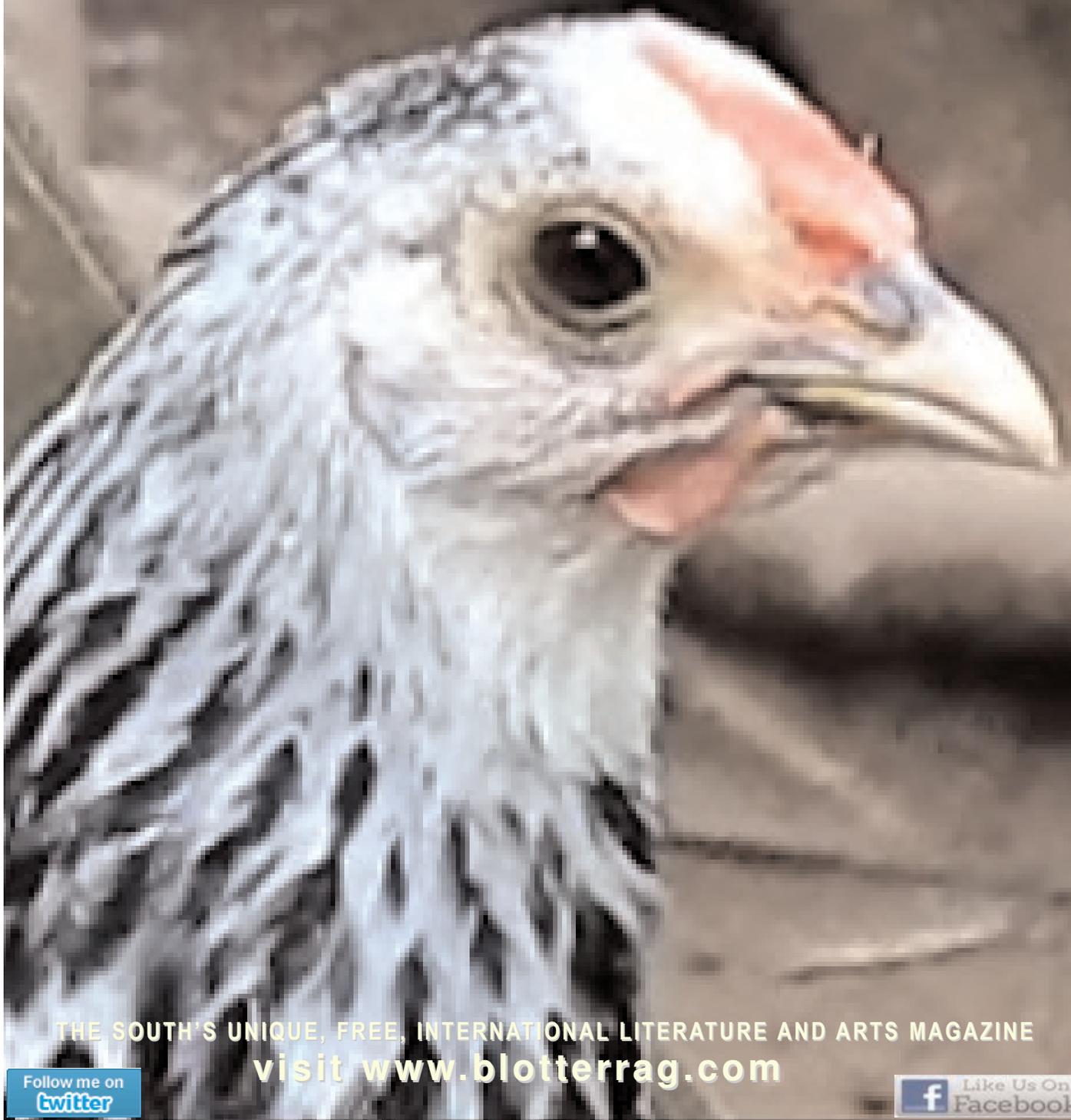


*Tricks. Treats. The choice is yours. Tamra Wilson,  
Morgue McMillan, Arthur Levine, Brian Ross Pals  
Phil Juliano and The Dream Journal*

# The Blotter

October 2012

MAGAZINE



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## "Rooms"

When I arrived at college in the fall of 1977, I brought some changes of clothes, a pillow and some sheets, and that's about it. I was lonely – even though I wasn't but a half-hour from my folks' new home – and I didn't know much about what was coming at me. What I did know is that this might

very well be my last shot at something resembling success.

