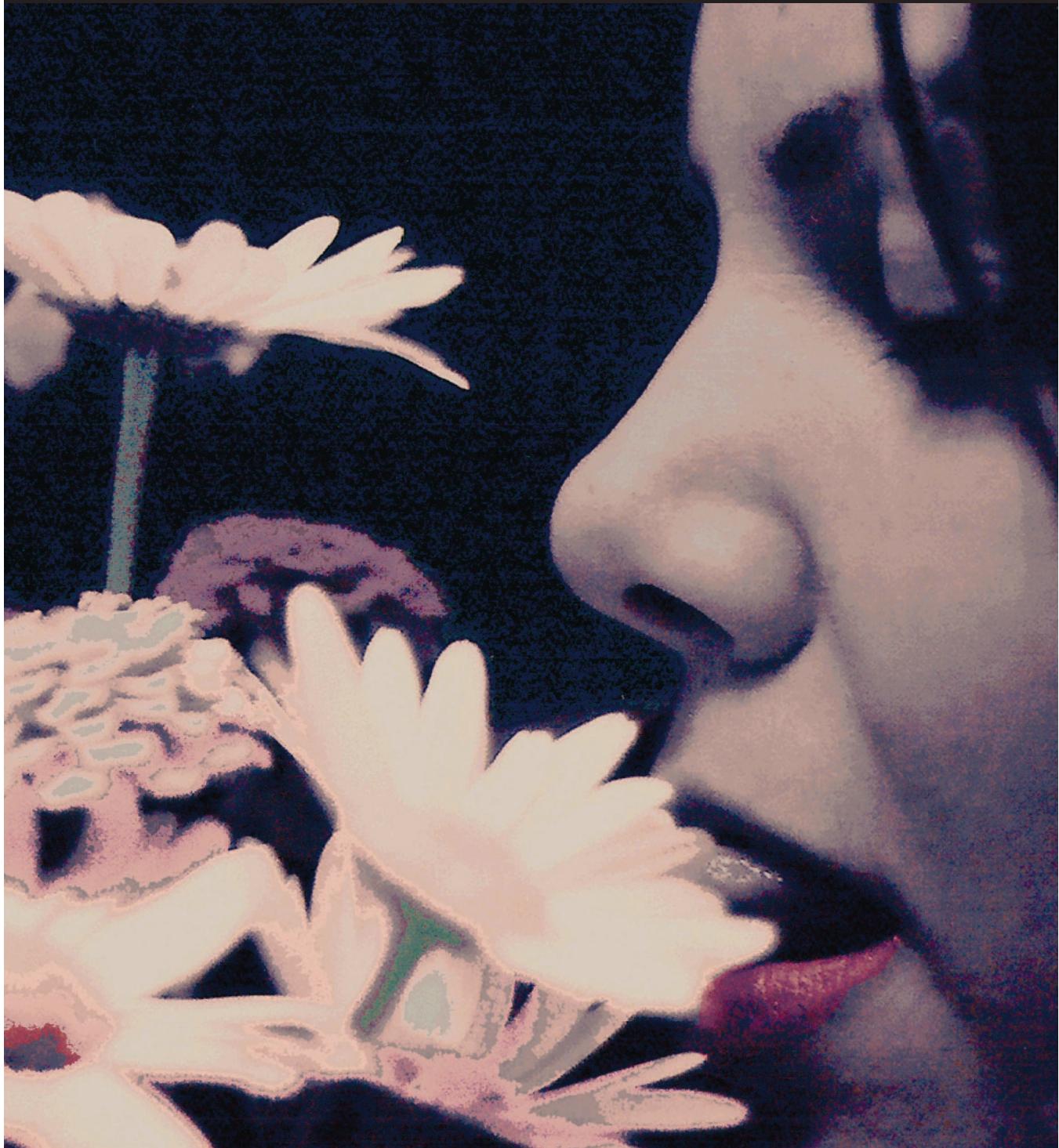


The Blotter

Magazine
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Kick out the jams for our third anniversary: Art by Lis Anna. A story by Garrison M. Somers. Poems by Angus Gorberg, Margot Considine, and Henry Kearney IV. OneNeck favors us with disturbing Cartoonery. And you know we got the Dream Journal, too.

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This magazine may contain typos or bad words

Items Worth Mentioning

from the desk of Johnny Pence

Input from a Reader, Printed without Comment

Cecilia Eichenberger, Duke University Biology Dept., writes:

"I'm suspecting you guys don't go for much editing of people's writing, but I have to voice my dismay over the misuse of pronouns. The first thing I bumbled into in your April issue was Benjamin Tyrrell's story and I read "leaving mom and *I* no money whatsoever"—noone anymore seems to know what objective case is in nouns, including writers and TV announcers. It's depressing to read and hear such illiterate stuff. 'Leaving *I* with no money.' Sure. And then we have '*Me and him* go to the store,' but 'Dad gave my brother and *I* a camera.' Couldn't you educate your writers and not perpetuate this mistake? The more people hear and read this error, the more they think it's right. Take a stand. You do know what I'm talking about?"

