Notes

Since the birth of COLLAGE in the spring of 1968 its editors have attempted to add or contribute some lasting improvement to the magazine per se. Lynn Small, editor number one, gave it its name. Bill Peters instituted a special edition.

From the combined years of Vicki Hill and Duane Sawyer, COLLAGE received its medalist rating from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. Under the editorship of Teena Andrews the magazine format saw its first change. By the end of Bill Bennett’s editorship COLLAGE was definitely classified as a “literary magazine with general feature format.”

Bennett sought to produce a “more professional magazine both graphically and technically,” a goal also pursued by the 1973-’74 editor, Lucy Sikes. But problems of even greater magnitude have constantly beset the magazine editor, problems which threaten the very existence of the literary and creatively artistic magazine.

From within the department of mass communications come all sorts of whisperings, suggestions and proposals which would 1) end COLLAGE and/or combine it with the yearbook (a move which would surely destroy the identity of the magazine), or 2) force COLLAGE into its coffin by reducing it to a 12 page, four issue, newsprint edition. And by the time COLLAGE readers peruse these notes, no telling how many other alternatives will have been considered.

Reason given? Primarily, University funding. The media are allotted a certain lump sum which is allocated to the different publications. The yearbook and newspaper would not have to make as many budgetary cuts if they could have money which would ordinarily be given to COLLAGE.

Is this what is to happen after six long years of work? Though not its initial goal, COLLAGE has continually outdone the other two in the area of awards. Must a magazine of the quality of COLLAGE be always worried about its existence? This editor hopes not, but at this point in time, the future of COLLAGE is looking mighty dim.
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I wandered down the blacktop, trying to get that last ride to Marshall. I was born and raised there. My parents died there. It is my home.

From where I stood then I could see the fields of brown corn, ready for harvest. They rocked back and forth in the sharp fall air. There was a gray dirt road that split the two fields in half; at the end sat an old house. It looked to me a good place to spend the night. A big elm tree shaded my view, and as I walked down it, I saw that the road went only to the house and not beyond.

It stood in front of me, yellow and black. The sun had begun to settle down. Shadows filled the front and sides of the house. Most of the windows had been broken out with rocks, or that's what it looked like to me. In the back yard there was a well with bucket and rope. I dropped it down and took a long, sweet drink.

Stepping onto the porch that faced the road, I opened the battered front door. The screen was covered with fly specks that rubbed off on my fingers. Flies were the only moving things I noticed outside. The door opened onto a black wood floor patched with cheap, yellow linoleum. I sat my guitar against the door and began to explore.

The first room was empty. In the next, a rolled-up desk and a bed were found opposite each other. The desk was filled with canned food, and the bed was rumpled like somebody had just gotten up. The house smelled old and stale. The kitchen was only a sink and an old table covered in oilcloth. Calendars, posters and newsprint papered the walls. A Currier and Ives winter was depicted there for liver pills, and women in big, floppy hats drank Coke. People were married and killed right there on the wall.

And there was a hearth, a large hearth, probably the only beautiful thing in the whole house.

While I was reading one wall, "Who's in there?" was yelled at me.

A shadow blocked the door. It startled me for a second, and I couldn't answer.

He was a dusty, gray, old man. He was about seventy or so, with a cane to support his weight. "What do you think you're doin'?

"Oh, nothin', just looking around. Readin' the walls," I said, pointing to them.

"I think I'm in there somewhere," he said, pointing with the cane to a place on the wall. It was an announcement of birth. The name was Horace Blaine Smythe.

"Horace Smythe?" I asked, really interested.

"Yep," he said, "that's me."

He wore a railroad engineer's coveralls and hat. The boots were brown and worn. They looked as though they had walked many miles. His face, brown and wrinkled, changed with every movement of his eyes, and his head seemed to bob slowly like the brown corn in the fields outside.

"Who are ye?" Smythe coughed. It was a deep and throaty cough that shook the old man hard. He quickly made for the bed to sit.

"Bobby Mincher."

"From 'round here?" he asked.

"I'm from Marshall, just a ways up the road."

"I got some beans over there," he said, motioning toward the desk. "Mess kits and can opener in there too." His voice was friendly but low.

He got up from the bed and moved to the hearth. Taking some bits of wood from his pockets, he stuffed the open hole. A scrap of paper was shoved in with a match. Smythe moved very slowly.

I opened the beans with a can opener

by Randy O'Brien

May 1974
and poured them into the mess kits. I put them on the grill that sat above the fire. I took an apple box from the corner, sat down, and asked, “What are you doin’ here?”

“I could ask you the same thing,” he wheezed.

“Well, I just needed a place to stay the night. Thought I might get somethin’ to eat.”

“You is right on both counts, you don’t look like the law, and even if you is the law, you gonna be fed. My momma told me to feed them that look hungry.”

“I look hungry, huh?” I smiled.

“You is hungry, ain’t you?” He cocked his black eyebrows at me and grinned.

“Yes sir, I sure am. It’s been two days since I ate.”

The smell of the cooking food began to push the stale air out of the room. It was so good I thought I could taste it. “Where you from?” I asked.

“Oklahoma.”

He began the first of the stories I was to hear.

“Kaufman, he hired a bunch of toughts from town to catch and teach them a lesson. One was a real tough bastard -- Smith, he called hisself. Smith and this group of toughts laid out all night with some cattle in a valley to bait the rustlers. They finally did come, six of them. They all carried torches. Smith and the toughts rode up from behind them rustlers, and the chase was on. Smith shot two of them hisself. Shot ’em in the back. If’n it had been dry, that range would had caught afire from the torches, but it didn’t. Anyways, they let three of them get away. The one they caught had to dig a hole. They put him in and filled it up to his neck, taking bets to see who could get nearest to his head without nickin’ him. They played with him ’til daybreak, then they finished him off. Left him out there to warn other rustlers off. Din’t have no others rustlin’ after that.”

Through the story, I noticed how his face seemed to mold every word and make it stronger than it really was. I was horrified by the recollections. I was never one who enjoyed grisly little stories, but if I could get a meal I would listen.

“You killed that last one didn’t you?”

I asked. He sat in silence. He seemed to be resting. He never answered the question.

“Them beans ought to be warm enough now,” he said, as he moved toward the pot over the fire.

“Yeah,” he said, handing me the hot plate, “I worked for the railroad for thirty years. I used to drive them mile-long trains for A&S. I ‘member one night I was drivin’ down past Memphis. I seen this man sittin’ on the tracks. I started blowin’ my whistle long and loud. Well, I threwed on the brake and put the engine in reverse. Now, it takes a good bit to stop a mile-long train, and that man was just up ahead.”

Smythe was attacked by a rasping coughing spell at this point, and I thought it was his last, but he continued.

“That man just sat there on the tracks with his head in his hands ’til the train hit him. I was doin’ ’bout twenty or so at the time, and all I seen was guts and blood after we stopped. That’s all that was left. Found out later that he’d been beaten to death and sat up on the track to make it look as if he’d been killed by the train.”

He rested again, breathed slowly and coughed a little until he was silent again. It was as if it was all an act that he must go through for every person who came to visit.

“How did you come to live here?” I asked, stuffing down another fork of beans.

“Well, I just sorta moved in. Nobody cares that I’m here, ’cept a couple little boys down the road.”

“Why do you live here? You get some sort of check from the railroad, don’t you?”

“Yeah, but I’d end up in some rest home; that’d kill me.”

“Well, probably would,” I said. He asked me what I did for a living.

“Nothing.”

“You play that guitar I seen you carryin’?”

