



# ***At the Edges of the West***

## ***Volume 2***

*Travels on US Interstate 5 and Hwy 99*

*Travels on US Highway 101 and Hwy 1*

*Memories of Pacific Coast Places*

*West Coast Snapshots & Snippets*

*Delightful Coastal Spur Roads*

*Great Agricultural Valleys*

*Coastal, Sierra, and Cascade Mountains*

Short Poems, Haiku, Photos

Quatrains, Limericks, Graphics

Concrete Poems, Jokes, Places

Rhymed and Free Verse, Text Art

## **By Mike Garofalo**

Vancouver, Washington

### **Things Stick Tight**

Of things mechanical

I've little ken,

I fumble and fuss

from start to end.

Where a mechanic

pushes right

I pull left till

things stick-tight,

And bend things

I shouldn't bend,

till they ain't right.

I could blame my bumbling  
On 80 years of overwork or bursitis  
but such evasions are merely a clever  
hiding of the truth that I never  
Was a skilled toolman whatsoever.

### **Winter at the Door**

All the cabbages in our garden  
are robust green to the core;  
All the peppers are dead black,  
not green and red anymore.  
The onions are thriving,  
the tomatoes all gone,  
The lettuce is rising,  
the Fava beans all stored—  
It's wet now in Red Bluff,  
Winter's knocking at the door.

outside the door  
bone dry  
    dog turds  
*laced* with frost

outside the door  
the cold wind  
blows more  
quite a roar

inside the door  
gardening, art,  
and literature  
books galore  
litter the floor

close the damn door  
keep cold air out

keep warm air in  
it's simple, amen

### **2+2=4: Now and Forever More**

A lady was studying her Bible  
in a Cayucos cafe one foggy day.  
We somehow struck up a conversation,  
and she tried to show me The Way.  
She believed every Bible Word she read,  
and she said,  
"If the Bible said,  $2+2=5$ ;  
I would believe that until I die."

I smiled; hid my contempt.  
Then paid my cafe bill, and  
counted out a four dollar tip.  
Headed out on the very long  
Cayucos Pier to fish.  
A fine cool fisherman's day ...  
Luckily, I caught four fish

With some guarded doubts and disbelief,  
I don't believe in all that I or others think;  
Fictions and fantasies for fun are fine,  
But I prefer a factual ordinary useful mind.

### **Chanting Canyon Streams**

Opening bell  
echoes from the canyon walls—  
raindrops on the river

The sounds of rocks bouncing off rocks  
the shadows of trees traced on trees

I sit, still...

The canyon river chants,  
Moving Mountains

The sermon spun on the still point:  
dropping off eternity, picking up time;  
letting go of self, awakened to Mind.

The shadows of trees traced on trees  
moving to and fro effortlessly.

The sounds of rocks bouncing off rocks.  
Karen and I once saw a man  
    Killed  
by a large falling rock.

### **Electric Fatalities**

What you see might never be,  
Changed for the better by factories.  
What you hear might bring you fear,  
Of nuclear power plants coming here.

San Onofre, Humboldt Bay, Chehalis all Closed,  
Nuclear waste locked in hot concrete commodes.  
Diablo Canyon headed for the same fate,  
San Luis Obispo, Avila, spared somewhat late.

We can't deny Fukushima's tsunami demise,  
Our West Coast shares that Ring of Fire Alive.  
We shudder and shake in earthquakes strong.  
Yes, it can suddenly become horribly wrong.

## **The Raven Broke Open the Magical Clam**

In the Time Before Everything Changed  
the Transformers and Changers  
lived in the Ocean's Womb  
before the Waters receded.  
Then They Came, and Everything Changed.

The Raven Broke Open the Magical Clam  
An Amazing New World then Began.  
Both inside and outside the Magical Clam  
Coming Forth, Coming From, Coming, coming

Then They Came, and Everything Changed.  
People and new plants were created.  
New mosses, mushrooms, camas bulbs,  
and huckleberries appeared.  
New cedars, spruces, firs,  
and salal berries appeared.  
The San Juan Islands, Hood Fjord,  
Salish Seas and Salmon appeared.  
Enemies, diseases, and famine appeared.

