

# WATERSHED



# **WATERSHED**

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## **Watershed**

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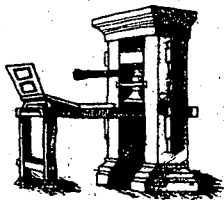
## Introduction

Searching inside himself, an author connects not only with what is uniquely his but with a collective human consciousness. He draws from the past and projects a poetic present into our future. Imagination spirals out to the unknown to return again to the individual writer and his audience in a circular motion that many selections in this issue exemplify.

Staff members often have diverse tastes but, as a group, they evolve definitions that shape an issue. *Watershed* selection is a dynamic process, and it is a process Lois and I have anxiously enjoyed.

As always, *Watershed* is nothing without Ellen Walker's patient and unobtrusive guidance and her trust in the learning that occurs during each issue's selection. We thank her.

*Elizabeth Singh*  
*Lois Hicks*



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*Susan Wooldridge*

**Bullseye**

(for Blake and Jung)

I sit beside  
your bullseye  
on the golden bale of hay.  
Concentric circles move  
out to embrace  
what is,  
past wild grapes  
and Jupiter,  
the steppingstone you  
pinpoint  
each clear night.  
And here I sit to write  
beside my fallen garden,  
earth under my nails,  
at the still yellow eye  
ringed with blue, red, black  
white spiralling out.  
Finally I listen.  
For light years  
arrows have been humming  
toward my heart

## **Seed**

Lying curled on my side  
I look for you  
    in cracks  
    on ceiling and walls,  
High up in one corner  
    ivy grows through a gap  
    that the shifting foundation  
    made not long ago.

White summer-hot sun pierces through  
    long crystals at the window,  
Playing color on my naked face,  
Sparking me to wake and  
    rise stumbling  
    to another day's heat.

There have been five new moons  
    since  
I heard—through soft-bright blankets  
    of stars and nightdreams—  
Your footsteps falling heavy  
    on the giving porch,  
Your keys jangling, twisting,  
    for the darkened lock.

I have washed all flavor of our loving  
    from my ocean sheets,  
The lost mountain scent of your hair  
    gone from my pillows too.  
I've been wearing a pair of old blue  
    jeans you left behind,  
Though lately the zipper won't  
    close over my melon-belly  
This tiny vine that grows to fruit inside me  
    reaching tendrils to my heart.



## **CowTrees Momentarily Interrupted**

These generous trees are wild.  
Not one severed  
at the shoulders. Nor  
cursed for his litterful leaves—  
a rich blanket of yellow straw-grass  
and green potpourri. Beneath

these wild trees graze docile cows  
in shiny brown oak  
and black slanky coats.  
One thunderous head bellows  
without human reason. Perhaps  
to echo another. Then

an airplane brumbles above  
us. The trees become distant  
splotches, breathless silhouettes  
of unnamed faces frowning  
silently at their long shadows cast by the setting sun.  
And when

the jet is over our heads,  
new, untagged calf ears  
flinch cat-like and nervous.  
Sifting mouths pause, and lowered heads  
are lifted, until

the sky is calm again. We chew  
and moo  
momentarily  
interrupted.

**Flying through the twentieth century I missed you**

My face pressed against a cool pane  
small square of glass  
Down below  
far  
you are  
beneath a blanket of white and blue  
Surrounded by voices and their bodies  
I watch for you  
miles below  
some where  
there  
down  
through  
the  
deep  
drop  
Unfair of the sky to hide any clue  
Eyes search as night blackens my view  
I am past  
dark deepens  
raindrops collect on my pane  
slide a line  
and fall freely  
To you

**driving east**

(a sunset in a fuel gauge)

racing up a road  
I might have missed  
an intense orange  
exiting  
pomegranate sky  
a show to ensure remembrance  
lost  
as it was  
it was not  
but was reflected  
and was reflected upon

*Robert Lundergan*

## **Railroad Ties**

In this station  
I watch the people  
come and go.  
Their lives,  
like steel rails on the horizon,  
only appear  
to touch.  
They run  
to the end of the line  
held together  
by decaying ties  
once hewn from a forest.

