

*It's the most mispronounced month of the year!!!  
N. West Moss, Mezzanine, a new Paper Cuts,  
Phil Juliano, and The Dream Journal*

# The Blotter

February 2015

MAGAZINE

THE SOUTH'S UNIQUE, FREE, INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE AND ARTS MAGAZINE  
visit [www.blotterrag.com](http://www.blotterrag.com)

Follow me on  
 Twitter

 Like Us On  
Facebook

G. M. Somers .....Editor-in-Chief  
Martin K. Smith.....Publisher-at-Large,  
Treasurer  
Marilyn Fontenot.....Director of  
Development  
Laine Cunningham.....Publishing  
Consultant  
Austin Richards.....Advertising Consultant  
Brace Boone III.....Marketing Advisor  
Richard Hess.....Programs Director  
T.J. Garrett.....Staff Photographer

**Subscriptions Contact:**

Martin K. Smith  
M\_K\_Smith@yahoo.com  
919.286.7760

**Advertisers Contact:**

Austin Richards  
ads@blotterrag.com  
940.395.5925

**Submissions and Editorial Business to:**

Jenny Haniver  
mermaid@blotterrag.com

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

919.933.4720 (business hours only! you  
may call for information about snail-mail  
submissions)

**Marketing & Public Relations Contact:**

Marilyn Fontenot  
marilyngfontenot@gmail.com  
919.904.7442

COVER: detail of "Kissing Acrobats" by  
Mezzanine Kowalski. See centerfold for  
more.

Unless otherwise noted, all content copyright  
2015 by the artist, not the magazine.

**The Blotter** is a production of  
MAGAZINE

The Blotter Magazine, Inc.,  
Durham, NC.

A 501 (c)3 non-profit

ISSN 1549-0351

[www.blotterrag.com](http://www.blotterrag.com)

[ c l m p ]

Council of Literary Magazines & Presses  
w w w . c l m p . o r g

## "Success"

A while back I spent an inordinate amount of time learning how to, discussing how to, and arguing about how to measure success. It is a slippery thing, success; like that golden winged mechanical tidbit in the broom-flying game in Ms Rowling's novels it often seems to want to elude most of us. Other times, we stumble over it but don't see it at all for what it is, so we cannot for the life of us discern that we should pick it up. Or, worst of all, we cannot make ourselves pick it up - our fingers just won't close around the gizmo. I don't know why this is, but I've heard about it and such a truth makes me frown.

The truth is, success doesn't wait at the end of hard work, patient as that dog at the front door when we left in the morning, cup of joe in hand. Success, despite all of the late-night infomercials' claims to the contrary, is an animal not unlike the snow leopard, impossibly beautiful when you catch a glimpse of them off in the distance, across the hillside where you roll your inevitable rock, but gone by the time you grab your camera.

Nevertheless, in my office-work days, or as I call it "way back when," success was the immediate result I felt when I completed any task. If I did what I was told - for eventual good of the company or not - I gave myself a pat on the back. Job (well) done, Garry old man. And, blithely, I would move on. I don't know what the medical term is for this. Something in the solip-sism spectrum, I suspect (say that five times fast.) But suffice to say that when I was younger, I found a fair few acres of joy in just doing, getting done and moving on, without being overly concerned about the what, how, why or other interrogatives.

Of course, my behavior wasn't good enough, was actually rather childish and petulant and often counter-productive. But it was a different world back then, and I believe that I remained employed because I was positive, seemed to be hard working, and was a happy person (most of the time.) Under good managers, I achieved...something necessary, and during difficult times I was a role model for, well, keeping on. The world, as it has wont to do, changed and eventually I was told that doing something - anything - must have a quantifiable performance metric. Apparently, you see, if you don't know how you are doing, compared to some benchmark, you don't know if you actually exist. Now setting aside the sarcasm-hammer, I kind of get why this would be important to managers (or as we call them, non-doers.) They have to validate their own existence through some sort of philosophical triangulation. By measuring others' accomplishments, they are taking part in those accomplishments. Absurd, of course, but understandable in a shake-your-head-sadly kind of way. And before this becomes a shouting match about business management, I will say "but enough about that..."

Here's the reveal: I just didn't give a rat's ass whether or not anyone else

thought I had accomplished some type of success; even those people who had set the goal for me - like my boss or her boss or his boss (ad infinitum). In my defense, I learned, sooner rather than later, that my own praise, my own appreciation, my own sense of worth, was sufficient for me. And I know now - in what may be considered my autumn - that in certain lines of work this is a hell of a thing. Like writing.

Obviously, and probably thank goodness, not everyone has this perspective. It appears to be a gift, and a little bit left-handed at that. I'm not sure how rare it is, but I know where it does the most good, because I'm in the process of wrapping up the first draft of a new novel. It has been a long, luxurious, furious and curious roller-coaster of a ride. And as I decide what will happen next and next and then finally, I feel like a million bucks. No one else knows anything about the fabulous details of this latest yarn, or the myriad living beings I have breathed life into, and yet I am a giant among men and quite a guy. I'm a novelist. And before you get in my face about editors, publishers and Gentle Readers, I know, I know. If you're not pleasing them, what's the point? Well, ahem. The, um, point is...you have to ignore those very important people for a long time, or nothing will ever come out of you. You have to write for yourself, every day, just being happy to accomplish a sentence, paint an image, describe a foible, push a plot forward. Wring a chapter out of your guts. Tell a story.

