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Poems

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Poems

Eric Hoffheiser

Eric Hoffheiser's two poems View from Ubehebe Peak and How to get Rid of Sorrow were written as part of a creative writing group using the theme of Moving On.

MOVING ON

Mari Hansen (English)

Jake Hjelmtveit, (English)

Christopher Peterson (English)

Eric Hoffheiser (English)

Hans Hetrick, Graduate Student Mentor (English)

Richard Robbins, Faculty Mentor (English)

For our group, *Moving On* represented the emotional weight in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. *Moving On* implies change, and all good prose and verse possess change. As creative writers, we explored this theme through subjects ranging from the death of a loved one to loss of one's faith. By focusing on our theme, we examined our own lives and improved our creative writing skills. We attained our goals through observation, discussion, information gathering, writing, and revision of creative work. We met frequently to discuss our work and ideas. We strove to bring each individual piece to a publishable quality and plan to submit our works for publication. In the hopes that others will gain from our awareness, we plan to present our writing at the conference, individually reading our work to the audience.

View from Ubehebe Peak

Stones wander unseen at night, betrayed by trails
spanning hundreds of feet behind—secrets the desert
couldn't keep. The Racetrack is a dry lakebed stretched

along the northern arm of Death Valley, where stones
scoot over *playa* cobbled like snake scales. The same crags
falcons scan for a meal are where rainwater steals down

to the valley floor. Water pools under cracked crust and turns
the ground into a slippery chute. Wind rips free from canyons,
bowling families of stones forward like tumbleweeds in errant

lines. Old stones shush the young ones' whoops and hollers,
stressing the virtue of inside voices. Crop circle fanatics think
bored alien children park their saucers above the valley and fire

laser beams at the stones, their way of playing a practical
joke. Others believe the breath of the Timbisha Shoshone
tribe invokes spirits who stir stones' hearts to move.

- Eric Hoffheiser

How to Get Rid of Sorrow

Son, pick up that white stone with spots
like your freckles that fade in winter.
Roll it in your hand. Feel grooves water
opened year after year, and the angled tip
yet to erode. This might be an arrowhead.
Roll until the texture grinds calluses

on your palm to smooth nubs. Skin layers
worn off are splinters of excess sorrow.
Press them into the stone. Someday
you will understand tears and laughter
are stones washed down the same river.
Water shaves away sorrow, the rough jags
of a stone, when two of them carom

edge to edge. Throw so the first strike
pops the stone forward like a water bug
floating on pockets of air. They say
the number of skips is the number
of years good luck sticks with a person
who finds your stone. Wrap your hand

so the curve nestles in your knuckles' crook,
and aim toward the heart of the creek. Snap
your wrist and cast your stone. I'll tell
you why. Because water breaks down
even the hardest of things. It reshapes
stones and tumbles them toward longer
streams—sometimes to strangers' feet.

- Eric Hoffheiser