**laughing fish point**

we dipped our helmeted mouths into the well of  
the air the dew-cool shade of the ridge the trailing  
pine sunlight thrown ochre-dry  
a string of shimmering birds around some mashed road-thing  
lifted in unison, gone over the range-wire before we passed  
I patted a knee and yelled, Miriam, turkey vultures  
our shadowed center-line stitched image obscured by  
the shadow of clouds the winged silhouette  
of a hawk and the immediacy of a leathered hand  
a reflected grin, scent of gas  
up ahead along side blur and gone of surroundings:  
rusting machinery, startled cows  
spotted wildflower reds  
a hundred street corners a hundred faces look out  
from their lives  
tip your head and laugh the insects taste like sugar  
layered clothes move like muscles  
death a black mouse across black snow

**elements, Michigan, Upper Peninsula, 1983**

- earth    stumbling under a streetlight-lit gut of warm beer  
          down where the tailings mountains slide  
          into the oiled Ishpeming River  
          I fumbled in my pants for an offering of pennies,  
          laid them on the rails  
          here, Northern Copper Mining, Inc., this is yours, too  
          streaming a string of piss on each  
          this is the blood    this is the body  
          air brings up juniper    diesel    lip-taste of machine oil  
          the balance of shoeleather on gravel and on night
- air        you might smell bear  
          or walk into the wrong bar some night  
          drop down a flooded mine    scream like a rabbit  
          caught in the chainlink  
          or picked off by an owl in the neighbor's field  
          and I lay upon my back tracing ceiling shadows    in August  
          I hear two or three a night    forgotten sounds  
          as is the yellow of dandelion floes  
          under a diamond-black sky
- fire       the ember snowball in my bare hands    I hurl  
          it into the snow-salted wind thru dry cattails  
          at the iced-lake's edge,  
          estrangement in winter is easier;  
          our private worlds of self-destruction  
          held warm in woolen arms.  
          we stood on Lake Superior    in the ice-blue air  
          the scarves whipped and swirled.  
          in March ice shanty holes drop from lake ice  
          into bottom mud    the snowprint melts into the carpeting  
          clothes slough in closets like bodies  
          and wind lifts like music across glass

water thru the snow-blanketed pines I heard the earth-pounding  
wall of Tequamonen Falls I stopped the pickup  
got out in the breath-clouded sun snow-walked  
to the waters frosting into mist into ice  
into waters I dipped a cupped hand and drank  
and my forgotten towed body is a salt stream rising;  
in time they all come over the falls: Michigan Erie  
Superior Huron Ontario we who were born of the dark  
peninsular waters know the cyclical affinity  
the concatenation of currents;  
we peer into the depths and wonder  
what down there holds onto a man and what lets him go

## **Nothing Dies Greek in Illinois**

Not the boredom, but the oppression  
of staring out that same window  
where heavy gray clouds relieve  
something of the midwestern sky,  
soaked with the seat of moderation  
and humidity too uninspired to write.  
It's thought which tranquility murders.

This has never been my love,  
bigotry appalls me, I'm fed up  
with cornfields of empty days,  
counting minutes filled with nothing  
moving into the next.

Tractors on highways  
attitudes, lives and  
rusty pick-ups;  
everything moves slow here  
old people so content  
with loneliness and toothless smiles.

Nothing dies Greek in Illinois.  
Tragedy never occurred except  
for the common fading away  
of everyday rather decrepitly  
without so much violence  
as to awaken the grandchildren.

I've always remembered it this way,  
since childhood, those subterranean summers.  
Empty now, the gravel roads that frightened me.  
So down home here  
everyone lives a masquerade  
desperate of dying dreams.



Even the birds stand as still  
as the days, as the houses  
like stage props against  
a background of fear  
that won't acknowledge the emptiness  
surrounding them.

Naperville, Illinois  
August 1986

## Matchmaker Meets Charlie

As a bet it started. Like a baby I was sleeping when Cosmic Charlie, he shakes me awake. "It's time to go," he says to me. "Where, go where?" I'm all asleep, you see, and I don't know from Adam who's this man. So he says, "It's your time to die. We're going now."

I sit up and reach for his arm—to talk to such a man in your bedroom at night you need his arm—but my hand, it goes right through. I suddenly know who's this man. I tell him I have business unfinished. I couldn't go just yet. So I make the bet. I tell him, "You give me any four people, I make one perfect match and one awful match. If this I cannot do, not only am I not the matchmaker I think I am, but you take me now, no questions asked. But if this I *do*, you give me one hundred dollars American and one more month." He is the sporting type and he takes the bet. He gives me these four. Such a bet, oy!

So I study them up, these writers. And to Cosmic Charlie I say, "With Robinson Jeffers goes Edith Wharton, she makes him fine kolleh. In heaven this match was made (I make the joke, yes?). But Henry James, that oyf-kapores, with Kate Chopin—such a match shouldn't happen to a dog!" Mr. Charlie, he makes *such* a face. "So excuse the expression, already." A joke, he can't take a joke, or what?

So to Mr. Charlie I say, "Now I go shopping. Where's my money?" Dumb he isn't. "It is necessary that we test the match," he says to me. With sense, he's loaded! So to the Fairmont Hotel—such a place is San Francisco—he brings them. Into a room—so small a mouse can't feel at home. Oy! And *watch* he makes me, he wants I should sing, too? So listen, Mr. Charlie—such a boychick—he puts them there, how I don't know, and we watch.

