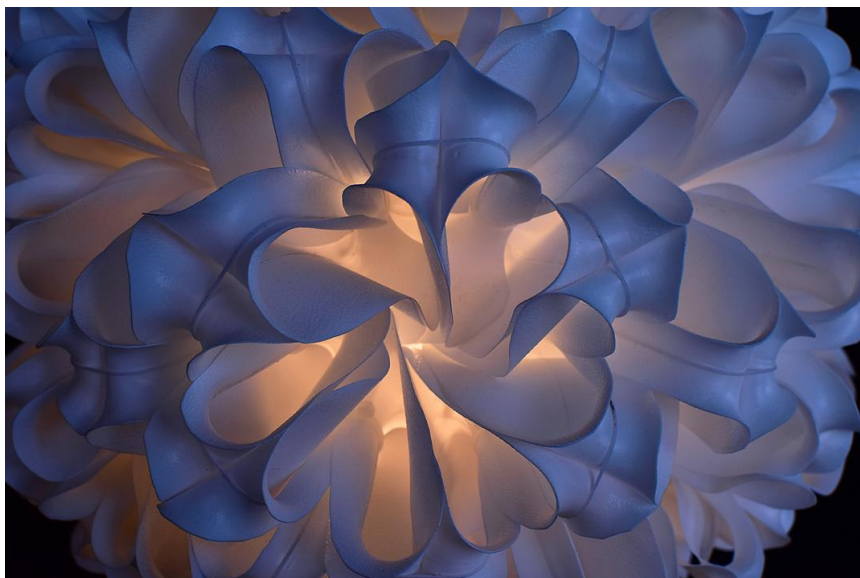


ESCOM Journal

May/June 2020



*Emeritus Students
College of Marin*

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong Doing

Lifelong Friends

Sculpture: Heath Nash. Photo: Laura Milholland

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings ESCOM Members and Friends:

How are you? My sincerest hope is that all of you have stayed healthy and resilient during the global pandemic crisis.

I can imagine you are feeling much like I am and are more than ready to see each other and connect in person again. After all, connection is what ESCOM is all about. I realize that staying inside, social distancing, and monitoring the news can leave one feeling overwhelmed. It's frustrating and frightening. But this will end; especially as we all continue to do our part. Our community and county are developing social bonds that will be stronger than ever. Soon, we will meet together once again in our parks, on our campuses and at our homes. Please stay safe and stay strong. We will need each other even more.

At this time your ESCOM Council, Committee Chairs and Club Leaders are finding ways to reach out with online conversations, phone conferencing, and our ongoing publications and newsletters. Please be sure to open our mailings and announcements to stay in the loop. If you want to get in touch with us, our email address is: escom@marin.edu.

In March, I sent you a letter about some ESCOM membership changes and benefits. The first important change is that starting this summer there will no longer be a mandatory fee to become a member of ESCOM. Membership is free and all are welcome. However, we sincerely hope that many of you will continue to contribute \$15 (or more) to support our clubs, activities, events, member parties and much more. ESCOM's new application form will give you more details about how to contribute. The other major change is that

all students, not just ESCOM members, will be able to take advantage of the reduced-rate EC classes through Community Education. The College presented us with these required policy changes after a recent review of their educational codes at the end of last year. The changes will take effect this summer.

In this period of pandemic uncertainty — which may last into the fall—the Council has decided to switch to an annual membership program that runs from January to December. All current members will remain active until the end of December 2020, at which time you will receive a reminder to renew for the year 2021. So, please continue to support us through this transition as we anticipate a strong and transformative year ahead. We want your engagement and need your support as we move forward.

-- Luanne Mullin

Editor's Note:

On this page, and interspersed throughout this issue, are poems prose and images inspired the coronavirus pandemic. The resulting Stay-at-Home orders and the pent up passion led to some inspiring results.

Easter 2020, Sharon Fournierat



**Susan's Facebook Challenge or:
Love in the Time of Corona: A
Three Sentence Summary**

Every evening at eight, following Jeopardy and a post-dinner snack, lovers, neighbors (families and friends) venture onto their decks (or out into their yards) to howl at each other and the moon.