“Yep.”

“You got to sing for your supper,” he said, smiling.

“So that’s the catch, huh,” I grinned back.

It was dark now, but we still talked and told stories and sang songs.

Later in the evening when we’d quieted
had been killed in a tornado.

Horace Smythe turned his face and frowned. "She won't be waiting for you, son. She'll be long gone, or worse still she'll be there with kids and an old man she's married to."

"What makes you think she'll be gone?"

"I know what happened to me, and I'll tell you that she didn't do no waitin'. No sir, I wadint gone but two years and she couldn't stay put that long."

"So I shouldn't go back?" I said, wondering just what I should do.

"I ain't tellin' you nothin', just don't expect her to be there." And with that he rolled over on the bed he had been sitting on for the past four hours. "Oh, there's an old army cot in that closet you can use," he said, pointing to an old, withered door.

I took it out and lay on it for a long time thinking about what he had just said. There were so many questions in my mind. The biggest seemed to be the realization that I had lived my return to Marie. If she was not there, what would be left?

The sun broke through the front window, across the floor and into my eyes. I raised my head and shielded my eyes. The old man was gone. I thought it looked like about nine o'clock, but I could not be sure. I walked over to the big window in the front of the room, the one that had let the sun in to waken me. I stood there for quite a while, until I was distracted by Horace Smythe stumbling around at the side of the building. He had four eggs in his hands. He was still hunched over his cane, in his overalls and engineer's hat. As he came in the door, he grinned toothlessly, "Breakfast."

I washed the mess kits in water I had drawn from the well. He cooked the eggs the same way he had cooked the beans the night before. They tasted even better than they smelled. For some reason he did not talk much, and I did not want to prod him into conversation.

I was thinking more of Marie, of times and love we had shared so long ago. We grew up together and lived across the street from each other in Marshall. We were even blood brothers, because we had seen a movie where
two boys had pricked their fingers and let their blood mix. She and I did that when we were seven and eight. Our first loves through adolescence were each other, and one night twelve years ago I promised to come back for her; she promised she would wait, or at least leave word where she could be found.

These memories were broken by a shrill “Mister Smythe.”

“Mister Smythe.” Two little boys sauntered in the front door, the screen slamming behind them. One was ten or eleven, the other five or six. They looked like brothers.

Mister Smythe said, “Hello, boys. This is Bobby Mincher.”

“Hi,” I said lightly, all but ignoring them at first.

“Hi, Bobby,” one said. “Hi, Bobby,” the other echoed.

They settled themselves on the old bed as the old man moved about the room. The little one began to squirm in his place until he could hold back no longer. “Mister Smythe, what’cha gonna tell us ‘bout today?”

“Well, how ’bout the time I was corralin’ this wild bronc in Texas? I ever tell y’all that one?”

“No!” They jumped.

“Wa-a-lll. In Sipaw, Texas, out on the range there was this horse they called Blackie. He was mean and he had a herd of other broncs that followed him. Well, I’d heard ‘bout Blackie and I wanted to see that horse. I really wanted to catch ’im.”

I smiled as the children laughed aloud at the expression on old Smythe’s face.

“I went out to this range where he was said to hang around. I snuck up on that herd of horses downwind, but they got wind of me from ‘bout a hundred yards off. They was off and runnin’, and so was I. That horse I was ridin’ was good, but he could only just ‘bout keep in sight of that herd. Blackie was leadin’, and he looked so purty every move he made, why it looked like he wasn’t runnin’ at all, but flyin’ just off the ground. For some reason all of the rest of the herd turned towards the sun. Blackie whirled and faced me alone to fight it out. We was in this big, old plain — no hills, flat as could be. It took all I’d ever learned as a ranch hand to nab that critter. We seemed to go ’round in circles hundreds of times ’fore I roped him. He pulled so hard that I was afraid the rope would break. I finally got a good ‘nuff hold on him to take him back to the ranch. I broke old Blackie and rode him for six years.”

“Wow,” the big one said.

“Wow,” the little one said.

I almost said “wow” myself, but did not.

“Tell us another one, Mister Smythe.”

“Can’t, boys. I only tell y’all one a day; ’kay?” he said smiling. Their faces clouded momentarily, but smiles won out.

“Kay,” the little one said, stretching a leg to the floor.

“We got to be goin’ anyways,” the big one said, hopping down. The door slammed shut.

Horace Smythe began coughing and laid down on the bed. His eyes were closed, and his chest rose slowly. He lay there for hours, saying nothing. I thought many thoughts during the time. His stories had amazed the children so. He had lived so much, and I was awed by the powerful descriptions he’d put forth.

Hours seemed to pass as I sat on the apple box, waiting for something to happen. While I was gazing out the window, the steady breathing ceased. I got up and slowly walked out of the house. I passed the waving corn once again, down the fields and back to the highway. A white house was up ahead. I moved toward it and reached its front porch.

The door sounded hollow as I pounded on it. A lady with drooping hair and a frown answered the knock. “A man has died in that yellow house just up the road. I think you should call the authorities.” As I turned, she said, “What are you going to do?” I couldn’t answer, for the road was calling me home.

“Just a minute,” she ordered. “Who are you? Whatcha doin’ down there any- way?”

I looked at her for a moment. Then I gazed down the road toward Marshall, trying to hold onto a fleeting past. “Guess I’m just passing through.”
I NEVER FOUND A FOUR-LEAF CLOVER

It all started so innocently

A Look, a sigh, and a winking of the eye

With a numerous number of arms,

I was firmly but gently held.

And as love engulfed me

The fires of passions rose

The urge began to control

The cycle started

First companionship,

Then love

Then sheer and fiery passion

A hand in my hand

A lovely face in my hand

A breast in my hand,

But I never found a four-leaf clover so love was not long to last.

To hear: I am yours, and you are mine

Chimes rang

It was sanity to a lunatic

It was life to death

It was spring to winter

It was the sun to the moon

It was the earth to the sky

The death bell tolled because

I never found a four-leaf clover, and love was not long to last

Life has many seasons,
But mine is darkness in the face of dawn.

For I've never found a four-leaf clover,

So I neither love nor am loved for Long.

Ron Howell
FREUD, FROGS, PHANTASMAGORIA
AND EGGPLANT

THE DISUNITY OF MODERN POETICS

Poetry is not the favored art form it once was; moreover, each day the wedge is driven deeper between poetry and a world of frosty readers. Does the fault lie with the reader? Perhaps. More likely, though, it is the modern poet who is murdering his mode. It is the poet's responsibility to find his reader, and those who do not, fail to survive as artists. In recent decades, the reader has labored through the glut of confused, mind-boggling quasi-poetry seeking his poet only to find his efforts too labored, too boring to be worthwhile. So frequently, modern poetry is too personal to be understood by any save the poet himself; the poet's personal experience when it is commonplace, dull and/or shares no affinity with the reader equals ennui.

As there is too much bad poetry, there are too many bad poets. Almost every literate person at some time feels an inward bent for expressing his own sensitivity and attempts poetry. Some early efforts are the forerunners of great poetry; most are not. Too often, praise from those in sympathy with the would-be poet nurtures a budding lack of talent. Abrasive, but unfortunately common, encounters between the ambitious poet and his friends/acquaintances-total strangers are running sores on college campuses:

Sheepishly: "Well, I do . . . write poetry."

Mock Surprise: "Really?"

Warmer: "Only for myself. You know, very personal stuff."

Mock Interest: "May I . . . ?"

Defensively: "No, I never show it to anyone. It's just for me."

True Interest: "Then, why do you write it?"

