

North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame

established 1996
as a program of the North Carolina Writers' Network

2002 Induction Ceremony
October 20, 2002



Weymouth Center for the Arts & Humanities
Southern Pines, North Carolina

*North Carolina
Literary Hall of Fame*



*North Carolina
Literary Hall of Fame*

2002 Inductees

LEGETTE BLYTHE

REYNOLDS PRICE

CHRISTIAN REID

GLEN ROUNDS

ELIZABETH SPENCER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*This program was made possible with a generous grant from
The North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources*

The N.C. Writers' Network is grateful for support from:

The Pilot

The Friends of Weymouth

The North Carolina Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill

The North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Office of Archives and History

The North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame Committee

North Carolina State University Humanities Extension Program

The Women of Weymouth

with additional support from:

The North Carolina Center for the Book

The North Carolina Poetry Society

State Library of North Carolina

The Town of Southern Pines

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*The publisher gratefully acknowledges the use of the photographs and selections of work by these
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Editor: Linda W. Hobson

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Bibliographies: Robert Anthony

Printer: Universal Printing, Durham N.C.

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North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame

Fifth Induction Ceremony

October 20, 2002 ♦ 2:00 p.m.

Schedule for the Day

MUSIC

“Copperline”

words by Reynolds Price, music by James Taylor, 1993

WELCOME

Linda Whitney Hobson

Chair, N.C. Literary Hall of Fame Steering Committee; Executive Director, N.C. Writers' Network

Steve Bouser

Editor, The Pilot

OPENING REMARKS

Fred Chappell

Poet Laureate, North Carolina

Presenting
William LeGette Blythe, II

James Applewhite

Kevin Cherry

Stephen E. Smith

Terry Roberts

Inductee
LEGETTE BLYTHE
Accepting: Samuel L. Blythe
REYNOLDS PRICE

CHRISTIAN REID
Accepting: Katharine W. Osborne

GLEN ROUNDS
Accepting: John Briggs
ELIZABETH SPENCER

Readers
Frank Borden Hanes

The Author

Kevin Cherry

Shelby Stephenson

The Author

RECOGNITION OF AWARD'S ARTIST

Fred Chappell—Ben Owen, III

READING

“Hallowind” from *Wind Mountain: A Poem*
by Fred Chappell (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1979)

Dramatis Personae

Reynolds - Reynolds Price
Rain - James W. Clark, Jr.

Fred - Fred Chappell

Susan - Susan Chappell
Wind - Shelby Stephenson

Scene: Halloween, Durham, 1961

A TRIBUTE TO SAM RAGAN

Henry Bowers

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Fred Chappell

Reception to follow in The Great Room

GETT,
ROBERT E. ANTHONY, JR



THE LITERARY HALL OF FAME AWARD 2002

Ben Owen Pottery, Incorporated

The Asian influence in my work has been carried to several levels of interpretation. I value form and color in each piece. I create pieces to be used in everyday life, emphasizing utility through creating pots that are simple in shape and harmonize with many things in nature and in our surroundings.

The color of pottery is an equally vital characteristic of my pots, and I correlate their colors to the seasons of the year. Lighter or brighter colors appear in the warm season, and darker or more subtle colors represent the cooler season.

The Japanese, as I have said, value the role pottery plays in everyday life. A pot is not a complete piece until the person who treasures it for life uses it for the sole purpose it was made. The act of "hands holding," feeling the form and absorbing life from the clay, is an experience that can only be felt by the one holding it and using it daily. My work conveys this vital strength in pottery, and each piece is imbued with the spirit of the potter, which carries on from one generation to the next.

Ben Owen Pottery, located in the community of Westmoore, just south of Seagrove, specializes in wood-fired stoneware, salt glazes, and earthenware pottery. Ben Owen, III, with deep roots in clay, continues a fine family tradition of quality craftsmanship and beautifully turned pieces, glazed in a variety of colors. Ben's signature glazes include vibrant reds, rich jade greens, and traditional earth tones. Ben is a nationally recognized potter producing functional and decorative pieces with a contemporary touch. Ben Owen Pottery is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

2199 S N.C. Highway 705, Seagrove, NC 27341
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FOREWORD
WEYMOUTH, WRITERS AND WORDS

It is a sturdy house, 98 years old now and still rising among glossy magnolias and tall pines which lean into the Carolina wind. Its elegance is understated, with none of the ostentation one might expect of a twenty-room house. Weymouth served the Boyd family well for seventy years; since 1979 its service has expanded beyond family to community, its mission marked by the good taste which distinguishes its architectural design.

In 1904, James Boyd, a steel and railroad magnate, purchased 1,200 acres in Southern Pines and built a home. He christened this new estate "Weymouth," after a town he had visited in England. Set amidst a magnificent stand of virgin long-leaf pines, it served as a country manor where his grandson and namesake, James, often came as a boy to repair frail health and explore the imposing pine forest and surrounding countryside.

Later young James went to Princeton and earned a master's degree at Cambridge. After serving as an ambulance driver during World War I, an experience which left his health even more fragile, he returned to Weymouth for recovery. In 1919, he and his new wife, the former Katharine Lamont, spent their honeymoon in the house, which by now James co-owned with his brother, Jackson. The following year, he and Katharine moved to Weymouth and began redesigning it. They moved part of the original house across Connecticut Avenue to become part of Jackson's new home, now known as the Campbell House. To the remaining structure, they added a second story and two wings, enlarging the Georgian-style house to 9,000 square feet.

James Boyd, now 32 years old, left the management of the family business to his brother while he pursued the dream which had begun when he was editor of his high school newspaper: to become a writer. Boyd's biographer, David Whisnant, observes that Boyd chose to live in Southern Pines because this site "seemed to offer the best conditions for beginning [a literary career]—a reasonable physical comfort, freedom from distractions, and a mild climate...and an opportunity to affirm the tangible values of American life." One of the earliest visitors to the newly-enlarged home was British novelist and playwright John Galsworthy, who, after reading Boyd's stories, encouraged him to try a novel, then, on a trip to New York, urged publishers to "keep an eye on James Boyd." In 1925, Scribner's published Boyd's first novel, *Drums*. It won immediate attention, not only for its story but for its realism—the result of Boyd's extensive and meticulous research.

Boyd went on to write more novels, a number of short stories and a collection of poetry. In 1941, he expanded his career by purchasing and editing the Southern Pines *Pilot*. Meanwhile, his home became a welcome retreat for many of the best writers of the day: Thomas Wolfe, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, John P. Marquand, and Paul Green, as well as his editor, the legendary Maxwell Perkins, and his illustrator, N.C. Wyeth. His daughter, Nancy Sokoloff, recalls that "During my father's lifetime there were no 'writers' colonies.' Our living room and that of Paul and Elizabeth Green served as settings for serious work and conversations about Southern writing and its future."

The serious conversations went beyond literature. During World War II, Boyd organized and served as the National Chairman of the Free Company of Players, a group of writers who were concerned that constitutional rights might be compromised during the frenzy of wartime. Among the writers joining him in writing plays for broadcast over national radio were Orson Welles, Paul Green, Archibald MacLeish, and Stephen Vincent Benet.

In 1944, after James Boyd's untimely death, Katharine continued living at Weymouth and publishing the *Pilot*. She and her children donated 400 pine-filled acres to the State for development into the Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve. When she died in 1974, she left the house, remaining land and forest to Sandhills Community College, which in 1977 put the estate on the market. Fearful that this treasure would be demolished by developers, two friends of the Boyds undertook the task of saving it. Elizabeth Stevenson (Buffie) Ives organized Friends of Weymouth; Sam Ragan, then editor of the *Pilot*, rallied support from the State of North Carolina, the Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, the North Carolina Writers' Conference, and the North Carolina Poetry Society. The first person Ragan approached, playwright Paul Green, made the first donation: \$1,000. Later, Moore County resident Bob Drummond provided a major boost with an initial contribution of \$20,000 and a later donation of an equal amount.

Since 1979, the house, surrounded by twenty-two acres, has flourished as a full-fledged cultural center. College groups and various arts groups hold meetings and retreats here. The great room and back lawn host concerts by chamber music groups and such notables as Doc Watson and lectures by speakers as varied as social critic Tom Wolfe and sociologist John Shelton Reed. There have also been frequent readings by North Carolina writers such as Clyde Edgerton, Kaye Gibbons and Shelby Stephenson, as well as an annual poetry festival the last Saturday in June.

In addition to formal programs, Weymouth has hosted one of former North Carolina Poet Laureate Sam Ragan's favorite projects: residencies offering writers, artists and composers stays of up to two weeks to pursue their art in James Boyd's hospitable home. Poet and novelist Guy Owen was the first writer-in-residence; in 1981, just a few months before his death, he also made his last public reading at Weymouth. By 2000 more than 500 writers and artists had held residencies here. Many testify that their art has flourished on this site; some even credit the hovering spirit of James Boyd and perhaps those of his many literary guests with providing additional creative impetus.

It is fitting that Weymouth, where James Boyd and hundreds of other writers have found congenial conditions for their work, is the site of the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame. It is also fitting that the space set aside for this distinction is the upstairs Boyd Library, where James did his own writing, often by dictating to a stenographer as he paced back and forth, taking on the voices of his characters. Perhaps the spirits of those who are honored here will join the chorus of literary masters whose influence echoes through the halls and across the grounds of Weymouth.

Sally Buckner
Raleigh, North Carolina

INTRODUCTION

And down the centuries that wait ahead there'll be some whisper of our name, some mention and devotion to the dream that brought us here.

— The Lost Colony by Paul Green

From its earliest days, North Carolina has been blessed with the “mention and devotion” of a great host of writers living and working in the state. A rich literary heritage is a legacy cherished by all North Carolinians.

The North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame is established as a perpetual opportunity to remember, honor and celebrate that heritage. By marking the contribution of its literary giants of every generation, it will support and encourage the further flourishing of excellent literature in the state.

The North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame was the dream of a generation of the state's most dedicated cultural leaders, mobilized by Sam Ragan, former poet laureate of North Carolina. It was authorized by a Joint Resolution of the General Assembly on July 23, 1993, then formally established by a grant from the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources to the North Carolina Writers' Network, a literary organization serving writers and readers across the state since 1985.

The Hall of Fame is physically located in a notable shrine of North Carolina writing. The Weymouth Center for the Arts & Humanities in Southern Pines is the former home and workplace of novelist James Boyd and his wife Katharine, a distinguished journalist and patron of the arts. The large room where plaques, pictures, books and other memorabilia of the state's honored writers are displayed was Boyd's workroom.

Members of the Hall of Fame are selected by a committee of writers. The goal is to choose widely and inclusively from the great parade of novelists, poets, short story writers, playwrights, journalists and storytellers of all sorts who have called themselves North Carolinians. While the first year honored only those from the past, the Hall of Fame now joins other notable cultural award programs in honoring living writers.

Seventy-five years ago, an editor visiting North Carolina marveled at the literary liveliness of the place where, she said, writers flourished in “an atmosphere of plain living and high thinking that I never experienced before.”

In the spirit of those who over the centuries have graced North Carolina with a literature of such quality, beauty and power, the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame proudly honors writers who have achieved enduring stature in their mention and devotion to their art and to the state.

Roy Parker, Jr.
Fayetteville, North Carolina



LeGette Blythe

1900-1993

William LeGette Blythe was both a respected journalist and a prolific author of novels, biographies, and outdoor dramas based on the history of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

Born in Huntersville, N.C., in 1900, he graduated in 1921 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was a member of the original Carolina Playmakers and classmate of Thomas Wolfe, Paul Green, and Jonathan Daniels. During his college days, he left his mark on every student publication on campus.

After a year as a teacher in Greensboro, he opted for a career in journalism, first with the *Charlotte News* and then, in 1927, with the *Charlotte Observer*. Over the next twenty-three years, Blythe covered every kind of news story imaginable and served as book editor toward the end of his tenure. In 1950 he left the paper to devote full time to creative writing.

