



3-1-1993

Westview: Vol. 12, Iss. 3 (Spring 1993)

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

(1993) "Westview: Vol. 12, Iss. 3 (Spring 1993)," *Westview*: Vol. 12 : Iss. 3 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol12/iss3/1>

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.



A JOURNAL OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA

WESTVIEW

VOLUME 12

NUMBER 3

SPRING 1993

\$3.00



Western Oklahoma
LAWMEN & OUTLAWS

Westview

A Journal of Western Oklahoma

Volume 12

Number 3

Spring 1993



Editorial Staff

Publisher

Editor

Assistant Editor

Art Director

Dr. Dan Dill

Fred Alsberg

Melissa Bruner

Laurie Jolliffe

Westview design & graphics production by the SWOSU Graphic Design Studio. Illustrations and layout by Southwestern Oklahoma State University Commercial Art students.

Published by Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, OK 73096.

Westview is the official quarterly publication of the Southwestern Center for Regional Studies. It is printed by the SWOSU Press of Weatherford under the direction of Mr. Larry Becker.

Westview publishes fiction, poetry, drama, nonfiction articles, book reviews, scholarly work, and graphic arts. *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 one year (four issues): \$8.00 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. Mail submissions flat in a 9"x12" envelope. Include a SASE for possible rejection.
2. Submissions should be typed; prose double spaced and poetry single spaced on 8.5" x 11" white paper. Artwork: graphics—pen and ink on white paper; photos—5" x 7" or 8" x 10" black and white. Send copies of photos since they may not 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. Please limit prose submissions to 10 double-spaced typed pages.
6. Include a brief biographical sketch.
7. We welcome submissions on a 3.5" disk formatted for WordPerfect 5.0, IBM or Macintosh. Please also include a hard copy of your submission.
8. Address all submissions and correspondence to:

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

WESTVIEW FUTURE ISSUES

Western Oklahoma Feasts: Summer 93.

Western Oklahoma Farmhouses: Fall 93.
Deadline: 7-1-93.

Western Oklahoma Youth: Winter 93.
Deadline: 9-15-93.

Western Oklahoma Flora and Fauna:
Spring 94.
Deadline: 12-15-93.

Western Oklahoma Hard Times / Good
Times: Summer 94.
Deadline: 2-15-94.

Western Oklahoma Terrain—Rivers,
Lakes, Hills: Fall 94.
Deadline: 7-1-94

Western Oklahoma Yesterday, Today,
Tomorrow: Winter 94.
Deadline: 9-15-94.

WESTVIEW *Spring 1993:*

Table of Contents



Outlaw on Holiday

4

Richard Plant

Hands

6

Mark Spencer



Interview with an Oklahoma Writer

10

Viki Pettijohn

Before We Lost Our Ways

13

Mark Sanders

The Broken Wishbone

14

Michael McKinney

WESTERN OKLAHOMA LAWMEN & OUTLAWS

Car Bombs and Camouflage

15

Keith Long

A Rumor of Ghosts

18

Robert Kessler

You Can Get There from Here

23

Carl Stanislaus

Oklahoma Homecoming

25

Richard D. Kahoe

Songs of Little Wolf

26

Claude D. Kezer

Another Round for Jake

34

Norman Arrington

High Crimes and Misdemeanors

37

William Kardish

Review: The Sound of Strings

39

Alvena Bieri

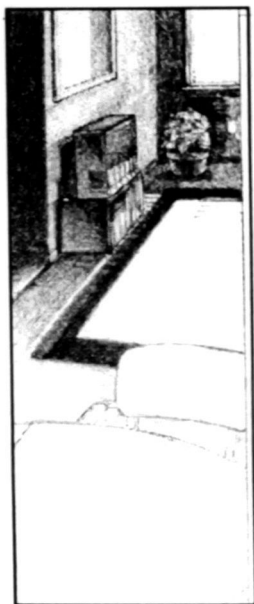
Illustrations by
John Crawford, Donna K. Hill, Mike Sigurdson

Cover Design & Illustration

by

TINA PRICE

Publication Layout by John Crawford





ILLUSTRATIONS
BY MIKE SIGURDSON



Outlaw on Holiday

BY RICHARD PLANT

A summer afternoon. Saturday.
Most of the men were cutting wheat.
Few women were in town either: they were up to
the farmhouses fixing dinner for the crews.
So the downtown merchants stood mostly alone
on the boardwalks, leaning in their doorways,
smoking, gazing at their own reflection
in the dusty shop windows.

He rode with a canter
right down the street's center, nothing to hide,
like a preacher riding to church on Sunday.
Even under their awnings, squinting up
into that sun, they could tell it was him.
The sorrel he rode looked dry as wheat husks,
he couldn't have ridden it far, not on a June day
like that, when even girls sitting in shade sweat.
His fancy grey coat rode back of his pistols
when he walked. He didn't try to hide them,
didn't seem aware of them himself. He stopped
to look in the window of the Emporium,
at the china teapot, maybe. Stopped again
at Palmer's Drug. Two girls came out. He nodded
like a gentleman while they giggled and passed.
They did not know him from his likeness.

His boots sounded like hammers on the floor.
Hey dee, he said, the same as you or I.
I sure could do with an ice cream. Chocolate.
He spooned it up right there at the counter,
sitting prim as a choirboy on his stool,
behind his back a lady buying iodine,
a bottle of Lydia Pinkham's pills,
a green-eyed boy in knickers buying licorice.
Palmer said that his hands looked like a millionaire's,
so fine and hairless. He worked his spoon in that
glass dish like you or I might play piano
if only we knew how.

He bought cigars.
And tucking one inside the pocket of his coat,
he let the silver of his gun flash free.
I felt ashamed to see it, Palmer said.
As if it were some private part or wound.
He smoked his second cigar in the store,
tossing the match into his empty dish,
fingering postcards in the rack, while overhead
his smoke was sliced and tumbled by the blades
of Palmer's fan. At last, he slapped
a silver dollar down and left. Where you
'spose it come from, Palmer would wonder, for years,



each time he tried to paint the day for all those men who weren't around, out cutting wheat and trusting their June sweat to buy next winter's comforts.

From Palmer's store, he crossed to Gordon's Photographic Studio. He got his picture took, according to the boys downtown. For now the word was out, and curious, not scared (the bank, they knew, was closed), some merchants trailed into the street. They took turns strolling by, turning their heads to peek into the window, then looping back to tell what they had seen.

He evidently meant it for a postcard. Someone would later see

him mail the likeness at the depot. What did he write (and where in god's name did he send the thing)? I'm having fun in town? Remember me with fondness? The photography technician in his stiff black hood, the flashpan held aloft and set to fire—in these few seconds only did he seem uncertain, ill at ease. They say—the man who took the picture, the two or three outside whose noses greased the glass—they saw a look of panic run like water down his face, as though he'd just glimpsed fear itself. Or else, unused to holiday, he'd of a sudden clean forgot just who he was, or at what point he'd hunkered down beside the campfire of his enemy, all cited up, asweat and staring down the flicker of eternity's glass eye. ■

HANDS

BY MARK SPENCER



about a week before she left him, Buck was looking at a catalogue he'd gotten in the mail from Port's Prostheses, and he called to her: "I can start doin' some work if I get me one of these things." Buck worked the farm his parents had given him two years ago when they retired to Atlanta to be near his older brother, a rich architect with three kids. "What things?" Crystal was at the table in the kitchen, fooling with a pile of photographs.

From where he sat in the living room he could see her. She was framed by the kitchen doorway. He was in his arm chair and had the TV on to watch "The Young and the Restless," one of his favorite soap operas. He'd started watching soap operas in the hospital and had kept all the nurses updated. He liked all the good-looking women on the shows. On "The Days of Our Lives," the women were all after a guy who wore an eye patch. One of those things that fascinated Buck was how characters who were supposed to be dead often turned out not to be. Even if you saw a dead body, it would usually turn out to be some long-lost twin who just happened to get into town the day the murderer struck or the accident occurred. Sometimes an actor quit for good, but his character was too important to kill off, so the show's writers would have him mutilated, then restored by plastic surgery. He would have no scars; he would lose nothing. He only talked different and looked different.

But the catalogue had come in the mail, and Buck wasn't paying attention to the TV. He said, "One of these things in this book. A hand."

"A what?"

He watched her. She didn't look up from her pictures. "One of those mechanical hands," he said. "Or something cheaper, like a hook."

The word "hook" seemed to get her attention. She looked up. Her mouth dropped open. She held a photograph in her fingers. "Buck, you hear me now. I don't ever want to hear you say something like that again. Are you trying to turn my stomach?" She laid the photograph down.

"But. . . ." He looked down at the catalogue on his lap. Smiling models showed off artificial hands and legs. Under the picture of a woman in a long

formal dress dancing with a man in a white tuxedo a caption said, "You can even dance!" Buck looked up and said, "I could—"

"I don't want to hear about hooks. God!"

He closed the catalogue. On the cover were a young couple on bicycles, a good-looking man with a mechanical leg and a sexy girl in shorts and a halter top. The girl wasn't missing any limbs. She had long blonde hair and a slim build, except for big, pointy breasts. She looked a lot like Crystal. Crystal could be a model, Buck thought. She'd been Miss Pumpkin Festival 1989.

Before his accident with the combine, Crystal often went around the house in flimsy, short nightgowns or in his tee shirts without a bra or panties underneath. Before the accident, she said she loved the way he looked and the things he did to her. Since he'd come home from the hospital, she had worn long, heavy robes and sweaters. Sitting at the kitchen table, looking at her photographs, she wore baggy denim overalls.

He got out of his arm chair and headed toward the kitchen. She didn't look up. Snapshots were arranged on the table in long straight rows and apparently in chronological order. The first one on the top row showed her as a baby barely old enough to sit up, wearing a frilly pink dress. Her hair was curly then. On the bottom row were several pictures she'd cut in half. Buck had known other girls who had also done that to photographs every time they broke up with a guy. In two of Crystal's pictures, there was a disembodied arm on her shoulder. In another, she was holding a disembodied hand in her own. In one, she wore a crown and her homecoming formal; a hand that came from nowhere was on her waist.

"Is that Scott Wilder's hand?" he asked.

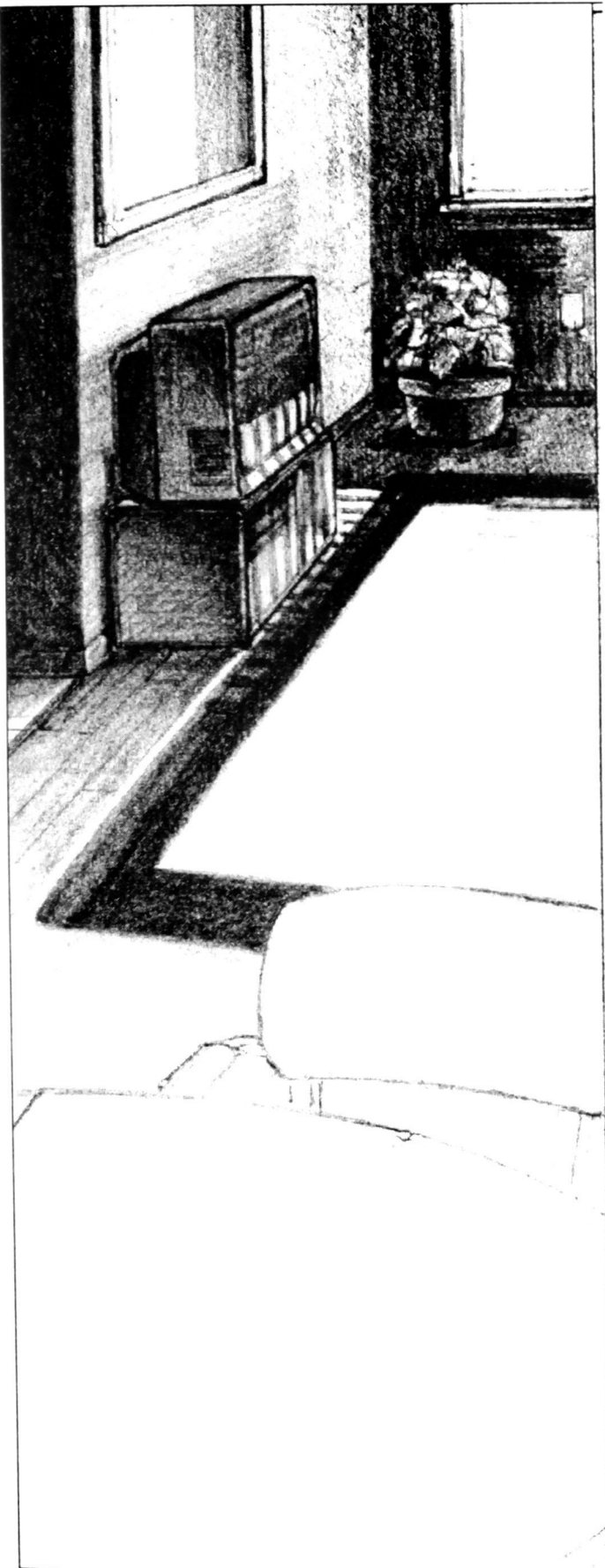
"Yeah. He was homecoming king, but he turned out to be a real loser. I'm sorry I wasted six months of my life on him."

