

# *Circle of Seasons*



*Summer 2021*

Cover Art  
—  
Opal King



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### Poetry

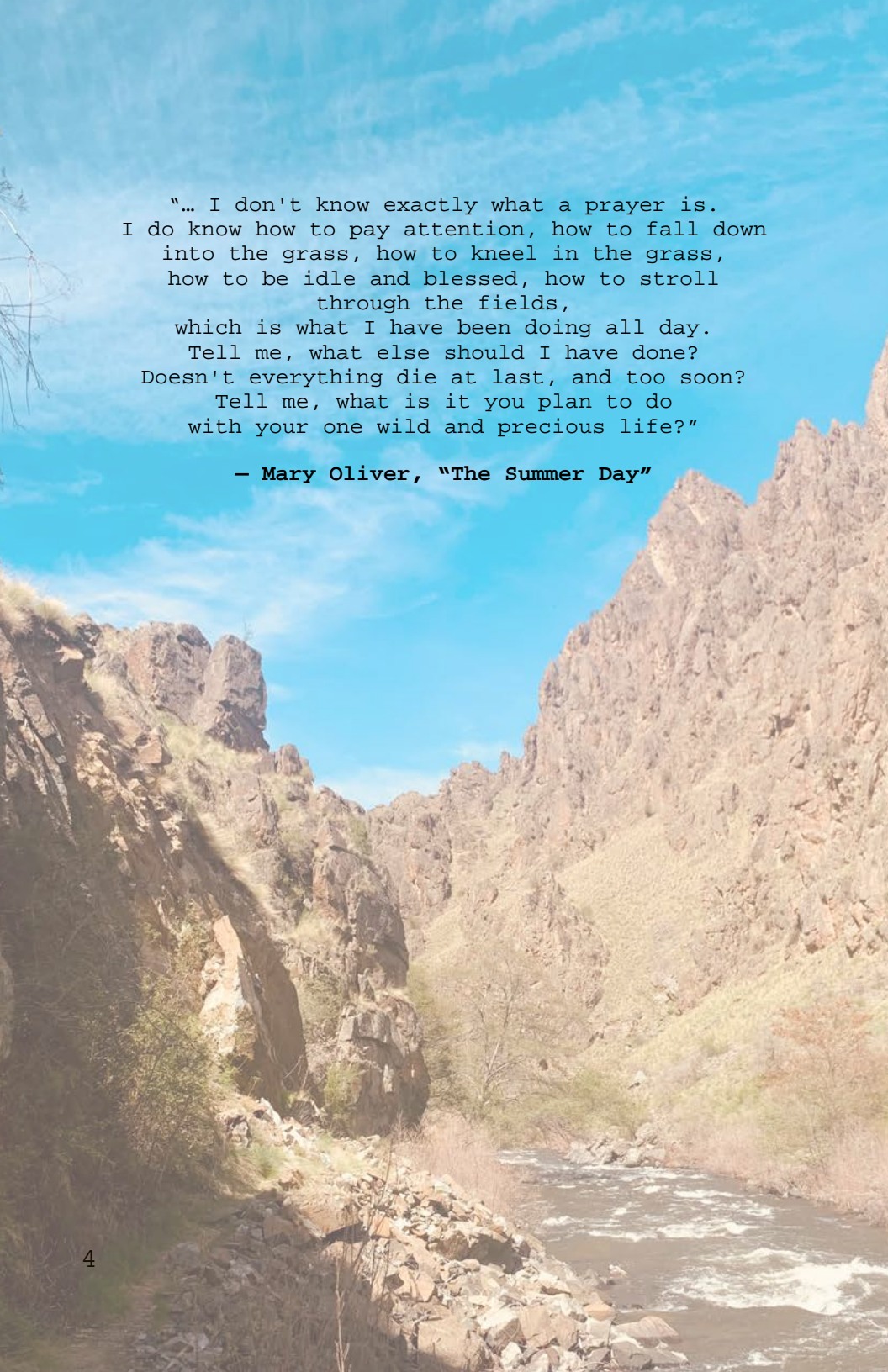
- 5 **Lilac's Dance** – Sara Averbek  
7 **Bushka** – Talia Jean Galvin  
10 **Curtis Mountain at Hot Lake** –  
June Reynolds  
11 **late august** – Ehlana Struth &  
Lauren MacDonald  
13 **Untitled** – Marge Hennes  
17 **Ouroboros** – Dustin Lyons  
20 **Babbling Brooks** – Nigel Makela  
21 **Painting Summer Sisters, Oregon** –  
Tricia Knoll  
22 **Problem** – Moll McCarty  
24 **Old Cliff** – Scott T. Starbuck  
25 **Lo Siento** – Marge Hennes  
26 **Untitled** – Luce Behnke

