

ESCOM Journal

March/April 2020



**EMERITUS STUDENTS
COLLEGE OF MARIN**

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong Doing

Lifelong Friendships

FROM THE PRESIDENT: A DAY TO LOOK AHEAD

On a cool January morning we met at IVC: 21 of us—Council members, Committee Chairs and Council liaisons, supplied with lots of coffee and bagels.

This Visioning Session was an opportunity to have three undisturbed hours together to discuss ESCOM and envision our future — where we are, where we want to go, what programs and events to offer. This year, upcoming COM policy changes give us an opportunity to re-think our organization, re-visiting questions such as: What are our values? What is our purpose? How are we serving older adults in Marin County?

Reimagining our mission for growth and innovation led us

to three basic questions reflecting what we understand are the opinions of many of our 1700 members. What follows are the questions, and their potential answers:

1. What is the ESCOM benefit you value the most?

- Clubs
- Education/lifelong learning and intellectual stimulation
- Camaraderie, social activity, and meeting new people
- Participating in ESCOM fosters connections, opportunities for social involvement, and gives members a voice within the COM community

- Giving back to the Marin community

2. What are suggestions for new programs, collaborations?

- Monthly scheduled free social events at the Centers, including “Pop-Up” activities.
- Free workshops (popular topics) with expert presenters including one-day and half-day academic classes
- Collaboration with other COM organizations including daytime and evening activities at IVC
- Expanded volunteer programs with organizations both inside and outside COM

Continued on page 3

A Winter's Day?

This kind of winter day
Takes some getting used to

Does it not?

Drawing back the blinds

A bright and blazing sun

Stabs my morning eyes

Bedroom shadows

Singed by

Burning brilliance

Flee the room

Potted balcony flowers

Each one still

In full bloom

So many leaves yet cling

Hang on to so many trees

Everywhere hummingbirds

Bumble and honey bees

Defying all laws

Of Januarys elsewhere

And of another time

As do shopping center
fountains

With water flowing freely

Summer, fall, winter and
spring

I walk creek and forest trails

Wear little

Save a shirt here

A light jacket there



Spend evenings outside

In the wild open air

Watch a faint and fuzzy crescent

Bright Venus close in tow

Set behind the mountain's peak

I feel great peace

As I reflect on yet another

Picture-perfect day

In the California Camelot

I now call home

While something in me

Stirs familiar thirst

For the blowy frozen cold

Of my Midwest baby soul

-- Larry Tolbert



VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED...

... to staff the ESCOM Office on the Kentfield campus. Volunteers are needed to fill the following shifts: 2nd and 4th Monday each month, or Every Wednesday - 10-1.

To find out more, have a chat with our Volunteer Coordinator, Lydia Nash, who will welcome your call at: 415/254-6484 or you may email her at Lydiaspath2@gmail.com

A Day to Look Ahead, continued from page 1

- How to start a new club—instructions and training.

3. How do we maintain a strong member base and generate income?

- Marketing membership in ESCOM through a variety of innovative actions.
- Revenue generation: membership donations, large gift solicitations, foundation grants, revival of Gold Card member benefits, fees for special ESCOM activities and events.
- Members-only communications as a benefit of membership; information about upcoming ESCOM events, community activities, and COM opportunities.

We hope to hear from you with your response to these questions/answers and your ideas and suggestions about ESCOM's future.

We have the best volunteers money could buy, yet they come willingly for free bringing their time, their talent and skills, and their open hearts, ready to make this organization the best it can be.

Please join us. We invite your involvement. To respond to this article email escom@marin.edu and type Vision Session in the subject line.

-- Luanne Millin, ESCOM President

RESERVE YOUR SPOT!

Mini-Medical School on April 4

College of Marin Mini-Medical School, *Medical Science and Aging* is a free event that focuses on the second half of life and normal human aging. Program partners include top medical school clinical professors as well as respected researchers from Stanford University, UC Davis, UCSF, and Kaiser Permanente.

College of Marin Kentfield Campus

James Dunn Theatre Saturday, April 4

Morning Session: 9am–Noon

Afternoon Session: 1pm–4pm

Register via email at minimed@marin.edu or call (415) 485-9500.

Please arrive early to check-in and enjoy coffee and tea with fellow attendees.

Co-sponsored by the College of Marin Community Education and Health Services Offices.