A Hint of Pique: "Good catharsis. Cleans me out. Puts me at peace spiritually . . . I'll show you some if you'd like."

Dread: "Thanks, but I really have to change the cartridge in my pen today and . . ."

Desperation: "Please, I want to. Just a peek, though."

Invariably, a "peek" admits a volume. Almost always, the poems are written in free verse; more significantly each is usually a collection of disjointed images inadequately cemented with disparate details. Generally, the poet prefaced his offering by apologizing for his poetry's A.) incompleteness, B.) lack of polish, C.) flaws, D.) lowly position in the strata of his efforts, E.) all of the above.

A first reading is hopeless; a second, pointless; a third, boring.

Falteringly: "I just don't understand."

Defiantly: "The fault is yours. I told you -- it's very personal. You lack depth and perception."

Thus the riposte continues: the reader cannot appreciate the poem without having "been there." The arcifinious argument is an exercise in frustration; the poet establishes the frontiers of his own consciousness as a natural wall of defense into which the hapless reader must bang his head. The essential question must now arise: Is it necessary -- or, indeed, even desirable -- that the reader be familiar with the poet's intimate personal experience? Somewhere, modern poetics has taken on a new slant which appears to be non-communicative. Subjective description must be understood in order to have merit. The poem has evolved as the possession of the poet alone;
the reader is forced into inertia. It must be noted that a callow appraisal of life from without is meaningful only to the appraiser. The experiences of the poet, then, must not only be refined and unified, but also available. The case against obscurity is clear. One need only to look to the symbolists for proof. Those in the vanguard of the symbolist movement are read today with, in many cases, as many lines of prose explanation seeking to make the poet's experience available, as there are lines of poetry itself. The culpability for confusion lies with the poet.

With significant, mature experience -- either actual or vicarious -- firmly in mind, the poet must then determine order, i.e. unity and direction, which is poetry's most appealing strength. Without unity and direction, a poem neither means nor is. Poems come about as the product of thought and reflection so that they are well-ordered records of perceptions of experience. If architecture is but frozen music, then poetry is frozen thought -- crystals of emotive experience. A poem, as a novel, painting or other art form, must, simply stated, have a place to go. This governing attitude comprises the core of the poem. Images, then, are woven into the fabric of the central unity in order to formulate the poetic statement. No matter how disjointed the images may appear on the surface, a concentration on the central attitude can unify them; if indeed the images are worthy of such union. The quintessence of poetry is the ability to unify the kaleidoscopic experience of man as he is attuned to the universe. The most common poetic pitfall occurs when ordinary man rises to poetry without experience, training, or genius only to produce short lines with peculiar punctuation which fetch after the form, but not the substance of poetry.

Too many modern poets extol the concepts of poetic unity but ignore them in their own endeavors. A collection of disjointed images trussed together by a hatful of conjunctions and commas will never rise to poetic art. Unity and order must be established, either on the surface or by extrapolation, at the core of the poem. For if they are not, what appears to the poet as a crystal of emotive experience may seem only a vacuous collage of words to the reader. It is therefore essential that the poet communicate a unified record of experience or perception to the reader. Unbridled, spontaneous representations of experience or fantasy serve only to alienate readers from poetry. If the course of modern poetics continues, self-consumption is inevitable, and poetry will belong solely to the poets.
THE MEANEST WOMAN ON EARTH

Drawing by Larry Reynolds
I like it. I'm just beginning to find out what us womenfolks been missing. Set down and have one.”

I went in the kitchen and got him a glass and poured it half full from the bottle. I pushed the bucket of water toward him, poured myself another whopping drink and settled back in my chair and drank it down. Zeb slumped into a chair across the table from me, looking at me like I was a creature from the moon, while the liquor poured down my throat as hot as melted lead. It took all the power of my will to keep from gagging, but I held it down. I waited a few minutes till the churning in my stomach stopped, and then I reached for the bottle.

By this time Zeb had gotten some of his senses back, and he lunged across the table and grabbed my wrist. I twisted loose, poured the glass half full and drank it slow, tilting the glass toward the light like I was admiring the color, but really trying to keep my stomach inside me. I could feel it rising up every time it knew the stuff was coming down.

“Where's Emma?” he asked suddenly, his eyes darting around the room.

“Over at Eph's,” I said. “I thought when you got back home that you and me could have a party just to ourselves, so I took her over to Eph's.”

He still hadn't touched the drink I had poured for him. I reached over to the water bucket with the dipper, brought up a dipperful of water, and held it over his glass.

“Maybe you don't like yours straight like I do,” I told him. “Would you like a little water with it? But it's a shame to mix good whisky with anything else, isn't it? The man at the saloon told me this was the best he had, shipped over here from Scotland.”

“Scotch!” he fairly screamed it at me. He hadn't even noticed the label. He jumped up so quick that he knocked the dipper out of my hand and the water spilled over the table. Then he saw the other bottles I had bought, piled every which way on the bureau against the wall. He ran over to it and looked at the labels on the bottles.

“Where'd you get the money for this?” he asked in a strangled voice. I poured myself another drink before I answered.

Already a glow had come all over my body, and this time it went down better than before. I looked at him and saw a warm misty haze in the room, and it was a full minute before I could make him out clear, standing almost the length of the room from me. My tongue felt thick in my mouth, and I had to make a great effort to speak at all.


“Old! Seven years old for a mule? Breaking up my team!” Oh, Zeb was fairly beside himself at this. He jumped up and down a couple of times and then flew out the door to the stable. I heard him hollering and banging down there, and a few minutes later I heard him coming back. I had just enough time to pick up the bottle and be pouring another drink when he walked back in.

“Give me that devil's brew!” he roared. He grabbed the bottle and flung it through the window, glass and all, and little pieces of glass tinkled onto the floor. Then he turned on me.

“Woman,” he says, “if you didn't have your specs on, I'd knock you right through that window after it.”

I reached up and pulled off my spectacles.

“Go ahead,” I says. “Knock.”

Zeb stood there with his fists clenched, glaring at me, his whole body trembling, while I held the specs in my hand and my face turned up to him for the blow. He gripped and ungripped his hands, and then he says to me, in a cold, dead kind of voice, he says, “Liza Martin, you are the meanest woman on earth.”

And he stomps over to the bureau and picks up each bottle and throws them through the broken window one at a time, and I hear them crash on rocks outside. Let me tell you, now, I have heard some mighty pretty music in my time. I have heard the sweetest singing in Tennessee, soprano, tenor and bass, and once I heard the pipe organ in one of the biggest churches in Nashville, and it made me want to faint with happiness. But no mortal man ever made more heavenly music than Zeb made then.

When Zeb had busted all the bottles
he turns to me and says in a choked-up voice, "When you sober up I want to talk to you." Then he stalks out of the house toward the stable, and I know that he's hitching Lou to the buggy to go over to Eph's for Emma and Bess.

Well, the strain was off and if I hadn't been tipsy I'd have cried, but as it was I went back of the house to a clump of bushes and set down on a big rock with my head between my knees and stuck my finger down my throat. I stayed there until I could hear Zeb coming up the road, and then I went in the house and washed my face in cold water like I had seen Zeb do after a drunk, and even though it wasn't yet dark I went to bed.

The next day Zeb didn't speak to me. I got up and fixed breakfast for him, and he went to the fields. He came in for dinner and I served him a good hot meal. He came in for supper and I gave him hot biscuits, ham and red gravy, beans and potatoes and coffee. Then we went to bed and laid side by side for a couple of hours, both awake, but not talking.

