
~~A TEXAN RANGER.~~

A gentleman, just from Richmond, gave the following account of these redoubtable warriors:

Ben M'Cullough's Texan Rangers are described as a desperate set of fellows. They number one thousand half savages, each of whom is mounted upon a mustang horse. Each is armed with a pair of Colt's navy revolvers, a rifle, a tomahawk, a Texan bowie-knife, and a lasso. They are described as being very dexterous in the use of the latter.

HARPER'S WEEKLY – July 6, 1861

Picking up The Tempo a country western journal **a DEXTEROUS NEW VOICE in Country from the ~ Music HALF ~ SAVAGE Southwest**

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PICKING UP THE TEMPO, a country western journal

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© 2007, Judy Gordon,

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Introduction: The title of this journal comes from Willie Nelson's song, "Pick up the Tempo." Since I am relocated in Garland, Texas, will attempt to publish this journal on a regular basis to seek out new writers and bring back some existing ones.

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Reviews

Edited and Produced by Judy Gordon

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RANGER RITA WRITES

Short Stories that Rhyme

by Ranger Rita Webb, © © 19 March, 2007, Richardson, Texas

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The Big Football Game

Oh hey! Party down! Bring on the beer!
Saddam Hussein, you're outa here!
Dropping some bombs, we'll hear the crowd cheer
At the big football game with Iraq.

Hold onto the ball, make an end run
Offensive strikes are a barrel of fun
Tri-nitro-toluene, one megaton
For the big football game with Iraq.

Make a few yards, gaining some ground
It looks real good until the first down
Ignore the U.N. who calls "Out of bounds"
In the big football game with Iraq

Nuclear touchdown! We win again!
Iraqis: zero; U.S.A.: ten.
It all goes to show that, at last, we are men
At the big football game with Iraq.

Osama bin Laden was too hard to find;
In popular polls, Bush had fallen behind.
A remedy clear came to his small mind:
A televised war with Iraq.

26 Mar 2003

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end

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Ranger Rita Webb © 2007, submits these "Short Stories that Rhyme" to
Picking Up The Tempo, a country western journal, April 06, 2007,
number 1, © 2007. Also available inquire about Ranger Rita Webb's new book,
Cruisin Central, A ROCK'N'ROLL NOVEL, published © 2006, Tonopah
Press, Richardson, Texas,

contact:

Ranger Rita Webb

visit her e-mail: rrital@ix.netcom.com

or contact:

Paperbacks Plus Bookstore

6115 La Vista,

Dallas, Texas, Phone: 214-827-4860

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CAROL GERHAUSER WRITES

© © 24 March, 2007, Dallas, Texas

Pedantic Pygmalion prima dona project
driven to possession a kneejerk farewell

My cat and I are prodigal kids
Beauty we mock with frivolity
love we taunt with debauchery
and only we can up the bids

Profiling, play around, precious love
Part time avenger bent on cuntrol
Banish, allow, debrief anon
Politics laughable they come and they go

Crybaby, unwilling, crabs upside down

Self-righteous, rotten, wrong out of bounds
Pressure in post-modern set up what round
Must see can do pleased if leave town

Hellspont's driving balast
blitzkrieg already out-
Bargains galore gaining
Merc-mont HOPE

Blast off maid to no orders
Sixteen times and perfect 2
Sheridan princess Boy it's on
Now or less she lives today

Gang agley plynth beam beyond
Budapest blaises park and abide
Push me down rough me out
I'll slide off fingers like up from the dead

Impatience irremedial impractically gifted
Bratpack sluggo too
not for me Pieces of 8
Blistered perfect in love talent-wise

Mon megalo transpuded plussed ag'in
Pas de plaisance filing with nessness
Impoled in flip off to drain flat out
Spit tamari bis o' cast angostura trough

Payin' the cost, thanks but
lest we forget my lost so and so
Not a minuteless Jesus up
the curtain Ramblin' Jack.

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end

Carol Gerhauser is a French teacher at one of our Dallas High Schools. She provided a collection of her poems entitled "Her Clean Up Days," in *Picking Up The Tempo*, journal – number 3, September 06, 2001.

[She can be contacted at e-mail Clgerhauser@aol.com]

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ROXY WRITES

Roxy Gordon – "Another North Texas"

[Edited by Judy Gordon]

Who knows where they came from and when. Time is a long time thing and back beyond the few thousand years we think we've recorded, back in what's called prehistory—and of course there's no such thing—history is glimpsed in the mist of inherited memory and myth and intuition and even common sense. And then, of recent times, there have been the diggers, people with pickaxes and dirt sifters come to dig up bits of the past and too damn often, human graves. With their devices, theories and comparisons, they claim now to give us some kind of close-to-concrete look at whatever was.