### Prose

- 12 **Whose Hands** – Emily Aumann  
15 **Heike's Geyser** – Douglas  
Hammerstrom

### Art & Photo

- 6 **Cherries** – Kristy Athens  
9 **Campfire** – Piper Larison  
14 **Joseph Canyon Lookout** – Susan  
Nolen  
19 **Untitled** – Luce Behnke  
27 **Untitled** – Beth Franz



"... I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll  
through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?"

**- Mary Oliver, "The Summer Day"**

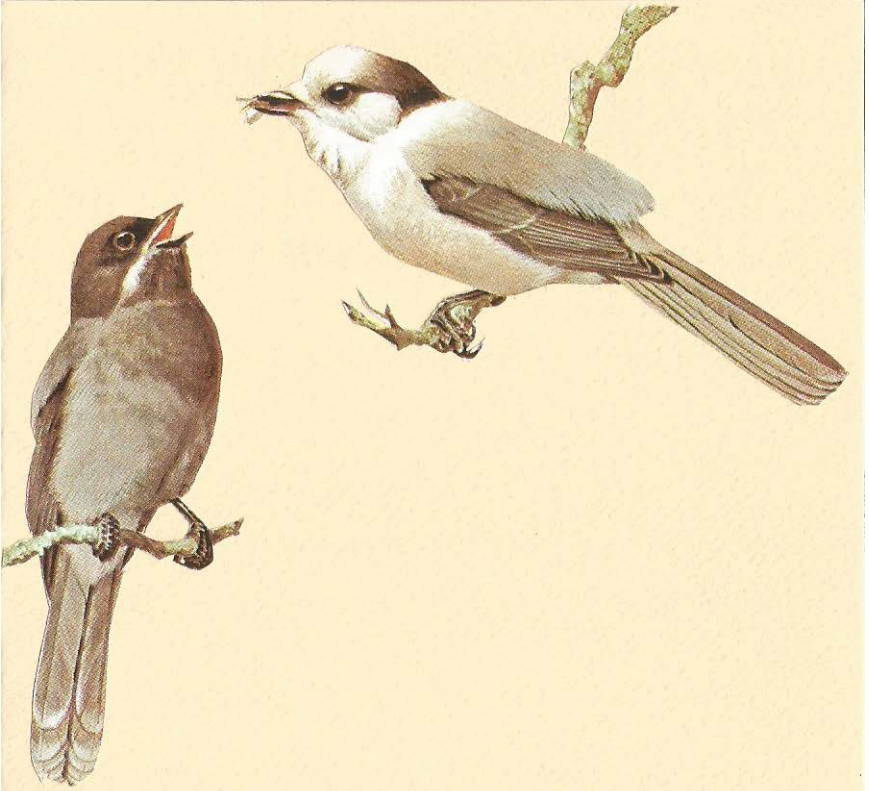
Lilac's Dance  
—  
Sara Averbeck



The ethereal lovemaking of fairies  
Sweet, vivid, fleeting  
In their sighs, soft  
Quick breaths  
Is beautiful nescience

Twisting and writhing in our Truth  
Lilac calls us back  
Into her illusory comfort  
For what good is knowledge  
When your magic is stifled by knowing

Cherries  
-  
Kristy Athens



Il y a quelqu'un à la porte.  
J'ai vu quelques-unes de vos amies.  
Avez-vous des cerises, madame ?  
J'en ai quelques-unes.

There is somebody at the door.  
I have seen some of your friends.  
Have you any cherries, madam ?  
I have a few.

