



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April 2019



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April 2019

Special Issue:
Elemental West

Guest Editor:
Dr. Candace Nadon
Fort Lewis College

Table of Contents
Introduction

Introduction: The Changing West
Candace Nadon4

Photo Essay

End of West
Nick Martin8

Poetry

Prologue: A Dustbowl Pastoral
Rebecca Macijeski17

I Came from the Desert
Jordan Osborne20

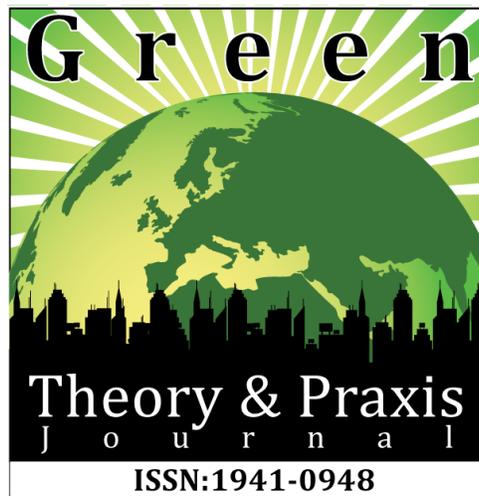
| | |
|---|----|
| Roadside Geology | |
| Mark McKain | 22 |
| The Rain's Design | |
| Tricia Knoll..... | 24 |
| In the Ragged Floodplain Forest after Years of Drought | |
| Thea Gavin..... | 25 |
| We Thirst | |
| Christina Stanton..... | 26 |
| Potash Mining on the Riverbanks of a Canyon Not Quite Grand Enough | |
| Jack Ellmer..... | 28 |
| Slow Life on Highway 160 | |
| Jack Ellmer..... | 30 |
| Winterless | |
| Deborah Phelps | 32 |

Prose

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Fever | |
| Evon Davis..... | 34 |
| Echosaber™ | |
| Evan Barber..... | 36 |
| Glacier Grey | |
| John Yohe..... | 39 |
| Pima County Cemetery | |
| Aidan Multhauf | 43 |

Photo Essay

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| ...And Yet | |
| Steven J. Meyers | 45 |



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

Introduction: The Changing West

Author: Dr. Candace Nadon
Title: Assistant Professor of English
Affiliation: Fort Lewis College
Location: Durango, CO, USA
Email: nadon_c@fortlewis.edu

Keywords: Fire, Grief, Story

Introduction: The Changing West

Mid-morning on Friday, June 1, 2018, I stood in the parking lot of Durango Natural Foods and saw a roiling cloud to the north, a formation I tried to convince myself was just an overactive cumulus showing off for the tourists who'd begun to arrive for the summer, even though I knew better. The cloud was smoke from the first wildfire of the season, the fire that would be named the 416 Fire and would grow rapidly, spurred by years of drought conditions and eventually burning 54,000 acres before it was contained in the end of July. There are always fires in the summer in the West. Fire is natural and keeps forests healthy, but I hadn't expected a fire so soon, hadn't expected it to assert itself before summer actually began, positioning itself to dominate the coming season with its heat and flames and smoke.

I am no stranger to wildfires. I grew up in Glenwood Springs, CO, and was 18 when the winds shifted and blew up the fire on Storm King Mountain, engulfing 14 firefighters as it blazed up the hillside. Years later, during another season of drought, a fire started on Red Mountain, which looms over Glenwood's downtown, and burned so quickly we feared it might consume the town. That same

summer a fire started on the hillside above my parents' house, terrifying me but about which my parents acted surprisingly nonchalant, convinced the fire would not jump the narrow county road separating the hillside from their property. They were correct, and their nonchalance was not unusual. We grieved the 14 firefighters, erecting monuments to them and building a trail in their honor on the burn site. We held fundraisers for those who lost homes or work. Fire was frightening and destructive, but wasn't the norm.

In the summer of 2002, the Hayman Fire raged near Colorado Springs and the smoke settled across the state, including in Basalt, just south of Glenwood Springs and where I had moved a few miles up valley from Carbondale to share a townhome with my ex-boyfriend's brother after a bad breakup. Then-Governor Bill Owens proclaimed that "All of Colorado is burning," and it felt like truth. The summer was hot and dry, and it felt like the moisture had been sucked out of all living things, myself included. But that hot summer eventually cooled into fall, the fire was contained, former U.S. Forestry technician Terry Barton pled guilty for starting the fire—an illegal campfire gone out of control—I started a new job, took a dance class, found a new home not shared by relatives of former lovers, the rains came, then the snow, and life moved on. I was more fascinated by Barton's claim that she'd started the fire to burn a letter from her estranged husband than the over 130,000 acres the fire burned, or what that fire might portend.

416 was different. The nimbleness and size of the fire. The thick smoke that settled in town, so that after a trip to the grocery store I smelled like I'd been camping for a week. The Stage 3 Fire Restrictions enacted by the Forest Service which closed the San Juan National Forest and all trails. The loss of revenue to local businesses, due to closures and downturn in tourist visits. The palpable fear and resignation evident on the faces of Durango residents. 416 *felt* different from the other fires I'd experienced, or at least I felt differently about it.

Gone was my sense that fires like the 416 or the Burro Fire, which started a week later in the Dolores Ranger District, just miles from the 416 Fire, were aberrations, even though National Forest official after official was quoted saying there had been instances of multiple fires before. Despite their remarks, we know that fire activity has increased in the United States by nearly 20 percent since the 1970's, and is projected to continue to grow as the climate warms. The Fourth National Climate Assessment warns that wildfires will "continue to stress our aging and deteriorating infrastructure" and are "expected to decrease the ability of U.S. forests to support economic activity, recreation, and subsistence activities." The devastation caused by wildfires is not only due to climate change—fire policy designed to prevent the natural cycle of fire by extinguishing fires also plays a role—but the changing climate is the largest factor, one that, as David Wallace-Wells writes in *The Uninhabitable Earth*, "reveals the true cruelty of climate change—it can upend and turn violently against us everything we have ever thought to be stable."

The 416 Fire *did* disrupt the stability of life in Southwestern Colorado, and I could not shake the feeling that more disruption was to come. The unease I'd felt as winter slipped into spring without spring snow or rain shifted from anxiety to sadness, a grief that the West, the landscape generations of my family have lived and loved, was lost. I couldn't quite allow myself to think consciously about what would replace it, even though the signs were all around me.

