

The Kumquat Challenge



42 poems by current and former WCC
faculty, staff, and students celebrating
National Poetry Month

Spring 2012

Whatcom Community College Library

TABLE OF CONTENTS

* = Kumquat Challenge Winner

Introduction

Sally Sheedy.....1

Snow

Marla Tuski.....2

The Rejuvenation of Spring

Guy Smith.....2

Valor

Sheila Sondik.....3

The Event

John Hansen.....3

Thapsus

Katy Kappelé.....4

The Kumquat Challenge

Meyyappan Kumar.....5

On Tour

Susan Campbell Cross.....6

Step Out of Your Element

Diana Swan.....7

Charm of Freedom

Uğur Doğu.....7

Abandoned

Linda Compton-Smith.....8

Bones

Jessy Stewart.....8

On the Wing

Pete Ruble.....9

Bonjour, Monsieur Gauguin

Scott Blume.....9

Oh, Ultra-runner, Why Do You Do It?

Sharon Evans.....10

LYNDA SPAULDING is a lifelong learner and likes to challenge herself by trying her hand at a variety of art forms. (p. 25)

TIFFANY ST. CLAIRE graduated from Whatcom last spring and transferred to the University of Washington to pursue a double major in English and Communication. She enjoys writing, reading, studying and creating art in many forms of media. A favorite thing for her to do is to try to create new words, or string bizarre words together to create something humorous. (pp. 28, 35)

JESSY STEWART, age 22, is a WCC student. She was born and raised in Bellingham and has been writing poetry her entire life. She describes herself as a bubbly girl with lots of life in her. (p. 8)

DIANA SWAN, when not enjoying the Bellingham gray skies and rain, is be-friending all the critters that cross her path. (p. 7)

ARA TAYLOR (person): no other known aliases. (p. 20)

MARLA TUSKI began writing when her mother died, realizing she still had time to learn. She may never be as good as she would like, but feels the journey is as good as the destination. She is a grandma, loves to kayak, and never tires of the Northwest. (p. 20)

SARAH VANDERPOOL works by day at the WCC Library, but by night she uses her super-human ability to stretch and fight the evils of WWU home-work while juggling the needs of her super-fast and unpredictable super-human sons with the help of her Mr. Incredible husband. (p. 42)

HEATHER WILLIAMS works in the library at Whatcom Community College. She is an incorrigible “Star Trek” geek who stops watching it about once per year in order to write a poem for the Kumquat Challenge. (p. 30)

LEEANNE WILLIAMS was born in Virginia, grew up in Georgia, lived in Florida for nearly a decade, and has now settled down in Washington. She works as an administrative assistant at a recreational park and recently got married in Las Vegas on Leap Day. Her greatest achievement, so far, is driving across the United States four times (twice with two dogs in tow). (p. 27)

KATE MILLER teaches English Composition and Creative Writing at Whatcom Community College and Women's Studies and American Cultural Studies at Western Washington University. In any spare time she writes poetry and creative nonfiction, watches birds, loves librarians and dogs, and reads post-apocalyptic fiction. (p. 18)

JIM MILSTEAD, a WCC student in the 1990s, has recently taken Betty Scott's poetry workshop, and classes taught by Laura Laffrado. He is a retired entomologist (UC Berkeley), and a member of the Bellingham Senior Center Writers, the Independent Writers Studio, and the Bellingham Haiku Group. He is a compulsive writer addicted to excessive verbiage. (p. 29)

MARLA MORROW feeds songbirds and an infrequent feral cat named Keisha (Russian for potato (ha!)). She is a horse woman. Her gelding, Abba, is a joy and bids her to be silently drawn by the stronger pull of what she really loves. Her husband, Steve, imparts extravagant love to her. (p. 32)

TIMOTHY PILGRIM, a journalism professor at Western Washington University (and occasional WCC Extended Ed student), is a Pacific Northwest poet with over 80 published poems, mostly in literary journals and anthologies. (p. 26) <http://hope.journ.wvu.edu/tpilgrim>.

PETE RUBLE graduated from WCC in 2010. He now studies at WWU. (p. 9)

DONNA RUSHING remembers first receiving praise for a poem in 8th grade, by Miss Gordon. Since then, she continues to write poetry, and especially likes praise and prizes; for instance, scones. However, most of her time is spent teaching composition (and the occasional creative writing class), so she appreciates this challenge. (p. 24).

HARVEY SCHWARTZ: Philadelphia / College / Vietnam War Raging / Dental school / Safe draft number / Woodstock / Drop out / Joined Commune / Hitchhiked west – Bellingham / Taught school/ Tipi vision quest / Chiropractic school / Married Colleen / Coeur d'Alene/ Jerome and Devan / Back to Bellingham / Writes it all. (p. 18)

SALLY SHEEDY is the systems librarian at WCC, collects stuff, plays the fiddle and sings, contra dances, and is the mother of twins. (pp. 11, 34)

GUY SMITH is a communication scholar, baseball aficionado and nature lover. (p. 2)

SHEILA SONDIK moved to Bellingham from Berkeley in 2008. She is a printmaker and poet who also enjoys solving word puzzles in the National Puzzlers' League and bird watching. She has a particular fondness for kumquats, dark chocolate, and her husband's jokes. (p. 3)

