SIROCCO
Catching the Winds of Creativity

Centennial Edition 2006
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Submissions are welcome anytime, but cannot be read or acted upon except during January and February. Submissions must not have been previously published and must be submitted in electronic format. Authors and artists should have some present or past affiliation with Georgia Southwestern State University. No work will be returned.

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Notes on the Centennial Edition:

In celebration of Georgia Southwestern’s Centennial, the Sirocco staff felt that a review of the last hundred years’ of published creative literary and artistic expression at Georgia Southwestern was in order. With the encouragement of Dr. Angelia Moore, we submitted a request to the Georgia Southwestern Foundation to grant us the resources for gathering a modest collection of the past years’ literary submissions. A group of students together with Dr. Gabriele Stauf read through approximately forty editions and made selections based on current appeal as well as universality of ideas and emotions. We trust that some of the authors will be familiar to our readers and we hope that those authors whose work we have included will come to see that their words penned as students remain valid years later.

A Brief History:

Centennial History will reveal that from early on students sought creative outlets in writing. While a yearly publication of a literary magazine did not begin until the mid-sixties, there is record of several other editions of collected pieces. Some editions were in collaboration with the Swouwester while others were separate volumes. There appears, however, to be no copies extant so we date the literary magazine from 1965. From that year until 1983 twelve editions were published. The founding faculty advisor of those later editions was Mrs. Iris Argo who can also be credited with the selection of the name for the creative arts magazine The Sirocco. In 1984, the magazine’s name was changed to Clay and Pine: A Magazine of Literary and Visual Art and continued under that name until 2004. In 2004, the editors wanted to return to the original name as it was more in keeping with the themes of Georgia Southwestern’s nickname – the Hurricanes. To augment the name, the subtitle “Catching the Winds of Creativity” was added.

Thank You:

The Faculty Advisors and Editorial Board expresse a heart-felt THANKS to the Georgia Southwestern Foundation for the financial underwriting of this Centennial Edition. Thank you also to Dr. Angelia Moore, Professor of English, Ret. for encouragement to produce this edition.
This Centennial Edition of Sirocco is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Millard E. Agerton who was not only a Georgia Southwestern alum, (1942) but also served as professor of Chemistry from 1968-1979. He was designated Professor Emeritus in 1979. In memory of his sister, Agnes E. Agerton, Dr. Agerton established a scholarship to recognize outstanding students majoring in English. Dr. Agerton was recognized in 2000 with the "Excellence in Philanthropy Award" by the Georgia Southwestern Foundation. Additionally, Dr. Agerton was honored with the naming of GSW's observatory, in the J.C. Roney Building, the Agerton Observatory.
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The Quilt on the Line

Yesterday, I took the quilt off the line, the quilt with Texas stars and stitches. It felt stiff, like the blurred squirrel I caught in the corner of my eye, jumping from concrete post to tree, climbing to a nest in the clouds. The dogs were not stirring yet, their lion’s ferocity ready to fall against the deep light of green, a late afternoon sun.

I thought, I want the rest of my life to be like this. Fold quilts that soak in the sun, wait for sundown to swim across the sky’s ocean, catch the day’s bare heel, and like kids at tag, make it “it” while treading water, smile as wide as birth. I want to push finger and thumb to the clothes pins, and pull down the stars, the cover of a marriage, take it into the house one minute from now. But right now I wait, now I flex my claws in the bark of the day, the rough bark that I rub my cat’s chin against to mark my place.

I want to do this, hold up the quilt, the pieces of cloth, cut small, sewn back together, taken down and washed and tucked back again, and again. Endless doing, endless folding and washing, and hanging, and waiting to dry, to turn into the soft stiffness that holds for only a moment, a blur you catch in the corner of your mind—and then it’s hidden on the other side of the tree, in the dark shadows, in the dusk of another idea.

I want to do this for the rest of my life.