If you choose to believe the diggers instead of the story-tellers (and maybe the two aren't so unlike), then maybe the oldest sign of man in America is in North Texas. Some different kind of diggers digging a dam near Lewisville in the early nineteen fifties dug up human signs and called the pickax diggers in. The pickax diggers could hardly believe what they'd found.

When they took charred wood, charred wood from cooking pits that still held bones of long gone extinct animals. When they took that wood to their testing device, that charred wood was too old to be carbon dated and their carbon dating went back thirty-seven thousand years.

Nobody had till then yet guessed North Texas man went back so far. Pickax diggers still argue about that date; some say the site can only be twelve-thousand years old, but then those are all likely white pickax diggers and we Indians know we were here much longer ago and most likely forever. Some pickax diggers say those men that long ago weren't Indians

at all. They say no one knows who exactly those men were, but with heads longer than any man today, they say, they were more unlike Indians than white men are from Indians today.

The pickax diggers call people that long ago archaic. Calling any people archaic is a little like calling any time prehistory. But people like pickax diggers need labels to classify and I guess anybody can call anything by any name anybody feels like.

I try to imagine what an archaic human being is like. This is ice age man, but the giant glaciers are far to the north. Here, the climate is much milder, the rain much greater. These people see animals we don't see and they eat most of them. There are mammoth elephants fourteen feet tall and somewhat smaller mastodons. Dwarf horses graze along side giant bison. There are beavers the size of grizzly bears and bears much bigger. There are giant armadillos, giant sloths as big as bears, saber-toothed tigers and lions looking much like the African lions we know today. Camels graze. These people eat these animals, hunted them with spear throwers called later by the pickax diggers, atlatls, called that from an Axtec Indian word. These people are far from farming yet, but they likely eat as much or more of plant as animal, nuts and berries and roots and leaves, ground and roasted sometimes, likely not yet boiled, the pickax diggers say.

Likely they wear skin clothing when they have to, for protection and for warmth; likely not for modesty, because when the white men came, those thousands of years later, they found still the natives here wearing little out of modesty. Modesty seems to have been invented across the sea.

They know of gods and likely demons, terror likely filling their nights as terror fills our own. They bury their dead with ceremony and decoration out of honor and in preparation for whatever journey is to come. They live not long by our measure, perhaps old at twenty-five or thirty.

These are things the pickax diggers tell us from uncovered pickax holes and general knowledge. >From misty myth and intuition and common sense, we can know most of the rest. They were people like us. Sometimes we see them.

Judy and I came back to Texas from California. We stayed for a

while with my grandparents. The highway through their place was widening and my grandfather wasn't able to move the fence, so I did. I was in the pasture one fall day, sawing up an old telephone pole to use for corner posts—when I realized someone was watching me.

I looked to see who and could see no person, but instead I could see an area of some disturbance in my vision perhaps fifty yards away, up over by a bunch of prickly pear. I tried to see; I could see no better. But then, there came to me another way to see, without my eyes which still saw only a vague disturbance. Some other part of me saw a man. He was a man before Indians were called Indians. He was short and stocky. His hair was loose and long and tangled badly. He was very dirty. He was naked.

We watched one another.¹

The pickax diggers' archaic time lasted long, lasted till perhaps twelve hundred years ago. Other people of course came and went in North Texas over all those years. Signs were found near White Rock Lake. In Nineteen-eighty-eight, another Denton County site was found, this one, too, near a lake. This one, the diggers said, was maybe Eleven-thousand years old. There they found where people had killed a giant buffalo.

Thousands of years of ghosts stalk these wooded rolling hills, once choked with brush and vines. As I lay awake late nights in East Dallas, listening to the whines and the roar (not unlike rushing water) of never ending city freeway traffic, as I hear trains and planes and never ending sirens in some three o'clock East Dallas morning, also I can hear murmuring I think, of those untold generations of people here before, people who knew this place as something so much different, people never guessing what this place would be, in half-sleep, almost hallucination, I see them move and murmur. I am visited.

Changes come, not quickly by clock's time, *but coming*.

