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The Blotter

magazine

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Laine Cunningham.....Publishing 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:
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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“Reader”

I’m almost certain I’ve talked about this before – I’m getting older and tending towards repeating myself – but I find that time is getting away from me in ever more slippery-slope chunks. The summer is over here – (and by the time you read this, autumn will nearly be,) and I’m feeling like nothing got done. I mean, by me. Which is a shame, or at least discouraging, so I need to go back and double-check.... You see, I had at least four different books that I planned to consume, and did so. Summer reading is the best – sitting on the front porch as the day’s heat dissipates, the buzzing of cicadas and the smell of citronella taking up two of my senses, leaving the others for the cover and spine and open pages in my hand, and the cold beverage on the table next to me. And I have some mighty tomes ahead of me (that, like I said, I will be deep into or will have put paid to by the time you read this).

Reading is not a chore – it shouldn’t be. And assigning myself four books was no challenge. Four doesn’t feel like much at all. Not nearly enough. So, what kept me from reading more? I watched baseball, did dishes and laundry, walked, all the normal stuff. I wrote. I always write. Pulled over to the side of the road on the WIP and delved into a different story that had been revving its engines in the corner of my brain. Yes, it got a bit out of control and is now pushing 25K words – which is lunacy, but there you go. I’ll get back to the WIP soon. I transplanted some begonia cuttings into flowerpots and kept them alive, for now. I flushed three late guppies and what had been a friendly little catfish from the tank. Human error, in case you’re wondering. I’m now staring at the tank, idly thinking about what I might do there next, if anything. I do seem to have a knack for raising healthy algae.... These are not excuses. Well, yes they are. I’m reading more, now. Melville. Twain. Emily Bronte. Emerson. Things I should have attended to long ago.

Over the summer, younger daughter read Mrs. Shelley’s *Frankenstein* as an assignment for her fall English class. I gave her my “Classics Reimagined” copy with all of the brilliant illustrations and other fanciful constructs of this particular volume. It helped her...overcome, if you will, the two-hundred-year-old prose.

She is a good reader, with a hell of a homework-ethic. And by “good” I mean she does what is necessary. She takes her reading assignments and breaks them down into “pages per day,” and doesn’t deviate from that plan even when something is actually holding her interest. I would say that this is strange and that I don’t understand it, but she is seventeen and

that describes almost everything about her life right now, from my Dad viewpoint. And the assignments are always completed, so there's that.

But, and this is sort of astonishing, she also reads for fun. She still makes time in her day for something no one told her to do. Perhaps it is precisely because she wants some level of control over her life, for a half hour, forty-five minutes. I know, or at least I hope, that many kids like reading even though they have to do it for some class they're taking. But is this the case, in our world of easy electronic entertainment in the palms of our hands?

Not so long ago (from my perspective, but back when she was in elementary school,) we would journey to the bookstore and she would settle down in the youth/children's section and scan the shelves with discernment, seeking one or two worthy literary candidates. Over the years, she had come to understand that wanting to purchase *everything* came to naught, but if she could show me something she really liked, a volume with a story that stretched her limits, I would consider letting the moths out of my wallet. This happened more often than she will give me credit for.

And, of course, there was always the public library. In her lifetime, it has moved from an old house in our county seat to a new, modern building over by the community college. Once every two weeks or so, we visited there to replenish her stock and return the volumes she'd recently consumed. The adjective *voracious* applied to her. Avid. Bookworm. Bibliophile.

So when I see her with a book, I ask about it. I hear the answer, and nod and say *mmm-hmm*. I may sound non-committal but I am impressed. I never ask her if it's for school, or if it's good, or tell her I'm pleased, because the truth is I'm afraid I'll break it, this phenomenon of reading, like someone thoughtlessly putting a beautiful porcelain tea-cup in the dishwasher.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

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in the Great State of Georgia!



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CAUTION

just because you can.