Three Years

Despite all odds and common sense, this issue marks our third anniversary. Thanks to everybody everywhere who has supported us in any way. Of course, especial thanks go to those of y'all who supported us financially, and subtle encouragement goes to those who haven't yet done so to do so.

Especial thanks also to all our contributors, particularly the regular ones. Thanks to our killer board of directors, to our advertisers, to President George Bush, to WD-40, and to Red Stripe Beer.

Don't Tell Anybody; It's a Secret

Okay, this is on the down-low: I'm starting a small prose-writer's workshop in Athens. We already have enough people to make it worthwhile, but have room for maybe five more people If you're interested, e-mail me for details.

—editot@blotterrag.com

Billy

by Garrison M. Somers

Kiefer had to content himself with the belief that he performed questionably useful acts. Driving what he still called a squad car around the darkened streets—Garrison was a tranquil place, sort of—it being July, the hum of AC challenged the supremacy of crickets and locusts. He was bored but didn't permit himself to switch on the radio and find that Dallas C&W station, or some evangelical preaching broadcasting out of Kilgore. Cruising slowly—no rush—looking at everything in its place. Lights were out where they should be; cars were parked. He rubbed his eyes to rid them of sleep's onset. A cop pays attention, even in tranquility.

His squad car was old, with a single pimple on top and a hand-control spotlight where the left mirror would have been. The vehicle had cloth seats—who could imagine them in a modern police car—and it occasionally smelled. Only once had anyone ever thrown up back there, a long time ago, a member of a wedding party at the Elks, and that had been a command performance—Hey, fella, how 'bout can I give you a ride home? The ginger-ale, scotch and champagne inside the rider returned with a vengeance to haunt them all. The rider (on duty Keifer never thought of people by their names, just riders and callers—he had to live here, too, and they might be neighbors and over the years he'd found it easier this way) had tried to catch the spew in his jacket pocket and then his cupped hands. Volume overcame capacity and the squad car suddenly needed

detailling. The fell'a'd been apologetic—what else could he have done?—but on humid nights like tonight it smelled like a couch in a fraternity house. Keifer gnawed a stick of Black Jack gum, its licorice flavor offsetting the aroma. The downtown CVS kept a small stock of the little blue packs special for him. He smiled at that. It's what you used to do when you wanted Po-Lease protection, ostensibly from little old ladies gossiping in the analgesic aisle. Not that such was necessary; all they had to do was ask and he'd make the drive-by and break up the traffic. Still, it was nice to see that some things, some, mind you, were still around. Like him and this squad car. He liked old things and old ways.

He parked behind the big plywood sign for the Sno-Ball shack that sold snowcones from May through October on the future Wal-Mart parking lot. This was a good spot for nabbing the occasional stranger that cut through town to get to the Shreveport expressway and neglected to sit through the red light cycle that was on all night. Yeah, it was kind of dumb both to run a red light and to have it cycling even when there was no cross traffic. But that was another of the old things whose passing he would regret when the town's fathers finally paid for time-and-traffic sensors. And, sure, he felt kind of pointless sitting in the dark trying to anticipate a scofflaw, but that was what the job entailed. Keifer never wished for more action, as a younger man might have. He didn't want anything more than was already here. Nobody teased him about it back at the station, there was something about Keifer that didn't permit

The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

Performance Resentment

I was on stage and seemed to be back in high school since the curtains on the stage were these orange and deep red paisley ones that the auditorium at my old school had until about three years after I graduated.... I was supposed to be performing a flute solo based on some classical piece of music in front of me. I had my back to the audience and was facing an entire orchestra of people I went to high school with, looking like they did in high school.... Instead of playing what was in front of me, I improvised a jazz piece with overtones inspired by Japanese folk music. Everyone thought I was excellent and couldn't tell I wasn't playing what was on the sheet music. I was thinking "Yes, I'm getting away with it."

Then, as I played, the notes started looking like the Beatles, but only if the Beatles had been Japanese instead of British. Each note was a specific person, like the Bs were always Japanese John and the Cs were always Japanese Paul. After the song ended, I was transported to Cooper Stadium, a baseball field near where I grew up. Don't worry if you haven't heard of it, no one outside of Columbus, Ohio even cares about it, and then only a few people there, really. The stands were full of people and I was looking up at them from below thinking "What? Am I supposed to play baseball now too? What more do you people want from me?"

—J.S.K. in Guysville, OH

Please send excerpts from your dream journals to Jenny at mermaid@blotterrag.com. If nothing else, we love to read them. We won't publish your whole name.

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razzing, although he'd never said anything regarding such behavior. He had a way that just nipped it off beforehand, like he was someone that should be left alone.

