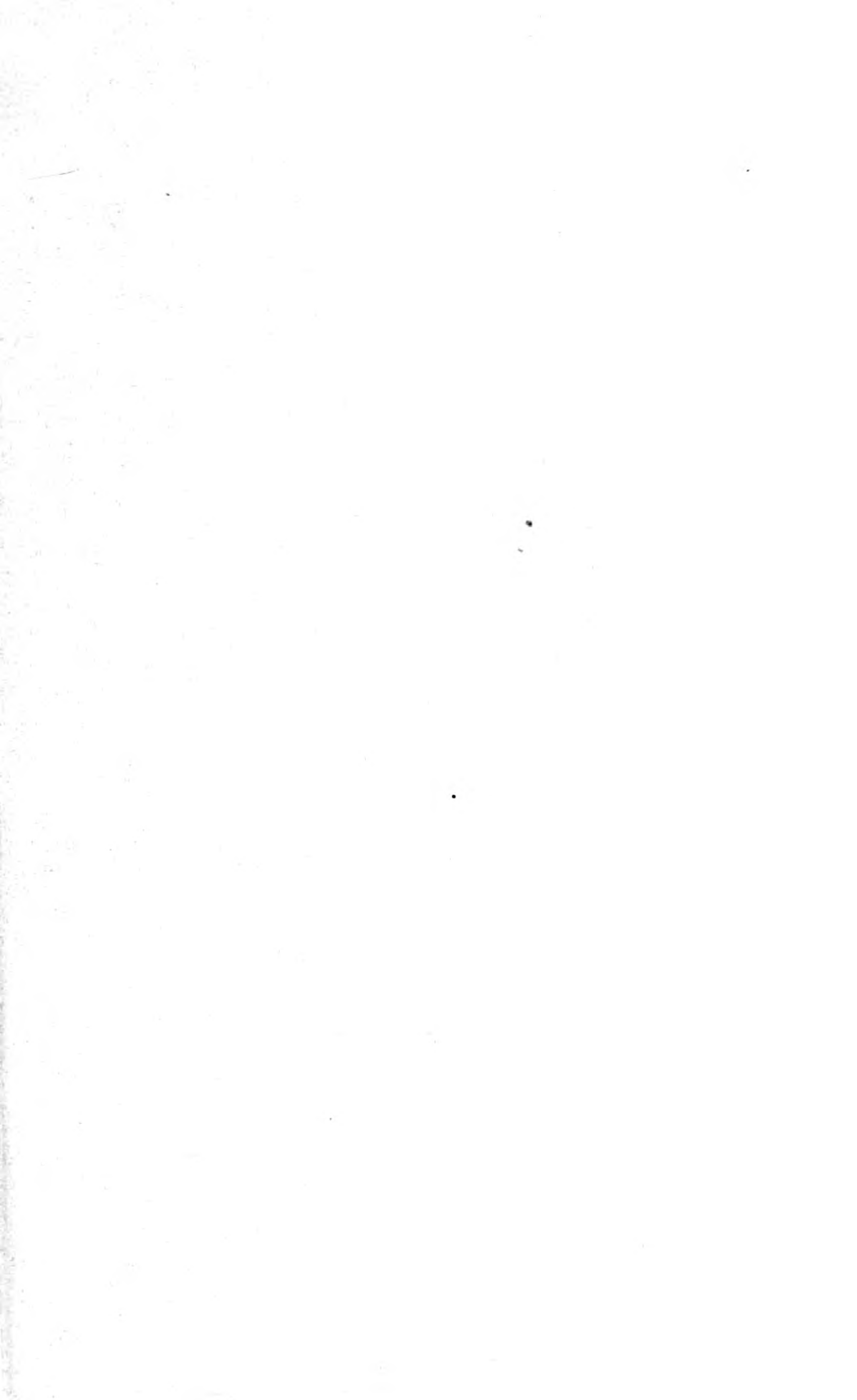


The Tinker & More

by  
Julie Hopp









# The Tinker and More

Poems by  
Julie Hopp



Press

Roseburg, Oregon

5/20

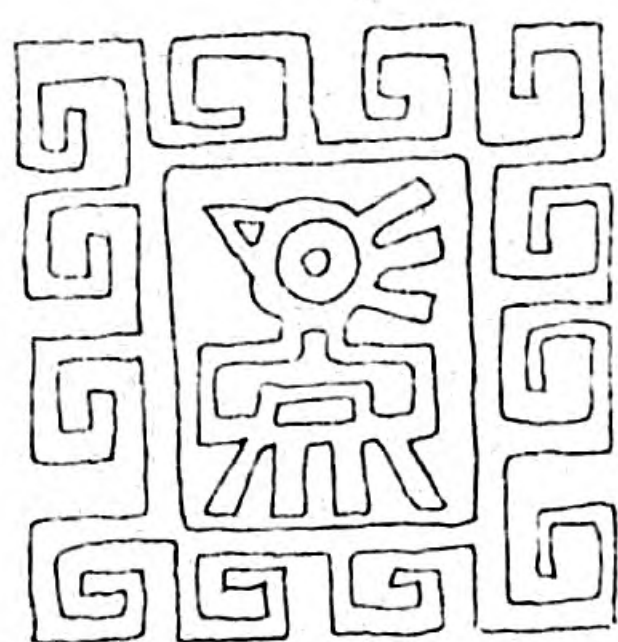
Julie Hopp

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Press

Roseburg, Oregon



## The Tinker

A clatter and rattle approaches,  
Pans and pots jangling, perhaps,  
In the wooden frame of a tinker's cart  
Jolting along the rutted track.

Hunched deaf and shoeless over the footboard  
Death the tinker sags.

Her burlap sack, half-full of bones,  
Slumps across the cart's worn boards.  
A femur rattles against a sauce pan,  
A clavicle dents the ladle's cup.

My limbs tighten around the tree;  
Her bole is slender one hundred feet above the earth  
My armpit clenched over pitchy branch,  
Fingers goring the bark's cleft;  
A dead limb explodes under my foot -  
My left leg pedals in the air.

The limb's fall muffled by the needles' net,  
The cart's approach, and the clamouring



Of pans and lids for more dead limbs:  
Kneecaps. My knucklebones.

Tree, I beg you:

Hold me safe, hidden in your branches.

Let her pass.

I'll leave the cones I climbed to pick,

I'll strangle squirrels,

I'll eat the bark-chewing beetles,

Chainsaw loggers,

But protect me here,

Cheek and nose smashed against

Sticky bark,

Eyes poked by needles,

Fingers scored by spiny cones -

Don't drop me.

Tin and pewter rattle for a ball-joint socket.

My skull

Tinker! Mother Death:

There can't be room!

The wagon moos with stew pots

Axles low beneath the cauldrons.

My left foot digs in more securely

I listen again to the death rattle:

Cow bells.

Plumas National Forest



## Fall's Web

Stretched from white-bellied hemlock  
To pine's furred arm, a strand,  
The skein spun from flocks grazed  
On the smallest wisps of thistles  
Dried in September's thirsty sky.

The sheep drunk on algae from a rusty tub,  
Lip glazed porcelain and water green  
In the noon-sun.

Their fleece carded on barbed wire,  
Its metal still so dew-heavy in morning's mist  
