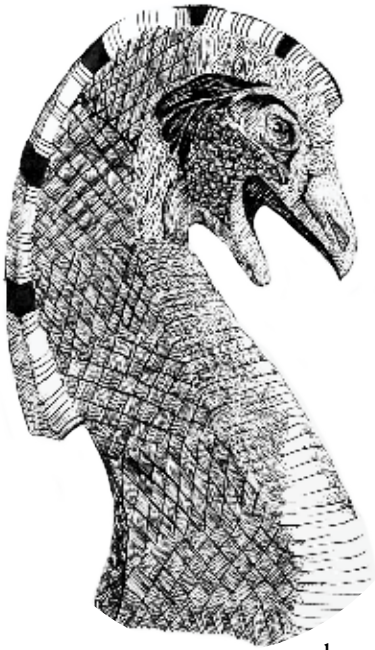


UPPER LEFT EDGE • COM
SPRING SUMMER 2017

*Nordic
Edition*

*We can learn from folks
who love the midnight sun.*





The Latitudes of Formidable Civility

Maybe the abundance of summer sun first lured humans to the top of the world. Or it could have been the fish and berries, or a primal yearning for untamed terrain covered with elk, caribou or reindeer. Perhaps hunters and gatherers felt crowded out by cities and agriculture, or just got the itch to explore. I suspect plenty of folks were escaping tyrants.

Whatever prompted the exodus from humanity's southern cradle, it happened. People adapted to challenging climates where they had room to be themselves. Some of those bloodlines still inhabit Northwest Europe and the Pacific Northwest. Many family trees are rooted in the upper left edges of both continents. We see this mirrored in traditional midsummer festivals, from Stockholm to Astoria.

Stories about human culture are often told by conquerors. Thus the word "Nordic" conjures up images of horn-helmeted men flinging dominion hither and yon, hauling plunder to giant halls where they toasted their exploits. We're drawn to Hollywood scripts about gods who immortalize male egos. Thor, the alpha muscle-head. Shrewd Odin, the patriarch. That crazy bastard Loki.

In his new book *Norse Mythology*, Neil Gaiman says traces of older stories can be found in such brawny myths. Those elder accounts point to deities

of nature, less war-prone but no less formidable. "There are so many Norse stories we do not have," proffers Gaiman, "so much we do not know."

Humility is a grand thing, yet storied truths were written on hearts long before they were scribbled on paper. The DNA of Nordic culture is manifest in egalitarian leadership. Decency is achieved by following that example, so this edition combines personal tributes to Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden (plus a special bonus country at the end). In our pursuit of greatness, these nations remind us how to be good. Their moral compass orients toward true north.

I'm especially inspired by the Sami, whose homeland includes parts of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Russia. Last year a Sami delegation visited the Standing Rock Sioux, bringing gifts of pure arctic water and a special joik (see next page). They came to demonstrate their solidarity with other indigenous people who struggle against corporate tyranny around the globe. Soon after their visit the Sami convinced Norway to divest from banks that fund the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Both Sami and Sioux carry legacies that respect humanity's intimate connections with creation. Their round drums and tepees remind us that these bonds join our hemispheres and are older than the tales found in most textbooks.

How gratifying it is to collaborate with folks who cherish this kind of connectivity. Many thanks to the contributors and advertisers who make it possible. May civility shine like the midnight sun, bracing us for days ahead.

~ Watt Childress

Artist Statement

The illustrations in this edition of the Upper Left Edge were created with ink and brush pens, and watered-down black gouache. The figure on the cover is an interpretation of the Sami goddess Beaivi. As well as being a deity of the sun, she also represents the Spring and reindeer, hence the flowers at her skirt and her animal head.

I chose to depict illustrations rooted in nature because of the role the natural world plays in our lives, especially to the Northerners in Europe. My family has kept information on our Sami ancestors, and this has allowed me to learn about my heritage and relation to people who understand their connection with nature, who use it resourcefully and considerately, and who understand its potency and worth. I hope we can continue understanding this as well -- nature and the importance of its protection and power as a rejuvenating force.

The hand lettering on the cover was created by my mother, Nicole Poole, also visual artist. Done in black ink and applied using a dip pen and Speedball B nib, the runes on the cover spell out 'Upper Left Edge'. It is on her side of the family that I get my Sami heritage, and her from her mother's side.

I have been living in the Pacific Northwest for almost my entire life, and it has been a huge part of my growth, interests, and visual expression. Educated originally at Fire Mountain School, I have a huge passion for nature and am happiest in wild areas.

This Fall, I will be attending college as a Freshman to study visual arts and zoology with a final desired career as an ornithologist. Birds are often used as symbols for freedom, and I believe it's necessary to keep them as free as possible -- free from confinement and environmental catastrophe -- and I wish to take part in rectifying these issues.

Aside from drawing and exploring various ecosystems, I also enjoy hiking, writing, reading, and sometimes running.



Joiks

by Israel Nebeker

I first encountered the word “joik” in a linguistics class in my first year of college. It was an example the professor used to demonstrate the way language is not always translatable between contrasting cultures. In English, we would translate “joik” to “song,” the closest word we possess. There are quite a few distinctions between a joik and a song, but my professor focused on one difference: a song, in our culture, is meant to be representative and evocative of its subject. Joiking, to the Sami, is meant to embody the very nature and spirit of who or what it is singing.

As a student of music and songwriting, I was beyond fascinated. But also, synchronistically, it was around this time that I was learning about my own Scandinavian ancestry, and learning that my line comes from the Sami people. It was after that school year that I visited Norway for the first time and my dad showed me places he used to live. We explored Oslo, Bergen, and travelled north, where we learned of the specific Sami village our family comes from.

What I find most amazing about the word joik is that although it illuminates cultural perspectives distinct from our own, most of the concepts it holds are already quite familiar, on a personal level, to any artist. Joiks have a powerful relationship to the communities and culture of Sami. Members of the community are given joiks, and this unique melody ties the individual to traditions and meaning that the community holds. A joik does not belong to the writer. Instead, it is perceived as its own entity, which comes and is given. Joiks are circular, often without beginning and end, mimicking the circular cycles of sun and season. Some joiks have a role in shamanism, used to heal or to change the course of events.

I have a lot to learn still about joiks, but by learning these concepts I can glimpse an idea of the deeply connected perspective the Sami hold with regard



to community, ancestry, nature, and art. As a songwriter, most of these concepts seem common sense to me. I hear musicians and artists in my community often expressing these same notions, but without the full vocabulary to connect them to our broader culture.

A couple of years ago was a pivotal point in my life, and I found myself writing songs from a new perspective. A lot was shifting. I found need to write in a way that connected personally to family and community, and which gave to my dad, who was moving through cancer and the end of his life. It was in this time that a few melodies and lines came to me that struck me as sounding like joiks, and so I tried to bring them into songs with that in mind. I included one of them on my recent album, *And Then Like Lions*. The melodic patterns are influenced by an album of Sami joik field recordings, and the structure of the songs are more circular than how I usually work. Certainly it is an appropriation of an art form that I still have a lot to learn about, but an appropriation with respect in its intention.

The Sami’s story in relation to the established countries their land resides in (Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Russia) is a tragically familiar one to the United States. Religious and economic pressure from these countries in recent centuries has taken land, resources, language, and culture from the Sami. In the 18th century, with the onset of Christianization, joiking was forbidden and regarded as an evil conjuring of spirits and the devil. In the 20th century there was a major planned economic push to wipe out the Sami culture and people completely.

At a unique point in human history, when the world’s dominant cultures are focused almost entirely on what is new and yet to come forth, it’s easy to forget that there are countless invaluable gifts of knowledge and wisdom that have come from a different kind of advancement. They come from our own lines of ancestry and from indigenous peoples around the world. They require our curiosity, our humility, our respect, and our protection. These truths filtered and distilled through the hands of so many generations hold a value beyond measure within any single one.

*Israel Nebeker is a songwriter from the Oregon Coast. His intricate folk-driven songs create an intimate space akin to the rainy, wild, sandy landscapes of his home and to the people whose stories belong to it. Nebeker’s songs have reached the top ten of Billboard’s national charts and have connected with a worldwide audience. With his band, **Blind Pilot**, he has appeared on NPR’s Morning Edition, World Cafe, Late Night with David Letterman, and The Ellen Degeneres Show. Nebeker is a proud member of Astoria’s dynamic art scene, following in the footsteps of his father, artist Royal Nebeker, who played a prominent role in the Columbia-Pacific arts community.*

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what love's got to do with it

ANU PARTANEN'S **THE NORDIC THEORY OF EVERYTHING** by Lotte Greaver

Imagine you wake up one day with universal health care, nine months parental leave, subsidized quality child care, five weeks paid vacation a year, free world class education from pre-school through university and affordable elder care. Would you dismiss these benefits as the trappings of a socialist nanny state that quashes any sense of personal determination while levying exorbitant tax rates? Or would you swallow that nagging sense of envy, and wonder how this is possible and where you can sign up?

