

No, no, hue can't take that away... Marsha A. Temlock,  
Thom Schwartz, Davis Entloe, E.M. Earle, Clifford Brooks,  
Phil Juliano and The Dream Journal

# The Blotter

April 2013

MAGAZINE

THE SOUTH'S UNIQUE, FREE, INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE AND ARTS MAGAZINE

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## "Found in my composition book – no date"

Working title: "Another open letter, just in case"

In recent times writers and filmmakers have visited the end of the world from a number of different perspectives. Contagious diseases, weather run amok. Asteroids with pinpoint accuracy, zombies that fuel up on our most morbid morsels, vampires that love us and don't leave us – we seem to have a taste for the lack thereof. Rather than avoid it, it can be fun to temporarily embrace it, from time to time. Why this is I do not know, as I sit and watch the most recently tivo'd episode of *The Walking Dead*. I suppose I don't worry so much about zombie hordes. Not from Atlanta, anyhow. Quick thought: how would Honey Boo-boo's family fare either as or against zombies? The very mind boggles...

So how do I see the end of the world? Well, I've always found Stephen King's *The Stand* to be legendary in its ferocity and scope – the killer disease which culls the herd so thoroughly that good and evil can actually quit their mundane day jobs and take center ring in the cirque du end-of-days for a cage match. That other inimitable Yankee, Robert Frost is rather less muscular in his content. Ice, Fire, (pick your poison). His point is brevity itself. My girls just watched Dennis Quaid tromp through the snow to rescue (thank goodness, says my thirteen-year-old) Jake Gyllenhaal in the global climate thriller *The Day After Tomorrow*. Of course, their perception of tragedy is alternative to mine. I no longer enjoy a full-on winter like we've had this year, so a brand new ice age has a certain...uncertainty to it I wouldn't approve of. I did appreciate the bald irony of North Americans wading across the Rio Grande; illegally, of course. And I wondered about the idea that the third world can't always feed itself so well, so what are the plans when their heretofore rather pushy northern neighbors descend and join them uninvited at the supper table? My girls chewed on that for a moment and went back to Jake-watching.

It's weird talking to thirteen year olds about the apocalypse. A thirteen year old is in her salad days. Those moments where they can't yet imagine failed love, broken dreams, misspent action. They also don't have a grip on hunting for their own food or endless suffering. That is, either they can't imagine it or they're actually experiencing it, which is a real horror that doesn't translate well to television or ink in a comic book. I guess this is true, because my girls ask me to play "where would you make your zombie apocalypse stand and why?" with me. They don't watch my show with me, but apparently there are kids in their schools that do. I would rather they played "who is your favorite Beatle?" like we did back in those halcyon days of practicing hiding under fusion-bomb proof desks. Actually I want to ask "what the hell is wrong with us?" but I'm afraid that I will get an answer I don't want to hear, not from my thirteen year old, not now or ever.

But I'll ask you all – because I trust you to at least understand where I'm coming from. E. B. White would have understood (and if all you know about him is *Elements of Style*, then get off your chairs and go get a book of his essays.) He up and left New York City and moved out to his salt-

water farm after he'd had just about enough of the Great War not actually being the war to end all wars. I'd like to ask him what was going through his head. Was he scared? Did he think he could run away from it all? Or was it just too much all of the time? Better to use time wisely – getting up to feed the chickens, finding the clinker in the coal burner, spreading seaweed on the hayfield to rot down into the soil. Just enough work on his plate, thank you. On the other hand, I wonder if his wife appreciated this change of scenery, being out in the never-never. Or, like Eva Gabor in Green Acres, perhaps she wandered around in a fru-fru dressing gown muttering "I get allergic smelling hay!" My guess is that things were different back then. E. B. didn't take her away from TV and indoor plumbing, take-out-Chinese and roll-on anti-perspirant. Maybe cocktail Tuesdays with the office-gang were over, and cab rides and window-shopping and replaced with the occasional "what is that *smell*?" (or "what is *that* smell?" – six and seven and pick 'em, if you ask me.) Still, I'll bet that he traded fresh eggs for lobster, and that helped balance things out a bit.

