

# ***7th Annual Poetry Dinner***

**Okanogan Land Trust**



**Home Hosts  
Tom and Linda Black  
Tonasket**

Saturday March 19, 2016 6:00 pm



**2016  
Poets & Singers**

**Julie Ashmore**

**George Baumgardner**

**Patti Baumgardner**

**Reed Engel**

**Bob Goodwin**

**Walter Henze**

**Dan Hulphers**

**Carey Hunter**

**Grant Jones**

**Victoria Jones**

**Mary Koch**

**Vonda Long**

**James Moore**

**William Slusher**

**Kathleen Smith**

**Douglas Woodrow**



## ***Taking It In With Slow Wide Bends***

*song Julie Ashmore*

*lyrics Grant Jones*

### ***Learning From the River***

It's not speed but sinuosity  
that gives life to the dance,  
puts the art in the flow,  
takes the hunger out of the river  
and puts love back inside it.

### ***When My River Becomes a Beaver Pond***

I can't explain  
your voice  
your eyes  
your hands  
in these back-channel moments  
after you leave when  
my river becomes  
a beaver pond.

### ***A Blessing for the River***

Let her water words coil round your ears,  
Trickle inside your head.

Let the wind in the cottonwoods  
Whisper through your hair  
Like loved ones calling your name.

Standing under the tall, silver maples,  
Let your fingers read the stories in the bark.

Hold earth in your hands and let her memories  
Sift through your fingers like cloud seeds.

Hear woodpecker tap out her heartbeat  
And warblers sing her deepest secrets.

Stand by the ancient snags in the channel  
And listen to Grandfather's dreams.

Let your heart make a home here on the River  
Sing a blessing for this Native land.

**Grant Jones**

## ***Solstice***

This winter's song, it's fastness, □  
Holds us whitely tight, □  
Strives to cancel color, yet □  
Seeks the 'bright' of light,  
Sound; it's moods suppressed, □  
It's random ramble quaffed, □  
Beneath the solemn grandeur □  
Of deeply pillowed loft.  
Yet down below this surface, □  
Another fastness lies,  
It's dreaming now it's story, □  
How it never really dies  
There color dances freely □  
And sounds clap hands and sing,  
And mouse dreams bask in summer sun, □  
And moss green days of spring.

**George Baumgardner**

December 21, 2015

## ***Coyechoes***

last night, spelling myself between sauna times,  
the quiet vibrated with autumnal resonance,  
a clutch of coyotes graced the opportunity to harmonize  
withall,  
tales of coyo-bravery and doggy foolishness, of spirit souls  
lurching through sleepless nights  
tethering with straining ears  
those humans close enough in kind  
to hear.

**George Baumgardner**

## ***MARCH, Full Circle***

Isolated drifts of snow, giving  
Silently over  
To the forgotten  
Burnished grass  
Of autumn

A painted Indian pony  
Of a landscape

Harbinger of spring

Memory of winter

And like some far away  
Promise of summer, piping up,  
A shiny, and very yellow  
Buttercup

**George Baumgardner**

Split Rock Farm  
Lower Antoine Watershed

## ***We Burn Houses***

In October  
We burn houses,  
In the middle of nowhere,  
After a soaking rain, cattle having wandered through the  
rooms for years.

In December  
We burn houses,  
Piece by piece, the siding from the first remodel,  
The wainscoting, salvaged from a house burned in October,  
from the second.

In July  
We burn houses,  
Gathered at the river with strangers,  
Watching across,  
Flames screaming through eyeless windows, escaping to the  
sky.

In January  
We burn houses,  
The original homestead, pulled down to one wall,  
The skilsaw managing the rubble into stove-sized pieces.

In August  
We burn houses,  
Memorialized by family,  
Drought and wind having their way,  
Mixing ash with ash.

The fleck of green paint under an eye,  
The scrolled cut in a tiny bit of trim,  
The lilac, hops and yellow rose,  
Hopes and dreams and despair  
Keep rising  
From these valleys and ledges and hillsides.  
Through the years,  
We burn houses.

**Patti Baumgardner**

Split Rocks

Lower Antoine Sub Watershed

February 24, 2016



## ***The Swing Set***

I'm busy now building, a swing set  
Eleven feet tall in this heat by myself.  
Not so fast, but carefully  
(To avoid mishap and potential injury)  
Challenged both physically and mentally I remind  
Myself not to hurry about this, three braces staked  
At grade with an allowance for a pivot, ready now  
Tools at hand, the hundred and seventy pound post  
Is guided from the elevated lumber rack  
Into the thirty-six inch hole and righted in the air  
Eleven feet vertical and slowly, methodically  
Braced, plumb to the Earth and sky--  
Challenging alone,  
But, What fun!

