

Watershed



WATERSHED

A Literary Magazine

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In speaking about the art of creating, author and poet Adrienne Rich once said, "The learning of poetic craft is easier than knowing what to do with it."

Recognizing that, the editorial staff of *Watershed* selected from 193 submissions, 19 poems and two prose writings of exceptional voice, imagery and imagination for this fall's issue.

Some of the selections were hotly debated and the decision to publish them difficult. In the end we felt that although their merit and meaning were not often or easily defined, the reader might enjoy the challenge of discovery. The power of these pieces is subtle and lies in their ability to incite and engage.

Black Pollen by Mark Rodriguez was picked as the broadside poem for it's linear quality and force of language.

Watershed is a literary magazine produced by Chico State students from a special publishing and editing course offered by the English Department. This is its eighth year of existence and would not be possible without the guidance and support of Ellen Walker and Casey Huff. My appreciation also goes to the entire staff who selected manuscripts, decided on typeface, ink colors, cover design and aided in layout. In addition I would like to thank Patricia Babcock for her wonderful coverprint, *Catfishing at Turtlehead Creek* and Pam Giuliano and her Plum Island Press for the outstanding broadside.

Lastly I'd like to give recognition to all of those who gave us the opportunity to read their manuscripts. We had many fine efforts to chose from.

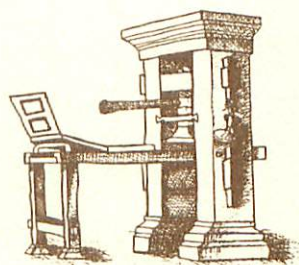
I hope that you will be as challenged and rewarded by this issue as we were ourselves.

Jennifer Hagan

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Sometimes at Sunset

We have all lost something —
what exactly, can't be remembered
but we know it's gone
Flown away
like a bird with a mended wing
A sister who sings with her hands
Another whose name was painted
on a fragile cup
and the cup like a mystery
fell

Sometimes at sunset
when the sky is the color of persimmons
We feel a voice
in the stillness of the trees
We braid our love
with the love our sister has
Together
it is strong enough to climb
up to the first star,
the wishing star

Mark Rodriguez

Memory's Children

We traveled in packs,
knew each other's houses
by scent.

At dusk, we dropped
from the trees to follow
secret alleys home.

And when we entered
the houses, stepping into light,
we knew

how our eyes blazed.
How odor of decayed leaves and earth
drifted behind us.
Our names still hanging
out there
like discarded tokens on furred air.

Our mothers, with their solid
bodies turning shadows,
barred the doorways
calling us in.

Chris Bristow

Another Spring on Old Humboldt Road

Behind the Symon's place,
little Chico Creek
runs through three seasons.
Walking alone
along its bank
I watch the willows bend
in a wind
that has nothing to do with longing.
Tangled mounds of blackberries
shrill
with the noise of bluebirds.
The milk thistle leafs
to lush green and cream.
And its thorny purple bloom
blazes
like a single event in memory.
On the still water,
beside the sycamore grove,
mayflies flutter to dry their wings.
On one tree
there are the initials
of two long ago lovers,
each letter
a cut that slowly mends.

Darren Marshall

In a Japanese Moon Garden at Kyoto

As his black-hood gown
falls from his naked body,
as his black-hood gown
falls on the pond evenly

sounds
from the bamboo chimes
slide through the pine trees
like needles of jade.

Borne
out of the lotus cross
he strews the strata of hours —

Time is the stream again —

Born
is the monk of zen
still and one with the eye of flowers.

(Old and silent as the rain
the zen-man blooms).

Mild he plays
the butterfly's flute,
mild he goes
breathing the Kyoto garden air.

Unannounced as the breeze,
unmarked by the weavers along the pond,
through the palace wall he gleams —

(only the flowers respond
to such freedom.....)

Mayo Garcia Reyes

The White Flower

I.

All the lovers
you could've had
but didn't
come back to you now
in an unspoken wave
of longing.

You held back
from their mouths,
held your vow
untainted
through the long
summer.

Your husband
bound you to his side
with iron,
and you stayed.

II.

You lie beneath the trees
that hang in luminescent clouds
beneath the moon
that shines like
the edge
of a white tongue.

Even something as far away
and white as the moon
can bleed as a cut tongue bleeds,
in a spreading flower
of blood.

