

Autumn 2011

# Quarterly Speed Bump

magazine

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Slow Down & Relax Slow Down & Relax Slow Down & Relax Slow Down & Relax Slow Down & Relax



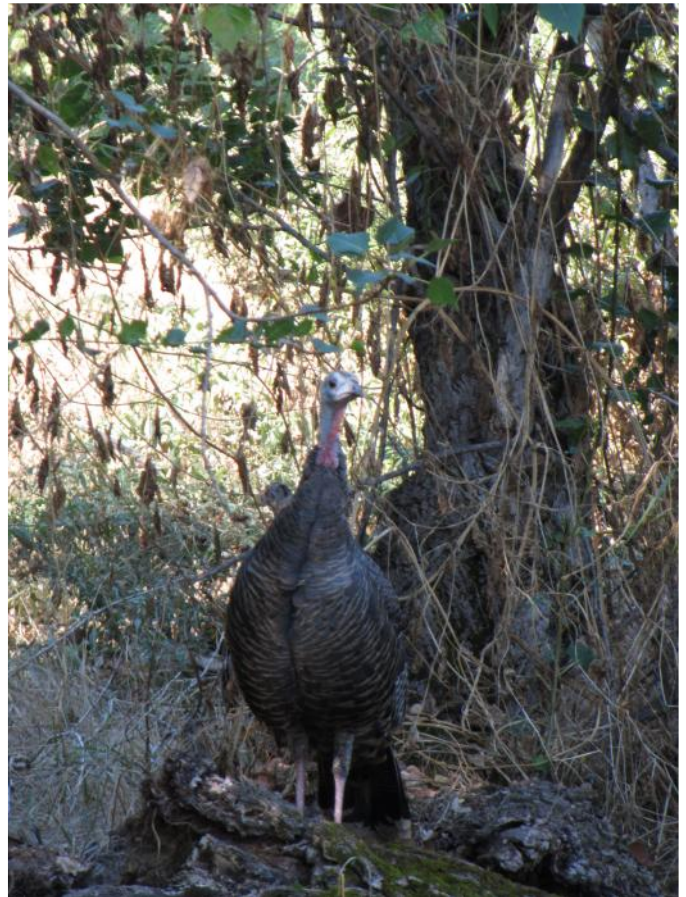






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# FRONTAGE

## From the Editor

Back in early summer when we were sitting around talking about what we wanted to do that was new and different in the next year, the idea of a digital magazine came up. It's been fun (though there's been a steep learning curve at times) and this, the first issue of the Quarterly Speed Bump, is the result of that conversation. We've been heavily inspired by a now out of print book that my aunt sent me when I was a kid: *Good Times: Every Kid's Book of Things to Do*. Adults need something similar.

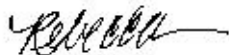


Not only was a book the inspiration for this magazine, books also feature prominently in its pages. Books in all their forms--paper or electronic--are still marvelous things. Although I'll often be found with my nose in a book, you'll also find me firmly ensconced with the nature lovers and exercise fiends as well. We encourage you to put down the books or the e-devices, step away from the screens, and (at least a couple of times a week) to get outdoors and enjoy nature, and to get some exercise, too.

You won't find anything earth shattering within QSB's digital pages but I do hope you'll find friendly encouragement to try that new hobby you've been thinking about, maybe go outside and watch birds or take a walk, or just stay indoors and put your feet up for a while as you work a puzzle or two. With the lousy news coming from all corners of the globe at all hours of the day, I think the world needs more relaxed and cheerful people. This is our little part of making that happen.

We plan to publish this here little digital magazine for the next year at least with each issue being released as close as possible to the first day of each new season (we're a little late with this first one). To keep it fun for ourselves we're not making a commitment (yet! but we have hopes) beyond the initial year. Let's see how it goes. Join us in slowing down and relaxing. Check out our website and blog at [QuarterlySpeedBump.com](http://QuarterlySpeedBump.com). And, have a wonderful Autumn.

Cheers,



Rebecca L. Wendt,  
Editor-in-Chief  
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A note on the products in our pages: QSB only features items that we like and actually use. We haven't been paid for any of our comments or recommendations; we just like to share.



# MILEPOSTS:

## More Things To Do

### OCTOBER

10

Thanksgiving  
(Canada)

15

Read books by  
Italo Calvino or  
P.G.  
Wodehouse--it's  
their birthday!

19

Start watching  
the World  
Series

21

Peak viewing  
of Orionids  
Meteor  
Shower starts  
tonight

22

Peak viewing  
of Orionids  
Meteor  
Shower again  
tonight

23

iPod  
introduced by  
Apple (2001)

24

Work week  
reduced to 40  
hours in the  
US (1940)

29

It's a great day  
to carve a jack-  
o'-lantern

31

Halloween

### NOVEMBER

1

Start of National  
Novel Writing  
Month

8

Read *Dracula*  
on Bram  
Stoker's  
birthday (1847)

9

Astronomer  
Carl Sagan born  
(1934)

10

Sesame Street  
premiered  
(1969)

11

Veteran's Day

17

Great American  
Smoke Out  
Don't light up  
today.

18

Peak viewing of  
Leonids Meteor  
Shower tonight  
and yesterday  
night

22

Abigail Adams--  
1st Lady & letter  
writer  
extraordinaire--  
born (1744).

24

Thanksgiving  
(US)

25

Buy Nothing  
Day (North  
America)

26

Buy Nothing  
Day  
(International)

29

Louisa May  
Alcott born  
(1832)

30

Did you win  
NaNoWriMo?



# DECEMBER

7 Pearl Harbor Day	8 National Brownie Day	10 Emily Dickinson born (1810)	13 Peak viewing of Geminid Meteor Shower	14 Peak viewing of Geminid Meteor Shower	16 Jane Austen born (1775)
18 Wish Puzzle editor GDW a happy birthday!	19 Charles Dickens' <i>A Christmas Carol</i> first published (1843)	20 Hanukkah begins at sundown	21 First crossword puzzle appears in the <i>New York World</i> (1913)	22 Winter Solstice/Winter QSB issue out	

Learn more about National Novel Writing Month and/or sign up to write your own 50,000 word novel in November at <http://www.nanowrimo.org>. I'll be trying again this year...not that I've ever won.

Plan to quit smoking at least for the day on the Great American Smokeout. Learn about the event at <http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/StayAwayfromTobacco/GreatAmericanSmokeout/index>.

Abigail Adams--what an interesting and strong woman! Read some of her letters at <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/aea/letter/>.

If you're inspired by Abigail Adams, why not take an actual pen to actual paper and write your own using what we so oddly call snail mail today. Sound appealing?

