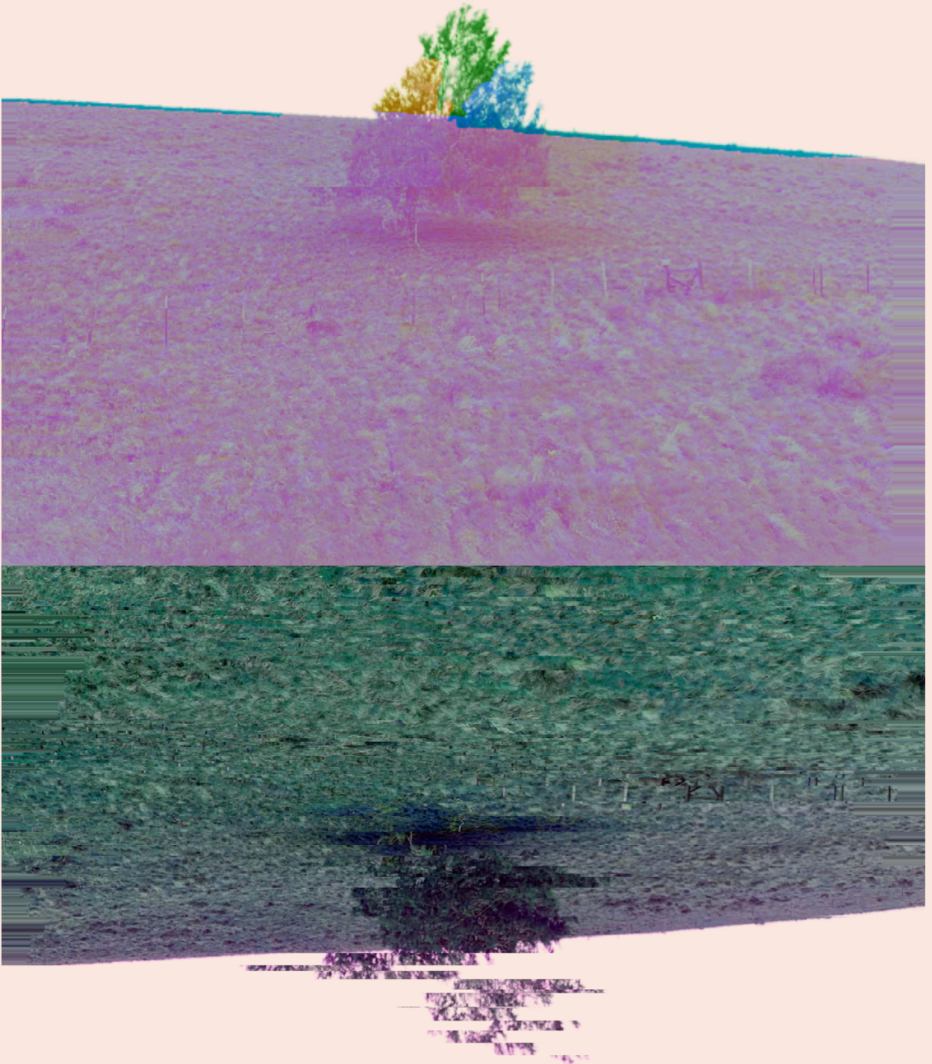


Spring 2022

# CIRCLE OF SEASONS



Both And

—

Cover Art & Editing by Katie Marrone

"WE TELL OURSELVES  
STORIES IN ORDER TO LIVE"

