

s i l o



2005

The College of Southern Idaho
Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Philosophy

silo

2005

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The purpose of *Silo* is to give students at the College of Southern Idaho and Magic Valley residents a place to publish their creative writing. From the birthplace of Ezra Pound to the resting place of Ernest Hemmingway, southern Idaho has a rich literary tradition that we hope will still be carried on today. This issue is just a preview, and with your help, the next one will be larger with an even more diverse selection of voices and genres. *Silo* welcomes poetry, short fiction, personal essays, and creative non-fiction. If you are writing and looking for a place to publish, please send your work. *Silo* can only exist if there are those who want to write for it and those who want to read it. To submit, send:

* up to five poems

* fiction and/or essays of no more than 5,000 words

Electronic submissions are best. Send your work as a Word attachment along with the following:

A cover letter with name, address, phone number, and e-mail address.

A short (50 words or less) biographical statement about yourself.

E-mail your submissions to mbrown@csi.edu. For land mail, send all of the above on a 3 1/2 disk to:

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Special thanks to the College of Southern Idaho Foundation for the funds that made this publication possible. Thanks also to CSI's department of English, Foreign Languages, and Philosophy for its support of this project.

Silo is a non-profit publication of the students of the College of Southern Idaho.

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Grandma's Mountain

The rocky sides of the mountain ascended to heights reached by eagles. The sharp outcroppings at the pinnacles poked the clouds with a mysterious confidence that only God can explain. A myriad of cacti speckled the rolling foothills. We arrived to Mt. Franklin to bring the ashes of my Grandmother to their final resting place. As I stood in the shadow of its south side, I hoped that peace and rest would be offered to me as well. My father checked out our hiking group for the proper gear. I laced my boots tightly, knowing that I'd need every bit of support that I could muster to conquer such a formidable foe as this. The mountain rests at the border of West Texas and Mexico, placed there by a Higher Power to guard the pass below. Mexican immigrants in the days of old traveled her, carrying goods to trade and services to offer to the people of the North. Keeping in a fixed rhythm, my Dad, my brother, and I began the steady ascent. A trail had been blazed before us by more experienced hikers of the previous decades. The Sun super heated the air around me. Rivulets of sweat rolled down the already balmy skin on my back.

We paused for a long moment to stare at the multi-colored monolith. The lower third was a pale gray, dotted with bursts of yucca and prickly pear cacti. The fist sized rocks carpeted most of the mountain. In this brief moment, I thought about my grandmother. I knew that this journey to the top of the mountain was also a journey within me. I was searching for a strength that I had always seen in Grandma that I knew I would need. She was gone now, but my struggles remained. Struggles with my new bride, difficulties in paying the monthly bills, and now dealing with this death plagued me. I had no choice but to deal with them.

We began through the first ravine, stifled by the noises above of birds of prey calling for a meal of rattlesnake or jack rabbit. I thought for a moment that one was looking at me. I stared back in defiance. How could such a grand habitat look so lifeless and cruel?

“We’d better stop for lunch,” said Dad. Lunch? I thought that we had just started, but my watch said 12:23. My brother brought us to a small depression in the side of the mountain. It was just big enough for the three of us to be shaded. Dried fruit and soggy sandwiches were on the menu for this meal. I ate in silence, staring down at the people and cars far below us. They looked so small.

An unexpected tear came, leaving a wet trail through the middle of my dusty cheek. I am so small. How could I ever think otherwise? ‘God, I need strength from you. I need strength to deal with my Grandma’s death, and I need enough wisdom to know that I need your strength,’ I prayed. As I talked to God, I knew that I needed help beyond today. Today’s mountain would soon be conquered; tomorrow’s mountain would surely come.

Thoughts drifted back to my Grandmother. Her ashes were in my Dads black knapsack. “She carried me for nine months,” he said. “I think that I can carry her up the mountain in one day.” She was a divorced mom who smoked, liked her soap operas, and demanded privacy. She wasn’t very sociable or even lovable, but I now had an unanticipated respect for her. Raising her son alone, she never took state aid. She worked hard, valuing what she had, trying to instill that value into her only child. Grandma didn’t seem to love her life, but she always did what she had to do.

It was clear to me now. This journey was something other than ascending this peak. I was climbing with my feet, but I was also climbing with my heart. ‘I must climb this mountain,’ I thought to myself. ‘I need to do this for Grandma...and for me.’ With Grandma’s inspiration and God’s strength, I continued to climb. The rough and rusty slopes grew steeper with our every step. The air grew colder along with altitude. Cactus was now absent, disappearing as the air became thinner. I struggled to breathe. We followed a small, little used pathway. One side of us was straight up, the other was straight down. I saw the flying predators circling below us, still looking for a meal.

“We’re near the summit!” my Dad yelled. The mountain groaned around us as the chilled wind forced her fingers through my hair. I had sure footing in the lower elevations, but now I held on to any protruding rock so I wouldn’t blow away.

Faded memories covered my mind as I thought about the past, present, and future. People and feelings that I once rendered irrelevant became relevant again. Ideas that I once thought important faded. This mountain was showing me the mixed up priorities that were ruling my life. Grandma was dead, but she was teaching me about what really is important.

One last step over a waist high, rocky stair and we arrived. The top in itself wasn’t very impressive with small pebbles thrown about. This barren and gray place of mourning seemed appropriate. Grandma’s ashes were in a brown plastic box the size of a grocery sack. My brother and I stood in silence as Dad opened the box to release Grandma back to nature’s harsh environment. The winds blew, the memories rolled, and my Dad wept. I was on top of the world, but at the bottom of my heart.

“This mountain,” I said, “we have conquered.”

‘And this mountain,’ I thought, ‘has conquered me.’

The journey down would have been silent if not for the cries of the birds and the howls of the wind. I knew something more now than I could have explained before today. I came to understand the necessity of perseverance and hard work in spite of opposition or of what others may think. I began to exist for my God, my family, and my friends and not for myself. “Keep your priorities in the proper order,” Grandma would say. “If you do, the small stuff will seem to take care of themselves.”

I looked out on the horizon, noticing that it was much clearer now. Mt. Franklin’s sides flowed down easily, giving way to the cactus and brush that skirted her lower parts. The birds had perched themselves in high reaching cliffs, speaking to each other of the day’s events. The tarnish-colored rocks bore the resemblance to the sand paper Dad would use to smooth his craft projects during hot

summer evenings.

