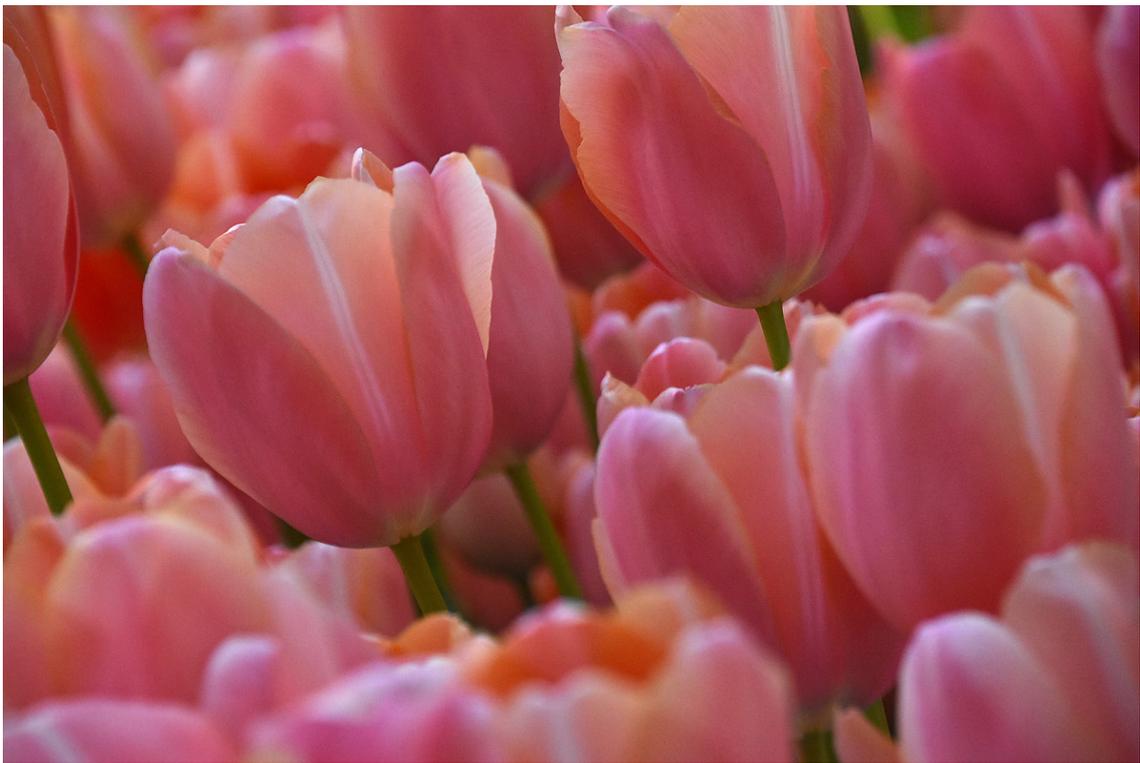


ESCOM Journal

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

March/April 2026



Laura Mulholland

INSIDE: Spring's temperament, creatures, promises and sacrifices



Nancy Outenreath

Goodbye False Spring

Last week the false spring came again but I forgot it was a tease when the walking path became a hall of gold acacia trees.

Last week the false spring came again but, as it happens every year, I did not see it for a fraud I thought, instead, the summer's near!

Last week the false spring came again foretaste of mountain trails and beach of languid days in sleeveless dress and sun's caresses on my cheek.

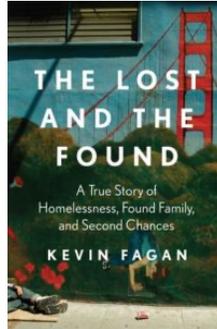
True winter's here in force today as gales send blossoms scattered sweet bird songs hush and wispy watercolor clouds turn slate—and burst.

lynn arias bornstein

ANNUAL AUTHOR EVENTS

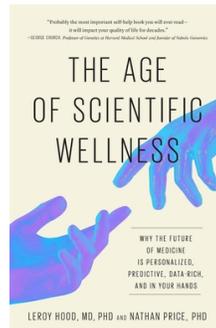
Join ESCOM for two author events this spring.

