

*God only knows what I'd be without Manning Kimmel,  
Ashok Rajamani, Derek Smith, Holly Guran, Alston Brake,  
Dragin & Best In Show & The Dream Journal.*

# The Blotter

December 2010

MAGAZINE

THE SOUTH'S UNIQUE, FREE, INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE AND ARTS MAGAZINE  
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## Alas, press release, we knew them well.

Front cover, "Nicolette's Glow" by  
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# "Poetry's not dead, it's just buried in the back of the closet under the dirty socks"

## Idle thoughts on the art of words.

In the twenty-first century, poetry is hard to find. Or maybe it's just that good poetry is hard to find. Or good poetry is hard to enjoy. Pick one. We teach it, but half-heartedly, fully prepared to answer the question: "OMG, why do I need to know this?" with "Don't write this down, but I find Milton probably as boring as you find Milton. Mrs. Milton found him boring too..." We step over poetry like a homeless person lying on the sidewalk, wondering why someone doesn't pick him up, clean him off and what in the world is that smell? Or else, with a solemnity reserved for the changing of the guard, some (read "famous poets") present what is left of poetry; stiffly, formally, daintily. Here, poems are reserved, like French wine, for the educated palate. These readings often proceed: the poems are on trial, with the poet as counselor for the defense, and thin-lipped and prissy academics as witnesses for the prosecution. Poems are read in a eulogistic monotone, under the auspices that the words must carry the day. (Hate the monotone, but the word/logic makes good sense.) Still if you're going to put someone to sleep, you're going to need more comfortable chairs. No wonder kids think poetry sucks.

So we others, we outsiders, excise poetry from the ashes, and then we fumble the ball. Because with the same attitude we modern adults have for all things regarding our children we say "poetry's not hard. Anyone can write poetry." Sure, and "baseball's not hard. Here, put the ball on this tee and swing at it." We teach, but poorly. We inform, but not completely. We tell them what a metaphor is: (it's like, something else that makes you think of the first thing.) And irony: (it's like something else that when it happens it makes you think about how weird the first thing was, you know what I'm saying?)

And then we cut them loose with paper and a pencil. Hey, anyone can do it! And I suppose that this is true; that with effort, lots of effort, and study and inspiration and intelligent feedback and more effort, anyone can do just about anything. Sing, sweetheart, sing! But poetry, ah poetry, is a bit tricky. For poetry used to require a filtration system to reach the poetry-reading public. A poem had to weather the gauntlet of cheesy academics and fawning gadflies, brittle editors and self-absorbed peers. It had to at least stand up to the pop-quizzes of time. Only then it was finally worth the paper it was printed on.

I think somebody once said, "If that was what it takes to make it here, I'd prefer to not make it anywhere," or something to that effect. I could be wrong.

## And then there was ~~Korea~~ the World Wide Web:

The Internet presents everything with equivalent speed (Except a friend of

mine, who, bewilderingly, still uses dial-up.) It permits form, shape, color and volume to take the place of quality, and allows emerald coronets to rest side-by-side with milk-cartons filled with chimp-poo. To wander the Internet - to surf, if you will - is like walking a dusty plain in a slight breeze, details obscured, voices masked. Sometimes, something good is "placed" on the Internet, and it is lost, or be-fouled, because of the Internet's very size and make-up, and the very freedom we purport to want the Internet to enjoy. To some of us, it is a rascal, its form and function the most idiotic-savantish of creations. So how can you publish out here?

Here in Chapel Hill, much of the historically glorious off-campus crustiness has been sandblasted away and painted over with chrome and lined with fancy brick-work. The "collitch-kids" in this collitch town are being ignored, for something that the town's fathers must see as a kind of student-tourist chic. The old bookstores are gone, replaced with...well, nothing. And it turns out you can indeed have too many coffee-shops, particularly if they sell four-dollar decaf lite-mocha-chinos and they don't let you take a nap in a ratty-comfy chair with the paperback of Dostoevsky's Greatest Hits balanced over your eyes. Who were they expecting? Who else did these merchants think wanted coffee at three o'clock in the afternoon? What self-respecting pre-law with a minor in economics wants to sit in a martini-bar, or watering hole that only sells water? Frankly, what self-respecting post-grad doing grant-funded gastro-intestinal research does either? So young folks slouch on towards Bethlehem, on a slippery slope to becoming adults. Consuming, administering, managing, their life lessons drawn from the Mr. Holland du jour. Things can only get worse, but we're all aware of that. There's nothing new in the world, but we've heard that refrain enough to have lost the capacity for wonder, much less panic.

