The Broadkill Review’s 1st Issue
Reaches an Audience of Over 2000

In a striking demonstration of the immediate and overwhelmingly positive support which local writers and other residents of the Delmarva Peninsula and the mid-Atlantic region have shown to The Broadkill Review, the initial release of the complimentary first issue has been forwarded ten times over, bringing the circulation of the new pdf publication to over 1500 within days of its first appearance. That figure has steadily grown since then.

Local support will be of paramount importance to the survival of the publication; Joe Allen of Wilmington, Delaware has the honor of going down in the books as the first paid subscriber to The Broadkill Review. Mr. Allen is the Organizer of the highly-regarded and long-running “Second Saturday Poetry Series” in that city, and the publisher of Prints, an anthology of the best of the poetry read by poets in that series, now in its 24th year. Mr. Allen is applauded for his dedication to the written and spoken word.

John Elsberg, Publisher of Bogg Magazine, joins our Editorial Board with this issue, and we are grateful to benefit from his experience.

Some of the responses we have gotten to the first issue can be found on page two of this issue.

In This Issue: Poetry by Lifshin, Ritchie, Jankowski, Larew, MacMillian, Lianne, Robbins, Blakeford, Illich, Dolan, Hanna; Fiction by Richard Peabody and Neal Fandek; Non-Fiction by Kim Roberts

Just when the Editors of The Broadkill Review wondered if it was possible to approach the success of our first issue, the submissions from unexpected places have left us shaking our heads in disbelief. This issue features poems by Lyn Lifshin, whose work is only getting better, fuller, richer, and deeper. Lenny Lianne offers three stunning poems from her volume of poetry about the English settlement of the new world. We also have poems by Elisavetta Ritchie, and by Hiram Larew, whose poetry “kind of sneak up on you.” Single poems appear from Paul Illich, Donald Blakeford, A. Mclean, and J. C. Pound.

Longtime friend, and publisher of The Sulphur River Literary Review, James Michael Robbins, has four poems in this issue.

We are pleased to offer a short story by Richard M. Peabody, publisher and editor of Gargoyle and the Mundo anthologies. The “Garg” is probably the most widely read and critically respected literary magazine in the world than, perhaps, The Paris Review. From Neal Fandek comes the short story, “Gold Gun,” which we are pleased to present in these pages.

Kim Roberts continues our series of articles about the business of writing by telling us a little something of the history of Beltway Poetry Quarterly, and Franetta MacMillian offers up a pair of poems.

Miles David Moore is a prize-winning poet and longtime organizer of the Iota Reading Series in Arlington, Virginia. We are pleased to present two of his poems here.

From Editorial Advisor Gary Hanna, Founder and Organizer of the “Poetry at the Beach” Readings Series come two poems and a short note on starting a reading series of your own.

Elizabeh Dougherty Dolan contributes two wonderful poems, and we institute a new feature with this issue, “Literary Birthdays,” as well as continuing events and submissions calendars, and another installment of “On Writing a Short Story.”

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Advertising rates for an ad in each of the year’s six issues: eighth of a page, $50; quarter page $95; half page $180; full page $350.

PRICE $2.50
ISSN # 1935-0538
Letters and Notes from Our Readers

The response to our first issue was overwhelmingly positive. Here is a sampling of some of the initial comments we received.

You should be quite proud of this first issue.
— Gerry LaFemina
...this looks wonderful! Thank you so much. I will send this around to select folks on my list.
— Kim Roberts

Thank you for the first look at The Broadkill Review. I think it has real possibilities for filling a presently vacant niche in Sussex County’s literary landscape. Good luck on this venture.
— Esther Friend

Thanks, especially for the article about the short story.
— Liz Dolan

Kim Roberts sent around your journal, and it is excellent...
— Elisavietta Ritchie

Fabulous! Thank you for including me.
— Ernie Wormwood
...this looks just wonderful.
— Fleda Brown

I wish to subscribe and will be delighted to send a check made out appropriately and to the correct address. A fine job on the first issue.
— Sherry Chapelle

IT'S GREAT!!! Sorry it's taken me so long to get back to you. I've been busy forwarding it on between bouts of reading the poems...
— Betsy Brown, Politics & Prose

A wonderful debut!!! Congratulations!
— Linda Blaskey

What an incredible Review! Thank you for adding so much to MILTON.
— Michaela Caffaro

IT LOOKS FABULOUS. I will probably send to 50 via elists.... Wow this is HOT!
— Grace Cavalieri

— Martin Galvin
...it's just a first rate magazine. Thanks,
— Maribeth Fischer

Thanks for the complimentary copy of the Broadkill Review. I printed it and read every single word. Would love to chat with you about one in particular, Maryanne Kahn's short story. Liked it.
— Marcia F. Finn

Saw your e-rag. Very nice.
— Howard Gofreed

LOOKS GREAT AND LOOKS LIKE A LOT OF WORK. THANKS FOR SENDING THE REVIEW...
— Charlie Fleetwood

I read the first issue straight through when I got home. Magnificent job, lotta touch in many dimensions. Will be tough to duplicate. But you put the BR on the map with that one. The first issue is so important. Really liked the layout and the various departments, it has class and I'm proud to be associated with it. And Maryanne Kahn's story was a winner. Kudos!
— Gary Hanna

Congrats on the first issue! Great idea, and I'm sure it will be a hit!
— Terry Flowman

I'm still young enough to find debut issues exciting, and The Broadkill Review #1 strikes me as particularly successful. What a great expansion of the Milton poetry festival. I hope you get lots of feedback, and I look forward to seeing how the mag continues to evolve. Editing a "literary" journal is never easy, but I'm convinced you have a rich pool of writers to draw on.
— John Elsberg

Thanks for the copy of TBR. Enjoyed reading it — looks good!
— James Michael Robbins

Love it. TVM
— Tim Nicholson

From Maryanne Khan's subsequent notes:

"...what a lovely publication! I was very honoured to have your generous introduction! I'll send it to friends and family. Love to know any feedback you might get. As always, it's so exciting to see it set out and official. I'm so pleased it's in the inaugural issue too!

Thank you so much...."

“I’ve read the whole thing now, and there is some really cool stuff in there. I liked the rookie biker best, I can relate to that one. Seems being middle-aged and vehicularly handicapped has its problems, but hey, at the end of the day you do have the experience the younger or stronger guys don’t have, and the drive to do weird stuff is for better reasons. Eat my dust, fellas, I’m way smarter than you. (feel free to pass that onto the author).”
—Maryanne Khan

[Editor's note: I did pass it along to poet Jose Gouveia. His reply follows.]

Thanks so much! I haven’t even read it yet, as I’m at my MFA residency, totally immersed in poetry 24/7 until Jan. 13. I hope to read it over the week end, as we have Sat. nite free. I’ll email Maryanne Khan as well. It’s always great to get positive feedback!! Thanks again, ’bro, for all u do! As we say in Portuguese, Muito Obrigadas!
— Jose Gouveia

and finally...

The magazine is good-- I admire a lot in it, including Linda Blaskey’s statement and poems.... It was nice to see my former student Scott Whitaker’s book-prize announcement, and to recognize Joe Gouveia. (I know Joe from poetry events on the Cape.)
— Robert Pinsky

Credo

By Jamie Brown

We were recently asked what kind of stories we look for, and we thought our response worth repeating here. “The Broadkill Review is almost too young to have guidelines. Quality is the most important factor. This isn’t to suggest that we are snobs, for I’m not talking about subject matter, but about the bell-like resonance of the work (evoked within the reader) and clarity. I want the reader left with the feeling that it matters to the reader personally that they read the story. Writing is the first interactive medium, after all, and although 100% communication cannot ever be achieved, owing to all sorts of internal and unconscious filters and the differences between two peoples’ perceptions of the same thing, the stories I like are those that understand that and which encourage a kind of divestiture of the self and an investment in the story with whatever they, the reader, can bring to it of an emotional commitment. If this sounds touchy-feely, I apologize, but if you haven’t read John Gardner’s On Becoming a Novelist, where he speaks of the writer’s task being to establish ‘the waking dream’ state in the reader, I’d suggest you do.”
A LEARNING PROCESS: EDITING BELTWAY POETRY QUARTERLY by Kim Roberts, Editor

Beltway Poetry Quarterly was founded in January 2000 at the suggestion of my friend Kathy Keler, a painter. Kathy started Washington-Art as a home on the web for 24 visual artists (12 each on washingtonart.com and washingtonart.net). Kathy hoped that by sharing web space, they would get more web traffic as a group than they might as individuals. Which is why she approached me soon after; she wanted to know if I would create a poetry section that would bring in even more viewers, and encourage visual artists and writers to interact.

I would never have started the journal on my own. And I never suspected that Beltway Poetry would become so engrossing and would take up so much of my time.

Why did I agree to do it? I hoped that I might learn something about being a better editor, which has certainly happened. I always want issues of Beltway Poetry to be cohesive, even though they contain voices from differing backgrounds. (I have had varying degrees of success in this, but I am learning with every issue.)

I hoped that Beltway Poetry would connect me more deeply to DC, introducing me to a wide range of poets and teaching me about the region’s rich history of writers. In that sense, the journal has been an unqualified success. At times it has struck me as perverse that I would use the World Wide Web to explore such a narrow geographic slice—the greater DC region—but the region is so diverse and interesting that the journal’s focus never feels narrow to me.

And I hoped that Beltway might be a bridge for others as well, a point of connection, a contribution to DC’s literary community. This is a large goal, and one that is harder to assess. But I am proud to have featured so many contemporary writers, and to have paid tribute to so many past writers, over the last six years.

Although I have had a number of short-term interns over the years, and I depend on a guest editor for one issue each year, I work mostly on my own. (I often get email referring to my "staff," which never ceases to amuse.) To keep my workload manageable, half of all issues I edit are by invitation only. But I do include themed issues with open calls for entries on a regular basis, to encourage participation from writers I might not otherwise find on my own. And I am constantly asking poets to recommend other poets. Because Beltway only exists on the web, I do not have to worry about printing, distribution, warehousing, or elaborate bookkeeping. My subscriber list is large (much larger than a print journal’s) and increases with each new issue. (Surprisingly, the subscribers from outside the region far outnumber the local subscribers.) And I get lots and lots of feedback on every issue, which is gratifying.

Some of the journal’s milestones: publishing poems from Anthony Hecht’s book The Darkness and the Light prior to their print publication (an actual poetry scoop, if such a thing is possible); publishing an issue of poems inspired by Walt Whitman in honor of the sesquicentennial of Leaves of Grass, which brought us national attention; and inclusion of an incredible interactive map with the DC Places Issue (which also included poems by such notables as William Carlos Williams, Elizabeth Bishop, and Robert Lowell).

But as important as the journal is to me, I think of the Resource Bank as equally important. Essentially a group of lists, the Resource Bank has a huge amount of information that I hope will be of help to writers from the Mid-Atlantic region, from grants to libraries to classes to small presses to blogs. One large list has links to every area poet that I know of who has an individual web page.

