

Poems for Cascadia BioFi, May 17, 2025, Georgetown Steam Plant

Action Philosophy

THAT GOVERNMENT IS BEST WHICH GOVERNS LEAST.

Let me be free of ligaments and tendencies  
to change myself into a shape  
that's less than spirit.

LET ME BE A WOLF,  
a caterpillar, a salmon,

or

an

OTTER

sailing in the silver water  
beneath the rosy sky.

Were I a moth or condor  
you'd see me fly!

I love this meat of which I'm made!  
I dive in it to find the simplest vital shape!

AH! HERE'S THE CHILD!!!

WHAT'S LIBERTY WHEN ONE CLASS STARVES ANOTHER?

## **Slaughter Tames the River**

Steamers on the White River  
the highway of its time, before  
the railroad.

1871, Captain Brooks Randolph  
and *the Comet*.

Langston Ferry, west of Kent  
Van Doren's, southwest of  
O'Brien.

*The Lily* famous  
steamboat once stranded  
a settler Mrs. Traeger.

The boat hit a snag  
trapped her and others  
Dick Davis, Ernie Brannan.  
There (snagtop) they spent the  
night, missed  
the wedding they were headed to.

The Flood of 1879.

The Flood of 1892.

Periodically, there were terrible floods in the White River area, which caused great hardships to the settlers. The White River in times of flood is a mountain torrent of tremendous power. Gravel and boulders are swept along the bed while the current carries an enormous load of driftwood. Any obstacle which arrests the progress of this drift, fills the channel and forces the water over the banks or compels it to make a new channel. This natural

condition operates to increase the destructive action of floods. When water overflows the banks or cuts through the river border, it finds its way through the lower bottom lands. Then it moves down the valleys, seeking a place to get back in the main channel. Generally at these times there are three streams. They are approximately parallel – one the deep, swift current of the river, the others the broad, shallow expanses on either side, moving with less speed. Damage always results at the times of these overflows, but generally quite as many losses arise from the fact that the water stands for weeks and months in low depression after the flood has gone down. As these lands are of great fertility and under high cultivation, overflows are especially destructive. The great floods in this area are usually caused by a combination of heavy rainfall and high temperatures among the snowfields on the western slopes of the Cascades where streams have their source. As a rule, the great floods occur in the fall or early winter. The high temperature acts more readily upon the freshly fallen snow than upon the heavy packed accumulations of winter. The records show that destructive floods may be expected on the average of some four to six years.

On July 4, 1898 (perhaps)  
amidst the celebration  
while picnickers enjoyed  
(@ Lake Tapps) enjoyed  
Independence Day  
festivities

# EXPLOSION!

They done blowd up the river!!!  
(Daisy Erickson tells the story.)

A neck of land  
BLASTED!  
by a King County resident  
(they keep his name secret)  
BLASTED!  
debris  
force the river  
into its STUCK channel.

In 1899  
Pierce County farmers  
BLASTED! a formidable bluff  
intending the White  
to stay in its channel.  
It backfired (the plan)  
making the river  
more  
Stuck.

It would stay Stuck for a long time.

In the early 1900's  
farmers of BOTH  
counties toting guns

prowling  
riverside  
guarding.

Bill Hompel, such a  
guard – King Co paid  
ready to shoot Sumner  
farmers who dared  
dynamite the  
White.

The river nobody wanted.  
No settlers, no changers  
wanted this river.

Temperatures were  
warmer Fall '06.  
Rainfall was  
*excessive*.

On November 14 all  
hell broke loose, a  
Chinook Wind and steady

warm

rain

steady

warm

rain

steady

warm

rain

directed against the  
GLACIERS.  
The Flood of 1906.  
November 14.

The flood climbed  
(the river rose)  
two inches per hour

three

miles

wide

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across the valley.  
Eighteen to twenty feet deep  
as the flood reached  
its peak.

No more Northern Pacific  
bridge.  
Steel pieces of that bridge  
took out the county's  
wooden bridge.

It took out (the flood)  
took out Markwell  
Shingle Mill.

Shingles and shingle bolts  
careen downstream.