My point? I dunno. I guess we'll muddle through. KBO. I recently heard something I liked, though. Something about pretending that airplanes in the night sky are like shooting stars, because I could really use a wish right now. Perhaps trying to be heard over all the noise in our world our minstrels shout rather than singing. They are delivered, rather than letting us seek them out; each voice branded, pre-sweetened and artificially flavored. Many of us are allergic to the taste. But occasionally there's still a package worth having opened.

Anyhow, in Chapel Hill (and Durham and Asheville and Athens and Austin,) there's poetry. Well, it isn't Robert Penn Warren and Richard Wilbur, dry-sherry served in a crystal glass. Not even in a Dixie-cup. It's not Ginsberg and Kenneth Rexroth duking it out for the best hearts and minds of their generation. Sorry, we're fifty years down the road from there, and there's no going back. Still, there's poetry at the open mic, and some folks are even listening.

Garry - [chief@blotterrag.com](mailto:chief@blotterrag.com)

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### **The Blotter Magazine, Inc.**

(again, a 501(c)3 non-profit) is an education concern. Our primary interest is the furthering of creative writing and fine arts, with the magazine being a means to that end. We publish in the first half of each month and enjoy a free circulation throughout the Southeast and some other places, too. Submissions are always welcome, as are ad inquiries.

Subscriptions are offered as a premium for a donation of \$25 or more. Send check or money order, name and address to The Blotter Subscriptions, 1010 Hale Street, Durham, NC 27705. Back issues are also available, 5 for \$5. Inquire re. same by e-mail: [chief@blotterrag.com](mailto:chief@blotterrag.com).



### **CAUTION**

*I don't want to hear it.  
No, don't say it. No, I'm  
not listening. La-la-la-la!*

# "The Man Who Never Broke A Law"

by Manning Kimmel

There once was a man who never broke a law. He was the most obedient citizen who ever lived. He didn't litter. He didn't jaywalk. He didn't take any illegal drugs, even in college. He didn't drink. He didn't pick up prostitutes. He didn't cheat on his taxes. He didn't get into fist fights, even when he was in elementary school. He didn't disobey his teachers or his parents. He didn't disobey his boss and had many prosperous years at his firm. He didn't steal or cheat his business partners. He didn't participate in insider trading. He didn't urinate in public, even when it forced him to piss in his pants. He didn't vandalize school property when he was in middle school. He didn't walk his dog without cleaning up after it. He didn't break the speed limit while he was driving and always came to a complete stop at all STOP signs.

He didn't gamble, even during a business trip to Las Vegas. He didn't bribe police, lawyers, or judges. He never used

profanity.

As the years went by, he received several professional and civic awards. He remained sexually abstinent until he married a woman that he met in church. Together they had three children: two boys and a girl. He bought a nice house in the suburbs with a white picket fence. Then he bought his children a puppy.

One day The Man saw that one of his neighbors had parked his RV on the street in front of his house. This was a violation of one of The Neighborhood Association's rules. The Man promptly reported this to them. The Neighbor received a letter in the mail that said he was in violation of the rules and needed to park his RV in the driveway. He ignored this and thought it was petty. A week later, his RV was towed and he had to pay \$200 to get it back. The Neighbor put two and two together and promptly walked over to The Man's house and yelled at him. The Man was having a birthday party for his

daughter. The Neighbor screamed at him, called him a gutless coward, and punched him out in front of a bunch of his daughter's third-grade friends. The Man didn't fight back. He was afraid that he might be charged with assault and he didn't want to break a law. Instead, he laid on the ground, took his beating, and cried like a little girl. His daughter's friends laughed at him. After The Neighbor left, The Man reported him to the police and he was charged with assault and spent a week in jail.

The Man continued tried to live his life like he normally did, before the incident, but something didn't feel right to him. He continued to be a patriotic and prosperous citizen and was still praised by the upper crust of society, along with his colleagues, but something didn't feel right to him. He began to feel depressed. Church didn't make him feel any better. His family didn't make him feel any better. The psychiatrist he visited didn't make him feel any better.

