

Graffiti

#4



to Love and to Create

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FRONT LINES

Don Root

Okay, so here's the deal. So far, Graffiti has a good following of literary types—lots of poets and fiction writers, along with a few artists. **Creative writing is great!** Keep those submissions coming! But I didn't intend for Graffiti to be *just* a literary rag. I also wanted it to be a community bulletin board, a soapbox if you will, where anyone with something to say about anything could get their voice in print. And so far I'm seeing almost nothing in Graffiti about what's going on in our community.

Come on, Lane County, tell it to Graffiti! Whether it's an out-of-control UO dorm party or an out-of-control bingo night at the Senior Center, Graffiti wants to hear about it.

What did you think of that concert? What did you think of that restaurant? What do you love about Eugene? What pisses you off about Eugene? You kid—got a crush on that hottie in homeroom? Tell them in Graffiti! Parents, does your kid make you want to scream? Tell them in Graffiti! Your cat, your dog, your aardvark—you've got a great story to tell about all of them. Share it in Graffiti!

Where's the best bar in town? Where's the best place to go skinny-dipping? Where's the best Thai food? What's the craziest thing you've ever done in town, and did you get caught doing it? Life is full of real-life stories, and I'd like to think Eugene is alive. So, geez, just send us an email, okay? (The address is plastered all over this rag!) Tell us what's going on with you. C'mon! It'll be fun, I promise! Life in all its infinite variety, right here in the pages of Graffiti! What are you waiting for? Send us something to share with your friends and neighbors! **Praise, gloat, rave, dis, gush... let's hear it all!**

I've given you prompts with several themed columns open to you: **Struggles**, **Stories from Our Elders**, **The Golden Pen**, and **Not the New York Review of Books**. And I'm adding one this time: **The Rant**. Choose one of those or send us something else. Spill your guts, baby. Set yourself free!

Finally, are there any **Sundance Natural Foods** shoppers reading this? (And if you aren't a Sundance shopper, why not? It's a great store!) Go have a look at the awesome new newsrack artpiece by the front door. It's the result of a collaboration between Sundance and Graffiti, and it was built with outstanding craftsmanship by our friends at **Oak Prairie Woodworks**. Check it out! Now if we can only get the *Eugene Weekly* to stop dumping piles of their papers right on top of Graffiti all over town every Thursday. Sheesh. Rude.

Courage, my friends. Onward into the frog,

—Don

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— Steven Spielberg

"If I weren't dead, I'd definitely submit something to the Graffiti showcase. No other publication in town captures La Dolce Vita nearly as well!"

— Federico Fellini

Graffiti

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Donors this issue: Oak Prairie Woodworks, Stephen Swiftfox. *Thanks!*

Find past issues and the work of additional contributors online at graffitieugene.wixsite.com/graffiti

ON THE COVER: Levi donates a buck to a down-and-out Graffiti. What a great idea! Why don't you try it? PayPal to graffitieugene@gmail.com. Photo by Don



"Oh my God! Graffiti is HUGE!" Photograph by Forest Howell-Gilbert @aghaveagh

"YOUR ZINE IS COOL. HOW DO I SUBMIT?"

You put on your leather and get on your knees and beg, slave! What? Wrong kind of submission? Oh. Sorry.

This box used to be called "Instruction Manual for Beginners," which I thought was obvious. But you all kept asking "How do I submit?," so I guess that title was too tricky. Or maybe you thought you weren't a beginner, so you skipped right over it. Well, got news for ya, Holmes. We're all beginners. Anyway, here are the exceedingly difficult submission procedures and requirements:

How do I submit work?

You email it to graffitieugene@gmail.com, or you snail-mail or hand-deliver hardcopy to 1430 Willamette St. #242, Eugene OR 97401. Just FYI: at that address you'll find Eugene Mailbox Center, not Graffiti's swanky corporate offices, the location of which remains a mystery, even to us.

Do I win anything if I'm selected?

Yes. You get published. No, you don't get paid. This isn't a contest. You write it. You send it in. We print it and drop it off at various places around the county (see the list on p. 12). If there isn't enough room for everything we receive, we print what we like. Hint: we like writing without spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors. **If you don't see your submission in this paper, look for it online at graffitieugene.wixsite.com/graffiti.**

Does I gotta right good?

No, but if you have something to say, you want people to understand it, right? Dictionaries are cheap—even free online! And if you use one, you'll always have perfect spelling. It's that easy. Grammar's a little harder, but the more you write, the better you'll get. As a rule, we don't edit. What you give us goes as-is.

Does Graffiti accept previously published work?

Generally not. That said, if we think something is cool, we'll consider it.

Does Graffiti accept submissions from outside Lane County?

Yes.

What length works are acceptable?

Shorter is better. Anything under 800 words makes us happy. Anything over 1,000 words makes us sad. Think of Graffiti as a tapas bar—tasty small bites. We won't print works longer than 1,200 words in this paper zine, but we'll post those submissions and others on our blog: graffitieugene.wixsite.com/graffiti.

Golden Muscatel

Stephen Swiftfox

The sun was streaming through amber stained-glass windows. Their texture, I later learned, was called "Cat's Paw." All the cabinets were of dark wood. Everything was quiet, people had gone home.

You brought out a bottle of wine. Christian Brothers Golden Muscatel. You unscrewed the top and gave me a glass. Curiosity bubbled up. I knew I was blushing already. After you poured a more-than-generous amount, I brought it to my lips and smelled a fummy smell that made my eyebrows furrow. It did taste good. Sweet and runny. I expected a thicker liquid because of the sweetness.

In a few moments my legs felt really funny. Funny in a good way. I told you that my legs felt really good. You reminded me how you made me feel good before, and you promised that this would make that feel even better. Soon the cassock and surplice were too hot as I was wearing my normal clothes underneath. I knew that I soon wouldn't be.

You poured me another glass. I gulped it. You told me to slow down because it was the blood of christ. I didn't care. I was 12. ☺☺☺

Sweaty Men Grappling

Jordan Rose

In the world of professional wrestling, nothing is more exhilarating than the smell of cheap beer, dusty spandex suits, and the sound of the stage groaning each time one of the wrestlers go for a "flying scissor" or a "double-barrel take-down." The venues are choked with the noise tipsy people create when adults are play-fighting on a stage; avenging their dignity while proudly sporting a onesie. The sound of a 10-year-old girl screaming at the top of her lungs, "KILL HIM! PUNCH HIM, PUNCH HIM!!!" appropriately backdrops the chaos. If you're thinking, "WWE is not really for me," I urge you to hold my beer as I go to scream out Tony Venchenzi and his greaseball manager, Mister Oohlala (*a side note, this guy actually got his name legally changed to Mister Oohlala*). While I thought the last place I'd be putting my support is with the pro wrestling community, I cannot overlook an engaging storyline. Not to bore the readers of this fine magazine with the tumultuous history of wrestling, know that these events and characters have moved grown men to tears for years. I must admit my reservations against the sport started and ended with the onelet (*for something with straps, it seems mechanically insufficient that they ignore covering the nipple altogether*). However, the novelty of going to see a wrestling event in the parking lot of my favorite bar was a novelty too good to pass up. In the initial acts of the performance, I was witness to a grown man stapling a dollar to another guy's head, now if *that* isn't a crowd pleaser (*albiet blurring the lines of legality*). Although the absurdity of the event never bottoms out, you can guarantee that your voice will. As all proper and upstanding performances go, there is an intermission halfway through the show (*a chance for you to replenish the drink you've spilled on your lap and go to the bathroom without*

missing a single slap or someone's mom being defamed). During one of these intermissions, as my partner and I went to grab our drinks from the bar, he turned to find that the intensely large human being the act had named "The Mountain" was standing just behind him, and before we both could stop it, beer was spilt upon The Mountain. As I was doing my best to remember the features of my lover's face I most cherished before this large man smashed it in, the large man kindly proclaimed, "Oh! I'm so sorry about that, can I buy you another beer man?" Without so much as a chance to digest this encounter, he (*The Mountain that is*) was pouring out his heart to us and his love of teaching small children. To say I have seen a more dynamic, melting-pot of a crowd drawn to a single event would be a massive overstatement. Where else can you find Silicon Valley dudes, fraternity bros, mothers of small children (*with impressively colorful vocabulary*), and older women in their 70s attentively watching grown men give each other wedgies. After the mayhem has settled and the final plot has been twisted, rest assured that you can meet your favorite rough-houser at a folding table behind the ring. I never thought I'd be spending my hard-earned money on merch at a wrestling event, but before I knew it my card had been handed over and I had mustered up as much of a voice as I could to say, "I'm a big fan of your work." The next time you consider scoffing at someone who's a fan of pro wrestling, take the \$20 gamble and buy a ticket for an event in town (*bring a change of pants and let your boss know you'll be a little late tomorrow*). ☺☺☺

Mexicans in Paris

Kevin Graves

Never forget the luck of winning the Birth Lottery. If you are reading this in your native English, consider this: Native English speakers make up just 6% of the world's population, yet English is the tourist language of choice in many parts of the world. English is the language of business in all the major developed economies of the world, and English music, books, and "culture" are exported into every country in the world, even North Korea. If you are a native speaker, all you had to do was get up in the morning to have mastery over the world's number-one language. You can work, travel, dance, or screw almost anywhere in the world. Cheers to you, Birth Lottery winner!

And never forget the advantages of winning the Birth Lottery. Through no work of your own you may be carrying a US or EU passport. People kill and die for those passports. Once, I was on an all-nighter from Rome to Paris, and as the train pulled into the station, from under the seat I had been sleeping on popped a skinny young stowaway—just a kid—with brown skin, black hair, dirty rags for clothes, and no shoes. It must have been an extremely tight fit under there. He smiled nicely at me, went out the door to the cabin, and ran down the hallway. I never saw him again. I'm told stowaways go out the bathroom windows and get on the roofs of the trains to avoid the authorities, but I don't know for sure. I don't need to know... I won the Birth Lottery and carry an American passport, so I can go almost anywhere in the world for three months or so before they want me to leave and come back to spend my American dollars again. I'm like a walking ATM that spits out cash.

