

The English Department presents
the 2014 Annual

Poets & Writers Anthology

A collection of original composition by students, staff, faculty, and community members at College of the Redwoods. We are pleased to present these original compositions for your enjoyment.

All of this would have been impossible without the hard work and dedication of the following people:

Spring 2013 Student Editors

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Spring 2014

Jeff Best	Come Morning Time I Rise and Shine
Amy Bloch	A Bird Caught in the Gothic Church (Poetry Prize Award Winner)
Daryl Ngee Chinn	Fog Walks In
Bob Davis	Canonized
Amy Fontaine	Roots and Wings
	Beyond the Rings
Naomi Rose Doherty	Mango Eater
Kenneth G. Kisser	The Only True Honor (Hobson Award Winner)
Kate Ward Lehre	It's Not about Meeting God, Exactly
Paul Mann	Autumn Vespers
Rachel Motian	Tunnel (Prose Prize Award Winner)
Anna Park	Encounters in the City
Stephanie Silvia	Jerry Garcia at the Keystone Berkeley 1979
Debra Zeno	A Change of Heart

Poetry prize is generously sponsored by Northtown Books
Prose prize is generously sponsored by Booklegger Books

Honorable Mentions:

Rebecca Ashbach	Walk and Run and Dance
Pam Holten	Fresh Basil
Joelle Matteoli	Friday, Chance of Rain
Krista Miller	Matriarch
Vinnie Peloso	Graffiti on the Wall: A Found Poem
Stephen Sottong	Colony One
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Julio Cesar Torres	Thinking about It
Tom Zagoria	The War Machine

Jeff Best

Come Morning Time I Rise and Shine

Come morning time, I rise and shine,
it's another day, who knows?
Perhaps fate will make my date,
with the waitress at the Woodrose.
With eyes so dark and deep,
and fairest skin, like winter snows.
The register rings, and my heart sings,
to the waitress at the Woodrose.
Headlines warning war is near,
round and round it goes.
I'll pray for love, from god above,
and the waitress at the Woodrose.
I'd brave the mountains jagged peaks,
and the fiercest wind that blows.
For eternal bliss, to share a kiss,
with the waitress at the Woodrose.

Amy Bloch

A BIRD CAUGHT IN THE GOTHIC CHURCH

Along the vaulted ceiling of the nave
a Pigeon is flapping blind.
Caught among the webbing and ribbed arches,
it beats its plump body again against
the long stained-glass windows--
manic wings upon the frame.
Soft breast feathers fall from the ceiling eaves
through the filtered light of the tower.

The bird flies into the light at the rose window
and breaks its neck against the pane.

Suger said, such
“wonderful and uninterrupted light”
of the Cathedral at Saint-Denis,
after the down feathers settled
around the bent wings and body bathed in sunlight
at the foot of the cross;
at the grand entrance of the West.

Daryl Ngee Chinn
FOG WALKS IN

Two days after
Opening Day for Deer

A gray buck trots up the side of our house
and stops.
He gazes a moment at the gate before him,
turns his head to look out
at the front yard, the street, cars rolling by.

He nibbles at the camellia leaves,
the rhododendron bush,
turns to lick his hooves and fur.
The long snout, black nose, large eyes,
the whole antlered head turns
this or that way to lick and preen himself.
Four-by-five-point.

There is something improbable
about my invisibility to him
through the screened window
and the silence between us.
Who agrees with Werner Heisenberg,
that the watcher changes the event?
Here I am, the observer,
moved but motionless,
heartbeat a-drum,
while the buck, ears swiveling,
notices nothing suspect
and stands and feeds
as if I do not exist.

It is like catching him in my lights,
but now the human freezes,
the deer does not swerve.
Instead, I study his fog gray fur
and sinuous antlers,
lined like dark old skin, cupped
hands holding a sphere of air and wishes.
Time is vapor, waiting to return.

He ambles over to the shade
beneath the fig and tulip poplar
and lies down.

When I dart to another window
to glance, his head jerks up,
but he does not leave.
I walk out to the mailbox.
We glance at each other.
Two people stroll by, talking.
Later, when I drive out,
he is still there in the shadows,
clear and invisible as breath.

Bob Davis
CANONIZED

Shoot me into the past
from the circus center ring,
wearing humongous
red and yellow shoes,
into a cave where artists
Sanctify the walls:
Holy Lions,
Sacred Tigers,
Consecrated Bears.

Shoot me now,
into the clown car,
circling fast, going nowhere.
Cram and jam,
smoke and mirror,
dog and pony.
Baptize me with
a squirting flower.

Shoot me into the future,
train ride with Boss Clown and
a tearless elephant,
down the timeless tracks
to enjoy Communion with that
sweet, sweet cherry pie.

