

Denver Urban
Spectrum
Denver, CO
Circ. 25000
From Page:
5
11/8/2008
146752



RECEIVED THE VIKTA EMILIC AWARDS

238
**Historical Society Involved With
Colorado Book Award Winner
And Nomination**

The Life and Times of Richard Castro - Bridging the Cultural Divide, written by **Richard Gould** and published by the Colorado Historical Society, has won the Colorado Book Award in the History and Biography category at the Colorado Center for the Book/Colorado Humanities awards ceremony.

The book captures Hispanic leader Richard Castro's passion and fighting spirit, as well as a community's coming of age. Denver police beat Castro bloody during a 1960s confrontation, and political rivals later shot him and bombed his home. But he emerged from the early struggles of Denver's Hispanic movement - el Movimiento - to become one of Colorado's most important political figures.

Also at the awards ceremony, Tom "Dr. Colorado" Noel's *Guide to Colorado Historic Places* was nominated for the best non-fiction book of the year. The book is the first-ever guide to offer 528 photos covering 606 historic treasures restored or preserved by State Historical Fund preservation grants in 165 communities across Colorado, including the stories behind the sites and the efforts taken to save them.

Both books are available at the Colorado History Museum and can be ordered by calling 303-866-4993.

The Trinidad
Times
Independent
Trinidad, CO
Circ. 2037
From Page:
11
10/21/2008
146145



²³⁸ *Mystery with a good dose of Western history*

Blood Memory
By Margaret Coel
Berkley Prime Crime
304 pp., \$24.95

Boulder mystery writer Margaret Coel made a sizable bet with her most recent novel, *Blood Memory*, and she won the jackpot.

Giving a rest to sleuths the Jesuit Father John O'Malley and Arapaho lawyer Vicki Holden, an engaging collaboration Coel's fans have followed through 13 Wind River Mysteries, the author takes a chance with a new protagonist, Denver journalist Catherine McLeod.

Catherine McLeod is a dedicated investigative reporter for a paper that could be the Denver Post as it was prior to the layoffs of recent years. Recently divorced, she lives alone with her Golden retriever, Rex, in a townhouse in one of Denver's newer gentrified neighborhoods while she tries to build a new life as a single working woman. She has a new circle of friends, and when she is lonely, or too stressed and alone, she tends to drink a bit too much.

And she is stressed. Someone is trying to murder her, perhaps because of a story she wrote or is writing.

Like Father O'Malley and Vicki Holden, the adopted Catherine feels displaced and is impelled to find where it is she really belongs. Echoing the experience of Coel's other complex lead characters, her experience tracking down "whodunit" meshes with her own quest to uncover her own story.

The author's insistence that all those risky meetings, chases, and near misses ultimately add to the sum of her characters' self-knowledge sets her work apart from more formulaic thrillers.

When you open *Blood Memory*, you don't need to know the writer is a best-selling New York Times author, four-time winner of the Colorado Book Award, and recipient of the Willa Award for best novel of the West. All you need do, Dear Reader, is keep turning the pages. And like Coel's previous books, this new one will keep you doing just that. If you put down this richly layered story of a tough-tender protagonist in peril, you will be impatient until you can

get back to the tale.

As a fourth-generation Coloradan, lover of the West, and historian by trade, Coel uses impeccably researched Western history to form the backbone of her novels. Sense of place, so vital to Coel's stories, keeps perfect balance with the rapid pace of plot. This book is so well engineered that even if you realize you are being set up, you are happy about it. You don't mind the ride when a master is in the driver's seat.

Coel's fans will not be disappointed with the historical premise of this new novel. To paraphrase the novelist William Faulkner, "The past isn't really over. It isn't even past." The massacre of the Arapaho people at Sand Creek over a century ago reverberates into the here and now. Journalist McLeod, whose ex-husband (not entirely out of the picture) is a scion of one of Denver's powerful founding families, is covering the story of a proposed land trade that will result in the construction of an Indian casino. But who is behind the deal? Who stands to profit? What is her husband's family's connection?

