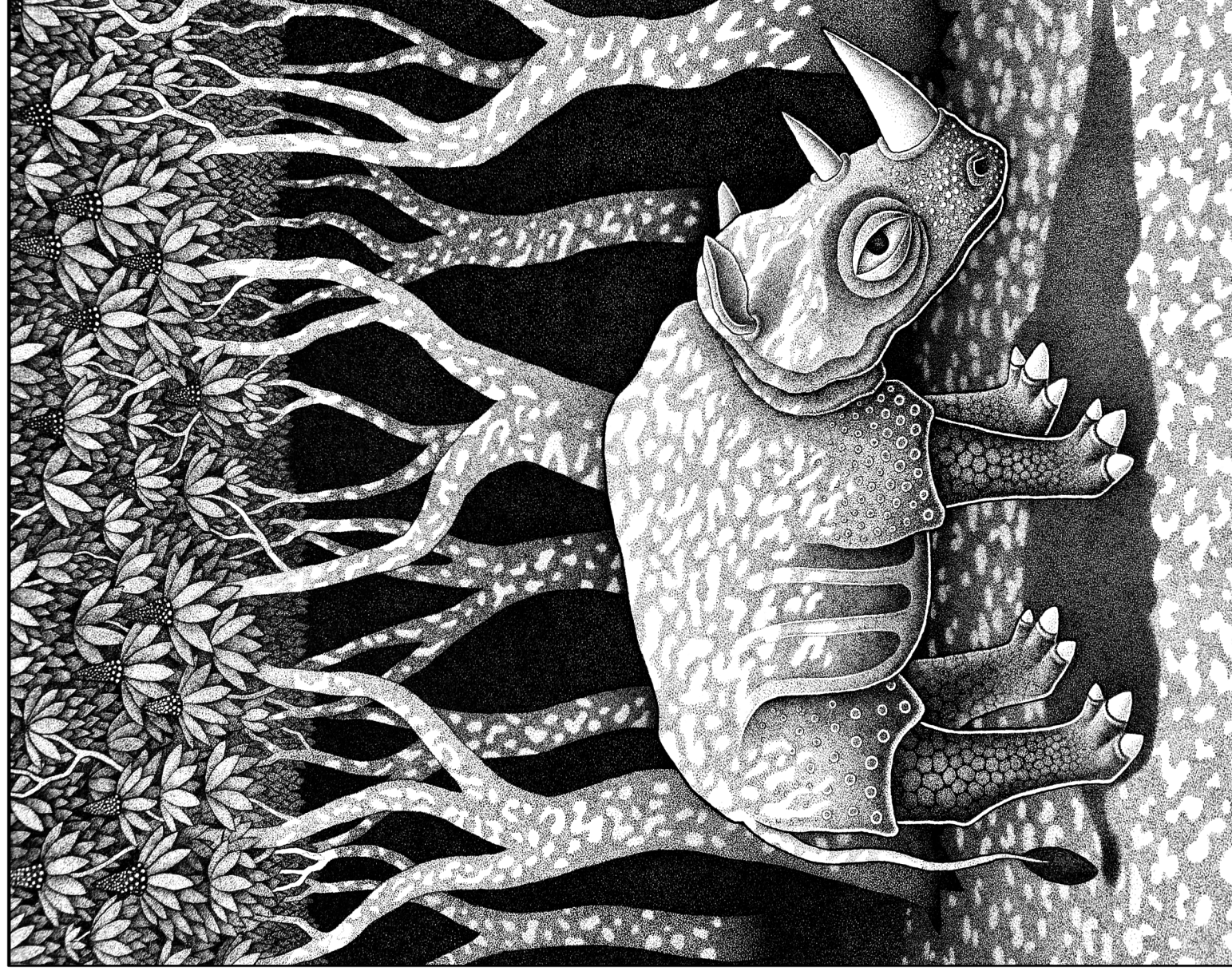


Graffiti

EUGENE'S CREATIVE WRITING & ART ZINE

#16

AUGUST 2024



to Love and to Create



1998

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Graffiti

1292 High St. #129, Eugene OR 97401
 graffitiugene@gmail.com
 (503) 853-5582



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 at graffiti-magazine.com

Ahab: Don Root
Ishmael: Morgan Smith
Queequeg: Rod Williams
Starbuck: Kevin O'Brien
The Bouton de Rose: Jordan Howell Rose
The Rachel: Lise Eskridge

Contributors: Fergul Cirpan, R.A. Davis, Tom DeLigio, Paul Dresman, Tim Edwards, Marco Elliott, Ed English, Randy Gudeika, Miguel Antonio Guevara, Bill Gunn, Mike Heide, Scott Lee, Dan Liberthson, macgealai, Eamon Morris, Moss, Jean Murphy, James Otter, Paisley, Eric Pierce, Audrey Quinn, Jim Smith, Morgan Smith, Erica Snowlake, Jeff Southwick, Stephen Swiftfox, Marcel Tulloh, Okon Udosenata, Rod Williams

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WHAT'S ON THE COVER? How do rhino? Art by Eamon Morris

Instagram: graffitiugene_

Our Mission...

...should we choose to accept it, is to encourage the production of creative writing and art by members of the community and to foster the development of skills in those endeavors. Also, it's to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, and to boldly go where no woman has gone before!

Read Me! and FAQ

- Graffiti publishes artwork, poetry, and short prose, submitted by anyone. Work must be original to you and preferably based on personal experience. We eschew (cool word!) essays on politics and current affairs. We DON'T publish rants, hate speech, excerpts from other people's work, or anything that makes us worry about libel or copyright infringement.

- Submissions aren't juried. Subject to the "DON'T"s listed above, we try to publish — either in the paper or on the website, at our discretion — everything we receive, first-come, first-served. Rarely, a submission may fall through the cracks, get eaten by the dog, or be rejected for some random reason. If it didn't get published, send us something else. Don't query us about its fate.

- Please scan your art (jpeg preferred) and email us your art and text. No scanner or computer? Public libraries have them. And librarians love helping Luddites.

- We give highest priority to new work, because Graffiti's mission is to encourage writers to write and artists to art.

- We also encourage writers to write *better!* We're not a vanity press. We prefer to publish writers who treat their writing as a craft and care about what they submit. Please don't send us a "first draft" or something "from the heart" without spell-checking it. Be serious about your work and do your best, okay?

HOW DO I SUBMIT WORK?

Email it to: graffitiugene@gmail.com

DO I GET PAID?

No. And neither do we.

DOES I GOTTA RIGHT GOOD?

No, but we so hoped you'd try. The grumpy publisher even gave you a patient, good-hearted column on how to write better. In any case, much as it causes said grumpy publisher to reach for his blood-pressure meds, remember, we don't edit.

What you give us goes as-is. So try to make your submission error-free. Who knows? You might actually enjoy polishing your work before sending it in!

WHAT LENGTH WORKS ARE ACCEPTABLE?

For printing in the zine, anything under 800 words makes us happy. Submissions longer than 1,000 words will probably be posted on the website instead: graffiti-magazine.com.

WHO'S VEUVÉ CLICQUOT? She was the wife of François Clicquot, who died in 1805, making his wife a *veuve*. Look it up. But that's just the start of her effervescent story!

FRONT LINES

Don Root

FIRST THINGS FIRST. Our email inbox was flooded last month with missives from you, dear readers, asking us "Where the Sam Heck is that tropical beach at Sam Bond's?" Alas, I fear I am sworn to secrecy on this matter. However, if you go to Sam Bond's, order two of the unique and amazing summer cocktails created by master mixologist Andrew, and drink said cocktails down to the cherry stem (or the divine, chocolate-covered strawberry stem, as the case may be), you might then be permitted to inquire of Andrew as to the location of said tropical beach. He may or may not tell you, but in any case, at that point you either won't remember what he says anyway, or you just won't care. You'll also be thinking about trying every single one of the delectable cocktail concoctions on his summer menu. (But pace yourself, please! No need to try them all at once. Plan future visits accordingly.)

SECOND THINGS SECOND. Damn! How 'bout the heat, eh? I love it! It reminds me of my youth, which I can still remember, amazingly enough. I grew up in San Diego and spent a lot of time in the Anza-Borrego Desert and Baja California, tooling around off-piste in four-wheel-drive vehicles in all seasons, summer included. So when the mercury hits 100°, I'm transported back to those days of being young and carefree, among friends, miles from nowhere out in the desert.

Despite being polar opposites in moisture content, the desert and the sea have something in common: you can look out at them, across miles and miles of open space, and see no people anywhere. That sight makes me happy. A San Diego artist once put fake historical monuments along the lonely desert highways in east San Diego County. One I remember distinctly. At a pullout along the highway, looking out at the vast expanse beyond, the plaque read: "This is the desert. There's nothing out there. Nothing." Of course, there's actually a lot out there. Just no humans, or not many anyway.

THIRD THINGS THIRD. And that was what drew our group of young friends to the desert. The lack of humans. The unimaginable quiet. The pure night skies. And yes, the heat. Once we got used to it, the heat was like a fortress wall that only we dared cross, while everyone else in the world barricaded themselves inside their air-conditioned cars and houses. The masses ceded the desert to us, and we seized it gladly. There was freedom in its "nothingness." Freedom from parents for the young naifs like me; freedom from the cops, perhaps, for the "elders" of the bunch. Freedom from societal constraints for all of us.