Buck nodded. She had started dating Buck before she got around to breaking up with Wilder. She'd tell Wilder lies about being sick or going out with her girlfriends or having to visit her grandmother, and she and Buck would drive forty miles to Portsmouth to see a movie or eat at Dairy Queen or park behind Portsmouth Junior High. The next night, she'd be out with Wilder.

"Is that Scott Wilder's hand?"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN CRAWFORD

"This is nice," he said. "The story of our lives in pictures."



Wilder found out, and one morning Buck discovered his mailbox smashed and the mailbox post sawed up into stubby logs, evidently with a chain saw. At three in the morning, Buck went into West Union to Wilder's house, armed with a double-blade ax. Wilder's parents had just a little mailbox attached to the house next to the front door, so Buck looked around and decided to chop up a garden hose somebody had left strung across the front yard. Then he chopped down a young pear tree before lights came on in the house.

Looking at the rows of snapshots, Buck said, "Wilder was a pussy. I wish he had come around with that chain saw of his again. I'd have shown him the Ohio chain saw massacre."

Leaning toward Crystal, Buck made a noise like a chainsaw, trying to be entertaining.

"Will you stop it."

Buck found a picture of himself: sitting up on his tractor, a big grin on his face, his Massey Ferguson cap pushed back on his head, his hands huge on the steering wheel.

"This is nice," he said. "The story of our lives in pictures."

Then he made the mistake of patting the back of her shoulder with his stump, and she jumped up, mumbling something.

"What?" he asked.

She shook her head on her way to the sink full of dirty cups and silverware. The garbage can was full of pot-pie and TV-dinner containers. She reached for the spigot, then stopped and reached up to a cabinet and took down a glass.

"I like pictures," she said. "They make things stand still."

She opened the refrigerator and poured a Coke from a plastic two-liter bottle. She left the refrigerator door open, and Buck felt the chill. The refrigerator's motor kicked on, hummed.

He watched her lift the glass to her lips, watched her tip back her head, her long hair dipping below her waist, her smooth neck stretching, then her throat moving as she swallowed.

He noticed the beauty of her hand holding the glass. Her nails were pink with scarlet polka dots. She took a long drink, her eyes on the ceiling. ■

M A R K

INTERVIEW

*Interview
With An
Oklahoma
Writer :
Mark
Spencer*



BY VIKI PETTIJOHN

In response to a question about his technique, fictionist Mark Spencer replies, "I feel that all I need to do—all that any writer needs to do—is to create some interesting people and put them in motion, doing interesting things. And of course there has to be a certain coherence in their actions, significance in what happens to them." Create interesting people he does—a coven member from Lawton named Becky, a professional wrestler and bigamist named Samson, failed baseball player Lon Peterson, Vicki, a tough blond who sells "Santo Gold" jewelry at a nearby flea market, and Buck, a young farmer who loses his hand to a combine.

The care he exercises with characterization is the direct result of a shift in emphasis: "I used to be a lot better at narrative movement when I couldn't develop character; my interest shifted from plotting to characterization, and so now I don't think about plotting. I don't worry about it."

Viki Pettijohn: You are a writer of short and long fiction, an author just breaking into the public eye. Is the novel dead?

Mark Spencer: No.

VP: How do you answer someone who so asserts?

MS: Usually they're the kind of people who like novels and authors I don't like. They like John Barth—I don't like John Barth. I tend not to like much of the experimental stuff in the 60's

S P E N C E R

" I feel that all I need to do—all that any writer needs to do—is to create some interesting people and put them in motion doing interesting things."

and 70's. I think metafiction is interesting to a very limited degree because it's fiction about fiction; experimental work simply draws attention to itself as artifice, and I think it is legitimate to do that—it raises questions about the nature of reality, about what truth is. But there are only so many stories you can write about a writer writing a story about a writer writing a story.

VP: So where are we going after metafiction?

MS: What happened in the 70's is that fiction writers started writing about other things again. Raymond Carver had a lot to do with short story writers switching from metafiction. Inevitably writers and all artists return to writing on, or creating in the medium they're working with, the subject of people. People are the most interesting subject that writers can treat. Human relationships are so rich, so complex, with endless possibilities lying in the conflicts within and between them. . . . At the moment 'gritty realism' is holding firm, according to my agent and people in New York. Even the incoming administration may add to gritty realism's popularity, with Clinton coming from Arkansas.

VP: Your work, which is gritty and real, has been compared to Carver's; who are the writers you admire and/or emulate?

MS: Well, my agent and my editor at Ballantine's do not think my work is like Carver's. For one thing, Carver's not a particularly humorous writer. Tobias Wolff has been a very consistent writer. . . the writers that I really admire are Carver, Bobbie Ann Mason, Wolff, Jayne Anne Phillips. I think I write

about people similar to Mason's, but I've tried not to imitate anybody. I like fiction that has both pathos and comedy. . . the kind which can move the reader to tears and make him laugh, and especially the kind of fiction that can do it almost simultaneously. Novels like *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Catch-22*, and *The World According to Garp*. Even if the novel is otherwise touching and honest, if there's no comedy in it, it's not quite real. It's not quite the real world, and not completely honest, because comedy is part of life. Life strikes me as somewhat absurd, and some of the absurdity is funny.

VP: So would you say, then, that the purpose of your work, or the basis of it, is mimetic?

MS: I think of myself primarily as an entertainer, actually, but on a higher level than what television sitcoms may do. . . . One of the pleasures that we all derive from serious literature is the sense that we're being told the truth about life. And so that's what I try

to do, to tell the truth, to deal with the complexities and ambiguities of thinking and being.

VP: Lon Peterson in the title novella of your collection *Wedlock* (Watermark Press) is a good example of such complexities and ambiguities. Where did he come from? I know he seems to be your favorite character in that collection, and that you continue tracking him in your current fiction, much as Updike does the central character in his *Rabbit* series.

MS: In the fall of 1985 it came to me for the first time to write about Adams County, Ohio, and the first piece was "Home," about Lon Peterson's return when his father dies. I have always felt a strong aesthetic attraction to Adams County, where my family owned a farm when I was 12 or 13. It is the poorest county in the state; on the fringes of Appalachia, it has more in common with Kentucky than with Cincinnati, only 60 miles away. It's a place of failing farms, mobile homes, unpainted shanties, and bootleggers—it's a dry county. I was very intrigued by the way people lived around my folks' farm, fascinated with their poverty; I found poignancy in their financial struggles and their attachment to the land. In the summer of 1985 I remember the interruption of normal programming one evening by the announcement that Pete Rose was about to break Ty Cobb's record; the excitement of it got to me, and I recorded the moment with my VCR. I started thinking of all the boys and young men who dream of doing what Pete Rose did, of the millions who don't meet their goals and dreams. What happens to them? Especially those who fail dramatically, who fall tragically short of their goals. Lon came out of that. He gets as far as the minors and then flops. He has just enough success to make the dream seem real.

VP: W.P. Kinsella gave *Wedlock* high praise in his *Vancouver Sun* review; do you think that the emphasis on baseball caught his eye?

MS: Yes, I tend to think he came across it because he read somewhere that it had to do with baseball. He talked about the compassion I seem to feel for my characters. Certainly the juxtaposition of Pete Rose's success with Lon's failure emphasizes the poignancy of his situation. In "Home" he comes back to his father's farm for the first time since he failed in the minor leagues, hoping to get his life together, perhaps to sell

his father's farm. He has an ex-wife there he wants to see.

VP: Is the Peterson farm like the one your family owned?

MS: Yes, it's set way back from the road, and there's a long, winding, rutted drive going up to it—it is the Peterson house in *Wedlock*. There's a small farm house in the shadow of a huge, traditional red barn. The landscape is hilly and lush; it's hard to grow corn and soybeans on land so hilly, so many people have a small tobacco patch and they live on that and public assistance. The men are emaciated, very gaunt in the face. It's "the county of three-fingered men."

VP: What do you mean?

MS: Well, so many people there have lost limbs and digits to accidents. The motif of missing limbs and body parts is very much a part of my forthcoming novel *Hiding*.

VP: And certainly a central issue for the short story "Hands" which is based on a section of that novel.

Spencer has said that he is interested in doing some screenwriting, preferably adaptations of his novels for film. When asked the name of a director for whom he might want to write, at first he is stymied, but he quickly responds, "Horton Foote would be a wonderful director for something that I've written." He adds, "I would like to have John Cougar Mellencamp play one of the characters. I feel a certain aesthetic kinship with him; we're both interested in similar things. If I were a musician, I'd be John Cougar Mellencamp. I like to think if John Cougar Mellencamp were a writer, he'd be me." Spencer plans on discussing his screenwriting future more seriously soon with people who can help him in Hollywood. Perhaps he'll have his chance to work with Horton Foote and John Cougar Mellencamp. One thing's for sure—he's a novelist with a future, and he's come a long way from his first novel the summer after first grade, a hundred-page story about a gangster who died on page three ("I wrote big and drew a lot of pictures").

Works by Mark Spencer:

Hiding, a novel. Ballantine, forthcoming.

Spying on Lovers, fifteen short stories, forthcoming.

Wedlock, two novellas and three short stories.

Watermark Press, 1990. ■

Before We Lost Our Ways

BY MARK SANDERS

STAFF ILLUSTRATION

The world was small as a house, then.
It was an elm-bordered,
sun-sprinkled yard of plenty.
The small noise of children
raced up and down the echoing staircase,
let doors smack their lips;
the noise ran the maze of laundered sheets
that hung upon the lines,
and unfolded like petals in the iris bed.

The world was a bright house, lace and wood
and ordinary.
Voices never raised inside—or so it seemed.
People walked into the house
without knocking
and their laughter played cards
until the light closed their eyes
and unplugged the radio static of bugs.

The world was so small
we knew little beyond our front door.
Sedans and coupes drove by slowly;
they grew arms and waved
as we played upon the infinite lawn.
People met upon our sidewalk
and their eyes spoke,
their mouths recognized each other.
The smallness of the world
was a fistful of wet gravel,
a grasshopper's spit juice.
It was all that could be lifted down to us.

These were safe times.
All we needed was the heat of home,
the heat of our love,
the heat of food,
and heat was an old worn blanket called hope.
All we had, while it may not have been enough,
was what we had.

It was enough. ■



The Broken Wishbone

BY C. MICHAEL MCKINNEY

At ten a.m. St. Valentine's Day,

we lost a voice

whose chords we'll never hear.

