

1997

Reflections 1997

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REFLECTIONS 1997

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Reflections

Volume 29

1997

Cover Art

“Hidden”

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Special thanks to:

Susan Carlisle Bell, Director of Art Contest

Wilson Brooks and Amy Camper, Graphic Design Artists

Reflections is a publication of the Department of English at Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, North Carolina.

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Poetry Contest

Each year, the English Department of Gardner-Webb University sponsors a poetry contest for undergraduate students in conjunction with the publication of *Reflections*. All works are judged anonymously. This year's poetry judges were June Hobbs, Janet Land, and Marilyn Knight.

Poetry Awards

First Place:	The band played on	Karen Brower
Second Place:	Words	Brandie Brandt
Third Place:	unsung	Jenny Rogers

Honorable Mention

Writer's Block	Karen Brower
Sunflower	Aubrey Moore
[the king]	Joanne Self

Art Contest

Each year, the Art Department of Gardner-Webb University sponsors an art contest for undergraduate students who have submitted work to be included in *Reflections*. The art judges were Susan Carlisle Bell, Nancy O'Dell Keim, Wilson Brooks and Kevin Binfield.

Art Awards

First Place:	Shoes	Teresa Carter Shaw
Second Place:	And, um	Julie Annette Gantt
Third Place:	Hidden	Tiffany Lynn Faircloth

Honorable Mention

When I Was Young	Sarah Elizabeth Parker
lower case i	Michael Brooks Derrick
Decisions	Jodi Melissa Baughn

Photography Contest

This year, the Department of Communications Studies is giving an award for the best photograph submitted for inclusion in *Reflections*.

This year's winner is Matt Norman.

Shoes



Teresa Carter Shaw

The band played on and so plays your memory in my mind
smooth tones, amazing dynamics, and incredible harmony
And just when I think it's all finally over
I realize I've missed a repeat sign somewhere along the way
- or maybe it was a change in key -
And I find myself lost in the music and I don't know how many
measures behind.

What a sentimental tune my ears now pick up
the memory of you and I living that melody
Sometimes I wonder if we were just playing along to the upbeat
or if we knew what the real score was supposed to be like
- everyone else could have been wrong -
but maybe we were the only two who were playing a different song.

Karen Brower

The Garden

A garden grows green
within my mind.
The twisted, tangled arms
wrap themselves around my brain,
interweaving in a loving embrace of knowledge.

With each thought that Springs,
a bud unfolds and blossoms Radiance.
The showers and sunshine
caress each flower
into glorious existence.

My garden is not
a perfect
garden.

It has weeds and thorns
that prick and sever and kill and sting and draw blood and ruin.

Look how pretty the roses are beside the thorns.
Notice the flowers within that patch of weeds over there.
And all those dandelions—
Weeds?
Beauty?

I have left a space there
for you
to plant a seed.

You may plant a daffodil,
or you may engulf your space in weeds.
It makes no difference,
As long as my garden grows—
an intricate web, with all things connected.

C. M. Stimpson

Words

Words dance by the window:
I can see them,
But they are out of my grasp.
They twirl and twirl
In patterns that entice,
But their movements are too complicated
For me to mimic.
I reach out
Longing for just one.
I beg them to come to me;
To dance within my grasp.
Instead they laugh and mock me.
I curse them in their selfishness;
This doesn't affect them at all.
So the page remains blank
While my mind is full.
And I long only to fill
The loneliness of those white lines.

Brandie Brandt

Standing on the outside
I can feel the coldness.
It caresses my face
In its hands.
Time passes me by
And the cold tickles
My toes and nose.
It suddenly grasps my toes
In an icy grip.
I move-only to be
Held back by the cold.
It creeps up my legs
The cold, like a
Mother's love, softly
And tenderly steals into
My heart freezing it.

Amy Parker

When I Was Young



Sarah Parker

In My Grandma's Garden

In my Grandma's garden there are
flowers of every kind, each of which
she knows their name.

And she cares for them so delicately
for she knows God does the same.

Every kind of color, in all different
shades, Grandma's favorite is each one
and each she knows God has made.

From the earth they sprout into a
beautiful bloom, and each time they go
away, just like Christ, she knows they
will return again one day soon.

Sometimes she picks them to make a
beautiful bouquet

And she is pleased with her creation just
as God is everyday.

Her flowers are beautiful because of
the care she shows,

For inside she is beautiful because that
is where God's love grows.

Grandma likes to share her flowers with
everyone because she knows that is was
for all God sent his only Son.

Grandma knows she will not always be
around to see her flowers bloom, but in
this she takes great joy because she
will go to be with the most Perfect
Flower one day soon.

Rhonda Arrowood

My Child

This child inside of me screams to be let free from this confining world.

I rip my clothes off in hope of breaking the chains.

The screams increase as it claws the flesh within.

I have felt it many times, moving inside of me.

I have felt it laughing as it eats away on my blood, and steals my food.

It wants to be free, to know the world as I do.

Yet, I nourish it, love it even though it tries to hurt me.

I push and push with all my might

to free this monster inside of me.

It grabs the lining of my body and will not let go,

as if to look back at the world it has lived in.

The world in my body is all it has known.

Then, when all my strength is gone,

I hear it cry and beg to be freed from the chain.

It is outside of my body and will not hurt me again.

The little monster, who sucked and lived on me as a parasite
has mutated and breathes its own air and eats its own food.

Now the little monster is free.

I smile with love as I look into my newborn baby's eyes.

Mandy Mooneyham

untitled photograph



Nicole Hartis

[awaken all dead this day]

awaken all dead this day
sleeping. tomorrow anew
before tomorrow or today
dark barren day of cold. leafless and frozen

arise new sprouts of green and
leaves — bloom
the life arisen
no longer barren — cold and dead

sing the birds returned from
gone. empty the dens of slumber season
days are growing long and
new life is — yes.