One church of freedom we regularly attended was a place we called "The Spot." Okay, not a particularly creative name, but those of us still left in our congregation will immediately smile at the utterance of those two words. Out in that spot, miles from civilization, we flew kites, we told tales, we built campfires, we may or may not have smoked dope, and all of us drank mass quantities of beer, which, at that time, meant Coors. In the desert, you see, you want a beer that's as close to water as you can get. Coors fit the bill. Budweiser, being cheap, was a satisfactory substitute.

My best friend at the time (below, left) introduced me to The Spot. He died young in Mexico. One of my favorite other guys out there (below, holding the six-pack) died too young, too. He was always kind to me, even though I was just a kid to him. And one of my best friends today (below, bottom right, in profile) was there; he and I didn't have much of a relationship at the time, but it came later, in the happenstantial way such things often do.

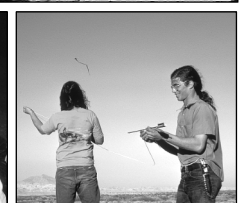
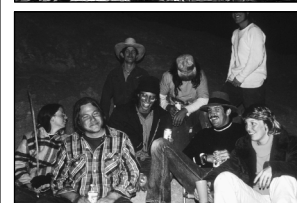
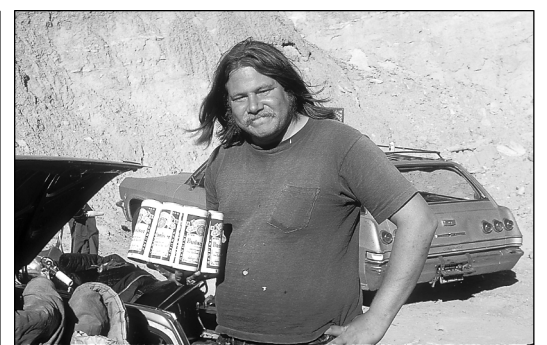
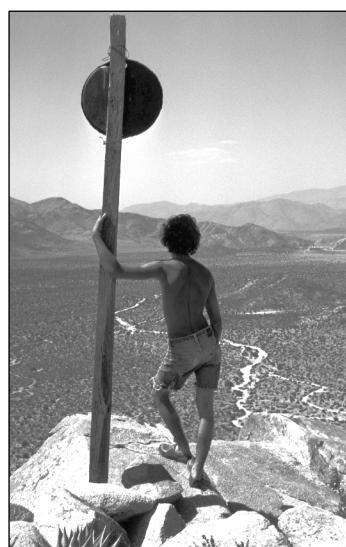
Someday before I die, I would like to go back to The Spot. In summer. In the heat. With no one around. No Republicans. No Democrats. No pundits. No politics. No TVs. No video games. No i-Anything or e-Anything. No lawn mowers. No leaf blowers. No traffic. No cars. No trucks. No motorcycles. No electric bikes. No social media. No antisocial media. No advertising. No sales and marketing. No corporations. No charities. No petition gatherers. No God-botherers. No housed. No houseless..... Nothing.

"This is the desert. There's nothing out there. Nothing." Just the way I like it.

FOURTH THINGS FOURTH.

I hope you had a happy Fourth. Of July, that is. **KA-BOOM!**

☺☺☺



For Chris

We eat peaches packed-in from the valley,
go for a walk along the water,
hurl dark pits as far as we can. I grab a stray log
thinking ahead to tonight's fire— how did it ever
get all the way up here? Standing at a col, you ask:
“How long has it been since we looked out over Nevada?”
I'm falling in love with her all over again, the woman
I brought here forty years ago. It must be the light
she carries into the wilderness, high on a ridge
beside a cairn. She says she fell in love with me
because I took her to snow in August, made her
a Kool-aid snow cone. In the afternoon, sitting
below a pass, next to the same snowfield
shrinking at the end of summer, the end
of the Anthropocene, I pour a dry stream
of garishly colored powder onto a scooped peak
in a tin cup. Sharing it back and forth,
it's more than big enough for the two of us.

Paul Dresman

Vow

I'd ride the rise and fall of the world,
breathing in to finally breathe out,
and lay myself to rest
with an old hymn going around in my head

a hymn that has nothing to do
with jealous gods or Christian soldiers,
or some glorious ascension to
heavenly streets paved with gold

It will have to be something
from a natural testament:
a western meadowlark
singing to a morning field,
a grove of red cedars
hiding an invisible stream,
a spoken poem, a soft breeze.

Paul Dresman

Odysseus the Walkman on 88.1 FM

Jeff Southwick

Yesterday, maybe a year or two ago, as the dog and I were plodding our way west along 22nd, gradually getting closer to Tyler, we saw a familiar figure headed our way while following the opposite sidewalk.

It was our fair-haired neighbor, the author who lives around the corner, heading east with what appeared to be a weed eater balanced over one shoulder.

The neighbor did not look in our direction, for strutting like a funk show Tony Manero carrying a paint can, he was on a mission with no time for distractions.

When we drew closer we were crossing Tyler, but my eyes were blinded by the solar horizon, so I was unable to focus on the article cradled by his shoulder.

With the shade the next house provided I decided that the contraption was not a weed eater for on the stern end of the pole there appeared to be a propellor.

This made me wonder, for although it is sensible to wander a neighborhood full of soil rather than ponded water with a weed eater on your shoulder, only some odd duck would carry a trolling motor.

Then came to mind the story of Odysseus, who carried an oar balanced over his shoulder, until far from the ocean's shore and useless, the locals might mistake his oar for a digging tool.

With this perspective I pondered since only five blocks from his home my neighbor appears on a journey, so instead of hurrying to return a weed eater to the ToolBox Project before sunset, he's initiated a quest to haul this trolling motor to a place with no water.

Now I felt sorry for my neighbor, for if his odyssey was similar to that of Odysseus, my neighbor will have a long way to wander with his hand on the ancient tiller and a pole propeller on his shoulder before either is mistaken for the tools of a gardener. ☺ ☺ ☺

Thinking About Water

R. A. Davis

I'm thinking about water. I'm thinking about streams, and tributaries; about trickles that join the sea.

So there was this sketchy little forest behind my childhood house in Maryland. Our yard was a wild strip of nettle and oak saplings that led to a steep ravine that widened into a block-wide V of backyard forest. It was Maryland forest-- oak trees and ivy; fallen logs and hollow stumps, Pepsi cups and brown-necked beer bottles.

I spent all of my time out there in the wooded ditch. I followed the path with tender steps: it was hallowed ground. The split-log fence at the edge of the forest marked the boundary. I went down into the forest with a ceremonial seriousness, and followed the correct protocols and rituals, as I knew them, with exactness. The small tree guardians had to be addressed with proper respect; the correct secret names and gestures had to be offered at specific thresholds. The First Gate. The Fallen Limb. The Goblin Log. The Newly Named Sapling.

After crossing several magical barriers (obvious to me but invisible to mundane eyes) my path opened into a section of woods where the oak trees were taller and the forest floor was soft grass and deep leaf mulch. A stream pebbled through. Sometimes deer lifted their heads from the brush and held themselves taut to watch. The world was green leaf and gold light.

The trees were tall enough that when I looked up into the highest branches, I felt like I was on a ship, watching the masts dip and wave above me. The solid ground would become rocking waves and my ears would roil with disequilibrium. It was

alchemy. The wind could turn trees to ships and solid ground to sea.

The stream was often low-- pooling at its deepest to only hip height during the summer, ankle-deep and choked with oak leaves in the shallows. Crawdads waved their antennae-wands underneath cool rocks and the water carved away steep banks, exposing roots like braids.

Once, I allowed my mom to follow me. She humored me and did not speak or ask questions, stifling her giggles. She snapped a picture of me lifting up water from the stream, and painted it later in watercolor, draping me in a flowing white toga. It's a beautiful painting, like an illustration from a book of myths. But she didn't believe that the magic was real.

Nobody told me how to do it; I knew it on my own. Those motherly oak trees; the golden water; the mossy roots. It remained a place apart I could return to in my mind when the rush and press of the outer world was too harsh or profane.

As I walked along the path, I gathered up my magic for the moment when I approached the water. If my mind was calm and my focus clear and I felt worthy, having performed all of the rituals to exactness, I leaned over the ledge and touched the stream. I greeted it with humility. I thought about Athena; about Narnian wood nymphs and Galadriel and Lothlorien. I thought about Herne the Hunter and Oberon and Titania. They were my witnesses. I was their supplicant.

My prayers, dipped with reverent fingertips into that forest creek, flowed to the sea. ☺ ☺ ☺

Storming Heaven

We have been betrayed,
I grumbled. 'Tis the end,
Love and hope banished
by Heaven's decree.

We have been pinned
on this earth,
marooned for all time,
our happy future, just a fable.

Nay, she said.
The wise old woman
of countless suns and moons
and children without number.

We stand on the summit
of Mt. Olympus,
looking for new worlds
to embrace.