All blue motion paled

on the ultrasound screen

then ceased.

Technicians and nurses

scuttled about

the hushed bustle of sterility.

I held you close,

felt a void in your breast

and realized our tears

were the sounds of bones

that would never break. ■

Car Bombs and Camouflage

BY KEITH LONG

When I was a kid, my mother always said cleanliness was next to Godliness. I always said cleanliness was next to impossible.

The world is a dirty place. Especially in southwestern Oklahoma. Especially for a kid. But even here, dirt is a seasonal thing. Winter dirt is hard to come by, while summer dirt is a little too hot and keeps getting washed off by the water hose. But springtime dirt, the right-now kind of dirt, makes for perfect messes. Just ask any mom-on-the-street.

There were all kinds of dirt in our neighborhood, but Mother was a stickler about certain kinds. She didn't like dirt under my fingernails. I kept my fingernails bit back as far as possible to lessen the tons of dirt that could get under them. Mother's method of unloosing the dirt from my fingernails—hot water, Lux liquid, and a steel brush—could've pulled war secrets from the most hardened Nazi.

Mother also worried about grass stains on the knees of my jeans. As a kid, I was young and short and clumsy, and I had very little protection against grass stains on my knees. Sometimes I would hobble into the house, nursing the results of an Evel Knievel bike wreck, such as a sprained ankle and a dislocated shoulder, and Mother would declare, "Just look at your knees! How am I going to get those grass stains out!"

I figured Mother didn't watch TV and hadn't

heard about "Tide" and "Era" and all those other laundry wonders. On the other hand, I didn't understand why Mother didn't go ahead and patch my stained jeans just like she did all the others. It was inevitable that a patch would wind up on my knee, so I saw no reason to wait until I actually tore a hole in it.

"Just look at your knees! How am I going to get those grass stains out!"

On the whole, fingernail dirt and grass stains were pretty run-of-the-mill stuff. I could get either all by myself. I could get fingernail dirt by excavating a red-ant bed, and the grass stains came easily enough when I practiced parachuting off the picnic table with a bath towel wrapped

around my neck. To get inventively dirty, however, a kid needs a catalyst of some kind. Luckily for me, I knew Harv. He was my partner in grime.

One afternoon, after a particularly gruesome John Wayne movie the night before, Harv and I decided we couldn't tame the entire Old West without a little camouflage on our faces. I swiped a couple of magic markers from Mother's art drawer, and we managed to pretty much cover our faces with black and red ink. But when we were finished, Harv said we just looked like two kids with magic marker on their faces. I agreed. We needed more. Besides, Old West lawmen didn't even have magic markers to help them sneak up on villainous outlaws. We remembered

the mounds of clover in Johnson's back yard, so we crumbled that up and rubbed it on our cheeks and brows.

"We look pretty dirty now," I said.

"Yeah, but not a great dirty," Harv countered.

We searched the neighborhood for more weeds, but unfortunately they were all of the green variety. We did find

"We look pretty
dirty now," I said.

some old charcoal in the barbecue grill. It had been cooked over and was all oily so it didn't scrape onto our faces too easily, but it

did alter our clothing wonderfully. We charcoaled each other, front and back. Even Clint Eastwood would have been proud of our ugliness.

Harv mused a minute. "Mud would work," he said.

"Can't, I said. "Mother won't let me get muddy."

Harv mused some more, and I could tell he was about to come up with a great musement. He began eyeing the lawn mower, which was sitting beside our red barn. It was great. The sludge on the mower was of perfect texture for camouflage. We sludged our hair, our ears, our faces. One could hardly see the charcoal on our clothes once we were properly sludged.

"Can't, I said.

"Mother won't let
me get muddy."

The mower didn't hold enough sludge for our purposes, but we were able to rake some off the rototiller, and then we scoured the neighborhood for more motor sludge. The mother lode was waiting for us behind the old DX station. Sludge was just lying about on the ground, camouflage in waiting.

When Mr. Worthley finally ran us off, we slinked around the neighborhood, looking for Pat Garrett, Billy the Kid, Butch and Sundance, and

any other bank-robbing, bomb-toting low-life that we could find, confident that our sludge camouflage would prevent our detection. Since Mother wouldn't let me go uptown to the bank, we decided the black hats must be planning a big car-bombing raid that day and took it upon

“Look,” Harv said, pointing out one of the squad cars.

“They must be looking for car bombs, too!”

ourselves to check every car in the neighborhood. I started to mention to Harv that there were no cars in the Old West, but decided not to ruin all the fun. We skulked through alleys and side yards, approaching each car with care and suspicion.

Neighbors came out and shooed us off, uttering nonsense about sludgy stuff on their windshield. But I knew they didn't recognize us, since no one

threatened to call my mother. Police cars began prowling through the neighborhood.

“Look,” Harv said, pointing out one of the squad cars. “They must be looking for car bombs, too!”

We doubled our efforts, but found only a few dozen car bombs. We were convinced there were hundreds more, but since the paper didn't carry any news about bombings for the next couple of weeks, we gave ourselves new deputy badges for a job well done.

When Father finally gave the dinner whistle, I scurried to the back door, leaving sludge marks every step of the way. When I rounded the corner into the kitchen, camouflage dripping from every limb, Mother stepped back, aghast at my appearance.

“Just look at your knees,” she cried. “How am I ever going to get those grass stains out?” ■

A R U M O R O F G H O S T S

■ ■ ■ BY ROBERT KESSLER ■ ■ ■

As usual, the big brass in the department called it “cleaning house”, but I called it re-

election time. At any rate, they wanted the Derk case wiped off the books in Wheeler. That was where I came in—Lance Tanner.

The air was already warm that morning when I headed out with the assignment folder. The sun twisted my eyes into a tight squint and I pulled out the blue blockers my ex-wife gave me for Christmas a few years ago. June-Marie was a sweet kid, but she could never adjust to the hours of my line of work. I can still hear her . . . standing in the kitchen cooking eggs with her shiny pink underwear on, “You think you’re gonna save the world or something.” A month later she was gone. I found the papers closed in the screen door. Since then, well, let’s put

it this way, I’m still not saving the world—just a little overtime pay.

Inside the car I took the elastic off the brown accordion folder. During my career as a detective, I’d heard about the Derk case many times. It was a legend in these parts. When folks ran out of jokes or were bored with cards, they’d rehash the different versions of the Derk murder, usually adding something new now and then about evil curses or ghosts.

The only sure thing that I knew about the case up front was that the victim had been a retired oil man named Randall Derk. Derk was known for his eccentricity. I’d heard that he’d kept a collection of exotic sea creatures and was such an odd, old codger that some even said he’d dabbled in black magic.

Inside the folder, I found the name, Ralph Watkins, typed and scrawled at the bottom of the police report. Watkins was a detective from before my time who’d originally investigated the Derk case.

He was retired now. And after talking to his wife, I learned he spent most of his time hanging out at the Long Horn Cafe down in Wheeler. That was where I found him.

When I opened the door to the place, the fried food smell

hit me. Cigarette smoke curled upward here and there. The room was packed. I took a seat at the only available booth, which happened to be under the mounted head of Bessie the milk cow. When the waitress came by, a tall woman with drawn-on eyebrows and a name tag that read Thelma, I asked if she knew Ralph Watkins.

As I was asking, a group on the other side of the restaurant raised their voices followed by a peal of laughter. One of them yelled, "Bet you he would by golly!" and got up, slapping the man next to him on the back.

The man was heading out the door, when the waitress, Thelma, pointed him out. "That's him there," she said to me, and yelled out so the whole place could hear, "Hey, this guy over here's looking for you!" The old lawman pointed at himself, mimed silent words, "Who, Me?" and grinned. He adjusted his summer straw and made his way through the sunlight and smoke to the seat facing me.

I introduced myself and Thelma brought Watkins a fresh coffee. He sat silently, looking me in the eye, until I mentioned the Derk case. "Well," he took off, "we thought it was some kind of knife, but it was never really decided what it was. Strange blue color. Boys down at the crypt analyzed it. You know, the morgue used to double as a police lab back then." He grinned. "We had it pretty rough in those days. Anyway, they said it was some type of bone, but couldn't tell what kind of bone, and didn't have any idea what it'd come from."

"The murder weapon?" I shook a cigarette out.

He nodded. "You know, there's been an awful lot of rumors about this case."

"What's your opinion?" I lit the end, watching the flame collapse into a thin blue ghost.

"Well . . ." his eye caught someone crossing the room and he waved, giving them a smile as he continued. "The doors were double bolted and windows were all locked, that part was true. The maid only had one of the keys, called us up when she couldn't get in to clean. We had to break a window to get inside."

"What else."

"No prints. Nothing near the body, just the weapon sticking out, you know, out of the throat." He shook his head.

When he said "you know," I sure did. I'd seen the swollen blank stares and plenty of gore too in my career. They told us back in cadet school it was something you'd never forget. They were right.

Watkins kept going, "Blood . . . well, I remember one of the state boys lost it right there on the carpet next to the guy's giant fish tank."

I leaned back on the wooden seat and blew out smoke, remembering it wasn't so much the look of the face or the wounds, but the smell stuffed in your nose and down your throat that made you gag like that.

Watkins took another sip and continued. "The whole day, no one was seen coming in or going out of the house. There's no witnesses either. I figure this one's got to be as close to a perfect crime as any I come across."

"No suspects?"

"Oh you've heard the stories I'm sure. Some people think some cult fanatics he'd been screwing around with killed Derk. There's even been a few ghosts held responsible." He laughed under his breath and then turned silent for a moment.

I waited.

"What I'd say you're up against," he leaned in and began to whisper, "is the work of a pro." He paused to catch my reaction. "And all you've got

are those bone pieces, and that there coroner's report, and, well, Tanner, that's not much. I'd say you might just as well quit right now and go fishing."

It was still early when I left Watkins, got back in my car, and dug into the Derk file once more. The ghost idea was a joke, and professionals use guns.

I pulled the bag of bone shards out and remembered what Watkins had said about the local morgue being part of the lab back then, about how things had changed. An old buddy of mine worked the police lab in Oklahoma City and he owed me one.

John was a funny fellow, an Australian who'd married an Oklahoman and taken up roots. I'd met John years ago when I was taking some courses at OU, and we'd kept in touch ever since.

After the usual joking around we did, I handed him the bag with the blue bone shards. He gave me a serious stare and then his usual squint-eyed smile. "Need it yesterday, right?"

I nodded yes, wondering if he would put me off due to scheduling. Instead, he twisted around on his perch and checked a tablet that lay next to the microscope in front of him. His pen followed a list. Then he turned and winked. "Call you in a jiff, Mate."

After tracking the realtor down, I was finally able to get a look inside the Derk Ranch. Judy Frank was a shapely blond, mid-40's. She was getting out of a gray Lincoln when I pulled up at the Derk Ranch.

Judy explained that the large ranch house, surrounded by overgrown scrub brush and

rolling red earth, had been for sale ever since Derk's murder. His relatives lived in Houston and wanted to sell, but like most people from a big city their asking price was way too high.

"Between that, and the rumors of ghosts," she said, "well, in a small town like this" The realtor lowered her voice to a whisper as the thick door unsealed, "Nobody's been able to sell this place."

I was led to what had been the living room, where the body was found, and went to work. From the photos in my folder, I was able to determine the position in the room where the body had fallen. The windows were in the wrong spot for someone to have tossed something through; besides, both Watkins and the report mentioned all of the windows and doors were locked from the inside. Looking straight in front of where the body had fallen, I noticed a scarring and discoloring on the wooden floor.

"Oh, that's where one of the tanks was," Judy explained, intercepting my curious look. "I keep telling them they ought to have that section refinished."

"Tank?"

