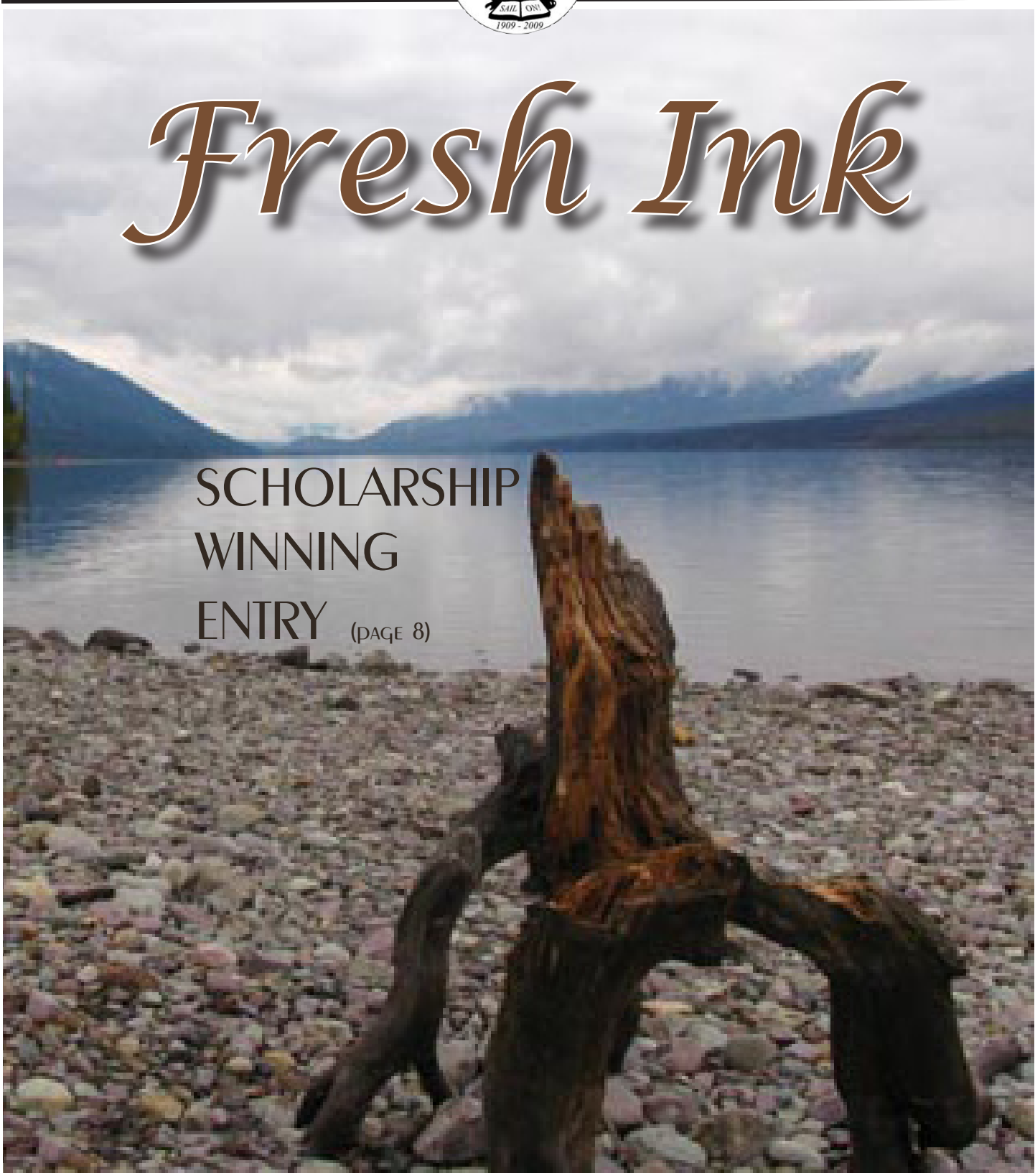

Vol. XIV No. II



FEBRUARY 2012

Fresh Ink



SCHOLARSHIP
WINNING
ENTRY (PAGE 8)

CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB

INLAND EMPIRE BRANCH

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The Board meets the fourth Saturday of each month from 9:00 to 9:45 am.
The location is
Boomers Coffeehouse
220 A Street, Upland.
All members are welcome.

