

the Journal of Kentucky Studies

Northern Kentucky University



The Journal of Kentucky Studies

Editor
Gary Walton

Northern Kentucky University

Contributors

The *Journal* welcomes articles on any theme—art, commentary, critical essays, history, literary criticism, short fiction, and poetry. Black and white photography is also accepted. Subject matter is not restricted to Kentucky. All manuscripts should follow the University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, be double-spaced, and be submitted in triplicate with S.A.S.E. Please include e-mail address.

The *Journal* is published yearly by the Northern Kentucky University Department of English. Statements of fact and opinion are made on the responsibility of the authors alone. All articles and other correspondence should be sent to: Northern Kentucky University, Gary Walton, Editor, *The Journal of Kentucky Studies*, Department of English, Nunn Drive, Highland Heights, Kentucky 41099. Phone (859) 572-5418. E-Mail: waltong@nku.edu

Subscriptions

Subscriptions are \$5.00 per issue, pre-paid. Send checks or money orders to: Gary Walton, Editor, *The Journal of Kentucky Studies*, Department of English, Northern Kentucky University, Nunn Drive, Highland Heights, Kentucky 41099.

Cover Photos



Front cover photo: Bar inside the Beverly Hills Country Club ("Showplace of the Middle West")

Back cover illustrations and photos:

left column: antique slot machine and art from ad for the Glenn Rendezvous

right column: George Ratterman on trial; "Sleep-out Louie"'s Flamingo/633

Club sign; Dillinger's Lounge sign



the
Journal of
Kentucky
◆ **Studies**



Northern Kentucky University

© 2012 Northern Kentucky University

ISSN 8755-4208

This publication was prepared by Northern Kentucky University and printed with state funds (KRS 57.375). Northern Kentucky University is committed to building a diverse faculty and staff for employment and promotion to ensure the highest quality of workforce and to foster an environment that embraces the broad range of human diversity.

The university is committed to equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, and eliminating discrimination. This commitment is consistent with an intellectual community that celebrates individual differences and diversity as well as being a matter of law.

Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited. The university will provide equal opportunity to all employees in regard to salaries, promotions, benefits, and working conditions and will monitor these areas to ensure that any differences that may exist are the result of bona fide policies and procedures and are not the result of illegal discrimination. 15665

The Journal of Kentucky Studies

Acknowledgments



The editors wish to express thanks to Northern Kentucky University for the funding of this journal and for the released time for its editing.

Contributors



Sandi Keaton-Wilson is a published writer of prose, poetry and plays from Somerset, Kentucky where she is a member of Pulaski Writers' Alliance. Her work has appeared in *Appalachian Heritage*, *Appalachian Journal*, *Now & Then*, *COAL: An Anthology*, *Pine Mt. Sand & Gravel*, and many other journals and anthologies throughout the region. One of her plays, *Boundaries*, (written in protest of Mountain Top Removal mining) has had staged readings in Berea, Somerset, and Manhattan Studio Club in New York City. She considers herself an arts activist who often writes for the protection of women, children and the environment.

Sandra R. Seidman holds the B.A. degree (*cum laude*) in English and History from Northern Kentucky University, where she serves as an administrative associate. She is the author of "Lane & Bodley, Manufacturers of Steam Engines and Hardware for Industry, Agriculture, and Fire Protection" (with Cory Ament) which appeared in the May-June 2006 issue of *Steam Traction*); "Early Cincinnati Steam Manufacturing: The Lane & Bodley Company, 1850-1921" (which appeared on the website cincinnati.triplesteam.org); and "Early Cincinnati Steam Manufacturing" (which appeared on the website vintagemachinery.org, July 4, 2012).

James B. Goode is a Professor of English with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. He holds an A.A., B.A., and M.A. from the University of Kentucky and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing: Fiction from Murray State University. He has published six books of poetry and non-fiction to date. His poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, and essays frequently appear in national and international magazines.

Lauren Lombardo a senior creative writing major at Northern Kentucky University and has published in the *Loch Norse Magazine*.

Katie Southerland, graduated from Northern Kentucky University with a B.A. in English and a M.A. in English. She has been published in *Licking River Review*. She teaches English Composition at Beckfield College, but is a professional poet at heart.

Renee Emerson teaches and writes in Rome, Georgia. She has her M.F.A. from Boston University and has recently published in *Indiana Review* and *Southern Humanities Review*. She is the author of three chapbooks, the most recent of which is *Where Nothing Can Grow* (Batcat Press, 2011).

H. Michael Sanders is a poet and media artist working in audio, photography and video. His media work typically incorporates poetic spoken text with imagery, and he recently completed an artist's residency at the Experimental Television Center in Owego, New York. His current poetry combines Beat poetics and jazz in a vocal per-

formance context. His most recent publications include: *Live From Diogenes' Café—H. Michael Sanders, Listening to Trane: Three Meditations on Saxophone* (DVD video), a live poetry performance, and *Magnetic Resonance Medley* (DVD video), an award-winning short experimental work screened internationally in over ten media festivals. He is currently a professor and department chair in Electronic Media Communications at University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash College.

Steven R. Cope is a Kentucky author whose second volume of children's poems, *Crow 2*, is due out from Wind Publications in the fall of 2012; his *Selected Poems* is forthcoming from Broadstone Books.

Nettie Farris is a poet living in Floyds Knobs, Indiana. Her work has recently appeared in *Paperbag* and *Illya's Honey*. Her chapbook of poems, *Communion*, is forthcoming from Accents Publishing.

Dennis Saleh is in the *Hotel Amerika* "Epistolary" issue, with "Letter from America," an excerpt from his as yet unpublished novel, *Pomegranate*, about Oscar Wilde's 1882 lecture tour of the United States. Other excerpts from the book have appeared in magazines from Arizona, to New York City, to Belfast, Ireland. Recent and forthcoming poetry appearances include *Blue Unicorn*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Oyez Review*, *Poem*, and *South Carolina Review*.

Ron Watson is a resource teacher for Gifted and Talented at Hopkins County Schools in Madisonville, Kentucky, where he serves as the editor for *The Mad Hatter*, a national journal of creativity for pre-college students. His poems have appeared in *South Dakota Review*, *Visions*, *Wind*, and *Zone 3*, among others. His chapbooks include *My Name Ain't Bud* (Pygmy Forest Press, 1991); *Pagan Faith* (Nightshade Press, 1992); *Counting Down the Days* (Pudding House Press, 1994); and *A Sacred Heart* (Redneck Press, 1994). He is a past recipient of the Al Smith Fellowship for Poetry, awarded by the Kentucky Arts Council.

Marguerite Guzman Bouvard is the author of six books and two chapbooks of poetry. Her latest book of poems, *The Unpredictability of Light*, won the MassBook award for Poetry. Her poems have been widely anthologized. She is also the author of twelve non-fiction books. Her latest *The Invisible Wounds of War; Coming Home from Iraq and Afghanistan*, has just come out. She is a Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University.

Vickie Cimprich is a Northern Kentucky writer who has also lived in the Kentucky mountains. *Pretty Mother's Home—A Shakeress Daybook* (Broadstone Books, 2007) is her first collection of poems. Her work has appeared in *Bigger Than They Appear: Anthology of Very Short Poems*, *Poetry As Prayer: Appalachian Women Speak* (Wind Publications, 2004), *Plainsongs*, *The African American Review*, *The Licking River Review*, *The AFCU Journal: A Franciscan Perspective on Higher Education*, *Mountain Life and Work*, *Inscape*, *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* and *Street Vibes*. She received Kentucky Foundation for Women grants in 1999, 2004 and 2011.

Matthew Haughton is the author of the book *Stand in the Stillness of Woods* (forthcoming, WordTech Editions). His chapbook, *Bee-coursing Box* (Accents Publishing) was nominated for the Weatherford Award for Appalachian Poetry Book of the Year. His poems have appeared in many journals including *Appalachian Journal*, *Now & Then*, *Still*, and *The Louisville Review*. He lives in Lexington, Kentucky.

Frederick Smock is Associate Professor of English at Bellarmine University, where he received the 2005 Wyatt Faculty Award. His work appears in many leading journals, and he has published collections of poetry with Larkspur Press and Accents Publishing.

John Cantey Knight is a past winner of the Pirate's Alley William Faulkner Creative Writing Competition for poetry, the *Louisiana Literature Prize* for poetry, the *New Delta Review* Eyster Prize and the Langston Hughes Prize for poetry.

Jane Stuart lives and writes on a farm in W-Hollow, Greenup, Kentucky. Her books include *Journeys: A Book of Poetry* (Summit Poetry Press, Louisville) and *Cherokee Lullaby* (Big Easy Press, 1995). She has published recently in *Bellowing Ark*, *The Poet's Pen*, *Candelabrum*, *Pegasus* and *Trestle Creek Review*.

Jane Olmsted is a professor and director of the Gender & Women's Studies Program and coordinator of the M.A. in Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities at Western Kentucky University. Her chapbook, *Tree Forms* (Finishing Line Press), was published in 2011. Her poems and stories have appeared in *Nimrod*, *Poetry Northwest*, *The Beloit Fiction Journal*, *Adirondack Review*, and *Briar Cliff Review*, among others.

Raymond Abbott lives in Louisville, Kentucky. For much of his life he has been employed as a social worker, most recently working with severely mentally ill adults in Louisville. He is the recipient of many awards for his writing, including the Whiting Writers Award; a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship; a Al Smith Fellowship; an Kentucky Arts Council award. He is currently at work on a novel, a contemporary story, set in Kentucky.

Walter Lane is a controversial Appalachian social commentator. His first person stories about resisting authority, moon shining, dynamiting fish and cockfighting have made him a person of interest. His style of writing is called redneck chic.

Travis Du Priest, a native of Virginia, attended the University of Richmond and received a Ph.D. in 17th century English Literature from the University of Kentucky, where he also studied letterpress printing with master printer Carolyn Hammer. His articles on Eudora Welty and Elizabeth Maddox Roberts, as well as his own creative short fiction, have appeared in the *Journal of Kentucky Studies*. He has published four chapbooks of poetry and two scholarly works on 17th century writers and has been a featured poet in the *Kentucky Poetry Review*. In 2007, he was the inaugural Clay Lancaster Residential Fellow, writing at "Warwick" on the Kentucky River near Salvisa. He is currently working on a book on his Huguenot ancestors and on a series of poems entitled "Poetic Post Scripts." He lives with his wife, also a University of Kentucky graduate, in Racine, Wisconsin, with their dog Buster.

Harry Brown teaches in the English Department at Eastern Kentucky University. He has published some three hundred and fifty poems in various magazines, including *Southern Humanities Review*, *Poem*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *Kentucky Poetry Review*, and many others. He has published several collections of poetry, including *Paint Lick Idyll* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), *Measuring Man* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), *Ego's Eye* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), and *Everything Is Its Opposite* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), *Felt Along the Blood—New and Selected Poems* (Wind Publications, 2005) and *In Some Households the King Is Soul*. He has received the Mary Anderson Senior Fellowship at the Mary Anderson Center for the Arts and has been a fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. He has also been poetry editor for *Scripsit* and *The Chaffin Journal*.

Robert K. Wallace is Regents Professor of English at Northern Kentucky University. His first book of poetry, *Dayton Floodwall Poems, 2009-2010*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2012. His book on Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *Moby-Dick* opera, which premiered in Dallas in 2010, is forthcoming from the University of North Texas Press in Spring 2013.

Richard Hague has published poems, essays, and stories in *Poetry*, *Country Journal*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, *Nimrod*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Appalachian Journal*, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Now & Then*, *Negative Capability*, *Ohio Magazine*, *English Journal*, *The Prose Poem: An International Journal*, *Religion & Ethics Newsletter*, *Basic Education*, and *Teachers & Writers* as well as two dozen other magazines and reviews and in over two dozen anthologies. His books include *Ripening* (The Ohio State U P, 1984) for which he was named Ohio Co-Poet of the Year in 1985), *Possible Debris* (Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 1988), *Mill and Smoke Marrow*, appearing in the four-book collection *A Red Shadow Of Steel Mills* (Bottom Dog Press, 1991), *Garden* (Word Press 2002), *Alive In Hard Country* (Bottom Dog Press, 2003) and named 2004 Poetry Book of the Year by the Appalachian Writers Association, *The Time It Takes Light* (Word Press, 2004), and *Lives of The Poem* (Wind Publications, 2005), as well as five chapbooks, *Crossings*, *A Week Of Nights Down River*, *A Bestiary*, *Greatest Hits: 1968-2000*, and *Burst: Poems Quickly* (Dos Madres Press, 2004). *Milltown Natural: Essays And Stories from A Life* (Bottom Dog Press, 1997) was a 1997 National Book Award nominee.

Richard B. Challis graduated with a Master of Arts degree in Public History from Northern Kentucky University. Having grown up in Northern Kentucky and having been one of the youngest members of The Committee of 500, he became interested in researching the history of organized crime in Northern Kentucky and its effects. He currently resides in Erlanger, Kentucky with his wife, Emily.

Rhonda Pettit is the author of *The Global Lovers*, a Critic's Pick at the 2010 Cincinnati Fringe Festival, and has published two books on the work of Dorothy Parker (*A Gendered Collision*, 2000, and *The Critical Waltz*, 2005). In 2010 she edited a special section on James Baker Hall for *JKS*. Her poems have been published widely in print and online journals and anthologies, and her poem "1963" was nominated for a 2011 Pushcart Prize. She is professor of English and Women's Studies at University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College.

Kevin McHugh taught English for over thirty years to students from grade six through college. In that time he earned awards for excellence in teaching, including three-time recognition by the Ashland Teacher Achievement Awards Program. He currently serves as the proofreading/copy manager for the Cincinnati office of Landor Associates, an international branding and design consulting firm. Kevin is the author of professional and historical articles, and an editor of/contributor to poetry collections, literature and writing texts. He has been active in Irish and Irish-American organizations and is a founder and a director of the Tapestry of Irish Culture series at Thomas More College in Northern Kentucky. Kevin lives in Cincinnati with his wife, Chris, the managing editor of *The Artist's Magazine*. They have two grown children, Katie and Brendan.

Charles Semones books include *And All the Layered Light: Last Poems* (NewSouth Books, Inc., 2008). His most recent magazine appearances include a poem in *The Kentucky Humanities Magazine*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Mercer's Magazine* and *The South Carolina Review*. He still lives in Harrodsburg, Kentucky.

Robert B. Slocum is an Episcopal priest and the rector of Trinity Church, Danville, Kentucky. He taught undergraduate theology courses at Marquette University and Mount Mary College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is a frequent contributor of short stories to the *Journal of Kentucky Studies*, and he has published poetry in the *Vanderbilt Review*, the *Anglican Theological Review*, and the *Wisconsin Poets' Calendar*. He lives with his wife, Victoria, in Danville. They enjoy competitive running, traveling, and raising their many greyhounds and cats.

Mary Ricketson has published in various publications including *Wild Goose Poetry Review*, *Future Cycle Press*, *Lights in the Mountains*, *Echoes Across the Blue Ridge*, *Freeing Jonah IV* and *Freeing Jonah V*. She has a chapbook entitled *I Hear the River Call My Name*. In 2011, she won first place in the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest national poetry contest and the gold medal for poetry in the Cherokee County Senior Games/Silver Arts. She works as a mental health counselor and as a farmer.

Paul Christensen teaches in the English Department of Texas A & M University.

Deana Nantz holds an M.F.A. in creative writing and an M.A. in English from Eastern Kentucky University where she currently teaches composition and modern drama. *Fits of Wrath and Irony* is her first chapbook published by *Finishing Line Press*. Her fiction, poetry, and literary reviews have appeared in *Paradigm*, *Fiddleblack*, *Fried Chicken and Coffee*, *Jelly Bucket*, and *Aurora*.

the Journal of Kentucky ❖ Studies

Volume Twenty-nine • September 2012

Contents



Poetry

- Richard Hague
Camera, Window, Mind, 13
- Frederick Smock
A Gift, 16
Discursus, 17
Moon, 18
Summer, 19
Og Skogen, 20
- Steven R. Cope
The Cellar Well, 21
The Lone Ranger, 24
- James B. Goode
Diving for Words, 26
- Charles Semones
Canaan's Landing, 27
Elegy for Peso in Indian Summer, 28
- Travis Du Priest
The Poet Goes Mad in the Coffee Shop, 29
Suspension, 31
This Poem, 32
- Sandi Keaton-Wilson
Book Woman, 33
- Rhonda Pettit
Super Model, 34
Fathoming, 35
Neo-natural History, 36
Mother the Stranger, 37
- Matthew Haughton
The Lineage of Fire-walkers, 39
For a Poet Friend, 40
Deer Corpse (a revision), 41

Vickie Cimprich
Evan Shelby, born 1828, 42
Isaac Newton's Girl, 43
Helen Keating, 44

John Cantey Knight
What She Was About, 45
Her Belly Filled, 46
Appomattox, 47
Quitin' Time, 48

Harry Brown
Portentous, 49
Dead Right; or, a Majority of One, 50
My Father's Garden, 51

Marguerite Guzman Bouvard
Somalia, 54
Resurrection, 55
Ahmed Kathrada, 56

Ron Watson
Disregarding the Facts, 57
The Rug Pulled Out from Under, 58

Dennis Saleh
Luna, Magritte, oil on canvas, 59
Chrysophilia Two, 60

Nettie Farris
Water Lilies, 61
Hawthorn, 62

Mary Ricketson
Sleepless, 63
Pick Flowers, 64
Back to the Campfire, 65

Walter Lane
The Hillbilly Poet, 66

Jane Stuart
Three haiku, 67
Galaxy, 68
Eclipse, 69

H. Michael Sanders
Boogie Woogie Piano, 70
Jazz Improvisation, 71
Jazz Haiku – Series 1, 72

Renee Emerson
Slow-Cooking, 73
10 Weeks Pregnant, Entering Spring, 74
The First Day After, 75

- Katie Southerland
Slaughter, 76
Hysterectomy, 77
You Could Live, 78
Pieces of Him, 79
- Robert K. Wallace
Overcast Beauty, June 10, 2012, 80
- Jane Olmsted
Someone Else's Offspring, 85
Far, Far Away, in Vilnius, 86
Confession by Proxy, 87
Two White Pigeons, 88
- Janet Gruenwald
Gardenia, 89
The Bridesmaids, 90

Fiction

- James B. Goode
Red, Bootjack, Little Stevie and the Red Indian, 92
- Paul Christensen
Fate, 97
- Robert B. Slocum
Peter, 104
- Raymond Abbott
Trouble, 108
Fire at Uptack Road, 112
- Kevin McHugh
Ergo Sum, 117
- Lauren Lombardo
Richard Hague's *Lives of the Poem: A Guide to the Heart of Creative Writing*, 121

Essays

- James B. Goode
"Nothing Gold Can Stay" The Curse of Coal in Joe Anthony's *Pickering's Mountain*, 126
- Lucy Arnold
The Possibility of Re-Form: Plasticity, Feminism, and Catherine Malabou, 131
- Sandra R. Seidman
Alexander Bonner "Moses" Latta, Nineteenth-Century Inventor and Entrepreneur, 140
- Richard Challis
Northern Kentucky, The State's Stepchild: Origins and Effects of Organized Crime, 149
- Harry Brown
A Good Man is Hard to Find—But Good Sense Can Prevail, 182

Camera, Window, Mind

by Richard Hague

*In memory of Joe Enzweiler, 1950-2011,
author of "The Man Who Stood Still"*

I

Out on the tundra, mosquitoes
in yellow-brown clouds around us,
we walked far off the road
toward the glacier,
its foot bleeding gray-white
with icy run-off
in high summer's heat.
When you left Ohio
the first time
it was not to such a place—sun-blasted,
night-less day-long days,
yourself nervously high on a
rope and board bridge
over icewater,
having already built your own warmth,
published your first books,
made truce with dark and cold,
grown new bones and muscles with the
work—
but to a young man's idea of here that,
like a physics problem,
you had yet to solve.

II

In Paris,
over the Boulevard du Temple,
Daguerre composed
a photo, himself
motionless, nervous
at this experiment,
as if balanced on a frail bridge
of time and light.
Far below his mind
in its high window
with a camera,
a man stood still,
forever fixed on glass
for us, much later, to mull.
Here, too, was an idea
you had to solve,

the camera slung around your neck,
 another eye into the world,
 a small room
 from which to compose your
 judgments and conjectures.

III

You wrote a poem
 in which Daguerre's man,
 had he known
 what was happening, might
 have felt all
 the kosmos drop away,
 the sky empty
 like a negative of itself
 from him,
 for in the photo's long exposure
 all that moves is gone.
 He alone occupies a city as forlorn
 as the imagined village of Keats's urn.

IV

So too for us.
 All that moves is gone,
 or soon will be.
 This is the problem:
 the permanence of
 impermanence.
 What sense to make
 of stone or flesh, of words
 or time or light,
 when all is brushed aside,
 blown dark,
 struck dumb,
 when all cameras'
 and windows' shutters
 rust closed?

V

Ah, Joe,
 I imagine myself the last reader
 of your poem: long ago the
 power has gone off,
 the phones are all dead and broken,
 the dynamos all decayed,
 the Internet long unraveled by lightning's mischief,
 war's chaos, mortality's old bad luck.

At midnight, in some fire-ruined room,
I find, in moonlit rubble,
your torn book of poems.
Slowly, I read your lines,
and fall from my last sure thought
into that loneliness,
that abandonment
you fixed in words—
that loss in which, you, and the man
who stood still,
like every star, have gone out.

A Gift

by Frederick Smock

The blueberry season has ended.
Soon it will be time for pumpkins
to arrive at the market stalls.

It is all a gift, no?
And the giver unknown.

The less you want
the more bounteous the world becomes,
when you pass that tipping point.

Discursus

by Frederick Smock

Trees lend shape
to the wind,
otherwise unseen,

as chimes lend sound
to the wind,
otherwise unheard;

theory comes from
the Greek,
the journey of the soul,

seeking out the
forms hidden
within the forms.

Moon

by Frederick Smock

The day lengthens,
the old earth tips its hat
to the moon.

The changeful moon
goes through many phases,
even in a single night,

though it is the same
moon as ever, we know this.
We are the changes.

Summer

by Frederick Smock

The sunlight
that the tree soaked up
for all those years

the logs give back
in the hearth.
Where we sit through

the long winter months,
a small blazing
patch of summer.

Og Skogen

(Norwegian: "the pines")

by Frederick Smock

Every forest has
a central tree,
one the whole forest
leans on.

You may not
be able to find it.
It lives deep
in the heart.

It may even have
fallen, years
ago, but its memory
is that strong.

The Cellar Well

by Steven R. Cope

You see there was this thing,
 hooked in the pond and set
 loose in our cellar well,
 finely squared, six feet across,
 the dark bottom unfathomed,
 and while I slept through three winters,
 growing outward and downward,
 mouth gaping upward, wide,
 finely squared, six feet across,
 there was forever this thing,
 this thing growing
 in the cellar well,
 this believe it or not thing
 that I could never once
 forget or leave behind,
 this thing I took with me
 to scout meetings and ballgames,
 to back rows of movie houses,
 to Sunday Schools and funerals,
 this growing unfed thing,
 ravenous and waiting,
 the shaft of its gullet
 hung halfway to China.

And I drew up at the cellar door
 to listen for it breathing,
 my little ear stone flat against the earth,
 one, then the other one,
 my little feet stone stupid and keening
 for any muffled rumbling,
 my little heart flumping.
 And inside the door, meekly,
 I towed-up the thrashings
 of dark water from the walls,
 the slimy wet cobwebs,
 the cold grimy gray light bulb,
 cold mucky mud floor,
 cold dank sheen settling on the jars
 of red beets and sausage balls,
 turnips and beans.

And more than once on the edge
 I peered over and down
 that long, oozing skidway,
 my gut heaving and spinning,

my little boy life pulled
 as duly and as tautly
 down from a height
 as some tired old vagabond
 from his bridge,
 deep calling unto deep,
 and if not for the string
 of that grimy gray light bulb
 would have plunged
 down and through
 that long cold dark corridor
 to the dead center of the earth,
 with nothing below my feet
 and no way to right myself,
 no bearings, no air,
 turned to gill and scale
 while I lashed out and clawed,
 and then nothing to nothing,
 even the thought of me dissolved.

And when I grew to write poems,
 grew to stand like some dandy
 with fine verses in my mouth,
 or just words, or rantings,
 with professors and technocrats
 strung with cellphones and Ipods,
 hands soft as play dough,
 with guitar strummers, rappers,
 occupiers and pollsters,
 with a mole on my left eyebrow,
 with a great love for God
 but a hatred of all allegory,
 I who still fished for lunkers
 while this great gulf
 still loomed, both in my mind
 and out of it, how deep now
 and how wide, how hungry, how mad,
 hung halfway to China,
 I dared never tell of it.

Or dared never tell
 that when the dozers and trucks came
 to plow the thing under
 I chained my heart to a log,
 mouth bound and gagged
 to keep from spilling over
 on the ground,
 boots laced together
 lest I run out to tell,

lest I break down
and confess every sin
in the world, every longing,
every secret fear,
every dark evil thing
that I'd lived with so long
I could hardly say, or recall,
or even imagine
what was real and what was not.

The Lone Ranger

by Steven R. Cope

Once the world
was less apt to.
Newscasters did not
and teachers did not and
students did not and
neither my mother
nor my father did
and all the men I knew
got up in the morning
and went to work
without doing it
and all the women I knew
stayed home and
worked without doing it
and raised their children
without doing it
and taught them
to respect their fathers.
If I came home and
mother was not there
I went to look
for her doing it.
I was the only
one who did it.
Nobody else did it.
And my brother said
to quit it and my sister
said to quit it
and when father came home
he said to quit it.
But I said you
don't understand.
I'm free to do it if I want to.
I'm the lone ranger.
I got certain rights and privileges.
I got a silver bullet.
I got a white hat
and a white horse.
I deserve to be treated better.
And besides, in 2012
those doing it will rule
and beget a country
of those doing it,
and what will become
of you then? —

and those in the know
will say I don't
know about you
but who does
he think he is?—
that fellow there
not doing it,
that insanely dull fellow.

Diving for Words

by James B. Goode

Below the skin of the classroom
 the water is cold and murky
 we are diving for words
 with little air left in the tanks
 dangerous dangling participles
 lurk
 in the darkness below
 an ink pen
 walking across the ocean floor
 some objectless preposition
 drifting down
 landing just before the period
 two sentences running together
 like a grilled cheese sandwich
 paragraphs turn into a salad no one wants to eat—
 the metaphor is drowning
 like a bitch dog with twelve pups
 I struggle to teach them how to dive
 but we are both going down
 in the same murky water
 with the same depleted tanks
 with the same familiar fears
 still there.

Canaan's Landing

by Charles Semones

What made him let his tongue turn mean when he went down to the landing that wintry November afternoon was something he could not account for. He never meant to ruin what had been such good relations with his neighbor. Each had been the other's closest friend, or so he thought. But there on the river, men never spoke of things like that. They kept their feelings to themselves. They never would have dared divulge them to the ones who had the right to hear them. He knew some perversity had seized him, made him say vile words he would have given up his seat in heaven not to. He had never known he had such rage built up inside him—and for no reason he could think of. And so he took the long way home, planning what he'd do, and how he'd do it, since something desperate was called for. Only then could he admit to what surely had to be a wrongful love. Familiar things seemed ominous; the day was cheerless, out of joint. He couldn't help but notice that dark was coming earlier than common. Once at home, he lit the mantel lamp, a natural thing to do. What was not natural was turning his hound loose and taking the well-rope to the curing barn. His best friend found him the next morning when he came to see if there was not some way the two of them could mend their fences, knowing that the words he'd heard the afternoon before were not the words his friend had aimed to say. He cut the body down and sat beside it for an hour or more. He'd feel the weight of unmeant words the balance of his days.

Elegy for Peso in Indian Summer

(1999 – 2009)

by Charles Semonos

Now that I think of it, you were the color of this weather,
this Indian summer weather of mid-November—
weather like today, when the blond of dandled leaves
is the color your face was, your bright Chihuahua face.
I miss those somnolent twilights of late September
when we took our walks to the end of the subdivision's
cul-de-sac, your picking up the pace when we started back,
your nose pointing homeward in the day's dwindling
tattoo of color, its nostalgia layering lawns, and the last
of the roses, frail but still tenacious on their trellises.
Your passing taught me all I need to know about grief:
the lump in the throat, the scalding tears pooling behind
the eyelids. In the drowse of Indian summers to come,
there'll be the blond weather of a five-pound Chihuahua,
the leaves letting go and slow-motioning groundward—
and you still ahead of me, tugging at your leash in the dusk.

The Poet Goes Mad in the Coffee Shop

by Travis Du Priest

*for Gurney Norman**

Would everyone, please, shut the fuck
up. You heard me. You in that stupid
Hawaiian shirt conversing with Karl
Marx. Yes, you over there: Everyone

Knows you have a place in Taos, we
know you can walk to the Plaza. Yes,
we know you're home every summer.
Do we ever. Oh, yes, especially you,

nomadic author, meandering minstrel—
lap-topped, cell-phoned, brief-cased,
dropping correspondence and calls
from your "editor." Where is she now?
New York or is it LA? Why not just

give us her e-mail address so we can
read your proofs on-line and learn about
the publishing process which you are the
first ever to experience. Actually, you're
okay; I like it that you're totally pissed
at a Fascist website. But, oh yes,

absolutely you, just back from Germany,
and to Germany we wish thou wouldst return.
We hear loud and clear that you are

"available" on Amazon—what was it?
"a complex yet readable read." And by
all means the six of you at the Old Farts

Board Meeting: We've been with you to
Austria, to Italy, to Spain, but I'll be
damned if we'll go with you and your
grand-children to see "Ratatouille."

We really won't. Sorry I have to raise
my voice even louder, the cackler by
the front window—did someone give
that bitch a microphone? And while

we're at it, does anyone know why the
Hell they have to launch a small rocket
to produce one little cup of coffee? I can't

even hear myself yelling. I lost control,
didn't I? I forgot where . . . where I was.
I was thinking, out loud, wasn't I?
Thinking of what to write next. Does any-
one remember what I was working on?

**Kentucky novelist and poet*

Suspension

by Travis Du Priest
*for Clay Lancaster**

I am a hanging basket of begonias
A Japanese lantern swaying gently
In the summer breeze, my head
Held up with twine, my eyes smiling,
My teeth slightly apart in wonder,
My puppet hands a millimeter
Above my legs. My thoughts,
Goldfish in a bowl.
What, I wonder, suspends my heart?

* *Kentucky architect and author*

This Poem

by Travis Du Priest

*for Guy Davenport**

This poem may be the very poem that changes your life.
 I know it's changing mine—just waiting for it to come
 has nearly brought me to distraction. I need your help.
 Not out of pity, but in communal contemplation of
 the mysteries of . . . well, let's just say . . . of the mysteries.

Don't you sense even now that you're more involved?
 That you're being turned inside out, having something
 pulled from your inner core, like straining green tea
 through bamboo.

Perhaps just hearing me read, you too feel a bit
 uneasy. Though thankful, as though a cold is being
 extracted from your chest? The pain of relief.

I'll admit that even as I watch the dark lead of my pencil
 in abrasion with the white 8 ½ by 11 paper, I find myself
 glaring into a window of wonder at what will come next.
 At what we will create, at your words flowing through my
 hand. I am speechless.

(Pause)

You thought we were through, didn't you? Well, not exactly:

Sages say that space is the essence of Spirit, that fields
 and pastures are where angels gather, not on the heads
 of pins. So, we needed that gap—touching but not
 touching—didn't we? For our souls to catch up
 with our bodies as the animists say.

I sense our initial impulses were indeed accurate:
 we wait on a threshold of time and space, and
 write our poems together.

* *Kentucky Writer, artist, translator, critic*

Book Woman

by Sandi Keaton-Wilson

I left the hollow on my ride
 heading high as I watched
 wisps of fog lift
 from lofty mountain realms
 like bored spirits leaving earth.
 A long day's work for short pay from WPA,
 I sat straight in the saddle—
 a Kentucky pack horse librarian.
 It was noon before I met sun, forest
 shadowing dirt trails up one ridge then down
 and over the river and up the next.
 I carried the books—precious then—
 to eager hands and eyes
 hungry for worlds beyond plank porches and puncheon floors.
Man does not live by bread alone . . .
 The Best Book says,
 so I carry it, too, pause to read some chosen scripture,
 or some fiction adventure chapter,
 sip spring-cooled sweet milk,
 and slip with friends like a letter sent
 to places we've never been and those we dare not go.



Super Model

by Rhonda Pettit

She refused
to believe

that image

was the best
she could do.

Fathoming

by Rhonda Pettit

Why love at all
what passes away
unless

the passing itself
is love hard come by,
hard-earned,

a liquefaction of stone
falling for its
poetry?

Neo-natural History

by Rhonda Pettit

Billions of species, galaxies,
billions of years,
nows.

The past never snaps;
it recycles, leaves
us the trace

that entices, would laugh
if it had a mouth
big as ours.

The past is postmodern,
not waiting for us
to catch up.

*

once I loved a rancher
who left the ranch for the city

who left the city for war
whose bones make soil
for the desert

*

us, them: a history
without names

a storm without cease
without rain
in the heartland

*

script on the stone that split
the hoof: mother the stranger

noun or verb, I ask
says a lone horse,
both

The Lineage of Fire-walkers

by Matthew Haughton

They will never speak to you,
these young men
out front of a Quik-Stop,
passing an Ale-8-One
bottle between them,
spitting chewing tobacco
down its long neck.
They will watch you silently
with eyes that seem to flicker
from an ancestral spark
of hot coal,
pulled up from this ground.
Their daddies, their daddies's
daddies, all labored
beneath the earth.
Like fire-walkers,
they walked a different way
to keep from getting hurt.
But these young men haven't
worked that life;
they will watch you without
uttering a word,
sizing you up for trying to talk.

For a Poet Friend

by Matthew Haughton

To tease my new friend,
I tell him
I'd likely be
the one
late at night
to sneak
out to his farm,
and snatch
handfuls of okra
from his garden.
That in the beam
of his flash-
light, I might
turn my eyes
away from
the shine,
and in a moment
of naked
honesty, curl
my lip
and spit,
before slipping
back under the fence.

Deer Corpse (a revision)

by Matthew Haughton

To return to the settled earth
where a deer once laid its head.
The grass was cool on his skull,
sending a shiver through his spine.
Did he know his unclosed eye
would never shut to the world?
Or that the bullet burrowed deep
in his thigh was a tiny, immaculate
creation, one that a man meant
to bury there without hesitation.

Evan Shelby, born 1828

Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill

by Vickie Cimprich

Deacon Elhannon picked Evan up that day
they threw him off the steamboat at Louisville.
There he was, looked to be eight or nine.
Said he was fifteen and free. Deacon said,
Look sharp. Act like you belong with us.

Through the day we loaded up our store.
By that evening, Zachariah said,
You want to go to Pleasant Hill with us?
What's Pleasant Hill? he said. *Why certainly.*

Turned out he was more or less eleven.
He believed, in 1839. All judged
he was an upright man. Good singing voice.
Testified some during Mother's Work.
Then in the spring of 1843,
when he had to shave he up and left.

The greater part of us had hoped
the steamboat let him on this time.

Isaac Newton's Girl

by Vickie Cimprich

*“ a bright mulatto, part Indian . . . ,
early convert at Pleasant Hill.”*

—Julia Neal, *The Kentucky Shakers*

Didn't nobody know how mean Daddy was
back in Oconaluftee. We all thought
it was the drink, but then things got so bad
he was invited out of the village. So
we all went up through Cumberland Gap.

The first
white man he met, he sold me to, mama
being gone that day. The last I saw
of any of my people. Might be worse:
Newtons were church-going folks, that is,
when there was a church. That's likely why,
soon as the Paint Lick preaching settled down,
we all rushed off to join the Shakers at
Elisha Thomas' place on Shawnee Run.

The first I'd danced since I left home was there.
Crazy steps. It scared me that they all
might be drunk, but it never happened.
Just more of singing, more and more of dancing,

another family maybe I could keep.

Helen Keating

by Vickie Cimprich

“. . . founder of [t]he first lay-operated rural Catholic settlement school in Appalachia.”

—*The Encyclopedia of Appalachia*

Caney Creek school at last! Miss Lloyd came out to welcome me at Hazard. By the time the horses pulled to the hollow's mouth, we were Alice and Helen. The children sang "Once More My Soul" to welcome me, harmonies a bit askew, but not their bows or buttons. Truly, to be their principal and teacher was all I'd dreamed, in Pennsylvania.

After I'd had time to settle in, Alice brought some blooms, redbud she said, and a vase to decorate my sideboard (a traveling trunk, with doily, looked quite well). We chatted. "Pippa Passes" was the piece of Mr. Browning's she admired most. Much she knew by heart. Presently she looked round, admiring the few bits of home I'd brought, the photograph: my sister by my side, our solemn communion. We were twelve. *You must be twins*. Yes, I was proud to own. Her eyes stopped at the pillow. Just two rosary beads. *You're Catholic*. Yes, I am. *I see. You know that mountains people are prejudiced. So it's important no one else should know.*

Two factors were involved in my discernment to resign: She'd said I couldn't be myself. Moreover, she'd sold these people short. Painful and costly though it was, I bought a ticket home. But

God's in his heaven, all's right with the world, chuckled Mr. Browning, Bishop Howard and I, when the bishop and I met and spoke. *Likely you, Miss Keating, are the one we have been praying for, on Contrary and in Covington, to found our mountains school.*

*Here's three hundred.
Let me know. I'm sure we can get more.*

What She Was About

by John Cantey Knight

Moisture and new mown grass
smell of birth beneath the sunshine.
Clay clings to heels
of cowboy boots and splatters
jeans' legs. The sweatband
of his Stetson is wet
as he circulates still air
across a wrinkled face. During
last night's thunder,
his wife's favorite mare foaled.
He thought about the night
before—what thunderclaps do
to animals. It wasn't like
his wife, the way she wakened
him. Since her miscarriage,
she'd been cool. That night
she became another woman
as she rode him. Filling
the water trough, his mind
moved on to work that needed
doing. Almost nine months
later to the day, he'd wonder
at the new face she cradled
as a mother. He wouldn't
recollect the night the foal
was born, the weather, or her
way of using him. She knew
that night what she was about.
In the morning, a smile
on her face, she promised
the boy in her belly the foal.
Done; trough filled, he moved on.

Her Belly Filled

by John Cantey Knight

The dirt poor, one way or 'nother, make do.
Girls learn to cook beans and greens
and make corn bread. Twin towheads,
too young for work, tumble
in played out dirt scratched and sown
with another man's seed. Every now a 'gin
what's planted don't come up true.
Watching his firstborn, a sharecropper
fingers his thinning hair as if to measure
from where this dark-tousled
daughter came. Still, she was his best
hand. As silent Negroes pass
in their Sunday best, he spit in the dust.
They don't look back till well past.
Another damn revival, Jesus loves us.
At noon, his wife's bare feet would walk
a pathway to the patch with pone, collards
and a pot of field peas, her belly filled.

Appomattox

by John Cantey Knight

I know how Lee struggled
between the Army of the Potomac
and the fall of the Confederacy.
Walking the Appomattox road,
I understand how each foot
was fought. Rearguard
actions are tactics to prolong
the inevitable with duty, honor,
and country. Each sun setting
ends on the long, weary
road to the inevitable. Now, all
that remains is simply, I gave
my best. Nothing else matters
but holding each diminishing
step till a man subtracts
in inches all that is left, always
drawing out the final surrender.
In defeat let men be measured!
Let nothing more than duty,
honor and country endure.

Note: "Duty, Honor, Country" is the
Motto of the U. S. Military Academy.

