

UPPER LEFT EDGE

FALL/WINTER 2016

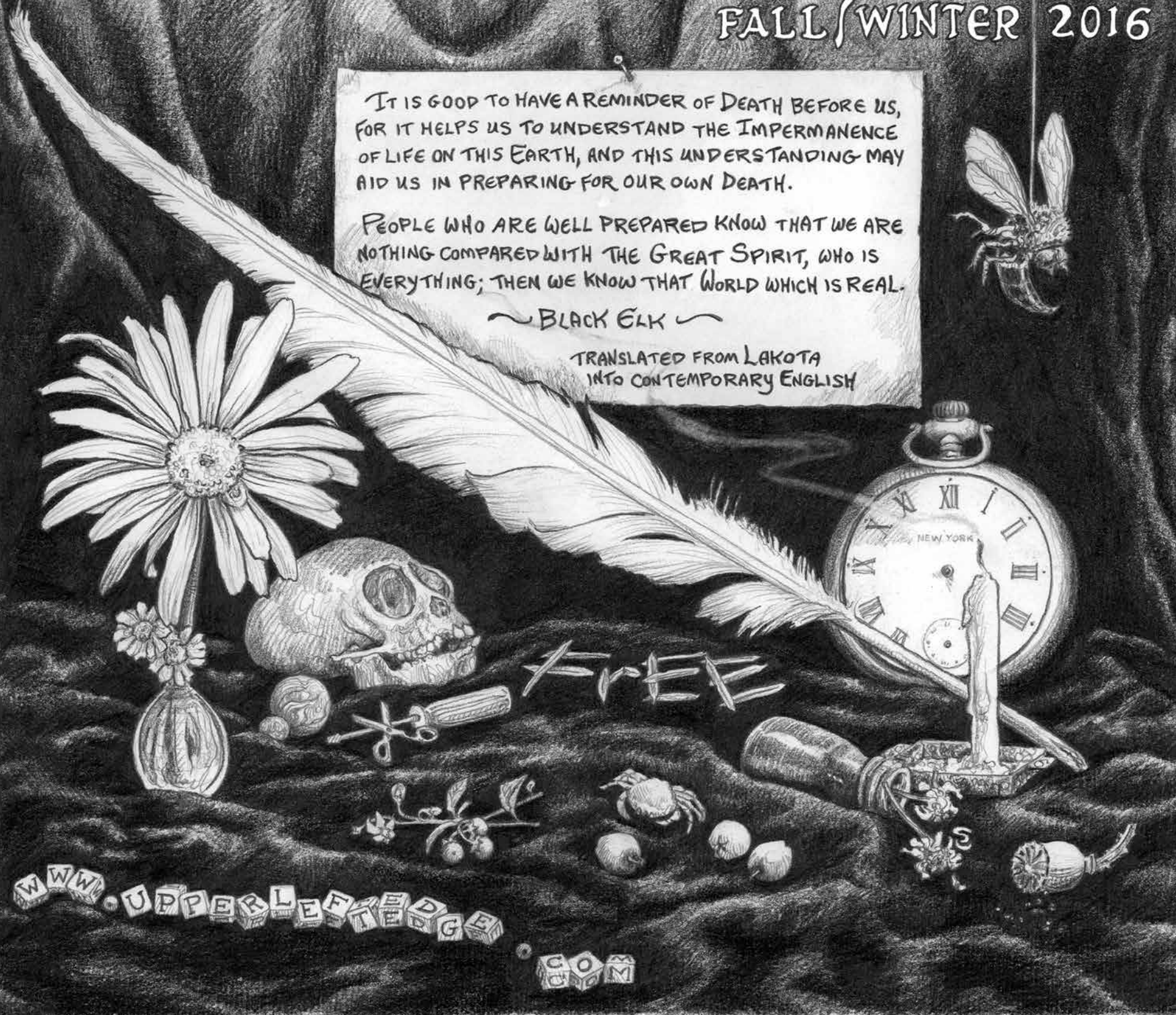
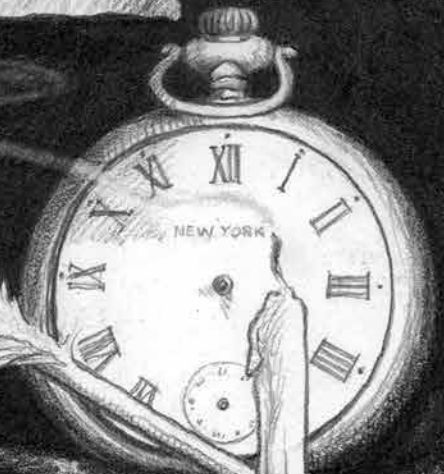
IT IS GOOD TO HAVE A REMINDER OF DEATH BEFORE US,
FOR IT HELPS US TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPERMANENCE
OF LIFE ON THIS EARTH, AND THIS UNDERSTANDING MAY
AID US IN PREPARING FOR OUR OWN DEATH.

PEOPLE WHO ARE WELL PREPARED KNOW THAT WE ARE
NOTHING COMPARED WITH THE GREAT SPIRIT, WHO IS
EVERYTHING; THEN WE KNOW THAT WORLD WHICH IS REAL.

~ BLACK ELK ~

TRANSLATED FROM LAKOTA
INTO CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH

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WHAT REMAINS



Our cover quote comes from a revered Lakota healer and holy man who lived between 1865 and 1950. During that time Black Elk's world was subjected to catastrophic change. He participated in the Battle of Little Bighorn and survived the massacre at Wounded Knee. His people suffered unimaginable losses of life, land, sacred places, and cultural traditions.

We can say Black Elk witnessed the death of an indigenous way of life that existed for thousands of years. He did so just as surely as we're watching death today -- from Aleppo to poison pipelines to dead zones off the coast of America, whole cities and sacred sites and ecosystems killed by greed.

But to say this with genuine intelligence requires us to reflect on something crucial. We need to pause and consider what *death* is.

Some words are so familiar that we assume their meaning is self-evident. We first hear them as children and ask questions of busy adults who often teach us how to use them without giving them much thought.

I passed death recently on the road to work, driving by the lifeless body of a young coyote. The next day my daughter saw another crumpled pup nearby, probably a sibling. One moment they'd been bundles of conscious furry matter, eons of molecular

magic in the making. Then cars came along in the rush of routine and extinguished their lives.

What were they then? What will every commuter on life's road be when Maxwell's hammer comes down on our heads?

Black Elk could have answered that question with more direct experience than the average human being. He came near to death twice during his lifetime -- first when he became terribly ill at the age of nine and again when he lost consciousness for three days at age 26. Both occasions taught him that reality is more than material existence.

His words on the cover are translated to convey a fleck of that understanding. The expression "Great Spirit" is used because it was often associated with Black Elk's statements and is familiar to contemporary American readers. Lakota activist Russell Means preferred "Great Mystery," yet some practitioners believe this can be misinterpreted as a huge question mark. So "Great Spirit" is applied here.

Black Elk's actual words in Lakota are "Wakan-Tanka," which literally means "Big Sacred." As with many indigenous people, Lakota tradition affirms the essential connection between Creator and creation. Everything is related, and human beings are part of that vast sacredness.

Some days it seems we are moving toward a future in which nothing is sacred. Art plays a critical role in changing that trajectory, in motivating people to think about our relationships with each other and the planet. Here at the Edge we add our small part by sharing words and images while enjoying ourselves.

Thank goodness for writers and artists who support this undertaking. Hats off to business people who help fund it by advertising, trusting without knowing how the contents will unfold. We pick a different theme for every print edition. Sometimes they're challenging.

