

May 2023

The Blotter

magazine



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

www.blotterrag.com

G. M. SomersEditor-in-Chief
Martin K. Smith..Publisher-at-Large, Treasurer
Marilyn Fontenot.....Director of Development
Laine Cunningham.....Publishing Consultant
Brace Boone III.....Marketing Advisor
Richard Hess.....Programs Director
Olivia Somers..Social Media and Art Director
T.J. Garrett.....Staff Photographer

Subscriptions Contact:
Martin K. Smith
M_K_Smith@yahoo.com
919.286.7760

Advertisers Contact:
Martin K. Smith
M_K_Smith@yahoo.com
919.286.7760

Submissions and Editorial Business to:
Jenny Haniver
mermaid@blotterrag.com

Garrison Somers, Editor-in-Chief
chief@blotterrag.com

919.869.7110 (business hours only! – call for
information about snail-mail submissions)

Marketing & Public Relations Contact:
Marilyn Fontenot
marilyngfontenot@gmail.com

COVER: Blow - Jay Del Greco

Unless otherwise noted, all content copyright
2023 by the artist, not the magazine.

The Blotter is a production of
MAGAZINE
The Blotter Magazine, Inc.,
Durham, NC.
A 501 (c)3 non-profit
ISSN 1549-0351
www.blotterrag.com

PROUD MEMBER



COMMUNITY OF LITERARY MAGAZINES & PRESSES
WWW.CLMP.ORG

“Responsibility”

Occasionally, my wife asks me what I’m going to do today. In the morning, while we’re performing our ablutions, my mouth full of toothpaste. It’s OK to ask, but I don’t always know a good answer. I want her to be satisfied that I’m being useful. Productive. What am I probably going to do? The same as yesterday. And the day before. Coffee. Read. Some writing. Some push-ups, if I’m in the mood. I try to be in the mood. If not, I walk around the block for a while. It’s quiet here, it often is. If I choose to sit on a bench in a park – I sometimes do - very little happens. The occasional car passes by. I sniff the morning breeze, it’s still pollen season and I’m always on the border between sneezing and not. I don’t mind much.

Unload the dishwasher. Load it with replacement (dirty) dishes. Turn it on and go back to reading, while listening to the perfect white noise swish of spray jets against a metal bowl. Find a classical music station and listen to Mahler or Rimsky-Korsakoff (not necessarily them, but for example). Top off my coffee and heat it in the microwave. If I told my wife all of this she would have left during the third sentence, and I wouldn’t blame her in the least. It’s a mundane list. And I’m happy to have it.

I call my mom. She likes to hear about what I’m doing today. She’s doing things, too, at 93 years of age, and our lists sometimes overlap. She drinks tea, though, so, there’s that. She’s reading, too. Different things than I would pick for myself, or that I have sent to me, and it’s interesting to hear someone speaking about what they’re consuming. Memoirs of young (to her. To me, too.) people. Novels about injustice overcome and redemption and forgiveness. Don’t get me wrong – I read volumes with these themes as well, but I lean towards action and humor and the speculative and history. Science. I tell her about the book I’m reading about the history of paleontology. She laughs. “I always knew you would get into that,” she says. “It was your favorite thing when you were five.” Well, I tell her, it was just a matter of time.

I let my mom go to get her lunch. “Soup,” she tells me. “Talk to you, soon.” Beef and barley sounds good. I think about lunch, act on that thought, bring my sandwich to the table. Or I go outside and watch birds at the feeder. Another generation of bluebirds is nesting in the box at the corner of the garage. I wonder if the last frost of the season has happened, and I can plant things. Columbine. Hosta. Bearded iris, the rhizomes gathered from my daughter’s house. (Yes, I asked permission and no, she didn’t

mind.) Gardening is a slow thing, a process hiding quietly within an artform. My wife is a sculptor of gardens. I am able to get my hands dirty, get seeds to start and bulbs to send out shoots, but I am not skilled with molding the look-and-feel of creation.

There's time to think, here, in the early part of afternoon. Different considerations. Time's passing, for one. This spring is similar to last spring, very different from two years back. We have published more books, a small handful now. More are in the pipe. And it's our twentieth anniversary, here and now with this issue. We talked about a party, back during the colder months, or some way of celebrating this milestone. That may happen when the warmer months actually get here. I hope so. I like a party.

