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Calliope

Armstrong State College

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Armstrong State College
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“Bitter? Man, I’m a volcano. Bitter? Here I am a giant—surrounded by ants... who can’t...understand what...the giant is talking about.”

Lorraine Hansberry, A Raisin in the Sun
Prayer For Tomorrow’s Child

I pray that you will never know
A hurt like that within my soul,
A hungry day, a lonely night,
Or ever have to see the sight
Of oil washed upon your shores
Or the horrible reality of wars.

I pray that you won’t have to feel
A desperation that makes you steal
Or a hopelessness which makes you shrug,
“SO WHAT! WHO CARES?”
Because you’ve never had a hug.

May you never know the aches of heart,
When love was crushed and then could not start
Again.

I pray for you so innocent,
Yearning to experience
Life, that you won’t have to be
Like some who’ve come before,
Who for a dollar shut heaven’s door
To make a mockery of Freewill.

May you bring Hope and never kill
The joy of peace, the peace of Love.
Then never will you fear the shroud
Of a homeless night, or a mushroom cloud.

Don Newman
THE MELTING POT RELEASES MORE SLUDGE

America the Beautiful—Joe Hul

Peace?—Margaret Vishneski
In Extremis

You know
I thought the South
Was certain death
And
To settle there would be
My piercing grave.
Of dirt roads and
Laggard speech I would seek
An existence
A niche
Among the barefoot and
Backward I would
Strain to find.
You know
I imagined
I'd flee the South
Leave them all in burning
Hell.
But now I laugh
Because I know
I've grown
And the South is no longer
My morbid dream.

JHP
A Symbol of Pride

Greed for oil, power personal and stately
Is the breeze that keeps it flying highest.
Hand over hand it's raised
By myopic military nationalists who twist words
As the global policeman spins his baton.
Panama—home of the strategic canal.
Kuwait—home of offshore drilling rights.
"Don't tread on me"
We'll inflict a jungle raid
Or perhaps a desert storm.

Rally 'round, rally 'round, rally 'round
Just don't let its bronze tip and spangled cloth touch ground.

Red—the color of civilian blood spilt for unjust causes with secret ulterior motives.
White—the color of the race that sends its minority-filled forces to war.
Blue—the color of the skin of a rotting warrior (husband, father)
fallen for misguided beliefs—"an effective way to jump start the economy."

Rally 'round, rally 'round, rally 'round
Bring the whole clan to the county playground.

Stars and bars and purple hearts for those who play their parts.
Stripes—Thirteen, thirteen, thirteen, the time honored numerology of Death.
Old Glory signals for the conscientious a new state of heaving nausea.

Rally 'round, rally 'round, rally 'round
Burn the goddamn thing to the ground.

A million miniatures waving in every government-fearing hand.
It's a soldier's job to kill his fellow man.
A tear falls from the eye of God.
Is this really
A symbol of pride?

gene lyons
Julia Burns wanted to die.

Lying among the yellowing sheets of her hospital bed, Julia could think of nothing else—or rather she tried not to. But there were always distractions, bringing her mind to dwell on other things, like her questionable life.

First there were the interruptions of the staff. They checked her temperature, took tubes of blood, and emptied the bag at her bedside that was a constant reminder of her embarrassing helplessness. And the questions. Always the same questions about how she was feeling—making it impossible for her to ignore the screams sounding from her brittle bones or the painful pounding feelings in her body. Purple bruises left by too many probing needles covered both of her wrists, further attesting to their futile attempts to “save” her. She wished they would leave her alone.

And of course there were the visits. They all came—loving her, blessing her, pitying her. Julia hated these visits the most, partly because her family was less adept at hiding their disgust than the medical people—but mostly because they reminded her she was no longer living; she had stopped living long ago. But at least they didn’t
come as often now, and they had stopped bringing her grandchildren altogether. Julia knew it was because she scared them. Hell, she even scared herself. She was only an alien shell of the woman she once was, hardly human at all. She understood that she no longer looked like Wife, Mother or Grandma at all. With all the machinery attached to her, combined with the smell of death that hung around her like an old, thick, black cloak, timeworn and moth-eaten, she thought she was enough to scare the devil.

She remembered the last time she visited her grandmother. She was only five, but the memory was strong even now. She never forgot the smell of her grandmother, a smell that permeated her entire house, a mixture of cooking odors and the ammonia she used to clean everything. She remembered her grandmother gathering her in her fleshy arms, and the old, too organic smell flooded Julia’s nose, making her feel smothered and sick. The gummy smile and medicine-soaked breath came to her now, and Julia recalled that was the day she decided she would never grow old. She almost laughed at the thought, then quickly pushed it away. It’s not funny, she thought, leaning back to blink away the gathering tears. It’s not funny at all.

Julia pushed her chin to her chest and looked down at her body, which barely made a discernable bulge underneath the sheets. She didn’t need to lift the cover to know the ugliness that decayed underneath. The womanly curves, the softness, the warm roundness of her body, all were gone now, replaced by some as yet unnamed figure. Still, she felt strangely comforted by the swelled and twisted joints and the bluish tint of her skin. She smiled vaguely as she decided it wouldn’t be much longer.

At first she had fought death. When they told her the cancer had spread through her body, Julia had been angry, bitterly laughing and crying as she shoved the doctor away. She had clung to her family’s visits then, always wanting them to stay longer. But not anymore. Soon enough she realized that they were waiting for her to die, that her slow degeneration was hurting them, hurting their lives. She discovered the visits were born out of guilt and riddled with fear and even anger. And Julia began to hate them. She loved their memory while she despised their faces and everything she saw reflected there. Julia wished she could leave them just as much as they wished she would hurry up and go: she was too tired now to love them, to care for them, to listen to them, to even like them. No, she was finished with all that now.

Still, they kept coming, seemingly unable to realize they were prolonging her departure. She had tried to explain it to them once, to tell them about her dreams for death. She told them she couldn’t sleep; even though she grew more and more tired, sleep never came. When she closed her eyes, the funny little designs like the ones that follow a camera flash were there to keep her up. She told them she couldn’t eat either; the feel of the warm, squishy food in her mouth sickened her. And she couldn’t live anymore. They just stared at her.

What she couldn’t tell them was that she needed them to go and never come back, so finally she could rest. She looked at their tired faces and sad, slumping figures, and instinct urged her to comfort, to soothe away their confusion and fright. But she pushed them away from her—she couldn’t let them hold her any longer. She didn’t belong with them anymore. They couldn’t understand this, though . . . and Julia couldn’t tell them. She sighed raspily now, and wished, hoped they would figure it out.

Soon, she thought, let it be soon.

Julia tried to shift positions, cursing the tubes and needles taped onto her body as they impeded her progress. I’m just too damned tired, she thought, tired of everything. And, as if to accentuate her mute words, the slow drilling in her belly began again, twisting her insides around some deepening hole there. Weary of fighting the pain, Julia waited quietly for it to pass, and waited for the time when pain wouldn’t matter.

She thought again of her family. Julia knew they only came to make themselves feel better. They didn’t really want to see her, not like this. Except Marie. Marie kept coming, encouraging her not to lose hope. Julia knew Marie was the one who would miss her—and that’s why she wished Marie would stay away.

Marie had come again this morning. Beautiful Marie. She appeared for her weekly visit, duti-
fully attending the shrinking flesh and bone that held her mother. Marie didn't seem to notice the traitorous tricks Julia's body had played on her; the patches of missing hair, toothless mouth, and decaying features failed to capture her daughter's attention. Julia wished Marie would notice and perhaps be sickened enough not to return, for Julia dreaded her visits and the pain that followed them. Her jaw still ached from the forced smiles, and her head pounded from the army of memories that marched through her head the minute Marie arrived. And there was the unexplainable tenderness that filled her chest and moved up her throat to choke her every time Marie left.

Julia struggled to push Marie from her thoughts, squinting against the white light pouring through her window. Marie always left the damn curtains open, unaware of how the sun made the eerie green walls glow—and the smell—the sunlight made the smell worse. Swirls of Lysol and urine, now more powerful after being heated by the sun, swam around her, making her dizzy. Julia pulled the over-used sheets over her nose and eyes and begged for rest.

But Marie was there, giggling, "Look Mama, look at me!" Cartwheeling through the grass, squealing at the bugs that followed her romp. Marie wouldn't let Julia sleep. "Mama . . . Mama . . . MAMA . . . watch me!" Chubby legs and cropped, curly hair bounced and twisted through fumbled somersaults.

It's so hot—too hot—Julia thought, loosening her blouse. And then a tired Marie piled onto her lap, her sweaty little body adding to the heat pressing into Julia's skin, pounding through her veins. The sun pushed her eyelids down, away from the light, and the hot air teased her smoldering body. Julia settled back and waited for sleep.

The squiggly body in her lap scared the sleep away. Julia tried to ignore the movements—until something wet touched her eye and tickled down her cheek. She peeked at Marie, whose pudgy fingers were patiently peeling the skin from an orange, the punctures her fingers made in the fruit sending missiles of sweet liquid onto Julia's face.

Mmmmmmm . . . Julia murmured as the next drops hit her lips. Her tongue moved, too slow to catch them, and they slid untasted down her chin. Her tired jaw relaxed and her lips parted as she exhaled, releasing a river of spittle that mixed with salty tears to chase the liquid orange to her pillow.