Do you have to hit the mall the day after Thanksgiving? (Maybe you do; we haven't met.) Here's information on a movement that thinks it's not a good idea. Learn about Buy Nothing Day at <http://www.adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd>.

I can't tell you how many times I read Louisa May Alcott's books when I was a kid--particularly *Eight Cousins* and *Little Women*. Have you read her thrillers?

Much of Emily Dickinson's poetry can be found online. Try Wikipedia (I know!) for a nice list and links to text:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Emily\\_Dickinson\\_poems](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Emily_Dickinson_poems).



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

## DETOUR: THINGS WE LIKE

1. Beekeepers still have honey available if they harvested in late summer although some beekeepers will wait until the bees make it through winter to "rob" the hive. Local honey is worth the wait. Have you tried it? This bottle comes from a local beekeeper in Oroville, CA. 2. Apples make great decorations as does this vintage Bauer Pottery bowl. Combine the two and have a healthy snack available within easy reach. 3. For you writers out there Edward Gorey's *The Unstrung Harp* provides comical inspiration. 4. You'll find binoculars come in handy for both birdwatching and stargazing. These are vintage and heavy but they still work nicely and make a nice display piece between uses. 5. Glam up for Halloween and give a nod to orb weaver spiders as you do so. Brooches like this one are available at such places as Victoria Trading Company. 6. Photography is always in season. This vintage Argus works just fine either with film or as a Through the Viewfinder camera. Take some pictures today! 7. Take notes, dream big, and write a lot--whether for NaNoWriMo or otherwise. Leatherbound journals similar to this one available at Barnes&Noble. 8. Orient yourself in regards to the heavens with a Stellarscope Star Finder like this one available from the National Geographic Store and elsewhere.





# POTHOLES: PLAY IN THE DIRT

*It's Fall now and that means that most of the big garden planting schemes are done for the year. Harvesting is ongoing but waning. If you'd like a little fresh color in your house in the middle of winter, march yourself over to the nearest nursery and pick up a handful of spring bulbs to force.*



## Spring Bulbs



Tulips, crocus, daffodils, dutch iris, & hyacinths all work well.



## Potting Soil



Don't use garden soil.



## Plastic Pot



Make sure there are drainage holes.



## Water



Place a crowded layer of bulbs on soil and cover completely with more soil. Water well.



## Plastic Bag

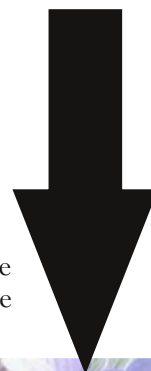


Place pot in plastic bag, poke a few holes in the bag, & seal.



# CHILL FOR 13-16 WEEKS

# =



The refrigerator crisper drawer is an ideal location. Check occasionally to make sure the soil is still damp. When there are shoots above the soil and visible roots, take the pot out and sit it in a bright, room temperature area. Soon, you'll have blooms.





# RED LIGHT: BACKYARD ASTRONOMY

*Ad astra per aspera* (To the stars through difficulties) these days might literally mean trying to view a constellation through light pollution. And, if you've temporarily destroyed your night vision by looking at a street lamp, you're in even more difficulty. A red light will allow you to look at a star map or find your binoculars without having to wait for your eyes to readjust to the darkness. So take care of that first:



With red light in hand and a star map, you can find all manner of sky objects. There are three major meteor showers this season so they're a good place to start. The maps shown here are for Chico, California and were created using the Stellarium program but they should give you a good feel for the sky. Find out more about using star maps at [www.skyandtelescope.com](http://www.skyandtelescope.com).



Late on October 21 and 22, find the darkest unobstructed view possible, look to the East, and find Orion. That is where the Orionids Meteor Shower will appear to be originating.







# ON THE ROAD TO...

## Birdwatching

with Liz Johnson



Black Phoebe. Photo by H. Bopp.

*The On the Road to... column is an opportunity for a Quarterly Speed Bump writer to sit down with a hobbyist and talk about how to get into their particular hobby and what they find to be rewarding about it. For our first issue we're on the road to birdwatching. We were pleased to sit down with Liz Johnson who has lived in Sacramento, California for the past 19 years and has been a birdwatcher for the last 8 years.*

**QSB: Do you prefer the term "bird watching" or "birding?"**

**Liz:** No preference though a lot of people do have one because "bird watching" is nerdy. I don't mind being nerdy and use "bird watching."

**QSB: What about bird watching appealed to you?**

**Liz:** Three things:

- 1) Being outside in nature.
- 2) You don't have to kill what you're watching like when fishing.
- 3) It gives purpose and structure when you're out in nature; you have something to do.

**QSB: How long have you been a bird watcher?**

**Liz:** I took a UC Davis Extension class that really got me started. That was 8 years ago. My parents started going to Audubon Society meetings after they retired and I went

bird watching with them before. But I saw the Extension ad kind of by accident and thought it would be fun.

**QSB: How did you get started? What do recommend to others who might be interested in taking up the hobby?**

**Liz:** The excellent introduction was the Extension class at Davis. The Audubon Society has bird walks every weekend-many for beginners. People who bird are kind and nice and love to help other people.

**QSB: What equipment do you use and what would you recommend to a beginner?**

**Liz:** A pair of binoculars and a good bird identification book. You pretty much have to have binoculars.

**QSB: What was your most memorable sighting and why?**

**Pigeon Guillemot in Washington.** Photo by M. Kramer.





**Liz:** I was in Arizona with my bird watching friend and we had been out with a book and had seen tons of new birds.

On the way back to where we were staying I wanted to go back to a place we'd already been...I just had a feeling.

When we got there there were tons of cars and we heard people talking about a "Class 4 Bird." We were all excited even though we didn't know what a Class 4 Bird was. My friend was getting her equipment out of the car but I was all excited and rushed off and scared the bird away. It was a very, very rare bird [for the area], more of a Mexican bird, a Rufous-capped Warbler. People were excited and shaky and so happy. And I spooked it. Luckily it came back.

I've learned now that if you're out bird watching and see a lot of cars you pretty much have to stop. Always ask people what they're seeing.

On the same trip I saw Elegant Trogans. There are three places in Arizona where they can be. They have a dog-barking call. We'd been out hiking and looking and hiking and looking. We found a couple of people who pointed out the Elegant Trogans to us. We saw *pairs* of Elegant Trogans.

Now before going on the trip I studied birds and studied and studied. In the same canyon as the Elegant Trogans there was a Painted Redstart that I identified before my more experienced friend because of studying. I identified a Bridled Titmouse too and was just so happy. This was approximately 7 years ago and was the first time we traveled together.

