

## Tyler's Bronco.

By Zeb Brown

When I get to the lake, the engine dies, the radio is silenced, and I see it. What was once a car is still, at least, a ghost of one. The fire has worked the exterior into marble: copper, green, navy, and white, swirling without motion, circles where bubbles have burst. The tires are gone, and so are the windows. I mince closer to get a better look inside the belly. The headlights are gone, leaving the car with empty eye-sockets and a cheerful mouth of broken steel. The vinyl from the seats has melted away, and the chairs have become cages. Tyler's red James-dean jacket was in the backseat, but that's curled up and gone, along with equipment, sheet music, whatever else. A couple of towel-draped newlyweds come up behind me, then shy away like yearlings. They are prepared for cold water, and maybe even love-making on a large flat rock, water and sweat beading and evaporating. They are thrilled by the prospect of being watched; they are not prepared for real danger. For all they know, the dirty young man before them is inspecting his handiwork. Their car may be next.

I only rode in Tyler's Bronco once, after a concert, and at the time I was drunk and depressed. It was after the party at the river, and everyone was totally wasted except Duke, who couldn't drive stick. The car jerked crazily as Duke struggled with the gearshift. Thick with grain and whiskey, Tyler's voice slid over the instructions like far-off thunder. Tyler was leaning back, a man big enough to make copilot look like a child-seat, hands like five-pound trout across thick equestrian thighs. I was in the backseat with Angel, who wouldn't stop laughing at Duke. It was creepy. She's one of those childish strippers who could have been famous, if she'd been in the right place at the right time. Jailbait never goes out of style. She'll always be easy on the eyes, she had gained a few pounds. I wondered if Tyler had gone and knocked her up. If he had, no one was talking.

I notice the car first, and the ground burnt around it, and the oak-tree planted by Will Jaspers, trunk blacker than coal. Burnt rubber stings nostrils, and I feel Tyler come up from behind before I turn to face him. He is grinning.

"Hey, guy, you up for barbecue?"

"Hey." I stick out my hand, grasp his, then pull him in, close.

"Buddy," he says, "hey." He gives me a light pat, arm only half alive; like the branch of a willow tree, it feels accidental. I stay close too long, pull back too late. *Stupid.* But when I look up at his face, he is smiling over my shoulder, in the direction of the smoking Bronco.

"Haven't smelled anything like that since working at the tire factory," he sighs without looking. He is a little bit proud. "Missed that smell. Too bad you weren't here to see it go."

All day, every time I blink, I'm standing in front of the smoking car. Ashes make their slow descent to the blackened woodchips all around. Stirred by breezes, the cremation whirlwinds in the clay-oven air. Sometimes, the bronco is in flames, as Tyler described it, a pillar of explosion reaching twenty, thirty feet high, black fingernails of smoke trying to sink into heaven.

At midnight, I see Duke, Tyler, and Angel at the flare-party, in the cemetery. I wonder where they have gotten their flares. Not from the Bronco, that's for sure. Unless they had been put aside. There are a hundred people or so, high-school kids mainly, all walking through the grave-stones, flares held in their outstretched hands. Their magenta light pulses without heat. Everyone meets at the top of Indian Hill, walking slowly, looking each other in the eye, until the smoke from a hundred flares gets to be too much, and we spread out a little to line them up along the gravel drive: a UFO landing strip. There's some drumming, some singing, but mostly, people keep quiet. Without looking at him, I know exactly where, and *how*, Duke stands: leaning to the side, old jeans and wide leather belt keeping a centimeter of clean air around his narrow hips. Under his ratty wife-beater, honey-brown skin stretches tight over the blades of his shoulders-wings trying to grow. He is looking at the ground, and I am sitting cross-legged, hunch-backed, watching. The last flare stutters, lighting up a statue of an angel. The angels' robes and hair pretend to move in the wind. His round arm is raised above his head. He is pointing up. It doesn't even matter whose grave it is, it has become something to us all, staring slack-jawed congregation. The light flickers and becomes green, then dies away. The crowd sits still, silent, mostly, conversations kept to low murmurs, reverence settled there like low clouds.

Duke doesn't meet my eye. He doesn't seem to notice me until I begin to take my leave. Jack has offered a ride, and I live too far away to turn it down. Jack is polite. Duke comes out of the darkness and smoke to kiss my cheek lethargically, smiling slightly, and I barely hear him ask if I'm coming with them. He's really asking me where I want to wake up. I want to-I can't-there will be people there, someone might notice. If I tell Jack to go home alone, he'll wonder why; why it's so important to go for beers at Tyler's seedy old house in the middle of nowhere. It can't happen again.

"I'm going." My voice cracks on the words, and I feel like I'm fifteen. I run down the hill, trying to keep pace with Jack, who is nearly at the car. On the drive, we share a joint and Jack tries to talk about where he's from, but I am miserable. I get too stoned, and fall asleep. When the truck stops, I'm not sure where I am-Jack punches my arm until I hop out and make my slow way through waking-life, weaving down the blurred dirt path to the house. In my room, the struggle with clothes: replacing day-crusted denim with lonesome nakedness. Under the heaviness of blankets, I begin to work up a

prayer that I be made clean, but don't really get anywhere before I am stolen by dreams.

Three days later, we are all drinking together at their kitchen table-pina colodas for some reason. It's a faggot drink, but the idea was Tyler's-to make us forget where we are. By this time I've had enough smoke and drink that I can pretend not to notice as Duke talks to a Floridian Jap-she's a high-schooler, and hangs on every word he says, hangs on the fluid motion of his narrow, birdlike hands. Maybe he finds her loud jewelry, the twist in her hair, her endangered eyebrows-I don't know, exotic-but she is unremarkable, limp. Probably, he likes her because he can see his reflection in her drool.