Of course you want to know more and need to read Anu Partanen's very timely book, *The Nordic Theory of Everything - In Search of a Better Life* (2016 Harper Collins Publishers). This is an eye opening primer on how the Nordic countries (Finland in particular) manage a societal structure that provides one of the highest qualities of life in the world. By contrasting everyday life in her native Finland to that of America, her newly adopted country, Partanen holds up a mirror that very kindly shows us where we stand as a modern nation. She moved here for love and has a great affection for America and its people, but her experience of the modern American Dream showed her a reality peppered with anxiety, stress and social injustice.

If you had dismissive thoughts about socialism, it would behoove you to read this book and gain a little perspective. The social benefits enjoyed by people in Finland are realized in a strong and competitive free market economy, governed by parliamentary rule. These benefits are funded by an average tax rate of 30%. (Do the math - it's a good deal.) With equal benefits, all people in Finland are provided the optimum conditions for a life of freedom, independence and opportunity. The multi-party government operates on the principle of consensus. Finns expect nothing less than full transparency and flexibility from their elected officials.

One of the aims of the book is for Americans to look at our lives and understand that we can live them better. As we progress deeper into the twenty-first century, there needs to be a reassessment of our national assumption that a country with a strong welfare state (or "well being state" as Partanen views it) is weak. The rest of the developed world has realized that the true path to modernity is created by providing all citizens with a social support that forges a much stronger, happier and resilient populace. We alone are falling behind the majority of the developed world in this regard.

This is not to suggest that we all become Nordic. Partanen instead posits that Nordic peoples and Americans share at their core an intense sense of individualism. Independence and self-sufficiency are key to the Nordic sense of self. Extend this value into relationships and the true beauty of this book is revealed: "that authentic love and friendship are possible only between individuals who are independent and equal."

Partanen draws on the social research of Lars Trägårdh who coined the phrase, "the Swedish theory of love." This explains that "the overarching ambition of Nordic societies during the course of the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first, has not been to socialize the economy at all, as is often mistakenly assumed.

Rather the goal has been to free the individual from all forms of dependency within the family and in civil society; the poor from charity, wives from husbands, adult children from parents, and elderly parents from their children. The express purpose of this freedom is to allow all those human relationships to be unencumbered by ulterior motives and needs, and thus to be entirely free, completely authentic, and driven purely by love."

"The Nordic theory of love" is how Partanen rebrands this concept. As the through line of the book, she highlights how it works in practice in the relationships of parents and children, men and women, employees and employers, and government and citizens. Imagine not having to take a specific job because of the health insurance, not being afraid of bankruptcy in the wake of a cancer diagnosis, not having to move heaven and earth to afford a college education, not having to choose between losing a job or caring for an elderly parent.

This is a heady notion -- pure love equals freedom. Both exhilarating and terrifying. Remove dependency in a moral society and the only thing standing in the way of achieving your best self is your self.

Throughout her well-researched book, Partanen maintains a strong voice of optimism that given the full facts, Americans would jump at such a way of life. Being Americans we will represent many views on the whys and why nots this could work. What a hopeful thing that as a nation we could holistically look at our civil, social and political structures and seek to heal the root causes of inequality and injustice. As we perch on a tipping point seeking a way forward, hats off to Anu Partanen for bravely pointing out a better way, with love.

Lotte Greaver lives in a circle of elder pines at the base of Ecola State Park and is daily reminded of the transcendent beauty of the natural world.

Everything in nature has a soul.
Sami saying



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ANIMAL SHELTERS AND CONSERVATION GROUPS.**

***Last summer
the farm where my mother was born
where my Finnish grandparents homesteaded
in Northern, Northern Minnesota,
burned to the ground
in a forest fire.***

In 1914, they built the sauna first
It sheltered the families
of the immigrants
as they proved their claim.

Sauna meant shelter
and fire and warmth.
A place to wash.
They cooked
on the hot stones
and slept
on the long benches
covered with rag rugs
made of clothes from Finland,
long worn out.

Boppa helped his brother
build his homestead.
All that winter,
my grandma, my Aiti,
was alone
with a toddler
and a babe in arms.
The only people she saw
were two Chippewa
who came by for food,
the winter was so harsh.

The Robber Barons
had cut clean the land
sere and barren.

My Grandfather
planted lodge pole pine.
When I was little,
I thought these trees
were virgin forest
they grew so tall.



At sunset
the light would slant
down between the trunks
spilling long shadows
across the lawn
down the hill
to the brook
with the hand-hewn bridge
and the water skeeters.

On the other side,
wheat gone wild
these fifty years
blew in the wind
under piles
of bright clouds.

At night the fog would rise
and spread between the birches
reflecting impossible stars
covering the blueberries
muting the hoot of an owl.

Once my Mother and I,
grown women,
rolled down the grassy meadow
and nibbled wild strawberries
right from the plant.

The lazy summer porch has burned,
along with the fishing poles
and the 22 Aiti used
to clear woodchucks
out of her garden
And silly plaques like
"The earth is 2/3 water
and 1/3 land."
The Good Lord
kinda figured you'd fish
more than you'd plow."

Little Bible verses
spelled out in
alphabet macaroni
decorated with grains
and flower seeds.

Ancient magazines
in the secret place
above the stairs
where you could listen
to grown-ups.
Three generations did.

In the kitchen
The big school clock,
ticking.

Upstairs,
oil in the
kerosene lamps
slanting from the tilt
of the house,
slowly
sinking
into the brook

The stable touched me most.
On it hung a scythe
worn with years of use
and a whetstone
to sharpen it,
large and round
its wheel and bench
grown over with moss
since Boppa died.

Inside: real sleigh bells!
The cream separator.
The felt Sami boots
that Boppa wore
to walk over the snow
that piled up clear
to the second story.
The iron bed
in which my mother was born.

All this has burned.

Only one tree grew high enough
to reach above the fire.

They saved the houses
with the people in them,
but left for the flames
the one with ghosts
the one
of memory.

~ Katja Biesanz

Katja Biesanz is a half Finn storyteller, dancer and poet with a passion for both cultivated and wild herbs. A Qigong teacher and a licensed therapist, she offers holistic counseling, ceremony and healing in Portland and on the North Coast. She and her husband Coby have stewarded land in Falcon Cove for fourteen years.

How can we be more like Finns? by Victoria Pitkanen Stoppiello

Finland celebrates its centennial this year and, given my Finnish heritage, I've received many lists touting Finland as the "first" (to allow women to vote) or "best" as in public education. I was born in Astoria and raised in the lower Columbia region with such a strong Finnish identity that I have no perspective on Finnish social values or politics - no perspective except if it's Finnish, it must be good.

After two decades of thinking about it, my husband and I spent five weeks in Finland in 2015 and the trip provided many tangible examples of how we could improve life at the local level, regardless of the national political climate.

Preparing for the trip, I read the usual tourist promotion literature, but it wasn't "usual" by American standards. Finland's tourism literature emphasizes two things: Nature and Quiet. If you want to calm yourself, Finland is the place to go. You don't have to go to a National Park or wildlife preserve to encounter Nature and Quiet in Finland. The first hint of this was landing at the Helsinki airport and using the restroom. Gleaming high-design fixtures -- the kind you see in upscale mid-century housing knock-offs here in the U.S. -- were accompanied by birdsong. Startling. Not Muzak. Not raucous rock, but what came to be (for us) the familiar song of the mustarastas, an otherwise unremarkable blackbird that sang from every grove of deciduous trees in Helsinki. "This is different," I thought. What American enterprise would use a source of music that cannot be bought, but only needs to be provided a habitat? Retailers and public spaces in our area could use the melodious song of our native Swainson's Thrush.

That was the beginning of the differences that we noticed: No litter on the sidewalks or roadways, 745 miles of bike paths in Helsinki alone, 1300 miles of driving (all the



way to the Arctic Ocean) with no potholes, a transportation system that integrates buses and high-speed trains as well as highways, where what we call "technology" makes systems easier to use, not more complex; a school system where administrators also teach and teachers have the same status (and pay) as physicians and attorneys, and where students spend time outdoors every day regardless of the weather. All these ideas could be implemented on the local level if we had the will. A Pacific County commissioner friend said, referring to the potholes, "That's because they do it right in the first place. We're never willing to spend the money to put down a really good base."

Finland has long, dark, cold winters. Helsinki, at the southernmost tip of the country, is roughly as far north as Anchorage, Alaska but somewhat warmer as is all of northern

Europe -- as long as climate change doesn't shut down the Gulf Stream. Compared to the US, Finland has limited natural resources, a difficult climate, and hundreds of years of domination by first Sweden, for 650 years, and more recently, Russia for roughly 100 years which ended in 1917.