### **Reed Hunter Engel**

Homestead Ridge  
Lower Antoine Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan River Watershed  
7 June 2015

## ***The Lime-Belt Fire***

(For Emily Gibson)

Did you have a favorite place  
past sage among the pines?  
A clearing near a stream perhaps,  
where deer ghost in to browse.  
A yellow bank of balsamroot  
where sun can reach the ground  
along the rutted Lime-Belt road  
to the cabin by a pond.

Starlit skies, clean air belie  
that smoke-choked hell we left  
to camp in safety five leagues south  
with horse and dog and cat.  
Red dots leap-frog section lines  
A laptop maps the blaze  
Each dot ten acres, barns and fields  
Incinerated dreams

Sintered earth and blackened stumps  
twisted pipes, a book  
open at a well-read page  
an empty picture frame.  
Creatures that could leap or fly  
fled the roar of fire.  
While those that crawl or slither  
perished with their prey.

Fences, barns will soon be fixed  
Homes will be rebuilt  
Scorched land's scars fare worse, I fear  
a century's disfigurement.  
Not since ice age glacier melt  
has soil been left this barren.  
How long will nature take to mend?  
What salve will heal the burns?

Ponderosa, lodge-pole pine that  
clothed our homeland hills  
Will they grow back to shade the deer  
on our superheated earth?  
Did you have a favorite place  
past sage among the pines?  
Will you hold it in your memory?  
A landscape lost in time.

**Bob Goodwin**

Scanlon Lake of the Lime Belt  
Hidden Valley of Alkali Lake-Okanogan Mainstem Reach  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Okanogan Haikus 2015***

Green mists rise with sap,  
Winter boughs' stark lines grow soft:  
Hopes of early Spring.

The horse's shadow  
longer than the two acre field:  
Dawns a summer day.

Nighthawks whirr and dive  
insecticidal sorties:  
Summer sun setting.

Winds howl a red night  
rolling over tinder woods:  
Blackened moonscape dawn.

Slanting early light  
scraping darkness off charred hills:  
Bright ellipse of hope.

### **Bob Goodwin**

Omak Sand Flat looking across the river to Wanacut Creek Watershed  
Swipkin Creek-Okanogan River Reach  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***From Phil***

“Where did you get the wood?”

“From Phil.”

In the predawn dark, my feet touch the floor – larch planks smooth and true, aged to the heavy golden color of butterscotch. From Phil.

Under my hands, the wood for the morning fire – kindling that split clean with a dry but musical note, lights and warms my face. From Phil

Above my head, the first snow sits on the roof - a roof sturdy and strong, held aloft by heavy beams and solid posts. From Phil

He’s in our gardens, in the sawdust turned to earth.

He’s on the wind, in the smoke from our fires.

He’s in our shelters, all around us.

He’s in our hearts, for all life

“Where did you get the wood?”

“From Phil.”

**Walter Henze**

Puerto Viejo de Talamanca

Costa Rica

3am, November 13, 2015

## ***Growing Together***

Over 40 years ago, more than half my life ago,  
A new friend pulled me from Seattle  
Out to the Okanogan  
With the promise of sunshine and heat.

And women and beer.

We worked together with other new friends  
To raise the rafters on his hand built log cabin,  
Massive and imposing.

Well, twelve by sixteen feet, to be precise.

And so it was not long thereafter, I moved to the Okanogan.  
Over the years and the decades that cabin grew, and our  
families grew,

And we grew older together.

And though my friend, alas, is no longer with us,  
His soul remains.  
He's easy to find  
Among the pines on the Little Loup.

We talk together, he and I, about the forest and the trees, and  
our families,

All growing, strong and tall.

**Walter Henze**

Little Loup Loup Creek Watershed

## ***The Clouds Over Arlington Ridge***

Below Arlington Ridge, my friend gone now a dozen  
Months or more, lies in last repose.  
He lay beneath green pines, until lightning  
Cracked the air on Beaver Creek and changed the land forever.

Now, the forest he nurtured so heartfully is gone,  
The house he built so carefully is gone,  
The cabin we raised so joyfully is gone,

All so suddenly ashes to ashes.