Then things really started to go wrong. Some of his partners at his firm had been involved in illegal things and



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when the heat came down, they framed him for their misdeeds. He was arrested and lost his professional license. His wife filed for divorce on the grounds that 'he's just plain boring!' She used the pending charges against him to get full custody of his children, with no visitation rights. Later, while he was out on bail and living in an apartment all alone, he found out that his wife had been having an ongoing affair with The Pastor of his church for several years. To his dismay, he found out that his daughter was not actually his. The Pastor had impregnated his wife many years ago.

The Man was sentenced to many years in prison and due to a clerical error, he was sent to a maximum security prison instead of one for white-collar non-violent criminals. He quickly fell prey to some of the predatory inmates. Money was extorted from him, he was beaten, and finally he was raped. He brought his complaints to The Prison Warden, who didn't seem to care.

Through it all, The Man tried to be a model prisoner. He started working in the kitchen of The Prison and in his spare time he began writing a memoir. It was very cathartic for him. Writing helped him deal with his pain.

At that point in his life he was 45 years old. He had lost everything except for a small fortune that he had saved and managed to avoid losing during his divorce from his treacherous wife. She had not taken the children to see their Father in the several years since he was incarcerated. He later found out that she had broken off her long-term

affair with his former Pastor to marry the multi-millionaire son of an Oil Tycoon, who had recently inherited his father's empire after a suspicious car 'accident'.

A gang war inside The Prison claimed the lives of the men who had been tormenting him, so he found some peace during the last months of his sentence. Through his correspondences with the outside world, he found a literary agent who liked his book and agreed to represent him. The agent managed to find a publisher for him and they began a promotional campaign. Once The Man was released from The Prison, he was to begin a book signing tour that would take him all across the country.

He petitioned the court to get back his visitation rights, so he could see his children again. A hearing was scheduled to occur three and a half months after his release date.

So, for the first time in years, things were starting to look good for The Man. He counted the hours until his release. On that day, he could barely contain his happiness. He was to begin his book tour the following morning.

As the gates opened he felt warm sunshine hit his shoulders. The joy overwhelmed him and he kissed the ground. He stepped out onto the sidewalk and waited for the next bus to take him into The City. He sat on a bench, enjoyed the warm

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## The Blotter

breeze, and thought about the future, as well as the better parts of his past. In the distance, a bus began driving down the street.

Before it could get to the bus stop, The Driver began to have a massive heart attack and lost control of the vehicle. The bus swerved and ran up onto the sidewalk, crashed into the bench, and ran over The Man.

As he laid in the gutter bleeding to death, The Man began to hallucinate. He saw himself in Heaven, surrounded by Jesus and many angels. Jesus pasted a gold star sticker onto The Man's white robe and smiled at him in approval.



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## "Shrimping, or, Come to Mama, or, Sari-Sex"

by Ashok Rajamani

The closest thing twenty-three year-old Leenu got to unwrapping her mother-in-law's sari took place in the third week of her husband Anil's absence. She still felt weird about lusting after Anil's mama. But Anil, whom she had just wed a month before, was off on a business trip. It wasn't her fault that she found the sixty year-old Neelama so damn sexy.

It wasn't her fault at all.

Left alone with Neelama in Anil's tiny Mumbai apartment while he was away (was he gone to Okinawa? Or Oklahoma? She never did pay any attention to him) Leenu had gotten used to rubbing Neelamma's legs as she slept. That was a traditional Indian bride's job. To massage her mother-in-law. But, finally she yielded to a desire that had been burning within the newly-proud mother-in-law-loving slutlet. She bent her face down by

the old woman's feet, and carefully, gently, she started licking the right one. It was aged, veiny, and leathery, but Leenu wanted it more than any curried potatoes in the world. Feeling braver, she opened her mouth, and sucked the toes on that liver-spotted foot, one by one. Her tongue scraped Neelamma's toe-ring, but she didn't mind. It was a cleaning that the jewelry needed. Neelamma, awakened by the delicious sensation, opened her eyes in shock, but then quickly shut them, determined to keep the ruse intact, all the while getting the pleasure of her feet serviced. After many minutes passed, however, she opened her eyes. Within a millisecond, Leenu moved back to her original position, rubbing the feet with her hands once again.

