

FIREWEED

Poetry of Western Oregon



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John Daniel

THE UNSEEN

1

Mustard crowds the barbed-wire fence,
the entire hillside thick with light
and glowing brighter as the pale sky
goes dim. The single oak is hazed
with April leaves. Across the valley
children call, quick strokes of sound.
A wavering cloud of sparrows passes,
a kestrel hovers on beating wings--
impossibly much, but I need more tonight
than the bare glory of what's given.
I need to rub this moment in mind
for the shimmer of meaning I almost see,
I need the boy who stood shivering once
in a different field, hands clenched
at his sides in the clammy dusk
as he silently burned into mind
the whippoorwills, silhouettes of trees,
the bright clear blue of the west--
*I'll remember, he whispered, even
when I'm dead I'll remember this.*

It ends in emptiness, a dark wind,
 the light of cold stars
 passing through me--
once I breathed,
I walked in my body.
 Nothing, I don't know,
 I say when my mother asks
 what made me cry,
 and as the light goes out--
switch on, switch off-- I know
 that even the dream is wrong,
 that when I die
 there will be no stars,
 nothing in my mind,
 no *me,*
 and I will not return in all of time.

Birdsong woke me to the hunger.
 As pale light filled the window
 I watched with one eye open,
 wondering what I wanted-- not a food
 but something I had never tasted,
 nothing in my parents' house
 or school or Sunday school,
 something in the still trees,
 in the songs of hidden birds
 calling in the cool morning
 as I still slept, it was nowhere
 in the world or everywhere,
 if I could just find words to name it.

I lay on the pavement trying to see.
 The snake raised his broken neck
 and swayed, as if
 there was something he still needed.
 I was looking for the moment.
 His jaws stretched, and from deep
 in the darkness of his throat
 a dry hiss forced its way.
 In a spasm, he subsided.
It was the spirit leaving him,
 I told myself, pressing
 at the skin of his small piled body.
 He twitched and lay still.
I heard the spirit,
 I said out loud, and stood
 in the stillness of the summer afternoon.

I'd sit where the trunk divided
 and watch how the limbs
 divided again,
 how they branched and branched
 and made themselves
 a confusion of a million twig-ends
 touching air.
 And I wondered--
 if a bud on one twig-end
 awakened
 by itself in air,
 if all it saw
 was twigs and buds,
 the empty sky,
 could it ever know
 where it came from?
 Before it fell,
 could it think its way back through
 those chance divisions,
 through all
 the blind branching history
 that brought it to its lonely place
 from the one
 where it was born?

Kneeling by the animal tracks I didn't know,
 I felt hidden eyes
 upon me, close, and everything
 stood clearer, brighter then,
 each twig, each fallen leaf
 in the puddles from the morning's rain.
 Hiking home through woods and fields
 where nothing moved but me,
 watched by something wild
 that stirred my groin and made me whirl around
 to stare at stones and honeysuckle,
 at the hillside's green horizon,
 the shining of last light on boughs--
 it all meant more
 than just itself, it stood
 for everything I couldn't know
 as I walked home,
 hollow-bellied with happiness,
 beneath the shadows of the forest trees
 and the bright scattered tracks of all the stars.

Wind on the waters, rippling there,
 rippling in the reeds
 that gracefully give way
 and rest. And now
 downshore the reeds are rippling,
 now here again--
 the water stirs and quickens,
 wavers smooth. If it were given
 I would come back. If it were given
 I would roam here always,
 touching the face of what I loved.

Fired with sun, the red-tail drifts
 deep in the sky, circling
 higher and higher
 in that field of light,
 and drowsing below
 I dream and drift along,
 I feel the streaming air,
 the land turning beneath me--
 to die might feel like this,
 my speck of self ascending
 so far into the light
 that it becomes the light at last.
 And as I rise to go
 I see two yellow slugs,
 curled close in semi-circles
 stroking each other with their snouts,
 stretching filaments of slime
 as they stroke. In the grass
 beside me, they raise
 their blind faceless mouths,
 they stir themselves in the light of sun.

This is the path where the panther waits,
 shadowing the things of day.
 His eyes glow. I call them stars.
 His breath stirs. I call it wind.
 His black coat quickens-- this
 is the place I always falter,
 this is the shadow
 of his unborn leap,
 where he waits to rend
 my hide of fear,
 where I might be born,
 or disappear.