"You know, a big old fish tank," she added, pointing out the worst of it with the toe of her patent leather shoe. "Nearly ruined the floor in a couple of places. Need to see any other rooms?"

"Thanks, I don't think so, this will do." I followed Judy's legs up to her painted finger tips and noticed she was single.

She pulled a card from her pocket. "Well, Detective, let me know if there's anything else I can do."

I liked the way she said it. For the first time since my divorce I thought about the possibilities.

When I got back in the car I took another

look at the file. There were statements from the ranchers in Derk's neighborhood. Each neighbor had an airtight alibi. There was also the cleaning lady, Clara Parker. The woman had passed a lie detector test, confirming her innocence. Yet, she was the only other person with one of the keys to the Derk house in those days.

I found Ms. Parker, still living in the same apartment building in Wheeler. She was sitting in the courtyard cocked to one side in a fraying lawn chair. She had on a pink hairnet and an old striped dress. Her hands were thumbing through a glossy paperback, and I could hear her humming something.

When she looked up, I flashed the ID.

Her eyes squinted. "Tann-er," she said reading my name. "Isn't that the name of one of those TV po-leece?"

I had to crack a grin. "I'm not sure, Ma'am," and wasn't. It'd been years since I'd had a set. The last time I'd watched, Andy, Opie, and Aunt Bea were still eating dinner.

"I'd like to ask you a few questions about the Derk murder."

"Oh, but that was years ago."

"It's been reopened, Ma'am." I took out a Winston and cracked a match.

"There was a, I believe his name was Watkins, asked me questions about to death back when it happened."

"I'd be grateful if you helped, Ma'am."

She marked her place with her index finger and gave me a questioning look.

"You were Randall Derk's cleaning help. Is that true?"

"I was."

"Well, since you talked to Mr. Watkins, have you ever recalled anything else, maybe something so ordinary you didn't think it worth mentioning?"

"There wasn't nothing *ordinary* about it."

I gave her a questioning look. She repositioned herself in the chair, and looked far away, staring past me as she continued. "Told Mr. Derk about it too. I was always hearing things and having stuff just up and disappear out from under me. Un-natural, that's what it was."

"Does this have something to do with the murder, Ma'am?"

She turned her head and appeared to look far away. "I'm an old woman you know."

As I flicked my ashes, I noticed a half empty bourbon bottle next to Clara's feet. "Yes, Ma'am. I understand."

"I already told Mr. Watkins all this years ago." She waved me away with her hands.

"Ma'am, just a few more questions."

She shook her head and sighed. "I told him it was that ghost did it."

"Yes Ma'am, now the report says you cleaned up afterwards."

"Oh, the mess that was, too." She lifted her arms again and waved her hands as if to wave something away.

"Was there anything else?"

"I told him everything, I told him so much it made me sick to think about it. All I remember's those fish that man had, all those fish. There was one big one had died, found him floating belly up." She made a face. "Oh Lord, he smelled, nasty! Those ghosts didn't get along with those fish. Seemed they was always scrapping, cause now and then, I'd find one dead and smelling up the place. Same thing must have finally gone and happened to poor old Mr. Derk."

"Why do you say that?" I decided to play along, there weren't many cards left.

"Cause I told Mr. Watkins, that fish was dead when I got there. And I figures, the spook must have got them both at the same time. Awful

smell. I dug a hole right in the flower bed for that one. That's where I always got rid of 'em." She smiled then wrinkled her forehead. "Lord, what a fuss that man made over those fish."

I thanked her and left. Halfway down the next street I pulled over at a pay phone and called in for my messages. Good thing I did; seems John had something for me.

It was dinner time when I arrived back at the police lab. Lucky for me, John was a hard worker. He handed me the report. "Not interested in what this is for, Mate, and I'm not asking." I could tell he really wanted to know what was going on.

For a moment I stood in disbelief. I wanted to make sure I had read what I thought I'd read.

"Let's get this straight, these bone pieces, they aren't part of a knife made out of a bone?"

"Could be," he'd lost his smile. "But you see," he pointed at the report. "Here, the presence of biliverdin . . ."

"English, John."

"I could tell it was a fish all right, Mate." He held one of the bone pieces up with a pair of tweezers. "But, the blue-green color puzzled me. It reflects the presence of a certain type of compound that, well, I've checked all the sources. As far as bones go, Mate, there aren't many creatures with blue bones." He shook his head. "It's a needlefish, all right."

I took a cigarette out but left it unlit.

"They have them in New Guinea, Mate. I remember reading something, a native got killed fishing." He illustrated with his hand the arc of a jumping fish. "Stuck the fellow."

I remembered what Clara had said about the

clean up, the floating fish, *the relationship of the body to the tank?*

Derk must have been looking down into the water when the fish struck. In the struggle, somehow, the fish's snout had broken off, the rest of him had fallen back into the tank. Derk collapsed and bled to death. I couldn't believe it, the old man had been done in by one of his own fish.

Later that night I finished typing the last of the Randall Derk report. Come election time, the big brass would finally have something to boast about. I flicked my cigarette and watched the smoke unravel. Staring tired and bleary-eyed past office chairs, I pulled Judy's card from my shirt pocket and ran my thumb over the raised numbers. An odd thought occurred to me: from now on, when the wind rushed down the streets of Wheeler, Oklahoma, something would be missing. That something was a ghost. ■

If you are interested in
advertising in
Westview

Please contact the
Design Staff
(405) 774-3793

You Can Get There From Here

BY CARL STANISLAUS

I was born in Vinita, Oklahoma just a few blocks from the "Main Street of America," so it was natural for me to develop a kinship to the grand old road known as US Highway 66.

The revolution of the automobile and motorized trucking necessitated a paved surface from the Great Lakes to the west coast. Cyrus Avery of Tulsa promoted the old wagon trails from Chicago through Oklahoma, to Santa Monica,

California as the best route. In 1926 he created the United States Highway System, and the road became official. One third had already been paved, but it took until 1937 to complete the job. From the onset many referred to the slab as "The Mother Road."

The Oklahoma section begins in the northeast at Quapaw, runs through Mickey Mantle's home town of Commerce, on to Miami, and the Will Rogers Memorial at Claremore, and to Tulsa. There in the "Oil Capital of the World" you can still hear the ghostly strains of "San Antonio Rose" on a steel guitar and fiddles reverberating from the Crystal Ballroom, where Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys once played.

The old road rambles through the present Turner Turnpike towns to Oklahoma City where it combines with Interstate 40 through Cheyenne-Arapaho country. This follows the old Gold Trail and Marcy's California Road near the historic Rock Mary landmark. The original route went through Weatherford, Clinton, Elk City, and Texola.

All along the road were tourist attractions of every sort: zoos, reptile gardens, buffalo ranches, pecan candy stores, and Indian blanket stands. At the end of the historic highway was the ocean, the natural attraction that lured, parched dry, the Okie Dust Bowl refugees to the cool waters of the Pacific.



Fifty years ago my parents, my brother Gene, and I began trips on Route 66 to visit Mother's side of the family in California. Thirty-one years ago my wife Margie, daughter Terra, and I moved to Chickasha, and used US. 62 and US. 66 to visit our parents back in Pryor. I remember, on one of our trips to the coast, getting into one of the worst rainstorms there ever was. When the flood abated we were able to make out the town marker. It read "HYDRO." The little town near El

Reno certainly lived up to its name that dark night!

Nature is at its best along the old road, and there was easy access to caves, caverns, lakes, rivers, the Painted Desert, the Grand Canyon, the Petrified Forest, and many more. When they said Route 66 had character, they could only be referring to the people who worked in the cafes, motels, service stations, and attractions. Those who owned houses nearby were fortunate to be able to sit on their porches and watch America on the move. They all seemed to have something to say, whether it was the universal greeting, "Sure is a hot (or cold) one today" or a story they had to tell because they needed companionship.

It those days it was possible to get turned around; Dad stopped to ask directions. The farmer gave him several wrong ways to get there; then grinned and said, "Well sir, you just can't get there from here." We drove on in disgust, and finally ran onto 66 again.

There was the waitress we overheard talking to a truck driver: "My ex-boyfriend treated me like a phone book." The driver stretched and asked, "How's that?" She answered, "Well, he was only interested in my numbers, 36-24-36, and when he was through with me he just cast me aside. Boy! Did I get a wrong number!"

On another trip, Mom, Dad, Brother Gene and I got as far as Elk City, had car trouble, and decided to turn back to Pryor for a fresh start. There was the '39 Chevy which used an enormous amount of oil all the way out and back; we found when we arrived home a rock had put a small hole in the oil pan.

In 1952 we put a frame over the bed of our '49 Chevy pickup, covered it with canvas; then Gene and I pretended we were in a prairie schooner on the way to discover gold in California—that is, until we sideswiped a car on a narrow mountain road. No one was hurt, and neither auto sustained much damage, thank goodness! I was bounced out on my bottom, but I was well padded there.

Everyone bought souvenirs on their first few trips out; then it became old hat. There were thermometers mounted on little mother-of-pearl oil wells, miniatures of the Mormon Temple, redwood trees, sailboats, jackrabbits, and just about anything else indigenous to the region. The picture postcards were kept for memories rather than mailed. There were bumper stickers declaring, "Binger, Home of Johnny Bench," or "Wave if You Love Jesus." I always did (love Jesus) and wave, but the person in the car ahead of me looked at me as if I was crazy.

It seemed as though every business on the Main Street of America was named '66' something or other. I wonder how many changed their signs when they relocated up on the Interstate. I-40, I-44, the Turner, the Will Rogers and other turnpikes and free roads have replaced the two-lane glory road. Oh, you still see parts of it here and there. Most cities have kept the national road signs through their business districts, and in the last year or so there has been a resurgence of interest to restore or redesignate other highways as Historic Route 66.

It won't ever be the same because on old 66 you had time to stop and enjoy our native land. One Yankee asked, "Say, son, where can you find any real Indians around here?" The boy answered, "I'm about as real as you will find, mister, only I left my blanket and scalping knife at home today."

Remember: IT CAN'T BE BEAT KIND TO YOUR FACE GIVE YOUR WIFE A TREAT! BURMA SHAVE. I think it was near Chandler where the retired Highway patrol car sat on a hill as a safety reminder. The signs were great. '100 miles to...', '50 miles to...', '10 miles to...', and then, YOU HAVE JUST PASSED SNAKES ALIVE.

Going to one of our Pryor Christmas reunions, we stopped at a roadside church to watch their Living Manger scene. The actors were mostly six and seven years old. It was inspirational, but then two of the three wise men began to fight about who should stand closer to Baby Jesus; then it reminded us that despite all the peace and good will in the world, there are still those who fight over holy ground.

Two beautiful three year old twin girls sat watching the pageant. Margie asked one, "What is your name, sweetheart?"

"Clara," she replied. Then to the other, "And what is your name, baby?" Her answer was, "Unclara." Margie hesitated and

asked, "Did you say 'Unclara'? Oh, that is pretty, too." Well, it was. Who are we to question a mother's love?

Speaking of mothers, we always liked to take our folks out for a drive when we were in Pryor. On one occasion we all went to the big city of Tulsa to see the sights. We stopped, after a while, to use the bathrooms at a Phillips 66 station. The attendant informed me that Phillips had the finest restrooms, but no baths! After we used their sparkling conveniences, we hopped in the car and headed down Route 66. Margie turned to speak to her mother in the back seat and exclaimed, "Stop, stop, we left Mother and Terra back at the station!"

The ultimate attractions were built at the west end of the highway: Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, and Sea World. Yes, beautiful beaches, fishing, and well, let me warn you boys and girls about fishing. Don't go out expecting to catch Snipe. Oklahoma kids don't know about those fictional creatures. I waited on the beach, burlap bag in hand, till after dark to get them when they were running. Don't fall for that Snipe story, because I know one kid who wet his pants before he could get back to the house.

