

*Mad Dogs and Englishmen aint a-goin' outside:* William Walsh teaches us new tricks; E. Townsend talks us off the ledge; Doug Draime, Jacob Kerner and Andy Coe take it out of school; mckenzee's second installment of the Cdulhuvida saga; the art and artisanry of Gary Pohl; a new Five Minutes With and The Dream Journal.

# The Blotter

MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2007



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Cover art: Gary Pohl's kinetic sculpture "Statue of Liberty". See center-fold for more.

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## Chicken salad.

I struggle with poultry. Of all God's creatures, they cause me the greatest angst. Some people prefer the variability of shape, color and size that dogs and cats have acquired, or the closeness that man can gain with horses or...parrots. I like chickens. It is a matter of taste, and as such there is no arguing with it.

Recently, I've become a bit of a disappointment to my older daughter. Not quite yet to my youngest one, who still wants me to wake her up each morning, but who tests me every day to see if I will stop her from crossing the street without holding hands. To small fry I am still the wise and powerful Oz. But my eldest is deciding that her Daddy is faulty. Evidenced by Spongebob Squarepants.

For those of you not familiar with Spongebob, he lives in a pineapple under the sea, is absorbent, yellow and porous. I memorized the lyrics to his theme song before my daughter did, and this thrilled her, because it was a tangible demonstration of my love for the things she loved. Now, however, she thinks Spongebob is "babyish". I've learned to care for him like a square, yellow little brother, but she has already outgrown him. That I make her lunch humming Spongebob's song is an ominous sign that I am occasionally wrong about things.

As a stay-at-home dad it has always been my plan to participate in the lives of, influence the development of, and, to a certain extent, wash the brains of my children, steering them to love some of the things that I love: reading, music, chess, the outdoors. Baseball. I want them to know the difference between right and wrong, and to understand their own responsibilities with regards to doing what is right. As time has passed I know better my limitations. I can but place certain ideas and opportunities in their path, and hope that they appreciate them. I think I see this more closely and, perhaps, wrong-headededly than a father who spends his days in the office and recognizes that his influence on his children is constrained by lack of time together.

There was a time when my elder daughter followed me out into the woods, to look at birds and plants and rabbits and deer. Her first pet was a crustacean; a large crawfish who lived in our dining room in a goldfish bowl. She named him Crawdaddy. I didn't get the connection at first. It became more apparent when he died. We buried him with full crawfish honors, and she wrote a letter to God (or was it Santa?) to remind him about how much she missed her friend.

There were always more pets, some lived and some died in the fullness of pet-time. And while I don't think she yet understands that death gives life real meaning and value -- it has an end and this end could come without real warning -- she has learned the nature of living things.

But now she is also asking questions like, "Are *you* going to die?" My wife and I tell her, "Yes, but not today. Not for a long while." She looks deeply into our eyes, ascertaining truth or hoping for some clarification of just how long that while is. For now, she trusts us. But life and death loom out there, cloudy and uncertain.

My Dad plan is exposed for the fraud it is. I admit that my goal is to delay my daughters' growing up, to be happy at play, content with small discoveries and derail the inevitable Eureka moment that I am not necessary to them. My little one now wants to help me butter her toast, and put laundry in the washing machine. She wants me to see her doing what she is supposed to do. But my older girl has ceased soliciting my help or voluntarily assisting me in my tasks. When I offer advice, more and more her response is, "I know." All that is missing is, "Duh, Dad."

Back to chickens. Last spring we had a rooster and a hen, hatched in a classroom incubator, brought home from school, their growth a measure of this spring, summer and autumn. They were my daughters' friends; they watched the birds grow, helped feed them, asked about how and when the hen would lay eggs, talked to Rex the rooster through the fall as if unruliness was something he could unlearn, something they could correct.

One February night the winter wind howled and shook the bare branches. I should have covered the chicken coop with a tarp, but the bitter weather surprised me. The twenty-degree night was too much for Rex, and when I woke, he was lying cold on the floor. I talked with my girls about what had happened. They both hugged me, comforted me, because they sensed my loss as much as felt their own. "We should have brought him inside," the elder told me later. "*You should have done something.*" I knew that I had failed her in a way that she saw as clearly as her seven year old eyes could. She forgave me, because that is her way, but I am now irreparably fallible, and that's a long fall for a father. How she sees me will continue to change, as my girls comprehend that they can learn without me, can do those things that girls do without my assistance. They can even live, without me.

