

*In my mistress' face, more or less, with poetry,
Jan Crawford's art, comics and The Dream Journal.*

The Blotter

April 2011

MAGAZINE

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

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We read press releases, but then stop.

Front cover, "The Hand," by Jan
Crawford. See centerfold and other
pages for even more.

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Dance

I've been thinking about a few things from my past. When I was younger (we used to say "when I was little" without coy hesitation – I don't know why that's changed) I liked to listen to the radio in my room and read books, or play outside with my friends, someone's Japanese transistor "Swinger" hanging from a tree-limb. We always tuned to WABC AM radio in New York, because they were reliably the folks who would pump out the most rock-and-roll in a time with the least news-chatter back when there were no hyper-specialized demographics or musical genres. The Beatles were combined with Mantovani, Perry Como followed the Rolling Stones with seemingly mindless aplomb, the disk-jockeys possessing a terrible naïve certainty that they had broadcasting all figured out. That fallacy notwithstanding, to their favor they also played soul music; James Brown and Otis Redding and Aretha and Wilson Pickett, with frequency rather than an occasional token nod. So while I understood the difference between the British invasion and the Motown Sound, and thought I preferred the mop-topped, lead/rhythm/bass/drum quartets that spawned throughout the English speaking world, I listened to everything, because there weren't many radio stations and only records as an alternative and I didn't have any records and I was starved for popular music.

Three things of which you should be aware:

One is that Mom and Pop listened to WQXR classical FM in New York, from morning wake-up until Pop went to bed. I listened and learned at that altar to Mom and Pop's music. Pop called it the original long-hair music. He didn't like rock n roll and wouldn't let me grow my hair. I discovered that there is something in our bones that resonates with the soft, oceanic swells of the second movement of Beethoven's seventh symphony, the *lacrimosa* of Mozart's "Requiem," and Barber's Adagio in G. That changed nothing about my affection for, if you will, *Pop music*.

Two is that I grew up in a so pale it was almost blue little bedroom 'burb, with no people of color dwelling for ten miles in any direction from the center of town (which I recall was either a liquor store, or perhaps a pharmacy.) No African-Americans, no Native Americans, no Hispanics, Southeast Asians, nary a Jamaican sous chef, Tibetan monk or Pakistani programmer, not nobody, not no-how. Frankly, Anneke from Belgium was *ethnic* for my town, a world so bizarrely white, yet no less than an hour by train to New York City. Read into this whatsoever you please.

Three is that our teen-aged next-door neighbor used to place a record-player in his second-floor window on some Saturday afternoon and spin 45s. A disk-jockey in the rough, he would try to see how many kids on the street he could get to gather around, dancing and cheering along to his contemporary musical selections. The girls came first, as if Paul (the cute one, not the Apostle,) himself was wailing out of the window. Because of that, the boys followed, metaphorically pale compared to the makers of modern music. We couldn't sing or play guitar or write music that made girls scream. And we sure couldn't fast-dance. The window-disk-jock must have known, because eventually he began playing slow-grinders, mostly sweet Jackie Wilson Lonely Teardrops doo-wop stuff from the fifties. Hesitant, certainly not first on the macadam floor, I asked a girl with lovely long ironed-flat hair to dance. And I learned the cosmic, mysterious appeal of the small of a woman's back, slow dancing in the middle of a neighbor's driveway on a warm summer evening. Those impromptu shindigs taught me everything I knew about girls: *you-oo-oo better ask your mama, tell her everything is alright. Girl, I want to be with you all of the time, all day and all of the night. We'll have fun, fun, fun 'til your daddy takes the t-bird away. Don't hang around, boy, two's a crowd.* All in all some very good, if mystic, advice, and one universal truth learned: if you like to dance you will be a very happy man. Especially if you can't play guitar, bass, drums or grow a mop-top haircut. I suppose I could have just grown up in the land of toast and eggs-over-easy and

left home and only then tripped over my ignorance, and that might have been that, anecdotally speaking. But two other more cool things happened.