Finally, Julia slept.
Dream Epiphany

An impregnable blackness. Totally devoid of color, depth, or sound.

Then—a tiny ghost-white spot. Starkly silhouetted against the darkness like a dot on a domino. I'm not sure it exists—

until it moves.

Twisting, turning, contorting,—it creeps out of the crevices of my subconscious.

It moves.

Slowly—menacingly—somewhat mockingly,
it crowds out the darkness,
forcing me to acknowledge its existence. Making me question its intrusion into my sleep world. Wanting me to admit my guil—

and then it stops.

Dead center in my mind.

A baby-sized bundle of bloody rags.

Before I can understand,

The echoes of a dying baby's screams jar me into consciousness.

                                      Don Robinson

Myn Kleine Baby—
Marjan Nieuwenhuie


Childish Games

Watch as the children gather every day,
    A few will lead, most follow, some stand by,
Their futures shaped by the childish games they play.

Daycare workers stuck on little pay,
    Change the babies busy Mothers kiss good-bye,
And watch the children gather every day.

The bully caught with out-stretched fist will say,
    "He hit me first!" though all can see the lie,
Their futures shaped by the childish games they play.

Burned-out teachers reaching for the end of May,
    Hear the morning bell and heave a deep sigh
To watch the children gather every day.

Students dreaming all week long of Saturday,
    Don't realize how the months, then years will fly,
Their futures shaped by the childish games they play.

Policemen at the bloody scene will pray
    This murdered child the last this week to die.
Watch as the children gather every day,
Their futures shaped by the childish games they play.

Ethel Butler Tuttle
The Fight

On a bicycle down by the railroad tracks,
he whips out his frustrations, pedaling wildly as
the dust flies up from his spinning wheels, when
suddenly—
    he is stuck in the sand.
The wheels grind deeper,
every hard-fought inch
only traps him in a deeper grave,
his face scrunches up in concentrated determination,
his knuckles white as he grips the handlebars fiercely,
his body taut even as he totters. . .
then,
with a final jerk—
    he is released,
weeds closing around him as he fades into the pink sunset.

At a kitchen table in their one-bedroom apartment,
she clunks down a half-empty bottle with a thud,
scattering crumbs across the formica surface, when
from the far corner—
    a baby wails in protest.
The chair scraped backward,
she lifts the glass
and downs the Southern Comfort
in one quick gulp,
her face blank of any expression,
her eyes vague, unfocused, watering from the sting,
her body sways as she stumbles
then,
with a gentle scoop—
    she presses the child against her,
shadows shrouding her as she stares out into the pink sunset.

J.L. Wineinger
The Fortuitous

The phalanx of greatness is replete with names
Of men who entered early graves
Leaving the mortal few who lived
To wonder what more they had to give.

What could they have done if they had lived
Any differently from those who lived;
They too with time would have grown old,
And lost that air that seemed so bold.

Fortuitous were those who went in their prime
For they live on in people's minds,
And those who stayed to get the gray look
Languish within dusty history books.

Vikram Kapur

Spaces

I talked to this guy
He was dying
and he asks me why.
I say, I don't know man.
Please don't burden me
with your memories.
I have no spaces left
in which to put them.
Ah! Says he.
I'm not looking for a savior
just the favor
of a smile from a friendly face
as I have but one space
left, yet to fill.

Adrian
The Creation of Hell—Brad Squibb

Virgin at the Foot of the Cross by Eugene Carriere—Acrylic Copy by Brad Squibb
Riverfront—Michael Gadomski

I Am Tired

I am tired.  
Tired of being afraid of my fellow-man:  
Of oil explorations and oil spills:  
Tired of pollution (and being part of the problem):  
Of dead sea turtles, drowned dolphins, slaughtered whales and clubbed seal pups:  
Tired of the destruction of the rain forest and global warming:  
Of nuclear power, dammed rivers, and industrial waste:  
Tired of chemicals: in my food, my water, the very air that I breathe:  
Of people stacked on people and racial disputes:  
Tired of apathy, greed, and human supremacy:  

But most of all—I am tired of being tired.  

Elaine Hall
Unaware of the Missing

unaware of the missing pieces,
the children cry
in the distant sunset,
weighed heavily upon
by the winds of time.
splintered hopes lay quietly
resting,
fragmented dreams
swept away,
the glimmering cheeks of the children
cooled by the wind
then fade...

Craig Kozlowski

Ethiopia’s Child

An imploded stomach
Hides
Under a small T-shirt,
A frail thumb
Sticks
Between two thin lips,
And puffy eyelids
Fall
Over the brown eyes
Of the starving baby,
Captured by sleep,
To dream of his dead mother’s milk.

Ron Speir, Jr.
On Borrowed Time

On borrowed time
we live our lives
upon a whim
all may die
The dogs of war
shall eat the flesh
The four who ride
will take the rest—

to sacrifice upon the altar
in worship to the God of power
and anointed with the oozing oil,
consecrated blood that boils.

Millions cry,
though none take heed
of the nameless, faceless hordes
it seems—
as if in righteous anger wrought
the silencing of the lessons taught
by those who before us found
the virtues we so expound
are a cruel veneer
to hide the truth
that peace is just
an excuse for war.

Elaine Hall
Fool's Gold

You leave town at the first sign of spring for a Sierra Mountain trail. And you walk to places where other men have tried to go, but where other men have failed. You're high up in the mountains, with the clouds around your feet, shivering with the cold, as you anticipate what you seek.

You dig down deep to find the strength to struggle with one more ton. And you know that death is creeping closer, when your day is done. You're running on empty, as you start to feel like your life's blood has been spent. Then it's a day too late when you get to wondering where your future went.

And that's just about the time you'll hear those mountains, laughing down at you.

There have been many good men lost up there in those hills. And the late night campfire stories, fill you full of chills. Each nightfall brings a thousand dancing prospectors' souls, Condemned men still searching for their fortunes made of gold.

It's been this way since times forgotten, men want to get rich fast. So they rape the earth and scar its soul, but nature laughs last. They tear the heart out of the earth, never caring about its needs. A man loses his perspective when he's overcome by greed.

And that's just about the time you'll hear those mountains, laughing down at you.

Don Robinson
There

"I almost love you but would have cast, I know, the stones of silence."

Seamus Heaney, "Punishment"

Mannequin—Mimi Georges
Sailing

When the lenient wind blows
I think of the summer day
I was at the helm when it
tickled the sails with steamy,
salty air as it pushed us up
the Skidaway River.

It was the same day
the mischievous wind made the
waves spit spray on us, while
whitecaps frolicked across
the wavetops that pulled the bow
depth into the Vernon River.

I fought the tiller that July day
the wind turned wild and the
bow shook water over us again
and again as she wrestled to
be free of the swells.

Not storm winds, just wicked winds
as Nature, cat-like, flexed her claws.
And I in reverence, not fear,
was glad I was at the helm to greet
the lenient wind
and the mischievous wind
and the wild wind
that summer day.

Cecilia Morett

An Aubade

The sky lies below a blanket of haze
As the night's cover is lifted by sunrise.
The waking sun will light the darkened shades
And you will rise groaning, rubbing your eyes—
And break my embrace when they see clearly.
I will follow and beg for one last kiss.
You will refuse—raise brows and say, "Really,"
But just before leaving press lips on lips.
I will wander onto the round terrace
And water roses that stand in earthen pots;
The morning breeze will drift against my face
And cool the cheeks the warming sun makes hot.

The roses release more fragrance under sunlight;
But somehow if I could arrest the night... 

Vikram Kapur

Cecilia Morett
Artists Passing in the Street

On a cool, dry day in the city,
I saw my reflection as I passed
a mountain of a thousand mirrors.
They’re built that way, you know,
in an attempt to make those outside feel ashamed
to be so casually out in the breezes,
while the jaded, paraded masses within slave away,
near-choking, on the silk nooses they choose to wear.

Anyway, as I walked along, ignoring
the distorted image of myself
which gladly conformed to every reflective corner,
I glanced up and caught sight of another.
He, too, was enjoying the cross-signals changing
so that we alone could walk.
Times before, I’d seen him at places
where works of art gather themselves.
Also, while the remainder of humanity
confined itself to the glass towers,
I’d spotted him roaming the streets for inspiration,
as did I.
So on that late winter’s day, we nodded,
each toward the other, silent acknowledgement
that we were prisoners of another world. . . .
But for the unreflected souls, peering down
from their shimmering, forty-story jails,
those must have seemed to be the glances
of passing royalty.
A king and queen of leisure,
Companions of the night,
Artists passing in the street.

Christi Manley
I didn’t eat lunch that day. It was Thursday.

The photography class I was taking for extra-credit my senior year of high school met on Thursdays, and we had an assignment due—our first “perfect” prints were to be made.

I met a classmate at the photography lab at 12:30. Since we had two free periods following lunch, our schedules allowed us to work uninterrupted until the 3:30 photography class. We took advantage of this unusually large block of lab time, and we were becoming good photographers because of these extra hours.

I made a few prints, trying to decide which picture I wanted to concentrate on and slave over in doing the assignment. Finally, I decided. This picture would become the best I’ve ever done and always hold a deep meaning within its silver and black tones.