Meticulous research, including careful study of unpublished letters and manuscripts, provided a solid foundation for many of Blythe's best historical novels. The first of his more than thirty books was published while he was still at the *Charlotte Observer*. *Marshal Ney: A Dual Life* (1937) was the biography of Napoleon's famous general who, according to legend, fled France and came to North Carolina in the guise of a schoolmaster. It was followed in 1940 by *Alexandriana*, which chronicled the heroic deeds of local people during the Revolutionary War.

Blythe was perhaps most widely known for a series of internationally acclaimed novels based on the New Testament, among them *Bold Galilean* (1948), *Hear Me, Pilate!* (1961), and *Brothers of Vengeance* (1969). His plays include *Shout Freedom!*, *The Chatham Rabbit*, and *Voice in the Wilderness*, a celebration of Presbyterian church history. An outdoor drama based on local Revolutionary history, *The Hornets' Nest*, was a highlight of Charlotte's bicentennial celebration in 1968. His biographies of prominent North Carolinians include *William Henry Belk: Merchant of the South* (1950) and *James W. Davis: North Carolina Surgeon* (1957).

Blythe twice won the Mayflower Cup for nonfiction, first in 1953 for *Miracle in the Hills*, the story of Dr. Mary Martin Sloop's crusade to improve the lives of mountain people, and again in 1961 for *Thomas Wolfe and His Family*. Other books over his productive career include *Gift from the Hills* (1958), about the nationally recognized Penland School of Crafts in Mitchell County, and *Mountain Doctor* (1964). *Call Down the Storm* (1964) is a powerful novel with racial overtones.

For the most part, Blythe lived his entire life in the town in which he was born and took his themes from the history he discovered around him. He was greatly admired by his fellow Tar Heel authors and chaired the annual North Carolina Writers Conference in 1965. His death in 1993 marked the passing of the last of an illustrious group of writers who helped launch the Southern literary renaissance.

As Sam Ragan observed, "LeGette had a high regard for both journalism and writing—to him both were callings, 'high callings,' and he had a lifelong respect and reverence for facts. I am sure that he believed, as did Thoreau, that one 'should never ignore a fact; it may flower into a truth.'"

From *Marshal Ney: A Dual Life*, by LeGette Blythe (New York: Stackpole and Sons, 1937)

Now he is in the settlement of Cheraw, sitting on the front porch of the tavern, talking with Colonel Benjamin Rogers who has come from Florence in the lower part of Marlborough County to sell his cotton. The colonel owns a large plantation, and he is the only man in the county who has one of those new devices called cotton-gin, that pulls the lint from the seeds by merely turning a handle.

The stranger says his name is Peter Stuart Ney, and Colonel Rogers is immediately interested. Was there not a French officer, one of Napoleon's great generals, named Ney? Marshal Ney, that was the man. He was executed a few years ago, and the colonel remembers that there was a good deal in the public prints about it at the time. Yes, and there were stories that the man was not actually shot . . .

But the big man sitting here on the tavern porch seems reluctant to say much about the matter, or about his own past life. "I am a refugee from France," he admits to Colonel Rogers. "I served in the French army, and was forced to leave the country for political reasons." That is all he will reveal, but Colonel Rogers is curious because the man's demeanour stamps him as a person of prominence.

The colonel is favorably impressed with the man, and suggests that he establish a school in the little community of Florence. On the next day Ney goes home with the colonel and is introduced to his large family with whom he is to live. From an architectural viewpoint the Rogers house lacks much, but it is comfortable, with high ceilings that keep it cool in the summer and huge fireplaces that warm it in the winter. The woodlands of Colonel Rogers are extensive, and in the winter months after the cotton had been picked, the slaves cut down trees and chop them into fire lengths until the fireplaces are blazing with great logs of oak and ash and hickory. Peter Stuart Ney has a bedroom on the second floor, and soon becomes a well loved member of the Rogers household.

The Rogers children constitute a valuable nucleus around which he forms his school, and soon other pupils join them until there is a whole roomful of scholars - some beginners, and some old enough to study his favorite subjects of Latin, Greek, French, mathematics, and surveying.

Ney enforces discipline. When his pupils recite, he makes them stand at attention along one side of the room, with their toes in a straight line, their shoulders back, stomach in, chins out. In spite of his strictness he is very popular. He is known as a cultured gentleman from France, who has traveled widely. Moreover, his charge for tuition is low, and if a child's parents are too poor to pay, he deducts the amount from his own salary. His wages are small, yet he dresses well and always appears to have plenty of money. The Rogers think that perhaps he receives money from some outside source, but he's very secretive about his personal affairs.

Sometimes, he receives letters, sometimes two or three in one mail, but they are always in large envelopes, postmarked Philadelphia, and always addressed in the same masculine handwriting. Every day, as soon as school is over, he walks back to the Rogers house and shuts himself in his room to write letters. Mary Rogers, the colonel's daughter, hears his pen scratching over the paper endlessly, and sometimes his candle burns late into the night.

Sometimes Ney speaks of the letters he received, but he never shows them to anyone. And when he has read them, he always destroys them carefully, as though he fears they may reveal a secret. A refugee knows the need for constant caution. The Bourbons are vindictive and resourceful, and they would not be above hiring assassins to do away with anyone they considered dangerous. The Bonapartists in France are growing more and more ineffectual with no strong leader to rally them, but it may be the Emperor will return some day to rule again from the Tuileries.

Peter Ney talks hour after hour on long winter nights before the Rogers' fire. In spite of his caution, it is not difficult to see that all his hopes are centered on the Emperor's return. Guardedly, but in detail, he talks of his past life; of battles he has fought, of friends he has known, the Emperor, Josephine, the great men and women of France. Always the talk reverts to the Emperor.

Always Ney's most interested listener is Mary Rogers. Sometimes he thinks he sees the look of more than interest in her eyes. Mary is a beautiful young woman . . . but men cannot completely sever themselves from their past, not even a dead man.

News from St. Helena is infrequent and unreliable. Can Napoleon be planning another dramatic coup? Could he regain the throne? Would the Allies this time permit it? Of course, he did march from the coast to Paris without firing a gun on his return from Elba. And would not the French people welcome him back with even more enthusiasm now that they are so thoroughly disgusted with the Bourbon rule? Yes, the Emperor will come back.

For Peter Stuart Ney the days are long, but the nights are even longer. Often the members of the Rogers family come upon him seated before the fireplace in his own room, motionless, his feet straight forward, his chin slumped upon his chest, staring into the flames. They wonder what it can be that the schoolmaster broods over so constantly. Colonel Rogers does not know, but often he suspects, and his suspicions grow as the months drag past.

He does not dismiss his school until late in the afternoons, as if reluctant to be left alone with his thoughts. The nights are long enough for those. Often, he reads until dawn. He studies his textbooks until he becomes a master of Latin, Greek and Hebrew. At any rate, these Carolina backwoodsmen, knowing little or nothing of the languages, will

regard him as a great scholar. He helps the children with their lessons, and prepares for them copybooks and problems in arithmetic and surveying. These things help to occupy a mind that is forever active, forever looking backward to the past, or feverishly forward toward the future.

The weeks grow into months, and life moves wearily along. This waiting must end, and soon. France must tire of the Bourbons. Letters from France say so, and even the brief dispatches in the Charleston newspapers indicate that. France, having tasted the freedom of the Revolutionary days, and having lived proudly during the era of Napoleon, will not abide much longer this reversion to a despicable feudalism. That is the confidence that sustains Peter Stuart Ney in these backwoods of Carolina.

One morning a scholar comes to school with the Charleston newspaper which he gives to Mr. Ney, as usual. The schoolmaster reads the poetry first, then the births and deaths, and glances through the advertisements with their offers of reward for the return of runaway slaves. Then he turns to the foreign news. Halfway down the column he stops.

The scholars see their master's face go pale, see it drained of color even in the thinning hair above his high forehead. They see him reach for the table to steady himself, miss it, and crumple to the floor.

Mr. Ney is lying face down, with his head underneath the table. Some of the younger children begin to cry, for they have never seen anyone faint, and they think Mr. Ney is dead. Some of the older boys run to fetch the pail of water on the bench in the corner, and sprinkle some on the schoolmaster's head. At last he is roused, and the older boys help him to his chair.

"I am sorry. I read some news in the paper, and it startled me. I must have fainted; I must be getting old. We won't have any more school today. You may all go home."

He is halfway home before he says a word to John Rogers. He seems lost in his thoughts, and John has never before seen him so dejected. Finally he turns to the boy:

"The Emperor is dead, John."

"Sorrowing Charlotte Thousands Pay Final Homage to Roosevelt," *Charlotte Observer*, Saturday, April 14, 1945

Franklin Roosevelt, honorably discharged from all his wars, rose slowly through Charlotte's sorrowing thousands last night toward the high banks of the Hudson and his long house.

Stretching the length of the railway station and packing the streets that opened out upon the tracks, the people who had come out to see the late President's funeral train bearing his body back to Washington and then to Hyde Park paid him the greatest tribute they knew how to pay him - the homage of utter silence.

It was one of the greatest throngs ever to assemble at the Southern station. And it was the most orderly. As the crowd awaited the arrival of the train, they stood quietly and talked in low tones. And as the train came - slowly and solemnly through, the only noise was that of the soldiers as they brought their rifles smartly to the salute.

And when the train had passed, and only a glimpse could be caught of the great American flag that covered the copper casket in which lay the body of the fallen chief, the crowd, still without a discordant word, turned and went away.

Many times had Franklin Roosevelt come through Charlotte. Many times had he sped through asleep in his shuttered car, and Charlotteans known nothing of it. Other times, he had come through in his journeyings to political wars. Some times Charlotte citizens had caught a floating sight of him, his long keen cigarette holder stuck out at a jaunty angle from the corner of his mouth. Then they had been gay. The Chief, after all, was one of those irrepressible Roosevelts.

SILENCE OF SORROW.

But last night as Charlotteans stood and waited for the train that was carrying Franklin Roosevelt upon his last ride, there was nothing anywhere of the carnival spirit.

"It is positively stifling," said a Charlotte man long used to the ways of Charlotte crowds. "I have never seen anything like it. Look at these people. They are really sorrowing. Look at that young woman with the young soldier beside her. Look at that man over there. It is amazing how the people - the people all over this nation, all over the world they say - are affected. Never in the history of the world has the death of one man so affected people everywhere."

Charlotte crowds had stood beneath the dingy, smoked canopy of the Southern's passenger sheds to welcome many great men. They had met the jolly Taft, whose May 20 visit was made all the more memorable by the deluge of rain that came with him; they had greeted Woodrow Wilson, tall, serious, intellectual, idealistic, loving with his great heart the people of his land, but never knowing how to speak their language; they had laughed and shouted with Al Smith, when the Happy Warrior in the brown derby talked from the back of his campaign train. The people had come out many times to see the great, but before they had come in holiday spirit, yelling and shouting and sometimes a bit overcome by the grandeur of the great man of the moment.

THE LAST TRIBUTE

But last night it was different. This time they had come to pay their last tribute to all that remained of the man who had led the nation in a dozen years of this earth's history.

Some saw only the flag-shrouded casket in the last coach. Others saw other things even as they watched silently and solemnly the train pushing slowly past. They saw the man they had known so long and so well though many thousands there had never actually seen him in the flesh. They heard him as he spoke, again, his voice now challenging and serious, as he spoke that day when he took the first oath of office and called upon the nation to build a new prosperity, now quipping and gay, as during some of his campaign speeches up and down the land. And they saw him, too, not the tired, haggard body released now to his long rest and the steel braces that often hurt, even as he stood and talked pleasantly and even at times joked to other great throngs, but as the conquering champ, the man who always won, the nemesis of Adolf Hitler and all his ilk.

There were thousands of persons and thousands of thoughts as Franklin Roosevelt rode through Charlotte last night, his gaunt fallen body now finally imprisoned

but his courageous spirit released to higher soaring. But they all agreed upon one thought, that a great man had gone on and had left a world the better for his having lived in it. And hinged upon this thought was another, a prayer for the thin sparse gray man in the White House with the burdens of a sorely troubled world upon his tired shoulders.

There was no ceremony at the station last night, though it was the most eloquent ceremony perhaps that Charlotte has ever staged. There were soldiers there, of course, M.P.s under the command of Captain John E. Abell of the local military police, who gave, without realizing it, one of the finest compliments Charlotte crowds ever received: "Not a man, woman or child in all these thousands broke ranks," said he. There were the police, too. And they carried out their assignments, though there was nothing for them to do but stand with the crowd, silently and meditating, as the train went by.

