALL

A sharp, dry thirst  
moves in waves  
across the land.  
There is bracken that is rotting  
below red fire  
flowering  
alpine fellfields.

Can you touch bone  
that dry?  
It is bare,  
beaten  
to  
high  
benevolence,  
far from crying  
into autumnal  
light.

I cry for my own  
inhibitions;  
passing with unbalanced risk  
across scarlet slopes,  
leaving you as a ghost  
moving high on summer rock,  
in this place that  
providence  
holds  
in chaos.

Wind too wild  
for ravens  
is  
taking  
leaves  
out of the west  
and

It is time.

We are scattered  
to the warm drudgery of cities,  
while the land pulls  
tight  
under a driven snow.



Susan A. Carlsen

NOT HERE

I'd rather be in my car,  
driving to the coast  
    walking in the sand  
    barefoot in the sand  
under the sun in the saltwind

my usual thoughts  
wrapped in seaweed  
clutched in my hand    in my pocket    until

sound of the waves  
    light green golden  
turns me away from  
that other  
    fleeting    day after day  
puts it in a box    in a closet  
with worn-out shoes

    light changes  
words are lost    to the waves' sound  
solidified    brilliant

Trapping the sun.

David Weakley

DISAPPOINTMENT

I sit alone in the tethered car  
Sullen as the silent radio  
Winter wind stroking my outer  
Shell's blue metal skin.  
Tree's skeleton shadows tickle  
The dark street's carcass.  
A square of white  
Lies on the floor; but on  
Reaching for what might be  
The text to my troubles  
My fingers brush only carpet.  
False solace comes from a  
House light as a ghost  
Of white paper.



Laura Steinert

THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW

Two days ago, in the rain,  
I walked past the building  
Where the front is glass  
And it works like a mirror  
(At just four-thirty or so)  
And I saw myself as you must  
(If you ever really look)  
An old woman, hair in disarray  
Skirt hem askew and slip slipped  
The kind who are someday spinsters  
But kindly called independent  
(At least to their faces)  
The kind whose hair melts  
(Or frizzes) in the rain  
Who never remember to wear  
Boots or rain coat or hat,  
And now I know why you smile  
Kindly at me when we speak  
And nod sometimes when we pass  
But I wish I didn't know  
I wish you could see me  
The way I did before I saw  
The woman in the window.

Dan Dillon

WHEN THE SINGER VISITS

The hour's lateness muddies  
the moment we imagined  
we'd become his lyrics.

Soft vibrating basso  
concocting truths of us:  
cul-de-sacs where we'll know  
paths to outrun bullies,  
those rogues whom our small talk  
or highballs will not sway;  
an appreciation  
for spring-loaded dance floors  
buffed by weekend work shoes  
stepping slow slow quickquick.

We appropriate him,  
the half of his life spent  
running caution lights  
at Myth and Circumstance,  
trailing maps of used lines.

Good-bye is brisk, last call,  
guessing how many times  
left leaning against curbs  
in whatever gray town  
he's learned chorus to verse.

*for R.H.*



Ray Burleigh

THE OLD LAMA DRAWS WATER FROM THE WELL  
WHILE A NOVICE WATCHES

"The old rimes remind me of the hills above the city.  
Our school classes sang late in the evenings in the courtyard  
and the setting sun seemed about to destroy the tallest steeples.  
I called them FIREHALLS,  
and made the other children laugh.

Then later I worked in one of the tallest buildings.  
I copied texts and the sun came burning through the wooden slats  
making things beautiful with red light  
but impossible to concentrate upon or write.

It is difficult, here in the cloister, to imagine so much light,  
but the rimes are so much louder said against the stone walls  
that I am easily fooled about where I am  
and I rejoice for the wrong reasons, for long moments,

that become, pleasantly, longer each day."

Nancy Henderson

THE FORMING

What-  
ever  
is  
forming  
in  
space-  
time-  
body-  
mind:  
did  
it  
have  
to  
be  
a  
serpent  
first  
or  
did  
it  
want  
to  
be?