I've often pondered two questions: How did the Finns, controlled by authoritarian monarchies for so long, pop loose, form a democracy and keep doing it for 100 years without periodic upheavals? Part of the answer to this is Lenin, who found sanctuary in Finland during the run-up to the Russian Revolution. Once the Bolsheviks took power in Russia, Lenin's principle, that all people deserve self-determination, meant that Finland became a sovereign nation almost immediately.

My second question has been, How did the Finns see themselves as Finns long before the country was recognized as such? Part of the answer for this "Finnishness" could be the Finnish language, that shares no similarity with languages in many other countries. One interesting peculiarity in Finnish is there is no pronoun for "he" or for "she." There's just one word "han" for a human. That language distinction may explain my own attitude (raised within a bilingual family) that women are automatically as capable as men -- and ought to be recognized as such. Women's suffrage has been part of Finnish life since 1906, the first in the world, and 14 years earlier than in the US. With female leadership, the Sami, the indigenous peoples of all the Nordic countries, held their first international conference in Norway in 1917; the modern Norwegian Sami Parliament requires half the members be women. That idea, requiring women to have an equal voice with men within our institutions could also be adopted in local organizations.

There are a lot of Finns in the Lower Columbia region. While subtle, their impact on community institutions is exemplified by the old Columbia River Packing Association, formed so that Finnish fishermen would have a role in the value-added part of fisheries. A more recent example is Coast Community Radio, founded by two people with a bright idea - one of whom is Rebecca Rubens, partly Finnish, full-time artist, who is also a founder of Astoria Visual Arts. And, you can't leave out Dinah Urell, another Astoria Finn who is editor, publisher and one of the founders of Hipfish and Kala (fish in Finnish), a cultural venue. And you don't have to look far to see Finnish-Americans like former Clatsop County Commissioner Peter Huhtala pushing policies to protect fish and habitat for everyone, you and me included.

The concept of private property is present in Finland but it is moderated by "every man's law," which provides everyone's right to walk, gather berries and mushrooms, even camp, on land anywhere in Finland, as long as you do no harm and don't camp too close to a home without getting permission. Walking on another's land doesn't count as trespassing. This Finnish concept may explain my own propensity to walk right past "no trespassing" signs with the belief that the real intent is "don't blame the property owner if you get hurt." Until about two years ago, an industrial timber tract about a quarter mile from my home had a sign indicating a similar policy: "Come on in, walk, bird watch, even hunt, just don't trash the place." That policy changed when the tract was acquired by Stimson Timber, who quickly put up standard no trespassing signs and clear-cut the forest.

There are obvious things we can do to make life a bit more pleasant right here on the north coast. We only need to muster the courage to educate, innovate, organize, and speak out -- and not be afraid of being accused of Democratic Socialism.



Sami Parliament building - Norway

postscript

More than 30 years ago I had a very vivid dream: I was in a far northern area with lots of water and not much vegetation. It seemed like it was late winter or very early spring. I was standing outside a large circular building, similar to a yurt, but probably 150 feet in diameter. Around the exterior of the building were a series of doors that looked like hatch covers mounted horizontally like awnings. An older woman was with me; she opened one of those doors and said, "You could stay here." Inside was a cubicle large enough for a person to sleep and store some gear. I responded "Yes, this will do."

Jump forward to 2014. At the Finnish-American Folk Festival in Naselle I saw a film "Suddenly Sami," a documentary produced by a young Norwegian woman seeking her family's roots. Her attempts to get straight answers from her northern Norwegian relatives failed. Eventually she went to the Norwegian Sami Parliament located in Karasjohka, Norway, a few miles from the Finnish border to research ancestors. When the film showed the Sami parliament building, I caught my breath, astounded. It was very like the building I had seen in my dream.

In 2016 when we traveled to Finland, we visited the Norwegian Sami parliament. The visit was somewhat anti-climatic probably because by then I had been steeped in many aspects of Finnish culture, including hints in my cousins' homes at the Arctic circle. One cousin had a photograph of the sacred island in Lake Inari, where only the Sami shaman are allowed to go and many relatives' homes had "special rocks" near the entrance...just like I do.

I've only told the story of my dream and the image in "Suddenly Sami" to a few people; the best interpretation I've received was that it was precognition. I am now the old woman and I am saying to myself, regarding staying in Finland, "Yes, this will do."

For more information about women's suffrage in Finland, go to:
allscandinavia.com/finnishsuffrage.htm.

For statistics about many aspects of Finnish society, go to:
www.stat.fi/ajk/satavuotiassuomi/suomimaailmankarjessa_en.html

*Born in Astoria and raised in the lower Columbia region, Victoria Pitkanen Stoppiello lived in Berkeley, Boulder and Portland before moving to the Northwest coast in 1985. Since 1996 she has been an essayist, news and feature writer for the Chinook Observer, the North Coast Citizen, Hipfish and the print version of the Upper Left Edge. Her collection of essays, **This Side of Sand Island: Reflections on Fish, Finns and Finding out about Family in the Lower Columbia**, was published in 2016. She currently lives near the North Fork of the Nehalem River.*





Icelandic Sojourn

by Judson Moore

As my wife Suzy and I make our way across the brightly polished wood floors past towering glass windows it feels more like we are visiting a modern art gallery or an Ikea store than arriving at an airport on a remote Nordic island in the middle of winter. Waiting for our shuttle, the baggage claim area suddenly erupts into applause as a young blonde woman emerges from the crowd followed by a gaggle of TV cameras. I ask a traveler next to us who she is.

“Oh, that’s Olafia Kristinsdottir. She is returning home after winning a spot on LPGA tour,” he says matter-of-factly. “She is the first woman in Iceland to make it this far in golf.”

It turns out that the reception of this female pro golfer says a great deal about how this nation values the role women play in its society, government and golf courses.

Founded by Vikings in 874, Suzy’s ancestral homeland has always been a fiercely independent country, and it has become a leading voice for women’s rights over the past two centuries. The first settlers fled from Scandinavia to establish a free society on the harsh and beautiful volcanic island. Having no desire for another king, they quickly established a General Assembly made up of locally appointed representatives who met yearly to establish laws and settle disputes. Established in 930, the Althingi remains the world’s oldest parliamentary democracy and was eventually led by the first woman to be democratically elected president.

Despite being a divorced single mother, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was elected at age 41 as Europe’s first female president. She served four terms in office from 1980 -1996 as a champion for women’s rights which had gained the world’s attention during the 1975 general strike by Icelandic women. On October 24 of that year, 90 percent of women took a day off to emphasize

the importance of women’s contributions, both in paid and unpaid work. Then on October 24, 2005, Icelandic women left work at 14:08, which was the estimated time when women had earned their pay -- based on women’s pay as a percentage of men’s pay. Close to 50 thousand people went to a rally in downtown Reykjavík, which was around one third of all Icelandic women, the largest meeting in Icelandic history to date. In the years since these landmark events, women’s issues have made important strides in areas such as health care and the workplace. Parliament has recently taken up plans to become the first country to require equal pay for women.

While traveling throughout Iceland we quickly got the sense that the working people we interacted with seemed content with their lives. There is a strong sense that everyone counts in their society, which has one of the lowest crime rates in the world and police officers do not carry firearms. The country has even gone several years without seeing a single murder. It is not uncommon to see single young women walking alone late at night in downtown Reykjavik or catching a ride from a stranger. Partly due to its geographic isolation and relatively low rate of immigration, Iceland has remained a largely heterogeneous population since its inception. Because there is virtually no difference among upper, middle and lower classes in Iceland, tension between economic classes is almost non-existent. A study of the Icelandic class system found only 1.1% of participants identified themselves as upper class, while 1.5% saw themselves as lower class. The remaining 97% identified themselves as upper-middle class, lower-middle class, or working class.

Several times on our trip we found ourselves wondering what it would be like to live in a country where everyone feels like they are on the same team and their government is looking

out for them. College tuition and healthcare are funded by the state while taxes are relatively low compared to other Nordic countries. More than half of government expenditures are for health, education and public assistance programs; while defense spending is less than 1 percent (Iceland has no standing army).

What has this country of 330,000 people at the top of the world figured out? They seemed to know how to get along with each other. Was it the geothermal water, their 99% rate of literacy or their belief in Elves? They had managed to survive the financial crisis of 2008 and come out the other side looking better than ever. While our own country struggled with its polarized view on how to make America great for everyone, this little Nordic nation pulled together and made it all look efficient.

As the rest of the world continues to discover this magical utopian outpost in the North, one can’t help but wonder if it can remain true to its egalitarian vision, environmental purity and independent spirit. When the news broke that a 20-year-old woman named Birna Brjansdottir had disappeared while walking home from a Reykjavik bar the morning of January 14th, we were stunned.

