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DECEMBER 2010

RISING FROM KAT'RINA

BEFORE (DURING) AFTER

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ULYSSES SEEN

Kael Alford



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ANNOUNCING

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Writing Competition For Self-Published Authors

Wattpad, the world's most popular eBook community, and **Shelf Unbound** indie book review magazine announce the launch of the Wattpad + Shelf Unbound Writing Competition for self-published authors.

The competition is open to any self-published writer who has an active Wattpad account (go to www.wattpad.com/contests for further details). The winner, as selected by Shelf Unbound editors, will have their work published and promoted on Wattpad and featured in an upcoming issue of Shelf Unbound.

Entries may be submitted through January 31, 2011.



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KATRINA

watched families stranded on rooftops as the water rose from my living room, on television. I listened to reports of rape and murder, looting and loss. I saw stray animals clumped on tiny islands of dry land, dead bodies covered in sheets on the sidewalks.

So when the buses finally lined up in front of the Superdome and filled with people with no destination in mind other than out of that rotting city, and some of those buses and those people ended up in Dallas, a city I never expected to find myself in, I don't believe my partner and I even had a discussion. We have a guesthouse, rather a spartan converted garage, not uncommon in the South. We figured we could take in a family of four.

A local church dropped off Denise and Tasha, grown sisters, tall and striking, along with Denise's two daughters, Big Girl and Bean. The numerous necessary tasks began: trips to Target to get school uniforms for the girls who were starting second and third grade, to Costco for food and toiletries. Walmart was offering jobs to displaced employees, so Denise, a cake decorator, started work immediately. Shifts were varied, and I realized the girls were being left alone some days after school. When I would get home from work, they would hear my car and come running down the guesthouse stairs, pressing their faces against the screen door. We would color or bake cakes or play with the cats or pick pomegranates from the yard (Big Girl's favorite).

Before Thanksgiving Denise had found a Section 8 apartment nearby. The move out was as quick as the move in. A week or so later I headed out to the guesthouse to do some cleaning before family arrived for the holiday. There were signs of life: an unflushed toilet, a rumpled comforter. At first I panicked that someone had broken in but quickly understood that the girls had been coming over by themselves after school. I called Denise, said something about liability and safety, and asked her to return the key.

This issue is about "the storm" (*Before (During) After*, page 8). About the people who experienced it (*Rising from Katrina*, page 86) and those who did, and didn't, help (*Floodlines*, 23). And, like the Kings of Leon point out, it's about that special something that can only be found in what are sometimes deadly Southern waters (*Best of LSU Fiction*, page 28). But mostly it's about leaving and coming home.

I miss those girls.

Kathy Wise
editor in chief

Like what you read? Click on any book cover to purchase from Powell's Books, or click on the publisher website for more information.

KATRINA

This book isn't what you think it is. It isn't the obvious—New Orleans before, during, and after the storm that forever changed it—so much as the intrinsic, exploring the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the lives and work of 12 photographers from Southeast Louisiana. Essays by the likes of Pulitzer Prize nominee John Biguenet, who reported on the storm's aftermath for *The New York Times*, provide a vivid and emotional context for the often esoteric imagery.

—Kathy Wise

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EXCERPT

A Letter from Atlantis

by John Biguenet

Imagine a city. Begin with its old quarter, a grid stretching perhaps six blocks inland from the eleven blocks that hug a riverbank congested with moored ships and bleating ferries. Line each narrow street and cobblestone alley with an unbroken façade of charming shops and cottages. The tropical sun that bakes the brick-and-stucco walls is unrelenting this time of year, so give each upstairs apartment a balcony, festooned with wrought-iron railings, to cast shade over the sidewalks below.

Now fill those pavements with knots of tourists gawking at the quaint architecture and with locals jostling past them on the way back to work after leisurely lunches in the fine restaurants for which the city is known.

Let the humid afternoon warmth damp the din of com-

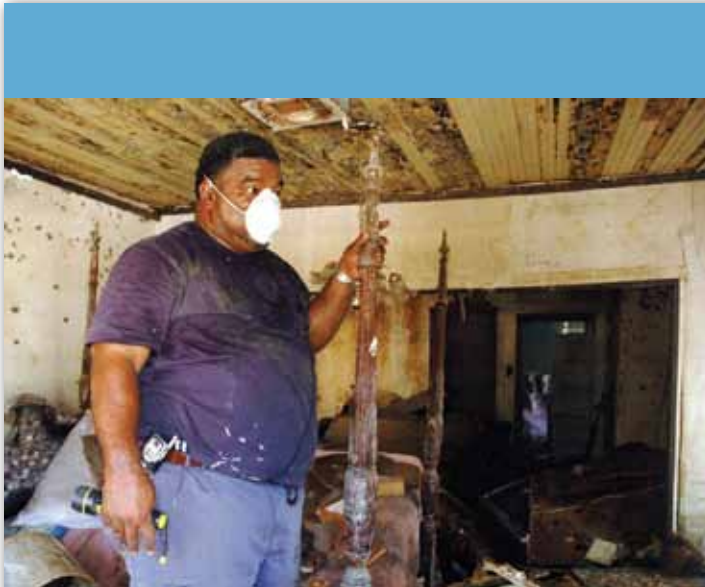
merce and mute the clack of mule hooves and iron-shod wheels, the screech of automobiles, the jingle of coins dropped into a street musician's hat, the tolling of the cathedral's bell, the interrogative horns on the river.

Thicken the air with sweet olive, coffee, rotting fish, gardenias, and burnt sugar. Allow the heavy buildings to waver in the heat.

And provide every home there with someone writing at a desk or stirring a kettle of soup in the kitchen or dozing on an old couch. Let their children, playing in patios fringed with palmetto fronds bobbing in a warm breeze, squat beside the shallow pools of ornate fountains to tease golden fish feeding on mosquito larvae.

Now spread the rest of the city across a low plain wedged





Photograph © David Paul Morris

(10) BEFORE DURING AFTER

unanswered

seething with flies. Heap sidewalks with ragged slabs of stained sheetrock, ripped-out cabinets, appliances sloshing with water. Mound still-damp insulation, moldy carpets, stained clothes, sopping wet mattresses until they spill into the gutter. Scatter debris—broken chunks of metal, shards of glass, rusted nails—down every street.

Hint that whole neighborhoods will be demolished, but decline to specify which homes will be bulldozed. Leave unanswered all the questions of those not yet able to return. Wonder aloud why they would even want to return to their houses. Suggest they need to move on with their lives.

As winter arrives, keep stores shuttered because no workers can be found. Let families live by candlelight in the unheated homes they have gutted. Have businesses begin to declare bankruptcy. Do nothing as doctors and lawyers see their practices shrivel and fail. Raise rents two and three times over their pre-flood levels because so little housing was spared by the water. Leave most of the city dark at night and uninhabited. Tally the suicides.

Encourage the nation to turn to other matters as the place you have dreamed withers. And as you watch it fade away, imagine one more thing: how history will judge a country that let New Orleans, one of the world's great cities, die.

questions

BEFORE DURING AFTER (11)

between a long crook of the river and the vast bay to the north. Erect office towers, an opera house, universities, theaters, hospitals, schools, a stadium, factories, churches, an aquarium, warehouses, museums, stores, statues of heroes, a train station, and two hundred thousand homes.

Divide the whole place into Irish neighborhoods and Italian, German and Vietnamese, Latin American and French. But reserve half the town for Africans. Invent an accent for them all to speak.

Set a fleet of small shrimp boats afloat on the bay, dragging their nets behind them. Loose a tide of cars down the highways that crisscross the city and arc over the river in broad bridges. Speckle the sky with planes banking toward the airport.

Have one, two, three thousand phones begin to ring. Suffuse the chatter of half a million people with coughs and curses, whispers and wheezes. Let a hundred dogs bark, fifty doorbells squawk their greetings, two hundred thousand television sets hawk the news, and a single lion in the zoo yawn. Provoke laughter until it ripples across the whole city.

Now—while they're still laughing—unpeople the place. Scatter in boarded-up houses, especially in the poorest neighborhoods, twenty-five, fifty, maybe eighty thousand men, women, and their children. But evacuate everyone else. Unleash a few dogs and cats to stray in search of food. Let the traffic lights continue to blink.

Have a damp breeze gust out of the southeast. Do not be distracted as oaks begin to shudder, loose weatherboards slap their houses, halcyons clatter against the masts of sail-

boats moored in the agitated bay.

Darken the sky; sustain the wind as it stiffens into a gale. Let the pelting rain arrive in bands, each heavier than the one before, until a merciless fist of wind sheathed in a glove of iron-gray water shatters windows in every house, smashes storefronts, snaps trees in half, batters roofs, flattens fences, rips signs from their poles. Hours later, as the storm trails north, shred the clouds with slashes of blue. Let people poke their heads out of doors, astonished by the freshly scoured sky. Gather them in the street, everyone ebullient that they have survived.

But while they regale one another with tales of what they've all just endured, notice how sand is bubbling along the base of the levees that protect their neighborhoods from drainage canals swollen with water from the bay. And a few minutes later, when the levees begin to collapse, one after another, note how shallow are the flood walls that pivot open as the water sluices, then cascades into the city.

Let the unchecked flow of warm salt water wash away houses abutting the levees, upend automobiles in driveways, gouge off corners of homes blocks away, topple light poles, and take more and more of the crumbling levees with it as the flood deepens.

As darkness falls across the city and people sleep, not yet aware of the breaches, fill the streets with water, gutter to gutter. Have it lap across the sidewalks and through picket gates, over the low azalea bushes blooming in gardens, up the steps and onto front porches, seeping under doors, then tamping at the windows, and finally settling just below the eaves.

JENNIFER SHAW)

(Jennifer Shaw

Before Katrina, I spent several years photographing post-industrial urban landscapes along New Orleans's Mississippi riverfront. After two months in post-Katrina exile, our family returned home, but it took several more months before I could bring myself to look at the city's vast devastation. Eventually, as a photographer living in New Orleans at that critical moment in its history, I felt compelled to bear witness.

In early 2006, I spent time documenting the storm's unbelievable destruction, resulting in the "Aftermath" portfolio. My work before and after the hurricane are actually quite compatible—my eye has always been drawn to objects in an elegant state of decay with the resulting images becoming portraits of things and times left behind. When seen side by side, the line between these pre- and post-K images is often unclear.

Focusing on the havoc was part of the healing process for me, but at a certain point I realized that the hurricane story I really needed to tell was my own. In the summer of 2006 I embarked on a radically different approach. I began shooting in color and employed toys to narrate my family's evacuation saga, including the birth of our son on the day Katrina hit. Where I used to find inspiration in the world around me, documenting things as I found them, I began instead to create a world in miniature—painting and posing tiny characters and props.

Photographing these tiny worlds was a wonderful catharsis for working through my post-hurricane anxieties. Recreating scenes within a timeline to illustrate my family's journey, with all its highs and lows, helped me come to peace with the physical and emotional upheaval that Katrina wrought.

(12) BEFORE

aw



BEFORE (13)

times left behind

of



decay

DURING (17)

The next morning, begin to strew human corpses here and there. Behind the locked door of a nursing home, heap thirty frail bodies. Then crowd forty more dead amid a pile of wheelchairs in a hospital stairwell. Let a whole family die trapped in their attic, not having thought to bring an axe to cut their way out through the roof.

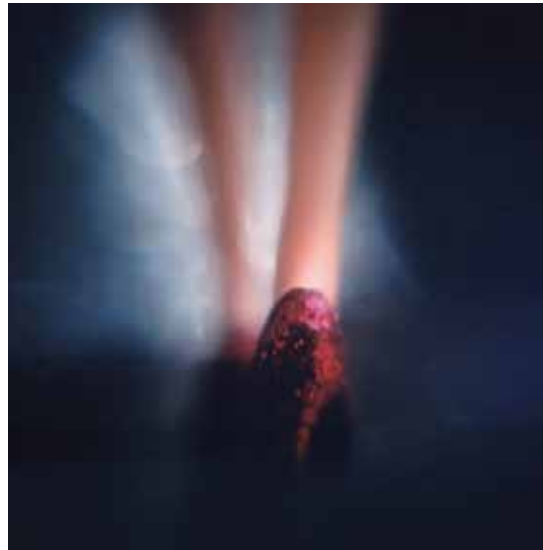
Assemble the dispossessed still left in the city on outcroppings of concrete, highway overpasses, the raised terraces of public buildings. Withhold water from them and food. Let the dead rot among the living.

Ignore the stench rising from the fetid swamp that, mere days ago, was a great city and look out across the place you have dreamt. But do not allow yourself to weep at what you see. The water is too deep already.

You think you have come to the end of it, this nightmare, but it is only just beginning. Loose mobs of looters on the city's shopping district. Let them burn what they cannot carry away. Pack thousands and thousands of citizens in a sweltering stadium and a convention center, with neither running water nor working toilets, then observe how these

create

a world



in miniature

(18) AFTER

people who have lost everything minister to one another, maintain what dignity they can muster, offer their sympathy to others, rebuke the lawless, protect the vulnerable. Do allow one government official to send word to the capital of the unfolding catastrophe, beg for supplies and personnel, and wait—surrounded by suffering—as help fails to arrive.

While the whole world watches in horror, let it go on like this for days. Then decree the abandonment of the city. Order the few troops who have finally arrived to drive out all its citizens. Scatter them across the country in makeshift shelters.

Keep the temperature in the nineties, and let the standing water rot the city for weeks. Study what salt water does to a house, to its sheetrock, to its insulation, to its door frames and studs. Marvel at the intricate designs of mold spiraling up walls, over furniture and artwork; wonder at its vibrant colors, the orange mold and the brown, the golden and the red as it thickens into delicate fur. Observe the shriveling of plants, the bleaching of grass.

Encourage politicians to denigrate the victims of the collapsed levees—which they themselves have refused to

FRANK RELLE)

Frank Relle

In 2004 and early 2005, I photographed the rich cultural story of New Orleans via its architecture, which reflects the personality of its citizens. The houses in their varied styles and states of repair, blended into a whole, reveal a fabric of life in the city more complex than if we looked at them separately. In my work, I juxtaposed images of ramshackle shotguns and grand mansions with the intent of depicting them in the same light.

After the levees broke, New Orleans turned pitch black. Although the complete darkness surrounding the flooded homes was intimidating, it forced me to work differently. I had to bring more of my own lights and power to the shoots, and in doing so a new story emerged—the destruction of the built environment and the culture it represents. Shot at night under these circumstances, the houses revealed the true mood of the city at that time.

I continued photographing the architecture of the city long after the storm. I wanted my images to show that the city was still standing. But I also wanted to explore the issues of preservation, renovation, abandonment and teardowns. Having brought more lights to capture New Orleans after Katrina, I was able to work on larger scenes showing the city's abandonment.

While each house I photograph has something different to show me, one overriding lesson I have learned is to get out there and get the picture, no matter what. If I contemplated photographic concepts before going out into the barricaded Ninth Ward at night, I don't think I would have made these photographs. I never asked for permission. Instead, I asked for forgiveness.

(20) BEFORE

the city's personality



BEFORE (21)



DURING (25)

provide funding to strengthen year after year—for choosing to live in a city protected by levees built by the government they administer.

A month later, after the water has drained away, welcome back stunned evacuees to uninhabitable houses. Have no place for them to live, no shops open, no schools, no gas stations. Impose a curfew enforced by armed soldiers.

Line the streets of the city with reeking refrigerators seething with flies. Heap sidewalks with ragged slabs of

stained sheetrock, ripped-out cabinets, appliances sloshing with water. Mound still-damp insulation, moldy carpets, stained clothes, sopping wet mattresses until they spill into the gutter. Scatter debris—broken chunks of metal, shards of glass, rusted nails—down every street.

Hint that whole neighborhoods will be demolished, but decline to specify which homes will be bulldozed. Leave unanswered all the questions of those not yet able to return. Wonder aloud why they would even want to return to their houses. Suggest they need to move on with their lives.



preservation

renovation

(26) AFTER

As winter arrives, keep stores shuttered because no workers can be found. Let families live by candlelight in the unheated homes they have gutted. Have businesses begin to declare bankruptcy. Do nothing as doctors and lawyers see their practices shrivel and fail. Raise rents two and three times over their pre-flood levels because so little housing was spared by the water. Leave most of the city dark at night and uninhabited. Tally the suicides.

Encourage the nation to turn to other matters as the place you have dreamed withers. And as you watch it fade

away, imagine one more thing: how history will judge a country that let New Orleans, one of the world's great cities, die.

From Before (During) After: Louisiana Photographers' Visual Reactions to Hurricane Katrina, essays by John Biguenet, Steven Maklansky, and Dr. Tony Lewis, UNO Press 2010, www.unopress.org. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

DAVID RAE MORRIS)

(David Rae

After moving to New Orleans on a whim in 1994, I soon found that with its rich and dynamic culture, the city was a photographer's dream.

I quickly established myself as a photographer, working for a host of local, national, and international clients, newspapers and magazines, as well as on my own personal projects. I even did a book on Mississippi with my father, Willie Morris. I bought a house, had a daughter. Life was good.

But by the summer of 2005, I was in a rut, not knowing where I wanted to go with my work. After evacuating with my family to Jackson, Mississippi a few days before Katrina made landfall, the realities of the storm and flood became evident. I knew I had to return to New Orleans to cover the story.

The only way for me to make sense of what had happened was to throw myself into my work. For the next two years I did little else but photograph the aftermath of the storm. There were assignments, exhibits, lectures, and magazine covers. Finally I reached a point where I could no longer engage Katrina on any level. But there was no place to hide. Katrina was everywhere; it permeated our daily lives, affecting every aspect of our routine and overwhelming our senses.

In the summer of 2007, my partner of twenty years had had enough. Tired of the recovery efforts, the trash, the crime, the finger pointing and the failed politics, she accepted a job at a prominent state university, took our then five-year-old daughter and moved to a small town in southeast Ohio. While I was still haunted and obsessed by Katrina, I lingered another six months before joining her. I decided it was time to take a break from New Orleans altogether, to teach and to re-evaluate my life and career.

Almost five years after the storm, I am constantly asking myself where I should go from here. How can I move on after being a witness to such suffering and such incompetence? What kind of projects do I commit to after working on the greatest story of my lifetime and certainly the story of the century? The answers are slow in coming. Still, I can't completely let go of the city. I remain a legal resident of Louisiana and return every few months. Recently, I came back to watch Super Bowl XLIV at Vaughan's Lounge, my neighborhood bar, to photograph and be a part of the Who Dat Nation. When the Saints won, it gave us all some hope. While the struggle to re-build continues, we could stop for a fleeting moment and celebrate. In the meantime, I try to keep busy as best I can, always searching for direction. While I spend more time in Ohio now, I know what it means to miss New Orleans.

(52) BEFORE

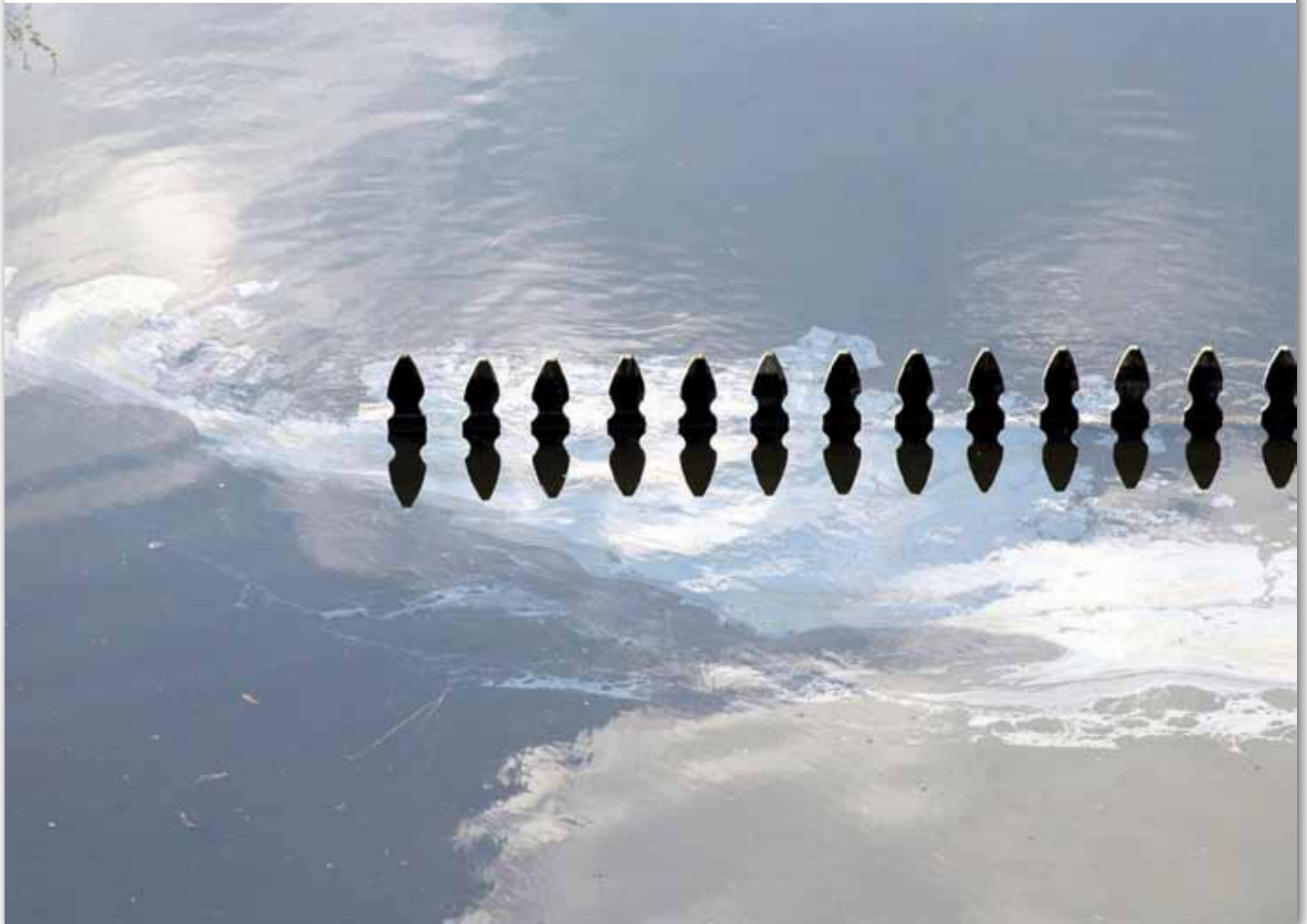
Morris

a photographer's

dream



overwhelmed our senses



INTERVIEW with John Bigeunet

Shelf Unbound: *At the end of your foreword, you chastise the nation for letting New Orleans die. Do you view the city as dead? Who do you blame?*

John Bigeunet: With over 100,000 New Orleanians still unable to return

home five years after the levee collapses, with over 50,000 blighted buildings, with many streets still impassable because of the erosion of their substructure thanks to weeks of standing saltwater, with generations-old businesses shuttered, with all the divorces and suicides of the last five years, the city that exists now is not the same city that existed the night before defective levees all across New Orleans began to

crumble in conditions well within their design specifications. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers admitted in their own final report on this manmade disaster that they were responsible for the majority of deaths and destruction in New Orleans. All you have to do is read their report and that of other forensic engineering studies about the levee collapse to know whom to blame.



s e a r c h i n g f o r d i r e c t i o n

AFTER (59)

Shelf: *I was living in Dallas during Hurricane Katrina, and I remember experiencing the tragedy in a way that I have never experienced another national disaster, or even an act of terror. After 9/11 there was little sense that an outsider could help other than to send money; watching the footage of New Orleans I felt little choice*

other than to open my own home to an evacuee family, which we did. I have never before or since opened up my home to complete strangers in the way that I felt not obligated, but absolutely and without a question necessary as I did then. In the midst of it all, did you have any sense of the national response, or just the feeling of

abandonment and chaos?

Bigunet: In the first few weeks after the flooding of the city, individual Americans could not have been more generous to us as we traveled around the country, unable to return home. And in the first years after the levees collapsed, over one million Americans came as volunteers to New Orleans with church groups or colleges or individually to help gut homes and build

new ones. All of us who were here then remain extremely grateful to them. It wasn't our fellow citizens who failed us; it was the Bush administration and the government agencies they oversaw.

Shelf: *How has your own writing changed before, during, after?*

Bigeunet: I have a clearer sense of the function of an artist in a community and of the value of the work we create. Our first task is to bear witness: As I say in my essay, "to author . . . urgent bulletins to the rest of the world" about the plight of our community. Afterward, we have to phrase the questions our neighbors need to discuss if we are to grasp fully what has happened to us and to begin to grapple with what needs to be done. There was a moment after the flood when people stopped talking about their admiration for my work and began to express their gratitude for what I was doing. I felt the same way toward other writers and musicians and artists and photographers in the city.

Shelf: *What does it mean to be a New Orleans writer?*

Bigeunet: To be a New Orleans writer is to bring a New Orleanian's perspective to one's writing. So we take the past seriously and recognize how it threads through the present. Our above-ground cemeteries, for example, are scattered throughout the city, even across the street from one of our finest restaurants. Perhaps because we live shoulder to shoulder with death, we celebrate life passionately—in music, food, festivities, and even in our jazz funerals. As one local bumper sticker declares, "New Orleans: we put the fun in funeral."

Shelf: *You were covering the after-effects of the hurricane for The New York Times from within the city. What was your reaction to journalists and writers who were writing about it from afar?*

Bigeunet: I think we were all grateful to everyone who tried to keep the story

alive. America, after all, has a short attention span. But even those journalists working here in New Orleans failed to convey to most of their audience that the city had been the victim not of a natural disaster but of a manmade catastrophe. They did their best in very difficult circumstances, but the story was a battle between the denials of responsibility by the Corps of Engineers for nearly nine months and the fragmentary stories by individual journalists trying to piece together the truth. By the time the Corps of Engineers confessed their guilt the following summer, the country had moved on to other problems. My sense is that most Americans still don't distinguish between what Hurricane Katrina did to the Mississippi Gulf Coast and what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers did to New Orleans.

Shelf: *Many local artists essentially became journalists and reporters as events were unfolding. When/how does it become necessary/possible to return to personal work?*

Bigeunet: A moment occurs when there's no longer a pressing need to broadcast the facts and a greater need to understand the experience takes hold. Once you've let the world know that people were trapped in their attics by the water, then you turn to your art to help people grasp what it must have been like in those attics and what those stories have to do with the rest of us.