<i>Such Love</i>	
Sally Sheedy	11
<i>Remoter?</i>	
Seren Fargo	12
<i>The Point</i>	
Patti Belle Braimes	13
<i>Unknown</i>	
Anna Harris	13
<i>How to Live: A Program of 12 Concurrent Steps</i>	
Andrew Shattuck McBride	14
<i>Charmed Quark</i>	
Linda Lambert	15
<i>Elements of a Relationship</i>	
Patricia Gentile	17
<i>*Skyping Mom's Death, an Elegy</i>	
Kate Miller	18
<i>Counterfeit</i>	
Harvey Schwartz	18
<i>Cherish Every Moment</i>	
Sarah Vanderpool	19
<i>I Still Cry</i>	
Ara Taylor.....	20
<i>Binding Together</i>	
Anita K. Boyle.....	22
<i>Windows</i>	
H.C.S. Williams	23
<i>*Where We Were</i>	
Donna Watson Rushing.....	24
<i>My Soul to Keep</i>	
Lynda Spaulding.....	25
<i>Remote Location</i>	
Julie Horst	26

<i>Plotting Romance</i>	
Timothy Pilgrim.....	26
<i>Picnic</i>	
LeeAnne Williams.....	27
<i>La Femme Mystérieuse</i>	
Tiffany St. Claire.....	28
<i>Thou Shalt</i>	
Jim Milstead	29
<i>Attachment</i>	
Linda Conroy.....	29
<i>The Graduation</i>	
Ann Merchant.....	30
<i>Love Hanging in the Balance</i>	
Sarah L. Hodge	30
<i>The Sheep</i>	
Robin Bailey	31
<i>Elements of Attraction</i>	
Marla Morrow	32
<i>*Asking Fashion Advice from My Son</i>	
Scott Blume.....	33
<i>Paper Cuts</i>	
Sally Sheedy	34
<i>Life's Narratives for a Lady</i>	
Tiffany St. Claire.....	35
Contributor Bios.....	36

PATRICIA GENTILE works evenings in the copy center in Cascade. She enjoys the challenge of using the words given to write poetry and had been doing so for a couple of years before actually entering the contest. Her other hobbies are gardening, knitting, tatting, and grandchildren. (p. 17)

JOHN HANSEN is known for his flair for floral arrangements, displayed at many campus events. He has a degree in display design from Spokane Falls Community College, and is on the custodial staff at WCC. (p. 3)

ANNA HARRIS is a Running Start senior, graduating this spring with an Associates degree. She says spending her last two years of high school at Whatcom has been wonderful. This year she has enjoyed working with poetry and writing, specifically in Donna Rushing's Creative Writing class. This is her second year in the Kumquat Challenge. (p. 13)

SARAH L. HODGE is a WCC alumni with a passion for creative writing, especially poetry. She took a poetry/fiction writing class while at WCC. Her inspiration for poetry comes from her own experiences and environments. She enjoys sharing her poems and have people connect to her poetry. (p. 30)

JULIE HORST, former instruction/reference librarian, left wonderful Whatcom CC for the crazy (and expensive) life of San Francisco and the thrill of running her own library. (p. 26)

KATY KAPPELE was the editor of the WCC student newspaper *Horizon* for two quarters, and is now the photo editor. She loves history, and considers herself a Libertarian. (p. 4)

MEYAPPAN KUMAR (aka Kumar) is an adjunct faculty member and teaches chemistry and economics. (p. 5)

LINDA LAMBERT, with her sixth submission to the Kumquat Challenge proves that she's up to the challenge, and confirms, she says, that her energy is best spent working at the library, not writing poetry. (p. 15)

ANDREW SHATTUCK McBRIDE has published poems in *Magnapoets*, *Caesura*, *The Bellingham Herald*, and *Clover*, *A Literary Rag*. His poem *'Desire (Padden Creek Winter)* was runner up in the 2011 *Clover, A Literary Rag* contest; his poem *Boulevard Park* won a merit award in the 2009 Sue C. Boynton Poetry Contest. (p. 14)

ANN MERCHANT was born in Oregon. Her parents died in tragic circumstances when she was a child. Her mother had been attending Edmonds Community College and planned to be an accountant. At 39, Ann is now the age at which her mother died. She hopes to complete college, as her mother was unable to do, and to go on to have a better future. (p. 30)

Contributors

ROBIN BAILEY, having taken a hiatus from her annual holiday-poetry-writing efforts, turned to the Kumquat Challenge to give her rhyming muscles a bit of a workout. When not working on rhymes, she spends her time reading recipes, the National Geographic, and the stars. This is her first entry into the Kumquat Challenge. (p. 31)

SCOTT BLUME is a WCC faculty member, providing ELS and Library instruction. (pp. 9, 33)

ANITA BOYLE is a poet and artist who makes a living as a graphic designer in Bellingham. Her off-time is spent working with the Whatcom Poetry Series: The Poet As Art and Egress Studio Press' poetry publications. The poet James Bertolino and she are celebrating the first year of their marriage. (p. 22)

PATTI BELL BRAIMES is a mother, wife, teacher, experience weaver, playful seeker, and musical tweaker-- striving to live lightly, yet deeply. (p. 13)

LINDA COMPTON-SMITH is a WCC Library employee and a kumquat poet at heart. (p. 8)

LINDA CONROY is a community education student and an observer of people who notes that: We are the same. We are different. We are ordinary and unique. (p. 29)

SUSAN CAMPBELL CROSS has lived in Bellingham for seven years. She has worked as a college lecturer, grocery store checker, and in a variety of accounting and administrative jobs. She enjoys traveling with her husband Henry, writing poetry, and working on her murder mystery novel. (p. 6)

UĞUR DOĞU is 24 and was born in Istanbul. He is here on a Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs scholarship (U.S. Dept. of State). His major is Tourism and Hospitality Management, which he also studied in Turkey. He likes writing, politics, history, cultures, being outside, and meeting new people. (p. 7)

SHARON EVANS is a volunteer tutor with Whatcom Literacy Council in Donna Collier's WCC ABE math classes. (p. 7)

SEREN FARGO, a former student of WCC, currently works for the Whatcom County Library System. She has been writing poetry, particularly Japanese forms, since 2008, and is founder/coordinator of the Bellingham Haiku Group. Her poems have won awards and been published in several countries. She lives outside Bellingham with her three cats. (p. 12)



Introduction

For the sixth consecutive year, current and former students, faculty, and staff of WCC have stepped up to the challenge of writing a poem which incorporates the 10 words the library supplies. The Kumquat Challenge originated as an homage to poetry because of National Poetry Month, and every April, we are pleased to discover new poets in our midst.

