



6-1-1997

## Westview: Vol. 16, Iss. 2 (Spring/Summer 1997)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), [Nonfiction Commons](#), [Photography Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

(1997) "Westview: Vol. 16, Iss. 2 (Spring/Summer 1997)," *Westview*: Vol. 16 : Iss. 2 , Article 1.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol16/iss2/1>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu](mailto:phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu).



A JOURNAL OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA

# WESTVIEW

VOLUME 16

NUMBER 2

SPRING/SUMMER 1997

\$3.00

• HEROES & HEROINES •

A JOURNAL OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA

W

E S

T V

I E

W

VOLUME 16

NUMBER 2

SPRING/SUMMER 1997

## PUBLISHER

DR. DAN DILL

## EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITOR ..... FRED ALSBERG  
ASSISTANT EDITOR ..... JOYCE STOFFERS  
COPY EDITOR ..... C. MICHAEL MCKINNEY  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS ..... JENNIFER CAGG  
MICHELLE STEWART  
AD SALES MANAGER ..... RHONDA STINSON

## DESIGN STAFF

ART DIRECTOR ..... JAN BRADFIELD  
DESIGN STUDIO ..... STACI HEADRICK  
SHAUNA JARVIS  
BRENT JOHNSON  
BRANDON WEBSTER  
COVER IMAGE ..... JAN BRADFIELD  
TRADEMARK IMAGE ..... RODNEY CLOUD

*Westview's* design & graphics are produced by the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Graphic Design Studio. Illustrations are by Southwestern Oklahoma State University faculty and Graphic Design students.

*Westview* is the official publication of the Southwestern Center for Regional Studies and is published by Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, OK 73096. It is printed by the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Press of Weatherford under the direction of Mr. Larry Becker.

*Westview* publishes fiction, poetry, drama, nonfiction, book reviews, scholarly work, literary criticism, and artwork. *Westview* holds only first rights for all works published. Send submissions and SASE to Fred Alsberg, Editor: *Westview*, 100 Campus Drive: Weatherford, OK 73096.

Subscription for two years (four issues): \$10.00 in USA: \$20 out of country. Single issues: \$4.00 including postage; \$3.00 if not mailed. Checks are to be made payable to Dr. Dan Dill, Publisher; *Westview*, 100 Campus Drive; Weatherford, OK 73096.



## STYLESHEET

1. Submissions should be typed on 8.5" x 11" white paper; prose should be double spaced and poetry should be single 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 use themes related to Western Oklahoma, as well as non-thematic work of high quality by writers from elsewhere.
4. We accept and enjoy both free verse and formal poetry.
5. Include a brief biographical sketch for our contributor's notes.
6. We welcome submissions on a 3.5" disk formatted for IBM or Macintosh. Please include a hard copy of your submission.
7. Address all submissions and correspondence to:

Mr. Fred Alsberg  
Editor, *Westview*  
100 Campus Drive  
Southwestern Oklahoma State University  
Weatherford, OK 73096

## WESTVIEW FUTURE ISSUES

### Now and Then

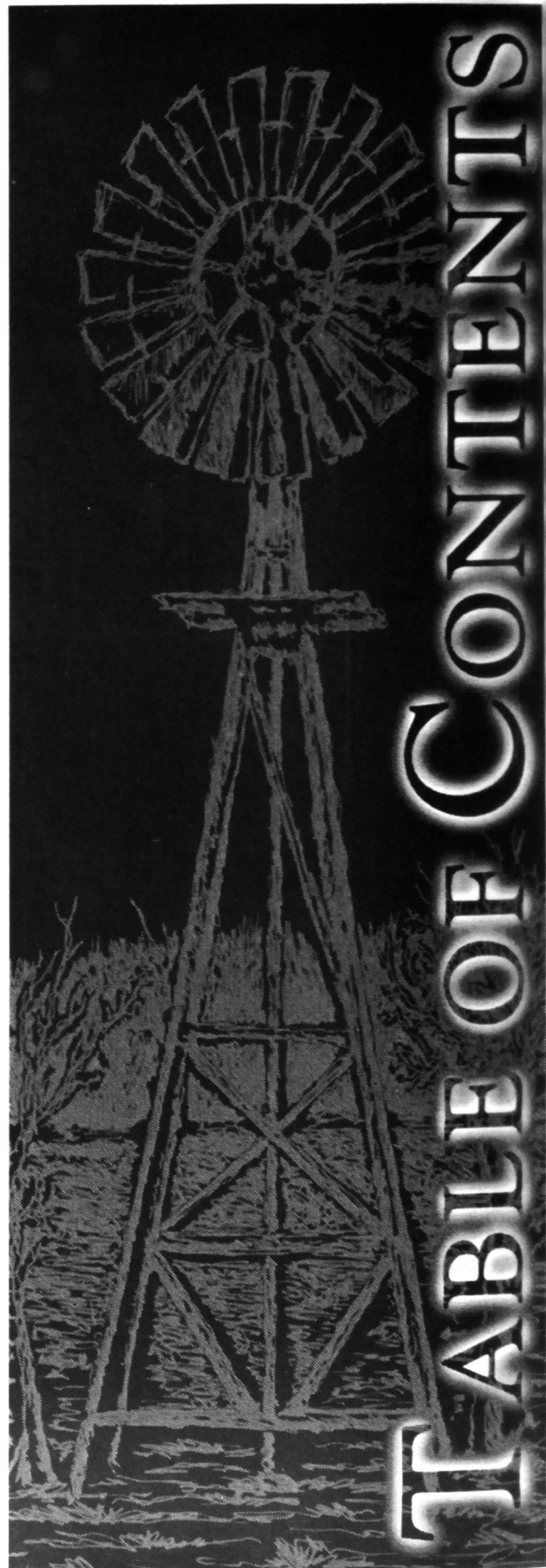
FALL/WINTER .....DEADLINE: 8-15-97

### Wildlife

SPRING/SUMMER .....DEADLINE: 12-15-97

### Landscapes

FALL/WINTER .....DEADLINE: 8-15-98





Lee Gutkind	Looking For Tom Mix Along a Road Paved With Promises of Gold	page 1
ILLUSTRATED BY BRENT JOHNSON		
Joyce Stoffers	Interview with Lee Gutkind	page 4
Mark Walling	Silo	page 10
ILLUSTRATED BY BRENT JOHNSON		
Jay Schneiders	Upon Reading the Obituary of Sarah Clough	page 12
Pat Snell	Lily Pie	page 13
ILLUSTRATED BY STACI HEADRICK		
Brent A. Baldwin	Waiting on Grandma	page 18
ILLUSTRATED BY STACI HEADRICK		
Marth Minford-Meas	The Form	page 20
ILLUSTRATED BY COLE RACHEL		
Leo Luke Marcello	Rocky and Mary Time	page 21
Brent Johnson	Martin	page 22
Shauna Jarvis	Dorothy Parker	page 23
Alvin O. Turner	Vanishing Act	page 24
ILLUSTRATED BY BRANDON WEBSTER		
Carol Cullar	Transfigured	page 26
Walter McDonald	The House on Fourth and Vine	page 27
ILLUSTRATED BY COLE RACHEL		
Hugh R. Tribbey	Reckoning for Edward Abbey	page 28
Jack Rickard	Sharecropper's Wife	page 30
ILLUSTRATED BY SHAUNA JARVIS		
Linda Simone	Borrowed Clothes	page 31
ILLUSTRATED BY COLE RACHEL		
Tom Durbin	Winnenap	page 32
Robert Cooperman	Sophia Starling Attends a Dying Man, Colorado Territory	page 38
Robert Cooperman	Sophia Starling Writes to Her Sister After Climbing Long's Peak...	page 39
Robert Cooperman	Sophia Starling Explains Her Reasons for Traveling	page 40
Robert Cooperman	John Sprockett Recalls the First Man He Killed	page 41
Robert Cooperman	From the Journal of John Sprockett, Colorado Territory, 1873	page 42
Melinda Craig	Scent of Rain	page 43
ILLUSTRATED BY BRENT JOHNSON		
Contributor's Notes		page 45

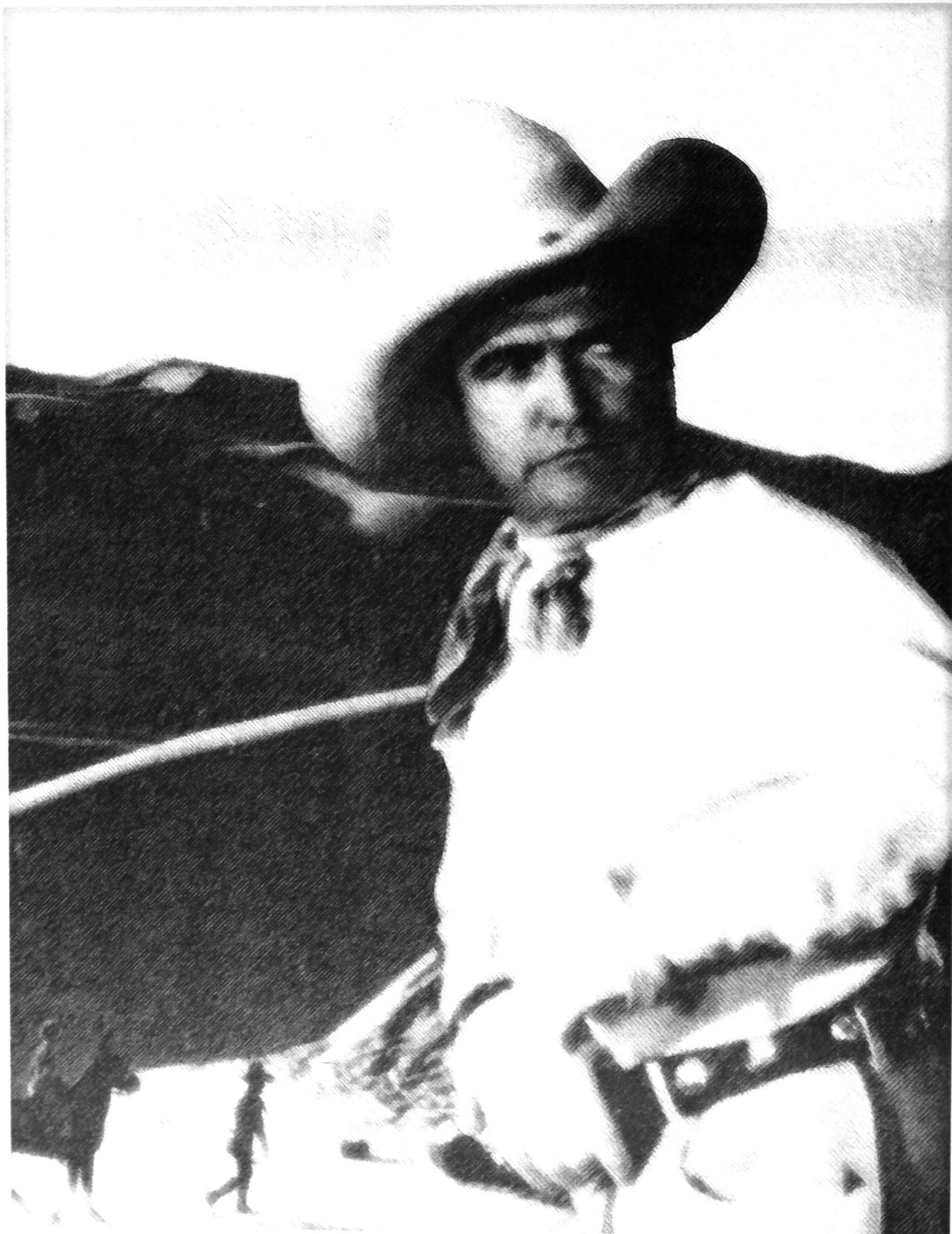


ILLUSTRATION BY BRENT JOHNSON

# Looking for Tom Mix Along a Road Paved With Promises of Gold

by Lee Gutkind

When I asked the man at the gas station to direct me to the Paradise Gulch Saloon, he slid out from under the car he was working on, glanced at my motorcycle resting beside the old-fashioned glass-domed American Oil pump, and got to his feet.

"When?" he said.

I hesitated, looked the man up and down. He was in his mid-fifties, short, with an overstuffed basket for a stomach and gray bib overalls stained with grease. I didn't know whether he was being serious or trying to give me trouble. Sometimes, when you ride a motorcycle, people get the wrong idea about you.

"Now," I finally said.

"Well, it isn't there now," he said.

"It isn't *where* now?" I persisted.

"It isn't where it was when it was last here," he said.

I sighed, turned away and looked down the hill into the tired old town of Dubois, Pennsylvania, in the northwest corner of Clearfield County. Across the street and up the block from where we stood was the Flaming Earth Cafe, and although a beer would have tasted good right about then, I was holding out for the Paradise Gulch.

It had been a difficult day, the morning rainy and cold, and now the afternoon was thick with heat. Earlier, the truck winding down the narrow mountain road from Boot Jack had roared past, splattering me with mud. It had slowed down to go up the next hill, but when it came down the hill after that, I was splattered again.

I explained that I had heard about a Tom Mix festival taking place in Dubois each year to celebrate the cowboy's birthday. "I thought that the Paradise Gulch was where Tom Mix fans hang out."

Mix, incidentally, was one of the first white-hatted heroes of movie westerns, having moonlighted his first of nearly four hundred films in 1910 while working as a deputy

marshal in Dewey, Oklahoma. He distinguished himself from his cowboy competitors by refusing to ever kiss a girl on film. "Rather kiss a horse," he always said.

Supposedly, the festival featured showings of Mix films, displays of Mix memorabilia, panel discussions about Tom Mix, and Mix souvenirs. The year before nearly seven thousand people attended the Tom Mix festival in Dubois, including a couple from West Germany.

"That's right," the man in the gasoline station said, "but the festival ain't until September."

"I know, but I just want to see the place."

"But it ain't real," he said. "It only exists during festival time." He chuckled and shook his head. "If we had a place like the Paradise Gulch year round, there would be nothin' left of Dubois."

The man explained that each autumn the town fathers erected the Paradise Gulch in a different spot, but that the patrons got so drunk paying homage to Mix that they'd tear the place apart long before the festival was over. The Paradise Gulch was so authentic and true to the image of the Old West, of which Mix was an integral albeit symbolic part, that some of the patrons even wore guns.

"The Paradise Gulch is a good place to go," he continued, patting his side where his six-shooter might have been and wiping his greasy hands on his knees, "if you got a grudge against somebody who's going to be there at the same time."

I thanked the man, washed up a bit, squeezed on my helmet, and headed north through Tyler, Weedville, and Caledonia toward Mix Run in Cameron County, about an hour's drive away, where Tom's grandfather had settled one hundred fifty years ago, and where the King of the Celluloid Cowboys was subsequently born. He moved to Dubois as a teenager, where he worked with his brother and sister as a stablehand.



Along the way, I would pass the ghost towns of Coalville, Glen Fisher, and Wilmer, as well as the site on which Bill Smith's Rattlesnake Zoo once stood, before old Bill caught a wet bite from a member of his friendly family of serpents and died on the spot.

This is a lovely, soothing stretch of country, with rolling meadows, fresh white church steeples, log cabins low to the ground, hills cushioned with trees, houses of natural stone. I wound my motorcycle out through all five gears. It whispered in the wind as I soared up the blacktop.

Actually, Mix never really needed to go to Hollywood to strike paydirt. According to stories and legends there is a motherlode of treasure buried near Mix Run, beginning with \$1.5 million in silver, stashed a century and a half ago by a salvage expert named Captain Blackbeard, who had raised a Spanish galleon near the port of Baltimore. While attempting to sneak the silver overland through Pennsylvania and into Canada, Blackbeard panicked, buried his treasure near the village of Gardeau in McKean County, about a day's ride from Mix Run, and fled. He was killed on a boat to England soon afterward, and the location of his treasure died with him.

At about the same time Blackbeard was hiding his silver, a man, sick and delirious, wandered into the tiny town of Hazel Hurst in McKean County and confessed to robbing a bank in nearby Emporium, making off with \$60,000.

He claimed to have stuffed the money in glass jars and buried them under a large flat rock within sight of Kinsua Bridge. To this day, the rock under which the money was allegedly concealed has not been found.

