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Poetry

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Poetry

POETRY

JUSTICE GREGORY J. HOBBS, JR.

In Volume 3/Issue 2; Volume 5/Issue 2; Volume 7/Issue 2; Volume 9/Issue 2; Volume 11/Issue 2; Volume 13/Issue 1; Volume 14/Issue 2; Volume 15/Issue 2; and Volume 16/Issue 2, we published selections of poems by Justice Hobbs. In the tradition of updates to previous publications, we hope you enjoy this additional selection.

AS LONG AS GRASSES GROW

Snow blows in on a stiff north wind,
drifts pile up on collapsed rail fences

And the bones of strays not brought in
howl in the vacant spaces

The land was theirs before we got it

Cabin to cabin, tent to tent.

In the fallen valley of the cut ravine
along the bottom margins of strangle creek

Two-by-twos and four-by-fours

We're neighbors now
as long as grasses grow

Doing the Ghost Dance
cheek to cheek.

JEFFERSON'S BIBLE

The Constitution rewards every stage
of belief and disbelief. Himself,
the great Jefferson, lawyer, scholar,
statesman, president, read himself
to sleep at night from a sliced-up
new testament translated into strips
of Hebrew, Greek, French, English.

No, Lazarus! You cannot come back!
 You lepers! Remain lepers. Don't cast
 away your crutches, you cripples!
 Child of the Enlightenment, he reserved
 the right to create his own version of
 miraculous censorship: believe what
 you will and respect the same for others.

You see, he owned the entire mountain
 and mortgaged it thoroughly, inventing
 a machine for signing two originals at once,
 paying some of his debts by selling his
 books to Congress. Others he left with
 the promise of a miracle: some day
 you may be equal before the law.

DUST ON SNOW

Wind blows red across the desert and the canyon country into the Shining Mountains all the stripes the breath of the creator may send into a country thrown up from oceans, cut and carved by streams looking for an outlet, and into this great land brought forth and delivered from the lake in the center of the earth, south from Mexico, across sea-blown currents and island bridges, up a reed from the lake in the center of the earth, in every form of vessel floating, flying, riding, walking, the peoples and every form of creature emerge and migrate, up and out. Some of us were always here before the rest of us were always here.

Whatever possessory interest we might assert in them, the land, the air, the waters own us. If ever they do not, we will leave our ancestors childless. Fly you storm clouds, fly! Turtle swim! Tortoise crawl! Cry, you Raven, Cry

SOTOMAYOR FEED BACK 360

Justice Sotomayor likes best to speak with children,
 her father gone, she holds on to her mother, her grandmother,
 she carries everywhere the next good book to read

"You're not smart enough, You're not worthy enough, You're not
 pretty enough," they'll tell you. "You're sick, Your outfit's plain,
 You won't make it."

You will, You can! She says to them

"When you're down, recall a moment of joy!"
 "Don't listen to anyone who tells you you can't!"
 "Go to college, follow your passion, listen to your

Parents, education is the greatest gift.”
Justice and the kids throw the doors
open to the Learning Center.

BICYCLE JUSTICE NO. 11SC536 WEBB V. BLACK HAWK

Black Hawk hosts retrofitted Colorado voters
a new class seeking fortune in keeping stagnant
economic development golden

Favor lion’s share of state gaming proceeds
accommodation of over-the-road coaches
remain open for twenty-four hours

Along Gregory Street gross proceeds
craps and roulette games casino gamers
added by Central City and Cripple Creek.

New investments increase maximum bets
Statewide historic preservation efforts housed
for violating Ordinance 2009-20

Adjusted hopeful prospectors
traveling from the Denver area
bicyclists pulled over and ticketed

Webb, Hermanson, and Jeronimus
ride the Peak-to-Peak Highway
including Gregory Street.
JUSTICE HOBBS delivered the opinion of the court.

REFLECTING A JUDICIAL PROCESS

Kindness and respect; opportunity to be heard;
actually being heard. Not being talked down to,
preempted or ignored.

Being firm and resolute when it’s time for decision;
clear in communicating the result; allowing each and
every person the benefit of his and her perspective,

Personality, inhibition, inability.
To draw out and celebrate divergence;
concentrate on convergence;

Make a difference.