Joanne Self

I call your names.
Sometimes you answer.
Sometimes you take a message
and get back to me at your convenience,
Although not at mine.
Everytime you do something wrong,
you look at me as if you were an angel—
My heart melts—every time I look at your faces—
Just to touch your bodies
pacifies my troubled mind
with satisfaction knowing that you are pleased too.
Your ancestors were worshipped—
adored along with the pharaohs.
Well, Munchkin. Well, Boots,
As far as I'm concerned,
Egypt has never left my heart.
You're my kitties, and I will always adore you.

Marlene Wheeler

Ladder of Life

I have climbed the ladder of life.
We all have one.
And many people feel reaching the top
Of this ladder means success,
But that isn't so.
See, we always go forward on our ladders
We can't go back.
We have setbacks,
But we can't go back; the past can't
be changed.
And no one really knows where the top
Of one's ladder is or where it will reach to.
That is why each step must be a "top" of
sorts.
And we have got to make the best of
that view.
Nor does reaching the top mean one has
reached "success";
No one said that failure was left at the
bottom.
To achieve success is not to reach the top,
but to take each step.
At the top of the ladder of life there
may not be a paradise waiting for you.
One may only be able to look down at the
rubble he or she climbed so hard to distance
one's self from.
And what is at the top?
If you climb your ladder right, had
courage to face your fears, and learned
something about yourself along the way,
Then you will find some wisdom,
strength, and a "paradise" of hope
to share with someone starting at
the bottom.

Rhonda Arrowood

Writer's Block

I want to write
I want to tell of loves lost
and chances spent
And I want to draw pictures
in the sands of time
and seashores
And I want to show
through consonants and vowels
(a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y)
things that cannot be expressed
in such rudimentary forms
as words and phrases.
I want to feel emotion
through paper
but the edges are rough
and sharp against my gentle soul
And along with a drop of blood
falls a tear.

Karen Brower

untitled photograph



Matt Norman

He stares at the road ahead
with nothing but her on his mind
The wind whispers her name
in his soul
And he follows what his heart hears
and finds himself wandering in the darkness
Trying to decode the scrambled message
of words like love and patience
trust and sorrow
change and time -
but when he tries to put them all together,
he looks up and finds himself lost
in a forest of regret.

Karen Brower

Sunflower

Sunflower, I envy you
You with your tall grace,
Openness to the world
Careless bending with the wind

Sunflower, growing despite the weeds around you
Gloating in your supremacy
Over the rodents and insects beneath you
Shining beautifully despite it all
Blooming in a world full of hate
And finding love

Sunflower, what makes you survive
And why can't I?
Are your roots really stronger than mine,
Or are they just brave enough to reach out . . .
Despite it all.

Aubrey Moore

She Remembers

for Dr. Susan Cernyak-Spatz

She's going back for
The first time since then.
She gazes at the water far below,
Staring at the icy blue ocean,
Not seeing it. Her mind
Is back in time, her body
Tense with memories of days.

Days of fear, hunger, typhoid
Fever, pneumonia. She remembers
A Christmas Eve, soldiers chopped down
One small tree, made decorations
And threw a party as five trucks
Of women departed for the ovens.

She raises her sleeve, shows
Her number — 34042.
She was lucky. She survived.

Over six million died.
In gas chambers
Shouting, screaming, crying
Eight minutes passed, while
They expired in fake showers.

Gold fillings removed
For treasury, shaven hair taken
For insulation vests, clothes
Sent to the mother
Country, their body parts
Ground into grease.

She left Auschwitz behind
Walked to the checkpoint
Found her father had survived.
She married an American G.I.

Moved to the U.S.
Earned a doctoral degree
In international language.

She travels now
Speaks of the Holocaust,
Of lives that were lost,
And she hopes the world
Will remember.

Tina Buck Clark

unsung

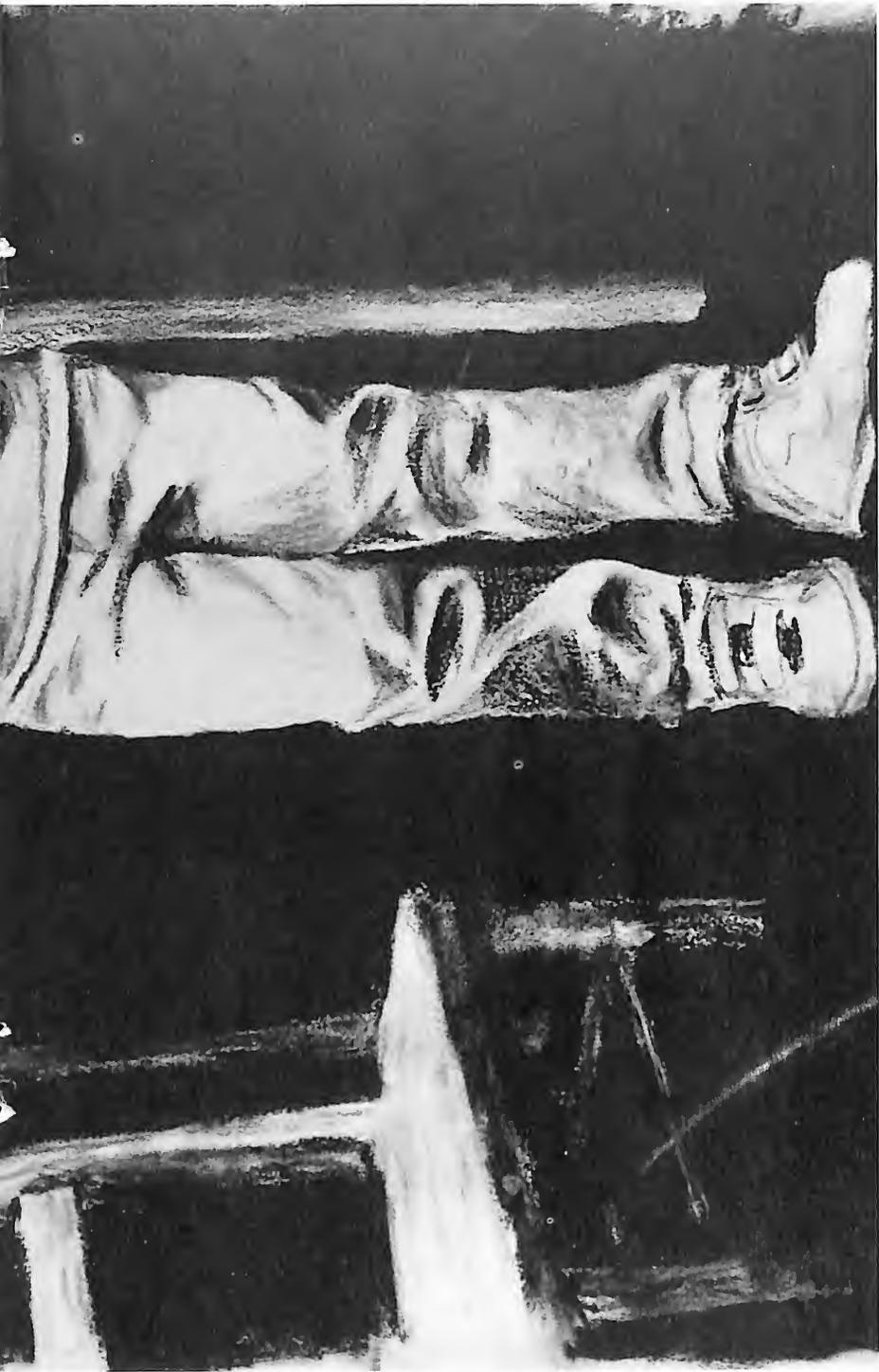
how blessed are you
little clump of common grass,
plain and patterned
like the thousand tiny blades
that scatter the unsung hills
but
your seed chanced
to fall
on this one small plot of ground
where She sleeps
eternally
beneath your silent vigil
it is you,
after all
who covers Her with the purest blanket
yours is the honor
of whispering wind poems
and drowsy summer songs
into Her perfect ears
only you can shout to the dawn
here is my home!
and wake each morning
near Her side