It was a picture of train tracks on Hutchinson Island. One rail emerged from each of the lower corners of the picture, converging into a train track. Raccoon or possum footprints walked down the rails and cross-ties, leaving a trail in the creosote. Trees, bearing new leaves with the coming spring, bordered the clearing the tracks cut down the middle of the small island. In the distance the rails split into four parallel tracks that continued to stretch out, disappearing in a gray haze.
I worked on the picture for almost four hours. When I finally developed the perfect print, I developed one extra. I wanted to give the photograph to my grandfather, Henry Lee Speir, Jr. He owned a company that built train bridges and had liked an earlier picture of train tracks I had taken—a less perfect picture.

Granddaddy formed Coastal Wrecking and Construction Company in 1971. At first the company only wrecked things, salvaging the scrap for a good profit, but one day by accident Granddaddy found himself stuck with a contract to build what he had been tearing down—a train bridge. That accident led to a hard life of spending weeks in the middle of Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina woods battling gnats, heat, cold, rain, and time to build one train bridge after the other. When he chose to come home for a weekend, he would come home on a Friday night and be back to the job site Sunday night. Since he was always working, I never really saw him for long periods of time, until right before his death.

One Sunday when I was twelve he asked if I wanted to go for a ride. I knew that he really just wanted to go to Dairy Queen. “I’ll go,” I said, acting like it was I who wanted to go get a banana split, “only if we can go by the D.Q.”

“O.K.,” he replied with a gleam in his eye.

As we rode through downtown Savannah, he broke his usually modest ways and shared a proud secret with me. “I built that train bridge,” he said, stopping the truck near a train trestle. Continuing on, he pointed out another bridge. As we rode past the tallest downtown building, the Desoto Hilton, he stated, “I tore down the Old Desoto, the one that was there before this one.”

Even though he was only stating facts, he acted like he had told me a secret. He had taken me into his confidence and shared a part of himself with me. His modest, introverted shell did not allow him to do this often, but on that day, he revealed his whole world to me—his work.

The next summer, I went with my dad out to Garden City where Granddaddy was building a train bridge unusually close to home. I saw him work for the first time. At that young age, I was impressed by his command over thirty men. He had them running from one side of the bridge to the other, moving cross-ties, lowering cranes, and everything else imaginable. I was amazed. A few years later when I worked for him for a month, I realized that his job was harder than I had ever suspected, and he worked others hard. The men worked as hard as he demanded, and they didn’t complain about the dawn to dusk hours or the consecutive long weeks of working without a day off. He ran his business with a strict hand, but he rewarded those loyal men and bailed them out of trouble whenever they needed his help. He worked hard, the same dawn to dusk hours, and he expected others to work hard also. When I worked for him, I was not his grandson, but just another employee. I learned what hard work was.

I rushed home with the intent of eating a quick supper and taking the picture to his house. He would be getting home from two weeks in the Alabama woods where he was currently working, taking an unusual Friday off since it was Easter weekend.

When I drove into the driveway, my younger brother came running out of the house. “Granddaddy Speir is dead,” he hurried to tell me. “He had a heart attack and died.”

I managed to walk into the house. As I sat down, the phone rang, and my Dad told me what he knew. Granddaddy had just eaten lunch. He backed a truck up to the work site, got out, walked around to let the tailgate down, and collapsed. He died at the age of sixty-three of a massive heart attack before he even hit the ground. He died while I made that photograph for him.

The suddenness shocked the family. After the many years of hard work leading up to the perfect retirement, all his efforts had gone for nothing.

Looking at his body in the funeral home, I felt a weird nausea sweep over me. I was partly stunned by the fact that I could look at the body. The gray suit he wore made his face look brighter than it was, and the pale smile was forced, not the natural smile rarely seen on his lips. The large coffin made his thin five-eight frame look even smaller than when he stood next to me. His closed eyes looked naked without his wire rimmed glasses framing them. I wondered if the glasses were tucked inside his well-worn glasses case inside his coat pocket. Before, I could never bring myself to look at a dead person, no matter who it was. But I looked at him, and it wasn’t the Granddaddy that I had come to know just re-
I remembered how he smiled that smile when he ate his Frosted Flakes.

Actually, he never called them Frosted Flakes. "Mama, we’re runnin’ low on Tony Tigers," he would tell Grandma, hinting for her to buy some more Frosted Flakes. Every morning he would sit there and eat a bowl while reading the paper and drinking coffee. Occasionally he would slip an extra spoonful of sugar on top of the cereal, and other times he would settle on some fruit that my grandma offered. Back then I didn’t think anything odd about a granddaddy eating Frosted Flakes.

He never really smiled much. For the longest time one of the only smiles of his that I knew was from a photograph of him at ten years old standing next to Henry Ford and looking up with a schoolboy smile to see a similar smile.

Only a few months earlier I had finally earned a smile from him. I was in a play at school, Waiting for Lefty by Clifford Odets. The night before the opening during dress rehearsal, I severely sprained my ankle and had to have it placed in a cast. The next night, after keeping the ankle iced and elevated all day, I managed to hobble smoothly around the stage. I was so good that many people in the audience didn’t realize I had a cast on my foot, my doctor included, until the reception afterwards. At the play, Granddaddy smiled, “Nice play.” I don’t know if it was because I was bold enough to stand in front of all those people—something he would never do. He was uncomfortable saying grace before dinner to a large group of people, even if they were all friends. Or maybe my stoic performance impressed him. Either way, he smiled that schoolboy smile.

But I later coaxed a bigger smile out of him when I asked him about Georgia Tech. He graduated from Tech in 1950, the first member of his family to graduate from college, and every year since, he would go to one football game. And every year I received a new Georgia Tech souvenir: a pennant, a stuffed yellow jacket, a seat cushion, a mug, a program, and on and on. But the day when I told him I wanted to go to Tech, his eyes lit up like I’ve never seen. “Good,” he said in his most excited voice. Never mind that I wanted to be a computer science major and not an engineer—he wanted someone to carry on the Tech legacy. He even offered to help pay for college when he heard that finances might keep me from going there. It was so important to him that someone in the family go to Tech that I began wondering how he ever let his youngest daughter, his last child with a chance to go to Tech, go to the University of Georgia. After he died, the enthusiasm I had for going to Tech died. I settled on another school.

I took one last look at his smiling face before I walked out of the funeral home, remembering the final time I saw him smile. My grandparents let me hold an oyster roast at the house one cool day the fall before he died, my senior year of high school. It was the weekend before homecoming, and the party was to plan the senior class homecoming activities in a social atmosphere. Even with all the oyster roasts and low country boils I had been to at Granddaddy’s, and all the times I watched him prepare the main seafood dish, I never saw him as happy as he was that day steaming open oysters, throwing them out on a long table covered with newspaper, and helping seventeen year old girls learn how to open an oyster that didn’t want to open. I never saw him smile any bigger, except in a photograph in one of my grandma’s photo albums where he is holding me—his first grandson—in his arms for the first time. I don’t know why he was so happy that fall day. Maybe it was his dreaming about his first grandson being the first family member to follow him to Georgia Tech. Everyone in the family noticed how happy he was.

A year after he died, he and I became closer friends. I had to do an English paper on a member of my family I didn’t know too much about, and ever since he died I had thought about how little I knew about his years before he was my granddaddy. And one day over lunch, my grandmother told me who he was before I knew him.

I never knew he was superstitious. He was so scared of black cats that if one ran out in front of him while he was driving, he would turn around so as not to cross its path. One day he ran across the path of a black cat before he could turn. He had three flat tires before he could get the remaining two miles to the job site. And he never started a work job on a Friday for fear of bad luck.

I never knew that he kept a silver dollar in his pocket his entire life. He had gotten the silver dollar for his tenth birthday. After he died, I saw the coin,
as did many people in the family, for the first time. It was worn smooth and thin from being rubbed by his calloused fingers whenever he became nervous in a trying social situation.

I never knew he kept his wallet under his mattress. He did this for privacy, my grandmother told me. “Certain things were too personal for anyone else to have any business with,” she explained, “and his wallet was one of those things.” He even kept it under the mattress at home. After he died, my grandmother discovered three pictures of her in his wallet. She had sent him each of the three pictures while he was in the Navy during World War II. He never replaced them with a newer photograph.

My grandmother never knew that friends had confided in him for years. When he died several family friends told her that they had been calling him with their problems for many years. He never told even his wife that he talked to them.

One fascinating thing that I learned was about the house I had helped build. It meant more to him than most people knew. His father, Henry, Sr., had inherited a large farm from his father. My granddaddy grew up on this farm, loving the large house they lived in and the endless woods to wander along. He especially loved the river that ran through part of the farm, and he fished there every day. He decided at that young age that he would live on that river forever. During the late 1930’s with World War II looming in the background, the Army came in and bought the thousand-acre farm for a fraction of its worth to build Ft. Stewart. His father took the money, which was still a large sum since the land was worth so much. My granddaddy never had a home that he felt comfortable in again until the house on the Ogeechee River was finished—the house on the river that he had always wanted. He had found the land the house was built on ten years before they built the house, and he knew then that was where his house would be. He dedicated his life to building a home on the banks of a river. But just when he was ready to enjoy that home, he died, losing everything those long days and weeks of work had gone toward building.