Quitin' Time

by John Cantey Knight

Soon, it will be quitin' time.
Already, sun's goin' down.
Light still, the moon is risin'.
The whippoorwill gives a call
out in the field where cows
are headin' home. Soon, it'll be
quitin' time when the milkin'
is done. When she calls like
a whippoorwill, "Supper's
on the table gettin' cold," I'll
sing, "It's almost quitin' time."

Portentous

by Harry Brown

“As laces just reveal the surge—”

—E. Dickinson

—for Jenny

Early risen from hibernation
wild onion tongues like snakes
test the late February
air for sun. My springing cows
waddle toward dinner I just served.
All the world is an almost green
patina holding its breath for Spring.

Dead Right; or, a Majority of One

by Harry Brown

—for Ben

I know well enough that Aesop's wise.

That haste makes waste I drank with my mother's milk,

Along with her granite omniscience

“Familiarity breeds contempt” and its ilk.

I agree that Henry by his lake

Zipped fast as any train through Concord—

That Emily sped on her estate

(Though late she would not cross her father's ground).

But wisdom, Aesop's or other, is never forever.

I learned to question yesterday

When driving to class I passed three travelers:

Two shells crawled our fabulist's way;

One lay a lumpy yellow, brown, and red mosaic—

An attack of fact.

My Father's Garden

by Harry Brown

—for Hugo, Murphy, and McKenzie

Yesterday I watched the autumn sun retreat, first bloody
with a quiet gold and violet aftermath.

This morning once again rouge and gold ushered forth
our same star.

I thought that he like Hélios would rise
each morning forever.

After I die look for me under your boot soles.*

What about my sole soul? And what is a soul? There's the rub.

He'll never again come in from the garden dripping sweat, one drop
gathering at the tip of his nose, another about to fall from his chin,
and wearing a threadbare shirt, Bermuda shorts, and brogans, sit
in his platform rocker, drink a glass of tea with sprig of mint
and read *Progressive Farmer* or *Time*. Having found a patch of mint
on Baldwin Creek one Sunday afternoon when I was ten or twelve,
we brought some home to plant in a damp, shaded corner where the new
west bedroom joined the house so that always after in summer months
he added mint leaves in his tea.

No . . . not always after.

I'll never again telephone on Sunday evening
to hear his rich unhurried voice describe the weather there.

*Whitman, *Song of Myself*: "If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles."

“Tobacco farmers are crying the blues,” he said last June when it was the driest in some two decades.

 Come summer he always talked about his garden.

“How are your tomatoes? I set out twenty Better Boys in May and Mother has picked already enough to can. We’re getting limas now and our black-eyed peas are coming on.” He raised cantaloupes as if he lived in the sand hills, but couldn’t bribe peanuts, another sand hills crop, to produce. He could grow okra in asphalt and eat it fried three times a day.

 But peanuts were his crop.

Somewhere, probably Stark’s, he bought a fig tree and planted it in the back upper corner of the garden where it multiplied as sprouts appeared but never reached six feet in height and never of course ripened a fig in piedmont North Carolina. Sometimes, thinking back, I feel surprised he didn’t plant an orchid or a mango. But the fig had plenty of company. He never cut dogwood, our state tree, so that three took sanctuary in the center of his garden just below the Yellow Delicious from Harold Latta and the Stayman Winesap we gave him, a favorite from his father’s farm—both set out too late in life for him to pick and enjoy one apple, both set out where they would shade his sweet potatoes and beans, both set out some fifteen feet from Concord vines at the edge of the lawn, vines he often over-pruned in early fall while the sap was up.

After grapes, apples, figs, and peanuts came quartz, ubiquitous
as red clay in Orange County and immanent throughout his garden;
sparse, hyperbolic hail, the stones, white and roughly round,
he gathered spring after spring as they surfaced—sprouted when the earth
was stirred by plow and disc like rye or oats. Over the years he laid
with the heavy harvest low, sigodlin walls around each of the trinity
of white dogwoods—solid but irregular mortared benches
for summer visiting in shade, but in the garden never used.
He also built at the garden's lower side a quartz retaining wall
that looked as if laid by a not quite sober sailor, or a man in love with planting,
growth, and making on this globe whose hope and faith were large as his love.

Somalia

by Marguerite Guzman Bouvard

The child's head seems large
compared to his skeletal frame,
but his eyes are as luminous
as the sea, reflect a cloudless
sky, radiate his innocence.
In his face, distance becomes
irrelevant, and though his time
is brief, his gaze has the eternity
of sacred texts, reminding
us that there is light
and darkness in our hearts,
showing us how the world
is out of balance.

Resurrection

by Marguerite Guzman Bouvard

for Phil Hasurus

There was a valley,
Le Cirque du Fer à Cheval,
surrounded by high mountains
where waterfalls gushed
from the peaks.
There was only a narrow path
by a glacial river
with its blue-green lights.
Suddenly the earth collapsed.
Hills rose at the mouth
of the entrance. Boulders
large as houses cascaded.
There were no more trees.
But years later the river
still flowed although it changed
its course and expanded,
crashing over rocks
far below jagged layers of shale.
Bulldozers moved gravel
and carved sinuous paths. The valley
opened but was altered. Hikers
returned. My friend
who lost his beloved wife
without warning, endured
the transformation of his years.
His life still flowed though
it changed its course
and he healed
the wounded on his path.

Ahmed Kathrada

by Marguerite Guzman Bouvard

I chat with two young South Africans
 who discuss their favorite singers and their jobs,
 but when I mention Ahmed Kathrada
 who was close to Nelson Mandela
 their faces turn blank. I'm in the wrong
 generation. Who remembers this towering
 figure, Ahmed Kathrada,
 prisoner no. 468/64 locked in his cell
 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 a. m.?
 Because he is Indian he was allowed
 one pair of long pants and socks
 while Nelson Mandela was in shorts
 and remained barefoot in the biting cold
 of Robben Island. There were eight
 political prisoners besides them, four
 illiterate, but Ahmed said, "one
 to teach, one to learn." Who recalls
 that more than a quarter of a century
 they were at hard labor there with shovels
 and pick axes, yet planning the road
 to reconciliation. Meanwhile
 there were massacres, Sharpeville,
 with hundreds murdered, including children.
 Ahmed and Mandela had no books
 or newspapers but they were learning
 wisdom and endurance. When they faced
 President De Klerk, they bargained
 for a new South Africa
 and did not give in. They insisted on
 a country that is inclusive,
 the end of Apartheid. Mandela
 became President, Ahmed Kathrada
 served as Mandela's parliamentary counselor.
 Sixteen years have flown by,
 two million houses were built, but who
 remembers this man with
 his quiet dignity, educated in the school
 of hunger and abuse, who has risen
 above hatred and divisions,
 cities where adult servants
 were called "boy," or "girl,"
 where shacks in Soweto
 had neither water nor electricity
 and where tourists now flock?

Disregarding the Facts

by Ron Watson

She might have been disentangling our brains
from the long tentacles of the Dark Ages
or weaving a few loose ends at the fringes
of the Renaissance. She could have been

connecting us to vital strands of our humanity
with motives Mother Teresa would admire,
her lesson plans strung along a rosary of bells.
Surely, she must have said something to us

as her mouth moved across a silent atmosphere.
I should have been listening as others were.
Yet, as I sat next to her, our desks in a ring,
windows open to April and daffodils abloom,

my eyes stayed fixed on her feet, so help me,
and I cannot recall a thing she said that day
which would help me pass a test in English class.
But I memorized the details, nevertheless—

each as vivid to me now as they were then:
the strawberry gloss of her toenail polish,
the braided curvature of her sandal straps,
the higher education of her anklebones.

The Rug Pulled Out from Under

by Ron Watson

Me, paired with you, team-teaching seniors,
I was never sure of my footing all along—
our class inclined to teeter as we tilted
side to side, ceiling flirting with the walls.
I adjusted, found my rhythm in undulations,
tucked my stack of twice-learned lessons,
and re-schooled myself in the art of flux.
Since you were my sole fixed reference,
forgive me if I seemed to stare too much,
if I admired you a tad too long, or worse—
if I crisscrossed that fine line dividing lust.
Having a pick-sharp focus exacts a cost.
I lost sight of a gradual two-fisted grip,
did not see fingers clinching the fabric
on which we stood or leaned or truly slid.
But it happened: the floor taking flight—
the undersides of our shoes catching air—
with you vanishing and me left there
upside-down, a flurry of loose handouts
swirling around me like wind-blown snow
settling to a new ground. *Now*, I thought,
now, what am I going to do with these?

Luna, Magritte, oil on canvas

by Dennis Saleh

The moon hangs
in the stars
a candle of solace

Balustrade of
a stairway to
a tower in a tale

Eluding ineluctable
like the shoulder
at the neck

We may reach for it
through eternity
it shall not fail us

Chrysophilia Two

by Dennis Saleh

He lay, Yellowmore, aswath in
silks of yellow, potentate of glory,
kissing the chartreuse lips of day,
mad with glee, and the joy of an
elixir none might know but he.
A canary of bliss, a sweet lemon,
blossom upon unreasoning blossom,
yellow shards flowering ever higher.
Let me be clear. Yellowmore is near.
Yellow fellow. Lector of elation.
Prodigy, profligate, as the urge of
yellow splurge in Egyptian electrum.
Seduced as Europa by Zeus's shower.
Keeper of the Book of Yellow. List
of gleams. Laws of glitter. Adornment.
Pondering, which first, sun or yellow,
that most sought sequin in the
science of allure. Pastiche of light,
facsimile of sun, the lamp of wonder.
Cry the day, eschew not the hue,
above all, to thine crown hue be true.
Though the sun might hide its head,
even in the night is yellow yellow.
Stalwart, evenso, redoubtable.
Yellow, the very opposite of time.

Water Lilies

by Nettie Farris

Folding and folding . . . I am turning the pages of old poems into paper boats. Most often the pages turn into strange birds instead, asymmetrical and unable to fly. They bear their deformities gracefully. There is no waving of hands, no visual signs of agitation. The construction of a boat requires skill, so I am working on precision in my creases, despite my lack of fine motor control. I cannot even shape the letters of my own name, or yours. See how the letters bob forward and back, forward and back, bumping in to one other, gently. Where does my name end and yours begin? Where begins the world? And the water—See how placid the surface looks, how silent. On its muddy bottom lie the bodies of dead birds.

Hawthorn

by Nettie Farris

A bird in the house augurs death, my grandmother always said . . . A small bird flew in through the window, circled three times over the bed; and, a day later, the woman was dead . . . (We referred to her as *senile*—My grandmother—Alzheimer's was not a word that we knew back then). However, I did not realize it bad luck to bring hawthorn into the house. It's so beautiful, in the spring, with those pearl-shaped buds, white tinged in pink, those jewels, branches and branches of them. Only good intentions I had, bringing them into the house, despite the thorns. But then the deaths began happening, one after one. Illness. Accident. Suicide. Dementia. So many of them. And nothing I could do, despite my good intentions. Despite anything. If only I had known. Fear death by water, warned Eliot, long before Virginia Woolf filled her pockets with stones, long after the drowning of Ophelia. Soft-spun blues atop cold still surfaces. He loves me. He loves me not. Madwomen. All of us.

Sleepless

by Mary Ricketson

I wonder
why the night
wakes no one
else but me.

I wear the world
by day, words
slip through
up one side,
down the other.
Chores do me,
unless I do them.
Wishes and wants
appear as warp and woof
in color and black and white.

I make notes.
I read awhile,
file my fingernails
and hear the music.

Sets of wooden stairs
climb me up,
slide me into bed.
Toasty, comfy, cozy,
I close my eyes
while every tired muscle
in me wakes and waits.

Pick Flowers

by Mary Ricketson

Let me get away
from what is right,
what is wrong,
who needs what
and what needs me.

Let me breathe some air,
feel the rain on my face,
and bask in the smell
of fresh cut grass.

Let me roam the forest
where trees much taller
than me stand straight,
never stray, and stay
right where they need to be
never entertaining
one single doubt.

Let wind move me
against my will,
put my power
into perspective.

Let me walk these fields
until grass teaches me
how to grow.

Back to the Campfire

by Mary Ricketson

This foggy morning takes me back
to campfires and tents. Smoky Mountain
trails, me and my pack, I found home for the night
by a clear running stream and dry wood found by forage.

Evening flames lasted late, created comfort
that set up residence and never left me.
A well-stoked fire kept embers hot till dawn
when I rubbed my eyes, tripped through the flap,
found my poking stick, and built up the fire.

Coffee lasts a long time when you set your cup
on a hot rock smack in the fire. Mist filled mornings
lasted long as I reviewed yesterday's hike
and thought toward today's trail.
Water on my face never felt so cold.
Bacon and eggs never tasted so good.

In time I packed my gear and bid goodbye
to trees that felt familiar after only one night,
but the mist that enveloped me then
left its moisture with me.
I made acquaintance with peacefulness
and I have never been the same.

The Hillbilly Poet

(Painted Black)

by **Walter Lane**

When the poet was a boy,
Before the EPA,
Tug River ran black.

When a teenager
his creek ran black
on Sunday,
the inspector's day off.

The faculty at Mt. Dream College
are well versed in the pathology
of city water,
buying Spring water for the faculty lounge.
After all Mtn. Dream is the Cancer Capital
of Appalachia and U.S.
The faculty drink coffee water
like their illiterate brethren.

The faculty support Mtn. Top Removal
for there are no strip mines
allowed in their subdivisions.

The hillbilly poet was said
to have a dangerous mouth,
unlike Pseudo-radicals
safely lecturing the local populace
on abortion and gay rights.

Three haiku

by Jane Stuart

Barely fluttering
a blue butterfly's first flight
through the summer wind

Flickering fireflies.
Rainy night winds. A full moon
then the whippoorwill

Sweet potato vine
twisted through a moonlit hour
shadows yesterday

Galaxy

by Jane Stuart

Wheels of starry light
Spin across the galaxy
Under milkglass skies.
Winter paints a carnival
With a ring-toss moon

Planets spin and turn . . .
Constellations sing . . .
Little ships that carry time
Move through cloudy waves
Through life's lost eternity
To a distant shore

Moon and sun eclipse . . .
Mountains shiver. Rivers wake
Newly-born stars shine.
Sand covers the desert floor . . .
Wind blows over dunes

An ethereal
Moment wakens
Winter dreams

Eclipse

by Jane Stuart

Waking,
Nefrititi,
shadowed by the wind's light,
walks on across the sun and sky's
bright moon

Fragments
of history
written on papyrus,
inscribed with stone in desert sand,
stay on

Unseen
moments rising
through a mist of hours
making dreams out of an ancient
prayer

Skylight,
a desert wind,
winding roads, caravans
bringing back yesterday's long lost
Silk Road

Boogie Woogie Piano

by H. Michael Sanders

for Jimmy Yancey and Big Joe Duskin,

Oh! I hear those ivories thumping and rumbling,
 twisting and tinkling up and down the keyboard
 at the end of long, talented fingers.
 Rolling percussive rhythm driven by the tenacious
 repetition of the persistent left-hand of God.
 Bell-clear serpentine melodies skittering across the
 surface of the throbbing beat and heeding the
 ancient and primal call of the righteous blues.
 Spare, inventive, blunt and direct, born for house
 parties and dancing on old worn out, out-of-tune
 and otherwise impaired upright pianos.

A-Flat Dreaming through a Bear Cat Crawl.
Slim Slam Boogie at 35th and Dearborn.
Beat Me Daddy Eight to the Bar with Pinetop's Boogie Woogie.
Shave 'Em Dry and Make Me a Pallet on the Floor.
Yancey's Special, Sweet Patootie, Cincinnati Stomp.
Roll 'Em Pete and Shout for Joy for a Boogie Woogie Prayer.

I sense those magic digits moving up and down my spine,
 a rollicking eight-to-the-bar boogie woogie rhythm,
 tingly, jingly purebred blues piano prowess.
 Those fingers striding along the keys with a touching
 simplicity possessing inherent grace and power.
 Fingers tickling my twisting vertebrae as if they were,
 in fact, those eighty-eight bony keys on the
 upright piano jangling loose over the rhythm.
 Walking bass, stomping their feet, barrelhouse
 bounce that sends me reeling every time I
 hear the thumping hammers on the strings.

—July 11, 2010

Jazz Improvisation

by H. Michael Sanders

The throaty growl of yellow saxophone bereavement,
merging with yelps of joy and excitement
in a brass cauldron of musical alchemy.

Speeding through modal changes, growling stops,
and flattened keys in sheets of sound—
bursting, shredding, flapping in the wind.

Conveying force and madness from the depths of the soul,
with complete wonderment at the
intense brevity of the simple act of living.

The sinuous twisting of the saxophone's profile,
undulating outward, downward, back and up—
launching vibrating molecules heavenward.

Dancing blindly toward the sun in the thicket of our fears,
mired in hopes and plans and failures—
leaving good sense and insanity behind us.

Reflections of light distort on the saxophone's surface,
glittering and pulsating as they pass
like the shadows of vibrating patterns of air.

The visual heartbeat of the Universe brought into focus
for a fraction of a second that masquerades
as eternity, removes its mask, and is eternity.

The tentacles of certainty unfurl riding the waves of
abstract truth and utter mystery to the ear—
and reveal themselves to be quite mistaken.

An artist squeezing and holding mechanical metal keys,
shaping air columns like a sculptor hammers stone
into recognizable shapes both real and symbolic.

Body humming, muscles relaxed, mind opened and emptied,
the mystical vibration of the saxophone resonates
and reverberates through the matrix of my cells.

My awareness is stirred to action by the heat of aural fire,
my eyes—two protrusions of my brain—observing
the colors and shapes of hot crystalline sound.

Jazz Haiku – Series 1

by H. Michael Sanders

Jazz Haiku No. 1

Miles, a winter night;
Trane, a howling spring north wind;
Monk, an autumn pause.

—June 21, 2010

Jazz Haiku No. 2

Blowing like the wind,
Coltrane's a force of nature
Sending out starlight.

—June 21, 2010

Jazz Haiku No. 3

Elvin Jones splashed sweat
on me as I sat front row
and he played on fire.

—July 11, 2010

Jazz Haiku No. 4

I learned about jazz
listening to radio
on hot summer nights.

—July 11, 2010

Jazz Haiku No. 5

Monk's hesitation
at the keyboard sculpted sound
out of nothingness.

—July 11, 2010

Slow-Cooking

by Renee Emerson

Outside the sumac limbs sag,
the vow of winter already
weighing.

A late dinner, drowsy, shaping bread
on the baking stone.

Yellow squash, onions, carrots,
a roast and small potatoes
slow-cooking.

My hands bitter with chopped onions,
apron on, the slow-soak of waiting
for you to come home.

My self-reliance, old trophy,
what once carried me,

swallowed
in the night's cataract, the moon,

and stars like small umbrellas,
opening.

10 Weeks Pregnant, Entering Spring

by Renee Emerson

Already you learn the new identities—
shelter, haven, lovely vessel.
Your vision is for your home
and for the area surrounding.
At the window, looking out on the
cropped dead grass of February
and small buds of leaves green on the oaks,
you take down your hair. This is a signal,
a reflection of something you learned
from your mother. The monotonous
habits that keep you human. The day
immersed in the delicate tension between
winter and spring. Already, you can feel
the new life. A heaviness
in the stomach. Your husband says
he can feel it too, when your bodies
are pressed together, fluent
in your own language.

The First Day After

by Renee Emerson

Smooth limbs against limbs.
Mouth still sweet from strawberries,
body young like summer,
uncut grass.

It's Sunday and the party guests
will arrive in an hour.

In my linen dress, barefoot,
climbing the maple to see
over our neighbor's fence.

Changed like the words
from a favorite novel
left in the rain.

All morning with my sisters,
picking up pecans
in the back fields.

Aging line
of trees, gauzed
with worms.

Slaughter

by **Katie Southerland**

You trace a line
with your knife
down my stomach,
around my hips,
between my legs.
Then when you
are done with my body,
you cut out my heart.
You roll me past
the machines, drop me.
You mold me
into my mother.

Hysterectomy

by Katie Southerland

I bind her front hooves together
with rope as strong as the calluses on my hands.
I hang her carcass from a steel beam.
With a knife, I slit her stomach
to expose her meat and her heart.

I sit on a metal stool and collect her insides in buckets,
placing long pieces of organs on old newspaper.
But ready to be thrown in a black trash bag
are her ovaries and eggs
that lay between my fingers.

I'm in torture as I discard the eggs.
They rupture as they land.
Then when all is gone, the bag tied at the ends,
I view her hollow body.
Her belly is no longer bloated with what could have been.

You Could Live

by Katie Southerland

I wonder if I could just roll you
up into a ball, put you on my
nightstand instead. The last thing
I see every night. I could dream
of you in red jackets sitting next
to a pond, feeding ducks with a piece
of bread. I could dream of you
twirling ribbons and tapping
your foot against stone, impatiently
waiting. Then maybe we wouldn't
be alone. We wouldn't stand in doorways
waiting for something to happen.
I could live in my sleep.
You could live in a jar.

Pieces of Him

by Katie Southerland

She liked to run her finger inside
the lining of his coat pocket
and feel for tobacco that fell

from his cigarette filters.
She would crumble it between
her fingers and let it fall

to the ground broken, in pieces:
a maze of him to find later
to unearth her.



Photo by Robert K. Wallace

Overcast Beauty, June 10, 2012

by Robert K. Wallace

Crystal clear and deep blue this morning,
 the sky clouded over before
 my evening walk, no shafts
 of light or even soft shadows
 on the way to the wall.
 Across O'Fallon I saw
 what seemed to be the new owner
 of the house on the corner
 across from the church
 out sweeping his sidewalk,
 and when I asked him,
 yes, indeed, he just moved
 from Fort Thomas to take
 a job with the Bellevue Police
 department, having worked at NKU
 until six days ago.

Without sunlight on the grass
 the path out to the wall
 was inviting in a different way
 tonight, harmonious green
 uniting the entire mound
 of the wall with the equally
 uniform green of trees across
 the river as I turn upstream.

Looking out at the water
 over the stack of tractors
 I notice the beautiful sliver glints
 behind any passing boat,
 not nearly so brilliant
 when the sun directly shines.

From the tractor park all
 is smooth and brown up to,
 and over, the former dirt pile,
 no sign of action now,
 although earlier today
 trucks were running both ways
 up and down the Avenue.
 Also missing was the standing water
 always on the side of the pile,
 a week of very warm weather
 having dried it up as
 the cavalcade of trucks
 came heavy and left light.
 Beyond the former pile
 all is spread out a little wider,
 my imagined golf tee maybe
 higher but not looking so,
 as the former drop off
 on the right is now filled
 level and smooth to where
 the height of the mound meets the wall.

Continuing the length of the imagined
 dogleg, the analogy is stronger
 than before, a nicely plateaued
 fairway of just the right width
 stretching from the mound for the tee
 all the way to the cottonwood green,
 with two portable floodlights
 there for nighttime sport
 as the trucks come and go,
 the way they are spreading
 the new debris out being
 very impressive, as skeptical
 as I am about the actual project.

On the way upstream I'd stopped
 to frame a B&B Riverboat
 as it cruised downstream
 past the former dirt pile
 and then the tractors.
 On the way back from the turnaround

bench I saw something even better,
 a few moments after having noticed
 the silvery tracks where
 the more recent trucks
 had backed and jolted around
 to dump their weighty loads.
 Abstractly, these imprinted
 tire tracks reminded me
 of Frank Stella's Circuit prints,
 whose incised lines were made
 by the routing tool in the backing
 board as he cut the metallic
 shapes for his painted reliefs,
 the pattern there below me
 on the expanding base of this
 waterfront development
 the same casual result
 of active work unconscious
 of the marks it makes.

As I was savoring the pattern
 of tractor marks on bank
 a white boat passed upstream
 far enough beyond the river's edge
 to leave a spreading silver wake
 toward the near Kentucky shore
 and the far Ohio one, too,
 as a slightly larger white boat
 cruised downstream, its wake
 overlaying that of the other
 in a complex intersection
 of shifting light and motion
 which I hope my camera caught
 more permanently than my eye
 saw it, there only for one
 evanescent snap to catch
 the liquid pattern in the water
 against the tractor marks on the shore,
 the overcast light equalizing
 the shallow ruts and ridges
 with the shallow waves and troughs
 in what I hope will be
 a blending of land and water,
 of shoreside occupation
 and mid-river recreation
 that marks a moment
 of rare revelation amidst
 the unsettling development
 along the shore, the rising

foundation along the bank
 surprisingly smooth given
 all that's been trucked in,
 the middle of the river
 absolutely dancing now
 in a complex silvery pattern
 worthy of Escher, those
 lines of his that seem to be
 going backward and forward
 at the same time, now
 pulsing like a strobe light
 in the ongoing dance
 of light and motion,
 a Bach-like fugal melodic
 intersection over the solid
 ground base of the tractor tracks.

By now one wave of dog-walkers
 after another was out, a short
 rotund man unable to manage
 his two tiny dogs; two hefty
 young couples with two large dogs
 and a small child; a family
 group whose composition
 from afar made me hope
 for Laura with her daughters
 and husband but who turned
 out to be a new family
 I'd not seen; a mother
 and her daughters with large
 beagles that could be mother
 and daughter too; a cavalcade
 of walkers on a sunless eve,
 hot but not yet humid;
 overhead the ESPN blimp
 over the Great American Ballpark
 as the Reds play the Tigers
 in a national broadcast
 from this curving river shore,
 a steady red light along
 the control capsule beneath
 the swollen, suspended airship
 too far away to tell,
 as it turned on and off
 from time to time, if it was
 an advertiser's message board
 or a warming light to mark its presence
 in the dark of the night sky,
 echoed for me as I walk up O'Fallon

by the first fireflies of the year,
flashing their lights as I passed
in a random aleatory pattern
John Cage would have savored.

Thirty years ago I dipped into
a new book called *Gödel,*
Escher, Bach. I never did get
the Gödel part, but I imagine
he too might have seen
something in the patterns
I saw tonight on what I expected
to be a walk lacking in beauty.

Someone Else's Offspring

by Jane Olmsted

At night I hear the fluttering of the bird,
 some starling's darling trapped
 after the gables were repaired last week.
 The wings rap at the wire mesh
 and then begin their whispering.

I crawl out my window,
 climb up to the neighbor's balcony
 (who are traveling in some godforsaken place)
 then shimmy up the brownstone
 and flash a light into the quiet darkness
 behind the silver grille.

I want to free the tyke but the landlord refuses
 to answer the phone,
 and all day long the ventilator fan pulls
 feathers and dust and slivers of insulation
 and shoots them into the dew-starved air . . .

Teeth gripping the screwdriver I have for repairs
 and inserting batteries into your childhood toys,
 I make a second trip, knees hugging and sinews twisting
 as my hand reaches beyond what's natural
 and unhinges a corner of the wire cover.

The hole admits my fingertips—
 like creatures that have crossed the line into abomination
 they writhe at the edge of the starling's night.
 I cough up the bit of lettuce, rice patty, raw ground beef
 I've been carrying under my tongue and glue it
 to the screwdriver's flat edge,

then pierce the cross-hairs with a stab
 and leave it, along with *something* more substantial,
 some *words* to get the poor fellow through the night.

I grip the wall. I chirp.

Far, Far Away, in Vilnius

by Jane Olmsted

A paper boat and an empty carton of juice
 dangled from a bridge over the river.
 Why, you asked, did someone do that?

I said, two children were playing
 in the water with boats they had made,
 and afterward they hung them out to dry.

Then, in the river, we saw
 a stack of shapely rocks, then another, then many.
 They looked dribbled from the sky, dabbles of brown paint—

why are the rocks piled just so, you asked, why?
 In this city of churches, I said, pagans come to the water,
 gripping the slick stones with their toes then hoisting them high.

And not only that, I say, here in the side streets of Vilnius
 doorways too small to step through
 unless you're an elf or a child or an old couple stooped over.

I miss my home, I tell you, which is why I'm sad.
 Is it a big missing, you ask—no, it's a little one, like a notch
 on one of these padlocks attached to this bridge by people in love.

We lift and turn them and they settle with a clink above the water,
 and then I ask if you have a lock for us, knowing you don't—
 our just discovering them like that, on the way to someplace else.

Confession by Proxy

by Jane Olmsted

I arrive early, hands jangling pieces
 from another game of Monopoly
 I couldn't bear to finish. I pull them out, familiar
 as my failings, and line them up on the ledge
 on my side of the confessional. Leading the way,
 no surprise, the silver Scottie noses into places
 he has no business going—

Next, the iron's blunt chin and that starchy frown . . .
 Behind the screen, you clear your throat.
 Hold on, I say, I think we're getting somewhere—

Look, the sports car has screeched to a halt,
 sneering at the little plow when it pulls up
 ready to argue, some dirty little secret
 about who does the real work
 and who spends half a day covering his tracks.

You clear your throat again. It's 10 o'clock in the morning
 and I've been moving pieces around for 30 minutes.
 Things are heating up as the line of penitents reaches
 the outer door, or maybe they're just sight-seers
 tapping their hymnals against the backs of pews.
 I say, maybe we should talk later, perhaps this evening

when the lilacs have closed and the crickets
 begin their leg-rubbing—or do they go at it all day long?
 Could we stroll around the cemetery where the old nuns
 swing their rosaries, chanting in syllables so low
 you'd think it was rocks in the creek tumbling toward the rapids—
 I hear it takes one pebble 7 years to make its way from the bridge
 at the big clock to the bend outside the window there,

where the red Jesus has lifted his hammer and stands ready
 to let it fall into a pile of gold and blue lumber. I always liked
 that window best, you know, the one where he's working
 with his hands not raising them over the children's heads
 or lowering them to someone's feet, where he's looking up
 as if someone's just called him to dinner, or he's just
 remembered something more urgent he needs to do.

Two White Pigeons

by Jane Olmsted

On this gray day when the May sun
has no burn left to dry the wind,

we return from our walk through
the monastery fields and woods

hungry for hot soup and gazing.
The dark green pond stretches

from window to window of this
rental cottage in the country

where we have retreated
from the gray hovering life

we know. Redwing blackbirds cut
the air and settle in the branches

of a tree that has died and stands
waiting—or savoring—its own

end of story. The shallow waters
ripple in the wind or the wake

of gray geese who paddle to the shores
and dive, but don't die, like the old song,

a-standing on their heads—and how I miss
that old song about Aunt Rhody's gray goose,

a song too sad to bear when I was a girl
who didn't see what was so dangerous

about standing on your head or why someone
would put it all down like that, in a song.

Memory wavers like a shadow, as two
snowy egrets land near the far shore

and begin their long-necked
wading, so intent on subtle movement

they are not startled by the blaze of two
white pigeons that fly out of blue clarity

and stop my breathing, if not my heart—three times
circling the pond in breathless nips and tucks,

stitching up the terrible rending
that has pulled our lives apart.



Gardenia

by Janet Gruenwald

*When you take a flower in your hand and really look at it,
it's your world for the moment.*

—Georgia O'Keeffe

In perfect clarity there is no sage.



The Bridesmaids

by Janet Gruenwald

In early March, winter ice storms give way to a magical world, the heartbreaking beauty of the weeping cherry trees. “The Bridesmaids,” dressed in their spring taffeta frocks of soft pink and white blossoms, promenade down the hillside like teenage forces of nature. Honey bees take full advantage of the blossoms opening to the warm sun. Walking through the filtered light, I am struck not just by the magnificence but by the overwhelming abundance of nature. It takes my breath away.

In Japan, cherry blossoms, have long been a symbol of fertility, and the fragility and impermanence of life. After a week of fleeting beauty, petals carpet the ground, and the yearly cycle continues.



Red, Bootjack, Little Stevie and the Red Indian

by James B. Goode

Red, Bootjack, and Little Stevie came out of their clapboard shack on Sanctified Hill carrying their burlap tow sacks thrown over their left shoulders, a twist held tightly with their right hands. A red tomato sun rested half in the sky and half below the dark ridges across the valley. Bootjack led the way down the narrow, winding gravel road. His stride was wide and deliberate. His dishwater blonde hair stood up on his head like a field of wheat. His beard stubble was a mass of red and gray and his chin bobbed up and down as he ground a rounded wad of Red Man chew with his stained teeth. Red followed. His gait, a hesitating skip as he stepped forward, paused, and dragged the other foot along like a comical version of a wedding march. His head jerked in spasms, first left and then right. Little Stevie shuffled in short staccato steps, his chin dropped to his chest with a steady stream of drool feathering down his dark blue button-up work shirt. A badly swollen hernia along his right side made him look like he had a huge penis running along his thigh. He carried a ball of string in his left pocket.

Collecting string had become his hobby. He had several large balls of it back at the shack. He found it everywhere, hanging in bushes, among the boxes behind the grocery store, and blood-stained pieces of it where the butcher threw his trash out at the meat market. Nobody fooled with his string. Nobody. Bootjack and Red had often been a victim of his wrath, just for picking up a ball to admire its colors.

“You’uns all is slower than cold molasses,” Bootjack said, with spittle flying from his mouth and landing on the limestone gravel. He glanced back at the parade with an impatient, disapproving look. Red and Little Stevie gave him a vacant stare, like some hidden switch was in the off position.

The parade was headed into town, going to the cowboy movie playing at the Lyric Theater. Every month the group saved seventy-five cents each from their pop bottle money to spend at the show. Fifty cents went for the ticket and the rest was spent for popcorn, Goobers, Necco Wafers, Tootsie Rolls, Boston Beans or Double Bubble Gum Cigars.

“Me not like Injuns,” Little Stevie said. “They bad. They try kill John Wayne.” He looked up and down the street, as if one of the savages might jump from the shadows of the storefront doorways. He had seen one on a carnival barker’s stage. The Chief’s fierce eyes had peered from between the eagle feathers, frightening Little Stevie and causing him hide under an old concessions trailer. Red and Bootjack had to lure him

out with a big pink ball of cotton candy. They had called to him like he was a puppy under a porch.

"Come on, Stevie. Come on boy! Here's some cotton candy. You like cotton candy," they had said as they tried to coax him from the mud beneath the trailer. He had finally crawled out the other side, covered with a sticky, yellow paste of mud. When he saw the pink cotton candy, a jack-o-lantern grin spread beneath his nose.

"You give Stevie," he had said. Bootjack had stretched out his arm, holding the paper cone toward him. Stevie snatched it away and buried his face into the pink cloud, making a sticky mask on his face.

* * *

The parade marched on down Main Street. They passed the Texaco station with its bright red star set on a big white oval. Red avoided stepping on the cracks in the sidewalk. "Step on a crack, break your mother's back," he kept repeating.

"I ain't puttin' up with no red Injuns no more," Stevie said as he stared at the mannequins in the Wells' Department Store window. "They chop and chop. Steal people's hair. They ain't no good. No good bastards."

Bootjack kept prodding them to hurry. "The picture show starts at six," he said, as he looked at the big Westclox pocket watch he carried attached to his belt loop with a strand of rawhide. "We have to be there," he said. "They don't wait on nobody." The parade moved past Halcomb's Barber Shop where the shoeshine boy sang out and snapped his polishing rag across a pair of wing-tipped shoes and then toward God's Grace Funeral Home where they paused to look at the funeral announcements posted on the blackboard in the window.

"My name not there," Red said, as he carefully avoided a big crack on the sidewalk near the window. "I glad my name not there," he said. He laughed in a high pitched shriek and slapped his rough, cracked hands on his overall covered thigh. "Bo Cornett's name there . . . Bo Cornett drink whiskey . . . Bo die . . ."

The parade moved across the bridge separating the upper and lower parts of the town. It filed past the Williams' Shoe Shop where Mr. Williams was grinding a shoe sole on the long shaft of spinning wheels. It moved past the cut sandstone city hall where they could see "Gunsmoke," the city policeman through an open window as he sat at his desk completing paperwork. A young boy saw them coming and ducked down behind a row of parked cars. He began to yell.

"Hey Red! Hey Red!"

Red paused to see from where the voice was coming. The boy again ducked behind the row of cars and scurried along just ahead of the parade.

"Hey Red! Heyyyy Red!" he continued to yell.

Red stopped suddenly, his toes halting just before another crack in the sidewalk. He had developed that habit after he was told that if he stepped on a crack, he would break his mother's back. "I wish somebody would holler blue instead of red," he said as he puffed on his crook stem pipe. "Holler yellow, green, blue or anything but red," he declared as he blew a cloud of smoke into the gentle wind and watched it being pulled toward the draft of an alleyway.

The parade moved to near the front of the Stardust Theatre. The line for the ticket booth ended two doors down at Creech's Grocery. The parade got in line. They shuffled forward as the clerk in the enclosed glass booth took the crowd's money, pushed the button, and handed out tickets as they appeared like rectangular green tongues from the narrow slit in the polished metal surface. The crowd shunned the parade, keeping

a safe distance. The parade hadn't taken a bath in over two months and the heat cast a wave of body odor in a wash over the line.

Boot Jack stepped up to the booth and, after rummaging through the deep pockets of his greasy suit jacket, palmed six quarters and pushed them through the rectangular cutout in the glass. "Gimme three fer duh show," he said. The clerk with white cat eye glasses stared back, her features magnified and distorted by the irregular glass in the booth.

"You boys will have to behave this time, if I let you into the theater. The last time you were here, you made ugly noises from the front row and acted like a bunch of wild monkeys all during the show. You must promise to behave," she declared from her perch on the wooden stool. The parade looked at her sharp nose as it caught a whiff of them. Her nostrils moved in and out like the gills of a catfish. Red grinned and showed his crosscut saw teeth. Little Stevie gripped his tow sack tightly and squinted at the cat-eye clerk with his beady eyes set deep in his fat. Boot Jack blew his nose by pinching his nostrils with his thumb and middle finger, blowing and slinging at the same time. The snot flew out in a long strand, attaching itself like a snail trail to the bottom of the booth. He grabbed the tickets and darted through the door and into the lobby. The parade followed. They got in line at the concession counter. Stevie got down on his knees and plastered his face against the display case. His breath clouded the glass as he exhaled. His eyes were fixed on the Goobers. Drool was flowing in rivers. Boot Jack finally reached the head of the line.

"Gimme a box of popcorn. Red wants them Red Hots. Little Stevie wants a box of Goobers. We need grape drink, in a cup," he said as ran his cracked, dirty hand through his blonde hair, flattening it to look like someone had run a push mower down the middle.

The soda jerk wrinkled his nose, but went about preparing the order, finally setting it on the beveled glass counter. Boot Jack jabbed his hand deep into his pants pocket and came out with the coins to pay. The parade followed him as he headed into the dimly lit theater, each carrying his snack with Boot Jack balancing the grape drink in one hand and the other holding his popcorn box and the dangling tow-sack. The parade made its way to the front row and across to the center. They placed their tow sacks between their feet, clamping them with their ankles to make sure they didn't go anywhere. Boot Jack held the grape drink, passing it periodically down the line to the parade. He ate the popcorn in large handfuls, most of it falling to his lap and onto the floor. Little Stevie threw the Goobers in the air, catching them like a hungry pup. Red sucked on the Red Hots, blowing in and out as they burned his tongue and lips.

On the screen, a box of popcorn sang: *Let's all go to the lobby; let's all go to the lobby; let's all go to lobby and get ourselves a coke.* Boxes of Goobers and bags of Red Hots danced around the screen.

Then the news reel came on, showing a giant, bald General Dwight Eisenhower talking about the war. Images of soldiers running from the trenches and firing their weapons flew across the screen, sometimes appearing to come toward them, causing the parade to jump in their seats.

Then a Buck Rogers serial came on. "Planet Outlaws" in jerky 3-D black and white script quivered on the screen with a space ship as a backdrop. Newspaper headlines spun toward them: *Ghosts in D.C. Skies Outrace Chasing Jets; Jets Chase D.C. Sky Ghosts; Jets to Shoot Down Saucers.* Then the familiar voice of the mustachioed narrator who sat at his news desk with his headset in place said: *From somewhere in the skies above us have come, from time to time, flaming discs and weird phenom-*

ena. What are they? Whence have they come? Dr. Maurice Biot, one of the leading aerodynamists in the world, stated that in his opinion they have originated elsewhere than the earth, and that they are artificially controlled. The narrator recounted how mankind had been suspicious of many things that were now reality.

