

*More'n you can count: Shelby Stephenson, Ben Byrom,  
David E. Snyder, Stephen Carradini,  
John Abbott, Phil Juliano and The Dream Journal*

# The Blotter

December 2012

MAGAZINE



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## "The Hunt for Un-read October"

A friend tells me from the depths of an autumn gloom that he can't find anything to do, so he's sitting in front of the television. Oh, I say. Nothing better to do than that? No books in which you might bury yourself for a while? No, says he. *There's nothing for me to read.*

Deeply disappointed in his current state of things, I'm headed to the bookstore. In much the same way that one would throw a life preserver to a drowning stranger, or give a couple of bucks to a sun-leathered panhandler, I feel obligated to help my friend out of his bluesy rut. I'm mad at him, but I'm going to help. And I admit it's a complicated, bad attitude I have. Because I can understand, sort of, someone who's not a reader at all, in a foot-dashed-against-a-stone depression, turning to uninterrupted broadcrap TV. But collapsing into it because one imagines that there is no text worthwhile out there? That should be unthinkable. Nothing to read? There's literally content tonnage. Don't like anything out there? Well, you're just not trying.

Twenty minutes to the bookstore. Time enough to let thoughts spin in little circlets of smoke and steam. Suddenly I'm worrying that he may be right. Oh, not now, not yet. But someday. Here's my math: on top of all of the other reading I do, I complete about one volume a month. Let me clarify. As I've said before, I read about five to seven books at the same time. I finish about one per month. And of course some are unfinishable and others require and deserve a second go-round. Still, it's about twelve books a year. I'm fifty-five and hope to get another similarly coherent thirty years of reading. Who knows, maybe I'll have more time down the road. But maybe my reading skills will wane, and things will slow down. Argh! That gives me three hundred sixty books, give or take. I'm taking that number pretty seriously and reading whenever there's a lull.

I occasionally tell the girls, "Only boring people get bored," in the hopes that through ironically sheer boredom of hearing this they will attempt more than once to find something useful to do. I also exercise the parental nuclear prerogative to give them something useful to do, because nature abhors a vacuum and so do my girls. Trust me, they know better now. Once bidden, twice shy. Hey, that's pretty good...

How do I define useful? More, perhaps, by what I consider useless. In that rusty bucket I fling weekly entertainment magazines, sunbathing, reality shows that put cameras in a house and entreat contestants to channel their inner sphincter muscle, sitting around whining on a rainy day. On the other, somewhat illogical hand, I am a fan of solitaire, daydreaming, re-

reading a book, pulling weeds, listening to favorite songs while watching the leaves fall from trees, gazing nostalgically at a baseball game between two teams that cannot possibly make the playoffs, and taking a slow walk without a thought to the word “aerobic.” Call me eclectic.

So I don’t accept “bored.” Nothing to do? The leaves need raking. Go talk to the chickens, toss them a handful of cracked corn. Fold some laundry – there’s always some sitting in the dryer waiting for you. Or read a book. Nobody in my house is accused of “needing something to do” if they have a book in their hands.

And here’s my current reading list, for better or worse, in no particular order. Richard Adams’ memoir “The Day Gone By.” Steinbeck’s “The Short Reign of Pippin IV.” “A Dream of Red Mansions” by Tsao Hsueh-Chin and Kao Ngo (a three-volume novel published in 1978 by the government publishing house of the People’s Republic of China.) “Upheaval in Charleston: Earthquake and Murder on the Eve of Jim Crow” by Susan Millar Williams and Stephen G. Hoffius. “When The World Spoke French” by Marc Fumaroli. “The Watch That Ends The Night” by Allan Wolf (a novel in the form of poems about the different people on the Titanic. “The Revolution – a Field Manual for Changing Your World” edited by Heather Zydek. And a volume of poems called “The Draw of Broken Eyes and Whirling Metaphysics” by Clifford Brooks that was sent to me by John Gosslee, editor of *Fjords* and publisher of the book. I’ve been carrying it around this fall, reading a couple of pages when I’m sitting waiting for the girls after school, or while Olivia practices her pedals on the church organ, or when they’re bashing about at karate. There are so many worse things to do than discover a book of poems a couple at a time, I’ll tell you that for nothing.