Bushka

-

Talia Jean Galvin

If my daughter, we are ever to part  
the Mountains will be your mother

Your bottom lip split  
by that break of dawn, echoed sneeze with  
the unwelcome taste, reminding you your broken heart.  
Much too early, your clavicle chilly  
from the first snow on the blue gentian,  
leer towards the song that truly woke you  
wraith in the fog, settled in your very valley  
dew glistens off the herd  
A bellowing protection  
Do you hear? There are so many.  
Be reminded that you left the zip open just a smidge  
to  
invite the lonesome stars,  
the elk for tea.

Your blinding feet in the crik  
a sash of dirt below our knobby knees,  
use your best tooth to tear open your lunch  
and look up & far at that distant  
cave, wonder the creature that dwells  
why that avalanche is you.

As you drag your birdlime feet forward  
to that birdlime song in your head  
today, and tomorrow, the next  
the waft of wild onion root  
move you to scoop the sky  
like my newborn baby  
with your strawberry shake dreams

Over a first ever found

well-investigated morel,  
butter fried rescue of another failed dinner  
To pair with a moody east wind nightcap, delirious  
giggles  
Today was Sunday.  
Tomorrow will be Sunday again

Stumbling back to your tent after a whisky campfire  
cocoa,  
As you dance with your shadow  
waltzing up the trunks of pines  
To the sway of your lantern,  
That feeling of dusk, so blue but also  
unhued, mystic  
trust only your horse to find the trail  
when you can't see your hand in front of you

When the tip of his hat makes  
your heart skip  
like a washboard drift  
Let the minerals paint your hair untangled  
The frigid water, soothe your rugburned hips  
As the fish jumps through the lakemoon  
To swim under your figure, a fallen star  
Be your hand in mine when you touch the water  
you are made for greatness  
my cool granite girl



Campfire  
—  
Piper Larison



Curtis Mountain at Hot Lake

—

June Reynolds

Gonna walk up Curtis Mountain.  
Gonna walk there really slow.  
Bet I'll make it up the mountain.  
Then I'll look down here, below.

Once this mountain heaved on upward.  
It rolled its back into the sky.  
Down below, the earth cracked open.  
Spitting steam and water high.

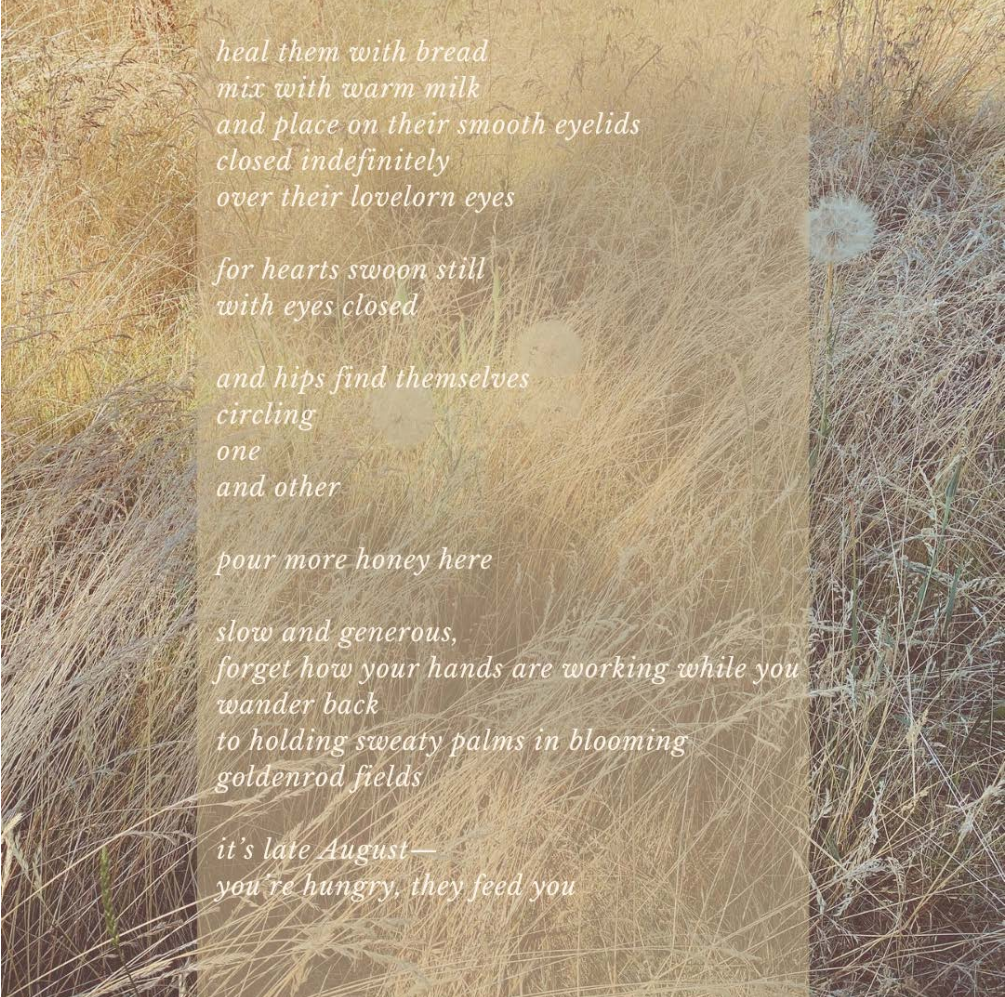
Clark and Lewis stood here wondering  
What made this place so full of steam?  
They sat and drank their last hot coffee.  
Ahead was just another dream.