His ashes lie neath the charred spar of his favored tree,  
Beneath a blanket of forest ash spread over the land for miles.  
He pledged he would return as a larch on the turn of the  
wheel.

A seed stirring beneath the ash, beneath the snow, will be that  
tree.

I visit this bare and open place that's waiting for traces of  
green and promise,  
But rocks and the ridge and the sky are all that remain.

In the heat of the sun, this blackened land breathes out,  
It's warmed breath rising, bearing aloft its nano bits of ash.

Ashes to ashes, ashes to air,

Nidus, seed for the clouds that form in the sky  
over Arlington Ridge.

**Walter Henze**

Little Loup Loup Creek Watershed



## ***Ode to an Okanogan Standing Stone***

O would that we could have seen the lost Hee Hee stone  
a monolith left by the passing age of ice  
in the visage of a woman forever glancing back  
a figure of legend and veneration to highland tribes  
who in spring may have festooned her with garlands.

For ages a stoic image standing above the trail  
around her, the virgin forest still graced the hills  
far below the rivers teamed with salmon  
before her a temple of mighty larch on rust red pillars  
higher than an arrows flight.

And there she stood for ten millennia  
knee deep in bunch grass and wildflowers  
tribes of man burgeoned and faded  
trees grew from sapling to ancient snag  
her mantle of lichen grew slowly ochre and crimson.

Always looking back, they say, to see her lost love coming  
as Orpheus took his forbidden peek  
to see if his lost Euridice followed as they fled Hades  
and so all were turned to stone  
for their impudence to the gods.

At last, our Hee Hee was dynamited by drunken gold rushers  
bent on desecration of all that evoked native ways  
she is dust now, as are her stories and songs  
where she stood the bunch grass still grows  
above a cut bank and a paved road  
that the elders would surely have known  
as the dark hard trail to Hades.

### **Dan Hulphers**

Along the Chesaw-Oroville Highway  
Tonasket Creek Sub-Watershed

## ***My First Homestead***

Hiked in on New Year's Day  
1971.

Snow was knee deep,  
Hills rolled gently upward,  
Warming me with the climb.  
Cresting the rise, before us  
A hip-roofed house,  
Faded yellow, nestled in a meadow  
Ponderosas in a receding hairline,  
Curved round to frame the scene.  
Pristine  
and yet  
Already someone had come  
In 1902 and built  
This house, come to find out.

We borrowed \$500  
And for \$50 a month  
This dream became ours to work.  
Sweet, back-busting work,  
Decades of packrat condos  
Cleaned and packed out.  
First long summer spent camping  
Au plein air.  
Okanogan sunshine,  
Fresh air and quiet spaces  
Seduced our willing spirits.  
By Fall in a cozy house  
We burned our last chair leg.

As we walked out and looked West  
Over waves of colliding plates  
We felt our place in a landscape  
That beached itself here eons before  
The vision kept us strong  
In our retreat to civilization for the winter  
Laboring for a homestead vision,  
Now a burgeoning reality.

**Carey Hunter**

Barker Mountain  
Siwash Creek Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Homestead #2***

Eighteen years after my first essay,  
I found what I was looking for.  
“Low Expectations,” I called it,  
Afraid to get my hopes up.

Nameless. It was up for back-taxes auction,  
Abandoned & derelict,  
Pipes...frozen & burst,  
Detritus from a series of derelict inhabitants.

But the location, aah, the location grabbed,  
Close enuf yet far enuf.  
Sweet-scented Pine trees again,  
Wind thru their branches.

It felt to my landlubber’s ears like the ocean.  
Not so remote,  
But still miles past other houses.  
Eager to leave town’s constricting confines,

I leapt at the opportunity, liberated into the woods.  
Camping au plein  
Air again, the ocean  
In the Pine branches filled me, settled me.

Breathing deep, listening out.  
I cast a blanket  
And laid down in the sounds and sensations,  
Waiting to exhale, listening out –

Once again in the woods again.

### **Carey Hunter**

Pine Stump Farm  
French Valley  
Omak Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Aspen Springs***

I happened upon it  
When the scorched dry of  
Late August and  
The Fires had ravaged us.  
Searching for a bit of respite  
And solace  
Instinctively knowing  
Knowing where to look for the springs.  
So I readied the horse and took off  
South by a bit southwest.  
Remembering a curve of the trail  
That led to a dip in the gulley  
And tracing that downhill  
I found the spring  
Tucked into a crevice of the hill  
Seeping out to a gentle slope.  
Verdant moss had retained its color;  
Cradled by old logs.  
I sighed and breathed deep.