Garry - [chief@blotterrag.com](mailto:chief@blotterrag.com)

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CAUTION

*"Oh. The humanity."*

## Chapter 52 from "Country"

by Shelby Stephenson

I realize today is January 4, 2011: my brother Paul left us January 4, 2008. Here I am in my study near

Derek's Awning, a little warmer now that the sun has come out, though the terrace under the canopy's not warm

enough to sit outside: the word *Paul* makes me buzz: I want to hear the Willis Brothers adding a

countrified, jazzy touch of gristle to Hank's music. Guy, Vic, and Skeeter Willis toured with Hank around

'48 and '49, backed him up. The sound of the Brothers bridge the old acoustic strings and accordion and

fiddle with the steel guitar of Jimmy Day and Buddy Emmons. Add the walking bass and

Tommy Jackson's fiddle: the Ray Price "Night Life" album may be a model for the peak of purist-country before

Elvis, Chuck, Little Richard, and all that rock and roll. Hank Williams died, but not before those Willis boys

presented their jug-blend of instruments. Their music just *is*, without pyrotechnical shots or shouts, ropes to

swing on or cannons to come out of while singing backwards "I'm My Own Grandpa": Tex Williams didn't have much of

a gimmick either: he was from Illinois, moved to California, met Tex Ritter: good times are good while they last: he formed

a big band, Western Caravan, and, I think, made the first million-selling record for Capitol, "Smoke, Smoke,

Smoke That Cigarette," the Tex Ritter-Merle Travis co-write: consider this: smoking in parks has been outlawed in certain cities: what

lungs must look like for the dollars made: I know that someday we'll get the general and specific closer together, government

and individual, hyperbole and plain talk; let desire entertain and our states go by other names: Tex Williams

recorded a song I learned long ago, mostly forgot: "Leaf of Love": slowly turning, turning: if my heart had just a

crack in a window, I'd like to be called "Tex," too, for I love the Texas music, all varieties, especially the

music of Bob Wills: please, don't picture me, though, freckles, about five-ten, strawberry blonde hair: Tex Stephenson,

Tex Dean (good ring), Tex Shelby, Shub Tex, Sub Text: see, just won't work: Bob Wills? Never-changing music: "Ah, ha!

San Antone": when Bob hollers, western swing's a thrill; Paul's Hill? the hogs will: slops cannot stop my boy's

joy. In "Faded Love," the singer ponders a letter, springtime, "when you said goodbye in the time of the mating of the dove":

"San Antonio Rose," deep in the heart of Texas, that old story, the tune, a "song of old San Antone, where in dreams

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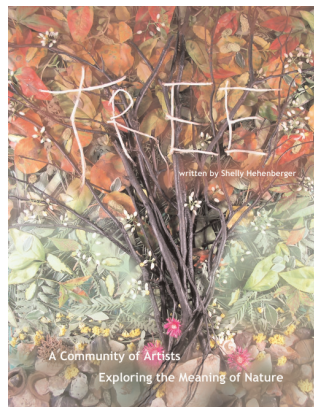
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I live with a memory": the broken-hearted relives the song; "Take Me Back to Tulsa, I'm Too Young to Marry," "Stay All Night, Stay a Little Longer": "Sitting in the window, singing to my love, slopbucket fell from the window up above, mule and the grasshopper eating ice cream, mule got sick and we laid him on the beam; stay all night, stay a little longer, dance all night, dance a little longer, pull off your coat, throw it in the corner, I don't see why you don't stay a little longer"; "Maiden's Prayer": "Every word reveals an empty broken heart, broken by Fate ? left us so far apart; lonely there she kneels and tells the stars above, in her arms he belongs, then her prayer is a song, an unending song of love": the instruments ? fiddle, steel, horns, drums, bass, guitar ? together with the singer's voice, an instrument, too ? without appropriating authority separate from the music ? that's western

swing, Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys: *My Years with Bob Wills* (Eakin Press, Austin, Texas: Third Revised Edition, 1996),

Al Stricklin: you can feel enough music in Stricklin's keys to understand Wills's barrel-house sound: same for Haggard's tribute album and artists and players who have kept that music alive: Leon Rausch, Willie Nelson,



