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The Blotter

magazine



The South's Unique, FREE, International Literature and Arts Magazine

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COVER: "Yeah, it's a phobia..." from
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W W W . C L M P . O R G

"Inflection"

Having recently watched, back to back, "Darkest Hour" and "Dunkirk," from the comfort of my living room couch, alone, late last Friday night, I have thoughts and questions. OK, must I say "spoiler alert?" Is there anyone reading this who would be angry that I told them about something that took place seventy-eight years ago? I hope not.

In any case, at the end of "Dunkirk," one young survivor of the rescue asks another soldier to read the leading story in a local newspaper as they ride the train. "I can't bear it," he replies when asked why he won't read it himself. "They'll be spitting on us in the streets."

And so the soldier reads Churchill's late May speech to the House of Commons, famous for the mighty "we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender" lines, in quiet clarity, as if he were reciting it, or reading across a breakfast table. Now, for some of you, this may be all that you know about Mr. Churchill's monumental gift for speechwriting and oratory. Or perhaps you're a bit more "word nerdy" like me. I have read the entire speech many times, listened many more to a recording of it by Churchill. And no matter how many times I do, or how frequently, I become choked-up when we reach the words, "we shall never surrender." He made it clear that, should England actually be conquered by a Nazi invasion, the British Empire overseas, supported by the British Fleet, would fight until "in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old." Which, by the way, is the part of the speech that also chokes me up. But that's not my point. It is that Churchill seems to make it sound, in a phrase, *matter-of-fact*. As if there was never a question in his mind that the British people would go on fighting.

It is the inflection of his spoken words, the emphasis given to certain phrases in delivery, that colors our perception of them. "We shall *never* surrender," Churchill growls, offhandedly, in the recording that pops up occasionally on history channels. As a young boy, I heard this recording, and it moved me then. I knew my history, and I knew my Battle of Britain and the RAF and "The Great Escape" and the words "never before has so much been owed by so many to so few."

What I didn't know then, and only recently found out, is that we don't know what Churchill's original emphasis was on those words. We have the writing, of course, and after all, like many a good poet, his word choice was intentional. But it was meant for hearing more than reading. They were "speeches" not "essays." So to discover that Churchill did not have this original delivery of the speech recorded in the House of Commons never occurred to me (why I do not know – it would be naïve

to imagine the kind of openness we now see on CSPAN) and moreover the speech was only read in excerpt form on the BBC to the British public in May 1940 – by a professional BBC reader. Was that the speech I have in my mind's ear – my auditory memory? No – it was a recording done in 1949 by Churchill for, of all things, Decca Records, the British recording studio that would go on to handle pre-Apple Corps Beatles. That stiff-upper-lipped, “Keep Calm and Carry On” sound of a man saying “we shall never surrender” of is probably not how it was actually spoken to Parliament, but rather a comfortable in his own legacy, post-war Churchill.

And so arrives the second feature of my evening. Gary Oldman as Churchill. Trying to arrange a consensus government and determine the best course of action as the Nazis overrun Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium. The BEF is trapped on the beaches. The 800 or so little boats are setting out across the Channel from the home island to rescue them. And this Churchill goes before the House of Commons with confidence, vigor and the knowledge that you cannot bargain with tyrants. The repetitive exhortation rises to a shout, “we shall fight *on the beaches*, we shall fight *on the landing grounds*, we shall fight *in the fields and in the streets*, we shall fight *in the hills*; **we shall never surrender!**” In “Darkest Hour,” Churchill lets us know without bluster, without flowery rhetoric, that it is the places that are important, the hills and streets and beaches of our home, because we already have committed ourselves to the act of fighting, before insisting what we also know – that we won't give up.

According to Kristin Hunt in her Smithsonian.com article of 11/21/2017, we do have some feedback about the speech as a whole; by MPs who were there, in entries by Churchill's own secretary in his diary. Eloquent and moving it was, as anyone with historical perspective and a grasp of the English language can read for themselves.

But with regards to Churchill's original emphatic intent, we can only guess. For me, this marvelous speech has the same mysterious hold on my imagination as does the Gettysburg Address. I often wonder: is it government “of the *people*, by the *people*, and for the *people*...?” Or government “of the people, *by* the people, and *for* the people...?” Did Mr. Lincoln intend for us to think about ourselves, the people, or the various ways that we the people relate to our government and it to us – *of*, *by* and *for*? I like to think it was the latter, because it's a bit more demanding and thought provoking. I also like the quiet, growling British Bulldog Churchill of my youth, almost talking over his shoulder to me through a cloud of cigar smoke. Hey, Garry; we shall never surrender...

