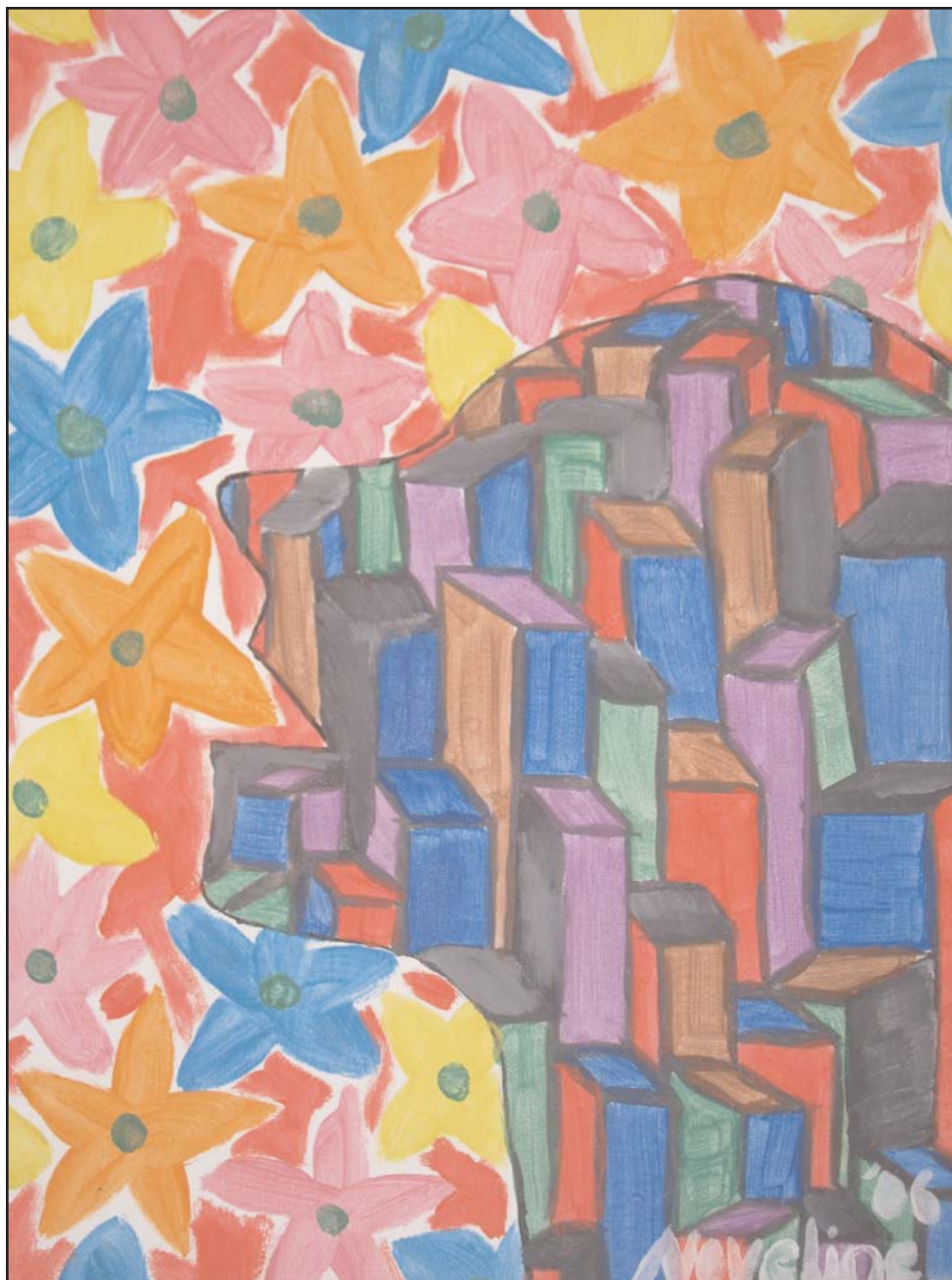


*Feeling Good! Looking Good! How Good? Real Good!*  
*Christopher Ross, Noveline Aung-Min, Ruth Moose, Doug Draime,*  
*A new Staccato, and The Dream Journal*

# The Blotter

March 2009

MAGAZINE



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Martin K. Smith  
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#### Submissions and Editorial Business to:

Jenny Haniver  
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## "Time Marches On"

Over the recent Christmas holiday a very cool and magical thing happened. On or about December 21<sup>st</sup>, Beatrice, my six-year-old, was reading Berenstain Bears books. For those of you not familiar with these, they have a paragraph or so of text per page, something like sixteen point type, and each book encompasses a lesson to be learned, framed for younger readers. Throughout the fall, Bea's teacher would place one new book of this ilk after another in a ziplock baggie (clever, clever) and send it home to be read at my daughter's convenience and pace. Upon completion, Bea would have me log it on a piece of paper included in the ziplock and return it for a new book. She saw each new book as a challenge that had to be tackled as soon as she came home from school. "Gotta read, Dad," she'd say and off to her room she'd go. As Ms Stewart would say, a very good thing.

Here's the magic part. Older sis Livie has a reading light – one of those goosenecked gizmo's that run on a double-A battery that you can clip onto the binding of your book, or the headboard of the bed, and read in the dark. Personally, I hate these things, my myopia (both literal and figurative) make night-time reading a constant book-and-lamp-adjustment-festival. But Livie loves it. Well, Bea was snitching it from her so often that she asked for one of her own for Christmas. Ouhla! She receives one – in purple plastic glory – from Uncle Butch. By the way, everyone needs an Uncle Butch. I'll explain some other time, but trust me on this one. Well, anyway, Bea would go to bed at her assigned 7:30 or so, all through the holidays, but she'd be sitting up in her bed with a stack of her Berenstain Bear-level books at her feet, plowing through one after another. Every semi-easy reader on the bookshelf.