Brian Ferguson-Avery
1996
time of embrace

Portrait of A Lady Shopping

Swing out,
You backzippered slickslash
Stand before a full length
   Mirror

Glow with goodness,
   Glisten
Swirl, to the sound of the
   Fancy flute;

For you
Are a new softique snowwhite
Risen,
   From deep within the daisies of
      Your tumble dry
         And Perma-iron sheets

While the clouds
   Are tinged with pink,
Go dig holes deep in the fresh drifts.

This is only a temporary stopping place
   And quality is old fashioned.

Ignore
Your new fashionable make-up guides,
   Your toiletries and
      Exquisite fragrances,
Because soon, your sparkler man
   Is to present you with a package
      Perforated
         All with holes.
Hurry, with your new, wide long life
Elastic waistband,
Soon you will find that getting to the
Center is only
Half

The fun
And you,

The cream of pales, are
For all your innocent aires,
Only
Faint blushes of
Beige.

Jack Lewis
19773
time of embrace

Days of Emerald Splendor

There are days of emerald splendour, when lovers
   Discover, once again, the terrible flames of fire;
A flame that purges all involved, searing with illogical
Proud bodies, leaving only ashes of promised sadness
   In silent tribute to love...........

There are days of resigned splendour, when the terrible
   Crash of awakening flows over all consciousness,
Tormenting the spirit itself, causing the memories of
   Other faces, other voices and other rooms to suddenly
Sublimate in a maze of mental mist.

There are days of dreaded splendor, that have no form
   Nor explanation, which linger with emerald magic,
Infusing everything; coloring the boring, tired refrains
   Of suspected uniqueness with sudden life and childish
Innocence.... as if it were the first time.

Ogletree
1981
That Desperate Look

Something haunts her.
The too-loud laugh
and press of her flesh
demand more than you can give.

Once she had something
no one could steal
and traded it
for a neon moon.

Now the smile
never reaches her eyes.
Vultures pick the very dream
from her marrow.

Still she wonders
about her purpose,
still has that desperate look.

Jana Salter
1986
a time of joy

Running On Empty

When I took this mission
It was with excited eyes
Enthusiasm filled my heart
How soon things change.
Now, I am weary, heavy, tired and aged.
Too fast I became acquainted with reality and the avarice of the human soul.
Too soon I learned to cut and deal those insults with stealth.

I do not like who I have become
A stranger who hides behind mean words
A sharp tongued, smart mouth brat
I became to deal with them-
The Children.
Older than me were some, but spoon fed from the start.
If experience is age, then I am trapped in a young girl’s body.
God, give me strength

When those jealous eyes look at me with scorn
When a lie comes quicker than the truth
When my drink is half empty and there pouring me more
When no one wants to know the real me and all they want is plastic
When I lose
When the pain comes
When I strike out and hurt so badly the ones I love
When there aren’t enough hours in the day to repair the damage I’ve done
When I doubt myself
When I hate myself

Give me strength
When, in the very end, I can open my eyes and realize
None of it matters.

Christi Lawton
1997
Sonnet In A Mirror, Twice Augmented

All business stilled;
The town was stunned. After a night and a day
Of steady April rain the weight of the spring's
New leaves was more than Main Street's stalwart oak's
Stout branch could take—a secret sickness lay
Athwart its heart. Their golden rings
But months since swapped, a single fateful stroke
At once divorced the former half from its
Old life and crushed an innocent young mister
In his car.

"Curses upon that God
Who willed that this occur," said one, and burned
The Book; "It was the speed—machines, I say,
At fault," decreed another; "I'll begotten tree!" the last.
One may ask why they spurned
Faith, Power, or the Earth; 'twas the decay
Within that killed.

John Edward Eldridge
1979
In Memoriam

A lifetime ago my mother walked...
alone to the earliest mass
the first still-winter morning of forty Lenten days.
I follow her into cold silence
hear it break—the harsh crunch beneath her weight
mark each quick step on snow.

My wool-muffled breath warms,
but my wadded body slows, my numbed feet stumble.
Too early yet for sunrise, I see
jet branches strain the rose-bordered sky.