I knew a Mexican-American woman in Portland who had entered the US by crossing "La Frontera"—the no-man's-land along the US-Mexico border. When the group she was with came to a barrier wall, only the strongest people in her group could climb over it.

"After I got over the wall," she told me, "I heard a woman crying out on the Mexico side, 'Please, someone catch my baby.' The woman had a baby in her arms and couldn't climb with it. Finally, a man said to throw the baby over, and she did. Everyone watched as he caught the baby, and we all sighed in relief and said a little prayer to Mother Maria. The woman was too exhausted to climb so she stayed behind, but her baby made it to El Norte."

I grew up thinking the US must be really great to have this "Mexican Problem" of people risking everything, including their lives, to come here. When I lived in Europe, I was surprised to hear that the Europeans also have a "Mexican Problem." In Greece, they call them "Albanians." In Germany they call them "Turks." Switzerland: Portuguese; England: Polish; France: North Africans. In Saudi Arabia they call Mexicans "foreigners," meaning anyone from anywhere on Earth that will come to the Kingdom to do physical work, so the Nationals can sip illegal Mai Tais, smoke illegal cigarettes, and bitch about the work ethic of the current generation. It turns out whenever you have a clear disparity—in wealth, security, or opportunity—between people on either side of a border, desperate people will want to migrate to the side with better jobs, more security, and more opportunity, laws be damned. Wouldn't you? ☺☺☺



Graffiti has back issues!

We went to our chiropractor, but she just told us to put everything online. So we did. You'll find back issues and more writing submissions online at:

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Your Money or Your Life?

Don Root

Editor's note: In 2003, I had been enjoying life for some time in the region just north of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge—an area familiarly known as the North Bay. Times were tough then, leading me to write this piece, published by the Santa Rosa Press Democrat. Yeah, yeah, that breaks Graffiti's general rule of eschewing previously published work. But the central question of this essay has been much on my mind lately as I contemplate life in Eugene. So I thought it worth sharing, and hey, there are perks to being head honcho.

With the nation's unemployment rate at an eight-year high, job hunting has soared in popularity to become America's latest fad. This new trend takes reality TV one step further. Who needs to watch *Survivor* on the tube when you can play it yourself at home? Now you too can compete with several million other members of your tribe, trying to outplay, outwit, and outlast your neighbor to win the grand prize: a regular paycheck.

I confess, this pop-culture phenomenon recently hooked me in. So enthralled was I with the prospect of playing the game that in a bold, possibly psychotic move, I quit my job and took up the challenge of becoming unemployed.

A look at the gaunt local job listings revealed the first strategy question: Should I stay home in my beloved North Bay, taking a job as a dishwasher or whatever else might be available, no matter how abysmal the pay? Or should I pack up and move to wherever the best employment opportunity might arise, no matter how dreadful that place might be? Simply put, what's more important, your money or your life?

The first employment nibble I had came from an unlikely place: the small town of Rio Vista, out in the delta. Never having been there, I decided to go take a gander. Highway 4 led me east, past Pittsburg, past Antioch, past the end of the BART line, and on into Terra Incognita, where a stilt-walking bridge ushered me into the delta proper.

Here was a different land—flat and empty. The lack of buildings made for a big sky, which grew ominously dark.

Splat! A raindrop hit the windshield. Or was it a bug? Nope, there's another, and another, and then a deluge—a locust plague of raindrops.

By the time I pulled into Rio Vista the rain had stopped, but the river refused to rejoice, remaining a sulking, steely gray. I followed the signs into downtown—all four square blocks of it—and noted a tractor store, truck store, boat store, and bait store. But no coffeehouse. No brewpub or wine bar. No cinema. Not even (oh, the horror!) a Whole Foods.

Groping my way through the town's short-hemmed outskirts, I came upon a residential neighborhood full of nondescript 1970s-vintage tract homes. Curbside basketball hoops seemed to be in vogue here, sprouting from the gutter three to a block like futuristic steel cornstalks. Not my taste in landscape architecture. West of downtown I found a nicer old quarter. Here the homes were aging divas—wrinkled and sagging, but proud and full of character. "Maybe there's hope," I thought.

I picked up a local paper and took it to the town's most promising bar, a place called Foster's Bighorn. It was midafternoon and the place was empty, but the walls had eyes, literally. As I ordered my beer, a zooful of big-game trophy heads stared scornfully down at me from on high.

"You're not from around here, are you?" asked the gazelle. No wait, it was the affable human bartender.

"No," I said, "but I might move here. What's it like?"

"Sweltering in summer," she said, "but you've got the water right there. And it's a real party place! Go check out the marinas—on weekends they have bands, and dancing, and bikini contests! The girls would lovvvvve you!"

I opened the paper and checked the headlines: Mosquito Season Coming. Biosolid Spreading Begins.

"Lots of mosquitoes around here?" I asked, knowing full well that mosquitoes and deltas go together like itch on a lump.

"You get used to 'em," she said.

"What's biosolid?" I asked.

"Oh, that's sewage sludge from the big city," she said. "They spread it around on the fields outside town."

"Oh," I said.

Turning my attention back to the paper, I trolled my way through the fishing report (I don't fish) and the ag report (I don't ag). Then I flipped to the classifieds and checked the housing rentals—all three.

"Not many places for rent," I said.

"No," said the bartender, "your best bet is to buy a mobile. That's what I did, and I only pay \$325 a month for space rental."

"Oh," I said.

And then it happened. At that moment. At that one fateful, life-altering moment—right then and there—something, what was it? Something way down in my deepest, darkest, fight-or-flight-dominated reptilian, half-a-walnut-size brain—you know the spot? Something in that musty, dusty, seldom-used old place involuntarily rose up boldly on its shaky, atrophied little hind legs, summoned up every bit of courage it could muster, and shouted simply: "NO!"

A mobile—a trailer! In the delta. In summer! There it was. The whole panorama suddenly coagulated in my brain like a blood clot bound for glory. It had come down to this: I saw myself toiling away in the sweltering delta heat, coming home to my sweltering ramshackle trailer, and spending the rest of my sweltering night fending off bloodthirsty mosquitoes, malodorous biosludge breezes, and the untoward advances of a thousand dancing bikini-contest girls.

I may have let out a little scream.

After thanking the bartender, I got up and sauntered nonchalantly toward the door—past the puma, the cheetah, and the warhog. "Animals can sense fear," I remembered. Then I jumped into the car and fled posthaste back to the North Bay, the pedal ramming a pedal-sized hole through the rusty metal floorboard.

On the way home I came to some conclusions. It seems to me that to really be able to call a place "home" you need to be in tune with it. You need to feel that your very soul is composed of the same raw materials as the soil beneath your feet and the sky above you. You need to suck in life from every breath of your hometown air and exhale your worries back to the local winds, to be carried far, far away. Your neighbors have to feel like family, dysfunctional though they may be. And every morning when you awake you need to feel that there's no better place on Earth to start the rest of your life.

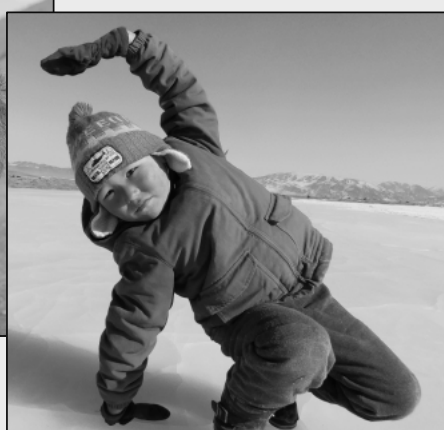
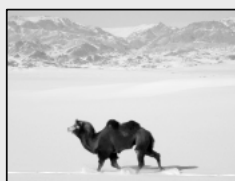
Blessings to all the good people of Rio Vista; may all your lines be loaded with lunkers. But for me, home must be where the heart—not just the paycheck—is. So from now on, thankyouverymuch, I'll be seeking my fortune, however humble it may be, right here in the Camelot we call the North Bay.

Anyone need a dishwasher? ☺☺☺

TRAVELS WITH STEVE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN SWIFFOX

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A Graffiti Interview

John Zerzan

On Our Broken Civilization

Author, social philosopher, and Eugene resident John Zerzan has spent much of his life looking at the failings of civilization and the roots of society's problems. A former anti-war activist, social worker, and union leader, Zerzan has written extensively about the conclusions he's reached, which are encompassed in a philosophy now widely known as "anarcho-primitivism." He sat down with Graffiti recently to explain what that means, and why it's our best hope for the future.

Your radio show is called "Anarchy Radio." The term "anarchy" may scare some people, bringing to mind bomb-throwing revolutionaries. What does it mean to you, and why should we want it?

The ideal of anarchy is to resist all forms of domination, which today would include technology and civilization. Today's anarchy movement, mostly called "green anarchy" or "anarcho-primitivism," is a shift from the 19th-century red anarchism, which was very production oriented—the people should own the factories. Now we see that the factories are really a big part of the problem, not the answer. We don't need any more factories. Noam Chomsky thinks we're scandalous for raising this point of view, but otherwise we're on a suicidal path. One way I like to put it is, if the future isn't somehow primitive, there won't be a future for life on this planet.

So is civilization today failing?

It's so scary, anywhere you look. The mass shootings, the ravaged emotional life of the youth, suicide rates going up—the loneliness, the anxiety, depression levels, not to mention the astounding, fast-moving ruin of what's left of nature. So that's the biggest elephant in the room: civilization is failing. It's so clear. It's falling down and bringing us with it, unless we can do something about it. And you can't find somebody who would disagree with that. It's like a "public secret" no one wants to talk about. But there it is.

Where did we go off track?

