

True to her independent form, Donnelly eventually became a single mother. "It was hard being a lesbian with a daughter in the 1970s and 1980s before lesbians starting having children as lesbians."

Although a homosexual identity affects our relation to and interpretation of the world around us, Donnelly says her ethnicity affects her much more. Because she is light skinned and has no accent, she says, North Americans don't recognize she is Hispanic.

"It is very strange to have lived in the U.S.A. so long and yet have so many not understand my differences and assume so much about me," she states. "My Hispanic background does make me different."

Donnelly moved north to Oregon in the late '60s and completed graduate studies at Oregon State University, earning a master's of education in counseling. Thereafter she built up an impressive résumé of achievements and posts. She acted as a civil rights instructor for the Portland branch of the U.S. Forest Service in the late '60s, worked as a migrant housing coordinator and for the Portland Development Commission in the early '70s and served as a counselor in the Upward Bound Program while teaching English to bilingual students in the mid-'70s.

During the late '70s, Donnelly coordinated the Women's Studies Program at OSU while offering job counseling to Corvallis high school students. Entering a new decade, she worked as an editor for the Educational Research Information Center at University of Oregon in Eugene, and during that period she founded Calyx.

The journal and the book publishing side, Calyx Books, have their own impressive list of honors: the Oregon Governor's Arts Award, American Book Award and U of O Oregon

"We wanted to publish women's literature and art in a beautiful format and have the work speak for itself; we wanted editorial decisions to be made by a group of editors, not just one; and we wanted to treat women writers with respect."

—Margarita Donnelly

Women of Achievement Award, to name just a few. The journal was one of the first to publish Barbara Kingsolver's fiction and, in 1979, was the first in the United States to publish Frida Kahlo's prints in color.

As a result of this decision, Donnelly notes, "the Bellas Artes Museum in Mexico City often displays our anthology with Kahlo art shows."

One of Calyx's latest publications, the novel *Undertow* by Estacada author Amy Schutzer, has been nominated for the Lambda Book Award, Violet Quill Award, and Foreword Magazine Fiction Award and has been cited in Best Gay/Lesbian Fiction by *Today's Librarian*.

Donnelly proposes Calyx is "a bit isolated" from the pop culture publishing world and "not as affected by trends or 'styles.' I believe some writers' voices have a better chance to be heard and acknowledged by our editors as a result of this."

To help celebrate a quarter-century of publishing, Calyx

plans an art raffle and a November birthday bash. The summer 2001 journal, *Cracking the Earth: A 25th Anniversary Anthology*, is available in stores.

Donnelly looks forward to another 25 years of Calyx, as long as the editorial collectivity, creative purpose and passion for the organization continues. "We have survived," she says simply, "because of the generosity of the writers and artists who trust us with their work and because of the commitments of the editors and the board who believe in the importance and necessity of what we do."

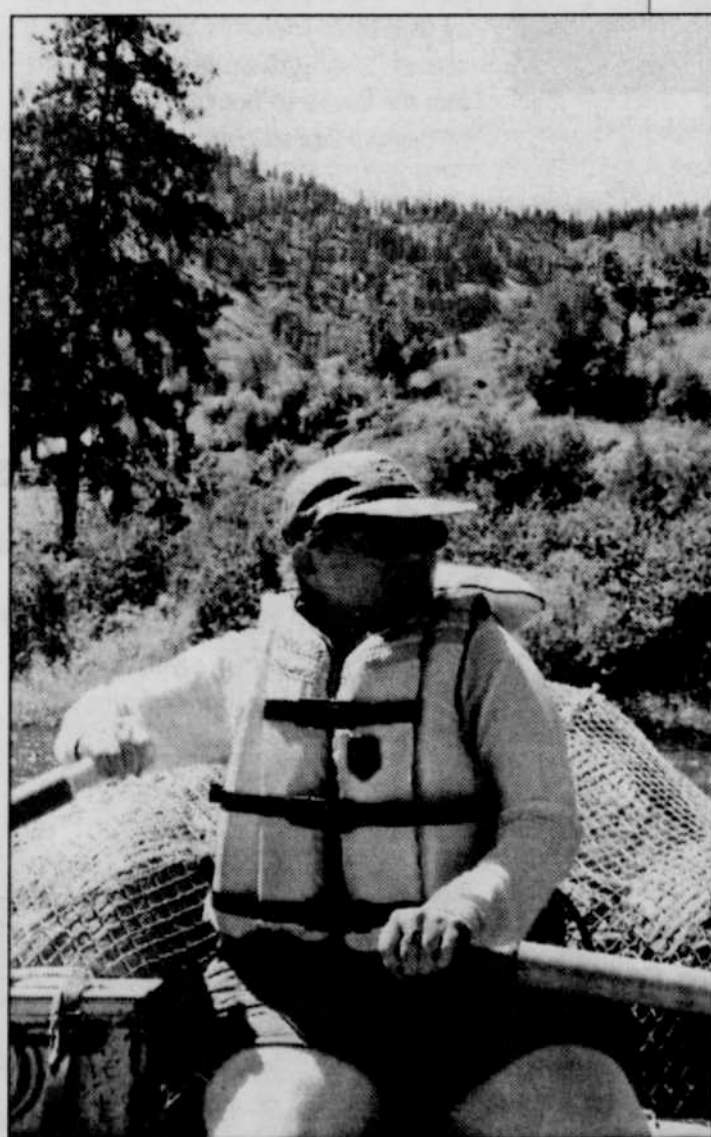
She also emphasizes the value of Calyx's non-profit status, which allows it to receive private donations and grants from national and local arts funding foundations. That's part of what gives it the ability to hang in there in the face of what Donnelly calls "a market driven by the 'bestsellerdoms' of superstores."

What makes Calyx different, she contends, is its sense of the value of good material, regardless of marketability. "Most...small press publishing is...not as commercially viable as the work published by mainstream presses."

And the value of the independent bookstore is vital to Calyx's ongoing success. "The good literature we publish needs the independent bookseller to be the interface with the public," she insists. It is much harder to sell their work "without independent booksellers who read and love our complex books and hand-sell them to the reading public." ■

Contact CALYX at 541-753-9384 or calyx@proaxis.com. The Calyx 25th Anniversary Reading Series will be 7 p.m. Sept. 20 at In Other Words in Portland, 7 p.m. Sept. 21 at Grass Roots in Corvallis (includes art raffle) and 7 p.m. Sept. 25 at Jackson's in Salem. The Calyx 25th Anniversary Gala will be 6:30 p.m. Nov. 1 at the Confluence at Big River in Corvallis. Tickets are \$25, available from Calyx or Grass Roots.

LISA BRADSHAW is a Portland free-lance writer who specializes in interviewing really cool women.



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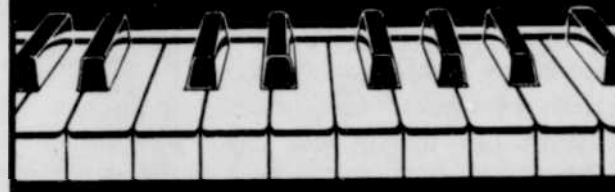
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