Death is a mystery, yet it teaches us how to behave. We come closer to understanding by doing our best with what remains.

I spoke to the pups as I lifted their bodies into the truck, telling them I was taking them to a good place in the forest. On the way I sang a song I learned from the cedars. Going up the last hill I carried them under each arm, then laid them side by side on a bed of moss. I knelt in the rain beside their beautiful bodies, and felt a little more connected with everything.

For transformation we work. Some pray.

~ Watt Childress

I am not a religious person or even a spiritual one, but I do love to obliquely contemplate the giant questions. I would prefer "Great Mystery" to "Great Spirit" because it is more ambiguous; to my mind putting a gender or even a form to something so very vast and incomprehensible lessens its potency -- which is probably exactly what most people want. For my part, I would rather keep it a mystery...

*The onus of illustrating the concept of death and its cyclical aftermath, however ambiguously, is a heavy one. From the start it made me think of the practice of **memento mori** in art ('remember, you must die' -- from the Latin). As an artistic tradition, it is rich in gloomy imagery, but also quite often presents an almost cheerful depiction of the enormous future we all look forward to facing. Mementos mori have been in broad use for about as long as mankind has been contemplating its mortality.*

To illustrate this theme I put my thoughts to what I consider symbols of the death/rebirth cycle. Things that are alive and dead, so to speak: seed pods, feathers, coral, eggs shells, bones... and as the possessor of a lifetime's worth of miniature things, in particular a monkey skull the size of a hen's egg, combining the two elements was as clear as the inevitability of my own demise. Some think of skulls and bones as morbid; I see them as beautiful pieces of the structure of the body, whatever body that may be. The attraction to miniature objects needs no explanation.

~ Sally Lackoff



Memento mori

Behold! Fires awake, filling the air with the faint acrid haze of wood smoke, while moldering leaves squish and crunch underfoot. Fall returns, crisp and cool, to Oregon's north coast. Clear late summer days are punctuated by the rising march of storms. Tumbling across the cold north Pacific, counterclockwise spirals of wind and rain knock on the continental door. Gentle summer breezes give way to south winds and hard rains – intermittently at first, but rising to the full stormy crescendo of winter. Even the ocean currents indecisively bob and weave, following the winds' lead – running flat and summer-strong from the north, the sea then surging gray and foamy from the south, only to pivot northward once again with short-lived moments of summery calm. Churning vast, awakening to its winterly obligations, Earth's largest and most ancient landform seeks its proper groove. Tourist hordes thin, rivers rise, and the south wind finds its voice.

So awakens South Wind the trickster, South Wind the transformer – as the autumn wind rises, he begins his return - cleansing the world and making all things right. Taking form in remote times, at the pivot point where mythtime and human origins meet, South Wind first arrived to prepare the world. First traveling this coast, from its far southern fringe to the unknown north, South Wind crafted our most important landmarks, reshaped all life, and established a new moral order to guide the people yet to come. Do not steal? South Wind taught that lesson near Barview, where an act of thievery left him encased in stone, begging each species of woodpecker for his freedom in turn. Do not be lecherous? He taught that lesson near there too – sandspit phallus, severed by all imaginable species of sharp sedge, shocking us all into awestruck piety. Do not kill and eat people? South Wind taught that lesson too: near Cannon Beach, where cannibals still stand petroform in the surf, seagulls nesting on their heads. On this coast, South Wind's handiwork and his teachings still sit in plain view.

Each year, as the south winds return, so does the creative and healing power

of South Wind. Traditional storytellers recounted South Wind story cycles as winter approached, tracing his journey step by step across the land. Safe indoors, visiting each landmark in the mind's eye, elders taught children to navigate earthly and moral terrains. The south wind, the life-giving rains, the tumbling gray sea – working together they cleansed, energized and enlivened each landmark along the way.

Mediator-narrators ushered this journey into being, symbolically reinvigorating each place, engaging its lessons at each mundane station, in a point-by-point annual rebirthing of the world. It is no

surprise: as many tribes embraced the ghost dance during times of apocalyptic change, here there arose a South Wind dance in its stead – desperate families, delving deep into the renewing and regenerative spirit of the annual tradition, seeking miraculous and positive change that might yet sweep across the world.

Most people resist the horizontal rains of rising autumn. Rain, I don't mind. Running out to embrace the south wind in its full force, one can hear its boundless voice, and feel the full force of this global choreography as it nudges and jostles us into new angles of repose. Winds surge from high pressure to low, carrying equatorial waters and energies to bless colder places, the whole earthly atmosphere striving for balance. Wind and rain conspire to scrub away tourist footprints, roadside dust and debris; forest birds and mammals draw a little closer to town, and fall salmon return. Many sins are forgiven and everything is made clean and right. Who are we to question it, or grouse? By living here we accept our own windy fate. The lessons of South Wind are only knowable if we stop and listen, and bear close witness to each step in autumn's advance. Behold!

In memory of Dave Hatch, Siletz tribal councilman and longtime defender of the natural and cultural heritage of the Oregon coast.

D.E. Deur is a professor of anthropology and environmental restoration, who has worked for over a quarter century with Northwestern tribes to help document their cultural relationships with the land and environment.

GREETING SOUTH WIND: NEW LESSONS FROM AN ANCIENT TRAVELER BY D. E. DEUR

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FALL PROVENDER

by Professor Peter Lindsey



All those juicy and succulent beasts and fruity things have spent a splendid summer basking in long days. Swollen, sleek, turgid beyond common decency, they await our yearning lips, gentle readers.

I've already fondled crook-neck and summer squashes the size of the zeppelin Hindenberg. I quiver in salacious expectation when confronting thickets of dense, pendulous, drooping Himalayan blackberries. Hoo-hah! A gourmand's bacchanalia! Consider the pears Bosc and D'Anjou. Ahhh, what sensual globes, the aesthetically curved and charmingly freckled skins hint at the tender flesh within. In the lusty fields of fall, young cornstalks sway like Nordic warriors, tousled and golden sheathed and waiting.

Consider a few autumn stalwarts from the animal kingdom. Each fall those randy salmon flash their lusty flanks upstream and into our skillet and barbecues. Oo-la-la. Va-va-voom! Twisting and shimmering, they flex delectable cheeks toward our coast, 20 to 50 points of muscle guided toward a love tryst. Yummy.

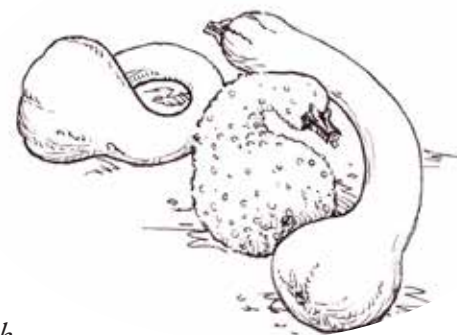
Don't forget our friends the dear little bivalves! All summer they've basked indolently in summer seas, sipping plankton cocktails and ripening those private parts we love to nibble. Few things quicken the

pulse like an encounter with a nubile oyster at the harvest season.

Ah, fall, glorious fall! Fallow deer and elk nibble gently in wooded glades, shadows dappling their tender briskets and chops. Chanterelle parasols dance softly on the forest floor. I yearn to lure them home to a hot bath in wines and rare oils, so tender for their delicate skins.