Shelf: *What about the experience did you find the hardest to communicate?*

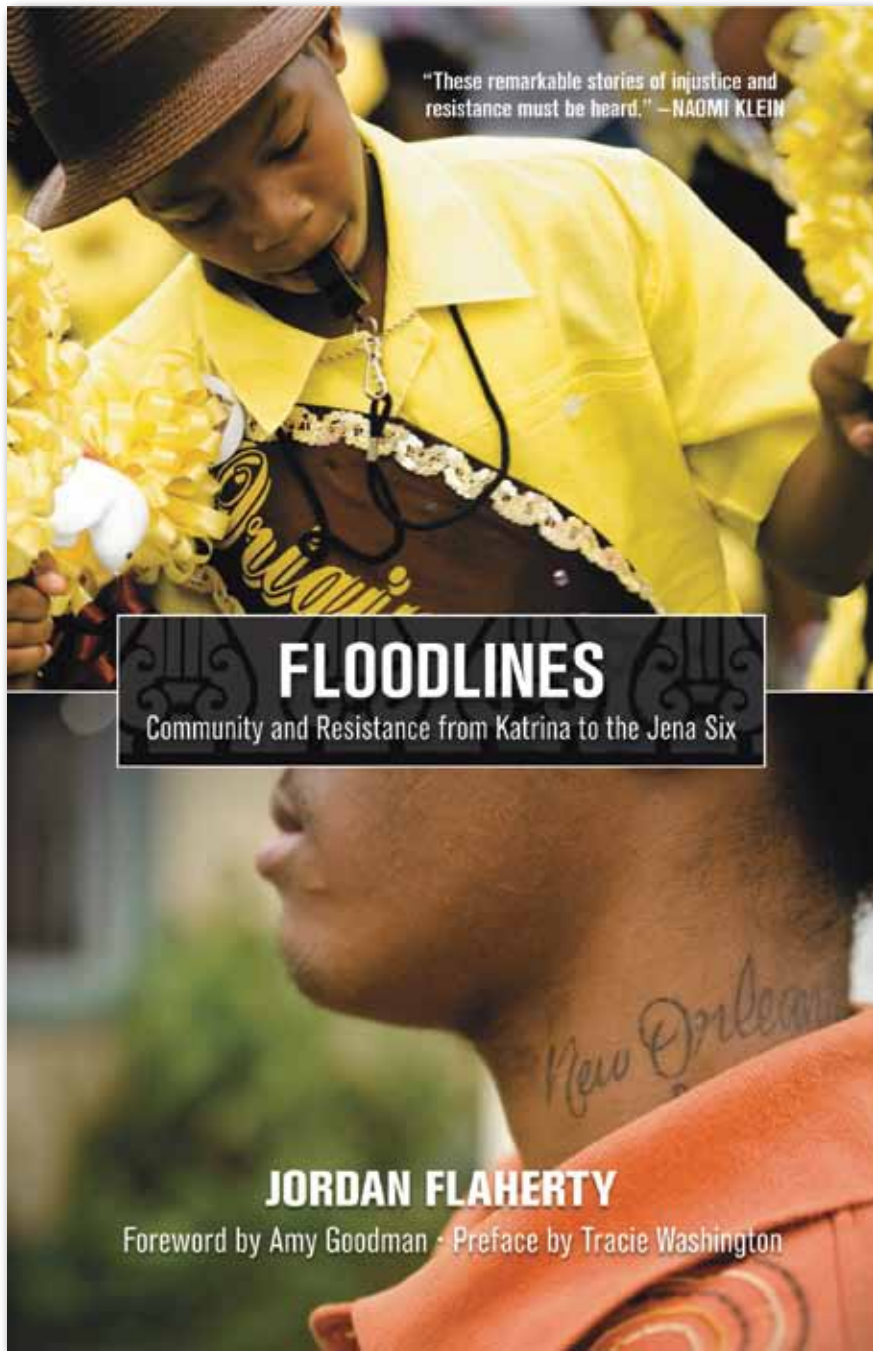
Bigeunet: It was immediately apparent when I tried to shoot photographs to accompany my columns for *The New York Times* how difficult it would be to communicate the extent of the destruction. The area destroyed when the defective levees collapsed was seven times the size of Manhattan. Even having seen it, I have a hard time comprehending how vast was the destruction.

Shelf: *You write about how you felt obligated to cover the disaster but torn between the need to be accurate for those who could not experience the reality and gentle for those who were trapped in it. How do you write about a subjectively and collectively experienced trauma?*

Bigeunet: A collective trauma requires one to write with a special kind of alertness to the implications of everything one says and the way one says it. In my play *Rising Water*, about a couple trapped in their attic and then on their rooftop by the flood, I have to talk about death by water. But it would have been unbearable for me or anyone else who had been through what had happened in New Orleans to sit through a play that described the deaths here directly. So except for a very brief passage when the wife imagines what must be happening as water fills the city's houses, the characters tell ghost stories of those dead at sea and anecdotes from their past about being threatened by water. And the play ends with the couple we've come to know over two hours still waiting for help they believe will arrive. Even if we know that rescue is unlikely, when the lights go down, they are still alive.

Shelf: *In the play, the wife is able to escape through a hole in the roof, but her overweight husband can squeeze no more than his head through. He is weighed down by memory and loss. Do you believe in some ways you have to let go of memory in order to survive?*

Bigeunet: It's impossible to restore what's been lost. But to sacrifice the memory of what existed before the catastrophe is to accept that the life you lived and the city in which you lived it are both dead. You are living a new life in a new city, whether you are willing to admit it to yourself or not. Remembering or forgetting, though, it hurts either way. ■



"These remarkable stories of injustice and resistance must be heard." – NAOMI KLEIN

FLOODLINES
Community and Resistance from Katrina to the Jena Six

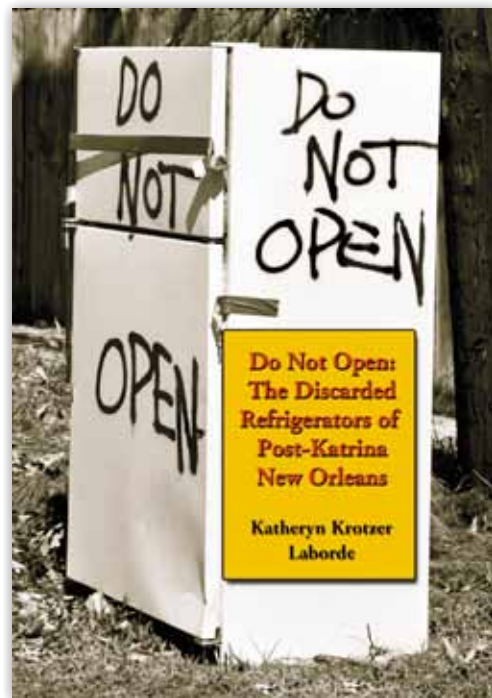
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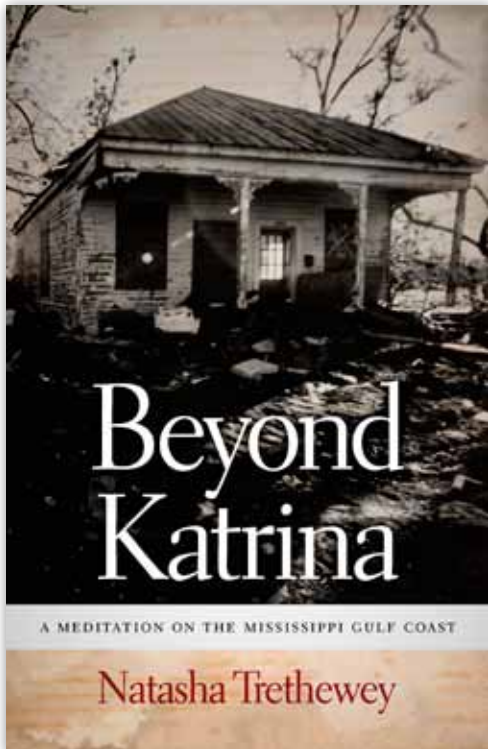
A white journalist from New Orleans, Jordan Flaherty wrote as the floodwaters rose, recording untold truths about acts of heroism and racism that occurred throughout his devastated city in the days, months, and years following Hurricane Katrina. This book is a firsthand account, eloquently told, about those who fought to survive, and who, in fact, came to their aid. A compelling call to action and an irresistible read, Flaherty's collection of essays will leave you itching for a righteous fight.

—Dean Hill



McFarland
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When the floodwaters that swamped New Orleans finally receded in September 2005, the post-Hurricane Katrina recovery began. One of the most common sights was the discarded home refrigerator, perched on the curb and ready for disposal. For months, thousands upon thousands of ruined refrigerators still awaited pick-up. Many had messages scribbled with markers or blurted with spray paint, rendered by owners and passersby alike, ranging from practical to sentimental, the angry to the darkly humorous. This book, featuring hundreds of black-and-white photographs, presents the communi- qués that transformed appliances into message boards, and explores the post-disaster environment that inspired their creation.



University of Georgia Press
www.ugapress.org

Poet Natasha Trethewey spent her childhood in Gulfport, Mississippi, where her younger brother and much of her mother's extended family still live. As she tried to get a grasp on the hurricane's wide-reaching impact, Trethewey uncovered an erosion of culture, economy, and landscape that had begun decades before, as economic dependence on tourism and casinos grew and wetlands rapidly made way for development. But she soon discovered that some of the most vile remnants of the storm were the racism and poverty laid bare by the retreating waters. *Beyond Katrina* began as a series of lectures by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author at the University of Virginia that were subsequently published as essays in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*. Here she expands that work into a personal narrative, weaving letters, poems, and family photographs into a moving meditation on the people and places she still calls home.

EXCERPT from *Floodlines*

Lies on the News: The Flood and Its Aftermath

*Hurrican Katrina, we should've called it Hurricane Bush
Then they telling y'all lies on the news
The white people smiling like everything cool
But I know people that died in that pool
I know people that died in them schools
Now what is the survivor to do?
Got no trailer, you gotta move
Now it's on to Texas and to Georgia
They tell you what they want, show you what they want you to see
But they don't let you know what's really going on
Make it look like a lot of stealing going on
Boy them cops is killer in my home...
Man fuck the police and President Bush
So what happened to the levees, why wasn't they steady
Why wasn't they able to control this?
I know some folk that live by the levee
that kept on telling me they heard the explosions
Same shit happened back in the Hurricane Betsy
1965, I ain't too young to know this...*

—From “Georgia...Bush” by Lil’ Wayne

In the morning, after the storm had passed, we explored the streets. Power was out throughout the city, including in our building, but this was a common occurrence in New Orleans, even after minor storms. There was some flooding, but not much more than the city regularly experienced in a hard rainstorm—felled trees, some torn roofs. The area in front of the Can Company building was under less than a foot of water, though the floodwater was deeper on some side streets.

It seemed as if the worst-case scenarios predicted by the media had not come to pass. More than once that day, someone said, “We dodged the bullet again.” New Orleanians know that the city is always at risk, and part of living here means becoming accustomed to that risk.

A few hours later, we heard some radio reports of more extensive flooding and destruction in the Ninth Ward, but no further details were given, and none of us could have guessed at the devastation already faced by some parts of the city. We decided to stay one more night in the Can Company building, assuming that by the next day the water outside would have drained to the point we could walk home. We anticipated that electricity would be restored to our neighborhood in a few days.

On the roof of the Can Company building, we talked to our temporary neighbors and watched the stars.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30

We woke up to discover that the water level outside had risen about two feet. Rising water was not what any of us had expected, and no one was sure what it indicated or what we should do. An inventory of our food revealed that with tight rationing we would have enough to eat for about five days. While discussing our plans we repeatedly reassured ourselves, “Not that we’ll be here that

long, but if we had to. . .” Soon we discovered that running water in the building (and, as we learned, throughout the city) had been turned off.

The Can Company building stands near a bayou that runs through the Midcity neighborhood. In better times, the bayou is one of the nicest parts of the city, a lovely place to spend time watching fish jump and snapping turtles poke their heads out over the surface of the water. Now the area was barely recognizable, its geography transformed by the flood. Looking out from the roof, we saw water everywhere.

Many people in the neighborhood had boats, and out on the flooded bayou several folks were rowing around. Photographer Jonathan Traviesa, who was staying in an apartment upstairs from us, lived less than a block away and owned a small boat. Traviesa retrieved his boat from his house and went to work navigating the area, giving people rides and delivering supplies. In three separate trips, he brought over an entire family—who were panicked as water came rushing into their home—to the Can Company building.

In the courtyard of the Can Company, which was raised a few feet above the ground outside, a young man named Christopher invited everyone to a barbecue. Someone brought a grill, and people from all over the building collected food that was in danger of spoiling and cooked and ate it together. Christopher stood in front of the grill with water up to his calves. A similar ritual was repeated all over the city—New Orleans is a city where people love to come together over shared food and conversation.

With 268 apartments in total, about two-thirds of them empty, and many of those remaining occupied by multiple individuals, I estimated at the time that more than 200 people stayed through the storm at the Can Company, roughly half Black and half white. John Keller, a tall and imposing former marine staying in the building, went door to door in an attempt to get an accurate count, and put the number at 244 people, about 100 of them white. Keller was later interviewed by the *Times-Picayune* about his role coordinating relief for the elderly, sick, and frightened residents of the building, and his remarkable tale was reportedly optioned by Will Smith. I remember Keller, but only from brief glimpses—the large building was the site of hundreds of individual stories.

The Can Company apartments are newly renovated and fairly luxurious, but there is some class diversity in the building, as a number of units are rented to Section 8 and other low-income residents. Many people who stayed in the building during the storm were elderly and/or infirm. Another category included people in a situation like ours: they didn’t live in the building but sought refuge there because the Can Company building was one of the most solid structures in the city (Keller estimated this group numbered about seventy-five). Several apartments were, like ours, crowded with seven or more people. Overall, people had supplies of food and water, but in most cases not enough to last several days.

In our apartment we had a small battery-powered TV/radio, but each time we switched it on, we soon turned it off in disgust. The newscasters offered no helpful information, just rumors and fear-mongering. New Orleans’s media horizon is bleak in general—even with no storm, television and radio options were limited to corporate-owned, cookie-cutter news outlets. But with most of the city evacuated, only one station was broadcasting. It didn’t tell us much, mostly just repeating a message for people who had left the city: “Don’t come back yet.” Throughout this time, we couldn’t find a reliable source of information, which heightened the tension.

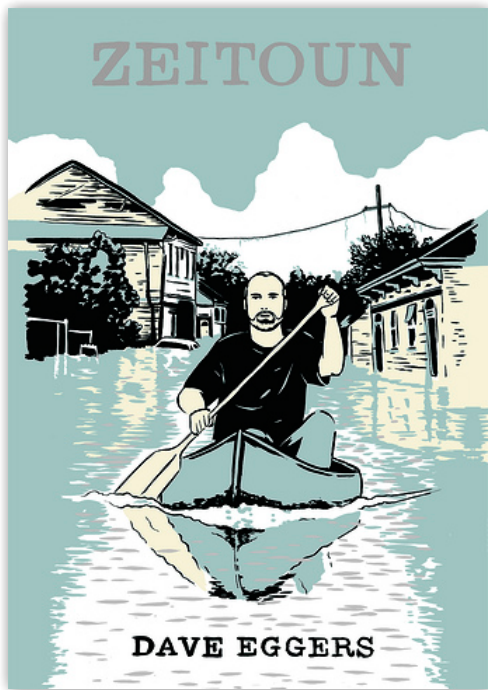
We finally heard on the radio that the levees had broken in several places, but still didn’t comprehend how serious the situation was. We thought it was a breach



Pantheon

www.randomhouse.com

Now in paperback, *The New York Times* best-selling graphic nonfiction work by *American Splendor* artist Josh Neufeld depicts the lives of seven real-life New Orleanians before, during, and just after Hurricane Katrina. There’s Denise, a counselor and social worker; “The Doctor,” a French Quarter raconteur; Abbas and Darnell, two friends who find themselves stranded in a flooding grocery store; Kwame, a preacher’s kid just starting his senior year of high school; and Leo and Michelle, a young local couple. Each is faced with the same decision without benefit of hindsight: stay or flee the impending storm.



Vintage
www.randomhouse.com

When Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans, Abdulrahman Zeitoun, a Syrian-American father of four with a successful house painting business, chose to stay through the storm to protect his home and livelihood. In the following days, he took to the flooded streets in a secondhand canoe, passing out supplies and offering aid to the stranded. But, on September 6, 2005, Zeitoun abruptly disappeared. Eggers' riveting nonfiction account investigates Zeitoun's roots in Syria, his marriage to an Islam-converted American, and the bizarre state of New Orleans (and the United States in general) that made Zeitoun's subsequent arrest, beating, and charges of terrorism not only plausible but strangely inevitable. In 2009, Eggers created the Zeitoun Foundation to distribute proceeds from the sale of the book to aid in the rebuilding of and ongoing health of the city of New Orleans, and to help ensure the human rights of all Americans. For more information, visit www.zeitounfoundation.org.

that could be fixed. The broadcast described helicopters delivering sandbags, and we assumed a solution was underway. However, as reporters announced later in the day, the water level in the city would continue to rise, perhaps twelve to fifteen feet. Governor Kathleen Blanco was on the radio calling for a day of prayer. We later found out that the levees had breached in at least fifty-three places in the Greater New Orleans area, and water from Lake Ponchartrain and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet was flowing into the city.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31

Tensions in the building started to rise. With no power, brutally hot apartments, and an uninviting swamp of sewage engulfing the building, most people spent time on the roof and in other public spaces. There were also people living in the hallways and common areas, such as the large family Jonathan had ferried over, who had fled nearby homes that hadn't stayed as dry and safe as the Can Company building.

I heard white people whispering about fears of "them." One woman complained of people in the building "from the projects," who she said were hoarding food. Others talked of gangs in the streets downtown, shooting, robbing—lawless chaos. There seemed to be a push and pull in people's minds between compassion and panic, between empathy and fear.

The national media added to the problem by reinforcing a view of New Orleanians as criminals. Days after the storm, CNN reporter Chris Lawrence commented that there were no "normal" people left in New Orleans, only armed ones. As he said this, the screen showed Black people at the Superdome. City officials helped fuel the panic with exaggerated reports. Police superintendent Eddie Compass told Oprah Winfrey, "We had little babies in there [the Superdome], some of the little babies getting raped." Compass resigned in disgrace in late September 2005, but proved to be another example of law enforcement career longevity even in the face of gross incompetence when, in 2007, he was put in charge of the security guards in the city's public schools.

To me, the stories I was hearing—of gangs and mass murdering and looting around the city—seemed insane. These were rumors that arose from fear of the other and as a demonization of the poor, then were repeated without question by the media, and then recirculated and multiplied, as people grew panicked over an incompetent government response. But seeing our city underwater, with no help anywhere, also seemed insane, even to someone like me with a critical view of the U.S. government. It was as if all rules had fallen away—not just the rule of law, but rules of logic, what I thought possible in this country.

Despite the rumors and fear, I witnessed Samaritans traveling in boats, bringing food, giving lifts, sharing information. The general sense in the area was that people were pulling together and looking for ways to help others. This was the New Orleans I knew. In the months afterward, I heard more of these stories from neighborhoods around the city—and especially poorer communities. One such example involved the community leader and civil rights veteran Dyan French Cole, known to everyone as Mama Dee, who led a group called the "Soul Patrol" in the Seventh Ward. The Soul Patrol consisted mostly of working-class Black men who patrolled their neighborhood by boat and on foot, rescuing their neighbors and providing relief in the first days after the storm. Ricky Matthieu, a Soul Patrol volunteer, worked for days doing rescue and relief. The whole time, Matthieu said, he was harassed and threatened by the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) and other police agencies, who accused Soul Patrol members of being looters. "These are my neighbors. I couldn't leave them behind, Matthieu

explained. “Leave them for what? A rescue that came seven or eight days later?” The so-called “first responders” did very little, according to Matthieu: they were more interested “in joyriding and trying out equipment. We [the Soul Patrol] rescued almost everyone in this area.”

From each neighborhood with a housing development, I heard stories of young Black men—the same young Black men criminalized in the media—helping people. Years after the storm, photographers Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick created a photo show of what they called the “real first responders,” dedicated to profiling the young men from their Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood who had rescued people when the government failed.

This story was never widely told. If the truth about how New Orleanians—especially young Black men—pitched in tirelessly to help one another had been publicized, a very different picture would have been painted of what was happening in New Orleans, and the nation’s response would likely have been reshaped. Instead of tales of criminal gangs wreaking havoc while police and soldiers fought to maintain order, there were stories of collective action, of people looking out for each other and developing communal responses to the crisis. In most of these stories, the police and military were part of the problem, not the solution. The so-called gangs—the young Black men from housing developments like the St. Bernard and Lafitte—were actually the ones who stepped in to help.

Denise Moore was one of an estimated twenty thousand people at the Convention Center. Although the center—a large complex by the Mississippi River, a few blocks from the Superdome and just upriver from the French Quarter—had not been named as an official hurricane shelter, thousands of people gathered there anyway. “Yes, there were young men with guns there,” Moore told family members. “But they organized the crowd. They went to Canal Street and ‘looted,’ and brought back food and water for the old people and the babies, because nobody had eaten in days. When the police rolled down windows and yelled out ‘The buses are coming,’ the young men with guns organized the crowd in order: old people in front, women and children next, men in the back, just so that when the buses came, there would be priorities of who got out first.”

But the buses never came. “Lots of people being dropped off,” said Moore. “Nobody being picked up. Cops passing by, speeding off. We thought we were being left to die.” “It was supposed to be a bus stop where they dropped people off for transportation,” one officer told the *Washington Post*, explaining why a huge crowd had gathered at the Convention Center. “The problem was, the transportation never came.”



Back at the Can Company building, by this time, fear was a palpable presence. Rumors and half-truths were flying everywhere.

There was a story of a soldier shot in the head by looters (not true), stories of bodies floating in the Ninth Ward (true), flooding in Charity Hospital (largely not true—only in the basement), and huge masses, including police, emptying Wal-Mart and the electronic stores on Canal Street (true—police looting was even caught on video). From the roof of the building, fires were visible in the distance, and someone told us the Lafitte housing projects were burning (not true).

Everyone in the building kept asking, Why has no one come? Helicopters occasionally flew by, but none would stop. Using foam from a fire extinguisher, Keller wrote out on the roof the number of people in the building and the need for food. Anyone in the helicopters could have clearly seen the writing, as well as the scores of people on the roof, but still no help arrived.

After we had gone several days without help, with people’s illnesses worsening and no signs of rescue on the horizon, Keller had an idea: he told all the Black people to leave the roof, and had only elderly white residents standing there. Within minutes, the first helicopter arrived, hovering a few feet above the roof, and dropped off food and water. Soon after, a Coast Guard helicopter started picking people up. I would later discover that similar stories were unfolding all over the city, as racism affected every aspect of the rescue efforts.

Lance Hill, the executive director of the Southern Institute for Education and Research at Tulane University, has documented the story of a downtown hotel—the Ritz Carlton—that put white guests and staff on a bus headed out of town, while Black staff and guests were transported to the Superdome. In congressional testimony, activist and attorney Ishmael Muhammad quoted Shelly, a thirty-one-year-old woman who was trapped in the Superdome: “When buses came to take us from the Superdome, they were taking tourists first. White people, they were just picking them out of the crowd. I don’t know why we were treated the way we were. But it was like they didn’t care.”

When the helicopter first dropped food on the Can Company roof, there was a rush to grab it. But soon people in the building came together and started coordinating distribution, and collective action won out over competition.

Not far from our building, visible from the roof, was a small spot of dry land. Around this time, helicopters began landing there to pick people up. The aircrafts were large military transporters, and could fit perhaps ten or more adults at a time. Hundreds of inpatients from a nearby hospital made their way to the patch of land, wearing only flimsy institutional gowns. Most ended up waiting for hours in the sun. As more helicopters came, people started arriving from every direction, coming by boat or slogging slowly and deliberately through the sludge-filled water.

As evening approached, a helicopter hovered over our roof, and a soldier descended to announce that the following day everyone remaining in the building would be evacuated. Across the way, at least two hundred people spent the night huddled on that tiny patch of land, waiting to be rescued. ■

BEST of LSU FICTION



EDITED BY
NOLDE ALEXIUS AND JUDY KAHN

The Southern Review | www.lsu.edu/thesouthernreview

Best of *LSU Fiction*, edited by Nolde Alexius and Judy Kahn, is a wonderfully surprising collection of works by 20 fiction writers who are associated with Louisiana State University—home of *The Southern Review* since its founding by Robert Penn Warren in 1935—in various incarnations as professors, undergrads, grads, and editors. From a failed football hero and a dysfunctional family to the dark side of love and a first-experienced Louisiana hurricane, these stories by the likes of Walker Percy, Jean Stafford, Valerie Martin, Andrei Codrescu, Tim Parrish, and Olympia Vernon will transport you south, where the air is thick and the trees are draped with moss, and storytelling is in the blood.

—Anna Nair

Shelf Unbound sat down with Judy Kahn, the editor of *Best of LSU Fiction*, and Valerie Martin, one of the contributors, to discuss what's so special about Louisiana writers.

INTERVIEW

WITH JUDY KAHN

Shelf Unbound: *You're a double tiger, receiving both your B.A. and M.A. from LSU, as well as going on to teach in the English Department for a number of years. What is it about the university that makes it such a fertile environment for writers?*

Judy Kahn: Any university is set apart from its city by its peculiar population of people who have chosen to live their lives in the rarefied atmosphere of learning, creativity, and research. So all around you are people who aren't living in the "real world" of business and industry. Competition isn't about money but scholarship and creativity. At LSU, we have the ivory tower factor, and we live in one of the most extraordinary states in the nation: It's almost trite to tout our sub-tropical landscape; blend of Spanish, French, and African-American cultures; diverse architecture, art, and sublime cuisine—but they're the basis of our everyday lives. And I haven't even gone into the year-round festivals based on food and music: jazz, blues, sweet potato, strawberry, pig roast, you name it. The political infamy beginning with Huey Long continues as do catastrophic natural disasters, and lately, the totally unnecessary oil disaster in the Gulf. All have the same appeal as Tahiti to Gauguin. Who couldn't write in such an environment?