You've heard this all before: writing is about getting words onto paper. It's about finding a key, a potion, a sledgehammer, whatever it takes to break your story open. Writing isn't always about that, but it sure as hell is at first, and that's what counts, for now. So does being happy at your work and not giving a damn about what other people think. I guess my point is that writing a first draft is like plowing a field. It is hard work with no proof that anything will come of it. But a farmer goes to bed and sleeps the deep slumber of complete satisfaction knowing that he's busted the sod and exposed the raw earth to the sun. And as soon as I type those last few sentences, I'm going to take me a nap, too. After that, well, never mind about that, yet.

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

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



in the Great State of Georgia!



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

Subscriptions are offered as a premium for a donation of \$25 or more. Send check or money order, name and address to The Blotter Subscriptions, 1010 Hale Street, Durham, NC 27705. Back issues are also available, 5 for \$5. Inquire re. same by e-mail: [chief@blotterrag.com](mailto:chief@blotterrag.com).



*CAUTION*

*You'll laugh so much your sides will ache, your heart will go pitter-pat*

## “Sky View Haven”

by N. West Moss

Dad at eighty-five was pretty far gone already, even before he crashed down the stairs. He fell with such vigor that he ripped the banister right out of the floor, then lay at the bottom of the stairs while Mom tried to talk him into letting her call an ambulance. “What for?” he asked her. “Let’s just lie here a while, shall we?” He loved spending time with my mother.

She called me that night from the emergency room. I could hear Dad in the background singing something operatic, Gilbert and Sullivan maybe. “Can you hear him?” she asked. “They gave him some joy juice and he’s singing his heart out.”

I heard a nurse say to my mother, “He has a nice voice.”

And then I heard Mom reply, “Yes, well, he was an announcer, you know, on the radio.” I could picture him in his hospital gown, with one arm in the air for dramatic effect.

“He’s fine mostly,” she said to me, “he just can’t stand on

his own, so they’re sending him to a nursing home for a few days, to Sky View Haven for rehab.”

“How are you?” I asked Mom, who was eighty herself and skinny as a sparrow.

“I’m fine,” she said, “I wish they’d give me some joy juice. Oh, one other thing. They’ve screwed up his meds and he’s hallucinating just the tiniest bit.”

“He’s hallucinating?”

She paused, sniffled a little and lowered her voice. “He thinks I’m a Nazi,” she said.

Dad was singing loudly in the background, then stopped.

Mom said, “Hold on,” and put her hand over the phone. I heard her say, “Well, that’s not very nice.”

Then I heard him say, “You’re right, of course you’re right. I know you’re not.”

“He just apologized,” she said to me, “for calling me a Nazi again, but listen, you have to visit him this weekend, starting Friday. He’s very disoriented and

I’m out of town with Aunt Gladys for her hysterectomy. They’re taking him to Sky View in the morning.” Dad said something I couldn’t hear and Mom snapped at him, “Oh for Christ’s sake, I am NOT.” Then to me she added, “Friday, Saturday and Sunday, ok? Stay at our house so you don’t have that long drive.”

My husband took my impending absence in stride. “Don’t forget to feed Louie,” I said. After a recent business trip, I returned to find our parakeet without any food in his dish. It seemed to me that Louie had looked at me accusatorially for weeks after that.

“I fed him when you were away,” my husband said, looking up from his Sudoku. “It isn’t like I didn’t feed him.”

I left late enough to miss rush hour traffic over the Tappan Zee Bridge, stopping for a pedicure to kill time. I handed the girl a bottle of Jelly Apple Red

**CLIFF'S MEAT MARKET**

QUALITY MEATS  
Beef · Poultry · Pork · Lamb  
Sausage · Seafood

*If we don't have it, we'll order it for you!*



We carry beer & wine

Mon-Sat 9 am—6 pm  
**919 942 2196**  
100 W. Main Street, Carrboro

*Serving Carrboro and surrounding communities for over 35 years*

**Christian Thompson**  
*The Hog Father*



**Full Service Catering**  
Outstanding service and cuisine  
919-593-4567  
porkintheroad@gmail.com  
Durham, NC, 27701

polish as though I were headed for a beach vacation instead of to a nursing home. Grabbing a stack of *People* magazines, I fell asleep in the massage chair without reading them while she did my toes.

At my parents' house, I dropped off my bags and picked up the copy of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* that Dad and I had been reading. Dad used to read to me at night before bed, but my childhood ritual had been flipped. Dad couldn't read to himself anymore, could hardly hold a book or focus his eyes, so I read to him, looking up often to see if he understood, to see if he was still awake. Already diminished before the fall, I didn't know what to expect now that he

was in a nursing home hallucinating. How much worse could he be?

Sky View Haven, a nursing home for the well-heeled of Westchester County, sits perched on a cliff overlooking the Hudson River, a precarious spot, I thought, for old people who tend to fall off of things regularly and with gusto. In the lobby they had a floor-to-ceiling bird cage

filled with a dozen Rainbow Finches the pastel colors of Jordan almonds. They preened and perched and feathered their nests while I waited for the elevator, trying not to make eye contact with the woman standing next to me who smelled of Lysol. I tapped on the glass of the cage and noticed how full *their* food bowls were, how the bottom of their cage was covered with

**20% off**  
Your first haircut  
at the new salon  
with selected stylists



**ALTERED  
image**  
Hair Designers

Appointments: 919-286-3732  
600 Fowler Street, Durham, NC 27701  
www.alteredimageDurham.com **NEW LOCATION!!**

♥

## SHOP NOURISH

Impacting Poverty with Ingenuity.