Twenty years is a long time, isn't it? It feels like a long time. We owe a great deal to luck (if you believe in such things) and just taking it easy. That is, we didn't get too upset about typos or double-spaces after periods, or em-dashes. In fact, someone had to define em-dash for me the first time I saw the term. We didn't insist on following a rules-of-style bible, nor did we charge for submitting. It's hard enough, we thought, to decide that something is send-out worthy. No need to add to that stress. We've had our share of hiccups, too. Blown up the website by accident. Fixed it, too. Made it, so far, through Covid, without stopping our print-run. And we love our writers, poets and artists. They're good people. We love our readers – good people, too. We're glad you're one. Or even two. Sharing is nice, isn't it?

Thought: we're not in competition with one another for the readers' eyes. I'm not certain that everyone believes this. Part of the reason is that there are so many writing contests out there in the ether that we suspect that writers and their works are all defined, catalogued and ranked by genre, by the authors' pronouns, and by some supposedly quantifiable measure of quality. Yet, I find it odd that something so personal as writing does not obviously and constantly translate to how personal it is to read. In the hubbub of marketing and media, we are steered by invisible algorithms towards or away from things, until finally we surrender to the flow. Instead of finding our own joy, calmly and organically, we wait to have it handed to us. We want to know what others think, via reviews, likes, bestseller numbers. We don't even browse anymore, because that option is mostly removed (although the tool we use is called a browser, it manipulates, reflects, compromises.) Despite being...literate, we seem to

Continued on page 14

We often use Bobco fonts, copyrighted shareware from the Church of the Subgenius. Prabob. We also use Mary Jane Antique and other free-ware fonts from Apostrophic Labs and other fonts from other sources.



in the Great State of Georgia!



The Blotter Magazine, Inc. (again, a 501(c)3 non-profit) is an education concern. Our primary interest is the furthering of creative writing and fine arts, with the magazine being a means to that end. We publish in the first half of each month and enjoy a free circulation throughout the Southeast and some other places, too. Submissions are always welcome, as are ad inquiries.

Subscriptions are offered as a premium for a donation of \$25 or more. Send check or money order, name and address to The Blotter Magazine 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

And when I die, and when...

“Chuyskiy Tract”

by Victor Pogostin

Last week of May 2022, Russian government celebrated the centenary of the Chuyskiy Tract that connects the cities of Eastern Siberia and runs all the way to the Mongolian border. But the Tract history is much older, complex, tragic, and sometimes ironic.

Insistent media reports claim that Putin and a close circle of his friends consume products from the deer’s blood and bathe in blood from the severed antlers of Altai marals.

In the Ongudaysky District, by the side of the Chuyskiy Tract stands a new “Altai Compound”, a hotel and tourist complex designed by Italian architects and built by Gazprom.

The Compound includes a deer breeding farm with fenced forest lands and is heavily guarded, which gives grounds to assume that this is a resting place for the first persons of the state.

In the late 80’s I travelled with the President of the International Sociological Association Ulf Himmelstrand and his wife Karin on a lecture tour of

Siberian Universities. The last leg of the tour we travelled by car along the Chuy Road or Chuyskiy Tract.

We left Barnaul, the largest city of Altai region early in the morning and soon hit the Chuyskiy Tract enroute to Gorno-Altai.

Ulf, Karin, and I were squeezed in the back seat of the black official limo and the Secretary for Ideology of the Regional Communist Party Committee presided in the front seat. The limo had no AC, and we kept our rear windows cracked open. Eating dust behind us was a battered van with a group of Ekaterinburg sociologists and a local security officer who joined our team in Barnaul. He was introduced to us as an employee of the Administrative Department of the City’s Communist Party Council, with recommendation to contact him with any security concerns.

In mid-July the sun-patched Chuy steppe brimmed by the distant snow-covered mountains looked eerily calm.

The only nuisance was the Secretary’s boring lecture on the advantages of Socialism.

Suddenly he yelped “Fuck... fuck!” and turned back, alarmed

to check on Ulf and Karin. Both had dozed off, lulled by the lecture.

