

Staff Favorite, Writing Division

Full Circle by Teresa McGoffin

Aug 25th

Today is the last day of summer. The temperature is balmy even now at 10 pm. According to the trusty gauge in the kitchen window, it is 68 degrees on the deck and 78 inside. The night air is slack, there is no wind, not even a hint of breeze to move the leaves on the apple trees. The darkness sets in early, around 8:30 pm. I notice the change tonight is so much earlier than a week ago. The nightfall slips evenly, slowly past the guards of day, creating a joyous transition of light and shadow against the mountains silhouetted in the backdrop. The stars begin to pop, emerging out of darkness to reveal their dependable positions – the ubiquitous Big Dipper in the north sky, Jupiter shining bright as the focus in the south. The ribbon of the Milky Way becomes more distinct as the evening advances. I feel small in comparison with the grandeur surrounding me; the quotidian event of twilight is so much greater than one pedestrian in the universe. The overwhelming beauty of the night entices me to dance and twirl like a schoolgirl, the deck my dance floor, the moon my partner. I am stirred by mixed emotion, ambivalence. This moment is surreal, impossibly perfect. A part of me is sad that summer is waning, the hippie chick who longs for the ocean and sand beneath bare feet. Yet this instant is the climax of a mountain season, an occurrence to be savored. Imprint the mood in the photography of my memory, to be brought out later to melt the coldness of my heart.

Oct 31st

The vertical pitch of the trail is immediately felt in my calves. The rocky shale provides a natural stair step up the ridge but loose rocks require my attention to be fixed on the ascent. The streaks of quartz are arrows urging me to continue up, up. Heart pumping, breathing strong to get oxygen to the symphony of leg muscles carrying me, I am transfixed on the journey. The town quickly falls away and at the first vantage point, I pause for a minute, amazed at the contrast. A couple deep breaths of clear air and I am rejuvenated, ready to go on. The steady beat of a rock song from my iPod sets the pace, urging me upward through the steepest section. Reaching the flagpole, I notice someone has replaced the tattered shreds with a new prayer darchor, so I take a moment to launch my wishes of peace and love on the eternal zephyr. Not content until the summit is reached, I push on past the old mine shafts to the highest point. At last, the ultimate reward. Turning full circle, arms wide open, I relish the astounding views, the rolling hills to the west, the first snowfall on the peaks in the distance to the north, the last amber leaves of cottonwoods along the meandering Big Wood, the vehicles moving along highway 75 like matchbox cars in a child's playroom, the patchwork of hayfields and housing developments. A sensation of wonder and contentment pervades and a spontaneous prayer of thankfulness escapes my lips.

Feb 28th

I wake at the regular time and slowly become aware of the warmth of the down comforter protecting from head to toe. Before my eyes are even open, I hear the snow falling. It is actually the absence of sound, the hush of nature, the sense of time standing still. I didn't

notice the rumbling of the snowplow at 4 am, maybe I slept through it? or maybe the fresh flakes began only a few hours ago. The thought of icing on top of groomed corduroy moves me to poke a toe out to test the temperature beyond the cocoon. Yes, frosty enough to roll over and languish in horizontal bliss for a few more minutes. Pulling a microfleece robe around my shivering frame, I step into woolly slippers and quickly head for the coffeepot. Walking past the sliding glass door, I notice the soft snowflakes floating down to join the couple inches of new frosting covering the deck. A delightful sensation warms me from the inside out, anticipation, longing for a certain satisfaction like longing for a distant lover. The clothing and gear are standing by, ready for deployment. An hour later, I'm on top of the world, or at least, on top of my world. There are only a few locals and ski team kids on the hill this early. A quick check of the website before I left the house, cemented my choice of first run, Limelight was groomed last night, top to bottom. Rapidly buckle down and I'm off, hoping to make first cuts in the fresh. I can't curtail a wide grin, gliding effortlessly through the fluff. There is no one else in sight and rays of sunshine pierce through the clouds.

Apr 17th

Reluctantly, I pack my shorts and sandals and look for a plastic grocery bag in the condo for the swim suit still wet from my last swim in the Sea of Cortez. The window coverings are swaying with the warm breeze and colorful birds are finding breakfast in the flowers and shrubs. I decide to keep a sweater out for the airplane trip home. Springtime in the valley comprises the gamut of weather conditions and temperatures so better to be prepared. The in-flight viewing includes glimpses of the Grand Canyon and western terrain so astounding, I find my jaw dropping involuntarily. Arriving at Friedman, the familiar hillsides and laid back aura of Hailey fill me with the comfortable feeling of home. I am delighted by the warmth of afternoon and toss the sweater in the backseat of my awaiting car. Passing the bike path on the way to the house, I feel a buzz in my core as the realization hits "there's no snow! (thank you BCRD). Throwing my suitcase aside, I scratch the cat's ears briefly and don biking attire. A quick pump of the tires and in record time I'm pedaling north to Boxcar Bend. As I pass neighbors and compadres, everyone smiles broadly and waves. We share a mutual elation for this moment and the promise of summer to come.