We are tempted to say they are just a fiction writer's dream. We must remember that Jules Verne once dreamed of exploring the ocean depths and, in time, we have the submarine. Leonardo da Vinci also prophesied that someday man would fly like a bird. Today, flying is commonplace But now man dreams of limitless power to propel us into outer space where we can explore other worlds. So, while travel to another planet may seem highly imaginative to us today, in the year 2000 it may be commonplace. A cigar shaped space ship appeared, careening through dark clouds and losing altitude. It crashed in the mountains of the polar region. Then, far into the future, Buck Rogers and Buddy were off to discover and explore the wreck.

The parade sat transfixed and believing. Their eyes fixed on the screen like a pride of lions watching a herd of gazelle. The parade ate their popcorn, Goobers, and Red Hots, lifting the snacks to their mouths without once glancing down to guide their hands. The swashbuckling space adventure played out before them. They grimaced, and punched the air with their fists. They were inside a world of robots and ray guns until the narrator said:

And that my friend finishes the story of Killer Kane, a man who wanted to conquer the world. No less ruthless, no less cunning, no less a danger to civilization than the very real enemy that threatens the world today. Let us hope that the scientists of the free world will devise the weapons and the craft that will make democracy invincible against any enemy. God bless America!

The parade rose to its feet, applauding, whistling through their index and little fingers, cheering, and stomping their feet. When the rows behind them jeered and yelled for them to sit down, they turn their backs, bent over, and wiggled their butts from side to side.

They didn't sit down until the giant letters HONDO came on the screen, but then they were back on their feet, cheering John Wayne who, as ex-gunfighter Hondo Lane, towered over them like a giant.

No one saw Little Stevie's right hand drop down toward his tow sack, undo the twist at the opening, slip it into the interior of the rough burlap, and slide out a single action Colt revolver that had belonged to his dad. It had been left to him by default when his mother died. He had found it hidden in a shoebox under his mother's bed. He had kept it in his tow-sack, only taking it out when no one else was around. He admired its cold, blue shininess and its silver bullets. He kept it on his lap until the Apaches appeared.

On the screen, Hondo tried to persuade Angie to leave the ranch before the next Indian raid, but she refused, insisting that the Apaches were friendly. Hondo had to leave Angie, and when he did, Apaches surrounded her ranch, menacing her and her son Johnny. Spears, arrows, and running horses careened toward the parade. Dead men toppled from wagons. Then Johnny raised his gun in an attempt to protect his mother.

Little Stevie could take it no longer. He jumped to his feet, screaming, "You leave her alone. You're a yeller bellied red Injun. You not chop and chop and steal her hair. You no good bastard." He raised the revolver, took aim, and fired two shots into the forehead of Apache Chief Vittorio. Two black holes appeared, and then as the Chief moved they became juxtaposed on the widow Angie Lowe. One of the holes pierced the cleavage of her bosom and another rested on her delicate jaw. A deep

primal scream arose from Little Stevie's drooling mouth as he rushed toward the screen. Boot Jack was on his feet, lunging toward Little Stevie, catching him with a flying tackle, and grabbing his ankles just as he made it to the apron of the stage. He twisted Little Stevie's fingers, trying to wrestle the gun from his fat, stubby hand. A thick band of foam formed around Little Stevie's mouth as they rolled on the floor. He screamed anguished sounds from deep in his throat. The Apaches on the screen screamed, forming a kind of trilling chorus. Then Little Stevie managed to get on top of Boot Jack. He bolted, using Boot Jack's chest as a springboard to propel himself onto the stage, leaving Bootjack holding one of his scarred brogans. He stood with his back to the audience who scattered, some running for the exits and some crouching behind theater seats. His body swayed in circles from the waist up, his image forming an imposing shadow as he raised the pistol again, firing two more holes into the Chief Vittorio's chest.

Red jumped up and down in place, clapping his hands like a Pentecostal song leader. "Touchdown!" he yelled. "Little Stevie, he made a touchdown!" He danced about manically, screaming like a banshee. The Apaches screamed. More shots were fired. The audience was now a mob, shrieking and running up the ramps toward the dimly lit exit signs. Bootjack lay on the floor curled in a fetal position with his eyes covered. Little Stevie fell to his knees, weeping uncontrollably. The four bullet holes moved wildly around the screen like windswept leaves in a violent storm.

Fate

by Paul Christensen

I recall some years ago standing in the Plaza Garibaldi in Mexico City, where the mariachi bands went around singing to newly weds. Down the street were all those little shops catering to girls about to turn fifteen, the *quinze anos* girls. The dresses in the windows were like confirmation gowns, all white and frilly, with intimations of marriage written into their lace and ribbons. A girl coming of age requires all sorts of symbols and myths to bring her into womanhood. Now that she reached that ripe state the old men with bass guitars wandered about singing to her, while a shy, wasp-waisted husband in roomy trousers and white shirt, stood by feeling idle and useless.

To the side was a kind of hot house, all glass and steel, building under which were big kettles of tripe steaming away. Cramped counters hugged each stove and men dished out bowls of cooked tripe to the workers who had shoved their way to a stool. I was waiting too timidly, and never was served. It was around eleven at night, and much of the market behind us was closed down. The tables were littered with vegetable leaves, peels, stumps of things. A smell of fish still lingered where high-pressure hoses had swept away the fish guts, scales, hacked fins. Now the air was heavy with dampness and cigarette smoke.

I kept hearing pounding nearby, but couldn't see the cause. It was a boom sound, with little reverberations soon after. A great hard pound, wet and thudding, and then metal rebounding with a tinny echo. Maybe some sort of night renovation in progress, or a pile driver digging up another subway tunnel. I waited some more, saw others coming off a shift—mainly haulers with big webbed ropes around their shoulders. They had been hauling carcasses for the butchers, or blocks of ice. They were starving, and aching for a toke of pulque, perhaps. They didn't stand around like me; they shoved, prodded, dug their fingers into backs and hips, and made a wedge in which to squeeze ahead. Soon enough they would look around with sleepy, half-lidded eyes spooning in heat, tanginess, uriney tripe smells, and gulping down a smudgy glass of dark beer. It was day's end, and they were distant, ethereal at this hour.

The boom came, then the low roar of the counters smothered it. Somewhere in back, around some partitions, I guessed. Tearing up this old shed to make room for another glass building, perhaps. I finally got someone to hand me a beer, and I sent up a wad of pesos that passed from hand to hand to the counter. I drank slowly, felt my bladder fill suddenly. I put down the glass, and asked for the toilet. It was around the corner, I was told.

When I came around the dirty gray wall, I saw a hauler still wearing part of his

webbed harness, a kind of judo shirt and loose work pants cut off well above the man's ankles. He wore sandals made of tire tread and coarse leather, and his feet were black from the day's work. He looked at me, or past me, with red eyes. He was grinning without humor. He looked around as some of the men standing in line for the toilet observed him neutrally. Then, the hauler drew in like a bull calf, put himself into a crouch and sprinted straight for the retaining wall leading to the toilets. He lowered his head as he came near and threw himself powerfully into the wall. His whole body took the shudder of impact and seemed to dissolve him. Then, he would fall back, slumped and weak, walking backward again. He had a bottle of pulque by the opposite wall, which he bent to retrieve, took a long double swallow of the stuff, and put it down again. Wiped his large mouth with his sleeve, and studied the wall. All along one level of the wall were thin red circles from where his scalp had broken and left a bloody imprint. He was doing his best to kill himself, and the men along the side, in the toilet line, were like spectators of some public sport.

Maybe this time he would do it, crush his skull and die. He seemed to understand that his suicidal attempt this evening was a public ritual, and that it was normal to have others standing by to observe. Not to cheer him on. The occasion was solemn. The air around him was heated and tense, and no one could possibly talk to him. He was alone in the universe, his universe. The rest of us were at the window of our own. No communication could reach from any normal mouth to his crazed ears. He was sure he was doing the only thing necessary at this hour. He could have jumped in front of a train, or a bus. He could have plunged off a bridge.

But the frenzy of the counters, the clutter and noise of the closed market, the filthy degraded sidewalk around the toilet seemed adequate context for a death. Men came out zipping up who had witnessed earlier runs, and surmised how long he had to go to finish the job. It might take another ten heaves to weaken his skull. He was still working on the cushion of flesh, but it was splitting apart. His hair was matted, his blood vessels had broken open and were dribbling thick, healthy blood into the roots of his hair. He was part of the way of jostling the brains inside enough to slide into a coma.

But he was intent on the whole thing, the break. So he reared up again, one sandal swung backward to propel his other foot. And off he went in some mocking display of athletic ability—a runner leaping off the blocks, headed for the bleak metal wall ahead of him twenty paces. This time he bounded off directly, and the thud was a bass note. He hurt that time, and staggered back, looking about with his stop sign eyes. He had reached some new depth, I suppose. It was a moment in which half the men felt he had gone far enough. They turned to go, not having had their chance at the urinals. They didn't want to see another good leap; it might actually spill his head down the wall. I left, too. I heard a thud as I felt my way through the last throngs at the counters onto the dark street. One more bass drum going short on the echo.

The pulque had poisoned him. But he had also had enough of lifting eighty pound crates of oysters, hundred pound blocks of ice. He knew as long as he could move he would be lifting. Maybe his back was going, his knees were failing. He looked to be about forty-five or so, about the time kidneys, liver give you trouble. He was powerful, still; iron boned, marble faced. His filth was like some sort of oil mist that had blown over a locomotive fender. It wasn't in him, just on him. He was pure inside, a pure hard poor and hapless man in a city without mercy. So tonight he was cashing in his chips, splitting the organ that had not done him any good.

And like much in his life, he would fail. His head would refuse another leap at the wall and he would curl up under a cart and sleep in the gutter, awake to the roar of

traffic, pull on his webs and start lifting again. All the way to noon, to the first knock back of pulque and the craze of the afternoon, and then evening — and the wall. Maybe his head would be so battered this time he wouldn't try again. He would wake with that hangover that reaches down into the buttocks and knees, and leaves you dazzled at your own pain.

The city was so old and battered with disaster it hardly noticed a peon's despair or feeble attempts to do himself in. It went on like the mountains around it, eternal and unmoved. Coming through the crowd of workers were certain beautiful women in sequined dresses, escorted by equally beautiful men in black suits with pale ties and equally pale colors of shirt. Their faces were cultivated, long thin noses and mild lips, languid eyes that did not dart or blink, but merely bathed the immediate air with attention. They were so clean and lovely that everyone else, even me, parted instinctively so as not to soil them. They came through with lustrous angelic detachment, to reach cars that were parked in the garage opposite the eating shed. They took the short cut partly to demonstrate the inequality of life, to enjoy the differences between themselves and us. And they moved along the paths of unsoiled ground as if they were catwalks in hell, and this was Dante and that was Virgil.

Their heads were as thin as eggshells and would have dashed out white, sophisticated brains on the first heave at the wall. Their brains would be as bright as cauliflowers, and would disintegrate at the touch of a finger. Inside such brains would be images of champagne and polished tables, echoes of thin chamber music, and equally thin laughter. These organs would have absorbed the world around them with less thirst than a ball of cotton. They had taken in only that fragment that moated them in luxury, in mildness. That was how they moved now, with their weightless satin coats draped like fog over their arms.

They carried the other end of the rope from the hauler with his bashed head. Between them dangled the whole world of my experience, with no way of reaching the ends that each hand grasped. That was the extreme, and I was somewhere in the middle, in the long loop dragging through the glittering scum of the market floor. It wasn't that I felt the scum, or was dampened by the filth. I was just hovering over the bottom of things, like a curious sort of trapeze artist with no sense of balance and no desire to fall off. I dangled between, and one fifth of my blood was drained through the same meshes as were these sophisticated tyrants in silk, and another fifth was pumped through the gutters of the market place, where the hauler wanted to die. Between lay the essential ambiguity of me, three fifths an ordinary, untried man.

I went back to my hotel, the Monte Carlo, on the Avenida Uruguay, up a broad staircase to a landing with a few old couches here and there, some doors going off to the street, others leading you to caves of darkness over the airshaft. D.H. Lawrence had occupied the room to the left, over the street, where he wrote *Mornings in Mexico*, his coffee and parrots prose. He too had three fifths of blood that had not been tested, or sufficiently exposed to danger. His prose resented it, and tried to find that place on earth where the sun roasted human blood and irreversibly catechized the soul into being pagan. His whole life was a preparation for being transformed, and he went home and died like Keats, with his lungs busted by tuberculosis. Malcolm Lowry occupied a ledge in the dark of Cuernavaca where he wrote *Under the Volcano*, and artificially transported his spirit by booze. He also went unchanged, largely unaltered to his death.

That is what I feared trudging up the steps, taking the right landing opposite Lawrence's room, to sulk away the last hours of night by myself. A table lamp was all the

illumination required to feel solitary. Being of unmalleable earth is a strange curse. The poor hauler couldn't alter himself even by heaving his full strength against a wall; the rich thought they had reached a point of refinement where all change could stop. But the women, two stately blondes with long necks, allowed their eyes to grope among the dark flesh of the men around them, and to make tentative love to them. They longed for the very dirt that had been scrubbed away from their world by brooms of money. They too couldn't change.

So there we were, all of us in the Mexican night, weighted with our identities. Only in our dreams do poor girls change into princesses. The little *quinze anos girls* were already fully made by childhood, and their final unfolding was from permanent flesh and soul—the woman was always inside. She would carry her village with her into marriage, and all her memories and connections to her youth would remain active, and fleshed as relatives, friends, sisters, brothers, parents' phone calls. A man must know that when he tries to steal love by seduction, a desire to take a little flower away from her and not her whole village. Love means the village, the past, the heritage all come with the woman you love. And the man, cutting off all ties to his life every time he gets a knife, must accept that he is a stranger in his wife's communal world. And neither will change their natures no matter how hard they try to adapt, to give in, or to convert the other.

In the morning, the Plaza Garibaldi is golden with sunlight. The pavement has been swept, the market removed except for the glass shed with its pots steaming. No customers on this bright ten o'clock Tuesday. The rumbles of night are far away. The wall has been washed down where the scalp had printed itself the night before. The poor hauler was already at work, invisible among his peers as they shoved beef sides into a freezer. Then, he would go off to pile tomato crates, and finish the workday with blocks of ice for the fish stalls. He might get extra work shaving the ice down, filling the bins.

By nine he would be blindly moving toward the counters, already half full of pulque for the night ahead. He was as determined as Sisyphus to transcend his fate, and his fate was as tense as the rusty, riveted girders supporting the glass roof over him. The iron world of the city was already transparent with messages to him, but he was the innocent among us, illiterate and gullible, an idealist worthy of Emerson's friendship.

I sat in the park and had my shoes shined. A newspaper was offered to me and I began to read about the drug gangs in Guadalajara, all the news back then. Their enormous profits were too much for the local banks to launder; the money had to go to offshore investment houses, get disguised as investments and circulated all through the world of money, from here to Hong Kong before it could come back and be useable as cash to build a mansion and swimming pool, to outfit the gangsters' wives and children. Then, and only then, could they clamber into the roomy backseat of a Rolls and cruise slowly toward the outskirts of the city to visit friends, to eat with that silky indifference of the rich on some splendid balcony overlooking the lawns and gardenia bushes.

And as they reached a hand out to fork up a slice of kiwi sprinkled with lime, to place it on an oversized dinner plate where it graced other shaved, sliced, peeled things, the hand still possessed its blood history, its scars. They could not be washed away. The palms had pulled roots in a field once, or yanked the handles of a wheelbarrow at some construction site, or bullied the wheel of a dump truck. Now it plucked kiwi disks from a platter, and was essentially cultivated and manicured, and stained with its own identity.

Is the function of money, which has no master, to dissolve one's history and liberate you into a self-made present? Is that why even death is not too high a price to pay to be reinvented? Their limos go by slowly, windows tinted opaque, the purr of money all through the silence of the moving vehicle, as it cruises into mauve shade and parks under the wild fig trees. The softness, the silk textures, the rare dawn colors of the limo's upholstery, the equally soft suede of the woman's jacket as she alights, all this is the attempt to alter by a micron the fate of being oneself. But her accent is the ghost of her true story, and it lingers in her teeth, on her tongue. She flattens her vowels; she calls forth on her breath some rustic and broken village origin never to be diluted. No Liza Doolittle here. That is a dream, like waking the marble up and holding the goddess only partly carved into the stone. She remains herself, buried under the luster, the soft surfaces. The smile is the same one that formed in her lips the first time she opened her eyes and took a step in the logy earth. She toddled toward her uncle, and he grabbed her up with a squeal of delight. She smiles that way now at the sight of jewels, or the sound of gravel under the approaching tires of a visitor.

"I can change," says the bad husband with his last chance before him. He tells the judge he won't strike his wife, and drags his mouth to say *ever again*. But the x-ray of his chest shows deep scoriations from a youth of beatings, so his hand is timed for more violence. He might drink instead, might run away, but he carries in him the written record laid down at his first trauma. He will be back. Everyone knows, but the hope, the faith in democracy, the vision of a new age all confirm the illusory gospel of a change—that he can alter himself by so little and become what he wants. So he reenters the house with sheepish expectations of a new life, and the clock ticks dreadfully inside him.

Maybe it's the city that gives us this perpetual hope that we too can rebuild. The cranes overhead are always swinging wrecking balls at the powerful sides of some stone tower, whacking at the resistant figure of the past as it withstands all the attempted destruction. And when it falls, it merely retreats into itself and ceases to be part of consciousness. But it hasn't changed, and the city has only replaced one form of towering loneliness with another. The new building will not invent a second use of the air, but merely fill it with anxiety and frustration, and the day to day routines of mere work. The city remains unalterable, even while its shadows keep rising and falling away. The city means some scripted fatefulness of human use or waste and nothing one does can reinvent the city.

Mexico grinds its poor, elevates its rich to the revolving restaurants, and leaves everyone else in the lower descents of the rope loop, in the middle. The middle is where there is every chance of falling, and yet it is crowded with all the hoppers and dreamers of modern democracy. I have my hands out there holding, too; and I believe fervently in the gospel that with more work, more hard thought, more nights on the edge of a hotel bed with the table lamp on to its dimmest power, I too can change. Keep at it, says the voice of my father; you'll make it, boy. Are you practicing still, says an old school friend, his voice slightly moist from having been replayed too often in memory.

Sure, sure, I say. You know me, always at it.

Perhaps that is what makes us kill nature in this century. It is half its strength and diversity, half its breadth over the planet, and we mean to finish the job of quartering that power by the time the governments cry foul. If you clear out land that was permanently forested before, you create a new world. You build huge towers and recirculate the life of the woods into them. All that will give you a new consciousness, a new economy,

a new hope in the power of man to change the flow of fate. And the peasants invent stories about the ghosts of trees that live in the foundations of the building, and sleep in heaps of family on the floor of their new apartment, and the indelible ink of history seeps through the new carpets and discolors everything in a year's time.

The despair of the suburbs is not so much the loneliness that comes with lawns and fortified, inward house forms, but because this mode of existence rides on the unconvertible wildness of hinterland. It can't change, even though bald, toothless, lawn-sprinklered, and asphalted. It is dead on its surface, but in its heart is the ferocity of the past, unwounded even though head-shaved. That is the peon's sore head, these pitched roofs and carpet lawns, and the wall that it would heave against is more subtle, a disintegration of marriages, the alienation of the young, the disappearing senses as food becomes tasteless, and mystery evaporates from experience. All the weakening ties to life are the upward pressure of the forest's memory, the shrub-tangle's insistent desire to be alive again. Nothing forgets, everything is an irredentist struggle to take back the original root home.

Nothing can be invented; it must all be drawn out of the well of fate. Nature is the very soul of repetition. Evolution is a script that exaggerates the leaps of nature toward some new species; it is the human script laid over nature to justify, root the idea that democracy is different, a magical form of governing in which old worlds trade in their peasant clothes for new technical utopias. And the new steel utopia slides around, drifts as if going forward, but has no force of will to continue its course. The past is fate, and will survive all feeble attempts to deny it.

Democracy is that vision of the common world, giving each one a chance to rise. But to what? To the memory of an old, oppressive aristocratic regime? Is that the commoner's dream? To invade the closed circle of an elite and rule with the same iron fist those below? If so, then no job is right, and no life is whole. Everything is open-ended; everything is a stairs leading higher. No road is long enough, no house big enough; no job pays enough. No kid is bright enough; no wife or husband is sufficient in themselves. Everything is temporary, a means of getting to something better. This lamp is for now, but wait till you see the one I put on layaway.

It was a stroke of pure market genius to begin with a simple computer whose technological development was minutely serial and endless, so that the customer would continually upgrade with each new mini-generation of circuitry, and end up paying vast sums of money to arrive at the end of a small tunnel of improvements that were added in a pace equal to greed, aspiration, and the myth of democratic rewards. Everyone is here for the moment, anxious to move up. No job is cause for joy, or merely a static means of living. The rest of life suffers accordingly because spare time is the time to invest in moving up. So life becomes empty all around; the job, the marriage, the family are nothing to the future's promise. Every moment is only a bridge to a better moment.

The loss of the past not only includes the disappearance of other forms of life, but also a vision of stability before everything turned to means. The other world was smaller, darker, more cramped and difficult. But it also had large clearings of the day in which to enjoy mere existence. The laughter was stronger, more earthy and sustained. The knowledge of each one's foibles and sins was intense, enriching. The need to walk, to allow time to do cooking, the obligation to fix the things one bought—all made life an intensity with focus. A man's basement was filled with implements for maintaining the house, the car. A kitchen was a wonder of pots and utensils for the making of food—with ethnic roots to it, and flavors that had molded the tongues and personalities of those who

partook of it. A room was more than a place to sleep; it was decorated with the dreams, the fantasies, the longings of kids who spent time there—in their diaries, or lolling about on beds with all their erotic fantasies burning inside them. The room was saturated in human idleness and dreaming.

The future is this endless watery promise that makes everyone swim harder, even when the place one occupies is enough. Almost any life is enough now, as it is.

The possessions are plenty, the house big enough, the mate essentially all one needs or deserves to make a good life. But the power to accept is gone; there is only the demand for more. The last small countries where fate is taken seriously are falling to the relentless fires of democratic ambition.

So the hauler comes to his wall again and surveys its density, its thick bolts and moorings in concrete, and shrugs his shoulders finally. It is useless to make another night of it, and he sits down with his quart of pulque, his sacking for the night's rest, and allows the gutter to rise up to his lips like a dark mirror in which all he can see is his true self again. The drink only softens the glow, dissipates the glare. He is born to this use of his back, and only when his organs fail will he walk away. He lives at the ink edge of democratic theory; he occupies the illiterate halo of twilight around every spoken ideal. He knows he is the very fastness of the universe, its magnetic web of stars and galaxies. Change him and the whole sky will start dissolving. Accept what he is, and all that he suffers, and you begin to let nature back into the world again, flower by flower, weed by stubborn weed.

There is no escape from fate, only a possible paradiso in acknowledging its victories. Let life take its own step, and your body follows, effortlessly, like a man shadow boxing with weightless legs and arms in a rundown playground in Beijing. If the hauler had danced instead of trying to kill himself, I would have stayed until he went to sleep. I would have encouraged him with my heart, not even knowing why I should feel such joy at his capacity to both suffer and transcend it with that magical power of the body to dance under the blows of fate.

Peter

by Robert B. Slocum

The first time I saw him was just after I took the call to Holy Spirit Parish in Belvedere, a small city in central Kentucky. I was newly ordained, and it was my first parish. Driving downtown one morning, I glanced over at the truck in the next lane, and there was Peter. He was sitting on a toolbox in the cargo bed, sitting up straight as an arrow, facing backwards as the truck moved along. Everything he wore looked like a soldier's uniform, but with no insignia, no stripes, nothing. It wasn't Army surplus, just some kind of camo.

Peter was probably in his fifties, maybe older, but lean as a rail. He had shaggy hair that bushed out under a green hat, and a scraggly beard. There was a bulging backpack over his shoulders, and it looked like he was carrying everything he owned with him. He had a small, tattered American flag on a black stick that was tied to a strap of the backpack. At first I thought it was a joke, but he wasn't laughing. Riding backwards, hands on his knees, he was perfectly still, eyes focused somewhere far away, a place I couldn't see. I was thinking we didn't have many homeless people in Belvedere, and certainly no one who looked like him.

It was maybe a month before I saw him again. I was running late to get ready for the parish council meeting at church. Walking to the parish hall, I was fumbling with some papers when I saw him sitting on the steps in front of the door. Same green hat, same funny camo. This time no backpack, no flag. He was looking right at me, like a marksman, watching me coming up the sidewalk, waiting for me to notice. "Eve'nin, parson," he said. Jeez, I thought, no one calls me parson. He told me his name.

I was in a hurry. The parish council people were going to arrive any minute, and I still had to get everything together for the meeting that night. Doors open, lights on, handouts ready. So I kind of snapped at him. "I'm sorry, there's no money left in the Handshake Fund today. And the Clothes Nook won't be open until tomorrow morning." He kept on looking at me, and it got real still. His eyes seemed to narrow just a little, then soften. "Don't remember asking for money or clothes, parson," he said, then a pause, "but maybe a cup of coffee." Another pause, still looking right at me. "Thought you might like to talk."

So I sent him on his way with coffee in a styrofoam cup, and told him to come back any morning during office hours. I figured my secretary could handle him, at least at first. I did offer him one of my business cards. It had an embossed logo of a descending Holy Spirit, with neatly printed lines of information in script. He wouldn't take it or look at it. "I know how to find you," he said, and left.

This was a busy time in the parish, and in Belvedere. Seemed like a lot was going on. One day a prisoner escaped the corrections van that was transporting him between the county lockup and a court appearance. Somehow he got out of his cuffs, and slipped the locked door at the back of the van. He was halfway down an alley before the guard and driver knew he was gone, and then nobody could find him. Belvedere was going nuts. Andy, the town constable was driving around town with his flashing lights on, except when he was going to the Rooster, his favorite diner, for the breakfast special. People were calling the church to ask if we knew anything.

Of course, it was just me and Jill, the secretary, at the church office during the day, unless some of the parish volunteers came by for the food pantry or the altar guild. So we kept getting all these calls. Someone even wondered if it had anything to do with that strange guy in the Army uniform they kept seeing around town. I said no, he's not a prisoner. It's not him. I nearly added that it's not an Army uniform, just looks like one. But I didn't. About this time, Peter yelled at someone for standing too close to him in the check-out line at the Kroger, and that didn't help. People were on edge, and people were talking.

Later that day, I had to review the annual report with the senior warden, Anne Taylor, so I went out to her farm at the edge of town. Going to Fox Run Farm was like visiting a plantation with rolling fields, grazing horses, and four-board white fences. This was life in the Bluegrass. It was almost dusk when I arrived, and I found Anne with her husband Larry on the front porch. They were each in their own rockers, enjoying the mild late spring and the fading light above the tree line. On a table between them were two half-filled glasses on paper napkins, their evening toddies, and two pistols. I also noticed a shotgun leaned against the wall of the house at the back of the porch. This was something I never saw before at Fox Run Farm, but I admitted no surprise. I was pleasant.

"Eve'nin, vicar," boomed Larry, "have a seat. Want a drink?" I pulled up a chair and said no, I'm fine, just wanted to come by to have a quick visit and show these papers to Anne. But before I knew it, they were both going full speed about the escaped prisoner. Someone thought they saw him, and someone heard he was dangerous, and the mayor was organizing a town meeting to talk about it, and someone called to say watch out tonight, and make sure all the windows and doors are locked.

Actually, Anne explained, that's what they were doing out on the porch that evening. They figured to see the prisoner if he came their way, and they'd be ready. They both reached for their drinks at about the same time, and sipped thoughtfully. I noticed one of the pistols on the table was sort of pointing my way, but I was deciding not to mention it when I realized someone was talking. It was Larry, saying if he saw that creep on his property, he wouldn't wait for any sheriff or police car, he'd just shoot him right off, and that would settle it.

So we watched the quiet sunset, talked a little parish business, and I went on home. "Be careful out there," Anne said, and they waved goodbye from the top step of the porch. Later that night I heard the police caught the escaped prisoner, and that ended the crisis for Belvedere. He was looking for food in a dumpster behind the Burger King downtown.

The next morning Jill left the office for her lunch break at about the usual time. She'd always leave around 11:30 to check on her daughter in day care across the street, and then pick up a sandwich to eat in the park. That meant the front door of the parish hall was open with no one at the desk near the entrance. My office was down the hall, and I was the only person in the building. I kept working in my office after Jill left. I

was writing something, probably a sermon, and not paying much attention to anything else. I thought I heard a sound somewhere, but then everything was quiet again. I kept on working, looking up every now and then if I got to a stopping place.

I glanced at my office door, and he was there. Peter was standing in the doorway, looking right at me, saying nothing. He was wearing the same camo and green hat. He was blocking the doorway. That was my first thought. He'd helped himself to a cup of coffee from the pot next to Jill's desk, and it was steaming in his hand. "Ah, Peter," I said, "here you are. What a surprise." He smiled for just a moment, watching me like a hawk, and then said, "Yeah, I knew how to find you. Thought you might want to talk."

So I invited him to sit down in the chair across from my desk. And he sat, pleasantly enough. He was unhurried and waiting, hands on his knees. Actually, we both waited. Usually, when people come to see me, they have something to say. But he waited, like he would have sat there all day until I said something. So we had a little silence, until I finally said to myself: Okay, I'll talk with anyone; I'll talk with this guy. "Well, did you hear they caught the escaped prisoner?" I began, drawing on the big local news item. "It's probably a good thing," I continued, "I have a couple of parishioners who were ready to shoot him on sight." Peter looked away for just a moment, made a sound like spitting, and said, "What do they know about killing?"

About that time I was thinking the escaped prisoner wasn't the best topic of conversation, but at least Peter was talking, and he kept on. "That prisoner was just a scared kid. Hanging out just inside the tree line behind the strip mall. You could hear him coming from a ways off. He knew nothing about living outside. His survival plan was to wait for the mall to close and then dive for scraps in the dumpster. I thought about sharing some food with him, but figured I'd just spook him. He seemed pretty much ready to go back by the time the police caught him. Looked like he was tired of sleeping on the ground, tired of being hungry and dirty. He had no damn business living outside."

Outside was where Peter lived, and he told me why. He talked about the war, and his camps inside concertina wire. He told me about nightly rocket attacks, enemy charges that began with whistles, and burying friends. He talked about the sound of helicopters overhead, and shouts in the night. He talked about burning hooches, and kids with guns or bombs. "But you know," he said, eyes straight on me, "bad as it was, you always knew who the enemy was. That's why I like outside." He paused. "Inside," he said, glancing sideways at the doorway, "you never know who's coming at you. They get behind you before you know it. You never really know who's on your side. You can't tell by looking at them. People cheat you, lie to you, stab you in the back while they're smiling at you." At that point I remembered a few stories of my own, but I kept quiet.

He looked me square in the eyes. "Parson, that's why you won't be seeing me in the church building for any prayer services or potluck suppers. I don't like crowds, or people behind me, or folks dressed up to be something they're not." I didn't try to reason with him, or explain. I just listened. He was talking faster now. "But I pray all the time. I prayed when I was sloshing through tunnels in country, looking for resistance. And I prayed back here when I got off the plane. I pray nights when I can't sleep, and when the dreams wake me up. I pray when I could scream. Sometimes I can tell other people who pray, and I'll talk to them when I can. I figured I could talk to you." He glanced down, and his expression softened a little. "I don't know. Maybe I'll show up for that early morning prayer service of yours on Tuesdays with the same three people. I'm usually up pretty early."

About that time I learned he didn't like sudden noises. Jill got back from lunch, and the office door closed hard behind her with a gust of wind. Peter snapped up straight in his chair, and looked side to side. Everything tightened. He finished what he was saying, but the conversation was over. He was moving, and in a minute he was gone.

I didn't see Peter for a couple of weeks, until one Tuesday after the early service. I remember Henry had to miss that day; Marge and Betty were already headed down to the Rooster for breakfast, and I was about to close the church door and join them. There he was, standing in the doorway, wearing the same gear as usual. Dawn was breaking behind him. "Hey," I said, "I thought you were coming to church. You're late." He smiled, and asked if he could go inside. He wanted to sit and pray in the quiet church. "That's fine, Peter," I said, "that's fine." I stepped out of the way, and he went inside.

The next time I saw Peter was a few days later. He appeared as I was getting out of my car in the church lot, and he asked me a favor. It was the first time I ever saw him hesitate, or be anything but direct. "The thing I need, parson," he said, "is, well, fall's coming, and my VA check may not be enough, and I don't take handouts." He started again. "So, I was thinking maybe you'd know someone who could use some help."

I could help. "Sure, Peter," I said. "Just a couple of days ago Anne was saying she needs some help at Fox Run Farm." So she put him on a tractor in one of her fields, and said he was a great worker. After Thanksgiving he told her he was leaving to spend the winter in Florida. Anne tried to keep him around, but Peter said he had his marching orders. His mind was made up. Anne promised his job would be waiting for him in the spring.

The week after Thanksgiving I saw Peter again. He was in the back of a pickup truck, stopped next to me at a traffic light. The truck was on the way out of town, and he was sitting on a chest in the cargo bed with his back to the cab. Same overstuffed backpack, same tattered flag, same fixed look at a point somewhere you can't see. But I think he saw me. I think he smiled.

Trouble

Raymond Abbott

The trouble didn't begin for Leon until his wife Ellie, who hadn't had a drink in five years or more, started back with serious drinking that spring. What bothered him almost as much as the drinking itself was the dressing-up in fancy white women's clothes including high heel shoes. Then she paraded around the joints off the reservation. She was making a complete fool of herself, and him too.

The best he knew how he watched out for the children, ever thankful though that the three were almost grown. They had two girls and a boy; the oldest, Linda, was fifteen and Stanley fourteen and Lucille nearly twelve. There had been other children too, by earlier marriages, a couple for each of them, but those didn't count any more. They had grown up and moved on a long time before.

Leon Little Sack would be fifty-six his next birthday and Ellie, carrying on now like a teenager, was past forty by a year or two. He wasn't sure of her exact age but he was sure that she looked mighty foolish in that white woman's get-up. Lately, it included a sun bonnet with a wide brim and yellow plastic flowers, even a veil when she wanted to be mysterious, ridiculous as that seemed to him. And if it hadn't been for the fact that she was often drunk and in a nasty mood when he got to see her—when she came home that is—he might have grinned at how she looked. But it wasn't a funny subject for him, and to smile at her was to invite more trouble and a whole lot of it at that. She didn't take to him making fun of her.

Things went on like this for one summer and into the fall. And he was thankful that she hadn't begun acting so crazy in the winter months when there were more pressing problems such as keeping warm and hunting for firewood, a chore that involved everyone in the family who was able-bodied. Also, in the summer there wasn't the worry of losing cattle in a fast-moving blizzard or a late spring northwester blowing in and killing off the new-born calves.

The truth was, and he knew it, he would have had to do something about her erratic behavior long before he did had there been snow on the ground and it was cold. Up to now it had been an unusually dry summer approaching drought conditions in parts of South Dakota. Water was more of a problem this year than he could ever remember. Still, he was managing, keeping things together as well as might be expected, as he waited for Ellie to come to her senses. This was the situation, that is, until she came home drunk one evening still wearing that absurd outfit which he was getting used to while at the same time coming to despise the more he saw of it. She was somewhat more sober this night, but he didn't pay too much attention to her condition because

he had become adjusted to her marathon drinking sessions and knew there were lulls when she was likely to be less drunk than at other times. He knew because he had been there himself. This wasn't the hard part anyway. The hard part was the people around him, his own people, Indian people, in some cases his family and friends. They could be the big trouble because they made quitting the booze more difficult for Ellie. It had been the same for him when he quit. He recalled how they were all the time at him, ridiculing him for trying to quit, calling him a snob and suggesting he was somehow better than they were because he didn't want to drink anymore. And there were others who tried to force him to take a drink. Once he was actually offered cash if he would take only one swig from the whiskey bottle being passed around so generously. And another time, when he'd stopped at an off-reservation cafe to buy a package of cigarettes, several drunk Indians had grabbed him and forced him to take a swallow of their cheap whiskey.

Yet through it all he'd stayed sober; sometimes he didn't know how. And after a while he was left alone and he liked to believe he began to be respected, if only for his stubbornness. He wished Ellie could get through this period the way he had, but the sad truth was that she had only four or five years of sobriety behind her. He had something like twelve.

Ellie was a tiny woman, slight actually, but now there was a change in her—a noticeable change. She had gained weight through the middle and around the hips; not a lot, but enough to notice. *She's pregnant, damn it*, he thought immediately. Four or five months pregnant, he guessed. He asked her about this and she didn't deny it, snarling at him in a more sober voice than he could recall since this entire sordid business began.

"Yes, I'm pregnant," she said in Indian, "and you aren't the father."

He thought about the statement for a moment. He smiled. She didn't see the smile, however. Not so startling news, he thought. He knew he couldn't have been the one. It had been that long since they had been together in that way. He wished he were, but he wouldn't tell her this. For some reason the news didn't upset him. It had happened in this way before. Children were born on the reservation all the time without fathers. This one would be luckier than most because he would be its father just as he was for his own children. He would do well by it, whatever it was, no matter who the father was.

Ellie kept on talking, her voice taking on a new hostility, he thought, an anger he hadn't picked up on before—or maybe he wasn't listening as carefully as before.

"The baby's father isn't Lakota," Ellie said all of a sudden. It just jumped out of her. "The father's a white man, a rancher I met over in Valentine, and an awfully nice guy, too. He knows how to treat a lady."

Yeah, he thought, *it appears so*. He heard the words, but their meaning didn't sink in right away. Pregnant by a white rancher and a local white man, no less. It might even be somebody he knew or had to do business with. Someone he bought cattle from or sold to, and someone who would hate the thought of fathering an Indian kid and wouldn't want it known he had been with some reservation squaw. And if the news got out, as it surely would, he would be ridiculed and laughed at for what he had permitted to go on. That's what it all came down to now for him and it was a degree of shame he wasn't prepared to accept and have carried into his home.

Ellie was quiet now, perhaps sensing that she had gone too far and had said too much. She stirred soup on the small kitchen stove and he, without a word of warning, swung her around and hit her with the back of his hand, knocking her to the floor. She didn't get up right away. She crawled into the corner where ordinarily there was wood

stacked. Finally, she got to her feet and he hit her again, this time square on the face with a closed fist. Again she went down—down to stay—and when she came around, he was gone. He quickly walked the two miles to his brother's house, and as he had guessed, there was a party going on. There almost always was a party at his brother's place when there was money for liquor, as there was this week. Several persons he knew were quite drunk and nobody seemed surprised when he began drinking with them, and this for the first time in a dozen years. Soon, he was wild-assed drunk and next thing he was doing was to borrow a few dollars, never an easy task on the reservation, and then he took someone's car and drove to nearby Vetal, an off-reservation town where he drank a good deal more cheap gin until the place closed. Then, it was back to Spring Creek and Ellie. He was drunker than he had ever been in his life. Still, he was on his feet and he was proud of that fact. When he arrived home, he was surprised to find Ellie still there. She was acting as if nothing had happened, as if there had been no beating, and if it weren't for her bruises to remind him, he might have thought he dreamt the entire affair. He could see she was frightened too, because she no longer could remember what he was like when he was drunk. She'd forgotten how mean he could become.

He talked at first as if he forgave her, although the subject of her pregnancy didn't come up. He offered her a drink from a bottle of gin he had in his coat pocket and she took a couple of long swallows. The liquor warmed her insides and she soon began to feel pleasantly intoxicated. What fun it might be for the two of them to go somewhere in the car, she said, the way they used to in the old days when they both drank. Maybe they would want to go over to Crockston, or perhaps as far as Valentine, Nebraska, she said, and party and get roaring drunk together.

