

GULF COAST WRITERS ASSOCIATION

The
Magnolia Quarterly

A MAGAZINE FOR CREATIVE WRITERS

Featured Writers:

Geneva Jo Anthony
Betty Beamguard
Lottie Boggan
Carson Brown
Linda Chubbuck
Mark Cohen
June Davidson
Judy Davies
John Freeman
Sheila Grieco
Kathy Lawrence
Philip Levin
Sue Monkress
Barry North
Fran Roberts
Mary Ann Sharp
Bob Strother

Guest Poet:

Suzanne Harvey



www.gcwriters.org

\$5.00

Winter 2009

Welcome to the Winter 2009 issue of The Magnolia Quarterly, the magazine of the Gulf Coast Writers Association.

GCWA Members receive issues as part of their membership.

Members only may provide e-mail submissions in .doc format as attachments to writerpllevin@gmail.com. We appreciate submissions around 750 words. MQ requests single publication rights, after which all rights revert back to the author.

No payment is provided. Extra copies are available to members at \$4 for one, or \$3 each for multiple copies, including postage.

GCWA Board of Directors:

Chair	Philip Levin
Vice Chair	Cindy Lamb
Treasurer	Joyce Hicks
Secretary	Terry Miles

At Large	Judy Davies
	Ralph Gordon
	Victoria Olsen
	Elaine Stevens
	Andrea Yeager

Advisors:	Diane Williams
	Ken Davies

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover Photo, "Santa Delivered!" by Cindy Lamb

Letter from the President by Philip L. Levin

FICTION

The Dedication	Sheila Grieco
Barefoot Healer	Bob Strother
Learning Responsibility	Judy Davies
I Love You Like Sunshine	Fran Roberts
Our Friend Bob	Mary Ann Sharp
My Household	Carson Brown
Taking Mary Home	Kathy Lawrence
Hail Mary! Sammi Jo's An Angel	Sue Monkress
Look Again	Linda Chubbuck

NON-FICTION

Essentials of a Short Story (Feature)	Philip L. Levin
Max and Wanda	June Davidson
All the Stars are in the Right Conjunction	Lottie Boggan

FEATURES FOR WRITERS

Featured Guest Poet	John Freeman
---------------------	--------------

POETRY

Members Collection of Poems	Betty Beamguard Mark Cohen Barry North George F. Riess
Collection of Poems	Geneva Jo Anthony
Collection of Poems	Judy Davies

CONTEST OF THE QUARTER (cash prizes)

This issue:	My Merriest Christmas	
Winners:	Sylvia Skrmetta, Terry I. Miles, Marcia Mills, Vivian Newkirk	
Photo Contest Winter:	Holiday Theme (Cover Photo)	Cindy Lamb
Spring Contests:	Photography Theme—Seafood Writing Theme—Gardening	

MQ STAFF

Editor: Philip L. Levin	Poetry Editor: John Freeman
Assistant Editor: Richard Creel	Graphic Design: Cindy Lamb
Webmaster: Victoria Olsen	

Letter from the President
Philip L. Levin, Editor

Measuring Life's Successes



Looking over pictures of holidays past, I came across a photo of twenty years ago, my kiddies sitting on Santa's lap. What were they asking for? Ninja Turtles. My Little Ponies. A bicycle. A skateboard. Ah, how easy to please they were in those days.

Now they're in their early twenties, and they have the intangibility of adult dreams. Where will they find their careers? How will they fulfill their dreams of happy households? We gather around the holiday dinner table and talk of where we are and what we hope to be, and wonder.

It was different for me. My acceptance to medical school arrived around Christmas time of my twenty-first year. By New Years of age twenty-five, I was halfway through my internship. I had a life-plan and everything fell into place. Even in those days I wrote, reflecting on life's offerings, my experiences and my dreams. I hoped to have a family of my own, children to love and to teach my life values. I wrote of my future, and of the world I wanted to leave to my children.

Now comes the time of year to count our blessings. I've had so many gifts in my life; my health, my career, the love of my friends, but the greatest of all are my children. All three sit on the doorsteps of their life journeys; unmarried, none with jobs, two still in school. They have the gifts I've been able to provide; education and encouragement. From here on, I'll be merely a bystander, a chronicler if you will. Their lives will provide me food for thought, substance for stories.

Someday these children will provide grandchildren; new lives to bring to sit on Santa's knees and tell of their desires. Wii toys. Sponge Bob Square Pants. Or whatever the latest trends. I'll take pictures, and I'll write stories, and I'll love them. For after all, there is no greater gift.

In the Spirit of the Season,

Philip

Fiction

The Dedication

Sheila Grieco – Ocean Springs, MS

On November 19, 1863, Sallie Barlow inspected herself in the mirror while she tied the strings of her bonnet. Satisfied, she took down her good woolen shawl, draped it over her shoulders and joined her husband on the front porch of their home.

“We don’t want to be late, Ethan,” she said when she saw him adjusting boards around a jagged hole where a cannon shot had crashed through the floor of their porch.

He brushed his hands together. “Yep,” he said. “Today’s special.”

They nodded to friends and neighbors also headed for the cemetery. Only five months ago, people were running down this same street screaming that the town would be shelled. Sallie shuddered at the memory, pulled her shawl tighter, and hastened to keep up with the crowd. The procession moved up a hill and gathered around the speakers’ stand.

Sallie breathed the fresh autumn air and unwillingly remembered the weeks of stench after the battle, when so many soldiers and animals lay dead in the community. Soon the featured speaker, Edward Everett, former governor of Massachusetts, began his oratory.

Governor Everett’s remarks stretched to an hour. People became restless, some strolling to tables at the fringes where people sold cookies, lemonade, coffee, and battle relics. Sallie brought hot coffee back to share with her husband.

Well into the second hour of his speech, the speaker still grasped at the elusive ideas of patriotism and bravery. Where were the images of tending the tens of thousands wounded? Though Ethan whispered what a fine speaker this was, Sallie felt Mr. Everett didn’t have a feel for what had happened here. He didn’t communicate the frightening clash and screams of battle, or the smell of sulfur and burned flesh.

Without being here, how could he know about scrubbing the blood off the walls of our homes where we had laid the wounded, or burning our blood soaked carpets? Where was the image of a blood spattered Bible, used by a wounded soldier for a pillow?

Edward Everett finally sat down. Sallie watched a tall, gangly man take the speaker’s position.

“FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO,” rang out across the crowd. Sallie stood still, captivated by the earnest tone.

“WE ARE MET ON A GREAT BATTLEFIELD OF THAT WAR.” The speaker’s voice echoed the sacrifice and strife that had been suffered here. She squeezed her husband’s hand.

“THE BRAVE YOUNG MEN, LIVING AND DEAD, WHO STRUGGLED HERE, HAVE CONSECRATED IT.” Sallie’s heart soared. He was putting into words her very feelings.

“THAT THESE DEAD SHALL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN – THAT THIS NATION, UNDER GOD, SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM.” Sallie and her husband beamed at each other as the speaker sat down.

“Well, I’ll be,” said Ethan. “Our President Lincoln said in two minutes what Mr. Everett tried to say in two hours.”

Barefoot Healer

Bob Strother—Greenville, SC

I know you may find this story pretty hard to believe, and I can't fault you for that. Even I have a hard time with it on the days when my reality is having the docs poke and prod and generally invade my body from one end to the other. But it's all true. And I guess, after all this time, I ought to tell someone. No, that's not exactly right. It's not that I ought to tell it. I want to tell it. Telling feeds the memories, and memories are food for the soul. No one in here listens to me anymore, so, if you've nothing else to do, take a minute or two, and hear my story. It won't hurt. It might even make you smile. And, in the end, even if you don't believe it, it just might spark a note of wonder—something most of us leave behind when we start growing the hair of adulthood. And once you begin to wonder, well, who knows where you may go ... or whom you might see.

....

I was ten years old the first time I saw her. My dog, Snappy, had got caught up in my father's threshing machine and died a little while after. That afternoon, I wrapped him in one of my old undershirts and buried him under a big live oak tree on the bank of Pea Vine Creek, about a hundred yards south of the barn. I was still crying when I straddled one of the low-lying limbs of that tree and stretched out on my stomach.

It started as a long, low whistle and then ended abruptly. I raised my head up from the tree limb and listened, but all I could hear were the sounds of the creek. A minute later, it began again, this time louder and maybe an octave higher. I shifted into a sitting position and looked around but saw nothing. A gentle tinkle of laughter caused me to look up, and there, on a limb some twenty feet higher and to my right, sat the most beautiful young woman I had ever seen.

She had copper-colored hair that curled around her face and tip-toed on top of her shoulders. Shafts of sunlight penetrated the oak's foliage, and where they touched her hair, it seemed to be on fire. Below a simple white dress, her legs swung lazily back and forth, and her feet were bare. She smiled down at me, then put her fingers to her mouth and whistled once more.

This time the sound was echoed by a series of barks, and from across the creek, I heard a rustling in the undergrowth. Seconds later, a small, furry, black-and-tan missile exploded off the far bank and hit the water with a splash. I dropped from the limb and ran to the creek's edge. In no time at all, that frisky little bundle was in my arms and licking my face.

When I looked back, she was sitting where I had sat, on the lowest limb of that tree. She beckoned with one finger and, clutching my new friend tightly to my chest, I went to her as though I were in a trance. She smiled again and rubbed the dog's muzzle. Her eyes were the color of wild violets. She took my face in her hands and kissed me lightly on the forehead. When I opened my eyes, she was gone.