Late in the night I lay in bed, reflecting on the mountain I had climbed that day. I knew that I would always look to these memories, knowing that I am now different. Places have the ability to significantly impact or shape our persona. In the moment, they have the ability to alter our moods and attitudes. Over time, they have the ability to mold who we are. Climbing Mt. Franklin helped me to realize that I could climb the other mountains in me life. I would fight to keep my marriage happy, I would work harder to attain financial stability, and I would accept the passing of my Grandma. This mountain, while difficult to climb, brought me the peace and the rest for which I had sought.

George J. Demko says: "A sense of place is central to our very comprehension of the world" (358). Mt. Franklin is unique to me. I've never before visited such a landmark that, while seeming so huge and cold, became something with which I could identify. I am no longer standing on Mt. Franklin, but now I stand on top of the mountains in my life.

Works Cited

Demko, George J. "A Sense of Place." Interactions, A Thematic Reader. Eds. Ann Moseley and Jeanette Harris. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003. 355-358.

Autumn Air

I drink it in,
Cool, with a hint of winter,
Tasting of fresh mown hay
And fallen leaves.

It speaks to me
Of endings and beginnings
Of death and rebirth
Of hope.

Horse Trading

My uncle Kenny once traded his
Two favorite quarter horses for
A slightly used Cadillac, a mutt puppy,
And some government surplus peanut butter.
The Sioux chief down the road knew that
His tribe needed the horses more than a car.
Kenny knew that he could get more horses,
Not to mention the fact that his eight boys
Liked the puppy and the peanut butter.
His wife thinks they got the short end of the deal.
Because, according to my aunt Suzie,
The only time that car blows any hot air
Is when Kenny sits in it and talks.

My Grandfather's House

My grandfather's house was on
a prime corner of smaller than small town
Montana real estate, facing both the bar
and the co-op. It also had a wonderful
view of the rest of town- basically
consisting of the Lutheran church
and my uncle's house.

But it was a good house and anyone
who bothered to knock was invited in,
offered a Diet Coke and treated like family.
It could have been a neighbor, friend,
delivery man, Jehovah's Witness, or simply
a very lost soul. I say very lost because
to get into town you actually leave
the paved road about three miles back
and pass a sign warning "Next services Canada"

Those that did make it were taken
into the living room and given
the "grand tour" as it was called.
Hundreds of photos ranging from small
black and white snapshots of solemn children
to redwood framed wedding parties
and Polaroids of birthday parties so festive
that everyone seems to continue moving.

He would point out a few of this son
and that granddaughter, but the finale
was always the same. A small
unframed snapshot taken
on the only real vacation he ever took.

the summer he retired.

He would hold out the photo of himself
in his oil stained polo shirt and local co-op cap
standing next to a two hundred pound halibut
surrounded by Alaskan wilderness and smile
at the memory of catching the creature.
He would then take it back and point
to the photo and say – as if the question
had been asked – “Oh, I’m the one
with the red suspenders”

Those that laughed were allowed to stay.

Phantom Biker

You used to see him at sunset
leaned up against his bike
staring off into the lake,
sipping a beer, smoking a cigarette
and blowing smoke rings into the air,
His pale, thin figure nearly an aberration,
You noticed him only because of his spotless Harley.

He said his wife nagged him
about smoking in the house
and spending too much time with the bike.

But that wasn't the only thing wrong in his life—
somewhere between lack of money and lack of parenting skills.
And one night last summer he got tanked
And just rode the bike down the ramp
off into the lake.
They say he was doing more than 60 in slow motion
when the bike sailed off the end of the ramp,
up into the cloudless sky and down into the water.

The bike sank and he drowned.
The miracle thing about it
is that the tide and current brought the bike to the shore
as if it were as light as a ghost,
with seaweed wrapped around the chassis
and moss hanging from the engine.

The body was never found.
But late at night the caretaker
sometimes hears the low rumble of a bike engine.
And says that if you listen carefully

you can hear the low deep voice of the rider

Smoke at the lake.

Smoke at the lake.

Smoke at the lake.

Gravel Pit

This lake was formed from a gravel pit
excavated for the Interstate.

Now a gravel path remains
and runs around the lake,
abundant in obsidian.

Shards remain, chipped from
the making of ancient tools.

Seerers say that if you hold the stones in your hand
you can feel the people
and hear their voices as they talk around a campfire
while they plan the next day's hunt
or lullaby their children in the cradle.

But I hold the stones in my hand and I see
the people of a more recent time –
a young Mexican couple leaning on their car,
who have come to the lake to watch the sunset
and escape the heat of a home without air conditioning.
The man has one arm around his woman's shoulder,
with the other hand he sips a Budweiser.
On another side of the lake a barefoot family fishes for trout
and the children swim in the cool water.
Another group carries coolers to a table.

The same sun, today hazed over by range fire smoke,
set on the people around that ancient campfire,
and sets now on those,
who are about to fry their fish on a Coleman stove.

It's not the people I feel in this obsidian chunk.
But it is instead a four-wheel drive or an RV –

The tires crunched down on the gravel
and broke off this piece of stone — a shard from our time —
as shiny as an arrowhead and as sharp as glass.

November Passage

They do not come until all but a few lone leaves
have fallen from the cottonwoods and willow trees
and wind has swept the gold detritus from the ground.
Fewer hours feel the sun; dull clouds hush all sound.

They do not come until the cold bare world has closed in
upon itself; scraping and cutting autumn's fading skin
with its jagged, brittle edges; it goads all sense
of sight and sound and touch into resistance.

They do not come until the world is braced for ice.
But then—they write white gestures of soft grace across the sky,
long necks stretching forward like pilgrims bowed in prayer,
wide wings pulsing like deep breaths in frozen air.

They stir the sky with their downy feathers and call
an unnamed yearning to the world. Snowflakes begin to fall,
and softness settles on the earth. And so change goes —
floating on feathers of tundra swans and first snows.

Peaches, Preserved

Steam rises from the empty jars in rows
upon the countertop and clings around
the hot and gleaming glass. The close windows
cloud up, then clear—reveal more misty clouds
beyond the pane. Through layers of glass and steam
she gleans the first of fall.

The peaches wait—

All summer long they fed on warm sunbeams,
becoming golden orbs that fill this crate.
The fruits of summer, picked in the nick of time,
now sit and seem to stay the eclipsed sun
while cold and clouds roll in across the sky
and drop down to the earth.