In sex lingo, the erotic sucking of a lover's toes is called *shrimping*. Leenu would have been horrified if she heard that term. She was a staunch vegetarian.



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## *Call for Entries!*

### **"The 2011 Laine Cunningham Novel Award"**

#### **The Blotter's Second Annual Long Form Fiction Contest for Novella and Novel length works**

1. The purpose of our contest is to provide a venue for writers to have their work read and commented on by our editors and judges. Additionally, the winner of this contest will have his/her work published here on these pages. And last but not least, the winner will receive a monetary prize! (Award monies are provided by the prize sponsor and the entry fee for the contest helps offset The Blotter's costs.)

2. Our pre-reader judges are intelligent and highly proud of their educations. Our final judge is smart, well-read and runs the hundred in nine-point-eight. But we told her that she could be the final judge and what can you do?

3. In a world chock-full of scandal, transparency is very important to us, and we make every effort to eliminate any conflict of interest situation from going down in our contest. Blotter volunteers and their family members and/or employees are prohibited from entering our contest.

To enter the contest, please submit your work with a \$25 entry fee by check or money order to: The Blotter Magazine, 1010 Hale Street, Durham, NC 27705. Entries must be received between October 1, 2010 and January 21, 2011 (you see, we're already giving you an extension, so don't put it off!)

Your entry must contain the following: no less than 10 pages, no more than 20 pages of the opening of your novel or novella, (or subject/character-connected short story chapbook) typed & double-spaced, without your name. On a separate cover page type your name, snail-mail and e-mail address, telephone number, the title of your novel or novella and a one page synopsis of your novel or novella. Remember, you have to have the entire book written, so that if and when you win, you can show us the rest!

**BONUS:** Enter the writing contest AND get a year's subscription to The Blotter for only \$30! (Regular annual subscription donations are \$25 total and you don't even get to enter a writing contest with that price!)

Well, now. \$650 in cash prizes, plus anything else we can wrangle together that we think has value. All placements, including honorable mentions, will receive an award certificate, proof positive of your success as an author, suitable for mocking your sophomore English teacher, who always wondered how it was that you graduated at all.

Our contest will be run in line with the rules of ethics and mechanics recommended by the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses, as outlined in their 2006 monograph on the subject. You can't view for free, but you may purchase the monograph entitled "Publishing Contests: Ethics and Mechanics" through the CLMP at <http://www.clmp.org/about/monographs.html>. This is the document we have used in coming up with the rules and conditions of this contest.

So that's it, then - quit fooling around and get to work!







Derek Smith - NC  
 bohemiannoirvisions.com &  
 focaletchings.com

Upper Left: Forgotten Window

Far Left: Motel Entrance

Left: Geologist, circa 1873

Upper Right: Valerie

Right: Ma, we gots company

Page 13: Trapped



## "Boston Baked Blues"

by Holly Guran

Same old Toyota putting on the miles,  
speedometer's clocked over a hundred thousand.  
Same old city turning over in my head  
broad as the Charles from the BU bridge.  
Lived here longer than anyplace else.

Why do the street signs point toward the past  
as Eric's soothing voice says he's playing Nina?  
I heard her once in Philly after the kids were born.  
Don't remember who'd arrived, the three came along  
so quickly. Those days, you didn't question having babies.  
Thank God for that. Listening to Nina,

love's gonna bring you nothing but  
pain and misery, nothing but  
misery and pain. Tonight  
sweetness oozes from the loves that fade,  
at least the ones furthest in the past.

To wash out the recent bitter taste  
I go out, embrace this old familiar place, this spot  
on the bridge where you turn your head  
and catch the glitter of dark skyscrapers,  
a moon if you're lucky.

If love knocks on your door, open wide.  
Put the water on to boil.  
Pull down the blinds. I see life passing  
and don't believe I've traveled these streets  
so long, don't believe I've woken up  
in this town so many times.