Inside the church she turned from where she knelt,
an ashen cross above her closed eyes.

Her lent is finished.

Dolores Capitan
1986
In this tearful weather
Where seasons fly apart
My motion of fate wept
    Alone.
I could not go far to see
A satisfying view.

But as I gazed across this
    Barren field
And watched the autumn
Decline its role,
I beheld a rustling
Among the shrine of leaves;
    A bird stirring,
    Breathing,
In unison with the wind.

This bird moved,
    Sprang upward,
Then came to me as a shadow
Unfolding blossoms
Embracing me
    In its tiny flame of
Sunlight.

Jack Lewis
1994
In June, Janet finished her draft;  
    She told me first, I think.  
I wondered just how she’d managed,  
But figured fairly fast  
That  
    She didn’t make excuses,  
Did carve out her time,  
    Did what it took,  
    Did preserve—and now  
She edits, sends manuscript,  
    Her novel for review.  
In truth, I thought I’d be the one to first produce  
    I’d left our class upbeat.  
Positive  
    Swollen with possibilities.  
    She left with a chapter in shreds.  
Should have known, though.  
    That Janet would stay the course  
    She’d stayed others, harder roads  
    Than simply writing a book  
In Iowa, in July 2000, all was green and growing  
    Like Janet’s hair, blond streaks painted on  
Thin wisps of russet. It had, the hair that is,  
Just come back, could finally be curled;  
    Even the hairs in her nose regrew  
    So the constant drip dried up  
She could now leave the house  
Without a big box of Kleenex  
Tucked secretively under one arm.  
In class, at second day’s break, she told me her story  
    An old one, complete with a man, married.  
    Who couldn’t, or wouldn’t, leave his wife,  
    Or Janet, who he professed to love.  
Then she had been diagnosed  
    “Hodgkin’s disease,” the doctor said,  
    and that man chose—  
his wife over his mistress.
After, Janet wanted to give up,
To forego the chemo, the radiating rays,
Instead she'd wrapped her round, red,
Bald and battered head, in brightly colored scarves,
And bound up her heart with promises to grieve
Right after she'd finished fighting for her life
Back home, he'd finally had the decision reversed,
His wife left him; she'd heard of Janet.
It was a small town, in a big city,

Where cancer and cheating
Filled conversational coffee klatches.
He didn't come right back to her;
Wanted to make sure—first—
That she'd get well,
Didn't think he could go back
If she wouldn't survive
The illness or treatment's course,
He didn't like holding her head
When she vomited,
And talking about wills and funerals
Made him uncomfortable.
Most of all
He hated hospitals
And she was always
Going in or out one,
In six months, though, her hair started to grow back
And her words began to make sentences
And sense. Then he came around.
And Janet, well, she still loved him;
But it had been a long illness
And she'd learned a thing or two
Like she was stronger than she thought,
Stronger than he was for sure, and
While she did still feel something for him,
She'd found other passions that promised
And delivered
More than he ever had.

Peggy Ellington

2003
Sometimes I felt myself stupid
When I could not understand what others said
English just passed by my side
As a stranger on a busy road
Leaving my heart shredded
Today was one such day

Sometimes I feel myself blank
When I cannot talk clearly about what I think
English firmly pushes my plea back
As a huge, heavy door made of oak
Dropping my soul into the dark
Today was one such day

But someday, I dream, it will be delightful
When I can go through all
What I could have not done well
English will fill me full
As a hymn echoing in a solemn cathedral
As pure water springing from a little well
Tomorrow shall be different from today

Yoko Ooka Britt
1999
Scirocco: centennial edition

Transitions

Your old house is for sale again.
It sits alone, the realtor's sign askew;
Uneasy in bright, unfamiliar new paint;
The shrubbery shorn into formal shapes
    that you and your restless kin
would never tolerate.

