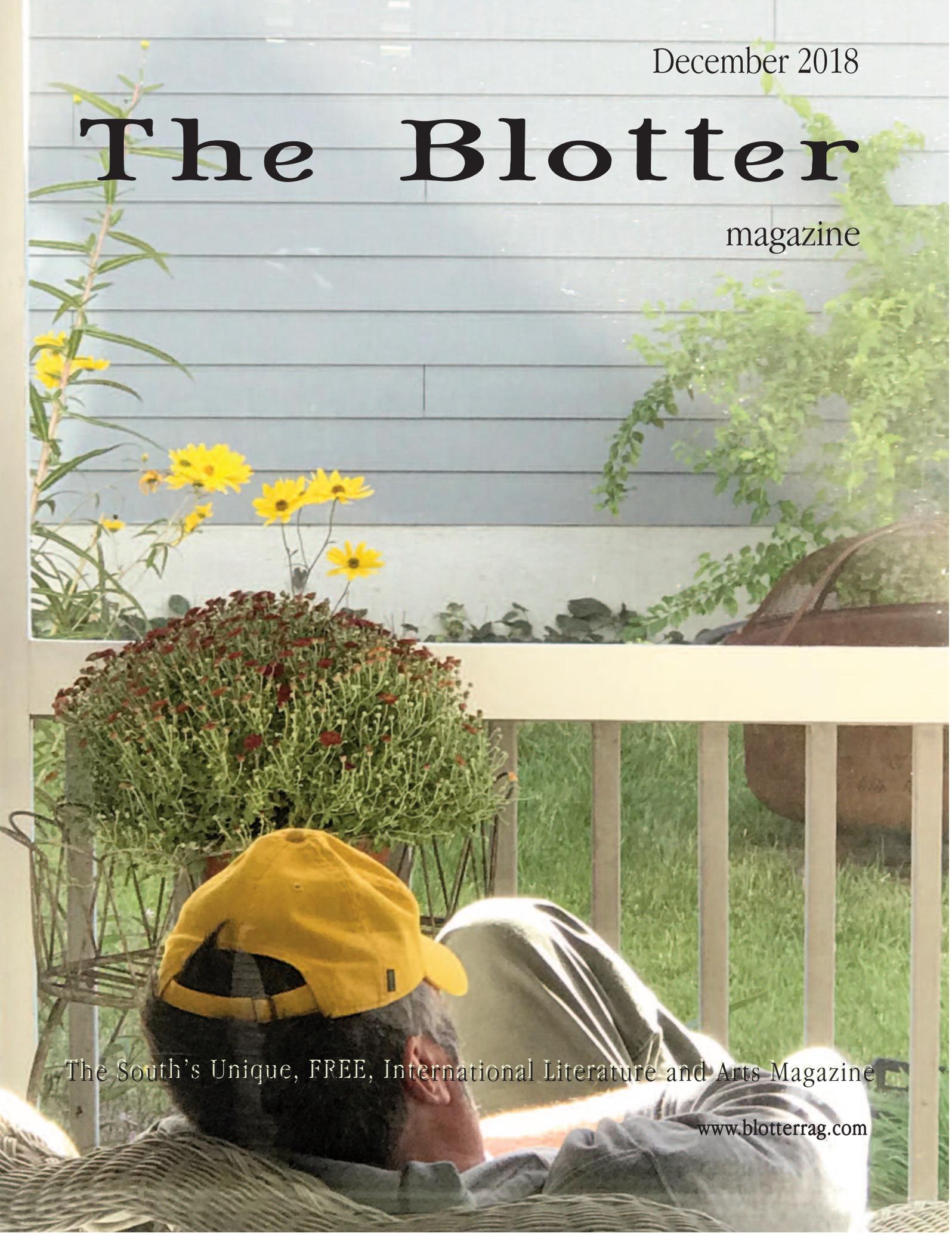


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G. M. SomersEditor-in-Chief
Martin K. Smith..Publisher-at-Large, Treasurer
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Brace Boone III.....Marketing Advisor
Richard Hess.....Programs Director
T.J. Garrett.....Staff Photographer

Subscriptions Contact:
Martin K. Smith
M_K_Smith@yahoo.com
919.286.7760

Advertisers Contact:
Martin K. Smith
M_K_Smith@yahoo.com
919.286.7760

Submissions and Editorial Business to:
Jenny Haniver
mermaid@blotterrag.com

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

919.869.7110 (business hours only! you may
call for information about snail-mail submis-
sions)

Marketing & Public Relations Contact:
Marilyn Fontenot
marilyng_fontenot@gmail.com
919.904.7442

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Kristin Somers.