Then round about New Years Eve, I saw her going into the big plastic storage box of books that Livie has outgrown, but that we thought Bea wasn't yet ready to read. She came up to me with three volumes in her hands. Her eyes aimed down in disappointed anticipation – ready to hear my *No, I don't think so. Not yet.* "Dad," she asked "can I read Captain Underpants?"

Well, of course I let her. Who am I to keep a first grader from reading all about poop and the words that rhyme with poop? It's a third-grade level book, for pity's sake. I'm as proud as punch that in one holiday she has moved on past the Bears and their ensemble-fables to Chapter Books with oodles of text and lots of dialogue and sarcastic humor. And anyway, she wants to read it. *Wants to. Read.* "Sure, sweetie," I said. And along with episode One, she grabbed Three and Eight, about wedgie-women and potty-people, respectively.

And herein lies my dilemma. Their Mom is all about *quality*. K understands that knowledge is doled out in appropriate measures, with

prudence and forethought and logic. I'm about quantity and volume and education by firehose and using hammers to kill mosquitoes. I've always felt that there's no such thing as too much information. If perchance confusion sets in, unravel it with more data. Glazed eyes? More, and louder! And for the most part I agree with my wife about most topics needing to be delivered in the right order, at the appropriate age. But reading, well, it's kind of like nuclear fission, metaphorically speaking. Keep placing books in front of your children. Build critical mass. Eventually, you'll get the explosion you're looking for.

You see, the same thing happened to me when I was a kid; that epiphany moment when I stopped reading the tripe in my grade school library and discovered that I wanted to dig into my Dad's collection of sci-fi pulps. It probably didn't help that the covers were all these nude women being attacked by robots and alien crocodile-men. And although not one iota in the text of those novels had anything to do with undressed distressed damsels, I was only vaguely sorry. It was the stories! It was always about the stories!

So now my daughter's into telling us all about the hilarious adventures of tighty-whitie boy, or whatever his secret identity is. And sure, I'm probably wrong, could have found something more uplifting for her to attack, but admittedly I was tangled up in the remarkable thing that had happened. She'd sailed past the horizon in her little reading *caravel*, whereby through sheer volume of reading, she'd become bored by simple easy-readers, and required more from a book. She craved that *something*; a real story, with characters developed by the words themselves, rather than by illustrations placed nearby on the page. And how cool is that?



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CAUTION

*I'm pretty sure that we've nothing offensive in this issue. If you should somehow find yourself feeling offended, however, hold that thought until next month. I'm certain we can provide content that will fulfill your need for self-righteousness.*

### “Yes, Virginia...”

by the Rev. Christopher Ross

“Let’s try Virginia,” my companion said as he scoured the internet in search of land for sale, after two previous such exploratory trips, one across Tennessee last March and the other, several months earlier, to Western North Carolina.

The Asheville excursion got high marks with friends and colleagues in New York. Almost everyone had heard of Asheville, which is quickly becoming *the* retirement place and, hey, if it’s good enough for the Vanderbilts, it certainly would be for us as well. Moreover, Asheville’s reputation as a progressive, eclectic city gave us—and them—a feeling that we were not, after all, taking ourselves to some town where our gay heads would immediately be put in stocks, if not chopped off altogether.

We’d found a realtor who was “in the club” and she confirmed Asheville’s image as the East Village of North Carolina: bohemian and live-and-let-live, with enough culture—high and low—to satisfy any about-to-be ex-New Yorker of a certain age. And it had a huge organic food market, a major plus for us,

without Fairway’s frenetic energy, clogged aisles, unsupervised children, disinterested staff and, well, if you’ve ever been there, you know what I mean.

We never did make it to the Biltmore Estate, advertised as “America’s Largest Home,” but spent most of the week looking at parcels of land, some of which had houses on them, some of which didn’t. It was also the height of the fall foliage season. Though we were told we’d missed the peak by about a week, you certainly could have fooled me. I’d never done the October-in-Vermont number so despite my world travels I’d not actually *seen* it other than in movies and in photographs. November in Western North Carolina surpassed anything the best cinematographers and travel magazines could produce. Achingly beautiful, every time the road took a turn and a new vista came into view, I was stunned by the beauty of God’s creation.

But no home spoke to us and said “Buy me.” Most of them were far too large and the steep terrain, despite the beautiful views worthy of *National Geographic*, would have

forced us to significantly alter if not altogether eliminate our fantasies of a vegetable garden and of gently rolling pastures where animals could graze. One house, in fact, resembled a ski lodge on top of a mountain. Four-wheel drive was a necessity in even the best of conditions and our realtor, seeing our dismay, conceded that the current owner had to leave her car at the bottom of the “drive-way” one winter day and literally crawl up to the house. I did not ask if she was also carrying a week’s worth of groceries. Definitely an opportunity to improve one’s list-making skills but that was not what we were looking for in a house. (Actually, I’m great at *making* the list but then I often leave it at home.) I was also frightened to walk too far in any one direction for fear of literally falling off the mountain. We got in the car and drove back to Earth in first gear.

We stayed that week not in Asheville proper but in a log cabin outside Saluda, roughly thirty miles to the southeast, just a squeak above the South Carolina line. After lunch one day at the local café, we strolled through town, a single street of two or three blocks, and wandered into an art gallery. The owner drawled, “So glad y’all came in,” every time we looked anywhere in her direction and, surprisingly, much of the art actually was. Granted, one afternoon does not a lifetime make, but the gallery owner’s repeated welcome came off as sincere rather than hokey and tiny Saluda as a whole exuded more charm than all of Asheville.