I've always considered summer sacred, a time of rejuvenation and reinvention, and whether consciously or not I've chosen a career that allows me to preserve the sanctity of summer, but this

summer I could not relax into the rhythm of cool mornings and evenings, in time suspended in long, hot days. Restlessness is a family trait, and I felt consumed by it. In the summer I move between Durango and Glenwood Springs—my two homes—Durango my chosen home and Glenwood Springs and the Roaring Fork Valley my family home, the place where I feel most *home*, whether in the grocery store or on the trails. My restlessness would not relent, though, and when I was in Durango, I wanted to be at my parents’ house on the Colorado River. When I was in the Roaring Fork Valley, I wanted to be in Durango. And so on.

The only place I felt still was, paradoxically, when I was driving between the two places, and specifically when on the passes between Durango and Ouray and between Paonia and Carbondale. Up high, moving at a swift clip, music loud, the sky wide above me, aspen and pine rooted and solid, I felt *okay*, the grief held at bay by evidence of still-intact wildness and by the fact that I couldn’t think much, could only take in the beauty and let the music playing wash through me so I didn’t crash the car. Had I stopped on Molas or McClure Pass to take in my surroundings and consider what it all meant, I imagine the grief would have returned in full, as it did whenever I reached my destination and the sense of loss flooded me again.

It’s a strange feeling, the sense of grief for something that isn’t yet lost. The Portuguese word *saudade* perhaps comes closest to describing it. The word is difficult to translate and has many meanings, but one implies a “melancholy nostalgia for something that perhaps has not even happened [and] often carries an assurance that this thing you feel nostalgic for will never happen again,” as journalist Jasmine Garsd describes. I longed for the ability to let the fire slip into history, as I’d done in 1994 and 2002, to become unpleasant memories, but I knew it was no longer possible and, even more, was not responsible.

I fled the smoke from the 416 Fire in early July, feeling almost guilty at my happiness to leave Durango for the Roaring Fork Valley. However, on the third of July, a young couple fired prohibited tracer rounds at the Basalt Shooting Range, starting a fire that grew almost as quickly as the 416 Fire had and that nearly devoured the town of Basalt. Onlookers on the night of July 4 watched as the fire swept towards Highway 82 and the town of El Jebel, just minutes north of Basalt. Fire – and smoke – seemed inescapable, a potent reminder of a changing climate. Yet after housesitting for friends who live in a gated community between Carbondale and Glenwood in August, I saw that the ravages of fire, although not completely unavoidable, were certainly mitigated by property value. The Lake Christine Fire still burned in August, filling the valley with smoke exasperated by the late-summer heat, but in my friends’ backyard, where I sat in the shade of leafy oaks and aspens and listened to the nearby brook, the smoke and fire seemed nonexistent, or at least not a problem I had to worry about.

David Wallace-Wells writes of “climate’s kaleidoscope,” saying “we can be mesmerized by the threat directly in front of us without ever perceiving it clearly.” Dystopian and post-apocalyptic narratives no longer serve as calls to action but rather provide comfort, because everything could be so much worse. Rather than inspiring movement, they allow us to take comfort in inaction, even if that is not what the narratives ask from us. It’s understandable, though, because the problem we face is simply so big, so complex, so terrifying.

The overwhelming grief I felt in the summer of 2018 was similarly passive, despite my restlessness, which really was only a moving kind of passivity. But at the same time, grief, restlessness, *saudade*,

are stories, like the dystopian and post-apocalyptic narratives abundant in fiction and on screen, and stories are necessary for us to understand who we are as individuals and as members of groups. Stories can keep us complicit, but they can also help us process, understand, and change our stories to ones that change behavior.

The story Western hegemonic culture has told about our relationship to the environment and our rights over it has led us to what Bill McKibben termed “The End of Nature.” Those of us who live in the Western United States feel close to the elements. We celebrate our connection to trails, to water, to sky, but we must now turn to changing our relationship to the elements that we love. The paradox of story is that stories cannot save us, yet without a changed story, we cannot save ourselves. The narratives in this volume remind us that to preserve our connection to our environment, we must change our stories, grieve what has been and may be.

References

- Garsd, J. (2015). Saudade: An untranslatable, undeniably potent word. *NPR*. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/sections/latino/2014/02/28/282552613/saudade-an-untranslatable-undeniably-potent-word>
- Mimiaga, J., & Alderton, S. (2018). Burro Fire reaches 100 acres amid air and ground attack. *The Journal*. Retrieved from <https://the-journal.com/articles/99779>
- Romeo, J. (2018). Six months later, no cause released for 416 Fire. *Durango Herald*, Retrieved from <https://durangoherald.com/articles/252763-six-months-later-no-cause-released-for-416-fire>
- Usgcrp. (2018). Fourth national climate assessment: Summary findings. *NCA4*. Retrieved from <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>
- Wallace-Wells, D. (2019). *The uninhabitable earth: Life after warming*. New York, NY: Tim Duggan Books.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

End of West

Author: Nick Martin
Title: Photographer and Writer
Affiliation: Independent
Location: Oregon, USA
Email: ntmphoto@gmail.com

Keywords: Endings, Expanse, Oregon Coast

The West is a big place. Landscape is a character in the story of the West looking inward looking out. Vast. Expansive. Harsh. Misunderstood. Exploited. Alive. The West can be anything and lives in the mind. History in the West lays buried in the sand under rivers crashing out of mountains running down time to the sea. The story of the West is one of Nature. A tale of wildness where even individual giants, whose deeds appear towering, who are immortalized in fictions defining movement, who are mythologized, who justified extinctions and genocide...all are specks, blips on geologic time. The West can be soft; like skin it can be scarred. A spider's web, for all its strength, is delicate and fragile. Under tension, it can fray and snap.

On the coast, there is a membrane, a porous barrier where two worlds of elemental opposites collide, here at The End of West.

THE END OF WEST



The following seven photos and commentary were collected in the decade or so of living on the West Coast, bumping up against it buoyed along by the current of our experience, combing the sand searching, I guess, for anything meaningful.

STORM



A couple times during this photo session I had to frantically pick up my tripod and run away from ensuing waves. There are moments that must be experienced to be fully felt. A storm rolling in on the Southern Oregon Coast is one of those experiences. No place else have I felt such raw energy. Wind, waves, surf, rock, moving sand, and atmosphere colliding in an elemental symphony. As Earth's temperature continues to rise, the wet will get wetter, the cold will get colder, the hot will get hotter, the dry will get drier. Resources will be stretched. There is a storm on the horizon.

LITTLE CRAB



These Striped Shore crabs, *Pachygrapsus crassipes*, live in tide pools along the Pacific coast from Oregon to the Sea of Cortez. At home in the cracks, they cling to the rocks in tiny caverns between barnacles and mussels, an integral participant in the coastal tapestry. One tiny piece connected to a living web the size of the Earth.