One was that Mom brought home a shy young man named Melvin from work at the New Jersey State Commission for the Blind (her work, his school) to stay at our house for a while. Melvin was blind, and Melvin's skin was the color of 60% cacao chocolate. He wore sunglasses to supper. I watched while he mysteriously and carefully tied his tie in front of a mirror in the guest bedroom. Melvin didn't talk much, except with Mom. Mostly he read braille books on the front porch or came inside and played the piano in the dining room. And Melvin could play the piano.

Oh, sure, Mom could play the piano. Chopin etudes and Liszt sonatinas. My older sister Wende could play that really advanced Chopsticks that morphed into something you could almost do the Hokey-pokey to. But Melvin sat at our piano and found *chords*; complex things that took nine or ten fingers to play. Melvin pounded out jazzy, rockin' chords that travelled from the dining room where our piano was, through the house and outside to the back stoop where I sat with my friends waiting for someone to show up so it could be three-on-three instead of two-on-two-and-one-sat-out. Then came twenty questions: Who's that playing? Who's Melvin? Where's your mom work again? Is Melvin moving in to stay? Hey, did you know he's a Negro? Can he play basketball? How's he play piano if he's blind? Who's Ray Charles? I couldn't explain that one very well. But that's when the second cool thing happened.

You see, I was allowed to play the heavy Bakelite radio on my bedside table long after lights out, because the orange glow of the dial was a soothing nightlight. I should have been asleep when I heard the guitar twanging out the rhythm and key of a new song and this young man's voice began declaiming how for once in his life he had someone who needed him, someone he'd also needed. He was no longer afraid to go wherever life led him, because he knew he'd be strong, somehow. Yeah, I thought. That made sense. Then, incredibly, an orchestra joined in playing along with the young man as he sang. The same kind of orchestra that might have played Beethoven, or Mahler. Not all wise-guy like the Beatles orchestras, put in the song to make fun of grown-ups. Just joining in, as if they'd been walking past carrying their flutes and violas while the young man was singing his song and decided they might have something to offer.

Suddenly the young man stopped singing and started playing the harmonica. The *harmonica*? I had a harmonica, for crying out loud. I couldn't play drums, bass or guitar, but I could play harmonica! There was hope for me yet!

The song ended and the disk jock, bless his soul, played it over again. He said that Little Stevie was only eighteen. He was blind. And he was black. Holy crap! I thought. Stevie Wonder was sleeping down the hall in the guest bedroom, under an assumed name.

Well, of course Melvin wasn't Stevie, and I never could play the harmonica very well. But I liked his music a lot, more than I did the Stones, the Beatles or even this brand new guitar/drum/bass/lead posse of oddly named Englishmen, Led Zeppelin.

So what's my point? That music crosses barriers that the cost of living in 1960's New Jersey created? I thought that was it, but no. Nothing so heavy or political. Actually, it's because I recently saw a video on the web of Stevie back in 1968, on a TV show, singing "For Once in My Life." Five apple-cheeked young women flank him; modest black skirts and sleeveless white sweaters reminding me that this is no MTV. They stand still for the launch of rhythm guitars, then dance; simple sixties stuff that accentuates arms and legs and smiles and hair. The girls are alternately nervous and marvelous. One hands the harmonica to Stevie for his solo, another takes it back from him as he reminds us that we won't let anything hurt us and nothing can desert us. They dance to this sweet song, and you could watch it over and over and never tire of it. Learn to dance, lads, and you'll be happy men.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

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CAUTION

Thanks awfully for not complaining, whining, making that sucking noise between your teeth, shaking your head from side to side, waving a finger in my face or rolling your eyes the way you sometimes do.

