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### The Little Balkans Review, Summer 1981

Gene DeGruson

Shelby Horn

Steve Robbins

Ted Watts

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The  
**Little Balkans Review**

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A Southeast Kansas Literary and Graphics Quarterly

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Vol. 1 No. 4

Summer 1981

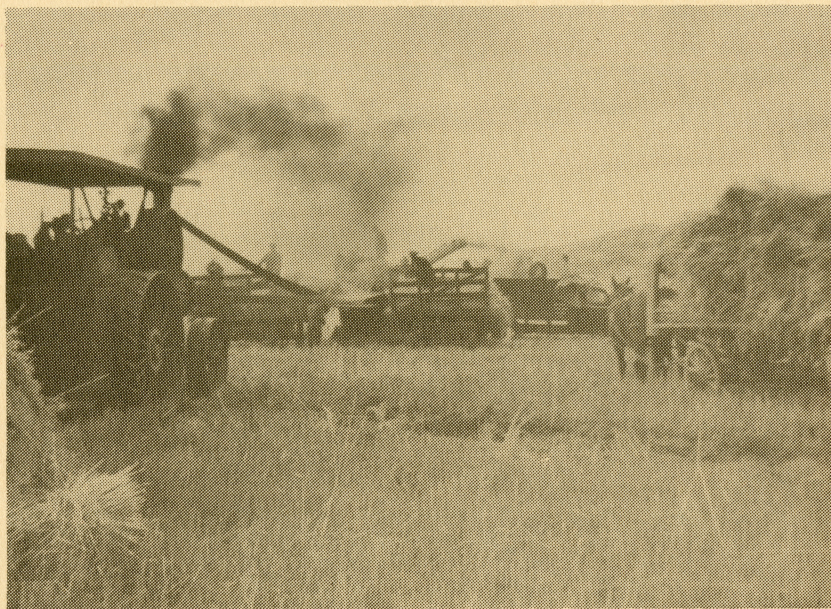
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**Dr. Eva Jessye**  
Musician  
Coffeyville, Kansas



Summer



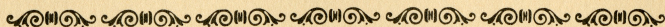
1920's

Photographer unknown



1980's

Bob Crowell, photographer





# The Little Balkans Review

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A Southeast Kansas Literary and Graphics Quarterly

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Vol. 1, No. 4



Gene DeGruson, Poetry Editor  
Shelby Horn, Non-Fiction Editor  
Steve Robbins, Fiction Editor  
Ted Watts, Art and Graphics Editor

All glory comes from daring to begin.--Eugene F. Ware

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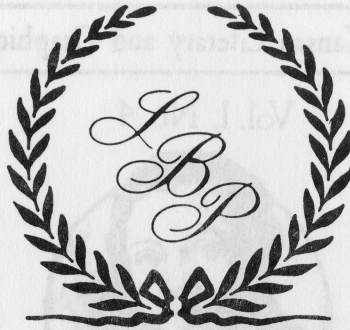
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601 Grandview Heights Terrace  
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762

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Summer 1981



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The  
**Little Balkans Review**

A Southeast Kansas Literary and Graphics Quarterly

**Vol. 1, No. 4**

**Summer 1981**

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## Preface

Ask a man on the street in Anytown, U.S.A., to play a game of word association, say "Kansas," and he probably will reply, "wheatfields" or "wheat." To recognize the importance of the wheat crop and the labor of those who produce it, we begin this issue with photographs, old and new, of harvests in Southeast Kansas. A photo study by Rosalee Mosburg, appearing later in the issue, adds personality to this recognition.

Our cover article cites a Southeast Kansan who has savored the fruits of many summers. Upon learning that Dr. Eva Jessye, artist-in-residence at Pittsburg State University, was retiring from that position, we expedited publication of Gladys Mundt's article and delayed our scheduled feature on novelist Harold Bell Wright. To complement the article, we include a recent pen and ink portrait of Dr. Jessye by Rod Dutton and a poem by Dr. Jessye herself, "A Bag of Peanuts."

Family and family life are at the core of "Food," our third installment of Zula Bennington Greene's autobiography. On the family farm, summer was a season for watching things grow. In "Food," we not only experience with the author the growth of things edible, plant and animal, but glimpse again the growing years of the writer, whose words transport the reader to an earlier place and time. Without city conveniences, doubtlessly the farm mother learned to sooth aches, prevent infections, and heal the wounds of her offspring by practicing her own brand of medicine. Although living less remotely than Margaret Bennington, an Oswego contemporary, Carrie Johnson, kept her family healthy through the use of various home remedies. The most interesting were generously provided by her son, Richard, for publication in this issue. They will evoke memories for many of our readers—not altogether unpleasant memories, we trust.

Completing nonfiction for this issue is Betty Vequist's "Andrew Carnegie's Tear-Rusted, Blood-Stained Gift," in which the author shows that the late industrialist's seemingly magnanimous library grants were not universally well received. The particular subject is Pittsburg's public library, an architecturally interesting structure, now on The National Register of Historic Landmarks, standing at the corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets.

The variety of summer is reflected in our diverse array of poems. Perhaps the most seasonal are Denise Low's "Snakes" and Mary Holstine Gray's "A Fisherwoman's Tale." "Snakes," with words as fluid as the movement of its subject, succinctly—perhaps chillingly—creates visions of those slithery creatures of the summer. Gray's poem is no "fish tale," but, for those honest enough to admit it, depicts the average fisherman's true experience.

Though they all do not deal directly with season, the out-of-doors is woven through "Settlers" and "Native Stone," by Barbara Shirk Parish, as well as through Anita Heistand's "Guardians," Steven Hind's "Good Morning," Eric McCollum's "Miles from Town," and "On A Day When I Realized Thoreau Wasn't Enough," by Al Ortolani. "Prairie Summer," by Michael Smetzer, is, of course, aptly titled.

Two poems both describe and lament present conditions—either personal, economic, or social, or all three. Playwright William Gibson's "Short Story" concerns a personal situation to which the narrator is resigned, while Dorothy Randolph's "Coué Revisited," decries changes in society over which we personally have little or no control. Laura Stahl's tender "Cancer in Pisces" deals with one of the most dreaded personal conditions, but emotes a reluctant acceptance of the inevitable.

Photographs in this issue need little introduction or description. In addition to those previously mentioned, we present a center spread by Mike Gullett of Parsons, whose work has often caught the eye of **Parsons Sun** subscribers. We feel that these selections, in particular, are visually representative of the Little Balkans. One, of grasshoppers shading themselves beneath a barbwire strand, illustrates how the eye and lens of this young photographer transform the commonplace into art.

Past becomes present through vintage photographs, "Santa Fe Day Parade" and "Lizzie Van Duker." From the running board of a (now) antique auto, Miss Van Duker lazily dips her hand into a stream, representing still the essence of carefree summer bathers.

Fiction includes C. Robert Haywood's "Summer of 1931" and "Grackle's Ascension," by Michael Smetzer, already mentioned as a poetry contributor. Haywood's first-person character relives an important summer in his life, one in which he narrowly misses success. He ponders the workings of an imagined fate that hovers about him like a cloud and causes his plans and efforts to always fall short. The characters in "Grackle's Ascension" face a similarly fateful but existent cloud—a summer tornado. One character, through madness, sees the tornado as the unavoidable summons of God, and his words become a self-fulfilling prophesy of his own violent demise.

Some contributions to the **LBR** do not fit neatly into one of our descriptive categories (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, art and graphics), but relate well to two or more. Patty Kuhel's Lebanese folktale readily comes to mind, and perhaps R. Stephen Russell's picture-poem, "Places to Touch You," is deserving of its own special category, one in which fantasy plays a large part. Another unique entry, Ursula LeGuin's "The Prince of Kansas," is nonfiction, but relates to her science fiction novel, **City of Illusions**. We find it unusual that our state should be mentioned as a science fiction setting—one imagines ethereal regions with monstrous nonhuman inhabitants—but think it fitting that Kansas should become, in a LeGuin story, the domain of a benevolent mythical Prince. In a sketch opposite Mrs. LeGuin's essay, Ted Watts, art and graphics editor, provides his interpretation of that great being's dark countenance.

Dr. Joyce Moyer's article on the Kansas years of Harold Bell Wright will appear in our next issue. Zula Bennington Greene's autobiography will continue, and the noted playwright, William Gibson (**The Miracle Worker**, **Two for the Seesaw**, etc.), has submitted poetry. We shall again attempt to provide the variety of material for which we are becoming known.





## “What’s the Matter with Now?”— Eva Jessye

by Gladys M. Mundt

---

How do you tell the story of Dr. Eva Jessye?  
First, you listen.

*There was no earthly way of telling when Great-Grandmother Hill would decide to come up from the “Nation,” as Oklahoma was called before Statehood, to pay her Northern kin a visit. She just dropped in at the most unexpected times and went the rounds of the family, staying a day or so with each until the entire circuit was complete. Then she would depart as suddenly as she came.*

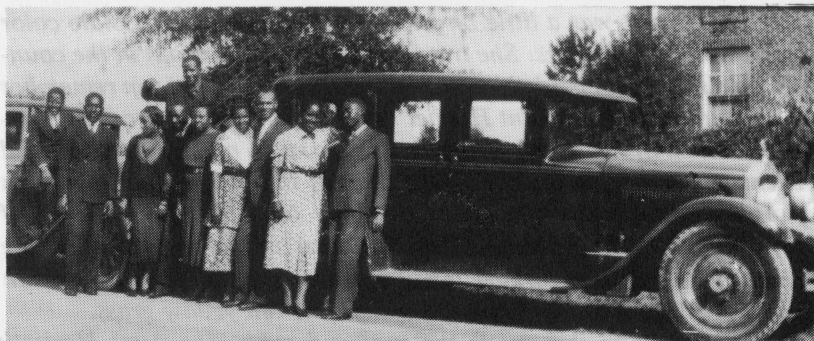
*I can clearly recall the first time I saw Great-Grandmother Hill. What a shock it was to my childish feelings when I heard that gray-headed, antiquated, little woman was the most remote branch on our genealogical tree. With youth’s conception of age, I thought her as old as Methuselah. Children as a rule shrink from contact with the aged. They seem to be weird specters, supernatural in powers and inexorable in judgment. All that day I shied away from the corner of the yard where she sat and could not be persuaded or cajoled into making friends with her. She seemed unable to remember me by name and always referred to me as “Julie’s child.”*

*The news had spread that “Gran’ma Hill” was at our house and in the cool of the evening all the grandchildren and their numerous offspring gathered in a happy reunion. Grandma Hill was the mother of sixteen children and the Coffeyville crop of grandchildren and great-grandchildren through her daughter, Molly, numbered thirty. So it was a good-sized army that surrounded her as she sat by a big bonfire, especially kindled to celebrate the memorable and long awaited event.*



Eva Jessye

Rod Dutton



The Eva Jessye Choir on tour, 1930's.

*The youngsters cavorted gleefully around the leaping flames until the fire died down to ruddy embers. Then the moment of enchantment arrived when Grandma Hill settled back in her chair, removed the old clay pipe from her lips and in a slow dreamy voice began to weave colorful tales of the Indian country. There she had been born, of a Cherokee and Negro union, her mother being brought as a slave from Alabama by the Cherokees.*

*Then came rousing songs of the hunt and tender papoose lullabies, nor did she forget the awe-inspiring barbaric dances practiced in the tribe. Too feeble to execute them with the necessary verve and abandon, she would sway from side to side, beating out the intricate rhythm with her feet.*

*She was amazingly vigorous for her twice fifty years and could thread a needle without the aid of glasses. She got about briskly with the aid of an oak stick and was never the querulous, decrepit old lady her age entitled her to be.*

Almost everyone has a talent, or maybe two, but Eva Jessye was born with many gifts she has cherished as she nurtured them into an outstandingly successful career. Artist. Poet, Performer. Choral director. Actress. Writer. Composer. She is all of these.

Eva Jessye was born January 20, 1895, in Coffeyville, Kansas. From the age of three, after her mother had separated from her husband and moved to work in Seattle, she was reared by her grandmother and aunts. "May Buckner Knight was my mother's oldest sister and I lived most of my young years in her home as one of the family," remembers Dr. Jessye. Summers were often spent with her Great-Aunt Harriet near Caney, while her other relatives went down into Indian Territory to pick cotton.

*Aunt Harriet was a little bird-like woman of dark chocolate color and piercing black eyes. She lived about fifteen miles out in the country on a little farm tended by a hired hand and herself. I can remember being bundled off to Aunt Harriet's and remaining for two long summer months of heartache and fear. There was so much desolation and silence. The little house sat on the edge of the prairie, and there was nothing to be seen from either doorway but an endless stretch of grassy plain. The only signs of life were in the barnyard. There chickens, geese, and turkeys lolled about in the hot glare of the sun and huge jack rabbits frolicked through the tall yellow grass.*

*The one thing that made the spot endurable was Aunt Harriet's singing—for a glorious voice dwelt in her frail body. When we had finished the chores for the night we would sit out under the stars for a while before going to bed, and I would listen in rapture while she sang "Bles' My Soul an' Gone."*

*She sang the first two lines, "I wouldn't be a sinner, I tell you de reason why," with a weird distant tone that seemed to travel on the night wind to the farthest roll of the plain. It was the most beautiful singing of spirituals I have ever heard.*

At the age of seven, Eva was sent by her grandmother to live with her mother in Seattle for two years. On Plummer Street, her best friend was a little Jewish girl, with whom she shared hot bread spread with butter and sprinkled with sugar. She recalls that Tom Brown, a railroad porter, would bring her magazines of poetry to read. "There," she says, "was born my love of poetry. I would copy styles, and there I wrote my first poem—to the Virgin Mary." Another incident she recalls from those early days is being sent by her mother down the railroad track to a dairy for twenty cents' worth of cream. The dairyman was Japanese, and the child made the man add more and more cream until she thought it was her money's worth. The man was patient and a bit amused, complying three times. He stood in his yard and watched her until she faded from view down the railroad track. When Mother Julia saw the contents of the bucket, she scolded Eva for buying milk instead of cream—whereupon Eva swelled up with pride. "It is cream, Mama!" she exclaimed. "I made him give me my money's worth!"

Eva Jessye also spent a year or two of her childhood in Iola, residing with her Aunt Pauline Walker, and in St. Louis with her Aunt Laura Denny, where she attended the Toussaint L'Ouverture School. But it was while residing at 510 Spring Street in Coffeyville with her Great Grandmother Mollie Buckner—after her return from Seattle at



the age of nine—that “something happened that influenced my whole life.” Convalescing from typhoid fever, she had a dream or divination in which she saw on the “bannister of a stairway leading to an unfinished upper attic, two hands—one of them beautiful and shining. I reached for it and a voice came, telling me why I was unworthy to touch it: ‘You must understand that there is something higher than the intellect’.”

“It is difficult to explain an encounter such as this to anyone who has not witnessed a similar occurrence,” she admits. “It is so real, so final, so authoritative, that you cannot fail to recognize the message as true and important. The voice did not tell me what the ‘something higher’ might be. I interpreted the vision as a warning against my eagerness to acquire knowledge. That voice was telling me that there is also humanity—people needing love and understanding. I have maintained that awareness throughout my life.”



Eva Jessye at 13.

When she was thirteen, her mother sent her to Western University, a school jointly maintained by the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the State of Kansas in Quindaro, a suburb of Kansas City. This move was motivated, Dr. Jessye recalls, because the public schools of Coffeyville would not admit Afro-American students to the high

school at the time. An exception was allowed by Western to permit her to enter a year before the required age of fourteen. There, music instructor R. G. Jackson discovered the child's precocious musical talent, allowing her to assume charge of the University chorus.