But for E. B., this was perfection. In the city was the deepest chasm of the Depression. Soup lines? Yes, but that's not what I'm thinking about. Men in worn-out suits, not quite so fine shoes, lost eyes looking out at something that's no longer there. It's in the falling that the end-of-the-world grabs us most sternly by our lapels and demands that we look. One day we're cooking burgers on the grill, the next has storm troopers tramping into Prague. Today the wife commutes to her newly promoted job, tomorrow a genetically modified virus leaks from a lab and begins its inexorable spread through the species. Or, one corpse decides – in that unpleasant way that corpses have of doing – to reanimate and bite the medical examiner peckishly. Yeah, that's how the world ends. Fire and Ice, Mr. Frost, together and simultaneously, whether you can handle it or not.

What are my personal preparations for the oncoming zombification of the planet? Although it's quite beautiful there, I don't think moving to Maine is going to fix things. Nor will wrapping the property with eight-foot-high hurricane fence. Not that I haven't priced such a thing. A lot of fence. Difficult to explain to the local Home Depot. "Thirty-six hundred feet of hot-dipped galvanized, taller than your average dead-guy. You planning a party?" And that's all the humor I can find on the apocalypse, although many continue to try.

Most of us ignore the current so blithely; make no real preparations for next week, next month, next year. As a culture, our lack of financial planning is legend. Our educational planning is disappointment personified. Our attitude towards food is immediate gratification. We see the end as so far...out there, literally and figuratively that it is not worth any considerable attention. Like dust motes that flutter before us but do not prevent our focus on the thing *right there*, the end is particular and inevitable. Best to ignore it, yeah?

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CAUTION

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that this issue is  
FDA approved.*

## "Top Drawer"

by Thom Schwarz, RN CHPN

My father kept a pistol in the top drawer of his bureau. The bureau was heavy oak with six stacked drawers it stood over five feet tall. Although I never measured it I couldn't poke through the top drawer until I was a tall, gangly adolescent, "just five feet," announced the school nurse when I was in the eighth-grade nurse. Prior to that I stood on my mother's cushioned vanity settee, making sure to pull off my dirty sneakers before I stepped up on the deep maroon velvet. Up there I could poke through the flotsam and jetsam of my father's long life that lay hidden in his top drawer.

The odd contents of many a man's top drawer mean something important but their history and meaning are often

left enigmatic to future generations. Young sons so as not to disturb their placement examine these oddities surreptitiously and über-carefully. Will he notice? Are they treasured and valueless, meaningful or meaningless? The only person who knows for certain is Dad and might never sit down with a curious son to explain each item. So sons—like me—take matters of familial archeology into their own hands.

A father's top drawer should only be examined on a Tuesday afternoon when the old man is not liable to pay a surprise visit. Rummaging through someone's top drawer is tantamount to reading someone's email or letters. No one saves old letters for no reason; they are kept because

an unconscious impulse says they are too valuable to discard, or at least minimally important enough to save. I suspect that the same can be said for a young girl's diary or the contents of a lady's lingerie drawer, although I have no personal experience investigating in either of those. (OK, that's a small, white lie, but I digress.)

My father's pistol, such as it was, was the size of a safety pin. It held a single, miniscule charge. It would be laughable to imagine a real bullet had been made for that gun. In any event, my father didn't appear to have any in his possession. If he did he hid them apart and much better than the gun itself. It was made of nickel and in its style it resembled an early 17<sup>th</sup> century firearm, if firearms had been made to arm an army of field mice. Careful examination showed that it had but two moving parts; the trigger

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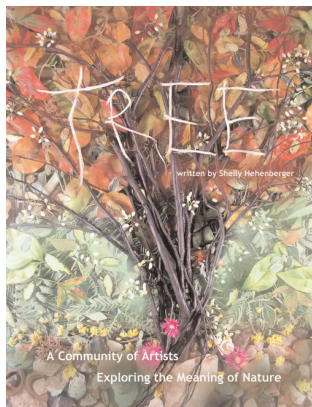
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and a striking mechanism for the charge, powered by a spring the size of a large parenthesis. This tiny gun (I hesitate to use the term “weapon” for something so puny) was probably assembled by a platoon of housewives scattered over the country who were sent monthly consignments of parts in shoeboxes from the factories in inner city Baltimore or rural Arkansas. The arrival of such a shipment convoked a gaggle of neighbors who gathered at the host’s kitchen table on bitter February evenings. There they drank bottomless cups of coffee and compared their husband’s bowling scores while their increasingly arthritic hands endlessly slipped the pistol parts together like prayers beads sliding through blue-veiled hands.

