

***Sixth Annual Poetry Dinner***

**Okanogan Land Trust**

*Caring for the Land and Each Other*

**Home Hosts  
Tom and Linda Black  
Tonasket**

Saturday March 7, 2015 6:00 PM



**2015  
Poets & Singers**

**Julie Ashmore 4**

**George Baumgardner 6**

**Patti Baumgardner 8**

**Katharine Bill 13**

**Reed Engel 4**

**Bob Goodwin 18**

**Walter Henze 22**

**Dan Hulphers 24**

**Grant Jones 27**

**Victoria Jones 33**

**Dale Swedberg 34**

**William Slusher 36**

**Kathleen Smith 37**

**Todd Thorn 41**

**Sandy Vaughn 44**

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

song Julie Ashmore

lyrics Grant Jones

## ***Refrain:***

***Dm***

***C***

***It's not speed but sinuosity***

***Am***

***G***

***Am***

***G***

***that gives life to the dance, puts the art in  
the flow,***

***Dm***

***C***

***takes the hunger out of the river***

***F/G***

***G***

***and puts love back inside it.***

C (edc)

I cannot explain

(ca) Am

your voice

(bg) G

your eyes

(af) F

your hands

G (ag)

in these back-channel moments

F (f)

after you leave when

G

my river becomes

C

a beaver pond.

## ***Refrain***

C (cccde)

Dm (ga)

F (dc)

Let her water words coil around your ears,

C Dm F

Trickle inside your head.

C (cccde gag) Dm

Let the wind in the cottonwoods

Em (agab highc) F

Whisper through your hair

Am

G

C

Like loved ones calling your name. X2

## ***Refrain***

C

Dm F

Standing under the tall, silver maples,

C

Dm

F

Let your fingers read stories in the bark.

C

Dm

Em

F

Hold earth in your hands and let her

memories sift

Am

G

C

Through your fingers like cloud seeds.

## ***Refrain***

C                    Dm        F  
Hear woodpecker tap out her heartbeat  
      C        Dm            F  
And warblers sing her deepest secrets.  
C                                    Dm  
Em F  
Lean your bones against ancient snags in  
the channel  
      AC/A    GC/G                    F  
And feel the music of grandfather's dreams.

*End:*

**Dm                                    C**  
***It's not speed but sinuosity***  
      **Am                                    G    Am**  
**G**  
***that gives life to the dance, puts the art in***  
***the flow,***  
      **Dm                                    C**  
***takes the hunger out of the river***  
      **F/G                                    G**  
***and puts love back inside it.***  
      **F                                    G                                    C**  
***My heart sings a blessing for this native***  
***land.***

Accompanied by  
Reed Engle and Sandy Vaughn

## ***Snow Music Score***

smooth

soft

scintillant snow

hieroglyph of snowshoe hare, quick-

stepped near by br'er coyote, seeking

a partner for his rhumba, that rhythmic

roundabout the forest

sings so true, by

night

and, yes

by day

**George Baumgardner**

Highlands Sno-Park

Upper Antoine Creek Sub Watershed

Okanogan River Sub Basin

## ***The Snow***

Yes, it's white,  
but wait...

frost flakes flame  
in rainbow bursts,  
spectrum fractured filaments  
flung far afield, while my  
eyes with ripe delight  
gather up these crystal glints  
play fetch with them  
till the night.

**George Baumgardner**

Henderson Steward Catchment  
North Burge Mountain  
Lower Antoine Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Walk***

A giant snag, old and gnarled,  
walks out of the white mist  
and a great rock, rolled by ice  
and dropped into place eons ago,  
apparates from the fog, dripping lichen.

The forest pulses into space  
left by trees gone to market,  
long limbs loose,  
gleaning droplets out of thin air.

### **Patti Baumgardner**

Upper Spring Creek Steps Steward Catchment  
North Burge Mountain  
Lower Antoine Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Bicycle***

Cycling toward Havillah from Sitzmark, the sky is a big, fall blue with great streaks of white flung across it, softening it.

Bonaparte stands to the east, its top catching puffy swirls of cloud, its flank already under snow along the Antoine.

In the roadside field, the grain has been harvested and the short, yellow stubble reveals drill lines, straight and narrow.

They roll to the west with the hill and the wheel marks left by the tractor curve through them, braiding them together.

At the top, Cascade peaks line up between the field and the horizon, startlingly, like a crown over the original cornrows.