“Relevance”

by Kim Farleigh

When the cape sucked the bull forward against the bull’s reluctance to charge, the crowd’s hope in beauty burst into applause, a fluid linking up of passes finishing with the man’s sword tip touching the bull’s snout, the turning man swinging his sword up triumphantly, leaving the bull stationary, the man clenching a fist and shouting: “*Vamos!*” fireworks applause cracking, cracking, cracking, crack crack cracking in the cracking crowd.

Young bullfighters dismiss fear, fear a luxury for those with nothing to prove. Ambition smothers reluctance, the cape overcoming the bull’s concern about danger, danger established for the bull after being pricked by those pic-holding, two-legged creatures on those stringy-haired, four-legged beasts with long faces; then more danger came from those two-legged beasts with long fangs, those agile, colourful, spindly insects called *banderilleros*.

The bullfighter faced the bull and raised his sword. Conversation’s death brought funerary silence. Hope the man would produce a clean kill boomed above auditory frequencies, hope that virtue yields success, hope thickening anticipation.

Man and bull attacked, the quietude pregnant with the child of exultant relief, that silence trying to give birth to that child, sound sucked into an imploding star of want.....

Disappointment’s supernova boomed, the sword, hitting bone, staying in the man’s right hand, different pitches of dismay in the crowd’s gasp of unfulfilled hope.

Then the crowd clapped in a rhythmical palm chorus of encouragement, the clapping driven by the unconscious wish of witnessing the virtues that created our survival in prehistoric times. That desire lingers on strong.

The sun flamed between misty continents, the man’s shadow under flashes on his suit of lights, his blade gilded by sunset rays. His left hand held the cape. He kicked it to avoid it tangling in his feet, the sword’s tip aimed at a spot behind the bull’s head.

Applause’s disappearance left desire reverberating in a compacting soundlessness that erupted into verbal fireworks as the blade disappeared into the bull’s back, the cape directing the bull’s snout towards sand.

The rising crowd, waving white

handkerchiefs, faced the President’s box, pressuring the bullfight’s President to acknowledge the art just seen, handkerchiefs waving and waving, someone screaming: “An ear! You bastard! Come on!”

People get emotional about unknown people’s performances because these performances, by satisfying unconscious wishes, provide surrogate power.

“Come on!” someone else screamed, the President ignoring what others acknowledged, white-butterfly handkerchiefs fluttering above the cubist flowers that distance gives a crowd’s clothes.

Collective hope’s white wings wafted and wafted.

The wings stopped fluttering after minutes of hopeful pleading, the President of *la corrida* not placing a white scarf over the balustrade of his box to acknowledge the awarding of an ear. Bullfighters once received ears from the bulls they had killed, the bullfighters using the ears as identity cards to receive as payment the meat from their dead adversaries. Now the awarding of ears represents official recognition, bank transfers replacing meat, the more ears the more transfers.

The rotating bullfighter held his black hat high, acknowledging the crowd’s generosity, applause cracking, a woman saying: “That’s not worth an ear?!”

The stranger beside her thought: She looks hurt. For phlegmatic people these emotions appear absurd.

But because of prehistory's overhang, the brain still needs extreme emotions. We still need this to feel alive, the unconscious working its meaningful magic.

Cushions rained into the ring, tossed in disgust at the President's decision not to give an ear, a reaction to denial of an emotional privilege by the privileged.

The cushions were hired from stalls in passageways behind the concrete seats. Those brown rectangles, associated with rump and "brownness," symbolised presidential perception. While dark brown crashed down, the bullfighter circled the ring, holding his hat high, someone in the crowd hurling a hat that the bullfighter caught and hurled back, a connection no President could deny, applause increasing where the bullfighter was walking in front of, like a clapping Mexican wave circling the arena, the President disallowing the ear due to a technicality, the crowd acknowledging wider pictures of style and talent, not the speck-like details important to those blind to the future. ❖

"Longley, USA"

by Lawrence Rebholtz

A pale, sterile light saturated the skin of Frank Bauer's forearms as he rolled a pair of white sleeves up to his elbows. His tissues puddled over the edges of tightened cloth, as dough rising in a fly-ridden kitchen. Two and a half folds up, a slight roll to cinch them in place. Frank pulled the front of his shirt to his mouth and moistened his name badge with a heavy breath before wiping it down.