I was nineteen the next time I saw her, and had been engaged to be married. Needless to say, when Gloria, my bride-to-be, suddenly decided that farm life in Camilla, Georgia, couldn't hold a candle to the bright lights of Atlanta, I was devastated. I walked along the creek bank late that afternoon, wondering if I had the courage to stay under the muddy waters long enough to drown my sorrow. The sun was still high enough to cast my shadow on the surface of the water, and I was watching it when it

divided into two. And there she was.

I turned and started to speak, but she touched a finger to my lips. As incredible as it may seem, she had not aged a day since the first time I saw her. She wore no makeup, her face a silken luster broken only by a scattering of freckles across the bridge of her delicate nose. She took my hand and walked me away from the bank and back to the big oak where we'd first met. She stretched up on the toes of her bare feet and kissed me under that old tree, and she tasted like ripe strawberries. My head started to swim, and the next thing I knew, I was sitting alone with my back to the tree and her sweet flavor still on my lips.

Now I know what you're probably thinking—that the next day, or perhaps later that night, the girl of my dreams suddenly popped up like the little mutt did when I was ten—but you'd be wrong. What *did* happen was that I forgot all about Gloria, and started dating again. Three months later, when I met Ellie, the girl who would become my wife, she tasted like strawberries.

That kind, remarkable woman passed away in the winter of '74 after we'd had thirty-seven good years together, four children, and the beginning of a wealth of grandkids. I wasn't of heart or mind to marry again, but the loneliness ate at me like the cancer that had taken Ellie. It was six months later I saw the barefooted girl once again.

I was in the swing on our back porch one evening about dusk. It was late June and the fireflies had taken over the meadow that stretched from the barn down to Pea Vine Creek. A soft drizzle began to fall and I was just about to go inside when I saw her coming out of the line of trees that marked the water, escorted by a hundred twinkling lights.

Minutes later, she walked right by me and into the rear hallway of the house. There she turned and summoned me again, this time with her eyes. As before, I went, and stood looking at her in what light still remained. She was as young and beautiful as the first time I had seen her. This time—before she could stop me—I asked her, “Are you real?”

She didn't answer. Rather, she took my hand and placed it over her breast. I could feel the rhythmic beating of her heart through the thin fabric of her dress. My own heart began to beat in time with hers, and moments later, she led me by the hand into the bedroom.

In the morning I awoke alone, and might have thought it all a dream, except for the few blades of meadow-grass I found at the foot of the bed. It was the sweetest night I'd had since Ellie died, and it's lasted me a long, long time.

.....

I can hear them talking about me. Poor old soul, they say. He just sits there and stares at nothing all day long. I don't mind what they say, though, and, by and large, they treat me with a measure of care and respect. I have a comfortable chair and a window where I can see the large oak tree that sits just this side of the wrought-iron fencing surrounding the home's property. I keep thinking that one of these days, I'm going to look out there and see her sitting on a limb about two-thirds of the way up—and she'll come to me one last time.

I know that may sound crazy, but it gets me through the night. And, whether you believe the story or not, sharing it this way has helped me remember it all the more vividly. A man needs his memories, you know, and I've got plenty. Memories that are tinged with a spark of wonder ... and where there's wonder—there's hope.

Learning Responsibility

Judy Davies—Gautier, MS

For my eighth birthday Mother bought me a shiny, wind-up clock. It had a large bell on top and a button that pulled up to make the alarm sound. Mother said the clock was to help teach me to become responsible.

I used to set the alarm to get up an extra half hour early so I could get dressed for school before I woke my six-year-old brother, Jimmy. Usually I fixed cereal with milk for us, but occasionally I would make toast and top the slices with wonderful, brown swirls of creamy peanut butter. I hurried to clean up the kitchen and wash the dishes before we brushed our teeth and rushed off to school. Mother didn't like a mess.

Most of the time Jimmy and I found Mother at the kitchen table sipping coffee and smoking cigarettes in her robe when we returned from school each afternoon. She said she slept late because she was tired from entertaining men each evening. She seemed to entertain a lot.

Afternoon was our best time with Mother. Some days we would have cookies and milk together while she looked at our papers from school or we would sing her the new song we'd learned in music class. Other days she might play a game of "Old Maid" or "Go Fish" with us.

Sometimes Mother's sister came to visit. Aunt Ida always smelled of sweet perfume, and now and then she brought a bar of chocolate for Jimmy and me to share. While Aunt Ida and Mother visited we'd run around in the back yard or climb a tree. In the springtime the mud in the yard was cool and just a little mushy. I had to be sure Jimmy and I got all the mud off our feet before we came inside. Mother didn't like mud tracked into the house.

Usually supper was soup or hot dogs. She taught me how to make a grilled cheese sandwich. I used the small frying pan just like Mother did. I did them carefully, one at a time, turning each sandwich over gently. Mother didn't like mistakes in the kitchen. After dinner I carefully washed the plates and silverware, standing them in the dish drainer to dry.

When it grew dark outside, I made sure Jimmy had his bath while Mother got ready to "entertain" for the evening. Sometimes she would let me help her choose which dress she would wear. Once she took me shopping with her when it was time to buy new ones.

Mother wanted the living room clean and pretty for her guests, so after supper I'd dust the tables and then fluff the pillows on the couch. Once we visited Aunt Ida's house. She had rugs in every room. We only had one and it was in Mother's bedroom. Mother said we just didn't need all that fanciness.

Jimmy and I had to be in our room before the guests arrived. We shared the room just past the bathroom and Mother's room was across the hall from ours. We had an old deck of cards, a bag of marbles and three books, so we had plenty to keep us busy. I watched my clock for it to settle on 8:00 and then Jimmy and I crawled into our beds for the night. We never went out to the living room to say goodnight to Mother, because she didn't like to be disturbed when she was entertaining.

One day we returned home from school and Mother wasn't sitting at the kitchen table sipping coffee. I peeked into her room and she was still in bed. I called to her, but she didn't answer. I took Jimmy and we went to the store at the corner and had the lady there telephone Aunt Ida.

We waited on the couch in the living room until Aunt Ida arrived. She stepped into Mother's room but quickly returned. She hustled Jimmy and me into her car and we went to the corner store again. Aunt Ida made a phone call and before long the ambulance came and took Mother away. Aunt Ida said that Mother was very sick.

We went back to our house and Aunt Ida helped us gather our clothes and school things together. She said we could bring our cards and marbles and all three books, too. She took us with her to stay in her house where Jimmy and I each had our own room. We didn't see Mother again until the following week when Aunt Ida took us to church, and there we said good-bye to Mother.

After the church service Aunt Ida told us that we would live with her from now on. I was even allowed to bring my clock. She said that we were very good children and she thought I had become very responsible. I think Mother would have been pleased..

Accolades!

Judy Davies' poem "Artistry" has won our state's Senior Poet Laureate Award for 2009 in the 2009 Senior Poets' Laureate Poetry Competition for American poets age 50 and older. Once the rest of the award recipients are known and info is released sometime next month, it will be published in the online edition of the 2009 anthology GOLDEN WORDS and appear online at the www.amykitchenerfdn.org site.

Linda Chubbuck reports: "I was a finalist in the Florida Writers Association contest in the short story published category. Yea!!!!!!!!!!!!!" Also, "My chicklet novel (1st 12 pages anyway), came in 2nd place in The Dixie Kane SOLA contest. I'm thrilled and anxious to see score sheets. I think it's time to try and get this one going."

Patty Butkovich won a second place in the South Branch Award and honorable mention in both The Robert Farrar Memorial Award and North Branch Award At the MPS Mini-Festival at Belhaven College in October.

Judy Davis' won an honorable mention in the What I Saw Taking A Walk Category for her poem "Nature's Paintbrush" and a second place finish in the Caden Double-Judged Award for her poem "The Piano."

Dixon Hearne's short story, "Plantatia" -- title story from his new book -- has just been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He also has short stories in current issues of Kestrel and Birmingham Arts Journal and in two new anthologies: Christmas is a Season 2009 and Christmas Traditions (Adams Media). He is an invited speaker at the 2010 Arkansas Book Festival. Web site: www.dixonhearne.com

I Love You Like Sunshine

Fran Roberts—Green Bay, AL

Rachel ran inside the tiny house, clothes dripping wet from the rain, hot tears joining the little rivers of water streaming down her face.

“Oh, Granny,” she cried. “It’s been the worst day ever.”

“Hush, Cher,” Granny said, smoothing her hair and planting a soft kiss on her forehead. “The bad days will come, but they’ll soon be gone and forgotten, just like this storm.”

She turned to the stove where she was melting a stick of butter in her big skillet. The smell of baking bread wafted from the oven, tickling Rachel’s nose.

“Bring me those chopped onions, Cher, and I’ll teach you to make a soup so good yo’ insides will smile.”

“How can my insides smile?” Rachel asked, dumping the onions into the butter..

“Oh, girl, once you taste this soup, all those rain clouds on yo’ face’ll go right away. I promise. It’s called Sunshine Bisque, and yo’ Granddaddy taught me how to make it over fifty years ago.”

The girl looked up at her Granny’s smiling face and couldn’t help but return a small smile. The smell of those onions sizzling in the butter did seem to make the sky outside a little lighter.

“That’s better, Cher. Now reach up into the ice box and get me that package of shrimp.”

The girl handed her Granny the bag and watched as she dumped the shrimp in and covered the skillet with a huge iron lid.

