
~~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,
708 Chandler Drive
Garland, Texas 75040-7775
Phone: 972/485-0990 or e-mail: judygordon708@verizon.net

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 first Friday of each month to seek out new writers and bring back some existing ones.

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Edited and Produced by Judy Gordon

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ROXY WRITES

Roxy Gordon – © 2007, “Beatlemania”
[Edited by Judy Gordon]

I'd lie on my bed and listen to their records through the wall, and to their musical conversations:

Bruce Channel singing: *Haaaaaay Hay, Baby...*

McMann and Fisher (with the record): *Haaaaaay Hay, Baby...*

B.C.: *I wanna know-ho-ho...*

McM.&F. (still with record): *I wanna know-ho-ho...*

B.C.: *If you'll be my girl.*

McM.&F. (much louder than the record now): *If you'll be my*
(now a shout and a scream) *GIRL!*

McM.&F. (stamping their feet and pounding their desks and still screaming so I can't hear the record at all): *HAAAAAAY HAY, BABY.*

I WANNA KNOW—HO—HO IF YOU'LL BE MY GIRL!!!

B.C. (now I can hear the record again): *When I saw you walking down the street...*

McM. (no longer singing, but still shouting): *That's OB-SCENE!*

F. (also no longer singing; also shouting): *OB-SCENE!*

B.C.: *I said there's the one I'd like to meet...*

When McMann and Fisher bought a new record, it was a ceremony. Take for instance when Fisher brought home *Fresh Berrys*.¹

Fisher knocked on my door passing. By the time I got the door open, he was already in their room. He was taking the record out of its sleeve. He handled it correctly, touching it only on the edge. McMann was lying on his bed. Records were about an inch deep on the floor, the desks, the chairs and on the beds—except for where McMann was lying. Almost none were in their covers. A week old glass of milk was sitting on *High Heel Sneakers*. Candy wrappers, dirty socks and all kinds of other clothing were intermingled with all the records. McMann's ROTC uniform was piled in the corner, with his hat neatly perched on top and a single, un-spit shined ROTC shoe, neatly on top of the hat.

Fisher placed the record player arm down gently and correctly. He raked a half-dozen scratched, finger-printed cover-less records off a chair and sat down with the *Fresh Berrys* cover to read the song titles as they played.

With the first full-volume sounds of Chuck Berry, other people drifted in.

Fisher concentrated. McMann, lying on his back in bed, had an expression which might be best described as goofy. He smiled vacantly. His eyes were half-lidded and rolled back.

They were both gone, wafted away on a raft of pure musical energy: **Chuck Berry.**

*

We all knew about the Beatles. We'd read *Life* magazine, I guess. But we

hadn't heard them. The radio played strictly top 20 and the Beatles weren't yet. And besides that, the radio station probably felt a little like the rest of us. There was something not quite right about a rock and roll band being from England. What did the English know about rock and roll?

Could you imagine Jerry Lee Lewis with an English accent?

So we were curious, but not anxious. And when McMann brought home *Meet The Beatles*,² it wasn't anything particularly special. To us, it wasn't. To McMann, as it turned out, it was something else entirely.

It's the same scene as *Fresh Berrys*. Except it's McMann who knocks on my door, passing. And it's McMann who gently removes the four mop-tops' record from the sleeve. *Fresh Berrys* is by now cover-less and mixed up with the other records on the floor, bed, etc. Fisher is hunched over his desk where he's been studying. Now he is relaxed, waiting for the record.

McMann does the ceremony. He places the arm down gently. He sits in the title-reading position. He should concentrate. Fisher should get goofy.

But a strange thing begins to happen. McMann is not concentrating; he isn't reading the liner notes. His initial expression is something like when he was listening to *Fresh Berrys*. But it's fast moving on. Half way through *I Want to Hold Your Hand*, it's already way past goofy.

And Fisher, who should at least make it to goofy, hardly even starts. He doesn't seem to understand. He looks at McMann's face and to the record player. He keeps his mouth shut through *It Won't be Long*.

In the silence after *All I've Got to Do*, Fisher asks McMann (and us all), "What is that shit?"

The Beatles' record didn't find its way to the floor. It was never fingerprinted. McMann played it a half-dozen times a day. Each time, he replaced it carefully to its cover and rested it on the window-sill. It leaned against the window, its front cover visible. Up there, it was like a God-record, lording over all the others.

Fisher wouldn't have replaced it so carefully. But Fisher never played it. He thought it was some kind of fluke. McMann had bought an obviously bad record. Soon, McMann would see it belonged somewhere around Bobby Vinton and forget it.

But night after night, I'd hear the Beatles through the wall. And McMann's one-sided musical conversation. Fisher never made a sound.

One night, a week of the Beatles later, McMann was singing along with *I Saw Her Standing There*. It was really getting to him. On the subdued scream after the line, "She wouldn't dance with another..."—something like, "oooooh,"—McMann couldn't take it anymore. "OB—SCENE!" he yelled.

Barely above the record, I heard Fisher say, "Rat's ass."

Their door slammed and a couple of seconds later, the outside door slammed. I saw Fisher from my window. He was going to the library. For a little peace and quiet, I

guess.