While at the University, she and Alma Bass, a fellow student and friend, entered the James A. Handy Literary Society Contest, open to Afro-Americans who lived west of the Mississippi. A special train was to come through Kansas City from Omaha to take contestants to Fort Scott, where the 1914 competition was to be held. While she and Alma were waiting to board, a woman passed them, and Eva whispered to her friend: "That's the one who is going to win the prize."

"I had never seen her before; I didn't know her name. But I knew she was going to be the winner the moment I saw her, and I knew her category was the same as mine—declamation. I knew I didn't have a chance against this woman, so I immediately sought out the president of the Literary Society, a lawyer by the name of Brown from Des Moines, Iowa, who agreed to change my entry from declamation to original poetry. I had written a poem called 'Negroes Are Bound to Rise,' in which I compared our race to a lazy river, powerful but without current. (I was militant even then in my own way.) That night the winner of declamation was the woman I had seen, D. Mae Lee of Buxton, Iowa, a seasoned dramatic reader, who gave a hair-raising portrayal of Hagar, Abraham's concubine driven into the desert with her son Ishmael because of Sarah's jealousy." The first prize winner in original poetry was Eva Jessye.

Eva was graduated from Western University in 1914. She then spent three summers at Langston [Oklahoma] University, from which she was graduated with a life certificate in teaching. In 1916 she began teaching in elementary schools in Taft, Oklahoma (an all-Black town), Haskell, and Muskogee. She also taught for a time at Flipper Key Davis, a church school just outside Muskogee. (One of her colleagues, Richard B. Harrison, was later to play "De Lord" in *Green Pastures*.) In 1920 she was appointed director of the music department of Morgan State College in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1925 she worked for the weekly Baltimore *Afro-American*, striking out on her own for New York in 1926, joining a small choral group called the Dixie Jubilee Singers—a group she was eventually to direct as the internationally famous Eva Jessye Choir. "Our best appearance," she remembers, "was at the Rivoli Theatre on Broadway. Its members included Edward Jones, Charles Parker, Bertha Powell, Purnell Hall,



The Dixie Jubilee Singers, 1926.

and Phillip Patterson. The musical director was one Hugo Riesenfeld, who remained my good friend and advisor for many years." Among other projects, the Singers were the vocal dialogue for the motion picture, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

At the urging of Will Marion Cook, the nationally known composer-conductor, whom she had met at Western University, Eva arranged with Cook's publisher, Robbins-Engels, to bring out a collection of her songs which she had heard in Southeast Kansas. Finding a one-room apartment on the ground floor of a rooming house on 129th Street, furnished only with a cot, a chair, and a dilapidated piano, she started work. "I was in such dire straits that I slaved over that book and completed it in two or three weeks. The experience was so distasteful that for years I found it impossible to look at that collection with affection."

*Those who are unfamiliar with the Negro citizenry of Southern Kansas may question the authenticity of spirituals gathered from so northern a source. On second thought they will realize that Kansas, and especially the southern section, was the nearest refuge of the runaway slave. It was the state which reached out protecting hands to the fugitives and escorted them via the "underground railroad" to a land of freedom and brotherhood.*

*Coffeyville was settled some 112 years ago, mostly by migrants from Tennessee, Kentucky, Texas, Georgia, Arkansas, and Alabama, many of them being former slaves. Their possessions consisted largely of hope, unshakeable faith and a heart of song. To these must be added the usual family of eight, ten or twelve, and often, sixteen children.*

To Coffeyville came two branches of the Buckners. On one side of Spring Street lived my Great Grandfather Pleasant Thomas Buckner and his wife Mollie; on the other side lived my Great-Uncle Holliday Buckner and his wife Lizzie. Of Pleasant Thomas and Molly Buckner's eight children, only the fourth remains: Aunt Celia Buckner Cox of Los Angeles, California, who is nearing her one-hundredth year.

The guiding genius of the Buckner household was Aunt Lizzie Buckner, a black woman of generous, if not entirely lavish, proportions. Aunt Lizzie was famed as the best laundress in town. On wash days it was impossible to see the house through the long lines of snow white clothes that encircled it. She seemed to love work and, though implored by her five children to give up washing and to rest in her old age, she insisted on "doin' her part."

Her two major interests were serving God and helping the distressed. She was a pillar of the Macedonia Baptist Church and never failed to contribute her share of the shouting on all occasions. No one in trouble was ever turned from her door, and I could almost believe that the Buckner roof has sheltered more unfortunates than any institution, with the exception of the old Chinatown Mission in New York.

Coffeyville knew Aunt Lizzie for almost seventy years. She came from Taylor County, Kentucky, with her husband, Holliday, when a mere girl, and gained such a reputation for honest and Christian rectitude that her bare word was taken as bond and irrefutable evidence in court.

Eileen Southern in *The Music of Black Americans: A History* states that Miss Jessye found it difficult as a newcomer to gain a foothold in the music world:

Finally, in desperation, she applied for a position as a dietician in a hospital. Her prospective employer, a doctor, came to her humble apartment to interview her, explaining that he could not hire "just anyone" to come into the kitchen of the hospital. He noticed that Jessye had been writing music when he entered and inquired if she were a musician. Upon her affirmative answer, he wanted to know why she was not following her profession. Flippantly Jessye responded, "Because I have to eat." His answer to that came slowly, but firmly, "I don't care what you have to do! Whatever your profession is, if you have been trained in it and you know what you are doing, stick with it and make it pay." Jessye never forgot the man's statement. It marked a turning point in her life and inspired her to become the first Negro woman (and the only one as of 1970) to win international distinction as a director of a professional choral group.





With her choir assembled and ready to perform, she looked for places to display its talent. "Used to be in New York with the choir, I'd run across a booking agent I knew—and I knew them all before I was through—and the agent would say, 'Come in and talk to me someday, Eva; I'll see what I can do.' And I'd answer, 'What's the matter with *now*? I'm here; you're here. Let's talk *now*!' And first thing I knew, I had a booking for my choir."

From those days she developed a philosophy: "Do not attach too much importance to a refusal. Sometimes it is only the wind that closes a door."

From 1926 through 1929 the Eva Jessye Choir appeared regularly at the Capitol Theatre under the management of Major Edward Bowes. Radio furnished another outlet for the choir, which performed on the "Major Bowes Family Radio Hour," the "General Motors Hour," and others. And Eva Jessye began organizing quartets, such as the Four Dusty Travellers, accompanied by cello and piano, who sang for

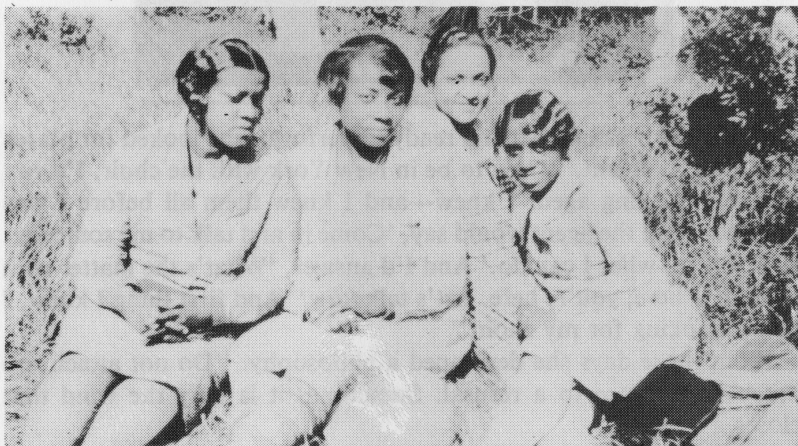
Station WOR for several years during the Depression. It was for that station that they sang what she thinks is one of the first singing commercials ever aired:

*You certainly look snappy  
In that Van Heusen.  
It's the best lookin' collar  
You ever wore.*

*Oh boy! Since you started  
Wearin' that Van Heusen,  
You look much smarter  
Than you ever looked before.*

*It won't wrinkle—it won't crinkle.  
It won't irritate or chafe.  
When you wear that Van Heusen,  
You're absolutely safe.*

*You certainly look snappy,  
In that Van Heusen.  
It's the best lookin' collar  
You ever wore.*



On location for *Hallelujah*, Eva Jessye relaxes with Georgia Woodruff (left) and Evelyn "Hotshot" Burwell (right), 1929.

In 1929 Eva Jessye was called to Hollywood to direct the choir in King Vidor's pioneer sound film, *Hallelujah*, the first Afro-American musical motion picture. While continuing her choir tours across the

United States and doing special radio programs for stations in New York and London, she met at Jacksonville, Florida, during the early thirties, Mary McLeod Bethune, the founder of Bethune-Cookman College, who had risen from direst poverty to become a highly respected educator.



A scene from *Four Saints in Three Acts*, 1934.

Mrs. Bethune offered the young musician a permanent position on her faculty—but Eva Jessye preferred to remain “in the field,” where she could broaden the opportunities of employment for members of her race. In 1934 just such an occasion arose. She was asked to become choral director for the production of Virgil Thomson’s *Four Saints in Three Acts*, an experimental opera with text by Gertrude Stein, to be produced by the Friends and Enemies of Modern Music in Hartford, Connecticut, and later to be taken to Chicago and New York for further productions.

John Houseman recalls in *Run-Through: A Memoir*, that it was Edward Perry, “a member of Edna Thomas’ sophisticated circle in Harlem,” who pointed out that “the famed Hall Johnson singers whom Virgil had so admired in *Run Little Chillun!* rehearsed and sang mostly by rote. Virgil felt this would delay us unduly. Perry then suggested a lady named Eva Jessye, whose group was small but of high musical standards. Virgil met her, interrogated her, heard her singers and approved. From then on, daily auditions were held—for the chorus uptown by Miss Jessye, for the principals in the Askews’ living room.” Houseman further states: “One of the main problems of rehearsing in Harlem, I had been warned, was keeping the company

together amid the intolerable poverty and harrassment in which most of them were living. With Eva Jessye and Perry, I arrived at a figure of fifteen dollars a week to be paid from the first day of rehearsal." Choruses were ordinarily paid only for performances, never for rehearsals. Thus this production made not only musical history, but added a significant footnote to labor history which has benefitted professional choir members ever since.



Eva Jessye, 1935.



Early in 1935, the Eva Jessye Choir rushed to New York from barnstorming in South Carolina for auditions of a new folk opera by George Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess*. "We got back just in time to audition," remembers Dr. Jessye, who adds, "It was Rosalee King, with her verve and dramatic flair, who sold the choir to Gershwin. She was magnificent."

This first truly American opera, *Porgy and Bess*, pleased audiences everywhere. When it opened at the Alvin Theatre in New York City the night of October 10, 1935, it was Eva Jessye who directed the choir. She still has an original score of the opera, as well as a recording of Helen Dowdy singing the audience-pleasing Strawberry Woman scene.





The Eva Jessye Choir, 1940.



After her days with *Porgy*, she was choral director for a time at Claflin College in Orangeburg, South Carolina. And the sixteen- to twenty-member choir bearing her name continued to thrill audiences from 1938 through the '40's, including those at the 1939 New York World's Fair. She returned to Broadway in 1942 with the revival of *Porgy and Bess*, contributing to the war effort in 1943 with her free "Victory Concerts" and in 1944 with her "Order of the Day" for the Russian War Relief Program. In 1942 a revival of *Porgy* toured Europe. In a bombed-out building in Berlin, her choir gave a concert for refugees from the East. "The building was a shambles," she recalls, "but on the stage was the most beautiful grand piano I ever



A Berlin performance of *Porgy and Bess*, 1952.



Eva Jessye in the London production of *Porgy and Bess*, 1952.

saw. The place was packed, and the people loved our music. It was the first time many of them ever saw an American Negro. They called us 'chocolate people,' and I said I hoped we were half as sweet."

After appearing in such movies as *Slaves* and *Black like Me*, Dr. Jessye finally returned to the college campus, going to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, where, in 1974, she established the Eva Jessye Collection of Afro-American Music. When Pittsburg State University was preparing to celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary, Dr. Jessye was chosen from the many Kansans who had achieved honor in their chosen fields to open the Diamond Jubilee Celebration. Accordingly, Governor Robert Bennett proclaimed October 1, 1978, "Eva Jessye Day" in Kansas.

On that day her oratorio, *Paradise Lost and Regained*, was performed in the auditorium under her direction. Of the many accolades offered her on that occasion, she said, "This is tangible proof of the intangible. I have always wanted the respect of my fellow Kansans."

**Dixie Jubilee Singers**  
EVA JESSYE, Director  
LYDIA MASON, Accompanist

**"Heart of the U. S. A."**  
(STORY OF THE SUNFLOWER STATE)  
Written and Directed by  
Eva Jessye

**Porgy and Bess**  
HONORING  
George Gershwin  
AMERICAN COMPOSER  
1898-1937

Evening, January 28, 1952  
8:15 o'clock  
101 AUDITORIUM ... COFFEYVILLE, KANSAS  
Sponsored by Cleveland School  
R. W. Cartwright, Principal

Handwritten note: *for Mrs. Eva Jessye (at Porgy & Bess show) - who is someone very special!! - my best wishes sincerely yours AG*

In March 1979 she returned to Kansas as artist-in-residence at Pittsburg State University, bringing with her 8,500 pounds of memorabilia from her career to be displayed in the Eva Jessye Collection of the newly constructed Leonard H. Axe Library. In her office in McCray Hall—she calls it her "cluttered nest"—she sorts, catalogs, and writes her memoirs.

Here she recounts her working with such figures as Eugene Ormandy, Leopold Stokowski, Steinberg, Vincet Lopez, William Grant Still, and many others. Here she remembers her students of Taft, Oklahoma, who adopted her as a "state-raised cousin." Here she receives such honors as the Kansas Musician of the Year and has been nominated to the Senior Citizen Hall of Fame by Governor John Carlin, who wrote her, "The people of Kansas are grateful for your artistic skill, your creative energy, and your eyes which behold and translate the beauty of our heritage."

Since coming to Pittsburg State University, she has directed and produced a number of programs, including her outstanding "Chronicle of Job," "Kansas: Yours and Mine," and most recently, "Western Star." But she is ever impatient to get on to the next project. Ask her to wait until tomorrow, and she is like to tell you, "'Wait' broke the wagon down. What's the matter with *now*?"





A portrait of Eva Jessye by Julie Steedman, 1976.

Among her former associates she is known as a hard taskmaster, demanding the last ounce of perfection from her performers and from herself. In person, she is a delight. Nothing misses her attention. Her fantastic mind is ever working, and so is she. She writes poetry on cue for any occasion, and just as quickly her mind's eye sees the making of a production from its beginning to end.

First you listen.

Then you gaze in wonder. Eva Jessye is a natural phenomenon. She recalls the past with appreciation, but she is living in the present.

As she says, "What's the matter with *now*?"





## A Bag of Peanuts

I was fair Julia's only child.  
She loved me, oh, so dearly,  
And I adored her in return—  
No, not so much, but nearly.

For who can measure mother love  
Save God, Who first created?  
But even that by some denied  
Or bitterly debated.

We lived alone in a tall, gaunt house  
On Seattle's Plummer Street  
Near iron foundry and railroad track—  
Harsh rumbling and hellish heat.

Where the fulsome waters of Puget Sound  
Surged flush to the railroad side,  
At daybreak retreated to distant gleam,  
Crept back with the evening tide.

From upper windows in our tall house  
Streamed music—most frequently  
A Sousa march on an old phonograph  
Saluting the land and sea.