To render whole and not divide unnecessarily;
to praise, sing, and celebrate each other's achievement,
to remember when we've been confused, misled, bamboozled,

Used. Through these reflections, rectify wrongs done to us
by doing unto others what love instructs—accord Due Process
and Equal Protection to all persons. Equally

For the universal is best located in the particular
and every determination, like a wave,
must have its crest and undertow.

IN RE RECALIBRATION

Recall the direction we are travelling
is not linear,

Never, exactly, has the world moved
as any individual thought it could
or should,

Spheres, hemispheres, ellipsis
eclipse one's ability to manage
or comprehend.

What we omit to say or do
strangely functions in tandem

With random progression, each
contributes the very next un-
predictable correction

The sudden squall refreshes,
and does not extinguish our thirsts.

WHIRLS AWAY

In haste we rush we know not what,
while all around us

particles that make us up
bind us together,

spleen to ear
we hear what we want to hear

while all the while cerebellum
and mi dig li ahh!

tugging and pulling together,
assembles and stores

while we here whirls away.

COLORADO FIRMAMENT

In the grotto of the starship columbine
sprinkled amongst the crags and crevices,

rooted in the Morgan formation
between Round Valley sandstone

and the Weber sandstone,
the two-layered Morgan blends

where ledges slide into the young
meandering free-flowing Yampa.

BLESSING OF THE RINGS

Toss a pebble in a pool,
random concentric circles migrate
from the source of all encompassing
From these beginnings these circles
have no endings, travelling through
space and time on a raft passing through
prehistoric sand dunes, hung with spider
webs, swallow nests, and Moki steps

Two seeds fall into a niche
and two ponderosa grow side by side,
who or when, why and how, are paired
in the where of the CanyonLands.
Heart and source, soul and reason,
love ripples.

SPLIT MOUNTAIN TURNAROUND

Settle in for comfort,
settle in for speed

Grandview grandeur granaries
run along the guy line ties

Run along the foible tracks
settle in the slopes and slips

Gooseneck bend diagonals
honey almond slow.

AND THEN . . . THERE'S EVENING

when the sinews
of the working river
begin to glow . . .
soothing the muscles
of the gritty row women—
out of the shadows settling into
cottonwood groves,
bowstring on bowstring,
from some cavern recess high above—
the sauce of a cradled violin
licks fire . . . into every pore
of every creature
canyon rim to canyon rim

, , , , , , ,

ATTRACTION

The place you are attracts to you
even as you move to another place

Anatomy of your makeover,
lids of your eye shadows.

You shed scales weighed in the balance
of the evidence you've left behind

When the whales climb back
into the ocean. You will hear them

Sounding on shelf rock
along the Jones Hole trail.

THE SWERVE

We read *The Swerve* for our book group before going on the Yampa River raft trip—about the finding in a German monastery of a copy of Lucretius' poem *On The Nature of Things*. Lucretius postulates before Christ that all existence on earth is made of atoms that assemble and then on death disperse. The earth in flux takes and uses them for reassembly. The soul and the body are inseparable in life and at death become dispersed atoms. For Lucretius, there is no afterlife for the soul when our eyelids finally close and we become shadows of ourselves.

Along the Jones Hole Trail along the Yampa in Dinosaur National Park, on top of rocks these calcified, fossilized life forms exist. Here the atoms remained intact long enough to retain their near perfect resemblance to the life forms they were. Explain memory! Every place we've been must attract and incorporate some of our atoms—as likewise we incorporate some of the atoms of the creatures of the eons of the oceans coming and going captured in the layers of the red rock canyon country.

No other place so dramatically exposes the makeup and proof of the nature of things and explains why we are so attracted by this country inhabited by the picture makers who walked the Jones Hole Trail from and to the Yampa River before us.