Shop Nourish is an online store featuring handcraft items from grassroots nonprofits and artisans in developing countries in need. Run by Nourish International, purchases enable us to impact poverty through sustainable development projects.

[www.shopnourish.org](http://www.shopnourish.org)



**RDAP Law Consultants, LLC**  
RDAP, Second Chance Act & White Collar Experts  
Federal Prison Sentence Reduction Specialists

**Marilyn Fontenot**  
Lead Investigator  
marilyngfontenot@gmail.com  
Fax: 216-502-2242  
Ph: 919-904-7442  
www.rdaplawconsultants.com

*Attorneys, get Your Clients up to 18 months time off from Prison  
or our services are FREE!*

### FROM CREATION TO CONTRACT



Ghostwritten/rewritten  
over 200 projects

Editor and publishing consultant with twenty years of experience helps you capture attention from top publishers and agents. Queries, proposals, developmental help and more for fiction and nonfiction.

Laine Cunningham  
WRITER'S RESOURCE

Toll-free 866-212-9805  
writersresource.us

## The Blotter

empty seed hulls. Up on the fifth floor, the doors opened onto a panoramic view of the Hudson becoming more distinct as the sun rose above the pale blue hills and burned away the haze.

Next to the elevator was a woman in a wheelchair. Her face came to a point at the tip of her nose and she held a stuffed dog with large, floppy ears. She petted it and whispered to it, her lips moving silently. She had on a bright red sweatshirt with a reindeer on the front. I said, "Hello," which caused her to whisper furiously to her stuffed dog, and then rub his ears to calm him down.

When I got to Dad's room, he was agitated. "You're here, thank God. They were supposed to take me to the nursing home."

"You're here, Dad. You're *in* the nursing home." A little green teddy bear sat on his night-

stand wrapped in cellophane. It had a festive Mylar balloon tied to its paw, which read, "Welcome to Sky View Haven!"

"No," he said, "they were supposed to take me to the nursing home." He was staring into the middle distance, and I sat down on the edge of the bed and patted his leg. His fingers moved across the top of the sheet, back and forth like he was playing the piano. "They don't know what they're doing. I was supposed to go to the nursing home." His forehead felt warm to me and his toes, which stuck out from the bottom of the sheet, looked bony and enormously vulnerable.

I tried to get him to understand and then finally just said, "We're going to the nursing home later," and he calmed down.

"You're mother's a Nazi," he said, finally, shaking his head in disgust.

"I heard."

"And there is a Croat following me." He pronounced it Kro-At.

"A Croat?" I asked, sur-

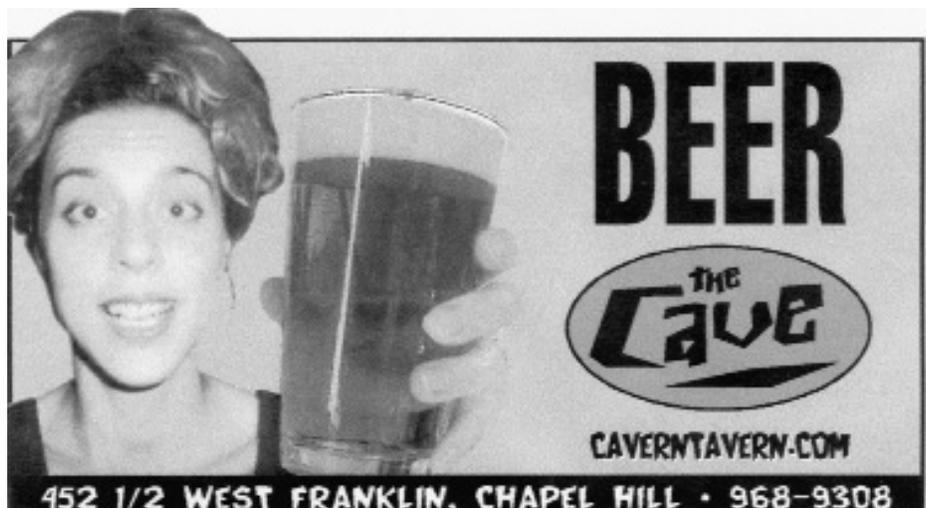
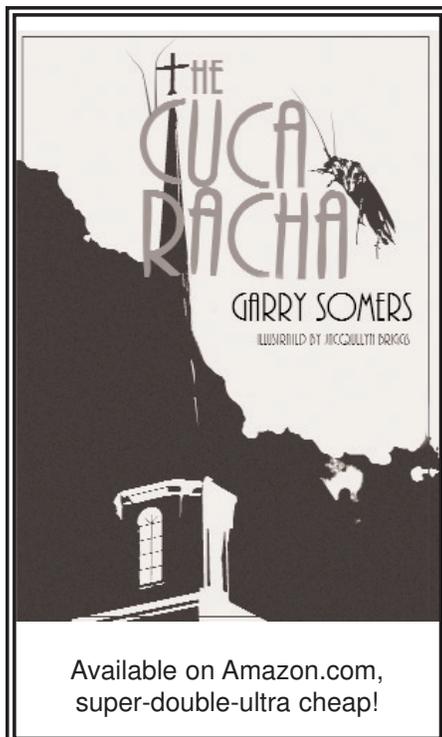
prised.