His first sandwich would come at two AM. The other was his breakfast reward. If he ate both at two, he would go into "a food-coma", as the teens in church youth-group called it. And steering around in a squad car wasn't enough exercise to burn off two pulled-pork sandwiches. Keifer recognized the signs—he couldn't fit in the same sized uniform he'd worn a couple of years back. His workhorse thermos was a three-cupper; half hi-test, half decaf. All of that in caffeine would give him what the kids called "the zooms".

The police scanner was quiet. He'd rigged it to pick up the emergency weather band as well, gleaning information from the NWS on thunder-boomers and twisters, especially when it pertained to Gregg County. Once upon a time you had to keep your windows open and keep tasting the air, for rain and dust and that ineffable tang a tornado had. Without that sense, folks had been lost to the tornadoes that dropped from thunderheads unexpectedly (back when it was almost all unexpected, before the advent of Doppler radar and storm advisories and satellite photography), whisking homes into the never-never and snatching lives with caprice. And the weather report was just more interesting than listening to the white noise of the local scanner, with only the occasional blip of chatter from out of town when police frequencies bent in the humid air. Tonight, though, even the sky was asleep.

At the far end of his patrol, Keifer drove past The Joint. Four hours after locking up, the air around the place still smelled like Willard had just burned the last burger to a crisp, his own late sup-

per before scraping the grill and going home to watch Tennessee Walker training on RFD TV. Like Keifer, there were other solitary folks with patterns to their lives, habits and personal proclivities. Beyond The Joint was the great empty road, extending out to other worlds, maybe towns like this, and maybe different. He had coveted, reached and passed the day when he should have kept on driving—there'd been something out there, he had felt its pull but hadn't responded. Now, that pull wasn't there. Or he couldn't tell, his guts occasionally twisted but he suspected they would never again have that strange attraction for the unknown, or someone to share it with. He crunched the squad car around in The Joint's gravel parking lot, and cruised deliberately back towards town.

Two o'clock came and went. He munched his sandwich and eyed the other one thoughtfully, sipping warm coffee. The radio's static calmed him like a mother's hushing whisper on another normal, quiet night. Keifer felt something though, anticipation, at the tip of his tongue, like tasting the rising wind for forthcoming rain. It sent a tingle along his spine, from his backside to the roots of his hair.

"Disturbance call, sergeant, pick up," a somnolent voice broke into his thoughts. It sounded like Desk was as entranced by this dog-watch hour as he was.

"Here," he said. Thank the Lord the staff ignored all radio bullshit; it was irritating to try and maintain what might have been thought of as proper police jargon etiquette. It was much simpler just to talk, and if privacy was needed to use a land-line telephone. Technology, and everyone's access to it, had nearly driven them back to the days of call-boxes.

"Mrs. Dunwood called in.

Someone is messing with her goats," said the "Desk Sergeant" who was a young woman named Clara who worked in the mayor's office and did the occasional night shift as a dispatch. Keifer winced. He had a passing familiarity with Mrs. Dunwood. She owned a small farm on the outskirts. Not even really a farm, sort of a once-was-a-farm. He saw her occasionally at First Baptist; she too sat in the back although he'd never passed the peace with her. The geese in the fellowship hall, those front-pew ladies that found the venue of Christian brotherhood a perfect opportunity to talk about other people's problems, surely had words about her broken marriage and strange behaviors.

"Messing?" Keifer said. He could imagine boys from the high school pestering the animals. Way back as a teen he had done this thing with his friends called Cow Tipping, which involved boys slamming full steam into the sides of Herefords, t-boning them, as it were. Sort of football training meets large animal husbandry. It turned out that although some cows sleep standing up, the truth was that some cows preferred to lie down to sleep. And in the dark it was difficult to tell the difference between a standing and sleeping cow and a merely resting cow, not to mention that pertinent difference between a cow and a bull. When you charged a merely resting bull, the tables became swiftly turned against you. Keifer had only cow tipped the one time before he became bored with such bovine hijinks.

"She didn't clarify, Sergeant," Clara said. "She says she's called before about this."

Keifer closed his eyes. It hadn't been his call before—Ludlow or Jones, maybe; those nitwits.

"She asked if you would call in and I would connect you with

her." Desk referred to the aforementioned land-line procedure. He was back at the junction that offered the Wal-Mart construction site or down-town. He took the Wal-Mart turn. There was an old phone stall in front of the dry-cleaners which had sold out to the big store developers, leaving everyone in town the option to either buy wash-and-wear or mail their clothes to Tyler. The phone hadn't been disconnected yet because the guys working on the Wal-Mart

liked to get take-out Mexican. Keifer rolled through the parking lot, past the Sno-Ball stand and up onto the bulldozer-crushed macadam at the construction site.

He picked around in his ashtray for change. Crap. He'd have to dial collect. Keifer smiled at the looniness of dialing collect across town on a police call.