So, I can't slow time, and I can't stop death, and I know the lyrics to the Spongebob theme song, but soon no one will care. I have new chickens. A father does what he has to do. *If nautical nonsense is something you wish, then drop on the deck and flop like a fish.* Ah, well. I've heard that things will get worse before they get worse.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

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#### CAUTION

*The Blotter* frequently contain certain words or ideas that offend the editor's mother. While this was in no way our intent, she lives really far away and can't even keep me from drinking milk out of the carton. Forewarned is forearmed. And a forearm is fifteen yards for unnecessary roughness.

## "Questioning Local Specialties"; A derived text sourced from *Feeding a Yen:*

*Savoring Local Specialties from Kansas City to Cuzco*, by Calvin Trillin, 2003

by William Walsh

If I can find those gnarly little dark pumpernickel bagels that we used to get at Tannenbaum's, you'll move back to New York, right? Daddy, how come in Kansas City the bagels taste like just round bread? You don't think it could be those chiles rellenos I had for lunch, do you? Would Proust have been ironic about the madeleine, particularly if he had fetched up in a place where you couldn't get a decent madeleine if your life depended on it? So you think she's just humoring her old dad? What could it hurt? Do you think Nikki might come back, too, if we found the bagels? Then they weren't real bagels? Would Moshé's West be a few blocks

closer to Manhattan than the original Moshé's? It's true that she expressed no interest whatsoever in bagels, but what if I got Mark Federman to agree to carry those little pumpernickel numbers—not instead of Mrs. Farkas babkas, I hasten to say, but in addition to Mrs. Farkas babkas? Would the Russ & Daughters account be enough to propel Poznanski's back into the bagel business? You're making all this fuss about some little green peppers cooked in oil? You *yearn* for peppers? The temptation is to ask, Why didn't anybody tell me about this before? Why take a chance? Did we reach any critical conclusions? What are these spices? You want pepper? How could I describe my response to being told that Baxters Road was no longer the preferred spot in Barbados for eating fried fish? Cold it be, I asked Alice, that fried fish is simply better than grilled fish? In fact, it occurred to me, since vendors on the streets of New York prepare Italian sausages and taro cakes and *tacos al carbón* right in front of your eyes, why not fried fish?

How long could it be before the *pan bagnat* catches on in America? Could she be right? Where you going? You like that ceviche? When's your plane? Would it be fair to say you're wimping out on the guinea pig? Do you think you really have to taste every single one? Mom, can we have this again next week? Did I, that is, conform to the standards of the breed set forth by a Web site called chowhound.com, which describes its devotees as people who 'blaze trails, combing gleefully through neighborhoods for hidden culinary treasure,' people who 'spurn trends and established opinion and sniff out secret deliciousness on their own'? You want to go to Danbury for some goulash? You didn't *know*? You went on a Tuesday? You didn't *know*? They told you that was *amba*? Did you say 'totally unique entity'? Packing boudin? Why eat nutria when you can get frozen chicken breasts cheap at Sam's? Nutria Cagney? Does the reasoning behind the Ancelet Dictum mean that it's all in the mind—that people just *think*

**They told you that nobody likes a smart ass?**

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the best boudin is the one convenient to where they live? But doesn't that story basically destroy the theory? You know what would hit the spot right now? The North Vietnamese won the war, after all; why wouldn't they also cook better? Could it be, I wondered, that the Chinese and the Czechs, both now devoted to the free market, were pals again and Beijing has sent over a huge delegation to decide where to reopen the restaurants of my fantasies? Where was Nancy Li when I needed her? Does Wild Turkey count? What sort of fancy beer do you have on tap? And then you graft the vines onto the stainless steel vats? But can anybody really tell the difference? Why? Does the failure to distinguish red from white undercut all the learned talk you hear about body and vintage and integrity and which side of the hill the grapes came from? I know what you're thinking: Isn't it rather snide to use a phrase like 'which side of the hill the grapes came from' while talking about whether wine drinkers can actually tell red from white? Is it possible that that a self-confessed beer-swilling ignoramus got interested in the Davis test simply as a way of debunking wine connoisseurship? Smell