People learned from the Transformers/Changers/Teachers:  
Raven, Coyote, Honne, Xwane, Turtle,  
Bear and Thunderbird.  
How to become Human Beings  
in a dangerous World.  
How to become heartless at times.  
How to gather, hunt, and fish for food.  
How to weave and keep a fire.  
What plants to eat, what not.  
What to Believe and Do  
in order for their tribe to survive.  
How to deal with surprise.

All kinds of beings emerged-created.  
People lived, worked, Spoke and mated.

Coyote howled and cheered!  
Thunderbird ordered the rain and thunder.  
Shape-Shifters played and plundered.  
Xwane saved two girls from blunders.

The Magical Clam: A Singularity Opening,  
Beginnings Beyond the Understanding  
Of Ordinary Times and Minds.  
From Something New Came Something New.

The Raven cawed, gurred, mmmured, croaked  
then hid in trees away from folks

### ***Yellow Patty-Pans in the Pure Sunshine***

Hardly thinking, mind still,  
Strolling out into the garden;  
Awakening in the dawn glow,  
Summer sun rising over the cloudless Cascades.  
Deep green fat squash leaves,  
Worry free, covering the damp clay soil.  
My hands search the straw mulch for  
Spaghetti squash, patty pans, crook-necks,  
zucchini, pumpkins, cantaloupes, cucumbers, gourds.  
All fattening on water, sun, and soil.

I touch the vines and smile, grasping colored fruits,  
Worry free, pleased just to be  
Me, the sum of things, I am That,  
Living and dead, endless vines of beings,  
A billion bees sucking a trillion flowers,  
In the Valley Spirit of a million summers.  
San Joaquin and Sacramento Valley Time.  
Past and Present merge Now—

As I fill to the brim with twining thoughts,  
Fattening on ideas, memories, fantasies, images, reflections,  
A pumpkin mind, full of invisible mind seeds,

A growing matrix of wonderful words.

As it should be.

***Walnut Trees on a Winter Day***

Along 99W one January day,  
men were cutting down  
an old walnut grove; and  
this led me to say:

The Mind is a vast Bodhi Grove,  
The body a Bodhi tree.  
Dirt is in every cranny,  
Flowers blossom, leaves bud,  
nuts drop, leaves fall.

The Bodhi Trees were  
cut down,  
The Bright Mirror shattered.

Beginning with nothing,  
Replant the trees,  
remake the mirror—

Make one's mind like a mirror,  
One's body like the Giving Tree.  
Reflect accurately  
and impartially;  
Give nuts and shade.

***Skeletons in Love***

Live long enough,  
and the losses pile up,  
Till you're tossed away



like an old cracked cup,  
All stained and worm,  
dulled by time,  
Useless, leaking,  
not worth a dime.  
Then, you die, sometime.

Egoless, your flesh falls away,  
You, a skeleton becomes;  
Lost in Nirvana,  
lights out,  
all done.

Nine months later  
to your utter surprise,  
you awaken in bed,  
Changed, very much alive.  
Not as Kafka's  
*Ungeheures Ungeziefer*,  
or as Casper the Ghost  
all covered in fur;  
Not as a *Memaloose* on the Run,  
but as a horny Stud Skeleton.

Then, the Skeleton Woman  
drinks your dry tears,  
Drums your still heart,  
and sings away fears,  
Slips under the quilts  
and gives Love a Whirl;  
Spinning, twirling,  
your reborn as a Girl.

Forget yourself,  
crack the cup on the floor,  
Speak in a new voice,  
the past is no more.