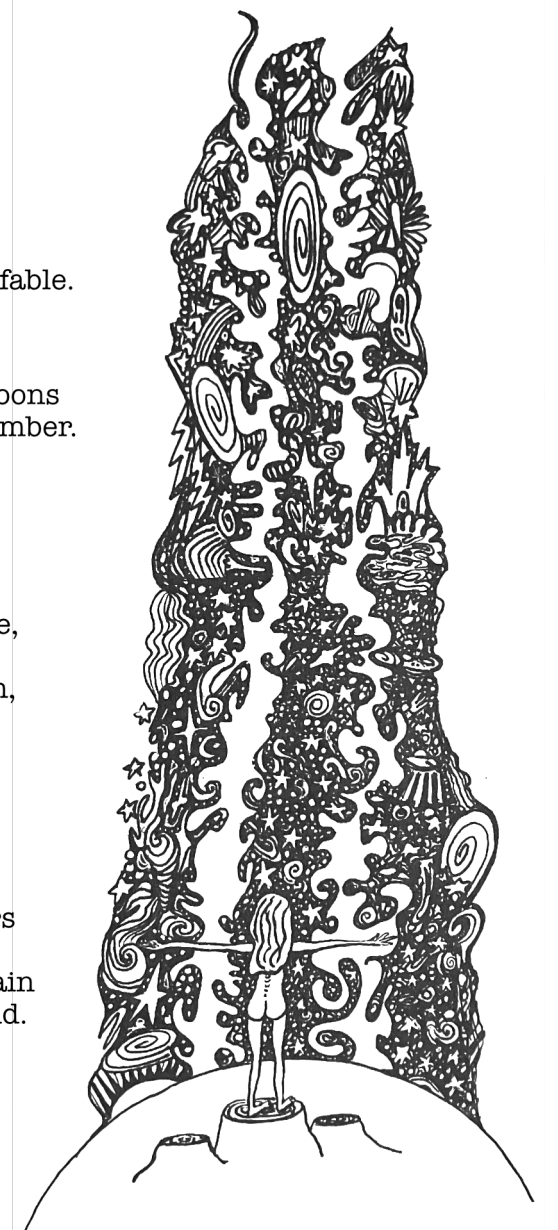
The gods are as old as we,
but not one bit wiser.
We shall become as them,
but greater.

The wheels of evolution
have ground to a halt,
waiting for us to lead
forever and ever more.

We will put our shoulders
to that wheel of stars
and turn it, and turn again
to new vistas without end.

Jim Smith

art by Erica Snowlake



Bicycle Woman by Jean Murphy



A Natural History of Teeth: a Study in Mixed Metaphor

I -- Baby Teeth

Spring peepers,
Baby-of-pearl.
Pebbles on a beach.
Snowdrops.
Early peas, tender and sweet,
pushed from below
from their pink, plush seat.

II -- The Tooth Fairy Years

Revolution!
the red flag waves, finds the wobbly throne-
a nudge, the roots dissolve,
the crown floats free,
a blood-edged jewel for the Tooth Fairy's Treasure.
The tongue recalls
the taste of pain's pleasure.

III -- Braces

New faces
fill the spaces.
ACHTUNG! says Dr. Zahner.
In crooked ranks, recruits
attempt salutes,
are drilled, embraced by wire, duty-bound,
pulled and pushed around,
force-marched for miles,
trained, retained,
until they keep order even in their sleep,
and finally, the company's disbanded.

IV -- Dental Work

Next, years of maintenance, stopgap road repair.
Potholes, washed-out bridges, cracks appear,
jackhammers chatter on once-smooth streets
while the strained highway budget
goes down in defeat.

V -- Old Age

In an ancient village the earth trembles.
A row of old stone houses crumble.
Survivors pick through the rubble.

VI -- Even Older

Tombstones the color of bone
lean, together or alone,
like teeth in an old man's mouth,
like stones.

Jean Murphy



art by erica snowlake

On the Boulevard Called Blair

It's like the Seventies, only worse for wear
Music and alchemy in the air
All along the boulevard they call Blair

Where the romcom soccer mom meets Tom,
the vet who bombed the Viet Cong,
she croons to him a sacred psalm
and reads his future in his palm.
And the homeless dude, bad attitude,
coarse and crude in a filthy mood,
he begs for food, sings out "Hey Jude!"
and "I contain multitudes!"

At Tacovore, the dinosaur like a matador
breaks down the door
and wipes the floor in blood and gore
but still wants more of what's in store.
And Vanilla Jill up on the hill,
can't buy a thrill from Bungalow Bill,
moves in for the kill
with her poison pill and electric drill.

It's a carnival, beyond compare
Join the party if you dare
Up on the boulevard they call Blair

See the Amish boy on rollerblades,
he moved here from the Everglades
with Spanish Johnny, sick from AIDS,
his eyes dim like the ace of spades.
Sweet Scandinavian Woman Blue stays oh-so-true
to Tattoo Lou from Katmandu with a hole in his shoe
who takes in the view and cries, "Oy, what a zoo!"
Then there's Wes from Inverness,
hangs out at Cigarettes 4 Less,
ask and he's the first to confess he's one hot mess,
oh hell yes, he plays some chess,
and occasionally he wears a dress.

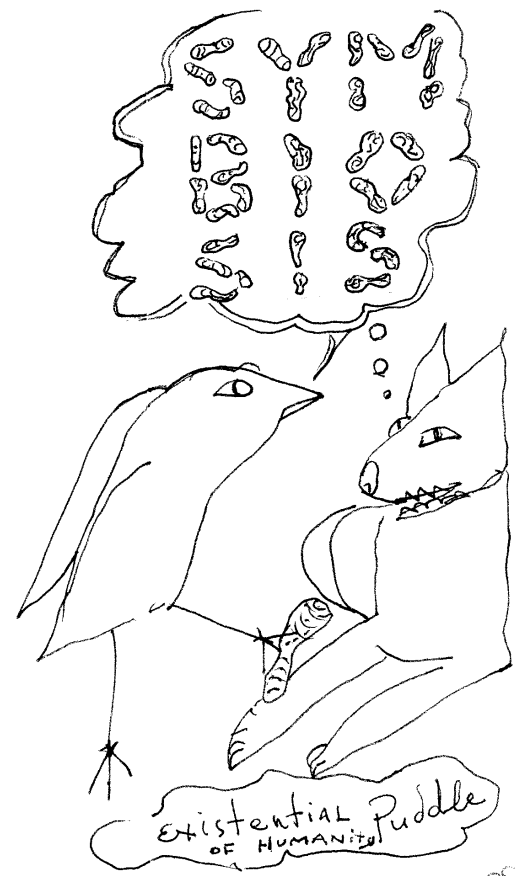
Now Little Queenie,
that brown-eyed genie
in her green bikini,
shares a pink martini and some cold fettucine
with her dog Houdini and her cat Fellini.
"It's a Mardi Gras, it's the County Fair,"
drawls an old woman with purple hair.
"It's just the boulevard we call Blair."

Three blind mice shoot darts and dice
in the back of Slice,
where one played nice,
one read *Soul on Ice*,
and one laughed, "If you want my advice,
you won't find Paradise at twice the price."
Outside Red Barn,
the schoolmarm uses her charm
and sounds the alarm
about Big Pharm, says
"Do no harm" then buys the farm; quite a yarn.

Hey, Tie Dye Ted and Hipster Fred
forgot their meds and lost the thread,
not the sharpest tools in the shed,
but instead saw red, felt existential dread,
and eventually went home to bed.
Watch Sexy Sally
from the valley
playing pinball at Blairally.
She's heartsick but quick to rally,
she don't take shit and she don't dilly-dally.

Pull up a barstool or an old rocking chair
Check out the vibe, vintage and rare
There's no need to gawk, no need to stare
Don't worry, you'll see them all standing there
Up on the boulevard they call Blair
Down on the boulevard we call Blair

Rod Williams



art by erica snowlake

Hammock Thoughts

At the horizon blue fades to white.
In the maple tree a silly bee
Seeks nectar where none should be.

Gnats bubble and froth, depicting
Electrons wrested from their nuclei
By vagabond free radicals.

Does macro copy micro?
Are electrons material AND spiritual?
Is there a world beside this world?

Petal froth of pink rose
Soft fluff stuff, flutters,
Wears a hole in thin air.

Do branches point futureward,
Imply unforeseen directions
Or jut at random, clueless?

If trees have arms then
Roots, their legs, ambulate
By going deeper.

Twenty-four water stems,
One from each hose-head,
Make a florette bouquet!

Obvious. But sun-dazed,
I can't strain self from perception,
Can't make the connection.

Dan Libberthson

Hitting for the Cycle

So rare that anything
has symmetry; more rare
something in any order.

The beauty is
no matter the sequence
it's perfection.

Dan Libberthson

Turn it up!

by Morgan Smith



Wanting to break from a tendency to review albums by long time favorites, I decided this issue's column would be all about fresh music. So, these three are from 2024 — "hot off the vinyl press."



Mountainhead



Everything Everything

Released: March 1, 2024

Tracks: 14

Formed in 2007, they are a four-member band from Manchester, England... with seven albums, to date.