Those old archaic animals all vanishing, some say by change of climate. Some of the pickax diggers say, people themselves helped the vanishing. They say that those archaic animals had lived here for

countless time, never faced with such a predator, having no real defense against the meanest animal that earth ever saw; they say maybe man hunted to extinction some archaic animals already threatened by change of food supply and weather.

And those new deadly predators got even more deadly then.

Bows and arrows replaced the hand-hurled spears.

Twelve-hundred years ago, or thereabouts, archaic ended, the pickax diggers said, because the way they define it, that's when people hereabouts first began to farm. Farmers, I guess, ain't archaic. These seem to have raised, like modern farmers here, corn and beans and probably squash. And most of all, what farming meant was revolution of life itself.

People no longer were forced to travel (though some did and would till the white man stopped them)—with assured food supply growing year after year, they could turn their attention to more complex ways of living. They began to weave and make pottery. More time could go to organized religion. North Texas was on an edge, actually, an edge between new agriculture future drifting from the east and continuing hunter's life to the west. And that's about the way the first white man found things here.

When the white men came first to Mesoamerica, the lands that became later Mexico and Central America, those white men—at least some of them—thought they'd found some lost remenant of old North African culture, of Egypt. These Indians in Mesoamerica built pyramids.

Those Indians built pyramids alright, but its pretty doubtful they brought pyramids from Egypt. The cultures that built pyramids in Mesoamerica began to develop perhaps Three-thousand-two-hundred years ago. Who knows why people began to build pyramids. Maybe flying saucers landed in both Egypt and Mesoamerica and left plans for pyramids.

And my friend, LeAnne Howe, once professed to believe in flying saucers. She said she believed that Indians were the true natives of earth and white people came on flying saucers. That's why she said white people have this silly drive to build spaceships.

White people have a genetic need to leave the planet earth and go on back home. Me, I don't think I'll buy flying saucers. If there be such thing, then the implication is they are from outer space and I don't believe in outer space. *I think we are outer space.*

When white men first came to explore the Mississippi and Ohio river valleys, they, too, wanted to think they'd found a place Egyptians once lived. Amongst Indians who professed ignorance of the race that had built them, the white men found again pyramids.

And they found pyramids again in Texas.

In Texas, they called the pyramids mounds and they called the builders Caddoes. The pickax diggers think all those pyramid builders came somehow from the same place and that place was likely Mesoamerica.

Sometime a long time ago, people crossed the Gulf of Mexico from Mesoamerica and worked through years up the Mississippi east on the Ohio and built their cities forgetting perhaps from where even the culture came—though some later said the first human beings came out of the sea. And that might be right, that sea might well be the Gulf of Mexico.

When these people came they found mounds left by an earlier, long vanished culture, called *Adena* and *Hopewell* by the pickax diggers. The pickax diggers called these newer mound builders the Mississippi Mound Builders.

Among these I can count in those long ago generations, human beings whose blood and genetics and I imagine, sometimes, genetic memory have come down long years of generation, to me. They, too, murmur in my dreams and hallucinations. I look at photos of tribes, what there are left in this *world-wild*, but still not *quite gone to the Christian, white man's way*. I look at photos of Amazonia Indians and New Guinea tribesmen and try to see the way it was back then. The western edge of the Mississippian Temple Building Culture reached into eastern Texas, reached in its extreme almost to the eastern edge of Dallas County. These Indians were the Caddo.

These people, these Caddo, were first described long ago by a chronicler with De Soto. He said they artificially elongated their heads and covered themselves with tatoos. They dressed in deerskins, deerskins tanned mostly black with brains of buffalo and deer.

The Caddo, like all their cultural cousins, were farmers and they were good farmers. They raised corn and beans and squash and sunflower seed. They raised tobacco, a stronger tobacco than any grown today. They hunted deer by dressing as deer themselves and approaching their game. They hunted buffalo when they could and they could much better after the horses came. They hunted buffalo with dogs. They hunted bears for fat and ate most all the mammals, birds and reptiles they could find. They were great eaters of fish and invented, to catch their fish, what we know now as trotlines—long before the whiteman came. They ate the fruits and roots and seeds and leaves and nuts and stalks and tubers of many plants that grew about.

They lived in grass houses, strong grass houses sometimes coated with mud. Their temples were built much the same and built sometimes on top of mounds built by their ancestors. Fires were kept to burn in the temples, fires that were never to be extinguished. Household fires gone-out, were relit from those.

Caddoes were great makers of pottery, likely the best of any of the southeastern culture. And they made superior bows. They traded the things they made with the pueblos far away in what would become New Mexico.