To read the journal, see www.beltwaypoetry.com Subscriptions are free! Instructions on how to subscribe can be found on the “About Beltway” page on the web site. The next open call for entries, on the theme “The Evolving City,” will take place between March 1 and April 1; poets from the Mid-Atlantic are encouraged to email entries, and guidelines are also on the “About Beltway” page.

http://washingtonart.com/beltway
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alan Davies’ Newest Book Now Available from Katalanche Press

Good friend of the Annual John Milton Memorial Celebration of Poets and Poetry, Alan Davies, has published another book. Here’s the release from the publisher: Katalanche Press is pleased to announce the availability of a new chapbook: BOOK 5, by Alan Davies, $5, 44 pages. Alan Davies is the author of many books of poetry, including Name (This), Signage (Roof), Candor (O Books) and Rave (Roof), as well as an untitled collaboration with photographer Mark Winterford published by Zasterle. He has written many critical articles and book reviews, and has lectured here and abroad. He was twice a recipient of Canada Council Grants for the Arts. His big book called Life is forthcoming from O Books. He is at work on a lifelong project consisting of individual books, of which Book 5 is the most recent installment to be published. Go to: http://katalanchepress1.blogspot.com Payments can be made on our website via paypal by clicking on the provided link, or by check made payable to Michael Carr. Prices are postpaid. Katalanche Press, c/o Carr, 9 Malcolmoad, #1, Cambridge, MA 02138

Bearlodge Writers Devils Tower National Monument 2007 Writer's Residency

Submission Guidelines: Two one-week residencies will be available at the monument in September and October. Selected individuals will be offered modest housing at the monument. A $100 travel stipend is provided by the Devils Tower Natural History Association. The goal of this residency is to provide an inspiring, secluded working environment for promising writers. Interested writers should submit writing samples to: Christine Czazasty, Chief of Interpretation, Devils Tower National Monument, P.O. Box 10, Devils Tower, WY 82714 Entries must be postmarked by April 1, 2007. Applicants must be United States citizens to be eligible. Winners may not reapply for a 5 year period. Writing may have been previously published but must be retyped to conform to manuscript guidelines. Submit one copy of work, typed double-spaced (not 1 spaced) on 16 or 20-pound 8 x 11” white paper. Use 12 pt. Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins. Clean photocopies are acceptable; no carbon copies please. Manuscripts should be no more than 2,500 words, or 10 pages (excess pages will be discarded), of essays, fiction, nonfiction, or poetry. Poems may be single-spaced, one poem to a page. Do not staple manuscripts or use any cover or binder; paper clip pages together. Manuscript pages must be consecutively numbered, starting with page 1. Include genre (For example: poetry, fiction, nonfiction, children’s fiction, children’s nonfiction or children’s poetry), and title of work on each page. Your name must not appear anywhere on the manuscript. Include a cover sheet, listing genre, title of work, your name, address, phone number, and a one-paragraph bio. Manuscripts will not be returned. Do not send supplementary materials, such as photos or illustrations. Notification to winners will be postmarked by May 15, 2007. Winners must contribute to the Tower Story Box, answering the question “What does the Tower mean to you?” Writings must be received by April 1, 2008. If you wish to receive an announcement of winners, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Receipt of your manuscript will be acknowledged if you enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard. For more information, contact Christine Czazasty at 307-467-5283 ext. 224 or email: christine_czazasty@nps.gov
2nd Saturday Poets
at Genelle’s on 8th & Market Street
Your Poetry Headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware
Readings occur the 2nd Saturday of every month at 5pm.
Featured readers followed by an Open Reading, allowing up to 5 minutes per person.
MARCH 10, 2007     Franetta MacMillian
APRIL 14, 2007      Eileen D’Angelo

2 Poems by Franetta MacMillian

HOMECOMING

Last night at the diner
there were these four guys
reminiscing about the time when those
disposable video cameras were all the rage.
One homecoming weekend
they got a notion to strap a camera
to the head of one Taylor Bob,
some freshman bumpkin from
Tennessee, or Kentucky, or some state like that,
pump him full of a designer drug
called St. Vitus Dance
and set him loose on some abandoned railroad tracks.
Until two or three in the morning
they all watched that poor kid stumble along
reciting Immanuel Kant
shooting blurry film of nothing
and singing praises to Jesus.

What happened to that tape?
one of the guys wanted to know.
Because they used to watch it every homecoming
at the party after the big game.
It was so hilarious
to see this kid’s big feet like a duck
and hear all this gibberish
about God and man’s will
mixed with Amazing Grace.

Oh you know what happened,
some other guy said.
Five years ago
this guy Marshall had the tape
and got himself car-jacked
right outside of Detroit.
Lost everything: car, cash, credit cards,
laptop and the tape.

The tape, all four guys repeated
and stared wistfully into their beers.
They looked impossibly sad
like they’d lost some vital historical document,
like they were the last and greatest generation
to be so young and stupid,
as if there weren’t a new generation
of drunken children out that very minute
wandering naked from door to door
searching for stolen clothes.

HOW I SEDUCED PYGMALION

First of all: I was always a woman.
I only pretended to be a slab of stone
because Pygmalion was afraid of water
but still wanted something to write his dreams on.
For the first part of our courtship
I was mostly silent;
the king was lonely and had plenty of stories
to tell himself or to anyone who would listen
and behind the music of his words I discovered
who I was to be.

All conversation creates us anew
and every suitor sculpts your body
according to the language of their desire.
So it was with us
until one night I stood before him
naked and ivory-white,
his more lovely and perfect twin.
When he kissed me it was to
taste his own forgotten beauty
and that first night the man
rode me like a cannibal
devouring the sweet and dark
corners of his own soul.

But somewhere sometime I grew a voice
and the king discovered
he could no longer read my thoughts,
no longer see himself in my eyes.
He told me I’d become a stranger
which only meant I’d become another
and we made love as two now, not as one.
If only I could have convinced him
of the delicious ecstasy of alchemy,
how with two dreams could shine anew
while with one dreams would grow stale.

But the king would hear none of this:
he branded me a monster --
then walked out to the garden
to find another stone.
Elisavietta Ritchie — Two Poems

**Bathers, Dunningford Cove**

Our nakedness may shock
neighbors across the cove
do they notice clothes on trees

muskrat dens beneath the shaky sod
soft underbelly of the marsh
holes trip us up

we cavort like muskrat pups
afloat bellies to the sun
they think no one sees we do

must learn from muskrats how
to dive and swim and glory in
this briny water and ourselves

not shiver, cloaked, masked, safe, dry
awake all night, agonized
about the world beyond this cove

---

**Navigational Problems**

(For B.)

I never warned you: falling in love is not
as simple as tumbling from a canoe
in shallow coves and donning new jeans
as if nothing changed.

Sand and mud, water bugs, seaweed strands cling.
Crabs snatch out your sun-struck eyes.
Minnows of lust keep nibbling bared flesh.
Electric or moray, sea-serpents bite.

Ebb tide can pull you into strange seas
or leave you ship-wrecked, thirsty, deranged.
No matter how leaky the battered hull,
we still steer into the next hurricane.
Four Poems by Lyn Lifshin

NIGHTS IT WAS TOO HOT TO STAY IN THE APARTMENT

We drove to the lake, then stopped at my grandmother’s. The grown ups sat in the screened porch on wicker or the glider whispering above the clink of ice in wet glass. Spirea and yellow roses circled the earth under stars. A silver apple moon. Bored and still sweaty, my sister and I wanted to sleep out on the lawn and dragged out our uncle’s army blankets and chairs for a tent. We wanted the stars on our skin, the small green apples to hang over the blanket to protect us from bats. From the straw mats, peonies glowed like planets and if there was a breeze, it was roses and sweat. I wanted our white cats under the olive green with us, their tongues snapping up moths and whatever buzzed thru the clover. For an hour the porch seemed miles away until itchy with bug bites and feeling our shirts fill with night air, my hair grow curlier, our mother came to fold up the blankets and chairs and I wished I was old enough to stay alone until dawn or small enough to be scooped up, asleep in arms that would carry me up the still hot apartment stairs and into sheets I wouldn’t know were still warm until morning.

BUT INSTEAD HAS GONE INTO WOODS

A girl goes into the woods and for what reason disappears behind branches and is never heard from again. We don’t really know why, she could have gone shopping or had lunch with her mother but instead has gone into woods, alone, without the lover, and not for leaves or flowers. It was a clear bright day very much like today. It was today. Now you might imagine I’m that girl, it seems there are reasons. But first consider: I don’t live very near those trees and my head is already wild with branches.

ALL NIGHT THE NIGHT HAS BEEN

lightening with moths
white behind the walnuts
If a woman couldn’t sleep and came to this window in this light her skin would glow like bones
Clouds over the full moon even with the wind
What would have been nuts looks like limes on the white stones,
it sounds like some one tapping on a glass coffin. It sounds like someone tapping from within the tree

DREAM OF IVY

you know the story of the woman in a turret and how ivy puts its fingers across the moon. And besides, no one could hear. Ivy that grows like kudzu in the deepest part of Georgia swallowing up a single house in one night. I would have lowered my long hair to a lover, lured him with blood in a bottle, each drop a ruby with a poem etched on it. Or carved my initials in the grey stone around his heart. I’d have talked to the birds or waited, slept 20 years, given away my children. Only I was outside trying to get in
Miles David Moore — Two Poems

The Horse

Barely a yearling, the horse
parts the high grass to meet us at the fence
that separates the meadow from the graveyard.
Snuffling the wire mesh, he waits
patiently for us to admire him
and stroke his palomino muzzle.

We, who have just left the ashes
of husband, father, grandfather,
are weary of farewells, and turn slowly away.
When we leave the horse, he whinnies--
a sound as lonely as a winter midnight.

Two months later, I return
to mown grass, a distant house and cows.
The flags on the graves snap like whips
in the wind that canters along the fence
and nickers in the trees.

Turtle Meat

Ohio, 1963

Turtle fishermen wade to their waists
in turbid creeks, a feast for leeches.
Sticking gloved hands under rocks and logs,
they pray the snapping ends aren’t facing forward.
But they get five bucks a pound for turtle--
big money for men with wives, kids, two jobs.

Poured from the canvas sack,
the olive-drab turtles tumble,
their slow eyes blinking at the backyard sun,
their prehistoric claws raking the grass.
Those who roll over on their bowler backs
will be righted to spend their final seconds
crawling too slowly away.

The men’s lips work cigarettes,
ash and sparks raining on turtle heads
severed with three or four smooth-bladed cuts
to wattled necks. The earth marinates
in the rotting-iron stench of blood.
Hammers splinter shells, knives lay open
unprotected hearts still needlessly beating.