Looking up and across the gulley  
I saw the landscape with refreshed eyes.  
Knowing that time would heal,  
Changing the scorched terrain.  
The surviving green sentinels announce  
The faith and optimism they hold  
Across a lifespan longer than mine.  
My mare wants to move on,  
So I urge her forward .  
Upwards, around the precious spring  
That shared its secret being with me  
And gifted me with reassurance.  
I had secured a glimpse of what I was seeking.

The remainder of the ride was couched in that success  
And the damaged trees & earth  
Didn't seem so desolate.

Each day now  
I think back to that ride and its gifts:  
My trusty mare, the precious spring, the sentinel trees, the  
glorious sunshine  
Breathe deep again  
And shoulder on.

**Carey Hunter**

Pine Stump Farm  
French Valley  
Omak Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Falling in Love with Land Is Not Easy to Explain***

I guess it was the creek that captured me first.  
I fell in love with sky second.  
Then rock outcrops and escarpments,  
Then trails and scattered trees.

Down in the valley where we are, no forest exists--  
Gallery ribbons with red-twigged dogwood,  
River birch and a few cottonwoods.  
Skeins of aspen tremble and quake,  
Underground rootlets springing out of the ground  
Around the seeps that perch  
Along benches of hill slopes, but otherwise

It's all bunchgrass and sagebrushes  
With bitterbrush that sometimes we call greasewood.  
The greasewood is blooming now with creamy flowers.  
It's a harsh community with ticks and rattlers  
So it's not so easy to fall in love with.

There's sadness too in our dying  
Ponderosas who've survived so long  
So long careening out from cracks in cliffs!  
But now in rising heat and desiccation  
They're succumbing to bark beetles--  
And slowly turn brassy green before collapsing.

It's more like this landscape survives and doesn't complain,  
Causing you to take stock of your own precious  
Fragile and tough body, love it more and respect it  
For its own persistence and scrappy survival.  
Of course it's made us love our marriage partnership as well.  
We became the pioneer pair who will be buried here,  
Pair who've rooted in and made a home.

It's kind of scary sometimes.  
But it's also the way it is, the way things have to be.  
So we decided to love it for its self, ugly or not,  
Beautiful or not, common, singularly unique body.

It's so complicated and simple simultaneously.  
Small chunks of hornblende granite spall  
Off our cheeks into the lips of the coulee after dark.  
Am I making sense?

***Grant Jones***

Coyote Springs Farm

Mouth of the Canyon of the Little Mosquito

30 April 2015

## ***Part of the Weave***

I started feeling younger when  
I took up residence in  
the mouth of this canyon  
I became less hurried here,  
relaxed, quieter, more awake.

When I sat still and rotated my head  
like I was cranking a director's chair,  
tiny movements caught my attention  
tugged at the tapestry that unfurled  
before me, like when I waded  
the Sauk and baby cutthroat  
would dart behind the boulders  
or rotating fins of big browns  
fanned sand in eddies up the Flathead:  
my skin tightened its weave.

Its like that now—a pair  
of red-shafted Northern flickers flick  
from one vertical face of crumbling gneiss  
to the next as they belay  
to peck off the ants,  
or a ground squirrel dashes  
between balsamroots  
or sometimes it's just a patch  
of leaves that flash in a swirl  
of warm air or something else  
I can't name like the shadows  
that twitch in the Antelope bitterbrush.

The tapestry out there was mine.  
I was part of its weave.

**Grant Jones**

On Watch Over Us Hill December 16, 2015

## ***The Backhoe Shed***

It's been good for my soul  
Working with Reed,  
Talking to the birch tree  
Measuring for its flexations with the rafters  
Staking the batter boards  
Picking through the old posts and boards  
From our recycle stack behind the barn,  
Setting the pier boxes  
Shooting the grades  
Tightening up the stringlines  
And centering the roach clips.  
Mixing the mud  
Pouring and placing the postbrackets  
And screeding them off;

Waiting while they set-up overnight  
Then stripping the forms,  
Hearing a few songs  
From the Bitterroot commune  
Frosty Creek melodies  
Brought down to the Eel and back again  
To the skylines of the Antwyne...  
Hearing Reed's homestead stories.