Library staff members were invited to suggest words for the challenge, and this year the marketing committee chose the final ten. They are:

**charm never wind element fold
remote curtain keep foster step**

Each year we have had a word beginning with K and it seems to always be the trickiest word to work into a poem. This year, the K word is *keep*, but it turns out that the word *curtain* is the most difficult to incorporate in natural fashion.

We received 42 poems. Our judges are Dr. Ron Leatherbarrow, Vice-President for Instruction; and art faculty member Rob Beishline.

The library marketing committee members — Linda Lambert, Sally Sheedy, Ara Taylor, and Heather Williams — have all played a part in planning and presenting the Kumquat Challenge.

We thank Hannah Lindberg and Modern Dance Club students for providing poetry in motion with their interpretive dances at the publication event.

We thank Rosemary Sterling and her staff at Whatcom's Copy Duplication Center for the production of this book.

Most of all, we thank the contributors, all of whom exhibited considerable creativity in their use of ten simple words.

Sally Sheedy

Snow

by Marla Tuski

You step into a windy world,
remote from familiar
where crystal foster-sisters
of silver charms
tumble down in curtains,
folding one over the other,
no two the same,
each icy element wondrous
enough to keep.
But sparkling moments
vanish to mist;
dazzling beauty
can never be kept.



Curtain

S Sheedy

Rejuvenation

by Guy Smith

Warm southerly winds gently caress the cherubic batter,
Comforting the softly swaying maple in the slowly dissolving
light –

Leather and the smell of resin wafting on the currents,
The charmed rookie furtively steps closer to the stage...

Confirming elements known only to Nature, Darkness,
A curtain of snow descends before the batter's eye –
Before which the weathered pitcher performs his magic,
The battery further conspiring with indecipherable signs...

Folding his frame before this fresh adversary, this foster child,
The pitcher keeps the dull, red-tinged ball well hid –
Leather and sweat on the gnarled fingers' tips,
Success as remote as a warm, sunny Spring day never to be
seen again...

The curtain rises –
The erratic ball dances,
The sun shines once more!

Life's Narratives for a Lady

by Tiffany St. Claire

Fold the curtain
To keep it clean and neat.

Never step on the crack
It might break her back.

Tie your hair up with a ribbon
And wear your charm bracelet.

A crisp, green leaf makes
Good presentation for mud pie

Never foster the idea of revealing
What's under your dress, you're a lady.

He's cute, but if he knew you thought that,
He would think he has it made with you

If he wants you, make him work for it,
Because if he doesn't he won't invest the time.

Let him have the remote control,
Because he likes to channel surf.

After "I do," keep the element of surprise,
You might be married but you're still a lady.



Fold

S Sheedy

Paper Cuts

by Sally Sheedy

It's dark by four thirty.
I draw the curtains and
Create a slight wind that
Blows around
Bits of paper cut asunder
For kirigami.
After the first step of folding
The paper as with origami,
I go on to cut out bits, iotas,
Even motes of paper.
Paper now floats like cherry blossoms
Fostering a sense of renewal,
Of the end of winter.
But I unfold a snowflake.
I know it's spring somewhere
Remote, beyond the equator.

They say one makes a sculpture
Of an object by removing the parts of the
Medium that don't look like the object.
Though I consider each cut,
— what I keep and what I cut —
My approach is nearly random.
As I seem to create confetti,
the paper falls where it will.
I don't take the time to form a plan.
I never do know how it will end up.
The element of surprise is the attraction,
so I tell myself. And I must believe
the mess is part of the charm.

Valor

by Sheila Sondik

The time
of peeping
around
curtains
has lost
its charm.
Never again
will I keep
myself hidden
in their folds.
As I step into
the elements,
the wind
begins to
beat me back,
but on a
remote treetop
I spot
something
dark and
feathered.
Hope begins
pounding
in my chest,
which before
had fostered
only fear.
"I'm coming!"
I yell,
and spread
my arms
like wings.



Never

S. Sheedy

The Event

by John Hansen

Some guys with charm
arrived at 4:20 in the afternoon
carrying Foster beer. Curtain time
was much later. The event was
held at a remote place near Neptune
Beach. The wind was picking up
and I'll never forget the heavy
rain. To keep up for the
evening we had to fold all of the
chairs and umbrellas and step
on the rocks to control
the elements.

Thapsus
by Katy Kappelé

Mournful Zephyrus howls in the forest of standards,
With its carpet of bodies, lying discarded
By souls, and roams over the steppes,
Down to where the bodies of elephants lie
In the mud stirred up by their blood in the sand,
And the wind passes over Thapsus with a sigh,
As if to say he was sorry for the loss of so many
Good men. Pluto and Mars
Seem better friends than Mars and Victoria.

In this vast remoteness of death,
The steam from corpses rises like a
Curtain, so that it seems like the Styx
Has already been crossed, and trampled into mud
By thousands of hob-nailed caligae.
And he lies wondering what could keep him alive.

