

Circle of Seasons

Winter 2022



Cover Art & Zine Editing

—

Katie Marrone

**”For some things
there are no wrong seasons”**

**- from ”Hurricane”
by Mary Oliver**

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.



Dear zine reader,

I've always been fascinated by the question: What keeps you up at night? What do you explore when the stillness lets? When the dark allows?

What's your particular genre of bedtime slideshow images— an all-exclusive show-for-one?

Recently, unable to fall back asleep at 4 a.m., I was engrossed in my own kind of middle-of-the-night tv special: My father who had just traveled back to the U.S. from Italy and his latest voice message to me— a touch of sadness in his tone. The reality that he is getting older and there is still so much left to know. The fact I will become an aunt in a few short months— the first of my siblings to have a child— and who will she become? Who I will become to her? And will I choose to become a mother one day, too?

But then, this: Dark bedroom after dark bedroom. Sheets twisted angry. Bodies sweaty with sleep, mothers and fathers and children and lovers in love and lovers out of it and people alone— so alone— and a dog waiting for his rooster call. A cat scratching at a door, eager for his breakfast.

A little county quiet at 4 a.m., too. A little county of restless sleepy yearning, too.

And I found some solace in that. In that unmistakable power of shared experience. How I can't be alone in feeling a sort of ambiguous grief and loneliness during this time, during this chapter in our world's history: a building of sadness and anxiety so subtle, so layered, we aren't even aware of it. It's coming from nowhere and everywhere. We add block after block to a precarious wooden tower in front of us. Hoping it won't fall with each sudden move. Looking to each other for a sign. Any sign. That we're doing the right thing. Being the right person. We wait for the next news cycle. The next shooting. The next variant.

Night, as always, comes. Winter, too. That's the only certainty we can touch. And through that, rest announces itself— demands we slow. Demands we listen.

I remind myself: We heal only when we rest. I remind myself: the more we feel the deeper we live.

We rest, we feel— and then, we act. How will we build what we seek— more health, more safety, more peace, more creativity, more connection? How will we create our own art, our own light, out of our fear? How will we reach for each other when the tower falls? How will we reach for each other even when— and, most importantly, when— we fear what will happen if we do?

What does it mean to be brave, today? To be brave when we're awake?

I thought about all this, and then: bodies shifting in the dark. Someone dreaming of someone they used to know. A woman getting out of bed to drink a glass of water. Our middle-of-the night scripts and slideshows and stories and thoughts filling up bedrooms of shadows— all linked in some way— making their way toward a dawn, together.

Toward a light.

This zine of community art has been one of those lights for me. I hope it can be for you, too.

In art and community dreaming,
Katie

Mist
—
Aidan Wandschneider



Winter Solstice
—
Cathy Jontos-Putnam

Wind stalks the canyon,
claws the Christmas wreath;
I find its fir face pressed
into the footpath.

From drifting snow you build
a cave for your soul, you say
while seashells
clamor on the wind
that keeps asking for more.

We live in a granite womb
by a mountainside
of a simple life
that brings howling through
spaces
when junipers bow down
to the shortest day.

Walking the loop road
when the snow slept like marble,
wind chewed our lips.
Creeks froze smooth and green
in layers like tortes.
Coolness was color
to the neutral fields.

Icicles menace the light
hovering over window panes.
We stuff popcorn down.
No bouquets;
just the sparse lines of fact.

On the twenty-second day of Advent,
I take refuge in a paint box.

Snake River Meditation

—

Richard Meadows

Stillness
seems important
to get to the bottom
of river to be with stones.

What does the river love
that doesn't have a name?

Listen to its release over stones.
Perhaps this.
No obstacles.
Flow of pure being.

Return
—
Emily Aumann

WINTER

work and ski,
cook sometimes,
rest.

SPRING/MUD/WINTER2

seek warmth in canyons,
wake up the garden,
pedal on dry roads,
forage mushrooms
when they pop.

