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RIDING THROUGH THE SKY BY SUSAN HODARA

We are biking in the rain but we hardly feel the drops. We see them fall in translucent lines around us; we hear them rustling wind-like in the trees. But as long as we keep moving, we can't feel them hitting us. It is only later that we will find blotches of wetness, soaking through the back of Paul's sweatshirt, rolling down the arms of my red raincoat. The exposed tops of my thighs will be pink from the cool, damp air.

We waited too long for the sun, and took our chances that the rain would let up as we headed to the bike path. When it didn't, we decided to go anyway.

The path, usually crowded with bikers, skaters and strollers on warm weekend afternoons, is desolate save a few hooded walkers. It is the first time I've been here without sunglasses. In the gray light, the trees glow with their springtime green and lean in towards one another to protect us. Chipmunks dart across the pavement; the air is thick with the scent of new growth.

The sounds around us blend. The stream alongside us that gathers speed as it crashes down the slope below, the air moving across our ears, the leaves rubbing against each other in the wind as raindrops kiss them all over, even the whir of our bicycle tires and the egg-beater spatters they make as they ride through puddles, create one patter-y rush of symphony.

"It's fine," we yell to each other. We don't want to stop, and soon we reach the old wooden railroad bridge that spans the reservoir. Water has puddled there, and as we bump across the slats, I hear the splashy plopping of my tires. I look up, see Paul ahead of me. There is enough wetness to hold a reflection of the upper structure of the rusted bridge, its lattice of beams and cables crisscrossing through clouds above us and below.

"Look," I call to Paul. "Look at the reflection."

"I know," he yells back to me. "It's like we're riding through the sky."

Susan Hodara is a journalist, memoirist, teacher and editor. Her articles have been published in the New York Times, Communication Arts, Harvard Magazine, and more. Her short memoirs appear in a variety of anthologies and literary journals. She is the co-author with three other writers of "Still Here Thinking of You," a collaborative memoir about mothers, daughters, and women working together.

Volume 1.1: Spring/Summer

Letter from the Editor

Poetry

Ana Garza G'z

The Holocaust

Larry Levis Reads

Articulo Mortis

Cara Kelly

Juice

Kit Kennedy

Poem to Accommodate a Martini

Alan King

Inner Weather

Karen Lake

A Cherry Tree Life

Easter's

My Apples

Heather Wyatt

Lunch Hour

Reclining Alone One Afternoon

Fiction

Louis Bourgeois

Strange Fish

James H. Celestino

Heidi Floating

Andy Cerrone

On Writing

Anonymous

Hot Chocolate

Non-Fiction

Joel Coblenz

Runaway Chef

Susan Hodara

Riding Through the Sky

Sheila Squillante

American Home Cookbook

Art

Paul Shampine

Genesis

George Shaw

Sculptures

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