### ***The Illusions of Seven O'clock***

TV is Deceiving—  
On episodes of comedy sit-coms  
(But few are funny, laugh tracks wrong)  
Or on:  
news on political themes,  
betting on sports teams,  
ads on buying things,  
shows on alien beings,  
laughing on que in shows,  
faked survival naked tests,  
beer is OK, smoking is Not.

These are hardly strange  
with colors and graphics galore  
drone photography, graphics and more.  
And narrators so melodious.  
People are going to Dream  
Of fake heroes and heroines,  
No matter how odious.

Somewhere, a tired old man,  
asleep in his shorts,  
Dreams of tortillas and tomatillos,  
Eating in cafes in foggy ports,  
Catching flies with chopsticks,  
Reading Wallace Stevens' *Quartz*.

---

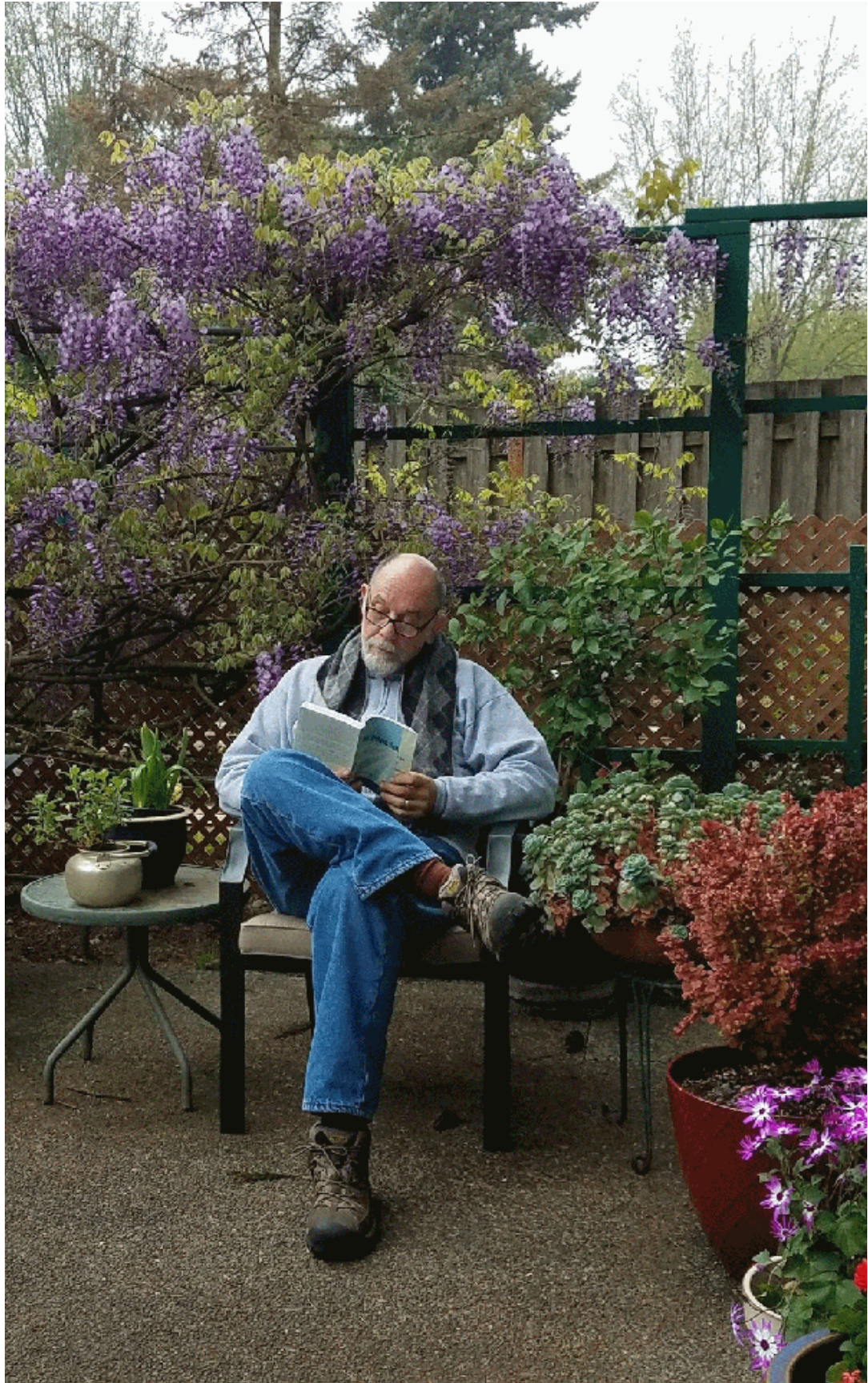
At the Edges of the West  
Volume 2  
Memories of Pacific Coast Places  
US Interstate 5 and Hwy 99