He was slow to respond to her idea but finally he decided it was a good suggestion and so they left Spring Creek, driving south in the direction of Crockston, Nebraska, by way of the cut-across, a sandy trail which leads to the mostly straight oil-surfaced road into St. Andrews community. At first Leon drove slowly but once on the straight oil-surfaced road he pushed the accelerator to the floor—50, 60, 70, 80. Ellie talked on as if still in the house. She didn't seem to notice the speed. She was in a happy, indeed festive, mood. It was as if the trouble hours before hadn't happened nor had there been peculiar behavior on her part for months before this night, and above all else, no news of her being pregnant by a white rancher. While Ellie may have forgotten so easily, Leon hadn't. He knew where he was and what he was doing and what he thought he had to do next. Next to him was his wife Ellie and she was carrying a child by a local white man. That was the fact that stuck in his head like glue, and no amount of drinking could change this for him.

He said later it was the liquor that made him do it. What he did, and without so much as a word of warning, was to reach across Ellie's lap as if adjusting her door, but instead of adjusting anything he opened the car door on her side and shoved her out and she was gone into the darkness. The next day she was found unconscious but alive by a white rancher in a pickup truck who saw the brightly colored white woman's outfit she still wore. She was taken to the reservation hospital where the pregnancy had to be terminated. There were other serious injuries as well—a broken leg, a fractured wrist, and a head injury—but she survived after being hospitalized for a month or more. She was transferred to a Rapid City hospital for treatment and remained on in Rapid after her release.

In the meantime, Leon went on a nearly four-week drunk and when the tribal police caught up with him to ask him about what happened with Ellie, all he could remember of the incident, he told them, was leaving his place at Spring Creek. He thought

maybe she fell out of the car, he said. The police went away threatening to return and arrest him, but he knew they wouldn't. The day they came to see him, Leon was somewhat more sober than he had been the day before and certainly more sober than he would be the day after. He was then in the process of selling off his small herd of cattle, head-by-head. It had taken him a decade to accumulate that herd. He sold his stock to a white man in Nebraska, a man by the name of Schmidt, a man he had done business with for a number of years. He and Schmidt were good friends and when the white rancher saw Leon's condition, he knew what it meant and could mean to Leon's chances of surviving as an Indian rancher. He tried to convince him not to sell.

"Not now my friend," he said. "Wait a few days, then come see me if you want." But the words were for nothing. Leon wanted to sell now, and for no good reason aside of being drunk he began to verbally abuse this white man who was just trying to help. Schmidt wanted no part of an Indian in an ugly mood like this one was, friend or no friend.

But it wasn't until after the cattle were sold to Schmidt that Leon got really crazy. He talked foolish, making outlandish assertions, Schmidt later said. "I don't need any crazy Indian going around accusing me of sleeping with his woman," he'd complain. "I don't consider that a compliment, even if I am 64 years old."

He wondered where Leon got such an idea in his mind. But Indians were funny like that, he told his worried wife, Eleanor. Indians frightened her, even after living near them for 38 years. Still, to see so much that was good undone so quickly made Schmidt sad for Leon Little Sack. There was no explaining it, he told his wife, except to say it was no less true today than it was years ago, that Indians and drink didn't mix well. "Never have and never will," he said, more certain about that than he was about most things in his life lately.

Fire at Uptack Road

Raymond Abbott

Sometimes when I read about somebody undergoing a coronary bypass—double or triple or quadruple bypasses you hear so much about—I remember Jake Mattolli. I see him as a kind of pioneer in undergoing heart surgery. He certainly didn't wish to be one, I hasten to add, nor was his surgery a bypass. I believe it was a valve replacement. But it was heart surgery and it was done in the late fifties when such procedures were not far from being experimental, and the survival rate was not anything like what it is today.

Jake's doctor was a bigshot surgeon in Boston, near the town where I grew up. I am sure this doctor was one of the best there was in those years. I remember he termed the operation a success, but as Jake's lungs gave out on the table, he, the patient, died. Jake died, that was what it all added up to for me. I saw the irony in what had happened when I viewed Jake's puffy face in his coffin. That sort of success most of us wish to avoid. Clearly the man had gone through an ordeal, having risked the ultimate and lost. It was one cigarette too many for Jake, I surmised, although I knew in the months before the surgery he had quit smoking altogether. That was when he began to bone up for his operation. He would brag that he could almost assist in one of those heart procedures—that was a word he liked to use: procedure. He was thorough, all right. But we all knew, too, that he was mighty scared. The night before he left for Boston, he broke down and cried in front of one of the older boys I palled around with. I was glad I didn't see it. And he gave one young man a new sports coat he'd bought only a month before, bought on an impulse, he claimed. Looking back now from the distance of many years, it appears Jake was approaching his surgery with something less than confidence. These days everybody says attitude means so much in medicine. Maybe that was the thought back then, too, but I don't recall hearing much talk about it. Then too, I was just a kid of 15 or 16 at the time.

The thing I remember about Jake, aside from what I've already told you, is that he was the fire chief in the Massachusetts town where I am from, Groveland. Being fire chief anyplace, anytime, is a fairly big deal, but for Jake Mattolli, being fire chief was almost a calling, like a religious vocation. My father used to say, in an unkind way I thought, that Jake didn't have anything better to do with his time and so that was why he was fire chief of the town's volunteer department. And my father also used to say Jake hung around the town's one luncheonette, Freddie's, much too much. He clearly didn't have use for a grown man who would spend his evenings at a lunch counter gossiping like a woman.

But then Jake wasn't married and he lived with his mother, and I guess his time at Freddie's provided a needed place to go evenings, something to do when there wasn't a poker game at the Fur, Fish and Feather Club, or if he couldn't use the cabin boat he kept in the nearby Merrimack River. Jake loved to fish, and besides being fire chief, then a part-time job, he ran a gas station/fishing tackle shop on the main street.

He was Italian, stocky in build, but not fat. Not very tall either, but not short the way my father was, who was less than five feet two inches tall. Jake had dark hair that was cropped close to his head and peppered with gray, and it looked as if it might have come in in tight curls if he allowed it to grow out. I think he was 53 or 54 when he died.

In the two or three years before his death, the fire department Jake operated was going through substantial changes, updates, I guess you would call them. The town was growing and the department had new needs. We simply have to keep up, Jake said often. He believed in change and always wanted the best possible equipment for his men, and he insisted they undergo whatever training was available. In Freddie's, in the evenings, Jake would frequently expound on the needs of his fire department, and many a night these little speeches (especially when they came late, as they often did) were heard only by Freddie or myself (the dishwasher/soda fountain clerk) or the part-time short order cook, Arthur, who filled in for Freddie some nights. And, of course, the stray cat, Gretchen. I think Jake considered that cat almost a person the way he talked to it, often in a whisper as if telling it secrets. Jake was unofficially in charge of seeing that Gretchen got fed in the evening. It was a major blow to him when Gretchen turned up missing one day. But another cat soon took her place and it was given the same special attention from Jake. Jake would have made a fine family man, I've thought more than a few times since his early passing.

The big deal technologically speaking, and this was about 1958, was two-way radios for the fire trucks and for Jake's fire car, a bright red 1951 Buick Dynaflow. Also, there was to be a centralized radio transmitter (actually there were two of them) called the Base Stations, and receivers in the homes of each of the volunteer firemen. It was truly an innovative step for the town.

Jake knew he had no talent for public speaking, but that hadn't kept him from getting up at the annual town meeting months earlier to plead for the money for his radios, and he got it all right, such was his sudden eloquence that night. Some time later he confided to us in Freddie's, Arthur, me and the cat Gretchen, how hard his heart had pounded and how sweaty his palms were as he got up to make his presentation at that meeting. But I could tell he was damn proud of himself and what he had accomplished.

One of the new base stations where the fire calls were to be received and the messages sent out, was to be Freddie's Luncheonette. Since Freddie's was open early each day, seven days a week, from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., it was thought to be the ideal place for part of the fire department radio equipment to be placed. From 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. one of the volunteer fire fighters would house the second base station in his home. Freddie himself was agreeable to this arrangement, as he considered himself a public-spirited man. But he was also to be paid \$600 a year to have the radio in his establishment. He had to be open, he reasoned, so why not the radio? Jake saw it as a good deal financially for Freddie. But to hear Freddie expound on the subject a few months after the installation of the radios, it was a big pain in the ass.

The immediate problem, as far as Jake was concerned, was the short-order cook, Arthur. He was an old man by then; at past 68 (damn near ancient to me), he was a nervous kind of fellow. But he was a great short-order cook, a real hasher from the old school. Fast at his work and friendly to the customers, he didn't demand much in wages. But he wasn't good with radio procedure.

“Thank God Arthur is only on part-time,” Jake would say to Freddie after Arthur had been particularly good at fouling up the evening test of the fire radios. I remember that the test was supposed to go something like this:

“This is KCF251; testing all monitor receivers.” And then the message was repeated and the person sending out the test, Arthur or Freddie usually, was supposed to say simply, “KCF251 off.”

That was it. Jake was not often satisfied with the way the test was put out. He claimed Freddie mumbled so that no one could hear the call numbers. With Arthur though, he was especially critical, for Arthur’s voice would sometimes falter, in obvious nervousness. He would then leave out words and numbers from the message, even though he was reading them from a piece of paper. Jake tried endlessly to properly train him (and calm him down) but Arthur seemed incapable of mastering it. It was a case of extreme mike fright, Jake noted with authority. No one could argue that point.

“Just say KCF251 off,” he would instruct Arthur, impatience in his voice, but Arthur frequently would say “KCF251 over and out,” if he signed off at all or if he didn’t leave out “KCF251” altogether. “Over and out,” as far as Jake was concerned, marked his fire department as pure amateurs.

“The man must think he’s Broderick Crawford or something [Crawford was a popular TV figure in those years who frequently used ‘Over and out’]. They must think we are real hicks over in Haverhill,” Jake would tell Freddie later when Arthur wasn’t present.

Freddie seldom had anything to say. Likely though, Freddie didn’t give a hoot how the test went out. He just didn’t view it as all that important. When he was especially riled he might say to someone—never to Jake—Jake can just take his radio equipment someplace else if he doesn’t like how it is being done. But I know Freddie liked getting that six hundred bucks every year, and so he kept his frustrations to himself around Jake for fear of losing it.

The nearest city of any size to us was Haverhill, and they had had this kind of radio gear for a number of years before we did. Thus, they became the model as to how things should be done, at least in Jake’s mind. They were a full-time department and were on the air all day long, so they no doubt knew procedure well. After all, they had had plenty of practice. Yet, Jake couldn’t help but make the inevitable comparisons, for in his heart he wished his volunteers were as professional in radio use as they were in Haverhill.

If Jake was annoyed and embarrassed with how Arthur put out an evening test, it didn’t compare with his consternation when it came to a real fire call. I recall one busy Saturday morning at Freddie’s. The place was jumping as it often was on Saturday. Dishes were piling up. I was late getting to work, and by the time I arrived, Arthur was beside himself. There were only the two of us working that morning and three would not have been enough that day. Arthur was running out of everything and he had several orders of eggs frying, and when things got this bad Arthur often would rock his body from side to side, from one leg to the other. By the time I arrived, he was rocking worse than I had ever seen him, and then that red phone in the back began to clang—and clang was what it did—Jake saw to that. Arthur dropped everything, even a pan of hot muffins, and sprang toward the back. He grabbed that red phone receiver so roughly I thought he’d tear it from the wall. He screamed into it, “GROVELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT!”

There was damn near panic in his voice. What the person on the other end thought, I can only surmise.

“A FIRE, YES, WHERE?” he asked.

I should tell you that the morning crowd at Freddie’s could be a rough bunch. Mostly, they were local truck drivers and construction workers. There wasn’t one in the bunch who didn’t know Arthur pretty well and appreciate how excitable he could become, and they were more than a little inclined to think up things to further upset him, if possible. I’ve thought many times since that if any one of that crowd had had their house on fire that day—or any day—they might well have reconsidered the razzing they gave this poor old man.

Now, however, a man in front was hollering, “Hey, Arthur, where are those eggs I ordered half an hour ago?” Laughter went up. Then, there was, “Arthur, I think your blueberry muffins are burning.” And it went on from there; there was no mercy.

By the time Arthur got to the radio transmitting part of the process, a mere three or four steps from the phone, he was quite incendiary.

The first mistake Arthur made was that he could not remember the call numbers, although they were printed in large red letters on the front of the radio. Arthur just started pushing buttons. I wondered if he even understood what all the buttons were supposed to do.

I knew, for example, that the right combination was supposed to trigger automatically the fire alarm at the fire station across the street. This morning, though, I don’t think Arthur put the necessary combination together to accomplish this required task. He pushed buttons until finally he came to the mike button and pushed that and yelled, “THERE’S A FIRE ON UPTACK ROAD!”

He didn’t say what kind of fire or where on Uptack Road, and Uptack Road was several miles long, although in those years it was mostly woods and brush. And, of course, he hadn’t identified himself. He didn’t say which fire department was putting out this call. There were at the time about seven departments on the same frequency. Each had its own call numbers, of course. Arthur’s message cut off in mid-sentence some fireman in Haverhill, that model community, but in Haverhill they were used to Arthur. Indeed, some claimed they loved it when he came on the air with such a flair. Everybody would step aside and just listen for what would inevitably follow.

“ALL TRUCKS TO UPTACK ROAD!” He forgot, however, to let go of the mike button, and so what he said next, which wasn’t meant to be on the air, went out for all to hear.

“HEY, MY MUFFINS ARE BURNING!” He was hollering to me, I suppose. “PLEASE TAKE THEM OUT!”

There was more laughter from the front of the store and the fire phone was clanging again, and Jake later said he had heard all of this commotion on his set at home, which meant that everybody on the air that day had heard it, too.

Arthur apparently had hung up on whoever it was that called in the alarm in the first place, before the man could pinpoint the location. That person was now calling back to say it was a brush fire near Stacy’s Bridge. Arthur dutifully passed on this new information, trying now as best he could to identify himself and the department. But he gave the wrong call numbers. By this time, Jake later said, he had hoped Arthur wouldn’t identify himself at all. It would be better because then at least not everybody would know what damn fools we are out in Groveland. But he knew it was much too late for that.

There being only one Uptack Road in the area, in a reasonable time the firemen got there and put out the brush fire without undue delay. After his initial upset, even Jake could laugh at it all—laugh on the outside, anyway. Later, he would wax some-

what philosophical about his problem with Arthur. He told me one night that Arthur was just too damn old to be taught good radio procedure. I suspect Arthur must have known that himself. He wasn't, after all, a stupid man. But that radio equipment just scared the dickens out of him.

It all seemed so important and serious then. And, you know, in a way I guess it was.

Ergo Sum

by Kevin McHugh

The following narrative, composed after my first return to Ireland since my student days at the University College Dublin in the late 1960s, describes the siren call of my adopted homeland and the uncanny circumstances that led to my return. This is an abbreviated version of that account, compressed at the request of a friend. The original has grown like an Irish mile into a book-length narrative of 120,000 words. The whole business began with a poem I entitled “Ergo Sum” (Therefore I am), also the title of this work.

In her adolescence, my daughter Katie spared me the father-chilling question, “Dad, where did I come from?” For that information, she quite wisely turned to her mother. With feminine precognition she intuited correctly that Daddy was a coward and that he, like many other fathers, would find *this* subject taboo for polite conversation with his “little girl.” So she took me by surprise when, at twenty and a student at Xavier University, she asked once more—but this time of me—where she had come from. “Tell me,” she said, settling bird-like into the couch, “about my family history.” (Whew.)

* * *

Three years before, Kate had witnessed my search for that history, one that took me back to Ireland nearly thirty years after my student days at University College Dublin in the late sixties and culminating in symbolic Irish citizenship. Social Security was to blame. Form SSA-7005-SM-SI (1-95) to be exact. It had dropped innocently into my life, addressed to my mother, Ellen *Gara* at my Cincinnati address. That *was* my mother’s name, but it was my mother’s maiden name and one, legally speaking, she had left behind at the altar in 1946 when she married my father and became Ellen *McHugh*. After his death, Mother moved to the Cincinnati area to be near granddaughter Katie (and later grandson Brendan). She died in 1989. But the “Message from the Commissioner of Social Security” mysteriously nose-dived into my letterbox six years later. Somehow, I really think my mother had something to do with this “chance” occurrence, and that possibility lends an air of mystery to my quest for her family roots.

I telephoned Social Security to find out how their card had wound up at my address (they had no idea) and to inform them that Ellen Gara, a.k.a. Ellen McHugh,

was deceased and that, just to set the record straight, *my* mother had not been born in 1920 and not 1914, as indicated in their correspondence.

“Oh, no, Mr. McHugh,” said the official voice with matter-of-fact finality, “I’m sure our records are correct.”

“Prove it,” I demanded, my “Irish” up.

They did. In fact, with their information and with corroborating evidence from the 1920 U.S. Census, I determined that Mother and her older sister Catherine had both lied about their ages (mother by six years, her sister by seven), no doubt to compete with the twenty-somethings for the returning GIs at the end of World War II. That they had “stretched the truth” and that the two sisters had carried their secret to their graves helped to explain why Mother had never talked much about her own family history. A staunch Irish Catholic, she abhorred lies and so, guilty of this sin, she sought to escape others through her silence. Sure, I knew that her family, like my father’s, was “Irish”—I thought in the same way as all my friends growing up were German, native-born, hyphenated Americans. I had no idea that Mother was a first-generation citizen or that my own ethnic roots lay so near the surface. The epiphany explained more. I had grown up in a home charged by my mother with an appreciation of “things Irish”—a difficult task in a town as German as Lake Woebegone is Norwegian and where the name *Kevin McHugh* never sounded as American as *Othmar Schnipke*. It also helped to explain how, like a salmon returning to its home waters in the spring, I had been lured to the National University of Ireland and how daughter Kate has begun her own journey homeward.

My curiosity piqued, I ordered a search of the National Archives and found the naturalization records for my maternal grandfather, Patrick Gara (wives were naturalized with their husbands). From that information I obtained the Ship Passenger Arrival Records and, finally, the Pennsylvania Department of Vital Statistics for my grandparents’ death certificates—the last arriving *the day before my first trip to Ireland since 1969*. I scanned the forms. Both Patrick Gara and Catherine (Phillips) Gara had been born in County Mayo, the former in Glenmullynaha Townland near the market village of Charlestown, the latter from just up the Dublin Road in tiny Carracastle (or as it had been spelled “Carrycastel”). According to the Pennsylvania death record, her parents (my maternal great-grandparents) were Charles and Bridget (Walsh) Phillips. Catherine had been born in 1885, but I learned later that she, too, had lied about her own age, shaving ten years on the voyage to America.

The tug of my own history (what a friend referred to as my Irish DNA) had been acting up for some time before spring’s primal pull took me and my then fifteen-year-old son, Brendan, “home” to my old Dublin turf and to Mayo. The “kids” were older, my professional life, secure. Preoccupied by swimming with or against the currents of day-to-day life, I had been unable to raise my head enough to see the further shore of the past which, as I approached fifty, called to me like a siren. I had been away too long.

Afraid of disappointing Brendan, I cautioned him as we entered Charlestown, parting a herd of commuting cattle like some low-budget Moses: “I’m not sure we’ll meet anyone who knew your great-grandfather Patrick. Maybe all the Garas have emigrated.” They had, I learned. In fact, of the forty-three families who lived in the same Townland of Glann with the Garas, only six remained. And so, up the highway we pattered, crossing a patchwork of level pastureland and past a green sign with white letters, “*Ceathru Chaisil*,” and below that, “CARRACASTLE.” It was hard to tell where the village started, but then it became apparent that we were in it—a sprinkling

of homes, some deserted. Brendan spotted two, large, white-plastered buildings. “Stop here,” he said suddenly. “Stop here.” He pointed to the red and white sign, “Davey’s” and in smaller letters, “Ale House, General Grocer.”

“You’ll want to be speaking with Vincent,” the proprietor told us when I asked about family roots. Vincent, as it turned out, was Vincent Coleman—a retired schoolmaster, a highly regarded genealogist, and now a dear friend—who by coincidence lived just across the road. Vincent and wife Chris “adopted” us that afternoon, they fed us and they have provided us a homeport in Mayo ever since. He determined first that there were two Charles Phillips in the local records, both of whom had daughters named Catherine. To determine which one of the two had been our forebear, he advised us to talk with a retired postman named Jim Ruane, living in a nursing home in nearby Ballaghaderreen, County Roscommon. “Don’t volunteer the name Walsh,” Vincent cautioned us, realizing that Catherine’s mother’s maiden name would be the key to our search. “Jim may just want to oblige you.”

The old postman was more than happy to see us, though even to my ear his accent was hard to cut above the Elvis Presley tunes blasting over the rec-room radio. When we did get around to “business,” Jim shook his head; he couldn’t remember Catherine Phillips’ mother’s name. I volunteered the first or Christian name, knowing it would be as common as rain and would give nothing away. “Bridget,” I anted.

“Walsh,” he answered immediately—and then traced the Phillips land to its present owner. Coincidence?

That afternoon Vincent piloted Brendan and me down narrow borreens (country lanes) and tractor tracks beyond his own home and just past Jim Ruane’s aging farm. The Phillipses and the Ruanes had, it turned out, been neighbors. In fact, baptismal records later revealed that Jim’s father, John Ruane, had been my grandmother’s baptismal sponsor in 1875—and not 1885 as she claimed. Eventually, we located the cottage from which my grandmother had emigrated to America. Over two hundred years old, it stands roofless but its walls rise still and timeless beneath the trees of Calvagh Townland. Not far away stretched Barroe Bog, from which Catherine Phillips’ father and his before had cut the peat turf that they burned as fuel to heat their tiny-two roomed, earthen-floored home. “Do you feel it?” Vincent asked after Brendan and I had stood, rooting ourselves in this our ancestral geography and in their familiar topography: the fields they worked (just over five acres), the bog they walked, the Ox Mountains rising blue-green and low against the western horizon. I did feel it and at once understood why Vincent found reward in moments like these and not in money. The DNA was stirring.

“Your mother was a Phillips,” Vincent reflected. He closed his eyes and seemed to sort through the files of his mind. “She would have had dark, black hair. Fair, pale skin. Blue blue eyes. And,” he added, “an intelligent look.” He had described my mother. Of the Phillips family I learned little. “It’s an English name,” I observed to Vincent. “Yes, it is,” he replied. “Possibly born on the wrong side of the blanket,” he noted, a polite way of telling me that the English lords had long ago “bedded” the locals. “There was a lot of that.” And there were a lot of Phillipses in the area, as well. That my grandmother’s family had survived the Famine on slightly more than five acres speaks well of their landlord, the Viscount Dillon, who ruled with compassion during those hard years.

With Vincent’s help we found the Garas (more commonly the O’Garas, the *O* meaning “son of”), resting in an old cemetery beside a ruined country church. Michael O’Gara, Mother’s cousin, had been buried there in 1976. Most of the family had emigrated

to America or to England. Most of those who had stayed and survived, daughters, had changed their names in marriage. Two years later and again with Vincent's help, my wife and I met several O'Gara relatives, Mother's eighty-seven-year-old cousin, Imelda Flanagan, who could have passed for her twin, and Imelda's son Terence, of Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo. And through Terence we found in Carabeg another cousin, another Michael O'Gara, seventyish, ruddy-faced, wide-smiling and white-haired, dressed in traditional West of Ireland farmer's Sunday attire—white shirt and black suit jacket—to greet cousins from “Amerikay.” The Flanagan clan, too, had ties with the Norman (English) Jordan family. Cousin Imelda passed along, at Terence's urging, the hushed family history of the “blue blood” running in Flanagan veins that betrayed other “wrong side of the blanket” liaisons.

Of the Garas we eventually learned a great deal more, a long and detailed family tree dating to 1815, provided by a Gara relative from Virginia I had never met. The same Carracastle pub proprietor who directed us to Vincent Coleman pointed our way to the castle of the O'Gara clan, *Moygara*, overlooking Lough Gara in neighboring County Sligo. It's an out-of-the-way place today, well off the tourist map. The O'Garas had, in fact, been important chieftains in the area. One Fergal O'Gara had provided and patronage and financial support for a classic of Irish history and literature, the monumental *Annals of the Four Masters* in 1632. Oliver Cromwell's forces ousted the clan a short time later, sending many to the Continent, where they served in the Irish Brigades of the Austrian and French armies, rising through the ranks to command. Another served as a general under Napoleon. Still others wound up as merchants in Brussels. The castle, though a ruin, gives testimony to O'Gara power, rising with four-cornered and castelated on the hill of Mulagatee. “This,” I gestured to the stony history surrounding us and with just a wee bit of exaggeration, “this is *your* castle, Brendan.” I thought I could hear the stirring of his DNA.

And as for Jim Ruane—“He died,” Vincent Coleman told us by phone the day after our return to America, “the day you and Brendan left Ireland. You were the last with whom he shared his wealth of information.” Coincidence? I think not. It had been Providence all along. Thank you, Ellen Gara.

And thank you, Vincent Coleman, for your warm and generous welcome, your wisdom, understanding and fifteen-year friendship. For me you are the face of Ireland. You have empowered me to see the countryside or County Mayo as home. Thanks also to Chris, his wife, whose door has ever been open; her teapot, always full.

Richard Hague's *Lives of the Poem*: A Guide to the Heart of Creative Writing

by Lauren Lombardo

Richard Hague's insightful *Lives of the Poem* is a resource that embodies the heart and soul of creative writing. The text presents practical strategies, such as writing prompts and journeys through revision, that enable aspiring writers to hone their craft. As in his previous poetry and essay anthologies, Hague regularly emphasizes the importance of the writer's sense of place. Furthermore, throughout many of Hague's commentaries, readers discover an artistic philosophy akin to Percy Shelley's. Both poets acknowledge an invisible spirit that helps writers present familiar objects in an unfamiliar light. Although Hague is modest and contends that his text is not meant to serve as a handbook for writing poetry, it is, in fact, a model tutorial in which Hague exemplifies creative writing techniques through his own poetry and commentary.

This is not to say that Hague fails to achieve his primary objective in the text. Readers easily recognize and celebrate the poem as a living, breathing entity that, according to Hague, has the capacity for "complex inter-relatedness" (3). He contends that poetry has a ripple effect; it reaches corners of the world long after its birth. The author frequently uses personification to remind readers that the poem has a life separate from the poet. For example, as readers follow his revisions of "The Poem Braids Its Lover's Hair," Hague insists that "the Poem is the world's lover—it loves all, not just the girl whose hair it braids" (86). In another poem, "The Advocate Speaks in Defense of the Poem's Rights," the narrator insists that the poem is a badger:

It digs under the door
of your notions,
wrecks the tidy room
of your truth . . . (14-17)

Like a badger, the poem prods and disturbs the reader's sense of order. It plants the seed of doubt in readers' minds. Even the form of the poem resembles a badger's claw, with five prominent lines that stand out of the text, in gradually ascending and descending lengths. Clearly, the poem is alive. Yet, there remains strong evidence that *Lives of the Poem* also succeeds as a writing tutorial. Hague illustrates how writing is a craft that can be taught, and that the creative writing philosophy and process are just as important as the product.

Within the first fifty pages of the text, Hague conveys the importance of a sense of place. In 1922, Harlem Renaissance author, Jean Toomer, composed one of the century's most influential works, *Cane*, while living among the black southern folk community in Sparta, Georgia. In "Jean Toomer and the Avant-Garde," author Mark Whalen states that Toomer's poetry so completely captured the spirit of the region and culture that *Opportunity* critic, Montgomery Gregory, commended, "*Cane* is not OF the south, it is not OF the Negro; it IS the south, it IS the Negro—as Jean Toomer experienced them" (13). Since 1978, Hague's poetry has reinforced *his* identity as a regional poet as well. His subject matter often reflects his personal experiences growing up along the eastern banks of the Ohio River in the small industrial town of Steubenville, Ohio.

Lives of the Poem includes several selections in which Hague shows how sense of place inspires, much like the quintessential muse. In "The Poem Wakes and Receives Visitors," readers can almost hear the blue jay "shout . . . in Nepalese" (9). In "Burning Lady," Hague becomes the fisherman who reels "and feels the first black smack of death" (39), after he fails to save a blazing woman by rolling her into the river. And in "Placed," readers understand Hague's profound affinity for nature:

I live here to feel
 the full moon's hymning
 fill my skull,
 to hear stars' codas
 richen my throat,
 the musky press
 of shadows
 whisper my name. (14-21)

Through these poems, Hague puts to rest the concerns of writers who fear that hometown experiences are mundane or of little interest to those who live in more exotic places. In fact, he warns that, "upward mobility . . . may well be a threat to the kind of placedness that certain kinds of poetry thrive on" (138).

Two contemporary authors have also noted the value of Hague's sense of place. In "Region and Vision: The Poetry of Richard Hague," Kevin Walzer reveres Hague for his ability to make use of the life and land in Ohio for the purpose of showing the interconnectedness of human and natural history. Walzer claims that, "place is a powerful source for poetry" (57), and in the silent world of plants and animals, writers "need not journey far to hear [their] voices; they are all around us" (59). Likewise, Frank Steele, English professor at Western Kentucky University, applauds Hague for his obsession with the primitive aspects of nature and the connections Hague establishes between man and nature through his poetry. In "Some Real Fruits and Vegetables: Richard Hague's Ripenings," Steele speaks to all poets when he states that writing about regional subjects has expanded in recent years. He believes there seems to be "among American readers, a greater tolerance for slightly alien details of place and even a more active curiosity about them, an openness, than was present fifty years ago" (354). Clearly, these authors share Hague's assertion that writers must value sense of place.

Another reason that *Lives of the Poem* may be considered a tutorial for aspiring creative writers is Hague's ever-present emphasis on the writing process itself. Within the commentary that follows many poems, readers are asked to respond to unusual writing prompts (write an anti-love poem, for example), keep commonplace

Books (to record fleeting moments or phrases) and Workbooks (for drafting). Hague suggests that readers engage in research and embark on field trips in order to enrich writing topics. Many of these suggestions are strategies Hague has used in his thirty-five years as a high school English teacher. When asked to define Mr. Hague's most useful strategy for inspiring students to write, former student, Abbie Louis, replied, "He told us stories! Stories about Steubenville, Ohio, where he grew up. Those stories got us thinking!" (Louis). By posing these strategies, Hague indirectly advises other creative writers that they must be proactive. They must be "badgers" and explore undiscovered territory.

Hague's text also showcases his students' writings as opportunities to share their own expertise. The commentary, "The Story of Silence" by Joanna Back, provides excellent instruction for aspiring writers. Hague allows Ms. Back to take the reader through her revising process. It is a fascinating read. Ms. Back explains her quest to discover silent images, such as an echo, a breeze and skinned trees. Her first draft captured the visual images of silence. Through her ongoing reflections, however, she instructs readers by revealing what is *missing* in her poem: a silent feeling, the lack of sound and minimal language. With every revision, readers learn the value of sound, simplicity, and critical thinking. Ms. Back then consults with a peer, a sight Hague likens to "two researchers in a science lab, plumbing the mysteries of the gene" (134). The final product, "Silence," is clearly more meaningful after witnessing the revising process.

But Hague, the teacher, is most visible in the way he advises readers with his edifying words of wisdom. Some of his advice is simple and straightforward: "Attention must be paid to places and customs and laws" (72) and "Settling is the enemy of excellence" (90). Prior to introducing "The Critic" (a poem about the writer's critical self), Hague acknowledges Leonardo DaVinci, whom he claims was a practitioner of irregularity and disorder. DaVinci often sketched confusing images as a means for discovering new inventions. Hague believes that current teaching models restrict creativity because many of us "have been conditioned to distrust disorder, randomness, and nonlinearity" (167). When it comes to writing, Hague challenges readers to leave their comfort zones in order to create. In the end, the Critic must impose order. But writers must have the freedom to explore "the actual mess and mystery of the world and [be] invited to make sense of it on their own" (167). For all writers, the distinction between Creator and Critic must be understood and applied. However, Hague suggests that disorder and defying traditional practices often spawns creativity. This idea can prove quite liberating for future writers.

Hague's allowance for creative chaos is a stark contrast to the creative process endorsed by the British literary giant, Percy B. Shelley. Although it is somewhat apparent that Shelley and Hague are kindred spirits, this difference must be acknowledged. In his "Defence of Poetry," Shelley addressed the necessity for order and harmony during the creative process. Above all, he believed "the mind in creation is as a fading coal which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness" (831). In other words, he believed that once composition began, the original inspiration was already waning. In his book, *Shelley: His Theory of Poetry*, Melvin Solvo states that Shelley (like Hague) sometimes struggled with word selection and "if the right word would not come he left a blank space" (147). But Shelley was convinced that the finest poetry was *not* produced through study and labor. Hague's creative philosophy is quite the opposite. He encourages writers to research their subjects, take field trips, and revise the work until it is right.

Having repeatedly consulted Hague's text in recent months, it is my belief that the

author enlightens future writers most by answering the questions that Shelley attempted to answer long ago: *Why do poets write poetry?* and *What purpose does poetry serve humankind?* The responses to these questions are the powerful threads that connect the two poets. Much like Shelley's Aeolian lyre that sought to capture the changing winds in order to play the changing melodies, Hague seeks to discover "what the poem is trying to get [him] to do . . . listening to it, trying to understand what it needs to say" (84). Both poets recognize the poem as having an invisible spirit.

In addition, both poets believe writers must show familiar objects in an unfamiliar light. In Hague's "The Poem Three-Railing Into the Mind," the narrator takes the reader into the gritty, late-night world of shooting pool. There, in a green-lit world, the narrator reveals:

poetry, that shapeshifter,
leaps from rail-shot
and talcum
as well as from
nightingales
and death. (20-25)

Just as Shelley strove to lift the veil from the hidden wonders of the world, Hague emphasizes the need to take readers to "places we haven't seen before, and with new ears and eyes and hearts" (32). Readers are stunned to think of a poem, lurking in a pool hall, waiting to be heard. This poem, along with many others, compels readers to reflect for hours.

As for the purpose that poetry serves humankind, Hague's philosophy is again, akin to Shelley's. He insists that poetry connects human beings to one another. We read and write books because "they change your life, they change the way you see the world" (29). This quote clearly aligns with Shelley's belief that poets were heralds, capable of inspiring people to connect with others and to work for change. According to Solvo, Shelley was convinced that any form of harmonious expression "[had] the possibility of communicating . . . and vitalized by its author's contact with his fellow-men, is poetry in the widest sense" (129). Hague illustrates this philosophy as well, in his poem, "During a Break, First Day of Writing Class," in which the narrator ponders outdoor sights and sounds, then wonders:

Who are these strangers,
Where are they from,
Why have we met,
How will they change
my dreams? (37-41)

This is but one of several selections in *Lives of the Poem* in which Hague attempts to connect with others through poetry.

Hague's text clearly shows that poems give life to ordinary aspects of our culture. And yes, poems have eternal lives. Yet, despite Hague's reluctance to identify his text as a teaching tool, aspiring writers, like me, cannot help but regard its content as educational. Hague shows how a sense of place gives poems a sense of reverence. Place is important because it offers writers a path for showcasing their own stories, their firsthand experiences—and in art, this always rings true. Hague also takes readers through the writing process by providing writing prompts, revision strategies, and the words of wisdom he has garnered as a poet for over forty years. Finally, Hague

asks readers to consider poetry as a means for understanding and connecting with the world.

I have copied one of Hague's most inspiring phrases from *Lives of the Poem* and taped it to the front cover of the copy that sits on my bookshelf. It reads: "I trusted that if I kept on working, I would discover what I needed to know" (83). Creative writers, both aspiring and established, will find many lives in Hague's creative classroom, *Lives of the Poem*.

Works Cited

- Hague, Richard. *Lives of the Poem*. Nicholasville: Wind Publications, 2005. Print.
- Louis, Abbie. Personal Interview. 20 March 2012.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. "A Defence of Poetry." *The Longman Anthology of British Literature* 4th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc., (2010): 824-834. Print.
- Solvo, Melvin. *Shelley: His Theory of Poetry*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1964. Print.
- Steele, Frank. "Some Real Fruits and Vegetables: Richard Hague's *Ripenings*." *Appalachian Journal: A Regional Studies Review* 12.4 (1985): 348-354. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 1 April, 2012.
- Walzer, Kevin. "Region and Vision: The Poetry of Richard Hague." *The Journal of Kentucky Studies* 10. (1993): 57-65. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 1 April. 2012.
- Whalen, Mark. "Jean Toomer and the Avant-Garde." *The Cambridge Companion to The Harlem Renaissance*. Ed. George Hutchinson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2007) 78-81. Print.

“Nothing Gold Can Stay”
The Curse of Coal in Joe Anthony’s
Pickering’s Mountain
 by James B. Goode

Joe Anthony’s new novel *Pickering’s Mountain* (Old Seventy Creek Press, 2012) is set in Appalachian Eastern Kentucky one year after 9/11, during a time of national unrest. The novel is an age old exploration into cultural and familial relations in a country founded on the premise that the “. . . huddled masses yearning to breathe free . . .” could all come to Eastern Kentucky and co-exist in some symbiotic fashion (Lazarus 11). Therein is the rub or, if you will, one of the central conflicts of this fiction. Only this conflict is played out in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky and is not only fueled by family revenge and dysfunction but also by the kind misinformation and ignorance that emerges from fear of the unknown by those who have failed to educate themselves as to the truths about the mysterious and often misunderstood Appalachians.

Much of this conflict is borne by the New York/New Jersey couple Sam and Margery who come to Eastern Kentucky seeking a simpler life only to discover one that is infinitely more complicated than they ever imagined. But it is also borne by the Pickering family whose matriarch is Alma, a strong, stalwart mountain woman whose relationship with her philandering husband Reverend Joshua Pickering has disintegrated, and three adult children Jimmy, Mason, and Jody who have been caught in the crossfire between the two battling warriors.

Margery and Sam, who have come to Appalachian Kentucky so Sam can take a job on the staff of a local newspaper, are straight away taken into Alma’s home upon their arrival and readily admit that “The only thing either of us had known about Kentucky was the Derby. But that was in Louisville” (7). When preparing for their journey, Margery sardonically tells Sam: “But do me a favor and get some maps. If we’re headed for the middle of nowhere, I’d rather we didn’t get lost on the way. Goddammit” (8). But Goddammit, they do get lost and so do the Pickerings, and it takes every page of this 403 page novel for them to find themselves as they maneuver through the minefields of this complex place, often stepping squarely on the explosives.

Anthony’s novel, on one hand, purports to be about strip mining and mountaintop removal—the destruction of a delicate ecosystem and ultimately its impact upon the people and their culture—but its center is more about religion, politics, economics,

personal vendettas and revenge, and the struggles dysfunctional families face in a culture that has always been torn apart by exploitive forces—both from within and without.

The novel often waxes poetic about the physical destruction of the ancient Appalachian Mountains and the inevitable price one pays for the presence of energy extraction and its accompanying greed. In one scene, Margery recalls the Robert Frost poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay”:

Nature’s first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf’s a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay. (1-8)

The critic Mordecai Marcus suggests that “The fall of humanity in Eden came by such a process. Starting from a height, it plunged the race into knowledge of natural decay. Frost’s view resembles Emerson’s idea that being born into this world is the fall implying that the suffering and decay brought by natural processes are what we know of evil” (par 1). The core of this novel also elicits Emerson’s essay “Nature,” wherein he explores all the possibilities of how nature serves humanity: Commodity, Beauty, Language, Discipline, Idealism, Spirit, and Prospects. For these to co-exist, conflict and debate must necessarily emerge.