The first thing that stands out about this group's upbeat sound are the funny, creative lyrics — specifically "The End of the Contender." As usual, I write these reviews while listening to the album. "Buddy, Come Over" is catchy. Overall, this band is unlikely to show up on my playlists. Maybe with further listens a love will grow. Hopefully, you the reader, will give them a try and instantly like them more. Onto the next one...

Chromalight



STS9

Released: July 12, 2024

Tracks: 14

Electronica, Funk, Jazz, Psychedelia and hip-hop, "favoring group rhythm over individual solos." (Wikipedia)

Formed near Atlanta, Georgia in 1997, their full name is Sound Tribe Sector 9. This album, the group's twelfth, is super fresh, released just four days before the start of me writing this. It is an instrumental-only collection, feeling perfect to play, on loop, in the pursuit of focus and productivity. Listening to it led me to look up the word "ethereal," which means "celestial, heavenly, unworldly, spiritual." — fitting because the band performs with "fully immersive light shows... consistently selling out the legendary Red Rocks Amphitheatre," in Colorado. (Spotify)

Lola



Goth Babe

Released: January 26, 2024

Tracks: 11

Goth Babe is Griff Washburn, from Tennessee, currently living and writing music on a sailboat on the Pacific side of Mexico.

Easy listening, mellow, smooth and upbeat. Like STS9 above, this is a sound I can get lost in while creating, designing, coding... eating a freshly sliced apple with peanut butter... whatever. Anyway, I mentioned that Griff "currently lives" on his sailboat, Lola, which this album is named after, but that was written early this year because he has since gotten off of it for a concert tour through the USA and then onto Australia. On October 5th, 2024, Goth Babe will be performing at McMenamins Edgefield in Portland.

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INSIDE COFFEE: Two Local Roasters Spill the Beans on the Industry, Consumer Tastes, and Home Coffee Brewing

A Graffiti Interview

Queries and photos by Don

What's the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning? For many of us, it's a sleepy walk to the kitchen in our PJs to begin the daily coffee ritual. We can barely imagine starting the day without that morning brew, but we don't know much about how coffee gets from a plant somewhere in the world to the heavenly brown elixir in our morning cup.

Recently, I sat down with a couple of notable Eugene coffee roasters to get the inside track on the industry.

Okon Udosenata is the owner/roaster of Equiano Coffee (www.equianocoffee.com); you can taste his brews at the roastery and tasting room in the Whit at 941 W. 3rd Avenue. Eric Pierce is the owner/roaster at Caffé Pacori (www.caffepacori.com), in West Eugene at 255 Wallis St, Suite 3, a hidden-away spot well worth the trouble to find for the great coffee and uniquely playful ambience. These two experts filled me in on how coffee gets from the farm to your kitchen, as well as what you should do to get the most from your morning Joe.

Which species of the coffee plant are used in the coffee-brewing industry?

Okon: Generally Arabica, Robusta, and Liberica, a West African species you don't see often. Robusta is used by some of the big companies, like Folgers. You used to be able to get high-quality Robusta for half the price of Arabica. Sellers would say, "We'll give you a great deal for this coffee. Blend it with something." But better farming practices have improved the quality over the last 15 years, so the demand for Robusta has risen. Now it's almost the same price as Arabica, and you've got to sign a contract for it a year out.

Where do you buy the beans?

Okon: When I first started Equiano, I was trying to buy directly from the farmers. One of the first ones was Finca Samaria, a well-established farm run by a fourth-generation coffee family in Colombia. I still purchase coffee from them. I also buy from Brazilians — JC Coffee Farms. The quality work they do is just amazing, from the planting of the seeds, to harvesting at the right time, to getting it to us. And Mighty Peace Coffee is an exporter-importer out of the Congo. I buy from them. You get unique, single varietal coffees from these farms. They're great.

Eric: I buy from wholesalers. The coffee I get is pretty common so I have no problem getting it, but the wholesale market has changed.

Okon: Right. Back 10 to 15 years ago, there was a push in the specialty coffee industry to showcase farmers and their unique high-quality coffees. Places like Stumptown were doing that. But the U.S. was behind other countries like Germany, Japan, and Denmark, where buyers were willing to pay farmers for higher-quality product. So the prices went up, which hurt those without deep pockets — guys like Eric and me. I can't touch what Stumptown can bring on.

Eric: Even Stumptown couldn't touch it. They were sold to Peet's, which is part of a big conglomerate with really deep pockets.

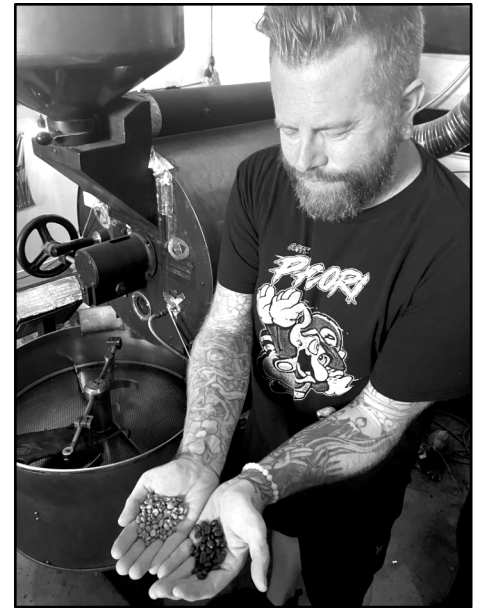
Okon: Then, ever since the pandemic, the cost of shipping coffee has quadrupled, which has hurt the ability of small producers to get their product to the market.

Eric: Even some of the big wholesalers are going out of business.

Okon: Mercon was one of the biggest — the number-one specialty coffee company on the planet, in business for over 100 years — and they filed for bankruptcy last December. It's the shipping. They were selling coffee from Rwanda, from Nicaragua, from everywhere. They had contracts with farmers spread out all over the world, so they had so much coffee sitting at the ports. And then when the price of shipping quadrupled, they tried to absorb the cost. But after a while, they just went out. It was amazing to see how that unfolded with Mercon, because it was a \$400 million business. I haven't picked back up buying from the bigger wholesale companies.



Left: Okon Udosenata starts a roast at Equiano Coffee.



Right: Caffé Pacori's Eric Pierce displays roasted and unroasted beans next to his wood-fired roaster.

The big guys like Starbucks and Peet's, where do they buy their beans?

Eric: A lot of them go directly to the farms, because they're buying in such quantity that they can just buy an entire lot.

It must be hard to compete with them.

Okon: Yes and no. I mean, we used to get the lion's share. Now we say, "Okay, well, what do you have left? I'll take that."

Eric: The only time we've ever run into a problem was back when the tsunami hit Indonesia, and we weren't able to get coffee from there because Starbucks had bought everything they could get their hands on.

Okon: I ran into that once, at a farm in Colombia. I tasted one of their six varietals and told them, "I love this coffee. I want 10 bags of it." They said, "You can get anything else, but not that varietal; Starbucks was here last week and bought all 300 bags."

Eric: But 300 bags is like a drop in the bucket down that way!

Okon: Exactly.

Eric: That'd be like, you're just trying to get the crumbs and someone's like, "Uhhh, no."

[Laughter]

How do beans differ in appearance and flavor?

Okon: When they process the beans, they filter them with different screens that sort them by size. You'll have the largest A, followed by B, C, D, E in descending order of size. The bigger ones are fuller and more developed, so they have all the nuances; the bandwidth of flavors is stretched out. Then the smaller they are, the more concentrated the flavor. Sometimes the E's taste better than the A's, because you have all that flavor compacted into a small bean. And then you have peaberry, which is a genetic variation — coffee "beans" are seeds of the coffee cherry, which normally grow two to a cherry with flat sides facing each other. But sometimes just one small, round seed grows instead, and it's super flavorful. That's peaberry.

Which coffees are most popular with your customers?

Eric: People come to our shop for the nutty flavors and light and medium roasts. Our best seller is our house roast. It's our medium roast. And we do wood roasting, so some people come for the smokiness. By contrast, our wholesale customers, and even those who come to the shop to buy beans for home, lean more toward the dark. We also do white coffee — a super light roast. Commonly, a light roast is around 400 degrees. The white roast is around 300 degrees. It doesn't taste like coffee. It tastes more like tea, and it's really high in caffeine. It's just getting a footing here now. We ran out the other day for the first time ever; we went through 15 pounds of white coffee.

Okon: Most of my customers want chocolatey, so I try to select single varietals that have the chocolatey notes, that have sweetness and mild fruit. But I also have a few varietals that are just pure fruit — just pure citrus or amazing fruit. My wholesale customers all want the darker roasts with the full body, round flavor notes, chocolatey, and smooth drinkability.

Conventional wisdom says it's best to use coffee within two weeks of buying it? True?

Eric: In the coffee world, there's so much lore that's been taken on as truth. It's more subjective than that. I've got ground coffee in my apartment right now that'll sit there for a month. And I'll be fine with that.

