

STRUNG OUT

Get jumpy when phone rings. Hate to see blinking green light on phone recorder when I come home. Been like this for couple of months. Tonight at 11:30 phone rings. For me. Heart is pounding in both ears. Carol says she died. Tears well from confusing mix of loss & relief but I'm too tightly strung to let go.

LOSS

When my Dad died I couldn't cry until I got drunk. When Mom died I'd stopped drinking & didn't cry. I kept my raging feelings bottled up macho style. When a boy I cried easily. The time my parents had the huge poplar tree in our back yard cut down my sister & I cried until we were exhausted. It was an old, magnificent tree; the largest in Alturas & we loved it because it helped us feel important & somehow protected us with its giant, spread-out limbs. One day soon, I hope, when I can let humility back in my heart, I'll cry for losing Mom.

MAGIC WATER JAR

Did you know the Hopi have a magic water jar filled with an unending supply of water? That's how they survive in dry country. A chosen Hopi whose life is perfect in every way cares for it. I'd like to meet this holy one, hear the story of the spirit jar, but I'm a white man & doubt that I'd be trusted.

SCOUTING HIGH SIERRA

Slowly walking migration trail that passes thru Spicer meadow, checking deer tracks, see a bear is ahead of us. His track in soft dirt is clean & small. About size of my hand, fingers curled under. There's water in meadow & grass chomped short by cattle. I try to imagine what this guy looks like, what his next meal might be but I've been a city boy for over 30 years & don't come close.