- JOAN DIDION

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She

—

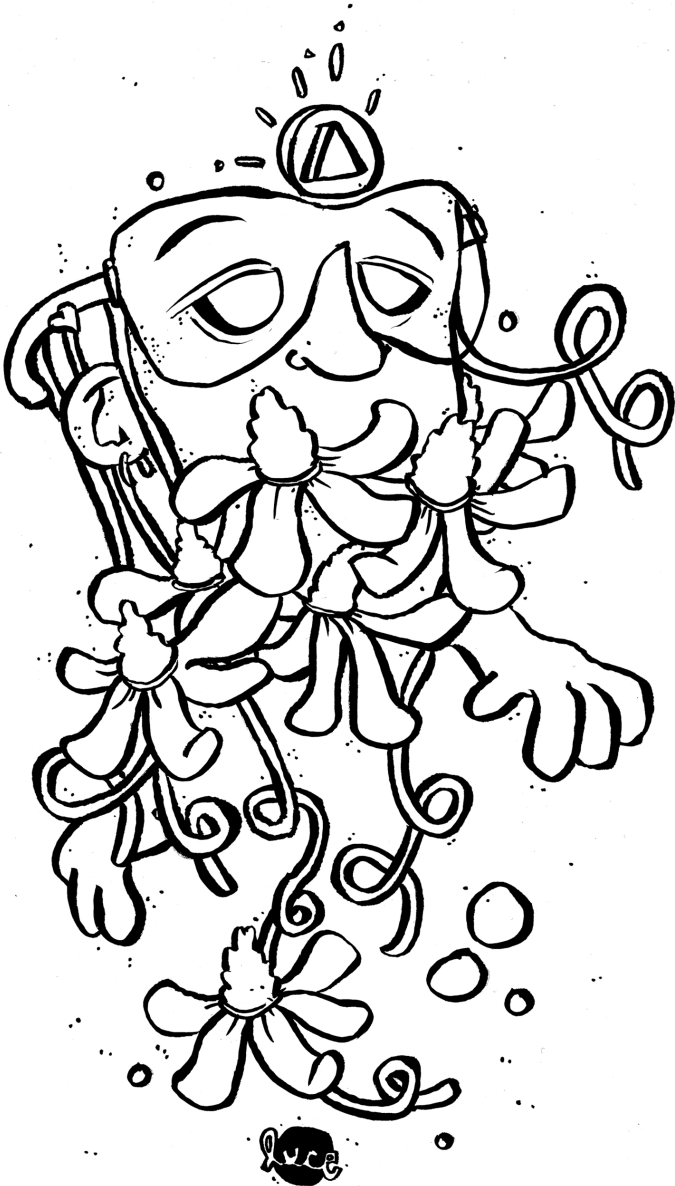
Richard Meadows

*for Janie Tippet*

She is stirring tonight,  
Murmuring beneath the mud,  
knows nothing of recession or depression.  
She is giving blood to buds, full of promise and  
bloom.  
She is pulsing with a vibrant surge, opening  
windows of a winter room.

Sun is broadening upon her, warming her days.  
Stretching out limbs, trunks drink of her gaze.  
Eyes opening to a bluer sky.  
She beats with a heart that thumps grass to  
green.  
She is spring.  
She is stirring tonight.

Untitled  
—  
Luce Behnke



Becoming  
-  
Kevin Joseph

snow in the shadows

blossoms unfurl, insistent

vulnerable: brave

Drop  
a drop of water becomes a child  
for Cole and Christina

—  
Kendrick Moholt

*My well, the pump 400 feet below the surface, was not working.*

*The impeller shredded and impacted so only seven pounds of pressure trickled from the faucet.*

*I was re-reading parts of a favorite book.  
Beth's words: "KÚS HÍWES WÁQIS. Water is life"*

*So, water was first in my mind when I thought of my friends' new baby.*

*Their first child, still on the way. Christina swelling and almost ready.*

*Piatote's words about water and mother blended with my biologist's view of water cycle.*

*A drop of water will become a child.*

\*\*\*

*If you follow the raindrop, you will eventually find life.*

*Water changes form as it accumulates over high peaks.  
Waves of air push inland, moving vapor from the warm ocean.  
Winds carry, rise, cool and condense.*

*Small droplets gather to a solid form in thin alpine air.  
Water falls, from the cold, in answer to gravity's call.  
The drop forms to a flat lace. Solid clouds settle onto the mountain  
as a blanket of snow.*

*Nothing can resist the push of time forever and snows will melt.*

*Ice water flows in narrow rivulets, into streams, then rivers.*

*From white rushing torrents to brown meandering deltas,  
the water submits to a pull from the center.*

And then the salt.

Water accumulates in the great salt pools  
that cover this green and blue earth.

Minerals are carried from the mountains.

Minerals are pumped up from deep in the crust.

As water seeps down amongst the earth's bones it is heated  
and

pushed back carrying a dissolved gift.

With time the ocean has become a warm, salty womb. The womb  
perfect for life.

If we follow our water drop long enough, we will find it in  
another mother's womb—

a womb walking on the land.

The land mother's womb is also a salty bath, warm and  
nurturing.

Small life forms new fingers, limbs and little eyes waiting  
to see.

Out of the dark, warm, salty depths of mother comes life  
into air and light.

Life screams into the air pumping its hot breath  
just as the earth pumps her hot water into the sea.

The breath is vapor moving out from the screaming new  
voice.

This life's first vapor moves across the ocean.

It is pushed by fresh winds into the mountains

to fall as little droplets

that will blanket the land.

## Nesting

—

Cynthia Pappas

On our farm in the McKenzie River Watershed, near to the house, the bluebirds - Mr. and Mrs. - sit atop the nesting box they have claimed. They have been out on forays, gathering straw from the barn to build their nest. I put out dog hair from the dryer lint tray that they can use to add softness. Immediately, a violet-green swallow takes some to add to the nest he's building.

This chilly morning, after the frost has melted, I weed the asparagus patch and the artichokes. Kneeling down, I almost plant my knee in coyote scat. What are the coyotes doing in the asparagus bed? Are coyotes omnivores? I don't think so, but I will have to look this up when I go back inside. As I weed, I hear a rattling call in the cedar tree near the garden. It sounds similar to a Bullock's oriole. It seems awfully early - the first week in April - for its return. I run in the house and grab my binoculars. I hear the call again and am able to see movement in the tree. I zero in on the bird and I see a huge white eye ring and a belly of soft yellow feathers. Not an oriole. It appears to be a vireo.

