

ESCOM Journal

The literary and visual arts publication of Emeritus Students College of Marin

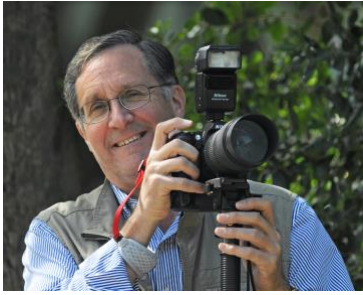
May/June 2024



Laura Harrison

INSIDE: Moms of all kinds, a Dad's legacy, a dog's perspective on Mother's Day, nature's treasures and surprises, a fearful heart, and members remembered.

IN MEMORIAM



Paul Milholland, Photography Club, Journal Contributor

A third-generation San Franciscan, Paul began his journey on November 9, 1950. He passed peacefully at home on March 9, 2024 at his residence in San Rafael after battling colon cancer.

Paul grew up in San Francisco, Tiburon, and Lucas Valley. After earning a degree at Sonoma State University, he spent one year at Biola College, and attended Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, before embarking on a 41-year career in elevator service and repairs, from which he retired in April of 2012.

Paul met his wife Laura at church in San Rafael where a strong friendship bloomed, and they married in 1978. Sons Christopher and Scott were born in the 1980s and the family lived in Marin as the boys grew and four grandchildren were born.

Paul had a life-long passion for reading and shared a joy in photography with Laura throughout their 45 years of marriage. “You rarely saw Paul without a book or camera,” recalls Laura. He aided Laura in getting the ESCOM Digital Camera Club off the ground and co-led the club with her for seven years.

Paul’s expert photography graced the pages of *The Journal* as he continued to be active in the club as long as he was able. His warm smile and gentle humor touched the lives of all who had the privilege of knowing him. Whether lending a listening ear, offering words of encouragement, or a witty comment, Paul had a remarkable ability to make people smile and feel valued and supported. His passion for life and quick sense of humor served as an inspiration and joy to all who crossed his path. His spirit lives on in his friends and family, including four grandchildren.



Paul Milholland



Paul Milholland



Allan G. Smorra

IN MEMORIAM



Karen Hemmeter

Former ESCOM President, ESCOM Center Host

Karen served as ESCOM co-president (with Marian Mermel) for two years starting in 2009.

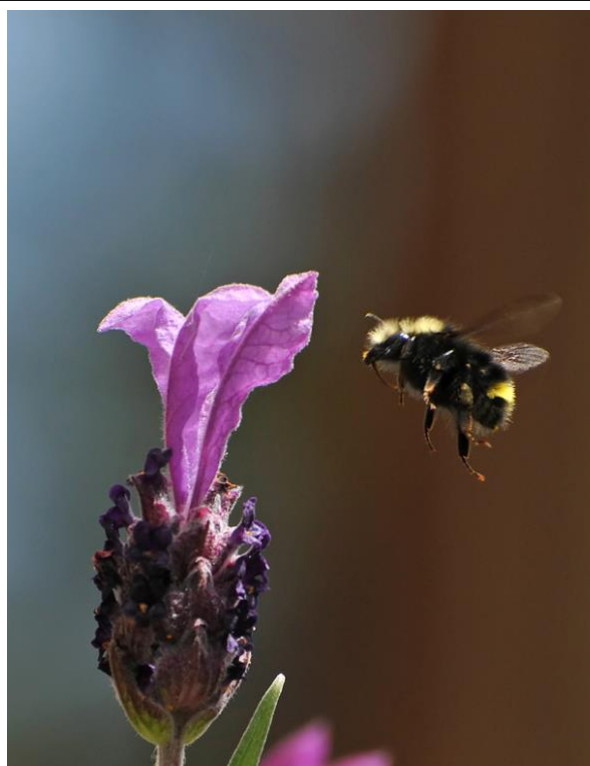
“She was an incredible gift to ESCOM and always gave 100%,” said Marian. “I am so grateful our paths crossed. She had this wonderful energy in making sure events and obligations were fulfilled.” Karen also organized the Emeritus desk volunteers at both the Kentfield and Indian Valley campuses. She developed detailed duties for the volunteers and had a wonderful relationship with all of them. She also worked with the COM Board of Trustees to maintain low fee classes.