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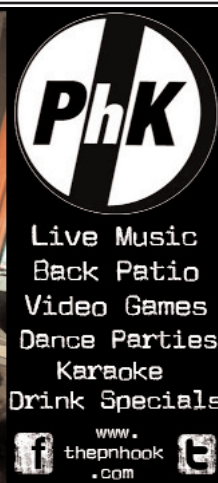


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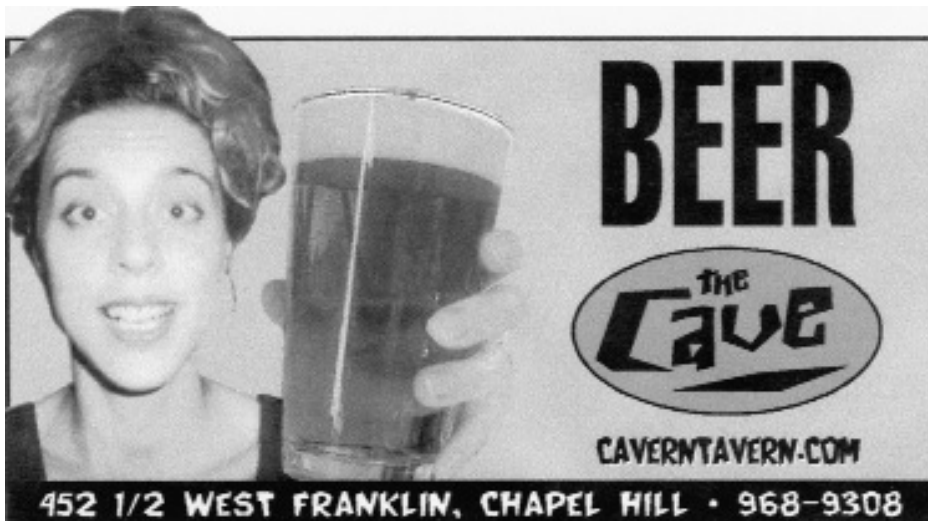
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## The Blotter

Ray Price and the Cherokee Cowboys, Ray Benson's Asleep at the Wheel. With his wife Lula Belle, Scotty Wiseman, from Spruce Pine, North Carolina, joined the National Barn Dance in the early 30's: he might have helped Bascom Lamar Lunsford write "Mountain Dew," assuming Lunsford gets the credit: he could have "collected" it: it's hard to say who wrote what when a song comes around in country music: two of Scotty's and Lulu Belle's songs Nin and I sing: "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You" and "Remember Me": my nickname is "Sheb": Sheb Wooley made up Ben Colder, a sidekick, alter-ego?he's a kind of air-head seer: Wooley himself was a star on the TV show "Rawhide": He's probably known best for writing and singing "Purple People Eater": country music's everywhere and it's here to stay: when Nin and I lived in Pittsburgh we went to the World's Original WWVA Jamboree, Wheeling, West Virginia ? started 1926, shortly after the Opry in 1925: besides West Virginians Hawkshaw Hawkins and Red Sovine, WWVA presented over the years Red Allen, Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper, Jim and Jesse McReynolds, Billy Grammer, Don Gibson, Hylo Brown, Red Smiley, Hank Snow, Don Reno, Elton Britt, Grandpa Jones and oodles others, including Doc and Chickie Williams who gave decades to WWVA and to country music: somebody said Chickie had a lullaby in her voice: the W's bring on the X's, XERA out of Del Rio: X-Rays, X-rated, for all the X's who live in Texas: Y's, yes: Z! You take a single letter and another and another and you get as far as Zora Layman, Kansan, born about 1900: she could play the violin to astound Chautauquas; she would

sing with her husband Francis Crow "I'll Be with You when the Roses Bloom Again": Love pretty much burns like a red, red rose June blooms. I need a big room to spring the tunes, colors, bushes, thorns, needles, pins: I'm running out of breath and breadth: I'll be here and there if you need me: if you don't take the best, come back sometime for the rest: "There'll Be No Teardrops Tonight": I might be in the back of a church, a lonely man, full of desire to move up front without being seen: my cousin Worth's a good example: he said such things about the mule he followed, the plow deep in the earth's furrows ? churning, turning: "Old John had a old-baptist trot so slow I could roll one of them Roll-Your-Owns before he could turn around at the end of the row." I've always wanted to walk in Jerusalem just like John, not worried about being counted as Someone's Number; yet I wish to sing in a world I imagine, hoping I can give more than a hand-touch or cheek-brush: waiting for you, I export Marion Worth's "Shake Me, I'll Rattle," a kind of Christmas favorite, one of those songs seasonal as the flurry of furry displays at Wal-Mart: what you hear is what you see: there it is and there it is not: you can't tell what's feeling and what's not, since the mucous not quite forms the working man's hand for his bandana, his sleeve the instinct necessary for the job, the getting-on-with-it for longevity, as if one could live forever, body with spirit bobbing for Valentine's Days: married to Kitty Wells, Johnny Wright was a working musician near-bout all his life, dying at ninety-seven, September 27, 2011, making up for his partner, Jack Anglin, killed in a car crash on the way to a