The reader soon discovers that mountain people may sell their birthright for many reasons other than greed or ignorance. Such is the case with Reverend Pickering who sells his ancestral mountain and the site of the former home he built with Alma and their children to be strip mined. He knows that Alma cherishes the mountain as a kind of paradise full with lush flora and abundant fauna. Because of his vitriolic separation from Alma, he wants to hurt her so badly that he is willing to leverage part of his birthright to make her feel his pain and therefore inflict it upon her. He says in one of his prayers: “My child wanted me to spare the mountain you have given us. But I didn’t want to. I wanted to blast it so this woman would hurt. I did not care who I blasted with it. I did not care for anything but that this woman, my child’s mother, would feel the pain.” He prays for the Lord to soften his heart and promises, “If you do this, Lord, I will spare the mountain” (297).

When their drunken son Mason perishes after plunging his truck over a mountain, Reverend Pickering is true to his word and declares: “I will build you a church. I will build you a church with two walls and no roof. Half a church for half a promise. I will save your mountain from the claws of the machines, but only half of it” (327). And so he sells half his mountain to Emmet Bowling, the local banker and coal operator who then proceeds to slice the mountain in half—with explosives and bulldozers.

Anthony creates a compelling symbol of a kind of paradise overlooking the pit of hell—a graphic and alarming sight for some of the warriors in this futile battle who survey it from the highwall. The feeling is unmistakably similar to what one feels when one reads the biblical story of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Alma’s anger and revenge turns to abject bitterness when she declares that “Every stick of dynamite that eats a hole in the mountain will be another hole in him [Pickering]. Till there won’t be nothing left” (340). And by the end, there is almost nothing

left. Alma is steadfast in her convictions that destroying the mountain is sinful and she exerts a powerful influence on her family, albeit that they have slipped into a time-honored fatalism supposedly endemic in the culture. When she demands that her son Jimmy is not going to be a part of tearing down the mountain, he relents, although he says, "Though I don't see it makes much difference. Me tearing it down or somebody else doing it." Alma replies, "It makes a whole lot of difference. You might not be able to keep evil from happening, but that don't mean you got to do the evil" (338).

One comeuppance in this novel is the idea that Appalachians have major responsibility for their own fate—most often in the role "outsiders" ultimately play in the Appalachians' demise. After Alma has declared that Reverend Pickering and their sons Jimmy and Mason have decided to ". . . do the devil's work of tearing God's mountain down" and that God is ever-present in those mountains and not trapped in some cement church like Pickering's, Jody, their daughter, responds by declaring that their two versions of God ". . . ought to get together soon or there won't be any mountains left" (247). Because strip mining is ". . . the only game in town," (79) their sons defend their mountains being blasted away as if they were the coal operators themselves. Mason says, "It's a crooked game. It's a losing game. But it's the only one around" (272).

Alma, in a moment of self realization and clarity, assumes ownership of her role in destroying the mountain when she describes to her family the last moments she spent with Pickering who had just consumed a tea made from deadly poisonous Cowbane: "And I wept, my whole body shaking, and I could feel Joshua shaking, too, though I didn't look up, and I knew we were finally crying for our boy and maybe for everything else, too, the mountain we had torn down cause it wasn't just Joshua's doing—it was me, too, trying to get back at your daddy and not caring what got leveled in-between . . ." (393-394).

After Reverend Pickering succumbs to the poison, Alma drags him to the precipice of the highwall and pushes him into the pit of hell—a place where she is convinced he now belongs. Edith Ison, a quirky, gossip columnist for the newspaper for which Sam works, writes about her and her husband Gabby's journey to Pickering's funeral and his burial on the remaining, undisturbed side of the mountain:

Folks kept coming in late, forgetting you couldn't get there from 27 anymore—that side's gone. And what a sight it is. I made Gabby walk with me complaining all the way over to where the mountain just stops and you're looking into the depths of something that just makes you want to cry. One moment you're in the glory of the Lord's creation and the next you're looking at the ruin of the world. (399)

As a result of his reporting on this Pickering drama and the subsequent fallout from the community power base, Sam and nearly all the staff of the newspaper are fired, leaving him and Margery in a dilemma. Even at the end, the reader is not sure of where Margery and Sam will land. Are they off to Louisville in hopes of getting on at a big city newspaper or will they return to Eastern Kentucky after Sam goes back to school and gets his teaching certificate? Sam knows that the politics of the culture may not allow the latter. "Ends up with me promising to go back to school to get a teacher's certificate although the way I've pissed off the powers that be I don't see how I'd ever get a job teaching around here" (403).

Edith Ison, the local newspaper columnist, may be on to something, too, when she realizes that her people have mishandled what the Lord has provided and that coal, ultimately, may be a curse on the region. I don't know. I ain't about to begin blaming

the Lord. He made the mountains. He put the coal under it. What we do to get it ain’t the Lord’s fault. I know there has to be a better way than what we’re doing. The Lord made us a Garden of Eden. It’s us who’ve invited the serpent in.” She tells Sam at a protest rally: “Sometimes I think the Lord sent us coal to plague us. Like he sent the mountains so we can’t get nowhere in a straight line” (346).

Maybe the reader will conclude as Gerard Manley Hopkins did in his iconic poem “God’s Grandeur”:

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod. (6-8)

Anthony’s novel has a powerful arc and is certainly worthy of reading. His characters are well wrought and memorable. His shifts in point-of-view allow the reader to understand the complexities of the various dimensions of characters and their interactions within the culture—outsiders, newspaper people (reporters, typesetters, editors, columnists, publishers, etc.), school teachers, ACLU attorneys, protesters, preachers, bankers, stalwart mountain females, desperate unemployed natives, and gossipy newspaper columnists are all employed to accomplish this. Maybe Alma is on target when she tells Margery, “If you were a Bible reading woman, you’d know that the Bible has more questions than answers” (293). Maybe if we were better students of the Appalachian culture, we’d know that there are infinitely more questions than answers.

The subject matter of this novel is difficult and delicate, dealing with a complex culture that has borne the brunt of exploitation from various directions, not the least of which was from the local color writers of the late 1800s and into the early 1900s who exported the stereotypes of the region to a national audience. Like the local color writers, Mr. Anthony is lured into exploring almost every stereotype that has ever been generated about the Appalachian culture: a violent culture where everyone packs pistols, the propensity for natives to fight at the drop of a hat (but who are plagued with an inherent, contradictory, almost condescending, persuasive “politeness”), a people who have an endemic over-sensitivity to criticism, a place resplendent with pervasive intermarriage, an overabundance of morbidly obese people, a culture composed of “. . . poor benighted freaks . . .” (110), people who are living on the frontier in isolated communities that seem an “. . . outpost of about fifty survivors . . .” (148) and mountaineers who are, more often than not, evasive and incapable of being direct, and many more. This type of easy characterization seems to be too much seasoning in the soup bean pot—way too much salt and pork belly. A conservative sampling of the kind of stereotypes Appalachian people face would have been enough to make the point regarding the battle they face from ignorant outsiders or from cynical, burned-out insiders like Billy the newspaper editor. Simply put, in Appalachian terms: Ain’t no use to beat a dog after it’s dead!

Writing about the highly technical strip mining industry without conducting comprehensive research is challenging. Anthony should have realized that this industry is much more than just bulldozers and explosives. For a non-miner/non-native to write this novel requires much more exacting research into the language and mechanics of mining. Rich coal seams do not lie under less than 12 feet of clay; strip mines do not blast continuously all day (it takes a lot of time to drill all those holes and load them and lots of strip operations may only blast once per day, if that); mining engineers are highly trained surveyors who would know in advance where the boundary of a strip

operation is—especially in a time in which this information is set into concrete legal documents; bond is not based on the quality of the coal, but the amount of dollars it would take to reclaim the disturbance of the land. The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 provides that, as a prerequisite for obtaining a coal mining permit, a person must post a reclamation bond to ensure that the regulatory authority will have sufficient funds to reclaim the site if the permittee fails to complete the reclamation plan approved in the permit.

Hopefully, these flaws will not deter the reader from deriving the strong arc of this story and discovering Anthony's lyrical passages and indelible symbolism which will prompt him or her to consider the complexities in this culture. Perhaps, the reader will have faith that Anthony's novel, at its core, does have the best interest of the Appalachian people in mind.

Optimistically, Anthony's novel might serve as the exception to what the cynical newspaper editor Billy believes: "I figured out a long time ago they [foreigners] don't have our best interests at heart. Foreigners have always taken what we have to give and given back nothing—or slag heaps of rubble and told us clean up wasn't in the bill" (379).

Works Cited

-
- Anthony, Joe. *Pickering's Mountain*. Albany, Kentucky: Old Seventy Creek Press, 2012. Print.
- Frost, Robert. "Nothing Gold Can Stay." *Yale Review* (Oct. 1923):30. Print.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley. "God's Grandeur." *Poetry Foundation*. Web. 31 July 2012. <<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173660>>.
- Lazarus, Emma. "The New Colossus." Statue of Liberty National Monument. National Park Service. Retrieved 31 July 2012.
- Marcus, Mordecai. *The Poems of Robert Frost: an explication. Modern American Poetry*. Web. 31 July 2012. <http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/a_f/frost/gold.htm>.

The Possibility of Re-Form: Plasticity, Feminism, and Catherine Malabou

by Lucy Arnold

But above all, of course, I write for the women I love, those whom I do not know and who are mistreated, humiliated. Those whom I know and who keep, in their way of being, something like an unseen memory of those aforementioned women, a fragility which does not look to hide itself.

—Catherine Malabou, *Changer de la différence*

This is the list of female philosophers associated with poststructuralist thought generated by users on *Wikipedia*: Kathy Acker, Judith Butler, Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Sarah Kofman. Every one of them is categorized as a “feminist” writer and thinker, that is, “feminism” or “feminist” is one of the keywords included in the description of the philosopher. In juxtaposition, none of the male authors noted on the same list, including Giorgio Agamben, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, Umberto Eco, John Fiske, Félix Guattari, René Girard, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-François Lyotard, Jean-Luc Nancy, Bernard Stiegler, or Gianni Vattimo, is tagged as a “feminist” nor is mentioned in association with feminism. This observation about male philosophers not being particularly prone toward an examination of the default gender is not surprising; it is difficult to critique the system inside of which one exists, and this includes the system of masculinity and patriarchy. On the other hand, that all of the female philosophers listed are associated with feminism is intriguing. Does the desire to pursue philosophy coupled with a female sexual identity require one to engage with the philosophy of gender? It does seem apparent that many women would be interested in feminism, but the near-universality of the interest raises questions about the material conditions of female philosophers.

Catherine Malabou’s work emphasizes, complicates, and characterizes these questions about philosophy and femininity. Malabou is a French philosopher whose dominant theme is plasticity, to which we will return soon. The bulk of Malabou’s writings have concerned Hegel, plasticity, and Derridean deconstruction. In fact, she was a student of Jacques Derrida, under whom she wrote her dissertation on Hegel. She later co-authored several texts with Derrida. Her more recent work has veered toward the convergence of philosophy and neuroscience, and in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* (2008), she theorizes plasticity through the lens of neuroscientific understandings of the brain. She has also co-authored works with Judith Butler; in these

works she does theorize gender and femininity, but her other work quite noticeably does not pose questions of gender or femininity. In 2009, Malabou published *Changer de différence: le féminin et la question philosophique*, in which she analyzes the philosophy, femininity, and the material conditions of the female philosopher through careful analysis of philosophical theory and her own lived experiences.

Plasticity is a key term throughout Malabou's work. I will trace Malabou's evolution of the term later in this paper, but for now will note that she relies on several key connotations of plasticity in her work. Her first understanding of the term "designates solidity as much as suppleness" (Malabou *Brain* 15), indicating plastic's ability to hold a certain form. The second connotation upon which she relies is that of transformation; in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, she uses the example of stem cells, which are able to transform from nonspecialized stem cells to specialized cells of almost any type (16). The third connotation with which she toys is that of detonation, of explosiveness, of *plastique*. The central dichotomy she poses in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* is that between plasticity and flexibility; she sees flexibility as adaptability that succumbs instead of acting. Malabou then construes explosion as revolution, as a way to defy flexibility in favor of plasticity: "Perhaps we ought to relearn how to enrage ourselves, to explode against a certain culture of docility . . ." (*Brain* 79). Although on one hand an exploration of the possibilities of neuroscience and an evaluation of neuroscience's philosophical state, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* also theorizes the brain as a metaphor for human agency and for encouraging humans to see their own capacity for plasticity in the face of social domination that often asks, or requires, flexibility, which Malabou reads as submission.

Malabou's interest in social revolution, exemplified by her use of the "explosive" meaning of plastic discussed above, results in attention to gender issues, particularly the constraints and allowances of femininity and how these constraints and allowances apply to the academy. The problem with theorizing gender in a deconstructionist framework, which is Malabou's seminal framework via her association with Derrida, is that gender itself as a dichotomy becomes, necessarily, an object of deconstruction as well. Derrida, who deconstructed the binary between self and other, philosophically eulogizing the notion of the "author" (Barthes's literary interpretation of deconstruction, which became quite pervasive in the United States) also critiques the gender binary. Following through with this line of reasoning and adding to the mix Judith Butler's revelations regarding the socially constructed nature of gender/sex, feminism is left in rather a bind. If there is no reality to the concept of self, author, or even woman, then how can one be a "feminist writer"? Why does it even matter how feminine identities are construed in writing or in utterance, if there is no essentially feminine element? Plus, any attempt to construe such a uniquely feminine voice or being would be doomed to exist in the same binary of the current masculine/feminine discourse. In an interview with Malabou conducted by Noelle Vahanian, Malabou construes the problem: ". . . an ontology of the feminine would no doubt bear all the symptoms of the traditional ontology — that is, an exclusion of the feminine itself. As we know, the discourse of and on property, propriety or subjectivity is precisely the discourse which has excluded women from the domain of Being (and perhaps even of beings)" (4).

Since I am immersed in poststructuralist philosophy myself, this is where I wind up at the end of this particular intellectual rope: there is no author and no essential feminine being. But philosophy here collides with the irrational, the ephemeral, the socially-constructed, the embodied, and the fully subjective "truth" of my lived experience as a woman. I am that female academic, completely convinced by Butler and

Derrida, but equally certain that my lived experiences as a woman in the academy have been impacted by the fact of my self-acknowledged and socially perceived sex. As I look ahead to my career in academics, I can see that as recently as 1989 a study found that female college professors make \$10,000 per year less than male college professors (Pounder). This study has been substantiated by David Glenn's report in 2008 for *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and Laura Kirkpatrick's 2010 article in *Time*. Kirkpatrick's article, which covers the gender gap in pay across jobs in the United States, not focusing specifically on higher education, even notes that women who go through sex changes to become men then make more money after the change and that men who have sex changes to become women make less money afterwards. Furthermore, there is the far less quantifiable problem of authority and credentialing that I, as a female intellectual, face as a student, a teacher, and a writer. By "credentialing," I mean the process of establishing one's authority to speak on a certain subject; there are many ways in which scholars credential themselves, including source citation, institutional associations, previous publications and academic positions, and general mien. Credentialing is a part of academic discourse, and I do not here intend to critique that element of the discourse. The question is whether that process of credentialing is different for female intellectuals than it is for males and thus an instance of gender injustice. The ubiquitous musings on femininity by female intellectuals (as I discussed in reference to the poststructuralist thinkers listed on Wikipedia) might be one indicator that this process of credentialing is indeed a material concern. Malabou herself discusses the barriers she has faced as a female intellectual:

My teacher said, you will never succeed because you're a woman. I have been told that philosophy was a masculine domain or field. And, ever since, I am always introduced in reference to deconstruction, even today, even if it is at a distance with deconstruction or by the question of my being a student of Derrida. People associate my name to a man's name all the time, I am thought of as a specialist of Hegel or as a specialist of Derrida; I'm never myself . . . I am still a *Maître de conférences* in Paris (and not a full professor even if I have written much more than all my colleagues). (Vahanian 5-6)

Indeed, in the reviews and literature on Malabou I will discuss, Malabou is almost constantly mentioned as "Derrida's student." And this is why a study of Malabou's reception in the United States seems particularly important, not just to me personally, but for our intellectual community. Though gender has been endlessly problematized and often rendered moot by discussions of essentialism, in practice the material conditions faced by female intellectuals remain difficult.

Indeed, the future of feminism is one of the issues Malabou examines in the introduction to *Changer de la différence*, published in English in 2011. She points out some of the current debates, including feminism versus post-feminism or Queer studies and essentialism versus anti-essentialism but concludes from a position clearly influenced by her background in deconstruction: "Woman is perhaps only negatively defined, with regard to the violence that is done to her, to the blows struck against her essence, but this negative definition nonetheless constitutes the resistant root which distinguishes the feminine from all other types of fragility, of overexposure to exploitation and brutality." Contrasting directly with thinkers like Baudrillard and Lacan who also attempt to construe the feminine, Malabou takes a materialist and deconstructive approach to defining the feminine. She then contends that the key aspect of difference is interpreting it not just as sexual difference but as individual differences among individual women and provides herself as an example: "This is why I begin from a

concrete situation, which is mine, that of the 'woman philosopher', French . . ." She also states her desire to "reorientate the course of deconstruction" and proposes the way to do this is by "plastiquer," which, as in her earlier work on plasticity, indicates contains a double meaning of exploding and of making into "plastic," something that changes but does not merely adapt. The concept she proposes to both explode and turn into plastic is difference (and/or différence). By this, she means challenging ideas of sexual difference while recognizing the plurality of women's experiences.

Malabou's first book is a reading of plasticity in Hegel, developed from her doctoral dissertation under Derrida at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales. In his introduction to this book, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, Derrida toys with Malabou's revival of plasticity from Hegel and distinguishes her interpretation of Hegel as well: "Perhaps this is one of the most discreet motifs of this book, which ends, as a matter of fact, on an allusion to the atomic bomb (Plastik-bombe) and on these other technical figures of death, of the non-living, of the artifice and of the synthetic, all of which are the plastic, the *plastification*, the plastic matter" (xxxiv). Derrida alludes to Malabou's interest in that third connotation of plasticity discussed above. He further develops the connection between death (or not living) and plasticity later in the introduction:

This plasticity, would it not consist in saying farewell to itself while always giving and receiving for itself yet another form, while always interiorizing, incorporating, *sublating*, idealizing, spiritualizing that which we abandon or which abandons us? The dialectical would be this plastic of mourning . . . May we not say that all plasticity is engaged or involved in some sort of mourning, in a mournful experience or a work of mourning, and to begin with the very one which divides and opposes to itself the expression "to see (what is) coming"? (xxxix)

Derrida's writing exemplifies deconstructive thinking about plasticity in that he engages the reverse of the "formation" meaning of the term to suggest that plasticity also always means a leave-taking; if a new form is being taken on, then some other form is being abandoned. Yet in other ways, the work of Derrida's introduction is to connect Malabou's new version of plasticity to the traditional Hegelian perspective, while also essentially credentialing Malabou's work by verifying it with his own use of deconstruction. The very act of writing the introduction to her book is a credentialing move, in fact.

Derrida's credentialing of Malabou's work continues in Gabriele Schwab's collection of essays, *Derrida, Deleuze, Psychoanalysis*, to which both Derrida and Malabou contributed pieces. Malabou's essay in this collection is an interpretation of Derrida, to which Schwab refers in his own essay: "According to Malabou, the stakes for Derrida lie in 'the immense question of a polymorphism of difference'" (13). Her inclusion in this collection and the way in which her work is framed as specifically an interpretation of Derrida is indicative of her reception in the United States. She has achieved her professional status as a colleague of Derrida and an interpreter of his work; Derrida and his ideas of deconstruction attained considerable popularity in the United States, at least in literary fields, so Malabou's work, coming as it does from a close colleague, seems to be accorded interest.

Malabou's interest in the concept of plasticity and in a post-Marxist re-visioning of human agency ultimately brought her to connect neuroscience with philosophy in writings that differentiate her from Derrida and have received a much more ambivalent reception in the United States. In the foreword to *What Should We Do with Our*

Brain?, the text that explicates her metaphorical understanding of brain plasticity and its connection to human agency, Marc Jeannerod positions Malabou within the two (often disparate) discourses of 1. Neuroscience and 2. Continental philosophy. He writes: “Malabou rightly draws a parallel between illnesses of social connection, such as depression, and neurodegenerative illnesses, such as Alzheimer’s dementia” (xiii), a move that may also be seen as credentialing Malabou’s points about neuroscience, since Jeannerod is a cognitive scientist himself. But after providing some substantiation for Malabou’s understandings of neuroscience, he then situates her thesis firmly in the realm of philosophy: “Thus the problem is, rather, that of understanding how an individual brain can respond to the challenges of its social environment. Malabou positions her book at the center of this questioning” (xiv). Like many forewords and introductions, Jeannerod’s foreword situates the writer in the conversation in which he sees her interacting. In contrast, however, to such introductions as Rex Butler and Scott Stephens’s introductions to Slavoj Žižek’s *Interrogating the Real*, Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens’s introduction to Alain Badiou’s *Infinite Thought*, and Cary Wolfe’s introduction to Michel Serres’s *The Parasite*, Jeannerod provides a cognitive science ethos for Malabou’s work and introduces her major themes, but he does not engage critics of Malabou’s philosophy, as Butler and Stephens do with their introduction of Žižek, provide in-depth neuroscientific grounding, as Feltham and Clemens do mathematically in regard to Badiou’s use of set theory, or orient Malabou’s theory with other thinkers or his own, as Wolfe does in the introduction to Serres. Jeannerod’s introduction seems to be more a matter of credentialing without attendant matters of meaning-making or critique. In part, this could be construed as a function of the liminal field in which Malabou is working; by attempting to bridge cognitive science and philosophy, she is mapping territory unfamiliar to either position, as Peter Skafish points out in his review of the book. On the other hand, Badiou also pushes the boundaries of philosophical thinking, while scholars (or perhaps editors) seem to see less need to provide an ethos for his work, instead making space for further thought and elucidation with the type of introduction presented. These examples are not meant to be representative or all-encompassing; they do at least imply, however, that the material conditions under which Malabou has published her work are different from those conditions encountered by her male counterparts.

Reviews of *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* also point to the material circumstances that frame the publishing and reception of Malabou’s work in the United States. Jan Slaby, quoting Boltanski and Chiapello, argues that Malabou’s attempt to map this new territory is the most crucial aspect of *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*:

It is the chief merit of the book that Malabou links, probably for the first time, the sociological and the social-political discourse on ‘the new spirit of capitalism’ with the discourses in neuroscience and naturalistic philosophy of mind With the cultural hegemony of the neural and cognitive sciences steadily increasing in Western societies, it is high time to explore these uncanny entanglements and start a debate about these things (238)

Slaby’s review of Malabou’s book emphasizes the “spirit” of her work and applauds her for beginning this discourse. His critique of *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* is arguably quite fair; he contends that it is a thesis and a scholarly diatribe but lacks the hard theoretical work necessary to make it meaningful and juxtaposes her loosely theoretical work with his own research project:

In our own project of critically engaging with the neurosciences we have learned how hard it can be to follow-through with detailed, fact-based critical analyses of the forces and factors that stabilize today's neurocentric discourses, how complex the academic landscape, how varied the discourses, how complicated the science, how polyvalent the influences, how tricky the philosophy, how diverse and varied the interests, attitudes, orientations, technical expertise and local cultures of the scientists. (239)

He points out that Malabou leaves out certain newer advances in neuroscience and wonders where philosophy should go from here. Slaby, however, concludes his biting critique of Malabou in this way: "Her *little* book is in the end no more than a call to arms without much of a battle plan" (239-240) [italics are mine]. The connotative choice of "little" here, while a technically appropriate way to refer to a book of only 94 pages, is still historically unfortunate. That a male reviewer should refer to the work of a female writer in a field traditionally dominated by men as a "little book" triggers all kinds of antiquated references to male condescension: "little lady" and "little girl," for instance. Particularly when this reference is juxtaposed with the rest of Slaby's critique, which seems to applaud his group's "hard work" at "engaging the current neurosciences" (239), the (perhaps unconscious) pejorative adjective is more striking. To juxtapose Slaby's way of delivering this particular critique of Malabou, I would note Skafish's review, which I will return to shortly, in which he succinctly organizes Slaby's criticism without a derogative, gendered stance: "Such an approach, an abbreviated version of this criticism would run, attempts to understand the relations between scientific discourse and socioeconomic institutions through a textual interpretation of how dialectical themes are at work in them, one making little to no reference to concrete practice..." (763).

Skafish's 2009 review of *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, published in *Cultural Anthropology* offers a more sympathetic approach to Malabou's work. He rather fully explores the issue of plasticity and theorizes that resistance to her work will come from thinkers who do not wish to shift the focus of philosophical thought from difference to plasticity, a move that would also mean a move from a focus on language to a focus on neurobiology. He argues that many in the United States will be unwilling to give up the idea that the study of language and literature is a path to change in culture and society. For Skafish, however, Malabou's perspective offers a useful path toward social change, envisioning as she does the common political ground of the brain (of neurobiology). Still, even in this thoughtful and engaged review, Skafish includes what seems to be the requisite clause regarding Malabou and her relationship to Derrida, "whose student, friend, and close collaborator she long was" (763). Skafish's reference to Derrida functions as a sort of defense for Malabou in this review, since Skafish saves the information for the section of the review in which he defends Malabou from two major critiques of her work.

Malabou's reception in *Hypatia*, a feminist journal, while positive, is not without patriarchal influences. In her article on Malabou's particular brand of Hegelianism, Lisabeth During forefronts the ways in which Malabou attempts to rehabilitate Hegel, particularly through the concept of plasticity. During also situates Malabou among other female poststructuralists:

For her, Hegel is not an interesting "maitre" worth a passionate but irritated conversation (as he is for Irigaray), nor a source of philosophical guidelines who can be absorbed and then moved beyond (as he is for Judith Butler), but someone who must be followed to the very limits (*jusqu' au bout*), to the extremities of his unexpected though, in order that the risk and challenge of his ideas be recognized and aspired to. (193)

Still, even with a fully engaged portrayal of Malabou's work, During genders Malabou in noticeable ways. When describing the ways in which Malabou defends Hegelian philosophy from the critique that he leaves no room for the local or the idiosyncratic, During writes: "But the virtue of Malabou's attractive Hegel is that, without glossing over any of the most intractable concepts in the Hegelian repertory, she can save Hegel from such a fate" (192). During's romanticized version of Malabou's philosophical endeavor casts Malabou in the role of rehabilitating a "bad boy" (Hegel) through her "virtue." And even During cannot resist credentialing Malabou in her conclusion, noting that Malabou's achievements in Hegelian interpretation were "Inspired by her teacher and collaborator Derrida" (194).

I can conclude from the above analysis that Malabou's work on Hegel, plasticity, and neuroscience has tended to be ungendered, yet responds to her work, at least in the United States, have been remarkably gendered. Except perhaps in the case of Derrida himself, writers have generally construed her as a philosopher with feminine tropes, as demonstrated above. Even in the case of Jeannerod's terse introduction, the absence of deepened explication, engagement, and critique differentiates Malabou's reception from that of other French post-poststructuralists being translated for audiences in the United States.

In the end, it is Derrida's work that may shed light on these questions about femininity and philosophy. In her essay on gender in Derrida, Peggy Kamuf examines Derrida's reading of Heidegger, in which Derrida notes Heidegger's refusal to connect the words "sexual" and "power." Derrida points out that by attempting to silence the binary of sexuality, Heidegger only reinscribes that particular polarity and thus power dynamic. For Kamuf, this move is just as evident in Judith Butler's work; she argues that Butler's work on gender and sex is just as vulnerable to deconstruction as, say, Heidegger. But Kamuf also notes that Butler's assertions about sex and power, in contrast to Heidegger's, are "in the open: it is overtly a discourse of sexual politics, rather than always only potentially or in secret" (102). To follow Kamuf in her musings on Derrida and gender, whether one discusses the binary of sex or gender or attempts to avoid said binary, one is still continuing to inscribe the cultural binary, and hence power/powerlessness dynamic. Malabou seems to choose to vocalize her thoughts about sex over silence, realizing that either choice inscribes the male/female binary; in any case, male and female philosophers continue to inscribe gender power dynamics on their works, whether they overtly choose to do so or not. In *Deep Time of the Media*, Siegfried Zielinski does not mention the issue of gender politics in relationship to his idiosyncratic history of art, science, and media; yet, by including no women among his protagonists, he makes a statement of sexual politics nonetheless. Zielinski is rather like Cesare Lombroso, one of his roguish protagonists, who defies others to make use of his work in denigrating and subjugating women by registering a political objection to his own work: "he defines the relationship between the sexes as production for the benefit of the male" (Zielinski 221). Even though Lombroso spares one sentence to attempt to avoid ill effects from his entire body of work, Lombroso's work, which does actually denigrate the position of women, still stands. As does Zielinski's silence on gender politics, which inscribes the cultural binary of power/powerlessness.

If Malabou were to make no comment at all on gender, she would still be inscribing the binary power structure of gender. If she does comment, the same result occurs, except that by the overt proclamation of her experiences and theory, she might have some impact on the material conditions of women in philosophy or otherwise. Indeed, her version of plasticity offers hope for what Malabou describes as freedom.

She describes plasticity as re-visioning the relationship between form and itself, first citing Hegel: “Hegel shows that the subject is plastic in the sense that she or he is able to receive form (passivity) and to give form (activity)” (Vahanian 4). Malabou then argues that this relationship is not based on difference but on metamorphosis, that the “Hegelian subject *trans-subjects* itself constantly” (Vahanian 4). Malabou takes this idea of transsubjectivation and re-visions the gender binary as not based on difference but change. Her interpretation of Foucault elaborates transsubjectivation: “This transsubjectivation doesn’t mean that you become different from what you used to be, nor that you are able to absorb the other’s difference, but that you open a space within yourself between two forms of yourself. That you oppose two forms of yourself within yourself” (Vahanian 5). She argues that this interpretation of transsubjectivation, which absorbs from Hegel and Foucault, might also be called plasticity and implies the ability of the subject to re-form itself. In an article on neuroscience that relies on Malabou’s work to ground the intersection between understandings of the brain and political agency, Victoria Pitts-Taylor argues that Malabou “claims the possibility of controlling our neuronal destiny—and perhaps our broader social and political life” (638). The potential for such re-form is at the heart of Malabou’s concept of freedom as well; in the introduction to *Changer de la différence*, she writes:

These four texts [the essays in *Changer de la différence*] each contain, in their own ways, an address to Jacques Derrida, who accompanied me for so long and first showed me the type of difficulty awaiting a “woman” when she intends to become a “philosopher”. Another difficulty being precisely how to manage to distance myself from him, Jacques Derrida, in order to be able to remain both, “woman” and “philosopher”. To be able, too, as the last text shows, to be neither one nor the other, in taking a decision not incumbent on anyone but me and which presents itself as a pure, radical affirmation, without a single concession, of my freedom.

It is the concept of plasticity that allows Malabou to envision such possibility for freedom and re-form, the radical ability to not choose femininity or philosophy but to be both and to be herself; it is this radical possibility for self re-form and perhaps cultural re-form that she offers her readers. Though she does not state it directly in her introduction to *Changer de la différence* there still lingers in the connotation of plasticity that this cultural re-form may entail *plastique*, or revolution. Though she does not hint at gender in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, we might still read into this work a potential feminine audience, the women for whom she wrote *Changer de la différence*, when she writes: “To ask ‘What should we do with our brain?’ is above all to visualize the possibility of saying no to an afflicting economic, political, and mediatic culture that celebrates only the triumph of flexibility, blessing obedient individuals who have no greater merit than that of knowing how to bow their heads with a smile” (79).

Works Cited

-
- Butler, Rex and Scott Stephens. ““The Thing Itself” Appears: Slavoj Žižek’s Exemplary Thought.” Introduction to *Interrogating the real* by Slavoj Žižek. New York: Continuum, 2005. 1-7.
- “Canada: Gender gap in professor salaries revealed.” *University World News* 15 August 2010. Web. 30 November 2010.
- Derrida, Jacques. “A time for farewells: Heidegger (read by) Hegel (read by) Malabou.” Pref-

- ace to *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic* by Catherine Malabou. London: Routledge, 2005. vii-xlvii.
- During, Lisabeth. "Catherine Malabou and the Currency of Hegelianism." *Hypatia* (Autumn 2000): 190-195.
- Feltham, Oliver and Justin Clemens. "An introduction to Alain Badiou's philosophy." Introduction to *Infinite Thought* by Alain Badiou. New York: Continuum, 2005. 1-28.
- Glenn, David. "Gender Gap in Academic Wages Is Linked to Type of Institution, Researcher Says." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 25 March 2008. Web. 30 November 2010.
- Jeannerod, Marc. Foreword to *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* New York: Fordham UP, 2008. xi-xiv.
- Kamuf, Peggy. "Derrida and gender: The other sexual difference." *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Tom Cohen. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge UP, 2001. 82-107.
- Kirkpatrick, Laura. "Why Do Women Still Earn Less Than Men?" *Time* 20 April 2010. Web. 30 November 2010.
- Malabou, Catherine. Introduction to *Changer de différence: le féminin et la question philosophique*. Translated by Nicole Rubczak. *An und für sich*. 20 July 2010. Web. 30 November 2010.
- Malabou, Catherine. *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* New York: Fordham UP, 2008.
- Pitts-Taylor, Victoria. "The plastic brain: Neoliberalism and the neuronal self." *Health* 14(6): 635-652.
- Pounder, Diana G. "The Gender Gap in Salaries of Educational Administration Professors." *Education Administration Quarterly* (May 1989): 181-201.
- Schwab, Gabriele. "Derrida, Deleuze, and the Psychoanalysis to Come." *Derrida, Deleuze, Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Gabriele Schwab. New York: Columbia UP, 2007. 1-34.
- Skafish, Peter. Review of *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* by Catherine Malabou. *Cultural Anthropology* 24: 758-765.
- Slaby, Jan. Review of *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* by Catherine Malabou. *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 17 (2010): 235-63.
- Vahanian, Noelle. "A Conversation with Catherine Malabou." *JRCT* (Winter 2008): 1-13.
- Wolfe, Cary. "Bring the Noise: *The Parasite* and the Multiple Genealogies of Posthumanism." Introduction to *The Parasite* by Michel Serres. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007. xi-xxviii.
- Zielinski, Siegfried. *Deep Time of the Media*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006.

Alexander Bonner “Moses” Latta, Nineteenth-Century Inventor and Entrepreneur

by Sandra R. Seidman

Often considered “dead” by the end of the 1950s, the era of steam-powered locomotives, riverboats, and agricultural engines is still very much alive. Today, one has only to attend a steam tractor meet during the summer when enthusiasts gather at fairgrounds across the United States to relive for a few weekends the excitement and pure joy of hearing the chuff-chuff-chuff of a working steam engine, seeing the smoke and cinders flying from the smokestack, and hearing the shrill whistles of impressive steamers as they signal noontime to the crowds. Whether it is a traction engine, a locomotive, a sawmill engine, or an industrial engine, a steam engine in action is as exhilarating today as it was to the farmer or engineer in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati were prominent participants in the steam era. The convenience of shipping locally produced equipment and material down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers directly contributed not only to the prosperity of Cincinnati and its environs but also to the growth of many small towns that became major agricultural and industrial cities. Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky were peppered with dozens of small machine shops making everything from a specific part to an entire engine. Only a few lasted any length of time, but the handful that survived into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became important firms that made an indelible mark on the growth of the nation’s agricultural and manufacturing industries. It is for steam-powered firefighting equipment that Alexander Bonner Latta is best known, but he was a man with an inquisitive spirit and remained actively involved in experimenting with diverse ideas even after retiring from his prosperous firm in Cincinnati. Sometime before selling his fire equipment business to Lane and Bodley, a Cincinnati industrial



Courtesy Don Prout, cincinnativiews.net

Alexander B. Latta is given credit for the first workable steam fire engine produced in 1853 for the city of Cincinnati.

steam engine manufacturing company, he had moved his family across the river to the area now known as Ludlow, Kentucky. He built a large home on Latta Avenue, the street now named in his honor.¹

When Ludlow received its charter from Frankfort in 1864, Latta was named one of the commissioners selected to conduct an election of officers with a six-member council eventually chosen. Latta was elected the first president of the Ludlow City Council, serving in that position for one year. According to John M. Hunnicut in his history of Ludlow, Latta was a popular figure in the community and was nominated by both the Regulars and the Independents, the two political and frequently feuding parties in the nascent town.²

Two issues immediately confronted the new council: regular transportation across the Ohio River and a locally run school for the growing number of children. A long-standing problem was dependable ferry service between Cincinnati and the northern Kentucky area. The Ludlow ferry, owned and operated by Captain William McCoy and his sons—and popularly known as the Fifth Street Ferry because its Ohio landing was at the foot of Fifth Street in Cincinnati—had no regular schedule. Ohio ferry service was more expensive. Latta, along with several other council members, formed a committee to resolve the ferry problem. Eventually a property tax of forty cents per hundred-dollar valuation and a one-dollar poll tax was levied to purchase and run the ferry. Townspeople disagreed over the property tax, and the problem was never solved until the railroad came to Covington and Northern Kentucky.³

Before the charter of Ludlow in 1864, the local school was controlled and run by the state. As the population grew, state oversight proved cumbersome. With the issuing of the charter, the state notified Ludlow that the state would no longer maintain the school. Thereafter, the town assumed responsibility for the school, and the town paid the teacher. Considering that many of the townspeople were still concerned about the Civil War until Lee’s surrender in 1865, Latta and his fellow Ludlow council members had the town surveyed and divided into three wards, passed an ordinance against vice and immorality, and established a relief fund for the poor.⁴

Latta’s lasting fame rests on his steam fire engine. The need for better fire protection, improvements in steam engineering, and the right friends and contacts all came together with Latta in the right place at the right time to reap the benefits. His beginnings were modest. He was born July 11, 1821, in Ross County, Ohio, to a farming family that moved to Cincinnati in 1827 after the death of his father in an accident. Latta was only 5 when his father died, forcing him to grow up quickly. He left school at an early age to help support his mother and brothers and found work with the David Bradford Woolen Mills, William Bylad (a ship joiner), and Samuel Cummings’ brass foundry.⁵

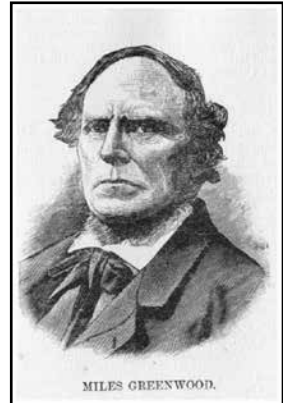
In 1841, Latta went to Washington, D. C., on business. There he met Anthony Harkness, owner of a foundry and machine shop in Cincinnati. Apparently, Latta made such an impression on Harkness that Harkness offered him the job of superintendent of his foundry. In those early years, Latta held a patent for a machine that would bend the stirrups for steamboat paddlewheels (Patent 3,022 in 1843)⁶ and designed a huge lathe and planing machine for Harkness. George Escol Sellers, who knew Latta personally, believed the planing machine was “a masterpiece of mechanism.”⁷ By the time Harkness turned his attention to locomotive building in 1845, his shop was building steam engines and boilers for the steamboat industry.⁸ Latta appeared to be the natural choice to design and build the locomotives. It is here that Latta stumbled. Latta designed and built only two engines for the Harkness foundry; both were unsuccessful in performance. Additionally, each engine took longer than expected to construct and

was more costly to produce than could be recouped in its sale. Latta was removed from his position of locomotive designer and, dissatisfied with the offer of another position, left the Harkness foundry. Harkness expanded the business, and, over the next twenty years, the company produced thirty locomotive engines. In 1848, Harkness brought his son William into the business and gradually turned the management of the foundry over to his son. In 1852, Robert Moore, a longtime employee of the firm, became a partner. John G. Richardson, a foreman with the Harkness foundry from the beginning of the locomotive ventures, joined Moore in 1853, leased the Harkness foundry buildings, and formed the Cincinnati Locomotive Works, usually referred to as Moore and Richardson. Harkness was now financially secure and pursuing other interests. By 1853, his son was no longer involved in the company and, according to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* of November 23, 1853, tragically committed suicide in the family home in Glendale, Ohio.⁹

Cincinnati Locomotive Works under Moore and Richardson prospered until adversely affected by several bad investments, the Civil War, and the inability of southern customers to obtain credit for new equipment. Moore and Richardson did not have the capacity to manufacture the larger locomotives then in demand, and, in 1868, they declared bankruptcy. John H. White, Jr., stated that “the closing of the Cincinnati Locomotive Works marked the end of the locomotive-building industry in that city.”¹⁰

Latta did not give up entirely his interest in building a locomotive. He held several patents for improvements including an automatic lubricator for axles and an improved wheel for steam carriages, as well as a metallic chimney to replace the glass chimney in oil lamps.¹¹ In 1856, he designed a coal-burning locomotive that proved to be a total failure. Undeterred, he issued a catalog in 1857 listing improvements, but there is no evidence that a machine was ever produced.¹² He made one last try—building a small steam locomotive, called a dummy, to be used on the new Cincinnati street railway. It was a mechanical success, but the *Cincinnati Gazette* of March 28, 1860, wrote that it frightened the horses so badly that it was deemed unsatisfactory for public use.¹³ Earlier, the *Cincinnati Commercial* of March 2, 1860, had given the little engine a glowing review describing its features, in particular the directing of the exhaust steam into vertical waters tanks so that the familiar “choo, choo” was silenced. Another review a few days later stated that the engine passed every test and that not a single horse was frightened; nevertheless, as White concludes, not the Latta brothers nor anyone else ever produced a steam locomotive suitable for street use.¹⁴

The threat of fire in Cincinnati was very real, and a number of prominent businesses went up in flames putting on what must have been a spectacular show. *History of the Cincinnati Fire Department* offers an excellent account of these fires.¹⁵ The need for fire protection was becoming a major concern as Cincinnati grew. Independent fire companies, using bucket brigades, were inadequate. Fiercely protective of their own territories, these companies often fought with each other while the structure they were meant to protect burned down. A central organization was called for. Several prominent Cincinnatians, led by Miles Greenwood, initiated a reform of the independent companies into a single fire department with *paid* fire-



This portrait of Miles Greenwood appeared in Henry Howe's Historical Collections of Ohio. Greenwood had the foresight, the funds, and the friends to push Cincinnati into modernizing its fire system.