Mayor Baxter was there and many others of the city's dignitaries. The Lions Club had arranged a beautiful tribute of flowers that had been brought in on a few hours' notice when they had asked for them. The flowers had been placed on the stands near the waiting room entrance. Perhaps those on the train saw them, too, as they saw the great throng. And after the train had passed the flowers went out to the little polio victims at Memorial Hospital. Including the huge potted azalea from Rock Hill's citizens. The Chief would have liked that. The flowers for the children. He would have understood that. He would have loved it.

And Eugene Craft with some 40 singers from the various churches was there. The group sang "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" and silently, as they began singing, hats went off all up and down the tracks.

Farther down the tracks at the other end of the station, a Negro group sang spirituals. For Negroes were there, too, hundreds of them, paying their tribute to the man whom they looked upon as the best friend they ever had in the White House.

JUST QUIETNESS

But there was no ceremony. No speaking. No announcements. No shouted commands, even to the military. Everything was quietness and contemplation.

"I don't understand it," the man said, as the train was lost in the distance and no more would Franklin Roosevelt ride through the old smoky Southern station. "I just don't get it. I've cried myself a dozen times today. Roosevelt was a great man, but there must have been many other great ones. And everybody must die. But his death somehow has just got under my skin. I guess it's because he was so well known. The radio, you know. The newspapers. His running about the country. Being in there 12 years. But that wasn't all, either. I think it was because the man really loved the folks. He was a showman. He did a lot of things I couldn't swallow. But, by George, he figured he was doing right. And he wasn't afraid to try anything. And he was sincere. He just naturally liked folks, and I guess they just naturally liked him. And now that he's dead, they have already forgot those little things they didn't like about him and have just begun to realize what a great fellow he was." He shook his head, walking up Trade Street, talking as much to himself as to anybody else. "I guess that's it. But still, it's hard to understand how a nation's grief can be so personal."

From *Bold Galilean*, by LeGette Blythe
(Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1948)

And now the dancing Salome was fumbling with the golden eagle at her throat. Her fingers must have seemed unduly awkward to Herod, for the Tetrarch half rose from his couch and shouted at her, so that they heard his voice even above the insistent pulsings of the drums, "Here, my dear girl, come here and I'll help you!"

Salome heard him, smiled, and the guests laughed. But they kept their eyes upon the woman dancing.

Now her hands were down from her throat again, and Marcus saw the light from the lamps flash suddenly in her right hand, and looking more closely he saw that she was holding the golden eagle. She was dancing now in the open way nearer the Tetrarch, and as she danced Marcus saw that the narrowed strips of her gown that went around her neck and came down to be pinned in front were slipping and just as the upper section of the gown fell away, she whirled and her back was toward the Tetrarch.

Herod was beside himself, for now the guests seated nearer the entrances were facing the dancer, while he was being ignored. "Here, my dear child!" he began shouting. "This way! This way! Is this not my birthday, my dear Salome!"

She turned, and in the same instant she dropped the great belt of golden mesh, for she had unlatched it while her back was to him, and the shimmering white gown crumpled to the floor as she danced away from it.

Salome was nude to the waist, just as the Egyptian and Arabian women had been, save for the black hair that cascaded about her, and the whiteness of her body was heightened by the diaphanous dark silk underskirt through which the rest of her figure was clearly outlined.

She came tripping upon noiseless bare feet to the table of the Tetrarch, her body undulating as every muscle from toe to neck seemed to pulse with the throbbing, beating rhythm of the drums and the shrill shrieks of the flute. Herod started to rise, but Herodias, watching with frozen smile that failed to soften her cold countenance, restrained him, and he sank upon the couch. Around the square Salome danced, her white torso, now more luminous with perspiration, and all but freed of its bonds, following in sensual wriggings and sinuations the wild abandoned rhythm of the music. Now she raised a white hand and the musicians understood, for they bent nearer their instruments and the music grew faster and faster, until the vast hall seemed to be leaping and rolling with the wild throbbing of the strangely exciting rhythm.

Salome, too, was leaping into the air, and wheeling, so that the short transparent black skirt, lifting high upon her whirling legs, spun outward like a fast revolving top. Faster and faster she whirled upon the balls of her flying feet as she moved almost imperceptibly toward the open end of the square, and the Tetrarch's guests, watching her spinning form, fancied themselves spinning too, around the fast rotating axis of her revolving white body.

Her hands held high above her head, her skirt now almost parallel with the floor wheeling beneath her, she spun giddily as the diners tried by the power of their eyes to slow her whirling. The drums increased their rhythmical thumping, the flute shrilled above the heavy bass of the drums and the harp strings. Salome lowered an arm as she maintained her giddy wheeling, her hand was busy at her waist, and suddenly, before the watchers realized what she was about, the shimmering black skirt, a wraparound garment held by a single fastener above her hips, went flying across the open space.

Abruptly, the music ended, Salome stopped spinning, and before Marcus and the others could recover, had run around the table at the right and out through the open door, her long waving black hair fallen protectingly around her slim white shoulders.

In a short moment, even before the wild applause had subsided, Salome had slipped into her place between Lucius and Gaius. Her white gown gave no indication of having been so precipitately discarded, her wild black hair was again rolled neatly into an enormous knot that reposed serenely in the golden mesh of the bag held at the top of her head by the large red stone clasp.

Herod wheeled his ponderous frame around, put his feet upon the floor, sat up unsteadily, raised his hand, and immediately the vast hall was silent. "Wonderful, my dear Salome," he said, and he licked his puffy lips, "wonderful, marvelous, great dancing, my dear, gorgeous display, wonderful evening, wonderful party, wonderful birthday -"

"Soon he will be doing some wonderful snoring," observed the girl to Marcus. "And then maybe I'll get some wonderful rest from him."

"Yes, glorious dancing," the Tetrarch was saying. "Good of you, my dear, to dance at my birthday party." He grinned, wiped his mouth with his hand. "Waked up some of these old fellows about our festive board" - he turned toward Marcus, then to Lucius and Gaius - "eh, my Roman friends? Yes, great party, thanks to you, my dear Salome." He coughed, reached for his wine glass. And when he had swallowed the wine, he coughed again, wiped his purple lips. "And now, my dear daughter, what is your pleasure? The Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea is not one to forget a promise once made. Speak up, Salome. It is for you but to name your wish, and it shall be granted. I have sworn it, have I not?"

Salome threw her head back and laughed. It was a very merry laugh, Gaius thought, a friendly gesture in appreciation of the Tetrarch's lavish thanks. "Yes," she said, "and I thank the Tetrarch for his kind words. But I think not that the Tetrarch will grant my wish."

"What! Have I not promised? Have I not sworn before -" he waved his hand - "this great company of friends here to do me honor on my birthday? Think you, my dear girl, I would dishonor them and myself by refusing you? Speak. Name your wish. Palaces, ships, slaves galore, gorgeous raiment, anything, yes, anything to the half of my possessions and sovereignty."

"But the Tetrarch would not dare!" Salome spoke loudly, and the assembled guests heard it down both lines of tables, even to the end of the banqueting hall. "The Tetrarch would be afraid!"

"Afraid!" Herod shouted. "Never! Of what am I afraid, pray, my girl?"

Herod arose, swaying, supported himself against the table. "The Tetrarch is afraid of nothing!" He spoke sharply, though his tongue was thickening. "Be done with this nonsensical talk. What does Salome wish in recompense for her dancing?"

"Does the Tetrarch promise to give it to me?" Salome's eyes were shining and her smile was bright. "Will he really fulfill his promise so rashly made?"

"I have sworn it, Salome. I swear it again. Only name it."

Gaius, turning now to watch Salome, saw her expression change. All the warmth, the apparent friendliness she had been showing in her tilt with the Tetrarch, was suddenly washed from her countenance, and now it seemed utterly cold, and when she spoke her tone was deadly serious.

"My desire is that you have the head of the mad prophet brought to me on a platter."



Reynolds Price

1933-

For four decades Reynolds Price has been a guiding star in the literary firmament of North Carolina and America. James B. Duke Professor of English at Duke University and a distinguished novelist, poet, dramatist and essayist, he is the author of more than thirty books, including the recent novel *Noble Norfleet* (2002). His work has been translated into sixteen languages.

Born in 1933 in Macon, near Warrenton, Price attended public school and earned an A.B. *summa cum laude* from Duke University. He traveled to Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar in 1955 to study English literature, returning to Duke after three years with a B.Litt. degree. He has taught there ever since.

His first novel, *A Long and Happy Life* (1962), published when he was twenty-nine, was an enchanting story of rural Warren County, where he grew up. It won the William Faulkner Award for a notable first novel and has never been out of print. Since that debut, Price has become regarded as one of the most talented writers of our time, noted for his lyrical language and searching insights on the complexities of love. He has transcended narrow regional classification to become simply one of our great contemporary writers.

His productivity and the range of his writing have been breathtaking. He won the 1986 National Book Critics Circle Award for his novel *Kate Vaiden*. He published his *Collected Stories* in 1993, and his *Collected Poems* in 1997. His work also includes volumes of plays, essays, and two volumes of memoir, *Clear Pictures* and *A Whole New Life*, the latter of which recounts his battle with spinal cancer.

A Palpable God (1978) contained translations from the Old and New Testaments with an essay on the origins and aims of narrative. *Three Gospels* (1996) contained his translations of Mark and John with introductory essays. His novel *The Promise of Rest* (1995) completed a trilogy that included *The Surface of Earth* and *The Source of Light*, chronicling nine decades in a family's history.

His eleventh novel, *Roxanna Slade* (1998), was his thirtieth work in thirty-five years. In 2000, he published his first novel for children, *A Perfect Friend*, as well as a collection of the essays he broadcasts regularly on National Public Radio. He even co-wrote the popular song "Copperline" with singer James Taylor.

Price's television play, *Private Contentment*, commissioned by "American Playhouse" in its premiere season on PBS, is generally considered

one of the finest in the series. His trilogy *New Music* premiered at the Cleveland Play House in 1989, and the three plays have been produced throughout the country. His play *Full Moon* has been performed by San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre and others.

Price is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Fellowship of Southern Writers. He has received the Lillian Smith Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship. His beloved home state has honored him with the Roanoke-Chowan Award for Poetry, the Sir Walter Raleigh Award for Fiction and the North Carolina Award for Literature.

"A chronicler of decency, pluck and joy, in novel after novel Price has given us the weight and worth of the ordinary," a *New York Times* reviewer wrote. "His characters, burdened as they may be with disasters that occur even in the midst of Carolina comforts, recognize their good fortune, like Hutch in his *Great Circle* trilogy, who 'despite the bitter sadness and loss he knew was bound toward him, had long stretches of joy all his life and he trusted pleasure.'"

From *The Use of Fire* by Reynolds Price (New York: Atheneum, 1990)

CONSOLATION AUGUST 1939

You drift on the creaky green porch swing and count
Dim water stains on the ceiling. They've dried themselves
Into maps of countries, shapes of organs - kidneys,
Hearts, Bolivia, lungs. The woman you
Trust best on Earth is snoozing not four feet
Away; you think her dream concerns your eyes,
Though you know she tried to kill herself two years
Ago - she has you now and means to stay
And said as much in ten plain words an hour
Ago. In another minute you'll think her name -
Not speak, think. Slow, the thought will lift
Her head. She'll turn your way and yawn and ask
"A brown-sugar sandwich or a cold fresh orange? - say which
Quick, *say*." You mull the choice and think your entire
Drift, here out, will move this slow.