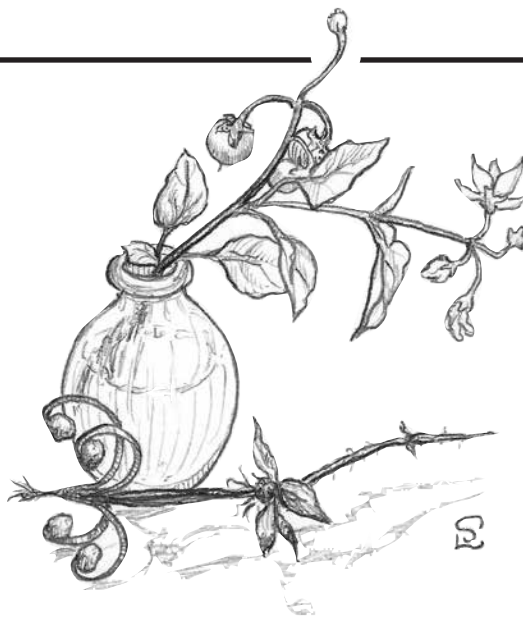
Welcome to the feast, my beauties. Shall we begin the meal?

*Professor Peter Milhouse Lindsey has been, at turns: an English professor, folklorist, human excrement burner, surveyor, union butcher, chanterellist, surf lifeguard, teacher, author, doll maker, dish washer, wood cutter, artilleryman, contractor, Santa Claus, candy man, cascara bark harvester, rolling pin turner, salmon troller, purse seiner, herring gill netter, distance runner, and beachcomber. He is the author of **Comin' in Over the Rock: a Storytellers History of Cannon Beach** and has contributed to two anthologies of Oregon folklore.*



AUTUMN LEAVES

Autumn's breath blows cold
Stately oak trembles and bends
Tired leaves twirling



SLUMBER

Daylight slips away
Nocturnal creatures stirring
Earth in slumber rests

~ Catherine M. Gardner

Catherine's artistic endeavors are focused on the short story and Haiku poetry. She has called Arch Cape home for the past six years and finds an endless amount of inspiration from the beauty that surrounds us on the Pacific Northwest coast.

if you can't beat them, join them

by Evie Alburas

I did not grow up watching football. Sundays in my home growing up were not full of the sounds of helmets crashing together or men grunting and groaning in shows of athletic prowess, but rather the sounds of the operatic warbling of Aida or Ravel's string quartets. My father was never called macho in my lifetime, though he was aware of which quarterback was playing particularly well, or which teams were going to the playoffs, he never sat and watched a game. It must have seemed odd to him when one of his daughters chose to spend her Sundays as a couch potato embracing American Football.



When I chose to accept football into my life it was definitely a "if you can't beat them, join them" scenario. Some people like to laughingly remind me of a time when I hated football. Which was true; it was all people talked about for a good three months out of the year and was almost completely foreign to me. So, lose my friends almost all Sundays and endure endless boring conversations, or join the team? The choice was obvious, I became a born again football believer. I guzzled so deeply of the kool-aid I joined a Fantasy League. By lucky happenstance a friend said sure, I will be your partner on a Fantasy football team and by some crazy timing we inherited a coveted spot in the Haystackers League, completely amazing considering vacancies coincided with deaths. I still don't know how my partner and I were lucky enough to fall into a spot

with the Haystackers, the premier Cannon Beach league that you had to have connections to get in to!

The Rabid Raccoons (that's our team name, terrifying right?) had a breakout rookie year winning money more weeks than not due to our lucky half blind picks. It was the first and only year that a special prize of an autographed football was awarded to the team that ended the season with the most points. Though the Raccoons did not win that year I am the proud owner of a Shaun Alexander autographed football, thank you Jimmy Webb. It wasn't until 2012 that we got our names on the trophy.

Over the years my approach has changed, I actually try to do some research and planning before the draft as opposed to picking players based on their looks or names. For example, "oooh I love him, he's got the most amazing green eyes," or Laquon Treadwell? Sounds like he'd be good on his feet.

The League has also changed. The commissioner is different than my first year and I have been wrangled into being the treasurer. There are some fresh faces, fortunately not due to anyone's untimely death. Our current base is kind of the American Legion, that's where we still hold our face to face draft. Though the League uses an internet site now for its operations, the draft is still done the old fashioned way, even with the previous year's winner supplying dinner.

It has been fun to be part of this group and rewarding in more ways than one. Certain times of the year I may go months without seeing some of the other League members, but we find our ways back to each other and catch up. As the kids go back to school and tourists dissipate the Haystackers come together with a collective sigh of relief and are wrapped in the loving snuggie of football.

*Evie Alburas grew up in Seaside, Oregon and she lives in Cannon Beach.
She works at Bill's Tavern, loves the Seahawks, and roots for the Rabid Raccoons.*



THE GENOCIDE OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN, AND THEIR REFUSAL TO DIE

BY STEVIE STEPHENS BURDEN

I have written often of what my life as the Mayor of Wheeler has brought to me. Some funny stories and some painful, but the one story of what I am most proud of is something I haven't written about. It is a difficult and complex story so I have avoided it, although it is one, that at least for me as the Mayor, has a happy ending for everyone else more directly impacted. The struggle continues.

It becomes difficult to tell the story of what has happened to native tribes over the last 500 years when so much of what is believed about them is actually founded on myths or worse yet out right lies. One hardly knows how to pick up the thread of the story because in reality it is of course many stories, taking place across great spans of time, impacting many different cultures, and cutting through the heart of a diverse population sharing a continent but not necessarily the same beliefs or values. In such a huge group as the term "Native American" now describes it must be an intertribal story. There are over 550 federally recognized tribes in the United States today and many more that are recognized by the States in which they originate. It actually takes an act of Congress for a tribe's existence. It can take years, decades, and all to often generations for the process to be completed. There are still tribes that have not been recognized because of their size, forced assimilation, blood quantum, and worse - poverty and apathy.

For many years during the Indian Wars when this nation was first founded there was a goal of genocide against Native Americans. For most this is a distant history that occurred hundreds of years ago, perhaps as far back as Christopher Columbus' fictitious discovery of North America. The fact that he never landed on this continent is just one of many fables that many generations of school children grew up on.

So what happens to a person or group when their identity is wiped from the book of history? Who is recognizable by today's world standards? How do you kill a tribe? Support the death of a culture...

many cultures? For 500 years? Having worked in and around Indian Country for the better part of 30 years I am acutely aware of both an increasing knowledge of, and total ignorance of, what it means to be a Native American in contemporary American society.

The international legal definition of the crime of genocide is found in Articles II and III of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, excerpted here:

"Article II: In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

Many people will shy away from the raw reality of what has been endured by Native American tribes since the arrival of the northern Europeans. Genocide is an ugly word and protests have arisen around the world when contemporary acts of genocide are committed. But for the average American the issues of genocide and Native tribes is ancient history and many resent it when the subject is brought up now.

"It all happened 500 years ago. Why don't they just get over it and move on?"

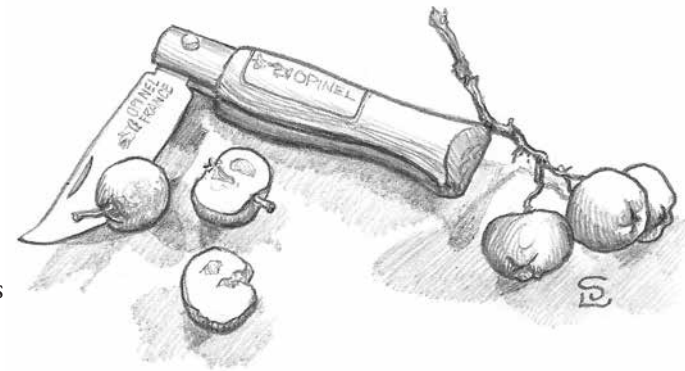
"Well if they aren't recognized as a tribe - are they really a tribe?"