Your old hometown is slowly withering.
It hangs, shriveled, from the broad stem of the four-lane;
Like rancid fruit, abandoned in a questionable prime;
The blank-eyed downtown buildings sliding silently
    past quaint decrepitude
to utter decay.

And we are all waiting here, dumbly, for you to return
From that new and more potent chaos
For whose benefit you abandoned
The familiar, well-worn pain of home.

Galen Mirate
2000
POLO PONIES, YACHTS, MANSIONS, WHITE BEACHES – AND HER

It was not much of a room. Just a five dollar a week proposition. Dark, rather dirty, and needing numerous small repairs. But it would serve his purpose.

The fat bald man in a soiled tee shirt and pants baggy in the seat, with a zipper that wouldn’t zip, was explaining:

“The bathroom’s down at the far end of the hall. The door lock, it don’t work. So when you’re on the john sorta wedge your foot against it. They’ll know. And another thing. Make sure you flush it when your finished, you hear. We get all kinds in a dump like this.”

He sounded as though he would not mind conversing a while, but he was getting no response. After a few more seconds, he shoved the room key into the strong young hand and turned.

“That’ll be all?” he asked, without expecting an answer.

“Well, you need something, you just stick your head out the door and yell. I stay at the desk all the time.”

He paused just outside the door, smiled a sly smile at the new tenant, and said, “Pleasant dreams.”

Then he turned and started back along the hall, scratching the luxurious growth under his arms.
The young man closed the door and turned off the weak, over-head light. As if in a trance, he moved, mechanically. He sat down on the small, slanting, narrow, dingy bed and pulled off his hand-tooled shoes. He stood up and stripped off his impressively tailored young-executive suit, and then stretched his long, lean, naked body on the short bed.

The lights from a marquee outside his window filled his small cell with live greens, blues, and yellows. On and off they flashed, painting the wall over the man’s head, creating wild dreams. Wild dreams of polo ponies, yachts, mansions, white beaches and her.

No telling how long he lay there watching the lights flicking on and off...on and off. Polo ponies...yachts...mansions...white beaches...and her...

Down the hall, Sam the fat bald landlord was asleep at the desk, cheap wine nearby, and a radio playing thin, raspy tunes.

The next day Sam forgot about him, but by night he remembered. He knocked on the door of 10A where the new tenant was.

“Hey, you in there! You alright?”

It seemed a rather silly question after he said it, for he already knew the answer. A man don’t run a place like his for twenty years without knowing that kind.

He turned the knob and stepped inside the blackness of the room. He paused a minute until his eyes adjusted to the dimness and filtered out the flickering kaleidoscope from the marquee.

Then, although he didn’t really want to, he snapped on the overhead light and turned it off again hurriedly. In its glare, pitilessly exposed, lay the young man, swathed in red, peacefully dreaming of polo ponies, yachts, mansions, white beaches—and her.

Richard Slappey
1965
War Box

today the war box came
home, an old us army issue
field desk, his war box, a
relic when he got it, a
dinosaur now, a place for
everything and everything
in its place

top drawer: pencils, paper
church key, whetstone, some
keys, old zippo, american
flag, folded right, two
newspaper clippings from stars
and stripes, Korea, 1952

top right lock box: two GI
plastic tumblers, pack of
old gold cigarettes, matches,
a steel canteen with a
lingering smell of bourbon

bottom left drawer: two candles,
more matches, empty c-ration can,
used bar of soap, a p-38, toilet
paper, pocket knife, a
sewing kit and a toothbrush.
a safety razor, no blades, a
shaving brush, boar bristle
bottom right drawer: two .45 cal pistol magazines, carbine rifle and some patches, an empty m-1 clip, three ivory dice and a single dog-tag, not his. a seventh division patch.

center hatch: a pile cap, 1951 issue, with tarnished, broken captain's bars, another roll of toilet paper, two flashlight batteries, on GI leather glove and scarf, blue.

the war box, old, older now, and extinct.

oh, I forgot. In the top drawer, picture of the wife and kids, and a BIBLE.