We had oceans of fun, just mother and I.  
What delighted me most of all  
Was, when on the arm of a gentleman friend,  
She took me along to the ball.

With orchestra screened by lush curtains of fern,  
Pure starlight the chandeliers gleamed.  
Like whispering zephyrs the violins sang—  
The Garden of Eden it seemed.

In the gay Spanish waltz—satin shoe, ruffled gown,  
High pompadour, smooth shoulders bare—  
My heart burst with pride in my Julia, for she  
Was by far the most beautiful there.

Then came a night I was left all alone.  
Though I swore I would not be afraid.  
For hours I shivered in fear 'neath the bed  
And there in dread darkness I stayed.

Till came the blest sound of a key in the lock.  
Quick abed, I pretended to sleep....  
Mother shook me, "Wake up, wake up, Eva dear,"  
And kissed me so soft on the cheek.

"Here are peanuts, still hot in the shell," she enticed.  
(In that moment past fears were forgot.)  
Tearing into the bag with a chuckle of glee,  
I frantically gobbled the lot!

That was seasons ago. Now I realize  
How thoughtlessly one can trade  
Treasures of life and accept in return  
Pittance in peanuts paid.

Eva Jessye

# Short Story

the story I'm in  
is  
the trouble's done

I marry  
the girl and have me  
a son  
and a second for luck and  
my name is made

so the breadbox is full  
and work is what's what and  
the mortgage is paid  
and the toddlers

buy pot but

the trouble I'm in  
is  
the story's done

and all  
of the loaf is worse  
than none  
with most of the older  
characters dead

so I'm looking around  
for a different plot  
to house my head  
and I

hurt a lot



---

William Gibson

# Good Morning



(For Wim)

Remember  
how it feels  
to wait  
for rain

Drawn  
by the rain  
into  
its wet dance

Even so  
a memory  
of drought

Steven Hind

---





The Farmer

Rosalee (Potocnik-Pichler) Mosburg



# Food

by  
Zula Bennington Greene

On the farm where I grew up, the greater part of our family's effort went into the growing of our own food. Vegetables were raised in our garden, fruit came from farm and orchard and woods, meat and milk, butter and eggs, from animals we raised. My parents, my brother and sister, and I all shared in the work on our farm of woods and fields and pastures and running streams.

First in the year was the plowing of the garden and it was like laying a cornerstone. Early in February my mother began preparing my father for the event, which was not spurred by the arrival of seed catalogs. We saved our own seed from plants grown the summer before. Some morning at breakfast my mother would say brightly, "It'll soon be time to plant the garden." Then after more and more pointed remarks, which my father brushed aside as purely conversational, she would close in with, "Jake, I want the garden plowed," and the finality was easily translated.

My father was a quiet, tense man. Sometimes an air of wistfulness hung about him, sometimes an air of detachment in which he seemed remote. He was lean and tanned, with a thin nose, eyes so intensely blue that they looked like turquoises in a terra cotta setting, and high cheek bones emphasized by the hollows below them. It is not easy to recall my mother's face. She was a presence, always there, in her long dress and apron, her shining brown hair pulled to the top of her head and wound in a coil.

Bending to the need for garden plowing, my father hitched up our two horses, Fred and Prince, to the plow and pulled it into the garden, where my mother stood, a shawled Demeter, guarding the roots already slumbering in the ground.

"Don't get too near that fence. The hyacinths are all along there.... Watch out for that gooseberry bush." She knew where every plant was waiting in the ground and steered him clear of the pie plant—that was what we called rhubarb—of the winter onions, the horseradish, and the row of currants down the middle of the garden.

It is easy to understand why a man does not move at the first suggestion of turning the soil in a garden. Give him a long stretch in a field, alone and free, his own master, not a short cramped row in a place pregnant with hyacinths and overrun by women and children.

Potatoes were planted the day the garden was plowed. We all sat around a wash tub cutting the seed we had saved, the choicest potatoes, into sections and always laughed at my mother's account of her first effort to cut potatoes, when she dug out the "eyes," the source of the new plant. Any household work my father shared took on the air of a holiday and any little joke fell on fertile ground. The potatoes were dropped in the furrows and covered.

Now we had something to wait for.

I helped my mother place sets from the winter onions in a long row. Peas and radishes and lettuce were planted and soon afterwards beets and beans. Every night we talked about what had been done. Our elation at planting a garden may seem strange at a time when vegetables can be bought fresh in the stores all year, but we had not seen a leaf of lettuce or a radish since the year before and would not see any until they grew in our own garden.

What delight in those first pairs of radish leaves that pushed through the ground, followed by a darker, fuzzier pair, standing opposite each other like couples waiting to begin a dance. As the plants grew I pulled aside a little soil each day to see if any radish was big enough to eat. One day I would find one the size of a marble—it was never the one with the largest top—and after running into the house to obtain permission from my mother, I pulled and there in the garden celebrated the spring rite of the first vegetable.

Our very first fresh food did not come from the garden. In early spring when a sharp wind and a warm sun were casting lots for the day, I went with my mother into the woods and pastures to gather wild greens. I often played in the woods and pastures, but to be there with my mother looking for greens was better than playing.

I learned to spot lamb's quarter and dandelion and sheep sorrel and pokeweed, which my mother cut neatly at the ground, then discarded the outer leaves and dropped the chosen portions into a big brass kettle. She would stop to listen to the song of a meadow lark, to point out the flashing wing of a cardinal or a violet peeping through the winter accumulation of leaves. Often she recited a few lines of poetry about a brook or flower. We went home with the kettle heaped, for greens "cooked down bad."

They cooked down into a dark acrid mass with overtones of bitterness, fit for nothing, I thought, but conversation. Women could keep the talk going all day about what plants made the best greens. Some wouldn't touch poke; others said mustard ruined the flavor; others liked a touch of nettles or narrow dock.

We planted cucumbers and watermelons, made ridges for sweet potatoes and set out cabbage plants. Sweet corn had already been planted and turnips would come later. Nearly every year my mother tried something new, sending away for seed. One year it was carrots; in another she tried celery. We planted green beans and pole beans. Later in the summer when the field corn was grown, pole beans would be planted by stalks of corn. Speckled beans were grown every year from seed that had been brought from Indiana by a great aunt.

Helping with the seed gathering, I learned the extravagance of nature, or perhaps the insurance—nature is more concerned with quantity than quality. The sycamore with its hundreds of pods filled with hundreds of seeds could populate the earth—small wonder it is called the Abraham tree. A milkweed shell holding rapturous rows of white satin and brown velvet bursts open and seeds fly away on wings of white floss. Some fall on stony ground. No matter. There are hundreds more.

Soon everything was growing. My mother would go to the garden to hoe in the cool of the morning, stopping first to survey her rich domain, the work of her hands. Whatever my mother did I wanted to do, but ahead of hoeing came weed pulling. I ridded the cabbage of "pursley," not a bad job, for both cabbage and purslane are strong individuals that bear no resemblance to each other. What I hated was to face a long row of beets, small timid plants that had been overrun by a bold gang of weeds.

Beets are backward, slow to come up, slow to grow and so undistinguished that it takes close looking to know what is weed and what is beet. But beans—they pop right up, get going, and weeds think twice before pushing in. Weeding the beets seemed endless as I looked



down the row, but as I worked, a transformation slowly took place. Instead of dwelling on how much remained to be done, I looked back at the neat row I had liberated.

My mother also worked in the garden in the cool of the evening and sometimes my father would take a hoe and help her. These were rare and momentous occasions that brought us all into the garden. There was Papa talking to Mamma about green tomato worms and pulling them off the vines. We cavorted about in the pure joy of our Eden.

Summer was a vegetarian orgy, from the first lettuce to the last tomato. Wilted lettuce was our tossed salad, cut up with onions and radishes and seasoned with hot vinegar and bacon fryings. The first potatoes were "graveled" by digging gently around a vine, searching out large potatoes without disturbing the plant, and cooked with new peas. We ate sharp pink sauce made from rhubarb, that most delectable of spring fruits, the exactly right taste that says spring is here and summer is on the way. My mother took a pink stalk tipped with a curled chartreuse leaf and stood it in a glass of water.

"It's as pretty on the table as in a dish," she said.

We watched for the first watermelons to "set on" and waited for them to grow. As one reached what seemed an enormous size and we begged to have it pulled, my mother would say, "Ask Papa. He knows when they are ready." Urged into the garden, he would thump the largest melons, look at the stems, and say, "Better wait a few days."

Wait a few days! We had waited all summer.

Then one morning the first melon was pulled and put in a tub of water to cool. When evening came we ate it on the porch, saving the rinds for the hogs. If it was red and ripe and delicious my mother would save the seeds for the next year. If it was underripe we didn't mind. It was a watermelon and it was the first one of the year. Afterwards we played in the yard while our parents sat on the porch.

The garden was not only for summer eating, but must provide for the winter. Beet pickles were sealed in glass and cucumber pickles put down in large stone jars. Cabbage was chopped for kraut—I stood by to eat the stalks. Tomatoes were canned in tins and sealed with wax.

A bramble of red raspberries grew along the back of the garden and ended at an old cherry tree more noted for chewy gum and red-headed woodpeckers than for cherries. Strawberries grew on plants that had been ordered from Kellogg's. Purple concord grapes vined over an arbor. Peaches and apples held on in an old orchard. Fruit was canned and made into jams and jellies and preserves.

Of all the things that grew, red raspberries were the best. I cannot trust myself to write temperately about red raspberries, eaten off the

vine or with cream and sugar. Some fine adjectives enrich our tongue, but I have turned through the book and find none that begin to express the melting ethereal delight red raspberries bring to taste, to sight, to smell and touch. They satisfy every sense but hearing, and there was always a bird note or the far-off melancholy cawing of a crow.

The big push of the summer was a wild blackberry picking, for which we were outfitted as carefully as for a safari. Mamma got us into shoes and stockings and clothes with long sleeves. Over her arms and clothes she pulled a pair of old heavy stockings with the feet cut out. No woman or girl wore overalls or trousers of any kind, but anything a person wore was light armor against the sharp briars of wild blackberries. Mamma said all the patch lacked of being a jungle was the tigers.

With all the buckets we could carry we walked to the blackberry patch and found black bending limbs. Greedily we stripped them and rushed on to more, calling to the others to come see. Although we had come to gather berries, had expected to find berries, a thick cluster induced the excitement of an old prospector striking gold, and we became as insensitive to the briars as the oriental fakir to the nails he walks on. When buckets were filled we went home, sighing for those we had to leave.

Things other than berries had been brought from the woods. The first thing Mamma did was fill the wash tub with salty water and give us all a bath, after we had been inspected for ticks, which had to be pulled off. The salty water was to kill chiggers, too small to be attacked individually. As our intensity diminished we began to notice the scratches that mapped trails across our bodies and smarted in the salt water. Might it be possible that the oriental's feet hurt a little after he went home and had his dinner?

The great thing about blackberries was that they required no stemming, as gooseberries did, a dismal task more interminable than weeding beets and slower to be resolved by philosophy. The bucketsful we gathered meant pies and cobblers all winter.

The end of summer brought the harvesting of vegetables to be stored. Potatoes were dug, onions were braided into bunches and hung in the smokehouse, beans were hulled and stored in flour sacks, turnips were put in the cave outside the house. The garden would rally with the September rains, but when the last fresh vegetable was eaten, there would be no more until another spring.

Women worked toward having frying chickens by the Fourth of July, but it required early hatching, and that had to depend on the

maternal mood of the hens. Nothing could be done until one took a notion to sit, probably a matter of body chemistry rather than whim, as the women implied.

"My hens just won't set this year," they complained.

When one did announce her readiness by staying on the nest, fifteen of the choicest eggs were marked with charcoal and put into a nest of fresh hay into which a powder had been dusted to control mites, minute mindless creatures that make a chicken's life miserable. Too little honor has been accorded a hen for her faithfulness in staying on her eggs though tormented day after day by mites. A few hens do leave their nests, but so do a few mothers desert their children.

Three weeks of steady sitting and the eggs began to "pip," then wet and woeful little chicks pushed out of the eggs, curled up from their oval world. A few hours under the warm feathers of the hen turned them into balls of fluff.

Setting a hen seemed something like giving a boost to creation. My sister and I, finding one brooding remote from the chicken yard, would gather eggs and secretly set her, hoping to surprise our mother with a fine flock of chickens. We watched over her, brought corn and bread scraps, but I seem to remember that these hens often left the nest before the eggs hatched. Perhaps their nonconformity, their isolating themselves from the group, indicated a restless and unstable personality.

A hen is not very bright, but she is faithful according to her instincts, and women have judged her unjustly by their standards. She faithfully hatches chickens that have scant chance of being her own flesh and blood, then rushes off the nest and begins scratching to make them a living. She is out with the dawn, dragging the chickens through dewy weeds in search of bugs and worms, and if a rain comes suddenly she can be counted on to select the lowest ground on which to sit and hover them. No matter how much water flows under and around her, there she stays. A hen understands duty but not gravity.

One warm summer day when it "looked like rain" my mother sent me to find a hen and chickens and bring them to shelter. It not only looked like rain, it was rain, and it came in a quick downpour, the perfect opportunity to do what I had long wanted to do—stay out in a rain. Wet to the skin, I conducted a leisurely search and found the hen hovering her brood in a watery fence corner.

I gathered the drenched chickens into my skirt and bore the hen squawking home under my arm. She ran about with fluffed feathers, clucking nervously while chickens, wrapped in an old shirt, were being dried in the oven of the kitchen stove. Soon they were fluffed up like

new and reunited with their anxious mother, who led them away proudly, but with no lesson learned. One cold morning my father brought in a litter of shivering pigs that had got born in the night. For a good many years after I lived in town I wondered when it rained, what I should be bringing in.

Hawks and crows were the natural enemies of little chickens. One day I saw a hawk swoop down, seize a baby chicken and bear it, crying and pleading, into the sky, the mother hen trying to fly into the air after it and clucking frantically as its cries grew fainter and farther away. That day I learned of agonized helplessness.

Another day I learned about remorse, when I stepped on a little chicken and heard it cry piteously as it died. I ran sobbing to my mother, carrying the warm soft body, the bright eyes closed, its head, which barely peeked out from its downy body when alive, hanging limp.

Brindle, our Jersey cow, provided us with milk and butter for a dozen years. My mother had brought her as a heifer to her new home when she married. A girl from any kind of a proper family was expected to bring a horse, a cow, and a featherbed as a dowry, though that word was never used. Brindle was a gentle cow who gave abundantly of her rich milk. One of my earliest memories is of standing by my mother as she milked a tin cup full for me to drink.

Brindle stood quietly as each child, in turn, learned to milk. My brother gave it scant attention. Milking was women's work. As the cow grew older she was called Old Jersey. Each year she produced a calf and each day came from the pasture and stood patiently to be milked, her great eyes as calm as the pond at evening. Even as she grew frail with years, her leadership was never questioned by the other cows.

Not even by an unstable red and white cow named Rose, who had one sharp and one blunt horn. Until she gave birth her life was placid, but motherhood threw her into a frenzy of apprehension. When we went to the barnlot to see a new calf of hers, my father stood by with a pitchfork.

He would come in from the barn some morning and say, "Guess what we've got. Old Jersey (or Rose or Daisy) has found a calf," and we rushed out to see the newborn. Calves were always found. One was found in a small lot where my brother and I had played that same day. Why, we asked ourselves, hadn't we found it.

Milk was strained into crocks and, in summer, carried to the cave to wait for the cream to rise and be skimmed for churning. The remain-



ing clabber was set on the back of the stove for the whey to separate from the curd, the latter to be made into cottage cheese.

