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A magazine of literary and visual art, Sirocco is published in April of each year by students at Georgia Southwestern State University, a senior unit of the University System of Georgia, an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution. Opinions expressed in the magazine are neither those of the editors nor those of the University.

Submissions are welcome anytime, but cannot be read and acted upon except during January and February. Submissions must not have been previously published and must be submitted in an 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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Editors' Notes

There comes a time in every artist's career, regardless of the craft, when one must experiment, reach out and find a creative voice. This creative "flexing" often pushes the boundaries of accepted norms, but is a necessary and beneficial exercise. The intention of this anthology is neither to shock nor offend. Rather, the intent is to be a sage forum for artists to share their creative voices without fear of retribution or censorship. Sirocco is dedicated to giving students and faculty a place in which to display their craft and test their creative wings. Should any of the material within strike you, as reader and viewer, as offensive, allow us to apologize now. However, in keeping with the spirit of artistic expression, we offer these works in celebration of their creative voices.

A Brief History

Georghi Southwestern's Lit Mag has returned to a former name: Sirocco. This was the name for the magazine when it began twenty-six years ago and we have returned to it since its name is more in keeping with the themes of the winds for the rest of our campus publications. The magazine has continued largely through persistent efforts of faculty in both the English and Fine Arts Departments and, of course, year after year students who are willing to make the commitment to getting it published.

Thank You

This year's big thank you goes to three people whose persistence kept pushing Sirocco along. Derrick Shields, Jason Burroughs worked as editorial staff and Jennifer Hagler work tirelessly as artistic editor and consultant.
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Untitled by Nichole Colbert
Jaco

By LACEY PITTS

We walked along the edge of the country
Dancing with the waves, salt riding the air
Looking for shells and rocks, laughing
Foam rolling over our feet, tide sucking our toes
Warm air wrapped around us like a blanket
Secure
All together in the safety of the sand
Some chance the wild waves

Teased by the lap of the water
I walk closer, but only just
A little closer now, turning to look towards the sea cliffs on the left
Washed over by an unseen swell
Water drips from my body, now wet

The warm sand sticks to my feet
Black nor white, volcanic they said
Sand is sand to me...perfect happiness
Running my fingertips over the tiny grains
Slipping away like the day

Back to the over-warm bus to ride
Hours of sitting and waiting for the next stop
Miles on uncertain roadways, no more than widened paths
The salt and sand still cling to my legs
Like a good memory

* Lacey Pitts is the Dolores F. Capitan First Prize Winner.
Valu by Valentina Gabrielle
Grecia

By LACEY PITTS

Beautiful greenness all around my bed
Outside these walls breathes a world unlike any I know
Parrots sit on the roof as I shower
Ice-cold water rushing over my body taking my breath down the drain
Sugar Cane grows in rows down the hill
A small store opens and closes with the day, like a rare flower
Mountains in the distance shrouded with clouds of white
The mixture of colors each day is stunning
Sky like a painter’s palette as the sun rises and sets
Blues, reds, and other hues blended
Roses grow near a fountain, fragrant
Palms sway in a lazy breeze near a schoolhouse
In town, the church bell rings, mass surrounded by metal
The square holds fruit trees and a sloth
Bar Oasis calls out to each of us as we hail cabs
Cold beer, chevice, and the best darn fries in store for us
In the hot sunshine

By LACEY PITTs

The sun smiles down on six houses in progress as a tour bus pulls to a stop on the uneven dirt track.
Work ceases as builders turn to see the newcomers disembark.
Trowels put down, wheelbarrows stop, conversation ends.
A stream of people pours through the bus door and pools on the hillside.
English conversations, mumbled guesses at the work to be done.
The builders hesitantly approach the milling crowd.
Delegation of tasks, teams decided, and everyone to work.
Spanish and English blurred together, a new hybrid spoken in a questioning tone.
How do I? Como? Help me please. Ayudame Por Favor.
Blocks passed, wire cut, cement mixed, rebar measured.
Everyone goes about their jobs as best as can be expected.
Experience is shared with novice to the completion of a project.
No longer what I did, but what We did.
Builders become comfortable with volunteers as new bonds form,
friendships in the making.
Half conversations, shared laughs, everyone works...
Days pass and tears fall as the bus pulls away for the last time.
The sun smiles again, this time on eight houses.
Untitled by Lindsey Hart
Rainy Night
By LACEY PITTS

Screaming ambulances roaring past with mortal cargo
Souls perchance escaping as it passes
What has happened, no one knows, but we all feel
Death is near.

A wreck ahead, a line of stopped vehicles, ants in a row
Tow truck bears a twisted car past, body smashed and dented
Wasted gasoline, blood and rain mix on the pavement and run in
small rivulets
Death has come to claim its property.

Glass crunched under tires as the traffic begins to move once more
A cross is seen as though floating in midair
The radio plays "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," it has come to take
someone home
Everyone is silent as we pass, feeling the pain and anguish that has
just been felt here
Death moves on to claim more souls.
Untitled by Allison Sinquefeld

Untitled by Andrea Carter
Terror in the treetops

By LACEY PITTS

As I climbed the stairs, waiting my turn, I began to wonder what was in store
Watching those before me go, I began to get nervous... Am I doing this?
Clipped onto the wire and pushed off, panic rises in my chest
Flying through the rainforest, I cannot stop myself
My heart is clamoring in my chest, breath short, eyes clenched
I reach again for the wire above me and feel myself fall back
I can't stop, I'm going to hit the tree, I still cannot reach the wire
I feel the tears welling up in my eyes, determination stops them
Reaching one last time, but OWW! Wrong hand
Pain shoots through my hand up my arm and sing down my back
My hand is caught in the wheel, glove and finger jammed
When I finally pry my hand out I am stopped forcefully with a rope tied on the line
Jolted to a stop, unhitched and shaking on the tiny platform high above the trees
Is now a good time to remember my fear of heights? So high above the ground
Terror has now set in, I cannot, Will NOT go on
Please let me down, I am too fat for this, Please... NO!
Harnesses in and flying before they understand my pleas for help
Spinning wildly this time
I am drunk from the motion
Again I cannot stop, help, and suddenly there's that stop rope again jarring my bones
Fear paralyzes me this time, I really cannot continue and
Now flying tied to a guide, feet up eyes closed
Still terrified
I open my eyes, I don't feel out of control anymore
He will stop us, maybe this isn't so bad
I breathe again as a blue butterfly passes us on it's way to a nearby flower

