

ORION
AN ORION READER

Wonder
and Other
Survival Skills

A Selection of Essays from Orion Magazine

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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Introduction

REMEMBERING WONDER

WHEN YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES and remember the last time you felt a pure sense of wonder, what was the spark? Where were you? What were you doing? Was the spark as simple as the rain-soaked smell after a spring downpour? As fraught with love and worry as the feel of a small hand grasped in yours? Each of these moments asks us to share in the life-affirming joy of wonder. Each of the writers in *Wonder and Other Survival Skills* issues a call for the restoration and upkeep of wonder in our lives.

Several writers contemplate quotidian delights of parenthood and link these moments to greater understanding of the ecological systems that sustain all generations. For Brian Doyle, Michael P. Branch, Susanne Antonetta, and Chris Dombrowski, children are the guardians of wonder. Children slow our pace enough to make us more watchful in the natural world and more introspective regarding our own human natures. These writers convey that we cultivate wonder when we recapture the sensibilities of childhood, when sensory appreciation of the natural world and unconditional love are effortless and immediate.

Other writers in the collection marvel at the unfurling pea vine, steadfast dawn, wild harvests, shifting seasons, and infinite night sky to experience what Anthony Doerr calls “the inexplicable, the implacable, the reflection of that something our minds cannot grasp.” These are the mysteries that we count on as adults, what Rick Bass calls the “wild green regularity,” the constant backdrop of our lives.

Throughout *Wonder and Other Survival Skills* runs the belief that stories aid us in our existence. We might need data and evidence to survive a future made less reliable or more ransacked by climate change, but we also must fill our bodies with enough mindful energy and altruistic love to be resourceful and hopeful. Our human stories, as Scott Russell Sanders and Georgiana Valoyce-Sanchez observe, connect us to landscape, to one another, and to sacred origins. Ann Zwinger, Aleria Jensen, and David Gessner remind us that landscape stories and all the plant and animal life they contain help us recognize “vast worlds beyond” our own and to situate ourselves as one storyteller among many.

Wonder, however, is often wrapped in the terrible knowledge of the demise of the earth's living systems. But we are caught knowing and loving anyway. "Why can't I let the wind just be the wind and not the stirrings of the apocalypse?" asks John Calderazzo. Later, he writes, "The universe breathes; everything sails along in its wind: rattling windows, rogue cells, bison, rainforest, bombs, eruptions of hatred and peace and goodwill. I need to remember this." The writers in this collection inspire us to learn our sense of wonder by heart and to defend this love with creativity, imagination, and memory. They affirm that re-enchantment is essential for survival, that waking up our sense of wonder is possible, that the spark is there if we look. "Once it happened standing shin deep in the Big Sur River," writes Teddy Macker, "cobble clattering at my feet."

TELLING THE HOLY

SCOTT RUSSELL SANDERS

1. According to Lee Gutkind, founder and editor of *Creative Nonfiction*, creative nonfiction writers create scenes for the reader in which they *show* the reader the image, rather than tell the reader about the image, and they link that image to the broader meaning of the essay. Take a look at the opening scene in “Telling the Holy.” What techniques does Sanders use to show rather than tell the reader about his boyhood memories of Ohio? How do these memories help to express the broader meaning of the essay?

2. In “Telling the Holy,” Sanders makes the case that science needs narrative. He writes, “I very much doubt that we can live by statements, and am certain we cannot live by statistics. Not even scientists can bear a steady diet of numbers. . . . The data themselves only make sense, only add up to knowledge, when they are embodied in narrative” (12). Do you agree or disagree with this idea?

3. Sanders weaves the thoughts of other writers, such as Joseph Campbell, Peter Matthiessen, Barry Lopez, Edwin Turner, and Bruce Chatwin, into the narrative structure of his essay. What are some examples of this technique, and how do they function in the essay? What are some of the advantages and challenges of using this technique?

4. Sanders frames his essay with the idea of “telling the holy.” What does this phrase mean to him? How does that meaning influence your own ideas about stories? What personal stories do you recall when Sanders asks, “By what stories shall we be known?”