It started even before "domestication," or more commonly called agriculture, private-property farming. That had its roots in division of labor, which goes even further back—specialization, where you have people with more authority, more expertise than others, and you start to have a gradient of authority. That led the shift to domestication, which led to an unnatural population size. For a couple million years there was a very low population. It then started bumping up with farming, and you get the first civilizations—Egypt, Mesopotamia—along with cities, war, religion. A long while later we get to the industrial revolution, where now there is a big population, and you can see the progressive ruin of the natural world—the systematic extinguishing of it, really. It's a logical panorama. It's all the same path with domestication at its base. Control—always more control. Now we see control on even the molecular or genetic level. Deeper and broader forms of control, including the political stuff—surveillance and all that, which is the technology issue.

Isn't it just human nature that we want to control things?

Well it wasn't that way for a couple of million years. Hunter-gatherer band societies, very small, led a face-to-face life. There's a lot of wonderful anthropology showing [extant] hunter-gatherer societies consciously keeping hierarchy out of it. Richard Borshay Lee comes to mind. For example, they have a hunting party and they come in and bring the deer or whatever back to the camp and get ridiculed—made fun of. To keep that hunter from becoming a "big man"—"I bring your food, I should be in charge"—they laugh at him.

What do you think about the current tech boom? Hasn't it made life easier?

Yeah, there's a lot of convenience there. You just push a button. In fact, now you can just push a button and write your term paper, or script, or novel, whatever. Jobs used to be outsourced; now *thinking* is outsourced. The technology is so rampant and so immersive—it's everywhere. Nobody's really happy or satisfied with all this techno-verse world, but they're addicted. People are saying, "It's empty, it's draining, it's not satisfying, but I'm addicted." In other words, "it's crap, but I'm stuck," and they smile. And then you think, well, why the fuck are you stuck? But I'm not predicting we'll have some breakthrough or some shift back to community. There is no community now. We try, we try to be human and connect, but man... There's no room for imagination. No room for direct physical experience.

(Continued on p. 11)

Cocktail RECIPE

by Morgan Smith

I am six years old, we live in the Portland, Oregon area, my mother buys me a Miami Dolphins jersey — unwittingly creating a passionate fan for life.

38 years later, I finally make it to South Florida to see a game. There for a week, I visit a liquor store to get supplies. Thinking the ingredients should be something fitting for the tropical locale, I decide on:

Spiced RUM PINEAPPLE Juice Lime JUICE

In a pint glass, add ice, pour in a shot or two of spiced rum, a tablespoon of fresh lime juice, and fill the rest up with pineapple juice.

In Dolphins' history there is a legendary Hall of Fame coach. The architect of the Undefeated Season. Back-to-back Super Bowl champion. Most all-time wins in the NFL.

So there is no name more perfect.
I call the drink a...



Here's your chance to vent your frustrations in print! Got a pet peeve? Something that really gets your blood boiling? Grand philosophical thoughts that have your family members rolling their eyes and looking up Oregon psychiatric commitment procedures? Write it up and send it in! Just label your submission with "The Rant." I'll start it off.

The Rant

Old and In the Way

Life isn't fair. We know that. Lots of good people die young, and lots of bad people live long lives. Perhaps that's why humans have invented the myth that old age brings wisdom, because, statistically speaking, if lots of good people die young, the remaining populace will be heavily weighted toward the bad. And the bad people want you to think they're wise, right?

It's not rocket science to see that most of the bad in the world is perpetrated by old people. The people with the most power to fuck the world over—who, in fact, are in the process of fucking the world over as we speak—are old.

Today the so-called "Leader of the Free World" clocks in at age 80. Putin is 70, and Xi Jinping is 69. They're all killing people, playing games for world dominance, and doing little more than fiddling like Nero while Rome—our planet—burns. Wise? Hardly.

At some point around middle age, humans seem to lose their imagination, idealism, and sheer creative power. By the time they get to be my age, most people can't see past what they knew when they were young. Looking at history, you could make a case that by the time you hit 40, your best years are behind you. Lennon and McCartney were in their 20s when they recorded *Abbey Road*. Einstein formulated his general theory of relativity at age 36, the same age Van Gogh was when he painted *Starry Night*.

I look at the political leaders I admire most. Jacinda Ardern was elected prime minister of New Zealand at age 37. Sanna Marin became Finland's prime minister at 34. Our own AOC is 33. And let's not forget the firebrand at the forefront of efforts to save our planet from self-destruction: Greta Thunberg is 20.

Note that almost all of my favorite leaders (all except Bernie, perhaps) are women. Which brings me to related rant #2.

Who is responsible for the war in Ukraine? Men. Who is responsible for every war since the beginning of time? Men. Who is responsible for most domestic violence cases in this country? Men. Who gets drunk and wants to pick a fight? Men. Sorry, guys. Testosterone is a bitch. We're hopeless.

So as I see it, if there's any hope for humanity to last another ten genera-

tions, it lies with the actions of young women. Please, ladies, do us all a favor. Go out there and give 'em hell. Don't take "no" for an answer. If we're all to have a future, it's in your hands. No pressure.

I'm old now. But what would I do if I were a young breeder contemplating bringing a new human life into this world? Well, I just wouldn't. Which brings me to my final rant.

It's become clear over the past half century or so that humans, particularly those of us in the good ol' US of A, have become, by and large, spoiled, ignorant imbeciles. We're killing the oceans, we're killing the forests, we're killing off our fellow creatures at an alarming rate, and for what? For nothing more than money and our selfish convenience. What will be left for your grandchildren? For your children? Hell, what will be left for you?

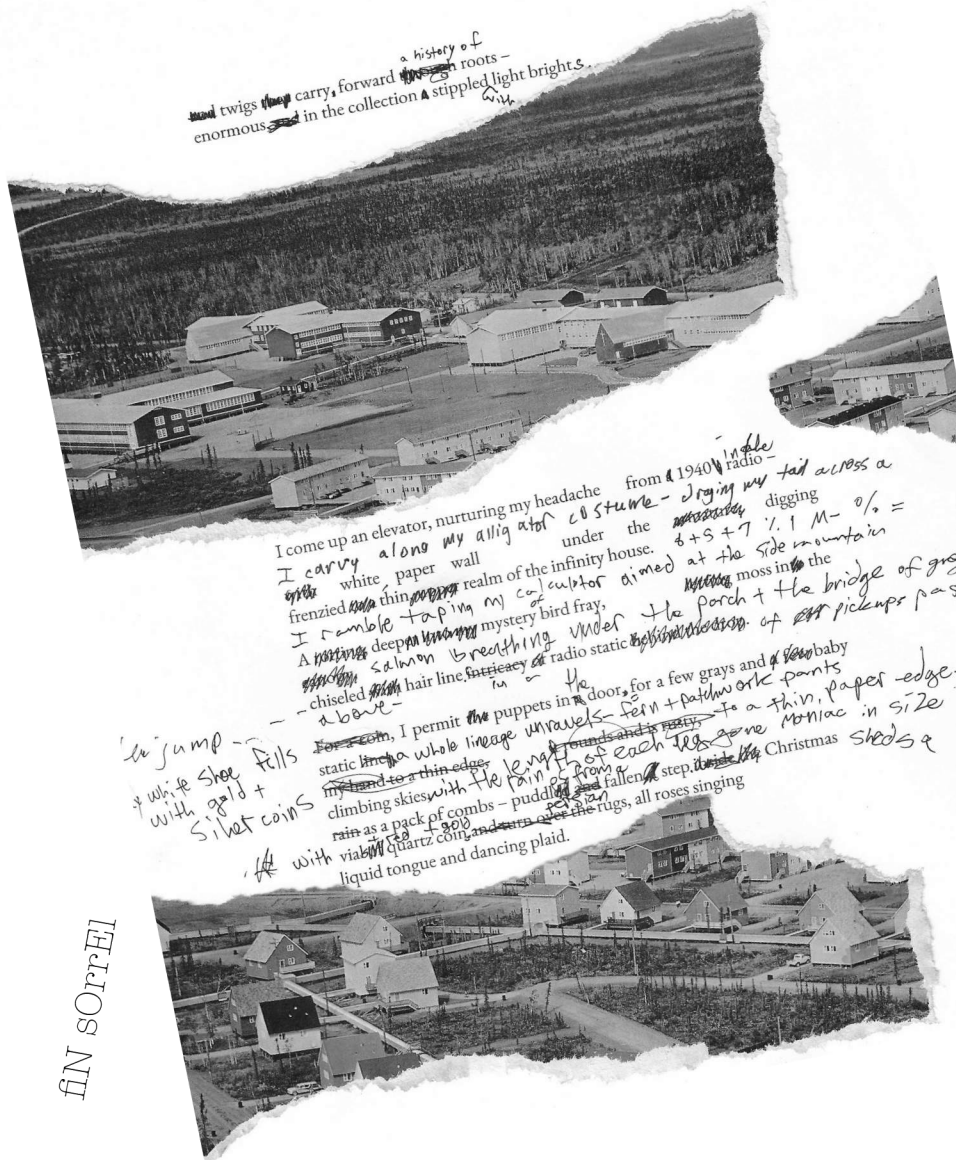
Let's face it, kids. Your parents are leaving you a life-and-death shit-mess you'll have to fix on your own. And time is against you, because the older you get, the older those older than you will get, and if the historical pattern continues, those elders will turn into the same despicable dickheads who put you in your predicament in the first place.

Elsewhere in this esteemed rag, you'll find a Graffiti interview with Eugene's own John Zerzan, an old fart like me who is acutely aware of the mess we're leaving you and has written several books on his ideas of where we went wrong. (Hint: according to Zerzan, the problem started around 12,000 years ago.) I urge you to read the interview.

So what do you do? How do you live your life? I wish I knew. I'm old (did I mention that?), so I can only offer apologies, not advice. But if I had to say something, it would be this: your every little action (or inaction) right now is critical to the continuing existence of human life and the lives of most other species as well. Maybe you think your one little voice doesn't matter and won't make a difference. But look at Greta. She's gotten the world talking with nothing more than truth and the strength of her convictions. Do you want to be part of the solution or part of the problem? Be like Greta.

But don't listen to me. I'm old.

