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William Faulkner: An American Novelist Responds to the Writer's Challenge in the Atomic Age

I decline to accept the end of man . . . I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance.

William Faulkner

Submitted by scholar of the Institute, Maureen Neville
William Faulkner: Nobel Prize Speech

Stockholm, December 10, 1950

I feel that this award was not made to me as a man, but to my work—a life's work in the agony and sweat of the human spirit, not for glory and least of all for profit, but to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before. So this award is only mine in trust. It will not be difficult to find a dedication for the money part of it commensurate with the purpose and significance of its origin. But I would like to do the same with the acclaim too, by using this moment as a pinnacle from which I might be listened to by the young men and women already dedicated to the same anguish and travail, among whom is already that one who will some day stand where I am standing.

Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only one question: When will I be blown up? Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat.

He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid: and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed—love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice. Until he does so, he labors under a curse. He writes not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, of victories without hope and, worst of all, without pity or compassion. His griefs grieve on no universal bones, leaving no scars. He writes not of the heart but of the glands.

Until he learns these things, he will write as though he stood among and watched the end of man. I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure: that when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking. I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.
William Faulkner was not particularly well-suited to public speaking. His short stature, his shy demeanor, quiet voice and deep Southern dialect all were factors which made it difficult at times for listeners to understand, or even to hear, what he was saying. Nevertheless, he sometimes struck gold, as his 1950 Nobel Prize speech demonstrates. A reluctant prize recipient, who tried to find good cause not to go to Sweden to accept the award, and a terrified speaker, his speech was initially unintelligible to those in attendance. It was only the next day, when the words of his speech were printed in the newspaper, that commentators would recognize the quality of his speech.

Faulkner did not write very many nonfiction essays, and those few that he did write often bore strong stylistic similarities to his fiction. In fact, he mingled fact and fiction in his most famous essay, "Mississippi."

Many of Faulkner's essays and other public nonfiction works were collected in Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters (New York: Random House, 1965), edited by James B. Meriwether.

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The Travels of Black Bear Bob

PART 2 in a Continuing Series
excerpted + edited by Sheila Holtz

Wednesday, May 3, 2000... 8 PM  "BE HERE NOW" BAR, 
  → ASHEVILLE ←

I'm being here now, Sheila!
Black Bear Bob has made it to Asheville in one piece, despite
some trifling problems which I will not even mention, because:
I'M BEING HERE NOW. I guess this place was named for
the book by Ram Dass, I dunno- ask the bartenders ...
No, the guy who founded it 8 years ago just felt like calling
it that- no relation to book. I thought they had food in here,
but no- so I'll have to leave soon cause hungry (hungry bear)
and a band is playing in a while (BBB hates noise)...
I'm drinking 'WOODCHUCK CIDER....
Big black dog walking around, people playing pool, band
repping up, nice and dark in here (BBB likes dark bars
~ reminds him of his cave.) This place right next to
PACK SQUARE, one corner of which was where Thomas Wolfe's
father had his stone masonry shop- no longer there. Also, the
house T.W. born in no longer there- I just looked for it-
supposed to be at 92 Woodfin Street but now it doesn't
ever go that far; a shame because I have seen pictures
of the house and it is central to look Homeward Angel.

However, the second house he lived in ("Old Kentucky Home") still
stands despite being damaged by fire 2 years ago (with a
Thomas Wolfe visitor center behind it.) I had intended to
make the official first steps of my hike from the low stone
wall parapet around the Lebulo Vance (civil war governor of
NC) obelisk on the west of Pack Square (get it? ~ leave Pack
Square w/ my pack?) BUT the whole square is surrounded by
a chainlink fence and you can't get in!!! (Pipes broke under
fountain.) So, the best laid plans...

At any rate, I don't start walking until PLANETARY ALIGN-
MENT DAY, 5-5, (watch out for Liuge Earth Changes) after
a full day of absorbing sights and sounds of A'ville (got
off bus late this afternoon.) Did you get my map?
Black Bear Bob's
Borders Bob's Famous Backpacking Trip
Through the Southern Appalachians
Spring 2000

Borders Bob Dies
On Beltane —
Long Live Black Bear Bob!

1 = 5-4
2 = 5-11
3 = 5-13
4 = 5-25
5 = 6-1
6 = 6-8
7 = 6-15
8 = 6-22
(≈ 50 Days)

(Tennesssee)

(South Carolina)

(North Carolina)

(Georgia)

Approximate dates:
- Little Tennessee River
- Fontana Lake
- Great Smoky Mountains
- Cherokee Indian Reservation
- Standing Indian Rock
- Rock Creek Wild

Maps and markers:
- Unicoi Mountains
- Brasstown Bald
- Standing Indian Rock
- Ely's Log
- Rock Creek Wild

Names:
- Fontana Village
- Brasstown Bald
- Standing Indian Rock
- Ely's Log

Notations:
- Named after "tree" poet Murphy
- Abortion bomber hiding out around here somehow
- Rock makes 3-state junction of NC, SC, GA

Map details:
- Highest point along whole A.T. — 6,643' and highest mt. in eastern U.S.
- Inspired novel "Ride to Purgatory"
Los Alamos scientists on leave for stress

The Associated Press

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. — Los Alamos National Laboratory placed about 35 members of a nuclear weapons group on paid leave for a week to recuperate from stress related to an investigation into the disappearance of two computer hard drives from a vault in a top secret area.

"The attention focused on these employees due to the computer hard drive incident has had an impact on their work," lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold said Monday. They are on leave for "rest and recuperation," he said.

"It is not administrative leave; it is not disciplinary leave; it is authorized leave" similar to what the lab offered employees who lost homes in a wildfire in May, Danneskiold said.

They are due to return to work Aug. 7.

What is Wrong with Janet Reno?

Virgil Suarez

pick up the boy
pick up the boy

PiIIIickuptheboy

Pick him up now. Pick him up now. Pick him up now!

Virgil Suarez

was born in Havana, Cuba in 1962. Since 1974 he has lived in the United States. He is the author of over fifteen books of prose and poetry, most recently of the poetry collection titled In the Republic of Longing. His poetry, stories, translations, and essays continue to be published in journals and reviews like Wilshire Review, Flyway, The New York Quarterly, The Bitter Oleander, and LUNA, and many others nationally and internationally. Next year Palm Crows, his fifth collection of poems, will be out. Currently he is at work on a new collection tentatively titled Caliban Ponders Chaos. When he is not tending the garden, he divides his time between Miami and Tallahassee where he lives with his family.
Bern Porter International is published monthly and is mailed to subscribers and gratis to a rotating list of devotees and afficionados. Donations are welcome but not required. If you choose to donate, please send cash or 33¢ stamps to S. Holtz, address below.

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