**QSB: Is there a bird that you'd most like to see?**

**Liz:** Two years ago the goal bird was the Pileated Woodpecker. I went up and down with my dad looking for the Pileated Woodpecker. I finally found it by Calistoga on my birthday. I went out all by myself and heard some hammering and finally saw a couple of Pileated Woodpeckers.

Currently I don't have a goal bird.

**QSB: Did birding match your expectations? What surprised you most?**

Liz: I was surprised by how kind the people are that bird and how much I enjoy being around other birders. I met a lady who's become a really great friend to me in my bird watching classes.

**QSB: What have you gotten out of bird watching?**

**Liz:** Travel and a friend. [Editor's note: Liz has traveled to Arizona, New Jersey, Texas, Oregon, and Washington in pursuit of birds.]

**QSB: What's a birder going to see in the Fall?**

**Liz:** Birds migrating back from Alaska. They migrate back down to warmer climates in the Fall. There are two big migrations every year and one's in the Fall. There's a huge population of ducks and geese in this [Sacramento Valley] area.





## QSB: Anything else you'd like to add?

**Liz:** There's a movie coming out in October. "The Big Year" is a comedy about bird watching, competitive bird watching when you try to see as many birds as you can in one year, with Steve Martin, Owen Wilson, and Jack Black.

There are two types of people who bird watch. There are people who make lists and people who don't really make lists. I was really into listing when I first started but not anymore. I think it made birding harder. I like to watch birds, watch their behavior and what they look like. The lists and competitive bird watching put pressure to see a



◀ *Liz Johnson, pictured here with a Gyre Falcon, works for the California Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources regulating geothermal wells. In addition to birding she enjoys fine dining, reading, movies, and travel.*

## Liz Recommends:

- *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*
- *Sibley Guide to Birds/ Sibley Field Guides*
- The iBird App for iPod Touch/iPhone

Find your local Audubon Society Chapter at  
[www.audubon.org/search-by-zip](http://www.audubon.org/search-by-zip).

bird. If you don't see it you're disappointed. If it's a rare bird and you wait a day and it flies away before you get there it's disappointing. ID's are sometimes tricky.

## QSB: Are there any books/websites that you have found particularly interesting or useful?

**Liz:** I use a *National Geographic* book. Every bird I see I write next to the picture. I have all my sightings written in it so I keep using the same book. I'm loathe to change books because I won't remember what I've seen. But if I started all over again I'd get a *Western Birds* book.



Rhinoceros Auklets in Washington. Photo by M. Kramer.



▲ Cape May, New Jersey.  
◀ Previous page, center: Looking for Trogons. Photos by L. Johnson.



Liz with her friend Pat Trimble in Texas.





# ROADSIDE STAND

## SAVE SOME FOR LATER

*At the beginning of Fall, good tomatoes are still to be found at farmer's markets or in your own backyard. If you can get your hands on a few pounds of ripe ones, some canning jars, and a large pot, you can enjoy summer's bounty until fresh, ripe tomatoes are available again. We'll show you how.*





Tomato plants produce well until the first frost. If you've dodged the frost bullet so far, you might want to save some of your harvest bounty in this easy tomato chutney. It's a recipe passed down from my maternal grandmother, Edith Davis, but I don't know where she got it. Although it contains no capsicums, the family name for the chutney is Chili Sauce. It's great with roast beef or with your brunchtime eggs and potatoes. You will have to can it in order to store it safely for longer than a few weeks. Store in the refrigerator if you don't want to take the trouble to follow proper canning procedures. Store opened containers in the refrigerator as well.

### Chili Sauce

Makes 2 pints

- 5 pounds tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 cup white vinegar (standard 5% acid)
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard



Place tomatoes, onions, and sugar in a large pot and boil until thick but not smooth, being careful not to burn. Add vinegar, salt, and spices. Boil for 10 minutes stirring occasionally. Ladle the hot sauce into sterilized pint jars, leaving a ½-inch head space. Process by boiling water method for 15 minutes.

### An easy method for peeling tomatoes:

Boil water in a large pot and have a large bowl half filled with ice & water standing by. Cut a small X in the bottom of each washed tomato and drop carefully into the boiling water for about 20 seconds. Retrieve each tomato with a slotted spoon and plunge immediately into the ice water bath. The skins should split and be easy to remove. Also remove any hard cores or blemishes that ended up being more than skin deep.

This is a spicy jam with subtle undertones of the tomato umami flavor. It bears no resemblance whatsoever to ketchup. Enjoy it on toasted english muffins or on a cheese sandwich with tea. You decide!

### Tomato Marmalade

Makes about 8 cups

5 pounds tomatoes, peeled and roughly chopped (Enough to make 2 quarts after you have first sliced the tomatoes in half along the equator and squeezed the majority of seeds and goo out. If you don't follow these steps, the mixture will be too wet and cooking time will drastically increase. Plus the seeds are neither decorative nor tasty.)

1 large orange, cut in quarters and very thinly sliced (leave rind on but remove any seeds)

1 large lemon, cut in quarters and very thinly sliced (leave rind on but remove any seeds)

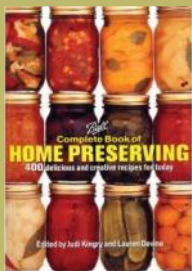
8 cups sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon ground ginger

3 cinnamon sticks, broken in half

Stir all ingredients together in a large heavy bottomed pot (it's best if the pot is more than twice as deep as the tomato mixture) until the sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil, being careful not to allow the mixture to scorch, stick, or burn. Once a boil has been reached, reduce to a simmer and let bubble gently for at least an hour and up to 2 hours, depending on the initial juiciness of your tomatoes, to allow the mixture to thicken. You will need to stir frequently to prevent burning. Makes about 8 cups.

Turn off heat and fish out the six cinnamon stick pieces. Ladle the hot marmalade into 8 sterilized  $\frac{1}{2}$ -pint canning jars. You can then process them with a ten minute boiling water bath (cover jars with 1 inch of water) or store the tightly covered jars in the refrigerator for up to 2 months.



Good resources for information on safe canning techniques and boiling water processing include the **Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving** (aka the *Ball Blue Book*), The National Center for Home Food Preservation ([www.uga.edu/nchfp](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp)), and your local University Extension office. Remember, canning done properly isn't that hard. **BUT**, it's nothing to mess around with either considering the consequences that improperly preserved food can have for your health and safety. If you're feeling tense, you can follow the recipe as written up to the canning process and simply store the un-processed sauce in sterilized jars in the refrigerator for up to a month.





# WORK AHEAD

**H**alloween is associated with spiders and their webs. It could be because mature garden spiders are present at harvest time or that spiders are fond of living in undisturbed areas like cemeteries. Some are highly venomous to humans and, of course, many people suffer from arachnophobia. But I don't find spiders to be particularly creepy; they're fascinating.