Paralyzed, I saw
 my heart gone still.
 I couldn't reach
 to squeeze and pound it
 back to life. Arteries
 grew stiff around it.
 I gave up then.
 And from those roots
 and the cold stone
 they circumscribed,
 a great tree grew--
 I watched it rise,
 watched it swaying
 in the light of sky,
 and I felt my body
 stretch and tremble.

The last flush of sun lights the snow peak
 high to the north,
 the nameless one
 that sends this black-water stream
 swirling through the chill of dusk.
 Nothing
 in the stream's quick passing,
 in the wet black trees or crusted snow,
 nothing here
 or in the silent mountain bright in distance
 knows my presence, nothing
 will be lessened when I've gone.
 It isn't much,
 this shivering warmth
 I cradle like a candle,
 worried how it flickers,
 how it burns down--
 I would let it burn,
 I would turn it loose
 to the beautiful indifference of this world.
 The first stars are shining,
 the mountain stands in stillness,
 the stream swirls
 past one small light in the darkening trees.

If the way is anywhere it's in
 the dodge and mingle of mustard flowers
 flattening as the wind comes on,
 in the blue eucalyptus swirling wild
 with a shimmer of water-sound,
 and even in the stiff oak limbs
 that stir as if remembering just now
 what motion is. It doesn't seem
 so difficult, this fluid aimlessness,
 this ease with which things bend
 as they hold firm-- what flows in trees
 and ripples silvery through the grass
 is loosening my fear-bound spirit
 that thinking tried and tried to free.
 If I can learn this limbering,
 if I can dance this earthly dance
 like all things touched by wind,
 when the hour comes I might be ready
 to swirl loose from all I know.

Catherine McGuire

FEAR OF LOSING MY SOUL

It's not a sudden strike,
 a single-pointed spear,
 more like vines overgrown
 whose roots strangle the soil,
 whose tendrils ease themselves
 into a labyrinth of greed.

By the time a sense of danger stirs
 the path is nearly lost-- a thicket
 of doubt where no slanting light
 gives direction or hope.

Heroic efforts only shred the mass
 into smaller pieces, each
 with its own weedy strength.
 What is needed is quiet care,
 to slip from the tangle and leave
 the vine to embrace itself.

Alice Evans

THE FIELDS

I have gone out into the fields
& they are my fields
ready to harvest.

I have gone out into the plump, ripe fields.
They are ready. I am ready.

I have gone out into the ready fields
& I have gathered in the fruits
& they are my fruits
grown from my seeds

& what is wholesome among them I claim
& what is rotten among them I also claim.

For they are my fields, plump and ready
they are my seeds, sown by me
they are my ripe fruits
grown in my soil

& there is no pretending otherwise.

William T. Sweet

VISITING SUPPOSE, OREGON

If you lived there, you would know
that the ruts on the slope behind the town
were rolled into the 1856 mud
by Steward Henry's team of two and four.
He stopped,
free of the mountain,
ahead of the snow.
He probably looked west
before turning to his wife and boy.
That winter had been slow
like all first winters are.
The oxen outlived the four horses.
Steward died before his wife.

For the moment let's say
the Henry family stopped *east* of the mountains.
Say the snow came up
early and heavy,
an ox or a horse broke a leg,
or the boy came down with the fever.
I suppose everything that happened
would have happened.
But, Steward Henry, I'm glad
I'm only visiting
your town.

GUEST POEM

Czeslaw Milosz



ENCOUNTER

We were riding through frozen fields in a wagon at dawn.
A red wing rose in the darkness.

And suddenly a hare ran across the road.
One of us pointed to it with his hand.

That was long ago. Today neither of them is alive.
Not the hare, nor the man who made the gesture.

O my love, where are they, where are they going
The flash of a hand, streak of movement, rustle of pebbles.
I ask not out of sorrow, but in wonder.