"Why, Henry, most refreshing to see you again."

"Edith, you're looking well. How long has it been?"

"Thank you. *Quite* some time. You exhibit a most dreadful pallor. You must have recently been working long and hard."

"Yes, I have. These longer stories are most definitely a very tricky business. You always find me out, Edith. How *do* you know, and how do you hide *your* working so well?"

"My dear Henry, I do not hide it; I just never allow its exposure in public conversation. But I *am* forgetting my manners. Mr. Henry James, meet Mr. Robinson Jeffers, the man promised to me in the match."

"The pleasure is entirely mine, Mr. Jeffers."

"Please, call me Robinson."

"Very well, Robinson. You are a lucky man. Edith—um—Mrs. Wharton is a fine woman, and a fine writer. When we were together in Paris we spoke every day about style and technique until . . ."

"Please, Henry, I am Edith. Among my friends I prefer to be so addressed."

"Quite right, my dear. I know your work, Robinson, and I find it immensely powerful. I believe the images you use communicate beyond the mere word; but with all respect, old man, I feel your poems are highly critical of our society. Take, for example, your poem, 'Shine, Perishing Republic.' I remember something of ' . . . America settling in the mould of its vulgarity, thickening heavily to Empire' or something like that. It is *Europe* mouldering! After all, we in America *are* the very pinnacle of development, what with all the decadence in Europe."

"Civilization is a dying reality."

"I see. A debatable position if ever there was one. . . ."

"Oh, gentlemen!? Do either of you know the whereabouts of Kate Chopin? Her arrival was timed with ours, yet she doesn't seem to have appeared yet."

"Edith, you are, of course, aware she *is* of Creole blood, by virtue of which she may be expected at *any* hour: they have *no* sense of punctuality. Why *she* was invited upon this . . . this . . . excursion I'll never know. She is probably lying in the sun, pondering fashionable lateness."

"Why, Henry, what *do* you hold against such a frail, passionate woman as Kate? Or is it *all* women whom you despise?"

"Edith, I have read her works. That should be enough, as we all know. An author's very soul is revealed in her works, and Mrs. Chopin bares herself in such an undignified manner as to give all women a poor image up with which they should not put! But I do not hold *all* women accountable for the transgressions of one who has fallen. After

all, my dear, *you* are a woman."

"Henry, you are too kind. Have you any idea, Robinson?"

"I'm afraid not, Mrs. Wharton—er—Edith. But I have read her works also, Henry. Please do not misunderstand me when I say her work is not without merit. Have you considered the notion that through her female fiction, she is proposing the myth of Aphrodite as an *alternative* to the patriarchal myth of Jesus?"

"You notice, of course, my pause, indicating I have not considered such forethought in her work. Perhaps it is just my being blinded by my opinion of her as an id-oriented female, full of desire and longing but doomed to failure. She will never reach the unattainable. She is the perfect Romantic, quite like Wagner's *music* in that by reaching for the unreachable, she is by definition a failure."

"That is a very apt analogy. But I'm afraid it deals only with the surface aspect of her work."

"Robinson, your analysis is quite in-depth . . . and true. But, Henry, your allusion to Wagner is quite perfect as well. Only Kate herself can . . ."

"*Pardonez-moi, mes amis*, for being so late. The hairdressers in this city *do* love to talk. Oh, you must be Henry James, my match for tonight. I did not ever dream that a man who writes such the beautiful English could be so ruggedly handsome. Dressed as you are, in dungarees and work shirt, I would suspect you to be a stone mason, not a writer."

"Excuse me. You *are* right, I am a stonemason, but you are also wrong. I am Robinson Jeffers. This gentleman in the suit is Mr. Henry James. You, I presume, are Katherine Chopin?"

"Kate. *Sacre bleu*. I feel the perfect idiot. My apologies to you both. . . . Well, should I ring the room service? Perhaps some wine might save me socially, though I really don't mind making mistakes. After all, mistakes *are* a part of life, you know. *You* must be Edith Wharton. I *love* your work. And such a surprise ending in 'Roman Fever'! How *did* you ever think of it? You must be a trickster at heart!"

"Perhaps. I am pleased to make your acquaintance, Kate. May I present Mr. Henry James?"

"Again? Hello, Henry. . . . Room Service, *s'il vous plaît*. What will everyone have? Robinson?"

"Port. Room temperature port, please."

"Of course, room temperature. I'll have a mint julep. Edith?"

"If you please, just some white wine. Henry?"

"I'll have the same, Edith."

"Very well, *mes amis* . . . Well, here we are."

"Yes."

"Please, Henry, your manners."

