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POETRY

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Salmon Coming Home
For the Columbia River
Cameron La Follette

A great salmon swims close
gliding under clear cold water
I saw lesser ones, but never you
says the girl waiting at the shore
such homecoming cannot be true

Come, says the shining salmon
you have never been away;
he flicks up a glittering tail
the girl slides into gold water
no one hears the human wail

You are young, says the salmon
the sea has never baptized you
nor your soul to fear and roam.
I am never lost, says the girl
we shall follow water home

They taste the sea's bitter green
and flicker in dark-blue tides
I am lost, says the girl, I know fear
now we go home, says the salmon
the far cold waters draw near

I shall never find it, says the girl
following salmon in foam and stone;
a gold river pours down in greeting
I am home, says the salmon-girl
blessed be the waters' meeting.

Cameron La Follette lives in Salem, Oregon. She works in the environmental field as a land use advocate. She has given readings in Oregon and been a featured local poet at the annual Silverton Poetry Festival. She also founded a Classic Poetry Group in Salem to revive the study and pleasure of reading older poetry written in traditional form and meter. Her book of poetry, *Anamchara*, will be

available September 1st, 2006 from Crane Dance Press in Eugene, Oregon.
Contact: thehomecountry@onemain.com

After a While

Veronica A. Shoffstall

After a while you learn the subtle difference
 between holding a hand and chaining a soul
And you learn that love doesn't mean leaning
 and company doesn't always mean security
And you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts
 and presents aren't promises
And you begin to accept your defeats
 with your head up and your eyes ahead
 with the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child
And you learn to build all your roads on today
 because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain for plans
 and futures have a way of falling down in mid-flight.
After a while you learn that even sunshine burns
 if you get too much.
So you plant your own garden and decorate your own soul
 instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers
And you learn that you really can endure
 that you really are strong
 and you really do have worth
And you learn and you learn
 with every goodbye you learn...

Words & One-Liners

THE SET UP — Ethen and Kathryn, a couple I married three years ago and whose anniversary is January 3rd are in the top ten of the hundreds of weddings I have presided over. All have been wonderful but there was just something mystical about their union even though I couldn't stand because of hip trouble and had to sit on a stool. Ethan e-mailed me requesting that I do a one-liner from a photograph that my daughter Jerri took of the proceedings at Rocky Point near my home. The wedding party was just the four of us standing out on a rocky piece of land that jutted out into the Pacific. Jerri who was also the witness scampering around on the rocks taking hundreds of photos of the event, a few of which Ethan sent me.

The drawing worked out so well I needed a poem to go with it. The piece I came up with seemed just right to start the New Year off with and after all the 3rd is their 3rd wedding anniversary.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

I am now

Ric Masten



I refuse to believe in personal free choice
It feels like I have it
but when I back away from something I've
chosen
it always turns out that the choice I made
was based upon something I didn't choose

I arrived predetermined
gifts and talents, DNA, IQ, disposition,
all of which begat the artist
that begat the actor/playwright
that begat the troubadour
that begat the poet
that begat the minister
adding up to the master of ceremonies

I ask myself how lucky can you be?
able to make a good livelihood
by assisting in the creation
of unforgettable moments
for audience and congregation
but most of all
for the couples I have danced with
on the beaches and rocky promontories
that grace the Big Sur coast
Ethan & Kathryn
"I now pronounce you husband and wife"
and by so saying help shape the future

for someone who doesn't believe
that my choices are free

I rejoice in the life that has chosen me
+++

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Phone (609) 714-1885 - Fax (609) 714-3553

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