Casey Bush

VISIT OF THE STAR NOSE MOLE  
CONCLUDING WITH THE GOOD DOCTOR  
DEMONSTRATING HIS PRACTICE OF MESMERISM  
(AN EXAMPLE OF THE POWER OF SUGGESTION)

when the Star Nose Mole visits  
    he brings his own chair  
    and a lamp for me, we sit  
    chewing over old ice.

Mole sighs with pleasure  
after such a dinner  
and pleasant conversation  
he pulls an ancient watch  
out of his vest pocket  
not opening it  
but hanging onto the chain with his teeth  
the lamp took my eyes  
until soon I followed a backwards  
tunnel in the heat of sleep:

2 dreams suggested by the Mole:

    Sporting in the Garden  
        a blue parade  
    picking up flamingo legs  
    perching on stepping stones  
a caravan across water each head  
    is veiled  
        each face  
    a blue sail.

    Teasing the Tutor  
when the children made him laugh  
they knew they could make him do other things  
    finding himself soon the puppet  
    of that clay he had been molding  
    finding he was his own creation  
    he put silk on the rope  
    he imagined to be there  
        and jumped  
            off  
                the edge  
    of the memory hole.

when I woke  
found myself on the floor  
Mole sleeping in the chair  
cigar burnt down  
a perfect guest  
holding ashes  
in the palm of his hand.

Tara Starr

TO ADORN WITH AUSTERITY

lone tall pine  
dry and dying  
cuts the sky  
black  
through  
blue

John L. Wagner

JANIS

Your feather boas took  
a lesson from their namesake:  
too subtle to squeeze  
they merely left you  
no room to breathe.



## CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

JOHN ADDIEGO, Portland, an MFA from U of O, has been published in *EPOCH*, *KANSAS QUARTERLY*, *HUBBUB*, *THE OHIO REVIEW*, *NORTHWEST REVIEW*.

STEVAN ALLRED is a writer living in Oregon City.

BARBARA BALDWIN, Corvallis, is a founding editor of *CALYX*. Her poetry has appeared in *LUCKIAMUTE*, *PRISM*, *NEGATIVE CAPABILITY*.

ANDREW BECKHAM, Portland, is a printmaker and photographer and a recent graduate of the Pacific Northwest College of Art.

DAN BERNE, Vancouver WA, studied with Denise Levertov at the University of Cincinnati and co-edited *FRESH HOT BREAD*.

LINDA BOWMAN, Medford, teaches at Crater High School, in Central Point.

ALANA BUCH, Eugene, is an undergraduate at U of O, "courting the surreal."

RAY BURLEIGH, Wilderville, works with abused children. He is publishing a book, *NATURAL POOLS*.

CASEY BUSH, Portland, writes books and articles about chess. He is a medical writer by trade and publishes poetry and reviews.

SUSAN A. CARLSEN, Eugene, helped organize the Forest Gathering of Poets and is working on an anthology of the event.

BARBARA CONYNE, Portland, operates a design and contracting business. Her poems have been in *HUBBUB*, *SUNRUST*, *CALAPOOYA COLLAGE*.

RAINA DEY, Newberg, is an English major at Linfield College researching the status of women in pre-patriarchal religions.

DAN DILLON, Grants Pass, is a newspaper reporter. This is his first poetry publication.

MICHAEL FOLEY, Ashland, teaches at Butte Falls High School. His family lived in England for twenty years.

CLINT FRAKES, Boulder CO, is a founding editor of Eugene's *BIG RAIN*, and a graduate of Naropa.

C. A. GILBERT, Eugene, won a first prize for a poem in this spring's Oregon State Poetry Association's competition and is active in the Lane Literary Guild.

NEAL GILL, Eugene, has published poetry in *DENALI*, *TIMBERLINE*, and *PACIFICA*.