"What about all those casinos, they're making all kinds of money now, why are we still talking about this?"

Such naiveté of the truth has repeatedly created a dangerous situation for tribes. Funding is denied. Services are withheld. Poverty is ignored. Indians are blamed. The death of a culture is unknowingly or deliberately given passage.

So here are just a few facts to help balance out the fallacies built upon for generations.

Yes some tribes have casinos. They have in fact helped tribes combat poverty, the lack of education, and loss of medical and social services. However a



vast majority of native tribes in this country do not have and could not afford casinos. Most tribes do not have the land, economic base, infrastructure, or power to build casinos that would be viable businesses for them.

When you think about the definition of genocide and how it applies to native communities and peoples, often there is confusion about how what happened historically can still have a meaningful impact today. In a closer look however, one will find that in very significant ways the actions of genocide have continued into the present. Consider this:

It was 1945 before Native Alaskans were recognized as citizens and protected from discrimination, in their own state.

The U.S government recently admitted to forcing thousands of Native American Indian women to be sterilized (3,406 women) without their permission between 1973-1976.

It wasn't until 1975, that Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. It was the first time Natives had the right to decide for themselves how they would live, educate, and take care of themselves.

It was not until about 1975 the U.S. government discontinued the practice of forced Native relocation, which created large populations of Native Americans who were removed from tribal lands to large cities like San Francisco and Oakland, and where today many still suffer from poverty and lack of access to services.

It was not until 1978 with the passing of the Indian Child Welfare Act that Native American parents gained the legal right to deny their children's placement in off-reservation schools, (American Indian Relief Council) i.e. boarding schools, infamous for their poor treatment of natives and their culture. The motto often quoted in these schools, "Kill the Indian. Save the man. "

An act that was finally passed in 1993 provided American Indians with help to retain their sacred sites and the 1994 act made it legal for peyote to be used and transported for ceremonial purposes in connection with the practice of traditional Indian religion

In an example of the current status of tribes in this country, as of September 17, 2016: Unemployment on the Pine Ridge Reservation is 33.40 percent, compared to the state as a whole, which is 3.8 percent.

The median household income on the Pine Ridge reservation is \$20,568, while 29 percent of the population of the reservation earns less than \$10,000 a year.

The trauma associated with such atrocities is hardly ancient history and the courage that it has taken to stay true to the path has come with many painful losses.

And the struggle continues today. Right here in northwest Oregon, we have a group of small local tribes that have joined together as the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes. It is not an easy road and many would deny them the right to be recognized. Despite waiting since 1885 Congress has yet to act on their request, thus effectively

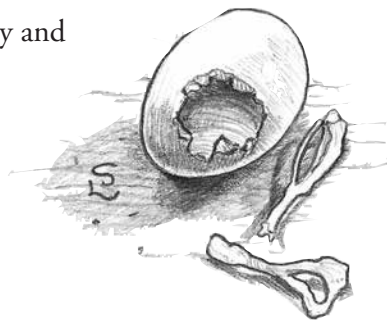
saying to the country and world these people do not exist on the books of law. It is a terrible thing to be reduced so far that despite tracing your ancestry back thousands of years you do not merit the mere status of recognition. I was invited to one of their recent Potlatches and it was a story of the steadfast movement of a people back to who they have always been. Despite the obstacles of living in a world that does not recognize them as who they are, the Clatsop-Nehalem continue to respect and hold sacred their truth and identity. Instead of giving up they focus their energy on teaching the young and old alike what it means to be one with the earth. So it was my great honor with the help of our City Council to help them take that first step. While this Confederation of tribes does not appear on the book of recognition at the federal or state level, they are recognized in Wheeler for who they are, a proud people. It is a miniscule step on the long road and this generation may never see the fruits of all their labors and if history is any indication neither will their children or grandchildren.

And yet...

Parents and grandparents have whispered stories, songs and prayers, their native languages, their beliefs, traditions, and values; through the long dark times when it could cost them their lives, through the forced separations with their children and families, through all the efforts to "Kill the Indian and save the man" they told of their ancestors.

And yet....

They still tell the stories and sing the songs. The vibrancy and unique cultures of what being Native American is continues. Despite 500 years of genocide, isolation, poverty, discrimination, and increased risks of substance abuse, premature death, and suicide you still find intact native cultures that are not only still in existence but thriving. While it has been a struggle to reclaim languages and territory the rich fabric of Native cultures across the United States is remarkably strong. Whether recognized by government or not these tribal



communities and people have continued to live their lives and raise generations of children to be proud of who they are as Indians; to honor their ancestors, and to walk the "red road".

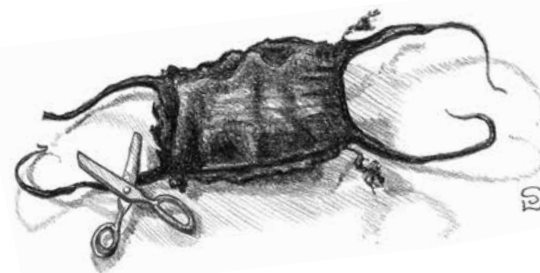
And yet....

At a recent potlatch hosted by the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes, they counted their blessings and not their complaints, spoke with humility and respect, talked of reconnecting with themselves and those around them and of being good stewards of the land. They sang songs and said prayers that have been handed down from generation to generation in a line so long none will ever trace it to its beginnings, because for them it never started or ended. It has been a circle continuing to rotate through the seasons of lives and lifetimes to the drum of heartbeats that have come before and the ones that will come after. It is an unending journey based in faith and hope and grounded in the knowledge of who they really are. And again I am reminded of what it means to be a person of honor and humility.

And yet....

They survive.

Stevie Stephens Burden has lived on the Upper Left Edge her entire life. She is a beach girl, enjoying the easy lifestyle, good neighbors, and the Nehalem Valley community along with four generations of her family that reside here. Although Stevie lives in Wheeler, Oregon her work has taken her many places over the last three decades. Most of that time has been spent working with indigenous people across the United States and Micronesia, helping them protect their cultures and combat the ravages of historical trauma, addiction, and suicide. She also enjoys traveling with her husband Alan, spending time with her five grandchildren, and being the Mayor of Wheeler.



UNDER FIR AND SITKA SPRUCE A HOMECOMING

by DAVID CAMPICHE



Either way, let the liquor flame and reduce in the pan. Add cream and reduce more. Cook down the liquids until the sauce thickens and bubbles. Until the aroma penetrates the kitchen. Season and marry it with tender blanched vegetables, or layer the mushrooms and sauce over a medium-rare steak. Maybe, choose a fillet of local salmon. After all, it's rendezvous time. The salmon are busting up those swollen rivers that feed our bays and finally the Pacific Ocean. Scurrying home. Could anything taste better than an ocean-caught Chinook? Nothing perhaps, unless you consider adding delicate mushrooms to this splendid celebration of field and forest. You might choose Man on Horseback, a Tricholoma, or the Honey mushroom. Or the best of all, the White Matsutaki. Heaven! Heaven in a pan.

Of course there is always a pork roast, supreme when slow oven-cooked, or sizzling on a barbecue grill over a low fire of mesquite. Take your time. Slow cook and slow dance—there are strong similarities. Oh, how I love pork glazed with oven juices, and finally accompanied with thin draped slices of porcini. After all, the world is your oyster. Other samples dangle in our imagination: clams and mussels, scallops, Dungeness crab or crawfish.