All the children who benefit
from turtles dismembered, who watch behind
corners to peek from and fingers that splay
from horrified eyes, who whisper a chant
of “I hate turtle, I won’t eat it,”
will sample the end on a Melmac plate:
turtle parts left over from the sale
to richer folk--knobby, angular,
fried to a Sunday brown, and tasting
like the darkest meat of chicken.

THE BEARS OF PARIS

Miles David Moore

Moore's brilliantly eclectic work
runs the gamut from first love to
the American Civil War to adven-
tures of Fatslug, the poster boy for
low self-esteem. "Some North
American Lorca lurks among The
Bears of Paris."—Pablo Medina.
A Word Works Capital Collection
publication.

THE BROADKILL REVIEW
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

IOTA POETRY SERIES

Readings take place at the Iota Bar and Restaurant, 2832 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia (two blocks from the
Clarendon Metro on the second Sunday of the month. Unless otherwise noted, all readings begin at 6:00 p.m.
with open readings to follow. Street parking available. Admission free. For information, call 703-522-8340 or
703-256-9275.

March 11: Mary-Sherman Willis & Katherine Young
April 8: Tribute to Jacklyn Potter with readers TBA
May 13: Sandra Beasley & Ellen Cole
June 10: Nathalie F. Anderson & Maria Terrone
July 8: Donald Illich & Neelam Patel
Three New Poems by Hiram Larew

ROUGH

There’s a spot in your heart
You won’t get to ever
No matter how green the gold
And so sometimes
If you can’t fall asleep
You should go out to your island
Where you won’t likely forget
That you do make a difference
Like a bean does

More in the sense of overlapping waves
Be by the way
In what you can do
So that no matter
What’s tends to happen
There’s a lovely roughness
With you some.

LANKY

I’m warning you
Don’t listen to me
Because if you do
You’ll end up crisp
Without any hope of earning some
   perfumy or big stuff merit
You’ll become all afar
And skinny as a feather

Having said that
I’d suggest that you dig out under the fence at night
Leave good advice behind – lonely crazy
And head out with a headache
Take every dumb turn that you can
Go for all of the deadends
Then buzz buzz buzz like you are dying
So that that way
What I just said
Right here right now
Won’t make any difference
At all
Ha!

BLOEMFONTEIN

The most important word there is anywhere
Is imagine
It’s the cause of all skies and milk
Never ending
As well as the ups and downs it takes
To build yes
Forever overlooking
It’s even the echoey who cares
Upon which nose bleeds depend.

Beyond reason you also understand that
The most crucial sounds in the world
Aren’t words at all
And never have been
And that’s why they are
Your very best friends.

No matter what else happens
You must give up your place
So that you’re completely after
Even ransom your heart
Trade in your days
Turn over every hope you’ve imagined
To end up next
And just be
Naked like grass overflowing
Or certain as wood in a blaze.
Blood was flying. The wop DeMarco and the negro Johnson were swinging away. DeMarco was about half Johnson’s size and already had a busted lip that had spurted blood down the front of his uniform, still he stood in there gamely punching at the larger man’s kidneys. A mob had gathered. I whistled and my MPs moved in for the kill.

Coleman grabbed Johnson’s collar and actually yanked him back about a foot before the guy turned to see what was happening. Vinnie hit him with his stick mid-turn. DeMarco was next and resisted but Vinnie soon collared him and in his bear-like arms, the wop went meek-like.

“Take ‘em to the jeep,” I said, and then faced the lingering mob.

“You soldier, what was this fighting all about?” I asked a willowy recruit from some hayseed town in Georgia.

“A girlie mag, Lieutenant.”

“What?” I was speechless. “Let’s see it.” The private handed the tattered magazine over. It was a black and white pinup magazine. And there on the cover, smiling as only she could, was Miss Page my high school student teacher—in a harem outfit just like a coochie dancer from the carney show last year in Nashville. Nashville, my home, half a continent away from my new life policing Boot Camp in Fort Lewis, Washington.

I tucked the magazine under my arm. “Evidence,” I said to collective groans.

***

“You’ve got to be nuts Lieutenant,” Vinnie was lighting up a stogie. He took a couple of exploratory puffs and the smoke filled our hole in the wall excuse for a guardhouse.

“You expect me to believe this chick in the harem outfit was your English teacher?”

“I don’t believe it either,” I said. I didn’t actually know if it was her or not. But the model in the photo had the same carefree smile. A smile that played havoc with the male hormones in my 10th grade English class, a smile in a photo which had fired up the new crop of recruits.

“So? What was she like?” Coleman asked. It was his turn to flip through the evidence.

“Not much to tell. I remember sitting in class the first day she walked in. All of my teachers had been men or women older than my mother, so when Miss Page walked in the door, talk ceased. Every one of us just stared. She was so young and just gorgeous, and looked our age.”

“What was she wearing?” Vinnie asked. He put one hairy arm behind his head and rocked the front legs of his chair off the ground, and then leaned solidly back against a wall the color of strained pea soup.

“A white sweater.”

Coleman whistled and hunched his helmet onto the back of his head. Coleman always wore his helmet. I think he was in love with the MP stenciled on the front.

And I could picture the white clinging sweater, and her black as pitch hair clasped by some kind of hair band. This seemed so pedestrian. I tried to imagine her outdoors in a leopard skin bathing suit like in the magazine. It was a stretch. She’d been demure compared to these pinup shots.

***

I ran into her only once off the high school grounds. At my bowling alley job. Pharaoh’s Lanes. Yeah, the snack bar kids had to wear goofy
months,” Mark said.  
“Well, hello. Are you a pin setter too?”  
“Faster than Jesse.”  
“So, you boys going to show me what it is you do?”  
“Well, after people throw their balls, I roll them back down the return, then I sweep the dead wood out of the way and set the remaining maples back on the lane so they can bowl again,” Mark said in a rush.  
“Maples?”  
“Pins. They’re made from maple trees,” I said.  
“Can I watch?”  
“I don’t know Miss Page, I’ve never had anybody ask before,” I said. Mark was shaking his head and frantically pulling on his ear lobe, which was the secret sign that our boss was fast approaching.  
“I guess maybe—”  
“Evening Miss. Is there some sort of problem?” It was Mr. Otis, the Pharaoh of Pharaoh Lanes, towering over us and giving his best evil eye.  
“Not at all. I just asked my student Jesse here, and his cousin Mike—.”  
“Mark,” Mark kind of squeaked. He’d been cut down to size.  
“Mark,” Mark kind of squeaked. He’d been cut down to size.  
Miss Page’s blue eyes glittered a little and she kind of half nodded her head at Mark and me, and then she continued, “—if I could watch them set the bowling pins.”  
“If this young lady wants to watch, she can watch.” Mr. Otis said. We all jumped when he barked, except right now he was oozing nicey-niceness. “Now, Jesse, mind your manners, stand up and introduce me.”  
Getting out of that chair was one of the hardest things I’d ever done. I felt like a step ladder that wouldn’t open up. “Miss Page, this here’s Mr. Otis, my boss.”  
“How nice to meet you,” Miss Page’s voice was as sticky as the sweet tea at Pharaoh’s snack bar and she gave him her hand.  
“You sure are a lovely young woman,” Mr. Otis said. My boss held on to her hand like it was Saturday night’s receipts. There was an awkward moment and then he let go. Miss Page never stopped smiling.  
“Run along boys. Set some pins.” He was waving us away and putting one arm around Miss Page’s waist.  
“But Mr. Otis—”  
“No buts, don’t you know not to keep a lady waiting.”  
“What Jesse is trying to say, Mr. Otis, is that it’s slow and all, so if nobody’s bowling on our lanes we can’t set up any pins now can we?” It was a Monday night and things were mighty slow.  
“You get on back there. I’ll bowl.”  
So we skedaddled down the wooden alley, and waited in the dark while Mr. Otis hefted a ball in order to show Miss Page how it was
done. Only he threw a baby split instead of his usual powerhouse. His face turned redder than Fruit Punch, he was so embarrassed. Then he stepped over the line and really let one rip. Pins just flew everywhere.

Mark cleared the pins and set them in the metal rack above the lane, and I pulled the handle on the rack to reset all the pins back in position. Right now the 75 cents an hour we got paid to perform this function didn’t seem like nearly enough. Especially watching Mr. Otis stand behind Miss Page and guide her pushaway, approach, delivery, and follow through. She managed a spare. And then much to our surprise came walking very slowly down the lane.

I opened the door and she peeked inside.

“Hi fellas.”

“Hi Miss Page.” We spoke in unison like Siamese twins. It was so embarrassing.

“You’re in the dungeon back here.”

“Yeah.”

The sound was deafening. I hadn’t realized before. Miss Page’s voice was lost in the din of the pin clatter, the impact of the balls, the frenzied activity, and the hollering of the other pin setters.

“Well, thanks for letting me take a peek, Y’all take care.”

We were watching her walk away, her body seemed to sway and dance when she moved, we would have watched her walk away forever, until a bowling ball collided with the pins beside us. It was only Mr. Otis putting some action on the ball, trying to get our attention.

***

About a week later I was manning the curtain for the Halloween variety show. It seemed like the whole town was there. The local Red Cross was recording the event for the wounded, a little something to help cheer them up I guess. I sat in a chair in the wings and nobody paid much attention to me. I’d gotten infatuated with the Navy and had taken to marking up my Life magazine, crossing off the ships that had been sunk at Midway and Coral Sea. I’d just put big red X’s through the pages in this old issue that showed all the US and Jap ships of the line. I wasn’t paying much attention to the show unless I knew the people real well. So we were at least halfway through the program and I was kind of flipping through my magazine when Miss Page appeared by my side.

Miss Page was one of the teachers helping the production to run as smooth as possible. By now it was clear that she was having trouble controlling a couple of the boys. They’d catcall and whistle at her, pinch her if she walked past, they were way out of line. We all wanted to be involved in the war, not stuck in a classroom. It felt like we were missing everything. But that was no excuse and I could tell that Miss Page was pretty fed up. Plus all the girls hated her. They were just jealous.

A lot of things crossed my mind. I don’t know how I knew, but it being a Friday night it dawned on me that Miss Page wasn’t seeing anyone special. I think that’s why the boys were getting to her so bad. I’d heard rumors that she liked Willow Plunge, a pool in nearby Franklin. You had to take the train out there to this pond surrounded by willow trees. That’s where Miss Page would go with her beaus. When she had one. There are no secrets in small towns.

To make matters worse one of the class bad boys was supposed to get up and recite “Ode to a Grecian Urn,” by John Keats. And well, by now I was fully and completely aware that I was alone behind the curtains in the dark with Miss Page. What would happen if I brushed against her? I had never been more alive than I was at that precise moment.

“Oh no,” Miss Page said, her voice filled with disgust.

“What?” I was afraid she’d been reading my mind.