Ben Almand
1987
Upon Visiting
Andersonville National Cemetery
on Memorial Day, 1990

As I stand upon this hallowed ground
With its white stones of marble white,
Cold and silent tributes
To Man's eternal quest for might.
Shaded from the Georgia sun
By oak and magnolia tree—
To my right, those who kept us together,
To my left, who kept us free.

Deaf to saber's bloody rattle
And cannon's angry din,
They now lie undivided in time
In the peace the grave has given.
Their spirits abide in the glory of Heaven,
As someday all may be—
Now at rest, those who kept us together,
And those who kept us free.

As I ponder the battles long ago
And the many victories won,
I consider all who gave their lives
When each his time did come.
For Death, O Death, is the highest toll
Toward the purchase of Liberty—
Paid in full by those who kept us together,
And those who kept us free.

Chris Shoemaker
1995
Goat’s bluff lies just East
Of Tahlequah above the Illinois
River which meanders her timeless
Course 100 feet below.
Here all the powers of the elements
Are present. Earth, Air, Water, and
Fire if you build one in the large
rocky crags beneath the bluff.
At night these caves envelop you
Like a womb in the sky over the
Rocky dark depths of the river.

I come to this place
To gather my thoughts and watch
Hawks circle concentrically
Hunting as they always have.
There is a peace in my heart
But I cannot understand the sadness
Of this place even in the daylight.
I imagine a cold beer washes down
The bitterness as it trickles
Down my throat into my stomach.

“What is in the woods behind the bluff?” I ask.
About 1200 or so before the Cherokee were driven here
There was a great massacre. Maybe the Catos or
even the Osages were driven from these cliffs.
Everyone died. No survivors.”
“Oh.” I can only utter in awe and surprise.
Now I understand the sadness of the bluff
And why I could hear moaning and
Tree branches snapping at night.

Mary Evans
1998
History, my friends,
is the random accumulation
of facts, arbitrarily selected
for studious reflection,
pasteurized, homogenized,
sterilized and disinfected,
distilled, filtered,
zonated and irradiated,
strained and sifted,
served up like a vintage wine
or French confection,
a work of scholarly perfection,
a miracle, a book without a spine.

Matt Flumerfelt
1999
I was fifteen the first time I spent a week with my great aunts Mildred Ruth, and Freda Anne Harmon. I had visited them before but just for short stretches. Now, my parents were forcing me to leave Atlanta and spend seven days in their small town of Sunbright, Georgia. Mama seemed sympathetic, but said, “You need to spend some time with them. After all, they are you namesakes, Ruth Anne.” I didn’t answer. I was only grateful that my parents had combined my great aunts’ middle names instead of their first names. Ruth Anne was old fashioned, but it as better that Mildred Freda.

I took the train to Sunbright, and my great aunts were at the station to meet me. They were about as alike as a sand hill crane and a bobwhite quail. Aunt Mildred was tall and lean, and towered over Aunt Freda like a scraggly scarecrow. She was all angles, and looked as if she hadn’t smiled in years. Aunt Freda reminded me of a small bird, alert and fidgety, with a sharp beak of a nose. They both looked older than Moses.

“Hello there Ruth Anne! We’re so glad you’ve come to stay with us,” said Aunt Freda, giving me a nervous hug. Aunt Mildred didn’t say anything in welcome, but picked up my suitcase.

“What you got in here, rookie?” She said before hoisting up my suitcase easily and starting on her way without a backward glance. Aunt Freda and I fell in behind, and we made our way to the house they shared on the outskirts of town.

From Mama, I knew that my great aunts’ house was the one they had grown up in. Neither of them had ever been married, and they had lived together all their lives. They were the perfect old maids: Aunt Freda was so shy I doubted she’d ever talked to a man, and Aunt Mildred just had no use for one.

As we passed the house next to my great aunts’ home, a woman opened the door.

“Janie Jenkins, biggest gossip in town,” Aunt Mildred muttered.