But the biggest all-time payload, today worth more than \$7 million, was brought into Penn's Woods West by Lieutenant Castleton of the Union Army, assigned to transport twenty-six fifty-pound bars of gold, concealed with black paint, from Wheeling, West Virginia, to Philadelphia, and to avoid detection by the Confederate Cavalry.

Castleton took the extra precaution of hiding the gold under a specially designed false bottom in his wagon, and selecting a roundabout northern route from Pittsburgh through Clarion and Ridgeway. He arrived in St. Mary's,

Elk County, in June 1863, the last time in which he and his men (with one exception) were ever seen alive.

Two months later, Sergeant John Conners wandered into Lock Haven, Pennsylvania and told a fantastic story of how the entire caravan was ambushed by highwaymen who stole the wagons. Without food or ammunition, Conners had managed to save himself only by drinking swamp water and crawling night and day through the snake-infested wilderness.

Since then, the army has conducted dozens of fruitless searches and investigations, most recently in 1941 when the Pinkerton detective agency uncovered one-half of a black-painted gold bar between Driftwood and Dent's Run. This is not much of a payload, considering all the trouble the army has gone through over the years, but it is more of a reward than I received when I rounded the last bend a few miles past Driftwood and chugged up the long hill to the site on which the town of Mix Run once stood.

All that is remaining of Tom Mix's ancestral home and the community surrounding it is a plaque, standing silent and erect like a wooden soldier on the shoulder of the lonely road:

Tom Mix cowboy star of silent motion pictures was born a short distance from here. He served as a soldier in the Spanish American War, later becoming renowned for his wild west roles in cinema and circus. Mix died in an auto accident in Arizona on October 12, 1940.

The terrain flattens somewhat as you travel northeast into the heartland of Pennsylvania, hooking up with Route 120, the Bucktail Highway, a winding rope of new asphalt, tall trees, crystal blue skies, edged with jagged mountain ridges.

I stopped for a drink at Whitcomb's Country Store, a red and white shingled structure with log facing and rows of elk antlers in the windows. Inside, along with the packaged goods, homemade sausage and pickles, the fishing tackle and postcards, a life-sized wooden Indian lounges in a swivel

chair. On the wall, there's a photo of a deer under a quilt in a four-poster bed and another photo of an old man French-kissing a buck elk.

As I continued northeast, there were freshly painted houses, many of them red, valleys scooped out of burly hills, silver silos gleaming like rockets, coal tipples, raw wood barns hunching in fields of grain, glazed golden with sun. There were ferns wafting up over the shoulder of the road, huckleberry bushes, blankets of ivy. The pungent aroma of pine filtered through the heat.

Every time I ride through this part of the country, I am simultaneously invigorated and enchanted. The sights I see and the solace I experience remain with me long after I return home. This isn't gold or silver or the glory of Tom Mix, but it's treasure enough.

"Back road journeys do not end any more than a book ends because it has been read or a symphony because it has been heard or a painting because it has been seen," writes Ed Peterson. "In highway driving the trip is ended when

the destination has been reached, but in backroad driving the trip lives on for many years, growing both in pleasure and in significance, for backroad driving is a belief in the abiding pleasure of blue sky and clouds, of a sparrow's song at night, of a stone house with a story to tell, of an old woman in a country store, a little girl who talked to a turtle, trillium in the spring and sumac in the fall, the taste of huckleberries, the smell of autumn apples, and the exhilaration of being lost and found again on an earth that, to those who live in it, is always familiar."

---

Reprinted with permission from *The People of Penn's Woods West*.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Tom Mix Museum in Dewey, Oklahoma is five miles north of Bartlesville on U.S. 75. Located on 721 North Delaware Street, it is a one room museum depicting the life of the silent screen cowboy who in real life was once town marshal. For more information call (918) 534-1555. Another Tom Mix point of interest is the Blue Belle Saloon and Restaurant in historic Guthrie, where he worked for a time as a bartender.



ILLUSTRATION BY BRENT JOHNSON

# Interview with Lee Gutkind

by Joyce Stoffers

In the fall of 1994, I attended the Oklahoma Fall Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain where Lee Gutkind, founder and editor of the journal *Creative Nonfiction*, was teaching an intense workshop on writing nonfiction. His wealth of knowledge and experience were combined with a teaching style radiating an exuberant warmth. I knew I had to ask him to share his ideas with the *Westview* audience, and allow us to run one of his pieces so our readers could see him putting those ideas into action. Fortunately, he graciously accepted. Lee would allow *Westview* to re-publish his Tom Mix piece for our Heroes and Heroines issue, plus he'd grant me an interview.

In December, 1995, I sent Lee the interview questions, and in January of 1996 he sent me a letter stating the following: "When I looked at your questions earlier this week, I was struck by the fact that I had already answered them in my book that will be published this spring by Chicago Review Press, entitled *Creative Nonfiction: How To Write It and Live It*." I immediately panicked and assumed Lee meant that now we wouldn't be able to run the interview; but I continued reading frantic with curiosity about the hefty weight of a stack of paper directly under the letter. The papers turned out to be close to seventy pages of then-unpublished manuscript, on which Lee had painstakingly marked in yellow those sections answering my questions. The following is the result of those literally illuminated and particularly illuminating portions.

---

**STOFFERS:** What is your background in writing, and how did you get interested in creative nonfiction?

**GUTKIND:** I launched my freelance writing career working for local newspapers and magazines. First, I wrote historically-oriented articles on topics such as the origin of Mother's Day, and then I began hanging around and exploring in the backwoods, befriending mountain people—a one-armed blacksmith, a championship snake-sacker (a guy who tossed dozens of writhing rattlesnakes, barehanded, into a canvas bag at breakneck speed), a cooper (barrel-maker), a woman whose husband bartered away for her teeth, and I wrote articles and essays about all of the people I met and the experiences we shared.

The more I wrote, the more I came to understand and appreciate the value and importance of personal experience in the writing process. When I first started freelancing, I devoted most of my research time to reading other people's work in the library or conducting interviews of experts in the subjects about which I was writing.

The library research was and is necessary: you need to familiarize yourself with the basic facts of any subject you are writing about. And the interviewing was often essential. But I always felt that a third dimension was missing in the essays and articles I was writing—and in most of the nonfiction I was reading in books, newspapers and magazines.



There were limits to a writer's ability to capture the essence of a subject by relying only on books and second-hand reports, no matter how vivid. What was missing was the special insight provided by the third dimension of the writer's research, which is personal experience.

How can you write accurately and intimately about people, places and things, I asked myself, unless you come as close as humanly possible to participating in the worlds you are attempting to describe? That revelation led to my decision to become a clown for a day for Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus.

I will never forget the fun that afternoon, dressing in clown costume, making-up in "clown alley," and then performing under the "big top," doing back flips, somersaults, hula-dancing, momentarily losing all of my inhibitions.

I will never forget the feeling of exhilaration and satisfaction, not only because I was a clown, but also because I knew in the back of my mind that I could become something else tomorrow—and then something very different in the weeks and months thereafter.

I suddenly realized how fortunate I was. How many other people had the rare opportunity to live in someone else's shoes—to try out life in another milieu and to pick and choose their experiences? Within the obvious limits of health, safety, good taste, etc., I could become literally anything that appealed to me, and when I got tired of it, become something else.

And then in the privacy of my own office, I was presented with the challenge to recreate in words the experiences I had just lived for thousands—or millions—of readers. I remember thinking: "I can't imagine ever doing anything else! I can't imagine ever *wanting* to do anything else!"

Since then, I have labored as a rodeo wrangler, scrubbed with heart and liver transplant surgeons, traveled with a crew of National League baseball umpires, acted in summer stock theater, flew rescue missions with emergency trauma teams, observed behind-the-scenes at a children's hospital, endured desert survival training, floated in the Goodyear blimp, bicycled Ireland, worked with zoo veterinarians on lions, gorillas, elephants and wandered the U.S. on a motorcycle—all in the line of duty. But becoming a clown was a special breakthrough.

From that moment on, this was how I wrote my articles and essays, by *embracing all three dimensions of the writing experience*: I researched in the library, I interviewed the experts, and then I plunged into a world I was attempting to capture in words and became intimately involved for a day, a month or a year until I could understand it—feel it—from the inside out.

**STOFFERS:** This brings us to the role of “immersion journalism” in your work. Would you comment some more on this topic?

**GUTKIND:** Immersion journalists, like Jeanne Marie Laskas, are take-charge guys who force fact and experience to collide. In immersion journalism, the important distinction is to try to understand that readers primarily want to know what you see and hear, based upon your observations.

The concept behind the immersion is to blend-in, to immerse yourself so deeply and with such subtlety in a place or as part of an experience that you will soon be part of the passing parade—a fixture—a fly on the wall. You make yourself so visible that you become invisible. Like the living room sofa; it has been in the same place for so long that you don’t even notice it anymore.

One of the greatest compliments I ever received, was from the pioneer liver transplant surgeon, Thomas Starzl, the director and chief architect of the world’s largest organ transplant program whom I shadowed off and on for four years while writing a book called *Many Sleepless Nights*.

In an immersion, I take the word “shadow” literally. Shadows are cast in the background: subtle, faceless figures. Silent and unobtrusive. Which was where I positioned myself in relation to Starzl, who, wherever he traveled, was usually followed by a cumbersome entourage of nurses and colleagues. I always found a place at the fringes of this group and listened without comment to conversations, debates and disputes, showing no reaction to what I was observing, so as not to call attention to myself.

After the book was published, reviewers marveled at the intimacy of my observations of Starzl and his dealings with colleagues, patients, and families. A reporter once asked him why he permitted a writer to hover so closely.

Starzl, a slender, handsome man with a reedy voice and a stiff facade, shrugged and shook his head. “I never saw the guy!”

**STOFFERS:** *Creative Nonfiction*, the title of the journal you edit, might sound like an oxymoron to those thinking of nonfiction writing with its technical reports, newspaper articles, business writing, etc., at one end of a continuum, while poetry, short stories, and novels are grouped at the other end. Would you address this misconception?

**GUTKIND:** In creative nonfiction, writers can be poetic and journalistic simultaneously. Creative nonfiction writers are encouraged to utilize fictional techniques in their prose—from scene to dialog to description to point-of-view—and be cinematic at the same time.

In many ways, creative nonfiction is much more demanding than poetry and fiction and playwriting because it invariably asks a writer to learn more and work more diligently to complete a project.

I discovered that this kind of writing is not particularly new, but the names chosen to describe the genre are. Some people call it “literary journalism” or the “personal essay” or “expository writing.” But the newest and most popular label is “creative nonfiction.”

**STOFFERS:** What are some of the differences and similarities between creative nonfiction and fiction, and are there some works that come close to straddling both?

**GUTKIND:** In the same way that I, a creative nonfiction writer, involve myself in the lives of the people about whom I write, novelists devote months and sometimes years researching the countries in which their stories take place, blending into and understanding the culture and landscape. They study history, politics, economics.

Ernest Hemingway did not only imagine how his protagonist in *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake Barnes, ran with the bulls in Pamploma, Spain; Hemingway did it first and returned year after year to celebrate and participate in the event. The adventures dramatized in all of his novels and short stories were products of his own experience.

Hemingway was wounded while working as a volunteer ambulance driver for the Italian Red Cross in World War I. He fell in love with a nurse in the hospital where he was sent to recover. His second novel, *A Farewell To Arms*, told the same story, with names changed and scenes altered. His third novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, was conceived while in Spain covering the war between the fascists and communists in 1939.

Hemingway was also a prolific creative nonfiction writer. “Death in the Afternoon” is his paen to bullfighting, while *The Green Hills of Africa* tells the story of his adventures and explorations during a long and grueling safari. Although Hemingway’s reputation and his Nobel Prize were achieved through fiction, his work was rooted in nonfiction. He was one of the earliest “immersion journalists,” a writer who experienced everything about which he wrote—for more than half his life.

Were you to examine selections of Ernest Hemingway’s prose, side-by-side, it would be difficult to know which was fiction (that is to say “imagined”) and which was nonfiction. . . fact. This is an important key to the understanding and producing of creative nonfiction.



It should read something like fiction, but simultaneously be true, meaning verifiable and accurate, a difficult objective, considering the blurred gray line between fiction and creative nonfiction and between documentable fact and how we perceive those facts over time.

In writing fiction, we may be borrowing people, places and situations from our own lives, but in creative nonfiction we are capturing the world in which we live in the vivid and irrevocable truth of our own experience.

Two other famous books come to mind with which most people would be familiar, which are actually creative nonfiction. The Daniel DeFoe classic, *Robinson Crusoe*, is actually based upon a true story of a physician who was marooned on a desert island.

You have probably read at least parts of the most popular, respected and sustaining book of creative nonfiction ever written. This is the Bible. Most people accept the stories recounted in the Bible, but whether or not you value the religious aspects, the Bible is invaluable from a historic perspective. Like the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Bible may or may not contain elements of fiction, but it is as close to the truth about the early days of mankind as it is humanly possible to ascertain.

**STOFFERS:** What is the relationship between creative nonfiction pieces and journalism?

**GUTKIND:** The truth is, there should not be much of a difference, although in practice “creative” or “literary” are not words we would use to describe writing in most newspapers published in the U.S.

The reason that writing in most newspapers is not considered particularly compelling is because journalism in the U.S. has, over the past half-century, been written in a formulaic way. That is, there is a special and confining structure to which newspaper reporters have been expected to adhere called “the inverted pyramid,” meaning that news stories are ordered with the most important facts of the story first and the least important last. Little or no emphasis has been given to the writer’s literary instincts.

Along with this inverted pyramid formula, newspaper writers have been expected to maintain an objective viewpoint. . . meaning not taking sides, maintaining a balanced perspective. The simple fact that objectivity is virtually impossible—we cannot hide what we feel and what we see—and subjectivity is inevitable is a reality which has only recently been acknowledged by the newspaper establishment. News stories have also been traditionally void of the “personal” or “first person” voice that is so important in creative nonfiction.

**STOFFERS:** Is some type of self-revelation necessary at some point in a creative nonfiction piece?

**GUTKIND:** What is most important and enjoyable about creative nonfiction is that it not only allows, but *encourages* the writer to become a part of the story or essay being written.

This personal involvement creates a special magic that alleviates the suffering and anxiety of the writing experience.

Not that writing creative nonfiction is easy....But because writing creative nonfiction is a genuine three-dimensional experience, it provides many more outlets for satisfaction and self discovery, flexibility and freedom.

**STOFFERS:** Is it ever acceptable to alter the facts in writing creative nonfiction?

**GUTKIND:** As I have pointed out, novelists (and poets) want their work to be considered true—at least symbolically. And many novels and poems are in fact much more true than not true. So how to make the distinction?

Think of it this way: fiction must seem to be true—in part—to be believable. Hemingway's description of Spain must be accurate enough to be believable to Spaniards and to people of other cultures as well. Describe Yankee Stadium inaccurately and baseball aficionados will spurn your novel—no matter how dramatic the plot or true to life the characters.

If you changed the names, the place and other relevant details, then how does a reader distinguish between truth and distortion? Your subjects, protective of their reputations, should force you to be truthful—for good or for bad. If you say something critical about another individual, your only real defense or explanation is the truth.