GREEN WAVE



Part of considering oneself an “artist” is figuring out how to live. Part of figuring out how to live in American Culture is figuring out your relationship with money. In the American West, to a greater and greater extent, experiences are commodified and used to sell ideas associated with products associated with lifestyle, signaling an ethos. If you wear a particular Brand, people know more about you through association than ever before. Intangible expressions used to sell Sprinter vans or silos on the Internet. This photo was taken while hanging out of a helicopter hired by a philanthropic organization funded by a resort to create media depicting the economic benefits to the coast by said philanthropic organization and by association, the resort. In this instance, sometimes it’s important to take one for yourself.

CONSUMPTION



Everything is disposable. This is a private dumpsite. One of the defining traits of the West's landscape is its vastness, its seemingly endless horizon. Arguably, it is this trait that enables private dumpsites like this one to proliferate. Profit above all else, above preservation, above health, above the common good, has come to define American culture like never before. What once seemed infinite is filled with the discarded detritus of consumer culture. "Open Space" is already becoming a resource, exploited like the mineral wealth that spawned its inception.

DELICATE BALANCE



Coastal zones can be defined by their tides. King tides in some places on the Oregon coast can swing as much as twenty feet in a few hours. Sea level rise has a Global effect. What to preserve and why? What gets drug to higher ground and what is willingly left behind? How will the next two generations answer these questions? A rising tide lifts all ships.

NIGHT BEACH



One of many nights spent outside. Something happens just after the sun goes below the horizon. There is a moment of transition, a last breath of daylight before the night crew. In less than a moment all things cease reflection, horizon mirrors sky and one falls silently into the other.

LEGACY



We are small. We are part of something big. The Big is bigger than us, but it is also part of us. We can know the Big, but we cannot know all of the Big. Sometimes, we can see the Big. Sometimes it is hard to know we are All part of the Big. We can move the Big as the Big moves us. In the West, the Big is close. The Big is lost and found in the West.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

Prologue: A Dustbowl Pastoral

Author: Rebecca Macijeski
Title: Assistant Professor
Affiliation: Northwestern State University
Location: Shreveport, LA, USA
Email: rebecca.macijeski@gmail.com

Keywords: Seeds, Formation, Beginnings

Prologue: A Dustbowl Pastoral

*His singing begins with the story of how the seeds
Of earth, and air, and water, and flowing fire
Were brought together through the vast inane
And how from these events all things began.
He sang of how the newborn orb of the world
Began to coalesce, and how the ground
Began to harden, and how it was that the rule
Of the god of the sea was confined to the sea, and how
The earth looked up in wonder at the new
Light of the shining sun, and how from clouds
The rain came down in showers, then woods arose,
And living creatures wandered on the sides
Of mountains unaware of what they were.*

-David Ferry translation of Virgil's *Eclogues*

If you follow a tune's logic, men are grace notes
clinging to their burdens. They only sound
at the fringes of what they know—the rusty windmill,
the empty well, cattle choking on the earth,
and a sky that fills every day with the pulverized farms
of growling old men and women who drone along
their generation's beautiful lie. *Next year will be better.*
Next year will be better.

But months pass in spurts, days gathering
more of the same, and just when you note the morning
it seems nine more have gone, twelve more, twenty more,
until the idea of crops becomes a myth,
until all that's left is this blowing sense of time.

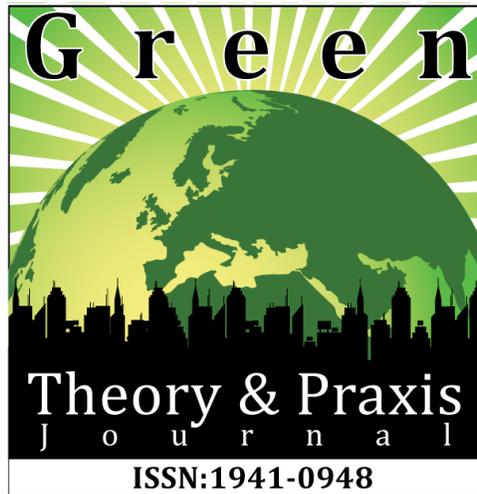
Sometimes it's all you can do to get up again
and face a day that doesn't seem to want you
in a sky filled with dusty reminders
of all that can go wrong. But still there's the promise
of apples, of healthy cows, of children
who don't wake up with mud in their throats,
and a renewed trust in the stories old men tell
of how what used to be good could be again.

Our old man left on the early end of things
before the Depression back east left its mark
in the farmland. Time's alone in the woods now
in a cabin up a California mountain waiting
for the end of the world. But Virgil and Damon are still out
at the center of things where the winds and the earth
turn the sky black with arguing. And if you squint hard enough
the devil is part of this howling, even if he's only a mirage
of what we don't understand, what our inner darkness makes
of the one swirling outside in a contest for whether we get
to keep going or whether the dust will take us back
to something primordial before all of this,
before the world built our bodies
with promises dug from the earth.

What's at stake is the devil's harvest,
the threat of him waiting for us
at the market at the end of the world
to sell us our own hand-hewn coffins.

How he invites us to imagine ourselves
packed away for travel
like the corn or lettuce in our baskets.
How the coffins wait quietly
lined along the western wall of the old school house
according to size.

If the young men have their way, we'll keep singing
like our grandfathers and their grandfathers
back to the days of sleeping in caves.
They'll need to bring their tunes west, and we'll need to follow
until their journey's through, until the victor's on the back porch of the world
tapping a bare foot down, thud on the wood, singing down a low-light tune
 the kind with a fiddle,
 the kind with no electricity,
 the kind with smiling as the dark comes
 knowing light will come back,
 that soon it'll be good and ready
but for now the tune plays long into the night,
long into settling, long past the arrival
of moths at the lantern
fluttering applause.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

I Came from the Desert

Author: Jordan Osborne
Title: MFA Candidate
Affiliation: Colorado State University
Location: Fort Collins, CO, USA
Email: jordan.osborne005@gmail.com

Keywords: Desert, River, Drying

I Came from the Desert

I came from the desert outside
of uvalde. slid through
the wrought iron and in
to the fetid pool – public

riddled with dead leaves
and things like bullet
holes or the rough

patches
that rain makes in my dirt
ied flesh.
where there is still no
chlorine or

salt

I came from
the desert out
side of uvalde. crawled
into the rio /grande/

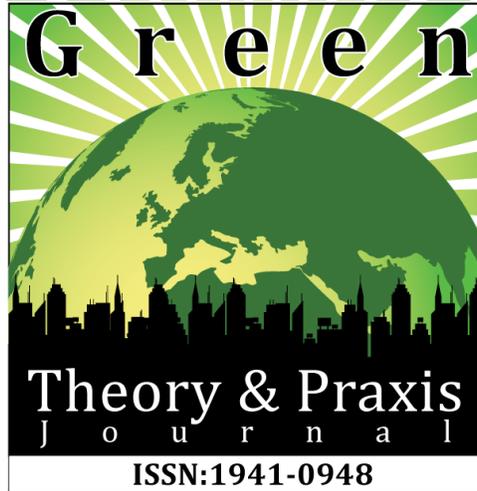
with a whisper like
my parched
my throat
my on fire space (between
legs -- I did not do
th/is to myself)

o I came to the desert outside
of from the desert
outside of
/uvalde/.