But then, I'm a word nerd. You make up your own mind.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

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in the Great State of Georgia!



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CAUTION

Red Rover, Red Rover let Bobby

“Side Effects”

by Sonny Rag

John Riley saw his life like Christmas lights dangling from the house in January - off, possibly burnt out - full only of failed promise. He walked alone along the tree-bordered street from the train station – an awning with a plywood-board-blocked ticket window really – and he mulled. Usually his mind was empty on this walk, cleared of all details of work. There was nothing for him to remember having done, nothing jelling in anticipation. His briefcase contained naught of note, the afternoon paper to scan tomorrow morning on the train, a wax paper wrapping from a ham sandwich, his bent plastic ID badge. Once upon a time, he would have counted the steps required from the station to his front porch. Ago that was, many longs.

It was dark. Street lights illuminated tiny yellowed spots beneath, like that old bit with the droopy clown and the broom. He let a notion creep in; how so many men crowded the siding – papers

crackling, coffee bright – to catch the 6:40 a.m. But the city only leaked them back in dribs and drabs, more than tired, in the quiet gloom of evening.

Tonight, Riley doled out frustrated attention to the various aches and pains about his person. His fingers stiffly gripped the briefcase handle. He was hungry, but his gut was already protesting. His scalp prickled, his skinny shanks tingled. Well, what of it? he asked himself. Too much bad coffee, not enough good sleep. He heard the soft tap-scrap as he stepped deliberately on the gritty macadam - the soles of his shoes were tissue paper thin and every errant pebble stabbed. He could feel his socks soaking up the moisture – this morning’s black ice had melted in this strangely warm winter evening. That was life; either your feet are cold or they’re wet, but they always hurt.

Reaching a point almost exactly between two of the street lights, where a rather large mountain laurel butted up against the pavement,

Riley took a blaze of heat right behind his eyes, like a bad headache – only jumped to the middle of one, not the tentative beginnings. Nausea filled his mouth with bitter tasting spit and he coughed and felt it dribble down his chin. *Oh! I can’t!* his mind said, but could not complete the thought, because the fire in his head flared again and for just a moment he was unable to think, like when the phone rings very loud or someone shouts surprise when you open the front door on your birth. . . .

His vision receded to tiny points, but he hardly noticed or cared, because the pain was retreating and he was so relieved. Legs twisting beneath him, he spun to the ground. His glasses skittered away on the blacktop. Still, Riley didn’t care, because the pain in his head was now almost tolerable. *I’m on pavement*, he thought, *it’s wet, but OK, then. It’s dark here, no one saw me tumble. OK, then. OK.*



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NIGHTSOUND
STUDIOS

He breathed, in, out. It was good, cool air both coming and going in huffs and puffs. It tasted a little like the oil on the street, but even so it was still good. Riley's legs were tangled beneath him, he tried to move them but they weren't having any of it. *Legs are like children*, he thought, *and who would know better about that than I?* He had nine of his own.

Children, of course, God bless him, not legs. He almost giggled at the idea of nine legs. Good Catholic family. Progeny. Be fruitful and multiply, saith the Lord our God.

Move your legs, he ordered. Nope. He had spindly, pale, insufficient legs. Years of old three-season suits had worn away any vestiges of hair. Walking to and from the train station and around the yard behind the mower was not enough exercise. His boys, though. Now they were athletes. Johnny and Tommy and Patrick. My boys. So proud of them I am. Sitting on the stoop, watching Johnny handle the ball, palm over palm, then up

in the air, feet kicked behind. Tick-tock, off the backboard and through the net. Tick-tock, like a toy clock. Johnny had gone to Holy Cross; he had a shooter's eye. And he could run! But it was a father's idle wish. My Johnny didn't have a prayer against boys a foot again taller than him. Patrick chose baseball. Training your mind is like training leather. Tie up a ball in the pit of the glove with leather thong and it keeps a memory of the ball. Fundamentals. Teach the boys how to play and often and they'll play well.