Then Zeb says, "Eph told me you didn't sell him Bess. Said he lent you the money."

"Well," I says, "maybe it wasn't exactly a sale. I don't know much about business. I left Bess with him for security."

"I gave him his money back," Zeb said. We laid there for a while and listened to crickets chirping all over the place. In her corner of the room Emma moved and mumbled something in her sleep, and then all was quiet except for the crickets and me and Zeb breathing.

"I can't quite figure you out, Liza," Zeb said, finally. "I know some of the answers, I guess. But what I can't figure out is whether you honest to God like the taste of liquor."

"I never thought I would," I said. "But I do. I reckon a taste for liquor runs in my family nearly as strong as it does in yours."

Zeb didn't say anything for a while, and I was afraid he had gone to sleep. But I didn't want him to go to sleep, not now. I breathed a little prayer to God that I would never have to taste another drop of the vile stinking stuff, and my stomach began to feel uneasy when I remembered the two hours I set on that rock with my finger rammed down my throat.

"It's not the taste so much as the feeling," I said. "It makes you feel like you don't have a care in the world. It's like floating on a cloud."

Zeb groaned. "That's what makes a drunkard."

Neither one of us said anything for a long time. Again I was afraid he might drop off to sleep, and there was something left unsettled that I felt had to
be settled there and then. I moved around in the bed, jolting Zeb so he would be awake.

"I've been thinking," Zeb said. "It's bad for a man to drink, but it's terrible for a woman."

"It is," I said. "I'll fight it. But I don't know how much good it will do. You know as well as I do that my grand-pappy Wilson was as big a drunkard as ever lived in Puckett County. The need to have a drink bust on me so quick, setting here lonesome with you gone the Lord knows where, I just went out of my senses almost. I don't hardly remember the things that happened."

"I guess we'll have to help each other," Zeb said.

I laid there in the dark and could feel the struggle that was going on inside him. It was like another person was in the room that Zeb was wrestling with, like Jacob wrestled with the angel, and I wanted to help him, but I knew that he would have to wrestle alone.

"Liza," he says in a low voice.

"Yes, Zeb," I says.

"If I promise to never touch another drop of liquor as long as I live, will you promise me the same thing? Do you think you can do it?"

I held my breath to keep from letting my joy spill out.

"If I tried hard enough," I says, "I reckon I could."

Well, neither of us ever broke our promise, though I reckon it was a lot harder for Zeb than it was for me. In a year or two we could laugh about him finding me tipsy, and a few years later, after he had joined up with the church, I told him the whole truth.

And like married folks will, when they love one another like Zeb and me, they hit upon a saying that may not mean a thing to somebody else who hears it, but means a lot to them.

So for 50 years that saying has been a bond between us, a reminder of how Zeb and me fought the devil and won. And ever so often in church, when the preacher describes the terrors of hell awaiting the drunkard, Zeb will take my hand in his own big rough one and whisper into my ear, "You're the meanest woman on earth." But if you should overhear him you can tell he is joking, for there's a quiet little twinkle in his eyes.

---

**NIGHT WATCH**

Outside the door,
Winter rages like a mad demon
The coals of the fire
hold off the night with a flaming crucifix
And the wind screams.

The mystery of darkness—
all of childhood's fears hide here.
In lurking shadows
shapeless phantoms taunt the living.
As death is endless night and solitude,
so is night death's mistress.

Strange how the house becomes alive
stirred from sleep by winter's chant.
Only the fire is real
But darkness woos her,
pulls her closer to its breast,
seizing her warmth with whispers,
leaves ashes.

Outside the door,
the night moves in.
Morning is yet a long time off.

Crouse Powell

---

**Gather Me**

Gather me like flowers
Fallen carelessly from
The hand of a child.
Gather me
In shattered fields
Where falls the rain
And blows the lonely wind.
Gather me
Like the fragments of winter ice
That sheath the ground
In frozen prisons.
Gather me
From inside your heart;
Take the pieces gently
From your soul.
If time will mend.
Someday, I'll be complete
Again.

Janice Hughes
The madness dances round me like a deep dark dream
Enticingly, jeeringly taunting in my face.

Ah, but I can brush it away like so much dust
accumulated over the ages on a dresser top

No one can say the same for you, my dear dead lady,
for all your glorious words of golden warmth

and though your inkspot words will last a decade
My joy will last brief moments --
Moths within a candle flame

With loveliness far greater than all the clock hands
forged upon Creation's span

Kathy Tempelmeyer Merritt
Don't Die In The Wintertime

In the steamy summertime of 1969, I went to hillbilly Hanson, Tenn., and saw broken-down, rusted-car-graveyard farms, toothless, beer-bellied rednecks and a soulful man of a preacher at the Lord's House Baptist Church.

I didn't and don't know anything at all about black folks (never had a black friend) or what they did or thought or felt, and being tired and hot from walking down the nameless road, I went inside, a coward.

Hot parking lot gravel crunches under polished too-tight Sunday shoes as, hats-in-hand, the black congregation (all black, poor black, lots-of-dogs and rib-sided-cow-on-a-limestone-farm blacks, the only kind of blacks I saw in Hanson hill country) moves through the squeaky hardwood hallway to the usual family-sits-together pews. Small, chewing-gum-restless boys squirm out of scale on the tall oaken bench, wanting to take off their red and white suffocating neckties and run outside and screw around, but Mama flashes "sit-still-and-act-like-your-sister" looks that settle them down fast.

Huge, ancient rafters, joined 50 feet over my head (maybe once a barn), have giant wasp nests clinging to their splintered sides, and I wonder if they'll fall on me.

And there I sit alone, White, scared, sitting on a chair near the door so I can jump up and run away if the quiet animosity becomes too great (or obvious, to my silly paranoia). There are no directed curses or hatred at poor, what's-goin-on? me, but I'm anyway awfully glad when the preacher (great, tall, God in his liquid brown eyes) strides to the dark pulpit and screams:

"Are you SINNERS?"

And I'm for the first time paralyzed by the words of a man.

"I said are you SINNERS?!"

The old elder cries, "Yes, brother, born in sin!"

"The Lord God said you would sin, said you would cheat, said you would lie, said you would kill ..."

He's rolling now, the edge of his booming Alabama-accent Sunday-morning-screaming-at-the-sinners voice cutting through the sweat and pain and hunger of the cheering crowd of worshipers.

A little girl with red socks and rubber-band pigtails just in front of me peeks over the back of the pew, eyes bulging like the old-time Negro comics', and I smile (wince) realizing that she's just as awed as I am at the growing insanity that I, watching the people, hear but don't comprehend without trying.

"Let's not your flight be in the winter, or on the Sabbath," says the preacher, while the congregation, jubilant after an hour of sacred sermon, replies with, "Yeeah," "Hallelujah," "Say it, brother," "Weeewell," and other shouts lost in the confusing excitement that somehow gets louder and louder and faster until I'm drowning, reeling, crying in the muggy, wet thickness of the ATMOSPHERE. Then--

"BROTHERS!!" (A pause, subdued.)

"Let us pray."

I bow my head but gaze through squinted eyes at a not-bad-looking middle-aged lady with a soggy sentimental tear, a spirit tear, holy tear on her cheek, quick wiped away as the prayer ends and the singing begins.

The ragged, rinky-dink, should-be-playing-blues-in-a-bar piano cranks up, and every voice in the house attacks the first verse of "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder." I grin at the pure earthiness, at the pure joy of the sound, and try to sing along -- not knowing the words, but grinning still.