Inside now, I look up the vireos we've had on our yard bird list. Cassin's vireo was passing through in 2008 on April 11. And the description in the bird book matches the prominent white eye ring. How fun to witness this early visitor. Then I doubt myself, thinking it might be a golden-crowned kinglet instead. But it was bigger than a kinglet. My yard is a living world, constantly in flux. I am along for the ride.

At sunset our prayer flags that fly on the tall copper pole are still. The wind blew earlier when we were trying to cover the transplants with garden cloth. The fabric billowed like a hot air balloon filling with gas. My husband, George, and I muscled the cloth to the ground and covered the edges with soil to weigh it down to protect the tender broccoli transplants which we raised from seed, from the



forecasted 27 degree low. I'm hoping we haven't planted too early. We tend to rush getting our garden in because after the long winter, we relish connecting with the soil. It's such good therapy.

Lily of the Valley pips spear the soil in the shade bed, readying themselves for a Mother's Day bouquet. They always remind me of Mom. Did she grow them in her flower garden? Maybe she wore this scent? I can't remember, which upsets me. These memories have become more important to me as I've aged. Will my kids remember the flowers I grew?

As I reach into the herb bed to pick rosemary for our roasted vegetable dinner, a spotted towhee flies out of the tangle. Good thing I haven't yet raked the leaves from this bed, I would have disturbed her nest.

A new day, and yet another place that needs my ministrations. Today I'm weeding under the currant bush in the planting bed by the rock wall. As my head is buried deep under the creamy flower clusters, I hear the unmistakable *chick* of a hummingbird. I raise my head slowly so I don't startle it. A four-inch male Anna's is feeding on the nectar, its bill entering each tiny bell-shaped flower. His stunning fuchsia sequined gorget flashes in the sun.

Now, in mid-April, it has warmed enough this past week that we actually have to water the garden. Astonishing. I'm watering the seeds we've planted and hoping they haven't withered in this unseasonal warmth. I look out toward the pasture and my gaze is caught up short by a large gray bird perched on the fence. Its back is angled toward me so I can see the pointed shape of its beak. The bird has the *jizz* of a flycatcher. I think it might be a Say's phoebe. It's silent so I can't identify it by voice.

All pretense at watering has fallen away; I am intent on the bird. I catch some yellow on its lower belly. Not a Say's phoebe because the belly would be faded rose. A western kingbird? This early in April? I doubt myself. I look down at the watering can. When I look back up, the bird is gone. I run inside to check my yard bird list. We've only seen kingbirds here four times in thirty years, so this feels unlikely, somehow. The earliest sighting was April 30, 2013. The bird is passing through, heading east,

where we will see them in droves in late May at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge when we visit to witness spring migration.

These birding moments telescope or maybe expand, seeming much longer. Even though time feels suspended, often last only as long as it takes the bird to alight and depart. So many species seem early this spring. What are they asking of us? How will we respond?

The red-hot poker plant (*Kniphofia* for those who need to know the Latin name) has formed buds so the Bullock's oriole's return can't be too far off. In a week it will be Mother's Day and George has given me an early gift of an oriole feeder. I hang the enticing feast of jelly and oranges on the feeder near the alluring orange buds.

The broccoli is almost ready to harvest. Nesting season is in full swing. George and I sit on the deck in the late afternoon after a day spent tending the garden. Binoculars in hand, always. We hear the unmistakable *ick* call of a black-headed grosbeak. I spot the Mrs. in the garden collecting twigs for her nest. Mr. is at the feeder. I'm delighted that so many birds have chosen to nest on our farm.

I see a raptor helicoptering over the pasture, attempting to hover, beating its wings furiously. I've seen kites and kestrels do this but never a red-tailed hawk. The hawk's rufous tail feathers are fanned out to create as much loft as possible. Then it drops precipitously and lands on a vole. It flies with the prey in its talons toward the nest to provide sustenance for its mate. Returning in the blink of an eye, the hawk repeats the helicoptering posture. The second try is unsuccessful and he flies to perch in the top of the cedar tree in the middle of the field. Ever watchful.

George lowers his binoculars, looks at me and says, "Who needs Netflix?"

It is mid-May now and we're dining on broccoli quiche. I tick through the nesting species on our farm, those who call our place home, saying each name aloud, relishing such abundance.

American goldfinch  
American kestrel  
American robin  
Anna's hummingbird  
Black phoebe  
Black-capped chickadee  
Black-headed grosbeak  
California quail  
Canada geese  
Common yellowthroat  
Golden-crowned kinglet  
Great blue heron  
Great horned owl  
Hooded merganser  
House finch  
House wren  
Killdeer  
Mourning dove  
Northern flicker  
Olive-sided flycatcher  
Pileated woodpecker  
Red-tailed hawk  
Red-breasted sapsucker  
Rufous hummingbird  
Song sparrow  
Spotted towhee  
Swainson's thrush  
Tree swallow  
Violet-green swallow  
Warbling vireo  
Western bluebird  
Western scrub jay  
Western wood pewee  
White-breasted nuthatch

Indeed, who needs Netflix?