"Clara, accept the charges, for crying out loud," Keifer said, as the automated operator offered Desk the option. He shushed her when

A Cartoon (?) by OneNeck



she asked what had happened, and told her to dial Mrs. Dunwood. There was a clicking in his ear as the call rang through.

"Hello?"

"Mrs. Dunwood?" Keifer started. "This is Sergeant Keifer with the police department. You called in a complaint?"

"No," Mrs. Dunwood said. Keifer felt his eyebrows go up. The woman's voice was low and clear. She was wide awake. "I'm trying to report an attack."

"An attack," Keifer said. A while back he had taken a class in Dallas on improving police listening skills. Repeating back key elements of a conversation showed interest.

"You need to come here," the woman said. It wasn't a request. A frown crossed Keifer's face.

"Yes. I'll be there in ten minutes," he said and hung up. He'd found there were times when it just paid to do what you were told.

Not another vehicle passed him on the roads over to Mrs. Dunwood's farm. The only sound was his car and the rush of cool air through the window past his ears.

Mrs. Dunwood stood outside her clapboard bungalow, looking like a statue in the front yard. Keifer stepped from his car, his small flashlight in hand. He left it off, as he saw Mrs. Dunwood was wearing a nightgown. She was a deeply unpleasant-looking woman, the policeman thought, and the dark didn't help. Her voice was sharp-edged; despite her attempts to whisper, she couldn't.

"I've called about this before, Sergeant," Mrs. Dunwood spat.

"Yes ma'am. But it was not immediately brought to my attention. All I know was what I have read on the call report," Keifer responded politely. He'd learned at a young age that it paid to be calm, particularly if your point could be seen as argumentative.

"Nobody likes me," the woman continued. She was lit from behind by a lamp in her house, diffused behind pulled curtains. Her hair stuck out on three points of the compass. "They act like I'm making crank calls."

"No, ma'am, I'm certain that's not the case," Keifer said. He was quite sure that this was the case, but in some situations he had found that gentle lies were preferable to belaboring the obvious. "Perhaps if you would explain to me what the problem is."

She sighed loudly at him, but he was relieved when without further prompting she began to explain.

Mrs. Dunwood raised animals for a petting zoo. There was no market for a petting zoo in Garrison, so the animals actually traveled with a carnival that cycled through Arklatex, that is, east Texas, western Louisiana, and the southwesternmost bit of Arkansas.



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They were unable to break into the Oklahoma carnival market, for reasons that passed understanding to Mrs. Dunwood; the laws on transporting small hooved animals across state lines held no particular interest for her. On the aforementioned call, according to a report filed a number of months ago by one of Keifer's brother officers, she had claimed to have prowlers in her yard. They sought to take and hurt her animals. That's what she'd already reported to the police.

"I told them there was foul play afoot, and they just smiled at me, like I was simple minded," she told him. "They didn't take me seriously."

Keifer wrestled back a smile with Herculean effort at the words 'foul play afoot'. He pictured Mrs. Dunwood in bright daylight, in her nightgown. The thought killed his smile as dead as the last unicorn.

"I take you very seriously, Mrs. Dunwood," he assured her, trying to look her in the eye.

"You took your own time getting here," she sulked, but her face appeared to soften in the dark.

"I was on the other side of town when the call came in," he said. "Why don't you tell me what's going on tonight." But Mrs. Dunwood must have sensed that she had center stage and wasn't going to give it up easily.

"You know, it's because my

husband's gone and I live alone that people bother me," she said. "Even the Pastor." Mr. Dunwood was, indeed, gone. Keifer didn't care to know why, that wasn't how he sorted information about people, but he'd heard that a while back the couple had split, the old man taking the car and driving out of town, somewhere. That was how things sometimes went, Keifer supposed. They had no children. She was not, he guessed, in a position to hunt for another man, although the police officer had a sudden vision of her, face painted blue, hair bound in a nest above her head in twine and small bones, a home-made crossbow in her hands, waiting for two-legged prey of some ilk.

Mrs. Dunwood shook her head and the mane of hair made a sad sound, like bone-dry hay in a breeze. No, Keifer admitted, that was an out-and-out lie. Her hair only seemed like straw. She pointed her finger accusatorily at Keifer. He reminded himself as well that she only seemed like a possessed demon in the night. "I'm sick of it, too. And I want it to stop." He felt her spittle on his cheeks with the word Stop.

"Do you know what they do? They mess with the animals. Who messes with animals, Officer?" She held up her hands in front of him, too closely. They had the coppery stink of blood. Blood and some-

thing else.

"What is that?" he asked the dark woman. She grimaced.

"Someone attacked my goat," she said curtly. Even in the dark, her look said 'laugh and ye shall regret'. He took the advice to heart.

Mrs. Dunwood turned and started towards the back of her bungalow. Keifer felt obliged to follow.