Once beautiful and modern, The Mother Road was the foundation for the future and the welding of a nation. It has surrendered to the demands of our times, but will live on in legend, movies, television, and song.

Gene moved his family to Long Beach years ago, and Dad died in 1988, but Margie, Mother and I made the pilgrimage back to California last summer. We took the latest trail, American Airlines. I drove the freeways in a rental car, and saw new monorails that will probably replace urban highway travel.

The Main Street of America, The Mother Road, the Will Rogers Highway, US. Route 66, whose path was taken by native Americans, explorers, immigrants, railroaders, Forty-niners, the Eighty-niner Sooners and Boomers, the rich and the refugee, the famous and infamous, princes and paupers, presidents and kings was the better way, and once, the only way to go.

Sources:

Scott, Quinta and Susan Croce Kelly. *Route 66: The Highway and Its People*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Wallis, Michael. *Route 66, The Mother Road*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990. ■

Oklahoma Homecoming

BY RICHARD D. KAHOE

When California quakes or Florida hurricanes
eclipse tornado memories,
when Houston unemployment goes ballistic,
when death or divorce dulls the luster
of the Rockies or the Ozarks,
can you go home to Oklahoma?

A pipeline matrix echoes busted oil booms;
"deer crossing" warns where whitetails
were never known before, but armadillos
challenge possums for road kill honors—
as egret immigrants curry beef,
hide-bleached by Charolais DNA,
ears half-masted by Brahman spin-offs.
And turnpike restaurant arches
are gilt McDonald's gold.

But strangers still hail strangers
as pickups meet on country roads;
Native American faces look up from
highway crews, toll booths, and nursing stations.
Flat-topped elms and spreading cedars
bow to sun, wind, and drought;
mid-day glare engenders crow's-feet,
while wildly whirling windmills
invoke the psychic ache of steady winds.
Cicada summer roadside songs buzz incessant,
where terra-cotta buttes table over grassy plains;
melon stands overflow from fertile sands,
the fatted wheat gilds June expanses,
and sorghum plush red-carpet August fields.
License plate codes prime dim memories
of county names ingested for Oklahoma History, and
sky blue state-flag fields shimmer over choice sites.
Small town diner menus lean on beef and fries—
"cholesterol" an oath in a foreign tongue.

But it can be.
Eat your heart out, Mister Wolfe,
I'm coming home. ■

Song of Little Wolf

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
DONNA K. HILL

*To honor the Muscogee
(Creek) Nation*

*Dedicated to my mother,
Jeanetta Laura (Brook)
Kezer- Hickory Ground
House, Tholophlocco House
and my father, James Daniel
Kezer, both longtime
residents of Okemah,
Oklahoma, and pioneers in
Indian Territory.*

BY CLAUDE D. KEZER

My great-grandmother, as a child, was left to die on the Trail of Tears. Was she abandoned, was she forgotten amidst the terrible confusion and exhaustion of the long march? My mind, my soul want to know my line beyond my great-grandmother, but this trail is cold and lost to me.

She was found by a childless white couple who took her for their own, raised her in their world. She married a white man who gave her children. Their blood was half. Her daughter married a white man and he gave her children. My mother, a child of the half quantum, was born to this union. Her blood was one-quarter.

My mother married a white man, and he gave her children. Though my mother's mother made her children promise to live white in a white man's world and not speak the language, my father had great respect for the Creeks. He learned their language and customs and kept the INDIAN alive in his children.

I thank my mother for my portion of Creek blood and her unspoken influence of the blood. I thank my father for openly nurturing the Indian way in me.

I firmly support the stand that the Muscogee Nation takes on self government of Indians, by Indians, for Indians.

The nation, the heritage, the customs, the history, the pride must be held strongly, because it is good.

The sun had risen from its deepest home seven times in my life, when I met two men whose lives touched mine in ways that make me remember.

One, a great dancer, Lone Eagle was already a legend. His prowess in telling stories through dance was great. He was the snake dancer.

How I watched his movements as he danced. How I left my own consciousness and danced in his body. Like a dream, I was a part of every step, every gesture his powerfully graceful body made.

His white world name was Buck Burgess, and both of his names were strong.

My white name as a child was Sonny. How I wished for a dancer's prowess and a strong name. As this great dancer walked on my father's ground, I would try to walk

like him as I reflected in his greatness.

Marcellus Williams was the other. A young man of nineteen southern suns, he was wise beyond his years.

A dancer of some note, his greatest talent was in herbs and in knowing, and in his strength he saw my desire.

He taught me to dance for war, of the eagle, and for joy. He gave me my Indian name, and his name has grown great among our nations. He is a great shaman.

Only a small part of my blood is Creek, but it is the part of me that sees the world. It is the part of me that dreams.

I AM LITTLE WOLF.

The rhythm of the drums echoes the beat of the Indian heart. Though the songs are old, each time I hear them they sound new.

The heart-drum beats are reflected in the faces of the dancers, and the faces mirror images of what was. And the faces reflect the searching of the heart for answers to the mysteries of man in his quest for understanding the way of his God, his place on Mother Earth, the reasons for his pain, his search for the old way.

The drums, the singers, the dancers all cry for answers. But the answers all say, "You must only remember, and teach your children to remember, for the great change has come. We can only live in the change, and remember the long-past time of greatness, and the beauty of our people and the simplicity of Mother Earth."

The rhythm of the drums echoes the beat of the Indian Heart.

Though the songs are old, each time I hear them they sound new.

Playing in the summer rain, I feel refreshed. Seeking shelter from the winter, I avoid the chill.

Playing in the snow, pleasure is great. Being lost in the snow, fear holds my spirit.

Seeing the great wind pass by is an awesome

thrill. Living through the destruction of the great wind leaves me numb and senseless.

How we see what we see is the balance between fun and fear, comfort and pain, laughter and tears.

The need for rain and too much rain.

The warmth and terror of fire.

The happiness and hurt of love.

The peace among peoples, and war.

In all of life, there is good and evil.

All good may be used for evil.

From all evil, good may come.

And this is the nature of all things.

And this is the beginning of the wisdom of MOTHER EARTH.

I sat at the feet of the old men. I listened to their stories of the old way.

I was a young man of sixteen southern suns, seeking the road to wisdom. My father had said, "If you desire to be wise, you must learn to be still, be silent, and listen."

Old men talk slow and one must learn patience just to listen, and I learned that patience is the pathway to wisdom.

As I listened I learned that every product of Mother Earth has its own way. I learned that to grow wise, one must discover the nature of all things. When one understands the ways of the animals, of the rooted plants, of the parasites, and of men, one begins to know. When one begins to understand the ways of the winds, the waters, the lights of the sky both large and small, and of fire, one grows in wisdom.

I broke my stillness with my ignorance and asked, "How does one begin to understand all these things, for I wish to become wise."

And the old men paused, and the eldest slowly asked, "Have you ever walked in your dream-mind in another man's steps?" And thinking back to Lone Eagle and how I had danced in his body in my imagination as a child, I answered, "Yes."

"Then you must," said he, "walk in the ways

of all Mother Earth's creatures. Only then can you grow in wisdom. Then you will grow as the great river grows, from all of the small streams that feed it. From the small stream that you are, you will gather the strength of many streams and grow toward the wisdom of the great body of water that knows no boundaries."

As I have grown in years, heeding the path of Wisdom, I have learned the nature of many of Mother Earth's bounty and of the elements from the skies that aid her. But I am not all wise as I desired to be, for in my growth toward wisdom I have learned one important thing. Mother Earth and all that is in her is always changing, and I will never be as wise as she.

A cold wind comes from the constant star, and the mist of water chills my naked body back to morning life, as I stand to greet it two hours before the sun.

The trees begin to tell their season story by coloring their leaves and dropping them to the ground. And beauty is in the chill air and on the trees and on the ground, as the grass goes from green to brown.

The fur on the animals begins to grow long, and soon the dead trees will share their spirit with me as he dances yellow and red and blue and white to keep me warm.

In the passage of three moons, the white blanket will cover the ground, and the children will track the rabbit, and the men will track the deer, and many days will be spent inside playing games and telling stories with our families and our friends.

This is the season of the North Wind. To him it belongs, and we belong to him. It is a time to be happy and close, to rest and stay warm, to guide and be guided.

It is a time for sickness, and death. A time that takes the old and weak and young and weak. It is a time when the strong must grow stronger. It is a time of great peace and happiness or of great turmoil and grief. It is a time to look forward to

renewal. For we who have passed many seasons know that the world will reawaken and the new will replace the old, and the time of the South Wind will bring the birds to sing us awake to a new world, and we will share the joy of the new season with our Mother Earth.

Through the lashes of nearly closed eyes, I have seen the wonder that the mind brings to an early morning forest. I have felt the frozen mist on the brows of my eyes as I sat unmoving, watching a doe watch me in wonder.

I have gazed from a high place at the world below, seeing the smallness of what before I had perceived as great.

And I grew.

I have studied the red ant and the black bear and respect their power.

I have stood unblinking, waiting for many wasps to leave my face, and upon their leaving gave thanks for my life to the Great Spirit.

I have raced grandfather turtle and the quick rabbit, and know what it is to win and lose when there is no true competition.

I have witnessed the silent stealth of the coyote and heard his mournful song.

I have thanked the tree for shade, for lodging, and for warmth it gives at the winter fire.

And I grew.

I have danced for the corn, for the rain, and of the eagle.

I have sung songs of joy and mourning. I have spent time in play and in prayer.

And I grew.

As a child and youth and young man, I wondered of the old ones, how did they gain their wisdom?

As an old one, I wonder at the child, the youth, and the young men. Will they ever grow wise?

And the answer is yes if they survive, and yes if they do not survive, because we all go to a better place, a happy place, a learning and reunion place when our spirits leave us. And our bodies feed the

worm, and then they all return to our Mother Earth, and in spirit, we grow.

The clouds came to sleep in the lowlands of Mother Earth. They spent the night hours of their final rest on her bosom.

As the great light of day pushed through the new clouds of his northern rising place, he rested on the uppermost before he began his long climb.

As this great day light grew in its strength, the clouds of earth began their movement into the spirit world. Fading, as a great Chief does in his old age, they moved slowly into the skies of the spirit world to give beauty to the eyes of our departed.

The clouds, like men, grow tired and come to rest on the bosom of Mother Earth, before they go to the greater land beyond of beauty, peace, and foreverness.

I speak these words to the Master of Mother Earth, the One who lives as Chief of the great beyond.

From him who made the lights in the sky, who turns the earth from the dark side to the light side, I ask these honors.

Honor my eyes with beauty in all they see.
Honor my mouth with words of wisdom.
Honor my ears with sounds of joy, my nose
with the fragrance of cleanliness, my hands
with the embrace of family and friends.

With these honors all the joys of life will be mine. My encounter with death will be most peaceful, knowing I will pass into even a better place in service to the Great Spirit.

Why should I be angry, when I have a home for myself and my family? Yes, it's called low income housing. Yes, it's located at the end of the road on the far side of town. Yes, it's surrounded by business and industry.

Why should I be angry, when we still have forests and plains? Yes, the forests are owned by corporations or the white man who put up signs

saying "KEEP OUT." Yes, the plains are still there, with barbed wire fences and signs that say "NO TRESPASSING."

Why should I be angry, when we still have the rivers to enjoy? Yes, the scenic waterways are full of power boats and beer cans and wrappers from fast food joints. Yes, the rivers are polluted with industrial waste and farm sprays. Yes, many of the fish are not good to eat because of the poisons in the water.

I have no reason to be angry, I am told, because tribes are given autonomy. Yes, but isn't this just another form of segregation, or marking and identifying?

I have no reason to be angry, I am told. So I escape in pow-wows, dancing, memory, by dropping out, not trying, all too often in drink, and I'm not angry. . . . I'm FURIOUS!