From *A Long and Happy Life* (Part One), by Reynolds Price
(New York: Atheneum, 1962)

The church sat sideways to Wesley's tree and the road, and Rosacoke could stay by her window and see what happened in the yard. Landon wasn't ten feet out the back when the truck turned in, having little trouble with the ruts Wesley made and bringing twelve cars behind it, each one paler with dust than the one before and all packed full. The cars unloaded in order and the first two women were Mildred's mother Mary and Mildred's sister Estelle who had stayed at home when all the others scattered because of her health which was poor from the night Manson Hargrove shot her at a dance, both barrels in the chest. (She lived though—shooting Estelle's bosom was like shooting a feather bed.) Then came the little boys that belonged to most anybody. They were brought to help carry the flowers, but when they swarmed out and saw Wesley, they took off towards him and stood in a tight dark ring, staring out at his cycle like the Chariot of God that could fly. But Wesley had stopped his tinkering when Mildred arrived. He answered one or two questions the boys asked—"What do it burn?" and he told them "Coal"—and then nodded good afternoon to Mary and shut up and leaned against the tree. Somebody called out, "You boys come get these flowers." They went over and took up the wreaths and brought them towards the church, and the one in front wore roses around his neck like a horse that has won and can smile.

Mary and Estelle stood by the truck, looking, and that boy kept his eyes and his foot flat on the box as if it was his and nobody was getting it. Then the other women came up, silent. One of them—Aunt Mannie Mayfield who had walked four miles to get there and was so old she didn't remember a soul now she *was* there—two girls nearly lifting Aunt Mannie who could walk any distance but *up* and who would be next. But the men stayed by the truck, and when the flowers had gone, that boy leaned over and shoved the box to the end, and Sammy and three others took it (to say they had, any two could have carried it alone). They stood a minute with it on their shoulders, taking their bearings. Somebody laughed high and clear. The preacher turned to the church and all the men followed.

Rosacoke saw that and thought every minute Wesley would break loose and take his seat beside her. But he didn't, not even when the yard was empty, and when she heard Mary and Estelle leading the others in, she had to take her eyes off him and stand and nod to the people as they passed and call them by name—the family taking the front pew and sitting as if something pressed them and the others filling in behind, leaving Rosacoke her empty pew at the back, and all standing up—except the ones with babies—till the box was laid on two sawhorses in front of the pulpit, and a boy laid flowers on the lid over what he reckoned was Mildred's face—one design, the Bleeding Heart that Rosacoke sent at Mary's request (white carnations with roses for blood at the center, which would take some time to pay for). When that was done five women stood in various pews and walked to the choir. The piano started and stopped and for a second there was just Bessie Williams' voice slicing through the heat with six high words, calling the others to follow. It was "Precious Name, Show Me Your Face," and it was Jesus they were singing to—meaning it, looking up at the roof to hornets' nests and spiders as if it might all roll

away and show them what they asked to see. But the song ended and Rev. Mingie thanked the ladies and said Mrs. Ransom had composed the obituary and would read it now. Mrs. Ransom stood where she was, smiling, and turned to face Mary and Estelle and read off the paper she held, "Miss Mildred Sutton was born in 1936 in the bed where she died. Her mother is Mary Sutton of this community, and her father was Wallace Sutton, whereabouts unknown, but who worked some years for the Highway and before that, said he fought in France and got gassed and buried alive and was never the same again. She had a brother and three sisters, and they are living in Baltimore and Philadelphia—except Estelle who is with us here—and are unable to come but have sent telegrams of their grief which will be read later. She grew up all around here and worked in cotton for Mr. Isaac Alston and went to school off and on till she started cooking for the Drakes and tending to their children that she loved like they were hers. She worked for them nearly two years, and they would surely be here today if they were not vacationing up at Willoughby Beach. Mildred aimed to go with them right to the last and then wasn't able. She stayed here and died not far from her twenty-first birthday. Her favorite tune was 'Annie Laurie' which she learned from Miss Rosacoke Mustian who is with us today, representing the white friends, and I will sing it now at her mother's request." And standing where she was, she sang it through alone, not to any tune Rosacoke had ever heard but making it on the air as she went, knowing Mildred would never object to that.

Then the preacher read the telegrams. They were all very much like the one from Alec her brother—"Thinking today of little sister and sorry the car is broke." That seemed sufficient reason. Everybody nodded their heads and one or two said "Amen."

Rosacoke sat through that, trying to see past flapping fans to the box. Every once in a while somebody would turn to see was she there and, seeing her, smile as though the whole afternoon would fold under if she didn't watch it with her familiar face (the way a boy three rows ahead watched her, holding her in his gaze like some new thing, untried, that might go up in smoke any minute). It was that hot inside and her mind worked slowly back through spring water and shade till she was almost in the night with Wesley, but the voice came at her faintly where she was—"Miss Rosacoke, will you kindly view the body?" It was the preacher standing by her, and she turned from the window—"Now?"

"Yes'm, she is ready." They had uncovered Mildred and they wanted Rosacoke to see her first. Mama had warned her this would happen, but there didn't seem to be a way out. She stood up, hoping the preacher would walk with her (and he did, a few feet behind), and went to the box, setting her eyes on the pulpit behind it so she wouldn't see Mildred the whole way.

They had laid Mildred in a pink nightgown that tied at the throat and had belonged to the lady she cooked for, but she had shrunk to nothing this last week as if her life was so much weight, and the gown was half empty. She never had much bosom—Estelle got most of that and when they were twelve, Rosacoke told her, "Mildred, why don't you buy some stuffing? Your bosoms look like fried eggs"—and the ones she had, swollen uselessly now, were settled on her arms that lay straight down her sides and left her hands out of sight that were her good feature. Sometime during the ride her body had twisted to the left, and her profile crushed bitterly into the pillow. Whoever took off the lid had left her alone. Rosacoke wondered if she should move her back for all to see. She

looked at the preacher and nearly asked if that was what he meant her to do. But she thought and turned and walked to her seat down the middle aisle with her eyes to the ground, passing through everybody waiting to look, feeling stronger with her part done and Mildred turned to the wall where nobody would see.

And so was Wesley turned away. He was squatting on the ground, and his shoes were sunk in the dust, but he was polishing every spoke in the wheels of that machine as if he never again intended driving it over anything but velvet rugs. The congregation lined up to view Mildred, and Rosacoke had time to think, "Tomorrow he will ride it to Norfolk and take his new job and sell motorcycles for maybe the rest of his life, but he can't leave it alone for one hour and sit by me through this service."

Christian Reid

1846-1920



In the years following the Civil War, Christian Reid, the pen name of Frances Christine Fisher, was one of the most popular and financially successful American writers of light romances. She published forty-six books, mostly novels, the first of which, *Valerie Aylmer*, appeared in 1870 when she was only twenty-three.

A reviewer noted that the author "speaks out the moral training, elegance of manners, purity of sentiments and high moral tone of her sisters in North Carolina." This assessment also would apply to the bulk of her work.

Born in Salisbury in 1846, she began inventing lengthy tales at the age of three. When her father, a colonel, was killed early in the Civil War, she grew close to a maiden aunt, who was Catholic, and soon converted. The economic hardship of the war left the family practically penniless, so Frances Fisher turned to writing for a livelihood.

Following the success of her first book, her course was clear. "In the South of those days, school teaching was the only respectable paying job a lady could have," literary historian Richard Walser writes. "Modesty, therefore, demanded that Miss Fisher hide behind a pseudonym. She chose one that would conceal her sex and indicate the moral quality of her writing."

The Land of the Sky (1876) is perhaps the book most associated with Reid. In the story, young ladies and gentlemen entertain themselves with mild flirtations while traveling on vacation in the North Carolina mountains. The book's title gave the western part of the state a nickname that endures to this day.

Christian Reid wrote other stories of the Blue Ridge, such as *A Summer Idyll* (1878) and *His Victory* (1887). Most of her books deal with plantation and small-town life in the southern foothills, such as *Bonny Kate* (1878) and *The Wargrave Trust* (1912). "The heroine may occasionally be strong-willed, but never coarse," Walser observes. "Reid wrote for an age which, like herself, believed in good taste and refinement."

In 1887 she married James M. Tiernan, a widower who owned silver mines in Mexico. They lived there for a time and traveled to Haiti, France, and Italy. More than a dozen of her novels are set in the West Indies, Mexico, New York, and Europe, all involving Southern heroines and all perfectly proper and decorous.

Following her husband's death, she remained in Salisbury, writing almost up until her own death in 1920. Reid's popularity waned as her later novels began to reflect her intense Roman Catholicism, but as Walser notes, "To her, fame was always secondary to character."

From *The Land of the Sky, or, Adventures in Mountain By-Ways*, by Christian Reid, (New York: Appleton, 1886)

...[P]eople laugh at things that seem very trivial in repetition, and we make the echoes ring with our mirth as this small but determined animal pushes resolutely by everyone else, and carries its protesting rider to the van.

"I have heard of the obstinacy of mules," she says, tugging fruitlessly at the rein, "but I *never* realized before what it is! I can make no impression whatever on this creature. He goes exactly where he likes without the slightest regard to my wishes. Sure-footed? Yes—he picks the best footing, with profound indifference as to whether I am scraped against trees, or pulled off by branches, or any thing else. Has a mule's mouth got no feeling? I'm sure I have pulled on this bit till my arm aches."

"I wish I had a sketch of you, Sylvia!" says Rupert, between his fits of laughter. "By George! you are a comical sight—you and your mule."

"You are very ill-bred," says Sylvia, "and I am going to devote myself to Mr. Burnet."

The ascent is very gradual and very slow. We are mounting all the time, but the zigzag path spares us any thing . . . on the perpendicular order. Now and then we feel inclined to cling to the main . . . horses as we feel the saddles slipping backward at some steep ascent—but on the whole the terrible accounts that we have heard of the way are by no means verified.

"We wind up the side of the mountain like this for several miles," says Eric, "then we travel along a ridge for some distance, and finally we ascend the peak formerly called the Black Dome, now Mount Mitchell. The whole distance is about twelve miles, and the most of it is steady climbing. We shall not reach the Dome until three o'clock at earliest."

"And shall we have nothing to eat until then?" asks Rupert, dismayed.

"Nothing," is the disheartening answer.

"What a big mountain this must be!" says Mrs. Cardigan.

"It is about twenty miles long," answers Eric, "and contains at least a hundred thousand acres of as dense wilderness as is to be found out of the tropical belt. When we reach Mount Mitchell we shall be in the centre of a region of unbroken forest, without house or road in any direction—except this path and a few trails known only to the hunters—for a radius of ten or twelve miles."

"And it was in this wilderness that Professor Mitchell lost his life sixteen or seventeen years ago, was it not?" I ask.

"Yes. Burnet was one of the men engaged in the search for him. He will tell you all about it. At least five hundred men were in the party, and they searched for days before at last the professor was found—drowned in a mountain-torrent."

Higher and higher we mount—the horses straining steadily upward with few pauses. The forest around us becomes wilder, greener, more luxuriant, with every step. When we wonder at this, Eric bids us observe the rich, black loam which composes the soil. Such gigantic trees as grown here cannot be matched, I am sure, out of California. The chestnuts, especially, exceed in girth and height any thing we have ever seen. Other trees correspond in size, and the dense undergrowth makes a sea of impenetrable verdure in every direction.

Presently, however, the aspect of our surroundings changes. We leave this varied forest behind, and enter the region of the balsam, from the dark color of which the mountain takes its name. Above a certain line of elevation no trees are found save these beautiful yet somber firs. They grow to an immense height, and stand so thickly together that one marvels how any animal larger than a cat can thread its way among their stems. Overhead the boughs interlock in a canopy, making perpetual shade beneath. No shrubs of any kind are to be found here—only beds of thick, elastic moss, richer than the richest velvet, and ferns in plummy profusion. Putting aside every thing else, it is worth ascending the Black Mountain to see these mosses and ferns. Description can give no idea of their beauty. As lovely ferns may perhaps be found elsewhere—though this is doubtful, since the rich soil, the perpetual moisture, and perpetual shade, foster their growth to the highest possible degree—but one never sees out of the balsam-forests the peculiar moss which is their glory. It is almost rank in its richness; it is more vivid than emerald in its greenness; and there is a delicate grace about it which no other moss possesses. It is more like a fairy forest of miniature palm-leaves than any thing else to which one can liken it.

"What is this?" we ask, as our horses struggle up a steep ascent, and pause on a small plateau, where a double house of balsam-logs stands. All planking, every thing which made the house habitable, is gone, but the stout logs remain firmly fixed, together, and look as if they might defy the hand of Time. "Are we on the summit?"