Home.
Had he ever really assigned that immense value
To this barren place?

He'd thought he led a charmed existence;
It's a common human foible to imagine that everyone
Wants us but Pluto. And he wonders if it's a crime
To lose, if it's wrong to give up his beliefs
As he lies dying. His horse stands above him,
Snorting, afraid, but unable to take a step
Away, as if tied. The wind, that enchanting element,
So cruel at times, so gentle now, folds him in,
Touches his scarred hands and arms, soothes
His fevered brow as his life leaks out of rents,
Into the sand.

His forehead furrows, his mother flicks
Into his mind, and tries to reach for his sword,
But his limbs are frozen; a noble suicide
Eludes him.

At least, he tells himself, he will not live

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 32)

She licks his dark skin, The kind to melt
Very slowly on the tongue,
Like Parisian chocolates,
Eiffel Towers and Swans

"Six," he says. "We have six."

We don't have any," she says,
"but we try."

He watches her dress,
The order of things.
The pale skin of her back.
The long zipper.

The brass door knob feels cold and absolute
in her hand,
Like a river stone underwater,
Like something bold and beautiful she could believe.

Asking Fashion Advice from My Son
by Scott Blume

3rd Place Winner!

I'd like more stylish jeans, but I'm out of my element.
He's remote, so I call. Shouldn't I foster the bond?
Maybe the Levi 511's?
No, Dad. You'll look like a hipster.
But "relaxed" never fit my skinny legs,
The folds drag like curtains with each step.
You'll look like you're smuggling kumquats.
Charmed. I wind up keeping them. In black.

Elements of Attraction

by Marla Morrow

Such as

The sudden sensuality of a woman,
A glimpse of her,
The length of her,
One button undone,
The sway of her breasts,
Her scent

Such as

The sudden sensuality of a man,
The dip of his hat,
The way he swallows wine,
The angle of his boot heel and the comfortable way
he devours her
as he passes

There is no pretense of remote lust,
No marital hesitation,
No vows to keep holy and pure

Such as

Never.

His step toward her,
The wind, Her skirt,
Her thigh, His mouth,
Her ivory invitation,
His greedy hands crazed upon her nakedness,
The indifferent curtain,
The Easy Fall

He wipes his mouth
and folds her splendor
into his memory to foster and fondle
and stroke later

"My wife is charmingly pregnant," he says.

(Continued on page 33)

(Continued from page 4)

Under Caesar's tyranny, to have died at Thapsus
A Republican, never to have conceded.
For years the senate had fostered its little
Band of men, cherished the fight,
Held close the idea of a return to the Rome
They loved, harboured the dream of
Cincinnatus and Horatius.

Thapsus. Not quite the end of the world,
But close. Once, this had been home,
But it had been transformed into the
Underworld, and he watched as the Furies
Rent the Republic as if in a funeral dirge,
An excess of passion like the ripping
Gusts of Vulturinus, the east wind that
Tore through the battle field
And blew Fortuna and Victoria to Caesar,
Where he seduced them like wives.

And gentle Zephyrus, who lent his name, Favonius,
To the vanquished officer in the sand,
Caresses the dying, as if to say goodbye,
Before flying over the sea to Rome,
Bearing the unbearable news.

The Kumquat Challenge

by Meyyappan Kumar

You will never miss a step with a weapon of charm
You can wind down all the wars and those awful killing arms
It is so elemental that love can only foster
Peace and lift the curtain that blinds us with anger
So keep the love alive, even if it feels remote
Extend those folding arms into a warm embracing hold.

On Tour

by Susan Campbell Cross

The play, meant to foster good relations
With the remote community,
Failed to deliver in so many ways.
The element of surprise,
Sadly lacking in the plot,
Came instead when a single misguided step
By a young actor
Brought down the curtain
Halfway through the Second Act.

Later wind rattled the doors
Of the old gymnasium,
Never designed for acoustic excellence.
The student actors soldiered on.
A few members of the audience saw charm
In the mistimed entrances,
And forgotten lines.
Others thought it was a comedy,
Until looks of criticism silenced
Their low laughter.

Outside a moose wandered in
From the delta,
And put his nose against the gym wall
In an effort to identify
The strange sounds emanating
From the three-man orchestra,
Whose loud incidental music
Failed to keep pace with the plot.

When the line of earnest actors
Folded in unison for the final bow,
The audience clapped politely.
Afterwards, at the meal,
A Tribal Elder gave a speech of thanks
And the villagers smiled shyly,
Quietly hoping that the experiment
Would not be repeated.

The Sheep

by Robin Bailey

There once was a charming young sheep
Who was kept with his fold in a keep.
He might step in a bog
When the wind came along
But would spring out again with a leap.

He resided remotely near G'louster
(He'd once had a sis but then lost her:
She was sold as a ewe—
But ended up stew—
For a gentleman (last name of Foster).

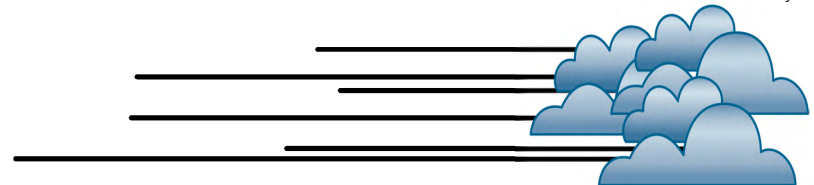
The elements of a great stew
Include both a ram and a ewe.
Of garlic and rice—
A bit will suffice.
Add carrots (no more than a few.)