The stereotypical spider web with its regular spiral pattern and rounded shape is created by orb weaver spiders--a group made up of a multitude of species. Orb Weavers are found around the globe and vary widely in size, shape, and color. Spiders or their webs feature in folklore and myth (think Arachne or Anansi). If you see an orb weaver hanging on its web, it's most likely a female--the males are less conspicuous and always in danger of being eaten by the female after mating.

I adore Halloween and spiders. So, let's make a useful and environmentally friendly string bag inspired by their webs. You can also take the principles outlined below and use them to make your own Halloween decorations. The possibilities, as they say, are endless.

There are also probably a quintillion ways to make a string bag. Your method may be better but here's how I make mine.

## **You'll Need:**

- String or yarn cut into 24 1.5 yard lengths (18 are for the bag proper and 6 are for the handle)
- Scissors (of course!)
- Darning needle
- Dritz Fray Check

String or yarn should be mostly- to-all plant based (hemp or cotton are both good). The blue-green bag shown here is made in Allhemp6 while the orange bag is in Elsebeth Lavold Hempathy. Avoid using material that will stretch or your full bag will be dragging the ground in no time. You may find suitable string at the hardware store or appropriate yarn at your local craft supply store. Make sure it's not so tightly twisted as to be uncomfortable to work with or use.

The bag starts at the bottom and works toward the top. The greater the distance between rows of knots, the larger the holes in the bag (and then it will only be useful for carrying large items).

## Orb Weaver Bag Directions

Numbers match up with the corresponding illustrations.

1. Take two lengths of string and loop the midpoints over each other.

2. With two lengths held together, "cast on" by using lark's head or reverse lark's head knots at the midpoint. (To form a lark's head: Make a loop at the halfway point in front of the base loop. Take the new loop behind and under the base loop. Pull the string ends through the top of the new loop. A reverse lark's head simply starts with new loop in front of the base loop and motions are reversed).



3. Pull to tighten.

4. Continue "casting" on.



5. When you have four lark's heads holding the original loop together, tighten everything and make sure the ends are mostly even.

6. Continue "casting on" until you have 8 lark's heads and you have used 18 lengths of string total.





7. Pull the four original ends and tighten up the original loop as much as possible.

8. With two adjacent strings, tie a two-strand overhand knot.



9. Pull tight with the knot less than an inch from the base loop.

10. Continue around with two-strand overhand knots. You will have 18 knots on the first round.



11. For the next round, shift over slightly. You'll be forming a diamonds using two-strand overhand knots (To form a two-strand overhand knot: With two strings held together, make a loop and pull the ends through it). Using one strand each from adjacent knots in the row above, continue around. Knots should be approximately 1 inch from the knot in the row before.

12. Continue this pattern, remembering you're forming diamonds so you must shift position after each row. I sometimes make bags while I'm sitting on the couch watching TV. I put the forming bag over one knee and it works pretty well.



13. Stop knotting once you've completed a row that leaves you only 4-6 inches of unknotted string.

14. Using a darning needle, draw the thread end through a knot in the row below.



15. Continue around securing the end of each thread.

16. Cut the excess thread.



17. Fray Check is your friend! Dot the securing knots and the ends of the thread with Fray Check.

18. You will have a bag with double threads along the top row and will be using these top diamonds to string the handle.





19. With the remaining 6 lengths of string, make a long braid secured with overhand knots at each end.

20. Thread handle through the top diamonds of the bag. Fill and use to your heart's content.



# TRICK OR TREAT

How many 3 or more letter words can you make out of the above phrase?

Hint: There are at least 45!







# ON THE CORNER

*When did it become unfashionable to memorize poetry in school? I know my one unlamented but mandatory attempt at memorization and performance in tenth grade was a miserable failure due to stage fright. My grandparents memorized poetry and snippets of Longfellow have become part of the family vernacular. Here's a chance to bring read-aloud poetry and poetry memorization back. We'll start with a minor poet, James Whitcomb Riley and his 'When the Frost is on the Punkin'. It seems like everyone has heard that first line but how about the rest of the poem?*

*Riley was the poet of Indiana and frequently wrote in the "Hoosier dialect." He published his Rhymes of Childhood the same year that my paternal grandfather was born in Indiana. I like to think that as a little boy my grandfather might have heard these poems in school and maybe memorized some of them. Without further ado, here is James Whitcomb Riley's 1883 (published in a collection that year, published in the newspaper earlier) poem 'When the Frost is on the Punkin' presented in full with photo illustration. Read it aloud and see how it sounds.*



# *When the Frost is on the Punkin'*

*by James Whitcomb Riley*



J. Vaughn

*WHEN the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,  
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,  
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,  
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;  
O, it's then the time a feller is a-feelin' at his best,  
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,  
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.*





*They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmusfere  
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here—  
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,  
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;  
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze  
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days  
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.*





*The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,  
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves as golden as the morn;  
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still  
A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they growed to fill;  
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;  
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead!—  
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.*




*Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps  
Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yaller heaps;  
And your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is through  
With theyr mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and sausage too!...  
I don't know how to tell it—but ef such a thing could be  
As the angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on me—  
I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.*



# THE FORK:

COOK SOMETHING  
FOR YOURSELF

Two lit candles are positioned vertically against a dark, textured background. The candle on the right is taller and more prominent, with a bright flame. The candle on the left is shorter and slightly behind the first. Both candles are lit, casting a warm, orange glow. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image, primarily over the shorter candle and the dark background.

*Sure Thanksgiving happens in Autumn but how many variations can you have on the traditional theme? We at the Quarterly Speed Bump are all about relaxation. Prepping Thanksgiving isn't relaxing even if you don't have to create a new menu every year. We'll leave Turkey-Day recipes to the other guys (though we hope you'll have an excellent holiday). Instead, try this meal on a weekend when you have a couple of hours at home and it's getting crisply cool outside. The active cooking time is slight but the meat will need to simmer for well over an hour. It's casual cooking but, somehow, it'll taste even better after dark has swept across the sky and you have a chance to sit down to a candlelit table. It only takes a few seconds to light a match and a few candles. Remember, this is about slowing down not about getting dressed up to go out. Leave your jeans on and be comfortable. And, if you want to eat dessert first, we say Go Ahead!*



## Steak in a Skillet

Serves 4

- 1 pound round steak, cut into four equal pieces
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 tablespoons of tomato paste (buy the stuff in the tubes if you won't use up the can soon)
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 cups beef stock
- ¼ teaspoon dried mustard
- ⅛ teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pound potatoes
- 1 10 oz. package of frozen italian (wide) green beans
- ½ cup roasted bell peppers, chopped





A note about the potatoes: Use a waxy- or semi-waxy type like Yukon Gold or German Butterball--something that will hold it's shape. Keep the skins on and go organic if at all possible. Either cut potatoes to about the size of your thumb or use small potatoes to begin with.

