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## Paradise Lost

By Marian Chinn, of Astoria

You are entering unceded territory  
So proclaims the sign  
Just across the Megler bridge  
In Washington State  
As I head north  
I think about the tribes  
Living along these shores  
Three hundred  
Five hundred  
One thousand years ago  
Awaiting spring  
With vegetation budding  
Days become longer  
Air becoming warmer  
A seemingly ideal life  
Altered forever  
By those who came by sea and land  
And never left

## Spring

By Marian Chinn, of Astoria

I can see a path through the trees  
Today and for awhile  
But the willow and alder are  
Returning to life  
Soon to be an impenetrable thicket  
Through which I can neither walk nor gaze  
For it is newly spring  
On the Long Beach Peninsula



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Pea plants sprout and begin to wind their way up sticks.

In Pacific County

In the state of Washington

## A GRACIOUS GIFT

By Randy Van Dyke, of Ocean Park, Washington

Who is the mother of my children  
What is she like  
This is who I see  
This is what I know  
She gives love like no other in the world  
She's like the love only God has to give  
She's like that and comes from that  
A Gracious Gift  
She gives kindness of a caliber  
Which eludes my understanding  
Her kindness comes from far away  
And resides in her heart as part of her

A Gracious Gift

Her self sacrifices cannot be counted  
Blessed are my children whom  
Often encounter them unknowingly  
A Gracious Gift  
I am confounded by her wonderful qualities  
The consistency of her ways  
Her patience, uncanny wisdom  
And natural intuition  
Caregiving beyond the call demanded  
The depth of her eyes  
Leading to the expanse of her heart  
The depth of her love  
This is who I know  
This is what I see  
A Gracious Gift

## SPINNING WITH THE UNIVERSE

By Randy Van Dyke, of Ocean Park, Washington

I guess I should have stopped in  
When I was passing by at first  
Since you're just around the corner  
From the universe  
But I was compelled by my star to keep going  
Because a moonlight night was glowing  
And if I stopped a minute right then  
I would have missed a lot by not going  
Then I followed my star and went  
When taken by complete surprise  
I felt as if I'd been there once  
Light years before I arrived  
And now some colorful cosmic rays  
Create rainbows to a new path my way  
So I'll be around the corner  
From the universe today  
This time I'll make time  
To stop in along the way  
And say hello while on my search  
Just around the corner  
From the universe

## Seven Months After the Echo Mountain Complex Fire

By Lauren Mallet, of Warrenton

The ridges and pits of the mushroom's  
brainy top,  
the trees creaking open,  
the tee ta da of the birds.  
The brushing aside the twigs and leaves

where the hollow  
stem meets the dirt.  
The pinch rather than the pull,  
the messy tear of morel from mycelium, the  
treasure  
set in the mesh bag  
secured to my hip.  
The faith that this transport liberates spores  
and divines  
mushrooms for years to come;  
this trail I hear myself on—  
then where are my lands and what is there  
for me to eat?

## Once Emerged

By Linda K. Hoard, of Lake Oswego

It starts with a groundhog lumbering out of  
a cozy sleep  
to search for his whiskered shadow, then  
waddle back to his dank den.  
Six weeks or sooner, Spring emerges. Even  
if we get late frost  
on the snowdrops, or the puffy-cheeked  
North Wind blows  
an arctic blast through the pear orchard, the  
cold won't last.  
Once skunk cabbage seep up from the thaw-  
ing mud, and purple crocus  
poke through snow crust, there's no pushing  
them down.  
When daffodil stems stretch up through soil  
and dried leaf,  
there's no stuffing them underground. Tulips  
and hyacinths won't slide back  
into their bulbs any more than paw-soft  
pussy willows will hide again in buds.  
Ever try to talk a skein of northbound geese  
into circling aloft an extra week?  
Convince the migrating redwings to stay in  
Florida a little longer?  
No use telling robins to cease their singing  
come March.  
They're hell bent on slapping some sticks  
and mud together  
for a lovely arrangement of light blue eggs.  
Tissue paper cherry blossoms, frill-edged  
daffodils, yellow forsythia.  
Once Spring makes up her mind, there's no  
turning  
back to tight bud casings, brown-husked  
buried bulbs.  
Life, in all its persistence, is going to sweep  
us through the seasons,  
no matter how hard we hang onto the last  
pile of melting snow,  
the brittle edge of lake ice, the mittens in a  
coat.  
And yet, just as quickly, tulips wilt. Petals  
curl and drop one by one,  
exposing pollen-heavy stamens. Forsythia  
litters the ground with gold.  
Fledglings, plump with worms, fly the nest.  
Soft green leaves fully unfurl.  
Spring, once so dang determined to be, dis-  
appears quietly  
under the maple's shade one bright June day.

**Mental health  
is a puzzle that's  
done best together**

[columbiamemorial.org/behavioral-health](http://columbiamemorial.org/behavioral-health)

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