alone? And what other information did The Test at Bruce's provide? If the test never existed, after all, how did the *New Yorker* fact checker verify it in 1994? Even assuming there was some lapse in the legendary thoroughness of the fact-checking department, why didn't the authorities at Davis write to deny the existence of the Davis Conundrum? And if no test existed, what test was that young man who showed us around the New York State winery taking when he got three out of seven? Could I have forgotten about carne avocado? Or is it possible that I somehow didn't know about carne avocado? Is it possible that knowledge of carne avocado was, for some reason, kept from me—and that I therefore lost an untold number of opportunities to eat carne avocado? Where had I heard that before? Wouldn't the obvious solution to a problem like that be to launch a restaurant—a restaurant with an irresistible name, like Taos County? Do you call this 'no décor'? How can I choose? Why is that? And? So what did you say? What was the citation for—assault with intent to bake? Why don't you have both? Still, who knew what jokes the god of New York real

estate had left in his bag of tricks? What if, in some astonishingly ironic twist, a cheap storefront of exquisite funkiness became available on the Upper East Side? An evangelist? Okay, but wasn't that something like what we had last night? But if we're in Tucson, shouldn't we be eating chimichangas? Are the fish tacos incredible? Will they change our lives? A Chinese restaurant? Aside from academic degrees and pay scale, after all, what was the difference between the Chinese scientists in San Diego and the Chinese contract workers who mined phosphate in Naurua? Also, what was the likelihood of finding a fish taco superior to those at Tacos Bajas Ensenada, let alone the ones I'd had in Ensenada itself? And what would that prove? Have I engaged in any of this smoky braggadocio myself? Are the beef brisket sandwiches and short ribs I eat in my hometown heavily laced with nostalgia? Was I accurately described by a newspaper reporter and trencherman I'll call Charlie Plum when he referred to me in print as someone who 'has built a career on exaggerating the virtues of his hometown's barbecue'? Did you bring sauce? Don't you think you're making



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too big a deal out of this? Also, what does Oklahoma have to do with anything? And was I really opposed to technological progress, even if that progress included convection ovens? When all was said and done, wasn't I in my hometown—or, at least, a few blocks from my hometown—eating barbecue? Are you saying that you're willing to raise this child—this innocent child—in a city that has virtually no delivery, depriving her of the attention of whatever parent has to make the pickup or interrupting her schedule for a totally unnecessary car journey or, God forbid, cooking? Why did I restrain myself? What's your pleasure? Chinese? Thai? Indian? Middle Eastern? Venezuelan? Italian? How about some octopus salad and artichoke ravioli from Da Andrea? How about risotto?



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## "10 Minutes Last Thursday, AM" by E. Townsend

I have sent her to her room to sit on her bed for at least the sixth time already. It's only 9:30 and the day stretches endlessly before us. Her screams are so loud and full of rage that I am sure eventually someone will call the police to investigate what is going on in my house. The relentless intensity and depth of her anger leaves me sitting here at the dining room table trying not to cry. To this day I cannot understand where all her emotion comes from, how exhausting it must be to go from elation to devastation and back again all before breakfast. I am exhausted. This I am sure of. It is during days like today that she and I fully understand how awful things are. When it is quiet and she looks at me. When she grabs me and hugs me. We feel the mutual fear of what the future holds for us both.

I felt something was wrong almost immediately after she was born. The screaming never stopped. No matter how I held her, what I fed her or whose sage advice I followed I could never get her to stop shrieking. She

terrified me. I would bring her to doctors with my long list of concerns and over and over I was reassured, "Nothing is wrong with her. She is fine. Babies can be sensitive, perhaps you're anxious." Of course I'm anxious. I would bring her home, completely relieved and grateful for her health. Of course it's me. My complete incompetence overwhelmed us both.

I remember standing in line at the drugstore. She was maybe six months old. She lay in her baby carrier, peaceful at that moment. The woman standing behind me said, "They are so wonderful at that age. They just sit there and smile." I struggled to just pleasantly nod and hide my utter confusion. My baby never just sat and smiled. I thought about what she said for a long time. Walking up and down the road outside my house, singing and jiggling my daughter while she cried and cried and cried, I would review that brief exchange in my mind. It was then that I began to wonder about our life.

Seven years later and here we sit. In some ways everything has changed and in other ways nothing has changed. She still scares me and now I am sure I scare her too. Although I understand that it is complete lunacy to scream at her "Would you just calm down!?" I still find myself doing it. I have the audacity to demand she learn to control her temper while I secretly whip plastic toys at the wall in the other room. I am not kidding anyone, most of all her. Neither she nor I seem to have any clue what to do with our



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seven years of accumulated pain. It sits between us growing larger and uglier with every passing day.

