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## STAKING OUT ADVENTURE'S TRAIL

My daddy says there are five senses: Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting. But I call them five adventures. And maybe there's another one. This morning I filled my pockets with new things to feel. Five smooth stones and lots of seeds. Maybe dragon seeds. Some of them are prickly like tiny teeth and claws. The only way to tell if dragons will come up is to plant them and wait. If they're dragon seeds, green tails will sprout in about a year. They'll be the color of my shirt. I can tell my shirt is green because it feels green. I don't have to look.

This afternoon I ate an orange. I pulled off the peel real slow so it made a curl. It was white on one side and yellow-reddish and dimply on the other side. I wound it around my wrist. It smelled like Florida. I told my sister I had a Florida bracelet. And I told her I might show her a dragon in about a year. She frowned. So I told her she couldn't feel my rocks and click them together.

The trouble with my sister is, she has no imagination. If she touched my rocks, she wouldn't see the tall, pointed, mountain stone they came from. She wouldn't see the sand they'll grind up into a long, long time from now. Longer than it takes to grow a dragon.

She hasn't learned to match colors with sound and smell. Or taste. She doesn't know that purple tastes like perfume. She doesn't know that lazy cloud-sheep sometimes come down here to drink in a pond. She hasn't figured out how to press the moon in a book, either, right after it's washed.

And maybe worst of all, she doesn't hear the music all around. I take her lots of places and tell her to listen. She just shrugs and calls me a dummy and a dork.

I've heard a song shaped like a shell. I've tasted thunder and I know it's black. Each picture I take with my play camera is soft or hot or tickly. But she can't feel them. I shouldn't be surprised. She can't even see them.

My sister is always bored. I might be bored, too, if I saw everything the same as everybody else. Well, I see it that way first but then I keep looking and thinking. There's more than one track to roll on. There are all kinds of knobs and dials to turn inside your mind.

Maybe I can help her find her gold knobs and dials  
so she'll have more fun. So she'll at least have five  
big adventures. I won't stop trying. Here she comes.  
"Hey, please don't step on my row of dragon seeds!"

## DENOUEMENT OVER THE JUNEAU ICE FIELD

I keep waiting for the Alaska feeling to come back-- a thrill as definite as wind tingling my skin with Katmai pumice. This other feeling has never left. Not as old, but deeper, more demanding. Melissa. Mellie. Missy. This has to be more than | hello/good-bye.

Somehow there isn't time for anything but a quick hug and a cheek peck when we meet in Juneau. In some puzzling way she's Shed the California college girl look for one that's more woman, more appealing. We hurry to a jeep she has waiting.

"I've planned a special tour for your first morning," she tells me. "We can relax once we're on the float plane."

"Float plane?"

"Now don't worry. You won't have any complaints, I promise... The guy who rebuilt it and flies it is considered tops around here, Don't go by appearances. Next to you he may be the best pilot there is." She pauses and gazes squarely in my face.

"You really do look good, Yance,"

As I start to lean forward she hastily pats my hand, turning away at the same time to see where we are, She clamps a large basket, probably our lunch, firmly between her feet just as the jeep driver veers onto an incredibly bumpy road, We spend the rest of the trip hanging on to our belongings and trying to stay upright.

Pilots are the world's worst air passengers. I stare at the antique patch-job wallowing in the water as we move down the Shore. A self-conscious cough slips out. "I've never been in a float plane before."

Melissa charges me with camera gear and smiles so I can't pursue my urge to inspect prop, rudder and struts before we're committed. All I know of the man at the controls is plaid Shoulders and a hood of hair and beard surrounding Air Force Shades, He revs the engine and waves us inside. Apparently there is a need for haste.

We settle in surprisingly comfortable homemade seats. Mellie points to ptarmigan already losing their summer brown. They flush from willows on the bank. I must have squirmed. Missy hands me film to load. We lift off fat, sluggish, deafening.