Fresh Ink:
“*Stuff on writing
and the stuff writers write*”

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Meetings

The fourth Saturday of each month
10:00 am to noon at
Ovitt Family Community Library
in Ontario, CA

Membership

There are two categories of membership for CWC: Active members have been published. Associate members have written work to present as samples for an evaluation. If publication is indicated soon, the writer qualifies. Either status entitles the member to a subscription to the state Bulletin as well as other privileges such as reduced rates at conferences.

Dues

All membership dues are \$45 a year, due July first. However, Active and Associate members pay a one-time fee of \$20. From mid-year (January) all new membership dues are \$22.50. The full year begins on July 1. All guests are welcome to the meetings of the Inland Empire Branch. First time guests of members are admitted free of charge. Thereafter, the guest fee is \$5 per meeting. If a visitor decides to join the branch, the guest fee will be applied to the first year’s dues.

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The Inland Empire
California Writers Club
publishes *Fresh Ink* monthly online.
Submissions should be sent to:
Barbara Unsworth, Editor
brbs@aol.com

Submissions for *Fresh Ink* are open to all CWC members. Needs: essays, short stories, poetry, how-to.

The Editor has the final word on content, layout, and acceptance of submissions.

Deadline for all submissions is open.

“Don’t be afraid to take a big step. You can’t cross a chasm in two small jumps.”

— David Lloyd George



Cover Photo

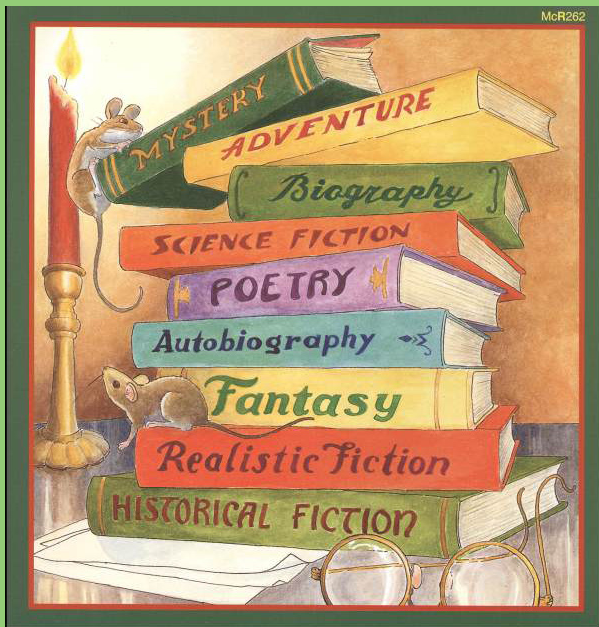
The image on this month’s cover, entitled *Lake McDonald*, is by member Kathryn Wilkens. You can see more of her photographs at www.pbase.com/katwilkens

Crossing Genres

by Laura L Mays Hoopes

Crossing Genres

I spent a lot of time over the last semester writing poetry for a class I was required to take at SDSU for my MFA in fiction. I kept asking myself why I needed to take this class, although I had to admit I enjoyed each class meeting. My husband, who often sat in the hall outside waiting for me, said we were having way too much fun in there. But for a long time I thought that I was wasting a lot of my writing time working in a genre that was not what I aspired to write. I enjoy writing a poem every so often, but I really would love to spend all my time writing fiction, especially since I must write a novel for my thesis, due in April, 2013.