With a magician's guile, Coel seamlessly weaves her protagonist's pursuit of the story with answers to her own history and origins. As Catherine McLeod eludes the psychopathic assassin stalking her, she races to publish the big story as a way of saving herself.

There might be those who find Catherine McLeod a bit of a cross between Lois Lane and Wonder Woman, even though Coel works to create a sense of her vulnerability.

No, the butler didn't do it, but you will have to read the book to find out who put the contract out on McLeod. In *Blood Memory*, Coel has created a new protagonist every bit as fascinating as her earlier sleuths.

Raton resident Sharon Niederman is an author who will provide periodic reviews of books that focus on New Mexico, Colorado and the Southwest, or are written by authors from this region. Her most recent book is "New Mexico: An Explorer's Guide." Her website is www.sharon-niederman.com.

County:

Las Animas

146145-10-21_11001

238
'The one way I could escape all the craziness was to climb into the barn loft and read a book.'

Rocky books editor Patti Thorn talks with Laura Pritchett, author of award-winning fiction set in the rural West and editor of several anthologies on Western issues, about her contribution to **A Dozen on Denver** and her writing life.

I'll start with the most important question first: Your Web site says you hold a Ph.D. in literature and are a frequent dumpster diver. Forget the Ph.D., what's up with the dumpster diving?

I'm so glad you consider that the most important question! It's a huge part of my life. I was a dumpster diver as a kid but picked it up again when I had kids and was diving with a friend and realized how much stuff this culture throws away. I just couldn't stand to think of these perfectly good filing cabinets or clothing or Jane Austen books going to the dump — Jane Austen books should never end up in the dump!

The kids and I do it on Saturdays; we drive around, and we go to dumpsters all across town. We take most of (what we find) to Goodwill, and my kids get the money . . . I personally think everyone should be dumpster diving because the weird thing is throwing away perfectly good stuff that could be reused and recycled.

So what were your best finds?

All right, Patti, but I doubt you're going to be able to print this. A friend and I found a brand-new, everything-still-in-the-plastic package of dildos. That was our most amusing find. We left them on the door of a fraternity because we also have a sense of humor. . .

OK, now I'll re-answer that question. We find a lot of really useful things, like kids' winter coats and gloves and all sorts of just basic living things. But we've also found very odd things. One time we were out at night — we had headlamps on, so we had to shoo away the raccoons in the dumpster — and we found a box of love letters from a young man to a young woman. It was a beautiful story of a young man who'd been put in jail because he was selling drugs to support the birth of his forthcoming baby. . .

We find all kinds of crazy stuff. All my kids' clothing, all my clothing and all of our cooking utensils come from the dumpster.

Getting back to your Denver story, it intrigued me because it had the least about Denver of all the stories. Explain why you took that approach.

All of my literature has been set in rural Colorado. That's what I love, and that's what I want to write about. The story that I started to envision was about this woman in love, very isolated by her own mental illness. So she's a ranch hand on a mountain ranch, and she's isolated in that way, too . . . I just felt like it was a landscape

that contributed to my character's internal landscape, so to speak.

So you think that sense of aloneness is a natural part of rural living?

I think loneliness is rampant, and there are plenty of lonely people on Larimer Street in Denver, too. (But) I wanted to touch base with a loneliness that a woman who comes into contact with almost no other human being feels, and I just found it easier to do in this mountain landscape. But loneliness, you know, wow, we're all lonely on some level.

At the end of your story, it seemed as if Lillie was drawing strength from nature, and yet, like Lillie, that world wasn't very stable, either, given that everything is melting.

Well, thank you for pointing that out because I wanted it to happen at a time when it wasn't stable. She's not particularly stable, the world's not particularly stable and the season reflects her mental state of accepting that . . . When I was working on the story, I took a walk to try to work out the ending, and I was walking near a pond and kept hearing this strange noise. I thought it was an animal that was hurt near the edge of the pond. It turned out to be ice melting and sloshing into the water below, and it was such a beautiful sound, I sat down and just listened to it for hours, mesmerized. It made me think of how someone like that could sit and listen and just find enough beauty and meaning in that simple noise to get up and go on.