F. Bauer: Lock and Key Security Personnel.

Inside a vinyl-paneled kiosk, he kept eyes with himself in a mirror hung from the wall to the right of his desk, cocking one brow to the compliment of a slanted smile; he un-cocked and made note of the time it took for the lines in his forehead to fill in, stared straight, re-cocked. A sharp motherfucker in a sharp uniform. He burst to his feet from the chair and pulled his taser on the man in the mirror. In effect, a standoff. Weapon drawn and posed in the mirror to admire himself in profile, he dusted his sternum with his knuckles.

In his periphery a face appeared in the window. He'd half fallen to the floor, half re-gripped the taser before a sense of familiarity took over.

"Jesus, Alvin, the hell are you sneakin' up on me like that for?"

"S'midnight, you knew I'd be around! Big mess-up on a shipment of mufflers last week, all fucked up. They got us working on twelve hour shifts all weekend. Can you goddam believe it? I sure as shit shouldn't be surprised."

The jumpsuit-clad Alvin raised a paper bag to his lips and tipped it back in sync with his head. The factory boys all operated like this. One of them might lose a finger on an isolated and dismal night, but who was to say the injury statistics were worse here than another factory? After fresh skin and scar tissue covered the stump, they'd be back again, lingering before shift's start with a brown bag clutched in four fingers.

Frank elevated an invisible can in his hand as the two men shared a knowing wink.

"Alvin, you hear about that guy over in Barstow got his dick chopped off by his old lady?"

"The fuck are you talkin' about?"

"Nah, I'm not givin' you shit, it's all up over QBC7. Guy was minding his own damn business and his lady starts going through his phone. She finds a conversation he's having with his girl cousin and she doesn't like it, I guess he's cheated before, and she doesn't like that he's talking to this girl cousin, she's just going off the handle with this shit. He tries to tell

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her they're just talkin' about family stuff, a reunion or something, and she's not having it and so she storms out of the house or whatever. "

"Uh-huh."

"So she comes back after he's sleeping and WHACK, pair of kitchen scissors. Just takes her guy's unit right off."

"Frank, wha..."

"AND, get this! As he's in shock over the whole thing, the bitch grabs his dick and throws it down the garbage disposal! Shredded! Not a thing the guy can do about it now!"

"Frank. You gotta stop watching that shit, man, I'm just trying to work."

"You know, he oughta be like one of them Italian kids that get chopped up like that so they can sing for the church, one of them... what is it, a Cannellini?"

Alvin drew a palm and rubbed his eyes in defeat. Perks of the job, he supposed. He took another pull from the bag.

"Well, I suppose that is some shit, ain't it? Lotta crazy people out there."

"Damn right there is. No way I'd let my woman get the drop on ME like that. Any woman'd think two times before pulling something like that on me"

"How long you lived alone for now, Frank? Since goddam always?"

Alvin let out a rattling laugh from his chest, spritzing the window with flecks of dry linen.

"You'll have to get a pair of scissors in that goddam apartment before you ever get a woman in

bed with you. She gonna chase you out the door with a pair of shit-stained Levi's?"

"Fuck you, Alvin!"

"Alright, alright, I gotta get in there."

Alvin punctuated himself with a deep swill that finished the bag's contents and gave the window a jocular rap.

"Say, you hear about that porn star over in Venice? Same thing happened to hi..."

"Work, Frank! I'm going in!"

With the turn of Alvin's boot on weathered cement Frank sat alone in the vinyl security kiosk.