You see, I was terrible in high-school. That is, I wasn't bad, but I was so bad at it. I'd muddled through four years of academics – bewildered by Algebra and Geometry, sleeping during English, skipping Spanish class, dawdling during Gym, and window-staring out at the world during any of my electives, selected specifically for their window-worthiness. My lifestyle at the time would be appropriate fodder for a lower level network mid-season replacement sit-com: not very funny, desperately repetitive, and painfully predictable.

I slid through everything else during those four years. Please understand: I didn't smoke dope, didn't get laid, didn't party, didn't spend ill-gotten gains on rock concerts, didn't trash anything, rarely drank, didn't hilariously drive my car into a swimming pool. Hell, I didn't even drive. I did pine tragically after some very pretty, smart and talented young women, who I suspect saw me as something that would eventually need to be scraped off, like gunk from the sole of a good shoe. I wasted good teaching, an excellent library, and fairly lenient parents. In other words, I was a slacker even before the word was invented. I was grunge before the Seattle style was ever assembled and assigned a musical score. Before Steven Tyler ever screamed the words, I was a high-school loser. After a couple of false starts; in the Navy and in the *entry-est* of the entry level working world, I came home, with the expected results. No real plan. No viable prospects. A bad haircut.

But truth be told, back then, in the forgiving if supremely self-interested post-Vietnam world, there were almost no train-wrecks a teenager couldn't walk away from, even if somewhat battered (and deep-fried). On, my own (mostly) volition I took the SATs (that I'd ignored for a couple of years) and tested well enough to be an interesting experiment for some college with at least a warped sense of decency, (if not humor.)

And I met my roommate, Davey.

Many people make friends easily. I don't. Thank goodness, he did. Many people are happy to get out on their own, away from home and their family. I had already demonstrated my difficulty with this. Davey was as happy to be here as a clam at high tide. He had about the same amount of stuff as me. More books, though. He was quiet, but friendly. Let me pick the side of the room I wanted. Told me his name and I told him mine. "New Jersey," he remarked, but made none of the typical jokes. "You're a Yankee," he concluded. "Where are you from?" I asked. "Goose Creek," he said with a grin, knowing that there were just as many funnies to attach to his home as mine. I think it was right here I knew that it was probably going to be OK.

He seemed to know what he was doing in direct counterpoint to my lack of knowing. For example, it was his suggestion to take our class schedules and go out and find our classes. This on a Sunday afternoon when other students were unpacking, hanging posters, wandering over to see what the

fraternities and sororities were doing, going downtown to find the college hangouts (even though none were open on a Blue Sunday.) Then we went to the college bookstore, which was open on Sunday, and bought some notebooks, pencils and all of his textbooks. I helped him carry them back to the room, as impressed as all get-out with their massiveness. So, I said to myself. So *this* is what being a student is.

He had an alarm clock, I did not. We went to breakfast together in the cafeteria conveniently downstairs in our dorm. Returning from classes to the room, we studied before lunch. More classes. Back to the room. Studying, then supper. I followed his lead, studying whenever he did. I had no idea, so it seemed the right thing to do. I assumed all college students behaved like this. Somehow I survived to my first Friday. "Heading out to the old homestead," I told him that afternoon. I had my laundry all packed up in the same suitcase I'd arrived with, along with reading material for next week's classes. "OK," he said. "See you Sunday." "You going home?" I asked. "Nah, I'll do my laundry here and hit the library tomorrow," he told me. I waved goodbye and made my way across town to the bus stop that for a couple of quarters would drop me right in front of my parent's house. Surprised the hell out of them that night when I sat on the living room couch reading a textbook.