Marriage was *a casual by European standards, most Indian marriages existed.*

The soul of the dead did not leave for six days.

The Caddoes liked to fight well enough and did often enough but were not so taken as plains Indians with dying a hero's death. They saw no great dishonor in running away to

fight another day. They took scalps, as did most Indians, a custom according to the pickax diggers, brought from Asia and not introduced by the Europeans—as some Indians have said since.

My drama—they took captives in war and tortured their captives. Women amputated captives' fingers and cut off bits of flesh which they might well force feed to another captive. Some captives were stretched on a rack to face the rising sun and again to face the setting sun. Their arms were gashed and their blood was cooked and eaten by women and children, after they bled to death the bodies were cooked and eaten. Some anthropological pickax diggers see in this practice an inheritance of ceremonial sacrifices of Mesoamerica, *this form of ceremony stopped.*

The Caddoes believed in one single god as creator and ruler, but like other Indians, too, in a profusion of lesser gods and spirits. To them, like other Indians, most everything was processed of spirit, living and approachable. Like other Indians, they saw no difference in sacred and profane, everything was ruled by spirit. The anthrop. pickax diggers have called that organization theocracy. The term is wrong.

These people lived and died and danced and made music with buried logs for drums and with flutes and rattles and held ceremonies that were not ceremonies to call for good crops and good hunting and to call for strong people and good luck and they held ceremonies which were not ceremonies to thank the things that are for good crops and good hunting and good luck and strong people.

Caddoes had a strange custom to cry at the arrival of strangers. The Europeans seemed shocked to find their arrival marked not by signs of welcome, *but by tears.*

Those were smart Indians, *those Caddoes.*

Before Caddoes were Caddoes exactly, but already living in the place the whitemen would find them, likely this the

lower Red River, some of them took off to take a drifting trip north. Somewhere on the Platte, these drifting Indians split again, some going on—these to be called Pawnees—and some to go to what would one day be called Kansas. These were later called the Wichita. The Spanish found them first there in Kansas. Then they drifted south again, perhaps pushed by warring pressure, pressed by the Osage and the newly horsed Comanche. These Wichita were the Indians the white men first found most in North Texas. They lived from the Red River down to Waco. The Wacos, in fact, were a band of Witchita.

Another band lived just north of Dallas and another, the Tawakoni, lived just south. When they came back to what would become Texas, they still spoke a language close to their eastward Caddo cousins.

These were very dark Indians, some said them to be the darkest skinned of any. *And were they tatoed.* The men, at least and maybe some women, *even tatoed their eyelids.* They tatoed their faces and bodies with geometric shapes and connecting lines. Women tatoed their *breasts in concentric circles.*

Like their eastward Caddo cousins, Wichitas were farmers and grew much the same thing. Like their eastward Caddo cousins, they lived in grass houses, built strong to stand in the wind of southern plains. Unlike their eastward Caddo cousins, they adopted more of the buffalo hunting ways of their neighbors on the plains. When they went on the winter hunt for buffalo, they also adopted the lodging of their neighbors and lived for them in hide covered teepees.

Wichitas were fighters, at war a long time ago with Apaches and Osages. They fought like cats and dogs with the Comanche till *the French got them to treaty.* In Texas then, they fought the Lipan Apaches and Tonkawas. They fought like most other plains Indians, warparties being organized by someone wanting revenge or glory. They went to take scalps and captives and horses. They believed in *counting coup*, but they

also believed in killing.

Wichitas had, too, one main god, this one known to be unknown in human understanding. Then there was the sun-god and next after that the morning star. There were several lesser men gods and the moon goddess, Bright Shining Woman, and other *women gods*.

The Wichitas believed that earth first appeared from the sea. That was *the first era*. In *the second era*, people and animals spread out all over the world, but *took on evil ways*. Spirits even went wrong. So a flood came and destroyed the world except for *two people, an ear of corn and the bow and arrow*. These two people *got the whole thing going again*. They taught all the truths of earth and life and heaven and death. This was *the third era*. And the Wichitas believed the fourth era was already well on its way. In *the fourth era*, things would go flat to hell. The *air* would be *unbreathable*, the *water undrinkable*; people would get physic powers and hear animals and trees and water talk. People would loose their sense of reality and ultimately no more children would be born. Then a big star would appear and select some human being to explain to the dying people. Then the sun and all the stars would become human beings themselves again and the *first era would start all over*.