Friday, April 17, 1:00-2:30



Journalist Kevin Fagan, will discuss his book *The Lost and the Found: A True Story of Homelessness, Found Family, and Second Chances*. Mr. Fagan, an award-winning journalist, spent six months in San Francisco's streets to produce the influential five-day "Shame of the City" series for the San Francisco Chronicle.

Friday, May 8, 1:00-2:30



Dr. Nathan Price from the Buck Institute, will discuss his book, *The Age of Scientific Wellness: Why the Future of Medicine Is Personalized, Predictive, Data-Rich, and in Your Hands*. The publisher, Harvard University Press, describes the theme of the book this way: "Using information gleaned from our blood and genes and tapping into the data revolution made possible by AI, doctors can catch the onset of disease years before symptoms arise, with startling results: diabetes reversed, cancers eliminated, Alzheimer's avoided, and autoimmune conditions kept at bay."

Both events will be in the brand-new Center for Student Success, Room 200 and on Zoom. Come early to enjoy snacks! For more information: libguides.marin.edu/friday

MARCH

March 5th, a day that's different from any other

For me, my family, my mother

Different because it marks a new year

And still another wet spring to manage

Slipping and sliding through the uncertainty

Inherent in the season.

Even the flowers and trees are at a loss for what to do.

Bud or bloom? What shall they do? Or still to sleep and dream

'Til April wakes them with daily doses of dry sunshine.

In Texas, azaleas would misjudge the March mood and

Burst open, hot pink and white to freeze and fall,

When the last whisper of winter comes to call.

I have a giant wooden fish hung high over my entrance door,

It's a gift from someone who believes in signs and stars, (not I)

Because Pisces is my sign, the fish and its environ, water

Signify me, my life, my style. I do not at all agree.

Yet I keep the fish above my door, because, it smiles at all who enter

And the smile, more than the rest, says me.



Harvey Abernathy

Birthdays are for making wishes,

A time for center stage, and ancient rituals.

The cards and gifts, the cake and candles.

Growing up and growing old. Please God,

Keep safe my loved ones so that they can share

My March to the end of my days.

For my month, no matter how uncertain

Marks my growth through life, at times

As tentative as the weather, yet finally followed

By the sudden knowledge of April warmth,

A profound relief in the tradition of renewal.

And so, it is important to celebrate and sing

Even if birthdays mark the arrival of unwanted things.

Marcy Hamilton

The Lighthouse

The wind is like a blues song
 howling across the Bay
 with storm clouds pushing in
 like they have something to say.

Out at Potato Patch,
 the waves are jumping wild—
 they lift the boats up high and
 drop them back down like a child.

Amidst it all Coit Tower stands
 steady, tall, and strong
 She hums a golden warning,
 she sings a silver song

Fort Point on your left side,
 Frisco Bay on your right—
 one path carries shadow,
 one path carries light.

But the Tower keeps glowing,
 through every storm she stands—
 guiding the lost and tired
 back home to solid land.

Ray Fay, M.D.



Jeff True

Ready To Get Involved? ESCOM Needs You!

ESCOM thrives because of people like you who are curious and value connections. You love lifelong learning and meaningful engagement. We are now seeking members like you to step into leadership roles and to join our team. We need:

1. Officers to guide our organization.
2. Council members to shape our direction.
3. Committee members to bring programs to life.

Your involvement will deepen your connections with the College of Marin and like-minded peers. It will give you opportunities to shape programs and activities that are important to you while making a real impact in our vibrant community. Our current leaders will provide support, training, and guidance.

If you'd like to learn more, let us know by contacting Luanne Mullin Luanne.Mullin@comcast.net or Richard Jensen at jensen9493@sbcglobal.net.