Back in New York, we continued to receive e-mails from our realtor about available properties but the

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thrill was gone. Asheville began to feel like a “should.” We “should” go there because it’s where “everyone” is going and we “should” go there because we could not find another small or medium-sized city east of the Mississippi that even hinted at being gay-friendly.

Not that we wanted to live in a city anyway. Assuming that our land, when we found it, would be large enough and far enough from civilization to ensure privacy, it didn’t really matter what state we lived in, right? So we threw caution to the wind and planned a trip to Tennessee. I don’t actually remember why, now, but I suppose it was because of the number of available properties we found on-line and because it was less expensive than Western North Carolina. This time we flew; the drive to Asheville had been grueling to do in one day, so we left Miss Enid the greyhound with a friend and flew to Nashville.

I *loved* Nashville. I loved all the honky-tonk places along Broadway and bought all the “Music City” t-shirts I could carry. I loved the big green boxes on street corners that played country music. I loved the BellSouth Building on Commerce Street, the top of which was designed to resemble a giant telephone. Although locals call it the Batman Building because with its

two spires it looks like Batman’s helmet, to me it appeared to be an enormous Art Deco radio that one could almost reach up and tune to different stations. I loved Merchant’s, where we ate several times. And the low culture of the east side turned, on the west side, into high culture—very high culture—at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts whose exhibitions were worthy of any museum in New York. The bad news was that none of the properties we saw moved us at all.

Chattanooga held some appeal, especially the large and attractive organic food market we discovered. And we did see one beautiful piece of land, considerably smaller than what we wanted but situated on a picture postcard country lane, very peaceful and pastoral, with a strangely shaped house that we conceivably could have lived in while we built another. We went back to see it two or three times but were ultimately deterred by the lack of acreage and the proximity of neighbors, especially the big, ugly white blimp of a house that looked directly down onto the property. Probably the most interesting thing we saw was the look on the realtor’s face when he learned that the “we” of e-mails and phone calls turned out to be two men. To his credit, his internal shift from whatever he expected

to the understanding that the client was a gay couple was quite subtle and we were off to look at properties with no discernible discomfort on anyone’s part.

Knoxville I remember only for the wonderful meal we had in a restaurant called 212 something or something 212, our area code in New York. At week’s end, we drove back to Nashville—wondering in my low-tech way how our cell phones knew when we changed time zones—and flew home, not quite sure what to do next.

When A. said “Let’s try Virginia,” I immediately felt something shift, saying, “Yes!” though the sum total of my Virginia experience was (a) having gone to college a thousand years ago with a girl from Richmond, (b) two or three ventures across the Potomac from D.C., and (c) a trip to Roanoke in 2004, I believe. I had driven down from New York for a church synod and was astounded by the beauty of the Virginia countryside, even at seventy miles an hour along I-81. Well, ok, eighty miles an hour if there’s a statute of limitations about these things. And I found the old, historic part of Roanoke to be quite charming; I was sorry I did not have more time to explore.

The “Yes!” that I felt inside was



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actually about Virginia's location, or as realtors say, "Location! Location! Location!" Farther east than Tennessee and farther north than North Carolina, just the *idea* of Virginia calmed my apprehension about being "out there in America" as I used to call it when I began in the mid-nineties to travel from New York to southeastern Pennsylvania. I'd fled to New York when I came out decades earlier and while no place is one hundred percent gay-friendly, I felt safest in Manhattan. Venturing out into the hinterlands made me anxious. Fortunately, what I found in Pennsylvania, for the most part, was also what we have found in Virginia: a slower pace marked by a level of courtesy, caring and helpfulness unparalleled in New York, unless, of course, there is an exchange of folded strips of green paper to ease the way. And I no longer needed to employ a friend's training technique at the supermarket checkout, when after a wordless transaction also lacking in eye contact, she would announce to the cashier in a loud, phony chirp, "Now *this* is the part of the transaction when *you* say, "Thank you!!!!!!!" But I digress.

I also remembered that Virginia is called The Old Dominion, though I had to look up exactly why. (Charles II of England put the arms of

Virginia on his shield in 1663 and in so doing added Virginia to his dominions of France, Ireland and Scotland.) The nickname, even without the explanation, communicated genteel sophistication. I conjured up a scene out of pre-war *Gone with the Wind* and said to A., "Yes, let's try Virginia."

Wanting to avoid the congestion and high prices of the DC suburbs, the possibility of hurricanes rolling up the east coast, the hillier terrain of the Blue Ridge to the west and the infamous Lynchburg homophobes in the central region, we concentrated on the southern part of the state and hit the computer once again.

By the end of April we'd found a realtor in South Hill and arranged to fly down for a weekend. Well, twenty-four hours, actually. Because I was working Monday through Friday and A. was working Tuesday through Saturday, our only free day together was Sunday, so we flew to Raleigh that Saturday night, collapsing in an airport motel sometime around midnight. Up at the crack to meet our realtor at the appointed hour, we watched his light bulb—unfortunately well under one hundred watts—light up when he said to himself, "Oh, they're gay" and as in Tennessee, it was simply a fact;

interesting, but not one that needed to be factored in in any way. We spent a very pleasant day with him but, alas, found no land with our names on it. We sped—despite Virginia's new draconian traffic fines—back to Raleigh and barely made our plane back to New York, which of course then sat on the runway for at least an hour. But we sensed that Virginia was "it," and though exhausted, we were relieved that our search was narrowing.