Two by Doug Draime

“Waiting Tables In Reno”

40 years ago
she left him
while he was
getting his
leg blown off
in Nam

Now,
here she was
waiting tables
in Reno - not even
recognizing him -
after she almost
fell over his
prosthetic leg

“Keep your legs
under the table, *sir*,
I could’ve fallen and
broken something.”

“Nada”

There is nothing
truly authentic in a world

where blood
glistens like rubies,
the shine blinding us

where everything
is upside down,
the ego mind grasping

for illusive, shadowy clues

where war and disease
and human depravity
call the shots

where life is like death
and death like life

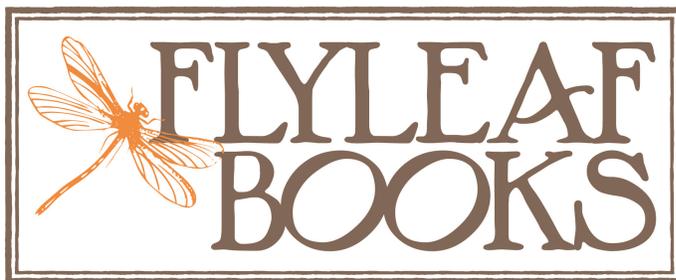
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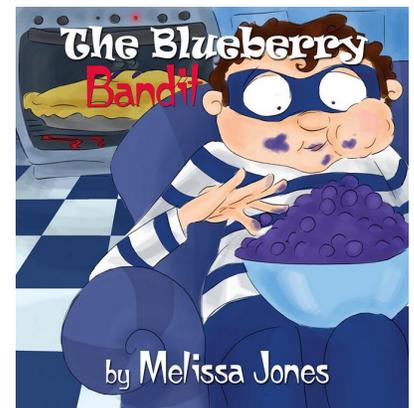
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“Rematch”

by Meghan Modafferi

My memory is better than yours.
 Now who can blame you for that?
 Running breathless in cavern-chilling crowd-heat
 Tingling notes plunging up scales.
Close your eyes.

Swimming mountains and climbing fish
 Singing ballroom dances of hot air-balloon fall in your atmosphere.
Try to remember.
 Whispers dissolvery breath breathing whispers, whispersighs
 Close my eyes, one body, four legs, infinite drumming of innumerable heart.

Mold me like butter-playdough, melt me like wax-yarn
 Muscle memory muddy muddling, move my mind
 Retreat.
 Reread history with your bi-spectacled lips, with my fine-printed hips.
 Retreat.
 Retreat

THURSTON MOORE, SONIC BACHELOR IN: “SQUALOR IF YA HEAR ME!”

BY CHRIS FOX

“LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT
 DEAD ROACH--IT’S AS BIG
 AS ME!”



“HOLY FLURKING MIT--I
 JUST HAD THE BEST IDEA
 FOR LYDIA’S COSTUME
 PARTY!!”



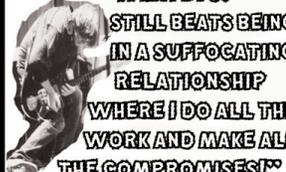
“I’LL HOLLOW OUT THAT
 ROACH LIKE IT’S A TAUNTAUN
 THEN CLIMB INSIDE!”



“DAMN--NO LOVE FROM THE
 LADIES, DESPITE MY BALLER,
 MAD-ERUDITE
 COSTUME!”



“ANOTHER NIGHT ALONE--
 WHATEVS!
 STILL BEATS BEING
 IN A SUFFOCATING
 RELATIONSHIP
 WHERE I DO ALL THE
 WORK AND MAKE ALL
 THE COMPROMISES!”



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"Scratch"

by Abigale Louis LeCavalier

It's that blank
morning stare,
looking past me
to the door and the street,
sometimes not existing
for a moment or two.

A feeling I crave.

Not to be wide open
to other peoples complications,
a figure in stain glass,
a ill conceived portrait
of an angel
with dusty wings.

Imagining;
the water I drink
is wine,

the food on my plate
a thick New York steak,
no apple or core.