You hold your flower
before you,
hear the rustling of its
skirts
and kiss it softly.

You drink one last draught
of night
and turn back
toward the lighted doorway.

David Lee

The Sprinter

You lower yourself
carefully, methodically
maneuvering tense muscle
mass between chalk lines
one-hundred straight meters
undisturbed space
and a ribbon
a ribbon!

Those geologic thighs
convulsing within skin
constrained thunder
of antelope, cheetah
drooling power
and crying—tense impatient
grieving the absence
of sound, motion.

Alas, your hips
raise with the gun
and ecstatic power
release of caliber energy
no longer man
but pure fury
felt only by the wind
and the stallions on your heels.

Albert Garcia

A B C D...

I was *just* thinking.
When I write this
Or read this
(no, not *just* thinking)
The letters, even the rare
Letters make words
Each shape makes sound
And the combinations —
Puzzles, intricate puzzle pieces
Locking
Words, sentences, language
And to think
Atoms, molecules
The red rose
 $E = mc^2$
Imagination
The human body
Can be made again
Intricately
A B C D...

Albert Garcia

She was naked save for socks

she was naked save for socks
white cotton
rivulets of cooling sweat trickled down
god where is the breeze to cool my neck
as she lifted the hair making mosiacs on her face

eternities lined her memory
why it was just yesterday she laughed
spelling out each and every one
the names were a blur the faces faded away
but i never forget a pain

it was this time yesterday she reminded herself
it will be the same time today
only she never remembered
spirits had moved her to greater heights
yet they never lasted the night

she was naked
save for socks
white cotton

Camilla Cardina

The Cell

The streets
are rotting
with debris
of a different kind.

Stiff figures
outlined in tape,
lie stretched
along the avenue,
like jacks,
scattered across
a barren floor.

Two blue men
surrounded by
clotted crowds of people
pick up a jumprope,
a sweater,
and two lunchpails.

The man,
who was thrown
through the window
of his '57 chevy,
will ride the wagon
for 20 years or more.

Shawn Evans

Catafalque

Death
Lies Upon Me

Celeste Harden

The day laid low

I

the day laid low
low browly on the moor kame
down the rose
by rose
the burney coomb
lea and scotched
the briery rack
then burned
the bairns held
cleary blow
so cold
so long
the callons gone
to fold and sleepy
Taft near Clachan
O down the drumblin
and by the braes
by the mill
and by the ghyll
under the bowl
of blackberry milk.

II

to have
in ever'd heart
the even hope and eve
is the breath upon face
the heart does breathe
the not unvaliant
but shyly held
heart for love's
one perfect realm
and never by wrest
nor blooded wing
cherish
thee
silent
nor separate dreams
for lovers dreams
left untold
ill
unbearing
tearing the hearts
of frailer things.

Timothy Mookes

Before Planting: San Joaquin Valley

South wind
blows off the levee
with rain
and a sky full of geese.
All day, under their edgy cries
Arturo works the canal,
crumbled at flood-stage.
For a moment,
his heart trips
like a broken wing
or a migrant boot, stubbed
on winter's ragged edge.

To turn back again.
Back to Hidalgo,
to a wife and four daughters
who fly from the dusty yard
in white cotton dresses
crying, home, "bienvenidos".
Arranging their wings,
those heavy black braids,
to preen in the sun.

Chris Bristow

Somewhere Between Amsterdam And Papeete

nadar was a bird over paris
when the dark social palette died
in abject reductive physics
in renoir's numb placidity
in monet's enchanting nothingness
in optical indifference or maybe
a portrait of comte's positive stage
while the seeds of the human spirit
were left sucking themselves
in the dark becoming psychotic
and god bless van gogh and
hail to the active analysts that
arose in coherent fragmentation
in the reestablishment of the mind
in all its glorious tenuousness
in the copulative totality of apollo
and id as cezanne and debussy
would again unite the world
in static post-freudian divisionism
however much it hurt to accept
however warm tahiti was and
however hard satie had to laugh
before we would realize
that the intellectual stratification
was invalid or he died in the dark
wearing a grey suit next to
a cabaret piano without keys
in an apartment in lower paris.