Raised in New Jersey, Karen passed away in Novato on February 19, 2024. A graduate of Cornell University, Karen’s passion for travel began during a transformative summer in Europe, where Karen and her first husband, Chris, worked at the Beau-Rivage Palace in Switzerland and explored the continent by train. They settled in Honolulu, Hawaii, where they raised their three children and Karen nurtured her interest in volunteering. In addition to her work with ESCOM, Karen was a Hospice volunteer.

When her first marriage concluded, Karen moved to Seattle. She and her second husband, Cale Carson, spent months at a time biking through the USA and Europe, covering more than 25,000 miles, sometimes camping, and carrying all provisions on their bikes. After Cale’s passing, Karen relocated to Marin County, California, to be closer to her son, daughter, and grandchildren.

In 2002, Karen’s adventurous spirit led her to Paris, where she lived for a year, fulfilling a lifelong dream. Later, Karen met Bob Hall, with whom she shared 15 years centered around their mutual love for golf and travel.

Karen's spirit lives on in the hearts of Bob and her children Mark, Chris and Katie; five grandchildren; two great grandchildren; her brother Ted and all who were fortunate enough to know her.



Laura Milholland



Laura Harrison

The Egg

She'd been gone
 about a year when
 I found it
 nesting in her mending basket
 its juniper-green glaze crazed
 like fine Kangxi porcelain
 its weight consoling
 in the palm of my hand.

Rainy afternoons
 I'd watch
 her polished finger tips
 coaxing the egg
 inside sweater elbows
 blue jean knees
 Argyle toes teaching me
 the art of mending
 life's random tears.

In a dream the egg splits wide
 releasing her
 dispeller of monsters under the bed
 kisser away of skinned knee stings
 available shoulder for teenage woes.

She sits cross-legged on the living room floor
 rolling the egg to me from the other side.

lynn arias bornstein



ESCOM Author's Series

Brian Copeland, *Outraged*

Friday, May 17 1 to 2:30 pm Academic Center Building
 (Kentfield corner of College and SFD) Room 255

A TV investigative reporter and his sister, a San Francisco PD homicide detective, investigate the slayings of Bay Area cops who've shot unarmed African Americans yet faced no repercussions in this debut crime thriller.

ESCOM Presents



Poet, Artist, COM Instructor, Prartho Sereno

"The 7 Secrets of the Creative Process."

Thurs., June 6

1 to 3:00 p.m. (in person)

Room 255, Academic Center, Kentfield campus (corner SFD and College Ave)

Lupine’s Perspective

Mother’s Day dawned, the air balmy with the scent of jasmine and roses. Dad made us Baba’s pancakes for breakfast. They are actually crepes, which he drizzles with melted butter before dusting them with powdered sugar. Blueberries and strawberries, sprinkled with sugar, glistened in a glass bowl. They’re mom’s favorite topping for the crepes. I was allowed two crepes sans the sugar and berries.

After breakfast mom looked at me and said, “Lupine let’s hike to the waterfall.” I wagged my tail in delight as it was my favorite walk. I get to be off leash the whole way as we hike up a steep trail through the woods that spits us out on a fire road, no cars, no worries. Where the road ends a narrow trail continues to a lilting waterfall cascading down a narrow ravine. It pauses, filling a basin big enough for me to jump in and cool off, before continuing its silvery way.

We’d just started down the fire road when around the corner came Buddy, a tennis ball in his mouth, tail wagging, looking like an advertisement for a Golden Retriever. With Buddy were Troy, a likable but cracked Chocolate Lab, and Hughie and Annie, brother and sister Bichon Frises who always go into a barking frenzy as they pass us. They don’t live in our neighborhood, but their dog walker often brings them here. I ran ahead to greet Buddy. Now this is where humans get confused. I had no intention of having an altercation with Buddy and wouldn’t have if he’d shown the proper respect. Instead, his stance insinuated that I should ask *his* leave to be on *my* road.