"A dirty Croat," he said, emphasizing the word 'dirty.'

"Duly noted," I said. We sat there for a while, him silently worrying about his Croat, me wondering when he had developed a disdain for Croatian people. I tried to open the window for some fresh air, but it had been soldered shut.

A little later the aide lifted Dad into a wheelchair, and I rolled him down the hall to the common area, where the giant TV was blaring the local weather. Dad suddenly froze and grabbed my hand. "That's him," he said out of the side of his mouth, too loud as always. "That's the dirty Croat." He pointed with his elbow at a guy in a wheelchair who was propelling himself around the room using his feet. The guy spotted us and hurtled our way. Dad squeezed my hand.

"This," the Croat said, pointing at my dad, "is a wonderful man." My dad refused to even look in his direction. "Is he your father?" he asked me, his accent thick. I nodded. "Your father is



a great man,” he said, smiling broadly so that the wide spaces between every single tooth in his mouth were visible.

Dad whispered loudly and with great indignation, “Take me back to my room right now.” As soon as we got into the hallway, he said, “He’s not even supposed to be here. Did you see that? Did you?”

“I sure did see that,” I said, hoping the bad meds would leach away soon. I wanted a normal conversation with my father.

That evening, after the aide got Dad into his pajamas, we read a few pages of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Dad began to snore softly and I put the book down. “Don’t stop,” he whispered, half asleep. “How will they know where to find me?”

I pushed a wisp of white hair off of his forehead and wondered who he was referring to. “I’ll tell them where you are,” I said, “I’ll leave them a note.” He used to leave notes by my bed when he came home too late to read to me. They said things like, “I was here but didn’t want to wake you.”

He began to snore again, and I whispered, “Dad?” I felt terrible, wanted to say something to him, I didn’t know what. I gripped the rail on the bottom of

the bed and whispered as quietly as possible, so as not to wake him, “I’m sorry.”

“You should be,” he said, his eyes closed, his snoring resuming again almost immediately.

The woman in the red sweatshirt with the reindeer on it was still by the elevator when I left. She was eating ice cream with a little plastic spoon and trying to feed it to her stuffed dog. I told her, “Good night,” and she leaned over to whisper to her dog, keeping an eye on me.

Back at my mother’s house, I showered for almost an hour, watching the soapy water swirl around my Jelly Apple Red toenails.

There was left-over Chinese in the fridge, which I ate while in my pajamas, my hair wet from the shower. I tried to parse why I felt so awful, besides the obvious. There was a lot I hadn’t accomplished, and it sickened me to think of it. I put my fork down. He would never know if I finally had kids, for instance. He’d be left with this unfinished version of me that I hoped, one

day, might be so much more.

On Saturday, I got to Sky View in time for lunch. All of the patients had been wheeled into the TV room. They had bibs around their necks, and CNN was on so loudly that no one even tried to talk. Nurses in candy-colored scrubs, the shades of the Rainbow Finches in the lobby, flitted around the room, cheerfully doling out medication. The sun poured in the window and reflected brightly off of the river below. I stood in the doorway, and watched. The patients looked like white-haired birds, perched in their wheelchairs, their mouths wide open, waiting for food and pills to be dropped in.

I spotted the dirty Croat across the room and waved, and he waved back. The lady with the dog was in red again, and sat at one of the tables moving her lips silently. As I walked past, she grabbed my sleeve. I looked down and she was grinning at my red coat. “Hello,” I said. She let go and leaned over her lunch tray to whisper something to her milk

## CREATIVE METALSMITHS

Kim Maitland

117 E. Franklin St., Chapel Hill

919-967-2037

[www.creativemetalsmiths.com](http://www.creativemetalsmiths.com)

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



**CARRBY BURRITOS**  
Burritos, Tacos, Nachos and Margaritas!

Mon thru Sat 11am-10pm - Closed Sunday - 933.8226  
711 W Rosemary St. Carrboro [www.carrburritos.com](http://www.carrburritos.com)





## Ode to Circus Friends on V-Day

“Nature loves courage. The way nature responds to courage is by removing obstacles.” - Terrence McKenna

My life is a dream  
and I dream that we  
gypsy-love-travelers – stargazers all  
who balance- contort – spin and flow  
mandala of talents  
ignite the morphogenic field  
propelling humanity closer to Light  
Will you double dutch with me  
through waves of fire?  
Our children are there now  
giggles in the garden  
handfulls of dirt – magic gaia glitter  
Smell the rosemary?  
quills crushed between my fingers  
when you bend in yoga  
drip nectar from your fingertips  
breakfast is coming  
a new day  
sweet potatoes frying in the oil  
rosemary and big white dove bodies of garlic cloves  
home smells  
I'm up again with the moon at my side  
The sun will be here soon  
I dream again  
spinning fire on the beach  
intoxified by the smell of gas  
I love it  
I love the whooosh!  
Spinning past  
grand circle protector  
sky blazing with stars and the music of night  
chorus of frogs calling out for love  
I'm safe in my hoop  
don't come close  
my lust is here  
my heart is here  
cannons all - beware!  
I am here  
Saturn at the center  
dreaming up all of you  
costumed mannequins contorting  
beyond humanity  
wonderous radiant cats  
stretching  
I dreamt that we met again  
I so remember meeting you  
the romance was instant in our eyes  
you were there by the speaker, modern day totem  
“shall I wear my trousers rolled?”  
I could have squirted the entire can of cream  
delicious clouds in my mouth  
it was so good. So so good. The sky entered my mouth  
nebulous cotton candy all pink and blue  
sweet melting in my mouth  
all of those meetings so magical I met *you*  
we are here now  
let's hold hands  
let's honor this earth  
with our dance.  
Let's keep dreaming  
We're on the right path  
see, the morphogenic field just ahead?  
There's not far to go.  
Just jump. How do you jump off a cliff? “Take a step,” he said.  
The air will give way  
“Nature rewards courage by  
removing obstacles” podcasts and manifestos  
We dream each others lives. We have more now than arms  
could ever hold. How blessed we are —  
the trapeze is there and all we need are trusting hands.  
The air will part for us.