Oh, little ones! if only i
could take your place

Jenny Rogers

And, um





Julie Garntt

[the king]

the king
immortal
who used to
pivot a pendulous
posterior
and rock with a oneanattoandathreeletsboogie

oMan
he was a ladys man
and could you please tell me
if your other baby has really come home
mama Rose

Joanne Self

Emerald

He made me a candle for Christmas
a green one,
 just the color I like
 green like the stems of the roses he bought me
or like the rind of the watermelon
 we shared
 laughing in the summer
like children
 or green as the forest we walked through

hand-in-hand
He watched me sniff the rows
 of colored candles in the shops
 that smelled of vanilla,
 of springtime,
 or of the ocean
and mixed and melted the hot wax
 with honeysuckle
 a fresh, gentle fragrance
 like my mother

Then he poured it all into
 a globe of glass to sleep, delicate yet
voluptuously round
 and cracked and glittering
 like the jackfrost that sparkled
on my bedroom window
 as a child

When he presented me this gift
 shyly, almost embarrassed of its smallness
I held it tenderly in my hands
 as if it were fragile as a butterfly
 and wept as I saw three full years
 of adoration in its craftsmanship
and handled it as it were worth
 a million emeralds

I packed his candle last fall
 in a box with my clothes
 and wrapped it securely in blankets
 soft as feathers

for the bumpy ride
hours away from home
and there, on my shelf
it rested
I watched it rattle on the shelf
when the phone slammed angrily into the
receiver
and saw its colors blur in sorrow
like the lonely stars outside my window
cold and far away
It sparkled
the way my tears did as they fell
abandoned
on his smiling picture
And then I watched it sit
alone
silent
when the phone stopped ringing
and I dusted its faded green
with a feather duster

How long has it been since those days, my love?
Today I reached up to the shelf
to get a book
and it fell onto the desk
before I could even jump at the crash
splintering glass
and sending thousands of glittering
shards
in all directions
I looked at the candle for a moment
his candle
crushed and broken
beyond any hope of recognition or repair
and swept the pieces
without a word
into the trash

It seemed almost as if it were waiting
to fall

Jenny Rogers

Revelation in a Flea Market

Whether born due to the lack of an expeditious route for estate disposal, or simply as an ingenious way to avoid the tax authorities, the flea market has proliferated on the American landscape with an unwaning and growing following. Some will say that these cultural gatherings serve as melting pots of escapism, reunions, entertainment, and deal making the likes of which are well recorded in ancient history. Where crossroads are found, human nature cannot resist the temptation to unfold a colorful tent, proceed to spread a table or carpet with irresistible baubles and then invariably practice the fine art of negotiating values with the insects who are attracted to the light. Call this one an insect if you will but I must admit that I, too, have relented to the magic found in these festive madrigals.

For the past several years, Labor Day has brought the family's annual pilgrimage to Hillsville, Virginia, the location generally accepted as the largest flea market in the Southeastern U.S. The little town is nestled in the mountains right across the N.C. and Virginia State line and the scenery has undoubtedly contributed greatly to the popularity of this annual event. Records show that over 300,000 people visited just this last year - my wife and I are of that number. Paradise is not hard to find - Interstate 77 provides ample width and signage while a rise before daybreak will place your caravan at the gates by 8 A.M. What was discovered there in August 1996 by this seeker solved one mystery but opened the door to another. I am compelled to share this revelation trusting that the populace will judge my senses as being coherent.

The morning of Friday, 30 August 1996, began at 5 A.M. After a quick bowl of oatmeal and skim milk, Betty and I cranked the 150 horses and literally darted toward Virginia. The rising sun painted hues of purple and yellow in the clouds that kissed the cloaked grey and green hills beginning to rise alongside I-77. Would we arrive in time to discover treasure? Would the rare objects of our desire still be there waiting to be found under a pot lid or magazine? A quick cup of coffee from the thermos brought our anticipation and awareness to their peaks. I was driving like a NASCAR professional; my reflexes were swift and accurate. Betty approved of every lane switch, of every vehicle left in the rear view mirror. I never told her of the buckled floorboard on the front passenger's side.

We were now being joined by hundreds of other vehicles—speeds dropped and the spaces between bumpers narrowed to the thickness of a cat whisker. Like a stream of thick syrup, the unceasing line of traffic gradually disbursed into the countless parking areas in the little town. We had arrived! No one felt the early morning chill. The thrill of the impending hunt had numbed the senses to the outside world.

