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The Blotter

magazine



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“Pop Culture Denial”

It’s a thing. Occasionally I’ve heard a friend or family member claim not to know anything about Tik Tok or who Ed Sheeran is. Or the Kardashians. What is “wordle?” Or Venmo. Or an NFT.

Oh, come on, you know! Someone will say. Me, for example.

Nope.

And not just current popstuff, either. Someone who states they’ve never listened to the Rolling Stones, or heard of much less read Rolling Stone Magazine, or never follow/ever followed Saturday Night Live or know what you mean when you say, “Here’s looking at you, kid.”

No. Way. It’s from Casablanca. The movie.

I never saw that, the response, which is remotely possible, but still just doesn’t work, I say, because Bogie has climbed out of the confines of celluloid and leached into every aspect of Western Civilization. The Rolling Stones play each building in every elevator. OK, maybe not Mick and the boys, but calm, quiet cover-doppelgangers. Right?

So I am trying to figure out this thing, this behavior, of being unaware of the unavoidable. Intentional ignorance. So that they, what? Seem more cultured? By pretending that you spend time buried underneath a rock you are somehow smarter – how does that work? Are they just picking an argument?

Or am I ignorance shaming?

Maybe they prefer not to clog their circuits with the burnt and melted marshmallow of the fifteen-minutes famous. I mean, if you miss one influencer as they pass, don’t worry – another will be along soon. Waiting to read a book until time has supposedly validated its worthiness is...something. A measurement of some ilk.

I’m going to turn this on myself. To wit: it has been difficult of late staying on top of the mélange that is socio-political diatribe and social-media rage. I do my best...

Sorry, that’s a big old whopper. I don’t even try anymore. That makes me...what? A newsless wonder? Out of touch? I cannot answer the question “Did you see...?” without seeming dim, lacking a clue. For I did not see.

And it isn’t just keeping up with the nightly/daily/every eighteen min-

utes newscycle. Do I stream TV shows? Some. None of them have singers, masks or judges. Do I watch superhero movies? Some. None of them have singers or judges. Can I explain NFTs? Not well, but passably. And I have read all I want to know about crypto-currency and have found myself not wanting.

And I understand, just now, right this moment, that there isn't an iota of difference between those people who can't spell Lady Gaga, much less pick her out of a lineup, and me. One person's not giving a damn about Britney is another's tired headache for the crumbling of the republic.

Maybe there are more ways than one of looking at this. You can decide for Oxford commas, just to rock the boat. (The damned sentences work, regardless of that extra little tittle. Let it go.) You can be overwhelmed by choices, like paper checks, online banking, PayPal and Venmo. (I swear, I don't know how that last one works any more than I can explain the inner workings of an automatic transmission. If I had some time, I would just drive it – so to speak - and become one of its advocates, comfortable in my lack of knowledge accompanied with practical experience. In the meantime, don't get behind me in the grocery store checkout.)

And here's a brief conclusion I've reached. It's about what we do to each other. How we treat one another. We say, "you don't know what you're talking about." We say, "I don't know what you're talking about." They're not the same thing at all, but each claim puts the onus of ignorance on the other person. That you don't know what they meant, or why they said what they said, or what in the living hell they meant by what they said. Or why they said anything at all.

How about we give this alternative a try: watch what you want to watch, read what you want to read, wear what you want to wear, dance how you want to dance, take pictures of your food, your dog, your dog's food. Follow what you want to follow. Share. Be nice.

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in the Great State of Georgia!



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CAUTION

gonna steal you away from all those

“Sunday Easter Sunday”

by Scott Harris

Ronnie feels his eyes open – or does he? Is he awake? Or is he sleeping? He can't tell, which usually means he's dreaming. He finds comfort in that thought. Familiarity. He tries to settle into his slumber, but there's a creeping sensation that he is awake. His delusion of unconsciousness is being replaced with a fear of consciousness. He's certain of it – his eyes are open, yet he cannot see anything. Complete darkness. He attempts to move his hands yet can't. He tries his feet – same result. Panic is surging through him. There is something in his mouth, he clenches his teeth, but they don't touch. He begins to yell. Nothing escapes him. He is stifled – muted.