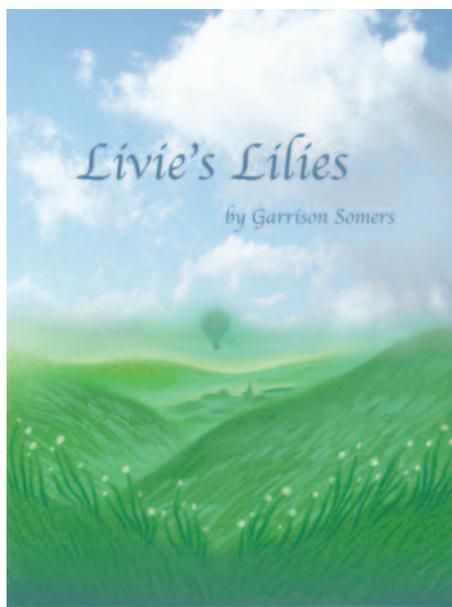
Tommy. My Tommy, freckle-face, shock of hair, untied sneakers. The king of neighborhood *home-free-all*, played in the summer evening after supper, just until the fireflies bloomed and took all the children's attention away. Not even thirty years and died of heart failure. But your heart was so big; I couldn't listen to the doctor explain to your mother and me what was wrong. A problem with a valve, as if it were mere plumbing and not the center of godliness in you, son.

He marked time after Tommy.

Days and months and years of showing up and doing and leaving. Sitting at Mass. Mouthing the words. Not caring.

Something shifted, in Riley, in the earth itself, and he rolled from his side to his back. His arms, which he had neglected to consider, rested knuckles down in the gravel and leaf littered gutter of this side-street. He tried to lift them, it was like juggling. He could lift an elbow or wrist but not both. The mountain laurel floated above him, black leaves. At home his garden was buried in oak leaf mulch. One good snow will pin it down, rotting well for spring planting. Tomatoes and cukes and pole-beans and wax-beans. He loved to kneel in the dirt furrows in summer, feel the sun in them, the heat on his back through the white tee-shirt. The touch of vines on his arms, their furry fingers.

Of all his girls, only little Virginia claimed she liked to garden, but then she sat on the lawn and read more than worked. A shame, for he would have enjoyed sitting in a web-chair watching his girls till and weed and plant.



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The Blotter

Virginia is a good girl; she walks to the library with her arms full – what is wrong with being bookish? What is wrong with being smart? It is as godly as prayer to use the tools the lord giveth. Mary-Margaret is a good mother and stopped Virginia's sisters from teasing her, chided them about their own homework. One by one, they grow, leave, get married, find work, go to school, leave. Little Virginia. He wished she wouldn't have left home, gone to school so far away, stayed to teach so far away.

A child cried quietly, somewhere, rhythmically, like a song, a record with a deep scratch. Whose neighborhood is this? The weeping was coming from behind him, or, rather, above his head. His neck wouldn't let him look, and there was dampness dripping slowly down the side of his head. Pebbles poked him, but he couldn't move. The crying stopped with a squawk; apparently a well-placed swat gave the child something to stop crying about.

Riley wondered how long he has been lying here. He couldn't clear his thoughts enough to estimate. It was after dinner time; most people ate later because of working in the city. Not so many folks went out after dinner. It had always been a quiet little town; what they called a bedroom community. His own commute was an hour and a half door to door. How many hours was that, after thirty-four years? Hey, I always suspected I'd end up in the gutter. He tried on a smile, but it was slack and his lips were dry. Surely, someone will

come by soon, the 7:55 westbound will drop someone and they'll see me here. Or Frenchy will pass in a patrol car, keeping the neighborhoods safe from graffiti, eggs and toilet-paper. Surely. Surly. Someone will find surly old me.

Odd. I'm not very hungry. Tonight is meatballs and spaghetti. He and Mary-Margaret had strict rules on food. When you have nine children, it comes naturally. Efficient, reheatable meals. Boring, Riley admitted, but always enough to go around, and in his book that counted a lot. Like clockwork, the first dinner pangs came around Convent Station. Five stops before home. Bells ringing in the chapel. He enjoyed the joke that the nuns made him hungry, like that Russian dog. Of course they didn't, really. The windows in the train hadn't been able to be opened in years. Of course, they did years ago. Of course, the nine children aren't home anymore. Meatballs and spaghetti tonight. A matter of course.