Creative nonfiction carries the writer and the reader into a deeper dimension of trust, truth and believability. The creative nonfiction writer may take certain liberties with the truth—he or she may push the blurred gray barrier between fiction and nonfiction to the limit—without breaking through to the other side.☐

## Silo

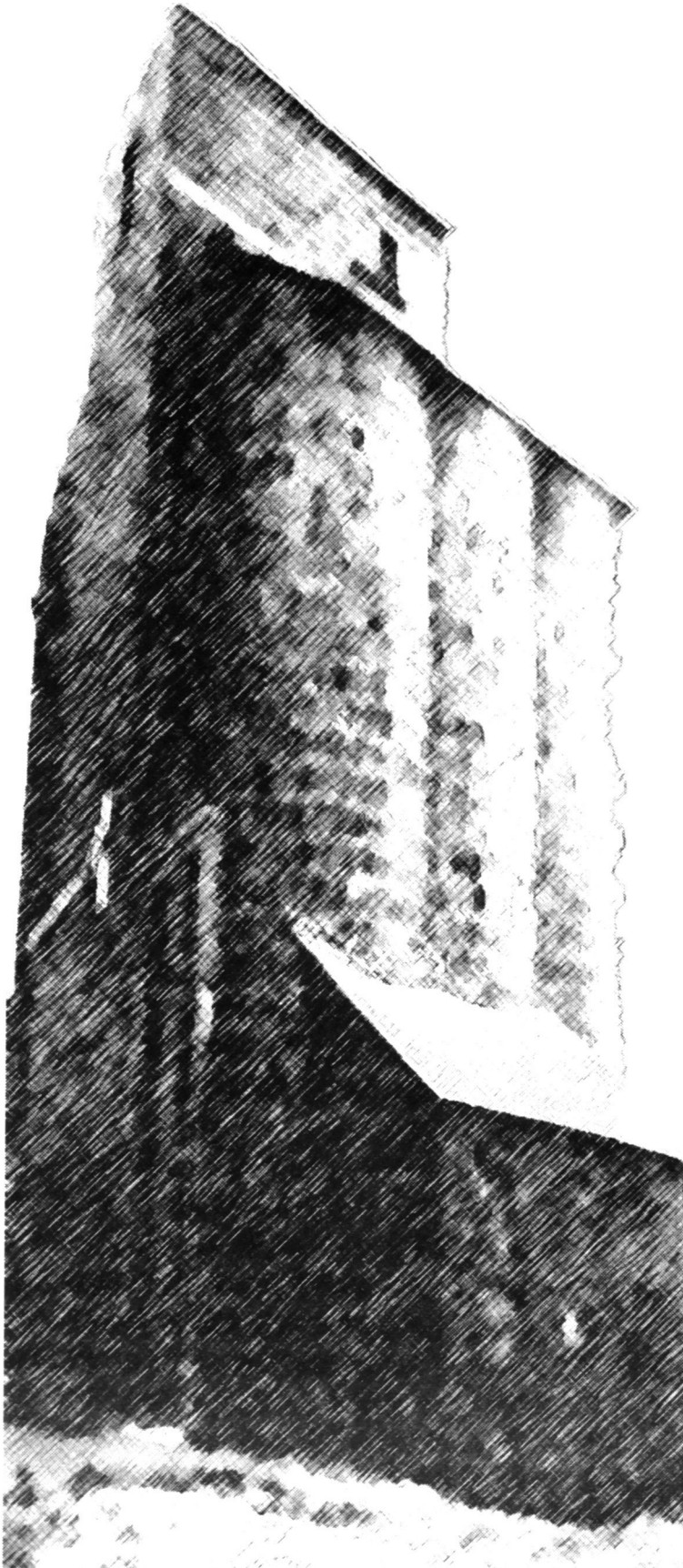
The abiding train brakes  
beside its measured grace,  
coughing trucks circle  
and go past the faded block  
of Main Street storefronts,  
vacant save for Claasen's market  
and Brenda's refurbished craft store,  
past the manila post office, the auburn bank,  
the hard, grassy iridescent shelves  
of houses as rough and varied as wild flowers,  
past a line of brick homes,  
a weed-fringed trailer park,  
to the undulating fields  
that stretch like seasoned faith  
between these sunlit temples,  
these whitewashed buttes.

That you can see these daunting pillars for miles  
is reason to believe in human hands.

Mammoth fenceposts, they release  
a whispering garden  
from the rasping prairie.

Their white heft is magnificent,  
and makes us know the tiny spread  
of a human chest, the delicacy  
of our shoulders, the shallowness  
of our breath.

The silo is the farmers' symbol,  
more sustaining than a teamster's button,  
more ennobling than an auto worker's decal,  
an airless windmill that turned subsistence  
into progress. Granary of a nation, a world,  
its wealth has crossed oceans and borders,  
glided by the crumbled iron curtain  
like summer rain.



Now, men grumble around its base  
as if they are Pharaoh's workmen, who,  
completing decades of labor, find the myth  
that designed their efforts may be dying  
with the fathers they have entombed.  
In bent-billed dusty caps and sagging jeans,  
the men show faith in their faded monument  
by their jimmied smiles, their gifted  
leaning and the loads of choking grain  
they pour into its welcome belly each June.  
But every day they peer at the sign  
on the co-op manager's window which stares  
at them like a boring Wall Street broker:  
\$2.15 a bushel.  
For that, the men peer at unknown passersby  
a moment longer, wondering if this is the one  
who brings the chains from the city.

**by Mark Walling**



ILLUSTRATION BY BRENT JOHNSON

## Upon Reading the Obituary of Sarah Clough

Sarah Clough died today at 91, far from Hastings  
where the earth knew her knees as a little girl  
and the wind kept busy complicating hair.  
Where she courted Frank in '17.

The papers say she knew books.  
“Librarian,” they say, which is different now. Now,  
everybody reads. Then, she felt she had secrets  
when the new ones came. Smell of ink  
on the page, almost. Snap of the page  
you turned. Trust in what was said.

The paper omits a line about remembrances.  
Not many left. Sarah's Frank preceding,  
the others lost one by one to this March Hare century  
hurrying like hell on its gypsy way.

I cannot speak to you of a voice that settled  
children. I have not heard Sarah whisper  
in an ear, just felt this serif wind of her passing,

that last bay breeze of an old storm:  
her name today, the ink set well, the page arranged,  
her life held hard in the short clear words she loved,  
at last her own.

**Jay Schneiders**



# Lily Pie

**Pat Snell**

"Hogwash!" bellowed Uncle Bradbury, as I stepped through the back door of his vet clinic. Metal tubs, cages, and shelves rattled as he kicked the fluttering pages of the *Dexter City Democrat* across worn gray linoleum.

"Uncle Bradbury, you busy?" Even without looking I could tell the waiting room was empty. The tan walls, for once, contained nothing more than the familiar fumes of alcohol, pine oil, and Bag Balm. For busy, at Uncle Bradbury's, meant noise—dogs yapping, tomcats hissing, the bawl of a lonesome calf. And underlying the chaos, the scrape and clump of boots, tough as West Texas.

"No, Sydney Mae! Busy I'm not! Lydia Stimms, not work, is gonna be the death of me!" Snatching the tattered remains of the *Democrat*, Uncle Bradbury waved it at me. "Have you ever, in your life, seen anything as stupid as this?"

"The *Democrat*?"

"The story, Syd, the story!" Slapping the paper on the exam table, he stabbed his finger at the headline. "Miracle,' on a bug's hiney! This is crazy! First it's dominoes, then it's miracles."

"Dominoes?"

Uncle Bradbury sighed. "You've forgot. I suspect everybody's forgot. At Trinity Tabernacle, last month, Lydia Stimms, in some holy revelation, declared God wanted her to wage 'war on the devil in the domino and sweep sin from the stoops of Dexter City."

"Stoops?"

"The point is, Lydia's messin' with our rights—God-given and civil—to dominoes. Ever since I can remember she's been railin' against one thing or another. Wants to see Dexter County dry, can't stand dancing, led the committee to watch-dog the library. And now she's managed to ban dominoes from the community center. Why, we've been playing there, Tuesday and Thursday, ever since it opened."

"What," I said, leaning over the *Democrat*, "is this about a miracle?"

"Trash."

Running my fingers over the shredded newsprint, I shrugged. "Came by to see if I could help out." I glanced around the silent office. "But it looks like you can handle things. If Ma calls, tell her I've gone to Willie Beth's." There, most times, I could learn about dominoes, miracles, and the whereabouts of Elvis Presley.

I had barely made it up to Willie Beth's porch when she banged open the door, sandwich in hand.

"Guess what? Just came from Uncle B's. He's screaming about Lydia and some miracle."

Willie hooted. "I bet. They were going at it yesterday in front of Pick 'n Pack. Bradbury called Lydia a Pit Bull. She called him a Chihuahua."

My mouth fell open.

Willie Beth grinned. "I'd shove this sandwich in, but it's ham. Tastes a lot like Lily Pie."

My mouth snapped shut. Since the loss of Lily Pie, not a slice of ham, strip of bacon, or slab of ribs had passed my lips. Pig or not, being forced to auction her was like killing my best friend.

"Do you know about the miracle or not?"

"Of course." Lydia was at the carnival a few days ago and bought a funnel cake. Just as she took it, a big gust of wind blasted the powdered sugar in her face. When everything cleared she looked at the funnel cake and there—grab your Psalms, Syd—was the face of Jesus."

"You're kidding."

"I swear."

"A funnel cake?"

Willie Beth glowed scarlet as she struggled not to laugh. I didn't try. The vision of Lydia shouting "Praise be!" and "Hallelujah!" to a funnel cake rattled my funnybone. Willie

Beth collapsed in a flurry of howls, snorts, and shrieks.

"You wanta see it?" she gasped. "The paper says it's on view at Tri Tab."

"Do I?" Grabbing Willie Beth's arm, I dragged her toward the street.

The commotion began three blocks before reaching Trinity Tabernacle, or Tri Tab, as it had been tagged by the Baptists. Cars lined both sides of the street while pickups crawled over curbs to pack themselves into fields, knee-high with weeds and trash.

We stopped when we saw Tri Tab. The lot, with its spare white building and spindly trees, swarmed with people.

"Wow," said Willie Beth, as we jostled our way through the crowd and up the wooden steps. Finally, squeezing through the front door, we found the church packed tighter than a Wal-mart on payday.

Joining the curious, we snaked through the worn pine pews. Standing on tiptoes, I spotted a kitchen table. On top, covered with paper doilies, sat a cardboard box.

"Contribution?"

Startled, I jerked back. The long arm of Lydia Stimms shoved a basket under my nose.

"A love offering, a dollar or five, for the blessed opportunity to gaze on the precious face of our Savior."

Lydia, blocking our path, prevented us from seeing her miracle. Digging into my pocket, I pulled out two dollars and dropped them into her basket.

"Bless you." She smiled. "And Sydney Mae, tell Bradbury Jack to make this pilgrimage. The Lord loves a sinner."

Willie Beth, giggling, shoved me toward the doily-bedecked box. A few seconds later, emerging into the blazing sun, I squinted at Willie Beth.

"What did you see?" she asked.

"I dunno, Willie Beth. A funnel cake."

"I am spiritual. I saw a face."

"Well, I sorta saw a face. But there was this big blob right in the middle."

"An ear, dummy."

"Hanging off His cheek? And the hair. It was sticking out every which way."

Willie Beth grinned. "Bad hair day. Jeez, Syd, this is a funnel cake, not the Sistine Chapel."

"Rip-off. Next time I see Lydia, I'm going to ask for my money back."

"*National Enquirer* doesn't think so."

"Huh?"

"Somebody called. They're supposed to be here Monday, along with a couple of TV stations."



"Saturday." Uncle Bradbury smiled beneath the broom of his massive mustache. "A fine day for a ride."

"Where are we going?" The road vanished into nothingness.

"Friends. You're gonna meet some friends." He'd told me nothing else for the past hour. His old truck, dependable as a Maytag, sped forward, sucking up mile after monotonous mile.

"Did I tell you about seeing the miracle and what Lydia said?"

"Twice."

"Tell me where we're going or I'll make it three."

He grimaced. "I got some business to take care of. In light of its possible historical significance, thought you might benefit."

"Business?"

"Collecting on a debt."

"From who?"

"Two brothers. Nubs and Roscoe. We might even see a dead friend of yours, who's really not."

"Huh?"

"No more questions, Sydney Pie. We're almost there." Gearing down, Uncle Bradbury slowed, bouncing the truck from blacktop to dirt. A quarter-mile later we lurched to a stop, fronting the dense tangle of a mesquite thicket.

Rolling down his window, Uncle Bradbury stuck his head out. "Listen to that. Peace and quiet."

The trill of a cricket floated past.

"So much," he cackled, "for that!" Leaning on the horn, he blasted the thicket with deafening intent.

"Stop!" I screamed. "You're killing my ears!"

"Yes!" Charging out of the truck, Uncle Bradbury ran toward a figure emerging from the shadows.

"Roscoe!"

"Jack!"

I saw Uncle Bradbury engulfed by a black man the size and shape of a grizzly bear.

"Sydney Mae, get outta that truck!" Uncle Bradbury waved me toward them.

Gingerly, I approached. Laughing, Uncle Bradbury slapped Roscoe in the belly. He couldn't reach much higher. "Get over here! Roscoe won't bite."

Roscoe smiled. At least if he did bite, it wouldn't hurt much. His gums gleamed, toothless, from his cinnamon brown face. Hair, white as cotton, fringed a smooth, bald head.

"Sydney, I'd like you to meet Roscoe Tanner."

"Mr. Tanner."

"Roscoe, I'd like you to meet my niece, Sydney Mae West."

Roscoe ducked his head and smiled. Uncle Bradbury laughed, again. "He's shy, Syd. I'd like to tell you not to be afraid of her, Roscoe. But contrary to what's decent, Syd will bite."

Roscoe whispered to Uncle Bradbury.

"You bet! Syd, follow Roscoe."

I liked the thicket. Sombre and silent, it closed in a dense harbor of mystery. Minutes later we emerged, stepping into the snugest of homesteads. The thicket horse-shoed around all but the east side, enclosing a neat cabin, garden, and two outbuildings. A windmill, weathered gray, creaked tunelessly. A stock tank's watery surface sparkled with sunlight. As I watched, butterflies fussed through golden sneezeweed, scarlet coneflowers, and fragrant yarrow. I'd never seen a prettier picture.

Uncle Bradbury smiled. "Thought you might like it.

Only where is Nubs? Don't tell me. You finally ran him off."

Sucking in his lips, Roscoe whistled. Amazing. I'd have to tell Willie Beth it only took gums, not teeth, to whistle.

"Look." Uncle Bradbury pointed.

From an outbuilding stepped another Roscoe, cinnamon brown and big as a bear. Only preceding him, attached to a harness, was a pig—a pink, wet-nosed, dainty-hoofed pig. Ambling up to us, it lifted its snout and snorted.

"Uncle Bradbury!" I gasped.

"Syd, meet Nubs Tanner, Roscoe's twin brother."

Looking up, I saw a massive hand extended high and to my right. Nub's face told me why. His eyes, sunken behind wasted lids, were sightless.

"Pleased to meet you," I stammered.

"Syd? The real Sydney Mae?" His voice, rich and booming, knocked me back.

Uncle Bradbury pushed me forward, and Nubs patted my scrunched up face.

"I been wanting to meet you, Miss Sydney, for the longest. This is indeed a pleasure. I just don't know how to thank you. If I knowed you was comin' maybe I coulda done somethin'." Nubs didn't have Roscoe's tendency toward silence.

Puzzled, I looked at Uncle Bradbury.

"Haven't figured it out?" Smugness covered his face. "You don't recognize anything familiar? Maybe if you kinda walked in that direction."

Shrugging, I stepped to my left. Then I saw it. A mark. A chocolatey shadow, the exact shape and size of an Easter lily, darkened the pig's hindquarter.

Stunned, I sank to my knees. And then, like a creek at flash-flood, tears gushed. Burying my face in her bristly hide, I sobbed. Lily Pie, my Lily Pie, lived.

"Lord, Syd. I thought you'd be happy."

"I-I am happy." I hugged Lily Pie as best I could. "T-Thought she was d-dead."

"No, Punkin. She's not. She's okay."

"How?"

"Well, after the auction I called Matt Garrett and got him to, uh, sell to me."

"W- Why didn't you tell me?"

Uncle Bradbury combed his fingers through his mustache. "Darn it all, Syd. After showing Lily Pie, you knew she had to go to auction."

"But I didn't know what it would be like! And I begged Ma and Pops to let me quit. Only Ma said no, I had to learn a lesson, pigs were ham, bacon and chops. I wanted to die, not Lily Pie!"

"You and your ma were so mad, I couldn't risk her knowing about Lily Pie. She'd have turned me into bacon and probably never let you come back to the clinic."

That was true.

"Why did you save her?"

"Dum it, Syd. You raised her at the clinic. She follows orders better than any female I know. And has better manners than most."