The Sunday after he died was Easter. A sunrise church service had been held at my grandparents’ the previous Easter, and a similar service had been planned that year. My grandma insisted that the service still be held: “He would want it that way.” As the preacher finished his sermon, which frequently crossed back to his eulogy a few days earlier, the sun pushed aside the clouds to shine across the river onto the gathering. All eyes focused on the rising sun, watching it rise above the marshes that the Ogeechee River snaked through on its way to the Atlantic Ocean. It was and still is the most brilliant sunrise I have seen.

Every once in a while I’ll stop what I am doing. Following an urge deep inside me, I’ll go look at that picture of the train tracks and try to see what lies behind that grey haze on the horizon.
Papa

I remember his eyes,
    like warm ice,
gazing thru panes of glass,
    and his skilled hands,
that I so loved and feared—

(though never did he bring to bear those gentle
    extensions of himself);

I remember (with a sense of wonder),
    how all creatures seemed to follow him,
as if powerless to resist his lure,
(yet he did not manipulate or deceive);

I remember his simplistic greatness,
    so carefully wrapped in tissue,
creased and worn with time
(he was well-loved by Chronos, too);

But I remember most clearly
    the day he left
    to join the One who loved him best,

(and I never had the chance to say good-bye).

Elaine Hall

Life Goes On
(For my Father)

The sun rises
dew fades
leaves rustle in the wind
birds fly
cars go by
tides come and go
children laugh
radios play
flowers bloom
rain falls
derriner's cooking
a child is born
a cat purrs softly
chores done
the sun sets
tears flow through
another day
without you.

Marguerite Dismukes
Solitary Confinement—Laura Beth Cohen
The Comrade Griffith Show
Brad Squibb

Picture this. A dimension of sight and sound, space and time, apple pie and lazy summer days. A game of checkers at the courthouse with Deputy Barney Fife or a relaxing discussion of the nature of man with Floyd the barber. Aunt Bea has just put a roast in the oven, and Andy and Opie skip rocks, fish with homemade rods, and ponder the existence of private property. Communism has swept the countryside, and there is no longer a struggle between classes in Mayberry. Also gone with the “radical rupture” of “the Communist revolution” are Mayberry’s “traditional ideas.” You have just entered The Marxberry Zone.


*       *       *

“Gee, pa, sure is great that all the labor in Mayberry is equally shared now. We sure have a lot of time to fish together; but golly, so does everyone else! It sure is crowded at our private fishin’ hole today!”

“Well, Ope, it’s not our private hole anymore. There isn’t any private property anymore. The Communists abolished private property.”

“Why’d they go and do that pa? Don’t Commies like to fish?”

“Well, ya see, son, the Communists fought for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class.”

“What?”

“They wanted what was best for you and me and Aunt Bea and Barney and Thelma Lou and Goober and Floyd and . . . .”

“Even Otis, pa?”

“Yep, see, we were being exploited and only them Communist fellas had the clear understandin’ to see what was goin’ on, and to start our proletarian movement.”

“Well, where are they now? How come I never see any of’em?”

“Oh, they’re around, I guess. I don’t rightly know where they went after they set us straight.”
"Ya mean, they came to Mayberry and organized the revolution and led us through it and after it was over they just left?"

"I guess so, Ope."

"Hey, pa! I got one! I got one!"

"A Communist, Ope?"

"No, a fish! A fish!"

"Well, now, son, that fish doesn't belong to you. That's a public fish. You have no right to claim it for your own."

"Aw, gee, pa! This no-private-property thing might not be so swell after all!"

"Well, son, us proletarians didn't rightly know what was good for us until we got set straight. And now it's obvious that we're better off, don'tcha think, Ope?"

"Well, gee, I guess so, pa, but why can't I keep the fish?"

* * *

"Yeah, Floyd, I could tell them bourgeois folk were up to something fishy."

"Oh, yeah, Barney, h-h-how c-could ya tell?"

"Well, ya see, someone with as trained and sharp senses as I have can detect these things way in advance. Them bourgeois fellas slowly and carefully resolved everyone's personal worth into exchange value. They converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, even you, Floyd, into paid wage-laborers!!"

"O-o-oh, yeah!"

"I could tell right from the start that them bourgeois fellas were sneaky and greedy and only out for themselves. They veiled the proletariat in religious and political illusions and substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation! Them kind of people can't help but exploit people politically, economically, and religiously. It's egotistical calculation! It's their nature. Just like the proletariat nature was to be oppressed and live a slavish existence of mere race propagation. And there was competition between the workers as well as the bourgeois."

"Hey, Barney? What happened to a bourgeois' nature when he became part of the proletariat? Did he have to change nature, or could he keep his old one?"

"Oh, be quiet, Goober! Anyway, those Communist fellas came along and nipped the whole thing in-the-bud! Ya see, Floyd, the proletariat movement was self-conscious and independent . . . . . . ."

"But, Barney, that Mark feller said the proletarian movement was inevitable. How could it be self-conscious and independent?"

"Goober! One more word . . . just one more word . . . You see, Floyd, the proletarians were called into existence."

"O-o-oh, yeah!"

"But, Barney?!"

"Goober, just nip it, nip-it-in-the-bud!"

* * *

"Oh, hello, Thelma Lou, come on in! I was just putting a roast in for supper tonight."

"Oh, Aunt Bea, speaking of roasting, it's a good thing those fixed, fast-frozen family relations and ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions were boiled away with the revolution."

"Yes, for all that was solid melted into the air, and it wasn't long before man was faced with his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind."

"Absolutely, Bea, but why aren't there any black people in Mayberry?"

"I don't know, Thelma Lou."

"Maybe Communism abolished classification of races and racism with religion and morality."

"I don't know, Thelma Lou."

"Ya know, Bea, sometimes I think the portrayal of women on this show is exactly like the bourgeois—a mere instrument of production!"

"I don't know, Thelma Lou."

"What about the differences in age and sex erased by the bourgeois? And the Communist revolution that supposedly broke down all class struggles? Are we still basically copies of each other or do we have the power of individual choice or expression?"

"I don't know, Thelma Lou."

"If the foundation of the bourgeois family was based on capital and private gain, what is the foundation of the post-communist revolution family? Are we in families? Oh, God, Bea! You might not have a family! And God!? Is there religion?"

"I don't know, Thelma Lou."

"But, Bea, is our system of values the same? Are all men equal? Is Goober just as good or bad as my Barney? Is Marx's theoretical society very practical? And what about Otis? Otis and Marx could actually be related!!"

"I don't know, Thelma Lou. We better wait 'til Andy comes home."

Submitted for your approval. A world of contradiction and parody. A world caught between there and here, then and now. Each individual with valid questions and seemingly few answers. But then again . . . . . . . This is the Marxberry Zone.
To Those Who Were

To those who were
.... Too blind to see,
   may you forever see my face,
.... Too deaf to hear my cries,
   may you forever hear my scream,
.... Too busy to help,
   may time forever stand still,
.... Too scared to try,
   may I forever haunt you,
.... Too foolish to do anything,
   may my blood forever remain on your hands.

Heather Mitzi Crow

Kentucky Oak

Kentucky oak standing in the corner,
Tape at one end, scars at the other.
Soft tan grain in perfect blend,
A small crack was a fitting end.

An old man in a rocking chair
With sagging eyes and thinning hair
Rises from his seat to get it
And curses the spinning sphere that split it.

Cory Hill

Descending Liquid

descending
   liquid
      interrupted
         pools quietly
            in the night

the
   liquid
      runs,

purifies,
   nothing
      remains.

Craig Kozlowski
The Drunk and the Poet

I

“How do you live, O man of rhyme,
Without the sweet taste of wine,
Does your heart hunger not
For succor from time to time,
Doesn’t your soul crave to soar
To lofty heights scaled through drink,
Doesn’t your mind wish to behold
Wonders that Bacchus can bring;
Men of whatever hue or kind
At one time all are slaves of wine,
But you’re truly one of a kind
For escape seems not to seek your mind,
Do tell me what O man of rhyme
Keeps you from the quart of wine.”

II

“Though in this world my self is seen
My mind does from time to time
Escape to a world unseen,
And behold truly wondrous sights
Sights that so delight the heart
That it knows of torment not a part,
And leave the soul so deeply touched
That full of vigor it rises much;
Thus, in mysticism escapes my mind,
And needs not escape in wine,
But other than that we are both drunks,
For intoxicated you are with wine,
And I’m just as drunk on rhyme.”

Vikram Kapur
“There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning.”

Thornton Wilder, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*
Meet Me at Night

Meet me at night
Where nature and shadows are our only witnesses.
Where our minds shutter the cold, and skin is awakened by the moonlight.

Follow me through its hours
Where the rain streams to vitalize our desires.
Where touch moves in legato and passion uncovers its mystique and powers.

Greet me in the morning
Where the sun walks as king and larks announce his arrival.
Where thoughts begin to rest dreams, and love holds no blanket.

Dina Vogel

The Piano

A piano of long ago stands disregarded
In the desolate corner of the deserted house
   Unplayed, forgotten, remembering
The years the dove-like hands rested fiercely,
   Blindly pounding out a blatant expression by Bach
   or mildly stroking out a mellow medley of Beethoven

Once haughty about the artists who touched its keys,
The Piano now longs for anyone to come upon it
   with unstinting love to beat
out a melody ever so carefully,
   entertaining even no one or someone
only to fill a world or even an ear.

