

To the Sea

by Maddy Brown-Clark

My father and me
 We went to the beach
 On a sunny windy day
 I longed to breathe
 The ocean breeze
 Beneath the windswept trees
 It was a far cry
 From the city streets
 The sand beneath my feet
 But the time came
 For us to leave
 To return to the dusty city
 But it would always be
 In my memory
 When Dad and I went to the sea.

VENDOR PROFILE

Eric Stayer

BY HELEN HILL
 CONTRIBUTING WRITER

There are many philosopher poets who wear a Street Roots vendor badge. Eric Stayer is one of those special philosopher poets selling a street paper he believes “restores faith in humanity,” starting with himself.

Born in 1970, Eric said that from early on he was profoundly influenced by the times. His mother was the quintessential flower child, raising him on communes deep in the forest. He remembers the welcome, stable respite of living for stretches of time with his maternal grandparents. His grandmother taught him perfect table manners, and his grandfather was a tool machinist and engineer, a far cry from the counterculture life he led with his mother. The juxtaposition of these two very different lifestyles shapes Eric’s perspectives.

One of Eric’s defining characteristics is his sensitivity toward the feelings of others, especially those who are dealing with trauma. This sensitivity has both strengthened his emotional connections with others and led to difficult, co-dependent relationships fraught with dysfunction. Over the course of several years, he said, he “gave his all” to a relationship that proved, in the long run, to be an unhealthy one that “smashed his life.”

“I didn’t walk away when I should have,” he said. “We must love ourselves enough to walk away when it’s time.”

He said he hung on, trying to “fix” his partner, until he had lost his job and apartment and

was forced to move the last of his possessions into a small van. That was in the fall of 2016, and he and Chloe – his beautifully behaved 11-year old Australian Kelpie he’s had since she was a puppy – have been homeless ever since.

Chloe has been with Eric through it all, and he is grateful the shelter he recently moved into allows dogs.

Eric has been working for Street Roots on and off since 2014. He said he feels accepted at Street Roots in a way that is hard to express. He finds the work of selling papers suits him well. He describes the hours he spends standing on sidewalks as a “liminal state”

of suspended time where he has the freedom and perspective to reflect on possible choices, options and future pathways. He cherishes the interactions he has with his customers and sometimes sings songs to pass the time.

Also, Eric has been dealing with depression for some time and he is grateful to have a job he believes in to get him up in the morning, out into the world and not stuck in his head.

Eric hopes to save his vendor money to renew his massage license. He was a massage therapist in Pittsburgh another lifetime ago, he said. He also dreams of going to the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine and receiving training in acupuncture. In the short term, though, he’d like to get some work done on his van and take a road trip with Chloe down to California and visit his 21-year-old daughter, who is training to be a biomedical researcher.

Eric said he believes many people out there are feeling isolated, wounded and angry – with each other, with politics and at the greed and racism rampant in our country.

When he senses a customer’s anger and isolation, he wishes a blessing on them; he said he “knows for a fact” this silent wish can make a difference.



Answers to Page 15 Puzzles

THROW UP STRAWLED
 EYELASH HAYWIRE
 ADMIRER RWANDAN
 TRIOS ARID SOSO
 IONS OSIER WIT
 MUD SLINKY GENE
 ESSAYING BURGGS
 SNOG SIAL
 AZTEC ENSIFORM
 SERAPALNEE
 KAY TRIGEHAND
 ALPS HECK TARED
 NOTATES BARNOWL
 CUISINE AREOLAE
 ESCHEVAT REFILL

PLUG ENCU BEB
 ARHLFI MORUS GEH
 LARUE WHELMELON
 MPRNEPHEGLIFIG
 NOETHELOPESVAP
 NLEARTINTYENL
 DJMTRINTIATOWU
 POKMGROUTPEANM
 BAVOCADVAHCOX
 KRPASPTLIBRUJ
 BMEASWVSJBRANANA
 TRVAVGEMAEACHMANGO
 ERVAREEGRIOTUD
 LYCHEETEMPDATEIT

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

Sheeptoast

by Elizabeth Considine