"Quite right, Edith. I apologize for my rudeness."

"Thank you. Kate, Henry and Robinson were just discussing your motivation for writing, with Robinson suggesting an alternative to the patriarchal Jesus myth and Henry describing you as a true Romantic in the manner of Richard Wagner."

"*Alors*, gentlemen, you both flatter me. I must confess I really wanted to write the *true* communications between man and woman—in the manner of the *Yellow Book*. But because these take place behind closed doors, as it were, I felt I would *never* be published. So I toned it down *un petit peu*. Still, I didn't make much from *The Awakening*, did I?"

"Such decadence."

"Henry!"

"It is *true*, Edith. Kate's works are truly decadent, what with her advocating the disintegration of American life! In allowing the erosion of the woman's role in society, she shakes the foundation of our culture! It is a danger to Humanity!"

"Humanity is the mold to break away from."

"*Merci*, Robinson."

"Robinson, my good man, you must admit that a woman's place is in the home."

"That might be convenient, Henry, for you, but I will only admit that work exists inside the home and that it has been traditionally done by women. Edith, how do you stand on this matter?"

"Well, I feel a woman *should* care for her children. This is first and foremost. But as far as traditional work is concerned, it seems just as uncomplicated for her to do *it* as well and leave her husband free to work outside the home. You must be aware from your extensive literary background that tradition has a basis in reality, Robinson."

"Well said, Edith."

"Thank you, Henry."

"Humans project upon the Universe all our crazy ideas, but the Universe is oblivious. This is the great irony."

"*Ces sont des bon mots*, Robinson."

"*Merci*, Kate."

"Gentlemen, Kate, I do believe our libations have arrived. And this reminds me that during the previous—er—discussion I wondered how you felt about Art; that is, about writing. Does Life imitate Art, or does Art imitate Life? Henry, how do you feel?"

"My dear, I have always allowed my writing to mirror life itself

because only by the careful control of Life as depicted through Art can the writer affect his message in a subtle manner. A writer should require the reader to entertain *some* thought."

"Those are my feelings as well, Henry."

"Quite right, Edith."

"Robinson?"

"Culture produces the Artist, Edith."

"*Tres bien*. I just write; I do not think. My ideas come from the heart."

"My point exactly, Kate."

"*Tres bien*, Robinson. May I call you Rob?"

"May I remind you, Kate, that Robinson is *my* match for this evening. You are most fortunate to have been paired with Henry. I'll thank you to limit your discussion to writing."

"*Mon Dieu*, you must have a very low tolerance to that small glass of wine you've drunk. Perhaps another glass might calm you. Allow *me*, and please accept my sincere apology."

"Perhaps I am a bit addled. I'll accept your apology if you will accept mine. Please, let us return to the topic at hand. Where were we, Henry?"

"Actually, I was looking across the room at that painting and I seem to have lost the thread of conversation. I was just wondering what the artist must have felt as he gazed at his model, what he was thinking as his brush outlined her supple musculature."

"Were you referring to her breasts, monsieur?"

"Mrs. Chopin, you are so vulgar, so decadent!"

"Decadent!? *Zut, alors!* Such accusations coming from an author who deliberately withholds information from his readers. All so he can make money! Decadence, indeed!"

"My dear Mrs. Chopin, my technique is thoroughly valid, and it has, I admit, made me quite a comfortable living. It is you, however, who are embroiled, yes, Embroiled! like all of Europe, in the passion for money! I feel this is because you haven't *made* any to speak of."

"*Oui*, I must confess, Henry, I have always wanted to become successful as a writer. But there is always the problem—*sacre bleu*—of the man! The problem of the man is one of love. I cannot solve this mystery of love, but it draws me to it, *mon Dieu*, it does! And this I explore in my writing. My women, *mais oui*, struggle to love, and to live beyond, outside the constraints of male-dominated culture. Like *petite moi*. Perhaps that is why I sometimes turn to the use of the drugs. They help my troubled soul to temporarily escape my body."

"Please, a bit of restraint."

"*Cochon!* Your dignity is but a *mask!* You hide there and *you* are a man to whom *nothing* is ever destined to happen! *Quel barbe!* Give me excitement!"

"Perhaps, Jeffers, you might calm her. I fear she frightens Edith with her outbursts. And this moist air of San Francisco! It must chill her delicate sensibilities to the very bone, just as it does myself!"

"Henry, I am fully able to speak for myself. She does *not* frighten me. On the contrary, I am rather embarrassed for her. She shows obvious underhanded intentions towards Robinson—a point I have cautioned her about once before. The wine has actually *cleared* my senses to the point that I can *feel* her animal desire. I must say, Kate, I *am* ashamed."

"I will *not* apologize again. It is *you* who are embarrassing *us*. You're drunk!"