Now the sheep thought his future uncertain,
So rather than spend the night flirtin'
He practiced his leap
On Broadway—asleep—
To make sure he would bring down the curtain!

But that sheep: he never lost hope.
Went searching his sis with a rope.
Found her in a pot
(...her ear's all he got...).
So went back to the castle to cope.

Wind

S. Sheedy



The Graduation

by Ann Merchant

The curtain steps aside
revealing the understanding held within
poetry rings forth from the audience
in musical symbols and mathematical equations
1,2,3
keep this breath fostering
never sever the link between the body and the
mind
charm the elements that fuse its growth
grow to become
gain to be wise
wisen to see
wind the sheet that binds the soul
And fold it close to the breast like a flag
The future is now far from remote.

Love Hanging in the Balance

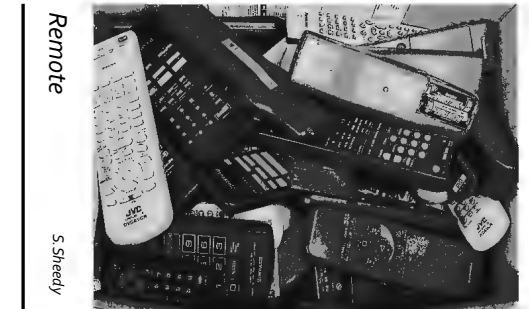
by Sarah L. Hodge

Your charm gets me every time.
Keep me aware of the wind that suddenly envelops me,
almost knocking me off my feet.
Step into the warmth of the sunshine.
With you I am out of my element.
As you fold me into your arms it is if we are in a remote place,
with no one else around.
Don't drop the curtain, because this isn't over.
Never foster anger for too long, or bitterness will remain.
There is so much to say, but maybe it is better not to speak.
Mysterious as the wind
Feeling but not always knowing.
Love hanging in the balance.

Step Out of Your Element

by Diana Swan

Never keep your charm
In the fold of a curtain.
Put down that remote!
Step into the wind,
The world is your element.
Foster it!



Charm of Freedom

by Uğur Doğu

I wish there was a curtain
I could open with a remote.
I wish life could have been a theatre stage
That would have shown a charming drama.

I wish I could create a damaging wind
That would blow away all the cruelty in the world.
I wish I could be one step forward
That I would fold all the guns to peace.

I wish we had only one element
A persistent love instead of money.
I wish I could foster a child called around "Charm of Freedom"
Keep existing forever, never to be collapsed.

Abandoned

by Linda Compton-Smith

I could never foster hard feelings toward you,
Despite abandoning me in that remote location, to face
the elements alone.
The fierce wind, a harsh reminder of how quickly you
blew into and out of my life.
The dense fog, a convenient curtain for you to disappear within.
If only I could fold it back, to find you waiting.
Now I must keep the memory of your charm
buried in this heart you so callously stepped on.

Bones

by Jessy Stewart

She walks on a wave of wind
And leaves charm in every step
But behind her perfect curtain
A remote secret's barely kept
Dying to fit a twisted mold
Eating calories she won't keep
She has no hands left to fold
A special brand of weak
Praises foster a porcelain prison
Drunk in a symphony of bones
An audacious madness has arisen
Sinking faster than a stone
Rare to see beyond a lipstick smile
She's still breathing, but has been dead awhile.

Thou Shalt

by Jim Milstead

Not foster parental abuse. If they dare, pull plug.
Bow down to Nosferatu. Never speak ill of the living dead.
Drape the curtain of decency over unclothed statuary.
Control your addiction to remote voyeurism.
Be bold. Fold your tentatives long before stealing away.
During the bath, search for hidden elemental messages in water.
Step cautiously while crossing the plain of eggshell romance.
Wind yourself carefully, but not too tight. Slow down. Do not pass wind.
Keep left, avoiding religious righteousness.
Charm yourself into believing there are only 10 commandments.

Attachment

by Linda Conroy

Knowing that charm is not his strong suit
I still hope to foster his indulgence,
to step into that place where he folds himself
as if behind a curtain,
grab some small thread and unravel it.

But that would tempt the very element of doubt,
the rite that keeps us in this place,
devised to keep the thrill afloat.
So, never far, we stay constant as the wind
and sometimes as remote.

La Femme Mystérieuse

by Tiffany St. Claire

She smiles only when she laughs,
Because it will keep them at distance.

Her mysterious charm draws them near out of curiosity,
But she remains holding her wall, her curtain up,
To keep them a step a way.

She smiles only when she laughs,
To foster and appease the social expectations;
To keep herself remote from crossing that threshold.

She weathers the social storm,
Meandering with silence and strength;
Bearing the wind of communication.
Never letting her guard down.

Each element to suffice what is expected,
The courtesy, kindness and respect;
She displays because it is nice and the contrary
Is rude in social situations.

Straight and precise she is,
Every word, every utterance,
And relationship she is in.
Like ironing her linens,
To fold on the creases.

She will only smile when she laughs.



Charm

S. Sheedy

On the Wing

by Pete Ruble

In a sense the innocence
Of past tense and its elements
Had kept his step behind the fold
Curtains of in-experience

But never to remain remote
The dreams of youth they foster
Seduction by the charms of wind
That wandering imposter.

Bonjour, Monsieur Gauguin

by Scott Blume

Where did you come from with so little charm
of the bourgeoisie. I see--you are not old
but tired of the cold, the Breton wind, the elements, the
need
to work for your keep. What's new?
I cannot ask you to step in. Adieu.