One day Fisher sat down with me in the dining room. “You know what that son-of-a-bitch hasn’t done?” Fisher wanted to know.

“What son-of-a-bitch?” I asked him

“McMann,” he said.

I said I didn’t know what McMann hadn’t done.

“Well, listen,” Fisher said, “you know he always gets a haircut once a week for ROTC. Well, he ain’t now for four weeks.”

“Maybe he forgot,” I said.

“That ain’t all,” Fisher said. “I been watching him at night. He’s been combing his hair down toward his eyes. He stands there at his mirror and combs his hair down. He keeps it down with flat-top wax.”

I’d noticed McMann’s hair looked a little weird.

“The son-of-a-bitch is growing fucking bangs,” Fisher said. “McMann’s growing fucking bangs.”

*

That was near the end of the semester and I left that spring. I never went back to that college and I never saw Fisher or McMann again. But I think about them a lot. I wonder what happened to them.

I see several choices.

McMann and Fisher may both live in LA now and have their hair grown out to their asses. Except McMann’s is neat to his ass while Fisher’s is dirty and standing out in

strange directions. Or they both may live in Eastern New Mexico where McMann manages a Penny’s store and has bangs and a moustache, while Fisher runs a gas station and has sideburns. Or maybe McMann went ahead and got his Phd. and teaches a pop culture American Studies course somewhere and is a personal friend of Tom Wolfe. If so, does that mean Fisher dropped out of college, got married, has six kids, rides a motorcycle and shoots speed?

I guess it does.

Or maybe it’s Fisher who has neat hair in LA, manages a Penny’s store, or teaches pop culture. And maybe McMann does all that other stuff.

I can’t figure it out. I don’t have the slightest idea whatever the hell happened to McMann and Fisher. But I think about them a lot. And what they mean to us all almost a full decade after the spring of 1964.

*

I glance around. Two guys are standing about two feet from my elbow—looking

at me. I do my best to casually look away. Out of the corner of my eye which of course has never left them, I see them look at each other and then laugh. The long haired son-of-a-bitch is such a chicken-shit you can laugh at him. Damn right he is.

After a while we get our food; time passes; the place clears out a little. Each person gives us his loving attention as he leaves. Just before we are ready to go, a cowboy with a wonderful flat top walks to the door. "Hey," somebody calls, "where you going?"

"I'll be back," he says with a nice big grin. "I'm going to get some sissors." Ha ha. Ha ha ha ha ha ha.

I've heard a story that Tom Jones was once in Abilene, hardly fifty miles away. Coleman wanted to have a little homecoming and decided to do *The Fantastics* in the high school gym. They invited him down. He told them he was too busy to make it. I say to David, "**Damn**. My own home is a foreign country."

David says now he understands more about ghetto riots. "If I had to go through **that** every day," he says, "I'd shoot the redneck bastards, too."

*

WE ARE IN AUSTIN—home of fifty hippies, according to *Time* magazine. David and Carol and Judy and I are all students at the University of Texas, and David and Carol are teaching assistants. This is the Saturday night before Labor Day. We are drinking beer in Scholz's Garden which is probably Austin's ranking landmark. Bill Brammer immortalized it in *The Gay Place* as the "Dearly Beloved." It's meeting ground for students; young executives and insurance flunkies in shiny suits; rednecks; Texas liberals ("self-styled" the local papers call them and may not be far from wrong); and fat middle-aged Germans. There are five of us.

The fifth is Hal Stowell, a poet who's just returned from Mexico. We're just sitting here drinking beer, talking loud, and making noise, when a guy appears at the table. "May I sit down?" he asks, and then immediately answers himself, "No. I'm interrupting your party."

"No, no," we all say. "Sit down. Sit down." All of us except Hal. Hal frowns at him. The guy sits down.

He says to my wife, "You really tear me up." Or maybe he says, "turn me on."

"I'm with the farm workers' march," he says. Now we notice he is probably Mexican. There is a march coming to Austin demanding a State minimum wage law. Last year they marched all the way from the Rio Grande Valley where they are striking. This year's walk is only about fifty miles to commemorate that earlier march. "We came up to ask your help," our new friend says.

David later refers to him as the "fraternity one;" he kind of looks like a fraternity boy. He tells us his name is Angel. We don't know really what the hell he wants. What help? I decide he's probably pretty uncomfortable. I ask him some questions to make conversation. He answers me. There is silence. He says, "I'm interrupting your party. Maybe you can't do anything for me. I'll leave."

“Wait,” says Hal. “Maybe you can do something for me.” Hal tells him he heard in Mexico last week about a massacre in Acapulco. Thirty-two people were killed. It was something to do with the police and a union. “You know anything about that?” Hal asks. Angel scowls. Hal says, “Well, I thought you might know something about it.”

“I know it’s a different country,” Angel says. “I’m an American.”

Okay. None of us doubt it. Angel leaves and goes back to a table with five other Mexican Americans. So we go back to drinking our beer and being loud.

The next visitor is drunker than the first one. He has a beard. He’s selling tickets to a benefit for the strikers. I buy one and ask him to sit down. He says, “We’re going to make all the Anglos swim back to Europe.”