After her mother reported her missing, the police began a massive investigation, reviewing security camera footage showing Ms. Brjansdottir staggering home along the main shopping street and possibly getting in to a red Kia rental car. Despite launching the largest search and rescue operation in Iceland’s history and investigating hundreds of tips they were unable to find the missing woman. Then police discovered video of the red Kia parked at the docks of a Greenlandic fishing trawler. After discovering traces of blood in the car, police flew by helicopter to board the

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The Venerable Bede's eighth-century *Ecclesiastical History of the English Peoples* describes an encounter between Christian missionaries and England's "barbarian" ancestors. One glimpse of the tall, sturdy Germanic warriors prompted a missionary to exclaim that the heathens must be angels. Someone corrected him, "They're not angels; they're Angles," "Engla," from which the words "Englaland" (England) and "English" evolved.

By the Middle Ages, England had become a multi-ethnic society: Britons, the original Celtic inhabitants; Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, who began migrating from a region below Denmark in the fifth century; Vikings from Scandinavia, who invaded and then settled from the eighth to the tenth centuries; and Norman peoples from France, arriving with William the Conqueror in the eleventh century.⁽¹⁾ The period's literature reflects this polyglot composition. *Beowulf* was written in Old/Anglo-Saxon English between the seventh and ninth centuries and interweaves mythology and Scandinavian history.⁽²⁾ Bede's History is an early attempt to define English peoplehood. Other semi-histories like Nennius' *Historia Brittonum* and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* represent efforts to supply medieval English people with both a coherent past and a legendarium, whether the latter is the Arthurian cycle or the Iliad, with Trojan refugees establishing a new empire on British soil.⁽³⁾

Nineteenth-century nationalism rekindled interest in these stories. Scholars and political figures claimed *Beowulf* and other works as Northern European epics, whether tied to national groups in the making (as with Grimur Thorkelin's 1814 edition of *Beowulf*, which the editor-translator claimed as a Danish saga) or to a nascent pan-Germanic identity.⁽⁴⁾ Anglo-Saxon "angels" became ideals of Germanic warrior manhood: loyal to their brotherly bands, stoic in fighting and loving, and noble in death. They were recruited posthumously into the army of white supremacy, incorporated into a mythology that canonized "Nordic" peoples as the angels and supermen ordained to dominate the earth. Their strapping but clean-cut image inspired the early twentieth-century eugenics movement and culminated in the atrocities of Nazi Germany.⁽⁵⁾

Because of the vile use to which Bede's barbarian angels have been put, it's understandable why many people are uncomfortable studying them. So why, in my senior year of college, did I waver between applying to rabbinical school and a PhD program where I'd focus on Old and Middle English Literature? What attracted a nice Jewish girl to *Beowulf*? Can the study of Northern European cultures ever be free from the shadows of nationalism and racism?

To address the personal side first: J.R.R. Tolkien made me do it! I've always been attracted to deep time, to origin stories and misty beginnings.

Discovering first the Grail legend when I was eleven and then *The Lord of the Rings* when I was thirteen answered these longings and also intensified my thirst to learn more. I found that Tolkien's magisterial work had been inspired by his expertise in medieval English, Norse, and Icelandic languages, and my desire to delve into the literature he loved caused the PhD program to win out

over rabbinical school. During the '90s (I received my PhD in 1997), cultural studies across academic disciplines prompted scholars to question Eurocentric biases. My love for medieval legends as origin stories became a more nuanced appreciation for the medieval period as a time when both cultural/religious pluralism and intolerance flourished, when fanciful stories about voyages to other lands revealed insecurities about "otherness" in the guise of dog-headed monster-people.

Eventually my own otherness confronted me in a medieval mirror. Medieval anti-Semitism is an

instructive and chilling example of how a majority culture demonized a minority. Jews began migrating to England in the seventh century, but they were still so few in number that not many Christian English-people had personal encounters with one. In the absence of real Jews, "the Jew" became a symbol for difference (of a sinister, despised kind) at a time when "Anglish" people were beginning to define themselves as a distinct culture.⁽⁶⁾ Medieval writers' fascination with and fear of difference is a rich area for investigating - and is more relevant than ever after the 2016 election, when long-simmering hatreds have surged back to the surface, surprising those of us who'd hoped a postracial society was on the near horizon.

I believe rejecting Northern European studies as an academic discipline because of racist associations would be a mistake, but so would promoting the field without confronting those associations. We need a whole history -- devils, angels, and ordinary mortals in between, those who cooperated, those who resisted, and those who consented with silence. For centuries, "history" has meant European history, and that unjust imbalance must be rectified. Not only history but the future also belongs to the world's cultures, and European hegemony must end. Reclaiming Northern European studies from abuse by racist agendas should be part of this process. If reputable researchers and academic programs reject the discipline as abstruse, irrelevant, or tainted, we'll be abandoning it for the white supremacists to claim as their own.

Margaret Hammitt-McDonald is a naturopathic physician and licensed acupuncturist who took 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.

Not ANGELS But ANGLES: Anglo-Saxon Studies and the Specter of White Supremacy



by Margaret Hammond-McDonald

¹ *Beowulf*, a Dual-Language Edition, Chickering, Howell D., editor and translator, New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1989: 259. ² Chickering 247. ³ Chickering 259.

⁴ Frantzen, Allen and Niles, John D., editors, *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity*, Gainesville: U of Florida P, 1997: 8. ⁵ Frantzen and Niles 8-10.

⁶ Scheil, Andrew P., *In the Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2004.

Robert Michael Pyle

The Day *After* the Election

A red oak leaf and a brown beech leaf lie
across a wet sword fern frond in the late sun.
A chorus frog does a hoarse solo on the hill,
a flicker cries a series of sharp single notes.
The sun falls, the mist rises all over the valley.
These things at least, I guess,
will go on.

November 9, 2016



The Day *After* the Inauguration

A pair of goldeneyes spin and dive
in a riffle below the covered bridge.
Hazel catkins swell and stretch,
not long till budburst. Back home,
chickadees have found the feeders
at last! Feared they weren't coming
at all this year—but here they are.

January 21, 2017

*Robert Michael Pyle walks, writes, and studies natural history in Gray's River, Washington. The latest of his twenty books are **Chinook and Chanterelle: Poems** (Lost Horse Press) and **Through a Green Lens: Fifty Years of Writing for Nature** (Oregon State University Press).*

Icelandic Sojourn ~ continued from page 8

ship at sea, taking two sailors from Greenland into custody. Ms. Brjansdottir's body was later found washed up on a remote beach outside of town.

Back home we felt brokenhearted reading news reports of the developing story. Just a few weeks before we had met with my wife's Icelandic cousin, her daughter and granddaughter for fish soup by the harbor. Now it was hard to imagine how these three generations of women felt about their home. Icelanders reacted with shock and outrage that something like this could happen in their peaceful land, and at the hands of their Greenlandic brothers. A memorial service was planned for the mourning country who considered Brjansdottir a daughter of everyone, with many posting "I am Birna" and messages of condolences to the family on social media. On January 30th, 10,000 people joined in a march in downtown Reykjavik to show their support. This event comes

as the boom in global tourism brings almost two million yearly visitors to this fragile and beautiful island. Already, women have reported feeling less safe walking alone at night or using informal ride sharing services to get around town.

The pressures of a tourist economy will continue to challenge this vibrant land and its people, yet history shows their resilient, independent and hopeful spirit will remain strong. And there is little doubt that women will play an important role in shaping what's to come.

Judson Moore studied journalism at the University of Oregon. He has lived at the coast since 1997 and currently owns Unfurl clothing boutique with his wife, Suzy. You might recognize him from his 15 seconds of fame on KOIN TV's news coverage of the Manzanita tornado.

The vision was of dog sledding, and a small cabin perched on the rocky edge of the sea. We were well above the Arctic Circle, two hours driving distance from Tromso, one of Norway's most northerly cities, and we had come for snow! Arriving shortly after the Winter Solstice, the light was gradually returning, but at a hairs length. The most you could hope for was a few hours between 10 am and 2 pm, and even that was murky and singed in darkness, looming like an indigo specter of night. The sun never fully breaks the horizon at this time and latitude in winter, and we had strong desire to experience that. Plunged into the womb of Polar Nights, we crossed our fingers and held out hope, that the Aura Borealis might dance this night in the obsidian sky.

WARM NORWEGIAN WOOD BY VINNY FERRAU

She did not, but the first night was glorious nevertheless.

Grabbing some provisions at a well-stocked portal, some warm soup and buttered bread, we set out for a long jaunt into the pervasive darkness and ever beckoning snow. Although there was much less of the white stuff than usual for that season, I was grateful for it. Living in Oslo, we had none. Zero. Zip.

Twenty sixteen had been one of the warmest snowless winters since the 1950's. There were days I wore nothing more than a shortsleeved tee shirt and an ultra light down vest, and still was sweating. We had fog and light rain. Misty dew-drenched mornings. I was beginning to think I had brought the Pacific Northwest with me. But here at last, remote and most northerly, there was snow!

We walked under the stars, laughing and giddy, as winter's embrace worked her magic. At one point, I strayed slightly away from my family, to lay vaunted, in joyful meditation, coddled by the earth's alabaster bosom of white.