Quickly the strategy was recanted. Betty would take Sector A, I could cover Sector B, the newly opened section upon the northeastern hill. We would spend one hour and twenty minutes in each area and regroup under the flagpole of the VFW building. I would seek Fisher-Price toys for the grandbaby, she as well; however, in our hearts, we each would look for those personal childhood memories. The plan was flawless - we would prevail and conquer.

The spirit could not absorb all there was to touch, to examine, to haggle. Here were magazines from the 40's, a wooden chicken pull toy, toy trucks, train sets, cereal box

premiums, and roasted peanuts. There were Barbie dolls, G.I. Joes, oil cans, model airplane kits, and kerosene lamps. Strolling and looking simultaneously, I found myself at the end of the last row in Sector B. Leaning against the fence was the very last booth. For some reason, the booth did not seem as the others. Perhaps it was an aroma of something old, perhaps it was the two old men sitting behind the table. Both were quite tall and thin. Their eyes were sharp and piercing, their faces weather-beaten. Their attire was indeed quite out of place. They resembled actors from a movie set of long ago. Neither offered conversation and neither smiled. I found myself unable to move on - something froze my legs and feet.

Leaning against the fence was a wooden propeller. The shape was similar to a highly straightened letter "S." By the colors, one could see that it was laminated with various types of wood. The varnish had worn thin and there was evidence of oil stains at each cracked tip. Something written in French was visible around the hub plate. Gazing back at the table, I saw two pair of flying goggles, two aviator helmets, an old book, some newspapers dated in the teens and thirties, and another cracked, leather book which, upon closer examination, appeared to be a pilot's log. Between the pages were sections of fabric which were very faded but, at one time, had very colorful markings. The newspapers had faded pictures of a type of large airship. My heart jumped. I examined the other book. Inside the front cover, the signature William Elliott Flier appeared in elegant script. The year 1917 was also hand written. I looked up. The old gentleman closest to the fence rose from his apple box seat and ambled to the table. "How much," I asked? He replied with a distinct British accent, "Mr. Duckworth, you have been selected to receive these artifacts. We have been waiting for you. There is a stipulation. If you elect to share our story, your audience must understand we cannot fully explain what happened ourselves and you may find yourself the subject of skepticism." Dumbfounded, I nodded my head. They asked for no compensation. Both then proceeded to drop the books, goggles, and newspapers into a leather bag having the tooled inscription "94th Aero Squadron, French Escadrille, Amiens, France." Shaking their hands was like touching ice at first but immediately I felt an increase in temperature as if life had re-entered their veins. They smiled. The old gentlemen that did the talking said "Cheerio," the other "Aufwedersehn." I could not find interest enough to continue the remaining exploration and immediately headed toward the flagpole rendezvous. I was early, Betty was still engaged in her searching. I gingerly opened the diary and began to read. What unfolded therein is now shared for serious contemplation.

It was 27 May 1914 and at Oxford University, some 50 miles northwest of London, Will and Gus were studying for final exams in their engineering classes. At certain breaks during these arduous moments, the chums would reminisce about the relaxing moments they spent rowing small boats down the nearby Cherwell River. Oxford University was well known for its Gothic architecture, beautiful campus, and world renowned reputation which attracted students from around the world. Of course, Willie was native born but Gus was German. While both focused on their review of air pressure, torque, and complex math problems, their thoughts could not dismiss the world situation at that moment.

Back in 1910, Will and Gus had become pals during their very first semester together. Will was fascinated with aviation. In the Colonies, the Wright Brothers flew the very first heavier-than-air machine and actually controlled its flight path.

Germany had produced its own flying machines through the efforts of Otto Lilienthal, Hugo Junkers, and Anthony Fokker. The thrill of flight had also captured Gus's imagination as well. With the same burning interest, each young man had pursued a course of study that would hopefully engage him in this new science of flight. Gus had come to Oxford simply because he had relatives in Devonshire which had enticed him with certain monetary considerations in hopes that he would elect to stay with them in their impending later years. He had received the fullest of blessings from his parents, for the English relatives were exceedingly well-to-do. Time permitting, Gus and Will both took jaunts across the Channel for short visits to Gus's home in Munich. And both caught frequent rides to the fledgling English airfield at Bristol about 30 Kilometers southwest of Oxford for numerous daydreams about their soaring in the heavens. This then is the background of their faithful friendship. Fate was soon to intervene.

Europe was a boiling cauldron ready to explode. Various military alliances had resulted in Germany's being surrounded by possible adversaries and she, as well as other nations, had been building military machines. Germany's Kaiser was not the least amenable to political solutions - he had released his renowned treaty negotiator, Count Bismarck. The Kaiser was now free to pursue his Napoleonic aspirations. Other European leaders had similar mindsets. Germany's ally was Austria-Hungary which had dominion over Bosnia in the Balkans. Archduke Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian-Hungarian empire, and his wife Sophie had elected, against advice, to visit Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. On 28 June 1914, both were assassinated by a young Serbian man thought to have been linked with the "Black Hand," a Serbian underground revolutionary group. Russia had always claimed Serbian and Bosnian territory and when Austria moved troops toward Bosnia, Russia mobilized. Germany responded by attacking Belgium in order to invade France, Russia's ally. England responded to Belgium's need and World War I began. Will E. Flier and Gus N. Heidt were now called to the service of their native lands. Ironically, they would now become adversaries. Or would they?