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“Choice Words - Word Choices”

You may have heard that the statue of the Confederate soldier on the campus of UNC in Chapel Hill was pulled down by protesters, who found it offensive in nature, and whose message of such offense to university authorities was dismissed with, more or less, *get over it*.

You may not have heard that the act of pulling down the statue was criticized by some school authorities as “incomprehensible.”

Incomprehensible. Defined as an adjective meaning “unable to be understood.”

We here at The Blotter Magazine try to be unbiased politically, but we often take grammatical and rhetorical stands, on the behalf of the language. And I must say that I’m not sure what’s *incomprehensible* about what happened. Everyone involved in the protest, on any side, was making their point well-known. And those who pulled down the statue did so in front of many other protesters – arguably a fairly strong statement of objection. This was no spur-of-the-moment event, either, so there was a reasonable amount of time for observers to analyze the concerns and feelings of those who wanted the statue removed. Incomprehensible. *Not understandable*. To quote master swordsman Inigo Montoya, speaking to Vizzini the know-it-all, “You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.”

So, was this a malapropism? Did they mean to say something else? Were they zealously and expeditiously trying to respond to the event, and this was the word that availed itself to them? Or was it ironic that the folks in charge were unable to comprehend the offensiveness of the statue’s existence, and inadvertently selected that word as a gaslight towards the protesters.

We seem to do that a lot nowadays. Gaslight one another. Talk over each other. When accused of some behavior, we often immediately and hypocritically accuse our accuser of the same behavior. It is a juvenile way of communicating our disagreement or disapproval with things or people.

So, may we suggest some adjectival alternatives? How about “insubordinate?” Insubordinate is defined as “defiant of authority or disobedient to orders.” Hey, maybe that’s what they actually meant to say in the first place. It makes a little more sense, although the people who pulled down the offending hunk of bronze may not have been students, or perhaps they did not recognize the laws regarding Confederate States of America statues as...valid laws, or maybe they just don’t consider themselves “subordinate” to those who would put in place such laws. Some orders, Lieutenant Calley, just shouldn’t be followed.

What if they meant incoherent? As in *unclear and confusing*. Nope – everything seemed loud and clear during the protest. Even well-written, from what we saw of posters and signs, on both sides of the protest argument.

Or perhaps they were thinking incompatible. Unfortunately, if something to do with students is incompatible with the university, you may need to re-visit your university's thinking. Because incompatible is defined as “two things so opposed in character as to be incapable of existing together.” An epic fail, in a manner of speaking, that would have been true with the statue honoring the Confederacy and its meaning, and many of the people walking past it every day.

Or was it inconsiderate? Yes, and no – because despite common usage, this word actually means *thoughtlessly* causing hurt to others, and this is simply not the case. Much forethought went into their actions – even if it caused hurt. Hurt was a risk involved in the taking down of the icon, admittedly, and yet down it did come.

What about inconceivable? Really? Not if you were remotely paying attention. Not if you know what the word means. Not if you are using it correctly.

The truth, from this desk, and to quote another fine film, is that what we have here is failure to communicate. When someone says “that hurts,” we need to believe them and find out what the pain is, and if it can be mitigated, and we are in a capacity to do so, well, do it. If it is hard to relieve the pain, admit it. The word we may be looking for is “inconvenient.” Maybe that's what the school meant. What the protesters who pulled down the statue did was *inconvenient*. Defined as *causing trouble, difficulties, or discomfort*.

Yes. That may well be so. Not that this is a real problem, in the end. Because the unspoken message over the years seems to be “get over it.” Maybe that's precisely what they were doing. And if you can imagine why this might be so, and if you're smiling, we understand.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

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in the Great State of Georgia!



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CAUTION

It smells just like bacon!

“How To Replace A Timing Belt on A 1984 Ford Bronco”

by Christopher Stevenson

1. Pull into the driveway; turn down the “I’m so sad you don’t love me” music on the radio. Stop the car and get out. Look up at the yard. A little more cluttered than normal. A pretty green five-acre plot, the same old brown rancher, and seven automobiles, and apparently only three are running since Junior is cursing under his own monstrosity, a 1984 Ford Bronco.

“I swear to you someone—some-where—is sitting behind a desk watching me on a television screen at the Ford Motor Company, laughing at me every time I bust a knuckle on some stripped bolt.”

Not sure where he got the Southern accent. He’s lived in Pennsylvania all his life. Asked him, once, and he explained he has relatives in Idaho.

But he works the redneck aesthetic pretty well. Moderately tall, wears RealTree hats, always flannel, and greasy jeans. Carries a hefty gut, which he blames on beer, but think of him and it’s too many Beanie Weenies and Cheez Whiz.

