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Stylesheet
1. Submissions should be typed on 8.5" x 11" white paper; prose should be double spaced. Include a SASE.

2. Submitted artwork should be suitable for black and white reproduction. Work should be no larger than 8.5" x 14". However, photographs or slides of larger work may be submitted. Submitted artwork with a SASE will be returned.

3. We accept and enjoy formal verse, free verse, and prose poems.

4. Include a brief biographical sketch for our contributor's notes.

5. We welcome submissions on a 3.5" disk formatted for IBM or Macintosh. Please include a hard copy of your submission.

6. Submissions and correspondence may be sent to:
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   Editor, Westview
   100 Campus Drive
   Southwestern Oklahoma State University
   Weatherford, OK 73096
   or by electronic e-mail to Westview@swosu.edu with the word Submission in the subject line. Please visit our website at http://www.swosu.edu/~mckinnm/westview/westview.htm

Cover photograph, Miller Williams
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A Poem for Emily

by Miller Williams

Small fact and fingers and farthest one from me,
a hand's width and two generations away,
in this still present I am fifty-three.
You are not yet a full day.

When I am sixty-three, when you are ten,
and you are neither closer nor as far,
your arms will fill with what you know by then,
the arithmetic and love we do and are.

When I by blood and luck am eighty-six
and you are someplace else and thirty-three
believing in sex and god and politics
with children who look not at all like me,

 sometime I know you will have read them this
so they will know I love them and say so
and love their mother. Child, whatever is
is always or never was. Long ago,

a day I watched awhile beside your bed,
I wrote this down, a thing that might be kept
awhile, to tell you what I would have said
when you were who knows what and I was dead
which is I stood and loved you while you slept.
Money

by Miller Williams

Money is flesh and bone. Honestly got,
money is one’s own toil, time, and thought
in tangible form. Money unfairly had
is somebody else’s labor and should go bad
in any pocket or wallet or bank vault.
Should but doesn’t. It isn’t money’s fault
if it doesn’t care whose purse or pocket it fills.
It makes people agree and pays bills,
not knowing whether it was earned or won,
stolen or borrowed. It does what it’s always done,
clamshells to plastic cards, a little better
for the creditor than for the debtor.
Living on the Surface

by Miller Williams

The dolphin
walked upon the land a little while
and crawled back to the sea
saying something thereby
about all that we live with.

Some of us
have followed him from time to time.
Most of us stay.
Not that we know what we’re doing here.

We do it anyway
lugging a small part of the sea around.
It leaks out our eyes.

We swim inside ourselves
but we walk on the land.

What’s wrong, we say, what’s wrong?

Think how sadness soaks into
the beds we lie on.

Jesus, we’ve only just got here.
We try to do what’s right
but what do we know?
Lay of the Badde Wyf

by Miller Williams

Part the first

All that she did she did not aim to do.
What she did intentionally was talk.
She had a simple hunger to say something
and see a sign that what she said was heard
by someone else, who might say, "Well" or "Maybe"
or nothing at all, but have the look of someone
to whom some words had recently been directed.

Home was where she watched the heavy hours,
each with its foggy number, grinding by.

She wanted once to work outside the home,
helping someone out somewhere for nothing.
Her husband said he would not hear of that.
She wanted once to have the kids by now.
Before the next promotion, though, and the next,
her husband would not hear of that at all.
She wanted once to join some other women
and take a morning walk around the mall,
but knew that he would never hear of that.
Her husband didn’t like her being alone
with people he didn’t know. Preacher, doctor,
woman down the street, it didn’t matter.

She spent the day reading and running errands,
taking clothes to the cleaners and planning dinner,
paying bills and watching talk shows.
Sometimes, at night, she could imagine words
dying inside of her, empty of all their meanings.
Part the last

He ran the dry cleaners and lived above it.
"You couldn't say," he said, "it's much of a home."
She couldn't tell you why she went upstairs,
or when exactly. One day she was there.
She was surprised to see that she was there,
with new furniture and older music,
and pictures of people she never asked about.

They came with coffee first, the few stray words,
then cup by cup she told her whole life,
such as it was. And then he told her his.

She climbed the stairs repeatedly, to find
slower talk and coffee every time.
Then one day she took a glass of wine.
Then when she let his finger trace her lips
she felt something fall that she couldn't catch,
the way you feel it when you've dropped a plate.
Inside a held breath you hear it break.
All you can say is, Well, there goes a plate.

Not watching her body being released to the light,
not talking, either, she thought about her husband,
and what she was doing, and how to carry the fact,
the knowledge of it home, to make it a part
of pancakes and bills and looking for car keys.

Then she smiled, lying back in the light of her thoughts,
suddenly seeing how ascending the stairs
and drinking the wine and being naked there
would surely be among the numberless things
he himself would say he'd never hear of.
So let him never hear, for who was she,
unfaithful wife, to doubt his wisdom now?
They rode around in auto-mobiles, metal sitting rooms that sat on wheels and coursed a network of concrete laid down by labor, a grid of street across street inside the cities, and on the countryside long winding ribbons sometimes laid so wide eight of the units could run along together, half going one direction and half the other. The engines that powered them were built to burn the residue of ancient life. You'll learn now if you will activate your screens how the drivers of these ingenious machines could shift the ratios of their mechanical gears. A lot of things have altered over the years since nations went to war for gods and lands and things lived in the oceans and there were bands of people who used their own breath and hands to make their music. All this was long before we freed ourselves from fretting about chance and learned not to walk too close to the shore or think about things like dolphins anymore.
**Interview with Miller Williams**

**Alsberg:** What are the stages in the translation of a poem?

**Williams:** The first stage is the reading and re-reading of the poem until it’s known from the inside, almost as if the translator had written it. The second is the creation of a trot, or literal rendition, as word-for-word as possible. The third is to turn this into a poem in the translator’s language as if the translator were writing an original poem from the seed of the trot, at the same time being restrained by the tone and prosodic pattern of the original. The fourth is to test it on a good and honest reader of poetry, asking that it be read not as a translation but as an original work. The fifth is to show it to a bilingual poetry reader native to the original language, watching the facial expressions very closely.

**Alsberg:** Are there any poems impossible to translate?

**Williams:** It’s not possible to re-create any poem in another language without losing part of it. There’s no poem that can’t be carried over in part. When there’s a major problem, it’s usually not because of the language but because the original poem alludes heavily to cultural matters with which most readers of the second language are not conversant.

**Alsberg:** To what extent is a nation’s poetry determined by its language?

**Williams:** To the same extent, I think that a nation’s music was originally determined by its instruments. Our languages are as different and different in some of the same ways as the zither, bagpipe, lute, and harp are different.

**Alsberg:** How do you choose a poem’s form? Or, at some point, does the poem choose its own?

**Williams:** I’ve never decided, at the outset, that a poem would be a villanelle, a sestina, in rhymed couplets or quatrains, or in blank or so-called free verse. Somewhere around the fifth or sixth draft the poem starts trying to tell me what it wants to be. It has taken me a while at times to pay attention.

**Alsberg:** You frequently write personae poems? Can you say why?

**Williams:** One of the most unattractive things a poet can fall into, I believe, is the publication of what in effect are personal letters, diary entries, transcriptions from therapy sessions. The dramatic monologue obliges the poet to try the air inside another skull.

**Alsberg:** Do you have any tips for removing clutter from a poem?

**Williams:** Make every word earn its way. Don’t say anything that the reader would have known without being told, excepting repetition for emphasis or pattern.

**Alsberg:** What grants a few poems permanence and is missing from the majority of poems?

**Williams:** I can’t claim to know the answer to this question. I can suggest that virtually all the poems we have from the past that seem to be permanent fixtures are at the same time direct and indirect or, as David Baker has said, “Clear to children and mysterious to adults”; we know at once what the poem says but what it means comes more slowly and is not the same for every reader.

**Alsberg:** What gives power to a narrative?

**Williams:** The reader has to believe it could happen, to care if it could happen, and to be intrigued by the thought of being there when it happens. This is made more likely by a compelling force of forward motion created by carefully con-
structured lines that leave the reader momentarily satisfied but with a sense of expectancy that pushes the eye forward.

**Alsberg:** To what extent should a poem be accessible to the senses?

**Williams:** To be a meaningful experience for the reader, a poem speaks to the senses in two ways, through its own music—quality of tone and rhythm—and through its images. And its involvement of the senses is a great deal of what brings the reader to take part in it as a personal experience. We would be much poorer without having ridden the sounds when “The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,/ The lowing herd wind slowly o’er the lea,/ The plowman weary plods his homeward way,/And leaves the world to darkness and to me.” or without being made to feel “zero at the bone.”

**Alsberg:** How does good figurative language work? Does poetry need figurative language?

**Williams:** To my mind, the primary difference between poetry and prose is the use of figurative language in poetry. It works a magic on us by causing us to hear one thing when another is said, by causing us to see one thing when another is shown us, and by suggesting that all things are at heart one thing. It is in doing all this while involving the senses that poetry involves the reader in its own making. It is in all this that a poem is direct and indirect at the same time.

**Alsberg:** What reading recommendations would you give to young poets?

**Williams:** A person wanting to become an accomplished poet should know not only poetry but the language of which it’s made the way a cabinet maker knows maple from oak, seasoned from green, pliant from brittle. To know English in this way, it helps greatly to know Latin and German. But the question, I know, was aimed at the reading of published work. And my answer to this is: read and re-read the classic poetry through the nineteenth century and from that time on to the present read a lot and often the poetry you enjoy reading, making sure that this includes both patterned and unpatterned poetry. If it doesn’t, then I’d recommend another line of work.

**Alsberg:** How has your academic work in the sciences affected your poetry?

**Williams:** The critics tell me that it’s kept my poems in close touch with the phenomenological world, which I hope is true.

**Alsberg:** Why did you choose to write poetry instead of fiction?

**Williams:** Well, I’ve published some short stories and I have a small collection about ready, but mostly I’ve written poetry, as the question makes obvious. The reason for that is the reason we do any one thing instead of another. I suppose—we like the result better or we get more joy out of the process, or both. But, then, it may be that as a poem chooses its form, poetry chooses its writers. Not always as well as it could, I guess. Maybe I’m just lucky that way.
Mariah

by Greg Garrett

i.

How come you never see women's underwear along the road?

Sorry. That's probably a random thing to start off with, but it's been on my mind. When I was out on my bike today I saw four pair of men's underwear in the weeds or down in the culverts—three pair of briefs that looked like they'd been through one of those paper shredders and a ratty old pair of plaid boxers.