My mind is just bouncing around. What's happening? I'm lying on the ground. My head. His head was just a dull pulsing throb; he was amazed to find that he couldn't remember how bad it had hurt just a little while ago. Mary Margaret had told him about that very thing, hadn't she, after Rose, their first, was born? God washes the pain from your memory. He couldn't believe it. Certainly, he hadn't been in the room with her. Even from the waiting room, down the hall, he could hear her scream. He had kept his eyes lowered,

avoided meeting those of the other expectant fathers in the lounge, but after a while he realized his hands were squeezing his knees white-knuckled. He'd given himself bruises that night. And still Mary Margaret said she didn't remember any pain. Unbelievable. Well, that's good, he told her, sweaty-haired and somehow quite lovely, otherwise you'd only go through this once. Once child wasn't enough. Nine children all left, eventually, and you were alone. You and Mary Margaret, alone.

Speaking of which, he tried to move his legs again. Come on, I was *home-free-all*, wasn't I? Only down to the corner and over to his own street. Past the Parrishes and the Coopers and the Cooks and the...whosits, with their matching post-and-rail fences. Then the vacant lot, where the kids always built their tree-houses, but now a catch-all for litter and grass-clippings. He wished he had made it home. It was warm there, and his chair was serviceably comfortable. No, then Mary Margaret would have to go through this, couldn't have that, wouldn't do that to her... Funny thought – he had always fallen just short. Down the hall from the birth of his children. Down the street and around the corner.

A light, down in the corner of his eye. One of the houses, maybe, someone carrying out the supper trash. Hey! *Hey!* But no shouting came forth, just a wheeze from his slack mouth. He gurgled another breath of air, sucked saliva down into his windpipe and choked a

cough. His left eye twitched and suddenly he was blind. Had a leaf dropped onto it? He closed his eyes and opened them again, in a long blink. The right was still closed. Old faithful left wiggled wildly around, trying to focus, to regain perception. Calm down, he told his eye. His heart also rattled in its cage, out of timing.

I need to pray. I need to calm down – something. Speak to God. Our Father who art – but there was nothing there. Not a single word, not a syllable. Where had it gone? It was the Our Father. He'd said it a million times, at least once every day since he was a child. It was as if a hand grenade had gone off in his memory, scattering landmarks across the field.

He couldn't think of the priest's name. Father Metro was all that his brain would give him. I wish I could talk to Father Metro. I don't want to confess, but I want him to talk to Mary Margaret. She will be hurt by this. Oh, the girls will come home. They will help. They've always been good. But Mary Margaret was so hurt by Tommy's death.

"Who gave these idiots microphones?"

Tuesdays at 10:00PM

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Chapel Hill & Carrboro, NC



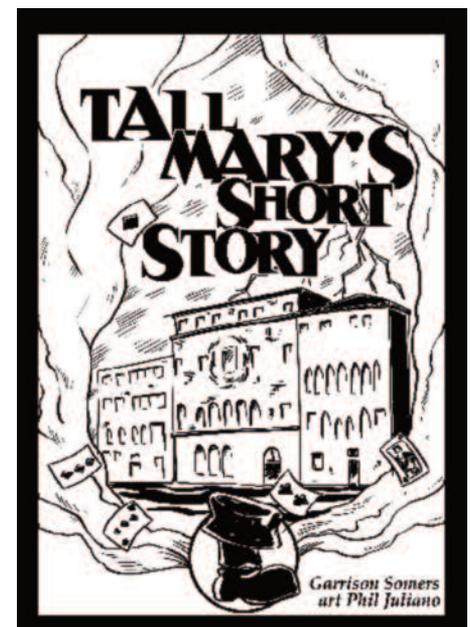
When you have a concrete faith, even droplets of water can eat away at it, like a cancer. Mary Margaret saw the world so clearly, what is good and what isn't, what is right and what is absolutely not. Children pass after they live long lives and care for their parents, and their parents are gone. The difficult birth is taken to God after the mother. And the husband and wife pass together, arm in arm. Riley tried to pray again, couldn't. He was afraid to close his left eye, for fear that it, too, would wink out like a dusty lightbulb.