Maintaining "social distance", grateful to be alive (but bemoaning a dwindling toilet paper supply), they holler and yip, praying they won't get sick, and thanking nurses, doctors and grocery clerks still able to work.

A minute or five later (sometimes more), they reenter isolation to wash their hands (again) before burying their heads in a book or (yet another) bowl of ice cream; And when sleep finally comes, even those who are alone dream of kissing lips no longer veiled by masks, and a lifetime of holding hands.

-- Cindy Ross

The Outlook

How do I live in this room

That's had its dimensions

Made ever so restricted?

No space for tears of loss here,

Only soft breaths that leave my existence,

One exaltation evaporating into the next.

There are no illusions now,

Not the ones promised to me.

Someone will find my sighs

And hear what lingered once.

There has to be a way back to you,

Some door that exits this outlook.

Can I be the wind that travels from spring into

Summer,

Or the leaf that has fallen onto the roadway,

Carrying the message of the trees?

-- Nora J. Monfredini



Promise of Spring

While poised in masked solitude,
amidst a seasonal resurgence,
time lingers patiently,
as if to beckon peace and prose.
Awareness lifts sights on-high,
to augur inner spirit.
While silently, with petal pride,
the orange poppy celebrates
in glowing form on hillsides,
coves and hidden valleys,
heralding the promise of Spring.

-- deidre silverman

MEMOIR

A Coral Snake

When I worked for the City of San Francisco Animal Care & Control we all rotated through dayshift, swing, swing-grave, and graveyard every three months. It was a matter of honor for me that I never closed my eyes for a minute on a nightshift. It was also true that Captain Knapp said he would fire us “in a hot second” if he ever caught anyone napping.

So it was that I began drinking coffee at night. I’d stop at all-night places in the Fillmore, the Height, and down in the Tenderloin for a cup. Then I saw someone order an espresso and dump it in his coffee and that became my drink. Maybe one at two a.m. and another at three or four just to be on the safe side. Often in the middle of the night I would stop and wonder if I was really awake. If I was out on a call I was fine, but back in the Shelter, alone in the quiet, I had the feeling I was in a dream. That was okay though. I felt all this while my eyes shone like LEDs.

About three A.M. one night I was in the second floor lunchroom having a coffee from the thermos I brought every night, when I walked by the window on the lunchroom door. I saw a red and black-banded snake slide busily along the hall outside. People talk about chills running up their back, but it was like a bucket of ice water sloshed me in the back of the neck. I stopped. I saw it; no I’m seeing things. No I saw it and it’s a coral snake. A coral snake. Shit!

Down that hall, at the other end of the building was the “wildlife room”, where we’d keep red-eared sliders, the odd raccoon, wild birds that needed feeding before going to rescue, toads, and the occasional boa constrictor or python. So it was possible a snake had got out of its cage, squeezed under the door, and

made a break for it. But a coral snake? Snakes are not my favorite animal and now this? My hands were shaking.

All that coffee was building up in me. To be safe I scooted downstairs to a restroom, closed the door, made ready-and turned around to see light shining through a gap under the door! I took aim for the business at hand but kept an eye on the door for the duration.

Back upstairs with a snake hook and a pillowcase, I searched. No snake. I looked all down the hall to the wildlife room. No snake. Then I had it! A dog! Suddenly I had a plan: get a dog out of the adoption kennels and have him track the snake.

Real quick I grabbed a leash and picked a shepherd mix I had visited with earlier in the evening: no dice. He was crazy for the other dogs in the kennel, barking and jumping. Sorry little guy, back in your run. Next a Lab who really didn’t want to be out, was just so timid. Finally a Corgi mix, stubby legs and oversize head; an unlikely partner, but he picked up the trail and found my snake hiding behind a potted tree at the top of the stairs. I put the dog away and atremble, got the damn snake into a pillowcase and back into his aquarium in the wildlife room.

Then I looked at the kennel card attached to it. Under *breed* it said ‘king snake’. Both king snakes and coral snakes have red, yellow, and black bands. Corals are venomous; kings are not and eat rodents. Even if I couldn’t tell one from the other I could have saved a lot of trouble if I had been more methodical, and checked the kennel cards first.