This isn't the first time I've seen underwear along the roads. Men are all shits, my momma says, and this is some kind of proof, I guess. What possesses somebody to just toss their underwear out the window? I don't care if they haven't worn them for years and they just use them as rags to wax their cars or something. No woman would ever throw her underwear out along the road, not even my momma when she's at her drunkest.

I see things like this because I ride my bike every day, even when it's hot like it is in Oklahoma in August and Gary England says on TV that the heat index is 115 degrees in the shade. I started riding my bike because I had to get out of the house, but now I ride it every day because I've decided to be a model and I need to try and lose some weight. I have great cheekbones, and my hair is black and wavy, not straight like my mother's, or kinky like my father's in the pictures I've seen of him. They were both handsome people once, and people say that I'm striking, and if I can only lose some weight and get out of this town I think I could really be something.

My name is Maria Freeman, and I'm thirteen years old, although I look older on account of I'm a little heavy and I have breasts. My momma named me after a famous Indian ballerina, which is what she wanted to be before my father got her pregnant and all, but I tell people it's pronounced "Mariah," like Mariah Carey, who is also really striking and is my idol. My father went to Watonga High School with my momma and when he got her pregnant, they got married at the African Methodist Episcopal church where my Freeman grandfather is the pastor, but then when my momma went into labor, no one could find my father to take her to the hospital, and no one's ever found him since. I only see his parents a couple of times a year, which is sad since we only live a few blocks from each other and I see my Grandmother Smallfeet who lives on the other side of town almost every day. I know they love me, because they're always giving me nice things, like this bike. They bought it at a garage sale, but it's a really nice bike, a 21-speed that maybe some rich white kid got rid of because he was getting an even better bike, so anyway, I know they love me, but I don't think they like seeing me very much because I remind them that their son is a bad person.

He was their baby and they haven't seen him since he took off when I was born, although they've heard he's working on an oil rig off the Texas coast. It can't be an easy thing to know that your baby, who you brought into this world and brought up to do right, is a shit, which is what my father is, and I know this even without my momma telling me.

ii.

Every day I go out on this bike that my Freeman grandparents bought me. I ride twenty-five miles, out past the fairgrounds and north of town and past my cousin Phillip One Horse's place and then west to the Canadian River and to a big abandoned bridge that nobody uses any more because it's got holes in it and then back south past the airport with all the little one-engine planes that never seem to go anywhere and past
the street where my Grandmother Smallfeet lives and then past the big grain elevators, and finally east over the railroad tracks and back to our little frame house which needs painting bad and has ever since I can remember and probably always will since my momma will never marry a man who would do it and she'll probably never be sober enough again to climb a ladder herself and I'll be damned if I'm going to do it if nobody else cares.

Even before I knew I was losing weight so I could be a model. I liked riding my bike. Since I always ride this same way, I get to see beautiful country, the wheat blowing in the wind sometimes as far as your eye can see, rippling like I bet the ocean does if you're out in the middle of it, only this is a golden ocean like in a fairy tale or something. I get to see the river, which most of the time isn't much more than a creek, wide sand bars and a trickle of water down in the bot-
tom, except when we get a big rain and the river fills the banks and the abandoned bridge kind of shudders at the water rushing by underneath it. Besides the wheat and alfalfa and pasturelands, there are trees down in the creek bottoms and all along the river—big cottonwoods and oak trees, and dark green cedar trees across all the hillsides—and those hills, which are nice to look at but not always to ride up.

You also get to see all sorts of other things, and not just guys’ underwear, thank God. The first week I rode my bike, some boys in a pickup truck whistled at me, which at the time made me feel good and I thought about it for days, the two of them in that old yellow Chevy truck waving as they went past, until I saw something else that changed everything for me. It was a Polaroid picture, and it was facing picture side up under the hot sun not more than a few feet off the cracked asphalt shoulder. I put on the brakes and circled back to it, and when I saw what it was. I laid my bike down in the grass and sat down next to the picture and picked it up gently.

The picture was of a girl maybe not much older than me. It had seen some use, because it was creased some and had been trimmed at the sides, maybe to fit in a wallet, but it hadn’t been alongside the road for long, first, because the sun hadn’t faded it, and second, because I would have seen it if it had been there for more than a day. In the picture, the girl’s arms were raised in such a way that you could see that she had taken her own picture in a mirror. You couldn’t see her face, but you could see her bare breasts, which were a little bigger than mine and very pretty, and her stomach, which was a lot smaller than mine and also pretty. She was wearing flowered cotton panties, and she had nice thighs, which were all I could see of her legs.

The picture first made me feel kind of sexy,
made my stomach kind of tighten, and that worried me some. My friend Tandy, who’s seen me naked when I’ve stayed over at her house, says I have nice breasts, and I wondered if maybe she is a lesbian ever since she said that and if maybe I was a lesbian since I noticed this girl’s breasts in her picture. Maybe that’s how you start being a lesbian, thinking that some girl has nice breasts. Of course, my momma has always told me I ought to be a lesbian so I’ll never have to take shit off any man, but Momma will sleep with any man who will buy her a six-pack, Momma is about as far from a lesbian as you can get, and if she doesn’t take her own advice, then why should I?

The longer I sat and looked at that picture, though, the less sexy I felt and the sadder I got. Some guy, a guy that this girl loved and had maybe even slept with, had begged her for a picture of her without her clothes so he could always have it near him and so he could remember her beautiful body even when he was far away from her. And she loved him so much that even though she was embarrassed and scared and she didn’t ever want to do something like this, when her parents were away she fixed her hair real pretty and put on her makeup the way he liked it and then she went out to the hall closet and took down the Polaroid camera and saw there were eight pictures left and maybe her dad wouldn’t miss just one.

Then she went in her bathroom and closed the door and took off her shirt and her jeans and she stood there for awhile in front of the mirror in just her underwear, and she thought about him and how much she loved him and the nice way he talked to her in front of her friends and how he was hardly ever mean to her like most boys, and so she took off her bra, and right away her nipples stood up in the cold air coming from the vent. They hurt, she didn’t feel sexy at all, but he would probably think it was sexy because he was just a boy and didn’t know any better and couldn’t see inside her to know what she felt.

No matter how long she stood there, though, she just could not take a picture of herself bare naked. He had said he wanted to see her whole body, but she just couldn’t do that. He also wanted to see her face, but what if his mother found this and told her mother? So she left her panties on and aimed the camera down so her head was out of the frame, and then she snapped the picture.

And she gave it to him, and he admired it and kissed her and maybe looking at it did get him to feeling sexy and they made love and maybe she thought he really did love her and turning herself into a body on a Polaroid was all worth it.

But now he didn’t love her anymore, and his friends didn’t get excited anymore when he showed her picture around, she was just old news, and so he tossed her Polaroid out the window like he was tossing her out of his life, like he never wanted to see her again, like what she’d gone through for him didn’t mean anything at all. And that’s when I started thinking about how I was going to lose all this weight and become a supermodel like Kate Moss or Cindy Crawford and no man was ever going to be able to leave me behind or toss me out a window and think he’d never see me again, because every time he turned on the TV or rode past a billboard or picked up a magazine, there I’d be.

iii.

My cousin Phillip One Horse is not a very close cousin, so don’t be thinking bad things about me when I tell you this part. We are related through my Grandmother Smallfeet, who is grandmother in some way to just about every Cheyenne in Oklahoma and has adopted the rest, so it’s not surprising, maybe, that I don’t know him at all, only know of him. He is one of the most famous Cheyenne since we rode horses and fought white soldiers. He was a bank robber or something like that and he did time in the peni-
tentiary at McAlester and some of the boys say he was in the American Indian Movement and was a political prisoner. My momma, when his name came up, would just spit and say to steer clear of him, that he was a bad man among bad men.

So I always pedaled hard past his place, which was not always easy to do, seeing as how it was uphill on a dirt road and it was really sandy and my bike slid around and I couldn’t get any traction. It was a spooky-looking farm, because the fences were sagging and fence posts were gray and rotted and broken off, and it looked like only ghosts lived there. His old trailer was down on the other side of the hill, people said, and when anybody besides my grandmother came near he would shoot at them.

One day, though. I was pedaling up the long hill and saw a man out fixing Phillip’s fence. He was digging new holes for fence posts with a posthole digger, and he had his shirt off and he had broad broad shoulders and a tiny waist and long black hair with threads of gray that flew in the wind, and then he turned because he heard me coming and it was Phillip. He raised a gloved hand in greeting as I rode past, and he smiled a small sad smile, and I thought I had never seen eyes like his—eyes that looked like they’d seen everything under the sun.

He turned back to his work, and when I looked back he was digging away. Maybe he’d forgotten about me already, but I couldn’t get him out of my mind. For weeks I lay in bed and dreamed, not dreaming, exactly, but more like daydreams. I dreamed about Phillip’s shoulders and his long hair and his eyes. I dreamed that Phillip would ask me to go for a ride in a big convertible and we’d end up on a five-state crime spree, robbing banks and killing people and becoming national celebrities and loving each other in the back seat of the big convertible, which was a little scary to think about but exciting too. The newspapers and the tabloid shows would call us “kissing cousins,” which we would be, and even though I have never really kissed a boy, Phillip would know how. I just knew Phillip would be a good kisser. After I thought about that for awhile, though, I always started feeling guilty, because I know killing people isn’t right, not even people who work in banks, so that dream isn’t a good idea for a lot of reasons, I guess, even if it would get me out of Watonga for good.

My momma has always thought I was going to get in trouble with some boy, but she’s not talking crime spree trouble. “You’re going to wind up just like me,” is what she always tells me when she’s feeling drunk and hurtful. Just like her is old and fat and tired. My momma used to be an Indian Princess at the powwows and dance in a pretty costume with beads and bells, but she hasn’t danced since I came along. She drinks too much and she smokes too much and it’s turned her round and leathery like an old football.

I know this is what happens to lots of women in Watonga, Indians especially, but black and white ones too. Some man gets them in trouble and then all they can do is depend on men and hate them and hate themselves for depending on them. But not me. Mrs. Hursh told me back when I was in fourth grade that I was smart and that I could do anything I set my mind to. I loved her. She never treated me like I was a half-breed or stupid, like some people. Maybe I’ll never leave town with Phillip—which, more I think about it, is a stupid dream, like a bad movie—but when I’m a supermodel, all of this—my momma and my daddy and this good-for-nothing town—will seem like a story that happened to somebody else, like a story I heard once and don’t ever have to hear again.