As to consider, for a moment,  
Unfurling its barbs and letting forth the flock  
To roam, dazed, among the firs  
And, finding other webs,

To leave behind on bark or branch  
A silvered strand to compete with spider's art  
And catch the light.  
As a window's crack  
Steals the whole pane's due,  
Binding it in a gleaming thread,  
To melt the gravelly Umpquan waters  
To a dry October bed

Flourmoy Valley

October 1985



## *Oak in August*

Oak, ponderously lobed and twisted,  
Hoists her weight between a sky  
Parched and cloudless,  
And long grass petrified in bright shards

No neighbors limbs graze her branches,  
Shading neither grove nor knoll,  
But bleached and open pasture,  
Deer-crossed, hoof-pocked.

A thousand arms lifting in supplication  
Her bitter corns have  
Drawn no clustered seedlings

To white oak grown huge in centuries' resignation.

The weight and heat of uncompanioned summer  
Are only blades of grass tickling the thick bark,  
But swords enough to pierce my naked feet.

Flornoy Valley  
October 1985  
for Stefi

## Orgasm

If, after the waves,  
Comes death,  
Labyris gleaming,  
I will not resist.

November 1985



Liz

Small bones

Small house

Small horse

Eyes shine

Through round glasses

My heart grows large.

## Cliff View

Dwarfed from above by winds  
And the grudging gifts of rock,  
So from below the twisted cedar  
Shrinks to nothing.  
Our eyes fail us.

The farm below unfolds as if a map,  
The plums in rows,  
The garden square,  
Corrugations of barn roof  
Written in light and shade.

Clearly seen, the past appears,  
Irrevocably arrayed.  
The doubts so tangled  
From the view of hay-strewn floor  
Are from above reduced to folds and creases,  
Boundary lines.

Callahan Ridge

Oct. '85



## A Present

Cats drag in moles, small shrews.

I come trailing scraps of paper.

Verses dripping with intent

Expressions of love as peculiar

As the trailed intestines of mice and birds

to Liz

Oct. '85

## Liz

The mouth upcurved in sleep,  
The sweeping line parting  
The dry lips.