The night air chose that moment to reach dew point. Mist rose around their feet theatrically. In her nightgown, Mrs. Dunwood looked exceedingly witchlike, seeming to float across the ground without walking. Trailing her, Keifer felt ill for some reason. The police officer resisted the urge to turn on his flashlight, suddenly fearful in some childish place in his mind that this event would turn into a nightmare. He tucked it in his pocket.

"Mostly, I just want to be left alone, you know," Mrs. Dunwood stopped near the fence in her back yard that separated the part where she ran the lawn mower from the part where she raised her animals. She turned back to face Keifer. "Even out here, no one respects that." She tried to push her hair down with one hand, but it wasn't having any.

"Yes, ma'am," Keifer said. He smelled barnyard now, but not terrible. She apparently kept the place

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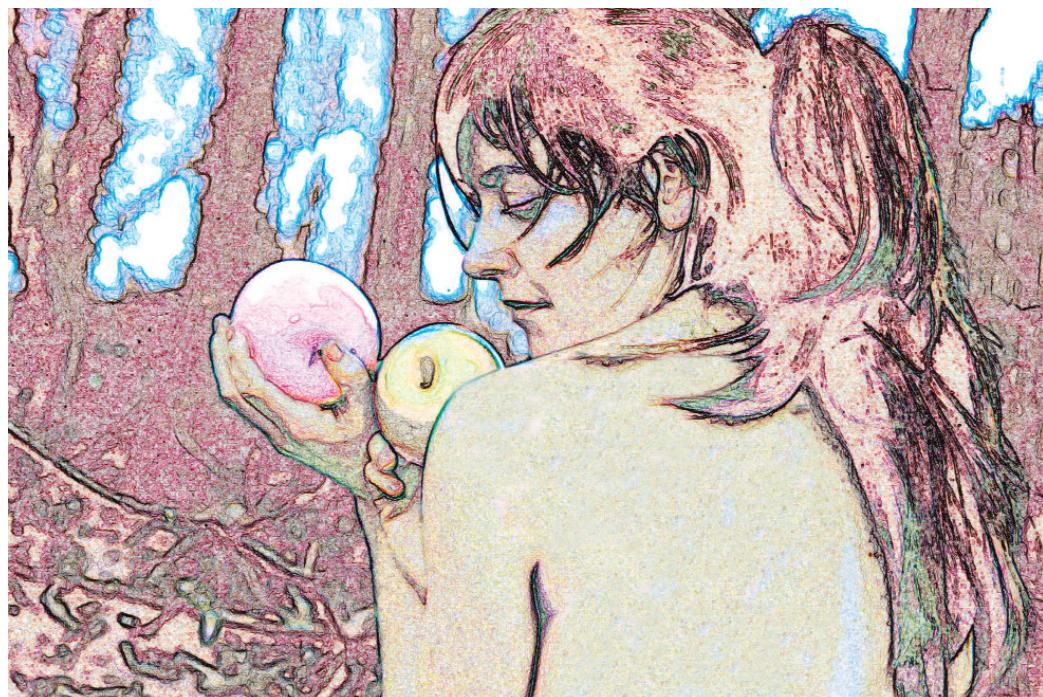
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Lis Anna is an award-winning screenwriter, producer, and director who has shown at Cannes, Telluride, and a long list of other festivals.

The work shown here is from two collections, **apple & eve** and **images from the tell-a-vision**, which will be showing throughout 2006 and 2007 in a variety of venues.

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as clean as such things could be kept, mucking out enclosures and putting a layer of hay on the manure pile every now and then to tamp down the aroma and aid in the composting. As if reading his mind, Mrs. Dunwood sniffed deeply.

"I sell it to the colored gentlemen for gardens," she said. "That and the petting zoo's orders keep me in bread and water. That old man of mine was as useless a piece of baggage as ever there was one. He didn't like working. How do you become an adult without understanding that you're gonna have to work to feed yourself."

Keifer shrugged unprofessionally. Some folks' nature that made them lazy, he knew. Like water, they sought their lowest level.

"But then to piss and moan about the turns that life had taken?" Mrs. Dunwood continued. "That didn't make no sense to me.

He was as lazy as a dry stick, and was the world's worst complainer. You can't have it both ways, can you?"

"No, ma'am," Keifer said quietly. "You can't."

"So he's gone, and good riddance. And he took the car. I'm not complaining about that. I like walking and I like working, and I don't shy away from the dirt, like some do. There's women go their whole lives without getting a grain of sand under their fingernails. Can't stand the pong of their own farts." Her head cocked to one side, she crossed her arms. "But them bitches at church blame me for it. Go figure."

Keifer stood still. What else was there to say? His listening skills class said that there was nothing wrong with the occasional silence. He believed in that old chestnut 'Best to keep your mouth shut and seem stupid than to open it and remove all doubt.'

"Well," Mrs. Dunwood said. "You aint much to look at, and you don't talk." Keifer's eyebrows went up.

