



CIRCLE

OF

SEASONS

Winter

2023

moonrise

-

Cover Art & Editing by Katie Marrone

“I lean to you, numb as a fossil. Tell me I'm here.”

— *Sylvia Plath, The Collected Poems*

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Dear Reader,

This edition comes late, but I suppose winter is similar this year: the last guest at the party. Lingering, waiting, not in any hurry for the morning sun. For the fire bloom.

Ever since I moved here three years ago, I have loved winter's seriousness. The job of the season. "We have to get ready!" "We have to cut the wood!" "Find the hobby!" Find the warmth.

What kept you warm this winter? What helped in your hibernation? How did you retreat? How did you connect?

Better yet- how did you just *be*? What a balance to strive for in our messy humanness: the doing and the being. And how winter, in her gracious challenging, helps us with the latter-- with the meeting of ourselves, with the meeting of our minds, with the meeting of our quiet. Our dark. So we can better see the light. The negative space. The space, period.

It's easy to get lost in distraction. To not soak into the stillness of our minds and our bodies with the same kind of fervor with which we jump into the lake on the first warm day in spring. Easy to get lost in the filling of our schedules with color, with parties, with trips, with *go go go*, once the weather brightens.

So, this is a love letter to winter, I guess. Before she truly leaves this damn party:

Thank you for pushing us to stillness. For getting us under covers, under selves. For getting us to light the candles, warm the water, breathe the dark, ask the questions we might not have otherwise, create our own joys. Our own little pleasures. Our own little lights.

Away from the distraction of her: the big, loud, brilliant sun.

In art and winter love,

Katie

Road into Joseph
—
Richard Meadows



Winter Dark

-

Doug Stone

The sun is slowly setting through the firs,
limb by limb, holding on, trying to survive
a little longer. As beautiful as those firs glow,
the winter dark will have none of it and lights
the first stars, so bright, they burn through
the fading fabric of the blue-black sky and burn
brighter with every dying moment of the sun.

Mother's Bees
-
Kendrick Moholt

In the side yard, between the house and arborvitae,
my mother kept a hive of bees for many years.
Before she walked by, she would click a little noise
between her tongue and cheek to let them know
she was coming to visit.

Then she would stop and talk to the bees.
The path was narrow and passed just a foot from the hive.
They knew her by sight as she bent towards the entrance.
None of the girls ever caused
any trouble or thought to sting.

One day, my mother went out for a visit,
but the hive was dead.
All the bees were gone.

My mother spent the summer singing to the hive
hoping a foraging bee would find the box, then
bring her sisters to make the yard their home again.

But it seems, this is not the way of bees.

A practical woman, raised in Montana, my mother
called our friend Gary and gave him the empty beehive,
its frames still strong with wax and open cells.

Gary took the stack of white boxes back to his home orchard
that had once belonged to his grandfather. Gary keeps bees.
Gary has plans to re-queen the hive and add a swarm.
In the spring, Gary says he will return
the bees to my mother's yard.

This is the Way of Bees.

We should each write a poem
for my mother and her bees
so she can sing our words
to her little friends
when they return.

My mother's address:

Lorinda Moholt
3531 SW 57th Avenue
Portland, Oregon
97221

If you send my mother a few written words,
so she can sing to her bees,
I'm sure she will invite you to join her.

The Way of Bees-
pure altruism done with care for sisters
while we spend our busy lives in search of nectar.

Getting Old

-

Clem Falbo

Oh, No! This morning
I tried to insert
My blue hearing aid
Into my right ear.
And it did not work.

Now, I wish I could
Remember where in
The world or the house,
My walking stick is.
Never is it found
In the same place, twice.

And my golf game is
Always greater than
A triple Bogie.
(It never was less).

And Chess! Never mind!
Almost every move
Is a gross blunder.

Math! I can still do.
I can still create.
And, I can still teach
In my friend's home-school
Calculus classes

White Privilege

-

Kristy Athens



As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

A Song She Sings to the Geese

-

Nancy Christopherson

Along the Missouri River my sister takes her daily exercise walking with purpose; so cold there in winter, bitter at times, she carries herself in spite of the cold, muffled by heavy down

parka, thick gloves, expedition-weight socks inside warm winter boots and long johns under her coveralls. The girl is tough.