13
Old Woman

By JASON BURROUGH

Old woman, why do you toil so
In this yarn mill, Astro Dye?
Your husband died for this country
Your friends have all gone to Florida.
Waiting on their children's dime
For death to rap on their doors.
Your grandson died of woe
Woe for your great-grandbaby's life.
Your grandbaby who's better off in God's arm
Than his mother's riddled with needle wounds.
Your body's worn to the bone,
Your muscles are lose rubber bands
Only your bones hold your frame.
Your eyes are filing you
Roaring yarn threaders steal choke your ears from hearing
Your back's dies for Astro Dye.
No one want you, and no one cares
You soul dwindles for Astro Dye
Old women, why do you toil so?
Untitled by Will Wilson
Concocting Immortality

By DANIEL WILLIAMS

Upon a bridge of stone stands a pale man in a gray wrinkled suit, gazing down at his reflection mixed with diamond sparkles of the sun's brilliance cast upon the tiny crests of the stream flowing under him and that ancient construct. His mind flutters as he tries to cast aside his thoughts of the physics behind the phenomenon taking place on that glassy surface. He had not left the lab complex of his employment in ore than four months, and his mind was not yet adjusted to being free of the purely analytical thought that the institution required of him. He ponders for a moment how long adjusting to a life without his bonds of science would take. It occurs to him that he is not to know that answer.

A second man, wearing a crisp, black pinstriped suit and wire-frame eyeglasses approaches from the south end of the bridge.

"The grass always seems greener on the north side of this bridge," says the man in the gray wrinkled suit glancing at the newcomer quickly and resuming his observation of the stream's steady current.

The second man nods and replies, "Yet, the fertile soil, we know, is on the south side." With this they both turn to face each other and the man in the gray wrinkled suit withdraws a black cylinder from his breast pocket and discreetly places it into the gloved palm of the man wearing the black pinstriped suit and wire-frame glasses.

"Is this all?" asks the second man in a tone that is neither anxious nor wholly relaxed.

"Yes."

"Good. Our latest fishing trips have resulted only in lost bait. Perhaps this bait will attract some big fish that we can hook."

The man in the gray wrinkled suit nods gravely. "Did you know that gunpowder was discovered while trying to concoct a serum that would give man immortality? It's a true story that parallels in some way the Greek myth of Prometheus bringing the gift of fire to man. How many times has man destroyed himself with fire or gunpowder?"

The second man maintains a stoic stare, displaying no reaction to this unexpected outburst. "Well, I must be returning to work. I will let you know how well the fish bite." At these words they both leave the bridge, going in opposite directions.

The man in the gray wrinkled suit finds his way to a large tree where he has placed a wooden box. He opens it unceremoniously and withdraws a Webley Mk IV revolver. He proceeds with
loading it and places it to his head. With gunpowder one more life is destroyed.

Inside a deceptively quiet office building the man wearing the pin-striped suit and wire-frame eyeglasses sits down at a desk dominated by a powerful lamp and a large radio transmitter. There he opens the black cylinder he received moments earlier. He pours out the contents to discover that the cylinder contains nothing more than a deep black powder.

Several years later, the darkest of shadows is cast upon a densely populated industrial center by a towering column of dense smoke that flowers out at the top not unlike a mushroom. This event is repeated, and the shadow of these two columns reaches not across just the Japanese landscape, but across the entire world and through time for centuries onward. And under that shadow a trembling scientist recounts the first test of the instrument of destruction and quotes these ancient words: “I am become death; the destroyer of worlds.”
My Ancestor's Memories

By JESSICA PRICE

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 because you don't know the reasons behind their actions. So, I can not tell you why I see with someone else's eyes, and I can not tell you why I struggle with questions that those my age are oblivious to, and I can not tell you 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 this through rebellion. She lay with a black man, not out 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 you are and what you pass on to your children is a difficult thing to express in any form; other than existing. A low value of self worth and misunderstanding of what life is for created a woman who would consistently be in childbirth, with every father a different man. 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, 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 hers. What you don't see is a woman imprisoned by feelings that thoughts that are not her own. But, 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 that my ancestors struggled with. I am the strength that will have many lessons to pass on to my children. The skeletons are out of the closet, and my children will know who they are. I am stronger, and I am setting the foundation for my children to have their own thoughts, their own experiences, and unscathed hearts.
Untitled by Will Wilson
Untitled by Lindsey Crozier

Untitled by Micah Simpson
Colors

By MICHAEL CLOUD

Kindergarten
Me a white boy
My best friend Quentin black
We didn't yet know
That simple fact
As we bounced between us
A bright orange basketball
Sometimes I wish
We could all be purple
But human nature being what it is
We'd just find a way
To fight about shades

*Michael Cloud is the Dolores F. Capitan Third Prize Winner.

City Streets
by NICOLE CRISP
Window View to Life by Nicole Crisp
Bubble Gum, Cigarettes and Buster Browns

By JOSH SIMPKINS

By the time Johnny Durango was put into time out for selling candy cigarettes and sent to stand next to me (ten steps away exactly) along the fence at the far end of the playground, he had already established quite a reputation for himself. First off, he was the only first grader to reportedly have been spanked by the principle (a punishment he had acquired after launching a spitball at Mrs. Morris, that struck to her glasses, while she read us a story). Secondly, he had managed to maintain the highest amount of demerits in class, thirteen. Third, he had gotten caught stealing gum in Sandy Nelson’s hair. And he had done all of this by the third week of school.

Although he had attained this mythic status, not much else was known about Johnny Durango (other than he was from a place called “The Bronze” and had a strange northern accent to accompany his jet black hair). During the first week he was moved from his original seat to a desk, in the front of the class, across from mine, (for the gum incident) but we hadn’t talked much. In fact, we ignored each other completely. Now we were standing exactly ten steps away from each other staring out towards the small graveyard across the street.