I don’t know how the assemblers were hired or their probably paltry pay scale, but I’ve seen ads for similar toy guns, magic tricks and decoder rings on the back page ads of *“Popular Mechanics”* and *“Boys Life”* when I was a boy. I never asked my Dad where he got his gun; that would have revealed my knowledge of its existence and hence my snooping. He probably bought it when he was 10 or 12, about the age when I found it in his top drawer. Maybe he won it in an arcade game in Asbury Park. Maybe he won it in a poker game at summer sailing camp as a teenager. Maybe he deftly snatched it with remote-controlled long metal claws from the pile of prizes of an Asbury Park

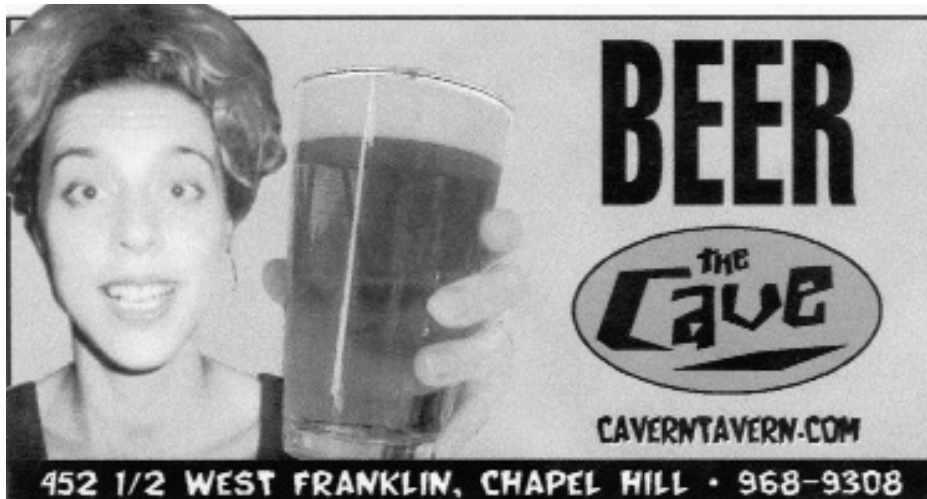
boardwalk game during his honeymoon. I like the honeymoon scenario best I imagine my mother shaking her head at the little boy in him as she exclaimed, “Just what I always wanted!” He took the real story to his grave, along with the back-story to the gold and onyx pinkie ring, the 3-by-4 inch black-and-white photo of the young woman who was most assuredly not my mother, and several other mystery items. The contents of his top drawer seemed to belong to a man I didn’t know.

I think everyone, even the most loquacious, has stories they haven’t told anyone; my father could certainly be counted among those secret-keepers. The tales he shared were terrific, never failing to enthrall me. As his most attentive audience I brought out the practiced storyteller in him. Stories from his Army days. Stories from when he was a scared little boy visiting relatives who only spoken Czechoslovakian. Tearful stories about Sparks, his long-lost dog. Stories about his hermit-woods-

man Uncle Frank. But he never said a word about the miniature pistol. Maybe he’d forgotten that it lay among the mysteries in his top drawer. After nearly a century of living it’s possible to misplace a story or two.

On the other hand, some anecdotes, while they may be entertaining or educational, may be too shocking or too easily misconstrued by young minds. Bluntly stated, there are just some things a dad shouldn’t share with his son—or anyone. Like the time he playfully pulled the trigger on what he thought was an unloaded Army pistol and nearly blew out his best friend’s brains. Or the time he took his buddies on a tour of Newburgh’s Prohibition brothels. Such tales might give the impression that what was OK for a father was also acceptable behavior for a son. And that simply wasn’t so. I don’t think it was what my slightly doddering da meant to convey when he told us those surprising, long-suppressed stories from his nursing home bed at age 92.

The fact that those stories





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were so long in coming, so out of character, so, well, hilariously shocking also casts doubt on their veracity. He told them in a sort of semi-senile shorthand. They were revealed during his final otherwise-quiet years. He smiled a lot and spoke very little, foregoing his earlier long-winded approach. He reminded me of other aged patients I have cared for as a hospice nurse. They address sons and daughters by names that weren't theirs, or say that someone who died decades previously had visited them but left just before we arrived. They'd forget their spouses entirely, much to their sadness, but recall clearly snatches of other languages that no one knew they ever spoke. So I wondered if my father's stories were true or merely random flashes of neural synapses that seemed true to him and therefore worth sharing with his confused children.