Mom is always pretty cool-headed if I get in a fight. Most humans don’t realize if they just leave us to it, we’ll work things out. Fights between reasonable dogs are more noise than anything and usually no one comes out too much the worse for wear. I guess Buddy’s leg got caught in my jaws when I was making my snapping feint.

Buddy was stretched out on his side, head resting on the ground. Mom said, “I think he’s scared and shocked.” I thought he was faking it to get attention. My muzzle hurt like hell. Talk about a dull fang, it felt like a fid had been driven into it. It was bleeding but mom barely glanced at it.

The dog walker said, “He seems OK.” Then her voice changed. “There’s some blood here,” she said, “oh no, lots of blood.”

She and mom turned Buddy over revealing a pool of blood on my road. I began to worry. The two Bichons started yapping and approached me. I barely had my lip curled when mom looked over and said, “Lupine, don’t even think about it.” I



Marilyn Bagshaw

flattened my ears in submission and gave her my sweetest look.

The dog walker took Buddy’s leash and started to wrap it around his leg. Mom, looking desperate, said, “That won’t work.” and whipped off her shirt. When Buddy was bandaged up in my mom’s shirt they coaxed him up. It was then that a jogger came down the road. Mom covered her breasts with her blood smeared hands. He stopped and asked, “My god, are you alright?” Mom’s face turned the color of Buddy’s blood. We’ll be OK, we just have to get him to his vet.” He glanced at mom and with a glint of humor in his eyes said, “Sorry I can’t offer you my shirt.” Enjoying the spring weather he was also bare to the waist. He turned and trotted off.

Mom lowered her hands and boy did she look spectacular, an Amazon painted for battle. We started slowly up the road, Buddy limping, when the dog walker said, “Oh no, where’re Annie, Hughie and Troy?” I could have told them. Like any dogs with gumption, they had slipped off for an unsupervised romp.

Back home mom was crying while telling dad what happened. “The jogger left, then Steve and Margo came around the corner with their dogs and I’m trying to cover myself, dried blood all over my hands and chest. It was mortifying. And we need to find out how Buddy is.”

I could have told her how Buddy was. We dogs sense these things. But she didn’t ask me. Buddy was doing just fine and the other three were safe at home. I felt heavy-hearted to have spoiled Mom’s Day.

Susan Connelly

Her Life's Project

"Why can't you write like Danielle Steel?"

This was my mother's reaction to everything I penned. I always felt obligated to share my writing with her. She worked hard and sacrificed -- doggedly determined to give her oldest daughter something she never achieved -- a college degree.

My education included Russian literature and a semester in what was then the Soviet Union, where I immersed myself in the lives of the Russian masters. I tried to express my appreciation to Mom by sharing my thrilling visits to Dostoevsky's apartment and Chekhov's grave. "Did you know, Mom, that Chekhov's headstone is shaped like a little dacha? As if death were his only refuge?"

But Mom never acknowledged my gratitude and seemed to care little about the authors I idolized. Nonetheless, for 40 years, I tried. I even sent her a signed copy of *Dr. Zhivago* for her birthday. "Why did you get me a used book," she moaned. "I've seen the movie at least eight times."

Whenever I uttered the word *Russian* around Mom she'd launch into a lecture about her favorite Steel novel, *Zoya*. She fed me the rags-to-riches story with the urgency of a mother heron regurgitating into the mouth of her insatiable chick. Nothing I could say about *Anna Karenina* ever measured up to *Zoya*.

Though Mom had two other children, I always felt like I was her life's project, so I let this go on longer than it should have. Having full time jobs, the only time I had to write my own material was on the weekends. But, at 57, I jumped at an early retirement with a pension so I could devote all my time to my own essays, plays and short fiction.

"This is what I want to do with the rest of my life," I told Mom. She countered with the same old question.

Although I have probably penned as many words as Steel has fans, I never had a desire to become a popular author. I write for only one reader -- the only one that really counts. Writing down what I observe and feel is how I make sense of a world I find as brutal as it is wondrous.

When Mom learned she was losing her sight to macular

degeneration, she upped the ante. "Can't you write something I'd like before I am too blind to read?"