And so it went until Thanksgiving. I hung out with my roomie every week-day. Our room had no radio, no television. We walked down the hall to the common room to see Reggie Jackson beat up on the Dodgers in the Series, then went back to read some more. I got my first college grades, and showed my folks what A's and B's look like. They were justifiably surprised. So was I.

By Christmas I'd figured out the right amount of studying, and we met some of the other folks living on the hall, went out and had a beer or two and started having fun. We would go downtown to the college pubs on Friday evenings, or to the weight room beneath the gym and I would try to keep up with his military presses and benches. Or we went to the movies, or over to watch a basketball game. Instead of making a beeline back to the room after class, we sat and talked about ourselves or just girl-watched. When spring came, I was a full-fledged, confident college kid.

I became a pretty good student in the end. Not great – I was still rebellious and silly and wanted to argue and occasionally mess around and chase girls and go to the beach. But that first semester with Davey made all the difference. Sitting in the room, him at his desk, poring over Calculus and Physics while occasionally spitting Skoal into a Dixie cup; me lying on my bed with my fishing hat jammed down on my head, eating Canada Mints and reading Erasmus and Chaucer and John Bunyan and Kerouac.

So thanks, my old friend. I don't know where I'd be if you hadn't been there. DMS 1959 - 2012

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CAUTION

**Q:** *Why did the chicken cross the road?*

**A:** *He was a cluck-off.*

## “Mermaids”

by Tamra Wilson

When I was going through a mermaid phase in second grade, Daddy splurged by taking us to Weeki Wachee. I spent time afterwards in the car drawing the fish women with their breathing tubes and their hair floating out like octopus arms. I drew in lipstick and sparkly jewelry and a cigarette for one of the mermaids.

Billy wrinkled his nose. “Nobody can smoke under water.”

“Those women can. You saw them in real life.”

Mama smiled as she exhaled behind cat-eye sunglasses.

“They can’t smoke can they, Daddy?” Billy said.

Our father checked his Air Force crew cut in the rear-view mirror. “No, son, they can’t, and I wish your Mama wouldn’t smoke at all. Will you tell her that for me?”

She shot him a look.

“Mama, Daddy said—”

“I heard.” She ground the butt into the ashtray, adjusted her headscarf and looked, out towards the scrub pines and billboards. “Let your sister use her

imagination. She can draw how she likes.”

At least she hadn’t said it was dumb to draw pictures. Billy was being his usual self, making the two years between us seem like ten.

We’d been gone for several hours against Mama’s wishes to stay home in front of the electric fan, the best way she knew to cope with sticky weather. Florida summers had never agreed with her. Sultry weather gave her headaches to the point of nausea, a scourge that kept her from being the mother she wanted to be.

“Hey look! Tarpon Springs, Sponge Capital of the World,” Billy read the billboard.

Daddy steered toward a parking place near the sponge dock. Mama sighed. The last thing she needed was another cleaning utensil. She used a large yellow sponge to clean the bath tub every other day, bending and stretching over the porcelain that didn’t look dirty. I never wanted to touch the sponge, not so much because it was unclean but for fear that something creepy was

lurking inside. Wasps might buzz out of the honeycomb holes with their stingers poised like hovering hypodermics. I’d been kissed by a wasp on the lip once, or so Mama said. “That old fellow gave you a smacker.” The stinger poison had sent me screaming for the better part of an hour. It was the first summer I could remember, when we still lived in Texas. Mama split open one of her cigarettes to make a tobacco plaster, but tasting those flaky brown bits made me gag.

We piled out of the car and sauntered to the gift shops. Freshly harvested sponges baked on vendors’ tables: delicate finger sponges, frilly baskets and tough wools.

“Catch.” Billy tossed a round sponge toward me. I ducked. The oblong ball bounced its way across the concrete.

“Fraidy cat. It’s not alive.”

Daddy put his hands on his hips. “Son, pick that up and put it back.”