## THE FLOOD OF '06.

The J.S. Corbin home  
collapsed.  
The family escaped  
on a raft.

Their barn went out  
at night  
and not one acre of  
topsoil remained  
on their twenty-acre  
farm.

Their orchard  
was a mass  
of debris.

Bridges

culverts  
and Chicago, Milwaukee  
and St. Paul Railroad grade  
gave way  
before the torrent.

People fled their homes

obliged  
to swim or cling  
to floating objects.

*Whatever improvements had been made on the land  
were destroyed.*

The White (the river nobody  
wanted) had a few  
*improvements*  
of its own.

This was to be the last time  
Slaughter was ever  
threatened by flooding  
of the White.

Freezing weather  
stopped the flood quick  
as it started.

The river now flowed  
through its Stuck channel.



A flood meeting  
@ the Mystic Hall  
called by Slaughter  
Senator  
Knickerbocker.

Lawsuits.

Litigation.

Plotting.

Another flood 1909.

December 24, 1912  
the Slaughter Town Council  
met  
(Christmas Eve!)  
voted to take down the  
large bridge (once  
called Slaughter's beauty  
spot)  
the old White River Bridge  
spanning a six year dry channel.

The county offered the  
bridge floor lumber  
for  
sidewalks.

The Game Farm Diversion Dam

1914.  
Homes and businesses  
in the dry channel, much  
of today's downtown  
Slaughter.

The Mud Mountain Dam  
done in 1949.

*Great floods had never been a problem for Indians, who had  
learned that they should not build permanent homes, which  
would be washed away.*

Old timer Dave Hart says:

*All the poor river was trying to do  
was to find the west bluff and  
if people would leave it alone,  
it would eventually find its  
proper channel.*

Slaughter never wanted that river.  
He got strip malls  
and asphalt riparian zones  
instead.

*Taming nature.*

Ideal fish habitat gone

for

ever.

The White River  
met the changers  
and the changers  
had the last word

so

far

# **Notice!**

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## **Warning!**

**River Will Be Rising Rapidly  
Please Take Safety Precautions**

**PSE Will Be Performing  
Maintenance on the Diversion Dam From**

**8/2/02 until 8/25/02**

**The Flows in the White River  
On The**

**Muckleshoot Reservation**

**Will Increase From Recent Summer Flows  
Of About**

**300 cu. ft. / sec. to about 1200 cu. ft. / sec.**

**This Will Be About 4 Times**

**As Much Water** Which Will Be

**Similar To Winter Average Flows.**

**Areas That Are**

**Normally Dry In The Summer May Be Flooded.**

## Slaughter Shikata Ga Nai

Dominism in action     try to  
eke out a living near Shira  
kawa busting stumps     working working     hands bleeding  
in Slaughter where  
the cherry trees in May still blossom  
and the Stuck still flows toward

Kumamoto Prefecture     where the old  
ones say: Dekita koto wa shikata ga nai  
that is: What has been done can not be helped  
one century of

what's been done can't be helped  
all the unmistakable signs of

Slaughter     perennial adolescent  
he of Alien Land Law     and  
internment of World War II.     He might be  
Kent's Representative James Jones or Miller Freeman of the  
Anti-Japanese League or a prosecutor named Malcolm Douglass  
terror of peaceful Nisei farmers  
and reason.     The

gentleman's agreement     is dropped  
and the Slaughter continues with

no respite exclusion laws     gunpoint stickups  
and worst of all when no other recourse,  
immolation.     Slaughter shikata ga nai.

Slaughter is the original name of Auburn, Washington, named after Lt. William A. Slaughter. It also refers to the urge toward domination. Many Japanese-Americans lived in Auburn before Executive Order 9066 and a few after.

## Motherwit

Pickett couldn't

stop 'em, not  
w/ a "mere mouthful" for Brit  
warships.

Defend land as if only  
Old Glory had the right  
to be planted on old  
SJI

(& Orcas  
& Lopez  
& Waldron

Defend land as if it were U.S. land  
(as if)  
but no.

Fledgling empire wd  
have to wait, powder  
kept dry, blood  
in piles like ponds

a possibility, yet.