We returned in June, this time to work with a realtor in South Boston whom we'd found, like the others, on the internet. C. introduced himself as retired military and my heart sank, wondering what excuse we might offer that necessitated our immediate return to New York, or at least to our own car that would speed us back to our motel so that we could find another agent. But the emphasis, it turned out, was on "retired," not "military," C.'s way of informing us that he did not need this job but did it out of enjoyment and therefore there would be no hard sell. Nor was there anything in his demeanor less than enthusiasm and eagerness to help us, as if gay couples used his services all the time.

C. showed us a beautiful piece of property that scored high marks for size, proximity to town and privacy, gently rolling, mainly wooded, with two open fields and two streambeds that actually had some water in them despite the drought. Along one edge, however, was a line of



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huge electrical pylons stretching in either direction as far as the eye could see. C. explained that they belong to Dominion Virginia Power and that the company has an easement, or right of way on the property to maintain the two or three pylons within its borders. Reluctantly, we said no, no pylons. Much too scary.

But there was a stirring, a whisper from somewhere within those fifty-eight acres that said, if not yes, then certainly maybe. So we went back for a second look. And a third. And maybe a fourth, when I remembered something from my early years in New York. After the World Trade Center was completed in 1970, the area of Manhattan known as Tribeca, an acronym of **Triangle Below Canal** (Street), changed from an undesirable neighborhood where nobody lived—at least not anybody who was anybody—into a thriving neighborhood filled with young families and all that is needed to service them, including a restaurant owned by Robert de Niro that put the area on the map as a place to live and as a destination for visitors. I remembered reading that a young mother and her children referred to the massive World Trade Center towers that loomed over their backyard as their very own personal “friendly giants.” When I thought of our pylons—they were already

our pylons—as our very own personal friendly giants, “maybe” became “yes.”

Between that week in June and when we moved at the end of August, there was an apartment to sell, jobs to resign from(!!!), the purchase of the land to negotiate, endless lists to make and people to say good bye to, who tended to fall into one of two categories: those who understood and supported what we were doing and were even a bit jealous that we were actually making the break, and those who said, “You’re going where?” and belittled our decision. One dear friend I’ve known almost forty years immediately assumed we’d be gay-bashed upon arrival and that a cross would be burned on our lawn as our furniture was carried into the house.

I dedicate this piece especially to them, to the New York-is-the-center-of-the-universe crowd to which I once so proudly belonged before the place wore me down with its exorbitant prices, its noise, its dirt and its shocking level of rudeness and general incivility—for me, perhaps most inexcusable of all.

Our relocation has been such an act of faith that to everyone who asks, “How did you find South Boston, Virginia?” I answer that South

Boston actually found us. While we came for the terrain and the climate, what a computer search could never reveal is how wonderful the people would be, from the hardware store to the bank to the carpet store where we had to make a special trip to pay for our new carpeting after it was installed because no one ever asked for money to the frame shop where the offer of a deposit was adamantly refused to the woman who would take nothing for her dog-sitting services to the people from whom we bought the little house we live in now with whom we merely shook hands and signed *nothing* until the actual closing as well as to the many, many others who have been equally warm, welcoming, friendly and amazingly eager to help.

Nevertheless, I admit to having a moment or two of panic the first few times we went to Walmart or Food Lion because we were the only two men shopping together and the only two men obviously “together.” Would some stereotypical redneck suddenly materialize and threaten us with a baseball bat? What I had to confront instead were my own prejudices about small town people in general and southerners in particular. Almost four months later, I would not trade even for one morning everyone’s “Y’all have a great day!” for a really, really good bagel,