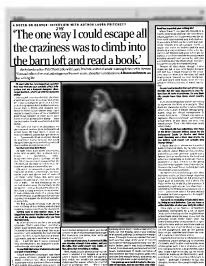
You grew up on a ranch in LaPorte, the seventh of nine kids. How do you think your childhood has impacted your writing life?

When I was 7, my parents moved to a ranch, and I think that was the most beautiful thing that ever happened in my life, at least until I got married and had children. It was a beautiful thing because I was suddenly thrown into an outdoor world in which you come to understand life and death on a very real basis: Calves are dying in your kitchen and your cat is giving birth in your closet and there are raccoons running around and peacocks, and you just learn to love the chaos of life. It makes you pretty sturdy in a wonderful way.

Despite all that chaos, though, it also made me fall in love with books because the one way I could escape all the craziness was to climb into the barn loft and read a book. I would say that being outside and being with books were the two greatest defining factors of who I am today.

People tend to idealize that sort of free-spir-

Rocky Mountain
News
Denver, CO
Circ. 263425
From Page:
20
11/11/2008
145395





ited life. But the rural characters in your fiction face all sorts of problems. Do you think city people have false ideas about country life?

A lot of contemporary writers are trying to represent the West as it really is. That does not mean the mythic cowboy riding off into the sunset. It means teenage pregnancy, drug use, illegal immigration. It means loneliness . . . I think one misconception is that (rural people) are this hick group when, in fact, most are very, very smart people. That's the West that really exists today.

You helped edit two collections: *The Pulse of the River: Colorado Writers Speak for the Endangered Cache La Poudre* and *Home Land: Ranching and a West That Works*. Do you believe such essays can actually help change things?

I think they do — otherwise I wouldn't work so hard on them. My favorite example is *Home Land*. When we did a reading, a gentleman came up to me, and he was a lawyer. He was so affected by the book and what was happening to Colorado that he donated his legal services to the group that the book supports, the Colorado Cattlemen's Ag Land Trust, to help put land into conservation easements.

So there's real-world changes like that, but there's also just the concept of getting people to re-remember, re-fall in love with

some part of Colorado, and I think *The Pulse of the River* did that for our river. It reminded people why we love that river — whether we're fishing or kayaking or whatever — just to not take it for granted and to realize that certain projects, if completed, will deplete that river.

You need no reminding of Colorado's beauty, living in rural Belleview. Can you leave us with a brief idea of what your daily life is like?

I live right at the foothills of Northern Colorado surrounded by a lot of ranch land, and my kids go to the neighborhood school right down the road. I love that the principal sends home notes that say there's been a bear or mountain lion spotted in the area and can we please walk our kids to the bus stop? Or there's cows out on the playground, and all the parents have to get together and chase the cows off. I really love that element to it . . .