Lightly coat the beef with flour and pound to a ¼-½ inch thickness (I use a rolling pin and really whack it). Shake off excess flour and brown beef in the oil. Remove the beef, briefly, to a covered plate. Sauté the onion in what's left of the oil until soft. Add the tomato paste, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, stock, and spices to the onions then nestle the beef back into the pan. Bring to a boil then cover and reduce to a simmer. After a half hour, add the potatoes and let simmer, covered, until the beef is tender (45-60 more minutes).

Add the frozen beans and chopped roasted peppers. Heat to boiling, reduce heat, then cover and simmer until the beans are tender (about 10-15 minutes more). Enjoy.

May we suggest a tasteful green salad with a light, homemade vinaigrette (seriously easy and better than bottled) and some crusty bread for sopping up the sauces as accompaniments? Pour the beverage of your choice and make it a good one. Use fancy glasses even if the beverage isn't that exciting. Something that reflects the candlelight is a nice choice and helps with the relaxation. But don't go using the good crystal if you'll only wind up having to wash it by hand later and you hate doing dishes. Either go dishwasher safe or adjust an attitude.

*Need something sweet before you can call it a night? This easy dessert should fit the laid-back vibe. You can make it a day in advance because it just gets better with a head start.*

### **Chocolate Apple Brownies** (pictured, without frosting, on next page)

½ cup butter, softened  
1 cup sugar  
2 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup flour  
2 tablespoons cocoa  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg  
2 cups diced apples (no need to peel)



Cream together the butter and sugar until fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time then splash in the vanilla extract. If you want to get finicky, mix the dry ingredients (that would be the flour, cocoa, baking soda, salt, and spices) together in a separate bowl then add to the wet. Frankly, I don't usually bother with the two-bowl shtick and just dump all the dry ingredients into the mixed wet stuff and mix again until smooth. Your mileage may vary. Once the batter is smooth, mix in the two cups of diced apples. A wooden spoon or a spatula works great for that.

Lightly grease a 9"x13" pan and plop the batter in. Use a spatula to help it spread to the edges and even out, if necessary, because the apples make it quite lumpy.

Bake brownies at 350°F for 35-40 minutes until, when tested with a toothpick, only a few damp crumbs stick to the pick. Let cool for an hour before cutting if you can stand the wait. If you're fond of nuts in your baked goods, 1 cup of toasted, chopped walnuts, pecans, or almonds, all make a good showing. You should have added those in when you mixed in the apples and before you baked your creation. If you forgot the nuts you can use the below frosting to anchor a sprinkling of them on top if you'd like. Oh, and did I mention that this is another recipe from my maternal grandmother, Edith Davis?

For particular decadence, frost with an easy buttercream made with ½ cup softened butter, 1 pound of sifted powdered sugar (if you don't have time to sift, just stir harder until the lumps disappear), 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract, and at least 2 tablespoons of cocoa, with enough milk or cream drizzled in to allow you to mix until smooth. If there's frosting left over after you've covered the cooled brownies to the desired thickness, make graham cracker sandwiches with the frosting as filling. Eat the brownies after dinner. Eat the graham cracker sandwiches any old time with ice cold milk and consider what it was like to be an eight year old with not a care in the world. Then go out and try to recapture some of that wonder. A milk mustache as accessory helps and the sugar high should keep you going for a while. But you don't really need the frosting if you don't want to.

