

# ESCOM Journal

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*The Literary and Visual Arts Publication of Emeritus Students College of Marin*

*May/June 2025*



*Photo: Laura Milholland*

***INSIDE: Motherhood, Fatherhood, Moms, Dads, Grads and Birds, Birds, Birds.***



*Lake Lagunitas, Marilyn Bagshaw*

### Meditation

My heart and mind unite as one,  
To bring me peace when day is done.  
With love and joy, my soul feels light,  
A gentle glow that shines so bright.

I breathe and let the moment stay,  
Compassion guides my heart each day.  
A healing warmth flows deep inside,  
With grace and care, my fears subside.

Though baring wounds still bring me pain,  
I rise with hope and try again.  
Each day I vow to start anew,  
With love that's strong, sincere, and true.

Ray Fay

## ESCOM NEEDS YOU!

COUNCIL ROLES; COMMITTEE MEMBERS & EVENT  
VOLUNTEERS

CONNECT, CONTRIBUTE, THRIVE!

Emeritus Students of College of Marin (ESCOM) was designed to foster lifelong learning opportunities for adults of Marin County through educational, social, and cultural activities under the auspices of the College of Marin.

Why Join our Leadership Team?

- Build rewarding relationships with like-minded peers who share your life experience and wisdom.
- Create a supportive community network that understands the unique joys and challenges of our generation.
- Apply your lifetime of skills and knowledge to help shape ESCOM's future.
- Stay engaged and mentally stimulated through collaborative problem-solving and creative thinking.
- Contribute to ESCOM's mission of providing enriching, challenging, and educational opportunities for active adults.

We have exciting opportunities in Marketing, Club Development, and Program Creation, with both committee and Council positions (at-large and officer) becoming available in June.

In this post-Zoom era, we're reimagining how active adults connect and engage. Your perspective is invaluable as we navigate this transition together.

Ready to join a community where your experience is treasured, and your presence matters?

For More Information: Contact One of Us Below and Join Us for a Council Meeting!

Gary Gonser, President: ggonser3@gmail.com

Leonard Weingarten: Vice President: lhweingarten1@gmail.com

Luanne Mullin: Council Member, Elections  
Committee: Luanne.Mullin@comcast.net

Together, we can build an ESCOM that enriches all our lives!



## A letter to my family reminiscing about my father's grooming habits

During the 1950's I was the eldest of four siblings up early it was a privilege observing my parents' preparations for the day like mom getting breakfast or watching my father's grooming rituals before he'd headed out for work.

This is a Story of watching my one of my dad's early morning rituals of getting dressed for work as a young girl. Appreciatively, all my siblings knew our father was a fashion horse however, our mother was no slouch herself as both were impeccable dressers.

Each parent had their own dressers with their own necessary grooming materials, (i.e., my dad's dot kit and mother's vanity).

Inside the top of my father's dresser drawer contained a wooden box of assembled cuff links, buttons, tie clasps and shirt pins from which he'd pick out what he wanted to use that day or for special occasions. Separately, there was another drawer with his handkerchiefs that covered boxes of his WWII Army Air Corp pilot metals he received and carefully save but that's for another story.

Next, carefully laid out on the bed was his starched shirt, his chosen suit for the day, his belt, socks and his polished shoes, but not the topcoat, at least not yet, as that would have to wait.

As a young 8-year-old girl I might wander into the bathroom unobtrusively and had the unspoken privilege to sit down on a closed toilet seat to observe my father shaving in front of the mirror. His face was smooth now, so he finished cleaning up his razor and the sink, then found his bottle of tonic and pumping out the contents in the palms of his hands sparingly splashed it on refreshing his clean face and finally, using a specific pomade, he combed his dark brown hair back carefully into place.

There, I quietly watched the grooming of my father. He deftly tied his tie with nimble fingers passing a long-patterned material through loops he created around his neck while his starched shirt collars were pointed upwards like rabbit ears, later folded back down as if they were being tamed around his neck. Looking at himself intently in the mirror he was satisfied and was ready to go to work.