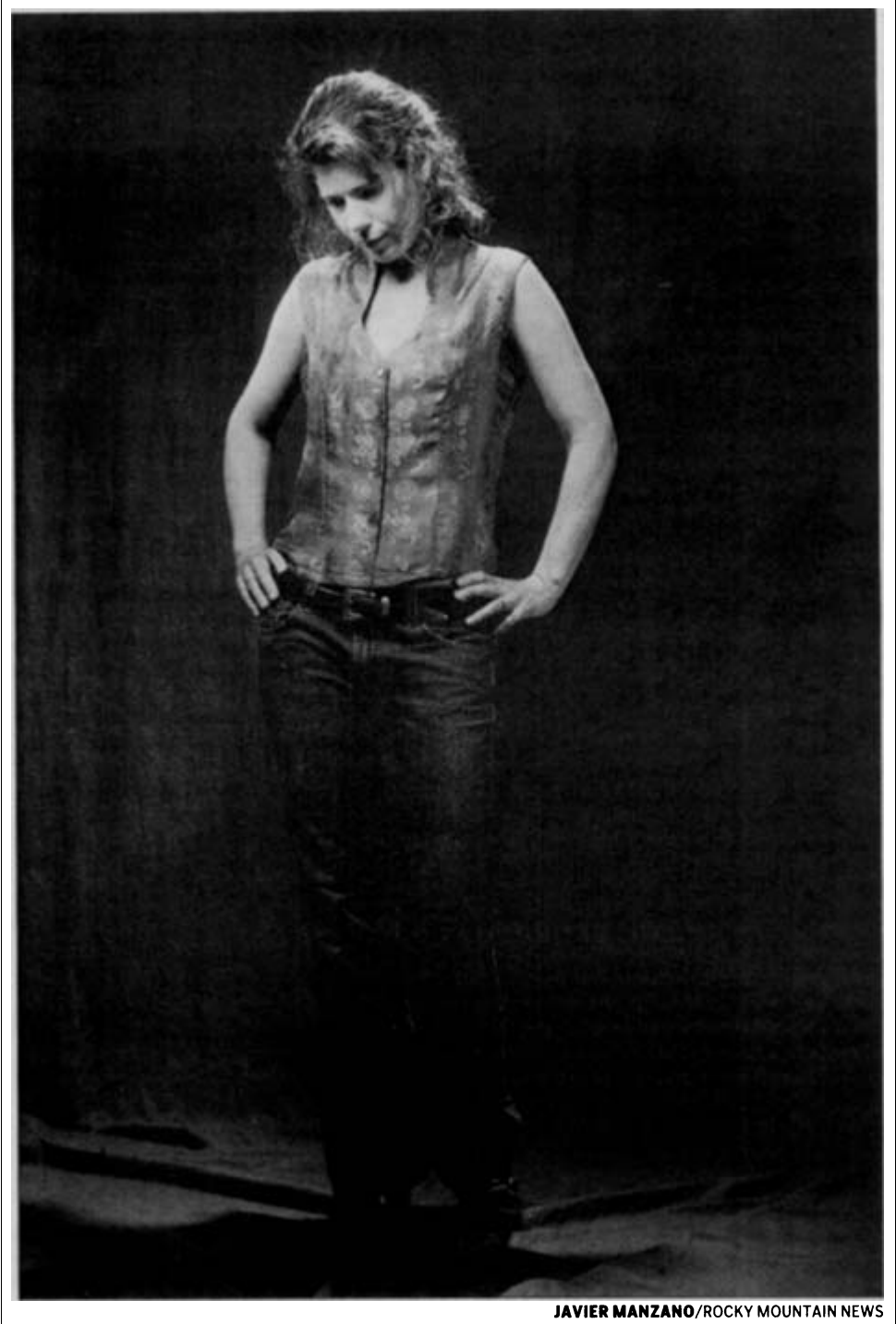
I spend a lot of my day working with environmental issues pertaining to Northern Colorado, and I'm also a wife and the mom of two great kids. I have chickens, a turkey, two guinea hens, a dog and fish, a garden. I take walks every day up the county road that leads up the first foothill, and I just think it's the most beautiful place on earth — although I hesitate to say that (laughs) because then people might move there.

Rocky Mountain
News
Denver, CO
Circ. 263425
From Page:
20
11/11/2008
145395





Rocky Mountain
News
Denver, CO
Circ. 263425
From Page:
20
11/11/2008
145395



JAVIER MANZANO/ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

The Color of the Impression

BY LAURA PRITCHETT

I was ice-skating on the pond, the puppy bounding around next to me, leaping at my legs in adoration and joy, and it was this exuberance that caused us to collide. I ran over the pup's paw with the blade of my skate, and her yelp pierced the air as I plunged forward, right into the boat that I leave, upside down, next to the pond. My head hit the chine of the boat, the boat being a little plywood number I made myself. So many things happen in such a moment: I thought, Oh, this hurts, and tipped my head back so the blood in my nose would run backward, and my eyes sought out the puppy, who was limping over to me, leaving bloody footprints on the ice, including one red swipe where she slipped stepping over the push broom I'd used to clear away the snow.