So here's the ironic part. Last semester, in fall, 2011 in my MFA fiction seminar, I got a good start on a novel that I will probably present next year for my thesis project. Some of you know that I wrote about five pages of it in spring, 2011 and then was stymied for the rest of that semester and over the summer. I tried and tried to write more, but it was wrong, not a good fit for the promising start I had made. I turned in 30 pages of it in spring, 2011, but only the first five were any good. What was wrong? I simply didn't know. I read and reread the first five pages, then sat down to write. Drek resulted over and over, until last fall when I started taking the poetry class. Falling in love with language again broke the logjam in my mind. I was able to write fiction in which the main character expressed her love of certain natural objects in passages that verged on prose poetry. That opened the door to the long continuation I produced, one that satisfies my aesthetic sensibilities a lot better. I need to revise more, though. I'm not finished. The difference is, now I have over fifty pages of material, not just five. By next spring, I must have at least one hundred and fifty.

What if I never had taken that poetry class? I probably would have ground out something else for my thesis project. But when I started this particular book, it was in response to one of my professors who told me that for his class, he wanted me to "write the book you were born to write." That idea was so exhilarating to me that I sat right down and wrote the magical five pages effortlessly. But then, I was like someone who fell in love with a person who disappeared from her life. Until I tried another genre, I couldn't reconnect with the ideas and the language that had poured out in those first hours. Only poetry re-opened that door.

So, if you have a chance to try writing in another genre, don't close out that opportunity. If my experience is any guide, it can inspire you in ways impossible to predict or imagine in advance.

Happy writing,
Laura

How to Make Friends with Twitter and Blogger

by Laura L. Mays Hoopes

If you're a writer, it's not very hard these days to start up a blog. If you go to the web site for Blogger, it will invite you to start one, offer you a choice of templates or let you freely design one, and offer you a panoply of gadgets you can choose to install on your blog, ranging from ways people can subscribe by email to your blog or if they're e-literate, take an RSS feed from your blog, to blogs you recommend, to ways you can automatically share your blog entries on Facebook or Twitter. If you set up a blog, you can ask our web mistress to connect our CWC Inland Empire page to your web page, but you still may not get a lot of traffic. However, you can post on Twitter and Facebook about your blog to increase traffic. Blogger has a nifty feature where you can look at numbers of visitors, what countries they are from, and which blog pieces they came to see over various lengths of time from a day to "all time."

What makes Twitter work as a referring site for your blog is to get a lot of followers who will see your tweets. But you probably can't read all of what each of them posts, so it can feel like you're drowning out there. I only had about 30 followers for a year or so on Twitter, but then I asked a friend whose list of followers was burgeoning for her advice. She said to forget trying to read every message, and also to avoid those "bots" which are sites that offer to get you many followers, most of whom are not real people. It's better for you to look at hashtag lists (that look like #writers or #authors or #memoirs or #fiction or #poetry.) If you type one of those into the search box on Twitter, it will take you to postings that people have connected with that topic. You can read those and follow other people who say smart things about that topic. Mostly they will follow you back. The exception is famous people. Mary Oliver or Margaret Atwood will not follow you back, any more than you could expect Gwyneth Paltrow to do that. So don't pick the famous people unless you just want to know what they tweet about. If you post an interesting tweet and someone retweets you (RT in Twitter slang), you should send them a message of thanks. Then, you can collect the Twitter names of people who post cool stuff on topics you like and suggest that others follow them like this: on a Friday, post #FF followed by a list of recommended people to follow. (#FF @llmhoopes, @coolmemoirs, etc.) It's a Friday follow recommendation. A lot of them will thank you (TY) or RT your thanks. Soon you'll have hundreds of real people follow-

ing you on Twitter so that if you post a note about your blog, at least some of them will go look at it.

When you look at how many people visit your blog and it seems like a low number, you can consider a couple of strategies to increase traffic. One is to interview authors or do something else to make available some kind of interesting information that people search for on the web. Of the items having the most hits on my blog, nine of the top ten are author/writer interviews.