The cave, separate from the house, provided cool storage in summer and warm in winter. It also provided a nice little rounded hill for playing. Another provision was a refuge in time of storms.

My father was a worrier. He worried about fire and mad dogs, wind and water. If a dark cloud arose bringing wind, he was out scanning the sky, and, if the signs were ominous, he hustled us to the cave. Standing in the entrance he held the slanting door open in order to fend off any heavy object, such as a house or barn, that might be hurled against the door and imprison us. If there was time he ran to the woodpile first to bring the ax, so that we might chop ourselves out if such calamity occurred.

Through the open door we could see small objects flying through the air and hear the swish of the wind. When it quieted we emerged from the cave and looked about, as Noah must have done when the ark landed on Mt. Ararat.

Butter was made in an earthen churn with a wooden dasher. Set at the churning out under the big mulberry tree west of the house, I watched for the first flecks of yellow that promised the butter was on its way. If I churned too fast my mother would call out not to churn it all away. If I lagged she said I would never get butter that way. I closed my eyes, hoping they would open on a ring of butter.

Some of the peaches and apples were spread on the porch roof to dry, safe from ground predators, with a thin cloth spread over them against pillaging by air. Laying the fruit and turning it was a job for children, one we liked, for it gave us a chance to climb to the porch roof, otherwise forbidden.

It also gave my father another source of worry. He would say as he left for the field, "Now, Mag, watch the children and don't let them fall off the roof." Other times he would charge my mother with keeping us from falling into the open curbed well or from standing by the stove to wash dishes and possibly catching our clothes on fire. He was not only a worrier, he was a compulsive worrier, often returning to repeat his message.

Garden and chickens and fruit formed peaks in the year, but the mountain was meat production. Our meat, outside occasional game, came from our own chickens and hogs. Beef was not easily preserved. Pork could be cured by smoking.

Shoats penned for butchering and mercifully unaware of plans being made for them must have felt fortunate at the extra feed that

came their way. I stood by the pen and watched them eat. A hog can snap corn off the cob with a sharp staccato while he is looking at you with his cold eyes in a way that makes you uneasy, particularly if you know he is nearing his last meal.

My father would confer with my mother and when they agreed that it was cold enough for butchering, a day would be set and a neighbor asked to help, a gratis exchange of labor paid for by a side of ribs. The day found me cringing in a closet from the shots of my grandfather's old muzzle-loading rifle, but my aversion did not prevent my enjoyment of the day's festivities or the ensuing product.

In a mixture of awe and curiosity I slipped down to the edge of the woods and saw the carcasses hanging, flat and white and stark. The insides had been piled in a tub and later in the day my mother would remove the fat for rendering into lard. By evening every crock and pan and bucket was filled either with chunks of fat or lean pieces to be ground into sausage.

These years afterwards I remember my mother in an old coat and fascinator standing outside in the cold, pulling fat off the entrails with her bare hands, my mother who lifted her face at the song of a meadow lark and made a bouquet out of a stalk of rhubarb.

Hams and shoulders and sides were salted and would be hung in the smokehouse to be cured with hickory smoke. Ribs, backbone, and tenderloins were for immediate eating. Liver, kidneys, and other organs thought inedible made a feast for the cats, and we always had a great many.

Supper was late, but worth waiting for. I have eaten in some well known restaurants, but I have found no meal so memorable as the fresh tenderloins, brown gravy, and hot biscuits my mother cooked on butchering day. Talk flew back and forth about what had been done and what awaited doing, almost as comrades might eat together and talk of the day's battles and tomorrow's expectations.

Grinding sausage was a job brighter in anticipation than in performance. We couldn't wait to get to it after supper, but wished ourselves out of it long before it was finished. A stout plank to which the grinder was bolted was laid between the seats of two chairs. A child sat on one end feeding the meat in, another child on the opposite end turning the grinder.

My father had two worries about sausage. "You kids be careful," he would say, "and don't get your hands in the grinder." And later, "Now watch out, Mag, and don't put in too much sage."

The sausage was stuffed into muslin bags and hung in the smokehouse with the meat, suspended over a smouldering fire of

green hickory. The smell of that smokehouse—meat and salt, old harness, braids of onions, sorghum in the wooden keg, a whiff of home-made soap, all wrapped together with hickory smoke—was a good enough smell all by itself.

A neighbor made the sorghum from his own sugar cane, an occasion for social gathering. Sucking the sap from a piece of cane, we watched the horse plodding in his endless circle to provide power for squeezing out the pale juice, which had a raw musty smell until it was boiled down in the long shallow vat, being stirred constantly with what looked like a wooden hoe.

We took a jugful home and later bought a kegful for winter. As to good eating, there's nothing the matter with hot biscuits and fresh molasses. When I went to the smokehouse for molasses, unplugged the corn cob stopper and rolled the keg to a level at which the contents would flow out the improvised tin spout, I learned the truth of that old saying, as slow as molasses in January.

The lard was rendered outdoors in a big iron kettle that was also used to make apple butter and soap, and passed from one family to another until who owned it was almost forgotten. Borrowing was to the neighborhood what banking is to business; it created a fluid economy. People borrowed everything from a cup of sugar to a wheat binder. There was no disrepute in borrowing, only in not returning or paying back, and women did not forget who had failed to return a cup of sugar. Families who were constant borrowers soon sank in public esteem.

To have nice white lard required not only select quality fat, but long slow rendering over a low fire, with constant stirring. Older children were allowed—whatever we could not do seemed a privilege—to stand and stir, and again we must be watched to see that our clothes did not catch on fire. After the lard was strained into big stone jars, a task done by my father and mother, what remained of the fat was dried and crisped for seasoning. It was called cracklings. I did not like cracklings, any more than I liked head cheese, which my mother sometimes made from various ingredients.

One morning my brother and I were galloping about on our stick horses when hunger pangs overtook us. We reined in to reconnoiter. Usually we refreshed ourselves with pieces of cornbread, which we called tobacco, offering them to each other with "Have a chaw," as we had seen men do.

After a trip into the house, he said, "Guess what we're going to have for supper," and his voice evoked visions of mysterious good things to eat. Perhaps he should have gone on the stage.

"Cornbread," he announced. That was all to the good. I liked cornbread. Then after a pause, the exactly right timing, he added, "with cracklings."

In a corner of the kitchen stood two barrels, one for flour, one for meal, ground from our own wheat and corn. Sometimes I went with my father to take grain to the mill. In a calico dress and bonnet, barefooted, my hair in two braids down my back, I sat proudly by him in the spring seat.

Many hours were spent riding in a wagon behind a team of horses. I watched the movement of their muscles under the skin and saw them stiffen in a heavy pull. I noticed the easy carriage of their heads and saw the necks bend on a hill. I tried to chart the movement of a horse's four feet, to see if the hind feet stepped exactly where the front feet had stepped. I wondered if the collars felt heavy on their necks, if the steel bits pinched their mouths, if the cruppers under their tails were comfortable.

At the mill we drove up beside a high platform. The miller, white with flour, came out, let down a wide plank hinged to the platform, and wheeled our sacks into the mill.

"Reckon it'll be upwards of an hour," he shouted above the rattle of the machinery.

We had brought eggs and butter to exchange for groceries. A farm wife tried to "keep the table" with the sale of her produce. Our butter, printed with an oak leaf, was dumped into a big open jar of other butters. Not much was bought at the store through the year—sugar and tea and coffee beans, to be ground at home, occasionally rice or raisins, or prunes, spices, soda and baking powder, lamp chimneys and wicks, coal oil for the lamps, and Star tobacco, three plugs for a quarter.

We bought crackers and cheese for lunch and ate them in the wagon. Back at the mill we loaded our sacks of flour and meal—the miller kept a portion to pay for the grinding—and drove home. I held tightly to a striped sack of stick candy my father had bought.

Now we had flour and meal in the house, meat in the smokehouse, cabbage and apples buried in hay under a mound in the garden, root vegetables in the cave, hulled beans and dried fruit in flour sacks, fruits and vegetables in cans and jars, a tall pile of stove wood from our own woods.

Our food had been grown from seed and egg, a summer's work that brought remembered pleasure. Now it was stored away and time could



be spent knitting mittens and stockings, sewing, preparing carpet rags for weaving, mending harness.

We were ready for winter.



**The Faun Instructs the Poet upon the Pipes. Rose O'Neill, 1922.**

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13  
May  
1942

Miss Eva Jessye  
Hotel Theresa  
7th Ave. & 125th Street  
New York City

Dear Miss Jessye

I enjoyed every moment of working with you  
and your choir, particularly the quick response and the  
humor. I too hope we shall work together again.

With friendly greetings to you and everyone  
in your choir.

Sincerely



Leopold Stokowski to Eva Jessye



## Snakes

they fill the out of doors  
their old cellophane skins  
left blowing in yellowed grasses  
their holes obvious beside creek beds

we learn  
beware of rocky outcrops  
don't flip flat stones  
stay away from old wells

they pass busy nights  
slipping breathless past sleeping dogs  
stalking toads in the strawberry patch  
and towards dawn  
they circle the back porch

at the natural history museum  
we watch them eat mice  
one slow swallow  
and strike at glass

we don't read Genesis  
or Freud  
or Aztec codices

we watch where we step

Denise Low

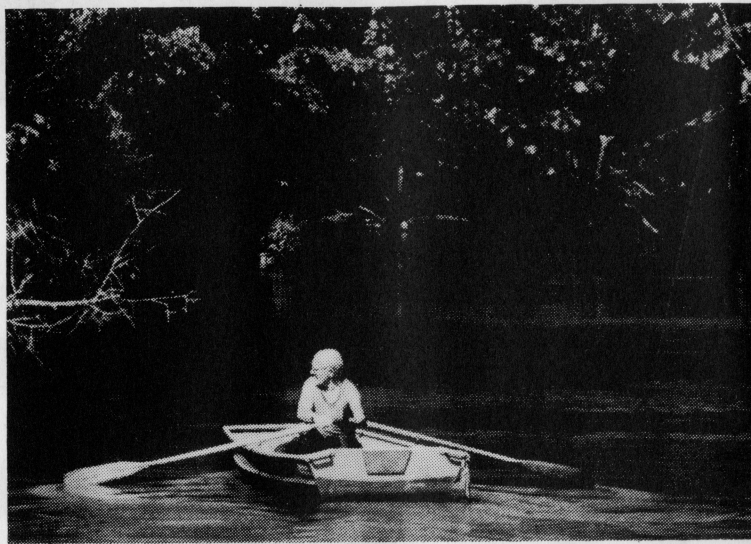
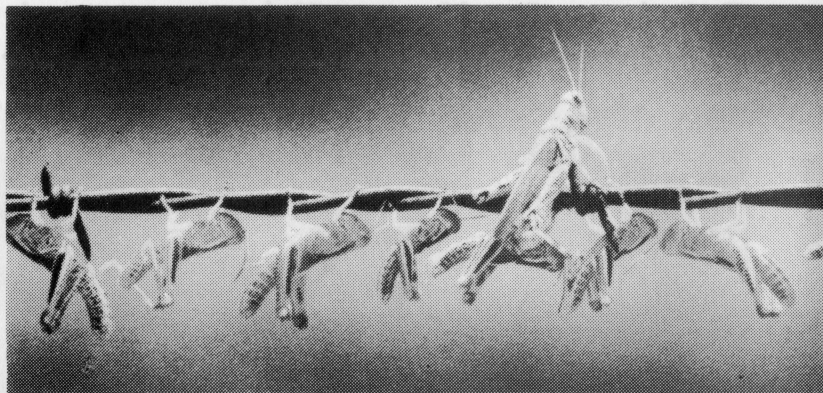
# Traveling the Little Balkans





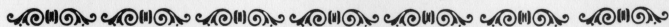
# Mike Gullett, Photographer

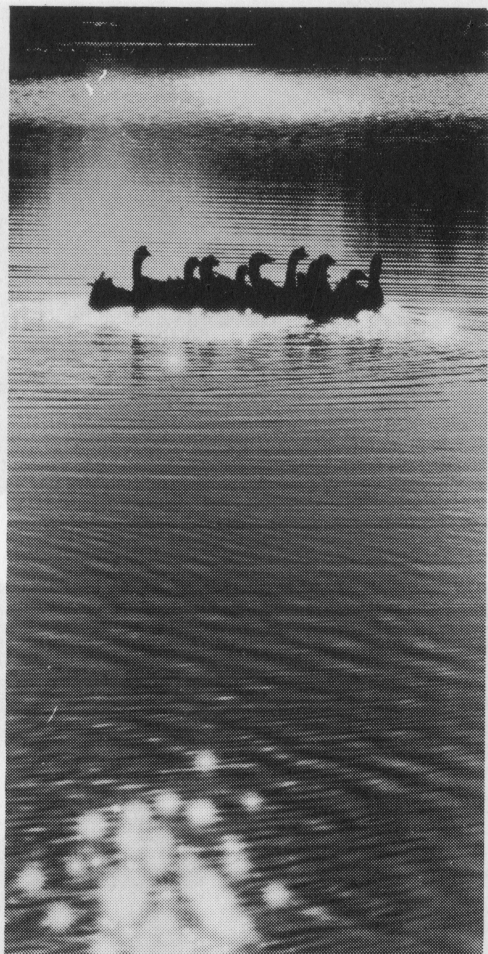
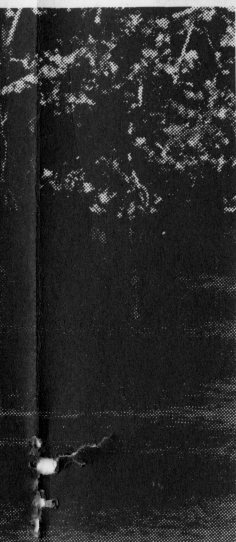
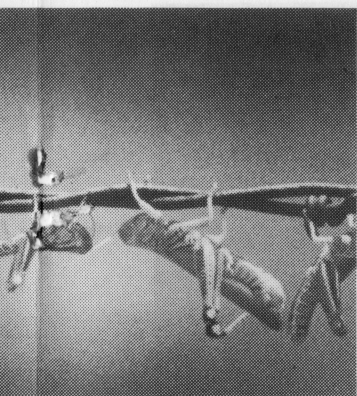




## Traveling the Little Balkans

Mike Gullett, Photographer











Traveling the Little Balkans  
Mike Gullett, Photographer



## On a Day When I Realized Thoreau Wasn't Enough



On a day when I realized Thoreau wasn't enough,  
you rattled through the forest  
as if in answer to my prayers.

At your approach, my eyes searched the green briar,  
straining for this Aphrodite who would step lightly  
from the willows.

You emerged with the clack of a falling stone.  
Your flash of a smile made crayfish  
scuttle below sunlit waters. Your hello  
forced gray squirrels to high branches.  
As I caught your eyes, a hawk screamed;  
wood ducks abandoned their young and flew  
tuck-feathered downstream.

I understood poetic justice  
and the price of lust amid plenty,  
but as we waded Shoal Creek, and you mentioned  
with excitement  
the beauty of love in the forest,  
I knew Thoreau *had* to be enough.

Al Ortolani

## C. Robert Haywood



## The Summer of 1931 and the Battle of South Fern Street

Because my brother, Harold, became a philosopher in the summer, I came to have a very bad year. That probably needs some explanation since Harold had just had his thirteenth birthday and his first pair of long pants. A thirteen-year-old philosopher is generally considered harmless, but you must remember he was four years older than I. You should know, also, that the summer was 1931, and THE DEPRESSION had just hit Wichita hard. Some might have thought my trouble was because Dad was out of work and things were a bit different at home. "Tense," Mom said. But it was Harold, all right!