Slipping inside
the side effects
of my mind,
defect;
crouching down
only to be noticed
for doing so.

And I scratch mascara
from the corner of my eyes,
anxiety creeping over me,
like sin.



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"Breaking Samsara"

by Laura Tabor

Each time someone dies
something is lost -
she couldn't have passed on
every thought in her mind,
via direct download,
only scraps and shadows
flung in a diary
senseless scribbling in the margins
of a now-unconnected set
of belongings.
Something died with her, in her,
and had to be born again
in another person,
who followed the clues
and found his own winding way
to the same conclusion,
and maybe maybe maybe
just a bit farther, just one smooth step
along the path toward omniscience.
but for every three steps forward, humanity
falls two steps back because
the jealous mind guards secrets
that cannot transcend the

generations.
Then, in a world straining with the
birth-pangs of the deeply significant,
came the internet,
flooding all people with space-less stuff
with substance so vast and
meaning so frequent -
much less was lost after that.
we are mostly gaining,
ever moving forward on the
wings of our fingertips:
when everything is understood,
when we completely resist
the entropy of mortality,
the purity of knowledge will create us a God
and we will die no more.



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Jan Crawford - Apex, NC



- Left - Birch Funnel
- Above - Mantel
- Top Right - Tall Skinny Buildings
- Right - Flower Vine
- Lower Right - Room with Chairs
- Page 12 Top - Vases
- Page 12 Lower Left - Left Hand Chairs
- Page 12 Lower Right - Right Hand Chairs
- Page 12 Middle - Jan's Face in Chalk



“After Second Shift”

she stops for groceries.
Her snow boots slosh
up and down the aisles, the store
deserted: couple stock boys
droning through cases of canned goods,
one sleepy checker at the till.

In the parking lot, an elderly man
stands mumbling outside his sedan,
all four doors open to the black
night. She asks him, *Are you okay?*
He’s wearing pajama pants, torn slippers,
a rumpled sportcoat, a knit wool hat.

Says he’s waiting for his wife.
*I just talked to her on the payphone
over there.* He’s pointing at
the Coke machine. *What payphone?*
she says. *That one,* he says.
It’s cold, she says, and escorts him
inside. *Don’t come with lights
and sirens,* she tells the 911

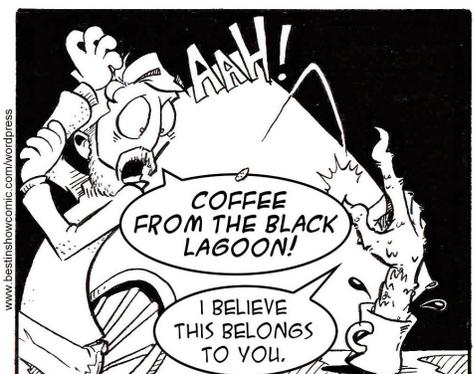
Two by Lowell Jaeger

dispatcher. *You’ll scare him.*
They stand together. The checker
brings him a cup of coffee. They watch
for the cop car in the lot.

He could have died, her husband tells her.
You did the right thing. So she
sleeps eventually. And dreams
she’s dialing him up on the Coke machine.
And wakes when he answers.
It’s her husband’s voice. *Are you okay?*

Best In Show

by Phil Juliano



“February, 1962”