"On the summit!" Eric laughs. "This is only the Mountain House, the summer residence, formerly, of Mr. William Patton, who owned the mountain. You are five thousand four hundred and sixty feet above sea-level, however, and have a most extensive view."

We turn—so dense has been the forest through which we ascended that this is our first glimpse of what we have gained—and see the world unrolled like a map below us,

with mountain ranges in azure billows spreading to the farthest verge of the infinitely distant horizon. It is a picture which almost takes away our breath, and dwarfs into insignificance all else that we have seen. What are the hills and rocks on which we have hitherto stood to this grand mountain-height, with the boundless territory which it overlooks? Eric points out the sweeping lines of the two great ranges which inclose on each side this Eden of the sky, as they trend southward to South Carolina and Georgia, and the innumerable transverse ranges and spurs that cover the face of the country. Far, misty, ocean-like, the magnificent expanse spreads, looking like a celestial country instead of a common work-day world.

We could linger here for hours, but are imperatively hurried on. Again we plunge into the dark shade of the dense balsams. The path is no more than a trail, which an eye inexperienced in woodcraft could not detect, and the way grows more and more steep. One moment the horses slip on the rocks up which they clamber; the next instant they sink above their fetlocks in black mud; there is barely room for their passage through the close-growing trees; and every few minutes a cry runs along the line, "Look out for your heads!" and we bend down on their necks to escape being scraped off by some leaning tree or low bough. In every direction stretches the somber, impenetrable forest, and the only things which break the monotony of its gloom are masses of rock piled together in strange, fantastic shapes, and covered with moss and ferns.

Two miles of this steep climbing brings us to the summit of the undulating ridge along which our way lies for several miles farther. The funereal branches of the balsam still overshadow us, but now and then we emerge from this canopy of shade into small, open spaces, lovely enough for a fairy court. Short, green grass flourishes, one or two graceful, hardy trees make a pleasant contrast to the somber firs, and flat rocks here and there seem provided specially for seats. We would willingly pause in these charming spots, but our guide calls no halt. He seems insensible to fatigue as he presses steadily onward with his long strides, and we are forced to follow, since this mountain wilderness, abounding in precipices and pitfalls, would be an unfavorable place in which to indulge a fancy for straggling. Twice he points out bear-tracks crossing our path, and once he turns aside from the path to show Sylvia the promised bear-trap—a stout erection of large logs.

"When you find a bear in a place like this," she says, regarding it gravely from the height of her mule, "what do you do to him?"

"Shoots him, generally," answers Mr. Burnet, with a broad smile.

"And you call that hunting!" she says, scornfully. "Why, I should think you would feel like a coward to come and shoot a poor trapped animal."

"Looking at the matter in that light, all hunting is cowardly," says Eric. "But if the bear had been stealing your hogs for several months you would probably be willing to shoot him when you found him in a trap.—Lead on, Dan. I am growing—to put it moderately—rather hungry."

Dan leads on, and presently we emerge on the largest and most beautiful of the little prairies through which we have passed. This stretch of open ground lies at the foot of the highest peak, the abrupt sides of which rise in conical shape before us. It is here, Mr. Burnet tells us, that the mountaineers who were searching for Professor Mitchell found the first trace of the way he had taken.

"We had been sarchin' from Friday to Tuesday," he says, "and on Tuesday we

was pretty nigh disheartened, when Wilson—an old hunter from over in Yancey—said he hadn't no doubt the professor had tried to go down to Caney Valley by a trail they two had followed thirteen years afore, and which leads that way"—he points down into the dark wilds below us. "Well, we looked along the edge of this here prairie till we found a track. Wilson was right—he *had* tried to go down to Caney Valley. We followed his trail for about four miles, and I was one of them what found him at last."

"He had lost his way," says Eric. "I have seen the spot—they call it Mitchell's Falls now—where he died. A stream of considerable size plunges over a precipice of about forty feet into a basin fourteen feet deep by as many wide. Into this he fell—probably at night."

"But how was it possible to bring a dead body up these steeps?" Sylvia says, addressing Mr. Burnet.

"We brought it in a sheet slung to the top of stout poles," he answers. "Then it were carried down to Asheville, and then brought up again and buried there"—he nods to the peak above us.

"In the warmth of their great friendship and admiration, people thought that he ought to rest in the midst of the scenes he had explored so fearlessly and loved so well," says Eric.

We are all silent. This shadow of death seems to obscure something of the beauty of the wide prospect. We have paused, attracted not only by the gentle loveliness of the spot, but by the magnificence of the far-stretching view. Immediately in front of us sweeps westwardly the great range of Craggy, its spurs shutting off Asheville from our view. Beyond, Pisgah lifts its crest, with its surrounding mountains, while behind these range after range melts into illimitable distance, and more than half the counties of the western part of the State lie spread before us. Eric takes his cherished companion—a large field-glass—from its case, and brings it to a proper focus, then he hands it to me.

"Look," he says, "at that cloud-like table-land lying near the South Carolina line—do you see what I mean? That is the upper valley of the French Broad in Transylvania, and it is nearly on a level with the summit of the Blue Ridge."

The glass passes from hand to hand, for we all alight here, since the rest of the ascent can best be made on foot. The saddles are taken from the horses, and they are turned loose to graze until morning.

"Suppose they should run away?" suggests Mr. Lanier, a little aghast at this proceeding; but our guide only laughs.

"They'll not run fur," he says.

"If they did, we should have to walk down the mountain," says Sylvia. "That would be capital fun!"

"Fun which I had rather be spared," says Mrs. Cardigan, taking off her waterproof, which has served as a riding skirt, and throwing it over her arm.

Only the pack-horse is led to the summit of the peak. We follow, glad to be spared the ascent of the steep and rocky way on horseback. The climbing is laborious, but fortunately short. Before long we gain the top, and the first object on which our eyes rest is—the grave.

Here the friends of the dead professor laid him down, to await the resurrection morning. At his feet the pines sigh their mournful requiem, and the majestic glory of that

Nature to which he was so devoted lies spread around. With this loftiest peak of the great Appalachian chain his name is linked effectually. The dome is not likely to be called by any other name than "Mount Mitchell" so long as the first sight which greets those who ascend is Mitchell's grave.

Beside the grave, the summit is entirely bare. A few yards down its sides the balsam-growth begins; but the firs are stunted, and round the crest of the knob half at least of them are dead and look like white spectres of trees. A small cabin stood here a year or two ago, but is now burned down—only its chimney remaining.

"Where is the cave? I don't see any cave," says Mrs. Cardigan, looking blankly round as we seat ourselves in an exhausted condition on the scattered rocks that abound.

"The cave is about fifty yards down the side of the peak," says Eric. "Burnet has taken the pack-horse there to unload. As soon as you are rested sufficiently, we had better follow. We can take dinner, and then return here for the view."

Does any one wonder that we rise with alacrity at the sound of that magic word "dinner"? If so, he or she never made a mountain-ascent of six hours in an atmosphere that sharpens the appetite to that positive hunger which in ordinary life we so seldom feel.

Down a path on the other side of the peak we go, and, about fifty yards from the summit, are led to a large rock, one side of which shelves inward to the depth of ten or twelve feet, forming an excellent shelter.

"This was the royal residence of the king of the bears in the good old times when there were no men on these mountains," says Rupert, as we approach. (He is on his knees, assisting Harrison to unpack the provisions.) "It serves admirably for bears, but is rather low for people."

"For giants like yourself, very likely," says Sylvia. "I can stand upright in it, quite far back, very comfortably—see!"

"And when one sits down it is admirable," says Mrs. Cardigan, suiting the action to the word, and sitting down on a shawl which Mr. Lanier has spread for her.

"Here is a natural cupboard," I say, examining a ledge of rocks that juts out on one side.

"I doubt whether we shall leave any thing to go into it," says Charley. "I am famished!"

"Spread the table quicker, Harrison!" cries Sylvia—"Eric, carve the ham while I cut some bread."

The table is spread—to wit, a miscellaneous collection of eatables are placed on a piece of black oil-cloth—and dinner begins. For some time no other remarks are heard than those which are strictly necessary. Requests are made for bread-and-butter, for another piece of ham or chicken, for pickles or sardines; beyond this, little is said until we look at each other and laugh. By this time the feast is drawing to its close. Canned fruits, cakes, and jelly, are on the table; Charley is opening a bottle of wine.

"Fate cannot harm us, we have dined today," says Sylvia. "Oh, were you *ever* so hungry before? I only hope we have left enough for breakfast: we cannot afford to eat any supper."

"Can't we?" says Rupert, looking dismayed. "Why, I think there's a plenty left. We'll have some coffee, at any rate. As soon as Burnet comes back—he has taken the pack-horse down to the others—we are going to make a fire."

"If the wind should be in the wrong direction, we shall suffer dreadfully from the smoke," says Mr. Lanier, looking at the great pile of charred logs immediately in front of our rock-house—remnants of the fire of some other party.

"Better suffer from smoke than from cold," says Eric. "You'll be glad of the fire when night falls; and, in order that you may have it, we must go to work and cut wood enough to last till morning."

"Cut wood!" repeats Mr. Lanier, with a gasp. He has plainly not anticipated any thing like this. "You mean that Harrison and the guide will cut it?"

"I mean that it will require several axes to cut as much as we shall need," answers Eric. "The balsam-wood will not burn in small quantities."

Mr. Lanier does not volunteer to take one of these axes; he looks, on the contrary, greatly disgusted.

"And you call this a pleasure-excursion?" he says.

"A pleasure *exertion* it might better be defined—don't you think so?" asks Mrs. Cardigan, laughing.

"I wondered why you were bringing axes along," says Sylvia, turning to Charley; "and this is what it was for?"

"This is what it was for," he answers. "Now—since we are in a gypsy camp—may I ask leave to light a cigar? 'When Juno ruffles thee, O Jupiter, try the weed'—and, according to my experience, Juno is pretty sure to ruffle one sooner or later; therefore, it is well to be provided with a weed."

"After that, you don't deserve permission to light it," she says, "but I suppose we can't refuse you the privilege which we are willing to grant the others."

At this, cigars are lighted, and, when the bottle of wine has been emptied, we take our way back to the summit.

There the full glory of all that we have come to see bursts upon us. How can one write of it?—how give the faintest idea of the beauty which lies below us on this September day?—how describe the sublimated fairness of the day itself in the rarefied air of this high peak?

"I have never obtained so good a view before!" says Eric. "There are not a dozen days in the year when one can obtain such a view from this mountain."

"What delightful luck that we should have hit one of the dozen!" says Mrs. Cardigan. "Don't you feel as if you overlooked the whole world, and the kingdoms thereof? O Mr. Markham, dear Mr. Markham, tell us what every thing is!"

Dear Mr. Markham proceeds to comply with this moderate request, while Sylvia mounts the chimney, and stands there—field-glass in hand—sweeping the horizon, as he indicates one object after another. Charley sits on the chimney at her feet, swinging his legs meditatively and smoking; Mrs. Cardigan, in her enthusiasm, takes Mr. Lanier's arm.

The view is so immense that one is forced to regard it in sections. Far to the north-east lies Virginia, from which the long waving lines of the Blue Ridge comes, and passes directly under the Black, making a point of junction, near which it towers into the steep Pinnacle and stately Graybeard—so called from the white beard which it wears when a frozen cloud has iced its rhododendrons. From our greater eminence we overlook the Blue Ridge entirely, and see the country below spreading into azure distance, with white spots which resolve themselves through the glass into villages, and mountains clearly

defined. The Linville range—through which the Linville River forces its way in a gorge of wonderful grandeur—is in full view, with a misty cloud lying on the surface of Table Rock, while the peculiar form of the Hawk's Bill stands forth in marked relief. Beyond, blue and limitless as the ocean, the undulating plain of the more level country extends until it melts into the sky.

As the glance leaves this view, and, sweeping back over the Blue Ridge, follows the main ledge of the Black, one begins to appreciate the magnitude of this great mountain. For miles along its dark crest appear a succession of cone-like peaks, and, as it sweeps round westwardly, it divides into two great branches—one of which terminates in the height on which we stand, while numerous spurs lead off from its base; the other stretches southward, forming the splendid chain of Craggy. At our feet lie the elevated counties of Yancey and Mitchell, with their surface so uniformly mountainous that one wonders how men could have been daring enough to think of making their homes amid such wild scenes.