Time in the kiosk was unmotivated, had habit of winding through the parking lot's sickly lamps before passing into the night at a dead limp with nobody concerned enough to chase after it. Frank stared at nothing in particular as he gave repetitive flicks to a bobble-head with teased hair, which was a piece of inherited hair metal memorabilia. *Flick*. A little doll on the drums, head vibrating on a spring and to a full stop. *Flick*. Vibrating and to a full stop. *Flick*.

Frank took notice of his reflection again. He flexed his biceps in the starchy guard's uniform and admired their bulge under tight polyester. Rising to his feet, he maintained his flex and faced off in the mirror. His gut hung out far over a tightened belt. He pushed and pulled at his stomach, examined it from different angles, and forced a suave grin. That's why they kept him around. The girth of a real man. It could be said with certainty that no other auto-parts

warehouse on the West Coast was under such a steadfast lockdown.

The sliding window across from Frank's desk reflected a transparent image of the bobble head still vibrating. He considered, for a moment, taking a seat, but stood in limbo to stare at the doll trembling on glass. The hollowness of the window's reflections always conjured a sense of unrest in Frank; the flickering overhead lamps, the shivering doll, the quick movements of his mirror-side posturing, and somehow even a visual echo of the water cooler's digestive rumbles, all suggested a solipsism occurring within a vinyl phantasm which stood in solitude away from the darkest corners of the factory parking lot. Tires on the factory boys' cars pulsed to the beat of the gurgling water cooler.

Two years ago, Frank had been approached by an old colleague (a "Co-League", as he was known to say it while recounting his latest rendition of this story at the bar top, usually to an audience displaying varied degrees of disinterest.) with an offer for a job in security. A quiet parking lot. Graveyard shifts. A lot of sitting to be expected, "getting paid to do fuck-all". The two men had worked together as bouncers at an uneventful bar a couple towns over, and he saw Frank as a perfect candidate for the security gig; Frank agreed.

The parking lot basked in silence as Frank began to wash the pavement with his flashlight. He considered this type of security check to be a hallmark of his exceptional service. Most other guards

waived this aspect of their job in favor sitting as statues behind the desk, picking at loose flesh along their nail beds until sunrise. He walked down a row of cars and pointed the flashlight between each of them. Nothing was ever under the cars either, but he looked there, too. It was his lifelong hatred of criminals that distinguished him from the other guards. He'd posited at the end of many beer-driven outings that his presence and reputation kept the lot safe for guards on day shift. Frank made back in the direction of his kiosk. The spaces between the cars remained unoccupied.

Back in the fluorescent confines of his kiosk, Frank surveyed his surroundings through the window to ensure he was alone, no workers coming in or out. Two in the morning. A slow time, to be sure. He took out his phone and began opening a series of tabs, pulling up pictures and videos on each one.

"Oh yeah, there we go", he muttered over the folds of his chin as he stared at the phone in his lap.

He opened videos and pictures until he had an arrangement of thirty-some panels displaying a series of airbrushed women fucking, getting fucked, spreading thick-lipped cunts for close-ups. One more scan of the parking lot. Frank and the desolate concrete expanse. He shifted in his chair and brushed at his thigh on impulse. The screen was now focused on an augmented woman feigning cries of ecstasy to a rhythmic penetration.

"What I would fucking do. Just one night, girl I'd show you what

I'll do."

A movement caught his attention, somewhere beyond the melange of reflected ephemera in the window. He hesitated to break his fixation with the screen, but lost himself to the distraction. He curved his hands to shield sweaty eyebrows and pressed his face to the kiosk's window. Two figures stood between cars in the parking lot. Frank watched on with doubt that he recognized either of them. Frank Bauer was on duty. Surely they must be aware of that.

With the swing of an arm, one of the figures shattered a car's window as the other fumbled through a backpack. Frank watched. The figure with the backpack sat in the driver's seat and played with the ignition. Frank gripped the taser on his belt and made for the door.