"I saw a beluga whale right out there last time," she shouts. Before I can wonder much about how often she's flown with this unclipped waterbuck, we see a pair of whales, arcing whitely through the long arm of tidal overflow. They move side by side like lovers, pale quotation marks introducing verses I've never read. We watch until they're indistinguishable from the waves.

We ride low, slow, over gold mine ruins, brush beginning to cover a burn area, slabs of quartz, sparse forest. Her cries of "Look? Oh, look!" make me stop listening for the stall warning. This time there's a moose with a rack like a park bench. Soon we spot a female and a calf. I love seeing things with her. I see better with her.

"We might see a grizzly, too. Jack sees them all the time."

"Jack's the pilot2"

She nods.

The whales, the moose replay on my mental screen along with swatches of our past. Missy. Mellie. Melissa, The woman beside me. No longer she or her but you. My thoughts want to connect with yours, want access to all the niches where you sort the things you'll keep. We had that closeness once. I didn't imagine it. Even if you did say my imagination ran on higher octane than your's.

We started coming apart last spring. When you took the job in Juneau, you said you'd know your answer by fall. How many hours aloft has it been since May? Los Angeles to Anchorage-- the great circle route to Tokyo-- high-- too high to see anything. But always hearing you over the drone, Hearing you say we never should have married until you found the direction your own wings should take. You apologized for the cornball cliché and continued. "Oh, Yancey, I wish I could love flying as much as you do. To me it's just an efficient way to get somewhere. To you-- when you're flying you're already where you want to be. You love the planes, the instruments, the skills involved-- I might rent a plane to spot signs of mineral deposits or fault lines or to visit a friend-- but you want to climb in a glider on Saturday after you've parked a jet Friday night."

How many times you had to remind me my wife is a fledgeling geologist, not a soarer, When I look at you it's hard to think of earth sciences. On our third date when I proposed, you said, "My element is what's on and under the surface. Yours is altitude and getting loose from gravity. How could we ever put it together?" And on our fifth date you said, "You like introspection, long silences, metaphor-- I like chit-chat, open argument. When I think about the past it's in terms of rock," But I was ready for you that time. "You also like Gershwin, poetry, pastels and baked salmon, We can't miss" Actually, I had a list of 86 things I'd found we shared a liking for, And I read them to you all evening. I even had your mother on my side. I visited her several times you didn't know about, "I'll do what I can," she said with a little wink. "I'd certainly prefer a smartly uniformed pilot for a son-in-law to any of those bearded wonders from the university in their rumpled

rag and backpacks. There's one, an assistant professor of archaeology, who always looks and smells like an afghan hound that's been sleeping in the rain. I think he comes courting directly from some dig. When I asked Melissa how she stood it she said she didn't notice it. Said their fields meshed, Imagine!" Another time your mother told me, "I'm not one of those women who's pressuring her offspring to marry and give her grandchildren. Melissa's career is very important to her. She may not want children. That's all right with me, but I think she'd be happier with a husband who could make her relax and be less serious. Just don't rush her. Most of her friends have married and over half of them are already divorced. So she's wary."

But I did rush you. I was afraid you'd get away, Afraid some superbrain with a bag of lava crumbs would mesh fields with you while I was fighting a headwind somewhere. I blitzed you, did everything but sing serenades. I even memorized Mohs' scale of mineral hardness and gave you a choice between a joke ring set with talc and a one carat diamond in platinum,

There was never any question about our magnetic fields meshing. But maybe I suffocated you. I tried to back off. Then one night you said, "The Alaska project I told you about sent me a green light. I'd like to leave Monday. You could come up in the fall and we'll see how we feel then."

"I know how I'll feel. You're the one who wants to test things scientifically." But I let you go without a hassle.

So now you've had your time and plenty of room. Are you going to leave me for good when we land? Are you working up to some insufferable bit about lifelong friendship and perpetual admiration? Hell, I'd rather deal with your caged shrew mode than that.

"We've caught the sun just right," you exclaim. You tell Jack, the bushman, you want a shot of Mendenhall. The huge mountain of ice bulks blue to the northwest. We tilt crazily and you aim a telephoto lens.