Another strategy is to participate in web challenges. Web sites offer challenges for a limited time and sign up groups of participants. For example, in January, 2012 I am participating in a challenge on the blog Writing Our Way Home, a Buddhist writing blog from UK. This challenge is called River of Small Stones, and participants are asked to observe very closely for a few minutes and then write down what they observed each day in January, creating a #smallstone for the day. There is a place on their blog for you to post your small stone and/or you can post it on your own blog and connect to theirs via a Blogroll, which someone runs for them. I sent that person my blog address and said I was writing small stones, and she connected to my blog. As soon as I post a small stone, it shows up on the blogroll along the right side of the Writing Our Way Home blog page. Others who are in the challenge then can click on my blog on the roll and go to read my small stone for the day. I've gone up from about eighty hits a month to well over a thousand hits a month for January because of this project. I also post on Twitter each time that I post a small stone, and people in the project retweet my tweets to their followers as well. It's a very pleasant way to interact with a lot of writers from all over the world. You certainly find out how special our weather is in doing this small stones challenge! Snow, rain, sleet, hail, wind, freezing rain, black ice, and then beautiful sunsets from me! But I love all the new traffic to my blog, and hope at least some of those folks will continue to visit when the month is over. Some have commented on several small stones.

So give Twitter and Blogger a whirl, and you could find some new enjoyable writer virtual friends. The resources will stand you in good stead when you have a book to publicize.

Out of Earshot

©2011 by Mike Foley



Over the years, most of you have heard me talk about viewpoint shifts and how awkward they can be. For example, you might begin a scene in one character's body/mind, showing that person's thoughts and feelings, then shift into another character's mind in the middle of that same scene. That's the most common viewpoint error, and it's the one you should be very sensitive to as you continue writing.

But there are other forms of viewpoint shifting, and I'd like to show you a couple of them here. While not as common as the "thought shifting" problem, they will stand out negatively in your work and will feel very awkward to editors and publishers (and your readers).

I call this the "out of earshot" problem. It occurs whenever a character is suddenly unaware of something in a scene. It can take various forms, but I want to focus on two of the most common problems. Let's look at them.

1. Moving Offstage—This occurs when the viewpoint character leaves a room or an outdoor scene, moving away, until he/she is out of earshot. It looks like this:

Bruce didn't like either of these guys, but they had shown up in his apartment and there wasn't a lot he could do. Pretend to play along. That might be his only chance.

"So?" the big man asked. "You gonna give us the name or not?"

Bruce nodded. "Yeah, I am. But first we have to talk about the girl. She might be there, too, and I don't want that."

The shorter man laughed. "That ain't your call, Pal."

"Maybe not," said Bruce. "But I was hoping we could negotiate that. I can make it lucrative for both of you. How about a drink and we can talk?" He searched their faces, hoping they'd say yes.

Both men hesitated, then nodded.

"I'll be right back." He hurried to the kitchen.

"So what do you think?" the big man asked his friend. "Is this guy for real?"

"I say we get the name and then clip him."

Although it's doubtful they would let Bruce out of their sight, there's a bigger problem here. Bruce, our viewpoint person, has left the stage. Readers don't see him and so they must assume that he can't hear these guys talk. And if Bruce can't hear them, readers can't hear them, either. This is a viewpoint shift because the viewpoint person is no longer around. And so the author is showing us the two men and their dialogue. We've moved to the author's viewpoint, away from our main viewpoint character. Very awkward.

To be consistent, you must take readers to the kitchen with Bruce.

The shorter man laughed. "That ain't your call, Pal."

"Maybe not," said Bruce. "But I was hoping we could negotiate that. I can make it lucrative for both of you. How about a drink and we can talk?" He searched their faces, hoping they'd say yes.

Both men hesitated, then nodded.

"I'll be right back." He hurried to the kitchen.

These guys wouldn't leave him alone for long. He'd have to grab the three glasses quickly.

Three glasses and a knife.

(continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5)

Now we see what Bruce has in mind and the viewpoint isn't lost.

But there can be an even bigger viewpoint shift in the "out of earshot" category.