2. Get angry at Samantha. At work, she

bragged she finally found love. But not you. Breathe deep. Fill every part of your lungs and diaphragm. Now sigh. Locate blue cooler near rear passenger wheel. Open and locate Yuengling bottle 12 oz. Remove carabineer from right side belt loop. Although twist off, use carabineer spine to pop the top off.

Junior’s eyebrows telegraph frustration.

Ask, “What’s up?”

“Timing belt snapped,” Junior says, tapping a wrench to the brim of his hat.

Junior took Calculus in eighth grade. Freshman year, he was sent with four twelfth graders to represent the school in the Math Olympics. His father beat the shit out him because Mathletes are queers. Mathletes mean college, and college means vegetarianism. Vegetarianism means liberalism. Liberalism means communism. Communism’s just a few shades of gay. A couple turds shy of the whole shit that is faggoty.

He’s tried to get away from his family, but he can’t say no to his father’s influence. Junior works full time. A welder at a textile factory. He’s

wants to be a forklift operator. For the money. If he can prove to his dad that he’s not worthless, maybe, just maybe, they can be friends again. And that seat would be good. His knees lock up. Right now, he labors through it. He hates doctors. No good to sit and whine. Doctors are just another form of welfare.

“Tell me about it,” Junior says. His face bitters. “I’m about ready to throw the motherfucker in the woods and forget about it. I just had to replace the carburetor and the distributor. Also, a new battery, and now the shit-assed truck is fucking around on me. It’s a like fucking war on the poor. Step forward and you find yourself three steps back. I’m not an acrobat.”

3. Agree, “I’m fuckin’ fed up on the whole being ‘shit on’ shit, too.”

Junior nods and points to the sky. “There’s somebody somewhere sitting in a chair with a camera directed toward us laughing their asses off thinking we’re playing a part in a reality TV show. Technology these days, it don’t sound so off the mark.”

4. Junior asks if you’ll help fix the



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NIGHTSOUND
STUDIOS

Bronco. Of course, you will.

5. Disconnect battery. Hold truck in place with ten-year-old tires that are bald and useless minus to stop vehicles from drifting away. Be careful of the frayed steel cord. It wouldn't be the first time you've poked your fingers.

Say, "I think I may be done with women."

"Every single one of them?"

Junior asks.

Say, "Yes. Every single one of them."

Roll your eyes as Junior laughs, pats you on the back, and looks back down at the truck with a solemn glare. He strokes the scruff on his face, accidentally smearing grease on his nose. He wipes his shirt sleeve over it. No dice. He lets out a "Fuck!" and spits on the sleeve and wipes again. It disappears, but you can't help but notice the black getting into his nose pores. It'll be fine because, despite his hyper-masculine demeanor, he's the only person in the house that exfoliates every day and uses pore strips.

"It's good for the skin," he'll say and wink.

6. Unfasten and take off the air intake

assembly, curse the engineer and the automobile and make sure you say "Goddam" quite a bit and "mother-fucker" every so often.

Sigh, "I just can't deal anymore."

"See Eve," Junior'll wink again. "Damn apples and shit."

"Whatever. Women cost too much money, anyway."

"Ooon-ly if you treat them right," he sings, then spits chaw from his gums.

7. Remove water pump, and power steering pump. Talk about good ol' days that you didn't actually live in, when everything was manual and there "weren't no power anythings" in these damn cars.

Ask, "I'm treating them wrong?"

"They don't have real thoughts," he'll say. "You can sway just about any woman with some dollars, whether it's jewelry, a place to stay, or if you're her boss giving her a week's pay-check."

"Can't you sway anyone with money?"

8. Align mark on crankshaft pulley with 0 on the timing scale molded into the engine block. Check Chilton's to make sure you know what you are

talking about because after all you are a back yard mechanic.

"Look, if it has tits or wheels, it will always give you trouble," Junior proclaims.

9. Take off motherfucking timing belt, cover bolts, and pull cover off. Throw cover somewhere far away. You may lose it, but it makes you feel better.

"Women repair," you joke. "What a concept."

"Swapping factory stock for performance parts."

"Four barrel blondes."

"High or low emission voices."

"Diagnostic chips, that you hook up to a line."

"Oh, I've got a line."

"Like, 'Hey honey, you should peel out of those clothes in my garage?'"

"No, dumbass," he says, "my dick."