Done.

Nearing the door, he whisked on his remaining piece of



Laura Milholland

clothing, his long arms pushed his sleeves through his overcoat then patted his left top pocket there inserted was his handkerchief with two points exposed poking up flat like little white peaks above his pocket, he looked handsome and composed then he'd pick me up to his face and gave me a quick kiss on my cheek, promptly put me back down and with that he'd turn on his long legs headed towards the front door taking his leather briefcase, with a wink to my mother and maybe a last minute sip of coffee he said, 'Goodbye' to the family. Gone was my father to a place called 'work', but I could still smell the imprint left on my cheek having briefly touched his smooth face, a faint splash of his aftershave of who's name I never did know, but one lasting scent I shall never forget.

Later, after college visiting, I watched another ritual exchanged this time between my parents of which I had never witnessed before and it was because they were preparing themselves to go out to a party.

Our parents were a good-looking couple and so here they were fully dressed to the 'Nines' so to speak, to attend the party, but there was a snag, as dad somehow couldn't tie his tie. No problem. In their dressing room I observed my mother tying Dad's tie in the Windsor Knot fashion, mind you this feat was done completely backwards from a man's point of view if he was doing it himself, but after a while through a concerted effort on her part she finished the job adjusting the tie beautifully. Together they were both satisfied and off they went to their party.

So, from this story I extend a respectful nod to any woman, a wife, a partner in life, who has taken the time to practice the art of learning to know how to tie a man's tie backwards, like a skillful contortionist and one in whom should receive a great amount of credit. And that's my takeaway on men's ties and the men in our lives who wear them. With love from, Aunt Debbie

Deborah Jo Dow

# Incident

The summer city sun was hot  
hanging in its horizontal angle  
in the sky straight into the eye  
its light too bright to see  
what's to come with  
coming of the night

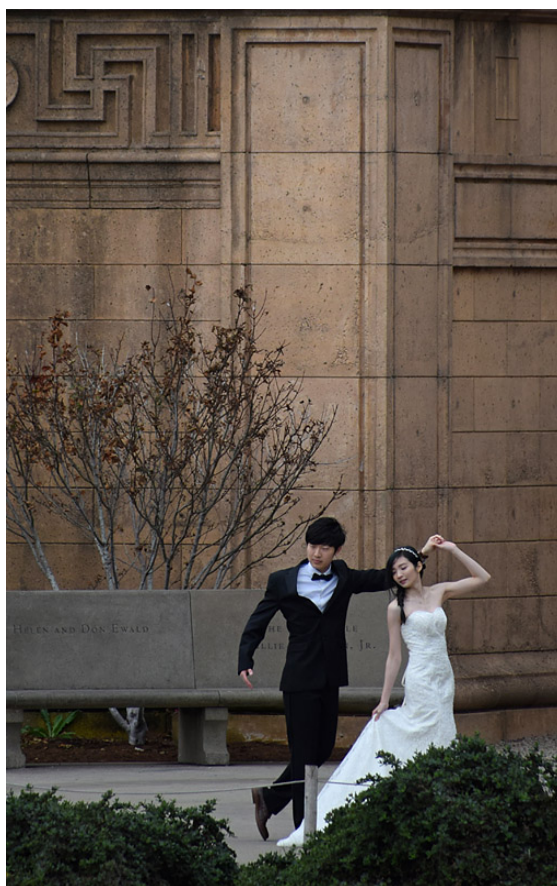
At this major intersection  
a careening Dodge  
Charger Hellcat  
just like that  
brushed me back

I bumped the curb, falling  
headlong into another  
Saturday night  
following not far behind

which didn't see the red or  
bother to signal a turn  
soon it was too late to stop

The Sunday paper read  
severe expectations  
were sustained and  
experience was tied  
up for hours  
in what appeared  
at first to be  
a minor incident

Larry C. Tolbert



Laura Milholland

# Bodhidharma Arrives on a Straw

The regard was without perspective,  
The Prime Ideal before the First Idol.