"And *you're* crazy! When I wake up tomorrow I will be sober, but you will still be crazy! Robinson, you *must* denounce this . . . this . . . woman of the night!"

"Actually, I quite enjoy her *joie de vivre*."

"Enough! I am cut to the quick! I knew we would be in a difficult town, in a difficult company, so in my purse I have brought . . . this!"

"Edith! Put down that gun! It might go off!"

"Go jump in the lake, Henry! This is between she and me."

"Mrs. Wharton, the two gentlemen and myself do not wish a scene. But I, too, come prepared to *this* town. I can destroy us *all* with . . . the contents of this satchel! I suggest that you place the gun quietly upon the table. If not, I will open the bag and set its destructive capabilities into motion—*instantly!*"

"Do you deny that you have the hots for my date?"

"No, Edith, I do not. Robinson is handsome, restrained, and yet he has a power, a masculine power, that comes from Knowledge. Quite unlike . . ."

"You give him up or I'll pull the trigger!"

"And I'll open the satchel!"

"Oy, this I need," I say to myself. I was *all* wrong. I work my fingers to the bone, to the very bone, and make the perfect match, all for what? I should hit my *head* against a wall, maybe, just as much could come from it. But if I live to be one hundred twenty, *never* will I see such a scene again. Mrs. Wharton, she pulls the trigger, and same time Mrs. Chopin, she opens the bag. I cover my eyes, may they all die.

But my ears, they must be deaf. All I hear is the laughing. I look. Mrs. Wharton, she stands there pointing the gun at Mrs. Chopin. Out of

the barrel hangs a cloth sign with "BANG" on it. And Mrs. Chopin, she laughs so hard, her sides could split, God forbid! Her bag is open. The little man, Henry, at the top of his lungs yet, he yells, "If nobody wants me, I'm leaving!" And he picks up his chair and throws it right through the window! He jumps, he jumps after it! Oy vey!

Mrs. Chopin, right away she says, "*Zut alors*, Edith, you wouldn't back down. No, indeed. Nor would I. Let us now get destroyed. This satchel contains the finest herb on the West Coast, the Mythical Motherlode Mindfuck from Mendocino. I'll roll us a huge spliff, or would you rather smoke the pipe? *Ce n'est pas une* pipe, eh? Ha!"

"But, but, my Henry! He has jumped out the hotel window!"

"Henry, *il est une souris*: he is a mouse. We are on the ground floor. Just listen!"

"Thay, mithter wonderful, where have *you* been all my life? Hey, fellows, look who just dropped into my arms! Let's go have a drink. Oh, *love* your tie!"

"Kate, I had no idea you knew the California coast."

"Oh, yes, Rob. I visit here *every* year at harvest time. Would you care to go back out there with me?"

"I'd be delighted. Edith, I suggest you chase after Henry or you'll lose him for sure. Some of these queens are *so* po-sess-ive! Take my arm, Kate?"

"*Au revoir, ma cherie.*"

So, I should fight City Hall, or what? You win, you lose. It makes no difference. Writing, from *that* they make a living? Oy, to me is shmutz.





**the hand**

the first frost  
came just before the solstice and last night  
was so cold I took a swig of bourbon offered  
on the street corner  
by the hand of a tooth-missing smile in rags  
as we spoke misty-mouthed in the frozen air.

that warming shot of eighty proof; given, suddenly  
became God sharing God with God and We  
all wore the same shoes treading the Mobius path.

noticing the signal change  
I crossed the street.

curb alighting, nearly stumbling, bourbon  
belching, blundering, I wondered why I took forever crossing  
that street—the hand remembered, nodding  
from the other side.

*Harley C. Jamieson*

The sun warmed my shoulders as my feet slapped the dirt in an easy rhythm. Passing a farmhouse, I glanced at the wide front porch. An elderly man sat in an old rocking chair, playing a violin and wearing faded jeans and a tee shirt. The notes, in assorted chaotic pitches, drifted disjointedly across the long gravelly driveway. He paused, looking up, and with the hard wooden chair grinding into my backbone as I leaned back, I gazed at the dark grey ribbon of blacktop with rows of tilled fields on the other side. The sun was bright and I squinted, watching a runner lope gently alongside the road.

"I wonder who that man is," I mumbled half-consciously, hearing the words pass my lips as I again jogged down the road, looking toward a distant line of orchard trees.

Running,  
I was sitting;  
From my lips  
fell  
words that were not  
mine.  
Only the mockingbird sings  
at the edge of the  
wood.

## **Good Morning Christopher**

Hot white light  
silver slice  
blinding on the countertop,  
fluorescent orange screams  
beneath my gaze.

"Coffee anyone?"