Shelf: *When you see the list of writers included, it's hard to believe this is the first anthology of LSU writers. How did it come about?*

Kahn: As a student at LSU, then instructor, I was fascinated by the great writers who had come long before my time and stamped their literary mark on our university. For years I taught in the basement of Allen Hall, and right down the hall was *The Southern Review* office! Later, as coordinator of the creative writing program, I formed friendships with our department's creative writers and invited them to read their stories or guest lecture in my sophomore literature class. So my students were lucky enough to hear stories read by Andrei Codrescu, Moira Crone, or James Wilcox—or some talented young M.F.A.s just starting their careers as authors. From these readings, I created a course that I named LSU Fiction and taught using a course packet. I always began the course with a story by Robert Penn Warren and ended with a current MFA student.

When Nolde Alexius, a young M.F.A. student from George Mason University, joined the LSU faculty, she too was interested in teaching LSU Fiction. We often talked about how nice it would be to have a real book, something the students could write in, dog-ear, keep as a part of their LSU experience. And when I retired, the two of us decided the time had come. We found the perfect publisher in *The Southern Review*, and we shaped our book based on our combined experience teaching LSU Fiction, the literary heritage of the LSU English Department, and the historical *Southern Review*.

Shelf: *Was it tough to decide who to include or which story to pick by a given author?*

Kahn: Yes, very tough. It was easy to choose authors and stories, but very hard to stop at 20, which is the number space permitted for a 250-page book. Our number one criterion was to keep the stories that worked well in the classroom, that our students

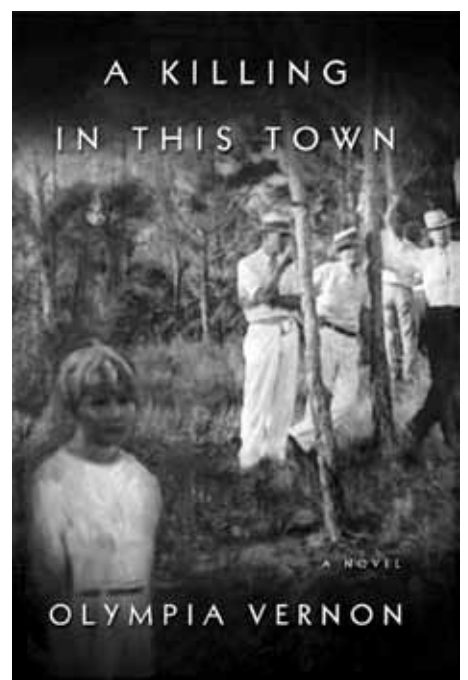
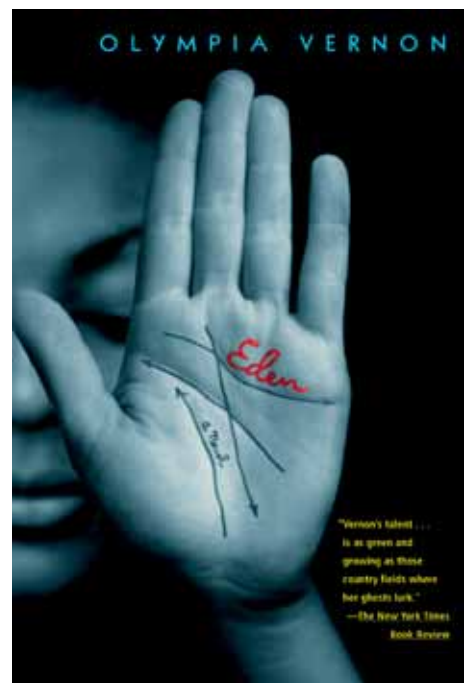
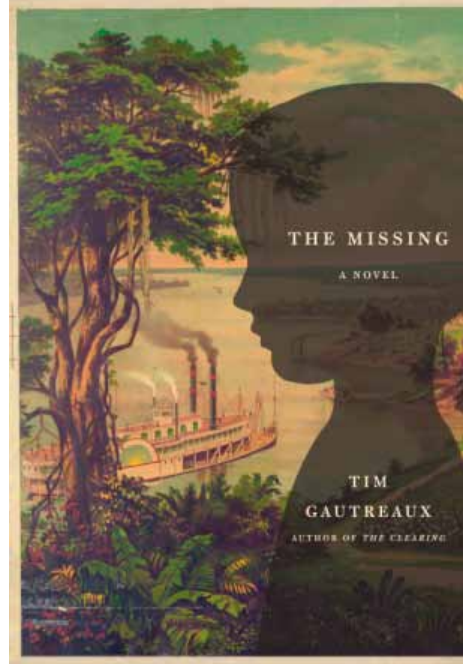
responded to. We also wanted representative authors from different eras to show how early authors influenced those who came later. For example, Robert Penn Warren taught James Wilcox, David Madden taught Allen Wier, James Gordon Bennett taught Olympia Vernon and Laurie Lynn Drummond. So we looked for those kinds of connections.

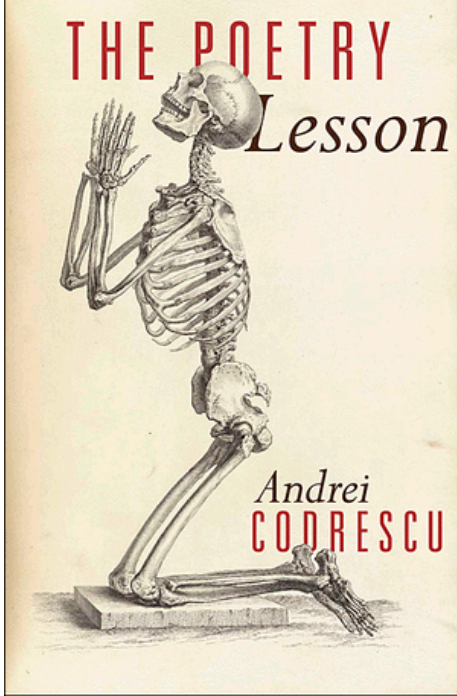
Shelf: *What do you think is unique about the Louisiana writing voice?*

Kahn: As a teacher, I spent too much time talking about the unique voice of the author to broaden that notion statewide. But I could say there are recognizable characteristics of Louisiana writing. First is the language you might come to expect from a state with the various cultural influences inherent in our people. Reading Tim Gautreaux's incredible stories and novels, most set in south Louisiana, will open your ears to the cadence of the Cajun voice with its heavy Acadian French influence. Tim Parish's story, "After the River," has the satirical bent and slangy dialect of a writer making fun of working class Louisianans and their habit of turning natural disasters into a party. This expectation and acceptance of floods, hurricanes, rivers changing course, potholes turning into sink holes show up in Michael Griffith's "Flood Festival," when the Indian student Seti feels guilty for having sexual fantasies in a bar during a street flood instead of studying hydrology.

Shelf: *Who do you see as some of the up-and-coming LSU writers to watch?*

Kahn: One young writer we wanted to include but couldn't is M.O. Walsh, whose new book *Prospect of Magic* is a real killer—extremely imaginative, funny, and poignant with a recognizable streak of magic realism obviously influenced by his teacher Matt Clark,





one of BOLSUF's authors. Nolde Alexius, my co-editor, has published stories, won awards, and is currently working on a novel trilogy, play, and short story collection. Olympia Vernon has just finished her fourth novel, and I have no doubt that it will receive as many accolades from *The New York Times* as the first three. And it's hard to read a Tim Parrish story without wanting to read more—I think we'll hear a lot from him.

Shelf: *Which Louisiana writers received the biggest response, positive or negative, from your students?*

Kahn: My students universally loved the Matt Clark story "The West Texas Sprouting of Loman Happenstance," about a traveling seed salesman who encounters a West Texas recluse named Cayman Bliss. Clark's brand of magical realism (shown in, for example, a group of chameleons who could rearrange themselves, change colors, and exhibit the Mona Lisa on command), was a real treat for them in a lit class. Moira Crone's "Gauguin" not only put them right on the streets of Baton Rouge during hurricane preparation, but reminded them of the truly frightening gubernatorial race between David Duke, a one-time Nazi, and then-governor Edwin Edwards, who had been indicted for fraud. There was a bumper sticker, "Vote for the Crook; It's important." For real. When it came to writing papers, they often chose Valerie Martin's "Spats," most likely because they could identify with the love-gone-bad situation, and also the interesting symbolic connections between animal and human characters in the story. Laurie Lynn Drummond's realistic behind-the-scenes look at Baton Rouge police-women drew them to a world they wanted to know more about.

Shelf: *What was your personal goal for the anthology?*

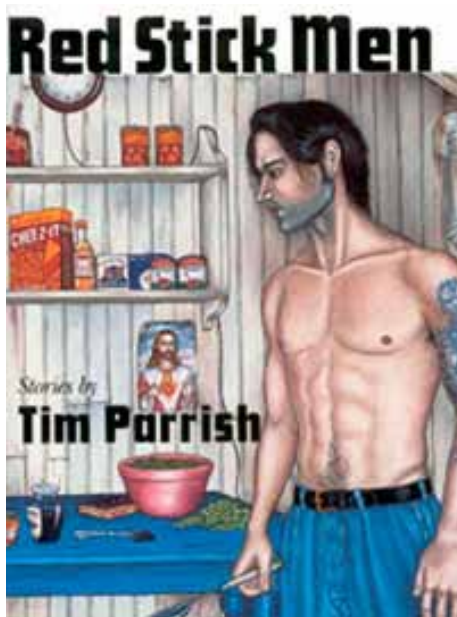
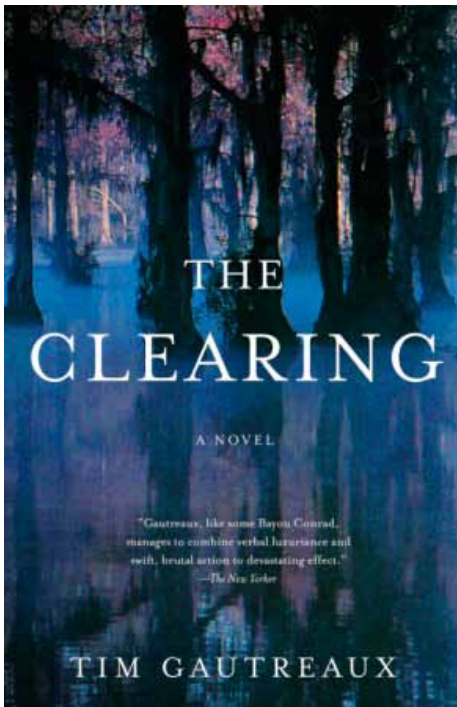
Kahn: My main objective was concrete and personal; I wanted to hold in my hands a book that represented the course I taught and loved for 10 years. Beyond that, Nolde and I wanted a book that would reveal the world of LSU writers to our state and the nation—to inform and/or remind those who love southern literature that our university has produced not only some great writers, but that once *The Southern Review* had set the standard for excellence among literary journals in the U.S., that the LSU campus was a magnet attracting the nation's top writers. Eudora Welty, Peter Taylor, Katherine Anne Porter, all were drawn to LSU to become part of what Scott Fitzgerald once described as "the Athens of the nation."

INTERVIEW

WITH VALERIE MARTIN

Shelf Unbound: *Six of your nine novels have been set, in whole or in part, in Louisiana. What draws you to that setting as an author?*

Valerie Martin: Yes, I keep coming back to the swamp; it's like the wallpaper of my consciousness. I like to let my imagination wander freely, but when I look up, there it is, the strange and beautiful world of my childhood. I can best illustrate the pull by explaining how a Croatian fisherman from Empire wound up in my book about East Coast liberal angst in the run-up to the Iraq war. I knew I wanted a refugee to invade the comfy security of my academic family, and I originally thought this character would be Lebanese. I spent many hours reading about the civil war in Lebanon, which is heavy going, believe me. Then, in conversation with John, who was at one time an abstractor for oil companies, he mentioned that many of the oysterman in Plaquemines Parish were Croatians, and still spoke their native



language. A little research revealed that they had come to Louisiana in waves since the 1840s, generally to escape civil unrest, and that the recent brutal war resulting in the break-up of the former Yugoslavia had sent a new group to Louisiana's shores.

Here was a world I could imagine, one that was close to my own experience (my fourth grade teacher was named Mrs. Yuratich), and one that would be so alien to my East Coast-ers, it might as well be another planet. So, of course, then I had to do a lot of research about the civil war in Yugoslavia, which was heavy going, believe me, but in the end I had my refugee, a young woman whose mother has disappeared in the war and who comes to Empire as a child with her father and brother, proves a good student, earns a scholarship to NYU, and appears on the first page of my novel *Trespass*—alluring, confident, and ready to bring the liberals to their knees.

Shelf: *You've stated that Trespass was inspired by the discovery of a poacher on your own property. What surprised you about your reaction to that incident?*

Martin: I was surprised at how angry it made me, how much I wanted to do something to make him stay off my land, though he was really only hunting rabbits for his dinner. The scene in the novel is very close to what happened: I realized he was a foreigner (in real life he was an Albanian, in the novel he's a Basque), and that just made me livid. I knew at once there was a novel in this feeling of being exactly the sort of person I don't like, one who is obsessed with ownership and paranoid about the threat of anything "foreign."

Shelf: *Your earlier novel Property, which beat out books by Zadie Smith, Carol Shields, and Donna Tartt to win the coveted Orange Prize, is set on a Louisiana sugar plantation in 1828 and also deals*

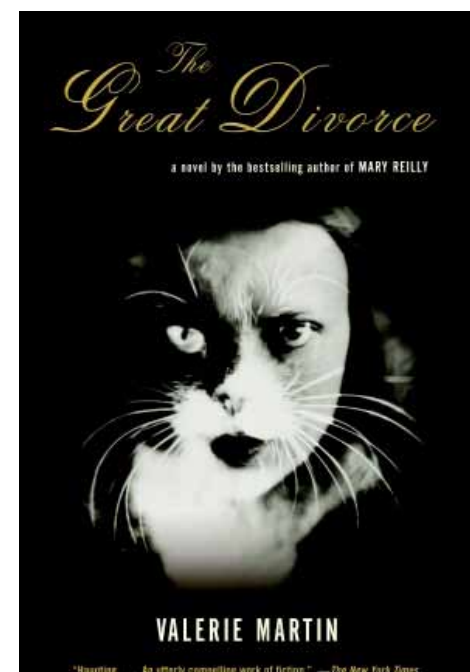
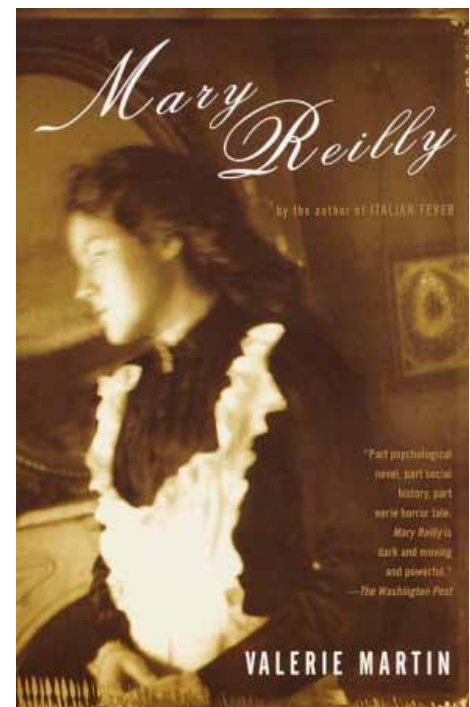
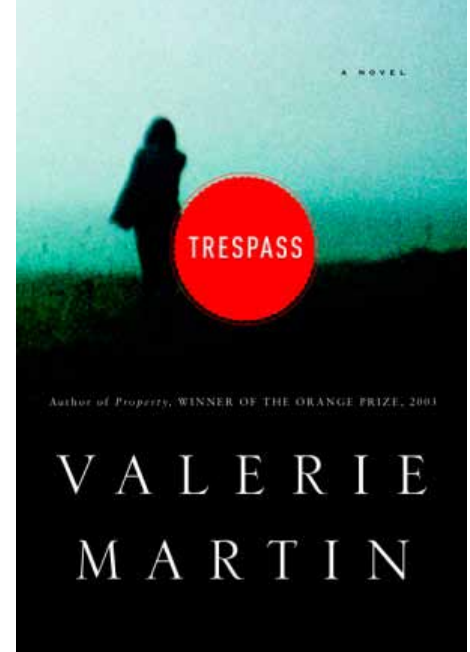
with issues of ownership. Why did you want to explore this time in history?

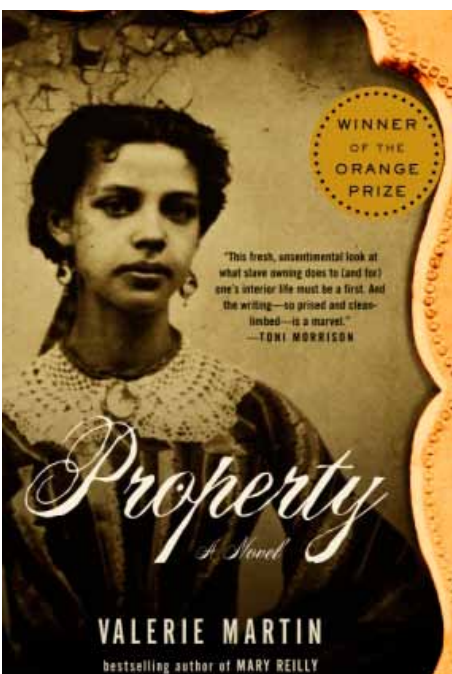
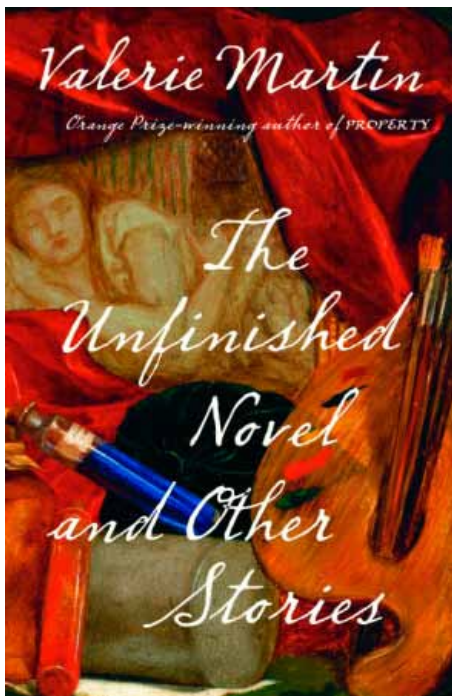
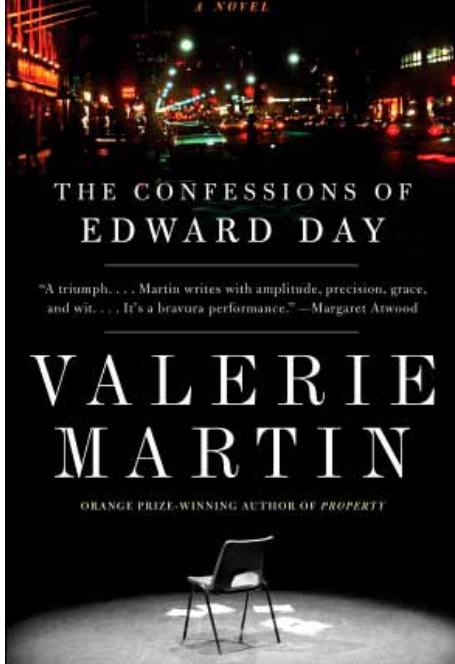
Martin: I'd written about slavery before, in *The Great Divorce*, though the "peculiar institution" was a small component of that novel. Years later, having read more on the subject, I felt I'd romanticized the ante-bellum world and wanted to correct that error. I chose a time well before the Civil War because I didn't want my slave-owning woman to be fretful about the possible emancipation of her slave. I wanted to get into the deep, growling belly of the beast, which is why that novel is so claustrophobic.

Shelf: *Will you share some favorite fellow LA writers?*

Martin: Hmm, I'm sure to leave someone out. Also, there are new ones all the time that I haven't kept up with. But I'd say, in no particular order, among living novelists: Chris Wiltz, Moira Crone, Sheila Bosworth, Ernest Gaines, John Biguenet, Tim Gautreaux (we were in Walker Percy's famous class together). Yusef Komunyak'a's poetry is wonderful. Among the dead, Lyle Saxon had a great influence on me very early; Kate Chopin, though she's not strictly speaking a Louisiana writer; and finally Tennessee Williams, who is big in my life—and such a better playwright than that dreary Arthur Miller!

Shelf: *I don't know if you have seen the HBO series True Blood, but the director, Alan Ball, sets his modern-day vampire tale smack dab in the middle of a Louisiana swamp and populates it with shape shifters, Voodoo practitioners, fairies, Greek goddesses, Bible thumpers, drug addicts, and lots of generally scary and disturbing things. Louisiana has long been associated with things mysterious and deadly, fecund and sexual. Your writing*





tends to cover the same ground.

What draws you to the dark side?

Martin: I haven't watched this series, but I'm glad to hear about the Greek goddesses as I'm currently working on a series of stories in which centaurs and silkies and enchanted stags appear on the bayous. These are set in the 19th century. I think the answer to your question is in the question: I'm drawn to the dark side because I'm from Louisiana. As, I think, one of Eudora Welty's characters observes, in New Orleans everybody believes everything spooky.

Shelf: *The New York Times* reviewed your most recent novel, *The Confessions of Edward Day*, in 2009, likening you to "a great character actor who never calls attention to the flesh and blood behind the performance, whose art seems to require or at least contain a special kind of humility or perhaps even a desire to sidestep the limelight." Do you believe that the incredible variety of your work, ranging from Louisiana plantations to *Dr. Jekyll's servant to an examination of the actor's psyche*, has limited recognition of it?

Martin: I've heard this theory about my having too much variety to sustain the general appetite for sameness, but I don't credit it much, and even if I did there's nothing I can do about it. In my mind, my novels flow one from the other, my moral concerns are often the same, though the century or the setting or the sex of the characters may change. I think of my novels as a conversation I'm having with all the novels I've ever read, as well as all the novels I've written.

Shelf: *What says more about you, the fact that your daughter is a philosophy professor or that your partner is a multi-lingual translator?*

Martin: I can't take credit for the professional choices of either; in fact I've seldom met two people who were more clearly called to their professions than my daughter Adrienne and John Cullen. Both, by the way, were born in New Orleans. Adrienne, at age 8, was required to take an entrance test at a private school in Alabama. The test was multiple choice and the questions were all analogies—duck is to water as bird is to blank—that sort of thing, which I later learned is designed to measure a child's ability to do abstract reasoning. She was expected to take an hour on the test. Fifteen minutes in, she was finished and in a good humor, though I noticed the school administrator looked doubtful when Adrienne handed him her work. As we left the school, she told me she had found the test entertaining. Then we heard the principal calling out excitedly as he chased us across the parking lot. She had a perfect score, evidently the first he had ever seen.

As for John, at a similar age, he passed his time during a Christmas holiday by translating, with the aid of a Spanish dictionary, the lyrics of "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" into Spanish. Now he describes this effort as painfully naïve; he thought it could be done word by word, with no thought to grammar or syntax.

I'm not good at languages or abstract thought, so I'm very proud of both of them, which may say something about me. I strongly believe that finding the work you love to do is about the most important choice you'll make—everything else will fall into place if that is clear to you.

Shelf: *You and John have made your home in upstate New York for the past 12 years. What do you miss most about the South?*

Martin: Irony, as a world view, as a last resort, as salvation. —

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kaelalford



When my raven-haired grandmother told my young blonde-haired, blue-eyed sisters and me about our “Indian” bloodlines and the land stolen from our family, I felt uneasy about claiming those stories as my own. A heritage so laden with myth and suffering, it seemed to me, had to be earned.

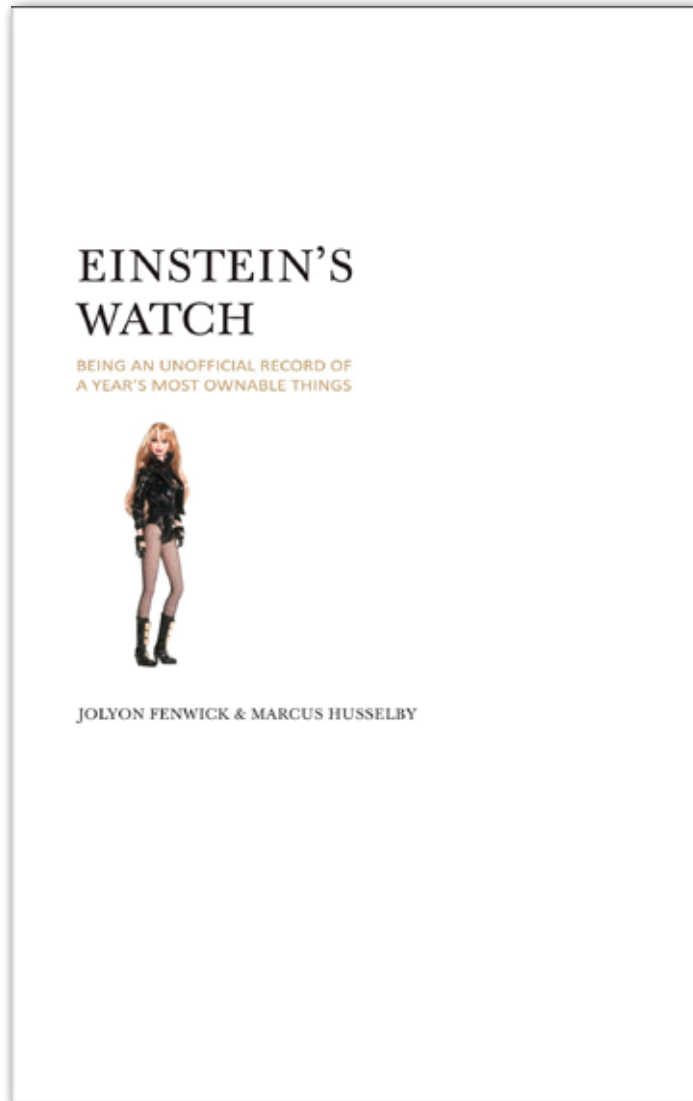
Many years and several wars later, I first set foot on my grandmother’s ancestral land, 60 miles southeast of New Orleans, while photographing the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I found that land sinking into a rising sea. Prospectors had dissected Louisiana’s coastal marshes in search of oil and natural gas. Salt water infiltrated their canals dredged to access pipelines and killed the marsh grass, letting loose the soil. The canals in the marsh grow wider to this day, until only water remains. The delta needs a transfusion of Mississippi River silt that built this delta, but that silt is now channeled far into the Gulf of Mexico by river control structures designed to protect settled land from flooding. Increasingly, those living on the Louisiana coast are displaced by erosion and rising sea levels, one storm at a time.