The next day held promise. We woke to orcas frolicking and cavorting in a cerulean fjord, as the mid morning snow gently fell. But by late afternoon, it all seemed to drastically change. The weather warmed and it began to rain. It rained hard and blew fiercely for almost 24 hours. From our cabin we could view the white of the frozen landscape, gradually giving itself over to earthen mush. We checked temperatures in between board games and potato chips. Tromso, Norway was warmer than Cannon Beach, Oregon! Athens, Greece huddled at 26 degrees, while we were roasting at a balmy 42, and this at 10:30 at night!

What had happened?

Those who know me know I cherish the white downy flake. So I move to Norway, and Portland

out snows us? Olympia Washington buries us in an avalanche of winteriness, of which my daughter never fails to flaunt.

Dog sledding was now a prospectors defeated dream. The snow shoes I'd brought slept fitfully inside their snug, zippered case. We decided to head back to the city and perhaps take in some of Tromso's winter charm. (It was pouring there too.) Yet before we did, I took a lone walk, determined to meet the Heart of the Arctic and gently pose a shocked and forlorn question.

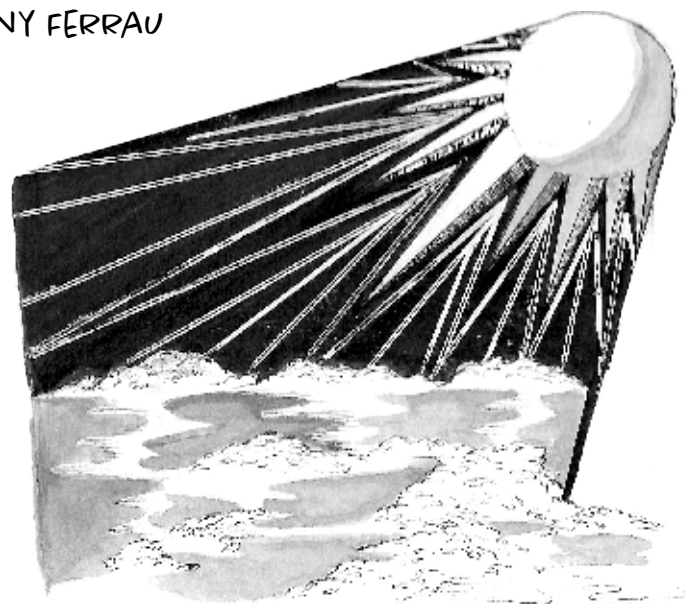
Why?

It was still raining, but it let up enough for me to gain some distance and some ground. The quiet was deafeningly sensual and profound. Walking briskly, I had stripped down to a tee shirt and sweats, and again, I was sweating. I had to remind myself of where I was, high in the Arctic, in winter! The silence, and the slow breath of the land calmed me. I stood for 45 minutes in the same place, listening to the sacred nothingness that is at the heart of All Things.

I was loath to leave, but I was not alone, and on the return drive to the city, I queried our local host as to what had happened. A life long resident, he told me that eight or ten years ago, something shifted, something changed. Where before they'd remain snow bound for months, now rain and a warm southerly wind dominated the landscape. The snow-filled solace of most of his life had been replaced by thin rubber boots and plentiful mud.

I had heard similar stories in Oslo. Winter used to begin in October and end very late in March... maybe. This year Christmas was without any snow, and no snow appeared remotely in the forecast. Only rapidly climbing temps, and a sparingly tapped into winter wardrobe....waiting.

I don't have answers, only observations, and an innate sadness that the greedy and imbalanced



hand of man is playing some crucial part. No matter what happens, no matter what countries do or don't do, We as a People, Individuals, and as a collective, have a responsibility to do our Best! To think about, be conscious, and change ways and modicums that lay a serious hurt upon our precious Mother and its sorely dependent inhabitants.

The way is clear and blessed with an abundance of environmentally friendly alternatives in the form of hemp, wind, solar, and free energy, just to name a few. Wherever we are, lets do our part to make a lasting difference. One single act of kindness and consciousness can create a welcome blizzard of sustainable change.

I thought about this as I picked my way cautiously along Oslo's thinly iced streets, trying hard not to slide towards an irrevocably grim future.

Vinny Ferrau moved to Oregon from New Jersey in 2010. A healing arts practitioner, Vinny has studied with indigenous peoples in Siberia and South America. He began writing poetry in earnest while studying and eating moon pies at Evergreen State College. He's currently writing a book and wandering the hinterlands of Scandinavia.

DRINKING FROM THE STREAM OF TIME

by Gwendolyn Endicott

Odin, from Norse Mythology, is a sky god who inhabits the top most branches of the World Tree. The World Tree is huge. Its roots go deeply back into Time, through generations of peoples and cultures, through the changing millennia of Earth itself, to the very belly of beginnings. The branches of the World Tree grow far into the heavens and vanish from human sight.

Many sky gods feel superior to Earth, much like mind tends to feel superior to body. But Odin is drawn to storm, to clouds racing across the night sky split by lightning. Perhaps this passion stirred in him Desire -- for Odin Desired beyond the realm of most sky gods. Odin wanted to drink from the stream of Time. He wanted Memory. He knew it would be painful; he knew he wouldn't always be in control of memory. Still, he desired its gifts so much that he was willing to give one of his eyes so he could look inward.

Some fear the pain of memory and choose not to recollect. They become, as Joanna Macy puts it, "psychically numb." Others crucify themselves with the pain of the past; they cannot see beyond it. They create a story that tells of their suffering, their wounding. They tell it over and over. It becomes who they are. It is a powerful drink, this gift of Memory.

From the gods' dwelling place in the topmost branches of the World Tree, the story goes, Odin became aware of activity deep in its roots. He knew something important was happening there. But he could not see it clearly. It looked to be three women spinning and weaving, spinning and weaving. He could almost hear the hum. But what were the mysterious hieroglyphs they carved in the roots of the tree? He wanted to Know.

Whereas the Viking ships sought adventure in conquest of outer seas, Odin leads us on an inner adventure in the deep Sea of Self. Odin is wise in the way of Ancient Mother Wisdom. He has heard that there is a Sacred Well of the Mother, that a drink from the well can give him Wisdom, can give him Sight. But he finds that a Holy Priestess protects the well.

"I would drink of the waters of Wisdom," he tells the Priestess of the well. "You can't just come and take of it," she says, "you must give up something



Photo by Jeremy Twin-Bear Wetter
Bear's Lens Photography

as well." She would not tell him how much was required. Still, Odin knew it was his way of Seeing that he had to surrender. He wanted Vision. He wanted to see inward and not just outward. He offered his eye for a draught of the Waters of Wisdom.

When Odin drinks of the well, he experiences what it is like to become human: he experiences change and loss. Now as he sits in the top-most branches gazing into the depths, he can see more clearly. But what he sees is his own dying. There is something he still does not understand. "The mystery," the myth tells us, is only revealed to the Worthy." Suffering and death are part of the surrender. "I know I hung on that windy tree, swung there for nine long nights, wounded by my own blade, bloodied for Odin. Myself an offering to myself: bound to the tree that no man knows where the roots of it run."

The violent images of "hanging" and a "sword in the side" are metaphors -- and realities that reflect cultures of war and

conflict. Although physical injury and death are pathways of Initiation, I prefer the equally powerful, but gentler, metaphor: that one must transform to allow more spirit light to enter. On The Tree of Life everything grows and changes, withers and dies, sprouts, and grows newly.

Odin is hung on the tree for nine nights. The birthing time (nine months) was spoken of as "nine-night" in folk language. It was a sacred time. From the birthing blood and waters, from the pain and letting go, new life was born. It was a time "to make sacred." This is the core meaning of the word "sacrifice" (sacre/sacred; fice/make). Odin experiences "dying to himself" and transformation. As Odin surrenders, he "sees" the Runes, the words of wisdom rising from the depth of his consciousness. He knows them as initiations in the soul's journey through life.

He can also hear, rising from roots, the sound of singing, singing and spinning. He hears the three Norns, busy with the weaving of creation. In Norse mythology, this is the way they are described: "Urd, the wise and ancient Norn, teaches lessons of the past while Verdandi, who is young and fearless and straight forward, bids good use of the present; and Skuld, who is closely veiled warns the Gods of future evil."

When I come to this part of the story, I find myself re-inventing their song. The Old One sings of the Past: "These are the threads I bring. They are strong. They are rich in Memory. They are filled with gifts."