I came to the place where the brush
became water became fier y ant

bite / inside of my hip/ s. I came
to the suburb the
swimming pool,
came to see the difference
between oak/street and

river.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

Roadside Geology

Author: Mark McKain
Title: Instructor
Affiliation: Independent
Location: St. Petersburg, FL, USA
Email: mmckain09@gmail.com

Keywords: Rocks, Explosions, Volcano

Roadside Geology

Don't care for the heart. I want tremors from the rift. Live in alcoves, church
in conical forms, hallowed by volcanic fumes.

Mother, wandering the West, did you kneel in the desert, sense explosions
of pumice and broken rock,

ash clouds drifting over Oklahoma, depleting
the magma chamber to collapse?
Did you touch olivine embedded in basalt,

ejected from red-painted mouth,
message from the mantle?

Your slim fingers telegraphing observations,

typing reports from the cinder cone, news
of the igneous rising, dust,
crystallization. Mother, continue tapping,

alphabet chirping at light speed, as gravel
fills old channels,
fans across a rippled shore, forgotten home.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

The Rain's Design

Author: Tricia Knoll

Title: Eco-poet

Affiliation: Independent

Location: Vermont, USA

Email: triciaknoll@gmail.com

Keywords: Storms, Acidification, Precipitation

The Rain's Design

fell nothing like the prediction
of thunder storm, mere dots
spot the windshield, no soft drum
on skylight. The scientists say we should
avoid the word drought, what we feel
is aridification, like taking the wet sheet
to the line in the vanishing mist of mid-summer
and slowly something dries, something
that won't snap sharply in the windless night.
The skin of an old miner creasing.
They could just say that.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

In the Ragged Floodplain Forest after Years of Drought

Author: Thea Gavin

Title: Poet

Affiliation: Independent

Location: Orange, CA, USA

Email: theagavin@sbcglobal.net

Keywords: Floodplain, Drought, Willow

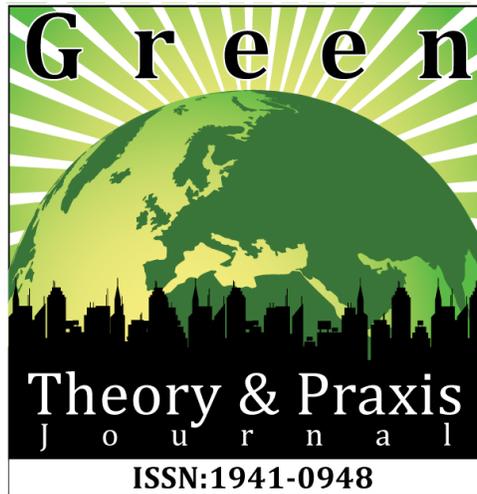
In the Ragged Floodplain Forest after Years of Drought

(Santiago Creek/Irvine Park)

No lightning strikes
snapped these willow
bones down to the duff.

The jagged stumps
and branch stubs
witness to strong forces

at work here:
water, always shaping,
even in its absence.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

We Thirst

Author: Christina Stanton
Title: Writing Major
Affiliation: Fort Lewis College
Location: Durango, CO, USA
Email: cstanton422@gmail.com

Keywords: Thirst, Waiting, Drought

We Thirst

We Thirst

Where has the water gone?

Thirsting for rain,
thirsting for snow.

We long and wait

Anticipating,

Listening,

Watching,

When will it come?

In a desert land full of people, full of hopes, full of longing,
we all wonder

What ever happened to the snow days that meant
sledding in the backyard?

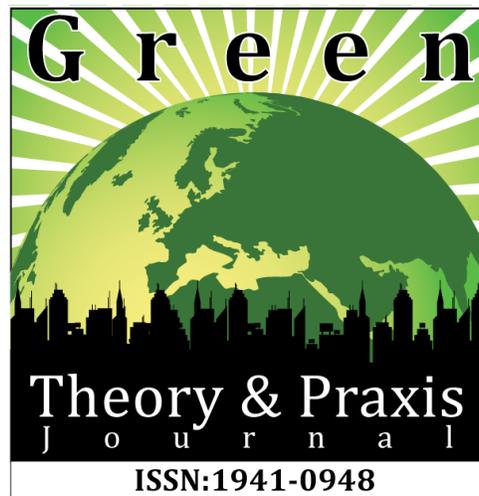
What ever happened to those rolling thunderstorms
with more pouring rain than thunder?

What ever happened to winter being winter,
summer being summer?

Where did it go? What did we do?

I thirst.

I know you do too.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

Potash Mining on the Riverbanks of a Canyon Not Quite Grand Enough

Author: Jack Ellmer
Title: Writing Major
Affiliation: Fort Lewis College
Location: Durango, CO, USA
Email: ellmerjack@gmail.com

Keywords: Colorado River, Glenn Dam, Riverbank

Potash Mining on the Riverbanks of a Canyon Not Quite Grand Enough

The rough and tumble dust-covered rubble bucket
burns.

The 55-gallon drum
heats no hobos – just refugees.

The flames dance to the steel-cable-snap rhythm,

and the great Colorado rages on below.

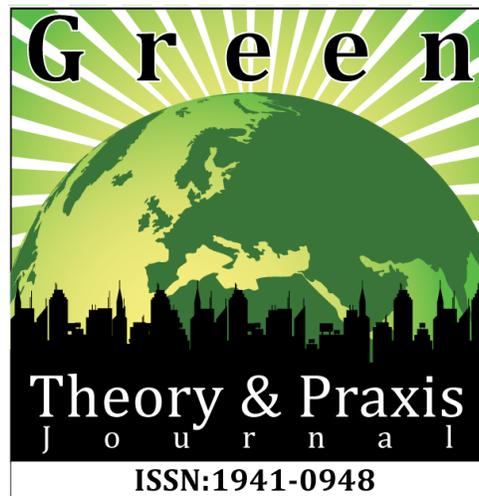
If we hop on the raging water freighter
will it rush us beneath more sites like these:

steel cables strewn about
55-gallon drum alight
an industry dedicated to feeding red rocks to crops aglow below?