Naomi Rose Doherty
MANGO EATER

Avatar of Shiva,
son of Zephyr and monkey.
The wind teaches him,
“fruit as ripe as the sun will be your food.”

Hovering high above the sky, a
ripe, juicy mango awaits.

One mighty leap
for one
succulent morsel.
The mango’s flesh burns his hands, singeing
his face black.

Here is born Hanuman
Capuchin monkey
God of loyalty and perseverance.

Luring and brilliant
the mango yet hovers above us, blind
to its own tricks.

Take a bite out of your flesh, consume
the radiance.
Allow it to emanate
from the creations before us.

I will give you my hands.
Burn and scorch them raw
to heal. And learn
to be tougher.

One mighty leap
demanding of my perseverance—
to *what* am I loyal ?

Hold this illumination inside my mind,
share it
among our hearts.
A sweet nectar to quench
our taste for life.

One thick slice of the juicy mango
will suffice.

Amy Fontaine

BEYOND THE RINGS

Somewhere in the galaxy
a planet spins around two stars.
Another planet is spongy,
like Styrofoam.
There are also planets
that could support life.

I like to think about these last ones in particular,
but I'm sure we will not see them in my lifetime.
The alien worlds
with other creatures
feeling other pains and joys
are confined to my imagination
for now.

For now,
I will tend my own little
chosen patch of stardust:
the pelicans on the water,
the old man crossing the street,
that certain look
in your eyes
when we make love.

I'll try not to think
of those other living planets,
of the future that cannot
belong to me and you.

Amy Fontaine
ROOTS & WINGS

Looking forward to the day
when we have nothing
else
to do and we can
climb the trees
and wake the owls
with the creaking and groaning
of our feet
against the limbs,
high for a moment
to forget
the world we came from,
knowing only
this new realm
of leaf and feather.

Shadows ripple inside us,
stirring the boughs
below.
The smell of sap and resin
stains our hands with sweet-
soul meaning.
I want to love you only
as the forest loves the trees.
In the deepest groves of my
heart I want to hold you
forever

Kenneth Kisser

THE ONLY TRUE HONOR

Some die in battle. Some later, of their wounds. Some, years later. Not all their wounds are of the body. Nor their deaths. Nor all their battles in the field. Nor ours...

2 Vets

1 Nam

1 Mid E

@ NCVRC

Both said pretty much the same

There was no honor in our battles

In them

Or awarded

Our Victories too few & hard fought won

Discounted

False Purposed

Pointless

Our losses too many, too much to bear

2 Addicts

1 Alkie

1 Junkie

@ NCVRC

@ 0500

Both rise & tarnish, bright & surly

Strive, struggle, stumble, sometimes fall, too often fail

Each new same-o day

Their losses are crosses not carried save by self

There are no victories save of self

Too few & hard fought won

There is no honor in their battles

Save self awarded in the mirror

Each new ending day

Note: NCVRC (North Coast Veterans Resource Center) is a homeless shelter for vets located at 109 4th Street in Eureka, CA.

Kate Ward Lehre

IT'S NOT ABOUT MEETING GOD, EXACTLY

It's not about meeting God, exactly,
not about mosque or temple or church.
It's about the way the sun slants onto the dusty floor,
the way the floor meets the cracked wall,
the way the wall protects the old woman,
the way the woman turns a page, just so,
the way the page spills out generous words,
the way the words enter her tired heart,
the way her heart pauses, and rests,
All, whether or not she's met God.

Paul Mann
AUTUMN VESPERS

When we were girls and boys we played kick the leaves.
The point was to kick them as high as your knees or,
better yet, your head.
Autumn leaves lay everywhere in heaps and windrows,
filling grassy culverts along the village side streets
and blanketing the slate walks.
Yellow school buses swept by,
returning to the garages from their last run of the day.
Sometimes we scattered the leaves with our feet,
other times we gathered two arms' full and heaved them
into the air to descend on us like fall rains.
Or we dumped leaves on each other's heads,
which prefigured the juvenile flirtations soon to burst forth.
The girls were little Ophelias with dimpled knees to die for;
pleated glen plaid wool skirts accented their cuddliness.
The boys were sheepish Princes of Denmark
who whooped and hollered to disguise
their blushing adoration of female beauty.
When the shouting died down,
we shuffled along slowly in the piles, ankle deep,
in the middle of the empty and darkening streets,
listening to the leaves' scratchy rustle, the sound of loss they made.
They smelled of faerie dust, of course.
We dreaded the end of the fun and the goodbyes
that signaled our return to our cozy homes,
porches rimmed with pumpkins and colored corn.
There was work as well as play; leaves were raked
in those days, there wasn't an infernal blower to be heard.
Dad bought leaf rakes at Turnberry's Hardware Store
and admonished us to get busy in the yard.
Rakes were rugged, made of metal not plastic.
Leaves clung to the tines;
we combed them off with our fingers and hurled them into the fire,
mixing twigs into the flames.
We savored the tang of leaf smoke,
felt our eyes burn and water,
munched on a crisp apple,
felt our faces redden from the heat of the blaze.
There was no such thing as pollution,
no environmental or climate alarms.
Innocent of human futility and the banality
of the adult destinies that would overtake us,

we headed home in the sublunary dark,
giggling, blissfully tired and hungry for supper.