Billy sniffed it and made a face. “It doesn’t smell dead.” He shuffled over to the counter and did as he was told, but he poked



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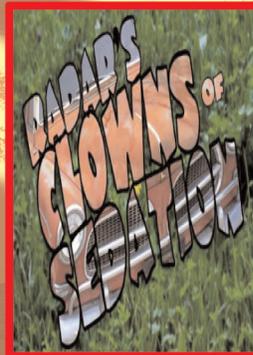
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## The Blotter

at more sponges piled in bins and buckets.

“Do sponges swim like fish?” I asked.

“They aren’t fish,” Daddy said. “They stay put on the ocean floor. Divers have to go get them. In the old days, they held their breath.”

He pointed to a life-size mannequin wearing a diver’s suit a hundred times more bulky than the mermaid suits at Weeki Wachee. I imagined holding my breath long enough to fetch a sponge head first. It was a lot of trouble to go to for a scrub brush.

Billy ogled a miniature version of the diver in a shop where Mama leaned her brunette bouffant hairdo against the door post, her arms folded across her chest as her fingers tapped

rhythm on her forearms. She hadn’t wanted to go on the outing in the first place. Sundays mornings were for church, she said, and Sunday afternoons for reading the Bible.

“Then consider this calling on the mermaids,” Daddy said. It was only after a promise of a seafood dinner did she give in, though the only food we’d seen so far that day was a fish sandwich.

I busied myself with a display of shiny tiger clams. Some were packaged inside of the other and covered in plastic to be sold as a set. The smaller ones would make perfect dishes for my Barbie doll while the colorful bits of coral might turn into something else if I thought hard enough. Elena, my Cuban friend,

didn’t own a Barbie, so she helped think up accessories for mine. Once we removed the spiked plastic insert from an olive jar and declared it was a coat rack. Another time we stripped the band from her father’s cigar. Elena said it could be a doll’s crown, though my Barbie wasn’t a princess and didn’t need one.

A sallow-skinned man poked his head out the door and sized up Mama. “May I interest you in something, ma’am?”

“Ask Mr. Tour Guide.” Mama pointed toward Daddy in his khaki slacks and rust-colored crew cut. Like me, he had freckles to fill in the parts of his skin that weren’t pink when we got sunburned.

Daddy looked over at us. “You kids want anything?” It was a signal to think fast. Billy blurted that he’d like a tiger clam and of course I wanted the package of shells. Mama, upset that we were taking so long, slammed the passenger door.

The man asked Daddy if he was in the service, which of course he was more than happy to admit. They talked Air Force



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until Daddy told both of us to take our stuff to the cash register.

Mama's fuse had burned to the nub by the time we got back to the car. Her cheeks flushed, she held her forehead in one hand and fanned herself with a roadmap. She didn't look up until Daddy handed her a small paper bag. "For you, Dear Heart."

"Gale, you shouldn't waste money—"

"Just open it, but be careful. It's a fragile thing, you see."

Her anger appeared to evaporate as she unfolded the tissue paper. Inside was a perfect disc with a folded piece of paper titled The Legend of the Sand Dollar. She examined the sugar-white object with the outline of a cross and Jesus's pierce marks like crucifix pictures in the Bible.

Mama read the note attached. "If the sand dollar is broken, tiny white doves will fall out."

"Is that true?" I asked. "There really are little birds in there? How do they breathe?"

"There's one way to find out," Daddy pretended to grab the shell from Mama's grasp, but she slapped him away. "Not on

your life, Bastard."

I'd never heard her call him that crass name before, but I remembered the moment that split the time when I knew everything was all right before it wasn't.

Daddy turned suddenly solemn, shifted the car into reverse.

We never did have our seafood dinner like he promised.

Not that day or any of the days that followed. Something uneven had shifted at the sponge docks. It had flown out and stung us 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@blotterra.com](mailto:mermaid@blotterra.com)

I sleep so much in my car - waiting for children to finish their school, extra-curricular things, sports, events - that I have begun to have dreams, although I am sitting upright, in broad daylight, often with a seatbelt strapped across my waist and chest. This had led to some awfully peculiar things going on in my dozing skull. In one, I am a tortoise, trying to make my way across a highway near Prescott, Arizona. I hear the humming wheels and engine roar of an eighteen-wheeler peeling down the highway, thumping on the seams in the concrete, and I can't move my legs fast enough. What if I just duck into my shell? Am I far enough into the lane to just weather the storm of the truck going by? My neck bobs up and down in anticipation, thuds against the driver's side window. I wake up, my sunglasses askew, sweat on my brow.