Poem for a Friend

—

Anonymous

I think of you over there,  
Your pant-legs that stand straight up  
Moving one, then the other  
Down your favorite gravel road

You pull carrots from the dirt,  
But only when you're ready.

You against the wind  
In the quietest of places,  
And I where you dreamed  
A few counties ago

Song of Late Springtime

—

Nancy Christopherson

*—to Matsuo Basho (1644-1694)*

A mere chickadee  
is enough to brighten  
this entire world.

All thought is cumbersome.

Brown  
—  
Jody Berry

In 1974, I joined the Columbia River Girl Scouts Brownie chapter.

My uniform consisted of a taupe brown jumper, a white blouse with brown stripes, a deep brown beret, a brown bow tie, and knee-high brown socks with little orange Brownies dancing on the sides. Buster Brown shoes completed the look. They X-rayed my feet to get just the right size.

My Brownie troop leader was Mrs. Brown. I don't think I ever knew her first name, or if there was a Mr. Brown.

Mrs. Brown had a gap between her front teeth and big hair; frizzy, unruly, soft brown. Mrs. Brown always wore a chocolate brown velour pant suit with a big O ring on the zipper. Her Oxford loafers in a reddish brown were scuffed, brown dirt caked to the heels from the garden she spent so much time in. Her long nails were usually caked with brown dirt and I would imagine her clawing the dirt instead of using a hand rake and gloves like Grandma did.

We had so many slumber parties at Mrs. Brown's house. She played the guitar as we crafted like crazy, focused on earning our badges. Leather working, weaving, basket making, sewing, beading, and rhinestone studding our new designer jeans with her Ronco machine.

When the TV station signed off for the night, we would climb into our flannel Coleman sleeping bags with the deer or ducks or blue buffalo plaid inside and begin to tell scary stories, our heads together in a circle on the hardwood floor. We would work out our fright by laughing hysterically as we streaked in our underwear through the streets of Milwaukie at dawn.

In the late morning, Mrs. Brown served up stacks of brown buckwheat pancakes cooked on the electric griddle with Imperial margarine, Koogole peanut butter, Log Cabin maple syrup, and little amber glasses of Tang to quench our powerful thirst.

Mrs. Brown's kitchen had all the latest appliances, all in brown, including a new invention called a microwave that we took turns pressing our faces up against to watch marshmallows blow up or silverware throw sparks. Her dining room walls were paneled dark brown and she had a big brown ceiling fan that moved her wild hair ever so gently, the haze of cigarette smoke dimly lit by a diagonal shaft of light coming through the big bay window.

Mrs. Brown chain-smoked those skinny brown "More" cigarettes. She said they kept her skinny - I thought they made her look like one of those cigarettes.

Mrs. Brown drove a brown Ford Country Squire LTD station wagon with a Naugahyde roof and faux wood paneling. There was a dent on one corner and the chrome bumper slightly mangled.

Mrs. Brown could fit all 12 of us Brownies in that mo-bile comfortably.

Mrs. Brown had a brown German Shorthair named Freckles who usually sat in the front bench seat and the rest of us would pile like puppies frolicking about in the back.

We played Rock Paper Scissors to claim the very back spots as we could open the back window and moon people.

Mrs. Brown drove really fast no matter the destination, her wing window open, smoking a brown cigarette, the V8 engine roaring, pedal to the metal as we headed off on some new Brownie adventure.

She would turn on the AM Radio and Brownie troop 4077 would sing along to "Bad, Bad, Leroy Brown".

dawn

—

Lauren MacDonald

hope crowned at dawn

much like you this afternoon

a long awaited site

headway

to

wow!

in tumbling form

like sun who breaks night with bounding rays of  
day

newer than any of us

we hear you cry



Spring Light, NE Oregon  
—  
MC Reardon



# My Friends Show Me Things That Are Beautiful

—  
Marika Straw

"Come over here, Marika" Crystal says. "We're looking at mushrooms."

"No," I say. "Mushrooms are gross."

Crystal, Ryan, and Adam cluster around a tiny laptop screen at our standard-issue college dorm desk. They ooh and aah. I remain aloof, sitting on my bed.

I don't remember what I was doing, actually, which tells me that it was almost certainly less captivating than whatever they were doing online. Crystal looks me in the eye, angrily. "You're closing your mind to beauty." This is clearly an unpardonable choice.

Suitably offended, I capitulate. They are right. Mushrooms are incredibly beautiful. I become entranced by the colors, the textures, the extravagance, the flair, the drama.

Later, they have me tromping with them through the nearby Wisconsin woods that I didn't know were public. Through mud, stream, and dead leaves we venture. I find a log and pretend-surf on it, making ridiculous noises in my comically oversized coat. Then, the moment of ultimate truth and wonder: Ryan finds a puffball. We crowd around it and admire. The good spring dankness wafts up around us.

It is, unquestionably, better than whatever else I would have been doing off by myself.