Later I learned the rhyme: “Red touching yellow will kill a fellow. Red touching black is safe for Jack.”

-- Mike Holland



Mountain King Snake, Photo: Laura Milholland

Ready for Breakfast

Sexy dancing

in the kitchen

while the

oatmeal

boils

What

brought on

this

shimmer

this

sashay?

Ah

Alexa

misunderstood

-- divine intervention? --

this morning

instead of NPR

I got

Sade

A new pandemic protocol

-- Kasey Carmichael

Today I am a Taker

Today I am a taker
I bask my petals in your sun
With a deep inhale
I invite your warmth
I dance beneath your storm cloud
Wetness on my face
Squish in my boots,
This call to green shoots
And slippery skin

I take your sugar
Your crystal nectar
Sweet in my bitter coffee

I take your faith
And stretch forth to grab
A bunch of lupine
In the high grass

I take your meteor
Your cataclysmic shooting star
A wish for the future
or a crash in our now
I saw you land in the ocean
and I accept the miracle
Of stardust



I see your scythe
Your lopping off loved ones
I thought there would always be more
time

But this is it.

Today I take your love, yours to give
I take you within me, live and wet
I take the joy of fullness
I take the pain of you gone
and its blue lake

I am myth to your myth
Lover, killer, healer, parent,
Child at the window
I grasp your hand in my garden
And sniff your compost in my dirt
I meet you here
My North Star, my Big Dipper.

-- Brita Ostrom

Permission Slip

I am old
This fact seems
beyond dispute
and yet
I know those
who would
take this age
and youth-anize it
denying all its joys

This age is my
permission slip
to slip a bit
no longer
beholden
to hold down
a corner of the world
I release my grip
so it billows up
freshly laundered
in the sunlight
making space
for laughter

--Stephanie Noble



ESSAY

The Loss of Common Scents

Those of us affected by the wildfires of recent years quickly grew weary (and frightened) of the expression “the new normal.” It got tossed around a lot by politicians and people who wanted to feign a jaded weariness about something that really, we ought to be able to fix, either with better forest management, or electrical equipment monitoring, or environmental policies.

I don’t want an annual neighborhood sacrifice – with lurid flames, dead victims, and lost homes -- to be normal, ever. But this NEW, new normal? Who saw THIS coming?

How quickly, and how suddenly, we have had to adapt to a “normal” that only dystopian fiction writers could have fully imagined. Suddenly, we approach everything with trepidation. The media are relentless, hectoring us with warnings and body counts and grim consequences.

We are fed visions of the best of us and the worst of us. It is not a choice, not an opportunity. It is a mandate that we reorder our lives. From the moment we wake up, our routines have changed. Just like that.

Instead of going to work, the gym, or to meet friends for coffee, we ponder our options. There’s food to prepare and eat, of course. Books, TV, Netflix, and cleaning out closets. And for activity, there’s walking. Boy is there walking. It’s amateur hour on the streets out there. And yet so necessary to keep us feeling alive and hopeful and part of something bigger.

On Nova Albion in Terra Linda, in front of an apartment building, I

pass by cars parked end to end. A car window is open, the day is warm, and I smell car interior. Maybe cigarette smoke, old carpet, the long-cooked plastic of a cracked dashboard. I also get the faintest hint of human sweat. A smell that rouses something primitive in me, some longing for the togetherness of my tribe.

Waving at dog walkers on the other side of the street is one thing. Nodding at folks on bikes is okay.

