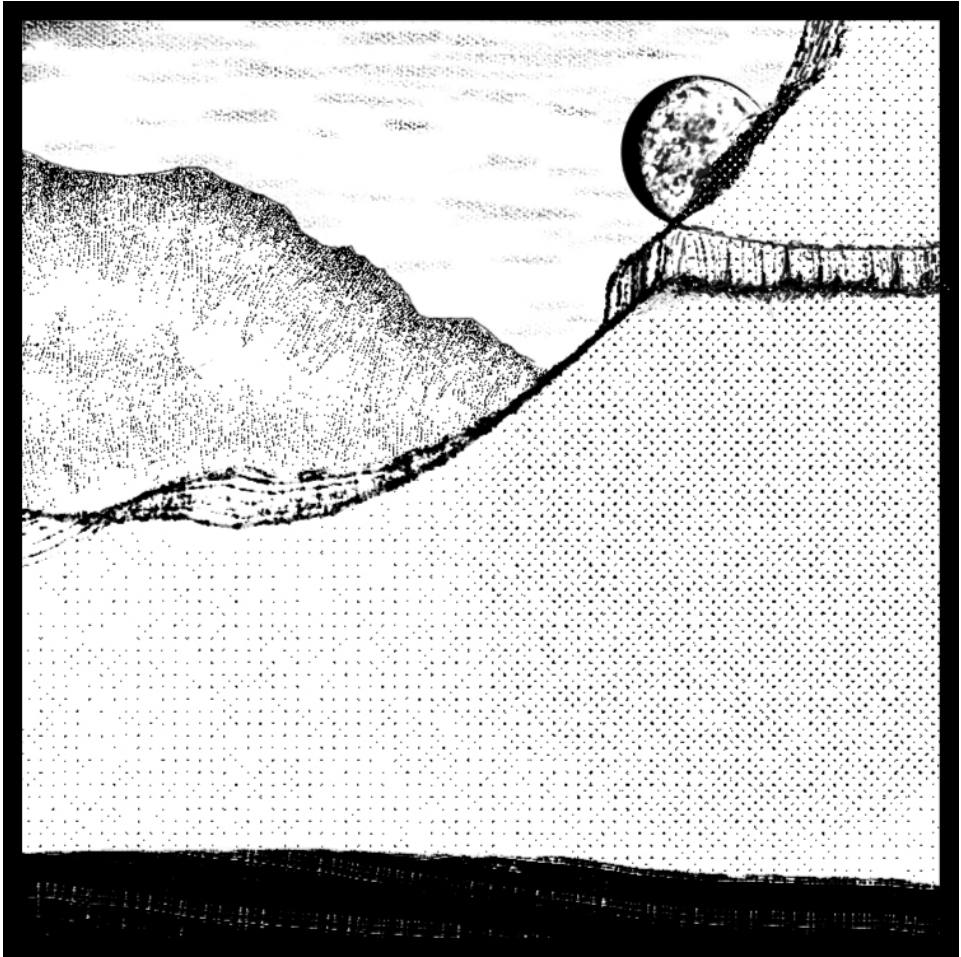


Circle of Seasons



Fall 2021

Cover Art

—

Stay a While and Listen

—

Guthrie Straw

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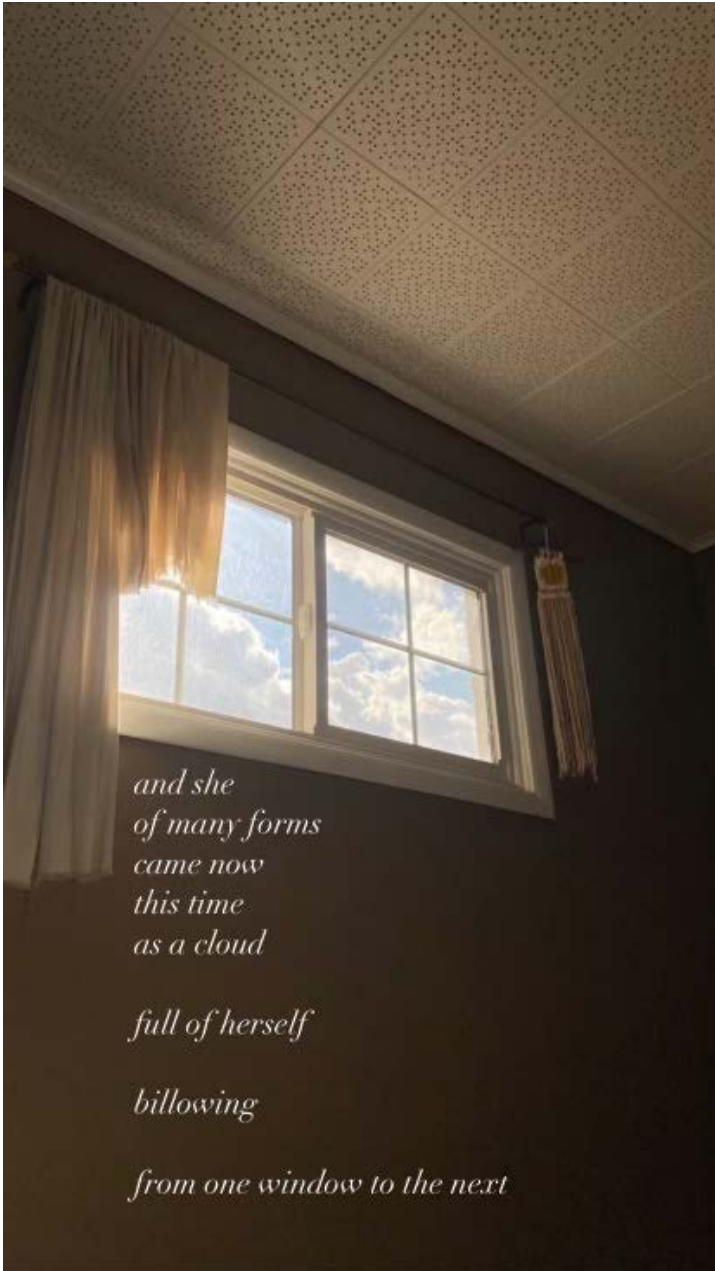


**Fishtrap**  
Writing and the West

she of many forms

—

Lauren MacDonald



*and she  
of many forms  
came now  
this time  
as a cloud*

*full of herself*

*billowing*

*from one window to the next*

We Are Still Here

—

Susan Bobbitt Nolen

My body is made of smoke.  
Quietly fading in  
Drifting among trees  
Gathering in the hidden places  
You do not see me  
But I am here

My hair is made of prairie grasses  
Shivered by the wind  
Nourished by the deep soils  
Pliable when young and tender  
Upright and stiff with age  
Sending out invisible roots  
To bind us to the land.

My breath is the huff of deer  
Scenting the air for danger  
The tang of pine and sage  
Scenting my dreams  
In and out  
Do you hear it?  
We are still here.

## Raking Leaves Yesterday

—

Nancy Christopherson

I enjoy the plastic swish  
of tines on the wide red rake  
as the leaves are obedient  
bits of dry flake—except  
in the wind when they flit—  
and stay where I guide  
them. The piles grow massive.  
These black plastic bags  
at my feet seem pretty small  
by comparison but as  
needed I stuff the leaf litter  
in, grabbing up deer droppings,  
dried up neighborhood critter  
poops—why I wear gloves—  
and for stickers—fill the  
bags one by one then squish  
the air out, tie them off.  
Big beach balls on the lawn  
as I toss them across the  
space toward the garage  
to pile in the back of the truck  
for the dump on this  
sunny, chilly Veteran's Day  
weekend. I think of  
William Stafford and his  
young wife out on the open road  
in the middle of Montana  
in the dark of night beneath  
stars, their happiness at  
the freedom of that,  
remembering he said to  
lower my standards  
this morning to get the words  
out, scatter them like mulch  
from the leaves I raked  
which makes me feel alright  
I guess, fully protected  
as the program says  
on the laptop screen,  
good to believe I think.