Selected Books by Scott Russell Sanders

- *A Conservationist Manifesto* (2009)
- *Wilderness Plots: Tales About the Settlement of the American Land* (2007)
- *A Private History of Awe* (2006)
- *The Force of Spirit* (2001)
- *The Country of Language* (1999)

Selected Resources

- Scott Russell Sanders’s website: <http://www.scottrussellsanders.com/>
- Video from the *Georgia Review*’s 2013 Earth Day Festival of Scott Russell Sanders reading “Near and Distant Bears”: <http://garev.uga.edu/wordpress/index.php/2013/05/scott-russell-sanders-near-and-distant-bears/>
- *Grist* magazine’s Jonathan Hiskes interviewed Scott Russell Sanders in 2009: <http://grist.org/article/2009-04-23-scott-russell-sanders/>
- Terrain.org’s Simmons B. Buntin also interviewed Scott Russell Sanders in 2009: <http://www.terrain.org/interview/23/>
- Scott Russell Sanders and John Elder at a Lannan Literary event in 2002: <http://www.lannan.org/events/scott-russell-sanders-with-john-elder/>

LOST DOG CREEK

BRIAN DOYLE

1. In *Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer*, author Roy Peter Clark advises, “In short works, don’t waste a syllable.” In this short essay, what literary techniques does Doyle employ to give the essay coherence, style, and purpose, so that he doesn’t “waste a syllable?”
2. Take a look at the last paragraph of Doyle’s essay. What meaning do you think the author is trying to convey here? What childhood memories connect you with a particular landscape?
3. Doyle writes about naming as a kind of story that carries cultural meaning beyond the physical attributes of landscape features. Which of Doyle’s names for Lost Dog Creek are the most compelling for you? Think about some of the names of natural places you know well. Are these names formal or colloquial, or both? Where did these names originate?

Selected Books by Brian Doyle

- *Bin Laden’s Bald Spot & Other Stories* (2011)
- *Grace Notes* (2011)
- *Mink River* (2010)
- *The Grail: A Year Ambling & Shambling Through an Oregon Vineyard in Pursuit of the Best Pinot Noir Wine in the Whole Wild World* (2006)
- *The Wet Engine: Exploring the Mad Wild Miracle of the Heart* (2005)

Selected Resources

- Video of Brian Doyle presenting the Stanley P. Stone Distinguished Lecture at Boston University’s College of General Studies: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tt8BoN3t-d4>
- Brian Doyle is the editor of the *Portland Magazine*:
<http://www.up.edu/marketing/default.aspx?cid=11411&pid=3061>

WORLD AT DAWN

DIANE ACKERMAN

1. Ackerman creates a lyrical sense of gently unfolding action in her essay, as the reader first anticipates and then experiences the dawn. How does she accomplish this?

2. According to Ackerman, “dawn summons us to a world alive and death-defying” (28). How might this appreciation of the dawn “rekindle” our sense of wonder? Explore your own experiences of dawn. Do you agree or disagree, as Ackerman suggests, that we *need* to experience “the sun spilling over the horizon” (27)?

Selected Books by Diane Ackerman

- *One Hundred Names for Love: A Memoir* (2012)
- *Dawn Light: Dancing with Cranes and Other Ways to Start the Day* (2009)
- *The Zookeeper’s Wife: A War Story* (2008)
- *The Rarest of the Rare: Vanishing Animals, Timeless Worlds* (1997)
- *The Moon by Whale Light: And Other Adventures Among Bats, Penguins, Crocodilians, and Whales* (1992)
- *A Natural History of the Senses* (1991)

Selected Resources

- Diane Ackerman’s website: <http://www.dianeackerman.com/>
- Diane Ackerman for the *New York Times* Opinionator blog: <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/author/diane-ackerman/>
- Diane Rehm interviewed Diane Ackerman in 2011: <http://thedianerehmshow.org/shows/2011-04-13/diane-ackerman-one-hundred-names-love>
- Diane Ackerman at the Kentucky Women Writers Conference in 2010: <http://www.ovguide.com/video/diane-ackerman-at-the-kentucky-women-writers-conference-922ca39ce10036ba0e1185a280c1c1ff2>

LADDER TO THE PLEIADES

MICHAEL P. BRANCH

1. Several essays in this collection convey that sharing in the delightful curiosity of children can provide teachable moments for adults. In “Ladder to the Pleiades,” Branch writes “Snow or no snow, Hannah knows those stars are up there, so she does easily what is somehow difficult for many of us grown-ups: she looks for them” (31). In what ways does Branch demonstrate that children have much to teach adults about appreciating life’s mysteries? Why do you think adults find it more difficult than children to “go outside and look up” (30)?