One by one
each peach is plunged into a boiling pot.
A pause—then when she gently lifts them out,
they are ready to slip their skins so hot.
So with a silver knife she helps them out
and slices them to halves, then crescent moons
that glide across her palms.

Into the jars
she drops the fresh-cut moons all afternoon
and floats them in a milky way of stars—
viscous sugar syrup. She seals them tight,
and boils the now-full jars. The fruit is canned
when the lids hold taut. In the slanting light
the jars appear to glow.

With steady hands
she lines the golden jars in constant rows—
her universe stands poised before the snows.

Wolves at First Sight

In the still cold wake of a springtime dawn,
we found you, relaxed and full,
on the banks of your crepuscular kill.
As night reluctantly withdrew its hold,
you stretched a spell, and settled in the sage,
surrounded by one loose and easy herd
of buffalo and elk among your own.
A grizzly and a coyote worked the edges.

We fell among the groupies, pressed
binoculars to eager eyes, looked
through the gray dawn's light and speculations.
We leaned into the gathered gaze
and formed a knot of whispers and of wool,
and each heart beat a little faster,
and each breath caught, and quickened.
The pulse of the perimeter increased.

We watched you do not much at all,
greet one another with wagging tails, and yawn.
We listened for a growl or a groan,
the subtle sounds of tongues and paws.
We wondered about the wounds you bear —
bruised muscles, fractured bones, cracked ribs —
the troubled limps you walk for miles of years.
The questions circled in the morning air.

And then you turned your head
and we — each I — looked straight into your face.
And it was hard to look away,
though we shivered and stamped our feet
and shrugged our shoulders to our ears,

though snow clouds gathered at Druid Peak
and the sun remained at bay.
You held us there for hours.

And now we feel somehow ordained,
blessed by the humble epiphanic gift
of standing on the threshold of your lives
and peering in, becoming
somehow greater than ourselves
because this one April morning
we saw you.

Endless Dreams

Old and gray, he shuffled down
the noisy, crowded street.
No one seemed to notice him.
No one cared to see
the worn-out shoes that drooped upon
his cracked and swollen feet.
He pulled the thin coat closer
to his bent and shivering form.
If only he could find the place
where endless dreams stayed warm.
He stopped a moment –
He looked around –
He faced the bitter wind –
He had not planned his life to take this futile, lonely bend.
Suddenly, a little tug played gently on his hem;
“Hey, Mister,” said the small, strained voice,
“would you like to wear my hat?”
The stunned old man turned and stared,
a lump stuck in his throat.
With trembling hands he took the hat
which matched the giver’s cloak.
The giver smiled up at him. . .
The old man humbly watched
as the twisted frame of the giver
limped slowly out of sight.

Double Portrait: Diego and I
(Frida Kahlo)

O I loved to rub my hand over Diego's belly,
big as a globe. I was the faithful moon
caught in the force field of his gravity.
On the day we were to wed, life seemed so sweet.
But thirty times under the butcher's knife
crushed my will and crowned me the Queen of Pain.

Peg-leg Frida was a name that caused me much pain,
but the trolley's handrail entering my belly
and exiting my pelvis like a knife
no words can describe. Like the man on the moon,
I want to detach myself from human suffering. Sweet
Jesus, I want to float in space, free from gravity.

Every morning I wake to the burden of gravity,
every morning I wake to some newfound pain.
Do you wonder why I suck on something sweet
until my teeth rot or fill my belly
with more brandy? There's no use to moon
over his infidelities, those few pricks of the knife.

His betrayal with my sister cut me like a rusty knife.
Picturing her in his arms, well, the gravity
of the situation was such that sun and moon
were torn apart. Why cause each other more pain?
All I ever wanted was his child in my belly,
my little snail, my orchid, Dieguito, my sweet.

Only in the glamorous movies is life truly sweet.
My life seems to be a tedious text written by a knife,
scars and sutures carved in my spine and belly.
Ground down, like a broken column, by gravity,
I made love to men and women alike to forget the pain.
Even Trotsky serenaded me beneath the light of the moon.

I was born under the sign of the crab and moon.
My plaster corset, my shell, became my home sweet
home. I can't remember a time without pain
or a time when I was not in love with the knife.
Through art alone could I escape gravity.
O Diego, I remember your ear against my belly.

As they shoved my corpse into the hot oven's belly,
I sat upright, grinning, hair aflame, defying gravity.
At last I was free of the knife, free, at last, of pain.

My Heart Is Humming

My heart is humming
 like a fluorescent light!
 How good it is to be alive!
 Every thought is followed by an
 exclamation point!
 The toast pops from the toaster
 a perfect brown!
 The coffee beans are
 singing, "Seize the day!"
 The appliances and I are
 harmonizing as if one!
 I never liked opera
 but this morning everything seems big!

Homecoming

My Cameron eldest brother
 left me in September in a Book of Mormon rain.
 For two years they fell from his sky
 and now he sits with 12 doughnuts in his lap
 my eyes beg him to eat this
 sacrament.

I have come here to worship the blue of his eyes
 and the sharpness of his chin, the
 great girth of his marathon legs, now plummeting out of black
 nylon flaps with crisp curls of
 sweat in his hair and the darkred of his pulse
 flooding the hollow cheeks

To see if he will be mine again or God's forever
 or no one
 and there at the plastic pine of his kitchen table I
 watch his Adam's apple twitch in his throat like a
 dead bird as the maple cream goes down in jerks and the
 four eyes of his two roommates
 sing their television hymn and stare.

Are you trying to make me fat he says
 as I leave the doughnut box and listen to
 his voice sing the canary song
 Swamped in English words, still he dreams of Brazil and
 when I feel his praying mantis arms around me as I go
 I can smell the thick heat upon him and
 taste him going home.

After LOTR

Jayson wants to name our daughter Eowyn
and she will fight dragons.
But I spent 3 ½ hours thinking
how I would turn and run at the first hiss of those
eight hairy legs – or when the battle charges come.
Then here, lying curled up
with you in my bed,
watching your little lips purse like soft tulips,
the gentle snores and whistles of your tiny nose
because I couldn't find
the children's Sudafed.
I think perhaps I will fight dragons.

