

*Because you've earned it: Robert D. Kirvel,
Sonny Rag, Nerys Levy, Tony Reevy,
Phil Juliano and The Dream Journal*

The Blotter

March 2013

MAGAZINE

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

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[c l m p]

Council of Literary Magazines & Presses
w w w . c l m p . o r g

"What do we do, now that *everyone's* 'good?'"

Mr. _____ types his poems on some manner of mechanical business equipment. How do I know? Because the ink has crashed directly onto the paper in that recognizably old-fashioned way, distributed unevenly, wobbling across the page. For me, an archaic, nostalgic look; thirty-odd years ago I sold IBM Correcting Selectric typewriters. I love the occasionally tentative aspect of trying to achieve uppercase, as if lines were carefully thought through, but still unsure of themselves. I love how non-electric typewriters give less impact to the characters attended to by one's pinkies – the L, the question-mark. To my eye this softens my subvocalizing of certain of Mr. _____'s words into whispers of love, loneliness and...lasagna, and all inquiries take on an English-countryside quality, as if my reading voice should fall at the end. "Can I help you?" becomes "I know I can help you, but do you trust me?"

Mr. _____ uses 20 pound all-purpose paper, the kind that Staples considers, well, a staple, of course. Sometimes, however, it is not so clean. What is that? Not exactly a coffee spill, but perhaps the spurt of a co-cola or the inside of a cat paw-print, possibly one that just came in from stalking the beach two blocks over, searching for a spare bit of kibble, if you don't mind. I'm not troubled by this at all. Paper is for capturing all events, including the accidental.

The typestyle is "prestige elite." How do I know? Once it was the self-crowned Emperor Napoleon of typefaces, the "element" sold with every typewriter, expected by every manager on every white paper describing in 5000 words the business plan for moving from ecru to mauve as the go-to shade for pinpoint cotton oxfords. And like the little corporal, it strode fearlessly across the known world right up until that point where Apple and Microsoft gave the faithful typewriter a Macintosh Moscow and Windows Waterloo. That's admittedly faulty metaphorical history, but you get my point.

That they're beautiful things, these poems of Mr. _____'s, is not the issue, although they are. Trifolded, SASE'd. Old-school submissions of the first order. And, to paraphrase Mr. Frost's *Birches*, may no author willfully misunderstand me and begin submitting like this. I merely illustrate what happens occasionally, and my conundrum. They're not good poems. Even as I type these words, I can feel the hackles rising on people's necks, you people reading this who think that I'm an arrogant bastard for typing the paragraphs that led up to this, with their slightly superior, slightly wise-ass tone. Who the heck am I, anyway? you ask. Where do I get off being the editor? Maybe my own writing sucks, have I ever considered that? Why don't I go choke on a pronoun? (That last was for Bradley, who caught me

recently using the term pronoun when I meant proper noun. Dear Bradley, I'm getting old and plan to misuse and lose words rather steadily over the coming decades, you young whipper...whipper-*what-ev*.

Editing and criticism are no longer *en vogue*. Correcting is passé. Writing is very big, however. Fabulously steam-of-contentiousness writing is fun and there's lots of it out there. Untrained, undisciplined, full of sound and fury and stuff, you know, like that writer said. Anything goes. Anyone's allowed. Out there inventing words, creating new usage, yelling as loud as they can, coloring it in with emotion. Using pictures when words fail them. Using lots of pictures when it's easier than explaining, so the reader (is he a reader if he's only looking at pictures? Or is he a watcher?) still gets their point.

And furthermore; never you mind if you think you have nothing original to say. There is all the work a mind can handle *commenting* on all of the other people's work. Not literary criticism, however. Just criticism. Just snideness and cynicism and snottiness. Trolling, it's called, as in, I assume, trolling for a fight. Or is it that manner of trolling where you wait under a bridge and eat raw goat? No one knows. It's the worst manner of bitchiness and there's a great market for it.

I get it, I truly do. We are in a fantastic age of populist technology, when everyone who wishes to be read can place words into the traffic patterns of everyone else. If you have a beef with someone, or a recipe for beef, scribble it down in Facebook or on a Blog. Something to say about nothing? Type as fast as your opposable thumbs will allow! Nothing to say about something? Hit a couple of random characters and press enter – it's probably the right combination for some kind of emoticon, and if it isn't, don't worry, the auto-correct feature will...auto-correct something out of your nothing. Call it the God participle. Everyone is good!

