

circle of seasons

WINTER

2021



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Dear zine reader,

Art and expression and voice have always been crucial for human resiliency— but it was during 2020 that some of us were forced to white-knuckle creativity in ways we may never have had to before. You're holding in your hands a result of that drive to create: the words, photos, observations, frustrations, vulnerabilities, and hearts of Wallowa County. This zine is the result of a moving collaboration between artists who live here today, used to live here, or have some kind of connection to the county. Because we know these mountains stick with you.

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.

All are welcome to submit. We are looking for art inspired by, or created during, each season: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall. The submission deadline for our Spring 2021 issue is February 28, 2021.

Please share with a friend, family or a new neighbor.

Many thanks to all the artists sharing their hearts and work with the world. And thank you for reading and witnessing.

in art,

Circle of Seasons Contributors

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the original authors and other contributors. These views and opinions do not necessarily represent those of Fishtrap staff, editors, board of directors, and/or any/all contributors to this zine.

Yet Another Love Song

—

Kelly Riggle

In our hall of hewn pine timbers
I watched you cook huge woks of food,
made from old tilling disks that our master blacksmith
taught you to forge handles onto, then oil to a gleam.
The knives you wielded with focused expertise
he had shown you how to forge too.

We learned to hunt together by walking quietly
through the Ponderosa forests and meadows out on Gould-
Gulch, north of the prairie. Once when we startled a
golden eagle perched on a basalt bluff she took flight.
The breeze from her wings smelled like sunshine
and air.

We listened to metal and folk and cumbia
on your record player, we danced,
we fell down in the woods for lunch while the dogs
moved around our perimeter, meeting coyotes
with their noses and we leaned into each other
so our noses almost met, picking up pine needles
and rolling them around between our fingers.
Then we leaned back and looked at the sky
and the trees shifting in the wind above.

Your smile- I have next to nothing to say about it.
Only that you since are named after your grandma
maybe she gave it to you. I'm outside a closed door-
and the big ring in your nose, the Sriracha tattoo,
your smile- are not on this side.
We burned bibles in the front yard of the
Campbell Club when we were very young.
I drew you with every color in my pencil case.
Eight years later you took me and Nick

to a spot on the Salmon River.
The walls of the hillside were so steep
that we had to climb down thick ropes
anchored to tree roots. In general,
I just like watching you. Your quiet

out the side of my eye. It's not really watching.
I feel it affect my nerves, like an alpine river,
like blood slowing down with deeper breaths.

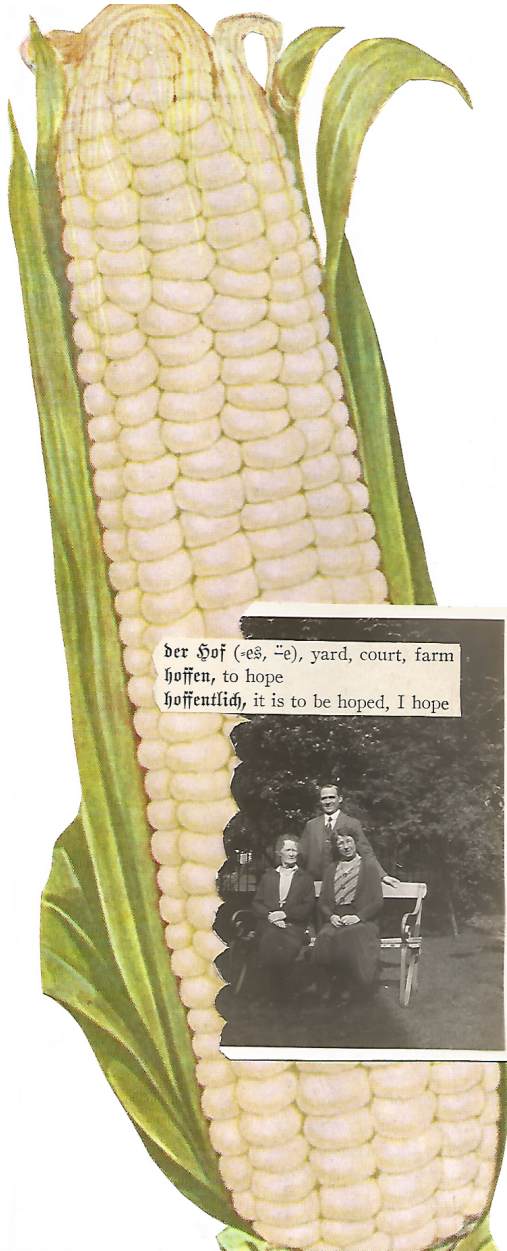
I could go on forever, but a song is
short. The chorus:

I watched, you wielded, we learned,
we smelled, we leaned in, then we leaned back,
we looked, we listened, we danced, I drew,
we burned, we were very young,
we had to climb, go on forever,
but a song is short.

Queer Mary
—
Moll McCarty

alarming: a small stucco house for her with thin black bars on the
front and inside
flowers, gifts, well-tended, recent
who has been here before me, on the side of the highway to pray?
I kneel and commune with her until a man rounds the corner in a
shiny black SUV
I assume it's a man by the way he leans into the gas and
bolt upward, still as a cactus, then out of habit toss a look over
my shoulder at him:
a throwback to teenage-hood, where I practiced flirting as if it
were a kind of prayer
a supplication to men-in-general
for my needs-in-general to be fulfilled
give me your love and I will give you the performance of a self
I will shape my self into whatever you want me to be
but what if a self can spring up through the middle of its own
yearning
shucking the performance off like a dried husk
growing into the shape of its own desire
a cactus curls around itself, pushing yellow fruit out of its inner
liquid
stop adjusting the slots of your yearning, Mary whispers, her voice
bedroomy
what reels up like a fountain within me is unedited
then I am walking down the highway again
in the unedited shape of my desire

Hoffen
—
Kristy Athens



der Hof (-es, -e), yard, court, farm
hoffen, to hope
hoffentlich, it is to be hoped, I hope



View From East Moraine

—

Bianca Marino

I sat on the hill and I called your name
I felt held and I felt different and I felt the same
In that still silence, it's like a memory
I was you and you were me
up the trail, past the cows and trees
I'm remembering what it means
I'm remembering what it means
I'm remembering what it means to be.

Cat on a Couch

—

Aimee Jungmann



Interrelation(ship)

—

Chantal Ivenso



Interrelation(ship)
Ch
Ivenso

Lit
—
Lauren MacDonald

the candle took me
flame has a way of taking me

dancing me away from noise

into a quiet cave

maybe the first cave
wherein the one light you needed was the one light you had
fire

when you didn't question

for all you knew
and needed to know
shone right before you

the only feeling there was that peace

Untitled
—
Emily Warnock



They Thought They Could Escape the Winter By
Driving South
"DIY Color n' Caption" Cartoon

—
Debbie Carson



Earth Landing, or Three Degrees Centigrade

—
Hudson Gardner

The rocks in the hills move slowly. The sun is high and fading. The grass turns a strange color. The lake below reflects the sky.

A great shadow covers trees in the distance, then comes toward us. The air cools a few degrees. People heard about it happening. But then, people came to high places to watch it go on.

The shadow soon covers us. A few stars show up. I'm reminded that beyond the blue is a dark vastness. The lake reflects the stars.

Then I see a lone deer, running up the slope. Scared from her daybed by the darkness.

Is it Dark Already?

Why did the Air Change?

Why did the Insects stop Singing?

What Happened to the Wind?

It can be hard to remember something till years after it passed. The sieve of memory fills with dark sediment.

Once in a while something becomes clear again, an image in the choss.

Things come in patterns. And sometimes the pattern takes one whole life. I tend to watch simple patterns.