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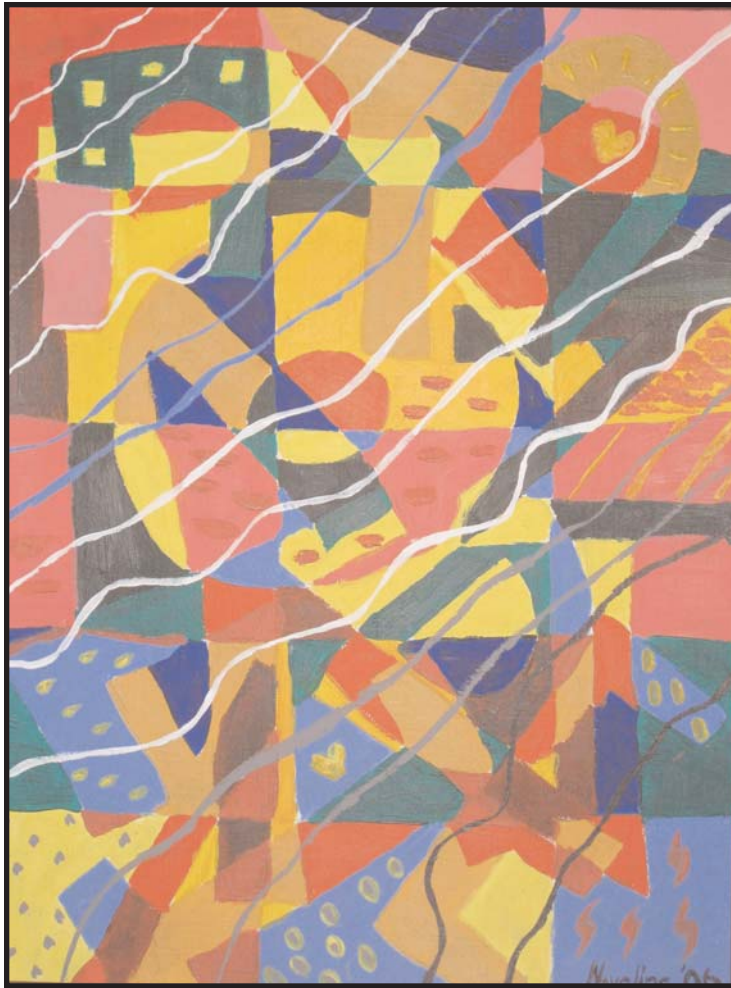
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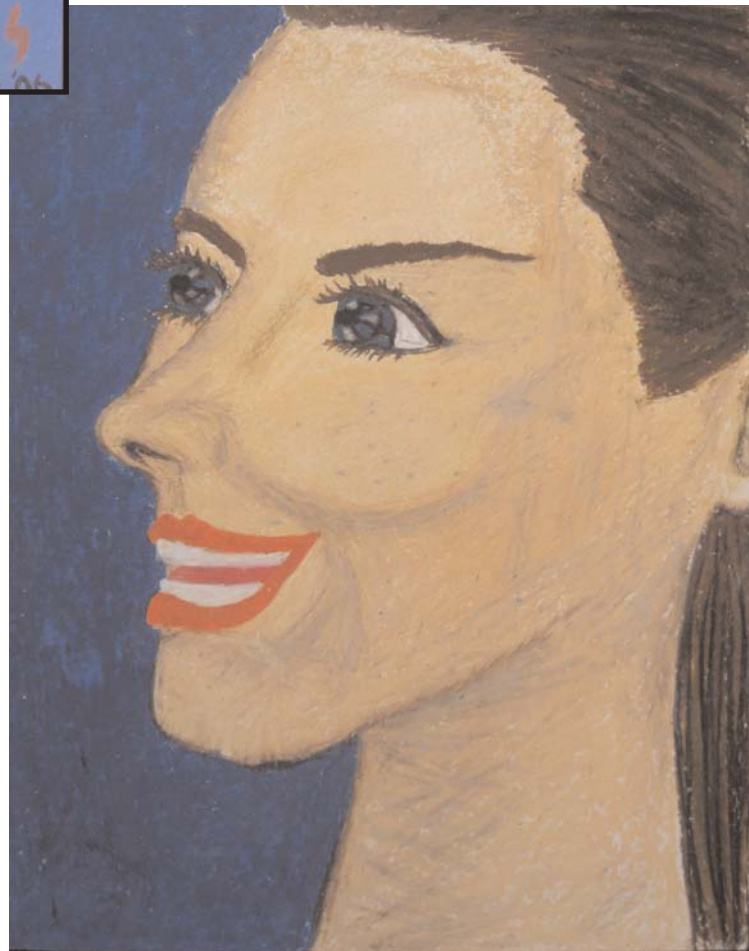
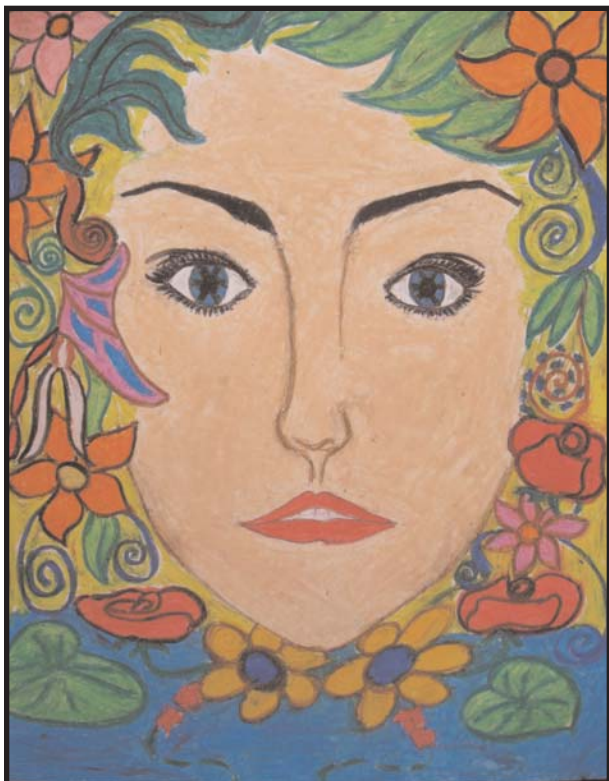