\*\*\*

Alex and I are walking toward the newer bridge that connects Minto Brown to Riverside. He asks if we can stop by the bridge for a while. He wants to watch the swallows. "Why?" I ask. It seems like a particularly specific ask. "My friend Audrey is working on an app

for identifying swallows," he says. "She taught me to stop and look at them. I'm trying to learn how to tell them apart." I nod, satisfied. This is a very good reason.

A few months later, in the summer, Alex is visiting me in Wallowa County. "I want to see canyons," he says. "And birds that I can't see on the west side." I rack my brain. I'm not sure what birds are on the west side of Oregon and which ones aren't. "Magpies?" I ask. He nods. He can't remember the last time he saw a magpie. (This is almost inconceivable to me at this point. I'm pretty sure I see them every day.) I appreciate the fact that we organize our time together through an ethos as simple as: "canyons and magpies." We go on a hike to Blue Hole, then discover the back road from Indian Crossing to Imnaha Tavern. Driving at 15, 20 miles per hour, we're surrounded by canyons and by flocks of magpies. We don't talk much; we don't have much to say. We look out the windows. We appreciate the canyons and the magpies. "Satisfied?" I ask. "Satisfied," he says.

\*\*\*

I'm on a date with someone I don't know well, driving on Highway 20 between Suttle Lake and Sisters. We're passing Black Butte Ranch, and I prepare to point out my favorite spot, but he beats me to it. "I've always wondered why this fence is different than all the other fences," he comments.

My mind immediately rephrases it into the Passover night question, fence version: 'Why is this fence different from all the other fences?' Then I ask, "The fence?" I am confused. I move my eyes down towards the road. There is a short wooden fence, more decorative than functional, closer to the road.

"I never noticed the fence before," I respond. "I was always too busy looking at the meadow and the mountains beyond."

Dawn

—

MC Reardon

The landscape calls to me  
while the moon still hangs high  
in an indigo sky.

A soft breeze dancing  
gently taps budding flower heads  
one by one  
as they lean upward  
eager for sunlight.

Bright new blades of grass  
whisper to each other  
among overwintered stalks of  
wheat and cattails.

It's been a long time  
since the sun warmed the earth.

The moon smiles down  
on these tiny resurrections  
before slipping away  
beyond the horizon  
and a new day begins.

## Words from Wallowa Students

The Sky

—

Gage Goebel

The sky looked spectral with its rosie tint with blotches of red and pink. It's almost as if it had a face, the face of no one with its mysterious glow. How it shone on the houses and hills as if it were flowing like a river, how it was deep, but shallow. Such a wondersome sight in the summer sky.

But the sky of my home town is the best of all. The way the mountains reach up and touch it like fingers grasping at nothing. A sight that you can never get over, a picture that never goes away.

\*\*\*

Untitled

—

Lucas Power

The trail is beaten down by many horses and people. The air smells sweet of pine and fir trees. Water is running very close by. There is a fawn and a doe drinking the freshly melted snow. A squirrel runs up a tree into a hole. Fish are glimmering in the short shallow pools. Water is tumbling over the rocks like an overflow. It is calm, very calm.

Birds are chirping, squirrels are chattering, a snake slithers by. There is a slight breeze

coming from the south down the canyon walls. The trail gets steeper, farther from the water. It is now a low dull noise. You now can see a great distance. On top of ridges there is still snow dusted on top of the trees. There is a small group of elk on a small outcropping chewing their cud. A hawk circles above slowly looking for its next meal. It is calm, very calm.

\*\*\*

Her Soul

—

Jadyn Tanzey

Her soul is like the sun  
lights up the universe  
only to be surrounded in darkness and silence  
While being surrounded by others  
but for them to be so far away  
For being everyone else's light  
but only to burn her sorrow  
The girl who brings light to everyone  
will never know how she glows  
because she burns bright as day  
but will forever be lost in the night

## My Favorite Flannel

—

Anonymous

A white, gray, and black flannel. A piece of art that keeps me warm during the winter makes me feel like the one thing I love doing, laying on a warm beach in the summertime. It makes me feel like I'm in the 90s cruisin' around and blasting Sweet Child O' Mine, it makes me feel like myself. It expresses a part of my personality by giving a chill vibe out for others to see. My flannel makes me feel as cool as John Stamos from Full House. The black and white blocks are as Oreos ready to dip into milk.

\*\*\*

## Skinning

—

GW Sweeney

I killed a coyote and brought it home and hung it. It had a nice coat on it and I started skinning, starting at the back knees cutting down to its crotch. Then I kept skinning down its body and put the hide on a piece of plywood on some saw horses. I stretched it out and nailed it down around the edge with some small finish nails and took a sharp knife and cut all the excess fat and meat off and trimmed it up. I got some salt and spread a good layer over it then waited a few minutes and put another layer on it. Now I'll wait about a week or so, putting a new layer of salt on it first thing every morning. After it's dry I need to take a wire brush and scrape the hide to get all the salt off and the other excess fat and skin that doesn't need to be on it that

will scrape off easily and it'll look nicer. Then I'll have a nice hide to sell or put on the wall.