JM - cyberspace

### Best In Show



by Phil Juliano

## “Mermaid”

by Morgue McMillan

When he saw her for the first time  
sitting there on a pedestal  
in the centre of a fountain,  
sun shining upon white marble,  
the reflection burned his eyes.

Water drops sparkled like diamonds,  
dizzy halos all around her,  
pearls were covering her body,  
as her nakedness was hidden  
by long hair around her shoulders.

He went back late after midnight,  
scenting basil in a soft breeze,  
all the stars above were twinkling,  
saw her face illuminated  
by the lights placed in the water.

The day's business was gone now  
and all chattiness replaced by  
constant murmur of the fountain,  
left her wrapped into the silence  
of a lonesome summer night.

Closing in he saw the mossy  
fine gauze covering her fishtail,  
as the stone still warmth was breathing,  
on her eyes the water felt like  
tears under his gentle fingers.

Every night he went to see her,

telling her his dreams and feelings,  
while she patiently would listen,  
all his anger, all his grief he threw  
against the beloved figure.

One night then when Luna was back  
in the same spot as the first night,  
suddenly he saw her winking,  
lifting arms, then yawning, stretching  
like awaking from deep sleep.

Then she looked at him intensely,  
while the surface started crackling,  
crunching, breaking into pieces,  
but her voice, nearly a whisper,  
lovingly caressed his name.

“For love's sake”, she said, “ please help me  
to get down from this pedestal,  
tell me if you truly love me,  
then with legs like every human  
I will walk with you forever.”

“I am scared”, his voice was trembling,  
“but be sure I truly love you”,  
and vigorously started scraping,  
wiping down the stony pieces  
his bare hands began to bleed.

Red drops fell down on white marble,

rosy petals formed all over,  
and the fishtail faded slowly,  
vanished back into the black night  
while two human legs appeared.

“Come with me”, he calmly whispered,  
took her hands and pulled her slightly  
off, away from the pedestal,  
“quick, away, before some other  
people see your naked body”.

“What does naked mean?” she asked him.  
“Is it bad to look like I do?  
I don’t know of any evil,  
nor intended neither random,  
is it bad to be like me?”

“you are wonderful”, he answered,  
“but you’re no longer a mermaid,  
humans use to hide and cover  
skins and minds and souls with fabric,  
never trusting one another.”

“What is love then?” she spoke sadly.  
“Not accepting, not respecting  
the uniqueness of each other,  
never learning, teaching, growing,  
fearing new things to discover?”

“That’s the curse of human being,  
love ignored and war is ruling”,  
sighed and dragged her to the doorstep,  
“you forgot what I have told you  
about death a glimpse away?”

“I remember all you told me,  
lovers, soul mates, friends we are,  
happy that we found each other,  
we’re connected now forever,  
seize with love and hope each day.”

“Maybe”, he replied uncertain,  
“but I have some trade to manage,  
I’ll be back to bring you clothing,  
we can then go on with talking,  
please stay here and wait for me.”

Kissed her, turned and left the home;  
she walked each and every room,  
found his shirts and put one on,  
thought and walked and sat and slept,  
waking up he still was gone.

Two more days and nights she waited,  
pondered all they had been speaking,  
wandered crying, hoping, praying.  
On the third day she decided

to go out and search for him.

Oh what pain was now approaching,  
left her trembling, shaking, shouting  
angrily that it could not be,  
when the neighbours told her sadly  
he had died 2 miles away.

She ran down the street with anger,  
found the place of green and flowers,  
and between the roses' petals  
lay a red and shimmery crystal  
whispering with love her name.

Falling on her knees and crying  
about death without a meaning  
she picked up the shiny crystal,  
pressed it to her heart so tightly

that her shirt turned red from blood.