SUMMER

work and garden;
when alpine season comes,
hike your buns off,
soak up the midweek evening swims,
try to hit the right spots at the right times
for berries,
travel if you can,
eat only salad,
brace for the harvest.

FALL

process the bounty
from the gardens that care for you,
when others' gardens overflow,
fill your tubs with more juicy earth
to put up for winter,
and don't forget -
the alpine is prime right now so
get into the high country,
brave the lake
while it's still "warm,"
see all your friends
before hibernation begins;
when the snow comes early,

find a pocket that's deep enough to ski,
listen for owls returning
to the woods behind your house,
let them rock you
to sleep.

WINTER

work and ski,
cook sometimes,
rest.

From the quiet all things rise.
To the quiet all things return.

Still Snowing Here
—
Nancy Christopherson

Five days to Christmas and still snowing.

Expanse of white, deep as my knees
high as my shoulders where I've shoveled.

No brown anywhere, just the bare branches of trees
jutting up and some tracks— deer mostly.

All things are calm, but for the news— try
not to think of the wars that rage. What is

this human race, *who* are we, and *why*?

Heavy snow insulates my home and the
earth around me as far as my gaze can wander.

The wreath on the front door forms
a full circle of fir and spruce and pinecones, red
ribbons, red berries, small lights. *Welcome*, it says.

To the passersby, to my guests, *Welcome To My Home*.

Come, eat a meal, relax. Enjoy the conversation.
Know friendship. Sing with your hearts full.

Feel at peace. Things will look better in the
morning.
This snow falls for all of us, belongs to all of us.

It buries our mistakes, blankets our dead.

New Song
—
Anne Jesteadt

Circle: broken, mirror: crazed, oak
leaves quaintly drift

down for us to pile up
but no longer reflect our losses

gray skies no longer solace
our solipsism

spring's pastels bleed
onto plastic candy sacks

dirty white scraps of winter
shrink to lingering drifts

when sun pulls fragrance from pine
needles too early

our nights, our risings, productions,
rituals bound by encircling certainty:

now, let us gather in the old stone, listen
to the belated paeon of trees, of roots

ululating inert soils, of branches
creaking to fountain our skies

cracking in orange sparks
bright as the sheen that ruffles

the wings of our birds
brought to pavement by glass

Ice Storm
—
Kat Johnson

The gorge spews forth a Banshee's scream.
Her shrill keen sleet-blasts trees, dead-stops
travel;
Her blizzard breath snow-shrouds dreams, freeze dries
marrow.
Her frozen fist flings ice shards at your window.

In the dim warm room your quiet whisper warns of
danger—

Please, you say, please watch the weather.
I hear the Banshee's taunting laugh.
She knows that I won't travel.

I need to watch your ice blue eyes.
Watch them dim. Watch them close.
I watch your eye-blue blanket breathe.
Watch it rise. Watch it fall.

In the shadow soft lights glow,
wave forms dancing green with life.
I watch them rise, watch them fall
Watch them flutter, falter, fade, grow forever flat.

No more rise
 No more fall
 No more to watch.
 No sound but the echo of the storm.

The Banshee says *it's time to go.*

Hackberry Creek
—
Sherry Smith Bell

Red winged blackbird trills a cry of
Summer storms.

The red earth responds with whirlwinds
Of shape. The dust crowns the barbed wire
Fences.

Plots of land are laid out across the prairie.
Pattern creates a known language.

Catfish lurking in the red muddy shallows
Wary.

Red winged blackbirds are silenced.

Raging clouds blow cottonwoods, dirt
Tornadoes, tumble weed, and a wandering
Tin can.

"Normal" Winter

—

Marika Straw

I wrote this piece in early 2015 when I had just moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, but this fall in Wallowa County felt similarly eerie and wrong.

"The winters aren't like how they used to be," They tell me.

"I know," I say, looking out over unfrozen water, birds chirping in the evening light.