We will provide position descriptions and schedule a phone call. We know your time is valuable. The roles are flexible and designed to fit your schedule and interests. Together, we can continue to build our growing ESCOM community. Thank you from all of us.



Alexander Brebner

Gray Wolf Gambit

Wolves in the American west can be a complex and often controversial topic, particularly here in California where the gray wolf was hunted to extinction during the early 1900s.

Recently, wolves have made headlines again in the Golden State. Miraculously, wolves migrated southward from Oregon and have begun recolonizing the northern part of California. In Shasta County. But officials there have declared a state of emergency due to the killing of some cattle by wolves. This move is seen largely as political as the county is asking the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to begin euthanizing wolves.

The gray wolf symbolizes much that is wild and free about the west. What amazes me is that after all these years we have not figured out how to live in harmony with nature. Are we not the species with the big brains? Humans are the only animal on the planet who can help other species that are struggling. But is this the best we can do? Shoot them?

I am impressed by the ingenuity and creativity of my species. Galileo built his own telescope, and from the surface of the Earth he was able to discern planetary motion. From these humble beginnings we have a robust Space exploration program.

And the best plan we can come up with is to kill the wolves?

Before we start with killing these animals can we please be sure we have exhausted all opportunities to coexist? Perhaps we should consider that the end-user of the meat may have to pay the actual price it costs to bring that meat to the table. Maybe the costs should be passed onto the end-user. People should have to pay the actual cost of their ribeye and filet mignon. It seems to me that the actual purchase price should be higher to capture the costs of commercial herd management.

Where I live, dairy ranchers keep their cattle secured indoors in a barn. Is this not feasible for comparable sized ranches? These ranches also provide shade structures for the cattle to escape the blistering heat of the California sun. Would it not be possible to put cattle in the structures at night or, in situations where that is not possible, post guards to defend against wolf attacks? Shade structures, a simple roof with gates on each end, can hold several hundred head of cattle.

Can we please stop with the fear mongering? One person was quoted saying this was not just about cattle it's also about public safety. When the reality is there have been no documented incidents of human fatality via wolves in California.

We humans have a responsibility to determine how large the population of wolves can sustainably grow to. This determination should not be made based on emotion or profit margin. Only then, after we agree upon a population threshold, will we have exhausted all other means of protecting our cattle, and only then should we kill a wolf. Keep in mind no animal has gone extinct under regulated hunting.

Humans are the interlopers on the wolves' domain. We may recall the lessons learned by the great conservationist Aldo Leopold. He came to the conclusion that apex predators, such as wolves, are vital to the health of an ecosystem. With this in mind, I feel we should work out ways to coexist.

To try and manage these wolves using lethal force is an example of human hubris and folly. We think that we can control nature when, in reality, it is often nature that controls us. I am reminded of the quote from the Jeff Bloomberg character in Jurassic Park.

"If there is one thing that nature has taught us through evolution. Animals will not be contained. They will break free."

We already killed all the wolves in California once and then they came back. Why are we going to try to repeat this? I like wolves. To me they are bad ass dogs, and I am a dog guy.

Scott McMorro

DIZZY

It's surprising more of us aren't dizzy
considering the planet is spinning
around at 1000 miles per hour
what keeps us from falling off?
is it really gravity because that's what
makes us fall and age and flowers droop
we are constantly moving
with the earth in a circular motion
But the apple falls from the tree anyway
rots and a seed is buried
sprouts and eventually becomes another tree
again and again over and over
life seems so exhausting
blooming and beauty then dust
aren't you tired and dizzy yet?
all this falling and rotting
the weight of so many planets whirling too
the universe wheeling like a big bicycle
swerving between stars in all that darkness
When I look up I see the Pleiades, my sister
stars
is that where I am from, and how did I get here
Am I crazy—perhaps no more than a
businessman
believing he's running the show down here.