I looked ahead. Our limo caught up with a convoy of prisoner transport trucks. Right behind the driver’s cabin, trucks had a guard station with two guards armed with Kalashnikovs and panting shepherd’s dogs.

“Damn it. Pass them fast,” the Secretary commanded.

As the limo sped past the convoy, I looked up at the dirty grey wagons and behind the barred slits saw grey faces in grey prison caps pulled over blank eyes watching closely the passing limo.

The convoy behind, the Secretary sat silent for a while, and I was left to my thoughts about the tract’s history.

First known as an ancient pack trail, believed to be one of the Silk Route branches it remained a narrow dirt road until late 1920’s when the Soviets recognized its military significance.

In the early 1930’s construction works began using as labor prisoners of the SIBLAG (Siberian branch of Stalin’s Gulags).

Dozens of “Business Outposts” as the NKVD called them were built along the tract at

15-20 kilometers apart.

Surrounded by a wood fence with barbed wire on top and watchtowers on the corners, the “outposts” had three or four barracks for 300-400 inmates. The barracks had bare windows, bunk beds and a brick oven. There was also a semi-dugout bathhouse and a solid log house for guards and dogs.

I remember reading those dogs were specially trained for humans. If an inmate escaped, the guards didn’t bother chasing but just released their dogs and that was it.

The outposts’ inhabitants were a mixture of political exiles, dispossessed well-off peasants and criminals deported to Altai for “Re-education through labor.” The NKVD trying to justify repressions insisted that the criminals were from Khitrovka, at the time a notorious crime riddled market district in Moscow often compared in Russian press to the London area of Whitechapel, where Jack the Ripper operated.

Supposedly, the women’s “outpost” inmates were the prostitutes from the infamous district.

Even today the Altai Region is pervaded with penitentiaries and many ex-convicts settle in its towns.

Not all prisoners lucked out in the forced labor.

Many, like my aunt Sonia’s

husband, Grigoriy Shpectorov, lieutenant-general, Head of the Trans-Baikal Railway were executed. Grigoriy was arrested in December 1937 in his HQ in Chita a few months after he was awarded with the Order of Lenin, the highest Soviet award and was executed the same year in August.

I remember my aunt letting me play with his pocket watch, the only one of his possessions that she was allowed to keep. She talked very little about the arrest and only mentioned that it was on a cold December morning, and she was out shopping. When she returned home there was an NKVD guard at their door. She was allowed to take a small bag with her personal belongings and ordered to leave.

The apartment was sealed. Interesting, I thought, Grigoriy, like Gregory means “vigilant, watchful”. Well, his vigilance failed him.

Sonia tried to get help from Grigoriy’s superiors, but none agreed to see her. She came to Moscow to my father and stayed with us. She never remarried and during and after the war worked as a nurse. In 1957, when Grigoriy was posthumously rehabilitated, she was offered a room in a two-room kommunalka (a communal apartment where several families share the kitchen, bathroom, and toilet).

The Secretary of Ideology

sprang back to life halfway to Gorno-Altaiisk.

“Little surprise... a picnic.” He announced clapping his hands happily.

A folding table was set in the shady spot of a wooded Chui riverbank. A sad-looking waitress in the national Altai long sleeves robe and a sausage-stained apron welcomed us with a tired of waiting smile.

The table was laid with sliced Kan Blood sausage, prepared with fresh ram blood, mutton fat, onions, and garlic, all boiled in milk.

Teertnek, flat Altai bread and Kurut, salty, very hard cheese. Kurut recipe, I was told, goes back to Genghis Khan horsemen. During lengthy campaigns they carried leather flasks with koumiss (horse milk) strapped to their saddles. Heat from sweating horses and the sun boiled and whipped koumiss to hard cheese. And we had to wash it down was Araka, koumiss vodka. Don’t get me wrong I have no grudge with vodka, but Araka must be drunk hot. When cold it has a sharp unpleasant smell. We were late for the feast, and Araka was cold and there was no way I could even gulp it without smelling. The Secretary followed me all over the place with a glass. I had to distract him.

“What is that little birdy in the bush?” I asked and when he turned away to look, I quickly

The Blotter

threw Araka on the ground and grunted mimicking pleasure.