Such as the motions of wind on water. Below us the lake cleared. The sun brightened. The deer stopped running. The insects resumed their chants. The boulders did not move. A breeze picked up. I took down the tent, and drank water, watching the water below.

Eventually I forgot about it for a long time. Then today I remembered. And I remembered about the shadow coming over the mountains, across the hills, to where I sat. I understood an ancient fear still lived inside of me. Then I saw, with my own eyes, the shadow recede.

I read that under the shadow the air temperature dropped by 3° centigrade— the amount that our earth is set to warm. I surely felt the coolness on my skin. I may have reached for a sweater. But I don't know if I did. I think I was feeling how it felt.

I have learned something from memory and life so far. To find the general in the specific. Though the perturbations of life may riffle ceaselessly by, the understanding I'm after is the nature and way of their flow.

These vast objects in space above us. Their coincidence determined by nothing but trajectory. And us down below, down below! Living with our ancient fears. Making our own stories and ways across the earth. And sometimes looking up at the sky.

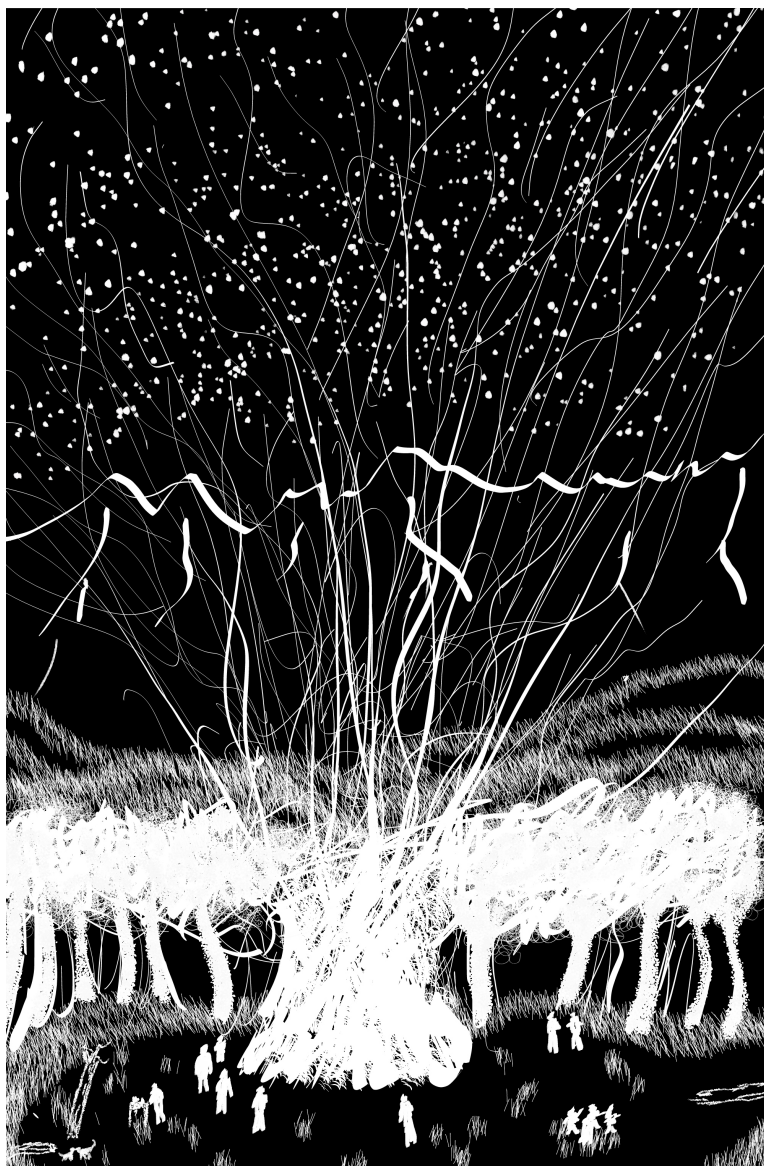
My foot on a rock was the only photo that I took that day.