"But why here? What made you bring her here?"

"Television."

"What?"

"A few nights before the auction, I saw a program about Seeing Eye dogs. They were making this big deal over their training and intelligence. It came to me. Lily Pie already did most of that stuff. A Seeing Eye pig. Nubs thought it was a dandy idea. He's kind of refined her to his needs." Uncle Bradbury paused. "You gonna be okay?"

I nodded.

"Good. Nubs, Roscoe, I got a favor to ask."

Leaving me with Lily Pie, they wandered to the cabin. I scratched Lily Pie and she nuzzled back. Not a day had passed that I hadn't carried the weight of her death and my guilt.

---

"Let's go! Let's go!" Willie Beth, her frizzy red hair gathered in a ponytail looked back in exasperation. "If you don't hurry, we'll miss the whole thing."

The whole thing, that Monday, consisted of Dexter City's

miracle and an army of film crews. Tri Tab hadn't closed its doors since we'd made Lydia's pilgrimage and word had it contributions now arrived by U.S. Mail.

An area in front of the church, staked and cordoned with yellow ribbon, separated sightseers from the film crews, Lydia, and her doiled box. Weaving through clusters of people, we worked our way to the barricade.

Poking me, Willie Beth pointed across the street. "Look there. Isn't that Bradbury?"

Sure enough, Uncle Bradbury sat high atop a mailbox. I waved. Seeing me, he nodded and tipped his hat.

"That's weird," I said. "I figured he'd sooner eat dirt than watch Lydia's glory."

As if in response, a bullhorn boomed, asking for silence.

The crowd hushed. Take one. Take two. Take six. Restless, spectators whispered. Another call for silence. Take nine. A call for silence. Another take. Then I noticed, from a distance, murmuring, a rumble that increased, growing closer. Laughter rippled across a burst of applause. Hanging onto Willie Beth's head, I balanced on the rim of a concrete urn. By this time, the crowd had turned from Lydia toward a figure moving down the street.

Gasping, I saw it was none other than Nubs Tanner, chin up, arm outstretched, hand grasping the strap of a pig's harness. And the crowd, like the Red Sea, parted before Lily Pie. Reveling in the attention, she fairly pranced, snout high, a wreath of flowers swinging from her neck.

"What," a cameraman shouted, "is going on?"

"It's Lily Pie!" I yelled. "The world's first and only Seeing Eye pig!" Grabbing cameras, the crews nearly knocked me down as Nubs and Lily Pie turned up the sidewalk leading to Tri Tab. Lydia, hands held high, shrieked with rage. Turning, she froze. A small figure, perched atop a mailbox, fairly glowed with satisfaction.

The cameras bore witness. Lydia, purple as a summer plum, tore through the crowd, knocking Nubs head-over-heels. It took half-a-dozen cowboys to keep her from ripping Uncle Bradbury apart and another half-dozen to drag her back to Tri Tab. Sweat soaked, hair straggling, she snatched up her doiled box. Holding it aloft she began a slow, deadly

dance. "It's gone!" she howled. "I will know what monster stole Jesus!"

It was then I looked down, responding to the wet slurp of a hog gobble. Raising her head, Lily Pie gazed back, a strip of funnel cake dangling from her lips.

---

That episode, Uncle Bradbury fondly relates, broke Lydia's hold on Dexter City. On Tuesday and Thursday, once again, men gather at the community center to play dominoes. And above them, tacked to the wall, is an eight-by-ten glossy of Lily-Pie, World's First Seeing Eye Pig. 🐷



ILLUSTRATION BY STACI HEADRICK



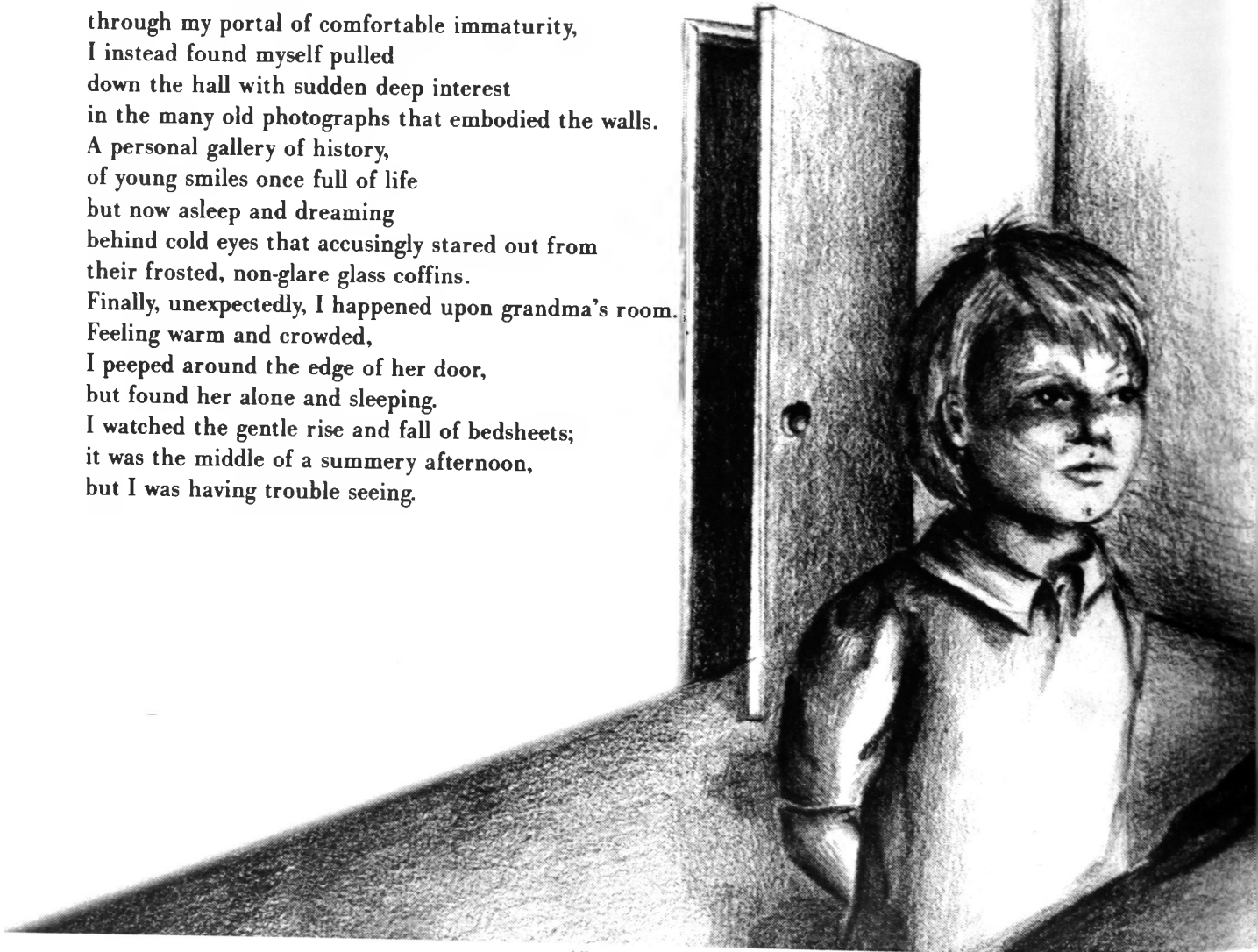

## Waiting on Grandma

We took smaller steps when walking  
with grandma. Spoke a little slower, louder.  
Listened a little harder.

It was afternoon with good-byes said and I was ready to go.  
My mother and Aunt Pat talked in the kitchen  
over coffee about anything but leaving.

I waited down the hall  
anxious in my youthful skin  
to be anywhere else  
than right there,  
right then.

A light fell from grandma's room filtered through burnt-orange curtains  
smothering the room in a rust colored tinge and into the hall past her partially opened door.  
I listened, strained, but heard nothing  
that sounded like leaving.  
Yearning to flee,  
to retreat  
through my portal of comfortable immaturity,  
I instead found myself pulled  
down the hall with sudden deep interest  
in the many old photographs that embodied the walls.  
A personal gallery of history,  
of young smiles once full of life  
but now asleep and dreaming  
behind cold eyes that accusingly stared out from  
their frosted, non-glare glass coffins.  
Finally, unexpectedly, I happened upon grandma's room.  
Feeling warm and crowded,  
I peeped around the edge of her door,  
but found her alone and sleeping.  
I watched the gentle rise and fall of bedsheets;  
it was the middle of a summery afternoon,  
but I was having trouble seeing.



There was darkness present  
and it felt much later than it was.  
I could almost caress her soft fleshy face  
under my gaze, and had I ventured to do so,  
felt the warmth of her cheek on my lips  
as I bent to kiss her tenderly  
as I would a sleeping child.  
But I did not, could not. Afraid  
my touch would melt away her thin vein of dreams  
and leave me  
to face what was left behind.

Perhaps it was my shifting carelessness,  
or perhaps that other dreamer  
that alerted her to my presence wrapped around her door,  
for her failing eyes suddenly snapped open, suddenly clear,  
trapped me with a distant dreamer's gaze.  
I stood motionless as a voyeur undone;  
an intruder imposing upon the sanctity of that bidding peace.  
A sudden wave of embarrassment,  
                    of transgression,  
crashed over me.  
A riptide of humility pulled me under,  
drug me back down the hall,  
past nightmarish *I told you so* faces,  
and into a world of air,  
and breath,  
and idle chatter,  
and waiting.

**by Brent A. Baldwin**

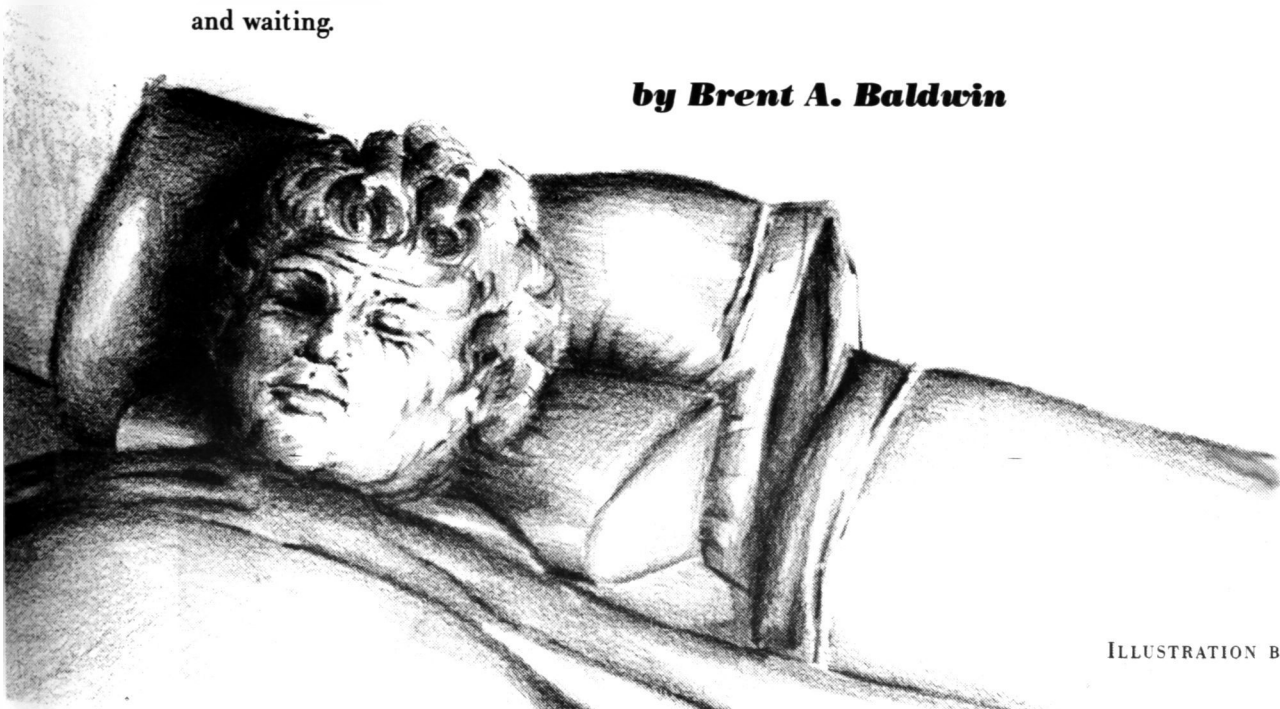


ILLUSTRATION BY STACI HEADRICK

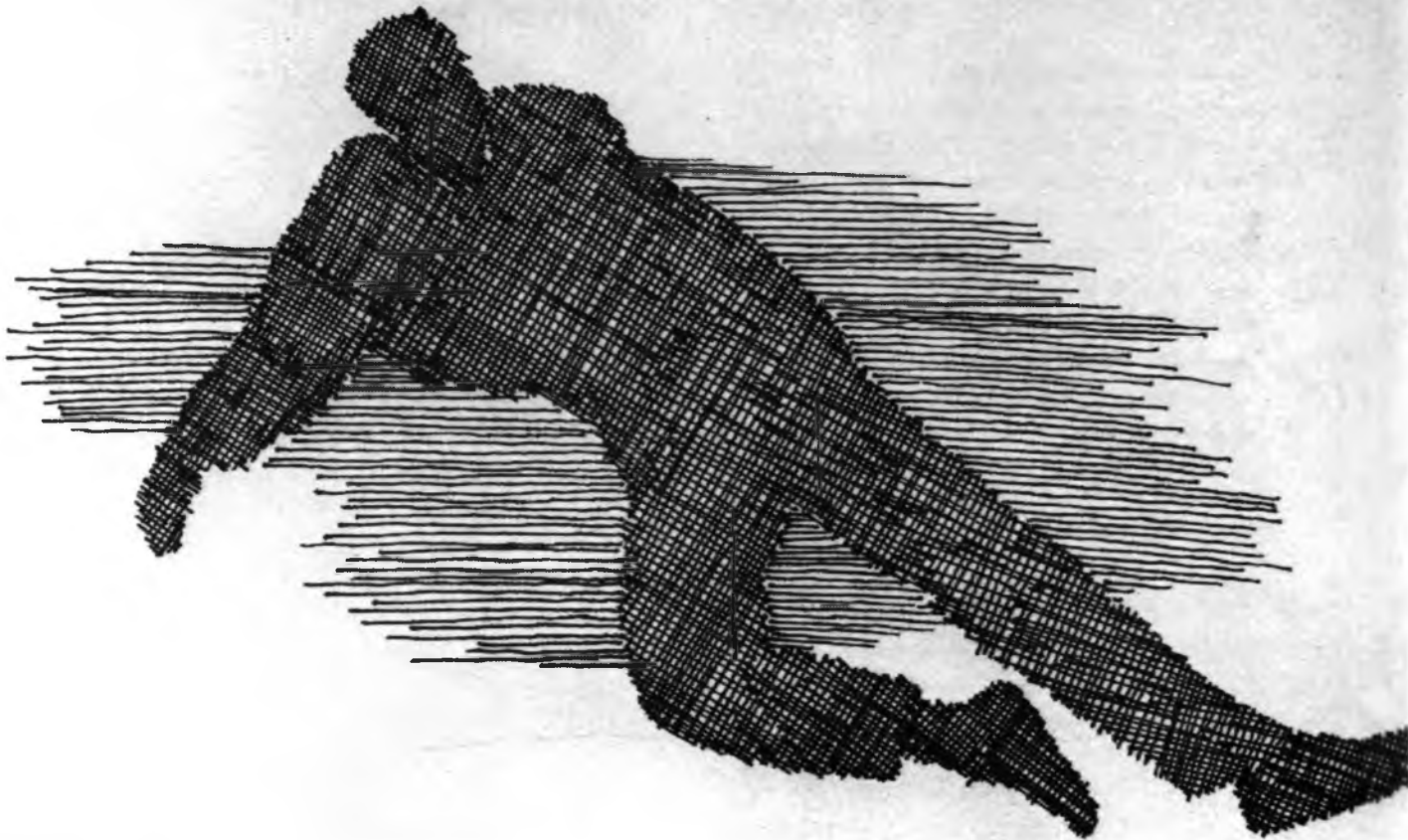


ILLUSTRATION BY COLE RACHEL

## **The Form**

We are never prepared for the multiple I.V.:  
Nine tubes sprouting from the labyrinthine  
Form; a glued pallor on the face,

The frown that even will will not erase;  
A once-firm fist that does not close,  
Hold cloth or fabled string; the crinkled mold

Of body into bedding; assisted turning  
When the figure cannot; and churning  
In a stomach which refuses food,

Heaves even fresh water, could  
Not use for sun or moon the path  
Patterned for waste, unless in aftermath.