"It's not that simple," I reasoned. "You just don't seem to like anything I've written."

"Read *Zoya*...you'll learn!"

As my mother's universe darkened, so did her appreciation of my talents.

"Your writing stinks," she finally snapped. "You'd better get going and write something I like, before I die."

"I'd rather swim with crocodiles," I snapped back.

The pause that followed was long and painful. I don't remember who hung up first, and I don't recall saying goodbye. *Was my mother showing signs of dementia? Why else would she believe she could make me write like Danielle Steel?*

She was right, though, that she was going to die soon. And, as soon as we resumed speaking, she reminded me of this. But all this did was make me anxious. *Would I deeply regret that I couldn't fulfill her most ardent wish?*

I attempted a Pasternak/Steel hybrid, but my heart wasn't in it. And the minute I typed the sentence "she knew she should leave, but something wouldn't let her;" my inner critic blew up: "You're NOT going to leave THAT in, are you?"

I deleted the piece from my hard drive and burned the printed copy. Only then did it occur to me that the vicious voice in my mind sounded a lot like -- well -- *my mother's*. I stopped sending her my work. I no longer told her about any publications, and she never asked.

When Mom died, on the young side of 99, she had indeed become too impaired to read. I can only hope she somehow understood that even though I did not become the kind of author she preferred; I would always appreciate what she sacrificed so I could become the one I am.

Denize Springer

Legacy

I saw my father weep
 for the boy
 who was leaving
 center ring filled
 with costumed peers
 the hush of the crowd,
 the loudest silence
 each tear that slid
 down his greasepaint grin
 was decades of pride
 washing over every
 sawdust heart,
 a magical life
 like jeweled birds
 we flew, spun, twisted
 and flamed,
 all because of one dream,
 a man with red and white
 canvas wings



Susan Connolly

who soared through miles
 of god light
 and Kentucky blue grass,
 our souls fed by
 primal echoes, summers lure,
 star drenched nights,
 child gypsies whirl
 to the pied piper,
The circus is in town.

Margie Heckelman

**BECOME AN ACTIVE AND
 IMPORTANT PART OF ESCOM**

Join Our Leadership Team!

ESCOM Council positions are currently available for the 2024/2025 year (and we meet only once a month).

For more information: Contact Luanne Mullin at Luanne.Mullin@comcast.net

or Gary Gonser at ggonser3@gmail.com.

Mom

Meet my mother. Yes, that's her in this coffee can.



She was a small woman and my sister managed to cram her into an empty, one gallon container. Born in Kansas and so completely American, Nola Arlene Campbell would smile and approve of her favorite coffee as funeral urn.

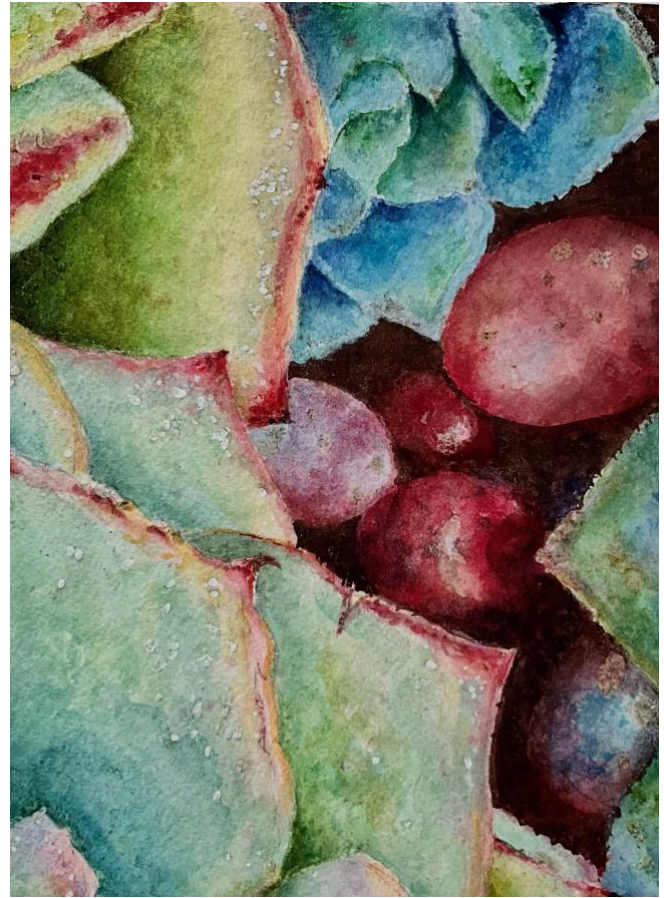
Mom would have also enjoyed her bizarre cross country journey with Mr. Folger on her way to me in California to spread her ashes. And as always, we could count on my sister, Alexie, to wave her dysfunctional wand and transform a simple task into a magical adventure...