*\*Special thanks to Wallowa teacher, Cameron Scott, for his support of Circle of Seasons zine and student voices!\**



I Don't Remember Things

—

M.M. Lau

I don't remember things.  
That space in my brain that holds the memories,  
the joy,  
the sadness,  
the fleeting moments and the lasting ones—  
That space is a grey cloud  
Filled with a catalogue of song lyrics  
It counts prime numbers  
It categorizes paint colors  
It doesn't remember memories

I don't know what color eyes you have  
But I remember your smell  
As sharp as if you'd left a handprint across my  
face  
I couldn't say when your birthday was  
But I know the sensation in my stomach when my  
eyes alight on your figure  
Walking down the path toward me  
A sense of home  
A sense of joy

I'm not nostalgic.  
Sentiment is best kept for another day  
But to touch you  
To know you are real  
To feel your breath with mine  
To sit vigil beside you  
To bear witness to your pain  
To share in your full bodied happiness  
To stroke your hair  
To hold you  
Aren't those memories, too?

Heave-ho  
—  
Dustin Lyons

O, Desire...the Great Liquefier

(so it seems)

But love uncoupled with mercy

is a broken thing—

I stare at this cherry

transfixed by its burn

by the gently sprung coil of its smoke...

It's double-quick dying by in-breath

It's long bitter haunt by exhale...

Why should it make me feel so real, so fit to  
spill?

It's the chase, I think

The exhilaration of catch and release

The automatic made manual

A willful escape...

to fate—

Many shoulders to the wheel of craving

and none mightier than trauma—

The high sun is hell

on the burned and thirsting-

A full moon offers little to the lonely

but a risible target-

And the minutes hasten into days...

pool into years...

and crust over-

O, Desire...

You fleet-footed and taunting whither

You palate-fire bodice-ripper

like beating back death...

like love...

like victory...

like livin'!

A rocks-off ride over the cliff...

and into the breakers

Where fetish fills the sails

and fever takes the oars

And the search for land begins again...

## Notes From an Aunt to Her Niece

—

Katie Marrone

*CW: domestic violence, suicide*

1. On the night you were born, the eve of my birthday, I cried at my kitchen table. I was thinking of stories: How you will become a character in ours, and we in yours. What will you think of us? What words and thoughts will you write of us— journaling under the covers at night, after your mother, my sister, tells you it's time for the dark?
2. When you see my father lose his patience, or my mother's moods, remember that she was a daughter of Irish and Lebanese immigrants who met in the desert of Heppner, Oregon. Remember that she was raised by a man who was raised by a mother who never had a say in her own life— an Irish woman forced to marry a man she barely knew and stretch her stomach to become a home for others. Over and over. A woman who collected her resentment in her kitchen, spit it out, kneaded it into dough. Burned it on purpose. When you start to forget the weight of a story, remember that my mother was raised by a woman whose voice dried up like the watermelon her husband threw at the wall and left by the carpet to mold. Remember that my father's first memory was crying alone on a terrace in Italy at one or two years old, for hours, his parents ignoring. Remember how the American boys made fun of his Italian accent, made fun of the shorts his father tailored just for him. Too short, like a little girl's. As if that's the worst thing you could become. A girl. Remember how his father's yelling filled rooms with smoke. You will learn what this can do to a boy. To men. You will learn how a woman's voice is sometimes so stifled in this world that her mind becomes a scream. You will learn how a boy's tears are so forgotten they become a memory on an Italian terrace. You will learn how the messages teach. How they pave roads. How they cement. I have never seen your grandfather cry.
3. There is no such thing as "bad" people. Only those who are hurting, who are ill— maybe in mind, maybe in body, maybe in both— and don't know what to do with their bleeding. At first, this might feel less convenient, more complicated, than the boxes we give others to curve

themselves into— and it is. But the boxes are traps, and we don't fit. Be brave enough to welcome the space, to be surprised by the clearing of your own assumptions, to open enough to see the too-bright truth dangling just between you and others. If you do, you'll find out that there is grace in this for you, as well: You get to be flawed and good, too. You get to be raw and real and fucked up and trying your best and making mistakes and learning, too.

4. I will never turn away from your messiness. Even when you are worrying about rent and you're not sure where your career is going and you never seem to have enough fucking quarters to do the laundry and it feels impossible that you will ever meet a partner who also wants to wander through a cemetery and read all the names on the tombstones and weave stories about them. Someone who doesn't get road rage, someone who would never yell at a baby, someone who holds a mirror up to yourself— and you to them— and neither of you wants to break it. Or turn away. Just look. Just see.
5. Life is juggling both the largeness and smallness of us. There's relief in this dance: Tap into your power when necessary— into the curiosity of your touch with someone starved of it, into the muscles of your body as it runs on pavement, into the waves of your hips as you move on a club floor, into the loudness of your voice on protesting streets— but let go when it starts to feel like you aren't noticing the flowers anymore. Notice the flowers. We are large and cruel and important enough to make a new father want to die in rural Oregon because he is gay and cowboys don't do that shit and people hate themselves so much they have to find a place to put it. And we are small enough that we can be swiped away by an avalanche. Small enough that we can cry from the shadows of mountains, alone— so moved by their vastness that we might choose to pray to them, though we don't believe in any of that shit. So taken and humbled that we might choose to pray to them anyway— because, looking up, we think they might be a kind of God, after all.
6. I haven't even met you yet, and I love you. You were loved before you were even here. Remember this as you move through. Remember that you never had to prove.