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Patsy Cline memorial service. Born, Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, Johnny Wright married Muriel Deason, 1938. Johnny and Jack formed a duo. When

my chin fuzzed in the early 50's, I heard Wright and Anglin sing "Crying Heart Blues" and "Poison Love" before their

stardom equilibrated with "I Get So Lonely," "Goodnight, Sweetheart, Goodnight," "Sincerely"; meanwhile, Muriel Deason became

Kitty Wells. A teenager hovering over the heads of her little children, her father already deceased when she was one-year old,

Tammy Wynette grew like a weed in poverty with her grandparents, among cotton for miles in fields, cotton-snow, her

cotton-sack dragging her into the patches early, her hoe sharp for chopping that cotton, her hands red from baling

the hay and so she went to church, learning the sacred songs, singing shape-notes of poetry's

multiple senses and sounds, this young woman seeing the instruments her father left around the

house, taking music lessons, and, like so many girls in her situation, getting married before finishing

highschool, settling in Tupelo, learning hair-dressing and working as a receptionist for a chiropractor, being

a mother, too, three babies, moving to Birmingham, her marriage breaking up, the third child contracting

spinal meningitis, the bills piling up for Tammy Wynette who started performing on the Country Boy Eddie Show

out of Birmingham, singing in clubs, too, plus appearing on Porter Wagoner's TV show, hoping

for a recording contract: someone at Epic records said Yes: "Apartment Number Nine" started her off, then

"Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad": in time, 1967, she and David Houston hit with "My Elusive Dreams": then

Tammy defined herself with "I Don't Wanna Play House," "Stand By Your Man," and a song Bobby Braddock and Curly Putman wrote,

"D-I-V-O-R-C-E." She married George Jones. Nin and I saw them at the Dane County Arena, Madison, about 1969: their

daughter Georgette tours and sings. Glenn Yarbrough? What made Milwaukee famous? Yarbrough had his own

coffeehouse in those 1960's, The Limelite, Colorado Springs: The Limelites came out of that experience; yet Yarbrough

loved to sing solo: "Baby, the Rain Must Fall," "Four Strong Winds," "San Francisco Bay Blues": even started a

publishing house with Rod McKuen: I remember Glenn Yarbrough's voice on the Coca-Cola commercial in the 60's: *Things go*

*better with Coke!* Mama's hedge used to be full of yarrow yellowing along the western line of our property: the cow-men

poisoned the border to keep the cows and one big bull inside the Irving Stephenson Tract, killing the weeds growing into

the electric wire-fence: no more yarrow tomorrow and tomorrow: in my mind, though, I see it: saw Peter Yarrow in

person several years back at Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo, helping raise money for EPIC: Nin's father started it to help

children: I never saw Peter, Paul, and Mary in concert, but I sure did hear "Puff," a lot, and smell it, too, back when

"Methodist Pie" was cool, and Bob Yellin, too, with those Greenbriar Boys: saw Faron Young in Wisconsin, too, agricultural