I stare at Tyler's boots-they are the size of clown shoes, and laces the color of construction cones race through the eyelets. He leans back, a wise, doxy half-grin tugging gently at the folds in his wide Germanic mug. Angel has been flipping out-she spends most of the evening in the bathroom, reappearing only to dare us to make mention of her red eyes, or the black smears across her face. She is silently begging us to say something-but from the look that passes between Tyler and Duke, I know better. Girls are so much trouble; they always make a production. I can't remember the last time any of us cried. We have better things to do.

We drink, until there is nothing left, and then we decide to break into one of the country houses down the road, to raid their liquor cabinet. It's pouring, and none of the boys wear jackets-their flannel shirts cling to the rocky muscles in their shoulders, back, and arms. They walk with half-closed eyes, and the air shines, thick without meaning, pregnant with rain. I realize now that it was a mistake. Accidents happen. There is a quiet dignity to going home alone.

**We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools. Martin Luther King Jr.**



cannon beach  
arts association

The Cannon Beach Gallery presents an exhibit of finely crafted furniture by Gideon Hughes and Thomas Hughes, August 3<sup>rd</sup> through August 27<sup>th</sup>. These two artists and craftsmen create the highest caliber heirloom quality furniture that crosses the boundary into art. Thomas is a North Coast craftsman and carpenter who lives in Arch Cape. Gideon is a carpenter, boat builder, ceramic artist and father and these roles all influence his furniture. Thomas will be showing small and medium sized tables including a series of bedside tables. Gideon will be exhibiting a wide variety of pieces including stools, tables and large wall mounted cabinets. A reception for the artist's will be held at the Cannon Beach Gallery (1064 S. Hemlock) on Saturday August 4<sup>th</sup> from 6pm until 8pm.

Northwest by Northwest Gallery  
www.nwbynwgallery.com

"My favorite spot to wander is Northwest By Northwest Gallery with it's extensive collection of exquisite works by regional artists."

- Northwest Travel, July/August 1999

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Press Release

For Immediate Publication

For more information, contact Gail Balden, 503-368-7807

The Manzanita Creative Arts Council, committed to supporting the work of local artists, has organized a studio tour to allow the public to see artists at work in their creative environments. The Nehalem Bay Area Artists' Studio Tour will take place Wednesday, August 15 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sixteen artists in ten locations are participating in the tour. Manzanita artists include Diane Gibson, metal sculptor; Kathy Kanas, basketry; Liza Jones, printmaker, and Don Osborne, painter.

Nehalem artists include MJ Anderson, sculptor in marble; Kathryn Harmon, fiber artist and painter; Sam Harmon, painter and printmaker; Rusty Painters (Barbara Temple Ayres, Jane Gillis, Lola Sorensen, Susan Walsh, Michele Wilkey); Kathleen Ryan, found object and fabric sculptor and Paul Torian, painter, sculptor, and collagist.

Wheeler artists include Heaven Hartford, painter, Judy Sorrel, painter, and Rebecca O'Day, painter and collagist.

Tickets are \$5 and are available at the following locations: **Manzanita:** Mother Natures, Manzanita News and Espresso, Marzanos Pizza, The Big Wave and Syzygy.

**Nehalem:** Wanda's Café and Art and Learn.

**Wheeler:** Gypsy Fire and Creative Fabrics.

The ticket packet includes a map of the studios and a list of the artists and their media. Refreshments will be served at various locations indicated on the map. The public is invited to support this first-ever event showcasing the richness of local artists' work.

This isn't really about you  
By Gabrielle Bouliane

Your hands are a gift unlooked for, two trembling birds searching for a sky in my skin, finding it like North in their flight toward whatever home we are always driven to seek. And my heart aches to be an open cage, to be pried wide apart for you to see, it's hollow enough inside for a flock of your fingers to reside forever against the delicate burning flower of my unrelentless heart.

One night, I looked into the lake of your eyes, surprised by the size of my own startled sighs, I realized, it's not pain or remorse I carry, it's a force beyond what I can restrain. I try to contain it with 9-to-5 and organize, I do my dishes instead of fantasize, I cook and clean and file and sweep just to keep this beast inside me asleep because this passion that resides has already devoured innocence once. I tried to contain it, silence its howls, but your hands have found the key to its cage, I can feel it awaken, killing this woman who has killed her rage by trying to forget that my pulse once lived at the base of my throat; that a glance across the room once soaked the inside of my thighs, forgot exactly which muscles in the small of my back rise to make my hips meet the night; the beast is hungry, and impatient, this is the animal inside they see when they say, "you are sexy," not beautiful, but sexy, they see the barest hint of the smoking jungle of the heart of my darkness, and no intrepid explorer has planted their mouth at the tree of my spine, has not scaled the mountains of my breasts to leave behind some sign, this country is deadly to the unready, but this not what I came here to say.

I came to say, thank you for showing me the way. With your hands, and the gardens of your eyes. And for however short a moment, rest your wings, in these arms, which will never seek to hold you down.

Cannon Beach CONCERTS IN THE PARK 2001  
Free concerts in the City park (2nd & Spruce St.)  
SUNDAYS, 2 - 4PM

August 5th  
Los Comatosos - Latin

August 12th  
The Buzzy Toons/ ENLEAVE - LATIN

August 19th  
Heather Christie Paul - Talk with an edge

August 26th  
Sylvia Cuenca Quartet - Jazz/Funk featuring Rob Scheps

September 2nd  
RHYTHM CULTURE - Reggae/Funk

Cheating is poor business procedure which can lead to loss of all profits. Wild Bill Hickok