Okon: That's it. I've been in the coffee industry for 20 years, and there's so much stuff that's taken as fact but nobody ever tests it. They say, "Oh, it's going to be horrible," and I say, "Let me see how horrible it is." Turns out it's great! They say, "Use it within two weeks." Well, take espresso for example — you don't even want to use espresso until it's degassed for two weeks. Otherwise, you're not going to taste all the nuances of the bean. And it's going to be so gassy that if your baristas don't really know what they're doing, the shot's going to be all over the place; some shots are going to be voluminous and some are going to be flat — there will be a lot of channels in the puck of coffee. For myself, I know that if I just use coffee within a month, it's going to taste amazing. That said, with the darker roasts, the oils that come to the surface will start to oxidize after a while. And the more they oxidize, the more the coffee tastes like, maybe metallic or something. So if you have a really dark roast, you might shoot for that two-week window.

Eric: Even ground coffee is fine even after a long while. Keep it in a cool, dry place, and don't put it in the fridge or freezer.

Okon: Right. If you put it next to the kimchi or salami, it's going to soak up flavors.

Does the type of coffee grinder matter?

Okon: Yes. If you want a high-quality cup, you want it to be ground in a sharp burr grinder so it cuts through the coffee in a uniform way. Otherwise, the bigger pieces won't extract as much as the smaller pieces, and you're going to have flavors that are all over the place. You don't want the whirlybird type, which pulverizes the coffee. It's not cutting the coffee, it's breaking it.

For people at home, what's the best way to make coffee? Pour-over? French press?

Eric: It just depends on the person. I've got a pour-over glass thing at home somebody gifted to us. It was a prototype and a terrible idea. I can't stand cleaning it. But I love that thing. It's just this carafe with holes in the bottom. And I like that it's glass.

(continued on p. 12)

A Dog's Life

Stephen Swiftfox

Flawed People, Good People, and a Winding Road

Noon, March 12th 2024 after 3 weeks of illness my Cairn Terrier, Mia, told me that it was time. I called our vet and said that we're on our way.

Upon our arrival we were greeted by several staff and shown into an exam room. Mia did stand up and wag for Dr. Matt, they had a profound understanding of each other. As things got prepared Mia lay down and I encircled her in my arms. In a few minutes she was gone. We hadn't even started the sedation. I stepped into the hallway and announced "Mia is gone." The response was almost embarrassingly swift. A tech and Dr. Matt checked. Mia did pass.

Soon after Dr. Matt contacted a Golden Retriever rescue organization and told them to fast track my upcoming application. He then contacted a training facility for therapy dogs. Finally, he contacted me. It all seemed preordained. I completed the application process, got the home inspection, and placed on a waiting list.

March 19th I was going under for a pacemaker implant. I raised my head and saw the clock. It was 11:57. A lot of dark thoughts. What does it all mean, 7 days later to the minute?

Obviously I'm still here.

Went in for a pacemaker 'tune up'. The receptionist told me that there was an 18 month old female German Shepherd that needed rescuing from an abusive owner right now. I wasn't really receptive because I was going to get a Golden. I knew better, right? Ok, fine. Went to see the dog. She lost all fear and came right up to me.

Now Daisy is part of the household. A large dog who's not a bed hog. She also developed the 'couch creep'. A local charity paid for her spay, inoculations and microchipping. Unasked, people brought 7 cases of canned food and 300 pounds (!) of the best kibble to the house. My friends who offered to pay for the therapy dog training found a service dog trainer and paid her to train Daisy and me.

Yeah, I admit that I thought that I knew best. And I thought that I was quite alone in my grief. People see things both obvious and not so obvious. It was known that I'd sold my stereo and a few other things to cover the \$6400+ Mia's vet bills. And Daisy found me. People found my need. As the saying goes, "You want to make God laugh? Tell him your plans."

Two Shots

Having gone through the sudden termination of an intensely physical relationship my friends had been quite worried about me. I was worried about me.

Weird interruption took form as loud barking in my backyard. Upon investigation I found my two dogs tangling with a family of skunks. After much yelling and pulling I managed to lock up my dogs in the garage. As the skunk spray volatized on me, I found the intense bitter smell of marigolds turn into the classic gagging skunk smell. What concerned me more was the hapless and helpless skunk family.

Parents dead and the two kits dying. I went inside the house and fetched my .22 pistol. I ended the kits' suffering only to realize that I discharged a firearm in the Pasadena city limits. Paying no attention to my barking dogs in the garage I went into the house to figure out what to do in this baffling situation.

The doorbell rang. 'Oh oh, the cops' I thought. At least my skunk smell might deter them from putting me in the patrol car. Opened the door and there stood Jim and Tina, the grammar school teachers next door. We stared at each other for a time and then Tina asked if I was OK. I briefly explained what had happened as they backed away from me. Tina said that they were concerned about the gunshots as they knew of my recent break up. Jim piped up that they thought that I'd shot myself. I said there were two shots. Jim said they thought I missed.

Welcomed

On the drive home, the Wolfhound hears ravings, insecurities, incongruities, secret scores of lost poems and like a trusted friend, will never repeat them.

Yellow-brown eyes, tearing canines and a countenance that makes the most vicious of war-like creatures come to toe. He is the calm one that observes and assesses all the little contrivances that have been spewed from the day.

He keeps me sane and I worship his tenacity. His life is food with garnish, cottage cheese, treats, water, new friends and me, whom he sniffs to see if I have touched other dogs.

If you are a dog-person, you are welcomed by the wolfhound, you are welcomed by me.

Bill Gunn

Dogs and Cats

Dogs and cats and piss-faced fuckers that only come at dusk or dawn, can make the dew on spring maple leaves blush with new vigor.

Daring to visit some new dimension, I sit with arms akimbo and legs in a somewhat lotus position, waiting, as if some deity will come and order them to some distant sage desert.

I sit here in bed, pillow between shoulders and wall in a somewhat upright position putting words together like screaming to distant gods, and wonder if I'll wake at 2:00 A. M. or 4:00 A. M.

Looks like I'm fucked again.

Bill Gunn

The Steppes

I can hear the far off sound of sleigh bells trailing off through the distant Steppes. I can see Genghis Khan riding small, stout ponies, swords pointing upward, screeching some archaic battle cry, lost to history. I can smell the steam from the horses, and see the arch of the mid horse troika flying through snowfields so vast it takes your breath away.

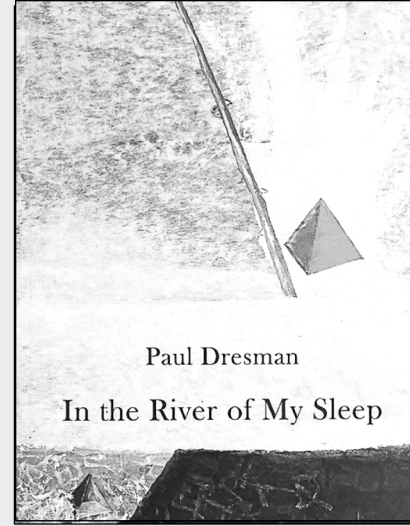
I can feel the cold breath of Siberia that makes fingers and appendages ache for warmth.

Human kindness along the way, rough cheeks and red noses, normal in this fantasy. The air is untouched by human lungs.

Bill Gunn

"The weather deepens roots, and I write from an American imagination, a spirit in cahoots with wellsprings and camaraderie... History is a nightmare I am trying to elucidate; poetry the singing, invisible flag I raise."

—from the Prologue



Paul Dresman

In the River of My Sleep



Published by EL SUR ES AMERICA
www.amazon.com/dp/1736178490

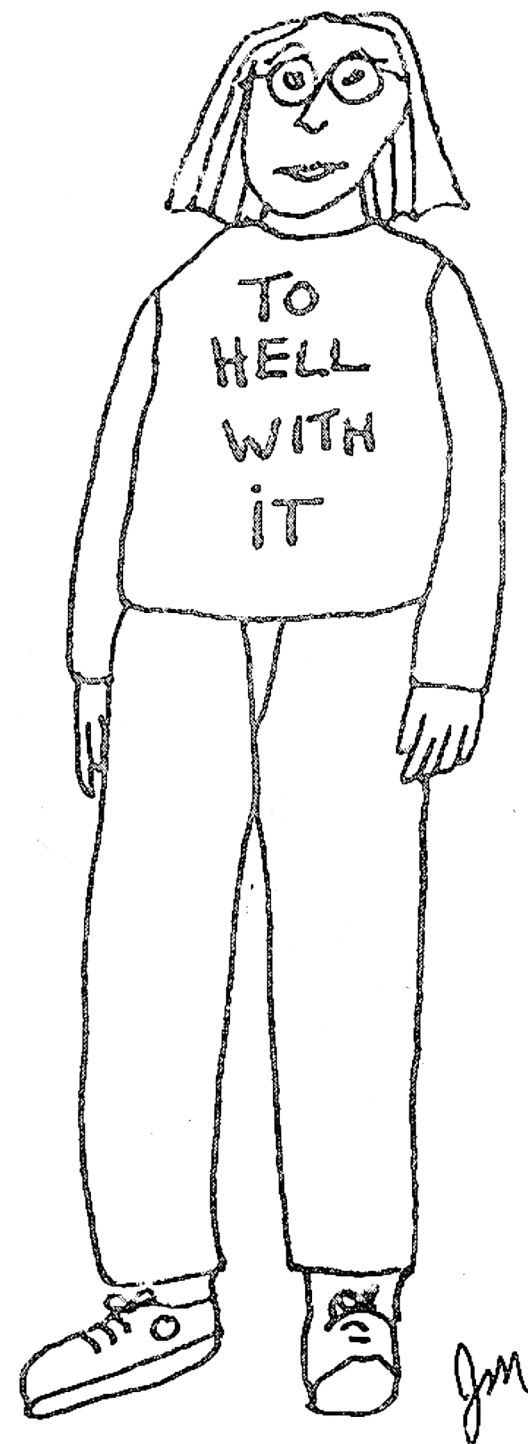
Award-winning poet Paul Dresman taught literature and writing at the University of California at San Diego, at Beijing Teachers' University, and at the University of Oregon, in his hometown of Eugene.

amazon



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— Donald Wesling, Professor Emeritus of English Literature, UC San Diego



"Thought for the Day" - art by jean murphy



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Our History by the walking historian

Randy Gudeika



Parkview Terrace, E 2nd, near High Street, has no plaque, no statue. Yet it marks a pivotal point in our nation's history.