After Mrs. Morris put Johnny Durango in his place by the fence, told us to behave, and returned to the rest of the kids on the other side of the playground, we slowly turned around and put our backs against the fence. Through the silence of the next few minutes, we both avoided making eye contact before I figured, since there was no one else to talk to, that I should break the ice.

I asked Johnny, “Watcha get in trouble for?”

Johnny cautiously eyed me before giving me an answer.

“Selling Candy Cigarettes to Tommy Davis,” he said in his strange northern accent.

I was amazed that he had the cigarettes to sell because the only place you could buy them was in the old trailer park behind the school that we called The Dark Forest.

“You went into the Dark Forest to buy them?”

“Yeah,” he answered. “What did you get in trouble for?”

“Chasin’ Carrie Ann Moore around the playground,” I told him.

“I didn’t know you could get in trouble for that.”
SIROCOCO

I didn't like the tone in his voice.  
“Well, you can. I get sent over here almost every recess because of it.”   
“Just for chasin' Carrie Ann around.  
She's ugly anyway.”   
“Yeah, I know.”  
I kicked a pinecone that was lying on the ground. Johnny began to stare at my Buster Brown's.  
“Watcha staring at?” I asked him.   
“Your fancy shoes.”   
“They aren't fancy, they're just shoes, and don't stare at them,” I told him.

We both went quiet for a while until he felt the need to throw a rock at Carrie Ann as she walked by with Sandy Nelson, hitting Carrie Ann in the shoulder, and sending her off screaming towards Mrs. Morris.  
“Hey, don't you be throwing rocks at her! I'm the only one who can do that!”   
“Oh yeah, says who?”   
“Says me! I'm the only one who can chase her, throw rocks at her, push her, or do any other mean things to her. Besides, you said she was ugly.”   
“Yeah, she's ugly, but I can chase her if I want!”   
“Oh, no, you can’t!”

We were so involved in our argument that we didn't see Mrs. Morris sneak up on us from the side.  
“Turn around and face away from the playground! And who threw a rock at Carrie Ann?” 

Both of us flipped around and stared back at the graveyard again, dead silent. Mrs. Morris eyed us through her weird looking glasses waiting for us to speak. Neither of us did.  

“So, neither of you threw the rock.”

I decided to answer.  
“No, Ma'am.”

“You are both lucky little boys and should be glad I didn’t see you because if I catch either one of you throwing any rocks at anybody or misbehaving for that matter, I'm sending both of you to the Principle's office!”

Both of us were dead silent again.  
“Do you understand me?”

“Yes, Ma'am,” I told her.

Johnny Durango kept his mouth shut until Mrs. Morris forced him to answer and then she walked back towards the other kids on the other side of the playground. After a couple minutes the silence became unbearable and I, once again, decided to break the ice.

“Can you believe that she's married?” I said.  

“Who would want to marry her? She's ugly.”

“Yeah, I know.”

We both cautiously turned away from the graveyard and began to face the playground again. It was quiet for a while because I couldn't think of anything to say. Eventually Johnny said something.

“I'll play you in bloody knuckles and the winner gets to chase Carrie Ann.”

He looked at me as if I would almost be scared to do it. I was. I had never played bloody knuckles and knew if I did and my parents found out I would get in big trouble. But I wouldn't give him the satisfaction of backing down.

“You're on.”

“Ok, I'll let you hit first.”
Johnny held out a fist and I reared back and hit it as hard as I could. He grunted in pain and pulled his hand back. I held out my fist and Johnny swung hitting my knuckles hard but not breaking the skin. We did this about five or six more times until our knuckles were good and bloody, and then we settled on a tie.

"So who gets to chase and do mean things to Carrie Ann?" asked Johnny.

"I do," I said, "because I chased her and did mean things to her first."

"Well, that ain't fair," said Johnny.

At that moment Carrie Ann happened to be passing nearby with Sandy Nelson again. Johnny Durango yelled for her to come over to us. She was hesitant at first but finally agreed.

"What are you doing?" I asked as Carrie Ann and Sandy Nelson approached.

"We are going to let her decide," said Johnny.

"What? You can't let a girl decide who chases her!" I said in fear that she might not pick me.

Carrie Ann walked up with Sandy and stopped a good five feet away from us.

"What do you two burheads want?" she said. She was the only girl in the class who would talk like that. I almost felt like chasing her right then.

"Who would you rather have chase you," asked Johnny, "him or me?"

"I don't want neither of you to chase me. Especially you," she said pointing towards me before turning and running away with Sandy Nelson.

Johnny Durango looked down and kicked one of the pinecones next to his foot. I felt bad because I knew how I would feel if I had lost.

"Hey," I said, "didn't you put gum in Sandy Nelson's hair like two weeks ago."

"Yeah, but it really wasn't that great."

"Maybe you should try it again or throw a rock at her or something. You might like it more this time. Or if you really want to chase Carrie Ann I guess you could do it once in a while," I said.

"Nah. She said that she really didn't want you to chase her, so now you have to," he said looking back up towards all the other children on the playground.

"I guess you're right," I said.

"Hey, do you want a bubble gum cigarette?" he asked.

"Sure," I told him before commenting, "you gotta a couple of the big ones, huh?" We called the bubble gum cigarettes "big ones" because they were bigger and better than candy ones and blew powder out the end that looked like real smoke.

Johnny reached into his sock and pulled out two bubble gum cigarettes. He handed one to me and we both turned away from the playground and looked at the graveyard through the fence as we puffed the white sugar powder out of those bubble gum cigarettes. At that point there was nothing else to say.

The rest of the year Johnny and me became pretty good friends. But the end of that year would be the end of our friendship. Me and Johnny
were never in the same class again. As time moved on and everyone learned about grades, and clothes, and houses, and things, they also learned that Johnny Durango was from the north, but “The Bronze” wasn’t actually the Bronx from New York. “The Bronze” was the same old trailer park behind the school that we had all known as The Dark Forest. A place where it was probably easier to get bubble gum cigarettes than it was to find a pair of Buster Browns.