"I'm sorry?" he said.

"What are you good for?" she

asked. He could detect snide in her voice, but it was almost like she was talking to herself as much as him.

"Ma'am. I'm just trying to help," he said. "You said you had an attack."

"He hurt my goat," she said, back on task and quietly angry again.

"Who did?" Keifer asked.

"That goat was just a yearling," she said. She pressed her hair down again and this time it stayed, framing her face, as if the moisture in the air wasn't fighting it anymore. While earlier she had looked frightful, now she was not so. "Something wrong if you don't like animals, but there's some like that. I guess I can't hold fault. But it's another thing altogether if you feel you gotta go out and hurt them, just to do it."

"What happened, Mrs. Dunwood?" Keifer asked. As she had before, the woman seemed calmed at the sound of her own name.

"I didn't call last time, on account of those others didn't pay attention like you do," she said.

"Others?"

"The younger policemen." Ah, he thought. Those two nit-wits, Jones and Ludlow.

"They're just playing at police," she said tangentially. "Gotta teach them where to take a crap and where not. They're just happy to be wearing a uniform over their skidmarked skivvies. No use whatsoever, I bet."

He nodded in spite of himself.

"I'm not sure I understand. You said you didn't call earlier. Do you mean..." Keifer said.

"That's right," the woman added. "I decided to handle it myself." The policeman's ears perked. Oh, boy, he thought. Maybe we'd better go look. But Mrs. Dunwood didn't seem anxious to walk back toward the

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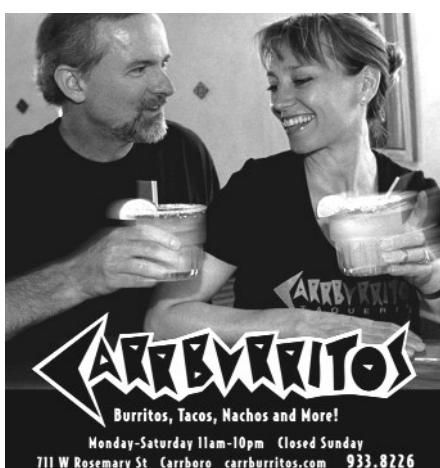
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enclosures.

"Mrs. Dunwood. What happened tonight that you called the police," he asked quietly. Keifer carefully looked her in the eye. He did not want to push her back into aggravation.

The woman put her hand to her face coquettishly. Somehow, the movement worked. Now there was an iota of attractiveness about her. Keifer blinked, surprised by the result.

"Some come out here, you know, because it's me. Because they're afraid of me. Just want to mess with me, rile me up. That's what I've heard, anyhow."

"Heard from whom?" Keifer asked, uncertain what she was talking about. He was afraid of her, a little, himself.

"That idiot Willard down at the Joint. Sometimes I go out there. I'm not a vegetarian. I sit at the bar and eat my burger and drink a Big Red. He talks to anyone, even me. The kids want to see the witch. That aint so bad. I mean, they're good churchgoing Baptist youth, so how bad can they be?" That one was aimed directly at Keifer and it stung a bit. He let it go.

"But then they talk about me like I'm strange. Like I'm at fault for what goes on around me. A pervert. So I don't go into town so much. I don't like being talked about, same as anyone else."

Keifer felt as if the muscles in his neck were useless and wriggly, from all of the nodding he was doing.

"I'll bet you didn't know that, did you," Mrs. Dunwood continued. "People coming here, just to look, just to taunt. Saying hateful things, like you wouldn't imagine. I'll bet you didn't know. I'll bet if you did, you might have done something to stop it. I can sense that in you." Strangely, as if she had never before done such a thing

with anyone, she leaned forward tentatively and touched him on the bare arm below his uniform shirt sleeve. It was chilling and intimate at the same time and Keifer struggled not to flinch reflexively.

"Or maybe not," she snarled, the mood broken like an eggshell against a frying pan. This time Keifer did flinch. Her eyes seemed to glow. "Maybe you're like all of the others."

Keifer was stumped silent again. What had happened to his quiet morning?

"Aaaaaah," came the cry. Behind Mrs. Dunwood, in the cages and enclosures somewhere. Keifer's hand went to his flashlight.

"What was that?" he asked. He'd never heard an animal make a noise like that.

"Nothing," she said, trying to block his way.

"Excuse me, ma'am," he touched her shoulder to gently move around her. He felt something like a static shock in his fingertips. She didn't move. It was like pushing against a fencepost. He fell back on negotiation.

"Mrs. Dunwood. You need to let me see what's going on." Keifer said. "Now, please." He frowned at her.

"Animals aren't dumb, you know. They know how to avoid things that are bad for them. Hunters and hunted is how the world is divided, but the hunted aren't less than those trying to hunt them, just because they might be weaker. Most know when they're being hurt. A bird that gets eaten by a cat knows it. But these were caged animals, trusting those cages, trusting me to protect them. And he'd been here more than once, you know. Thought he could come whenever he pleased, once he knew that the police weren't doing anything."