Rachel Motian
TUNNEL

On the way to growing-up, I dropped out of high school and pretended like I might go to college some day. Buck occasionally got saved at church and pretended like he might sober up someday. We both grew into our parents.

We use to cut class and spend time at the park. My favorite spot was inside the yellow plastic tunnel that ran through the center of the overly multicolored jungle gym in a place that was otherwise grass and oak trees.

I never wanted to go home and would let him kiss me just for the company. Buck didn't like the tunnel much, but he liked my kisses enough to stay—even if it was cramped—even if the color sometimes gave him a headache.

In school we were more distant. Buck would listen to the rumors of my promiscuity and laugh. I would watch Buck fail every class and laugh.

“I'm never gonna drink,” he told me once huddled in the tunnel as rain flooded the park around us.

I smiled.

“Don't you believe me?”

I shrugged my shoulders. “Doesn't most of your family drink?”

“You'll see,” he said and leaned down to kiss me. I kept my eyes open as we kissed, no matter how many times Bucked told me to shut them.

“What are you looking at when we kiss?” he asked once. “The tunnel. I like the yellow... maybe nothing.”

“I can never figure you out.” Still, he never asked me to shut them again.

Sometimes he would ask, “If I didn't come, would you bring somebody else to the park?”

“I don't like to be alone” was my answer.

Now I see him, leaning on the broken railing of the defunct police station. The building was abandoned due to faulty wiring. I thought it should be condemned. Bulldozed over. But it stood—ignored with broken windows—on the edge of a parking lot. The parking lot it shared with the only grocery store in town.

Walking out of the store, I spot him. It's the end of my double shift. Feet tired, calves cramping, I smoke my cigarette with a little desperation. I keep my head down and ignore my name slurring off his lips. I do what I always do when he's drunk downtown. I pretend not to see him—that the distance between us is too great. But I can see the three different colors of puke on his shirt and the dirt on his hands. I can tell he hasn't been home in a long time and probably can't remember the way.

I weave through the outskirts of the parking lot, sliding between the empty spaces parked cars leave. In one of the cars, I notice Buck's older sister. I haven't seen her in years, but she looks the same. She's staring in the direction I am avoiding.

Three years earlier she had caught us smoking pot at the park after a basketball game. She had graduated the summer before and liked to tell everyone she was moving to the city.

I offered her a hit.

She glared at us. “Don't you know weed's a gateway drug?”

I laughed. Buck took another hit. “Sister, we don't need a gateway drug, we have a gateway life.”

Anna Park

ENCOUNTERS IN THE CITY

A man thrusts a paper in my face as though disseminating the word of God.
A Mormon dressed up as a haggard old man.
Where was his starched shirt and bicycle helmet?

His skin nearly as thin as the ink on the paper tells its own story.
One maybe God doesn't even know or understand.
As I look into his face, I try to see his story.

The hidden kisses forever held inside broken and bleeding lips.
Almost as red as the lipstick on Marie that very first time.
Large peaceful brown eyes stare out at me.
Now move so slowly but once beheld the swiftness of bullets,
whizzing through the air.
He was lucky I guess.
Teeth that once held the richness of custard and pies
are now removed at night to remain hidden in a jar of green.
The holes of his head seem so full I don't know how it all fits.

As I take the paper, I see these loves, exotic cakes, and war.
I hand him a coin in gratitude for the story he just silently shared.
I think I know this man, but if God can't figure him out, how can I?

Stephanie Silvia

JERRY GARCIA AT THE KEYSTONE BERKELEY 1979

Oh my—

he was looking right at me

There was a moment

in the middle of a

lonely riff

He looked right at me

and then he sang

and it was like the Mona Lisa

a message

from heaven from Atlantis from the moon

from the heart of the universe

like the Mona Lisa

smiling smiling at me smiling right at me

I swear

Debbie Zeno

A CHANGE OF HEART

I was four years old when we moved into the big, yellow house with its steep brown shingled roof. It would be the place I would call home for about 11 years. It was on a secluded street that was nestled in the Oakland hills.