Began to feel the cold again, under his neck and shoulders. There was the tang of dung in the air. Fell, shit myself and died. Do you think the neighbors will let this detail go unspoken? Once he had grilled burgers in the cul-de-sac with other Dads. The kids; all of them, a wave of locusts they were, back and forth across the connecting yards, around the Buicks and Oldsmobiles, kicking cans and shooting baskets and flinging Frisbees, picking grapes from arbors, catching fireflies. They all grew up, and yards became flower gardens and Saturdays were for turtle-waxing old sedans. In the meantime, he'd become jetsam, abandoned because some ship in the grand scheme was sinking.

Had to be more'n an hour now. Not a single car going to the liquor store for some gin? No one making a late run to the grocery? Cold was addling what remained of his mind. He counted heart beats, to give himself some perspective on the passing time, like the steps from the station to the front porch.

One, two, three, four, he was unable to see Mary Margaret's face in his mind's eye. God, give back. That urge dissolved. I'll miss... Then he couldn't remember what it was that he would miss. Five. Six. Not long now. A song played in his ears, tune discordant, slipping from vague to unrecognizable. A smell, whiff of sour, a tickle in his old sore feet, heaviness on his tired bladder, a hand on his shoulder, a buzzing bee flirting with tomato blooms, the swish of an orange ball sliding through a rope net. Seven, eight, nine, nine. ❖

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"Epitaph"

by Sarah Skiles

Her kids groaned as she called out headstone epitaphs from her hospice bed.
What about *I'm coming for you next? See you in Hell?*

Ma, really!

She smiled, but there were tears in her eyes.

At the funeral, they obeyed her wishes.

Beloved Wife & Mother

Best Lay In Texas

The Pregnant Mare

or

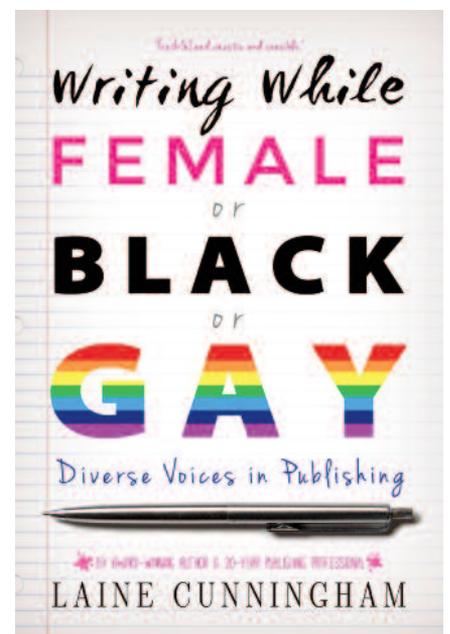
The Guys
in The Crate
at The Joint



Garrison Somers

art by Susan Connors

On Amazon - of course....



Available on Amazon

“Word Of The Day”

by Paul Perilli

narcotize\nabr-kub-tabyz\verb

1. To subject to or treat with a narcotic; stupefy.
2. To make dull; stupefy; deaden the awareness of.

You have your go-to self treatment. I have mine. Whatever yours is, as long as you and no one else gets hurt, it's fine with me. I understand. You gotta have something to get through these particular days and nights. Mine so happens to be craft beer. That's right, I'm part of the revolution, if by revolution we mean a dramatic and wide-reaching change of a long established order that was imploring to be overthrown. More power to the talented brewmasters. I'm done with those tasteless, fizzy white beers. They're just not for me anymore. Though, BTW, did you notice I didn't say those affordable fizzy white beers you can still get a pint of for three or four dollars? Craft beer out of the keg, not so cheap for we thirsty folks on a budget. And who's not bound to one of those? My disposable income's taken a hit. And not an insignificant hit. Yet I remain a willing patron of those

small, pricey brew houses popping up in NYC and elsewhere. Where I go to mingle with other discriminating insurgents to drink beer described as having “a fruity wheat complexity with slightly smoked notes” or “to save to the far end of the night.” The pints at the joint two blocks from my house start at eight smackers and from there trend upward to ten and twelve. But they know they have me and their other admirers hooked by the taste buds. So much so they don't even throw us a freebee now and then. The first wasn't for nothing and the last won't be either. That's an effective business model for sure. Hook the customer. Raise the prices. Yet, we craving beer enthusiasts remain undeterred. We justify the cost with the understanding revolutions don't come cheap. Upending an old order for one

many times better is a steep undertaking. And like the mortgage, no matter how much it costs room is made in the budget because you can't live without microbrew even if it jeopardizes the cable and phone bills. Whatever has to be cut will be cut in pursuit of another tasty gold medal IPA or lip puckering sour. You want that mellow, stupefying feeling after another humdrum day in the cubicle? After checking out the latest fusillade of tweets from the leader of the land? After hours of intense art making? After a testy conversation with your mother? If that's your wish you'll have to dig deep into your pocket because in this time and place that agreeable, palliative feeling that comes with drinking great craft beer doesn't come cheap. ❖

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“More Killing Time”

By Larry D. Thacker

Sometimes the dead go it alone.