Louisiana loses 70 square kilometer of land per year, the equivalent of a football field worth of land every 20 minutes. Scientists say hurricane Katrina was only the beginning. If nothing changes in the coming decades, more New Orleanians may also be forced to retreat inland. *Bottom a ‘da Boot* is a photographic record of a failing and sacred environment, and an elegy to native people on the remote southeast coast of Louisiana. It’s also a call to national action to help protect some of the most valuable cultural and economic treasures in the country. —Kael Alford

Kael Alford is coauthor of *Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq* (Chelsea Green 2005). She is seeking a publisher for her current book, *Bottom a ‘da Boot*, about coastal Louisiana. She can be contacted through her website at www.kaelalford.com. An exhibition of her recent photography will be held at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, in July 2012.



With the support of a commission from the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, Kael Alford has spent the last five years documenting the erosion of wetlands on the Louisiana coast. An exhibition of her photography will be held at the High Museum in July 2012.

**Profile Books**

www.profilebooks.com

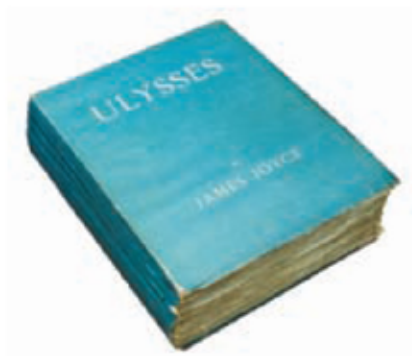
How much would you pay for Jimi Hendrix's wah-wah pedal? Luke Skywalker's lightsabre? Gandhi's glasses? Steve McQueen's driver's license? This cleverly collected and insightfully annotated assortment of the coolest, oddest, and most sought after items on the 2009 auction block will make you hope this little hardcover edition becomes an annual endeavor. For those who don't have to ask the price and are looking for more of the same artful finds, authors Fenwick and Huselby also happen to be the founders of 20ltd.com, a curator and e-tailer of contemporary design. So if you're still shopping for my gift, I'd love that plasticine diorama-esque photo by Vincent Laforet of Maria Sharapova's 2006 U.S. Open victory.

—Kathy Wise



Einstein's watch

A tonneau-shaped 1930 wristwatch in 14K yellow gold by Longines of Switzerland (no. 4876616, case no. 66968). Presented to Albert Einstein in Los Angeles on 16 February 1931. Initially estimated at \$25,000–\$35,000, it made the highest price ever for a Longines watch at auction – being sold on 16 October 2008 by Antiquorum in New York for **\$596,000**.



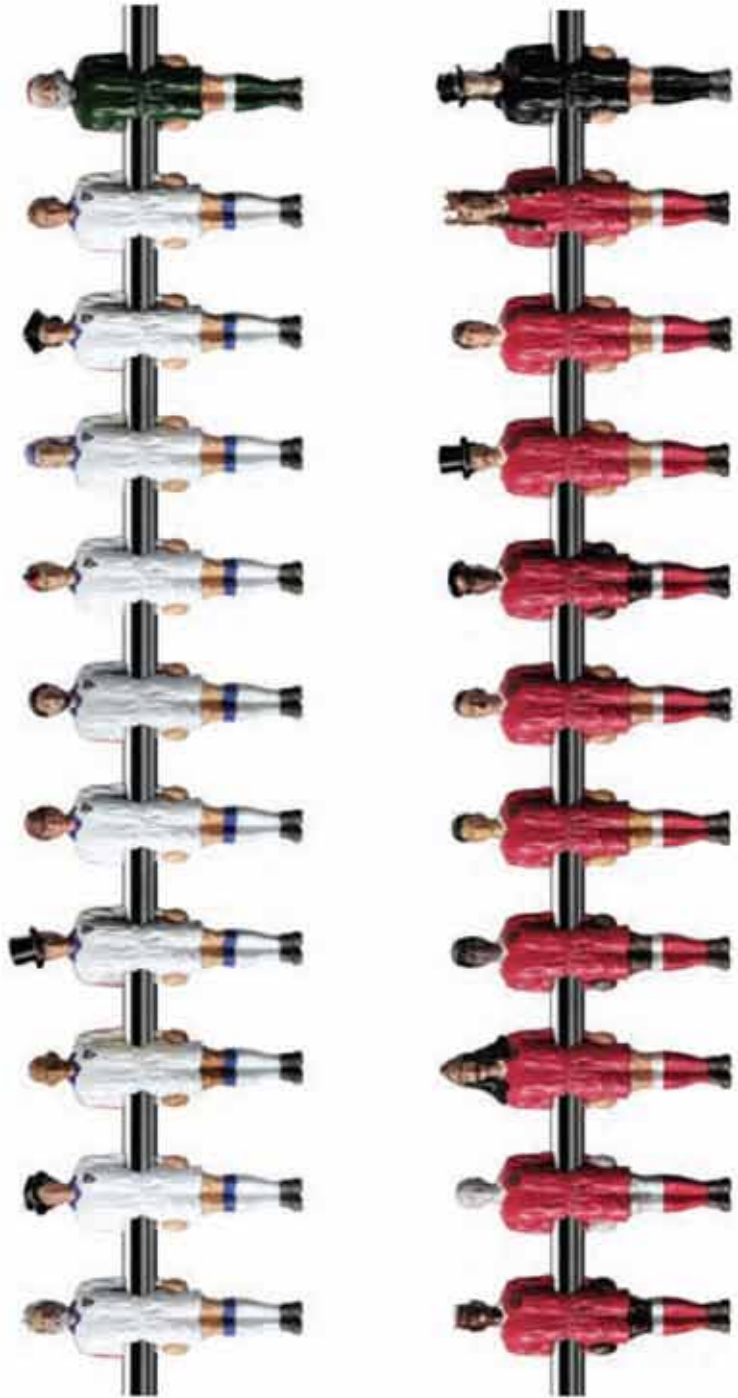
Ulysses, first edition

First edition of *Ulysses* by James Joyce. Copy number 45, of the first 100. Printed on fine Dutch handmade paper. Signed by the author. Hailed by some as the greatest novel ever written, *Ulysses* was uncertainly received when first published in 1922. One reviewer complained that it 'appears to have been written by a perverted lunatic who has made a speciality of the literature of the latrine'. The book chronicles the passage of Leopold Bloom through Dublin during an ordinary day, 16 June 1904, and is divided into eighteen episodes – the notoriously racy last of which contains Molly Bloom's soliloquy, ending in her orgasmic 'yes I said yes I will Yes'. This near-pristine first edition is unopened apart from this last episode, which has been keenly thumbed. Banned in the UK and the USA during the 1920s, this ultra-rare copy, one of only four of the original 100 unaccounted for, was bought by a Mrs Hewitt Morgan at the subversive Manhattan bookshop *Sunwise Turn*. It remained in the Morgan family, stored in its original box, before being sold by Pom Harrington at the Antiquarian Book Fair, Olympia, London, on 4 June 2009 for £275,000, the highest price recorded for a twentieth-century first edition.



First Superman comic

June 1938 copy of *Action Comics* featuring the first appearance of the superhero ('The Man of Steel', 'The Man of Tomorrow', 'The Last Son of Krypton') originally created by American writer Jerry Siegel and Canadian-born artist Joe Shuster in 1932. Sold for 10 cents when first published, it is one of only 100 copies now remaining. Stephen Fishler, the co-owner with Vincent Zurzolo of the online auction site Comic Connect, said the comic had been in the same hands since 1950, when a young boy on the US west coast bought it for 35 cents. Sold at online auction by Comic Connect of New York in March 2009 for **\$317,200**.



'Good versus Evil' football table

'Good versus Evil' Opus football table conceived by 20ltd.com, constructed by The Eleven Forty Company. Lacquer-finished maple wood cabinet, toughened frosted UV etched glass pitch, telescopic aluminium rods with brass castings, ergonomically designed handles and aluminium, hand-painted players with die-cast heads. The table convenes a match between 'Good' and 'Evil'. The ball is fashioned as the world, and it's souls not goals that are at stake. The teams line up as follows (left to right):

GOOD XI: God, Poppins, M. K. Gandhi, Jekyll, Robin (Christopher), Assisi, Gordon (Flash), Teresa, More (Sir Thomas), Moore (Sir Bobby), Claus (Santa).

EVIL XI: Lucifer, Caligula, Impaler (Vlad the), Hyde, Pot (Pol), Hitler, Amin, Ripper (Jack the), Klebb (Rosa), Macbeth (Lady), Catcher (The Child).

Offered for sale in June 2009 by 20ltd.com for £17,000.





***Beverly Hills Housewife* by David Hockney**

Oil on canvas, 1966. The 12-foot double canvas depicts Los Angeles arts patron Betty Freeman on her patio, flanked by a zebra-print Le Corbusier lounge chair, and an abstract sculpture. Sold at auction by Christie's, New York, in May 2009 for a record **\$7.9 million**. The previous auction record for a Hockney was \$5.35 million for *The Splash*, a 1966 swimming pool painting once owned by movie mogul David Geffen, sold in London by Sotheby's in 2006.

David Hockney
'Beverly Hills Housewife' 1966/67
Acrylic on 2 canvases
72" x 144"
Copyright David Hockney
Photo credit: Richard Schmidt



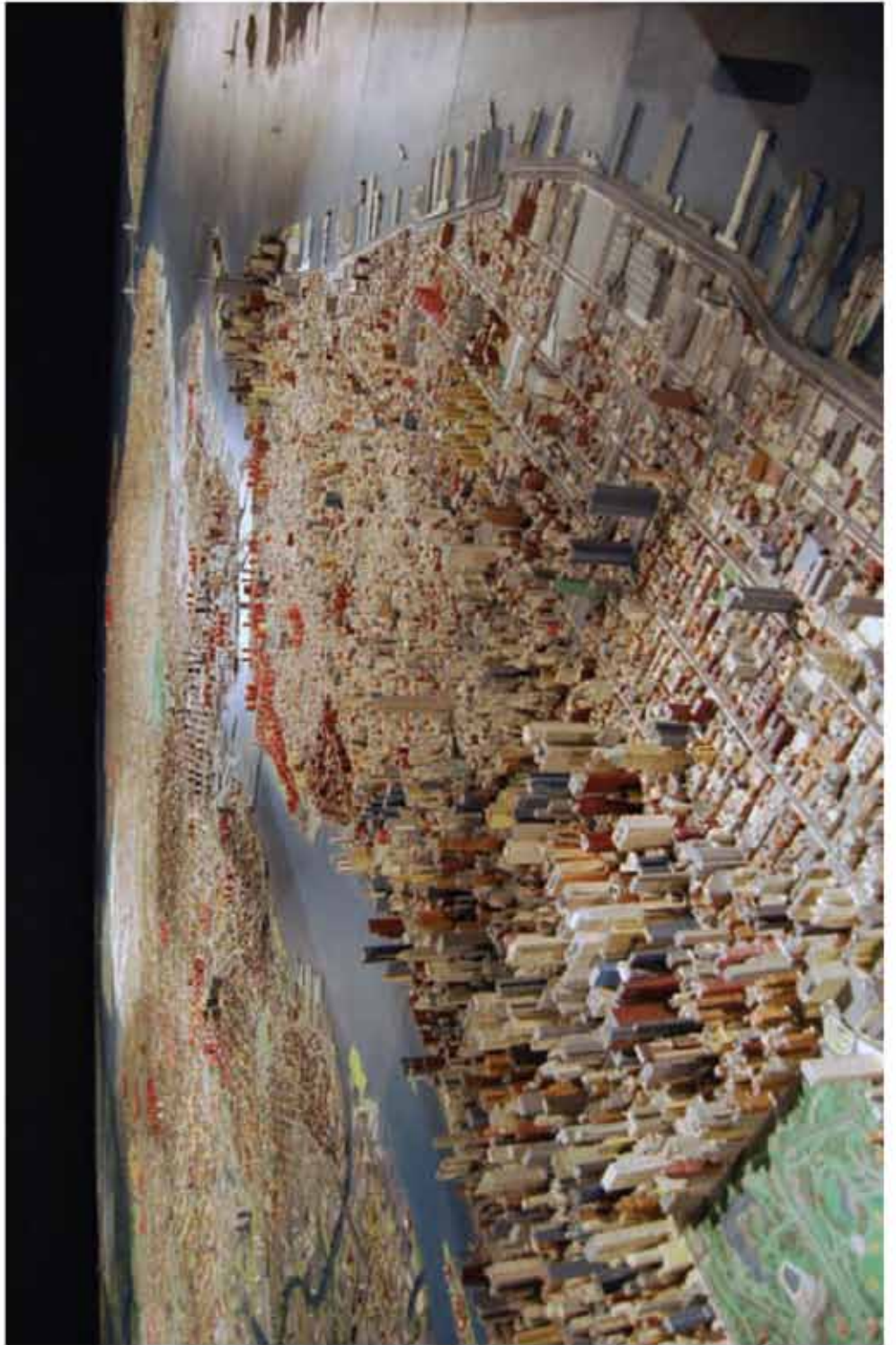
James Brown's lighter

Gold-plated Zippo lighter inscribed with the initials 'JB', belonging to James Joseph Brown, Jr (1933–2006), the godfather of soul. Sold at auction by Christie's on 17 July 2008 for **\$2,000**.



The last Woolworth's cheque

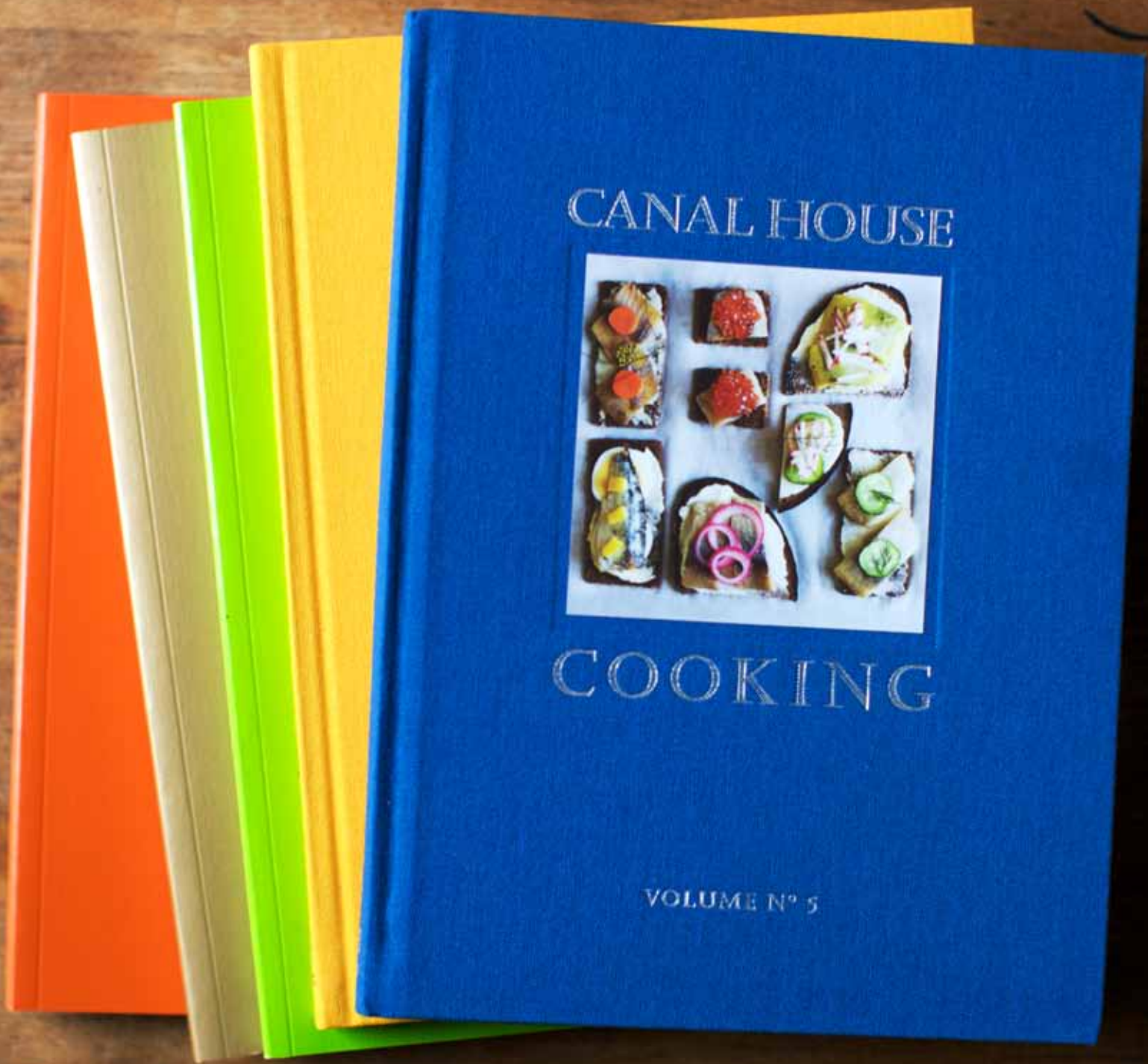
Cheque for £97,916.60 made out to Woolworth's supplier TMTI. Submitted for cashing on 26 November 2008 (the day the 99-year-old UK firm went bust), it bounced. The cheque (hopefully a good deal more legible than it appears here) made **£1,080** at auction on eBay. The money was given to the National Autistic Society.





The Panorama of the City of New York

A built-to-scale model of the city originally created for the 1964 World's Fair, the Panorama of the City of New York occupies 9,335 square feet of the old fairgrounds in Flushing Meadows Corona Park. In a novel fundraising initiative starting on 17 March 2009, the Queen's Museum of Art, the panorama's owners, introduced their 'Adopt-a-Building' programme, whereby donors will be able to purchase deeds to one of the model's 895,000 structures. Prices range from \$50 for an apartment to \$10,000 for a developer to install their new mega-development in the landscape.



by Christopher Hirsheimer and Melissa Hamilton | photographs by Christopher Hirsheimer | illustrations by Melissa Hamilton

www.thecanalhouse.com



f, like me, you still mourn the loss of *Gourmet* and rank *Saveur* as one of the greatest food magazines ever imagined, and at some point you also subscribed to *Cook's Illustrated* but ultimately found that the meticulously presented and fool-proof recipes simply could not make up for the lack of pretty pictures, *Canal House Cooking* is the answer to your foodie prayers, in the form of a thrice-yearly cookbook. Christopher Hirsheimer, former *Saveur* founder and executive editor, and Melissa Hamilton, former executive chef and food editor for *Martha Stewart Living*, *Cook's Illustrated*, and *Saveur*, have combined their formidable talents in a sunny, canal-side studio in New Jersey where, inspired by local and seasonal ingredients, they cook what they want to cook, write down recipes as they go, and take photographs of the spectacular

results. The latest volume, No. 5, focuses on the holidays, with recipes for goose liver pâté with truffles; buckwheat blini with smoked salmon and trout roe; homemade duck, quail, and lamb sausages; Moroccan lamb roast with mint sauce; and apple fritters and lemon crepes for dessert.

"We wanted to give simple, clear, delicious recipes coming from the perspective of a home cook, and to share our collective knowledge and experience with readers," Hamilton says. "We wanted to make our books very accessible both visually and in terms of the sorts of recipes we choose to publish." Hirsheimer agrees: "We just make the cookbooks how we like them. Everyone is looking for an authentic voice, something real, and that was very important to us. The books are about how we cook." Which is delicious, seasonal food made from accessible ingredients. And although No. 5 may lean toward indulgence and extravagance, emphasizing the good life, No. 6 will be all about cooking well with what you find in the supermarket. Either way, the results are delectable.

—Kathy Wise

Roast Goose with Ten Legs | serves 10–12

Howard Helmer is one of the great characters of the food world, with his dapper duds, his great smile, and his irrepressible giggle. A spokesperson for both the American Egg Board and Schiltz Goose Farm, he holds the Guinness World Record for the "World's Fastest Omelette Maker". Every year around the holidays, Howard hires a big black Town Car and fills the trunk with frozen geese. He zooms around Manhattan delivering these birds to all the lucky food editors. When we were editors we were on that list. He'd hurry into our offices laughing, "Hello, hello", and hand each of us a big frozen goose, and then off he'd zip. It's thanks to Howard that we are such aficionados of this glorious bird.

While a whole golden goose makes a beautiful presentation, the legs are where you find the real meat and delicious flavor. Schiltz Goose Farm, in South Dakota, sells beautiful big birds and also whole legs, four to the package. We roast one big bird for the tah-dah factor, along with 8 legs—and everyone is happy and well fed.

- 1 whole goose, 8–10 pounds
- Salt and pepper
- 1 large handful fresh thyme leaves
- 3 tablespoons juniper berries, crushed
- 8 whole goose legs (thigh and drumstick attached)

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Remove the neck and giblets from the goose and save to make stock, if you like. Remove any excess fat and save to make rendered fat, if you like. Rinse and pat the goose dry with paper towels. Use a wooden spoon to mix and crush together 1 tablespoon salt, 2 teaspoons pepper, the thyme leaves, and juniper berries in a small bowl. Rub the bird inside and out with the mixture, and also on the goose legs. Use a sharp fork to prick the goose and





the legs all over to release fat while they cook. Bend the wings behind the bird's back and tie its legs together.

Put the goose on a rack in a roasting pan. Pour 1 cup water into the pan to keep the fat from burning. Arrange the 8 legs in a single layer in another large roasting pan and add a little water. Cover both pans with foil and roast for 45 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 325 degrees, uncover both pans and roast until a meat thermometer inserted into a thigh registers 180 degrees and the skin is brown and crisp, 1–2 hours. If the legs are cooked before the goose, remove them from the oven. You can pop them back in for a few minutes to warm them before serving. Season with salt and pepper.

Transfer the goose with the legs to a large platter and serve with Apples Cooked with Cumin.

Apples Cooked with Cumin | makes 10

These fragrant apples are a delicious accompaniment for Roast Goose with Ten Legs but they are also delicious with Fresh Ham with Madeira Sauce and Roasted Pork Belly [two more fabulous holiday recipes found in Canal House Cookbook No. 5]. Fall is the season for apples and we are lucky to have beautiful orchards all around us. Branch out and try an heirloom variety that is a cooking apple. The apples will hold their shape but have a nice texture. You can make this recipe using fewer apples but don't cut down on the butter, sugar, and cumin.

- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) butter
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 10 whole apples such as Winesap, Empire, or Braeburn, peeled and cored

Melt the butter over medium heat in a large pan with a lid. Add the cumin and sugar, then add the apples. Cook, basting and turning the apples to coat them in the butter. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook, basting from time to time, until they are tender, about 1 hour.



*An Appetizing
Smørrebrød...*

Cured fish and cold champagne.



Pumpernickel and Rye

Topped with horseradish
and fresh dill.



Sugar Cookies | makes about 3 dozen

While poking around in a cookware store recently, we wandered into the baking section and came upon a handsome set of cookie cutters. They made us want to bake buttery little sugar cookies, which immediately made us think of our friend Katherine Yang. She is an exquisite baker whose pastries and desserts always balance sweet and savory perfectly—a quality we love because we're really not big dessert eaters. We bought the cookie cutters and gave Katherine a call. Ever gracious, and in fact delighted that we asked, she shared her recipe for these tender, subtly sophisticated cookies. Just the kind we had in mind.

Like most bakers, Katherine relies on measuring her ingredients by weight, not volume, for the most consistent results. We agree, but have included both methods below in case you don't have a scale. We found two other points in her meticulous notes that really did make a difference: letting the dough rest in the refrigerator, and making sure the dough is always cold when it's being worked. What's that expression?—God is in the details.

2 cups (284g) all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons (7g) kosher salt
1 large egg (50g)
1 large egg yolk (20g)
16 tablespoons (2 sticks) (227g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
½ cup (52g) powdered sugar, sifted
¼ cup (50g) granulated sugar
1 tablespoon (15g) vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
Decorating sprinkles and sugars or other cookie decorations, optional

Sift the flour and salt together in a medium bowl and set aside. Lightly whisk together the whole egg and egg yolk in a small bowl and set aside.

Beat together the butter, powdered sugar, granulated sugar, and vanilla bean paste in a large mixing bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and beat until just combined. Add

the sifted flour and beat just until the dough is smooth.

Cut 8 pieces of parchment paper into 8" x 12" sheets. Lay one sheet on a flat work surface and put a quarter of the dough in the center. Lay another sheet on top of the dough then roll the dough out between the sheets until it is ¼–⅓ inch thick. Transfer the rolled-out dough to a flat tray. Repeat with the remaining dough, stacking the sheets of dough on top of each other on the tray. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours and up to 3 days.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

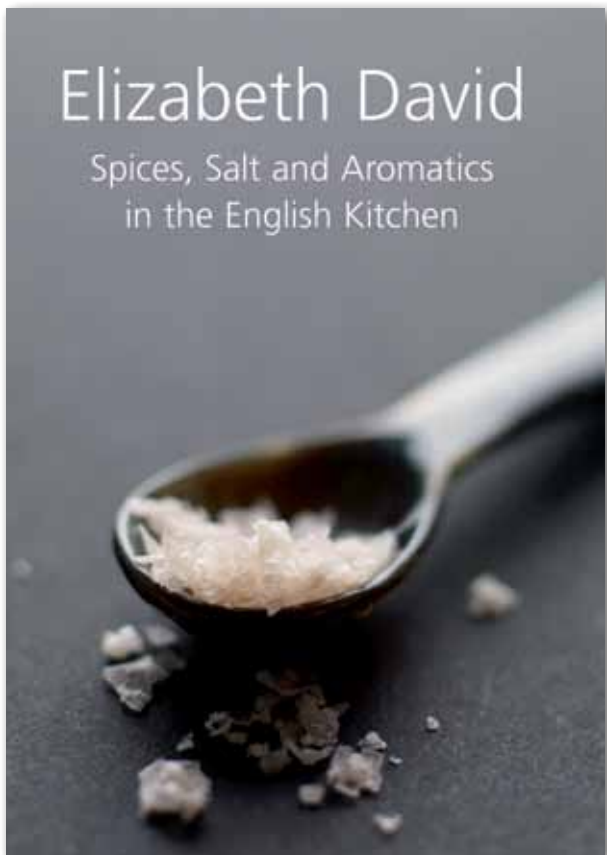
Take one sheet of dough out of the refrigerator at a time. Peel off the top sheet of parchment. Use a cookie cutter to cut out desired shapes, leaving them in place. Dust the cutter with a little flour if the dough begins to stick.