My face was nearly pressed against the car window as mom drove slowly along the narrow winding road. I was fascinated by the pine trees' shadows that cast multiple shapes on and in-between the houses.

"Is it that one Mommy?"

"No, not that one either sweetheart."

I knew not to ask again by the tone of her voice.

We finally arrived. I'm certain that I annoyed the movers by being in their way, asking endless questions, and getting underfoot. Each box they opened with one sweep of their sharp knives was stuff for the house--unfortunately not Christmas presents, much to my disappointment.

Boxes began to fill the room on the top floor that I shared with my big sister Marian. It had big windows that never failed to let in plenty of light, even on stormy mornings. Grandma Abbey sewed pale red curtains that made them even more special. We were given the task of putting our books away on freshly painted built in shelves. Dr. Seuss, *Little House on the Prairie*, and our other beloved stories appeared. Mom had packed them away a few days earlier. Lost among the mass of boxes in the living room, I was sure that I would never see them again.

We rushed downstairs when we heard loud voices. There was an angry, red-faced stranger standing in doorway. I didn't understand many of the words that she said to my parents. As she turned and left, she stopped at end of the walkway, turned, and pointed her finger at my dad.

"You're too close to my house."

Dad wrapped his muscular arms around my mom and pulled her against his chest as she began to cry.

"I knew that buying this house would be a bad idea."

He kissed her on top of her head, and I wrapped my arms around her slender legs.

“Not everyone is like her. Don’t worry, Betty, we will be fine.” He bent down and looked at me. “Don’t you worry either,” he said, ruffling my hair.

“Girls, I bet your brothers will have empty boxes before you do.” We raced back upstairs and finished unpacking.

A few days later, I was outside riding my tricycle. Dad told me to stay in front of the house. Of course I didn’t obey. I stopped in front of each house and wondered about my new neighbors. What were they like? Could I go in and see?

Some of the houses were big like ours; some were small. Most had large windows on the top floor. I especially liked the white house with the blue. It looked happy. There were red and orange flowers planted in front. I really wanted to go explore that house, but the shades were closed. I knew that meant that usually no one was home.

“Let’s come back later,” I told my always-present teddy bear, Olivia.

We continued our journey, stopping in front of each house.

I came to a sudden stop when I found myself at the feet of the stranger from our first day. She had short brown hair, and she was wearing the kind of colorful polka dots on her pants that I thought only children wore. She was standing on the sidewalk with her arms crossed in front of her. I did not know what to expect of her. Was she going to start yelling at me? She looked down at me but said nothing.

Her shirt was green, but it didn’t match any of the dots on her pants. I was going to mention that she didn’t do a good job of matching her clothes that day, but I remembered that mom said saying something like that would be rude.

I saw numbers that were inscribed on her arm.

“Why did your mommy write your phone number on your arm? Is it so you won’t forget?”

She quickly covered the tattoo with her other hand.

“No, darling,” she said. “It’s because there are some in this world who were very mean people.”

“Like you? You are mean. You made my mommy cry.”

“No, darling. Nothing like that.”

She knelt down and fixed the errant ribbon on my pigtail. She smiled and was gentle.

“No. I never should have said those awful things to your parents.”

I said in my most serious voice, “My teacher Ms. Casey said if you ever make someone cry, you have to apologize to them--and you have to mean it,” I said in my most serious voice.

“Okay, I will, darling.”

“Do you have any cookies?”

She threw her head back and laughed.

“Yes, I do. I baked some this morning, but I don’t know your name, little one.” We introduced ourselves.

“May I have some?”

She went inside and came out with two cookies wrapped in a napkin. They looked different from those I had helped mom or grandma bake. These were like little softly folded tubes filled with jam. I took a small bite. They were good, and with that she became my cookie connection.

Every time my mom would say: “No cookies.”

I would make my way to Mrs. Kahenes’s house and get a few cookies.

I would knock on her door and go in, sometimes with 5 or 6 of my friends. I found she had a warm smile, a loving hug, and, of course, cookies. When mom was busy, she became my babysitter, and we would make those wonderful cookies. Sometimes I would insist in using strawberry jam, even though her husband loved apricot. She taught me how to make *perogi*. I loved watching the soft pillows of dough rise to the top of the boiling water, indicating they were ready to be sautéed. I made stuffed cabbage with her, and something about the way the meat, onions, and rice felt as I squished them together in my hands was lots of fun. They cooked in a sweet tomato sauce. When I was 11, I surprised both families by making her recipe for my father’s birthday dinner. They were a hit. Those days were special because outside of cooking I learned a lot about life.

We would talk and laugh as she told me about growing up in Poland, telling me how much fun she had a child playing with her younger sister, Magdalena. They played the same games that my sister and I played. We each had favorite dolls, tea parties, and we loved playing in the park. When I asked where her sister was, she grew quiet and looked down.