The first thought,  
A thought without thinker, gyred to plenum,  
Plenum to Word, to Order,  
And, perhaps, to a first particular.

It would begin from there,  
When such would regard itself.

Let, then, Word spin out to its words.  
Let words spin out and out and down,  
Light and heavy all,  
Spinning down and down,  
All to inuendo.

Brian Racette

### Frozen Light

three Italians discovered  
how to freeze light today  
neither liquid nor solid  
but something in between

how will we use it, I wonder  
something like glowing ice cream  
or a rocket ride through time

an astrophysicist recently  
found time is like two arrows  
moving in opposite directions  
what next?  
can AI do my laundry?

last night, Leo, my neighbor's cat  
stopped by for a visit  
sat on my lap and stared at me  
with those big luminous cat eyes

as if he knew me  
from another time  
tears fell across his furry face  
and I wondered why  
he was so sad

maybe curiosity  
is what keeps us alive

that darting ray of light  
from dark clouds above

not quite frozen yet

- Marcia Taylor Smith



Jeff True

### Visitors

Fiery orange like a field of poppies,  
sharp black and white wings  
all focused on one single bird.

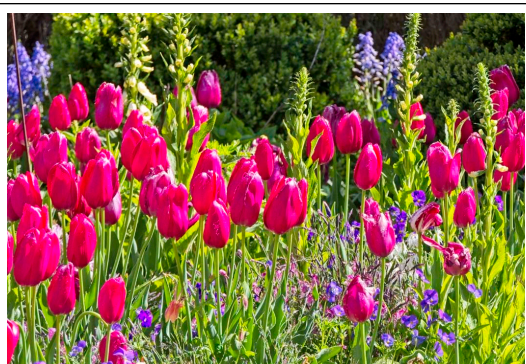
It's that Hooded Oriole again,  
lighting in my only fan palm.  
His mate, carefully weaving  
a cradle of fiber and feathers,  
skillfully sewing it to a branch.

Both of them constantly chattering  
Like two common crows in a cornfield.  
Sing-song bemusement to my ears.

The male now upside down  
on my hummingbird feeder trying  
to suck nectar from its tiny hole.  
His ambition a comical sight.

They often fly to my orange tree,  
to suck juice from the fruit.  
I'll lay out some oranges cut in half  
along with some grape jelly today  
So my visitors are assured a special stay.

Carol Allen



Nancy Outenreath



## Thrice Blessed

Jamie watched Grace carefully weave between the cafe tables to their booth. "You look ready to pop."

Grace eased herself down onto the banquette, her belly grazing the edge of the table. "You have no idea how exhausting it is hauling this around."

"I've ordered the bouillabaisse; we can split it and each have a salad. When you called, I could tell you needed something to warm the cockles of your heart."

The briny scent of the sea laced with the aroma of garlic, leeks and tomatoes wafted from steaming bowls placed in front of the two friends.

"Every time I have bouillabaisse; I think of the summer Renee took me to visit her parents in Provence. Why she invited me is a mystery, I was so horrid to her in my early teens. We visited her favorite village, Bormes les Mimosas. It steps down a side of a hill overlooking the Mediterranean and the whole village was enveloped in the scent of flowers. It was like being inside a bottle of heavenly perfume. Renee ordered us bouillabaisse at a small restaurant and after scouring our bowls we descended the narrow medieval streets and stairs exploring the village. Passages led to beautifully paved squares with splashing fountains and earthen pots holding jasmine, roses, and lemons. Geraniums tumbled from planters above doorways and windows peeking through honeysuckle. Because the streets are so steep and narrow there weren't any cars. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven."

Grace's eyes brimmed with tears brought on by the memories and one rolled down her cheek, dropping into her soup. Jamie reached across the table and squeezed her hand. "What did you want to talk about?"