"Ayy, just what the fuck do you think yer doing?"

Frank's hand clutched a holstered taser as he approached.

"AY..."

"Don't talk."

As the man with the arms commanded silence, Frank found himself at the barrel of a revolver.

"Just shut your fat ass up and don't make this hard on your self... is that a taser?"

Frank stared, felt the pistol trained on his gut, kept his silence.

"You see this?! This fat fuck just tried to walk up on us with a taser. Toss that shit to me, eh? On the ground."

Frank unholstered the taser and skipped it across the ground to the feet of the man with the arms, who tossed it into the car. The engine sputtered as the man with

the backpack turned a makeshift metallic device in the ignition.

"I don't think this one's gonna work. It's not gonna go."

"Try it again, we're supposed to get him a hatchback."

The engine spat resistant echoes through the parking lot. The man with the arms kept the gun on Frank. They held eye contact.

"What the fuck's taking so long, I thought..."

"I told you man, this one ain't it! I don't even know how they drove this thing here!"

The man with the arms turned back to Frank.

"You got keys on that belt, Dough Boy?"

Frank remained reticent, frozen.

"Asshole, where the fuck are your car keys?"

The man with the arms stepped up to Frank and gestured at the key loop on on his belt.

"Which one of them is your car keys? DON'T!"

The man raised his gun to stop Frank mid-reach.

"Point to it."

With the gun pressed against his spine Frank walked to his car. This could happen to anyone, he reasoned. Lotta crazy people out there, or so he'd heard. The crunch of their boots was erratic, out of step. It must take some kind of bastard to point a gun at him, of all people. He supposed that he, too, would be angry enough to point a pistol at someone if a woman had chopped his dick off. It takes some real type of dickless degenerate to go waving a gun around like that. If



Mario Lopez
Catanzaro, Italy



crete
aly



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only he'd gotten the drop on them...

The man with the arms kept the gun to the small of his back while the other unlocked Frank's car.

"This better work. We don't have time to fu... Did you piss your pants?"

A wet shadow had soaked outwards from Frank's crotch. He looked down at the darkened khakis and kept his mouth shut.

"You see that, man? This fat piece of shit just pissed his pants!" The man shouted over to his companion who'd fired the engine.

"What's the problem, this your first time seeing a real gun? I guess I wouldn't give you one either, after seeing you play with that taser."

"Come on, stop fucking around, let's get out of here!" The other man belted from the car.

The man with the gun laughed and showed some teeth.

"Alright Dough Boy, good luck out there."

With that, Frank's assailants rolled out of the parking lot, marking their exit with responsible usage of the turn signal. Frank stood next to the empty parking space as if in a trance. Time lapsed, his thoughts empty among tunneling sounds of insects crooning from the penumbræ, stale urine chafing quivering thighs, fastening pin of his name badge scratching skin. He removed the key ring from his belt and flipped it in circles around his finger. A *woosh* and a *clink* with each rotation. *Woosh* and *clink*. Frank Bauer, Security Personnel. *Woosh* and *Clink*. Lotta crazy people. *Woosh*. *Clink*.

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Back in the kiosk, Frank reckoned with himself in the mirror. Notwithstanding the stain radiating from its zipper, his uniform had never looked more distinguished. He'd polished the rivets and starched the fabric. The stiff sleeves looked immaculate over flexed forearms, if he had anything to say about it. In a fast twitch, Frank drew an imaginary pistol from his empty holster and dropped down, landing in a power stance on one foot and one knee, and drew his phantom pistol on the man in the mirror, one eye closed for a true shot. His body jolted with the release of a bullet from empty hands.

Frank groaned and took a seat behind the desk. He rocked and swiveled. He flicked the head of the drumming doll to a metronome in his head. Three in the morning, as suggested by the wall clock.

Frank saw a car lurking past his window towards the lot's exit. From the driver's seat Alvin gave a weary nod and raised a paper bag in hushed communion. Frank returned Alvin's nod and ushered him into the morning with a stiff salute. ❖

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.