Oh yes, our chances are good.

Mezzanine 1/11/15

## The Blotter

carton.

“Thank God you’re here,” my dad said. “They’re giving me the wrong food. I specifically signed up for chicken and mashed potatoes.” He pointed at the tray in front of him with disgust. “This is all wrong.”

“It looks like chicken and mashed potatoes to me, Dad.”

“It’s the wrong order,” he insisted so I picked up the tray and carried it over to the nurse’s station and said hello to the woman in pink who was standing there. I read her name tag.

“Hi Janice,” I said, “I’m pretending to get my father a different meal.”

“Gotcha,” she said, winking at me.

I waited a minute and then brought the tray back to Dad. “Here’s the right meal,” I said. “It’s all straightened out.”

“Thank God you’re here,”

he said, and dug in. I pulled over a chair and tried not to take in the calamity of him eating, his extended tongue, the worn-down, yellowed cores of his teeth, the food falling in thick, gelatinous drops on his terry cloth bib.

“Where’s Mom?” he asked.

“She’s with Aunt Gladys for the weekend,” I said, “Remember? Aunt Gladys is getting a hysterectomy?”

Dad looked confused. “Is Mom ever coming back?” he asked, with a sudden, deep sadness in his eyes. He put his fork down, waiting to hear.

“Yes,” I said, “Mom’s coming back.”

“How will she know where to find me?” He reached for my hand and I thought he was going to cry.

“I’ll tell her where you are.” I said. “I’ll leave her a

note.”

“I thought she was a Nazi,” he said, “I have to apologize.” He began to eat again.

“That would be nice, but she isn’t mad.”

“Yes, but I think I called her a Nazi.”

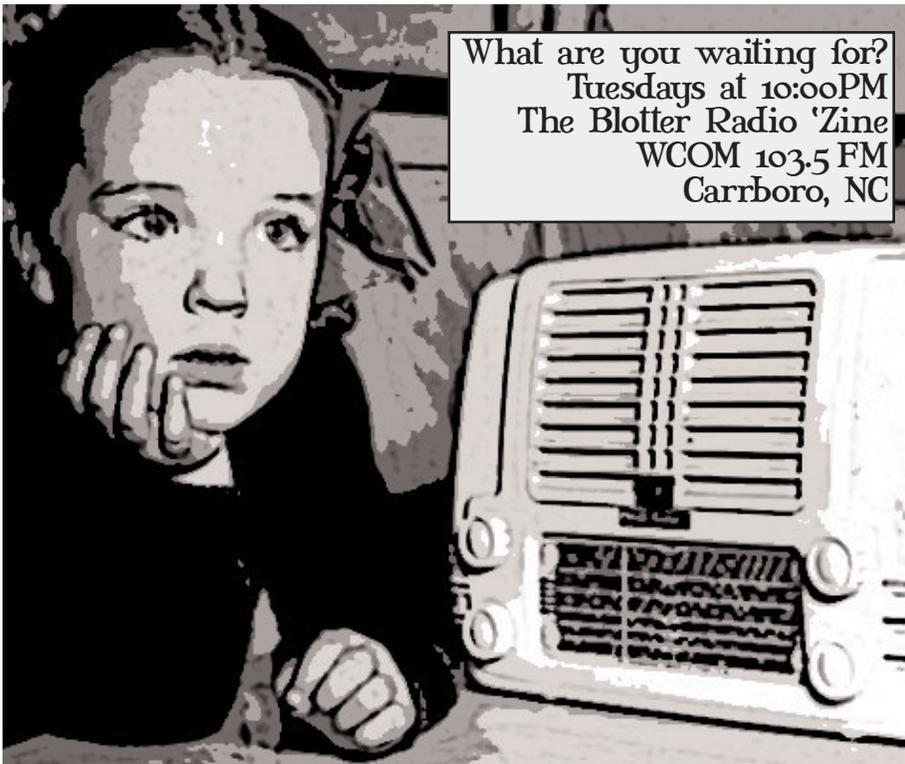
“You probably should apologize then, when she gets back.”

We went to his room after lunch and the aide kicked me out so she could bathe Dad. I visited the Rainbow Finches in the lobby and tapped on the side of their enormous cage again, thinking of Louie. Then I meandered through the cafeteria and out to a large veranda that looked down through the trees and onto the wide, gray river. Three people on separate benches were smoking. I leaned over the brick wall and looked at the water flowing past. It was cold and sunny, and spring was arriving. The local paper said that there were bald eagles up on this part of the river, but I didn’t see any. One of the smokers was an angry looking old woman with thin, tightly curled white hair. As I walked past her she said, “Go fuck yourself.”

And I said, “I know exactly how you feel.”

