

**FALL 2020**

Cover Art

-

Moonlit String  
Silje Christoffersen

-

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this edition is dedicated to the pain and loss  
suffered by many this year, 2020.  
we offer a humble bow to those grieving from  
COVID 19, Black Lives Matter, wildfires,  
political polarization and more.  
may this art meet you on your path and walk with  
you, as a neighbor does.

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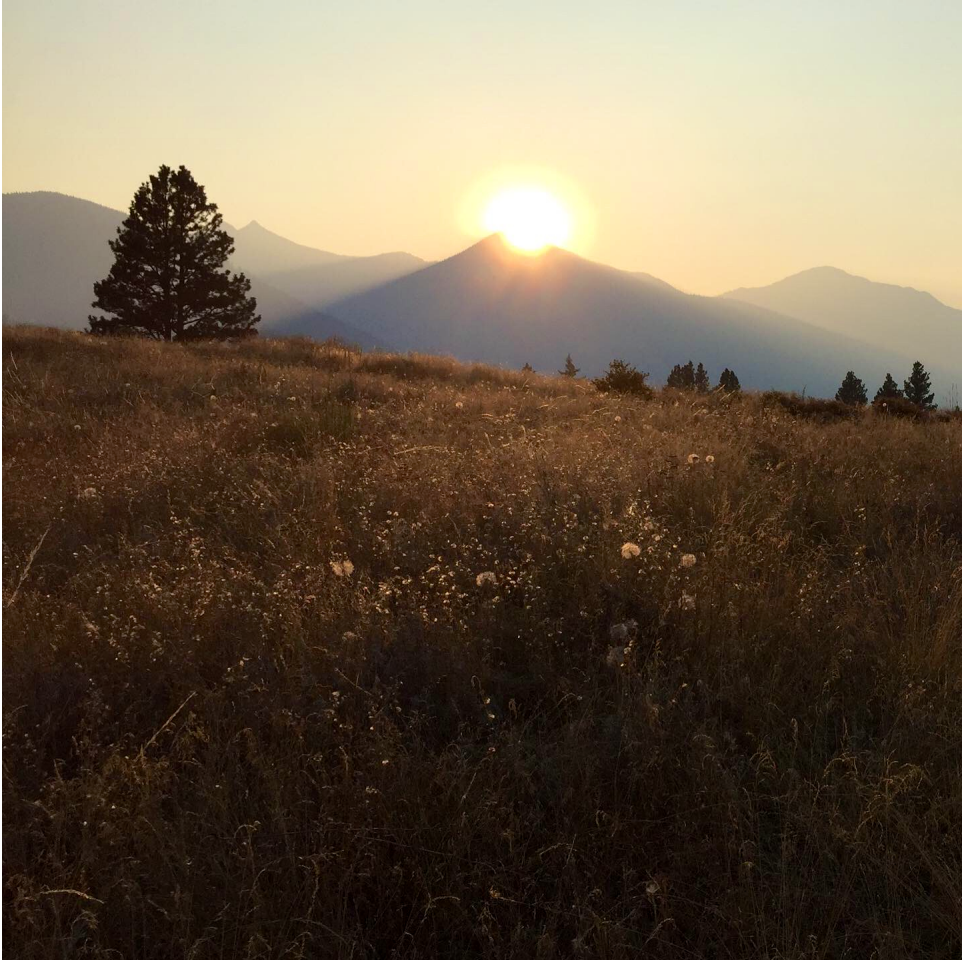


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Mountain Kiss  
Marika Straw  
-



I arrived  
Ezekiel Hale

-

I arrived. There was  
A flash and I was  
Gone again, before  
Asking for a name.

Lying at the edge  
Of the almighty  
And unable to doubt, to  
Breathe, to cross this line.

Linked Verse Poem  
Nick McRoberts and Kelly Riggle

-

Linked Verse Poem

The elder gods knew  
what the trees and rocks wanted-  
it was given to them with no qualms.  
Forever grateful, they stuck around  
to teach the young seeds how to sow  
a realm so pure.