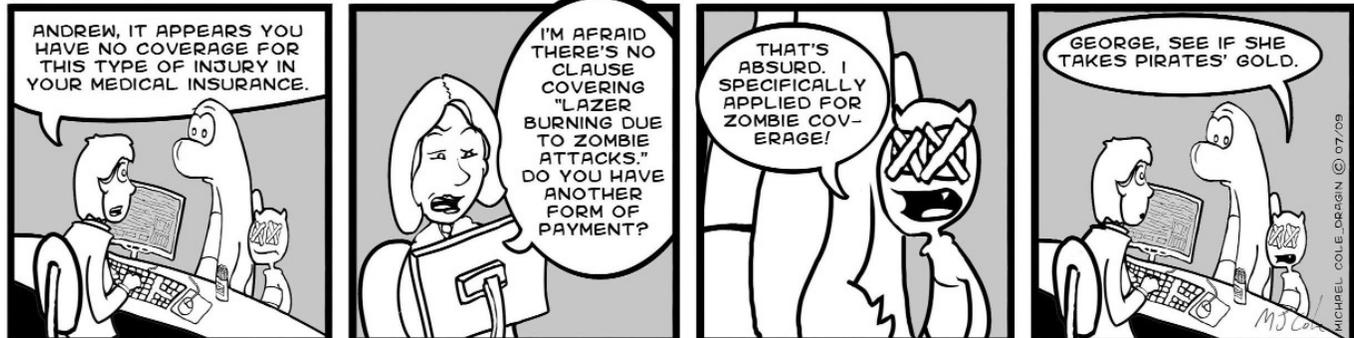
John Glenn became the first man to orbit the Earth. I was in fifth grade, dazzled to distraction at the possibilities of space flight, curious to know how our planet might look from such a far perspective.

In the classroom, our school listened over the intercom to radio reports of the flight—at times the voice of the astronaut—and we set a globe in front of the classroom to follow his progress across oceans and over continents.

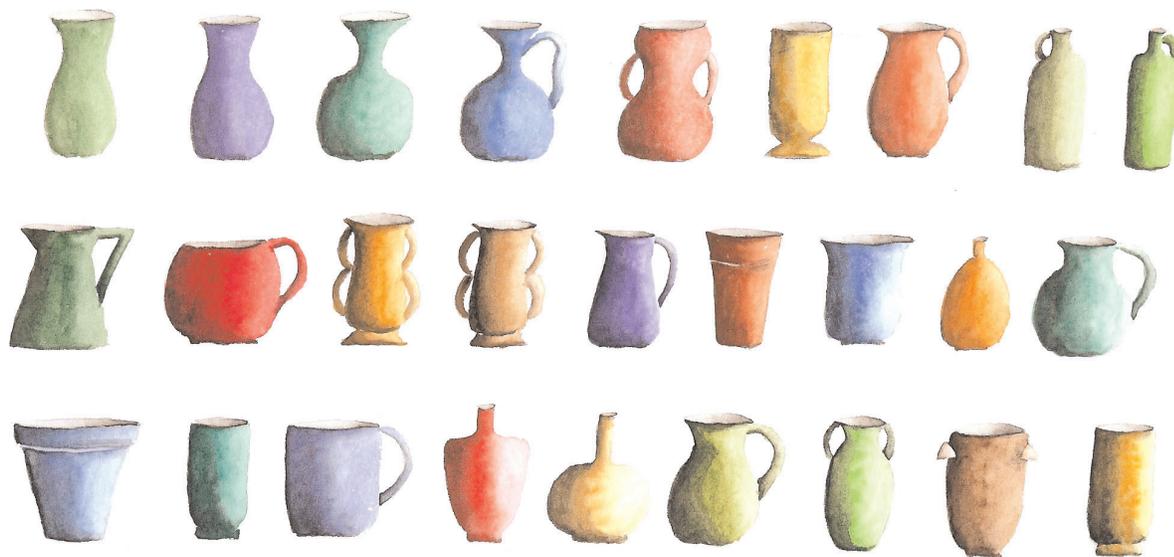
Later we saw photos of John Glenn’s view from one hundred miles above us, where unlike the globe, no one had divided the world into patchworks of borders, lines drawn in the sand between nations. From then on, for some, in the mind’s eye

we could peer from the capsule homeward at the creases and folds, shorelines and ranges. At the huddled mass of human habitation. And telescope beyond the distances between us, as John Glenn must have, looking away from the Earth into the lonely deserts of black sky.