She marvels at migrant and resident geese who gather in flocks in the few open pools on the river between ice floes which crack and groan with expansion-contraction, deep moving water.

So far the winter's been mild, the geese are starting to display rituals in courtship, by tomorrow Arctic air will plunge southward, down to severe minus twenties not counting wind chill.

The river is not ruined, it will stay fluid in warm spots and will steam and mist and fog even as the ground around it and the ice will freeze solid as steel, knock hard as iron.

She sings easy to them, *glissade, glissade, my dears, down to the banks of the frozen river*. They honk and waddle and hiss and glide in, paddle for all they are worth. Six weeks to spring.

She smiles to herself; she's raised four children in this place. She knows these geese will survive.

--for Joanne

Bluebird Day
-
Ann Sigveland

His chin wet with aspiration
As the longing sighs out his nose
Frigid air a warm dreamcatcher
Beard a net of sparkly gemstones

Cold lips rimmed in royal purple
Crowning a slowly-spreading smile
Teeth bright like the falling snowflakes
That cloak and calm his tender soul

Loss has blanketed his winter
But it appears stamped out today
His boots crunching a new breakthrough
Taste of yesterday's tears frozen

Woodsmoke spices the horizon
Embers blaze kindling in his heart
88 a full life indeed
But more years fathers no less pain

Radiant sky; Sonny is gone
Harder yet, Mom still carries on
Memories fading like daylight
Grieving is a wintertime act

Untitled
—
Aidan Wandschneider



Hugged By Swirling Water

-

Rhonda Struth

there is a love song in my head

sometimes

still

I keep my heart

when

joy tanks

fingers bleed

with confessions of desperation

when

I plead for help

swirling water hugs

a touch-splash of safety

when

jars of salve soothe

your whispered love-words

feed faith

I know I am not alone

the Cailleach
-
Lauren MacDonald

and we
as winter is
are a dance of freezing and thawing

layered then undone,

layered and undone

and this year
the cold wind is a welcomed traveler
with ancient tales
with sage truths

and we, fat and fire wed, are her resting flock

Probate Clerk

-

Moll McCarty

"Death is not the end. There remains litigation over the estate." -Ambrose Bierce

"My mother didn't have an estate," a customer tells me through the plexi-glass of the Clerk's office. I explain that "estate" is the term we use for a decedent's belongings. "Decedent?" She asks, weary of legal jargon. "Dead person," I clarify. She steps back as if struck, blinks rapidly, gathers herself. "So what do I need to file?"

Each day my customers begin their stories with some version of the following: "My beloved died and did or did not have a will." I like listening to the meanderings of grief. Their stories inevitably turn to logistics and this is where I gently interrupt: "We have an affidavit that works on small parcels of land, is the value under \$100,000?"

In my youth, untouched as it was by personal tragedy, I didn't understand how death worked. I imagined that my own era was elevated above other eras; it seemed to follow from this that my era would, somehow, therefore continue without end. I knew this to be untrue but, until I tragedy grounded me, it continued to *feel* true. Psychologists call this type of ignorance "denial". To un-deny the unbearable is a discipline.

Monday arrives again: a customer passes a death certificate through the Clerk's window. I scan for the date of death and nod. 120 hours have passed since this body has expired: enough time, according to statute, to file an Informal Probate. In 120 hours, a beloved person becomes an object. The cadaver begins to disintegrate. The beloved person no longer exists.

On the weekend, I curl my alive-body around Ludwig Wittgenstein's notebooks. "The earlier culture will become a heap of rubble and finally a heap of ashes, but spirits will hover above the ashes," he writes (Culture and Value, 1929).

His beloved era has passed. His body, his culture, his family: rubble and finally, ash. His personhood has expired but the record of his thoughts hover in my alive-hands. What are the components of the discipline of un-denial? "What would an answer to this question be *like*?" Wittgenstein, would ask.

Could the answer be pictorial, numerical, musical or must it come in the form of language? Will each area of denial merit a specific strategy or could there exist a method broad enough to cover all manner of denial? Can the goal of un-denial be accomplished through self-reflective thought alone or must the agent take action to reverse the denial process? What exactly must one not-deny?