'My words is only for hearing,'  
the aspen groves murmur in twilight shimmer.  
The basalt cliffs merge their musings  
with quiet night air, pierced by  
coyotes' yaps and porcupine's contented grumble  
upon discovering a crowded canyon hollow  
of Great Basin Wildrye. Language like this,  
on pages, can't quite reach that other kind,  
though it tries.

Probably comes closest outside the dance hall  
in the tunes rising off the sheet music,  
through the instruments, and across the crowd  
to linger in the pines as the folk band  
stomps on the fir stage boards,  
the 87 year old fiddler never once pausing  
to wipe his brow.

Letter from Time on my 40th birthday  
Moll McCarty

-

I stand still while you rush through me or, on unbearable days, beg me to quicken though you; you weep at night for the children you thought would stay children; you yourself are still a child.

You don't look 40, a friend says on your 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, which is meant as a compliment.

The tea kettle startles you back into the kitchen of your skin.

When you pour hot water over nettle leaves, they un-wrinkle themselves in glee. You

examine your face in the water for signs of age and instead see signs of

race. You are not accustomed to seeing yourself as having race because you belong to

the default race.

To belong to a race that considers itself race-less is to imagine a deathless life.

Outside the air is sharp.

Your tea cools

Your skin cools

Your white skin.

Skin that will wrinkle and die. You plummet toward death - who doesn't?

Don't say death, you chasten me, but I never stop speaking of death.

Forward is how you move through me, forward toward death.

Goodnight, you say to the mountains,  
whose lack of response sends a jolt of rejection  
through the  
fascia under your skin.

The past exists - it cannot be un-made or  
re-fashioned. The future is undeveloped: does not exist  
until it blooms obscenely  
then disappears.

A leaf crackles underfoot, then the porch swing moves  
with your fresh weight.

When a white body swings in a poem no one thinks of  
trees or of

bodies swinging from them.

What was death called by the people your people  
erased?

Your ancestors clamored to exist outside poverty and  
inside the

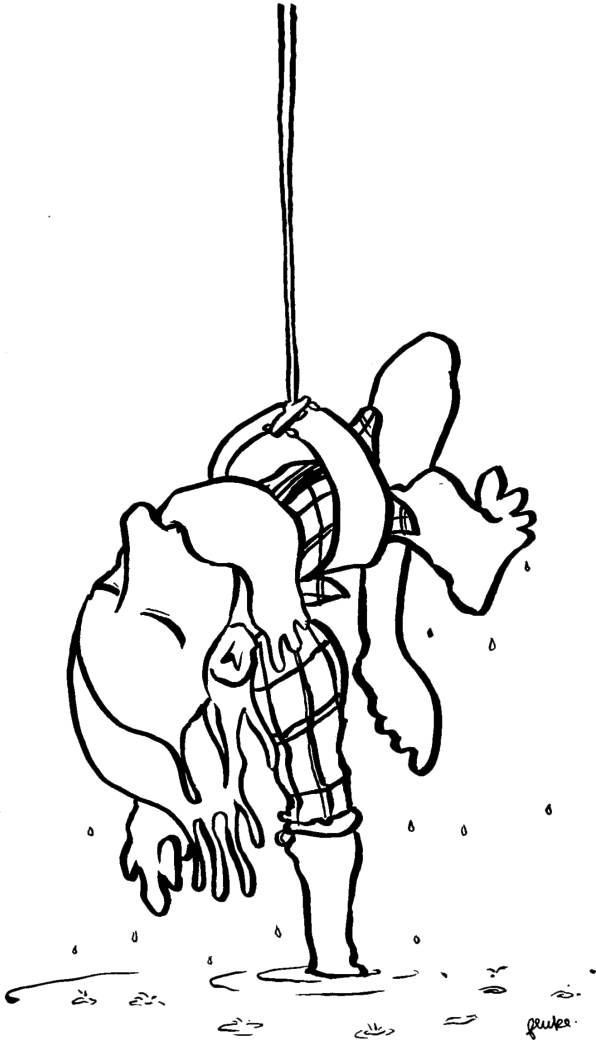
white race. Your whiteness clamors to exist outside  
of me.