“Someday I will tell you little one. You are too young to understand.”

“Why do grown-ups always say that?” I asked Olivia, she looked at me with her big button eyes (she spoke only to me).

“I think they just don’t know how smart 4-year-olds are.”

I loved to visit their home, even learning to like the smell of Mr. Kahene’s cigars. I thought they smelled like burning broccoli, not at all like the smell of warm cherries of my grandpa’s pipe.

She was also an amazing artist and could draw anything. I remember summer mornings when we would draw together. I had my 64 color box of crayons and several pads of dull tan paper. Mrs. Kahene sat on one of her kitchen chairs at her easel with her beautiful oil pastels and her brilliant white paper. I sprawled out on the sidewalk next to her. She could draw anything, but most of the time she drew pictures of her childhood in Poland.

We spent many summer mornings this way. I told her about how nervous I was about my upcoming Kindergarten year. She told my stories about her boys Maury and David who had the same concerns but had survived them, and even liked them.

Sometimes I wish I had not scampered off with my friends the moment they had appeared during our art time, ending those special times with this wonderful person. Today she sits in a wheelchair at a convalescent home. She no longer wears the colorful polka dot pants, and I can no longer smell the cookies in her warm kitchen. It is bittersweet that everything smells like antiseptic. Old age and lack of memory have erased a great deal of our friendship. I wish I could hand her two cookies wrapped in a napkin, and she would understand.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Rebecca Ashbach

WALK AND RUN AND DANCE

Walk with me and watch the world
Whirling, full of wondrous scenes:
Woods and waters, midnight wanderings
Forlorn fables, fairy rings.

Run with me through fields and forest,
Feel the grass between your toes,
Sift soft sand between your fingers
While the windy blusters blow.

Dance with me through deep and desert,
Take delight from day to day,
Sing of starlight in the darkness,
Loosing light along the way.

Come with me through all creation,
Let our hearts be full and free,
Mirrors of our Maker's beauty:
Walk, and run, and dance with me!

Pam Holten
FRESH BASIL

Ordering my espresso
at Ukiah Natural Foods,
I glanced to the side
and saw her.

Transfixed by and fondling
fresh, sweet basil,
allure of pesto
and pasta hypnotic.

My eyes, enchanted, led me.
Her world I entered.
I became her basil, her pesto.
I yearned to be consumed.

Looking up, she saw me,
She knew, she tasted.
My heart left me
Dancing in the aisles.

Oh yes, my espresso-
Clerk announces \$3.50
But all I am or own
Belongs to her now.

Following my heart,
I offer myself to her
By simply stating,
"I think I know you."

She replies,
"That's possible.
Do you love fresh basil?"
I answer, "Intimately."

Joelle Matteoli
Friday, Chance of Rain
(A Pantoum)

Happy birthday, my love.
I miss you tonight.
I am in my university library. It rains, our grey world slumbers.
Dressed in my pajamas, I sip tea.

I miss you tonight.
My guess—you're steeped in Chaucer, pursing your lips, —those elegant lips—brow furrowed.
The night is cold. I am in my pajamas, breathing steam of hibiscus.
Perhaps it rains, too, on your quaint wooden roof.

I see you wrapped in Shakespeare, lips pursed, eyes glowing.
Can you sense the heavy drumming of my finger on this paper?
Perhaps there's sun-brushed snow on your green dorm roof,
while I scribble nothings on paper meant for Stats.

All I feel is constant thudding—like a heartbeat—on my temple.
My textbooks nap at my feet.
I write empty words;
my love reads Aristotle.

Biology snores at my feet.
My striped socks laugh. I realize they are mismatched.
My love breathes the classics.
Darling, your girl's gone mad.

My candy-cane sock is warmer than its friend.
I re-wrap my scarf and kiss your photograph;
the place is empty, so no one will think I'm mad...
Then my eyelids meet, and catch on that dream...

Crocheting your scarf, I sit in a sunny window.
Asleep in your chair-- the dark hair falls off your sweet forehead.
That etched face, kind mouth—then my own finds your eyelids.
The brown of your skin paints my breathing... like the warm rush of cocoa.

I wake in my chair in the back of the cold library.
The ash-colored carpet yawns 'neath my textbooks.

I blink. The chocolate of your hands, a warm breath of cocoa—
I startle at the flash of the jewel on my hand.

I love you, I whisper to the ash-colored carpet.
I love you, I grin to wherever you are.
The gem at my left sings its love medley upward.
I pick up my notebook and run through the hush—heavy like smoke. My feet bounce on that
carpet.

Giggling, I come to the last row of shelves.
I land in the cloud of my own rushing body.
Clutching my diary, I tiptoe through the hush.
Feeling, for an instant, like Nancy Drew.