Next comes the closing prayer (I wish they would sing some more!), but the service is over and it's hand-shaking, thank-the-preacher time, time for me to creep out and start walking down the road again.

It's hotter than ever, and I start to feel sorta sad about those cheated, sinned-against folks who come gladly to church to confess their meager sins that couldn't be much, when a black '59 Ford pick-up stops and the old elder motions me quietly into the back. Lurching and bumping, we slowly drive the last six miles to the new-car, station-wagon gleam of U.S. 41, and say goodbye with a smile.
Drawing by Larry Reynolds
SOAP OPERA

"Do you have change for a dollar?" the young man asked the young woman at the adjoining washing machine in the laundromat.

"No!" was her emphatic reply.

Perhaps it was his aggressive manner that brought the cuteness or perhaps it was the fact that he had asked her if he could borrow bleach after he had asked her if he could borrow detergent.

Warren came to the laundromat without change, detergent or bleach, and if it would not have been too conspicuous, he would have left his dirty clothes at home.

Warren liked laundromats; he regularly visited them. Unlike many young bachelors, he always had an abundant supply of clean clothes. In fact, he sometimes had to dig deeply to respectably fill a laundry basket.

"Do you put the conditioner in before or after the wash cycle?" Warren asked the young woman, who had red hair. Warren was persistent.

The young woman, who had just finished loading the machine, said "after," picked up her laundry basket and walked out the laundromat door to her car.

"She'll be back," Warren thought. Warren was also a pragmatist.

It had been for almost a year now that Warren had been frequenting laundromats. He had, of course, used the services of laundromats since he left home for college, but it was almost a year since he had seen the true potential of a laundromat.

**

She was just a normal looking girl, nothing really special, and Warren had just come in to wash his underwear and socks -- hardly a romantic endeavor. In those days he brought change and detergent and was well-enough acquainted with the operation of a washing machine to know the difference between the wash and rinse cycles.

Warren never really sensed the laundromat until the night she came in. It was late, 2 a.m. perhaps, and he had been studying for an exam and decided to get double use of his time.

She came in with a small bundle of clothes. He couldn't even remember what all she had now, not that he was a fetishist or anything, but he was always interested in what people brought with them. He remembered one middle-aged woman who always brought in a red dress. He was sure she owned more than that, but that was all she ever brought. Sometimes he thought about asking her the significance of the dress, but that was her business, he decided.

***

It was an important test, and Warren had been more concerned with the organization of the French government, at first, than with the young lady. They were the only two people in the laundromat at the time; and when she passed by him to go to the detergent dispenser, he looked up and smiled.

She was moderately tall and slender, with long brown hair. She wore jeans and a knit top and the motion of her small breasts showed no encumbrance of a bra. Warren's interest in French government had begun to diminish. Warren was not shy, but he always had a difficult time beginning conversations. He hated corny lines, and he could never think of original ones. Perhaps this time he should try...

He suddenly noticed that the girl was pulling the selector lever and trying to get a box out of the dispenser. He grasped the moment.

"Excuse me, but the handle's on the side." The young woman turned around, somewhat embarrassed, and looked to the side to see the handle. She reached for it, but still couldn't figure out the operation of the device. Warren, with a certain degree of aplomb, took the handle, turned it properly and the detergent came out of the slot.

"It's a frequent mistake," he said. "They don't make the directions very clear." Warren later learned that his ad lib was more correct than he then
knew. Trouble with the detergent dis-
penser usually marked a laundromat
newcomer. She reached for the small
box of "Tide."

"Thank you" was all she said; she
walked over to a washing machine
and began loading her clothes.

"Well, I blew that one," he thought
as he returned to his chair to study,
but he kept an eye on the girl. He
noticed that she put the entire box of
detergent in the front-loader, and then
he began to look around the room for
a mop.

It took a few minutes, but it was
soon "high tide" as the cleansing suds
began to escape from the front of the
machine. The girl had begun reading
a "romance" magazine, and Warren
thought he would wait to see her reaction.

She initially didn't notice the suds,
but then she suddenly bolted from the
chair toward the machine. Her arms
waved in the air as she tried to grasp
something, but she didn't know what
to grasp.

Warren went for the mop as soon as
he saw her register the mistake. He
was already mopping by the time she
realized he was next to her. She again
seemed embarrassed and a little angry
now, but Warren just mopped and smiled.

"I suppose you realize I'm new at
this," she said finally.

"It could have been worse," Warren
said, trying to reassure her. That was
an understatement, he knew now. One
young launderer put half of a regular-
sized box into a machine. It was a mass
bubble bath for an hour, he remembered.

She watched, again silent, as he cleaned
up the overflow. "You'll probably want
to put these clothes through another time
to get all the soap out," he told her.

"That's a good idea, thank you." She
finally smiled. "I really do appreciate
all your help." She walked back to her
chair and her magazine.

Warren put the mop back in the utility
closet and walked over to her chair.
"Can I buy you a Coke?"

"No, thank you," she said in a friendly
enough manner.

Warren was getting inspired. "It'll be
a few minutes before our clothes are
ready. Why don't we go get a cup of
coffee? There's a place near here . . ."

"I appreciate your offer," she said,
smiling. "and I appreciate all your help,
but I think I'll stay here; I don't want
any more laundry accidents."

Warren decided not to persist, mut-
tered an "OK" and went back to his
book. His clothes were soon ready for
the dryer, and as he went to the machine
to unload, he noticed the girl watching
him. She got up and came over beside
him. "Do you mind if I watch? As I
said, I don't want to make any more
mistakes."

Warren was pleased. He opened the
door of the machine and threw the mix-
ture of socks and jockey shorts into a
cart. He supposed she had seen men's
underwear before; if she hadn't, she
looked old enough. He rolled the cart
over to the dryer and threw the wet
masses inside. "You put your dimes
into this slot," he pointed, "and turn
this knob. The more dimes, the longer
it stays on; there's nothing to it."

She observed the procedure silently.
She again said "thank you," but this
time she followed him over to the table
where he was studying, and he scrambled
to get her a seat.

"Do you go to the university?" she
asked.

He was tempted to be sarcastic with
his answer, but he decided not to press
his luck. "Yes, I'm a junior."

"What are you studying?"

"Political science," he answered as
he tried to think of ways to reverse
the flow of the conversation. She was
obviously college age, but he had never
seen her at the university.

"Are you a student?"

"No, I'm a secretary. Do you come
to the laundromat often?" she asked,
obviously trying to change the subject.

"About once every other week or 50,000
socks, whichever comes first." If all
else fails, try humor, he thought.

She coughed and laughed politely. "I
suppose you meet interesting people in
a laundromat."

At that point she had been the first,
Warren thought. There had been a lot
of nameless girls and, of course,
"Brother Sam." ***

Warren first met Sam Arnold when the
middle-aged black man asked him what
a word meant in a book he was reading.
Warren had told him the definition, and he had written it in the margin. Warren couldn't remember now what the word even was.

Arnold or "Brother Sam" as he liked people to call him was a minister, and since he had limited formal and theological education, his church's printing house provided him with study guides and books to help him in his work and in preparing sermons.

Brother Sam's church was a poor one, and it couldn't supply him with all the money needed to provide for his family. He had to work at a factory to supplement his income, which didn't leave much time for study.

Whenever Warren went to the laundromat near the university on Saturday night, he saw Brother Sam studying while his wife did the family's laundry. "She and I don't always have much time together," he once told Warren.

***

Warren couldn't remember all his conversation with HER. They mostly discussed his interests and future plans. He tried, to no avail, to find out more about her. She did not wear a wedding ring -- so he assumed she was single but that did not necessarily mean she was unattached.