I chased Carrie Ann Moore all the way until the third grade when Misty Rogers moved to town and I informed Carrie Ann that it was over between us. I was going to give a valentine to Misty Rogers. And I did, and that valentine led to a confrontation between me and Troy Harris behind the field house during recess. As a small crowd formed to watch me defend myself against a towering Troy Harris, Johnny Durango watched with them silently rooting me on. I saw him before I was slammed to the ground the last time. He did nothing to help me and no one expected him to. Especially me. But when I hit the ground that last time, before my new glasses broke and my new shirt was ruined, I tasted that sweet sugary powder from those bubble gum cigarettes and I felt the fading scars from that game of bloody knuckles.

Superman Symbol by Micah Simpson
Life Size by Nicole Crisp
“Almost” Sin

By DON LITTLE

I thought the night would bring a cool break to the nasty day. Damn wrong. My momma once said a full moon gives the midnight a good glow. Can’t see the glow through the sweat in muh face it seems like. Sittin’ on the porch fanning the grits from their drink seems almost sin. Little boogers get in through the cuts on the screen. Been meaning to fix that. So tired out from fixing cars seems like I gotta struggle to shower. I got me a good cold beer for this June moon. Ain’t sharing though. It’s all mine. Got it with my own damn money. Nothing else to do it seems in Sale City. ‘Nother old’ n hell forgotten town in Georgia. Ain’t no jobs here. Everything done went north or south. If it weren’t for broke down cars I’d have to get stamps again. Been that route once. Ain’t goin’ back.

Thing about this town is everybody knows too damn much about everybody else. And what they don’t know, they make up. I shouldn’t think that though. Just as bad. Got muh Bearcat scanner on now listening and being just as guilty. Nuthin’ but fuzz. White noise is good on a night like this. I don’t like silence. Never could. Momma use to run a fan for me so I could sleep at night. Now she gone. No fan no more. Porch fan gone too. May as well. The paint chips would just crack off the ceiling and in my beer.

Only a few hundred folks here and we got a church all lit up. Like we got some damn passers-bys needin’ to see it. Big church too down there. See the lights glowin’. Got one light down here on the neighborhood corner. Makes all the other houses seem a dim shade of yellow. Mine still looks grey. White once, grey now.

Wonder what Little Bo’s doing cross the street? He and Big Bo moved in ‘bout two years ago now. Big Bo must be workin’ late at the corner store. Manager makes him work night shift so the kids don’t hafta see him. Somma them said they seen him and Little Bo holdin’ hands and kissin’ n’ stuff. Ain’t so sure ‘bout that. I know they queer and all. But I never seen nuthin’ like the kids say. The folks that got the most to say it seems is the Wray family up on the rich block. Preacher Wray an his wife always talkin’ ‘bout the Bo’s. I hear him sometimes when he preach all the way here while I fix a car. He just ain’t got nothin’ good to say ‘bout them.

His wife sure likes to show off her stuff. She goes up to Albany and buys all kinda nonsense they don’t need. She brought her brand new ’77 Regal here for me to work on just a week after her husband bought it. She just had me
look under the hood for her. Accordin’ to her, she wanted to make sure it had good oil in it and make sure everything looked right. Then she paid me my twenty and a little extra ‘cause……. Well…… you know.

The Wray boys are some of the most awful acting kids I know. Since the oldest one turned sixteen last year I hear him screeching his tires down the road all night long. Him and his younger brother always hangin’ out. They go either up to Albany or down to Camilla all night long since the older one, Jamie, quit school. Don’t imagine the younger one. Chris, will do anything different in a year when he turns of age. You know what? I wonder when they screech down this street if it’s for all of us, or just the Bo’s?

I know the Wray boys pick at the Bo’s all the time. They get mean about it. I saw them one time followin’ the Bo’s ’round at the store where Big Bo works. They both gotta do their shoppin’ there since they ain’t got a car of their own. They can’t really get away. Feel bad for ’em. Momma said if I point fingers make sure to take a look at mUh hand to see all the ones pointing back at me. Good advice. I stick to it.

I almost sin myself. Smoke and drink beer. I say it’s almost a sin ‘cause I never seen in the Bible say don’t drink beer and smoke Marlboros. I think preacher Wray has though. Maybe it’s in there somewhere. ‘Till I hear it for good though, I’ll stick with what I know. Speakin’ of that, I think Immo light a long one now.

**Untitled** by Will Wilson

Damnit! There go the Wray boys again. Screeching louder ‘n five hells! Next street over but seems like it’s right here in front of me. Surprise I never hear about them on the Bearcat. Their daddy got the Sheriff wrapped on his finger tight. Small town for you.
Nothin but static.

A fresh lit smoke is nice on a hot night under a June moon. It slow burn real good too. Somethin' 'bout a cigarette, you know. Cools you in the summer and warms you in the winter. My beer almost out. Think I'll crack another one 'fore I go to bed. Got a long day tomorrow. Got three cars includin' my own. Tryin' to keep it goin' long as I can. Well, 'least till after taxes and I can get me a better used one. My finger nails got nasty stuff under 'em. Should wash my hands before I take my second puff and any more after that. It'll only take a second..............What the hell?!

What................... is that?

Closer look..................... holy God! It's Big Bo! Crawlin'! He's all mits-colored! Black, blue and red! He stopped right in front of his house, naked as the day he was born! Look like he's trying to holler but bleeding from the neck and from the rear end! He fell flat now and I stand up and walk to put my hands on the railin' of my porch. It was hot before. Now feel cold to the touch. Heart in the throat. He's pickin' up stones from the yard and throwin' 'em at the house. They're hittin' hard. Little Bo runnin' out now. He's tryin' hard to pick up Big Bo. Surprise he ain't fallin' over from the difference! He gets Big Bo inside though by the grace of God. Miracle I think. Through tears and sweat and covered in blood from what I see.

Little Bo's come runnin' back out now. I'm scared to move. Just my smoke burnin' and my jaw to the ground. Little Bo runs 'round the corner and fades in the yellow light. Some of Big Bo's blood splattin' under his shoes! I think he's goin' to the pay phone at the store. That's where he should be goin'. Ain't none of us got a phone in the neighborhood. His jacket seem heavy while he's runnin'. Just cryin' so loud. Breakin' my heart.

I hear a break in the fuzz on my scanner. Immo crouch down to listen close.

