SEASON'S READINGS

Robert Fulghum Exclusive: A Tale of Christmas Pageant Trauma, by the Man Who Learned It All in Kindergarten

Plus Award-Winning Fiction by Ivan Doig and Carol Orlock

SEASON'S FEASTING

John Doerper Invites Us to a Country Christmas Dinner

The Washington Wine of the Year Award Winner Is...

AND THREE WISE MEN

Political Wisdom from Dan Evans, Tom Foley and John Spellman
1988 EVERGREEN ANTHOLOGY

Writers’ Bloc
Our second annual read on the Governor’s Writers Awards.

1988 AWARD WINNERS

CAROLINE W. BYNUM
Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women

WILLIAM H. CALVIN
The River That Flows Uphill: A Journey from the Big Bang to the Big Brain

IVAN DOIG
Dancing at the Rascal Fair

KATHRYN HEWITT
King Midas and the Golden Touch

BILL HOLM
Spirit and Ancestor: A Century of Northwest Coast Indian Art at the Burke Museum

CHARLES JOHNSON
Being & Race: Black Writing Since 1970

ANN LOVEJOY
The Year in Bloom: Gardening for All Seasons in the Pacific Northwest

COLLEEN J. McELROY
Bone Flames and Jesse and Fat Tuesday and Other Short Stories

NICHOLAS O’CONNELL
At the Field’s Edge: Interviews with 20 Pacific Northwest Writers

CAROL ORLOCK
The Goddess Letters: The Myth of Demeter & Persephone Revisited

WILFRED P. SCHOPENBERG, S.J.
A History of the Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest, 1745-1983

Washingtonians, we derive extra levels of understanding about this place in which we live. Nonfiction—such as Charles Johnson’s excellent new examination of black writing, Being & Race, or William Calvin’s trip down a river and into the mind, The River That Flows Uphill—opens doors wider to the outside world. Poetry and fiction allow us to enter still more secure passageways. As many a magazine has learned through its publication of fiction—and as Washington will demonstrate, as it begins to print original high-quality short stories in 1989—what writers make up about the world and the people around them tells as much about their place as could any 10,000-word investigative report that claims to tell “just the facts, ma’am.”

Most of the writers we showcase in this year’s Evergreen Anthology are new to our pages; only Ivan Doig has been with us before (see “Stone Spirits, September/October 1986). All but Robert Fulghum were award winners this year. And the next you read about the Rise of Regionalism, how folks outside of the Eastern publishing nexus can really write, you’re invited to roll your eyes. There isn’t anything “new” in that “news.”—Ed.

Oh Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen
By Robert Fulghum

Our church had not had a full-blown Christmas pageant in years. For one thing we had become fairly rational and efficient about the season, content to let the Sunday School observe the event on its own turf in a low-key way. Then, too, there was the last time we had gone all out.

That time the week of the Christmas pageant coincided with an outbreak of German measles, chicken pox and the Hong Kong flu. The night of that pageant there was a short storm and a partial power failure that threw some people’s clocks off, and one of the sheep listed for the occasion got diarrhea. That was about par for the course, since Joseph and two Wise Men upchucked during the performance, and some little angels managed both to cry and wet their pants. To top it off, the choir of teenagers walking about in an irresponsible manner with lighted candles created more a feeling of the fear of fire and the wrath of God than a feeling of peace on Earth. I don’t think it was really all that bad, and maybe all those things didn’t happen in the same year, but a sufficient number of
The Goddess Letters

By Carol Orlock

In her first novel, Orlock swept the Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone through a distinctly contemporary and feminist screen. Students of mythology will no doubt be interested to learn that, after Persephone's rape and abduction by the underworld lord Hades, a remorseful Demeter began to neglect her duty of keeping Earth fruitful. In the end, the gods and goddesses were disheartened as well, feeling less needed than before, losing their influence as other religious beliefs rose in prominence. Orlock's version of the tale follows Demeter's daughter as she discovers herself, both emotionally and sexually, in Hades' company—much to Demeter's dismay. In our excerpt from chapter two, Persephone recalls her abduction and takes her first good look at Hades.

The problem was that our soft winds of spring, our gentle zephyrs? Are they everywhere I go. Well, maybe more than a little. All over me I felt this sweet and my wrist shook until I dropped my basket. And then when I stooped to pick up the flowers, I saw that special one. He came right after that.

...What else? Ye, Merry Gentlemen, this which appears in Washington for the first time anywhere.