Marcia Taylor Smith

Spring Sacrifice

Petals, perfumed, white
spill from almond trees
Spring sacrifice to the earth

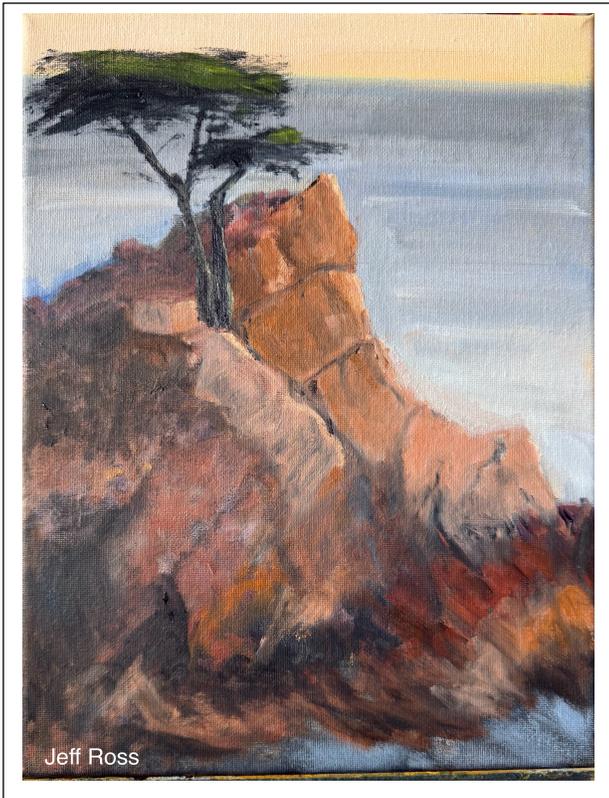
Susan Connolly



Harvey Abernathy



Swirling Ginkos, Oil, Diana Wypich



Jeff Ross



Marilyn Bagshaw

Gonna Get Ma-a-arried
Sharp Tailed Grouse

Preened my feathers and
practiced my love clucks.
Time to flap, flap over to the lek,
and dance the double-time stomp,
display my madcap spiral moves
and show my intent on
giving her chicks.

I've watched the Indians
do this ass kickin dance. I've
practiced and practiced their struts.
There will be a bit of back and forth
sparing and tail feather flicking
to ward off the ruthless rivalry,
but when I inflate my purple
air sacs at the nape of my neck,
bigger and brighter than all the rest,
when I bow down to the earth,
raise my pointed tail skyward and
shake, shake, shake my booty,
she's sure to succumb to my moves.

Going to the Grouse lek and I'm
gonna get ma-a-aried.

*lek: display area where males
gather to attract females

Carol Allen



Degas, Tami Tsark

MEMOIR: Familial Lineal Longings

Sitting here today under a mountain of whim that has lost its oomph to proceed with the list of goals that I wish to accomplish. Yes, I too am a work in progress, inching toward enlightenment amidst the monkey mind chatter that crowds into my creativity time like a drill sergeant. The mental checklist continues to nag at my conscience when I try to find comfort in settling into a life of semi-retirement. Will my choices be clearer to me, as I once again set out to satisfy my interest in the maternal side of my family heritage? My maternal Portuguese/Azorean roots flavors that continue to show up in the concoctions I find myself passionately creating to serve for dinner. The paella kind of rice that I often find myself wanting to throw chorizo or linguica in to spice up the dish. Or the passionate gypsy guitar styles and Fado music I find myself hungering for, so that my rhythms in life will continue inspiring me to move forward.

Honestly, the fact that I am close to my mother in likenesses, does not necessarily mean I am completely thrilled to mimic these characteristics day after day. Oftentimes, I yearn to know what on earth my deceased Swedish/French Canadian/English Father would have to say about all these Latin heritage yearnings I am compelled to fulfill in my life.