花びら (Hanabira)

—

Melina Kiyomi Coumas

Bursting into powder at my touch  
I inhale the faint delicate scent  
rekindling the fires that once raged  
with the knowledge that I still had time

the cycles of a living body  
that we stretch and flatten  
attempting to remove any fluctuations  
an insult to the divine design

are these petals the ancestor of those that fell  
before  
or are they unique in their own time, devoid  
of memory or nostalgia and lucky  
to not recall the pain of previous blooms

if only I could tell them  
how revolutionary it is  
to grow free and unbound  
by expectations

Shattered Water  
—  
Melina Kiyomi Coumas



After Equinox

—

Kortney Garrison

The earth tilts toward cold  
lopsided days left in darkness

The moon too shutters  
its lone eye



## A Question of Spring

—

Susan Morse

A mound of ice in the bird bath does not look promising to our solitary backyard visitor. One crow pumps his wings up and down, clowning, but on the edge he finds a thin halo of water melted from the rising warmth. The sun struggles through a gray fabric of clouds. The crow dips his clumsy bill and flaps off, cackling, his comical black hulk raising the dead on his morning rounds.

We tick off returning species on our calendar. His lesser cousins (more and more each day) flock to begin preening, take up territorial "cat calls," which sound lovely, even if fights will ensue and obscure battles will be fought upon tree limbs just beginning to bud.

Unforgiving, the brown palette of late winter slowly exhales the ghost. My lenten rose buds too early, succumbs to a flashback of 20 degree nights. But mysterious lime fingers scratch and shift beneath leftover strands of dirty ice that criss-cross our muddy backyard. Pockets of small, red worms emerge from their winter dreams.

Bake Some Bread, Write a Poem

—

Karen Jones

When you awaken to a boyg,  
and shadowy thoughts crowd  
your brain, sticky and uncontrolled  
as forgotten yeast dough, get up,

look them in the eye, name them.  
Mix some batter. Start a poem.  
Get those trolls down on paper.  
Knead dough and ogres down to size.

Round and settle their mass.  
Shape them how they want to grow -  
braided to a pantoum, framed  
to a sonnet, folded to haiku.

Watch them so they stay contained,  
keep their supple muscle tone  
in a balance of expansion,  
a slow rise of bound elements,

a loft of measured chemistry.  
Within their matrix of grain,  
your shadows cradled, baked.  
Blessed, broken, eaten.

Spring in Imnaha

—

MC Reardon



My Haikus

—

Jay Butts

Snow falling slowly  
Birds sleeping inside tonight  
Spring should soon be here

Frost in the morning  
Sunlight breaks the horizon  
Steam rises above

Thinking of your face  
My hands softly touching it  
I want all of you

The Circle of Seasons Are a Good Example of  
Balance

—

Jack James

Balance is the most operative word in the English language.

Discipline is the most difficult word to enact.

"Focus" gives us hope amidst the chaos of life.

Discipline helps us focus in order to keep our balance in/on an ever

turning and sometimes spinning out of balance world.

A Season's Density

—

Rachel Barton

in a slow creep the greening cold  
liver's bitter remedy Blackroot or Burdock

so still the browns of bracken and briar  
sudden the daffodils loud in yellow

once Spring a Luna moth the maple  
soon maple flowers the soundless dongles

the canary's keep a bell-ringer's cage  
but then his sunny morning song

creek-side a rush of snowmelt highwater  
green-gold moss glow a sweater to leafless limbs

# Time is a River

—

Amanda Kelly

When the man who became my children's father  
first spoke to me of the west, under early snow  
in an attic in Gloucester, the rivers in his telling were  
wide,  
rich in stone, flowed smoothly, fed by glacier,  
became life, fish and stream.

Nimiipuu, Nez Perce, Hells Canyon  
names foreign as rock in my mouth.