What are you? Empire's savage foster child
with eagle eyes and government billet
transiting remote ports, stinking of smoke,
bemused by barbarous tales
of fruit for the plucking, girls for the painting,
women on the beach beyond
the curtains of colonials.
You are not young, mining the folds,
and the gold of their bodies.

Did you find the ancient spirits
of the dead and did you learn
the language of the gods?
Where are you going?
Fading in the ocean myth,
lame and syphilitic, silent, on an isle,
in Polynesia, never to return.

Oh, Ultra-runner, Why Do You Do It?

by Sharon Evans

Step One... uncertain anticipation... yet certain purpose.

At instant of impact... sole to ground.

Step by Step... Nature's elements surprise...

Wind, a swaddling curtain around my burning quads.

Mist, a cool refreshing cloth on my ruddy cheeks.

Sunbeams, warm as a cedar sauna against my sweaty brow.

An eagle beckons, drawing my fatigued spirit to ride, adrift on splayed wingtips.

Feelings meld, inside to outside, outside to inside.

Step after Step... one foot in front of the other...

Embracing this simple, child-like charm.

Keeping peace deep within, mile after mile, hour after hour.

Banishing rising doubts, buried within deepest cells,

Never surrendering to thoughts of self-defeat.

Positive mantras echo: "I'm energized!" "I'm strong!"

Foster conquest from within; keep me on this moment's path.

Step after Step... how remote the finish line...

Powerful deep desires keep the unimaginable achievable.

Distance is relative; the finish momentous!

Adrenalin rush engulfs as the banner appears in view.

Family folds congratulatory arms around my exhaustion.

The award: my face aglow; my mind refreshed.

Lessons learned of internal qualities never imagined:

strength, stamina, focus, persistence, gratitude; willing resistance.

Step by Step...

Sole to ground

Sole to soul.

Ground to sole.

Picnic

by LeeAnne Williams

I pulled back the curtain to let the light in

Oh glorious rays of sunshine

With a skip in my step and the wind in my hair

I was determined to spend all day outside

My picnic basket was ready to go

My blanket was folded and clean

My foster dog, Ralph, was on his new leash

Barking at other dogs on the street

We made our way down to a quaint little park

With a charming garden and fountains to spare

But the park was so crowded with others like us

We soon decided not to stay there

We walked a little further keeping to a path

That led to a remote open field

I let Ralph off his leash and threw him a ball

While I unpacked my afternoon meal

Never, not once, did I see it coming

As usual I guess I should say

As I opened my mouth to take my first bite

A piece of hail hit me right in the face

Next thing I know we are both vainly attempting

To outrun this shrapnel from the sky

I trip and I fall and Ralph just takes off

As my picnic basket goes flying

Face down and cursing the elements of nature

I think what a fool am I

I said I wanted to spend all day outside

I guess next time I should specify.

Remote Location

by Julie Horst

I am at a remote location
The charm of the wind moves
The curtain of the open window
At rest in a hammock
I keep my breath steady
And take this element of relaxation
One step further
To bend but not fold
To foster continual good feelings
And carry them back to Washington
I never tire of the beach.



Plotting Romance

by Timothy Pilgrim

Fresh out of charm, it's best
to ambush love — use the element

of surprise to foster her affection.
Hide behind maroon curtains,

step out with gifts — fish gills, folded, tomato tequila, strawberry ice.

Or, text her a prize — dogsled trek
to remote hot springs, overnight camping,

with you, alone, chance to unwind.
Attach pictures of scorpions mating —

subtle proof males suffer, bleed, die.
Keep it pure — no games, no lies —

but never permit her to peer
deep into your molten red eyes.

Such Love

by Sally Sheedy

As Icarus threw caution to the solar wind
So I my better counsel do rescind

My sense of propriety is lost, sir.
You can't help but such love for you foster

You are very much in your element
I can't do otherwise than to assent

Though I am wooed with charisma and charm
I am sure I won't come to any harm

I have fallen in love with you so deep
My captured heart forever you shall keep

Into my life this dream made real has stepped
Powerful emotions make me verklempt

See how with brazen ardor uncontrolled
I reach for you as you my arms enfold

Are you ever not totally clever?
No, not at all, absolutely never

You're greater than the Wizard for certain
I'll ignore the man behind the curtain

And I'll take this chance, however remote
I have weighed my words and that's all she wrote.



Foster
S. Sheedy

Remoter?

by Seren Fargo

I wake late,
missing much of what the day has to foster

I mean offer.

I get dressed as quickly as I can,
but spend too much time folding

I mean fumbling

to open the curtains
to let in what's left of the sun's daily routine.

I decide to skip breakfast, and instead
I step outside with my journal and a lounge chair
into the warmth of the afternoon.

My wind charms

I mean chimes

catch a breeze, joining the chorus of birds
already filling the air.

I see the old cherry tree has blossomed again,
its fragrance keeping

I mean reaching

far beyond the tips
of its gnarled, moss-laden branches.

All my senses are teeming with spring,
and although the day has generously donated
all the right elements for writing,

I realize I never should have tried
to write this poem with a remoter

I mean hangover.

(Continued from page 24)

and he tells us that President Kennedy has been shot
killed one city away in Dallas.

Mrs. VanTine cries.

My classroom enemies, Mitch and Rob,
say to each other, "It was probably the Reds."
"You don't know that!" I shout,
startling myself.

At home, alone with their televisions,
all our mothers cry, gaze outside from time to time,
waiting for the children and then the fathers to come home.
Our President waves to the crowds, in his element,
charming them, and us,
then is shot again and again, on those television screens
while he grows more and more remote.
We third graders don't know yet
that we will never forget where we were on this day.

