

## BEHOLD

by Karen Coulter

Behold the lowly slime mold  
neither plant nor animal  
slithering along soundlessly  
in stopped time  
leaving ooze trails showing progress  
movement over a log  
from one side to the other  
all we see is a bright yellow  
or orange  
or white  
blob  
that squishes flat  
when we touch it  
or a fried crust of death  
small, seemingly insignificant  
in its stopped passage  
through the forest  
yet the scientists say  
it exhibits learned behavior—  
it can create a new foot  
out of its single cellular self  
to push over an obstacle  
she/he can learn a safe route  
across a caffeinated bridge  
to a food prize  
on the other side  
and traverse it more quickly  
each time  
but it's no accident—  
new obstacles require new learning—  
learning with no brain,  
no nerves—  
what does this say  
about us humans  
assumed center of the universe,  
who wreck everything we see  
in our arrogance  
of brainful ignorance  
while the slime mold  
doesn't deviate  
from its natural path  
which we can't even follow  
much less comprehend.

May 17, 2016

Karen has been a long time EF!er, and for those that caught this collective's first EF!J issue, we sat down with Karen and other long-time activists to discuss the changing tide of earth first! over the years. I like to think of her over the years at these different campaigns, or her involvement in bringing forth more radical and anarchist practices into these spaces, and her tenacity in sticking through some hard times. Over the years the role of poetry has been significant at earth first! gatherings and in the journal and it was nice to hear about a project years ago to write poems about “non-charismatic” species, something she said her friend Dennis (Fritzinger) suggested as a way for people to turn their attention to the sometimes overlooked species which are still important parts of our eco-system.



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Karen Coulter  
27803 Williams lane  
Fossil, OR 97830