

POETRY CORNER

Paddletail

by Paul Tipton

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Paddletail is a performance piece written for and presented at the August 2019 Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council's Annual Meeting at Red Lily Vineyards, where the Applegate Poets read prior to the showing of Sarah Koenigsberg's documentary, The Beaver Believers. A nod to Barbara Summerhawk for allowing the use of "bucktooth pond.")

Sez Paddletail, in his bucktooth pond:
"I'm Slap-Happy! Whack! Whack!
Don't go near my new-gnawed logs!
My home makes the flow go slow,
and my dry tunnel into the bank
even better than money in the bank.
Just sticks and a hole make my life whole.

"Yeah, my stumps, you can see 'em,
but they're still rooty-toot-rootin'.
I don't give a dam, unless I decide to,
but the benefits are for me, and for you.
I think you're jealous, or maybe rebellious,
'cause it seems you'd like to try living like I do.
I'm Slap-Happy! Whack! Whack!"

■ A GREATER APPLGATE

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input isn't important anyway? *Stop!* AGA thinks your input is essential. If you don't like meetings, you can fill out AGA's planned upcoming survey.

"I find our goals very compelling," Megan says, "and worth putting some energy into to see what we can do."

A Greater Applegate isn't thrashing in the dark. The Ford Family Foundation's Rural Development Initiative, which has supported AGA with generous grants, funds eight to twelve such organizations in Oregon. One of the best models is Illinois Valley's Community Development Organization, called IVCandO.

But AGA is unique in that it is the only one of those organizations without a city center. In the words of an anonymous participant at a neighborhood meeting, "We're centrally isolated. Our center is ourselves."

It's impossible not to get as excited by AGA's vision as Seth and Megan and

AGA's outreach coordinator, Ryan Pernell. Consider the past successes: Applegate Valley Connect, a website (applegateconnect.org) with a local events calendar and a directory of Applegate businesses; a network of nonprofits; and a business network that is working on a map of businesses in the valley, a branding logo for the Applegate, and "Welcome to the Applegate" signs on Highway 238.

"We want the businesses here to be successful," Seth says.

Don't we all! With all our differing viewpoints, there is something about living in the Applegate that makes us "see each other as cousins," as Seth says. The Applegate isn't Jacksonville. It's not Medford. It's not Grants Pass. It's us, and AGA is out to find out what we want. Don't miss the opportunity to paint yourself into the picture.

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■ STAR RANGER STATION

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Sometimes we share "words of wisdom" with our visitors. After being shown some pictures taken on a weekend camp-out up the Middle Fork of the Applegate River, we needed to discourage the folks who were hand-feeding chocolate chip cookies to a couple of black bears who had wandered into their camp. Could have ended pretty badly.

The Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District sits on some of the most interesting historical and botanically diverse ground in the Pacific Northwest, and our relatively low elevation allows nearly year-round opportunities to get out on forest trail systems, especially around Applegate Lake. We have trail guides to assist you in having a great day on the trails, including areas along the Middle Fork of the Applegate River.

A stop at the ranger station can include a visit to our Tack Room, built in 1911. This historic building has served many purposes over the years, from storing the equestrian tack, food, and equipment for the "pack string" to serving

as a supplemental storage shed for tree-marking paint when timber was king on the district in the 1970s and 1980s. The Tack Room has been in continuous use for over 100 years!

It is now filled with odds and ends from days gone by, including maps of the forest way back when we were the Crater National Forest, old crank telephones, and other examples of the way things were. Visitors are welcome to request a key and wander back in time.

While you are in the office, be sure to look at a painting of an inventive cabin built in the early 1900s in the Red Buttes Wilderness near Frog Pond. Knox McCloy used a circle of live incense cedars as his uprights and simply filled in the gaps and put a roof on top.

At the front desk we are available to take your information and questions about what's happening in your forest. If we don't know the answer to your question, we know who does. We will do our best to direct your comment or question to the right personnel.

