

ESCOM Journal

March/April 2023



A Golden Year for ESCOM

Emeritus Students College of Marin

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong Doing

Lifelong Friendship

Photo: Harvey Abernathey

Dear Readers:

In 1973 some very creative thinkers in Marin County realized that one of our community's most precious resources, its senior population, was rapidly growing. They thought that bringing these seniors back to a college campus might be of tremendous value. Thus, Emeritus College, college within the College of Marin, which is now called Emeritus Students College of Marin (ESCOM).

Over the years, countless individuals have come forward to develop classes, clubs, community events and social gatherings of particular interest to seniors, but open to the entire community.

Throughout its history, ESCOM has enjoyed the gracious support of the College of Marin. Moreover, the College has bestowed thousands of local seniors with the opportunity to be part of a beautiful and active campus.

Today, ESCOM shares its programs online as well as on campus, forever building on its beginnings 50 years ago to provide opportunities for personal and intellectual growth, to keep our minds and bodies engaged and to make new friends young and old.

I remember one of the earliest leaders of the Emeritus College of Marin, Dr. Bernard Carp, suggested that it was possible to put our past behind us and "live what we are now."

There really is something about living *right now*, treasuring the moment. They say that you get wiser with age, but this is so not true for me. I just have so many more questions, and I'm glad I have had ESCOM to help me with these answers.

Marian Mermel,

Long time ESCOM member,
Former Council President,
Current Curriculum Committee
member, ESCOM Organizational
Liaison, and Keeper of ESCOM
History

In this issue:

***Introducing ESCOM's handsome
new logo***

***Artist, author and photographer
tributes to ESCOM's Golden Year***

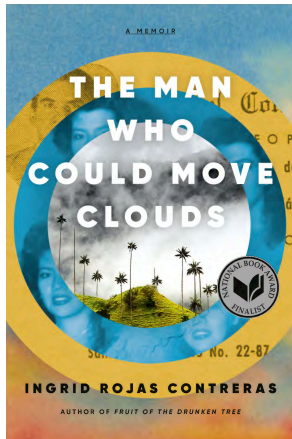


After years of mulling over the possibility of an ESCOM logo, the Membership/Marketing Committee led by Lois St. Sure and Denize Springer, got to work early this year to develop this handsome representation of ESCOM's productive, hearty and thriving existence.

It was designed by Jemma Brown, a former Bay Area designer.

To obtain a copy of the logo and the guidelines for its usage, please contact Denize Springer at denizespringer@gmail.com

ESCOM'S POPULAR AUTHOR SERIES RETURNS TO THE KENTFIELD CAMPUS!



Friday, March 31 at 1 pm, Room 255, Academic Center

The Man Who Could Move Clouds by Ingrid Rojas Contreras

A National Book Award finalist, this memoir summons up stories from the living and the dead that connects the author's own experiences to that of her Colombian ancestors.

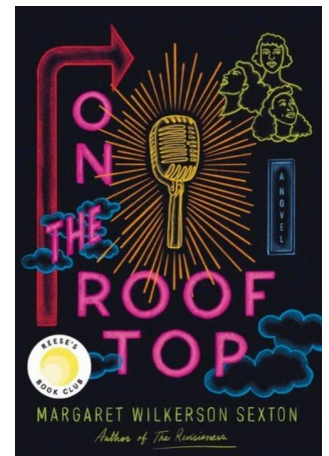
Contreras was born and raised in Bogotá, Colombia. Her debut novel, *Fruit of the Drunken Tree*, was the silver medal winner in First Fiction from the California Book Awards, and a *New York Times* editor's choice. Her essays and short stories have appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Believer*, and *Zyzzzyva*, among others.

Friday, April 28 at 1 pm, Room 255, Academic Center

On the Rooftop by Margaret Wilkerson Sexton

A novel set in 1950s San Francisco about a mother whose dream of musical stardom for her three daughters collides with the daughters' ambitions for their own lives.

Wilkerson Sexton studied creative writing at Dartmouth College and law at UC Berkeley. Her most recent novel, *The Revisioners*, won a 2020 Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize and an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work and was a national bestseller as well as a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year. Her debut novel, *A Kind of Freedom*, was long-listed for the National Book Award.