NANCY HENDERSON, Coos Bay, has published novels and non-fiction with Doubleday. She is a writing consultant and co-founder of The Pushcart Press.

MELANIE ANN HOLEN, Medford, writes poetry and fiction and is considering graduate study. She has been active in Lane Literary Guild workshops.

BENNETT TRACY HUFFMAN, Eugene, co-authored *CAVERNS* with Ken Kesey. Poems have been in *OREGON EAST* and *WEST WIND REVIEW*.

STEPHEN R. JONES, Corvallis, teaches writing at Alsea High School and tends a family tree farm. His work has appeared in *NORTHWEST REVIEW*, *SLACKWATER REVIEW*, and *CALAPOOYA COLLAGE*.

JOANNE JORDAN is a poet living and writing in Portland. See the INTRODUCTION of this issue,

ABD YOUNIS LAFI, Corvallis, is a writer and teacher with a Ph. D. in engineering.

KRISTEN LINDQUIST, Eugene, is finishing her MFA in Creative Writing. *HUBBUB* has recently published her poetry.

LOU MASSON, Portland, is English and Foreign Language Chair at the University of Portland and writes for *PORTLAND*.

RAY MELVIN, Portland, has had poems in *PORTLAND REVIEW*, *CALAPOOYA COLLAGE* and *STANZA*. He was recently a graduate student at PSU.

ELLEN E. MOORE, Eugene, recently moved from Fairbanks, where she earned an MFA and edited *PERMAFROST*. Her poems have appeared in *KANSAS QUARTERLY*, *ZONE 3*, *CREAM CITY REVIEW*.

RANDALL PAYTON, Portland, is a musician and graphic designer. His writing has been in *MISSISSIPPI MUD*, *STANZA*, and *PATAGONIAN PROSE*.

KATHERINE SALZMAN is a poet living in Portland.



MARY SCHEIRMAN, Coos Bay, directs the annual Coos Head workshop at Charleston. Her poems have appeared in *THE ARCHER*, *THE COOS BAY WORLD*, and *CALAPOOYA COLLAGE*.

REBECCA SHINE, Portland, is a college student writing in a variety of forms.

KELLY SIEVERS, Portland, a nurse anesthetist, studies poetry with Floyd Skloot. Her poems have been in *THE GREENSBORO REVIEW*, *THE SEATTLE REVIEW*, *ELLIPSIS*.

AMEDEE SMITH, Eugene, is a chef by trade. He read at the Forest Gathering of Poets, and *EMERGENCY HORSE* has published his work.

EMILE SNYDER, Gold Hill, is a high school student. He writes for himself, not for school, and has won regional recognition for his work.

JOHN F. SOLLERS, Lincoln City, teaches high school. His poems have been published in *COLD DRILL*, *KSOR GUIDE*, and *IDAHO'S POETRY: A CENTENNIAL ANTHOLOGY*.

TARA STARR, Salem, is a student at Graceland College. She graduated valedictorian last year from South Salem High School, learning math from poet Carolyn Miller.

LAURA STEINERT, Tangent, has studied at OSU with Roger Weaver and Lex Runciman. This is her second poetry acceptance.

JANE THIELSEN, Depoe Bay, teaches at Western Oregon State College and Oregon Coast Community College.

MICHELE THOMPSON, Corvallis, is an OSU English major who grew up on a coastal rhododendron farm.

SYDNEY J. THOMPSON, Portland, is a recent English graduate from PSU. Her poems appear in *PORTLAND REVIEW* and *ECHOES*.

TIM VAN ERT, Corvallis, is a physician who has taught "Poetry and Medicine" in OSU's Honors Program.

JOHN L. WAGNER, Eugene, works for a non-profit housing development, "redemption for a past life of writing ad copy."

DAVID WEAKLEY, Eugene, works for a computer memory disk company. He has published poetry in *BITTERROOT* and *DENALI* and stories in Britain and America.