ROBERT FULGUM

The former Seattle teacher's life story sounds like every writer's fantasy. As a divinity student, Fulghum composed a reflection on what he'd learned of life. For decades after that, he managed the essay until it was as concise as possible and was finally discovered by a New York agent. That piece, along with many other Fulghum's essays on life, is included in a new book called "Learned in Kindergarten." The preface assembles the essay until it was as funny as possible. The president of the board of trustees, seated in the front row and roused by an election for jacks that day, there would have been several candidates mentioned. And the vote would have been pretty evenly distributed. We're such fun to watch when we do what we do.

Although it has been several years since the church has held a Christmas pageant, we have no more trouble putting it on because the hundred-year-old outline of the history of the haole. Hope always makes us believe that this time, this year we will get it right.

That's the whole deal with Christmas, I guess. It's just real life—only more of it all at once than usual. I suppose we will continue doing it all. Get frenzied and confused and frazzled and excited and friendly and friendly. With progress being made, the whole body in a cement condition will be as stately and stately inch by inch. With progress being made, the whole body in a cement condition will be as stately and stately inch by inch. With progress being made, the whole body in a cement condition will be as stately and stately inch by inch.

In short order, people who kept saying "I ought to know better" were right in those making costume out of old bed sheets, cardboard and chicken feathers. Just the right kind of barbaroes could not be found for the Wise Men, so some of the fathers went out and bought two men and aged them. One of the young mothers was pregnant and it was made clear to her in loving terms that she was expected to come up with a real newborn child by early December. She vowed to try.

An angel choir was lashed into singing shape. A real angel stained with real sweat. And while there was no consensus on leaving out live sheep this time, some enterprising soul managed to borrow two small goats for the evening. The real coup was renting a little donkey for the Mother Mary to ride in on. None of us had ever seen a live donkey ridden through a church chancel and it seemed a very fine thing to do. If we had another man pulling at the halter, the president crumpled at the stern of the donkey and pushed—slowly sliding the rigid beast across the floor, inch by inch. With progress being made, the whole body of the donkey seemed to go through the whole thing twice.

The great day dawned and everybody arrived at church. Husbands came who were not known for how, and nobody was scared of the fine thing to do. Of day so we could see what we were doing and have the thing on a key, carrying what later proved to be a Raggedy Ann sheep this time, some enterprising soul managed to borrow two small goats for the evening. The real coup was renting a little donkey for the Mother Mary to ride in on. None of us had ever seen a live donkey ridden through a church chancel and it seemed a very fine thing to do. If we had another man pulling at the halter, the president crumpled at the stern of the donkey and pushed—slowly sliding the rigid beast across the floor, inch by inch. With progress being made, the whole body of the donkey seemed to go through the whole thing twice.

senior ladies in the church had had it up to here with the whole ho-ho-qa and tended to squawk any suggestion of another pageant with tales of grief, pain, and anguish as if children had once been amongst us and nobody wanted to go through that again. But formulaire is strong and it saluted the brains of some of the wiser of the mothers as they considered pleas from younger mothers who had not been through this ritual ordeal and would not be dismayed. It was time their children had their chance.

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I must think it through. I must remember it all from the beginning. I must be calm. He's left me. I must make decisions, he said. I must think. I must remember now. I could see he wouldn't lie, but he didn't want to tell me the truth either.

I don't know how to think. I'm feeling as if I'm being watched. It was a long time before I could speak again.

We must think. We must use our heads. We must use our minds. We must use our memories.

I asked him something, what was it? I asked, what does he do when he's away from me?

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DANCING AT THE RASCAL FAIR

(Continued from page 49)

This is what I meant to, Alexander the Second," your great-grandfather always told me I just had to believe. "Mister Stevenson's mouth moved as if he was saying, but no words came out. The feud had died his mouth so. "Your great-grandfather and the man watched Stevenson go down on his knees and drink water like a dog in a pool in the rock. When he stood up to try to speak the time, somebody shouted out, 'A boat! There, a boat!' The pilot boat, it was, bringing the week's mail to the island.

I could not see myself doing what Alexander McCaskill did in his Bell Rock years, travel an extent of untrustable water each day to set Arbroath stone onto reef stone.

workshop. Your great-grandfather always ended saying I almost ran out onto the water to hail that boat, you can believe.

"You ask me why I rebelled," the Second's father's voice became a strange, sad thunder when he told of my great-grandfather's reply to him: "Once every three of these Bell Rock years, and most of the minutes, dreaming was on my mind. I can't afford enough, yes. But the Bell Rock was there at the Bell Rock. It was to be done, afraid or no afraid.