A temple falls revealed  
Under the dark hair's ragged cut.  
One white strand in the soft, short  
Sea of black.

A vein beneath the crosshatching  
Of knuckle's cover; the hand twitches  
And the reins of night tighten.  
Outside ponies nicker.

Glasses lie unfolded on the table  
Against the shirts worn smooth with their rubbing

I lift my head to let it drop again  
Into the crook of arm's warm bend.

Nov. '85

## Bound

So small a space--  
Less than arm's reach  
The table's edge,  
The carpet's aisle  
A foot's half swinging in breadth;

Too little space to drop the gaze,  
To summon stillness from

Table leg or carpet-tack,  
To contain the fumbled, slowdrawn words;  
Tumbling, belly-flopping down from  
Palate's top to stomach roped in knots

I bind myself:  
Twine fingers,  
Lower eyes,  
Chew cheek and tongue,



Lest the outfly  
Of sobs and sighs,  
Moans and whimpers,  
Obtuse questions,  
Absurd replies,  
Hungry stares  
And teary eyes,  
Outswell the doorframe,  
Curtain rods,  
Crack the windows and  
Warp the frames,  
So that, like rearing pony,  
I am banished,  
With harsh words,  
To bare and muddy ground.

Nov. '85

## Two Boys

I hear my death invoked -  
"Bang! Bang! you're dead!"  
The cap-gun's crack  
Called down by boys outgrown  
The twisting off of cricket's legs  
And warming now to the scent of blood.

Soon, the shotgun's blast,  
The flurry of wings,  
'The buckling of does  
Will not be enough:

A worthier opponent will be sought,  
One who'll comprehend the pointed nuzzle  
And frenzied eyes,  
One who'll beg and scream and fight  
And then upyield her essence, her force of life,  
All that gun steel lacks and such men's lives.

Melrose

Nov. '85



Open on the earth  
Mouth agape, red veins running  
Sun-fallen: a plum

Jan. '86

Two pails of water  
Thick with oil and salt:  
Gull's wings -  
How distant the sky!

Bandon

Jan. '86

Julie Hopp

Full moon pulls away  
The spring tide to reveal the stars:  
Purple-fingered

Bandon

Feb. '86



Like small, wriggling fish  
The seedlings in their silver wraps  
Fall into the earth

Tree planting  
Rainbow's End  
Feb. '86

Deer nibbling at moss --  
Your lips graze among my hairs  
To reveal the bud

For Fran

Feb. '86

## Anal Sex

Dig, until the pools of iris  
Fill with tears, and beating against  
Her rib-walled cage  
My heart pounds wide  
The humid corridor and airs  
The soils of night  
To the Crooked furrow of  
The oiled, three-jointed plow

For Fran

Mar. '86



## The Desert Is Humming

Winds have shaped the granite  
As the breasts and buttocks  
Of huge women pressed with sweat  
Together on the sands, as on beach towels too small.

The squat cactus bursts with deep hues,  
Smelling, in the dry land, of ripened watermelons

Under the sands wait the tortoises,  
Above them run the hares,  
And through the rocks run dikes:  
The quartz-filled veins exuded  
In the joy of heat and pressure --  
Stones milky as clouds  
And crystals empty as the sky

Joshua Tree

Apr. '86

## Lesbians are Natural Phenomena

I saw myself  
Standing at the edge of the sea,  
Wet and wanting to get wetter

I cried out  
As the ocean sent another wave  
Crashing over me

Deeper,  
I ask her to cover me,  
To keep me smeared with foam,  
Rocking in her wake

She is a wave,  
She throws herself upon the sand  
For a moment

And in that moment I dream:  
"Ah, she is at peace, she will stay here,  
Licking gently at my toes.  
And I will scratch her sandy back."

But the sea draws herself up  
And pulls away.  
The sand beneath my feet recedes  
"She draws back and the earth goes with her,"  
I panic,  
"The whole world is leaving me,  
I must follow her,  
must drown myself in her waves.

But the sand holds me  
And i settle a little deeper into the earth.

I think of standing at the edge of a woman,  
Wet  
And wanting to get wetter.

I cry out as she sends another wave  
Crashing over me.

Deeper,  
I ask her to cover me,  
To keep me smeared with foam,  
Rocking in her wake.

She lies down beside me  
For a moment,  
And in that moment i dream:  
"Ah, she is at peace,  
She will stay here,  
Kissing at my breasts  
And I will stroke her back."

But she draws herself up  
And walks away.

"The earth is leaving me,"  
I panic,  
"I must stay with her  
And hold her.  
There will be nothing left  
For me to stand on.

But the earth holds me  
And i settle a little deeper  
Into myself.