In Appreciation

The other day, while attending the Humanities Club lead by Ruth King, who has been an ESCOM member and supporter since the early 1990s, I marveled at what she has accomplished.

Ruth was vice president of ESCOM under two presidents. She is a long time club leader, initially the Adventurers Club and now the IVC Humanities Club.

In addition, Ruth has had to solve many little problems along the way and always handles them with aplomb. In fact, she goes beyond the call, having added walks on the lovely IVC campus and visits to its organic farm to our Saturday afternoon Humanities Club gatherings. Ruth always brings more than expected to our enlightening afternoons.

Do the numbers. Beginning in 1990s Ruth King has given more than 30 years to maintain life long learning at COM, while aging in place. Thank you, Ruth!

Gloria Sable Kopshever



Elaine Thornton



Patty Young

Space and Time

We live within a celestial infinity,
of galaxies: interstellar
unknowns from beginning to end.

One billion light years preceded life
as we now know it.

Aeons of intergalactic space, bestow upon us
time to wonder.

Astronomical
density and dark matter, light and stars:
we are an infinitesimal part
of your being.

I want to know you.

deidre silverman



Patty Young, Watercolor



Harvey Abernathey

Afterschool Care

He's the quiet boy
not the rowdy one who slides shrieking
across the newly waxed Parish Center floor
whining when the au pair arrives too early.

No. He's the quiet one whose eyes flit
over the top of "Monsters at Midnight"
and back to the page when it's Megan's mom,
not his, smiling, at the door

the quiet one who staunches
tears with practiced force of will
whose bitten nails dig into clenched palms
as the clock moves past five

the quiet one who hunches down
in his parka, knees up, back against the wall,
eyes focused in the middle distance listening
to the silence of an empty room

the quiet one whose mother breezes
in at ten past six reciting her well-worn liturgy:
long distance call or missing cat or traffic jam
as he, head down, dodges her hug.

Sometimes, in the small hours,
awakened by a noise or dream
of unbidden angst, I think of him:
that quiet boy and weep.

lynn arias bornstein

Laura Harrison





Laura Milholland

Untitled

In - out - under - above
 i come to this life
 as a seeker of love
 i have fallen in
 with romantic muses
 only to find
 i don't get what i chooses
 i've been thrown out
 with no pomp included
 i've been pushed under
 so everyone loses
 i've risen above
 this messy conclusion
 and now i don't sing the begotten Blueses

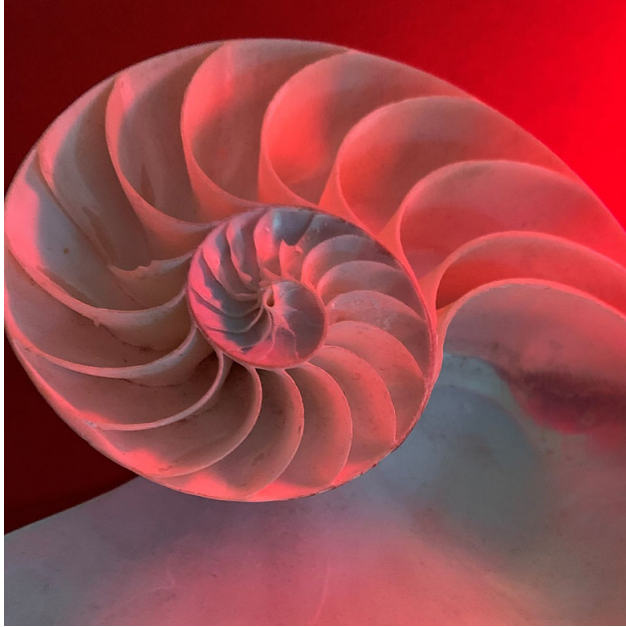
Louise Potter Yost



I took the photo above in Snowmass Colorado just as the Aspen leaves peaked and a light snow had occurred the night before. These mountains, the Maroon Bells, are said to be over 300 million years old. I call that "mature." They are constantly changing, as are the aspen trees. Trees in a grove of aspens are in a constant race upwards, fighting for the sunlight. They self prune as they grow, to preserve their life energy, the sap, from the branches that no longer receive the light. I file this under "growth." These are the most photographed mountains in America, and the peak of the Aspens turning gold, as well as the reflection in the Maroon Bells Lake. -- Denice Barsness