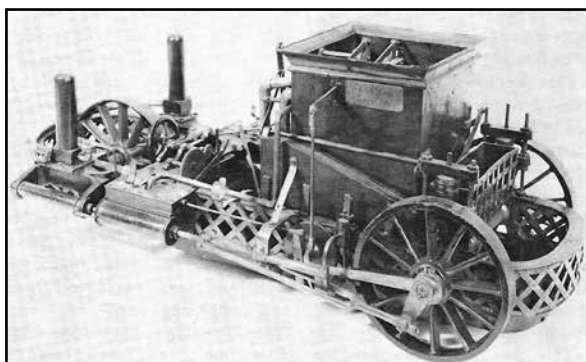
men, a new concept. Eventually an alarm system was instituted and a water supply of cisterns placed around the city.¹⁶ In 1852, Latta, with Greenwood’s encouragement, proposed a trial of his portable steam fire engine, pulled by four horses.

Latta’s claim to be the first man to build a successful steam fire engine has been repeated so often that it is taken as unquestioned fact. White has speculated that this idea might very well have been taken from Latta’s own statement in 1857 and repeated in 1860 in his pamphlet “The Origin and Introduction of Steam Fire Engines: Together With the Results of the Use of Them in Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Louisville for One Year”: namely, that he “was the only man that has built a successful machine [steam fire engine] in this country or anywhere else”¹⁷ The idea for a steam fire engine was not new. Earlier experimental machines were made as early as 1828 in England by John Braithwaite and John Ericsson and were used for a brief time in Europe. Another machine was produced in New York by Paul R. Hodge, but, unlike Braithwaite’s lightweight machine, it was heavy, clumsy, and ultimately unacceptable.¹⁸ Regardless of the truth of Latta’s claim, it can be said that he did produce a workable steam fire engine at the time Cincinnati and the town fathers were receptive to the idea.¹⁹

Before Latta became involved in the design of his first steam fire engine, Abel Shawk, a small manufacturer of door locks and a photographer²⁰ who was interested in steam engines, had purchased the patent rights to a steam generator designed by Joseph Buchanan of Lexington, Kentucky, and had added copper coils. Although there are some discrepancies, Sellers provided one of the best sources of information about Shawk in his “Early Engineering Reminiscences,” written when Sellers was in his eighties.²¹ Shawk joined Latta and his brothers in partnership sometime in 1852 to produce a test steam fire engine made up of the Buchanan boiler, a small steam engine from Latta’s shop to run the generator, and parts salvaged from an older attempt at a steam fire engine by D. L. Farnham. The Cincinnati City Council had set aside a thousand dollars for Latta and Shawk to build and test their steam fire engine, which was reported to have produced a steady stream of water within five minutes through 150 feet of hose, but the frame with its wooden wheels proved unable to carry the weight of the machine.²²

Buoyed by the success of the test run, Shawk proposed to the council that he could produce an efficient engine and guarantee its performance for the price of five thousand dollars. This proved to be completely unrealistic, and the eventual cost totaled ten thousand dollars and embroiled Latta and Shawk in a protracted legal struggle with the city for the full cost of the engine. The steam engine was named the *Uncle Joe Ross*, in honor of the city councilman who had championed the use of steam.²³

The most important requirement for a steam fire engine was for a boiler that could produce steam at a working pressure quickly. Once a large fire was well under way,



Courtesy Don Prout, cincinnativiews.net

Alexander B. Latta is given credit for the first workable steam fire engine produced in 1853 for the city of Cincinnati.

it was impossible to stop, and the most that could be done was to try to keep it from spreading. Latta and Shawk chose to use the Buchanan boiler because it produced steam at working pressure in about five minutes by heating a small amount of water. Latta and Shawk modified the early Buchanan design by squaring the coil and placing it inside a rectangular iron box. The box had double-sided iron walls that formed a water leg. The Buchanan boiler was of the water-tube style and was dependent on a reliable pump to force water through the system at a precise rate. Boilers of this type can be called injection, continuous feed, or controlled circulation boilers.²⁴

Sellers in his “Reminiscences” believes that the partnership between Shawk and Latta was an uneasy one. Shawk wanted the simplest, most durable engine possible that incorporated a coil steam generator, steam cylinder, and pump and that was easy to handle and move rapidly. Latta believed that, because the machine was being built for Cincinnati, it was especially important that it be as perfect as possible; weight was of little consequence because he envisioned the engine as a traction engine that propelled itself. The self-propelling feature was eventually dropped; it took too long to get up steam on the way to the fire.²⁵

The *Uncle Joe Ross* was placed in service in 1852. The city was pleased with its performance and kept it in use until 1858.²⁶ In 1853, the fire engine named *Citizens’ Gift* was purchased with funds from citizens and insurance companies. By the end of the 1860s, the fire department had purchased a number of other steam fire engines, some built by Lane and Bodley, the Cincinnati firm that purchased production rights from Latta in 1863.

After the success of the *Uncle Joe Ross*, the former partners appeared to work separately. For some time, Latta had been working on his ideas for improvement of a tubular boiler using an open water box; he filed his ideas with the United States Patent Office in 1852 and received a patent in 1853. Earlier in 1853, Shawk received a patent for a similar tubular boiler but using a check valve water system. In 1854 or 1855, Shawk constructed an engine called *Young America*, exhibited it in the East, and eventually sold it in Philadelphia for over nine thousand dollars.

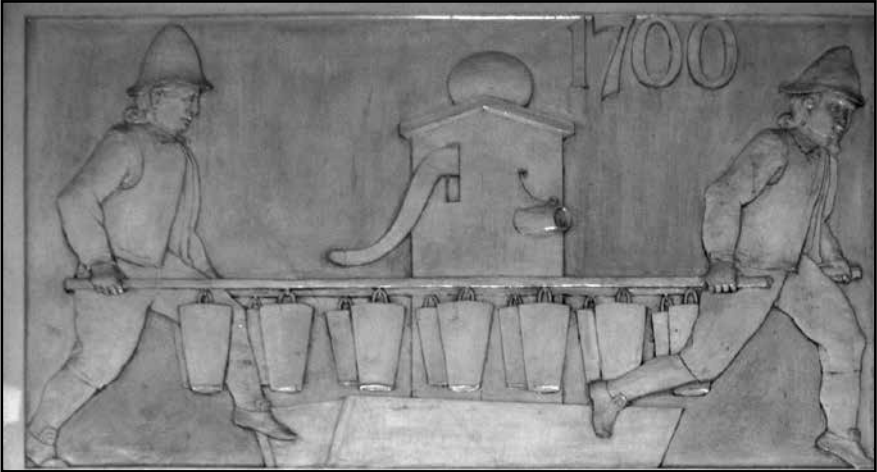
Latta sued Shawk for patent infringement, and Shawk countersued, alleging that Latta had abandoned his patent, that the patent contained no novel ideas, and that boilers similar to Latta’s had previously been used in a number of cities. At this point, legal technicalities intervened with the judge ruling that “special pleas” were not filed in a timely matter by Shawk and that Shawk did not provide the specifics required to prove that the ideas for the boiler were in use before any patent had been granted. In his instructions to the jury, the judge stated that Latta’s improvements on the older ideas were patentable and that the jury was to decide if Shawk’s boiler was substantially different from Latta’s boiler—that is, was the type of water vessel an essential or material element to the invention? The jury found that Shawk had infringed on Latta’s patent and awarded Latta damages of five dollars. Latta was represented by Alphonso Taft; Shawk was represented by C. D. Coffin.²⁷

Shawk was never able to sell any more fire engines after he sold *Young America*. He had exhausted the money from his former lock business and never recovered financially. Shawk was never given the public credit he deserved during the development of the first successful steam fire engine, and Latta was never known to have corrected accounts of their partnership in the birth of the steam fire engine.²⁸ Little more is known about Shawk.

Alexander Bonner Latta could look back on a successful career. In 1846, with his brothers Edmiston and Finley, he founded the Buckeye Works and made it financially rewarding. Sellers believed that Edmiston, in spite of a physical handicap, was a sound



These murals are from the former headquarters of the Cincinnati Fire Department located at the Cincinnati Water Works Eden Park pumping station.



Photos courtesy of Leland Hite

mechanic and may even have been the real brains of the company. Finley eventually became foreman of the city’s repair shop and was the engineer for the “Citizens’ Gift.”²⁹ Latta was the proud holder of a number of patents and was a faculty member of the Ohio Mechanics Institute, which had been founded by his friend Greenwood. Latta had gained a nationwide recognition for the first *workable* steam fire engine and put Cincinnati on the road to becoming the leading manufacturer of premier fire equipment.³⁰ He was one of the foremost participants in the industrial life of Cincinnati and an active participant in the early government of his community, Ludlow, Kentucky. His son Griffin Taylor Latta followed in his footsteps as an elected official and successful businessman in Ludlow. Alexander Latta was fortunate to be able to retire when he was still young. Unfortunately, he did not live to see Ludlow grow into a modern city; he died April 28, 1865, age 45, before he had finished his second year on the Ludlow City Council. He is buried in Spring Grove Cemetery. His last wish was to have a fire engine on top of his gravestone. This was soundly vetoed by the cemetery.³¹

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank Dr. Robert T. Rhode, professor of English, Northern Kentucky University, for suggesting that a history of A. B. Latta was a logical step for me to take after publication of my paper on Lane & Bodley and for his continuing support and help in the research; Thomas J. Jaffee, JD, CPA, for his interpretation and explanation of the lawsuit, Latta vs Shawk; Anne B. Shepherd, reference librarian, Cincinnati History Library and Archives, for her expert assistance; Anne Ryckbost, Library Specialist, Frank Steely Library, for assistance in locating material; Leland Hite for kindly helping to locate sources; and Don Prout for his kind permission to use his photographs.

Endnotes

1. Kenton County Historical Society, November–December 2007. It is thought Alexander Bonner Latta moved to Ludlow in 1849 and lived there until his death in 1865. After A. B. Latta's death, his son Griffin Taylor Latta had the old house torn down and built a large twelve-sided house at 254 Latta Avenue, which still stands. According to Mary Ann Kelly in her book *My Old Kentucky Home, Good Night*, on G. T.'s death in 1930, the estate was sold to Dr. and Mrs. Charles Stroup of another old Ludlow family. For many years, Mona Tritsch (the Stroups' daughter) and her family resided there. Mona Jo Williams, her daughter, lived in the house until 1978. Mona Jo was a professional ballet dancer and at one time conducted a dance school in the house. Robert Charles Tritsch, son of Mona, lived in Terrace Park, Ohio, as late as 1978. In an interview in 1968 with Sigmon Byrd in his article "Israel Ludlow's Little Town Still Has Charm," in the *Kentucky Post*, July 27, 1968, Mona Tritsch said she believed the house was built by G. T. Latta in 1903 at a cost of about forty-five thousand dollars and that Mary Latta, G. T.'s daughter, was married in the house. In 2005, the house was sold for two hundred fifty thousand dollars and is now a residence and music studio. (www.zillow.com/homedetails/254-Latta-St-Ludlow-KY-41016)

2. John M. Hunnicutt, *History of City of Ludlow*, Ludlow Volunteer Fire Department, (1935) 18-19.

3. Hunnicutt, 8-9, 14, 22.

4. Hunnicutt, 21-23, 60. Although A. B. Latta served on the city council only a year and half, his son Griffin Taylor Latta was on the council until 1893. G. T. headed the committee to get a bond issue passed to establish the Ludlow Water Works. In a special election on July 4, 1892, the issue passed, giving Ludlow the beginning of a regular water supply able to support the fire department. Latta served as the water works superintendent from 1894 to 1920. G. T. continued family involvement in his community, acting as an officer for forty years in the Kenton Building Association and the Ludlow Building Association. www.kenton.lib.ky.us/gen/Kenton/Ludlow/people.html. 11/21/2007.

5. www.kenton.lib.ky.us/gen/Kenton/Ludlow/people.html. 11/21/2007. See also Sue Latta Cox letter at archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/LATTA/2003-01/1042302340.

6. www.google.de/patents/US3022. The details, claims made in support of issuance, and drawings of this and other patents mentioned may be seen at www.google.de/patents/and the number of the patent.

7. John H. White, Jr., "Alexander Latta as a Locomotive Designer," *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* 23 (April 1965) 128; George Escol Sellers. "Reminiscences," *American Machinist* vol. 12 (December 19, 1889) 2.

8. White, 11.

9. White, 11-43. Anthony Harkness died of cancer in 1858. From humble beginnings, he became a wealthy and respected businessman. He was one of the founders of Glendale, Ohio, still one of the premier residential communities northeast of Cincinnati.

10. White, 43-46, 143-144. Moore died in 1887, and White believes Richardson died in 1901 and is buried in Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio.

11. www.google.de/patents. US Patent 17,972, issued November, 1857; US Patent 15,297,

issued July 8, 1856; US Patent 39,154, issued July 7, 1863. Latta was also issued patents for a safety valve for steam engines (US Patent 14,963, issued 1856); an improvement in steam generators which divided the coils and shortened the time for the water to pass through the tubes and produce steam (US Patent 11,025, issued June 6, 1854); and a different way of attaching the valves which he claimed improved the independent motion of the valves within the cylinder (US Patent 10,119, issued October 11, 1853). It is doubtful many of his inventions were actually used. Around 1863, he also developed a method to aerate bread. He was a man of many interests. (Biography—Latta, Alexander Bonner #2, folder, “A Kentucky Inventor,” paper by John Burns for the Kenton County Historical Society, undated, Kenton County Library.)

12. White, 17-18.

13. White, 18-19

14. White, 128-130.

15. *History of the Cincinnati Fire Department*, Firemen’s Protective Association of the Cincinnati Fire Department (1895) 121-140.

16. *History of the Cincinnati Fire Department*, 3, 109, 112. Miles Greenwood became the first chief engineer of the Cincinnati Fire Department. Born in 1807 in New Jersey, he had moved to Cincinnati in 1817 and had established the Eagle Ironworks in 1832. He was one of the founders of the Ohio Mechanics Institute. He died in 1885 in Cincinnati.

17. White, “The Steam Fire Engine: A Reappraisal of a Cincinnati ‘First.’” *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* 28 (Winter 1970) 317. Even Christopher Ahrens, successor to Latta steam engine patents, felt it was worthwhile to use this “first” steam fire engine tag line in the catalogs of his fire engine company long after steam had been replaced by gasoline and diesel.

18. White, 318.

19. White, 319.

20. Mary Sayre Haverstock, Jeannette M. Vance, Brian L. Meggitt, eds., *Artists in Ohio, a Biographical Dictionary*. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State UP, 2000) 780. An Abel Shawk is listed in 1845 in Hamilton, Ohio, as a portrait and view photographer whose daguerreotypes had been shown in an Ohio Mechanics Institute fair. Sometime between 1840 and 1849, Shawk married Phoebe Ann Marsh of Hamilton, Ohio. Sellers mentioned in his *Reminiscences* that Shawk’s daughter, Caroline Shawk Brooks, became a professional sculptress. See www.hcgsdata.org/brides/Marh-Maz.shtml. Charles Crist, in his book, *The Cincinnati Miscellany, Or Antiquities of the West and Pioneer History*, published in 1846, also writes that Shawk was known for his daguerreotypes.

21. Sellers, “Early Engineering Reminiscences,” *American Machinist* vol. 12 (December 19, 1889) and vol. 13 (January 2, 9, 23, 1890) Cincinnati Historical Society MSS VF 728. Sellers was a respected engineer who moved to Cincinnati from the east in 1841. He knew personally Latta, Shawk, Greenwood, and many other of the leading local industrialists. Sellers long promoted his own idea of a center rail system between the two main rails of track with additional wheels added to the locomotive to boost the ability of locomotives to handle steep grades. He was ultimately unsuccessful and was forced to close his shop. White provides an excellent description of Sellers’ dream and his ordeal to get his idea accepted in Chapter 3 of White’s book *Cincinnati Locomotive Builders* (Cincinnati Museum Center, 2004).

22. White, 325-326.

23. White cites an interesting conflict of opinion regarding the naming of the *Uncle Joe Ross*. Joe Ross was a Cincinnati city councilman with a keen eye on budget reform who often produced the only negative vote in meetings by thundering “I object” and thus became commonly known as the “Great Obstructionist.” White in his article on the “first” steam engine points out that, while some remember Ross as supporting the need for more modern fire equipment, some do not—in particular Sellers, who lived in Cincinnati during the birth of the steam fire engine. His recollections, corroborated by several elderly men still alive at the time Sellers published his reminiscences (1884–85) and directly involved in the negotiations for the fire engine, contradict the city council minutes, which generally favor the project. Regardless of who did or did not advocate for a more modern steam fire engine, White believes Cincinnati can claim to be the first major municipality to replace hand pumpers with steam engines.

24. White, personal correspondence with the author of this paper (June 11, 2007; July 31, 2007).

25. Sellers.

26. *History of the Cincinnati Fire Department*, 120.

27. Samuel S. Fisher, *Reports of Cases Arising Upon Letters Patent for Inventions Determined in the Circuit Courts of the United States*. 2nd ed., vol. 1. (1870) Cincinnati: Robert Clark & Co. The author of this paper is indebted to Mr. Thomas J. Jaffe, JD, CPA, for his review and interpretation of Case No. 8,116, Latta vs. Shawk, filed March 1859 in Circuit Court of the Southern District of Ohio. The complete text may also be seen at law.resource.org/pub/reporter/Hein/0014.f.cas/0014.f.cas.1188.2.html.

28. Sellers.

29. Sellers.

30. Latta sold the rights to his patents to Lane and Bodley, who in turn, sold them to their foreman, Christopher Ahrens. Ahrens and his company brought world-wide recognition to Cincinnati, manufacturing new and improved fire equipment well into the twentieth century.

31. Alvin F. Harlow, *The Serene Cincinnatians* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1950) 73.

Northern Kentucky, The State's Stepchild: Origins and Effects of Organized Crime*

by Richard Challis

Oral History Project

"I believe (that this nation) is the only one where every man, at the call of the laws, would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of public order as his own personal concern."

—Thomas Jefferson¹

"Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperation with good."

—Gandhi²

The future Sheriff of Campbell County, George Ratterman sent me, a seventeen year old high school student in 1961, a membership for "The Committee of 500." Fifty-one years later, I will be graduating from Northern Kentucky University with a Master of Arts degree in Public History. This college and later university founded, in 1968, would not have existed in Campbell County, Kentucky without U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy's involvement in Northern Kentucky's reform movement. An entrenched Jewish Syndicate and Italian Mafia organized crime element was expelled from Newport, Kentucky; the largest city in the United States to have done so. This local community had changed its attitude towards the myth about organized crime. Many people in Northern Kentucky, up to that time, believed that there was a difference between a good entrepreneurial organized crime figure and the "bust-out joint"

* Editor's Note: The following article is based largely on "oral history," a type of historical narrative that is crafted primarily on first-hand personal interviews with the personalities who were present during important historical moments. Such a history is grounded firmly in the oral tradition of the culture, rather than exclusively on secondary documentation. As with memoirs, oral histories must depend on human memory and human feelings and thus are subject to all of the biases and vagaries that accompany human memory. Yet, in many cases, such memory is all that the historian has on which to build his or her historical account.

criminals. This proved to be false. The local officials were not the only ones corrupt in keeping a “hands-off” policy toward illegal gambling, prostitution and other vices committed by criminals and organized crime.³

Prominent Kentucky politicians such as Senator Alben Barkley, Vice-President under President Truman, and Governor Albert Chandler also were taking Mob payoffs. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was blackmailed by organized crime, over his Mob arranged successful business investments, travel perks, and fixed California, Del Mar Race Track winnings. These unsubstantiated activities as well as the rumors of his homosexuality, cross dressing, and African-American Ancestry, haunted Hoover. He acted brutally against homosexuals and African-Americans, while he was Director of the Bureau of Investigations in 1924. This agency became the FBI in 1935. But it was not until 1957 that Hoover acknowledge the existence of organized crime.⁴ By that time, the Jewish Syndicate and Italian Mafia had been entrenched for decades in Northern Kentucky.

On June 11, 1968, Northern Kentucky University was founded. Less than a week earlier, on June 5th, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, the person most responsible for the existence of Northern Kentucky University, in Campbell County, Kentucky was assassinated. This was just six years after Newport, Kentucky had become the largest city in the United States to expel an organized crime Syndicate.

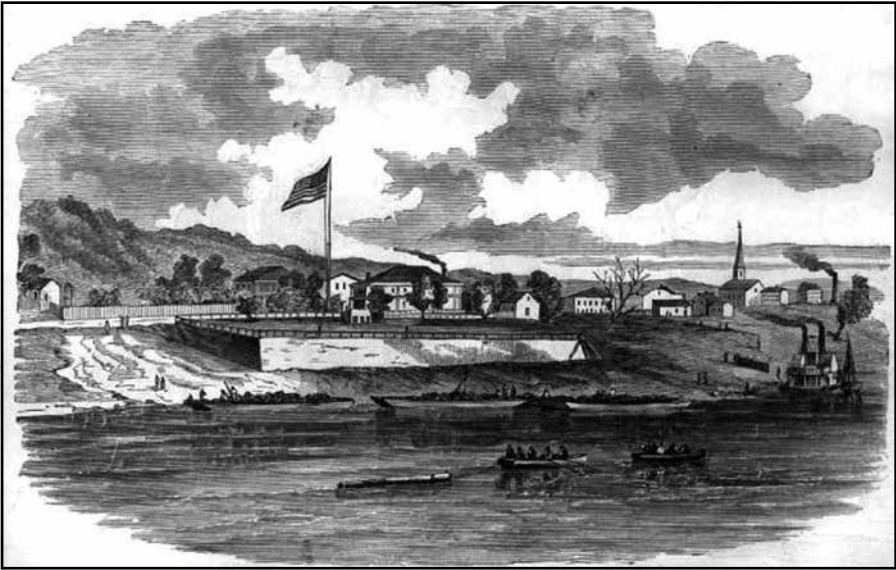
Northern Kentucky has long been considered a stepchild to the rest of Kentucky. Even our dialect is mid-western and more closely aligned with that of Southern Ohio and the Cincinnati area. This is in stark contrast to the various Southern and Appalachian dialects throughout the rest of Kentucky. The early primitive road system and the surrounding hilly terrain isolated Northern Kentucky from the rest of Kentucky. Northern Kentucky is part of the Greater Cincinnati Area, but many residents in Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana consider those who live in Northern Kentucky, sociologically beneath them. This attitude has been mostly fostered from the earlier pejorative moniker for the city of Newport: “Sin City.”⁵ (See “Cross Section U.S.A.: Sin Town,” by Monroe Fry, *Esquire Magazine*, May 1957, p. 84.)

The Wall Street Journal's rating of state governments in the October 4, 2010 issue, listed Kentucky as the worst run government of the 50 states. The survey analyzed data ranging from debt rating agencies, to unemployment trends, violent crime rate, median income, and overall government management.⁶ This article historically characterizes Kentucky Government negatively.

In my interview with Nick Clooney, he added that one of the major causes for the perceived onus that Kentucky has been and still qualifies, as one of the most corrupt states in the United States, is the designation of “wet” and “dry” counties. In one of the largest hard liquor producing states in the nation, this equivocal attitude toward alcohol fosters wide-spread criminal activity.⁷ Even with our nation’s low opinion of Kentucky, many “down-state” Kentuckians considered, just 50 years ago, Northern Kentucky even lower. We were the Yankees, gangsters, gamblers, whores, and pimps. Today, the perception of many Kentuckians, about Northern Kentucky, is not that much better. The corruption of local state and federal officials has had dire repercussions for Northern Kentucky’s past, especially, in the city of Newport. The belief held by much of the general public in Northern Kentucky that organized crime was an accepted entrepreneurial endeavor run by capitalists explains why Northern Kentucky had become a sectional pariah to the rest of the state.⁸

This essay will focus on the growth of crime bosses, organized crime, and the reformers. It will show what resulted from the “hands-off” policy in Northern Kentucky,

by corrupted local, state, and federal officials from the Prohibition Era (1919-1932), to the reform campaigns of 1959-1962, which helped to evict an entrenched Syndicate crime organization.



Newport Barracks

The city of Newport fronts the Ohio River and it lies directly across from Cincinnati, Ohio. It is located at the confluence of the Ohio and Licking Rivers in Northern Kentucky's Campbell County. The founders in 1791 named the community for the sea captain, Christopher Newport, who piloted the first settlers to Jamestown, Virginia. Newport, Kentucky was incorporated as a town in 1795. It benefited in its development in the 19th Century from its proximity to Cincinnati, a vibrant commercial center and the "Queen City" of the Midwest. In 1803, when Ohio gained statehood, a military camp, Newport Barracks, was founded in Newport on the banks of the Licking and Ohio Rivers. Newport became a "Sin" City during the Civil War, when a garrison of Union troops was established there, just across the river from Cincinnati.⁹

General Joseph Hooker, one of the Commanders of the Northern Department headquartered in Cincinnati which included Newport, was known to let wives of Union soldiers into Union camps during military campaigns and while garrisoned in Civil War camps. The wives could be with their husbands, be allowed to share the food and supplies and more importantly their Union Army pay. Prostitutes also lived around the camps; euphemistically, they were called Hooker's girls, and later it was shortened to Hookers.¹⁰ Many prostitutes came into Newport for the soldier's business. The establishment of prostitution was followed



General Joseph Hooker

Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration

by illegal gambling casinos run by the clientele that crossed the river, just a few minutes away.

In contrast to the economic growth and cultural development which Newport could have shared with The Greater Cincinnati area, it took a sharp turn in the opposite direction, in the early twentieth century. In fact, Newport became the Midwest's "Sin City," from its identification with vice and corruption. From Prohibition until the early sixties, illegal gambling, prostitution and nude entertainment made Newport a 20th Century boomtown and Cincinnati's playground.¹¹

The passage of the 18th Amendment or Volstead Act outlawing the distribution, sale and consumption of alcohol in the United States played a key role in organizing crime in Newport; for example, Prohibition caused legal businesses, like restaurants, taverns and cafes, to become "speakeasies," or among Northern Kentuckians, they were called "tiger blinds." This not only perpetuated criminal activity, but it also greatly increased the number of establishments in a community where "vice" already existed. By selling liquor illegally, the "tiger blinds" found that it was not that difficult to offer other vice-related goods and services, like gambling and prostitution. The broad effect of a Prohibition law created a fertile ground for organized crime to foster and develop, quickly. What had been legal one day, was illegal the next.¹²

Prohibition provided the accumulation of massive sums of cash for criminal enterprises. Since most people still drank, such activity illegally allowed a surcharge to be added to the price. This so called "crime tax" covered the additional costs and risks of operating an illegal business. With the increased profits, Newport had the extra capital to invest in more vice driven enterprises.

Before Prohibition, corruption had always been present, but it was secretive and discrete. Payoffs assured that those who wished to participate in gambling, prostitution, and the other vices could, but away from the law abiding public. Under Prohibition, corruption gained a quasi-acceptance, and it soon became a tolerated part of life in the community; for example, liquor for family celebrations continued, but under Prohibition it came from the underworld, supplied by the bootlegger.¹³

Consequently, Prohibition helped to institutionalize corruption. The public wanted vice tolerated and their liquor supply to continue. Politicians in Newport, like in so many other cities, began to appear publicly with bootleggers to dispel any doubts that it would be otherwise. Open bribery and public corruption became an integral part of American politics, in general.

In Newport, not only was liquor sold illegally, but there were large-scale smuggling operations that provided beer, wine, whiskey and gin to these businesses. Small-scale production operations became a common means of supplementing income. Oral tradition has it that there were so many back-yard stills in Newport producing wine and brandy, that the smoke from these stills blocked out the sun from 1919 to 1932.¹⁴ While this is certainly an exaggeration, undoubtedly, the production of "red" (illegal moonshine) liquor was commonplace in Northern Kentucky. In the early years of Prohibition, many major Syndicates including those of Al Capone, Dutch Schultz and Meyer Lansky¹⁵ purchased some of their stock in Newport, as well as in other Kentucky locales. It is from these tiger-blinds that many gambling locations were created. In essence, massive scale gambling was organized and supported from the payoffs gained from liquor-based corruption. It was from the early local liquor Syndicates, that most of the key figures in Newport organized crime started.¹⁶

Northern Kentucky played a prominent role in bootlegging during Prohibition. One of its most successful and colorful criminals was George Remus. He was born in Germany in 1874 and moved to Chicago with his family, when he was five. His

father became disabled when he was 14, and George supported the family by working at his uncle's pharmacy and attending the Chicago College of Pharmacy. At 19, he passed the state's pharmaceutical exam and obtained a license by claiming he was 21. Two years later, he bought the pharmacy. He quickly became tired of the pharmacy business, and began to study law. He completed the three-year law course in 18 months, and he became a lawyer in 1900, at age 24.¹⁷

Remus specialized in criminal defense, especially murder. In one year, he had defended 18 people accused of murder, and he had become rather famous. By 1919, when Prohibition had become effective in many states, Remus was giving counsel to various individuals charged with violating the liquor laws. Remus immediately realized what huge profits could be made by selling liquor. He divorced his wife after he began having an affair with his beautiful and ambitious secretary, Imogene Holmes. Alcohol Prohibition started in January 1920; within a few months, Remus saw that his clients, a rather crude and uneducated group, were becoming wealthy very quickly.

He memorized the Volstead Act, that enforced Prohibition, and he found loopholes. This was so he could buy distilleries and pharmacies, in order to sell liquor himself under government licenses for medicinal purposes. He was still a licensed pharmacist.¹⁸ Most of the liquor disappeared on the way to market, because he would "hi-jack" it. He moved to Cincinnati, with his girlfriend Imogene, because 80 percent of America's bonded whiskey was produced within a 300 miles radius, and the city contained many distilleries. He bought most of America's best known whiskey manufacturers, including Fleischmann Distillery in Cincinnati. He paid \$197,000 for it, and it came with 3100 gallons of whiskey already made.¹⁹

Remus ran his business from a palatial suite in the Remus Building located at Race and Pearl Streets. It contained consulting rooms, a library, and a kitchen with a chef. In less than three years, he made \$40 million (\$430 million today); his organization had as many as 3,000 loyal, well paid employees. His entire operation depended on "The Fix." He bribed hundreds of police, judges, and government officials including \$500,000 to the U.S. Attorney General Henry M. Daugherty, of President Warren Harding's Administration. He estimated that during his "heyday," he had spent over \$20,000,000 in bribes. He was quoted as saying, "Men have tried to corner the wheat market only to learn there is too much wheat in the world. I tried to corner the graft market, but there isn't enough money in the world to buy up all the public officials who demand their share of the graft."²⁰

The rumor was that Remus bribed federal agents to guard the bonded whiskey at his warehouses. He then removed the whiskey from the barrels and replaced it with water. When federal inspectors checked the warehouses, all the barrels were full. After his operations expanded to Indiana and Kentucky, he became known as the "King of the Bootleggers." Remus needed 12 lieutenants to manage the procurement, distribution and public affairs, better known as bribery. Shipments were sent out by car, truck,



*George Remus,
King of the Bootleggers*



Imogene Remus

Courtesy of Cincinnati Enquirer

and even full boxcar loads. He deposited huge sums of money into various banks. His net worth was estimated at \$70,000,000.²¹

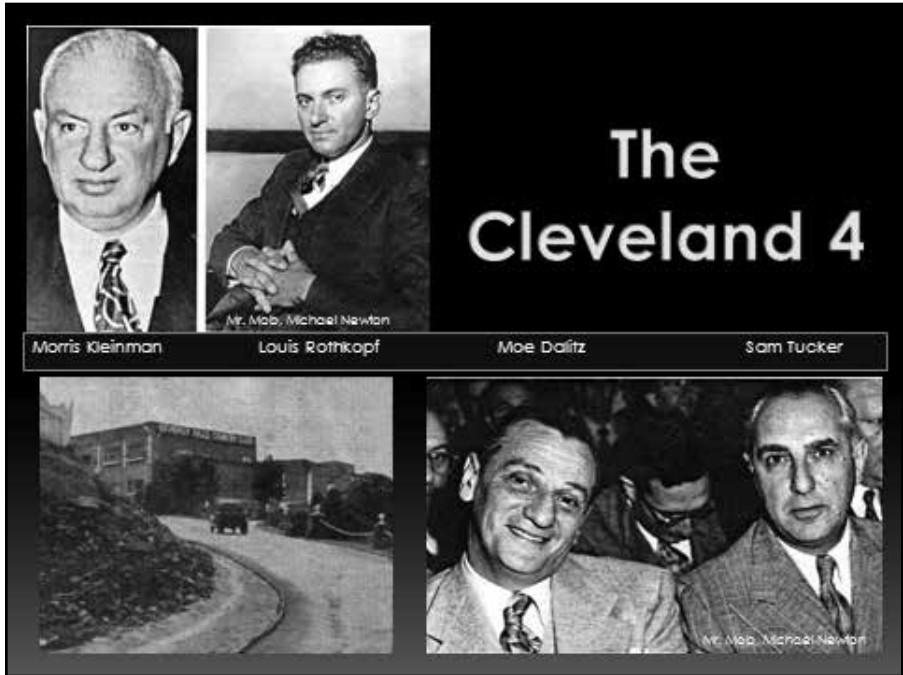
Although Bugsy Siegel is acknowledged as the founder of Las Vegas, he did it with the money Remus was able to provide. George is credited with putting Newport, Kentucky on the map. Newport became known as “Little Mexico,” because law enforcement in this area of Northern Kentucky was as lax and corrupt as that of Tijuana, Mexico. Newport was famous for its nightlife and illegal gambling activities. During and after Prohibition, it was estimated that there were over 30,000 speakeasies in Cincinnati and Newport.²²

During Prohibition, however, local corruption was insufficient to maintain a criminal organization. It is in this regard that Remus differed from most of his more successful East Coast and Midwestern colleagues. While Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel, Dutch Schultz, Al Capone and others had been able to neutralize, corrupt or otherwise protect themselves from Treasury Department agents, Remus ignored this area of vulnerability to his detriment. In 1922, Remus’ operation was raided. He and twelve of his associates were arrested, convicted and imprisoned. But it was the associates of the Remus bootlegging operation who used the organization of corruption he created, to establish post-Prohibition gambling as the major enterprise in the open city of Newport.²³

After Remus was released from prison, he was out for revenge against his wife. One of the federal agents, who prosecuted Remus, had an affair with Remus’ wife. Not only did Imogene and the agent go through Remus’ money, but she sued him for divorce before he left prison. However, the day before the divorce hearing, Remus chased his wife’s taxi, caught and killed her in Cincinnati’s Eden Park. Because of the many benefits Remus gave to Cincinnati, the jury freed him for temporary insanity, after only 19 minutes of deliberation. Within a month, Remus was declared sane and released. His illegal liquor organization, while he was in prison, had been taken over by different groups. Remus later moved to Covington, Kentucky, and lived modestly until his death of natural causes in 1952.²⁴

Of those Syndicates operating primarily outside Newport, the most important was the Cleveland Four. It was named for the four leaders of the Jewish Syndicate: Moe Dalitz, Morris Kleinman, Louis Rothkopf and Sam Tucker. This group had a long history and widespread interests. Arguably, next to Meyer Lansky and his associates, the Cleveland Four was one of the most powerful Syndicates in the United States. In fact, it was a defining influence in the organization of crime throughout the entire 20th Century. In addition to the Ohio area, the Cleveland Syndicate was given control of Northern Kentucky, which it gained from a meeting of organized crime in Cleveland, at the Hotel Statler in 1928.²⁵

Each of the governing members of the Cleveland Four brought his own unique experiences to the organization; assumed primary responsibility for specific enterprises of the organizations; and each left his own clear mark on organized crime. Moe Dalitz was a native of Detroit. He was an early member of the “Purple Gang,” a Syndicate involved in the “protection racket,” strikebreaking, and bootlegging. He was a friend and mentor of the young Jimmy Hoffa, who became notoriously famous as president of the Teamsters Union. Dalitz left Detroit for Cleveland and for rum-running across Lake Erie, in 1925. Morris Kleinman was a Cleveland native, who started out running a brewery in Cleveland. He ended up supervising bootlegging for the Cleveland Four through Canada. Louis Rothkopf was also a Cleveland native, with expertise in the construction and management of stills. He played a major role as a supervisor of the Syndicate’s many alcohol production facilities, both domestically and internationally. Finally, Sam Tucker was an immigrant from Lithuania who supervised the purchase,



*Morris Kleinman, Moe Dalitz, Sam Tucker – Courtesy of National Archives
Louis Rothkopf – Courtesy of Cleveland State University Library
Beverly Hills Supper Club 1949 – Courtesy of nkyviews.com*

maintenance and operation of the fleet of speed boats used by the Syndicate during Prohibition.²⁶

Closely allied with Meyer Lansky and Bugsy Siegel in New York, the Cleveland Four were bootlegging liquor from Canada and operating a nationwide distribution system. By 1930, they were partners with Lansky in several large distilling operations in both Cuba and Ohio. In the early 1930s, the Cleveland Four, just like Lansky, began establishing illegal gambling casinos in the Cleveland area as a probable post-Prohibition enterprise. By the 1950s, the Cleveland Four had joined Lansky and Siegel in Las Vegas expansion, at the world-famous Desert Inn.²⁷ At a time, when anti-Semitism was growing in Italy through Fascism, in Germany through Nazism, from the 1920s into the 1940s, America at that time was highly anti-Semitic; yet, the Jewish Syndicate was able to work a close profitable partnership in crime with the Italian Mafia. The “muscle” or “hit-men” were usually from the Italian Mafia, but in Northern Kentucky, this was not always the case. The Jewish Syndicate supplied the financial expertise, and in the late 1970s, when they became assimilated into legitimate businesses, the Jewish Syndicate disbanded. Unlike their Italian Mafia counterparts, many became extremely wealthy.²⁸

Although the Cleveland Four distributed liquor in the Newport area, their first direct move into metropolitan Cincinnati came with the contract assassination of Dutch Schultz. For those movie fans, Dustin Hoffman depicted Dutch Schultz very well, in *Billy Bathgate*. Dutch Schultz owned a race track outside of Cincinnati, named the “Coney Island Racetrack.” Within days of Schultz’s 1935 assassination in New

York, the Cleveland Four took that track over, renaming it River Downs, a track that continues to run today. Soon afterward, they purchased Latonia Park and a dog track in Florence, Kentucky, right outside Newport, which they turned into a horse track. Later, it was renamed Turfway Park, a track now owned by Keeneland Racetrack.²⁹

Even though prostitution had been well established in Newport since the Civil War, it was not until the 1930s, that prostitution became highly organized in Newport and in surrounding cities. Prostitution took many forms, some of which survive today. However, one unique aspect of prostitution in Newport was the influence of the city's system of one-way streets. Many residents of Northern Kentucky worked across the river in Cincinnati. When they went to work, they crossed the Ohio via Monmouth Street, which was a one-way thoroughfare leading into Cincinnati. To return, they used York Street, another one-way thoroughfare leading back through Newport. Some, but by no means all of the prostitution, was organized to accommodate the traffic. Many of the brothels were located where the Newport Levee area is today.