She has a psychologist who tells me she is mentally ill and I should consider medication. Her teacher tells me she seems perfectly normal, intelligent and agreeable. The only commonality in their assessment is how they look at me. Friends and family see bits and pieces too. They offer suggestions and support that never really feels tangible. I am told with great regularity that she will grow out of it. "I remember you were just like that too", my parents like to remind me, validating their assertions with horrible anecdotes from my childhood.

She is quiet now and I call to her that she can come off her bed. Before she even can get out her bedroom door, she is already talking at one-hundred miles an hour, gasping between each word, desperate to tell me something that has nothing to do with the previous drama. I listen without really hearing what she says. I'm still immersed in our battle. I am trying to control my reflexive anger and let it go. To her it was another lifetime. She has completely moved on and somehow I never can.



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## Five Minutes With: Lucy Jackson

by Heather Hoffmann, MD.

Secrets. We've all got them. The characters in *Posh* sure have them and so does the author of *Posh*. Her secret: her identity.

Lucy Jackson is the *nom de plume* of the author of *Posh*. The writer presently known as Lucy has an established career by another name as an author of literary fiction. *Posh* represents her foray into mainstream fiction. With these notes aside, I'm going to jump into our five minutes with Lucy Jackson.

HH: It seems that a *nom de plume* could aid an established author who wants to test new waters. Then again, I wondered, after reading the book if you were one of those "celebrity parents" on the board of an elite prep school, much like the one in *Posh*. Regardless of the reason for the pseudonym, feel free to pass on anything that you feel would compromise your identity. Suffice it to say that writing this interview is a bit like writing with one hand behind my back.

Secrets can be hard to keep. Maybe there are a handful of folks in your life who know you wrote *Posh*. Then again, most

people can't keep a secret and some secrets are best left mum. How did you handle this disclosure in your inner circle of friends, and to be more direct, how many folks know you are the author of *Posh*?

LJ: I am, I assure you, far from being a "celebrity parent." As for compromising my identity, I'm afraid I'll have to insist on being uncooperative, and hope you'll accept my apologies for that.

I would say that friends do know about the book, as do some family members. And I consider myself very lucky indeed to have been able to count on them not to reveal my identity. While it may be true that most people can't keep a secret, I think that when you explain exactly what's at stake, people understand and don't want to be responsible for destroying something you've worked so hard to maintain.

HH: Under present circumstances, I presume you won't be doing readings from *Posh*. Then again, maybe I am wrong, and maybe you have a costume in your closet, much like Donald



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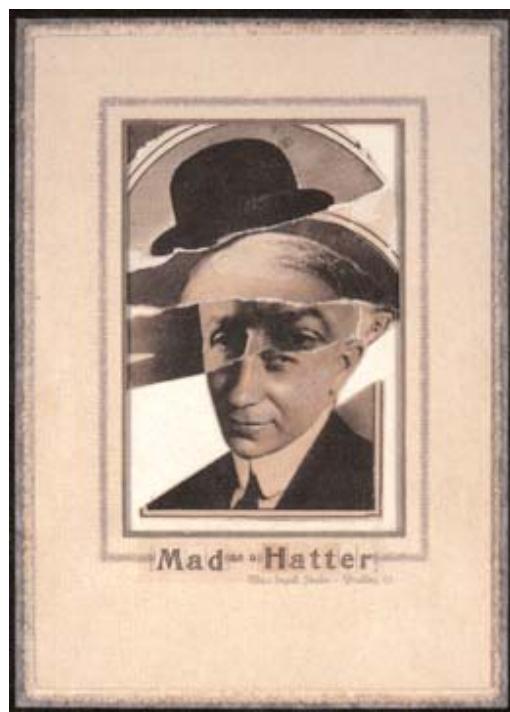


# Gary Pohl - Kinetic Sculpture

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Far left: Select-a-Father  
Left: Six Function Non-Torture Unit  
Lower left: Mad Hatter  
Below: New World Hero



## The Blotter

Harington's character Ekaterina did in the book whose title bears her name. If you could read to us now from *Posh*, which passage would you select and why?