As a matter of fact, Dad being around the house all day was great. He got a long ladder and about a dozen boxes of Old Dutch Cleanser and Bon Ami, and washed our house with rags and buckets of water. It looked like he'd repainted it when he finished. Everyone used coal for heat, you remember, and after a couple of years a house took on the color of soot. After he scrubbed it, the paint was as good as new. Then, too, Dad and Mr. Fleming played a lot of checkers. It was pure fun having men playing games around the house almost any hour of the day. So I didn't mind THE DEPRESSION like Mom did. It was Harold who caused me grief.

He organized all the kids on the block into the Owls Club and then the Owls Club "sponsored" the army. Harold was President, Commander-in-Chief, and about everything else. Herb Wellmeyer was a Lieutenant and Treasurer, because Harold said he was about the only kid old enough to count to ten he could trust with a dime. Eldon



Lipp was Secretary and Captain whenever he could play. Eldon was a great violinist, the only thing that any kid on the block could do better than my brother. He had to practice a lot after school, so he didn't get to fight as much as the rest of us who didn't "show much promise" or anything. As for the rest of us kids, we were dues-paying members in the Owls Club and infantry men in the army. To belong to the club, we could either pay cash, collect refundable bottles or contribute to refreshments. At the time of the Battle of Fern, we had thirty-seven cents more or less in the treasury and about fifteen Ne-Hi bottles. To belong to the army we had to take orders from Harold, Eldon and Herby and have one usable rubber gun.\*

The Owls Club was great. We built a club house and had regular meetings which consisted mostly of Harold "banging the gavel" and yelling at us to come to order. But the army was best of all. The most important thing the club did, in fact, was to set up the rules for rubber gun fights. The rules were simple enough, but hard to enforce. If the rubber hit you hard enough for you to feel it, you were dead. If you said you didn't feel it, and one of the officers or any other three kids said you must have felt it, you were out of the fight for fifteen minutes. There was still plenty of yelling: "You felt it." "I did not." "You did too." But these were private duels and didn't count for much—it was the battles that counted.

The Elizabeth Street Gang had a club too, but you could tell they didn't have as much fun as we did. Well, for one thing they didn't have Harold. There were only the Wilson kids, the two Fleming boys, the "Syrians," and four or five little kids younger than me. There were fifteen of us in the Owls Club army when Eldon wasn't playing the fiddle and when Elmer White wasn't sick.

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\*The innertubes in the car tires of the 1930's were made with a very elastic rubber which could be stretched two or three feet when cut into half-inch bands. When stretched over the end of a stick fashioned into a gun, the band would make a considerable impact at twenty or thirty feet. A clothes-pin was used to hold the band on pistols; rifles had notches along the top with a string fastened at the end of the barrel which ran along the gun and into the notches over the string. When the string was pulled up it released the band. At ten feet a kid could raise a good burn or even a black and blue mark on the enemy. It was a great invention: cheap, easy to make, and frowned on by most parents.

My troubles started after we had our big battle with the Elizabeth Street Gang. Harold had arranged with Bill Wilson to fight on Fern because Ol' Lady Hoyer, who lived next to the Wilsons, would come out and yell that we made too much noise. We fixed up Forrest's garage for a fort because it had a big weather-vent cupola on top which could serve as a look-out when we took the slats out of it. So we knew the Elizabeth Street Gang was coming; we just didn't know what day or when.

The afternoon of the battle Harold made Bud and me "look-outs." We had been lying under our hedge for about a half-hour and Bud wanted to give up.

"Look here," Bud said. "How do you know they'll be coming over today? I'll bet you two bits they're just making us wait for fun."

"Harold told us to watch, and you better damn well do it, too," I answered.

Bud knew what I meant so he didn't answer right back. He dug a couple of marbles out of his pocket and started jingling them in his hand. The sharp crack of glass on glass made a good sound. One of them bounced out of his fist and rolled over toward me. I picked it up and held it up to the sun. I judged it to be a cheap glassie.

"Swap you four bands for the glassie," I said, still holding the glittering marble up to the sun.

"I'll bet," Bud's voice was heavy with bored sarcasm.

"Let me see the other one."

Bud rolled it along the ground toward me. It flashed a brilliant red everytime it passed through a patch of sunlight. I picked it up, comparing it to the duller green one. I rolled it along the ground, watching it sparkle in the sun patches again.

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you my British Congo one-center for 'em both."

"I don't know," Bud hesitated. "That's the best one I got."

I didn't answer because I knew he would give in. I clicked the marbles together and rolled them along the ground comparing their color as they went in and out of the shadows. After awhile I just stretched out flat and felt the warm, lazy afternoon slide by. I felt great. Not a thing in the wide world to worry about. I bowed my back and shifted over nearer the hedge. Funny how an old rock without any eyes or sense at all can cause a guy so much trouble, I thought. For me it was profound thought and I knew it. I also knew that if I was real philosophical, like Harold said he was, I could have given that thought a lot of deep concentration. Harold had once talked philosophically for a half-hour about how it was funny a spider

caught flies with a web, frogs with their tongues, and people used a fly swatter. But one thing I wasn't, and that was philosophical! I gave up the thought as quickly as it came.

Somewhere in the hedge a bird gave a weak chirp as if he were afraid to break the stillness. The ground felt damp and cool and smelled of moss and mold. I closed my eyes and thought of how easy it had been to give up my British Congo one-center. Two weeks before I wouldn't have traded it for anything, unless maybe for Herb's Latvian triangle. Now, since we had organized the army and built the fort, there wasn't anything important, except guns and ribbons. You never got any honor or anything for having stamps. Like last week when Eldon shot me with his high-powered rifle, my eye got red and then black and blue, but I didn't cry. Harold said I ought to have a medal for bravery. So the club voted me one. Maybe when the battle was on I could get another one or even get to be Assistant General.

I looked over to where Bud had gone to sleep with one arm shielding the light from his eyes. One thing for sure, Bud would never get to be Assistant Anything! He couldn't make a gun that wouldn't break, or keep its nails in, or even shoot straight. Bud's gun lay by mine, the stock askew and two notches broken. I reached over for my gun and ran my hand along the barrel testing the string that released the rubber bands from the notches. Everything was right. I closed my eyes again and thought of how the battle would go.

Then I heard them. I opened my eyes and saw them running on the other side of the hedge all doubled over like Hollywood Indians. Bill Wilson held up his hand and they stopped within ten feet of us. I reached out, found my gun, and nudged Bud.

"Shut up," I whispered. "They're here. We got to get to the fort before they see us."

"Run like hell!" Bud answered, and I did.

The fort was back of the next to the last house on the block. All the way down I was trying to decide what to say. I thought I could stagger the last few steps and gasp out a single word, "Enemy," like the Spartans always did. Or I might stop and stroll calmly in, salute, and say, "The enemy is approaching, Sir!" Both sounded silly. Anyway, by the time I reached the fort the problem of what to say had already been settled. They knew what was happening as soon as they saw me coming. Everyone began rushing about making ready for the attack. I went straight to my position and began arranging the guns. Bud finally came puffing in and we closed and bolted the big swinging doors.

Harold was in the turret ventilator atop the roof. The rest of the officers and infantry had taken positions. The noise died down and we

waited. The dust from the floor, which we had stirred up in our scramble for positions, made yellow shafts of haze where the light streamed through the windows and cracks. I could hear Bud breathing heavy and, of course, I could hear my own heart pounding.

Suddenly Harold shouted, "Bill, remember the rules, you're dead if a rubber hits you hard enough to feel it, and when you're dead, you can't say anything."

Somewhere, outside the fort, I could hear Wilson agreeing in an equally loud voice. The battle was on.

For the first fifteen minutes the fight was all ours. We had killed six to their three. Then one of the "Syrians" slipped up and pried open the door before we realized it. Most of our men were hit before they could turn around. I wheeled and began shooting. I knew I was going to be hit, and that we would lose the battle. I knew, too, that I wouldn't get any Distinguished Service Ribbon or anything. But there wasn't a thing I could do but go down shooting like General Custer or the Last of the Foreign Legion. Then I got it, right on my arm, where everyone could see it, and know I had felt it.

"He's the last one," Bill Wilson shouted as he walked in with a kind of a strut that made me sick. Maybe it was because of the dust we had stirred up or maybe it was because the sun was so bright outside; anyway, Bill Wilson, his brother, and one of the "Syrians," all that weren't dead on the Elizabeth Street Gang, walked right past Bud and never noticed him.

"Now you're all dead. We got ya easy enough," Wilson bragged. "Well, you guys can talk now, if you got anything to say."

We didn't because we were all too busy trying to pretend we weren't watching Bud. He had a hard time coming out from behind the packing boxes. Bill Wilson finally realized we were looking at something behind him and started to turn. It was too late. Bud pulled up on the string. He was too close to miss and the others were too surprised to duck.

We had won! Or rather, Bud had won. We all ran over to him and began hitting him on the back and saying good things to him. Harold jumped down from the turret and said he was going to make a "battlefield promotion." Bud was a real hero. I felt good about it. We'd won right when I knew we were going to lose. Bill Wilson and his bunch stayed over for all the rest of the afternoon, and all in all it was a great day.

It wasn't until that night that it began. Right after we got into bed, I said to Harold, "It sure was a real battle. Just like in the show we saw last week. What was its name?"



"The Shoot Out at Fort Dodge," Harold answered. "Only in that one the best man won." I hadn't thought of that. Then it really started.

"You know," Harold said, in a sad, hushed voice. "It just doesn't seem right somehow. There's Bud, a fat, little, dopey kid. He can't do anything right. It's a wonder his gun didn't bust in two when he shot Wilson. And there you were; you seen them first; you told us they were coming; your guns were all in good shape. Philosophically it would seem that you're just like Jean Val Jean in Victor Hugo's book—no, more like Sidney Carton. Fate's against you. You're unlucky. Philosophically I'd say you are going to have to get used to fate—to disappointments. Yes, I'd say this is an omen."

There it was. I'd been feeling great. No, it *didn't* seem right. I finally worried myself to sleep. But I woke up with it and couldn't shake it all summer long.

I began to notice that things were "tense" around the house. When I broke my skates, for instance. Dad wouldn't get them fixed and acted mad that I should ask him. Mom wouldn't get me long pants either, even though Bud had had them for months. Then, too, that was the summer I got poison ivy hunting for golf balls on the City Links, and, to top it all off, the measles. Who ever heard of having measles in the summer? Bud had measles in the middle of November the year before and missed three weeks of school. THE DEPRESSION might have had something to do with the long pants, but not with *the measles*. I'm not saying that Harold caused the measles either. It's just that after the Battle of Fern I'd get to thinking something bad was going to happen and sure enough it would. And even when it wasn't happening, I'd think each night that it would and feel disappointed when it didn't. It was a summer of trouble and worries.

Anyway you look at the summer of 1931, it was bad. It was even worse when you consider it philosophically like Harold did, and like I came to. Dad said things got a lot better after Mr. Roosevelt was elected. But for me, things didn't get better for a long time. I can't remember exactly when I got over it, but it was sometime after Winston moved to our block and Harold got interested in crystal sets. As a matter of fact, I don't think I really got over it then but, at least most mornings, I'd wake up without worrying about what fate had planned for me that day. I guess, philosophically speaking, that's about as much as you ever get over a summer like 1931.

Stanzas from **Miles from Town**

Long curves of highway  
through east Kansas  
the slow move of an embrace  
driving toward spring

The land is leached    no color  
just the snow    grey weaving of the trees  
and cloud    and the black earth  
Wind    like the trembling ghost  
of the tallgrass

A red-tailed hawk  
elegant    watchful  
waits in the wind  
mistrusting our movement  
across    this    empty    land



The dark red bloodstone  
struck    smooth  
obsidian    of the eye  
and the grey flint  
tongue  
turquoise thought  
the limestone sea

Digging down like fingers  
into the weave of roots  
this is what the plow  
turns    music  
Listen  
we are letting go    the dance  
inside the stones  
the breathing



The voices of friends  
off in the dark  
soft talk laugh  
and sleep

whippoorwill flies away  
homeward somehow

the cicada's voice  
or locust's fades  
late May a cloudless sky

I lie at the edge  
of the sleeping prairie  
My own silence grows  
circles large  
and patient

until the night wind  
rises quick breath  
the whole land moves  
and speaks



Cicada's song by the dark side  
of the evening sky  
and a blackbird calls  
into the gathering dark

these are the walls of wind  
the corridor of tangled grass  
the room of the night sky  
or deep summer  
the limestone sill worn smooth

Coyote barks wandering  
these far counties  
but I speak  
an older earthen tongue  
He passes

From the porch  
I watch night come  
from the dark  
between the stars

inside lighting the lamp  
miles from town

Eric McCollum



## Guardians

Bees and mosquitoes  
Fire and sword  
Self-appointed guardians  
Of blackberry treasures.



Anita Heistand



# Andrew Carnegie's Tear-Rusted Blood-Stained Gift



by Betty Vequist

On January 12, 1912, when their handsome new library was dedicated, most Pittsburg, Kansas, citizens were proud and happy.

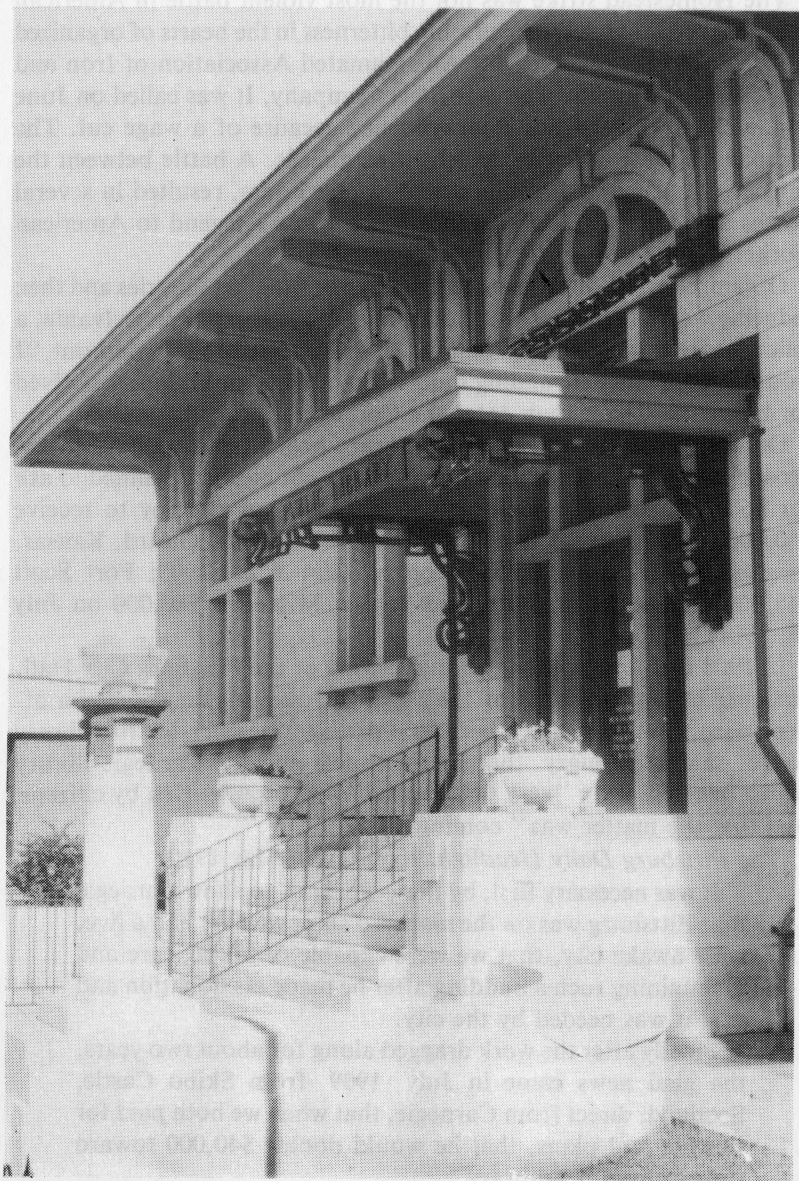
"It is unsurpassed in the state for beauty, convenience or the high character of the books found there," states a souvenir booklet of the day.