After several moments of frantic, stationary convulsions and a terror of which he has never known, his primal, survival brain takes control. His breathing slows, as does his pulse. His wits begin to return. What could this be? What has happened to him?

His first thought is some sort of attack. Medical. Stroke. Seizure. Paralysis. Yet, he can feel – and he knows he's moving, but not where he wants. Is this how a paraplegic feels? Frustrated? Bound – yes – bound! That's it! That's how he feels. And he's sitting, upright, his feet planted solidly.

Where was he – what was his last memory? Sitting on his back porch.

Drinking a beer – actually, several beers. Did he get drunk? Fall down? It's his blood pressure! Did he take his meds? He can't remember.

He does remember working in his yard. Cleaning it. Making sure it was perfect. He remembers that feeling of satisfaction. Ownership. *His* lawn. Pristine. Then what?

Then there is light. A searing brightness. It's scalding as it explodes into his eyes – then his brain.

“Mr. Thompson.”

A voice, deep and authoritative ignites Ronnie's terror again.

“Who's that? Where am I?” He asks.

“Are you Mr. Ronald Thompson?” The voice asks.

“Yes – yes – who are you?”

“We will arrive at that soon enough, Mr. Thompson. Do you live at 1508 Hummingbird Lane?”

“Yes – why?”

“I am merely trying to discover if I have the correct subject, Mr. Thompson.” The voice says.

“Subject – what the fuck are you talking about?” Ronnie asks, his fear trickling toward anger.

“Do you own an Echo PB-9010T backpack leaf blower?”

“Yeah – I own two.” Ronnie says with a glimmer of pride.

“Do you regularly operate this device for more than four hours

consecutively?” The voice asks.

“Of course – perfection takes time.” Ronnie says.

“Mr. Thompson, I'm now going to show you several pieces of evidence. I want you to confirm or deny that this evidence concerns you.”

Ronnie, who has been twisting his head, in vain, trying to see who has been talking to him, is now confronted with a figure. The blinding white light is at its back, and he can only see a silhouette. The figure is holding a screen, a tablet, in front of him. The screen shows a video. A video of Ronnie, in his yard, working diligently with the Echo PB-9010T strapped securely on his back. He's wearing industrial ear protection. He got them from his cousin Sal, who works for the airlines.

“Is that you, Mr. Thompson?” The figure asks.

“Yes – yes, it is.” Ronnie answers.

“Do you know what time this video was taken?”

“What time? What do you mean?” Ronnie asks.

“The time of day, Mr. Thompson. Do you know what time it was?” The figure asks.

“No, I don't. It could be anytime.” Ronnie answers.

“You are right – it could be – but

this particular video was taken at 7 A.M., Mr. Thompson.”

“That’s possible. I like to start early. Get it done before lunch. The beers taste better in the afternoon.” Ronnie says.

“Do you know what day this video was taken?”

“No – but hell, it could be any day. Probably the weekend though. I work during the week – and if it’s at 7, like you said – probably the weekend.”

“You are correct, Mr. Thompson – it’s Sunday – Sunday at 7 A.M., and not just any Sunday either. This video was shot at 7 A.M., Easter Sunday.” The figure says.

“Oh, yeah – I remember now – I had all morning to work that day. Me and Gloria, that’s the wife, we didn’t have to go to Aunt Sylvia’s until two. Gloria already had the deviled eggs made, so I spent the morning sprucing up the place. Spring cleaning – you know?” Ronnie says.

“Now, Mr. Thompson, I am going to show you an email that was reportedly sent to you. The only thing I am asking is, did you receive this email?” The voice asks.

The screen now showed an email, but he couldn’t read it.

“I can’t see it; can you move it closer?” Ronnie asked. The Figure complied. That was how Ronnie was envisioning his inquisitor now. Formal.

“Can you see it now?” The Figure asks.

“Yes.”

“Have you ever seen this before?”

“Yes.”

“It is an email sent to you by several of your neighbors – is that correct, Mr. Thompson?”

“Yes.”

“It was the third such email, was it not?”

“Yes.”

“All of them regarding the same topic, correct?”