The reason I had to get out of the house and started riding my bike this summer is because my momma is all the time bringing men home, sometimes even in the middle of the day, and
I’m getting too big to pretend I don’t know what’s going on, getting too big, period. They are the same men, mostly, although they come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. I know them, and they are all shits, like my momma says, and there is not a good man among them, although that doesn’t mean that there aren’t some good men somewhere in the world, no matter what Momma thinks. Sometimes they give her a little bit of money to come visit, but mostly they’ve run across her in the bar or have driven by with a six-pack of some bargain beer, Old Milwaukee or Schlitz, or with a bottle of cheap wine, Night Train or Thunderbird. Momma isn’t much particular. And after they’ve been drinking for awhile, if I’m home my momma sends me away to my grandmother’s house across town, and then I guess they have sex. I don’t know how she has sex with all these men, who are creepy and who don’t care about her even a little bit, but then I don’t really understand how sex works and I don’t think I want to know.

That’s why every time there’s a car or truck parked in our yard I knock before I come in, because a couple of times walking in on your momma sliding around on top of some ugly man is plenty if you ask me. But this time I’m thinking of, which was not too long ago, I knocked and I didn’t hear any noise, and so I opened the door and went inside. The house was dark and hot, and the air inside smelled so bitter and hateful that it was all I could do not to turn and run back outside. When my eyesight adjusted to the dim light, I could see that my momma and Harley Olson were dead drunk and lay draped across each other and across our old sofa with the springs kind of sticking up in places, which is why we have it covered with an old blanket.
Harley used to be a drunk farmer living out south of town toward Geary and now was just a drunk. He came around every couple of months, when he got his rent checks, Momma said, from the people farming his place now.

At last I figured out the smell. Momma had thrown up all over the place, all over herself and all over Harley and all over the blanket, and I hoped nowhere else, since if I didn't clean it up, it would be there until the house fell down. There was a bottle of Early Times on the table mostly gone. It was better whiskey than Momma was used to, which might explain why she got sick and then why she got unconscious.

Harley stirred after a bit, though, like he could feel he was being watched, and looked up at me from the couch. "Hey," he said, trying to focus on me and not having much luck. He was looking all over the place and I was standing still.

"Hey," I said. I didn't want to talk to him, so I turned and went back to my room and lay down.

I could hear Harley staggering around in the front room and then I heard him coming down the hall, probably to use the bathroom, I thought, except he opened my door and came in and closed it behind him and the back of my neck started to prickle up like those dogs that come barking out to chase me when I'm riding past their houses.

"Bathroom's down the hall," I said, and sat up on the bed.

"Don't need it," he said and took a few steps and stood weaving in front of me.

"Momma?" I called, but there was nothing from the front of the house but some snores that sounded like explosions in a war movie.

"She done give out on me," Harley said. His nose wrinkled every couple of seconds, like it at least knew how bad he stunk. The rest of him didn't seem to know—or maybe didn't care—that he had vomit smeared across his chest and down his left arm.

"Momma," I called louder.

"She's passed out cold," he said, and his hand ran down my arm, and the springs sang out in fear as he sat down hard on the bed next to me. His hand had trailed off my arm to the hem of my biking shorts. He was staring down at my breasts.

I stood up then and crossed my arms in front of me and backed into the corner. I could hardly talk but I knew I had to, that it was my only chance to keep something bad from happening.

"Don't," I said. "Please don't. You just get out of here, Harley Olson. Go on home now."

"Don't be like that," he said, and he stumbled to his feet and leaned in toward me and one hand took me at the waist and the other started down from my throat to my breasts and on south. My stomach jumped inward at his touch like I'd been stung. I could smell the whiskey on his hot breath and the sour vomit on his shirt, and I raised my right hand to his face to try and hold him back while the left was running across my desk—cup, notebook, stapler. I found the ceramic bookend in the shape of a horse's head and grabbed it up and raised it high while my books fell around our feet like dominos, and then I smashed him hard across the head with it.

It sounded like somebody thumping a melon. His eyes rolled a little and a red seam of blood appeared in his greasy gray hair and he dropped to his knees in front of me, but his arms were still around me and his face was buried between my legs and I could feel him moaning there and I hit him again, hard as I could, and he let go of me and stopped moaning and I pushed him down and ran for the door and out of the house.

I had enough of my mind working to hop on my bike, although I could have run all the way across town, I was that scared. I was crying and my heart was pounding like it wanted to climb out of my chest and I felt dirty like I never would get clean again no matter how hard I scrubbed or how hot the water.

I was still crying when I got there, and when I said what happened my grandmother wanted
to go across town and kill this Harley Olson where he lay—she pulled her longest bread knife out of the drawer and slipped her feet into her tennis shoes without laces, since with her arthritis she can’t tie them any more—but I convinced her that he hadn’t really hurt me and just scared me mostly and that if she tried to walk all the way across town on a hot day like today it would likely kill her dead before she even got the chance to visit that fate on Harley. So she let out a big sigh and sat me down at the kitchen table and took my hand in her old dry wrinkled hands and squeezed it and she could still give a pretty good squeeze for a woman my momma said was older than God. We sat for a long time like that, my hand in hers, her head cocked to one side like she was listening for a hint about what to tell me.

“These things should not happen to a girl like you,” she said after awhile. “But they do and they always have and I am sorry. I want you to remember something.” Her little glittering eyes were on me and I couldn’t look away, even though I didn’t want to talk about this, I just wanted to crawl under the table and hide and never come out.

“Oh okay,” I said, and I took a deep breath. “Go ahead.”

“A bad man can touch your body but never your spirit. That belongs to God.”

“It feels like he run off my spirit,” I said, and I started crying again. “Just run it clean off. It feels like there’s nothing in me now but dirty things and no hope and evil and I’ll never be a little girl again.”

And my grandmother started crying too, and she held out her arms to me and I got on my knees and snuggled in next to her and held on tight while she sang to me. She felt like a pillowcase full of old bones, and the skin on her arms was like paper, but her grip was tight, and her voice, when she stopped crying, was strong. She sang in a high voice like she used to when I was a baby and she was singing me to sleep. It was a Cheyenne hero song about a warrior who made a long ride across the plains and brought back magical gifts to his people. Even though I didn’t know the words, it always made me feel peaceful, and even though she couldn’t fix me, she could tell me that she loved me and that I was a good person and that what happened to me was not my fault and that if she ever saw that Harley Olson again she would cut his heart out and feed it to him, all of which made me feel better.

When I told my momma later what happened, she didn’t seem to care much. It was worse, even—she said I shouldn’t ought to go bashing her men over the head with ceramic bookends, and that anyway, men were going to have their way with me some day, and I might as well get used to the idea now or it would be hard on me later.

“I’m not going to get used to the idea,” I said, and it was the first time I had ever talked back to my momma. “I’m not like you and I never will be.”

She jumped to her feet in front of me and raised her hand. I flinched away from her, but then she sighed and her face kind of folded in on itself with sadness and her hand dropped gentle to my face and she just shook her head and said, “You’ll see, little one. You’ll see.”

But I won’t see. I’m not going to wind up old and fat in this sorry nothing of a town. I’m smart and I have great cheekbones and I have a plan. I’m going to ride my bike every day like somebody is after me, and I’m going to give up cokes and Cheetos and cupcakes, and I’m going to get so skinny that one of these days I’ll just disappear.

***
It was during the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles that my father met her, she came over with her then boyfriend/lover, some guy they called “Niño.”

They called her Muñeca, which means doll, and the three men at the party swooned over her. My sister, mother and me watched these three grown men outside on the lawn running around her, the witch as we came to know her. They smelled something about her, like cats do, my mother said. She promised never to have any other parties—that was it, no more free food and sangrias for that bitch. A year later, my father left my mother for Muñeca, who had left Niño in what rumor held to be a pretty ugly sight: clothes on the lawn, broken windows, dented fender on the car.

Ugly. My father came home from work one afternoon, told my mother like he was saying goodbye to strangers, got in the car and took off. I watched from the living room window, across the lawn as the car picked up speed then turned for good at the corner. I can’t remember if my mother cried, but we lived on, knowing that the gap existed, and my mother and sister never mentioned his name again. At night, in the dark of my bedroom, I looked at the picture of my mother and father in Havana, outside the building where they said they got married. And I thought of Muñeca, how she had come that one
time and changed our lives forever.
Powder smooth cleavage and green
eyes, I remember how she tilted her neck
as she sipped sangria
to show off her chest. Her manicured
nails gripped and clicked against the glass.
And I promised myself I would remember
that Aren’t-I-wonderful look,
the way she hissed words through her teeth.
Of course, her affair with my father lasted
only a couple of years. She left him like
my mother said she would, and my father
could never come back. The weakness of men,
my mother called it, for which he
would pay and pay and pay. He came by
every so often to say hello, or at school
to buy me and my sister lunch. Years later,
when my sister moved out, I went to college
in Florida. My mother stayed in California
and lived alone. My father died of a stroke.

Once in Miami at La Carreta, I was there
with my fiancée eating dinner, and I got up
to go to the bathroom and to do so you have
to enter the cantina, a smoky dark cavern.

Muneca sat at the bar working on her vermouth.
A man kept his head buried in her breasts.
He was drunk. She looked wasted, old and haggard.
The smoke of a burning cigar coiled in her hair.

I looked long enough to make sure it was her.
At that moment I thought of my father
and his friends that one afternoon on the lawn,
of my mother looking out at them, and she
now alone in her room in California,
the Spanish soap operas on the television,
watching as bad things happen to good people.
Me, I decided long ago not to get involved,
not to let these seeds take root
in the darkness of my memory.
The Death of a Liquor Board Agent

by Bruce McCandless

The way they're selling Texas now
you'd swear it's heaven-kissed,
but not far east of Huntsville are
whole counties Jesus missed.

Where sons of darkest Georgia,
and sons of Tennessee,
and SOBs from everywhere
came looking to live free.

Vidalia. 1946.
The whiskey boys owned town.
When preaching couldn't get 'em stopped,
the Liquor Board came 'round.

They sent an agent, Long John Peek,
with a Ford and a .38,
to reinforce the rules and regs
enacted by the state.

Peek stood six-five if he stood a foot
and talked like his tongue was cold.
His sense of what was right and wrong
was thirty centuries old.