My body slows at the window, and I laugh at myself.
I am in the university library. The rain helps us slumber.
Hugging your picture, I gaze out at the night: wet, ebony, and soft.
Happy birthday, my love. Sweet dreams.

Krista Miller
MATRIARCH

Can you remember when you were last a barefoot child who ran through the forest
Chasing the songbird on its way home?
Or when your father could see to drive the wagon from farm to farm before there was
Whiskey
Before time?
How your dreams carry the visions of family
Pure and raw born to values driven into hard clay with fits of survival
Ability to shape change, culture shift, to swiftly be adept at anything
Fierce towards would be enemies
Complacent in the luxury of privilege
Running from the storm

Vinnie Peloso

GRAFFITI ON THE WALL IN THE ACCESSIBLE STALL OF THE FIRST FLOOR MEN'S ROOM IN THE NEW HUMANITIES BUILDING ON CR'S EUREKA CAMPUS: A FOUND POEM

Three things I hate:

- 1) *Graffiti*
- 2) *Lists*
- 3) *Irony*

- 2/22/14 (graffiti removed, 2/24/14)

Stephen Sottong
COLONY ONE

The hydroponics' water smelled sour. The digester was having trouble with the extra mass. Elizabeth sighed. "Dex."

"Yes, Liz."

"Check the pH on the digester." She noticed his hesitation. "I know it's unpleasant, but we can't lose our food and oxygen supply."

He nodded. "All right. It just gives me the willies every time I get close to that thing." He shivered. "And the smell ..."

"I know." She put a hand on his arm.

Dex nodded and left.

A grow light flickered. Elizabeth picked up a length of plastic pipe and banged on the end of the end of the fixture. It went out and then sputtered back to life. She brushed a graying hair from her eyes and headed for the planting table. She'd sprout extra corn. They didn't need the food, but the plants would help convert some of the unneeded nutrients. Corn could be stored pulling biomass out of the system. One of the paradoxes of their little colony was that the fewer they were, the more food they needed to store.

Mitch poked his head into the greenhouse. "Coming out of shadow. We'll begin reception in a couple of minutes."

Elizabeth took off her gardening gloves. "His daughter will be first, I expect. Tomorrow would have been his birthday."

Mitch nodded. They secured the airtight door as they walked to the communications center.

The outside camera showed the dish antenna seeking, hesitating. Mitch manually moved the antenna back and forth, up and down. "I've got to get out there and clean the dust out of those joints again." The antenna resumed seeking and finally locked.

The screen came to life. A girl in her late teens appeared. "Hi grandpa!" She broke into a chorus of Happy Birthday. "I got accepted to Barnard. They gave me a scholarship because I'm the granddaughter of a famed Martian explorer. Thanks gramps. How are you doing? I'll be waiting for your reply."

Mitch looked at Elizabeth. "She's expecting to see Joe in four minutes. Do you take this or do I?"

"I'll take it."

"Are you going to tell her the truth?"

"Tell her that her grandfather couldn't take the pain of his deteriorating bones? Could barely stand because his heart was failing? Tell her he opened an airlock without his suit on?" She shook her head. "No. I'll tell her he died of a heart attack and that we buried him on his beloved Mars." She put a hand on Mitch's arm. "And I hope when I finally can't take it any longer that you feed my niece the same pack of lies."

"You're going to be around for a long time."

She shook her head. "We knew there were dangers living in low gravity. We knew this was a one-way trip." She sat up, straightened her collar, ran a hand through her hair.

"Presentable?"

"Always."

"Open the link."

Patti Stammer
ANOTHER COUNTRY

“You need a passport to come down here,” said Reese Witherspoon in *Sweet Home Alabama*. Whoever wrote that line must have met my family from Chattanooga or Uncle Chester’s line from Louisiana.

In the summer of 1960, I was sixteen, and it was the calm before the storm in most of America. My parents dragged me to a family reunion in Chattanooga, Tennessee. It was not exactly the summer I’d imagined for myself, and I was cranky. My sister was eight years younger than I, so it was all a big adventure to her. Instead of being happy that she was having fun, I did my best to make her as miserable as I was. Fortunately, according to all accounts, I was ‘raised proper’ so my parents weren’t ready to drive off and leave me in a gas station somewhere. But I swear, every now and then, I could see my father’s hand twitch with anticipation of giving me a good swat on the behind. I had outgrown the threat of “Do I have to get my belt?” by the time I entered high school. I never actually got smacked with his belt, but the image was always in my mind if I even thought about what my parents always referred to as ‘back-talk.’