Pioneers saw fertile valleys.  
As they rolled down with their band.  
Could this be the land of plenty?  
As they strode o're sunburned land.  
Birds and rushes, water gushes.  
Frogs are hot, fishes fry.  
Mosquitoes rush in sunset dusk.  
Moon is climbing. So am I.

late august

—

Ehlana Struth and Lauren MacDonald



*heal them with bread  
mix with warm milk  
and place on their smooth eyelids  
closed indefinitely  
over their lovelorn eyes*

*for hearts swoon still  
with eyes closed*

*and hips find themselves  
circling  
one  
and other*

*pour more honey here*

*slow and generous,  
forget how your hands are working while you  
wander back  
to holding sweaty palms in blooming  
goldenrod fields*

*it's late August—  
you're hungry, they feed you*

Whose Hands  
—  
Emily Aumann

When I looked in the mirror I saw my dad's hands. I've known for a long time that the quality of my skin is much more like his than my mom's, but this glance struck me – bronzed from long days of work and play, smooth on the backs and rough around the fingertips. They hung on the ends of my arms after a hot shower, channels of veins raised like his would be when lingering after dinner with me on his lap and I would trace them, curious and affectionate. They hold stories I'd heard a hundred times and others I'll never know. There's even the gold band he shared with Mom, except it rests on the other hand where it has been since I put it on in high school. It's not as heavy on my heart as it once was, but it sure looks familiar on these tanned and weathering fingers. These hands are rough, smooth, tender, strong, scarred, calloused, capable, aging. When I look in the mirror I see my dad's hands. Now I see they're mine too.

Untitled

—

Marge Hennes

loose loam, two palms breaking ground  
looking for something to lighten  
that bloody, purple hole that exists deep in winters'  
sleeping mind

friendly pebbles,  
remnants of ancestors,  
last years' bulbs  
nutrition and moisture  
myself

Everywhere I looked  
Silhouetted behind floral sheets hung to dry  
warm laundry air filling evening twilight  
A peony bud pregnant with expectation caught between  
adjectives  
and pronouns in a book about beekeeping.

To do:  
read the book  
keep the bees

Nearly June, friends, holding a wedding  
between the catalpa and blue sky, in union at least  
until the fall  
so we'll lay indolent in the shade of its love  
drunk on the confessions that enough summer sun can  
yield  
"if I had a choice,  
I'd be a sunflower"

to do:  
keep growing.

Joseph Canyon Lookout  
—  
Susan Nolen



## Heike's Geyser

—

Douglas Hammerstrom

"Whiskey's for drinkin'. Water's for fightin.'" Not the first time I've used this maxim, but it summarizes nicely how important water is to the American West and that's just where this story takes place. It involves a riding lawn mower, a foreign exchange student, lots of water and no whiskey.