September Morning

—

Heidi Muller

Pull back the curtains  
Cold fingers reaching for warmth  
Hot cup of coffee

Plaintive small voices  
Meow so desperately  
Please don't let us starve

Blue sky and sunshine  
Autumn peeks in through the door  
Who invited you?

## Monsoon Season

—

Moll McCarty

I.

When there is danger, you call  
Your voice is a waterfall I stand under  
Waiting is a practice I attack with overconfidence  
As if my devotion to the act itself is enough to  
bring you home

II.

A red velvet cake decomposes in the kitchen  
I luxuriate amidst ashtrays and piles of books on a  
brown floral couch stained with coffee  
The air is warm and wet and stinks of booze  
A fly lands on my collar bone and I brush at it  
lazily

III.

There is a cognitive bias with too long of a name to  
remember (Dunning-Kruger)  
that indicates overconfidence when  
arriving to a skillset as a novice  
The novice, when waking up to their own incompetence  
will feel  
shocked, horrified, humiliated, aghast, embarrassed

IV.

The police officer asks where I am from and why I am  
so naive  
"Oregon must be a nice place, is it cold?"  
I tell him my life is off the tracks of its own plan  
He gives me lecture and he is mostly right  
"Yes, sir" I say, embarrassed

V.

Monsoons drench the dirt, mosquitos feast  
The scent of creosote is released by the rain  
and rises soft and volatile like me  
I rub calamine lotion into my ankles and  
spray my legs with geranium

## Breaking Records

—

Kendrick Moholt

It has been hot.  
Dry, dusty, record breaking hot.

Not just once or twice.  
The whole month of July  
all around the region, breaking records hot.

This afternoon big clouds moved in  
and were persuaded to give up just a little moisture.  
After dark they really set in with a steady, soaking  
rain.

Eleven o'clock- the rain, no wind to push it around,  
falls straight to the pastures.

The emergency siren starts to wail from town  
calling in the volunteers.

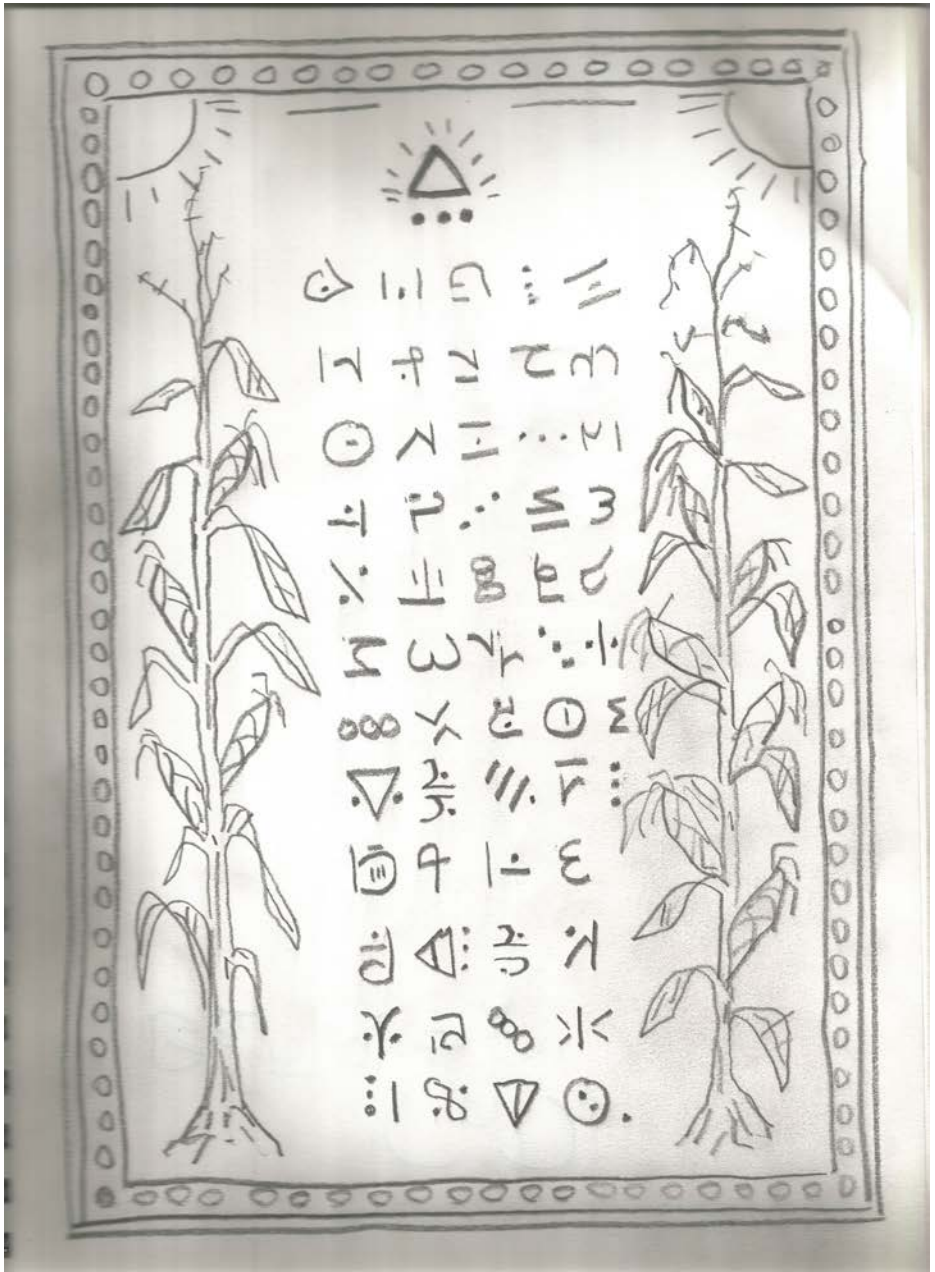
In bed, I listen to the heavy rain  
and the siren through open windows.  
The coyotes are in the dark pastures  
all responding with song.