"I will leave this world of sorrow,  
back into the waters for me,  
see my sisters and my brothers,  
but his love will stay forever  
with me in this shiny crystal."

So she walked on to the seaside,  
slowly went into the water,  
swimming farther from the bayline,  
diving deep and always deeper  
towards the darkness on the ground.

Pain she felt all of a sudden,  
ears were aching under pressure,  
Breathe! her lungs were screaming at her -  
but too late, she now was sure:  
she no longer was a mermaid.



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# “Done”

By Arthur Levine

*‘What’s done cannot be undone...’*  
Macbeth Act V Scene 1

Chicken tried hard to keep his mind on the shoveling beneath an incisor of a moon peeking out from the dark clouds.

‘What’s done is done,’ he told his cousin Brown, ‘there ain’t no bringing her back.’

‘Well, it’s like you say, done is done. No use trying to undo what can’t be undid!’

Chicken paused and leaned on his shovel.

‘Best to just put her in the ground and leave her there and go on about our business. After all, wasn’t like it was did on purpose.’

‘No sir! Weren’t like it was done intentional,’ said Brown, ‘if you had done it intentional, then that’d be another thing entirely.’

They dug for a good bit, not paying any mind to the first few drops of rain. Then Chicken leaned his shovel against the Ford pick-up, and went behind an oak to pee.

The rain stopped, then began again in a light drizzle. Chicken listened to the peeps for a bit, then looked up at the darkness and rubbed his chin.

‘This should ought to hold her,’ he said.

Brown shook the last unfiltered Camel from the crumbled pack in his overalls, then

turned toward the wrapped bundle in the bed of the pick-up and eyed the ditch.

‘Looks plenty deep to me,’ he said.

‘She deserved better,’ Chicken said.

‘We done as best we could. It looks plenty deep to me.’

‘I wish things come out otherwise.’

‘Only one way things come out. Everything comes out how it does, is all.’

‘There was times when things was as they should have been. *Better* than they should have been.’

‘That’s just how it is Chick, There’s some times, then there’s other times.’

‘She just wouldn’t let things go.’

‘That’s the trouble right there. If she would ought to of have, then things maybe would have come out how else they might have.’

‘There was times.’

The drizzle grew into a rain.

‘I screwed up. I really fucked everything up.’

‘Her being how she was, naturally things was fucked up. There weren’t nothing intentional about it’

‘You don’t get many chances. Most don’t get any. I had one and I fucked it up.’

As Chicken approached the truck, Brown paused a full minute before joining him.

The each took an end of the bundle and dropped it in the freshly dug pit.

Chicken scooped a shovel full of dirt and dropped it in the hole.

‘Say Chicken, we’re doing right, ain’t we? I mean there’s nothing else we should ought to do is there?’

‘You mean like say a prayer or some shit?’

‘Nah...I was just saying...’

‘Well it’s over with.’

‘Yeah it’s over with all right. Ain’t no undoing what’s already been done.’

‘Take a look, Brown. Do it look deep enough to you?’

Brown bent to check and Chicken swung the shovel hard against the back of his cousin’s head and watched him topple face forward into the pit.

After every shovel full of dirt the sound got a bit fainter, but when he finished Chicken could still hear, or thought he could still hear, Brown’s moaning.

He threw the shovel in the back of the pickup and after he turned the key in the ignition all he heard was the engine.

Then he pulled a Pall Mall from his pack, pulled the lighter from the dash and thought for a minute.

‘That’s that,’ he said.



## "Conscience Dreaming, 13 Thermidor"

by Brian Ross Pals

Some days break to the dull purr  
of thunder struck dumb by the sun's coming.

Woke

early one such dawn, the justice  
lumbered slowly from an old man's  
slumber to the

oak

wardrobe, where he leaned

a moment

to quash the persistence of his dream.

He'd been a woman,

striding

through a field of fiery offal,

firing blindly with a wooden rifle

butted between her bare right arm and  
breast.

Flags, Haitian possibly,

had whipped and popped in cindered wind  
at the tops of long, bent poles.

A rag

wrapped her face to the eyes.