But don't tell anyone what's wrong, though. That's just not done, old boy. It's not politically correct to correct. Cultural elitism. No one wants to hear about the mistakes they might have made and fixed, or

Continued on page 13

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in the Great State of Georgia!



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



CAUTION

OK, fools and small children.

"Affidavit"

by Dr. Robert D. Kirvel

You know I was born 15 years after they said I was. Like I say, that, or else I was born when they said but frozen for 15 years then thawed like a turkey the way they do in those science fiction movies. I should know because I was there. Not at the movies. I mean when I was born, not where I am now. Wait. Where was I?

Oh yes, the odds are stacked against a person being thawed—who believes movies like that?—so it stands to reason I am 15 years younger. How else do you explain I look 15 years younger than I supposedly am other than to say I am 15 years younger than

they say I am? Minus 15 is what it is.

Stand in front of a mirror like you do to shave your face when you're shaving, a young face I might add, and look directly at the nonwrinkles where they should be by now. That's more money in the bank as far as I'm concerned. Nickel for each side of my mouth regardless of smiling in the mirror or not smiling. Cheeks smooth as a billiard ball, so that's a dime. Not a line on the forehead, add a dollar. Upper eyelids without a droopy crease, throw in a fiver for that. Times two for the two eyes. Ten bucks for the nonchicken jowls. Twenty

at least for places under the eyes where old people get bags. So that right there is—what?—a couple hundred bucks. I am wealthy I tell you, not some mummyneck. Healthy, wealthy, and wrinkle-free. Take it to the bank.

Anyway, Sarah is always on me not to change my birth certificate, which is what I intend to do as soon as I can. She says not to change the date because I wouldn't get my Social Security checks until 15 years later than if I didn't change the date to the real one. What kind of sense does that make I won't even bother explaining.

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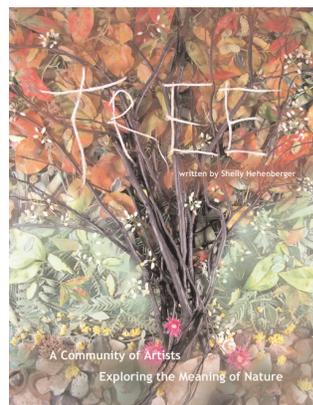
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Another thing. Every single time I had a car accident she's the one who's yaking at me do this, don't do this, watch out for that kid over there. So naturally I don't have a driver's license to get to work that she forgets to set the alarm for anyway back when I worked. Or make my sandwiches. Your mother would turn over in her grave. Did I mention how scattered she's become? I fear she's got a tuber.

Same type of thing with the chainsaw when I was out to the woods doing some cutting she was always on my back about for the fireplace. It's cold in here, it's cold in here, so I go out to the woods to get her off my back. Come quick I yell, but do you think she could find the fingers even after I point where I was pointing? No of course not, me bleeding like a banshee all the way to the emergency, which I could not drive to myself because I don't have a license to get there and now the left fingers so Sarah had to drive without the fingers for them to sew back the way

they can these days. They use ice or something like in the movies.

Or when I got that concussion from the motorcycle thing after her yelling at me all the time you'll crack your skull open, you'll crack your skull open. A person keeps talking about an accident and killing someone no matter how careful you are, sooner or later sure enough it's bound to happen so just don't say it in the first place. Don't say you'll shoot your eye out like they told that little kid with the BB gun before he did in that movie. Well almost did. Or how you're going to hurt somebody on your motorcycle, which is how I ended up like this.

People keep warning I should stop poking fun at the guards because they have these insecurity issues and all and maybe that's so, but I always say life's not worth two hoots if you can't have some fun now and then, which is why I like scotch so much and fast motorcycles and guns. What kind of security is it anyway

when the security guys have insecurity about the security they're paid to do? What kind of logic is that?

You can count the evidence on my fingers like a lawyer. Finger one, Sarah denies I am 15 years younger. That's denial. Two, she forgets where I put things like when she wouldn't go to help me get that FBI job I said I would go to interview. Good money too so whose fault is that? Three, she truly believes they will not give me my Social Security for 15 years after it's due. That's nuts. Which is why I have those big old bags under my eyes now I guess. Four, she's getting fat.