Don't miss the 6th Annual Author Series

The 6th annual ESCOM sponsored Author Series began in February and continues with two April dates.

This FREE event is a collaboration of ESCOM, Book Passage and College of Marin Community Education and Lifelong Learning and ESCOM. This year will be the last time the series will take place in the William Keith Room in the Kentfield Campus' Library, which will be demolished during the summer.

All programs will be from 1 to 2:30 pm, and parking in Lot Six, close to the Library, will be free for the duration of each event. The event is free and open to the public. A limited number of copies of each book will be available at each reading.

"For the first time our lineup is all non-fiction," said David Patterson COM Librarian. The event is free and open to everyone, each book this year is especially relevant to all ESCOM members and their peers."

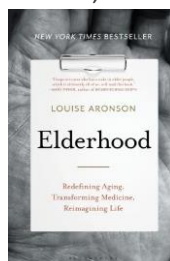
Kudos are due for the hard work put in on the event by Patterson, Community Education and all the ESCOM members over the years who have dedicated themselves to making this event a smash each year.

"This program is a wonderful example of how ESCOM enriches the entire campus," said Patterson.

Friday, April 10: Louise Aronson:

<https://www.bookpassage.com/event/louise-aronson-elderhood-college-marin>

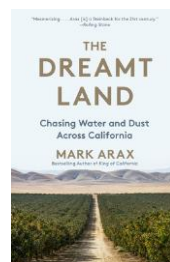
At the very moment that humans are living longer than ever before, we've made old age into a disease—a condition to be dreaded, disparaged, neglected, and denied. In *Elderhood*, Harvard-trained geriatrician Louise Aronson uses stories from her quarter-century of caring for patients, as well as history, science, literature, pop culture, and elements of her own life, to weave a vision of old age that's neither nightmare nor utopian fantasy, but full of joy, wonder, and hope.



Friday, April 24th: Mark Arax:

<https://www.bookpassage.com/event/mark-arax-dreamt-land-college-marin>

- From a family of Central Valley farmers, writer Mark Arax has seen firsthand the battles over water intensify as California lurches from drought to flood and back again. In *The Dreamt Land*, he travels the state to explore the one-of-a-kind distribution system built in the '40s that's straining to keep up California's relentless growth, weaving together reportage, history, and memoir to tell the story of the West's relationship with water.



SPRING CLASS REGISTRATION

If you haven't already, don't forget to register for the Spring semester of Continuing Education classes.

Note NEW locations:

Kentfield Campus

Enrollment Services, Student Services Building, Second Floor

**Mon 9 am to 4 pm, Tue, Wed, Thurs 9 am to 7 pm
Fri 9 am to 1 pm**

Indian Valley Campus

Enrollment Services, Building 27 East Hall, Room 109

**Mon, Tues, Thurs 9 am to 4 pm,
Wed 9 am to 6 pm
Fri 9 am to 1 pm**

PLEASE NOTE: Checks may no longer be used to pay for in-person registration. Checks may still be used for mail-in or on-site drop box registration. Enrollment offices are closed daily for lunch from 1 - 2 pm

More info: **call 415-485-9305, or email info@marincommunityed.com**

Scholarships ...

... for Continuing Education classes are available for students 55 and older. The next deadline is March 25.

To apply, pick up an application in the Community Ed office or contact the office at: 415-485-9305 or www.marincommunityed.com

These scholarships are made possible through an Anonymous Fund at the Marin Community Foundation.

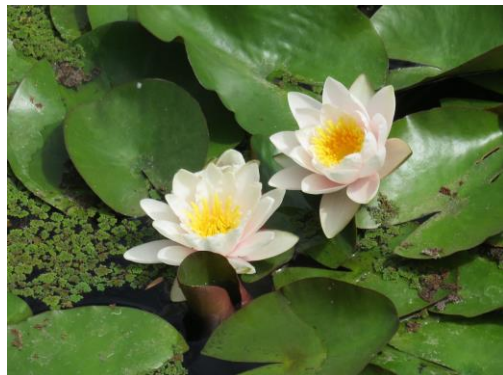


ANTHOLOGY EXCAVATION

Now is the time to rearrange
 the jigsaw puzzle
 like a mirror held up to nature
 let the umbrella invert itself
 notice lilacs blooming in november
 the eucalyptus, embarrassed,
 tears sighing through palms,
 try to imagine no room, we are
 all one together,
 the photo shows us sitting with
 our backs to some monument
 golden as a mexican marguerite
 blossom, that little round bowl