US Highway 101 and Hwy 1

By Michael P. Garofalo

Vancouver, Washington

*Version 1, January 2025*



[\*Brief Biography of Michael P. Garofalo\*](#)

[\*Poetry by Michael P. Garofalo\*](#)

[\*Uncle Mike's Cellphone Poetry Series\*](#)

[\*Cuttings: Haiku and Short Poems\*](#)

[\*Pulling Onions: Over 1,000 One-Liners\*](#)

[\*Green Way Research Subject Index\*](#)

[\*Cloud Hands Blog\*](#)

[\*Facebook\*](#)

[\*Four Days in Grayland\*](#)

[\*How to Live a Good Life\*](#)

[\*The Fireplace Records Koan Collection\*](#)

[\*The Spirit of Gardening\*](#)

[\*Concrete Poetry\*](#)

[\*25 Steps and Beyond Anthology\*](#)

[\*US Highway 101 and Hwy 1\*](#)

[\*US Highway 99 and Interstate 5\*](#)

[\*At the Edges of the West, Volume 1\*](#)

[\*At the Edges of the West, Volume 2\*](#)

***All of the text, graphics, photos, and webpage design  
by Michael P. Garofalo.***

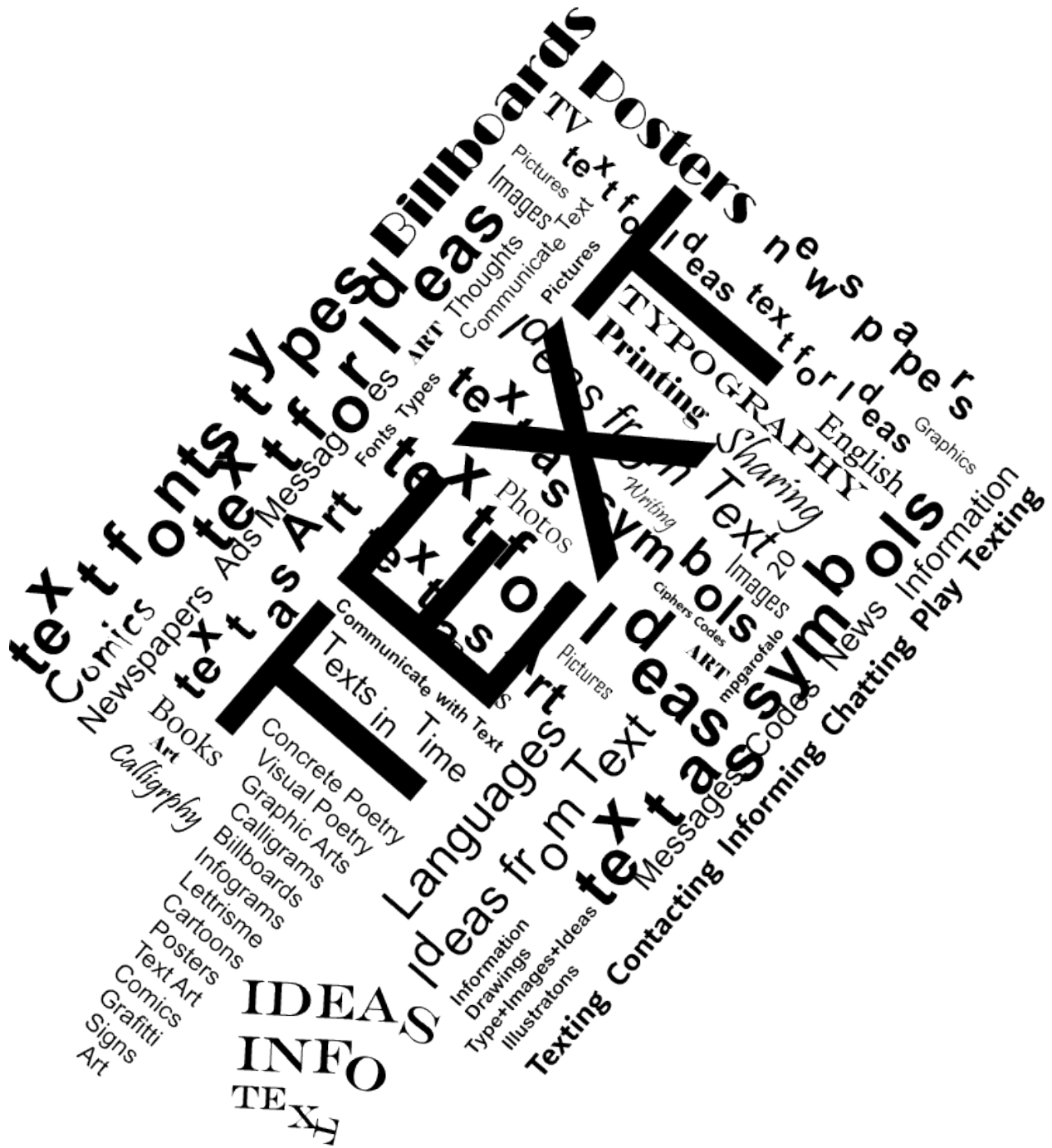
***Version 1, January 2025, Layout, Format, Short Poems, Links***

***© Michael Peter Garofalo [Mike Garofalo], Green Way Research***

***Vancouver, Washington***

***All Rights Reserved***

Michael Peter Garofalo (1946-) grew up in East Los Angeles, was educated in Catholic Schools, lived with two other brothers, graduated (B.A., M.S.) from local universities, married Blanche Karen Eubanks, served in the US Air Force, worked in and managed many City and Los Angeles County Public Libraries, raised two