Andrew Carnegie, steel industrialist and philanthropist, donated \$40,000 to build the Pittsburg library. He gave funds to fifty-seven other Kansas communities on the condition that the cities would supply and support their libraries. The establishment class on the Pittsburg library board welcomed the assistance of the Carnegie donation.

But there was also hostility toward the library. Pittsburg miners, who worked in the coal mines and zinc smelters of southeast Kansas, carried bitter memories of the Homestead steel strike of 1892. They were violently opposed to accepting a gift from Carnegie.

In 1909 the Democratic and Socialist-leaning newspaper, the *Pittsburg Kansan* said:

The Carnegie Library project was revived and the committee instructed to ask for \$50,000 from Mr. Carnegie. This is a matter that the *Kansan* is not in favor of. If Pittsburg is not able to build a library let it wait till it is. A library that is built on money wrung from the hearts and homes of Homestead miners who were shot down in cold blood by



Pinkerton detectives is no fitting monument for the kind of men that built Pittsburg. If Mr. Carnegie wants to be charitable let him commence with the widows and orphans of the murdered miners.

The Homestead strike was not the most violent battle in American labor history, but it left an enduring bitterness in the hearts of organized labor. The strike involved the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers and the Carnegie Steel Company. It was called on June 29, 1892, at Homestead, Pennsylvania, because of a wage cut. The company hired Pinkerton detectives as guards. A battle between the workmen and guards, lasting nearly twelve hours, resulted in several deaths and many injuries. Homestead became a legend to American workers.

Organized labor often accused Carnegie of building libraries and then reducing wages to pay for them. At a rally in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, a union leader protesting the donation of a Carnegie library cried out, "I would sooner enter a building built with the dirty silver Judas received for betraying Christ than enter the Carnegie Library."

On July 22, 1907, the Pittsburg library board initiated steps to approach Andrew Carnegie for a donation. The board first planned to ask for \$60,000, scaled it down to \$50,000, and were happy to receive \$40,000. Pittsburg was late in applying for a grant. Girard, Kansas, received \$8,000 for a building on November 24, 1905; Fort Scott \$18,000 on March 14, 1901; and Joplin, Missouri, \$60,000 on July 16, 1901.

In 1908 the library, crowded into a wing of the Pittsburg City Hall, had outgrown its quarters and the city was requesting the rooms for office space. State Senator Ebenezer Porter, a member of the library board, said in January that letters concerning the Carnegie library which in effect were "very detrimental" had been written by citizens, but that the matter was "coming along nicely."

The *Pittsburg Daily Headlight* reported in May 1910:

It was necessary first, by these workers, to show Carnegie that Pittsburg was on the map. To show that we had a live, wide awake city, that we were capable of taking care and maintaining such a building after he made his donation and that it was needed by the city.

Finally after the work dragged along for about two years, the glad news came in July 1909 from Skibo Castle, Scotland, direct from Carnegie, that when we both paid for the site and plans, that he would donate \$40,000 toward the erection of a library.

In September 1910 the architects and a construction firm had been hired and the cornerstone was laid. The *Pittsburg Kansan* said:

"The Craftsmen have performed their duty," so said the master Masons who examined the cornerstone of the new Carnegie Library Wednesday afternoon in the presence of

a representative crowd of Pittsburg citizens. There were young and old, rich and poor and laborers of all sorts, professionals, tradesmen, and the man in overalls. All stood and listened attentively to the interesting ceremonies that marked the occasion. When the building is finished all will say, "The Craftsmen have performed their duty." But the craftsmen whom we laud are not alone the Pittsburg, Kansas craftsmen, for the \$40,000 donated by Andrew Carnegie as a building fund was earned by the skill and craftsmen who called Pittsburg, Pennsylvania and its environs home. They toiled where the molten iron oft gave the kiss of death and though the name of Carnegie will decorate the building, these unnamed heroes of toil will have a share in the glory of the beautiful structure that shall aid in the dissemination of truth, the truth that shall make all men free.

Mrs. Ruth Elliott, a former librarian of the Pittsburg library, who was a child at the time, says that "although many people wanted a Carnegie Library, many more did not." Ida Tarbell wrote a biography of Carnegie which enflamed readers. Mrs. Elliott's grandmother, after reading the book, was violently opposed to Carnegie. She believed Carnegie brought over immigrants, kept them in stockades and paid them but ninety cents a day. When the library was being built her grandmother said, "There should be a death's head in every window."

It was difficult for Carnegie to understand the negative reception by workers to his gifts. At the opening of a library in 1890 Carnegie declared:

I wish that the masses of working men and women, the wage-earners, will remember and act upon the fact that this is their library, their gallery, and their hall. The poorest man, the poorest woman, that toils from morn till night for a livelihood, as thank Heaven, I had that toil to do in my early days, as he walks this hall, as he reads the books from those alcoves, equally with the millionaire and the foremost citizen, I want him to exclaim in his heart, "Behold, all this is mine. I support it, and I am proud to support it. I am joint proprietor here."

The Pittsburg library was considered to be, at the time it was opened, the most beautiful library building in the state of Kansas. It was decided that the library would not be built in a conventional "Carnegie-style" and not be called a Carnegie library. The words over



the entrance say, simply, "Public Library." The building has a frontage of eighty-five feet and extends back sixty-one feet. The walls, wide steps, and flower pots are of Carthage, Missouri, stone. It has a red tile roof. The architectural design is of heavy massive effect carrying out the clean classic lines seen in the buildings of the Orient.

A week after the building was opened the *Pittsburg Kansan* said:

The *KANSAN* is in receipt of communication from one of our readers who feels that we have not tooted our horn loud enough about the beneficence of Andrew Carnegie who built the library building for Pittsburg. It was gathered in the blood and tears of the Homestead strike, when children starved, women wept and workmen were shot to death on the doorsteps of the shacks they had been driven from by Pinkerton's hired butchers. The editor of the *KANSAN* is not in favor today, nor any other day, of holding out clamorous hands for any of this tear-rusted blood-stained gold for library buildings. We can't conceive any pleasure the children of workmen of Pittsburg can derive from entering the building bought at such a price. What we need is fewer libraries and more justice. Carnegie has one of his monuments here in Pittsburg catering to the children of Union labor.

At this time a bronze plaque dedicated to Andrew Carnegie was installed in the library. It is there today. It reads, "the People of Pittsburg Acknowledge With Gratitude the Generosity of Andrew Carnegie Whose Gift Enabled Them to Erect This Building. A.D. 1910."



# A Fisherwoman's Tale

Alarm is set for four a.m.  
I wake up with a start—  
And reach to turn the darn thing off  
Before it falls apart.

I finally get myself all dressed  
And put the breakfast on.  
The food seems so repulsive  
That my appetite is gone.

I clean the table off and put  
The dishes in the sink  
And, in between the chores at hand,  
Some scalding coffee drink.

At last the car is packed to go  
With food and rods and bait.  
We told the kids we'd start at five.  
I hope that's not too late.

So we start the car and off we go.  
For miles and *miles* we drive.  
Our destination comes in view.  
We *finally* arrive.

I'm pretty much awake by now  
And don my sports attire,  
Unpack a stool, the rods, some food,  
Prepare to start a fire.

Then we walk along the river bank  
To pick a likely spot.  
All indications point to luck . . .  
The fish are as good as caught.

We work like Trojans all day long  
And often change location.





I hear two *Yahoos*\* down the stream,  
Which give me inspiration.

I lose my sinkers, then my hooks.  
I have to bait anew.  
If only I could get a *bite*,  
I wouldn't mind the goo.

The sky clouds up, the air gets muggy,  
Then the wind begins its song.  
It's turned into a dreadful day—  
The barometer was *wrong*.

Somebody hollers, "Let's go home!"  
So we gather up our stuff.  
Between the four of us we've caught  
Two "keepers"—not enough.

So we trudge along the dusty road  
Until we see the car.  
I'm sure that when we came this morn  
It wasn't *near* this far!

But home, at last, unpack the car  
And feed our mortal tummies;  
Then soon to bed and sound asleep.  
I'm sure you think us dummies.

But even if we caught no fish  
We're healthy to a *T*.  
I really recommend this hobby—  
And I'm sure that you'll agree

That despite the troubles you'll endure,  
You'll find contentment, too.  
Of course, we hope you'll catch some fish  
(*As once in a while we do*).

\*When anyone catches a fish, he yells, "Yahoo!" It can be heard up and down the river.

Mary Holstine Gray

P L A C E S   +   o

+ o u c h   Y o u

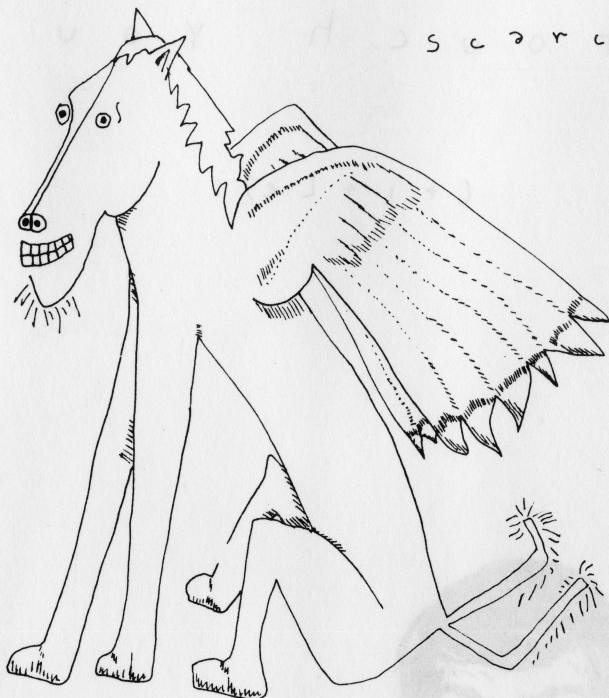
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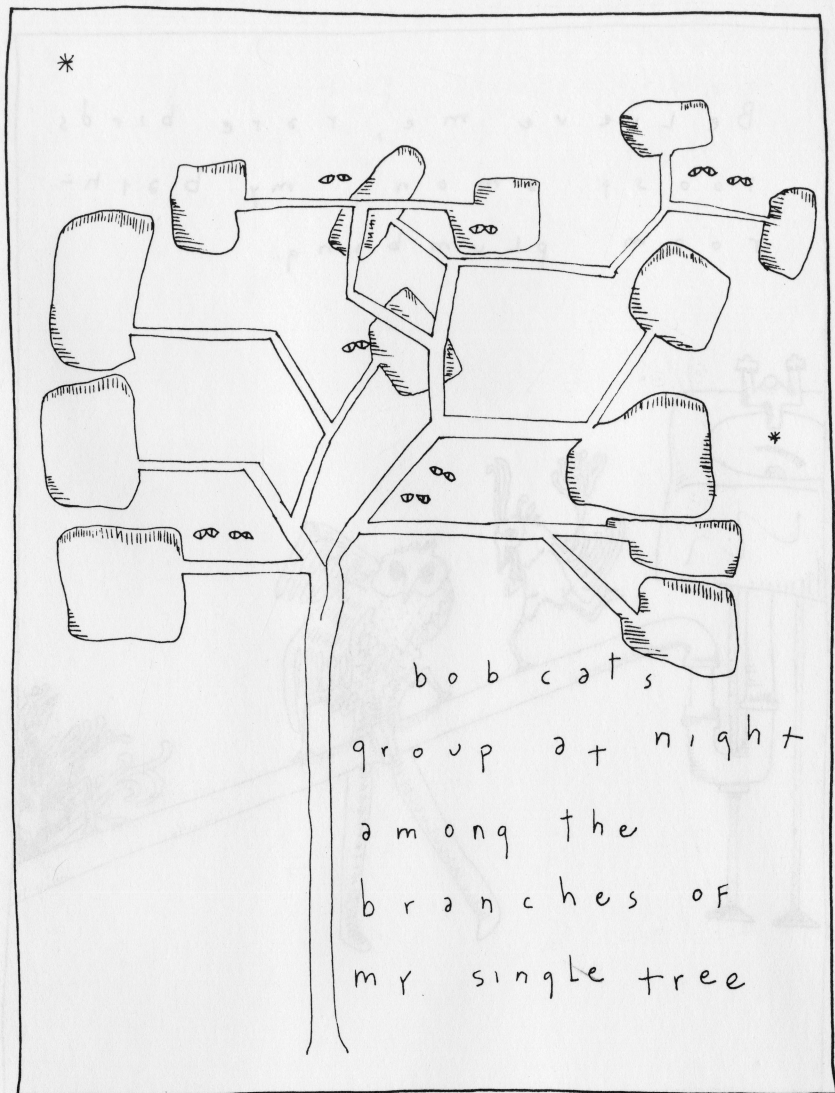


R. Stephen Russell



there are places  
where animals you  
seldom see are not  
scarce

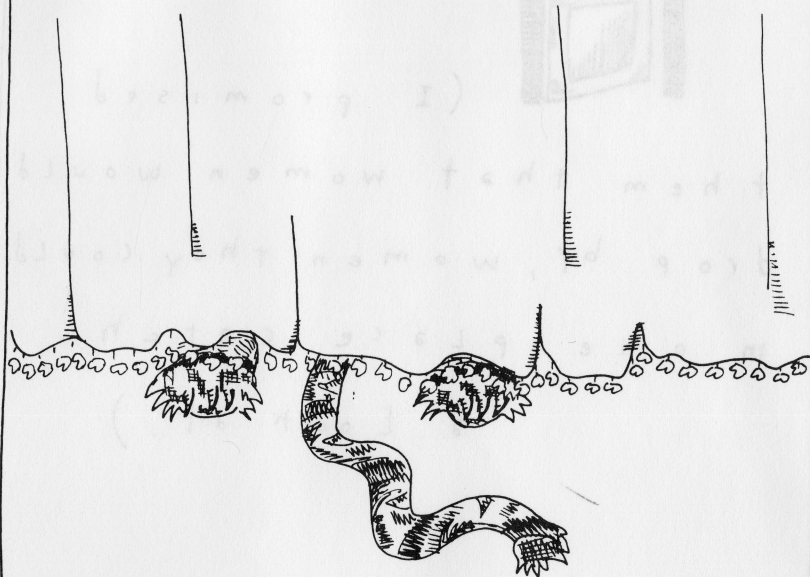




BeLieve me, rare birds  
roost among my bath-  
room plumbIng.

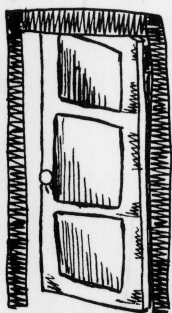


Something with a  
very deep voice  
sleeps under my bed,  
honest.





C o m e a n d s e e  
f o r Y o u r s e l f .



( I p r o m i s e d  
t h e m t h a t w o m e n w o u l d  
d r o p b y , w o m e n t h e y c o u l d  
i n o n e p l a c e c a t c h  
a L o o k a t . )

# Coué Revisited



Silly platitude . . . . I cannot repeat it any more:

"Day by day in every way . . . ."