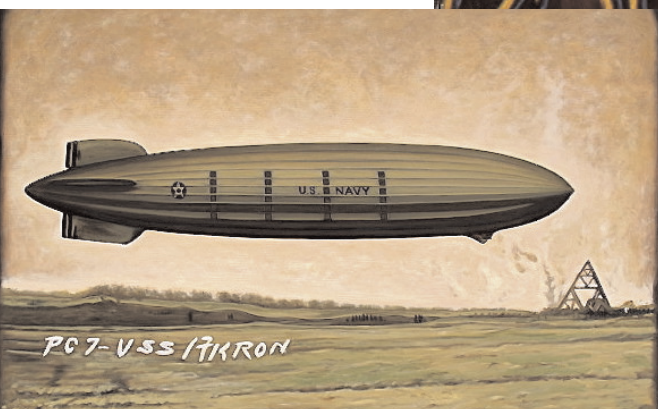
building, Madison, where we also saw the Conway Twitty show: Nin went up to Faron backstage to ask him to sign an album: he

was dressed in a yellow suit: the early 50's after Hank died, Faron came along strong, this Young Sheriff, as he

was later called, singing "Going Steady," a song he's credited with writing, his gritty delivery a lot like Hank's: Faron

was one of my singing heroes, hearing him in the Special Forces during the Korean War and later





David E. Snyder -  
Chapel Hill, NC



doing the recruiting commercials for the Army and  
oh he ended up taking his own life. After rock-n-roll, Faron  
said, you couldn't buy a hillbilly for a concert or sell  
a hillbilly song in Nashville: Faron Young, born, Shreveport, 1932: never  
got along with his father. Was that *it*? I sang, "Live Fast, Love Hard, and  
Die Young" in the mid-fifties: FY joined Louisiana Hayride: became  
a regular on the Opry in '52: Faron Young: "If You Ain't  
Loving," "It's a Great Life," "Hello Walls," (Willie Nelson  
wrote it before he himself was discovered with the hit  
of the Fred Rose song, "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain"): "Alone  
with You," "Face to the Wall": I don't think I  
would know a zither if I saw one leaning in a  
corner: years ago it might have been called a  
guitar, if someone had called it that, instead of  
a *cithara*: let's face it: if Susan Reed played the zither  
she must have played it ? well ? I don't remember: ZZZZZZ's? I am  
tired of cataloguing, caroling, ambling, buzzing, chomping,  
biting, diddling, presenting subjects, albeit single  
threads feigning many grabbing lines the wind  
harnesses before it's too late for isolated  
showers to come in on you and me and  
your urges to spurn an orgy of sorts among  
the letters, You, like Job of Old, Shub, lying on the  
ground, your body supple next to mine, the sunny  
side of the plain leading us to Thoroughfare Valley, no  
rockslides in sight, hoping for more stories of women  
in Music Country: *Finding Her Voice: The Saga of Women in  
Country Music* by Mary A. Bufwack and Robert K. Oermann  
(Crown: 1993): still numbers overwhelm me. The grand Z  
brings *Country* around. My brother Paul's beginning to  
play and sing the old songs, share the stage once more with  
his Campus Playboys, Life's Railway Singers, and the  
Stephenson Brothers and Linda: Paul started Stephenson's  
Barbeque, 1958. One day he sold to a man some shoats  
he grew from pink piglets, asking him What are  
you going to do with my hogs? And the Man said  
right off Sell them to someone who runs a barbeque house  
and Paul said I will start my own, growing my hogs to kill and  
split into shoulders and hams and put on the wood as long  
as the State says I can and I will cook the pork until I must  
use coals to accommodate the State's Laws. You can sing, he said ? and  
up and down the shoulders of Sanders Road, our song I keep pitching.



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I abhor doing the same work  
twice. Once in my dreams and  
again when I awake. I adore  
loving the same person twice,  
once in my dreams and again  
when I awake. I'm sore from  
running the same miles twice,  
once on dreamroads, again  
when I awake. I'm floored by  
the same story, once written in  
dream text and forgotten when I  
awake.

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by Phil Juliano



## "An Astronaut, Embarked"

by James Benjamin T. Byrom

### Part 1: Memory

"I have acted to spare myself grief,  
though, no more than I expected.  
Playing games of make believe,  
somehow guessing correctly  
that not all pretending  
is fantasy.  
Going on since there are  
other worlds than these —  
to wrestle with the fact  
I might not be coming back.  
Sometimes here  
and often gone  
I find it difficult to remember anyone.  
I harbor a simple fear of  
a bigger instinct towards  
leaving my body  
inhabitable  
so I found no reason  
to learn who first referred to me as  
'the lonely astronaut explorer'  
when I set off towards the talent  
that lay just beyond the darkness."

