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As new air is expectant to dream and to yearn,
Endings need beginnings and from this polarity I would never want to be apart,
And the seasons will always recharge my heart.
Up and down, left and right, forwards and backwards, past, present and future,
Summer thrives, Autumn falls, Winter wounds, and then Spring heals to suture,
Who am I to upset God and Nature's apple cart?
Higher powers in charge do recharge my heart.

Walking the Wireless

By Jennifer Nightingale, of Astoria

A beautiful Bascule bridge stretches out across the bay.
Over the century its stood guard on thousand different gill-netters
Its pilings washed by constant whirlpools and eddies
The currents of its estuarial destiny Battered by one hundred years of winter storms.
Built for the constant push and tug of tidal demands
Walk across the Old Youngs Bay and take a sharp right onto Wireless Road.
The noise of traffic drops off and you can Hear the fresh staccato of the black capped chickadee.
Out across the across the verdant fields, tiny Spring lambs
Gambol towards you because they are curious
Cry out and poke their heads through the wire fences.
Mud-streaked daffodils spill sunlight in the muck
Follow the Wireless Road along the bay
So many mysterious landmarks and rusting things
Make you wonder why
A round barn has been filling with tractors and forgotten things.
It's been there before the bridge was built.
You want to know its story but there's no one there to ask.
Refrigerated trailers used to haul fish, now they sit in the mud going nowhere.
A family of cattle cluster together with a tiny black calf,
Mud splattered and curious, she calls out to you.
You slop through the mud to touch her soft muzzle.
While a cormorant dries his massive wings a top a long-forgotten piling
You witness the world waking up as you walk the loop of Wireless Road,
In the Springing of the year



Jennifer Nightingale

Jennifer Nightingale's poem 'Walking the Wireless' is inspired by walking along Wireless Road and Old Youngs Bay Bridge.

Autumn Pear Hangs On

By Florence Sage, of Astoria

Buffeted hard at Smith Point on the bay
by westerlies off the ocean and piercing blows
rushing from the Arctic through the Gorge,
a lone pear hangs from a long thin branch
on my front yard tree.
Branches brace
for the next big storm to snatch from the tree
most of its dainty white blooms
and reduce the harvest again next Fall
to just a few, six last year.
This one pear has persisted from
September
to April Fool's, a little brown in spots, getting soft,
determined to make it to Spring
to witness this year's white array
of petals spread over the arms of the tree.
In punishing gusts the pear swings in wild arcs
like the hummingbird feeder hooked nearby
that has been known to fly horizontal
and empty its nectar on the ground.
The suet holder has taken off to some other yard.
Still this last pear refuses to let go.
I've almost stopped looking, just a glance,
afraid for the little round pear, so hopeful,
the way you watch the hapless characters
in a horror movie through spread fingers,
no, no, don't fall. Not yet.
I'll never eat from the pear when it finally drops.
Maybe bury it by the garden in the flower pot
holding the ashes of my old dog
and let them share their epic stories
about being brave and holding on.

Nature's Dance

By Ed Leinenkugel, of Astoria

Spring appeared between bands of piercing rain.
The "gang of four," black-tailed deer, grazed by the Alders and Firs;
One deer, in particular, groomed Chubby Cheekers,
The local rabbit, whose visits are a welcome habit.
Another deer, however, apparently felt otherwise,
Pawing at the animated rabbit, as if to say "Enough is enough, we don't wish to play."
Instead, the rabbit circled around the friendliest doe
While she curiously studied nature's dance below.
Random sunbreaks sliced through menacing clouds,
Billowing objects tinted with blue, grey, black and charcoal.
The darkness appeared darker, and the brightness seemed brighter,
And the long grass, freshly wet, waved while it glistened,
Inviting nibbles by the four-legged creatures,
Kindred spirits enjoying community sustenance.
And then the rabbit leaped on the deer in the shadows
Ready to lead a charge against the predators who dare
To threaten this pastoral neighborhood affair.

A Story About Astoria

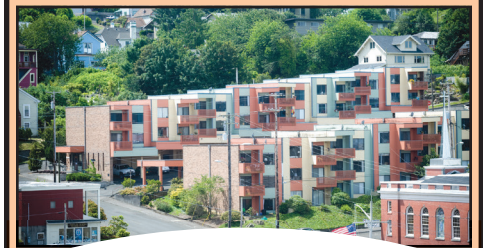
By Ed Leinenkugel, of Astoria

I peered through the wide end of my telescope
And studied a flamboyant past, not quite forgotten,
Of working canneries and colorful Victorians
Hugging craggy hillsides that slope toward the Columbia.

This is a story about Astoria's fascinating past,
About forests and furs, salmon and ferns,
Fins and Swedes and tall trees that spread like weeds,
About Tribes and tribulations of fighting weather,
Where relentless rain is always in play.
Assume you will get wet, and never forget,
Umbrellas are useless and capes often disappoint.
Light houses and lightships project angels of light.
The terrors of the Pacific escalate the fright,
Above the lure of graveyards that threaten the night
Where shipwrecks litter the bottom of the ocean.
Always in perpetual frothy motion
The waves at the Mouth crash against the jetties
And the Bar confounds with foggy sounds.
Misty mysteries slicken the ladders
That bob and sway and provide the way
To safety and guidance and pirate's parlance,
And point to a destiny that may lie North.
From ferries to bridges, and cabins and forts,
In one state or the other, to a protected port.
A history one could never make up.

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