—Don Root



FIN SORREI



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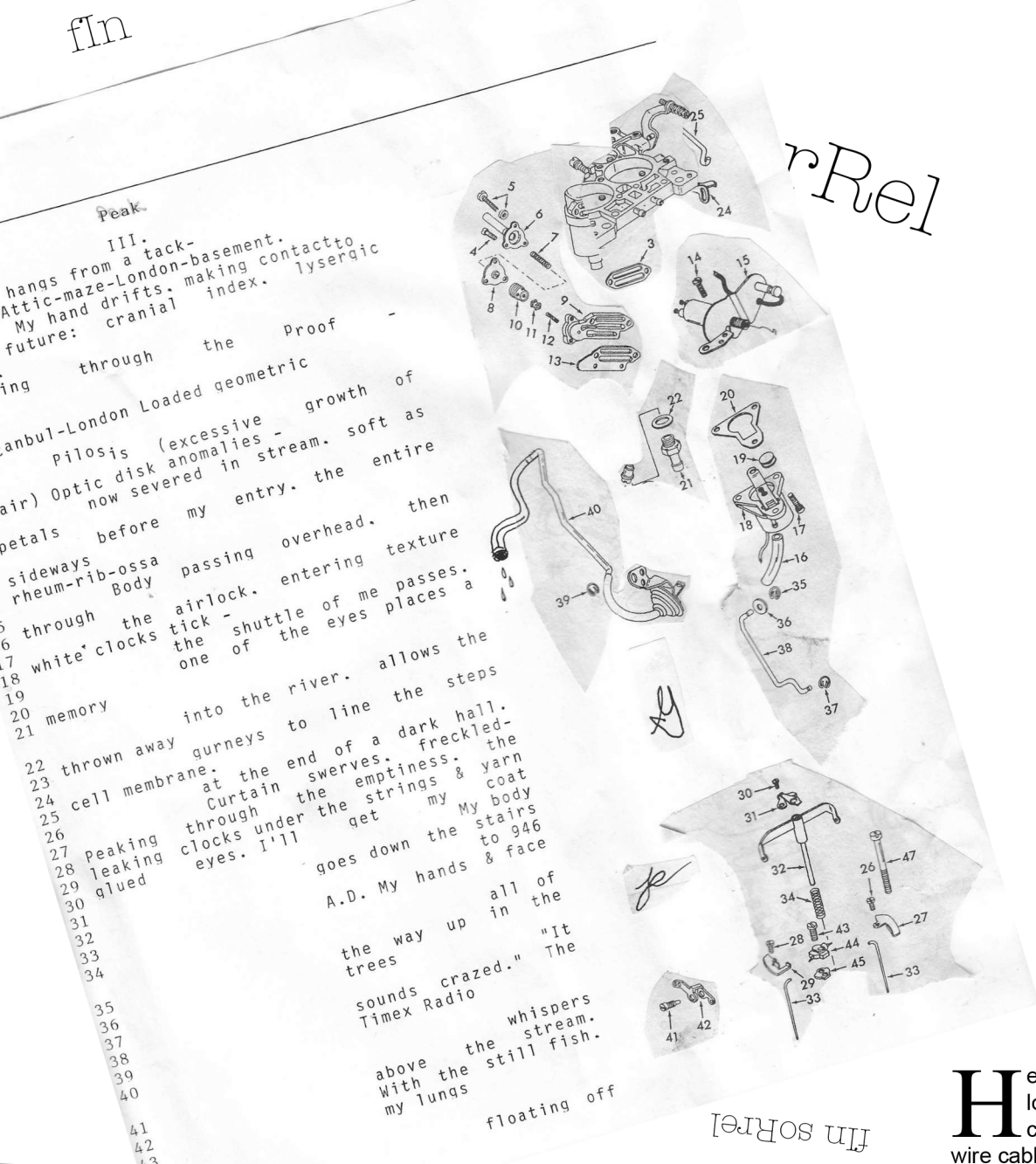
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MADAM SUKHOMLÍNA.
(Went voluntarily to the mines with her husband in 1888.)

The Glassblower's Daughter

Rod Williams

He poured all his prodigious powers and passions into his craft. Spent long hours sweating and laboring in his sweltering studio. From the ceiling, an armada of colored glass boats hung suspended on slender wire cables. Dolphin-stemmed wineglasses lined the rough shelves along the sooty walls.

When I was five, he built me a menagerie: jade deer and golden squirrels, blood-red sparrows, midnight-blue wolves, silver javelina. He himself was sometimes bear, sometimes goat, sometimes fox.

Two-thirty in the morning, I held my tongue and watched his every move, my eyes raccoon-ringed from lack of sleep. I studied my papa's broad neck, his workshirt stained dark and deep along his spine, his paws performing alchemy with mean materials. In one corner, the oven flared an orange grin my way, nurturing and sinister at the same time.

When I was twelve, he schooled me in the commercial slants of his art. "Man cannot live by glass alone," he growled. He took pride in the marketing of his products. His windchimes of sparkling fish and scarlet-streaked hummingbirds. His painted doorknobs, his glossy buttons. His pipes and bottles, his beer steins, his ornately beaded mirrors. The flowery chandeliers and gardens of blooming green crystals. His shiny holiday ornaments. The playful miniature figurines for shadowboxes and curio cabinets. The cornucopias, cylinders, and conches.

He taught me that creativity can occur at any ordinary time, in the most common of circumstances. Like when eating a pear or folding laundry or digging out a troublesome tree root. His eyes glazed over when he spoke about work. His words were molten, molten.

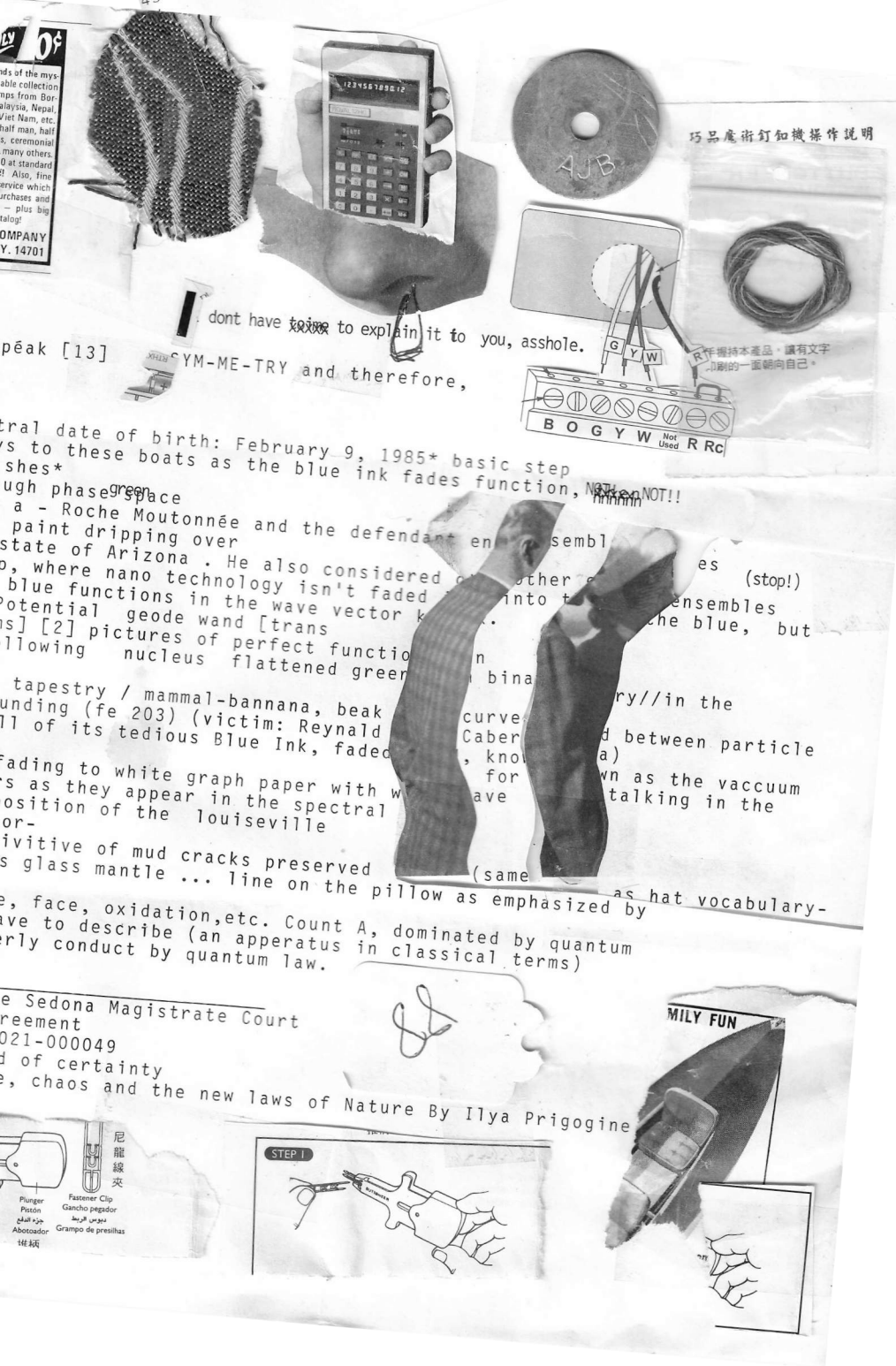
Papa, did you ever dream of blowing a citadel of glass, a shelter for my youthful flaws and weaknesses? You might have made a colossal snow globe or even a glass-paned prison where I could have been your "girl in a bubble," shielded against all the world's wild storms and your own opacity.

I remember you went half-daft when my mother left, but even before she fled you had no clear window into the world of women. You vaporized all your sorrows, regrets, and confusion inside your furnaces. All your suppressed emotions emerged from the yawning kilns in iterations of smooth teardrops and jagged black stars.