Using a thin spatula, transfer the cut out shapes to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet, spacing them about 2 inches apart. Decorate them, if you like, with decorating sprinkles and/or sugars. Refrigerate the cut-out shapes on the baking sheet until cold. Repeat until all of the dough has been cut into shapes. Refrigerate the dough whenever it becomes too soft to work with. Re-roll the scraps between sheets of parchment paper, refrigerate dough until firm, and repeat the process until all the dough has been cut out.

Bake the cookies, rotating the baking sheet halfway through baking, until they are slightly puffed and the edges are pale golden brown, 10–12 minutes. Remove the cookies from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes on the baking sheet, then transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely. The cookies will keep for up to 2 weeks in an airtight container.

From Canal House Cooking Vol. 5 by Christopher Hirscheimer and Melissa Hamilton, www.thecanalhouse.com. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.





Grub Street | www.grubstreet.co.uk



he's been referred to as the English Julia Child. A wild child actress wannabe known for her love affairs as much as her love of food, she lived and kept house in France, Italy, Greece, Egypt, and India during the war years, mastering the local

ingredients and techniques while managing to evade the German army. She published her classic tome *French Provincial Cooking* in 1960 and followed it up a decade later with *Spices, Salt and Aromatics in the English Kitchen*. And although Elizabeth David admits that the lavish uses of spices in English cooking can be attributed in part to “the necessity to mask half-decayed food and to give zest to a monotonous diet of salt meat and boiled fish,” she also eloquently proves that the British Empire managed to adopt some of the best flavors the world has to offer, from kebabs and curries to chutneys and preserves. And, of course, what would a book on spices be without an English spiced cake and an equally sweet story?

—Anna Nair

The Christmas Pudding Is Mediterranean Food

A white cube of a house, two box-like rooms and a nice large kitchen. No bath. No plumbing. A well and a fig tree outside the front door and five yards away the Aegean. On the horizon a half circle of the islands of Andros, Tinos, Seriphos. In the village, about three dozen houses, two churches (one Orthodox, one Roman Catholic), one provision shop. Down on the shore one shack of a tavern, and in the village street a more important one, stacked with barrels and furnished with stout wooden tables. Christo, the owner of this second tavern, was one of the grandees of the village. He operated, in addition to the tavern, a small market garden, and sold his produce in the island's capital seven miles away. He also had a brother-in-law, called Yannaki. Yannaki was that stock Greek village character, the traveller come home after experiencing glamorous doings and glorious events in far-off places. True to type, he spoke a little Anglo-American and, more uncommonly, a little French; he was always on hand to help out if foreigners came to the village. He seemed a kind and cheerful man, rich too; at any rate, he owned a spare donkey and was prepared to lend me this animal, along with a boy to talk to it, so that I could ride into the town when I needed to stock up with fresh supplies of beans and oil, bottled wine, cheese, dried fruit, and boxes of the delicious Turkish Delight which was—still is—a specialty of the island.

Before long it transpired that the greatest favour I could bestow upon Yannaki in return for the loan of his transport would be some tomato soup in tins and perhaps also a jar or two of English “picklies”.

Handing over to one of the brothers who owned the hotel and the Turkish Delight factory in the capital a bundle of drachmae which would have kept me in wine and cheese for a month, I got in return four tins, vintage, of the required soup. Of English piccalilli, which I took was what Yannaki meant by picklies, there was no sign nor sniff, and very relieved I was. Many more such exotic luxuries, and it would be cheaper for me to leave my seashore village for Athens and a suite at the Grande-Bretagne.

The tomato soup gave Yannaki and Christo and their families a great deal of pleasure. It was the real thing, no mistaking it. In return I was offered baskets of eggs, lemons, oranges, freshly dug vegetables and salads, glass after glass of wine in the tavern. And, then, next item the picklies? I *was* English wasn't I? Then I should certainly be able to produce these delicacies.

For days I scanned the horizon for sight of an English yacht. I could, in my turn, have bartered fresh vegetables and fruit for the jars of mustard pickles which I knew must grace the table of any English *lordos* grand enough to be roaming the Aegean seas. It was late in the season. That way no yacht came.

Anybody who has experience of the stubborn determination, courteous but quite unrelenting, of an Aegean islander when he has made up his mind about something will understand why, in the end, I was obliged to set to and make those confounded pickles myself.

Into the town then for mustard, vinegar, spices. Long mornings I spent cutting up cauliflower and onions, carrots and cucumbers. Afternoons, I squatted in my kitchen fanning the charcoal fires into a blaze brisk enough to boil the brew. The jars, the only ones I could find, which I had bought to pack the stuff in were of one oke capacity, three pounds, near enough. Also they were of rough earthenware, unglazed, and exceptionally porous. Before I could even give the filled jars away they were half empty again, the liquid all soaked up by that sponge-like clay. Every one had to be replenished with a fresh batch of pickle. To me the mixture seemed fairly odd, but with my village friends it was successful enough. In fact, on the barter system, I could have lived for nothing so long as I was prepared to dedicate my life to pickle-making. Before long, though, it was getting on for December, and references to "Xmas pudding" began to crop up in the tavern talk. By now I had learned a little more about these kindly village tyrants. If Christmas pudding they wanted, Christmas pudding I should have to give them. But not, so help me, made on the improvised happy-go-lucky system I'd used for the mustard pickles. Once more then into the town (I never could stay five seconds on a horse or a mule or even a bicycle, but by that time I had at least found out how to sit on a donkey and get the animal moving over stony paths and up and down steep hills) to telegraph home for a recipe. When it arrived, it turned out to be one of those which calls for a pound of almost everything you can think of, which was lucky. Simply by multiplying each by three it as all turned into okes. A large-scale Christmas party was now simmering, so there wouldn't, I thought, be an oke too much.

Now, all those with their fine talk of the glories of Old English fare, have they ever actually made Christmas pudding, in large quantities, by Old English methods? Have they for instance ever tried cleaning and skinning, flouring, shredding, chopping beef kidney suet straight off the hoof? Have they ever stoned bunch after bunch of raisins hardly yet dry on the stalk and each one as sticky as a piece of warm toffee? And how long do they think it takes to bash up three pounds of breadcrumbs without an oven in which they could first dry the loaves? Come to that, what would they make of an attempt to boil, and to keep on the boil for nine to ten hours on two charcoal fires let into holes in the wall, some dozen large puddings? Well, I had nothing much else to do in those days and quite enjoyed all the work, but I'd certainly never let myself in for such an undertaking again. Nor, indeed, would I again attempt to explain the principles of a hay-box and the reasons for making one to peasants of whose language I had such a scanty knowledge and who are in any case notoriously unreceptive to the idea of having hot food, or for that matter hot water or hot coffee, hotter than tepid.

Christmas Plum Pudding

I still have noted on a torn envelope the outlines of that recipe, in Greek measurements, as I used it thirty years ago on the island of Syros. I have never made the pudding again, and since some relevant details such as the quantity of candied peel and spices appear to be missing, I shall quote another recipe which seems to me to be similar. It comes from one of those collections popular in Edwardian days, made by the lady of the household in collaboration with her cook and friends.

The author, Miss Eleanor Jenkinson, was sister of a librarian of a Cambridge college. Possibly Miss Jenkinson kept house for her brother. Most of her recipes are on a fairly modest scale. The lavishness of the Christmas pudding simply indicates that housekeepers in those pre-1914 days would not bother to make festive puddings in niggling quantities—but note that no sugar is required.

“Two pounds and a quarter of stoned raisins, two pounds and a quarter of cur-

rants, six ounces of finely-chopped candied peel, thirteen eggs, one pint and a half of milk, one teacupful and a half of breadcrumbs, one pound and a half of flour, one pound and a half of finely chopped suet, three wineglasses of brandy, two wineglasses of rum.

“Mix these ingredients well together, put into buttered basins, and boil for fourteen hours. This quantity makes two large puddings.

—*The Ocklye Cookery Book*,
Eleanor L. Jenkinson, 1909

All things considered, my puddings turned out quite nicely. The ones which emerged from the hay-box were at just about the right temperature—luke-warm. They were sweet and dark and rich. My village friends were not as enthusiastic as they had been about the mustard pickles. What with so many of the company having participated in the construction of the hay-box, my assurances that the raisins and the currants grown and dried there on the spot in the Greek sun were richer and more juicy than the artificially dried, hygienically treated and much-travelled variety we got at home, my observations on the incomparable island-made candied citron and orange peel (that was fun to cut up too) given me by the neighbours, and the memorable scent of violets and brilliantine given to the pudding by Athenian brandy, a certain amount of the English mystery had disappeared from our great national festive dish.

That *le plum-pudding n'est pas Anglais* was a startling discovery made by a French chef, Philéas Gilbert, round about the turn of the century. No, not English indeed. In this case *le plum-pudding* had been almost Greek. What I wish I'd known at the time was the rest of Gilbert's story. It seems that with a passing nod to a Breton concoction called *le far* “obviously the ancestor of the English pudding”, an earlier French historian, Bourdeau by name, unable or perhaps unwilling to claim plum pudding for France, says that it is precisely described by Athanaeus in a report of the wedding feast of Caranus, an Argive prince. The pudding was called *strepte*, and in origin was entirely Greek.

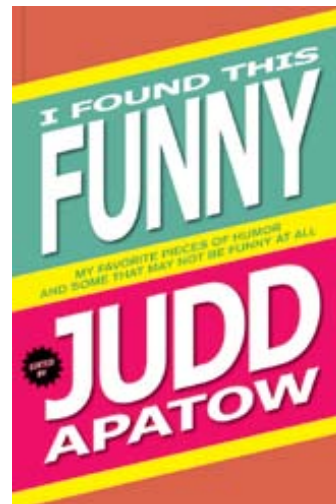
From Spices, Salt and Aromatics in the English Kitchen by Elizabeth David, Grub Street 2010, www.grubstreet.co.uk. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

JUDD APATOW I FOUND THIS FUNNY

In the new collection [I Found This Funny](#), Judd Apatow presents the work of some of his favorite authors and artists. The book showcases many different styles of writing, from fiction to short humor to essays to comedy sketches to poetry.

Proceeds from the book will go to [826 National](#), a nonprofit tutoring, writing, and publishing organization with locations in eight cities across the country.

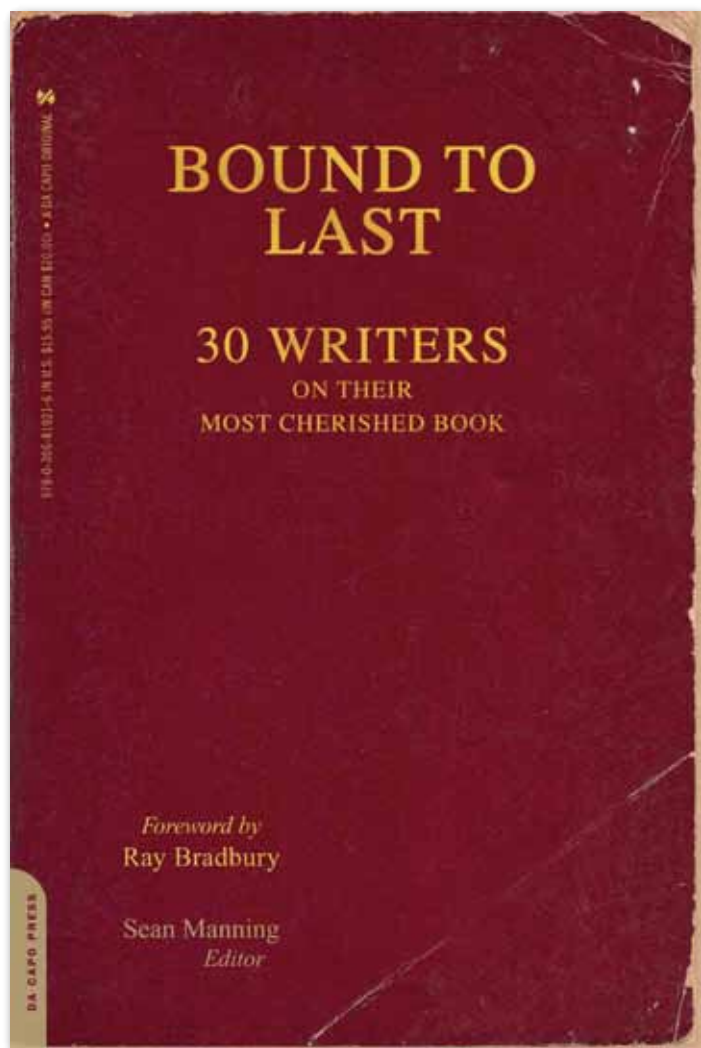
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Shahriar Mandanipour writes about how hoarding his copy of *Das Kapital* was tantamount to treason. A 22-year-old Anthony Doerr heads to Auckland weighed down by *The Story and Its Writer* in his rucksack. Elissa Schappell finds true love while struggling with her gag reflex over *Naked Lunch*. Gambino crime family member Louis Ferrante finds salvation behind bars with *Les Misérables*. And editor Sean Manning inadvertently lets the mice in the basement of the Strand bookstore work their way through an early edition of *Ulysses*. In this deftly diverse and surprising anthology, authors reminisce about the books that changed their lives—sometimes through the content, sometimes through the physical object itself—serving both as a compelling reminder of how books have changed our own lives and as an impetus to pick up a dusty volume that transformed someone else’s.

—Jack Rubenstein

EXCERPT

Ulysses

by Sean Manning

I moved to New York in May 2001, less than a week after graduating college. That hadn’t been the plan. Grad school didn’t start till September. I’d been looking forward to one last suburban Ohio summer with my high school friends. Grilling the thirty-dollar fillet mignons we’d get for the price of ground chuck from our buddy who worked the meat counter at the gourmet grocery store. Sprawling out on the country club’s eighteenth fairway to watch the Fourth of July fireworks. A whole lot of basement beer pong and two a.m. trips to

the Rally’s drive-thru. The Saturday following commencement, though, a family friend who lived in the city called with a line on a cheap apartment. I had to be there to sign the lease. I was on a plane the next morning.

The apartment fell through, but I didn’t think of returning home. Something had happened when I stepped off the plane at LaGuardia, the same as it no doubt would’ve three months later. Everything had changed. Adulthood had officially begun. There was no going back.

I slept on that family friend’s couch for nearly a month. This was before Craigslist. The only way to find an

apartment in the city was the weekly *Village Voice*. The paper hit newsstands on Wednesday, but Tuesday the apartment listings were updated on the *Voice* Web site. I'd sit in front of the computer all afternoon clicking the refresh button. When the new listings finally appeared, I'd race through them scribbling down names and phone numbers. I still wasn't fast enough. Most of the time I'd get an answering machine that was already full. The few landlords and tenants looking for a roommate with whom I did manage to speak turned me down instantly. They wouldn't even meet me. I had just enough money to pay a security deposit and first month's rent and, busy as apartment hunting kept me, was so far without a job. I divulged this freely. I may have been an adult but I wasn't yet a New Yorker.

It occurred to me to check with my grad school. Sure enough, there was an office devoted to helping students find housing. A couple days later I moved into a loft in Nolita, the downtown Manhattan neighborhood north of Houston Street, bordered by Bowery on the east and Broadway on the west. The loft was owned by a fifty-year old divorcee, a devout Sufi who worked at home as an astrologer. She'd bought it for practically nothing upon moving to the city in the early '70s to pursue painting. Back then the Bowery was still the Bowery. She and her two daughters always had to step over some drunk passed out in the building's entryway. When her daughters moved out, she began letting their two rooms. She didn't advertise in the *Voice*, only with my grad school and a couple others in the city. In the other bedroom was an Israeli actress a couple years older than me. I'd be sitting on the couch or at the kitchen table and out of the bathroom, fresh from the shower, would walk this pretty, milk-skinned girl wrapped in just a towel with her long brown hair all wet. Also sharing the space were two cats—a lazy old Persian and frisky young tabby. The building's roof had a garden worthy

of a spread in *Martha Stewart Living* and a view that spanned from the World Trade Center to the Empire State Building. The elevator was one of those old ones with the hand lever and sliding metal gate. Sheryl Crow lived on the second floor. Every now and then I'd come home or be on my way out and hear her strumming her acoustic guitar and singing.

There was still the matter of income. The previous summer I'd worked in a shoe store, the summer before that in a J. Crew. I could've again sold clothes, or perhaps waited tables. But my living quarters inspired me to find equally exotic employment. I'd come to New York to be a writer. I loved books more than anything in the world. (When I visited Paris during junior year study abroad, the first sight I saw wasn't the Louvre or Notre Dame or even Jim Morrison's grave but Shakespeare and Co.) So I applied for a job at the Strand.

If you've ever visited New York, you've likely patronized that fifty-five thousand square-foot, multi-floor warehouse on the corner of Broadway and Twelfth Street with the giant red awning advertising eighteen miles of new and used books. If not, you've surely seen it on TV or in movies—*Sex and the City*, that scene in *Unfaithful* where Diane Lane's character finds her lover making out with some other girl in the stacks. Opened in 1927, the Strand was one of more than forty bookstores that lined Fourth Avenue between Eighth and Fourteenth Streets. By the late '50s nearly all those "Book Row" vendors had folded, and the Strand—still owned and run by the Bass family, as it remains today—moved to its current location. Since then it's been perhaps the city's most steady benefactor of aspiring artists and creative types. Patti Smith worked there in the '70s, along with fellow punk rock pioneers Tom Verlaine of Television and Lux Interior of the Cramps. The staff's shared mien isn't mere happenstance but rather insisted upon by management. In order

to be hired, you're given a written test in which a list of a dozen titles must be matched to their authors. I got stumped on *The Red and the Black* and *Lost Illusions*—something like that—but still passed, and began working in the basement the very next day.

The basement was where the advance copies were kept. These are books sent to reviewers ahead of publication. When finished, reviewers sell them to the Strand. My job was to alphabetize and shelve them. That's it. I'd grab a stack of twenty or thirty advance copies, sort them into piles by author last name, file each pile in its appropriate rack, grab another stack, sort them into more piles....

It was so depressing—the tedium but also the condition of the books. Most, it was obvious, hadn't been opened, the publicity notices still sharply creased and tucked inside the front covers. All the hours those authors had toiled, all their months and years of sacrifice, just for some reviewer to hoc it back to the Strand for two or three lousy bucks. Then again, at least they got their books published.

That was another thing that bummed me out. I thought that by just getting into a grad school I was set, my career as a writer all but assured. Apparently not. My co-worker William was a recent alumnus of a grad school far more selective and prestigious than mine. He'd submitted the novel that'd been his thesis project to dozens of agents. He hadn't heard back from a single one.

By far the worst part of working at the Strand was the heat. Even with their stifling, moving-underwater humidity, Ohio summers had nothing on New York's. The tall buildings and miles of road and sidewalk, all that glass and steel and concrete and asphalt—it trapped and held the sun, served as insulation. So did the Strand's twenty-foot-tall metal racks packed tight with books: it was at least ten degrees hotter in the store. There was no air condition-

ing. Rumor had it the summer before some fat guy had died of heat stroke in the philosophy section.

The basement was even more intolerable. There were no windows. A few fans hung from the ceiling but just blew around dust. It was hard to breathe, the air was so thick. I'd sweat just standing still. By the end of my 1:30 to 10:30 shift my shirt and underwear and socks would be soaked. Like William and everyone else in the basement, I counted the minutes till my turn on bag check.

In addition to shelving advance copies, us basement guys had to man the counter and cubby holes by the entrance where customers were required to leave their shopping bags and backpacks while they browsed. We'd rotate every hour. After being downstairs for so long, the faint breeze every time the door opened seemed an arctic gust, the view of the sidewalk a breathtaking panorama. The other guys would usually pass the time reading, but I'd stand there watching out the door all the people walking by. A few nights after 9/11 a candlelight procession traveled down the middle of Broadway. When my hour was up, people were still going past. But even bag check got old after a few months, especially when I started getting warts on my hands from handling so many grimy plastic shopping bag handles and sweaty backpack straps.

The sole redeeming part of the job—other than the five-minute walk to my and Sheryl's place—was the discount. Employees got half-off everything. And everything in the Strand was already reduced in price. A paperback with a \$12 cover price the Strand might sell for \$6. I'd get it for \$3. In the eight or so months I worked there, I bought close to a hundred books. First editions of Sherwood Anderson's *Dark Laughter* and Joan Didion's *Play It As It Lays*. Early hardcover printings of *Native*

Son, From Here to Eternity, Last Exit to Brooklyn, Lolita, Ballad of the Sad Café and Go Down, Moses. Commemorative anniversary versions of *Invisible Man, Look Homeward, Angel* and *On the Road*.

I would've bought even more but the limit was six at a time. And you could buy only once a week, on Friday. If you found something Saturday, you had to wait the whole week, and stow it along with the rest of your haul on a special shelf in the basement.

Early one week I came across a copy of *Ulysses*. I'd tried to read the book sophomore year of college—not for any class, just on my own—but gave up after about a hundred pages. I had no intention of trying again. The edition was just so good-looking, I couldn't resist: copyrighted 1946; devoid of dust jacket; the emerald green cover emblazoned with two imposing, black, Art-Deco lower case *js*; the text prefaced by Judge Woolsey's district court decision lifting the ban as well as by a letter from Joyce to his American editor Bennett Cerf detailing the European publication history ("My friend Mr. Ezra Pound and good luck brought me into contact with a very clever and energetic person Miss Sylvia Beach who had been running for some years previously a small English bookshop and lending library in Paris under the name of Shakespeare and Co. This brave woman risked what professional publishers did not wish to, she took the manuscript and handed it to the printers."); the first page of the novel itself containing but two words—"Stately, plump"—the *S* filling the entire sheaf.

I put it on the basement shelf. When Friday came and I went to retrieve it, the spine and edges were all torn up. At first I thought another employee had found some other beat-up copy and swapped it. Upon closer inspection, I identified the real culprit: mice. Often in the basement you'd see one darting around a corner. They'd been

dining on *Ulysses* all week.

I decided to buy the book anyway. I can't remember why. Until now, I never once opened it. Nor am I entirely sure why I chose to write about it here. It's certainly not my rarest or most valuable book—that'd have to be the pristine first edition of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* I found for \$5 at a Daytona Beach used book store while visiting a retired aunt and uncle. And compared with, say, that of the threadbare copy of *Fiesta* (the British title of *The Sun Also Rises*) I picked up studying abroad and carried with me to Paris and Pamplona, its backstory isn't very enthralling. I suppose settling on *Ulysses* as my most cherished book has to do with it fast approaching a decade since my arrival in New York and stint at the Strand—struggling to keep up with my course load and prohibited by store policy from working part time, I found a more flexible job passing hors d'oeuvres for a catering company—and my naiveté toward the city having long worn off. I know now not only when to keep my mouth shut but where to stand on subway platforms to save time transferring trains. I know to show up for a movie no less than forty-five minutes beforehand and that admission prices at the Met are merely *recommended*. I know the protocol for ordering porterhouse at Peter Luger, and that a great spot to watch the Macy's fireworks (that is until they were moved from the East River to the Hudson) is the Long Island City piers, and at what bar to find a game of Beirut. And I know that while I'll never truly be a New Yorker—a distinction reserved for the born-and-raised—I've earned the right to call this city my home.

From Bound to Last: 30 Writers on Their Most Cherished Book, edited by Sean Manning, Da Capo Press 2010, www.dacapopress.com. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

Who's afraid of *Ulysses*? Not comic artist Rob Berry or Joycean scholar Mike Barasanti, who were inspired over a pint of Guinness at the annual Bloomsday festival in Philadelphia (celebrated every June 16 when Leopold Bloom, the fictional protagonist, first wandered into Dublin) to explore the more graphic aspects of the novel. So they set about to design a web-based comic version of James Joyce's opus accompanied by a reader's guide, which they launched in 2009. A year later they decided to take their comic to the people via a free iPad app, at which point they found themselves in the midst of a highly publicized censorship debate with the folks at Apple, who felt that Berry's illustrations for the novel—which was deemed “not obscene” by a federal judge in 1933—were a bit too, um, graphic. But cooler heads prevailed, and Apple ultimately green-lighted the comic's unedited release on iTunes, paving the way for pages to come. We talked with Rob and Mike, along with Josh Levitas, the production director, about non-stimulating nudity, censorship, and the publishing revolution that made their project possible.