She was shaking her head motioning to center stage, where Duane Rozelle
was supposed to be reciting Keats.  
“Duane’s drunk,” Miss Page stage whispered.  
And he was, stinking, staggering, babbling, falling down drunk.  
She reached across me and grasped the curtain ropes firmly in both hands, but I reacted swiftly, and before she could pull I took them from her and yanked the rough ropes hard, closing the curtains on my idiot classmate. My palms burned for two days afterwards.  
Principle Barnes was on Duane like white on rice, and Mr. Simon, the math teacher, could be heard announcing intermission from the other side of the curtain.  
“Thanks Jesse,” Miss Page said, and made to go.  
“Miss Page.”  
She turned, “Yes, Jesse?”  
“I was wondering . . . “
“What exactly?”  
“You’re going to quit the school aren’t you?”  
She crossed her arms and studied me. “Maybe, why?”  
We were in the dark. That must have given me courage. “I’ll miss you, that’s all.”  
“Thanks Jesse, you’re a good kid.”  
She turned again to go but I couldn’t resist. “You did that on purpose, forgetting Mark’s name. Didn’t you?”  
“What do you think?”  
“And you already knew how to bowl? Am I right?”  
“Umm hmm.”  
If I could have seen her soft blue eyes then I know they would have been sparkling. But it was dark and then she was gone. She didn’t show up at school on Monday and I never saw her again.  
* * *
“Pardon my French, but you’re so full of shit Lieutenant, your eyes are brown. Man oh man, no way a chick this stacked could be no English teacher in Nashville or anywhere else. She’s got to be living it up in Manhattan, or Chicago,” Vinnie said, tapping an ash from his cigar for emphasis. He’d snatched the evidence back and was poking the magazine with the index finger of his left hand.  
“Or partying in Miami or Havana,” Coleman added.  
“Drinking martinis. Dancing all night. Why would she be wasting away in a dump like Nashville?” Vinnie rocked up out of his chair and tore the cover off the magazine. “That’s evidence,” I sputtered.  
Vinnie tsk tsked me, held one arm aloft, and then punched the photo through a nail on the wall. Underneath it he scrawled “Betty Page—Lt. Ayers’ English Teacher.” The guys laughed at me as they walked out the door into the rainy dawn. But I knew it was her, the perfectly centered photo overtop the calendar, the nail just above her dark hair, that smile. My heart began beating at a slightly irregular rhythm. Yep, it was Miss Page all right. I knew it now for certain.
JOHN SMITH, BROUGHT BEFORE CHIEF POWHATAN
Pocahontas, at the end of December, 1607

Crowned with hair as red as the hard clay that runs through the earth under our feet, he stood proud, like one of our warriors, but appeared short with a large head. Like a fox, his face was covered with rusty-red beard and thick whiskers.

The man brought before my father, his captains, counselors, wives and retainers, was said to be a wizard who’d bewitched a box he owned, small and made of bone, so whenever he held it in his hand, its needle pointed to him no matter which way the box was turned.

The entire time looking at Powhatan, unafraid, he announced he was waiting for his great and fearsome father, Captain Newport, to arrive with many ships to carry him and his men back to their own land.

The minor chiefs and petty advisors chafed and swelled with impatience, saying, if he were a true sorcerer, he’d know our own soothsayers had foretold a nation of strong men would cross into our broad bay and come ashore to annihilate Powhatan and our people.

Our warriors stood poised with uplifted clubs. The wizard never flinched, said nothing to contradict the prophecy. Even the wind drew in its breath and waited.

THE SPLENDOR OF GESTURE
Pocahontas explains

Simple men and savage acts were all John Smith assumed. The first of his countrymen to cast eyes on my father’s face and majestic figure, he saw only death or rescue.

Our display of Powhatan’s power and bounty by way of ritual adoption, depicted in two parts, like a heartbeat or a lesson formed as a call and response, was lost on him.

Always at the dead center of his own story, John Smith preferred to remember the splendor of gesture, a fanciful turn flashed up for his readers, and fashioned everything else as framework.
CONTRIBUTIONS/ SUBSCRIPTIONS: Contribution categories, including a one-year subscription to SULPHUR RIVER LITERARY REVIEW, are: Sponsor, $100 or more; Patron, $50; Friend, $25; Regular Subscription, $12. Single copy, $7.

SUBMISSIONS: Send manuscripts with SASE to Editor, Sulphur River Literary Review, P. O. Box 19228, Austin TX 78760-9228. Payment in copies.
Funhouse Minion

Suppose there was a reason for irony beyond all understanding,
An argument stemming from some ancient singularity unknown
During the usual course of life that will only develop when
Catastrophe strikes, and then sparingly, remanding
Lucidity to the baser senses of survival, mouth and eyes
Opened wider than possible, accentuated by wonder's greasepaint,
White and red and mirrored in a distortion that signifies
Nothing more or less than the fear of laughter's constraint.

The Life Without Pain

We seek it
despite its impossibility:
the child, without understanding
pain's necessity;
the adult, in the face of failure
at work, with love and family;
the aged, for whom
pain is the currency
paid for each day.
The rich with their emptiness.
The poor with their desires unfulfilled.

We call for it, like the dog
that will not come.
That drink raised to our lips:
false promise.
It will not let us forget.
Even behind the blank
face of death, we hope to find it grinning.

We dream of exotic relief,
open our blue veins
to distant lands—China,
Peru, Afghanistan—as if we could be delivered
by that journey.
The trip home leaves us wasted.

We get confused
in the story of our searching,
use bullets for punctuation.
We open our mouths
to question
and the sea comes rushing in.
“Quiet now,” it says.
“There there.”
A roaring fills our ears
and grows into silence.

Carnival Of The Dichotomist

Somehow the unknown has slipped into town
And people no longer believe what they know.
Doubt does its baggy dance: big shoe hidy-ho,
Crooning in vibrato two notes, and that’s all,
Looking in windows for the one sympathetic
Official, he with the painted tear, the dread
Wide frown of a disciple of the great enigma.
No one dares to escape his incredulous gravitas.

And Cannot

Because I want to kiss you
and cannot
my lips are the dry husks
of cicadas that have already
whirred their last.
The taste of your lips
is a mystery that swells
in my throat
and takes root.

Because I want to touch you
and cannot
my hands are dead fish
that don’t know where
to swim. The pressure
of your fingers
is a vacuum in my skin.
It dreams only an emptiness.

Because I want to have you
and cannot
my heart is a yellow paper
clutched by a blank wind,
where the ink of your heart
leaves no stain.
It rattles like cracked voices
in the trees.
It wilts in the rain,
turns up its blind eye.
FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 2007  1:45 ~ 4:45
A. Workshops
P1: Breaking the Line: Fleda Brown (Intermediate)
P2: I’ll Send You a Postcard: John Hoppenthaler (Intermediate)
P3: Myth and Persona: Shara McCallum (All Levels)
P4: Beginning Outside the Body: James Harms (Beginning)
P5: Painting White Flowers B. Crooker (Advanced)
F1: Writing Dialogue That Matters, Part I: Robert Bausch (Intermediate/Advanced)
F2: Beneath the Surface: Research in Fiction: Liam Callanan (Intermediate)
F3: The First Pages: Leslie Pietrzyk (Beginning)
F4: Beyond the Stage Set, part I: Richard Bausch (Intermediate)
F5: Turning Family Stories into Fiction: Connie Biewald (Beginning)
N1: Pure Success: Secrets of Self-Publishing: Richard Lamotte (all levels)
N2: Geography of Longing: The Nature Essay. Lisa Couturier (All Levels)
S1: Song Writing: Randy Lee Ashcraft (Beginning/Intermediate)

I. Conversations 1:45 – 3:15
C1: How Many Books?: Candice Furhman, Cherise Davis

II. Conversations 3:30 – 4:45.
C2: From Where I Stand: Writers on Point of View

SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 2007
A. Workshops (9:30 - 11:45)
F6: Narrative Voice: Sheri Reynolds (Intermediate)
F7: Dying of Suspense: Ed Dee (All Levels)
N4: Where I’m Calling From -- The Travel Memoir: C. M. Mayo (All Levels)
N5: Writing the Humor Column: Faye Jacobs, (All Levels)
A1: Write Brain Workshop Workout: Bonnie Neubauer (All Levels)

Conversations II (9:30 - 10:30)
C3: Writing and Motherhood
C4: How Many Books?: Candice Furhman, Cherise Davis
C5: The Literary Magazine

C6: Another Broken Heart Part 1
Conversations III (10:45 – 11:45)
C7: Silencing the Author
C8: Another Broken Heart Part II
C9: Between the Sheets with Family & Friends
C10: Everything You Need to Know About Magazine Publishing

Conversations IV (2:45 - 4:00)
C11: Novel Ideas
C12: Usurping Sorrow: Writing about 9/11
C13: Off Limits: Writing about Families, Friends, Lovers

Conversations V (4:15 - 5:30)
C14: Seriously Now, Does Poetry Really Matter?
C15: A Reading & Conversation with the Bausch Brothers
C16: Seaching for Sea Glass: The World of Self Publishing

SUNDAY MORNING
Workshops (9:30-11:00)
The Story Spinner: Ideas to Get Going, Bonnie Neubauer (All)

Conference Registration--until Feb. 14: $170.00
Additional Guest Breakfast Buffet (25.00)
Manuscript Review ($25.00)
Author Dinner ($50.00)
Extra Contribution to United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation
Elizabeth Dougherty Dolan — 2 Poems

My Second Pair of Eyes

Pull down the moon, I say, and smother it in down. Light stirs sleep. Even dark needs light, my love says, when we quibble over light and color. I fancy rooms plumed in hemlock, burgundy and cobalt blue. He brushes them white: ecru, eggshell, opal, pearl. I had forgotten Tiresias, blind seer ignored by Creon to his woe. I had forgotten my love's double vision, letters pirouetting on the page, his long lashes shading eyes of umber.

The Dog the Bodega Owner Gave Her Years Ago

lies dead under the stove
next to the fluttering heart-laced curtains. Her long braids wet from weeping
she plods to school .
and plops on a marble step
hip to hip with her friend, Eileen
as they keen together over Malo.
At three she returns and folds
the burlap sack on which
he lay into a small regalo.
and slips it under her cotton pillow.

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Al Himes pulled up on his Harley

with a new long blonde babe
clutching his hips
nice and tight.
He snatched
his baseball bat and glove
out of his saddle bag,
stroked his beard,
shook out his long shaggy blonde hair
and then stuffed it
under his St. Mary's baseball hat.
Al, 16 now, barely nodded at us 14 year-olds,
playing pepper on the sideline,
as he strutted to the warm-up mound.
He leaned over to Billy Frazier, our catcher,
"Let's rock."
And began to burn Billy's mitt
with fastball after fastball.
Al loved the game to get ever-so-tight.
He'd wait for the late innings,
to pull off his gambit.
As he walked the first guy,
we began to fidget in the infield,
"C'mon Himes! Get it over!"
These little nothings meant nothing to him.