The mountains continue their silence. You take a sip  
of tea and wrap yourself in

wool. I stand still while the moon moves, while the  
soil moves, while your thoughts move;

I stand still while your body swings into its own  
age.

untitled  
Luke Behnke  
-





Death, Death  
Nigel Makela

-

*To Arseny Tarkovsky*

Walking through this thoroughfare of conscientious-  
ness

Seeking awareness of my shortcomings

To be a better man than my drunken past

To be a loving husband married to my heart

Alone with the Mystery

Sometimes I cry

People who once brought me comfort are  
now voices of the void

The warmth that could be always seems to be re-  
placed by open doors for self correction

Dancing along the shoreline that we all stride  
across, staring across timeless waters

I dissolve myself into one who knows he is not  
greater than the rest

elk under a cotton candy sky  
Sara Sutton  
-



A LETTER TO MY LOVER

Rhonda Struth

-

*Wait For me*

As I sail around my body docking at every port  
on a Discovery Voyage called "Who Am I?"

As I kayak through the inlets of my nervous  
system the water of life awakening every cell

*Wait for me*

Lying on my back rolling with the water's mo-  
tion as Wind changes the shape of clouds- of who I am  
As I wear my new Trauma Free Lenses shielding me from  
the brightness of new blood rushing through my veins  
fueling who I was meant to be

*Wait for me*

Weathering the stormy waters in my small vessel  
as I seek safe places to anchor

As turbulent waters throw me off balance, as I  
relearn touch from terror to safety

*Wait for me*

As I emerge from subterranean darkness to  
catch the ruach-breath of life; breath of my true  
self

Treading water, life jacket around my neck keeping me  
from drowning in the rising tide of new experiences

*Wait for me*

As I lay on a blanket holding you in my arms  
touching your lips, feeling sensations again

*Wait for me*

And don't give up hope

Blessings on a Dark Night  
Maryann Hurtt

-

Blessings on a Dark Night  
long after the sun slips behind Joseph Mountain,  
the navy blue sky slides into ebony

I have come to love  
this blanketing  
the wait for the moon  
and at least one star to wish on

I am not sure about wishes  
but do believe across the road ponies  
nicker-breathe  
blessings  
just loud enough  
to lullaby  
us good night

COVID RICE from Spring to Autumn  
Eileen Thiel

-

It is more than dreary, being a kernel of rice in a frugal cook's kitchen. I used to be a firm young thing but now you see how frayed and ragged around the edges I am. Not all of us are destined to life beyond our own capabilities. Ill luck, or fate or god or sometimes our own determination can destine us to immortality while still on earth. Can you think of anything closer to hell than that? To know you will never attain total fulfillment of a job well done? To be destined for perpetual ignominy?

No one who tastes me knows my name. My flavor has been taken over by so many boilings, bakings, frying and stewings that it won't be long before I am reduced to having no edges at all. I will end up as a victim of a Cuisinart. Then there will be no hope, for I-will-be-slowly separated, scattered and creamed so thoroughly, parts of me will float further and further away from the whole. I will feed first eight, then ten, then 20 people never knowing an end to it. Doomed to recycle until my atoms are split, yes, SPLIT. That, my friends, is when I will explode and the very particles of me will be as the starry infinity, dying and regenerating in the big banging of POTDOM. I fear it will go on and on ad-infinatum. Here I will be, haunting the mess hall of the world until the OH'S and AHH'S and YUM'S of the world turn into shrieks of horror. "No! No! not the leftover rice from April again! Ad Infinatum. Ad infinatum.

Best wishes BLM  
Kenneth Hunt

-

Best wishes BLM

What portion should I control?

The part where the oceanshore falls and swims crumbling?

Should I hate the impossible burning core of wildfire because it is close to home?

Should I fight the craving for more that ripples through life howling then longing then fucking then changing?

Or the welcome pitch black darkness,

the winds, the moon, colliding trees, the murderers impulse, irrational surrender, selflessness, the children's piercing desire to replace us?

Should I resist sleep?

Punish the dog for barking?

Pull the weeds? Eat only what my father ate?