On April 18, 1968, 42-year-old US Senator Robert F. Kennedy, brother to assassinated President John F. Kennedy, brought his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination to Eugene. The Oregon primary was a month away. Then, our primary was extremely key to the presidential race because it was so early in the process.

The charismatic Bobby first pressed the flesh with seniors at what's now Campbell Center, then crossed the street to tour the new affordable housing complex, as always followed by "Freckles," his springer spaniel.

Two weeks earlier, on April 4, in Indianapolis, he'd been told of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. He spoke then to the angry, grieving crowds: "What we need in the United States is not division; what we need... is not hatred; what we need... is not violence... but is love, and wisdom and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country."

He had an aura about him. A Eugene policeman told the Register Guard (June 1968): "People want to touch him, and his staff told us Kennedy wanted the contact with the people." During his campaign parades, the crowds got close enough to tousle his hair, and even take his cufflinks. He had only one personal bodyguard in Eugene.

Going into May 28, Kennedy was leading Eugene McCarthy in the polls, but ended up being upset, 44% to 38%. He did what he needed to do the next week, winning the California primary on June 5. If he hadn't been killed in L.A.'s Ambassador Hotel, what might have been? Maybe a plaque at Parkview Terrace, at least.

More: Check out his 1968 campaign speeches on YouTube.

Untitled

To walk Alone(g)
mumbling only to my thin self
hoping noone will see
but almost beyond caring.

The dangling legs and bloated bellies.
Those kids flattened
beneath yesterday's bombs.
The stiff body of a fawn,
eyes wide along MacBeth —

and then, in November
the white pelicans wheeling
over this stretch of Lorane Highway
so that even the dog looks up
to see
their whirling dance —

Tom DeLigio

Heavenly Particles

I once saw the lunar eclipse
Through the branches
Of a scraggly oak
On the side of a butte.
My life stopped for a short time
My breath became oceanic
In-out..... like the tides.
Graceful, intentional, and everlasting.

For a fractured moment I saw
The infinite.
(it's easier than you think)

I felt humbled
And big
And small
All at the same time.

Stars glimmered but were
muted by the moons glow.
I hold on to these fragments
These celestial elements
They carry me forward
I call them
Heavenly particles.

Ed English

Selva Oscura (Inferno)

Dark forest
Shadowy
Impossible landscapes

Poems and leaves
Dreamy night
The tangled darkness grows

Micro matter
Macro matter
Energy
Transformation

Love agrees
Never disagrees

I am a tree that can dance
Refreshed and fresh

Grateful for all I have
For all that has not been granted
For all that manifested
For all the love.

Fergul Cirpan

A Fresh Approach

Loving in Oregon
Northwest flora and fauna

Relating to nature
Notable trees
Plants and fungi

Organic organisms
Pure and raw

A magical ecosystem
Cosmic and microscopic

Fantasy and playfulness
Holds my hand

Fergul Cirpan

Ideas of Heaven

dreamed of a lost grandfather
passed by him in a ticket line
waiting for some big show
held him almost to death
headed toward the end of the line
waking up at the entrance
sat up to pure emotion
buried worn alliances of joy and pain
wearing the cowls of catharsis

remembered tales from the aunts
thought about their many years of abuse
beguiling so many golden holidays
thanked them for softening him
looked upon my youth with shameful ease
being locked in the washroom
used to turn out the light
sat quietly in the dark and slept
trying not to be noticed

joked away the first stroke
prepared for it with three heart attacks
watching my grandmother have affairs
found him in the washroom
seated in a small pool of blood
fingering it like a child
looked him in the eye
recoiled mortified at no form of recognition
seeing the fragility of identity

called grandmother on the tryst
endured a confusing hour of expedited concern
echoing past diversions of guilt
considered how nobody told him
knew that he knew that we knew
considering he designed guidance systems
frustrated himself with new crosswords
lost peripheral vision with the second stroke
usurping his previously perfect record

fell into a peaceful resignation
appeared content making hot dogs in hell
waiting for our reluctant tirades
sat quietly in the corner
advised gratefulness over the petty current drama
finding wisdom inverse to clout
worked to become lucid again
studied patiently in an otherwise empty house
hoping for any imperfect acceptance

drove him to various exams
felt his defeated sense of invulnerable authority
knowing many nails came before
placed him over the television
spoke briefly with his two estranged daughters
avoiding him since the abandonment
pondered his fearlessness of death
recalled his humble attempts at remorseful closure
searching our eyes for understanding

Mike Heide

Sympathy for the Shooter

A young searching man, looking for truth, for hope and examples ends up on a roof.

Living is hard, he needs direction, he picks the side that's offering heaven.

Maybe this group will provide what I need, belonging, examples, reasons to be.

He listens and watches, a nice looking group, wealthy and smiling, Armani suits.

He can't understand yet why they are there: to white wash the world because they are scared.

Not caring about others' hardship and sorrow as long as their stocks go up tomorrow.

So Tommy joins in, watching his screens, signs in his yard, smiling at dreams.

Dissonance working but won't hold for long, he's starting to sense that something is wrong.

Fancy adults applaud while they cheer, he's way too young to see what is here.

He's shell shocked to learn of a twelve year old girl.

Oh disillusion, rears up again, learning of Santa, betrayed by a friend.

Parents and teachers begin to show cracks, not many examples from where he is at.

And now his hero falls quickly to zero, in one of the most wicked of ways, did she pray?

Taught black and white, evil and good, he shores up resolve to be Robin Hood.

His mind can't find purchase surrounding this news, angry confused, he decides what to do.

Where were the answers to soothe Tommy's mind, isn't it what we all want to find?

So now he is the bad guy, thou shall not kill.

So vote for the rapist of an innocent girl.

Paisley



Joy at 10-Mile Dunes - art by don

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We need to find an extra \$600 for our IRS 501(c)(3) application so at some point we can get grants and stop asking you impoverished creatives for your lunch money. We also need our own wire display racks so we look presentable and oh-so profeshneal in our drop spots around town (and also to keep other free-paper purveyors from plopping their dross on top of ours — or at least make them feel guilty about it). A dozen racks will set us back another \$600. We so far haven't found a source for used racks — if your Uncle

Dave runs a used newsrack business, please have him call us. In any case, add that all up and it comes to 1,200 smackeroos. That's a lot of smackeroos, so... **We've started a smackeroo GoFundMe: gofund.me/02e7682e** Please, I beg of you! Help! I'm not sure how much longer I can...



art by eamon morris

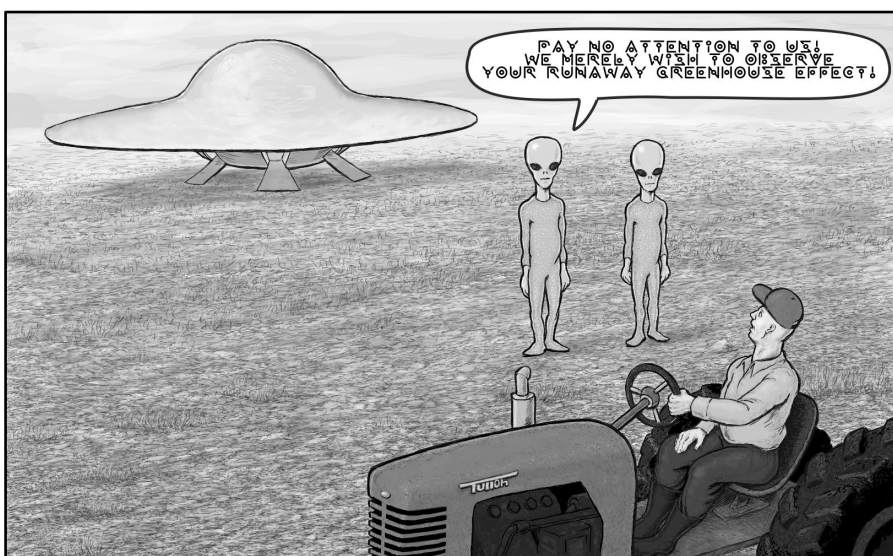


art by marco elliot

Actual conversation overheard in a university cafeteria.



art by marcel tulloh



art by marcel tulloh



"Robin," art by moss

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art by james otter

Igniting Robert Frost Skylines

this is for the little guy
missing Ma & Pa shops
harassed for closing his siren/ houseless eyes
in libraries

thermometer breaking from lack of justice
kicked out
exiled
sleeping in dirt
indifferent oak shadows tracking his raven dreams

innocent laughter rippling out from river swims
a different time/ a different place
all levels sparking thousands of faces from a tough
totem pole called Life

do you remember hopscotch sidewalks
ring pops/ big wheel adventures down simpler roads?

does he silence drunk chatter by bolting for an abandoned building
where dangerous brown recluse spiders spin soundless webs?

is he grateful for the small blue church on Monroe Street
which doesn't judge anyone for anything because they too
have lost it all?

freedom/family/friends

were you raped in your sleep
under a bridge by the mall
waking up to find your clothes slashed in half?

who does that?
what part of the Night Slasher puzzle piece are we all missing this time?

will rough stones leak out from his morning mist almond eyes
when kindness buys him a sandwich?

igniting Robert Frost skylines
when darkness works overtime
to kill every hope & stab out every nerve

will you think twice before ignoring the downtrodden
by stepping over his body
or telling him to get a fucking job you lazy piece of shit
or will you stop to actually listen to his story
instead of pretending you know everything?