“Yes.”

“What would that topic be, Mr. Thompson?” The Figure asks.

“They were noise complaints.” Ronnie says.

“Noise complaints, regarding?”

“My leaf blower.” Ronnie answers.

“Did you do anything to address these complaints, Mr. Thompson?”

“Hell no! I just ignored them. Nobody has the right to tell me what I can do on my property. I pay taxes. I pay my mortgage – on time too – not like that relief bum Collins! He has some nerve signing those emails. His place looks like a yard sale. Crabgrass everywhere, dead leaves – and a yard ball—for Christ’s sake!”

“Just to be clear, Mr. Thompson, you acknowledged receipt of three emails, not to mention numerous, non-formal complaints, concerning your usage of the leaf blower.” The Figure asks.

“Oh yeah. Lots of bitching. They’re all slobs! I take pride in the appear-

ance of my property. I’m an example of what a fine, well-manicured lawn should look like. I raise the property values!” Ronnie says, in full throat.

“I’m glad you brought that up, Mr. Thompson. Have you ever used your leaf blower on property other than your own?”

“Damn right! A few times. Ungrateful bastards!” He says.

“You’ve answered all of my questions sufficiently, Mr. Thompson. I will be back to you shortly.” The Figure says.

“What’s this about? Who the hell are you?” Ronnie says but gets no reply.

“Hey – hey – at least untie me, I can’t feel my hands.” Ronnie pleads, and again receives no reply.

Ronnie sits there, bound and silent. His confusion as to why he is here, is becoming apparent. The voice – The Figure, grilled him about his yard activities – more accurately, his leaf blower usage – and the complaints.

He had shrugged off the complaints, the emails, the snide remarks, as pettiness and jealousy. He knows he makes them look bad. He exposes their laziness. He imagines all the husbands being raked over the coals, having *his* yard thrown in their faces. “Why doesn’t our yard look like Ronnie’s?” “Why aren’t you out there making me proud, instead of sitting on the couch watching NASCAR?”

Ronnie chalks it up to the price you pay for success. His meditation is

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interrupted by the voice, this time behind him.

“Mr. Thompson, we have established that you are the perpetrator of these offenses. We have also established, that after several civil attempts to mediate this situation, you have steadfastly refused to alter your behavior. I will now offer you one more opportunity to negotiate. Will you take this offer?” The Figure says.

“What are you offering?” Ronnie replies.

“The party you will be entering into negotiations with, are my clients. They have hired me to intercede in this matter. From now on, I am their agent. As their agent, I offer you this. You must be willing to use your leaf blower between the hours of 12 P.M. and 3 P.M., except on Sundays. There will be no leaf blower activity on that day. Also, you may only use the leaf blower for thirty minutes consecutively, and for no longer than one hour in total per day.”

“Fuck that! That’s a hard no!” Ronnie spat. Almost coming out of the chair. He was now fuming, he didn’t care what position he was currently in, he would never agree to those terms. This is America – God damn it!

“Is that your final answer, Mr. Thompson?” The Figure asks.

“Damn straight.”

“You leave me no choice then.”

“What the hell does that mean?” Ronnie asks, but he is met with stony silence. A silence that he will

soon long for.

The blaring white light that had been constant since his hood was removed, was now off. He is enveloped in deep darkness. He can hear low footsteps and slight echoes. He is inside a garage or warehouse. The emptiness creating its own space. He sits like that for five minutes – or sixty – he can’t tell.

Suddenly, the voice reappears, this time amplified.

“Mr. Thompson, I have come to the conclusion that you believe your actions are not offensive to your neighbors. That you believe that they are being overly sensitive and want to impart their will upon you.” The Figure says, his voice echoing and bouncing around the room like a pinball.

“You got that right, Pal.” Ronnie answers, growing more resolute.

“I will now try to impart some wisdom upon you, Mr. Thompson. I am going to attempt to show you that offensive is a matter of perspective. After this session, it is my hope that you have a new found respect for others, and their sensitivities.”

“What are you going to do?” Ronnie asks, his bravado escaping him.