**by Marth Minford-Meas**

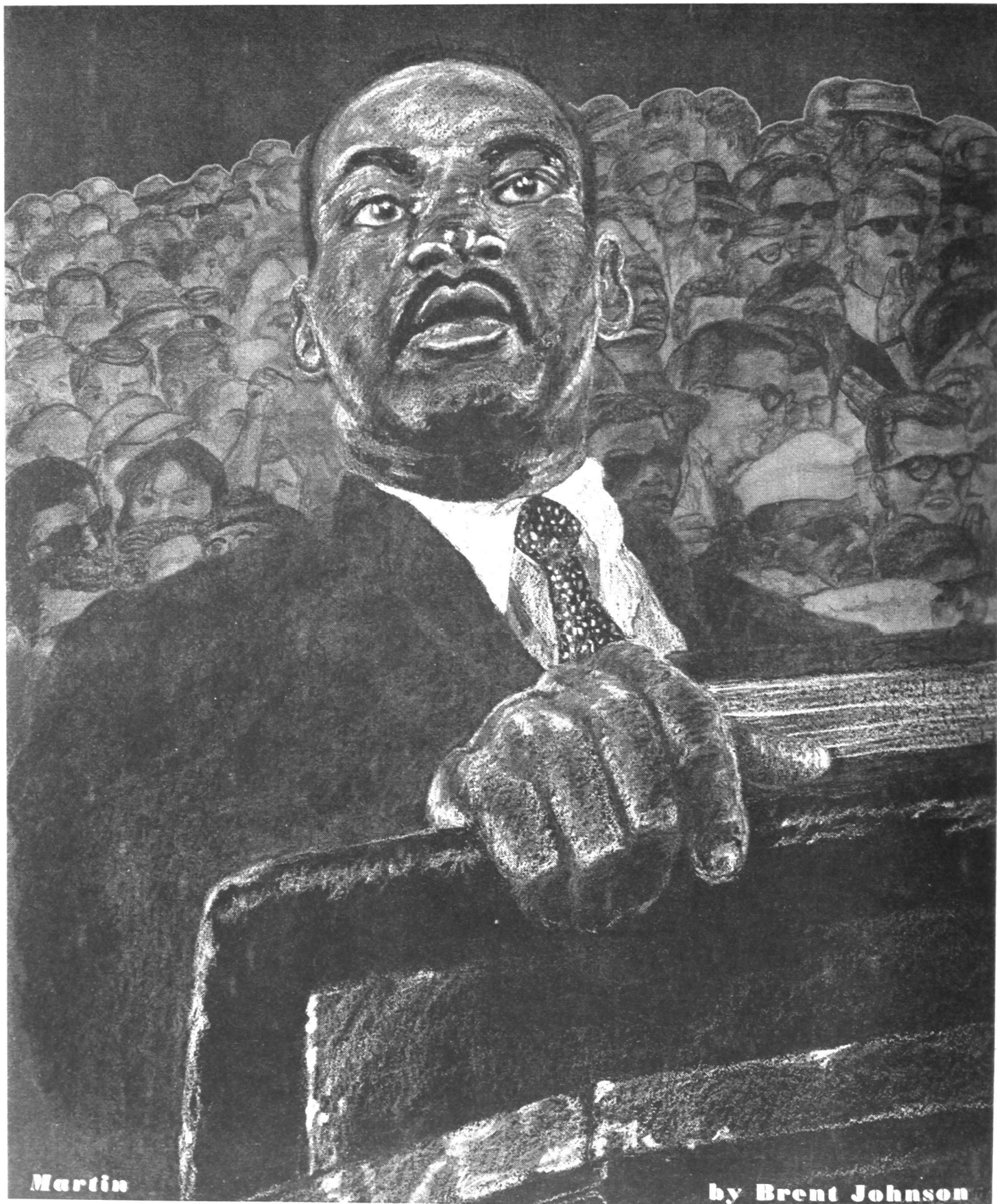
## **Rocky and Mary Time**

Christmases they called from New York,  
persistent enough to get through the jam  
with their annual wishes,  
faces I'd never seen  
except in old 16-millimeter  
brightly colored film exposed  
before I'd been conceived:

Clowning, the young soldier encircles  
his bride's waist from behind,  
presses his face against hers, nuzzles,  
and lifts her against his stomach,  
her feet off the ground. Nearby  
my mother, laughing, is drawn  
into their arms. A shadow rises  
beneath their feet, my father,  
the cameraman, for whom they dance  
and play.

Years later they no longer call.  
Has our name been scratched from their book,  
penciled out neatly perhaps, or x-ed  
with ink? Or have they too passed  
into some other silent footage?

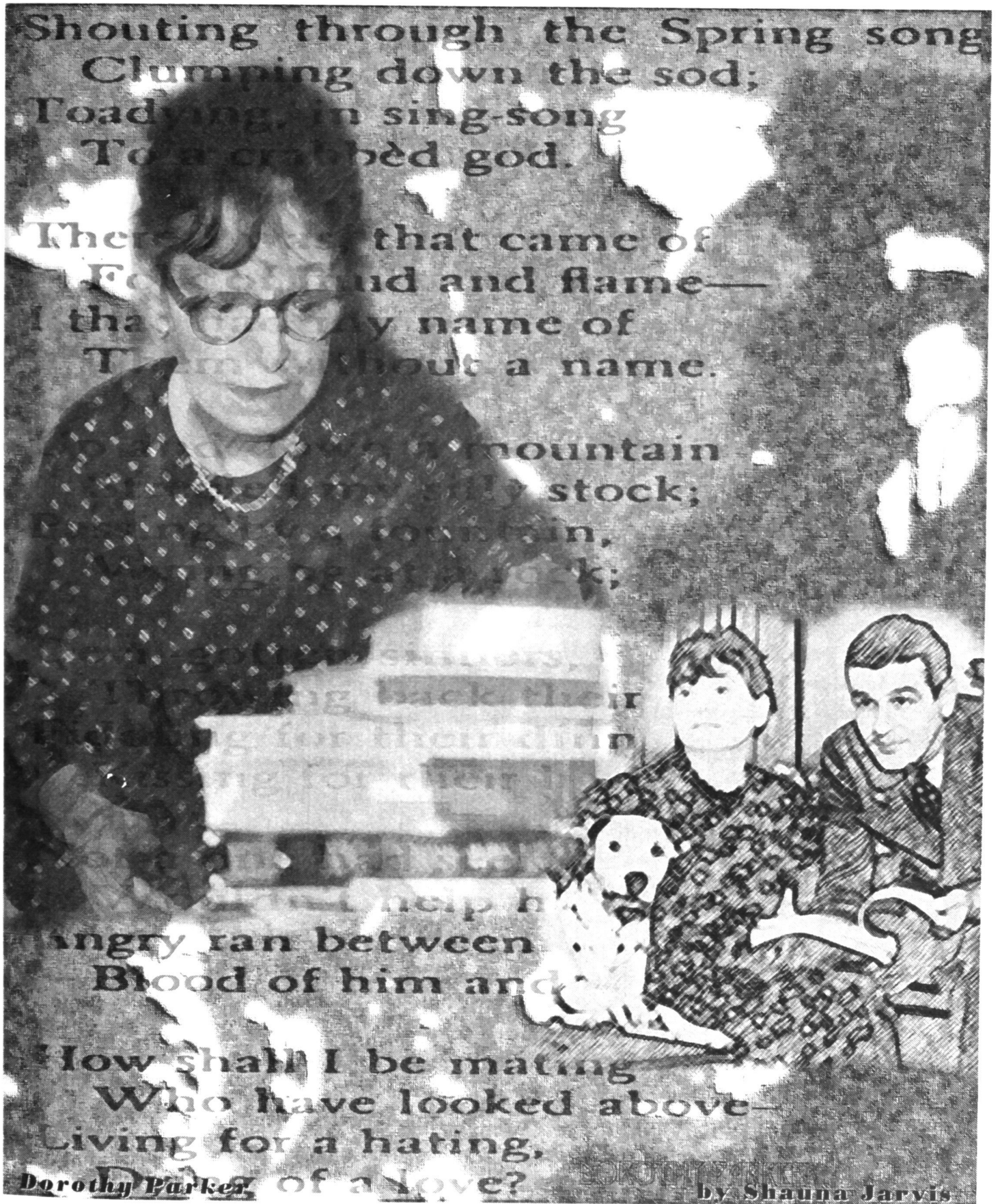
**by Leo Luke Marcello**



**Martin**

**by Brent Johnson**





Shouting through the Spring song  
Clumping down the sod;  
Toadying, in sing-song  
To a crumbed god.

There's that came of  
For mud and flame—  
I that say name of  
Telling about a name.

There's a mountain  
For my stock;  
There's a mountain,  
With a rock;

There's a mountain,  
With a rock;  
There's a mountain,  
With a rock;

There's a mountain,  
With a rock;  
There's a mountain,  
With a rock;

How shall I be mating  
Who have looked above—  
Living for a hating,  
Dog of a love?

Dorothy Parker

By Shauna Jarvis

# Vanishing Act

Alvin O. Turner

I suppose a lot of people growing up in the 1950s had it a lot rougher than I did or at least they seem to think so. They usually begin laments about their youth before I have my story half told. Maybe going to school in blackboard jungles, getting pushed into half-baked science programs after Sputnik, or having hair too curly to shape into a duck-tail or stand in a flat top, was traumatic. I know it would have been worse to have to face death or the kinds of family problems many of my friends did. Still, I wish that I had never met Brother Alfred Baylor and have never really stopped thinking about my encounter with him.

Brother Alfred was an evangelist, known across Oklahoma and the south as "the Preaching Peter of our generation." He offered the promise of good preaching and the experience of a lifetime in return for his expenses plus the offering collected during week-long revival meetings. And, in those days before televisions were common in every household, he managed to satisfy many including some who had begun as his detractors. The latter usually pointed to stylistic abuses in his speaking, the fact that his suit didn't fit, his nose turned red when he was shouting, which was most of the time, or to the similarities between his death-bed stories and those of other preachers they had heard.

Being a preacher's kid I accepted most such matters without many questions. I sensed that well-fitted clothing was somewhat suspect in preachers. Brother Alfred's suits fit worse than most, but we expected evangelists, whom we tended to rank right below angels and missionaries, to stand out a bit more than ordinary preachers. Likewise, his grammar emphasized that his preaching came from God rather than some hifalutin college. Most of us had never heard a soft-spoken preacher and assumed that the really loud ones such as Brother Alfred were just better qualified than the rest. The nose was a little distracting, but we were supposed to be focusing on his words anyway. And, I had grown up with the sense that preachers often drew from

common sources or borrowed from each other. In fact, the only thing about Brother Alfred that disturbed me in the least was that he pretended to remember me when Dad introduced us. He had only seen me one time ten years prior when I was eighteen months old.

Brother Alfred managed to erase any doubts I might have had with his first sermon entitled "And a Little Child Shall Lead Them." Somehow, he managed to convince me that I was responsible for whether or not we had revival that year. Maybe it was just the general excitement of revival time. I know that I didn't sleep through his sermon the way I usually did when Dad was preaching. I think I was also at least a little bit afraid Brother Alfred might ask God to hold it against me if I didn't do my part. Mostly though, I wanted the prize he offered to the one who would bring the most people to "Pack a Pew" the following Sunday night.

Although he had not specified what the prize was to be, I had never won anything. I was fascinated by the possibilities of my winning "while leading as a little child" and believed that his promise "to show us something we had never seen before and would never see again" gave me the tool I needed to accomplish the task. So, I resolved to get as many people as possible to sit in my pew by telling them about Brother Alfred's promise.

Anyway, between the first Sunday and the next I called every kid enrolled in my sixth grade class that year including the Catholics. Each night at the services held during the week, I asked everyone I could contact to sit in my pew on Pack the Pew night. I then inserted invitations, which I had written out by hand on little slips of paper, into the newspapers that I delivered to the customers on my paper route for three straight days. Friday, I made a sandwich board sign and wore it to school inviting one and all to sit in my pew the following Sunday night. I even managed to get a letter published in letters to the editor in the newspaper which listed four good reasons why everyone should

attend the revival and sit in my pew. My fourth reason was Brother Alfred's promise. By Friday night my campaign created such a stir that he commended me personally in front of the whole church.

That night I stayed behind and used the church mimeograph to run off 750 invitations to the revival which I delivered to about 500 houses the next day. Sunday morning, I took the remaining invitations and passed them out to every person I could get to take one as they entered the church. That morning old Deacon Farrell called me "little preacher" which he continued to do until he died some years later. Though I was never to give him cause for the title again, I took it as heady praise that morning. That afternoon I went house to house in the neighborhoods I had not reached with my prior efforts and invited everyone I found at home to the services that night.

I invited each and every person I contacted that week to sit in my pew and come see something they had never seen before and would never see again, underlining that message in my writings and accentuated in my speech. By the time Sunday night arrived, I was approaching hysterical expectancy.

Apparently my persistence and advertising paid off. Sunday morning we reached a *near* record attendance with 233 people in Sunday School and even more in the church service. At the evening services, Pack the Pew night, we had to bring in extra chairs and seat some folks in the foyer. Dad counted over 400 people and later reported that some people had arrived at the church and left rather than try to find a place to sit.

Most of the people asked to sit in my pew. I had not only packed a pew; I had packed a church. Over 320 people stood up to signify they had come to the service in response to my invitations.

My father beamed as if he were looking at Jesus; Mother

cried; Mary Martha, my big sister, favored me with a respectful look. Brother Alfred rhapsodized for about twenty minutes about how if every Baptist in Oklahoma would work as hard as I had, the whole world would be converted within a year. The congregation echoed his words with hearty choruses of "Amen!" "Praise the Lord!" "Yes Lord!" and "That's right, That's right!" I even heard one "Hallelujah!" but that wasn't considered a good Baptist phrase in those days.

Finally, Brother Alfred invited me to the speaker's podium to receive my prize. I still feel as if I floated rather than walked from my pew to the front of the church. I know that I have never felt prouder—or closer to fainting, as I stood there next to him. I was so far from sensibility that I cherished the prize he gave me. It was an autographed copy of his book, *On the Sawdust Trail* (sic) with *Brother Alfred Baylor, the Preaching Peter of our Genration* (sic) "At least I had won something.

When he invited me to "say a few words to the folks," I managed somehow to speak despite the pressure in my throat and a foolish grin that distorted my face. I remembered my training and protested that I hadn't really done that much, but then blurted out something about how much I really wanted to see something I had never seen before and would never see again. The audience laughed appreciatively, and Brother Alfred smiled benignly as he reached into his coat pocket.

I've got to hand it to him even after forty years of thinking about it. He was either the coolest cookie that ever faced such circumstances or he genuinely believed he was producing something that would meet my expectations. Instead, he pulled his hand from his pocket and displayed a peanut, announcing, "this is something you have never seen before and will never see again." He ate the peanut as I plodded back to my seat. ☐



ILLUSTRATION BY BRANDON WEBSTER

# Transfigured

**"...WE ARE NOT, THOUGH, THOUGH NATURAL, DIVORCED FROM HIGHER,  
FINER CONFIGURATIONS" A. R. AMMONS, GARBAGE**

Photographs hold quiddity in cameras,  
trace information stored in darkness,

await chemical release,  
become actinic rectangles, plastic polychromes

with corners tucked into white wedges  
pasted into albums on shelves or low tables

in Connecticut, Canada, Japan—wherever:  
images of our poor persons seated

at this moment, or standing, yesterday.  
Perhaps we pose beside the cog train

up Mt. Washington—  
it is windy and a light mist obscures our goal,

relative strangers caught up in others' lives, we stand.  
Or, arms, akimbo, relaxed/juxtaposed with others

on the porch of The Frost Place,  
heated discussion suspended, we sit.