LJ: No readings, no costumes, though I briefly considered a simple paper bag over my head. I might choose the chapter where Dee Coopersmith, single mother/erstwhile novelist/current cab driver picks up Buster, the high-profile literary agent who fired her, and ferries him downtown in her cab to a very expensive restaurant. To me, that's the ultimate nightmare for a serious writer: finding herself driving a cab with her former agent in the back seat. And Dee knows she's no cab driver, she knows who she REALLY is: *This is who I am...An inventor of striking metaphors*, she tells herself.

HH: Let's talk nomenclature. Why Lucy Jackson? Did you grow up on the corner of Lucy and Jackson? Did your publisher supply the pen name?

LJ: I'd initially planned to be simply "Anonymous" but was told some months after I sold the novel that I needed to choose a pseudonym. And so I looked around my bedroom, where I do all my writing, and there were my two cats, Lucy

and Jackson, staring at me expectantly.

HH: Continuing in the same vein, I was pleased, of course, to see my surname, albeit with one "N," selected for the name of the headmistress at Griffin. Did you flip through a phone book? Is Dustin Hoffman your favorite actor?

LJ: Years ago I happened to be in a hotel room in Vancouver watching a news show. In the credits at the end was the name "Lazy," which I immediately wrote down in the little notebook I keep with me at all times. And I knew that someday I'd use it. (My editor and publicist still call me Lazy, the name I chose before I became LJ.) I ran through a list of last names, and for some reason it struck me that "Hoffman" went nicely with "Lazy."

HH: As the mother of a teenage girl, I liked the way the story ended for the teenage lovers Julianne and Michael. I definitely read: Good girl+troubled boyfriend = dangerous situation for good girl. Were you hoping that some of your young readership would find this story a cautionary tale?

LJ: A number of readers have asked me that very question,

and the truth is, I don't think I was conscious, as I was writing, of doing anything more than telling the particular story that I needed to tell. In retrospect, though, it seems clear that this part of the book might well be seen that way—as a cautionary tale.

HH: *Posh* has a fast pace and I flew through it in one night. How long did it take for you to write the story?

LJ: The first draft took me a little over a year. I then found myself in the market for a new agent, who suggested I do some cutting and shaping, which took me another couple of months. So all in all, it wasn't a long, painful process.

HH: My favorite writer, Larry McMurtry, has said that if left to his own devices, he would only write nonfiction. Nicholson Baker once said at a reading at the Regulator in Durham that he thinks he benefits from writing fiction and nonfiction. If you could choose, what would you be writing?

LJ: Probably I would be spending a lot more time writing short stories, which is how I began my career.

HH: Has the experience of writing and publishing *Posh* been "all that"? Are you pleased with the outcome? Please elaborate.

LJ: What I've enjoyed most is reinventing myself, being able to approach booksellers and others and say, "I'm Lucy Jackson, and this is my novel *Posh*." In certain ways it's almost as if I know what it's like to be an actress fully submerged in a role. There's something exhilarating about it, actually. And it's an experience

A black and white photograph of a woman with short hair, smiling and holding a large glass of beer. To her right, the word "BEER" is printed in large, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below "BEER" is a logo for "THE CAVE" featuring the word "CAVE" in a stylized font inside an oval shape, with "THE" written above it. Underneath the logo is the website "CAVERNCAVE.COM". At the bottom of the advertisement, the address "452 1/2 WEST FRANKLIN, CHAPEL HILL • 968-9308" is printed.

I'd never expected to have.

HH: Any plans for another Lucy Jackson title?

LJ: I'm at work on a new book, which I hope to finish soon. It's just hard to say at the moment whether it will have Lucy Jackson's name on it.

HH: Let's play six degrees of separation. Any chance I know someone who knows you?

LJ: Well, I doubt it. But of course you never know...

HH: Thank you very much for the interview. Time for us all to get back to our secrets.

LJ: My pleasure!



## "Errata"

### by Garrison Somers

Very sorry about last month – when I attributed a photo taken by a friend of mine as having been taken by another friend. That was a mistake. And sorry for printing “dill sergeant” instead of “drill sergeant” the month before. It makes a lot more sense now that I see it corrected. And earlier in the year, I miss-spelled an author’s name and for that I am truly embarrassed. And I apologize for the time I goofed a URL to an artist’s website. And for that time that I sent a reply to a submission to an address that thinks that I’m spam; and because they can’t see my apology, I apologize for that as well.