I'm not saying she has a brain tuber because I'm not the expert here, but when you put it all together—the denial of my 15 years and her fat and forgetting and repeating stuff about accidents and breaking my skull—then what you've got is finger five as clear as the nose on your face in a mirror. I don't know if it's what they call haywire from the




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tuber exactly, but I'm taking her in for an exam first chance I get. Six, that's exactly why I'm filing for the quarantine or what you call it, commitment I guess, when I get out. So don't forget to bring her quarantine papers to

show at my parole to the parole people like you promised you would. Thanks. Your dad Sid.

Oh and some quarters for the candy bars I like if it's not too much to ask. They only take

quarters after someone new here passed some bills. If you know what I mean.



Call for Entries!

"The 2013 Laine Cunningham Novel Award" The Blotter's *Fourth* Annual Long Form Fiction Contest for Novella and Novel length works

1. The purpose of our contest is to provide a venue for writers to have their work read and commented on by our editors and judges. Additionally, the winner of this contest will have his/her work published here on these pages. And last but not least, the winner will receive a monetary prize! (Award monies are provided by the prize sponsor and the entry fee for the contest helps offset The Blotter's costs.)
2. Our pre-reader judges are intelligent and highly proud of their educations. Our final judge is smart, well-read and fiercely possessive of her personal space. She gets to be the final judge and as Pop says, "there are no ifs ands or buts about it."
3. In a world besmirched by foolishness and scandal, transparency is very important to us, and we make every effort to eliminate any conflict of interest situation from going down in our contest. Blotter volunteers and their family members and/or employees are prohibited from entering our contest.

To enter the contest, please submit your work with a \$25 entry fee by check or money order to: The Blotter Magazine, 1010 Hale Street, Durham, NC 27705. Entries must be received between November 1, 2012 and February 28, 2013 (you see, we're already giving you an extension, so don't put it off!)

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

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

Well, now. \$650 in cash prizes, plus books and other fun stuff we've been accumulating around here that we think has value. All placements, including honorable mentions, will receive an award certificate, proof positive of your success as an author, suitable for mocking your sophomore English teacher, who always wondered how it was that you graduated at all.

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

So that's it, then - now get to work!

“American Eagle to Longview”

By Sonny Rag

Bernard had read once about a man who talked into paper cups during take-offs and landings, admitting that it assured him to be some part of the flight process. Bernard laughed at the time, but understood. Little prop planes gave him the willies.

He bumped his head twice: on an overhead compartment door and on a tiny television monitor. Walking down the aisle, hunched over, watching his feet, heaving along his carry-on on his shoulder, his back was getting the worst of both worlds.

“Excuse me,” said a pair of shoes coming toward him. Bernard stopped. Twisting his neck, he saw a stubby woman looking back at him. He stood stock-still, bent necked, bushy eyebrows raised in question. “Excuse me,” she repeated right in front of him, smelling of ciga-

rette and, oddly, tomato sauce.

“Ma’am?” Bernard started, but there was nowhere to go, either in the airplane or the conversation. He couldn’t say why she was in the back of the plane. Perhaps that was her seat, and she’d gotten up to come forward to take a sudden, irresistible pee. Or she had seated a fellow traveler and was now returning to her seat, somewhere behind him in the pitiful first class. The single lane they shared was, he estimated, eleven inches wide. One of him or one of her. He’d heard that these planes had a maximum passenger size, which made it tougher on some customers in what he gently referred to as these fast-food times. This, however, wasn’t Bernard’s issue, his girth was relatively suitable for someone as tall as he. But standing here he was twisted like a question mark, and understood

that the pizza-breathed woman before him believed that he must reverse back up the aisle, to make room for her. It was the polite action for him to take, in a world Bernard found only just passably so. And there was no point in arguing that it might be easier, perhaps, for her to go back to wherever she had come from and let him sit down first. Because if that wasn’t already obvious, then the truth was this: nothing is gained from standing certain ground.

Bonk! Bernard’s duffel *duffed* a young man in the head. He whispered his “terribly sorry” and continued backing up, like a dump truck misrouted in a parking garage. The “asshole” aimed his direction was the last unamplified word he heard.