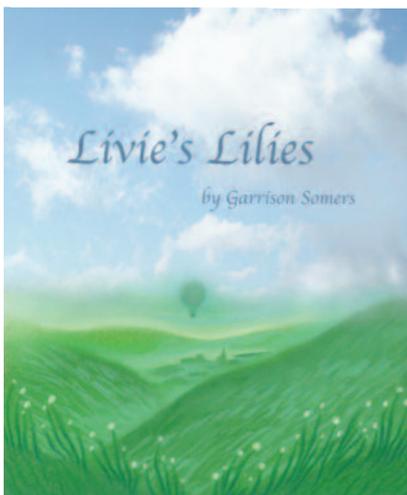
He pretends to cast his cock as if it were fishing line, "I reel in the chicks with my fly."

"You mean your lure?" You know you're offended. You not sure if it's the overt sexism or the bad pun in use. "Fly."

"Fly—lure. Same difference."

"That has nothing to do cars."

"Shut the fuck up and quit being



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so literal.”

“Of, course,” you’d shake your head, but it’s Junior.

He wasn’t always like this. When he came home the day after the Math Olympics, he arrived at school with black eyes and a busted lip. He fixed himself after that. His Daddy’d told him, “Men don’t learn Calculus, they practice Calculus. Men who learn Calculus do it for chicks. You don’t do shit for chicks.” That day he got his PSAT scores back, which was something he paid for and took behind his father’s back. Everyone knows he won a scholarship because it was in the school newspaper, but it didn’t matter, and he never talked about it. Not long after his dad beat him, Junior joined a far-right militia group. He bought a white 1984 Bronco on it with too many miles, jacked it up and put large Confederate flags on it, lest his truck be confused with OJ Simpson’s get-away vehicle. He could never join the KKK because it was too extreme, but he received the invitation. Junior wouldn’t join, but said they had nice picnics and barbecues, and when they went to the beach they always partied hard.

10. Some say check the tensioner bearings. Tell inappropriate jokes instead. For every sexist joke told, tell Junior a dumb white person joke and direct it specifically at him. He’ll probably agree, but honestly, auto repair is about the only thing you folks have in common.

“How many white people does it take to change a timing belt?”

“How many?” he grumbles.

“White people are too lazy to do anything, the job’s been outsourced.”

He shakes his head. You can see a slight smile rise on the side of his mouth, but it turns into a greaser’s

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version of Mona Lisa’s half smile. You actually thought it was clever and funny, and hoped Junior might, too.

11. Check that all the timing marks are lined up and loosen up the belt tensioner and remove the belt. Don’t let the camshaft and crankshaft move when you have the belt off, if it does, blame Ford. Go get a beer to drink, smoke a cigarette and throw tools you have broken clear into the woods, where raccoons might pick them up to fix their cars. Replace belt. Curse the automobile Gods. Set the tensioner if you need to make it tighter. Make sure that it sits well over the teeth of the timing sprockets.

“Outsourced.” Junior says calmly. He takes a deep breath, looks you in the eye and raises his eyebrows. He looks down at the timing belt, then back you at you. You can see a tensioner arise as if he’s filling with anxiety.

He’s almost the timing, search for the teeth of the sprockets, someone’s started him too soon and now he’s misfiring. He gives a you-asked-for-this smirk and matter-of-factly says, “This is exactly why Republicans had to win the election. Even if the whiney carrot-

face was to be the one. Some people need to leave America.”

“What people?”

Junior purses his lips, raises an eyebrow, and nods his head like you’re an idiot.

12. Put the timing belt cover back on.

“Lots. The Mexicans. The Muslims. The ni-eh-eh... the en-en-en-N bombs-bomb. The N words,” he’ll say through a shit-eating grin after a less than gracious stumble, with an eyebrow that says *you can’t be mad, I didn’t SAY the word*.

“Wow, Junior,” throw your arms above your head, and as if you weren’t already frustrated. Lock your knees and grit your teeth. “All of the N-words? Just remove them from the American vocabulary?”

He’ll clench his fists. The crosses his arms. He’ll look up at the sky. You look, too. Rain clouds.

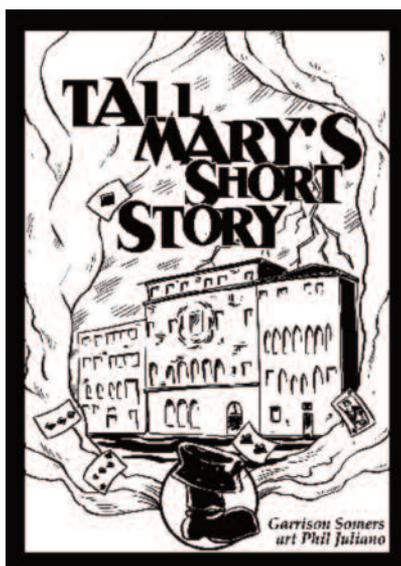
“A storm comes, my boy,” he’ll say and his eyes’ll light up as if the Pentecost is all about him.