As long as we’re on the subject, I apologize for eating all of the captain’s strawberries, and for that day I didn’t wear my seatbelt. For all of the second hand smoke I ever exhaled, I apologize. And for that time I said Lauren instead of Laura, well, that was just wrong. And I’m sorry for not looking over the form for child care costs before submitting my tax return. And had I checked my math I wouldn’t have required that extra semester of geometry with Mrs. Mitchell; to her or her descendants I am honestly sorry. I’m sorry for disco, because had I bought the Springsteen album that day in Monmouth Junction, it might

have made all the difference in the world. I’m sorry to Mom for sneaking an extra Nutter-Butter peanut butter sandwich cookie, but just that one time. I’m sorry for the Gulf of Tonkin resolution – I’m a Vietnam era vet and my wife is from Texas. I guess that makes us partially responsible. And I’m sorry that Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland didn’t ante up during the big one, because there’s no excuse for that moral lapse. Did I tell you that it may very well be my fault that the Cherokee did the trail of tears? Well I’m sorry anyway. And the whole coming to America thing. And the English, French, Russian and probably the American Revolutions. My bad. That Nero thing with Rome burning, the Visigoths, Tamerlane, Kubla Khan – Me. Not Genghis Khan, though. I don’t know how that happened. I wasn’t even there. The clean up on aisle three a while back, though. Sorry. Global warming. Never mind, Mr. Gore. I’ll handle it. Sorry. Sorry, sorry. And to all of you dinosaurs. That asteroid. I’ll get that. You stay put.



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# Cdulhuvida

## I. Among the Skraelings

In the year 1000, as the Christians measure time, the old ways were being forgotten. Norway and Iceland had converted to Christianity and only the western lands of Greenland, Markland and Vinland remained true to Asgard.

Thor had been hearing much of the wonders of Vinland from Thorvald, son-in-law of Erik the Red, and decided that he would go and see it for himself. Disguising himself as a youth, Thor left his home at Bilskirnir, tucked his hammer Mjollnir into his belt and set out to the west.

After many days of walking across the ice, Thor came across a strange tribe of Skraelings, now known to us as the Beothuck. They lived apart from the other Esquimaux, painted their bodies and clothing with red ochre, and worshipped a fetish of a winged Kraken. The Beothuck claimed that the Great Old Ones had dropped the cuttlefish stone from the sky when they fled into the sea when the world was new. Those Old Ones were gone now; but their dead bodies had told their secrets in dreams to this tribe, who formed a cult that had never died.

Leading Thor into their camp, they explained to him that the Old Ones were waiting for when the great priest Cthulhu, would rise from his dark house under the waters and bring the earth again beneath his sway. Some day, when the stars were ready, he would call. The Beothuck and their secret cult would always be waiting to liberate Cthulhu for Ragnarok, the twilight of the gods.

The Beothuck then moved forward and seized Thor, as they recognized him as a god and wished to use him in one of their unholy sacrifices. There was one man among the Beothuck, of large size and fine bearing, whom Thor concluded must be their chief. He pulled Mjollnir from Thor's belt, but was thrown to the ground by its weight, as only one who is worthy may handle Mjollnir.

Thor stooped and grabbed his hammer, swinging it in a mighty circle. He swept back the Skraelings holding him, and knocked off the head of their chief. The rest of the tribe then took up their hideous idol and fled into the woods.

Thor continued south.

To be continued...

## The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

Dear Ms. Haniver,

I have a nightmare that just won't let go. This isn't a horror story. It truly is a nightmare of mine. It doesn't ever go away, but somehow the promise I have made mitigates my fears.

Sincerely,

Resha Caner

"Let go of the side of the pool, Danny."

"I scared, Daddy."

"No tears, Danny. You can do it. Remember, you have Pooh floaties."

"Catch me, Daddy."

"OK."

"Don't let go."

"Never. I promise."

\* \* \*

"Dan!"

"The waves are too much, Dad."

"See the boat hull, Dan? It hasn't sunk. We can make it."

"The water is so cold. I'm tired, Dad."

"OK."

"Don't let go."

"Never. I promise."