Because it's not getting any better—it's getting worse.

Science and technology are better—

We have better bombs—better buttons to push to unload them.

Greed and strife run riot while ambassadors of many nations  
parley and bargain for peace—hoping to make it.

But in spite of technological progress it still eludes them.

Me—I'm trying to make it—trying to eat, pay rent, insurance,  
and the monthly light bill on the dollars I earn.

But in spite of all the scientific know-how of man

Most of the products I buy are inferior in quality

and a waste of money I cannot afford to waste.

(Chiefly because someone rich wants to be richer

is why my little household items are made skimpier now.)

Frustration surrounds me—there is nothing I can do to  
change things . . . .

But I'm trying to make it.

Statesmen scramble for countries and pieces of countries  
and rights to the waterways—hate seeps in  
nationally and individually—leaders are trying to ease  
the tension, trying to make treaties work.

Young couples in the supermarket hold hands

making small talk over the vegetables,

choosing words—each adjusting to the other's opinion  
and temperament—

wanting no arguments—nothing to ruffle the sea

of elusive happiness, yearning to hold the moments,

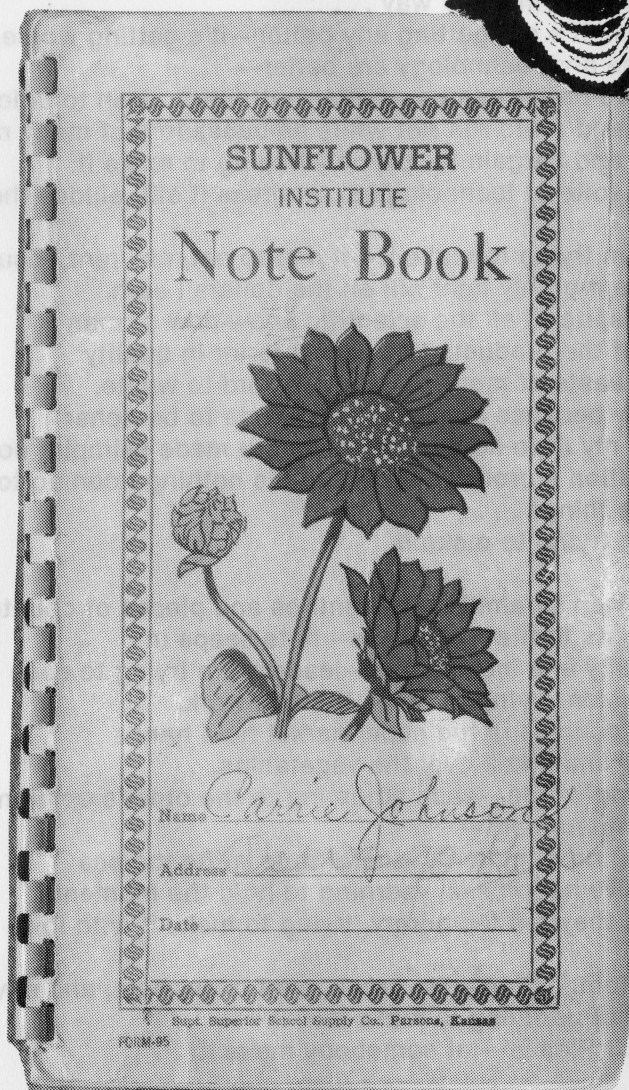
fearing they are temporary, trying to make it with love.

It all frightens me—the greed, confusion, hate, and envy,  
and all of us trying to make it . . . .

Oh God! Please—let somebody make it!

Dorothy Randolph

# Carrie Johnson's Home Remedies



Who over forty does not remember—with lingering discomfort—a mother's home remedy: the smell of camphor, the taste of cod liver oil, or the sting of ointment? Avoiding school by feigned illness was once less attractive than risky; children sometimes feigned *healthiness* to avoid repugnant home remedies. Anyone who has been administered a dose of castor oil will find truth in "Cure 'em or kill 'em!"

Carrie Johnson of Oswego, mother of ten, reared eight to adulthood with the help of castor oil and asafetida. The sunny cover of her notebook may have been unconvincing to her children contemplating a spoonful of oil, but it is symbolic of a mother's bright hopes.

Mrs. Johnson (1887–1971) is remembered for a willingness to share her knowledge of folk remedies. We believe that she would have enjoyed having these samples published.—The Editors.



**Prevent colds:** Wear Asafetida bags around necks.

**Fever:** Tie a mixture of fried gypsum leaves, turpentine and coal oil around the head. (Also relieves headaches.)

**Pneumonia:** Take tea made from shavings off a hog's feet.

**Coughing:** Horehound syrup.

**Earache:** Put sweet oil and warm cotton in the ear.

**Toothache:** Apply camphor and cotton.

**Complexion problem:** Sleep with pounded beefsteak on the face.

**Styes:** Use a flaxseed pack.

**Nosebleed:** Put wet brown paper on back of the neck and a dime in the roof of the mouth.

**Mumps:** Apply marrow from a fresh hog jaw to the throat.

**Stomach ache:** A tablespoon of soda in turpentine.

**Colds:** Put on skunk grease or a fried red onion pack, then drink a mixture of hot ginger, sugar, and whiskey and go to bed.

**Warts:** Remove by rubbing off on a freshly dead person.

**Boils:** Apply beaten egg whites.

**Cuts:** Put on fresh chewed tobacco.

**Sprained ankle:** Cover with pack of ground mud daubers and kerosene.

**Sore muscles:** Rub with mixture of turpentine, coal oil, camphor, and whiskey.

**Burns:** Apply coal oil.

**Infants slow to walk:** Soak legs in dishwater.



## To Please a Child: A Lebanese Folktale



Collected by Patty Kuhel from George Farris

Once there was a man who had a child who could **never** be pleased. The man tried everything he could think of to please the child, but it was no good. So one day the father lost his temper and started screaming and cussing at the child.

His neighbor, who was a priest, heard the man cussing and was very upset. He went next door and told the man, "You should not scream and cuss at your child. Have a little patience. If you have patience, it is easy to please a child."

The father looked at the priest, and then he said: "You take this child home with you and see if you can please him. If you can please him, I'll let you give me advice on how to raise him, and I'll do whatever you say." So the priest took the child by the hand and led him next door to his house.

They had no sooner gotten inside the priest's house, when the child said, "I want some syrup." So the priest got out a little dish and poured some syrup into it. The child looked at the syrup, and he said, "I want some butter." So the priest got another little dish, and he put some butter in it and gave it to the child. The child looked at the two dishes, and then said to the priest, "I want them mixed together!" So the priest put the butter in with the syrup and stirred them up and gave the dish back to the child. The child sat there looking at the dish for a minute, and then he said, "I want them apart again!" The priest refused to lose his patience. He got out two more dishes and put syrup in one and butter in the other and gave them to the child.

The priest had no sooner set the two dishes down than the child started to scream and cry. When the priest asked him what was wrong, the child sobbed, "I don't want any **new** syrup and butter. I want **this** one taken apart!" And he screamed and kicked his feet. The priest tried to reason with the child, but it was no good.

At last the priest had all he could take and started to scream and cuss at the child. Picking him up under his arm, he carried him back to his father. When he got there, he told the father, "**Now I understand.** It's easier to chew a stone than it is to please a child." And that priest never again gave people advice on how to raise their children.



## Cancer in Pisces

My love sleeps  
His life away,  
Better to keep the demons  
From our door,  
Whose gnawing pains  
Keep us aware  
Of what must be.

We must not admit  
Even to ourselves,  
All defenses down,  
That chaos rules  
Our lives  
Until the end.

And so sweet sleep  
Protects us  
From ourselves  
And gives us  
Dignity  
To face our future  
And our end.

Laura Stahl

# The Prince of Kansas

by Ursula K. LeGuin



*The Prince of Kansas was black as his silhouette or his shadow, an old, jetblack man seven feet tall with a face like a swordblade. . . . The Prince ruled his domain absolutely, but in no way was his rule enforced: rather it was accepted as an honour; his people chose to serve him, perhaps because they found, in thus affirming the innate and essential grandeur of one person, that they reaffirmed their own quality as men. . . .*

*"Oh fool, oh desolation!" said the Prince of Kansas. "I'll give you ten women to accompany you to the Place of the Lie, with lutes and flutes and tambourines and contraceptive pills. I'll give you five good friends armed with firecrackers. I'll give you a dog—in truth I will, a living extinct dog, to be your true companion. Do you know why dogs died out? Because they were loyal, because they were trusting. Go alone, man!"* from *City of Illusions* (New York: Ace Books, 1967).

Why, you ask, did I write about the Prince of Kansas?

Well, because in 1962, driving back across from Macon, Georgia, where my husband grew up, to Berkeley, California, where I grew up, we decided to go back by Telluride, Colorado, where my mother grew up. On the way up into the Rockies we stopped by the Black Canyon of the Gunnison River, which (since I could never invent anything so fantastically vertiginous) I used in the novel I wrote a few years later as the locale for a vertiginously fantastic city of Aliens, whose whole existence is predicated upon lying (in which they may, or may not, differ very much from us natives). The novel's protagonist starts out from the endless forest of the Eastern seaboard (this takes place a thousand years or so from now) to go to that city. On his way west he crosses Kansas, as we did on ours. He sees that it is a very large, a great land, a noble domain. In the kind of novel I tend to write, if a domain is noble, it acquires a nobility: hence Kansas has a Prince.

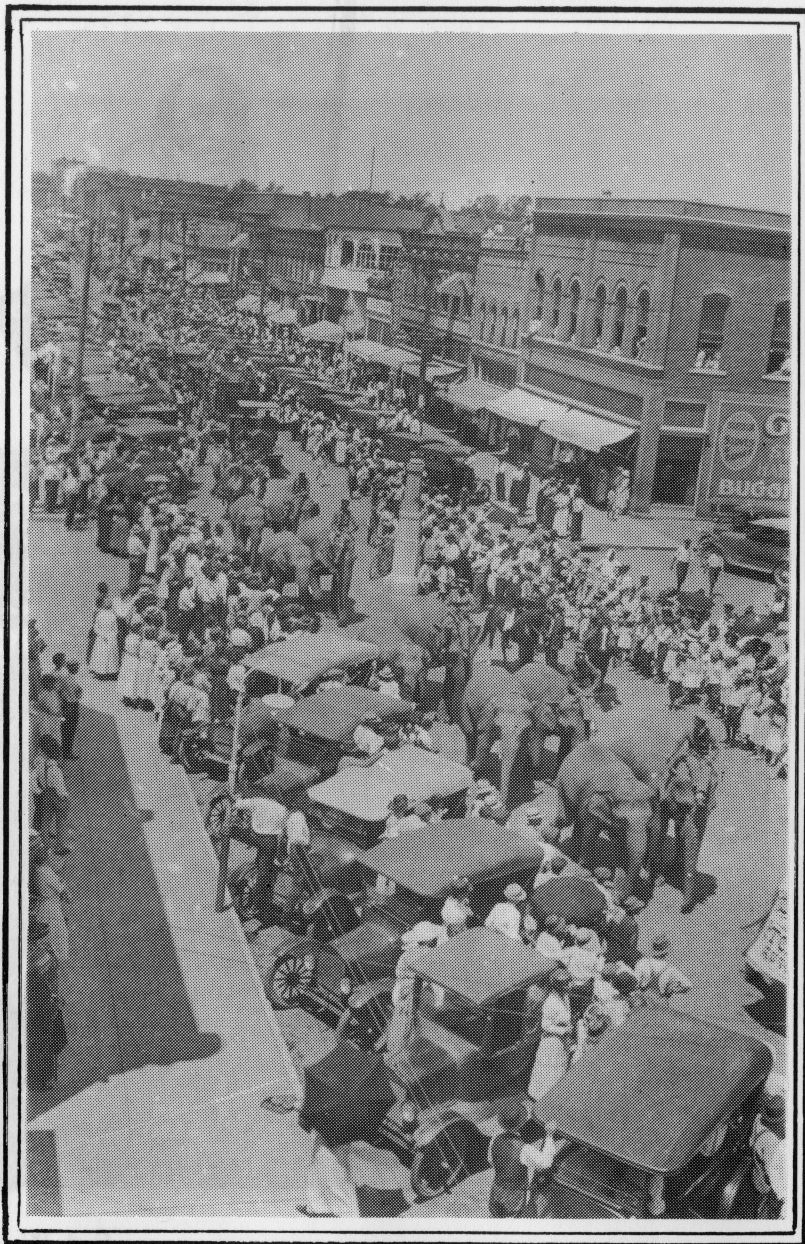
The Prince of Kansas has very few subjects and no power at all, but lots of time, and lots of space. Also he is the only person left in North America who has dogs. He is my effort to give Kansas a ruler worthy of it, a great, wide, mad soul, a soul without boundaries.



Ted Watts



# SANTA FE DAY PARADE



Chanute, Kansas (1924)

## Two Poems



### Settlers

Because this hillside land  
was dear to Indians  
the lone tree has a branch  
that points the way . . .

We claim it now  
with an avalanche of cows  
and the grave of the little sister  
who slowed the wagon  
on the wing-tips of the Rockies.

### Native Stone

Cut from the hills  
my mother's town dies hard;  
stone houses drown in maple.

Kindled by shattered glass  
dawn ransacks Main;  
wind filches from a threshold  
bank notes of 1920 . . .

Time meanders here  
and can't be measured  
as the crow flies.

In a few hours  
on down the road  
a coyote slices past our pickup bumper  
to nail a sunset.

Barbara Shirk Parish

## Grackle's



## Ascension

by Michael Smetzer

The men bounced like balloons on the iron-hard seats of the retired school bus as it ground its way down the gravel shortcut that led to the development. It was Fred, staring out into the gloom of the dark afternoon sky, who first saw the tornado. It was tiny in the distant south and he wondered at first if it were only a dense body of rain held aloft in the clouds teasing the dry farms beneath. But as he watched, the distant churning moved down to the earth, though its point of contact was hidden by the hills and trees that formed the horizon.

His announcement came with all the drama of a hiccup and just before the punch line of Bud's joke about Bunny Runyon, the local TV anchor woman. "Isn't that a tornado?" he said. The crowd of men looked first at him with mild irritation, paused, and then looked with a rush at the windows, following his gaze into the distance.

"My God! It is a tornado!" said Jack. "How far off do you think it is?"

"It can't be more than six miles or we'd never be able to see it, not in this kind of weather," was Bud's pronouncement. There was general agreement.

"Where do you think it's going, Grackle?" someone asked, and everyone turned to listen to old Grackle's opinion.

Kevin Grackle had worked for fifty years building and later repairing the railroads in this part of the country. For twenty years now he had lived virtually alone with a paralyzed daughter in a warped, old house in the little woods next to the development. Ten years before, the ground on which the development sat had been his corn field, but now he sat on his steps and watched the old barn slowly fall to ruin. Everyone knew Grackle, and his knowledge of area geography was a

local commonplace, but not much was ever said to him and even less was ever heard from him, though the men of the development sometimes carried him along on their Sunday outings.

The wrinkles tightened around the old man's eyes as he watched the cloud. "It will be in Leroy in a minute," he said, almost to himself.

"There'll be a Hell for sinners in Leroy, I bet," announced Bud. "It will make them pay for their sins. I'm glad I don't live there."

"Maybe we should stop and call someone?" suggested Jack.

"I guess the people in Leroy will know in a minute or two if they don't know now," responded Bud.