It was dark when we drove into Gorno-Altaiisk.

The only well lighted spot was around the monument to Lenin in the central square, right across the barely lit entrance to our hotel. Such serial monuments were all over the Soviet Union.

“Come,” the Secretary called me.

I followed him to the monument and for a minute or two looked at it in silence.

“Lenin,” I said wondering what was it that he wanted me to see expecting to hear another ideological glib.

“Look closer,” he insisted.

I looked and shrugged my shoulders still wondering where he was going.

“Look at the coat,” he said.

I did and laughed – the Lenin of Gorno-Altaiisk had a coat with buttons on the left side, like on women’s coats.

“Unique!” he said and winked at me.

“Gotcha,” I said and thought to myself “even apparatchiks have a sense of humor”.

Later I read that the only twin statute of Lenin was in Riga but after the collapse of the Soviet Union it was destroyed.

Surrounded by low hills the town of Gorno-Altaiisk consisted of a main avenue called Kommunisticheskiy Prospekt and

many side streets. The university of course was on Lenin Street. Even now, thirty years after the communist system collapsed, the street names had not changed. The town has the alley of Chekists, perhaps with the names of those who had run the “business outposts.”

Our hotel was on the central square to the right of the town’s Communist Party Committee building. The only two rooms with full bathrooms were booked for Ulf and the Secretary. The rest of the team had to share rooms and use toilets down the hall. I shared my room with the security guy. The son of a gun’s secret night weapon was his menacing snore. It kept me awake and scared away the unlikely night intruders.

To guard Ulf and Karin from the frugal reality, breakfasts and lunches were served in the conference room and dinners behind a heavy curtain on the live orchestra stage of the restaurant. All food including caviar was hand delivered from the Party Committee special canteen.

The orchestra moved to the dancing floor and occasionally a tipsy curious visitor tried to sneak behind the curtain but was immediately warded off by the vigilant security officer.

We didn’t see much of the town. During the day we visited the University where Ulf lectured,

and the security guy didn’t recommend going out at night neither in Barnaul nor in Gorno-Altaiisk. *Cherry on the cake...*

On our last day in Altai, after Ulf’s lecture I was stopped by a young woman dressed like a typical woman professor – glasses, knee-length skirt, and a formal white blouse.

“I am Kiraz,” she said and extended her hand to me. “I teach English and I have a book with your translations of Hemingway’s early articles.”

“Really,” I said, smiling widely, expanded with delight that my work was known so far away.

“Will you sign it for me?”

“With pleasure.”

“Also, I’d like to pick your brain on Hem.”

“Sure”

“How about tonight. Would seven my place work?”

She gave me the address.

Cabs were not available, and I asked the security guy to help.

“I won’t let you go alone,” he said.

“Seriously?”

“Tell her to come here.”

I didn’t insist. His warning didn’t matter much, but Ulf had some visitors too and asked me to stay and translate.

“No problem,” said Kiraz when I called her.

I bought a cake and asked the floor receptionist to make tea.

Kiraz came at eight and surprised me with her changed looks.

The professor was gone, instead there was an alluring woman in a tight-fitting black leather miniskirt and high-heeled shoes. Glasses disappeared and her dimples looked sexy.

The security guy coughed pointedly and left.

I felt confused, amazed with her looks.

Kiraz, meanwhile, made herself comfortable in a low armchair, sighed, and opened her notebook. The notebook sobered me up and I saddled my hobby horse. I started with Hem as a cub reporter in The Kansas City Star and then my floodgates opened, and I didn't notice how two hours passed. I was already enclosing on Hem's WWII reporting when a knock on the door brought me back to earth. The security guy was back.

Kiraz closed her notebook, gave me an inquisitive look, smiled, and said, "Tomorrow you will go to a maral, our red deer breeding farm. They make a drink with blood extracted from the young male marals antlers. We export it for gold to China, but you are a guest and if you ask you may get some. It'll do you good."

The Farm welcomed us with another picnic. This time vodka Araka was served hot as it should be, but in early morning it didn't go well. The Secretary had to toast to "peace and friendship" with the Farm's Manager, a few herdsman and a bunch of unsus-

pecting marals freely wondering on the green hilly slopes. We were told that antlers have no nerve cells so cutting them off doesn't cause pain. Blood is taken right after the antlers are hacksawed, then they are boiled and dried. Still, we refused to watch.