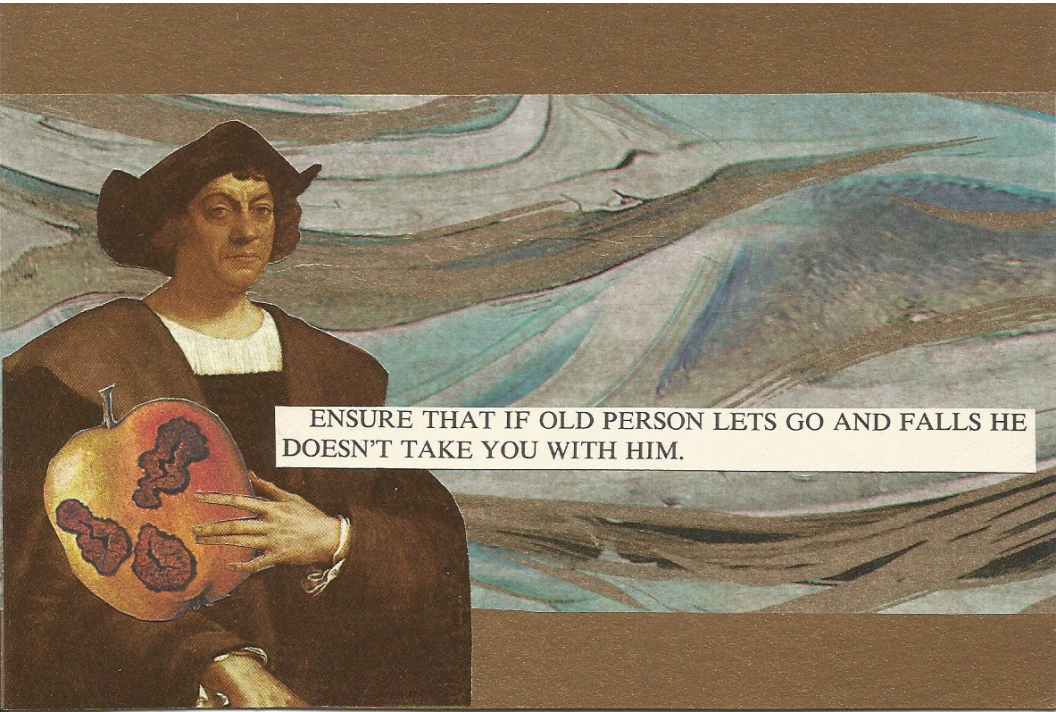
What little I knew then of how to make a home of my body,  
nurse a child, sleep alone.  
The taste of these hills not yet baked in memory,  
sage on tongue, wind in throat.  
How little I knew then of harms done  
in my not yet conceived name.

This land, these slow and rolling hills,  
summer sun baking soil and skin.  
Grown sons now fishing her waters,  
daughter fighting her fires,  
Wallowa, Whitman, named parks on stolen land,  
putting her holy body in the face of flame  
nearing cedar, what lengths we will go to  
to save what we love.

All connected, this one body electric  
that which we share I mean,  
canyon and eagle, salmon,  
goat, heifer and grass,  
grandmother, root,  
branch, berry,  
each seed.

Ten thousand burning trees yet  
no smoke that will cleanse us.  
These waters, with mountains slowly drying,  
  
above us,  
this patient and infinite sky.

Ensure  
—  
Kristy Athens



ENSURE THAT IF OLD PERSON LETS GO AND FALLS HE  
DOESN'T TAKE YOU WITH HIM.



Dance With Me

—

Gail Kinsey Hill

Warmth pours through my upstairs room  
Slides along my ears, shoulders, waist.  
Nestles in my lap.  
Catches strands of music  
Playing soft and thick.  
Sun, warmth, shine.  
They ask sweetly  
For a little less sway  
A little more rhumba.

Shamrock  
—  
Kat Johnson

Now begins the Season of Blah.

Berms of once-white snow line the slushy gray streets under a constipated sky that needs to rain or snow but is unable to do either.

My spirit craves a meadow but my pantry demands a trip to the grocery.

It's there that I find the little shamrock plant-incongruously perky, vibrant green, bursting with wispy white blossoms. I lift the tiny beribboned bundle and bring it home.

From its perch on the mantle it reminds me it will soon be St. Patrick's Day (the Irish American tradition for partying away the Season of Blah rather than the religious feast devoutly honoring the memory of a saint).

Jigsaw pieces of memories fall into place invoking the spirit of St. Paddy's Day Past:

Being one of many mostly non-Irish Catholic school children performing jigs for a distinctly non-Irish Archbishop.

Being a starry-eyed 17 year old dressed in white chiffon and sequins for the Mayor's Ball. Ruining my green satin pumps in the March snow.

Being the mother of an overjoyed four year old boy who believed it was "Sean Patrick's Day", a special day named just for him.

Being the soon-to-be ex-wife of an insomniac who stayed awake fearing that I meant it when I joked

that I would paint his backside green in the middle of the night if he didn't wear green on March 17.

Touring the town in a limousine with my last and best love more than 30 years ago. Irish whiskey and rock and roll.

There will be no Irish whiskey this year. In deference to tradition I'll slow cook my corned beef and listen to some Celtic tunes but I'd benefit more from pondering the wisdom of the good Saint than seeking comfort in a "wee drop of the spirit".

I'll gaze at the little shamrock sitting proudly and hopefully green with the promise of spring. . the promise of new life for an old world grown weary from pandemic, winter and war.

Upcoming summer zine  
submissions with title  
due by: June 26, 2022  
[wccircleofseasons@gmail.com](mailto:wccircleofseasons@gmail.com)