I was riding on the back of a grocery store shopping cart down a long hill in a California beach town, wind-whipping fast. Leaning to the left or right helped steer the thing – a contraction my dad would have called it – around defects in the road, stones, bits of flotsam – and there were no vehicles on the road so it felt like flying. For the briefest of moments I wondered about the integrity of the solid-rubber wheels, but they seemed to turn with that fantastic ball-bearing quality of old skateboards so I relaxed that part of my mind and focused on what was coming up next. Near the bottom of the hill was a company picnic (I don't know what company, and it doesn't really matter because I didn't work for them and was merely bursting in on their celebration with my wild ride. A group of people scrambled out into the road and helped me slow my cart and led me over to have refreshments. A pretty girl asked me questions about how I learned to ride shopping carts, and I explained as if I were a Mercury astronaut going into space. She was impressed and I wanted to give her a ride, but some of the people in the picnic crowd had taken the wheels off my cart as souvenirs, like Frenchmen tore pieces of The Spirit of St. Louis after Lindbergh landed in Paris.

— Spacy

"No Parking Beyond This Point"

by Michelle Brooks

A girl in fishnets walks down the street
staring at her phone before sitting
on the curb, head in her hands. I'm stopped
at a red light, cursing another Monday
morning. I drive away before the girl
stands up, and I wonder what sorrows have visited
her from across the transom, what sadness lives
in the invisible waves that have travelled
through her phone. I park and walk to my
office and a man yells out of his truck window,
Do you want to party? I do not. I smile, look
down and see a rip in my tights. It's too early for
this shit, and it's too late to change.
The man persists until I look at him, shake
my head as I slide my keys between my fingers
that I have somewhere else I have to be.

“Don’t Allow Yourself to Become A Victim”

By Michelle Brooks

The noise, constant, felt like a blanket
of quiet, and intrusions of silence opened
like a cut, unexpected, awful, a gaping
wound that needed to be covered lest it
allow entry into the blood. Let’s face it.

I am broken, and nothing should touch me.

I am alone, and the night surrounds me. I hear
snippets of songs blaring from cars, You
don’t know what it’s like to be me. Girls
huddle together, their laughter punctuated
by cigarettes, high heels, lipstick and hope.

The dark pulses with need, all lit by the stunning,
lonesome artificial lights that promise what it
can and cannot give, and nothing else matters,
and nobody blinks in the endless darkness.



“I live in a world that I shape to my liking, throughout a virtual pictorial and sculptural movement, transferring my experiences, photographing reality throughout my filters, refined from years of research and experimentation. Painting is the first love, an important, pure love. Creating a painting, starting from the spasmodic research of a concept with which I want to send a message, transmit my message, it’s the basis of my painting. Sculpture is my lover, my artistic betrayal to the painting. That voluptuous and sensual lover that gives me different emotions, that touches prohibited cords....”

Mario Loprete

Two by Diane Webster

“The Office Drudge”

Alone
while everyone else
stuffs goodie bags
with recipes and homemaking tips
for this weekend’s event.

Bursts of laughter
spiral up
as I help a customer
with a classified ad,
answer line 1,
line 2,
line 3,
sell a subscription
to another customer,
typeset more copy,
answer line 1

while everyone else
snacks on bite-sized
Snicker candy bars
as a reward for
working.

“Door To The Dollhouse”

Like my parents’ house in miniature
 when I visit as an adult –
 countertops tweak back muscles
 leaning to wash dishes;
 the desk pushes against the wall
 in smallish cuteness to all
 term papers written there;
 dining table and chairs chuckle memories
 of our kids’ set sized for dolls,
 teddy bears and captured cats.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Kim Farleigh has worked for aid agencies in three conflicts: Kosovo, Iraq and Palestine. He takes risks to get the experience required for writing. He likes fine wine, art, photography and bullfighting, which probably explains why this Australian lives in Madrid; although he wouldn’t say no to living in a French château or a Swiss ski resort. You saw him recently in our March 2019 issue.