DRAGIN

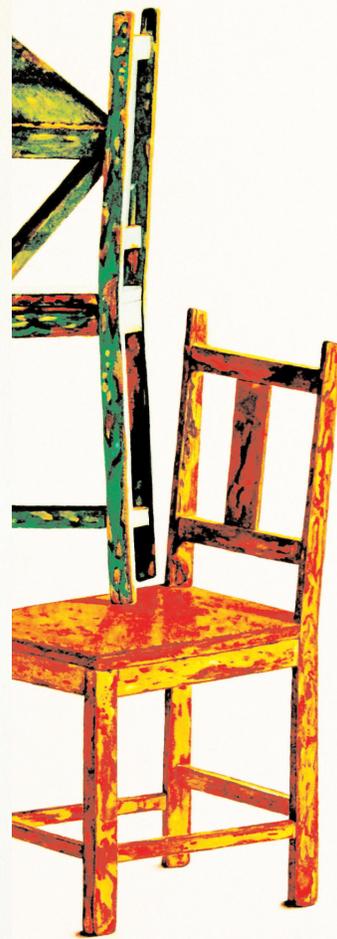


by Michael Cole



Artwork by Jan Andrea Crawford 1952-2010. Jan was born in California but raised in Minnesota. As an adult she migrated from LA to Mpls but in 1996 moved to North Carolina to make it her home. North Carolina and Jan never sync'd up but she made the best of it. Jan loved to draw and paint. She was self taught and hyper-critical of her work. She had a great mind, killer eye for colors and detail and the focus of a laser. There was never ever anything good enough, but it was always wonderful for the few that were able to see it.

She is and will be missed. *Jan* 1991





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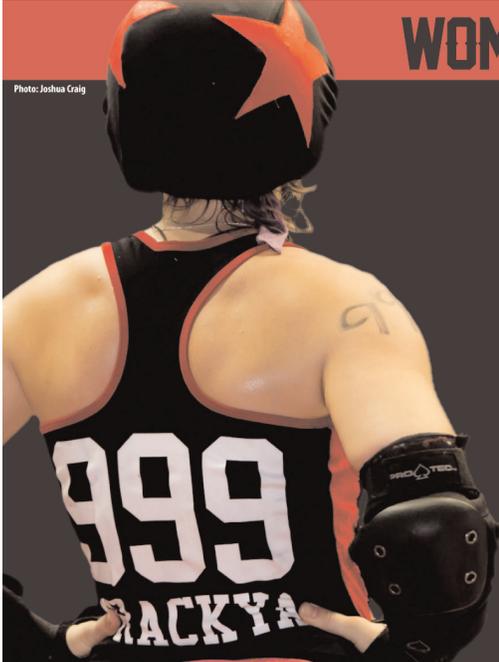


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“Another Thing I Should Not Have Told My Students”

By John Pierce

I hand out advice,
conveniently, in handout form,
as I’m paid, poorly,
to do.

It is not a poor handout.

On taking exams:
“Be calm—it does matter if you fail.
But not that much.”

Which is, evidently,
wisdom worth hearing,
for once.

“It’s true. Have perspective,”
I say, basking in the attention
that feels like respect.

“After all, you’re going to die
someday, and who’ll care
then about a D.”

I mean for them to laugh,
and they laugh,

but look way,
and the room shuts,
for once,
like a refrigerator door,
the air inside pressed
with a rumor
fit only to whisper in restrooms
or hint by note
hand-to-hand
around the room.

The bell rings,
releasing us all.
We rush to hide
in the crowd in the hall,
and forget
another day’s lesson.