TELL IT TRUE AND EDIBLE

Cheetah's fast, but can't climb trees,
 Leopard hangs his kill aloft
 Hyenas hear the warthog's squeal
 Chase the leopard off;

Lioness will crouch and still,
 Impala cross in fleet review
 Male lion will supervise
 Her choice of his next meal;

Rhino marks his boundaries
 In piles of dung and urine spray,
 Elephant will knock down trees
 For tasty strip beneath the bark;

Dwarf Mongoose will dwell within
 Shattered branches cast aside,
 Wild Dogs rejoice in ganging up
 Hippos move in pools of eyes;

Cape Buffalo wears a judge's wig
 Vervet Monkey face of regal blue
 Water Buck a target for a rear
 Jackal takes advantage.

NEWS FROM CAPE TOWN

Free Nelson Mandela!

May his spirit roam, so may freedom ferry
across all boundaries within our cells;

A version of the rule of law jailed him
for eighteen years on Robben Island,
breaking limestone quarry rocks;

One by one he broke them—his indentured
Masters, the silent tongues of Witnesses,
Fear of being jailed;
The more they jailed, the more they formed
a company of courtyard freedmen, sons
of the mothers of orphaned liberty;

He writes and buries the pages of what makes
right in a corner of that mighty courtyard,
the Air We Breathe hidden behind photos of

Family, Service, and Honesty.

AN OATH AS GOOD AS FRY BREAD

When you take the attorney's oath of office
you swear to yourself and to the court
you will step outside of yourself to walk
in the shoes, the boots, the slippers,
the moccasins, the loafers, the high heels,
the tennis shoes, the ice skates of some
one else's no longer comfortable fit.

You can feel the pinch of their desperation,
bad deal, loss, victimization, crash or ambit of
their fondest wish to leave something of their
own to the future's very next ancestors.

This oath of office allows you to cross tribal
boundaries within the jurisdiction of your mind
and heart's ability to feel and listen well, reason
prudentially, give wise counsel freely to another
tying the constraints of the law to its ever-creative
possibility. In this, you stir the leaven of your
own legacy into good and edible fry bread.

TRIFOCALS

Every day to see
I must put my glasses on

To reconnect my blindness
to all worth seeing

For when the night will come
and takes my sight away

I'll be ready for the visitors
who surely will be calling

"Greg" (I hear my name)
as when the day they name me

And some will simply beam
and hold me close to them.

(thank you all of you!)
December 15, 1944

MOTHER TO DAUGHTER

Once again, dear daughter of my slopes and
Drifts, hid in bundled coverlet, sleep on!
I will carry you. I will sing to you.
You are but a bud, and I, your vessel,
Will bear you through the howling storm, whereby
Your cradle rocks. I will walk and talk with
You of seas that come and go, building beds
You kick and leap within, to free yourself.

Haste not your appearance! Though many wait
For you to show your tiny fingers and
Gurgling voices, they but toddlers themselves
Must try out their shaky limbs, falling hard
And crying out their overconfidence,
Reach for your nimble grip, and stand again
In the elegance of your castle buttes
Buzz, glimmer, croak in wetland serenade.

O, dear daughter, be not discomforted!
They can attempt to possess your beauty
Beyond measure, without sufficient ends
And looking glasses, frenzy, berserk, de-

Hydrate marvels they have engineered in
 Fact, conveyance, deed, statute, law, decree,
 Cannot substitute for the Natural Stream
 Of your loving boundless intimacy.

(In celebration of the 40th year
 of Colorado's instream flow law)

ALL PERSONS ARE EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW.

All are endowed with inalienable rights. Then, why, under the rule of law, has slavery and servitude been so persistently endemic human history?

Why, in Colorado, constituted February of 1861 at the outset of a civil war abolishing slavery (the 13th Amendment) and instituting due process and equal protection (the 14th Amendment)

Have only 234 of 3,246 members of Colorado's legislature been women (7 percent)?

And only 6 women among the entire membership of the Colorado Supreme Court?

Surely, not because women haven't carried — at least — an equal burden of the workload of settling into this great land, while enduring the grief of unequal treatment

Surely, not because they haven't put their muscle minds and amplitude hearts into building and serving communities, from Julesburg and Springfield to Craig and Cortez, farm and ranch, church and hospital, village and metropolis, shop keeping and schooling

Homeland of the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute,
 San Luis Valley Hispanic pioneers, and all we fellow immigrants who
 have followed up and up into the headwaters of Colorado, Mother of Rivers

Our dear Colorado, the first of all states to recognize a woman's right to vote (Wyoming Territory, to your wildest credit, the earlier initiator of this most basic regenerative civil right)

The right to vote, maturing, re-maturing, so to pair equality and opportunity, statute by statute, case by case, by stint of good ideas sharing risks

Assemble you women of the Colorado General Assembly!
 Attuned to Colorado's work of reassembling herself!