Until the Miller Family Reunion, I never knew my Grandfather Miller had five brothers. A passel of Millers showed up, and you could pick ‘em out in a crowd. My father, Fredrick Alfred, (Fred Fred), had eight brothers and a sister. He was the only one to ever leave the south. My Uncle Dub introduced me to someone, and she said, “This is Miss Patsy, Alfred’s daughter. You remember my brother Alfred, the Yankee.” And so it was for the entire reunion...that sentence rolled off his tongue over and over again. My sister, Miss Freddy Sue, was introduced the same way. “Who do you favor?” “Where do you fall?” “Hey, honey! Gimme some sugar.”

During the week we were in Chattanooga, I heard words, phrases, and ideas that were absolutely from another country, not just another *part* of the country.

My Grandmother Pearl was an alterations seamstress at a big department store downtown. It was the kind of store where all the clerks wore gray, black, or brown; had sensible shoes and carried handkerchiefs in their sleeves. You could get luggage, suits, bridal gowns, cookware, cosmetics, and get measured for brassieres that were kept in clear boxes behind the counter. I'm certain the store had been there since the War of Northern Aggression, and the stock looked to be either that old, or filled with only things that people bought year in, year out. Trendy, avant-garde, or even fashions from this century were not on display. There were no portable stereos, bell-bottom pants, Capezios, puka shells, short skirts, records by Chubby Checker, Johnny Mathis, or Sam Cooke. Elvis was barely tolerated.

Aunt Precious took me shopping and visiting my Grandmother for lunch at the store. As we came to the double doors at the entrance, a young woman with a baby in a stroller was approaching at the same time. I walked quickly to hold the door open for her to make navigation easier. My Aunt looked like she had just sucked a lemon and said not a word to me until we met my grandmother. When Grandma Pearl looked at us, she knew something was wrong. I had no clue, but my Aunt spat it out, "Patsy held the door open for a negra and her pick-a-ninny. I could just die. Thank Jesus none of our friends saw us." I guess the look on my face made them think I was dumb as a box of rocks, because an explanation, of sorts, followed. "We're Baptists, and we do not mix with coloreds. They're gettin' uppity since that Martin King started preaching to our good Negros, gettin' 'em riled up and forgettin' their place." Holy crap! I thought stuff like this was only in the movies. I really was dumb as a box of rocks.

We had lunch in a diner in downtown, walking distance from the store. While we were eating, I asked my grandmother if they had shrimp salads in Tennessee. “You mean those little pink grub worms? Well, I ain’t never tried ‘em, but I don’t reckon I’d like ‘em.” There were several more phrases that stuck with me. After she’d finished lunch, my Aunt said, “I feel just like a tick on a fat dog!” and later describing a woman at her church she actually said this, “I declare, that woman’s rear end is two ax handles across. If somebody said to haul ass, she’d have to make two trips.” As we were walking back to the store, my Grandmother looked at me and said she’d enjoyed hearing about California. “Honey, you could talk a hound off a meat truck.” I ask you... how many homey homilies can one Yankee teenager hear without a room to hide in and a door to slam?

The day after the reunion, as a special treat for us Yankees, we were taking a boat trip on the Tennessee River. Great, I thought, relief from the steaming heat. We boarded my Uncle Bobby’s houseboat and soon were floating downstream. Sunbathing! Get a tan at all costs, so I could go back home looking how all California teenagers in the ‘60s looked...blonde, burnt to a crisp, with white lipstick.

Incredible as it seemed, it wasn’t 150 degrees, and I was actually enjoying myself...until we started to go through the Chickamauga Lock. I’m still not sure how these locks work, or why they’re on the river, and when I was sixteen, I cared even less than I do now. We floated into a concrete box that was narrow, not much wider than the street where I lived, and the walls above us were tall and seemed to be crumbling to pieces. Then a huge set of doors behind our boat closed, and we were ‘locked in.’ Everyone except me thought that was funny. The adults on this ‘pleasures cruise’ were happily drinking beer, gin and tonics in tall glasses and smoking cigarettes, everyone except the Baptists. Only my tee totaling aunt and uncle noticed that I was

about to come unglued. Even through my sunburn, my face must have looked pale, because Aunt Betty looked at me and said, “Why Patsy, you look as if you’ve seen a haint.” One of the uncles responded with, “She does seem a might nervy.” I had never heard either of these expressions; I didn’t know what they were talking about, and I didn’t care. All I knew was that I was locked in a crumbling concrete box full of water, and we were sinking.

After what seemed like half my life, but was only about a half an hour, the doors opened, and we floated out onto Lake Chickamauga. I went below and burst into tears. My sister, whom I had been torturing relentlessly for days, laughed until I thought she would wet her pants. We spent the rest of the afternoon swimming, floating on air mattresses and tubes, lolling around in the sun. It was definitely the best afternoon I had spent on this trip. It was getting toward the end of the day when I realized that we had to go back through the lock to get home. I hid below and hoped it would be over soon. I could hear my sister laughing telling everyone that I was a ‘fraidy cat.’ Brat!