For Vincent

the sun reclines in the park today
and poplars wear evening crowns of starlings,
faintly chittering
over a hazy smell of shorn grass
and the steady plops of bullfrogs.

but I miss your starry night
and the sudden storm that spun
weeping willows into great balls of undulating
seagrass, frothing and swirling in your
angry ocean sky

gravel flew like horizontal hail in frightened
clouds of dust, and though a black labrador
hid in the pines, I raised a broken willow limb
and waved it in the wind like a flag,
drinking with pleasure your thrilling madness

the trees roared like waterfalls
under the black light of a silver penny sun
and three sprinklers shot out arm-thick streams of water
helplessly resupinating into spray

I walked home with a mouth
full of dirt and hours of fingernail
knots in my hair, the first
uncertain spots of rain
in my eyes and on my cheeks, and
my heart thick with the wonder
of meeting you in the park that day.

Anne of Rocky Bar

Anne counts her days by the nights.
By the grunts.
By a stink of gold desperation
Mining her,

Anne counts the stars through the
Slit of curtain.
pondering that love must be
Far away .
As the bed creaks
silly girl
Silly girl
silly girl

Anne used to count fresh breaths
Of morning when they cleansed
Her of the nights.

Now, the dark is the only place
She can hide

From redemption

now,
redwing blackbirds caw
brazenly in your absence, columns
of gnats drift in the late sunlight and

though the clouds wear capes of light
only the willows and I
remember your passing

for I can still see those brilliant
swirls of pain in the sky
and the willows,
again with slumped shoulders,
are weeping

Harry Under Ground

When Harry McCord died coyotes howled in delight at the chance to crunch his bones.

The cheapest bartender west of Independence gave free drinks
And the hostesses on Red Street of Idaho City took a day of rest.
The undertaker laughed as he carved the words over Harry McCord

HERE LIES THE MEANEST
MAN TO HAVE TAKEN
A BREATH. NOTHING GOOD
WILL COME OF HIM

Harry heard it all from under the loose dirt and pine needles — through the cheap box. He chewed splinters and cursed the town folk — especially the man who turned and fired his Winchester after Harry had shot him in the back.

They hadn't seen the last of Harry McCord. He'd haunt their outhouses and smother their chickens. Give their youngin's colic and their women cross eyes.

Harry McCord made good on his promise. Outhouses rocked, chickens swooned. Babies filled with gas, men closed their eyes as not to see their women's.

Harry's laugh from six foot under sounded of farts on the wind.

And when he saw a lodgepole take root above him he wished he had a glass of ole' jack to celebrate.

Nothing good, he grinned with what was left of his jaw and muscle. He'll show them. Just wait for his tree to grow. He'd suck the strength from its roots and ride the sap to the top. His tree will house birds that will shit on the heads of the high fullutin'. His branches would

fall on top those no gooduns who sang hymns over everybody else's grave but his. He'd drop needles on the hair of those women who never looked at him when he was alive.

Harry waited and waited for the tree roots to come to him until he was too tired to haunt buildings or spook chickens. And thought at last he was in hell.

One day, the undertaker's great-grandson and his missus tramped up to his grave. Harry heard them like a whisper because only his ears had not sunk into the earth.

Lookee there. A lodgepole growing out of Harry McCord's grave, the grandson spit.

See something good did come from that outlaw, the missus said. His body will feed the roots of that tree, and make a home for birds or firewood

The grandson laughed and laughed. That tree has shallow roots. Harry McCord still is a no good son of a bitch.

Asking an Old Mechanic on How to Write a Poem

The maybe Santa sat at the white workbench,
His stomach too small and his beard too brown;
His eyes focused on the television on the wall
Like Job treating the appearance of the whirlwind
As some static, historic monument,
Perhaps a monument responsible for that pile of pens,
 that stack of quadrant paper,
That idle pair of needle-nose pliers.
Perhaps the nearby ashtray collects the ashes of some sacrifice,
A sacrifice for the years of pens, paper, and pliers.

As he gives me his most dramatic pause,
Smoke rises from his fingers
As if one were rewinding a tape of a cobweb falling from a ceiling.

“So, here’s what you do,” he says.

“You stop then start.

Coagulate then bleed

Stall and climb

Recover and Fail.

And whatever you do,
Put it in two-four time.”

The garage floor is always cold
And the lights are never bright.

“Yes,” he answered,

“I know you want some miracle,
an infusion of some energizing light,
some muse to rap you on your head
and send you on your way.”

The garage floor is always cold
And the lights are never bright

“Repeal and restore.
Experience and ignore.
And whatever you do,
Put it in two-four time.”

“So this is how you write a poem?”
I barefootingly ask,
Knowing you all want closure.
But as another offering
Is tapped into the collection tray,
Nothing more
Comes from Job.

The garage floor is always cold
And the lights are never bright.

No Shoes Required

Today is a picnic kind of day. At long last the dreary, silent black cloud of winter has drifted far away, leaving the gentle breeze of a sweet spring. My daffodils nod their merry heads as they bask in the light of a bright, cheerful sun. And I, too, take comfort in its warmth as I recline on my cool, soon to be green grass – no shoes required. The lively spring weather is begging for my company, or maybe it is I who craves the company of spring, but either way neither of us will be left wanting. After loading my husband and our two dogs into the truck, making a quick stop to the grocery store, and stopping at the gas station for the items we forgot, we are on our way to picnic paradise.

Hawaii is said to be paradise. I certainly wouldn't mind finding out if it is, but for now paradise must be sought not too far from my back door. I suppose that any place that imprints on a person's mind or moves them in a powerful way could be considered paradise even without the clear blue waterfalls, swaying palm trees, and warm sandy beaches. Places can blanket us in a peaceful and secure coziness giving us a sense of place. In the surroundings, we feel like a part of the place and like the place is a part of ourselves. I feel that sense of place anytime I find myself in nature's kind embrace.

Spring has arrived to Southern Idaho and Chase and I are now looking for that place in nature to have our spring picnic. Our destination is a spot along the creek that cuts through the South Hills – Rock Creek. As my husband and I glide along the winding road, the creek races beside us, outperforming us with its graceful ease at each bend. Peering through the tinted window, I search with hopeful eyes for the perfect spot. I am looking for a place with tall, mysterious trees, a soft whispering stream, cheerful spring flowers, and a flat piece of ground – perfect for a picnic. Quickly enough, I am beginning to discover that turn-off after turn-off from the main road is already claimed. So the next open spot is the one we stop at.