We are here to assist you with information about current conditions

BOOK REVIEW

Ongoingness: The End of a Diary

Sarah Manguso
Graywolf Press 2015

"Write this down! *Write it!*" ordered my first husband, Pat Kelly, as he lay in hospice, half comatose on the very edge of his life, about to slip, fall, or fly into whatever ongoingness comes next. He thought he knew what that was. "It's *obvious!*" he said, his voice triumphant, and he didn't want the knowledge lost.

Sarah Manguso would have loved this moment. She would have understood. She kept a diary.

If you keep a diary, journal, or book of reflections, or if you've wished you did, or are considering doing so, or have tried and then hidden the thing in the sock drawer or on the top shelf of a bookcase *behind* the books, you will probably want to read Sarah Manguso's *Ongoingness*. Her book could best be compared to an apologia. It is not in itself a diary, though she kept a diary from childhood. This concise, thoughtful, wise, down-to-earth, sometimes humorous book gives us her reasons for having done so.

Here's another book about time, memory and forgetfulness, human purpose and choice, the paradox of life and death. I say "another" because such are the books that have lately fallen into my hands and that I've been reviewing here in the *Applegater*. Manguso tells us right at the top: "The diary was my defense against waking up at the end of my life and realizing I had missed it." I read that and thought immediately of Pat's insistence, thought of my own frantic search for a pen and paper and the act of getting his experience down in words, but even while writing I was missing those last moments because life keeps happening as we try to save it. It is ongoing. Manguso stresses the almost heartbreaking impossibility of saving experience. Even what we store in memory revises by the moment; it can't be pinned down. It is a butterfly. The pin kills it. She shares with us her perception that beginnings and endings are delusions imposed upon our moment-to-moment existence in this world. It is the world itself that continues and only our immersion in its motion that guarantees...well...what's obvious. She argues that we must forget. "I started keeping the diary in earnest when I started finding myself in moments that

were too full." The diary became her way to "empty the reservoir."

Manguso takes the reader's breath away with very common examples. Early in her years of keeping a diary she realized she could not write down everything, but she was haunted by what she forgot, which was most of what happened to her every day. She felt herself disappearing. "I wanted to remember what I could bear to remember and convince myself that's all there was... My behavior was an attempt to stop time before it swept me up. It was an attempt to stay safe, free to detach before life and time became too intertwined for me to write down, as a detached observer, what had happened."

Ongoingness is Manguso's description of emergence from her anxiety over time and her place in it. The anxiety she felt became existential terror. She says, "My life, which exists mostly in the memories of the people I've known, is deteriorating at the rate of physiological decay. A color, a sensation, the way someone said a single word—soon it will all be gone. In a hundred and fifty years no one alive will ever have known me. Being forgotten like that, entering that great and ongoing blank, seems more like death than death.... The catalog of emotion that disappears when someone dies and the degree to which we rely on a few people to record something of what life was to them, is almost too much to bear."

How did she survive? How do any of us survive? No spoilers here except that Manguso does not disappoint. Still, I'd like to think she will write another even more profound reflection in 20 years. Maybe she has just begun to explore these things. I invite you to read her book.

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Visitors to the Star Ranger Station can find a selection of books, maps, toys, and other items. Photo: Pam Carr.

6941 Upper Applegate Road. Before you head out for your adventure, please sign our visitors' register (and look through the book to see who else you know). And, most importantly, "Y'all come back now, hear?"

Pam Carr
Information Specialist
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in the forest and a wide variety of forest products, such as boughs, cones, rocks, mushrooms, and firewood. We are happy to guide you through the process of obtaining incidental use and other permits.

We have many maps (some free and others available for purchase), such as public motor-vehicle use maps, district and forest maps, recreational trail guides, and a map of a self-guided hike on the Historic Gin Lin Trail. We also have many interesting handouts, such as a brochure about the history of the Applegate's very own Bigfoot trap and a self-guided motor tour of the Siskiyou Crest, which runs from the Applegate River to Mount Ashland.

The ranger station is open from 8 am - 4:30 pm Monday through Friday at