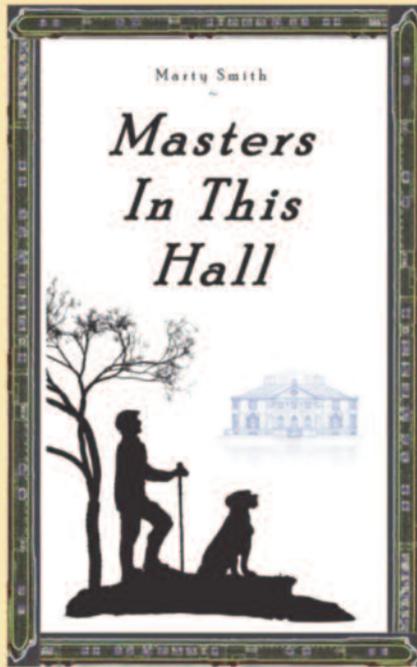
Lawrence Rebholtz writes, “I am a chronic wanderer who always has the next destination in mind, a jaded service industry worker, and a writer who dabbles in poetry but whose heart rests with prose. My work has previously appeared in the *Okapi Paste* literary zine. My current reading rotation has involved writers like Valeria Luiselli, Nabokov, Yuri Herrera, and Irvine Welsh. While my writing tends to feel like it has a direction separate from my own intentions, it usually deals in finding either humor or beauty in the mundane, ugly things that surround us. The story I’m submitting to you now is inspired by the working class grit that, while often overlooked, is the fabric and reality of the US; it would not exist without my semi-small town Nevada upbringing, but I believe the content is universal whether someone grew up in Fresno or Ohio. My goal is to continue writing short stories until an eventual graduation to novels. I’m a native Nevadan who has lived in Seattle, a few different spots in the Oakland/Berkeley area, and now resides in Los Angeles.”

Mario Loprete’s artistic statement is on page 13. He resides in Catanzaro, Italy.

Michelle Brooks has published a collection of poetry, *Make Yourself Small*, (Backwaters Press), and a novella, *Dead Girl, Live Boy*, (Storylandia Press). Her poetry collection, *Pretty in A Hard Way*, will be published by Finishing Line Press in 2019. A native Texan, she has spent much of her adult life in Detroit.

Diane Webster’s goal is to remain open to poetry ideas in everyday life or nature or an overheard phrase. Many nights she falls asleep juggling images to fit into a poem. Her work has appeared in *“Philadelphia Poets,” “Home Planet News Online,” “Better Than Starbucks”* and other literary magazines.

Now Arriving from Blotter Books
and the author of ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES



Rick Kingsley's younger half-brother Aidan ran away three years ago. During those years, "ghost trains" – old long-gone streamliners – began reappearing, sometimes even rescuing people in danger. A being called "the Wizard" started entering peoples' dreams, but offering real-world psychic powers. Rick has inherited, from a mysterious recluse he's never met, a vast fortune and an estate, "Haw Court." And the world seems speeding ever closer to apocalypse, with global-warming fires, floods and tornadoes increasing both in numbers and size; along with human evils: "religious freedom" and Stand Your Ground laws, rampant bigotry online and in person, right-wing sabotages against society, topped by Trump's Presidential bid. Now, on the eve of the election, Aidan's coming home. His return may bring Rick to a possible confrontation with the Wizard himself – with the lives of Rick's family and friends, and his own, at stake.

Marty Smith's MASTERS IN THIS HALL
from Blotter Books
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Friendship, loyalty, nostalgia; and the joy
and healing power of music...

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by Marty Smith



(publisher & book reviewer, "The Blotter Magazine;" contributor to the "Urban Hiker;" former host of "New Frontiers" and "Laugh Tracks" on WXDU - FM, Duke University Radio)

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