

1989 THE RAIN BLANKET

SCENE-SPEAKER:

The Historic Columbia River Highway,
Some sections still passable,
Others almost not jackass-able,
Allows travelers to look down into, and
Across a cleft through the Cascade Mountains,
That is a great basalt venturi through which
Winds, from either west or east, squeezed,
Into the Cascade Range's single gate to
Become two to possibly three times the
Wind's velocity at either of the
Columbia River Gorge's
Eastern or the western ends.

SHE-OREGON:

**The Rain Blanket, churning and straining,
Pushed through the Columbia River Gorge from Portland.
Her bow lights crackling, her rumble thunder,
Her stern light a rainbow, cloud fingers navigating the
Reaches, the bars, and the ripping promontories.**

ECHO:

*We watched her as she docked at Hood River where
She unloaded her orchard growing rain cargo.
As the moisture from her holds was discharged
At each river town along the Columbia's banks,
Her bow would ride higher on the wind currents.*

SHE-OREGON:

**Ah, but when the Rain Blanket moored at The Dalles
All that remained within her holds was perfume of an**

**Essence that causes men to be lured to the earth,
Much as they are to the tiny drop behind a lady's ear.**

ECHO:

*We watched as the Rain Blanket spread her mists
Upon dry browns and yellows and dusty breezes.
The acrid odor of the working town stopped midstride
To smell the sweet love-sweet fragrance of wetted ground,
Steaming pavement, and the yellow grass lawns greening.*

SCENE-SPEAKER:

East from Troutdale, The Vista House the promontories,
Bonneville Dam on past Hood River, Mosier,
Rowena Crest, Tom McCall Nature Preserve,
Reaching past The Dalles to Celilo;
While mirrored across the same big river,

Washington State's Lewis and Clark Highway
From Washougal to Beacon Rock,
Bonneville Dam to Bridge of the Gods,
Stevenson to Carson, White Salmon,
Lyle, and Wishram, almost to Maryhill;

Here is where rain clouds become metaphors for
Paddle-wheel steamers rising higher on the waters
As their initial loads becomes lighter
At each stop up the Columbia River.

SHE-OREGON:

**The Rain Blanket has since departed upstream
To tease side-hill grain-growers and livestock water holes.
While her cloud-cargo evaporated quickly this
Tantalizing thought crossed our minds:
When is the next shipment due?**