I titled the photo: "Earth Landing"



Solstice in the Jungle

—
Guthrie Straw



Do This in Remembrance of Me

—

Sara Miller

If you clasp one hand to the other, palms nested, waiting, allowing—
what passes between?

And if you stand behind me, cradling my face in your hands
palms along my jaw, thumbs riding the pulse of consciousness
what flows from you to me or from me to you or from me through you
to somewhere else?

And if I place my hand along your frontal bone, heel of palm
between your shuttered eyes, fingers reaching upward
to the fractal suture of your interlocking crown
what melts then welds between us?

And if my hand floats across your head
to rest atop what seems to want resting upon
only to astound by opening, unleashing fear that calm replaces
what have we then exchanged?

The Picture Window

Gia Marrone



In front of where I live, in a compact living room, there is a picture window. It is one of those highlighted features a real estate agent with crisp light blue button-up shirts and gelled hair may exclaim upon showing a home or may type up for an online listing. My partner, Michael, and I found ourselves scrolling through these very listings on dizzying phone screens when we were looking for a new home. Our eyes ached from the light of the screens and our shoulders grew tense as we came to realize the scarcity of housing in the area met with the high demand.

On a damp morning in April, when the sky hung like heavy grey wool felt over our heads, we were brought to a 1970's ranch home with a dandelion-dotted front lawn, wood siding the color of iron with a dash of cream poured into it, brick accent on the lower half, and moss-ridden roof adding splashes of green to the overall

composition. After looking at an abundance of overpriced and frankly misshapen homes, this was a welcome sight. We applied, and to our relief, we were able to buy the home.

Three months later, we were finally settling into the home like our backyard hens settled into pockets of soil to rest in the afternoon sunlight. All the while, our dogs were already scratching up the hardwood floors. This is how we found ourselves in the middle of a Pacific Northwest summer. From the picture window, I could observe Cottontail Rabbits roaming in surprising numbers and peeking from the sticky leaves of the Pacific Wax Myrtle bushes. From the picture window, I noticed how the power line that hung above transformed into a stage for a cast of creatures, such as the House Finches with their highlighter orange heads moving slightly up and down with each tune produced. To our horror, the occasional rat may also give its appearance. It can be seen scurrying across the power line in a furious act of athleticism. It happens only every so often and when it does we shout, with equal disgust and awe: "Rat on the power line!"

There is more that can be seen from the picture window. I see a plot of vacant land with cedar trees and evergreen shrubs. The land extends to about one hundred feet and holds a variety of weeds, old evergreen trees, crabapple trees, and fast food wrappers bleached from the sun. There is a family of Western Grey Squirrels that take shelter in the tree. I see them come out only to flee back to their home when a group of crows arrive for their daily meal and harass any creature that may be after their food, whether it be Western Grey Squirrel or the American Kestrel I also saw them chase between the tippy-tops of a pair of Doug Firs. I have come to call it "The Field" for its humble yet useful service to the neighborhood wildlife, dog walkers, tag racers, bike riders, fort builders, mischief makers of children.

At one time there were houses on the land. In 2014, the land was bought by the non-for-profit Catholic hospital nearby and the houses on the land were bought, demolished, or moved to another location. The hospital spoke of building on the lot, building an extended hospital unit, a parking lot, and to the chagrin of some older neighbors walking their dogs passed our house: "low-income housing." The bitterness towards the hospital wasn't all misplaced, even if some of it was misdirected toward the poor. One neighbor, who lived in the area for nearly twenty years and works as a security guard at a local high school, shared her story of how some of her friends were forced out of their homes in the frenzy, forced from their community and bearings, only for the hospital to leave nothing in its place. It is still unclear even now, when construction will take place if ever. This, especially during a housing shortage that continues to plague most of the country's metropolitan areas, can leave a bitter residue in the community, especially a blue-collar and lower-middle class community such as this.