Harvest

-

MidLo



Untitled

—

Luce Behnke

holding you, pressing our skin together, i brought  
you into the deepest part of me.

i wanted you. from the top of your head, down your  
neck, to your shoulders, and towards the feet that  
held you. each wrinkle, dimple, and freckle pointing  
to the next.

and it almost worked. that me-becoming-you us  
creation. yielding fruit with a mouth that spoke,  
directionality and weight. indistinguishable from  
itself, we soared. i thought.

i remember you that way; a part of me.

now, i hold the dirt in my hands and wonder what it  
might take to build with this dry soil and rock. to  
be just a me, in my own body,

separate from.

Untitled  
—  
Luce Behnke



Barbed Wire (Belly Crawl)

—  
Margo Cilker

Capo 2 – Key of G (A)

**INTRO:**

Em G Em G Em G C

**VERSE 1:**

          Em          G  
There's a barbed wire fence  
Em          G  
Down in the canyon  
          Em          G          C  
Are we inside or outside the line?  
Em          G  
You step over it  
Em          G  
I go through it  
Em          G                  C  
The kid belly crawls cause they're five

**CHORUS:**

          Em          G  
If you knew what it was like to be  
Em          G  
On both sides of me  
Em          D          C  
I'm going farther this time  
Em          D          C  
I'm going farther this time

## **VERSE 2:**

There's a farmer we know  
Steps into the tavern  
Where the bright lights ease the mind  
The band gets an encore  
The farmer a stiff pour  
And we're all getting closer this time  
Yeah we're all getting closer this time

## **Chorus**

          Em                          G  
If you knew what it was like to be  
Em          G  
On both sides of me  
Em          D          C  
I'm going farther this time  
Em                          G  
If you knew what it was like to have  
Em          G  
Both hands tied  
Em          D          C  
I'm going farther this time  
Em          D          C  
I'm going farther this time