“Sir, we’re taking off as soon as *everyone* is in their seat,” the air-waitress said over the lo-fi

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Left: Skyline - Red Square

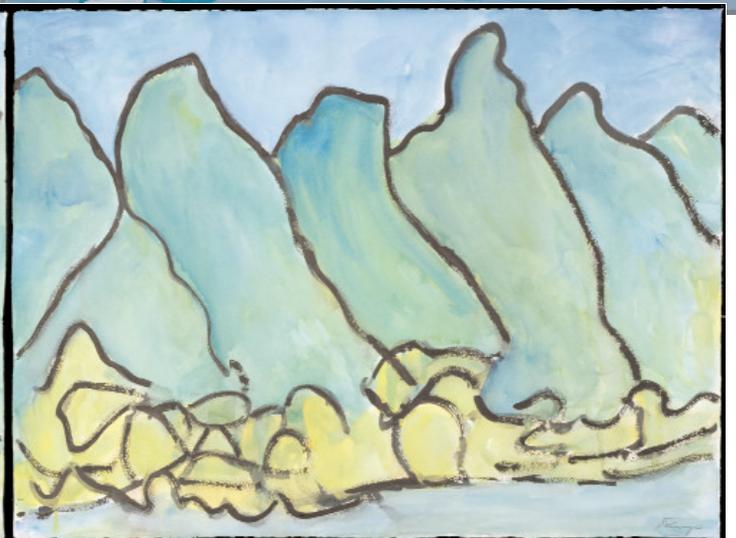
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Lower Left: Guilan Li Jian River Diptych

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Lower Right: Canal





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sound system. It was airline communication, without empathy or concern. The stubby woman hmph'd at him. Didn't turn and head for the back of the plane; alright then, that wasn't her assigned spot. Bernard swiveled his head to explain that he was attempting to, but at that

moment a nerve in his neck pinched, releasing a blinding arrow of light behind his eyes and buckling his knees. He could hear the door close and the props turn over. The stubby woman stared at him. The nerve wouldn't give an inch, either. Bernard had but one path of least resist-

ance. He collapsed onto the floor of the plane, beneath his carry-on. Not a word could he hear from his audience, the twenty-nine other passengers. Not a hand reached to assist. Stubby, however, took the bait and stepped over him. Then, in a left-handed *kharmic* blessing, the throb in Bernard's neck snapped, like a rubber-band breaking and he clambered to his feet again, shuffled to his seat, buckling himself in.



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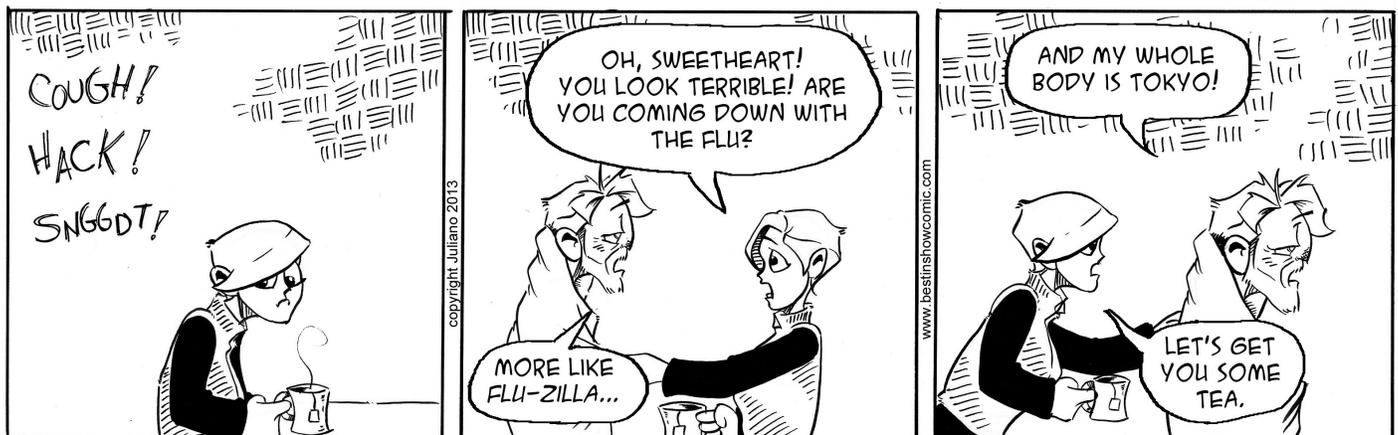
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Best In Show Comic

