

The Sower's decree

by Avendor

We all grow here...
 Some are stunted, deformed, maligned
 While others fly like spurious heat-seeking
 missiles
 For the time being...
 While yet some
 Move like world class ballet artists.
 Yet won't all
 Wiggle like worms
 To a final compassionate embrace
 In a prismatic morphing spectacle
 Stirring and settling, raging and peaceful
 Like the one beautiful blue ocean
 Common to us all
 Fierce,
 Yet eloquent
 Like a yellowfish
 Darting amidst the coral reefs.

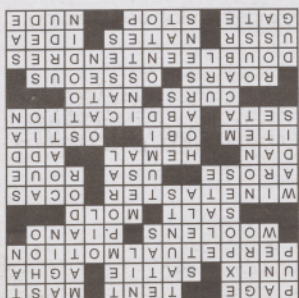
CORRECTION

Please report any errors to our managing editor, Joanne Zuhl, at 503-228-5657, or write to joanne@streetroots.org

Answers to puzzles on page 15



4	7	2	1	3	6	9	6	8	5
3	1	8	4	5	6	4	7	9	2
5	9	6	2	7	8	3	4	1	4
9	8	7	5	3	1	4	2	6	2
6	4	3	8	7	2	1	5	9	3
2	5	1	2	7	8	6	4	7	3
7	3	9	6	2	8	5	1	4	7
1	6	7	5	4	9	2	3	8	8
8	2	4	9	7	5	6	1	3	7
2	8	7	6	9	1	5	3	4	2



VENDOR PROFILE

Richard Rowe

SAM BOUMAN
 STAFF WRITER

Richard Rowe moved to the Portland area just over a year ago from Texas, where he did maintenance on oil rigs. It was a dangerous job. Not as dangerous as drilling, he says, but well-paid and suited to his skills. He lost his job when oil prices fell and he became homeless for a spell.

He moved up to Vancouver, Wash., to be with a girlfriend, a situation that went south quickly and landed him on the streets again. "It's not an easy city to be homeless in," he says of Vancouver. At one point he was given a ticket for sleeping on the sidewalk. He crossed the Columbia River to Portland three months ago and began selling Street Roots almost immediately.

Richard sells at the U.S. Bancorp Tower and the nearby food carts on Southwest Fifth Avenue. He is a soft-spoken

and genial man with a low-key selling style. He gives passersby a warm smile and a simple greeting. He does well at the U.S. Bancorp Tower, especially when people are getting off work, as opposed to the morning when they tend to ride a wave of caffeine past all distractions.

He sets his own schedule, selling for a block of time in the morning and evening with a lunch break in between. Often for lunch he volunteers at Sisters of the Road on Northwest Sixth

Avenue and Davis Street in exchange for a meal. Personal drive and hard work are important to him, giving him the knowledge that he's making his life better.

He starts selling each day with small goals — get lunch at the food carts, and stay positive each day — while working on the larger goals of getting off the streets and reconnecting with his family.

"I know I'm not gonna be selling enough to get a room for the night," he says. "Down payment on a car? That ain't happening.

So, little goals. And once I meet them, you know it doesn't matter, because I know I've got papers for tomorrow. The Lord provides, you know. What little I want, He's given to me."



A writers reflection

BY JULIE MCCURDY
 CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It's hard to wrap words around how I feel about Street Roots. How do you, after all, thank an organization that has been your birthing ground as a writer, while simultaneously witnessing and applauding your voice's brand new strength? They mean it when they say giving the voiceless a voice. Honestly, it feels like we've grown up together.

Let me explain. I had been unhoued for approximately two months when I first heard of Street Roots. I was encouraged through a mutual friend to approach the

paper with an article about my experience as a woman outside. That article led to other articles and a ton of poetry submitted. These things gave me back the voice I thought I had lost when I became unhoued in the first place. I feel like, together, Street Roots and I weathered all sorts of things: right decisions, wrong decisions; good poetry, bad poetry; rain, coffee, protests, challenges and triumphs.

Over the years, I have stumbled in and out of housing and back into housing again; into active addiction and relationships rife with domestic violence, and then into recovery from both experiences.

Today, I am inside and in recovery. I hesitate to even think about where I might be now if it weren't for those relationships formed with the staff and volunteers at Street Roots. At once empowering and supportive, I feel like I would have been lost without them. I feel like my whole history as an unhoued person has been chronicled with and through Street Roots. The experience has led to what has quite possibly become the healthiest, most longstanding relationship of my life.

Honestly, how do you thank a group of folks for literally helping you help yourself back into life and the land of the living?



Street Roots is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers, celebrating International Vendor Week, Feb. 2-8.