The "mischief makers of children" I spoke of earlier are really just a rambunctious group of kids in the neighborhood of four, sometimes five kids, between the ages of five and nine years old. They often congregate in the vacant lot, carrying found materials; cardboard boxes, old tablecloths, parent's hammers and nails, to continue their work on a "base" at the foot of the cedar tree that is anchored in the center of the field.

One sauna-like summer afternoon when mosquitoes collected in pockets of air, swirling and twirling as though on an amusement park ride, the children took out slices of pizza with pools of red grease resting in the creases, to have "dinner at their base." They chanted in unison about the event, reciting over and over again to one another and to any passerby. They set up their base on the bedding of cedar branches, just above the roots of the cedar tree, with makeshift buckets and tree stump chairs. For their dessert, they picked summer sunset-hued, rainier cherries from an old lichen rich tree on the far end of the Field and told stories of a red-eyed bunny that hid in the shadows around them. One of the kids, a seven year old, was the most vocal of the bunch. He often wore tight-fitted t-shirts and ran on the pavement and biked with only socks on his feet. He shared all sorts of stories with whoever would listen. He was the one who talked most about the red-eyed bunny. He also shared a story of a sniper on the roof of the hospital nearby. Sometimes he told more than just stories. One day he shared that his grandfather was coming to live with him and his family and that he had "a brain problem and didn't talk."

The Grandfather as we came to refer to him, would go on daily walks every morning and late afternoon. Sometimes, we would see him through the picture window taking steady strides through the field, back upright, eyes focused ahead with a cowboy hat punctuating his strong stature. It was a mystery where he went on his daily walks most days, but sometimes he would return embracing a lumpy plastic bag or pushing a shopping cart only to empty it and dispose of it in the field, turned over on its side, left to rust and collect dew drops. Shortly after he moved into the neighborhood, we found bags of onions, off-brand boxes of mac and cheese, supermarket pockets of dough with bright red jellies bursting out unto plastic containers, left on our front porch. We suspected it was the grandfather and brought the food to our neighbors, who told us, apologizing, that he would do that sometimes, that he would go to the food bank and leave food for other neighbors.

A few more months moved along the picture window and we found ourselves unable to leave our homes due to the contaminated air that collected outside. The caustic air arrived from the violent forest fires that raced across Oregon, Washington and California last fall, clouding up our windows and unleashing a heavy quiet in the neighborhood. My partner and I woke up early one morning to our garbage can and recycling bin resting on the street, ready for

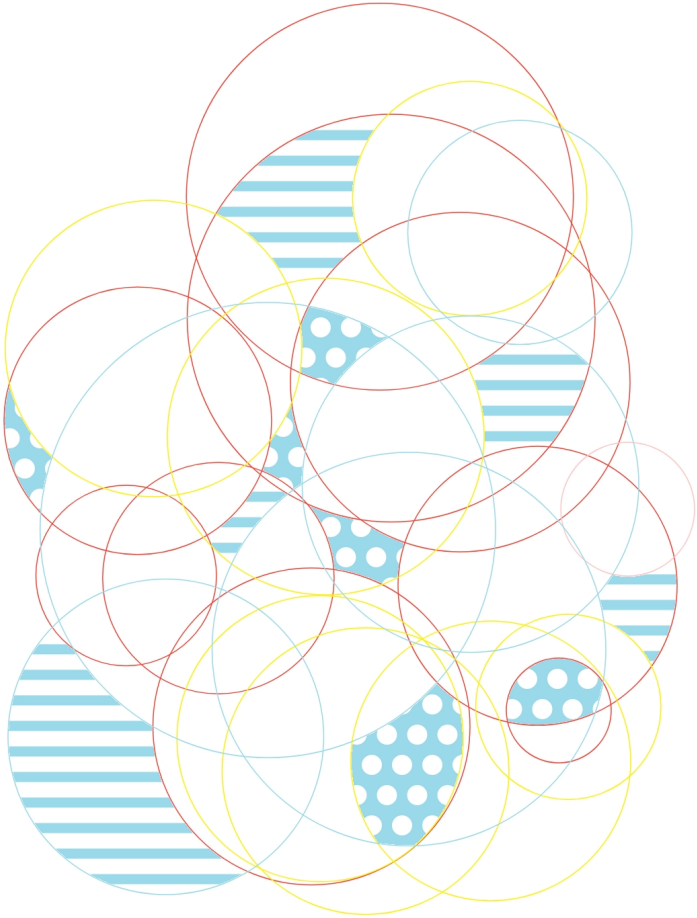
pick-up. We both wondered who moved them. Eventually we found out, through our neighbor across the street, that it was the Grandfather, that he would do that sometimes.