When leaving the farm Ulf and I were presented with a wax sealed bottle. A barely readable label had a strong message "Pantogematogen Gornoaltaiskiy –

effective aphrodisiac, acts on the mind and causes the arousal of the mood of sexual desire."

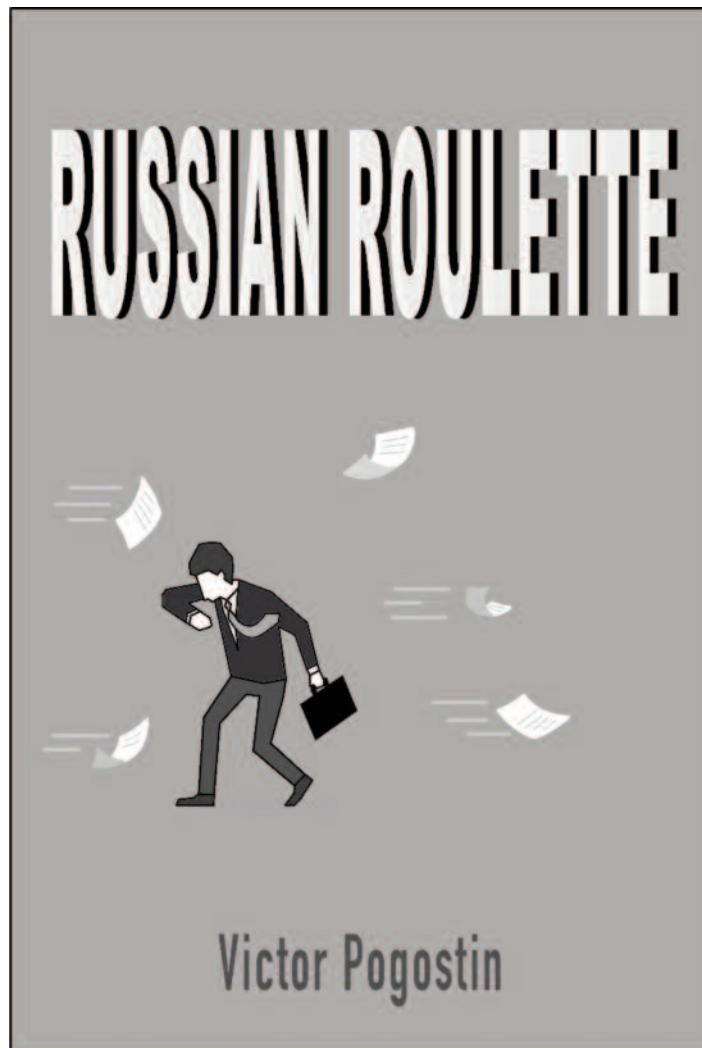
"Do you speak Altai?" I asked the Secretary on the way to the hotel.

"Some."

What does Kiraz mean?"

"Cherry... why?"

"Nothing," I said laughing "One Altai Cherry got me good."



Blotter Books

Find it on Amazon

“Weekend Drive”

Weekend traffic in the big city
Not like weekday rush hour
More relaxed drivers
No sounds of blaring horns
On this four lane stretch of road
Going towards the south side
Hitting every red light
Radio tuned to classic rock station
Only a few out-of-state tags
No big event to attract tourists
Personalized plate on truck
Mixture of letters and numbers
Must mean something to owner
Complete gibberish to me
Car beside has window down
Its occupant smoking a cigarette
Also getting pollution in lungs now
Finally reach destination
Visit relative in nursing home
Then back to the north end of town

two by K. A. Williams

“Waiting”

How much time do people
spend during their life
WAITING
In line
By the phone
On something exciting to happen
Out the day
HOPING
For a better tomorrow

"The Ring"

By Susie Gharib

What is it about the ring?
Is it the fact it ends where it begins?
An incessant cycle of birth and death,
The wheel of seasons that never end,
A halo around a martyr's head,
A coin to buy a loaf of bread,
The clock whose hands are in constant haste,
A saucer to invade the outer space,
The spiraling smokes of endless wars,
A disc, a hoop, what childish toys!
A vicious circle, no joys to wed,
The wedding gift that fingers deck,
The pupil of every gazing eye,
The sun, the moon and earth in flight.

