

Lynn M. Hansen

Gifts of Loss

They warned me it would be gone.
It would take fourteen days
for my hair to fall into my food,
gather in clumps at my feet
in the shower, form mats
in my brush or comb by the fistful.

As if on schedule, long grey strands
loosened from their follicles
then drifted to the floor
making it necessary to clip
the remainder, before a patchwork
pate became unbearable.

Friends came, held hands
in ceremony to honor loss.
Mani burned white sage, offered
Yaqui prayers, sang Lakota blessing.
Melinda buzz-cut the remaining strands.
Lillian helped harvest my locks
for moments of sharing –

strands draped from garden fence posts,
at the wildlife refuge bundles dangled
on barren willow twigs and cottonwood
branches swollen with buds, wisps
of hair fluttered on naked cattail stalks –

my gifts to the birds for their mothering.



Coso Petroglyphs

In Renegade Canyon,
wall images seem simple,
pounded through patina of basalt.
Grooves hammered
by shamans into rock fabric
weathered by the elements –
graven.

Stick figures with spherical heads
wearing ceremonial costumes,
geometric patterns,
elaborate medicine bags,
antelope, scorpion, snake
and desert bighorn sheep
emerge and disappear
with slant of light
as if carved in black velvet.
Each design embodies mystery –
vision quest revelation,
tribal boundary marker,
hunting magic.

But in this desert stillness
I hear a thrumming,
rock strike on rock
a working rhythm,
an absolute focus
of ancient artists
that ricochets along
the canyon gallery,
feel shivers of reverence
as I walk back
in time,
listening.

Lynn M. Hansen is a retired community college professor of marine biology. A member of the Ina Coolbrith Circle, Orinda, CA, and National League of American Pen Women, she has been published in *More Than Soil, More Than Sky: The Modesto Poets*, *Quercus Review*, *Rattlesnake Review*, *Stanislaus Connections*, *hardpan*, *Modesto Poets' Corner*, *The Song of the San*

Joaquin and has two nominations for a Pushcart Prize. In 2013 a collection of her poems was published by Quercus Review Press entitled *Flicker, Poems by Lynn M. Hansen*.