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## The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

Please send excerpts from your own dream journals.. If nothing else, we'd love to read them We won't publish your whole name.

mermaid@blotterra.com

Hi there,

I love The Blotter, and the other night I had what I thought was a funny dream. So I wrote it down:

I am lying on the gray marble floor at some glassy airport in Germany. My husband and I are in Germany for a vacation, and it has been the best trip of our lives. My hands are spread out on the floor soaking in the coolness of the marble, and I hear the announcer say, "Train 51 now leaving the station." My husband is lying on the floor beside me when he turns to me and says, "I dare you to spell 'pterodactyl.'" He's smiling, and I smile back at him because I know I can spell 'pterodactyl.' Easy. I open my mouth, "T – no, wait, yes, T." I burst into laughing. "Wait, wait, wait, this is a weird word, I can do this." I'm sitting up now like my husband with our arms hugging our knees. There's a girl with a head full of pretty braids watching us, and she says to me, "Spell 'pterodactyl.'" I look at her and my husband, who's still smiling, and feeling my confidence rise within me, I stand up, and in the middle of the busy German airport or train station, I proclaim, with one arm stretched out like a Roman orator, "T – T – T – E – R – A – D – A – C – T – Y – L." Suddenly, the people around us erupt into cheers, clapping their hands and taking pictures of me. My husband kisses me good on my mouth. I jump up on him, wrap my legs around his waist, and we are spinning. "My wife is the smartest woman on the planet!" I hear him shout to the crowds. I wake up next to my sleeping husband, and I smile at him and secretly think, I don't think I know how to spell 'pterodactyl.' But somehow I doubt it matters much to him. So I kiss him good on the mouth.

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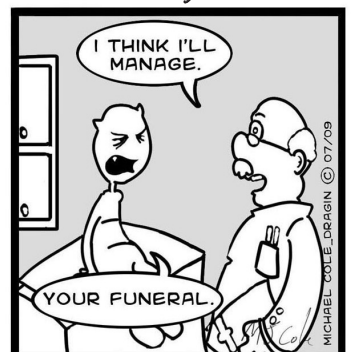
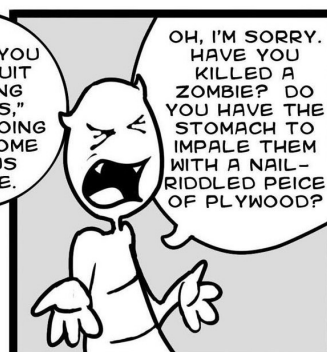
### Best In Show

by Phil Juliano



### DRAGIN

by Michael Cole



### "Derek, on Derek"

Digital artist, writer, and photographer whose work has appeared in NC Fetish Art Festivals '09 & '10, Davenport & Winkleperry Gallery (Pittsboro, NC), Bizarre Magazine, Tattooed Girls Rock, Durham Magazine, Fox 50, Fuel for the Boiler, Independent Weekly, the Hippo, News and Observer, and multiple internet locations.

"Blending traditional photographic techniques with modern digital technology, Derek's visual works are haunting images reminiscent of times lost, be it the shadowy backroom of a 1920's speakeasy, or the smoke filled lounge of a 50's beatnik joint."

I've never taken a photography classes in my life, but it seemed that everyone on my Dad's side of the family were photographers so I kinda' grew up with a camera in my hand. When I was around 10 my dad owned one of those old time photo shops where you get all dressed up in Victorian or western clothes and stood in front of a saloon set or other stylized pieces. He used that huge old camera where you'd get behind it and pull the black cloth over yourself to block the light. Sometimes he'd let me stand under there with him as he set up the shot, and I was always fascinated looking at the back of the camera and seeing the inverted image of the people as they were reflected from the lens. I definitely think that's where I got my love for that old style and feel.

Later, computer graphics started to hit the public eye in the early 80's and I was instantly drawn to them from the start. My mother's artistic influence help instill a love of painting and drawing but I never felt I was that great at either. It wasn't until getting to play with the Apple 2E color art



program in high school computer class and the Commodore 64 I had to play with at home that I found a medium I loved.