"The world", Wittgenstein says, "is everything that is the case," (Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, 5). To exercise non-denial, one must accept everything that is the case.

But how can one accept death?

When tragedy entered my life, my family filed a Probate case. At this time, I had not yet become interested in the law nor was particularly interested in family. "What kind of paperwork did you file?" I ask my mother, years later. "We hired a lawyer," she sounds exhausted by the subject. I am curious about the administrative details. My mother sighs heavily. She digs into her file cabinet and extracts a small stack of papers. The spirit of our beloved's estate hovers in her hands. She passes the paperwork to me and I hold it tenderly to my chest.

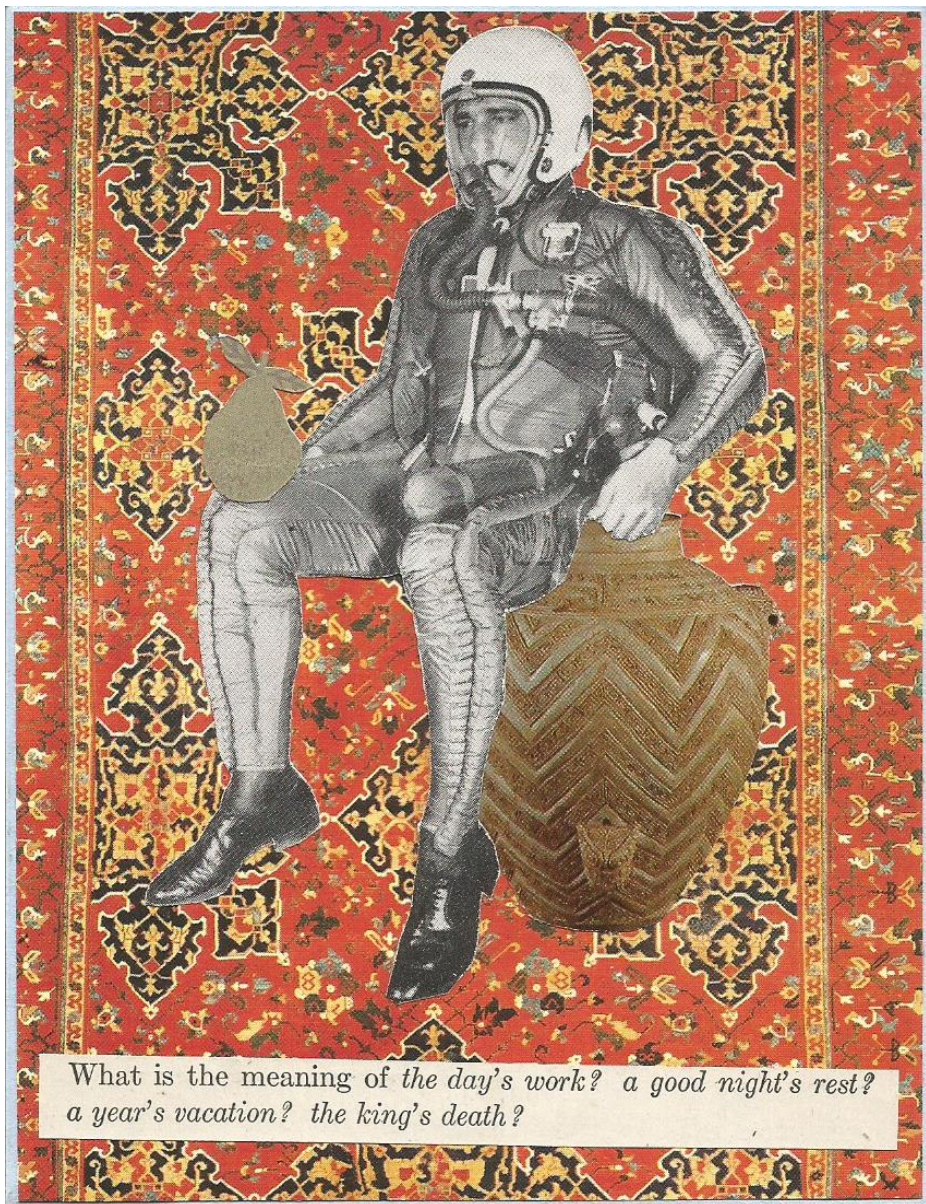
January

-

Doug Stone

For weeks, a light frost
has tinged the landscape.
Now, the first hard frost
strolls across the fields,
grinning like he owns the world.
He wears a ragged coat
of cold, thin sunlight,
the last memory of summer
dangling from his clenched fist.
A week from now
no one will remember
the sun was ever warm.