When I was eighteen, and when I tumbled into my own glassy chasms—bottles, syringes, brittle romances—you could only try to save me with your tongs and your hard-tempered will. I was twenty when you learned about your unborn grandchild: sexless, floating in the basket of my womb, vulnerable, unwanted. When I ended it, was it any wonder that you poured your nameless grief into a boiling cauldron and from its scalding liquid fashioned a series of see-through cradles, tiny tombstones, and translucent baby rattles. "Just symbols," you grunted through your inarticulate goat-lips. Staring at nothing with your mournful fox-eyes. Shoving me aside with your coarse bear paws.

Oh Papa, I never meant to be such a fragile thing. Can you pretend I'm five again, and from your fires build me a flat, red-purple piece of sky shot through with white-hot comets and the gold bulb of a full moon? Can you, with your sturdy tools and clever hands, can you design another zoo for me, this time one populated with beasts that prowl like broken promises, creatures that purr with hurtful secrets, and that rarest of all animals, the one called forgiveness?

Can you breathe us a new future together? I'm asking you, Papa. Can you?



Zombie Love

Sara and Jack, three years after the end of the novel, *Morphology*

Liv Reimers

“I hate you, Jack,” Sara said as she shimmied her pants up over her hips. The pants had been retrieved from a careless heap on the floor, jumbled with their comingled underwear, socks, and shirts. But there was no real heat behind her declaration.

“This again?” Jack said and smirked. His hands were folded behind his head as he lay back on a stack of pillows on the rumpled bed and watched her dress.

Sara felt a sudden, though brief, urge to hit the smug smile off his face.

“You know you love me, little darlin’,” he said. “By the way, nice view. You’re holding up pretty well, old girl.”

“Shut up. Why do you assume that? That I love you?” she said.

He snorted, clearly amused. “You’re here, aren’t you? And you always come back. That’s how I know. Self-evident.”

“Not love, addiction,” she said. “Love is healthy ... life affirming. This is not that.”

“Whatever. You know you’d die of boredom without me. Good thing I got snipped when it was still legal.”

She sighed heavily and sat down on the edge of bed. “Your arrogance is only outdone by your narcissism, Jack.”

Sara stared blindly at the corner of the room. “But you’re right about the boredom. It’s deadly. Lillianna is in school all day now. They call it school, anyway. The girls are barely taught reading, let alone math or science. They keep telling her that curiosity is unseemly in a girl. Sam works ‘til midnight every night. And I miss my practice. I wish I could work again. Sam doesn’t really understand. He tries, I guess, but no one’s telling him he can’t do what he’s good at ... what he’s been trained for. He just keeps saying he’ll take care of all of us.”

“Stand-up guy, Sam,” Jack said, oozing sarcasm.

Sara felt her face redden. “Stop talking about him.”

“Gladly. You started it.”

“This is really dangerous for me, you know.”

“Me, too,” Jack said.

Sara grunted. “You might get a reprimand—a slap on the wrist. But you have people who’ll protect you. I could be put in prison ... or worse. They actually hanged a woman last month—for adultery.”

“They’d shave your head first.” He grimaced. “Not a good look.”

Sara laughed despite herself. *Classic Jack.*

Jack stretched his hand out like he was presenting her a gift. She took it and felt comforted, even after everything he had done. Warm and dry in hers, his fingers were thick and short. She was always surprised by his hands. He was quite tall, and despite popular mythology about hand size, nothing else about him was small.

“It’s our destiny, our fate,” he said. “To be together.”

“Doom, more like,” she said. “Anyway, we’re not together. Not anymore. God, I loved you. What a fool.”

“That wasn’t love. You just loved what you thought I was, what you wanted me to be. Your projection onto a human-sized screen ... on me. You should know about that, being a psychologist and all.”

“An ex-psychologist,” she said bitterly.

“What we have now is real. More real than what you have with Sam or I have with Jazz. We’re actually honest with each other.”

“Yeah, maybe. Who knows. Everything is so upside down. Nothing makes sense. But what we have seems more like zombie love.”

“Zombie love?”

“I’ve wondered how this *thing*—whatever it is—would end. I guess the answer is: it might not. I mean we’ll get decrepit and die, but until then it just shambles along ... like a zombie. That’s what we have, frickin’ zombie love.”

He laughed at that. “Zombie love. I like it.”

“We’ll be so old and ghastly, we’ll have to close our eyes to kiss each other.”

“You’re not *that* ghastly, my love.”

“Oh thanks. Thanks so much.”

“No problem,” Jack said. “Now bring your rotting lips over here and give me one of those sweet zombie kisses.”

Sara kissed him, long and deep. Then she walked across the room, grabbed her bag off the floor, and pulled out her hair brush. After yanking it through her hair a few times, she threw it back in the bag, and strode toward the door.

Before she reached it, she stopped, and turned back to look at Jack. “This is the last time. I won’t be back.”

He laughed outright, a loud bark this time. “Yes you will.”

Sara’s body sagged as she looked down at the floor.

Jack sat up straighter and looked at his phone. “Man, I gotta get going, too, or I’m gonna have some ‘splainin’ to do.”

“Back to Jazz?” Sara asked.

“Yup.”

“I really do hate you, Jack.”

He shrugged. “Same time next week, darling?”

“Yeah,” she said. “Same time, same place ... *dear.*”

“Okay. Well, love you,” Jack said.

“Love you, too,” Sara answered as she opened the door and carefully closed it behind her. ☺☺☺

“I don't think writers are sacred, but words are. They deserve respect. If you get the right ones in the right order, you can nudge the world a little...”

– Tom Stoppard, *The Real Thing*

Editor’s Note: This column is open to anyone who just read a good book and wants to tell others about it. Have you read something wonderful lately? Write down your thoughts and send them to us. Just be aware of one thing. This is...

NOT

The New York Review of Books

Passages: 2022 Anthology

by the Cottage Grove Harpies

Review by Don Root

First, full disclosure: The Harpies, a Cottage Grove writers’ group, was instrumental—nay, crucial!—in the birth of Graffiti. Without their contributions of writing and cash, Graffiti never would have gotten off the ground.

Their support stems from a chance meeting I had in Eugene with one of their members, Liv Reimers (see “The Unveiling” in Graffiti issues 2 and 3), whom I overheard talking about writing with another patron in the South Eugene Starbucks.

I rudely interrupted them to spew my crazy plans for starting this esteemed rag, and thankfully, Liv didn’t call 911. Instead, she spread the word about Graffiti to her fellow Harpies, and the rest is herstory. Thanks, Liv!

So it is with great pleasure I hereby return the karma, spreading the word to you readers about *Passages*, the Harpies’ outstanding 2022 anthology.

Lest you think the following glowing review has been influenced by the group’s generosity to Graffiti, I assure you that is not the case. (It was actually influenced by the 20-large in small, unmarked bills they gave to *me, personally*—it had nothing to do with Graffiti!) So here we go...

Anthologies are perfect for readers with short attention spans. *Passages* contains 56 short works—a mix of poetry and prose—by 28 authors, and there is, indeed, something for everyone in its 270 pages.

You might think that in an assortment of 56 different works, at least a small percentage would be dogs. *Woof!* Not the case here. I sincerely enjoyed each and every included work. And since throughout my writing and editing career I have been sometimes not-so-affectionately known as “The Picker of All Nits,” this is really saying something.

The book’s mix of writing styles and subjects precludes a single, overall description (other than “highly enjoyable!”),

but let me tell you about a few of my favorite entries.

Patricia Crisafulli’s “Raspberries on the Moon” brought me to tears. I’m welling up again now just thinking about it. In its nine pages, Crisafulli tells an exquisitely beautiful story of a mother’s love for her daughter in the face of a world where people can be needlessly cruel. It made me want to be a better person.

Charles Stromme’s “Emma’s Story” personalizes the tragic folly of war by tracing one Russian woman’s life—from her happy childhood in Moscow, to her bravery as a young nurse helping the Russians fight the Nazis in WWII, to her old age living in post-Soviet Georgia, when the Russians she once heroically served invaded and shelled her city. I can’t help but think of all the people who died in Vietnam, and how we now buy running shoes made there. I wonder if the domino theory foresaw that.

In Helen Murphy’s “Annie, Willy, Lucky, and Me,” a dog, a spider, and an imperiled wasp lead us to a fundamental question we all commonly face—to kill or to save? Pondering the goings-on in her “little kitchen ecosystem,” Murphy asks us to consider the sanctity of all life, not just human life. I was reminded of my favorite anecdote about the entomologist E.O. Wilson. When a woman asked him what to do about the ants that had invaded her kitchen en masse, Wilson replied, “Be careful where you step.”

With these fine stories and many more, *Passages* offers a literary buffet table of food for thought, each dish prepared with talent and love. It’s a worthy and inspiring feast. ☺☺☺

Support your local authors! *Passages* is available for \$9.99 at local bookstores, on Amazon or Kindle, or by contacting the Harpies directly at cgharpies@gmail.com.



“Just imagine if everything you desire from another human being—every fantasy, every wish, every yearning—could be perfectly sensed and wholly fulfilled. And if you can do that, what you have conjured is a Morph.”