Nancy Outenreath

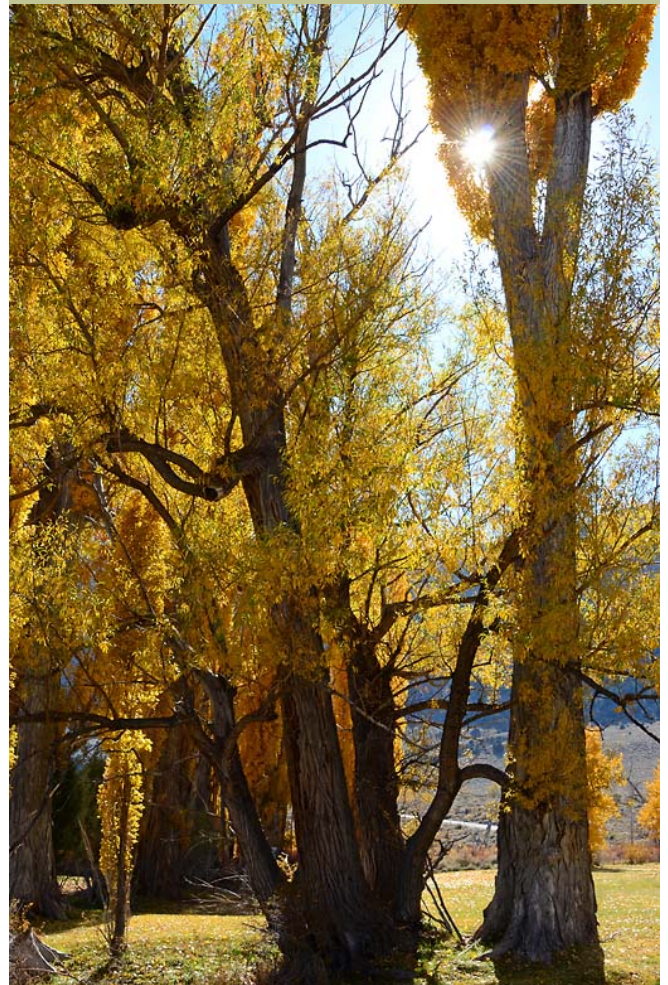


Tom Cannon

Golden

Golden light seeps through
Warming air and calming soul
Resplendent in gold.

-- Luara Milholland



Laura Milholland

Quandary

the luxury of a Saturday morning
spring showers sprinkle the deck
diving ducks cavort in the mist
Scott Simon interviews celebrities
whiffs of cinnamon oatmeal
flavor the air the kettle
whistles time for tea

the day lies ahead
waiting for what's next

should I chop onion celery
for minestrone clean the closet
read Merwin for my class
or just be like the birds

-- Barbara McDonald

***"Luminous people grow old; others just
get that way."***

-- Steve Lovette

Golden Youth

The earliest memory I have of sports is at our boy's school in San Francisco's Mission District.

It was 1954 and I was in third grade. We had an hour lunch "out in the yard," a big, asphalt lot behind the school with stripes for baseball and basketball. Games.

Two captains would stand facing each other. Everyone else crowded around to be picked for their teams. Jackie Adams, dim scholastically, bright at first base, was always one of the first picked. Easygoing Jose Berdugo, who in high school would play alto sax, was second base. Excitable, dangerous Mike Cazerres was a captain and a pitcher. Altar Boy, Eddy Chiosso (Big Ed), usually was the other captain and a catcher. Everyone was quiet when Eddy was at bat. He went regularly to games at Seals Stadium and was one of the two best hitters. The other best hitter was Frank MacDonald, whose father beat him up to make him tough. He was also the best fighter, and as unstable as a gallon of gas. I was a weak fighter, but didn't want my Dad to beat me up, if that's what it took to learn.

