

POETRY CORNER

*The Tree, She Is My Friend*By Diana Coogle
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If only English gave to trees a gender
and called them “he” and “she” and gave them person-
hood, would we feel towards them a love and tender-
ess, make a world we wouldn’t wreck and worsen?
Could we then see a tree as caring mother
and think of saplings as like calves or gos-
lings, treat all plants like us and not the “other”—
a woods of persons, not it-trees and moss-
things? Expunge the self-canceling neutral-
ity of “it!” a pronoun quashing worth
and giving strength to a ruthless brutal-
ity: felling trees, our good friends on Earth.

By changing pronouns could we end the killing?
Would we then see sap as blood we’re spilling?

Have a submission for Poetry Corner, either by an Applegate resident
or about the Applegate? Email it to *Applegater*
poetry editor Paul Tipton at ptipton4u2c@gmail.com.

Ticket sales close March 10 for Siskiyou FilmFest

BY ALLEE GUSTAFSON

The 21st annual Siskiyou FilmFest is excited to present the Wild & Scenic Film Festival, an online party to support the conservation work of KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper, defending the wildlands, wildlife, and waterways of the Klamath-Siskiyou region and Rogue Basin.

This year we are hosting the film festival and a raffle online as a fundraiser to support KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper while bringing the community together to celebrate the wonders of the Klamath-Siskiyou region through film and art.

We are continuing the legacy of FilmFest founder Barry Snitkin, who

in 2009 began taking films around the Rogue Valley region, including Williams, Cave Junction, and Ashland, to folks who might not be able to attend the entire festival.

Check out the film lineup and purchase film festival tickets at siskiyoufilmfest.org. Tickets are on sale through 6 pm March 10.

After you purchase your ticket, the film festival will be sent to your email inbox on March 10 at 6 pm. The film festival will be available to view for five days, until March 15.

Allee Gustafson
allee@kswild.org

Celebrate and give gratitude at Earth Day in Williams

BY CHERYL BRUNER

Come celebrate and give gratitude at Earth Day in Williams from 11 am to 6 pm on Saturday, April 22. Admission is by a \$10-20 donation (children under 12 are free).

The day will be filled with a host of activities for all ages. Come and enjoy the five bands, the drums, and Ray of Light Dance Troupe.

Browse at the environmental booths and learn from demonstrations on how we protect the earth and its inhabitants.

Partake in yummy organic food and drinks for the stomach and soul. Have

your children—with their faces painted—join the All Species Parade dressed as their favorite plant or animal.

Look for future additional information on the website at williamscommunityforestproject.org and the Facebook page at [facebook.com/WilliamsCommunityForestProject](https://www.facebook.com/WilliamsCommunityForestProject).

We welcome all sponsors and volunteers for this exciting day. Contact WilliamsCommunityForestProjectatinfo@williamscommunityforestproject.org.

Cheryl Bruner
info@williamscommunityforestproject.orgwilliamscommunityforestproject.org

BOOK REVIEW

*The Marriage Portrait*Maggie O’Farrell
Alfred A Knopf, 2022
New York, New York

BY CHRISTIN LORE WEBER

High school happened a long time ago, but I remember that in English class, probably my senior year, we were assigned the dramatic-monologue poem “My Last Duchess,” by Robert Browning. At 16 I had not a clue what Browning might be telling me. Later, college maybe, the picture painted by the poet began making sense. The arrogance of the Duke of Ferrara, who is the speaker in the poem, can chill a person, especially a woman, to the depths with recognition.