To resemble the Colorado our children, girls and boys, women and men
will cherish.

IF ONLY

If only we had clear days full of sunshine
and no storms impeding the way we like to get
from here to there,

we'd have no water in this glass
we'd have no food upon this plate.

If only we had stormy days and no sunshine,
we'd have plenty of water in these glasses
but no food upon these plates.

We'd have nothing but really bad attitudes
and a lot of bills not worth paying for.

To get from there to here, plants need a
combination of wet, heat, and light
in goodly proportion

And so do we!

A really good bill, a really good decision,
is one we agree upon with difficulty.

So let's dig in and enjoy this meal.

MARRY INTEGRITY

Vow you marry, learn your part
Completes the whole you already
Are, yet entire unto
Yourself, unsatisfied, you burn,
Lacking another's complete;

What you long to be without —
Your loneliness — that for all you
See and hear, earth, ocean, sky,
Fascinating possibility
May not be indifferent

Vow you marry risk of loss,
For when your circle encircles

Another, you become a
Relation best comprehending
Integrity, say "Yes!"

To love, your brokens mended,
Consent to say yes, your circles
Enclosing, to live return
For a lifework of standing firm
In awe of aging;

The old, the new, future, past,
Slow to anger, sharing repast,
Enjoin the law, heal, forgive,
Relax, to breathe in wisdom's simple
Undying spirit

May creation infuse you,
In your art, lack craftiness,
Your word, not vain, deceitful,
Water and work every ending,
Rejoice and receive.

PLENTY ENOUGH!

I can be the fire breather
or bring a gentle rain,
I can be the canyon ripper
or swell a honey dew;

I can pat the red dirt down
or chant hosanna to the light,
I can gurgle from your tap
or cut your home in half.

I can carry you along,
ripple up a sundown sky,
I can cleave a cloud in two,
splinter forest sentinels;

I can break and wreck and heave,
sever channels tried and true,
I can rearrange communities
you can help put back together.

IT'S THAT CLACK CLACK CLACK AT THE WINDOW.

The older I get the longer I work the more I see Saturday

is the lord's day.

The lord's day is the day words wake up their meaning
from last week's you do nothing but push them out.

Let them loose and come into Saturday.

They start reassembling themselves
off the street out of the work place

scrabble and peep at the feeder.

DAN LUECKE

You, the scientist, has helped us see,
much better, many a watershed

From the Truckee to the Rio Grande,
Missouri/Mississippi to the Sacramento Delta

You have helped us interact with those who,
working with each other, are re-discovering

The connectivity of people and streams,
restoring habitats of understanding

Modeled on risk, uncertainty, the gist of
opportunity, to give and gain incrementally

Readying ourselves as best we can for
the very next decision we must make.

EVERYBODY NEEDS A LULLABY

You may be thinking you're too old
to have me sing my song for you

You'll be nodding off,
like you used to,

You and Paddington Bear.

Please don't worry I'll be there,
everybody needs a lullaby.

How you loved that bear!

You and he went everywhere,

Silly old hat and silly old boots
then he went away.

Your four children came in turn,
you sing your song for each of them

Please don't worry I'll be there,
everybody needs a lullaby.

You give your third child up to sleep,
when he went away

He sang his song for you

Please don't worry I'll be there,
everybody needs a lullaby.

SAND CREEK MASSACRE

Those who came before us say:
"Nothing Lives Long but the Mountains and the Ground"
Their testimony lives on.
What happened here must be remembered.

150 years later we fly the flags of those
who peacefully assembled here.

Fremont's 1845 map clearly shows
the land of the Arapaho and Cheyenne,

from plains to mountains,
North Platte to Arkansas.

President Abraham Lincoln appointed John Evans
of Illinois Colorado's Territorial Governor.

His duties included protecting the Native Peoples
of Colorado. He did not.