children, socialized, traveled, and learned. Retired as the Regional Administrator, East Region, Los Angeles County Public Library in 1998. We moved to a rural 5 acre property in Red Bluff, in the North Sacramento Valley, CA. Webmaster since 1999. Worked part-time for the Corning School District (Technology and Media Services Manager); and as a yoga, Taijiquan, and fitness club instructor until 2016. Traveled extensively in Northern California, Oregon, and Washington. We both retired, and we moved to Vancouver, WA, in 2017. Currently in 2025: reading, writing, gardening, harmonica playing, string figures playing, home chores, yurt camping, exercise, traveling in the Northwest, walking, web publishing, family events, poetry research and writing, photography, Northwest research, Nature mysticism, sports events, and other projects.



[\*Exhibits at the Cyber Gazebo: Text Art and Concrete Poetry\*](#)

By Michael P. Garofalo

[\*25 Steps and Beyond Anthology\*](#)

***At the Edges of the West***

***Volume 2***

***Travels on US Interstate 5 and Hwy 99***

***Travels on US Highway 101 and Hwy 1***

***Memories of Pacific Coast Places***

***West Coast Snapshots & Snippets***

***Great Agricultural Valleys***

***Coastal, Sierra, and Cascade Mountains***

***By Michael Peter Garofalo***







*This document was last edited, revised, reformatted, added to, relinked, changed, improved, or modified by Mike Garofalo on January 15, 2025.*