2. Blackout—When a character loses consciousness, he/she has left the scene just as much as Bruce did above. Characters who black out are no longer in the story, at least temporarily. It would look like this:

Bruce came quickly from the kitchen and mixed the drinks at his small bar. Carrying the glasses to the coffee table, he moved slowly, focusing on both men. Once they had their drinks in hand, they'd be distracted and he could make his move.

"Here you go," he told them.

But they didn't reach for their glasses. Instead, they both stood up quickly, flanking him on either side. He still held the drinks, and he felt the needle enter his neck before he could stop it.

And it happened quickly.

A moment later, the drinks slipped from his hand, crashing onto the coffee table. But he barely heard it. He felt himself drift away, and then it all went black.

The two men caught him before he hit the floor, and dragged him to the bedroom. Lifting him, they tossed him onto the bed and left the room.

"Time to call Artie," the big man said. "He'll make this guy talk."

Once Bruce is unconscious he can't possibly know that the men are moving him to the bedroom, and he definitely can't hear what they're saying. It amounts to the same problem—a viewpoint shift to the author, who is showing readers what's going on after Bruce is out.

To maintain his viewpoint, you would have to add a space break and return to Bruce once he comes back to consciousness.

And it happened quickly.

A moment later, the drinks slipped from his hand, crashing onto the coffee table. But he barely heard it. He felt himself drift away, and then it all went black.

Bruce heard the talking first—men talking in the living room. He was on the bed, in the dark bedroom. Sitting up, leaned on one forearm, fighting a sudden dizziness. His head screamed at him, throbbing at the temples, and he was slightly nauseous.

They hadn't killed him, which meant they still wanted Grover's address. And that meant this thing was about to get worse.

A lot worse.

In the above, readers stay with Bruce's viewpoint, rejoining him once he's awake. It's easy to fill in the fact that he has been moved to the bed. And now there will be a more focused effort to get him talking. The viewpoint has been preserved and the story is stronger.

As you continue writing, remember this "out of earshot" problem. Avoid giving the readers information and detail that the viewpoint character wouldn't know. Keep readers with your viewpoint character and allow them to live the story with that person. It will be a much more satisfying experience.

Best of luck with all your writing.

Give your writing the professional edge before submitting it to agents and publishers. Mike Foley has helped hundreds of writers improve their work with focused critiques and edits of novels, nonfiction books, feature articles, short stories, and screenplays. Contact Mike for a quote:

mike@writers-review.com

You may also find information on Mike's services by visiting his website

<http://www.writers-review.com>

Mike Foley is former editor of Dream Merchant Magazine and author of more than 750 published stories and articles. He also teaches fiction and nonfiction writing in the extension program at UC-Riverside. Since 1986, he has operated the Writer's Review critique service, helping hundreds of aspiring writers improve their fiction and nonfiction projects.



Creative Hands

Folks enjoy attractions of creative hands-- beauty from minds, hearts, and mouths, headed south from San Leandro--1772 city graced by Saint Leander's worship place.

Grandeur lies naked, solitary, original flair, joy to eyes of the glassed observation car. Titanic thanks falls short for such earthen treats this December day following solemn festivity, gaiety, nativity of the hallowed holy one, redemptive incarnation.

Pacific Ocean, greenery surfeit, mountains, farmlands, fulfilling desirous humans-- scenic riches etched in their senses. Deer, steed, stride and stare atop clefts snaking grassy countryside, like chug-a-lugging iron on the go, every-day locomotives spiraling San Luis Obispo--

moving through Santa Barbara, Simi Valley, Burbank to LA., Metro to Fontana for joys of ringing in New Year's Day. Then came New Year's Eve without Fred, Reggie, and Dorothy showing up. December days sent them to sup their eternal cups.

Even so, peace and easiness abide mid a calming train ride, though at best the least of creative hands for expectant people buoyed by divine birth, thankful for a creative, mystical plan in due course gathering family and friends from earth.