I thought *this* was what we were running from.
We drove three hours to where we thought our
nuclear rivers and dining hall dinners couldn't get us.
But I guess we need to run some more.

Let's ride these rapid rails –
journey far from safe.
This river may be "protected"
but it isn't immune to yesterday.
We can draw all the green lines we want,
but conservation can't flow upstream.
That just isn't how rivers work.

If we aren't overrun by spring-break rental vessels
or stolen by illegitimate concrete arteries
or stuck behind Glen Canyon or Hoover Dam
we'll be drowning in salt in the Sea of Cortez,
apologizing to a Mexican farmer.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

Slow Life on Highway 160

Author: Jack Ellmer
Title: Writing Student
Affiliation: Fort Lewis College
Location: Durango, CO, USA
Email: ellmerjack@gmail.com

Keywords: Beer, Highways, Litter

Slow Life on Highway 160

Who drinks Keystone Light on the side of the highway
and decides to just leave it there?

Are drinking driving and littering inherently intertwined? Why can't
people pick between endangering others and the environment?

Or maybe the can is the product of somebody
stupid like me giving up while pedaling up

the highway. It is indeed miserable being passed
at sixty-five while pedaling less than five for miles and miles on end.

Who wouldn't lay their bike or even worse their boots to the side and sip on a tallboy of Keystone Light?

But then again if you have packed twenty-four ounces of light beer that far up highway 160

and you have consumed all those ounces and had a nice rest, then why not stomp the remnants and shove them back in your pack?

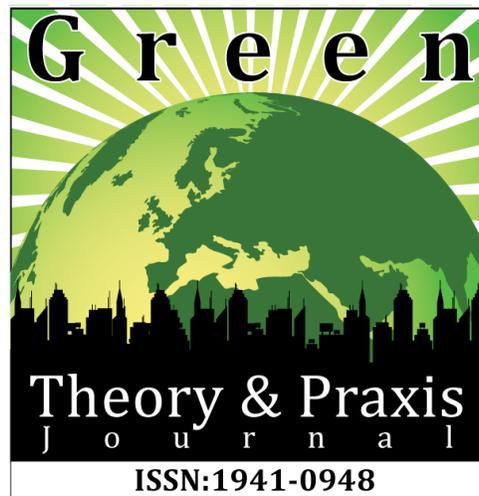
Is there really a weight savings to not packing out less than what you packed in? I know from longer walks with fewer

beers that empty cans fit nicely in most packs if you just stomp on them. And stomping them is fun, should be the highlight of your stupid long walk or bike.

But really, the answer I think is that highwayside slowlife either on foot or on bike is not for everybody or even for many people.

At sixty-five it's easy to let the trash and sad stories of the ditch pass by the wayside, but at less than five it's much harder.

Ride a bike. Walk. Learn the stories of our highway ditches and the underside of our bridges. Channel your newfound sadness into something for good.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

Winterless

Author: Deborah Phelps
Title: Associate Professor
Affiliation: Sam Houston State University
Location: Huntsville, TX, USA
Email: ENG_DLP@SHSU.EDU

Keywords: Mosquitoes, January, Winterless

Winterless

Strangeness in January, raising
Mayflies, millers, mosquitoes
Blind from their humid beds.
My windows open. I listen
To the slow syncopation
Of a passing shower. No evidence
Of a cold front.
Yet. And Shelley's lie unproven.

A year without winter
Is more than just confusing

To the insects. It discomfits
Us with benignity
Out of order. What little
Winter we get we should
Damn well get,
Like goods already paid for.
We don't ask for much: a few freezes
To set color in the trees,
Some sun-struck blue northers
To reinforce Christmas.

This sort of weather will give you TB
My old-country grandmother would say,
Bundling me in woolens
I would sweat the day through,
Seeing doom painted so prettily:
The pear and the plum trees
Blooming out, shading daffodils and tulips.
The bright-pink contagious
Smear of redbuds. Rather than lifting
Our hearts, we hold them in abeyance.
We know what's coming so sharply, solidly,
Heartlessly. Aimed
Straight for them.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

Fever

Author: Evon Davis
Title: MFA Candidate
Affiliation: Western Colorado University
Location: Gunnison, CO, USA
Email: evon.davis@western.edu

Keywords: Facts, Heatwave, Fever

Fever

It didn't all go bad at once. In fact, for someone like myself, I barely noticed anything different for a long time.

Mainly 'cause I didn't follow the news... already knew the world was crazy as ever. I only had to see it in places like Walmart at the checkout counter, reading the rag newspapers and celebrity magazines full of stories that were 99% fiction, sold as if they were true. Or at the Country Buffet where most people waddled rather than walked, and the guy sitting next to us kept sucking his snot back up his nose between every other bite.

I had a feeling something wasn't quite right.

I caught the news one of the last few times before the fever hit our little town. Heard the reporter say, "Join us on channel seven news, where the facts matter."

When would the facts not matter?

The news isn't what it used to be when I was a child. Now it's all about weaving a story and convincing as many people as possible to believe what's being fed to them.

Nothing seems real anymore. A "reality" TV star is president. Everyone buying the latest virtual reality headsets and haptic gloves for Christmas to play Halo and War of the Worlds in 3D.

I've found myself troubled by the reality that our world is sinking into. If you wrote about this a hundred years ago -- I think George Orwell did more recently than that -- you'd think it was just some bizarre science-fiction novel. Imagine millions, billions, of people hypnotized by a box that flashes lights and images at them, injecting a virtual reality into their brains and controlling their minds.

Scary. But it's not science fiction.

Me, I still enjoy sitting in the backyard, watching the blue jays washing up in the bird bath.

But once the fever came to our town, none of this much mattered anymore. And when the birds started to die, I guess I lost my will to go on living. That's when it got hold of me.

I often wonder what life will look like in the future when this terrible extinction has finally passed. I wonder if the human species will survive. Will it be like those science fiction movies? Like *The Matrix* or *Logan's Run*?

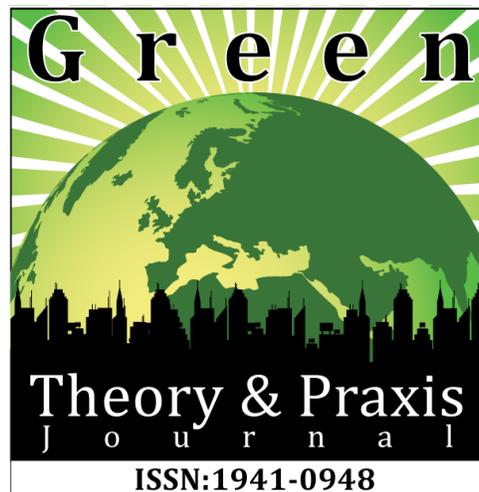
Will we go back to the dark ages, like the days of the black plague or the Inquisition? Will Earth replenish itself with a new dominant species 65 million years from now? I guess I'll never know.