**Patti Baumgardner**

Upper Antoine Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## ***Ski***

Now come the cold and the stillness.  
Yet it's Solstice in the Highlands  
and the morning snow is throwing huge sparks of light back to  
a newly awakened sun.

Barely rolling across the ridge, our burning orb dissects  
surface crystals into tiny prisms  
that glitter the snow.

And in defiance of color,  
a pair of ravens, dressed in black like we are,  
fly in the blue, croaking Christmas bells.

Farther up the hill the sun backlights a twiggy deciduous tree  
full of icicles, letting the branches emanate their own  
sparkling light.

If you ever find the artificial glow of this season  
too glitzy, just go out and see what it is  
that the sun, ice and snow do together.

**Patti Baumgardner**

Upper Antoine Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan Sub Basin

## **Home**

Farmer friends tend  
the tender greens that emerge from winter  
torpor and cold, swollen spring.

They weed, prune, harrow, tie,  
measure moisture, measure sugar,  
wait for rain, wait for Okanogan sunshine.

They find tension with the climate, the weather,  
the machines, the labor, the market.

Their brows grow as furrowed as their soil  
but the day comes that is right to harvest  
the perfect clusters, seed in bins, fruit in baskets, chaff blown  
to the wind, vines unnetted for gleaning.

We gather, we crush, we grind, we culture  
yeast and feed it Okanogan sugar.  
We press, we beat, we fold, we rack,  
we divide, we cool, we shape, we barrel,  
we fire, we bottle and we wait hours or years.

Inconsequentially, time passes.

We peel the loaf off the hot oven stone.  
It crackles. We set the bottle on the table.  
It breathes. We sit with each other.  
Each Day.  
Sacred.  
Okanogan. Communion.

### **Patti Baumgardner**

Henderson Steward Catchment  
Upper Antoine Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan River Sub Basin



## **Storm**

After hail quiet; frantic  
energy released into  
hardness, beating fists  
upon spring's fickle ground; done.

Now.

Dissolving cold tension  
with apologetic drizzle  
the hard evidence remains; anger  
at the lost love  
the bittersweet air of almost.

Strained energy  
released and  
thawed;

could have fallen as gentle rain  
on sweet spring beauties,  
instead  
force.

No ones fault,  
just potential energy  
accumulated over time  
at once too much  
and then gone.

Leaving mud on mountains  
hammered and cold.

### **Katharine Bill**

Washington Pass  
Early Winters Sub Watershed  
Methow River Sub Basin  
14 April 2009

## ***What is here?***

River here  
smell of meltwater and silt  
new to the world  
current  
fast.

Life here  
vessel for experience  
etching in  
ceramic boundaries.

Edges here  
of water on granite  
of time on skin  
    rough  
of spirit on heart  
    full and hot  
    within arching sides  
seductive boundaries  
    uncertain ends.

Child's hand here  
holding mine tight  
we walk with purpose  
to a flower  
pull it off  
pick it apart  
throw it down  
again.  
and again.

Sunshine here  
requires exposure  
seeds require dirt  
perhaps lost in soil  
perhaps found in a child's hand.

River here  
Life here  
Spirit here

**Katharine Bill**

Fawn Creek Sub Watershed  
Methow River Sub Basin

## ***Radiate***

Colors of fall ending now  
the late peak  
fragile to the wind  
falling leaves  
one time only.

Dark up high  
cold coming  
time to put away  
clean up  
store.

Hello to what is next  
open (patient, loving, strong?)  
goodbye to green  
now golden  
grass  
underneath  
soon frozen  
gone for this year; this year gone too;  
one time only.

### **Katharine Bill**

Fawn Creek Sub Watershed  
Methow River Sub Basin

## ***Winter Poem I***

Inevitable transformation  
sometimes catastrophic  
release  
sometimes incredible  
plastic strength  
water  
sculpted  
translucent.  
Why worry when this blanket  
covers regularity  
with the miracle of water  
why not enjoy the sanctity  
safety  
silence?

### **Katharine Bill**

Fawn Creek Sub Watershed  
Methow River Sub Basin

## ***High Water***

High in the Pasayten  
last winter's snow  
kissed by a late spring sun  
shape-shifts itself to water,  
trickles to join other storms'  
snow-melt to feed a creek,  
then another, swelling in time  
to a bank-full stream.