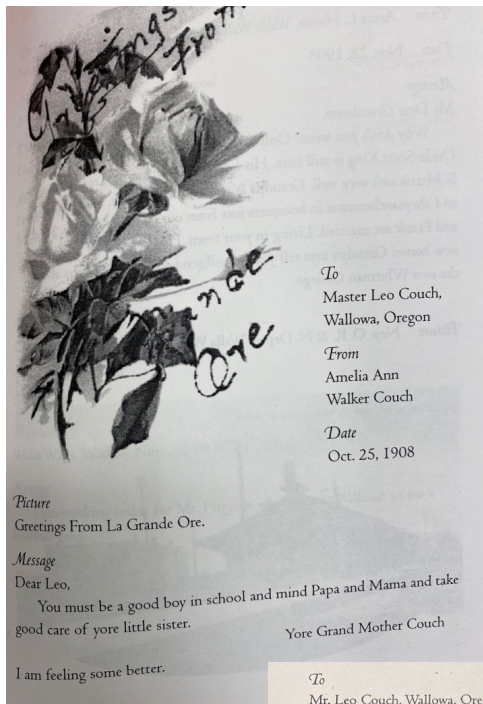
And what of my wandering ancestors?

And what is it that I should forget?

To be together with you my family of humans, should I draw the line at twenty years or fifty or two thousand, six thousand? When is it ok to belong? Who must I kill to prove worthy? What is the password?

What are you afraid of?

Postcards from the Couch Family  
Jane Couch Curry



*Picture*  
Greetings From La Grande Ore.

*Message*

Dear Leo,

You must be a good boy in school and mind Papa and Mama and take good care of yore little sister.

I am feeling some better.

*To*  
Master Leo Couch,  
Wallowa, Oregon

*From*  
Amelia Ann  
Walker Couch

*Date*  
Oct. 25, 1908

Mr. Leo Couch, Wallowa, Oregon

*From*  
Scott Harris

*Postmark*  
Walla Walla, Wash. - Oct. 22, 1908 - 11-30P

*Message*

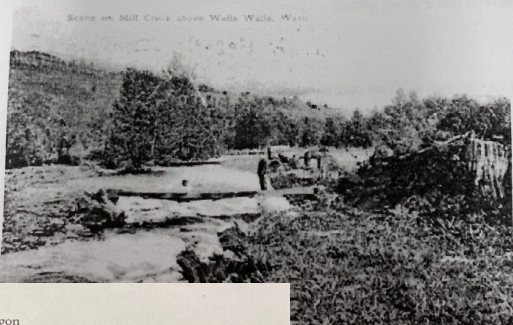
Dear Leo,

I arrived home a week ago Sunday. The Walla Walla Fair was good, but we had too much rain.

Uncle Scott

*Picture*

Scene on Mill Creek above Walla Walla, Wash.



*To*  
Mr. Leo Couch, Wallowa, Oregon

*From*  
Rosalind

*Postmark*  
Enterprise, Oreg. - Oct. 12, 1908 - 7-AM

*Message*

Hello, Leo —

How did the fair turn out? I ought to have all I want to eat for once from the picture you sent me.

Rosalind





Fate provides  
Ezekial Hale

-

Slowly waking from a dream  
Of a house far away, and rustic Memory transporting  
it  
With beguiling providence.

Fate provides us with a song

And we begin to Nervously rejoice,  
Ego gnawing at the bone Like a scrappy callow dog.

Opening  
Sara Sutton

-

Some days it feels like I am not alive at all,  
but set on sleep mode,  
hibernating under the hum of a machine,  
acknowledging but not interfacing.  
Some days it feels like there is an hourglass in my  
chest  
and all the sand is caught at the narrowest point  
and sometimes the hour glass breaks  
inside my chest.  
Some days  
it feels like maybe I do not know  
what it feels like to really live.  
As if there is a maple syrup of happiness  
I have not tapped into yet  
as in - others have found it but I haven't,  
I see it on them.  
Some days hunger could eat me alive  
and end my life  
all in one bite.  
Some days I am the fog rolling in steadily,  
making it impossible to see  
others I am  
the blue light just before dawn,  
the fragrance that drifts on the pond.  
Most of us know little, if anything  
about how to live our lives.  
About when to grasp at a celestial catalyst,  
when to run and when to stay.  
I look up to the sky  
and hope it might open for me.  
So that this feeling  
of choking will leave.  
Some days I wake up contaminated with sadness,  
a grey light that says everything is meaningless  
that life has no true purpose  
but then comes a louder thought:  
that I am all wrong,  
and that it does.