I wake now in the haze of the unrelenting heatwave, so intense, there's no relief. My hands shake from weakness as I write these last few words.

Will the fact of my existence matter in a year from now? Will there be anyone around to notice? Will I even have a headstone?

If so, it'd say, "Mary Patricia Barnes. Born 1965. Died 2024."

Will anyone ever read these words I'm scratching out today? Or will they wash away on the tide as the water creeps higher and higher, finally engulfing this house, this bed, this body?



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

Echosaber™

Author: Evan Barber
Title: MFA Candidate
Affiliation: Western Colorado University
Location: Gunnison, CO, USA
Email: evan.barber@western.edu

Keywords: Ultrarich, Bezos, Ayn Rand

Echosaber™

Sometime in the distant future, tomorrow maybe depending on when you're reading this, the gap widened between the rich and poor. The ultrarich ruled the world. But, like, more than usual.

Many people lost their homes as housing prices skyrocketed to alarming rates and wages stagnated. Homelessness was more rampant than ever before. Millions of people littered the streets of major cities, complicated by issues of overpopulation. Without internet access, there wasn't much else to do besides procreate on the streets of Los Angeles or San Francisco while the rich's Teslas maneuvered automatically around them.

Luckily benevolent trillionaires slaved over their projects to fix overpopulation or homelessness. The ambitious sought to rid the world of both.

Nylon Marks, an Amazon inventor, had finally done it. She (yes, that's right, in the distant future the world had achieved enough gender equality to allow women to be evilly wealthy. Haha, just kidding. Sexism will forever be rampant and Nylon is an exception.) ripped a hole in the fabric of space and time. She stepped forward towards the warbling portal torn four feet ahead by her Echosaber™. She wanted to call it the Aynsaber after her favorite philosopher, but she knew it would be branded by her Amazonian overlords.

An idyllic green world greeted her. Red mountains curved across the horizon. No buildings. No sign of fauna. But most importantly, space.

She squinted, activating her Amazon Eye monocle to snap a photograph, then stepped back through the portal.

Back in her office, she sighed with relief, thanking Lord Bezos it worked both ways. She flicked the switch off on the portal-tearing saber.

* * * * *

“Sir,” Marks said to Jeff Bezos after he clambered out of his anti-aging chamber, “We can move all the homeless, the poor, and the Apple and Google apologists to this new dimension. We'll free our streets of the flood-waters of humanity.”

“Okay, but can we leave a few of the poor just so we can have someone to look down on?”

“Of course, my Lord.”

And so it was done, more or less. Many chose to go. Why wouldn't they? It was beautiful. An overall improvement. But some resisted, out of fear or stubbornness or both.

However, Nylon Marks soon realized an issue. When attempting to check up on the homeless, she could not find them. The same, green and mountainous world greeted her, but no one could be found. Nylon cut portal after portal, ravaging the city in different places, with mostly the same results. Sometimes the weather would be different there. A light rain. Sometimes cloudy. Sometimes sweltering or brisk. But no one was in sight.

“Honestly, I really don't see the issue,” Bezos said, his voice emanating from an Amazon Echo™ embedded in his throat. “They're gone, right? We're cleaning the streets. You're a hero. The rich think you're making a cleaner, safer place and the peasants think you're giving them a new home.”

But Nylon wasn't so sure. Alone in her mansion, she wondered if she even had it in her to be a rich, mad-scientist inventor.

“Aw, hey, don't say that,” the Alexa in her head said. “You can commit genocide on an entire class of people. I believe in you.”

But the libertarian part of her thought, “Facts are more important than being evil. Let’s do some research.” At least she thought it was her thoughts and not an Alexa malfunction. It had become increasingly difficult to tell the difference over the years. “Not to be morally good but to just know stuff. Also, fuck taxes and roads and schools.” *Okay good, it was the libertarian part of my brain*, she thought. But that thought was actually Alexa.

Her Tesla, which was of course now owned by Amazon, drove her around the country as she tore more portal holes open than a whole poor whorehouse. In each tear, she found only subtle shifts in landscape. Still no life beyond the flora. But she didn’t dare venture further for her tears stitched themselves up soon after being opened. And she didn’t want to be stuck on the inside when they did because who knew if she’d end up back in her own world.

It was getting late and she was getting nowhere, so she bought herself a sky hotel-pod for the night and went to sleep. Or at least she tried. She awoke in the middle of the night, above the smog that had recently gained sentience, after a nightmare. She had been trapped inside the portal-world and gang-raped by homeless men and women. After she got done feeling proud of herself for being so inclusive, she tried to go back to sleep.

“Play Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead*,” she said to her Alexa.

But it didn’t help, being just too riveting, so she decided to face things head on. She tore a portal open in the sky-pod and stepped inside.

She was still on the ground but she may have had better luck falling 1,000 feet. She was surrounded by rough and tumble men and women in makeshift clothes. They looked like cavemen. One woman, young and Latina, grabbed her.

“We’ve been waiting for you,” the woman said.

“Dear Bezos, please don’t kill me,” Nylon implored.

“We won’t kill you. But do not disgrace us with His name.” The woman spat. “My collective has been looking for you. You’ve scattered us throughout time on this unknown planet we now call Analog. It was nice and quiet here until He and his men arrived.”

This was no surprise to Nylon as she knew all thoughts, including design of the Echosaber™, were instantly transmitted to Bezos.

“I think I can help,” Nylon said, brandishing the Echosaber™, “with this.” She flicked the switch, the saber glowed, and she swung it at the woman, separating her body by time and space. Nylon jumped through the portal, hoping that it would lead to a place free of the poor and controlling regimes. A libertarian paradise.

“Take me to Ayn.”



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

Glacier Grey

Author: John Yohe

Title: Writer

Affiliation: Independent

Location: Oregon, USA

Email: yohejohn@gmail.com

Keywords: Glacier, Chile, Mint Chocolate

Glacier Grey

The end of the world is cold. And windy. No trees, just rock, boulders and shale. Patches of snow and sandy pebbles hitting my face. My plastic poncho supposed to be a windbreaker, but has really just turned into a big sail. I have to stop in big sudden gusts blowing down from *El Paso Garner*, Garner Pass, 'El Paso' for short. No trail, basically we're just heading *up*. With the altitude, I rest every twenty meters, bent over almost to the ground, thinking about the man who recently died trying to hike over this point.

