

# Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

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Volume 11 | Issue 1

Article 69

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June 2011

## Marcot

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### Recommended Citation

Stewart, D. E. (2011) "Marcot," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 69.  
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol11/iss1/69>

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Stewart: Marcot

**MARCOT**



**D.E.  
STEWART**

Brilliant early sun after the vernal-equinox gale winds yesterday

Before flying off into water-glass skies toward the International Date Line

Watch a Cooper's hawk on high perch in a dying maple pick apart a limp  
mourning dove with focused relish

In a way as dramatic as switchbacking down four thousand feet of gray  
volcanic slope below Kilauea to the ocean

Puna-side

To stand over the chaotic surf crashing on the cliffs at the black Holei Sea  
Arch and watch three soot-black Tristram's storm-petrels dancing on  
the wind just above the spray

Elusive seabirds in their mysterious flare and dash darker even than the  
eerie colorlessness of Kilauea's ash-gray

Metallic ocean, iodophilic pitching surface horizon away in mist and coastal  
fog

Birds without the fresh lava's sheen, storm-petrels, the *Oceanitidae*,  
dramatically kinetic before the sizzling papaya-orange incandescent  
magma spilling out upslope

gases

Walk carefully on the solid crunching black pahoehoe's glass needle shards

On that which flowed a couple of weeks ago and is still warm

Molten pools beneath, channeling through what can burn,  
the roots, organic pockets burned out and filling up

Muffled thuds of occasional methane explosions below the flow

Throwing dirt and bushes high as if from a demolition charge

Watch the orange-red lava's seaward progress, ineluctable as moonrise-  
sunset nightfall, from a bank a few yards off the sinister front's  
advance

Through grass patches and light brush

As the surface ahead heats towards the two thousand degrees of the  
magma, grass flares, bushes and scraggly kapuka trees wither

Alien force that kills instantly

Ground cover goes to pale yellow flames, weak combustion flickers against  
the glowing mass of wrinkling lava moving in behind

Mineral terra firma remade directly on top of what has been

Extrusion that spills onto an ocean shelf that it itself extends

Flows around outcrops and fills ravines

As it reaches seawater, throws up toxic clouds of laze

The mix of steam and hydrochloric acid laced with bits of glass from the  
magma that explodes dropping off into the ocean in sizzling chunks

## Stewart: Marcot

- That then become sulfurously vicious black volcanic stones
- Lava quenched by meeting water on the black-sand's swash glows  
incandescent
- Small steaming blobs lifted by the waves, wash in and out on the immedial  
sandy black
- Volcanic time not our time
- Not within organic time, day, night, seasons, growth, decay, stasis, or cyclical  
renewal
- Inland, upslope from the Kilauea's east rift zone, magma spills from two  
miles below the huge caldera
- Kilauea Volcano dwarfs steep-sided Mount Rainier in height and mass
- Lava advance recasts the surface in the volcano's complex's east rift zone
- Leaving pahoehoe cooled into a bulged, thick and endless wrinkled hide
- Walrusesque
- In places much like a squat trunk of a fallen copper beach where its bole  
first limbs out, left, right, constrictor roots, fat, piled, gray
- Like continental ice sheets and tsunamis, flowing lava negates everything it  
reaches
- Dominates absolutely
- Whatever stands in front of it gives way or is gone
- Gasping in the searing pain of its sulfuric gases, agape
- Dogs sulk away from it, birds avoid overflying it, people walk toward the  
lifeless, smoking line of it as to an event

Vulcanism as pilgrimage

Visit Kilauea like trekking to Olduvai Gorge, to the Acropolis, the Forum  
Romanum, to Chartres, Kyoto, Tiantan or the Forbidden City

Lava cooling into black rock confounds terrestrial assumptions far more  
than flooding, landslips, dune migration, avalanche

Lava flows with no reference at all to anything except itself

But we live on volcanic slopes, Vesuvio-Mayon-Etna-Montserrat

Gambling our time lines against theirs

Guessing that if there is an eruption we'll make it out

Gape at the timber-fall patterns on Mount St. Helens decades on, the  
universal gray, and the open face of the peak that was blown away

Fifty-seven people killed in a lightly populated, thoroughly-alerted  
community

Cross-grained world of coexistence with great violence

Skyscrapers after Nine-Eleven

Lives lived on the San Andreas Fault

Sixty years of most of us on the planet living in the target zones of  
hydrogen bombs

Living as though how we choose to live will always be