***

He had always been rather lonely, had dated a few girls, but he had never "gone steady" when that was the vogue, nor had he "shacked up" as in the newer vogue.

No virgin was he, or at least he would pride himself on that one night with the girl he met that summer. She had been visiting friends of his parents, and they had arranged the first date. Warren had often thought he would have had more blind dates, if they had been like her.

She had been very attractive, and by the second date, he was prepared for his first trip to the filling station. His opportunity had come when his parents' friends had to leave town on an emergency, and she had come to stay at his house. She had been given the key to the friends' house, and their date to the movies ended up in the master bedroom. Warren had enjoyed the evening, to say the least, but she seemed rather bored, he remembered. She had
left the next week.

It wasn't that Warren hadn't met the right girls or had the opportunity. Something always came up, either with him or her, to prevent the consummation. Warren hadn't wanted to lay the girl in the laundromat, he had just wanted to get to know her, and if things happened... they happened.

***

BAM! Warren looked around. A car door slammed. It was "Red" returning to check her laundry. She came in, opened the machine and filled her basket. "I hope she sticks around to dry it," Warren thought.

Red looked at him and for a moment seemed indecisive, then she walked over to a dryer and began to throw the clothes into it. "Have you separated your cotton and synthetic fabrics?" he asked as he walked toward her.

"What?"

"Have you separated your cotton and synthetic fabrics? They require two different heat settings."

"Listen, buddy, I don't need your help. I apparently knew more about washing than you did, so don't tell me you're an expert on drying." Warren had forgotten that he had been playing "laundromat dumb." He silently went to put his own laundry in the dryer.

***

He helped HER put her laundry in the dryer after she washed it twice to get out the soap. He began to get desperate; his laundry would soon be dry, and he still did not know who she was or if she might be interested in going out. He decided to try the direct approach again.

"Our stuff will be through in a little while. Are you sure you don't want to join me in a late supper... or early breakfast?"

She smiled, "You've been very helpful, but I don't think so, not this time."

"This time." He turned the phrase over in his mind. Did that mean there would be a next time, he asked himself.

"Sure," he said, "and by the way, my name is Warren."

"I'm Jean," she said. "Your stuff should be ready now."

He spent all this time with her and all he knew was her first name and that she was a secretary. "My name is Warren Adams." He tried again.

"I'm Jean Jones," she said as she walked over to the dryer with his clothes in it. She was right. His laundry was finished -- dry and everything. How could he stall?

"Can I help you take your laundry out to the car when it's finished?" he finally asked.

"I brought it in without too much difficulty. I think I can get it out," she said, seeming to get edgy. He decided he had better let it go. He dumped his socks and shorts into a pillow case.

"It was nice talking with you," he said as he gathered up his books and notes. "See you 'round."

"Bye."

He walked toward the door slowly and turned as he reached it. Her eyes were transfixed on the revolving blouses and bras. He continued to watch her as he crossed the street to go back to his room.

***

"Are you some kind of a pervert?" The voice was Red's, and it was angry now. The other people in the laundromat turned around to look at Warren, whose gaze had become fixed on the bras and panties leaping around inside the dryer.

"If you don't leave me alone, I'm going to call the police, buddy!" Warren wasn't used to this type of treatment.

"I'm--I'm sorry, excuse me." Warren was embarrassed. Usually the girls who weren't interested--that having proven to be a majority--ignored him, and he left well enough alone. But he had been thinking about HER.

Warren slouched down in his chair, almost trying to hide. There was one other time he had been very embarrassed in the laundromat, he remembered.

***

She had been a young woman, in her early 30's--attractive enough and no sign of a wedding ring. He had thought he would just start a conversation. He had started by asking her for change. She had given him the change for the dollar, and then she had asked him, "Are you saved?"

Warren had made the grave error of saying, "I don't know." She did: He wasn't.

She had harangued him for 45 minutes through the wash and rinse cycles...
and in and out of the dryer. As he threw his jockey shorts in his pillow case, she had told him about "judgment day," and as he tried to get out of the laundromat past her, she had told him about the "fires of Hell."

Warren never saw her again after, but then he never saw HER again either. ***

He had made a feeble attempt to find her, but he couldn't really imagine calling her, if he had found her, and saying, "Remember me? I mopped up your suds."

He had come every night for the first two weeks, but she never showed up. His socks became threadbare as he continually washed them, and he had finally decided it was hopeless. He had noticed, however, that a new girl came in every other night--a girl he hadn't met.

***

The laundromat was empty now except for Warren and Red, and he was afraid to say anything else to her. She eventually retrieved her dried clothes and left. Warren soon followed. "Maybe Sunday," he thought, going to his car. "I'll come later. I came too early today. Maybe I should try another laundromat. I'm already a regular at three."

Warren was sitting in his car getting ready to leave, when a car pulled up beside him, and he saw a pretty blonde get out, grab a basket of laundry and go into the laundromat.

He looked across the seat at the clean pillow case and sighed. He then took his car keys, got out, went to the back of the car and opened the trunk. He took out a gray-white bundle.

Warren always carried a reserve.

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Love lives in crystal
firmly entwined
with bands, golden and bright
And stays with those
who know their soul
and live for each other's light

Bob Ferry

---

Shelter

Down along the cold, churning path,
there sat a stump
with my initials engraved
in its need-to-be
magnificence.

For years,
that was my stump.
Answering to my expectations,
and being there
whenever I went by.

I'd sit there and
rest a while.
Remembering my property's
past,
dreading its almost
certain future.

I would dream of
the crystallized
winters
and steaming summer
days
when both the stump
and I were sheltered
by its massive
crown.

Today my stump
is gone.
In its place is
a hole
filled with water --
breeding mosquitoes.
My memory is now
enough to see
me through,
and I sit, remembering
the days
when things were
good.

Don Ellis
CONCERTS
We all gather, the faithful, to sit and worship in our own special way, the idols that we have shelled out $5 or $6 (or in Elvis’ case, $10), fought the crowds and parking to get to our seats. We wait for the lights to go down and the music to engulf us, taking us on a cosmic trip or making us get lost in the words and rhymes of the particular entertainer. We come to share a common love with our entertainer, that of music.
VINCE VANCE
AND THE VALIANTS
NITTY Gritty DIRT BAND
Kentucky Bound

“Bluegrass music will set you free,” declares the bumper sticker on a blue Volkswagen as it rumbles down the Cosby exit of Interstate 40 en route to James Monroe’s second annual Bluegrass Festival at Kineaulista Farm.

It is Friday, June 30, and before the holiday weekend is over more than 5,000 bluegrass enthusiasts from as far away as Canada will have converged on M.M. Bullard’s mountain-top farm to hear “their” music. Some of the best fiddlers and mandolin and guitar pickers in the country are there to blend their talents in the music called bluegrass.

Mac Wiseman, Ralph Stanley, Lester Flatt and the Nashville Grass, and Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys are a few of the big names that will appear, along with a host of other good musicians.

All day Friday, people trickle in to the farm, paying several dollars a day to camp and listen to the music. Some of the fancy travel vehicles have trouble in the muddy fields set aside for camping. The pick-ups and VWs loaded with tents fare better, but everyone manages to stake out an area. It is not yet crowded.

The people who pile out of the campers and cars are as varied as the vehicles that bring them. A fellow who works on the line at the Ford glass plant in Nashville pulls his modest pick-up camper into a clear space, and the family piles out. Next to them are freaks from Knoxville who some might think are anticipating a rock festival. They aren’t. Everyone is here for bluegrass.