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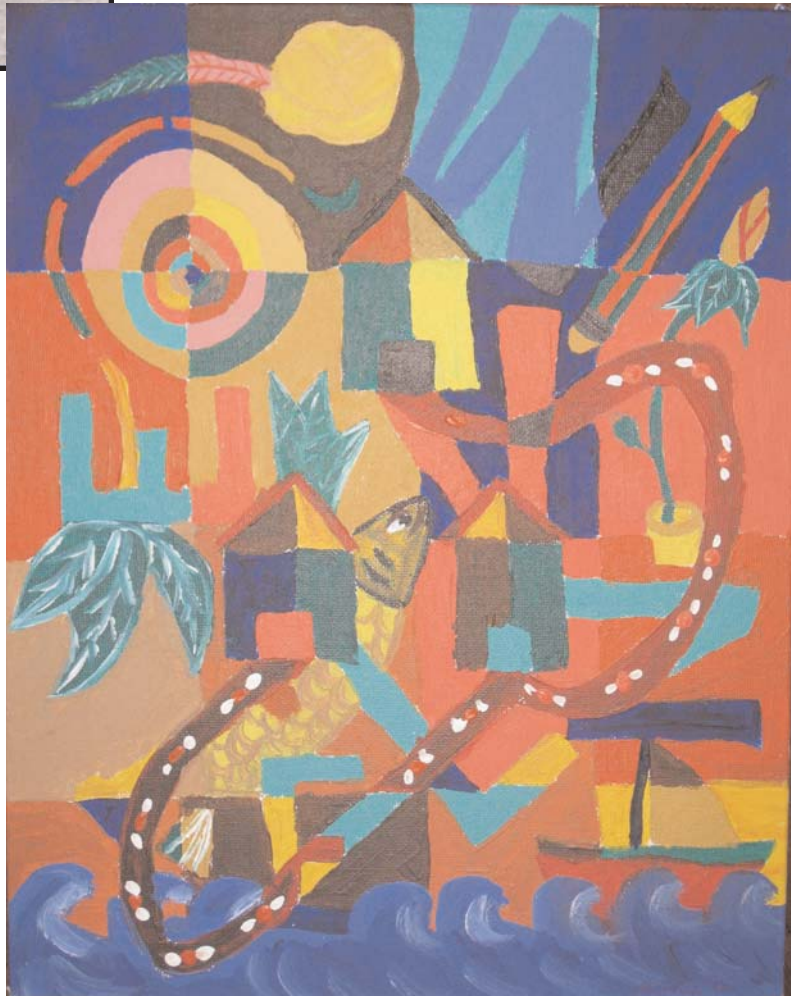
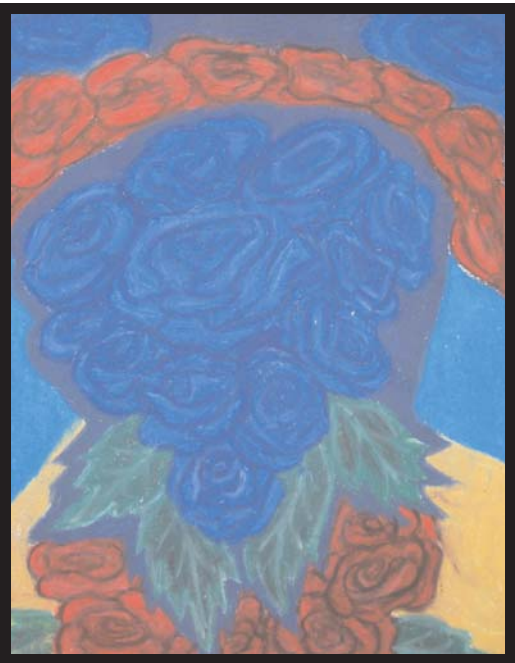
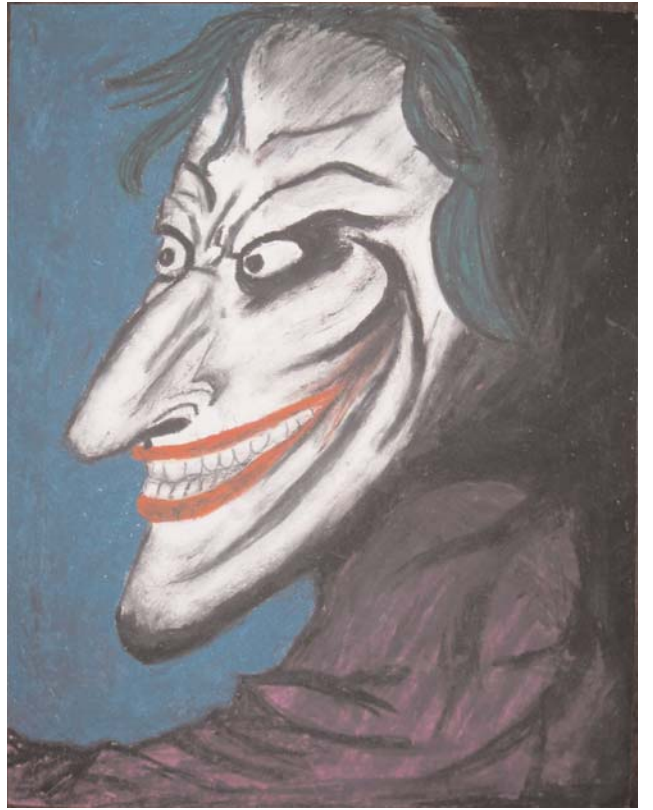
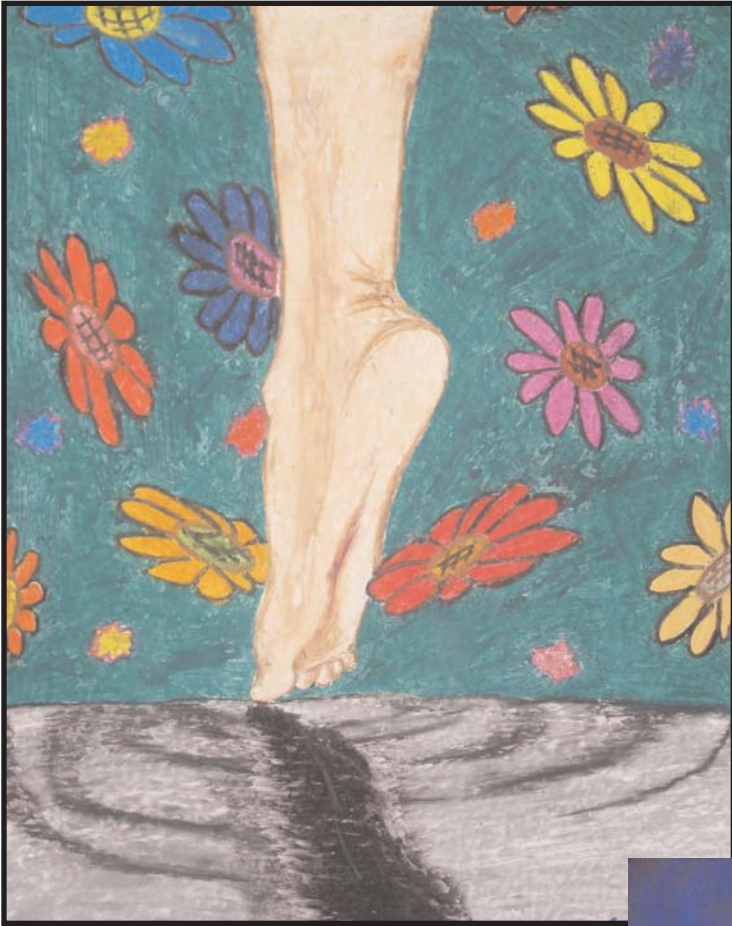
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## The Blotter

