

## THE STATE OF OUR DEMOCRACY: THE TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT

An elegy for the Public Libraries in Jackson County, Oregon

The expected veto of the bill setting a timeline for troop withdrawal =  
Cut-off Federal reimbursements to counties for diminished timber sales =  
The complete shutdown of the entire public library system in Jackson County =  
The shattering of our country's democracy while we spend billions per week  
"to spread democracy" somewhere else.  
A lie which now bleeds us  
In every way we can be bled.

~CAROLYN DUNN

(Carolyn Dunn is former librarian for Clatsop Community College)

## A RIDDLE IN HARD TIMES

(for Kurt Vonnegut)

What good is life?  
The seed of what it doesn't fit  
is poetry  
and good for f\*\*\* all, I'm sure.  
But every four years Venus on the half-shell  
tracks a five-pointed star, a path re-occurring  
also in the apple, cut transversely.

Some events are like invisible love,  
like the shore wind's grace:  
open for all the season,  
but a riddle in hard times.  
Can you refute me?

I do think about us someday turning our mind into stone  
and plummeting toward God,  
a sore, muted clink the longed-for answer,  
the arc tracing the form of the question.  
Still, workings can be seen, even from here.  
One imagines this lovely blue-green planet has also been a host.

The tree goes on and on.  
The spider devours and autumn continues  
after we're gone. It would be great  
if one's lonely patchwork could break  
into a halo of dance.

If you find it so, please writ it in the stars, or if you can,  
take me up there with you, too.

~VINCENT REYNOLDS

In suits and ties and hats and hose  
they file inside exalted walls.  
All those sinners, all their sins  
so amiably combined within.

A ghostly shadow falls upon  
the Sunday funnies on my porch.  
You fuckers, move that god damned church,  
it's shutting off my sun.

~JEAN ESTEVE

## POINTS WEST

For Kevin & Eve

When the street has gone all so quiet  
except for the police car that whizzes up  
and down at the same time every night —

when the timbers jolt and the radiators click-click  
and the action of the clocks gets ready to strike —  
I stumble across a blustery waste ground,

a cliff-face, a dozen streets of little  
houses, under a full moon, blinded by  
the light of a door that's been left open,

church bells clanging at six in the morning,  
the first train haring off to points west,  
and, from the garden that edges a misty lake,

wind chimes accompany my 'going before me',  
to the terrace overlooking a splendid sea,  
where the kids hunt in rock pools or dive

headlong into the uplit swimming pool,  
the smoky hills behind and beyond us  
nestle the rich and no-longer famous —

ex-colonials on retreat and contemplatives —  
but in the bulky containers moving so slowly,  
stowaways crouch for pockets of air.

I am off again, daydreaming of marauding  
tree wasps with their ghostly undercarriages,  
cicadas ringing their nightly changes,

the high-pitched whine of a mosquito,  
my eyes peeled on dolphin-watch,  
while they, like dancers, wait in the wings.

~GERALD DAWE

## INVASIVE SPECIES

Black mold  
has invaded every  
corner, ridge, and indent  
of the front door window molding.