Seeing as how my wife and I were already in our thirties when we moved to Oregon, our first property purchase was no starter-home. It was a fixer-upper, but included one reasonably sized house, two cottages, a shop, a riding shed, a big barn and forty acres of land on which stood twenty-acres of alfalfa. At closing we received the property deed and a document that stated our water rights on the Arrowhead Pipeline that came off the Alder Slope Ditch. That ditch channels snowmelt off the Scotch Creek drainage of the Wallowa Mountains. Those rights dated back to 1898 and as most rights do, came with certain responsibilities. Among those was a fee to pay the ditch manager, but primarily I was made to understand that it was my duty to keep the water flowing to the downstream neighbors who made their living from their farms and were not wannabe hobby-ranchers (like me).

Now the Arrowhead Pipeline ran straight thru the side yard before exiting our acreage where it then leveled out to serve the real ranches. There was a valve that controlled the water entering the pipeline from the ditch, about a half-mile up the hill, on Century Lane and another valve that could turn off the entire pipeline that was semi-buried in a culvert at the edge of our property. At intervals in our yard were exposed risers where smaller pipes came off to irrigate our lawn.

OK, that's the setting. Enter Heike, a 17-year old, German exchange student who would be staying with us for the upcoming fall semester. I thought the best way to integrate her into our family would be to give her some chores so that she might receive the character-building experience of living in the rural West. And what could be more fun than cutting grass with a riding lawn mower? I sure loved it when I was a kid! And so it was that I carefully explained how to safely drive the mower, how to use the kill switch and what obstacles needed to be avoided - the primary obstacle being a 4-inch high, 6-inch diameter riser in the southeast corner of the lawn.

Heike was quite intelligent and responsible beyond her years. Everything was going fine and an hour later most of

the grass was cut - except for the southeast corner. It was then that I heard the scream of a teenage female. It was one of those moments that lasted just a second but was experienced forever in slow mo. The whirling blade was just finishing off the top of the riser. Heike was jumping off as the back end of the riding mower was being lifted into the air by a 6-inch diameter column of water that grew 30-feet after the machine had passed.

My buddy Rick ran to stop the still-running mower, my wife to comfort the shaken, but unhurt Heike. The cavalry having arrived at that end of the yard, I sprinted for the valve at the opposite edge. It didn't budge - frozen tight with disuse. I then remembered the intake valve at the ditch, so I flew the half-mile up the hill in my pickup and cranked closed the pipeline's mouth, where it sucked in water from the Alder Slope Ditch.

On my return the situation was calmer, except for the 30-foot geyser that continued to spout for a couple hours as Arrowhead slowly evacuated its contents on to my yard. This occurred, of course, in dry August when the ranchers were irrigating 24-hours a day. Next, I needed to find someone who could repair the situation and get the now-less-than-amused real ranchers back online, and as is the case of all plumbing emergencies, it was a weekend.

I can't remember much how the rest of the story played out. Heike didn't think the event was as hilarious as we did. We didn't get a picture of the geyser. It was at least a day before the irrigation was doing its chik-chik-chik-chik-chik thing on our neighbors' fields. The frozen valve was also repaired and one of the workmen forgot his coffee mug on our fence post by the side of the road. I left it there for a week, but he never returned. It's still one of my favorite mugs. It was as I sipped chai from it recently that I was prompted to write this story.





Ouroboros  
—  
Dustin Lyons

*The thrust of flood impels the stone*  
*The thrust of blood impels the bone*

The sun leaps up..

over a crown of conifers

Keeper of the dark, dank sooth in a forest—

Like ghee they glide...

the morning's first photons

over the ever-undulating dorsum of the river—

Where the waters run wide

a feathered scribe

A twirling, a banking

A twitter, a dive

A greased stylus on a crystal plate—

*What artless calligraphy!*

*What glyphic riddle!*

Downstream...

the drink is quaffed

by the pursed declivity of a canyon-cut

in earth upheaved...

A frenzied hiss and hurtling gurgle

*This mountain-born, gorge-hewing conveyer of  
critters, dreams, and debris!*

*This river!*

An emerald vein of deliquescent seersucker

A salivary fantasia of tongue-play

A rolling chorus...

*of eternal hurrah!* and mortal croak

of movement...

stagnation

movement...

diversion

movement...