His absence since I was a toddler drove me to cling to my mother's family like glue. Since his death when I was five, his angelic presence encouraged me from afar to excel in my passions. And I who sometimes fits that fickle woman model, often find yet another project gathering dust. There often is no rhyme or reason to this wishy-washy attitude that causes me to hunt and peck for the right path that will allow me to strive toward my goals completion.

There is a method to the managing of dusting off a project left to itself, yet perfection is far from what I find myself striving for. The permanence of family heritage becoming an interest, has to do with my curiosity of a mixed heritage handed to me from birth.

Great As a young mother in my mid-twenties and early thirties, I spent many days visiting my Portuguese Azorean Grandmother Josephine in Sonoma. I would cart along my daughter and son to spend time with their loving Great Grandmother. Through her I learned of our family's connection to the Petaluma Portuguese Holy Ghost Hall. My Great, Great, Great Grandparents John Pimentel Avila Dabner and Maria De Jesus Machado's son William Dabner together with his wife Maria Silveira donated the land in Petaluma for the still standing Portuguese Holy Ghost Hall and church.

As my daughter and son would play in Josephine's yard among the multi-colored roses, Josephine would recount fond memories of her mother Mary. We would look at black and white faded pictures of Josephine proudly wearing the elaborate dresses Mary painstakingly created. Mary sewed beaded costumes for Josephine to wear in her San Francisco dance troupe. Each dress Mary sewed would take her months to complete working late into the evening hours sewing on beads the size of a sunflower seeds one by one. My Grandmother's dance troupe joined in all the San Francisco parades and performed all over the bay area to happy crowds of people. Both my grandmother and Mother Sylvia shared a passion for dancing, so I know where my desires to dance into the night came from.

At 79 my mother is still enjoying her passion for Latin music by joining in a Salsa dance class twice a week. In the interim, she tunes into her Latin radio station at home to practice dance moves and imagines herself back in Portugal where Fado music played to her hearts delight. She reminds me often of her need for music to fuel her daily rhythms. Looking back on my childhood, I really wanted to emulate my mother's free flowing desires to entrench my daily rhythms in the free-flowing creative world of the arts. Every record she played at full volume to wake me from my deep slumber was not lost in the void. As I also find myself turning up the volume to awaken my sleeping heartbeat to welcome another day that beckons me to excel in my heart's desires.

Cynthia Rovero

SKYWATCHER

I look at the sky at all times of the day
 from morning remnants of sunrise
 to bright blue skies that grow dimmer
 as the day moves on.

This time of year the sky changes
 a brightening morning sky
 holds a promise of a sunny day
 then suddenly the light dims
 clouds appear-parading
 marching across the sky
 blocking the sun.

Some days they're just passing through
 other days they stay
 dumping rain they've been holding on to
 as everyone scurries for cover
 and looks for their umbrella.

I have always been a skywatcher
 growing up gazing at the night sky
 that glowed in the dark
 over my childhood bunk