2. Branch integrates the technical language of astronomy with quotations from his young daughter throughout the essay. What are some examples of this technique, and in what ways do they illuminate the broader aims of the essay?

Selected Books by Michael P. Branch

- *There’s No Home Like Place* (in progress)
- *Rants from the Hill* (in progress)
- *Reading the Roots: American Nature Writing before Walden* (2004)
- *The ISLE Reader: Ecocriticism, 1993–2003* (2003)
- *John Muir’s Last Journey: South to the Amazon and East to Africa* (2001)
- *The Height of Our Mountains: Nature Writing from Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah Valley* (1998)

Selected Resources

- Michael Branch’s website: <http://www.michaelbranchwriter.com/>
- Find more of Michael Branch’s writing here:
http://www.michaelbranchwriter.com/?page_id=69
- Find his essay “My Child’s First Garden” in *Companions in Wonder: Children and Adults Exploring Nature Together* (2012)
- Michael Branch’s column Rants from the Hill is published the first Monday of each month on The Range, a blog of *High Country News*: <http://www.hcn.org/blogs/range>

THE ART OF WANDERING

ANN ZWINGER

1. Zwinger writes, “It is no accident that naturalists are often writers: we’re all proselytizers for this best of all possible pastimes” (34). What are the characteristics of a naturalist, according to Zwinger? What connections can you make between writing and being a naturalist given this description?
2. In her essay, Zwinger writes that she “keeps phenologic lists of what goes on in the natural world and when” (41). What does “phenology” mean? How does Zwinger connect this individual act to the greater human desire for stability and permanence?
3. In “The Art of Wandering,” Zwinger’s personal narrative is punctuated by references to other naturalists and writers and a particular section on brain wave patterns. In what ways do you think these elements enhance or detract from the essay’s overall meaning?
4. Zwinger’s essay is a kind of organized wandering through her thought processes on being a naturalist. Do you find the structure and organization of this essay effective? Why or why not?

Selected Books by Ann Zwinger

- *Beyond the Aspen Grove* (2002)
- *Land Above the Trees: A Guide to American Alpine Tundra* (1996)
- *Downcanyon: A Naturalist Explores the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon* (1995)
- *Wind in the Rock: The Canyonlands of Southeastern Utah* (1986)
- *Run, River, Run: A Naturalist’s Journey Down One of the Great Rivers of the West* (1984)

Selected Resources

- “Writing Natural History: An Interview with Ann Zwinger” in *Writing Environments* (2005)
- Interview with *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*’s Cassie Kircher in 1993: <http://isle.oxfordjournals.org/content/1/2/123.full.pdf>
- Peter Wild’s 1993 Western Writers Series booklet *Ann Zwinger (#111)*: <http://westernwriters.boisestate.edu/>

GATHERING INDIGO

ALERIA JENSEN

1. In “Gathering Indigo,” Jensen describes how a rather ordinary event—blueberry picking—takes on greater meaning for her as she realizes that “each fruit” holds “an accumulation of place” (48). What do you think she means by this phrase? What events do these berries contain? Have you ever had a similar experience, when some familiar action led to a greater understanding of place or of yourself?

2. Jensen first writes that the “tangy explosion of these northern berries on the tongue is the landscape communicating itself,” and then following in italics, she envisions what the berries might say as they invite her to taste (48). Read this final passage aloud. Is this an effective ending for this essay? Why or why not?

3. There is a subtle reference to global climate change in “Gathering Indigo.” Did you notice it the first time you read the essay? What effect does this reference have on the overall meaning of this essay?