Wende K. Carver
From the Mouths of Babes

"And so you would be a philosopher" the old woman laughed.
"At twenty-years and one, what do you know?"
The girl spoke without hesitation, as was her custom.
"At twenty-years and one, this is all that I know:
Wisdom is the retention of both knowledge and mercy
in the face of adversity.
Love is best served when it is a dish made on rare occasion,
but then in bounty.
Truth is to open one's mouth and speak with both
conviction and compassion.
And Tranquility is the eventual alchemy of pairing
dignity with vision."
To the learned maiden's dismay, the old woman laughed again.
"Surely you know more that that, at twenty-years and one!
This is the question, yes, the very point of Philosophy:
    What is Utopia?"
The girl's reply came slowly this time, as she was
taken aback, "A perfect world is simply this:
    To keep good company and pray to a kindly god.
To eat hearty food, dance with delight, and drink dark wine.
    Yet most of all it is this:
To have a shade tree large enough to keep
all one's friends cool in summer,
so that, upon their leisure, they may disclose
all idle dreams, worthy thought, and good talk.
    Truly, ma'am, this is all that I know."
This time her teacher did not laugh; at length, she said,
"That is more than most. Go then, child,
    and philosophize."

Christi Manley
The Debate

In danger, close to the edge of the road,
He earnestly jabs at the stirred-up air.
Countering thoughts with silent debaters,
The demented disputant strides next to the curb.
Asking the trees to back up his argument,
He stops when his eyes meet with mine in the car.

In fact, does he see me as I wait in my car
And know that I'm real, lined up here in the road?
Or do I become like the noise and the air—
An irritant much like his ceaseless debaters,
A new set of eyes that arrives at the curb
To set him off into some meaningless argument?

Does his mind never tire of undying argument?
Can't he turn off his babble as I, in my car,
Can switch off the radio as I travel the road?
Is he doomed waking hours to spend motioning air,
While valiantly coping with ghostly debaters?
I sense no real answers as I watch from the curb.

All alone, without keeper, this man at the curb,
With no one to bolster his ongoing argument,
Just drivers who stare, as I do, from a car,
Wondering why he's allowed near the road.
I voice my outrage while I fan the hot air,
While realizing we're nothing but idle debaters.

His face shows deep lines from his years with debaters,
Six inches of beard I can see from the curb.
That his clothes need a wash cannot be an argument.
Other needs are too hidden to spot from my car.
Does his world include places besides just this road?
Has he a roof for protection, and not just the air?

Again the demented man's hand cuts the air
As his tirade continues with persistent debaters.
I try not to look as I pull away from the curb
But my eyes won't obey, as though locked in an argument.
He's out of clear sight now, he's far from my car,
But near in my thoughts as I take off down the road.

Just a demented debater, arms flailing the air
In an argument that no one feels willing to curb,
Now in my mind's eye as I drive in my car.

Gayle Whitaker
Reach Out—Robbie
Speechless

Characters—Casey: seven year old daughter of Jeff and Dawn Stubbs, friends of Don.
Don: ASC English Major who enjoys writing, but often has "blocks" and becomes discouraged when trying to come up with something profound.

Scene—A gathering of friends. Numerous conversations taking place simultaneously. One between Casey and Don.

Casey: Donny, what's your last name?
Don: Newman.
Casey: How do you spell it?
Don: Well, you put two words together. "New" and "man." You can spell "man," can't you?
Casey: M-A-N (writing it down).
Don: OK, now spell "new."
Casey: Ummmmm . . .
Don: You know what new is, don't you?
Casey: Well, let's see. It's like when something new . . . Like a new pencil is new, but an old pencil is chewed up and speechless . . .

Don, with a bewildered gape and near epiphanic look, is at a loss for words.

Don Newman

Brittany—Mary Robinson


**Just As I Am**

I may not talk like other guys—
I may not walk like the other guys, but—
You still love me, just as I am
Maybe it’s hard for you to understand the words I speak,
but—
you take the time.

I walk slowly, but you seem not to mind
You love me, just as I am—
When we go out you don’t try to hide—
Nor do you seem to mind how people look at you and me.

You don’t treat me like an infant, but—
You treat me with loving dignity—
I love you for loving me . . .

**R. Glenn Moscoso**

**My Corner**

From beneath the grasses shy violets
Peep and softly greet
The weary mother on her retreat.
Along the path to the trickling brook
Cardinals and Blue Birds usher with
Lilting refrains.

Strong ferns encroach the path to the
Babbling stream.
The fortress of Poplar and Hickories
and Oaks
Compel strife its hold to revoke.
A cordial Cypress summons repose.

Bright green leaves, melodic refrains
The gentle rhythm of the stream—
Refresh the winter dryness of her soul.

Like a dry sponge in an ocean of
New life She bathed in the tenderness
and grandeur
of Her Creator.

**Suzane Wiggins**

**True Love**

This is the nature of
true love:
That you may see
the flaw,
And pity that your beloved
had to endure its making.
That you may see
the flaw,
And feel anger that they
who loved him before you
could not have saved the lover from it.
This is the nature of true love:
That you may see the flaw,
and, yet, love the flawed.

**Christi Manley**
War Memories
Lisette de Groot

Half a century ago, I was a young girl living in the Netherlands. It was a time of oppression by the Germans during WW II and although the population as a whole suffered, children led a normal life: going to school, doing homework and playing. At least, there was a routine. If the father had not been taken in a "razzia" by the Germans to work in a factory in Germany, most kids had a two-parent household. My Dad, with whom I was close, also managed to stay out of the Germans' hands, but there were some close calls. Living in an occupied country, where the people are not free to congregate, where one has to be careful when talking to a friend because a traitor might overhear something, creates tension. This tension influences behavior in adults as well as children. Nevertheless, it also brings families closer together.

When war broke out on May 10, 1940, our family lived in a small town not far from the Hague and Leiden, where my father was stationed in the Dutch Army. At about 4 A.M., we were awakened by the droning of hundreds of airplanes on their way to bomb the city of Rotterdam. It was soon light, and overhead the sky looked black. Feeling overwhelmed, my father decided to take action. Dressed in his Army uniform, he stood in the middle of the street, his gun aimed at the airplanes. "If I could just hit the gastank," he said, "there would be one airplane less." Although he tried for quite some time, he was not successful. Disappointed, he came back inside. Then, we watched the first Dutch fighter plane being shot down, falling helplessly and burning to the ground. The pilot parachuted down and was later treated in a make-shift
hospital down the street. I was impressed and subdued, seeing the stretcher with the wounded man carried inside. We had watched it all thru the small window in our front door, while shooting was going on, not realizing that it was dangerous. We could easily have been hurt! As the war continued, people learned how to protect themselves by going into the cellar or in a closet or bathroom. Sometimes only the bathroom walls of a house were left standing, but people would still be alive!

After Holland had capitulated after just a few days, life continued. Gradually, we were surrounded by German soldiers who marched singing thru the streets, who confiscated homes for offices, and later bicycles as well. A bicycle was the main vehicle of transportation. If one lost that, it meant walking to get groceries, or to visit friends and family. I remember toward the end of the war that my mother asked my Dad specifically whether she could use her bike to go to the store. It seemed safe, because no bikes had been confiscated lately. So off my mother went. To her surprise, when she reached the corner of Main Street, a young German soldier ordered her off her bike, saying, “Give it to me,” and peddled away. Goodbye, bike! Mother was very angry and upset! And this bike was still in good condition, although it no longer had regular tires. My father was always fooling with bicycles. People were riding bikes without tires, with wooden tires, and also tires made out of rubber garden hose. Our bikes had double garden hose tires: one inside another. My father’s proud invention!

In September of 1944, we lived with my grandmother and her lady friend/companion in a big house in the center of Holland near Arnhem. It seemed safer to move there from the western part of the country and we would be closer to the farms for food supply. That month was the big attempt by the allied forces to conquer Arnhem, which lies on the Rhine river. From the kitchen window we watched hundreds of parachutists coming down in a field somewhere in Arnhem. Imagine the tremendous excitement! Even though a big battle lay ahead, we anticipated liberation in a few days. But it was not to be, and everyone was immensely disappointed. The Germans were not giving up; Arnhem was practically destroyed and its people had been evacuated right before the start of the battle. Our house was filled with evacuees, our relatives from Arnhem, but after a few days the Germans ordered all to leave town, except for my other grandmother who was allowed to stay because of her age. It was a desolate sight to see them leave, parents walking with small children and few belongings. Would we ever see them again, and where would they find a place to stay? So many questions and fears of the unknown.

After the disappointment of the failed liberation attempt, followed by the separation from our relatives, a feeling of desolation set in. Yet, we had to try to make the best of it, and grin and bear it.