—Jack Rubenstein

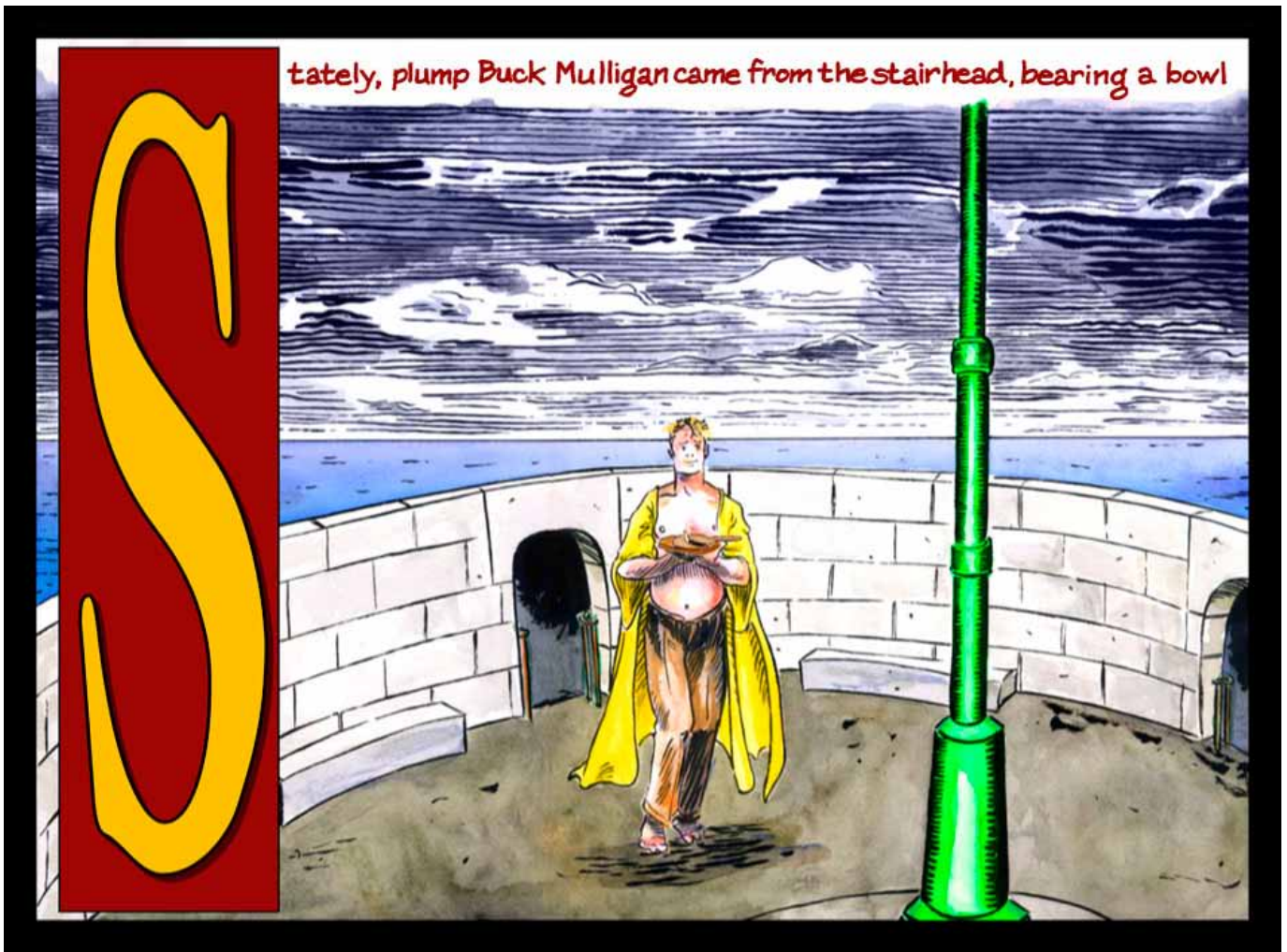
INTERVIEW

Shelf Unbound: Why *Ulysses*? It is long, extremely challenging, and not known as a visual novel. What drew you to it, no pun intended?

Robert Berry: A few years back, another cartoonist and I were having a few beers together after attending a Bloomsday reading of the novel. If you've never heard the novel read aloud, I can tell you that it can be a great experience for new readers in understanding the flow and humor in Joyce's writing. But the subject came up, over pints of Guinness, as to what

other art form could best interpret Joyce's book; why it doesn't work as a movie or a stage play or even an animated cartoon. My argument was that only the language of comics might manage to capture the novel's intricacies, and that comics—with their greater plasticity of time and weight of visual symbols for engaging memory—could go a long way toward helping new readers get their bearings within the world of the novel.

So, on a bet and a few beers, I started playing with the notion.



Josh Levitas: When Rob invited me to be a part of this project, he had already drawn a few of the pages. I thought it was a great idea, and I loved that it was a chance to show people how enjoyable *Ulysses* is. I also saw that the whole thing was much more doable than one would think. It's a perfect combination of everything I love—art, literature, and self-education. I've never been afraid of long, labor-intensive projects, as long as I feel that they're worth the effort, and this one certainly is worth it.

Mike Barsanti: It struck me as a very odd idea at first, definitely a folly, but Rob's drawings brought something new to the book for me. And as a person who's spent many years study-

ing and talking about *Ulysses*, that's a feeling I pay attention to. I also feel that the novel suffers from all of the well-intentioned critical apparatus that surrounds it. Someone encountering the book for the first time can easily get stuck in the weeds, cross-referencing annotations across several different reader's guides. The comic brings the drama, the interactions between characters, back into the foreground in a way that really clarifies the experience of reading the novel.

Shelf: *Favorite scene that you have illustrated? Scene you can't wait to get to?*

Rob: Strangely enough, my favorite page of the first chapter was the one that Apple initially

contacted us about changing because of the nudity. This is page 37, on which the old milk-woman is transformed, through the magic of Joyce's prose and the language of comic books, into a goddess of the morning. To my mind, it's one of the first pages I did that so clearly proves how appropriate comics can be for illustrating this novel.

There are many other scenes I'm really anxious to get to and they're spread pretty equally through the next 17 chapters. The nice thing about working on this project is that Joyce changed his style or approach with each chapter so I get to follow that course. With the actual shape and platform of delivery for books changing so drastically these days, just as they were when Joyce first wrote the novel, it seems best to follow the example of his fluidity.

Josh: I'm going to go with Rob on that one. My favorite so far is definitely the milkwoman scene.

I'm really looking forward to the pages in the "Cyclops" episode that will show the stories of the battle over the date of St. Patrick's Day, the public hanging, etc. Those should require quite a bit of work for Rob and me to put together, but it will be well worth it, I think. Those passages really appeal to my warped sense of humor. There are some moments (or different depictions of the same moment) in "Wandering Rocks," like the coin falling from the window, that should be a lot of fun, as well.... But we've got a little while before we come to all of that. The truth is that all of it is a lot of fun to do.

Mike: I'm looking forward to "Circe." That's going to be a trip. The format has such enormous flexibility, it may actually be able to do that episode justice.



Crouching by a patient cow at daybreak in the lush field



They lowed about her whom they knew, dew-silky cattle.



Silk of the kine and poor old woman...



...lowly form of an immortal...



... serving her conqueror and her gay betrayer; their common cuckquean...

... a witch on her toadstool...



her wrinkled fingers quick at the squirting dugs.



...names given her in old times.



A wandering crone...

...whether he could not tell:

... a messenger from the secret morning.



To serve or upbraid...



TASTE IT, SIR.

IT IS INDEED, MA'AM.

but scorned to beg her favour.

Shelf: *What is your favorite passage of the novel from a literary perspective?*

Rob: My favorite chapter in the novel is Episode 8, the one commonly referred to as “Lestrygonians.” In it Mr. Bloom is deciding where to have a nice quiet lunch in a modern cosmopolitan city where everyone and everything they eat seems to disgust him and make him think of death. He is also wrestling with the knowledge that his wife is having an affair later that same day and the light that sheds on so many happy memories of their earlier days together. So there are very complex allusions being made in the everyday objects and activities. But for outright passion of writing on memory, you really can’t beat that chapter.

Josh: I think I have to give a favorite beautiful section and a favorite comedic moment. In terms of purely beautiful writing, I’d have to go with the description of the waves washing up on the beach at the end of the “Proteus” episode (Episode 3). Although I could give at least 10 passages that induced belly laughs for me, I’m going to give the afore-mentioned long-winded, overly detailed digressions in the “Cyclops” episode. Their influence on 1970s and ’80s British comedy is fairly obvious to me. I can think of a number of Monty Python sketches and scenes in *Blackadder*, for example, that include deadpan recitations of incredibly long lists of nonsense.

Mike: The passage describing Bloom’s reentry into his (and his wife’s) bed in the “Ithaca” episode.

Shelf: *Were you surprised by Apple’s initial censorship of the app? How did it feel to play a*

highly visible and debated role in that age-old struggle for free expression?

Rob: It was, as with any case of artists feeling compelled to restrict their content, a turmoil for all of us in deciding what to do. It should be said here that Apple did not censor or alter our work in any way but had instead called and informed us that no nudity, even in an adaptation of a novel that had gone so far to settle the issue of “decency in literature,” would be allowed in their iTunes Store. We felt that this was a mistake on their part at the time, but had already done quite a lot of work to premiere our adaptation early in the iPad’s release. We decided it was best to comply with the restrictions as businessmen but, as artists, felt an obligation to tell people in the press what was going on and what concessions were being made.

We were all very encouraged (if not shocked) when Apple called us to say they were lifting the restrictions and would make sure that the unedited version of comics like ours would be cleared through the iTunes Store that same day. Their press agent said, quite clearly, that they had made a mistake.

We tend to see this as an obvious conclusion to, as you say, an “age-old struggle for freedom of expression” and yet another victory for Joyce’s novel. Eighty-eight years later it’s still crashing the notions of prudery in a whole new society.

Josh: I’ll just add that I wasn’t greatly surprised that Apple took issue with the nudity—as non-stimulating (sexually, at least) as it is—as they, as a private company, were and are setting precedents for the type of content

they will carry on this new device. I wasn't happy about it, but I can't say I was blindsided by it. What did surprise me was how quickly the story spread.

To answer the second part of the question, when the dust settled and we had a chance to really look at what had happened, we felt really good about having helped the cause of free expression and about the fact that we were fair to Apple in our commentary throughout the whole thing. I personally love that this series of events showed that pushing and fighting are not the only ways to bring about the outcome one desires.

Shelf: How do you see the iPad changing the face of comics and publishing in general?

Rob: We'd been planning for the "iPad revolution" since Apple first introduced its touch screen interface for the iPod and iPhone years ago. It was just a question of waiting for the larger screen that would allow for more attractive visual content and some direct competition with other more limited reading platforms, like the Kindle. So everything I've been looking at or doing as both a cartoonist and a publisher has been about this new delivery platform.

One of the most fundamental changes brought on by the new device does seem to be escaping the consideration of a lot of publishers, however. Most of them seem to see this as a revolution in how to market more directly through the internet and "smart" devices. There is that, certainly. But on a more important level this is a revolution in the shape of the page itself. The amount of content and access to related content through one window that

Charity for the Living

Ulysses is a big undertaking. It contains 267,000-odd words comprising 18 episodes and took seven years to write. So it goes without saying that in order to draw the whole thing, Rob Berry could use a little help. In order to be able to illustrate the comic full time over the next several months without having to stop to wait tables, Rob has done the math and figured out that he needs \$6,300 to pay the studio rent and keep the website up for another year. A bob here and there, by dribs and drabs, it all adds up, so go to <http://kck.st/cK7zMs> and make a contribution.

we think of as a page is now fundamentally changed. Publishers and designers are not limited by the same conventions they once were and the savvy new consumers using these devices will be looking for products that are also not limited in this way. The important thing now, to my mind, is how is the ebook different from the book? How is the page not a frozen printed thing but, like any computer interface, a window on more than itself?

Comics, through the equally rapid growth of the newspaper industry a hundred years ago, were used as a window on selling the content inside. I think that comics can have a similar function now on these new tablet devices. So, with our publishing company, Throwaway Horse LLC, we're looking at how these new devices allow readers to go "behind the seen" in a given page or panel of comics to educational and interactive connections. Just like 100 years ago, comics just open up the world beneath each page.



Shelf: *What have been the biggest criticisms and accolades so far for your interpretation?*

Rob: For myself, as a cartoonist trying to think about the theoretical new design page of comics on these new devices, it was at the San Diego Comic Con last July. I met Scott McCloud there for the first time and we sat on the carpeted floor outside a conference hall together with a couple of other designers talking for more than an hour about the new “shape of the page.” It was like the best moments of grad school without the booze, marijuana, and Twinkies. I really believe the only thing that halted our talk was the audible sound of our middle-aged knees cracking from sitting cross-legged too long.

To make a good thing is an accomplishment for any artist, and I’ve been an artist long enough to be proud of and sustained by just that. To make a good thing that peers and professors of the industry think is also a smart thing, well, that’s an accolade that carries you through to the future.

Mike: We presented the “Telemachus” episode at a conference of Joyce scholars last year, and I don’t think we got any criticism at all. At least not to our faces. I think we’ve been spared some of this partly because there have been a number of significant projects that have tried to create online or hypertext editions of *Ulysses* that have failed, and so most of the questions about our work were pragmatic—how is it financed, how are legal questions

handled... Most Joyce scholars I've spoken to are appreciative of the project, though perhaps they are inclined to think of us as holy fools. It's also true, though, that the episodes we've worked on so far have not shown *Ulysses* at its weirdest, at those points where stable notions of characters and plot and setting start to break down. We'll have greater interpretive challenges then.

Shelf: *What do you see as the interplay between this vast visual project and the accompanying literary analysis provided by Mike, your resident Joycean scholar?*

Rob: Quite a lot of the early stages of development for any publisher working in the field of tablet ebooks is spent figuring out just what to do. I certainly don't have to remind you guys at *Shelf Unbound* about that. Reflexive is the watchword of any new media publisher.

But a certain new and directed energy happened between Mike and Josh (the production artist and web designer) and I one day when we realized that the annotations were to be a part of the overall experience and not an addendum. It was possible then for me to make illustrations of the novel that would rely on and even necessitate the reader going deeper beyond the page. I could proceed just as Joyce might have himself, dropping in obscure references and creating unique pathways, afforded by the new technology, for readers to keep up.

Mike's reader's guide, to my mind as a cartoonist, is not so much an addendum of literary analysis as an interactive place where readers might go for further answers. If it was a simple question of "the comic illustrates and the readers guide explains the illustrations" I think that would become really boring really fast. I look forward now to making illustrations that open a dialogue between

new readers and old, presenting questions that Mike will cut through or, occasionally, adjudicate when the conversation gets difficult.

In that math, I think we've found a unique and very agreeable interplay of adaptation and education. The new shape of the comics page on these devices makes that possible in a way no other previous devices has ever done. We work together like it's a whole new ballgame.

Mike: Rob initially asked me to produce annotations for the comic, but I felt that had already been done, and been done well, by several other people. I also know I don't have the disposition or time to do a really satisfying set of annotations for this project. It seemed better, given the direction we eventually decided to take the project, to have my comments serve as a friendly introduction, a starting point for conversation. There's no way I can or would want to say everything that I know or that other scholars know about a given passage—there's just too much. And inevitably people call you on that, because they think whatever detail you've failed to mention is critical to understanding the text. But the key is to give just enough information to keep people oriented and engaged, and even entertained. Then we want them to provide their own annotations, so that the readers teach themselves in a kind of wiki-model.

Shelf: *If you were to meet Joyce in the afterlife someday, what do you hope he would say about Ulysses Seen?*

Rob: What would he think of what we've done with *Ulysses*? Who knows? But in an afterlife that might cause an artist to review his own work over and over again until the end of days, I'd like to believe Joyce would have better things to do than challenge my work adapting his novel. ■



Electric Literature
www.electricle.com

PORTLAND NOVELIST Patrick deWitt scored rave reviews last year for his debut novel *Ablutions*. His following short story is excerpted with permission from *Electric Literature*, a quarterly anthology of the best contemporary short fiction delivered via eBook, audiobook, Kindle, iPhone, or paperback. *Electric Literature* publishes stories by award-winning authors such as Michael Cunningham, Rick Moody, Aimee Bender, Jim Shepard, Colson Whitehead, and Lydia Davis, as well as great new work by other innovative and up-and-coming writers.

—Ben Minton

EXCERPT

The Bastard

by Patrick deWitt

The Bastard approached the farmhouse on foot, a leather satchel in one hand and a long stick of pine in the other. The sun had dropped behind the mountains, and the heavy evening cold came hurrying into the valley. He watched the smoke spinning from the stone chimney and felt a passionate loathing for every living thing; he spit a slug of mucous over his shoulder and muttered the third-rudest word he knew. Shaking this feeling away, or secreting it, he stepped up the walk to the front door where he was met by the farmer, red-nosed Wilson, who spoke before the Bastard could open his mouth: “There’s no work for you here, not even half a day.” This was just the opposite of what the Bastard had hoped to hear, and it took no small effort to conceal his disappointment, but his recovery was swift, and without a moment wasted he launched into his performance.

“You misunderstand me, sir. I am merely passing by and was hopeful for a bed of hay to lie down upon. I have my own food to eat, and shall require nothing from your household other than a splash of water in the morning, but then I will be on my way, and you will hear nothing of me for the rest of your days. Of course, I will be sure and make comments to all those I pass on my way out of town regarding the good farmer Wilson’s hospitality, his generosity, his sympathy for those working to make their way in life. Mark my words, they will learn all about it!”

Wilson was caught off guard by the stranger’s speech, and he shifted back and forth in his boots, scratching his eye—the actual eyeball, which itched devilishly and was forever bloodshot. “How’d you know my name?” he asked.

The Bastard blinked in disbelief. “Your name, sir? But doesn’t everyone in this area know your name? Are you not well-thought-of hereabouts? Is it not understood that you are the most hard-working farmer, the most clever and able?” He threw back his head and laughed. “How did I know his name, he asks me! That’s modesty for you.”

At this, the tension gripping the farmer’s body uncoiled itself, and all his mistrust fell away. Now he stood in his doorway, vulnerable as a calf, and the Bastard knew the bed of hay and jug of water were his for the taking. Only he had no plans to settle for this humble victory, and when the farmer acquiesced, pointing his crooked thumb at the barn, the Bastard did not simply bow and step away, but pretended to stumble, and in doing so gave his satchel a tap with the toe of his boot. This brought forth the clink of a bottle, muffled but unmistakable, and he watched the farmer’s expression with all of his concentration. When Wilson shuddered and twitched, the Bastard knew he had the man in his clutches. *Look at him*, he thought. *He wants a drink so badly his pores are yawning open*. He imagined each of Wilson’s pores as a tiny mouth, each with a miniature pink tongue sticking greedily out in hopes of catching a splash of whatever the bottle held. This nearly made him laugh, but he collected himself and returned to the role of deferential outsider:

“Before I make my bed down, it would be an honor if I might offer you a short drink of rye whiskey. I’ve got a full and unopened bottle, a gift from a friend, only I don’t care all that much for spirits. Frankly, I find they upset my constitution. But you, sir, look all the more hearty than I. Perhaps you take the rare drink?”

Wilson could scarcely believe his luck. He looked here and there into the expanse, a frightened expression on his face as though he expected some vindictive God or another to swoop from the sky and steal away the magical passerby, rye whiskey and all. Witnessing this reaction, it was all the Bastard could do not to strike the gluttonous farmer to the ground. How he longed to grind his boot-heel into the man’s sickening face! “Please accept,” he implored, “otherwise you will wound me deeply. And really, isn’t it the least I could do, considering the kindness you’ve extended to me?”

So it was that the Bastard was admitted into the house itself. Wilson rushed to fetch two mugs, and lay these on the kitchen table; his hand trembled as he fell to drinking the precious rye with much slurping and heavy breathing. When there came the uncertain rhythm of dainty footsteps at the top of the stairs, the Bastard made his innocent query: “Is that your wife, sir? I would be honored to meet her. What a lucky lady, to spend her days in this grand home, and with such a gentleman as yourself at her side.”

You’re overdoing it, the Bastard told himself. But Wilson was distracted by his rye-guzzling, and his guard was down. “That’s my daughter,” he said. “Wife died seven months ago.”

“Daughter?” said the Bastard. “Is that so? Hmm, yes.”

But of course he knew about the daughter already. Here was the reason he had come to Wilson’s home in the first place. Here was the reason he had stolen the rye from the general store, and why he plied the farmer so generously while he himself abstained. When the daughter, still hidden, began to hum and sing, the Bastard broke character, and a wicked smile spread across his face. Wilson was already quite drunk, but through the haze he saw this smile, and found himself distantly concerned. Pointing at his guest, he slurred, “You, now. Wait a minute.”

“Drink up,” snapped the Bastard, “that’s all you want anyway, isn’t that right?”

Wilson cast his eyes down, impotent, scolded. Ducking his face to the mug, he snuffled like a hound, inhaling the rye’s burning fumes. He was simultaneously very glad and very sad.

Earlier in the day, the Bastard entered a feed store five miles to the east of Wilson’s farm. The clerk’s face was a broad purple depression with eyes and teeth dropped in, and he looked as though he had no bones in his body whatsoever—a gelatinous mass of blubber and grease-slick flesh. As such, the Bastard despised him on sight, for if there was one thing he had no tolerance for, it was the overweight. He greeted the clerk thusly: “Hello, my good man! Shaping up to be a fine day out there.”

“What’ll it be,” the clerk intoned, staring at the floor and chewing lazily. An unfriendly sort, but the Bastard had gone up against many a more formidable foe than this pellet salesman, and he kept his disgust well-buried.

“I wonder, sir,” he said, “if you might help me locate an acquaintance of mine.”

“A *what* of yours?”

“A friend,” he explained. “Or not quite a friend, but someone I met that I should like to visit with again. It was just outside your store, in the road there. He was a farmer, if I’m not mistaken.”

“Lotta farmers around here. Fact, that’s all there is. What’s his name, did you say?”

“Here now, we’ve arrived at the root of my problem. I never caught his name.

But, I was thinking, perhaps if I were to describe him?”

The clerk said nothing. It seemed he was chewing on his own tongue.

“Hmm,” said the Bastard. “Yes, well, he was a working fellow, much like yourself.”

“You saying he looked like me?”

“Not terribly like you, no. But in the general sense, there was some similarity.”

“Mister, did he look like me or not?”

“He had a daughter with him,” said the Bastard. “A young woman.”

“All right. And what’s *she* look like?”

The delicate Bastard was prepared for just this question. He held his hand out to exhibit the golden wedding band on his ring finger. Speaking lowly, in confidence, he said, “I myself am already engaged to be married, and I fear that, since meeting my beloved, I have a habit of altogether ignoring the fairer sex.”

A customer entered the store and began walking the aisles with a hand truck. Peering over the Bastard’s shoulder, the clerk said, “You saying you saw the daughter or didn’t you?”

“What if you were to describe her? That is, describe some of the farmers’ daughters?”

The clerk groaned in annoyance, and the Bastard sensed he had used up every ounce of the man’s charity. Wordlessly, then, he lay a single bill onto the countertop. The clerk was unsurprised by this; he retrieved the money and stuffed it away, looking all the more accommodating, or at least not quite so hostile as before. “Okay, let’s see. There’s Lund’s girl. She’s about fifteen, ugly as a hedge fence, dog breath.”

“That doesn’t sound right, no.”

“Well, what about Miller’s girl, Sandy? Twelve years old, maybe. Coke-bottle glasses. Got a brace on her leg.”

The Bastard shook his head. “This was a young *woman*. And though I only glanced at her in passing, I seem to recall, if I may speak frankly—well, she was somewhat fair.”

“Mister,” said the clerk, “there ain’t no *fair young women* in these parts.”

The words settled in, and the Bastard wondered if there wasn’t some way he might get his money back. But no, the town was a wash—it had happened before—and he stepped back from the counter, automatically thanking the clerk and moving to the exit. Halfway to the door, however, the customer that had entered a moment earlier spoke to the Bastard from the far side of the store. “Could be Wilson’s girl you’re thinking of.”

The Bastard turned slowly. “Wilson,” he said.

The customer nodded. “My sister does their washing? Told me Wilson’s daughter’s shaping up to be a prize beauty. Blonde and fair, just like you mentioned.”

“Wilson hasn’t hardly set foot in town since his wife died,” the clerk said skeptically.

“A widower,” said the Bastard. “Yes, that sounds familiar.”

The customer said, “Sister says old man Wilson won’t let the girl out of the house. On account of how she looks I mean? Don’t seem right to me, but I’m not surprised, the way that man drinks. Well, what can you say about it?”

“Wilson,” said the Bastard. “Yes, it’s all coming back to me now.” Of the clerk, he asked, “Where can I buy a bottle of whiskey?”

“Three down from here,” the clerk answered, pointing.

“And which way is it to Wilson’s farm?”

In the general store he dropped a lit match into a paper-filled trash can, and while customers and employees swarmed to bat at the flames he made off handily with the rye. He felt joyful as he left the town, forging ahead into the open spaces,

the farmland. *All or nothing*, he thought, decapitating flowers with his stick of pine. *Otherwise, what's the point?*

Wilson lay face down on the table, a void where only minutes earlier there was a man, or half a man. The Bastard wrenched the mug from the drunkard's claw and returned the rye to the bottle. There was enough left to poison the farmer once more, perhaps twice. And after this, then what? *I don't know, and I can't care*, he thought. He had never been one to fret about the future. He stood and stepped further into the room, taking in his new surroundings with his hands behind his back, like a man luxuriating in a museum or rose garden. Each time this crucial maneuver of entering a home was accomplished, he was struck by the image that a house was, after all, much like a human skull.

The furnishings were unremarkable: candles, lace, quilting, and wicker. It had probably been a comfortable enough space before Wilson's wife had died, but now it was bleak, dark—a sink full of grime-coated dinner plates greeted the Bastard as he stepped into the kitchen. The sight of it reminded him of something the helpful feed store customer had said, that his sister did Wilson's washing. But why was this so, with the daughter in the house? Why was everything so dingy? This only made him all the more curious about the girl, and his head began to pound as he imagined her alone in her room. He thought, *She's let everything go to hell, while her father savors a slow death*. He walked to the base of the stairs and kicked the tread with his heel. "Girl," he called. "You up there, girl." There came a gasp from the darkness above him, and the Bastard thought almost fondly of her paper-drumming mouse-heart. He returned to the kitchen and rolled up his sleeves. He had elected to clean the plates and cutlery himself, not to curry favor with his newest acquaintances, but because the very thought of their laziness filled him with an anger whose insistence was frightening to him.

They pulled Wilson up the stairs and installed him in his vinegary, scooped-out bed. The daughter stood panting and looking sadly down at her father. Her dainty hands rested atop the curve of her hips; the Bastard could not help but stare at the yellowing bruises on her otherwise pale and fine forearms and wrists. She noticed his noticing and pulled down the sleeves of her blouse. She was absolutely beautiful, it was true.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"No one, yet. I struck up a conversation with your father and he invited me in."

She pondered the words. "My father does not strike up conversations."

"Anyway, we spoke."

"What did you give him to drink?"

"Rye."

Her face tightened. "You must never give him any more."

"Why is that?"

By way of answering, she merely pointed at her father; and it was a thoughtful reply when the Bastard considered the farmer's sorry state: his inhalations were stilted, his exhalations rasping, a high whine sounding over top of the gurgling lower tones emanating from the back of his throat. It was an unpleasant thing to witness, and the Bastard thought the man could die at any given point. The anger from moments earlier re-visited him and he asked the daughter, "But who are you to say what I should and shouldn't do?"

