

JOHN YOHE

FIRE LOOKOUT VILLANELLE

photo by Barbara Michelman

Fire Lookout Villanelle

On a mountain somewhere on the Boise National Forest
 Sitting on the catwalk of my wind- and snow-beaten tower
 Mind as always working mad though body relatively at rest

On the roof flying ants seem to have made a nest
 So I'm hiding in the wind surrounded by red and purple flowers
 On a mountain somewhere on the Boise National Forest

It's been a few days since I've had any guests
 It's been a hot dry week since I've taken a shower
 My mind's still working mad and body mostly always at rest

I'm trying to teach myself Latin but I'm failing every test
 I scan the hills and valleys with my binos about every hour
 On a mountain somewhere on the Boise National Forest

I go naked a lot or in shorts and I'm sunburned on my chest
 though cloudy today so my solar radio keeps losing power
 Mind always working mad though body relatively at rest

We got rain clouds and lightning tracking from the west
 Towards me and the elk and butterflies and grouse on our
 Mountain somewhere on the Boise National Forest
 Minds forever working mad and bodies relatively at rest



Born in Puerto Rico, John Yohe grew up in Michigan, and currently lives in Portland, Oregon. He has worked as a wildland firefighter, deckhand/oiler, runner/busboy, bike messenger, wilderness ranger, and fire lookout, as well as a teacher of writing. A complete list of his publications, with links and samples, can be found at his website: www.johnyohe.com