Our neighbor across the street works at a hotel downtown and smokes electronic cigarettes in the garage with the door open when it rains. He also offered to give us some of his electric blue Camas Lilies that he dug from his yard. When we first moved in, he had told us about his special needs nephew. We often see his nephew standing behind the picket fence beside their house, looking out his own picture window of sorts, sometimes making sounds that echo in the late afternoon air.

I wonder what he sees from his picture window of sorts, what each neighbor sees. Do they see me in my disheveled mornings picking up after my dogs in the rain? Do they see me, at my wits end, yell at my dog for jumping on me? Do they notice when I change my outfit multiple times a day, itchy in my own skin? Do they see the craze in my eyes after staying inside for too long, in desperate need of my afternoon walk? Do they see my partner and I in the midst of an argument? Or do they see my partner and I in the midst of an embrace?

These are my thoughts as I close the blinds of the picture window to end another day. I go to the kitchen to bring over the teapot with nettle leaves steeping in its fiery core. I set the pot on the living room coffee table. Michael is already resting on the couch, phone in hand, enveloped in cushions. I sit beside him with a book in hand ready to unwind my ruminations and slip into the stories of "Winesburg, Ohio." Except, I don't just slip into flipping pages and Michael doesn't slip into scrolling on his phone. Instead, we sit and we sip. We listen to the wind and rain conversing outside. We listen to the wild sounds of the neighborhood: the kids screeching in the field, the wheels of our garbage can roll along our driveway, and a strange shuffling sound that could only be explained as the sounds of a red-eyed bunny scuffling in our black elderberry bushes.

Cycles
—
Teri Anderson



Monday Night Football

—

Seth, Josh, Garik & Steve

I live life out of my car
And at my friends' houses.
I am the man beyond reason, a little lamb munching on
the shady side of the slope.
Yay though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death, I WILL score a touchdown.

Hot tub and a projector.
Cats, football, hot tub.
For DK art with me.
Amen.

High testosterone, feline pride,
Hearts pleased, faces aglow,
Together our spirits have grown.

Hot tub and a projector.
Cats, football, hot tub.
For DK art with me.
Amen.

"Behold," I proclaim, "I am the Lord. Thou annointest
my calves with Icyhot. I runneth over your cup with
my blue-52, chartreuse bouquet, 3 pizzas and doritos
(paid), Dalmatian guile."

Amen.

(my triceps they will runneth over)

My First Mistake

—

Marika Straw

This poem was written in 2019 about an ex. However, for this issue of the Circle of Seasons, it is dedicated to the 2020 defeat of Trump.

My first mistake was giving you power over my truth.

You held such ease in presiding over it
I mistook my warning intuition
for simple uncertainty.

It was tempting to sink into a realm of certainty
even though my body knew your certainty was not the
same as mine.

It was tempting to believe something that seemed
Concrete and Truthful and not just Unsure.

Now that I've taken my power back,
I can see how I undermined by own truths
by giving you the power to name them for me.

But as much as I can't recommend giving truths away,

I hope someday soon
everyone realizes
the sweet, sweet victory
of reclaiming them.

December Leaves

—

Alia Ayer



Full of conviction
you hold on to your fire,
even in winter.