I don't know what happened to Dad's pistol, the ring and the photograph. After he entered the nursing home most of his belongings soon disappeared. They weren't in the drawer of his bedside table after he died; yes, I checked. My sister and brother did a magnificent job of arranging the financial and other details of the end of his life, so I suppose they gathered everything into a shopping bag when his room was being cleaned out. I don't begrudge them anything they found. I'm sure they treasure them as much as I would. Perhaps they brought everything home and dropped all Dad's top-

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drawer flotsam and jetsam into their own top drawers. I would have done the same, adding Dad's mysteries to my own. Putting his pistol with my pocket sun dial, a pair of string-slender silver bracelets and the photo of a girl who is most assuredly not my

wife, a mysterious girl smiling from the window of my old Saab model 93 station wagon. All that stuff will cause my kids to think that maybe they didn't know all their old man's back stories and secrets after all.



## 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@blotterrag.com](mailto:mermaid@blotterrag.com)

### NIGHTMARE

The entire town is made of metal,  
highly polished, dark and light, angles and spheres

The street so narrow, doorways soldered shut  
Trying to find a way inside a building to no avail  
The whine and wail of metal stressing  
Trying to block it out, closing ears with fingers

A huge, barrel-like creature careening  
through the street, its legs, if any, not showing,  
its body banging back and forth metallically,  
one side to the other, me trying to hide,  
to not be crushed, very little leeway

Closer and closer it comes, bearing down,  
Screeching of metal against metal  
The acrid odor of metal penetrating my nostrils

I wedge myself into a small opening in a wall  
as the thing rolls by, turns around banging  
and then comes back in my direction, whining,  
rolling back and forth, up and down,  
filling up the street, leaving no room for flesh,  
only metal, hard, shiny, impermeable

Paralyzed with fear, I feel I'm caught  
Even without a head, it knows how to find me

E. M. Earle, Chapel Hill, NC

# "Three-Pound Carpe Diem"

by Marsha A. Temlock

For forty odd years my two uncles owned a hardware store in Manhattan on 52<sup>nd</sup> and Second Avenue. Everyone knew the Gasnick brothers as the boys. Uncle Walter had the nose for business, but it was Uncle Jack who entertained the burly plumbers, electricians, painters and weekend do-it-yourselfers with his tall tales.

I'd just stopped by the store to pick up a bottle of Jubilee furniture polish in time to catch Jack in medias res. "Had to be at least five feet below ground level."

"You don't say?" exclaimed one of his listeners.

"Lost quite a bit of inventory, I bet," said another.

"Couple of G's."

There were sympathetic *scheezes* all around.

I figured Uncle Jack was well into a description of last night's spring downpour that apparently flooded the store's cellar.

"I go downstairs and see water bubbling up right through the floor."

"Must've been pretty dark

down there," I smirked, "the lights being out and all."

"I could hear it rushing in. Anyways I had a flashlight." He acts out like he's checking the floor, squints for effect, and says dramatically. "Looking into the pitch, I see this steam that gotta be five, maybe six feet wide, and up on either side there are these dark green moss-covered rocks. I get closer and I hear this noise. 'Jack', I sez to myself, 'there's something underground.' So I go back upstairs and get me a plumb-bob and a line. I throw it in and, damn, if that stream don't measure six feet deep."

"No shit," breathes the plumber.

"I'm just standing there, looking at this gusher and I'm wondering, where did this come from?" He screws up his mouth like he's puzzled, next raps his forehead with a finger. "So I go upstairs and I go on the Net to find out what was here, under-

ground, way back when, and you know what I learn? Right where we're standing, on this very spot, there once was a stream where the Manhattan Indians used to fish."

"Ya don't say?" clucks the electrician.

"Yup."

"What do ya know? Been buried all these years." The plumber looks down at the linoleum where thousands of footsteps have eroded the black speckles and dulled the shine, perhaps by deerskin moccasins.

"Now, I'm so excited I decide to go back upstairs to get my reel and rod ... ."

