

LYNN HANSEN

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.

Duster

There is no warning rumble of thunder
or odor of ozone in the air
but you see it coming,
run for shelter.

The air, blustery from its own rush,
descends into the valley
from distant fallow wheat fields,
a billowing cloud,
like a wall of India Ink,
sucks up topsoil
and gathers it into a wild rolling
wave of suspended fine particles
that finger their way into every window
or crack in the door
until breathing becomes
difficult – grandpa called it a duster.

Though it may be four in the afternoon
darkness overcomes the day,
dusk to dawn lights flicker on,
chickens collect on their roosts.
In its fullness, wind whips tree limbs
like tetherballs until they snap,
lie across power lines that snarl
their protest, sending sparks
into the dirty air, shorting circuits.
At full force, the storm lasts for
an hour, sometimes two, then
leaves its dirty blanket –
a calling card
at the trailing edge
of chaos.

Sea Lanterns

The red hull of the *Incantata* lunges
over waves in the warm equatorial darkness,
her three masts of sails full of bluster and breeze
leaving no exhaust to stifle our breath.
We are anything but unlucky
as we plunge up and down
in rhythm with the sea, cruising
between *Isla Santiago* and *Isla Genovesa*,
Galapagos Islands archipelago.

To add to the balmy evening magic
each wave spills light
as it folds back into its watery bed,
billions of tiny twinkles like luminous confetti,
phosphorescence of bioluminescent plankton –
microscopic drifters at the bottom
of the aquatic food chain.

Vacating the galley, sipping
our after-dinner *café con leche*
we perch precariously on folding deck chairs
and marvel at the cascade of sparkles
falling along the watery furrow
as the vessel's bow plows its agitation,
each of us trying to reconcile
how something so humble
could illuminate the sea.

Lynn M. Hansen is a retired community college professor of marine biology. She volunteers in elementary schools presenting science lessons for children in grades K-6. A member of the Ina Coolbrith Circle, Orinda, CA, Poets of the San Joaquin Chapter of California Federation of Chaparral Poets 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* and has two nominations for a Pushcart Prize. She has self published two chapbooks: *Loose Energy*, *Poems About People*, and *Stones In the Road* and a collection of poems published by *Quercus Review Press* entitled *Flicker, Poems by Lynn M. Hansen*.