A shelf full of machines purr and hum  
surrounded by sounds,  
styrafoam silos stacked,  
colored dreams displayed in racks  
edible too—

And then there's you hawaiian print,  
purple and blue,  
flash and glint,  
sachet across the room.

Varnet smile  
in a halo of sunlight.  
Life, you say,  
is easy.

## **Mission Bell**

The mission bell  
rings in old San Juan Bautista  
echoing out  
clanging  
into the vineyards and rolling hills  
but not quite beyond  
into the open fields  
where migrant workers stoop to pick  
bright red tomatoes  
which will soil the shirt  
stain the soul  
leave the reminder  
of work endured  
to bring happiness  
while leaving no mouth unfed.

The bell cries loud  
it shakes  
the adobe walls  
still not to be heard  
throughout the dusty valley  
but even those it does reach  
cannot be pulled from the field  
to hear the message  
that will be sent this day.

Another time

may prove the better  
to go sit and hear  
the words that come  
from the mouth  
of the padre  
who sits in the garden  
for the better part of his days  
and prays for his people  
to let his words  
stay to fill the stains  
on their souls  
to be worn with pride  
and work the land.

Echoes ring throughout the countryside  
cutting through the still dry air.  
They do not join together  
to hear the word  
but the word must not be enough  
for the wooden benches  
are empty.

It comes again:  
pure is the sound

*Barbara L. Kimball*

### **The First Night Of Autumn**

There is a certain  
eloquence to the symphony  
of the treefrogs this evening,  
and the sugar pine  
has more reverence  
than a cathedral spiral against  
the crisp half-lighted  
night. The moon  
has not yet risen. It waits.  
Day has gone,  
only night lies beyond  
the twilight, and yet my soul climbs  
the long sky trying to taste  
the fragrance that spills  
over from tomorrow, and lingers  
in a left-over memory from today.  
Continuity hangs in suspension waiting  
for something that has never  
happened, yet has been there every  
night since that first time.

## **To A Special Friend In Holland**

When winter drives the birds to flight,  
and rains slice the forest bare,  
scents of the North Sea will guide me.

I'll see pink sunsets: blue winds,  
white sand dunes swaying with sea grass  
and long memories:

When thunder rides the swaying pines  
I'll bend the wind and catch  
the tang of salty spray.

Then four dimensions disappear,  
space will sing of distance bridged,  
and you will find me.



## **Moon Dog's Return**

They say there are times—  
when Moon is full  
and Southwind sifts  
spring on the land;  
and Redbud Tree wears  
a pink spangled crown  
and Wild Rose sprinkles  
night with perfumes;  
when Grass is bent  
with tiny gilt  
pearls and Horned Owl calls  
long mournful tones;  
when Deer slips  
down to river's edge  
and all Fish gather  
in dimpled pools;  
when Coyote steals  
close on cotton feet  
and Breeze has velvet  
and silver breath—  
He glides out  
of hills from  
some yesterday and tells  
of times when cookfires burned  
low and peacepipes  
were smoked and long  
stories were told.  
They say there are times—  
if your heartbeat is right  
you might catch  
a glimpse of a shadowy  
form that walks  
tall in moonlight on  
moccasin feet and wears  
on his head the eagle's

dress, and you might hear  
the throb of a distant  
tom-tom or a chant  
to the moon when  
night is near gone;  
you might see a quiver—  
empty of arrow—  
or a tear stain  
the pool where all fish  
gather; you might notice  
him slip up a distant  
moonpath, back  
to the hills; back  
to the past.  
They say there are times—

*Barbara L. Kimball*

### **The Fog Is A Wanderer**

Fog is a misty  
soul lost from the sea.  
It creeps over moist  
ground: looks for a crevice to seep  
into, to curl up in, to wait  
for spring.

It embraces  
the naked oaks, makes black blurred  
sculptures of gnarled  
beauty within its blue-grey veil.

It blends  
with the wind and swirls  
through the wilted forest.  
It slides under the sheltering  
bough of a pine tree and whispers  
to the sleepy birds of other places.

It finds my window:  
looks inside at the fire, clings  
there, waits for me.  
It is so still. . . .  
It has its own silence,  
like the slow drip of water on cotton;  
like the final breath of a very old woman.

**Mari's Lover Struck By Lightning  
In The Country**

Nearly evening, and the storm has shouldered  
in. He will not make love with her  
the way he wanted  
                                this first downpour

of Autumn, as she is living  
elsewhere.

                        Wherever lightning comes from,  
it comes close,

rain on all sides diverted

by the pressure of this desire  
breaking into night.

                        As though it were a bottle  
his body rocks  
                        but does not tip  
  and if he spills

one cry, it is to her  
absent like God but mindful

of an honest prayer. Sweet aftertaste, full shove—  
this atmosphere  
                        lays down blanched and liable

one love every stroke of danger,  
one mercy each revival.