### Part 2: Prophecy

There is a cost to riding the line  
dividing worlds —  
the past and the future  
and the immortal sea of dreams between;  
to bending wisdom  
and cosmic forces,  
turning consciousness into Art.  
He had a dim, true awareness  
of the country beyond the sea  
and that is probably what  
kept him safe —  
knowing just enough  
to favor thoughts of  
staying sane.  
Our lone astronaut explorer,  
hurtling through the darkness,  
tightens his grip on the wheel.

### Part 3: Fantasy

"When I hurtle through the darkness  
an astronaut  
alone  
exploring  
I have waking dreams  
and they alone fuel this expedition.  
If I doubt, the lights dim  
a panic could set in  
quick as sand  
mucking up my gears  
until I am moored to the void —  
worse than blind  
and better off  
surrendered to the natives of  
this wild land.  
The moment this happens,  
when I feel the hot breath,  
a mighty force,  
mingled with a stench  
truly old as time —  
I'll swear,  
'I was only passing through.'"

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## "The Courtesan's Gift"

The Duke liked to buy her  
Exotic fruits and spices  
Even though living in his  
Palace and wearing clothes  
Paid for by his gold  
Was payment enough for  
Services rendered, company  
She was happy to provide

When she wasn't in  
Bed curled against his  
Flesh she like to roam  
The hallways of the palace  
Saying the names of things  
He'd bought her, forming  
The sounds on her lips  
As if this could carry  
Their desire for each  
Other to a place where  
What they had was either  
All right or all wrong.

## Two by John Abbott

### "Departures"

The hunter walked away  
from the campfire after  
the meal was served, before  
his buddies twisted off the cap  
that would fuel the discussion  
into the night.  
He walked toward the creek  
where river birches grew,  
because he didn't go in  
for the secret sharing  
that happened when the others  
got far enough into  
the bottle. He hated feeling  
like he needed to take a turn  
when he had nothing  
to feel shame over:  
There weren't any women  
out there he had used  
or done wrong, no customers  
he had cheated at work  
and, most important to him,  
no animal he had ever  
caught or killed that he didn't  
eat and make use of according  
to the old ways.  
Better to sit  
by the banks of a fast running  
creek while picking out  
the sounds of nearby animals  
passing through the blazing  
alder, aware of his presence  
only by his smell, something over which  
he possessed neither  
awareness nor control.

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## "Eternal Nights"

by Stephen Carradini

An ability to forever click the next page  
A looping problem: nowhere to go,  
going nowhere.  
A desire to know everything,  
knowing that the Internet never ends.  
at least, that is, realistically.  
I could click forever,  
and there would be more pages made in an instant  
than I could see in an hour.  
It is a permanent, perfected, imperfect thing  
the world's knowledge  
accessible, yet inaccessible  
everything is too much for me  
everything is too much.  
but I keep looping through  
and stumbling upon  
all the knowledge of the world  
and there is no reason to turn off the light  
until I realize that there is a darkness  
rushing toward a light  
and I don't know what side of it I'm on  
the longer I burrow in.  
everything is too much  
at least, while the sun still rises.

### CONTRIBUTORS:

*Ed. Note: The world is still occasionally a surprise to me. I've been hanging out on Saturday mornings for a couple of years with **David Snyder**. We talk about current events, explain our conspiracy theories to each other - that's how you know who your friends are, of course - and walk up the hill to the place that sells eggs and bacon on a bagel and a ginger-tea. I knew that he's a musician, and a composer, and a picker of old electronics and stereo equipment. I told him that I did the magazine and wrote some, and had an HK2500 tuner/amplifier and Boston Acoustics floor speakers that could blow the leaves across the yard. And he told me he did some painting. I had no idea.*

David writes, "Born in Huntington, WV, my family moved to western NY, where I lived until moving to NC in 1998. During the spring of 2001, I embarked on a three-week European journey where I took hundreds of awe-inspiring photos of the English, French and Italian countrysides. The permanent impressions these trips created, along with the beautiful terrain and shores of North Carolina, have become the main focus of my landscape work.