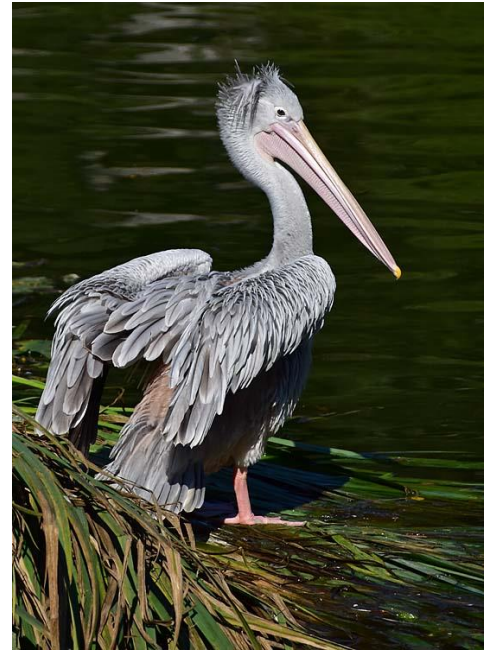
But the experience of another near human – the feel of skin, the texture of hair, the sheen of their face up close in the sun, and yes the smell of them, whether it’s shampoo or perfume or garlic from last night’s dinner – well, it’s life-affirming.

It’s a strange thing to miss, when I can immediately summon up a whole list of more obvious Stuff I Miss: my gym, lipstick, choosing what shoes to wear, working in a school and interacting with kids and classrooms and laptops, walking in stores and touching merchandise, even for no reason, just to touch it. Grocery shopping without masking tape on the floor telling me where to stand. Museums and restaurants and browsing in book stores and music shops, pulling out stacks of sheet music and fingering them one by one. That’s the stuff in the Rule Book we are now avoiding.

And those are tactile reassurances, too. But they’re mostly the man-made stuff of modern times – stores and computers and Uber door handles and ATMs.

It’s the more primitive tactile experience of being human that we are having to do without, and which no wartime population quite had to endure.

If my kids were still small, I could smell them and bathe them and wash and fold their clothes and kiss their heads, all while social distancing with the outside world. But with an empty house



and one husband, I am missing out on the fleshly experience of community-wide human interaction. It’s such an odd thing. And rather jarring for our very social species.

Just a few weeks ago I was in the Performing Arts Center, playing “Georgia On My Mind” in an upstairs room at my Thursday night piano class. It was the last meeting of the winter session, and we were growing slightly wary of each other. Do we wipe down the piano keys from the class right before? Do we eat a cookie from that container our teacher brought? Do I hug the friend with whom I carpooled to class for seven weeks? What about the door we all pushed on the way in? The sheet music we touched, sorted, borrowed from each other?

Protective wariness of “the Other” has come to mean everyone. Walkers approach from afar and cede wide berth from blocks away. Curious toddlers are hustled away from friends and strangers met on the street. It’s antithetical to our very natures, to the social stirrings we are born with. And it stinks.

-- Elaine Bultman

FACULTY PROFILE

Dr. Trevor Björklund

Conductor, composer, trombonist/tubist, and teacher, Dr. directs the Golden Gate Brass Band and the Symphonic Wind Ensemble at the College of Marin, where he is a tenured professor of music.

How did you get started with your instrument?

Trevor: Well, I didn't start out on trombone or tuba. My first instrument was, in fact, a bugle. It was my father's from when he was an Eagle Scout. It lived on the windowsill in our house in Mill Valley. One day I expressed interest in it and my dad taught me some of the basics: how to buzz my lips, how to play three or four different notes, and how to play Taps and Reveille. Because of my experience with not only the bugle, but also membership in the San Francisco Boys Choir, Joe Angiulo (music teacher for the Mill Valley Public Schools) let me start on the trumpet in fourth grade, a year early. By fifth grade I was riding my bike from Park School over to Mill Valley Middle School to participate in the beginning band on trumpet!

Once a sixth grader at MVMS, I continued to improve on trumpet until seventh grade, when I got braces. So Mr. Angiulo switched me to euphonium, which is a little lighter on the face. I played euphonium at Tamalpais High School for a year under Omar Clay, before moving on to the electric guitar. There was no brass playing in my life until years later, when I stumbled into the College of Marin Music Department and met its band director, Doug Delaney. He recruited me into the band at COM and, at the end of the fall semester – 1996, I think – called me into his office. He handed me a beat up old trombone and asked me to take it

home over the winter break... Doug needed another trombonist for his jazz band!