So the past, the past past, so to speak, back there beyond myself. What can we ever truly know of it, how can we account for what it passes to us, what it withholds? Employ my imagination to its utmost, I could not see myself doing what Alexander McCaskill did in his Bell Rock years, travel an extent of untrustable water each day to set Arbroath stone onto reef stone. Feed me first to the flaming bound of hell. For I knew, my own defining great-grandfather was afraid of the dark or whimpered at the sight of a spider but any such perturbations were whited out by time. Only his brave Bell Rock accomplishment was left to sight. And here I lay, sweating, stung, aware, with a dread of water that had no logic, never than 80 years, no personal beginning, and evidently no end. It simply was in me, like life's underground river of blood. There I was, I hoped for afraid, when I myself became the past—would the weak places in me become hidden? Yes! So I ever did become husband, father, eventual great-grandfather of Montana McCaskills. What were they going to be? I knew that, because I knew. I knew what frightened me.

I hoped the maybe thinking could help. I might change to a river. Then I saw that, he was the weak place in me become hidden. I thought, I held for afraid, when I myself became the past—would the weak places in me become hidden? Yes! So I ever did become husband, father, eventual great-grandfather of Montana McCaskills. What were they going to be? I knew that, because I knew. I knew what frightened me.

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McCoy

Written by Ivan Doig
Illustrated by Rene Eisenbart

The place is the Two Medicine country of northern Montana. The time is late summer of the war year 1917. The narrator, Angus McCaskill, and his son, Varick, long have kept away from each other because of a bitter family dispute, but now with "the war reaching over the horizon to find us" Angus can't resist watching Varick perform in the Sunday bronc riding at a ranch on Noon Creek.

He was there atop a corral pole with the other young Sunday heroes when I arrived. Varick, whom I had come to lay eyes on before the 11th day of the next month made him 18 years of age. Before he became war fodder.

He saw me across the corral as I dismounted. I gave him a hello wave, he nodded the minimum in return, and with public amenities satisfied, we left it at that. Maybe more would eventuate between us later, but I did not really expect so. No, today I simply was bringing my son my eyes, the one part of me he could not turn away from on such a public afternoon as this.

Quite a crowd in and on the corral by then, and I found a place on the opposite side from Varick. Men hollowed and Angus was me in surprise as they passed.

"Angus, good to see you here," Pat Egan called out as he came over to me. "Heard about our special attraction, did you?"

When my blank look said I'd heard no such thing, Pat told me that after the bronc riding there was to be a corral dirt and saddled while down. The rider would

... poise over him and try to socket himself into the saddle and stirrups as the horse struggled up. It looked to me like a recipe for suicide.

My throat stoppered itself when I saw that Varick had drawn one of the saddle-in-the-dirt rides.

"Watch out for when this bugger starts sunfishing," I heard Dode counsel him, "or he'll stick your head in the ground."

Varick nodded, tugged his hat down severely toward ground."

 Varick sat astride him, long legs stretched mightily into the stirrups. My blood raced as I watched. What son of mine was this? Somehow this bronc rider, this tall half-stranger, this Sunday centaur, was the yield of his mother and me. I was vastly thankful she was not here to see our wild result.

When Varick had ridden and the other braves of the saddle tribe had taken their turns at rattling their brains, Pat Egan hollered from beside the coral gate: "Time for something different, boys!"

Pat swung the gate open, and in strolled a man and a steer.

At first glimpse the Fort Benton critter looked like standard steer, red-brown, haunch-high to a horse. But when you considered him for a moment, this was a very veteran steer, indeed — years older than the usual by not having gone the route to the slaughterhouse. An old dodger of the last battle, so to say. He was uniquely calm around people, blinking slow blinks that were halfway toward sleep as the onlookers gathered around him. The circle gave way considering, however, when his tail like a pump handle and casually let loose several fluid feet of manure.

For his part, the Fort Benton man was a moon-face with willye published...
steer writhed his headquarters as if he were now a giant snake. A giant snake with horns and hooves. Varick’s head whipped sideways, then to the other side, like a willow snapping back and forth. Then the steer lurched forward, and Varick jumped in that direction and back.

MURRRAWWW issued out of McCoy, half-bellow, half-groan, as he and Varick began storming around the circle of the corral. It was like watching a battle in a whirlwind, the steer’s hooves spraying the loose minced dirt of the arena 20 feet into the air. I watched in agony, fear, fascination. So I wanted to know about Varick’s Sunday life, did I? We spend the years of raising children for this, for them to invent fresh ways to break their young necks?