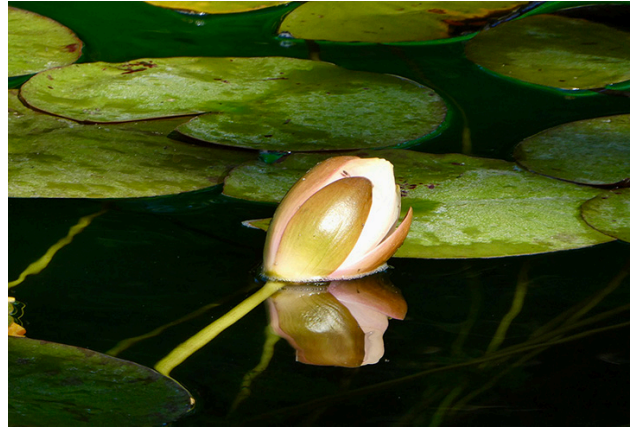
Choosing up would go on till every last one of us was picked for one or the other team in the name of "Christian Sportsmanship." One day the two captains were arguing over me: "You take 'em", "No, YOU take 'em." I got the message.

I started hanging around with Bad Jimmy (not an altar boy), who even at eight was figuring out how to motorize his bike. He wound up mounting a model ramjet to the back of his bicycle: *five pounds of thrust!* He needed a compressor to start the jet, which his Dad provided on a day when I was doing something else, so I never saw it run.

We'd eat lunch together every day next to one of the garbage cans in the yard. That only seemed right to us as we threw orange peels, Waxtex bags, and the odd baloney sandwich into the can as we talked. We taught ourselves to use swearwords. Jimmy had the news on how a '52 Buick Dynaflow transmission (he called it a "tranny"), could be thrown into reverse at any time, stopping the car if the brakes went out. This was "must-have" information for an eight year old. This was stuff the baseball players would never figure out.

He was always coming up with new facts. I'd argue with him, which would just egg him on. But I knew he wasn't kidding. The last thing Jimmy was, was a BS'er.

By the time we were thirteen, Jimmy had a naked Oldsmobile V8 engine mounted on blocks in his father's claustrophobic little garage. He called me up one Saturday



Marilyn Bagshaw

and said "C'mon down, got somethin' to show ya". I rode my bike down and saw the engine, now with cables and a car battery hooked up to it, a gallon can of gas suspended from the ceiling.

A copper fuel line ran down from the can to the Olds' carburetor, which had no air filter, and thus no flame arrestor should it backfire. No fire extinguisher, either. Hoses ran from the motor to a radiator half-stuffed into a wooden crate. Several wires ran from the engine to a starter switch cannibalized from an old truck. He was holding these in his hand, squinting, and grinning so you could see the gap between his front teeth.

Jim hesitated only a second. He twisted that switch and the big Olds wheezed and cranked-way too loud in this confined space. It wheezed and cranked faster, coughed and roared: no muffler, just open exhaust. It was alive, beautiful in its brutality, trembling on its wooden cradle on the floor of the garage – a cast iron monster running at a thousand RPM, with more on tap. It was so loud it hurt my face!

I was bug-eyed and yelling. Jim was cool, the engineer, but broke down laughing, eyes bugged out, as well. His dad came down from the five-unit building upstairs, watched a bit. I think he might have smiled but maybe not. A union electrician, he called himself a *herring choker from Boston*. "A! Turn that god damn thing off," he yelled. It wound up being a one-time event.

Jim was the one who could fix any bike, I was the one with little flames and skulls all over my bike: decals, reflectors, a mud flap, but also, a siren. That's right. I still have that siren.

Mike Holland



"Lunar Rabbit," Tami Tsark



"Way Out," Maggie Saxon

The Hoodie Issue

The gymnasium of the Albany Middle School was full of students and parents. There had been a little concert by the middle school choir and orchestra. The parents and students were milling about, chatting.

Since the music, art and sports programs were not included in the school budget, these programs had to do their own fund-raising. Around the periphery of the gym, booths were set up selling pennants, t-shirts, sweat shirts, etc. with the school insignia on them in order to raise these funds.