of sunlight, in the distance
 a silent row of windows reflect
 the possibilities like splitting stones
 all wooden floors slanted to the west
 toward the one born crow
 with the sequined face
 in the middle of cow country,
 we would come to know he was human,
 crippled hands like half closed bird claws
 unaware of his nakedness,
 does the bird know it's alone?
 My mind goes blank and opens
 like a flower, you might as well
 call me Love, I don't feel them
 leave the auditorium stained by
 strawberry jam fingertips,
 it is only this moment we embrace
 her dozens of patchwork squares
 her roots shall be our cradle
 as we scatter his ashes in the potatoe
 patch and finish our drinks in peace,
 only then, this little poem let out
 a long and happy sigh....

-- Margie Heckelman
 and the lines of the Poetic Pilgrims

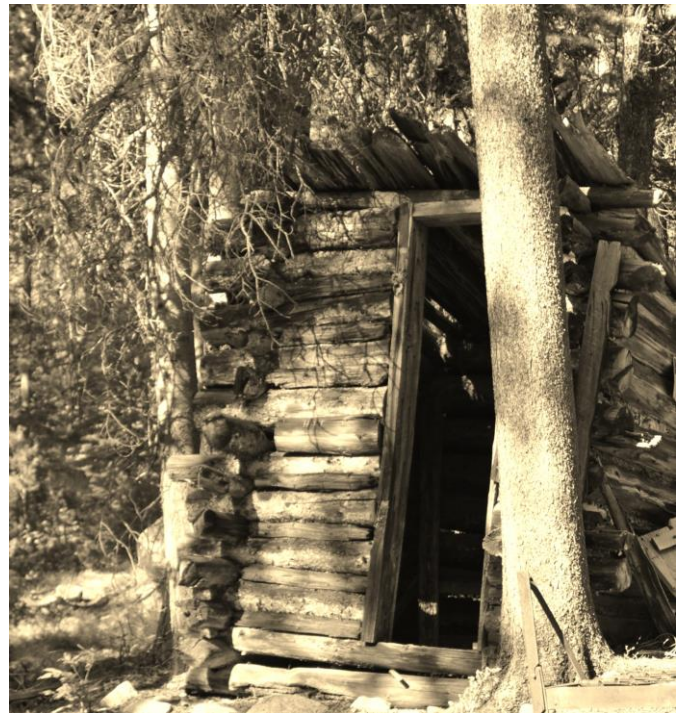


ON OUTHOUSES

In the late 1800's my grandfather Oscar was walking merrily down a dusty road pushing his wheel barrow filled with his carpentry tools in front of him when two officers of the Tsar's army grabbed him and sent him off to fight for the Tsar. Miraculously he survived. He was living a happy life in Odessa, Russia when several years later he was called upon to fight again.

"Oy vey" he said, "I am not going." He kissed his wife Hannah on both cheeks, kissed his four beautiful children "I will send for all of you." He got on the next ship for America. When he reached the shores of America, he found the streets were not covered with gold but he was very resourceful and he immediately got a job in St Louis where they were building the First World's Fair. This was 1901. With his first paycheck he bought a subscription to the local newspaper and was given FREE a piece of land about 40 miles out in the country. In his spare time, on this piece of land he built a cabin, with an all-purpose room and two bedrooms, and an outhouse, which brings us to the point of this story.

At this point I was forced to do some research. Everyone has his or her own idea about the size of the hole. I attempted to measure some of my friends' "rear ends" to get an idea about the size of the hole. My best friend was totally uncooperative. My husband would not let me approach him.



I considered asking my son Bob but I knew his response would be negative. I asked a few more people if they would let me measure their "rear ends" but no one would cooperate with me. In the book I am currently reading *Lisette's List* by Susan Vreeland the hero builds a very elegant outhouse for the heroine and a cover for the hole, which is stained and shellacked with a design in the center. But this is rare in the story of outhouses.

My grandfather, Oscar's outhouse, was of the plain generic variety, one hole. I finally decided the size was about the size of the lid of my 4-quart cooking pot. It has served its purpose very well for as long as I can remember. The outhouse and the cooking pot. I spent every summer with my mother and two aunts in Eureka, Missouri using that outhouse in a constant state of constipation because I was afraid a snake would come up and bite me on the fanny. I only saw two snakes in all the summers I spent with my mother

and aunts--and none near the outhouse.