Diversity is also apparent at Nashville’s three main bluegrass clubs. Earl Snead’s Bluegrass Inn off 20th Avenue in the Vanderbilt area caters to the campus crowd. A typical weekend audience there is heavy on frats and newcomers to bluegrass who like to holler a lot. “Foggy Mountain Breakdown,” “Fox on the Run” and “Salty Dog Blues” are usually yelled out as requests countless times during the night.

The Old Time Pickin’ Parlor at the corner of Second Avenue and Broadway usually has a quieter crowd that’s willing to pay a buck over charge. Respected musicians such as Charlie Collins and Norman Blake often play to small crowds Wednesday and Thursday nights and drop by on weekends for midnight sets with the house band, the Misty Mountain Boys.

Across from the National Casket Co. on Woodland Street, Dusty Rhodes is a small tavern catering to a lot of bluegrass regulars. It’s more a neighborhood place where you can drop by to drink a beer after the Pickin’ Parlor closes as long as you’re not in a hollering and screaming mood. Good musicians who don’t play regularly with a group often jam there.

What is the strong attraction of bluegrass for so many different people? “It has a lot of what I call ‘folk’ in it. You have to be a good musician to play good bluegrass,” says a Pickin’ Parlor regular. “It’s not as easy as some folks think.”

The coordination of the most common instruments in the bluegrass group—guitar, banjo, fiddle and mandolin—isn’t easy. All these instruments are in continual reaction and the singing—usually high pitched, often a piercing falsetto—is a combination of voices into two, three and four parts. Though good bluegrass is not easy to play, more than musical expertise brings its devotees together.

Developing to its present form in the 1930s and 1940s, bluegrass music has deep roots in the folk tradition of the Appalachians. Many of the old fiddle tunes that have echoed for generations in the mountain hollers have become bluegrass favorites. Bill Monroe, who

by Larry Harrington

MAY 1974
is often credited with popularizing the bluegrass style, gives much credit for his musical development to an old-time fiddler, Uncle Pen. Monroe lived with the fiddler as a youth, accompanying him on a guitar when they played at dances in the hills around Rosine, Ky.

Not only the tunes, but the words, of bluegrass songs are influenced by the American folk tradition. They deal with love, death, hate and religion, the emotions of man. The 20th Century development of this music is marked not only by the influence of Negro blues, but also by the manner in which song texts handle these common emotional themes.

“Roane County Prison,” an old-time bluegrass favorite, has many characteristics of a traditional American ballad. Sung in first person, it is the story of a Roane County boy named Willie who is stabbed “for some unknown reason” by his new bride’s brother. Three months later, Willie kills his brother-in-law. He is captured and put on trial in Kingston. “Not a man in that county will speak up for him, so the jury sentences Willie to ‘a hard life in prison.’

In the scorching hot sand of the foundry I’m working,

Toiling and working my poor life away,

They’ll measure my grave on the banks of Old Cumberland.

As soon as I’ve finished the rest of my days.

Virtually all bluegrass songs express nostalgia for the rural mountain life. No matter what the theme, eyes are always turned toward the hills.

Love is often expressed toward a girl back home, as in “My Little Girl in Tennessee.”

Remorse over a lost love seeks comfort in “Cora Is Gone.”

And there are parents waiting in a little cabin as well as an old love on the next farm in “I’m Kentuck Bound.”

Or as in another Bill Monroe favor-
ite, "There's a bluebird singing in the Blue Ridge Mountains," calling the singer back home.

The sad desire to be back up in the hills and recollections of the lost happy times are almost constant themes of bluegrass music. More than 80 per cent of the bluegrass musicians have their roots in Appalachia, L. Mayne Smith claims in an article in the "Journal of American Folklore."

More important, these people are transplants to the city, and the emotions expressed in the songs they sing are common among people forced by industrialization, the Depression and World War II to move from the hills of Tennessee and Kentucky to Nashville and Cincinnati.

"I moved to Cincinnati to get work, and I did... worked right on through the war," said a graying man who watched the sun set over Kineauvista Farm while his wife cooked dinner inside the camper. "But I'm fixin' to retire and try to buy a fiddle moaned an ancient tune.

But bluegrass music also attracts young people whose roots go no deeper than the bermuda grass of suburbia. Maybe for them the music is an expression of yearning for something they never had rather than for something they have lost.

For young and old, the music at Kineauvista, on stage and around the campfires that dot the hillside, is part of a search for a quality of life that has been lost in the complexity of this century. It is a search for freedom, the freedom of a "bluebird singing in a little farm near where I was raised. I had to leave Kentucky when I was young. Couldn't make a livin' up in the hills back then, but Cincinnati's so dirty and I don't have to work anymore..." His voice trailed off as he stared across the haze of several campfires; somewhere in the distance the mountains."

Photos by: Tim Hamilton
Cherry Berries?
Where would you go if you wanted a cherry berry or to ride on the runaway Dahlonega Mine Train or to see television’s H.R. Pufnstuf.

Simply take Interstate 20 west out of Atlanta. It only takes about 10 minutes until you arrive at the place where you can see all these things. This magical spot is Six Flags Over Georgia.

For the price of one admission ticket ($6.50), you can travel back into Georgia history and relive the six separate times that the state has been under different flags. The theme areas in the park are British, French, Spanish, Confederate, State of Georgia and, last but not least, the United States.

These areas are interwoven in 200-plus acres of Georgia land. Each period in Georgia’s past has been recaptured through rides, shops, architecture, landscape, musical shows and costumes.

Classified as “a historically themed family entertainment center,” Six Flags has been visited by 9.1 million people since it opened in 1967.

Once inside the park, guests are greeted by “Papa Bear,” “Mr. Rabbit” and “H. R. Pufnstuf” as they walk through the park.

Among the approximately 80 rides and other attractions is a log flume, which carries passengers around a winding route and then swooshes down a waterfall into a pool 30 feet below. A runaway mine train, the Dahlonega, carries willing adventurers down treacherous rails through the park woods at breathtaking speeds.

The Jean Ribault Riverboat follows the adventures of French explorer Ribault, who, according to legend, disappeared while searching for gold along a Georgia river.

In the “Pet-a-Pet” section of the park, children -- as well as adults -- can pet rabbits, puppies and a real live llama.

Six Flags recruits 1,800 young people from throughout the South to serve as hosts and hostesses around the spanking clean park.

by Nancy Nipper

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These people also take part in the professional review that is staged at the Ante-Bellum Crystal Pistol Music Hall. It lasts 30 minutes so that weary visitors may have a rest.

At Six Flags there is a blend of the modern and the traditional. For example, one can see a rock band, sporty racing cars and sky hook as well as eat southern fried chicken in the USA section.

Indeed, there is a blend of the old and new at the unique park. You can travel by every mode of transportation that man has invented, including a Flying Jenny, the log flume, steam engines, cable cars, antique cars, a boat and a basket that ascends 100 feet into the air to view the panoramic park.

Adding this year is a themed section, "The Cotton States Exposition of 1895." Besides adding 10 acres to the park, in 1895. The section boasts of having this section pays tribute to the exposition held in Atlanta’s Piedmont Park the "tallest, longest and fastest roller coaster in the United States." Called the Great American Scream Machine, it stands 105 feet in the air and extends two-thirds of a mile in length.

In addition to this spectacular ride, Six Flags has one of the three five-abreast carrousels in the world. More than 26,000 man-hours went into restoring the ride to its former grandeur.

Puppets are an integral part of the atmosphere at the park. Well-known puppeteers Sid and Marty Kroft have created some especially for the park, and these puppets complement the already famous creations that also are on hand.