Selected Resources

- Read Aleria Jensen’s blog post here:

<http://49writers.blogspot.com/2013/04/aleria-jensen-alaskan-discovers.html>

- Find her essays “Peepers” and “Standing Still” in *Wildbranch: An Anthology of Nature, Environmental, and Place-Based Writing* (2010)

- Find Aleria Jensen’s poem “Threshold” at Terrain.org:

<http://www.terrain.org/poetry/23/jensen.htm>

THE RETURN

RICK BASS

1. In *Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer*, author Roy Peter Clark contends that “the best long sentences flow from good research . . . from direct observation and note taking” (40). Bass is fond of crafting long sentences based on his observations of the natural world. Take a look at some examples of lengthy sentences in “The Return.” What do these sentences describe? What images do they evoke? Try revising some of them into shorter sentences. How would this change the rhythm or flow of the essay?
2. Bass suggests that “the daily witnessing of the natural wonders is a kind of education of logic and assurance that cannot be duplicated by any other means, or in other places” and is “still somehow relevant, even now, in the twenty-first century” (53). Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What elements of nature do you look forward to experiencing when the seasons change? Do you think it’s important for you to know these markers?
3. You may remember once being told that repetition was a hallmark of poor writing, but repetition well used can have dramatic impacts on the reader. Bass uses repetitive word patterns at the beginning of adjacent fragments in “The Return” on pages 51-52. This literary technique is called anaphora. Do you find his repetitive use of sentence fragments beginning with the word *felt* effective? Why or why not?
4. Several writers in *Wonder and Other Survival Skills* point to the symmetry, structure, certainty, and cyclical way of patterns in the natural world as part of the “story” they read in the landscape that helps them survive and thrive. Bass calls this messy predictability a “wild green regularity” (52). In addition to Bass, which writers in this collection engage with this idea, and what do they say?

Selected Books by Rick Bass

- *A Thousand Deer: Four Generations of Hunting and the Hill Country* (2012)
- *The Black Rhinos of Namibia: Searching for Survivors in the African Desert* (2012)
- *Why I Came West* (2009)
- *The Wild Marsh: Four Seasons at Home in Montana* (2009)
- *The Ninemile Wolves* (2003)
- *The Lost Grizzlies: A Search for Survivors in the Wilderness of Colorado* (1997)

Selected Resources

- Rick Bass’s 2011 essay on writing, “Danger,” at the *Huffington Post*: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/14/writing-advice-rick-bass_n_808813.html
- “Rick Bass and the Yaak Valley Forest Council” at the National Park Service’s Conservation Study Institute: <http://www.nps.gov/mabi/historyculture/rick-bass.htm>
- *Willow Springs’* Brian O’Grady and Rob Sumner interviewed Rick Bass in 2003: <http://willowsprings.ewu.edu/interviews/bass.php>
- Listen to Rick Bass in a 1998 interview with Charlie Rose: <http://www.charlierose.com/guest/view/3653>

WHEN YOU SEE A SKIMMER

DAVID GESSNER

1. Gessner directly addresses the reader throughout “When You See a Skimmer,” beginning his essay with this challenge: “I dare you not to get excited when you see black skimmers scything along the shoreline.” What effect does this literary technique have on you, the reader?
2. Gessner accomplishes a wonderful sense of movement in his essay. What specific word choices, images, or descriptions help achieve this?
3. There are multiple stories being told in this short essay. Whose stories are being told, and which one do you find most compelling? What do you think Gessner is ultimately saying about the stories we tell and the stories about “vast worlds beyond [our] own” (56)?

Selected Books by David Gessner

- *The Tarball Chronicles* (2012)
- *My Green Manifesto* (2011)
- *Soaring with Fidel* (2007)
- *The Prophet of Dry Hill* (2005)
- *Sick of Nature* (2004)
- *Return of the Osprey* (2001)
- *Under the Devil's Thumb* (1999)
- *A Wild, Rank Place* (1997)

Selected Resources

- David Gessner’s website: <http://www.davidgessner.com/>
- David Gessner’s blog (with Bill Roorbach): <http://billanddavescocktailhour.com/>
- David Gessner’s essay “Experiencing a Feeling of Wildness” for the *This I Believe* project on National Public Radio: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12254393>
- David Gessner is founder of the journal *Ecotone*:
<http://www.ecotonejournal.com/index.php/home/about/>
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology website on the black skimmer:
http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black_Skimmer/id