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The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

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

mermaid@blotterrag.com

Out of the window, out in the trees, is the face of Shakespeare. What is his beard, that neat Van Dyke so familiar? A turkey vulture? No way. Apparently, yes, way, because as I stare it flies to a higher branch, which changes the image from Shakespeare to a samurai in full enameled armor, a dark frown on his faceplate. The sky dims as the sun finally topples in the distance. Colors indiscernable, the late afternoon breeze settling down like a child does after the witching hour before supper. Last flutters and whispers. What good can come of this? Any faces that remain in my trees are unfamiliar and vague, the fellow passengers on a train home.

Eric S. - cyberspace

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CONTRIBUTORS

Our friend **Doug Draine** emerged as a presence in the 'underground' literary movement in the late 1960's in Los Angeles. Most recent books include: "Rock 'n Roll Jizz' Prropaganda Press), "For A Dream Ended (Kendra Steiner Editions) and "Los Angeles Terminal: Poems 1971-1980" (Covert Press). He lives and writes in the foothills of southern Oregon.

Meghan Modafferi is a junior at UNC, Chapel Hill, who is on some days an artsy-fartsy actress/writer/painter and, on other days, a serious wannabe political speechwriter. The fluctuations of her multiple personalities can be found by a truly observant observer in her everyday life and speech, but are glaringly apparent if you ask her how many times she's switched her major. But please don't ask her that.

Our poet from San Diego writes, "My name is **Abigale Louis LeCavalier**, a name that was not given to me, a name I chose for myself. Louise is for my grandmother who I loved dearly. I kept the last name because I wanted it to remain the same as my two boys. As for Abigale, I wanted something as far away from my birth name as possible, and I always loved that name. I'm not good at writing bio's so I'm just going to tell a quick story. I have seen the movie, *The Breakfast Club*, probably 100 times, but I remember the first time the most clearly. For this reason. I looked like Anthony Michael Hall(Brian), I wanted to be Molly Ringwald(Claire), but I identified most with Ally Sheedy(Allison.) Now my life consists of trying to make my 'outsides' look like what I identify 'inside.' The hardest thing I have ever done."

Laura Tabor is a graduating senior at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, who aspires to live in a dusty attic and write a book based on her own sleeptalking.

Lowell Jaeger teaches creative writing at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, Montana. As founding editor of Many Voices Press, he compiled *Poems Across the Big Sky*, an anthology of Montana poets, and *New Poets of the American West*, an anthology of poets from 11 Western states. His third collection of poems, *Suddenly Out of a Long Sleep* (Arctos Press) was published in 2009 and was a finalist for the Paterson Award. His fourth collection, *WE*, (Main Street Rag Press) was published in 2010. He is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Montana Arts Council and winner of the Grolier Poetry Peace Prize. Most recently Jaeger was awarded the Montana Governor's Humanities Award for his work in promoting thoughtful civic discourse

John Pierce of Waco writes, "I am currently a teacher in central Texas. Recently, I have had work published by *Defenestration*, *Feathertale*, *Wild Violet*, and *The Shinnery Review*."

Chris Fox writes and draws and cut&pastes in Chapel Hill.

Phil Juliano and **Michael Cole** don't remotely sound like a law firm in Asheville.

CREATIVE METALSMITHS

Kim Maitland

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www.creativemetalsmiths.com

Weekdays 11 - 6 * Saturdays 10 - 5 * Sundays 12 - 5

Final Tidbits: We've been selling books and paintings and prints for our first release "Tree" for a couple of months but I still haven't seen your pre-order. Lots of fine people are helping with the project and we want you to do your part. Talk it up, think about who you like giving gifts to, and go on over to paintbrushforest.com or pencilpointmountain.com and do it. While you're mulling that over, consider a donation to The Blotter (www.blotterrag.com) as your good deed for the year! And visit your local independent bookstore, they have hot cocoa! I don't want to hear any of you saying, "I'm bored." Got it? Good!



full
frame

documentary
film festival

FILM SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED MARCH 24
TICKETS ON SALE APRIL 4
FESTIVAL APRIL 14 – 17, 2011
FULLFRAMEFEST.ORG