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My Manifesto

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My Manifesto

Mallory Hellman

The scene opens on a balding, portly man.
The recliner, the imitation potato chips, the
remote control.
They epitomize his spiraling existence: the fall
of what was, of what has been.
Clutching the glass of cheap *sake* to his chest,
he stares into the blurred television,
Defining his myopic frame of reference for
eternity.
Outside, the storm blows, winds rage, the
animals are dead and where was he?
Asking his wife if she wants sushi that evening.

The floods come, the gates collapse,
A world caving in on itself and its recalcitrant
denizens,
Should we go to Taco Bell?
To hell with the endangered lizards; I want a
steak.
Where was I?
Up to my neck in excrement literal and
metaphorical,
Toiling ceaselessly for the continued well-being
of an ungrateful populace.
Suburban drones and corporate lemmings eking
out their livings in defying my cause,
My reason to live.

And who can blame them?
SUV's and drive-though fast food seep into
their lives of oblivion like rainwater into arid
soil.

But one day the soil must become saturated,
The people so immersed in their consumerism,
their greed, their deep fried food
And gas-guzzling machines –
They begin to see me as the enemy.
I, who worked persistently for the right of those
unable to protest,
I, who understood the plight of the carpenter
ant, the redwood tree, the Patagonian fox,
I, who lived naked in the Sierra Nevadas and
spent twenty-four diapered hours on an
overturned bucket with my feet embedded in
concrete,
Only to prove a point.
Only to communicate that if we expect to live,
we must be friends of the Earth,
In destruction lies luxury, but in conservation
lies life.
While I turn my swimming pool into a thriving
ecosystem, GE devises plans for another
habitat-devouring plant.
And *I'm* the enemy?
And *I'm* incarcerated?

Am I self-righteous?
You bet *I'm* self-righteous.
When the patterns of the ecosystem screech to a
halt;
When familiar species become endangered,
extinct;
When showers turn to storms, storms to floods,
floods to deluges,
I will have accomplished nothing.
Saved no one.
But the people will dare not complain of never
receiving a warning.