He had a hand from a local man—
a deputy named Glass,
who dug up tips and rode along
with Peek to watch his ass.

So Eaton Anderson lost his still
one evening just at dusk
and Wilmer Browning caught three slugs
in the woods outside of Rusk.

And pretty soon the tips dried up
but not so all the booze.
John Peek began to wonder if
'ol Glass was hiding clues.

Then Glass called Long John Peek one night
and told him, come alone.
You've flushed the biggest moonshine man
East Texas ever owned.

Peek lived in a two-room clapboard house,
a little too close to the tracks.
He kissed his wife good-bye that night
and said he'd be right back.

He walked out to his blue garage
to fetch the 12-gauge down.
He grabbed a box of extra shells
and headed out of town.

Photograph by Joel Kendall
The Four Square Bible Baptist Church stood hard by Sour Lake. Peek pulled off Highway 21, saw Glass’s car, and braked.

Before he could put the Ford in Park and take the keys from the post, Glass had pulled a snub-nosed six and stepped up whisper close.

He said, “John Peek it’s been a hoot to help you clean these woods. But now you’ve come to clean my house, so listen to me good.

My daddy taught me how to run corn mash through copper pipe. Now Texas wants to take my still. This state ain’t got the right.”

The agent knew his time was up. He ducked his crew-cut head. The deputy shot him 14 times to make sure he was dead.

Glass filled the Ford with bottled rye, stuffed cash in John Peek’s hand. Next morning a preacher found the corpse, just like the deputy planned.

The way they’re selling Texas now, you’d swear it’s heaven-kissed, but not far east of Huntsville are whole counties Jesus missed.

Where Ardis Glass grew fat and rich, and lent his name to banks, but Long John Peek was buried young without a word of thanks.

And now East Texas cops watch hard for cocaine-runners’ cars. Vidalia’s fine new country club serves Chivas at three bars.
If only it would write itself, the damned article. Because you’re certainly not going to. You’ve been trying for weeks, but somehow it just won’t come. There isn’t much time left. You’ve started a dozen times, but things keep getting in the way.

Your job. After conjugating *estar* fifty times a day for five classes of freshmen and pushing a red pencil over dozens of compositions, you can’t bear looking at your own words on the computer screen. That’s why you succumb to the lure of the tube. You’ll just watch for an hour, you tell yourself. Just the news.

But once you’re curled up with a Bloody Mary and CNN, inertia wins out. The drone of the newscaster’s voice. The tension oozing out through the tips of your toes. If someone asked you what’s going on in Bosnia or Iraq or Israel, you couldn’t tell them. That sumptuous semi-atrophy of the early evening. The announcer wraps it up, but you just can’t bear to move, and so you stay glued to the couch another hour or two. You call it relaxing.

Your dinner. You can’t avoid it. You have to eat. But even a frozen dinner takes time. You have to take it out of the refrigerator. Then you have to read the directions. Even though you’ve been buying the same Stouffer’s Lean Cuisine Chicken à l’Orange for the last eight years, you have to check to see how many minutes it needs to stay in the microwave. And you also have to verify that it’s still only 2.5 grams of fat and 260 calories. Naturally, there’s no sense beginning anything while dinner is cooking. After all, you’d just have to stop again in a few minutes. You leaf through the paper. So what if you just heard the news? What could be more irresistible around 9:00 in the evening than an unopened morning paper lying on a kitchen table?

You push aside the bronze candlestick holder you brought back from Spain, then run your eyes down the columns. Once in a while, you turn the page. The microwave beeped fifteen minutes ago, but you’re still pretending to read the op eds. Finally, you get up and take out the chicken. You could eat it right from the plastic tray it comes in, but instead, you scoop it onto a dish. More appetizing, you tell yourself. More like homemade.

You don’t care for sweets, but after dinner you rummage through the cupboards looking for dessert. A cookie. Some canned peaches. Perhaps a Jell-O pudding, the fat-free kind. Naturally, it has to be served on a dish.

Now dinner is over and you can get down to work. But no. The dishes. You can’t work on a table covered with dirty dishes. You get up and put them into the sink. But oh, those dishes.

Their presence is a silent censure. They’re there. That’s wrong. Dishes left in the sink start to stink. Or attract cockroaches. What would your mother say?

You get up and wash the dishes.

Now you’ll work. But, oh my God! How did it ever get to be 10:30? It’s really too late to start anything. But not too late to make a telephone call. And there are so many people you haven’t spoken to in ages. There’s your old college friend Marilyn, who’s a senior editor at Prentice Hall. There’s Raquel, who teaches at City College. There’s Aunt Tina. Yes, you’d better call Aunt Tina. Dad will be furious with you for neglecting his favorite sister. And speaking of Dad, maybe this would be a good time to telephone him, too. You’ve hardly spoken to him since the divorce.

God, a quarter to twelve. You’d better go to
bed. After all, you have to get up early in the morning.

That's the way it always is, but not tonight. Tonight you're going to write the article! The deadline is September 15, and it's already September 10. You have less than a week left. Less than a week. You've got to get started!

You sit down at the table with your back toward the television set and turn on the computer. You run your gaze over the icons and click on WordPerfect. But what about your e-mail? You really should read it. What if there's a message from Saint Pancratius College, where you applied for a teaching position? Or from your editor? Or from your daughter, who's staying with her father this week? But no, you won't read it. You can't read it. You have no time! You have to get to work! On the other hand, maybe you should read it. Some of those messages might be urgent. Maybe your editor has extended the deadline. . . You click on the minus sign on the upper right-hand corner to hide the screen and log on to your e-mail account.

Suddenly, you feel hungry. It would be good to eat something. It's hard to concentrate when your stomach is growling. Not a real dinner, of course. Just a sandwich or a piece of fruit, because you really have to get to work. You get up and open a can of tuna. You read the label, then take out a jar of imitation mayonnaise and check to see how many calories there are in a tablespoon (even though you know there are fifty). You walk over to the bookcase and take out the carbohydrate gram counter. Marshmallow . . . Marshmallow sauce . . . Martini cocktail . . . Mashed potatoes . . . Matzoth . . . Mayonnaise . . . See Salad dressing. Damn! Q . . . R . . . Radishes . . . Rice . . . S . . . Salad dressings . . . Bacon-vinegar . . . Blue cheese . . . Commercial . . . French . . . here it is! Mayonnaise (1 tablespoon) . . . nothing about imitation mayonnaise, but let's see, regular mayonnaise has only a trace of carbohydrates—not even a whole gram—so imitation mayonnaise must also have a trace. You put the carbohydrate counter back on the shelf, but Marion Zimmer Bradley's Lady of Avalon catches your eye. You've been meaning to read that book for ages. It's a National Bestseller, according to the blurb. You wonder why you can't write a national bestseller. You start to read the back cover, but then, suddenly, fling the book back onto the shelf. You've got to stop fooling around! You have less than a
week to write that article!

You go back into the kitchen and finish making the tuna salad. It would be nice to put a hard boiled egg in it. No! By the time you make an egg it will be 7:30. You take out a loaf of whole wheat bread, make the sandwich and eat it slowly. Then you sit down and begin to write.

The first three sentences come easily. You’ve written them before. You’ve written them over and over again. You pick up a pack of cigarettes and fidget with the cellophane wrapper. You read: Warning. The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health. Then you open the pack and pull out a Marlboro. Now, where’s the lighter? You had it just a minute ago. You get up to look. No, it’s not in the kitchen. It’s not on the night table or on the dresser, but, my God! Look in the mirror! Another hair-thin line is forming on your brow. And look at those crows’ feet that grow larger and deeper by the day! And, oh no, another blackhead on your chin. Of course, it could be covered up with make-up . . . or could it? Maybe you’d better try, just to be sure.

You sit down again. Now you’re going to concentrate. You’re not going to let anything distract you. You won’t get up again until you’ve written at least a paragraph. Well, that is, you won’t get up again once you’ve gone to the bathroom.

You come back from the bathroom and sit down. The ashtray catches your eye. How many days has it been since you’ve emptied it? You pick it up, then decide to let it go for now. You look at the stack of paper in your printer. There isn’t too much left. You wonder if you’ll have enough and if you’ve got money to buy more tomorrow. You pick up a small blue pencil and calculate how much money you’ll need to get through the week.

You’re off to a good start on the article. You’ve written three sentences. Now, if you could just find an opening line for the next paragraph. You know exactly what you want to say, only the words won’t come. You pick up a paper clip that’s lying next to the printer and begin to pull it open. Oh God, if only it would just write itself, the damned article! You think: funny how a paper clip is made. Such a simple little thing, and yet so useful. Such a simple little thing.

And then they’re gone. What’s happened? The lights have gone out. You squint in disbelief and reach out into the blackness. You grope your way to the window and peer out blindly. The city power system must have failed. Didn’t you hear on the news something about the possibility of a power failure due to the amount of electricity being used for air conditioners? You hear people scurrying around in the night. Every few seconds a match flickers. Within minutes translucent flashlight beams are visible here and there.

You feel your way back to the table. You stare into the blackness at your dead computer. You feel for the paper clip, but can’t find it. You sit there blinking at the invisible objects you know surround you. How frustrating! Just when the article was beginning to move!

You get up. Edging along the wall, you make your way into the kitchen, where you find a large candle in a cupboard above the sink. You light it. On the gas range, then inch your way back to your work area. You finger the table until you find the blue pencil, then take several sheets of paper out of the printer tray. You stick the candle into a holder. The light is dim, but it Illuminates the white sheet, your hand, and the pencil in it. Everything else has disappeared.