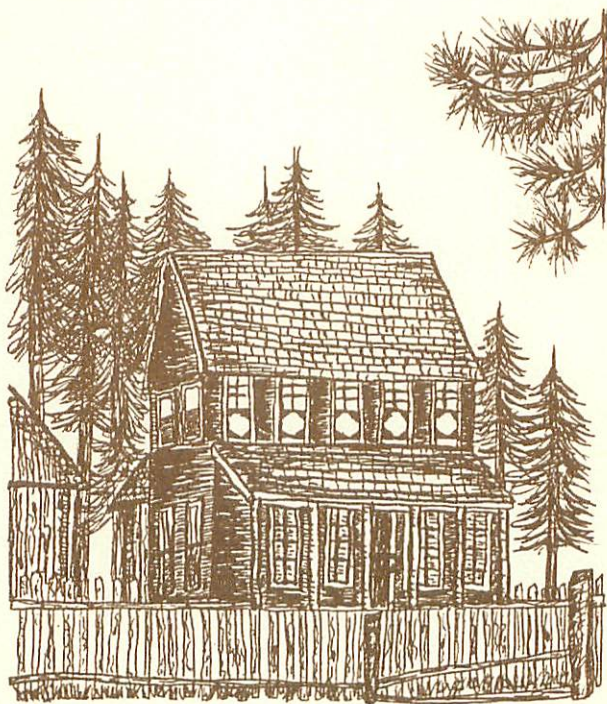
Dominic LeFave

Subterranean Notes

we sat that night dying
of several french diseases
the least of which was rationalism
the worst of which was lyricism
and the sense of detachment that
we both felt in discussing
the russian velimir khlebnikov
who died in the dark of malnutrition
some years after producing his play
death's mistake at rostov-on-don
and the dead parallax on broadway
and the west german new wave band
einsturzende neubauten that was shouting
alles wird muzak und alle werden gleich
into the air that had become thick
with a sort of italian sensuality
laced with a sense of underground
or maybe shame or even fear
of social sanction but nothing
that would not be forgotten
in several glasses of cabernet
a good meal of pasta with sweet basil
and some predictable tonal music evoking
nothing like the post-serial desperation
that we continually immersed ourselves in
only again to escape into the clutches
of ourselves in an imagined fusion
of our separate realities predicated
on wholly different experiential pasts
and inseparable from our bodies
that could only make exchanges
even when we stopped thinking
of ourselves as separate
or when we found our thoughts
so similiar that we had to argue
over abstracted minutiae

such as the final pages
of a semiotic critique
or a cubist study of trivial things
on a table or being bombed
by militarist fascists in spain
or a poem by pablo neruda
or again that night we sat
trying to reconcile urbanity
homosexuality and platonic love
only to find that indeed
when the dawn came
we had yet to die.

Dominic LeFave



Jonesville Hotel
Janet Greene

What I Want

I don't want

**your broken promise
dropped like best-china
on the floor —
well behaved until the end
or
your sad eyes
full of tales
mute and fading —
denim cloth**

I don't want

**your “sorrys”
neat and nice
as Hallmark cards
or your glances —
shipwrecked voyages
washing up
all over me**

Go on home

**to your woman
soft and ripened
fruitful plum
to your kitchen lights
bright and safe
to your job —
the calendar**

Go on home

and stay for good
hide in the house
or among your
pruned bushes
or among the rooms —
so full of her

I don't want

to own a memory
live in you
while you live in me
I don't want —
that importance
of the broken
piece of china

I only want

to live in summer
believe I'll always
believe like this

I only want

to hold this fierceness
sure as a fire
in the afternoon.

Lynn Mundell

Seafaring (to my father, Kenneth Elvin)

Immense oblong chunk of raging Marlin,
Gnashing mouth shearing through the waters,
Leaping low on the hook of the bending bamboo,
Real zizzing between swells on the deck;
And you take him in.

Sweat drops mingle in spite of salt spray;
And the land with all its terrors of settling down
Accommodates your sons, who know no better,
Except for fishing trips on the rivers
At highwater season when the mists are alive,
Where we crouch chilled in a rowboat,
Whispering.

John Storm

Sister

Sister — Thank God
I needn't prove myself to you,
I exhale as a greeting,
traipsing after you the stairs.

We take mid-day meal
in a Chinese restaurant,
sharing dishes.
Across the room you notice
a small child alone,
and moving his lips.
You are the one who knows
he's singing — always had
the knowledge of children,
small animals and others —
vulnerable.