GODS AT PLAY

SUSANNE ANTONETTA

1. In “Gods at Play,” Antonetta writes about her son’s relationship with the natural world. What do you think he’s learning? What do you think Antonetta is learning by watching him? Do some research on “nature-deficit disorder.” Do you agree or disagree with Richard Louv’s assertion that “Our society is teaching young people to avoid direct experience in nature” (2)?
2. What is the meaning of the title “Gods at Play?” In what ways might titles shape, inform, or help emphasize an essay’s meaning? Can you think of another title that might work for this essay?
3. Lee Gutkind, founder and editor of *Creative Nonfiction*, notes that “Scenes are the building blocks of creative nonfiction,” the “jumping-off points for you to present relevant and important ideas and information related to these scenes or little stories” (105). What are the scenes described by Antonetta, and how do they function to evoke the larger meaning of the essay?
4. Antonetta writes, “I want to say we’re born tender; I know we probably have both possibilities inside us—the hand that ministers, the hand that dismembers.” What do you think about this provocative claim?

Selected Books by Susanne Antonetta

- *Inventing Family* (in progress)
- *A Mind Apart: Travels in a Neurodiverse World* (2007)
- *The Lives of the Saints* (2002)
- *Body Toxic: An Environmental Memoir* (2001)
- *Bardo* (1998)

Selected Resources

- Susanne Antonetta’s website: <http://www.suzannepaola.com/>
- *The American Literary Review*’s April Murphy interviewed Susanne Antonetta in 2012: <http://americanliteraryreview.blogspot.com/2012/09/an-interview-with-suzanne-paola-susanne.html>
- Find Susanne Antonetta’s essay “Little Things” in *Brevity* magazine: https://www.creativenonfiction.org/brevity/pastissues/two/brev34/antonetta_things.html

PEA MADNESS

AMY LEACH

1. Leach utilizes repetition of words and phrases as a rhetorical strategy in “Pea Madness.” Find some examples of simple, rhythmic patterns in her essay. What is the effect of this literary style?
2. *Things That Are*, Leach’s first book of creative nonfiction writing, was published in 2012, and “Pea Madness” appears in this collection. Reviewers of the book have said, “The author’s appreciation for absurdity and the joys of wildlife infuses her pieces with a child-like suspension of disbelief”; the book is “part encyclopedia entry, part whirlwind tour of a peculiar imagination”; and the essays are comprised of “loopy, mad-hatterish, infernally addictive writing that makes you sneeze.” How would you describe Leach’s writing style in “Pea Madness”? Find some examples in the text that support your description.
3. What is the “Ginnungagap”? Why do you think Leach decided to reference Norse mythology in her essay? What is the significance of this reference to the larger meaning of the essay?
4. Leach characterizes the pea as having a particular kind of personality. What are some characteristics of pea personality? What similarities and differences between pea comportment and human behavior do you think Leach wants the reader to discern from her essay?

Selected Books by Amy Leach

- *Things That Are* (2012)

Selected Resources

- Milkweed Press’s Will Wlitzo interviewed Amy Leach in 2012: <http://milkweed.org/blog/interviews/frog-inspiration-and-mouse-inspiration-an-interview-with-amy-leach/>
- Amy Leach was the 2010 winner of the Whiting Foundation’s Nonfiction Writing Award: http://www.whitingfoundation.org/search/writers/amy_leach
- Amy Leach reads from *Things That Are* at Webster University in 2013: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHd35J1UXz8>
- Amy Leach’s essay “Sail on, My Little Honey Bee” in the journal *A Public Space*: http://www.apublicspace.org/back_issues/issue_7/sail_on_my_little_honey_bee.html