## **Airships**

### **1. Blossoming**

Blue never occurs to squash flowers. They are too frightened, impatient. I have not forgotten that vines face death too. Now Autumn comes. Him gone. Not dead,

a storm is here again this morning. Damn lover, damn harvest. I cut the waste-wrack out and spill late petals, dried untouched. They are yellow never blue. I have noticed. Never blue.

### **2. Debris**

I shoulder my past to the compost heap. This morning, passing the graveyard, a tabbied sky looked down on some cat staring at an open hole. Somewhere a devouring

worm turns to moth and means to shudder away but the cat pulls it down. My own little animal leaves wings scattered in the hardwood hall.

### **3. Preference**

That is, the hardwood. I walk naked and wet to my lover, map of the ocean world pinned up in the corridor. Borneo is blue, but never alters. The night sky lies as blue as Borneo, but flashes,

flashes almost as if the soul were cresting fresh  
from someone. I enter her and wonder if the aliens have hearts.  
If they know where I love her is where I loved him. Not a place  
on the body. Not a buried blossom. Not a decomposing  
heap of sea.

## **The Begging Bowl**

The birds of paradise grow so thick  
we must split and replant them  
almost every year in the backyard.  
Like now, digging around the roots,  
separating the huge stalks  
we break off caked dirt so the plants can breathe.

I like to think of myself  
breathing like that. As if some soil  
was lifted and not replaced too soon  
and I became open again.

Every summer the shovel reminds me:  
Dig deep!  
I can't stay like this.

## **Before The Storm**

Here, the Madison runs northwest.  
Downstream is a stormfront.  
7:30 and the sun leans.  
Clouds glow  
a color somewhere between pink and gold.  
A color like skin,  
skin after love.  
The sun falls  
and behind an enormous boulder  
in a slick,  
this color is held for a moment,  
maybe a minute,  
like a picture or memory.  
The fisherman sits on the grassy bank  
and does not think.  
Sits and gazes  
and the river runs.



*Darren Marshall*

## **The Way Home**

Waves close slow  
    like memory  
Slow roll meets slow roll  
    meets slow roll  
Mottled and grey  
    seagulls chase momentum  
The sun falls  
    beyond the horizon  
and fog wafts near  
    holding fast  
and clinging  
    Clinging to anything  
within reach

**Waves**

As if confusing love and lust  
could be fatal.

As though the buttons  
on your blouse undid themselves  
leaving you open to interpretation.

Remembering how my hands were waves  
searching your secret beaches  
for that perfect black agate.

At night the self grows small  
this movement is absolute.

Leaving us nothing more  
than what we give or take.

## **Simple Delicate Blossoms**

If only  
forever  
is the dogwood in bloom  
and not the hawk  
picking apart  
the innocent young  
run down  
in that second of indecision.

If only  
you could know the pain  
of the rodent  
having its flesh picked  
from its bones  
without strength to cry  
mercy.

Simple delicate blossoms  
so unlike  
those animals  
that kill to live,  
how I wish I could leave  
this body  
and open into myself  
a petal at a time.



## Contributors' Notes

**Michael Bertsch** states that he "once wore high-top tennis shoes and is a member of a well-known granfalloon."

**Joseph F.L. Felice** was writing short fiction by the age of five. Raised in the illustrious agricultural capital of Hollister, he attended private schools and graduated from Christian Brothers in Sacramento. Writing has always been his form of escape.

**Felicia Ferrance** is currently loving, working, and schooling in Chico with hopes of starting an outdoor school on the Northern California coast. Her poem is dedicated to her father.

**Craig Gingrich-Philbrook** lives and works in Chico and is having profound difficulty getting people to use his real name.

**Ken Hardy** has always wanted to be one of the few select people taken by alien visitors to gain hands-on experience of alien life forms. As a graduate of the Chico ROTC program, 2nd Lt. Hardy will integrate his 4½ years in Chico and an English degree and apply them to another planet—the U.S. Army. He is 23 years old and hopes to become a high school English teacher and baseball coach someday.

**Harley C. Jamieson**, an English graduate student at Chico State, is currently writing his thesis on the fiction of Walter Van Tilburg Clark. A widely traveled military veteran, Harley was an ESL instructor in the Yemen Arab Republic. He lists his main interests as "reading, writing, and running."

**Barbara L. Kimball** is still working on her MA in English Literature. She is presently in Holland, soaking up sights, scents, and sounds for more poetry.