In writing this story I have learned a lot about outhouses. For example in the Northern States today men who are serious hunters take the seats into the cabins with them because it is too cold to leave them in the outhouse.

When I was a little girl the Meramec River overflowed taking our outhouse with it. I don't remember what we did in the interim without it but we finally discovered it about 3 weeks later a mile away in someone's cornfield. We attached a rope to it and hauled it home. Oh happy days.

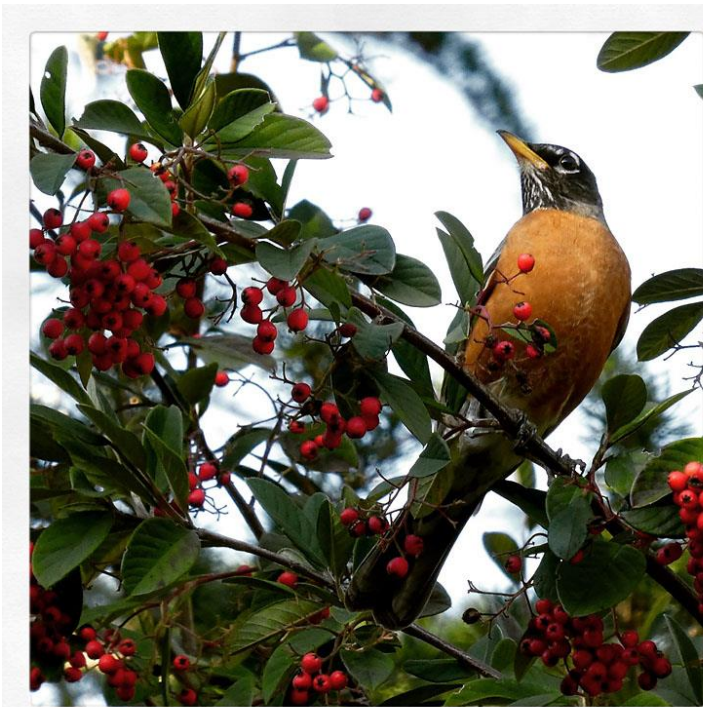
Everybody should have some experience in his or her lives with outhouses. It is one of life's greatest experiences, one you'll never forget. Enjoy, with a cover or without.

-- Iris Tandler

FREE ASSOCIATION

It was just a beam of sunlight piercing through the peep hole
 in my door
 like a message from the divine i thought
 like a laser bullet of nuclear powered photons screaming to be
 recognized
 for what it is and i surmised
 what could it possibly mean and i reflected
 like a mirror held up to nature
 and that reminded me of Bertolt Brecht who said
 "Art is not a mirror held up to nature, but a hammer with which
 to shape it"
 and i have always fervently believed that- But-
 the hammer is the part that bothers me for i think the hammer
 comes
 on too strong and i am a pacifist after all so i prefer to say—
 "Art is not a mirror held up to nature but a" loving mighty wind
 "with which to shape it"
 but anyway i digress, which actually is the whole point isn't it,
 for digression is association is free versing is jazz scatting like
 do be Wop do be doo
 and I've always loved jazz for sure
 but anyway the point was light, a poignant point of light
 and i think i got it

-- Louise Potter Yost



ON A HOMEBOUND TRAIN FROM PHILLY

Waves of darkness, streams of light
 travelling in dimly lit cabins,
 respite from the long day
 refuge from the long night

Clackety clack of iron wheels on the tracks
 rhythmic railings of metal on metal
 a long blast from the melancholy whistle
 a traveler's lullaby

Peering thru darkened houses
 envious of sleep & warm beds
 seeking solace from the lighted window
 an inviting warm glow
 a beacon for insomniacs

Though perhaps it only hides
 a kitchen table littered with
 cold coffee cups & old cigarettes
 and another like me
 awake and wondering

-- Grace Ilagan Angel

LAGUNITAS CREEK

(Editor's note: The author worked for Marin Humane Society)

It was way out west, along Lagunitas Creek. All I knew was the mile marker along the road, and that it was across from there.