You sit and listen to your heartbeat. Finally, you begin to write.
Bi-cycle

by David Galef

The blind event that caused this lurch
Is back again, the sheets adrift
As the clock proclaims, “How late, how late.”
My wife wheels around so noiselessly,
In synch with my revolutions,
We might as well be dreaming but
For the wail that cuts right through the night—
Abandonment and desolation.
It’s my turn, no yours, says one of us,
As I skate into slippers and stumble hallward,
The dark parting thick as the curtain of life,
Into the chamber that houses our son.
His legs shoot outward, pedaling
The tricycle stolen just last week.
I pick up our hero; I soothe him with hands;
I tell him it’s all right till he understands.
Leave slowly, turn once, keep the door ajar.
I move in reverse to the bed but lie wide-eyed.
After so many wakings, my sleep cycle’s bent,
Like Dizzie’s dinged trumpet, a warped lemniscate.
My wife’s on her side with the bulk of the sheets.
I shut my eyes tight and coast until dawn.
For Friends Missing in Action

by Walt McDonald

I want to turn them loose
in pastures without gunfire
or trucks running them down.
I think of friends from childhood
on icy streets at night,
the first car wreck in town

I ever heard, West Texas burning
and two good friends inside
and dying. Waking in dry July,
I watch the ceiling fan, whirring
the same old moan, my wife
asleep beside me. Friends died

in Vietnam and childhood,
others missing in action.
Our children sleep behind locked doors.
The hearth is stocked with wood,
though nothing I’ve done
could save them. Often, I swore

I’d never forget their names.
I watch the clock, counting red dots.
I finally sit up and rack my brain
and walk to the porch to bump
into ghosts, roll calls
of all who never know I’m up.
Some Women I Used to Take to the Jail

by Mike Carson

“When I was imprisoned and you visited me...”
—Jesus

She has to beg a ride and leave her kid out on the walk. She’s heavy-set, skin pocked, hair slick. Her smile can’t quite untwist her frown.

She waits to get a four-inch square of glass, a muffled wire-mesh mouthpiece under it, part of his face, her mouth or ear up close.

She listens to this one she didn’t know until he was encaged say sweetheart, baby, whatever it will take to get a buck.

She takes me where I didn’t want to go, their voices trickling through the boiler plate, his crooked body on the other side.

She’ll have more bruises still if he gets out. I have not thought of any out for her. She holds me to the words where God begins.
Watch

by Gordon Grice

This is the time of night when winds course from hill and rain-cut ravine in voices, when the fat red-diamond rattler under the porch moves out in suggestions toward the corn, his neck bubbled out in brick-red scab. I build my private and sleepless stories on his wound: the arc of a scythe, the scored face of the man holding it, his color modified by the starlight in which I myself sit imagining. Or no human presence at all: a bird of prey whose browns crackle with gold and obsidian in the full sun, dying of venom, his talons scratching out a minor revenge. I have read of them, rattlesnake and eagle, finishing each other at the height of human vision before they fall.

This is the time for nostalgia, just before the wind stills, before the tentative doves spread their rumors of dawn. Silhouettes of possum and rat by the ditch, the smell of cooling cement, the walk of wolf spider and centipede. This is the hour I steal from sleep without guilt, the one I never pay back.
In the Pygmy Forest Off Highway 72

by Charles Rafferty

It is easy to believe in omniscience,
in the pleasure of knowing how far
I have to go. With any rise in elevation
a hundred acres can break into view,
revealing the racks of buck
or the hat of another man
walking down a fire trail. It is easy
to understand how a forest can be dwarfed
by strong wind, recurrent fire,
or the generally poor condition of the soil,
though acres exist even in those pines,
hunched and stunted to survive it all,
where the trees obscure my sight—
forcing me to whistle to warn off poachers,
as I push through thickets of laurel and rose,
to see where an ended path will lead.
Sleeping with the Animals

by Glenda Zumwalt

In my past lives I must have been quite ordinary:
a baker's wife in Glasgow, a scullery maid at Hampton Court,
the girl herding geese along the banks of the River Wye,
or just another red head digging potatoes near Dublin. Nothing
unusual about me except for this:

At one time, while everyone else was busy being Anne Boleyn
or Cleopatra or Joan of Arc, I was living with animals
in a mud hut or thatched hovel, huddled against wind
and loneliness, sheltering what saved me—the chickens
who pecked at the pests in my cabbage patch and gave me eggs,
the goats who gave me milk and cheese, the ox who pulled
my cart to market, the dog to guard me, the cat to purr me
to sleep. All of us together—a community of feather, fur,
hoof, and flesh. This is the life my blood and bones remember

the life of matter. Nights now I lay me down to sleep
once again with animals. The old dogs wheeze, grumble
hush themselves into soft snores; the little terrier yips
dreaming gophers. The cats wind, twine, stretch, sharpen
claws, roll themselves into piles of balls, become a humming
choir of angels murmuring tidings of quiet joy. All night
our breathing fills the room, food for the fern and ivy,
a symphony discordant to the modern ear, but a chorus in harmony
with the wind under the eaves, with our brother moon and sister stars.
On Falling for Animated Females

by Randy W. Oakes

The phantom souls
of these Japanese vixens
vex my imagination.
Those bodies in fine-tipped
clarity forever evade me
in my cursed dimensional world.
Athletic and feisty
in their sinewy inking
they keep me up at night
drawing myself, creating
some insinuating presence
to win them by evading lasers
and mastering mazes, leaping
the abyss of my life mired
in post-Euclidean solitude.
Cast me on a shore of trees
that whisker a guileless sky,
all blue. It must forget it ever
cloaked up. Put fences around,
enclosures holding your thought in.
There I can step past the horizon,
enter your ether world,
take on your skin,
walk about in it, peek over
the rim where night begins,
see China all asleep,
so heedless of my stare.
With one foot on night,
one on day, I’ll walk out
mumbling all those questions
which bring frowns
to grown-up brows,
all those forbidden words,
the ones Adam swallowed down hard
so creation would forget
they were ever even thought.
Those questions are the ones
I would ask you
from this cusp of dark and light,
from the air we both breathe at,
from this unacknowledged air we share,
    I would,
    how I would,
    ask you.
Cloud-Gazing Over Cobb Creek

by Keith Long

It started out as a standard, opening-day hunt. I came prepared. I stepped out of the pickup and pulled on my insulated overalls, located my blaze-orange cap, strapped on my hunting knife, slipped my binoculars and case over my shoulder, found my hunting gloves and hand warmers, hung my grunt call over my head, made sure my wallet, hunting license and deer tag were in my hip pocket, put camo paint on my face, grabbed a flashlight to guide me to my stand, checked to make sure my boots were double-knotted, took my rifle out of its case and put four shells in my left front pocket.

"What am I forgetting?" I asked.

"Your orange vest," Quay said via the dome light of the pickup.

"Oh, yeah," I said, and I quickly slipped one on and snapped it across my chest.

I was ready to hunt and it had only taken me twenty minutes since parking the pickup.

I followed the beam of my flashlight a quarter-of-a-mile downhill to my stand, while Quay followed on my footsteps. He had another half a mile to walk and needed the help of the flashlight to keep from stepping off the edge of the ravine and tumbling into Cobb Creek.

"You set?" he asked, when I finally quit wriggling into the ditch from which I would hunt.

"Yeah." I handed him the flashlight and felt the suddenness of darkness surround me while he wandered back up around the ravine.

Then I did what deer hunters do best. I sat.

I sat until I made my first mistake about fifteen minutes before daybreak.

I decided, there in total darkness, that I should take out my binoculars and put them in a handy place so I could begin glassing the big meadow as soon as it was light enough to shoot.

I began rustling and wrestling in the dark.

I pulled the binoculars strap over my head. It was stuck to my left ear. I couldn’t figure it out there in the dark, so I pulled harder. I had forgotten I had put my orange vest on AFTER I’d hung the binoculars around my neck.

I wasn’t in the mood for remembering.

I pulled harder.

Everything budged exactly halfway over my head. Binoculars. Vest. Grunt call. I sat in the dark. I contemplated waiting for first light to see what had happened. Oh, if only I had.

But, being the hunter-type man-of-action that I am, I quickly deduced what was wrong. I needed to turn my attention from the binoculars to the vest. That was my second mistake.

If I can get the vest off, I reasoned, then I can sort out the rest of the stuff and still have enough energy to hunt at daybreak.

So I began some sort of weird Arabian dance in the dark, the dance of the nine vests, which, if you ever try it, must be performed standing up with one foot off the ground at all times, sometimes two. All this, mind you, within three feet of a 60-foot drop-off into the big meadow.

Luckily, I snagged the underarm waddle of my insulated coveralls on the top rung of the barbed wire fence behind me, which probably saved me from a long plunge into the cow muck of the big meadow.

Being stuck on the fence greatly hampered my dance. I turned my attention away from the vest and began concentrating on the fence, particularly that one little nettlesome barb in my underarm. I had long since forgotten about the binoculars.

Because the ground was wet, and because the fence was tall, I couldn’t get the right angle on the barb to set myself free. And because the overalls were of the heavy-duty type — and more importantly because they were of the heavy-price type — I couldn’t just tear myself free.

So I tried to climb the fence for some altitude. Mistake number three.
My left boot, caked with mud, slipped through the first and second wires of the fence, which took the opportunity to snag my left leg right above the ankle, and seal my fate. In a rash act of defiance ala Brer Rabbit and the tar baby, I kicked the fence post with my other foot.

Number four.

The post, rotten to the core, busted in two and with one fell swoop the fence turned sideways and dangled me over the big meadow just as the sun came up, leaving me in something of the posture of a camouflaged pig on a spit.

Quay happened by six hours later.

"Seen anything?" he asked.

"Clouds. Lots of clouds," I said. "Say, can you help me with these binoculars?"
All It Takes

by Brett Hursey

is a rainy day to make me realize
my mind has boarded up
like an abandoned theater —

backstage and balconies
cluttered with faded flats
from long-forgotten seasons,

chips of memory flaking
off the canvass of my cortex,
raining neuro-synaptic snow

over an Id and Ego
who strut and fret
until the trapdoor in my psyche

finally snaps,
dropping everything into the basement
of my brain—

grocery lists and electric bills
tumbling out of chaos
into consciousness,

along with the idea of you
smoothing gingham out of your dress,
anxiously scanning sodden

paperback faces
in the little bookstore
beside the theater

where I should have been
an hour before the rain began.
Old

by Robert Parham


Old news is good news, I say. To be old news it must be tossed back at us, an insult, old news, you say, but you remembered it, or what you would return in its place is silence. Yes, old news is good news. Old.

New gold. Think of it. Do you think of gold as new? Just discovered, somehow gold or gems of any kind are somehow, always, old. Gold is never new except it's fool's gold shining in the eye of sharp-tongued faddist barking "old... old" while his polyester clothes wait by the shredder and his catalogs, damp (as tears) and smell of mildew, rot like pages from a calendar.