As soon as the engine is turned off, Chase and I step out onto nature's carpet, pine needles crackling beneath our feet. I take a breath of the clean, fragrant air blossoming with the first of spring's flowers. Immediately, I feel happy and energized. Our dogs are also full of energy as they bound around excitedly sniffing everything in their path. Like the dogs, we too decide to go exploring to familiarize ourselves with our surroundings. The first thing my eyes fall upon is a trail of sweet yellow flowers. Their petals seem to be glazed with a glossy finish that reflects the sun's brilliant rays. The trail leads to an inviting flat area perfect for a blanket and two picnickers. Encircling the open ground are towering pine trees and silent aspens awaiting their summer foliage. Down below in the shade of the canopy, the ground is camouflaged in a mosaic of greens. One plant growing in small clusters brandishes leaves with spiky edges. Another, spread in patches, resembles tiny bursts of stars huddled closely together. Among the greenery are big, earthy rocks popping out of the landscape as if they fell from the sky. They are covered in bright green and orange moss and look as if they would make great shelter from the sun or predators for small wildlife.

Tearing through this tranquil landscape is the swift, dashing Rock Creek. Soaring quickly down its path, it seems that some unworldly force sends it on its trek never ceasing. Large rocks jutting out create opportunities for the water to slide up and over or playfully splash around the base. Gurgle, gurgle, swish, glop, glop – a symphony of sounds is carried down the creek. The choppy thrashing keeps in perfect harmony with the soothing melody of continuous flow as the water dances down the stream. Gazing into the moving water I spy colorful jewel-like pebbles lining the creek bed. I grab a handful to inspect their shining beauty, but as soon as the water evaporates, their luster is lost. I toss them back into the clear water where they immediately become treasures once again. Next to the water sits a huge mossy rock. I climb it and situate myself on its flat surface, warmed by the sun. Higher up the creek, I see that it is thrashing about forming white foamy bubbles. A soft

breeze nuzzles my cheek and carries the fresh scent of nature along the path of the creek. I look across the creek and up towards the sky at the stately South Hills. The hills shoot up from the ground piercing the blue sky on either side of the creek. I feel as if they are protectors, making me feel secure. They inspire me and create a surge of energy calling me to scale their smooth terrain. With the creek nestled in between them all is peaceful and calm.

After our exciting exploration, we decide it is time to eat. As the dogs chew on their rawhide bones, Chase and I eat a delicious turkey and hummus pita with feta and green peppers, a salad with zesty Italian dressing, and some sweet apple pie with Cool Whip. Relaxing on the blanket surrounded by the sounds and smells of nature, I am happy. This place has quickly taken its hold on me and I feel a oneness with my environment. Hidden behind the trees, the main road disappears and the songs of the creek drown out the cars zipping by. In this place I can get away from all the rush rush and have some time to think. The serenity that I feel from being in the tame – though sometimes brilliantly wild – outdoors gives me my sense of place in nature. It is something that I passionately feel is worth saving, which brings me closer to it.

Then there are those who obviously enjoy spending time in nature, but have no respect for it. When Chase and I arrived at this beautiful spot, something that caught my eyes before the sweet flowers was something in great contrast – trash. There was a white garbage bag with its contents dumped out right alongside the majestic creek. There were beer cans, food wrappers, used napkins, and other unsightly litter. There were also beer cans sticking on the end of the trees branches – charming. And then there were bits of this and that stuck under rocks, caught in the grass, and trapped in the trees. People need to realize how very long it takes certain materials to break down in order to be taken into the earth. Their careless trashing of the campsites, lakes, and parks ruins the experience for others. But I doubt people who litter care much about what effect littering has on anyone or anything. Maybe if they

knew how much of their money goes to federal park employees for the cleanup of their litter, they'd change their mind about lazily tossing something on the ground. Chase and I are both discouraged with the disrespect people have for the places they seem to enjoy going to. We clean up their mess, but hopefully they'll learn to be responsible for themselves someday soon.

Before leaving, Chase and I walk down to an enormous tree with branches so big I can hardly wrap my arms around them. I feel a childish whim to climb the tree and sit on a branch that extends towards the creek. Once up there, I am reminded of the times when my brothers, sisters, and I used to climb this huge grapefruit tree in our backyard in Arizona. It makes me think of how daring and fearless I was as a kid. I truly felt like I could change the world and make it a better place. Sitting in this tree I gain inspiration to do what I want to do. I feel a strong sense of place and a need to preserve my surroundings for future generations to enjoy. Having this sense of place helps me appreciate what I value. In George Demko's essay "A Sense of Place," he states, "Civilization, as we know it, is the poorer when we lose the sense of place" (358). I believe he is right in saying that and we truly are the poorer. I know that obtaining my sense of place in nature helps me to have respect for it and take care of it. I hope to save endangered species and their habitats and I want to conserve our natural resources and our precious lands. I also want to have an impact on helping people from our country and other countries to have more understanding and respect for each other and work together for a greater good for all. A sense of place guides us in caring for what and who we have around us and we are the richer once that sense of place is reached. I know that even just one person can make a positive difference. It is remarkable how immersing ones' self in a place and letting it sink in can move a person. I know that anytime I need inspiration, a smile, or a picnic all I have to do is step out into nature, even if it means simply stepping out onto my green grass with my sunny daffodils – no shoes required.



Rain Dance

"Settlement in this area came through both the Homestead Act, with ranchers along the river, and through the Carey Land Act, which was designed to reclaim desert lands"

(The History of Richfield, Idaho: The biggest little town in Idaho 7)

A rain dance is what we need. Calling to the gods for the precious gift, dancing and chanting a sacred song for rain. The Indians would dance long into the night. Waiting for the heavens to rumble with approval and the winds to carry the sweet clean smell of rain. They would dance until the rain poured down. Only when the water splashed and the mud oozed under their moccasins would they end their dance, they would then look to the sky and thank the gods for this gift. Today the Indians are long departed from the little desert town of Richfield. True to most Indians they left little evidence of their ever being here. A few flint arrow heads chipped with rocks can be found if a person looks carefully in the desert that skirts our town. Cave paintings are hard to find and few lack the ambition or patience to search the desert for their existence, but I have heard tales of people stumbling upon them.

Water is the reason for my little town. It was founded as a stop for the trains to get fuel and water, in 1883. Soon Arvada, as the railroad called it, was growing. The name was changed to Alberta in 1907 in honor of the first child born in the city. Within a year the more appealing name Richfield was given to the little village to lure in people with dreams of farming. But even with the richest of soil without water the fields would be barren. So canals were dug, rivers were diverted and dams were built all before Richfield was five years old. In 1924 Richfield irrigators filed suit against the Idaho Irrigation Company, charging they were not delivering the water they had promised (*The History of Richfield* 18). Eighty years later and the little town of Richfield is still short of water.