"Dead deer, floating in the creek two days," written on the dispatch sheet. I put it down with the other three on *my* sheet. Knocked out a couple other calls, then went out to mile marker whatever-it-was to check out the floater. Down the embankment was a pretty little clearing by a wide spot on the creek. A dead deer was half-submerged right in the middle of the water. There was a mild hint of summer breeze. Whiffs of necrosis passed through the air like fingers.

It was well and truly out there, 25 feet or so, and I had no boat, no intention of wading. Even if I did, it looked too deep. Pretty soon a couple hikers emerged from the trail. I saw them watching me as I decided this was one time I had to leave the deer alone and hope it went downstream. I ignored them as I left and walked up to the truck. If they wanted to complain about my leaving it there, my boss would back me up. It was understood that we would use no heroics recovering a dead animal.

One night years prior in San Francisco, I was in my garage hanging around. Idle minds are the devil's hands or something like that. I'd watched a guy catch a shark off the rocks near the Cliff House. Maybe, like him, I needed a treble hook in case I went shark fishing. I took three pieces of steel rod, sharpened them on my bench grinder, bent each one to a hook ideal for that deer in the



creek.

I didn't want to report to my boss I hadn't been able to get it. I enjoyed being independent, liked to prove myself resourceful. So I had the solution: I could throw a hook way out there with a rope attached, and haul the body in. The deer was full size but I thought it would do.

After work I went to the bait and tackle store and bought fifty feet of 1/4" nylon line and a devilishly sharp treble hook as big as a fist. I went to work the next morning and drove right out to where the deer was and sure enough, it was still there, maybe stuck on an underwater branch.

It was puffed up even more and the smell was worse. After death, the immune system shuts down and a "microbial clock" starts ticking. The bacteria in the gut begin to digest the intestines, and invade the other organs, and that's what causes the deer's stomach to turn blue and literally raises a big stink.

I tied one end of the rope to the hook and carefully laid the rest in a circle like a skinny garden hose. The first throw, I tried swinging it around my head, but then I found it easier to swing it vertically,

parallel to my right side. Not as much chance of hooking my head with it. More hikers emerged, and I didn't acknowledge them. They could watch if they wanted. Maybe they'd see me fail, maybe not. I would try.

On the fifth toss or so, the hook set into the meat of it. I started pulling, and had it halfway home, when the hook popped loose. The body spun slowly, as if it might start to go downstream, but I threw again and it held. I looked over at the hikers and they waved. I pulled it right in as if I did it every day, put the come-along on it, and dragged it up to the truck.

At the end of the day I told the story to my boss, and he asked me to save the rig in a cardboard box in case that scenario came up again. I did, but that box sat on top of a storage cabinet for years. I never had a call like that again.

I'm retired now, and there are all new people there, even someone who drives the DOA truck like I did. Maybe down the road, someone will be in a situation like that, and use that hook one more time.

-- Mike Holland

Things I Feel in My Body

I

The silver rake
abandoned
by the monk
tines down
in the sand.

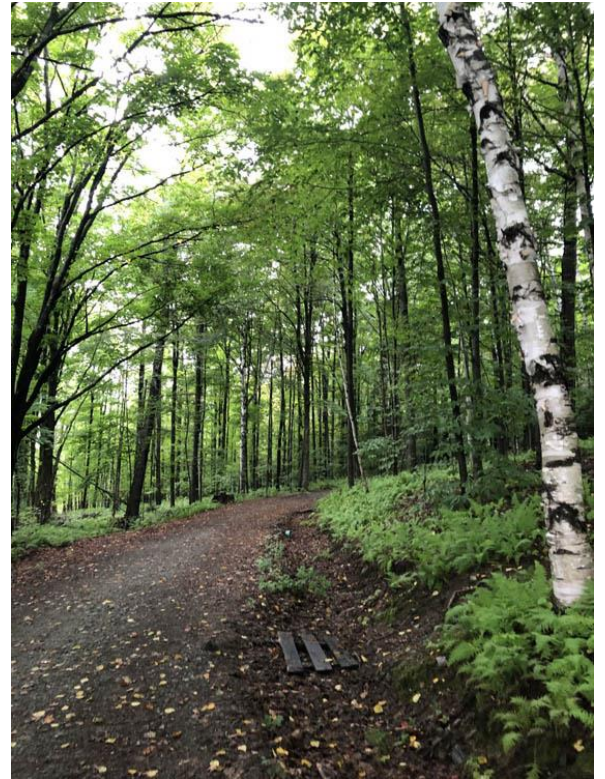
How is it
loosening
tumbling
scattering
tiny stones

in my chest?

grateful to be one of
many
ink streams
spilling
into rivers
of awe
and
the ocean
of is.