“Intelligent, affecting feminist dystopian SF puts a gene-modified spin on the Pygmalion wish-fulfillment dream.”—Kirkus Reviews

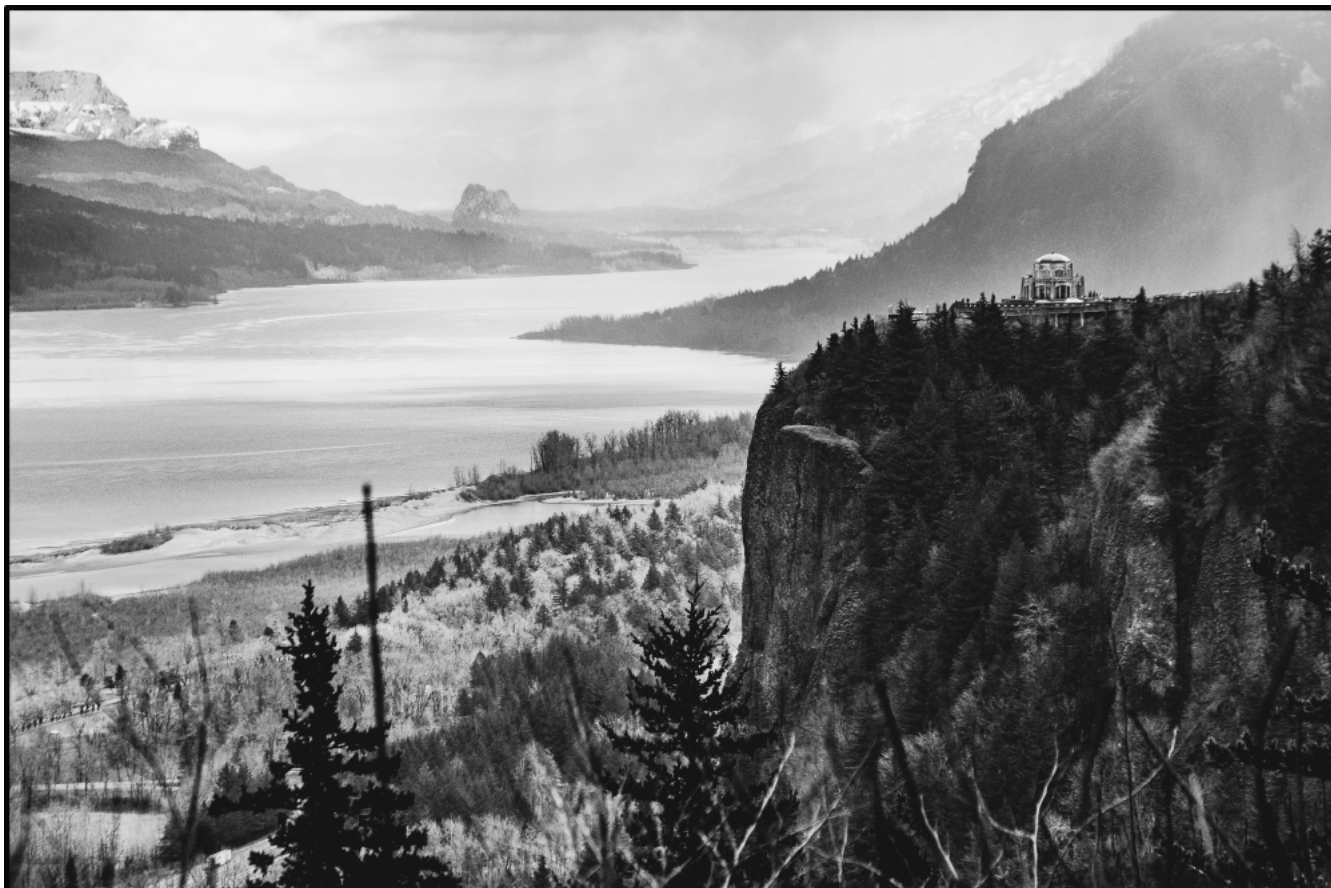
MORPHOLOGY
Liv Reimers
available on Bookbaby Bookshop and Amazon
livreimers.com

The Cottage Grove Harpies announce the publication of their new anthology,

Passages

Short stories, essays, and poetry by regional writers, many of them Cottage Grove residents.

Support local authors! *Passages* is available for \$9.99 at local bookstores, on Amazon or Kindle, or by contacting the Harpies directly at cgharpies@gmail.com.



The Vista House, Columbia River Gorge, Oregon - March 25th, 2023. Photograph by Morgan Smith

après-midi sur les voies ferrées

worshipping the god of depravity
rhymes with gravity
but not when JJBA
gets mashed with NBA

and the Big Deep Breath
wants to be real with us for a millisecond
to talk about Second-Hand
corner store
fashion shows
on a Thursday afternoon

every now and then
I look at my funkadelic deities,
say a prayer to the
Highest version of myself

and in Their eyes
I tell everyone who hurt me
where to find the confidence
I only gained from
faking it so godamn hard.

Stratus Blackstock

What I Heard

What I heard on my way to the market:

A crow cawing, and
the beat of its wings as
it flew past
A frog in a drainage ditch
Two ducks splashing in the same ditch
The wind in my ears
A chorus of unseen twittering birds
A chattering squirrel, and
the scratch of its claws on bark as it
scrambled up a tree
Geese honking overhead
My feet crunching along the gravel path
Raindrops bouncing off the shoulders of
my jacket, and
Nothing

What I heard on my way back:

The incessant din of traffic
A leaf blower
Another leaf blower
A siren
A train in the distance
Bus brakes
A speeding car with ear-splitting exhaust
A lawn mower
A pressure washer
The grinding gears of a semi
The roar of a jet overhead
The squeals and slamming of a trash truck
A nail gun
Car horns honking
Loud music booming from a car window, and
Another leaf blower

Don Root

Unusually Fun Opportunities

(for pranks)

Stephen Swiftfox

For 17 years my wife and I lived on the west-facing slopes of the Cerbat Mountains in Northwest Arizona. We were wildland firefighters; I was the fire chief and medic. For these reasons, in the evening, when Donna closed up the fire station she would transfer the fire phone to our house.

This was the most stressful and unappreciated part of our fully volunteer duties. Every time the phone rang our heartbeats would race and adrenalin would spike. Then there were our monthly public meetings where some people would ceaselessly find things to bitch about. Mostly about how we were spending taxpayer money. Some even complained when I authorized the purchase of a new fire engine. Desert people are weird.

In our town we had three bars and one church. This ratio would have pleased renowned author, naturalist, desert rat, and contrarian Ed Abbey.

"Sightings" of UFOs were common in our area. We even had a UFO club where folks would exchange stories of their experiences. Donna and I were skeptics, but "Good Morning America" heard about the club and came to town to report on it. And as fire chief, I was asked to meet with the show's producers, at 3 a.m. at Grasshopper Junction, to tell the combined stories of the townsfolk.

After that, our fire phone would frequently ring late at night with people telling us of glowing lights in the sky. Not coincidentally, perhaps, this often happened after the bars closed.

For some relief from the stress of all this, Donna and I came up with an idea. We purchased a bunch of balloons and light sticks, and we rented a helium tank. We would sit on our porch in the evening, inflate the balloons, tie on the light sticks, and release them. Since we lived on a mountain slope, the evening air flowing down the mountains would carry our balloons out over the town.

At first nothing really happened. But after a few weeks, our evenings would be filled with dozens of people shouting into the phone about bright rays of light shooting across the sky, fleets of alien ships hovering over town, and a few transcendent experiences of some New Agers.

After a couple of months we were feeling the pinch of spending so much money on our UFO supplies. Brilliance struck me. I got out a fishing rod and reel. This time I would tie the line to a balloon. After the balloon drifted over town I would slowly reel it in. If I was particularly amused I would speed that up.

Word spread to two neighboring towns. The three bars in town were doing a rollicking business.

We never told a soul. ☺☺☺

Untitled

I asked her where she's been and she said lost in her brain. I'd move mountains to find her, search any terrain. I'd swim through her synapses to know what they are saying, what they are telling her she's worth, and what's being held in chains. To light her a new path, I'd set myself aflame, melt myself into glass and make a new frame, so she could see out into the world, and see past her closed eyes, may she find a new sight, may she learn how to fly.

K West

Glass of Dichotomy

The crystal whiskey glass
Sitting loudly on the scuffed bar top
A dualistic existence it bears
It is poured into with contrasting opportunity
To be raised in celebration
And to be lifted in anguish
It is swirled in the palm of a hand of the reminiscent
For the good moments or the bad
The whiskey glass does not know its own purpose
Until placed into the hand of the beholder
It is only then it knows the emotions that lay at its bottom
Will it be the holder of a bittersweet sip of cheer
Or will it sting the tongue of the one bartering to forget.

K West

Untitled

I see the green in my eyes in the moss between my toes
and my pale skin in the petal tips of a rose
In the rivers I see my rushing blue veins
In the wind I hear the call of my name
I see the cage of my ribs in the branches of an old oak tree.
I see myself in the world.
I see the world in me

K West

Moon Landing Plus Fifty

I didn't see the moon landing.
The whole world watched, but I did not.
Billions saw the first human steps on another world.
I did not.
I saw Michele's eyes,
I held her close,
I tasted her lips,
I stroked her hair.
In the front room they watched
"One small step..."
History.
In the other room I gazed fifty years into my future.
Michele.

G. Helm

Flanders Fields Remembered

Gold poppies grow beside the road
They nod and bend beneath the breeze
And people stopped by beauty
wade golden flowers to their knees
But do they know Red Poppies Grow
between the crosses row on row
in Flanders Fields.