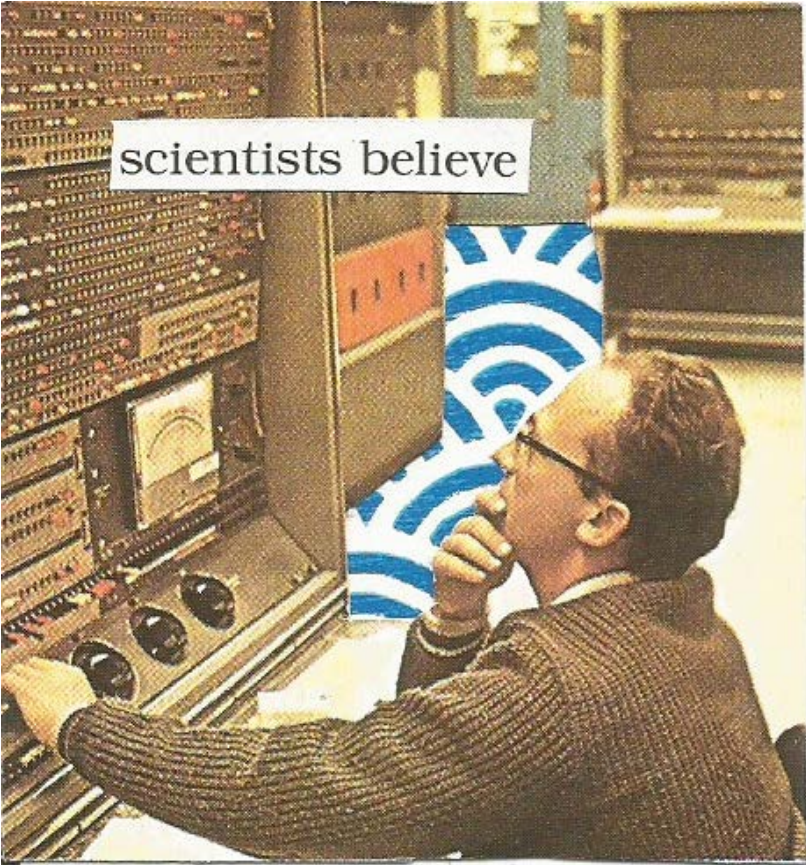
G D C x4

## **CHORUS**

## **OUTRO**

There's a barbed wire fence  
Down in the canyon  
Are we inside or outside the line?

Scientists  
—  
Kristy Athens



*Editor's note: After submitting to Circle of Seasons, Athen's "Scientists" was stolen from Wallowa County's local bookstore, The Bookloft. Perhaps it was because of its pro-science stance? As the artist put it in an email to the editor: "We live in a strange time!"*

Hands (for Beth)  
—  
Kendrick Moholt

## HANDS

(for beth)

Then,  
one day  
you wake up.  
Your hands look very old.

You learn a friend's wife has died  
after seven years of cancer.

Another friend's child is pregnant,  
with her first child,  
in her 30s.

You remember the first time  
grandfather's hands  
looked old.

And, you realize, he was about your age.



Turn Around  
—  
Marika Straw

By the time I arrive, it is already feeling like fall -  
still summer, but cold to my North Carolina-adjusted body,  
shivers under sweaters in the evenings,  
not able to jump into the lake as eagerly as my brother.

I gaze up wide at the jagged mountains,  
contemplating how it feels like they'd be quicker to kill  
you,  
but I like them better.

I never quite felt comfortable in the rolling old of the  
Appalachians,  
uneasy in their suffocating jungliness, so much more  
difficult to catch a view.

I think often of something someone said to me once,  
that we are direct products of the land we first knew.  
*Is that why I'm so fierce and I can't dream small?*

When I woke up in Wyoming on my drive over,  
I went to the lakeshore to greet the West.  
Suddenly, I was keening,  
hurled over some edge of emotion  
by the scent of juniper and the open air.  
I rocked back and forth on the lakeside grit -  
*how could I,*  
*HOW COULD I have stayed away from the place I love so much*  
*for so long?*  
I had my reasons, and I know why,  
but reacquainting myself, it's almost as if  
I am apologizing to the landscape,  
apologizing to myself.