After her stroke, I flew from France to be with Mom during her hospital stay, end stage and home hospice. She passed away in my sister's home. Packing up her apartment, going through all the documents and donating items to designated charities, I prepared to return to Europe. Always practical and organized, Mom had prepaid for cremation. My sister claimed the ashes and in the car I had purchased for our mother, drove me to the airport.

A year passed and I moved back to California after another dysfunctional relationship of my own: our family tradition. Mom waited in a cardboard box in my sister's garage hoping to be scattered in Bass Lake, California. She and her second husband, the love of her life, honeymooned there. I had promised to deposit her in the waters in front of the campground where they shared a cabin.

In the meantime, my sister had found yet another sponsor to house her, this time in Sacramento. So, she packed up her house and contracted a moving company. Mom joined the furniture and other boxes and off they went in a truck from Colorado Springs, heading West. Well, everything went well in the beginning as it usually did with my sister and her many changes.

Alexie followed the truck, and they had a very scenic and comfortable trip until arriving at the California border. Research had never been a priority in her life and apparently the moving company was not licensed or insured to operate in California. Mom was not allowed to enter California.



Janet Frankfield

Undaunted and quite used to the slings and arrows of poor planning, Alexie called me in California to arrange for another moving company meet them at the border, transfer her possessions and Mom to another truck. I refused. Our mother's death released me from the need to rescue my sister in yet another family crisis. She simply worked her way through her long list of other codependents. It would take a month before I inherited Mom and Mr. Folger...

My friend, Skip, steered his boat towards the small bay in front of the campground as Mom and Husband No. 2, smiled down from the big coffee shop in the sky. We slowed to an idle and Mr. Folger emerged from a paper sack. Nola Campbell disappeared into Bass Lake.

Skip looked across the lake at the Ranger Station and said, "You know this is totally illegal."

Was it the wind in the trees? I thought I heard Mom laughing.

Brenton MacKinnon



Eloise Rivera

Birding with the Girls

like the fledglings on the telephone

line learning to fly

Shelby and Phoebe, two and three

peer through the binoculars

nearly as big as they

learn to navigate the world

acquiring knowledge

standing like the egret

still as statues

to watch him stalk a mouse

see it bump down

his slender throat

invisible in the creek grass

a great blue

seize the frog

it's twenty years now

they visit on break

time to find the binoculars

Barbara McDonald

Living Energy Haiku

Energy be clean
Self-charge and all show yourselves
Forces in sun's rays.

Water sounds and I dance
Winds tear, plants sway stillness finally comes.
Bring the sound of rain.

If it is not sick
Don't even try to heal it,
You will crack and break.

Crown me with blessings
Showing no headache or pain,
I can handle my head.

Between ears docs' jokes
Compute temperate waving
To thrive safely.

Dad never sickly
Thermodynamics appear
Health without healing.

Memorialize Dad
His time came with death's sickness
He sleeps health forgot.

Ole' man river, roll
For he sure knew something,
Waves call rest. Pillow.

Karen Arnold

Think Tank

A think tank - in present tense -

becomes a thinking tank, *I guess!*

Formulating party concepts,

conjugating polling precepts.

Talking heads and savvy pundits

walk the walk and run the gauntlets.

Party members, party die-hards -

quiet speak or rampant blow-hards.