As Himes threw ball four again,
high and tight for good measure,
Coach Powell, slightly inebriated,
a working class mix
of Old Crow, Old Spice, and cigars,
would move closer to the fence,
stare at Al in disgust
and start warming up a new pitcher.

Himes was not moved,
He glared the batter down
as he walked to first base.
The seconds mounted.
Step off. Pace. Pick up the resin bag.
Throw Ball Four to load the bases.
We sniped to each other in the infield.
"Asshole's at it again."
through our mitt-covered mouths,
then spit, "prick," to the infield dirt.
Once he had us all captive,
Himes cleanly calmly methodically
mowed down
the bottom of the order
on 9 smoking strikes.

Game finished, Himes answered us
with a grin right between the eyes,
rode off on his Harley,
proud babe on his back.
We were left holding the stats.

My cross-country hitchhiking experience

had more dreary hungry miles
than Kerouac kicks.
I did learn the true meaning
of near-crackup loneliness, though,
when a friend I planned on staying with
no longer lived in Stockton, California,
and I turned, penniless, on Route 99
to face a whole continent.

I made it halfway home to Pennsylvania,
stealing Hostess cupcakes from convenience stores,
when a pickup truck
pulled over to give me a ride.
I threw my sack
in the back and hopped in
to face a pearl-handled pistol
staring me in the face,
"You're not gonna mess me with me, are you?"
the middle-aged, wiry cowboy glared.
I thought of doing a "duck-and-roll"
out the door, but was too stunned to move.

We drove for a long, quiet way on Route 40.
He said, "You look like you're from the East," with disdain and never questioned me,
until he asked if I could drive a stickshift
as he pulled into the roadside market.
He told me to get into the drivers seat,
I was terrified,
thought he wanted me to be
his accomplice in crime,
until he came back from the store
and handed me a barbecue sandwich.
"I can go to Okemah, that's it," he grumbled.

We silently made our way
across Oklahoma until it was dusk.
He pulled to the side of the road and
popped out to meet me on the shoulder,
looked me in the eye and said,
"Always remember, look at the donut, not the hole."
I shrugged, tried hard
to cling to something,
as I walked East,
stuck out my thumb
and braced for the draft
of a barreling tractor-trailer.
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DIRECTED BY Various Directors
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"Nuncrackers"
WRITTEN BY Dan Goggin
DIRECTED BY Tom Sweeney & Ches Warrener
Nov 30, Dec 1, 2*, 14, 15 & 16*
Important Note on Referencing

The Broadkill Review Bibliographically

Dear Readers —

An important question came up recently when a contributor to issue number one wrote and asked how to reference publication in TBR when one has placed the item into an upcoming anthology. The questioner wanted to know if it should be handled as if it had appeared on an e-zine, and if so, since we have no url, how was it to be cited?

I did not have the answer, so I inquired of The Modern Language Association how they would recommend such a circumstance be handled. Here is the response of Mr. Eric Wirth, Associate Editor of the MLA, and I hope it helps clarify the issue.

“Are you asking how your contributors should cite the original publication in the _Broadkill Review_ when their pieces are republished in anthologies?

“I gather that there is no URL (Web address) from which the PDF file is downloaded. The MLA guidelines don’t provide a method for labeling electronic files as such, in the absence of a URL.

“Therefore, if your review is presented like a traditional print journal, with volume or issue numbers and page numbers, I would document it like a print publication. As publication media become increasingly fluid, documents readily move between print and online formats, and so I don’t think too much need be made of the medium that a document happens to appear in. Below is an example of how the credit notice might appear, using made-up data (I’ve used the underline symbol here to indicate the start and end of underlining):

“This essay (poem/story/review) was originally published in The Broadkill Review Vol. 1, No. 3 (2007): 14-23.’

“Please let me know if this reply doesn’t answer your question.”

So when citing work which has appeared in The Broadkill Review, treat it as a print publication.

Poetry At The Beach

Poetry At The Beach is a reading series now entering its second year. The program is sponsored by the Rehoboth Art Guild, South Coastal Library (Bethany Beach), Rehoboth Beach Public Library, and the Lewes Public Library, and funded in part by the Delaware Division of the Arts. All readings are at the three libraries at 7:00 PM on the dates scheduled.

April 12 (Lewes)       Anne Colwell, Wendy Ingersoll, Russ Endo
May 9 (Rehoboth)       H.A. Maxson, Carol Bruce, Russ Endo
June 14 (Bethany)      Anne Colwell, Joe Allen, Carol Bruce
July 12 (Lewes)        H.A. Maxson, Carol Bruce, Joe Allen
Aug. 9 (Rehoboth)      Anne Colwell, Joe Allen, Wendy Ingersoll
Sept. 13 (Bethany)     H.A. Maxson, Wendy Ingersoll, Russ Endo

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Golden Gun

a short story by
Neal Fandek

We made love that night. In the hot, in the dark. I wanted to get every part of her with as much of me as I could, smearsy fingertips and shins and forehead and rising sap, because – well, the “because” comes later.

When I collapsed on top of her, she said, “Baby boy.” She’d flown in that night from a conference in Portland, changed planes in Vegas. I knew it was her flight when people got off dressed like characters on TV in cowboy hats and dark suits. We kissed, found luggage, drove not home my parents’ house hadn’t been home for 30 years, carefully bumped wheeled luggage over front door sills, shucking shoes, sliding under midnight sheets, because our son was in the next bed, my sister was in the next room, my brother and his second wife were next to the bathroom, my mother in the bedroom next to that, and . . .

My father. Yes. Because my father. My father was in a heavy oak casket with burnished handles in a viewing room in a funeral home on Padonia Road. Maybe already shoved back in the basement where funeral home guys in dark suits drank coffee and talked sports talk.

My mother and I were in the back of the building. Mom was ahead. Then the black truck pulled out and we were on a concrete cliff hundreds of feet above the ground. I panicked, flailed air, hugged the wall. I saw Mom creeping toward the portal. I took a shuffle step over air and found it wasn’t hard but Mom was already disappearing to the place where black trucks loaded.

I jerked awake to my wife’s hand on my thigh and a sweet taste on my lips. She’d gotten dried cherries in the Portland airport.

Good. Weird. Greasy. Sweet. “What were you dreaming of?” “I almost fell.” She looked down. “Not that I see.” Death makes you horny. Is that a because?

Oak casket. I think it was an oak casket, weighing more than 400 lb. with him in it, cutting into my sweaty hands so I thought I’d drop it, satin and dead gray flesh exploding onto the hot Towson sidewalk, cutting into my fingers so deeply they left white bands, the other pallbearers struggling too, my thin brother, my two stout brothers in law, not the gritty undertaker who wasn’t smoking but looked like he was and not the trim funeral home guy either. Looked like he’d strain with a vase but handled the casket by himself like nothing.

“Dearly beloved.” The pastor really said that. Upbeat, smiling. “We are not bereaved! This is a celebration!” Strained smiles. Funeral as self-help, turning tragedy into growth. Beveled, burnished edges that cut hands. Why? To feel pain? Isn’t there enough in life, there is in death too?

Dad didn’t look like he was asleep. He looked dead. I walked closer in the hushed satiny room. My wary son, dull bro old held back. My son was in shorts and T-shirt, my brother in shorts and polo. I had a suit over T-shirt and sandals. Because -- respect?

Dad had on a pink Oxford shirt that looked like it hadn’t been buttoned down but it wasn’t a button down. His legs were cut off by the white satin blooming like a carnivorous flower from the bottom half of the casket. Dress pants, sweatpants on his spindly legs? I felt like tugging him up. Dad didn’t look like he was asleep. He looked dead. I walked closer in the hushed satiny room. My wary son, dull bro old held back. My son was in shorts and T-shirt, my brother in shorts and polo. I had a suit over T-shirt and sandals. Because -- respect?

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Dad’s nose was thinner. Hawklike. Emaciation and settling of flesh I guess. The still-brutal face, incongruously fluffy white hair. His mouth was set in an expression of distaste, as if he’d bitten into something tart. Was that his tongue? No.

The veins in his hands were turning blue, nails already gray-blue with cyanosis. His forearms were beginning to mottle. No preservatives because they were cremating him. His hands looked no different, bruised and twisted when he was alive.

My brother came too and looked. Then started to cry and I put an arm around his shoulder but he shook me off. Because I’m the little brother. “Come on Dad let’s get out of here this is creeping me out!” my son said.

I glared, touched my Dad’s hands, forehead, hair. Thought about kissing his forehead. Couldn’t. I put my hand on his forehead instead, a postmortem benediction. The skin felt slack but otherwise normal and not particularly cold. Someone had washed his hair and skin, the funeral home guys I guess, and it was all herbal smelling and baby-soft. When I touched him he was ice cold people say. That’s wrong, too.

The immaculate funeral home guy who showed us in entered with no noise no Ah-hem just woosh. Transition. Airports, cars, funeral homes. Perfectly cut salt and pepper hair, swimmer’s build, looking more than good looking ideal in that suit. Eyed my distracted brother. Eyed me.

“That’s such a good look,” he said to me eventually. “Very -- Miami. I just buried a friend who--” He stopped. Worked his tongue. “You have problems finding suits that fit? I do and I’m only six-two.”


We exited, drove in silence up Padonia Road, a left onto Mays Chapel Road, my brother driving. I looked for the quarry, the pool, the orchard, but all my landmarks had vanished and now it was just houses and condos with no sidewalks or yards.

“Dad that was creepy.” My son looked out at suburban nothing. I looked over at my brother. He was looking straight ahead as he ran a stop sign. Then another. There wasn’t much traffic on Mays Chapel so I didn’t say anything.
Then we were on Falls Road and my brother stooped to get gas at a tiny white Exxon station. The paint was peeling on the side and you could just make out the old Esso logo.

My son swore he’d seen a snocone place around the corner so we walked around the whitewashed station. He was right. The snocone place was sturdily, made of brick like the station, maybe an old storage shed. The bright new lettering on the wall said Sno-a-sis. I asked the pale woman behind the plank like a 19th century apothecary which flavors were really tart.

“All tart all good,” she said in heavily accented English. She looked tired. My son got sour lemon, I got sour lime. When we came back my brother didn’t seem to notice we’d been gone.

The taste of greasy cherries, my wife’s fingers on my thigh, a concrete cliff. I thought I should cry.

“I think you should take a keepsake,” my wife whispered. “Something that’ll remind you.”

“Like --”

“Something everyday, elegant, like my grandmother’s pie safe, cake pans.” I couldn’t see her face in the dark. Joking? No. The huge pie safe had been in the basement for years and she baked maybe twice a year.

“Can’t think of anything.”

Clear and precise as a 1960s Technicolor frame.

“... if I ever see that [ ] thing again! ...” Mom never cursed, the curse was implicit. I’d ambushed my sisters once too often I guess so she threw it over the railing of the vacation house and it tumbled down into the thick brush where the raspberries and rattlesnakes grew. Rattlesnakes liked raspberries, my cousin said, reaching down to pick the biggest plumpest ones.

were here ...” But he wasn’t. He rarely was. What would he do anyway? Back up mom that’s what.