Detonation stun and nothing.

Blink.

Sun

leaked like smoke through the

defeated front's dead  
clouds.

It gently smudged the judge's  
brow

to nudge him from imagined battle  
to the present.

First a bath, thought his honor,  
a lull to ponder  
the current case involving a young man and,  
of course,  
a gun.

Mulling the matter as his man drew water,  
he doffed his robe and,  
diffidently,  
stepped from the bathroom scale,  
the naked weight of him illegible  
on its fogged  
dial.

Delhomme, the nurse, took his arm,  
helped to prop his body in the hot  
pool,  
and affixed a pine plank  
desktop to the tubside.

At hand was a competency



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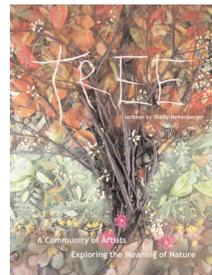
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hearing, a formality,  
 for an apparent madman who'd opened fire  
 in a public market. The judge  
 drummed  
 at the tubtop and thumbed the brief.  
 The accused, a student of twenty-two,  
 had posted a manifesto, a dumb polemic  
 against, somehow, the governance of words,  
 of words' forms.  
 Its logic battled language with  
 misspelled syllogism:  
*Therefore we dont allow them control  
 of the grammar structure.  
 Therefore we are conscience dreamers.  
 Therefore we create new letters and new pronounciations  
 to replace the alphabet.*  
 To allow any of it would be to allow insanity,  
 obviously,  
 but justice demanded probity.  
 It had to be heard.  
 With a grumble of surrender, the judge  
 slumped to the edge of the tub  
 and hung there by the base of one arm.  
 He felt himself humming,  
 with a warm rag molded to his eyes  
 and a wooden pencil

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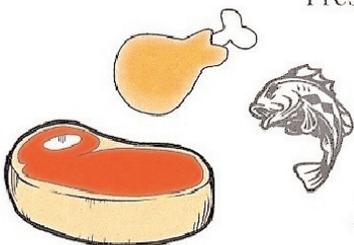
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dangling from his white fingers.  
*I am a sleepwalker who turned off the alarm.*

Another woman,  
seen now rather than experienced.  
The scene is of disorder in North Africa, Algiers?  
She waits amid a cityscape sharp with triangulate  
pennants,  
where the wooden, crackling sound is of a city's people  
in sore grievance,  
their language shrill demotic code.  
In hijab  
to her indecipherable eyes, she is waiting.  
Her steel blinds in the sun  
as she weighs it against a man and his heart's long  
drub.

No blink, no nudge.

No tug.

Vessels in the broken blood spasm,  
and a tub of water cools to still  
plasm.

*Your honor?*, called Delhomme, after some time.

His name had been David,  
but the judge had liked the honorific,  
had allowed himself that quaint  
neoformalism.



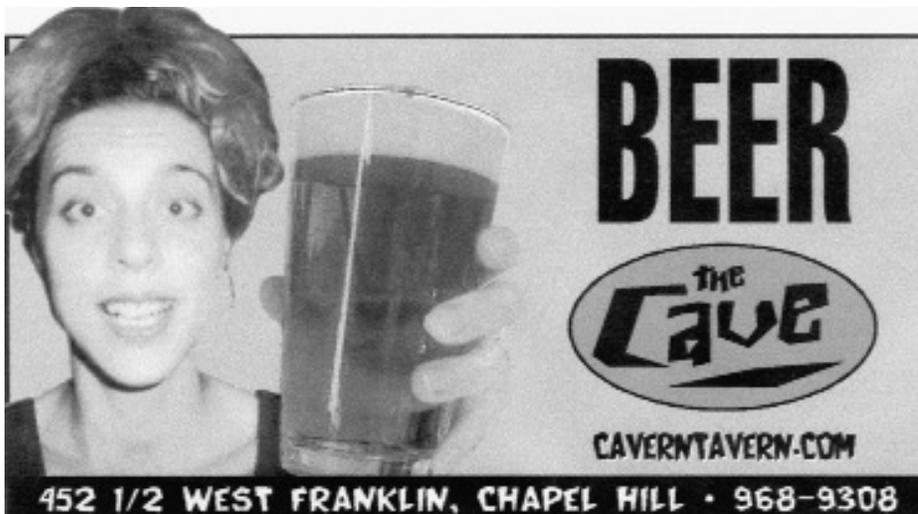
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## "Three Ways" by Brian Ross Pals

### *Split pea soup*

Steam rose from the dishrag  
and my face was so wounded  
to you, I could tell,  
because yours looked like hell  
with a rough road cut through it to me.