Yesterday my neighbor Bob,  
Up the canyon on Wizard's Flat,  
Shoveled, screened and loaded  
Four yards of Beaverhead shale  
In his International dumptruck  
Piling it off our driveway so I can spread it  
With the Kubota front-end loader  
Dressing out the floor of the backhoe shed  
Edged now with five ancient four-by-fours  
We got from Phil at Havillah Shake  
Wood yard and sawmill down 97  
Toward the Janis Rapids  
Saving my countless ass

In every mutation we've triggered  
Like when the barn collapsed  
Or the house needed mutating,  
Like when the tractor shed flooded  
And the creek washed the road out,  
Or when we needed the Camp Kitchen  
To have a tall, hovering Tapanco roof,  
Wanted a woodshed for a four-cord winter,  
A deerfence around the vegetables,  
Or portal gates to the Riverbraids Garden,  
Beams for a footbridge to harbor our *minari*  
The water celery that coils in our kimchi  
Or posts to tie the moon  
And keep the coyotes yipping  
For any number of reasons  
That keep the Earth in one piece.

**Grant Jones**

Coyote Springs at the Mouth of the Canyon of the Little Mosquito  
Mosquito Creek-North Okanogan Sub Watershed  
6 June 2015

## ***Spirit Visitors***

They passed behind a broken tree,  
the walnut shaking in the wind.  
One moved hunched on four legs  
low in grass dried out brown  
color of dirt. The other fluttered  
followed smaller like tumble weed  
bounced off its leader trailing his shadows.  
Shadows—or their shifts--in afterlight?  
That's what I saw I guess shadows.  
But then the big one's eyes burned my Filson  
tin vest and cooked its paraffin  
sweet enough to eat.

### **Grant Jones**

Coyote Springs Farm

Mouth of the Canyon of the Little Mosquito

## ***As Sociable and Loving as Handsome Wolves***

We crossed the river after dawn  
as a fresh breeze from the north  
blew the oily scent of lambs  
off Whitestone Mountain's hip.

Leaves from the poplars had backfilled  
the fence where seven lambs waited through the night.

Trailrunner George and mate Patti  
broke the ridge first with Rendezvous Donal  
followed by Teacher Scott.  
Ranchfather Tom stood still by a tall poplar.  
Shaman Grant and Healer Chong trailed in behind.  
We came to slaughter seven lambs,  
as sociable and loving as handsome wolves.

Shadows of morning banded Whitestone's knuckles  
as we closed in circling the lambs.  
George rolled the first to the ground and made  
his end-of-the-trail mortise while Patti held down  
and gentled the lamb, leaving its last breaths  
to the wind in our hair under the tall poplars.

None of this could have happened without  
Ranchmother Linda's energizing breakfast and lunch  
for the pack.

### **Grant Jones**

Black's Bench  
Whitestone Mountain-Horse Springs Coulee Watershed  
Okanogan River Sub Basin  
October 17, 2015

## ***Voices from Coyote Springs Farm***

Voices of grass, shrub and tree,  
from rocks, sand and falling water,  
all the creatures that ooze, swim,  
crawl, slither, walk, leap,  
flutter, flash and soar, are like  
a chorus from the mouth of the canyon, and commingle  
in rising air, make families of clouds  
that watch over us, whisper our stories  
through a morning mist, an afternoon rain,  
and whack us about the head when we're not listening.

**Grant Jones**

February 24, 2016

## ***Fires***

Crazy here  
Valley of smoke  
I stay grounded in the creek  
Barefoot and freezing  
Chewing mint.  
I try doing yoga on the footbridge  
Slippery and wet  
Balancing in the tree pose  
The waters calm me  
Even as the world burns.  
The water is everything.

### **Victoria Jones**

Indian Springs Canyon  
Wildhorse Coulee-Aeneas Creek Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Ho Tai Laughing***

Ho Tai at twilight  
Amethyst crystals sparkle  
Evening in the cupola  
Blue Heron sails by  
Smokey mauve clouds in tatters.

### **Victoria Jones**

Tonka in the Cupola  
Indian Springs Canyon  
Wildhorse Coulee-Aeneas Creek Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Scarlet Flash***

Scarlet flash in pines  
red naped sapsuckers mating.....  
Twitterpated joy!!!

## **Victoria Jones**

Haiku in the Pines  
India Springs Canyon  
Wildhorse Coulee-Aeneas Creek Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Winter from the Cupola***

From my cupola I see  
A shiver of fir trees  
Thrust up through the cliff's cleft.  
Fog enshrouds drooping white shoulders  
A fresh snowfall drenches their limbs.  
Snow doilies festooning the black arms.  
Ancient trees preside  
Over the hushed valley.  
A red tailed hawk hunts her prey.