Winter Solo

by Don Stinson

The world is quiet in January ice the Sunday after Epiphany. The roads are too slick to drive to church, so I walk through the silent cold to buy the latest news of the noisy world that lies so far beyond this sleeping town. I see no cars, no dogs, no birds, but tracks of animal and man cover the white ground. I think of those preachers from my childhood who told of the rapture, how people would disappear with the Lord, leaving the faithless behind. Today’s like that, as if I were the only sinner wandering through a town evacuated by God. A cruising police car reassures me I’m not alone; it’s not the end of time, just the beginning of a week in winter’s darkest month. All the world waits silently for a revelation like the melting of ice on the young, green wheat, the flower tip pushing its way through the dirt, a stone rolling heavy away from the bright mouth of an open tomb.
He was always selling something, it seemed: cars, an illusion of security and understanding, himself. But now, poised on what could be the biggest sale of his life, he sat immobilized, psychologically glued to the swivel chair in his mauve modular cubicle.

His grandfather had become glued to his chair, too, of course. Died in it, in fact. But Gros Papa’s chair was ratty, a ponderous old wing chair upholstered in worn velour, its spade feet painted brownish-wood to simulate mahogany. The chair sat in a dark corner of a dark, low-ceilinged apartment Gros Papa had been too afraid to leave. There were muted stripes in the wallpaper and a Philco 620 radio sitting on the floor next to the chair. Gros Papa had listened to it constantly, liking the news, especially the accidents that happened when people traveled too far from home.

Chet’s chair was ergonomically-designed, and as he spun slowly around in it, he thought of his sister, Meredith, and how she had followed their grandfather’s path. Or lack of one, rather. In their late forties now, she lived in an apartment uptown she hadn’t left for twenty years. It had become her second skin. Chet or his wife Dorothy brought her groceries once a week, chatted with her briefly over the noise of the T.V. “What do you want to do?” Chet prodded her.

“What where do you want to go?” “Nowhere.”

Dorothy thought Meredith was nuts, and she was right. When Chet first started dating her, too many years ago to think about now, he’d been afraid to tell her about his sister. But of course she’d found out when his mother died and the aunts muttered about how Meredith wouldn’t even brave coming out for her poor mama’s funeral.

By then, Chet and Dorothy were married, and Dorothy was pregnant, so she couldn’t back out. She stayed up at night instead, worrying about how their unborn child might somehow catch the family curse. And how, by the way, had Chet ever escaped it? she asked irritatedly from her pillow, not even expecting an answer.

He knew the answer, though he’d never articulated it to Dorothy. He’d pushed his way out into the world, as soon as he was old enough to leave his mama’s side. He’d read a lot, everything he could get his hands on, including titles like Secrets of Success and The Power of Persuasion. And he’d learned how to sell anyone anything—including himself on the idea that there was something there in the outside world that was truly worth going after.

Now, the biggest prospect of his life waited out on the showroom floor. Chet could see the man if he rolled his chair just a few inches to the left on the clear vinyl chair mat. He had an expensive taupe trench coat (probably London Fog), neat rubber galoshes over his shoes, a drinker’s ruddy nose.

And he wanted something Chet could provide: a fleet of fancy white limos, stretch limos with six doors and shiny burled wood cabinets inside, a T.V. and digital phone and portable fax in each. Crystal decanters and smooth leather seats you could sink into like a silky bath.

It wasn’t that he didn’t want to go with the man for the requisite test drive. He could remember each time he took someone out in one of the limos—the expressions on people’s faces as they passed, the appreciative nods from the customer in the glassed-off seat behind him. He especially remembered how there was unexpected light from the ceiling inside the limo, pouring down on everyone indiscriminately, no matter their status, no matter the season.

Now it was winter. Wet snow bled down the huge glass walls of the carpeted showroom. It
was gray and foggy out there. From his chair, Chet could barely make out the letters of the light-studded oval sign above the dealership: Herb Jaffarian Motors. Outside, at least, there would be air. Room to breathe, but maybe, he thought now, too much of it.

Three other cars filled this end of the showroom: a black Previa All Trac with captain’s chairs and roof rack, a blue 4Runner SR5 with cashmere beige and oak interior, a shadow plum pearl Avalon with alloy wheels.

Chet knew them by heart, ticking off cruise control and cassette deck, a/c, running boards—each add-on punctuated with a painful tap of his finger against the laminate desktop. The man in the trench coat was leaning against the hood of the Avalon impatiently now, playing with his watch.

But Chet could not, for the life of him, leave his chair.

His heart had started beating like crazy; he couldn’t breathe. A pain shot down his leg; his hands tingled.

To calm himself, he put his hands on top of a book. It was a book of lists. Not lists that had anything to do with cars, but lists of other, more important things. Sometimes it dawned on him how little he knew, how much there was to know, and so he tried to pack his brain with more: the fact that “Gone with the Wind” sold 25 million copies in its first half-century; the date of the flood that struck Florence, Italy and destroyed so many cultural treasures (November 4, 1966); all the lines of John Greenleaf Whittier’s poem, “Snowbound,” about a homestead buried in snow.

Last night, the son Dorothy had worried about and who was now a sullen fifteen (and who had no trouble at all leaving their house, in fact seemed to prefer it), told Chet he’d been suspended for stealing a portable c.d. player from a teacher’s car. Chet wanted to cry, wanted to hit him, wanted to hug him, but did nothing except close his eyes.

Then the boy tried to manipulate him. He told Chet he had terrible dreams, always. Dreams of being buried alive in quicksand, always. Dreams of running someone over in a car.

“The dreams scare me, Dad.”

“I know,” Chet had answered, eyes still closed.

Chet remembered as a child going to visit Gros Papa, listening to his mother sniffle as she timidly turned the steering wheel, Meredith sucking on her thumb in the back seat. He remembered hearing the frightening small tsk of the kitchen clock in Gros Papa’s apartment, eying the bulging black phone that never rang.

“You’ve got to leave, Gros Papa,” his mama would say. “You’ve got to get out of here. If only to the market.”

But Gros Papa would stay in his chair, shaking his head. Afraid. And Chet’s mother would leave heads of cabbage and vinegar, a tea cake.

Chet’s eyes scanned a page of the book of lists in front of him: 1967, the year Gros Papa died in his chair, the Sony Tummy Tickler T.V. came out, a T.V. small enough to sit on your stomach. Gros Papa would have liked that.

Unfortunately, the man in the trench coat was looking really annoyed by now.

Wiping his sweaty palms, Chet looked around the showroom to see if there were any other salesmen who might help.

No one.

Maybe he could just stand up, walk the few feet between him and the prospect, and convince the man to come back for the test drive tomorrow. The weather would be better. He’d get a better feel for the car, be able to make a more informed decision.

But that was stupid! Chet knew it. This was a bird in the hand. He’d talked to the man’s secretary on the phone: they wanted a fleet of limos, she’d said in her clipped British accent. Her voice made Chet feel like a clumsy fool.

But he knew the cars were good, that they were great, in fact, and that if he just opened the
door and let the man in the trench coat sink into one of those leather seats, why, it was practically a done deal. Fifty grand times six, three hundred thousand smackeroos, and the 10% commission was his. Enough to put a down payment on the new house Dorothy wanted. Enough to take a vacation, maybe to Bermuda where they could swim with the dolphins. They were supposed to be healing, Chet remembered reading somewhere. And there was plenty of that to be done.

He simply had to get off his ass and make the miracle happen.

The keys to the limo were in his desk drawer. Licking his lips nervously, he rummaged through the Herb Jaffarian personalized pens and Acco silverette paper clip boxes until he found them.

What kind of music would the man want to hear? he wondered, feeling for a moment like his old self. But then a second thought decimated the first: Was the c.d. player in the limo the same or better than the one his son had snitched?

By now, he could see gray sweat stains starting to show through the front of his shirt.

He held the keys up, dangled them temptingly for the man in the trench coat to see. “Just a minute!” he mouthed, pointing to some invisible, and nonexistent, task on his desk.

He was remembering the radio in Gros Papa’s room: the Philco chairside, wood veneer, with AM and two shortwave bands, and a glowing beam indicator light. Chet remembered staring at that light when he and his mother went to visit, listening to the static-y sounds of “Mysterious Traveller” or “Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar.” Reception was better at night than in the daytime, and better in the winter than in the summer. Then, the signals could be heard from greater distances, and Gros Papa would tune in to distant stations. Bring the world to him.

When they’d gone for their last visit, he and his mother and Meredith, just five at the time, they’d found Gros Papa blue and cold in his chair. Chet’s mama started sniffling again, then picked up the handset of the black phone and called her sister and sniffled and bawled some more, Meredith wrapped around her legs and hanging on for dear life. Chet carried the radio into the bedroom, where he curled up under a quilt made of dark velvet patches and listened. “The Thing at the Top of the Stairs” was on, on a series Gros Papa often listened to called “Escape.” Chet took the radio home; his mother didn’t even notice.

Keys to the limo pressing hard into his palm, Chet somehow managed to stand. He smiled and waved to the man in the trench coat, then ran a finger under his collar, giving him room to breathe.

When Chet reached him, the man seemed out of breath, too. Or maybe he was just angry Chet had kept him waiting so long.

Did he have a son who ever stole anything? Chet wondered as he pumped his smooth, cool hand with his own sweaty one. Did he know how much you had to hurt, how empty you had to feel, before you’d take something that didn’t belong to you?

“Let’s take it out for a spin.” Chet heard his voice come as though from a far distance, accompanied by all the whistles and hums he remembered from Gros Papa’s radio.

“That’s what I’ve been waiting for.”

Of course, Chet thought. The world moved while I sat. The world moved while Gros Papa sat and died. Once, right after he and Dorothy married, Chet went into a newfangled television store. The salesman showed him one of the new “T.V.s.” All it showed was a big circle in the middle with an Indian chief’s head at the top and four smaller circles with lines and patterns in the corners. After Dorothy prodded him to buy one, the same picture would show up on the TV screen just before and after normal program hours.

“No.” The man in the trench coat spat out the word. There was no doubt he was angry, and in a hurry. To Chet’s eyes, it seemed the man
was moving even as he stood across from him in those firmly-planted galoshes.

“What’d you do?” Chet heard himself ask. “Rob a bank?”

The man looked at Chet in disbelief; his nose grew even redder.

Chet looked down at his palm. The keys he still held had drawn blood.

From the corner of his eye, Chet saw one of the other salesmen, Roger, come out of the men’s room, zipping his fly. Also in a hurry. And just behind him, beyond the huge pane of glass that fronted the showroom, the white limo sat, sleek and massive and tempting.

Ten percent commission on three hundred grand wasn’t enough to keep his son from stealing again.