About ten years ago my brother and I started playing with extended exposure shots, black-light lit models, and other non-traditional styles of photography just to explore what could be done with the fledgling digital photography of the time. He used to joke that I was a 'photo purist', and really, I was...I wanted the image that came out of the

camera to be perfect, to be finished as is. But it wasn't long before I started incorporating two of my artistic passions, photography and digital art, and once I really started playing around with Photoshop and realized I could take my images to a whole 'nother level it was a sort of photography epiphany and where I truly began to find my own feel and style. It's because of this that I tend to think of myself more of a 'digital artist' than strictly a 'photographer'. I tend to pick 'dark and disturbing' over 'bloody and gory', 'antiqued' over 'modern', low or natural lighting over bright studio lights...in short things slightly off from the norm.

With few exceptions, I usually go into a shoot without a clear idea of what the final image(s) will look like. Sometimes I'll see an image on the camera's screen and know it's done as is, but most of the time I tend to let them grow and evolve once I get them out of the camera and onto the computer screen. Every photon captured becomes a new toy to tug at, to pull apart and rearrange into something new and unique and many times I'm pleasantly surprised by the final results as I don't have a set 'formula' of editing and really just play until suddenly hitting that "Ah haaaa!" moment when I know it's done.



## "Sam's Advice"

by Holly Guran

Someone who's lost needs  
a useful thing to do  
like chopping  
and hauling. Even slopping

feed to the hogs  
you can take pride in that,  
but you may have a wife  
not showing respect. Mine didn't.

It's quite possible  
I hit her then—  
I sure wanted to—losing her  
into the piney night.

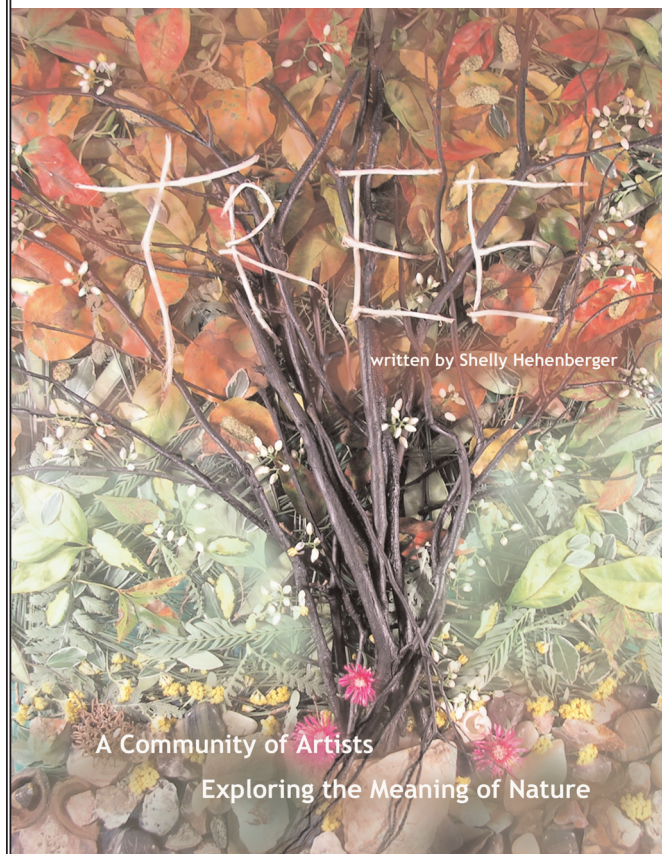
These days I feel good  
when Perry and I bury fence posts  
and gather wood on his farm  
where the sun's up early

and days go  
at the speed they should—  
you work, get tired and sleep  
in your own bed at night

not minding dreams  
or silver needles  
sliding like women  
away from the trees.

The Blotter Magazine's book publishing imprint, PencilPoint Mountain, and [www.paintbrushforest.com](http://www.paintbrushforest.com) present *Tree*, a collaborative, all ages, fine arts book illustrated by members of Paintbrush Forest, a group of artists from the Orange County, NC, area. All proceeds from *Tree* support the Haw River Assembly, a NC environmental organization.

Join us on December 10, 2010, 6-9PM, at the Carrboro, NC ArtsCenter for our artists' reception. Check out [www.paintbrushforest.com](http://www.paintbrushforest.com) to bid on the original book art, to make a donation, and to order your own copy of *Tree*.



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## "My Mother and My Neighbor" by Holly Guran

Was it my name or God's she cried out,  
did the rattle come before the cry?

The cat struggled to the end, fighter that he was.  
She didn't want death to take her.

