

Freight Train of Destiny

by Daniel Cox

Arrival on the space train
Destination unknown
it's bringing
me closer to the end.
Looking in the mirror
Laughing at fate,
staring back at me is sadness.
Flowing from her eyes
are tears running
down her cheeks.
Into an ocean of time.

Peacetime

by Ron Sanford

Some of the worst things I've done involve
the tongue.
Lord knows I've tried to keep the temper
down with all the pangs
Preventing setbacks. Preventing angst.
Moving along.
No excuses. I should judge myself so that I
won't be judged. Relax.
It's no good to have guilt and shame.
Don't do it again.
Yes, It's that simple. Even if you are right.
To avoid a backlash.
You know that a word to the wise and a word
to the weak mean two different things
Keep that tongue bridled when you know it's
time
When the dogs of war howl
about the world they made
Did they not know that we are in peacetime?

IMAM, from page 5

"I have a lot of respect for him and his willingness to be out in the community and be a part of both educating communities about Islam, and learning about other religions, and also putting his faith into action in a lot of different ways," Elfers said. "Especially in the last year, he's been very active with going to churches and working on educating people about the Muslim ban and working with the Muslim Consulate on communications."

Polovina has also spoken on panels and at rallies in Portland about the challenges that refugees and Muslims are facing in the current political climate.

Interwoven with all his public efforts is a strategy to get to know people on a personal level. He wants to jump over the hidden wall created by labels, such as "Muslim" and "non-Muslim," he explained.

"I would like for people to see me not just as Imam but as a human being that is doing something for that common good," he said. "My advice for everybody is to try to build that personal level because each of us can do something."

At the Institute for Christian/Muslim Understanding of Oregon and Southwest Washington, Polovina is an active board member.

That's where he met the lead pastor at Portland Mennonite Church, Rod Stafford. The two men have gotten to know each other and have visited each other's houses of worship to deliver greetings and attend sermons.

They have also united their practitioners for meals at BECO and then at the Mennonite church on Southeast 35th Avenue.

"It was really positive for the people



PHOTO BY CELESTE NOCHE

Imam Abdulah Polovina sits in his Portland mosque.

involved," Stafford said. "It breaks down whatever assumptions or stereotypes you might have. In the Christian tradition, we're told to love our neighbors as ourselves, but you've got to figure out who your neighbors are first, and I think that really helped a lot."

Behireta Corbadzic, a Bosnian refugee, has been attending Polovina's services at BECO with her mother and two daughters for three years. When she moved to Portland, she said, her father was suffering from colon cancer.

"Abdulah was here for my family," she said. "He helped me, whatever I needed help with, and I believe that is how he is with everybody else."

Corbadzic said she's been to Friday

services where Polovina has invited Christian pastors to speak.

"I think it's awesome," she said. "I think this should be done more from every religious side, because sometimes people just assume what is being talked about, what they teach us."

She said imams she's met previously haven't had the same enthusiasm for interfaith dialogues.

"I'm not sure why," she said. "I really like the idea of us talking more, sharing what we learn, what we believe, and all that. To keep the door open to others, it just helps so much for us to understand each other."

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