I came out on deck after I knew the ordeal of the locks was passed. I had a story to tell my friends back home. I knew none of them had ever been locked in a lock. It was almost dark, and all the adults were hovering along the rear of the boat. My uncle had a spotlight and was shining it about ten feet off the rear deck. I could see something wiggling around in the water. Soon there were two, three, four, and then too many to count. “Miss Patsy, did you know that snakes won’t go into a garden where gourds grow?” “What?” I replied, now totally confused. “Them’s Cottonmouth moccasins,” said uncle somebody. “Is that like a rattlesnake?” I asked. “Worse” came a chorus of responses. There were more snakes squiggling and churning in the river than I could count. My skin crawled, and I threw up...right there on deck. These crazy people let Freddy Sue and me swim in water full of snakes? Cottonmouth water moccasins that

were worse than rattle snakes! Where the hell were my parents and why hadn't they said something? I didn't know many curse words when I was sixteen, but an absolute betrayal by the people who should have been taking care of us, dredged up all the foul words in my vocabulary. They came out in one long stream, each one tumbling over the next. I don't know how long this went on, but finally my mother's arms were around me, and she was whispering in my ear, "I didn't know. I didn't know."

Once I 'got over being ugly,' things were different. The trust that I'd had in my parents and anyone older than I was suddenly in question. I thought about drinking and smoking and wondered if maybe the Baptists had the right idea. I cut my sister some slack and saw her as a little kid, instead of a pain in the butt. I started listening to the phrases around me and wondered how the South and its people could look the same and be so different from where I lived.

The language was colorful, and the expressions make me laugh even now, but the hidden undercurrents of fear and judgment I first felt on that trip to Chattanooga have caused me to question much in my life. I've counted my blessings that my father, Alfred the Yankee, mustered out of the Army in California...the only one of his family to ever live anywhere else. I've wondered what it would be like to live the life of blind devotion to God and family that was so present. How would it be to grow up following the rules and never questioning, because it's what you, your parents, your grandparents, and past generations were taught. What would be like to grow up hating, fearing, and killing people because they were a different color?

My life changed that summer in Chattanooga. My parents looked like real people for the first time, and I was no longer afraid of them. I saw hate and stupidity up close. Claustrophobia and fear of snakes became constant nightmares. It seemed like everything we saw in the movies was true.

Well, I ain't never tried it, but I don't reckon I'd like it...

Janet Supar
THREE DAYS IN EGYPT

He found himself in the desert, alone.
He was naked.
He looked to the West and saw her walking towards him.
She was naked, carrying green plants.
“Cover yourself,” he ordered. “You are naked.”
“And so are you!” she replied.

Then gently, he took the plants from her hands, divided them in two
and together they covered themselves.
Suddenly the desert became green and he asked the woman, “Is this your paradise?”
“Yes,” she replied.
“How long have you had it?” he asked.
“For three days my love.”
Then he took her hand in his and together they walked to the East.

Julio Cesar Torres
THINKING ABOUT IT

Wrong place. Right Time.
Wrong words. Slip of tongue.
Presence of fate?
Cows graze. Lovely Face.
Great open space. Surrounded by a much greater closed space.
I didn't think it would really bother me,
I thought that it wouldn't get to me.
The more and less I think about it,
I get a strange and familiar feeling.
My throat gets thin,
My ribs get narrow and touch.
It passes. It comes and goes.
I miss you.

Tom Zagoria
THE WAR MACHINE

I stare
out
across the fields
that once were rye
at the hulking
shivering carcass
the wreck of
an instrument
an instrument of struggle.

So out of place
is this formidable horror
that I
with sprightly limbs
leap upon its turret
to stare down into its abyss.

Cold iron greets my cheek
as I
with weary limbs
rest my head upon its
silver snout.
It
so powerful, so beautiful
does not speak
but unbounded and unbidden
rolls onward.

Moments later with a creak
that raises its tenor and its volume until
it cannot be other than a scream that makes me shudder
the great beast of burden directed in life by humanity and only able to choose for itself
the time of its passing
stops.
It stopped. I glance up, survey the scene.

That which held such beauty
such power
is deceased.
I see now
the trail of gears
and ugly paraphernalia of

the grand machine
laid out like
a line of ants not advancing
but dropping dead along the path
falling like sweat from the monster's back.
I see the twisted barrel
curved
like a cruel iron salute
and to the blackened creature (late creature)
now deceased
to you I ask
what ancient games were played with you
that made you so?