Willie was dismayed when Gus left for Germany. He vowed he would only serve the war effort in some humanitarian capacity - he did not want to knowingly, or unknowingly, have to face Gus in battle. Willie was also young and naive; he had no choice in the matter. In September 1914, Willie was conscripted and sent to Hendon, the R.A.F. flying school organized for military pilot training. Willie received flight training in the British Sopwith and DeHavilland machines. Made of wood and fabric, these early airplanes offered nothing in the way of comfort. The open cockpits froze a pilot to death. Heavy leather clothing provided the only protection, and the bulk of such garments highly restricted quick responses. As a result, Willie never really became a proficient pilot. But pilots were needed at the front and, with only 20 hours of flying school, he was shipped to France. *I had now read about half-way through the Diary and Betty was nowhere in sight. I, therefore, returned to the reading, completely oblivious to the pool of buzzing activity.*

Departing on a troop ship from Dover, Willie arrived at Calais and, from there, boarded a train which carried him to Paris. The German line had advanced to within 30 miles of the French capital. Willie was placed under the command of a Captain Francois Romaine and bussed to an airfield northwest of Paris,

approximately 5 miles from the German lines. The aerodrome perimeter was sheltered by dense woods which provided a degree of protection but also made take-offs and landings extremely precarious for all but the seasoned aviators. In broken English, Captain Romaine gave orientation to Willie and then assigned him to his quarters, an old converted barn. After a hearty meal of black bread, cheese, sausage, and red wine, Willie was taken to his assigned flying machine, a French Nieuport 17 biplane. In the early stages of the war, English fliers were under the command of the French military simply because the English had not yet developed their air cavalry to combat capability.

After a 15 minute ground instruction dissertation, Willie was allowed to take the ship up for a spin. The little airplane was quite small but responded quickly to the controls. Willie's flying skills were simply not that polished and, as usual, his flight pattern was erratic. Actually, his skills really never improved, even with the best of aircraft and increased experience in the air. The little scout, as it was affectionately called, was powered by an 80 hp Gnome Rotary radial engine that gave the plane a slight edge in speed over the German Fokkers and Taubes. Two machine guns provided the armament - one mounted on the fuselage to the left of the pilot and the other slid on a track attached to the top wing. It would do for Willie. He wobbled in for his first landing and immediately cracked the tail skid on a rock. The Gnome was notorious for slinging oil and black ooze had covered the windscreen. Willie thought that the lack of a clear view had affected his landing but, in all actuality, the open cockpit permitted a 360 degree rotation regardless of an obscured windscreen. Captain Romaine was very perceptive about Willie's flying skills and assigned him to destroy enemy observation balloons rather than involve him in direct engagement with experienced enemy pilots in dogfights. Willie's assignment would occur the next morning over Sector GQ, a 10 square mile area over Belleau Wood. He would never forget it.

At 4:00 A.M. Willie crawled out, dressed, and gulped down a delicious French meal of black bread, cheese, and goat milk. The coffee shipment had not yet arrived (and never would). The mechanic had Willie's Nieuport sputtering on the flight line. After being strapped in the cockpit, Willie checked the controls and, being pleased with their operation, gunned the airplane down the grassy field. Circling East, he leveled off at 8,000 feet. He flew over the Seine River and immediately encountered enemy flak. Pilots of all forces call the stuff "Archie." Big puffs of black smoke erupted all around and fragments of metal ripped fabric and tore rigging wires. Willie had now been initiated into battle. He just could not fly the little ship gracefully. Freezing to death, Willie was all over the sky. Actually, his erratic flying saved him from being hit, for the ground gunners could not track a specific path for their aim. As he righted the Nieuport from a sharp bank, he saw a large gray object immediately in his path. It was his first enemy balloon. The German cross on the balloon's envelope confirmed it as so. Suspended in a basket about 20 feet below the hydrogen gas filled balloon was the German observer. Willie turned up the coal and tried to zero in on the balloon. Again, his flying skills came into play.

Whether the oil from the engine blurred his sight can never be proven but Willie clipped the balloon with the Nieuport's propeller. The balloon was

punctured, the hot oil ignited the gas, and one enemy balloon went down in flames. Willie banked toward the west, crossed back over the Seine, found his airfield and glided in. He hit hard and broke the landing gear. Nonetheless, he had survived his first mission. No thought had been given to the German occupant of the destroyed balloon.

The story continued to be the same. Willie would go up on a mission and, although inept in flying skills, always seemed to pull off a kill. He gained quite a reputation in both the Allied and Axis camps. German pilots were very hesitant of a round with him for fear of an inevitable collision beyond their control. Willie periodically thought of this as well but the war left little time for him to worry about it. Then that day occurred.

The year moved to 1916. Allied successes had allowed the 94th Squadron to move further east. Willie was now at Reims, near the Argonne Forest. His mission was still the same, knock out observation balloons. He still flew the Nieuport, albeit a later model and seven wrecks later. Captain Romaine had gone to his glory, not from enemy engagement but from mental stress resulting from commanding such a group of airmen possessing Willie's countenance. The new chief was Colonel Francois Parsle', an elderly commander whose forte was in cavalry units. How he came to this position was quite questionable but Willie enjoyed a measureable degree of independence by now anyway, being the only survivor of the original group. Parslie' felt inclined to let Willie manage his own affairs, a somewhat unusual type of military style. In any event, one mission will never be forgotten.

Willie had been up for about an hour but had not engaged any balloons. Disgusted and covered with oil, he turned slightly northeast, the direction for home base. Immediately he flew into a dense cloud bank. Losing orientation, he could not tell whether he was level, climbing, or diving. Seemingly, a strong headwind restrained the little ship from making any headway - every brace wire sang in the wind. Even the altimeter, oil pressure gauge, and compass appeared stuck. Characteristically, the Gnome engine was still throwing oil all over him and the entire forward fuselage. This seemed to give Willie a little comfort; at least one thing hadn't changed. Willie moved the control stick left and kicked the left rudder pedal. The little ship suddenly emerged into bright sunlight. Willie savored the warmth and breathed relief at being out in the open once more. Looking at his watch in order to determine how long he had been in the cloud bank, he noticed that it, too, had stopped. The vibrating fuel gauge stick in front of the windscreen registered a reservoir of petrol of over half a tank, plenty to return home or even engage a balloon.

Turning his head around for bearings, his eyes came upon an airship, the size of which he had never seen before. Willie had heard rumors of secret German weapons and he immediately perceived this to be such a device. It was unmistakably German. A red band across the balloon's rudder contained a circle in which the German cross could be seen. Suspended below this tremendous airship was a basket containing an observer. A steel cable of about 100 feet was holding the basket firmly to the airship. Willie knew what to do. He put the Nieuport into a steep dive, so steep in fact that the wing fabric covering began to peel.