I brought that sad instrument home and it promptly fell apart in my hands. I went back and he gave me a much nicer horn, a King 3b. Thus began my trombone adventure. I took lessons from Barry Roland for the next few years, then transferred to SFSU on a trombone scholarship. I studied there with McDowell Kenley until 2001, when I moved to Trossingen, Germany as part of an exchange program. There I studied with Abbie Conant and Gerhard Wolf.

I have played trombone professionally for 22 years but only picked up the tuba in 2011, just because I had always loved it. I've gotten pretty good, but wouldn't consider myself a professional tubist.

How did you get started with conducting a Brass Band?

Trevor: In the late 1970's, Arlen Philpott founded the Golden Gate Brass Band, a community group that played a lot of outdoor shows (Arlen also founded the recently re-vitalized *Music in the Park* concert series in Fairfax). In 2007, Arlen passed the baton to local cornetist, music educator, and music historian Kenneth Brungess, who was directing the group when I "found" it in 2012 upon returning to Marin to live and work at the College of Marin. I say "found" because I [re-discovered the brass band, with whom I had played a few times as a teenager, through a Craigslist ad looking for a tubist!

I played with the group for about a year and then, in 2013, Ken decided to retire from his directorship. The baton was thus passed to me!

The brass band had been rehearsing in a musty room attached to the San Rafael Salvation Army. It had low ceilings and was tight on space but it was free.



My first act as the new director was to move our rehearsal (and later concert) space to Terra Linda, where the fine, music-loving folks of Christ Presbyterian Church housed us. But we didn't have much in the way of a budget and concerts were tough to organize. At this time I hatched a plan to create a "brass band" course at the College of Marin. It worked out and I moved the ensemble into the school, where we now had a great, supportive home; we had a wonderful rehearsal and performance space, good lighting, at first and later two concerts per semester, use of the school's promotional material office, and even a budget to buy new music!

The group has really taken off in terms of the sophistication of the literature we perform. It has become an elite group, capable of playing everything from brass chamber music for subsets of the ensemble to large-scale pieces written for us by local composers. In fact, we just premiered Adrian L. Quince's excellent *A Hollywood Overture* in March of this year.

-- Maria Gregoriev

Part Two of this interview will appear in the July August issue.

Message

Looking out my kitchen window, I see my son Eli hop on his mountain bike and head down the road for a quick ride..

Through the trees, I can see his red baseball cap and his working boots. It's a sweet moment for me.

Not much is coming down my road these days. Walkers mostly, few cars. He came out from San Rafael with groceries for me. Lots of good food, salmon, eggs, cottage cheese, pasta, sauces, bread and lots of veggies.

He's not at his work these days so he is here to build a railing for me next to the steps that go up the hill to the Art studio. I'm blessed. His presence and attention make me feel safe and supported.

We are in a time and space that is unique for all of us. We are doing distancing, so I miss giving him a truly carefree smile and a big hug when he arrives. Now, I'm making a lunch for us with some of the great food he brought out to me.

I've been cleaning everything that comes into my house from out in the world, but even that is being hopeful. This is a new time, a sad time, and a challenge to what we thought we would be doing.

Eli has a garden and he brought out a big bag of beautifully perfect green kale leaves. I'm cleaning them and preparing them for blends or stir fry.. The big and small leaves are so perfect, so fresh and gorgeous. I think to arrange some in a vase. But I don't.

I want a good lunch for us both, so I chop up some small leaves for stir fry, and I think.

It sends me deep into myself looking to see how I am doing emotionally. My hands stop and I look out at the trees in the sunshine.

I will gently surrender, be calm, do the work I can do and think of good for all.. I will rejoice in the mind, body and spirit that is myself, in this life, right now,

here on this planet. I will be as alive and thankful as I can be in the moment. And at this moment, I'm making a fabulous salmon feast for myself and my son.

I wish for us all to have some Joy and Security and much love.

-- Rosie Eichelmeier



Cornflowers Blue

Cornflowers, blue, buttoned on a straw field
Ten thousand suns beat down, like drums of fire

From inside out I long for a sweet breeze
to carry warm wet droplets from my brow.
Five hundred feet below there is a stream
It's bed peeks thru where water doesn't flow
I crave to dip my lips into that stream.
It will quench my thirst and nourish my soul.
I'll rest for a while under a tree.