"I'm scared."

"But we've taken the birthing classes and Sam and I'll be there to coach you."

"It's not the birth, oh, I'm a little apprehensive but I think that's normal. I'm frightened I won't be a good mother, that I'm lacking some essential ingredient of the motherhood recipe. When I was nineteen and met my birth mother, Allie, I thought the hollow places in me would fill up, I would feel whole, like I belonged. And I did find where my

nose came from, that she has allergies too and had rebellious teen years. I do love her, it's just that I thought she'd feel like my mother, but she doesn't. She feels like an aunt."

You of all people should have the ingredients. You had three mothers."

"Right, one who gave me away, one who might as well have for all the attention she gave me after having my sister Lindsay, and Renee whose cancer came back and took her from us so suddenly just when I needed her most." Grace swiped at another tear, "Sorry, hormones, Allie's decision to have me was very brave, Renee didn't want to die, and mom had her own challenges. She laughed, "You know Renee said I had her deepest sympathy for having three mothers, how she'd found one more than enough."

"Did I ever tell you about Renee trying to slap me when I called her a bitch? I ducked and she missed. I'll never forget how she held up her hand and looked at it as if she'd never seen it before. She said please forgive me and walked out of the room. If I'd called my mom a bitch she would have banned me from the house. It was Renee who convinced my dad to take us to visit Paris, Rome and London. She wanted us aware of the bigger world, of other cultures. We spent three extraordinary Easter vacations visiting these cities."

"Remember when you introduced me to her as your stepmother? In that great French accent she said, I will not be cast as the wicked stepmother. That is all English nonsense. Grace is my belle-fille and I am her belle-mere. Grace, just think, she married your father knowing she'd be responsible for two little girls, eight and ten. She hadn't any practice with motherhood, and she wasn't young."

"Forty, with a demanding job, and with daddy often traveling she became a part-time single parent. She was a fabulous cook and the first thing I asked when she got home was "Whats for dinner?" Mom was pretty much absent the first couple of years daddy and Renee were married. I'm surprised Renee didn't have a breakdown!"

"There you go, follow Renee's recipe. Her ingredients seem superb."

Susan Connelly

## Community Education

### *Italian Anyone?*

A Q&A with Alessandra Beraldi, Instructor,  
Conversational Italian



#### **Tell us about yourself**

I came from Genoa, Italy and grew up in Milan. Since Elementary School, I have wanted to become a teacher. I attended a High School preparatory program for teachers. Then I went to university and graduated. While in college I did substitute teaching for Pre-School and Elementary. I was a High School teacher for three years in Italy. Then my husband and I moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While he attended Wharton School's MBA program, I taught Italian Language at the Romance Languages program at University of Pennsylvania- Penn University for two years. In a letter from the Dean, I was voted by the students as the "Best Teacher." My husband and I moved back to Europe. In London, England, I taught Italian in English Elementary Schools for the Consulate General of Italy. I also taught at Kensington and Chelsea College for five years. In 2000, my husband and I moved to California. I taught primarily Italian language for Reed Union School District in Tiburon. In 2019, I began teaching at College of Marin.

#### **What do you enjoy most about teaching?**

I like to teach beginner classes. It is so rewarding to see students make initial sentences and then have conversations.

#### **What about your current Hobbies?**

I enjoy being with people. I love cooking.

I enjoy Marin and love walking and going on the trails and by the water. My family loves to go sailing in the Bay.



*Laura Milholland*

#### **What would you recommend to students looking to study Italian in college?**

I recommend that students go to Italy, study abroad. While they are in college, they could spend a semester in Italy and travel throughout Italy and all of Europe. The Train System is so wonderful that you can travel everywhere. There are important towns and cities, and you can stop at one station at a time and visit the town or city. There are many historical and cultural differences, such as the food and the people, the museums, castles and churches.