The last time I lived here, I stared out of car windows  
unthinkingly,  
unconcerned with road names or landmarks.  
I didn't know that one day I would wish I knew where it was  
that we made the acapulco houses in the shadow-dappled sand  
by the creek,  
where it was, that one swimming hole  
with the waterfall you could duck behind and stick your  
face through,  
where it was, that we went tubing somewhere up high on a  
hill  
in the golden grandeur of summer.



This time, I seek out the backroads,  
drive in all directions in search of what I know of this  
place  
and also, what I don't.

One day I drive up Caudle Lane, and, *whoosh!*  
That's where that horse stepped on my foot for a whole two  
minutes  
before my riding instructor bolted over and yelled,  
"Why didn't you say something?!" as she lifted the hoof up  
off of my foot.  
Where I made that detour that put a barbed wire fence  
through my forehead  
because I was sledding downhill and a car was driving up,  
and I was more scared to roll than to slice.  
Where I tubed down that irrigation ditch with a friend that  
one golden afternoon,  
fretting the whole time that the bees might sting.

That first summer, my mom takes me to Bear Creek and -  
*voila!* - there it is,  
that swimming hole with the waterfall you can duck behind  
and poke your face through.  
But the second summer, for my birthday, my dad takes me  
driving out Harl Butte.  
We end up on a tiny dirt road through the forest out a  
ridge  
even he's never seen before.

One evening in late fall, perhaps the day I drive out  
Caudle Lane, but maybe not,  
I drive out Leap Road from Lostine to Enterprise for the  
first time.  
I stop to take a walk and breathe in the cold,  
take in the patches of snow on the ground.  
I turn around.  
I don't know why I'm so surprised, but I am,  
to see the mountains beyond the prairie,  
looming purple-blue, weaving in and out of stormy sunset  
clouds and light.  
My heart pounds.  
I've never been here before - at least not in my memory -  
but somehow it seems like the mountains were always there  
in my rearview mirror,  
tucked inside of me,  
ready for my return should I choose to turn around.

Woman

—

Ginger Berry

I thought I knew you, girl with long flowing hair down to her not yet existent hips, girl with giggles on her tongue and adventure in her eyes. An untouched soul, who had never felt weight on their heart, shock on her face, or hopeless for the world. Girl whose thoughts were swimming with innocence, not quite understanding what happiness felt like. Girl who was in love with life, but who's smile hadn't quite formed yet.

I know you now girl, I understand you. Girl with fully formed emotion, with hair cut, and bleached. Girl with curves, girl with love, and a little bit of life to accompany the adventure in her eyes. Her laughter bouncing off her teeth. She's felt heavy hearted and shocked. She's let people into her heart. The world is still hopeless at times, but girl, you strive to change it. She's felt true happiness, what it's like to feel full, full of sparks and stillness. Full of happiness. But you're not a girl anymore. You're a Woman.

Ichabod 2009

—

Douglas Hammerstrom

October— The month of hot sun, cool air and shortened days. It's also the month that middle-school lit teachers bring out "The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow." I was a wimpy kid. I never liked horror stories (well maybe Poe), but the supposedly scary "Sleepy Hollow" just never gave me a fright. Maybe it was because Ichabod Crane was such a preposterous character. Maybe it was because he was wimpier than I was and made me feel brave, or maybe the headless horseman was just not creepy enough.

Over the years the story became a distant memory, but the name Ichabod remained intriguing. It's a ridiculous name, an icky name, one with sharp edges, like the pointy elbows of Irving's scrawny school master. These days it's common to find kids with uncommon names - Aloysius, Esau, even Jedidiah, but I've yet to run across an Ichabod.

In the Old Testament Ichabod was the son Phineas, the son of Eli. The day he was born the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines, his father was slain in battle and hearing the news, his grandpa fell off a stool, breaking his neck. The shock of it all sent his mother into early labor and as she died in childbirth, she named the newborn, Ichabod, meaning, "the glory has departed." It was a bad day— a bad day for Israel, a bad day for the Eli family and a rough start for the baby. His name only pops up once more in the Bible and then it concerns his brother Ahitub, and not Ichabod.