“While that’s cookin’ we’ll start on the soup. Back in the day I’d ‘a’ made the soup myself, but today we’ll just use these cans. Bring me those two cans of cream of potato soup and that cream of mushroom soup over there. That’s a good girl, now you open them and tell me what happened today that has you so upset.”

“Well, Granny, I know you always tell me not to worry about what those other girls say, but I’m so tired of that LeAnn pickin’ on me I could spit.”

Granny laughed. “Well, don’t go spittin’ on my clean floor.”

“No, I’d like to spit on her. She thinks she’s so pretty and so rich. Well who cares? Her Daddy’s rich, not her.”

“Now child, you just don’ know how bad those rich kids got it. One day real life gonna sneak up and bop ‘em in the head ‘n’ they won’t be ready, ‘cause they came up with ever’thing handed to ‘em. But folks like us, we know how to handle the bad with the good. We the ones that got it better. Mark my words, girl. Ain’ no sense bein’ jealous over what you don’ have.”

Rachel scooped the soup out of the cans into a large pot as Granny poured in a small carton of half and half.

“See this cream? It’s thick and good. It’s nothin’ fancy, but it does its job. When you mix it with the right things, you’ll have a soup so good you won’t b’lieve.”

“But LeAnn always calls me ‘freckle-face’ and everybody laughs.”

“I know it hurts, Cher, but yo’ freckles are so perty it makes me want to kiss yo’ whole face. I ‘spect that’s what LeAnn don’t like about ‘em. They make you prettier than her.”

“Oh, Granny, you know she’s the prettiest girl in our class.”

“Not from where I’m standin’,” Granny said. “C’mere girl and stir this soup while I get these shrimp all good and buttery. Mmmmmn, this gonna be so delicious.”

“I think it’s almost done.”

“Did you add the Ro-Tel yet?”

“You know I don’t like spicy stuff, Granny.”

“Girl, you gotta have a little zing in yo’ soup. Life would be boring if it was the same all the time. Here, add this can of corn, too. Make sure you drain it good.”

“Every time I walk past LeAnn to get off the bus she says something ugly to me, Granny. I really want to punch her in her perfect little nose.”

“Now, chile, that’s yo’ Daddy in ya. Fightin’ won’t do no good. A girl like that loves to stir things up. If you pretend she’s not even there she’ll find someone else to pick on, I guarantee.”

“But even my friends laugh when she says ugly things to me.”

“Oh, Cher, don’t be so sensitive. They yo’ friends because they like you. Girls like LeAnn don’t have many real friends because they spen’ too much time talking behind they backs. So nobody trusts ‘em. Believe me, I’ve known my share of LeAnns in my life, and they’re never happy. Hurtin’ others won’t never make a person happy. Now, let me scoop dis shrimp into the soup, and you go get that block of cream cheese over there.”

“What do I do with it?”

“Break off little pieces and drop them into the soup. Don’t it smell wonderful, Cher?”

“Yes, Granny, it really does. Momma and Daddy are shore gonna be proud of us, aren’t they? I can almost taste it now, with a big hunk of your fresh bread.”

“Yes, Ma’am. Now, let’s let that cheese melt while I read you a story.”

Granny limped slowly to the couch and sat down. She pulled the afghan around them with slightly trembling hands.

Rachel snuggled up next her, enjoying her warmth, and the rich smells coming from the kitchen, the storm outside all but forgotten.

“I love you, Granny,” Rachel said.

“I love you like sunshine, Cher,” Granny said.

She gave Rachel a tight squeeze, kissed her on the head, and began to read.

Accolades!

Betty Beamguard’s feature structured around Jackie Miles’ novel *Roseflower Creek* got bumped to the December issue of *The Writer*, but should be on bookstore shelves mid-November. She reached a longtime goal by having one of her poems published in *Main Street Rag’s* fall issue, and another is accepted for *Falling Star Magazine*. Five of her pieces appear in the 2009 *Petigru Review*, and she has a humorous essay in the recently published *Silver Boomers* anthology, *This Path*. Betty also won second place in both fiction and nonfiction in a Quill contest sponsored by the SCWW.

Our Friend Bob

Mary Ann Sharp—Bush, LA

The morning of December 11, 2008, I snuggled deeply within the comforts of my soft, cozy blankets enjoying the luxury of not having to get up when, before sunrise, I was awakened by the sudden glare of bright overhead lights.

“Get up and look outside,” my husband insisted.

“What time is it?” I grumbled as I pulled the covers over my face to shield my sleepy eyes.

“It’s five-thirty . . . get up and come look outside.”

Reluctantly, I threw the covers back and dragged myself out of bed, stepped into my slippers, and followed him into our adjoining backroom built with large windows all around. He turned on the outside lights, revealing the picturesque view of rolling hills blanketed with virgin snow.

“But the weather guy said the conditions weren’t favorable for a substantial amount of snow,” I said in wonder of Mother Nature’s mischievous trick.

“Well, obviously he was wrong.”

By daybreak several inches had fallen, and the blizzard continued in globs. School was cancelled, so with their parents having to work, our granddaughters, Sadie and Sarah came to our house to spend the day. They were practically bursting with excitement.

They had played in snow during our summer road trip through Canada to Alaska; but never at their own doorsteps. We are very fortunate to have all these hills in our backyard. Yet, there was a twinge of disappointment because we didn’t have a sled hanging in the barn. Paw-paw removed the handles and wheel assembly off the wheelbarrow for a makeshift sled. When that proved to be unsuccessful, they pulled each other down the hill on an old tarpaulin.

Heavy laden tree branches began to break and fall from the weight of the fallen snow. Before long we lost power; but that didn’t hamper our day. We had snowball fights, made snow angels, and hung wet clothes over ladder back chairs by the fireplace to dry; and never once did this overprotective maw-maw say, “You can’t go out and play because you might get sick.”

I remembered my mother tell about growing up in Michigan. My grandmother would put cream mixed with a little sugar and vanilla on fresh snow for a treat. *What impurities did the snow pick up in the atmosphere? But are they any worse than the air we breathe everyday? The girls may be grown with children of their own before we see a snowfall like this again!*

I turned my kitchen counter into a snowball stand, and lined up all the plausible ingredients I could find: condensed milk, chocolate syrup, coconut cream, orange juice, sugar, vanilla. They mixed, stirred, and sampled. I think at one point they even tried some Gatorade.

“Thanks, Maw-maw, for letting us have so much fun.”

“You’re welcome Sweetie; I didn’t want you to miss a thing.”

Everyone knows that you can’t have eight inches of snow and no snowman. As afternoon approached, Paw-paw showed the girls how to build one. After rolling, packing, and stacking, they gathered charcoal from the grill, buttons from the sewing basket, hat and scarf from the closet, and a carrot from the garden. All the snowman needed was arms and he would come alive! It wasn’t hard to find a couple of twigs.

“Oh wait . . . there’s still one thing missing. He needs a name. What’s it going to be? Frosty?”

“No, we’re naming him Bob.”

They became great friends with Bob, and took turns dancing and having pictures taken with him to preserve their phenomenal day.

As the afternoon gave way to evening hours, a huge yellow moon ascended high in the darkening sky, shining down on Bob like a spotlight. The girls took their last dance by the light of the moon. Then it was time to come inside where they could look out the big windows and see Bob standing all alone.

My Household

Carson Brown

For some years now my household has been very small for it contained one member and I was that member. When I mentioned small, I did not mean the size of the person it held, but the number of members. There is a green lizard that lives in the backyard that I elevated to the status of a household member, but she was not constant in her sojourning inside with me. As I could not rely on her for companionship, I took her from the lofty position of member and gave her back to the wilds. She was also a member who did not care for my petting her and therefore was not truly a member of the family.

Last July Beanie came to live with me and now my household boasts two good members – Beanie and me. A dear high school friend’s son gave me Beanie and actually it turns out, Beanie and I are somewhat kin for Beanie’s mother came from Quitman Plantation which is a family place. She is a beautiful mixed breed, but mostly black lab. She lives in the backyard and has an igloo house that she adores and goes to check often during the day. She comes into the other house about once a day and for months our ritual was petting and more petting at the patio door, and then she went back to the yard. As Beanie has grown, she has developed new ideas and lately her practice has changed. When it is time, after her petting, for her to go into the yard, she runs all over the house escaping me and she honestly turns her head to me and grins. This is a merry chase and this new ritual does not sit well with me; I am not fond of the daily chase. The other morning as I was chasing her, I ran into a chair and broke a toe. That is why you see me limping today. However, my affection for Beanie is such that all is forgiven and on a friend’s advice, I learned to chastise Beanie in her merry chase with a fly swatter.

My Beanie has her problems, too, for she is suffering with an ailment which was never before known to me. She suffers with growing too rapidly and the muscles of her legs cannot carry her body well so she has trouble walking at times. Her doctor gave her medicine for this and she lies in her bed in her house after taking her pill and this seems to help her. But this will be a passing thing, for one of these days, Beanie will be a grown lab and this ailment will disappear.

My Beanie and I spend our time together in our household with ever deepening communication between us. Fussies may come, but they blow over. How interesting Beanie is. I see her now on the patio grinning at me, ready for her afternoon chase.

Taking Mary Home

Kathy Lawrence—Lexington, NC

It was late in 1943. Paul used his pass to meet Mary in London after she got off work. They had only an hour together before she had to get ready to board the ship for America. They discussed their plans to be married after the war. This last evening together he slipped an engagement ring on her finger and her eyes revealed all he needed to know: Mary loved him as much as he loved her and she had committed her life to him.