“Overheard on the Run”

by Richard Van Ingram

Unfit Misfit

Landed Hard

in the pits,

knew nothing about coming down.

Studied obscurities

out in the yard,

rolled dice, hated cards.

Snake eyes sent him to town

so he could become another

unpainted clown

with a broken head

who dreams of the day

he no longer dreams of the day

where his final meal's

a plate of lead.

Screw Top

Pop Tart

All the world locked away

in her lacey heart.

Iron lung

breathing machine

to filter life,

to muffle screams.

When she rode in

on the Sherman Tank,

not the regulation go-kart

at the skating rink,

they didn't ask questions

but it sure made them think.

Land Mine

All The Time

hides low in the grass,

prays to keep the words
at bay.
Lost his mind
in the daily grind,
everywhere he saw the signs.
Cried in the dirt,
screamed at the beasts -
at least he can still tell
his Marvell from his MacLeish.

Shigella Cinderella
has no time for
most fellas,
still sentenced to
sweeping the streets.
Kamikaze Romeos
ride their nuclear bulls
to the final rodeo
right up the street
while she waits in the alley
until there's peace.
Then she resumes cleaning the mess,

dressed up in her party best
because you never know
just who you'll meet.

Ham Can

Peter Pan

Mr. Cleans with Spic n Span.

Revolving door girlfriends,

They go out when he comes in,

then runs wild in the woods

trying to call down the moon

saying 15 year-olds turn 20

about 10 years too soon.

28 February - 1 March 2023

"Poetry Class Notes"

by GS

Robert Frost -
Occasionally lost -
Shot his load
At a fork
In the road.

Shelley, trapped
In life's dark chasms
Gave his readers
Multiple sarcasms.

Emily
Desperately
Needed some
Dick and sun.

Were he alive today
It is liable
That John Milton
Would stay
At the Las Vegas Hilton
Reading the Bible,
Wasting his comp away.

Oscar Wilde
As a child
Never matured
Merely endured
Quite inured.

When God
Gave his nod
To who uses
The Muses.
Ezra Pound
Wasn't around.

It was Sandburg's luck
To be eternally stuck
In the midcentury mid-life middle-American
clusterfuck.

Keats
Beats
Yeats.

Wallace Stephens
Rode the train
Into the city
Back again
Did his job
Wrote some verse
Some was shitty
Some was worse.

William Wordsworth
Took an ax
And gave his verses
Forty whacks
That wasn't enough
To kill the things,
Some rhymes
Require poisonings.

I could be darker
Than Dorothy Parker
But she's in the lead,
Being already dead.

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.

May Dream

I played the oboe for five years as a youngster. Fifth through ninth grades. Started because I liked the sound of the duck in Peter and the Wolf. Stopped because high-school required all musicians to march on Saturdays at the football games. Oboes don't march. If you know why, I needn't explain. If you don't, no manner of explanation will make it clearer.

To remain in the band, I had to carry a clarinet, pretending to make some sound with it, in a heavy wool uniform in the September heat. Not to disparage anyone who plays clarinet, but it's different from an oboe. Not more or less difficult to play, but you cannot play an oboe and march. In a hot uniform. In September (or any other month.) You can do so with a clarinet.

All I wanted to do was get to the next semester, after the holidays, after the football season, so that I could play the oboe sitting down. We practiced a lot out on the field, me without my oboe. We also practiced some in the music room, sitting down, me with my oboe. But because I wasn't playing oboe as often as everyone else was playing their instruments that could be played both on the football field and sitting down, I was falling behind. Or maybe I wasn't, but I only thought I was. And as a mere freshman, I let that lack of confidence take over. Bad enough I was not marching around doing nothing. Had no... fellow non-clarinet players to practice marching around with (practices were held in small groups – sectionals of flutes, trumpets, clarinets, drums, etc. and I wasn't asked to join the actual playing clarinets.)