Six and eight years old
we traded a treasure for a
treasure —
all your things of blue,
mittens, paper flowers and such,
mine of red —
wanting our own colors back.
Indian giver.

Smaller hurts and
a couple larger —
wouldn't forgive a man
for that —
have to forgive a sister though.

Hot pavement at first home
I, somehow caught in
the middle of it —
long, black desert then.
Only my child's cries.
You, in heavy thongs,
trundling the red wheelbarrow
towards me to rescue —
alarm, red alert — fire!

Knowing you'll be here as
long as I am —
needing to believe that
above all else.
Your attic where your
paintings lie, hidden
proof of your own genius —
attic in yourself — where the
real great paintings lie.

Each visit a revelation —
discovering that all of
our past lovers
had parallel quirks and
that we disliked the same
aunt
since childhood.

Years believing that
the other was loved more —
knowing that if all
else failed —
we loved each other equally.

Bringing you my fresh flower cuts
of disappointment —
newly chopped and bruising —
trusting you to dab them
with your waters —
can't change what's been
done but watch
them as they fade.

Marvel at this city with
the surety of the small,
your red hair looped
like a skein of rust yarn.
In the morning light
you're older and I'm
surprised, somehow believing
we'd be sister-children always.

Not much needed to make us
happy in the past —
a ceiling with sparkles in it,
a small pie crust sugared,
or sitting in the front car seat —
takes more now — a good job,
a good man, a good dream...

Counting our plans for the future
like beads on an abacus —
they are all there, safe and
accessible —
they will not escape,
as long as we can still count.

Sister —
you are my twin,
although your face
is not my face;
your eyes
are not my eyes.

Our lives are our own —
yet related —
like a flowered cup
and it's matching saucer.

Little, homely memories,
you as a child, inventing
a paint remover —
chastised; you threw
it out the window —
stripped the red paint
off our house — chastised more.
Picking up leaves in the fall —
alternating raking and bagging job —
fair is fair.

Talking family,
touching each member —
spoken of the same, like
an old pearl necklace
strongly strung together;
each bead in it's place,
each knowingly rubbed —
over and over.

Waking in the morning
we walk down a block and
find a bust of Cortez,
that is also a lamp.
Laughing, we struggle home
with our warrior —
see with delight that
the light works —
knowing it would —
had to, because we're still
that young.

Silent as a book
dropped into the return slot
late at night,
unaccompanied,
I return home.
Driving through the
dark for hundreds of miles,
I think that
the night was not as
lonely when we were small,
and your room was but
a whistle down the hall.

Lynn Mundell

This Morning Writing for William Saroyan

The woman at the highway-side cafe outside Fernly, Nevada,
the sole of one shoe thicker,
Slightly, than the other. Humming, the side of her lower lip
sagging, she dusts the rocks
That are for sale under the glass counter beside the cash
register. Watching her, I know,
That for this story, her parents left her here before she turned
two. Didn't want her,
And drove on to Phoenix, in silence, the mother aching and
empty but clean, the father
Just clean. Sometimes, now, at night in the still dark of their
bedrooms, they think of
Her. On a day that I will create, the mother will go back, drink
two cups of coffee, smoke
Three cigarettes and half of another, will pay the waitress, who
won't
Let the daughter, older, run the register, and then drive across
the desert with a dusted rock
On the car seat beside her.

How I think of my wife when I am standing kneedeep and alone
in some cold mountain
Stream, casting to promising holes, and later, when I run sharp
steel from anus to
Gill and think of feeding her from the clear water of the earth.

The night crawler caught too far from the lawn when dawn
broke yesterday and lay hardening
On the concrete in the shape of a soft, Daliesque 3.

And this, too: An American in Madrid, slowly losing his mind;
drinking *absenta* in tiny Basement bars with ghosts of
young freedom fighters, who now speak of *futbol* as though
It matters, and of the war as though they do. He'll make
pilgrimages to the home of El
Greco and to the Prado, to watch Goya going blind. Maybe — I
don't really know yet — he'll join
The international anarchist party and play "Lilly. Rosemary, and
the Jack of Hearts" in
The subway in Barcelona on a harmonica and battered guitar,
its case open for *pesetas* and

Duros. I will work towards his taking a baptismal trip to the
Balearics, where he will
Fast, cleanse himself, and realize he loves Her again.