by Phil Juliano



The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

Please send excerpts from your own dream journals. If nothing else, we'd love to read them.
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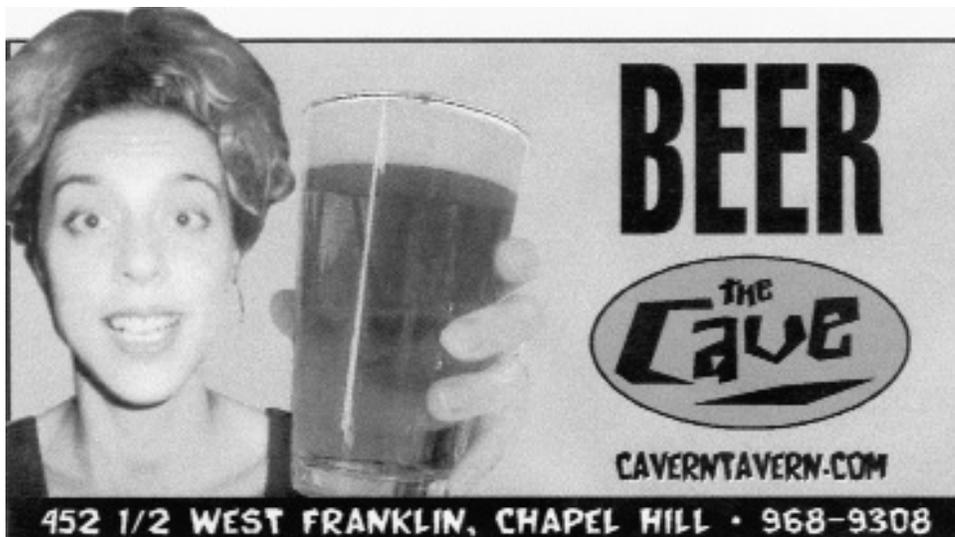
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It is strange that the subconscious can pull people up from the past so very far back and place them in the current context of one's life. I am running around in a mall/university. Late for class, late for buying a pair of Carrharts, something. There is a helicopter outside on the lawn intended to pick me up and bring me to a state function, the likes of which I have no idea. Am I famous? Am I important? I don't care about this aspect of the dream and it fades into the stock background that attends many dreams - sunny day, cool, windy. Hills and lawns with occasional climbing trees, just in case, I assume, I have a wild hair and decide to resume my childhood.

She is there, seeming the same as she was twenty some years ago. I appreciate the irony of her not aging and my yearning for a youthful fame and I suspect that if this were a college film school project this would be the focus of the plot. This, however, is a dream and there is something afoot. The mall is empty, has three levels and the escalators are on. My dream me wants to surf the escalators. Some dreamers fly. I stairway surf. My shoes slide down the banisters as if I were Shaun White snowboarding Aspen. When I get to the end of a railing, I jump to the escalator and climb back to the top. She watches me, patient. I don't know where she is going, but she is dressed to the nines. It can't be the same place as me, I'm still wearing sneakers and cargo pants.

She doesn't remind me that it's time to go. She stands at the foot of the stairs and waits for me to descend a second time, skating the rails, hopping over the little metal humps that hold the rail to the banisters. Her dress is red and her hair is pulled back in a pony tail. Grow up, I want to say. Grow up, I want to shout at myself. Stop playing around and go where she is going.

go-man-go - Cyberspace





St Petersburg #2

Born in Wales and now a resident of Carrboro, North Carolina, Nerys Levy is deeply rooted in her native country's culture which has influenced her painting. Working on site using mixed water-based media on paper, she portrays the forms and forces of nature: Polar landscapes and wildlife, Chinese urban and riverine landscapes, Russian waterways, North Carolina's forests and rural landscapes, Alpine masses and glaciers, cloud formations, animals, European gardens and old architectural forms altered by time. Nerys Levy is a member artist of FRANK Gallery, Chapel Hill, NC (www.frankisart.com) and in January, 2013, her latest work will be featured there in a new exhibit, "A Journey in Russia—thanks to WUNC Radio."

She's not your type.



To our Austin readers:

our buddies ***SPIRALFIRE*** are playing at SXSW,
for the (4th annual) ***Texas Rock Fest !***
Thurs. March 14, corner of 7th and Neches, 2:30 pm.
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Blotter love !!

<http://www.reverbnation.com/spiralfire> * <http://texasrockfest.com>

Continued from page 3

the stylistic issues they've encountered. That's become a joke – Chicago Style v AP – two street gangs meeting in an old Michael Jackson video. Somewhere along the line we've lost our ability to tell a songstress before she goes on camera that she *peals* the siding right off the house each time she belts out a show tune. We've no stomach for saying "not my cup of tea" to a painter. And there's no gentle way to say a poem is a stinkaroo. So no one does.