I knew I was fine but that the puppy should get to the vet, for her prints were pure blood now, as if her foot were a brush sopped with red paint. I stood and skated over to the edge of the pond, which was where I'd left my hiking boots, and it took me some time to unlace the skates since my fingers were thick with cold and the laces themselves were hard, but finally I could gather the pup in my arms and carry her to my truck. I was dizzy but told myself, as I do during difficult times, Ah, shut up and wait it out, because the pain would pass and I believed then that fleeting moments shouldn't get much attention, though now I understand that they are in fact what make up my life.

There was an old towel under the pickup's seat, and the last time I'd used it was to rub a newborn calf into life — he'd been plopped down, wet and slick, into the snow, and his mama was doing a half-assed job of licking him warm. But the calf lived. As I started the truck, I put one hand on the pup's side to hold her down into the seat and apologized, as I did with the calf, for the ways life can surprise you with pain.

That was the last moment I remember of my old self, my self that had not yet met Ruben. The next moment I was in a train wreck, which is to say, I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. I could not have avoided it, even if I'd tried, which I did not.

Ruben was not the vet. Ruben was the vet's nephew, and judging from his looks you'd guess he was about 25. A child. In comparison. But Ruben looked at me as I told my story, looked at me for longer than one would expect. His eyes were very dark, he was Mexican, with eyes that were like liquid.

The puppy was on the examining table, and Ruben tilted his head to consider the paw, and he said, "Name?"

"Well, I don't know, I just got her. I call her Pup."

Ruben's eyes moved from the pup's foot to my head. "Your forehead. You could use a coupla stitches." But he said it without conviction, because we both knew I wouldn't be driving off the mountain and into town for three small stitches.

"Do you have any of that glue that sticks your skin together?" I asked. "The cut doesn't hurt. No, that's a lie, actually it does. We humans do that all the time! Lie about pain, I mean. Do you know that glue I'm talking about?"

It might be too much to believe that's all it took. Although maybe not: Perhaps it's uncommon to run into a person who's more or less a stranger but you know has interests that align with yours — animals, outdoors, tenderness in a world that is without — and then to have your breath taken away for no other reason than his searching eyes, his smile and some sort of quiet sadness buzzing about him. Perhaps, on top of this, you know you are a bit off-kilter, and that the outside world has a tendency to scowl at you since you cannot quite maneuver through life as they do, and perhaps you know that there are only a

Rocky Mountain
News
Denver, CO
Circ. 263425
From Page:
18d
11/11/2008
145395





handful of people who are going to think that's fine and maybe even preferable. Perhaps all this can happen, and it is not love, at that particular instant, but it is the beginning of it, or at least contains the potential.

Ruben said, "Yes, glue, in a minute," like that was the conclusion he'd already come to. "Your pup has a deep laceration, but the tendon isn't severed. It's a full-skin-thickness cut, though, so Victor will use skin staples, wrap it, antibiotic. Clean cut, though. Nice cut for a cut." He shrugged. "I know who you are. You're the woman who helps out at the Vreeland Ranch. You live up the canyon. You're their ranch hand, right?"

"Yes."

"You have a lot of animals." This he said with a certain amount of admiration.

"Yes, lots of animals."

"You have bees, you sell honey."

"Yes, I do," I said. "People think I'm crazy. But I'm not very crazy! My neighbor, Wendell, calls my place a Damn Petting Zoo. I told him he had so much junk on his property that I could get tetanus just by looking."

Ruben chuckled and said, "The truth is, Victor is at home. Archangels are visiting him today." He looked at me to see if I understood, which I did. Victor is schizophrenic and delusional, and on some days functional and some days not, and during some years he's fared well, and during others he's disappeared completely. Last year, for instance, someone from the mountain found him on Larimer Street, in Denver, sleeping next to a dumpster, and they brought him home and since then we have all been more careful to protect this Victor, this vet who talks to God, who sees patterns and light in ways that we do not. So I knew I had the option of driving 40 miles down the mountain or letting Ruben take over, this vet-tech, this nephew, this quiet, beautiful man.