Wilno, 1936

from *THE COLLECTED POEMS*
(The Ecco Press, 1988), translated
by the author and Lillian Vallee

COMMENT

It isn't necessary to lose almost everything you love in order to write fine poetry, but it seems to help. Perspective is earned. Hunger takes on new meaning. Glibness is intolerable. Irony, any easy convention, avoided. Whatever calls attention to itself in the poem is a weakness-- the poet saying "Look how smart I am." We may be momentarily distracted by the poem, its flags waving, but only momentarily. We move on. After all, what good is a poem if it does not validate our own interior struggle?

Milosz is a great poet. With a great poet the words go with us. We need them the way we need prayer. Quiet. Retreat. He reminds us that life is serious after all, and poetry is essential, in fact, a matter of survival.

I have loved this little poem, "Encounter," almost from the moment I first read it in *BELLS IN WINTER* 20 years ago. The poem was written in 1936. Not long before his country, Poland, was bombed into rubble then occupied by the Germans. In nine spare lines, a tender mixture of imagery and abstraction, it is impossible not to feel the intensity of his longing which is our own. Each line clean, unadorned, adds to the poem another level of density, pathos.

All the while-- and here is the magic-- I never feel like I am reading a poem. Nowhere is there the rousing metaphor, the wily irony or purposeful line break... the glitter of invention for its own sake, a self-consciousness peculiar to so much contemporary American poetry. Artifice is never memorable. Necessity not compulsion is the soul of poetry, Rilke reminds us. Neither am I suggesting that great poetry doesn't have metaphor and the likes. That would be foolish.

But in its simplicity, incantation, questions, "Encounter" graces the page like an icon. What it reaches for, longs to know, it partly achieves through its sheer force and freshness of language. A prayer answered at least partly by its own humble utterance. It's a rare poem that can rid itself of its poet, "creator," his intrusions, expectations. "Encounter" puts the poem first and dispels any doubts we might have about who wrote it. We can be the "hand" in the poem gesturing, pointing at the hare, but ultimate questions (and these are the best ones) have no answer. What we are left with is "wonder," our lives, our shared vulnerability. It's the intensity of the longing that makes great art.

Tom Crawford



Joan Maiers

WHERE THE ROAD ASKS A QUESTION

Oak trees leach their shadows
on winter-cruled coat of pastures,
on the horse that chews the skyline
where 99 and 18 fork near Yamhill.

Corkscrew willow just beyond
last shoulder of road
swirls upward in a mist
of Januaries.

Near the county line I clip past
rectangles of rice, millet, barley.
Their texture gives land
the look of flat fell seams.

Sheep abrade this landscape
with their gray teeth
near vineyards
nicked by forsythia.

MURIEL'S WATERLOOP: TO SAVE A TREE

Each day she takes the landscape
her sickle vision
cuts across dry orchard paths.
She, whose name means
bittersweet,
moves among bracken.
In ripe times she promotes
symmetry.
She tailors wind-blown
wire of blackberry runners.
She swipes at tansy
contaminating the borders.
She reels in bouquets of myrtle,
arum and fireweed
on seasoned schedule.
In drought time
a curly leaf willow owes her
its life,
spirals cringe
until she moistens
the stripling
by the pailful.
Riverbottom loam drinks
its own waters
from the Willamette.

Joan Maiers

STATIONARY OBJECTS LOOK LIKE
THEY ARE IN MOTION

Before vapor trails stressed the skies,
we crossed a nation great again with war.
Passenger cars, the color of garter snakes,
half put us to sleep in their rhythm.
The Chesapeake & Ohio delivered us
out of Virginia, took us halfway across
a continent where my mother and I
were taken by another line to Oregon.
Her journey, a father's funeral, just five months
after the death of her year-old son.

Those times meant rationed shoes,
victory gardens, gold stars
hung up when a son's light went out
in Germany or in the Pacific.
Railway upholstery cushions
angular as Airedales chafed
our day times. By nights
berths folded us into sleep sections.
Messages long-short from the engine
signalled our positions down the railbeds.

Men in olive green aimed their talk at us.
I gave them a reason to open
conversations around my mother.
When I pushed past doors into men's
restrooms, they looked out over khaki curtains.
My questions crossed my mother's boundaries--
Why did they stand up?
Where did we leave father?
Is the other train racing with us?
Now I uncode the answers for myself.

Myrna Peña-Reyes

MY RELATIVES WHO WELCOMED DEATH

They were not afraid
those aunts and uncles
whose letters I still read.