Meaning
-
Kristy Athens



What is the meaning of *the day's work?* *a good night's rest?*
a year's vacation? *the king's death?*

Clarity
-
Dustin Lyons

*From cabindoor, outward, into mountains
long tracing strides
clear-eyed
he walks that old familiar trail
A song sung beneath breaths...*

*"Give me your muddy rivers, Love
Give me your iliac banks of fertile loam
Give me your naked and nocturne pupils, my Dear
Give me the bloodfruit of your tongue"*

By some ineffable thrill that it pricks in us
there are moments, places, people, callings
that take on a dreamlike texture
that swing the tide toward thirst-whim—a new moon
We call it romance
and it is, perhaps more than anything else,
what makes us precisely human—

Stowed in a burning lamp
in its pulsing golden hold
there dwells the djinn of ineludible loss
It is for this that we sometimes wish it away
this selfsame flask of passion
that grants us all the joy we're likely to know—

With a tandem talent for love & sacrifice, animus &
annihilation

with alien brains and animal hearts
we see the thing we are
and where we are

perhaps most crystalline
where we lose control
in those furtive side-glances of self-doubt
in that laughter that pains our guts and cracks our lips
in the mirror of the blood we spill-

The young creative strains desperately for the breadth it
hallows in the art of its type-

You find out that you really do have to live a life
that the ecstasy and peace and security you've rubbed
yourself raw on
can't be held in captivity
-that some things break for good.

You have to crack your jaw on that pit
writhe & buck
and weep & bleed
against the iron echo of this absolute
to finally paint those eyes...
write that poem...

You have to burn your boat at the foot of Song-

*She gave him only her name: Clarity
What else could he do but give chase?*

Wolf Moon Ranch 2023

Winter Solace

-

Gail K. Hill

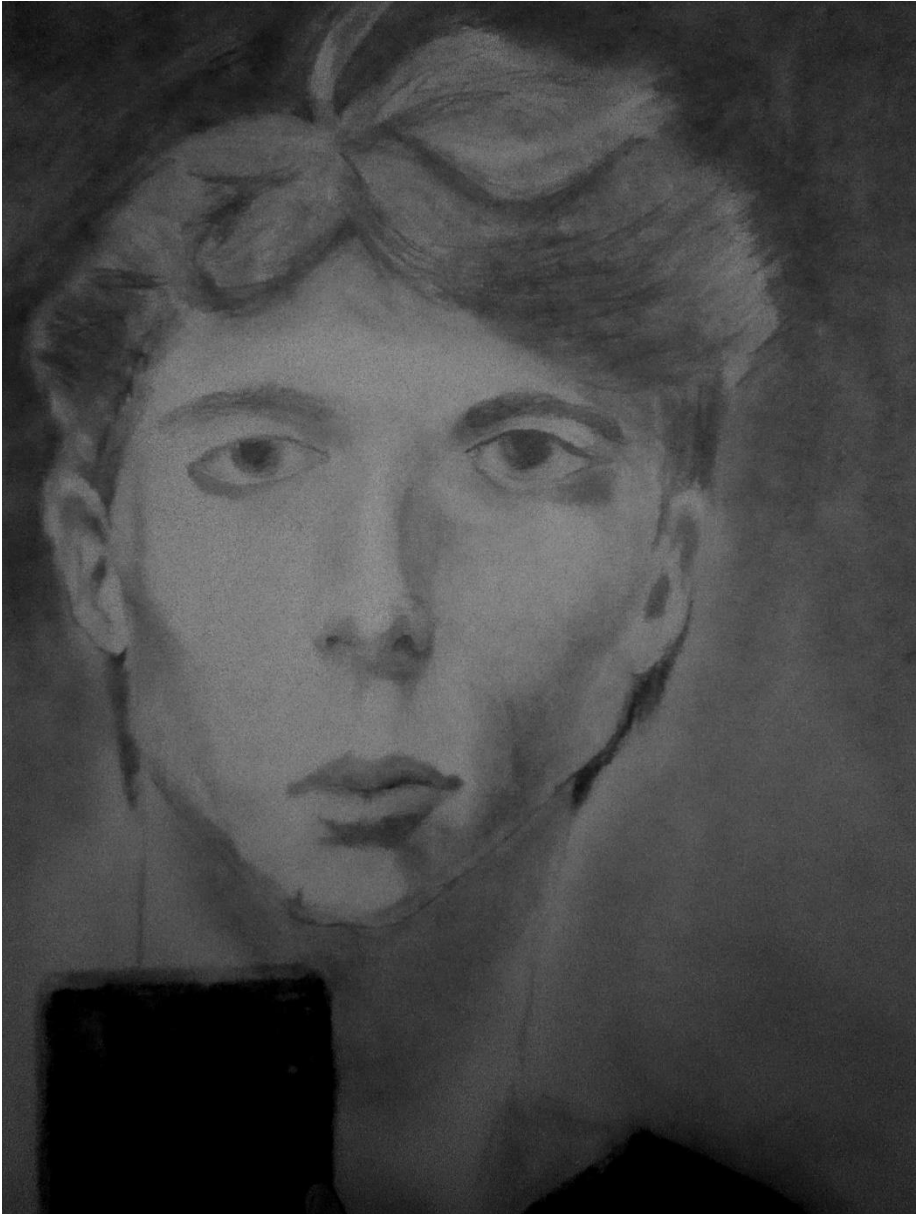
Snow obliterates
Obscures intention
Allows retreat
Insists on resignation
It is an offering,
A cold reprieve