At about McCoy’s dozenth MURRRAWWW, Varick continued left while the steer adjourned right.

“Pretty good!” Pat Egan shouted as Varick alit in the corral earth.

His words still were in the air when Dode dashed beside the steer to grab the halter rope. As he reached down for it, the animal trotted slightly faster, just enough to keep the rope out of reach. Dode speeded up. McCoy speeded up even more, circling the corral now at a sustained pace that a trotting horse would have envied. As the seconds ticked by in this round race between Dode and McCoy, it became clear what they used for brains in Fort Benton. Before the considerable problem of climbing onto McCoy and staying on there was going to be the trickier problem of catching him each time.

Varick by now had scrambled to his feet and joined the chase. “I’ll cut across behind the bugger, you run him around to me,” Dode strategized in a panting yell.

He started his veer behind McCoy. Sudden as a clock mechanism reaching the hour, McCoy halted in his tracks and delivered a flashing kick that missed Dode by the width of a fiddlerstring.

But while McCoy was trying to send his would-be hazer into the middle of next week, Varick managed to lay hands on the halter rope and hold the steer long enough for Dode to gain control of the halter. Time sped as Dode desperately hugged McCoy by the head and Varick remounted; then the writhing contest was on again. The steer bounced around the arena, always in the same direction, with the same crazy seesaw motion, and I thought Varick was beginning to look a bit woozy. Then MURRRAWWW again, and my son flew into the dirt another time.

“Another 46 seconds!” shouted Pat. “That’s 5½ minutes,” chimed the Fort Bentonian.

Away went McCoy, away went the puffing Dode after him, in a race until Varick managed to mount again and the bucking resumed.

They rampaged that way, McCoy and McCaskill, through three further exchanges, man onto steer, steer out from under man. Each time, Varick’s tenancy atop McCoy was briefer; but each time added preciously toward the three-minute total of riding, too.

Now McCoy sent Varick cloud-chasing again, and I half hoped my stubborn son would find enough sense to give up the combat, half-wished his heavy plummets into the arena would conk him hard enough that he had to quit. But no, never. Varick was one long streak of corrall dirt, but he was onto his feet again, more or less. Gasping as if he’d been running steadily in tandem with McCoy ever since their bout began, he cast a bleary look around for his adversary. Over by the corral gate Dode Withrow had McCoy by the halter again, snipping the animal while urging Varick: “Now we get the bugger, Mac! One more time!”

The steer casually studied young Withrow, then tossed his head and slung Dode tip-over-teakettle into the expanse of fresh green, still-almost-liquid manure he had deposited just before the riding match commenced. The dazzling corduroy trousers and most other fabric on Dode abruptly changed color. While he slid and sloshed, the steer started away as if bored. But Varick had wobbled close enough to grab the halter rope as it flew from Dode, and now somehow he was putting himself aboard McCoy again.

The steer shook him mightily, but whatever wild rhythm McCoy was cavorting to, Varick also had found. The clamped pair of them, creature and rider, MURRRAWWW and gritting silence, shot around the corral in a steady circle, if up-and-down isn’t counted. Varick grasped the halter rope as if it was the harness to life. McCoy quit circling and simply spun in his tracks like a dog chasing its tail. Varick’s face came-went, came-went...

“Time!” yelled Pat Egan. “That’s three minutes’ worth! And still half a minute to the limit!”

“Whoa, McCoy,” the Fort Benton man called out sourly. At once the steer froze, so abruptly that Varick pitched ahead onto its neck. With a great gulp of air, Varick lowered himself from McCoy’s back, held out the halter rope and dropped it. Blearily my son located the figure, manure-sopped but grinning, of young Withrow.

“Dode,” Varick called out. “You’re awful hard on a pair of pants.”

Home Plan

Vaulted ceilings, a raised master suite and individually covered garden patios highlight this 1,557-square-foot single-level house.

The formal living and dining rooms directly off the main entry hall offer 10-foot-high ceilings, stained glass windows and garden surroundings.

A two-car garage, with an optional half-bath/utility room, leads directly into the kitchen area. The kitchen and breakfast nook provide direct access to the centrally located family room.

The raised master suite includes a spacious walk-in closet, a large private bathroom and a hot-tub deck. The additional two bedrooms also have access to a covered patio.

Address inquiries about plan No. 7599-2A to Knight’s Building Design, 2932 N.E. Broadway, Portland, OR 97212. A set of four professionally designed plans is $820. Extra copies ordered at the same time as the original set are $25 each; a material list is $30. Please add 85 postage.

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