Suddenly, Willie saw the observer basket falling! He had not yet fired a shot.

Had the basket accidentally been severed or had the fiendish crew elected to sacrifice to poor devil in order to gain speed and escape Willie? No matter, Willie could not bring himself to let the observer die without displaying some effort of saving the soul. Enemy or not, the poor guy deserved a sporting chance. Chivalry in the air corps was legendary and Willie was not going to be the first to abandon the tradition. He pushed the throttle to the firewall and headed toward the basket. Oil was splattering everywhere.

Incredibly, Willie brought the little Nieuport alongside the falling basket. Motionsing to the white faced occupant, he maneuvered as close as possible. The German reached out, almost grabbed a strut, missed, reached out again and made it! The basket fell away. The extra weight made the airplane difficult to control but Willie managed to right the little ship. The German slowly crawled toward Willie. Holding on for dear life, he finally reached the fuselage and positioned himself as near the center of gravity as possible. Determined more than ever to right this terrible wrong, Willie pointed the Nieuport back toward the balloon. Closer and closer he approached the large balloon but, surprisingly, there was no defensive fire. Again, Willie's random and inconsistent flying skills came into play. The hot oil continued splattering all over everything.

Willie did it again. Suddenly, a thump, a tearing of fabric, and a huge explosion created a ball of fire in the sky. The hot oil had once more ignited the fatal hydrogen gas so favored by the Germans in their balloons. Like a bird's feather, the little Nieuport was thrown through the air for thousands of feet but it seemed to right itself and fly away into the distance. Most assuredly, the pilot and his passenger had endured a tremendous shock.

The next morning, 6 May 1937, newspapers the world over carried the story: "German Airship Hindenburg unexplainably explodes while attempting landing at Lakehurst, N.J." About two months later in an old abandoned hay field near Trenton, two boys were reported to have found the remains of a weather-beaten WWI biplane. Most of the fabric covering was gone but that part still remaining bore the semblance of French markings and was completely oil soaked. Interestingly, the propeller was missing. Two sets of footprints were found leading away from the wreckage, but they disappeared on rocky ground. *There the diary and log book ended. I felt a tapping on my shoulder. "James, do you hear me?"*

Looking up, I returned to the present day and hour. "Betty, I've got to take you to a booth where I found these books." It was now 12:30, the sun was high in the sky. With Betty's hand in mine, we literally "flew" back to the location of the booth. Coming upon the spot, we found nothing there. I was absolutely without words. I could only suggest that we check the registration office where the vendors were required to register. The journals in the office produced nothing - no names or records of fees being paid for that particular spot. My mind raced. Who were those guys? Where were they from? Of all people, why had I received the artifacts? As the sun set and Betty and I drove home, I unconsciously kept wiping black oil off my glasses while contemplating my family tree, the name Duckworth being English on my father's side and the name Hargett being German on my mother's side.

James Duckworth

Victory

Just one week ago I saw her
weakened by the cancerous enemy, but still so full of life.
Her spunky style and warming laughter,
she hides the pain so well.
Fighting the battle with determination yet remembering,
just nine months ago, a former battle too soon lost by the one she loved.
Perhaps, secretly hoping the end was near for her too.
No one thought it would be so soon.

Family gathered as the war became more intense.
Waiting in the darkness afraid of what the dawn would bring.
Telephoning concerned relatives; preparing for the worst.
Questions, prayers, waiting

The ringing of the expected, but unwanted, phone call cut through
the silent darkness of the small room like a knife.
News from the battlefield:
the long and hard fought war was over.
The white flag of surrender was lifted as the angel was called home.

The night that seemed to never end eventually brought
morning with a peaceful sunrise enveloped in a shadow of gloom.
An unexplainable emptiness. A long drive across roads too recently traveled.
A melting pot of emotions: sad yet happy in a way, empty yet full,
confused yet certain, nervous yet calm, angry yet peaceful.
Rushing to feel the comforting embraces of loved ones;
each feels the other's sorrow. All too weak to survive alone,
but together strong enough to face any of life's storms.

Shocked that life had changed so much in just one week. Saddened by
the sudden loss, but glad the battle was over.
Realizing it had ended in victory not defeat. A celebration was
taking place on the golden streets of Heaven as another
family member was reunited. Back to live with the ones she loved so much,
back to her lifetime companion to now spend eternity with.

In a place where all tears are dried, all pain is vanquished,
and all questions, doubts, and fears fade into nonexistence.
Where we will all meet one day and live together with the happy couple.
Joined with loved ones and friends who have already made the journey.
Able to stand in the presence of God.
Bow down and worship the Father and the Son.
Sing with the angels.
And be a family once again.

Sleep

Dreams are death's window
stained with colored lead
A slow, spinning descent into the maze
from which we never truly leave
only forget for a few hours each day.

Justin Stacy

To Be a Hero

It began in a backyard in Huntington, West Virginia, when I made my first pathetic attempt to shoot a basketball, and ended in 1957, in Person County, North Carolina, the year Carolina won the NCAA title over Kansas and I graduated from Bethel Hill High School. It was there that I contracted a love for basketball that has lasted these many years. In the early days, I followed the action, glued to the WPTF radio, the only way at that time for me to follow the games since television itself had not yet discovered the full potential of roundball. Such was actually a blessing, given the power of imagination fanned by the descriptive skills of radio announcers like Jim Reid and Bill Jackson. In words, they glamorized the exploits of Ron Shavlik, Vic Molodet, Dicke Hemrick, and Lennie Rosenbluth. It was ACC basketball at inception, and for the young and impressionable it was a chance to live vicariously among the gods of the hardwood. I can still hear C. A. Dillon, Jr., introducing the North Carolina State players from a darkened Reynolds Coliseum in Raleigh as the deafening roar of the faithful splintered the benches and cracked the walls of that mighty coliseum.