It wasn’t enough to get Meredith out of her apartment.

It wasn’t enough to make Dorothy finally believe he wasn’t somehow cursed.

He had worked so hard, for so long. He had found a place in the world, become a salesman, earned a living. Had a son, had a wife, had a house.

When she was little, he had beaten Meredith at every sport and game they played. Beaten it out of her. He had played and competed and won. The dollars had blown in like dead leaves. And Meredith had been doomed to her lonely apartment from the beginning.

The outside, the world, was for Chet to conquer. And so he had.

Now, all he had to do was chalk up another win. Get the man into the car. Take him for a spin. Make the world go the way he wanted it to.

Afterwards, he’d walk over to Roger, slap his back because he didn’t want to shake his hand, and go back to his cubicle in victory. But once there, what?

He wasn’t going to die like Gros Papa. Though the man had taken control, Chet saw that very clearly now. For there was no way you could control the rest of it—the sons, the wives, the speeding cars coming at you when you least expected them.

Outside, the snow was falling harder now. Snowbound. Lines from the Whittier poem slid through his frantic brain, poignant, persistent, making him ache. There’d been a family trapped in snow, a half-welcome guest, the sun rising cheerless over hills of gray. A chill no coat could shut out. A hard, dull bitterness of cold, the blinding storm. White drifts piling against the window frame until, when the second morning shone, the family looked upon a world unknown, on nothing they could call their own.

Nothing stayed the same, whether you stayed put or not. Idyllic families existed only in nostalgia.

The man in the trench coat had hold of Chet’s sleeve now, starting to pull him toward the car outside. Didn’t he see the snow? Didn’t he know how quickly you could be trapped in it? He jerked his arm away, caught sight again of the smears of blood on his palm. He took three strides to the huge glass wall, not checking to see if the man in the trench coat followed him, eyes only on the white limo, the snow, the air.

And then, making a fist with his huge, already sore hand, he pushed a round hole through the glass. Simply to reach the air. He saw Roger from the corner of his eye, shaking his head in disbelief, but Chet pushed another hole right beside the first, and kicked with his shoe until the glass crumpled in front of him, a snowfall of dangerous shards. Behind him, he could hear Muzak and shouts of other people, salesmen all of them. But he stepped right on through it—through the opening in the glass, through all the pitfalls and possibilities of it—and out.

He had to go. Somewhere, anywhere. Do. Something, anything. Hugging his son might be a good place to start.
One minute he's Satan, the next St. George. We arrived in Fairplay—a village desolate as any in the wind-ripped Andes. A scaffold completed, the crowd cheered. The condemned man—his wife sobbing for mercy—was dragged to the gallows. “By God,” Mr. Sprockett thundered, “that’s Charley Diderot, as honest as I’m a scoundrel and butcher!”

Only a thin shirt and the hangman’s cravat separated the trembling man from eternity. The mob shouted; an Ethan Wagner—Mr. Diderot’s rival in the saloon trade—was especially vociferous in shouting, “Justice for Harry Rivers!” Mr. Sprockett leapt onto the gallows, shoved aside the executioner, untied the noose. The assembly, enraged, hurled rotten fruit, Mr. Wagner shouted, “String him up too!”

Mr. Sprockett bellowed fierce as the wind: “I’ll prove this man shot in self-defense!” The saloon shutters cracked like gunshots. The noose flung itself like a snared bird. “Who saw it?” Mr. Sprockett demanded. Silence. “How many rounds did Rivers get off?” “Five!” someone yelled. A revolver glimmered in Wagner’s beefy fist, but John fired a warning at the blackguard’s boots. Never have I seen anything so fast and true.

We dined at Mrs. Diderot’s grateful table. Later, Mr. Sprockett crept into my bed. “Will you soil the best deed of your life?” I hissed; flames, nonetheless, kindled my belly, despite my oath not to succumb a second time to the splendour his bravery filled me with.

“Sophie,” he groaned in mortal agony. I could deny him, and myself, nothing.
Sophia Starling Sees Figures in the Snow

by Robert Cooperman

We had pushed the horses
through withers-high drifts all day,
hand numb with blue-brittle cold.
Mr. Sprockett cursed the snow
that could slide away in an instant;
the smashed carrion of our bodies
feasts for coyotes and crows.

Imperative I reach Denver
to meet the train for New York,
or forfeit my fare paid in advance,
and then the ship back to England.
We thrashed like trout in a creel—
dusk a deepening crimson: sure death
unless we found a shack, a ranch outpost.

Eyebrows sewed tight with frost,
I spied two trekkers plunge and rise;
faces pale as sails of abandoned ships.
They laboured under packs,
passed us without a word;
sky smudging into layers of ash,
wind spat stray flakes at my face.
Those two travelers had disappeared.

“Did you see?” I gasped.
He nodded, my impatience a flame.
“Do you know them?” I snapped.
“Us,” his voice barked like a shot,
“if we don’t find that cabin.”
Fear danced down my spine;
the sun was sinking like a ship.
Then I saw those walkers on a snow-bank,
the shack a dark square beside them.

“John!” I stabbed with a forefinger.
We urged the horses toward the shelter,
no one else in sight; no other footprints
tamped down the snow drifted
half-way up the one oil-skinned window.
I took those journeyers for a sign
I need not fret about consequences
if our bodies merged one last time.
While Hearing a Case, the Honorable Samuel Delaney, Judge of Gold Creek, Reflects Idly

by Robert Cooperman

"Judge Sam-u-well," friends greet me,
mine owners, their whiskey smooth
as a whore’s thumb on your top button.
"Sam, you’d better!" my wife screeches,
if I’m late to dinner, served
with the scrape of nails down a slate.
Our daughter’s a second harpy
when her beak’s not buried in poetry.

This one-eyed claim-jumper whose butt
I’m going to ship to Salida’s rock-pile
reminds me of John Sprockett,
who passed through before the thaw,
with an English lady, high-bosomed as a statue.
I had him before my bench once,
but let him off when he recited
one of the poems he’s famous for to my daughter,
greedy as an owlet for culture
from that grizzly-chewed killer;
Letitia was especially raven-righteous
to make me Sprockett’s accomplice.

What I wouldn’t give to be free as an eagle
mating with a female wild as the wind
stirred by their love-dives.
I should just punch Letty’s mouth shut,
no respect for her husband, a judge,
appointed by the Governor, by thunder!

Though that Englishwoman sipped tea—
too lady-gracious to see the horse-shit
booby-trapping Main Street
like cannon balls at Antietam—
if Sprockett’s not stirring her cup,
I’ve never done the dirty with Mary LaFrance,
a workhorse to that highbred filly
unafraid, I’ll wager, of hard riding
out of range of Letitia’s black wings
flinging ashes and accusations.
"March can be tricky in Denver, sifting blizzards on the Pearl of the Plains like tons of deadly confectioner’s sugar. But on this day, ladies had need of fans, men waved stetsons in front of sweat-lathered faces, fingers greased carriage reins, parasols, tempers flared like shoot-outs in saloons.

"John Sprockett stood beside Sophia Starling waiting for the east-bound to New York. Hat in hand, he ignored children staring at the claw marks ripped down his face by the king of grizzlies he had dispatched with nothing more than his Bowie blade and the raw courage of an American legend. Miss Starling fidgeted with her gloves, hoping he’d speak some tender farewells, knowing they would never meet again: she returning to England, he a creature of mountains and plains, more likely to crush a china teacup than hold one with a daintily raised pinkie.

"The whistle blew, the platform shuddered, mothers pulled children from the rails as if from a herd of stampeding mustangs, men kissed wives, shook hands with brothers, yelled at porters, bought cups of water, resorted to flasks to fortify themselves against the long, dry journey east, sun thudding like a Ute tom-tom.

"John Sprockett stooped for Miss Starling’s bags. She blushed, then quick as a hummingbird, gave her lips to his as no man has ever been kissed. Mothers cupped palms over children’s faces, men elbowed each other and snorted, a reporter cursed that he had no camera handy. Sobbing into her handkerchief, she flew on-board. ‘Good-bye!’ she cried. ‘I shall treasure you always!’ And in a rush of whistles and steam she was gone, the platform silent as the prairie after a twister.

"Sprockett—feeling old as Lee at Appomatox, yet a glory like Lincoln to preserve the Union—pivoted like a war-decorated hero. He rode west, sun glittering pyrite. On board that snorting steel horse, a boy read a novel about Wild Bill Hickock. ‘He’d not stand a chance,’ Miss Starling vowed, ‘against my darling John Sprockett.’"
John Sprocket Leaves Sophia Starling,
Union Station, Denver, March 1874

by Robert Cooperman

We wait for the east-bound
to whisk her away, leave me empty—
a fisherman in a fable, granted
three wishes, all turning out bad.
Maybe I'll shoot the first man I meet,
or hang myself, or toss my worthless husk
from Long's Peak, food for buzzards.

She stands separate, already in England,
moved, with a yardful of kids
tugging at her apron-strings.
Senseless to watch her wave good-bye
from inside that steel nightmare.
"I can't abide fare-thee-wells," I say,
tip the brim of my stetson, and pivot,
almost lose my balance, from knowing
I'll never see her again.

"John!" I hear her call,
feel her take my arm,
England a lifetime behind her.
But folks rush past, no one noticing
my scarred face or caring who I am,
and it was only wishing,
not her real fingers or her warm,
staggered breathing in my ear
of that night in the frozen cabin
when she clung to me in the black-out instant
when gatling-guns went off in our heads.

I wake from that memory, sitting my mount:
unlike her Wren, I never named it,
just a smooth stepper, gentle;
a gelding, it can't know what I'm grieving
even if every whore in the territory
gave it to me eager as if I was Lincoln
come back in justice and glory,
not a murmur about money changing hands.

To be continued in future issues.

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Greg Garrett’s story “Mariah” is part of a collection of stories about a group of Cheyenne in and around Watonga, Oklahoma. Other stories from this collection have appeared in such journals as *Writers Forum*, *Grain*, and *South Dakota Review*.

Gordon Grice’s book of creative nonfiction, *The Red Hourglass* is forthcoming in April from Delacorte Press. It details the lives of rattlesnakes, black widow spiders, and other citizens of Oklahoma. The Book of the Month Club has picked it up as an alternate main selection. He contributes an occasional article to *Oklahoma Today*. His other credits in poetry and nonfiction include *Harper’s*, *The Chattahoochee Review*, *The Best American Essays 1996*, and others. Grice is a resident of Guymon, Oklahoma.