They were in their twenties. Paul had graduated from West Point a few years earlier. Mary was a grammar school teacher in civilian life but now was a WAC officer serving her country. She was a very pretty woman with shoulder-length brownish-red hair and hazel eyes. His parents knew of his love for the young woman and approved. They were broad-minded people who were relieved their son had finally found someone with whom he could spend his life.

This last evening together was very special. They had dinner at a nice restaurant and then danced at the USO club. He was walking her back to her quarters when the air raid sirens went off. They headed for the nearest bomb shelter and were herded into a crowded basement. The bombing started in earnest. This was not what he had planned for the evening. The upside of the situation, if there was one, was that she was here next to him for a little while longer.

At first they sat together close, but not too close. People were watching them so they tried to look proper. The bombing intensified and people now worried only about themselves, ignoring the young American couple. The impact from the blasts was getting closer. Paul pulled his fiancé closer to him and she looked at him with gratitude. She was scared and happy at the same time. The sound of bombing was something she had not gotten used to during her time in war-ravaged England. Loud sounds like thunder unnerved her. But now, encased in Paul's arms, she felt secure. She rested her head on his shoulder. She had his love, and had someone she could love in return. His parents, in their letter to her, had accepted her as their future daughter-in-law. Mary, who had been orphaned at an early age, would have a family once again.

She tried to think of their future together. If Paul stayed in the military she would follow him wherever he was assigned. They wanted a family, lots of children. She tried to imagine the faces of their children. She hoped they looked like Paul. God, he was so handsome and tall, with gray-green eyes that danced with mischief.

Another bomb hit closer. The overhead joists rattled dust on the shelter's inhabitants. Paul's face betrayed a look of concern. Mary looked at him with questioning eyes. He whispered into her ear. "They're using 500-lb bombs." He knew about such things. He was a bomber pilot and had just received his own command. Then he looked at her and smiled. "At least we're together." He gave her a squeeze and she hugged him back. This time she kept her arms around his waist. She didn't give a damn who thought it inappropriate. He was her rock against the fear of the explosions. "I love you", she whispered into his ear. "I love you too," he responded. "Only God knows how much I love you, Mary." The major and first lieutenant pushed thoughts of not surviving the air raid out of their minds. They had a future to live and they were going to live it together.

There seemed to be a bit of a lull. It was just enough time for the people in the shelter to catch their breath. Then, the bombs fell again. This time the sounds were getting even closer. Suddenly Paul knew they would not survive the night. He took Mary's left hand that held his engagement ring. He turned the ring around so only the gold of the band was visible and, looking into her eyes, said, "With this ring I thee wed." She looked at him – shocked – and then, understanding, replied, "I take thee Paul for my wedded husband". Her next words were cut short by a crash overhead, a thud. He held her tight. Paul's last words were, "damned delayed timer."

The shelter around them disintegrated, scattering debris and bodies.

Paul's next awareness was a glow with just shapes and movement. He was alone. He wanted Mary. Was she safe? Then another shape, a familiar one, was next to him. The face became clearer. It was her face. She was with him once again. She was smiling at him, her face radiant. She took his hand and they moved forward toward the light.

Accolades!

Brenda Finnegan won an honorable mention in the MPS President's Award, first place in the Herbert and Inez Shelton Award and first place in the Poet of the Year 2009 Award.

Sue Monkress has just published a new book of southern-flavored tales: *A 'Mess' of Short Stories*, at Lulu.com and soon available at Amazon.

Frances Roberts reports that her story, "His Neighbor's Keeper," will be published in the Spring 2010 "Cup of Comfort for a Better World".

Victoria Olsen reports that the reprint of her book, "The Cajun Bomber", <http://cajunbomber.com/> will be out soon, with many more recipes than the first printing.

Tom Lynn has an article "The Modern Marvel" that appears in the Nov/Dec issue of The Working Writer newsletter. It may clear up many mysteries that have baffled PC users for a long while. Online subscriptions at www.theworkingwriter.com.

Kathy Lawrence won second place in the Davidson County Writer's contest, fiction division in Lexington. "Taking Mary Home;" is set in London, WWII era during a bombing attack on the city. "I dreamt the story, got up wrote what I could remember down and then developed the story from there." The ending is one in which you must decide whether they survived the air raid or not.

Ed Hennessey is under contract with Eagle Press publishing short stories and poems for his book called "Survived to Love."

Hail Mary! Sammi Jo's An Angel!

Sue Monkress – Gulfport, MS

Sammi Jo, at twelve, was Mary Ruth's bigger, bossy, year-older cousin. But in spite of distinct personality differences, they were *way more* than just cousins, often acting like best friends – spending sleepovers together, talking much too late into the night about school, sports, boys – nearly *everything*. With their similar hair and eye color, people sometimes mistook them for sisters.

The holidays fast approached and Christmas was the absolute most-special holiday for Mary Ruth. Joining in their church Christmas play was ... well, about the closest thing she could imagine to being in Heaven. Mary Ruth often wondered why they only sang Christmas carols during the Christmas season; they were the most beautiful songs and it seemed like a real waste to shelve them in the book till next year's holiday season.

Every year, Mrs. Henshaw would begin plans to present the wonderful story of the night of Christ's birth. Each youngster that wanted (or was "encouraged" by his or her parents) to participate was given a part. Mrs. Henshaw worked on the script and music for weeks, making sure each part was adequately rehearsed; each song would waft beautifully through the church auditorium. The lovely effect charmed all the adults, particularly proud parents. The entire choir would sing all the songs, but reading parts would be assigned to the kids – some shepherds, some angels, three wise men, and naturally Mary and Joseph and a tiny baby doll laid in a manger.

This year Mary Ruth and Sammi Jo, along with several other girls, were thrilled to be selected as angels. Mrs. Henshaw sewed softly-gathered white robes for each girl, fashioned a delicate, glitter-covered wire 'halo' for them, and made wire 'wings,' which she covered with cellophane. These accessories were fragile, so Mary Ruth practiced her most careful entrance and exit. Every time she tried on her costume, she felt absolutely ... ethereal!

A bit of a self-imposed perfectionist, Mary Ruth practiced her songs continually – singing so much around the house that she drove her siblings crazy. But she wanted her part – one of the high-pitched soprano parts – to be *outstanding*. At every opportunity, Mary Ruth chattered away at Sammi Jo about the pageant. However, Sammi Jo got a bit frustrated with Mary Ruth's eager-beaver hyperness. She'd much rather be playing ball and felt her angel costume made her look fat.

The evening of the performance felt magical. The children waited in the wings, nervous about their parents seated in the audience, and fearful of forgetting their parts. Mary Ruth wished she could appear barefoot up on stage. *After all, in the pictures, you never saw an angel with shoes, right?* But her Mama insisted she keep them on. Mary Ruth sighed.

When their turn came, the girls moved up the three steps single file, with Mary Ruth close behind Sammi Jo. Mary Ruth caught her white gown under a toe as she stepped up, pitching forward. Her hand ripped right through one of Sammi Jo's angel wings, leaving it torn and lopsided.

"Now you've *done* it, clumsy!" Sammi Jo glared at her just a moment, but returned her attention to the stage as they entered. Mary Ruth breathed a sigh of relief. She just hoped no one in the audience would notice the drooping wing.

When her turn came, Mary Ruth's lovely voice rang out, pure and clear: "*It came upon a midnight clear.*" The magic returned and Mary Ruth felt transported to the heavens. For the time being, *nothing could spoil her magical trance.*

Toward the end of the program, Mary Ruth looked down at her feet. She loved the scuffed, lace-up red shoes she was wearing -- she'd never owned a pair of red ones before. Her cousin also noticed those bright red shoes peeking out. The other angels all wore white shoes, which made Mary Ruth's red shoes seem all the more glaring. For some reason, Sammi Jo thought her usual up-tight, gotta-be-perfect cousin's oversight extremely hilarious. She leaned in close and whispered affectionately: "Hey stupid, are those the *only* shoes you had to wear tonight?"

Mary Ruth, relieved that her cousin wasn't mad at her anymore, and pumped up with the excitement, giggled, which started Sammi Jo, then several of the other kids, to join the nervous laughter. Now, she knew for sure she wouldn't have to face her cousin's wrath. *Whew!*

The Magnolia Quarterly

Cover Photo Contest - \$20 Winner Spring Issue—Seafood Theme

E-mail all entries to writerpllevin@gmail.com with title "Spring Photo Contest Entry." The entry must be a jpeg file as an attachment. Black and White or Color entries accepted.

(Spring Issue will have a Color Cover)

No hard copies will be accepted. E-mail deadline March. 1, 2010.

Rules: No entry fee. Only GCWA members may enter. Philip L. Levin, editor of MQ will be the judge. All entrants must agree to allow publication in the MQ along with their names or pseudonym. Prizes paid at publication. MQ requires one-time publishing rights only; afterwards all rights revert to the authors.

Look Again

Linda Chubbuck—West Palm Beach, FL

Fate has a way of tying up loose ends as life runs its course, but never did I understand this so clearly until the death of my mother brought me back to my old neighborhood. When Mum moved into my house a few years before her passing, she'd left behind the people and habits that wove the fabric of our family history. I realized as her eldest son it was my duty to inform those old neighbors of her recent passing.

As I drove slowly through my childhood haunts, the proportions of the buildings, once huge in my memory, now seemed shrunken. What was once ominous now seemed trite, dull and gray, much like the remaining residents. Nothing had changed. Nothing needed to change.