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](mailto:mermaid@blotterrag.com)

## Waiting For Further Developments

by Doug Draime

My publisher doesn't answer my e-mails, but I know he's there high on weed, playing his Fender guitar and watching reruns of the Gong Show.  
he doesn't answer my letters sent the old fashioned way, but I know he's there unemployed, more than half my age, doing a 100 push-ups on dirty linoleum without taking a breath.  
My publisher doesn't answer his phone, but I know he's there rolling another joint, contemplating the double wide zigzag papers.  
he doesn't answer his fax, but I know he's there drinking a Red Dog 40 and watching a Madonna video, the lights turned out strobe light blinking on and off from the corner.  
My publisher doesn't answer his door, but I know he's in there naked and jacking off ....  
and by now starting to stink and bloat from his lack of simple common courtesy.

## How Many Licks Does it Take to Get to the Center of a Zen Koan?

by Andy Coe

If a tree falls in the woods and no one is there to hear it, does the light in the refrigerator stay on?

What does the color seven smell like?

A chicken darts through traffic makes it to the other side.  
Was the egg there first?

How do I acknowledge the sound of one hand clapping for me?

## CONTRIBUTORS

**William Walsh** writes, "I am developing a series of derived texts based on Trillin's many (many) books, creating new texts from each book by presenting sequentially in single-paragraph form every question that appears in each of his books. The results provide for, I believe, a unique and surprising reading experience. Thematic and stylistic elements become amplified and skewed narratives emerge. I don't know why I have undertaken this writing project, and I don't know why I have selected Trillin. But I am excited by the process and I am enjoying the results. So far nine pieces from this series have been accepted for publication in CAKETRAIN #4, TURNPIKE GATES #1, BLEEDING QUILL #3, OPIUM, 3711 ATLANTIC, SEGUE, 5\_TROPE, SLURVE, and ELIMAE. In addition to a short story forthcoming in NEW YORK TYRANT, my fiction has appeared in JUKED, CRESCENT REVIEW, ONIONHEAD, SULPHUR RIVER REVIEW, McSWEENEY'S INTERNET TENDENCY, and other journals. I currently serve as Director of Advancement Communications at Brown University." Based on his extra-curricular activities alone, I'm giving him the interview.

**Larry Holderfield - mckenzee** is just now married and he and his bride should be completing their honeymoon by the time this issue goes to print. Congratulations!!

**E. Townsend** is a nom de plume for a talented-but-skittish, 38'ish mom. Hey, we've got nom de plumes all over the place. I like the words "nom de plume". Like a flavor of Ben & Jerry's ice cream. Two scoops of nom de plume with sprinkles, please. In a sugar cone.

**Gary Pohl** has all of his stuff and junk packed in crates while he relocates yet again. He promised me that he would let me see the artwork we've shown this month in full motion, and I plan to do just that.

Our friend, **Dr. Heather Hoffmann** is traveling this summer to exotic locations like Chicago and Austin, where she is talking up **The Blotter** for us with like-minded coffee shops and guitar-player hangouts. She's a good egg for doing that, so tell her so when you see her.

**Doug Draime**'s most recent book is "Spiders And Madmen" (Scintillating Publications, 2006). He lives and writes in southern Oregon. Shhh! He's three hours behind us, and hasn't had his coffee yet.

**Andy Coe** is the director of admissions at the Carlstadt School and snuck this poem out to us in a note to someone's parent and/or guardian.

I thought **Jacob Kerner** was that rarest of commodities, a Chapel Hill native in Chapel Hill. Then it turned out that he was living in Montana. Egg on my face! Well, other than that, and the quality of the poem he sent to us, that's all we know. He's probably rich, and good looking, too. I hate him already.

# Your Presence Strongly Requested

by Jacob Kerner

Boston at night in November  
 Fills the cold with thousands  
 Of streaked headlights.  
 Like ectoplasmic fire flies  
 Caught in slow amber,  
 The wind over water  
 Is captured forever spiraling in  
 On film and on bridge.  
 On Evan and on me,  
 Pissing away our sickness together at last,  
 As subterranean homesick blues  
 Suddenly don't matter.

Turn over this postcard.

My dearest Crankshaw,  
 Wrote you back but  
 Lost it in the war. Here is another.  
 I am quite ill and  
 Despite a strict regimen of drugs, alcohol  
 and poison,  
 I am not healed.  
 Come visit  
 Now.  
 We'll run like bulls and  
 Drink wine out of skins,  
 And get hurt and laugh about it  
 And piss off of bridges.  
 Shit we'll have so much fun.  
 Love Kerner.

# Bull Durham Blues

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