My Soul to Keep

by Lynda Spaulding

I step bent to the remote desert of possibility

The wind etching through my heart

Pushing, pushing my blood into translucent veins of hope.

The shroud envelopes me

Her snake charmed tentacles coil and wrap me with their sweet embrace

Never to let go, never to leave me.

She fosters my love

with her element of deadly recognition.

Where We Were
by Donna Rushing

Bruce E Shulkey Elementary,
Fort Worth, Texas, 1963.
Inside, we third-graders, having pledged
allegiance to the flag
and having tortured the high notes
during yet another repetition
of Stephen Foster's "Old Folks at Home"
in music class, now gaze outdoors,
where on this November morning
the sun shines, though a chill wind stirs.

Now it is Social Studies.
"Russia," says Mrs. VanTine,
"is behind the Iron Curtain."
My mind conjures a dark and endless curtain,
its creases and folds dangerous,
heavier than a million iron skilletts
What does the curtain hang on?
I wonder, and why does a whole country
need a curtain?

Some days we have "Duck and Cover" drills.
We line up quickly, boys and girls
in separate rows. "Keep the lines straight,"
says Mrs. VanTine, and "Keep in step!"
We march down the hall, and once in our places
kneel toward the walls in unison, as if in prayer
then fold into ourselves
gawky ducks in rows
our fingers laced behind our heads
rehearsing for the A-bomb.

Today there is no drill,
but Mr. Parnell's voice comes through the loud speaker
making me forget my next thought

1st Place Winner!

(Continued on page 25)

The Point
by Patti Braimes

Ahh, to Foster the Questions
Find the Elusive Element
Pull Back the Curtain
Step
And Feel Yourself Full.

(this is not just a remote possibility)

What's the Point In
Holding your Charm?
Folding your Heart?
Winding Yourself so Small?
Begging to Keep your Soul?

(to never have to live?)
.

Unknown
by Anna Harris

The roses must smell sweet as they bend
behind the smeared glass,
their dark hearts curtained by pale gauze and
tender frills;
a cricket chirps,
its own clean green charm
folded together in a remote,
wayward place unknown to the world,
its step so soft, its
breath so indiscernible
—a keeper of secrets—
it waits beneath the shadowing leaves
in the mist and wind,
fostering each note of its song with the scent
of the rose,
never thinking of its own wild freedom,
its sparkling element
unseen, unheard.

How to Live: A Program of 12 Concurrent Steps

by Andrew Shattuck McBride

for Jim M. and Judy T., friends and mentors

Over the decades, I've embraced or fought off despair at various times. When I realized finally that more than anything I needed a program of 12 concurrent steps I could use in learning how to live, Jim and Judy were there. Without telling me what to do or how to live, they are unintentional examples and simply show me.

Each concurrent step is a key element to success. I work on these continuously, and focus on practice and results.

Live fearlessly and unapologetically,
 but learn how and know when to say "I'm sorry."
Be loving and fierce, and charm friends and others.
Pay attention and be attentive.
Don't be remote or overly talkative.
Be mindful and engage intelligence for good.
Have a deep curiosity – one unending, like the wind.
Read widely, take classes, and attend seminars.
Be generous and know when to listen and offer hugs.
Foster hope and love for animals and children;
 engage loved ones and mentor friends.
Write furiously and expansively.
When rage is called for, channel it productively.
Keep active and keep on trying;
 don't fold under pressure and never give up.

When the curtain begins to fall, I will do what I imagine they will do: bow gracefully and exit with only words of gratitude and love on my lips.

Windows

by H.C.S. Williams

It's winter, night, and I make my way through town.
Each window I pass holds a certain charm,
a yellow glow and shadows of friends and laughter,
but I can never quite see inside to know what's there.
After passing several such squares of light, my steps
cease their snowy crunching; you've opened the
curtain inside your window and you're looking down
at me and smiling. I wave and our eyes meet, and
I rejoice at having finally made a connection.
We stand there for perhaps an hour, and although
we can't hear each other, we gesture and nod and
each of us knows what the other is trying to say.
Soon, too soon, you glance sharply behind you,
your face so pale against the curtain's folds,
and I know that you're being called away.
You turn to me again; you mouth "I'm sorry."
I nod in understanding and the curtain once more
hides your gentle face. It's so seldom that I find
an uncovered window, and I don't know if or when
it will happen again. Tired, I bend fearlessly
into the elements, for I know that someone is still
winding my clock. My heart fosters the hope that
one day I might find the remote and legendary
city—the place where all windows are uncovered
and where every door is open to the weary.
For now, I keep walking, my hope a crisp mirage
of scintillating lights against a sky of ice.

Binding Together

by Anita K. Boyle

a lyric pantoum

Be certain the folds of your paper heart are sharp.
Keep your eyes shut as we thread these pages together.
This book of dreams will foster the future.
Tighten every knot with the strands blowing loose in the wind.

Keep your eyes shut as we thread these pages together.
Cut each thread swiftly, without the remotest hesitation.
Tighten every knot with the strands blowing loose in the wind.
If you drop the bone folder, listen for quick step of the dog.

Cut each thread swiftly, without the remotest hesitation.
And remember. Never drink tea with an awl in your hand.
If you drop the bone folder, listen for quick step of the dog.
You'll own a charmed book full of flattened flowers.

I said, "Remember, never drink tea with an awl in your hand."
Always glue the cover with an element of intimacy.
You'll own a charmed book full of flattened flowers.
Surely, the curtains won't lower before we're through.

Always glue the cover with an element of intimacy.
This book of dreams will foster our future.
Surely, the curtains won't lower before we're through.
Be certain the folds of your paper heart are sharp.