“I am going to inundate you with various aural recordings, played at high volume, for a lengthy period of time, so that you may understand the suffering of your neighbors.” The Figure says.

“What the hell does that mean?” Ronnie asks, panic overflowing.

“You’ll see, Mr. Thompson.”

Ronnie is now hit with an incredible wall of sound. He initially can’t identify it, then it becomes clearer. A baby crying. Screaming. At mammoth volume. On loop. It sounds like it has its finger caught in a pencil sharpener.

This goes on, interminably. Abruptly, it ends, and the voice returns.

“Do you now understand, Mr. Thompson?”

“Yeah.”

“Do you now sense the torment you have inflicted?”

“No. Not really. I raised four kids, twins too, that shit don’t bother me. I tune it out.”

This is met with a moment of stunned silence, before the voice replies.

“Very well, Mr. Thompson. We will move on to another example.”

The hollow room is now filled with the grating, shrill noise, of what Ronnie assumes, is nails on a chalkboard. After a few minutes of that, Ronnie speaks.

“Hey, buddy. You’re gonna have to do better than that. I was famous for that trick in the 8th grade.”

Again, he is met with silence.

The Figure is perplexed. He realizes that he has a hard case. He needs to up his game, quickly. He is working on a flat fee, so time is money.

“I see Mr. Thompson, that you are a serious man. I am now going to

add a second stimulus to the presentation.”

“Oh Jesus – not that car battery!?” Ronnie whelps.

“No – no – not that – too cliché.” The Figure replies.

The room is now lit up with a large screen TV. The image is a close up of a man’s face. He is chewing voraciously. His mouth open, and particles of food are flying outward. The sound is perfectly synched to match every movement of his jaw. Squishing, noshing sounds fill the air. This proceeds for several minutes, before Ronnie interrupts.

“That ain’t working. I lived with my Aunt Nora when I was a kid. She had mismatched dentures – they were her mother’s. She ate like a garbage disposal – smelled like one too.” Ronnie says.

The video stops. The room goes still. A new image appears on the screen. It is two men standing behind podiums. The announcer pipes in.

“We would like to welcome you to the 2020 Presidential debate, featuring the Democratic nominee, Senator Joe Biden, and the Republican nominee, President Donald Trump.” The sound is muted as The Figure interjects.

“Excuse me, Mr. Thompson, but I have to leave the room for this one.”

After an hour The Figure returns. Ronnie knows it was an hour because he has it memorized from his own personal recordings. He knows that at the one-hour mark, Chris Wallace, the mediator, dodges

Trump’s perfect volley.

“Well, Mr. Thompson, would you care to continue, we have the Vice-Presidential debate next.” The Figure threatens.

“Hell, yeah! Bring it on! My man Pence kicks ass in that one!” Ronnie says.

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me?” The Figure spits. He is agitated at his lack of professionalism, but this man is some specimen. He has only met one other like him, but that man broke, eventually. He has no doubt that Mr. Thompson will too. He will succumb to this last measure. He’s only had to resort to it once. Thank God. Even for a seasoned, hardened, interrogator like himself – it seems cruel. But he has a job to do, and his Yelp ratings are dependent on his results.

“Mr. Thompson, I will give you one final chance to come to the negotiating table. I hope I have made an impression as to what you have subjected your neighbors too.”

“They’re a bunch of pansies! Tell them to toughen up.” Ronnie says, feeling confident that he has withstood all that The Figure can dish out.

“You leave me no choice, Mr. Thompson. I’m certain you are familiar with the 1980’s Irish rock band – U2.” The Figure says as he dons his own protective airline grade ear protection.

The entire building explodes with the sound of wailing, and monotonous melody. The video screen is showing the smug, pompous face

of the band’s singer, Bono, in his ever-present diabolical sunglasses. The ghastly, hollow lyrics of “Where The Streets Have No Name” repetitively pounding, and softening his brain, like a meat hammer.

Ronnie begins to thrash and twist, desperately trying to free his tied hands, so that he can cover his ears. Tears streak down his face, and his stomach bile retches upward, filling his mouth. This abuse continues, perpetually, until, mercifully, Ronnie loses consciousness.

He is awakened by a cold blast of water, as The Figure stands in front of him.