I made sorry noises and looked off contritely memorizing the spot where I thought the gun had fallen. Was that a reptilian coil down there? Or the glint of gun?

The Golden Gun. From the James Bond movie. Mine was gold-plated metal back when toys were metal, golden plastic stock for long-range assassinations too. The pistol butt clicked up to reveal a complicated mechanism into which you could thread a whole roll of caps so you could shoot enemy sisters indefinitely. Very cool. So was a slantly-eyed Christopher Lee (taped eyelids?) as the Man with the golden Luger. He never missed and commanded top dollar on the assassination market. Sean Connery as James Bond. Roger Moore? I’d prefer Sean Connery. Roger Moore’s more the aloof smart alecky brother, lacks Connery’s grace and sinisterness. Lee was Connery’s ex-mentor in the movie. The father figurishness of movie villains; Mike Meyers, George Lucas know this. What’s scarier than a villain Dad? Who comes not to protect but destroy?

I never found my golden gun but we sure ate a lot of raspberries that summer. I thought I saw a rattlesnake once more. It was gone when I looked closer.

“Take it. Take all of it!” my mother said. “He hasn’t worn these clothes in years.” She left us. My brother, son and I looked at each other.

“Creepy dead guy stuff,” my son said and went outside to play with his cousin.

I picked two okay ties and a too-large, new-looking blue polo shirt. Fingered a huge early 1960s-looking dark gray suit. Big guy, my Dad.

“That’s gonna cost more to have it tailored than a new suit,” my brother said. He stepped closer. “Christian Dior, I’d say early 1980s...” My brother knew clothes. He didn’t know Xiu-Xiu. Then he stopped as if I opened the leather case. There was the original factory target with its bulls eyes, the peppered paper better than any ad. The oil stained manual with its old fashioned language. “Congratulations. You have purchased one of the finest sports automatics available to-day. With proper care, it should offer years of reliable service.”

The gun looked just the same too, glinting fresh and blue and black in the weak closet light. I felt a surge of -- Warmth? Gratitude?

I picked it up, mouth a bit dry, and –

Not as heavy as I remembered from secret childhood tip-toeing. Lighter than a 9mm, a lot lighter than a .44. Not a serious weapon. A rabbit plunker. A golden gun.

Shit. I moved from the closet into the better light of the bedroom, feeling foolish not dangerous with the long pistol against my thigh.

Looked again. In full sunlight it was beautiful. Long and sleek and burnished. A lovely weapon. An assassin’s weapon.

I pressed the magazine release and the clip snicked into my palm. So tiny, this horizontal coffin for .22 rounds. Empty, of course. No problem. Bullets are easy to come by in America.

I sighted along the long barrel, tracked a passing green station wagon outside as I would with a rifle. I could almost feel the kickback as I dry-fired at the harried-looking blonde woman behind the wheel of the Taurus yelling at her kids.

And -- Nothing. The trigger didn’t budge. I tried again, at the stop sign this time. Nothing.

Think. What would Christopher Lee do?

Idiot. I thumbed the safety off, dry-fired at the Meyers’ lamppost across the street their 40-something retarded son liked to stare at in the dusk. Something clicked and some-
down get some lunch!” I carefully put the .22 back in its case in the closet under the sweaters and went down.

I hugged a tall blonde niece just turned 21, her hair wet and fragrant from a recent shower, shook hands with her pale 30-something boyfriend. His hands, forearms, upper arms, legs, neck were bruised with tattoos. He ate fast, talked fast, looked like he didn’t know how to work his mouth. When he took another slug of beer I saw the glint of a recent tongue stud in the oral redness.

Mom looked over. “Taste good?” My son and I nodded. But the sandwich was missing -- Mustard? Tomato? That sound inside the .22 --

“You okay baby?” my wife murmured.

“Yeah -- a little --”

Firing pin! Something wrong with the firing pin. Maybe missing entirely. Dad must have removed it or had it removed so baby girls wouldn’t be shot. Christopher Lee would have known instantly.

“What?”

“I wish I’d talked to him more.”

“Oh baby.” She hugged me as nieces and in-laws beamed.

* * *

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DONALD ILLICH

The Public Affairs Specialists

We don't have enough money to buy our sandwiches today.

The owner smiles, says, you can pay tomorrow, for now they're free.

Work's busy Tuesday, a jet crashes, we respond to reporters' calls,

stress over what each story says, can't return for lunch to the mall.

A hard week passes by, we don't lose our jobs for wretched news.

Independently, we excuse ourselves of debts we know we won't erase. We scarf pizza instead, a buffet of sausage, pepperoni,
onions, mushrooms. Feeling well fed, sweating from peppers and worry,

we both talk about getting ahead, whose ass we must kiss to guarantee our best meal ticket, to get in bed with those who will help us for free.

PAUL BLAKEFORD

A Little Girl Gets Paid While a Nigger Gets Nothing

A white woman can get Fifty Grand If someone calls her a “little girl” at school or work.

I have been called a Nigger, Boy, Big Nigger, and Little Boy, Without collecting a cent.

Nowadays, a rapper can get paid Fifty million For calling all of the guys who look like me Niggaz, bitches, dogs and thugs.

Next time I need change for the train, This big nigger will ask a little girl if she can spare fifty cents While she's listening to Fifty Cent's lyrics.

Annual Gival Press Oscar Wilde Award

Award given to the best previously unpublished poem written in English, of any length, in any style, which best relates gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered life, by a poet 18 years or older. Deadline June 27. Contact Robert L. Giron, Gival Press at 703-351-0079, email: givalpress@yahoo.com

George F. Wedge Poetry Award

I-70 Review announces the second George F. Wedge Poetry Award contest. The prize this year is $500.00. Reading fee for submissions is $10.00. Send no more than three poems. You must include SASE if you desire a response. Submissions by e-mail will not be accepted for the contest. Please do not place your name on the poems. All submissions will be judged anonymously. Place name and address on cover letter only. Include your e-mail address on cover letter. Do not send submissions for the award with submissions for the journal. They must be sent separately. All submissions will be read and judged by a highly-qualified poet not affiliated with I-70 Review. All award manuscripts must be received by MARCH 31. Send submissions to: George F. Wedge Poetry Award, I-70 Review, 913 Joseph Dr. Lawrence KS 66049

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Two Poems by a. mclean

Fireflies

tiny embers of stars
flit among rose buds,
through fence pickets,
spinning threads of light
in the grape vines,
connecting lost dreams
to childhood summers
that light our way home,
confirm we exist

Love speaks in silence
as clocks tick and break apart time,
as cars pass leaving memories,
as waves speak and snowflakes chatter.
It sings in the dust that dances
as sun spills through the doorway.
Silence gathers love in.

Haiku by J. C. Pound

Blueberries

Eating blueberries
growing from ancestors’ graves...
Oh! How succulent!

Literary Birthdays

March
Mar. 1, 1917       Robert Lowell
Mar. 3, 1800       Evgeni Abramovich Baratynski
Mar. 5, 1922       Pier Paolo Pasolini (Italy)
Mar. 6, 1885       Ring Lardner
Mar. 6, 1806       Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Mar. 11, 1544      Torquato Tasso
Mar. 13, 1892      Janet Flanner (Genet)
Mar. 14, 1823      Theodore de Banville
Mar. 16, 1585      Gerbrand A. Bredero (Netherlands)
Mar. 20, 1823      Edward Judson (Ned Buntline)
Mar. 26, 1911      Tennessee Williams
Mar. 27, 1746      Michael Bruce (Scotland)
Mar. 29, 1831      Amelia Edith Barr

April
Apr. 2, 1805       Hans Christian Andersen (Denmark)
Apr. 3, 1798       John Banim
Apr. 4, 1785       Bettina von Arnim
Apr. 4, 1574       Gabriel Bataille
Apr. 5, 1834       Frank Stockton
Apr. 6, 1866       Lincoln Steffens
Apr. 9, 1821       Charles Pierre Baudelaire
Apr. 11, 1905      Attila Jozsef (Hungary)
Apr. 14, 1900      Karin Maria Boye (Sweden)
Apr. 16, 1871      John Millington Synge
Apr. 17, 1863      Constantine Cavafy (Greece)
Apr. 18, 1837      Henry Francois Becque
Apr. 20, 1807      Jacques Louis Napoleon Bertrand
Apr. 21, 1837      Fredrik Baje
Apr. 21, 1816      Charlotte Bronte
Apr. 22, 1816      Philip James Bailey
Apr. 22, 1819      Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt
Apr. 23, 1564      William Shakespeare
Apr. 24, 1825      Robert Michael Ballantyne
Apr. 24, 1815      Anthony Trollope
Apr. 25, 1914      Ross Lockridge, Jr.
Apr. 27, 1874      Maurice Baring

May
May 3, 1912         May Sarton
May 5, 1867         Nellie Bly (Elizabeth Cochran)
May 6, 1861         Rabindranath Tagore
May 7, 1812         Robert Browning
May 7, 1857         Jose Valentim Fialho de Almeida
May 7, 1776         Daniel Berzsenyi
May 8, 1698         Henry Baker
May 9, 1860         Sir James Matthew Barrie
May 12, 1907        Daphne Du Maurier
May 12, 1812        Edward Lear
May 15, 1890        Katherine Anne Porter
May 17, 1873        Henri Barbusse
May 20, 1799        Honore de Balzac
May 22, 1688        Alexander Pope
May 26, 1799        Alexander Pushkin
May 27, 1867        Arnold Bennett
May 30, 1835        Alfred Austin

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Valparaiso Poetry Review is currently seeking submissions for its Spring and Fall 2007 issues. VPR presents new, emerging, and well-known voices in contemporary poetry alongside one another, and it offers another opportunity for more readers to discover young or established poets whose writings deserve an even larger audience. VPR accepts submissions of poems, book reviews, author interviews, and essays about poetry or poetics which have not appeared online and for which the rights belong to the author. Simultaneous submissions are welcome; however, confirmation of acceptance is regarded as a commitment to Submit an essay or book review, or no more than five poems at a time. Postal submissions should include a cover letter with some biographical information and a SASE, and should be sent to the following address: Valparaiso Poetry Review, Edward Byrne, Department of English, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN 46383-6493 Email submissions, inquiries, or correspondence should be sent to: VPR@Valpo.edu http://www.valpo.edu/english/vpr

The Apple Valley Review, a semiannual online literary journal, will be accepting submissions of poetry, short fiction, and essays for its Spring 2007 issue until February 16, 2007. Submissions are accepted year-round via e-mail. We prefer work that has both mainstream and literary appeal. All work must be original, previously unpublished, and in English. Please do not submit genre fiction, explicit work, or anything particularly violent or depressing. All published work is considered for our annual editor’s prize. Previous issues and complete submission guidelines are available at www.applevalleyreview.com. Additional questions and/or submissions may be sent to Leah Browning, Editor, at <editor(at)leahbrowning.net>