Yesterday down through the tube  
that's like a tulip stem, a clear liquid dripped.

My neighbor fumbled at his wrist where the tube entered,  
replacing the loosened tape

squirming in the upright chair  
in a room where the smiles were too bright—

a custom here, bring cheer. In each alcove people  
hooked to the prolonging.

She might have prolonged.  
Was it wise to steal that option?

The daughters wanted her near. She traveled north  
leaving friends and warm air,

made friends with my friends,  
cooked meals for me she couldn't eat.

In her home, pets were not permitted,  
but in my home she let the cat sleep in her lap

her old disturbed crankiness familiar.  
I must have taken on some of that.

Let me take this too: she's in her fur coat  
arms spread to receive the falling snow.

My neighbor's arm rested on the pillow  
as the drips slid down.

His gaze followed each drop  
silent beats infusing his body.

## "Home Will Find You"

by Alston Brake

Sometimes home comes as a whisper,  
a cherished memory,  
that coaxes you into peaceful sleep.

But sometimes home comes as insomnia  
that causes you to pace all night  
in nervous delirium.

Home transcends the miles,  
capturing your heart again and again,  
to wring from it  
every drop of guilt it can.

Home raises unanswerable questions  
of should've, could've been.  
It will not let you forget  
you are the last piece of the puzzle  
whether you want to be or not.

Once home finds you,  
don't even bother to run.

Final Tid-Bits: My gosh, they started Christmas on TV by November 1st. If I see one more Smiling Bob ad for blue pill life behaviors stupidity correction I'm going to... Lots of great books out this year so give your friends something to read as a holiday gift, rectangles are easier to wrap than smoked cheese-wheels or sweaters. And consider a donation to The Blotter as your good deed for the year! Remember, only you can keep browsing as an option - visit your local independent bookstore, they have hot cocoa! - and I don't want to hear any of you saying, "I'm bored." Got it? Good!

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Manning Kimmel** was born in Cumberland, Maryland in 1977, but moved with his family, to Rock Hill, SC in 1985, when he was still seven years old. After graduating from Westminster Catawba, a fundamentalist Presbyterian school, he attended The Savannah College of Art and Design, in Georgia, then later graduated from FULL SAIL Technical College in Winter Park, FL. After that he moved to Phoenix, AZ and lived there for almost a year before eventually settling in Raleigh, NC in 2004. He has worked many different jobs, from door to door salesman to news cameraman to legal assistant. He currently performs in two local bands, RAW DOG and DEAD TO SOCIETY.

**Ashok Rajamani** is a writer, poet, and artist in New York City. He is a member of the Authors Guild, New York Writers Coalition, and South Asian Journalists Association. He has been published in numerous outlets, including Gutter Eloquence, Pulp Metal, South Asian Review, and 3:AM Magazine. Ashok's artwork has been submitted to many venues as well, such as Exit Art, a leading New York Cultural Center. His memoir, "BRAIN KARMA," will be published by Algonquin Books in 2011. For more info: [www.ashokrajamani.com](http://www.ashokrajamani.com).

**Holly Guran**, of Roslindale, MA and author of *River Tracks* (Poets Corner Press), received an International Merit Award from the *Atlanta Review*, placed second in the *Explorations* competition, and was a featured poet in *Howling Ark* and *The Aurorean*. Her poems have appeared in *96, Inc.*, *Hummingbird*, *Labyris*, *Phoenix*, *Poetry East*, *Ibbetson Street* and *Connecticut River Review* and in *The Breath of Parted Lips*, a Cavan Kerry Press anthology. She currently has poems on display at Boston City Hall.

**Derek Smith?** Come on, see Page 12!

**Alston Brake** was born on May 21, 1985 in Raleigh, NC. She now lives in Carrboro, NC with her dog. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and minors in both Creative Writing and Journalism from UNC-Chapel Hill. Currently, she is pursuing a Masters in Library Science from UNC-Chapel Hill. She also works as a Library Technical Assistant at North Carolina State University's D.H. Hill Library.

**Phil Juliano** and **Michael Cole** hail from Asheville, by way of those secret places where renderers of time, space and matter pause to ply their skills.

Photo: Joshua Craig



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*xxooxooxoox - The Blotter Gang*