KANA

CHRIS DOMBROWSKI

1. In “Kana,” Dombrowski thinks to himself: “Slow down: move at Luka pace” (67). What does he mean? How does this self-admonition relate to the larger purpose of the essay?
2. The title of this collection is *Wonder and Other Survival Skills*. Dombrowski offers some suggestions for how we might regain a sense of wonder through time spent with children, reading poetry, foraging in the woods. Which of these best represents “the wisdom we lose along the way” for you (70)?
3. In response to a questionnaire mailed to him from *New York Times* journalist Israel Shenker in 1969, E. B. White wrote, “If the world were merely seductive, that would be easy. If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem. But I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve (or save) the world and a desire to enjoy (or savor) the world. This makes it hard to plan the day.” In many ways, Dombrowski acknowledges a similar struggle as he and his son, Luka, hunt morels. How would you characterize this challenge in our modern times? Do you ever experience similar struggles in your own life?
4. Dombrowski, a poet himself, writes about three Japanese master haiku poets, Matsuo Basho, Yosa Buson, and Kobayashi Issa. What impact does bringing their haiku poetry into his narrative about hunting morels have on the essay generally and on the title in particular? Is this an effective literary strategy? Why or why not?

Selected Books by Chris Dombrowski

- *Earth Again* (2013)
- *September Miniatures with Blood and Mars* (2012)
- *By Cold Water* (2009)
- *Fragments with Dusk in Them* (2008)

Selected Resources

- Learn more about Chris Dombrowski at The Poetry Foundation website:
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/chris-dombrowski>
- Find his poetry anthologized in *Joyful Noise: An Anthology of American Spiritual Poetry* (2006).
- Chris Dombrowski is affiliated with the Interlochen Center for the Arts, where he was a former writer-in-residence:
<http://academy.interlochen.org/person/christopher-dombrowski>
- An interview with Chris Dombrowski at The Armchair blog:
<http://jonahogles.wordpress.com/2009/05/28/interview-with-chris-dombrowski/>
- Selected poems by Chris Dombrowski at *The Sun*:
http://thesunmagazine.org/author/chris_dombrowski

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

TEDDY MACKER

1. What does meditation mean? What are some of the subjects that Macker contemplates in his essay, and what does he say about them? In what ways are these musings “a meditation” on “the kingdom of God”?
2. This essay is comprised of short paragraphs on a variety of topics, from species diversity and social injustice to intimacy and personal revelation. In what ways do you think the structure of this essay reinforces or detracts from the essay’s overall meaning?
3. Macker begins several sentences with the phrase “In the alms of this moment.” What do you think he means by this phrase, and what ideas do some of the images that follow convey?
4. The essay opens and closes with this image: “a familiar mudra, a downstretched right hand, the Buddha touches the earth,” and this question: “What could be the meaning of this gesture?” Do you think Macker offers readers an answer to this question in the essay? If so, what is it? Is this interpretation similar to or different from how you would interpret the Buddha’s gesture?

Selected Resources

- David Starkey of “The Creative Community” interviewed Teddy Macker in 2010:
<http://vimeo.com/10049457>
- Teddy Macker’s poem “To The One-Legged Homeless Woman In The Pouring Rain,” published in *The Sun* in 2009:
http://thesunmagazine.org/issues/403/to_the_one_legged_homeless_woman
- Teddy Macker reading “Teddy Agonistes” for the *New Ohio Review* in 2009:
<http://www.ohio.edu/nor/noraudio/macker.html>

BREATHING THE ANCESTORS

GEORGIANA VALOYCE-SANCHEZ

1. In 1998, workers at the Arco Refinery in California found skeletal remains of at least fifty Tongva/Gabrieleno people who had perished in mysterious and violent ways. Throughout her essay, Valoyce-Sanchez weaves images of a reburial ceremony for these native Ancestors and her personal experiences surrounding her father's death. Lee Gutkind, founder and editor of *Creative Nonfiction*, suggests that "writers who can choose a public subject and give it a personal treatment are establishing a 'universal chord'" (62). Do you believe Valoyce-Sanchez has struck a "universal chord" in this essay? If so, how would you describe it? If not, why do you feel the main ideas of the essay are not universal?

2. Valoyce-Sanchez creates powerful images of breathing and taking breaths in this essay. What do these images represent, and in what ways do they provide a narrative trajectory for the essay?

3. There are several images of return in this essay. What are some of them, and in what ways do they provide cohesion to the literary dimensions of this essay?