I quickly discovered the sky outside
 and never stopped looking

Anne Mulvaney



Elaine Thornton

Hiking Favors

Yellow dwarf violets
 spring from this rough mountainside
 hiking favors, life

Susan Connelly

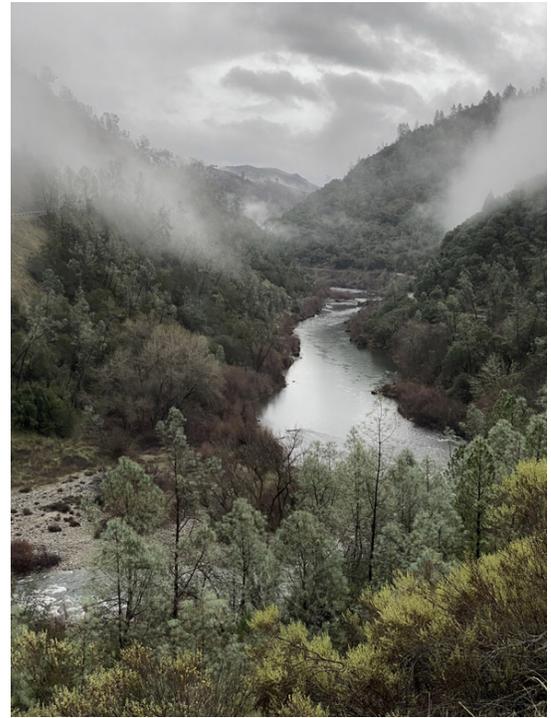


Tom Gannon

**Even the Spring Comes
How Does a Bird Spring Clean?**

A deep breath after refreshing winter rain
 Springs like coils and cogs
 Not animal like a springing cat or a prancing dog
 leaving trails of waste.
 The rain clears my senses' intake
 My cognition cleans the environment for myself.
 We all can clean.
 My broom on my wall,
 On the wall?
 Apple cinnamon broom, let's my residential inside
 Resemble the outsides
 Where spring awakens the blooms
 And inside mechanical vacuuming
 Hums like birds of song hovering over buds.
 Aaaa the spring clean.
 My red cardinal bird nightlight
 Meant for the days rest
 As the words in Alexa's music soothe
 The day into night
 As every vacuum is quiet
 and not disturbing
 Even birds tired of flight
 Yet the mechanics will night crawl
 And awake for the sound, "Play ball."

Karen Arnold



Nancy Pappas

The Joy of Life

The gentle surge of Spring emerges,
 guiding light and life.
 Time to rejoice the pulse of living,
 pause and prune the strife.

Each blossom, seed or newborn
 seeks to embrace the urge,
 while daily tidal patterns
 continue from Moon's surge.

The life around, within, beyond
 is gifted for all time,
 to reach, enjoy, exhilarate
 this wondrous gift - sublime.

Spring has sprung!

deidre silverman

Itty-bitty, witty, Miss Kitty* Cajun Ditty

Dedicated to Kitty Martin, Executive Director, West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission.

To plantation turkey Gus and swamp gator George - who accepted us unconditionally.

A daiquiri crawfish swamp bread pudding levee fried Sazerac breaded jambalaya Zydeco downpour beignets fiddle river Creole washboard Cajun po' boy étouffée gator shrimp plantation gumbo bayou accordion moveable feast all y'all.

O' sweet Miss Kitty
was really very nifty
coping with our nitty-gritty

Through our many capers
assisting all our labors
with nary any vapors

Drive-thru daiquiris we employed
bread puddings most enjoyed
swamp gators a bit annoyed

Whilst in the Easy maze
we danced a Zydeco haze
in a Cajun daze

Riverboats drift so slow
fireflies steal the show
gators watch below

Porch lights flicker bright
cicadas argue all night
mosquitos join the fight

After all our Cajun play
we are now bayou away
Be back another day!

Joseph Cillo

**In Louisiana and other Southern areas, it is customary to call women "miss"; thus "Miss Kitty" equals Kitty Martin.*



Laura Harrison

Early Morning in Late Winter

Outside the window

The leaves are still.

A sparrow sits watching,

Feathers plumped to gather warmth.

The sun lifts slowly,

Warming the stillness.

Its motion ignites

The emerging sunscape.

Joan Taschian



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. 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 15th of the prior month. Please send submissions or questions to the editor at denizespringer@gmail.com.

ESCOM Council: President, Gary Gonser; Vice President, Leonard Weingarten; Treasurer, Richard Jensen; Gloria Dunn-Violin, Peter Ehmke, Nancy P. Major, Will Meecham, Luanne Mullin, Beth Rowett, Lois St.Sure, Larry Tolbert

ESCOM Centers

Indian Valley campus: 1800 Ignacio Blvd., Bldg. 10 Rm. 40, Novato, CA 94949 415/457-8811, x 8322

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

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE JOURNAL?

NEXT DEADLINE IS April 15

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.