Oh, how I want to lie down and reflect
on the pure blue of that tiny cornflower
nestled with kin on a field of dry straw
Hot sun, dry field these flowers will endure
Home's uphill, dwell upon the cornflower.

-- Carol Allen

Haikus from the Pandemic

Haiku #19

the bees will still hum
and seeds will still grow
tall trees
when we are all gone

Haiku #24

walking in the woods
under canopy of trees
you can hear their song

Haiku #33

listen to the wind
telling tales of long ago
before we were here

Haiku #38

the clouds and
mountains
will not take notice
when we
are no longer here

-- Grace Ilagan Angel



Spring

Blossoms shower on

waking koi surfacing to

welcome morning light

-- Sharon Fusco, Japan

Lessons Learned

As Spring arises, as the saying goes," all eyes turn to baseball." When a pitcher throws a third strike the empire yells "your out!"

Some years ago, at this time of year, my wife Kathleen, following thirty-three years of marriage, was called out by that Chief Empire in the sky after only two strikes. She was a breast cancer survivor -- strike one -- when seventeen years later, a second strike was thrown. She was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and within four months, at the age of sixty-three, Kathleen was called out. Her playing days were over. No, life is not a baseball game. Once you are called out, you're out. There are no second chances at the bat.



In the course of a married life together, as with most husbands, our wives teach us many lessons. To this day I continue to put the toilet sit down. But it was in the last weeks of her life, at her last time at bat, that Kathleen's impact and teaching were the most significant. During this time I was caring for her at home. She was fortunate to have the services of Hospice. Nurses, nurses aids, social workers, found their way to our bedroom. Kathleen, despite bouts of intense pain and despair, always met her hospice workers with warmth and a deep appreciation of the time they spent with her. She always felt better after their visits and the hospice workers left with a smile. I was later told that Kathleen was one of the favorite patients at Hospice. As a witness to these interactions, I came to realize how every day consideration not only improved our own well being but those around us as well. Lesson Learned.

A few days before her death, Kathleen called me into our bedroom. She asked me to help her walk out side to our deck. Because of the ravages of her cancer she was physically very weak and had not been able to leave her bed. I was fearful of causing her injury. However, she was determined and we slowly made are way out doors. Once there, Kathleen looked up at the azure blue sky with white puffy clouds floating bye and in a barely audible voice said " beautiful, how beautiful." I believe in that moment she planted in me a seed, which has grown into my present day love for the great outdoors and passion for nature. A lesson much appreciated.

My most difficult lesson took place when Kathleen told me that we needed to discuss my future. What would happen to me when she was no longer here. Although I was fully aware that her end was imminent, it was most difficult for me to conceive of my life without her. I did not want this talk. Kathleen, in her inimitable way, prevailed. Then, right before my eyes she became a matchmaker. She began to list for me the pros and cons of all our single female friends and acquaintances that just might be a match for me. Well, no matches were made that night. However, I do have an online profile on a couple of on dating sites. I believe that this last lesson was perhaps the most important of them all. Life goes on. Yes, life goes on.

-- Richard Schneider

Friday March 27 2020

Is it strange to feel
the well of tears like
deep ocean waves in
the belly, slowly they
begin to swell and perch
on the edge of each eyelid.
It's not a sadness so much
as an uncontrollable need
to feel "in control", but
how can one achieve
such a task in this day
to day marathon of questions
not fully answered? Yes
the statistics and diagrams
roll off tongues and saturate
screens from every media
platform. We all seem
to be minding the rules....
yet it's still there
in the weight on ones
shoulders, in the continued
efforts to escape the cyclone
of truth, to just be alive
in each minute without
the monkey without the
devastation without the
unknown path we hold
ahead of us.