When I arrived at Dad’s room on Sunday, he announced, “They’re having a cocktail party later. Wine and cheese.” He paused, “But how will they know where to find me for the party?”

“Well Dad,” I sighed, “they know you’re in Room 501,



so they'll probably look for you here."

At three they came for us. Dad seemed to be emerging a little from the hallucinations and he was very excited about the cheese. We made our way to the TV room, which was packed with weekend visitors. A nurse with a gigantic rear-end was lumbering from patient to patient. "Red wine or white?" she spoke loudly into the face of an inert man strapped into his wheel chair. An orderly was handing out Styrofoam plates of cubed cheese and everyone, the employees anyway, were acting festive.

I got Dad set up with his back to the window and pulled a chair next to him. We watched everyone get served and when the orderly handed us our plate of cheese, Dad said, imperiously I thought, "Take it back. I want more cheese." I felt I should apologize, but the orderly didn't seem flustered. He came back with a heap of white and orange cheese cubes on the plate. Dad smiled at me. I could tell he really felt he was getting his money's worth.

A nurse wheeled the lady in red to a table. She didn't have any visitors with her, but someone had put an enormous red bow in her hair for the party, making her head look small and pointy. The nurse handed us each a cup with an inch of wine in the bottom. Dad and I clicked ours together and said, "Cheers!"

The dirty Croat wheeled up next to me and said hello. Out of the corner of my eye I saw

Dad purposefully turn his head away. "Hello," I shouted over the TV. "So, you're from Croatia?"

"No," he said, "I'm from Rome."

"Really? You're not from Croatia?" Perhaps he was mistaken.

"I'm from Rome," he said. "Your father, he is a great man."

"He's alright," I conceded.

"No. No, he is a great man. I was a pianist in Rome, a professional pianist, and when I moved to America, I listened to him every afternoon on the radio for twenty years. I learned my English from listening to his show! He is a *great* man."

"Oh," I said. "Right." I was finding it hard to remember who Dad had been before all of this, before old age had begun to pluck his identity away. I recited in my mind what I had known to be true about him. He had been on the radio. He had read to me at night. He had played jazz trombone, had told raucous dirty jokes, spoke Italian to waiters. But the actual memories of him were slipping away from me. This list of what I remembered seemed to be about someone else entirely. The person in front of me now, hoarding his processed cheese cubes, was the only father I could imagine anymore.

"He's a great man, your father," the man from Rome repeated, spitting as he talked so that bits of cheese flew through the spaces between his teeth and into my cup of wine.

We were interrupted by the lady in red, who began sob-

bing loudly while holding her dog very hard around the neck.

"For your dog," I said, going up to her and holding out a little red napkin I'd found at my mother's house. "I thought you could tie it around his neck like a scarf." She looked up at me, her mouth wide open, paused mid-sob. Her scalp was visible under the big red bow. She whispered something to the dog out of the side of her mouth, then snatched the napkin from my hand like a thief.

When I got back to Dad, he wanted to know why I had been speaking to the Croatian guy. "Get this!" I said, "He's not Croatian! He's from Rome, and he used to listen to you on the radio."

"He's a fan?" Dad asked, straightening up a little in his wheelchair, posing.

"Yes, I suppose he is. He's a fan."

"He's Italian?" Dad had been fluent in Italian, had been to Venice and Rome. He loved Italy, loved Italian people. "So," Dad said, "he's a dirty Italian."

"Yes," I said, "exactly."

When it was time for bed, I read the last few pages of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* out loud. Dad seemed perfectly lucid as I closed the book.

"So Mr. Hyde," he said, "never turns back to Dr. Jekyll in the end, I guess. Is that what we're supposed to understand?"

"Yes, that's right."

"So he's just a monster then, forever?"

## The Blotter

"Not a very happy ending," I admitted.

"Yes, well. Robert Louis Stevenson certainly is a depressing fellow." We sat there for a while thinking about the book, as the room darkened around us.

"Mom's coming back tomorrow," I told him.

"How will she know where to find me?" he asked.

"Nazis have a great sense of direction," I said.

He laughed, which was a relief. "I have to remember to apologize to her about that."

"She isn't mad, but it's probably a good idea anyway. Dad?" I asked, standing at the foot of his bed, shifting from one foot to the other. I looked down

at my hands. "I don't know, I just wanted to tell you that I'm sorry."

"For what?"

I couldn't look at him. "I don't know. For you being here. For fighting with you so much. For never having kids. You know. I'm just sorry for everything."

He smiled and shook his head. "You should be," he said. "I know I am." We looked out the window together at the wide river just a shade lighter than the sky now. Dad turned to me and said quietly, "Some people died in the park." He leaned forward from his bed to tell me, as though it were urgent news, his eyebrows knit together in concern.

"What park?"

"Bryant Park, just outside of my apartment." He used to have an apartment there on Fortieth Street in New York City.

"How did they die?" I asked, confused about whether this was a real story he'd seen on TV or something he'd hallucinated.

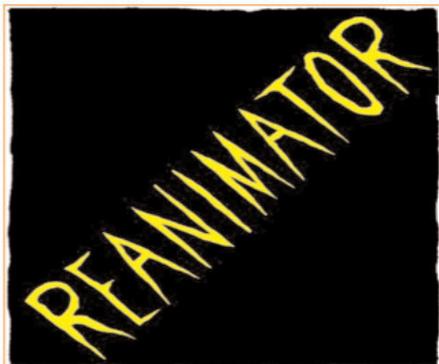
"There was a tsunami," he said, his eyes enormous and sad,

"and all of the people watching the Monday night movie in the park got washed away." He looked so crushed by the news that I just sat down on the edge of his bed. We sat like that, quiet for a while, together.