“**Your** people came from Spain,” I tell him smugly.

He says, “You never heard of a Mestizo?” A Mestizo is part Indian, part Spanish. Most people of Mexican descent are Mestizos.

“My grandmother’s Indian I tell him. That makes me an Anglo Mestizo.”

“You live like a European,” he says.

“Don’t bet on it.” I tell him.

“You see these scars, Gentlemans?” he points to his forehead. “Hell’s Angels did that.”

Hal gets up and goes to the table our visitors are coming from, and Angel returns to take Hal’s seat. I’m still talking to the one with the beard. Angel listens and begins to laugh—at things I’m saying which I certainly do not consider funny.

Goddammit! I’m beginning to be pissed off. After all, this is **our** territory. The one with the beard is saying, “I was with the Viet Nam Day Committee. The Hell’s Angels beat us up. Gave me these scars.”

“What were you doing in California with the Viet Nam Day Committee?” I ask him.

“My grandmother was with Pancho Villa,” he tells me. “She indoctrinated me. When I was little, one time, the teacher every day hunted in my hair for lice. Finally I told my grandmother. She went to school and kicked that teacher’s ass.”

“Where’d you go to school?” I ask him.

“San Antonio,” he tells me. He asks me where I’m from.

“San Angelo,” I say. San Angelo is the nearest town to Coleman that most people have heard of.

He knows about San Angelo. He says, “They wouldn’t cut my hair in San Angelo. My hair was over my collar.” He measures how much with his finger. “They wouldn’t cut it. Out there, they make you wear your hair long.”

All this time Angel—this fraternity one—is still laughing.

The guy with the beard says, “I had a loaf of bread under one arm. And a bottle of wine under the other. I was Jesus Christ.” I don’t know why he says that. Probably because he is drunk. Anyway, I am certainly drunk.

So I say, “You can’t be. Jesus was black.”

Angel quits laughing. “Hey, White Man,” he says to me, “who told you that?”
 “A black guy,” I tell him, which is the truth.

Now the bearded guy is talking to Carol. In Spanish. Carol teaches Spanish. Angel looks at them. “Look,” he says. “Soul brothers. **She** thinks.”

So now I’m thoroughly pissed. Angel and I have an argument which goes something like this: I tell him he’s putting us down. Laughing at us. Doing all this stuff which pisses me off. He tells me I’m an Anglo. Anglos are son-of-a-bitches. I’m not Anglo. I tell him. I tell him I’m his friend, or at least potentially his friend. I didn’t sit down here to start putting **him** down. He sat down to put **me** down. He says he hasn’t been to school like we have. I tell him school has nothing to do with it. I tell him that his taking for granted that all Anglos are son-of-a-bitches is like Lyndon Johnson taking for granted that all Red Chinese or whoever are son-of-a-bitches. And vice-versa. I tell him that’s wrong with the world **right** now. Boy...

And then the bearded one says, “That’s right. You Anglos are killing babies in Viet Nam.” My wife who is also a little drunk, jumps up out of her chair then.

“You bastard!” she says. “That’s not true. We are **not** Lyndon Johnson.” She runs off crying.

Angel is a bit shocked. He says, “You should go after her.”

“I can’t,” I tell him. “She’s gone to the ladies’ room.”

Then Lon Taylor and another striker show up. It seems the strikers with the car are going back to their camp. This new one wants to stay with us. Hal says he’ll take all three of them home. Lon Taylor was just there drinking beer and David, going to piss, told him we had a table full of wild farm workers. They all know Lon. He’s writing a book about them, they tell us. They say he’s one good Gringo. The one with the beard is now upset about making my wife cry. He says he’s sorry three or four times. He says we aren’t killing babies. He says we are Viet Nam Day Committee. He tells Carol she’s beautiful. ‘Man,’” says Angel, “we should not kid with these people. With these people we should make brotherhood.” My wife comes back.

The bearded one says to her, “Lady, I am cursed because I made you cry. Please forgive me.” She tells him it’s okay. I’m tired of talking. I go to piss.

When I come back, everyone says we’re leaving. They say we’re going to my house for a party. Okay. The strikers ride with us. They want us to find them some girls. We don’t know where to find any girls this late at night.

When we get to my house, the one with the beard says—about my cookstove “Hey, that’s a good stove. If I had a truck, I would steal it.”

Lon, who is driving a pickup, says, “I’ve got a truck.”

The striker says, “You’re an Anglo.” He says to David, “I was lying about the Hell’s Angels. I just wanted to scare you because you’re the biggest white man I ever saw.” He asks Lon, “Why are you so fat? Ain’t that gentleman the biggest white man you ever saw?”

This is all in the kitchen. In the livingroom, Angel and my wife are still arguing. The bearded one says he really is cursed for making my wife cry.

My cats wander into the kitchen. The bearded one says, "Look at these cats. Children are starving in China. These cats should be fed to starving children in China."

"The hell you say," says Hal.

"Are they your cats?" he asks.

"No," says Hal, "but you aren't going to feed my friend's cats to any Chinese kids."