 You'll want to run to catch up,
but your legs are as sluggish as theirs.

Sometimes the dead could do with a shave.

 Some days you know you're not going to run
into anyone that gives a damn.

Sometimes the dead are the smartest guys in the room.

 Which is a clever phrasing, but doesn't tell you
much at all about what you need.

Sometimes the dead aren't too shabby.

I had a cousin buried in a sleeve-less denim vest
with a pack of Marlboros in the chest pocket.
I was young, but I remember this so well.

Sometimes the dead ride it out.

 They've got time. Plenty of time.

Sometimes the dead can't handle their liquor.

 A skeleton walks into a bar.
Asked the bartender for a shot of Jack and a mop.

Sometimes the dead prefer homelessness.

 A hole in the ground does not a home make.

Sometimes the dead never catch the bus.

They've asked all their friends for a schedule,
but no seems to have one on them
and the WiFi isn't working so they can just Google it.

Sometimes the dead lose power.

Sometimes losing power cause the dead to be dead.
Reference: nursing home deaths during Hurricane Irma, 2017.

Sometimes the dead think they never dream.

 We all dream, but don't
necessarily remember our dreams.

Sometimes the dead strike it rich.

“To finally know what happens after death is a treasure”

Sometimes the dead have no one to blame but themselves.

It’s hard to blame others when it’s only you in there.

Sometimes the dead stay under the bed.

Is there a statistic out there on the number of deaths
each year taking place under home furniture?

Sometimes the dead are list makers.

1. To live.

Sometimes the dead are dehydrated.

The darker your urine,
the more dehydrated you are.

Sometimes the dead Netflix and chill.

Who first came up with this phrase?
I want to strangle them.

Sometimes the dead are water people.

Or earth people. Or fire people. Or wind people.

Sometimes the dead remember the good old days.

And we find them in their comfy rockers
on the porch with a quilt on their laps. Humming
to themselves, watching all the day
fall over the ridge.

Sometimes the dead grow no moss.

They’re still so very active. Chasing
after those dreams. Chasing. Chasing.

Sometimes the dead wait and wait.

For what?

Sometimes the dead never catch a break.

The same in life. Always complaining.
The world’s out to get them.

“Fuck You, Charlie!”

Hollywood: The Stuff of Dreams”

by Joe Buonfiglio

Sitting in a secluded California cove between Malibu’s Point Dume and Zuma Beach at the easternmost point on Westward Beach, I strike up a conversation with my dear friend, Charlie, with whom I am visiting for Christmas.

“You forgot to eat?” I inquire of Charles with what I’m sure is a look of absolute bafflement. “Like just didn’t remember to consume food?”

“Yeah,” he responds without altering his gaze from the rolling waves. “Part of yesterday, too.”

...
...
...

“You forgot ... to eat?”

“E-yup.”

...
...
...

“How the hell do you forget to eat?”

Charlie shrugs his shoulders.

...
...
...

“Fuck you, Charlie!”

He smiles.

The tide seems to be coming in dangerously close to our toes.

“Hey, you know what?” I say. “I’m thinking about moving back to LA. I miss it.”

Charlie looks at me and scrunches up his mouth with a frown so unique to his face that he really should try to trademark it.

“Bad idea,” he somewhat mumbles, his demeanor turning darker.

“Why so?”

“You know why.”

I throw my hands up to indicate otherwise.

Friendship, loyalty, nostalgia; and the joy and healing power of music...

A Southern college town and its thriving local music scene, where the music's neither "sacred" nor "profane" so long as it's good...

A lost tape of a beloved band's legendary show...
A record label, poised to break big, which certain people want to be part of - by any means necessary...

Two visitors, whose own music has been muted by regrets over long-ago bad decisions: Chuck McDonough, former grad student, who skipped town after learning things about himself he couldn't face; and Penny Froward, whose attempt to help a friend in danger almost destroyed another woman's life...