Stan, the bent old man who lives in the stone house behind me
and whose wife, an ex-history professor, waits in St.
Theresa's Retirement Home with Alzheimer's disease.
"These peaches,"

He says, "are a hybrid. I discovered it myself and taught it to the
Afghanis before the
Russians invaded — the bastards." And later, as I tromp away
through the tall weeds of his
Back yard: "I'll look better when I see you Friday, and talk
better, too. I'll have my
Teeth and my laundry cleaned and back.

The always-empty amphitheater in the park by the creek, on the
stage of which a bouquet
Of roses appeared one morning last week. For no one, I thought,
their petals and stems
Glistening with the dew, and shiny in the sun of the early
Autumn day.

These are the things I wanted to write about today before I went
to the bank and before
I put on my gloves to go out and split wood for tonight's fire.

H.B.

Late Winter in Tehama County

Cow parsnip
and sweet fennel
crowd roadsides.
Beyond the Sutter Buttes
storm clouds pile
and steep.
Farm equipment idles
in untilled fields.
Along rice checks
cattails lean and rattle.
Snow geese
huddle on charred stubble.
The grey sky splinters
and falls.

Darren Marshall

The Ritual

Karen Moore

Mary sits down in the cold red booth and adjusts her skirt which has bunched up around her hips, revealing that part of her thigh she considers not quite aesthetically correct, that part of her thigh she successfully forgets about, until of course, that terrifying and crucial moment when someone is unzipping and pulling at her and she cannot adjust quickly enough, and thus is suddenly revealed, imperfect and bulging.

He enters: a quick glance in the glass above the bar assures him his features are the same as when he left the apartment. He is relieved to find he has changed neither in size nor color.

Her glance of recognition, slow in coming, vacant at best, nonetheless is his final assurance that he is truly unaltered. Her first glance is always the same, as though someone were standing above her, perhaps right above the patented seascape whose waves lunge quietly frothing above her platinum stray hairs, as though this someone pulled strings woven with safety pins directly into her scalp in an unsuccessful attempt to correct her insufficiencies of expression. Once, he was almost so convinced of her attachment, her puppet nature, that he moved his hand to run it over her hair, knowing that in this action he would confirm the existence of any strings. At that moment she had taken his hand and, instead of letting it continue to her head, had pressed it to her breast, and referring to the stroking of hair, murmured, "Honey, not in public."

This time, he makes no such attempt, he slides into the booth and sits so that the gabardine of his trouser leg barely touches her nylon stocking.

"Your tie's on backwards," she comments. He hears a snap as her mouth opens.

"That's impossible," he says, "You just want me to look down."

"Down my blouse," she corrects, moving her eyelids up and down seductively with a fluidity that resembles butterflies flailing in day-old molasses. "Oh, you," she continues, goading him, "take that thing off. I hate ties. Why do you wear it? How practical clothes pretend to be, calling themselves the thing you do with them. You dress; you wear a

dress. You tie a tie. But you don't blouse, you don't pants, at least these things admit their silliness. They're for fun; just for the excitement of zippers and buttons; just to take off."

While they are talking, the bartender, who is also the waiter, has brought their drinks. Two vodkas on the rocks.

"Spill your drink on it then," he says to her, "Spill it on my pants too, then you'll have double the incentive."

"You'll take it off then? And your pants?"

"Ha! You're just assuming that I don't like lounging in vodka. That I don't feed on impracticality. That I don't go home at night and pour jiggers full of the stuff into my leatherette recliner, put on every article of clothing I own, and sink slowly in the lakes of volatile stench. You're just assuming that being undressed and dry is some 'natural' state. Well not for me. I get cold when I'm not clothed, and I don't enjoy the way my skin feels, or the way it's all the same color when I look in the mirror. Clothing is essential, my dear. You talk about the superfluity of my tie, but look at the way it has permeated even our drinking here; what are we doing but 'tying one on'?"

"Yes, yes darling. And you like my dress, don't you? You always say that, don't you. And I always wear it for you, don't I?"

"Yes you do," he says and gets up. He stands outside the booth and unbuttons the buttondown collar of his white shirt and without actually untying the tie, removes it from his neck. He walks across the simulated marble floor, slick and cold beneath his shoes, to a hook which hangs above the bar, above the bartenders head.

"Would you?" the man asks. The bartender takes the tie from the man, steps up on a stool, and attaches the tie to the hook so that the loop dangles down.

