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POETRY | FALL 2017

## For My Father, Lost

By Larry Oakner

Once, on a U-PIK-M farm  
fertilized by the rich confluent silt  
of Columbia and Willamette river flows,  
I picked raspberries with my father.

Cardboard quarts in hand, we raided the canes,  
raking ripe berries from trellises with stained fingers.  
Summer-heavy and red as blood drops,  
we hardly filled our containers  
for the handfuls of fruit we ate.

Intent on finding the finest berries under prickly leaves,  
I didn't see my father leaving me  
to side-step his way down his own dusty brambles.  
An hour later, basket and belly full,  
I ambled up and down the hedgerows to find him.

And when he finally wandered back to me,  
chin glistening with juice,  
he was a boy again on a Colorado farm, happy and free  
of the tyranny that time imposes.

And when he died years later, dropped to the floor  
by the drupelets of his heart weeping blood,  
his breath a chortled gasp, he was finally free  
of the misery that sickness sends.

I think of him lost in those fields.

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Larry Oakner's poems have appeared recently in *Tricycle: Buddhist News*, *PROVOKR.com*, *The Shambhala Times*, *The Jewish Literary Review*, *Lost Coast Review*, *Home Planet News*, and *Mystic Nebula*. Earlier, his work appeared in *Mobius*, *Long Island Quarterly*, *CCAR Journal*, *Jewish Spectator*, *Kerem*, *SPSM&H*, and *MARILYN*. He is also the author of a chapbook, *Sitting Still*, and his essays on poets Jack Spicer and William Carlos Williams appeared in *Manroot* and *Thoth: Graduate Studies in English* (Syracuse University). Oakner has a Master's Degree in Creative Writing from UCLA, and works as a branding consultant in New York City.

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