From inside the cupola's orange walls,  
A room bright as an egg yolk,  
I write.  
Its as if I'm inside a lantern....  
Twilight glows through crystals in every window.  
Starlight glances off long icicles:  
Winter's sharp teeth  
Dripping glittery droplets.  
Outside a red tailed hawk rests  
Atop a bare apricot tree.  
Mulies paw the deep snow  
Foraging for grasses.  
Icy waterfalls sing their faithful songs.  
Steam rises as candles glow.  
Its winter on Aeneas Creek.  
In Danish it is called *hygga*, in Norwegian its *kosileg*.  
It is embracing the whole of winter with joy.  
It is extreme coziness.

### **Victoria Jones**

Indian Springs Canyon  
Wildhorse Canyon-Aeneas Creek Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Hope***

I dump coffee grounds  
Five Mallards take to the sky  
Its a morning jolt!

It looks for all the world  
Like pollen fallen on sagebrush hills.  
A drift of golden petals  
Sweeping down the slopes....  
Balsam in the spring  
After the wild fires left  
Bare scorched earth and  
Blackened sagebrush trunks.  
Hope amid the wreckage  
Springs eternal.

### **Victoria Jones**

Indian Springs Canyon  
Wildhorse Coulee-Aeneas Creek Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin



*a e d a*  
3. Fire and flood take our lands and life, yet if it  
*d E7*  
weren't for them, we couldn't survive.  
*a e d a*  
Water's what we sprinkle at the time of rebirth, but we're  
*d E7*  
sucking up the water and drying out the earth.

(Bridge)

*a D a D*  
Oh God, you gave us these powerful tools.  
*a D a E7*  
Please God, forgive us for their misuse.

(Final chorus)

**Mary Koch**

Swipkin Canyon Reach  
Okanogan River

## ***The Connection***

To the eye, it's rugged and raw  
Awe inspiring beauty and  
shadowy beast.

A landscape of image  
where the eye  
can feast.

To the ear, there's a backdrop  
of bullfrogs, coyotes  
and Canada Geese.

Wind, relentless and howling...  
then snow-blanketed silence  
amidst stands of trees.

The touch is sweltering hot;  
soft and sumptuous; cold as ice....  
changing by moon.

A fragrance of cider and smoke  
icicle tendrils, alfalfa  
and lilacs in bloom.

Time filled with challenge  
and heartache,  
fires, draught, and flood;  
Mirrored by the coyote  
squawking goose, and  
remnants of blood.

Yet....it beckons...

It calls...

Despite the toll;

An undeniable connection  
that permeates the senses  
and nurtures the soul.

**Vonda Olson Long**

3/19/16

## ***For Shae – At Whistler Canyon Trailhead***

Padmasambhava comes riding  
and demons run for cover  
flushed out by  
the all seeing eye  
of Sun-like awareness.

Padmasambhava comes riding  
up the steep cliff  
one bolt at a time  
move by move  
till there is nothing left to do,

Padmasambhava comes riding  
lasso in hand  
snagging ego as it makes its stand  
proud or pitiful  
it makes no difference once caught.

Padmasambhava comes riding  
singing, laughing, joyous dancing  
lifting up and cutting through  
simultaneously  
in one swift motion.

Padmasambhava comes riding  
revealing all to be but a dream  
an illusion, dew drop, mirage  
of the mind  
merciless in his all encompassing view.

**James Moore**

8/17/12



## ***The Center of the Universe***

The center of the universe  
always bursting forth  
wherever you happen to be  
eyes open, senses piqued  
under my boots 'n around my toes  
at the periphery of perception  
and right dab-smack in front  
of us, wherever we are.

A little pin I got in Wallace Idaho,  
an old mining town of now charming  
has-been brick buildings and dusty streets,  
proudly proclaims  
"Center of the Universe - Wallace, ID"  
and it's right.  
Even my little town in Washington  
has a sign informing all visitors that,  
"All Roads Lead to Tonasket"  
and it's right too.

And here is the exact point  
where fantasy and reality meet  
a mirage that shimmers  
on a surface of light,  
the Zero-point of creation  
where the part (self)  
and the whole (Self)  
exist in primordial wonder  
before any sense of oneness, unity  
or misunderstanding of capital  
and small case spellings emerge.