-- Margie Heckelman

Pandemic Birthday Greeting

How was my birthday, you ask,

My friend from

A thousand miles away

As you might imagine, quiet,

Wife and I at home

Two sheltered-in-place
Californians

Electronic late-breaking news

Silenced and shuttered-in-
place

Embraced over phone

By family and

Friends

Like you

Precious moments

Of physical distance,

Emotional closeness

Reminding me

What truly matters

In this uncertain lark

Of a life

Sodden and saddened

By worldwide tales:

Not enough and no work

Rainy day,

Golden years

Treasures

Avalanche-buried by

Multiple market slides

Reminding me

Of the overwhelming stress

In our own and other lands

The compounding heartbreak of

Loved ones lost forever

Sodden and saddened

By everyday tales:

Pandemic-panicked shoppers

Jostling, racing and grabbing

From the shelf

That last lonely

Can of beans

(Not that I needed reminding of fear,

That most powerful of all emotions)

(In kindergarten, I'm sure,

They all learned how to share

And did reasonably well until

The end of the world

As we've known it)

Reminded nonetheless,

To err is human

To forgive—

Also human

So I thank you for

Warm birthday wishes, and

Ask that you join me

In this troubled time—

Hold others in your heart

As I hold you in mine

Be healthy, happy, strong,

My friend, and know

One day,

At long last

This, too,

Shall pass

-- Larry Tolbert



IN BIRDSONG

We notice more, in this new quiet.

Buzz of bees on lavender.

Crackle of wind through eucalyptus leaves.

A calm hawk watching a vacant street.

Come, calls the morning—

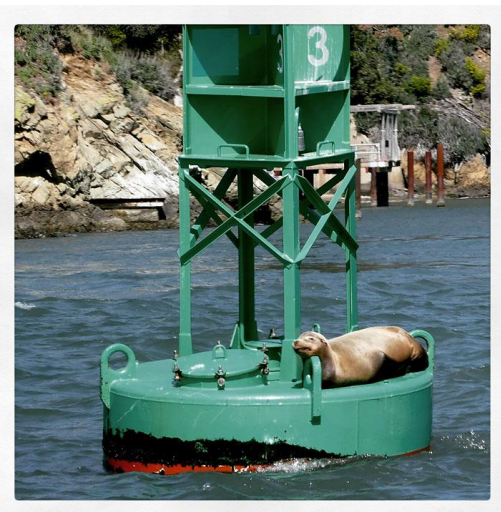
Join in birdsong, in blossom and cold rain.

Leave fear behind,

And for a few short hours

Be made of springtime.

-- Elizabeth Shreeve



Battered Spoon

(in memory of John Prine)

So a spoon gets loose in the washer
and the water blades bash it again
and again against the plates:
a cyclical storm of musical despair
that continues where
our cycle of uncertainty began
when it was too late to prepare.

"Nothing to do now, but wait."

But you can't.

Battered by one cancer, and then another
it weakened one lung, coronavirus the other.
In a cycle that comes back round in the end,
though in its darkness, we rarely know
when.

The last "go round" and round
again.

Until, at last, it comes out in the rinse,
and the drying cycle follows.

A blistering trial of heat so long
that tears may dry, but not my grief,
which returns when I find my reflection
in the battered spoons of your song.

-- Denize Springer



RECIPE

You take your cup of syllables
You pour it in a bowl
You mash them to a poetic mix
With pastry cutter bold
Then add some words that grow
Like yeast and kids and flowers
Blend them well until they
stretch and percolate for hours
Move on to the whole phrases
All metaphoric and clumpy
Whip them mightily to form
A dough that's not so lumpy
Now knead your heart into it
Add soul and spirit too
Form into letters, spell your
name
And bake with love true blue.

-- Louise Potter Yost



In Memoriam

Nancy Hope Williams Koors passed peacefully on April 16, 2020. She and her late husband Donald E Koors were long time members of ESCOM at the College of Marin. An extended and adored group of friends were a very important part of her life for which she credited a life of joy and celebration. Rememberences and thoughts are welcome at: ForeverMissed.com.

Night Shapes

Beach town on the bay – cool breeze blowing late.

Wet sand slate grey, shimmering patches from the hiding moon.

Small slapping waves slipping here and there, gone –

then reappear, then away – dart and hide in the darkening water.