1		
H		
3	4	
Li	Be	
11	12	
Na	Mg	
19	20	21
K	Ca	Sc

Element

S. Shedy

Charmed Quark

by Linda Lambert

Mornings, with other students,
we ate brötchen, slathered with Nutella.
Evenings, fostering adventure,
we tried steak tartar:
rye bread, raw meat, uncooked egg.
On Sundays, outdoors,
our home-stay family
served cheesecake made from quark.¹

*Take quark, take quark,
fold it in a cheesecake,
have a picnic in the park.*

Our high school science teacher,
circa 1960, proclaimed elements
the basic building
blocks of all matter.
He, and therefore we,
did not know about
the six sub particles²,
Murray Gell-Mann
would discover in 1961.

*Charmed quark, charmed quark,
new particles of matter,
physics out of the dark.*

Some scientists,

(Continued on page 16)

¹ Quark is a soft, fresh cheese common in Europe, and similar to cottage cheese, but made without rennet.

² Physicists have labeled the six sub-nuclear particles known as quarks as up, down, strange, charm, top, and bottom.

(Continued from page 15)

tiring of repeated additions
to the "particle zoo,"
called them mathematical fictions,
theoretical predictions.
G-Mann called them quorks.
That is, he applied
his playful, made-up name
until he stepped into *Finnegan's Wake*,
influenced by a literary wind of whimsy
and lifted a different appellation
from the parlance of James Joyce
demanding "three quarks for Master Mark!"

*Charmed quark, charmed quark,
Literature meets physics,
what an unexpected lark.*

Six years later, at SLAC,
the Stanford Linear Accelerator Lab,
three scientists, keeping
their focus on the protons and neutrons
they called "fuzzy balls,"
brought the curtain down
on the question of,
the existence of,
quarks.
High energy bombardments
revealed what they never expected:
tiny inseparable units--
Gell-Mann's quarks.

I, bombarded by the need
to find new meanings for
Kumquat Challenge words,
found charmed quark, the 9th

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 20)

Now, here in this room
what I feel for you
is a desire to keep you safe—desire
more potent than I've ever known.

And I cannot.

Just like you never could.

The tiger waits. The tiger springs.
With one swift slice, the tiger wins.

Always.

Yet you still lived

only half-devoured.

"Stay back," you whispered. "Don't come any closer,"
your dark eyes filled with terror and sadness.

And cowards that we were, we faded into
shadow, watchful but remote, while
your lungs slowly flooded.

You, who'd charmed millions, brought down
by a witless mob, despite the
gentle mercies you strove so hard to foster.

Now my heart is curtained in sorrow.
You sang your odes for me; now
I sing for you.

I Still Cry
by Ara Taylor

I wonder what happened
the night you died—whether
the stars burned brighter
during your last hour,
whether the breeze off the ocean
flowed inland on your current, whether
the last pure stream of light
folding deep into your irises
was any help at all,

and whether you knew
how beautiful you were—
kind death, at last, your lover,
your long black hair fanned out
upon the carpet,

and if you lifted your head, slightly,
at the very last moment, as if trying
to steal a kiss from what was
left of the elements,

and how absolutely still the world
became for a moment, before the
wind picked up off the coast of
Australia.

On boulevards in cities, large
crowds of mourners gathered, some
cupping makeshift votives, others
holding fragile flowers.
How had they heard? What did
any of us know?
You'd barely stepped away
from this blind world into another.

(Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 16)
of 16 listings for charm,
in the *Random House Unabridged*,
the only remotely possible spark
for my study of physics or of quark.

*Charmed quark, charmed quark,
catalyst for learning,
making physics not so stark.*

Elements of a Relationship
by Patricia Gentile

Elements of you wind their way
into the folds of my consciousness.
With every step you take toward me,
your charm increases my desire for you.
I see you for the wizard you are,
behind the great and billowing curtain.
I give you all I can to foster what we have
and keep you near,
praying silently to never be banished
to the remote island of your disfavor.

Skyping Mom's Death, an Elegy
by Kate Miller

We on the West Coast, you in Hospice thousands of miles away,
so remote, so remote. The charmed eye of the webcam lets us
seem to step through space, fostering the illusion of proximity.
Yet we know with certainty we can never fold you in our arms
again or keep the curtain from darkening your eyes. All the sacred
elements are here: the earth connecting us, the fire of our love,
your last wild breath — a final wind, our tears that keep on falling.

Counterfeit
by Harvey Schwartz

A counterfeit curtain hung, lifeless
Despite the ever-present wind

Below, sirens called
With hypnotic charm

Never again, people would say
While an element of hope, burned like the sun

Keep moving, bullhorns roared
Step followed step followed step

Followed step
But some jumped

Remote shadows
Fold the curtains like flags

Foster children of fate
September 11, 2001



Keep

Library of Congress

Cherish Every Moment
by Sarah Vanderpool

One night I went for a walk in my dreams
step.

the warm wind caressed my skin
step.

whispers in the dark hinted of secrets
step.

charmed by the solitude and peace
step.

my mind wandered as I explored the forest of curtains
step.

and I found that each fold was soft and familiar
step.

my wedding, the birth of my children, the sunrise on the lake
step.

the elements of my heart that I keep sacred
step.

but then I sensed that I was too remote there
stop.

although the forest continued it was life that created it
I had to go.

I needed to taste the lips of My Love
I needed to feel the hugs of my children
I needed to hear their laughter
I needed to smell their skin

I opened my eyes and the mist cleared.
I had never been so happy to awaken.

That pilgrimage fostered in me the desire to cherish every moment.