This is how we know  
anything, everything  
where we are, who we are  
always at the center.

**James Moore** 9/10/1

## ***A Good Day to Die***

Every time I go climbing I think, "This could be the day I die."  
I also think this when driving in really bad conditions  
or when flying on a plane, but I go climbing a lot more often...  
I think about slipping off the top of the cliff,  
having the rope break, or my anchor fail.

Those are all the things I can have some control of, but  
a few years ago I almost got bitten by a baby rattler  
as I stood unroped on a small ledge 100' off the deck.  
Last fall I was shot at by a crazy local sniper.

Last week I had a golf ball sized rock whizz past my head  
from high up above just moments after I'd taken my helmet  
off.

Today I thought I could have a heart attack  
humping my 45 lb load up the steep approach trail.  
I think of that one because I have a climbing buddy who had a  
good friend die

of a massive heart attack while hiking up steep hills  
scouting for new cliffs to climb.

Just before he died he'd sat on a rock enjoying the view  
and expressed that feeling of deepest contentment,  
"You know, today would be a good day to die."

Sometimes I think this too, usually when I'm out alone  
working on a new route, flush with endorphins  
and the beauty of this planet.

I don't want to die, but I've come to accept the idea,  
the idea of it being an ever present consequence of living,  
or so I tell myself.

I've been close enough a few times to know it isn't anything to  
fear,  
yet fear I do.

And I know this fear isn't a bad thing,  
it can lead to caution and prudence  
which can lead to survival and longevity,  
and longevity can lead to the opportunity to grow wise,  
and I want to grow wise.

But I also know that facing your fears isn't easy  
and doesn't mean they just go away.

It sometimes means they just grow bigger.  
I don't mean the little fear of nagging worries,  
but the big fear of existential terror of our extinction  
that resides right up next to our core,  
and when faced is revealed to have layers, layer upon layers.  
And when the terror grows it doesn't necessarily lead to  
strength,  
that is something we have to bring to it,  
something we sometimes have to dig deep to find.  
I guess that's called courage.  
So we evolve, face our fear and develop our courage, steadily if  
not inevitably,  
or is that inevitably if not steadily?  
And meanwhile have good days when none of that matters,  
when we say it's a good day to die,  
and simply mean it just doesn't get any better than this.

**James Moore**  
(3/4/16)

## ***Fetching Bodine***

It was raining that day, the dark storm was mean', the day the Colhaine boys went to fetch Bodine.

They was Cale and Carl and Clete Colhaine, the names of the sons in that cold gray rain.

Yeah, they stopped in the village to git coffee and supplies, an' Miz Kim the storekeeper, she could see it in their eyes.

"So it's time?" she said, her eyes squinted all tight. The boys, they said nothin', but she knowed she was right.

She watched the trucks and trailers disappear from view; then she dialed the volunteer firehouse and ast for Chief Drew,

"Y'all better stand by the am-ba-lance, Gene ... the Colhaine boys is gone to fetch Bodine."

\*\*\*

Ya see, Bodine ... he was a Charolais/Simmental cross, twenty-eight-hundred pounds of rangy herd boss.

Last year that one-horned evil force hooked the Colhaine patriarch right off his horse.

Bodine seemed to ... gore the old cowboy with glee, 'fore he hurled the bloody body up into some trees.

That crazy bull sent a fine man to his fate ... but ... Bodine still sired the best calves in six states.

\*\*\*

Now the snow was fallin' an' the high range was lean, an' the time was here again ... to fetch Bodine.

The boys saddled up with rifles an' ropes ... an' off into the snow their ranch horses loped.

It wadn't long ... they heard him ... a' breathin' in the fog ... a course ... raspy, snortin' ... like some ... devilish hog.

Then outta that mist charged a ton-plus of meat, and slammed Cale's horse clean off of its feet.

Cale flew slidin' away in the snow; his horse scrambled up now beginnin' to blow.

Cale hit the ground already moving fast. That deadly horn missed as Bodine thundered past.

Clete giggered Old Pete to try to head off Bodine, but the horse's hooves slid on the icy sheen.

Carl whipped out his forty-four Marlin gun, but Bodine, he'd done turned on another run.

Round and round that big ole rock, Bodine chased Cale. Clete rode in to block.

The devil bull whirled with a furious roar, slingin' slobber and snow and rocks and more.

Carl aimed his rifle but there was no good shot, he coulda hit Bodine ... or Cale ... or not.