“Yoo-hoo, Mildred! Freda! Is that ya’lls niece? Ain’t she just as sweet as a pie!” Mrs. Jenkins called in a lilting voice. Aunt Freda smiled, but Aunt Mildred just glowered. We kept walking without slowing down, but that didn’t faze Mrs. Jenkins. She walked right along with us. “Didn’t I see that Tom Booth at your house last night? What was he doing over there?” she asked.
Just visiting, like folks do,” responded Aunt Mildred. We had reached the steps to the house, and if Mrs. Jenkins expected to be asked in, she was mistaken. Aunt Mildred ushered Aunt Freda and me in, hurried in herself and shut the door. “Janie Jenkins is sorrier’n gully dirt. Ain’t got a thing in the world to do but put her nose in other people’s business.

I had expected to be bored, and my expectations were fully realized my first night with my great aunts. They never had any company. Aunt Freda was too shy to make friends and Aunt Mildred too mean. After supper, Aunt Freda and I played a game of checkers and, at barely even nine o’ clock, Aunt Mildred stretched and announced that it was time for bed.

The bedrooms were on the second floor. “We’re putting you in Mildred’s room, Ruth Anne,” Aunt Freda told me as we stood in the bedroom. “Mildred and I are going to share my room. It’s right next to yours, so just holler if you need anything.” Aunt Freda left, and I started to get ready for bed. I had just turned off the light and laid down when the door opened furtively, and I saw a long, thin shadow in the opening. Aunt Mildred hurried over to the bed. Was she planning on tucking me in, I wondered in alarm. But no. She stooped down, lifted up the bedskirt, and pulled out a shotgun.

“I like to keep this near me,” she said. “You can’t be too careful.” Then she turned and left.

It took me awile to go to sleep, and I don’t think I ever did more than dose. I kept dreaming of Aunt Mildred’s shotgun going off with a bang. Sometime in the middle of the night, I woke up with a start. THUMP. That wasn’t a shotgun, but it was a real noise, and it came from right outside me window, which was open. I raced over to look out, and immediately ducked as a large object sailed toward the window and bounced off the screen.

I cowered on the floor for a moment, until curiosity made me ease my head up to look again. I don’t know what I expected to see, but it certainly wasn’t what I saw. In the moonlight, I could make out a man standing just below the window, searching the ground. After a few seconds, he picked up a large rock, stood up, and drew back his arm to hurl it. I cringed, but he evidently saw me, because he held onto the rock, stumbling backwards.

“Miz Harmon! Is that you? I thought you’d never wake up!” he shouted. The he smoothed his hair and said, “I got our train tickets!” Across the street at Mrs. Jenkins house, I saw a light come on in an upstairs window.
I was speechless. Luckily, I didn’t have to say anything. Aunt Mildred had apparently heard the commotion and rushed into the room behind me, with her shotgun ready.

"Tom Booth, you durn fool! I told you next Monday night!" she hollered. "I can’t get married till after my niece leaves!"

Mr. Booth looked rather crest fallen. "Oh. Well, I reckon I’ll come back then." He started to leave then and turned around. "But what about Pastor Daniels? I got him all woke up and everything." For the first time, I noticed the faded looking man with a bible standing behind Mr. Booth.

Aunt Mildred looked at the poor tired preacher and across the street at Mrs. Jenkins’ upstairs light. "Well shoot, Tom. I reckon you’ve done taken all the romance out of elopin’." She looked at me, and I realized, with sleepy amazement, that she was waiting for my permission.

"It’s fine with me Aunt Mildred. I’ll be your bridesmaid."

So that’s how, thirty minutes later, standing in the parlor in my nightgown, I witnessed the wedding of my great Aunt Mildred. Aunt Mildred had gotten dressed, and I guess Aunt Freda had managed to get the shotgun out of her hand. By the time Mrs. Jenkins could get to my great aunts’ house, the wedding was over.

"Mildred Harmon, what in the samhill is going on?" she cried.