"Well, can you do it?" I ventured.

"Because I don't like town much."

I put my hand over my mouth. You might think I have problems with silence, but in fact I do not. In fact I spend most of my time in silence and the silence of my body is basically in equilibrium with the silence of the world. It's only when I get with other people that I become nervous, I don't know why, except to say that it's a little hard to clarify some things about yourself to yourself, even when you have long conversations with yourself about yourself in the silence.

When Ruben was done, and the pup was standing on the floor, wagging her tail, holding up her bandaged paw, Ruben washed his hands and stood in front of me. He squinted at my forehead. Cleaned the wound with a cotton ball dipped in something. Dabbed on a bit of glue from his finger to my forehead. I tried (successfully, I might add!) to breathe quietly and not let the tears slip, for suddenly I was feeling very alone, that buzzing heavy terror of a space when you recognize that you are alone and that you are going to die alone. This was bad timing for such a moment to descend, but I managed under the weight of it all.

Ruben said, "You cut your lip," to which I nodded. For a moment I thought that perhaps we both wanted him to kiss it, to apply another kind of healing. But such a thing is not allowed, of course, by the invisible forces that operate this world. These invisible forces have too much power, if you ask me. If only the world could be less influenced by them, then their potency would naturally decrease.

Ruben put on a Band-Aid and his fingers stayed an extra moment as he pushed down the plastic tabs. He said, "*Mucho gusto*, it's nice to meet you, Lillie."

Rocky Mountain
News
Denver, CO
Circ. 263425
From Page:
18d
11/11/2008
145395





That was the moment that became slowed down in my mind. Because he knew my name, though I had not said it. And because I am not a person who is ever touched by another human, and so I could not help but like it a great deal.

"El gusto es mio, Ruben," I whispered.

His eyes lit up in surprise at my bit of offered Spanish. Then he nodded and directed me, with a wave of his arm, to the front of the clinic, where I paid my bill. Then I left.

That is the bulk of my story. By the time I got to my truck, with the puppy in my arms, I was wondering what the best course of action is when one is in a train wreck. Run away from the wreckage? Or stay in the danger and heat?

I managed to stay away from town for quite some time, and then Victor shot himself. Finally the archangels had been too much. They had been in cahoots with God, setting up various mental obstacle courses to see if Victor was worthy and in the end, Victor felt he wasn't, and he took Ruben's Colt .45 from Ruben's truck and put it in his mouth.

Ruben felt bad about it being his gun, but I called Ruben and told him, along with many other people, Victor would have found a way no matter what. I also told Ruben that I did not feel anything but agreement about this suicide because had I been in Victor's position I no doubt would've walked out in a field, just like he did, and shot myself, too, and indeed, in my most off-kilter moments I've thought about doing just that.

It was getting to be spring, now, and the roads were slushy around the cemetery, and our footprints went down to the earth and left watery brown marks. To get to the funeral, I caught a ride down the canyon with Wendell, and on the way Wendell and I conversed in such a way as to confirm for each other that we did not like each other; he thought I was a scattered and strange woman, and I thought him a dull and stupid man.

"I'm in love with a man," I told him. "It's going to take a lot of effort and erosion to get rid of this feeling." I said this so I could get it out of my system. How many of us are going around telling the truth to the wrong person? Wendell took it as one more piece of evidence of my malformed character, and I took my confession as a needed relief to have voiced my love to someone, somewhere, at some point in time.