Clete spun his mount, and shook out his rope, his horse struggling for purchase on the snowy slope.

Now Bodine really became agitated, he'd always thought cowboys were a little overrated,

He seen ole Cale slip and slide and go down, and Bodine was on him in a single bound.

Cale scrambled for the rock but he saw the worst, yep ... Bodine and that horn was gittin' there first.

Cale felt Bodine's heat and smell, and he figured it was a one-way trip to hell.

Bodine rooted again with that terrible horn. It missed Cale's leg but his chaps were gored.

The rip pitched Cale six feet in the air, and when he came down Bodine was still there.

Cale could see Bodine coming on fast and he was pretty damn sure he'd breathed his last.

But suddenly the big bull whipped and fought, as two ropes around his neck pulled taught.

Clete's and Carl's horses sunk down to pull that rearing and draggin' and thrashin' bull.

Cale collected his horse and swung into the saddle, he looped his own rope and rejoined the battle.

Together they pulled in three different directions, keeping Bodine strung between their connections.

Taught ropes twanged and Bodine bucked, but they towed him fightin' all the way to the trucks.

Clete opened a stock trailer and ran into the front; he made a face at Bodine who lunged with a grunt,

Just as Bodine stampeded in with a roar, Clete turned and dived out the trailer's side door.

The doors was slammed shut as the trailer rocked, an' the boys gasped hard as the latches locked.

\*\*\*

Back in the village at the country store, there was dancin', and  
singin' and drinkin' an' more,

The boys was cheered, and gamblers paid off their bets ... and  
why not? For once again ...

... Bodine ... was done fetched.

**William Slusher**

March 19th, 2016

## ***Moth Wings***

Every winter the cabin stands quiet and cold,  
snow on the roads too deep to clear for human  
solitude. Some heat seeps in from low sun  
dropping early behind the hilly aspen grove.  
Warmth and protein are scarce. At night, the glow  
of moon on snow shows, that even here, the carnage  
of the world goes on. Mice, whose blood is warm  
and pumped by small and shivering hearts, catch  
cold-blooded moths made sluggish in this season.  
Every spring we find their wings piled in cabin corners,  
their soft silver wings scorned by carnivores,  
good for nothing except fair weather flight.  
Poets, who stretch to reach the wings of poems  
flying by, do well to watch and learn  
the patience of a single starving mouse.

**Kathleen Smith**

East Molson Hill  
Mary Ann Creek Sub Watershed  
Kettle River Sub Basin

## **Okanogan Tryptic**

### **Monarchs**

Arriving souls  
Souls of ancestors  
Tributaries of souls in great currents  
communal congregations of souls  
Arriving on yellow and black wings  
to the sacred pines of Michoacán  
for Dia De Los Muertos  
Al Norte they whispered  
Over wintering, whispering, waiting  
for the surging swell of Spring  
the trawl net northern sweep of spring  
following the unfolding of milkweed  
a Diaspora north like the burst pod of Milkweed seeds  
chasing chlorophyll  
the ooze of chlorophyll  
viscous current of chlorophyll  
the hydraulic push of fluids  
thru xylem and phloem  
dew drop of alkaloid nectar  
midland mountains of Michoacán  
to the bottom lands of the Okanogan

### **Mustangs**

Durable Spanish ponies  
Between the knees of conquistadores  
Radiating from the ruins of Tenochtitlan  
Follows the butterflies north  
Of al Norte de Mexico  
Stolen by Mescaleros  
Raiding the Ranchos and Haciendas  
traded to Comanche  
Won in a coup by Crow  
Bartered to Nez Pearce  
Lost in a stick game to the Spokanes

Arriving in the Okanogan  
to level the mountains  
And melt the miles  
Those brown eyes  
framed by an ochre star  
staring south from the top of the hill  
Across the river to the rodeo arena,  
Carnival, and ring of Teepees  
between him and Mexico  
Soft nose nudges his warrior  
For the Matinee race

### **Migrants**

Bracero Bus leaves Michoacán  
To follow the chlorophyll north  
Another Diaspora of souls  
Replacing other souls gone to war  
Another migration drawn to the nectar  
of work and harvest  
Stay and starve or leave and live  
Sent for wives and children  
To "echar raices"  
"throw down roots"  
Along side the milk weed plant  
From Orondo to Oroville,  
both Spanish Names,  
Named as if awaiting for their arrival

**Douglas Woodrow**