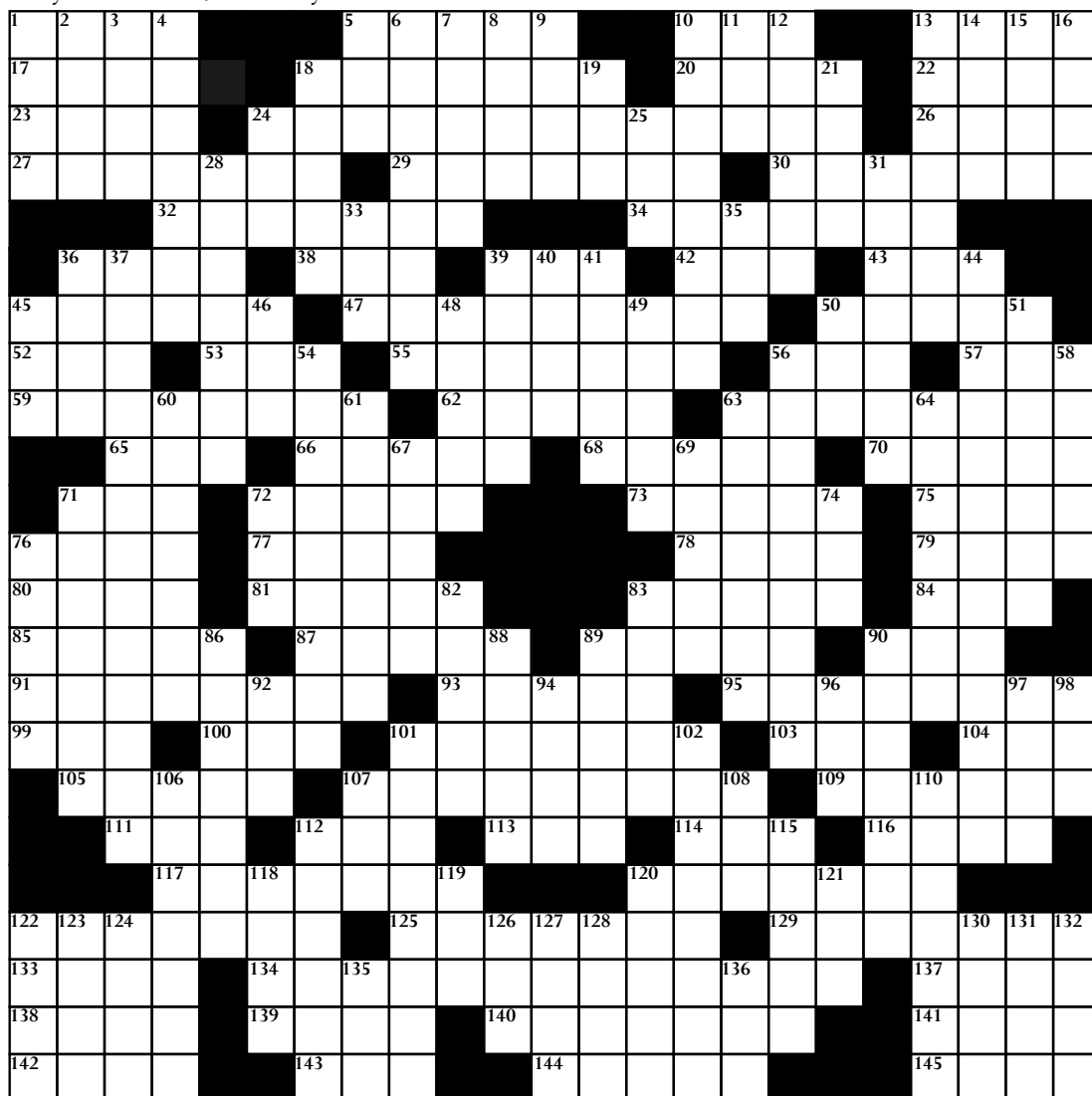




# AT THE CROSSROADS

## QSB Crossword Puzzle #1 (Themeless)

by R.L.Wendt, edited by GDW



### ACROSS

- 1 Oral tradition
- 5 Completely perplexed
- 10 Nashville award giver since 1967, for short
- 13 Nickerson date
- 17 Egyptian deity
- 18 Blind feelers
- 20 Spread uncontrollably, like fire
- 22 Apiece
- 23 DC NLers
- 24 Star also known as Porrima
- 26 British bomber maker

- 27 Hang up wet
- 29 Curio
- 30 Arena
- 32 Wind-blown
- 34 Celtic May Day
- 36 MM minus MCCL
- 38 Beatles' label
- 39 Film with H, C, and P formats, informally
- 42 Res. hall leaders
- 43 Crucial internet serv.
- 45 Enter
- 47 Geocentric, theoretically
- 50 Data converting device
- 52 Gourmet Garten

- 53 \_\_\_ Easley
- 55 Donna sposata
- 56 It may get beaten out of you, with "the"
- 57 Didn't stop
- 59 Blues guitar chord
- 62 Pierce
- 63 Impediments
- 65 Absorb
- 66 Narcotic nut
- 68 Slender boat
- 70 Vex
- 71 Obtained
- 72 Plant support
- 73 Meal with bitter herbs

- 75 Thick wheat noodle
- 76 Sen. from CA
- 77 New Looker
- 78 Curb
- 79 Dilute solution: Abbr. (Var.)
- 80 Bio. chains
- 81 Small unit
- 83 Furze
- 84 LPs' shorter cousins
- 85 Brayers
- 87 Absolutely square
- 89 Raptor roost
- 90 Common prefix
- 91 Brought up
- 93 Disturb
- 95 Mindless mimic
- 99 Inappropriate sharing, briefly
- 100 Examine
- 101 College "attendee," quadrennially
- 103 Hermana de la madre
- 104 Food fragment
- 105 English county
- 107 Patterned carpet
- 109 Make a charge
- 111 Electrically charged one
- 112 Citrus seed
- 113 Middle Eastern flute
- 114 Follow
- 116 Use non-lethal force
- 117 Cavendishes
- 120 Before
- 122 Guy Montag job
- 125 Reeking
- 129 Sallies
- 133 Febreze's opponent
- 134 Polish literary Nobelists, 1980
- 137 Contributes
- 138 Otherwise
- 139 \_\_\_ majesté
- 140 Sororal establishment

- |                                      |   |  |                               |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 141 Approach                         | 18 Singing Lynn's singing sister                | 58 Justin Timberlake's post-Club group | 102 Southeast Asian butterfly |
| 142 Expert                           | 19 Christian broadcasting co.                   | 60 Nail grooming equip.                | 106 Less playful              |
| 143 Legal object                     | 21 This, in Guadalajara                         | 61 Recover value                       | 107 French river              |
| 144 Manners                          | 24 Miracle-__                                   | 63 Psychedelic crisis                  | 108 Tasty Tobiko or Uni       |
| 145 Warehouse Club                   | 25 Slimy lump                                   | 64 Before birth                        | 110 Flowing garments          |
|                                      | 28 Set boundaries                               | 67 Mosaic collection                   | 112 World War II tank         |
| <b>DOWN</b>                          | 31 France neighbor                              | 69 "___ no?"                           | 115 Inclined toward verbosity |
| 1 Bring in                           | 33 Folkloric being                              | 71 Charmingly childlike                | 118 Shaker crystals           |
| 2 Actor Epps                         | 35 Scarlet secretion                            | 72 Super Bowl companions               | 119 Fifth note                |
| 3 Chapati relative                   | 36 E. F. Hutton's actress daughter: ___ Merrill | 74 Reuben requirement                  | 120 Organic compound          |
| 4 Half an em                         | 37 Famous Francis's gal pal                     | 76 Pull along                          | 121 Baker's meas.             |
| 5 Prepare for conflict               | 39 Seaweed related                              | 82 "___ for Murder"                    | 122 Hostile forces            |
| 6 Scratchy-voiced singer-songwriter  | 40 Keystone State, briefly                      | 83 Assembly of old                     | 123 Without foundation        |
| 7 Cy Young Award winner              | 41 Dauber's costume                             | 86 A breakfast hour                    | 124 Dusty crimson             |
| 8 Finnish writer Kilpi               | 44 By chance                                    | 88 ___-air painting                    | 126 Scottish John             |
| 9 Short-handled sickle               | 45 Falsehood                                    | 89 Wears black and a beret             | 127 Crossed                   |
| 10 Standards                         | 46 Opposite of oui                              | 90 Kubota or New Holland               | 128 Worldwide hotel company   |
| 11 Be on duty                        | 48 Edmonton team member                         | 92 Curly-furred cat                    | 130 Mental impression         |
| 12 Discriminators: Var.              | 49 Lengths by widths                            | 94 Bane of adolescent existence        | 131 Waxed cheese              |
| 13 Cul-de-sac                        | 50 Blemish                                      | 96 Former river valley                 | 132 Geo. and Ukr., formerly   |
| 14 Norah and Anoushka's sitarist dad | 51 Leaves behind                                | 97 Gaelic tongue                       | 135 Austin to Houston dir.    |
| 15 A light tan                       | 54 Nickname                                     | 98 Established road: Abbr.             | 136 Eithers                   |
| 16 Objective person?                 | 56 Find a chair                                 | 101 Wide open spaces                   |                               |

## Pile-Up: A Scrambled Letters Game

by Scott Wendt

### ROAD SIGNS

IDERIVESR

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

SOUHONT

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PONINMSEALI

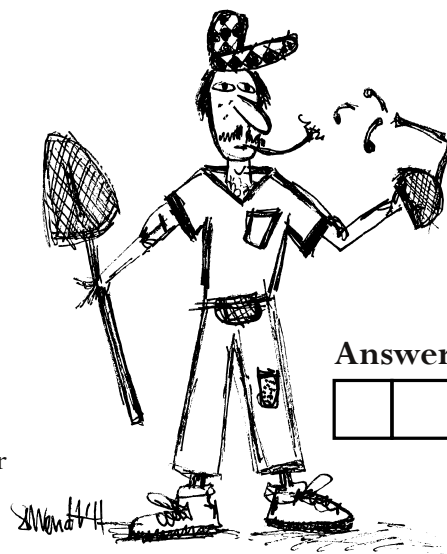
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

ONTBOS

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Unscramble the above four words that might appear on road signs, one letter per square. Then unscramble the circled letters to answer the question asked by the cartoon.