Constant in their jobs, homes, church
year after year
they took what came--

willful children, the bankruptcy,
a typhoon out of season--
parts of a Plan not their own.

It was not theirs to understand
till everything, they said,
would fit together in the end.

I wonder if they've found out yet,
they who waited, prayed and prayed,
dying, dead, not afraid,
not afraid of death?

Sandy Polishuk

TO GREENWOOD

for Maria Raunio & Julia Ruuttila
1872-1911 1907-1991

Keeping my promise to you starts
as adventure, driving
along the river, through blasts
of rain, to the old cemetery.

The records don't show
the grave you tended.
I expect the caretaker to remember
a tombstone with a hammer and sickle.

I trudge, raincoat wrapped close,
shoes soaking through, wondering
if the stone's worn smooth
or is one of the fallen.

Evoking you, I realize:
Look beneath trees.
I find it hiding under the holly
you planted. Now I must take up
the plastic container. It looks
like it should hold potato salad
or assorted thread and buttons, but

this is you,
what is called ashes,
bone-colored bits.
I reach in,
take a handful, cast
on fallen leaves,
white against brown.
A sprinkle to fertilize
the tree (you would like that).
Lay my single red rose across,
as Wobblies did.

Driving away
I feel dust on my palm.
Are fragments stuck beneath my nails?
Did you enter the cracks of my cuticles,
truly make it under my skin?
My hand rises
to caress my face.

Stacie Smith-Rowe

In my dream
I'm with a lover from long ago.
His back is turned to me for healing.
I press into his skin a shining oil.
A woman whose face I can't see
stands beside me, doing as I do.
Only my fingertips are bold enough
to touch those scars that look like
craters on the moon.
In my dream her fingers, mine,
moving in circles on his skin
tracing the text of those scars,
a ravaged, inverse braille,
our reading teaching him by touch
to feel his way through fear and out
beyond the tyranny of ancient wounds.

Harold Johnson

NASSIR SYED

Dear Bill,
Down in Virginia where the United States first started to be black I started reading *WRITING THE AUSTRALIAN CRAWL*. The connection to New York was hours late, a line of summer storms. Reading *CRAWL* soothed me back to deeper roots brought a burning sense of liberation or maybe fanned the sparks of identity I felt at the reunion where we listened to family stories from the old folks, the family genealogists.

Anyhow, sometime that night I finished your book, which illuminated our workshop contact of last year, and reached New York with water purling through my ears, got stored in a hotel overnight by the airline and put in a taxi back to the airport at six a.m.

The cab driver was a short dark fellow, East Indian I thought. I looked at his license and photo on the glovebox: Nassir Syed.

We sputtered into conversation about how much this ride might cost me beyond the 35-dollar TWA voucher. No problem. He had a heavy accent but I understood him well.

"How long have you been in the United States?"

"Four years," rolling the r at the end of each word. He told me he was Pakistani, had a green card, a wife and child in Pakistan and one on the way. (I assumed he visited) He planned to bring them to the U.S. within a couple of years.

We talked about Pakistan, India, Islam. He recited the history of the Islamic presence in India three four hundred years ago-- Hindu "robbers" had necessitated the sending of Muslim troops to straighten things out. ("Just like Persian Gulf" we laughed)

As I listened to him the ghazal floated to mind, to which I am devoted, and which in English I most closely associate with Adrienne Rich, Jim Harrison, Robert Peterson and you. I was about to ask him if he was acquainted with Urdu

when he said, "My language is Urdu." I asked him if he was acquainted with the works of the poet Ghalib, Mirza Ghalib. He clutched the wheel with something like surprise, pumped his shoulders, bobbed his head and clucked, "Ghalib, Ghalib"-- then his words exploded like a flock of doves out of a packed cage:

the top student of my class in language and literature at the university the professor loved me because I always know more than just the meaning of the words root meaning of ghazal is the sound a deer make when it is being killed that's it in farsi ghazaal mean deer Ghalib is greatest he is the master Iqbal is his successor they say Iqbal is Ghalib born again like the hindus in Pakistan I was singer of ghazals on radio

Now and then I wedged in a question. first ghazals were love poems spiritual poems sex got nothing to do with it Urdu comes from Farsi Hindi and other languages those who speak Urdu and Hindi can understand one another but they cannot read the writing of one another He zoomed on, thumping the steering wheel with the heel of his hand for emphasis, especially during his insertions regarding Islam ("Excuse me, I should say perhaps you are a Christian and although you might believe different, I must treat you kindly....") I jotted down a few notes on irresistible parts of his flow as we bounced along. I told him about Aijaz Ahmad's book *THE GHAZALS OF GHALIB*. His eyes popped.