The Newport brothels, on or adjoining Monmouth Street, were called "day houses," because they were open during the morning and afternoon to accommodate travelers to Cincinnati. The brothels on or adjoining York Street were called "night houses," because they opened in the late afternoon and ran into the early evening for the travelers returning to Northern Kentucky. This allowed Newport brothels to provide easy access services for their customers. By the 1940s, there were 300 women working in the brothels of downtown Newport. This was in an area less than one-square mile.³⁰



Courtesy of nky.com

Vivian's Brothel, Newport, Kentucky

Among the largest operators of prostitution were the Bridewell brothers, who had come from Jackson County in Eastern Kentucky. While the Bridewell's operated three small casinos, all of which also offered prostitution services, their primary business was not casino gambling, but rather numerous local brothels.³¹

Not all the prostitution was centered near traffic areas. Some of the larger, more expensive brothels opened in the late afternoon; they stayed open all night for the convenience of casino patrons. Newport was a pioneer in still another type of prostitution, "Bargirls." These B-girls were dancers, waitresses, or entertainers working in the many strip clubs along Monmouth Street. B-girls were paid a percentage of the drinks they sold. They were primarily a strip club phenomenon; some of the lower stakes, "bust-out" casinos, offered similar services.

Newport brothels had an agreement with Cincinnati taxi-drivers, who brought them potential business. Any traveler or out-of-town businessman who asked about prostitution services was driven to one of the Newport brothels. In return, the cab driver received 40% of the fees charged by the brothel. There was strong competition among brothels. The taxi-drivers not only served as their advertisers, but they transported their customers. The cost in 1960 was \$1.35 for a nine-minute taxi drive

from Cincinnati. The taxis definitely played an important role in the success of the brothels. Before World War II, there were about 1,000,000 out of town visitors, who came to Newport every year.³² The Verox interview stated that often when his parents drove him to school at Newport Public High School in the 1950s, the prostitutes, trying to solicit customers, would tap on the car windows with their spoons while their car was stopped at the stop signs.³³

Credit cards were not available at that time; however, S&H Green Stamps were, and they could be used at some of the brothels. For high school students, there were specials at the whorehouses of a \$1.00 for the prostitute and \$1.00 for the madam. Many high school students from Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky took advantage of these discounts. The majority of the high school students, nevertheless, considered these gorgeous girls from all over the world, as their teachers. They were appalled at girls' treatment, by the madams and pimps.³⁴

Outside Newport, in Wilder, one of the most famous brothels in America was in operation, the Hi-De-Ho Club. It was primarily a brothel, although it did have a small casino operation as well. It was owned by James "Big Jim" Harris, the marshal of Wilder.³⁵ Marshal Harris successfully operated the Hi-De-Ho Club until 1951, when State Police raided it.

Under Kentucky Law, in incorporated cities like Newport, the State Police had no jurisdiction unless they were invited by local police. Wilder was an unincorporated municipality, and the State Police could act there uninvited. The raid was provoked by two factors: The Hi-De-Ho Club was taking gambling business away from the Cleveland Four's Latin Quarter; and the Syndicate was busily lobbying their supporters in Frankfort, for relief. In addition, the Hi-De-Ho's brothel operation was engaged in blackmail. Harris had wired the rooms and gave the prostitutes "scripts" from which they would try to elicit clients' names, addresses, wives' names, and children's names. Sometimes, after the client returned home, Harris would call and explain how embarrassing it might be for the audio tape to surface and suggesting that \$5000 would assure the destruction of the tape.³⁶ Jim Harris was indicted by a grand jury in 1955, on prostitution charges. The indictment, to a degree, was from the complaints lodged by The Cleveland Syndicate about his blackmail operation, and the continued growth of the Hi-De-Ho Club as a gambling venue. Harris had also made the mistake of trying to shake-down Cleveland Four operatives for \$10,000. They used the Grand Jury to close him down. Witnesses from the 1951 raid testified against Harris. He was represented by local attorney Charles Lester, who apparently did not take the trial very seriously. He did not appear for the trial. Harris was sentenced to three years in prison.³⁷

Prostitution Outlets in Newport 1959

Brothel	Address	Description
345 Club	345 Central Avenue	Night House, with gambling
Columbia Café	101 West Fourth Street	Night House, with gambling
Florence's	212 Columbia Street	Day House
Fourth Street Grill	Fourth and Columbia	Night House, with gambling
Frolics	Monmouth Street	Bar Girls, with gambling
Galaxie	Monmouth Street	Bar Girls, with gambling
Goldy's	28 West Second Street	Day House
Harbor Bar	201 Columbia Street	Night House, with gambling

Kitty's	30 West Second Street	Day House
Mabel's	26 West Second Street	Day House
Ray's Café	116 West Fourth Street	Brothel, open both day and night
Silver Slipper	Monmouth Street	Bar Girls, with gambling
Stardust	Monmouth Street	Bar Girls, with gambling
Stork Club	Monmouth Street	Bar Girls, with gambling
Vivian's	21 West Third Street	Night House
Wanda's	213 York Street	Day House ³⁸

One of the associates of George Remus who played an important role in the organizing of crime in Newport was Peter Schmidt. He had been a truck driver for Remus, and he was one of the twelve men arrested with Remus. When he was released from prison, Schmidt used the money he had made in bootlegging to buy a hotel on Monmouth Street, in Newport. He named it the Glenn Hotel, after his son. Initially, Schmidt sold illegal alcohol, and he had some slot machines installed. The Glenn Hotel was also a notorious hideout for organized criminals from other parts of the country, who were avoiding indictments or arrests. Dave Jerus, one of Al Capone's gunmen and one of the hit-men in the notorious "Saint Valentine's Day Massacre," hid there for a while, as did the notorious strong-arm man, Bob Zwick. Treasury agents raided The Glenn Hotel; in the raid, Schmidt shot a federal officer. He was sent to prison for another five years. However, Pete Schmidt had bigger plans for Newport. When he was released that time, Schmidt put them into effect.³⁹

Schmidt expanded the casino at the Glenn Hotel, but it was still a small-scale operation. He wanted a much bigger, more plush gambling establishment, complete with good food and entertainment, similar to Lansky's casinos in Saratoga, New York, Broward County Florida, or like the Cleveland Four's Arrowhead Club in Clermont County, Ohio. Schmidt purchased a former "tiger blind," The Old Kaintuck Inn, three miles south of Newport, in the town of Southgate. He completely renovated the building, and he renamed it The Beverly Hills Club. When it opened in April 1947, it was Newport's premier "carpet joint," a plush gambling establishment.⁴⁰

The Beverly Hills Club was a great success, but success created problems for Schmidt. One of the early visitors was Moe Dalitz, who clearly liked what he saw. He thought The Beverly Hills Club would be a nice acquisition for the Cleveland Four. Dalitz offered to buy or to take Schmidt in as a partner. Nevertheless, Pete Schmidt was neither interested in selling nor acquiring new partners. The Cleveland Four, however, were not used to being refused. In 1936, there was a fire at the Beverly Hills Club. The casino was destroyed and the niece of the caretaker was killed.⁴¹

The fire was a mystery. What is known is that another of George Remus' associates, Albert "Red" Masterson, bought several canisters of gasoline the night of the fire. Another local man, Dave Whitfield, a friend of Masterson, gave Edwin Garrison, a place to stay that same night. Garrison was a veteran of Dutch Schultz's New York gang, and he had burns on his hands and legs. Whitfield was blamed for the fire and the death of the young woman. When he was released from prison, he was hired as a casino manager in one the Cleveland Four's casinos. Red Masterson made a minor criminal career out of providing muscle work for both the Cleveland Four and Meyer Lansky's associates in Newport, for 20 years. This made a *prima facie* case for Syndicate involvement.⁴²

Death and fire, however, did not stop Peter Schmidt. In April 1937, he reopened

the facility as the Beverly Hills Country Club. Kentucky Governor Albert (Happy) Chandler, plus governors and other politicians from three states attended the opening night party. Crystal chandeliers, oak paneling, plush blue carpets and gilded gold leaf pattern wallpaper made the new Beverly Hills an even more elegant gambling place. The reconstructed club became, however, an even greater target for the Cleveland Jewish Syndicate.⁴³

In the summer 1937, a group of armed men robbed the Beverly Hills Country Club. Schmidt hired heavily armed guards, but acts of harassment continued. Schmidt even attempted to approach an organized crime group from Toledo as possible partners. This was probably to provide him with some additional protection. They had no interest in a run-in with Dalitz, Kleinman, Rothkopf and Tucker. In 1940, Charles Lester, a local attorney on retainer for the Syndicate, handled the legal sale of the Beverly Hills Country Club from Peter Schmidt to Sam Tucker. The Cleveland Four then had the "Showplace of The Nation"; in Newport, Peter Schmidt temporarily retired to his Glenn Hotel.⁴⁴

Known Illegal Casinos in Kentucky, 1920-1962

Casino	City	Years of Operation	Proprietor(s)
222 Club	Covington	1940s-1952	Melvin Clark and Steve Payne
316 Club	Newport	1940s-1955	Taylor Farley
345 Club	Newport	1930s-1950s	The Bridewells
633 Club	Newport	1930s-1961	Arthur Dennert/Levinson Brothers
Alibi Club	Newport	1940s-1955	Melvin Clark/Screw Andrews
Avenue Club	Newport	1930s-1961	Unknown
Beacon Inn	Wilder	1930s-1940s	Buck Brady
Belmont Club	Newport	1940s-1954	Unknown
Beverly Hills Country Club	Southgate	1930s-1962	Pete Schmidt/Cleveland Four
Bluegrass Inn	Newport	1940s-1961	Unknown
Club 314	Newport	1940s-1960s	Unknown
Club Alexandria	Southgate	1940s-1961	Unknown
Club Keeneland	Covington	1940s-1952	Unknown
Club Kenton	Covington	1940s-1952	Unknown
Coconut Grove	Newport	1954-1961	Melvin Clark/Screw Andrews
Congo Club	Newport	1950s-1961	Melvin Clark and Steve Payne
Copa Club	Newport	1940s-1961	Melvin Clark and Steve Payne
Dogpatch	Covington	1940s-1952	Unknown
Flamingo Club	Newport	1930s-1961	Art Dennert/Levinson Brothers
Glenn Hotel	Newport	1940s-1960	Pete Schmidt
Glenn Rendezvous	Newport	1940s-1960	Pete Schmidt/Levinson Brothers
Golden Horseshoe	Wilder	1920s-1930s	Unknown
Grandview Gardens	Wilder	1940s	Unknown
Guys and Dolls	Cold Springs	1940s	Unknown
Hi-De-Ho Club	Wilder	1940s-1955	James Harris
Iroquois Club	Lexington	1940s-1960s	Unknown
Kentucky Club	Covington	1940s	Unknown

Kid Able Club	Newport	1940s-1956	The Bridewells
Latin Quarter	Wilder	1947-1961	Cleveland Four
Lookout House	Covington	1930s-1952	Jimmy Brink/Cleveland Four
Mecca Club	Newport	1940s-1950s	The Bridewells
Melbourne Country Club	Melbourne	1940s-1950s	Cleveland Four
Merchants Club	Newport	1940s-1961	Cleveland Four
Monmouth Cigar	Newport	1956-1961	Unknown
New Concept I	Louisville	1940s-1952	Unknown
New Sportsman's Club	Newport	1961-1968	Screw Andrews
Nineteen Hole	Newport	1940s-1950s	James Harris
Old Sportsman's Club	Newport	1940s-1960	Screw Andrews
Playtorium	Newport	1951-1955	Pete and Glenn Schmidt
Primrose Club	Wilder	1940s-1947	Buck Brady/Cleveland Four
Rocket Club	Newport	1940s	Melvin Clark and Steve Payne
Silver Slipper	Newport	1952-1956	James Harris/Cleveland Four
Snax Bar	Newport	1955-1961	Glenn Schmidt
Sportmans Club	Newport	1940s-1961	Steve Payne/Screw Andrews
Spotted Calf	Newport	1950s-1961	Unknown
Stardust	Newport	1956-1961	Unknown
Stork Club	Newport	1940s-1952	James Harris
Sycamore Club	Louisville	1930s-1960s	Unknown
Teddy Bear Lounge	Covington	1940s-1952	Unknown
Tin Shack	Covington	1940s-1952	Unknown
Tropicana	Newport	1960-1961	Cleveland Four/ Tito Carinci
Turf Club	Covington	1940s-1952	Unknown
Varga Club	Newport	1940s	Melvin Clark and Steve Payne
Yorkshire Club	Newport	1940s-1961	The Bermans/Cleveland Four ⁴⁵

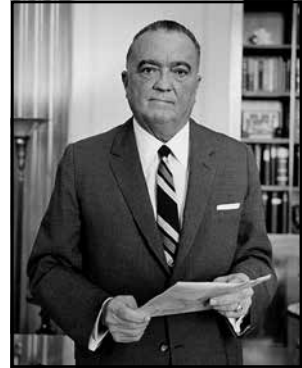
Casino gambling was not the only source of gambling profits for organized crime in Newport. It was the home of the largest numbers racket in the country. During the 1940s, Bookmaking was also a major organized crime business nationwide, and Newport became a center for organized crime "layoff" banks. A layoff bank operated as a type of insurance company for illegal bookmakers. Bookies, who had too much betting action on a particular fight, horse race, or sporting event sold some of their betting action to larger, better financed layoff banks. The layoff bank divided the risk and the profits with the bookies, for a fee or handling charge. In the early 1940s, a national betting layoff operation was established in Newport under Meyer Lansky and the New York Mob. It was located at the corner of 4th and York, and the bank covered most of the layoff action in the Midwest. The Lassoff brothers ran the operation under the name, Bobben Realty Company.⁴⁶

Screw Andrews (born Frank Andriola) began his criminal career as a moonshiner in the suburbs of Cincinnati. Later, he started doing the numbers rackets, primarily in African-American neighborhoods. By the mid-1940s, with his brother, "Spider," and his nephew, Screw owned several newspaper stands and liquor stores across the river, in Newport. Through those otherwise legitimate businesses, Screw was able to expand his numbers rackets into Newport. In the late 1940s, Andrews decided to move against

African-American owned casinos in Newport. Using a well-placed bribe, Andrews was able to convince Newport police to raid Steve Payne's Sportsman's Club, May 14, 1947. In 1948, Payne was murdered, and Andrews purchased the Sportsman's Club from the Newport redevelopment authority. This club served as the headquarters for Andrew's numbers racket, the largest in the nation, and a casino operation.⁴⁷

Unlike his Jewish Syndicate counterparts, who were very careful to always pay federal income taxes on their profits and meet the requirement of the Federal Wagering Stamp Act, Screw Andrews was lax in dealing with the Treasury Department. He was convicted on tax charges. It was estimated Andrews only declared ten percent of his revenues of over 10 million a year and was sent to federal prison for six years in 1956.⁴⁸

The Syndicate could not have been able to operate in Northern Kentucky without the hands-off policy that J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI had in their non-acknowledgement of organized crime. To Hoover, many of the criminal activities were anti-communist, and they represented capitalist entrepreneurs.⁴⁹ Hoover had repeatedly and publicly ridiculed the idea of a national crime syndicate. He refused to cooperate with Senator Estes Kefauver's Committee on Organized Crime, in 1951. The New York State Police questioned this, when they discovered a conference of more than sixty Mafia dons in upstate New York, November 14, 1957. In 1959, the FBI's New York office had 400 agents investigating Communists, while there were only four agents handling organized crime. However, there are indications that Hoover had other reasons for refusing to investigate organized crime. He was friends with the columnist, Walter Winchell, who was extremely close to many gangsters, including Frank Costello; Hoover regularly spent time at clubs frequented by gangsters. He stayed free of charge at Del Webb's hotels in Las Vegas, even though Webb was known to be a partner with Bugsy Siegel and Meyer Lansky. In addition, Hoover and his Assistant Director of the FBI, Clyde Tolson, were dedicated gamblers on horse races. Since the Mob fixed the races, at the Mob controlled Del Mar Race Track owned by oil magnate Clint Murchison, the Mob ensured that Hoover won his bets, instead of bribing him directly. Clint Murchison made sure that Hoover benefited from many investments, especially in oil. Even if it turned out to be a poor investment, Murchison personally covered the loss.⁵⁰



Courtesy of Library of Congress

J. Edgar Hoover

There was even a rumor that Lansky had used pictures of Hoover and Tolson in gay relationships to blackmail them. The pictures that Lansky admitted having from hidden cameras of Hoover and Tolson in the men's room at the Mob-run Stork Club in New York City were never authenticated nor materialized from later Mob records.

There was also a strong belief that Meyer Lansky would also expose Hoover's ancestry that included his alleged grandfather's African-American heritage. This revelation in the 1920s and 1930s when Hoover became head of the Bureau of Investigation in 1924, and later the Director of the FBI in 1935 would have been devastating to him.

President Woodrow Wilson, in 1913, extended Jim Crow Laws, to federal agencies, based on the Plessey vs. Ferguson 1896 Supreme Court Decision, segregating African-Americans or mulattoes with 1/32 Black blood. If Hoover's alleged Black ancestry from his grandfather was suspected, he would not have been allowed to be a director under Federal Civil Service. Hoover proved to be one of the most vicious

American racists of the 20th Century, when he persecuted Black liberation movements, especially, Martin Luther King Jr. Less than one percent (.06) of African-Americans were FBI agents when Hoover died in 1972.⁵¹

The Syndicate and Mafia would definitely not be able to hide incriminating evidence against Hoover. Just because two men live together does not make them gay. Until DNA Testing is performed on relatives and also on Hoover's remains, there cannot be a Black ancestry determination. As for cross-dressing, there is no indication that definitive evidence has been presented. However, his net worth and its acquisition can be tracked. Hoover lived lavishly and his estate was worth over \$450,000. His antiques were way undervalued for tax purposes. In fact, when Clyde Tolson died almost three years later, his estate was worth more than \$720,000.⁵²

Even my own family was affected by Hoover's FBI files. My grandfather, a prominent opera singer who performed with Enrico Caruso, was "blacklisted" by the House Un-American Activities Committee. This was for his support of the American volunteers of the Communist-led "Abraham Lincoln Brigade" against the Fascists, in The Spanish Civil War.⁵³

Hoover said that if any community wanted to eliminate illegal gambling, they could do it within 48 hours. But he denied the existence of organized crime, which in cities as Newport controlled the gambling. This denial allowed organized crime to operate without the FBI stopping their illegal activities.

The mystery of organized crime's existence and success is really not a mystery at all. It revolves around some basic truths: organized crime, politics, the economy and American society, which are confirmed by events in Newport. The history of gambling, prostitution and organized crime in Newport, Kentucky is not very different than organized crime in the largest of American cities, such as Chicago, New York, Atlantic City or Philadelphia. There is little variance in a river town like Newport or a New York City; organized crime operates in much the same way in different places and under very different circumstances.⁵⁴

Organized crime is a profit-making business. It is a market based business in which it operates, both in terms of the way it is organized, and how it serves its customers. Newport is a classic case of crime as a business. Even the Jewish Syndicate and Italian Mafia operating in Newport separated their operations by using local managers and keeping the Syndicate leaders away from the actual delivery of illegal goods and services. Of the Cleveland Four: Moe Dalitz was in Las Vegas; Morris Kleinman was in Cleveland and then in Miami; Sam Tucker, who ran Beverly Hills Country Club for the Syndicate, after Pete Schmidt was forced out in 1940, moved in the late 1940s to Florida. Mayer Lansky and his major associates never came anywhere near Newport. Local operations, for the Cleveland Syndicate, were handled by Red Masterson, at the Merchants Club in Newport, and by Jim Brink at the Lookout House, in Covington. Local operations for the Eastern Syndicate, led by Mayer Lansky, were handled by the Levinson brothers, Mike, Ed, and "Sleep Out" Louie. They ran operations at several clubs, including the 633 Club, also called Flamingo Club.⁵⁵ According to Earl Clark, in his interview, there were about 80 employees at the Beverly Hills Country Club, but just a few decision makers.⁵⁶ Moe Dalitz could not be implicated in that operation. The farthest up the organized crime hierarchy any actual criminality could be traced would be to the local managers.

There were very practical reasons for the small size of the management in the casinos. The small size reduced the chances of being caught and prosecuted. Employees, in illegal industries, are the greatest threats to those operations; they make the best witnesses against the owners. That is why it is an organizational necessity



Courtesy of The Courier Journal

Hi-De-Ho Club



Courtesy of cincinnati.com

The Glenn Rendezvous

for organized crime to limit the number of people cognizant of their illegal operations. This is achieved mostly by employing people who only know about their own level of activity. By distancing themselves from the local operations, Syndicate leaders put regional managers in charge, who sometimes made bad decisions.⁵⁷

Organized crime succeeded in Newport because of two major reasons. First, there was a market; second, there was a community need for productive, profit-making enterprises. In Newport, organized crime provided services that the legitimate world could not or would not supply. It not only supplied jobs for community residents, but it provided supplemental income for people on fixed incomes, or who had other economic problems.⁵⁸ From 1930-1961, organized crime did one good thing; it supplied jobs for the local labor market, like waitresses, bartenders, and other related jobs. The local businesses also profited; it gave them an opportunity to compete with the nationally known chain stores.⁵⁹



Courtesy of Sonny Tuttle

The Merchants Club



Courtesy of Better Living Magazine, February, 2003

The Lookout House

Of course, organized crime also requires corruption and political influence. There is probably no city which demonstrates better than Newport the fact that organized criminals, legitimate businessmen and government officials are all equal players in a

marketplace of corruption. Looking at the entire history of vice in Newport, it would be fair to argue that, far more than gambling and prostitution, corruption was the most valuable commodity produced.

Although there were many crime figures in Newport and some were in conflict with their competitors, the small amount of violence over a 30 year span is testimony to the power of the organized crime networks in keeping the community safe. Corruption, combined with strong leadership from organized crime, also served as a vital social control. In fact, the cities, notorious for corruption, rarely experience organized crime related violence. This was certainly true in Newport.

Gambling, prostitution and other forms of vice did not happen in Newport because organized crime forced them on the community. The casinos and the brothels provided economic and social opportunities. It was only when the benefits started to wane did any type of reform become possible. As my interviews showed, the Northern Kentucky Community was open to the vices of organized crime.⁶⁰

The U.S. Senate's Kefauver Committee hearings on organized crime in 1951 held Newport up to national ridicule, by underscoring law enforcement's hear-no-evil, see-no-evil approach. When Newport Police Chief George Gugel testified, the committee counsel pointed out that "the Cincinnati papers ran advertisements as to the gambling places open for business in Newport." "I never read them," Gugel replied. How was it possible, the counsel persisted, that the police chief was "the only man in that entire vicinity who didn't know that any taxi driver could take you to a selection of five or six gambling joints." "I never ride in a cab," the chief said.⁶¹

There had been reform movements in Newport and Campbell County dating back to the 1900s, but all had failed. The county was so corrupt that for years local politicians used different definitions from the rest of the United States; for example, a "liberal" in Campbell County language is not a person known for his progressive social views, but one who is in favor of non-interference with vice and gambling. This reminded me of the "government hands-off classical liberalism" of the 19th Century. For three decades before 1961, no Campbell County Jury, convicted a gambling establishment, except when the Jewish Syndicate needed to acquire more casinos from rival competitors.⁶²

Over the years, attempts to reform Northern Kentucky were ongoing, but they were for the most part in vain. Since the 1930s, various groups and even a few local elected officials had made attempts to shut down illegal activities. However, there was not much support from the general populace, because these activities brought money to the region. Local clergymen attempted to organize several times, but there was not much support from Catholic leaders, who were much more tolerant of gambling than the Protestants. In my interview with James Hengelbrok, George Ratterman's brother-in-law and his lawyer during his scandal trial, Hengelbrok stated that the Catholic Church was not against moderate forms of gambling, such as bingo and alcohol consumption; however, they followed state laws, and Kentucky Laws made many forms of gambling illegal.⁶³

In the early 1950s, a group of ministers in Kenton County actually received some action that resulted in the closing of the Lookout House in 1952, and the Syndicate decided to keep it closed for gambling as a concession to the reformers. The "reform" movement in Campbell County at that time was totally compromised, when the Syndicate was able to get Red Masterson to head the Newport Civic Association (NCA) under the slogan of "Clean Up, Not Close Up." The NCA was a pawn of the Syndicate, and after several circus-like raids in Newport, gambling continued through most of the 1950s.⁶⁴

According to my interview, with Jack Steinman, The Committee of 500, formed in 1961 by local businessmen, convinced George Ratterman, a retired pro-football

player living in Fort Thomas, Kentucky to run for sheriff. Ratterman was angry that no prominent Catholics were in the reform movement. Acting with the Social Action Committee (SAC) formed in 1958 by the Protestant clergy, the Committee of 500 hoped to receive more active support from Catholic members using Ratterman's college football career at Notre Dame as a ploy.⁶⁵

Ratterman was born and reared in Cincinnati, in Hyde Park. He lettered in four sports at both St. Xavier High School and the University of Notre Dame. Coach Frank Leahy hailed him as "the greatest all-around athlete in the history of Notre Dame," where Ratterman quarterbacked, the 1946 national champions.

After leaving Notre Dame, following his junior year, he began a decade-long professional football career that concluded in 1956, with the Cleveland Browns. During his playing days, he pursued a law degree at night and in the off-season at various colleges. After ten years, he graduated, from the Salmon P. Chase College of Law. The then 34 year old Ratterman, living in Fort Thomas, and the father of a growing family of eventually ten children, had a dual career.

Ratterman was a color commentator for network telecasts of American Football League games, and he worked as an investment counsel, before the campaign. "I am told that if I run for sheriff, I will be the victim of all sorts of personal slanderous attacks," Ratterman said in announcing his candidacy on April 4, 1961, "But I say to our opponents, let the attacks start now, if they must. Let the battle be joined now."⁶⁶

The day after Ratterman entered the race, Tito Carinci from Mafia-run Steubenville, Ohio, a cousin to Dean Martin, president and manager of the Glenn Hotel and its Tropicana night club-casino, tried to set up a meeting with him through a mutual Cleveland-area friend, Thomas Paisley. Carinci, a former Xavier University football player and honor student, wanted Ratterman's help. He wanted to get out of the Tropicana's illegal gambling activities, be clear of the Mob, and Carinci wanted to open a restaurant in New York.

The meeting was finally arranged for May 8, 1961. Before going to the Glenn, Ratterman and Paisley met Carinci at a bar in downtown Cincinnati, where Ratterman was said to have had one drink. Later, Ratterman told his attorney James Henglebrok, he had eleven alcoholic drinks that day. After that, everything became a blur. He groggily recalled being in a bedroom, "feeling so weak that I wanted to lie down." That was followed by a commotion involving "some men in the room and a female form in a red dress and someone pulling at my clothes."⁶⁷

According to official police records, three detectives (one, Newport Detective Pat Ciafardini just happened to be in the station on his day off at 2:30 a.m.) had received a tip about prostitution at the hotel. They burst into a room, where they found Ratterman and a 26-year-old stripper named Juanita Hodges, who was better known as April Flowers, nearly undressed and in bed. The detectives, who claimed Ratterman



Courtesy of Better Living Magazine

George Ratterman



Courtesy of Better Living Magazine

*Tito Carinci and
Juanita Hodges
(a.k.a. April Flowers)*

suffled with them, wrapped him in a bedspread and took him and Ms. Flowers, who was just wearing a negligee, back to the Newport Police Station to be booked. Ratterman was booked for “breach of the peace,” a misdemeanor with a \$10.00 fine.⁶⁸

As the arrest was splashed across front pages, Ratterman insisted that he had been drugged and set up. Overflow crowds went to Ratterman’s trial the next week. In my interview with James Hengelbrok, Ratterman’s brother-in-law, Hengelbrok revealed the strategy of the defense, that he and Committee of 500 lawyer, Henry Cook led. Because this case only had a \$10.00 fine, Kentucky Law stated a guilty decision could not be appealed. In order to exonerate Ratterman, the defense team would have to show that he had been drugged in an effort to smear his reputation. The chief prosecutor the Syndicate hired, Thomas Hirshfield was paid \$10,000, at a time when a prosecutor’s legal salary was \$10,000 a year in Newport, Kentucky. Tito Carinci and Juanita Hodges (April Flowers) hired Charles Lester, a local Mob lawyer. Both lawyers tried to trick Ratterman by having the trial against Tito Carinci for breach of the peace and Juanita Hodges for prostitution proceed first. The prosecution called George Ratterman as the first witness. Afterwards, the cross examination by defense lawyer Lester tried, as Hengelbrok said, to crucify Ratterman on the stand, which they *figuratively did*. Ratterman could not plead the 5th Amendment or have his counsel represent him, since he was just a witness. The jury found Carinci and Juanita Hodges (April Flowers) not guilty.⁶⁹

At the Ratterman trial, which started May 16, 1961, Carinci and Hodges testified for the state. Hengelbrok stated that since most of his legal cases had been in Cincinnati under the Ohio legal system, he would defer to Chief Counsel Henry Cook. Hengelbrok was told that since Kentucky Law is different than Ohio Law, Hengelbrok would handle the five doctors, and Cook would handle the other witnesses and cross-examination. Hengelbrok summoned for the trial Dr. Frank Cleveland, renowned coroner and Cincinnati and Newport pathologist from the Kettering Laboratory in Cincinnati, Ohio. This was important in that Dr. Cleveland handled the tests of urine and blood taken from George Ratterman at St. Luke Hospital in Ft. Thomas at 9:30 a.m., the morning after Ratterman was booked at the Newport Police station. The police would not release Ratterman despite the fact a bondsman posted bail for Carinci and Hodges. The bondsman refused to post bail for George Ratterman, even though he owned a large house in Fort Thomas. The bond was posted by the Committee of 500 lawyer Henry Cook, 30 minutes later. The reason for holding Ratterman so long, according to Hengelbrok, was that any trace of drugs dissipates quickly in the body. Keeping Ratterman in jail without giving him bond another 30 minutes would have made drugs more difficult to detect, if he had been drugged.⁷⁰

Hengelbrok was bewildered by the first day’s testimony of Dr. Cleveland. The doctor was being evasive on his answers and “froze-up.” Hengelbrok went to Henry Cook and asked what he had done wrong. Cook told him to use delaying courtroom tactics. Hengelbrok used a lawyers’ trick, called “read the Bible,” where long extraneous legal jargon is cited, so that the defense could use up time so they could be granted a recess by Judge Joseph Rolf until the next day.

That evening at his home, Hengelbrok received a call from Dr. Cleveland stating that he did not like lawyers, and had been afraid that the defense was using him, just to make themselves look good. However, Dr. Cleveland now was convinced that the defense attorneys were trustworthy. He told Hengelbrok to ask him the next day about the test results from Ratterman’s urine and blood samples. The following day Dr. Cleveland was asked on the stand about the results from Ratterman’s urine and blood samples. To the delight of the prosecution, he stated that he could not find measurable drugs in the urine. Then, he clarified his statement by saying that he did

not expect to find drugs in the urine because drugs dissipate quickly in urine. When he was asked about the blood samples, Dr. Cleveland said the amount of chloral hydrate (or a "Mickey Finn"—sometimes called "knock-out-drops,"—slipped in a drink, a favorite drug of the Mob, used to incapacitate the recipient) given to George Ratterman would have killed two-thirds of the population. The reason he survived was his excellent physical condition. The amount of drugs he had ingested could have made him into a "zombie."⁷¹

The strategy of Cook and Hengelbrok was to acquit Ratterman with a surprise witness. He was a local photographer, Tom Withrow, whose family was under FBI protection at a safe-haven from the Syndicate. Withrow testified that he had been approached by Charles Lester prior to the incident about photographing it and he had initially agreed. At the last minute, Withrow had second thoughts. The photographer's story was corroborated by his wife's grandmother, Mrs. Nancy Hays, who testified that she had received several frantic calls from the Tropicana inquiring about the photographer on the night of the incident. Hengelbrok knew the case was won when Prosecutor Hirshfield asked Mrs. Hays if she belonged to the Committee of 500. Mrs. Hays said "no, I don't become involved in politics." Hirshfield asked her how she knew the telephone number and the times that the calls were made. Mrs. Hays said she wrote down the number and the time, and she had the original paper in her purse. When Hirshfield asked why she was testifying, Mrs. Hays said "I felt it was my bound and Christian duty to testify."⁷²

Because of this testimony, Thomas Hirschfield, asked for a statement from Charles Lester denying the testimony of the Withrows, or he would ask the court to dismiss the charges as a fraud on the court, and he would demand a grand jury investigation into this matter. Lester told him to do whatever he thought was right, but he would not give a statement at that time. Hirshfield rose, and as a silence fell over the courtroom, said, "I've always practiced law honestly, and never a word can be said about my integrity in court. I've known Tom Withrow for a number of years, and I'm inclined to believe his testimony . . . I'd like to move to dismiss this case." Judge Joseph Rolf looked up, then, pounding his gavel, he said, "Let the case be dismissed."⁷³ Hengelbrok said this was the only crushing decision, I have ever heard in 60 years of practice.⁷⁴ This case showed, according to James Hengelbrok, there was a myth that there were good and bad gamblers; e.g. the good gamblers, who at Beverly Hills Country Club came out with their winnings; and bad gamblers, who in a bust-out joints, were lucky to get out of the place. The community attitude changed when they saw that, no matter who you are, the Mob could go after you. The community was not safe.⁷⁵

James Sprague, Cincinnati attorney, told Hengelbrok, that while the Ratterman case was in court, the Justice Department under U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy had made a major decision to investigate a civil rights violation of George Ratterman. The consensus as to the reason Robert Kennedy chose Northern Kentucky to go after organized crime is that Kennedy was an old admirer of George Ratterman from his football playing days, and that Kennedy was interested in Newport because of Newport's prominence in the 1951 Kefauver Report.⁷⁶

According to James Hengelbrok in his interview, and from my own corroborating research, William Geoghegan, a successful Cincinnati lawyer and prominent Democrat in Ohio who had served as one of John F. Kennedy's election managers in Ohio during the 1960 Presidential Election, was very influential in Northern Kentucky's future. More importantly, he was one of three Deputy Advisors to Byron "Wizard" White, a future Supreme Court Justice, and in 1961, Assistant Attorney General, under the Attorney General Robert Kennedy.⁷⁷

Attorney General Robert Kennedy had two important agendas in 1961, James Hengelbrok said: one was investigating organized crime; the other was the prosecution of the Mob-run President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, "Jimmy Hoffa." Since the Hoffa investigation was ongoing, William Geoghegan told Robert Kennedy, the George Ratterman case, was ideal for going after organized crime in Newport, Kentucky for a civil rights violation and Bob Kennedy agreed.⁷⁸

William Geoghegan met Robert Kennedy, while at Harvard Law School, in 1947. They both lived about a block away from each other. Geoghegan actually met Robert Kennedy through his younger sister, Mary. She was a roommate at "Manhattanville College of The Sacred Heart," in New York City, with Robert Kennedy's sister, Jean and with his future wife, Ethel Skakel. This group dated and had many parties together, in the late 1940s. These strong friendships, developed during their college and university school days, had a profound influence on Robert Kennedy's decision to prosecute organized crime in Newport, Kentucky.⁷⁹

Robert Kennedy's career began in 1951 as a lawyer in the criminal division of the Justice Department. In 1953, he became one of the five assistants of Roy Cohn, chief legal counsel for Senator McCarthy, chairman of the Investigations Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Government Operations. He took over Cohn's job when Senator McClellan replaced McCarthy, in 1954. In 1957, with a staff of 65, he became chief counsel of the Senate Rackets Committee, which Senator McClellan also headed. He exposed corruption in the labor unions. He became an expert on labor racketeering. In November 1957, he received the first annual award as "Outstanding Investigator of the Year," from the Society of Professional Investigators.⁸⁰

Organized crime could never have survived and developed on a large scale without the "protection of the law-enforcement agencies." This "protection" was facilitated by a police force that often ignored organized crime's existence and sometimes even supported it. On June 15, 1961, Attorney General Robert Kennedy declared, "The problem of organized crime will not really be solved as long as the attitude of the American people remains what it is; acceptance of crime and corruption, and as long as Americans are only interested in getting a bigger TV set, a bigger car, and earning an extra buck."⁸¹

Under the instructions of Robert Kennedy to Edwyn Silberling, head of a special section against organized crime, Ronald Goldfarb was sent to Northern Kentucky, the day after George Ratterman was arrested. Goldfarb was given the title of Special Assistant to the Attorney General. He initiated the federal action against criminal elements, who were later tried in federal courts for federal criminal activities and violating the civil rights of George Ratterman. Goldfarb was also given the authority to conduct grand jury investigations into foreseeable federal crimes in Kentucky. His investigations concluded with two federal grand juries operating in Lexington and Covington, Kentucky, and one in Cincinnati, Ohio. The one in Lexington was investigating the possible civil rights violation of George Ratterman. The Covington grand jury was investigating Newport federal violations, and the Cincinnati grand jury was investigating the illegal numbers rackets in Northern Kentucky, especially, the Sportsman Club run by Screw Andrews.⁸²

The investigation into the possible civil rights violations surrounding the arrest and "frame-up" of George Ratterman had some problems in Lexington and the prosecution's case was not easy. The first problem was The Civil Rights Act. Under this act,



Courtesy of Library of Congress

*Attorney General
Robert F. Kennedy*

federal prosecutors could seek indictments based on the Civil War Reconstruction statutes, dealing with civil rights violations. These particular violations were defined as depriving another person of any right protected by the United States Constitution by public officials acting under the "color of law." This means that persons committing such an act would be using the powers that have been given to them by a government agency. This definition implicated Detective Ciafardini and Attorney Charles Lester.⁸³

George Ratterman volunteered to take a lie detector examination but the findings were inconclusive. Ratterman had a genius I.Q. His answers were too long, for the machine to assimilate correctly. His next examination on the lie detector consisted of yes-no answers; he passed as not being deceptive. Also, there was a problem with the eleven drinks that Ratterman had that day. A man consuming that much alcohol was not the image of a family man that Federal Prosecutor Goldfarb wanted to portray. These party drinks could have clouded Ratterman's memory, instead of the Mickey Finn. The grand jury was not yet ready to seek indictments without further conclusive evidence.⁸⁴

Juanita Hodges (a.k.a. April Flowers) supplied the needed evidence by changing her story. She told FBI Agent Frank Staab that Carinci (and possibly Marty Bucceri, Carinci's employee at the Tropicana) had dragged Ratterman to Carinci's room at the Tropicana. They put him in bed with her. April Flowers said that Ratterman was fully clothed, a change from her earlier civil trial testimony. She also said that Attorney Charles Lester had promised her a trip to Puerto Rico, if she lied; Lester later reneged on that promise. April Flowers passed a lie detector examination.⁸⁵

On October 26, 1961, just before the November 7th election for Sheriff of Campbell County, the grand jury said there was evidence that Tito Carinci, Marty Bucceri, Charles Lester, and Detectives Ciafardini, Quitter and White conspired to violate Ratterman's civil rights. The indicted defendants were deemed by the grand jury as depriving George Ratterman of his constitutional rights.⁸⁶

Attorney General Robert Kennedy announced the indictments in Washington. The grand jury issued a harsh report. The testimony had revealed that many elected and appointed officials were receiving payoffs, for non-enforcement of the law. There was no effort on behalf of the state, county, or city attorneys to follow their sworn obligations. Neither the police nor the sheriff's department enforced laws against gambling and vice. For one of only a few times, the local media, especially the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and *Cincinnati Post*, showed the ramifications of organized crime on Northern Kentucky, revealed by these indictments. The result was to help George Ratterman in his campaign for Campbell County Sheriff.⁸⁷

To the surprise of the federal prosecution, there was a hung jury on the Ratterman case, even though the evidence was overwhelming for a conviction. The federal prosecutors decided to pursue the case against the numbers operations in Newport and Cincinnati, by prosecuting Screw Andrews and seven other defendants. Before these prosecutions, however, the election for Campbell County Sheriff ensued.⁸⁸

The electorate was motivated by the federal indictments against organized crime figures; an earlier voter deficiency for George Ratterman, turned into a 12,000 vote plus victory, with over 26,000 votes cast. Since the Committee of 500 registered as a party, according to my interview with Jack Steinman, they could have challengers at every polling place in Campbell County. At one polling place, 120 women were denied the right to vote, because they listed their addresses as bordellos that had closed over ten years earlier.⁸⁹

After the elections, the federal trial against Frank "Screw" Andrews and seven defendants started. None of the defendants testified in the trial, because they feared their criminal activity would be exposed during cross-examination, or there would be a

perjury conviction if they lied. Unlike Ratterman's Civil Rights trial, this jury returned a guilty verdict against all the defendants. The judge sentenced Screw Andrews to six years and most of the other defendants received five years. This case effectively shut down the numbers racket operations in Newport and Cincinnati.