We will remain nameless contingents of place  
one page over from Aunt Suki, Uncle Francois,

Seated on a wicker couch  
beside this weathered morris chair

in which the poet exacted other moments—  
of Franconia, the farm,

New Hampshire's fence-bound neighbors.  
And in each Kodak/Fuji moment

encompassed by gray mist on Ridge Road  
in all those fixed-framed chronicles

in strangers' musty lives  
we smile.

**by Carol Cullar**

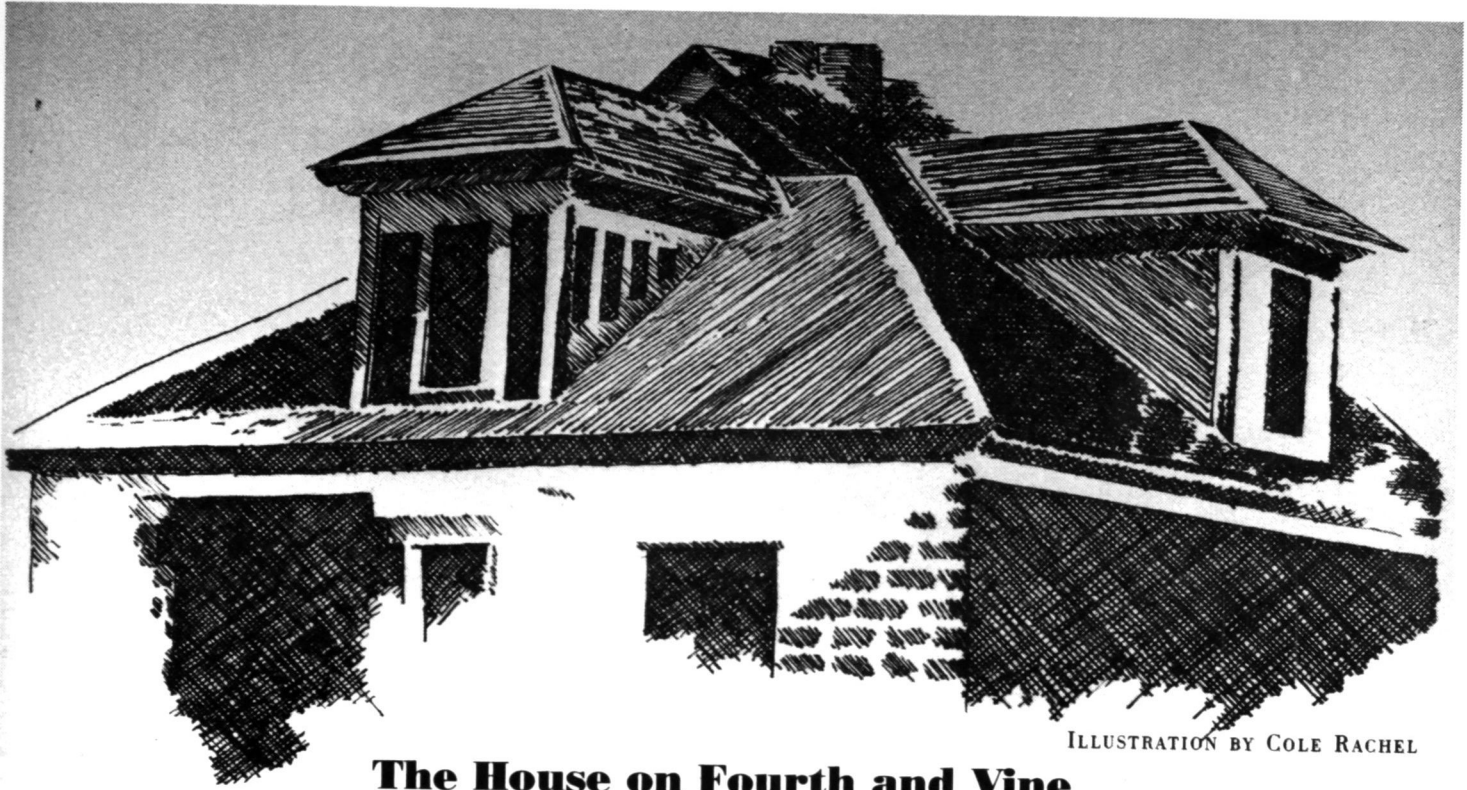


ILLUSTRATION BY COLE RACHEL

## The House on Fourth and Vine

I hoped that house would burn,  
but there we were, shoving each other  
upstairs. The jimmied door creaked shut  
and we were alone where it happened,  
the murder we believed. Each step we took,  
boards popped. Cobwebs bowed us along  
like ghosts, the screen door tapping code.  
Webs stuck to my hair, and I clawed

and wheeled around, rubbing my face to see.  
Games when we were ten were serious as sex,  
and we thought all others cheated.  
In gunfights, crouched, we shot each other,  
shouting. When no one fell,  
that's when the bad blood flowed.  
*You're dead!* somebody swore. *You missed!*  
we lied, and shot straight at his head.

Backing off to our homes, we all fired  
volleys at the heart, *liar, sissy, coward.*  
One night, we bragged we'd bring back  
doorknobs, glass, a floor board  
stained with blood. But inside,  
anything there heard every step, so close  
we felt it breathe, hiding in shadows,  
knowing we didn't dare turn back.

**by Walter McDonald**



## **Reckoning for Edward Abbey,**

**ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF EARTH FIRST! AND AUTHOR OF *DESERT SOLITAIRE* AND *THE MONKEYWRENCH GANG***

Larna takes our two scrapping kids,  
as an act of mercy,  
to a Van Damme double feature  
so I can get my grading done.  
Sprawled on the bed,  
I stoically lift each leaden page  
of improvised analysis,  
freshman insight into the Romantic lyric,  
case studies in years  
of compulsory miseducation,  
intimations of a bad future  
for the kids. I'm rehashing  
petty departmental turf wars  
by the time I finish.  
With a bad taste in my mouth  
for my species,  
I light a Cuesta Rey,  
channel surf to a fishing show  
and the soothing babble  
of huckster good ole' boys.  
When they cut  
to a commercial for Eagle Claws,  
I hear the wind  
raid our subdivision,  
set the rafters moaning.

Heat, dust, light, broad spaces in it.  
The kids will return with grit in their hair,  
will wash out enough to dip a miner's pan.  
I remember Uncle Jaspers' ranch  
by the North Canadian.  
Pastures, gullies, cliffs there  
don't see hominids for months at a stretch.

My fanatic cigar purifies itself to ash  
while the wind sends the house  
on wagon axles across the prairie,  
the old antenna wire slapping  
the living room window,  
the storm door rocking and creaking.

Ed Abbey loved cigars. His last trip  
down the Colorado, he must have mashed  
a soggy stub between his teeth  
though that stretch was almost gentle,  
the rapids more spectacular than dangerous  
because he'd discovered he was sick  
and wouldn't be better. At what point did  
his age, his sickness, the late autumn  
convince him the emptiness  
behind the cliff's face, under white water,  
wasn't the dunes' soft erasure,  
and so couldn't comfort him  
as the wind lulls me?  
It became his first wife  
who died in New York.  
He left her body at the hospital  
to walk the city streets  
with a loaded .45 in his coat,  
in a rage to deliver  
his reckoning for  
a poisoned world.

I have shower duty tonight:  
Seth will forget his towel, will  
forget to rinse the tub,  
Hannah must have the temperature just so.

His last time down the rushing Colorado,  
Abbey wanted his latest wife and the first one,  
he wanted the few people he trusted.

**by Hugh R. Tribbey**

## Sharecropper's Wife

Clay sticks to her shoes  
as she plants purple iris  
in the thick air  
between living and death.  
An unwatered rose,  
withering on its stalk.  
Her days crawl like a snail  
on the side of the barn.  
Sky broods in shades of gray,  
weeps dew diamonds  
on her garden.  
Married to hard times,  
her money is eggs and cream  
traded for sugar and salt.

Yesterdays hang in her closet  
of a pale shack with rusty screens  
and insect eaten blinds,  
palmprints on the windows,  
children spread on the land  
like blackberry jam.  
Conceals her love  
beneath a sunbonnet,  
stares at an empty mailbox  
mouth open for forgiveness.  
Despair prowls at her door  
like a hungry wolf,  
contests her right to exist.  
Her man, skilled in nothing  
more than dirt,  
scatters his seed  
on used-up ground.

She walks up the road  
making small footprints  
on the great emptiness of the plains,  
knowing the end of the journey  
could be no harder  
than the long passage  
toward it.

**by Jack Rickard**



ILLUSTRATION BY SHAUNA JARVIS



# Winnenap'

by Tom Durbin

Winnenap' squatted in the wickiup, his gray head bent, staring into the fire. There was not much more he could do here. The child would soon die. And he would be at fault. He was the medicine man, after all, he and no other. He wondered if the Paiutes would come for him. A few years before it would have been a foregone conclusion, execution being the price of repeated failure. But Wovoka's gentle teachings had spread widely through the Paiute people, though not so much in his own band. Still, they were a gentler people than in the old days, and that was his hope, for the campoodie lay a far piece from any white settlements and farther still from the white man's law. Many had died of this disease the whites called pneumonia, all up and down the valley, mostly the old ones, but many of the children too, the youngest, the weakest. And more than a few had died under his own care in spite of all he could do. Maybe it was the cold. As long as he had lived he had never seen such snow. It had heaped up day after day, stopping for awhile only to begin again, and the chill prying its icy fingers through the willow work walls of the wickiups.

The rest of the family was asleep, the father and mother and the other two children. It had been a hard night, the boy not being able to breathe and raving in his fever. His breathing had slowed now, the lungs pulling hard but with less and less force, and the fever eating him alive. It would be dawn soon, but the boy would not see it.

He waited in the hut, wanting to leave, to turn his back on death once and for all, but he could not. It was his duty to stay till the last. He was sick of this! He had never asked to be a medicine man. It had come to him by lot as it did among these people. He had never understood it. Among his own people, the Shoshone, a man was called by his medicine to be a healer, and it was understood that the ways of the Great Mystery were beyond all knowing, all understanding. The Creator gave or took away as the Creator would, and there was no way that a man could wrap his

mind around it. Only as mystery within mystery did it make any sense. But these Paiutes wanted everything laid out nice and straight. It was the law, or had been—three chances only. If more than three died under your care, it was your life. Oh, there were the exceptions of gunshot, broken bone, any sort of wound. And he could refuse any patient who had been treated by another. Also he could attribute the death to some witchcraft or coyote trick or some evil spirit. In the early years he had been in luck twice when at the death of a patient he had been able to step outside the wickiup and point to a whirlwind.

He picked up a stick and stirred the fire, coaxing a little more heat from the spent wood. At the risk of waking the family, he went to the woodpile taking a couple of piñon logs and placing them quietly over the coals. The wood was a little damp, and the hut immediately filled with smoke. No one was disturbed; woodsmoke was a constant in the winter.

He went back and sat beside the child. The breath now was very soft. He touched the pale forehead feeling the fever stronger yet. He closed his eyes and began singing a little song, very quietly so as not to wake the family. He bent over the child, singing in the boy's ear. It was not a healing song in the strictest sense, more a song of celebration, a song of spring, a song of renewal and rebirth. He wanted the child to die with some happiness around him, and so he sang the Hummingbird Song, his voice imitating the little whirring sounds of the wings, singing of colors, flowers and rainbows in the springtime waterfalls. He sang the song again and again telling himself it would comfort the child, but taking his own comfort too. When at last the boy's breathing stopped, Winnenap' thought he could feel the little wings of the boy's spirit brush against his face as it flew to the Great Mystery. Singing the death song of his medicine, he walked a little way with the child's spirit, guiding it on its way, helping it onto the good road.

He rose and slipped into his heavy sheepskin robe. Let

the parents wake without him, the knowledge would come to them the same whether he was there or not. Throwing open the door he walked out into the courtyard of the campoodie, his moccasins crunching the ice underfoot. He strode to the eastern edge of the cleared area. The snow beyond was waist deep. Hunting had been difficult to impossible this year. People were not starving now, but there had been much hunger, hunger that sapped the strength of those already weak and left them easy prey for disease. They would not have survived without the thin charity of the whites. Every few weeks, when they could get through, a wagon would arrive with weevily flour, moth eaten blankets, assorted scraps and castoff food items. No, the whites would not let them starve; they were needed to work the ranches; tend the horses, the cattle and the sheep; and look after the alfalfa.

He stood gazing east at the desert mountains, feeling a physical wrenching in the place where his heart was. Untold times he had wished that he could simply leave, go back to his own people, to his own land. Untold times he had told himself he could not. The honor of his people, the word of elders long since passed on, these held him with iron bonds. He was hostage, a marker given and received as assurance for the white-imposed truce. He would never leave...as long as he lived.

It had not been so bad. He had a Paiute wife, a good woman, wise and beautiful. She was gone now, but still there were his two grown sons. Besides, he was too old now to go back, his home was here, and his work. Yes, the work, this being a medicine man! At first he had resisted, but only a little. It had seemed right, natural. So he had taken it seriously and gone to the hills to get his medicine and his songs. It was good work. He liked helping people. His mother had known much about the healing properties of herbs, and she had passed the lore on to her son in her quiet way, not teaching really, just passing on her interest and her love for the plants and their natural relation to people. That had been useful. And he had been surprised at the strength of his own medicine, the chuckwalla and the rattlesnake. They were good helpers, reliable at a bedside.

And there had come his deepening compassion. As a boy and even as a young man he had thought that the role of medicine man depended largely on the healer's power, on his medicine, his magical abilities. He had come to understand that the chief tool was compassion. To bring the body or the spirit back into harmony with the Great Mystery, the healer had to feel an identity between himself and the one he was helping. Without that one thing, all the magic in the world was not only of little use, but also it was dangerous, liable to backfire and injure the healer. Without compassion the healer stood between the forces of healing and the patient, a barrier to the healing.

Well, he had learned. And learned more when he had gone to see the Paiute Messiah. He had expected a sad figure, the man after all was discredited after the terror of Wounded Knee, the massacre of the Big Foot Band. He had made the journey northward to Walker Lake in the fall, at a time when the flurry of chores at the C-Bar was over, everything left tight and ready for winter. The white man he worked for, John Sherril, was a good enough man, sending him home with a bonus, a couple of good blankets and some coffee. But he would never get used to the ways of whites. They were almost as bad as the Paiutes.

Wovoka had not been at all what he expected. A big man with large hands and feet, he possessed or was possessed by that deep sense of peace and gentleness that sometimes goes with great size. His face was very plain, not ugly in any sense, but with a sense that the planes of his face had been cut from rock and sculpted with a feeling for simplicity rather than cunning. The man had great presence, a tremendous magnetism. To Winnenap' it was as though he had walked into some great mountain amphitheater, a place of vast silence and peace. He seemed all-accepting, all-encompassing, and Winnenap' felt himself enfolded and brought to a peace within himself that he had not known existed. And this was all in spite of himself, in spite of his own wall of cynicism and doubt-nourished lifetime of having to see through one fraud or another. But this man, whatever he might be, was no fraud. Nor was he the broken shell Winnenap' had expected. Instead he found a man



heartly and whole, a man of wisdom, a man who knew. At one time most of the tribes of the West had sent their delegates to learn more of his vision and to bring back his ritual. His Ghost Dance had been enacted across the plains and even in the East, uniting many of the tribes around a common vision. It might have changed everything . . . except for Wounded Knee.

Now, no one wanted to hear about the Ghost Dance anymore. Wovoka was still a holy man, but he was not a medicine man, did not run a sweat, though it was said he had the power to heal. He still preached the same message, admonishing the people to do good always, to work well with the whites, and do no harm to anyone. He spoke of a time to come when the earth would be renewed, lifted from her sleep and restored to her youth, the whole Indian people, living and dead alike, reunited on that new earth.