13. Take all that shit you took off that you thought might be necessary to take off and put it back on. Talk about how stupid everything is and threaten to kill the car repeatedly.

There’s an awkward silence. He huffs a little bit, and you wonder if you’ve done it again: stepped out of line, became uptight. Uptight meaning you’re too concerned with being classy, too concerned with being prim and proper and using the right words, and having the right beliefs. Too concerned with “decorum.” Sometimes, people’ll use that word at you, to prove a point.

14. Notice the timing marks, are they all aligned?

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"You know what I mean," says Junior, His face lights up a like a preacher. "I just know you don't like the actual word."

"Yeah, because calling them 'N-words' makes everything all innocent."

"Look," he says, taking off his hat and runs his greasy hand through his hair, "you know I don't like them. I'm not racist. I like black people, just not..."

"Those damn N-words: nice, noteworthy, new..."

15. Put the air intake back on.

"Why do you do this?" he'll whisper under his breath, and walk away from the truck. He'll stop and glare back at you, because you started a fight. "They don't have our back, and well, I don't blame them somewhat, but they're all against us. Look, even if they are being as held down as they say they are, they can't even fight for equal rights correctly, right? They're not people we can depend on."

"No, because they're just apparently words."

"For fuck's sake, why do you have to do this?"

"Do what?"

"Why do you always have to be right? Why can't we have differing opinions? I'm respecting yours. Where the fuck is diversity if you can't you take the time to respect mine?"

"Respect?"

"Right. I get it. But you know what?" and he takes a deep breath and starts shaking a finger at you.

"Samantha, who I think is cool—Samantha she's—oh for fuck's sake... She ain't even an N-word, but even SHE won't go with you. She's all caught with some Don Juan who can sway her, I'm sure with big words. Bigger words than you or me, you pretentious fuck. You know, pretentious:

pretense, pretend."

"But not N-words."

"Fuck, off. You're not even making sense right now."

16. Reconnect the battery.

Ask, "Don't you have the largest cache of interracial porn in the world?"

"That's different," he fires back. "That's fantasy."

"And people who are words aren't?"

"That's what *you* people don't ever get."

"Us people?"

"Yeah, you people. The wannabe N-word fucker" he gets this look of concern in his face, almost like shame, that he crossed a line. "Whatever, I know you don't like the word—but let's be real. You're a wannabe, and can't even be that. And you know why that word makes it so bad?"

"Oh dear sage, ally of all the women of the world, please tell me."

You'll really want to punch him dead in the face.

"There's nothing wrong with wanting to be with a woman. There's nothing wrong with wanting to be with a black woman. But for you, she's something different, and interesting.

For it's about decorum: décor, decoration—she's just an N-word you want to fuck or hold your arm."

"What's that have to do with interracial porn?"

"Because I'm not afraid of who I am. I'm not afraid of what people might think. Why didn't you ask Samantha out? Caught up in your political correctness? Can't be a man? Can't look at her as more than an object? Maybe you could keep her on a shelf! 'Oh hay world, here's my bookshelf, complete with stuffy books

and my politically correct black girlfriend!' How's that any different than someone cracking a whip on someone on a plantation?"

Shake your head.

"Tell me something, smart ass," he continues. "Why didn't you date Betsy Lou?"

"You know why."

"Here's this girl, who the whole of the town knows is crazy about you, despite your weird uptight liberal self, and you won't give her the time of day."

"She's a racist."

"We're all racists, ain't that what you say? All white folks are racist whether we like it or not. So, that doesn't mean anything."

"But she's actually in the Klan and stuff."

"WHO g-i-v-e-s a fuck? Maybe, y'all could have worked each other out. Maybe she'd teach you to stop being such a hifalootin prick, and maybe you could have taught her that maybe, just maybe, that lynching people ain't right. But, oh hell, naw, you're too good."

"She's in the K fucking KK."

"It doesn't matter. You never gave her the time of day, because you have your eyes set on this pretty black girl who doesn't even know you exist!"

"That's not fair. We're friends. And—"

"Look, I want to say it could have been you and not some other son of a bitch in Samantha's bedroom whispering poetry, but what are you? What's your interest in her? Even if we forgot about Betsy Lou, the fact remains with Samantha, why didn't you at least ask her out? What is Samantha to you?"

All you can think is that it's the system, it must be. It's the spectacle, the patriarchy. Not Betsy Lou but Samantha. Betsy is unthinkable, a

The Blotter

racist single mother working at the local mini-mart, probably looking for sugar daddy. If being sugar daddy means trucking fruits and veggies to the farmers markets in DC. You have nothing in common with her, anyway. Your music to you is Neutral Milk Hotel's *Holland, 1945* on 7 inch. You assume she's a Nickelback fan (even though you love their song "Photograph") or worse Montgomery Gentry's (whose "My Town is also a fave of yours). You're pretty sure she's never heard of Noam Chomsky. But this is about Samantha. If she had really been interested in you then *she would have asked you*. A modern woman asks. She's worked with you, standing by your side selling peaches and apple cider to all the hip neighborhoods in the big cities. It's not your fault. It's not her fault. But you certainly feel friendzoned, although you'd never say that out loud.