Of ultimate immunity to impediment—

Abiding

Unbridled

Onward...

to the original wilderness of the heart...

To the sea

To the heavens

To the mountains...

The womb of it all—

Untitled  
—  
Luce Behnke



Babbling Brooks  
—  
Nigel Makela

Today

People are conversations

Seamlessly drifting words

As bodies sway in the wake

It's high-tide in this land-locked ocean of awareness

A wave of loss brings me under the surface

Images of a friendship I discontinued

Confronts my eyes

I look up to see a photo of Leonard Cohen

I like singing his songs

And hearing his truth

Painting Summer  
*Sisters, Oregon*

—  
Tricia Knoll

To paint this place  
silver is glint on pine needles,  
work for moon on woods.

Light vanilla for cracks  
in shifting continents  
of ponderosa bark.

Ochre orange and red pumice  
cinder roads bend, flame orange  
for Indian paint brush  
and alpenglow's thin birdsong.

Deep blacks wrought-iron  
cowboys, bronco busting, crusted wire  
to underbelly of frog,  
juniper twists, skink's tail,  
night's plangent soft song  
to star holes,

Late afternoon wind  
sun-shifts, scours trees, sweat and grasses  
white like the eye of mountains,  
slow snow melt riffling  
cold as the dog shakes,  
under rumble of blue pick-up trucks.

Slather on rusted gates creaking opening,  
clanging shut where brown cows follow  
zipper-green creeks and sorrel horses blow hot.

A grasshopper splats on the boardwalk.  
The wild turkey lumbers up  
a steep gravel road without shade.

Two black cats  
hide in sagebrush  
from my wet brush.

Problem  
—  
Moll McCarty

"I think that there is only one way to science - or to philosophy, for that matter: to meet a problem, to see its beauty and fall in love with it; to get married to it, and to live with it happily, till death do you part..." -Karl Popper, *Realism and The Aim of Science*

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A problem is a question

asked

chipped away at

swam toward

I once wrote a poem about the number seven full of  
longing and disappointment

it was about narcissism

which is an unsolved problem itself

seven mistakes

seven questions about how to solve a problem in a way  
that does not cause harm

seven is a prime number

it cannot be divided by anything but one and itself

what kind of object resists division?

the object of a Self is

ever-changing

growing east to west, soil to sky

I arrive home from my walk and let the lawn chair  
gather my weight

a pack of coyotes sends up a wail in minor keys  
which reminds me of of a story my father told  
a banshee appeared to him and asked: fantasy or  
reality?

red dirt, grey sidewalk, navy sky

a cactus from the farmer's market holds steady on my  
porch

can a cactus be divided?

can a Self?

Old Cliff

—

Scott T. Starbuck

A fall day steelhead fishing  
on Grande Ronde River  
can be wet, cold, and boring  
to all but him.

"A rattlesnake entered Imnaha Store  
where it morphed into  
a beautiful woman I dated  
a few years back.

"Bark beetles make good stew  
if you're a woodpecker,  
snakefly, or parasitic wasp,  
otherwise not so much.

"The difference between catching,  
and not catching a steelhead  
may be barometric pressure,  
dull hook, or political affiliation.

"Dynamite beats flyfishing  
most days unless you're Charlie  
in which case  
it's about the same.

"I saw an alien spacecraft" he points,  
exit Ruby Peak one night,  
"or it could've been something  
stuck in my eye."



Lo Siento  
—  
Marge Hennes

Lo siento verano

Dependo demasiado en ti

los dias son tan largos

con tanta oportunidad

(campos y campos)

Para la felicidad

y a veces

la flor no florece

Untitled  
—  
Luce Behnke

i almost didn't see you there, arms wide, on your  
bike, receiving the day.

who rides like that.

my clothes were heavy on my body. thighs trapped  
against seams. shirt stitching digging into soft skin  
from stored winter.

i ran after you. in my mind. to say hello. to tell  
you about my life and ask about yours.