They came in the store where I worked. Members of my tribe, men older than their years, and I was ashamed for them.

I feel sorry for them. My heart aches for them. Men who spend their time in town shuffling down the street, disoriented, sitting or prone in the alleys, locked up in the jail, they exist on the edge of life just beyond reality.

Once they were children who played, young men who aspired and loved, men who tried and dreamed. Now they are empty shells with nightmares day and night, vacant lots with weeds of discontent, shuffling into this store where I will deceive them.

I go quickly to the "Hair Care" counter, empty it of all the bottles of Bay Rum Hair Dressing, and lie to them that we are out of that product.

They are blank-faced. They know I am lying, but there is no protest. They know they will find someone in town who will sell it to them, and they leave in their unsteady gait in pursuit of their "tonic."

I knew it was futile, but I would not contribute to their disgrace.



"When I arrive."

He who sees far is like the eagle.

He who sees what cannot be seen has great medicine.

He who looks to the future is wise.

He who sees into the hearts of men is great council.

And these are the requirements of a great chief.

And the great Chief uses these gifts to benefit his people.

And the Chief who lives to benefit his people is like the eagle who soars to the greatest heights. He is held in esteem by those he serves.

This was true in the old days.

This is true today.

"The Great White Father in Washington makes this treaty with you. It will last forever," said the Agent. But, it did not last forever.

The Indian lived with the capriciousness of nature and was happy to do so. But to live with the whims of a vacillating and invisible Great White Father was unbearable.

To be herded like cattle, uprooted like a tornado rips up trees, denuded by the white man's flood, all this was unbearable for the Indian. So, he became in his mind like the eagle. He learned to soar in his imagination. In his body, he still walks tall. In his heart, he still has dreams. In his mind he still has pride. And this stubborn mindset has prevailed.

Today, the Indian is regaining control over his life. Today he can again have the pride of self-determination, because his Chiefs have learned to work and fight with the white man's tools; Indian lawyers, Indian politicians, EDUCATION.

An hour before the first light of day, I stepped into the cool morning breeze. Looking

They say, "All Indians are stoic, stern faced." Look at the children. Are they stoic? No, they are happy, animated, full of dreams.

Only when the child becomes an adult does the countenance change, for then they understand the way of the "civilized" world.

Only then do they learn to wear the mask. The mask of noncommittance.

The mask that hides their rage.

Living in the white man's world means living by his measure of time. . . minutes, seconds, hours.

To the Indian this is an imposing restriction, because his measures of time are the sun, phases of the moon, and the needs of his family.

In today's world, to the white man, time means money in his pocket.

To many Indians who still think Indian, money in his pocket means he has more time.

"I'm coming to see you."

"When will you get here?"

up, into the realm of the stars, to offer my morning thanks to the Great Spirit for the opportunities proffered by another day of tasks, I saw the most beautiful sight.

The Rabbit-on-the-moon appeared as a deep vortex to the brilliant half-orb of the night sky. Portent of change in the weather. Hopes for a change in the world. Thanks for the change in my life. Nature's symbol for the coming washing of her earth.

There are streams and rivers that flow underground. Some flow freely, while others seep slowly. But, there is a current to be found.

The blood in the veins of the Indian flows like the water under the ground. Some flows fast and impatiently, while others flow slow and mark time.

Sadly, because the sun of the white man's world burns so hot, in some Indians their river is turned into vapor and they are Indian no more.

Sadly, because for most Indians the stream is strong, the river runs into the great water of Heritage and collectively the strength is increased and the tribes will live on forever.

You see me at some of your functions and you think, "Who is this light-skinned old bald-headed man? Why is he here? Has he come to see us wild Indians like a carnival sideshow?"

If you would take the moment to hold my hand in yours, you would feel the pulse, the river that flows in me.

You would sense my reverence for the wolf, my awe of the eagle, my insights into nature, my love of the old ways, my understanding of the betrayals, my hopes for the future.



I know that I must earn your respect. But, I also know that you must earn mine. I have no respect for any man who sets a bad example, no matter what his heritage.

Individually, I give you respect unless you prove me foolish. Collectively, I give you respect, because I believe in quantum control of the tribe.

I give you respect, because I do not condemn or condone until I have walked in your steps.

All I ask is a chance for you to see that my blood flows the same direction as yours.

Fred Beaver, my mother's second cousin, was a man who captured his ancestry in great simplicity through the masterful strokes with his tools of graphic art. Many paint. Few are recognized as great.

What is the secret of greatness? Experts in all fields have various criteria they feel must be met before the title "great" is added to any name.

In all art forms, the answer is CAPTURE THE ESSENCE, the spirit, the soul of the effort,

and greatness may then occur.

Many strive. Few achieve. All long for it.
Fred Beaver. Artist. GREAT.

The animals grow nervous before the ground shakes.

The birds fly south before the snow falls.

The flies become buzzing pests before they die.

All creatures have their normal senses and, usually, one dominates as most important for their survival. But, all creatures have senses beyond "normal" and many listen to these as well.

The modern world says that the only senses which can be trusted are the five "normal" ones. And, here is a major difference between the modern world and the Indian world.

The Indian still listens to his beyond-normal senses, for he knows them as "real." They are a part of his nature. They set him apart from and above the modern world, because he has his modern knowledge increased by his Indian natural sense.

In his youth his breath was warm and friendly.

In his age of passion, he breathes whirlwinds of aggression. When his time for conquest comes he builds his strength for the path of war. He blusters with hot breath. Raging with destruction, he lays to waste all that are in his path.

When he matures, he rests, gently breathing, caressing those he loves.

He is the wind, and we learn from him. We grow to be like him, and as we grow, we age. And, as we age, our breath cools. And when we're old and death is near, our breath goes cold. It can no longer warm our bodies, and our bodies fall under the spell of the north wind. And, our bodies lie under the blanket of snow, as our spirits seek the warmth of the Great Spirit.

Much of the time she is silent, predictable, loving.

At times she is fragile, sometimes soft, sometimes hard and unyielding.

Sometimes she trembles. Other times she violently shakes and screams horrors to the skies. Her cycles come and go with near regularity. Most times she is patient, but sometimes she brings forth before her season.

Most of the time she seems happy, but she is not above scorn and rebuke.

Much of the time she's crying, but her tears flow in all her moods whether joyous or angry.

Her offspring bring joy and pain to our lives. She suckles us from birth to death.

In every way she is like a woman, and that's why we call her MOTHER EARTH.

Where he is, Mother Earth brings forth.

Where he is not, Mother Earth is barren.

He gives life.

He gives death.

He is our friend.

He is our enemy.

He is in the sky.

He is on the ground.

He is under the ground.

He is the first thought for where we build our camps.

He is water, and without him we are nothing.

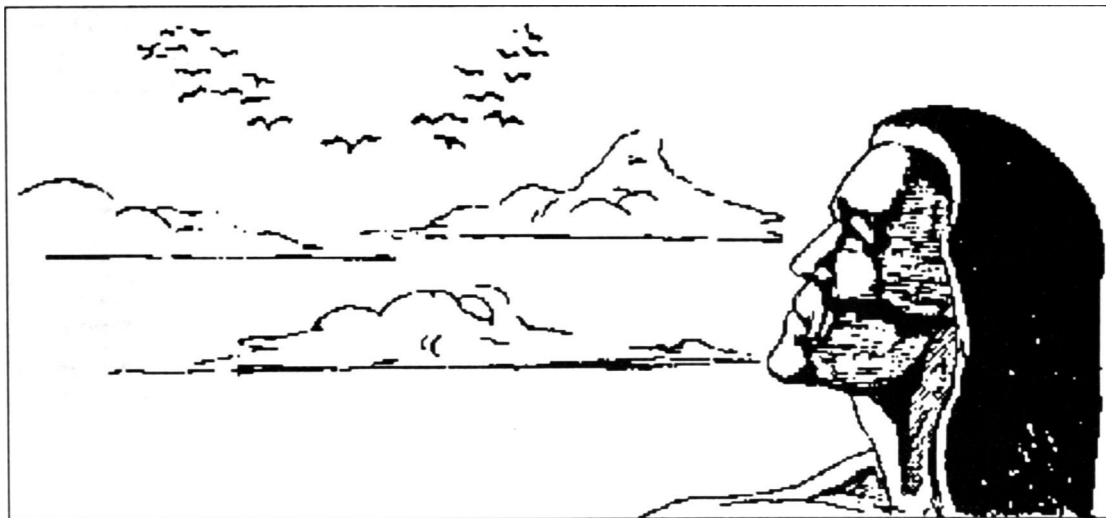
The rod of brilliant light that comes before the thunder is like unto that rod of the Great Spirit which strikes through my heart. It causes these words to flow.

These words that uphold the beauty of creation, that see as the spirit sees, feel as it feels, love as it loves, hear as it hears, these allow me to touch all that is. And, being a part of all that is, when I experience it, I experience myself.

The Great Spirit Father and Mother Earth, these are the parents of all mankind and must be honored.

Honor your Father and Mother, and they will in turn honor you.

The robin sings, before the barnyard cock,



to greet the morn. Its song a sweet reminder, another chance of life is born. It gentles all who hear it, it urges them along, but you've got to get up early to hear the robin's song.

Why do all the old ones rise before dawn, and go out of their homes to stand barefoot on the lawn, and breathe the clean air deeply that wafts gently from the south, and hum quiet lovely tunes that flow easy from the mouth?

It must be that they find a special force that time of day, for it's evident they spend this time in thought. They hope. They pray.

The quiet and sense of peace is something we employ. We think of all the ones we love, our sorrow and our joy.

We thank our source of love for standing by us for so long. Besides, you've got to get up early to hear the robin's song.

When my time on earth is over, and it's time to go to sleep, I hope to do it early just before the first light's peep, surrounded by the ones I love to help me move along, and once more I hear the glory of the robin's morning song.

I am Little Wolf. From the direction of creativity I come. Toward the direction of

fulfillment, I go. My destiny is to create and to lead others to learning. My life is an opening-up, a growing thing, that shares itself in all manner of the arts.

Look to me. I will not tell you answers, I will only create questions. For each of us must find our own answers to the mysteries of Mother Earth and the Great Spirit.

There are many who are in touch with Mother Earth, the Great Spirit, and their own spirit place in the oneness of all creation. Look to these.

It is time for a return to the way of comprehension. Look to the way-pointers who ask nothing but understanding.

Only when we find a balance between our two opposing forces, only when we couple them, may we find true peace and total positive growth.

Look to those who cause you to ask questions. Seek answers. Begin by understanding that for every thing got, something must be given. Don't fail to offer thanks to the spirit of what is got, and the Great Spirit for making all possible.

I am Little Wolf. From the South I come, to the North I go, as I learn to balance the East and West.

I am Little Wolf. . . .and this is my song. ■

Another Round for Jake

BY NORMAN ARRINGTON

"**J**ake, leave the gentleman alone," the bartender said, not unkindly. "Old Jake loves to talk, don't you pay him no mind," he said to me. The old man was the only other person in the bar. He shoved a chair out from his table with his worn boot. "Park it here, stranger," he said. His voice sounded like gravel rolling down a rusty tin roof. "It's okay," I said to the bartender. I carried my beer over to his table and sat down. I had been driving alone for the past three days and talking to someone other than the car radio seemed like a good idea. I'd stopped at the little redneck bar in a nowhere west Texas town late one hot summer day to get something wet and cold.

As soon as I opened the sagging screen door and walked in, I noticed him sitting alone at a table near the back of the dark, dingy room. He looked to be about eighty years old, scrawny and leather hard. His gnarled hands were cradling a mug of beer and a

roll-your-own cigarette hung from the corner of his lip. The smoke curled into his eyes, making him squint as he looked up and stared at me with watery blue eyes from under the rim of his battered old hat.

"Ain't seen ya in here before. Ya new in town?" he asked.