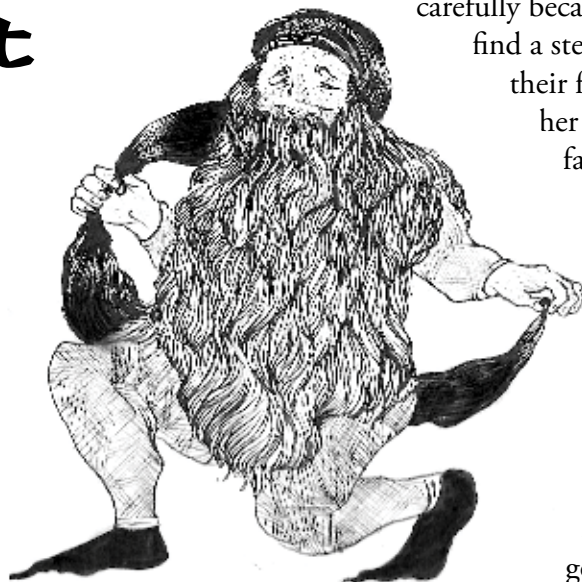
Swedish Spirit

by Deborah Boone

Hejdå!! (hi) I am writing to tell you some interesting things about Sweden.

Did you know that if you have a certain family name and you meet someone else with the same name and you both have family within 50 kilometers of each other in the same region in Sweden and come from towns or areas that happen to be connected by water then you can be fairly certain that you are related? Many couples got together when one floated a boat down a waterway to the next town or took their church boats to a town along the lakeshore and stayed in little stugas (cabins) on Saturday night before attending church on Sunday and then floated back to their home towns.

Does your home have a little ghost in it? Maybe from a previous owner who died there and didn't quite make the final heavenly trip at the end of life..... Ghosts are everywhere in Sweden. You can find them in old hotels out in the countryside and homes that have been inhabited by the ghost's family members for several generations. There is usually a good story to accompany them. In one such manor house, a young girl who served the house master as a maid (and other purposes) was pushed or fell down a steep staircase hidden in a wall that lead from the master's bedroom to the kitchen. Since it was a somewhat nefarious situation she was never completely spirited away to heaven but entered the netherworld because her master had banished her from his bedroom. When she returned in tears to beg his acceptance he was already on to the next maid and so in his haste to get to the new girl he pushed the first one down the stairs where she died halfway. To this day a visitor to this old shloss (castle) can find a hidden door in the wall (look



carefully because it is nearly invisible) and when pushed open they find a steep staircase and feel a cold wind blowing up into their face. Sometimes a faint plaintive cry is heard...likely her spirit is still trying to re-enter the master's world but falling short. He was an unimportant man.

House Tomtes are in every house in Sweden. These little spirits can be good or bad and can cause a great deal of grief for the home's people when they want to be naughty. Many people have a representative Tomte that they place in different rooms at different times in order to bring good luck or happiness to those within. When my house Tomte is being naughty I turn his face to the wall and make him stay like that until I believe he is going to change his behavior. You can also have a car Tomte, an office Tomte and so on.....until next time, Hejdå!! (bye)

Deborah Boone is serving her sixth term in the Oregon House of Representatives (District 32, in the northwest corner of the state). She started in public service as a volunteer for political and issue-based campaigns during college in the 1960s and 70s, including the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). In 1974 she moved to Clatsop County where over the next 15 years she served on the Head Start Policy Council and as coordinator for the Necanicum Watershed Council. She's also served on the Clatsop County Commission and many other boards and task forces in the area. Her work in the legislature has involved sea floor mapping, emergency preparedness, fisheries, forest practices, small business, tax policy, law enforcement, education, consumer protections, services for seniors and veterans, environmental protection, health care, and renewable energy. Of Swedish decent, Deborah is the co-owner of a construction company and has owned and operated a restaurant and catering business. She and her husband live on their family tree farm and have two grown children.

Stream of Time continued from page 12

The Young One sings of her Beauty, of her joy and laughter. She chooses surprises. She chooses adventure. The third One, the One who creates the pattern, the One who creates the imprint on the future, she sees Beauty and Harmony. She sees growth and Love.

The stories surrounding the Nordic Runes have roots that go back to the 12th century. Yet, the wisdom that they offer still speaks clearly of the soul's journey and the initiations along the way. Ralph Blum in his book on the Runes, calls them "Divine Play," a guide along the Path. When I feel confused or blocked, I often look to the Runes for guidance and wisdom.

*Gwendolyn Endicott, a mythologist and storyteller, has taught college classes and workshops for over forty years. Endicott grew up in the forests of Oregon and in her 60's created Wanderland, a rainforest sanctuary on the Oregon coast. She is the author of three books: **The Spinning Wheel, Crone Trekking in Coyote Land, and Tales of Wanderland***

∩	∩	ƒ	X	∩	strength	separation	signals	partnership	the self
Y	∩	∩	X	∩	protection	defense	fertility	constraint	initiation
↑	<	∩	∩	ƒ	warrior	opening	harvest	joy	possessions
R	H	∩	M	B	journey	disruption	flow	movement	growth
∩	∩	I	∩	∩	unknowable	wholeness	standstill	breakthrough	gateway

Classic rock fans often wax nostalgic about guy-bands from across the pond like the Beatles, Rolling Stones, and Led Zeppelin. For me any tribute to trans-Atlantic music must spotlight a mixed-gender group from Sweden.

ABBA played a sweet role in my musical upbringing. I was reminded of this recently while watching a video of the group performing in 1976, with a young girl on the dance floor spinning around to *Dancing Queen*. The video brought back memories of watching ABBA on American Bandstand, our version of MTV. In those days, roller-skating rinks were popular and it wasn't uncommon to hear an ABBA tune during the "snowball," when the boys were supposed to ask a girl to skate around the rink until you heard the announcement "It's an all-skate everybody," and the pressure of not being asked to skate was relieved.

The Night is Young and the Music's High by Tracy Abel

I first discovered ABBA while fishing through my parents' record collection. I loved to look at the group's album covers, and marvel at the crazy outfits the band was wearing. I especially liked the double album cover showing the blonde singer (Agnetha Fältskog) with her cool hat tilted sideways, wearing gauchos and leather boots, and the guy next to her reading the paper. On the other side of the cover was the red-haired singer (Frida Lyngstad) wearing a knit poncho and kissing some bearded guy. I truly felt sorry for the blonde girl who seemingly was being ignored by a man I assumed was her husband or boyfriend.

Fast forward to 1991 and I am now in college. While the scene was all about grunge and Nirvana, I would listen to ABBA, confused by love, and drive around blaring the song *The Name of the Game* singing out the following lyrics, "If I trust in you, would you let me down? Would you laugh at me, if I said I care for you? Could you feel the same way too, I wanna know what's the name of the game?" I felt like it was my personal anthem to one particular boy and if given the chance I probably would have dedicated it to him on some sappy late night radio station. The relationship didn't last and a couple years later my CD player was on constant repeat of *Winner Takes it All*. Critic Chuck Klosterman wrote that ABBA's "*Winner Takes it All* is the only pop song that examines the self-aware guilt one feels when talking to a person who has humanely obliterated your heart."

Now, when I listen to ABBA, songs such as *Mama Mia*, *S.O.S.*, and *Take a Chance on Me*, I can't help but sing along and remember fondly that scratchy sound of the needle on a record, when your TV had only four channels, and summer meant running through sprinklers. That was a time when no kid, or parent for that matter, carried a cell phone. If your parents wanted to call you, they would open a window and yell outside that it was time to come home. It was the carefree summer days of outside entertainment such as Hopscotch, Kick the Can, Red light Green light and Mother May I. As a kid growing up in the 70's I thought these were pretty great and simple times. ABBA's music still makes me feel as if I'm six years old, reminds me of a love that I once knew, and still provides me with some of my favorite earworms of all-time.

Tracy Abel is a certified meeting professional who has worked in the event and meeting planning business for over 15 years. She and her husband Todd Rowley live in Cannon Beach, where she co-chairs Friends of Haystack Rock and is treasurer of the Tolovana Arts Colony.



My Scandinavian heritage comes from my mother who shares both Sami and Norwegian blood. She and I would make seasonal saft cordials and put them up for winter in beautiful cut-glass bottles. When the holidays arrived the bottles would be brought out and the cheerful berry concoction would be served in dainty little glasses. Saft is a delicious berry concentrate that is enjoyed throughout Scandinavia. It is generally non-alcoholic but is enjoyed mixed with spirits or in the bottom of a glass of champagne as much as it is enjoyed as a refreshment served simply with sparkling water.

We thrive in wild lands of abundant water, migrating salmon and an impressive array of wild berries. I often find myself thinking of my ancestors while I pick berries under the golden sun, my hands stained and bucket getting heavier with bounty. I remember berry picking with my family, the incredible flavor of a perfect blackberry or a bright raspberry. I remember looking at my own children's faces, their cheeks rosy with juice and sticky hands reaching for more. I remember saft cordials and tarts. Years when the salal berries were impossibly sweet. The breathtaking sight of the bright pink-red huckleberry punctuating its lacy leaves with ladylike elegance. And salmonberry, thimbleberry, and the tamarind-tang of the berry grown by native lily-of-the-valley.

These remembrances run deep. They not only connect me to my ancestors but are a reminder of the original people who harvested the rich bounty that we have here in the great Northwest.