"Who are you at all?" she asked.

"I've just told you I am no one."

"And yet here you stand, flesh and blood, you've kicked my stairs and upset my reading. You've poisoned my father and spoiled any chance he'll lift a finger in the morning. If you are no one, sir, I should never like to meet someone, for what

might he bring but utter ruin!”

The Bastard was opening his mouth to call the girl the second-rudest word he knew—it was forming in the basin at the center of his tongue—when suddenly the lone window in the farmer’s room flew open and a gust of cold wind swarmed them, ruffling their clothing and hair. The daughter rushed to close the latch, acting very much put-out, even embarrassed by the wind; the Bastard, on the other hand, was struck with a sudden good humor at the interruption, and by the time the daughter turned back, he was stifling laughter. Just the moment she noticed this, she too began to laugh. It was as though the fresh air and the loud rap of the pane hitting the wall, which had made them both jump, had cleaned away their independent worries, and now they stood together, partnered in a wholesome adventure. She returned to stand over Wilson and asked the Bastard, “Will you help me take his clothes off?”

“No, I won’t!”

They laughed again, and long after the laughter died, a smile clung stubbornly to the daughter’s lips. She found herself stealing glances at the stranger, her blue eyes darting in the candlelight. It is late to mention it, but the Bastard was terrifically, probably unfairly handsome.

“What is your name?” he asked.

“My name is Molly. What is your name?”

“Molly.”

“Your name is Molly?”

“*Your* name is Molly. Molly, Molly.”

“Will you tell me your name or won’t you?”

“Molly,” said the Bastard, dreamily.

Wait now, he did help her disrobe Wilson after all, peeling away the damp socks, the stained pullover, the canvas pants, stiff from dried mud and muck. The farmer’s naked person was bordering on the macabre. It was like an exhibit people might pay a small fee to look over and afterwards feel exhausted by. His penis was tiny and thin, the hood chapped and wrinkled; the Bastard reached out and flicked the tip. Scowling, Molly asked him not to touch her father.

“That, and don’t give him any rye,” he said.

“You think I’m making a joke, but another dose of alcohol might kill him.”

“Here is the most interesting statement I’ve heard in hundreds of hours.”

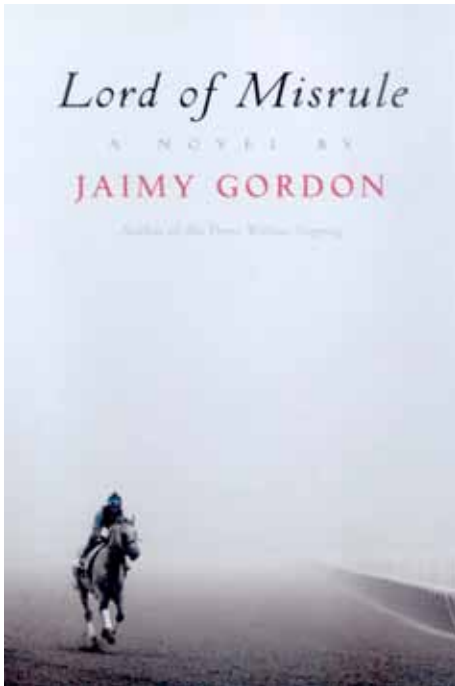
Molly, cautiously: “Why won’t you tell me your name?”

But the Bastard was distracted by the odors Wilson was now sharing with the room. He hadn’t noticed at first, but all at once it was as though a pair of black-smoke hands had him gripped about the throat. Molly, too, could not ignore the stench. They turned longingly to the window. “O, fickle wind,” said the Bastard, “will you never push when I wish you to push?”

Molly laughed a third time; the Bastard, not at all. Her gladness dried up at once, and what remained was confusion, also a vague lust—but mainly confusion. Who was this person in her home? What were his plans? And if she found these untoward, what might she do to prevent him from seeing them through? She had not spoken with anyone other than her father in so many days and nights. “Come away,” she said. “I will see you out.”

Now the Bastard laughed.

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LONG ODDS

National Book Award-finalist Jaimy Gordon's new novel, **Lord of Misrule**, is set in Indian Mound Downs, a backwoods race-track where horse trainer Tommy Hansel hatches the perfect scam. He'll run four unknown horses at long odds and bet big before anyone realizes just how fast his runners are. Problem is, everyone notices: Medicine Ed, the veteran groom; Kidstuff, the blacksmith; Suitcase Smithers, the stall superintendent; even Two-Tie, the local gangster. But Hansel's girlfriend, Maggie, tragic as the washed-up horses she loves, has the power to turn all of their luck around. Like Eudora Welty, Gordon takes full advantage of the colloquial voice, effectively evoking the muck and glory of a long-shot dream.

—Jack Rubenstein

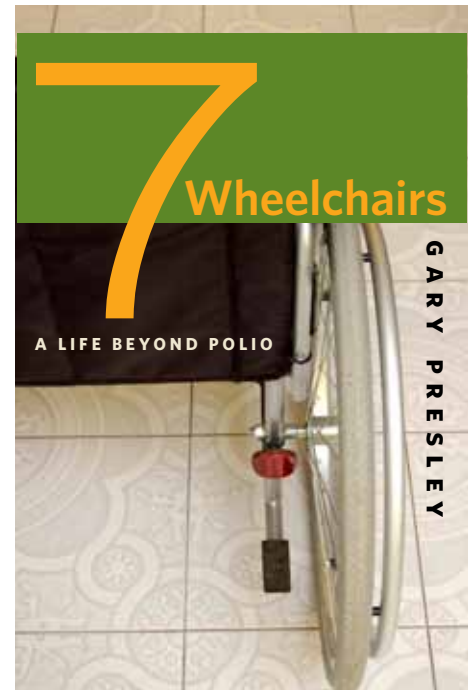
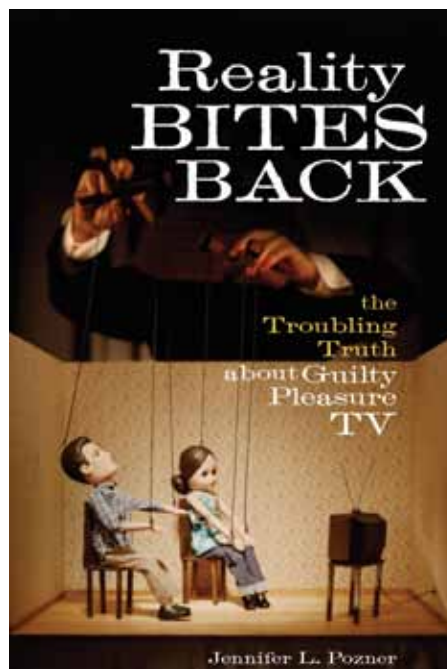
Lord of Misrule by Jaimy Gordon, McPherson & Company, www.mcphersonco.com.

REMOTE CONTROL

Jennifer L. Pozner's thoughtfully researched **Reality Bites Back** is a call to awareness and action for anyone who is of the opinion that popular shows like *The Bachelor* or *America's Next Top Model* are consequence-free, harmless escapism. In fact, posits Pozner, "...these shows frame their narratives in ways that both play to and reinforce deeply ingrained societal biases about women and men, love and beauty, race and class, consumption and happiness in America." Pozner makes an interesting and compelling case for the need for conscious consumption of reality programming. She's not asking us to turn off our TVs, just to turn on our critical brains. Now where's the remote...

—Margaret Brown

Reality Bites Back: The Troubling Truth About Guilty Pleasure TV by Jennifer L. Pozner, Seal Press, www.sealpress.com.

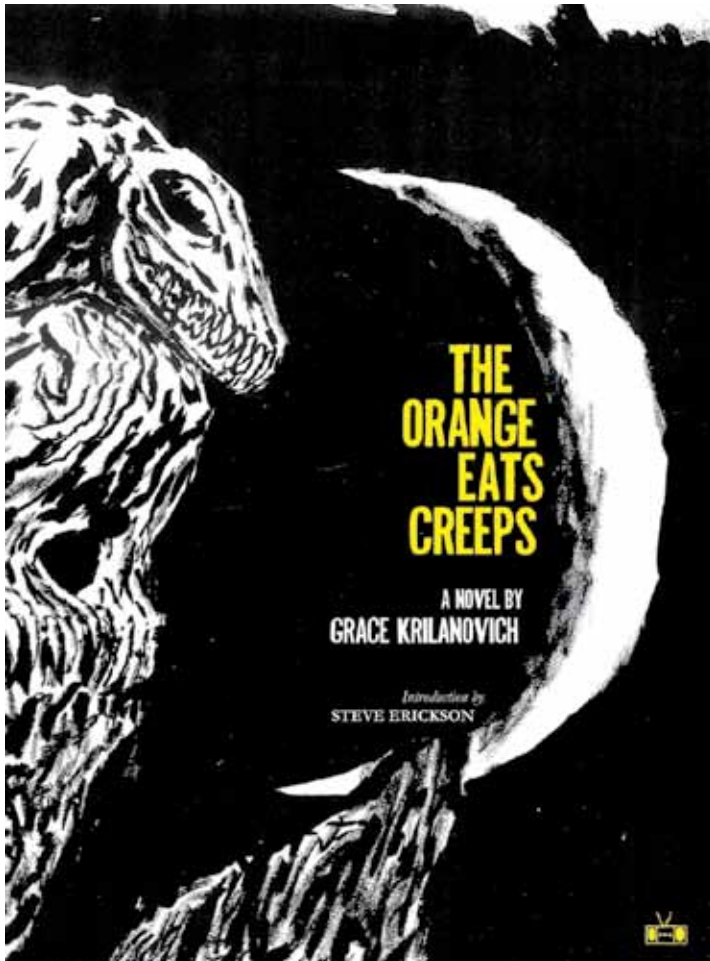


IRON LUNG

It started with a pin prick and a swab. Within a week, the basketball-playing, farm-tending teenager would find himself viewing the world from inside an iron lung. Held hostage for the next three months with only a mirror linking him to the outside world, Gary Presley was left alone with the sound of his artificially inflated lungs as he tried to come to terms with his immobile future. In poetic prose, Presley describes a life's journey in two-wheeled succession as he wears out **Seven Wheelchairs** along the way. A Midwesterner with no patience for pity or condescension, Presley provides an exceedingly honest and informative memoir of a disease, and a man.

—Kathy Wise

Seven Wheelchairs: A Life Beyond Polio by Gary Presley, University of Iowa Press, www.uiowapress.org.



The Orange Eats Creeps by Grace Krilanovich

Two Dollar Radio
www.twodollarradio.com

Grace Krilanovich's *The Orange Eats Creeps* is as baffling as it is brilliant. She dispenses with so many writing norms that the reader is required to figure out a new way to read. It's a thrilling ride. *The Orange Eats Creeps* earned Krilanovich the National Book Foundation's 5 Under 35 honor this year. She is also bassist in the psychedelic soul band Unicornface. We had a few questions for Krilanovich, not the least being, What the hell?

—Margaret Brown

INTERVIEW

Shelf Unbound: *The Orange Eats Creeps* is a relentless existentialist nightmare told from the point of view of a nameless female hobo vampire junkie. I'll pull out the key word here: *existentialist*. Is that the main thing you were going for?

Grace Krilanovich: Yes, well, a lot's at stake here and the dread, the leakage, the thrills and the devouring are all of the psyche as well as the body. I was going for something ultra-dramatic and ridiculous and at the same time quiet and sleepy, like a prolonged, hissing draft of air escaping from an inner tube. I felt it was worthwhile to risk cliché, excessiveness, and sentimentality if it meant approaching some kind of "existential" truth. What I certainly didn't want to do was limit it too early, define what it was, wrap it up neatly, tell it what it should be. That seemed antithetical to the book's purpose, its tone, and the form itself. Much of it is rooted in the sensory, the lived experience of the body—just heightened by multiple threats from external forces: drugs, predators, the landscape. And from internal forces: the throbbing bruise pressure of soul sickness.

Shelf: "*Twilight* this isn't," writes Steve Erickson in the book's introduction, and, indeed, there is not an ounce of vampire cliché in this literate novel. Why make the characters actual vampires, though, rather than just predatory human degenerates?

Krilanovich: I wanted the confusion there, or rather, not knowing one way or another. Are they? Aren't they? In terms of "actual vamps" vs. merely "predatory human degenerates"—there are lots of great examples of the latter: *Evil Companions*, de Sade, *Story of the Eye*, Buffalo Bill, the Mentors—but it's the *parasitism* of actual vampires that had the richness of meaning that I was after. All of the shared cultural anxiety over our perceived interior purity, our bodies' supposed tidiness and impermeability, wouldn't have much traction without the imminent threats to Our Precious Fluids by the

parasitic force of the vampire. Everyone fears being sucked dry by some leisurely, non-productive ne'er do well. Imagine the insidiousness of all that languid reclining on overstuffed furniture, keeping of non-farmer's hours (talk about going against the grain), being out of step with the world, willingly or unwillingly. Not being a producer, instead, a pure consumer. And what are they consuming? Life itself. The life essence of living, productive, "daytime" people. Converting them/destroying them.

I don't see my characters as literal vampires to the extent that Kiefer Sutherland and Jason Patric were in *The Lost Boys*, like Bill Paxton and Jenette Goldstein were in *Near Dark*—though I learned a lot about tone and the sick feeling I wanted to capture for my own near-vamps. Those movies have mystique and a creepy pull that *Interview with the Vampire* and *Twilight* don't, although I still enjoy those two as films. I love going to see the new *Twilight* movie. I laugh and laugh while my boyfriend shields his eyes and pretends to go to sleep, even though he's laughing on the inside, I'm sure. Let me make it clear that vamp clichés are still great. It's a very important cliché to think about and make art about, and it will always be.

Shelf: The main character is witness to, victim of, and participant in all manner of depravity. I ultimately had sympathy for her, though, and was moved by her poignant quest for her soul mate/lover/sister Kim. How do you, as the writer, feel about the main character?

Krilanovich: Very tenderly. You know, I worked on this book for so long, six years. Inevitably (if things are going well) your characters take on a life of their own and begin dictating what will happen to them in the story. Or they just start going about their business and you've got to take it all down fast. It's your job to listen, and be truthful, and do right by them. And of course you get attached. A great thing was being able to slip back into that voice for the revisions that happened after the book was accepted for publication. It was so much easier and surprised me because I thought that after two and a half years (and after having started a new novel) the characters would be faded out old wooden clothespin dolls of their true selves. But that wasn't the case at all. Some of my favorite stuff was written last.

Shelf: You connect the main character with Donner Party survivor Patty Reed and her wooden doll. What is the meaning of this connection?

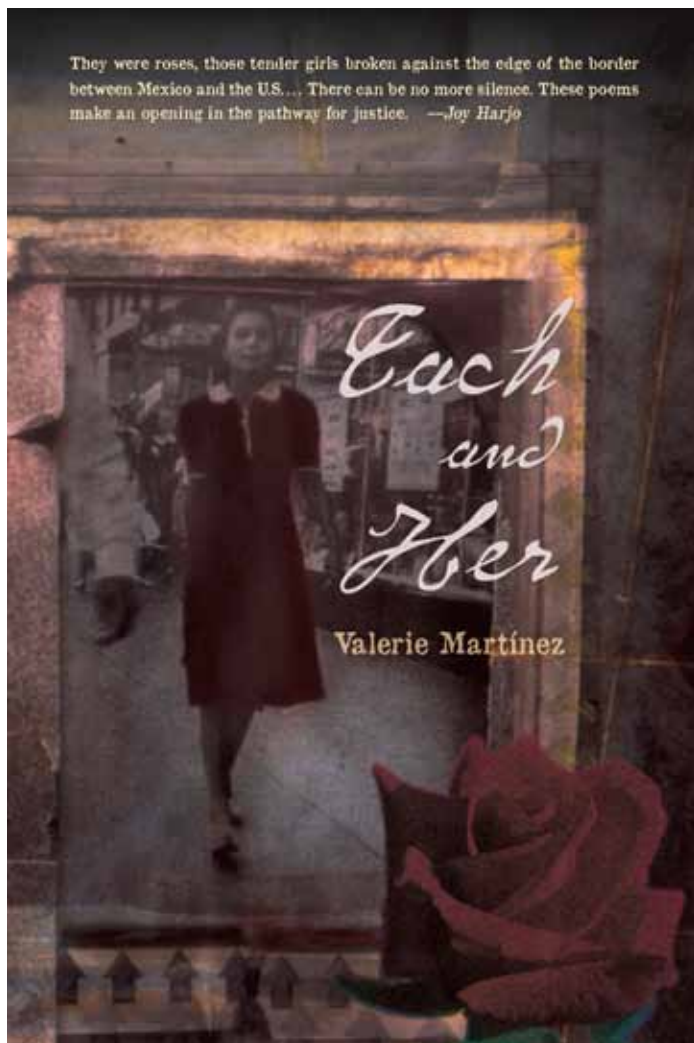
Krilanovich: It's partly a personal fascination with the Donner Party and their plight. Growing up in California you'd take a fifth grade field trip to Sacramento and Sutter's Fort where there's a Donner Party exhibit and they've got the doll on view. *Patty Reed's Doll* is a '50s illustrated chapter book that we read in class, strange as it may seem to have a cute kids' version of the Donner Party tragedy. It's something John Waters should adapt ASAP. So there's that. But I also felt Patty Reed's doll (the book and the phenomenon) had certain connections to the story I was writing. Thematically, there are echoes throughout *Orange*: parasitic beings (once again) with their own agendas, maybe a comforting little pet/confidant here or there and those little yapping sub-entities House Mom makes do her bidding. A lot of stuff in the novel about hibernation, foraging, madness setting in in the middle of nowhere, the site of unknown tragedy, the macabre, bones and artifacts buried in the earth, all those things I hoped would be deepened and broadened by the Donner connection.

Shelf: How do you describe your writing style?

Krilanovich: Ideally: lush, maniacal, fearless. Realistically: Up to 11, relentless, no brakes; a set constellation of words that crop up again and again. How many times can I get away with using the words "gelatinous," "ashen," "creepy," "hippie," and "vague" in one work of fiction?

Shelf: What are you working on now, and are you writing it in a similar style to *The Orange Eats Creeps*?

Krilanovich: Another novel. I would definitely say it's written in a style similar to *The Orange Eats Creeps*. But this is a historical romance, Coast Range of California, circa 1870. Nights seem to stretch on into eternity. A pack of brindle mutts runs around under cover of darkness, leaving a trail of gore in its wake. ■



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Each and Her
by Valerie Martínez

University of Arizona Press
www.uapress.arizona.edu

Since 1993, more than 450 women and girls have been tortured, raped, and murdered in the killing fields of Juárez, Mexico. Valerie Martínez exposes the ongoing injustice as only a poet can, with metaphor, lyric prose, and heartrending detail.

—Anna Nair

INTERVIEW

Shelf Unbound: *How is Each and Her different from your two previous collections of poetry, Absence, Luminescent, and World to World?*

Valerie Martínez: The most obvious difference is that this is a book-length poem rather than a collection. And some might consider this the most “newsworthy” or “political” because it addresses the murders of women in Juárez. In my previous books I have dealt with situations of injustice or torture in one or two poems, but this book tries to take the larger issue of violence against women on, if poetically.

Shelf: *What made you decide to focus on the issue of femicide along the U.S.-Mexico border?*

Martínez: Violence against women has always been important to me, but since 1997 or so I became aware of the large numbers of murders in Juárez. Also, in 2008, I lost my sister to suicide. She had suffered abuse at the hands of several ex-boyfriends. And as my work in both Albuquerque and Santa Fe grew, I made the drive north more and more often, with the Rio Grande at my shoulder. I began to feel the umbilical pull of the river, my connection to all the communities along the *rio*, north and south, including Mexico. Somehow all this sparked the poem.

Poetry is the way I grapple with every intense joy and every intense sorrow/difficulty/grief/tragedy, so it’s always poetry first as my response to the world. This has been true since I was 13 years old, when I started writing. Naturally, I don’t move first to fiction or nonfiction; poetry is my first way of being, so to speak. And as I began the poem I had no idea it was going to unfold into book-length form. I just followed. About a month into writing I realized that I had a very, very long poem on my hands. It intimidated me, but I kept pushing through, though I couldn’t always figure out where all the threads

were leading me. It was thrilling and daunting at the same time. Revising was the hardest thing love had to do as a writer, with 75 or so parts to the poem.

Shelf: *A few of the poems are remarkably short, and poem 63 has no words at all.*

Martínez: Section 63 is a direct response to the previous section, which left me without words, which leaves the poem without words. It is the climax of the poem, a space in which the writer (and hopefully the reader) nearly collapses under the weight of grief and the magnitude of loss.

Shelf: *The phrase “each and her” appears in poem 16. How did this come to be the title?*

Martínez: Ah, titles are so difficult, and this book had anywhere from six to seven titles along the way. But somewhere in the process I realized this title had the power to both humanize each murdered woman and refer to the global community of women (the collective “her”) and re-emphasize what the poem attempts to evoke—me/our connection to each woman who suffers violence and the reality of femicide (the collective communities of women who suffer and die) around the world. The murdered women of Juárez are just one terrible example of a community of women targeted. Honor killings, female genital mutilation, and the denial of education for girls and women in various countries are other examples.

Shelf: *What did you hope to accomplish with Each and Her?*

Martínez: One of my great hopes for this book is that it will raise awareness about the murders of women in Juárez. Because the murders are so widespread and perpetrated by so many murderers, I believe one of the key ways to stop them is to galvanize international awareness as well as raise awareness by everyone who lives and travels in Juárez. The more and more eyes on the femicide and on the streets of the city, the fewer opportunities there will be for abduction and murder. At the same time, the murders need to be targeted at systemic levels, economics, trade agreements, drug cartels, police, etc. But this is not why I wrote the poem. Poets capture the world of a moment, in language, in images, and in metaphors. This moment can be more intimate or more public. It just so happens that this poem’s moment happens to be much more public, so to speak. All poems, I think, are about real life events. What *kind* of event differs from poem to poem. The best poems change our lives, so aren’t they all about real life?

EXCERPT

14.

Ciudad Juárez sits at the front lines of globalization. By 1996, nearly 40 percent of Mexico’s exports were generated by the maquiladora sector along the U.S.-Mexico border. From modest beginnings, the maqui labor force has grown to nearly a quarter-million workers in Juárez alone. Most plants are U.S. owned, and women constitute more than half the workforce.

Maquiladoras can be 100 percent foreign, enjoying exemption from Foreign Investment Law. On average, companies save as much as 75 percent on labor costs by operating in Mexico.

Juárez is also home to perhaps the largest drug-trafficking cartel in the world, supplying the largest drug-consuming nation in the world—the United States.

15.

at the checkpoint border crossing

Mother Father the six fo us
body to body in the Chevy

trinkets blankets
wrought-iron fence pieces
bottles of Montezuma tequila

cheap

over the limit

in the back
wet-seamed to the seat
we blow on each others’ backs
pass a Shasta bottleneck

you cradle and wave
your yellow and indigo paper-flower bouquet

16.

years later
in the recovery room
veins still pulsing with valium

outside the dust-furious desert

you and each and her

somewhere near consciousness

between us

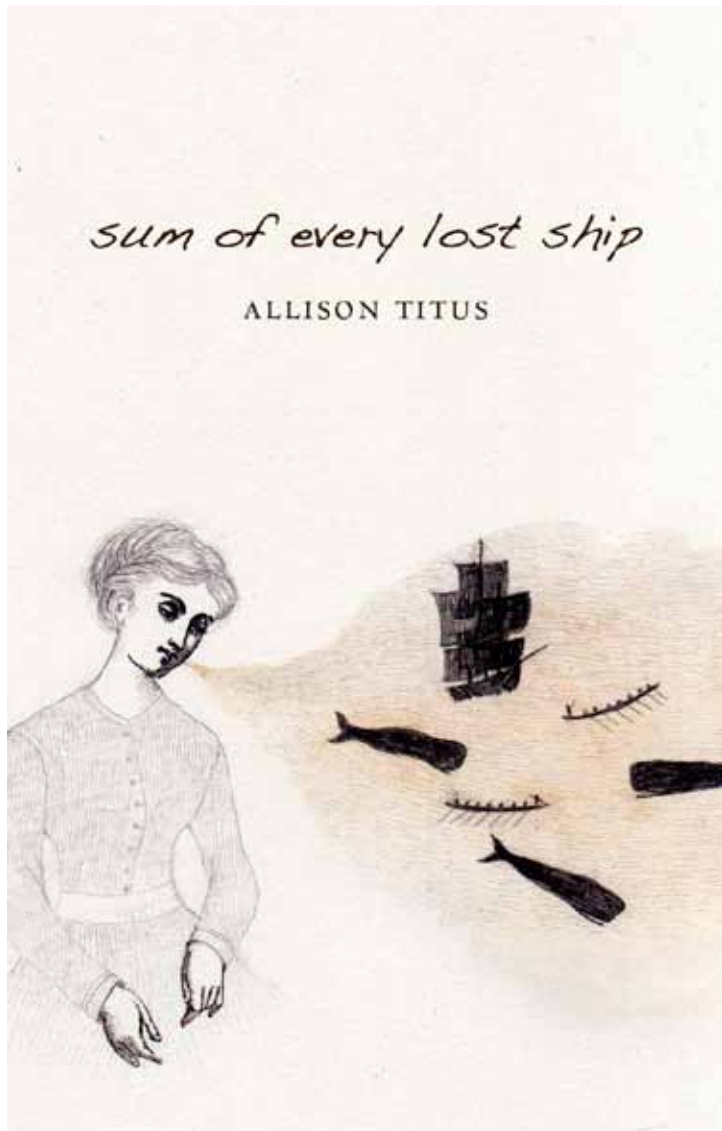
you said

*something kindred
umbilical
numinous*

Sum of Every Lost Ship

by Allison Titus

Cleveland State University Poetry Center

www.csuohio.edu/poetrycenter

I wake some mornings to find a fox trotting down my sidewalk—not with any regularity, but often enough to know that there’s a fox in the neighborhood who comes out of hiding in the early morning hours to do whatever foxes do. (Hunt? Forage? Shop for groceries?) There’s always something mystical about the fox. Even if it may not be true, I always remember seeing the fox on misty mornings, always imagine it disappearing into the fog. In my mind, the fox is magical because, really, what’s it doing in my neighborhood, a few scant miles from a major U.S. city, in the 21st century? In this age of cell phones, plasma television, superhighways, and mega-malls, the sudden appearance of a fox can be as disconcertingly wonderful as seeing a ghost: As far as civilization has come, such apparitions seem to say, There’s always room for mystery.