#### **What classes are you currently offering and what are some future classes at College of Marin?**

At College of Marin I am teaching intermediate Italian, course (B level) and a beginner course. I have had some of the same students since 2019. Conversation is key in my classes whereby students speak, ask and answer questions from the beginning. This summer, I'm excited to be offering a new Italian Workshop – in person at Kentfield Campus:

"Italian Workshop: Everyday Conversations for Elementary and Intermediate Levels"

-Maria Gregoriev

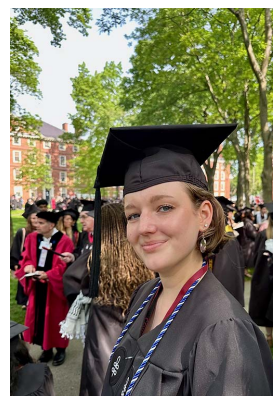
## Graduation

Graduation is a step  
a step taken into the future  
to the next level  
a celebration  
of life and vocation  
of hopes and dreams  
of time and energy  
of how we will spend our days.

An ending and a beginning  
looking forward from the stage  
flipping the tassels and  
throwing caps in the air  
we affirmed our accomplishments  
and faith in what we would do.

As an event linked  
to formal education  
some of us have had more graduations  
than others, but...  
if we are awake and aware and invested

if we pay attention while living everyday  
we experience many graduations  
without ceremony  
without celebration  
or even notice by anyone  
perhaps even ourselves  
until  
we know we have changed  
we have grown  
we have learned



Nancy Outenreath

we have survived  
we are alive and  
we are ready to take  
the next step-  
Congratulations!

-- Anne Mulvaney

## Cultural Revolution

during China's Cultural Revolution  
intellectuals and youths  
were rooted out sent to rural areas  
to become farmers  
Cherry Chin's nephew arrived in America  
hoping to hawk vegetables from his bike  
his parents had been Beijing academics

today we are at war with academia  
shutting down big science  
punishing the arts higher education

will the intellectuals artists  
plow the fields pick the lettuce  
have their children peddle  
potatoes from their bikes

Barbara McDonald



### It begins as it ends

What we call bad  
others call good  
value has many faces  
it begins with Eden's promise  
manipulating truth and  
fantasy  
You know.... what  
.....I mean

Then perspective  
held tight to the chest  
asks who's to know  
right from right  
anymore as if we ever did  
You know.... what  
.....I mean

What we know is  
more is better more is good  
to best your neighbor  
brings out your best  
You know.... what  
.....I mean

Young Futures,  
in-view but without in-sight  
of what was before and  
what lies ahead leave Hope  
an orphaned child#

You Know What I Mean?

charles Beisch



*Susan Connelly*



*Laura Milholland*

### Lidocaine Dose

Lidocaine dose, oh lidocaine,  
You take away my pain.  
Lidocaine dose, oh lidocaine,  
I hope it won't come back again.

Ring, ring, ring,  
I can hear the telephone sing.  
Ring, ring, ring,  
I need a refill. I'm on a treadmill.

Lidocaine dose, oh lidocaine,  
Without a dollar to my name.  
Lidocaine dose, now everyone knows  
My back is so inflamed.

Doc, please hear my plea and not just for my  
spine.  
Lidocaine patch, Oh! pal of mine.

Jeff Lemontt

# **He lives in the memory of things**

His spirit lives on  
in the cotton candy faces  
of children sitting on hay  
bales at the Clark County  
fair, mesmerized by summers  
sun and tumbling acrobats  
that soar over stacks of clowns,

I still see him among the Nubian  
goats inhaling barnyard aromas  
as their gentle mouths nuzzle  
his fingers while he convinces  
me of the tangy deliciousness  
from the freshly squeezed milk,

He's there in old photographs  
and news clippings from Wenatchee  
music theater with his well-rehearsed  
characters like Hajj and Harold Hill,  
or a full-page color photo  
when the circus was in town,

in the echoed halls of HB Ellison  
and Orchard Jr. High where the principals  
office was just off the school entrance  
and his manual Royal typewriter with  
its black and white round button keys  
sat proudly at his desk awaiting  
the hunt and peck method of his index  
fingers,