Pasayten joins Similkameen  
tumbles over falls, then  
hesitates on the flats  
by Nighthawk, unsure  
which way gravity pulls.

Wouldn't do to confuse  
the naming geographers  
by spilling into Palmer Lake  
and thence the Sinlahekin  
(Similkameenlahekin?)

Meandering slowly east  
to pick up speed down the  
doomed wild reach above  
damned Enloe dam,  
Similkameen rushes by  
its confluence with  
lesser sibling Okanogan.

On the flood, brown as chocolate,  
trees, branches, stumps with  
root-balls snatched from perches  
safe since last high water,  
slide with the current past  
Valley towns to founder  
like beached whales on the flats  
where the Okanogan adds

its color to the Columbia.

Before the main stem dams  
Changed river to settling ponds,  
Pasayten sand built beaches  
on the Cascadian Coast.

Now winter storms demanding  
tribute, sever spits, cut into bluffs.  
The sea reclaims the land  
the river can't sustain.

Think on this as turbines spin  
to charge your phones and  
burn your morning toast.

**Bob Goodwin**

Palmer Lake and Creek Sub Watershed  
Similkameen River Sub Basin

## ***The Wauconda Barn***

The old barn is gone from the High Country  
near the limestone quarry past Wauconda Grange.  
Not a trace remains in the meadow it graced  
for over a hundred saddle ranching years.

Architecture without artifice, the Western Barn  
is an endangered species, an unpretentious form  
shaped by necessities: high in the center  
with large paired doors for wagons;  
low at the sides for pony stalls,  
ridge extended to lift grain  
by a hook into the hay loft,  
stockaded by split rail pens and chutes.

Slowly bent by winter snows  
its ridge yields to gravity's pull.  
An ATV can replace a horse,  
no one cares enough to fix  
a loose board, leaks in the roof.  
Walls bow, nails pop;  
then, last Spring, with creaks  
and groans that were heard by a pair of ravens,  
marmots, perhaps a passing coyote,  
the old barn folds itself into the meadow.

It's rough sawn boards were scavenged in a day  
by city folk in glossy trucks  
to clad their recroom walls,  
lichens lodged still in the grain,  
patinas no stain could ever match,  
bagged and displayed like wild trophies.

Grasses in the meadow keen a soft lament  
Barn swallows swoop back and forth to search  
out last summer's nests. A barn owl,  
seeks sanctuary but finds no roost.

The old barn is gone from the High Country  
near the limestone quarry past Wauconda Grange.  
Will it fade from that meadow's memory?  
I must mark it with a split rail poem.

**Bob Goodwin**

Toroda Creek Sub Watershed

Okanogan River Sub Basin

January 2015

This poem is about an encounter with an ermine I had last fall.  
Encounters with ermines and weasels in my experience tend to be very short, and so this poem is too.

### ***Pop Goes the Weasel – in White***

POP!

Like a jack-in-the-box, he pops up from behind the stone.

BAM!

Like a shot, he's over the snow, hightailing for parts unknown.

**Walter Henze**

Burge Mountain  
Stagecoach Spring Steward Catchment  
Lower Antoine Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan River Sub Basin

## ***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.

Ok, 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**

Loup Loup Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan River Sub Basin

## ***Passing Clouds***

Passing clouds cast shadows  
rolling darkly  
over green highland hills  
strewn with wild flowers  
whose brilliance fades  
until the cloud passes  
then burst forth brightly  
until the next dark caress

**Dan Hulphers**

Mary Ann Sub Watershed  
Kettle Sub Basin

## ***Rising Air***

A hillside of tall grass flows in waves  
inscribing a breeze  
aspens shimmer and rustle  
reaching into the wind  
a hawk floats higher and higher  
on uplifting air  
the streaked sky  
streams inexorably north  
these poignant atmospheric vicissitudes  
of the invisible

**Dan Hulphers**

Mary Ann Sub Watershed  
Kettle Sub Basin

## ***Okanogan Highland Dreams***

(to be sung with guitar)

At last alone on a midnight hill  
a clever breeze whispers secrets in the pines  
on the dark cloth of night a cosmic sugar spill  
a broken moon stumbles over the power lines

(chorus) and here we are, unlikely as it seems  
beneath our lucky star  
these Okanogan highland dreams

A coyote's aria, an owl hoots and takes flight  
a big rig rumbles over the pass  
this brief theater, an opera of the night  
then it's gone with a gust through the tall summer grass

(chorus repeat)

### **Dan Hulphers**

Lady Bug Mountain  
Baker Creek Sub Watershed  
Kettle Sub Basin

## ***The Footbridge***

The footbridge connects the house to the barn.  
Sitting on it now my feet,  
Like ducks in my creek,  
Connect me to the North Pacific's spinning gyre  
Like a battery that turns the world  
And it changes my tide four times a day.  
Last night's moon lifted fresh coconuts  
Out of the Wailua River on Kauai Island  
And scattered them up Lumahai Beach to shade the lovers.  
I'm reborn every time I go to the barn.

