

An old, old story

I was sitting in a sidewalk cafe in Ashland, drinking a beer and reading the newspaper when I saw her. I knew at once it was Esme — and I couldn't lie to myself — I had come to the cafe half in hopes of seeing her. She spread her books out on the table and began studying. A waitress approached and took her order. I wondered if it would be what she always ordered.

cort fernald

sidelong glances

I'd thought that if I ever saw Esme again it wouldn't affect me. But I was wrong. Seeing her brought back all the memories of our relationship. "Had it been that long?" I thought. I had been carrying her so quietly close to my heart that it never really seemed over for me.

She hadn't noticed me yet, she was looking from page to page as the wind gently ruffled the book leaves. Every once in awhile she glanced up and squinted into the broad sunlight. Strange seeing old lovers.

It wasn't one of those comet-type of relationships, all fiery passion streaking across the night sky, consuming itself in smoldering heat. Relationships of that sort usually run their course in three weeks. No, we quite slowly and deliberately grew close. I realized some bitterness still burned inside of me — having been fooled by her deliberateness into believing there would be more to the relationship. Why are men and women often so cruel to each other when all seek the same joy?

I sipped my beer and shook my head — what a lot of odd and battered emotional baggage I carry around.

The waitress swept by her table and placed a glass of cafe latte before her. Esme's tastes hadn't changed in some things.

The wind scattered a hank of black hair across her face. She gently pushed it aside her cheek. It was one of those unconscious movements that I recall so vividly. The ghosts whelmed into my thoughts. The way she would tilt her head to the side when listening. The brightness of her dark eyes. That lilt in her voice. The girlish squeak when she cried — once. The small things become so important, perhaps too important, when the relationship ends.

So funny to fall in love and literally be felled when the emotions aren't reciprocated. But there are no winners or losers in love.

It was probably that dark night when all the stern guises of the *macho*-male shattered and I broke down, crying out so much of the pain frustrating inside my soul.

"Writing and writing and writing... a million words scribbled in ink, Es," I shouted half-mad, "and no recognition." She was silent, and frightened.

Despite all the enlightened rhetoric about a man's sensitivity it's not easy for a woman to relinquish her cultural role, even for an instant.

Perhaps that was the reason she wanted it to end — she's never said. I ask too much. I'll always have a question for which there is no longer any purpose in answering.

I finished my beer and tucked the newspaper under my arm, crossing the cafe to her table.

"How have you been, Es?" She looked up, startled at the sound of my voice. "Cort... f-fine," she said nervously. "How have you been?"

I was about to automatically respond when I noticed her eyes dart to the side. I half-turned and saw a man approaching the table. I glanced back at Esme and perceived that glint of optimism alight in her eyes.

The man kissed her and sat beside her. They talked softly — enveloped in their whispered world with all its secret knowledge and shared experience.

"It was good seeing you again, Esme," I quickly said, wanting to get the hell out. I didn't wait for her to reply, but turned and walked off, pursued by shadows. *C'est la vie.*

Cort Fernald is the Emerald's editorial page editor.



letters

Abomination

On Wednesday I was standing at a campus bulletin board, and my eye caught a poster for a workshop by Steven Levine, a well-known death-and-dying counselor who has a background in Buddhist meditation. I had just begun to read the poster when a young man walking by tore it down from right in front of my eyes.

I intuitively sensed what would come next, but I played out the drama by asking "Why did you do that? I was reading it." The response to my question was "That's an abomination against God."

If this young man was looking to destroy "evil" in the world, he really needed to look no further than his own mind. World views like his are the breeding ground of hatred, discrimination, witch-hunts, inquisitions, and much of what is truly evil in this world. Before people like him try to tear down and destroy what they don't understand, they would do well to first tear down the barriers of ignorance, chauvinism, and dogma in their own minds. A truly spiritual person would not be afraid of allowing others to express (or hear) other opinions. Spirituality is expansiveness of mind, not black-and-white dogma.

When people set themselves up as self-appointed censors for what others can or can't learn for their own personal and spiritual development, they are depriving others of the opportunity to make a meaningful, mature attempt to understand Truth and God. If there was an "abomination against God" in this episode, it was this young man's attitude of religious fascism. Yes, he did "teach" me —

he taught me to be even more vigilant against the dangers of his type of attitude in myself and others.

Dr. Wayland Secrest
Psychology

No coverage

I am disappointed in not finding any Emerald coverage of Alice Walker, nationally prominent author, and Mary Watkins, reknown jazz pianist. Walker and Watkins' Poetry and Jazz concert, the ASUO Women's Symposium's final event, seems to have gotten overshadowed by the articles and clarifications concerning Professor Barbara Green's position and the politics thereof.

Because of limited Women's Symposium funds, we were told at the Poetry and Jazz concert, Alice Walker and Mary Watkins accepted a fraction of their usual fees in coming to Eugene to read and perform. Alice Walker, poet, short story writer, essayist, novelist, and a contributing editor of Ms. since the magazine's conception over a decade ago, is featured in the most recent Ms. (June '82). She calls herself a "womanist", a derogatory tag she's turned around, locating herself in black culture as a woman who speaks out. (Marge Piercy speaks out too, but at her reading last fall there were over twice as many people to listen and celebrate strength with Piercy than were present for Alice Walker's reading in Poetry and Jazz.) KLCC taped the reading and jazz performance so you still have an opportunity to hear, but next time, Emerald reporters, students, be there.

Robin Leigh
Graduate, independent studies

Atiyeh leads

As a student at the University, I feel I must speak out.

With our economy in a serious slump, and revenues severely reduced, higher education could not be granted a total reprieve from budget cuts without intolerable harm being done to other needs in our state.

Gov. Vic Atiyeh recognized that fact and made the only moral choices he could make when he devised his budget.

Atiyeh also stepped out in front to push our higher education system toward the future with a new emphasis on training in "high tech" fields. (He asked the Legislature for dollars to fund High Tech at our universities and has matching funds pledged from private industry.)

He is pushing our economy toward the future in the same way, emphasizing the need for bringing in "high tech", and other clean industry and pushing for expansion of clean Oregon businesses.

For students, Atiyeh is leading in the right direction, to give us the education the future will require — and the employers who will give us jobs once we receive that education.

Many of the critics of Atiyeh are those who are trying to protect their sacred cows. They do so at the expense of Oregon's future. We can't afford everything. To afford what will bring lasting help to Oregon has been Atiyeh's goal.

He deserves the support of students in Oregon who must face tomorrow's world. We need the skills — and the jobs — Atiyeh is pushing to face the future with confidence.

John Welch
Graduate, business

staff

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