There is so much beauty in the world. It flickers in and out of our daily lives and whispers to us from the far corners of the unknown. In nature, it surrounds us in a neighboring field, by a babbling brook, or from a songbird just outside our window. Yet in today's increasingly hectic world, we are too often distracted. We get disconnected from nature's beauty and the sustaining qualities that it can provide." \*\*\* **Shelby Stephenson's** *Family Matters: Homage to July, the Slave Girl* won the 2008 Bellday Poetry Prize, Allen Grossman, judge. Stephenson edited *Pembroke Magazine* for 32 years. \*\*\* **Ben Byrom** is the lead vocalist and lyricist of the Raleigh, NC native band 'The Gonzo Symphonic Presents:'. His personal poetry is influenced heavily by the laws of nature, polytheistic spiritualism, verisimilitude and trying to use words to

## Call for Entries!

### "The 2013 Laine Cunningham Novel Award" The Blotter's *Fourth* Annual Long Form Fiction Contest for Novella and Novel length works

1. The purpose of our contest is to provide a venue for writers to have their work read and commented on by our editors and judges. Additionally, the winner of this contest will have his/her work published here on these pages. And last but not least, the winner will receive a monetary prize! (Award monies are provided by the prize sponsor and the entry fee for the contest helps offset The Blotter's costs.)

2. Our pre-reader judges are intelligent and highly proud of their educations. Our final judge is smart, well-read and fiercely possessive of her personal space. She gets to be the final judge and as Pop says, "there are no ifs ands or buts about it."

3. In a world besmirched by foolishness and scandal, transparency is very important to us, and we make every effort to eliminate any conflict of interest situation from going down in our contest. Blotter volunteers and their family members and/or employees are prohibited from entering our contest.

To enter the contest, please submit your work with a \$25 entry fee by check or money order to: The Blotter Magazine, 1010 Hale Street, Durham, NC 27705. Entries must be received between November 1, 2012 and February 28, 2013 (you see, we're already giving you an extension, so don't put it off!)

Your entry must contain the following: no less than 10 pages and no more than 20 pages of the opening of your novel or novella, (or subject/character-connected short story chapbook) typed & double-spaced, without your name. On a separate cover page type your name, snail-mail and e-mail address, telephone number, the title of your novel or novella and a one page synopsis of your novel or novella. Remember, you have to have the entire book written, so that if and when you win, you can show us the rest! Sounds easy because it is!

BONUS: Enter the writing contest AND get a year's subscription to The Blotter for only \$30! (Regular annual subscription donations are \$25 total and you don't even get to enter a writing contest with that price!)

Well, now. \$650 in cash prizes, plus books and other fun stuff we've been accumulating around here that we think has value. All placements, including honorable mentions, will receive an award certificate, proof positive of your success as an author, suitable for mocking your sophomore English teacher, who always wondered how it was that you graduated at all.

Our contest will be run in line with the rules of ethics and mechanics recommended by the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses, as outlined in their 2006 monograph on the subject. You can't view for free, but you may purchase the monograph entitled "Publishing Contests: Ethics and Mechanics" through the CLMP at <http://www.clmp.org/about/monographs.html>. This is the document we have used in coming up with the rules and conditions of this contest.

So that's it, then - now get to work!

convey that which is normally communicated through music. He currently lives with his band-mates in a barn, within the woods immediately surrounding the state park, where he names all the animals that frequent their property. He writes, "Before I even dare think of submitting this poem for public inspection I must acknowledge my influences. Clive Barker and Stephen King have always been, to me, two sides of the same coin - mirroring each other from across the great drink and you may recognize their voices as you read this piece. If not, that is alright. Even they once drew strength from the voices of others while they found theirs." \*\*\* **John Abbott** is a writer, musician, and English instructor who lives with his wife and daughter in Kalamazoo, Michigan. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in The Potomac Review, Georgetown Review, Hawaii Pacific Review, Arcadia, Midwestern Gothic, Atticus Review, upstreet, Tipton Poetry Journal, and many others. His first chapbook is forthcoming from Wormwood Chapbooks. For more information about his writing, please visit [www.johnabbottauthor.com](http://www.johnabbottauthor.com). \*\*\* **Stephen Carradini** is a freelance writer and musician from Oklahoma, currently sojourning in Alabama. His poetry has been published in ZAUM and at Gospelized.com. Many of his hobbies (reading books, watching sports, talking about the Internet's effects on us) are corralled at [StephenCarradini.com](http://StephenCarradini.com). \*\*\* If you friend **Phil Juliano** on Facebook, he sends you presents!!

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