The moraine is plush with stunted black spruce and hemlock splashed with fireweed. My last thoughts of ailerons, pontoons, fuel slip by and my arm falls on your shoulder as we press toward your window. A braided river flounders in the Silt, looking for the main part of itself without current or compass, I'm a braided river.

The mountains are fingerpainted for fall, I'd forgotten how many shades of red the tundra owns, how many Tlingit legends shadow the hills. "Remember when you thought Alaska would be drab?"

I watch northern light play your face as you nod. Your hair is darker, glossier than I remember.

"I've really appreciated being here, Yance, It's the best gift you ever gave me. Thank you for understanding."

The engine only allows for half-yelled communication. I settle for squeezing your shoulder in reply. Maybe if we could be still for awhile-- really still-- we could make it work. Nowhere to go, no opposite things that have to be done. Just a chance to learn the verb to be. It would be worth it to get snowed-in somewhere further north.

Pocked remnants of centuries bend the light below. We're approaching the ice cap. A hundred-mile mother lode, forty miles wide, No one's sure how many feet thick. I planned to fly it once when I was based here. Never did. It has the look of silence. But that arctic leftover must creak with age, crack with change, growl at the wind's heavy rake. Life support for the glaciers, keeping them healthy enough to bully mountains, gouge holes for lakes and Slough off bergs the size of ships. Even the Nunataka groan under their scars. Great granite chess pieces still castling an empty board where all the pawns and knights were lost. No roads. No animals. A shelf of loneliness except for glaciers-- kings, queens, bishops standing pompous in the passes, "What a sight. No wonder you said this was special, Can you read its history?"

"What? Oh--not too well,"

You're down there now on that stretch of shine-- as if you'd stepped out without Saying good-bye. Take me with you when you go,

The crevasses hold the colors of California sky and morning-glories. Your eyes have more lavender. If we crashed down there, somehow I'd save you, Put myself between you and the ice. I'd will you my breath and blood, strength and mind. The mind. What fool flights it takes. Untended, it fills up like a windsock and starts shredding. Or slowly ravel at one end,

"How was it down there?" Your voice startles me. Your expression is different,

"What?" I move my head nearer your mouth.

"Down there on the famous ice field. I knew you'd be entranced. You left here and explored that cold desert as far as you could see, I tried to follow but I couldn't keep up."

The surrealism of the scene and that tin can motor must be making me flaky. Did your eyes suddenly mist over before you turned back to the window so I wouldn't notice? God, my depth perception is failing! How long have I been misreading you?

We're passing a small glacier. "Look at that lower slope. Like Spider-web turquoise. And on top, one perfect cabochon some lapidary's frozen fingers had to abandon before he could cut it loose for a pendant."

I want to believe I can feel tension flow out of your shoulder, You turn slightly. Your hair curves against my lips. "I'm glad you're still a romantic," you say at last.

"Is that what I am?" I manage to get closer, "Only with | you."

"Are you glad I talked you into doing this?"

"It wasn't difficult. I'd have run the Iditarod if you'd wanted to. This is wonderful."

The prop changes pitch again. My ears pop. We're nearing an evergreen rain forest Slanting away to a meadow rimmed with aspen gold. Bald eagles circle and sail like wooden totems freed from their poles. I can feel how they excite you, feel it building.

"Look, they're feeding on salmon. Let's join them." You're pointing ahead. "There's the lodge and old Kip is out front waving. I can smell the alder smoke already. Can you carry this bag?"

"I had no idea we'd be putting down anywhere." My arms are being filled with stuff I don't recognize. My leg is asleep from my strained position. You smile broadly.

No river was visible a moment ago. Now we ease onto one like Silk on glass, and taxi to a makeshift dock.

Your ungloved hand is warm, even your eyes, although cerulean is a cool color. On the dock you poke your head back in the plane and speak to the pilot. He asks you something I can't hear and you nod decisively for the second time. I suppose he'll tie up and join us for lunch. I'll certainly compliment him on a damn nice landing. He probably ferries lots of people here for salmon bakes and maybe fishing.