Ah, hell.

Believe me when I tell you that I love the idea of everyone being introduced to writing and poetry (and drawing and painting and dancing and singing and acting and playing an instrument and sculpting, and, and, and). Teachers: tell every child to read, and write. Parents: buy your kids journals and let them have at it. You out there: blog like no one is reading your work.

And then, should a moment arrive when you think you want someone to read your work, submit it somewhere. If it is accepted for publication, be as proud of yourself as you are able. If you have read other writing similar in genre, and you believe yours is of commensurate quality, then your pride will be valid. If you have not read other work, and have no real basis for comparison, then your pride will also be valid in and of itself.

And speaking of nostalgia and typewriters, back in the day I was fortunate to meet a fellow who told me a story about the day in 1961 when he was sent out from 590 Madison (the IBM building in NY City) carrying a small folding table and an automobile battery, his cohort toting a piece of business equipment. On Fifth and 53rd they set up their little show. Rolled a piece of cotton bond into the platen and started keying "a quick brown fox jumped over...." Within fifteen minutes, NYPD beat-cops asked them to put away their Selectric because the crowd had extended off the sidewalk into the street and was stopping traffic. To see a typewriter with that miraculous little Prestige Elite element. Imagine that.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

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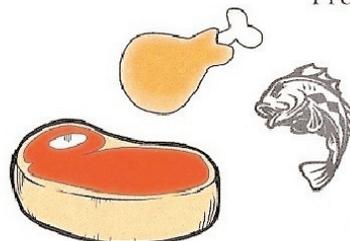
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"Second Grade, Zimmerly School"

The hands on the classroom
clock advanced
with a soundless sweep.

Cursive letters loomed,
white on green, on a strip
above the blackboard
as I labored, pencil-scratching
in my *Printing Power* workbook.

But what I liked to watch in class
was Mrs. Grice—my teacher—
young, quick, pretty.
Her arm swept white lines
across the blackboard.

Then, her perfume followed
when she leaned over me,
guiding my hand
with her hand
as she taught me
to write.

Three by Tony Reevy

"Crow Hill"

The Catholic church, More's
namesake, which crowned
this peak is gone.

Not twentieth century
death of piety—but a parish,
blessed and fruitful,
that outgrew its steeplehouse.

At the hill's foot,
apartments where men,
flush with GI benefits,
brought young wives
and bookbags, will go.
Buses roar upgrade; bikers,
pumping morning rush, reach
for these heights.

Crows that scavenged
the church lot, seeking student
revelers' weekend leavings,
have moved to university parking.

One tops a pole, quawks
for dawn's lift of cold.

Northern Lights—Southern Town

*Aurora borealis, seen looking north down Virginia Avenue, Durham,
North Carolina, August 2010*

Under the glimmering arch
of green-ghosted sky,
This shouldn't happen here, I told
my daughter and son.

We stood stilled, watching.
As ions winked, swirled—emerald
and red—we dreamed
of Alaska, Canada, and Mars.

Soon, too soon, aurora borealis
was gone.

Leaving sky jaundiced
by city lights,
their glow diminishing
the stars.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Robert D. Kirvel of Clayton, CA has a Ph.D. in neuropsychology. He has authored numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals, three chapters in anthologies, received awards of excellence from the Society for Technical Communications, and was recognized in 2009 by the Executive Office of the President of the United States for contributions in writing guidance for recovery following biological warfare incidents. He is now focused on writing literary fiction and has upcoming 2013 stories to be published in American Athenaeum and Columbia College Literary Review. *** Senior associate director of the Institute for the Environment at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, **Tony Reevy** is a graduate of North Carolina State University, UNC-Chapel Hill and Miami University. He is a David P. Morgan Award winner (2006) and a Pushcart Prize nominee. His previous publications include poetry, non-fiction and short fiction, including the non-fiction books *Ghost Train!* and *O. Winston Link: Life Along the Line*, and the poetry chapbooks *Green Cove Stop*, *Magdalena*, *Lightning in Wartime*, and *In Mountain Lion Country*. He resides in Durham, North Carolina with wife, Caroline Weaver, and children Lindley and Ian. *** **Phil Juliano** has been a faithful ad-hoc member of the Blotter's stable of artists for...well...a long time. We all should do something for him. Get to work on that.

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