*Always Remembering My Dad, Marilyn Bagshaw*

as I write this poem I remember  
to dig out the collection of postcards  
he sent through the years from illustrious  
world travels as his lifelong dreams  
came true always signed "with love  
from your traveling Dad",

there are molecules of contentment  
stretched wide across African jewels  
such as Kenya and Tanzania,  
elephants knew of his unforgettable love,  
nearly every continent absorbed his  
curious footsteps,

he visits my dreams, occasionally implants  
music from the Big Top deep within  
my sleepless brain sponge, when I fly  
through aerial sideshows of cumulous,  
he is always there with outstretched  
arms ready to catch and return me  
safely home to this suspended pedestal  
of life.

Margie Heckelman



Jeff True

### Driving Lesson

I.  
It's a white sky morning  
high fog drizzles a fine mist  
veiling her hair like a mantilla.

Top down, pedal to the metal, she pilots  
her butter yellow Pontiac over the steep  
Scott Street hills to Cow Hollow  
radio tuned to KJAZZ  
June Christy and Mommy  
harmonizing That Old Devil Moon.

Mid-morning sun  
vacuums the mist, bluing the sky,  
as she teaches me to drive  
on the road that runs from  
the yacht club to the old lighthouse  
at the far end of Marina Green.

II.  
It's a gray sky morning  
gunmetal clouds hang heavy over Cow Hollow  
as Daddy, behind the wheel of his gray sedan,  
leads the cortege, tailing the hearse,  
from the quaint old church on Green Street  
'cross town to the beach and Great Highway.

In sync we think of her, bedded down,  
in timeless silence of a cherry wood casket  
impossibly young at fifty-one, passenger  
in alien transport, snail-pacing to Colma  
—at twelve miles an hour.

lynn arias bornstein

### Early Morning

Looking out ~ a still life

Framed by the window.

Outside the window

The leaves are still.

A sparrow sits watching,

Plumped to blanket heat.

The sun lifts slowly,

Warming the stillness.

Its motion ignites

The emerging sunscape.

Joan Taschian

### Intermediate Treasure

As the sun shines bright in the sky,  
my thoughts go to your spirit on high  
I want to meditate on your heartstrings from within  
I want to alleviate rash decisions made on a whim  
Please reiterate the deeper love you have for me,  
I need to rest and be able to see  
my vision is blocked without your eyes  
my thoughts are imprisoned with peoples lies  
reach out to me and family close up  
give us the love of a tender pup  
give us the honor to stay by your side  
help us to keep your precepts  
not run and hide

Cynthia Rovero

*In Memory of the Hero Husband, I am blessed to  
have married*





# ESCOM

Emeritus Students  
College of Marin

## ESCOM Journal

**Editor/Designer,** Denize Springer

**Web Content Manager,** Richard Jensen

*The ESCOM Journal is published on alternate months online at [www.marin.edu/escom](http://www.marin.edu/escom). A limited number of printed copies are available in the ESCOM office, Building 10, at the Indian Valley campus or the College of Marin Welcome Center in Kentfield. 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 15<sup>th</sup> of the prior month. Please send submissions or questions to the editor at [denizespringer@gmail.com](mailto:denizespringer@gmail.com).*

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## ESCOM Council

President, Gary Conser; Vice President, Leonard Weingarten;  
Treasurer, Richard Jensen

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**Kentfield Campus:** 835 College Ave., Kentfield, CA 94904  
(ESCOM office is temporarily occupying the Deedy Lounge in  
the Student Services bldg.) 415/485-9652 or  
[escom@marin.edu](mailto:escom@marin.edu)

## WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE JOURNAL?

**NEXT DEADLINE IS JUNE 15**

Please send your **FINAL** draft to

[denizespringer@gmail.com](mailto: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 newspaper.