Robert Louis Covington



There are no parking places on the road to success

INSULTS:— “He has Van Gogh’s ear for music.” — Billy Wilder

NEOLOGISM: Negligent—describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown

NEWSPAPER AD: Ladies and gentlemen, now you can have a bikini for a ridiculous figure.

BRAINDROPPINGS: George Washington’s brother was the Uncle of Our Country.

THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING?

“The sixth sick sheik’s sixth sheep’s sick” is said to be the toughest tongue twister in the English language.

HIGH SCHOOLERS’ ANALOGIES &

METAPHORS: The little boat gently drifted across the pond exactly the way a bowling ball wouldn’t.

CAR TALK CREDITS:

Director of Photography Len Scapon
 Marine Biologist Frieda Wayles
 PR Director Bea Esser
 Spanish Gerontologist Señor Moment

FOR THE PUN OF IT: Two peanuts walk into a bar. One was a salted.

WHY WE SAY IT: — HAPPY AS A CLAM (AT HIGH TIDE).

Clam diggers collect their clams at low tide, thus the little fellows are safe when the tide was at its highest. Over time the last part got lopped off.

A THOUGHT: When opportunity knocks, don’t be out looking for a four-leaf clover.

... BCNU!

B. Unsworth
 Editor

Bottcher's Gap

by Jonathan Maule

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

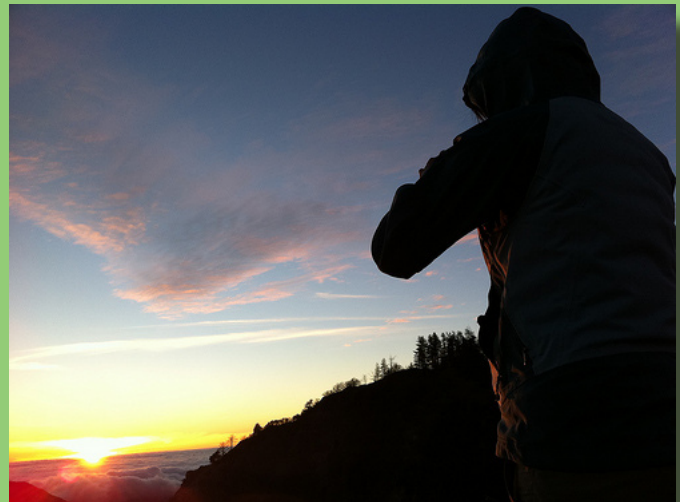
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

The day my father and I arrived, we went to the massive overlook after setting up camp. We took pictures and yelled things at the Santa Lucia Mountain Range, and waited for her to mimic a reply. The wounds from the fires that reduced 100,000 acres back in 1999 were masked under stretched blankets of Tanbark Oak and Ponderosa Pine.

We hiked the Skinner Ridge trail toward Ventana Double Cone and Mount Carmel. Each of us carried folding knives in our pockets, and I had a tomahawk that my older brother made for me out of a 16" combination wrench. He had heated the open side of the wrench in a forge until it looked like a glowing Lego hand, and then pounded one part of the open side into a blade, and the other into a twisted spike like the spiraled beak of some sinister vulture.

I took my shirt off and ran parts of the trail, imagining scenes from *The Last of the Mohicans*, running to save Uncas from having his head caved in by Magua. The trail was steep, and a few times I ran ahead and hid in the brush, waiting until my father came by to jump out and force a deep growl from my throat. We passed the Apple Camp junction and continued at a medium clip, stopping at Devil's Peak, where a giant madrone with sprawling roots overlooked a plateau. We sat and ate liverwurst and mustard sandwiches. He asked if we should rename that spot "Stick No Beans Point," and I said we should. A promise was made that if we ever needed to, we would gather the family here and create a plan for survival. We spat in our hands and shook on it, and then we finished our sandwiches.