But the Brits  
w/  
a world view, the Brits

w/ a policy (official) of non  
con  
frontation, (Pacific Station directive)

had heard tell of  
"blood-washed quarterdecks"  
& human enough to see what cd be done  
beyond bluffs  
& USAmerican cock  
blocking &

bravado.

A world view w/ which  
would have nothing to prove  
against a ragtag bunch  
of expat Irishmen  
& this one Southerner  
w/ a “mere mouthful”  
of men & a mis  
conception  
of who owned what land  
& how.

& the media  
(what it was)  
far from the field  
(of battle)  
free to rattle  
(the sabers)  
  
(free)  
to be courage acting cheap  
(free)  
  
to talk big & stride  
over tobacco stain'd  
grass

& this Southerner  
& his mere mouthful

of guns  
& tents &  
lumber (for buildings  
& heavy gun platforms)

& this Southerner  
whose nerve wd  
stun a gunkholer  
Archibald Campbell

who knew these islands  
as neither ours  
nor theirs and waiting  
for the choice of straits.

Haro

Rosario

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Does it always take  
a world-view  
(that is) a perspective  
global?

*Some say an army of horse &  
Some say an army on foot &  
Some say an army of ships  
the most beautiful thing  
on this black earth but  
it is what you love...*

& if you love  
commerce  
    & limbs  
        & children  
& salmon & apricot  
    colored  
        sunsets from Young Hill  
or if you're a Rear Admiral  
    w/ elaborate bow ties &  
    comb-overs  
        & top hats &  
            high collars  
    & laughter  
        like R. Lambert Baynes, then maybe



you & your navy  
as beautiful as this army of ships  
might be  
w/ their beautiful soldiers & sailors  
beautiful bayonets, sharp  
as any human eye & brain

& beautiful cannons  
you  
& yr world view  
& yr  
pocketsfull of motherwit (as is sd of Hornby)  
wd direct all to:

“strictly avoid all interference”  
&  
“by every means in yr power”  
“prevent the risk of collision...”

World view, love  
of earth & eagles  
of camas & orcas  
of tides & gunkholes  
& raccoons & red-  
winged blackbirds  
& views of rufous  
hummingbirds  
& their sanghas, love  
of sea lions & red  
tailed hawks &  
motherwit  
&  
garry oak & western  
hemlock  
a love of things &  
humans & their  
smell then you

you'd take a

pinch of that  
motherwit

& you'd be re  
membered  
Geoffrey Phipps Hornby  
R. Lambert Baynes  
Winfield Scott  
as that rarest of  
military man  
who'd see glory  
where it rightly  
be in all things  
connected  
(all things)  
even those worth  
much as a pocket  
of motherwit  
& a world view of  
all things connected  
(all things) worth  
fighting for or

not

6:39P - 2.8.13

Caffé Vita

Seward Park

*Some say* quote from Sappho.

## Excerpt from Daysong of Casa del Colibrí

The somewhere we have to get  
eventually is here.  
Here with the intensity  
of a gull's beak  
Robin sang.  
Here with the intensity  
of an inner tornado  
of a Ukrainian fighting  
troops into battle ordered  
by a man of whom is said:

“Everything Putin touches dies.”

Not the intensity of he who'd dig the  
holes for mass graves, but the he who'd  
shoot his own Russian leg to get the loot &  
get back to the village. The intensity of  
she who'd sing her song invoking the  
Espiritista realm, invoking African  
deities in La Habana, ron y cigarro  
como sacramentos.

Duende intensity of here  
of the improvised DaySong  
of the commitment to a place  
as lift raft for the Anthropocene.  
A place  
w/ water.  
A place  
you'd die for.

A place  
to find the rose hips  
the rabbit eats, to hide  
the Humboldt Fog. To walk  
up Roxbury doing Latihan  
shadow of shaking hands  
beating you to the mailbox  
8 final colorful postcards  
in yr hand, pork pie on yr  
head, sent w/ a little prayer  
that we all can go deeper than  
this from here on in.

9:08am  
1. SEPT. 2022  
Casa del Colibrí