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University of Nebraska Press Prairie Schooner Prizes Two prizes of $3,000 each & publication by University of Nebraska Press in the Prairie Schooner Book Prize Series are given annually for collections of poetry and short fiction. A $1,000 runner-up prize will also be awarded in each category. The competition is open to all writers, regardless of publication history. Submit a manuscript of at least 50 pages of poetry or at least 150 pages of short stories with a $25 entry fee by March 15. Send an SASE, call, e-mail, or visit the Web site for complete guidelines. University of Nebraska Press, Prairie Schooner Prizes, 201 Andrews Hall, P.O. Box 880334, Lincoln, NE 68588-0334. (402) 472-0911. Kelly Grey Carlisle, Managing Editor. kgrey2@unl.edu prairieschooner.unl.edu

Bellingham Review Literary Awards Three prizes of $1,000 each and publication in the Bellingham Review are given annually for works of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. The 49th Parallel Poetry Award is given for a poem or group of poems of any style or length. Carolyn Wright will judge. The Tobias Wolff Award for Fiction is given for a short story or novel excerpt of more than 8,000 words. Peter Rock will judge. The Annie Dillard Award for Creative Nonfiction is given for an essay of no more than 8,000 words. Phillip Lopate will judge. Submit up to three poems, a short story or novel excerpt, or an essay with a $15 entry fee ($10 for each additional entry), which includes a subscription to the Bellingham Review, by March 15. Send an SASE or visit the Web site for complete guidelines. Bellingham Review, Literary Awards, Mail Stop 9053, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225-9053. Lucy Elenbaas, Managing Editor. www.wwu.edu/~bhrview

Arts & Letters Arts & Letters Prizes Three prizes of $1,000 each and publication in Arts & Letters are given annually for a group of poems, a short story, and an essay. Winners also receive an invitation to read at Georgia College and State University. A. Van Jordan will judge in poetry, Robert Boswell will judge in fiction, and Jeanette Walls will judge in creative nonfiction. Submit up to eight pages of poetry or a story or essay of no more than 25 pages with a $15 entry fee, which includes a two-issue subscription to Arts & Letters, by March 15. Send an SASE, e-mail, or visit the Web site for complete guidelines. Arts & Letters, Arts & Letters Prizes, Campus Box 89, Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville, GA 31061. (478) 445-1289. Martin Lammon, Editor. al@gesu.edu al.gcsu.edu
A Note on Organizing a Poetry Reading Series and Two Poems by Gary Hanna

Starting a Reading Series

Does your writing community have a poetry reading series? If not, start one. Like painters, musicians, or other artists, poets need an opportunity to present their work too. It’s a chance to hear your work, see how it resonates with your would-be readers.

I’m not talking about the icons of the poetry world, who rarely visit your space, or even mid-level poets on a book tour, but your colleagues who write well and have something to say, but have yet to gain national recognition.

It’s not hard to do, poetry is making a come back in the public consciousness, but it does take some forethought. Here are some suggestions to help you make it a reality. Carpe diem! The biggest obstacle is just taking the bull by the horns and doing it. First make it a win-win situation for all involved. Find two or three nearby sites where it makes sense to have a poetry reading, libraries or local art centers for example. Give them a literary arts program to add to their list of events, expand their outreach to a new audience, help them to demonstrate their institutional collaboration. All of these things not only to expand their offerings, but also help them better qualify for funding opportunities that they all need.

Regularity and repetition are important. Establish a schedule. Hold your readings on the same day of the month. Read more than once at each venue. Vary the readers so that no one reads more than once at each place, e.g., six poets reading in varying groups of three, once a month for six months, alternating between three libraries, will produce a series of two readings per library with each poet reading once at each library. In that way, the audience will hear all new poets each time.

While you’re at it, seek funding from your local arts council. Poets should get paid too. This is an ideal program for them - everybody wins, community outreach, institutional collaboration, public education, new programming for institutions, supporting an art form that lacks exposure, and supporting individual artists that seldom get any support at all. Now what public agency can turn that down?

Finally, market, market, market. Audiences for poetry readings are scarce - don't be disappointed, persist. Develop a series flyer, put it in store windows, book stores, video stores, post offices, and grocery stores or restaurants that attract people. Have the institutions involved develop their own flyers, have them call attention to the readings at their other events. Get your PSA on your public radio station. And above all, write newspaper articles for each reading for all the local newspapers you can get into. Go talk to the editors or Artline section heads if they have one, set up expectations for your article.

Work? Sure, but it’s doable and worth it of you want to advance the cause of poetry, help the public understand that it's accessible and relevant, and give your poets a chance to be heard. Really, it’s not hard to do, put your writers community on the map. Institutionalize it, and do it again next year.

— G. H.

Deception

In the marsh grass,
in the reeds, like unruly hair too thick to be combed, where each step is the slosh and suck of mud and water, the eye is deceived.

The empty lens sees a golden land, a vast expanse of friendly waving hands beckoning in the breeze, come to me, come to me,

and I'll sink your sorry ass, pull you down, peel the stardust from your dream, let you commune with crabs and slithery things, rot like bones on wind. Appearance is all I need.

A Way of Life

Why not shoot the birds. I want to get mine before they're gone. It's hard getting up so early, it's cold, and dark, too cold, layering up, stuffing my legs in waders. The trek, the slosh across the marsh in heavy gear, is work not fun, but effort is what life's about. Me and the birds, that's a match on an icy morning in early light. Getting up, securing the blind before they're up, before they come in from a long exhausting flight. But there's so few now, it's hardly worth it. Old Ted Warnecke gave up, got too cold he said, too much trouble, shot his decoys, one by one, packed up the gun, put it away for self defense. It's on the shelf now, not much need. The cost I suppose, is a factor too, the shot, the boots, gun and stuff, rainwear and blind fee. The cost truly is more than the store, now that the big boxes have come in, but that's not what it's about. this last one, maybe today, will be special, I don't want to wait any longer, I'll aim good, take my time, make sure, right on the money. This one I'll mount instead of freeze, a symbol of the American dream, a passing of a way of life.
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Upcoming Literary Events in the Mid-Atlantic Region

March

1st  8 PM  Nokuthula Mazibuko, Jenny McKeen Moore Reading Series, GW University, Wash., DC
2nd  7 PM  John Amen & Bob Small, Barnes & Noble, 720 Lancaster Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA
3rd  8 PM  Marie Kane & Guest Poets, Barnes & Noble, 210 Commerce Blvd., Fairless Hills, PA
5th  8 PM  A Tribute to W.H. Auden with Shirley Hazzard, J.D. McClatchy, Edward Mendelson, Ned Rorem, Charles Rosen and Oliver Sacks, 92nd St. Y, Lexington & 92nd, New York, NY
6th  7—8:30 PM  Steve Almond and Janice Earbaum, Busboys & Poets, 2021 14th St., NW, Washington, DC
10th  5 PM  Franetta MacMillian, 2nd Saturday, Gennell’s, 8th & Market Sts., Wilmington
11th  6 PM  Mary-Sherman Willis & Katherine Young, Iota, 2832 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia
15th  8 PM  A.B. Yehoshua, 92nd St. Y, Lexington & 92nd, New York, NY
16—18  Writers at the Beach, Writers Conference, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware
16th  7 PM  Timothy Gager & G. Emil Reutter, Institute of Science, 11 Veterans Square, Media, PA
18th  2—4:00 PM  Jean Nordhaus and Linda Pastan, The Writer’s Center, 4508 Walsh Street, Bethesda, MD
19th  7 PM  John Ashbery and Grace Schulman, The Stella Adler Studio of Acting - Studio 6, 31 W. 27th St., 3rd Fl., New York, NY  Please call the day of the event (212) 689-0087
19th  8:15 PM  Jack Gilbert and Vijay Seshadri, 92nd St. Y, Lexington & 92nd, New York, NY
21st  8 PM  Lee K. Abbott, AU Visiting Writers, Katzen Arts Center, American University, NW, Washington, DC
22nd  8 PM  André Aciman and Roya Hakakian, 92nd St. Y, Lexington & 92nd, New York, NY
24th  7:30—9:30 PM  Jimi Hendrix Anthology Reading, The Writer’s Center, 4508 Walsh Street, Bethesda, MD
26th  1 PM  Nick Flynn and Mary Karr, 92nd St. Y, Lexington & 92nd, New York, NY
26th  8 PM  Dianne Herrin, Steel City Coffeehouse, 203 Bridge St., Phoenixville, PA
28th  6 PM  Pat Falk and Daniela Gioseffi, Cornelia St. Cafe, 29 Cornelia Street, New York, NY

April

5th  8 PM  Vikram Chandra, Jenny McKeen Moore Reading Series, GW University, Wash., DC
6th  7 PM  Renee Ashley & Kate Northrop, Barnes & Noble, 720 Lancaster Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA
7th  8 PM  Hayden Saunier, Barnes & Noble, 210 Commerce Blvd., Fairless Hills, PA
8th  6 PM  Tribute to Jacklyn Potter with readers TBA, Iota, 2832 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia
12th  7 PM  Poetry at the Beach, Anne Colwell, Wendy Ingersoll, Russ Endo, Lewes, DE Library
12th  8 PM  Monique Truong, Jenny McKeen Moore Reading Series, GW University, Wash., DC
14th  8 PM  Delaware Literary Connection’s New Castle Writers’ Conference
14th  5 PM  Eileen D'Angelo, 2nd Saturday, Gennell’s, 8th & Market Sts., Wilmington
16th  8 PM  Lawrence Ferlinghetti, 92nd St. Y, Lexington & 92nd, New York, NY
18th  6 PM  Dinner at Irish Eyes Milton to Benefit John Milton Statue; Unveiling Bust of John Milton
20th  7 PM  Alicia Ostriker & Madeline Tiger, Institute of Science, 11 Veterans Square, Media, PA
23rd  1 PM  Richard Moyer, Steel City Coffeehouse, 203 Bridge St., Phoenixville, PA
24th — 29th  PEN WORLD VOICES Festival of International Literature, New York, NY
25th  8 PM  Nathan Englander and Jonathan Lethem, 92nd St. Y, Lexington & 92nd, New York, NY
28th  Noon—4 PM  Robert Pinsky, MLK Library, Street festival, 901 G St., NW Washington, DC

May

1st  8 PM  Michael Chabon, 92nd St. Y, Lexington & 92nd, New York, NY
4th  7 PM  Dave Worrell & Richard Bank, Barnes & Noble, 720 Lancaster Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA
5th  8 PM  Joe Chelius, Barnes & Noble, 210 Commerce Blvd., Fairless Hills, PA
7th  8:15 PM  Discovery/The Nation Poetry Winners, 92nd St. Y, Lexington & 92nd, New York, NY
9th  7 PM  Poetry at the Beach, H.A. Maxson, Carol Bruce, Russ Endo, Rehoboth, DE Library
10th  7 PM  U.S. Poet Laureate Donald Hall and British Poet Laureate Andrew Motion, Coolidge Auditorium, Library of Congress, Jefferson Building, Eashington, DC
10th  8:45 AM—4:15 PM  WIW Seminar: Marketing Yourself and Your Writing, Cafritz Center, GWU, Washington, DC
12th  5 PM  The Twin Poets, 2nd Saturday, Gennell’s, 8th & Market Sts., Wilmington
13th  6 PM  Sandra Beasley & Ellen Cole, Iota, 2832 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia
18th  7 PM  Lamont Steptoe & Daniel Abdal-Hayy Moore, Inst. of Sci., 11 Veterans Square, Media, PA
Irish Eyes
&
The Milton Community Foundation
are pleased to invite you to the unveiling
of the John Milton Bust
For a dinner to benefit the
John Milton Statue Project
April 18th, 2007
6:00 P.M.