"For real, man. Fuck this. Fuck all this. The Betsys, the Samanthas, the N-words. Whatever," Junior proclaims. He straightens up his back, and looks you dead in the eye. "Sometimes, it takes a real man to ask. To treat a woman like a woman. To not to get caught up in the particulars of what people say we ought to do. No one

cares about what things look like if you're real."

"Sure, Junior," and with every ounce of rancor you say, "go down stairs where you got your porn and black painted blow up dolls, and you can call them every N-word you want, and they'll never say anything back."

"Brother, it's my suggestion that you start examining why there's something in you that's afraid not just of races, but of women. Maybe you can all them W-words: woeful, weepy, wilted. Won't. Won't. Won't. Or C-words, because *you c-c-c-c-can't*."

He throws his remaining tools on the ground. It begins to rain. He gives one last look of disappointment. He rushes off inside the house, most likely to his room. You look at the tools as they collect drops of water. You should probably pick it up so it doesn't rust. But why?

17. If the truck starts and runs, well, then shit, you did okay.

So, why can't women work that way? *For every sexist and racist joke told—*

"So John and I are seeing each other now," Samantha said. "I was so sick of being lonely. And he's dreamy. It feels like I'm a teenager again. I'm

in love. Isn't that great? "

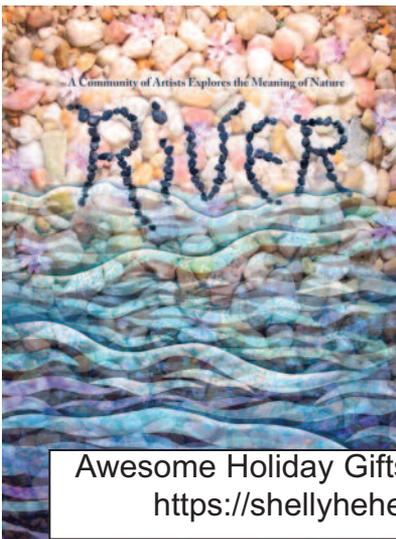
No. Not at all. And who the hell is John? You rush inside, leaving the tools on the ground and the hood of the truck still open. You run to the bathroom. Close the door behind you, and look in the mirror for a minute. You clean off the grease from your arms, thinking of how to fix yourself: *you spend most of your time moping—you could change the way you dress—girls like a man who can dress well—you should go to a bar, take a money clip with two hundreds, a couple twenties and twenty ones*. Jesus, is it really this difficult?

You wash your face and dry it off. No crying. And Junior is so pissed off at you; he will not talk to you for the rest of the day. Tomorrow, things might be different. And, maybe tomorrow, another car will break down. Or despite the "this is what a feminist looks like" sticker you have on your own car, maybe women repair will become a respected discipline. Maybe, you'll sort yourself out, or maybe you won't. But today, the World decided you will spend your evening thinking the most heinous thoughts about women, and romanticizing them, and blaming your mother, while Junior watches interracial porn, and both of you remain afraid of words that begin with N and W.

You and Junior.

Alone.

The tools and truck rust as water globs from heaven. But, at least the timing belt is changed. And timing is everything. ❖