When we left Huntington in 1950 and moved to Woodsdale in rural Person County, North Carolina, I was ready to turn in my certificate as a special deputy of the Lone Ranger for an orange roundball and a crude backboard held aloft by a 4x4. Because I lacked the patience to be a careful carpenter, the backboard changed direction like a weather vane in the wind. But the appearance of the board only served to make me more fanatical. I haunted my court, even in the rain and on the dusky evenings, as grass became dirt and then mud, which soon smothered the ball and turned my white T-shirt brown.

Most of the time I practiced alone, dramatizing my efforts by creating imaginary teams whose players had just the right names to read off a basketball program and make impossible shots in the fading seconds of championship games. My mother became a fixture at the screen door, fuming while supper cooled and fretting about dirty tennis shoes that threatened her spotless kitchen floor. Eventually, however, I began to notice three black guys whose school bus let them off near our house. Soon we were playing two on two, and I began to appreciate the competition. My dramatic contrivances were nullified by the superior skills of my new friends. They were quicker, they shot better (even at my meandering backboard), and my layup attempts were sometimes batted into the field behind my house.

I was grudgingly appreciative. This competition was what I needed to become a high school star, and maybe a hero like those ACC gods. Then, one day, my new friends got off the bus and kept walking. We never played together again. I didn't even know their names.

Then it was 1954, and I had my first chance to play team ball as a freshman guard for the Bethel Hill Hilltoppers. I can still feel the silky black and gold warmup suits that made me strut and shiver, still smell a faint odor that years of washing had failed to eradicate. Perhaps the boys who wore the colors before me may have shared my romantic fantasies. They had been country kids from tobacco and other farms, boys more likely to drop out of school early, get married in their teens, and find work on the family farm or in a local industry than to attend college.

The Hilltoppers played in the "Crackerbox," a gym so small that the only seating consisted of folding chairs situated precariously just a foot from the sideline boundaries. Some spectators viewed the game from the open doors of classrooms,

science, business, and social studies mingling with shrill whistles and sweat pools as in a mock tribute to the unity of athletics and academics.

For two years I rode the pine while Bobby Murray and John Shotwell worked their magic. I played when we had the game wrapped up or, more commonly, were too far down to matter. Some hero. Then I was a junior and a starting guard. It was the year we got new jerseys, mine sporting a big 84. "You've got Ron Shavlik's number, Taylor," grinned Paul Pryor, our new coach.

My senior year, minus Murray and Shotwell, our only consistently good players, we faced an uncertain season. All of my backyard practice could not atone for my slow feet and a one-dimensional game of fifteen-foot jump shots. Some hero.

Winning some but losing more, we crept into mid season, ready for a game with Norlina on a neutral court. Because they were from down east, we knew little about them, though the mystery easily made Norlina the most exotic game on our schedule. When we learned that Enos "Country" Slaughter, the baseball great who was Person County's famous athlete, would be there, the game became a must-win for us.

And it was a close one, so close that the score stood 70-70 with Norlina working for the last shot with only a few slippery seconds left. Standing at the top of the key, I was startled when the long rebound fell right in my hands. Only daylight stood between me and the basket, and I raced down the court and laid it in. But where was everybody? Not for the first time had I failed to hear the referee's whistle and had provided comic relief. As it happened, I had been fouled and went to the line with a chance to win it all. Norlina called time to rattle me. Coach Pryor, as a teammate informed me later, told an elephant joke to relax me. I didn't hear that either.

All the practice in the backyard flashed before me. This was it—a chance to be a hero. Only—why did Coach make us shoot foul shots underhand? I hated the abominable method; it wasn't even dignified. All those fans were staring at me, some on their feet. Country Slaughter would watch as I lofted an inglorious air ball and brought disgrace to Person County, my coach, teammates, and the world in general.

Bounce the ball, concentrate, relax. Then the ball was on its way, my hopes ingrained on the orange leather that left my hands burning as though I had mistaken the sun for a basketball. The ball bounced twice on the rim, tantalizing me, and fell in. I missed the second shot, but Norlina ran out of time.

Later in the locker room, a local farmer said, "Boy I want you to have this dollar for winning the game." Afraid that I would lose my amateur status, I gave the money to Coach Pryor, who grinned, promising to put my dollar in our fund to buy an activity bus.

To be a hero. In the time that it took a basketball to bounce on a rim and fall through a net, I had been transformed from an ordinary, nondescript high school player into the man of the moment, the bringer of honor and glory to our rural community. This was no backyard fantasy, and, in the heat of euphoria, I wanted more.

A couple weeks later, we played the return game of Norlina. Their gym was virtually new, a regulation-sized beauty with roomy bleachers, a shiny floor, and glass backboards. Again, the game went down to the wire. With thirty seconds left, Norlina had a one point lead and the ball. Their guards passed the ball back and forth as Jimmy Montague and I stood mesmerized at the top of our 2-1-2 zone. To this day, I don't know why we weren't going after them man to man. Finally it dawned on me that we could lose the game because of stupidity. Timing Norlina's pass just right I slapped the ball away and set sail for the glass backboard at the other end. An easy layup and I would be a double hero, my exploits worth more than a puny dollar. This time there

would be no whistle, no elephant joke, no fear of disgracing myself in front of Country Slaughter. Instead, the shot would be a simple act, the essence of purity. Then I was airborne. But something had gone terribly wrong, for the ball froze in my hand. A Norlina player had run me down and blocked the shot. Jump ball! Norlina controlled the tap and the clock told us to go home.

In the great cosmic scheme of things, there must be a god of levity. For many of us, this god may decree that twice is too much glory, especially for people of modest talents. Houseman's athlete who died young at least did not have to watch as others broke his records. At times, I suppose that all my teammates at Bethel Hill entertained romantic notions similar to mine and indeed had their great moments. But glory withers quicker than the rose. What remains are memories of youthful experience and passion, the invisible trophies that line the shelves of our lives.

At season's end, Coach Pryor announced that I had made the All-County team. Since Helena and Bethel Hill were the only schools involved and only seniors were eligible, I declined to put that trophy on my shelf. In the fall of my first year at Mars Hill College, I lighted for the last time the deceitful flames of glory. When I failed to make even the first cut of basketball tryouts, the flames flickered and died. Many years removed, and now a racquetball and tennis player, I was asked by my mother one day if I remembered the three black boys I played with in the back yard. "Did you know," she said, "that the neighbors were mad at you for playing with those boys?"