Winnenap' had liked the man immediately, liked him on a deep, human level, establishing that instant trust that occurs only when two men are natural friends; it was as though they had always known each other. They had sat for hours talking of spirit matters, the Grandfathers, the Great Mystery and finally the tragedy of the Lakota. The Prophet had found it hard to talk about Wounded Knee, but finally he had come to it. He had led Winnenap' to a high place, a narrow valley folded in the mountains. There he had pointed to one of the ancient pictures that the Old Ones had carved into the rocks, figures, six of them dancing together with hands linked. One figure was larger than the others, and Wovoka had told him this was Creator, and that Creator had shown him the spirit dance as it was done on the other side. Then Wovoka had told him how the dance was meant to restore the earth, not only from the ravages of the whites, but also to restore it to its youth. He had described his vision of the happy union of all the tribes, all the Indian peoples, living and dead. He told Winnenap' how the delegates from the tribes had come and how he had taught them the Way of Peace and the sacred dance. Then, tears streaming down his face, he told how the Lakota messengers had come, asking for the ritual, how he had seen the desperation, pain and anger in their eyes and been taken aback

by their fanaticism. He had warned them then that he was not giving them the whole of the ritual, that the wholeness of the thing must wait until a time when there was a greater unity among the tribes. He knew they had not listened. He had seen that there would be a disaster, but had been powerless to stop it. He had even gone so far as to admonish the Lakota that the pipe he gave them was under his own, and therefore powerless unless they obeyed his instructions, that they must perform the ritual only as he had said. And he had known the moment when old Sitting Bull had wrested the pipe away and broken the covenant. He had seen the disaster coming, had sent messengers to warn them, but it was too late. No, he said, the sacred shirts which he had shown them how to make were never meant to stop bullets. That also had been Sitting Bull's idea. Insane! The whole idea of the Ghost Dance had been to establish a path which the entire Indian people could walk in peace, a way to survive alongside the whites until the time came when the two worlds, red and white, separated as naturally as day emerging from night. Yes, he said, it will still happen. In some places the Paiutes still danced, albeit secretly, and the more the people danced the closer the new world would come. Yes, Wovoka knew that he had frightened and offended the whites, but he could not change either his vision or his message.

Winnenap' had looked him in the eye and said, "What about this business of you sayin' you're Jesus."

The big man had looked right back at him, his eyes great warm pools. "But I am Jesus," he had said. "There is no difference between me and Jesus." And he had smiled, an expression of such vastness in its compassion and understanding that Winnenap' had, for awhile, believed. He understood then how the tribes had been mesmerized by the man's presence and his teaching. And, for the first time, he understood the Paiute people, drawn as they were between the peaceful teachings of this man, their Messiah, and their ancient ways.

Well, that was years ago. He knew for a fact that certain groups of Paiutes still performed the Ghost Dance, and for that matter, followed the teachings of Wovoka. Not that he

could see that it did them much good, not at least with the whites. Those people may talk about turning the other cheek, but you better not turn your back on them, not if you wanted to keep your land or your hide in one piece. Still, he had to hand it to those who still followed the teachings of the Messiah. They were the best kind of people. He himself had been changed by his time with the gentle healer. He had ceased hunting altogether, finding that he could not kill. It seemed there was some basic conflict with his medicine, a conflict which he could not quite understand, but which he had to take seriously if he was to continue as a healer. And he found his medicine got stronger. But he was still not sure whether he believed or not. The man had possessed such power! Sometimes in his heart he felt like a traitor, like a white man in his refusal to acknowledge the Messiah. They were all too willing for the Indian to become Christian if it was through their own teaching. But an Indian Jesus? A living Messiah? They wanted their Christ safely on the cross, not walking among them embarrassing them with his teachings!

His reverie was broken by a sharp keening from inside the hut. Winnenap' stepped to the door, lifted the buckskin cover and stepped in. The woman was in her husband's arms, the little girl crying, the older boy staring, uncomprehending. Again there was nothing he could do, but he sat down anyway, waiting. At what he hoped was the right time, he rose and told the parents he was sorry, that he had done everything he could and it was not enough. He knew he should have covered himself with some coyote story or tale of snow spirits or such, but he was fed up with all of it and he would not. He had truly done all he could. He had made sure that the child was kept as warm and comfortable as possible, had cautioned the mother to make sure he got plenty to drink, had administered the most potent herbs he knew for lungs and fever and had sung the healing songs of his medicine endlessly. He had not dared to take the child in the sweat lodge because of the fever.

The parents were understanding, not blaming him. He knew this family to be "Wovoka people." There would be none of the nasty business of the past in this wickiup, no

cutting off of fingers or other mutilation. Such goings-on were against the teachings of the Messiah. They were good people and would be no threat to him, but the word would go out. He finished up with the boy, singing another song for the dead, this time one that was meant more for the comfort of the living.

When he was done, he left the village, wading through the waist-deep snow to a nearby hilltop. He sat looking down. Should he leave? Try to make a run for it? He would not. He was an old man, and running did not become his dignity. Further, he would not break his oath, or the faith of the elders. Yes, he was afraid to die. If he looked at it too long, he was sure he would be trembling, but he rode instead the hard wave of anger and contempt which he had nursed for these many years. It was difficult though, and at last he gave it up, surrendering to his own wisdom which told him there was, after all, little difference between Paiute and Shoshone, that it was his own pride that had made him magnify differences that were not worth the telling. The boy who had just died was as good as any boy, as good as his own son and as little deserving of death. For that matter, what was there to tell the difference between Indian and white? One could murder as ruthlessly as the other, and either one, given the power, would certainly exercise it.

He had grown to despise ignorance and brutishness. He saw it in the Paiutes. He saw it in the whites. And he was sure there was plenty of it in his own people, and he would know it well if he were not looking back at them through the illusive mists of time. Bad was bad, good was good and there was enough of each in any man regardless of the color of his skin.

Well enough of that! He felt the weight of his own thoughts on his back like the very snows of winter upon the earth, heavy and cold. He tried to remember what it had felt like to be young, and he saw his wife's face as the young woman she had been. It is like that, he thought. For a man, the story of his life is the story of what he can bring to a woman. We play at being great warriors, but when the day is over, we come home to the fire, home to the wickiup, home to the woman. That is where a man's life is, at that

fire that she makes and tends with her hands. Without that fire a man is nothing, a leaf on the wind, separated from the branch that nourishes and sustains it.

The sun was climbing in the eastern sky now. There were tendrils of gray cloud blowing off the high peaks of the Sierra, gathering over the valley. He looked at the eastward hills, up past Winedumah. Over there was the land of the Shoshone, the land his heart had never left, the desert land, land of chuckwalla and rattlesnake. He would go visit in the spring, if only to see the land again.

He returned to his own wickiup and waited. If they were going to come, they would come soon. He rested for awhile, pushing the thought of his own death away, wishing the old woman was still there to tend the fire, maybe make some stew. Finally he allowed himself to drift off to sleep.

When he woke it was late afternoon. He went outside and down the hill a little from the campoodie to where the sweat lodge had been erected. He gathered together the stones and wood and made fire, then brought water to the little domed hut. When all was in readiness, the stones dragged in to the pit, he smoked himself with the sacred sweet sage, making his spirit clean, then getting down on all fours, he entered the lodge.

He had determined that he would be ready, that perhaps they would come, perhaps not, but he would be ready. So now he sat quietly in the semi-darkness, the buckskin door not yet pulled down, making a silent prayer. Then he closed the door, threw first a little tobacco on the glowing stones as an offering, then poured the water. The stones hissed and popped, some of them breaking apart with the sudden change in temperature. Instantly the little hut was transformed to another world, a world of steam and heat and total darkness. Very gradually he began one of the songs of his medicine, the Bear Song to give him the courage he would need for this night. He began singing very softly, almost inaudibly, letting his voice rise and grow until it thundered in his own ears, and he could see the bear clearly before him and feel its power within himself. He entered that state in which he could move back and forth easily between the visible and invisible worlds, the world of ordi-

nary life and the world of spirit. After a long time of this and a long time of silence, he shifted to the Hummingbird Song, recalling the spirit of the boy who had died and sending him once again the blessing of the beautiful colors as well as the immense courage of the little bird. He felt his spirit rise and walk on the rainbow road, the good road, the road of happiness, and he was not surprised to find the boy walking beside him, lifting his hand to his own so that they walked together for a time, the song of hummingbird all around them.

When that was done he lay down for awhile, feeling the spirits gathering within the sweat and seeing some of them, the Old Men, the Healers of the Mountain, the River Woman and also his grandmother, his t'utsi. They all came. When he sat up again and began to sing, it was the Mountain Song and it was hard for him because it seemed that the life of the mountain was so far away from his own at that moment. He suddenly felt old and feeble, and he was trying to draw in the strength of the mountain, the strength of the rock and the earth. But it was hard. His voice was shaking and soon he found himself weeping, weeping for himself, for the boy who had died, weeping for his dead wife, for the terrible loss of his land and his people, all his people, Shoshone and Paiute, for the Indian people, all of them. He felt then his own death, knew that he would surely die this night and felt that his own passing was the passing of his people, that with his death his people would enter some new and unknown era, and he was afraid for them.

In the midst of his tears he looked and saw standing in front of him the figure of Jesus as he had seen him in the white man's Bible. And behind him stood Wovoka. Smiling gently and radiating peace, they came and sat on either side of him; and he was comforted beyond all measure, feeling lifted beyond the care of death. One of them motioned to him, he could not tell which one, and he saw that the door of the sweat lodge was in fact the door of life and death, and simultaneously he knew that this Jesus and this Wovoka were the same, and that they were that door, the door and the guardians of the door. A voice spoke and said, "I am

the way and the light." And he saw that death and life were merely passageways into one another, and that in fact there was no death as he had understood it. He was consumed then, completely enraptured, so that his experience was beyond his own comprehension or remembrance.

When he woke in the darkness of the sweat, he was shaking, shivering with cold. He could not tell how long he had been asleep or if he had been asleep at all. He felt helpless as a newborn babe and at the same time clean and powerful, possessed of himself, of the full range of his abilities and powers.

Outside he heard the sounds of drunken men and knew it was coming. He was not afraid. He was sad for the men that they had needed alcohol to work themselves up to it. He knew he did not want to die, but there was nothing to do but sit in the darkness, now singing the death song of his medicine, now just sitting in the silence. He found his pipe and tobacco and smoked in the sacred way, praying for his people, for all people, for all the relatives, all things. Finally he sang one of the songs from the Ghost Dance.

Wūmbi' ndomā'n, Wūmbi' ndoma'n,  
Wūmbi' ndomā'n, Wūmbi' ndoma'n,  
Nuvā ri' p noyo' wanā, Nuvā ri' p noyo' wanā  
Nuvā ri' p noyo' wanā, Nuvā ri' p noyo' wanā

The Whirlwind! The Whirlwind!

The Whirlwind! The Whirlwind!

The snowy earth comes gliding, the snowy earth comes gliding,

The snowy earth comes gliding, the snowy earth comes gliding.

They were the words of Wavoka's vision, the words for bringing forth the new earth, the words of healing.

All night long, whenever he was quiet, he heard the men shouting and cursing. In the hour of first light they came.

"Winnenap"! Winnenap"! Come out you worthless piece of Shoshone shit! Come out here and get what's coming to you!"

He crawled outside. The night was startlingly clear, stars blazing in the heavens, and the Milky Way spread like a great blanket from south to north, the spirit road, the road that all must travel from life to death. Standing, he looked at the men. "What business have you got with me?"

"You let people die! Old people, young ones too!"

"I did all I could. I did everything that anyone could do. Go away! Leave me here with my medicine."

"Your medicine! Ha! It failed us and now you're through. You gotta die! It's our way!"

"That part of your way is dead. It died with Wovoka."

"Ha! You and that Wovoka! Him and his Ghost Dance!" The man spat in Winnenap's face.

He held his head high, looking each man in the eye. "I have been in your wickiups, all three of you! I have doctored your children when they were sick. I have helped each of you and each of your wives. You dishonor yourselves and you dishonor your people! You dishonor your own manhood! Go home! We are past this!" He stared at each of the men till they were forced to look away in their shame. Then he turned toward the eastern mountains, toward the country of the Shoshone, toward home.

The blow came to the back of his head, swiftly, and he was free.

Spring came at last to the lands of the southern Paiute. A south wind was blowing up from Coso and with it the fevers ceased. Around the fires the women gathered at their daily chores and told the story of the old medicine man and his ending. Some remarked on the goodness of the old man and how he would be missed while others nodded to the wisdom of the ancient ways, ways which no mind could understand, but which allowed the people to continue.

And each year, at the turning of the seasons, the people danced. ❖

## **Sophia Starling Attends a Dying Man, Colorado Territory**

He filled the kitchen with his moaning,  
his feet covered by heavy socks quivering  
with each spasm that shook him like a mastiff.  
His brother wandered sobbing through the inn,  
racked by chills but still able to walk.

Any appetite I had upon entering—  
from a day of forcing my mare  
through drifts past her withers  
and streams freezing into my boots—  
was swept away by his broken hurricanes.

The landlady kept soaking a rag,  
but a dance was planned  
so I agreed to sit with him  
while a fiddle scuttled down my spine  
like insects no scratching can abate.

He died during the wildest reel  
the fiddler's elbow could inspire.  
One instant his body was drawn  
into the air, the next tossed down,  
those socks giving off the odour of slow death.  
His brother beat his head on the door frame,  
crying, "Easier to die at home in Delaware."

I wanted to hold his hand in comfort,  
but fear of contagion forced me outdoors  
to gulp down buckets of rasping air  
until the landlady came to me,  
saying the corpse had been removed,  
my pallet beside the stove quite ready,  
not another bed in the entire establishment.

Mr. Sprockett, my guide,  
sat with the bereaved brother  
for the rest of the night.  
At dawn he built a coffin  
from some slats behind the barn.  
His skills continue to amaze me.  
He even recited a portion of "Lycidas,"  
no minister within fifty miles  
of the grave it took Mr. Sprockett  
half the morning to dig, with a pick-axe,  
the ground hard as Dante's Ninth Circle.

**by Robert Cooperman**

# **Sophia Starling Writes to Her Sister After Climbing Long's Peak, Late September, 1873**

Dear Aggie,  
Congratulate me! The first Englishwoman  
to stand this close to Heaven,  
air so thin it cracked like spring ice.  
Yet it was more a stiff hike  
than a Matterhorn ascent: a well-marked path;  
still Mr. Sprockett had to lift me,  
my lungs tearing like cheap paper,  
my boots slipping on inconsequential pebbles.

At the summit, we gasped and pivoted,  
a hundred mile views in all directions:  
to the east, plains a brown ocean;  
to the west, peaks like giant white-caps.  
I could have stood there forever,  
but he pointed to black, bulging clouds.  
"An early snow," he hastened our descent.

I've had a salutary effect on him,  
smelled not an exhalation fouled by drink,  
his language chivalrous as Lancelot's.  
Still, men say he rode with raiders  
during the late American War,  
savage as any wolverine or lynx.  
Yet he recites poetry so feelingly,  
even scraps of his own verse,  
written, he laughs, when he was young  
and rabid for an Indian squaw  
who understood not a word or rhyme,  
whose brother and betrothed he slew,  
when they disapproved of his courting.

I silently thanked him for that dash of reality,  
the fire that crackles between us a chasm  
wider than the canyon men claim  
sparkles in the Arizona Territory  
like a hundred miles of gems and Botticell's.

**by Robert Cooperman**



## **Sophia Starling Explains Her Reasons for Traveling**

Imagine, Mr. Sprockett, a girl who reads—  
books of maps her passion,  
to run her hands along empty continents  
between plotted coastlines, and feel  
the spell of uncharted regions within.

Imagine her mother dying in a second childbirth,  
and she more parent than sister to the girl,  
their father a man of private interests  
who forgot he had two daughters;  
he returned home only to rest from excesses,  
to slouch in his library, to drink port,  
slaughter pheasants and foxes in season,  
to pat his younger daughter's head like a beagle  
and nod to the other as if a housekeeper.

Imagine him dying in a riding accident,  
his mount even more uncontrollable  
than the life which led him  
to test himself against a fence  
not even Pegasus could have scaled.  
Imagine her sister's heart being won  
by the local vicar, a quiet man  
as different from their late father  
as gentle Shetland ponies from mustangs,  
muzzles flecked with foam and blood.