"I’m Mildred Booth now, and I’ll thank you to stay out of my business." Mrs. Jenkins looked shocked, and, seeming to relent, Aunt Mildred continued. "What’s wrong do you think I am too young and innocent to get married?"

And, with a loud guffaw, she swept her husband out the door, only pausing to pick up her shotgun.

Katie Harris

2004

Third Place- Dolores F. Captain Award
Granny’s Knife

Granny’s knife is one-finger long
And bright with days
Shiny from apron pockets

And peeling apples
For a little boy

Chickens in the yard peck
At sun splatters under the tree
Outside, her kitten is cool

The tight fruit turns shimmer
In her long hand
Curling off like wonder

The quick white slither
Running over the blade
A thing complete, whole

It is the earliest thing I know
The sharp clean smell and perfect peel
Her smile, chickens clucking

In the yard under the tree
Where my days started
Like a gift

Granny’s knife is bright
With my years
When I pull it shining
From my pocket, finger long

The apple cool in my hand
The child waiting, watching
The day curling backward into light

Tom Liner
1989
BOXWOODS

Grandmother lived in a red brick house with a garden which thrived out back.
She dug in the dirt for “therapy” she’d say.
I’d see her kneeling there day after day
as sharp-edged and solid as the brick. Both warmed slowly
under the sun
softened by pink camellias
and the boxwoods she liked to hate.

Grandfather’s stroke kept him in his chair
a prisoner for playing solitaire
waiting for that tray that was the highlight of his day.
I’d see her take in the meals:
okra and crowder peas, iced tea, corn muffins tumbled from
the oven
Roast beef, Rice-pudding-with-a-smile.
Footsteps up and down the hallway
a path of crusted red smudges
left behind like bread crumbs to find the way to love.

Grandmother gardened. Grandfather died. Grandmother
gardened some more
cursing the boxwoods slow to grow in the hard red clay.
I saw her crying there one autumn day
“It’s these boxwoods,” she said, “I never liked them.”

Grandmother lies by her husband again
within a square of crumbling brick.
I pull up weeks, rake the gravel
spreading it over the dusty clay.
There are no boxwoods here.
The sun felt warm on my back today
and I say it’s therapy.

Kay (Sassi) Pace
2000
Omnipotent Elwood

"Elwood git out of that flower bed, you know yo’ moma don’t want you playing in there."

"Huh?"

"Git out of there this minute! You heared me."

Elwood was thoroughly disgusted. He had been in the flower beds all morning with Frank and Fanny, his pet beetles, and now when things were beginning to get interesting he had to move.

Frank had a Ladybug backed into a corner between a tiger lilly and the rotten stump of tomato plant. Fanny was close at hand to back him up if something went wrong. He wasn’t free to back out of the fight anyway. He wasn’t free to do anything for that matter, because Elwood had tied a piece of thread to one of Frank’s back legs. If Frank had even thought of disobeying, he was dragged to the chore. Actually, Frank had no beef with the Ladybug, or any Ladybug for that matter. He didn’t have a beef with anything. He was a peaceful sort, just wanting to be left alone to drill holes in ripe plant stems and to eat leaves.

Fanny’s lot wasn’t much different from Frank’s. She had been fying home late last night when she saw the light on Elwood’s back porch. She had fought the light’s seductive rays, but her will power was almost nil and she had been easily saved in Elwood’s preserve jar as she flew into the yellow rays.

Omnipotent Elwood. He was all powerful in his backyard, and he had two subjects to pay him homage. Elwood had great plans. He wanted to build an entire army of Unicorn Beetles, and if the warm weather held, he would be at the back porch light every night. Elwood heard his mother’s car stop in the drive so he gathered Frank and Fanny and started toward the house. He was watching his captives crawl around on the porch when his mother came to the screen door.

"Elwood, I thought I told you to stay out of that flower bed."

"Yessum"

"And get rid of those nasty bugs."

"Yessum"

"Right now!"