"I can get book here?" I made a few suggestions about how he might acquire the book. At the airport we enjoyed a brotherly handshake, and he said, "I never seen no guy like you before."

Funny thing, I had the feeling that I was overhearing him say that to you, Bill-- or he was me saying that to you.

Best regards

Alice Ann Eberman

I LOST A POEM ONCE IN WYOMING

at one of those gas station oases
out in the middle of everything
people are always trying to escape,
one of those places that never closes,

a place out there
in the dust and the sky,
a place where the grease
smells higher than the sagebrush
and where, when you look down,

metallic bits gleam up through the grime,
bits of cars, maybe, that passed through
yesterday or ten years ago,
where the oil-weighted gravel
works its way into the dirt

and where, when the wind stops blowing,
everything stops.

FRAMES

I want to see you through a window,
the window of a car moving fast,
fast, and coming to a corner.
I want to see you through a window that way,
maybe cutting grass or raking leaves
or stepping through a doorway,
one foot on the porch,
half your body
caught in the darkness of the door,
caught there as I slow slightly
before pressing into the turn.
Only half of you in the world
as I turn the corner--
then, framed in the window,
a falling barn
where you once were.

Robert Cohen

MAGIC

I am the worker of magic
and the fearer of storms...
Ralph McTell

I wanted to believe
in magic
so I fell in love
with a magician.
She made the tides
rise and fall.
Then I learned
the illusion.
It was only
my pulse
pretending to be
the world.
Sleight of heart.

Howard W. Robertson

one of those moments at the crack
of dawn on a workday in summer when
you're nearly 45 and not getting any
younger but hanging in there and married
again and it all somehow kind of seems
pretty good

Hope is
here with
me now
nestled
beside
me in
bed in
the first
light of
morning

her
peaceful
sleepy
breathing
going
round
and round
like a
wooden
mill
wheel
driven
by a
slow
stream...

Quinton Hallett

LOOKING FOR SHOOTING STARS AFTER A
WEEKEND WITH QUARRELING HOUSEGUESTS

We lie parallel
on our backs outdoors,
darkness and red wine separating us
across the deck.
"There's one!" you cry.
I don't see it.
Then you miss the first bat,
lit from below by our candle,
shooting through the dusk,
so we're even.

It's never bothered us,
seeing constellations emerge
at different rates, that eyesight
and what we remember of astronomy
are not exactly alike.
But we've been at this long enough
to know that every now and then
we must tilt our faces in the same direction.



REVIEW: *CONFLUENCE/Selected Poems* by Peter Jensen, Erik Muller, David Johnson (Walking Bird Press, Eugene, OR , 1992)

As a lawyer might put it, *prima facie*, this just has to be an extraordinary book. Where else would you find three such moss-backed minds examining life and times in our beloved wet green Oregon? Maybe decades ago, feet up on the woodstove in some general store on a backroad in the Coast Range. And now, right here in our laps.

But lest the book be dismissed too quickly as just another anthology of local poems, let's take a closer look. A clue as to the possibility of something unique going on here lies in the Table of Contents. The poems are not arranged by author but are carefully presented thematically, and this does not seem to be done merely for the convenience of the reader. Other clues are Susan Applegate's intriguing illustrations, suggesting interweaving and integration, and Shannon Applegate's Preface. Shannon supposes that the "three poets sacrifice a large measure of individual identity for the sake of a single text in which voices merge as well as emerge."

Confluence? A rich choice of a word for a title. But does it work as a unifying concept for the reader? The word brought to mind a personal memory, of sitting high on a ridge in the Canadian Rockies 40 years ago. Below me three rivers flowed together (as near Eugene): each river a completely different color. I was surprised at how long it took for the final river to become a single color, miles and miles after the confluence.