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The Dream Journal

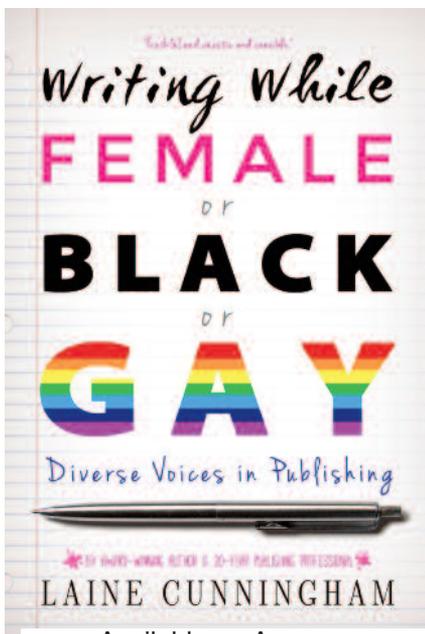
real dreams, real weird

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

I dreamt that I was living back in Portland again -- & was visiting the big mall there ... I was walking past the ice rink and heard someone say "You know that's where Tonya Harding got her start practicing!" ... And their friend guffawed & replied "Are you sure that's anything to be all that proud of? ... She was quite a terror!" ... Then I saw the Zamboni driver coming around -- but I couldn't believe what he was doing ... He'd put an attachment to the machine to break up all of the ice into cubes floating in water ... Then I was even more astounded to see another guy come up & start throwing giant things into what was now mostly water in the rink They looked like big lumps shaped like alligators , but motionless and covered in corn meal or sawdust ... I was getting more and more bewildered & I said to the guy "What the hell are you doing to the rink?" ... And he said "No one wants to skate anymore ... We're turning it into an alligator habitat ... People can watch them from behind the railings" ... So I said "But they look dead!" & he replied "They're freeze-dried cryonically ... Give 'em a few minutes & they'll snap out of it !!" ... Someone next to me said "For those things "snap" is the word" -- and let out a big laugh ...

Keep up the good work with your magazine ... Adam (upstate NY)



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"In Larva (C.2534)"

by Fin Sorrel

Bags of *'fillet o' fish'* hang on the front door of the houses, as I walk up Main Street. I see each certificate within the twelve arms grown out of the torso, to climb the apple blossom. I watch the blob losing fat that becomes paper origami. I see there's a thief, hiding in the leaves, and pull out a spray can, and an eight percent beer, crack it open, while a cat jumps across the street, wrapped in circuit boards that blink little lights reflecting casts over the gutters, puddled rain and a blue and green flickering light. I cross, and approach with my spray can aimed at the thief - Thief with Chimney rockets, feverishly on stamina, if you know what I'm saying here - I Approach shouting flower pots.

Red dots in my vision arrive out of place, reflections of the puddles, that crossing cat. I arrive in front of the Willow tree, hanging dinners out of my hat, offer some to the thief as bait. He thinks on it for a moment, eases back and forth, hanging there in his shadow, and declines with a gesture - He begins climbing into his Willow tree, as himself, but younger than he appeared before, as a kid, I'm in his yard. Hang my fingers with beads and ribbons and jar lids with pink shoe string. At my feet is my new body, dressed in her finest suit. She lies there sleeping sound.

{One squishy reptile enters over my vision of her on a screen before me and an audience of three in all, we lounge back watching the movie in this dark smoke filled movie theater.}

I walk in my new stale bodies, there is three of me now: the thief, the girl, and the child.

Illuminating the old house, we approach with flashlights, the dark living room windows white curtains.

Hidden new languages surface between us three while we pass a Guava fruit back and forth between us, whispering commands.

I as my female self, illuminate the transistors with my flashlight, once in the basement of our old house.

My flashlight beams are everywhere I look, searching the shadows as they reach out from the concrete walls of the basement, and enter the body closest, in each breath a possession, where the eyes turn cold white, and the muscles begin running autopilot.

This is when the feathers rise from the basement, from under our feet, and into a stairway. We follow the feathers down to another room, behind us comes the lake, flooding us out, and up to the watchtower. I know this is the sample of simulated present entanglement, and relax as I ride on the cold lake water, upward. Televisions spin on TV dinner trays, that float along side me, nearby.

I watch the sky fill with ants.

When we get upstairs to the watchtower, the floor has been freshly wood stained, and there is a guitar that plays a bed through a speaker into being, and through a golden trumpet the land and shore pour out before us from within its twisted pipes.

NOTATION:

When you look up into the light with your eyes, flies settle in the kings' chair, your majesty, the brain. In its clothing case, it animates, with its lobster tail shadows behind it. Up in the helium balloon pyramid, our dusty Saturday is full of bread crumbs landing wings of fish fry onto the edges of rock — This is where, in landing, I find the half specimen of leak latched doors to the caves near the sea—

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"Perhaps The Doors To Our Dreams"

Perhaps the doors to our dreams
space time rambling mind
hang on cosmic hinges
restless hinges aching hinges
in need of hemp opium or fine wine

Unmoved by being in my dream
she walked barefoot over my breath
speaking languages
from a trillion universes
unknown to me

I heard her I called to her
I listened and her voice
spoke to me one word
slowly one word at a time

Her face near my memory
her kisses her body our whisperings
I held my hands out and they disappeared
A lonely finger remained pointing

Perhaps the portals to our dreams
are hungry mouths stuck open
endlessly whimpering to be nurtured

I watched her laughing and crying
at the threshold of my tenderness crying
slippery tears severe tears unreal tears
tears like smoke rings tears like crystals
tears like rain the roses love

Gently she lifted a red rose
to my mouth
it lived in ecstasy
on my tongue

O Love love love
daylight is near
and dreams will fade
like one blossom after another