I mention all of this not because I’m especially enamored with wildlife, but because the image of a fox runs through *Sum of Every Lost Ship*, the debut collection of poetry by Allison Titus, and its effect, like that of the volume as a whole, is much like that of the real fox I’ve caught prowling around my neighborhood. That is, it serves as a reminder that our lives run parallel to other lives that are mysterious and alien to us, lives that have no care for human concerns, lives that are oblivious to the trappings of postmodern living.

And it’s not just the animal kingdom that our 21st-century lives parallel, this volume insists. We’re also living in the same spaces as those who have gone before us. Indeed, the images Titus uses throughout this volume suggest a conflation of

several centuries. Or, to put it another way, these poems fold time and space so that shepherds, narwhals, giants, and all manner of creatures both real and imagined haunt the seedy motels and abandoned factories that dot our modern landscape.

We live in many worlds, *Sum of Every Lost Ship* insists, and each is ripe with wonder.

—Marc Schuster, www.smallpressreviews.wordpress.com

97 Orchard
An Edible History of Five Immigrant
Families in One New York Tenement
by Jane Ziegelman

Smithsonian/Harper Collins
www.harpercollins.com

Reading about immigrant families who lived and sometimes even prospered in unthinkable surroundings arouses in me a strange longing, for I, too, was the daughter of immigrants. I lived in a tenement on the edge of the Lower East Side until I was six years old. The streets were alive with music: Vendors sang out their wares (fruits, vegetables, fish) from clattering horse-drawn wagons. Knife grinders and junk men added to the cacophony. Street musicians sang a capella; violinists played for pennies wrapped in paper and tossed from windows. Church bells rang often on Sundays, gently breaking the Christian Sabbath quiet with carillons.

Desperate to assimilate, I nagged my mother to shop at the A&P, which, even as a child, I understood was the mark of a true American. But she refused, sticking to her old country ways and dragging me from grocer, to baker, to the fruit or fish or butcher shops.

Beautifully written and thoroughly researched, *97 Orchard* brings this world vividly to life as it describes how America transformed the waves of late 19th-century immigrants and how they changed America. Based upon absorbing descriptions of the daily lives of five families who successively lived at that address, Ziegelman weaves a rich, frequently astonishing social tapestry of the period and includes dozens of popular recipes: veal stew, dumplings, zucchini frittata, and cranberry strudel, to name a few.

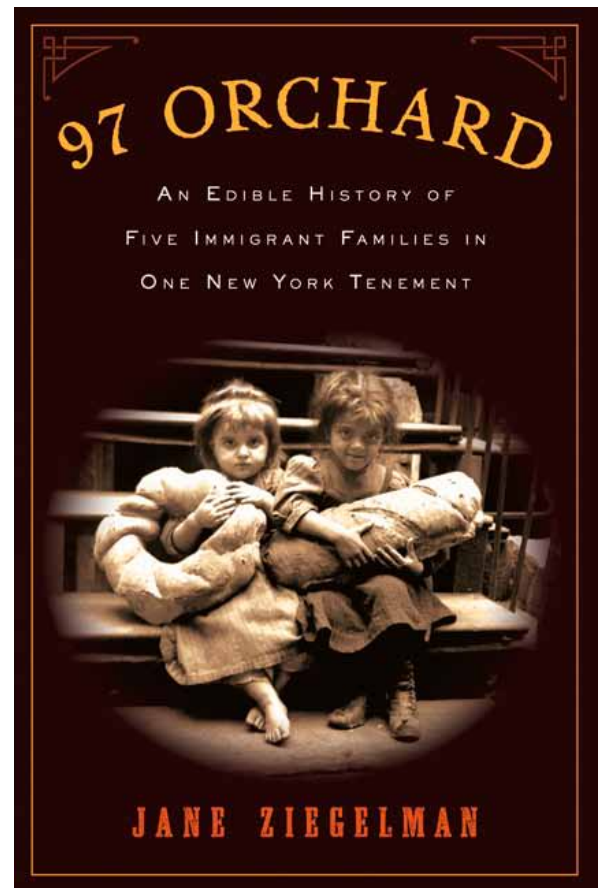
The story begins with the German Glockners, who built and owned the building and were its first tenants. It then chronicles the Irish Moores, the German-Jewish Gumpertz family, the Russian-Jewish Rogashevskys, and finally, the Sicilian Baldizzis.

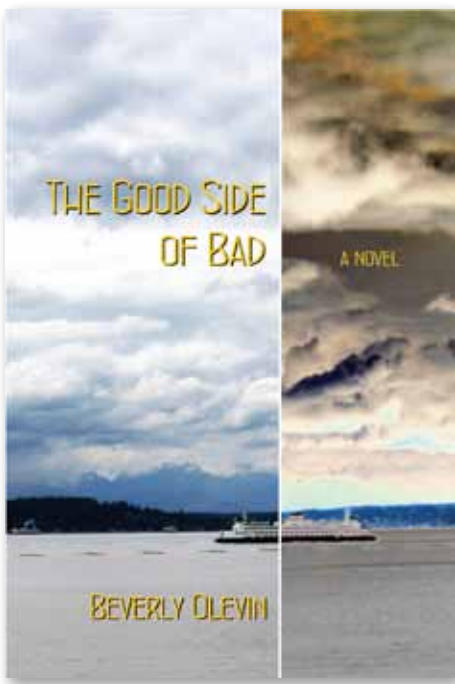
Every immigrant family had a unique history, but most were poor, subsisting on potatoes or flour made into noodles or bread. The Irish arrived with a limited culinary tradition; theirs had been decimated by the British landlord system. They “kitchened” potatoes by adding a bit of fat or spice. At home, the Irish had used seaweed as a condiment; here the poorest might add minuscule bits of salt fish or bacon. Germans brought a rich culinary tradition: stews, dumplings, spices, sausages, sauerkraut and, of course, their beer and baked goods. German Jews, who took many of their food habits from Germans, made their own versions of these dishes. They savored black bread and used peas and beans favored in northern Germany as a basis for filling soups. Because lard rendered from pigs was forbidden to Jews, they substituted goose fat (schmaltz).

The importance of food in maintaining identity led immigrants to establish eating places that eventually attracted curious Americans. The Irish created small eateries—sometimes only carts that served sandwiches, fish, and oyster dishes. Better-financed German establishments introduced the frankfurter and the hamburger, named for cities back home. Jews opened dairy restaurants and kosher delicatessens. Italians founded coffee houses, salumeria (cold meat shops), and small restaurants—a few of which still remain.

If you enjoy eating in ethnic restaurants—and even if you don’t—you will savor the intelligence and zest of Ziegelman’s wonderful book.

—Gloria Levitas, www.momentmag.com





White River Press
www.whiteriverpress.com

THE GOOD SIDE OF BAD gives readers a fascinating view inside the mind of 27-year-old Florence, who is losing her grip on reality. Her two older siblings—Sarah, a divorced schoolteacher trying to rediscover herself, and Peter, a stockbroker precariously perched at the top of his game—are trying to help their sister hang on. At the same time they are both struggling to shape and make sense of their own lives. In this 202-page novel told from the viewpoints of all three siblings, author Beverly Olevin raises some interesting questions about the thin and fragile lines between what looks “right” on the outside and what feels “real” on the inside.

—Jennifer Haupt

Shelf Unbound: *Your novel reads very much like a play with lots of dialogue and not a lot of action. How does your background as a playwright and teacher of theater and acting at UCLA and the University of Washington influence your novel writing and vice versa?*

Beverly Olevin: Since I’m also a playwright, I’m comfortable with dialogue. I love writing dialogue in my prose because it brings the reader into the story in a fresh and intimate way. You also learn about the character’s complexity by contrasting what they say and what they do. In theater the characters need to be driven by their individual subtexts to make the play dramatic. In a novel you have more ways of creating the subtext and getting inside the characters’ minds. I wrote this story as a novel instead of a play because I wanted to follow the journey of each of the characters separately. The dialogue is the juice that spices up their interactions, but the real story is in how each of them face their unique challenges.

Shelf: *I know that you had the idea for this novel in your head for a long time. What made you finally decide to write it, and in just three months?*

Olevin: I was dealing with my own life challenges regarding a major health crisis, and I wanted to explore how the three siblings in my novel would come to deal with the major events, both internal and external, that were changing the course of their lives. The idea for the story had been with me for several years, but I wasn’t compelled to write it until I needed to explore the themes of resilience, compassion, and redemption in my own life.

All of the characters in the novel are on their own journey toward understanding and compassion—both for their siblings and for themselves. I guess that’s what I want readers to feel and take away. When people come to a crossroads in their lives, they not only discover who is there to fight with them but how to find the strength to fight for themselves. Our motivations, our choices, and even our values can be wildly different—as is the case with Sara, Peter, and Florence—but opening yourself to deeply knowing someone can’t help but bring compassion.

Shelf: *Throughout the sections written from Florence’s point of view, it is often difficult to tell what’s real and what she has made up. To what extent do you think we all create our own reality?*

Olevin: We all have a different perspective on reality. Two people can be in the same exact situation and see their options and potential outcomes through different lenses. But Florence is a special case. For her, reality is a moving target. Living in her world is always a delicate balance.

Shelf: *Do you consider the end of the novel hopeful?*

Olevin: Can I answer this without giving away the ending? Probably not. I can only say that the story ended the way it needed to, given each of the characters’ arcs. I had that satisfied feeling a writer gets when they write the last word and feel that their book is complete. It ended as it should have. I’ll let the reader decide the rest.

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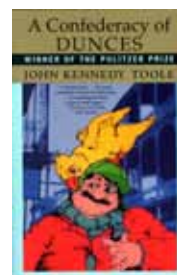
what's on their shelf



The Sound of Building Coffins by Louis Maistros, Toby Press, www.tobypress.com. In 1891 New Orleans, young Typhus Morningstar seeks to fulfill his calling, not realizing that the birth of jazz and events set in motion by a Voodoo curse gone awry will forever change his path.



The House of Dance and Feathers by Rachel Breunlin and Ronald W. Lewis, The Neighborhood Story Project, www.neighborhood-storyproject.org. In his Tupelo Street backyard in the Lower Ninth Ward, Ronald W. Lewis has constructed a museum to the Mardi Gras Indians, Bone Gangs, and Pleasure Clubs of his beloved city.



Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole, Grove/Atlantic, www.groveatlantic.com. Considered to be one of the most accurate fictional portrayals of New Orleans, this book earned Toole a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1981, more than a decade after his suicide at the age of 31.

MAPLE STREET BOOKSHOP

Next time you're in New Orleans, ditch the rental car and treat yourself to a ride on the St. Charles streetcar. Take in the Garden District, the Tulane University campus, and Audubon Park before disembarking at Cherokee Street for the short stroll to the Maple Street Bookshop. Founded in two colorful, porch-bedecked, gingerbread houses in 1964, this local literary institution has a long and storied history with New Orleans novelist

Walker Percy, even publishing four of his works through the bookshop's publishing arm, Faust Publishing. In addition to a rich collection of books by and about Percy, Maple Street also features works by current NO authors, as well as books about the city, its history, and current events. **7523 Maple St., New Orleans, Louisiana, 504.866.4916 or 504.861.2105, www.maplestreetbookshop.com.**

—Dean Hill

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author

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with

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Koch



Rising from Katrina **How My Mississippi Hometown Lost It All and Found What Mattered**

by Kathleen Koch
John F. Blair, Publisher
www.blairpub.com

In her account of the surreal experience of reporting on the all-but-complete destruction of her hometown of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, former CNN reporter Kathleen Koch gives what may be the best description of Hurricane Katrina's impact for those of us lucky enough not to have been caught in its path. By focusing on a single community, Koch brings the initial horror and devastation wrought by the storm—as well as the ongoing and present day (meaning still, right now) struggle to recover—into proper perspective. *Rising from Katrina* puts a name, a face, and a history on a dozen or so families who survived the event, allowing readers to understand the actual impact of FEMA's slow response on real people, not just the media portrayal provided by an inept administration appointee whose boss thought he was doing a "heck of a job!"

—Jennifer Wichmann

Shelf Unbound: *Personal experience as news seems to be a growing phenomenon in media. As a CNN correspondent covering the flooding from Katrina, you were part of the vanguard of this trend. How do you think such subjective crossovers affects journalism, its mission to deliver news, and the interest that the public has in news?*

Kathleen Koch: I ventured with great trepidation into this realm of reporting. I never believed in inserting myself into the story. I often argued against including a standup (me on camera talking straight to the audience) in my reports if I thought it wasn't warranted. I am a traditionalist and believe the news should be the focus—not the reporter.

But apparently audiences are tiring of "straight news" and want both reporter involvement and opinion. I think the former can be used effectively if the journalist exercises restraint and uses their personal involvement to draw viewers into the story, educate and inform them, and make them care. In cases like mine where a reporter has deep personal ties to and knowledge of an area where a major news event is occurring, then their personal take on a story can give the audience valuable insight. I believe things can go awry when a reporter's personality and opinion begin to dominate. In that case, the end result can cease to be news and morph into an editorial.

Shelf: *On several occasions that you note in the book, remaining an impassive observer in the face of desperate times was incredibly difficult for you, such as when you saw the abandoned convenience store with available food and water. Looking back, do you think you walked the correct line or is there something you would have changed about your experience?*

Koch: We walked a very fine line in those days after Katrina, and I think we did the right thing. True, it was frustrating to go back to that convenience store six months after the hurricane and see the food and drinks that were perfectly good right after the storm rotting and covered with swarms of flies. Still, without the owner's permission, we just couldn't

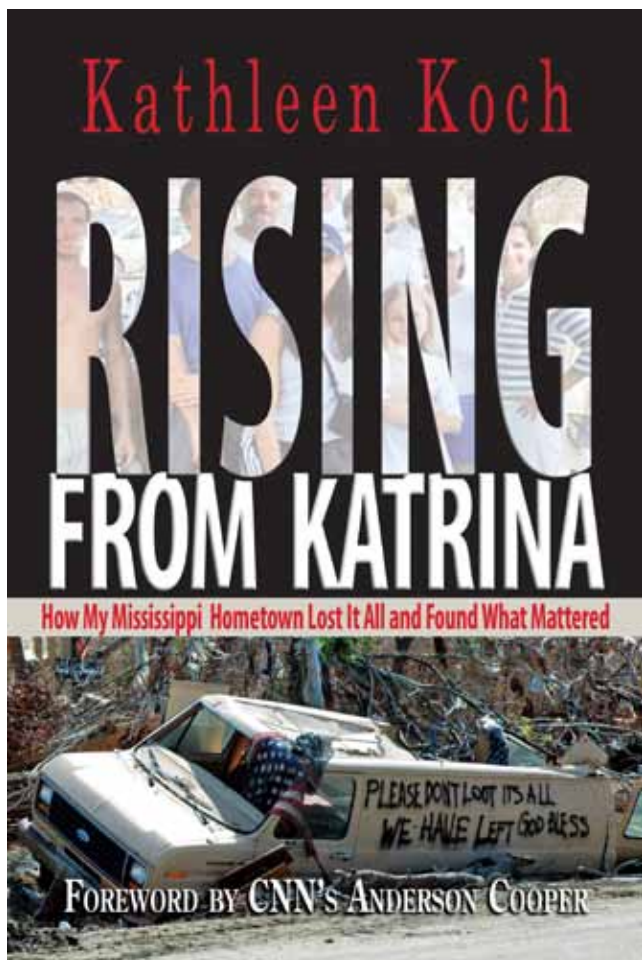
bring ourselves to go in and haul out armloads of items that weren't ours. Yes, we did cross the line and get involved. But my crew, producer, and I did it when we were off the air. Yes, we took blankets, clothing, food, and water to victims. But we bought it ourselves when the first store opened up. Yes, we looked for missing people and gave away our own hurricane supplies before we left. But we did it off camera instead of turning our personal desire to help into a self-congratulatory news story. The only thing I wish I could have changed, I couldn't. And that was to have had more time that first week to locate a missing man before his family found his body three days after we departed.

Shelf: *Your accounting of hurricane coverage, particularly following Katrina, seems more akin to active war coverage than weather reporting. Because of your personal experience growing up with the threat of hurricanes you knew the extent of that peril more than most, but it also had to be a somewhat familiar danger. Do you think you would have as easily accepted an assignment in Iraq or Afghanistan as you did in Mississippi in 2005?*

Koch: No. As a CNN correspondent, I had the option of taking "war training." I never did. I believed that would have constituted an implicit

agreement that I was willing to accept an assignment in a war zone with bullets flying around me. I had young children. I felt it would be irresponsible to risk my life that way for my job.

The risks faced when covering hurricanes, I thought, were manageable. But none of us had ever dealt with a hurricane like Katrina. Now I understand that the greatest threat may not be from the elements, but from the chaotic and lawless situation you find yourself in afterwards. And I also now understand the mental and emotional toll such circumstances can take. Still, it didn't stop me from covering Hurricane Gustav in 2008, nor would it dissuade me in the future.



Shelf: *Many people turn away from tragedy as a mechanism to cope with the stress and emotions their stark reality engenders. In covering Mississippi after Katrina, you repeatedly turned back to the tragedy you witnessed there instead of ignoring it. Why do you think you made this choice?*

Koch: That was home. They needed me. There was no way I could turn my back on them. Mississippians have a long tradition of taking care of their own. Also, the national focus on the tragic levee collapses in New Orleans made me even more determined to keep returning to Mississippi to tell the Gulf Coast's story and make sure people there got the help they needed. Finally, when my producer and I left the Bay St. Louis citizen's shelter Saturday after the storm, I told the people there, "I promise I won't let anyone forget what happened here." I keep my promises.

Shelf: *You and many of the sources you quote remarked on the tendency for Mississippians to look on the bright side of their situation and be grateful for what they had, not dwelling on what was lost. In what ways do you think that attitude played a role in the long wait for relief and lack of recognition that Bay St. Louis and other Mississippi communities experienced?*

Koch: It definitely played a role when it came to media attention. Just like the old adage, the squeaky wheel gets the grease, cities where mayors and public officials scream and curse and sign-waving citizens protest angrily in the streets get attention and coverage. Towns where folks work together, say they're blessed and things will be just fine, don't. Mississippi's story was more nuanced and therefore really needed to be told by a native like me or ABC anchor Robin Roberts. You had to understand the people, their history and traditions, and why they were reacting as they were despite being the ground zero of the worst natural disaster in U.S. history.

Regarding the long wait for relief, I believe that was simply a matter of poor logistical planning. Affected areas received help as soon as the federal and state governments could get it there. Whether their citizens and leaders screamed for aid or not was not a factor.

Shelf: *While covering Hurricane Gustav, you describe driving across a drawbridge in Biloxi and experiencing gale-force winds which almost swept your vehicle off the bridge. I was struck by your shock that some arm of the government had not done*



caption caption caption

something to close the bridge because of the dangers from high winds. How have you maintained your faith in the general ability of government to keep people safe after witnessing first hand the problems that followed Katrina?

Koch: In the case you mention during Hurricane Gustav, I was surprised because a city police car was sitting at the foot of the bridge. The officer had to be aware of the dangerous conditions. I was stunned that the vehicle was not blocking all entry.

In general, I have lost much of my faith in the ability of government to help people following major disasters—particularly the federal government. I tell groups I speak to about crises and disaster preparedness that you will be relying first on those closest to you—family, friends and neighbors, your local government, and help from neighboring states. But anyone who's expecting the federal government to come riding to the rescue will be sorely disappointed. The feds will get there if and when they can. I also think the local authorities are the ones who

best understand the people and their needs. Many found that after Katrina the federal government and some national relief organizations insisted on strict adherence to cumbersome rules instead of taking the speediest route to help the most people.

Shelf: *So many of the individuals living in Bay St. Louis have a remarkable love affair with the water. Following Katrina, many seem to have maintained that connection. How do you think they have eluded feeling betrayed by nature?*

Koch: I think most people there who love the natural beauty of the place also respect the destructive force of the elements. For generations, so many in the region have made their living off the water and they understand that which sustains you can also destroy you. So that acceptance of the risk is part of living on the water.

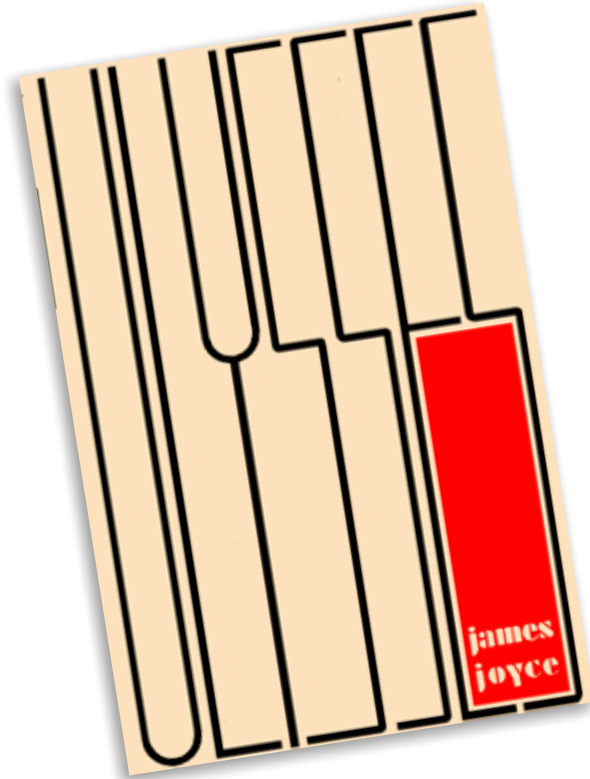
I do see a heightened level of concern when storms approach the Gulf. The town of hardy hurricane veterans has a new sense of vulnerability. As I relate in my book, the first heavy thunderstorms after the hurricane caused widespread anxiety and brought back frightening memories for many. Much of that early trauma has faded. And I am relieved that more residents than ever before now evacuate if a real hurricane threat materializes.

Shelf: *At the end of your book, you relate how so many of those who survived the hurricane have begun to focus on smaller, more meaningful things in their lives—nights home with family instead of shopping at the mall for example. How has your experience with Katrina and its aftermath shaped the values that you live by?*

Koch: I take any opportunity I can now to volunteer, and encourage my family to do the same. I've always been frugal and not terribly materialistic, but now I loath waste and conspicuous consumption. (I can't help thinking how money and energy could be put to so much better use on the Gulf Coast or in Haiti, etc.) I have greater faith in the ability of the individual to make a difference. I have a deeper faith and trust in God. Finally, I have a greater appreciation of the brevity and fragility of life and the need to reach out every day and build bridges not walls to connect to others and make this world a better place. —



LAST WORDS



Ulysses

by James Joyce

Random House

www.randomhouse.com

... **i** was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will yes.

KAEL ALFORD is a freelance photojournalist who was based in Baghdad during the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003. Her book about the experience, *Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq*, was published by Chelsea Green in 2005. Her work from the conflicts in Kosovo and Macedonia was recognized in the Pictures of the Year competition in 2001 and 2002, and she is one of the photographers featured in the CBC documentary *Beyond Words*.

JOHN BIGUENET's fiction, poetry, and essays have appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *Washington Post*, *Esquire*, *Granta*, *Story*, *DoubleTake*, and *Ploughshares*. His new play, *Rising Water*, was nominated for the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in drama. *Shotgun*, his second play in his *Rising Water* cycle, premiered in 2009. He is currently the Robert Hunter Distinguished Professor at Loyola University in New Orleans.

PATRICK DEWITT was born in 1975 in British Columbia, Canada. He has also lived in California, Washington, and Oregon, where he presently resides with his wife and son. In 2007, Teenage Teardrops press published his short book of random writings and bad advice, *Help Yourself Help Yourself*. He has worked as a laborer, a clerk, a dishwasher, and a bartender. *Ablutions* is his first novel.

JORDAN FLAHERTY is a writer and community organizer based in New Orleans. He was the first writer to bring the story of the Jena Six to a national audience, and his award-winning reporting from the Gulf Coast has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Mother Jones*, and Argentina's *Clarín* newspaper.

MELISSA HAMILTON cofounded the restaurant Hamilton's Grill Room in Lambertville, New Jersey, where she served as executive chef. She worked at *Martha Stewart Living*, *Cook's Illustrated*, and at *Saveur* as the food editor.

CHRISTOPHER HIRSHEIMER served as food and design editor for *Metropolitan Home* magazine and was one of the founders of *Saveur* magazine, where she served as executive editor.

JUDY KAHN entered LSU when she was 18 years old as a student, received her B.A. and M.A. in English, taught as an instructor in the English department, served as coordinator of the reading series Readers & Writers for 15 years, coordinated the creative writing program for three years, and taught the course Fiction of LSU for at least 10. She has retired from teaching but will never leave her alma mater.

KATHLEEN KOCH is an award-winning broadcast journalist and former longtime CNN correspondent based in Washington, D.C. She shared in the Peabody Award won by CNN for its coverage of Hurricane Katrina. She lives in Maryland with her husband and two daughters.

GRACE KRILANOVICH was a MacDowell Colony Fellow and a finalist for the Starcherone Prize. Her first book, *The Orange Eats Creeps*, is the only novel to be excerpted twice in *Black Clock*.

SEAN MANNING is the author of *The Things That Need Doing: A Memoir* and editor of the nonfiction anthologies *Top of the Order*, *The Show I'll Never Forget*, and *Rock and Roll Cage Match*. He lives in New York.

VALERIE MARTIN is the author of nine novels, three collections of short stories, and a biography of St. Francis of Assisi. In 1990 her novel *Mary Reilly* was awarded the Kafka prize and later was made into a movie starring Julia Roberts. For the past 12 years she has lived in upstate New York with her partner, John Cullen, and her cat, Jackson Gray.

VALERIE MARTÍNEZ is the author of *World to World* (2004) and *Absence, Luminescent* (1999), for which she won the Levis Poetry Prize. Her poems, essays, and translations have also appeared in *The Best American Poetry*, *American Poetry Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, and *The Latino Poetry Review*. She is the Poet Laureate for the City of Santa Fe for 2008–2010.

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