To make Saft gather berries when they are ripe. Cook the berries in water and sugar (sweeten to taste). If you wish, add a little lemon! It adds a nice brightness to the flavor. Mash the berries as they cook. Strain the mash through a few layers of cheesecloth. It will take some time and, when it's cooled enough to handle, gather up the cheesecloth and squeeze the remainder of the juice from the mash. Strain the juice once again before bottling or canning. You could also buy a mid-grade vodka and add your fresh juice to make a delicious cordial (think Anne of Green Gables, and her fateful tea with Diana when they drank too much cordial!). Above all, enjoy in good health: Skål!

Nicole Poole is a visual artist of Native Sami and Ashkenazi Jewish descent. She spends her time primarily between the coast and Portland.



IN DEFENSE OF **hygge** by Lotte Greaver

When the everyday stresses of life and the worrisome script of national and world politics become too much, we all have our ways of coping -- be it a cathartic primal scream, active protest or involvement in political office. But there are times when a retreat is in order. Not so much as in flight or fight but as in considered rest -- closing the doors to the world, lighting some candles, setting a pot of tea to brew and putting something melodic on the stereo. This is what my parents did recently to bring sanity back into all the chaos.

Inspired by a tin of homemade Finsk Brød (Finnish Shortbread) leftover from Christmas and found tucked in an odd corner of the freezer, they decided on the ritual of a tea party to shore up their spirits. The shortbread are traditional Danish cookies from a recipe my mother has been making every year since she moved to America from Copenhagen to marry my father. They are sublime in their simplicity, crisp and soft at the same time and best served in peaceable companionship and savored slowly. This is just how my parents enjoyed their cookies.

When they told me about this mini-retreat, I told them it sounded like *hygge*. We shared a slightly self-conscious laugh. Hygge is a Danish concept that has been getting over-played by the media lately. It directly translates as coziness. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as: “*A quality of coziness and comfortable conviviality that engenders a feeling of contentment or well-being (regarded as a defining characteristic of Danish culture).*” Shopped around by blogs, articles and books as the best new lifestyle trend going, images of Danish interiors aglow with candles, mid-century modern furniture, sheepskin rugs, chunky woolens and the like proliferate, illustrating how to get the hygge vibe.

All this attention is also tied to Denmark consistently showing up as one of the happiest countries in the world in the United Nations annual World Happiness Report. What is it that makes these people so content? This small nation of outdoorsy Danes enjoy beautiful northern summers. There is a high tax structure that provides generous social benefits (including universal health care) as well as stabilizing one of the smallest wealth gaps in the world between the very rich and the rest. It is very child friendly, has fabulous culinary traditions and a strong appreciation and support of art and culture. Plus they've got Legos. No list would be complete without mention of this quintessentially Danish company that competes on the world stage while pursuing sustainable and planet-forward practices.

As magical as Danish summers are, the winters are very long, dark and damp. Not inherently happy-making but that's where hygge shines. Forgo focusing on the material trappings of hygge mentioned earlier. (Except perhaps candles.) While the Danish design aesthetic is certainly very lovely and integral to the country's culture, that doesn't create hygge, though it may be a happy result of this mindset. This Danish notion of coziness or comfort comes from long evolved experience in how to live in and truly care for your surroundings, be that your living room or your country. It is about paying heed to the moment and making it the very best it can be with whatever is at hand. It is a way of being with yourself and others, feeding the need for connection as well as retreat. As a way to survive the Nordic winter with peace and sanity intact it works beautifully.

As a child, I loved the extra dimension and perspective that living with a blend of cultures provided, from my mother's charming accent to general family hilarity at her take on American life (what kind of wondrous American cows produce eggnog

and why do complete strangers call you honey and please don't make me say refrigerator!). Being of two worlds felt like a gift, especially celebrating Christmas with both American and Danish traditions. When my mother baked her Finnish Shortbread, the season became embodied by the crunch of sugar in the dense buttery dough. Yet, for all the gifts and sweets presented by this occasion, the cherished moment was always when we gathered simply amid candlelight, making the choice to be fully present, connected to each other and the rest of the world in stillness and in peace. That's hygge. And it is not limited to winter.

I have a distinct childhood memory of walking to the beach in the small southeast coastal town of Dragør just outside of Copenhagen. The walk afforded glimpses into the beautiful cottage gardens that served as outdoor living rooms for residents during the summer. In one, a group of elderly ladies gathered, taking in the sun while drinking tea, chatting with great animation and smoking cigars. It is the novelty of the latter detail that greatly appealed at the time, but seeing it with older eyes, it is the ease of companionship and the comfort taken from a well-tended garden that resonates. The women were completely connected to their environment and obviously making the most of every moment. It looked like hygge -- and happiness.

If you're wondering how to pronounce it -- find a Dane, ask them and share a smile.



Finsk Brød - Finnish Shortbread

Grate **2 cups of cold butter**. European style butter offers the best results for its higher fat/lower water content. Sift **4 cups flour** into a large bowl and add **1 cup sugar** and a **pinch of salt**. Add grated butter and knead by hand or use a food processor to quickly combine - being careful not to overmix.

Shape dough into ball and chill for about 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Roll out dough to a thickness of 1/2 - 3/4 of an inch on a floured board or between layers of wax paper. For this version of the cookies, shape dough into a large diamond shape. Using a sharp knife, slice rows in the dough apx. 1-2 inches wide (depending on the size of cookie you desire) along one side of the diamond and then slice rows along the adjacent side, making diamond shaped cookies.

Whisk **one egg** and brush over the dough and sprinkle liberally with **chopped almonds** or **walnuts** if you prefer. Optional: For extra sweetness and crunch, lightly sprinkle with **coarse sugar**. Transfer individual cookies to greased or parchment lined baking sheets far enough apart to allow for some spreading. Bake for about 10 minutes. Keep a close watch and remove cookies when a very light golden brown. Make sure to sample the cookies warm from the oven though they are best eaten cold from a favorite cookie tin.



DEMOCRACY IN CONCERT: *the northern tour*

by Watt Childress

National borders shape the way we think about ourselves. They frame stories about how people behave in groups. They trace the reach of our empires and the spread of our legal codes. Yet what we learn from human relations across these borders tells us more about who we are than any lines on a map.

What is humanity's place on earth? Northern Europe points us in a progressive direction, with a model of government called "Nordic social democracy." This model combines free market capitalism with a comprehensive social safety net that benefits from collective bargaining. Some people call it "democratic socialism," which can seem confusing.

The word "socialism" was burned into America's psyche during World War II, when it was coopted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the National Socialist German Workers Party (the Nazis). Both of these so-called "socialist" regimes were authoritarian states ruled by dictators who suppressed the civic freedoms modeled by true democratic socialism. They were driven by the pursuit of power and material domination rather than love of freedom, justice, creative exchange among cultures, and human rights -- ideals that undergird all open societies.

Nordic countries endured a violent tug-of-war between Stalin and Hitler. Then they navigated the Cold War by keeping ties with the West while seeking to avoid further conflict with the Soviet Union. What emerged were free nations that have become global leaders in health care, education, economic security, public safety, and environmental protection. Having held the line against despots, they've reaped the rewards of social democracy.

That freedom did not come easy. Finland's military was tested severely by Stalin's aggressions, for example. Between 1939 and 1944 the Finns fought two bloody wars to repel the Soviets and retain control of their homeland. Hard-earned victories in those conflicts now enable them to mark 2017 with a centennial celebration of their unbroken independence.

A short distance across the Gulf of Finland, the country of Estonia wasn't as fortunate. Like Finland, Estonia gained its independence from the Russian Empire early in the 20th century. But it was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940, then by Nazi Germany a year later, and was annexed by Stalin again in 1944. Many Estonians who fought the takeover were killed outright or deported in cattle cars to work camps in Siberia.

When speaking of Nordic nations, few people include Estonia. Yet this tiny nation of 1.3 million is comprised of folks whose language and cultural traditions are closely related to that of Finland. Estonians have

long called their country *Põhjamaa*, which means "the Northern Land" or "the Nordic Land." They are a venerable people with a deeply-rooted history. Researchers estimate they have inhabited their region for 5,000 to 8,000 years.



Most Americans know almost nothing about Estonia, which is a little smaller than New Hampshire and Vermont combined. Recently I mentioned the country to a young friend. His sole reference-point was the 90s comedy flick *Encino Man*, in which California teens uncover a frozen ice-age youth while digging a backyard pool. He thaws out, they clean him up and christen him "Link" (as in "missing link"), then pass him off as an Estonian exchange student. Link helps his new friends overcome the social trials of high school. The film climaxes on prom night when live music inspires him to lead his classmates in a caveman dance.

