

## Winter Ritual

Again this year  
gale winds drive walls of waves and rolling logs uninvited  
into motels and restaurants  
hung along oceanside bluffs.

In the coast range  
rain pelts soil once hardened and scarred when trees were  
plucked and hauled off for the building of roads.

The hills once proud now slump and offer to pavement  
their sacrifice of rich forest slurry thick with fern, bark and  
branches

Asphalt buckles along embankments while gravel trucks  
line up  
like tanks on their way to war.

Is this war or only a skirmish, this creative reordering,  
this goin~ head to head with nature?

## How to Write a Poem

It helps to shower first  
and notice how the water wets your hair pay attention to  
wetness seeping into pores washing away sleep  
lather with soap and breathe its scent

with your head tipped back face up to the spray  
wash away any plans

after drying and sliding into clothes for sitting  
walk around the block  
avoid the mind's grocery list put the to-do list aside only  
then return to  
get a drink of water to soak in moisture

then  
face your writing place  
and do what your dog taught you circle around 3 or 4 times until  
it's right

remember to breathe and now  
invite the words.

## What I Didn't Tell

If anyone is interested I might tell  
that I catch and release spiders

until mice ate my linens  
I used the same technique on them

the stories are true

I might tell of two hours spent on a late night rescue  
of a senseless moth that flew down the bathroom sink  
drain

also true

but there are things I neglect to tell like of the 5 year  
old  
who pulled legs off flies  
as they rested from the dance across the window  
seeking freedom

or of the lakeside tadpoles rolled in sand  
as though flour and cornmeal so I could fry fish  
like my mother did

but did you really want to know?