I finally said, "It must be awful to be washed away by a tsunami."

"Believe me," he said turning to look at me, "it is."

As Dad was falling asleep, I peeked into the hallway. The woman in red was still next to the elevator. She had tied the napkin I gave her around the dog's neck. She touched her nose to his and looked tenderly into his plastic eyes before tucking him into her lap for the night. I left a note for Dad on his bedside table. "Mom will see you for breakfast." I was going to leave it at that, but added, after a moment, "I gave her your room number so she'll know where to find you."



344 Patterson Avenue (behind Krankies)  
Winston-Salem, NC  
336 / 794-6936



**SOUTHERN RAIL**

Carrboro's Finest Food, Drinks, Music & Nightlife

201-c East Main St., Carrboro, NC

919 / 967-1967  
www.sr-nc.com

## Paper Cuts - Books You Should Have Read

*Deer Hunting In Paris* by Paula Young Lee  
(2013 - Solas House, Palo Alto)

Occasionally when reading you let part of your brain wander. Well, anyway, I do. Did I remember to turn off the light in the car so the battery's not dying? That shirt on the couch needs ironing, not to be laundered all over again. How many days until that bill is actually due? I really like this author's writing; I wonder if she is as nice as she seems to be?

This is the thing about Paula Young Lee – I think she is as nice as she seems to be. She is certainly more perfectly frank than any writer I've ever read. She's kind of like a member of your extended family who insists on revealing truths you don't necessarily want to hear in those holiday letters you don't really want to receive – right up until you do, and then you have a million questions on the tip of your tongue so you call them on the phone for answers.

That's Paula – who I feel I can call Paula because we know so much about each other.

Or do we? Well, she knows that I read slowly – or too many things at once – because she's been waiting patiently for me to tell you all about this book of hers: *Deer Hunting In Paris*. I know that with almost no encouragement at all, she would tell me that I'm reading too slow, or clogging my eyes with buckets of textual tripe, and then she would teach me how to cook tripe, in a way that I could never get enough of. Then she would find the ingredients and cook the tripe – probably over my house, in my kitchen, and probably find time to sharpen my knives, while I sit down and drink a beer or maybe while I work, typing away at something she occasionally and politely asks me about. Like I said, family.

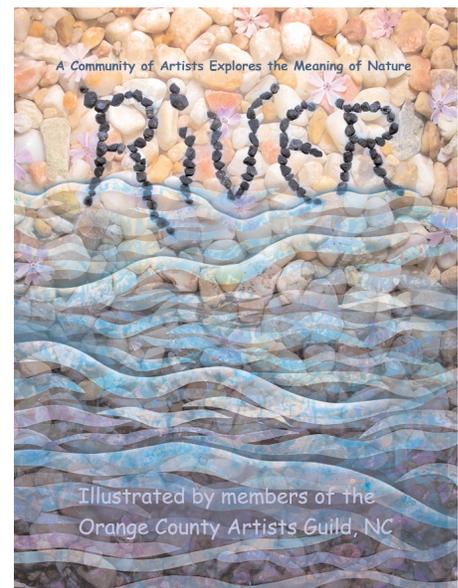
I also know that she is so smart that she can be a professor of some ilk and a novelist and a memoirist all at once, each task well done. And a chef – or whatever it is we now call good cooks that don't go to school to learn how to be called chef because we're all snobby like that on account of basic cable TV – (oh, that's right...we call them "good cooks.") She knows that it is very funny to talk about ourselves: to look in the mirror without pre-or-post-conceived notions of beauty or having to worry about questionable hygiene practices or what we look like in this outfit. And that's all well and good, right up until we also talk about



**JOHN HERRING**  
Full Service Copyediting / Proofreading  
Developmental Editing

johnherring.net/editorial  
jherring@yahoo.com  
954.971.5785

Novels / Nonfiction / Dissertations  
Theses / Essays / Articles / Web Sites



From PencilPoint Mountain Books  
(an imprint of  
**The Blotter Magazine, Inc.**)  
We'd love for you to go on over to  
[www.paintbrushforest.com](http://www.paintbrushforest.com)  
and pick up a copy or two.

# The Blotter

her mother's passing from an arduous bout with cancer. Then we realize that Paula was helping teach us get over ourselves; reminding us that the world is sometimes a dirty, stinking place and if she hadn't broken the ice with talk of intestinal distress or hairy pits, we would have come apart at the seams when she led us through her mom's final weeks. She should be aware that we came apart at the seams, anyway, because that's what we do when a story is purely-told. We suspect that Paula is brave to the point of being a Disney princess, which she may scratch her head about, because truly round pegs who find a way to fit into that hole in which not every part of the circumference is equidistant

from the center are not always cognizant of their own bravery. Brave is how we see others. I don't recall Paula ever using this word, but you can hear it, feel it in between the lines when she talks about her father, her mother, even her somewhat block-headed, rough, gentle, good-man boyfriend.