I pulled the car to the side of the road adjacent to my old home and looked immediately toward Miss Cora Castleberry's house. It stood in granite splendor in marked contrast to the claustrophobic cluster of houses in the immediate vicinity. It remained the same stolid barbican that stood guard of the neighborhood for decades. My jaws tightened at the thought of the numerous tongue-lashings I received from my parents due to the informant behind the curtains of Miss Cora's house; curtains that never really closed..

Miss Cora had always struck me as a singularly sour woman who rarely smiled except when passing tidbits of gossip to listeners who rolled their eyes and tapped their toes impatiently, eager to move away from her ceaseless digs and barbs. They knew full well that they themselves were being discussed to someone else the moment their backs were turned. She became almost universally disliked and avoided.

I recalled one day when my mother came outside to do a little gardening and enjoy some private time; Miss Cora had decided that she had to unburden herself of all the tiny "secrets" she had seen in the intervening weeks since they had last spoken. Miss Cora immediately crossed the street and proceeded to share with Mum all the "latest." Apparently my mother was brutally frank and told Miss Cora to "get stuffed." They never again spoke.

I visited with several other neighbors, dredging up both good and bad times, before I decided that Miss Cora needed to be told of Mum's demise, notwithstanding their row. I walked slowly up the steps toward the front of her house and couldn't help but think that this was the closest I'd ever been to the Castleberry citadel. My skin crawled ever so slightly. I held my breath and rang the doorbell. No reply. Armed with paper and pen for just such an eventuality, I was almost finished writing my note for the letterbox when the door opened.

For a frozen moment she simply stood there. No more than five feet tall, her face held gaunt cheeks and streams of wrinkles that time had handily chiseled. The sullen smile seemed replaced with a spacey stare. After I introduced myself, she invited me in, and we chatted for a long time. I had never been in her house before. As I sat in her parlor I realized I could look straight across the street and down into my old bedroom, where I had spent my teenage years. Yes, she had a great view, but then she told me that it was my voice she recognized, because for some long while Cora Castleberry had been blind. Gone were the nefarious eagle eyes that never missed a trick. I suddenly understood why the sharp edges, corners and angles in the house had been covered with foam and duct tape. She had padded her house to avoid injury.

Miss Cora brought out a photograph album documenting the neighborhood history. Images from forty years ago sprang out, bringing back memories long buried. Cracked brownish photos showed me on a pony hired for someone's birthday. Fiona Clooney's bridesmaids stood together with smiling faces in front of her mother's house. My Mum was immortalized, too, as she gently tended her roses. The photo was old but that didn't lessen the look of peace and love in her eyes as she interacted with nature and the things that she loved.

I swallowed hard and fought back tears, finally understanding the truth of Miss Cora's infinite intrusion on our lives. She never had a life of her own, never was invited to christenings, weddings or graduations. But she made us all her own, unbeknownst to us. The gossip she passed maybe wasn't as malicious as I remembered; maybe it was just the desperation that comes from living vicariously. When we said our good byes, I felt my visit with Miss Cora had laid to rest a number of questions I had never asked, questions that I hadn't been able to form. I realized though she had never particularly mattered to me, I, and all our neighbors, had mattered very much to her.

Advertising!

The Magnolia Quarterly

Whole Page:	\$100
1/2 Page:	60
1/4 Page:	35

Yearly rates available on request.

Ad design is the responsibility of the Advertiser.

Hit your target audience!

Contact: Cindy Lamb
228-363-4622
cindylamb@cableone.net

Features for Writers

The Essentials of a Short Story

Philip L. Levin – Long Beach, MS

When new writers approach me at fairs or lectures, often they tell me they're working on a novel. I suggest they should, instead, learn the craft by writing short stories. My first novel, "Inheritance," took fourteen years to finish. I wrote it in a year, rewrote it in another year, started shopping it around, and received rejection after rejection. I started writing stories for my critique group, and honed my skill. After ten years I picked up the old manuscript and rewrote it again, and now am proud of its success. In this discussion of the essentials of short story writing, I'll use examples from stories published in this issue of the MQ.

There are many kinds of short prose. A Memoir relates a tale from a writer's life, such as "Our Friend Bob," which tells of building a snowman. A Character Sketch emphasizes one character, such as in "Look Again," which examines an old woman's isolation. Sometimes an incident strikes enough of a chord to inspire a story, such as "Taking Mary Home," where young lovers die. A Diary writes about a personal event, such as "All the Stars," about the author walking her dog.

These are all wonderful prose, but they're not short stories. A true short story has three parts; a situation, an event, and a resolution. That is, something has to have changed because of the event, either the situation or the character. A good example of a true short story is "Learning Responsibility," where a child tells of living with a prostitute mother, the mother dying, and how that changed her life. The reader is left with a sense of closure, knowing that something has happened.

When writing your story, make every word count; after all, you only have a thousand or so. Have a hook on the first line, in the first paragraph, on the first page, and on every page thereafter. "Max sized Wanda up and decided he wanted nothing to do with her and walked away in a huff," from "Max and Wanda." Include all the parts of a novel in your story; plot, character, viewpoint, setting, and dialogue. "Hail Mary" sets up two preteen girls with strong characteristics, in a school auditorium, told from one girl's viewpoint, with typical childhood dialect.

When concentrating on a thousand words, make each phrase sharp, poetic, and delightful, such as "Shafts of sunlight penetrated the oak's foliage," from "Barefoot Healer." Set up the scene and characters quickly. In "The Dedication" the opening paragraph defines the time and character in a mere forty-three words.

The first line should tell the reader what the story will be about. "My Household" begins, "For some years now my household has been very small for it contained one member." Don't repeat words, phrases, or ideas; once is enough for your reader to get it. "Oh, Granny," she cried. "It's been the worst day ever," from "I Love You Like Sunshine," tells the plot without repetition or description. Try to avoid coincidences, for they make the work feel phony.

Write crisply, write what interests you, and maybe tell a story. Once you've developed your skills on the short piece, get ready to tackle that novel. I'll save that for next issue's topic.

Non-Fiction

Max and Wanda

June Davidson – Meridian, MS

When Max first saw Wanda, he sized her up and decided he wanted nothing to do with her, walking away in a huff. Little did Max know just how deeply he would fall for Wanda.

She was a beauty all right. Her reddish coat and sweet expressive face seemed to know exactly what you were saying. Her big brown eyes relayed the message, "Yes ma'am. I understand."

Max, a prideful half-breed with a long shaggy coat and bushy tail, lived next door to Wanda, our little red dachshund.

Max seemed to change before our very eyes. It didn't take long before we knew he was devoted to Wanda. She was such a playful pup, and soon a well worn trail was formed from his house to ours.

Each morning Max waited outside our door for Wanda to come out and play. He became very protective of Wanda and was her constant companion outside.

At dusk I would stand at the back patio door and call Wanda in. Max would follow her to the door and block her way, using his paw to pull her back toward him. Max wanted Wanda only with himself.

I had never considered dogs could love one another, but it was obvious Max and Wanda were a couple. They spent wonderful days exploring the backyard, always side by side. You never saw one without the other. Max seemed to enjoy Wanda even more when he stretched out on the ground and allowed her to leap around him, nipping at his ears and fur until he had quite enough of her playful antics.

Then one warm summer day, I saw Max and Wanda near the driveway. I planned to put Wanda inside the fenced backyard as I normally do before leaving. She ran to Max and looked up at me with expressive eyes that seemed to beg, "Let me stay and play with Max."

I recall telling her, "Stay in the yard, Wanda. I'll be right back."

Max's owner glanced out the window just as Max and Wanda scampered toward the road. Wanda never saw the car coming. Max ran back to Wanda. Very gently he pushed the lifeless body of Wanda from the road. He sat by her side until help arrived.

Each day for the next few weeks Max lay in front of my door, heartbroken, refusing to eat as he mourned the loss of his beloved Wanda.

Eventually, Max and his family moved away, but the memory of the love between Max and our sweet Wanda will always remain with me.

From Rotten Reviews and Rejections by Henderson & Bernard:
Regarding *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence...
"For your own good do not publish this book."

All the Stars are in the Right Conjunction

Lottie Boggan—Jaskson, MS

A heart-rending sound pierced the stillness of our quiet bedroom. “The old girl’s fifteen minutes early,” husband Willard moaned. “It’s just 6:00.”

I was tempted to roll over and go back to sleep, but there was no ignoring the pitiful animal crying outside our door. In June Cleaver’s doggie brain, it was “Showtime.” I groaned, pushed back the covers and got dressed.

A short while later I stood outside the front door and checked the time: 6:22. Not a cloud in the sky, the rising sun was a large gold bloom over the Jackson Country Club and all the stars were in the right conjunction for a good brisk walk.

Today the dog and I will be on the three mile long walk. 6,718 steps. To pass the time on these promenades, sometimes I pray, other times I worry about things. On days when I’m not praying or worrying, I count steps from the time June Cleaver and I leave our yard until we get back home. When I’m into this mode I don’t want to be interrupted by prayers or the worry monkeys that often prattle in my head.

On this morning I opted to count steps and when I do this, it’s VERY important to remember how many I’ve taken. For every one thousand steps I pick up a small stick so I’ll know how far we’ve come and how much further The Cleave and I have to go. I tried to do leaves for the hundreds but most pants pockets aren’t deep enough and with those that were, a few times I forgot and threw the pants into the washing machine, leaves and all. So for the hundreds I generally have ten small pieces of paper and move them from my right pocket to my left. Then reverse it when I pick up my stick that stands for 1,000. Oftentimes I let the paces slide a little bit with the reasoning that they change on any given day, depending on whether I take short or long steps.