"He who, Mrs. Dunwood?" Keifer resisted shaking his head in

confusion. A chill wriggled down his backbone again. But Mrs. Dunwood turned without responding. Her hair flowed out behind her above her nightgown. The ground mist covered her bare feet. She walked out of the manicured lawn, past cedar posts, into the animal enclosures. He followed.

Tall fences of chicken cloth wired to one-inch pipe marked the left and right boundaries. He couldn't see what was in each cage, and moved forward carefully. Again he noticed how clean it was, and ordered. But it was a place of animals, and his nose was dulled by the constancy of the reek. She turned and stopped in front of one cage, different from the others. How? He glanced around. Ah, this one had wire across the top of the cage. Again Mrs. Dunwood read his thoughts.

"First time, I wasn't certain what had happened. My poor goat. Second time, it was one of her kids, not two months old. He ruined her. I had to put the poor damaged thing down myself."

Ruined her? Keifer thought. Ruined her how? Something went off in his head like a big Oh. Then his brain said No Way. As if he wasn't a cop, but was a kid going out to tip cows. Well, no wonder she's pissed. He stared into the dark enclosure, not at all sure what he was going to see—not sure what he was ready to see. Then something else came to him. This cage wasn't chicken-wire like the others, but chain-link. Hurricane fence—sides and top.

"Yeah, I switched the fence, too," she said with cold satisfaction. "Damned fool didn't even notice."

"Oh, shit," Keifer finally said. This couldn't go well. The muscles in his pistol hand flexed instinctively, but he made them stay put. "In the cage."

"Yeah, and I snapped the lock behind him while he wasn't paying attention. Hunter and hunted. He'd come looking for her again, but I tricked him. You damn betcha I did." Her arms crossed triumphantly. Keifer's brow knitted—she'd caught some pervert. Well, now. Someone to arrest, he supposed. This was going to stink, he guessed. He stared at her. An odd thought flickered across the policeman's mind; that this was actually a handsome woman, someone of worth. Attractive even? He tried to chase the idea away with one that said you're tired, it's been a long night and you're not thinking well, but in truth he could not.

Keifer slowly reached to his hip and pulled out his little flashlight again. With a thumb, he flicked on the beam. It was so bright, after trying to see in the darkness, that his eyes stung, then ached as though he were driving into

oncoming traffic. He pointed the flashlight into the enclosure. It was too tight a beam to take everything in, and reflected back at him off of the chain-links.

In the cage was a man, lying on his side, naked. Again, Keifer suppressed the urge to pull his weapon. And the need to say something. There was blood around, a fair bit of it; bright on him and dark on the ground. It was difficult to tell how much of the blood was the man's own and what might have been someone or something else's blood. At least some of it was dribbling from the man's nose, which was bent to the side and looked broken. The man's eyes were swollen, but nothing was falling out of them, no dark and gelatinous bits, thank goodness. Some of the blood also appeared to come from scrapes on the man's body, his side, knees, elbows and such. That the man was alive, but not well, Keifer could tell, but that

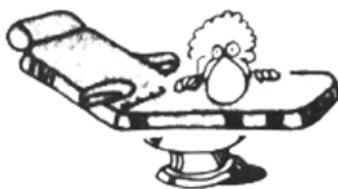
was about all he could reasonably conclude by Triple A-Battery light. He scanned the rest of the enclosure. On the other side was an animal, bigger than he thought would be in there, also lying on its side.

"That's Billy," Mrs. Dunwood said. "He's just resting, I'll bet." Keifer scoped out the animal's mighty head with the eerie slit-pupilled eyes and shaggy, manish beard. The goat's horns wrapped and twisted around in a helix, encircling its ears in bony armor. Mrs. Dunwood leaned in close as if to see the same things that Keifer was. Her breath was sour but not unpleasant.

"Billy is one ornery bastard; I'll tell you that for nothing. He's the king-mean-boss of all goats. And he didn't like someone else doing his nanny-goats. So I put him in her enclosure, and when this fool came to visit, I just locked up behind him."

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The woman leaned on the chain link fence, looking in the cage.

"The ancient Greeks found old billy goats to be such violent and randy animals they believed that they just had to have some human in them, and were probably possessed of some type of magic. They called them satyrs, and attributed all sorts of misbehavior to them. Rape and deflowering and such. Well, not surprisingly, in addition to his nanny goats Billy here is partial to young billy goats, sheep, llamas, and just about anything that can't escape him when he's in such a mood. I suppose he had to bust this one around a bit before he could have his way, but eventually it all worked out. Turnabout is fair and all."

"Jesus," was all Keifer could say, nodding.

"Yeah, you'd think so," Mrs. Dunwood said. Keifer looked at her, questioningly. "Don't you see

who it is?"