The lady sayin' somethin' 'bout 516 Buck street, Sale City. The Bo's house alright. Exactly where he went, to the store. Thought so. My chest still beatin' fast. I think I should walk back over to the railin'. I watch close. I was tired a minute ago. Not now though. Puff on my cigarette more. The blue lights at the house 'fore the Sheriff's car is. He gettin' out pullin' up his buckle back to his belly leavin' his wife on the passenger side. The volunteer E.M.T. team pullin' up right behind him. They go inside. Where's Little Bo? He ain't back yet.

I wipe the sweat from the front of my head. Stingin' my eyes. Cheeks pushin' them up I guess. 'Nother break on the fuzz on my scanner. Someone callin' in four gunshots they heard next door to them in Sale City. Sheriff still inside with the E.M.T. I saw him in the window shakin' his head and talkin' in his scanner. Mine finally picks up his signal. All I hear is something about a D.O.A. and not enough folks to check out noises folks hear. Now he's done and the first little ol' lady on the street walkin' out her house to the sidewalk.
Curlers in her hair and one hand over her mouth. More folks followin'. Just shadowed shapes in the dim yellow light.

I puff more and have another sip from my opened can. Lookin' both ways down the street. The blue lights flashin' all over. I see runnin' 'round the corner on the other block opposite. It's Little Bo!

The Sheriff's on the Bo's front porch and sees Little Bo runnin' towards the house. He puts his smoke out right after he lights it and walks to meet Little Bo before he get too close. Little Bo sees the volunteer E.M.T. team wheelin' out the gurney with the bloody sheet all the way up. Little Bo collapses on his knees screaming and prayin' to God. Sheriff squats down and grabs Little Bo's waist with one hand. He scrunch his eyes up 'tween his eyebrows lookin' where he grabbed. Picks Little Bo from under his arms to his feet all while the poor guy was sobbing and holdin' his face.

That's all I can stand. I crush out my Marlboro. Thinkin' 'bout all the fingers pointin' back at me.

I wake up next morning. Walk out my front door. I see yellow tape 'round the front fence and tags on the ground. Just red stains on the sidewalk. Go back to my house 'till afternoon. I run out cigarettes now. Gotta go to the corner store. I see Sheriff's wife in there. She tells me the whole damn story!

Seems that the Wray boys were waitin' for Big Bo to close the store.
SIROCCO

They parked in a dark spot on the street. Soon as they saw him, they jumped him! Then they messed with him real bad. First with a cola bottle, then with themselves! After they did that, they beat him awful like and cut his throat so he couldn't say nuthin' to nobody. Then they both sped off. That was the screechin' I heard last night. Big Bo had enough strength to crawl back to his house. Little Bo saw him from the window where he watches for him every night. Little Bo took him back inside and all Big Bo could say was something 'bout the Wray boys. Little Bo got a gun and ran to the Wray house after he called 911! He shot all four Wrays! Then he ran back to his house. Just in time to see them carry Big Bo away dead! Now Little Bo in jail saying nuthin' matter 'cause he ain't got nuthin' no more.

Tonight I think Immo cry. And pray something good for Little Bo.

Untitled by CHARLES COMBS
Dot

By DON LITTLE

Once in the land of void
There lived a Dot
And this Dot was alone
And unhappy
The Dot would wander
Too and fro
But no other Dot could it find
The Dot did not grow
Nor did it develop any
New concepts about the void
The Dot never realized that
The fact of its own existence
Within the void
Made the void
Not a void
As a matter of fact
The Dot became depressed
And began to shrink
For this is the opposite
Of grow

Until one day
A Speck
Found the shrinking Dot
And the Speck
Reversed the negativity of the Dot
And the Dot became happy
And started to grow
For the Dot saw
Within the Speck
An image of it's emotionally stable
And aware self
The Speck saw
Within the Dot
An image of it's emotionally needful
And unrealized self
Neither was aware
Of differences
For the void
Was absent of a voice
To tell them it was wrong
To find within themselves
The balance and harmony required
to grow
And both were happy
Marie d' France by Allison Sinquefield
Gatherin' Darkness

By EDNA AIKENS

Hattie Mae Tookes, Age 17

PROLOGUE

Hattie Mae Rhodes sits in a rocking chair on our front porch in Americus, Georgia, tapping a white-sneakered foot and gazing down our long, unpaved driveway. At age 94, she has outlived all of her relatives and now resides with my family at the quiet end of a rural street. She has lived and learned incredible things; all stored on the tides of her memories—memories that come and go like ocean waves in powerful surges. When the past rolls in, Miss Hattie loves to talk, rocking and talking, each movement triggering another nostalgic treasure. When she's not reminiscing, she's enjoying the warm sunshine, extolling to nature her nurturing touch. Whether she's tending delicate blossoms or holding the face of our beagle puppy in her calloused fingers, softly scolding him for some misdeed as though he were her child, she yields a magical response.

Her life has been a fascinating cycle of seasons; blooming with almost a century of springs, changing like the golden leaves, and at times, bowing to the chill of death's heartache. Almost a century of tragedy and joy has shaped and crafted her humble, cautious demeanor. She survived the hardship of The Great Depression, a childhood of troubling uncertainties, contagious diseases, evil curses, and the loss of both a precious child and a loving husband. Even though these tragic events left permanent scars on her gentle soul, it was always the strength of her character and her indelible courage that pushed her through the painful valleys. She is the last of a vanishing legacy—a strong, southern, black woman who worked hard, faced intolerable cruelties not only from whites, but from members of her own race and survived on a deep well of faith, and a bucket of sheer, gut-drawn determination. This is the story of her remarkable life in Oglethorpe, Georgia—this is her legacy to those who will honor her by keeping her story alive.

GATHERIN' DARKNESS

I wuz bawn in Ogletawp, near Montezuma, in Macon County, Gaw-
gy. Da bess I can figga, I come inta dis wurl in 1909; I know da month an' day by heart—it wuz September thewteenth—'cause muh daddy always give me uh silver dollar on dat day. Muh daddy wasn' no piddlin' main; he wukid hawd. He'd come in from da field on muh bu'ethday, take off hiz hat an' dey be nuttin but pride in hiz eyes, "guhl baby, ya take dis heyar dollar to da bank an' put it ta yo future." Muh daddy luv'id me, an' wanted mo'e fo' me dan what uh poe Negro shaycroppa had ta offa. Times wuz hawd den, but I wanted fo' nuttin cause I had plenny t'eat an' plenny t'wear.