So if you want to have a unique day exploring Georgia’s past, you can visit Six Flags from now through Dec. 1. What’s a cherry berry? You’ll find out.

Photos by: Linda Sissom
Vassar Clements: The Man Behind The Music

by Crouse Powell

Vassar Clements leaned back onto the couch and carefully tindered the tobacco in his brown-stained brier pipe. He studied the smoke for a moment before he spoke.

"I was in school in Kissimmee, Florida," he reminisced. "Every time Bill (Monroe) would come to town, I'd follow him around. His band would come and go to all the bars, and I'd have to wait outside until they came out. At first, I was playing guitar and he tried to get me to come to Nashville when I was eleven. But my mother wouldn't let me quit school."

One hazy March afternoon, we were sitting in the downstairs den of the Clements' comfortable home in Hermitage, Tenn. Vassar's wife, Millie, was sitting across the room patiently knitting while listening to our conversation. On the warmly paneled walls hung an old violin, a banjo, a worn-out acoustic guitar with the strings missing and several fiddles, one of which had wax flowers inside it, the result of Millie's daring eye for home decoration.

It's hard to call Vassar by anything but his first name. When I first met him backstage before the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band concert at MTSU, I think I called him "Mr. Clements," but after I started talking to him, formalities seemed unnecessary, almost out of place.

Vassar was talking about his Flo-
nd childhood, and how he became a fiddle player instead of a guitarist.

"At the start, it was me and my two cousins. Me and one of ’em just about lived together; we wore the same size clothes, shoes and everything. In fact, his name is Vassar Carroll and mine is Vassar Carlton. The other one was his brother, Gerald.

"We must have loved music even then, because we used to pick up sticks and make out like we was playing.

"Somehow, we had it figured out who was going to play what. The tall, skinny guy was supposed to play the fiddle and the short guy played the guitar. We had never seen nobody. It was just something in a kid’s head, I guess." Vassar shifted in his seat and paused to tap out the pipe.

"Anyway, the one who was playing
fiddle—or trying to—said his girl didn't want to play fiddle. Me and Gerald—we were playing guitar—we didn't want to play fiddle. We loved to hear it, but . . . ," he shrugged his shoulders. "It was left up to one of us. I learned the first time, which was 'Rubber Dolly,' I think.

"One day Gerald came up to me and said, 'Well, I guess you're elected.' From then on out, I was the fiddle player.

Vassar has come a long way since "Rubber Dolly." One of the most sought after session musicians in the country, he has played virtually every music from bluegrass to rock and classical.

Though his main instrument is fiddle (a 237-year-old violin that once belonged to Roy Acuff), Vassar also plays guitar, bass, mandolin, tenor banjo, cello and violin.

Vassar is an improvisor, and has an approach to music that tends to escape the traditional. On the album "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," he became famous for his off-beat version of "Orange Blossom Special," the song he learned in the late thirties after he was "elected" to play fiddle.

The "Circle" album began his rise to fame. "I never really got to do what I
wanted until then," he said. "'Circle,' John Hartford and Earl Scruggs—those three let me. Everybody else said I was too far out."

Indeed, I thought. That may be the attraction that brings performers like Danny Davis, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and the Grateful Dead to his door with contracts and record offers.

"I think he would sleep with that thing if I'd let him," Millie said as she pointed a knitting needle at the fiddle laying across the room.

Millie, who is Vassar's second wife, told me, "I'm his greatest admirer and his sharpest critic." She also handles his club and concert dates, as Vassar tends to get rather confused with the business side of his career.

"Millie is the pusher," he grinned. "She just points me in the right direction and tells me where to go."

The conversation turned to the recent upswing in traditional music that has swept the country.

"It started in the colleges, with the kids who buy the records. It became kind of a fad like fold used to be, which is the basis for all music, I guess."

"They are really studying it. They've
told me things about myself that I didn't even know. What kind of guitar I used to play, you know, and...” He trailed off, looking slightly uncomfortable. “It scares me sometimes, they know so much.”

Despite his intense following, Vassar remains unfazed by success. He is basically a family man, and likes to spend as much of his time at home as possible.

“I don't see how anybody in his right mind could change just because he is successful. A little bit of money shouldn't make them different.”

It hasn’t changed Vassar Clements. The boy who followed Bill Monroe’s band from bar to bar and listened to the Opry on Saturday nights is much similar to the man who has mastered his trade. When he picked up his fiddle that afternoon, his eagerness and excitement seemed to fill the room as he played, and I could almost see the trees swaying in the Florida breeze, keeping time to the soft throb of the music...
about the authors

- Crouse Powell, author of “Vassar Clements: The Man Behind the Music,” is a freshman mass communications major at MTSU. He wrote the feature upon meeting Clements after a concert of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band at MTSU.

- Nancy Nipper, COLLAGE feature editor, is the author of “Cherry Berries,” a feature on the Six Flags Over Georgia amusement park. Nipper is a mass communications major and has been appointed as 1974-’75 Midlander editor.

- Larry Harrington is an international relations major at MTSU. Harrington, the author of the feature “Kentucky Bound,” was Sidelines editor in the fall of 1973. His last COLLAGE feature appeared in the May of 1973 Special Edition.

- Randy O'Brien is a sophomore English major at MTSU. His short story, “Noontime Shadows,” began as a dream, literally. O’Brien wrote his story through his agent in New York before submitting it to COLLAGE. O’Brien has also published two pages of poems in Winter’s Half, an anthology of U.S. collegiate poems published by J. Elliot, from which he receives a small royalty.

- Jim Leonhirth of Murphysboro, is an alumnus of MTSU. The author of the short story “Soap Opera” was Sidelines editor in both the summer of 1970 and the fall of 1971. Leonhirth served also as production supervisor for both COLLAGE and Sidelines in 1972-’73. He has been assistant editor of the Democrat Union in Lawrenceburg. Leonhirth is, currently, a reporter for the Daily News Journal.

- Mel Davenport, author of “Don’t Die In The Wintertime,” is a Nashville junior. Davenport is an English major. Although he has written other prose and poetry works, this is his first to be submitted to COLLAGE.

- Ralph W. Hyde is a faculty member of the English department at MTSU. Past popular writings for COLLAGE include his “Looking Back: A Reflection,” and “The Greatest Potato Growing Area in the World.” “The Meanest Woman on Earth,” of this issue, is a very natural, smoothly flowing narrative set in the 1910 South.

- John W. Alexander received his B.A. from MTSU in 1971. The author of the Focus essay, “Freud, Frogs and Phantasmagoria...” holds a Robert Browning Assistantship at Baylor University where he is currently working on his M.A. in English.

- Co-author of the “Freud, Frogs and Phantasmagoria...” essay is, Susan Belasco, a graduate of Baylor University. Belasco is a graduate assistant in English working on her M.A.

- “Concerts,” a photo essay compiled by COLLAGE photography editor, Linda Sismon, is a composite study of photos by the following MTSU students: Fred Carr, an elementary education major from Chattanooga; Tim Hamilton, sophomore mass communications major; Bill Muehlbauer, photography student; Steve Crass, assistant photography editor for COLLAGE; and “Sugar Bear” Larry Reynolds, art editor for COLLAGE.
The full-color cover, a first for COLLAGE, is a photograph by Mike Freeman, an art and history major at MTSU. He is currently employed by Delbridge Studios as a photographer. Freeman's composition of Elvis Presley is from a two-and-a-quarter negative taken with a Hasselblad on high speed, ektachrome, tungsten film.