A huge gust hits, blowing me over and back. I twist mid-air somehow and land on my hands and knees, dragged, poncho choking my neck and flapping in my face.

Up ahead somewhere, I hope, are my two Australian companions, named, amazingly, Tristan and Hamish. They've been traveling in South America for about two months, basically trekking,

camping out, The Inca Trail in Peru and Macchu Pichu, getting ripped off by police in Lima. Neither has picked up much español, so I've been useful, for once in my life, as a translator back in Puerto Natales where we met in one of the *hospedajes*. They accepted my presence matter o' factly and invited me along on an eight-day trek around the park, doing 'The Circuit,' a big loop in el Parque Nacional Los Torres del Paine. I'd only been thinking of an overnigher, have never done more than that, but said yes immediately. Amazing how that can change your life. We've seen the Torres, the Towers, huge skyscraper-like mountains, a climbers paradise, along with 'small' glaciers and glacial lakes filled with large chunks of floating blue ice.

I just graduated, barely, in December with a degree in creative writing, and the only story I could imagine for myself is working at a Border's bookstore the rest of my life. Nothing made sense except to revise completely, to leave, to go visit Chile, the homeland of Pablo Neruda. *Why do trees hide the splendor of their roots?* Maybe a last gasp, a last reward, a poem, before I join Real Life and grow up and be serious and stuff. So, from minimal savings I bought the ticket and walked through that gate in the Detroit Metro airport, expecting someone to say, Hey, you can't do that. Which is kind of what school had been like. But, no one did. And in Santiago, despite all the beautiful women, my instinct had been to get the hell out of there too, out into wilderness. My guidebook showed Los Torres del Paine, a United Nations Heritage Site, at the southern tip of the continent, of the world.

The Australians haven't laughed at me, at least not for any of that. They seem to be giving me the benefit of the doubt that I know what I'm doing, despite the fact that I'm in cut-off shorts, a Mötörhead t-shirt, and Converse High-tops. They *do* like to make fun of the States, and other Americans ('Why do American tourists dress like children?') which I am more than happy to encourage. Plus they're fellow Monty Python fans, quoting classic lines like 'She turned me into a newt' with much better British accents than mine. I had half-thought I might drop out earlier, and without them I surely would have. They've been teaching me, even just by example, how to properly trek. Things like planning out meals, reading a topographical (topo) map, and just drinking water straight off the glaciers, no need for iodine or filters (but *cold*). Also showing me how to tighten the waist belt on my *mochila* to get most of the weight on my hips, so my shoulders aren't screaming. Which makes my hip bones scream. But it's a good pain! Other things I've learned on my own, the hard way, like if you use a tarp, never put it *under* the tent. It should go on the ground inside, otherwise it actually catches runoff from the tent and funnels it into a puddle right underneath and you wake up the next morning with your butt in a puddle. Fortunately, neither of them are the gung-ho type that get up at five in the morning. Nope, we all crawl out at 9:30.

We had all wondered if I'd be warm enough, with no heavy jacket, just a rain shell, and I have been fine up to this point. Walking with a forty-pound backpack tends to warm one up. I've had it for a year and took it on a summer study-abroad in Mexico, but never really used it for a *backpack*. But here I am, *mochilando*, the first few days in low hills, snow-covered mountains in the background. Chile and the whole west coast of South America are like someone took the west coast of North America and flipped it over, and we're in the Alaska-looking part, though I'm Darwin, observing longer thinner dandelions, flower heads smaller, evolved differently down here. And with at least one completely new animal: the guanaco, related to llamas, same long

neck and wooly fur, which browses in the grass like deer, but also jumps around on rocks like mountain goats, and has the same kind of hooves. Herds of them, or single ones just appearing over my head on a boulder, staring at me. Judging me.

Learning too the rhythm of trekking, of backpacking, of *mochilando*, aware of what's around me but processing thoughts and emotions, of girls, friends, girlfriends, jobs, school, life. They just flow on by, nothing I can do about them, all that is far away, nothing to get on with except the next step. And when I get tired of thinking (though you never do, really) I just come out of the trance and look at the mountains which have been there forever. My problems nothing, a speck of sand on the side of a mountain.

During this trip, people have thought I'm Canadian or Argentinean, which is fine by me, I'm kind of ashamed to be an American after seeing many US oil companies in Chile, and knowing about our government's involvement in the coup which overthrow Salvador Allende, a democratically-elected (though Communist and therefore automatically bad) president, who Pablo Neruda supported. One would almost start to think America was out to invade everywhere because of oil. But on one break, Hamish remarks, —Well, you're certainly the quietest American I've met. Most go on and on, gabbing away.

Which I'm proud of. But we do talk. Hamish the free spirit type. Long black hair and a beard which he's been growing since he'd arrived in South America. One of the skinniest people I've ever met, and I'm pretty scrawny. I don't know how he hikes so far and fast with those chicken legs. He's still going to college, but I get the impression it's an on/off kind of thing. His girlfriend is an exotic dancer, which I would think would be both exotic and nerve-wracking while away on another continent for two months, but seems neither to him.

Tristan the more serious and quieter of the two. Long Elvis side-burns and the shortest hair of the three of us. In graduate school for psychology, he's going into clinical psychology to actually, like, help people. What a concept. But he still indulges his love of travel. He's seeing a beautiful young woman too, and keeps a picture of her in his passport so when a customs official wants to check his papers, her picture falls out and the guy forgets about hassling him. This actually happened at least once, I guess.

This whole trek I've still been expecting someone to jump out from behind a boulder and pull a Monty Python on me: 'Right! Stop that! You're being much too silly!' But thanks to Tristan and Hamish I've been starting to feel a little normal. Or, not alone in my silliness.

I rise, staggering, my poncho now just a cape, both hands on the ground, wondering if I'm about to be blown off the mountain. More sand in my face, trudging, long bloody slice in my left knee: the mountain has claimed a blood sacrifice.

And then I'm not walking uphill anymore, facing a vast sea of ice, grey and blue and cold. Glacier Grey. Beyond it, surrounding it, the Andes Mountains. We've been hiking through mountains the whole time, but these are MOUNTAINS. Tall vast dense hunks of planet with ice and snow on top, in huge CLOUDS. And I'm looking *across* at them. The end of the world. Nothing can be beyond those clouds. This is where reality creates itself. And is destroyed.

The wind *doubles*. The end of the world isn't going to let us live.

My Australian companions are having a grand ole time, of course. When I catch up, they're sitting behind a boulder, grinning away. As I collapse next to him, Hamish says, —That's more like it. I was beginning to get worried this would be a lark.