So how hard will we have to work as readers to experience a single stream flowing through this selection of poems? It took this reader a while. Attending one of the dozen or so local readings the poets have done helped. As an event-- even without the feet up on the woodstove-- this book is a powerful experience.

But something else has begun to happen for me as I have lived with these poems. I understand I think that what is suggested by the idea of confluence here, more than anything else, is *community*. If I read this book as though it is based on an assumption that there is (or ought to be) a community of writers and readers and just plain folks who have common concerns about a place-- Oregon-- which they hold in common, then it all comes together wonderfully. Then I can understand that this is not simply three very different poets standing up and singing out-- but three poets speaking in three very different roles important to us in the community. These roles will help us survive.

So if you will: Peter Jensen is our Warrior and Protector. He walks the battlements and makes frequent forays out into the wilderness around us to reconnoiter and skirmish with the enemy. His voice-- excited, outspoken and sometimes delightfully lusty-- sounds like this:

I've been a water and a land animal.
I have hammered pictures of myself
into faces of Myth Rock.
I have been a desert and a forest creature
adapting to outwit
transformations that create
habitats around my fit.

from "Myth Rock"

One thousand origami cranes finger-folded
are a prayer for peace, and we were peaceful
in our canoe, as we glided out Quinn Creek
into the ghost alpine fir forest
of Crane Prairie Reservoir,
where we saw one thousand coots!

from "One Thousand Coots"

I'd like to blast for space
and when these wings run out of air
meet my match, a female way up there
coming back from space
like the ghost of the "Challenger"
and mate as we reenter the atmosphere
and fall white-hot like twin meteors...

from "Dream Pilot"

David Johnson speaks in the voice of the Shaman. He scans the past for mythic signs and he stores wisdom for us. He seems interested in healing as well. Frequently he tells us about the elusive figure of a Woman moving among us. This is how he sounds:

My totem animals have been inconstant friends
They come and go
As if they had other work to do
Other shoulders to touch,
Frogs to eat,
Riverbottoms to graze upon

All but one. . .
Tawny shadow of the ridgetops
Sunlider padfooting across loose shale
You came to me once
Years ago in hills so distant
They seem like dark green myths.

from "Second Sighting"

Jenny, you blew through my life
Like a Chinook Wind
Warming my winterbound heart
With your girlish delight
That a man turning grey at all his edges
Would court someone so translucently green
So cheerfully alert to the light above...

from "Yet Another Yin/Yang Poem"

You,
Princess of scotchbroom high on the hill,
Added your medicine
To our coven will.
Cloud Soldier Woman
I welcome you again to the dance of the grangers
Where slow steps of the hausfraus
Trick me into thinking of you walking
Near a sunset wood

from "Cloud Soldier Woman"

To Erik Muller I assign the vital role of Caretaker, and I'm not referring to taking care of homes and gardens, though he certainly does this too. What he takes care of is the people in the community, the neighbors. He speaks almost always of the relationships between people (including himself) and between people and other living creatures or just plain things. His voice is deeply affectionate, and it sounds like this:

The single parent turns the page.
The children stare at the book.
Once again someone is lost in the forest.
Shadows there are deep
but not troubling:
they kneel before one candleflame,
each child is found.

from "Primer"

Breath is smoke, words
blown into the dark
during break on graveyard. You
stand on the deck and stare at the night,
the mill clattering behind you.
You feel the cool and quiet,
seeing as you talk
the words leaving, walking
off the job.

from "Closure"

We chew until our teeth ache.
We wish we had more stomach
for all the cake to settle on
during the long afternoon
blizzards of mother love.

from "Mother's Cake"

All of us fit into this community. *CONFLUENCE* sounds
a wake-up call, in my opinion. Taken as a whole, the book asks
us to look around and see the richness of what we've got here.
Don't pass up the chance!

D.L.

P.S. Copies (\$10) are still available from Walking Bird Press, 340
N. Grand St., Eugene, OR 97402.



BOOKFIND: *CRY OF TIME* by Hazel Hall (E.P. Dutton & Co., 1928)

Ever since finding there a WCW *COLLECTED EARLIER
POEMS* for under \$5, I have been cruising the poetry shelf at
the Book Bin, Corvallis, looking at hardcovers with spines dim
enough I have to take them out and open them.