Bits of Goodness

—

Ari Blatt

It is a funny thing, this time of year. All summer long we built up our broth bag in the freezer. Tops of carrots, peels of onions and garlic and shallots, green ends of leeks, stems of kale and chard and collard greens and parsley and mushrooms, butt-end root-y nodules of celeriac— these things demanded flexibility on the part of the ten gallon Ziploc. While we lived under summer's long light, we hardly ever cooked with broth, so we continued stretching the sack until it threatened ripping. We then started throwing out some of these vegetable bits, regretful of our waste, but there was no room in our apartment to save any more, we couldn't keep up with all this bounty.

Now we don't have as many bits to save, and what we do is smaller in size. I've reached an equilibrium of sorts in broth making, halving the contents of the bag every week or so. I fill a dutch oven with these frozen bits and water, bring it to a boil, turn the burner off, then watch the long bloom. While steeping this vegetable tea, I imagine all the nutrients and vitamins made from the summer sun and soil being transferred into this liquid goodness, itself transferred into old yogurt containers and put back into the freezer for future use as the days further darken. When the day comes that is so gray that our golden lamplight can't penetrate the gloom and the windows shake as they are besieged by wind, I re-thaw the broth. These dim days when we feel we don't have enough—the broth, a reminder that we do. How funny we ever forgot.

Contact
—
Cole Gustafson



Morning, 2020

—

Katie Marrone

Have you seen the photos
of the nursing homes in Italy?
I'd like to ask you:
Have you seen
the photos of the grandchildren
touching nonna's fingertips
through the waterfalls
of plastic,
their kissy breath
heating masks?

I cried when I saw the images,
I want to tell you,
cried when they made me think
of my Italian father
who hasn't touched anyone
in months.
My father.
The guy who used to go
to ballroom dance classes,
the guy who won't say
I love you in English
but will dance with me,
Latin-American style,
across the living room.

How lucky we are, then,
you and me,
to dance like we do,
close,
to swim in down comforter,
late.
How lucky I am,
I remind myself,
to feel the rough
of your beard
against my cheeks.

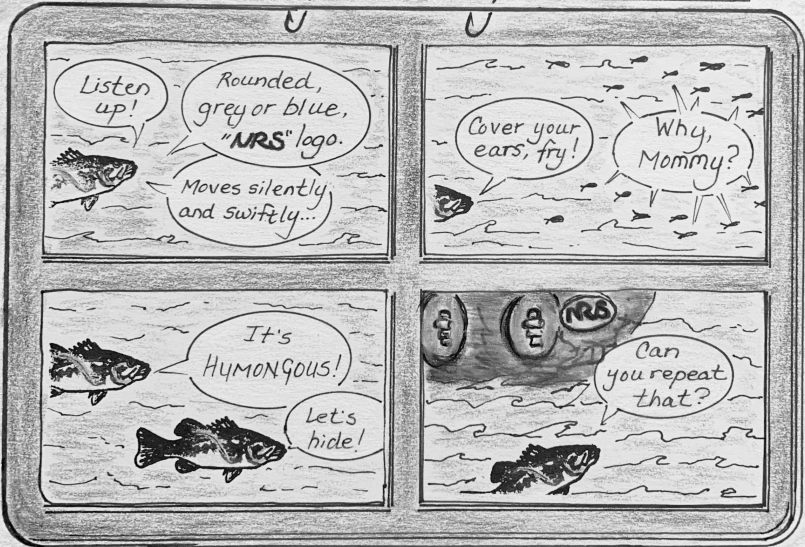
If Trout Had Zoom Meetings

Debbie Carson



Coffee before Zoom!

Zoom Safety Meeting: The Raft



Uprising
—
Sarah Greenman



Snow and Insanity

—

Jack James

Snow falls, and I shovel
Snow falls, and I shovel
I have always heard
That the definition of
Insanity is repeating the
Same process over and over again,
Expecting different results!
Snow falls, and I shovel
Mother Nature has me pegged!

Upcoming Spring Zine
Submissions with Title
due by: Feb. 28, 2021
wccircleofseasons@gmail.com