Go this fall to your favorite restaurant: Rising Star Cafe, Newmans at 988, The Irish Table, Baked Alaska, The Depot or the Shelburne Inn. There are so many wonderful choices now. Or

go Thai at home! Go Pho! Bring a homemade stock—fish, beef, chicken or vegetarian broth—to a soft roll. Add tamarind, Thai red curry, the fresh leaves of kefir lime. Stir in sautéed Lobster mushrooms or Chicken of the Woods. Simmer the dense mushroom for 20 minutes. Add beef or chicken, or, better yet, that salmon we discussed. Poach carefully. Leave the flesh tender. Add broccoli, sweet onion and a slivered blanched carrot. A poached egg is superb, a finishing touch. Pour all this over cooked rice noodles or Japanese soba noodles. Sprinkle shredded fresh basil over the hot Pho. Better yet, pour all into a hand-thrown ceramic bowl. One shaped lovingly by a local potter. Go to the bowl dinner in Nehalem or Astoria. Buy a bowl and help out the women. You will treasure that bowl, wood-fired by a community of potters at the Astoria Anagama kiln.

Take. Eat. Offer a prayer to your personal food god. If you're lucky, share with family and friends. Where we live life is rich and abundant. Encourage fire in the belly. Gather. Explore.

Cook in your own kitchen for friends and family frequently. Later, walk the trails that lace Northwest mountains and valleys. Gather, yes, but don't take too much. If you're not greedy, plants and herbs and mushrooms will push back. Will replenish. Please, tread with care.

Life is rarely easy, but has its many moments of celebration. Grab the moment. Share the gifts: light from the forest, white spume illuminating the surging surf under moonlight, and the speckled sun motes that paint mushroom caps, here, there, under the gaze of tall fir and Sitka spruce.

Above all else, be grateful.

David Campiche is an Innkeeper of 40 years at the Shelburne Inn in Seaview (in SW Washington State). Potter, poet, and writer, he is forever drawn to the landscape of the Pacific Northwest.

Fall is the seasonal arbitrator between hot and cold, winter and summer. Rain returns, daintily at first, with sighing trees and ebbing water. Rivers rise, sometimes rage. Best of all, the wild mushrooms are back, magical and, in the pan, succulent to our sensitive palates.

The weather is humid, warm and damp. Miles of fungi trails weave invisible nets under the rich soils, under duff and needles. The mushrooms, miraculously, rise up, a phoenix of tender flesh, a blossom of unannounced homecoming.

With devotion to mother earth, I gather up the delectables. I gather 20 or 30 of the best, the select from abundant choices. There may well be a few hundred here, in Clatsop, Tillamook, and Pacific counties, in this corner of the continent, springing up between insistent rain and pockets of sunshine. Overhead clouds charge like gladiators or frolic like otters.

Oyster mushrooms come along first in the late spring. Far inland there are morels. Chanterelles and lobster mushrooms come next, early in the mushroom stampede, poking through the dampness of June rain. Then we wait, not unhappily, but anxiously, for the mother lode of fall.

With those first gatherings, we sauté, grill, stew and bake. Flame the treasures with brandy. Sauté with good olive oil or butter, marry with thick cream or homemade stock. Reduce those liquids along with the sweet dew of the fungi, the richest, most pungent of flavors. Moisture is released from the mushrooms, released in a hot pan. Trap those juices. Savor the savory.

If you want a divine accoutrement to enhance nearly anything edible (fish, fowl, garden vegetables; seafood and red meats), try this. Sauté garlic and onion until translucent. Add two handfuls of sliced mushrooms. Give them 60 to 90 seconds of cook through. Deglaze with white wine or brandy. I love Calvados (particularly with apples). Apples and porcini are a match made in heaven.

again ~ Tricia Gates Brown

*You are no different than asters that fall dead
in sleep, reemerge each year strong and new. By*

*midlife, you had fallen twice. First, watched
the pieces leveled one by one, left to ask what remains
when no one calls, when accolades fester into
gossip, when all our proud self-sacrifice, clever deeds*

*feed the march of maggots. The Perennial Story. Then,
having emerged, you saw it everywhere. How
what dies is nothing and divinity still seeks divinity. How
the brilliance of pigment, the ground-claiming rout*

*of foliage is mistaken for the life force invisible, strong
for the dying. "So," you preached, "let it be.
Surrender to this new birth. You are not the maggot
feed. That is nothing. You are the endless life."*

*Until it happened again. Piece by piece. This time love.
This time justice. This time sense. One by one. The ground
itself dead in a winter of grief and grasping, fierce
grasping to what was dear life. And then finally, it was*

*over, the pain and tearing. You thought it was over. It may
yet be. It is okay to stretch your petals and turn. These
are the clothes you wear a few decades, they may be beautiful.
There is the sun. It is okay to eat create laugh. But*

*can you see? Have you learned the pattern? Again
you will die, you will rise, you will return. New.
More than once if you are blessed
and brave. The final dare is: Let it be.*



*Tricia Gates Brown works as a writer, garden designer, and emotional wellness coach in Nehalem. She holds a PhD from the University of St. Andrews and is the mother of one grown daughter. In 2015 she completed her first novel and the essay collection **Season of Wonder**, and is currently at work on her second novel.*

Dangerous Angels

by Margaret Hammitt-McDonald

"I'm a dangerous man, Will." A year ago, Dad might've grinned and inflected these words with Irish mischief, but Parkinson's disease has scoured his face to expressionlessness and hearing loss has blurred the syllables. "But do you know what's the most dangerous of all?" Dad takes my brother's arm. His fingers, too awkward and swollen to hold with anything less than the entire hand, can startle with their strength, especially as he struggles to stand up unaided. He leans in, confiding, "Angels. There's nothing more dangerous than the angels."

Dementia is cruel, capricious, and chimerical. My father, a retired classics scholar and special-education teacher, has carried with him his impressive vocabulary, but it's difficult to determine if he wields his words with intent or if they rise to his lips like images in dreams, luminous and haunting but not always sensible. His statement about angels could convey insight, profundity, even humor...or it could be a patchwork assembled from memory-scrap. Listening to him speak, you witness a brilliant mind in ruin, transcendence, or both. After a year of caring for him as Parkinson's disease has worn away his ability to care for himself, I still don't know.

When I was a child, I imagined angels like the ones in sentimental postcards, those romanticized winged guardians walking alongside a blond, middle-class boy and girl whose aggressive normality rendered them as iconic as their protector. Yet the angels I read about in various sacred traditions were awesome in the old sense: beautiful and frightening. Somewhere I recall reading that angels, unlike human beings, were not gifted with free will. (This notion did not explain how Lucifer managed to rebel against heavenly rule.) They were magnificent engines of God, praising their maker and carrying out divine instructions.

A person under dementia's sway resembles these angels: compelled rather than choosing, mighty and powerless, dangerous to those who love them and remember them in their full humanity, before they started approaching the great mystery at life's borders.

Where do my father's words, the ones that sound like prophecies, come from? Are they the random driftwood of a splintering mind, or are those splinters cracks through which light, both sacred and difficult, can shine?

I can't always determine what he's cobbled together from his bruised memory and what he's using his still keen intelligence to assemble from the information his fading senses send him. This morning, he tried to drink his bagel with a straw. Another day, he pointed to a fallen tissue and said, "The hotel has nailed the bill to the floor. Can you get it for me?" (He has called his house a retreat center, a library, a museum, and a hotel and, after filling it with books, furniture, and memorabilia for four decades, I suppose it can pass for all of these.)