"Yessum"
Omnipotent Elwood grinned thoughtfully. He was still grinning as he tied the end of Frank's string to the end of Fanny's thread and threw them into the air. He laughed as they tried to fly away in opposite directions.

Frank and Fanny were still struggling as the screen door slammed.

Robert T. Crabb III
1966
Scirocco: centennial edition
My Ancestor's Memories

My ancestor's memories live inside of my heart, and come out when they are beckoned. WHO AM I is beckoned by struggle, turmoil, and rejection. People always say never judge a person; you don't know the reasons behind their actions. So, I cannot tell you why I see with someone else's eyes, and I cannot tell you why I struggle with questions that others my age are oblivious to, and I cannot tell why I am who I am.

I am my maternal great grandmother. A white woman raising her grandchildren and struggling to fulfill the American Dream, while being cheated out of her American Rights.

Her inner turmoil and hatred for that which her family was and where they came from plagued every action and decision she made. A hatred being her lineage and her strong desire to change through rebellion. She lay with a Blackman, not of love, but out of bitter hatred for her family's prejudice. She was rejected by her family and ridiculed.

The passing on of who are you and what you pass on to your children is a difficult thing to express in any form; other than existing. A low self worth and a misunderstanding of what life is for, created a woman who would consistently be in childbirth; and every child a different father, a different man. She carried a victim's mentality and a woman's confusion.

This is the history that makes me who I am, but that is not what you see. What you see is a pretty face, hiding an unimaginable past. What you don't see is a woman with scars on her heart; scars that weren't placed there by her own experiences, but by those before her. What you don't see is a mind filled with memories of a past that isn't her own. What you don't see is a woman imprisoned by feelings and thoughts that are not her own. Instead, what can be spoken into being truth is what you have yet to see. You have yet to see a Conqueror. I am what my ancestors prayed for. I am the woman who will surpass the obstacles my ancestors struggled against. I am the strength that will have many lessons to pass on to my children. The skeletons are out of the closet. My children will know who they are. I am stronger. I am setting the foundation for my children to have their own thoughts, their own experiences, and unscathed hearts.

Candace Butler
2005
To Mark Twain

"Don't part with your illusions,"
I the advise you give,
"For when they go, you still exist,
But you have ceased to live."
Today I faced the Gorgon;
My eyes were open wide.
She did not turn me into stone,
But all my tears were dried.

Argo

1978

Iris
Centennial Song

“et docere et rerum exquirere causas”
To teach and inquire about the causes of things

Upon fields of grand endeavor through the tens and tens of years
Honest effort, earnest measure has built what’s celebrated here.
Not from privilege your lineage, faith endowed you’ve made your place
Skills developed, judgment deepened dedication distilling Grace.
Blow the winds fair or treacherous dignity-built or hate-destroyed
In “this garden spot of Dixie” nobler things of life employed.

Hands have built you; words confirmed you;
Hearts envisioned, minds made bold
An inestimable value
Bearing fruit a hundred fold.

Who are they now standing mustered life-long inquiry their mien?
Global servants should’ring duty, expansive sights compelling dreams.
Each, wholehearted joined in service citizens now upward bound
To a world far from perfected -- but their quests and feats astound!
Even failure is not wasted, courageously, old faults laid bare
Wisdom searched for, values fostered -- noble goals, acts nobly dared.

Hands have built you; words confirmed you;
Hearts envisioned, minds made bold
An inestimable value
Bearing fruit a hundred fold.

Gabriele Ulrike Stauf
2005
GSW Centennial Anthem
(Choral part)

Music by: A. Anishenko
Words by: G. Stauf

Up on the fields of grand endeavor through the time and time of years

Oh, what a world our master has built where so often we have been

Here once a forest covered emerald meadow

Here once a forest, covered emerald meadow has stood what's encompassed here

No more of that, so we measure has stood what's encompassed here

You from progeny your line age, faith unproved you've made your place

Not from progeny your line age, faith unproved you've made your place

Not from progeny your line age, faith unproved you've made your place

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