Coming down on the number 2, 012, two sticks in one hand and counting, June Cleaver broke my concentration. She picked the wrong spot to do big business, by the country club sign. This is a no, no. Usually my dog is more discriminating on her sniff, find, and ablution mission; she has her favorite vacant lot and that suits both of us just fine.

But now, when June was done she left a mound the size of a loaf of bread and it was up to the cleanup committee to take care of it. Since I was the only member in place to do the honors, I reached down, but to my dismay realized there was no plastic bag attached to the pooper scooper. I managed to shovel and capture the loaf but knew it would slide off if I didn’t carry it very carefully until I could get to a garbage can, a vacant lot, or a nearby creek.

Just as I raised up, I sensed somebody watching. Not too far away, hands on their hips, two young men who had been planting boxes of petunias stared at us.

I felt compelled to explain my problem. Balancing the dog’s leavings like I was serving a tray of champagne flutes at a cocktail party in one hand and holding June Cleaver’s leash and my counting sticks in the other I slowly walked toward them. “I’m so sorry,” I said to the workmen. “But the poop could slide loose.” I carefully raised the scooper. “I won’t ask you to help me dispose of this, but,” I glanced toward a pile of discarded petunia flats they had thrown next to a nearby golf cart parked on St. Andrews Drive, “you left some empty boxes over there. Could I use one of them?”

For a moment the stillness was so deep you could almost hear those petunias taking root.

One of the men broke the silence. "Say what?" he asked.

I held up my hand holding the sticks and the dog's leash. "Each of these stands for a thousand steps. I don't want to lose count. If I walk over and use one of those empty flower boxes, I might ask you to hold these sticks so I can remember how many steps I've taken. Also, don't forget the number 12. That's how far June Cleaver and I've come from my house in addition to these sticks. Two thousand steps plus twelve more. Not counting to where you all are." Both their mouths curved downward in disbelief; the men stared at me as if they couldn't believe what they were hearing.

"It won't take but a minute," I said. "If you'll hold these sticks, when I empty this pooper scooper into a petunia box, I'll come right back here and you can hand them to me."

One of the men jerked a backward turned cap around so fast that a pencil stub he had behind his ear fell off. The two of them looked at each other, dropped their rakes, and hurried to the parked golf cart. They jumped in and sped toward the clubhouse.

There would be no way for me to continue walking and counting. I couldn't balance the poop in the scoop and keep up with numbers.

I walked over to the petunia boxes and emptied the scooper. Still worried about my step counting I remembered the pencil that fell from behind one of the men's ears.

"That'll work even better." I began doing my numbers again and returned to the country club sign. "Forty-nine steps back to the petunia boxes. Forty nine steps doubled. There and back to here," I said.

I dropped the sticks and picked up the pencil stub. "Two thousand and twelve plus ninety-eight." I scribbled 2,110 into my hand.

Once again all the stars were in the right conjunction for June Cleaver and me to have a good day. The dog and I resumed walking. When we topped the St. Andrews hill we stopped a minute to catch our breath. I pulled the pencil from my pocket and wrote, 5,310 in the palm of my hand. "One thousand, four hundred, and eight steps left on the long walk."

Our exercise ritual almost over, I stopped and closed my eyes. "Thank you, God, that I was able to keep up with the number of steps today," I said, and rubbed my thumb over the dog's wet, velvet nose. "And thank you," I whispered, "that at my age, the Cleave and I can still do this."

Reasonable Rates **30 Years Experience** **Published Author**
Teaching, Editing
Refereeing Books

Editorial Services

Richard Creel Ph.D., M.Div.
Editorial attention given to spelling, grammar, clarity, consistency, development, etc. Request a copy of my resume' and my editorial philosophy so you can decide if I can help you.

228-388-9712 **diccreel@cableone.net**

Suzanne Richardson Harvey's Poetry Pages

Guest Poet and Commentary by John Freeman (4 pages)

John Freeman's commentary: These poems by Suzanne Richardson Harvey, taken from her most recent book, offer excellent examples of the poetic power of original metaphors. In previous comments, I have stressed the importance of using concrete images in place of abstractions. The most effective type of image the poet can use is the metaphor, where an element in the poem (known as the "tenor") is made more vivid by comparing it to a totally different object or process (known as the "vehicle"). What the two objects have in common presents a new, unique way of looking at the original object.

There are quite a few effective metaphors in these poems, and I will present my three favorites.

From "Agape: A Family Love Feast", we have:

While Sonny languishes at her side
A bundle of mildewed dreams

This is actually a double metaphor. Sonny is compared to a "bundle", indicating that he is "wrapped up", even "trapped", in his dreams. The dreams are compared to something that is "mildewed"—old and unused to the point of becoming rancid. Do you see how much better this presentation becomes through the metaphor, rather than merely stating that Sonny is "lost in his failures"?

AGAPE: A FAMILY LOVE FEAST

Dearly beloved
We are gathered here
To celebrate the demise
Of yet another year
In Sonny's undistinguished
But fiscally sound career

The family stag presides
Over a plate of rusty lettuce
A mildly deranged brontosaurus
Trumpeting his bid for triumph
Distended in the middle
Like a bloated kidney bean

Sonny's sour spouse
Chases self-esteem
While Sonny languishes at her side
A bundle of mildewed dreams

The aging doe
Peddles gray platitudes
She plucked this morning
From the blue fungi
That flourish on the stroller
And smother the bassinet.

Suzanne Richardson Harvey, Ph.D. ("Sue")
SHARVEY1210@comcast.net

From “The Writer at Half Past Five”, we find:

Marinated in sweat...

bringing into play four of our five senses: vision, smell, taste, and touch, and suggesting that the sweat is the result of a process of preparation (the hard work involved in writing a poem).

THE WRITER AT HALF PAST FIVE

Every word dipped in blood
Marinated in sweat, seasoned with doubt
I draped a comma in a commemorative flag
When the clock chimed half past four

You enshrine a semicolon
Canonize a verb
Beatify some errant phrase
When the seconds stretch like rubber bands
Then snap, boomerang and ricochet
Hurling you back on the blank page

Every sentence is etched in acid
We chisel them from the marrow of our bones
Every stanza carved in some corner of the heart
Awaiting a nod, a smile, an unsolicited embrace
We fling wide our arms and grasp at air
Hunger and thirst for living flesh
Starved on a diet of prepositions
We lust after the key in the lock, the familiar face
in the door frame.

From the same poem, there is:

When the seconds stretch like rubber bands
Then snap, boomerang and ricochet
Hurling you back on the blank page

To me this reveals a primary facet about time when writing. It is easy to get sidetracked on trifling thoughts so that one loses track of time (the seconds seem to stretch) until the sudden realization that nothing has been done yet.

I hope that the inexperienced poet can learn, from these examples, how much more emotional as well as descriptive power metaphor can provide than mere abstract statement.

Suzanne Richardson Harvey received a Bachelor's Degree from Mount Mercy College (now Carlow College), a Master's Degree from Northeastern College, and a Doctorate from Tufts University, where she wrote a dissertation on Elizabethan poetry, specifically that of Edmund Spenser.

AGING ON AN ISLAND OF THE YOUNG

The grey heron hunts at evening
Soaring like an arrow through the midnight air
A tawny owl pierces the blue black sky
With strength stored in the heart
Of those who know the night
The Arctic fox, the homely slug

Eels feast in an ebony sea
Unlocking riddles with the key of depth
Not speed
The lacewing and Roe fawn
The possum and the badger
Cohabit with a waning moon

Orb web spiders cradle in a shrinking belly
Silken threads to spin a world
The bush cricket chirps in tones unheard
In a land where collagen rules
The lynx sprints with greatest zest at dusk
The swan glides with full throated grace on the kiss
of evening air

The common crayfish and caddis fly
The otter and the snail
Speak with Venus
Share secrets with Orion's belt
The starfish and the sea urchin
Embrace the setting sun

Dolphins dance their pas de deux
With joy in a fading light
The octopus spreads nocturnal tenacles
Wide enough to hold a world
The desert flower's evening root sinks deep and true
Growing old is a cosmic art.

Her poetry has appeared in The Christian Science Monitor, Ascent Aspirations Magazine (Canada), Poetry Salzburg Review (Austria), SpeedPoets (Australia), and nthposition (UK), among other venues globally.

More recently, her verse has been collected into a single volume entitled A Tiara for the Twentieth Century (Fithian Press, October 2009)."

ABORTING THE LAUNCH

She's here this morning
In the garden where I feed your sunflower
And nurse your fading cyclamen
These are favors
Any friend can perform
There are no life or death matters here
No prison sentence
Without parole

She's the letter in your Out basket
Forward - No Longer At This Address
Your recorded message "Sorry
The Professor is on sabbatical
All matters should be referred
To the Department"

She perches on your fence post
Like a freshly hatched starling
A non-swimmer on the rail
Of the Golden Gate Bridge
Reaching for our hands at that last half-second
Before the plunge.

STAIRS

We've lost our entrance
Mislaidd it in our march
Elevators and escalators
Can't replace it
Swing wide the heart of Rome
Ascend its seven hills

Stairs traveled with Roman legions
A gate that led to glory
Sharing the terrain
In a romance with memory

The Aracoeli was a door to wonder
Better to caress the tip of heaven
Than languish on the plateau
Climbing was a prayer
Unlocking a realm that pilgrims craved
The rungs on Jacob's ladder

The Cordonata lifted the curtain for a palace
Ushered in an Emperor
There are no kings on the Los Angeles freeway
We live on an arid plain.