Sometimes his mistaken impressions worry him. I was changing his sheet one day when he begged me to stop, insisting that the sheet was "my brochure about milking, which I have been trying to find for some time." When I asked him about it, he explained, "It tells you how to milk the cow, but not where," a tidbit he imparted to me as if dispensing millennia-old wisdom. (By "where," did he mean the location of the milking parlor or the udder?)

There's sense in these gnomish utterances. A lifelong city-dweller, Dad was fascinated by country living, from organic farming to traditional furniture-making methods, although he spent more time studying these subjects in books than planting vegetables or caning chairs. Thus, it's not unprecedented for him to collect brochures on milking cows. Another day, my mother was helping him to eat his lunch and, when she took up another spoonful, Dad said, "I'll give Jere his turn." Once Dad had told me about his childhood during the Great Depression, when his father gathered the children in a circle (whether around a table or on the floor I don't know), put a soup can in the middle, and offered a spoonful to each child in turn, accompanying the scant meal with humorous commentary. It's possible that after all these years (and with his brother having predeceased him a year ago), he was offering his next mouthful to his younger sibling.

If it's challenging to decipher the reasons behind an individual statement, it's an even greater conundrum to determine what caused my father to develop this condition, especially with the associated dementia (which affects only a minority of people with Parkinson's disease). Parkinson's is a common but mysterious condition, affecting about one in 100 people in the United States. Its origins are uncertain: it's not genetic, which suggests an environmental cause. In a world awash in toxic chemicals, it's difficult

to identify a particular trigger. Dad was a teacher; he does not remember experiencing any significant toxic exposures, other than having lived in New York City his whole life. He has never smoked, he did not drink alcohol to excess, he was an organic-food proponent, and he exercised moderately; he also has no other chronic ailments. So what has brought him to this pass? In the absence of an identifiable cause, it's understandable why many people take refuge in metaphysics for answers.

Being separate from the angels' realm, and hence receiving whatever messages the universe sends in forms as blunted and obscured as my father's communication, doesn't stop human beings from attempting to find meaning in—or impose meaning on—whatever happens to us. We ask why one person reaches her nineties with faculties intact and strength and reflexes diminished but not vanished, while at the same age another ceases to recognize his spouse and home, thinks he is 19, and cannot dress or use the toilet unassisted. Is it evidence of divine favor that a man gets to hike each morning in his favorite park until the day he dies at age 94? What sins or karma can a lady possibly atone for by living the last five years of her life unaware of who she is, where she is, and what she's doing? What life lesson can she learn when her mind has come undone and she can't reflect on her condition?

These speculations lend themselves to simplistic answers that lay the blame for what happens to us on our prior actions, whether in this lifetime or in another. Such answers don't leave room for change-making. After all, why work to eradicate a life of poverty and discrimination if this is our well-deserved fate? Why strive to create justice for all, including humane treatment of elders (regardless of disability status and cognitive capacity) and those who care for them, if losing one's powers for thought, movement, and independent living is one's rightful punishment? While I champion every effort we humans make to understand our condition, I don't consider it fruitful to ask what "crimes" our misfortunes are meant to make us pay for, including the misfortune of physical and mental decline many experience at life's edge. I'd rather ask how those of us who are (at least temporarily) abler can create a world where people with disabilities can receive assistance with dignity, in accordance with their own wishes and their loved ones', and without discrimination and adverse financial repercussions.

My parents have always been adamant about remaining in their home for life. They have friends who are pleased with their assisted-living facilities, but this is not their preference. Yet the prevailing elder-care paradigm assumes that by default an elder will leave her home for assisted living or an extended-care facility when she can no longer perform daily activities without help. This model is the basis for medical insurance outlays for elder care. This is what many folks, at least in the United States, assume will be their lot, to judge from all the offhand comments about one's children picking out one's nursing home.

As with many people who have Parkinson's, my father underwent a rapid decline: he suddenly went from being mentally intact and caring for himself (even if he shuffled along, taking a half-hour to go from the dining room to the bathroom) to requiring a wheelchair to get around and being disoriented in his home. He also started falling several times a week when trying to move from bed to wheelchair or wheelchair to toilet. It didn't help that he has severely impaired vision and hearing. My husband and I had been caring for him for a month, cooking for him and doing his errands, when he experienced this precipitous loss of function, and we realized that he needed professional in-home care, so we took him to his physician for evaluation.

The doctor was sympathetic and recognized his situation immediately, but Medicare—his primary insurance—only paid for six weeks' physical and occupational therapy and two hours' caregiving three times a week. Eventually, my mother found a wonderful private caregiver in the neighborhood to help him each morning and evening, but Mom has depleted her pension and life savings to afford this. It's unconscionable that our elected officials don't consider it worthwhile to spend public money on guaranteeing our elders their preferred living and care arrangements and affording their caregivers a living wage without bankrupting the elder and his family.

Another angel-related tradition I've come to cherish is the Jewish legend of the Lamed Vav, the thirty-six Tzadikim (just people). These righteous individuals, just by their presence, uphold the world—and the delightful twist is that they don't know who they are, nor do we. Therefore, we're enjoined to treat everyone as if he or she is a Lamed Vavnik. Maybe that kid fiddling with her Play Station on the park bench next to you is one. Maybe the old man who's lost on his own street corner is another. Angels are dangerous, especially when we don't recognize and acknowledge them, when we cease to treat ourselves and others like the angels they, and we, all are inside ourselves, just waiting to release our light.

Margaret Hammitt-McDonald is a naturopathic physician and licensed acupuncturist who has taken a hiatus from her medical practice to help provide care for her father and to study Library and Information Science, specializing in Rare Books and Special Collections and Archives and Records Management. She enjoys writing, reading, hiking, bicycling, gardening, wacky art projects, and quiet time with both human and feline family members.



Midwifing Death

by Lane deMoll

It must seem a strange urge – to work with the dying.
Our culture taught us to resist this sacred Call.

“It’s not for me.”

“It’s too hard.”

“I wouldn’t know what to do.”

“They must think me morbid.... “

Yet with a beloved family member or friend, in a hospital setting as a professional, or simply at the bedside of someone we love, it seeks us out.

And to our amazement
(or perhaps consternation)
we find
joy and fulfillment.
Amidst tears a breaking open of the heart.

Bewildering to those who haven’t experienced it. Scary to those who obey our society’s injunction to hide it away, to pretend it doesn’t exist.

To not look grief and loss in the face.

Yet inevitably Death comes. In one way or another. As unique and individual as we each are in our living (which is in itself a perfect preparation for our dying*). A mysterious passage to which we can sometimes be honored witnesses.

A slipping away.

A monumental struggle to *not breathe* when our whole physical being was made for breathing.

From the first
to the last.....

Often the struggle is apparent. Breaths loud, rasping, rattling. Gasping. (Which may go on for days). Unsettling. But eventually the times between grow longer. And we witnesses hold our own breaths, stilled. Listening... Hoping it is and hoping it isn’t.

The last breath?
Not quite.
Then suddenly it is.



photo: Cathy deMoll

The spirit lifts up and out. If we have the wit and the wisdom

And a certain kind of sight
We can help that spirit rise.
Certainly we can sing to it as it goes.

If we are lucky there is time and inclination for a cleansing of the body. Of the shell that is left.

Soft washcloths. Scented oils.
Beloved body naked and familiar.
Or seen fully for the first time.
Flowers swiped from the sickroom bouquets.
Beautiful scarves or a favorite vest and pair of suspenders.
A soft nightgown.

Each time an improvisation of what is possible, allowed, available.

Wise ones from another culture say, “But of course you want to be here. This is what we do.”