Pretty soon the household chores of day to day living kept everyone busy. All schools were closed now, but after a short time about ten or twelve children were given daily lessons to prepare them for high school, actually the 7th grade. We met in a room of the local gas factory for a while, also in the garage of the doctor whose son was in our class. It was fortunate that our teacher was willing to do this, although the parents probably paid him with cash or food. Now and then our village was attacked by projectiles shot from tanks. My father had instructed me how to protect myself. “When you hear the boom, boom, boom, in the distance,” he said, “you have to listen to the direction of the sound, so that if the building gets hit, the wall will protect you instead of falling upon you.” After the boom, boom, boom, one also hears the whistling sound, followed by the impact. So sure enough, one day, while walking to school (the gas factory), I heard the dreaded boom, boom, boom sound, like distant thunder. Quickly I ran to the other side of the street, lying down flat on the ground against the wall of a big building. More children and adults came and also lay down. How proud I felt that I had taken the initiative and done the right thing! Although we were scared, the bombs did not fall in that street, but a couple of blocks away. Meanwhile, I had to move a few inches several times to make room for the others, until I was almost with my nose in a dog’s droppings. I did not particularly care for it, but reasoned laconically that it was still better than being killed. As soon as the scary whistling and explosions stopped, everyone got up and went on his way, as if nothing had happened. One tries to harden inside and act stoically. It is the best attitude, for otherwise one would fall apart.
In order to survive, there were many chores to do. One of the chores in those days was standing in line for bread or milk. The milk by then was very thin and bluish looking. Absolutely no-fat milk, without added milk solids as we have today. Everyone came with his own container, like a pitcher or pan. Sometimes we stood in line for a long time, and when it was our turn finally, or almost finally, the milk supply had run out so that we went home empty-handed. One time I remember clearly. My mother was expecting and sent me out to get the milk. When I arrived at the store, there was already a long line of people waiting. Everyone waited patiently that day and made small-talk. Suddenly, the storekeeper came outside and announced: “Anyone who is expecting may come to the head of the line.” Immediately I went to the front, but the whole line of people roared with laughter. Here was this eleven year old girl, trying to get ahead, who apparently was not pregnant! How embarrassing! All I could mumble was: “But it is for my mother who is expecting.” Apparently there was enough milk for that day, so I had to get back in my place in the line. The people had a short moment of laughter, thereby momentarily forgetting hardships. Although on this occasion I was the butt of the joke and didn’t mean to be, or cared for it, I can now appreciate the humor.

What was very difficult for children as well as adults, was not to give oneself away when soldiers came knocking at the door to look for the man in the house. Those were anxious moments for all. My father became careless one day and stood in the living room when the soldiers passed our house. The Germans actually had seen the glimmer of my father’s watch crystal. Luckily, we had also noticed them, so Dad hid under the floor of the house. To do this, he went in the coat closet, lifted up the linoleum, removed the cover of the square entrance to the low crawlspace, and then mother quickly replaced the cover and the linoleum. All this had to be done in a jiffy, because we couldn’t let the Germans wait at the front door. They were knocking impatiently, shouting: “Open the door, NOW!” Coming inside, they were very determined to find my father. They looked in every closet, went upstairs looking everywhere, came back downstairs, and checked the coat closet three times! They insisted they had seen him, but mother told them they were wrong; her husband was working in Germany. Finally they departed. Meanwhile, my father sweated it out underground and almost gave himself away because he had to cough. He thought he would burst! From then on he was very careful not to show himself in the front of the house. We were all so relieved that he had this narrow escape. I learned during the war that lying or hiding the truth from the enemy is permissible when you have to protect yourself. At other times, a lie told would result in punishment. Yet, some people used the war as an excuse when they lied, claiming they were unable to learn right from wrong.

The “hunger winter” of 1944-45 was a cold and dark winter. Cold, because there was no more coal to burn in the stoves. People cut down trees if they could (it was not allowed) for firewood, or anything else that would burn, like gate posts, and old door, etc. The cooking was done on a flat-top stove in the living room. Dark, because we had no electricity and the Germans had ordered all windows darkened at night to hinder the allies. No light was allowed to shine thru the curtains. On December 1, when my brother was born, there was a knocking on the front door. My father threw all caution aside and opened the door himself. Two German soldiers stepped inside. Immediately they wanted to go upstairs, but my father stood in the way explaining that his wife was in labor. The soldiers brushed him aside and quickly went up the stairs, entering the room next to my mother’s. In that room stood a burning candle on the shelf of the washstand, its light reflected in a mirror and shining thru a small opening of the dark curtains. The soldier quickly closed the curtains completely and gave a warning that it should not happen again. Both soldiers left. My father was much relieved, because he had been unwise to face the Germans instead of hiding. The Germans could easily have taken him.

Evenings were spent in the kitchen, the warmest place of the house. There was a small gaslight, although at 10 P.M. it was shut off by the authorities. The family played many card games around the kitchen table. My grandmother knitted house slippers, sweaters, anything. Old garments were unraveled to be made into new apparel. Food was very scarce. There was no meat and we ate sugar beets daily. Also fodderbeets, which were a little less
sweet. Eel-baskets were set out in the creek that ran through our yard, and big, fat eels were caught. It was my father's duty to kill and skin the eels. The eels would be slithering with their heads up over the patio, making a "kah-kah" sound. Dad, who was very sensitive and hated this job, would grab an eel to chop its head off. The eel would wriggle its whole body around my father's arm, making the task difficult. I would watch my father's and the eel's struggle. Finally, the eels were chopped in five-inch pieces and then fried in a pan with a lid, because those pieces were still wriggling and jumping. The meat tasted delicious. It was very greasy, but we all had a need for fat.

There was another occasion when we had meat. This time my Dad shot a big, fat wood pigeon out of a blue spruce with his air-gun. He was so surprised at his own skill. Dad plucked the bird, Mother cooked it, but when we set down for dinner, Dad could not bring himself to even taste it.

Gradually, the winter turned into spring. The Allied forces were coming closer again to liberate the northern part of Holland. Finally, our town came under fire. By now water also was shut off. We decided it would be safer to sleep in the cellar. There were ten adults and three children, with my brother sleeping in the cradle. A big ceramic pot, normally used to put up sauerkraut, was used for a toilet, and stood in a corner of the cellar. An older gentleman evacuee refused to use it; instead he went upstairs to the bathroom, in between the shootings. He was quite deaf, so maybe he was not as disturbed by all the noise and danger as we were. The cellar was directly underneath the kitchen. When the grenade bombs shot by allied tanks hit the kitchen, there was a cacophonous sound of the bomb explosion, bricks falling, as well as the clattering noise of pans knocked down from shelves. One grenade landed right close to the protected cellar window into the septic tank. Splash!! This was a so-called "blind-runner," meaning a bomb that did not explode on impact. Then suddenly, we heard water running after a bomb hit. Quickly, my father located the main water line and closed the faucet. The water stopped running. Finally, after five nights and four days the allies were in town! It was a beautiful spring day, April 16. My father had already pushed open the cellar door. This was not easy, because a five inch layer of rubble was on the kitchen floor. The roof was gone and he looked straight into a blue sky. Looking at the damage, he also noticed that the aquarium sitting on top of a cabinet was broken. All the water had run out. Dad realized then that the leaking water pipe had actually been the water running out of the aquarium. By coincidence the sound of running water stopped at the same time that the faucet was turned off. Because of nerves, nobody had remembered that we had been without water for days!

Although the bombing had stopped, we could hear the tanks in the main street and also the rapid fire of machineguns. The allies were here! Gradually everyone but myself went up the cellar stairs and into the house, assessing the damage and listening for the sounds outside. I was too scared and refused to come out of the safety of the cellar. My parents and the others let me be and walked to Main Street to see what was going on. Maybe after an hour they came back, urging me to come up, that it was really safe. I did not trust this calm; my nerves were shattered from the past few days. But I finally overwon my fear and we all went to Main Street, where the "Tommies" (soldiers) in tanks handed out cigarettes and chocolate. The population was jubilant. Everybody suddenly had Dutch red, white, and blue flags waving in the wind and people were singing "Orange in Top" (the color for the House of Orange). It was an overwhelming feeling to be outside and free. The hated Germans were either killed or taken prisoners of war; we were finally rid of them. Our family had survived and that evening we slept again in our own beds.

Although all these events happened a long time ago, they are impossible to forget. War is a dreadful thing, and I hope that our children and grandchildren will never have to experience it.
The Blood of Nature

The tall pines grow inside the glen which stretches
along a cool creek
bouncing
down
the mountain
becoming the old,
meandering river that slips
past the drying farmlands and sleepy swamps,
through dammed reservoirs,
under rusting bridges
and into the coastal marshes, filtering the water
from the garbage of the miles of civilization
the river journeyed through,
and finally the river
plunges into the sea
to help build culminating clouds
that the winds carry
back uphill and release
to the pines,
in a gentle rain,
the waters of the neighboring creek.

Ron Speir, Jr.
The Ocean

Love is like the ocean.  
Calm one minute, then raging and terrible  
the next.  
No warning given, uncaring of anyone or anything.  
Capable of incredible fury,  
but able to lap gently at your ankles.  
As if it exists only for your pleasure  
to enjoy and admire as if it has never been seen before.

But as peaceful as it may look on the surface  
One can never tell what is underneath.  
What horrors may be lurking there  
Just out of sight.  Waiting for the unlucky wader to  
wander by. To strike, to wound,  
to hurt as no other pain can hurt.

Sailors long ago, though they may have ruled the surface,  
were terrified of what was below, what they couldn’t see,  
Couldn’t control.  
As I am with love. I have mastered the surface,  
But what lies below I cannot even begin to control.  
Just like the ocean.