Fern  
Nikki Beachy

-



Blue Hour  
Sara Sutton

-

It is the blue hour again.  
The blue blur.  
Twice a day  
the world turns  
a deep blue.  
In one quiet moment,  
my hands on the counter,  
breath out the window,  
the earth fades to nothing  
but a cold blue fog.  
The fluorescent fog sinks  
deep into the field,  
until it is swallowed and resting.  
I find the hour at both its openings.  
I enter the delicate hour and linger,  
as long as it will let me.  
I will paint it,  
(though I wish it could paint me).  
I will paint the feeling so you can know  
the vast everything and small nothing  
the blue hour represents.  
The vast nothing  
and small everything.

crane operator

Luke Benhke

-

metal extensions slide out, three-stacked growing larger to smaller, eventually reaching a tip. steel cable woven, stronger with tension when weighted, lowers. rain falls, sliding down faded paint, mixing with oil; diesel and clouds making shapes. dark pastel overcoats, a tissue, the officer, and wet soil thick puzzle pieces to tread on rims locked in four wheel drive.

nearby, ravens taking shelter; trees losing leaves, returning to earth. at full reach, i drop the rest of the line to boat below, grabbed above water by hand, then taken down, around, and under by divers. soft sediment, algae, and brown brittle grass swallowed wet to mush. a body of water naturally made from things both taken and given.

outside my cab: power and pull, from lever and buttons all after gestured signals from below, signifying the all clear. inside: thermos and coffee, saran wrap partially pulled back, exposing sandwich bitten. a map of the area with highlights and arrows marking directions. and puddled boot soup on ribbed and matted floor.

gently pulling, talkies chattering slowly about distances and delivery, i notice drops of water inside just above my head and to the right. the engine fires into space, leaving idle under load, clearing its throat. cable tense. fogged up windows, i wipe the screen, flicking the toggle for air vent and blower motor to flow.

looking up, partial primer exposed, a light rust patina breaches the surface. the frame, seats, shattered glass mixing with water into indiscernible shapes as submerged becomes surrendered. wheels and tires the last to show.

months later, the body arrived, as though it needed more time with. i imagine it rising and floating, revealing how life under water treats a being.

Devotion or Greed  
Christina deVillier



Rebirth  
Nigel Makela

-

Water churning in changed States

Sharing in the light that's as old as time

Washing up on ageless rocks

*Everything is trying to settle,*

My dead friend says

*The universe is a story of black  
holes,*

I respond

Bouncing off every encountered surface

Reflecting ever babble passing my way,

Encountering the depths of the ocean,

I touch sandy beaches and an end-  
less perspective

Considering love as courage to create



Rest in the Belonging  
Lauren MacDonald

-

i screamed into the hollows the last day of summer  
into that open canyon       cried  
praying for pain to land  
ground this body