Scott Lee



art (detail) by elvert barnes - CC BY-SA 2.0

Once Upon a Time the End of The World

MIGUEL ANTONIO GUEVARA

The birth of Noise culture can only be understood in the context of the collapse of the industrial city.

Noise Theory, Csaba Toth

The society of the spectacle is also the society of silence. Open the door to hear noise as a form of cultural disruption in the deindustrialized, silent, and silenced space of late capitalism.

Noise claims none of this. It constitutes a radical deconstruction of the status of the artist, the audience, and the music.

It is "the grain of the voice, a rejection of representation, a rejection of identity. a rejection of representation, a rejection of identity. a rejection of representation, a rejection of identity.

ONCE UPON A TIME THE END OF THE WORLD.

This is a soundtrack. A visual essay to narrate the collapse of a civilization. Desolate images. Disturbing sounds. Questioning the nature of progress and the inevitability of decline.

This is not music; it is the desperation of the hyper-controlled cyberpunk world we live in.
ONCE UPON A TIME THE END OF THE WORLD.

Experimental music, noise, music technology, and soundscapes as a way to "fabricate the present" and offer a new way to perceive reality.

Noise is a disruptive element that challenges established structures and anticipates social and political changes.

The composition of noise creates an aesthetic impact. It questions and challenges cultural and social norms. Suggesting new possibilities and alternative futures.

Once Upon a Time the End of The World.

These are the ruins of the future.

When we see a ruin, we see ourselves.

The ruins of our present. The possibilities of alternative futures.

Noise is a means to explore temporality and memory, connecting the past, present, and future in a continuous auditory experience From a broken tongue from a world broken.

Once Upon a Time the End of The World.

But not all is noise and bad news.

I see in the debris of noise and ruins

New leaves sprouting, new life.

Even in the shadows, hope rises militant.

A call to action, to rebuild from the ruins, to challenge the silence, to create new symphonies of change.

Our actions, our resistance, will forge a renewed world.

The melody of hope resonates in every heart, transforming noise into a cry for freedom and justice.

ONCE UPON A TIME THE END OF THE WORLD.



art by james otter

Alas, Poor David

Tim Edwards

“T edious, overrated, tortured, and one of the most pretentious writers of my generation.” Controversial in his own right, Bret Easton Ellis didn’t mince words when describing an author considered one of the most influential writers of the last 30 years. Mary K. Holland, in her essay entitled, “The Last Essay I Need to Write About David Foster Wallace,” ended it with a question. “How might reading Wallace’s fiction in the contexts of biographical information about him and women’s narratives about their experiences of sexual violence enable us to better understand—and interrupt—the powerful hold misogyny and rape culture have on our society, our art, and our critical practices?”

Wallace was a novelist and essayist. He wrote about addiction, depression, tennis, David Lynch, and if lobsters have feelings as they are being boiled to death. His complex narratives and unique prose have earned him a devoted following among the often derogatorily named “Lit Bros.” After his suicide in 2008, fellow authors, essayists, and journalists have written of his transgressions and his literary accomplishments in equal candor. He has faced considerable backlash on the heels of the #metoo movement because of his documented misogyny and abusive behavior, particularly with author Mary Karr.

Infinite Jest, the *Ulysses* of Generation X, is a blunt exploration of addiction, how entertainment consumes us, and the human condition. Written in a *Pulp Fiction* style narrative, it jumps from one plot to another. Challenging, funny, dense, and pretentious yet rewarding, *Infinite Jest* pushes readers to engage deeply with its dark themes. Wallace’s innovative use of footnotes, his playful yet poignant prose, and his ability to weave together disparate narratives showcase a level of intellectual artistry that few can match and many have copied.

Despite the challenges posed by his writing, Wallace’s work resonates on multiple levels. He delves into the complexities of modern life, addressing issues like existential despair, the nature of consciousness, and the impact of technology on our daily lives. By confronting these topics, Wallace opens up dialogues about our existence in a consumer-driven society. His insights encourage readers to question their values and the nature of their happiness. To think Wallace wrote about these subjects in the 1990s, and in 2024 we are all still experiencing, and struggling, with these same issues.

Understanding Wallace’s personal struggles should be considered in our judgment of his character. Wallace battled depression and anxiety throughout his life. His mental health challenges informed much of his writing, adding a layer of authenticity that resonates deeply with many readers. We must recognize that he faced demons that many struggle with silently. It saddens me that only recently we have become concerned for the mental health of the male population, and that we aren’t more empathetic to the mental health struggles of Wallace and others. Mala Chatterjee, a writer and legal scholar, once wrote, “I started reading and it soon became the case that so long as ‘Infinite Jest’ was in my hands, it was possible, okay even, for me to stick around.” It was the first article I had come across where a young woman praised this controversial novel. She also stated, “The suicidal person, in other words, is not misguided but rather literally facing different choices—ones unimaginable to those who do not also have flames slowly engulfing them.”

The cultural context of Wallace’s writing is vital in understanding his significance. He emerged during a time when literature was evolving—grappling with the implications of postmodernism in a rapidly changing world. Wallace’s work can be seen as a response to the nihilism and irony that characterized much of late-20th-century literature. He strove to infuse meaning into a meaningless existence, advocating for sincerity in a world marked by superficiality.

In our digital mass consumption, where public figures often face swift and harsh judgments because of their views, opinions, and lifestyle choices, we must cultivate a culture of empathy rather than ridicule. Wallace, like many artists, laid himself bare in his writing, inviting readers into his psyche. To respond with disdain not only diminishes his contributions but also reflects a societal tendency to tear down those who dare to be vulnerable.

In the end, Sally Jean and James Wallace lost a son, Amy Wallace-Havens lost a brother, and Karen Green lost a husband. Author Jonathan Franzen lost a friend. Did Wallace make mistakes, hurt the people close to him, and make life decisions that would stain his character? Absolutely. What makes this narrative unfortunate is that Wallace is not alive to atone for his actions, leaving this tragic legacy unresolved. By approaching his life with compassion, we acknowledge the importance of vulnerability in literature and the profound impact of mental health on creativity. 🐞 🐞 🐞



Writing Exercises to Process Loss and Trauma

Audrey Quinn

Trauma and loss come in all shapes and sizes, but they’re two things that everyone on the planet Earth will eventually experience.

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Some people believe that “trauma” only occurs in cases of life-threatening events or physical assaults, such as being in a war or experiencing physical abuse.

However, trauma is a RESPONSE to any deeply upsetting event. The trauma response can look like intrusive thoughts relating to the event, impaired memory, mood swings, anger, depression, flashbacks, impaired relationships, and more. The causes of trauma for different people are numerous, but each person who has experienced trauma should be able to name their experiences as such.

THE MANY TYPES OF LOSS

Loss is another topic with many different meanings. The loss most of us think of is a death. But this is not always the case.

Loss can occur with a chronic illness. Loss can mean a divorce, break-up, or a falling out. Loss can mean missing out on your childhood years because you experienced abuse or bullying. Just as in trauma, loss can mean something different to different people.

HOW WRITING CAN HELP YOU HEAL FROM LOSS AND TRAUMA

Creative writing is a great outlet to express difficult emotions and experiences you can’t discuss out loud. Writing helps you process experiences by transforming them into something tangible.

Some benefits to writing specifically for processing trauma and loss are that you can do it anywhere and anytime you feel comfortable—and you don’t ever have to share it with anyone else.

GUIDED JOURNALING PROMPTS

Guided journaling prompts relating specifically to trauma and loss give you a jumping-off point to help you start writing about your experiences. This is helpful if you don’t know where to begin, or if you’ve experienced more than one kind of trauma or loss.

On their website, calmsage.com offers several excellent prompts. They include:

- Write about a negative belief you have that you know is false. Write about why it isn’t true.
- Write about if and when you’ve downplayed your traumatic experiences. Why?
- Write about one thing you wish your loved one understood about you. You could choose to share this one with the other person if you felt like you were able to do so.
- Write about the ways trauma has impacted your behavior and thinking process.