Or is it I who am like the ocean, or my love?  
We are both capable of the same sort of fury  
Are we not?  
Unable to understand ourselves except on the surface,  
Much less the horrors just beneath.  
Some say the ocean is the last frontier,  
I say they are wrong.  
It is love.

Something is like the ocean.  
But how can I tell what  
When I can’t even understand my own mind?

In Spite of Friendship

In spite of friendship  
Instead of love  
Because days gone by  
Without a thought  
To emotions or tender hearts  
By means of enduring hatred  
As well as a hardened heart.

In spite of friendship  
Instead of forgiveness  
Beneath the icy surface flows  
With traces of anger, and of guilt  
During moments of confusion  
’Til time is no more in the memory of men.

When time is no more  
In the memory of men  
During peace  
With regard to friendship  
With respect to love  
In place of haunting hatred  
Among the flowers of forgiveness  
Contentment.

Bonnie Payne
Out

Imperceptibly squeezing out
from under his arm,
she slides smoothly out
of the cramped warmth,
and tiptoes out
onto the cold planked floor.

Silently slipping into set-out clothes
in the darkened place,
she hurriedly stops
to look back at him,
his arm encircling her pillow,
unaware of the loss.

Escaping out
into the new still morning,
she exhales,
turning her head to see who is out,
anxious to be going.

Striding briskly, her enthusiasm out-
strips her composure,
and she lets out
a delirious,
unplanned,
out-of-control
whoop!

Gayle Whitaker
Loved One

Sometimes I think I see you
looking through the clouds at me;
a secret shared by no one
about the family.

I tell you things I know
you’ll want to hear about and then,
I tell you of my heart
and places that I’ve been.

Now granddaddy is with you
and building heavenly roads,
with bulldozers and graders
and instruments of gold.

Your grandmother, you would be proud,
grows sweeter every day,
and never does a day go by
that her thoughts don’t pass your way.

Little brothers you would not know them
grown so tall and handsome too,
the sensitive and lean one
and the one that looks like you.

John, the oldest grandson now,
fifteen, tall and vain,
while a girlfriend every moment
fills his thoughts and brain.

And Thomas little cousin
grown so tall and thin,
faces a battle with leukemia
and knows some of where you’ve been.

Emily and Rebekah,
little cousins at their best,
with cheerleaders and Barbie dolls
little girls like all the rest.

Laura, the cousin you especially asked for,
arrived with joy last year,
A little sweetheart, pink and precious,
so special and so dear.

Your granny and your papa,
sing a special little song,
they remember you with fondness
and they know you sing along.

Your daddy now is growing
wiser every day,
his love for you these past four years
has grown in every way.

Our family has grown older
your memories have grown dear,
as we think of you in heaven
and miss you so down here.

Love, Mom

Tina Miles
Laying Waste to an American Generation
Russell Jones

It was an afternoon meant for children. The sun was shining down through broken clouds that were being pushed along by some comforting breeze that coaxed an occasional brown leaf from one of the trees surrounding a small, grassy field meant for a boy, his dog and a frisbee. Yet there were no children, and from the distant look on the face of the lone, elderly man, there never had been, and probably never would be.

He sat in his cold steel wheelchair, alone in the shade of an old pine tree that grew nearest the asphalt parking lot bordering the expansive field. I had watched him struggle to arrive in his spot, fighting with the wheelchair in small patches of dirt with tree roots that protruded from the earth just far enough to make getting over them a monumental chore, requiring total effort from his aging muscles. Upon finally arriving under his tree, he wheeled over to what must have been a familiar spot as he jostled his wheelchair an inch or two in several directions until he seemed happy with the way he was facing. And so he sat— not reading, not writing, not eating or drinking, but looking. I feel sure he was not looking at the field or the clouds, but rather at his memories. He seemed almost lost in them, as America is lost in what to do with him.

It's shameful that America finds it convenient to shut away a generation after an arbitrary age deadline strikes. Retirement is forced on many seniors at 65, and some companies encourage early retirement with bonuses and parties. The same quick pace of the world that enforces the withdrawal of the elderly from working society also dictates that the younger generation input overwhelming amounts of time and energy to keep pace, and a
problem develops. The solution for many Americans tends to be a Retirement Home. (While some may call it a rest home, or nursing home, or whatever, I will borrow from Shakespeare that “That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”) This sad scenario represents a missed opportunity for many Americans, not just the old, but also the young.

For instance, I grew up knowing my grandfather to be a respectable man whom I looked forward to seeing, not as a broken man surrounded by other elderly people, some of whom were much worse off than he. This surely would have diminished my enthusiasm to see him and would have forever erased any opportunity for him to pass on to me his greatest gift — the gift of teaching.

Vernon Mixter was his name, and although he has long since passed away, his influence continues to guide me through life. He had about him certain qualities that defined for me terms such as determination, commitment, respect and endurance. These and many other lessons I learned from him, along with the way he unconsciously taught them to me, will stick with me forever.

For as long as I can remember, my grandfather had a wooden leg below his left knee. I think he lost his leg in an accident, although I can’t say for sure because the subject hardly ever came up. To me, it was just a natural part of my grandfather. He never complained about it, or even mentioned it, really. He endured it with dignity. It was a good lesson.

I remember he was a great flying enthusiast. So dedicated was he that he built a Piper Cub airplane in his backyard. I never got to see him fly it, but I’ve seen pictures of him standing tall next to it. His emotions emanate from the picture and give away his feeling of pride and joy for his plane. Sadly, the reason I never got to see him fly in his plane, or fly with him, is the F.A.A. stripped him of his pilot’s license when he lost his leg. He still took me out to fly his plane, though. In his determination not to abandon his love of flying, he turned to building remote controlled model airplanes, and he would take me to the park to help fly them. Carefully he would explain to me what ailerons were, and what the function for the rudder was; then with a quick upward thrust we would launch the plane into flight.

He was determined to pursue his dreams, and he shared them with me. It was a good lesson.

Our camping trips at Four Lakes Campground also provided insightful memories about my grandfather. After the required campground meal of well done hamburgers and scorched hot dogs with a side of baked beans, Mom would break out the guitar and the women would start singing those corny folk songs I was surely too cool to sing. There was one song, however, that I could put up with, and even looked forward to hearing. The Green, Green Grass of Home was the name of the song, and part of it requires someone to talk to the music, not sing. This is where my grandfather came in. Somberly he would start into it. “The old town looks the same, as I step down from the train...” It wasn’t the words so much that held the meaning for me, but the atmosphere surrounding the moment. All would be quiet with the exception of the crackling of the campfire and the rhythmic strumming of the guitar as the voice of my grandfather carried everyone into himself. He had everyone’s attention without asking for it; he had everyone’s respect without demanding it. It was a good lesson.

Looking back, it seems that my grandfather lived a full life, for although he was taken from me by a heart attack when I was very young, he had the opportunity to tell me of many experiences and share with me first hand many of the lessons he learned along the way. This is the way it should be, but tragically, today’s society all too often relinquishes its elderly to the condescending hands of strangers, feeling its commitment filled with an occasional visit or telephone call. I can’t help but wonder if this is the case for the elderly man who was sitting under the pine tree.

When I last saw him, he was asleep in his wheelchair, holding his head in his left hand as he slumped down. A nurse dressed in clinical white from her hat to her shoes approached the man, politely shook him awake, and started to wheel him back inside the home. Where was this old man’s grandson? What good is coming from shutting this man back inside a sterile room where the four walls close in on him? There are lessons to be learned, experiences to be shared, all too valuable to be missed. On this beautiful afternoon, where were this man’s children?
It's Only Quiet If You’re Not Listening

The feel of fresh washed
sand
Smells of wet sea weed
Shore line and endless
sea
Musical air
Cotton candy hair
Star fish, seagulls and
sand dollars
Sticky skin
Red pain and lotion
lava sand
Laughter and joy
A thankful breeze
Moon slivers
Waves of thunder
Echo in ice
Sounds of still

Deb Domako

A Contradiction

Life begins not at birth
With shut eyes
And innocent cries.
Nor does life with puberty spring.
It starts to rise,
Then briefly dies.
And life doesn’t come with
the adulthood moon,
With responsibility’s hold
'Round freedom’s god.

No, I don’t think life starts then
When youth is sold
And love is cold

For me—
Life
Starts

Now.

JHP
Liquification

I find
That within the reach of my waves
I stand on chance of ever liquifying
even the slightest tinge of time
that drifts wondrously between now and when,
but if I tidal wide, fierce and just high enough,
I might find some trace of passion shoreline
that I arc or create or even destroy
with each new virtue instilled
by the vertical fluid integrity
that, by the Grace of God,
will continue to flow on,
spilling out before us,
until I find time to rest
and slowly but steadily roll and tumble in
to wash the old castles away
and to bring you a larger
and much brighter seashell than before.

Tim Gill

The Proper Utility

Is it indeed
The fool who ventures
between wakefulness and the big sleep?
  is he lost?
  trapped?
  searching in vain?
  right on?
—Whatever—
call me a fool,
for the truth lay here,
  with me
  on my pillow . . .
Oh, whisper them to me.
Tell me quiet fire-side stories
  while we sleep
  together
in quaint Father led family unities.