Then one cat hops up into the bearded one's lap. "See," he says, "see how this little animal likes me. This proves I'm a true believer." He pets the cat.

Lon has to go home. The bearded one goes into the livingroom and asks Carol for a little kiss. Angel asks me for my address. I give him some copies of the literary magazine I edited and write my address in one of them. He says, "I can't read."

"Shit," I say.

It's late as hell. They have to get up in the morning and march. Hal's going to take them home. Angel takes the magazines. "I'll read them," he says.

I haven't seen or heard much out of the third one. He seems to be quieter and cynical of the others. I give him copies, too. Sometime earlier, he's told David he is a writer, though he forgets the magazines, leaves them on the kitchen table.

So they go out the door. And the bearded one—I'll be damned if I can remember his name—says, one more time, "I'm eternally cursed. I'll never be forgiven. I made the lady cry."

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end

¹ "Fifty" 17 March, 1994, Roxy Gordon's column published by *The Coleman Chronicle & Democrat-Voice* newspaper, Coleman, Texas.

² "Fifty" 17 March, 1994, Roxy Gordon's column published by *The Coleman Chronicle & Democrat-Voice* newspaper, Coleman, Texas.

(Coming next issue will have Roxy Gordon's "*Billy the Kid, A Screen Play.*")

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RANGER RITA WRITES

Flash Fiction

by Ranger Rita Webb, © è May 16, 2007, Richardson, Texas

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Dance on a Polar Bear Rug

The summer I was fifteen, I got a job as a mechanic at my uncle Larry's speed shop.

The afternoon of the second day I worked there, Mrs. Lovejoy brought her white-on-white slushbox Impala in for an oil change. She was beautiful and I talked to her. When her car was ready, she offered me a ride home, but instead, took me to her apartment. Everything was white and immaculate: furniture, walls, carpet, and a huge polar bear rug in front of the white tile fireplace.

She gave me a whiskey-spiked Coke, and slowly stripped in front of me, teasing me with her hands. She was insatiable on that polar bear skin. Nearly every evening for two months, while I was high on spiked Coke, she taught me things that no fifteen-year-old boy needs to know.

One day, alone in her living room, I saw her white leather address book open next to the phone. She had written "Danny" above my dad's private phone number. *Nobody* called him Danny, not even Mom. I flipped it to another page, and when Mrs. Lovejoy came back, I asked her to take me home because I felt sick. When we got to my house, I told her that I never wanted to see her again, but refused to give a reason.

I've often wondered if Dad knew that I'd been with his girlfriend. It still makes me sick to think about it. If I'd known, then, what I know now, she would've gone to prison.

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Rita Webb © 2007.

Rita Webb's new book, ***Cruisin Central*** © 2006, Tonopah Press,
Richardson, Texas.

E-mail [Rita](#)

or buy ***Cruisin Central*** at

Paperbacks Plus Bookstore

6115 La Vista

Dallas, Texas

Phone: 214-827-4860

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CAROL GERHAUSER WRITES

© è 01 June, 2007, Dallas, Texas

The Hero and the Underworld: *THE FALL BY ALBERT CAMUS*

(Continued from Carol Gerhauser's "The Hero..." PUTT no. 2)

Phase two is liberation. He tries to upset all those he had helped, but most keep to the script. His self-accusation is not enough, and, while recounting near the dikes of Holland, he gets a sinister feeling from the

Doves. As the story within a story continues, en route on the dream landscape of a timeless, foggy sea to visit the Zuider Zee, Jean-Baptiste proclaims the scum floating on the water are we. Here he begins his account of a descent into debauchery. Without love or complete theater, he has found the realm of truth a total bore. As he slips into the "little ease", a prison cell built so one must stand hunched over, he feels he does not deserve self-knowledge and is only worthy of a life with no promise or punishment. Ironically, this stage of drinking, slumming, and sex confers on him a sort of immortality, like a long sleep. As his body gives out, he reveals that jealousy is a result of a weakened imagination and that divinity is invoked in proportion to one's ignorance. All testify to the "little ease", and though the cry in the Seine has never ceased, it becomes the bitter water of Baptism. He admits guilt and participation in the guilt of others. Judgment is of men, whereas, he briefly admits, religion or God guarantees innocence; Christians have pardon on the lips but sentence in their hearts, and we all are involved—none are acquitted. He becomes a prophet without a God. To prevent being judged without a law, he brings the law. Bringing fear of other, debauchery, and now penitent to the table, the true confessions begin. In his room in Amsterdam is the real painting "The Innocence of the Lamb". This acquisition of stolen property becomes to him an instrument of the unknown—to them who pass by a copy, fulfilled by its in-authenticity.

Coming into the stretch, Clamence separates justice from innocence. He spreads his words, which now hold a purpose, thinly to silence the laughter. Freedom is a solitary chore, and without God in such a context, time is dreadful. Condemning moralizing as virtuous Satanism, and the Church, begotten by the freedom that says that men must shift for themselves and which believes more in sin than the Grace all want, what Jean-Baptiste Clamence learned on the bridge is to be afraid of freedom; that he should obey like in a democracy of collective slavery. But here is where he remains outside, by his reverse reasoning, putting judge first, before penitent, like a death in life. He constructs a web or mask for the straying bourgeois who wanders into the seedy Mexico City. His self-confession he uses as a mirror changing as "I" to "we".