To the southwest, down over central Texas, into the hill country and over to the Edwards Plateau, there had lived for centuries, roaming bands of Indians who spoke a language not really ever tied by the anthro pickax diggers to any other tongue. They lived for a long time on the banks of creeks and rivers, roaming about to hunt buffalo and other game. They picked the food that grew wild, but they never farmed. They liked to camp on the ancient sites of long ago ancestors. They made some pottery and they traded with the Caddo who lived across the Trinity which was the northeast edge of these people's range. These were the Tonkawa, but not called that

until the whiteman, Comanche and history itself drove them together, these wondering bands, into something resembling, in whiteman's terms, *a tribe*.

Tonkawas didn't wear much clothing, but like most Indians and more than some, they liked to decorate themselves. They were covered with tatoos and paint and earrings and necklaces. Women seem to have worn less than men and children even less. The old Texas Ranger and historian, Noah Smithwick, remembered a Tonkawa baby at some white gathering, the baby dressed only in a pink ribbon bowed where the fig leaf might be. They wore their hair long, plains style, loose or wrapped or braided.

The Tonkawas were called cannibals by their enemy the Comanche—who were not. And neither were the Tonkawa except for ceremony, like the Caddo.

All these peoples, the bands of the Caddo and the Wichita and the Tonkawa, came together around Ft. Worth and Dallas and to the north and to the south. None of these fought each other much, if at all. Some Cherokees, driven west from Georgia and Tennessee by white pressure to East Texas, came, in Eighteen-nineteen, to North Texas under Chief Bowl. They encountered Kickapoos in would-be Wise County and were badly beaten, loosing one third of their warriors. But mostly these Indians hereabouts would rather trade with one another. Once or twice a year, they would gather, among other places, at the Cedar Springs that really was and is a spring and gave Dallas the name for that part of town. They would trade and gamble and race horses; they'd eat and dance and I expect drink. Some Indians lived there more permanently. By Eighteen-forty-one, soldiers had camped at the spring and the Indians went some place else.

Whitemen were all over the place. Whitemen had been around for centuries by then. The Spanish had fooled around this part of Texas and so had the French. The first

whiteman from the United States to come was probably Philip Nolan.

In about Seventeen-ninety Philip Nolan got permission from the Spanish to cross the line to Texas and hunt wild horses. That year and the next and maybe some after, Philip Nolan hunted horses and lived with Indian people at sites which would one day become both Ft. Worth and Dallas. In Seventeen-ninety-nine, he met with Thomas Jefferson and the Spanish got wind of it and feared he was out to steal Northern Texas and make a new nation, this one of Indians and American frontiersmen. On the other hand, Americans on the border thought Philip Nolan was a traitor, out to build a break away nation from the Union.

In Eighteen-one, Philip Nolan came back to Texas and the Spanish heard about it. They set out to find him. They caught up with him at his fort somewhere likely between Cleburne and Waco. There the Spanish killed him. Sixty-two years later, Edward Everett Hale wrote the short story everybody's read in high school called "The Man Without A Country" and used the long dead Philip Nolan's name and perhaps his person for the man without a country set forever to sail at sea.

Thirty-five years after the Spanish killed Philip Nolan, Texas became a nation. The greatest leader of that nation, the man who more than any other, *made it a nation*, considered himself a friend of Indians. And likely he was. He had lived for a time in Tennessee and later in Oklahoma with the Cherokee. His name was Sam Houston. Houston negotiated treaties with all the Texas Indians he could find. The East Texas treaty included the Caddoes. But a year later, the senate of the Republic of Texas refused to ratify. They didn't want *to treat* with any Indians. They wanted them Indians quickly to travel *to gone*.

That same year, Eighteen-thirty-seven, some Tejanos took off to kill Indians on the west side of the forks of the Trinity and instead found themselves about

to die and took off in full flight. They ran down the Elm Fork and found safety finally at the big bluff that disappeared years ago into what we know as *Dealy Plaza*. An Indian road, the Kickapoo Trace, crossed the river somewhere there.

In Eighteen-thirty-eight, Mirabeau B. Lamar was elected president of the republic. Mirabeau B. Lamar was the first well known poet in Texas and he was foremost among Texians as an Indian hater. He was Sam Houston's arch-enemy.

Also in Eighteen-thirty-eight, Indians—likely Wichitas or maybe Tonkawas—whoever they were, they talked English—killed half of two dozen men surveying down in Navarro County. Indians already well knew what parties of surveyors meant.