"No, just passing through," I replied. "I've got business down in El Paso."

"Not many strangers stop in this jerkwater town anymore unless they's up to no good. You a cop or runnin' dope?"

I laughed and said, "No, I'm a sales rep for an advertising company."

"What the hell kind of work is that fer a man?" Jake snorted. "You ever kill a man? Naw, I don't reckon you're the type."

I was taken aback. I took a long pull on my beer and fumbled for my cigarettes. I shook one out and offered it to Jake.

"Thanks, I'll smoke my own," he said with just a trace of wounded pride.

We sat in silence for a few minutes. Jake ordered another beer for us both. He did not look up when the beers were brought to our table until I dug out my wallet and paid for them.

Jake looked at me with a toothless grin. Broken blood vessels flamed his cheeks and gray stubble peppered his square jaw and chin. He tipped his bottle back and drank deeply. A trickle of beer coursed down the deep crease at the corner of his mouth. He wiped it away with the back of his hand.

"I seen a man killed right here in this bar," Jake said with a far-away look in his eyes. "Musta been forty, forty-five years ago."

"What happened?" I asked, leaning forward to hear him better.

Jake sat back in his chair and gazed at me for a long time, like he was studying me. Then he laughed a hoarse, barking laugh.

"He was sittin' bout where ya are now when it happened. 'Course it weren't murder," Jake said.

The old man had offered me the bait. He took another draw on his beer while he waited to see if I took the hook. I swallowed it deep.

"So, what happened?" I asked, swimming into his net.

"Well now," he began, while signaling for another beer, "we'd all been back from the war, oh, 'bout two, three years when it all started. My baby girl, Sara, was goin' on eleven. Me an' the missus and all three of the kids had come to town one Saturday. We was livin' on the old Wells place and I was doin' a little dry land farmin'."

Jake paused to knock back another swallow of beer. "Anyway, I'd sold a milk cow and we had a bit of spendin' money, so I gave each of the younguns a quarter and let them go off while the ol' lady and me was gettin' in some supplies.

"Now ol' Melvin Parks was in town, all liquored up. Melvin was bad to drink and he was a real mean drunk.

"Anyways, Sara was standin' on the sidewalk, in front of the drugstore, with an ice cream cone in her hand, just as pretty as a picture. Little Sara always was my favorite," Jake said. He lapsed into silence and sat staring at his beer bottle.

A shudder passed through him and he looked up. "Melvin, he was drivin' that beat up ol' Ford pickup of his down the street," Jake continued. "I cain't say fer sure, but it looked like the bastard was looking right at Sara when he ran right up on the sidewalk and ran her down. She was dead time I could get across the street.

"They held Melvin's trial the day after we buried little Sara. He'd hired a big city lawyer from up at Odessa what got him off with just a fine. The sonofabitch didn't spend one night in jail.

"When Melvin and that damn smooth talkin' lawyer walked out of the court house they both was grinnin' all over their faces. Ol' Melvin was waving and braggin' to his drinkin' buddies how he'd got off scott free. All of a sudden a shot was fired from the other side of the square. Melvin fell down screamin' like a coaloiled cat and grabbing his leg. His whole britches leg was soaked in blood. He was bleeding like a stuck hog. Nobody seen who done it.

"The ambulance hauled him away to the hospital. The sheriff said later that his whole kneecap was blown away. Melvin was laid up in the hospital fer nearly four weeks," Jake said with a malicious twinkle in his rummy eyes.

"The sheriff came out to my place the next day after the shooting. He knewed that Melvin and me wasn't exactly on the best of terms before he ran over Sara and now he thought I had it in for Melvin. He asked me straight out, 'Did ya shoot Parks?' and I said, 'Sheriff, ya know that if I'da done the shooting I wouldna missed. I'da hit that sonofabitch square 'teen the eyes.' Well, the sheriff owned that was probably right and nothin' more came of it.

"The day that Melvin was let out of the hospital, a bunch of his riffraff friends was there to take him home. They was a laughin' and a jokin' around with the nurse that wheeled him out to his pickup in a wheelchair. She helped him stand up on a pair of crutches.

"One of his pals opened the door of his truck and they were gettin' set to load him in when his good leg just exploded out from under him. They hadn't even heard the sound of the shot before Melvin's blood was splattered all over that old truck. They all dove fer cover and left Melvin just layin' on the ground bleedin' and bellerin'. After a while they just loaded him back into the wheelchair and put him back in the hospital.

"This time, he didn't get out for nearly three months," Jake cackled.

He finished off the last of his beer. I ordered another round.

"Thanks," Jake said, "Talkin's thirsty work. Anyways, the sheriff seen fit to pay me another call. He said that he had thought the first time that somebody had been tryin' to kill Melvin and missed, but this time his other knee was shot off. He sez,

'Now Jake, how do ya figure it?' 'Beats the hell out of me. I was here all day, so it sure weren't me what did it. If ya don't believe me just ask the missus,' I says.

"**T**he sheriff said that he didn't reckon it would do any good to talk to my wife. 'Sides, he didn't have much truck with Melvin, him being such a mean-assed drunk, always fightin' and gettin' into trouble and all. He weren't fixin' to dig none too deep. He did tell me that he didn't want to have to make no more trips out to my place.

"When Melvin finally got out of the hospital, the sheriff and two of his deputies were there to give him a police escort home, but nothin' happened.

"In fact, nothin' happened for a couple ah months. Melvin was getting around on his fancy braces and crutches. He had stuck right close to home for a long time, but I guess he got thirsty. He got one of his pals to take him down to this very same bar. He sat in here all afternoon, drinkin' and jawin' with his mangy buddies. He got to feelin' pretty cocky and started shooting his mouth off 'bout how he was gonna get whoever had shot him. He claimed that he had a good idee who it was.

"**B**ut, when it was time to go home he didn't get all the way out the door afore a thirty-aught-six slug ripped through his left elbow.

"The doctor said that he could go home after only two weeks, but Melvin wouldn't leave the hospital. They had to kick him out. After that, he refused to come outta his house. Melvin lived in a run down place on the south edge of town. He kept the shades down and wouldn't let anyone in, not even his friends. The kid that fetched groceries up to his house said that Melvin made him leave the box on the step and leave before he'd open the door.

"He took to keeping a gun with him all the time. One day some kids shot his front window with a BB gun and Melvin blowed a hole clean through his door with a twelve-gauge shotgun. Folks sorta kept away after that.

"Melvin stayed in that house fer two years and never came outside. Folks here about said that he had gone crazy. Even his old drinkin' buddies were afraid to go up to the house.

"Sometime during that time Melvin musta got religion, 'cause one Sunday he showed up at the Baptist church in town. The good people didn't know what to make of him. His hair had turned gray, and he looked like a walking dead man, they said.

"Turned out that were the only time Melvin went to church 'cause someone shot off his right foot as he was shaking hands with the preacher after the services. Melvin kinda went downhill after that," Jake said.

"What finally happened to Melvin?" I asked. I noticed that Jake's beer was empty. I still had half a bottle. I bought him one more, hoping that would finish the story.

"**I**'m not real clear on what happened to Melvin after he got outa the hospital here. I heard that he spent some time in the 'sylum up ta Big Springs, but I don't know fer sure. He weren't seen around here for nigh on to four years. Then one day he shows up. He couldn't walk, even with crutches. He was in a wheel chair. Well sir, those no-account pals of his'n brought him in here to celebrate his homecomin'. Everybody that was here said that he acted real strange, kinda nervous and jumpy. His hands shook when he lifted his beer and he keep looking around like someone was sneaking up on him.

"Course I'm just tellin' ya what they told me 'cause I weren't nowhere around. But after he sit right thar where ya is sittin' fer about twenty minutes, a car drivin' by backfired, real loud like. Melvin whipped out a pistol and screamed, 'Not again!' and shot hisself right between the eyes, stone cold dead," Jake said.

"Wait a minute," I said. "I thought you said before that you saw it happen."

Jake lifted his beer, looked at me over the top of the bottle and smiled, but did not say a word.

I stopped at the bar to order another beer for Jake before I walked outside into the fading west Texas sun. ■

High Crimes and Misdemeanors

BY WILLIAM KARDISH

Since his father had no license and his mother couldn't drive, Dorlan Jr. hadn't told them what time his bus would arrive from boot camp. He walked home, carrying his duffle bag as if it were a suitcase, his body thrown on an angle like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and thinking as he stepped over each crack in the sidewalk how all this was his father's fault. It was his father's fault that he had to walk, and his father's fault that he had gone to boot camp in the first place.

Two months ago, Dorlan Jr. and Senior walked past these very trees and houses of Geary, two thick figures with the same mangy, auburn hair moving through the still morning, two rusted bolts. Senior's hand was wrapped in sweat around Dorlan's neck, who was just a bit taller. "You know you don't have to leave, son," he said.

But both Senior and the Judge were anxious for Dorlan to leave. Senior, who hadn't hit Dorlan since the cigarette days of eighth grade, slapped Dorlan's face when told about the pot and the police. Dorlan had been too surprised to strike back; he considered the pot bust a minor incident, while Senior said it was "obscene." But it was okay for Senior to drink himself stale.

When Dorlan finally reached his faded brown-shingled house, he tried not to think of Senior as drunk right then. Inside, he closed his nose against the stench of smoky, fermented breath which had saturated the walls and carpets over the course of Senior's life, and walked to the

kitchen, where the air hinted bits of powdered cleanser and boiled cabbage.

His mother's back was to him as she mended a pair of pants by the bay windows where even the sunlight on her face couldn't totally wash away the yellowish tone in her skin. When Dorlan walked over and came around to face her, his mother lifted herself slightly to meet his hug with her own body. She then pretended to straighten her dress, and only looked at him in brief peeks from the tops of her eyes.

"Mamma, you look better than I dreamt about in those barracks."

"Stop, you." The corners of her mouth suppressed an embarrassed grin.

Dorlan pulled a chair over and sat down next to her, and they both watched the back garden from the window. "Where's Senior?" he asked.

She went back to her sewing. "Oh, he had a few errands to run. He should be back home soon. Said he couldn't wait to see you." She smiled faintly.

"Why do you cover for him, Mamma?"

She didn't answer.

"He's never going to change."

His mother shifted in her seat. "Dorlan, please."

Dorlan shut up for a minute. "I brought you a present," he said, handing her a large envelope.

She opened it, and pulled out a picture of her son in his dress uniform. "It's very handsome," she said, studying the photo. Indeed, the service had produced a remarkable physical

transformation of Dorlan. He now stood every bit of his five feet eleven inches, and the lazy ruffles of flesh from around his shoulders to under his buttocks now functioned with the unities of angles and shadowed curves.

"Hmm," his mother said thoughtfully, picking up her sewing again, "Maybe you should keep it to look at sometimes. You're going to change more, you know?"

Dorlan left her thought where it was and waited to catch her eye. "I want to make you happy, Mamma," he said.

She reached her hand to his. "I am happy, Dorlan. I'm very happy that you're home." She kissed him.

For his mother's sake, Dorlan didn't create a stir when Senior finally returned home around supper time. Through clenched teeth, he bore his father's excessive formality, a ridiculous posturing that Senior believed concealed his inebriation. "Tell me, my son, is it true that the military has not changed much *ipso de facto* since the term of my service?"

Dorlan's voice was gravel: "I wouldn't know anything about your service," and the conversation ended.

Senior went out again at night, and Dorlan stayed home with his mother. They talked, and he watered the tomato and melon garden, and played the piano for her before they went to bed.

The next day, Dorlan drove her to the store to make groceries. As they were coming home, a man staggering in the middle of the street had both lanes of traffic blocked. Of course it was Dorlan's father. Some kids were on the sidewalk taunting him, "You're going to get hit, you old drunk." "Look, he can't even walk."

Senior waved his arms grandly and tried to reason with the youngsters, "Children, I am your elder, and as such I should be accorded all the respect due someone of my advanced years and position in this community."