“Mr. Thompson, we have one more round of treatment. Having determined your threshold of disgust, I must now ascertain a level of guarantee from you.”

“Anything! I promise! I will never use the leaf blower again. I’m cured. I will rake from now on.” Ronnie pleads.

“I know that you are sincere, Mr. Thompson, but my clients require a more substantial assurance.”

“I promise – I swear – I’ll burn the Echo!” Ronnie says.

“You may forget this episode; therefore, I will instill in you a permanent association.” The Figure says.

At that Ronnie is once again assaulted by deeper and longer cuts from the band, interspersed with clips of interviews with Bono. These clips are then in tandem with recordings of Ronnie’s leaf blower. Over and over. Ad nauseum. Until the mere starting of a leaf blower causes

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Ronnie to cringe and palpitate in anticipation of The Edge's woeful guitar.

Finally, it's over.

The hood is reattached. Ronnie goes dark, and when he comes to, he is back on his porch.

Three weeks later, The Figure drives by Ronnie's house, on a Sunday. He is pleased to see Ronnie languidly working in his yard. No sign of the Echo PB-9010T, only a long-handled rake.

The Figure pulls to the stop sign, puts on his ear protection, hits play on his phone, and 30 on the volume knob. Bono's warbling hitting a manic note, The Figure watches as Ronnie drops the rake, hands covering his ears as he sprints to the front door.

The Figure smiles and drives on, confident of his pending five stars.



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.

Oddly enough, my dreams are seeming sequential of late. Chase scenes follow some sort of direction, as if there were a camera and crew obeying a script and storyboard, and everything is being filmed in order. I am not aware of these cinematic devices during the action, while I participate, but it all comes together nicely – even when an affectionate moment of some sort with someone so long in my past I misspeak their name mutates into flying over a meadow on my own, sans wings or plane.

It feels like a television show, a well-constructed one, down to the detail that I don't know who my co-stars are, or why they are in my show, but they do a fine job of acting like we all know each other, and have something we are meant to accomplish, even if it's only getting me to class on time, or finding my car in the parking garage, or serving a picnic lunch to a crowd of people on a hillside waiting for a concert to begin.

Stranger still, is finding the entire main cast of Harry Potter in my bar, waiting for me to be served a gin-and-tonic in a Ball jar while I tell them what I've been doing since we all filmed Deathly Hallows, part 2. Which is interesting to me, because I don't remember being rich, or famous. Although I have a very nice red sportscar parked outside. One of the cast members is apparently here to receive medical attention for something she tries to explain, but will only speak in some magical language that I either don't remember or never knew to begin with. I offer to help in any way I can – it is my town we're in, after all.

Speaking of which, I've been told by the local constabulary that red sportscars are illegal, and I may only drive it home, not to work or out on the freeway. Something about not having enough room in them for other passengers. At the moment, my sister is in the car with me, and she protests that she is, in fact, right there and can hear everything

the policeman is saying, but he ignores her. That is weird, I think, but I don't argue and that's when we drive to the bar. After we go in, my sister goes to the restroom and never returns.

I guess that's the end of her scene.

The bar is crowded, someone is celebrating a wedding, or upcoming wedding. Festive flowers are perched in vases at every compass point, and a small ensemble of instrumental musicians wearing red-coat-uniforms from the old British army are filling one corner of the room, with a lit fireplace nearby. I thought it was still summer – my car had the top down and I'm wearing short sleeves. They're not yet playing music, or just finished, I don't know which, but are quietly talking and fiddling with things – figuratively, not literally.

A group of women in green outfits. There is also a woman in a white dress with a veil, but it is very short. I assume she is the bride, or bride to be. That could be a rehearsal dress – something I didn't know even existed – or just having tastes very different from my own. She looks like a gardenia bloom, surrounded by leaves. I feel underdressed now, even though I'm not part of this party. Am I not supposed to be here at all? Maybe.