What on earth triggered this meditation on Ichabod? The summer of 2009 in Colorado was hands-down the most glorious summer of my six decades. Every day seemed to be filled with sparkling, azure skies that morphed into billowing thunderheads with hours of crackling lightning for our evening diversion. It was Goldilocks, never too hot and never too dry. Daily rains brought forth a feast of wild flowers and kept the water bill low. Then, the first week of October, ice and snow hit the Rockies with leaves still green on the branches. The usual blaze of color from carpet-bagging maples and native aspen never arrived. Frosted leaves wilted, passing straight to brown where they waited only for a gale to bring down the curtains on their embarrassing finale.

The glory had departed.



Milady Malady

—

Dustin Lyons

On the many flows and storms that brought us here...

a dancing train  
of dying stars

Gone but ongoing, black and sheer...

pert and relic  
as gypsy guitar—

Another romance

Another comedy

Another killing to unfold

Another spray of lover's blood

upon your fighter's robe—

My Little Tiny...

Milady Malady

Mine are your cracked and wine-stained lips—

There's a ringing bell

a mangled spade

an unbridled jade

In your eyes...

a salted lash, a dusty road—

On a kiss

in a casket of gowns  
with a latching sound

Your whetted fangs sliced the cord  
and it quickly fell...

All that was silk...  
and all that was love...

but a feast for the breathless moths of farewell-

My Gypsy Jaguar...  
Milady Malady

Mine are your quaking face  
and riverbed eyes-

From your Black Hair

to your neck

Down your back

to your waist

From your hips

to your thighs

Down your legs

to the tips...

Your body like the canyons, like the mountains, like the  
prairie-

My fingers like the rain, like the river, like the sea-

It was cottonwoods, it was sandstone, it was condors in  
flight-

It was keeping our stride on swollen tides-

It was Tricky, it was Malbec, it was jumping the gates-

It was past lives, future dreams, it was Xela, it was Fate-

It was reefer and Redwoods, Cocteau Twins in Claude Damn  
Van-

It was whiskey in the Minam, meadowlarks, and silver bands-

It was Ceildhs and Xavanadus, it was Mine Shafts and Iron Lungs-

It was duck skirts and *ushankas*, it was set-up and breakdown-

It was the North Fork of the Salmon: the patina of your eyes-

It was naked me, swimming you, a proposal and a smile-

It was clawfoot tubs and candles, it was your hot-rock touch-

Into my arms at Mountain Star, at Blood Moon Ranch-

It was *cluck cluck... you know the rules...that spot there, yes! Yes! YES!*-

It was tangled legs, curls in my mouth, a hand upon your breast-

It was drunken nights, shit said, it was stains upon the day-

It was Pad Thai and a movie, it was passion gone astray-

It was friends, it was neighbors, shattered trust, another lie-

It was one last, hot puddle of us... my head on your thigh-

It's all ashes in a fire pit now, my Little Bird...  
Milady Malady

Mine is that lost, waning woman  
And that fair and waxing girl-

*August 11, 2021*  
*Blood Moon Ranch*

Refuge

—

Rhonda Struth

Experience

The Redwing Blackbird

Atop the

Weedstick

Gently weaving in the wind

Singing it's bright song

Full volume

Utterly

Purely

Divine



after  
—  
Katie Marrone

and just like that

there's no hiding  
behind the sun  
anymore

how do you feel?

i think i prefer it this way, myself—  
summer's so loud,  
demands so  
much

doesn't listen  
as much as she speaks  
and i tire  
so easily  
of this

oh,  
all the ways  
to distract  
a heart

we'd collect them all  
if we could,  
use them to stay afloat  
in cold lakes,  
collect them like  
stickers  
out of state

but I'd rather  
put hot  
liquid  
to  
lips

drown in clouds  
of blanket

breath  
after that smoke finally left

i'd rather  
watch these trees  
work so hard

to keep

and then so  
easily

release  
release



Upcoming winter zine  
submissions with title  
due by: December 9, 2021  
[wccircleofseasons@gmail.com](mailto:wccircleofseasons@gmail.com)