Two forms in the sweet unknown of discovery,
reaching out to meet, grasping a new dream from the past.

Night shapes touch slow and carry the other and evening
becomes the night, and their words flow over each other, and they
wear them and they shiver.

-- Julio Burroughs



The Raccoon

Covid-19, you just might be our best friend
As death may come near
And whisper in your ear – make haste
While light still streams...

Pandora's Box has been opened
Planned or by accident
What does it matter?
We are here now

Every movement, face, bird, mask or meal
Will be your teacher
It could be your last
So make haste
While light still streams...

Easy to rebel, throw a fit, strike out
But make friends with your enemies
Make friends with the pile of dirty dishes
Now that the dishwasher is broken too

It's through broken-ness, the light gets through
The vulnerable will show us the way
When you care to look—
So don't avert your eyes
When a poor wet raccoon comes to your door
As he did yesterday, in the rain, looking up at you
With pained eyes as if to say—
I'm hungry, I'm lonely and I'm hurt
I gazed at him with a deep sadness...
As if I could help and I knew I couldn't
The glass door barrier between us....
Then he turned, as if he knew, there was nothing I could do
And limped away, down the wet stairs to the yard below
Lifting his little back hind leg obviously hurt...
And hobbled away...

I promise myself I will throw more food scraps down in the yard tonight
I tell myself he will be okay. We will all be okay, until we're not.
This raccoon feels like the whole weight of the world now –
His masked face...his tiny hands ready to touch something, someone, anything—
To no avail.
His absence felt more strongly than his presence now

Clouds pulled back from their glowering
As if to say remember the sky
As if a curtain lifted for the next scene...
Everyone's home waiting for the eight-o'clock howl
Now accompanied with church bells

I picked a few calla lilies from the yard

As if outside could ever be in
What's right could ever be wrong
Or what's up could ever be down...

Red Horse Benally, my neighbor, is weeding his front yard
And if weeds could speak, they would weep
Maybe the Corona will teach us to speak in one tongue...
Instead of the tongues that have divided us for so long
The forked ones, the fearful ones, the doublespeak and the lies
So many lies...

Maybe novel coron..., *the new crown*
Will wake us from our waking sleep
From our mechanized madness
And bring us to a place...
We never could imagine.

--Marcia Smith

Mother Nature's Reset

Mother Nature is doing a reset, forcing us to pay attention to her! Environmental pollution in China and Italy are now at unprecedented low levels. Earth might reach global emissions targets - as planes are being grounded throughout the world.

Fewer vehicles on roads - as people are staying home, not commuting to work, school, etc. Burning of hydrocarbons...substantially reduced.

Now we, along with all animals/trees, can breathe (although protectively yet for us)!



One can't help but wonder if the super bugs are not directly related to how we treat our environment. Animals, along with all vegetation, are being stressed by our impact on them, as they don't have a choice. They are weakened, becoming unhealthy or extinct; and we consume them.

Although this virus started in China, we are all to blame. We are contributing to the unhealthy environment...and we are paying for it!

Mother Nature is making us re-think our ways within our current solitude. Will we learn?

--Harvey Abernathey



Laura Miholland

THE ESCOM JOURNAL WELCOMES YOUR SUBMISSIONS!

Send your best work to denizespringer@gmail.com

GUIDELINES

Submit your final, proofed work. Changes, unless absolutely necessary, will not be accepted after submission.

Include your name in file name and on the page of any documents. **You must be an ESCOM member in good standing. Membership is no longer available with registration.**

Sign up for, or renew, ESCOM membership at:
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WRITTEN WORK (700 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 must be 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 will not be considered.

POETS: If your poem must be centered, please note. 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 to avoid embarrassing errors.

NEXT DEADLINE: JUNE 15, 2020

ESCOM Journal

The ESCOM Journal a publication of the Emeritus Students, College of Marin, is published on alternate months online at www.escomnews.com. A limited number of printed copies are available in the ESCOM Campus 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 (please consult the guidelines (on the last page of each issue) before submitting). The deadline for each issue is the 15th of the prior month. Submissions or questions and comments should be addressed to the editor: denizespringer@gmail.com

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