Brett Hursey’s work has won National AWP journal awards in 1995, 1994, and 1993, and has appeared in over sixty journals across the United States and Canada. He teaches creative writing and composition at East Carolina University.

Keith Long, a regular contributor to *Westview*, has taught in the Language Arts Department at Southwestern Oklahoma State University since 1988. He writes a weekly humor column entitled “Tall Cotton,” which appears in the *Tri-Cities Journal*, the *Comanche County Chronicle*, and the *Marlow Review*. His other publications include a men’s devotional book, *Room to Grow*, released in August, 1999, by Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA. Long’s inspiration for the book came from the *Westview Writers’ Festival* in the fall of 1998. Featured speaker Walter McDonald talked about a writer exploring “regions” in life. Once those regions have been explored, the writing comes naturally, McDonald said. Long found this to be true. Those wishing to obtain an autographed copy of the book, entitled *Room to Grow*, should contact Keith Long, 1708 Sandstone, Weatherford, OK, 73096.

Walt McDonald’s latest book is *Counting Survivors* (University of Massachusetts Press). Two other books are *After the Noise of Saigon* (University of Massachusetts Press) and *Night Landings* (HarperCollins). He has published fifteen collections of poems and one book of fiction for presses such as University of Pittsburgh Press, University of

Bruce McCandless is a writer and editor living in Austin, Texas. His poems and stories have appeared in the *Texas Observer*, *Slant*, *Louisiana Literature*, and the *Grasslands Review*.

Barbara Mujica is the author of over fifty books on Hispanic culture and language, and her anthology of Hispanic Nobel Prize winners will be published by Georgetown University Press. Her articles on Hispanic and women's issues have appeared in hundreds of publications, among them *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Miami Herald*, and *The International Herald Tribune*. In 1984 she received a fiction reading grant from Poets and Writers of New York and *The Antietam Review*. Two years later, her story "Women" was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. In 1990 her essay on bilingualism was named one of the 50 best op-ed pieces of the decade by *The New York Times*, and in 1992 she won the E.L. Doctorow International Fiction Competition. She won the award for best short story of 1998 sponsored by *Pangolin Papers*.

Randy Oakes has published poetry and fiction in *Poetry East*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Real Fiction*, and other journals.


Charles Rafferty's first full-length collection of poems was published by the University of Arkansas Press; *The Man on the Tower* won the 1994 Arkansas Poetry Award, selected by Susan Ludvigson. In addition, he has published two chapbooks: *The Wave That Will Beach Us Both* and *The Bog Shack*. Currently, he is an editor for a computer consulting firm and the book review editor of *Hellas*.

Donna Baier Stein has had stories and poems published in *Prairie Schooner*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Florida Review*, *New Virginia Review*, *Santa Clara Review*, *Iowa Woman*, *George Washington Review*, *South Carolina Review*, *The Washingtonian*, *The Caribbean Writer*, *Antietam Review*, and other journals, and in three anthologies from George Washington University Press, University Press of America, and *The Spirit That Moves Us Press*. One story won *Florida Review*'s first place fiction prize and was nominated for a Pushcart. Another received a first place fiction award from *Kansas Quarterly*. She has also received a Bread Loaf scholarship and Johns Hopkins Writing Seminars fellowship. NTC Publishing Group published her non-fiction book *Write on Target!* last year, and she is a contributing essayist to Pocket Book's *I've Always Meant to Tell You: Letters to Our Mothers from Women Writers* (published in paperback as *From
Daughters to Mothers). Her novel, Fortune, received this year’s PEN/New England Discovery Award in Fiction.

Don Stinson’s poetry has appeared in little magazines such as Midland Review, Concho River Review, and Slant. He has also written fiction and plays. Stinson teaches writing at Northern Oklahoma College in Tonkawa and is a Ph.D. candidate in the graduate writing program at Oklahoma State University.

Virgil Suarez’s first book of poetry, You Come Singing, is due out this fall from Tia Chucha Press/Northwestern University. He has earned fellowships from the Florida State Arts Council, and has won an award for the best poem from The Caribbean Review. His poems have appeared in such journals as Blue Mesa Review, The Chariton Review, Sow’s Ear Review, Cimarron, Crazy Horse, and Puerto del Sol. He teaches creative writing at Florida State University and lives with his family in Tallahassee. In his spare time he breeds and shows canaries.

Richard Torrence received his bachelor of arts in art education from Southwestern Oklahoma State University in 1980. His untitled picture of Weatherford grain elevators was painted in 1979. It is acrylic on canvas.

Miller Williams is the author, translator, or coauthor of twenty-nine books for presses such as University of Missouri, Louisiana State University, Rutgers University, Houghton Mifflin, Random House, Scott Foresman, and New Directions. His most recent book is Some Jazz a While: Collected Poems from the University of Illinois Press. In addition to the poetry and translation, he has contributed a reference work entitled Patterns of Poetry: An Encyclopedia of Forms (LSU) and critical writings as well. Williams has been awarded numerous honors, such as a Fulbright Professorship and a Prix de Rome. He served as our latest inaugural poet (1997) and is currently the University Professor of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Gary Wolgamott has been teaching at Southwestern since January 1968 and has loved (almost) every minute of it. Wolgamott is currently Chairman of Allied Health and Associate Dean, School of Health Sciences. He has an interest in the history of the old Colorado mining regions. When he finds a unique mine, he enjoys drawing it in pen and ink or possibly painting it in acrylics. The picture of the old mine on the river is from Crystal, near Marble, Colorado, and is frequently photographed for Colorado magazines. The painting of the mountain was his first oil painting, and he calls it “Winter Solitude.” It is not a picture of any specific mountain range, but comes from his “mind’s eye.”

Glenda Zumwalt teaches in the English Department of Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Oklahoma.

Illustrations

3 Photograph by Steve Lounsbury, farmhouse outside of Thomas, Oklahoma
13 Painting (detail) by Richard Torrence, Weatherford, Oklahoma, grain elevators
14 Photograph by C. Michael McKinney, house in Leedey, Oklahoma
17 Photograph (detail) by C. Michael McKinney, grain elevators in Leedey, Oklahoma
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48 Drawing by Gary Wolgamott, Morning Glory Mine, above Anaconda, Colorado

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Arts Calendar

Music, Theater, Art, and Literary Events

All events are on the campus of Southwestern Oklahoma State University unless otherwise noted. Panorama events are free.

November
1 Panorama Event: Alexi Bruni—Fine Arts Center-7:30 p.m.
10-30 Drawings by Foundations of Art I students—Art Building.
11 Panorama Event: Robert Cialdini—Fine Arts Center-7:30 p.m.
13 IAO event: “Not So Silent Night” Exhibition, party, and silent auction.
16 “Everything I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.” Weatherford Arts Council Dinner Theatre, Student Union Ballroom. For more information call (580) 772-6109.
19-31 IAO Exhibition: “The Circumstance of Things.” In his first solo show, John Hill is commenting on current society and showing people a way out of their dilemmas, no matter how far they have fallen.
“Quiet Places” by Wendy Mahsetky-Poolaw, Native American artist.
“Behind the Counter” Amir Alavi’s study of the culture and everyday life at a convenience store. Opening reception is November 19, 5-8 p.m. Exhibition on view during Opening Night New Year’s Eve celebration.

December
3-January 2 IAO Premiere of “24 Works on Paper Traveling Exhibition” featured in the Oklahoma Room of the Kirkpatrick Galleries at Omniplex, 2100 NE 52nd St. Opening reception Friday, December 3, 6-8 p.m.
8, 9, 10, 11 You’re A Good Man Charlie Brown directed by Scott Crew—Old Science auditorium December 8, 10 a.m.; December 9, 10, and 11, 7:30 p.m.
8-22 The Annual SWOSU Art Department Christmas Art Exhibition. Works by Weatherford-area working artists. A juried exhibition celebrating the visual creativity of local artists. Reception scheduled for Monday, December 13, at 7 p.m.—Art Building.

January 2000
17 Panorama Event: “The Meeting”—Fine Arts Center-7:30 p.m.
10-11 Jazz Festival—Fine Arts Center
24 Panorama Event: Terry Anderson—Fine Arts Center-7:30 p.m.

March
1 Our Town directed by Scott Crew—Old Science auditorium. March 1, 10 a.m.; 2, 3 and 4, 7:30 p.m.
Fall/Winter 1999-2000

30 Panorama Event: “Blues in the Night”
—Fine Arts Center - 7:30 p.m.

April
10-15 Beethoven Festival — Fine Arts Center
27, 28, & 29 The Boys Next Door directed by Steve P. Strickler — Old Science auditorium. 7:30 p.m.

July
Weatherford Arts Council’s Arts Academy 2000 for children and youth. For more information contact (580) 772-7238.

Ongoing Events:
IAO (Individual Artists of Oklahoma) is located at the corner of Sheridan and Hudson in Oklahoma City, and is open Tuesday through Friday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the last Saturday of every month from 1 p.m.-4 p.m. The gallery is closed November 24-26 and December 24-31. Admission is free, but there is a charge for some events. Call (405) 232-6060 for more information.

IAO will host the following poetry readings in the Oklahoma City area. Son of Slam poetry competition will be on the second and fourth Tuesdays at 8:30 p.m. in Galileo’s Bar & Grill on Paseo. The competition is presented by The Home for Wayward Poets. Every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m., The Home for Wayward Poets will also host a poetry reading at Galileo’s. Featured poets and an open mic will be featured every second Friday at 8 p.m. at Diversity, 1739 NW 16th Street. Featured poets, discussion, and an open mic are also scheduled for every Thursday at 8 p.m. at Prairie Moon Gallery, located at 577 Buchanan Alley on Campus Corner in Norman. The format will combine featured poets and an open mic. Any poet wishing to participate as a featured poet should call IAO and leave a name and phone number.

Other Events and Exhibitions Coming in Spring 2000
The 15th Annual “24 Works on Paper” Traveling Exhibition sponsored by IAO.
2nd Annual “Arts of March” Exhibition and Evening of the Arts, organized in conjunction with the Weatherford Arts Council.
“22 x 30 x 30”: A visiting collection of 30 works in various print media, organized by Robert Dorlac.
May 5: Cinco de Mayo Celebration of Hispanic Music and Dance. Contact Andrew Marvick at (580) 774-3032 (marvica@swosu.edu) for further information.
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