"If you don't watch it, your position is going to be flat on the asphalt," one of the sharper kids retorted, and the other kids laughed.

Dorlan was furious. He slammed the car door

and walked towards the scene. His father stumbled back a bit upon seeing him. Dorlan said loudly, "You're drunk, you old louse, you. Drunk again."

"What? What? Who the?" Senior tried to form a sentence.

"Just get out of the damn road," Dorlan said.

"I have every right to stand where I please. And you, what kind of military bearing is this? They used to teach young men respect."

"Out of the road, damn it!"

Senior raised his fists. "I must warn you, one more word, son, and I shall be forced to take appropriate action."

"Move!"

Before Dorlan's father had fully wound up his arm, Dorlan landed a heavy punch on his chin. His mother screamed and the children stepped back on the sidewalk. Senior lay in the middle of the road, blood seeping from his mouth and from where his head hit the tar.

Dorlan took his mother's hand, "Let's go."

But she wouldn't move. She pulled her hand out of Dorlan's and screamed again. The children returned, and a crowd began to gather.

Dorlan said gently, "Come on, Mamma. It's okay, it's okay." He put his arm around her.

She looked at her husband and then at her son. "That's my husband," she said, pointing at the bundle of dirty clothes in the road. "That's my husband!"

She turned to the crowd. "That's my husband! That's my husband!" she yelled.

The gathered faces eyed Dorlan suspiciously. He backed away a few steps, confused and in shock, while his mother kept screaming, pointing alternately at his father and at him, her words an undecipherable lament.

He turned and ran, and a few of the more upstanding men in the crowd gave mock chase. Dorlan sped down the block, his green uniform perfectly keeping the shape of his sculpted body, even as he turned the corner. He was gone. ■

Review:

The Sound of Strings

BY ALVENA BIERI

Norman writer Harold Keith, author of the new book *The Sound of Strings* is an Oklahoma treasure. A long-time sports publicist at the University of Oklahoma, now retired, he has spent many years using the rich resources of Oklahoma history in books like *Rifles for Watie*. Not only is Keith steeped in knowledge of our past, but he is a master of superb storytelling skills. He is sometimes called a children's writer, but his themes and style appeal to all ages.

In the mid 1960's his "Komantcia" told the story of a young Spanish guitarrista, Pedro Pavon, who lived in northern Mexico with his family. Here at age fifteen Pedro's life turned tragic when his mother was killed in a Comanche raid, and he himself was kidnapped to live among the Comanches. But Pedro adjusted to the strange new life and even grew to like its "wild, sweet freedom" as he put it. The action in this sequel to the earlier book opens in the late 1870's somewhere in western Oklahoma soon after the twenty-three-year old Pedro has married Willow Girl, daughter of a Yamparika peace chief. Keith has a way of perfectly blending his language and his subject. He

describes Pedro's feelings about his happy wedding in words appropriate to the setting, writing "Pedro's heart began to sing like a thousand meadowlarks splitting their throats."

Yet despite Pedro's happiness with wife and later his adoration of their little daughter Keeche ("Little Prairie Dog"), he still feels torn between his Christian, Andalusian background and the culture of the Comanches. He has a European, romantic, one-person-only attitude about love in a civilization where polygamy is practiced. And Comanches are guarded about expressing their feelings, almost stoic. Even the young are matter-of-fact and pragmatic. In one passage Pedro observes the Indian philosophy which is so different from his own. "Unlike Spanish children," he reflects, "these little Comanches did not like happy endings. They expected natural results from just causes, whether good or bad."

But *The Sound of Strings* is much more than a book about a culture clash. Keith is concerned with the happiness of his characters, and we too are captivated by their plight. And like any good writer of fiction, he deals ultimately with the universal themes of longing, love, suffering, and death. The artistic unity is made just about perfect by the central part that Pedro's guitar

playing plays in the story. Guitar music, long a Spanish tradition, powerfully stirs Pedro's soul and becomes a redeeming center to his life. Even the impassive Comanches can be brought to the verge of tears by his poignant melodies. In one scene Pedro's old enemy, a real meany named Belt Whip, slinks away puzzled and defeated after hearing the guitar. And again in a touchingly sweet part near the end of the action, Keith writes in his own appropriate style of alliteration, "A feeling of tenderness came over him and he began to play the lullaby he had fashioned from the go-to-sleep song Willow Girl had sung to Keeche scores of times, the strange, soothing song of the wind soughing through the sage."

Despite the tragedy of the story, Harold Keith makes Oklahoma plains-Indian history alive for us in a positive way. And he is good at creating people we really care about to people his broad western Oklahoma landscape.

The Sound of Strings was published in 1992 by Levite of Apache, 1005 N. Flood, Suite 111, Norman, OK, 73069.

(Editor's note: Mr. Keith was recently honored at the 1993 Oklahoma Book Awards as the 1993 Lifetime Achievement Award winner.) ■

CONTRIBUTOR 'S NOTES

Norman Arrington was born in Colorado in 1941. He was raised in New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma and has traveled extensively throughout the Southwest and Ozark regions. He holds a Masters of Fine Arts degree from the University of Oklahoma and has done post-graduate study in Maine and Arizona. He has taught art in a small college, was an Artist-In-Residence with the Oklahoma State Arts Council and has run a pottery studio and a small town newspaper. Norman currently lives and works in Roger Mills County.

Alvena Bieri, formerly of Hobart, now lives and writes in Stillwater. She has made previous contributions to *Westview*.

Richard D. Kahoe, a psychologist, "shuttles between the Ozarks and the High Plains." Ecology, conservation, natural living, and wildlife are among his avocational interests. His poems have recently been published in or accepted by *The Whisperer*, *manna*, *CreativeReading*, *Psych It*, *American Knight*, *Living Waters*, and *Silver Wings*.

William Kardish is the pseudonym for an unknown writer who lives in El Reno, OK. Mr. Kardish has also published stories under the names Les Harey, Stephen Tompkins, and Adam Goya.

Robert Kessler's work has appeared

in *Groundswell Literary Journal*; *The WVC Oubache*, *ENL Magazine*; and a literary supplement of the newspaper, *The Daily Republican Register*.

Claude D. Kezer, performer, playwright, and teacher (among other things), received his M.F.A. from the University of Oklahoma. He is an active participant in a number of capacities with theatre productions across the state and elsewhere.

Keith Long, 36, is an instructor in Language Arts at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. He writes a weekly humor column for the *Marlow Review*.

Michael McKinney grew up in Beckham and Roger Mills counties of western Oklahoma. He earned a BA in professional writing from the University of Oklahoma and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing from McNeese State University. McKinney teaches Language Arts at Southwestern Oklahoma State University at Sayre and spends summers as Poet in Residence for the Louisiana Division of the Arts.

Viki Pettijohn teaches English and Spanish at Southwestern Oklahoma State University while finishing her doctorate at Florida State University. She is no stranger to the Southwest, being a sixth-generation Texan whose great-grandfather rode the Chisolm Trail through Oklahoma.

Richard Plant, a former faculty member at SOSU, lives with his wife Mary Beth and two daughters in Staunton, Virginia, where he teaches at Mary Baldwin College. His short stories may be found in recent issues of *Artemis* and *The South Dakota Review*.

Mark Sanders is a Nebraska native whose poems, short stories, and essays have been published in journals in the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain. He is the editor and publisher of the Plains Poetry Series and Sandhills Press.

Mark Spencer is an associate professor of English at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma. His short fiction has appeared in *The Chariton Review*, *Beloit Fiction Journal*, *The Laurel Review*, *South Dakota Review*, *Florida Review*, *Maryland Review*, *Short Story*, *New Mexico Humanities Review*, and elsewhere. His collection *Spying On Lovers* (Amelia Press) won the Patrick T. T. Bradshaw Book Award. Watermark Press published *Wedlock*, two novellas and three short stories. A novel, *Hiding*, is forthcoming from Ballantine in September 1993.

Carl Stanislaus, now retired from OTASCO and living in Chickasha, enjoys free-lance writing and the challenge of becoming computer-friendly. He has been a frequent contributor to *Westview*.



Mark Motor Hotel

Independently owned & operated

9 Blocks from Southwestern University
24 Hour Restaurant
26 Non-Smoking Rooms
Refrigerator in all King & Queen Rooms
Free Local Calls
Complimentary Coffee & Newspapers
Special Senior and AAA Rates
HBO

Special rates for Weddings & Reunions
that exceed 6 rooms.
Children under 12 Free
5 Blks. from 15,000 Ft. Antique Mall
5 Blks. from Downtown Shopping

I-40 East Bound Exit 80A - I-40 West Bound Exit 82
525 E. Main, Weatherford, OK 73096

(405) 772-3325



BANK OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA

Supporting Western Oklahoma

Member F.D.I.C.

Elk City, OK 225-3434
Vici, OK 995-3323

1ST THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF CUSTER CITY

MEMBER
F.D.I.C.

P.O. Box 100
CUSTER CITY, OK 73639
(405) 593-2291



balloons weddings
 plants
gift baskets silk flowers
 fresh flowers

108 E. Main 772-1401
Weatherford Ok 73096



Member FDIC

TELEPHONE: 115 N. CUSTER
(405)774-2265 WEATHERFORD, OK 73096



THE WOODSHED
FRAME SHOP
AND
THE ART GALLERY

PICTURE FRAMING & ART WORK
105 E. MAIN
WEATHERFORD, OKLA 73096

G.E. JONES (HEAD TERMITE)
Phone 772-5648

NINA JONES



Mon. - Sat.
5 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Charlene Stelzig & Joann Hamburger, Owners

Pasteries, Cookies, Cakes for all Occasions

103 W. Main, Weatherford, OK 774-2947



**LOCAL
FEDERAL
BANK** FSB
FDIC INSURED

Weatherford Office: (405)772-7441
P.O. Box 271 109 E. Franklin
Weatherford, Oklahoma 73096



MEMBER FDIC

122 North Broadway
Weatherford, OK 73096 (405)772-5541



Rader's Auction & Real Estate

"No Sale Too Small or Too Large"

116 N. Custer, Box 351, Weatherford, OK 73096

Toll Free 1-800-444-5160
Day 405 / 772-3396
Night 405 / 772-2687

Gary D. Rader
Auctioneer & Broker

ALLEN PHARMACY



"Prescription Specialist"

521 E FRANKLIN WEATHERFORD, OK (405)772-3347

Blunck's

Creative Professional Photography
...since 1910

- Senior
- Family
- Wedding
- Glamour
- ABC
- Athletic

Teenage Casual • School-Day

1-800-8-BLUNCK

*Studios located in Clinton, Elk City, Lawton, Moore
and Weatherford, Oklahoma and Amarillo, Texas*

ED BERRONG

INSURANCE AGENCY

Insurance

Real Estate

Bonds

"THE AGENCY SERVICE BUILT"

520 East Main Street Weatherford, OK 73096 (405)772-3329

"Your Community-Owned Bank"



FIRST
NATIONAL BANK AND TRUST COMPANY
OF WEATHERFORD

(405)772-5575

FDIC

1100 EAST MAIN

**FIRST NATIONAL
BANK AND TRUST
COMPANY
IN CLINTON**

See our Trust Department to
provide professional management
for your assets and security for
your families.

Fifth and Frisco

Clinton, OK

Member FDIC



FIRST STATE BANK & TRUST CO.



Hollis

Eldorado

Sayre

Hollis, Okla.

688-3323

Sayre, Okla.

928-3311

Eldorado, Okla.

633-2202

MEMBER F.D.I.C.

The staff of Westview would
like to thank our new advertisers
in this issue. If you would like
to become an advertiser in
Westview, please contact us at:

(405)774-3793



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WEATHERFORD, OK
PERMIT NO. 57



WESTVIEW

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