whole  
and unbroken

weary weary  
rest

rest this tired voice  
rest this endless worry

rest in the belonging

root under  
into earth again

Window  
Caroline Leone

-



The back of my hand  
Vere McCarty

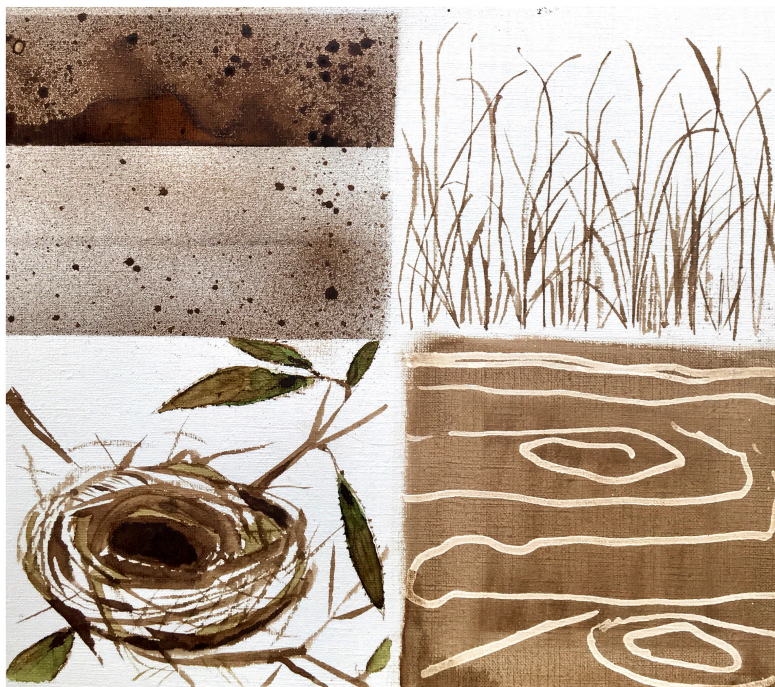
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I look at the hand warmed by the teacup.  
What color is it? Old freckles, new sunburn.  
The hairs are blond against the skin.  
The knuckles approach white, and the fingernails.  
The palm is lighter than the back of the hand,  
which in fact is blotches of several colors.  
The crayon box had a flesh color, but  
I long ago noticed that I am not that color.  
When I cut my finger and wash the blood away,  
the inside of the gash is white.  
White clouds have places that are white.  
My grandma in the casket was white.  
The belly of a caught fish is white.  
Against what background am I white?  
  
White is emblematic, is it not?  
barely descriptive and only  
in relation to other colors,  
an overexposure, a blinding  
to who you are and who I am.

soil/grass/vacant nest/ripples

Nikki Beachy

-



Why I Need to Meditate

Julia Zeise

-

Why didn't I get honey when I stopped at the farm stand?

I looked right at it.

How pretty it was in the sunny window.

It was a different me, I can only presume.

A me who was so full of sweet, there was no need for honey.

A me with no future & no past.

Maybe I was meditating then.

How are these plants still alive?

Please don't run onto the road, little deer. Follow mama.

Humans are the problem.

Just breathe.

How am I hungry again?

Why does nothing sound good?

The new washer doesn't work that well.

An impeller is not the same as an agitator.

But the universe decided

with a queen size quilt

locked in the hatch of the old one.

The process to get it out was more than the guy with the trailer and I were willing to take on.

Did I pay the electric bill?

Did the kid eat a vegetable?

Do I need another layer?

I gotta seal that front door better before winter.

You can feel the wind.

You should not be able to feel the wind.

Drink some water.

Walk the dog.

No. Better.

How did I spell plagiarism, sriracha, recommend, & acquired wrong for this many years & not notice? Thank you all for being so polite, but honesty is where it's at.

I want to go to a damn movie & drink a large Dr. Pepper with a big plastic straw.

What if the big mammals are all hunted to extinction & are just stories to our children's children?

Just relax.

Rest well & sleep tight.

Don't let the bedbugs bite.

;-)

AIR  
Katie Marrone

-

I went to the top of Iwetemlaykin last night  
after the smoke had cleared,  
after the mountains had made their way  
back to us.

And I took off my mask  
drank in a darkness  
that then seeped  
its way  
out  
out  
of me  
into the dry grass  
into a puddle  
of wet  
laugh.

I yelled,  
and danced,  
thanked the people who were here before the greed;  
circled the moon  
with my hips,  
traced the mountain's face  
with my toes.

I've never thought about air so goddamn much before.  
It's like I'm a fucking Jordin Sparks song.

Funny,  
how we forget about the space air takes,  
about how much of a life is breath and  
breath and  
breath and  
breath  
and how it just keeps going

until they're stepping on his neck  
his neck  
his neck  
his neck.



Until a whole town vanishes in smoke.  
Until people refuse to cover mouths,  
saying they can't breathe through  
thin cloth.

Until over 200,000 people have  
struggled with their last gulp,  
their palms open,

no touch.