Tim Gill
Joe Christmas:
Hero of *Light in August*
And Beyond....
*Christy Cadle*

People have always searched for heroes to celebrate and heroic actions to applaud; they need good examples to hold up to society which prove the success of the human race. This need perhaps is the reason critics have attacked William Faulkner’s *Light in August*, a novel seemingly bereft of hope and human triumph. But through the violence and darkness, a hero emerges, a mysterious character who attacks and murders.

*Light in August* centers around Joe Christmas, a character who kills his adopted father and his mistress, attacks his friends, and loves no one. His problem seems to develop from his unknown heritage, which rumor identifies as a mixture of black and white blood. He appears at first to be an aloof, almost vicious man; a man who draws the hatred of all he meets, including readers. But Christmas’ character goes much deeper. Despite appearances, he does not portray the evil in the novel, nor does Faulkner intend him to do so. In fact, Faulkner’s intention is the opposite; Joe Christmas is the hero.

On the surface, Christmas does seem more villainous than heroic. A closer study, however, reveals that Faulkner’s hero is not so different from classical heroes of the past. Classical mythology tells us that these heroes are often born under mysterious circumstances, then spirited away to be raised by foster parents, often after the father
or maternal grandfather has attempted to murder the child-hero (Noel 69). Such are the circumstances of Christmas’ early life, who, we find out near the end of the novel, was born to a young white girl and a father of unknown (but presumed Negro) heritage. After killing Christmas’ father, Hines, his maternal grandfather, tries to kill the baby Christmas, but later takes him to an orphanage where he is adopted by the McEacherns. From the beginning, Faulkner structures Christmas’ life according to the model of the classical hero, thus illustrating the character’s heroic origin.

Indeed, Christmas’ entire life appears much like the life of a classical hero. John Longley compares Christmas’ life to that of Oedipus. Both are burdened with a “curse,” the curse handed to them by their parents, and it is because of their curses that both men “in the willing of [their] own actions against the pressure of [their] destinies” bring their downfall (165). Just as Oedipus seeks the truth about his parents, Joe seeks to find his own “truth” in himself, to find his peace, and these searches for “self-knowledge” lead to their destruction (165). Christmas states that he, like Oedipus, is unable to break “out of the ring of what [he has] already done and cannot ever undo” (374). Both men make decisions that determine their destinies and bring their destruction. Again, the likenesses between the classical hero (Oedipus) and Christmas are strong, further revealing Christmas’ heroic potential.

Not only does Christmas resemble the classical hero, but he possesses the qualities of a modern hero as well. Longley states that the modern hero should be:

... typical of the age ... and typify the major myths and problems of our century. In a cosmos where all is chaos ... he will very likely be destroyed as a result of his failure to define himself correctly in relation to that cosmos. Lastly, he must embody the perpetual human constants which are the property of any age. (164)

Unfortunately, Christmas indeed represents our age. He portrays an outcast torn between self-discovery and the racial fears and prejudices of a society to which he does not belong. And it is his inability to reconcile himself to that society, to declare his race and “place,” that destroys him. Even though he is an outcast, however, there is something about Christ-

mas with which we can identify, his enduring search for peace. Before his capture, as Christmas sits in the quiet, half-light of dawn, he tells us, “[This] is all I ever wanted” (364). Christmas endures hatred and pity in search of a place where he really belongs; it is a search readers can understand. Thus, as a loner and outcast, destroyed by his rejection of society and his search for peace, Christmas also represents the modern hero.

But what of the murders Christmas commits? What about his cruelty? True, Christmas often appears the villain of the novel, but he only acts out violently when forced. Unlike Oedipus, he does not seek the truth about his past but about his present; he chooses to live for himself. He lives at one time with black people in their community, and later he tries to live in the white community as well. He refuses to tell society exactly what he is, most likely because he does not know himself. He cannot choose blackness or whiteness. And so it is when his foster father, McEachern, tries to force him to accept his lifestyle, or when his mistress, Joanna Burden, tries to bind him to her beliefs that Christmas strikes out. He reacts to those attempting to fit him into a society where he does not belong. Faulkner said that Christmas chose to “live outside the human race. And he tried to do that but nobody would let him, the human race itself wouldn’t let him” (quoted in Minter 95). Thus, when society “refuses to let” Christmas live in his own world and make his own choices, he attacks it. These actions do not counter his heroic qualities. They reinforce them. John Longley explains:

Christmas’ dilemma is the truly tragic one. He is caught not between clear cut right and wrong, but between right and right. Rejected, feared, hated, he has sought and been proud of that rejection and fear; but pushed too far he has gone too far, and unable to reconcile conflicting responsibility, he has committed brutal murder. (169)

Therefore, Christmas’ acts of violence result from his “modern hero” dilemma, and instead of illustrating his corruption and criminality, they support his claim to hero.

Because Christmas fulfills much of the classical and modern criteria for “hero,” we must accept that Faulkner intentionally structured the novel to portray Christmas as a hero of the novel. But
Faulkner gives other indications that Christmas, despite his initial appearances of villainy, is the hero of the novel as a whole. He reveals his intentions in two ways, first through his depictions of Christmas, and secondly by anticipating their effect on the reader.

Faulkner creates a character who draws our sympathy and defies quick judgement. Instead of depicting only a violent and cruel man, Faulkner shows where Christmas' violent potential originates. For instance, because we see Christmas' life with McEachern, we understand that Christmas views religion as a system of control and self-denial. This understanding is important, because it is Joanna Burden's desire to make Christmas pray that leads him to kill her. Christmas himself says, "She would have been all right if she hadn't started praying over me" (117). Because we know about his background with McEachern, we understand that "praying" represented the ultimate threat for Christmas. We understand that the murder is not a calculated act of cruelty but a violent self-defense mechanism.

The sympathy we feel for Christmas continues throughout the novel because Faulkner shows us the forces which Christmas must endure. All of the characters that pursue and antagonize Christmas are difficult for readers to like or understand. Whether it is Hines, Grimm, or the greedy Lucas Burch, we do not wish Christmas to fall to their mercy. Because most of the characters possess their own wickedness, from the sheriff's brutal prejudice to McEachern's iron discipline, Christmas' cruel veneer fades slightly in comparison. Faulkner readily shows the different cruelties of the other characters, making us more understanding of how Christmas has developed into the confused loner that he is; he has been subjected to too much to emerge unscathed.

Faulkner best manipulates our sympathy in Christmas' death scene, and thus gives one of the best clues as to his intentions concerning Christmas. Here we see another example of Christmas' persecution and the response it evokes. After seeing Grimm fill Christmas' body with bullets and then castrate him, one of the other pursuers turns and vomits, explicitly showing the reader the repulsiveness of Grimm's actions. But lest we still be uncertain about the meaning of the scene, we are told that Christmas' image:

... seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever. They are not to lose it, in whatever peaceful valleys, beside whatever placid and reassuring streams of old age, in the mirroring faces of whatever children they will contemplate old disasters and newer hopes. It will be there, musing, quiet, steadfast, not particularly threatful, but of itself alone serene, of itself alone triumphant. (513)

Here we have witnessed the death of a hero, a hero who "triumphs" only in death, and so it is his death that remains unforgettable.

Faulkner's biggest clue to Christmas' hero status is perhaps one of the least understood and most overlooked. Critics have often argued over the significant parallels between Joe Christmas and Jesus Christ. For instance, both men share the same initials, both appeared on Christmas, both died at the same age (thirty-three), and both were persecuted and then killed by their persecutors. Other parallels exist as well. But why? Why would Faulkner create such a violent character in Jesus Christ's likeness? Perhaps Faulkner intentionally modeled Christmas after Christ because of the potential of each to "save" mankind. Put simply, Christmas is Faulkner's sacrifice to a world he wants to save. By allowing Christmas to be crucified, Faulkner hoped to show the tragedy of Christmas' life, to remind the world what hatred causes and forgiveness saves. Faulkner sent his hero, Christmas, with a vengeance and a mission.

Faulkner intended Christmas to be his "hero" and "savior." However, Christmas' violence often interferes with the reader's ability to grasp Faulkner's meaning. For example, Alfred Kazin states that "Faulkner's world is grim" and "the opening of Light in August is so beautiful that nothing after quite comes up to it" (161). Lynn Gartrell Lewis agrees that because, "complete victory is unattainable...some critics...assert that Faulkner is commenting on the negative qualities in human nature, or, at best, on the inability of the individual...to cope with the circumstances that confront him" (161). But we must not let the "grim" appearance over-influence our understanding. Readers of Faulkner know that he felt all works should be uplifting, including his own. The uplift in this novel comes not from a model
hero but from the hero’s gift. By illustrating the results of prejudice, hatred, and misguided righteousness—indeed, by embodying these results in one man—Faulkner gives us a model of what is wrong. The main character, Joe Christmas, is the hero because he is the vessel of Faulkner’s lesson.

Because of the violence and hatred, readers may become entangled in the “rotted, pinched” look of the novel and find it difficult to see Faulkner’s message of hope (Kazin 161). By looking deeper, though, we can see to the heart of the novel and its hero. And just in case the structural and effectual clues are not enough, Faulkner allows his hero to ask outright the question that is whispered throughout the novel. Christmas asks, “Just when do men that have different blood in them stop hating each other?” (274), making him not only the hero of Faulkner’s novel, but (hopefully) the world beyond the novel as well.

Works Cited