### **Grant Jones**

Coyote Springs Farm,  
Little Mosquito Creek-Okanogan Sub Watershed,  
Okanogan River Sub Basin, Columbia River Basin, Washington.  
22 March 2014

## ***Braided River #2***

Maybe if I'd kept going to that big doctor in Seattle,  
I would have died a long time ago.  
But lifting the pitcher pump handle seven times  
lifts a gallon of water cold and clear  
and sweet, from twelve feet down the hand-dug  
homestead well which I bring inside  
with four apples from the old tree each morning  
with the hand ground coffee just before I take  
a crap and shave and brush my teeth  
before we savor the radishes, onions  
and peppers Chong's strong hand's  
chopped into the magic of her Coho Kimchi  
now bursting in my mouth like the Nesbitt's orange pop  
I liked as a kid.  
Yes so glad to be alive.

### **Grant Jones**

Coyote Springs Farm  
Canyon of the Little Mosquito  
Okanogan River Sub Basin  
4 October 2014

## ***Raptive Beauty***

*Hawks are not social.  
They are singleminded  
looking for kills to eat.  
All hawks aren't successful.  
My "raptive beauty" is elegant,  
beautifully put together with  
no evidence of wrecks  
marring its perfect pelage.  
He or she must be pretty  
successful in gyrating, spinning  
high-speed, blasting through branches full-tilt.  
This gymnastic beauty stalks  
a cross section of little birds,  
some easier, some difficult to nab  
from their perches, suggesting  
acquired preferences  
for certain prey, but with skill  
to handle a diversity of kills  
some delicious with few feathers,  
some all bony inside deep feathered  
hairballs. The skill is in the tail,  
but the meat of some tastes better,  
is easier to defeather, so my hawk  
plays his or her options not  
from hunger but for the delight  
of pleasurable outcomes.*

You're meditating on a lichened fence post,  
rotating your head with its sexy,  
wind-ruffed crown, your coffee-brown pupils  
flaming peacefully in their blood-pink irises.

The slate-blue maxilla of your beak  
arcs like a linoleum knife  
from its moss-green nasal tufts,  
the dark nostril holes like compass points.

Your muscular neck, foamy-cream nape and throat,  
is bulging warm against the wind;  
your cape of cobalt-gray scapulars floating from its mantle,  
while your wings nestle like bow scythes.

When you're ready you'll corkscrew through the serviceberries  
pick off a few puffs of passerine protein,  
steered by that swiveling triple-black tail rudder,  
perfect for the yaw, pitch, and roll of your acquired tastes.

**Grant Jones**

Inspired by Art Campbell's photographs posted on ncwabird.  
Cooper's Hawk on a fence post  
Coyote Springs Farm  
Mouth of the Canyon of the Little Mosquito  
North Okanogan Valley

## ***Bone Dreamer***

I lived among coyotes at the mouth of the canyon.  
I still wear the young pup's collarbone I found in the creek.  
I heard his kettling, falsetto yipping.  
But it's his spirit to play in the stars that I keep.

I used to be as quick as a ferret,  
But now I'm so still, flickers buzz bomb my hair  
When I lean on a fence post yipping.

### **Grant Jones**

Coyote Springs Farm  
Mouth of the Canyon of the Little Mosquito  
North Okanogan Valley  
13 December 2014

## ***Dusk in the Forest***

Dusk in the forest;  
A Great Gray Owl shadows me  
On broad silent wings.  
Deep snowfall in the twilight.....  
Pines wear strings of hoarfrost pearls.

Poetry is the hush of the snowy forest at dusk  
and the deeper silence  
of a Great gray owl swooping into the shadows.  
It is the noisy skiers, stopped in their tracks, spellbound,  
listening to the wooded stillness.