And if we are very lucky we get to sit vigil around the body. As if at a warm fire.

For the night, or the morning. Maybe even a couple of days while those who want to can share in the beauty and magic of this sacred time of passage.
Transition.

Holding space for those who come to mourn.

Giving comfort.
(Perhaps to that newly released spirit as well).
Finding words to celebrate and honor.

Until we are truly ready to let them go.

And if we are very, very lucky
we get to take care of the empty shell ourselves.

In family.
In tribe.
In community.

To create a casket. With loving hands.

Perhaps woven as a basket
or crafted from cedar or pine.
Sew a shroud.
Dig the hole.
Build the pyre.

Usher out with bells. Sing the praise songs.

Set to lie in land we love. Or scattered in special places.

Oceans and flowing streams.
Prairies. Mountain tops.

We must learn these ways.

Re-learn them.
Re-member them.
Re-invent them.

Letting the dying teach us

To heal ourselves and

Recognize that it is a kind of birth.

*In memoriam to those whose passings I have been
privileged to attend.*

*Lane DeMoll wears many hats in her Nehalem Bay
community as one does living in the same place for 40 years.
One of them is fostering conversations about death and dying.
She was born as her maternal grandmother was dying of
cancer and the sorrow of that loss in her family is never far
from her heart. Currently she is part of a local project of the
Hoffman Center called **The Arts of Aging and Dying**. She
also paints, writes, helps start organizations, does ceremony
and Tarot readings and plays Sudoku on line.*

** Stephen Jenkinson's superb thinking on this can be found in
his book **Die Wise: A Manifesto for Sanity and Soul** and
in the film about him entitled **Griefwalker**.*

Alchemy

*In Autumn the red maple by the lake
takes sunlight of late afternoon,
holds fire captive as though in ransom
against the coming cold. Each leaf burns,
the whole a conflagration.*

*Through short October days, as leaves fall, flying,
the fire drops away. The tree defines itself
against the lake in dark, fine turnings,
branchings like pilgrim paths that wander upward.
When sun strikes on a sudden morning
through a frozen fog, the ransom of Autumn lost,
a glory stands in silvered white, a gleam so cold
that now the tree's breath shines.*

*It is as though the tree has lived for this:
neither for the green promises of Spring
nor the blazing heat of Fall's lost bargain,
but rather for this revelation of essential form,
an alchemy of water, air, and light.*

~ Alan Greiner

Alan Greiner has always written bits and pieces of this and that. He has served as a teacher (read guide and mentor) and a director (as before) of theater. For 35 years he and his family spent summers on the shore of Willapa Bay, Washington, at the summer camp site of the Shoalwater Tribe's Chief Nahcotti where, long after the Chief had passed, they hosted their own camps. He's been a resident of Switzerland for the past 25 years, living close to Alpine walking and astonishing geological wonders.

BABY GRAMPS and the GEECHEE GOO by Watt Childress

When musicians intrigue me I listen to their songs over and over again. I want to fully absorb their art, become part of their relationship with the world.

This ritual doesn't just tickle my fancy. Music is medicine. It conjures up ideas, revives memories and unleashes insight.

Here's how it happened one time.

Toward midnight on a Sunday I dropped in on social media. Friends were having a cross-cultural discussion about music. One person alleged that Baptists are less apt to invoke a state of spiritual transcendence than Buddhists or Hindus. The assertion sent me looking for a video clip, figuring the sound of a big Baptist choir might leaven the conversation.

Life is woven with threads from many ancestors.

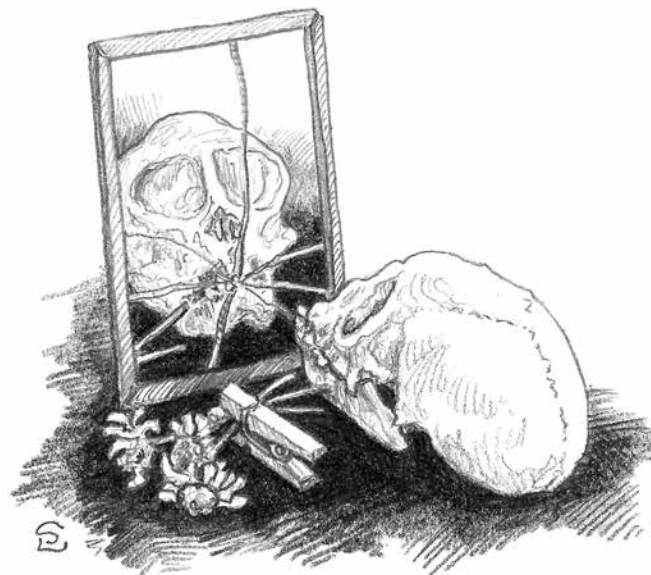
Does the Holy Spirit tinker with internet algorithms? So it seemed when my search engine routed me to the Spiritual Baptists, a denomination of Afro-syncretic Christians who spread throughout the Caribbean from Trinidad. My heart was instantly lifted by their praise music, with its poly-rhythmic pulse and locomotive vocal percussion. I felt opened up by something that was equally exotic and familiar, like I'd turned a corner in a distant land and suddenly realized I was home.

"When I die, I'll live again, oh glory hallelujah..."

Then the phone rang. Dora needed directions to our house so she and Baby Gramps could stay the night. As the Baptists sang in the background I guided her to our driveway. It all strangely fit together. I had just met them a few hours earlier in Cannon Beach, where Gramps headlined an end-of-summer concert for the Tolovana Arts Colony. It was my first sampling of his solo performance, a phenomenon that cannot be fathomed unless it's experienced first hand.

Gramps is a legendary folk artist who's been making music for 53 years, as long as I've been alive. He blends virtuosic guitar skills with an uncanny stage presence and a voice that can sound like a didjeridoo, a coyote, a grumbling prospector, a Tibetan monk, or Popeye. Sometimes while he's playing his body suddenly flexes in a way that reminds me of a startled infant.

My favorite song during his set was "Ghost Train of Freak Mountain," a ballad he performs to summon up memories of folk musician friends who've passed on. In Cannon Beach Gramps devoted the entire song to Billy Hults -- the late washboard-player, publisher of the Upper Left Edge, and co-founded of the Tolovana Arts Colony. He shared some words about Billy as he played, inserting licks from Elizabeth Cotton's "Freight Train." Then Gramps added a "Geechee" rhythm he said came from descendants of former slaves who settled on the Sea Islands of Georgia and the Carolinas.



That's when the evening's music started mixing into gooey medicinal salve. In hindsight, it's all one song.

Geechee is a term that's linked with the Gullah people, carried in chains to this hemisphere from Africa. The roots of their culture broke free of those bonds and spread into their new surroundings. I imagine the Gullah borrowed folkways from indigenous Americans, as did European indentured servants and immigrants. Some of these cultural currents swept south to the West Indies where they contributed to various traditions, including the Spiritual Baptists.

I got closer to those Afro-syncretic roots while conducting field work after college on the island of Saint Lucia, not far from Trinidad. Every morning I woke early and hiked several miles to the forested slopes of Mount Tourney, where I studied birds. Many interesting encounters shaped my time there.

Once I witnessed two elder women singing hymns near the top of Tourney. They were unaware of my presence, so I stood there quietly

admiring their beautiful voices as they clapped their hands in quick syncopated rhythm. Their style of worship was different from anything I'd experienced.

When they finished I introduced myself and explained what I was doing in the bush. In gratitude for their songs I gave them an unopened jar of apple juice (the only thing I had that wasn't dirty or half-used). They graciously accepted, and we talked about birds.