Imagine that older sister, now free  
to find the roads she had only dreamt of:  
funds just enough in the estate  
to see her through this one journey  
before she slips into the harness  
her sister wears like an emerald necklace,  
or to take a position as governess,  
and watch her charges' eyes  
dance like Guy Fawkes' bonfires  
when she shows them unmapped places  
in their fathers' ponderous atlases,  
and tells them, "I was there!"

**by Robert Cooperman**

# John Sprockett Recalls the First Man He Killed

I told Miss Starling of my first kill,  
to make her see the lines ripped in my face  
aren't just scars from a grizzly—  
but invisible signs Satan marked me with at birth  
until he sent his clawed messenger  
to remind me I'd been claimed for darkness.

Jimmy was the boy the whores loved  
to pet like a clever songbird  
that could make you forget you hadn't seen  
your ma since cholera sweated her into the ground  
or that your pa had hurled curses  
and cow shit at your back when you ran off.

Jimmy had fine blond hair drooping into eyes  
so deep women wanted to drown there,  
a smile for all the whores and miners;  
even rough boys would sob into their whiskeys  
and think of home when he strummed and sang.  
No one gave a buffalo's fart  
that I could recite poems by the hour,  
had even composed a few.

When he accidentally spilled my bottle,  
I rammed my gun into his quivering gut.  
"He ain't even armed!" a whore cried.  
Hell, I didn't want to shoot him,  
just make him shut up for a bit  
and not be so damned adored.  
But a demon inside me pulled the trigger  
and laughed to watch  
Jimmy's grin fade on his white face.  
I flogged my mount toward Quantrill—  
looking for men who'd buried consciences  
too deep for even wolves to scratch loose.

I'd lay some flowers on that boy's grave,  
but they'd wilt in my paw.  
Besides, his stone's probably purest marble,  
bought by whores missing his voice and sweet face.  
I'll be lucky to lie below a wood cross  
that'll be no help when Satan claims kin.

**by Robert Cooperman**

## From the Journal of John Sprockett, Colorado Territory, 1873

We've had our first, early snow,  
those clouds heavy as foaling mares  
when Miss Starling and I stood  
atop Long's Peak, her breath a bellows  
to shape horseshoes for a herd of ghostly mustangs,  
her face red as Indian paintbrush  
but soft as the inside of a rose—  
to make me ashamed of my scarred face:  
an evil brand singed by Satan's rustlers;  
ashamed even more of the men I'd killed  
in Bloody Kansas; the men before, and since.  
She looked pleased to be standing  
where no lady's ever been, but clouds swooped in  
like flocks of crows, so we started down.

Still, we got caught by the blizzard,  
took shelter in an unchinked cabin,  
mouse-stink in the corners;  
Miss Starling's lavender perfume  
made me wish for a vat of beer to drown in,  
not to be tempted by her lady ways  
so different from the women I'm used to:  
that Ute squaw the closest thing to her,  
and she half-terrified by my face,  
by my having shot her brother and kinsman—  
who came at me with knives and pistols  
for presuming to love one of theirs.  
She had me at her mercy,  
but only left her blade buried in my arm.

I should toss this journal into the fire,  
but feel the need to pour out memories tonight:  
ghosts I've kept jailed with drink and work—  
all fluttering now like moths in October frost.  
Miss Starling's asleep.  
I'd brush the sifting snow off her,  
but she'd scream at the demon who rides beside her,  
who'd throw himself off Long's Peak  
if she said that was part of the job  
I'd hired on for as her guide.

**by Robert Cooperman**

Robert Cooperman's poems are from *The Badman and the Lady* soon to be published by Basfol Books.

TO BE CONTINUED IN FUTURE ISSUES

# Scent of Rain

by Melinda Craig

It was the summer of my twelfth birthday when my best friend Charlene, invited me to spend a Saturday afternoon with her. She lived in an old farmhouse outside of town that had a musty attic made for little girls to explore. Her father had fields of wheat and a pasture that was home for several woeful-looking cows. I loved to go to her house because her mother was always baking something that made their house smell sweet and warm. That Saturday she was baking an apple cobbler for the "dinner-on-the-ground" church social the next day. The kitchen smelt of baked apples and cinnamon. Her mother shooed us outside to play in the fields behind the house.

I remember the grass came almost all the way to my shoulders. Charlene and I ran barefoot up and down the rows chased by ponytails of brunette and blond with bangs sticky and matted to our foreheads. We collapsed, giggling on the side of the field furthest from the house, our breath ragged from the wild run.

"Let's play truth or dare," Charlene piped up, still trying to catch her breath.

I laughed and threw a piece of grass in her hair. "We already know each other's secrets. That's no fun."

"Ok, we'll just play dare." She looked at my doubtful expression, "...unless you're too chicken."

Those were fighting words to any twelve year old. "I am NOT scared...fine. I'll go first."

I looked around for something to use, and my eye fell on a bright red lady bug which I carefully removed from a piece of grass. "Here, I dare you to eat this lady bug." I held it out to her with a pleased smirk on my face.

I knew Charlene prided herself on never losing a dare, but the look of disgust on her face showed that maybe I had outdone her with this one.

Slowly she reached over and the unsuspecting lady bug crawled across my dirty palm onto hers. She squeezed her eyes shut tight and popped the bug into her mouth with the

bravado of any boy, swallowing it in one loud gulp.

I made a face and asked, "Yuck! How did it taste?"

"I really didn't taste it at all, to be honest," she grinned proudly.

"Ok, my turn."

I looked nervously around, hoping no worms were nearby.

Charlene appeared to be deep in thought as I anxiously waited for my dare.

"I dare you..." she paused for dramatic effect, "to take all your clothes off and run around the field."

"I can't do that! What if your parents see me?" I argued.

"My dad has gone into town for the day and mama is too busy. She can't see you anyway in the tall grass," she said. Charlene looked me dead in the eye, and I knew I had to do it now or forever be called chicken.

Once the decision was made, I jumped up and quickly removed my cut-off blue jean shorts and red checkered halter top. I ran as fast as I could through the tall grass, my heart pounding with fear and excitement. I remember how warm the hot sun felt beating down on me as the grass tickled my naked body. I laughed out loud at the sheer wildness of it, running harder and harder till the blades of grass stung my skin. When I came back to where Charlene sat giggling hysterically, I plopped down beside her, sweat pouring down my body making my tanned skin glisten.

"That was fun," I announced in a casual, confident way, as if I had done it a hundred times before. "The grass tickles like a thousand fingers."

Charlene laughed and jumped up and stripped out of her clothes. Before I could say anything, she was running through the grass like a gazelle. I chased after her, zig zagging across the field, laughing dizzily. I don't know how long we chased each other back and forth that day, but somehow it bonded our friendship to share in this exhilarating freedom.

When our tired legs couldn't carry us any further, we wandered back to the pile of discarded clothes, just as a storm cloud covered the sun from our view. We looked up at the darkening sky as fat raindrops began to sting our skin, washing the sweat from our bodies. We both giggled as we held hands and danced in a big circle with our arms opened wide, catching raindrops on the end of our tongues. The rain was warm and steamy, the air heavy with the strong scent of summer rain. Even now I remember the rain caressing me, soothing the tiny, stinging welts the grass had cut into my skin.

Charlene's mother called our names from the back porch until we were pulled from our world of freedom and rain. We rushed to wiggle into our soaked clothes and held hands as we ran back to the house. 🏠



ILLUSTRATION BY BRENT JOHNSON

## Contributor's Notes

**Brent A. Baldwin** has been writing for several years. His latest credit is acceptance into the anthology, *Ariel*. A one time resident of Hobart, Oklahoma, he is presently a Technical Sergeant in the US Air Force, stationed at Cheyenne Mountain Air Station, Colorado, and is working towards a degree in creative writing.

**Robert Cooperman's** second collection, *The Badman and the Lady*, is forthcoming from Basfol Books. His work has appeared in *The Centennial Review*, *Cimarron Review*, and *North Dakota Quarterly*. His first book, *In the Household of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, was published by the University Press of Florida.

**Melinda Craig** is a 29 year old stay-at-home mother. She resides in northeast Texas with her husband and two sons. She grew up in southwest Arkansas. Her hobbies are writing, reading and gardening.

**Carol Cullar's** parents both graduated from Weatherford: Martha Nell Darnell Payne in the summer of 1940 and James Ernest Payne in the summer of 1941. Her poetry collection, *Inexplicable Burnings*, won The Press of the Guadalupe's 1992 chapbook contest, and she also has work recently published (1994-97), or

forthcoming in *The MacGuffin*, *The Kansas Quarterly*, *Negative Capability*, *Plainsongs*, and the *New Mexico Humanities Review*.

**Tom Durbin** has a piece forthcoming in the spring issue of *Spirit Talk*, a magazine devoted to the celebration of Indian culture. Though he's not by blood a Native American, he has had close association with the cultures of various tribes throughout his life and he is the adopted son of a Paiute medicine man. He makes his living designing, creating and marketing his jewelry.

**Lee Gutkind** is a professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh where he founded the literary journal *Pennsylvania Review*, and the Pitt Writers' Conference. He has received a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship and the American Heart Association's Howard W. Blakeslee Award for outstanding achievement in scientific journalism. Gutkind is also a filmmaker and author of a variety of books including the award-winning *Many Sleepless Nights Bike Fever*; *The Best Seat in Baseball, But You Have to Stand*; *The People of Penn's Woods West*; *Our Roots Grow Deeper Than We Know*; *One Children's Place and Stuck in Time*. He has also written a novel, *God's Helicopter*. He is the founder and editor of the journal

*Creative Nonfiction*. Gutkind is also the editor of *The Creative Nonfiction Reader*, a series of anthologies upcoming from Jeremy E. Tarcher (Putnam Publishing Group), *Emerging Writers in Creative Nonfiction* book series from Duquesne University Press and Director of the Mid-Atlantic Creative Nonfiction Writers' Conference at Goucher College in Baltimore.

**Leo Luke Marcello's** "Rocky and Mary Time" accompanies other pieces in *Nothing Grows in One Place Forever*, to be published by Time Being Books in 1998.

**Walter McDonald's** latest book is *Counting Survivors* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995). Two other recent books are *After the Noise of Saigon* (University of Massachusetts Press) and *Night Landings* (HarperCollins).

**Marth Minford-Meas's** poems have appeared lately in: *Negative Capability*, *Concho River Review*, *RE: Arts & Letters*, *CCTE Studies*, and two anthologies. An English instructor, her reviews appear in *Houston Chronicle* and *Aethon*. Her poems are forthcoming in *Cumberland Poetry Review*, *The Maverick Press*, and *Context South*.

**Jack Rickard** was born on October 28, 1934, in Kingman, Kansas. His poetry has been published in a variety of literary



## Contributor's Notes

magazines and publications, including *Midwest Poetry Review*, *Mobius*, *Worldplay*, *Rain Dog Review*, *California Work World*, *Harp-Strings*, *Whisper*, the *National Library of Poetry*, *Sublime Odyssey*, *The Oak*, *Poetry Motel*, *Quill Books*, *Golden Apple Press*, *Hard Row to Hoe*, and *Reno County New Times*. He taught American and world history for 25 years at Central High School, Phoenix, Arizona, where he was also the Director for the Center for Foreign Studies Magnet School. His honors include a "Distinguished Teacher" award from the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education and a Presidential Citation for environmental work in the Grand Canyon in conjunction with the National Parks Service. He is also a Southwest artist noted for his paintings depicting the myths and folk tales of Japanese Kabuki drama.

**Jay Schneiders's** work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Georgia Review*, *Quarterly West*, *Sonora Review*, *Willow Springs*, *Tampa Review*, *Chattahoochee Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Prism*: international and other literary journals around the U.S. and Canada. He lives and works in Denver, where he also serves as a consultant to the literary organization Writer's Conferences and Festivals.

**Linda Simone** writes poetry, short fiction and essays and is currently working on a novel about a young girl's survival through the Catholic school system of the late 1950's. She and artist Lora Friedman have presented their art and poetry workshop to school children and student teachers. Her writing has been published in the *New York Times*, *Black Buzzard Review*, and in *Potomac Review*. Her poem, "Shooting Star," to be published in the fall edition of the *New England Writer's Network*, was a finalist in the 1994 Greenburgh Poetry Contest. Her work is forthcoming in *Gotta Write Network LitMag*, *The Poet's Page*, *The New Press Literary Quarterly*, *Tucumcari Literary Review*, *The Pegasus Review*, *The Villager*, and *Piedmont Literary Review*.

**Pat Snell** had stories published in *ByLine*, *Dogwood Tales*, *Concho River Review*, and *Texas Gardener*. She has an article in the next issue of *Texas Child Care* and a story accepted by *Cricket*.

**Joyce Stoffers** teaches at Southwestern Oklahoma State University and is the assistant editor of *Westview*.

**Hugh R. Tribbey's** work has appeared in *Midland Review*, *The Plastic Tower*, and *Poetry Motel*, as well as other journals. He is currently an English instructor at East Central University in Ada, OK.

**Alvin O. Turner** is Dean of Social Sciences at Northwestern Oklahoma State University. He has published a variety of books and articles on western American history and culture, mostly dealing with Oklahoma subjects.

**Mark Walling** has recently completed his Ph.D. in Creative Writing at Oklahoma State University, and is teaching at East Central University. He has other poems appearing in recent issues of *Concho River Review*, *Aileron*, and *Weber Studies*.



*Specialist in*  
*Fine Diamonds &*  
*Colored Gemstones*

107 West Main ♦ P.O. Box 689 ♦ Weatherford, Oklahoma 73096  
1-800-533-4380 ♦ 1-405-772-3113 ♦ fax: 405-772-8705

TELEPHONE  
405 772-3207

**DAVID D. DUNCAN**  
LAWYER

305 FIRST NATIONAL CENTER  
11 EAST MAIN STREET

P.O. BOX 1648  
WEATHERFORD, OK 73096

**"Your Community Owned Bank"**



**National Bank and Trust Company**  
Member F.D.I.C.

**4 ATM LOCATIONS**

- STUDENT UNION LOBBY  
SWOSU CAMPUS
- UNITED SUPERMARKET  
920 E. MAIN
- WASHINGTON AND DAVIS
- 120 S. MARKET  
CORDELL, OK

**24 HOUR BANKING**

JUST CALL 772-6789 TO  
ACCESS ALL OF YOUR  
ACCOUNTS

WEATHERFORD  
1100 E. MAIN  
(405) 772-5575

CORDELL  
120 S. MARKET  
(405) 832-3352



**ED BERRONG**

AGENCY

INSURANCE • REAL ESTATE • BONDS



520 E. Main  
Weatherford, OK 73096  
Phone 405 772-3329



# CITY BANK

Cordell - Corn - Weatherford

"Offering a variety of loan programs"  
Member F.D.I.C.

(405) 774-2265 • 115 N. CUSTER



...get the image

.....**Blunks**  
memories made to last a lifetime

SENIOR • FAMILY • WEDDING  
GLAMOUR • TEENAGE CASUAL • ABC  
ATHLETIC • SCHOOL DAY

...PHOTOGRAPHY...

**1-800-8-BLUNK**

Clinton, Elk City, Enid, Lawton, Moore, Weatherford OK  
Amarillo TX

## HOOKED ON BOOKS

*your  
book  
headquarters*

405-772-2062  
104 E. Main • Weatherford

*Hooked on Books*

MEMBER FDIC

# **BancFirst®**

122 North Broadway, Weatherford OK. 73096 405.772.5541



## LOCAL FEDERAL BANK

FSB  
FDIC INSURED

Weatherford Office  
(405) 772-7441  
109 E. Franklin

P.O. Box 271  
Weatherford, OK  
73096



**Gary D. Rader**  
AUCTIONEER AND BROKER

## **Rader's**

### **Insurance and Auction**

"We work for you"

TOLL FREE: 1.800.444.5160  
DAY: 405.772.3396

NIGHT: 405.772.2687  
FAX: 405.772.3159

116 N. CUSTER • BOX 351 • WEATHERFORD, OK 73096





# WESTVIEW

Published Semianually by  
Southwestern Center for Regional Studies  
Southwestern Oklahoma State University  
Weatherford, Oklahoma 73096