They told me it'd be cold Back Here in winter. "Bring a Wool Scarf," they said, "Good Boots. Warm Gloves."

I need them, kind of, but not as often as I was told to expect. I was told to expect bone-chilling freezes, thirty-below. But it barely dips below zero and the ice melts weekly.

I am growing Young in a climate where there is no Normal, where mildness is slashed by polar vortices, where sudden storms rage as if the apocalypse were calling.

And yet They seem to think that this is just an aberration of aberrations, that they can explain this away as "Abnormal" until we return to Normal Winter.

"Normal Winter"?

Say goodbye to that sweet memory; it is already long gone.

Untitled
—
Jean Falbo

Dear Kristy,

Our traditional birthday bouquet of flowers is heading your way from a Burlington Florist. Watch for them to be delivered on Wednesday.

A poet once wrote, "Time you are a villain, time you are a thief." It is quite old and has been stolen as lyrics and poems of lament in various forms many times. One version in a blues number goes "Time steals tomorrow and leaves only yesterday."

So anyhow, I have had my rendezvous with time—humorous to me in hindsight. Once upon a time (1989), I was chosen to be a rep for the faculty union, along with 11 others. The campus had a photographer who took all our thumbnails, head and shoulders, and he framed them together. They were displayed in a well-trafficked hallway along with instructions that said anyone of us could consult and guide colleagues in filing a work complaint against the University.

Some time went by before I noticed the pictures, but when I did, I was not pleased. It was an awful picture of me up there. Forthwith, I tromped into the photo studio and demanded a re-take. The guy sort of hemmed and hawed but reluctantly agreed to take my picture again. I walked the hall every day, watching for the new flattering image of me. Boy, I was bird dogging it!

I remember so well standing before the replacement. Hmmm. Looked awful lot like the last one. Could it be, really, that this is how I looked at age 50? Someone I knew came by, glanced at the pictures without actually seeing them and launched into talking about some mundane thing. I don't remember what, maybe the paper clip budget. I went home and looked in the mirror. It confirmed my worst fears. Yep, that's me at age 50.

Oh, where did the time go? Now that I am 82, I say, "Oh to be 50 again."

I am so happy to have you in my life these days. Happy birthday baby!

Love,
Mom

In the Cloudy Firs
—
Cathy Jontos-Putnam

In the cloudy firs, a stone
the color of the Serengeti,
toward Arko, a butte of Rhino backs.
My friends live over these canyons
lost to prairie.
We breathe the same mountain air,
watch the clock of our lives
with the same attention
we listen to each other's stories...
similar, maybe, to the thought
that ordered these plum orchards,
now deserted like the fish ponds—
havoc of cattails — where the trout
imagined a summer evening when
the bear came to partake.

Why do I linger in winter corners
when the light grows into the new year...
Above, the burnished house is still
as a Christmas tree speckling the carpet
with needles it no longer needs.
The road back is steep, snow crusted.
The sun mutes the path now
making its own way beneath the horizon.

Oh winter wind
—
Alia Ayer



Oh winter wind,

Is it you who plucks the
rings of Saturn and
places them at my feet?

Is it you who borrows the
wrinkles from my eyes and
molds them to this bark?

Is it you who arrives from
where window meets wood
silently bidding me to rest?

I must be someone's Dream...

—
Dustin Lyons

Doffing what's scarlet in wild ballet

I must be someone's Autumn...

A fulsome harvest of prime light

Some deadfall séance of slash and smoke

A place to fall...

A heaven to rise...

into—

Splinting what's broken with rime and silence

I must be someone's Winter...

Hearth-heat on cold feet

Sunrise on avalanche

That sprawling imp in mittens and boots

carving angels into snow

and aiming for the lips—

Trailing the scent of my maker's palms

I must be someone's Dream...

Someone's Spring..

Someone's Summer..