Feeling superior in knowing, happy in acceptance of his duplicity, he has not

changed. Crushed under his own infirmity of repentance and doubt, he is acting like God hearing testimonials—pity without absolution, understanding without forgiveness. In the end he forsakes hope that there is an existing order. The challenge of time locates the engaged-man making a choice of field of action under circumstances. Thus, Clamence feels the discrepancy between man and his milieu. Dignity implies freedom, whereas there is no measure in revolt. In the “Myth of Sisyphos” (the one Camus wrote as well as the one we all know), the protagonist grasps the absurdity and void of a world where all is allowed. But his grandeur is in action without losing groundless faith. The battle itself suffices, he happily says in the essay’s last line. “His lucidity is what crowns his victory, for there is no fate which cannot be surmounted by scorn.”

According to Rene Girard, *The Fall* transcends both *The Stranger* and *The Plague* in denouncing self-justification of both involvement and non. It is in his solitude, though, that Meursault, the hero of *The Stranger*, discovers happiness but is alone, innocent on a sea of guilt, and dies a victim of others, a judge of judges. Jean-Paul Sartre called *The Fall* “Camus’ greatest work...a dreary Dantesque world where tortured souls wander.” The narrative, like Hell in the *Inferno*, moves in concentric circles with an absence of time. Clamence may reflect Camus’ social concerns and moral thinking, an annunciation of man’s total depravity and universal guilt. From an advocate for the poor to self-degradation, the story begins with the hero at the Mexico City and ends at his apartment at dawn after “the fall” or loss of the light. Like the doves, snow falls. He muses that perhaps one of his recruits will arrest him for the art theft, he a man who risked neither life nor limb at a time when both lives, his and the girl’s, could have been saved. “Oh well”, he says, “the water would have been so cold.” He concludes the story with “Heuresusement”—fortunately—as he sets out to walk in the snow.

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 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 clemming@dallasisd.org]

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 (Next issue will have Carol Gerhauser’s “Sonnet.”)
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OBSERVATIONS OF WILD LIFE, WITH JENNIFER KIDNEY

**Trash and Treasures*

© è 2005 by Jennifer Kidney

ROCK STAR

Sixth grade found me caught between Perry Como and the Monotones, with a little Patsy Cline snuck in. (Mother hated Patsy Cline and was delighted when she appeared on the cover of the local TV guide with her name misprinted as "Pasty" Cline, which Mother felt more aptly described her voice.) Even though I already aspired to be a poet, I found more truth and beauty in the lyrics of popular songs than in the poetry then considered suitable for children. I wouldn't discover Emily Dickinson until ninth grade. But believing in lyrics could lead to trouble and disappointment.

"Who wrote the book of love?" queried that wonderful bouncy alluring song. My best friend Carol and I decided to answer that question by writing our own version of "The Book of Love" for the neighbor boys on whom we had crushes. Mine was Jimmy who lived on the corner of Danville and Tenth Street. He had soulful brown eyes and a bristly brown crewcut and dimples when he smiled. Carol's was Steve who lived across the street from her. He was blond and blue eyed, exceedingly tall for his age and resultingly gangly, but love is blind. I don't remember exactly what we included in our book; I **do** know that we each wrote poems, carefully printed and illustrated with hearts and flowers, declaring our love for the objects of our affection, **and** we signed our names to them. We wound ribbon through the holes of the notebook paper to bind our book and hid it first under Jimmy's front porch. Alas, Jimmy never received this magical gift that would make him fall in love with me forever; his mother found it instead and called Carol's mother who called my mother who wanted to know what the heck we'd been up to. Carol and I vehemently defended ourselves—it was art, it was literature—but secretly we were glad that our hoped-for boyfriends never laid eyes on the book considering the reactions of our mothers.

"Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket, save it for a rainy day." It **was** a rainy day, and I was on my way to pick up Carol for the walk to school. Because I had to wear a dress, climbing the fence into Carol's back yard was not allowed, so I had to walk around the corner past Jimmy's house, and there on the sidewalk was a perfect five-pointed star that seemed to be composed of some strange material, both glittery and earthy. Of course, I picked it up and put it in my pocket and went to meet Carol and make the three

block trudge to Henry Clay Elementary. I forgot about my star until after school when Carol turned down Danville and I walked alone to Cleveland Street. I reached in my pocket to retrieve my treasure, but there was nothing there—just a little silty dust. I started to be sad, but then I realized that I must have a pocketful of "stardust" left behind when my star magically disappeared, and that was okay.

Years later I realized that a fallen "star," a meteorite, would look like nothing but a rock, and that the magical star I had found was probably formed from mud by Jimmy's little sister playing tea party in the rain with a star-shaped Christmas cookie cutter filched from her mother's kitchen. But her childish handiwork gave me proof of magic and truth in lyrics that sustained me for many years, and I still smile to remember that once I had a fallen star in my pocket.

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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

(Next issue will have Jennifer Kidney's "*The Gestalt of Garbage*.")