Around the fire my father sang songs from my childhood while embers like pixies filtered up and blinked out under the lowest branches of a ponderosa. The tips of his fingers and the nylon strings of the guitar interacted in a way that confused who was playing and who was being played. We sat on either side of the fire and drank Carlo Rossi from blue plastic cups. The stars that had been obscured one night previous by the city now resounded over us from another world equally as complex and formidable as our own. We finished the wine, and rolled out our bags over a flat section of ground. While we



lay in our nylon bags like overgrown pupae, the fire diminished inside its rusted housing, and my father began to laugh. I turned to see him. His eyes were closed and he laughed quietly to himself.

"You know, when I was a little younger than you are now, my best friend Ollie and I found a junked car sitting at the top of a hill." He began telling the familiar story. I kept my eyes open, and watched him flick his thumbnail against the side of his index finger like something was stuck there that would not come off.

"We had no idea what the hell we were doing."

I knew this story, but I wasn't sure why he was telling it.

"I pulled off the emergency brake and that damn car started down the hill."

It was strange that he could remember the story in its entirety but could not remember telling it a hundred times. As if his memory was a creature unknown to him.

"It ran straight into the living room of a man named Byron Luther." He opened his eyes and looked at me.

"I could have killed someone." He laughed out loud and put his hand to his eyes and rubbed them. I lay in my bag and did not tell him that I already knew he worked every day for

(continued on page 9)

(continued from page 8)

three months, and that he gave every penny to that man and it still wasn't enough to fix the house. Then he told me that my grandfather was a good man who believed in moderation in all things. I did not speak. The wind passed through the open branches overhead, and my father said that 1984 was the year of his son's birth and his father's death. I knew that my grandfather had been an alcoholic with gum cancer from smoking a pipe all those years, but I said nothing.

The fire and sky reminded me of the other time I camped with my father. The church we used to go to organized a father-son camping trip at a stream that ran through the Sawtooth Mountains near Stanley, Idaho. Most Sundays, my father and I would write notes to each other on the prayer request forms and draw caricatures of the pastor. There had not been a campfire that night. My father was the only father who didn't drive a truck. The other fathers and sons wore brand new Carhartts, while we rubbed our cold legs under old Wranglers. They said things like "thank you lord" and we made our camp at a distance from them, and ate spam from the can. The only fish I ever caught was out there along the packed mud bank of that stream, twisting through acres of sage under the watch of the Sawtooths. The golden back with black spots contorted over washed stones, the blood-red flame down its body looked like war paint, or the ancient decoration of some forgotten ceremony. The rainbow trout was as long as my forearm, and

had translucent eyes with a single wild spot in the middle that searched for familiarity along that foreign shoreline. My father showed me how to cut the belly with a fillet knife, and slide my finger through the opening. I cut off the fins and head, and put the trout in a plastic cooler.

"Not bad," my father said. "Next time we'll go camp in McCall or Sandpoint and you'll get an even bigger one."

I rolled onto my side and wondered when we would camp again. I hoped another ten years would not pass between now and then. My father exhaled.

"Stick no beans, Son."

"Stick no beans, Dad." I slept in my clothes, and turned during the night, toward the failing fire.

When I woke up, he was gone. His sleeping bag, boots, and guitar were gone, too. The fire was dead. As I sat up to look around, I heard the humming of an engine. I pulled on a sweatshirt and stepped into my boots. In the parking lot, our Honda idled with a tiny spit of white exhaust coming from the muffler. My father sat reclined with his bag pulled over him, and the heater on. He opened his eyes when I got in a turned the heater up. The Santa Lucia Mountains rose like fingers into the belly of the morning sky, and we talked about things I no longer remember.

Congratulations to our annual
scholarship award winner
Jonathan Maule!

... announcement ...

Next Meeting of CWC Inland Empire

Our next meeting
will be at 10:10 a.m.

Saturday

February 25, 2012

at the

**Ovitt Family
Community Library**
215 East "C" Street
Ontario, CA

... a splash ...

The Los Angeles Times Health section (1/2/2012)
published the submission on small changes by

IECWC member

Barbara Unsworth.

It's her first!