A moment later he calls out clearly, "See you two next week." Then he begins his turn for take-off.



## BEST OF SHOW, SEASONAL MURAL

For months the river spreads a wash of gray  
While spackling wrinkled margins winter-dull.  
But soon the palette changes, textured schemes  
Of light and hue from April's interplay  
Begin to rearrange and then annul  
The drabness, add chartreuses flocked with creams.  
Hawks wind the winds, late lightning rips the seams  
In blue. Pale sunrise silhouettes a gull.  
Shadbush stipples air, brushes down to cull  
Sea foam, framing lost impressions of Monet.  
We rock in pastel shades of lullabyes,  
Our spectrum flashed with cubist fireflies.  
The next stroke primes a redding sumac spray.

Effective use of rhyme. lullabies is misspelled. You might want to fix that before you send this poem out again. I wonder, too, if you might want to consider a 14th line, not necessarily to adhere to the traditional sonnet length, but because I think you need a summary sentence that ties the whole poem together and perhaps refers to the idea hinted at in the title. What do you think?  
Judge Patricia A. Lawrence

## Addie at Eighty

It's hard, she said, always being so damn grateful for rides downtown or snow removal, mattress turned around or Sam repairing something. She was low-- upset because some neighbor called her ma'am.

Some nights, she said, she'd think about white lightning-- the kind the sheriff used to make and stash away for years to take the creeping achey edge off winter's whitening. The stuff was clear, she said, a slow pure heightening of sense-- contenting-- warm and gold-- the way it should be growing old-- The thing it shouldn't ever be is frightening.

## DITHYRAMB IMPROMPTU IN D

A tall man with a banjo leaned against the Ozarks,  
propped his boot on granite, had to make a song.  
He borrowed chords from falling water  
down the longest canyon wall; he sang  
of blowing cottonwood and bluestem miles of prairie  
tomorrowed with the off-key bawl of calving.

He saved insistent rhythm from an appaloosa hoof,  
a pumping well and tin roof rain,  
the ragged rugged meter of the languages that met,  
and a Hopi shuttling sunset through a rug loom.  
Two cowboys mouthed harmonicas and puffed the melody,  
hummed their loneliness and thumbed some badlands bass.  
A red man added drumming, like the coming of a twister  
like the warming of a rattler and the fear-beat of a doe.

Play the ranging polyrhythm changing green to gray  
or tan, heathen heat that stills the windmill,  
spirals deep inside the core drill, thrums  
the also obbligato for the dreamer and the drum.

Other voices join in. The ballad changes key--  
from minor to major and back again--  
Dust-scape, wind-scope, miles of mood as black as crude,  
magpie notes on dusty barbwire staff,  
salt-flat hopes pitched higher-toned and sharp.

Tighten old guitar strings, patch and stitch the tune,  
lighten with the lupine, reach a wing.  
Listen to the underlilt, the afterbeat of thunder,  
whistle up the wonder of thistledown and desert,  
Modulate the sound of silversmith and logger.

Scale it all to satisfy harmony's quest--  
And sing! Another chorus of the west.

## ASSATEAGUE SILVER

The moon's image quivers, wrinkles wetly  
like tie-dyed surah as a brindled mare  
crosses the shallow backwater.  
She leaves the loose passel of ponies,  
their indifferent ears and languid tails,  
moves toward a pale hump of beach  
carved by wind, curved like her neck  
and fringed with a mane of sea oats.

She pauses on its crest, poses farthest  
from the new white-blazed leader  
pounding after a wandering filly.  
He warns his other conquests,  
circles them, tightens them into a clump.  
The brindled mare stays motionless, apart.  
Suddenly his senses fill with her.  
He swings his ebony head like a pendulum.

The old deposed stallion,  
watching from a hummock of salt-marsh grass,  
backs his wounds deeper into the night.  
The victor prances forward, muscles  
undulating moonlight, the silver flame  
on his forehead igniting flares in his eyes.  
The mare waits then turns away.