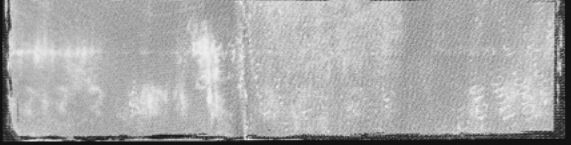
G. Helm




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ROD WILLIAMS
Author
joyousshambles@gmail.com

"An Americana Singer for the Twenty-First Century"
"Celestial Springs (Stories)"
"The Light Don't Shine No More"



misha kagutaba

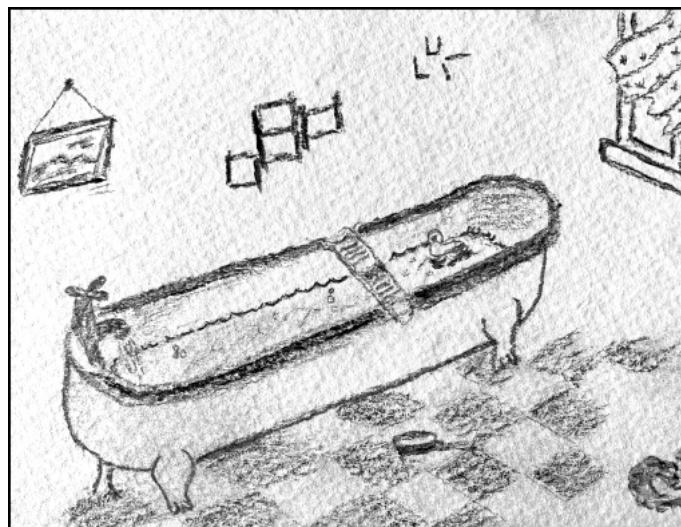
Another Brown Bird

If I had to name them well - just another sparrow I don't know for sure out in our congregation flocking at the back door from here - seems to me all look pretty much the same. The little brown birds choir director calls them plain dresses in creamed coffee tan color of pancakes pork chop gravy some pecan pie - white breasted males in herringbone ties suit pants in khaki. My mother - boiled peas and beans yessir, any vegetable into lumps of pale gray killing off anything harmful she said it's not natural shameful the way beets and spinach greens - leave a stain. I like my supper potluck blessed grazing shades of tan a mashed potato dam with gravy blended sopped up by a butter roll lighter end of the spectrum but the other - brownies and red velvet a juicy grilled hamburger. These sparrows come to me a palatable people of comfort foods they don't fuss much - stoic as afflictions go communal victuals sliding down to fulfillment of the belly gathered here for easy seeds words and rituals are really all they need - In tolerable harmony they sound fine to me wren and finch chickadee our choir director though keeps her eyes focused on flashy fauna in her loft are piercing sopranos warblers bluejays and cardinals. One sparrow she told me of a robin disgracefully splashing at a public bath another - in a hushed tone common to her mother said it was the waxwing fond of fermented berries who was passed out by the path. I share a knowing nod we are all in the eyes of God above the lambs blood stained glass of a plump dove reminds me of the love I have for some - fried chicken yes ma'am the ladies are cooking for our noon dinner. But, she makes me - nervous perhaps on purpose those lips bright red and shiny green eyeshadow outside my dreams maybe mothering defines obscene as feathered tropical natives peeping in a window open see a bony old man dancing in a hot pink boa just closet skeletons I can toss no stones - upon our choir director.

Jeff Southwick

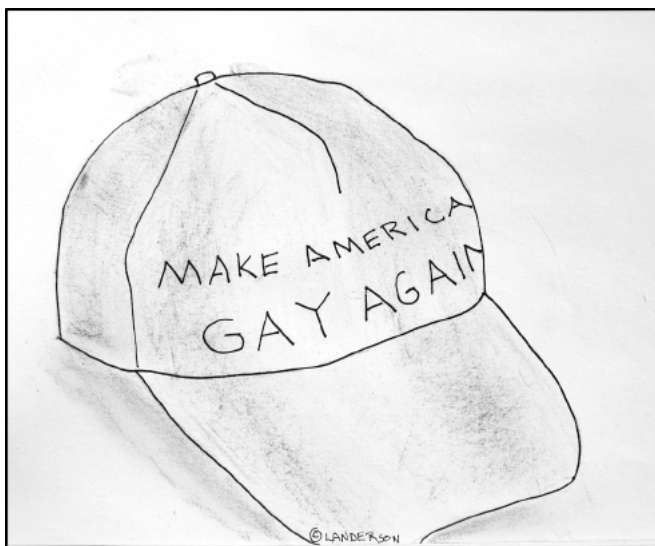


Single Thread from the Ether, by Stratus Blackstock

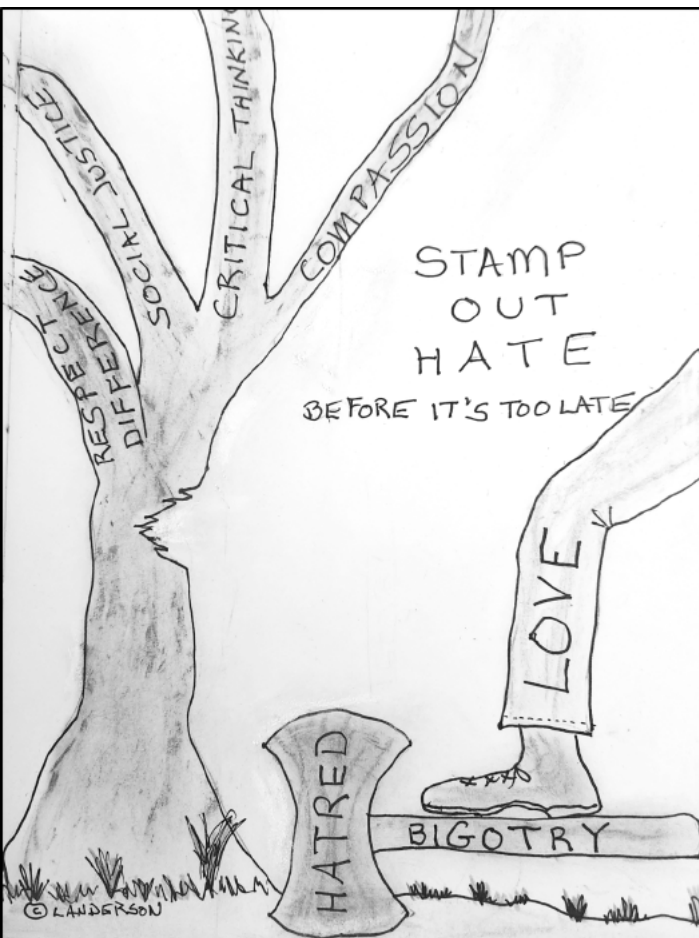


Clawfoot, by Amatola

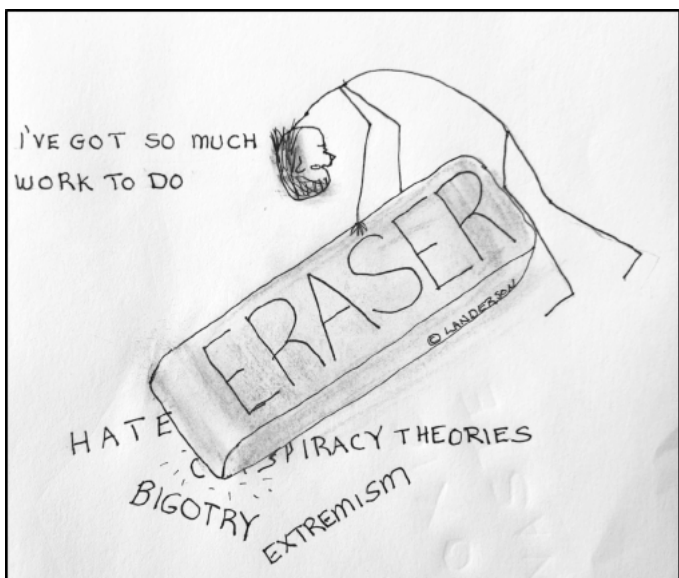
"I sometimes think there is nothing so delightful as drawing."
— Vincent van Gogh



Lisa Anderson



Lisa Anderson



Lisa Anderson



"Hoo you lookin' at?" Photograph by Magoo at Cascade Raptor Center

Slipping Over the Dividing Line

Jeff Southwick

He kept his paddle on the chalk rail, alarm clock on his desk — he said "y'all act like a bunch of morons" annoyed by distracted focus, and a lesson incomplete at end of class.

Elm trees bend to prevailing wind, loose soil spins and blow-sand drifts, manure piles up like prosperity, bindweed grows among friends, The Breaks south down Highway 30.

Adolescent minds come unrefined, full of life, bored with slow times, caught in headlights, panic blind, swerved by fate across border lines, in my yearbook he wrote, Best Wishes, Leroy Bryan.

Junior-high science simmers, bursting boils in a juvenile brew where spit wads flew, he'd slap the paddle on the sole of his shoe, then propped his butt on chalk-rail dust, where he'd talk to us about consequence.

A big guy, buttoned up and down with a tie, an inadequate shirt tail tucked repetitively, warning of disarray in his physiology, and chalk dust flat-lined across his pants, a Kick Me sign, tracing his trajectory.

School bus route and field-trip driver, fueled by perpetual bottles of Dr. Pepper, his howdy salute a swirled index finger, a centerline ritual in rural Oklahoma, polite greeting to oncoming travelers.

Black-framed glasses, flat-top haircut, targeted as quirky — an oddball nut, so, just set his clock alarm to disrupt, hide his paddle, desk chair thumbtacks, the evasive innocents respond, "do what?"

Senior-high classes took inspiration, appreciated guidance from Mr. Bryan, so voted him along with Mrs. McMinn, laughing, lashed in chairs, back to back, favorite teachers in the 1974 Bearcat.

High school cool was a disco shirt, bib overalls and a puka-shell necklace, with status gained via others pain, a freshmen class chopped to a dozen, by manual labor, like weeds from cotton.

Mr. Bryan announced a quiz on science, Lionel complained it wasn't assigned yet, Artie joined in and their argument rallied, our class, a mob against an unjust verdict, until by reprieve Mr. Bryan released us.

Whacked one night while taking out trash, on the back of his head was a nasty gash, oblivious young minds were prone to tease, while, diagnosed with diabetes mellitus, Mr. Bryan was enveloped by a fog of disease.

Our sophomore year his career was gone We heard he returned to his parents' farm trading potatoes he gathered in a truck with increasing headaches came a plot, his furrow a long straight line of trouble, a scheme to abduct a banker was credible, and so he did time at Eastern State Hospital.

For Aunt Inabel, he brought solicitations, disguised in a lavender chrysanthemum, a check in Inabel's name rented a Lincoln, and in that trunk with a large dimension he had a .22 rifle loaded with intention.

Inabel missed church that September Sunday, by her chair, family found her bible and diary, so looking for the one who crossed the line, agents, of state and federal investigation, searched some trees and an old combine.

Robert Leroy Bryan shot his aunt, but his lawyers pled incompetence, for a brain atrophied by diabetes is only guilty, by reason of irreversible brain pathology, and the chronic paranoia of schizophrenia.

Nineteen eighty-three, while living in OKC, Vicki said she ran into him occasionally, one of her favorite teachers of that time, he was strict but also kind, a criminal act, without a sound mind.