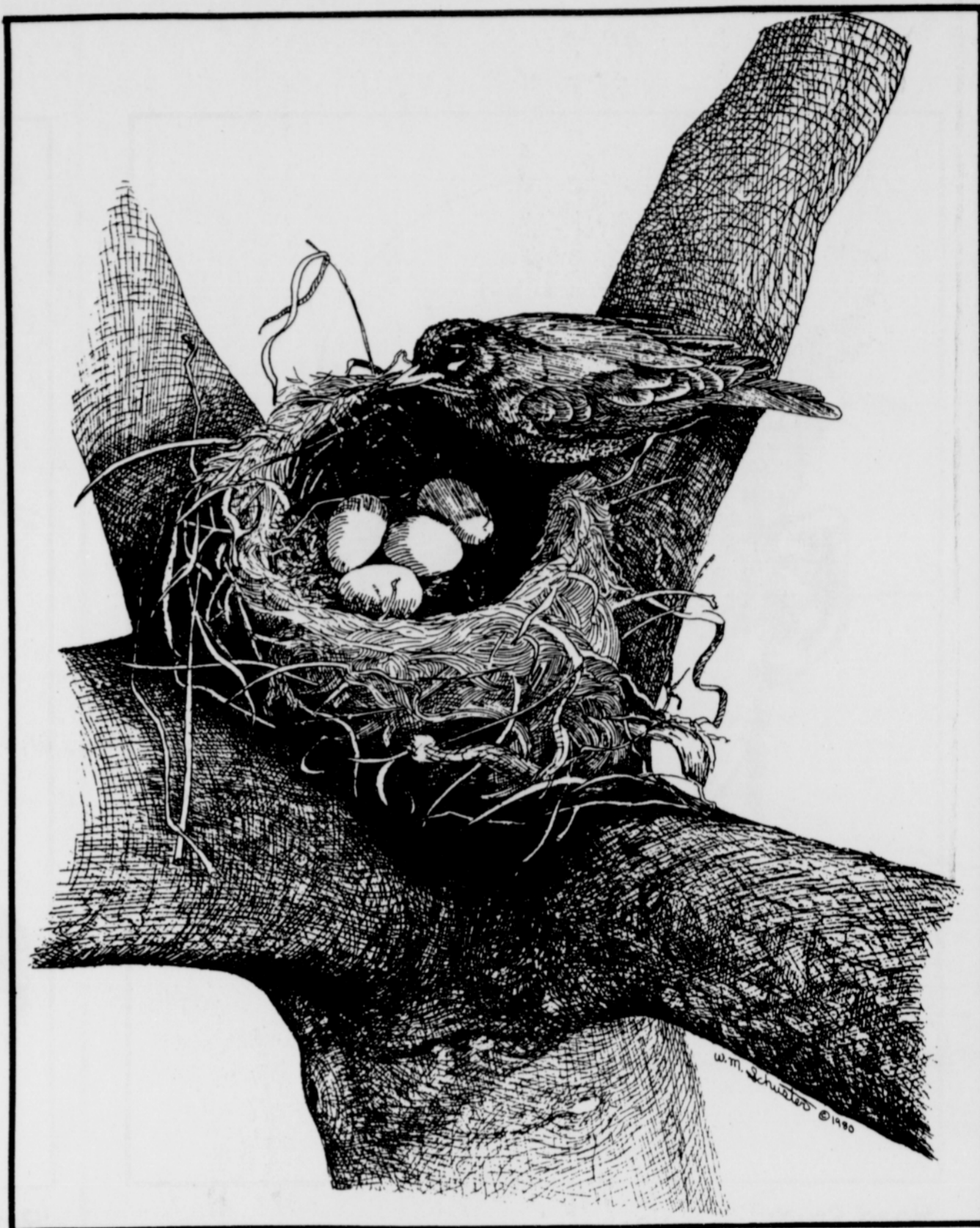
Frogs expire  
by the pond-full  
from the encroachment  
of a fungus in their lungs.

Words fly  
in a startling-wave:  
habitat loss  
sewer overflows  
suburban runoff  
water pollutants  
airborne contaminants  
industrial wastes  
poisons in the food chain  
gigantic dead zones  
rampant algae growth  
land as "national sacrifice."

But of all invasions  
the invasion which  
we embody  
has hog-tied us  
within a human procreation frenzy.

The unexamined question  
between elections, between one  
day and the next, between  
high water and hell.

~CAROLYN DUNN



DRAWING BY WILLIAM MICHAEL SCHUSTER

# POETRY

## NEAHKAHNIE MOON

White pearly moon  
observant as an eye,  
shine on bone-white  
snags. Disgraceful race  
decimates great Douglas fir.  
Sunset is salmon pink  
to sea. Slaughtered  
fish runs. O Kahnne —  
god witness of a  
1000 generations —  
remove scavengers  
from the scabbed land.  
Primitive Pacific coast  
scarred by their  
deprivations. May they  
and their seed die out,  
lead depleted lives.

O most beautiful  
place on earth, rainy Eden,  
of dewy jade-like trees  
and Taoist rocks!  
Ocean fog leaves a kiss  
on wounded landscape.  
Indian God, forgive us  
our trespasses, as we  
cannot those who pass  
this way trespassing  
against primordial beauty.  
May this race die off  
and their offspring slough  
into the ocean, scraps  
of maggoty meat  
for wheeling gulls  
and pounding wave smash.  
Pitiless moon, see all,  
be a searchlight  
for natural justice,  
reflecting pearl, bone  
and polished shell.

~WALT CURTIS

when may I go home and watch my  
movie? Give me my TV brainrot  
and my potato chips. Love potion  
no. 9. yum yum. My salty  
almonds must be eaten and the  
droop in my couch sat upon.  
you may quote me on this.  
I love you and your mother.

~SOPHIE

## WINE GLASSES

A man is brought in  
to the cafeteria.  
Naked. Long hair,  
pretty boy good looks,  
like something out of King Arthur.  
He's been sleeping with the Princess.  
Now he's dogmeat.

Some guy cuts into his back  
with a big blade,  
blood bubbles up  
and the victim curls  
like an embryo on the white stretcher,  
reduced to agony,  
begging for his life.

Two women sit chatting  
about this and that  
as the man bleeds in front of them.  
Long thin tubes  
transmit his blood  
into their wine glasses.  
One woman gives a wink, and they drink.

~STEVE CLEVELAND

## THE EXCUSE

In the well-lighted room  
we sat on the bed  
the light from the window  
burnished dully, opalescent to touch.  
The bedspread was pulled tautly  
at the corners, the dimpled cloth  
reminiscent of memories.  
I told mother what I had told the others...  
she moved closer to me and hugged me, weeping  
smallly, saying she was happy I had  
told her, that no one could save her,  
and, that I had done my  
duty. Now I could go...  
and loosely I did.

~L. R. BUELT