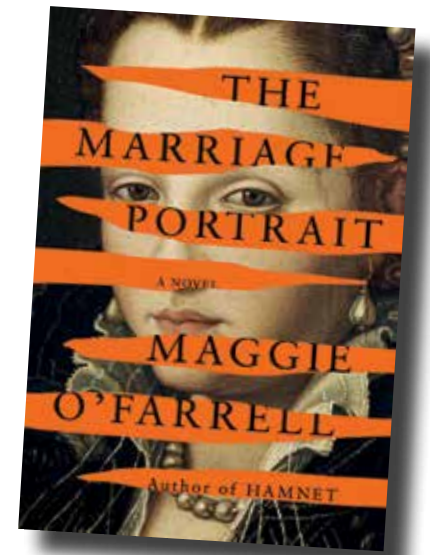
*That’s my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive.*

In her latest novel, *The Marriage Portrait*, Maggie O’Farrell has accomplished a stunning task of artistry and storytelling. She has telescoped that same woman of poetry and history out from scant renderings of historical fact in which she was an unfavored daughter of Cosmo de Medici, his middle child, Lucrezia. In an ironic twist the Duke of Ferrara had purchased her as a bride when she was but a child. O’Farrell uses her exquisite intuition to “read” Ferrara’s wedding portrait of Lucrezia at sixteen, to ponder her disappearance soon afterwards, to examine Browning’s nineteenth-century work, in which he took some clues from those scant historic renderings and in his poem implied something shrewd, something cruel, something unimaginable, something trifling, dehumanizing, something icy cold. And now Maggie O’Farrell asks her reader, “What is the violence that lies hidden here?”

Already on the novel’s first page, with the Browning quote (“*My last Duchess... Looking as though she were alive*”) ringing in our ears, we know that when the duke was showing off Lucrezia’s picture, she was already dead and that he intends to find himself another wife. It is a tongue-in-cheek sort of violence we deal with here, and more horrible for that realization. At that very moment, because she must be dead, she comes alive for us, and the novel is on its terrifying way.

My friend Diana Coogle recommended this book to me, calling it brilliant. After I spent all of a day and a half reading it (because I couldn’t pull myself away), Diana and I stood outside the Applegate Library and praised the author.

“Were you amazed by her ability to manipulate the timeline to increase suspense?”



“I know! And not in an ordinary way.”
“Right, not at all. She did it with potent images. Foreshadowing. Fate.”

“Like knowing it before it happened...”
We were laughing together in mutual recognition of what is probably O’Farrell’s masterpiece.

I think I called *Hamnet*, the novel O’Farrell released two years ago, a masterpiece. Can a writer have only one of those?

I find O’Farrell’s writing style, her voice, intriguing. Her structure is chiasmic, meaning that her themes and images are layered and synchronous. They echo and call to each other from beginning to end, entwining to create multifaceted meaning. *The Marriage Portrait* is an artistic pentimento in which layer after layer of painted color creates a surface the opposite of the original below the layers. The reader senses something hidden, even trapped, beneath each stroke of the artist’s brush. The beauty of the final image covers something wild and dangerous. Right up front, page 18, O’Farrell gives us the image of a magnificent tiger caged and being brought into the Sala Dei Leoni, the Room of the Lion, in the Di Medici basement.

And then Lucrezia...saw it: a lithe, sinuous shape, moving from one side of the cage to the other. The tigress didn’t so much pace as pour herself, as if her very essence was molten, simmering, like the ooze from a volcano. It was hard to distinguish the bars of the cage from the dark, repeating stripes on the creature’s fur. The animal was orange, burnished gold, fire made flesh; she was power and anger, she was vicious and exquisite; she carried on her body the barred marks of a prison, as if she had been branded for exactly this, as if captivity had been her destiny all along.

Here the echoes and buried images of O’Farrell’s masterpiece begin to be heard and seen.

Christin Lore Weber
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Welcome Spring!

A poetry reading by the Applegate Poets

Refreshments ☒ Book Table

March 19, 2023, 2 to 4 pm

Applegate Library, 18485 North Applegate Road

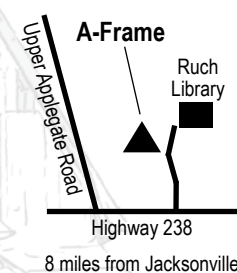
Authors!

Need copy editing? Want to self-publish?

- Book design and production
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- Long-time *Applegater* editor

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