One of the most illustrious Kentuckians was Senator and Vice-President under President Truman, Alben W. Barkley. During the presidential campaign in 1932, as Keynote Speaker at the Democratic Convention that nominated Franklin Roosevelt, Barkley called for the repeal of Prohibition. This made his speech one of the most memorable, and the Democratic platform included a repeal of Prohibition. The 21st Amendment was passed in 1933. Barkley was responsible for Congressional passage of much of Roosevelt's "New Deal" Legislation, especially, The Social Security Act.⁹⁰

When Senator Barkley's first wife Dorothy died in 1947 after a long illness with cancer, Barkley was in debt for thousands of dollars of medical expenses; his Senate salary was \$12,500. Barkley's secretary, Flo Bratten, introduced him to the Mob. She had been a friend of Red Masterson, a strong arm man for the Mob and manager of the Merchants Club, in Newport, Kentucky. Many times Mrs. Bratten and her husband would go to the race tracks with Masterson, and they stayed at his Newport, Kentucky house. A series of fundraisers were held in Northern Kentucky, for Senator and later Vice-President Barkley. In my interview, with Glenn Schmidt Jr., he talked about meeting Senator Barkley several times at the Glenn Rendezvous fundraiser. Schmidt also knew that Barkley was known to visit other gambling clubs.⁹¹ This, however, was not verified at the University of Kentucky Archives in Lexington, Kentucky. They have incomplete Barkley appointment books. Mob attorney, Sidney Korshack stated that the Mob owned Barkley. Alben W. Barkley's estate in 1956 was over \$640,000.⁹²

Albert B. (Happy) Chandler was a corrupt Kentucky politician, who had close ties to organized crime. While governor of Kentucky, Chandler stated that he supported "the right of the people to have it dirty." Chandler attended Pete Schmidt's reopening of the Beverly Hills Country Club, after a fire closed it in 1937; as long as he was paid-off by organized crime, he maintained a "hands-off" policy, toward Northern Kentucky.⁹³ In the summer 1958, for instance, *The Louisville Times* ran a series of articles about wide-open gambling in Newport. When these reports were brought to the attention of Governor A.B. (Happy) Chandler, he dismissed them with, "We have no information of the truth or falsity of his (the reporter's) statements, officially or otherwise."⁹⁴

Fidel Castro's successful Cuban Revolution, January 1, 1959, had a profound effect on Kentucky politics. Governor Chandler was alleged to have heavy investments with the Mob in Cuba. In the Democratic primary campaign against Harry Lee Waterfield, Bert Combs attacked the Chandler administration. He was especially critical of a rumor which held that Chandler had placed a two percent assessment on state employees' salaries, and he had stored the funds in a Cuban bank. This was so the funds could not be traced to the Jewish Syndicate in Havana, Cuba. Meyer Lansky, who was depicted



*Vice-President
Alben W. Barkley*



*Governor Albert B.
"Happy" Chandler*

in the *Godfather II* movie as Hyman Roth, and Moe Dalitz were personal friends of Cuban President Fulgencio Batista, who was put in office by the United States government's meddling in Cuban affairs. The United States clandestinely helped to depose the legitimately elected liberal Presidents of Cuba twice; once in 1933 and again, in 1952.⁹⁵ Kentucky Law stated that before 1992, a governor could not succeed himself. The Syndicate was allegedly going to contribute three million dollars to the campaign of Governor Chandler's 1960 hand-picked Democrat, Harry Waterfield, who was running against the reform Democrat, Bert Combs. Fidel Castro froze the money in Cuba; Combs won the Democratic primary election and the subsequent gubernatorial election.⁹⁶ Albert B. Chandler's estate in 1991 was over 1.1 million dollars.⁹⁷

When the federal government pursued the Ratterman Civil Rights Case, this vigorous federal activity convinced Governor Bert Combs that it was time for the state to move against those gamblers who were solidly entrenched in Newport and Campbell County. Finally, the turning point had been reached. Public sentiment was now on the side of law and order.

The governor ordered an investigation and he initiated removal proceedings against elected officials in Campbell County and Newport. Governor Combs charged: Sheriff, Norbert Roll; Newport Police Chief, George Gugel; Newport Detective Chief, Leroy Fredericks; and Campbell County Police Chief, Harry Stuart with neglect of duty. All defendants were found guilty.



Courtesy of Kentucky Historical Society

Governor Bert Combs

During the hearings of the governor's removal petition in Lexington, Kentucky, a Newport madam, Hattie Jackson, reported that to keep her from testifying, Police Chief, Gugel put her in jail. Then, he opened the man-hole covers and she had to stay on a table all night because of the rats. Hattie Jackson testified that she had made weekly payoffs to Commonwealth Attorney, William Wise; Campbell County Circuit Judge, Ray Murphy; Police Chief, George Gugel; Detective, Frank Ciafardini; and individual officers on the police force. A special grand jury was convened. The grand jury returned 93 felony accounts in 17 indictments for setting up and operating gambling houses. Newport's Mayor, Ralph Mussman and City Manager Oscar Hesch were also indicted on charges of conspiracy to pervert justice as were all the elected officials, who had been removed from office. Commonwealth Attorney, Bill Wise was not indicted, but he was reprimanded for his apathetic attitude toward gambling and prostitution in Campbell County.⁹⁸

Frank Benton III was appointed temporary Commonwealth Attorney by Governor Combs. In his interview, Benton said that even though the grand jury that he advised did not indict Bill Wise and Ray Murphy, the grand jury knew that both of them were corrupt and paid by the Mob. Benton also added that he received a phone call offering him \$4,000 a week, if he would leave the Syndicate alone.⁹⁹

According to James Hengelbrok, from his sources, the Jewish Syndicate and the Italian Mafia met in Miami, Florida in late January 1962. There, they decided to take the heat-off of the upcoming Campbell County Election for Commonwealth Attorney and Circuit Judge, two critical offices that organized crime had to have to operate in Campbell County. In order to diffuse the situation in February, a convoy of limousines arrived at the gambling casinos in Newport. In two days, organized crime heads and others left for the legalized gambling city, Las Vegas, Nevada. In the fall of 1962, the Committee of 500 candidates for Commonwealth Attorney and Circuit Judge in

Campbell County were elected. U.S. Attorney General, Robert Kennedy and Governor, Bert Combs had effectively expelled organized crime from Northern, Kentucky.

While researching a topic, the goal is to try see if there is correlation from past events that affect today's perceptions. *The Kentucky Enquirer* on April 13, 2012, quoted on the front page a question from Dr. Jonathan Gibraltar, one of the three finalists to become NKU's fifth president. Dr. Gibraltar asked "what are the negatives here?" The NKU search committee's answer was the Kentucky Legislature. *The Kentucky Enquirer* further stated that "NKU has complained for years about unequal funding from Frankfort. Last year, it received \$1.2 million less than Murray State University, despite 3,845 more full-time equivalent students."¹⁰⁰

One could argue that Northern Kentucky is still being penalized for its seedy past. Another example of the lingering effects of Newport's notorious past is the current proposal to place two new casinos in Northern Kentucky, if the casino bill is passed by the Kentucky Legislature. The bill implies that the people of Northern Kentucky will readily accept casinos, because of their past involvement with them. Again, this proposal embodies Northern Kentucky's perception problem.

Northern Kentucky businesses need to emphasize Kentucky heritage in their advertising. When they are hiring throughout the state, their message needs to be "We are proud to be a Kentucky business." In the same way, Northern Kentucky needs to emphasize its Kentucky pride with downstate slogans like: "Northern Kentucky University—a great place to learn! We are proud of our Kentucky heritage!" Northern Kentuckians must do away with their isolationism. They must actively pursue interaction with the rest of the state, or they will always be considered Kentucky's stepchild. In addition, there must be better cooperation with the Greater Cincinnati region, not only for federal funds, but for mutual development. The Ohio River has been a barrier far too long.

Governor Bert Combs, in 1963, elevated the status of extension colleges to the full status of "community colleges." The UK Northern Extension Center in Covington, Kentucky was founded in 1943, and it was one of the Kentucky Extension Centers, later elevated to a community college status. Governor Combs would not have allowed this community college to relocate in Campbell County, if organized crime had not been expelled from the County.¹⁰¹

Personal Interviews—Oral History Project

15 images, April 2012



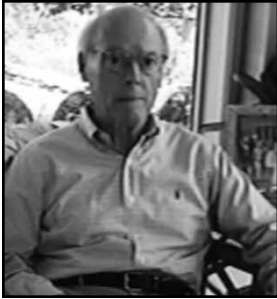
Anna W. Wiley



Earl Clark



Frank Benton III



Jack Steinman



Jim Hengelbrok



Jim McFarlan



Louise Orzali



Ruby Wiley



Virginia Stenken



Wayne Dammert



William Verox



Ruth Kolkmeier, C.D.P.



Rosemary Chenue



Glenn P. Schmidt, Jr.



*Nick Clooney and
Dick Challis*

Endnotes

1. Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address, Washington, D.C. March 4, 1801.
2. Owen Collins, comp., *Speeches That Changed the World* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 384.
3. James Hengelbrok, Interview by Richard Challis, Cincinnati, Ohio, June 3, 2011.
4. Michael Newton, *Mr. Mob: The Life and Crimes of Moe Dalitz* (Jefferson, North Carolina: MacFarland & Company, Inc., 2009), 68, 172.
5. Michael L. Williams, "Sin City Kentucky: Newport Kentucky's Vice Heritage And its Illegal Extinction, 1920-1991" (M.A. thesis, University of Louisville, 2008).
6. "The Best and Worst Run States in America: A Survey of All Fifty." *Wall Street Journal*, October 4, 2010. <http://247wallst.com/2010/10/04/the-best-and-worst-in-america-a-survey-of-all-fifty/> (December 5, 2011).
7. Nick Clooney, Interview by Richard Challis, Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University, August 30, 2011.
8. Thomas Barker, Gary Potter, and Jenna Meglan., *Wicked Newport Kentucky's Sin City* (Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press, 2009), 9.
9. David Wecker, "Before There Was Vegas, There Was Newport," *Cincinnati Post*, September 4, 2004, 1K.
10. Michael Quinion. "Hooker," *World Wide Words*. <http://www.worldwidewords.org/qa/qa-hoo.htm>. (December 4, 2011).
11. Michael L. Williams, "Sin City Kentucky: Newport Kentucky's Vice Heritage And its Illegal Extinction, 1920-1991."
12. Matthew DeMichele, Gary Potter, Justice and Police Studies, Newport Gambling: *Sin City Revisited: A Case Study of the Official Sanctioning of Organized Crime in an "Open City."* Richmond, Kentucky: Eastern Kentucky University. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kycampbe/newportgambling.htm>.
13. Ibid.
14. Hank Messick, *Syndicate Wife: The Story of Ann Drahmann Coppola* (Mattick, New York: Ameron House, 1968), 18.
15. DeMichele, Potter, and Justice and Police Studies, *Sin City Revisited: A Case Study of the Official Sanctioning of Organized Crime in an "Open City."*
16. Bill Davidson, "The Great Kentucky Scandal," *Look Magazine*, October 24, 1961, http://www.nkyviews.com/campbell/text/txt_newport_100k.htm.
17. William A. Cook, *King Of The Bootleggers: A Biography of George Remus* (Jefferson, North Carolina: MacFarland & Company, Inc., 2008), 5.
18. Ibid., 2.
19. DeMichele, Potter, and Justice and Police Studies, *Sin City Revisited: A Case Study of the Official Sanctioning of Organized Crime in an "Open City."*
20. Cook, *King Of The Bootleggers: A Biography of George Remus*, 122.
21. DeMichele, Potter, and Justice and Police Studies, *Sin City Revisited: A Case Study of the Official Sanctioning of Organized Crime in an "Open City."*
22. Cathie and John Celestri, *Little Mexico* (Loveland, Ohio: Journeybook Press, 2000), 62.
23. Messick, *Syndicate Wife: The Story of Ann Drahmann Coppola*, 18.
24. DeMichele, Potter, and Justice and Police Studies, *Sin City Revisited: A Case Study of the Official Sanctioning of Organized Crime in an "Open City."*
25. Messick, *Syndicate Wife: The Story of Ann Drahmann Coppola*, 21.
26. Hank Messick, *The Silent Syndicate* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1967), 181.
27. Ibid., 185.
28. Robert Lacey, *Little Man Meyer Lansky And The Gangster Life* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), 336.
29. Messick, *The Silent Syndicate*, 12.
30. Messick, *Syndicate Wife: The Story of Ann Drahmann Coppola*, 19.
31. DeMichele, Potter, and Justice and Police Studies, *Sin City Revisited: A Case Study of the Official Sanctioning of Organized Crime in an "Open City."*

32. Messick, *Syndicate Wife: The Story of Ann Drahhmann Coppola*, 15.
33. William A. Verox, Interview by Richard Challis, Fort Thomas, Kentucky, October 18, 2011.
34. "Kentucky: Sin Center." *Time Magazine*, May 26, 1961
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,872451,00.html>.
35. Messick, *Syndicate Wife: The Story of Ann Drahhmann Coppola*, 87.
36. *Ibid.*, 88.
37. *Ibid.*
38. DeMichele, Potter, and Justice and Police Studies, *Sin City Revisited: A Case Study of the Official Sanctioning of Organized Crime in an "Open City."*
39. Messick, *Syndicate Wife: The Story of Ann Drahhmann Coppola*, 20.
40. *Ibid.*, 21.
41. *Ibid.*, 22-23.
42. *Ibid.*, 22.
43. *Ibid.*, 23.
44. Newton. *Mr. Mob: The Life and Crimes of Moe Dalitz*, 83.
45. DeMichele, Potter, and Justice and Police Studies, *Sin City Revisited: A Case Study of the Official Sanctioning of Organized Crime in an "Open City."*
46. *Ibid.*
47. Messick, *Syndicate Wife: The Story of Ann Drahhmann Coppola*, 54.
48. David Wecker, "Before There Was Vegas, There Was Newport," *Cincinnati Post*, September 4, 2004, 1K.
49. Newton. *Mr. Mob: The Life and Crimes of Moe Dalitz*, 68.
50. *Ibid.*, 69.
51. Curt Gentry, *J. Edgar Hoover: The Man and the Secrets* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001) 3.
52. W. T. Young Library Archives, *Estate Records*, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
53. Elizabeth Cunningham, Interview with Richard Challis, Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. December 10, 2011.
54. Barker, Potter, and Meglan., *Wicked Newport Kentucky's Sin City*, 105.
55. Jim Lundoff, Roy Klein, and Larry Trapp. *When Vice Was King A History of Northern Kentucky Gambling 1920-1970*. <http://www.preservinggaminghistory.com/other/WHENVICE-WASKING.pdf>.
56. Earl Clark, Interview with Richard Challis, Saylor Park, Ohio, October 19, 2011.
57. Barker, Potter, and Meglan., *Wicked Newport Kentucky's Sin City*, 106.
58. DeMichele, Potter, and Justice and Police Studies, *Sin City Revisited: A Case Study of the Official Sanctioning of Organized Crime in an "Open City."*
59. Barker, Potter, and Meglan., *Wicked Newport Kentucky's Sin City*, 107
60. *Ibid.*, 108.
61. Bill Davidson, "The Great Kentucky Scandal," *Look Magazine*, October 24, 1961.
62. Barker, Potter, and Meglan., *Wicked Newport Kentucky's Sin City*, 103.
63. "Kentucky Gambling Laws." *Code Section 528.010; 230.010 et seq.*
<http://law.findlaw.com/state-laws/gambling/kentucky/>.
64. James A. Maxwell, "Newport: Kentucky's Open City." *Saturday Evening Post*, March 26, 1960. http://www.nkyviews.com/campbell/text/campbell_text_satevepost.htm.
65. Jack W. Steinman, Interview with Richard Challis, Fort Thomas, Kentucky. June 9, 2011.
66. Bill Davidson, "The Great Kentucky Scandal," *Look Magazine*, October 24, 1961.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. Hengelbrok, Interview.
70. Bill Davidson, "The Great Kentucky Scandal," *Look Magazine*, October 24, 1961.
71. Hengelbrok, Interview.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Bill Davidson, "The Great Kentucky Scandal," *Look Magazine*, October 24, 1961.

74. Hengelbrok, Interview.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. William A. Geoghegan, Oral History Interview by Ronald Grele, Washington, D.C., February 17, 1966.
78. Hengelbrok, Interview.
79. Geoghegan, Interview.
80. James Hepburn and William Turner, *Farewell America: The Plot to Kill JFK*. (Roseville, California: Penmarin Books, 2002), 94.
81. Ibid., 91.
82. Barker, Potter, and Meglan, *Wicked Newport Kentucky's Sin City*, 85.
83. Ronald Goldfarb, *Perfect Villains, Imperfect Heroes: Robert F. Kennedy's War Against Organized Crime* (New York: Random House, 1995), 88.
84. Ibid., 86.
85. Bill Davidson, "The Great Kentucky Scandal," *Look Magazine*, October 24, 1961.
86. Goldfarb, *Perfect Villains, Imperfect Heroes: Robert F. Kennedy's War Against Organized Crime*, 235.
87. Bill Davidson, "The Great Kentucky Scandal," *Look Magazine*, October 24, 1961.
88. Goldfarb, *Perfect Villains, Imperfect Heroes: Robert F. Kennedy's War Against Organized Crime*, 120.
89. Steinman, Interview.
90. James K. Libbey, *Dear Alben: Mr. Barkley of Kentucky* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1979), 66.
91. Glenn Peter Schmidt, Jr., Interview with Richard Challis., Highland Heights, Kentucky, January 13, 2012.
92. W. T. Young Library Archives, *Estate Records*, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
93. Newton, *Mr. Mob: The Life and Crimes of Moe Dalitz*, 87.
94. Bill Davidson, "The Great Kentucky Scandal," *Look Magazine*, October 24, 1961.
95. Jerry Sierra, "Batista," *historyofcuba.com*. <http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/batista/htm>
96. Hengelbrok, Interview.
97. W. T. Young Library Archives, *Estate Records*, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
98. Wecker, "Before There Was Vegas, There Was Newport," *Cincinnati Post*, September 4, 2004, 1K.
99. Frank V. Benton, III, Interview with Richard Challis, Fort Thomas, Kentucky, August 12, 2011.
100. Cliff Peal, "Next NKU chief to face old challenge," *The Kentucky Enquirer*, April 13, 2012, 1A.
101. Bill Davidson, "The Great Kentucky Scandal," *Look Magazine*, October 24, 1961.

ANNOTATED PRACTICUM BIBLIOGRAPHY

-
- Barker, Thomas, Gary Potter, and Jenna Meglan. *Wicked Newport Kentucky's Sin City*. Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press, 2009.
- Newport was controlled by the Jewish Syndicate and Italian Mafia. There were corrupt federal, state, and local political and law enforcement officials on the Mob's payroll
- Benton, Frank V., III. Interview with Richard Challis. Fort Thomas, Kentucky. August 12, 2011.
- Mr. Benton spoke of his appointment as Kentucky Commonwealth Attorney, by Governor Bert Combs, and his fight against organized crime.
- Caraway, Robin. *Newport: The Sin City Years*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2009.
- Good pictures of Newport, Kentucky during the "Sin City" Years.

Celestri, Cathie and John. *Little Mexico*. Loveland, Ohio: Journeybook Press, 2000.

Describes how the Cleveland Syndicate controlled Newport, Kentucky gambling and the city's government. The fight of an independent casino to operate against Mob opposition.

Combs, Burt. Governor of Kentucky. *Executive Orders* 61-815—61-816. October 10, 1961.

Governor Combs acted on Attorney General Robert Kennedy's (George Ratterman Federal Civil Rights Act) violation cases, and he fired seven Campbell County officials.

Chenue, Rosemary. Interview with Richard Challis. Wilder, Kentucky. March 23, 2012.

She discussed the Protestant ministries who were responsible for the early reform movements.

Clark, Earl. Interview with Richard Challis. Saylor Park, Ohio. October 19, 2011.

A musician at Beverly Hills Country Club, during the 1950's, Clark discussed the way he functioned under Syndicate control.

Clooney, Nicholas J. Interview with Richard Challis. Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University. August 30, 2011.

A universally celebrated newscaster, Clooney discussed organized crime in Northern Kentucky.

Collins, Owen, comp. *Speeches That Changed the World*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.

Extract from Mahatma Gandhi's trial for sedition at Ahmadabad, India, March, 23rd 1922.

Cunningham, Elizabeth. Interview with Richard Challis, Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. December 10, 2011.

Discussed life in Northern Kentucky in the late 1950s and early 1960s, for article published in the *Community Recorder*, January 19, 2012.

Dammert, John Wayne. Interview with Richard Challis. Alexandria, Kentucky. January 27, 2012.

Mr. Dammert talked about growing-up in Northern Kentucky and working at the Beverly Hills Country Club. Wayne, met his wife, a dancer at the club, while working there.

Davidson, Bill. "The Great Kentucky Scandal," *Look Magazine*, October 24, 1961. http://www.nkyviews.com/campbell/text/txt_newport_100k.htm (November 8, 2011).

This article describes the Ratterman scandal: how the Cleveland Syndicate was removed from Ohio, by reformers in the 1940s, and their settlement in Campbell County, Kentucky.

DeMichele, Matthew, Gary Potter, Justice and Police Studies. *Newport Gambling: Sin City Revisited: A Case Study of the Official Sanctioning of Organized Crime in an "Open City."* Richmond, Kentucky: Eastern Kentucky University. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kycampbe/newportgambling.htm> (March 11, 2012).

This is a research guide for bibliography sources with excellent graphics and very informative.

Eastwood, Clint, Director. *J. Edgar*. 2011

This movie highlights many non-substantiated suppositions, based on rumor and innuendo.

This film depicts J. Edgar Hoover as a complex and dangerous man, who manipulated people for his own gain.

FBI Records: The Vault. "Sidney Korshak." part 3 of 3, April 30, 1963.

<http://vault.fbi.gov/SidneyKorshak/SidneyKorshakPartof/view> (January 10, 2012). Korschale was the Mob lawyer who told the FBI about his many clients.

Fry, Monroe. "Cross Section: Sin Town." *Esquire Magazine*, May 1957.

http://www.nkyviews.com/campbell/text/s_city_esq.htm (November 8, 2011). Provides a perspective on Newport, Kentucky's prostitution, how clients were solicited, and many times blackmailed and the non-involvement of privileged women's groups in Campbell County, Kentucky.

Gentry, Curt. *J. Edgar Hoover: The Man and the Secrets*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.

A complete story of J. Edgar Hoover has been destroyed by the F.B.I. This book reveals hidden secrets about Hoover's ancestry.

- Geoghegan, William A. Oral History Interview, with Ronald Grele. Washington, D.C., February 17, 1966.
Cincinnati attorney who told Robert Kennedy about Civil Rights violation of George Ratterman.
- Gioielli, Robert. "Newport Reform Groups." *The Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky*. ed. Paul A. Tenkotte and James C. Claypool. Lexington, Kentucky: The UP of Kentucky, 2009. 660-661. <http://www.issuu.com/cincinnati/docs/nky-n> (November 22, 2011).
This source identifies the reform groups that preceded The Committee of 500, through successful reform candidates, especially, the sheriff. It describes how the Cleveland Syndicate left Newport.
- Goldfarb, Ronald. *Perfect Villains, Imperfect Heroes: Robert F. Kennedy's War Against Organized Crime*. New York: Random House, 1995.
This article identifies the failure of J. Edgar Hoover and the F.B.I. to recognize organized crime's significance. Robert Kennedy was the catalyst for Newport, Kentucky's reform.
- Hamill, Lois. Telephone Interview. 16 December 2010.
University Archivist, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, Kentucky.
She has oral interview tapes of the Committee of 500. They are not available because of release form problems. KOHC will be the repository for this practicum's archives.
- Hengelbrok, James W. Interview with Richard Challis. Cincinnati, Ohio. June 3, 2011.
He was one the attorneys for George Ratterman, also his brother-in-law.
- Hepburn, James and William Turner. *Farewell America: The Plot to Kill JFK*. Roseville, California: Penmarin Books, 2002.
Attorney General Robert Kennedy fights organized crime and states that it will not be solved until the American people look beyond their own personal luxuries.
- Jefferson, Thomas. First Inaugural Address, Washington, D.C. 4 Mar. 1801.
This nation's people must protect their laws, as if they were their own personal concern.
- "Kentucky Gambling Laws." *Code Section* 528.010; 230.010 et seq.
<http://law.findlaw.com/state-laws/gambling/kentucky/> (March 1, 2012).
These gambling laws were on the books during the organized crime era, but they were never enforced.
- "Kentucky: Sin Center." *Time Magazine*, May 26, 1961.
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,872451,00.html> (October 3, 2011).
This article describes the past history of gambling and other vices in Newport, Kentucky, the story of George Ratterman and the emergence of The Committee of 500.
- Kolkmeier, Ruth Marie, CDP. Interview with Richard Challis. St. Anne's Convent, Melbourne, Kentucky. June 9, 2011.
She grew up in Newport. The controversy was with the German, Italian, and Irish segregated Catholic Churches. Organized crime within the city was of little concern.
- Lacey, Robert. *Little Man Meyer Lansky And The Gangster Life*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991.
Lansky was the most powerful Jewish gangster of his era.
- Lawson, Robert G. *Beverly Hills: Anatomy of a Nightclub Fire*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1984.
This book provides a perspective on the role of the Beverly Hills Supper Club. The club's past reputation made "the good-old-times" work in the Shillings' favor.
- Libbey, James K. *Dear Alben: Mr. Barkley of Kentucky*. Lexington, Kentucky: The UP of Kentucky, 1979.
Barkley was responsible for many Congressional passages of Roosevelt's "New Deal" Legislation; later financial needs corrupted Barkley.
- Lundoff, Jim, Roy Klein, and Larry Trapp. *When Vice Was King: A History of Northern Kentucky Gambling 1920-1970*.
<http://www.preservinggaminghistory.com/other/WHENVICEWASKING.pdf> (February 15, 2012).
This site shows organized crime when it ruled Newport.

Maxwell, James A. "Newport: Kentucky's Open City." *Saturday Evening Post*, March 26, 1960.

http://www.nkyviews.com/campbell/text/campbell_text_satevepost.htm (November 8, 2011).

This article examines the actions by church oriented reform groups which tried to bring indictments against Newport, Kentucky's administrative officers and the failures by the courts and other institutions which protected gambling.

Messick, Hank. *Razzle-Dazzle*. Mattituck, New York: Amereon House, 1995.

This book discusses the investigation of the powerful Cleveland Syndicate in Newport, Kentucky by *The Louisville Courier Journal* reporter, John Messick, and his help to reformers.

_____. *Secret File: The Untold Story of America's Least Known Crimefighters*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969.

This book mentions the crime in Newport, Kentucky and the corruption in Kentucky government.

_____. *Syndicate Wife: The Story of Ann Drahmann Coppola*. Mattituck, New York: Ameron House, 1968.

This book describes the life of a Mob wife, Ann Coppola, and her desire for a change in Newport's image by contacting Robert Kennedy. Coppola's story parallels the rising of the reform movement.

_____. *The Silent Syndicate*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1967.

Messick shows how the Jewish Syndicate's low publicity profile allowed them in silence to have interlocking business, which shifted capital from one company to another, subverting efforts by the IRS to define their tax status. The Jewish Syndicate learned what the Italian Mafia did not, that the bribe is more powerful than the bullet.

_____. "Former marshal names Mr. Big of Newport: Syndicate in control, Harris tells reporters; Grand jury hears Wise." *Louisville Courier-Journal*, September 12, 1961, 1A.

Wise was the former owner of the Hi-De-Ho Club and Marshall of Wilder, Kentucky.

McFarlan, James. Interview with Richard Challis. Park Hills, Kentucky. October 30, 2010.

McFarlan describes his early years in Campbell County, Kentucky, the night clubs and the changing attitudes in Newport. This change of attitude brought about The Committee of 500.

Milligan, Sarah. Telephone Interview with Richard Challis, April 13, 2011.

Ms. Milligan is Director of the Kentucky Oral History Commission, which is in the Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky. Ms Milligan will accept my practicum.

Neff, Judy L. and Peggy Wiedemann-Harris. *Images of America, Newport*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2004.

This book illustrates with many pictures the history of Newport, Kentucky with actual images of the Prohibition Period, the depression years and the nightclubs of the Syndicate Era.

Neuenschwander, John A. *A Guide to Oral History and The Law*. New York, New York: Oxford UP, 2009.

Neuenschwander is the legal authority for an oral historian.

Newton, Michael. *Mr. Mob: The Life and Crimes of Moe Dalitz*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009.

Moe Dalitz was the head of the Cleveland Syndicate in Northern Kentucky. He developed Las Vegas with Meyer Lansky. He lived a full life, and died very wealthy.

Orzali, Louise. Interview with Richard Challis. Fort Thomas, Kentucky. October 18, 2011.

Her family supplied the chickens to Beverly Hills Country Club, from their farm in Alexandria, Kentucky. They were always paid in cash.

Peal, Cliff. "Next NKU chief to face old challenge." *The Kentucky Enquirer*, April 13, 2012, 1A.

The story tells of the lack of respect that the Kentucky Legislature has for NKU.

Pinger, Dan. "Trip to Newport Paisley's Idea, Hotelman Says." *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 21, 1961: A1.

This article describes the trial of Juanita Hodges (April Flowers) for prostitution in the George Ratterman scandal. Defendants, Tito Carinci and Ratterman, accused each other of lying.

Purvis, Thomas L and Kenneth M. Clift. *Newport, Kentucky: A Bicentennial History*. Newport, Kentucky: Otto Zimmerman & Son Co. Inc., 1996.

This book includes a detailed history of the early years of Newport, Kentucky; the colorful politicians, law enforcement officials, and the reform groups are presented fairly.

Quinion, Michael. "Hooker." *World Wide Words*. www.worldwidewords.org/qa/qa-hoo.htm, (December 4, 2011).

Rutledge, Mike. "Notorious arrest inspired Newport to clean up its 'Sin City' reputation." *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 9, 2011.

This article contains good pictures but is weak on important facts as to why the Mob left Campbell County abruptly.

Schmidt, Glenn Peter, Jr. Interview with Richard Challis. Highland Heights, Kentucky. January 13, 2012.

Pete Schmidt Jr. tried to live a normal life as a kid in Ft. Thomas, Kentucky. He was happy to meet dignitaries, such as Senator Alben Barkley.

Sierra, Jerry. "Batista." *history of cuba.com*. <http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/batista/htm> (March 3, 2012).

Batista was corrupt politician who accepted payoffs from the Mob.

Sommer, Barbara W. and Mary Kay Quinlan. *The Oral History Manual*, 2nd ed. New York: Altamira Press, 2009.

This reference contains a concise discussion of the process of oral history. It has become the standard manual for most community and academic oral history projects

Steinman, Jack W. Interview with Richard Challis. Fort Thomas, Kentucky. June 9, 2011.

Steinman discussed his involvement with the Committee of 500 and the growth of Campbell County after organized crime was eradicated.

Stenken, Virginia L. Interview with Richard Challis. Fort Thomas, Kentucky. October 18, 2011.

Ms. Stenken recalled her early days in Newport. Her family's life was normal with emphasis on the church. She did know about Screw Andrews and the "number's racket."

"The Best and Worst Run States In America: A Survey of All Fifty." *Wall Street Journal*, October 4, 2010. <http://247wallst.com/2010/10/04/the-best-and-worst-run-states-in-america-a-survey-of-all-fifty/> (December 5, 2011).

This article was an analysis of hundreds of data dealing with government management of the states and found Kentucky as the worst run of the 50 states.

"The Press Day in Court." *Time Magazine*, March 22, 1954. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,819590,00.html> (November 3, 2011).

This article describes the difficulties *The Courier Journal* newspaper photographer had in "Syndicate-run" Newport, Kentucky; it also describes the photographer's arrest, and sham court verdicts.

United States Senate. Committee on Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce on the *Special Committee To Investigate Organized Crime In Interstate Commerce*. 82nd Cong., 1st sess. S. Res.60 and S. Res.129. Washington: GPO, 1951.

This reference includes information from the Kefauver Committee Report, about the Cleveland Mafia's exodus from Ohio to Kentucky in Campbell and Kenton Counties. It also includes eyewitness accounts of gambling and prostitution.

Verox, William A. Interview with Richard Challis. Fort Thomas, Kentucky. October 18, 2011.

Verox was very informative about his early life and seeing prostitution in Newport.

W. T. Young Library Archives, *Estate Records*, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

The archives contain the final estates' monetary values for the following: Alben W. Barkley, J. Edgar Hoover, Clyde Tolson, and Albert B. (Happy) Chandler.

Williams, Michael L 2008. *Sin City Kentucky: Newport Kentucky's Vice Heritage And its Illegal Extinction, 1920-1991*. M.A. thesis, University of Louisville.

An excellent legal mind shows the lingering effect of organized crime's departure from Newport. For another 21 years, the sleaze bars and prostitution would exist in Newport.

Wecker, David. "Before There Was Vegas, There Was Newport," *Cincinnati Post*, September 4, 2004, 1K.

This article contains an abbreviated account of life in Northern Kentucky when organized crime ruled.

Wiley, Alma Walker. Interview with Richard Challis. Fort Thomas, Kentucky. October 18, 2011.

Ms. Walker's early life was in Cincinnati. She and her work friends went many times to eat cheaply, lunch and dinner, at the plush Yorkshire and Glenn Schmidt's Restaurants in Newport, Kentucky.

Wiley, Ruby. Interview with Richard Challis. Fort Thomas, Kentucky. January 26, 2012.

In this informative interview, Ms. Wiley talked about neighbors making liquor; how the raids were handled at the Beverly Hills Country Club; and how the "crap" tables were converted into pool tables. She talked about the Newport streets and how her father forbade her to walk at night.

A Good Man is Hard to Find—But Good Sense Can Prevail

by Harry Brown

I am pleased to review *Fits of Wrath and Irony* (Finishing Line Press, 2013), a fine first poetry collection by Deana Nantz, who holds three degrees in English from Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), the latest an MFA in Creative Writing. She teaches English at North Laurel High School, and also teaches as adjunct in English at EKU's Corbin Campus.

Nantz uses excellent detail—sharp, appropriate, telling, sometimes ironic or satirical. We see real persons in real settings—herself, a teacher, speeding to work; a young Pentecostal woman praying for a husband; a body building boyfriend. Consider these strong lines with first-rate imagery, illustrating respectively the preceding examples:

I'm the mule of the world.

I am woman—a fiery ball of anxiety,
gripping steering wheel, holding a cup of whoop-ass,
tailing a yellow school bus—heading straight to hell. (“Whitman’s Teacher” 18-21)

My fortunate female friends
don spouses and white fences.
But I’m unpicked like a fat girl at prom
wearing a borrowed dress
ten years too old for Goodwill’s dumpster. (“Prayer from the Skirt” 5-9)

Here you come gleaming in
with tight t-shirt and pecks flexing.
I feel insecure,
seeing that yours are bigger. (“Steroid” 1-4)

As my colleague Julie Hensley emphasized, “She has attitude.” And original figures of speech.

Fits of Wrath and Irony contains a broad spectrum of subjects ranging from the poet herself as “a scraggly pine” (“Pine Seed” 2) to high school students taking their final exam, Nantz’s pet Ms. Kitty, an April storm, and Ernest Hemingway. The second most important subject in the collection is the poet’s grandparents, her experiences

with them recalled in admiration and affection. In “Birthday Present” about her grandmother’s eightieth birthday party, Nantz recalls that when she suffered from colic as an infant, her grandmother “slept by my side on a scratchy couch” (12): “But that was my gift—to have the matriarch. / I’d take you over the Magi any day” (13-14). In “Leaves of Maple,” the poet recalls her grandfather’s “fixing hands that carried me inside / from bee stings and sprained ankles” (13-14), and longs “to see / a knotty head bent down to task” (30-31) in his “clapboard building” (4). In a touching stanza she wishes “just one more time” to “wrap my arms / around a stiff collared, sleeveless shirt” (32-34).

The dominant subject in *Fits of Wrath and Irony* is the persona’s gender struggle with several boyfriends, the series concluding with a fulfilling relationship and concomitant new sense of self described in the final lines from “Change of Motion”:

Autumn prepares a path to clarity
 where all is bare and clean.
 Standing in front of you,
 the fall of my old world—
 I wax naked and new. (12-16)

I suspect that these lines owe something to the final scene in Chopin’s *The Awakening*, but the speaker’s experience and attitude here are the opposite of Edna Pontellier’s.

It’s a bit surprising that Nantz’s persona could have such luck with several suitors before her happy discovery. Consider, for example, the subject of this Freudian passage from “Bedroom Psychology”:

I want to reach over and rip off
 all your old girlfriends, the love affair with your mother,
 and the first time your father rendered you impotent
 in front of her. (1-4)

Or this well-to-do façade in the opening lines of “Lasagna”:

I sit here in this Italian restaurant with a man who’s paying for my meal.
 Skinny six-figure fellow with poofy hair and shiny shoes,
 he’s wearing church clothes and a mask. (1-3)

Or the overbearing fiancé in “Why I Left You Two Weeks before Our Wedding” who, along with his parents, picked out “a musty rental” (1) near his parents’ home, and bought “a suitable marriage bed of . . . [his] choice” (17-18). In the end—or, rather, in a new beginning—the book’s persona once more exercised good sense, and finally found and made good fortune. I wish her well.

With politicians in their pocket, organized crime controlled the nightclubs, gambling, prostitution and illegal liquor distribution that defined Newport, Kentucky as the "Sin City of the South."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KENTON COUNTY LIBRARY AND THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