I took good keer of muhself too. I seed uh pic'cha in uh magazine of uh woman wawshin herself in soda; so everday I filled uh wawshstub with hot waw'da an' bathed muhself good under muh arms with soda. I never did stank lak some folks did. When I got ouda de wawda, I rubbed muhself with taller dat come from hogs we kilt; an' muh skin wuz soff as budda. Muh gran'mama made de best lye soap in da country; an' dat's what I wawsh' muh clothes with. I scrub dem on da rub-bowed; den I starch an' iron muh dresses till dey could near 'bout stand in da cawna by deyelves.

Lotsa kids at school, mosa dem muh cousins, didn't lak me none 'cause I always had uh new pair o' black pateen' shoes, an' muh hair wuz neva nappy; it wuz long an' black. I memba Sugie Lester foll'id me home from school one
day singin', "Hattie Mae, Hattie Mae, go home an' check yo dyntie, yo pappy may be coal tar, but yo mammie come from whitey." I knowed da rumors 'bout Dan Kleckley hein' muh mama's daddy. Yes mam, I knowed all right. Missa Dan wuz uh white main who run'd uh shoe stowe uptown. When I walk by hiz stowe he yelled ta me, "Hattie Mae, you come heer gal an' git you some of dese new shoes I got in." I'd go inside an' he'd give me uh pair o' soft leathah boots with buttuns an' loops. Dey wuz so shiney, ya didn't hav'ta shine 'em; all ya has'ta do wuz wipe 'em off with uh rag.

I don' rightly know if'ln he wuz muh gran'daddy, but he always treated me special lak, so I speck hiz conscience mus'uh been whuppin him fo' som'in.

I jus' always reckoned dey mus' be some Cherokee blood in muh veins from uh ways back, 'cause muh eyes wuz shaped funny, an' muh high cheekbones got dat Injun look; but muh skin wuz sho nuff dark—dark as uh walnut hull. Da whites called yella Negoes Mulattas (Mulattos), but when da census man came 'roun' in nineteen-twenny, he listed me as 'negro', not Mulatta; so I guess I didn't look yella ta him, but dat wuz ladda on. Da kids at school sho were mean ta me dough, an' I got shucked plenny 'bout muh hair. It always made me feel different, even dough I knowed dey wuz jus' jealous, cause dey hair wuz all short an' wiry, an' dey eyes didn't have uh speck o' color—jus' muddy brown or black. Sometimes, muh eyes looked almos' blue; no mam, dem Negoes didn't lak dat.

Not long affa da Marion's step-
mama, Mamie Tookes, come down with da pox. Dey nailt up her house an' tole us nobody could go near her dere. I tole Marion dat she would starve ta death, but he tole me not ta worry 'bout her an' ta stay away from dere. Everyday, I took Marion, Jr. with me ta Mamie's house an' I slipped food ta her through da cat hole in da doe. I left muh baby unda uh big sprawlin' oak at da bottom of da hill, afo' I went up ta her house. No one evah knowed what I did fo' Mamie, even dough she wuz so mean ta me. I figger she had ta wuk dat out with da good Lawd, 'cause I couldn' let nobody starve ta death. She died uh couple o' months later, an' dey burnt her house to da groun' with her inside. I cried fo' Mamie Tookes; I guess 'cause I had uh lil' boy now, an' I believed in muh heart dat evah mam-a's got ta have some kind o' goodness inside her summers. Poe ole Mamie, if' in she had any goodness in her, she sho took it with her, 'cause she never did spread any 'roun' whilst she wuz heer.

Wadden long after dat when I woke up one night heerin air dog barkin' lak he had som'in treed in da yard. We hu'eeyed (heard) uh yelp from air hound, an' den everthang got still an' quiet. Marion put on hiz breeches an' tole me ta stay dere with Marion, Jr. whilst he went ta see what it wuz. Directly, he came back an' tole me I had ta come an' see. He cracked da front doe an' I saw uh big yella moon lightin' up air front yard as good as any daytime. I saw Sista Palma sprinklin' uh white powda all 'roun' air yard an' cov-erin' it ova with du'yeet (dirt). She pull out handfuls o' her devilment from her apron pockets an' let it sift through her closed fist. We closed da doe an' got on air knees an' prayed fo' da Lawd ta protect us from Sista Palma's curse. Den da rain came an' fell till mawnin'; I thought ta muhself dat da devil wuz wukin-in Sista's hoodoo powda so 's it would be mo'e powfal.

Marion walked 'roun' air place when light came, but I stayed on da poach holdin' Marion, Jr., makin' sho he didn' cross her markin's. Marion came back affa lookin' an' said, "Sista's t'uched us Hattie Mae, an' I don' know if' in dere's uh thang we can do ta lift dis mis'ry from air house." Marion, Jr. jus' sat dere on da poach pushin' bis-cuit crumbs through da cracks in da floor, watchin' da chickens fight over da scraps. I 'member thankin', "Lawd, nor muh boy; don' let dat devilwoman have muh boy." Marion tole me dat Sista Palma had stuck fo' roots up in da groun' at eery cawn 'roun' air house. Dat wuz da only day Marion Rhodes evah missed uh day o' work in hiz life, till he got da cancer ladda on. We stayed in da house all day, jus' prayin' fo' wisdom.

In Ogletawp dere wuz twin sistas named Ardella an' Arzona Wallace. Dey came ta live heer from Baton Rouge, an' dey had da sight. Arizona wuz blind from bu'ech soes Ardella looked thangs ova an' Arizona brung daz message. Marion went an' fetched da twins ta come an' look at Sista's cuese. Ardella woe uh long, red sku'yeet (skirt) an' neva took her hands oudda her pockets.
Sirocco

Arizona had uh hick’ry wood stick fo’ pokin’ ‘round whilst she walked. Dey both stayed close together an’ jus’ shook dey heads when dey saw what Sista Palma laid down. Arizona kin’uh drug one laig when she walked, an’ it took her uh while ta come back to da poach, but when she did, she come right up ta me jus’ lak she could see me standin’ dere. “Whadya do chile? Whadya do ta set her off lak dis heer?” I tol her ’bout muh daddy’s money an’ how Elve Kleckley bought dis cueese agin’ muh house ‘cause she wanted dat money. Arizona took muh hands an’ looked right at me with dose milk eyes an’ said, “Chile pray. Pray an’ Gaw’d’ll sen’ his angel ta tell ya how ta save yo family. But, know dis chile, da devil pays hiz debts, he does dat fo’ sho.”