"And you just happen to have a fishing rod, didja?" I sneer.

All eyes say, "Girlie, why don't you shut up and let your uncle tell the story."

I plug my mouth with one fist, and ball the other to keep from laughing.

"Course I didn't have a fishing rod handy. What I had is a bent nail so I just made me a drop line and baited it with a piece of sperm-candle. Then I jiggled the hook for about five

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minutes until I felt a nibble ... then a tug." My uncle pauses, grins ear-to-ear. "And when I hauled up the line, I had me a carp."

"A carp," I hoot.

"And close to a three-pounder!"

There's no question, my uncle was a crowd pleaser. The men roared, slapped him on the back. It didn't matter if Jack was handing them a fishy line. For years he baited other customers with this story. Swore up and down that right there, in midtown Manhattan, he'd gone fishing in the cellar of Gasnick Hardware where he'd caught a

three-pound carp. Not only did he catch it, he took the fish upstairs, pan-broiled and buttered it on a hotplate and ate it.

Uncle Jack died at the ripe old age of ninety-three. I always dismissed his fish story as pure blarney until recently I read an article about extending the New York subway that rivulets, canals, ditches and wells have been discovered beneath landfill and building constructions. It's a known fact the island of Manhattan was once covered with water so it's possible there are ponds that connect underground. (Canal Street in Lower Manhattan was a hand-dug canal

before it was a street; Spring Street is named for its erstwhile springs; and there are sinkholes in the city that may have been created by leaking pipes and runoffs.)

As for a three-pound carp having survived under the cellar floor in my uncles' store, could it be a fish vendor dumped one in a sewer where it might have spawned? Carps are hardy, adaptable creatures. Assuming one found food and there was some source of light, it might have survived.

All I know is that when the Hilton Corporation put up a hotel on the spot where Gasnick Hardware Store used to stand, the construction crew found a rivulet under the foundation. All these "suppose so's" make me scratch my head except for one indisputable argument against my uncle's bragging. My aunt Ruth swears her husband wouldn't know how to cook a fish if his life depended on it.



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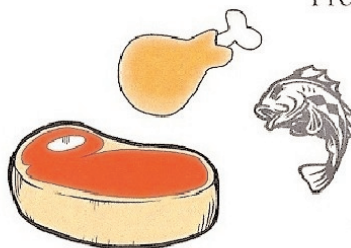
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## Five Minutes with: Clifford Brooks

**Editor's Note:** Good friend John Gosslee, editor of *Fjords Review*, turned me on to Clifford Brooks poems. The volume *The Draw of Broken Eyes & Whirling Metaphysics* is available at [www.fjordsreview.com](http://www.fjordsreview.com). We carried it around in our car to read during those moments that are readily available in a day - waiting for school to get out, for the wife to run into the grocery store, outside karate or gymnastics classes. Those are poetry times, if you want. Or you can go on playing angry birds, it's up to you.

**Ed.:** Your collection has a quality about it in which the sum is greater than the parts. Some pieces seem just that – flavors, tastes of something that was going through your mind, rather than wholes. Snapshots in the best sense of that word - where moments are captured. Not abstractions, though; they are too well crafted, crisp and clear, to be just that. Rather like layers (of you?) that are peeled back as one reads the whole. It feels like only in the end, seeing all of them together, a reader is given a bigger picture. Is this sort of development intentional when compiling work for a book or chapbook, or happenstance, or am I being too pretensions and full of crap? (Trust us, we fully

support your position with any of those hypotheses)

**Clifford Brooks:** I wanted *The Draw of Broken Eyes & Whirling Metaphysics* to tell a story with full narrative poetry (conversations between poet-and-reader) then much shorter poems that can appear to be light-hearted, confused, or shamelessly unapologetic. As in real life, sometimes what's uttered under one's breath is more telling than a rehearsed personal opinion. When it felt right, moment poems made their way into the book's lineup. They are from dreamy places suspended in "Hammock", and brutally honest announcements from "Inclined".

I am a Southern poet. I bring a litany of local sayings and myths that others from these places will pick up immediately. If you don't understand the subtext, it doesn't rob from the journey. Feel free to ask a Southerner to put it in context. I've cut keyholes into memories of life in rural Georgia, and I have postcards from New Orleans and Savannah with sentimental value. There are long car rides in a road-weary Oldsmobile 442. You're haunted by a Patsy Cline song. Not all your best friends have good intentions. A gorgeous woman's wandering got scattered all over the Delta, then thrown

back to Washington. Small towns in Mississippi wish you'd come back for a visit.