The flat surf is sibilant  
with the year's lowest tide. Fluted dunes  
ripple contiguous shine and shape. The mare  
snorts at a scuttling crab, an oblique shadow  
crossing her domain. The dark stallion  
hurries to block her premises. He nickers  
and nips at a moon streak on her hip.

Claiming his right to her promises, throwing  
his ardent cry to the ancient salver  
serving light, he declares himself best  
of his remnant kind-- his New World kind  
he would save here in their only home  
of barrier island sand biased with silver.

## THE CLUMSY CONSUMER REPORT

I'm a gentle soul, relaxed and mild;  
I love my fellow man.  
But there's this thing that drives me wild  
And shortens my life span.

I go to build some midnight snackage--  
That's when my trials begin--  
Getting the goodies outa the package  
Thoroughly does me in.

My finger's cut on a zippered can,  
A plastic bag claims a tooth.  
The crimped-closed edge of frozen pan,  
Finds I can be uncouth.

The canopy that covers the ham  
Might yield to a bayonet.  
Designers closely studied the clam  
But they aren't happy yet.

To greater, rarer heights they aspire--  
Impregnable wraps for cheese,  
And seals for nuts and cakes that require  
Three engineering degrees.

My bread reposes behind chain mail;  
I spring the flap with a thud.  
My sandwich contains my fingernail--  
And look-- is that ketchup or blood?

Inventors should get deserved acclaim.  
Would one of these masters stand  
And take all the credits due his name?  
I just wanta break his hand!

## LISSIE ROYAL, APPALACHIAN AUNT

She spent her whole life on that old razor ridge  
in a four room cabin with a two-holer outhouse  
and mice in the rafters and twice I know of, a snake  
in her mattress. She had a wall of County Fair awards  
for her quilts and more orders than she could fill.  
The last thing she made me  
was a quilt of her blue ribbons.

She worked by coal oil lamps till her cat knocked  
one over, set her sewing on fire, charred the floor.  
For years she argued, "You get all them lights up here  
and first thing you know you can't see the stars.  
Ain't no nights like mountain nights for watchin' stars.  
Been seein' Venus rise over Beckley's Knot in spring  
since I was high as the churn. Course what you see  
is her lamp-- which ain't electric-- as she carries it  
to climb her own mountain. If'n you squint a little  
you c'n see Mercury taggin' along. And that's Mars there,"  
she pointed with two warped fingers  
tough as her brogans from never wearing a thimble.

Electricity won her over but never my campaign  
to make her leave the switchbacks and Joe-Pye weed  
and coon dogs belling in the gap. "I'm like Sirius,"  
she said, "I don't move. People are always losin' things  
when they move. Things they never find agin. Besides,  
can't you just see me peerin' through them Venetian blinds  
in some big concrete carton a'lookin' for Orion's belt?  
And no place to make compost and plant dahlias?"

I failed to persuade her she could have stars and dahlias  
and running water too. She preferred life where she was.  
And I can say for certain-- she never lost a thing.

## MAKING PRAISE FOR EASTERTIME

We need a psalm to celebrate defeat.  
Our common enemy was made to fall.  
Unlike man's fall, the breach in death's old wall  
Is permanent, its power obsolete.

For centuries life was a one-way street  
Until the Savior broke that grip and gall.  
We need a psalm to celebrate defeat.  
Our common enemy was made to fall.

From ancient times we sought the way to cheat  
Finality. Our Father heard our call  
And sent His Son to lift that hopeless pall.  
His victory made deliverance complete.  
We need a psalm to celebrate defeat.  
Our common enemy was made to fall.

Dear Grace:

I've seen your name so often I feel as if we're old friends. It's nice to have this opportunity to communicate. And nice of you to sponsor this little contest.

I'd love to hear your views on using words like "victory" in a metrical poem. In this case it's pronounced in 2 syllables but it's just as often meant to use 3. "Power" is meant to have 2 complete syllables but often it squeaks by as one. The point is, they create stumbling blocks for the reader until he pauses long enough to figure out the writer's intention. I usually try to avoid such problems if possible but often it can't be done. There are other choices here but these words are precisely what I want in a theme of victory and defeat. They are being used in their most natural pronunciations as used in normal speech.