Poetry is a forest of pine and fir trees  
Shedding their winter weight of snow...  
Each exalting in the sun  
Dripping their crystal droplets.  
It is the heavy showers falling on the sopping snow,  
Each one a rain tree,  
Each one spongy with chartreuse wolf lichen  
Clinging to the steamy black bark.

Like powdered sugar  
That decorates mountain cakes  
Fresh snow sprinkling.  
Pine tree candles  
Catch the drift  
And dress for celebration.

### **Victoria Jones**

Highlands SnoPark  
Upper Antione Creek Sub Watershed  
Okanogan River Sub Basin

## ***Sinlahekin - A Sense of Place***

Belong to the land  
I want to be  
I search for  
What does it mean  
I belong to the land  
A sense of place

To understand  
To belong to the land  
More knowledge I seek  
Insatiable yearning makes me weak  
I belong to the land  
A sense of place

To know  
Fauna and Flora  
Who they are  
What they do  
How we fit  
I belong to the land  
A sense of place

To understand  
Processes biotic and abiotic  
Past and present  
How they create today  
I belong to the land  
A sense of place

**Dale Swedberg**  
Sinlahekin Creek Sub Watershed

## ***Not That Washington***

Washington!, they cry ... all rain ... and snow! Why wish would anyone there to go?

Washingtonians ... crazy they, who never do know an unfoggy day.

Whales and airliners and a rocky coast, of precious little more can Washington boast.

Why go you there, they ask of me, why leave our ... lovely ... civilized ... East?

\*\*\*\*\*

But not to that Washington do I go, I protest, that Washington was never to be my quest ...

no ... I go to the little known central high-lands, the rolling, desert, sagebrush, dry lands.

I go where the salt always shakes, the sugar always pours, where the wind blows dry and the waterfalls roar.

I go where nothing rots and nothing rusts, where there're moose in the roads and the cowboys cuss.

I go where the eagle dives, and the cougar stalks, where the Indians dance and the Sasquatch walks!

I go under the glorious Northern Lights, where the stars are laser in the cold black nights ...

... where seasons are four and well defined, where old dreamers seek gold in the canyons to mine.

\*\*\*\*\*

I go to the highlands that shake with quakes, where February  
freezes and August bakes.

In summer the Fire Beast rises to rage, hot, angry and hungry,  
and scorching the sage.

In winter, avalanches close highways, in the spring wildflowers  
color byways.

I go where mountains slide, where Native drums thump, where  
wolves hide and the nights go bump,

I go where fighter jets soar, their pilots to train, where the  
rancher wonders is it ever gonna rain?

There're more square miles than people out there, freeways  
and subdivisions are rare.

No, it's out to the high-land desert I go, it's farrrr from the  
Washington you think you know.

\*\*\*\*\*

The highlands aren't a place you can learn from books, they  
take much more than a distant look.

You have to feel the heat and smell the smoke, and slip on the  
ice where bones get broke ...

... you must drive the tractors and ride the horses, you must  
track the creeks all the way to their sources.

You must weep from the windblown dust in your eyes, you  
must hear in the darkness the coyote cries.

You must love roads, empty, far out of sight. You must ...

tremble ... when the sky glows orange in the night!

\*\*\*\*\*

Noooo ... you stay here in your ... East of ... fame. I've seen it  
and I'll pass, thanks just the same.

I like to drive for an hour and see two cars, where the Big  
Dipper shines and so does Mars ...

... where women blow snot feeding cows before dawn, where  
out your kitchen window there may lie a fawn,

where distant Cascades make your spirits lift, where our kids  
get guns for baby shower gifts.

\*\*\*\*\*

Noooo ... you stay here in the East. You won't like it out there,  
you'll just lose sleep and stay all scared,

The highlands are not the place for thee, no ... you stay here ...  
and leave the West to me.

**William Slusher**

Buttercup Falls  
McLoughlin Reach  
Okanogan River

## ***Down from the Highlands***

The omens warned us before we came back:  
the outhouse tilted fifteen degrees right,  
the dog stood trapped in the hole he fell in.  
Omens spoke death on other vacations, other returns.

But the huge gold moon rose each night  
over misted fields, and the whitetail bounced  
away from fawns down the hill behind the pond.  
Frogs sang nightly and rain beat softly.