WHAT DID THE PART-TIME TRUCK-DRIVER/  
FARMER LIKE TO  
DIG UP?



Answer:

--	--	--	--	--	--



*In Autumn, the cooling weather and waning daylight make me want to curl up with a good book (I have reasons for doing the same in all the other seasons as well). This time around I believe I'm channeling the spirit of recommendations such as the "Thumping Good Reads" and books recommended by "She Who Would Read Read" as they appeared in the late-lamented A Common Reader book catalog. I found the following four series to be page turners and think the writing will appeal to a number of reading tastes. None of these novels are newly published (with the exception of the forthcoming book in the Saxon Stories series). The quantity of books in each series is also truly comforting when searching for something else to binge read. Try these on for size this Fall. You won't run out of reading material in a hurry.*

# INTERCHANGE: GET READY TO READ

## *Mostly Medieval*

The **Saxon Stories** by Bernard Cornwell are set in 9th century England.

Uhtred, our hero and narrator, is a fictional Saxon kidnapped by Danes (aka Vikings) as a child who grows up in their care. He later chooses different loyalties and participates in many of the major battles leading to Alfred the Great's rule and attempts to unify England. Excitement and swordplay abound as Uhtred's life is bound with Alfred's.



Currently there are five books in the series with the sixth--*Death of Kings*--now available in the UK and coming to the US in January 2012.

Start your reading with the first volume: ***The Last Kingdom***.

The **Brother Cadfael Chronicles** by Ellis Peters (aka Edith Pargeter who died in 1995) are set in the early 12th century during England's long civil war

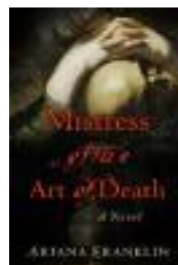


between King Stephen and Empress Maud. They follow the wise, observant, and practical Brother Cadfael as he solves murders he encounters in his life attached to the Benedictine order at Shrewsbury Abbey. Cadfael is not your typical monk for he lived a long and

adventurous life before he chose to join the Order.

And he still believes that the end can justify the means. You may be familiar with the TV series starring Sir Derek Jacobi--the series is excellent--but the books are even better. There are 20 books plus a couple of short stories. Start your reading with the first volume: ***A Morbid Taste for Bones***.

The **Mistress of the Art of Death** books by Ariana Franklin (aka Diana Norman who died 2011) are set in late 12th century England. King Henry II has asked his cousin, the King of Sicily, for an expert medical examiner or "master of the art of death" in order to



solve a troublesome murder. The King sends Adelia Aguilar, instead--a "mistress of the art of death" and expert female physician. This is an early CSI with added danger because of suspicions of witchcraft, meddling monarchy, and a powerful church.

Not to be missed is the relationship between Rowley Picot and Adelia. There are only four books in the series, alas, due to the author's death. Start reading with the first: ***Mistress of the Art of Death***.

## *Renaissance Realm*

The **House of Niccolò** books by Dorothy Dunnett (who died 2001) are set in 15th century Europe. We follow the adventures of Niccolò (aka Claes, aka Nicholas van der Poele, aka Nicholas de Fleury) as he rises from servant to powerful merchant in these



action packed pages. Dunnett did an extraordinary amount of research and the books have much historical detail but you'll find that almost everything--even the seemingly inconsequential--has a purpose for moving the story forward. There are

8 books in the series which serves as a prequel to Dunnett's **Lymond Chronicles**. Start with book one: ***Niccolò Rising***.

# Library List

Books on gardening can be found in the 635 section of the Dewey Decimal System.

Those living in Western North America will enjoy the comprehensive Sunset *Western Garden Book*. Also useful is the *Southern Living Garden Book*.

Books on astronomy can be found in the 520 section of the Dewey Decimal System.

Good titles for the amateur astronomer living in the city (and dealing with light pollution) are *The Backyard Astronomer's Guide* by Terence Dickinson & Alan Dyer (2008), *City Astronomy* by Robin Scagell (1994), and *Stargazing with Binoculars* by Robin Scagell & David Frydman (2011).

Watch the 598 section of the Dewey Decimal System if you want to learn more about birds and birdwatching. Liz Johnson recommended some great volumes in her interview earlier in this magazine (see the On the Road to... article).

Books on spiders can be found in the 595 section of the Dewey Decimal System.

If your interest in spiders lies chiefly in folklore and history, try *The Book of the Spider: A Compendium of Arachno-Facts and Eight Legged Lore* by Paul Hillyard (1998). If you just want to identify the spider hanging out on your back deck, track down the *National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to Insects and Spiders & Related Species of North America* by Arthur V. Evans and Craig Tufts (2007) or a similar field guide.

Who doesn't love a cookbook (okay, probably a lot of people)? The Dewey Decimal System number you're looking for is 641. And, while you're in the 641s, check out the books on canning and preserving. Make sure you get one that's been recently published--although your library will most likely weed out the outdated material--so you have the latest safety procedures.

If you just feel like reading poetry, head to the 811 and other 8XX sections. You'll find lots to ponder there. Volumes of James Whitcomb Riley may be hard to find but other American or world poets will be sitting on the shelves waiting for your visit.

Finally, if you want to read up on ballroom dance before you hit the floor, you need to be in the 793 section of the Dewey Decimal System.





### ***Towards the Sun***

Alexi Murdoch

[www.aleximurdoch.com](http://www.aleximurdoch.com)

This is a shorter album than most that was reportedly recorded in one session. The slow intimate sounds of Murdoch's mellow voice, acoustic guitar, and lyrics make it well worth your while. Favorite tracks: "Some Day Soon" and "Slow Revolution."

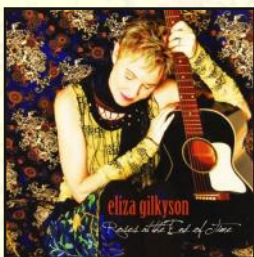


### ***Carrying Lightning***

Amanda Shires

[www.amandashires.net](http://www.amandashires.net)

Shires is a fiddler and songwriter with a raw and genuine quality to her music. A little old-timey and a lot of storytelling. Favorite tracks: "When You Need a Train It Never Comes" and "Detroit Or Buffalo."