ART COELHO WRITES

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Box 249

Big Timber, Mt. 59011

"I'm Getting Old"

I'm getting old,
which has nothing to do with years
or putting my finger deeper into the pie—
one day I want to paint a small canvas
to sell it
for cold cash,
a touch of artistic whiplash,
and a flash that's still a real flash.

The very next day
I want to do a big painting
from floor to ceiling
where half of it
is elephant ears,
and the other half
would take Dali's surrealism
to give justice to my fears.

I am only consistently proud
of not being in a hurry for any lack of politics.
Only poems still follow me with fishing leaders.
Yet I look over my shoulder with disinterest
and try to frighten them away.
“What do you guys want?
Can't you see I'm wearing non-lyric shoes?”
Before they can state their case I say
“Shoo!”
Then quickly give them wisdom's hind tit:
“When you're deep in shit and the void don't wink
don't go looking for any clues,
unless you're halving raw clams in the kitchen sink.
I used to ask myself when I could still remember youth
and might suddenly blink,
“What do I want beyond all this spinning?
I mean when you're this late there is no gate;
besides, I'm already on a running board of fate.

The lyric tonight is dread.
tomorrow it might be a waterfall.
Nudes soaking my dreams in blood
'cause the unexpected has its human dead,
and their flight is nothing but rude.

I myself through Shakespeare's cyclone would laugh,
but everything cheerful already carries my gaff;
and blowing the word whistle on truth is crude.

I blow a whistle only for solitude and Mary Magdalene.
It helps keep the slow drain of tin soldiers smiling too much.
I simply travel through today with my own coins made by time
(sometimes I like to think they sparkle,
that they'll bring a new age with a winding donkey staircase
and where everything is in mime.)
It's like stark destiny only has newspaper feet.
Nevertheless, I'm not making any headlines.
I just run out naked into the street
and mercy's halo is never part of the elite.

There's a Crazy Horse future for some us
and that fortune in eagle feathers is never spent;
it's not this hollow-eyed landlord coming for his rent.
It's not just buried in that same old sound
of trick or treat,
or holding up again an ancient wound
a catfish whisker away from defeat.

===

end

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(Next issue will have Art Coelho's "Thoughts on Painting.")

KAREN X WRITES

by **Karen X** ©è 6-1-07

I Don't Even Wish I Cared

**I hung the roses from the ceiling—except one.
It's still in a vase and refuses to go limp.**

**The rest are dying, drying upside down from a cheap department store fixture,
looking quite fetching in their atrophying
state-
rather the way our further dying love is somehow appealing
in its inverted form.**

**On Valentine's Day, you dropped by with the roses and a big
piece of licquer-soaked chocolate cake.
After you left, I ate that cake in bed and was nauseous in nightmares all
night long.**

***DO NOT eat foot that has been handled by a former lover!*
It's as indigestible as their continuing presence in your life.
And hang their gratuitous gifts above your eyes' horizon.**

**And for all we've been to each other and what we're not to each other,
*I don't even wish I cared.***

KAREN X

***Registered Yoga Teacher
and Writer at Large***

KXatlarge@aol.com

WOWAPI PRESS, 1993, published

TENDER BLUE FLICKERS,

by **Karen X.**

=====
RICK SIKES WRITES
=====

AA STORY OF LOVE AND TIME@

RICK SIKES
August 5, 1969

On a rocky, cactus infested ranch, in Texas, there lived an old billy goat. His appearance was enough to disgust horned toads, not to mention his odor, which would gag a buzzard. For many years, the old goat stumbled over rocks and briars aimlessly, being the only goat in the area, since the cowboys had long since barbequed the last goat in the pasture, they thought. The old billy was lonesome. The cattle, sheep and other animals spurned him. About the only company he knew was when two or three coyotes would get hard-up enough to chase him. Then he was stubborn as hell, and not anxious for their company anyway.

One day, he came upon a little wild rose growing between some huge boulders, surrounded by weeds, as a little moisture seeped from the crevices in the mountain. He first started to eat the rose, but it was too beautiful to be gobbled up in a couple of bites. It was fascinating and he felt something that he had never felt before. Suddenly, he felt he was much younger at just the sight of the pretty little rose. He encountered an odor, which put him in a romantic mood. He grazed around the area for days, ever near the rose. He would wander a few feet away, only to turn around every few minutes to see if it was still there, and that no other creature was near. He began to get jealous of the weeds growing so near his rose and besides, he reasoned, that the weeds were too ugly to be near his delicate rose. So, he ate all the weeds around it, some of them not very good flavored, but it was something he must do. He had never been so happy as this summer. At night the warm breeze would blow the fragrance of the rose into his nostrils, as he went to sleep by the side of his greatest treasure. He would awake each morning to find it even more beautiful, fresh with little droplets of dew.

Then, in late summer, his rose began to fade and look bad, as the air became cooler and faint signs of autumn had begun to show. The goat was getting old, and had seen many winters, but the rose was worrying him and he ate very little. He was a very poor looking creature. Shortly after the first frost, it happened. The rose lost all of its petals and the leaves dropped off. This was too much for the old goat. He had helplessly stayed near until the last of the leaves were gone. He could go no farther, so he just lay down by the stem of the rose and died.