impossible to find here.

Is there gay life in this most charming of all small towns in Virginia? Well, I don't really know. We did not come here for that, the way I went to New York so many years ago to feel safe and to be part of a community in which I could be my authentic self. And for that, New York, I will always be grateful. Older now, and coupled, and loners more than joiners, we are not looking for night life or pride marches but for time—time to indulge our individual and joint interests, time to be successful in the way that Bob Dylan defined success: "A man is a success if he gets up in the morning and gets to bed at night and in between he does what he wants to do." If gay life, then, is simply being who we are and being taken under the town's wings as we feel we have been, the answer, as Francis P. Church of *The New York Sun* told eight year-old Virginia O'Hanlon in 1897, when she asked if there is a Santa Claus, the answer, then, is a definitive, "Yes, Virginia, there is...."



### "The Mourning Dove in the Tree"

The nest didn't even fit. Her feathers lapped over the sides, hung over even as she hung on after the woodcutter came to cut down the tree.

He stopped with his axe when he saw on the upper branch a ragged nest of twigs and straw. There sat a tan speckled mourning dove her chick beneath her wing.

She eyed him, didn't move a feather. Her fledgling rustled under her folded wing, snuggled closer. Neither made a sound. She held steady, that mother bird in her borrowed nest, street bird, rain crow with rain beading her back, her beak, her dark head. Rain from the tail end of a hurricane beating down.



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Three by Ruth Moose

“Untitled”

O, blonde headed, wrong headed  
 little green worm  
 curled in my ear  
 of fresh, sweet corn,  
 we greet, meet each other.  
 You, having eaten  
 the top kernels and me  
 ready to shuck and silk  
 and boil the ear. But  
 not you, Sir Worm, not  
 you.

I remember a dinner in Denmark.  
 A vegan friend who bought  
 slices of Danish ham  
 for “her American friends.”  
 How a yellow bee from  
 the grape arbor above us,  
 descended on the ham  
 and began to lick or nibble  
 or do what bees do to feed  
 themselves. “Do you mind?”  
 Our hostess asked as we waited,  
 watched. “They eat so little.”  
 We didn’t mind then and now,  
 years later, I say Sir Worm,  
 “You ate so little.”

“Sunday’s Sermon”

No birds were flying,  
 the air was thick with rain.  
 Outside my window  
 twenty nine vultures  
 gathered in a pine tree,  
 robed as judges,  
 or perhaps hangmen  
 having a conference?  
 Or a convention? Beggars  
 pooling their needs?  
 Not crows, these bigger  
 blacker birds each claimed  
 a limb, clutched it claws  
 tight. I counted their  
 scruffy tails, eyed their  
 arrogant heads, their hungry  
 hunched shoulders  
 as they sat silent  
 as death.

## "A Widow And Her Elses"

by Eric Beeny

Alesta started her car and sat there.

She turned the heat all the way up.

All the glass, the front and rear windshields, the windows, the plastic headlights, they were all cloaked in dark white ice.

She couldn't see anything that wasn't in the car.

She breathed in and out.

She watched her breath gently exploding from some place below her eyes.

Alesta sat in her car, just breathing.

Her eyes were cold and wet with tears she was too upset to feel like crying.

It didn't matter.

It didn't matter what she did.

She'd just been fired.

It didn't matter she'd just been fired.

It didn't matter she'd left without a fight.

It didn't matter Alesta was sitting in her car now, wondering how to pretend she didn't have a son, how to pretend she was the only one who could get away with not eating.

It was so cold out Alesta couldn't feel how numb she was getting.

She tried to turn up the heat more.

She'd just been fired.

It didn't matter.

What did was now she had to go home to Garvey.

She had to go home to Garvey.

Her job was what got her out of the apartment and away from Garvey.

Now she had to go home to Garvey.

Alesta had to go home to Garvey and tell him she lost her job and something else happened, maybe the reason she got fired.

Garvey, who hadn't had a job since Alesta had known him, since they'd moved in and accidentally had a child together.

Garvey who didn't even watch the kid while he was home all day drinking and smoking and on coke playing video games and calling different other girls on the phone and all while Alesta's sister Jalina took care of and changed and fed and bathed and rocked his son to sleep.

Garvey who only cared about what he looked like and did nothing but lift weights and go jogging to the store when he wasn't on drugs or hitting on Jalina.

Alesta missed her son, Landon, because she worked so much.

She also missed how things were before she had him.

She didn't need money so much as now.

Now she needed another job.

She had to move on.

She wished she could quit Garvey, who was just as much work as working or finding work.

What else happened was maybe the reason she lost her job, but losing her job at least resolved that for now.

She didn't have to tell Garvey about it.

She'd think of something else, something else he'd at least think he had a reason to be upset with her for.