"The richest lands in the mountains are to be found in those counties," says Eric, when we remark something like this:

"Look at the farms—they scarcely seem more than gardens from our point of view—dotted all over the valleys and rolling table-lands, and even on the mountain-sides. Yet Burnswille, the county-seat, is six hundred feet higher than Asheville."

Beyond these counties stretches the chain of the Unaka, running along the line of Tennessee, with the Roan Mountain—famous for its extensive view over seven States—immediately in our front. Through the passes and rugged chasms of this range, we look across the entire valley of East Tennessee to where the blue outlines of the Cumberland Mountains trend toward Kentucky, and we see distinctly a marked depression which Eric says is Cumberland Gap. Turning our gaze due westward, the view is, if possible, still more grand. There the colossal masses of the Great Smoky stand, draped in a mantle of clouds, while through Haywood and Transylvania, to the borders of South Carolina, rise the peaks of the Balsam Mountains, behind which are the Cullowhee and the Nantahala, with the Blue Ridge making a majestic curve toward the point where Georgia touches the Carolinas.

"To understand how much you see," says Eric—"for such a view is bewildering in its magnitude—you must remember that this elevated country called Western North Carolina is two hundred and fifty miles long, with a breadth varying from thirty to sixty miles, and that you overlook all this—with much more besides."

"With very much more besides," says Charley, "especially in the matter of width. Cumberland Gap is fully a hundred miles away, and the view on the other side of the Blue Ridge is even more extensive."

"You are right—it is bewildering," says Sylvia, dropping the glass, "and it is folly to think of seeing such a view in one day or two days. We should remain here for a week at least."

"In that case we'd have to send for more provisions," says Rupert's voice from the rear.

Then Eric rouses with a start to the consciousness that, while the sun is sloping westward, and the shadows are lengthening over all the marvelous scene, a supply of wood for the night has not been cut. The axes of the guide and Harrison are ringing

down among the balsam-trees, but he is too experienced a mountaineer to trust entirely to their efforts.

"Come, Rupert," he says, "a little exercise will do you no harm. —Charley, if we need recruits, I'll call you."

"Very good," says Charley, with resignation.

Deserted thus by our instructor, we cease to ask the names of the mountain-ranges or towering peaks. It is enough to sit and watch the inexpressible beauty of the vast prospect as afternoon slowly wanes into evening. There is a sense of isolation, of solemnity and majesty, in the scene which none of us are likely to forget. So high are we elevated above the world, that the pure vault of ether over our heads seems nearer to us than the blue rolling earth, with its wooded hills and smiling valleys below. No sound comes up to us, no voice of water or note of bird breaks the stillness. We are in the region of that eternal silence which wraps the summits of the "everlasting hills." A repose that is full of awe broods over this lofty peak, which still retains the last rays of the sinking sun, while over the lower world twilight has fallen.

Glen Rounds

1906-2002

Known as the last of the great "Ring-Tailed Roarers," Glen Rounds delighted readers for more than 60 years with his tall tales, colorful narratives of the West, and nature books, populated by often cantankerous characters drawn with squiggly, whimsical energy.

A longtime resident of Southern Pines, Rounds was born in a sod house in the Badlands of South Dakota in 1906 and grew up there and on a horse ranch in Montana. In a roundabout way, it seems he was destined to be an artist. He studied painting and drawing at the Art Institute in Kansas City, where he made pastries in a bakery at night and studied art by day. Under the tutelage of the famous Thomas Hart Benton, he drew the cowboys and lumberjacks he had known as a boy.

Rounds and another art student, abstract expressionist Jackson Pollock, traveled the country with Benton one summer, assisting with, and even appearing as subjects in, some of his celebrated murals of Midwestern life for Post Offices and other public buildings. An early vagabond career provided a wealth of material. Rounds was a muleskinner, railroad section hand, medicine man, lightning artist, hobo, rodeo rider, sign painter, artilleryman, textile designer, naturalist, cowboy, and carnival man.

An editor in New York advised him that his drawings would have a better chance of selling if attached to a narrative. He was already known by his friends as a veritable tornado of a yarn-spinner. His first book, *O! Paul*,



Photo by Jack Rourke 1999

The Mighty Logger, about the legendary Paul Bunyan, was published in 1936 and has never been out of print. While his books are generally considered for young readers, they appeal to all ages.

In 1937 Rounds visited North Carolina, married and, after service in World War II, settled down. It's estimated that he wrote and/or illustrated a hundred and fifty books, more or less. Among his early ones, *Whitey's First Roundup* (1942) features a pint-size cowboy whose adventures were recorded in many sequels. In the mid-1950s, North Carolina began to gain a foothold in his tales. *Swamp Life* (1957), a popular book about the Sandhills, deals with the natural history of the swampy places along Little Fierly Creek. A companion volume, *Wildlife at Your Doorstep* (1958), takes up insects, reptiles, and small woods animals. *Wild Orphan* (1961) tells of a young beaver who must get along by himself.

Rain in the Woods and Other Small Matters (1964) deals with those wild creatures, including the otter and tent caterpillar, inhabiting the author's own pond and woods. His tall tales found monumental expression in *Mr. Yowder and the Lion Roar Capsules* (1976), *Mr. Yowder and the Train Robbers* (1981), and others. On its website, the New York Public Library recommends his retelling of a classic, *I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* (1990), among "100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know."

Rounds won the American Association of University Women Award four times for best juvenile book of the year. He was a recipient of the North Carolina Award for Literature and was also honored by the North Carolina Writers Conference. According to fellow author Steve Smith, "Glen Rounds understood that life is all in the telling and that narrative is a means by which the storyteller transmits energy to the listener or reader."

Rounds offered his own unique perspective on yarn-spinning. "It's like recharging lightning rods," he said. "Doesn't do anybody any harm and does some folks a lot of good."

From *The Blind Colt*, (Part One: "The Bad Lands"), by Glen Rounds (New York: Holiday House, 1941)

It was near sundown of an early spring afternoon when the brown mustang mare left the wild horse band where it grazed on the new spring grass, and climbed carefully to the top of a nearby hogback.

All afternoon she had been restless and nervous, spending much of her time on high ground watching the country around her. Now she stood and stamped her feet fretfully while she tipped her sharp-pointed ears forward and back as she looked and

listened. Her nostrils flared wide as she tested the wind for any smells that might be about.

The rain-gullied buttes and pinnacles of the Badlands threw long black shadows across the soft gray and brown and green of the alkali flats below her. A few jack rabbits had already left their hiding places and were prospecting timidly around in the morning light, poking out the tender shoots of new grass. They, too, threw long black shadows that were all out of proportion to their size.

A few bull bats boomed overhead, and a meadow lark sang from the top of a sagebrush nearby. Below her the rest of the mustang band grazed quietly except for an occasional squeal and thump of hoofs as some minor dispute was settled. Otherwise everything was quiet.

But still the little mare didn't leave the ridge. She stood watching while the flats grew darker and the darkness crept up the sides of the buttes, until at last the sun touched only the very tiptops of the highest pinnacles. Then after a look back to where the rest of the horses were bedding down for the night, she slipped quietly down the far side of the ridge and was soon hidden in the darkness.

Next morning she was in a grassy hollow at the head of a dry coulee where the rolling prairie and the Badlands meet. And lying at her feet, sound asleep, was her colt, that had been born during the night.

The early sun touched the top of the rimrock behind her, then gradually crept down until it was warming the grass where the little mustang lay. As soon as the ground had begun to steam and the touch of frost was out of the air, she nudged him with her muzzle and waked him. For a little while he lay there, sniffing around in the grass as far as he could reach, and flapping his tail to hear it thump against the ground, while the mare stood relaxed on three legs and watched him.

But after a while she seemed to figure it was time for him to be up and about so she urged him to his feet. He was as awkward looking a scamp as you'd care to see as he stood with his long, knobby legs braced wide apart and caught his breath after the effort of getting up.

His body was close knit and compact and his back was flat and strong. His muzzle was delicately shaped but his forehead bulged as all colts' do. His neck was so short he couldn't get his nose closer to the ground than his knees, and his legs were so long he seemed to be walking on stilts. His ears were trim and sharply pointed but looked as though they should belong to a horse much larger than he.

The mare saw all this but she knew that colts were put together so, and that those extra long legs of his were specially made that way so that by the time he was a day or two old he would be able to travel as fast and as far as the grown horses in case of danger. And besides, she thought that his blue-gray coat was especially handsome.

For a few minutes the colt was busy trying to balance himself on his legs while he sniffed and snorted at everything in reach. As long as he stood still he was all right but when he tried walking he found he was engaged in a mighty ticklish business, what with his being so high in the air with nothing holding him up but those four knobby legs. They had to be lifted and swung just so or they got all tangled up and started him kiting off in some entirely unexpected direction.

But he was hungry, and the only way he could get anything to eat was to go after it himself; so it wasn't long before he was able to scramble around against the mare's side.

After a little nuzzling around he found her teats and settled down to sucking noisily, flapping his tail with excitement.

Before long his sides began to stick out, he was so full of milk, and he was quite ready to enjoy the business of having his coat groomed by the mustang mare. She was fair bursting with pride, as this was her first colt. She whickered softly and caressed him with her muzzle every now and again as she scrubbed him with her rough tongue. When she hit a ticklish spot he'd flap his tail and squirm and snort his tiny snorts. When he did that she'd nip him gently with her big yellow teeth to warn him that wild young ones must learn to obey, and he'd better stand still until she was done or he might get worse.

And not an inch of his hide did she overlook. The white snip on his nose, his speckled blue sides and flanks, his legs that shaded down to black shiny hoofs: all got their share of combing and washing. By the time he had been thoroughly polished the sun was warm in the hollow and he practised his walking again, and his smelling, and his hearing.

He started taking little exploring trips, a few wobbly steps in one direction, then another, with much snuffing and snorting as the brittle last year's grass crackled under foot. As he got the hang of operating his walking apparatus more smoothly, he became bolder and extended the range of his explorations until sometimes he traveled as far as ten or twenty feet from the brown mare's side.

His black-tipped, pointed ears were fixed to turn in all directions, to help him locate the source of sounds he heard. He pointed them forward and back, and the soft wind that springs up on the desert in the morning brushed against them, feeling sweet and clear and smooth. What few sounds he heard at first seemed to float separately through the warm silence as though there was all the time in the world and no need for two noises to be moving at the same time. Meadow larks whistled from nearby sagebrush, and far off he heard the harsh bickering of magpies as they quarreled over a dead rabbit or a gopher.

Later on he discovered that down close to the ground there was a thin blanket of bug sounds. Flies buzzed and grasshoppers whirled. And buryer beetles made clicking noises as they busily buried a small dead snake.

Sniffing through his nose, he caught the sharp clean smell of the sagebrush, and the more pungent smell of the greasewood as the sun began to heat it up. Occasionally he got a whiff of wild plum and chokecherry blossoms from the thicket down below the rim of the Badlands.

Of course, these were the big plain smells, easily discovered. Later on he would learn to identify others that had to be searched for with flared nostrils, and carefully and delicately sifted for the story they could tell him of friends, or danger, or the location of water holes in the dry times. But for now the simpler lessons were enough to keep him busy, and the mustang mare was mighty proud of him.

But for all her pride, she was a little troubled, too. For there was something strange about the colt, although she couldn't tell exactly what the matter was. He was as lively as you'd expect any colt only a few hours old to be. He snorted and kicked up his heels when a ground squirrel whistled close by. And when a tumbleweed blew against his legs he put on a mock battle, rearing up and lashing out with his front feet. When he came back to her from his trips he'd pinch her with his teeth, and pretend to fight, as any healthy colt should. But nonetheless, she felt that something was wrong.

The sun climbed higher, and the colt finally tired himself out and lay down to doze at the mare's feet. She thought about starting back to join the mustang band, but it seemed so safe and peaceful here in the pocket that she hated to leave. By tomorrow the colt's legs would be stronger and he would be able to follow her with no difficulty.

But before the morning was half gone she heard the sound of danger, an iron-shod hoof striking a stone, and looked up to see two cowboys between her and the mouth of the pocket.