SIROCCO: WIND SONG FOR THE HOMELESS ON MARKET STREET

Night sentinels police their heart
Worshippers of Sutherland
Pavarotti's devotees
Disciples of Balanchine
Baryshnikov and Kirkland
March past them dreaming
Of that rare filet at the Fairmont
A flute of Chardonnay
An Amaretto demitasse
Some B&B on ice

They shove their supermarket cart
Through the desert of Market Street
Cradling a limp MacBLT
Plucked from an aging puddle
The Hefty bag in their
Safeway cart shrinks
Like gums in a toothless skull
Tonight the wind will singe their flesh
Nestle in their throat like a torch.

She has taught in the English Departments of Pine Manor College, Tufts, Stanford University, and UC Berkeley. While at Stanford for almost two decades, she also was an instructor in the Publishing Program at UC Berkeley Extension and served as a resident fellow in an all-freshman residence hall at Stanford, together with her husband.

Summer Vacation?

Mark D. Cohen

I got my car air conditioner fixed in April of '09
How I made it through last summer without it I'll never know—
I guess I burned the memory of frying day after day
From my memory banks

Speaking of banks—
Don't get me started on banks!
Every month I wonder if Dad's estate money is going to arrive
Nervous wreck is my middle name

I'm still doing work around the condo—
Well, actually I'm not doing it;
I'm no fixer-upper
But I pay other people to solve various and sundry problems

I really only enjoy spring and autumn
Winter is the worst, but I hate summer heat as well
I just hope against hope I survive another "summer vacation"

Angel in Lilac

Betty Beamguard – York, SC

My granddaughter slips out the back door
wearing her soft lilac coat embroidered with dragonflies,
fur-trimmed hood framing angelic face—
out to yell, stomp ice, wrestle,
and roll down muddy hills with her brother.

A Rip-Roaring Halloween

Mark D. Cohen – Madison, WI

I can't remember so much hoopla about Halloween for years and years
As what we're having in 2009

The economy is in the doldrums
The Job rate is about to hit double digits
People are upset and fed up
So tomorrow is a good day
For America to blow off some steam

My father told me years ago,
"Unemployed men went to baseball games"

Whatever works—
America could use a good celebration right now

Bootlegger's Legacy

Betty Beamguard – York, SC

Here comes our neighbor
riding his lawn mower down the highway,
announces he needs help to fix the belt
cases our farm as he explains a seven-month absence.
“Been in jail, a good one this time, only one row of wire.
Bobcat ain't gettin' out for years, maybe life.”

His brother Bob beat and raped their sister;
police dogs found him in the woods behind our house
camped next to his marijuana patch.
They're questioning him about his uncle's death.

So goes the saga of the bootlegging branch of the Blantons,
the whiskey-making daddy long dead, the mama more recently.
One brother died in jail—suicide say the jailers; murder says the family.
Not a driver's license left among them,
they'll be drinking, drugging, fighting
in their little house on the hill,
till they kill each other off
or all go to jail.

winter

George F. Riess – New Orleans, LA

autumn is an exhibitionist elsewhere strutting
the streets in stripes and epaulets but she saunters
backatown in south Louisiana
slightly embarrassed by blushing sweet gum and maple
in complexion of ocher sycamore and sienna cypress

soft as gathering pine needles she hunkers
down in the bottom land as if winter will be
cold and covers her nakedness with gray
mottled green of palmetto and oak

refracted sunlight reaches only the edge
and leaves within indifferent shadows where
day can pass for night and the blooming hyacinth
remains unseen

in my gathering seasons
I will turn within beneath the edge to walk
in the shadows in the heart of the eternal cycle
and accept it in the same diffidence
as winter takes fall, as winter takes us all

The Loveless Marriage

Barry W. North -- Hahnville, La.

It sits on broken shores,
in a land where tools are valued above people,
yet constant labor builds nothing.
All day, inhabitants, with maniacal determination,
pound square pegs into round holes.

Nowhere in the land is there a meeting of the minds.
Two plus two is three,
sometimes five.
Four is an illusion of the wishful thinker.

Escape from the madness is impossible.
Everywhere, travel is difficult at best.
Roads are nearly impassable and always under construction.
Rain, when it comes, is never welcome,
causing horrendous floods.

In this land, nothing comes easy.
The sound of work is the only music.
And even the sunsets are noisy,
coming down.

Life Costs Money

Mark D. Cohen

Such a sad world, with its economic booms and busts
So many people out of a job—so many without health insurance
I'm so blessed to have had a dear departed father
Who worked incredibly hard at playing the stock market
So that his wife and children wouldn't suffer from want

Is this country ever going to get better?
It's hard to say
Wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan
Which cuts back on infrastructure in America's states and localities

The auto industry in America is on its last legs
So many financial companies have given up the ghost
Some people still to this day wonder where their next meal is coming from,
Still cut pills in half

I wish I could really help out—but I'm just one person
And sad to say, a pretty selfish one at that

Thanksgiving Joy

Hooray, hooray, it's almost Thanksgiving Day,
A day for folks to put on their best,
For a table laden with pumpkin pie,
A turkey so big, it fills up the eye,
Cornbread and peas,
A glass of iced tea,
Mashed potatoes and yams,
Oh, how full, we are,
A day to be thankful to praise Him above,
To bless those around us with abundant love.

Christmas Doorway

The doorway was opening,
Decorated inside for Christmas,
Bright lights shined outside,
Showing the warmth,
Of kind hearts inside.

Christmas Music

Hear the bells,
Hear them ring,
Christmas is finally here,
Listen to the carols,
Hear the children sing,
Bringing Christmas cheer,
I love to hear the violins play,
Especially, on Christmas Day,
Music is floating everywhere,
Making this a special day.

Alas, A Starless night

On cloudy nights, when there are no glistening stars,
To shine their light upon this darkened world;
I truly miss their sparkling lights,
Wishing the clouds would come unfurled.

Rocking Horse Dreams

When, I was a very, young girl,
I had rocking horse dreams,
I would grab the mane and reins unfurl,
I would ride the horse over rocky streams,
And on a mountain trail,
I would ride through velvet woodland,
Over myriad lands, I would sail,
Deep in a secluded glen,
I would water her in my hand,
Then, all of a sudden,
I would be in my room again.

Still of the Night

In the still of the night,
When all is at peace and all is quiet,
While I am sleeping in my bed,
Dreams of angels, winging in the air,
Dreams of clouds and flowers, fair,
Peaceful sleep in slumber land,
Sleeping in the sandman's sand.

Peaceful Day

Clouds are soaring high overhead,
Pine trees reach up to the sky,
The little, blooming flower is red,
Little birds, upward fly,
Peace is found, outside.

Christmas in the ER

'Twas the daytime of Christmas and as all of you know
Transcription slowed to a crawl, almost no job workflow.
Doctor's offices were closed, all filled with good cheer,
While ER physicians worked double-time this year.

New patients arrived with gastric distress
And soon the waiting room appeared quite a mess.
One patient arrived and fell flat on his face,
Of wine and beer he'd had more than a taste.

The patients were nestled in their hospital beds
Some had wild visions that danced in their heads.
And the doctors in white coats and nurses in caps
All wished they could take just one little nap.

When out in the waiting room there arose quite a clatter,
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.
Away 'round the corner I flew like a flash
In time to see a wheelchair and dietary cart clash.

The mess on the wall soon let me know
A similar catastrophe waited below.
When what to my tired old eyes should show up
But a housekeeping cart to clean it all up.

With a housekeeping super so prompt and quick
I thought for sure this was some sort of trick.
More spirited that ever, extra staff came.
The remarkable mess they soon overcame.

Doctors Ashley and Lancer, please call Nurse Dixon.
Cardiology, orthopedics, some folks need a fixin'.
To the ER, the ER, come one, come all,
We've plenty of patients; please heed my call!

As old bones after a wild ride will creak
When mounting an obstacle for which they're too weak,
Off to the ER another ambulance flew
With a poor aching patient broken in two.

And then in a twinkling I heard loud and clear,
An ambulance siren piercing the air.
As I looked up from my work and was turning around
Down the hall the surgeon came with a bound.

And then in a twinkling I heard loud and clear,
An ambulance siren piercing the air.
As I looked up from my work and was turning around
Down the hall the surgeon came with a bound.

He was dressed in scrubs from his foot to his head
And he looked like he had just crawled out of bed.
Bags under his eyes, a tired-looking face,
But he still was a model of competence and grace.

He focused on his patient; his gaze didn't vary,
He was now in control; we needn't be wary.
His exam complete, he let the patient know
He would see him in surgery, they'd prep him to go.

He would fix him right, tho' he might need a new part
But he'd come through just fine; he had a good heart.
The patient managed a smile, though his insides felt like jelly.
He was a bit nervous of someone cutting his belly.

Anesthesia's your friend, you'll wake like yourself
Though it will be a while before you're spry as an elf.
The surgeon winked his eye and nodded his head,
The patient listened carefully to all that he said.

I'm told he didn't speak once the operation began
But fixed me up like new as a good surgeon can.
Then folding his hands over me, he gave thanks to God
And off down the hall to his next patient he trod.

The ER staff sprang from room to room all day,
Prescriptions, treatments dispensed without delay.
When their shifts ended, staff voices rang out of sight
"Merry Christmas to all, and have a great night."

Celebrate

Joseph and Mary journeyed to Bethlehem
to the house of David as required of them.
The small infant son that Mary would bear
would be laid in a manger with the greatest of care.