The person I hoped to see at the service, of course, was Ruben. I'm honest enough to admit that even at a funeral of someone who had doctored my goats and peacock and cats, I was selfishly thinking of love. Ruben was dressed in black jeans and roper boots and seeing him this way made my heart feel as if it were suffocating; I had to avert my eyes, actually, so as to find some relief. What I did not realize then, but came to understand during the course of the after-funeral gathering, as I kept my hand over my mouth and listened to people talk, was that I was possibly saying goodbye to Ruben as well. Because it is illegal for someone who does not have a degree and license to practice vet medicine, and now that Victor was gone, there was no way that Ruben could keep the clinic open. I did hear it mentioned, however, that Ruben, who, wisely enough, refused to go to school to prove what he already knew (and thus refused to give in to those invisible forces that operate this world), might just doctor animals as a "friend who was helping out" and a person might pay Ruben for his help. As I listened to a dozen conversations, I knew where Ruben was at all moments, which caused



Rocky Mountain
News
Denver, CO
Circ. 263425
From Page:
18d
11/11/2008
145395



me to wonder if love is simply keeping track of a person.

When Ruben came up to me and asked about my puppy, as I knew he would, it was not as I had hoped. There was nothing in his eyes that showed I was alive to him in some unique way. Perhaps he saw my reaction to this because he tried to say something nice. He said, "I never asked you about ice-skating. But I imagined you, skating alone, on the Vreelands' pond on that foggy day, yes?" and when I nodded he continued, "It's rather pretty, the picture I have in my mind. Until the puppy got hurt, that is."

I almost said the following: "This love is invisible but it is very, very heavy."

What I said instead was, "My horse has an odd swelling in its chest and maybe ought to be looked at?"

"It's probably Pigeon disease," he said. "A new thing with horses. They get it from bacteria in the dirt."

"When I push my hand into my horse's chest, where the swelling is, there is the impression of my hand for a moment. Ruben, am I imagining this?"

He looked at me truly, then, and gave his answer: No, you are not imagining this, but no, there is no way for this disease (called love) to be resolved in this particular case. Right then I knew how exhausting it would be, waiting for a peace that was never going to come. And I took notice of my ache, and realized it had a strange, buzzing hum that could nearly burst my eardrums apart.

Pretend, if you will, that this is a story, and that it ends like this: There is a woman, some figure in the far distance, a shape that's hard to make out, and she has a task ahead of her, which is to expel a feeling as best she can, or at the very least maneuver it so that the place it occupies inside her is comfortable, or if not comfortable, then bearable. I laughed, for what an odd thing to do to love!

I went home and began to walk alongside the edge of the pond, my puppy darting in front of me, and I noticed that in certain places, the spring snow had formed ridges of intricate crystals that jutted up at an angle. I was surprised to discover, if I squinted my eyes, the degree to which patterns create snow. Then I considered the degree to which colors create snow. Then I considered the degree to which light creates snow. After I came to, I continued walking, and continued to create the collateral damage we all do as we go through life, but then I could no longer crush those snow crystals with my feet in such a clumsy manner, and so I retraced my steps carefully. I walked back to the pond and stared into the melting ice sheaf. While I stared, I kept hearing noises at the water's edge, and I thought an animal was perhaps moving about in the dry grasses. It took me some time to realize the noise came from the ice melting at the edges, slipping into the water below. So I sat in the grass at the edge and watched the crystals slip into the absorbing water, and sometimes I helped it along by gently brushing and dabbing the slush down with a stick that had been left to rest, kindly enough, beside me.

■ **Laura Pritchett** is the author of a novel, *Sky Bridge*, and a collection of short stories, *Hell's Bottom, Colorado*. She is co-editor of two nonfiction books, and her third, *The Gleaners: Eco Essays on Recycling, Re-Use, and Living Lightly on the Land*, is scheduled for publication in spring 2009. She is the winner of the Colorado Book Award, the Women Writing the West Willa Award, the PEN USA Award and the Milkweed National Fiction Prize.

Rocky Mountain
News
Denver, CO
Circ. 263425
From Page:
18d
11/11/2008
145395





Rocky Mountain
News
Denver, CO
Circ. 263425
From Page:
18d
11/11/2008
145395



CHARLES CHAMBERLIN/ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