-- Kacey Carmichael

amrita@post.harvard.edu



II

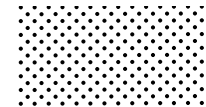
Night's sparkling expanse
dissolves my edges

the stars of my atoms
thrill to join their older cousins

in hide and seek and
a mysterious first kiss

III

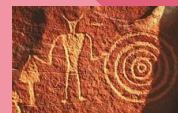
Last writing period of the retreat
passing the cloister courtyard
I choose the library this morning
a collection
of scribbling others



BAJA, MARIN, MARS: STEM CENTER CELEBRATION COLLEGE OF MARIN

MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2020

...



The Cave Murals of Baja California

Library
1:00 PM - 1:30 PM
Teresa Salzman, Archaeologist

Rock Art: Marin, Bay Area, and Beyond

Library
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Teresa Salzman, Archaeologist

Red Rocks from Earth to Mars

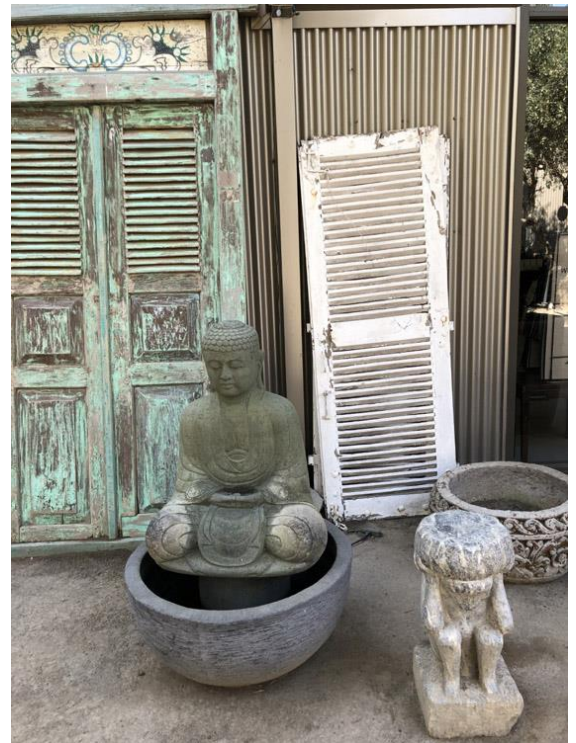
STEM Center, Science Math Learning Building, Room 129
6:00-7:30
University of Utah Distinguished Professor Margie Chen

Free
Open to the Public
For More Information
libguides.marin.edu/rocks

What Can We Do

(after "Asking For A Friend" by Abby E. Murray)

Is it possible to find	as if under an evil spell
peace of mind	stand behind his every act
when the most	defending the indefensible and
powerful person	how do we hold hope
in the world	for our children
the leader of the most	for the world
powerful nation	as we watch
on earth	with desperation
the person	with admiration
you did not vote for	the brave few
the person	who stand up to the insanity
a majority of the country	who stand for democracy
did not vote for	who fight for truth
the narcissist	and what can we do
with no moral compass	to help set our country
who delights	back on solid ground
in dividing the country	to save ourselves
the bully who relishes	to save the world
standing in front of the camera	from the poisons
with a backdrop of chanting followers	of this dangerous
as he slings his wrecking ball of hate	want-to-be dictator
and dismantles our democracy	-- Christine Dietrich Cragg
one rule at a time	
while the members of his party	



Goodbye.

What remembrance does Autumn bring,
 wafting silently
 on the wings of yesteryear?
 They say tomorrow brings a promise of
 renewal, faith and hope,
 while I grasp at what once was,
 recalling the wayward mystery
 of your smile,
 when distance came between us
 and you were gone,
 leaving me with time and memory
 of one lonely tear drifting down your
 cheek
 as we said goodbye.
 I thought there would be other times.
 But this was the last.

-- deidre silverman

THE LOST NOTEBOOK

Did it want to become lost? Like a runaway, tired of sad stories and laundry lists. Get milk, a log, pay the light bill, go to the dentist. It tried to fight the mundane and offered stark white pages, like clean sheets. Like a romantic hotel for lovers or the anonymity of a big city. With straight lines to keep her story straight. But it never was. Straight or clean, but occasionally it was romantic.