I made a decision to tell the truth – good, bad, selfish, and heathen. If you're going to tell a story, tell the whole story. More times than not the past is going to catch up with you, anyway. It only takes time to peel back the old wallpaper.

**Ed.:** Are you an image or idea poet? Do you come upon the idea for a poem, or does an image catch your attention and allow you to go from there?

**CB:** The Answer: Both.

The Gateman's Hymn of Ignoracium is the epitome of my idea poems. I worked for the Georgia juvenile justice/welfare system for a decade. I witnessed some things that family did to family. Kids are smart. Kids are strong. They had limits. The poor were always terrified but





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knew the process by heart. There were some who abused these most desperate every day. I decided Hell was too easy for these individuals. Then a light bulb went off.

I love Dante. I have been reading and rereading his Divine Comedy for two decades. I wondered: What if there came a time in human existence that Hell wasn't brutal enough for some misguided? What would that place be like? Who would run it? Religion is a fascination of mine. It would be very time consuming. Ignoracium became a hobby. I worked on it through the majority of my professional life in social services.

Other idea poems are: "Judas Noose Tavern", "Raven in Memoriam", "There are Hours", "Shouldering Divorce", and "Conversations with Daisy".

Examples of imagery-driven pieces include: "Thinking in an Argument," "The Small Now and Then" and "Wolves".

**Ed.: What sorts of things happen as you craft a poem – do you deconstruct to find the core, or is there a lathe-and-plaster layering of more onto a core that you already have?**

CB: Narrative poems tend to roar out, and then I whittle them into shapes. A first draft can often be thirty pages or more. In some cases I will edit poems for years.

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The snapshot poems, however, are sound bites, and get penciled into a Moleskine. They change very little.

I am obsessive compulsive when it comes to editing. I do believe less is more, but a poet can carve a poem so fine it's no good to anyone. Without meat the poem becomes an inside joke.

**Ed.: Influences – who are they and how did they shape your thinking/work?**

CB: Music is my biggest influence. I'm tapping my foot as I finish this interview right now. I've also got great parents who help me keep my shoulders back. I have friends that deliver head punches for inflated egos. I listen when I pray. I've got good people behind me.

Larry Fagin was a talented mentor who taught me to choose my words, and their sound, carefully. He was the first to see Whirling Metaphysics in 2009 after I put it into a chapbook-style collection. The Draw of Broken Eyes was written over four days, in January of 2010. John Gosslee Books worked well with me for over a year until the book's release in April 2012.

**Ed.: Best "meeting someone famous" story...**

CB: A buddy of mine, Clayton Jones, introduced me to my hero, Coleman Barks, who also lives

here in Athens, Georgia. Coleman Barks' translations of Rumi have helped me make sense of grace, soulful music, and my Christian faith I still watch with a wary eye. "Whirling" from my book's title was inspired from Rumi's ecstatic poetry.

At one 'o'clock Friday morning Clayton took me to The Manhattan Bar in downtown Athens to meet Coleman Barks. The renowned translator was larger than life and made me feel immediately at home. Until the bar staff ran us out of there, all three of us talked about poetry, small town rumors, a little bit about my roots in Oglethorpe County. Towards the end of our visit, I gave Coleman Barks a copy of my book, and he asked me sign it. I thought right then, "Okay Jesus. Bring me home. I got what I came for."

Before the night closed, the four of us walked back to Barks' truck where he gave me a newly released collection of his personal verse, Winter Sky, and another book he co-authored, The Drowned Book. My Public Relation Liaison/Personal-Shepherd, Elton Porter, suggested we get a photograph. Mr. Barks was more than happy to pull me in for a picture. It was surreal. I would never have asked for the photo myself.

**Ed.: Your own favorite poem, and why?**

CB: Everything written by

Rainer Maria Rilke – it is impossible to choose a single piece. Rilke is my go-to guy.

Ed.: Who wins in a slam: Frost, Yeats, Ginsberg or Dickinson. Who would you enter against these four as a dark-horse?

CB: Ginsberg would make the rest be quiet until another night. My dark-horse candidate for this epic, poetry-slam-to-the-death match is Charles Bukowski.