Please,  
forgive me,  
Mountains  
Grass  
Sky  
Dark,

I didn't realize just how maddening.

I didn't realize just how precious.

It was

to be here.

I didn't realize

what a

breath.

Mother Moon  
Sara Averbeck

-

Mother Moon.  
Red as the embers that are  
The last breaths of her babies  
Before they turn to the ashen  
Color of their Old Mother.

Is she mad with grief?  
Wild with anger?

Or does she watch with providence  
Through the toxic veil  
That we have gifted her daughter Earth?

A veil that traps.  
A veil that chokes.

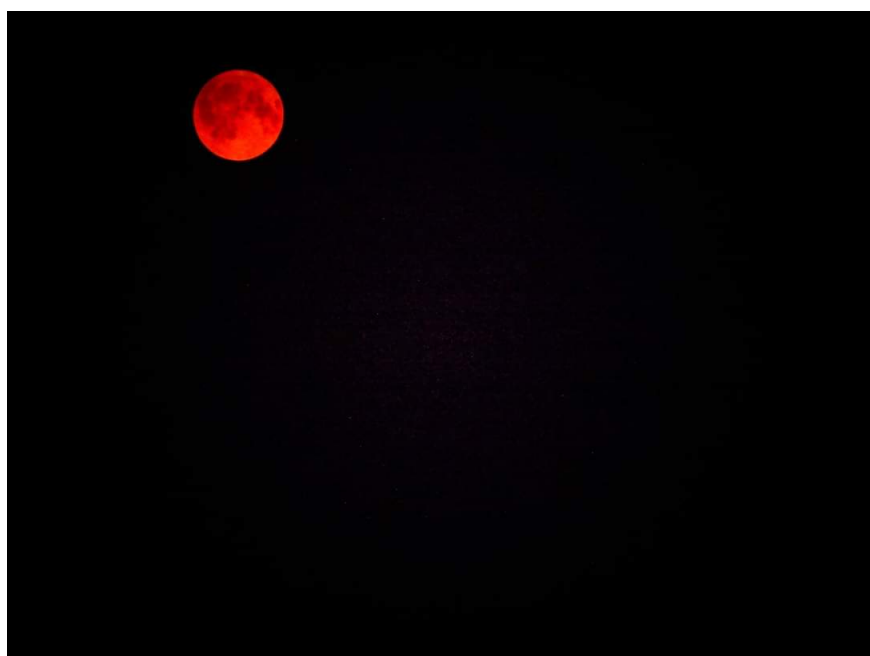
Does she weep?  
Tears that tear  
Through our cloak of conceit  
To drown our denial.

Does Mother Moon shake her daughter Earth  
To wake her tides  
And begin her child's rebirth?

In her labor are we  
To be forsaken?

Choked by our own masks  
As our mother's screams  
Awaken us.  
Finally.

We will be  
Her, new and wise.  
We will be  
Her, naked and alive.



Dear Zine \zeen\ Readers,

'The role of the artist is to make the  
revolution irresistible'

*Toni Cade Bambarayou*

We are revolving with time, in circles, yes, but spirals too. We are constant evolution of hearts, minds, & bodies. If and when we choose to see it, feel it, hear it, let us express this change and call for more with our art. Let us make it beautiful, tangible, relatable, raw, polished, *irresistible*. Let us be moved in these moments of change and share what keeps us whole, what rips us open, and what mends our broken hearts.

This work was produced in collaboration with artists who want to contribute one time or ongoing, words and/or visual art, printed every season in Wallowa County, Oregon. All are welcome to submit!

We are looking for art inspired by, with essence of, created during and/or about each season: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.

Fishtrap, a local writing non-profit organization, has generously sponsored the production of this zine. With their help our hope is to keep it free of cost and accessible throughout the county and beyond.

Please share when you are finished reading, with a friend, family or a new neighbor.

A great thanks to all the artists sharing their hearts and work with the world.

in art,  
Circle of Seasons Collaborators

Upcoming Winter Zine  
Submissions  
with Title  
due by:  
November 15, 2020  
[wccircleofseasons@gmail.com](mailto:wccircleofseasons@gmail.com)