A mysterious will by an unknown hand; and murder...

Blotter Books presents:
All Tomorrow's Parties
by Marty Smith

(publisher & book reviewer, "The Blotter Magazine;" contributor to the "Urban Hiker;" former host of "New Frontiers" and "Laugh Tracks" on WXDU - FM, Duke University Radio)

Available in print or e-reader at www.wileequixote.com



“With all that grey in your hair and your beard,” Charlie states in quite the matter-of-fact tone, “you wouldn’t stand a chance. If you tried coming back out here, you and I both know trying to reboot your LA writing days would be over before your plane touched down at LAX.”

I feel as if smacked in the head by an overstuffed bag of greasy tacos from Tito’s on Washington Place.

“Ffff—”

...

...

...

“Fah—”

...

...

...

“FUCK YOU, CHARLIE!”

I knew he was right, of course. Why else would it hurt so badly? It’s as if being called stupid when you’re both a Rhodes Scholar and break the intelligence scales at Mensa. You’d just shrug off such an insult as being a little weird. But if you’re a true dumbass confounded by the steps to produce a PB&J that has the jelly inside the bread slices and not on top, then that hurts.

That *REALLY* hurts.

Charlie was dead on. You start showing any sign of the slightest move beyond youth, let alone middle age, and you’re done working in most sectors of “The Industry” in Hollywood.

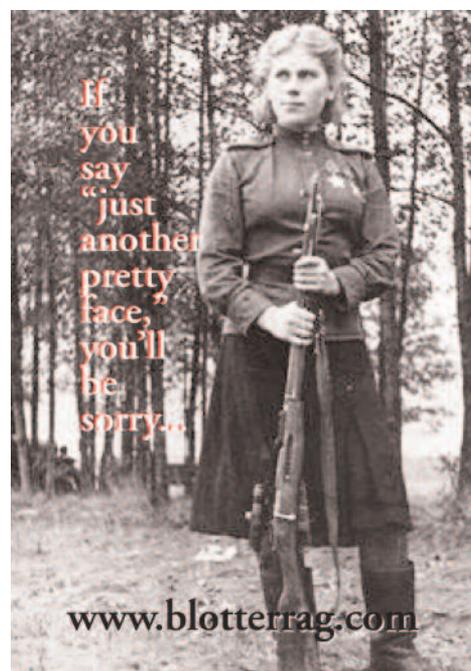
You can’t fight it.

That’s just the way it is.

Yes, I could always depend on Charlie for honesty ... and a good glass of beer ... and incomparable flatulence ... but mostly honesty. However, as we sat there on that Malibu beach where they filmed the climactic ending to the 1968 movie *Planet of the Apes* next to the remnant of our once-beloved Statue of Liberty, I also knew this was a dream. The bombed out top of Lady Liberty is not housed in that rocky cove. As far as I know, she still stands on Liberty Island in New York Harbor (although I did not watch the news programs today). Additionally, Charlie had not aged a day in the nearly thirty years I’ve known him, not to mention it’s nowhere near Christmas and Chuck currently lives on the west coast of Florida, not the west coast of the country.

So, as I slowly wake up in my Deep South-domiciled bed drenched in

sweat because my air conditioner had gone out sometime in the night, “Fuck you, Charlie!” came across my lips yet another time as if my friend was still there in the room. And even though the phantom comrade was correct — getting older is the ultimate sin when it comes to working in LA — what stayed with me from my dream-state conversation was the forgetting-to-eat thing. In real life, Charlie was (and I assume still is) one of those people who could ... well ... forget to eat. And as a writer formerly from Los Angeles, I can attest to the fact that if there is one sin worse than getting *OLD* in Hollywood, it’s getting *FAT*. It’s getting “drenched in sweat the moment you step out of the air conditioning and into ‘real’ air” *FAT*. So a guy such as “Did I eat today?” Charlie could actually go quite far in a Tinseltown that unquestionably reveres thi— *FUCK YOU, CHARLIE!* ❖



The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

Please send excerpts from your own dream journals. If nothing else, we'd love to read them. We won't publish your whole name.