An embodied man, a science teacher, chemical compounds mixed together, for his final supper — Mr. Bryan requested, ten pieces of fried chicken, barbecued beans, cole slaw, potatoes, two biscuits, gravy, and two liters of Dr. Pepper.

Leaving on an intravenous line, on a gurney, ties that bind, heading toward a flat line, he said "I have been on death row for some time" with his maker he made peace, and from afflictions he was released, by lethal injection his heartbeat ceased.

As witnesses abide, relations allied, his sister cried, when he whispered, "I hope I'll see you on the other side" from among living with breath withdrawn, crossing through veiled beyond, saying "until then so long."

So long— a wrong way of dying for life aspiring, in hope of forgiveness from decisions, developed in obscured vision, refracted through our opaque design, for light only travels a straight line, through the transparent mind. In my yearbook he wrote,



John Zerzan

(continued from p. 5)

It's all mediated. We all go to the screens—little screens, big screens. What role does imagination have? That's another terrifying part of it. Are we losing that, too? We're getting progressively de-skilled. People know less and less how to do anything, even read a map or have a sense of direction. You get in your car and turn on the GPS. It tells you where to turn. You're becoming just a blob, really. That's the direction. And they commend that, they celebrate that. I saw a TV ad the other day—four women in a car saying they don't know how to parallel park. Well, the driver pushes a button and it parks the car. You don't have to know anything or learn anything. Much less imagine anything. I guess you have to put your bet on the fact that this isn't working. This is not satisfying. And it's becoming a ruin on every level across the board. Are people going to sit still for that and go down the drain and just take more and more dope? Maybe.

Could voting for the right people give us a government that could lead us back toward a more primitive society?

I don't think that's likely to happen. I imagine some people who are in government will peel off and move away from that racket. It's about representation—when you think about it, why does somebody represent other people? That, in itself, doesn't seem very healthy. But you can only have that if you had a very decentralized world, maybe something like band society, where you don't have to run the world or the country, because you can't be responsible for that. You can be responsible for your own group. Hunter-gatherer bands were 40 people or whatever it was—it varied. Then you are responsible. When I was in the co-op here for 15 years—the East Blair Housing Co-op—I'm not saying it was hunter-gatherer society, but if someone was fucking up, they had to be at the general meeting every month and face the music. We had this part-time maintenance guy who was messing with the women, and we kicked him out. He got the chance to talk, and he had nothing much to say. But you can't do that now. In mass society you call up the experts—the cops or whoever it is—and you're at their mercy. At some point, if you break it down to small groups, you can have face-to-face community. I don't think you can have that with government.

Don't primitive societies naturally want to become more advanced?

No. There are still consciously uncontacted peoples, like the Andaman Islanders. On the cover of one book of ours, there's that picture of the kid shooting arrows at the helicopter—"We don't want your civilization. Leave us alone!" It's false to say that everybody if they have the chance wants all the modern stuff, the conveniences. That's not true. And some people don't know what befalls them if they go that route. I met an anthropologist in Spain, this French guy, who was going native, you might say. His field work was in southern Guyana, in South America. He said he was paddling his canoe from one encampment to another, and these native folks came by—they were friends of his—they were waving and jeering at him, "Hey, François, Gonna take you paddling all day. We'll be there in 15 minutes!" They're laughing. He said to me, "They can teach us so much, but the one thing we can teach them is, 'Don't go there [Western civilization]. Alcoholism, drugs. Your culture will fall apart. You'll get into buying all the crap. Your traditions will be lost.'" They don't know that. We know that. And it's hard for us to preach to indigenous people—"Who are you to come and tell us what's what?—but I think his point was pretty clear. Some of them wanted to go further. "We get the outboard motor, then we can go buy this and buy that," and then they're part of the whole thing. He said, "That's the wrong path."

So is there any hope for our society?

Yeah, I think I'm just continually optimistic from the counterculture movement of the mid '60s. I was in San Francisco and Berkeley in those days, right in the middle of everything. And I could be wrong, or maybe it's just my own skewed memory, but it seemed like it came virtually overnight. There was some civil rights stuff going on, but really nothing in mainstream culture. And then, bang!, all over the world. Not just California—Paris, Tokyo, Berlin. [Brandeis University professor Herbert] Marcuse wrote the book *One-Dimensional Man* in '64 and said maybe it's all over—people are just too conditioned and domesticated. There may be no hope for change. And then in a few weeks, he had to tear up the book. He was delighted to say, "Wow, I didn't see that coming!" And nobody else did either—not the Marxists or anybody. There was no economic downturn—no economic crisis like the leftists like to look at. Just the opposite. It was actually a growing economy. It was pretty magical. I don't know why, but it stayed with me. I saw it start to happen, and I think it could start to happen again. That was the time you wanted to take some acid and just let it all hit you, because it felt good, it felt positive. Things were changing. It was a nice time to come of age, because I was a kid in the '50s, and I was just hating that. I didn't have a clue as to why it seemed so stupid and I felt so out of it. But then the '60s came. Wow! I went from Stanford to Haight-Ashbury. There it was. I was lucky. ☺☺☺



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Rod's Music Review

The Henry Cooper Trio

What is swampytk? Best I can figure, it's a musical gumbo of the blues and Americana, with a pinch of country and a dash of jazz added to the mix. When performed well, it's a tasty, toe-tapping, and danceable recipe that feels both traditional and timeless.

The Henry Cooper Trio performs swampytk exceptionally well. The award-winning Cooper (vocalist, guitarist, and harp player) is front-and-center as the band's driving engine. His style is inspired and informed by blues giants like Paul Butterfield, Elmore James, Albert Collins, and Muddy Waters. Somehow, he's taken that impressive pedigree and forged his own unique identity, especially on slide guitar. He writes his own original tunes, but also pays homage to "those who came before" by covering artists from Tampa Red to Jimmy Rodgers to Ma Rainey.

Cooper is more than ably supported by Scoop McGuire on the upright bass (his instrument is affectionately dubbed "Baby Huey"), and Mark Schneider on drums and percussion. Together, the three of them produce music that feels just right for a sweet evening at a pub or a winery, though I suspect listeners would feel equally at home listening to this trio in a church or a rollicking old roadhouse.

"We try to tell people about the musicians whose songs we cover and to give them credit without being too academic about it," says Cooper. "Interacting with the audience is real important for us, and seeing people groove and dance to our music is the best."

The Henry Cooper Trio plays all around town, and Eugene's lucky to have them. Check local listings for their upcoming shows. And while you're at it, maybe spring for their live CD featuring several of Cooper's original songs ("Goodbye Blues," "Automatic Trouble," "Baby Please," and, in a bit of a nod to Mose Allison's philosophy, "Love the Life You're Living."), as well as familiar old friends like "C.C. Rider," J.J. Cale's "The Breeze," and of course Jimmy Rodgers' "T for Texas" and "California Blues."

If you're a fan of the blues, you'll listen to the disc over and over. And over again. But first, get out to see a live show and experience the magic firsthand. ☺☺☺

Dive Bars

Cheaper Than Therapy To Nurture the Dark and Brooding Soul

Don Root

Eugene is full of places to have a drink with friends. Bars and brewpubs abound, filling the city with laughter, boisterous conversation and general merriment. But what if you're having "one of those days"?

What if your lover just left you? Or you failed your calculus midterm? What if you had to put your cat down? Or you accidentally texted that naked selfie to your mother-in-law? What then? The last place you'll want to be is in some bright nightspot filled with shiny happy cheery people.

Instead, you'll be looking for a good spot to break down. A place where you won't have to talk to friends . . . or anyone! Just a quiet sanctuary to self-medicate and be left alone to wallow in your misery. You'll want a dive bar.

So just what is a dive bar? You can start with what it isn't. The proper dive bar is not a wine bar, sports bar, strip joint, distillery, tap room, bottle shop, growler-fill station, microbrewery, or liquor-store parking lot.

A dive bar is not "Cheers." It is not a place to socialize or gaily carry on. Rather it is a place where the downtrodden, unfortunate, and heavily burdened among us can sit quietly in a dark corner, unperturbed, head hung low, and watch drops of our own saltwater splash into a two-dollar glass of reflection and regret. That is why dive bars are dark.

Outside, the proper dive bar must have few or no windows, and nothing of particular interest to entice the curious in. That's not to say it can't be welcoming; a good one embraces patrons from all rungs of the social ladder, including the lowest. It is a place where the bar of social acceptability is set so low, it's right down there on the stained carpet. Careful you don't trip over it on your way to the bathroom, which smells so comfortably of old urine that you won't feel guilty splashing the floor—you'll just be adding to the patina. And the

decor of a good dive bar always contributes to peace of mind: You don't have to worry about breaking anything, because if you do, it'll probably be an improvement.

Then there's the person behind the bar. In a proper dive bar, the bartender will be older than you. Much older. If an Eisenhower voter can still stand and pour a drink, that's the bartender you want—a creaky relic who's tended bar longer than you've been alive. One who's been around long enough to watch the whole Mighty Mississippi flow under the bridge and has the stories to prove it. One look at this bartender tells you, "Oh yeah, in your day, buddy, you saw some things, yes you did."

All these components are the hallmarks of a proper dive bar. Unfortunately, this species of drinking establishment is rapidly fading away. "The noble dive bar is a thing of the past," said one local barkeep. "There are none anymore." One theory has it that the true dive bar died with the advent of video lottery machines; another points the finger at the spread of karaoke. Whatever the case, when the current generation of red-nosed regulars dies off, it's possible that the term "dive bar" will disappear from the language.

For the moment, however, you can still find a bit of the proper dive in several local establishments. Next time: my Top 6 picks (plus a Hall of Fame entry). What are your top picks? I'll do a poll. Send in your favorites and why you like them. I'll print the results next time. Just one caveat: Don't make the mistake of sitting by yourself in a dive bar, drinking, at two in the afternoon, then asking yourself, "What the hell am I doing here, sitting by myself in a dive bar, drinking, at two in the afternoon?" Trust me. Don't even go there. It's not pretty. ☺☺☺

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