Ed.: Ha! We were thinking about Bukowski, but he seems

like a ringer in such an event. Alright then, what would you do (for a living?) if money were no object?

CB: I'd like to be a personal tutor. One of my passions is education in America. Yet, with a black American Express Card, and no outstanding debts here, I think I'd scoop up a few friends and move to Costa Rica. Live somewhere modest and teach English, Greek history, String Theory, the art of Jackson Pollock, Stonewall Jackson's sad demise – to anyone who will lis-

ten. While I'm there, I'd like to knock out some short stories, and a novel that's been nagging me.

Ed.: One last question...where is the best place to get some writing done?

CB: I get the best work done in my study, or on my family's property in Lexington, Georgia.



## "leaves"

*leaves are pregnant;  
the color of eviscerated  
peaches and plums.*

iceland poppies carve  
a rim around an old, drained pool.  
gardenias, confederate jasmine,  
and blue iris create a path  
to our small cottage  
created for strays.

she told me stories about  
sex under a mosquito net,  
two naked girls scattering lemon peels,  
a boy's powdered shoulders  
against boxcar walls.

quietly i entertained  
the litigator,  
the fashionista,  
the mom in need  
of strange.

*driving east swishes sycamore trees,  
showing autumn,  
stealing from flaring branches.*

## Two by Clifford Brooks

### "Sunday Morning"

One Sunday morning while pumping gas  
I watch two ratty kids  
fight over a chocolate bar.  
Young shouting grows profane.  
Their father is an arm's length away.

Most businesses are  
still closed on Sunday.  
The South is superstitious.  
Those children begin  
to beat each other like men,  
then bleed into broken pavement.



### Tootertown Police Department Daily Announcements and Discussion of Errata Sheet for the Witness Statement on the Coot Edmonds' Incident

Where it reads *witness* write in *seeing-eye dog*,  
*owner*. Add *one-eyed witness* in front of *seeing*  
*double*. Change *evidence may indicate* to say  
*residence beside the lake*. Cross out *was ruled*  
*a mistake* as intent cannot now be determined.

Leave intact all after *Coot Edmonds skipped bail*  
*on his purse snatching charge*. Before *refused*  
*to sign an affidavit*, white out *victim was unfeeling*  
and write in *unwilling victim*. By the way, see  
me if you know what poetry puking pervert left

a James Dickey book in the toilet stall. Correct  
the spelling of Councilman Afronsky's name to s-k-i.  
Black out the phrase *liquored up* and the word *shit*—  
leave the word *faced*. Delete entire sentence ending  
with *giving him a hand job*. In its place insert

*The goddamn goat wandered into the crosswalk.*  
Do not change anything in the sentence beginning  
*Afronsky stumbled out of his car to check the goat*—  
except *stumbled* should read *hurried*. We all know  
who got blamed just for being there. Redact

the entire paragraph beginning with *He held*  
*the goat by its cloven hooves*. Steel-toed shoe  
salesman will be here on Monday. Lake Wiley  
dredging begins 0700 tomorrow. Department  
barbecue is cancelled until further notice.

Three by Davis Enloe

## "Marilyn, Or Someone Dressed Like Her, Reads a Poem"

Only one moment exists, has ever existed—  
 which is to say, time freezes when she  
 swishes her way to the stage. Riveted all  
 to her figured speech, how each phrase  
 turns, turns our eyes to her figure, how  
 her alliterative esses all sound like,  
*seldom but sometimes sailors do score.*  
 And her fricatives send whispers whisking  
 up the aisles. Through her fingered caressing  
 of the peach sequined belt buckle intrigue  
 gathers—you can't say it does not build  
 desire in the poem. Several times over one  
 shoulder, a spaghetti strap falls, promising  
 an ending that appalls, but never delivered—  
 you can't say it does not build tension in her  
 verse. God bless her, I guess Marilyn is  
 nervous, a delicate bead of sweat glistening  
 above garnet lips and when dampness moistens  
 her cleavage, male hands throughout the audience  
 dig for a handkerchief. Sharper than an angel's  
 blade, her wit, I imagine. Metaphors dangle  
 in midair like striptease I mean trapeze artists.  
 But, as far as what she reads, you *can* say  
 not a single man and certainly no woman  
 present remembers a word she speaks.