It was Uncle Torwal and Whitey out to see how their range stock was getting along. Torwal was a slow-speaking fellow with a droopy red moustache, and a good many of the horses running in the Badlands belonged to him. Whitey, who was probably ten years old or thereabouts, had lived with him on the ranch for several years. Almost since he could remember. He wore a cast-off Stetson hat of Torwal's and high-heeled riding boots from the same source. They lived alone like any two old sourdoughs and were a familiar sight at all the roundups, and in town of a Saturday, Torwal on a crop-eared black and Whitey on a pot-bellied old pinto named Spot. Torwal usually spoke of Whitey as his 'sawed-off' foreman.

The little mare had whirled to face them, keeping the colt behind her. With her teeth bared and ears laid back, she looked half wolf for sure.

"Spunky crittur, ain't she?" Whitey remarked as they rode carefully around, trying to get a good look at the colt.

"She's a wolf all right," Torwal agreed. "An' if you ain't careful she's agoin' to paste you plumb outta your saddle. Better not crowd her."

They sat on their horses and watched awhile and admired the colt. "Purty as a picture, ain't he, Uncle Torwal?" said Whitey. "Reckon we better take him home so the wolves won't get him?"

"Don't reckon we'll take him anywheres," Torwal told him. "Looks like I'm agoin' to have to shoot him!"

"Shoot him! Why?" squalled Whitey. "Why he's the purtiest colt on the ranch!"

"Better look him over closer, Bub," said Torwal. "See if you notice anything outta the way about him."

"I don't see anything wrong, myself," Whitey told him, after he'd walked Spot in a circle around the mare and colt again. "He looks to me just like the kind of crittur I'd like to have for a 'Sunday' horse."

"Look at his eyes; they're white," Torwal growled. "That colt's blind as a bat!"

"Aw, them's just china eyes, Uncle Torwal," Whitey said. "Lotsa horses has china eyes. Even ol' spot has one."

"Them ain't no china eyes, not by a long shot," said Torwal. "If you look close you'll see that they're pure white without no center. He's blind, and we gotta shoot him. Otherwise he'll fall in a hole somewheres or get wolf et."

"Well, even if he is blind do we *hafta* shoot him?" Whitey asked. "Couldn't I take him home an' keep him at the ranch?"

"All he'd be is a mess of trouble even if you got him home, and I doubt that he'd go that far without somethin' happening to him anyways," Torwal told him. "An' besides, he wouldn't be good for nothing."

"Well anyway, do we hafta shoot him?" Whitey said. "Couldn't we just let him go loose?"

"Now quit your squallin'," Torwal told him, patiently. "I don't like it any more than you do, but if we leave him he'll either fall in a hole and starve or else he'll get wolf et. Lookit her tracks where she circled during the night. Fighting off an ol' 'gray,' I bet she was."

While Whitey sat with his lip hanging down almost to his collar, Torwal took another chew from his plug and got his rifle out of his saddle scabbard. But whenever he tried to get near the colt the little mare was there, lashing out with her hoofs and showing her teeth to bite either man or horse that got too near. Before long she was covered with lather and her eyes showed white, and the ground was plowed and trampled in a circle. But still the colt was safe.

Then Whitey spoke up again. "Lissen, Uncle Torwal," he said, "Lookit the way she fights. I don't believe any wolf could get to that colt, the way she uses them heels. If you'll let him go I'll watch mighty close to see if he falls in anything. I'll ride out every day to see that he's all right. An' if he does fall in I - I - I'll shoot him myself!"

Uncle Torwal thought the matter over awhile.

"You want that colt mighty bad, don't yuh?" he said at last.

"Yeah, I sure do! He's the purtiest thing I've ever seen!" said Whitey. "I don't think anything will happen to him, really, Uncle Torwal! He's too smart lookin'!"

"Well, I tell yuh," Torwal said, doubtfully. "Since you feel like that about it we'll let him go awhile. We'll be a-ridin' over here every day for a while, anyways, so we can always shoot him later.

"But don't go gettin' your hopes up," he added. "The chances are he won't last a week. An' if he does he ain't good for nothing except to eat up good grass an' be a gunny sack full of trouble."

"Nothing is going to happen to him," Whitey exclaimed. "You'll see."

"Maybe," said Uncle Torwal, but Whitey could see that he was glad to have an excuse for not shooting the colt. Uncle Torwal put his rifle back in the scabbard, and they sat for a minute watching the colt, and then rode off to attend to their other affairs.

The little mare watched them until they were out of sight, and finally when she could no longer hear them she turned to the colt. She nuzzled him all over to make sure that nothing had happened to him. Then, after letting him suck again, she started down the trail toward the place she'd left the mustang band, with the blind colt following close against her flank.



Elizabeth Spencer

1921-

“Elizabeth Spencer’s literary works flow effortlessly,” a critic once observed, “like a lazy Southern river: calm on the surface, yet possessing a powerful undertow capable of sweeping away the unsuspecting.” Throughout her career, which began with her first novel, *Fire in the*

Morning (1948), her prose has captivated readers with its subtle wit and grace. She is regarded as one of America’s most outstanding fiction writers.

Spencer was born in Carroton, Mississippi, in 1921 to a storytelling and book-loving family in a community steeped in the oral traditions of the South, and subsequently set many of her works in the hill country and deltas of Mississippi and Louisiana. She met her lifelong friend Eudora Welty while at Belhaven College in Jackson, and began to write seriously after a year of graduate study at Vanderbilt.

While in Italy on a Guggenheim in 1953, she met her future husband. They lived in Montreal, Canada, for many years, coming back to the South in 1986, where Spencer taught creative writing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has been a resident of Chapel Hill ever since.

Perhaps her most famous work is the novella *The Light in the Piazza*, which *The New Yorker* published in its entirety in a single issue. It won the McGraw Hill Fiction Prize, was made into a movie (starring Olivia de Havilland and George Hamilton) and is currently under option for a musical production. Other titles among her nine novels include *The Voice at the Back Door*, *The Salt Line*, *This Crooked Way*, and *The Night Travellers*. She has also published four collections of short stories, the memoir *Landscapes of the Heart*, and a play, *For Lease or Sale*. Her work has been translated into fourteen languages.

The recent Modern Library edition of her short fiction, *The Southern Woman*, published to wide critical acclaim, includes twenty-seven stories written over the past six decades, including six previously unpublished works.

Spencer has received the Award of Merit Medal for the Short Story from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, of which she is a member. She has received five O’Henry Prizes for stories in *The New Yorker*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Southern Review* and elsewhere. Her stories have been included in editions of the *O’Henry Prize Stories* and *The Pushcart Prize*.

Her many honors include the Cleanth Brooks Medal for achievement awarded by the Fellowship of Southern Writers, the John Dos Passos Award for Literature, the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award for fiction, the Fortner Award for Literature from St. Andrews Presbyterian College, and the North Carolina Award for Literature.

Her themes are universal and grapple with such enduring issues as selfhood and the price one must pay to be independent, race relations, class consciousness, alienation, despair and evil, eloquently illuminating the complexities of the human condition. Her most masterful stories are richly ambiguous, revealing more with each successive reading.

In the words of Terry Roberts, author of *Self and Community in the Fiction of Elizabeth Spencer*, "She consistently reveals for our examination the densely woven ties of communion—ties that bind us all by binding up our wounds while simultaneously limiting who and what we may become. Many of her characters sever those ties in order to gain their freedom, but nearly all those who do, pay a very real price."

**From *The Snare*, "11. The Trial Continues"
(Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1993; New York: McGraw-Hill,
1972)**

Julia had known wild boys from high school on. But Southern boys, New Orleans boys with their pedigreed French names and their casual pursuit of excellence—the tops in living, sport, girls—were self-conscious; they were tied to a smaller statement of life than what she wanted made to her. Besides, something had happened which had crystallized them all for her, way too soon. When she was seventeen a sweet wild one she was dating had shot himself playing with an old dueling pistol. It had been during a house party on a fine plantation dating back to the eighteenth century. All week, through beautiful nights, pavilion dances, through layers of wit, rounds of eating, and almost perpetual drinking, it had seemed that they were all too much of something. Too beautiful, too soft-voiced, too brilliant, too casually enhanced with everything that tended toward a racial deserving, an eternity of a paradise of simply knowing they were the only ones in the world with those particular redolent names, the poise and repose of that singularly spared plantation house resting in neoclassical outline upon the banks of that one languid bayou. Beurivard. "Garrett," the boy had said. "It won't do for a name, Julia. If I had a name like Garrett, I'd shoot myself straight through the head." And he had spun the cylinder, and drawn back the hammer. It had clicked dull and empty, but the gesture remained, printed before her vision. All that afternoon (as well as other afternoons before that day) he had been initiating her sexually down in a boat house on a daybed covered with old chintz. In the breeze from time to time, a torn shade flapped and slapped like a sail in a hot calm. Now he was in the side gallery at Beurivard, after dinner, alone with

her, sitting carelessly, leaning back against a white-painted column, his leg cocked up as though he sat a horse he knew well. Julia felt like a wild orchid just come to bloom. Don't, she wanted to say, when he spun the chamber the second time, but her spirit overruled it. They both were free, that was the good thing. A word like "don't" on that long party and the house might catch fire, or a tornado come plowing in through the woods, or, more magically, all might turn to cobwebs and dust. A light breeze sprang up, fanning the damp warmth of the flesh at her neck and armpits, moving along her bare shoulders. The moon had risen. A second time, the boy pulled the trigger. She did not hear the sound till later. The face regarding her own transferred itself from the support of his neck to that of the white pillar beside it. Julia screamed.

He had been supposed to die as though it didn't matter and he had done it, they said. They had dragged her away before he actually expired, but she guessed he had succeeded, all right, and this more than anything could bring tears to her yet, to this day, because fiercely she knew it wasn't worth it; she knew now they had been so much better than the aristocratic games they'd been so greedily playing. But René, who hadn't known that, had signed them off for her forever; she could never make herself believe in all that self-charmed world again. For years she had cherished the notion that he—René—had been her one love, but then Martin Parham had come along from up in Mississippi, and she'd changed. But that, too, though entirely another story, had reached an apex, a climax, which had not been marriage—a marriage so confidently awaited by her aunt and uncle. By now she felt that every man—and each world that every man brought with him—might be expected to do the same.

From The Southern Woman: New and Selected Fiction,
 "A Southern Landscape"

(New York: The Modern Library, 2001;
 Copyright © 2001 by Elizabeth Spencer)

If you're like me and sometimes turn through the paper reading anything and everything because you're too lazy to get up and do what you ought to be doing, then you already know about my home town. There's a church there that has a gilded hand on the steeple, with the finger pointing to Heaven. The hand looks normal size, but it's really as big as a Ford car. At least, that's what they used to say in those little cartoon squares in the newspaper, full of sketches and exclamation points—"Strange As It Seems," "This Curious World," or Ripley's "Believe It or Not." Along with carnivorous tropical flowers, the Rosetta stone, and the cheerful information that the entire human race could be packed into a box a mile square and dumped into Grand Canyon, there it would be every so often, that old Presbyterian hand the size of a Ford car. It made me feel right in touch with the universe to see it in the paper—something it never did accomplish all by itself. I haven't seen anything about it recently, but then, Ford cars have got bigger, and, come to think of it, maybe they don't even print those cartoons any more. The name of the town, in case you're trying your best to remember and can't, is Port Claiborne, Mississippi. Not that I'm *from* there; I'm from *near* there.

Coming down the highway from Vicksburg, you come to Port Claiborne, and then to get to our house you turn off to the right on State Highway No. 202 and follow along the prettiest road. It's just about the way it always was—worn deep down like a tunnel and thick with shade in summer. In spring, it's so full of sweet heavy odors, they make you drunk, you can't think of anything—you feel you will faint or go right out of yourself. In fall, there is the rustle of leaves under your tires and the smell of them, all sad and Indian-like. Then in the winter, there are only dust and bare limbs, and mud when it rains, and everything is like an old dirt-dauber's nest up in the corner. Well, any season, you go twisting along this tunnel for a mile or so, then the road breaks down into a flat open run toward a wooden bridge that spans a swampy creek bottom. Tall trees grown up out of the bottom—willow and cypress, gum and sycamore—and there is a jungle of brush and vines—kudzu, Jackson vine, Spanish moss, grapevine, Virginia creeper, and honeysuckle—looping, climbing, and festooning the trees, and harboring every sort of snake and varmint underneath. The wooden bridge clatters when you cross, and down far below you can see water, lying still, not a good step wide. One bank is grassy and the other is a slant of ribbed white sand.