Tris grinning too. — Isn't this great? I got blown over on my back. Good thing I landed on my pack. Gawd, I never expected a view like that!

I cower in a ball, my poncho ripped to shreds, knowing I'm going to die, either right there, by being blown off back down the mountain, or else when we go into all that ice and cold and cloud. Those are the real Andes over there and I am shamed and unprepared, desecrating a holy place.

They take pictures.

Tristan turns to me: —We're thinking about walking a little bit further then stopping for lunch.

—Great! Let's get the hell out of here!

I run, shooting down the slope, expecting snow and ice any moment. If I'm going to die, it won't be crawling. Tris and Hamish come behind, jumping into the wind, laughing.

And, the wind lessens. Still strong, but only in a cold way now. And, instead of snow and ice, a field of thick green moss appears, covering over all the rocks. Far below, a forest of reasonable-looking non-snowy pine trees. Maybe we aren't going to die after all. I take big spongy leaps down, unable to stop staring at that huge GLACIER. We find another little protected nook behind a big boulder. Tris loans me a sweater, and we sit on mossy rocks with the best view in the world. Glacier Grey just like its name, with huge blue cracks and fissures. I'm looking down a long ways, those cracks must be canyons. I get a chill, imagining falling into one, lost in blue ice caves, the glacier moving and crushing me like nothing, which I am.

None of us speak for a while, none of us stop staring.

—You guys, I gotta confess, I was scared up there.

Tristan grins. —Yeah I noticed. You wanted to leave right quick.

—We just saw the face of God.

Hamish gives me his most pseudo-aristocratic Australian-snob look. —Bah. Rubbish. Someone's been watching too much Hollywood tripe. Or should I say Holy-wood? That wind wasn't a bit over a hundred kilometers an hour. Oh, sorry, divide by eight, multiply by five to get whatever the US is still using. It was a stroll. A doddle, if you will. If you Americans don't have some fortitude, who will want to be policed, watchdogged, big-sticked, or new-ordered by you? You could learn a bit from us Crocodile Dundee types, you could.

I break out a huge chocolate bar I've been saving, filled with mint cream, the most wonderful candy bar I have ever eaten.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

Pima County Cemetery

Author: Aidan Multhauf
Title: Writing Major, Climbing Guide
Affiliation: Fort Lewis College
Location: Durango, CO, USA
Email: aidanmulthauf@gmail.com

Keywords: Pima County, Dehydration, Wasteland

Pima County Cemetery

Plunge
Scoop
Pull
Cough

We never understood how this was legal. The killing was not with bullets, rather with walls and barriers, forcing the desperate into the wastelands. Hot days, cold nights and dehydration kills hundreds of these hungry humans each year, and their families are fleeing death too quickly to even see their loved ones go down.

Plunge
Scoop
Pull
Blink

The air is too thick with the dust we've been kicking up, so we take a water break. It's nearly 5am and we've been working all night. Working to protect their bodies from the elements that took their lives. Working to give them a burial.

—*Vamanos*

Plunge
Scoop
Pull
Stretch

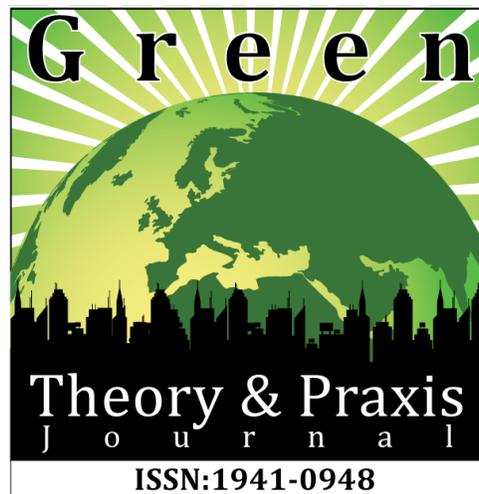
The stars have disappeared on the horizon, and a warm breeze reminds us where we are. Naked hills rise out of the dead Earth reminding us why we left Arizona while we were still children. Seven are now in Las Angeles, and the other five of us live in Reno. Those of us who make this annual trip have obtained the right to stay through DACA. We are the kin of those who made it.

Plunge
Scoop
Pull
Sweat

There used to be more of us, but many were deported. Last year, we buried one of our own who attempted to get back.

Plunge
Scoop
Pull
Drag
Drop

We need to be out before its light so we don't get bothered by border patrol. We mark each body we buried with an opaque plastic gallon of water we tag with a short red flag to try and ensure that nobody dies here again. This year we found jugs with bullet holes in them. Just another gringo believing toxic rhetoric.



Vol. 12, Issue 1
April, 2019

And Yet...

Author: Steven J. Meyers
Title: Senior Lecturer
Affiliation: Fort Lewis College
Location: Durango, CO, USA
Email: meyers_s@fortlewis.edu

Keywords: Image, Symbol, Object

And Yet...

In the argot of radical environmentalism few words are spoken with more contempt than anthropocentrism, human-centeredness, and for good reason. Origin Stories, value systems, that place the human above all else have too often abused the non-human. And yet, we are inescapably human. Shall we not value ourselves?

The word is not the thing. The image is not the object. The symbol is not the thing symbolized. But we must communicate, and we must communicate meanings deeper than the mere surface presentations of things. Well, we must at least try.

And what is the photographic image? Not hardly the object or objects framed. Not hardly the thing or things captured on the sensor. Image become symbol of the beautiful, the wild? Image become emblem of the human-wild interface, the picturesque? What of that? If the image is not the object, the thing isolated and perhaps symbolized, what is it?

Is any process more anthropocentric than the image extracted by a photographer from its natural community, made two-dimensional, printed and presented as a “representation” of ... what?

And yet we speak, we write, we photograph hoping to communicate, believing that to some degree we do. To believe otherwise is unthinkable.

Some have argued that in the Anthropocene nature has ended. This is not the moment to engage in that particular conversation; except, maybe, to repeat something I've written more than once before. Even if capable of profoundly destructive acts, even if possessing far too often an utter lack of respect for the other, the human is no less natural than that which is not. To separate ourselves from the natural is to begin a rapid slide down the treacherous slope to disdain or perhaps an even more dangerous detachment. The other is not utterly other. To believe so is to be separated from that of which we are a part.

How do you love something with which you feel no connection?

And so we come to these photographs. Human seen. Technology enabled. Attempting to share one person's seen with others, to kindle words and thoughts that although not the things imaged somehow represent them. Hopefully, respect them. The nonhuman and the human, together. The sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque.

The word is not the thing. The image is not the object. The symbol is not the thing symbolized.

And yet ...



