So it wasn't long before I realized (a word I would not have grasped as a fourteen/fifteen year old) was not doing well either as a player or as a non-playing poorly marching fool. I did not sign up to be in band for the spring. My parents were...troubled with that decision, reached after much holiday *sturm und drang*.

But I dream about playing. I have a seat in the center, front, facing the conductor's riser. I am attentive, as the concertmaster stands to have me play an A, long and drawn out, perfectly launched, first for the rest of the orchestra to tune to, then for the strings. I finish, and set up my music for the first piece, and then rest – ten, fifteen seconds until the house quiets and then the conductor steps out to applause.

Ben K. cyberspace

Continued from page 3

require assistance in finding something to read. We need validation on all fronts. Why? Is it because we don't want to take the time? Reading is all about time, and still we've made it into a competitive sport.

Quiz questions: How short can a story be? Five hundred words? Fifty? Five? How quickly can you write a novel? In a month? Can AI do it for you better, faster?

So, can we all agree that where there is competition, there is the inevitable "us v them" conflict? Writers and editors disagreeing, fussing and eventually raging against one another. Editors making and enforcing rules - just for the submission of a piece of writing - that are so...inscrutable and yet convoluted as to imply immediate rejection without even the courtesy of reading. And writers angry and frustrated: about editors, styles, fonts, block, genres, other writers, dead writers, old ways of seeing the universe, archaic rules, antiquated perceptions. Impersonal postcards. Wanting to know why, why *why*? All completely legitimate, of course, inasmuch as anyone's way of seeing things is. It feels disingenuous to me for two integral parts of an organism to be at odds. Like baseball players and baseball team owners. They cannot exist in these iterations, one without the other. What is a baseball player without the game? A very strong lawn-guy. What is an owner without a team? The head of their city's Parks and Recreation department.

My opinion (nothing more, nothing less)? I feel like the problems between us are a side show, and the main tent is that they - the ubiquitous they - want to determine (read control) what is out there to be read, and the only way to do that is to calmly and insidiously remind writers and editors that they each are the bane of the other's existence. Reduce choices. Make it difficult. Make it disappointing. Introduce new stumbling blocks and make the normal process feel like failing. Get us to disagree with each other.

That said, there are some unpleasant stories out (in all the ways that can be defined.) The submission tools, both electronic and flesh-and-blood, that make the act of giving one's creative beating-heart to another to examine/drop on the floor/pick up and wipe off with a bar-towel rather more unpleasant than it needs to be.

I could go on, about how substituting our lack of human interaction, camaraderie, and writerly friendship with social media "followers" makes too many of us behave like writing and getting rejected and getting published is akin to an American Idol sort of thing - our raw voices and sweaty armpits displayed on national television - but I won't because that is one really convoluted sentence.

Writers and editors/publishers are symbiotic, at least logically. Yin and Yang, moving in a natural cycle from writer to editor and back again, on and on. The writer creates, the editor presents, (the writer is pleased, the editor is pleased.) On the flip side, however, we have the editor rejecting and dismissing, and the writer steaming and sulking. Maybe this is impossible to avoid? I don't think so, but I'm just one person, one editor. I talked about this a little bit last month, but I want to make it clear - in more

than one way, we are responsible for each other. Writers and editors – together, somehow, for the reader. Yes, yes, that sounds like the sand-serif text beneath a poster of a kitten trapped on a high branch of a tree, but it is still accurate, I think. In the end, it's a moot point, after all, and I'm not in a moot mood. And without an interactive comments field, it makes it a mute moot mood. And my webmaster is not moved to unmute the moot. . . . Sorry, got carried away there.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

Contributors:

Dr. Victor Pogostin lives just outside Toronto, Ontario, is the author of Blotter Books volume "Russian Roulette" (find it on Amazon). and has these great stories about his well-spent youth. You're welcome!

K. A. Williams lives in North Carolina. Her poems have been published in many magazines including The Blotter, Tigershark, Literary Yard, 5-7-5 Haiku Journal, The Creativity Webzine, Calliope, and Scifaikuest. She has also published 11 ebooks. Among them are 3 poetry collections - "Free Verse and Rhyme: A Poetry Collection", "Limericks and Other Humorous Poems", "Scifaiku and Haiku: A Poetry Collection" and 2 mystery/crime novellas - "Tour of Intrigue" and "Question of Vendetta". Apart from writing, the author enjoys music (especially '70s rock) and word games.