Then you're going to have to stop and ask somebody. Just say, "Can you tell me where to turn to get to the Summerall place?" Everybody knows us. Not that we *are* anybody—I don't mean that. It's just that we've been there forever. When you find the right road, you go right on up through a little wood of oaks, then across a field, across a cattle gap, and you're there. The house is nothing special, just a one-gable affair with a bay window and a front porch—the kind they built back around fifty or sixty years ago. The shrubs around the porch and the privet hedge around the bay window were all grown up too high the last time I was there. They ought to be kept trimmed down. The yard is a nice flat one, not much for growing grass but wonderful for shooting marbles. There were always two or three marble holes out near the pecan trees where I used to play with the colored children.

Benjy Hamilton swore he twisted his ankle in one of those same marble holes once when he came to pick me up for something my senior year in high school. For all I know, they're still there, but Benjy was more than likely drunk and so would hardly have needed a marble hole for an excuse to fall down. Once, before we got the cattle gap, he couldn't open the gate, and fell on the barbed wire trying to cross the fence. I had to pick him out, thread at a time, he was so tangled up. Mama said, "What were you two doing out at the gate so long last night?" "Oh, nothing, just talking," I said. She thought for the longest time that Benjy Hamilton was the nicest boy that ever walked the earth. No matter how drunk he was, the presence of an innocent lady like Mama, who said "*Drinking?*" in the same tone of voice she would have said "*Murder.*" would bring him around faster than any number of needle showers, massages, ice packs, prairie oysters, or quick dips in December off the northern bank of Lake Ontario. He would straighten up and smile and say, "You made any more peach pickle lately, Miss Sadie?" (He could even say "peach pickle.") And she'd say no, but that there was always some of the old for him whenever he wanted any. And he'd say that was just the sweetest thing he'd ever heard of, but she didn't know what she was promising—anything as good as her peach pickle ought to be guarded like gold. And she'd say, well, for most anybody else she'd think twice before she offered any. And he'd say, if only everybody was as sweet to him as she was...And

they'd go on together like that till you'd think that all creation had ground and wound itself down through the vistas of eternity to bring the two of them face to face for exchanging compliments over peach pickle. Then I would put my arm in his so it would look like he was helping me down the porch steps out of the reflexes of his gentlemanly upbringing, and off we'd go.

It didn't happen all the time, like I've made it sound. In fact, it was only a few times when I was in school that I went anywhere with Benjy Hamilton. Benjy isn't his name, either; it's Foster. I sometimes call him "Benjy" to myself, after a big overgrown thirty-three-year-old idiot in *The Sound and the Fury*, by William Faulkner. Not that Foster was so big or overgrown, or even thirty-three years old, back then; but he certainly did behave like an idiot.



Fred Chappell, Poet Laureate

1937-

Being appointed Poet Laureate by then-Governor Jim Hunt in December, 1997, has been just one of Fred Chappell's many achievements. He began teaching at UNC-Greensboro in 1964. His awards include the O. Max Gardner Award, the highest teaching award bestowed by the UNC system, and in 1988, he was named the Burlington Industries Excellence Professor of English. For his more than twenty books of poetry and fiction, he has received a long list of awards and prizes, including the Yale University Library's Bollingen Prize in poetry, the T.S. Eliot Prize, an award from the National Academy of Arts and Letters, and the best foreign book prize from the Academie Française.

At the time of conferring the laureateship upon Chappell, Governor Hunt said that, "Fred is famous for his generous support of aspiring writers His great talent and generosity make him the perfect choice for North Carolina's highest literary honor. His great energy and his marvelous wit will serve North Carolina well as he encourages reading, writing, and literacy statewide."

Chappell notes, "Being poet laureate of a state filled with splendid writers makes me feel proud but fearful, like an awkward teenager at his first formal dance.... A hundred others in the state might have been chosen. In my mind, I represent them."

A fellowship has also been established at UNC-Greensboro in honor of Chappell, enabling the University to attract young writers with the most potential to develop their craft in the company of UNC-Greensboro faculty. The fellowship serves to "...solidify the creative writing program's national reputation in the twenty-first century."

From *Wind Mountain: A Poem*, by Fred Chappell
(Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1979)

X. Hallowind

Setting: Halloween, 1961; Durham, N.C.

Personae: Reynolds Price, Susan, Fred, the rain, the wind

Fred

Listen to it skirl the roof
And tear the ragged eaves as if
The world outside weren't room enough!

Reynolds

Voices.

Fred

What do they say?

Reynolds

"In, in."

The ghosts of stories not yet written
Lisp and whimper like dead men.
It's up to us to chronicle
Their thoughts, that death not treat them all
The way that life did, flat forgetful.

Fred

What a swarm of stories there
Must be, to overload the air
With voices as loud as a river's roar.

Reynolds

The number, of course, is infinite.

Fred

Why couldn't a single story tell it
All?

Reynolds

Ah, that's the helpless poet
In you, the need to generalize
From yours to all men's destinies.
For fiction, those are pompous lies
Which try to stretch the single stories
Into laws akin to physical laws.

Fred

You're no one to talk. *A Long
And Happy Life* will make as strong
An example as any poet's song.
What is it but the ancient tale
Of Cupid and muddled Psyche? All
That's added is the motorcycle.

Reynolds

That's not the way I see it. These
Are Warren County sweethearts whose
Lives shape local clarities.

Fred

Suppose, though, that I choose to read
The myth within it. Is it so bad
To add more meaning to each word?

Reynolds

But do you add or take away?
A certain lake, a certain tree,
A particular girl on a certain day—
A fleeting tang in Carolina . . .
You'd give that up for some diviner
Heavy symbol?

Fred

But if I find a
Paradigm as old as fiction
Itself conformably mixed in?

Reynolds

Well, that requires some hard reflection.
If you think it's there it's there,
I guess. It could be anywhere,
Or not at all. *Things as they are*:
That's the novelist's true belief.
I regard the "symbol" as a thief
Which steals the best parts of a life.

Fred

I think I don't believe you quite.

Reynolds

I'm overstating it a bit
To make my point. Jim Applewhite
Would have conniptions if he were here—

Fred

And Spender too.

Reynolds

—*Things as they are.*

I'll stand by what I see and hear.

Fred

And does that mean the poet's blind
And deaf? Let's say he's trained his mind
To hear all, multivoiced as wind.

Reynolds

Wind's what the poet cannot fix;
The current of life from Eden to Styx
Demands an accounting of *the facts*.
Poems are maimed by their timelessness,
Lack of distinction in *was* and *is*,
That stony stillness like a star of ice.
The *symbol* is at last inhuman,
A cruel geometry, and no man
Ever loved one like a woman
Or a novel.

Fred

Oh, come now. Yeats—

Reynolds

I except of course the crazy poets
Who can fall in love with rocks and he-goats.

(*Enter Susan with tea and cakes.*)

Fred

Now just a minute—

Susan

Boys, boys.
I'm surprised you make such a dreadful noise.
—Reynolds, your Oxonian poise!
Old Fred *never* had a grain
Of couth, but you're a *gentleman* . . .
Don't you-all hear how the wind's brought rain?

(*They fall silent and listen. Susan pours.*)

Fred

The most symbolic line there is,
 And fullest of hard realities,
 Is Shakespearean: "Exeunt omnes."

Reynolds

Your poet's a foe to love and laughter.
 Here's the line one gives one's life for:
 "They all lived happily ever after."

Susan

I wish I weren't a writer's wife.
 I'd live as harmless as a leaf
 And cuddle up in a dear warm life.

The Rain (to The Wind)

What say we work us up some brio
 And drown this silly wayward trio?
 My favorite line is "Ex Nihilo."

The Wind

Leave them in peace, if peace there is
 For their clamorous little species;
 Let them relish their flimsy wishes.
 Tomorrow and tomorrow we
 Advance against them frightfully.
 This night at least they have their say
 Together; and the force of Time
 Upon their arts, upon slant rhyme
 And paragraph, delays for them.
 It's soon enough that we dissolve
 Their names to dust, unmoving move
 Against their animal powers to love
 And weep and fear. It's all too soon
 They grow as silent as the moon
 And lie in earth as naked bone.
 We'll let them sit and sip their tea
 Till midnight; then I'll shake the tree
 Outside their window, and drive the sea
 Upon the land, the mountain toward the Pole,
 The desert upon the glacier. And all
 They ever knew or hoped will fall
 To ash . . . Till then, though, let them speak
 And lighten the long dim heartache,
 And trifle, for sweet trifling's sake.

IN TRIBUTE

Sam Ragan was for more than fifty years one of North Carolina's leading men of letters. As the state's first secretary of the Department of Cultural Resources and first chairman of the North Carolina Arts Council, he was instrumental in making the arts in the state accessible to a wide, varied audience. Born in Granville County, Ragan began writing poetry in grade school. By the time he was a student at Atlantic Christian (Barton) College, he knew he wanted to be a newspaperman. Ragan joined the *Raleigh News & Observer* in 1941 and, by the time he left in 1968 to buy *The Pilot* in Southern Pines, he was the *News & Observer's* managing and executive editor. He stayed at *The Pilot* until his death, continuing to write "Southern Accent," the column he began in 1948.



SAMUEL TALMADGE
RAGAN
(1915-1996)

Ragan published six collections of verse and four works of nonfiction. His poetry has been called "sensitive to the seasons of life, the sureties and contradictions of living, the elements in which we exist...written out of a Tar Heel's sense of place." When Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., appointed him North Carolina Poet Laureate in 1982, Ragan responded, "I don't know that I'll write poetry on demand, but I would like to encourage North Carolinians to read and write poetry. I'll be happy to do that."

The Marked and Unmarked

from *To the Water's Edge*

(Durham, N.C.: Moore Publishing, 1971)

I cannot say upon which luminous evening
I shall go out beyond the stars,
To windless spaces and unmarked time,
Turning nights to days and days to nights.

This is the place where I live.
I planted this tree.
I watched it grow.
The leaves fall and I scuff them with my feet.
This is the street on which I walk.
I have walked it many times.
Sometimes it seems there are echoes of my
walking—

In the mornings, in the nights,
In those long evenings of silence and stars

—the unmarked stars.

THE PILOT

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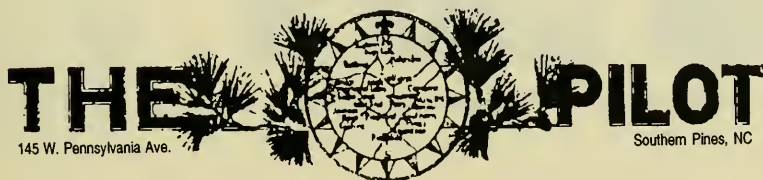
The history of *The Pilot* and that of the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame are inextricably bound.



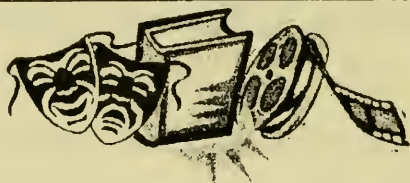
James Boyd, novelist and publisher of *The Pilot*, was among the original inductees to the Hall of Fame in 1996. He and his wife, Katharine, who continued as publisher of *The Pilot* after his death, were owners of Weymouth, where they established a great literary tradition.

The late Sam Ragan, editor and publisher of *The Pilot* from 1968-1996, was instrumental in bringing the Hall of Fame to Weymouth and Southern Pines. He was inducted to the Hall of Fame in 1997.

And now, as publisher of *The Pilot*, David Woronoff, great-nephew of Jonathan Daniels, a 1996 inductee to the Literary Hall of Fame, continues this tradition of generosity and foresight by his important contribution to today's 2002 induction ceremony.



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Made possible with support from
Art Taylor, The Charlotte Writers Club,
GlaxoSmithKline, Quail Ridge Books,
NC Arts Council and the
Winston Salem Journal