## "Do Over"

Over this plate of free range scrambled  
 eggs, whole wheat toast, and organic  
 strawberry preserves, I tell you Love,

gardening this morning between rows  
 of half-runner beans, a vision accosts  
 me, detaining me inside heaven's gates

where I wait for the Divine. I can not  
 tell, when it arrives, if male or female,  
 but its good manners are no comfort

when it offers me a deal: return to earth,  
 live again the same life, but avoid the pain  
 I'd known, undo all the hurt I had caused.

And the catch Dear-because there is  
 always a hook: no guarantee my new path  
 carries me back to you. What to do?

"You're waffling," the Ineffable suggests.  
 But when I ask, "Since I'm here, can't I  
 just stay?," it replies, "It's a vision, and

you're holding up the line." My Love,  
 though I desired otherwise, I could not  
 trade my own pain at risk of missing you.

Yet, reading my opened heart, recalling  
 the spiteful mistakes I'd made, pain I'd  
 caused to strangers, friends, and family,

and knowing no man deserves a second  
 life with the devoted wife you are, I  
 chose . . . "What? Yes precious, I'll go  
 right now and finish picking the beans."



### "Burn On"

by Davis Enloe

Music surrounds you on the rocks at Darlington  
Creek with waterfalls and a stand of canes as  
backdrop. Your hair is black, your body beautiful.  
Both arms are wrapped around knees pulled chest

tight; eyes focused on something off to the right.  
As though all of your future remains unfocused,  
the old snapshot is blurred along its curled edges.  
I know these falls and will someday, as a child,

cut my foot on a broken beer bottle here, but  
a world war will first sweep up your sweetheart,  
my father. Yet who, I wonder, is measuring you  
through the viewfinder. Your older sister Ruth,

whose cloistered secret and Jesus-love becomes  
the burden that drives her guilt-crazy? Where is  
your brother, Thomas, who survives Normandy's  
invasion but ten years later perishes—his ATF plane

shot down by moonshiners? The truck driver who  
happened upon the fiery scene will become a sergeant  
in my guard unit and take me to the old crash site.  
When I offer to take you, you will whisper, "Let

him burn." For now, here by the creek, safe, posing  
in a modest bathing suit on a floral blanket—had  
Thomas molested your baby sister by this time? That  
is not the question I always lacked the courage to ask.

## CONTRIBUTORS:

**Marsha A. Temlock** is the author of **Your Child's Divorce: What to Expect...What You Can Do** (Impact Publisher, Inc.). This year her fiction and poetry have appeared in The Blotter, The Rusty Nail, Bareback, Airplane Reading, SouthernWomensReview, Writes for All and the Write Room; she is a featured blogger about family relationships for the Huffington Post. Marsha teaches English at Norwalk Community College in Connecticut where she is continually inspired by her students. \*\*\* **Thom Schwarz** of Pleasant Valley NY, is a Registered Nurse, presently working in hospice and palliative care. He's been published in the New York Times Sunday Magazine, Newsweek, the American Journal of Nursing and the Journal of the American Medical Association, and his work was read on National Public Radio. He hopes to find a publisher for his Young Adult novel, *Step Up, Peter*, about his ancestors' role in the American Revolution, as well as his memoir about sexual and physical abuse during his years in a Catholic high school and his quest to forgive his abusers. \*\*\* **E.M. Earle** believes that what goes on when she is asleep is as important as what happens while she's awake. A resident of Chapel Hill for more than 30 years, a lover of fiction, poetry, classical music, philosophy and visual art in all its forms,

she is perpetually studying human nature and seeking truth. \*\*\* After retiring from the Army National Guard, **Davis Enloe** of Greenville, SC looked around for something to do and decided one evening to write a verse drama about the last weeks of Eugene O'Neil's life: "After a few frustrating days I realized I knew nothing useful about writing poetry." That is when he decided to attend a host of conferences and eventually enrolled in the Converse College MFA program for poetry where he graduated in May 2012. Davis has new work forthcoming in Main Street Rag and Barrow Street and is currently working on a book-length poetry manuscript. \*\*\* We found **Florence I. Johnson's** print of her watercolor piece "Paint Cans" in the terrific little gallery **The Joyful Jewel** in Pittsboro, NC. She graciously let us use it for this month's cover.

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by Phil Juliano



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