Selected Books by Georgiana Valoyce-Sanchez

- *A Light to Do Shellwork By* (1992)

Selected Resources

- An article on Georgiana Valoyce-Sanchez in the California State University, Long Beach, newsletter in 2005:

http://www.csulb.edu/misc/inside/archives/vol_57_no_5/feature4.shtml

And a related article on traditional Chumash crossing: "A Chumash Perspective—Tomol Crossing September 8th, 2007": <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/cr/chumash.html>

- Find her poetry anthologized in *Returning the Gift: Poetry and Prose from the First North American Native Writers' Festival* (1994); *The Sound of Rattles and Clappers: A Collection of New California Indian Writing* (1994); *Home Places: Contemporary Native American Writing from Sun Tracks* (1995); and *Through the Eye of the Deer: An Anthology of Native American Women Writers* (1999)

SAILING THROUGH THE NIGHT

JOHN CALDERAZZO

1. Lee Gutkind, founder and editor of *Creative Nonfiction*, defines creative nonfiction writing as “true stories well told.” In “Sailing Through the Night,” Calderazzo provides several embedded narratives—or “true stories well told”—within the larger narrative frame. What are a few of these embedded narratives, and what purposes do they serve? Which of the “true stories well told” in Calderazzo’s essay is most meaningful to you?
2. Throughout his essay, Calderazzo struggles with how to manage knowledge of global injustices with the necessities of everyday existence, such as sleep, and he asks himself: “Why can’t I let the wind just be wind and not the stirrings of the apocalypse?” What does he mean? Do you ever have difficulty finding balance between knowledge, being, and action?
3. Calderazzo describes several instances of the “impermanent nature of everything” (92). What are some examples of this impermanence, and how do they relate to the larger meaning of the essay?
4. The tone of this essay is a kind of soul-searching seriousness until the last few paragraphs when Calderazzo muses on the meaning of an ant carrying away his recently cut toenail. What do you think about this ending?

Selected Books by John Calderazzo

- *Rising Fire: Volcanoes and Our Inner Lives* (2004)
- *101 Questions About Volcanoes* (1994)
- *Writing From Scratch: Freelancing* (1990)

Selected Resources

- Find John Calderazzo’s “Lost on Colfax Avenue” in *Brevity* magazine:
https://www.creativenonfiction.org/brevity/past%20issues/brev25/calderazzo_lost.htm
- John Calderazzo is cofounder of “Changing Climates @ CSU,” a climate change initiative at Colorado State University: <http://changingclimates.colostate.edu/>
- Read John Calderazzo’s poem “First Freeze” here:
<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/poem/252/>

WINDOW OF POSSIBILITY

ANTHONY DOERR

1. View this image of the Hubble Ultra Deep Field: <http://www.nasa.gov/images/content/690951main_hs-2009-31-a-xlarge_web.jpg>. Given the extraordinary nature of this image conveyed in Doerr's essay, do you agree or disagree with him that what the image "ultimately offers is a singular glimpse at ourselves" that "resets our understanding of who and what we are" (97)? What does this image say to you about human life on earth? In the universe, and beyond?
2. Doerr explains the "hugeness of the universe" in several different ways near the beginning of the essay. Which explanation makes the most sense to you? Come up with another way to explain the "hugeness of the universe" in your own words.
3. Why does Doerr implore his readers to "accept the invitation of the sky?" What do you believe are some of the benefits of looking up into "the reflection of that something our minds cannot grasp" (99)?

Selected Books by Anthony Doerr

- *The Shell Collector: Stories* (2011)
- *Memory Wall: Stories* (2010)
- *Four Seasons in Rome: On Twins, Insomnia, and the Biggest Funeral in the History of the World* (2008)
- *About Grace: A Novel* (2005)

Selected Resources

- Anthony Doerr's website: <http://www.anthonydoerr.com/>
- View Anthony Doerr's Poptech! presentation, "Am I Still Here?": http://poptech.org/popcasts/anthony_doerr_am_i_still_here
- GRANTA's Patrick Ryan interviewed Anthony Doerr in 2007: <http://www.granta.com/Interview-with-Anthony-Doerr>
- Simon & Schuster's author webpage on Anthony Doerr: <http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Anthony-Doerr/1945358>