Grackle seemed deep in thought. Fred wondered if he were praying. He had heard that Grackle was the oldest member of the little country church that served the remaining farmers in the area. The people of the development didn't go there, although it was only a couple of miles away. They went to various churches in the city to the north or to nearby towns, or else they slept late.

Grackle never swore or drank and by all reports studied the Bible late at night. People respected him in a patronizing sort of way. There was something sobering about all the years he had spent taking care of his daughter instead of putting her in a home. It was a little frightening, too, thinking of all those days and nights living with a woman who could only make cries like an animal to tell him of her moods and needs. People wondered what the world looked like from inside his habitual and watchful silence.

Not that they worried about it. Grackle was a small rock in the stream of their lives. Their conversation and projects bubbled around him without their really noticing his presence. If he didn't function as part of their society, he didn't disrupt their society either. They would once in a while notice that he was there.

The bus finally stopped at the entrance of Grackle's long driveway, and he began moving toward the door. "Hey, you've got a CB receiver, don't you, Grackle? Maybe we could pick up something on the air."

Five or six men piled out behind Grackle and filed down the gravel path that curved around the head of the gully to the old single-story house hidden in the trees. Fred, following at the end of group, noticed how hard the ground felt underneath the grass in the middle of the driveway. In the trees the tornado could not be seen. The cluttered old woods was dense with tangled brush and decay. The tornado seemed like a dream here among the gently rustling oaks, except for the blackness of the southern sky.

Fred couldn't imagine the old woods on a sunny day. He felt in the sunshine it would vanish. The woods was a cold place, dark and



menacing like the sky. Together they seemed to form a world centuries removed from his life in the development. He put his hands in his pockets and hunched up his shoulders.

There were no birds. He saw no squirrels. Everything in the woods was silent. It reminded him of the Flying Dutchman, a phantom ship, tattered, with no living crew, that appeared to doomed sailors. What sins could Grackle have committed, he wondered, that he would be the sole dweller in the woods? But he felt his own inadequacy here more clearly than Grackle's remoteness. He had never been comfortable in nature, at least outside a city park. In a park you would have pleasant little squirrels to watch, and someone would have cleaned up all these dead limbs and brush.

Maybe Grackle liked the woods. Fred couldn't imagine why. There was nothing to do here. You couldn't picnic in the brush and weeds. You could sit on a fallen log, he supposed, and watch the mushrooms grow. Could you eat the wild grapes that wound their vines up into the trees? Could you even reach them? There were patches of what Bud had told him were May apples. He said inside they were sweet and slimy and full of seeds. The thought of sucking out their pulp made him shudder. If there were worms, Bud said, you could spit them out with the seeds. What could Grackle do in a woods like this?

Yet it seemed the right place for him to live. Both were old and decayed, with no real usefulness anymore. Both were forbiddingly silent and ghostly, deep but at the same time opaque. Like the black sky to the south, he thought, and he wondered if all the invisible churning and violence within those clouds had its parallel within Grackle or his woods, inert and silent as they both were. Perhaps a slow violence was moving just beneath the leaves, a violence in the ground to match the violence in the clouds, only much slower, too slow for men to notice who moved only on its surface, and harder to define or measure.

As they approached the house, Fred felt his skin tighten. He thought the house and woods disliked him. The old house in the old woods seemed like a setting out of some fearful fairy tale. What was he doing coming here with these men? The answer he could give was that he was doing what he had always done—follow someone else's plan. He hadn't wanted to move out to the development. All his life he had lived in the suburbs close to Chicago, comfortably surrounded by people like himself. But his wife wanted to raise their daughter in the country, so he had brought them to the development and now commuted forty miles to work.

The men tumbled their way through the tools and old clothes that were heaped about the narrow porch, walked through the kitchen, and took various places about the tiny living room where Grackle had a CB receiver. Most of the men had never been in the house before, and the grunts and cries of his speechless daughter in the next room made them glance about uneasily. An old leather-bound Bible lay open on the table surrounded by bent nails, a coffee cup, and odd pieces of machinery and wire. The CB was on a shelf with old books and emergency candles.

After a minute of scanning they picked up a conversation.

"She went right through the trailer court and headed east. It looks like the end of the world over there. Go ahead."

"Have you been able to pick up anything about the people?"

I heard on the sheriff's channel there were six dead, a couple of them children. I wonder. . . ."

"It is Jehovah," Crackle whispered to himself.

"What?" asked Fred, but he was cut off by Bud.

"Six dead! Did you hear that? And in a town only three miles from here! Do you think we'll make the national news? God, I'm glad I didn't decide to buy that house in Leroy."

"It is Jehovah," said Grackle, quietly but with force. "He has come to us."

Everyone looked at Grackle. Fred first tried to put his hands into his pockets, then folded them together and pressed them between his knees. He felt uncomfortable in this decayed house. He didn't really know Grackle, and would have gladly gone home, if his wife and little girl had been there. The old man's assertion frightened him almost as much as the tornado. What kind of man was he? Jack reached over and began scanning the channels again.

"I wonder where that bugger's going now," said Jack.

"The guy said it was going east," replied Bud. "What will it hit east of Leroy, Grackle?"

"Jehovah won't forget us," muttered Grackle. Then glancing sideways at Bud, he added, "There's nothing east of Leroy."

A crack in an east window began to whistle softly and a branch began rubbing against the side of the house. "The wind has shifted around," said Jack.

"Hey now, Grackle, there must be something east of Leroy," argued Bud. "What about that little place called Hurlbert? Isn't that straight east of Leroy? They're both right along the railroad."

"I don't think I've even heard of Hurlbert," said Jack. "It must be pretty small."

"Yeah, they used to load cattle there. What do you think about Hurlbert, Grackle?"

Grackle said nothing. He sat listening, with one hand clenched on the table. Fred thought Grackle looked like a prophet, and he felt as if he himself were among the worshippers of some false god about to be consumed by fire out of heaven.

He found himself staring at Grackle. The old man's eyes had never seemed so clear and full of life. But it was a life he could not fathom. It made him want to run. Grackle wasn't a man like him. He seemed an apparition conjured out of the forest, a spirit with which he had no way to deal. Fred felt like one of the children of Bethel must have felt when they saw the she-bears of Elisha coming out of the woods to maul them. He chewed hard on his lip and glanced quickly about the room.

"Hey, listen to this!" Jack had found something on the CB.

"... just about that corner. Then the damned thing turned back around. Hell, I think it's heading back towards Leroy. I can still see it from my car. I'm gonna follow it, if the road's clear. Say, you know it looks like it may hit that new development north of Leroy. . . ."

"Shit!" said Jack, "He said it's heading here." Everyone looked out the window, but all they could see were the gently swaying trees at the side of the house.

"Jehovah has come," announced Grackle, and he stood suddenly beside the table. All the men poured through the house and spilled like marbles into the front yard. About a mile before them in the sky the tornado loomed, twisting, weaving back and forth above them like a black cobra with a shifting hood of clouds.

"My God!" gasped Jack. "There are no basements in the development!"

"Grackle has a cellar!" cried Bud.

The men turned to see Grackle braced in his doorway with a double-barreled shotgun. "Jehovah has come and we must meet Him."

"Christ, man! You can't leave us out here to die," pleaded Bud. "Quick, let's get in the cellar."

"No! We must meet Him on the hilltop."

Bud stepped toward Grackle, but the old man cocked the hammers and pointed the gun straight into his face. Bud backed off and turned to look at the approaching funnel. They all looked at the black

twisting cloud. The roar came to them through the gently rustling leaves. They could not see the impact as it entered the development on the far side, but debris flew in the air above the tree line.

"Let's get in the gully!" cried Jack.

The men broke and ran for the wooded ravine. Behind them they could hear Grackle calling, "No! You must meet Him on the hilltop."

Fred and the others slipped down the eroded sides and hesitated among the trees at the bottom. Years of rains had washed out the soil around the old trees. They stood there like giant, ruined pillars of the old forest, raised above the ground on arthritic roots that twisted everywhere into the clay. Some of the trees had broken down. Many leaned into each other or rested against the gully's side.

"Get under the roots!" cried Jack, and each man ran to a tree and squirmed his way beneath it.

Lying in the roots, Fred saw the tree above him, creaking slowly, with half its branches dead, leaning like an old slate tombstone neglected in a pioneer graveyard. Then the cloud came to the gully's edge, roaring, black, angry, raging up to heaven, up into the dark billowing richness of sky. He imagined the roots twisting like snakes about him, strangling his body, tightening, squeezing, choking off his throat and guts. The tree was a living shaft pressing his body into the soil. Then his ears popped and, looking up, he saw Grackle flying in the sky.



## Prairie Summer

Always, under the heavy sun, there is time.  
You look around, and nothing has changed;  
the hills are more steady than the heart.

Clouds move for days across the sky,  
like strangers down the highway  
looking for some other place.

Michael Smetzer



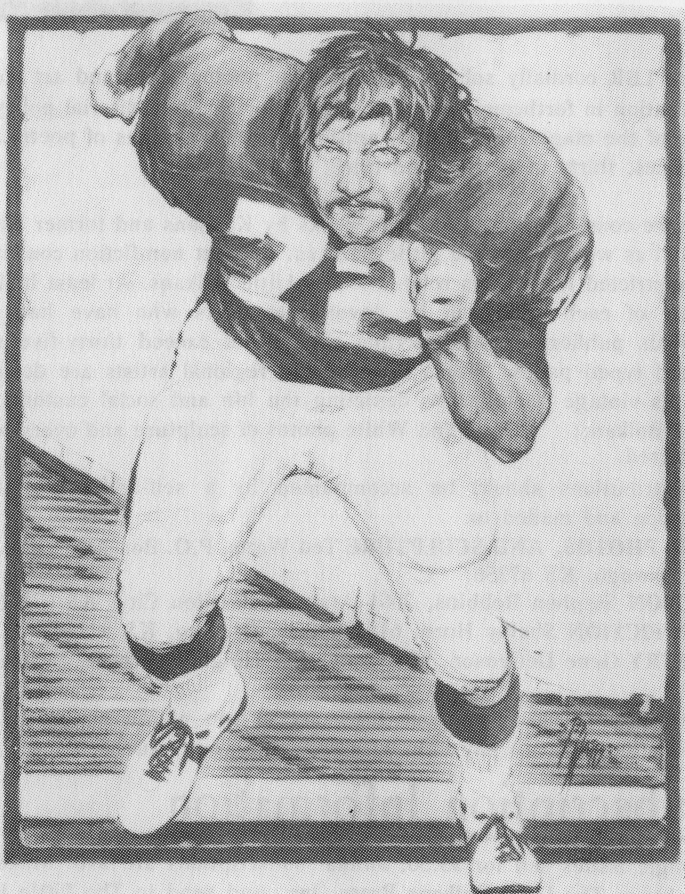
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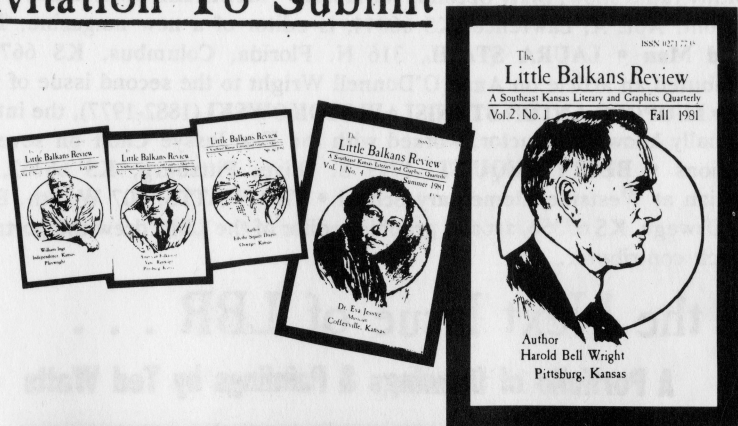
## In the Next Issue of LBR . . .

### A Portfolio of Drawings & Paintings by Ted Watts



Derrel Gofourth of Parsons, Kansas

# Invitation To Submit



The LBR cordially solicits manuscripts, photographs, and art work for publication in forthcoming issues. Under our current editorial policy, each issue of the magazine will have approximately ten pages of poetry, ten of graphics, thirty of fiction, and thirty of non-fiction.

Prime consideration is given to works by Kansans and former Kansans, as well as work set in the Little Balkans. Current non-fiction contributions are restricted to subjects related to the Little Balkans. At least half of the poetry of each issue will be devoted to poets who have had limited previous publication. Manuscripts should not exceed thirty-five double-spaced typed pages. Works of local and regional artists are desired, as well as vintage photographs depicting the life and social customs of the Little Balkans; Black and White photos of sculpture and oversize art is preferred.

Contributions should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope and mailed to:

**ART, PHOTOS, AND SCULPTURE** Ted Watts, P.O. Box 303, 87 W. Fourth St., Oswego, KS 67356.

**FICTION** Stephen Robbins, 2001 Arapaho, Garden City, KS 67846.

**NON-FICTION** Shelby Horn, 615 Kansas, Oswego, KS 67356.

**POETRY** Gene DeGruson, 601 Grandview Heights Terrace, Pittsburg, KS 66762.

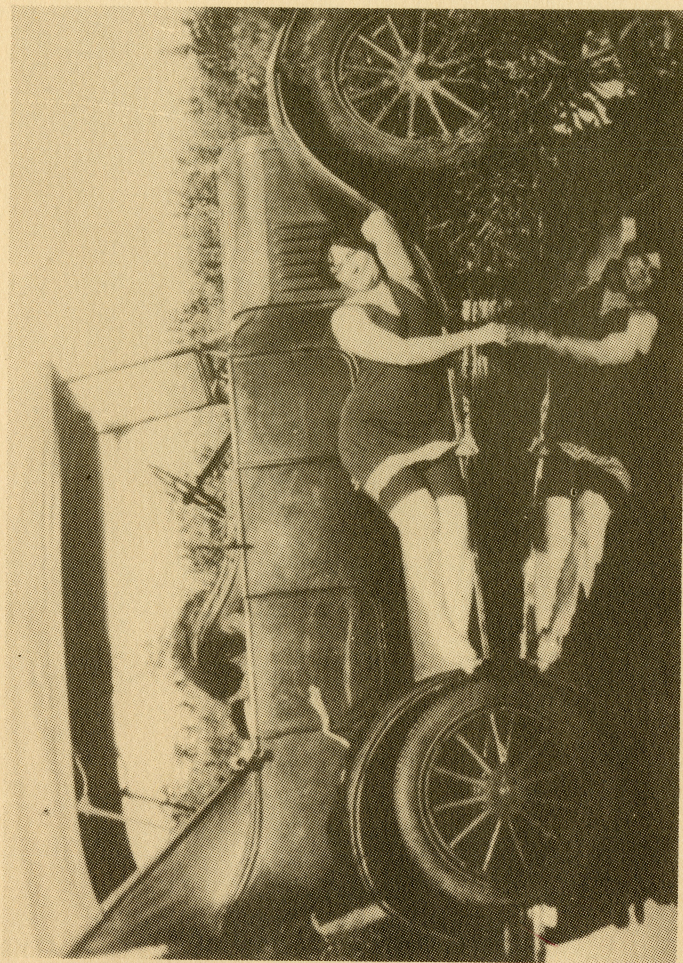
We promise to report our reactions to you within six weeks. Upon publication, we can pay only with copies of your issue.

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Single issues sell for \$3.50; annual subscriptions are \$10. Make check payable to **The Little Balkans Press, Inc.**, and send to The Little Balkans Press, Inc., 601 Grandview Heights Terrace, Pittsburg, KS 66762.



Summer



Lizzie Van Duker - 1924





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