

POETRY CORNER

Fire Season 2022: To August, in the hottest year now on record

By Lisa E Baldwin
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As this brutal season begins
to come to its end,
begins to wind down to something kinder,
the scent of Autumn a hint in the morning air,
our eyes stay focused on the near horizon,
looking for signs warning us
this summer will not go
quietly into its goodnight.

What new heartache might you bring?
What more sacrifice will you demand?
Another hundred-thousand trees?
Salmon belly-up in a hot river,
muddied, reddened and fouled?
Perhaps the silencing of frogs,
or the growing absence of birdsong?
In truth, the penance should be ours,
as is the sin, the blame,
the crying shame.

Oh, August, will you exact a full reckoning
and without mercy
take the forests,
chum the waters,
choke the breath from the sky?
Oh, ash will fall on the butterfly's wings
and even song sparrows
won't sing.

Lisa E Baldwin, a fifth-generation native Oregonian, lives in the Lower Applegate Valley. Lisa taught English in Grants Pass for 30 years, retiring in 2015. Currently, as owner of N8tive Run Enterprises, she works as a poetry evangelist—writing and publishing poetry, organizing and teaching poetry workshops, spreading the good news of the poetry world, and encouraging others to write as an act of art. Lisa serves as secretary on the *Applegater* Board of Directors.

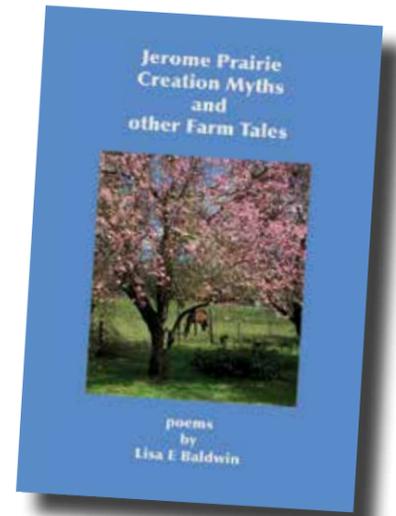
Have a submission for Poetry Corner, either by an Applegate resident or about the Applegate? Email it to *Applegater* poetry editor Paul Tipton at ptipton4u2c@gmail.com.

BOOK REVIEW

Jerome Prairie Creation Myths and other Farm Tales

Lisa E Baldwin
N8tive Run Press, 2023

BY CHRISTIN LORE WEBER



From "This Flight Cannot be Cancelled"

*Here, where I write, I have much:
An open view across the valley
To mountains rising in the west;
Space enough for solitude
But no yawning loneliness.
(p. 69)*

Between the covers of this book we find a collection of homegrown poems from our own word-wise Lisa Baldwin. In herself she has become one life and image with the Applegate and southern Oregon. Raised here, she lived all her life within miles of her childhood home. Her poetic voice resonates with the sounds of this land. The images and stories we discover in her poems rise up from this ground and fly through this sky. We need only to open and raise our eyes to see.

It seems to me that most reviews of poetry focus on the poets themselves—on their souls and what they see, hear, touch—on what life does to them, how the sensual world inhabits them and how efforts to transform life into words ends in self-transformation. A poem is the result of an alchemy of the poet's soul. So it is with Lisa Baldwin.

Lisa's poems reveal a daughter of earth, a watcher and worshipper of earth's mysteries, a theologian of earth's elements. A gardening priestess of earth's soil and waters, mountains, prairies, woods, and sky, she takes hawks, swallows, and bees as her acolytes. All of it is here in the poems. More than that is here. The people of the Applegate are here. We are here. The seasons of Jerome Prairie are here. Smoke and fog over the Siskiyou mountains—here they are in poems of summer and summer's end. The poet who is our neighbor gives all of this to us, a home in which to work, play, contemplate, and love.

From "High Desert Gospel"

*This place is mother to nothing
But time, borne out in the gnarled junipers,
Witnessed in the symbiosis
Of want and satisfaction as a single
frame of mind.
A density of memory is the lone excess;
Petroglyphs, trail ruts, range fire chars—
Recollections spanning ten-
thousand years—*

*Occupy the same present and leave
Still open space for a high desert miracle:
A singular sense of self,
Knowing the terrible smallness of one.
It's a slow climb to a stone
Lesson of the will. Low
Thunder gives it voice.
(p. 53)*

Maybe you will sit leaning against a tree at Cantrall Buckley Park, down by the river where you can hear the water tumbling over rocks, and read this book, slowly, letting Lisa bring your own experience of this intense land to your mind and heart. Nothing foreign resides in these pages. Likely you will see yourself walking through the pages. You will remember the year the garden flourished, another year when the blackberries by the stream dried hard and sour on the vine. Lisa sees it all and she makes words of it.

Jerome Prairie Creation Myths and other Farm Tales is available at Oregon Books, in Grants Pass, and at Rebel Heart, in Jacksonville, as well as from any other bookstore that will order a copy, using the ISBN (979-8-9866994-1-7). Also, it is possible to order directly from Lisa and receive a signed copy. Contact N8tive Run Press (that's Lisa herself, fulfilling a lifelong dream) at n8tive-run-enterprises.weeblysite.com.

Just one more of Lisa before I go:

"Home in the Still Hours"

*At times I feel the smallness of my life
Here on these few acres
Where I have everything I need:
Good dirt to plant in,
Space to be alone and my tribe nearby,
An open view to the mountains,
A peaceful sky above,
Deep, deep roots that feed me,
And ghosts I know and love.
(p. 23)*

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HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!

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Voices of the Applegate

You love music. You like to sing. Maybe you've never sung with a performing choir before, or perhaps you have, but not for a while.

Either way, we have a great opportunity for you to try your wings with no audition required!

This fall, beginning Tuesday, September 12, Voices of the Applegate, a community chorus, commences its 20th year. We rehearse for a 12-week session, culminating in concerts on December 8 and 10.

Our repertoire is diverse; we've sung 1500s madrigals, Broadway tunes, Disney, '60s to '90s, Bach, spirituals, calypso, African, jazz, pop, and everything in between. We meet weekly at the Ruch Library from 7-8:30 pm and continue to grow in numbers and skills under the direction of Shayne Flock. Because we are self-supporting, we each pay tuition of \$65 per season.

So throw yourself into the ring, be part of something bigger than yourself, and come make beautiful music with us!

Questions? Call David Franklin at 541-821-1129.