Being in need of a sweatshirt -- a hoodie, if possible -- I decided to buy a hoodie with the school mascot on its front. I would be helping fund these school programs, I thought. Harry and Madeleine, my grandchildren who attended the middle school, would approve too.

Madeleine was in the middle school choir. That is why I was there. I thought she might be pleased that I had bought something to help the choir.

"Ba!" she yelled when she found out what I had done. "How could you DO such a thing?! I'm not going to go anywhere with you if you wear that thing!"

Harry, her brother, just rolled his eyes.

I was rather hurt, really. I wore the hoodie whenever I went out and about without Madeleine. I had no idea what the problem with the hoodie was. It was a perfect weight for the winter and the hood made it easy to cover my head if the wind blew. I found it to be very useful.

Fast-forward 15 years. Now I live in Marin with my older daughter. One morning, over coffee, I was leafing through the *Marin Independent Journal* (the Marin County newspaper). The headline of the advice column, "Ask Amy," caught my eye.

The headline was: "Personal Trainer is Catnip for Cougars." I remembered the infamous hoodie with "Cougar" across the front.

The nickel dropped. I guess Madeleine and Harry supposed I knew what the word "cougar" meant. I was older and knew everything, of course.

The mascot animal for the Albany schools is a cougar. Madeleine had no intention of being seen with an old lady with "Cougar" written across her chest!

Tania Yates

Pest on a Veggie

Vegetable thriving in a gardens
Not tabled
Flying speeded like a snowflake falling
Yet dry,
Flies the insect geared at landing,
The veggie pest.

Creepy crawly noiseless at last
The pest sleeps
Opening up with flowers
It spins
And webs hiding from rain,
Steps and complaints.

Now the veggie without pests
Is enjoyed
A pest without vegetation
Can't survive
Shall cling with the stink of terror
Bug alarm.

Incapable of intellectual cooperation
Without repellent
The pests will appear everywhere
By the vegetation
To pause the growing progress
Of our refreshment.

We can squish bugs
Treat them
With riddance, poisons turn them to waste
Cleaned up
From eyeing foods destruction
May God be with us.

-

Karen Arnold



Nancy Pappas

Laura Milholland



Spell

Words will transport you
Fly words, rocket shock words and the transparent ones too
Bringing particle light riding on beams into your room
We can ride those waves to oblivion
Bye bye mundane
Please just let me dissolve
and shimmer

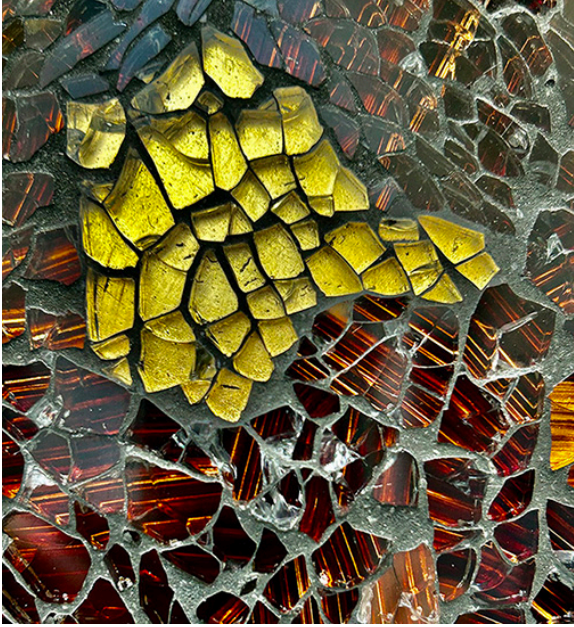
Transmutation at the threshold
Just when you least expect it
As if a tuning fork
Called its flock to mass

In the meadow of the long forgotten
Thanks to belladonna and her friends
In those wild elysian fields
Where yellow dominates
Far from insufferable machines
In suburban yards

We can't remember their names
Since we've been covered with cosmic dust
For so long that even rocks know

In one game, lace never had a chance
A sort of incantation took over
As if a spell bound it together
And lace floated
Over leathery water
And eventually became lead

Marcia Smith



"Gold Glass," Marilyn Bagshaw



*"Flower Bum Bun," Mixed Media, "Tami
Tsark*



Harvey Abernathey

CROW

Family man in every sense of the word.