Irish Eyes Pub & Restaurant
105 Federal Street,
Milton, Delaware
(302) 684-8889
Constructing a Short Story

Fiction (Part Two)

By Jamie Brown

The first flaw the novice makes in writing a short story is in wanting to write a short story about (fill in the blank). The idea for a setting, or a scene, or an event, may seem particularly significant for a variety of what are generally rather personal reasons. Often this is an idea that has taken hold with the vague notion that “someone ought to write a story about it (whatever “it” is).”

That’s not enough. The work comes, as with anything of value, after you spend some time with it, develop ideas about plot threads, characters, how they mesh, and how events unfold. About how this unfolding effects or changes which of the characters, and why. How this alters the character who is, surprise, the protagonist, or the person whom the story is about, and, vicariously, the reader.

Why do you want to write this particular story? “Because it is important.” “Important to whom?” I ask. “Important to me,” the green writer will reply. That’s good, for if it isn’t really important to you, don’t start. Not, at least, with your first attempt at fiction. Those who are experienced writers know that they can get interested, occasionally, in a story which is not initially interesting to them, but that approach is just a waste of time for the novice.

Understand that the most important rule for writing a short story, other than Edgar Allan Poe’s three rules lined out in the previous issue of The Broadkill Review, is to learn to stop thinking about the story and let it begin to write itself.

Do not make the mistake of bringing your rational and analytical powers to bear on the story as it evolves. Far too many short stories die still-born because the writer is thinking like an editor before he or she even gets started. The time for editorial review is after the story is finished, not one second before!

If you have done your job correctly, the thing which is so important that it has motivated you to want to share it with others as a short story will guide the development of plot and help flesh out characters for you. Now there is nothing mysterious about this. It is just that most apprentice “fictioneers” have yet to learn to trust that their subconscious will have made some connection with the material, too. It is the subconscious which provides inspiration, not the conscious.

The effect of this learning to trust all of your mind’s fabulous creativity is that you need not struggle to name a character. Someone in the story will undoubtedly call to your character by name in dialogue. And you should stick with that name, because it will be the most important name that character can have for what he or she does.

(Nearly everyone has at one time or another in their childhood wished that they had been named something else. Names, after all, dictate much our sense of ourselves — and names will dictate much of the characters’ senses of themselves as well — ask anyone named “Darryl” or “Esmé” or “Petunia” or “Dick.” My name is “James Brown,” after all.)

At any rate, you cannot begin, the first time this sort of serendipitous thing happens to you, to understand the enormous complexity and richness to which this can lead.

A minor character in my short story, “Feria,” wound up named “Dory,” short, I guessed, for “Doreen” or some such. I didn’t analyze it, but trusted my subconscious. It helped to shape her character, and then, when the first draft was finished, I realized that the importance of her character is that she throws the protagonist a life-ring, euphemistically speaking, and the “dory = lifeboat” connection was something with which I was quite happy. No one seems to have noticed, and it probably wouldn’t matter to anyone but me anyway; nonetheless, I think it makes the text richer.

The axiom of all good writers is “write what you know.” This does not mean that you should write it down “exactly as it happened in real life.” Hemingway, I think it was, once said something to the effect that the writer’s job was to “make it truer than true, realer than real.” This means, specifically, that reality and what you know should be the starting point for your story, and not the ending point.

So when a new writer says, “I have trouble finishing a story,” or “I have trouble making my characters do what I want,” or “I can’t seem to keep going,” or any number of similar complaints, I’m fairly certain that the person making the statement is over-thinking whatever the situation is with which they are having trouble. What they really have trouble doing is letting go of their own sense of themselves as the creator of the story, thinking, of course, that anything which they create they must remain in absolute control of, and that, of course, is nearly impossible. (Even God, I am told, allows for free will.)

So let your characters breathe on their own, and they will begin to think and act on their own, and not always in ways which you expect. (Not consciously, at least. Your subconscious will be taking care of all by itself and offering your conscious mind its creative efforts.)

Just at the point when you find yourself thinking, “Oh no. My character would never say something like that!” you should smack yourself in the face with a cold wet rag, tell yourself to stop thinking, and start writing it down exactly as it begins to come to you because, even if you (or your conscious mind) don’t understand how or why the character says or does something, if you trust your subconscious, creative mind, you will eventually learn exactly why he or she or they say or do exactly what you don’t think they ever could.

Just shut up and get out of the way. The story will tell itself.
Paul Blakeford is a thirty-something black man who works in DC. He’s working on his fifth collection of poetry, which covers all things rude, romantic and political.

Elizabeth Dougherty Dolan A Pushcart nominee in fiction and poetry, Liz Dolan has received a poetry fellowship from the Delaware Division of the Arts. She has published poems, memoir, and short stories in New Delta Review, Rattle, Harp-weaver, Mudlark, and Natural Bridge, among others. She is anthologized in The Farmer’s Daughter, Wicked Alice, Philadelphia Stories and the upcoming Delaware Anthology. An associate artist-in-residence with Sharon Olds at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, Liz is a member of the poetry board of Philadelphia Stories. She was a finalists in the 2006 Dogfish Head Poetry Prize Competition.

Neal Fandek grew up in Copenhagen, Denmark and in Baltimore, attended journalism school in California, worked as a photographer in New York and now lives in mid-Missouri. His father worked his way up from deckhand to captain of ocean-going vessels on the Moore-McCormack line. His son still doesn’t know what he did during World War II.

Gary Hanna received the Emerging Artist Fellowship in Poetry from the Delaware Division of the Arts in 2003. He won the Brodie Herndon Memorial Prize in 2002 and the Walter W. Winchell Poetry Contest in 2005. This year his poems have been published or accepted in Print II, The Connecticut River Review, California State Poetry Society Letter & Literary Review, Rockhurst Review, Genie, Tapestries, Delmarva Quarterly, Bogg, Dreamstreets, Delaware Beach Life, and A Chaos of Angels. He is the Director of the Poetry at the Beach reading series.

Donald Illich has published poetry in The Iowa Review, Fourteen Hills, Roanoke Review, and New Zoo Poetry Review. His work will be included in future issues of DANElion, Passages North, Nexus, Nnopad, Sue’s Ear Poetry Review, and The Sulphur River Literary Review, among many others. He received a Prairie Schooner scholarship to the 2006 Nebraska Summer Writer’s Conference and a 2006 Pushcart Prize nomination.

Bernard Jankowski’s first book, The Bullfrog Does Not Imagine New Towns, won the Washington Writers Publishing House more-Washington Contest. His poems have been published in journals such as Atlanta Review, Baltimore Review, Cumberland Poetry Review, Potomac Review, Sycamore Review, and Visions International. Mr. Jankowski has been a featured poet online on Poetry Daily. He is working with blues pianist Bruce Bears on a recording of his Shamokin Monologues.

Hiram Larew lives in Upper Marlboro, MD. His work has appeared in various poetry journals, and was nominated for a 2006 Pushcart Prize.


Lyn Lifshin Just out: The Licorice Daughter: My Year with Ruffian, Texas Review Press; Another Woman Who Looks Like Me, from Black Sparrow at Godine. She has over 120 books & edited 4 anthologies. Her last two Black Sparrow books, Cold Comfort and Before It’s Light, won Paterson Review Awards. New also: In Mirrors, An Unfinished Story, The Daughter I Don’t Have, She Was Found Treading Water.

a. mclean has been writing poetry for decades.

Franetta McMillian has been writing ever since her mother taught her how to use a pencil. She has had poetry and short stories appear in DREAMSTREETS, MUSEA, HZS04, as well as other small publications. She also publishes a zine, ETIDORPHA and is on the staff of both DREAMSTREETS and ZINE WORLD, a national magazine review publication. Her newest poetry chapbook is entitled WATCHING THE WARS, and she has been an invited reader at the annual John Milton Poetry Celebration of Poets and Poetry the past four years.

Miles David Moore is founder and host of the Iota poetry series in Arlington, Va.; a member of the board of directors of The Word Works; and administrator of the Word Works Washington Prize. He has two books of poetry: The Bears of Paris and Rollercoaster, as well as a chapbook, Buddha Isn’t Laughing He co-edited Winners: A Retrospective of the Washington Prize. Fatslug Unbound, a CD of Moore’s poetry, was released in 2000 by Minimus Productions which, in 2005, also released Poetry Alive at IOTA, a CD from the series’ 10th anniversary. Moore’s review/essays on the poet John Haines appeared in The Wilderness of Vision (Story Line Press, 1996) and A Gradual Twilight (CavanKerry Press, 2003). A short story was published in Alice Redux, issued late 2005 by Paycock Press. He has won prizes from Poet Lore, Wordwrights! and Potomac Review; three times nominated for a Pushcart Prize; twice semifinalist in the “Discovery”/The Nation contest.

Richard Myers Peabody, a prolific poet, fiction writer and editor, is an experienced teacher and important activist in the Washington, D.C. community of letters. Peabody teaches fiction writing for the Johns Hopkins Advanced Studies Program.

J. C. Pound describes himself only as “a derelict from the beat fringe.” He resides in “the Brooklyn of the heart.”

Elisavietta Ritchie’s books include: Awaiting Permission to Land, The Spirit of the Walrus; The Arc of the Storm; Elegy for the Other Woman; Tightening The Circle Over Eel Country; Raking The Snow; chapbooks: Timbot; Wild Garlic: The Journal of Maria X.; Fiction collections: In Haste I Write You This Note; Flying Time: Edited The Dolphin’s Arc: Endangered Creatures of the Sea and others.

James Michael Robbins is the long-time Publisher and Editor of The Sulphur River Literary Review and of the SRLR Press in Austin, Texas. He received his BA in Physics from East Texas State University and studied World Literature in Grad School. He is the author of Greviture, a chapbook of poetry from Rancho Loco Press.

Kim Roberts is the author of two books of poems, The Wishbone Galaxy, and The Kimkama (Vyzha Press, forthcoming in 2007), and editor of Beltway Poetry Quarterly (www.beltwaypoetry.com)