The following spring two cowboys were up in the rocks looking for stray lambs. One of them saw the rose and said AHey, Ed, come >ere an= look. Ain=t that the purdiest rose you ever seen?@ Ed turned to look. ADamned shore is.

Looks like one of them painted pictures, don't it?@ The cowboy agreed with a nod and said, ALook at them goat horns a layin= there. That must a= been that ole= Billy we never found.@ Ed said, AYea, I guess he just got so old he died or sump=n. Bet if he had a= seen that rose bush, he would of >et >er up in a couple of bites.@ The other cowboy turned, AYea, prob=ly would. If it weren=t so derved purdy, I=d take that rose to my ol= lady. I=ll leave it, though. It=d prob=ly wilt if I pulled it anyhow. Besides, it=s kinda= nice for that ole= billy to have a purdy flower like that by his grave, the onery ole= cuss@.

For many seasons, there bloomed an extra beautiful red rose beside the bleaching bones. Finally, both were gone, covered with sands of time and completely forgotten.

====
end

RHYTHM REBEL

Rick Sikes

900 N. Neches

Coleman, Texas 76834

Phone: 325/625-5014

Rick Sikes' CD's For Sale

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Rhythm Rebel, ©èby Rick Sikes' chapbook,
published by **Wowapi Press, 1996, 2001**, inquiry.

JUDY GORDON PAINTS

#200

Sitting Bull, Sioux Medicine Man – 1883, original media black ink on paper, a shade of grey or purple casting over it. Date: November 1982, dimensions:

8½" x 11," current whereabouts of original: Private Collection, Garland, Texas.

On July 19, 1881, Sitting Bull, surrendered to the U.S.A. In November, 1982, painted subject from a photograph, to be used in a Wowapi Press chapbook, *Wowapi: Anything Written In Any Form*, by artist.

A butterfly very high-profiled on the man's hat.

First painting was owned by Marquette Herring, coowner, Paperbacks Plus Bookstore, painting regretfully, was lost in the Gaston fire in 1993, in Dallas, Texas.

Words written by Judy:

The more they learned.

*The more they quested,
The lower
Became
The corners
Of
Their mouths.*

All prints 8½" x 11" archival matte paper available.

====
end

ENTERTAINMENT

#100

by way of marq, we received Sarah Wrightson letting us know **VINCE BELL** has launched his fourth recording, ***Recado***, on SteadyBoy Records, with his producer **Cam King**, tastefully recorded **Bell's** songs in acoustic arrangements that bring out the subtle magic of his carefully crafted lyrics. **Texas CD Release Date: JUNE 1, 2007, All Good Cafe, Dallas, Texas, with Freddie Krc and Cam King.** On purchasing CDs order from your local record store, or to Amazon. Contact: www.vincebell.com or contact: Sarah Wrightson sarah_wrightson@vincebell.com., OR call: **505.466.6432 or 505.670.8720 cell.**

Lerking in the background we might have Richard Dobson and Townes Van Zandt.

#200

by way of marq, we have The Cactus Cafe, Austin, Texas, bringing us **TOM RUSSELL and Gretchen Peters** on Friday, **JUNE 8, 2007.**

#300

by way of marq, we have Sat. **JUNE 9, 2007, ADAM CAROLL and MARK JUNGERS** will be rebooked song swap at **WRECKS BELL'S Old Quarters Acoustic Cafe. These young guys are some of the new voices and faces we will have the pleasure of hearing for a long time.** On Fri. **JUNE 15**, will have **THE HUDSONS** with **RICKY STEIN**, then Sat. **JUNE 16th, SHAKE RUSSELL** with **MARIETTA ROBARDS.**

#400

by way of marq, we have **Lu MITCHELL – Sat. JUNE 16 – Crossroads Coffeehouse, Winnsboro, Texas (w/Catch-23), at 7:30 p.m., NEXT – Sat. JUNE 30th, 2007, Lu MITCHELL at the VanZandt County Community Theatre, 416 S. Fourth St., Wills Point, Texas.**

#500

by way of Charley

Christian Brooks Band /Moose Fest

Hello Special Friends!!!!

This is a Reminder to Mark Your Calendar,
Grab your Chair, Grab your Friends and GET READY
to **Come Out to the MooseFest SAT. – JUNE 2nd, 2007!!! Noon – 8 pm**
Where: at the Moose Lodge #2277 (near Webbs Chapel and Beltline)
3110 Towerwood Drive in Farmers Branch – Tickets: \$15 each.

*It's also a bit of a plea.....Please call the hotline and
buy your tickets so we can have the "up front" cash
we need to make this Baby MooseFest a BIG TIME!
Pay it Forward if you will.....
The Cause is Calling Us!!!!*

BTW – Sponsorships are also still available.....

Thanks for Helping our Local do Good Things!!!!

Feels good doesn't it??????

See You There!

The 1st Annual MooseFest Committee

Karen Ward – ward.karen@tx.rr.com

Christian Brooks snookie2000@earthlink.net - www.myspace.com/snookie2000

#600

by way of marq, we have **Rod Russell IDes – Sat. JUNE 30 – Poor David's Pub**, new location beside Bill's Records, on Main Street, Dallas, Texas.