*"Who gave these idiots
microphones?"*
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Two by Dah

“We Said Hello”

Today the sun sang with spirit
with streaks of light so dazzling
that the warm dizzy breeze was in love

Today I walked as if my bones needed exercise
only to see beautiful women smiling and
without knowing why

we said hello and my heart clapped its hands
excitedly and the sun sang with spirit
and small birds joined in and light floated

with the breeze and the whole day opened
its eyes and one tree after another took the breeze
in its arms until

all the colors of the day were laughing
even in the shade and all of the beautiful women
smiled at me and we said hello

*Friendship, loyalty, nostalgia, and the joy
and healing power of music...*

A Southern college town and its thriving local music scene,
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good...
A lost tape of a beloved band's legendary show...
A record label, poised to break big, which certain people want
to be part of - by any means necessary...
Two visitors, whose own music has been muted by regrets over
long-ago bad decisions: Chuck McDonough, former grad student,
who skipped town after learning things about himself he couldn't
face; and Penny Froward, whose attempt to help a friend in
danger almost destroyed another woman's life...
A mysterious will by an unknown hand; and murder...

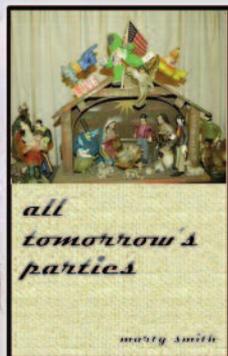
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“For Those Who Wish And Believe”

by Dah

On these clear warm winter days
before the fog's misted fabric
before the shadows
are steadily waiting

magic wields a wand over
this earthy landscape Look

a child rushes a seasonal flower
an old man carries his voice
in silence
the air denounces sorrow

The Bay's silvery water
calls out to the clouds
calls out
while shaking its clear skin

and the City is a hard flame
lost in its own make believe

From time to time
I see girls holding their young hearts
in tender thoughts while

boys watching from short distances
bloom from their young mouths
with slow greetings

I see virginal youths crystallizing
into puberty expanding their lives

I see sunlight transformed
into powdery butterflies
floating over French lavender

I watch the mossy path
of a forest suddenly
fluttering in breeze like green gauze
greeting me with dreamy calm

and shiny leaves

I see the tenderness
of morning dew bathing
earth's body
A mother's call to her child
echoes from an oak tree
A dog barks at its own paw prints
then smiles at a small ball
a small boy is carrying

I see flames of wild pink roses
climbing to the sky
like a fragrant wandering path

And for a long time
I hear distant voices sometimes
women laughing across a meadow

Meadows Meadows Meadows
warm grassy beds for loving you
for those who wish and believe

CONTRIBUTORS:

Christopher Stevenson lived in Pennsylvania and West Virginia while driving for UPS, where he was a Teamster shop steward for twelve years. He quit to attend the University of Maryland for creative writing, where he was a member of the Jimenez-Porter Writers House. These days, he works for the Petworth Branch of the DC Public Library where he runs a couple writers workshops, teaches a baby lap time, and coaches people on resumes, genealogy, and the location of the public restrooms.

Fin Sorrel runs mannequin haus (infii2.weebly.com). He is the author of *Caramel Floods* (pski porch, 2017) and *Sand Library Poems* (Alien buddha Press, 2018)

Dah's seventh poetry collection is *Something Else's Thoughts* (Transcendent Zero Press) and his poems have been published by editors from the US, UK, Ireland, Canada, Spain, Singapore, Philippines, Poland, Australia, Africa, and India. He is a Pushcart Prize and Best Of The Net nominee and the lead editor of the poetry critique group, The Lounge. Dah's eighth book is forthcoming in November 2018 from Flutter Press. He lives in Berkeley, California. www.dahlusion.wordpress.com



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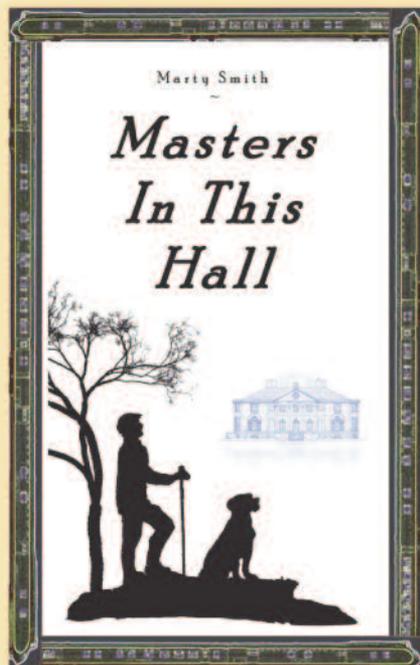
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