And so here is what I can say about Paula's memoir. Against all odds yet without brute force, it is a damned good yarn. Adventure? Oh, yes; up the mountain and back again. Humor? As Pop would say she's a stitch. Love? Plenty and some to spare. Philial, erotic, Agape (that's ah-gah-pay, not a-gape, ya'll) and whatever you call that love some writers have for words (Storge - affection - doesn't quite cut it. Paula loves language, words don't roll off her tongue but rather shoot from her lips like a well-sighted rifle.) And there is pathos, indeed, but not leaning to the pity side. Instead it contains the empathy we feel when a friend tells us a sad story; wrapped, perhaps, in a happy story full of food, family, friends,

and the occasional fart. There, I can't believe I said that.

Ed. Note: I dropped my copy of *Deer Hunting In Paris* in the community pool in July, while the girls were playing Marco Polo. I was mortified and not about to ask for another not-quite-so-advance copy. It took three weeks of sitting in a Ziploc bag of grits to dry out enough that I could take a hair-dryer to it and release each page from the one next to it and get back to reading the book. It was worth that effort, and more. Nevertheless, my copy now looks like it went by steamer to France, waded onto the beach at Normandy (Juno or Sword, not Omaha - less violent, more "just wet"), crawled around the 7th arrondissement and stealthily slipped itself into the grubby backpack of a student coming back to the States. It has place of pride on my bookshelf, too.



**NIGHTSOUND  
STUDIOS**



## Best In Show



by Phil Juliano

# 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](mailto:mermaid@blotterrag.com)

I descended a covered bridge that became a wooden walkway that led onto the beach. There I found people milling about. My sister was there as was her ex-boyfriend David from decades ago, the lost love of her life. She said hello briefly and I knew we were all going on a trip together. However, the sea rose like a wall before me, somehow elevated thirty feet or so into the air and up on top of it sat a white sailboat. Everyone was preparing for the trip and David angrily told me that I needed to contribute, to do my part. He handed me a dead black fish with a long thin fin on its back, like a sword. I held the disgusting thing gingerly as I walked down the beach to make a sandwich out of it. Others were carrying their fishes as well as I noticed that a stream ran next to me, running parallel to the ocean and then turned towards the wall of water. There, before me, at the edge of the stream stood a naked woman and a Victorian undertaker with a large brass bell. He rang the bell and the woman fell into the water and screamed, causing myself and everyone else to fall onto the sand and drop their fish. We all laughed at the shock, but my fish had fallen into the stream where it suddenly became alive again and it viciously jumped up and bit me on the leg and I awoke from the dream screaming in pain.

Chris R. - Atlanta, GA

## CONTRIBUTORS:

**N. West Moss** has been a fellow at MacDowell, VCCA and Cill Rialaig in Ireland. She has won the Diana Wood Memorial Prize in Creative Non-Fiction out of Antioch in 2015. She was awarded two Faulkner-Wisdom medals for both her fiction and non-fiction work, and her short story "Omeer's Mangoes" won the Saturday Evening Post's Great American Fiction Contest for 2015, "Sky View Haven" is part of a short story collection set in, and around, Bryant Park in New York City.

**Mezzanine** (once upon a time hereabouts, now in Santa Cruz, CA,) writes, "This is where I am: over my stove and sink alternating between water and heat elements. My mind thinking about what's next – a show about autonomy and about bodies intersecting; a show about ecstasy. Maybe the exhibit will be called Ecstautonomy. I'm feeling my way through title ideas. I am moving toward autonomy following a huge move from North Carolina to California. However, the next evolution of my work I really want to honor all of my circus-performer-friends. I'm blessed to study your elbows, bends, rotations and flow art.



Dear circus-gypsy-music-flow-dancer-lover-traveler-friend,  
Without you I would have had no journey, no plunges into the wilderness in search of the wild inbetween places of my heart and mind. I've learned through my circus friends how expansive the heart can be. Here's a love poem, for V-Day. Happy day of eros, philia, and agape.

With deep gratitude,  
Mezzanine"

Find her work on [www.beecombfreedom.com](http://www.beecombfreedom.com) and [facebook.com/artofmezza9](https://www.facebook.com/artofmezza9)

**Phil Juliano** (Minneapolis, MN) has been cartooning for over twenty years. "Best In Show" is currently being featured in several newspapers and magazines and is syndicated by MCT Campus where it is distributed to college and university newspapers across the country. To see more of Phil's work go to [www.bestinshowcomic.com](http://www.bestinshowcomic.com)



... have good taste.

They read "The Blotter".

So should you.

Subscriptions \$25.

[www.blotterrag.com](http://www.blotterrag.com)

*look what we found: a way to help The Blotter, not spend any money, and surf the Net all day. check this out.*



**GoodSearch**  
YOU SEARCH WE GIVE™

- 1 Choose Your Cause**  
Enter your charity or school below and click Verify.
- 2 Search**  
Search the web just as you normally would.
- 3 We Donate**  
We'll donate to your cause for every search. *Yes, it's that easy!*

powered by **YAHOO! SEARCH**

Web Images Video Yellow Pages Shopping

**who put the bomp in the bomp sh bomp sh bomp** **Search**

Please use this site honestly. Fraudulent searches will result in your charity being delisted.

**WHO DO YOU GOODSEARCH FOR?**

enter your charity here ... **The Blotter Magazine** **Verify**

Enter the charity or school you support here then click "verify."  
Next, search from above and earn money for your cause!



*whenever you want to search the Web for something, go to "www.goodsearch.com", and type in "The Blotter Magazine" under "who do you Goodsearch for?" for every search, they'll donate a penny to us. and pennies do add up, eventually. give it a try.*

*xxooxoox - The Blotter Gang*