"Thank-you," says the man, and returns to his seat.

The girl is holding her drink, staring intently at her fingernails which are painted red. She looks up. "Darling. You're looking a little small today, and have your changed your coloration since our last date?"

"Perhaps I look smaller without the tie."

"Perhaps."

With the movement of her head to look at him, strands of her wig have now obscured both her eyes. He sighs and continues to look at the spot where her eyes would be, could he see them.

"Darling," she says. "Darling."

"Is it hot in here, or is it just me?" he says suddenly. His tone is slightly excited.

"You're excited then?" she asks. "Perhaps then you ought to touch my thigh, yes, that's it, touch my thigh, and I will begin to moan softly. I'll say that phrase you especially like: 'Oh, I'm hot'".

"First I must put my tie back on," he interrupts. "First I must order a bottle of vodka. Waiter!"

The waiter brings the bottle, and a glass. "Now darling," the man says, "I shall have a cigarette before I begin to touch your thigh. Have you a match?"

The proprietor yells from his position in front of the large mirror, "We'll be closed in a few minutes!"

"Darling, you are cute this small." She says and passes him the matches.

"Do you really think I'm looking smaller; I really hadn't thought so myself. I do love vodka. Thank you for the match darling."

"And the green color your skin has developed. I saw a drawing of leaves once..."

He pours an amount of vodka into the glass and continues to pour as the liquid spills out over the top of the glass onto the table, into his lap. He picks up the glass and dumps the remaining vodka onto his head. He does this repeatedly until the shoulders of his suit are saturated, along with his hair and face.

"You do love vodka, darling!"

"Yes," he says and lights a match. His entire body ignites and disappears in flame. Mary's arms and legs are singed, but she does not attempt to move from her place in the booth. The proprietor goes to a circuit breaker in the rear of the bar and flips some switches. Mary's face becomes completely still, her arms slump to her sides, her wig drops. The proprietor then goes to the front door and beside the sign marked 'Mortuary' turns the open sign to closed.

Contributor's Notes

Patricia Babcock is currently pursuing a MFA degree from Washington State University in absentia. She is also working on a thesis exhibit and is teaching watercolor classes at *Art, Etc.* in Chico. Her art is exhibited throughout California and represented in traveling exhibits in Canada. The etchings are created from cut copper and zinc plates and are deeply embossed.

Chris Bristow lives and works in Chico.

Carmella Cardina is a self-proclaimed struggler who'd enjoy being more of an artist.

Shawn Evans is a junior, English major who works at KCSC. His poetry has been greatly influenced by the music and people of the station. He has been published in *Wide Open*.

Celeste Hardin is a senior in the English Department.

Albert Garcia finds no need for drugs, strange clothes or other eccentricities. Suicide is also of no serious consideration. He writes to record and evaluate everyday occurrences.

H.B. lives in Chico, likes to fish and play softball and poker.

David Lee is a second rate comedian currently performing with the Allen Standish Comedy Revue in "WeB.S. Radio" show. He is also a middle-of-the-road anarchist who hails from Manton, California, and is tired of locating it on maps for people.

Dominic LeFave is now in his third year at CSUC where he studies Phenomenology, Germanic anxiety and black-on-grey ink paintings.

Darren Marshall decided to dispense with any biography.

Karen Moore is a graduate student at CSUC.

Lynn Mundell is a genius who is having a struggling relationship with her cat named Marie. She lives, works and writes downtown.

Mayo Garcia Reyes graduated from CSUC in 1980 with a B.A. in Religious Studies, emphasis in Hinduism and Buddhism. She does not consider herself a poet but is interested in the poetic process.

Mark Rodriguez is an angry young man whose influences are his mother and Rimbaud.

John Storm is an English major who wonders how he ever received that rank. He lives in beootiful Chico and has no phone.

Watershed was set by TypeArt on a AM Varsityper 5410 and 5618 in 10 and 11 point Walbaum, printed on 70 wt. Sundance Natural text by the CSUC Print Shop. The cover is a halftone from on original piece of artwork. It is chocolate brown ink on a 65 lb. Sunray Opaque Dusk Vellum cover. The broadside was handset and printed by Pam Giuliano, Plum Island Press on 80 lb. Forest Legendry Text. Perfect binding was done by Inland Bindrey in Sacramento, California.