**P. Koronakos** is entombed hilarious and fed and resides in Chico.

**Robert Lundergan**—born in Bennington, VT, burial place of Robert Frost; raised in Visalia, CA, Gateway to Sequoia; worked in Huntington Beach, CA, Surf City USA; student currently residing in Chico—"came into the world looking for a home and found many." He adds, "I brew a great pot of coffee, I love Susan and her apple pies, and I sometimes write but not often enough."

**Geraldine Mahood** lives in Paradise, CA.

**Darren Marshall** lives in Susanville, CA.

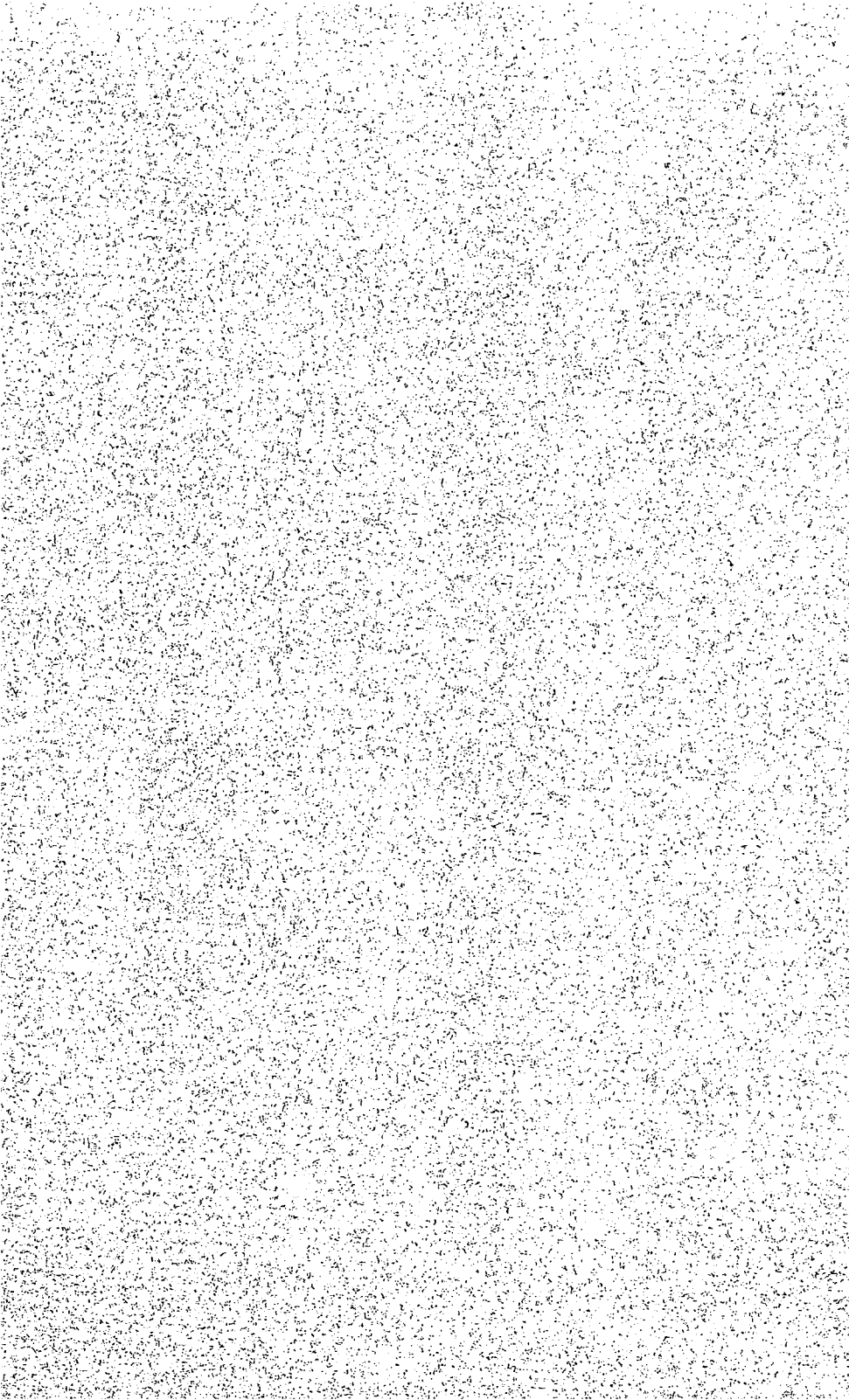
**Daniel McColgin** notes that his poem is one of seven written between Illinois and California, in which he put down "over two thousand miles of words, boredom, and bliss."

**Betsy McNeil** is inspired to write so she's doing it.

**Ken O'Connor** has lived in Chico since 1977 and is currently working as a personnel counselor. He states that "poems in progress are different by handful."

**Susan Wooldridge** likes to make things and perform with clay, sticks, stones, and words. Susan lives in Chico with her family and works with California Poets in the Schools.

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