I look out my window towards the north and see the gray mountains standing like a shadow in the blue sky. Between the mountain and me is my family's farming land. I grew up on this farm, picking rocks from the fields and swimming in the ditches. I've watched my father and other farmers bring water to the pasture, by canvas dams, gated pipes and recently many farmers have invested in sprinklers, hoping to make the most out of the water they are given to work with. Past our land are our neighbors' pastures and fields and beyond them the land turns back to its natural state—desert. Soon however the mountains stop the desert, thick brush changes into pine trees and the flatness of desert abruptly shoots upward forming the mountains. These are the very mountains that my community depends on.

In the winter when normal people beg the sun to bless us all with her warm golden rays the farmers are praying for more snow. They want to look to the north and see white mountains against a clouded sky ready to sprinkle even more on the mountaintop. Farmers know that although the winter may be frigid soon summer will be baking the earth. The songbirds will return and the snow will melt into the rivers and dams. If the spring is kind it will bring showers to quench the already thirsty desert soil until the ditches run with mountain water. One of these important ditches flows just a few feet behind my house. This ditch carries water that will loop threw the town and countryside. It will flow threw countless fields watering oats, wheat, and alfalfa, it will feel ponds for cows to water at and what is left flows to the river and on to farmers in the next town.

On warm summer nights when I can only stand to have one sheet on the bed, threw my open I can hear window the water making its journey. It softly ripples, and the frogs and crickets sing me a lullaby. The water is running down the field sinking into the soil. As I sleep the alfalfa that will feed our cows in the winter is soaking up the moisture and growing. The pasture that they graze on is being nourished.

When the sun turns cruel and the water is used up all a creature can do is find a shady cool place and sleep. The next best thing to do on a day like this is relax with a glass of ice cold tea. I look southward from the porch where I am relaxing and see my neighbor's horses grazing in the pasture next to our house. They lazily look for grass not yet burned brown. Their heads down, they search under weeds that are not bothered by drought. The horses' tails rhythmically swoosh from side to side attempting to keep the flies at bay. Past the horses are a few more fields by the highway that goes through town and then the desert. The same desert that the town was cut out of less than a hundred years ago. The thought of the desert makes me appreciate my little oasis. My grove of trees standing tall and proud. Trees that were planted a lifetime ago shield my house with outstretched limbs. Their leaves filter the violent sunrays and offer a place to rest when the heat proves too strong for work.

Even my mighty trees suffer when their deep roots no longer reach water. The grass has long since turned dull brown. It crunches and turns to dust under foot. The green leaves on the trees transform into golden oranges, burnt yellows, and deep reds. A fall rain blows in and washes the dust back to the earth; the lane to my house can now be traveled without a cloud of dirt raising twenty-feet into the sky. Finally the heat breaks and the cows lay idle in the pasture. Soon the snow will come and the cycle will start again.

Since 1920 my family has been fighting the desert in this little town. I've lived on my little farm for my whole twenty-years of life. During the summer I still ride my bike down to Pipers' Shopping Center to get slush puppies. —the only grocery store in town. Pipers' has been in Richfield since 1941 and has been passed through three generations of the Piper family. Within walking distance is the school I attended from my first day of school until graduation. On cool fall nights I can hear the crowds cheering at the football games. They stand around in groups chatting about when they played on that very field years ago. If you listen long enough,

the talks eventually turn to farming and water and I get to hear the same complaints and hopes for the next years that I hear almost every day at home.

My dad and his friends sit around the kitchen table drinking coffee (no matter how hot it is outside) and talk politics and water. That's all. They talk about how other towns have more water, they discuss new irrigation methods, changes to the system that might maximize existing water, and they hope. They hope that next year the snow will fall heavy and the rains will come. If that happens the twenty-year drought will be over, the fields will be lush, the cows will be fat and the harvest plentiful. Until then they will just keep hoping and wishing. It's like hoping to win the lottery - the chances of winning are one in a million but it's impossible to quit playing. The farmers that are still here after all these years are not going to lose hope. It's just not in their genes to give up. Winter will come and no matter how much snow comes or doesn't they will remain, just like the little town of Richfield. They stay because this is their life. The town of Richfield with all its family history is all they've ever known. The idea of working nine to five for someone else or living in a town where driving a truck with a pack of dogs in the back isn't the norm is as strange as the idea of living on Mars.

Many of my friends and classmates were desperate to escape small town living. They were afraid of being stuck working day after day just trying to make enough to pay to do it all over again the following year. And a lot of them did leave—and most of them returned. I've never wanted to leave. Yes I want to see the world but this town is home and I know wherever I go I'll always return to my little desert town.

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Meditation

A row of Lombardy poplars guards the east boundary of the Hagerman Cemetery. They, and other rows like them, were visible from the windows of my parents' modest retirement acreage on the eastern outskirts of the village, reminding me of landscape paintings of Southern Europe. For years, they symbolized my bewilderment that my parents would have chosen this peculiar valley for their perfect retirement home. I was in my mid-40's, citified, sophisticated, somewhat estranged. The estrangement eventually ended through subsequent visits and our occasional special trips together in the years I was single and my daughter grown. My bewilderment, however, remained, along with the visceral belief that choosing retirement in godforsaken Southern Idaho would be *over my dead body!*

Never say never.

I had reckoned without considering, or even realizing, the depth of my lifelong bond with my father. It has been four years since his passing at age 94, and I still struggle to integrate that bond into my own maturity. Still, since so much of that bond is tangled in myth and sense of place, eventually it becomes necessary to try to untangle it and, in the process, articulate my efforts. Let me start by observing that my husband and I have been retired in Southern Idaho for six years. It is unlikely that those other places I have loved will ever be more than treasured memories. Although we moved here to help my parents through their last problematic years, we have stayed largely because of my personal paternal heritage of myth and place.

It was not that my mother isn't part of the equation or that my parents weren't close. Indeed, their marriage was intensely intimate. Although we kids sometimes felt like mere consequences, definitely relegated to second fiddle to their romance, we were a close family. Through the years we were growing up, in South Dakota and Denver, my mother was an old-fashioned mom who

subordinated her considerable personal talents to her chosen role of wife, companion, mother, and homemaker. This included direct participation in all of the professional and nature-related activities that consumed my father. Still, running a large, busy household and facing a constant shortage of money was time consuming and challenging. Doing that well took many hours, and her in-home child care business kept her tied down while earning desperately needed extra cash. As the oldest daughter, I was permitted to usurp some of her leisure hours with her high maintenance husband. In time, my mother and I were able to resolve a relationship that was often difficult. Finished business. Apparently not so with my father or I wouldn't be struggling to write this essay.