Lamar struck in Thirty-nine. Citing some unlikely plot that the Cherokee and other Indians were out to side with Mexicans to take Texas back, he sent the army and the Rangers to drive East Texas Indians out. Some Caddoes made it to the Choctaws and Chickasaws up across the Red River. Some fled to Louisiana and then commenced to raid the Texians back across the border.

That year, Eighteen-thirty-nine, marked really the beginning of fifty years of Indian/Texan wars to come. Years later, an old Texas Ranger down in San Antonio wrote a song called "The Texas Ranger" about a young ranger who really didn't want much to fight. I decided to write the other side. I called it "*The Texas Indian*."

"The Texas Indian"

Come all you, Texians,

Whoever you may be.

I'll tell to you some troubles

that happened to me.

I've been dead a long time

so my name I will not tell.
But I was a Texas Indian—
so I do not wish you well.
At the age of Seventeen
I joined a Comanche band.
We rode from the Palo Duro
down to the Rio Grande.
Our leader Black Eyes told us
"When the Rangers come in sight,
see to your medicine,
I'm sure we'll have a fight."
I saw the Rangers coming.
I heard them give a shout.
My feelings at that moment
no white man could know about.
I saw the flashes from their guns
their bullets came quite near.
My heart was high within me;
my war song came out clear.
I thought of my old mother,
with tears to me she'd said
"You must go and fight the white man;
and make sure that he is dead."
She said, "You must be brave,
and protect our native land.
Drive these white skin thieves from Texas.
Ride well with Black Eyes' band."
I saw the smoke ascending;
It seemed to reach the sky.
I thought at that moment,
My time had come to die.
The Rangers kept on coming;
Black Eyes led us on.
"Remember men," he shouted,

"We are fighting for our home."
We fought them full nine hours
before the fight was o'er.
The like of dead and wounded
I've never seen before.
Five of Black Eyes' band
Crossed to the other side.
We had six more that were wounded
and barely could they ride.
Perhaps you have a mother
Likewise a sister, too.
And maybe a woman to
weep and mourn for you.
If that be your situation,
and although you'd like to roam.
Remember with your coming,
you are stealing our home.
And we'll protect it well,
Our families and our land,
So your hair might well hang
From the lances of our band.
You'd best hitch up your old wagons
and go back to Tennessee.
Or better yet, find a ship,
and head east across the sea.²

In Eighteen-forty-one, Sam Houston was again elected president of the Republic of Texas. That summer, a band of white men came to chase North Texas Indians and found some about where Regal Row crosses Interstate 35 in Dallas now. One white man was killed. That expedition took off, but another came in the fall and built Bird's Fort south of Euless in today's Tarrant County. General E. H. Tarrant, that year, destroyed an Indian village on the Trinity north of Dallas and John B. Denton was killed by Indians on the creek that took his name up in Denton County.

And John Neeley Bryan with four friends crossed over the Trinity from Bird's Fort to a place he'd visited a year or so before, the high bluff on the Trinity where the Indian fighters had found sanctuary in Eighteen-thirty-seven. The places they built there are supposed to be the first of Dallas. Bryan had been clerking up at Holland Coffee's Station on the Red River, trading with the Choctaw and some Cherokee. They said he spoke several Indian languages. He owned a series of horses he named Neshoba from the Choctaw word for gray wolf. His dog, he called Tubby, not for fat, but instead after the Choctaw for killer like in the name Moshulatubee.

Dallas was here to stay. Indians were mostly moved to the west. In Eighteen-forty-three, Sam Houston came to treat with tribes left hereabouts, the Caddoes, Delawares, Shawnees and some bands of Wichitas. He camped on the Grape Vine Prairie out about where Las Colinas uglified up the earth a hundred and thirty years later.

The Indians were *running on Indian time* and didn't arrive till after Houston had to go home but indeed a treaty was made and called *the Treaty of Bird's Fort*. It didn't do much for Indians. In Eighteen-forty-six Texas became a state of the Union and Texas got all unowned land and Indians got the feds to protect them and in reality, to chase them. In the spring of Forty-six, the Indian agent Robert Neighbors met on Tehuacana Creek with Caddoes, Comanches and Wichitas. That was the beginning, *The Brazos Reservation*, of the plan for the only North Texas reservation. It never was worth much. The local Texans closed it down in four years; they didn't want any more damn redskins inside their borders. Most everybody, most all North Texas Indians were herded or chased up to the Indian Territories. Some other Indians up there killed half the Tonkawas, but some Tonkawas made it to Mexico with the Lipan Apaches and their people were

still there as late as the late Nineteen-twenties.