Come Frid’y mawnin I took Marion, Jr. with me to da runnin’ spigot ta catch wawda when I see’d uh car runnin’ hot off da side o’ da road. Dere wuz uh white lady an’ her baby guhl sittin’ in da front seat fannin’ da heat an’ da gnats. Muh boy wuz uh ridin’ muh hip whilst I carried da wawda jar in muh right hand. When I bent down ta catch some wawda I hear’d somebody uh comin’ up behind me. I turn’ an’ saw uh white main; he looked uh lot olda dan hiz wife uh sittin’ in da car. He tol me dat hiz family wuz passin’ through on dey way ta Florida an’ hiz car run hot. He ask me if’in I had som’in he could catch wawda in fo’ hiz car. I tol him I only had dis one jug, but he wuz welcome ta it if it would help hiz family. He smil’ an’ took muh jar. When he got hiz wawda he took off hiz hat an’ said, “Mam, you gather up all dat darkness an’ you bury it deep: an’ tonight you go see who’s put dat spell on yo house—cause I’m gonna git dat spell offa yo house an’ send it back where it come from.”

Dat evenin’ me an’ Marion Rhodes gathered up dose roots an’ as much o’ dat powda as we could shovel an’ buried it deep behin’ air chicken coup. We took Marion, Jr. an’ walked ta Red Feun Road to dat two story house with da white bowd fence ‘round it. We stood at da foot o’ Sista Palma’s bed an’ watched her lay dere lak she couldn’t move, an’ dis is da truth from heer ta heavin’, her eyes jumped in her head when he put dat spell back on her. She looked right at us an’ said, “Git out from ova muh bed. He can’t grab me. He ain’t no where ‘round. You don’t know who you laughin’ at.” Her daughter, Euala, cried an’ axed if’in we could help her mama; but I tol her dat da devil ushers hiz own, an’ dat we couldn’t do nuttin’ bout hiz business. We watched Sista Palma draw her last breath dat very night.

But Arzon wuz right ’bout one thing, da devil do pay hiz debts, an’ da price wuz muh sweet boy’s life. Two months to da day affa we berried dat witch’s evil, muh baby took sick an’ got hodder’na stove pipe. I held hiz dishrag body in muh arms an’ bathed hiz li’l head with Epsom salts wawda. He opened hiz eyes once an’ tol me dat he wuz gonna go play with Pooch, hiz dawg dat died in da sprangtime. I begged him ta please don’t play with Pooch; ta stay heer with me an’ daddy,
but da Lawd knows bess I reckon, 'cause he took muh li'l boy da next day. Dey say it wuz da sca'let fever dat kilt muh boy. All I knewed wuz dat Elve Kleckly's greed sent uh demon from hell ta muh doesteps. Gawd may've let da devil take muh baby's life, but he sho never let him tuch his soul. I know he's waitin fo' me in heav'n; he's dere with his daddy jus' waitin' on me ta finally make it home.

We buried air boy in uh lil' white coffin we bought fo' twenty-five dollars from Missa D.C. Smith's stowe. Affa da funeral, I went to da bank an' took all dat whiskey money out; an' me an' Marion loaded up everthang we had in an ole car we bought second-hand from Marion's brother, Zan Tookes. But, my mos' prized possession I loaded was tha only pic'cha I has of muh li'l boy.

We move ta 'Mericus, Gawgy (Americus, Georgia) in August o' thwenty-two, an' left all dat wickedness behin' us. We never had no mo'e chilun affa dat, 'cause I wadden able ta carry no mo'e babies affa dat. I got pregnant lots of times, but I always took ta bleedin' an' loss em fo' too long. Mean' Marion Rhodes lived together in uh short-gun house 'side da railroad tracks on South Hampton Street till da Lawd took him home on March twenny-thu'heed, nineteen eighty-three. I sat right by hiz death bed an' held hiz han' till he left me foe da firs' time in fifty-seb'uhn yairs.

Nowadays, I only sees him when I'm frettin' ova som'in; an' he comes an' sits on muh bed at night. He never says nuttin', he jus' smiles at me an' I knows it'll all be betta in da mawnin. I'm thankful ever day tha Lawd lets me keep a breathin'; but I'm a lookin' fo' dat day when I can go home an' see Marion and muh boy again. I'd lak ta tell Mamie Tookes she wuz wrong 'bout muh boy, but I don't thank I'll see her face in glowry.

Window by Allison Sinquefeld

*Edna Aikens is the Dolores F. Capitan First Prize Winner.*

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Untitled Poems

By SHANNON HARRIS

Oft I glance at those lights
Shining forth from the city
Miles from my little dirt road
And wonder what occurs within
That place of a thousand dreams
I do not tread near though
For I still have many miles
To take in and many rocks to kick
I still have stars that I have not yet
Seen and dreams I have not yet dreamt
Maybe some other day I will visit
The city but not
Today

The leaves carry the words to a story
I do not know
The trees birth thoughts that I cannot
Begin to comprehend
The stream whispers its lullaby to me
Cool and soothing in my ears
These things I watch form my back porch
While the asphalt covers the little road
In front of my house

The grass dances before my eyes
The gentle rains calm my tempestial mind
The trees bend and lean and creak
And break as the cars pass us by
break up with a text message

By SHANNON HARRIS

i'll wear ur scars like honor medals
my heart has now been bled 3 times
seasons changed
but time stood still
it is my time 2 die
as u stand on ur balcony
with ur newfound life
think of me and remember
the days that passed us by
n my dreams i c u
a little less forlorn than id wish
with the chrysanthemums all around me
im lying, still in bed
my eyes will never open
nor will my heart beat 4 u again
n joy and n sorrow... i linger
the end
"Star Gazer." He had streaked blonde hair, glowing, tanned skin, well-defined muscles, and .....dirty shoes. I hate dirty shoes. Definitely not my type, I told myself.

