

Kick

by V.

It's all coming thru rapidly
Like a train doing 120 mph
Thru my veins, my bones
My soul is alive again
I'm beginning to remember
Who I am
Who I was
What happened
Seeking a new direction to go
Every pore of my body sweats
And shakes when I try to sleep
But I'm not laying down
For another chemical ass whooping
I've put myself thru this
Too many times to count
I rise and fall
Rise and fall
Rise and fall
Enough!!
Enough of the falling
And staying down
Only to drag myself down
The dead end streets
I'm up
I'm staying up
And if I don't rise fast enough
At least I can go forward

Answers to puzzles on page 15

DESVGLS EIHVINCE
VCEKOSSE LNSOKE
MVKENED IIVFIVN
OBEIVINDSHNL
COHO BVN LVCO
ELC DBKILING SIG
SCIFGV ICHILE
VJGOCGEKHEVD2
VBO VILIES EKIN
SLYLE OVL EGVWE
NZE HBS LOW DIB
OBSLELBICIVIS
SBOI DBNBS EV2A
VXGE IVOWI 2LEB
BEG2 NBBED V2BS

H I I W S I O S K E E E J A
L S B E S V G B K B B V D A I
C A C F I S J V I B S W V C O
B X M E E K G A I G B O S O S
E W A L V O D G C S E A C H E
V M D E K F H I B E E R H E
N S D E C V S B G M S K E
B E E E D G M I V M S O T
O V L V L N E B X D B M G A B
B S I B C B S N O G D O G O O
L O C G V D I B E E E L E O O
V I B W B V I H S M D M D L
X S I I L I O W F E B G O S
E K B V I D N A G L B O B O X

0	1	2	5	0	3	8	4	1
3	5	4	8	2	1	0	1	0
0	1	8	0	1	4	3	5	2
1	2	0	4	0	8	5	3	1
5	4	1	3	1	0	2	8	0
8	3	0	1	5	2	1	0	4
2	8	3	1	4	1	0	0	5
1	0	1	0	8	5	4	2	3
4	0	5	2	3	0	1	1	8

VENDOR PROFILE

Paul Ortiz

BY SAM BOUMAN
STAFF WRITER

On a cold, spitting December afternoon Paul Ortiz walks from the food carts at Southwest Third Avenue and Stark Street back to the Street Roots office to check his mail and pick up more papers. He moves with long strides but keeps his head up to scan Third Avenue, which is full of holiday shoppers, tourists, street kids and damp, windblown debris. Paul has a friendly, open face and seems to know every other person we pass. He grunts a cheerful "Hi how ya doin'?" to an older man who only smiles, to a panhandler sitting on cardboard outside an adult theater, to a burly guy wearing only a T-shirt. The two of them stop and talk for a minute to catch up, and Paul explains what he's doing with the stack of newspapers.

After a few words, Paul told him the days and times of the vendor orientations and went on his way.

Paul began selling Street Roots this past August and has become a familiar face in front of the food carts across from Cameron's Books. He uses the money to keep himself in basic necessities and help his girlfriend pay her bills. His style of selling is understated but visible — he holds the paper out to the side and says "Best paper in town, one dollar" as people walk past. The key, he says, is to be there day after day, so that people know he's serious about the work. He says the people who pass by his turf are

all kinds, ranging from openly cold or snobbish to remarkably kind. The day before, an older man had just walked up and given him a five-dollar bill and started walking away.

"You don't have to do that," Paul said with surprise.

"I do," the man said. "God told me to."

Telling that story, Paul just smiled and shrugged. He has an accepting attitude toward people in general, having experienced both the charitable and cruel sides of humanity from living on the streets. When a potential customer gives him the cold shoulder or says something nasty, he just shrugs it off and gets back to work. There's always the next person.

One thing that does rankle him is theft — taking from others what they worked hard to get.

That wasn't always his

attitude, having his own distant history with drugs and crime in California before finding a somewhat steady job riding with a traveling carnival, setting up the booths and stages and rides in towns across California and southern Oregon. The job took him to Salem, where he quit and settled for a few years. He got married, got divorced, and decided to light out for Portland. He traveled up the Willamette Valley by bicycle on the shoulder of Interstate 5. He eventually saw the exit sign for Tigard and

peeled off. In Portland he got clean for good and eventually began selling Street Roots which became his main source of income and a source of networking and friendship. He attends writing workshops there and takes the time to meet vendors new and old. It became clear during our walk back to the office that he knows and cares about the people he shares the streets with.

"I give what I got," he says. "If I have more than I need, there's plenty of people out here who can use that."



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