mermaid@blotterrag.com

2/28 – I am with my best friend Kristian in a car, we are on some kind of adventure and we get out of what feels like the city or some theme park and eventually come to break on the edge of this spectacular snow covered steep ravine. I realize when we stop that we are on the edge. We get out and it seems to be this tunnel like thing as you look down. It is just rocky on the way down but as I glance down the tunnel it seems to be as if what I see is living in a picture frame. There are beautiful crashing waves and a shoreline it looks like you can walk on. We wait before we decide to descend it and thank goodness we do because suddenly the water comes crashing and filling up the whole hill and steep tunnel we wanted to go explore. The water is tumultuous as it fills the enclosure close to the top and then retreats. I guess we both understand that there is some kind of timing sequence as to when the water rises so right after we start to walk down, we want to see the bottom. Near the bottom, along the sides of the walls there are dozens of now not-working phones plugged in and sparking that were destroyed by the water. I recall seeing frayed wires. I'm aware that they were left by hopefuls who thought they could charge their phones but the water took them. Kristian plugs mine in also to charge but I'm so worried during the whole descent that the water will return and sweep us away and my phone. It's coming again and we start to run up. I don't want to lose my phone so I turn back and descend again to get it, risking my life. We make it to the top.

A.B. - cyberspace

CONTRIBUTORS:

Sonny Rag is a figment of the great imagination in the sky, a clever punchline to the joking question “Who do the voodoo you do?”

Sarah Skiles is a west coast author we found on Twitter whose brilliant VSS’s first caught our eye and then helped us recognize the crafting that goes into this fiction sub-genre. I know, I know, it looks like an elegant poem. I believe that’s the point. Find out more about her at sarahskiles.com

Paul Perilli of Brooklyn, NY writes, “My fiction and non-fiction have appeared in *The European*, *Baltimore Magazine*, *New Observations Magazine*, *Poets & Writers Magazine*, *The Brooklyn Rail* and others. Recent work has appeared in *bioStories*, *The Transnational*, *Hektoen International*, *The Satirist*, *Coldnoon*, *Litro*, *Intima*, *Numero Cinq*, *Taj Mahal Review*, *Thema*, *The Offbeat* and *Wanderlust*. My story 'Orwell's Year' is forthcoming as a chapbook from Blue Cubicle Press. My fiction 'Summary Report to the Committee' is just out in *Overland's* False Documents issue.”

Larry D. Thacker's poetry can be found in over a hundred publications including *Spillway*, *The Still Journal*, *American Journal of Poetry*, *Poetry South*, *Mad River Review*, *The Southern Poetry Anthology*, *Mojave River Review*, *Town Creek Poetry*, and *Appalachian Heritage*. His books include *Mountain Mysteries*, and the poetry books, *Drifting in Awe*, *Voice Hunting*, *Memory Train*, and the forthcoming full collections, *Feasts of Evasion* and *Grave Robber Confessional*. His MFA in poetry and fiction is earned from West Virginia Wesleyan College. Visit his website at: www.larrydthacker.com

Writer, humorist & “Literary Absurdist” **Joe Buonfiglio** loves pangolins (quite literally) ... and Vieux-Boulogne cheese ... often at the same time. Oh, and his best friend is a blob of vulcanized rubber named Sasha. That’s probably important to know about him. If you’re weird enough to want to experience more of his locker-room intelligentsia laced with the tears of polite society, go to his Twitter page @JoeBuonfiglio (<https://twitter.com/joebunfiglio>) and his often dark and always strange Absurdist-humor blog “Potpourri of the Damned” at JoeBuonfiglio.com. We now return you to the “Chalk-Painting by Numbers with Urinal Cakes” program.



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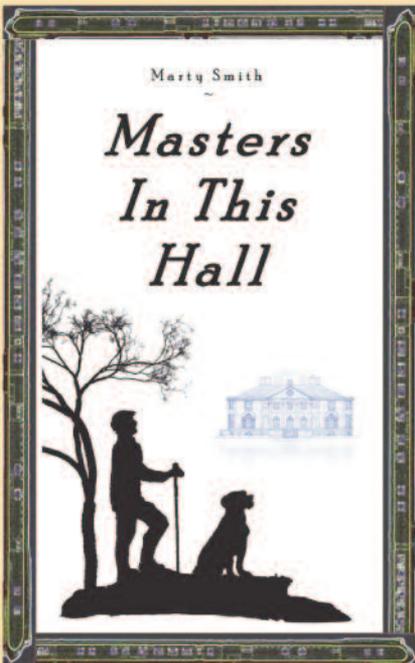
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