Keifer nodded one more time, but Mrs. Dunwood wasn't looking for his answer.

"The hypocritical old sycophant. Always casting the first stone and everything. Well, you want him, you got him."

Keifer held his breath. Did she mean the goat or the bloody mess lying on his side? He unsnapped his holster with a click, re-snapped it. He wasn't going to shoot anything, not yet, anyway. And he'd lied to Mrs. Dunwood. No, he couldn't tell who the naked, battered bastard was in the cage, not from here. And what was a sick-o-fant, anyway? He could only guess.

He tried to imagine all of the fuss. The out of town newspapers, once the story leaked. The talk back at the station. Just an inkling of what Mrs. Dunwood went through. He felt inclined to just leave him there, let things work themselves out, like she said.

Had he spoken out loud? Mrs. Dunwood replied as if he had.

"I can't help you there, officer. If I was in your shoes, I'd leave him there for a while at least. You don't want to mess around in Billy's cage, in case he aint had his fill. You want a cup of coffee?"

Keifer was not surprised to find that, suddenly, he did.

Sprockets 2006

Sprockets Music Video Show june21

the40watt 10pm awards show_june22

Two-Headed Cow june21

the40watt 8pm 2005 Rockumentary

Sprockets TeenScreen FilmFest june24

redeemer auditorium(165 pulaskist.) 8:30pm



*special thanks to **the Blotter Magazine**

*more info at <http://filmathens.net>

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When The Elocutionist Can't Speak Good by Angus Gorberg

Chlorophormed from the very breaths
That birthed them
Subway trains hiss like snakes
Sidewinding through familiar passages.

A chaise for the chase
Not too many ticks from now
To the next day
But enough to turn loose
All the splinters and dirt
Recycled through vocal chords.

Separate tunnel visions occur
From various vantage points
But the smell of sleep
Circles heads like stars.

Even on top
Buildings still obscure naked eyes
Amongst the many
Flights of stares
Still too low for any
True change in pressure to take place.

Yet follicles stand at attention
For the subconscious apprehension
Leaving a multitude of mouths
Sewn shut from consequential mention.

Patent leather postulations
Held by tightly closed fists.
Every dry-cleaned sleeve
Linked by cuffs.
Any chance of choice
Tightly tucked and buttoned down.

No amount of cream will ever be enough
To lessen the burn of the coffee
No sky could scrape away
The steel's glutinous gaze

Seen as nothing but ants
All from the same whole
Where the queen collects green
And work supercedes dreams.

Cold beads of sweat collect in the beds of the buried
Until alarms interrupt the clocks of such tightly-tucked nightmares.

wet wet water by Margot Considine

i licked dairy-free buttery spread from my fingers &
you came clean about the milk you'd poured in my
cereal but i only laughed
turned up the oven while the toast crackled
and the smoke drifted up
and let's just hope the fire alarm doesn't work, else
the screeching beeping will drive us outside

into the rain and we'll
wander confused, wander wet
with drops drip-dropping off the ends of our noses
streams coming down from our hair.
listen, do you hear the clouds silently fleeing?

now that we're wet and slippery we should go to
the coast
before it dries up too
oh look i imagined it maybe but here i am still
in this puddle drenched and shivering,
transported. where have you gone, my enemy?

The Mosquito Swing

She had always found mosquitoes annoying
until the night she learned to forget about them.

She had always found boys annoying
until the night she learned to forget about mosquitoes.

"Fireflies are the redeemers
of the insect world,"
she thought
looking up at dying meteors,
the tops of rushes
dripping their dry seeds,
and the fireflies between.
The mosquitoes forgave her for thinking this,
and bit her anyway.

by Henry Kearney IV

The Downtown Elm Tree Blues

The skyscrapers never flinched, just stood
clean and brutal against the sky.

Sunbeams swept over the lower roofs
and broke hard against the steel horizon,

filtering down to the streets and rivers
in shadow-tinted silt, crumbs of sun.

The world below the 26th floor
learned to breathe without sunlight.

In the shade, we grew like the skyscrapers,
who would not bend for photosynthesis. Or love.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS:

Garrison M. Somers is our homeboy. He is a stay-home dad, substitute teacher, and author of the hopefully-soon-to-be-published novel *Dust of the Earth*, (Blotter Books, if we can get the money together—hint, hint.)

OneNeck is a crazy Scottish cartoonist.

Angus Gorberg is a poet from Raleigh.

Margot Considine has been published in *The Blotter* before, but has never given me a bio.

Henry Kearney IV is an MFA student at the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers, UNC Chapel Hill. Well well well.

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6/25 Debutante Brawlers vs Tai Chi-tahs

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For more information contact the Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 772-BALL or the Festival office at (919) 477-4749 or festival@durham.org

To volunteer: (919) 471-5008 or volunteer@durham.org

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