We need not regret nor apologize for our youthful passions and dreams any more than we should live our adulthood through them. I was famous for more than my allotted fifteen minutes, and for at least that long was a goat. Adulthood long ago taught me what real heroism is, but I had to start learning somewhere. A muddy backyard suited me just fine.

James K. Taylor
Professor of English

untitled photograph



Michelle Padgett

Journal

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g in Late November

Life had gotten overripe.

My sideboard was groaning—

Family, Friends, Details, Duties, Chores, Challenges, Children
Pleading, Prodding, Pushing, Begging, Nagging, Nudging, Needing
Me,

Only I

Could—

So I piled

Too much on

My plate and

Gobbled, Gulped, Gorged, Crammed, Jammed, Squeezed, Stuffed
Myself

Just doing it

All,

And now I feel

Packed, Puffed, Bloated, Bleary, Rotund, Roiling, Reeling,

My nerves distended,

My spirit showing

Serious stretch marks:

I will explode

Unless I get—

I stick

A pen

In my hand

And press

The point—

It lines & loops & curls & swirls & whorls & dashes & dots

And—s s s s s s—

Relief.

Gayle Bolt Price
Professor of English

It's about time that I tire of high art
and chalk and exposition and the scalpel
of method and the sutures of imagery
patterned and abstracted and of Pope's satires
and Wordsworth's trees and unread farmers and
Hopkins' shook foil of god and his angry rod enough.

Poetry is all lust. Watch the lover sweat
as she writes and hides the rush the heat
that lives below the belly and throbs even
to words like miss and kiss and lips
and watch the lover as he reads and sweats
the ache that her words cause just beneath the ribs.

Read to me, because I want my teeth rattled
by your tongue forming words
as it seeks in my mouth for reply
so wet that the words slip
into silence and all that's left is to kiss

and I want my veins to feel the tugging
squeezing gentle pushing and pulling
of blood and flesh moving and resisting and moving
writing lines in flesh because paper
makes a damned unfeeling lover

and I want Eros, not the pudgy baby with his wings
who doesn't know a whit of love and lust,
but the youth who burned for Psyche,
bedded, left, returned, in darkness
where no one can write and waste the motion of
mouth or hand on air or paper
but must make flesh the matter of its meaning.

Kevin Binfield
Assistant Professor of English

lower case i



Carolina Foothills High School Poets Contest

For the third consecutive year, as part of Gardner-Webb University's efforts to encourage and reward creative work by young people, *Reflections* has accepted submissions of poetry from regional high school students. The staff of *Reflections* is delighted to announce the following winners.

First Place:	Bourke-White at Buchenwald	Kris Neely
Second Place:	Softly into the Night	Jamie Knowles
Third Place:	Sea Dreamer	Corey Swain

Bourke-White at Buchenwald

Staring down the barrel of my Canon
focusing on your white, emaciated jaw
as you, an adonis of oppression,
hemmed into your realm of contrast
hoped to hear the jingle of keys
to the soot-blackened barbs
framing you for the pages of Life.
It was a Kodak moment.

*Kris Neely
Bill Pell, Teacher
Spartanburg High School
Spartanburg, South Carolina*

Softly into the Night

“He always hates to see night come”
Darkness, an oblivion of dreamscapes
From days without nights, endless sunsets
Swirls of soft violet flower petals
Cotton candy pink and little boy blue
Along with night comes the serpent
Hissing fears of yet-to-come
With its fangs, drains all strength
Composure dances away into the web
(Silver translucent masterpiece)
Softly swaying to the serpent’s rhythm
In the corner of the airless room

He feels if he should slip from the room
He would fall from the world to eternity
But perhaps with this step, freedom
Maybe the pain would cease
The disease would nevermore rot life from flesh
An inner tranquility would be found
The hourly dosages, nightly pill sessions
Would become meaningless
Perhaps he could step from the room
And lay upon a giant pillow
Finally reaching rest from eternity
Free from hearing the cries from the next room
Murmuring voices from the nurses’ station
Muffled tears from the next

“He always hates to see night come”
Said the weary doctor with blood-shot eyes
Holding a paper in one hand, pen in the other
“Sign here, we’ll pull the plug”
I thought of the serpent, the darkness
Slowly swallowing him into another night of hell
And so I signed away his pain

The doctor led me down twisted corridors
And into his cramped room filled
With the serpent’s hiss of stabilizing machines
My signature faded to blood-red
The good doctor did a tainted deed
And the hiss ceased, as he exhaled
Stealing softly into the night
As I whispered “Goodnight my love”

*Jamie Knowles
Mary Layton, Teacher
Ashbrook High School
Gastonia, North Carolina*

Sea Dreamer

An old man sits in
his weathered rocking chair.
He dreams of his past—
the mornings exhausted after
playing among the dolphins,
the afternoons lazily spent in the hull
of his boat being tossed
from one raging whitecap to another.
He recalls the touch of the soothing sea
as he would drag his hand through the water
parting it like the Red Sea.
He can still feel the warmth on his chest
as the sun slowly rose in morning stillness.
In the theater of his mind
he sees his son catch his first fish:
a big, writhing, angry marlin,
fighting against the string that had snagged it.
The old man struggles to his feet
and clutches his cane
with the seven gods of the sea
carved upon its worn oak frame.
He hobbles to the mirror,
looks into strained bloodshot eyes,
and wonders if he might be able
to dream once again of his big sea.
But the time is not right, not just yet.
The old man feels his way back to his rocker,
turns on a lamp, and watches
the shadows eerily scatter
while the sun paints the sea
in pools of crimson and honey.
Fishermen triumph with their day's catch.
The man runs his hand
along the dusty window
believing his hand is running
through the salty water
while knowing he is nothing more
than a sea dreamer.

*Corey Swain
Bill Pell, Teacher
Spartanburg High School
Spartanburg, South Carolina*

Decisions