Art & Words from Students at Joseph Charter

Untitled

-

Andy Miranda



Simple
-
Colbi Cunningham

Simple,

Simple like the waves
rolling onto the beach,

Simple like the rocks
forming from years of wear,

Simple, like nothing ever,
nothing is Simple,

Simple is nothing.

All I Want

-

Margaret Miller

All I want in life is a person who loves me more than anyone else. A man who will make me breakfast in bed, bring my tea, hold my hand everywhere we go, called me babe even when we are 80. All I want is for this man to always do as I ask, from taking out the trash to brushing my hair. Stay in bed and snuggle all Sunday morning. Exercise together, go to the gym together, walk together, ride bikes together, and swim together.

All I want is to be successful together. Both have happy successful jobs, a clean house, extremely organized, and a boat we can spend the summer months on. I want us to both have vehicles we love. I want to travel the world together, fly first-class, go to fancy restaurants, and take tons of pictures together.

All I want is babies together, sweet little girls or boys running around. I want to see my man being the best loving dad, taking them out, and teaching them things that will help them be successful all of their life. Teach them to be the most polite and kind kids. I want people to tell us that we have raised such great and polite kids.

All I want is to have a dog to add to our family. To get our dog as a puppy and raise it through our children's lives. A golden retriever, lab, or labradoodle lets our kid's name in and hope they grow a bond with their first animal. I want to be able to take our dog on family road trips and go out and explore the world with our family. I want our dog to be a little spoiled but very polite and calm. Making sure we do the best we can to train our dogs to be the best they can be.

All I want in life is to be married to this man who is the love of my life. I want to get married at the end of summer/fall when it is warm enough to enjoy but when the leaves and outdoors

are starting to change colors. I want to be wearing my dream white dress, with my best bridesmaids, with all my loved ones watching in the perfect location. I want lavender to be my favorite scent, which has the most meaning to me.

Do You Remember

-

Sofia Salerno

Do you remember growing up, well if you don't I do. I remember riding my horse bareback until the sun went down. I remember late summer nights when my mom yelled "Supper's ready!" from the back porch. I remember playing very intense games of tag with the kids from down the road. I remember washing my hands after catching frogs in our creek out back. I remember the four wheeler rides I took my friends on in the pasture. I remember me and my sister racing our horses, dusty and ducati in the nursery across from the house. I remember the sidewalk chalk I wiped on my Wranglers after a "long day." Mostly I remember how peaceful and fun it was, and trying to find that these days seems to be impossible.

Untitled
-
Harley Wanner