Also, some judges don't permit contractions in formal verse. Suppose my first line were "Let's write new psalms," etc. My feeling is that "let's" is far more natural than "let us" and as a rule, preferable. On the other hand, the nature of this poem may require utmost formality. On still another hand, I like the spontaneity of "let's." What do you think?

Thank you for the stimulus to write my first rondel. Come to think of it, it's my first Easter poem, too. Such subjects have been done so much the triteness is built in. And thank you for your forthcoming comments. I'll look forward to hearing from you.

A very happy Easter to you and yours.

Sincerely,  
GLENN HOLLOWAY



## DEATH ALWAYS PLAYS THE LEAD

Death never was the villain we supposed,  
Nor is it sinister or strange. Our acts  
Could not go on without it. Scenes are closed  
By saturation, change, the emptied facts,  
Not death. It's this, our wordly partnership,  
Our ancient contract still inviolate  
That makes the drama work, that gives us grip  
And drive. Consider how the years deflate  
Our starring parts. Foreverness allots  
A strung-out tedium of now and here  
While grinding down our once-dynamic plots.  
The wise Director lets no sonneteer  
Recite so long he mouths a shibboleth  
Instead of song. Our roles revolve on death.

Retiring from the earthly stage at last  
With makeup changed to something so unique  
No actor could have owned it in the past,  
Nor bowed and raised so radiant a cheek,  
Each player's voice resolves a major chord  
With which to sing dimensions never heard.  
Each tongue transmits the music of the Lord,  
Each swelling passage amplifies His Word.  
Don't mourn your final exit toward the wings,  
Or sadden over lines left unexpressed.  
You'll enter a production of great things,  
Assume your true identity twice blessed:  
Beginnings are endings of life's disguise;  
Endings are pauses while new curtains rise.

## LISTEN MAMA

He's got his faults, Mama,  
but he sees me not by size  
but what he reads behind my eyes.  
He has a certain hearing of the heart.

He runs his finger down my tingling arm  
and doesn't wish it thin but loves instead  
the dimpled satin of my skin.

Don't say he'll never be wealthy  
or famous or even wise.  
Knowing full well I'm not rich  
he wants to make me smile. He tries  
to make me laugh so he can hear two notes  
he says remind him of his door chime.

Love is opening each other's doors,  
throwing them back in warm bright rooms  
with vases of peppergrass and daffodils.  
Mama-- don't drape a wispy shadow  
over these sunny sills.

## OLD TROQUOIS WHIT, RED MAN WITH A WHITE CANE

To him our metaphors are recondite,  
Our modern terms are riddles to a brain  
Where long-gone wispy hunter's trails remain  
And only childhood images are bright.  
When man transcends his bone-imprisoned night  
To touch shore's gritty Braille or taste fresh rain,  
His lengthened grasp can snatch the key from pain  
To open what mere language fails to light.

We read to Whit then he becomes our gauge,  
Our guide for measures we can seldom find  
To pace the dark, to pacify the rage.  
For we, far-sighted, young and keen of mind,  
Are often trapped inside a blackened cage...  
Till life is lit with vision from the blind.

## OLD WIVES THE TALES COME FROM

Crocheting string doilies, antimacassars  
no one wants, filling boxes,  
filling huge cotton prints, sleeves sloping  
like tents, hooks unfastened back of the neck,  
they string out death in rocking chairs.  
Daily they fatten to fill their final boxes,  
paying out advice no one needs, paying  
out the slow twine, enlarging the old designs,  
Straining fifty-odd years of wifery  
for a mite to impress the young ones  
tightening against their webs and cardboard,  
closing in with the last lid.

They wait-- frayed sheaths-- used awhile  
by knife-voiced kin who own everything in focus  
outside the net of squares and wheels.  
On humid suburban evenings, on some deserted  
concrete patio, they group like toadspellstools,  
picking at the threads of the days' patterns,  
unraveling their mouths,  
honing their only weapons.