Stalwart citizens.....united

now can play the game, unblighted.

Strategizing blogs and websites,

trumping points for media sound-bytes.

Thinking Tanks may foment bias,

(occasionally, overtly pious).

Oh, to augment power now,

Yet circumvent that 'sacred cow.'

Power-seek or simply righteous.

Thinking Tanks may stem a crisis.

deidre silverman



Nancy Outenreath

Practicing Hope

(for Dr. Heather Poupore-King)

Pain lives in the shadows of my brain
my mind terrorized, my heart fearful
my muscles in rigor.

Don't give up, she said.

Practice mindfulness.

*Sit comfortably,
hands resting on lap,
eyes down, spine straight,
muscles relaxed.*

*Take slow deep breaths,
feel the fresh air dancing
in the crevices of your nostrils,
expanding the air pockets of your lungs,*

*your breath bringing hope and joy,
whispering past your parted lips,
as you savor the air, sweet as red wine,
flowing over your tongue.*

Feel safe. Let fear fly.

Breathe slowly. Heart will follow.

Pain gently glides by.

ray fay, m.d.

my hybrid haiku

like a river’s current
cars crisscross the bridge
still water below

tall white egret
wades at the shore
a hungry fallen angel
looking for bugs

a houseboat built high
is so full of sky
winds can sweep away
in a day

that old couch
will never be good enough
for sleeping beauty

streetlamps
will never be
a substitute
for starlight

empty box
now filled with shells
an orphan earring
listening to the sea

birdsong full of truths
we will never understand

a tiny lemon seed has much to say
after living in a lemon

did I hear that
mountain murmur
or was it
gravity sighing?

marcia taylor smith



Tami Tsark

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Summer General Meeting

Sat., June 1 at 1 p.m.

Kentfield Campus Student Center

Events like these bring us all together and foster a sense of belonging and shared purpose. This is a great opportunity to meet and make new friends, celebrate together, and learn about ESCOM’s exciting plans for the future.

With refreshments and music adding to the festive atmosphere, it’s bound to leave everyone inspired and connected, so come join us!

Look for your emailed invitation for more details about parking and program.

Eclipse

It has begun
 millions of eyes wearing odd glasses
 looking up at the sky
 at the sun
 as the moon shadow slowly creeps
 over the light.

The darkness doesn't last
 it is brief but eerie

as the blazing rim appears
 cries of amazement then silence
 somewhere in the distance
 church bells can be heard.

What is it in our DNA that compels us
 to gather as witness to this cosmic event
 which we now know is coming
 unlike our ancient ancestors
 taken by surprise and no doubt frightened
 at the loss of the light and warmth needed for life?



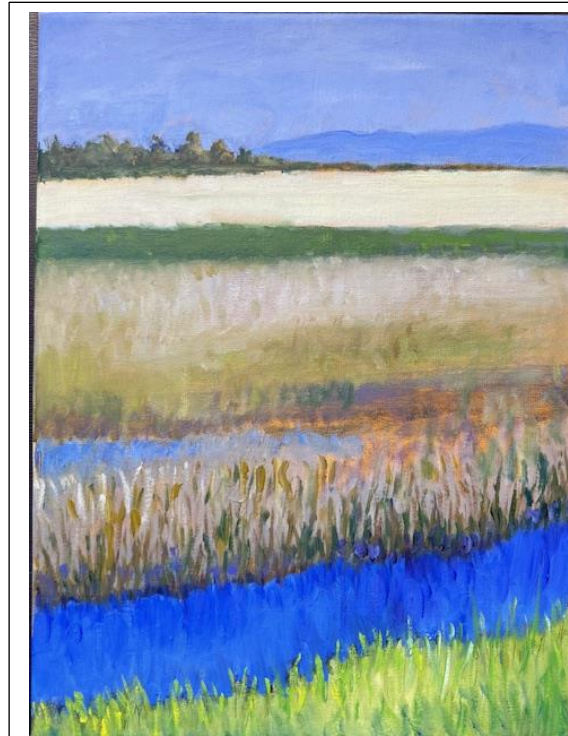
Marilyn Bagshaw

This gradual disappearance of the sun
 now a media event televised and broadcast
 could be seen by millions throughout the world
 at home on a TV or computer
 yet many travel great distances
 to participate in the ritual of being there
 part of a communal event, of a story that can now be told
 of history.