She thought she left it in the library, on the bench facing the old towering redwoods. She was distracted that day, the impeachment trial, the lockdown and general societal idiocy. The way he didn't look at her. So many ridiculous resolutions. A new year, a new decade. 2020, the 1920's on steroids. Publish a book, get fit, and get a life! Fight the virtual madness! An overwhelming roar encompassed her like a waterfall in early spring. Things just get more complicated or impossible. The notebook noted this and tried to offer its blank pages of consolation, listening like a shrink or good friend. Like a good diary with a lock. She remembered the pink one she had in high school with the little gold key, which she lost one day and worried Wayne had found it.

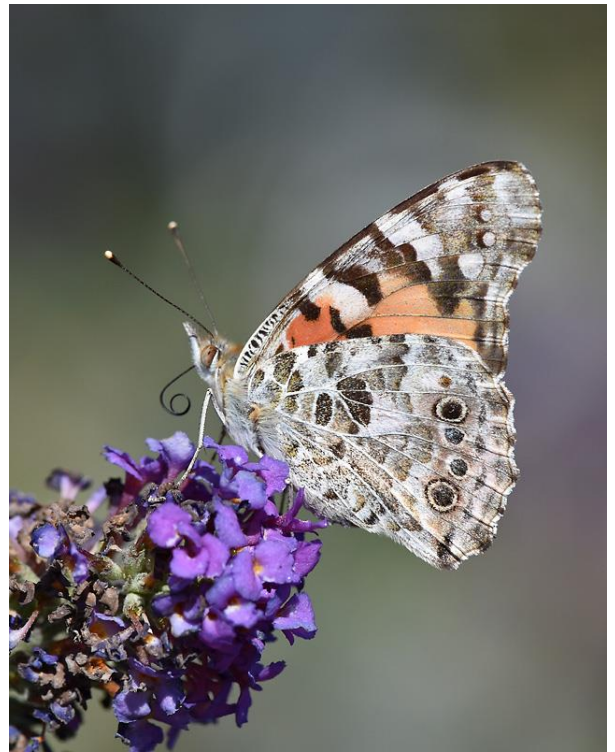
All these thoughts like leaves floating upstream instead of down. A shaft of light drifted through the redwoods over the little creek below full of life from last night's rain. It's still winter and yet the plums are already blooming. She wanted to be that plum tree. All blooming beauty and new again. Patchwork thoughts tried to weave themselves into something cohesive. Like a difficult crossword puzzle or an old quilt that needed a good wash. The images were jumbled and acting up like bad kids.

There's a song to be found in the river someone once said, between high water and a rock, but sometimes it gets stuck on the rocks and you better not be downstream from Bob Dylan. Between a whimper and a prayer, there might be something there. The path is full of weeds and stinging nettle. But then she remembers the picnic under the silvery quaking aspen, along the creek in the gully, eating blueberry pie with bottle of cheap wine, skipping school with you know who. Her white dress on the ground. It's all in the diary. Analog and offline thank god.

Did a stranger find her notebook? Ruby red with a thin black pen, marooned there on the green velvet bench? The librarian did not find it in the lost & found. Will the stranger find a way to write a new chapter, finish her story, or turn it into an exquisite corpse? Or worse, tear out her pages and begin anew? She feels like the stranger has seen her naked. She wonders if the stranger will call. Her name and number listed on the first page circled with little stars, *January 2020*.

Sometimes you catch a big fish and sometimes an old shoe. *To see you naked is to remember the earth*, wrote Lorca. Why did she remember that now? *Eventually the grass eats the horse*, Dragameer, the Maître D at Vanessi's told her father one night.

Where do all the lost things go? The bracelet, locket, ring, the men and the dead? Perhaps the notebook will find a new chapter, a new life like her. She imagines the stranger in a room overlooking a creek, staring at the light beyond writing a sentence or two. -- Marcia Smith





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.

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).

ART and PHOTOGRAPHY 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: April 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

ESCOM Council

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ESCOM Centers

Indian Valley campus: 1800 Ignacio Blvd., Bldg. 10
Rm. 40, Novato, CA 94949

Kentfield Campus: 835 College Ave., Kentfield, CA 94904 (ESCOM office is temporarily occupying the Dedee Lounge in the Student Services bldg.)

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www.marin.edu/escom

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