Oldest daughters occupy a unique position in a family, especially when a young father's dreams of parenthood were delayed until the ripe old age of 30. With my arrival there was, at last, the prospect of a junior ornithologist. I was taught bird identification with flash cards at age 3 and began regular early-morning "bird walks with Daddy" about the same time. Four remaining siblings arriving in six years took a heavy toll on a busy, economically strapped family with a breadwinner struggling to achieve a career that would guarantee economic security. In a competitive world filled with sibling rivalry, it didn't take me long to learn how to take full advantage of my special outings. In the process, I learned first-hand about the rich variety of birds traversing the huge flyway that stretches across eastern Dakota.

In one South Dakota town when I was in junior high, Dad organized the local bird club and we all participated in their field trips and the winter Audubon Screen Tours with the visiting celebrities. Later, in Denver, with City Park as our front yard, on Sunday afternoons he often sought companionship for a walk in the park, a visit to the zoo, or a meander through the Museum of Natural History where he was on good terms with the staff. A conspicuous lack of interest from Mom and siblings left it to me to be his companion. It was always special. College in Southern California,

an inter-racial marriage that wildly pushed the 1950s envelope, an east coast career move for Dad and, I suppose, the generation gap, eventually pushed us apart. It was not until they retired to Hagerman, Idaho that the old relationships resumed after a fashion.

Early in that first visit I was invited to join him for tours of this “interesting new beauty spot,” as he called it – with its attendant understanding of its individualized natural history. Exploring the Oster Lakes, Balanced Rock Canyon, Thousand Springs, Niagara Springs, Malad Gorge and viewing it through his naturalist eyes, I had to admit that once one got past the endless sagebrush, bald hillsides, and fields of rock, the country *was* interesting and beautiful in its own way. There were early morning bird walks down 2650 South to Billingsley Creek where one could stand on the narrow bridge and count a dozen species of water birds. There was an all day trip to Bruneau Sand Dunes to eat a picnic lunch and marvel at nature’s way with endless sand. There was a memorable two-week Christmas visit when the temperature didn’t get above zero the whole time and the roads were icy and snow packed. Fairy frost clung to the trees until noon and drifted lazily to the ground, catching the sun rays as it fell. White steam drifted skyward from the warm waters of the ponds along “Snake Lake.” On a Christmas bird count afternoon, Mom and I flushed a colony of black crowned night herons — a first for my life list — on the edge of the wildlife refuge while Dad estimated their number.

On a spring visit, there was the morning we jumped into the car and raced down to the dam north of town because Dad had heard the cries of swans passing overhead. There was a fall visit to “the owls’ dining room” – a grove that must be somewhere near the federal fish hatchery. We arrived at noon. The occupants, if at home, were probably sleeping, but there was ample, graphic evidence of their recent meals; and I remember that Dad, ever the teacher, explained in great detail the natural history and habits of

these eerie predators. For him, there was always the joy of the naturalist, required not only to observe, but also to understand. He always assumed that people are also a part of nature, and as such, he believed, it is incumbent upon us to *walk softly on the face of the earth*, eyes open, to experience the adventure of discovery with its sense of wonder.

Back home, there was his enormous, wide-ranging library filled with books by environmental thinkers, scientists, and the special literary writers whose works captured the adventure, the wonder – and the scientific bases for the various things we had viewed. “Here’s one you might enjoy,” he would say, handing me *Idaho For The Curious* or Darwin or Ernest Thompson Seton or Donald Culross Peattie or Rachel Carson or Roger Tory Peterson. Inevitably, he guessed right – they were special books. I did enjoy them; and these books laid the foundation for a life of reading, absorbing and enjoying the work of the writers I would encounter years later at CSI, where I found myself in Jenny and Jan’s *Environment and Literature* course in the spring of 2004.

Nevertheless, I confess that often during those other years my mind was mainly elsewhere. It was a time when I was consumed by the high-powered government job, worries about whether my teenage daughter was going to make it into adulthood in one piece, whether I would ever find a marriage to replace the one I had too quickly relinquished. My adventurous, often rebellious, eclectic cross-cultural experiences had led me into worlds of people of color, issues of poverty, social justice, big government, technical environmental regulatory issues – not to mention a continuing spiritual journey, and numerous other causes far from the experiences of my middle-class, conservative parents. I believed then that some doors were best left closed. It was many years before we began cautiously to open them and explore new thoughts about complex topics. When at last we did so, we were astonished to find so many areas of agreement...

As I watched my parents build their retirement paradise, it was a pleasure to observe my father working the land, Idaho style,

mucking about in his irrigation boots and straw hat, carrying his shovel. Limited retirement dollars and a lifetime of Great Depression frugality had led them to affordable land where they could grow much of their food and they found great pleasure in the rich volcanic soils of their short acre. Like Crevecoeur, Dad, the yeoman farmer, always wherever he lived exalted in the ownership and production of his small piece of land – but this late life property was especially precious. Not for him were gas-powered gardening tools, although he did make an exception with his gas-powered lawn mower. The volcanic soils were best turned lovingly by hand, the weeds pulled during long sessions on the “prayer bones”, each plant lovingly nurtured. There were grapes in the orchard by the back fence; fruit trees brought apricots, apples, pears, peaches, cherries. The garden yielded vegetables and strawberries, and there was always a special place reserved for his rows of prize iris. Roses covered the propane tank and nestled against the side of the house; other roses occupied special places of pride. On summer mornings, he delighted in offering his bride a perfect rose.

Holly, flowering quince, lilac, and other bushes drew the birds. Columbine and daisies in many varieties showed their colors in unexpected nooks. Tall honey locusts formed a dense natural border, hiding the ugly trailer park that had invaded the land to the west. From the giant old black walnut in the corner of the front yard with its carefully groomed lawn hung an old-fashioned swing that inevitably drew grandchildren and adult children. Squirrels and birds of all varieties were fed outside the den window where Dad worked at his desk several hours each day. From the front windows that faced the north, beyond the row of poplars by the cemetery rose the peaks of Soldier Mountain and its companions. Across the road, we easterners enjoyed watching the old range horse spend his days herding a few long-suffering cows from one end of the pasture to the other.