### *Locust Ave.*

The evening minutes staggered away  
like people from a bombing  
and emptied us of all but one word left unsaid.  
The answer to the dare was anything,  
in tongues as soft as a riverbed.

### *Dedicated bench*

Where your voice trailed off was not to follow,  
not as sad as psilocybin made the sky,  
not as safe as alcohol made the creek seem.

### Final Tidbits:

Our annual long-form fiction contest is coming! So are the holidays - buy your sweetie a copy of *Tree*, published by PencilPoint Mountain ([www.pencilpointmountain.com](http://www.pencilpointmountain.com)), an imprint of The Blotter Magazine, Inc. What is an imprint? It's when Leonardo da Vinci leaves his thumb too long in the beeswax of his horse-and-rider sculpture. Need your karma tweaked? Make a donation to The Blotter ([www.blotterrag.com](http://www.blotterrag.com)). Buy a Blotter t-shirt while you're there, they'll keep you calm if not warm in the blustery autumn breezes. Visit your local independent bookstore, kind and gentle people that they are. Stop asking, "How on earth did that get way up there and go find a mop?" Open a book, turn on the local jazz station, have a dirty-chai-latte, call your bank and apologize for never balancing your checkbook - they live for financial humor, and give someone you like a kiss, they deserve it, and if they don't, well, you do, don't you? Got it? Good!

## CONTRIBUTORS:

**Tamra Wilson**, of Newton, NC writes, "Mermaids first appeared in the 2010 issue of *Southern Women's Review*. As info, *Home at the Lincoln Hotel* was the creative thesis for my MFA at Stonecoast, University of Southern Maine in 2011. Other portions of the novel manuscript have appeared in *Rockhurst Review*, *Colere*, *MoonShine Review* and elsewhere. I have published stories and essays in more than 60 journals, anthologies and magazines I'm a Road Scholar for the N.C. Humanities Council and critiquer for the N.C. Writers Network. My first collection, *Dining with Robert Redford & Other Stories*, was released in 2011." Her novel "" won third prize in this year's Laine Cunningham Novel Award. \*\*\* **Morgue McMillan** writes, "I have known your magazine for some years due to your presence in Second Life, where I am known as Morgue McMillan. My RL name is Marieluise Niehus. I am a native German writing in English, living in Plymouth, UK. I'd prefer to use Morgue McMillan for publishing as that is how I am known all over the web. 'Mermaids' is a lengthy poem (unusual for me), and it came out one night after reading 'The Kalevala'." \*\*\* **Arthur Levine** of Rockville, MD, tells us that his work has appeared in numerous print publications in four countries. But not to overstate the case, none of those publications were "The New Yorker," "Vanity Fair" or "Harper's." *Ed. note: Dang, Arthur, you beat us to the funny. Nicely done!* \*\*\* **Brian Ross Pals** of Cedar Falls, IA writes, "I am currently a student at the University of Northern Iowa, where I read poetry for the *North American Review*. I am submitting to *Blotter* primarily because I have fond memories of my years stationed in North Carolina, where I encountered your magazine at the Regulator Bookshop in Durham. Please tell me it's still there!" His work first appeared in *Inner Weather*. *Ed. note: Last time I checked, the good old Reg is still there, up the street from Elmo's and around the corner and down the street from Mad Hatter's Bake Shop. Ya gotta love Durham!* \*\*\* **Phil Juliano** is part of the Chapel Hill-esque arts scene in the Twin Cities of Minnesota. Well, it's Chapel Hill-esque except for the really cold part.

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