The white man Texans of North Texas had done their job well. It was going to be a good long while before Indians came drifting back.

One famous Indian, the Comanche Quanah Parker, the last and best Comanche warchief, *he became a rich man* and raised his tribe from defeat and despair by involving himself with rich North Texas ranchers like Burk Burnett and the Waggoner Ranch. Kin by his white mother Cynthia Ann Parker to the Parkers of North Texas, the Parkers of Parker County, he toured county fairs and town gatherings telling of the old times. *By century-two became a hero to North Texas, this last wild chief of the Comanches.* He lived in an Oklahoma house that Burk Burnett built him; it had stars on the roof. Quanah was a judge for years; *he had five wives at once.* He built a railroad.

¹ "Visited" available on Roxy Gordon's CD, *Unfinished Business*, and Wowapi Press's chapbook.

² "The Texas Indian" available on Roxy Gordon's CD, *Crazy Horse Never Died*, and Wowapi Press's chapbook.

(continue Roxy Gordon's "Another North Texas" to PUTT no. 2)

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OBSERVATIONS OF WILD LIFE, WITH JENNIFER KIDNEY

Songs of the Seventh Decade and Other Poems

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"Growing Old Gracefully"

My parents' generation spoke
of growing old gracefully.
Did this mean eschewing
dyed hair and face lifts,
accepting the creasing,
drooping, and silvering

of advancing years,
something women did less well
than men? Or did it mean
my own mother's scorn
for those gray-haired frumps
who let themselves go
while she frosted her hair
and painted her lips and nails
with "Cherries in the Snow?"

Now plastic surgery
is featured on TV.
We're told that sixty
is the new forty, that red
is the new blonde
(to compliment chapeaux
worn to Red Hat teas),
and everyone is looking good
in the wall of mirrors
at the gym.

When I look in the mirror
I discover an alien
under my chin
and my father's mustache below
my ever more prominent nose.
*I have no plans to grow
old gracefully.* What's the point
of artifice that can only keep
the appearance of age at bay?
The surgeon's knife I'll shun,
and I'll continue to gray.
I am old, and I deserve
the rewards of age. I'd rather

evolve into the hag
I've spent a lifetime
to become.

=====

"Original Skin"

I was born
in original skin.
It fit me well
and suits me still
though millions of cells
have replaced themselves.
Now wrinkled and mottled
and sagging in places,
it's uniquely mine.
If I believe in
intelligent design,
I'd say I wore
a designer original.
I'm always garbed
in my birthday suit
beneath off-the-rack
tee shirt and jeans.
*I'm comfortable in my skin
and glad I'm not a snake*
whose fate it is to shed
his marbled hide
as seasons dictate.

=====

"The Thwarted Jay"

A bird without a wing
is a hopeless thing,
but still he strives to live,
hopping across the lawn
to feast on seeds
fallen from the feeder,
hoisting himself into the holly
in order to leap to the rim
of the birdbath for a drink.
I'll never know how
he made it out of the nest
without falling to certain death.
He's grown to be as blue
and beautiful as the others
but will never jay
from the tops of the trees
or experience the joy
of flying like his brothers.
There are laws, both nature's
and man's, that prevent me
from keeping him in a cage
where he might survive
to a bird's old age.
A cat will probably get him,
or a hawk, or even my dog,
not knowing what's rustling
behind the shrubbery,
blindly pouncing on my prey.
I pray for a miracle,
a sudden spurt of growth,
scapulars, coverts,
secondaries, primaries,
a bright right wing

so that he might wing
away into the world
beyond my yard.

=====

"Pyramid Scheme"

When I learned I'd been nominated
for state poet laureate
I decided to celebrate
by cleaning my refrigerator.
Now my refrigerator is a poem,
each shelf and surface gleaming,
jars and bottles arranged neatly,
vegetables nestled in plastic bags
in their bin, butter behind its door,
unmoldy cheeses stored in their drawer,
boxes of pasta beside the carton of eggs,
and the single discordant note
of a mysterious substance in the process
of transformation ceremoniously discarded
to preserve the magical symmetry
of the pyramid of food.
And then, nourished by the honor and the order,
I decided to write this poem.