The Hagerman house was hospitable – full of family reunions, a wedding, a 50th anniversary celebration, and countless

gatherings of friends from all over – fellow ornithologists, photographers, retirees, assorted church friends. It was a comfortable home, filled with talismans and treasures from their long marriage. As my parents aged, however, it became a house of secrets, as Mom sought desperately to conceal the health concerns that were overtaking them. Her cover-up was unbelievably seamless. Even when locals tried to warn us out-of-staters about their deteriorating health, quality of life, and Dad’s encroaching blindness and loss of short-term memory, it was difficult for outsiders to detect. Finally there came a time when the inevitable could no longer be postponed, even though three of the five siblings were in varying states of fierce denial. On the July 4, 1999, we moved them to Applegate, a lovely, intimate assisted living home. We unwillingly began the long, painful, but curiously enriching final journey. It ended when Mom passed in April 2000; Dad the following February.

While my local sister struggled with the challenges of “personal representative,” sorting through the intricacies of their lives initially fell to me. Much of it was easy to deal with; the treasures that made us family were easily placed, shared, or passed on to others who could benefit. Sorting through Dad’s papers has been another matter – often wonderful scholar-to-scholar communication; sometimes bittersweet as I’ve realized that the fruits of his rich, intensely private intellectual life do not engage my siblings, the grandchildren, nor the great-grandchildren. The articles he saved, the observations he wrote, the systematic self-education he devised to replace the graduate university studies he coveted but could never afford – his wide ranging interests – all shed a priceless light on a man we knew mainly as Dad – and missed knowing as an individual. Is it ever thus?

Poring over the notes of a naturalist – annual gardening the books he read that opened the technical doors – I see Jefferson, Crevecoeur, Thoreau, those masterful observers and speculative thinkers whose questioning minds never stopped them

from appreciating the incredible beauty, wonder, and majesty of the natural world. I follow in my father's tracks and strive to see who he was, how he grew, and what made Idaho so special to him. And so – I study the digital atlas he would have enjoyed – the one that explains the Bonneville flood. I revisit the Craters of the Moon and the strange, surreal canyons that pop up out of nowhere, and try to imagine what it must have been like when the tremendous creative forces of nature shaped this land. In the front yard of the Buhl house he chose for us, we grow the roses he loved. On summer mornings, my husband often brings me a perfect bloom. In the evenings, we drive the country roads of the West End – on top, and in the canyons, enjoying the sunsets, marveling, not always positively, at this peculiar country. We still are baffled by gravel roads and cow trails that go nowhere; the bleakness of the land in the grip of drought; the vast, lonely acres of unforgiving wilderness; the endless rocks; the absence of trees. Still, with each passing year Idaho seems less peculiar, and my father more familiar. Much of my acceptance has come as I try to view this land through the eyes of the naturalist who trained me, and whom I have had the great privilege of learning to know a different way.

The Lombardy poplars guard the eastern boundary of the Hagerman cemetery where my parents rest. Pink and white roses grow on either side of the headstone. We stop by to visit from time to time, to trim the roses, and enjoy the peaceful surroundings – and sometimes catch a glimpse of some unusual natural wonder...and wonder at wondering.

BIOGRAPHIES

John Bauer moved to the Twin Falls, Idaho in 1984 at the age of 11. He graduated from CSI in the spring of 2005. John is currently working toward a degree in education. He lives in Kimberly, Idaho, with his wife Tina and their four children Daniell, Alex, Rebekah, and Tucker.

Dale Elizabeth Bostock is a local massage therapist with “A Miracle Touch,” and the mother of 9 grown children. She enjoys expressing herself through poetry and finding her inspiration in her connection with God and in the beauty of nature. Two of her selections are included in Poetry.com’s 2005 Eternal Portraits Series.

Jessica Brown is a former CSI student and sporadic Magic Valley resident. She will graduate from ISU this year with a BA in secondary education, focusing on literature and history. She hopes to go on to teach in between continued periods of aimless world travel.

Lorraine Cavener is a freelance writer, who lives near Paul. She writes as a correspondent for The Times-News and has had stories published in Ethanol Producer Magazine and Animal Watch. She attended D.C. Days with Snake River Alliance this year and is working on more articles with an activist slant, which are influenced by her seven year battle with cancer.

Jenny Emery Davidson directs the Blaine County extension center for the College of Southern Idaho. She has a PhD in American Studies and raises chickens in her yard.

Winona Gurney lives in Rupert, Idaho with her husband and one of four sons. She is currently employed for Minidoka County and is a part-time student at CSI. She enjoys writing, quilting, cross-stitch, hiking, camping, and fishing.

BIOGRAPHIES

Jim Irons teaches English and humanities at the College of Southern Idaho. He was appointed Idaho’s Writer-in-Residence for 2001-2004. “Double Portrait” is a dramatic monologue told in the voice of the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. “My Heart Is Humming” was written hurriedly one morning before going to work.

Tierra Lloyd started writing terrible poetry in junior high in Paradise, California. Since then she’s completed a Physics degree, become a mother, and taken a poetry class at CSI, all of which have affected the quality of her writing. She lives in Twin Falls with her husband and two sons.

Patricia Marcantonio was born in Pueblo, Colorado. She is an award-winning reporter, short story and screenplay writer. Her children’s book, “Red Ridin’ in the Hood and other Cuentos” was published this year by Farrar Straus & Giroux. Her inspiration is her husband, Jerry, and daughters, Marguerite and Gabrielle.

Rob Mayer, a CSI English Instructor since 2002, lives in Burley with his wife, three sons — ages 15, 13, and three months — and two male cats. This poem, written in a Wendy’s Restaurant on a fall Friday evening last year, is his first effort at composing a poem since 1997.

Paige McLaughlin is 21 years old and attends the College of Southern Idaho. She is majoring in Biology and hopes to work in wildlife conservation and ecology.

Jessica Robinson grew up in Richfield, the little town featured in her essay. Her father, Vic, is a farmer and dairyman in Richfield. Her mother, Janet, wrote a popular series of farm life stories called “Barn Yard Tales” for the Lincoln County Journal, until her death in 1992. Jessica spends her time away from the College of Southern Idaho riding her horses, reading, and writing.

BIOGRAPHIES

Bettie VanEpps-Taylor is a part-time non-trad student enjoying active retirement in Buhl, Idaho. CSI's English Department has offered her the opportunity to hone her writing skills and explore new ideas while studying material not covered in her several previous academic lives. Married, with a daughter and two granddaughters, she especially enjoys the cross-generational campus experience.