A flare of sin

A feather of prayer

Some meld of mud-doll and star-wish

carried off by high water..

or lost to fire-

Harvest, Raab's Lagoon

—

Amanda Kelly

Not sure what they are harvesting
but the beach at low tide is full of families
collecting and prying.
I do not speak the same language
as they so cannot ask.
Mussels or clam, geoduck or urchin
whatever it is, they are measuring in buckets.
It is not a beautiful day.
The edge of water smells of fifty billion
animals boiled in their shells
just last weekend.
I want to ask them to leave
those still living in the salty beds
alone,
as if it were my business,
which maybe it is.
Who can say,
we are all of us here,
eagle, ravens, the common gull,
just watching.

Have been trying to start a poem
about old growth and deep grief,
Came here,
began at low tide.
The way we all did,
these gatherers,
these shells.

Mule at Temperance Creek

—

Richard Meadows

Dark brown mule
arrives in the dusty heat.
Tromps down to Temperance Creek
to temper its thirst.

All animals need to drink water.

I see you sniffing and sensing
your mulesphere
as I stand in my human kinesphere.

Wondering about the circles we live in.
How they overlap.
Where they intersect.

Today I experience one livingsphere
looking into your mule eyes.
Seeing and being seen.

The Adventurers

—

Angela Mart

Who shouldn't love being alone
A soul and two dogs on their own
Exploring individually and together
One rock, one river at a time
And, those mountains above
Telling the story from beginning to end
It's difficult to imagine where each fits in
But, onward they go
What each will find no one knows
The soul and two dogs
Hoping to discover
What grounds them to the earth
And fills them with joy
Will someday too
Become part of the story

Doe in the Snow
—
Nancy Christopherson

On the hillside between sagebrush
lying with her legs tucked

and her neck raised, she is
concealed in snowfall and barely

identifiable, ears perking forward
mid-swivel. On alert she looks like

Nessie if Nessie were realized and
not yet a myth blurred, pure truth

from the neck of her, tensing the dark
nose hidden in white fog. She pauses

then continues in profile in inked
stillness buried beneath twirling snow-

flakes, the grainy film unfamiliar but
so tender in the morning at 8 am.

She chews her cud in peace, this
creature of deep winter, fully

conscious, cruising the imagination
sometimes coming up for air.

A List
—
Anonymous

Do I have to do it?

Yes, then what?

Another list.

I suppose that's just life

You'll get used to it.

I'm still learning too.

What do you do on a 3rd date?

Whatever you want I suppose
just don't do the wrong thing.

Should you kiss them?
If you are asking probably not.

how do you feel about them?

good, I guess, but I don't know

that's what I'm trying to figure out

Don't google it.

This is just life

we'll get used to it

we're still learning.

Birdbath

—

Anne Jestadt

Hanging from the hook outside
my window, a shallow tray brimmed
with water

finches come, two then three, tinier
than you'd think, claws
wispy as spider's legs

eyes obsidian points
feathered in softest red

bowing to their reflections
cocking their heads at the sky

flitting to a bare branch when they see
my shadow moving behind glass

they are unknowable as death

familiar as breath

as are all wild things that light
and if we look, reflect

our own movements
back, our own eyes, this poised truth

as it watches, as it waits -

waits, then leaves us

to ourselves, to what
we have built for them

empty, gently rocking

The Story
—
Angela Mart

On foot they go
Where it is no one knows
They venture out into the wild
With the anticipation of a giddy child
The perfect spot is found
There is potential all around
One makes the call
And, in minutes the answer is heard
It moves closer and closer
What seemed like miles becomes yards
His heart begins pounding
What emerges from the woods is astounding
He draws back and releases
Hoping it hits the optimal creases
There's a mighty crack and he knows
This one is his in one blow
Oh, the story he'll tell his friends
From beginning to end

Frost
—
Aidan Wandschneider



Upcoming spring zine
submissions with title
due by: March 6, 2022
wccircleofseasons@gmail.com