=====

Jennifer Kidney was nominated for Oklahoma Poet Laureate,
along with twelve other poets, including N. Scott Momaday
and Yevgeny Yevtushenko. Dr. Kidney's recent book,
Women Who Sleep With The Dogs, published by Village
Books, 2004, is \$10.00, plus in the United States add \$4.00;
for each item shipped to an address outside the United States,
add \$10.00, shipping and handling. Also available limited

quantity of her *Animal Magnetism*, published by Wowapi Press, 1985, \$3.50, inquiry.

To order each book, contact:

Jennifer Kidney

1232 Windsor Way

Norman, Oklahoma 73069

Phone: 405/329-3395 or E-mail: jen1kidney@hotmail.com

=====
ART COELHO WRITES
=====

Box 249

Big Timber, Mt. 59011

Ode to 'Not Seeing It Comin'

It doesn't matter how much you got
stored up from working or inheritance,
what's heaped into your lap by chance—
or what's salvaged from hind-tit
you won't see coming from all sides.

Don't pay no mind to the nomad of insurance,
or any potential speculation dancing in rye
because every expectation overflows from lies.
Your good luck charm might as well be a barn cat
caught out in a terrible blizzard while mousing
against a headwind where she unsuddenly dies.

Your savings won't measure even a hoot
when that crooked card player of fate
can deal his aces all day long,
but in short order it's gonna get down to deuces

like a rattlesnake coiling in your boot.
Snake eyes is all you will possess that's wild,
and lost treasures will be all you can shoot.

Dealing from the bottom is a twisted grant of sacrifice.
Dealing from the top an abyss.
And everything you miss like a road gypsy
will become a Brazilian bank teller well-endowed—
but it'll fail you, put its brakes on,
and you'll go off screaming in
a rainless event smothered in non-bliss.
When you cotton to too much foreign magic
and a kiss becomes a hiss,
there's a poem in every leer—
better to put your baby shoes back on
'cause at least you can *play with what you steer.*

All your gaffs will be too heavy to lift,
and all your laughter will be smitten by inlaid piss.
Your best friends will shrink from your name.
You'll wonder out loud who you are,
but wisdom will be a game
counting your seared visions and scars.

You can't go fishing.
Hooks are all broken.
Line won't get wet.
Trout are poisoned.
Your net is no longer a net.

Stumbling ain't even deliverance
or any semblance of peace.
It calls attention to nothing.
And you'll be too broke to pay taxes.

G-men you can no longer rent.
Love will lose its chariot.
The family dog will pull a buck deer
carcass into your feather bed.
You'll only be able to part a swarm of gnats
with a truth so fat from being underfed.

Funk won't be funk,
but *skunk remains skunk*,
the smell colliding with your torn flesh.
Fresh air will grow rank crazy hair.
Destiny will throw up on tomorrow.
And all the six guns of sorrow
will only make Heaven more scared.

It's the pinnacle of rot being aware.
The only gifts you will have
will all be wearing the same stained underwear.

end

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For a British fellow, much of Wes McGhee's new album captures Tejas, and holds captive those die-hards who refuse to share it. South of the border, "Moon over Ciudad Acuna," accordion and all, has some sweet guitar that is not "goin' out of style." This track is more about something than "Al Andaluz and You" is about "you," but instrumentally the latter's pauses and percussion appeal to one's heart and perhaps tenders its purpose.

One cannot say enough good things about "Don't Let the Monkey Drive."
OH, MY GOSH! With hints of Levon Helm's voice and style, this is an apocryphal vision of the fearful (us) relinquishing control to the desensitized ("full of passionate intensity").

The abundantly clear lyrics are luckily not muddled by the appropriate blues/funk sound. Two other goodies are “Happy Anniversary” and “Is Anybody There”—good guitar on the first and realness in the second (shades of Sam the Sham, ya think?). On track #9, “Shame on You Rosie” Wes almost sounds Rockabilly-sexy at first, and the lyric is nifty. The only weak-ish tracks are “Blue, Blue Night” which is like truth going to beauty, and “Raggedy Annie” (it takes one to know one?) though the girl must’ve loved honky-tonks.

And last and most, a track with ROXY GORDON, far too minimal, with a whining soprano saxophone one is sure will drown him out—if he were there, but the part one is saved by Grandma, the real McCoy, who told stories, too. Thanks, also, for Texas#2, part 2, which is full of sincerity and love that those who know will feel as well.

[Please visit, maybe order from Wes Mcghee Website—wesmcghee.com]or[wes.mcghee@hotmail.co.uk]

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