Alesta tried turning up the heat more but it wouldn't go any higher.

The windows were still dark white with ice and they weren't going invisible.

Inside the car no one could see her.

But she had to get out.

She popped the trunk.

She got out the snowbrush.

The car running, breathing exhaust out onto her legs, she began scraping the dark white ice from the windows.

After that, all she could do was brush her car off, get back in and drive home, thinking of somewhere else.

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is the unequivocally ineffable, so to speak, of

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Submissions, five hundred (500) words or less,  
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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

I wait with you in a room full of desks, an old classroom or a place where people might come to take tests, like the DMV. People are talking, and their voices have that large-room echo. There are some men sitting in the front chairs, they are semi-tough-looking, like members of a gang, only back in the West Side Story days, not tatted and flying colors like today. We talk about playing poker, and they snicker at us with surprisingly inclusive laughter, like if we actually had some cards a game might be arranged.

Then we're putting together either a time-capsule or perhaps a space capsule, gathering the bits and pieces from shelves around the edge of a new room. A handsome young woman with blonde hair wearing a white coat asks me about something she needs and I realize that I have that thing in my back-pack. It is wrapped in the bag I bought it in, but I feel good giving it to her to solve her need, although it must have cost me something. When I look at what I've pulled from the bag, it is a stuffed-animal dinosaur, like the Flintstones' Dino. She takes the toy from my hand with obvious and enigmatic relief, as if it is the keystone to the time-or-space capsule project. When she smiles at me I cannot decide if I know her, or if she is an amalgam of all the women I have ever known and tried to satisfy.

CSS - Cyberspace

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## "Third Birthday"

He mumbles at the ground. His white  
mane of hair like a stringy damp blanket  
over his head. 15 years on the streets.  
His wife and children living  
with his ex-best friend  
in Pasadena.

Two cardboard TV boxes are his home,  
in back of a garment factory  
on 6th street. I share the bottle with him  
on the lawn of the downtown library. He's  
coherent for several moments,  
recalling his youngest daughter at 3 years old.  
The last time he saw her she was playing  
with a doll he bought for her birthday on the  
porch of his former home.

He starts to shake and cry and looks off  
down the street, clamming up  
like a deaf mute. I sit there awhile and finally  
get up and walk off, leaving him there with his  
memories  
and the half empty bottle of rot gut.

Three by Doug Draime

## "Fungi"

It is a known fact  
that fungi  
are more  
closely related  
to people  
than to  
plants.  
I consider this  
as I watch  
2 men  
across the street  
from a local  
landscaping  
company,  
argue over which  
plant to uproot  
and which  
to leave alone.

## "Disneyland"

Mickey Mouse  
 sold out  
 in 1939  
 when he  
 pawned  
 his  
 tug boat  
 to Hitler  
 to pull  
 cargo ships full of  
 dead  
 bodies,  
 stuffed inside  
 thousands  
 of Volkswagens  
 like marinating  
 sardines.

They say  
 Walt is  
 frozen  
 somewhere.  
 I most  
 respectfully  
 suggest  
 someone  
 sneak in and  
 place  
 a good size  
 space  
 heater  
 next to him  
 in  
 his ice tomb,  
 to keep  
 him  
*dead,*  
 he's done enough  
 for the  
 world.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**The Rev. Christopher Ross** is a contemplative priest within the United American Catholic Church, an independent Catholic jurisdiction based in Virginia Beach, VA. Fr. Ross lives in South Boston, VA, where he is also an Associate Chaplain at Halifax County Hospital, a spiritual director and a Reiki Master. He is the author of *Homosexuality in the Christian Church*, an entry in the *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender* (Macmillan Reference USA, 2007) and is currently working on *For the Love of God: Reflections on an Ecclesiastical Year*, a collection of sermons.

**Noveline Aung-Min** is 15 years old. A Karen refugee from Burma, she grew up in camps in Thailand. When her parents became guest-workers she learned to draw by watching Japanese cartoons on MEASAT Saturdays and Sundays. None of her early art remains, though. In 2004, with one suitcase each, her family came to Carrboro, NC. I asked Noveline if she wants to grow up and be an artist and she shook her head. Instead, she wants to be a teacher, saying, "Art is a thing to express yourself." Her favorite artist? "The guy who paints the melting clock." I think Dali would have appreciated that.

**Ruth Moose** had a poem chosen by Ted Kooser for his poet laureate project sponsored by the Library of Congress, The Poetry Foundation and the University of Nebraska. Moose lectured at the 16<sup>th</sup> annual CPCC Literary Festival, on writing children's literature. She was a participant at the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Conference and also on the staff of the NC Writers Network Conference. Moose published stories and poems in *Kalliope*, *Atlanta Review*, *Sunday Journal*, *NC Literary Review*, and *Pembroke*. She has published book reviews in the *Raleigh News and Observer*, *Minnesota Tribune* and *The Pilot*. She is poetry editor for *The Rambler* magazine.

**Doug Draime** of Ashland, Oregon was in our August 2007 issue, and has been writing and publishing for four decades.

**Eric Beeny** writes, "My Poultry (chicken-shit scribbles) has appeared in *5AM*, *32 Poems*, *King Log*, *Main Street Rag*, *Nuthouse*, and others. I also have work forthcoming in *Quercus Review* and *Shampoo*. My short story "Inventing the Victim" was awarded Distinguished Achievement in Paradoxism.

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**Career Award - St. Clair Bourne**  
Filmmaker Sam Pollard will curate a selection of Bourne's films to be exhibited at the Festival, incorporating Bourne's early work, his more prominent titles, and films that influenced his career.

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