#700

by way of marq, we have **SLAID CLEAVES with ADAM CARROLL – Fri. JUNE 22, 8:00 PM – Granada Theatre, Doors at 7:00 PM on Greenville Ave., Dallas, Texas.**

#800

by way of charley, we have **R. KEVIN OBREGON, Director of NINE EYES STUDIO GALLERY**, located at 130 N. Peak at Elm Street, one block north of Main/Columbia, by the DART bldg., Dallas, Texas. **A 27-hr painting session – EyeOpener: One** will be the inaugural event of the series, beginning **7 PM, Friday, JUNE 1, 2007, ending the following day at 10 AM.** [kevinobregon@hotmail.com]

#900

by way of charley, we have **Steve Cruz's Mighty Fine Arts presents "BLAZE of GLORY,"** featuring new work by **OMAR HERNANDEZ**, opens **Sat. JUNE 2nd**, reception 6-9 PM, located **407 N. Tyler, Dallas, Texas.**

#1000

by way of charley, we have **From the Ends of the Earth's South American Photo**

Exhibit "*Seeking Shangrila*" by IAN BLAIR on Sun. JUNE 3rd, 6 PM at 839 W. Davis St., Dallas, Texas. Ian can be contacted 505.263.8777.

#2000

by way of charley, we have a Gallery Opening – BATH HOUSE CULTURAL CENTER on JUNE 2, 2007, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM, at 521 East Lawther Drive, Dallas, Texas.

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end

REVIEWS by Judy Gordon* and Carol Gerhauser+

Deva Deaton *Deva**

1. "What A Fool You Are (For Loving Me)" We get low down sad with memories we cannot deny. 2. **Then**, with "A Million More Just Like Him," Deva really *picks up the tempo*. Please contact: www.deva-music.com or Go to Official Website of Rick Sikes – www.ricksikes.com

DEVA DEATON *Deva*+

Deva Deaton is a lovely girl with a big strangely-older voice, and her folks write good songs such as #1 "What a Fool You are for Loving Me" (SHE has lived that long?) and #2 "A Million More just like Him" (again) though the latter is a better vehicle for her lusty voice (more pitch-perfect) and has great instrumentation (use of the subjunctive "nothing...if there were" impressive!).

James Hinkle Quintet *Straight Ahead Blues**

3. and 4. are pretty much background music while maybe Hinkle takes a break, then with 5. "Glide On" almost Musak, 6. We get picked up "Don't Start Crying Now," 7. "I Ain't Got You" (onward picking up time with Hinkle). 8. "Let The Backdoor Hit Ya" is just an old saying brings us to easy going. 9. "Sad Nite Owl" might be another break background. Then with 10. "She Likes To Boogie Real Low," going to have a little fun. 11. "Swooshy" (Maybe short break taking you nowhere). 12. "Watch Yourself" (Pick up time; you might find the love of your life.) Here comes the answer with 13. "When Did You Leave Heaven." 14. "Cool Blues," we must remember this is **THE "JAMES HINKLE QUINTET"** and we head home with *Straight Ahead Blues*. Please contact www.jameshinkle.com or www.bluelightsmusic.com.

JAMES HINKLE QUINTET *Straight Ahead Blues*+

Title-wise one figures it out; unfortunately the jazz is not straight ahead nor

does the blues need to be interrogative; in fact such tracks are tol'able if not good as in #1 "Manner Jammer" (Wolf meets Little Richard), "Ugly Woman Blues" and "Rooster" ("I like Ike" Turner who wrote both). Also good are two instrumentals (hooray for Frankie Lee Sims of Big D fame) "She Likes to Boogie" and "Swooshy" "Don't Start Crying Now" he could have sung almost as well himself instead of Johnny Mack. An insipid version of "I Ain't Got You" is audible (finally learned the lyrics) and needs...to give the drummer some.

Interspersed are cool jazz mutants which are also good (or cute) like a Mose Allisonish "When Did You Leave Heaven" (good piano) and "Cool Blues" which has been done with less soul by others and is better than "Alexandria, Va." Where Wes Montgomery meets *South Pacific*. "Glide" has some good bari sax. All in all the guitar's tone is jazzy but quite good, and the only rec would be—pick one groove, preferably #2's or #8 "Don't Let the Back Door Hit Ya"'s, stick with it, and "Watch Yourself".

===

end

ROXY AND JUDY GORDON PRODUCTIONS – PLEASE VISIT ROXY'S WEBSITE.

1. *TOWNES ASKED DID HANK WILLIAMS EVER WRITE*

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6. *BREEDS,* by ROXY GORDON ©è words & artwork, 2001, the Estate of Roxy Gordon \$10.00 book, 66 pgs.

7. *SOME THINGS I DID,* by ROXY GORDON © 1971, Encino Press , 127 pgs. See Amazon to order.

8. *WOWAPI: ANYTHING WRITTEN IN ANY FORM,* by Judy Gordon, poems, drawings, and photographs, now available Wowapi Press Chapbook, 2007, \$10.00.

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