However, the bartender – who recognizes me on sight, which is troubling – offers to make me the gin-and-tonic, but only has empty Ball jars to make them in. He smiles and tells me that he will charge me the same price no matter what. Kind of generous, unless he always charges me the full quart price, even when I only get a regular glass' worth, but I keep wondering how I can drink a quart of gin-and-tonic and still drive a fancy red, illegal, sports-car home afterward. I suppose we'll cross that bridge when we burn it.

My brain, or something – my heart, my soul – is or are causing these changes in how I sleep. To some extent I am “live-streaming” a show of my own devices. Perhaps I am spending too much screen-time. Perhaps this is just a result of our reliance on electronic noise. I don't know.

I don't know how you explain dreams if you dismiss those things so many humans seem to think are real, if not rely on – belief systems, religions, para-normality, different “ologies. They're just the brain...and then fill in the blank with some pithy terms. First of all, “just the brain” is the worst possible combination of words. There is nothing “just” about our brains, although some of us use them poorly in our day-to-day existences. They are astonishing tools, and dreams are a fine example of organic complexity, art and magic, in my opinion.

DBA - cyberspace

Three by Brooks Lindberg

“Eating Butterflies”

Cookery is the only art we need lest we perish.
Even then, some things are best raw.

For instance, one summer
a cousin force-fed me heat-stunned butterflies
after I refused to crush them
along a crackling canal bank.

That meal nourished me more
than devouring all Chekhov, Cioran, and Celan.

You thin feasting off sighs.
But one bite of butterfly blood and dust
and your sated forever
with what gusts and buds inside a god.

“Cajole for the Gods”

Like any crow

I should be mouthless—
enough squawks as is.

But a crow squawks.

And I have my mouth.

Oh well.

Someone must inform the wolves
a doe limps nearby.

Someone must court witches.

Someone must cajole for the gods.

At least mischief is its own reward.

Just look at you

stooped over reading this
instead of smelling the air.

My smile is a switchblade

outlawed in ten states
barely legal all elsewhere.

Those nights I spent at the mirror
perfecting flicking it out
twisting it in the bowels
of dancehalls and truck stops.

No other hand has held its handle.

But it's towards yours now.

Come clutch me.

“Vanished”

by Lucio Cooper

The mercury in the lake mixed with the feces and the bloated slimy fish swarm backwards and upside down, The little boy placed his wooden raft in the water as the sun knifed the back of the low clouds and mountains, losing light fast, the boy paddled furiously to the other side of the lake

A bloated and severely burned body, floated past him he screamed and breathed heavily the herons and ducks gurgling the brown-green water heavy-black-grey shadows

descending quickly across the lake, like an elevator with the cable cut, regaining himself

This tiny 10-year-old boy gritted his teeth and paddled faster to the hidden bunker his father with the numbers tattooed on his arm, built on the other side the cocktail syringe of potassium iodine infused in cells and nerves, he still had his buck knife and lighter on him, his father would be pleased.

The plumes of smoke rose 20 miles in the air, up it rose and dropped the Hebrew birds, thousands of them, splattered and bloated carcasses Popping and Hissing in the searing heat, with a switch still glowing red bolted and fused to transistors and raw sewage pure vitriol and ideology, the guillotine megaphone ---

that sent--- millions to their death lungs imploded with ZYKLON B,

And the boy emerged from the cocoon 12 years older, worse for wear, drugged up from a nightmare, false statements, dreams, nightmares, are you awake in there! He

screamed at the mirror a blackened bridge cut in half, rusted rebar stuck out like pitch forks, or forklifts, sabotaged and welded back bullets in skulls pockmarks in the searing dirt, downloaded into your pocket you might think you know what happened to his people, downloaded with him leashed to my pocket I carry you leashed to a pier leg unable to breathe, this life is solid while drowning,

The black-grey clouds slowly slide across the sky hidden from view the sun is shy and mercurial hiding its body in the clouds, but hot tempered and vengeful, the angry bipolar sun tries to burn its way out like a welders torch through a bank vault door,

Each gas cube has life – wind, heat, fire, death, sex and stagnation, each cube is a pyramid of humanity, soft and velvety or a scythe of obsidian crumbled to dust,

The blood curled and congealed on the floor, a La Brea tar pit hair and gold fillings, once blue-now red and tainted, bitter as cough syrup in a sewer drain, if they hear you alive, they shoot or sick the dogs. . . . The children don't care they laugh and play around it, they slam doors and scream at it, sneak out with their flashlights to make wishes on it like coins in a fountain, the slotted jigsaw shadows converse and shatter – smashed on the smeared glass, a diorama where wolves eat their 6 million children.