He and Colonel John Chivington share responsibility
for the Sand Creek Massacre.

They came to Territorial Denver, 1864, seeking peace.
To his dying day Evans refused to admit his culpability.

This ground speaks the truth.
A slaughter not a battle

The facts cry out.

Conscience and courage were also at work that day, some of
the soldiers refused to aim at anyone but the perpetrators.

Soule, Cramer, their words are wrapped and roped to the annals of justice
those who died that day dare to live on, Left Hand, White Antelope,

Many more, their descendants,
to heal and be heard.

Assemble and see for yourself
how humble a site gathers us together

To remember and to speak
how the young people will lead us forth,

Generation on generation, sages grow
and the roads we take take us back to Sand Creek.

Sacred ground in shadow and in light.

INTERDEPENDENCE DAYS

The Columbine

our flags salute
colorful communities

loved by peoples who came before
going on foot

to see, preserve, and persevere
public places

to stride, and gain within
the close up small

the great
hands of a mother

creating

pink and gold puppies

through private windows,
free wild nurtured

no monopoly but precious grandmother
grandfather wizard time

with the Alleluia chorus.

THE VERY NEXT BEND

River, big and wide,
narrow and challenging,

Never fully discloses
its next meandering.

Brings us together
in the chambers

Of our hearts,
sends us on our ways

Worthier
of each other.

THREE FOR WILDERNESS!

In celebration of the 50th Anniversary
of the Wilderness Act

1. Think ahead whereat you go!

Pack your pack, your saddle bags,
your camera, craft, your fishing pole,
your sleeping bag, your pocket knife,
flashlight, poncho, wooly cap

Whichever map will get you back!

To canyon, forest, peak, and stream,
quiet eye of deep down things,
juice and joy of streaming light
within, along, above, below

What's very good that needs you not!

Paws and claws, gills and wings,
trunk and branch, flower stems,
mother dew and father cool,
beauty's changing discipline
In the rhythm you're returning to!

Ever fresh and ever new,
re-creation's symmetries,
pour off tarns and pocket cirques,
travois tracks and medicine wheels

The smallest thing the hardest to do!

Leave 'em alone, just let it be
a column of moonlight,
marmot snouts,
wetland seeps.

2. I like a crowded city

It makes me park my oversized truck
and hop a loaner bike
or, maybe, walk
to the farmer's market,
the neighborhood theatre,
the ice cream store

It makes me vote for open space,
sewer bonds, riverine paths,
people who start to hesitate
at more is better,
whatever it takes
away

It makes me want to get way up
the Maroon, Never Summer, Zirkel, Powderhorn,
Rawah, Lost Creek, Eagle Nest, Neota
Sarvis Creek, West Elk, La Garita
Flat Top, Weminuche, Lizard Head,
Holy Cross, Spanish Peaks!

3. Love the wilderness ethic!

The place that needs us least

is the place we want to go

So let's go lightly on the land
and leave the creatures be!
On-trail, in sure and steady single-file,
in dusty sturdy muddy rock-hop boots,

Untouched the wetland vistas,
on-leash our canine friends,

No marred-up tundra, desert soils,
leave behind no stinking waste,

We pack it in, we pack it out,
we leave no trace but eagerness!

PRESENTATION

Raspberry arugula with nectarines,
goat cheese & toasted almonds,
honey jalapeno vinaigrette
all stays lifted,

You may love the one
you choose and who
chooses you.

In the morning of the blood moon,
simply say injustice crumbles
quite nicely won't do.

Deprived, despised, vilified, exiled,
our own aunts, uncles, cousins,
dear friends, praise be!
who led the way.

INTO THE CANOPY

A gathering
within Colorado's canopy
sharing elevations
opening doors
helping each other
trading hats
bringing on the new.

Hoping they too

join good company
celebrating
when the stakes are high
when gold is in the trees
when the table is laden
when the way is steep.

Shelter's all around
when you wear your heart openly
vistas are so very near
friends go far
boundless devotion
make-believe challenges
written into law.

The rule of love
the turn of Nature's day
Creature fire.

(for my law clerks, thank you!)

Greg Hobbs 10/11/2014