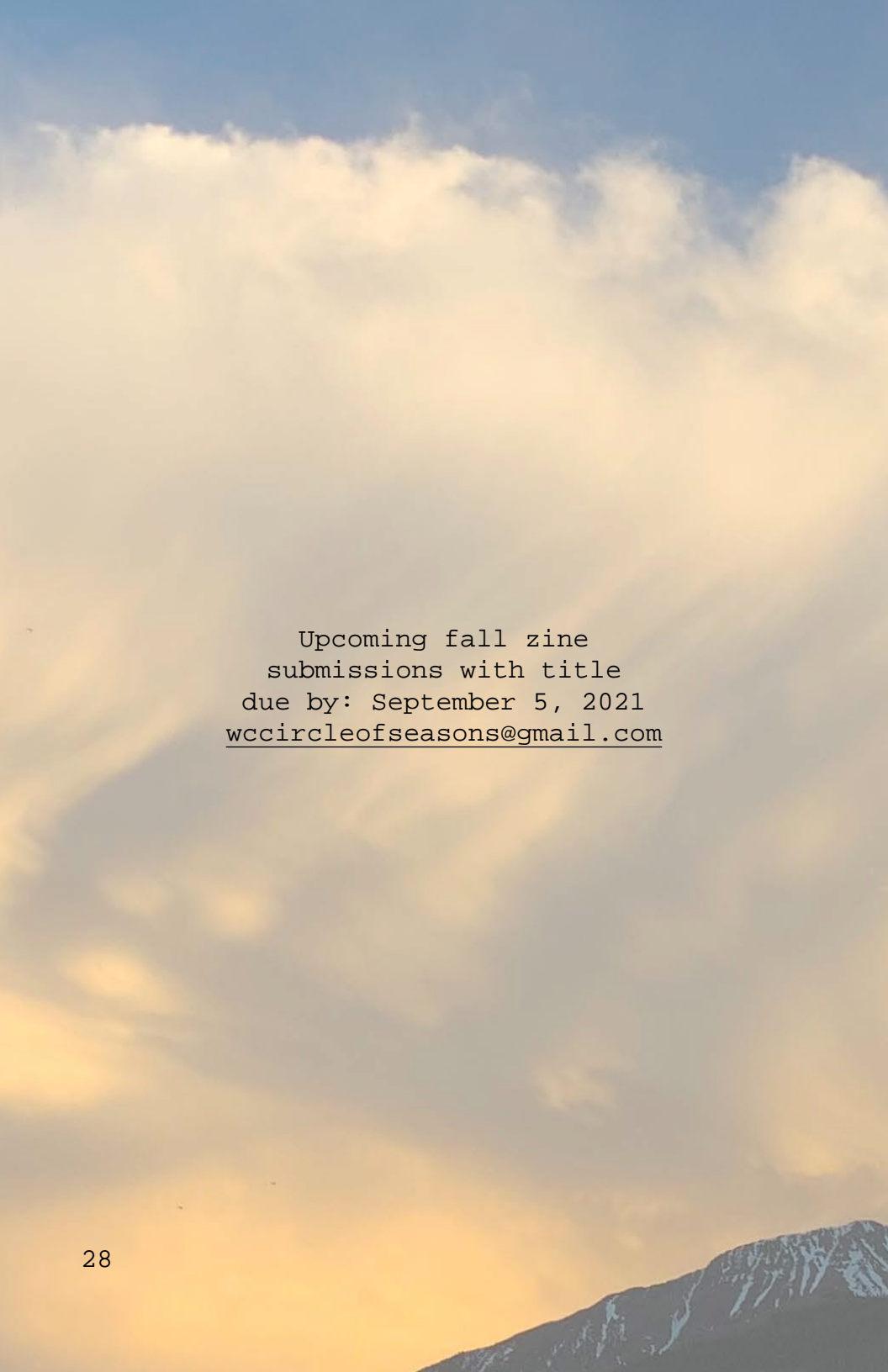
but, even sunshine has to work at ending cold.  
gradually becoming something else.

months later, once the freeze-to-liquid lowered  
enough to move, i reached for you.

in that hot cafe, words from my mouth to your ears;  
hands on the counter, dividing our bodies. sweating.

Untitled  
—  
Beth Franz





Upcoming fall zine  
submissions with title  
due by: September 5, 2021  
[wccircleofseasons@gmail.com](mailto:wccircleofseasons@gmail.com)