The period of Advent and waiting is past.
Mary's tiny infant son is born at last.
Wrapped in cloth strips, bathed in mother's love,
Joseph, their protector, looks on from above.

Following a star, the three Magi appear,
bringing gifts to worship this child so dear.
Prince of Peace, Savior, Christmas bells now ring
as we celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus our King.

Christmas Wishes

Christmas cards send notes of cheer
to family and friends we hold so dear.
Cards carry good wishes far and near
of yuletide blessings for the coming year.

Wintry scenes that make us mellow
or a red-suited Santa, that jolly old fellow,
add to our own Christmas delight
reading the cards we've received each night.

While strains of familiar Christmas carols soar
from loudspeakers in our favorite store,
cards arrive via mail at Christmas-wreathed doors
sending merriest Christmas wishes from our house to yours.

WINTER

Evening comes and with it a drenching downpour cloaking the
town in sheets of cold rain, thinly coating the walks with ice.

Three hours transforms the wet outside into a white array of
winter wonder. Sleet rain-snow glasses the town in
a splendor of white frost. Cracking ice-laden branches
crumble to the ice-crusting ground.

Morning arrives and the sun shines with a radiance that
reflects, mirrors, sparkles, twinkles...crinkling through the
bright glare, creating tingling sounds like splintering, sparkling
crystal as ice, loosened from wires and trees by the warm
sun, sprinkles to wet walkways.

Shimmering, scintillating glass spun in crystal-clear fibers
fades into oblivion as streams of water line car tracks,
glistening like freshly scrubbed diamonds.

Twinkling spun glass dances first in the air, then on the ground
as it liquefies into a reflective sun-swept pool.
Overhead, a powder-dusted, pale blue sky nods its
approval as the evidence of winter slowly melts away.

Magnolia Quarterly's

250 word Spring 2010 Writing Contest:

“Gardening”

Non-fiction, fiction, poetry, humor, or free style

First Prize	\$20	Second Prize	\$15
Third Prize	\$10	Special Prizes	\$5

E-mail all entries to writerpllevin@gmail.com with title “Spring Contest Entry.” I prefer you put the whole entry in the body of the message, to avoid attachments.

OR: Mail your entry to: “Spring Contest Entry, GCWA, PO BOX 10294, Gulfport, MS 39505”.

No entries will be returned. E-mail and Postmark deadline March 1, 2010.

Rules: No entry fee. Entries must be 250 Words or less, excluding title. Only GCWA members may enter. Philip L. Levin, editor of MQ will be the judge. All entrants must agree to allow publication in the MQ along with their names or pseudonym. Prizes paid at publication. MQ requires one-time publishing rights only; afterwards all rights revert to the authors.

Winter Issue Contest Topic: My Merriest Christmas

First Prize:	Sylvia Skrmetta
Second Prize:	Terry I. Miles
Third Prize:	Marcia Mills
Special Prize:	Vivian Newkirk

Congratulations to All the Winners!
The following two pages present the winning entries for your enjoyment!

The Winners!

My Greatest Gift

Sylvia Skrmetta – Saucier, MS

I hated waiting in the grocery check-out line, especially on Christmas Eve. Of course I wasn't the only person in town that had forgotten to purchase an essential item for their Christmas feast.

Late shoppers were losing patience as they watched the young woman in front of me unload her few groceries while attempting to pacify her screaming baby and preventing her rambunctious toddler from bringing down the candy shelf.

I remember thinking how much I hated the holidays. I rushed around for weeks like a crazy person buying, cooking, and decorating and for what—a few minutes of hoopla on Christmas morning. I always felt so empty after it was all over. Now here I was again—tired and irritated and waiting in another line.

I saw the expression on the young mother's face as the cashier gave her the total. I felt a slight flutter in my heart as I realized the young woman couldn't pay for all of her meager groceries. She began to look through her bags, taking out items and setting them back on the counter. Her son began to cry. "No honey," she explained, "we can't buy that."

"Excuse me miss," I said as I tapped her on her shoulder. "Would you give me the greatest gift anyone could possibly give me at Christmas and allow me to pay for your groceries?"

The tearful young woman began to protest. "Please," I begged, "I really need this."

A Christmas Surprise

Terry Miles – Gulfport, MS

I had just turned seven years old and although I was warm, comfortable and loved by my paternal grandparents, I had asked Santa Claus to please bring my daddy home from the U.S. Navy for Christmas.

Of course, my grandpa told me Santa had lots of responsibility and getting my daddy home was next to impossible. Still, I had faith.

From my bedroom window facing the front porch, I could tell it was snowing that Christmas Eve. Suddenly I heard a rumbling. It had to be Santa. I ran to the window and saw footprints in the snow on the porch. He was trying to get in. I hurried to my grandparent's room. "Grandpa, Santa's here and you forgot to leave the front door unlocked!"

He jumped out of bed and rushed to our front room. I peered from behind his legs. Outside in the flickering porch light stood my daddy, in his uniform, his arms loaded down with presents!

Sheepishly he said, "Merry Christmas Dad, Santa asked me to help him drop all of these gifts off!"

It was the best Christmas present ever! My daddy was home!

Tom's Homecoming

Marcia Mills – Lansdale, PA

My cat, Tom, came into my life after my best friend moved away. I was lonely and restless and couldn't understand why Dana had to move. Mother suggested I get a pet, but since she had been raised as a Tennessee farm girl, she thought all animals belonged outdoors.

As a kitten, Tom was a wonderful pet. He liked his warm back-porch shelter and grew into a large, graceful yellow and white tomcat. He delighted Mother and me by climbing up on the back-porch table and peaking in the window.

Sadly, Tom began to wander around town. He went away for weeks, returning home all dirty and scratched. Mother said he was fighting with other tomcats for the attention of his favorite girlfriend.

In the fall before I started high school, Tom went on an extended sojourn. I missed him terribly and looked all over town. The weeks flew by and when we decorated the Christmas tree, I missed him even more. Tradition was that Tom came indoors on Christmas Eve to receive his gifts and play with the Christmas balls.

On Christmas Eve Mother and I were baking pies in our small kitchen. I was standing at the sink, and looked up to see Tom's scratched face in the window. I rushed out and hugged him. He was a mess, but he spent the rest of the evening indoors with us. I never saw Dana again, but I remember that year of Tom's homecoming as my merriest Christmas.

Untitled (My Merriest Christmas Entry)

Vivian Newkirk – Madison, MS

Daddy came home from the train station with a soldier December 25, 1944. The young man from New Jersey was on his way from boot camp in Texas to a New York departure to parts unknown. He sat alone on the hardwood bench in the station filled primarily with other enlisted men. Daddy recalls how lonely and forlorn the young man looked. The reason why he selected "Joe" to eat lunch with our family.

Joe wasn't aware of the preparations Mother, my sister and I had made for this celebration. It had been Mother's idea to invite someone after hearing the radio advertise the fact that U. S. citizens should "do their part for the war for our men going to the front". Sister and I cleaned and decorated the tiny apartment and readied the tree sparkling with lights, hand-me-down baubles and paper chains.

Our daily sugar ration saved for a month went into Mother's chocolate and coconut pies. The hen cooked with cornbread dressing had all the usual southern side dishes. Mother's best china bought in the 1930s graced the table for this occasion. During coffee and dessert time Joe told us about his family and growing up in the east. We gave him a gift of shaving cream and talcum powder. When the clock chimed 4 p.m., Daddy walked this young soldier back to the train station seven blocks away and stayed until Joe departed. We repeated this gesture with service men until the war ended in 1945.

Membership Form:
Gulf Coast Writers Association
P.O. Box 10294
Gulfport, MS 39505

Your membership entitles you to contribute your own work to our quarterly magazine, Magnolia Quarterly. You will receive the next four issues. Also you will be added to our email list, which includes announcements of markets, contests, meetings, and events. If you have book publications you may have your book listed on our website and in our magazine. GCWA charges only 2\$ on each sale on items sold through our listing, and no listing fees. We also feature your book on our website in a very attractive display. We have an annual contest called 'Let's Write' each spring. We will be happy to announce any book signings you might be planning on our website and also notify all our members via email of your events. Membership for one year is only \$30. Please send a check to the above address with this form or information on a separate sheet.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____

Remit to:

The Magnolia Quarterly
c/o Gulf Coast Writers Association
P.O. Box 10294
Gulfport, MS 39505

So, You're Writing a Book?

Join the leading directory of
authors and writers on the web!



Don't wait until after you publish.

Build Your Marketing Platform Early!

Save \$10 on a Pre-Publication Website!
Use Promo Code GCWA when ordering



With a Pre-Publication Website from FiledBy, you can...

- CREATE a web presence for your forthcoming book
- BUILD awareness and buzz for your upcoming release
- PROMOTE your book across the web using built-in share links
- INCREASE pre-order sales with Buy links to popular e-retailers
- SHARE interesting media, including videos, mp3s, documents
- CONNECT with readers with through our blog and author wall

What is FiledBy? FiledBy is where authors can create a web presence and a marketing platform online. Every published author can claim a FREE website on FiledBy, and each site can be enhanced with both free and premium marketing tools to help you connect with readers while promoting yourself and selling your books online. Join for FREE and start building your online community! To join today, visit www.filedby.com/fb/gcwa

filedby[®]
www.filedby.com/fb/gcwa

The Magnolia Quarterly
c/o Gulf Coast Writers Association
P.O. Box 10294
Gulfport, MS 39505