Another time I met a man who was building a ceremonial fire on the side of the mountain. He said he was ritually preparing the space to grow produce. At the time he was tending a small farm further back in the country, and he wanted to be closer to town. He invited me to eat with him at his farm camp later that week, and we had a delicious fish dinner.

The next day I was sitting at a secluded spot on the side of Tourney, a place where I could look out over the countryside. I was wondering whether I fit into the scheme of things, actually praying for a sign.

At that moment I looked down and saw part of an indigenous stone axe sticking out of the earth. I was amazed and humbled to my core. While eating fish the evening before I had noticed a similar artifact at the farmer's camp. He told me that such objects are found where lightning strikes, that a person may go their whole life and never come across one of these "thunderstones."

I picked up the axe and in its place left a special rock I'd found in the backcountry of Utah. The exchange marked an important point in my relationship with creation and the old ones who first called this hemisphere home.

Life is woven with threads from many ancestors. Our time on earth is an unbroken circle according to the Gullah, a view that's shared by people around the world. Birth, adulthood, and death are all integral parts of a whole. In keeping with that worldview, remembrance of the dead is not just a respectful social custom. It affirms a continual bond with loved ones who've died yet remain part of the community.

Some Protestant authorities forbid their followers from maintaining connections with deceased family and friends. I don't know how ancestral ties are handled by the Spiritual Baptists. What I do know is that their hymns move me deeply. They lift up love for someone who died long ago yet continues to play the central role in Christian households. And amidst all the music of that Sunday, they reminded me how such transcendent love connects with every soul.

Riders of the Ghost Train generally shun authoritarianism -- religious or otherwise. When Baby Gramps invokes their memory he upholds the lineage of folks who've long camped at the cultural crossroads -- hippies and hobo songsters and sea-shanty bards, ancestors who learned a thing or two by mingling with natives and servants.

I imagine a jam session across time and space, one that can be heard simultaneously on the slopes of Mount Tourney and Freak Mountain. Billy is wielding the washboard, unseen yet fully in synch. Gramps is throat-singing as he improvises strange and wonderful sounds. I hear women offering up melodies of sweet praise.

May the music be unbroken and hold us together. Listen again.

*Watt Childress sells books in a yellow cinder-block garage across from the playground in downtown Cannon Beach. A compulsive reader and writer, he also publishes the **Upper Left Edge** and serves as chair of the **Tolovana Arts Colony**.*



Stumbling Stones

**There's a way in which water flows.
It knows where to go without directions,
understands how to travel with ease.
No matter the landscape or its depth,
water doesn't question its path or final destination.
It moves where it's taken.
Across shores, around stones, away from sky, against skin.
Ocean. River. Rain. Tears.
We are mostly made of water.
And yet, we forget this.
This beautiful truth is us.
We, who wonder how might it be,
to remember who we really are before we die.
We are not the stumbling stones in water.
We are the tide, the current, the showers, the drops,
the ebb, the undertow, the swirl, the trickle, the flood
We rise. We fall. We flow. We move on.
A map is never needed.
Follow the water.
It will always lead you home.**

~ Lila Danielle

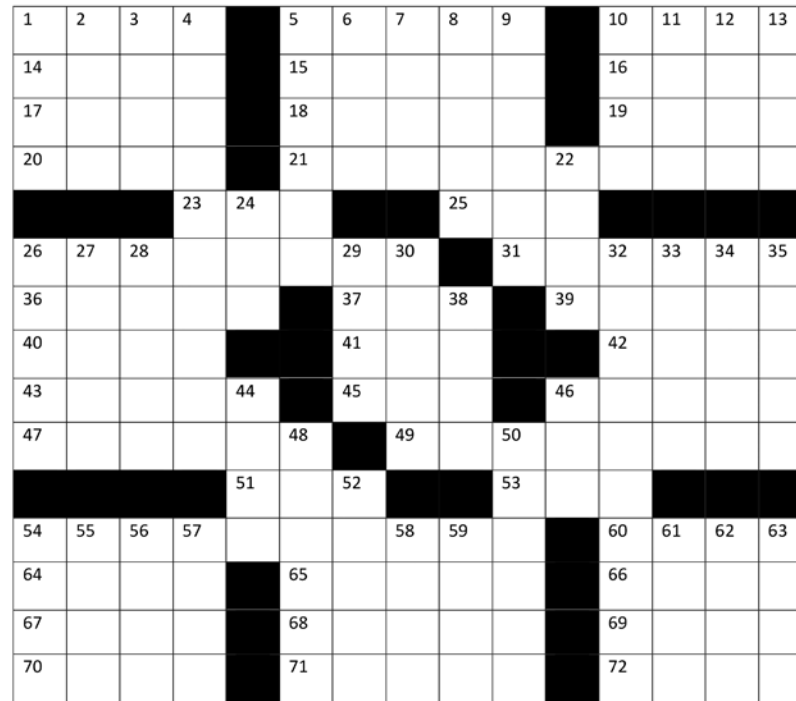
Lila Danielle, previously known as Lisa Evans, is a former full-time Cannon Beach resident who lives on Maui with her husband and fifteen year old cat. She enjoys playing with words, dancing on the beach and sharing her home with others as a bed and breakfast. When she visits family and friends in Oregon, she always looks forward to returning "home" to the north end and spending time on Crescent Beach.

Northwest Oregon

by Danny & Jennfer Rasmussen
edited by Rich Rasmussen

ACROSS

1. Surf's partner
5. French elephant
10. Emp. taxes
14. Space
15. Place named after the Chinook word for whale
16. See 25-across
17. Sense
18. Hot crime?
19. Lewis & Clark once removed it from the ocean
20. Baby powder mineral
21. "The place of God"
23. Beavers' school
25. 16-across who died in 2016
26. Poisonous mushrooms
31. Local group of seniors
36. Puccini opera
37. Low diget
39. Tossed
40. X-_____
41. "Bird _____ Wire"
42. Concerning
43. Decorated Columbian bus
45. Plug in an amp
46. Creep
47. Gillan and Carpenter
49. Hired boats
51. _____ for apple
53. Gawain or Percival



54. Where to find Shorty's
60. Therefore
64. One of many famous Bridges
65. Resulted in
66. Aquatic flyer
67. "Mistake by the lake" lake
68. Yard tool
69. Some beginning?
70. Guys in Dallas
71. Appears
72. Hospital tests

DOWN

1. 27th President
2. Common fertilizer ingredient
3. Baitcast or saltwater
4. Its trailhead can be found at milepost 39
5. Get silly
6. 4,840 square miles
7. Recent Ohio State football star
8. Island greeting
9. Fester
10. Local poetry topic
11. I think _____
12. E. _____
13. Pay up
22. Isn't improperly
24. Australian singer
26. Sharp as _____
27. Java drink
28. Cause _____
29. Tiny power house
30. Sega star
32. Forest delicacy
33. "_____ each sunrise as a gift"
Coldplay lyric
34. Repair a roof
35. Endor inhabitants
38. Per
44. Detail oriented
46. _____ Lanka
48. Inches
50. Noted Titanic perishers
52. Common finding in Uppertown Astoria
54. Adhere
55. When repeated, the end of a song title
56. Lament
57. Oregon author Jean
58. Narrowly defeat
59. Arise (from)
61. Chess piece
62. "The _____ Show"
63. Washingtons

Jennifer and Danny fell in love over the New York Times Sunday crossword puzzle. They currently reside in Svensen, Oregon, where they hope to share their fondness of puzzles with a bunch of chickens and their daughter, Rosalee.



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