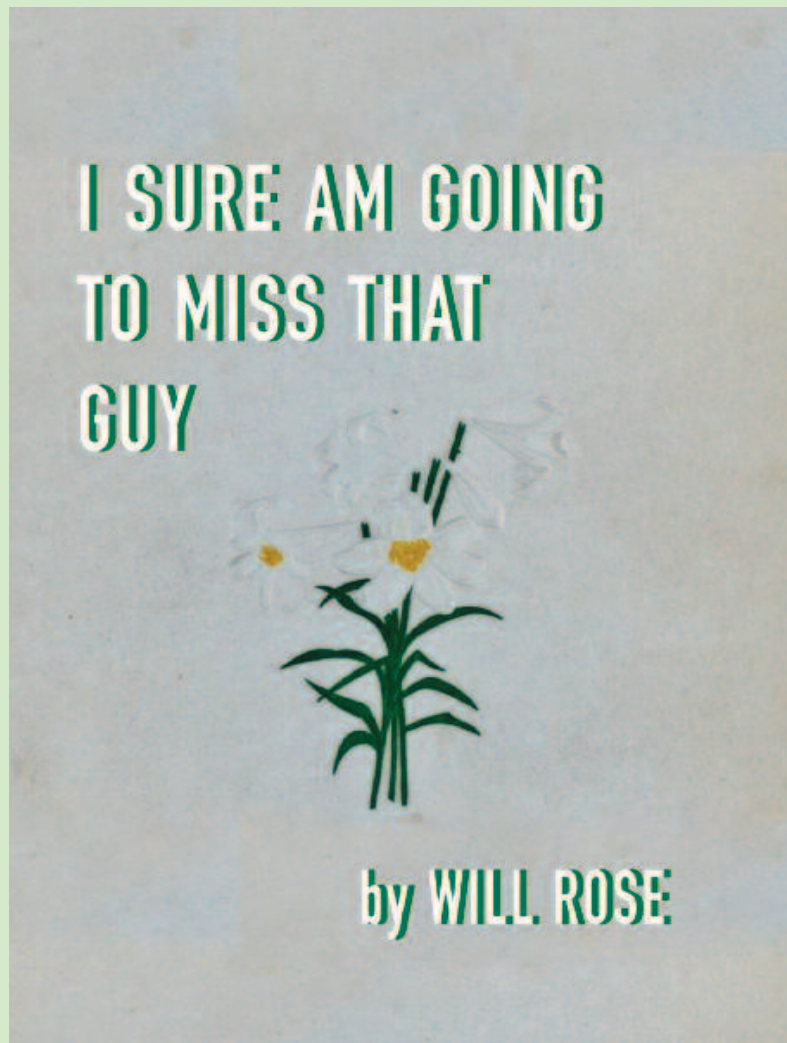
Dr. Susie Gharib is the author of To Dance on the Ugly (a collection of poetry) and Classical Adaptations, three film scripts adapted from D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover, Charlotte Brontë's Vilette, and Virginia Woolf's The Waves. Her poetry, fiction, and literary essays have appeared in numerous journals and magazines.

Richard Van Ingram is our artist, philosopher, essayist and teacher from San Antonio. He illustrated recently published volume "Ask, Alice", available on Amazon.

Jay Michael Del Greco writes, "A native of Western Pennsylvania, I have lived and worked in and around the Pittsburgh area for my whole life. I graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Studio Art in August of 2000. Currently I work as a software developer. I've been making art since childhood, but I've been showing since 1998, participating in 105 exhibitions so far. I loosely refer to my works as paintings for sake of brevity and convenience, with the knowledge that they're too sculptural to be classified that way. More accurately I believe the term "wall sculpture" is more appropriate. My interest in philosophy, literature, and music has played a considerable role in the development of my work. A vehement atheist since the age of 18, I have renounced any and all religious beliefs in favor of the human will to create as my highest moral ideal."

A simple homily about belief,
understanding, spirituality,
sin, redemption, sacrifice,
and love.

You know, just your everyday
Easter People stuff.




Blotter Books 

Available on Amazon