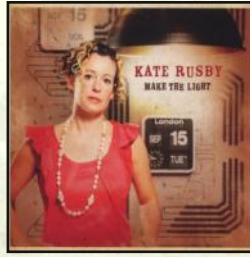
### ***Roses at the End of Time***

Eliza Gilkyson

[www.elizagilkyson.com](http://www.elizagilkyson.com)

Like other american folk singers, Gilkyson's songs can be political or comment on societal woes. But something else keeps me coming back for more.

Favorite tracks: "Death in Arkansas," "Looking for a Place," and "Slouching Towards Bethlehem,"



### ***Make the Light***

Kate Rusby

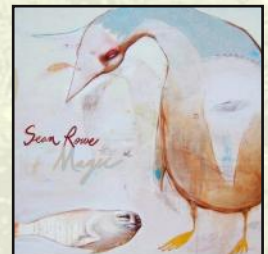
[www.katerusby.com](http://www.katerusby.com)

I first discovered Kate Rusby on the soundtrack to the Brit Com, Clatterford (don't judge!). There's a celtic lilt to her singing and the songwriting is top notch and moving--it sounds traditional but is all new. Favorite tracks: "The Wishing Wife" & "Walk The Road."

## OFF THE BEATEN TRACKS

My brother, if asked, would be happy to tell you that all the music I listen to sounds the same and is either folk music or The Beatles. He may have a point there somewhere. For this season's column, I submit that folk or folk-inspired music--call it roots music, maybe--is completely appropriate. We have slower songs (sometimes). We have a bit of melancholy. We have atmosphere. Autumn's got all that too. These albums are not necessarily recommended in winter, however. There's too much melancholia then as it is.

If you have time to settle in (maybe under a blanket) and listen to the lyrics, you'll have stories sung to you as a reward. Here are the five folk-y albums that I think will be seeing heavy rotation in my music queue for the next couple of months. Maybe you'll like them too?



### ***Magic***

Sean Rowe

[www.seanrowe.net](http://www.seanrowe.net)

Wow, that baritone voice! A decidedly intimate recording, a little bit of an ache, some road and life weariness coming through. Favorite tracks: "Surprise" and "Night."

# UNQUILATIONS

## Essays in Dance

by Jessica Herrick



*"And we should consider every day lost on which we have not danced at least once."*

*—Friedrich Nietzsche*

Hello. My name is Jessica Herrick, and I am a ballroom dance addict.

My addiction materialized sometime between 7:30 and 7:45 on the evening of April 7, 2010. Before that fateful night, I had lived my life free of dance in any form save that of the high school sway, the awkward back-and-forth shifting that us '80s generation teenagers thought was so daring. I felt that any other dancing was quite out of the realm of possibility, as I have always considered myself rather graceless and clumsy (an opinion reinforced by 37 years of inexplicably stumbling against unsuspecting walls, tripping on blameless carpet, and acquiring innumerable bruises both large and small).

So when I saw the ad for a ballroom dance class geared toward those of us with two left feet, I was intrigued. I had only a vague idea of what was involved in ballroom dancing. Terms like foxtrot and waltz had some hazy association with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, mixed with visions of Cinderella whirling about with Prince Charming while being cheered on by talking mice. But what lady doesn't want to be Cinderella for at least a few minutes, right? I screwed up my courage, figured the worst that could

happen was that I would fall and break an instructor's leg at which point I would flee the scene never to return...and signed up for a month's worth of Introduction to Ballroom classes.

I am not what you would call a social butterfly. In fact, I am much more comfortable as a wall flower watching the

butterflies flit by at a safe distance.

That being said, walking into a dance studio for the first time in my life with the intention to not only speak to, but dance with, strangers, was the single most frightening thing I have ever done. I came so very close to turning around at the door, my knees watery and my brain shrieking incoherent warnings about public humiliation. Honestly, I think the only reason I forced myself to open that studio door was the thought of the \$32 I had already spent on the classes. The *non-refundable* \$32.

Thankfully, I did open the door. A dashing, handsome young man warmly welcomed me, managed to discern from my terrified, breathless mumblings that I was there for a class, and invited me to take a seat, as I was a few minutes early. I perched stiffly on the corner of a sofa and

glumly watched several couples float effortlessly around the floor. This did nothing to calm my nerves. Rather, it made me ever more certain that I was about to make a gigantic fool of myself. How could I ever hope to achieve such grace and poise? I was doomed.





It turned out that the dashing young man was the class instructor. He gently herded me and my classmates through the first basic steps of a waltz, using humor and enthusiasm in a (generally futile) attempt to settle our nerves. First we practiced the steps on our own, but all too quickly the time came to try it with a partner. Most of my classmates had come as pairs, so as one of the only people there without a dance partner, I had to dance with the instructor. This is it, I thought. Hello, embarrassment, disgrace, shame. He directed me on how to take frame, I took a deep breath, and, shaking, moved my right foot back into a new world.

For here...here I found magic. The magic of flying, soaring around a dance floor in a world made up only of you and your partner, music and motion. The magic of shared effort, and hard-won victories over recalcitrant muscles unwilling to challenge gravity. The magic of creation, of beauty, of pain, of sweat, of precision...the magic of ballroom dance. I didn't know all of this at the

time, of course, could never have articulated these ideas during that first waltz. But I knew that I loved it, instantly and unreservedly, and that was enough.

Needless to say, I came back for the next class, and the next, and the next. A year and a half later, that dashing handsome instructor is my dance partner, and one of the best friends I have ever had. We have performed and even competed at several different venues. I help him teach the Introduction to Ballroom class that so terrified me that evening. We share a deep love for Argentine tango, one of the most intimate dances in existence. I am at the studio six days a week, sometimes seven. At the risk of sounding impossibly clichéd, dance changed my life. All because I took a chance, and walked through that studio door.

My name is Jessica Herrick, and I am a ballroom dance addict. And I wouldn't have it any other way.



B. Herrick



*Jessica Herrick is a regular columnist for Quarterly Speed Bump. Come back for the Winter Issue to learn more about her continuing adventures in ballroom dance. Contact Jessica at [undulations@quarterlyspeedbump.com](mailto:undulations@quarterlyspeedbump.com) or learn more at [www.any2cantango.com](http://www.any2cantango.com).*

▲ **First Ballroom Gown.**

◀ Previous page: **Jessica & her instructor during an Argentine tango competition.**

*Photos by B. Herrick.*





*Don't forget to enjoy the journey.*



**WE'LL BE BACK  
DECEMBER 22  
WITH  
MUCH MORE.**

**HAVE A  
MARVELOUS  
AUTUMN!**