TRAUMA NARRATIVES

Another way you can use writing to help you confront your trauma and help provide more clarity about the ways it affected you is by creating a trauma narrative. As the name suggests, a trauma narrative is when you write about the event(s) that led to your trauma response.

This is sometimes more intensive than using journaling prompts because it requires you to revisit your writing and add more detail to it. Take breaks and allow yourself to feel whatever you feel each time you sit down to work on your narrative.

Start by writing about the traumatic event itself, then add the emotions and thoughts you experienced during it. Next, break down the parts of the event that deeply affected you by describing them in as much detail as possible, and adding in all the things they bring up for you today. One resource for creating a trauma narrative is on therapistaid.com.

POETRY

Another means of transforming difficult experiences into writing is poetry. If you struggle with writing a linear narrative—especially if you’ve experienced many different traumatic or grief events—free verse poetry might be a more accessible way to approach writing.

There’s something liberating in making something beautiful from something ugly. Poetry lets you do that. You can be messy and hideous, and the thing you write may not be the same as what you went through, but it allows you access and release those stuck emotions.

LET YOURSELF BEGIN

You don’t need to be a professional writer to use creative writing to express yourself. There’s no bar you need to reach, nothing you need to prove to anyone else. This is writing you’re doing just for you.

Dealing with trauma and loss is an ongoing journey, and writing about your experiences is just one tool to help process your emotions and experiences. If one writing exercise doesn’t work, that’s ok! You can always try a different one.

(Continued on p. 12)



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1-5 pm

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Demon Song

It's never enough to listen.
You'd know that if you'd seen
the way its eyes will glisten
every single time I scream

It whispers, soft, "I hate you,
I want to watch you hurt!"
Then I do as I'm bade to,
and don my crown of dirt.

The pieces of me shattered
lie strewn across the space
And when they spiral, scattered
I catch glimpses of its face.

It follows me to bed at night
and greets me on the morrow,
filling all my dreams with fright
and all my thoughts with sorrow.

The shadows can't contain it.
It does not fear the light.
I know I don't explain it,
Try though as I might.

It shows up unexpected
to destroy all it can see.
And I am left dejected
in destructive fantasy.

When the dust has time to settle
and I can tally up the cost.
They'll lock me behind metal
And hope the key gets lost.

A calliope plays a haunting tune
as carousels spin inside,
waiting for the gibbous moon
to make the monster hide.

I cannot tell you what I've done
or why tears fill up my vision.
But I'm sorry for all that I've become,
and welcome your derision.

I don't know how much fight I have,
This demon is very strong.
I have no cure, I hold no salve
I battle all day long.

This is a clash I cannot win.
One knows this when it starts.
I'm guilty of the biggest sin,
In breaking all your hearts.

It's not a superstition
It wants to watch me die!
You all know my position
and now you all know why.


macgealai


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COFFEE, continued from p. 6

Okon: If I'm near an espresso machine, I'll have espresso. But if I'm making coffee at home, I like a cone filter pour-over. I've got a nice thick ceramic cone and a metal filter. And I've got an electric kettle that I can set the temperature I want. You want the water to be hot enough to extract all the oil and flavor, but not too hot. And I usually preheat everything to make sure everything's at the right temperature. Preheat the cone and the filter. If you use a cold filter and a cold cone, the instant the water goes in, its temperature is going to drop like three degrees. Then you're going to have sour coffee instead of sweet coffee. If you add the water at a lower temperature, it's going to make your coffee sour. If you add it at too high a temperature, the coffee is going to be acidic. For me, boiling water at 212 degrees is too hot. I was experimenting with 207. It's still a little bit too hot. I feel like 203 to 205 is where I like it.

Is there a taste difference between the paper filter and a metal filter?

Okon: Yes, you can taste the paper. With a paper filter, at least wet it down first so you don't get that fibrous paperness.

Are there any types of home coffeemakers you wouldn't recommend?

Okon: All day long. Let me just say the brand I *would* recommend: anything from Breville. They make decent espresso machines and home brewing machines. They're really good about having the right temperature. Other than that, I would say a Moccamaster, which makes amazing coffee, or a Ratio, which is a Portland company and also amazing. I wouldn't recommend a percolator. They burn the coffee. I mean, if you want really, really, really, strong coffee, then okay. It's really high temperature and recirculates coffee and rebrews it. I wouldn't recommend it.

Eric: I think the percolator is also a dance move from the '90s. Hey, the percolator. Yeah. I can do it.

So why are we so addicted to coffee?

Okon: Coffee is a beverage we congregate around. But I feel like in the last 20 years, people confuse coffee shops with sitting on their laptops with earbuds on and being isolated from the community, which is the exact opposite of what coffee is supposed to be. It's all about socializing. You get to know people — sit down with cups of coffee and talk about things.

Eric: If I'm going to go on a date for the first time, I'm like, "Let's go get coffee." And it's not because that's a generic thing to do. It's because when you have a cup of coffee in you, you're *going* to talk. So I'm going to get to know you.

Okon: People are just so stuck in their own little world now because they can have everything delivered to them. Coffee is almost the antidote. It's like, "Hey, neighbor, how's it going? Let's have some coffee." It's a social lubricant.

My pet peeve is drive-thru coffee places with lines of idling cars going down the block.

Eric: Yeah. And they're not even selling coffee. They're selling energy drinks. It's just a vehicle for caffeine, no pun intended. But coffee is subjective. You shouldn't be made to feel bad about how you're drinking coffee. I may not like all that sugar, but you shouldn't feel guilty about liking it. At Caffé Pacori you get no judgment. We're anti coffee-snobbery.

Okon: And there's something that can be said about the drive-thru coffee culture. It's more than just a cup of coffee. It's the interaction. People want that, even if it's one, two minutes — to be able to connect with a barista. You've got a five-minute friend. People are starving for human connection, and coffee is something that helps with socializing, connecting.

Eric: Exactly. Come to Pacori or Equiano and hang out. That's what we're here for, you know?



WRITING EXERCISES, continued from p. 11

And if you feel like you're not benefiting from processing your trauma through writing, that's OK. Consider trying one of these:

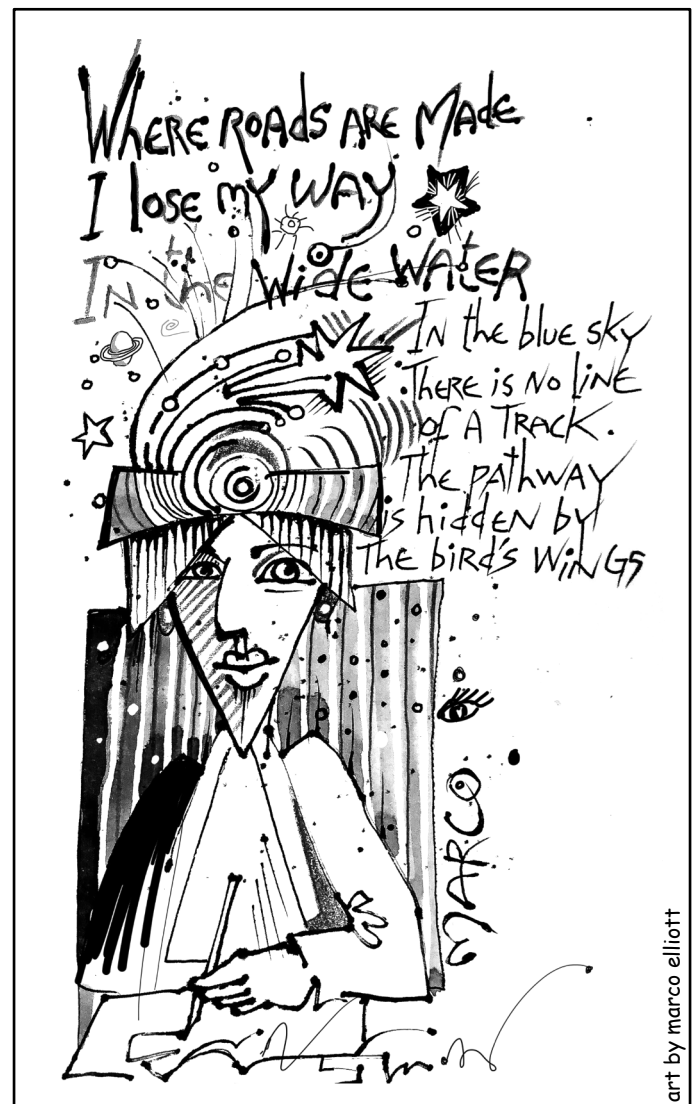
- Go for a walk or just be outside in nature
- Use an intense form of physical exercise to help vent negative emotions
- Find a creative outlet to distract yourself
- Check out groups for other people who have experiences similar to yours
- Allow yourself to be still and sit with yourself

Peace and healing on your journey to dealing with whatever you've gone through and continue to experience.

Audrey Quinn is on the staff at Wordcrafters in Eugene, a non-profit creative writing organization. You can learn more about them and the classes and events Wordcrafters offers at wordcrafters.org.

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graffitieugene@gmail.com



@GraffitiEugene