Encino Man was released in 1992, the same year Estonian citizens ratified a new constitution by national referendum. The country had just reclaimed its independence from the Soviet Union following four years of struggle. Authoritarian rule had hit a crossroads. Leaders in the Kremlin were compelled to restructure their system due to poor economic performance and inadequate living conditions. This initiative, known as *perestroika*, cracked the door open for self-determination in satellite Soviet republics.

A test of the new approach occurred when Moscow announced plans to develop phosphorite mines in Estonia, exposing the country to large-scale environmental degradation. Estonians launched protests and petitions against the plan, exercising free speech that was previously unthinkable behind the iron curtain. The mines were stopped, and a successful campaign by citizens to protect their country bolstered the drive for democracy.

Something magnificent happened during that time. Large public gatherings prompted spontaneous singing of traditional and contemporary songs. The singers unleashed feelings of deep affinity for their homeland and affirmed fidelity to freedoms by which they could reclaim their autonomy. In 1988, a massive song festival attracted 300,000 people,

nearly a quarter of all Estonians raising their voices together. Public leaders were present and citizens witnessed the first open calls for self-governance. Estonia's "Singing Revolution" was born.

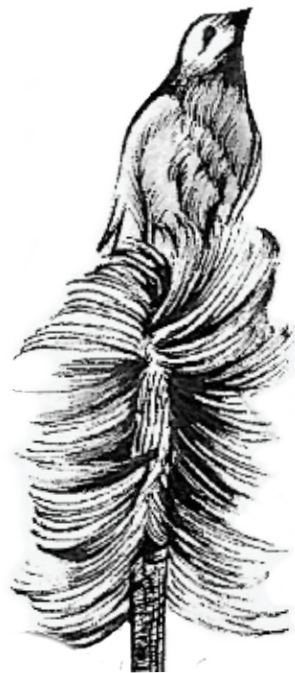
By that point, all political parties had joined together in calling for independence. Protests grew with broader public sanction. Citizens gathered as human shields to protect local news outlets from being hijacked by Moscow. The following year, upwards of 700,000 Estonians linked hands in solidarity with 400,000 Latvians and 1,000,000 Lithuanians in a call for freedom that spanned the Baltic nations.

Nordic and Baltic peoples share this passion for democracy. Estonia bridges these groups, and their Singing Revolution links to something deep in humanity's soul. They reclaimed their freedom in an inspirational way, and the memory of that liberation is still vibrant.

So it instructs us all today, as autocrats expand their spheres of influence to control the globe. The resources for engaging in this struggle have changed, with the internet now weaponized to quickly spread propaganda and fake-news. In response, Estonia has become one of the most digitally-connected and tech-savvy countries on earth. NATO's cyber defense hub is based in the nation's capital of Tallinn. This tiny nation is a key ally in the fight to prevent authoritarians from hacking elections and commandeering public policy.

A deep human drive for freedom will always resist rule by the few -- whether those few are feudal monarchs, communist dictators, fascist oligarchs, or mob capitalists who rise through the ranks of business as usual. The latter is our greatest threat here in America. We've been insulated from despots for so long that some of us seem unable to recognize tyranny. Many now equate freedom with unregulated corporate power and commercial expansion. Inclusion in the decision-making process seems less important to us than having money to spend at our favorite chains.

Democracy should not be confused with consumerism, warned Estonia's President Kersti Kaljulaid at a trans-Atlantic meeting of leaders earlier this year.



"Too many people in the world associate democracy with their ability to go buy more and more every year. I come from a country where it's much more popular to remind people that democracy is available at every income level and this is something which you need to protect... The freedom of speech. The freedom of thinking. The freedom of coming and going."

These words feel like a beautiful old song, a gift of wisdom from beyond the borders to fortify the freedom in our hearts. Resistance to authoritarian rule launched the American Revolution and it's still a popular theme in teen movies. We have it in us. Time to thaw out our frozen devotion to democracy and revive our commitment to social progress.

Watt Childress publishes the Upper Left Edge and owns Jupiter's Books in Cannon Beach, Oregon. He raises a small herd of dairy goats with his family, enjoys organic apples, and loves many kinds of music. His writing has appeared in various publications. He serves as chair of the Tolovana Arts Colony and secretary of the Nehalem Valley Farm Trust.



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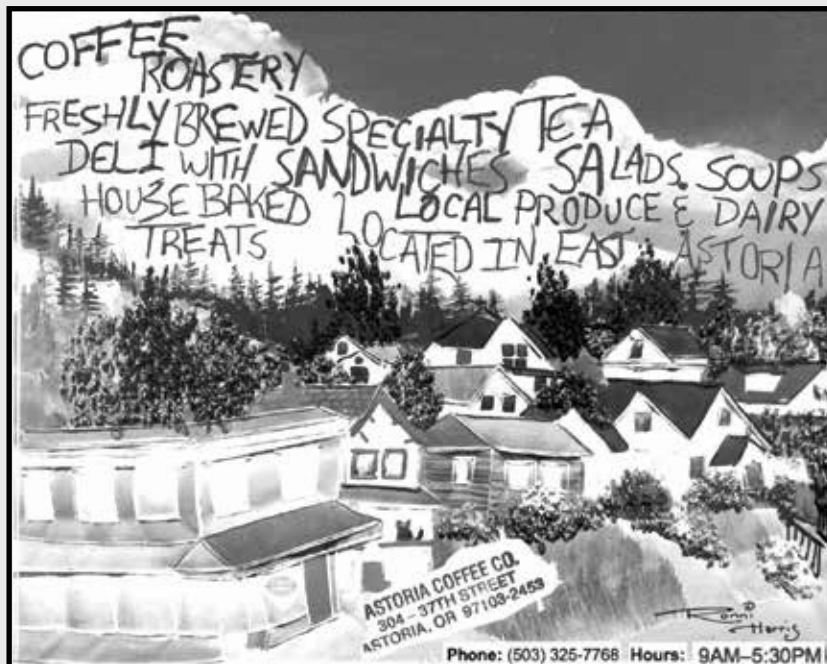
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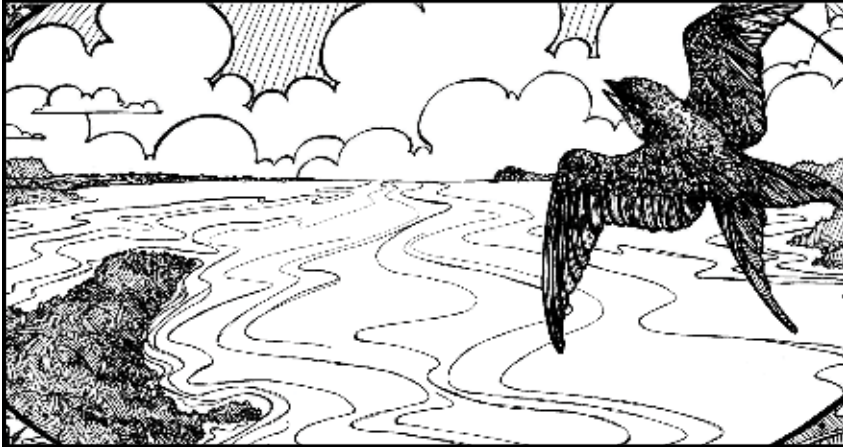
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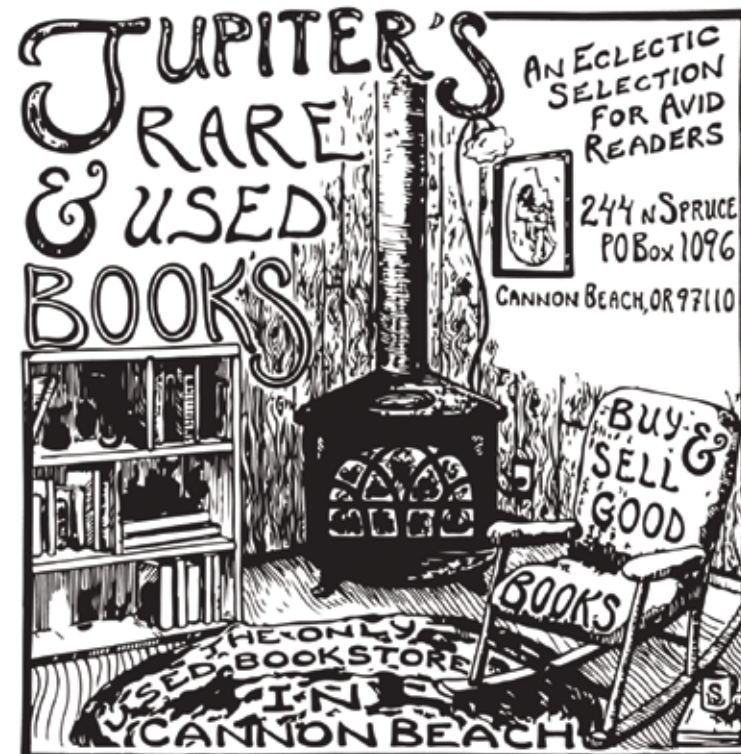
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