That's how I found Hazel Hall's 1928 volume, #226 of one
thousand bound in a lovely paisley of gold sunflowers with blue
centers. There's the photo, too, of the poetess, as she'd be known
then, looking directly at me. The pencilled in \$1.85 price is amaz-
ing a few months after the 1992 Portland Poetry Festival honoring
her.

How poetry changes in 65 years! In *CRY OF TIME* only
the word "fir" reflects the poet's Oregon locale. The poems are
internal, timeless, general. Numbers are smooth. The persona is
unparticularized, like the poetic place, cleared for pure poetry in
a pre-Merwin enterprise. One lyric is "Wild Geese":

There was a throb of singing
Warm upon my mouth,
But I have seen wild geese
Flying south.

I have heard them calling
From a leaden space,
And like a wind their cold cry
Has swept my face.

I hesitate to cut the few still uncut pages!

E.M.



EDITORS' NOTES

Section 1 of John Daniel's sequence "The Unseen" is reprinted from
COMMON GROUND by John Daniel (Confluence Press, 1988), in
which it appeared under the title "At Thirty-Five." It was first
published in *SOUTHWEST REVIEW*. Section 12 first appeared in
POETRY (June 1990) as "The Rising Wind."

LitEruption is coming! March 6 and 7, in Portland. Please
visit us there. Back issues will be only \$1!

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

Robert Cohen, Portland, attended the Coos Head Writers Workshop
in August. His poems have been in *PORTLAND REVIEW*, *THE OSPA
NEWSLETTER* and *FIREWEED*.

Tom Crawford, Hebo, leaves for another teaching assignment abroad
in February, this time in Korea. Before he leaves his next collection
of poems, *LAUDS* (Cedar House Books), will be published.

*John Daniel, Portland, is poetry editor of *WILDERNESS* magazine.
His nature essays are collected in *THE TRAIL HOME* (Pantheon
Books), and *COMMON GROUND*, his book of poems, is from
Confluence Press.

Alice Ann Eberman, Corvallis, teaches literature and creative writing in Corvallis. Her work appears in *CALYX*, *OREGON ENGLISH*, *NORTHWEST MAGAZINE*.

Alice Evans, Eugene, published an interview with Garrett Hongo in *POETS AND WRITERS*. She teaches poetry and journal writing. *WOMEN'S STRUGGLES*, *WOMEN'S VISIONS* published her poem sequence, "Wolf Howl."

Quinton Hallett, Noti, has poetry and fiction in *PACIFICA*, *CURRENTS*, *VOICES INTERNATIONAL*. She is a founder of the workshop KWINNIM.

Harold Johnson, Portland, is teacher, artist, musician, poet. *DRY BOATS* is his chapbook.

Catherine McGuire, Portland, has published children's books and over forty poems in the likes of *CONNECTICUT REVIEW* and *TAPJOE*. She is studying for a Masters in Art Therapy.

Joan Maiers, Marylhurst, has had poems in the *FEMINIST BROADCAST QUARTERLY*, *OUT OF SEASON*, *FIREWEED*. She organizes readings at Marylhurst College and the Lake Oswego Festival of Arts.

* Myrna Peña-Reyes, Eugene, is a buyer for The Book Bin's new Eugene branch. She has taught and managed her own bookshop. She is married to William T. Sweet.

* Sandy Polishuk, Rockaway Beach, has a January residency at Cottages at Hedgebrook. A student of Floyd Skloot, she is writing an oral history of the life of Julia Ruuttila, the subject of this issue's poem "To Greenwood."

Howard W. Robertson, Eugene, read in December at Maude Kerns Art Center in Eugene. His new work continues the fictions of Lee Douglas from *TO THE FIERCE GUARD IN THE ASSYRIAN SALOON*, (Ashahta Press). Leaving his university library post, Howard plans to write full-time.

Stacie Smith-Rowe, Hugo, is an artist, with upcoming shows in Ashland, Albany, and Astoria. She and her brother Amedee read this month at Maude Kerns Art Center in Eugene.

* William T. Sweet, Eugene, edited Pacific House Books, managed The Literary Lion Bookstore, and taught creative writing at Linn-Benton Community College. Now he teaches at Lane Community College and Trend College. He is writing memoirs of his Oregon boyhood.

* first appearance in *FIREWEED*