He struts about proudly in black leather boots,

Sporting a cropped cut crown and a shiny black suit.

He is ever faithful to parents, children and mate.

He helps with the chore of building their surround

In the crotch of a tree several feet off the ground.

While his spouse cradles her eggs of blue green

Until her six tender skinned fledglings are seen

He gathers their food and provides a safe haven

Assigns his relations assemblage on local rests

To distract predators from visiting the nest.

I see a family man in every sense of the word.

Son husband, father taking it all in his stride.

Building, feeding, protecting, strutting his pride.

Carol Allen

Mah Jong Remembered

Mah Jong encourages gossip, marriage arrangements, business deals.

Play and talk lead to bountiful give and take.

Colorful stories are recalled and told with gusto.

Life-long friendships are formed, common values reinforced.

Mom's three oldest friends would arrive at 8 am,
eat breakfast,

play until noon, stop twenty minutes for lunch, and
play until dinner.

They'd rest and dine for thirty minutes and then
continue until midnight,

heading for home after one last snack. They loved
eating as much as the game:

*"Let's take a short break, I just made fresh tempura
shrimps, potatoes and zucchinis."*

*"They are delicious with Korean sesame soy-sauce
and hot sriracha".*

"I'll bring char-siu-bow, steamed barbecue buns."

*"How about red-bean sticky rice to celebrate lunar
year of the rabbit?"*

Now I play Mah Jong with three ladies, share
stories and joyful laughter,

and listen to the clack-clack-clack of the tiles, in
remembrance of mom.

Ray Fay



"Owl Eye, Copperfield's," Marilyn Bagshaw

Bud on a Branch

Perhaps the secret life
Which lives in seeds and bulbs
And sends them sprouting, blooming
Will yearly stir in my heart

And out of the ancient time of darkness
When we burn candles, light trees and
Sing chants against the loneliness
Of long-spun nights

I will turn and unfurl
Like a bud on a branch
Tender and green, opening
Toward your light

Susan Connelly

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE JOURNAL?

NEXT DEADLINE IS APRIL 15

Please send your **final** draft to
denizespringer@gmail.com

PLEASE ADHERE TO THESE SPECIFICATIONS

Submit only one piece of final, proofed work. Changes, unless absolutely necessary, will not be accepted after submission.

Include your name in the file name and on the page of your document. **You must be an ESCOM member. Membership is free but is no longer automatic with class registration. To join, go to:**
<http://escom.marin.edu/join-escom>

WRITTEN WORK (**750 words MAX**): must be single spaced, left margin oriented, and ATTACHED as a Word doc. Do not submit PDFs of written work (as these cannot be properly transferred or edited).
Please submit only one piece per issue.

ART and PHOTOGRAPHY: Borderless images only in file size no larger than 300 kb and attached to the email in the .pdf or jpeg format (not imbedded in email message). **Images larger than 300 kb or saved as a tif file cannot be considered.**

POEMS: (**50 lines MAX including the spaces between stanzas**) If your poem must be centered, please note this.

Misspellings, grammatical errors and erroneous line breaks could be mistaken as the author's intent and not corrected. Proof your copy before sending it in.

Information for "In Memoriam" must be verified with an obituary that appears in an official resource such as a newspaper.

ESCOM (Emeritus Students College of Marin) is a student organization of active adults affiliated with the Community Education Department of College of Marin. Founded in 1973, ESCOM provides diverse opportunities for lifelong learning, lifelong doing, and lifelong friendships.



ESCOM

Emeritus Students
College of Marin

ESCOM Journal

Editor, Denize Springer

Web Content Manager, Richard Jensen

The ESCOM Journal is published on alternate months online at www.marin.edu/escom. A limited number of printed copies are available in the ESCOM offices on the College of Marin Kentfield and Indian Valley campuses. ESCOM members are invited to submit news items, or creative works, such as original art, photography, poetry, memoir and fiction. Consult the submission specifications on this page before submission. The deadline for each issue is the 15th of the prior month. Please send submissions or questions to the editor at denizespringer@gmail.com

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