Anne Mulvaney



Susan Connolly



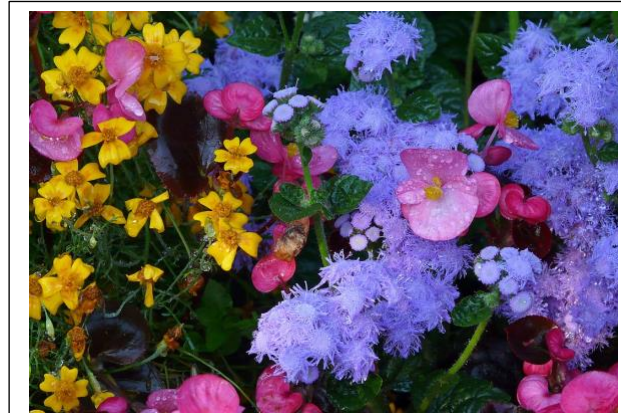
Jeff Ross



Sharon Fusco



Tami Tsark



Laura Milholland

Tiny Treasure

I find a rough egg-shaped rock
in the Tuolumne River basin,
a geode, I believe.

I crack it open on the shore
using my little rock hammer.

Each half is filled with crystals,
all the colors of a desert rain.

I place one half back in the river
with its inner treasure exposed,
and carry the other half with me
as I saunter into Yosemite's
Tuolumne Grove, home of giant
sequoias, some 300 feet tall,
some thousands of years old.

I carry with me the freshness
of this early spring morning
that has followed a gentle rain.

The air is crisp and clear.

I inhale the resinous scent of conifer
as I observe the resplendence
of the natural world before me.

no bigger than a walnut,
wearing more down than barbs,
an insulating semi plume, I think,
its colors white, cream and grey.

I pick it up, enclose it in my empty
palm for fear it might blow away.

Beside me among the sequoias, sits
a White Fir tree, needles, blue and green

and flitting among its upper branches

a Mountain Chickadee, round bellied,
white cheeks, wearing a black cap and scarf.

I'm sure this feather was once part of her tiny body.

I can scarcely hold the wonder of the moment

To be alive and be a part of this forest scene.

To honor this tree and the little bird
who may have built her nest up there.

I place the geode half, crystal side up,
under its needle filled branches,

and walk on with my treasure, gifted

by the Mountain Chickadee.

Poem by Carol Allen

Long Haul

I

You drive with pride a bright colored
 rig that you ride astride up high and big
 bringing other’s wares to the world.
 Day and night and day again, your
 world a long and labored asphalt
 divide—deserts, farmland, mountains
 and forests frame you on either side.
 Rain, sleet and snow fall from above,
 sleep and boredom well up from
 within, country songs and early rock,
 lukewarm coffee four hours in the pot,
 and a day-old hoagie from the last
 truck stop on the seat at your side,
 sole companions for the ride.

And though your haul is small, it’s
 true, a fraction of the whole, your
 task is large—the food we eat, the
 clothes we wear, the things in homes,
 look anywhere, it’s plain to see the
 freight, the weight you bear touches all.



Tom Gannon

II

I’ve long watched you make your
 countless hauls since you first came
 my way the time I skid my bike
 into the roadside gravel and shot
 my hand toward the sky, tugged
 hard, again and again, an invisible
 cord, a spirited appeal to you, long
 haul trucker, long ago passer-by.

You blasted your air horn loud and
 proud for me that day, I remember
 it still, the thrill, as today as I tug
 upon my beard of gray, recall the
 boy, with hair bleached blond by
 sun and build so slight—his smile
 erupting in pure delight.

Larry C. Tolbert



Laura Milholland



Libby Smith



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. Production of the ESCOM Journal is supported by the Joan Hopper Trust.

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WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE JOURNAL?

NEXT DEADLINE IS JUNE 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 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