"Excuse me?"

"You look like you're a star gazer. Someone who enjoys sitting under the open sky on a night where the moon hangs like peeling wallpaper. You look like a nature lover."

When I didn't respond, he said, "My name is Luke."

I continued to sip my extra-tall better-than-average bookstore coffee. Is he for real? I asked myself. No one ever bothered me in this place, thus its appeal. It may seem silly to some, but this is unofficially my seat. First window, big comfy chair. The people that work here know it. All the regulars know it. And unlike some that might come to socialize, I come to enjoy my isolation. This was my time away from my de-ranged mother. No nieces and nephews running around. So I refused to tolerate this tanned man standing two inches too close to my face.

"Agnes," I returned dryly, hoping my tone would turn him away.

"No. You look like a Rachel, Teresa...or maybe a Destiny. But definitely not Agnes. Agnes reminds me of agony, and there is nothing agonizing about you," Luke said.

Although his words were smooth, he shifted uncomfortably from one foot to the other, like he wanted to join me, but was afraid.

"Well, Luke, is it? You are completely wrong about me in every way. My name, again, is Agnes. I hate nature. Watching stars is a waste of time, and so is talking to you."

I gathered my things and waited for a reaction. I expected him to be put off, but his eyes twinkled all the more.

Definitely not my type, I reminded myself on the way to the parking lot. Once at home, I resumed the helter-skelter pace with practiced ease. Check the levels on Mom's oxygen tank. Get the twins ready for bed. Feed the dogs. Take Mom her dinner. Finish accounting work. Explain to Mom that it's a very bad idea for her to smoke since she had emphysema and is damn near dead anyway. Crawl into bed, dog tired, bones aching, and do it all over again.

I had been so busy, too busy to think about Luke. But he was there, in my subconscious, begging to be remembered.

Pretty soon, I didn't have to remember him, because every day, he was there. Between the hours of 5:00 and 6:00, he sat directly across from me in
the biography section. Not saying a word, just pretending to read all kinds of books about all kinds of people. Alexander the Great. Hilary Clinton. Sitting and staring, and sitting and staring.

After about a month, I couldn’t take it anymore, so I casually walked over to him.

“The Three Stooges,” I said.

“Excuse me?” he said with mock disdain.

He laughed. I laughed. And just like that, we connected.

It was wonderful getting to know him the summer of 2004. I craved someone who understood what it was liked to be trapped. Trapped in a little town that was disguised by tall buildings and big city lights. Baltimore. Luke understood that I wanted to leave. Leave my mom and all of her medical bills behind. Leave the dynamic duo to someone else. But there was no one else.

Luke and I took walks in the park, talked about his experiences when he studied in Italy, France, and Romania. We shared books that we loved, food that we loved, we made love. He bought nicer shoes.

But the demons wouldn’t stay down. The more time I spent with him, the more unhappy my mother became. It was the summer of my content, but the summer of her discontent. She needed me more and more and more. And I had less and less and less to give her. It wasn’t fair. Her frail body wracked with pain. Breathing became so impossible that she had to give up the cigarettes.

She could barely walk, barely talk, and when she did talk, it was to ask questions about Luke. When can I meet him? Why won’t you bring him here? Are you ashamed of me? Ashamed of where you come from?

One night, I laughed at the thought of forgetting to get her oxygen tanks refilled. If she can’t breathe, she can’t ask questions. I laughed again, this time louder and longer. It was like a song playing in my head. No breath, no ask, no breath then...death. I felt like skipping. I hadn’t been so happy in a long time. That one thought had liberated me. I had never, never allowed myself to think that way.

When that night was over, I filed the idea away deep in my brain. But it was like opening Pandora’s box. Once I got that idea in my head, I couldn’t get rid of it. It was then that I knew it was time to leave. I made some calls. Found a place for the dynamic duo. Made arrangements for Mom. Left the little town disguised by tall buildings and big city lights.

Became the star gazer I always wanted to be.
Pete Townshend by Kimberly Norris
EDNA AIKENS is a third year English/Technical Writing student at GSW, former Safety and Security Director for Flint River Community Hospital. A Native of Franklin, Georgia, Edna now lives in Americus with her husband and twin five-year-old daughters. She wrote a historical article entitled “Marion County Comes Alive” that Georgia magazine published in April 1995, and recently wrote and secured a successful grant for Middle Flint’s Service Center serving mentally challenged. Edna currently maintains a 4.0 GPA and plans to write and teach after graduation.

DANIEL G. WILLIAMS works as a control board operator for radio station WNNG 1350AM in Warner Robins. His interests include writing, 3-D modelling and animation.

SHANNON HARRIS was born at Miller County Hospital but has lived her entire life in the same red brick house in Baker County. She went to high school at both Miller County High School and Mitchell-Baker High School. Before coming to GSW, Shannon attended Darton College from Fall 2001 to Fall 2003, earning Associates of Arts degrees in English and Journalism. As for interests/hobbies, she enjoys reading, writing, watching movies and TV, playing cards, and shooting pool.

LACEY PITTS is a junior at GSW majoring in English and seeking a teaching certificate as well. She is a native of Cordele, Georgia but now resides in Americus to attend GSW. She is twenty-one and enjoys writing poetry in her spare time.

JOSH SIMPKINS lives in Miami, FL. He is currently working freelance bouncing from shoot to shoot. In the past month, he has worked on a feature film, a photo shoot, and earned a post production credit on another feature. He is working with a friend to develop an animated series that they hope to sell for television. In the future, Josh hopes to write, produce, and direct his own films.

MICHAEL CLOUD is a 21-year-old Junior at Georgia Southwestern. He is majoring in English with Professional Writing Option.

DON LITTLE is a GSW student pursuing a BFA in Art. He loves to attend Art galleries and his favorite medium in Art is Photography. Don also likes to read and write poetry. It is very rare that he writes a short story. Don believes that Art lies more in the content than the technique. He enjoys experiencing people as much as he enjoys sharing his experiences with them.
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