“Education”

by Richard Van Ingram

Pink clouds by pylons
higher than this place
of feet rooted into concrete.

The unacknowledged legislators of the world
failed to dream;
hell, they failed Dreaming
but excel at P.E.
to all our damnations.

So the television's full of football
and Fame's most famous Famous –
and I would talk of dust
were it not for all the concrete
holding fast these, the rooted feet.

Contributors:

Scott Harris is a writer and photographer who spends a great deal of time traveling this beautiful country. When he's not out and about, you can find him in his secluded log cabin in Northern Pennsylvania, surrounded by the bounties of nature.

Brooks Lindberg recently moved from New York City and now lives in the Pacific Northwest. His poems have appeared before in *The Blotter Magazine*. Others appear in *Squawk Back*, *Wild Violet*, *Lost Sparrow Press*, and elsewhere.

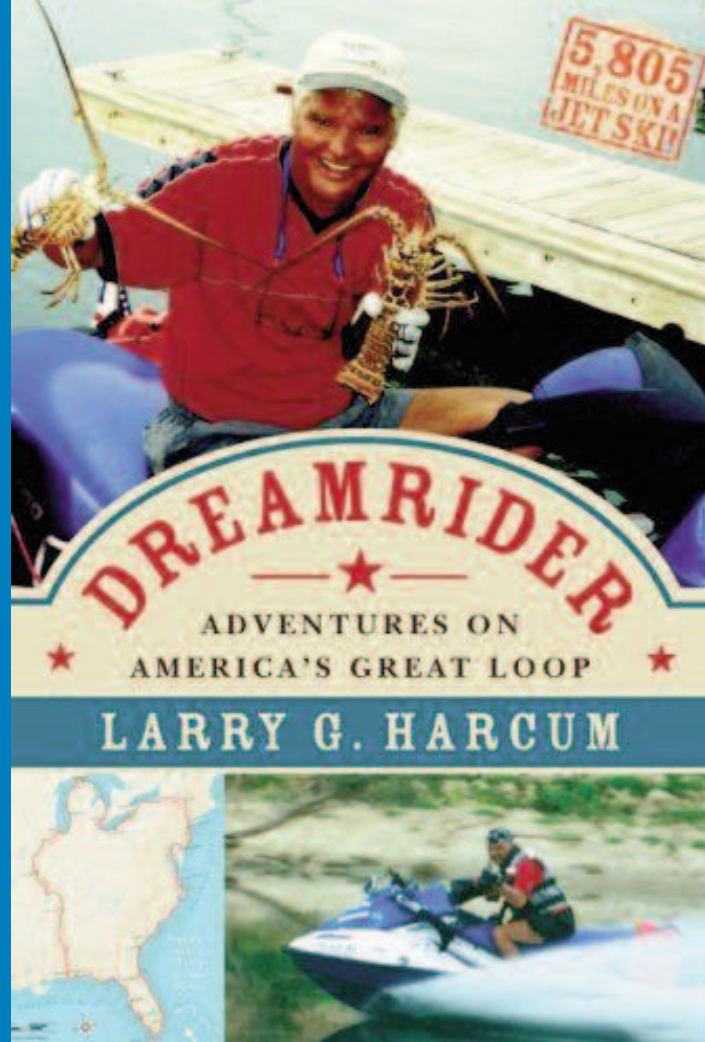
Richard Van Ingram is a teacher and professor and student and scholar and artist and illustrator and is currently working with Blotter Books on a piece of madness called "Ask, Alice." He resides in San Antonio, TX.

Lucio Cooper's work has been featured in the *San Diego Poetry Annual*, *Cheat River Review*, *Zombie Logic Review*, *Down in the Dirt*, *The Blotter Magazine* (August 2021) and other publications. He is a third-generation San Diegan still living and working in the city he loves.

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