We forgot. We got lost in that eternal world, curled  
into each other as the coyotes set a dim perimeter  
around our fire and our dreams. When we stopped  
briefly in town to shower, the phones came on:

three deaths this week. Not old people,  
but friends who stood with us through the plague.  
Now, just released from the high wild world,  
we shake like grouse chicks newly hatched,  
the truth of fragile shells in fragments all around us.

**Kathleen Smith**

Baker Creek Sub Watershed  
Kettle River Sub Basin

## ***Golden***

Moved from cutting down birch with my chainsaw to drinking Belgian beer on the south porch, I take it all in. This is fall: the torch blazing the way down darker passages to winter's ecstatic silence.

Now everything is golden: the birches, the larches, the beer, the waning sun. Just enough kiss of sun on skin to make us believe--for now at least—that earth will always be a gentle lover. Just enough gold on gold for ecstasy, even now.

**Kathleen Smith**

Swipkin Canyon Reach  
Okanogan River Sub Basin

## ***The Poetry of Cougar, the Cat***

If words would move as Cougar  
the cat, moves easily up a tree,  
casually choosing a high branch  
to drape himself and sleep;

then maybe words could glide  
the way he glides silently  
between tall and yellowed grasses  
until they explode quickly  
the feathers of quail chick.

Or maybe words could wait,  
the way he waits, all of him  
present and pressed to earth  
twitching as the next metaphor  
for dinner happens by.

He kills them all;  
doesn't miss a one.  
Happiness distilled  
in muscular grace.

**Kathleen Smith**

Swipkin Canyon Reach  
Okanogan River Sub Basin

## ***Why the Locals Distrust the State***

Tonight a deep fog creeps up the valley.  
Wood heat seeps through the books.  
I sip Rattler Red in the library,  
find it hard to believe I am the government.

The Chinese said it right:  
the mountains are high and the emperor  
far, far away. On this side nesting crows  
team up to banish river eagles from the yard.

At the west end of the house cordwood lies unsplit.  
At the east, machines throb with unread email.  
We are not Caesar's lean and hungry, but our edges  
are far sharper than the rain soaked river bank.

**Kathleen Smith**

Swipkin Canyon Reach  
Okanogan River Sub Basin

## ***Last November***

I saw her photo,  
A portrait of wild soul,  
And remembered

The long meadow, place of camas gathering  
Dry and tawny, quiet before the snows  
Its stream, artery, cut deep with banks eroded  
From grazing and old ditchwork  
Cut to drain and till the moist soil.

At the edge of the stream we stood  
Discussing healing these old wounds,  
Restoring the water cycle of this place,  
Sustaining traditional plants  
The people need.

A flash of white between our feet  
Ermine, dressed already for winter,  
Exploring the base of a lone alder  
Roots stripped of soil by the hungry waters.

A message  
Approving our plans.

© **Todd Thorn**  
Friedlander Meadows  
Ninemile Creek Sub Watershed  
Sandpoil River Sub Basin

## *May*

Moonlight slips past new birch leaves  
Lighting this back porch chair.  
The siren crickets play one beautiful note, again and again

### **Todd Thorn**

Swipkin Canyon Reach  
Okanogan River Sub Basin

## *Minute of Rest*

The shade of alders  
Cool respite from late May sun  
We rested from counting birds  
Nestled within a catbird thicket  
Lying in the moist grass  
Soft caress of spring nettles  
Not 50 feet from Canada  
Only a barb wire fence in fair condition  
Marking the boundary  
Myers Creek doesn't hesitate flowing across

### **Todd Thorn**

Meyers Creek Sub Watershed  
Kettle River Sub Basin

## ***Nighthawks***

Nighthawks, memories now of summer evenings  
Warming fires while temperatures retreat  
Friends huddle close as winter nears  
Gardens offer up the last of their bounty  
Welcome rains fill soil pores  
It only takes a day of gray  
And we go manic depressive  
But news travels fast  
Snow on the Loup!

### **Todd Thorn**

Near mouth of Salmon Creek  
Okanogan River Sub Basin

## ***Highland Spring***

Ah, the relentless nature of Spring...inexorable,  
It will come...still every year we hold our collective breath.

Cynics we may well be in worldly affairs  
But yet hopeful at heart we wonder,  
Will Spring really come again, and all at once?  
Or in bits of blooms, and nips at winter's icy hand.

Now, grey wet wild wind, brown hills,  
Flattened grasses just relieved from the burden of snow.

Then sunlit shaft, and fragrance of warm soil.

**Sandy Vaughn**  
Meyers Creek Watershed