

B a y o u

R. e v i e w

Fall 1990



Bayou Review

Fall 1990

Bayou Review is published biannually by UH-Downtown. The magazine welcomes essay, poetry, short story, art and photography submissions from the UH-

Downtown students and faculty. Mail submissions with S.A.S.E. to: *Bayou Review*, UH-D Center, 101 Main St., Houston, Texas 77002.



Bayou Review

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Bayou Review Contest

Bayou Review awards four \$50 prizes for winning submissions in the categories of essay, poetry, short story, and cover illustration. All student submissions are considered for the contests.

The winners for the Fall 1990 contests are:

Essay	Diana Hornick	<i>On Maine's Coast</i>
Poetry	Jun Juguilon	<i>A Solo</i>
Short Story	Veronica Alker	<i>The Drought</i>

The cover contest did not receive a winning illustration; therefore, the prize money will be used for the *Bayou Review* Spring 1991 cover contest.

Contents

Alker, Veronica	<i>The Drought</i>	27
Brown, Kevin M.	<i>Glass</i>	37
	<i>Winter Skies</i>	37
Caven, Jeanette	<i>On Knowing Julian</i>	5
Cole, Caroline	<i>A Solution to the Problem</i>	9
	<i>Cathrine</i>	19
Doan, Phu T.	<i>The Longest Week</i>	38
Dubuisson, Philip	<i>Palmer Street at Night</i>	22
Eicher, John J.	<i>A Bay Fisherman's Dream</i>	50
Gonzales, Martha Ideal	<i>My Apology</i>	18
Hardy, Debra L.	<i>Metallic Mentality</i>	33
Hickman, Jenet Renee	<i>There's No Place Like Home</i>	52
Holder, Sharon	<i>Somewhere</i>	24

Contents

Hornick, Diana	<i>On Maine's Coast</i>	34
Juguilon, Jun	<i>A Solo</i>	8
Kellner, Rob	<i>Untitled</i>	25
Laverpool, Lenora	<i>An Illusion of Love</i>	20
Milton, Gloria	<i>Clouds</i>	26
	<i>My Family</i>	47
	<i>Tower of Babel</i>	4
Peterson, Irene	<i>Always After</i>	29
	<i>With Me</i>	49
Rogerson, Kimberly	<i>Daddy</i>	46
Shelton, Marc	<i>Second Chance</i>	12
Verble, Desiree Y.	<i>All in a Day's Ride</i>	30



Gloria Milton

Tower of Babel

Ham's people were the first
to try to reach the top,
but the Lord said, "No way!"
Thus He sent down a spirit
of confusion
amongst the people.

Shaka's people also tried
to reach the top.
The strangers showed them
the way.
They brought them to the
great big ships.

Nat's people searched
valiantly
for a way to reach the top,
but the declarers
said they were 3/5 human
and could never be equal
to white men.

Ella Baker's people said,
"One more time ..."
as they struggled in a
new free state,
but Jim Crow said,
"No way, nigger!"

Martin's people said,
"It's time for a change!"
Intelligent people
killed
our Moses.

Louis' people said,
"NO MORE!"
Today we are still
fighting for
freedom, equality, and security
in a society
of cave dwellers.





Jeanette Caven

On Knowing Julian

When Julian and I first met we were introduced at a party. At least that's what he told me. I remember meeting him at the beach, but wherever we first met we didn't actually carry on a conversation until last year; he showed up at my birthday party with some friends of mine.

For weeks I thought he had a crush on me because he would call all the time. We met a few times for drinks, and I was surprised he never tried to kiss me. The funny thing is, he was really interested in being just my friend. He really liked my company because we shared a common interest—writing. He was a very talented writer.

One day I went to his apartment and I was thoroughly impressed with his extensive book collection and the fact that he had read each one and enjoyed telling me about them.

Julian worked for a large theater company, so we saw every play for free. We loved dressing up and going to the parties after the show, especially since we knew we would never have been invited if he hadn't worked there.

One thing I remember most about Julian is that we never fought. We disagreed a few times but we never yelled at each other. He had a very quiet and sensual voice and a wonderful flair for making you see his point of view. I could tell him everything and I did. He knew all my secrets and never held them against me.

Julian also had a wonderful sense of humor. He told me about a party he wanted to take me to after the opera and said that everyone was supposed to dress like their favorite character. We took our costumes and changed after the opera, arriving late because Julian said



lighter underneath it until it bubbled and all the powder dissolved, making the liquid look like muddy water. He set the spoon down, tore off a small piece of cotton, rolled it into a little ball, and dropped it into the spoon. He put the tip of the needle into the cotton and drew the brown fluid through it. Then he said, 'OK Elaine, take the belt and tie yourself off.' I was so scared, but I couldn't back out; it had gone too far. 'Hold the belt tight, but let go as soon as I shoot it in, OK?' He told me to pump up my arm so that a vein in the crook of my arm would stand out, then he stuck the needle in my arm.

"I don't remember it hurting at all. He pulled the plunger out a little to make sure he was on a vein, and I saw my dark red blood sucked into the syringe; yep, he was on. He slowly pushed the plunger in, and I let go of the belt and reeled. I felt like a huge wave of warm muddy water bowled me over. After the wave retreated,

I felt this warmth seeping all through my body, then I got hot, and then I felt nauseous. I staggered up and made it into the bathroom just in time to vomit again and again until my stomach was empty.

"After I was finished getting sick, I couldn't think of anything but how good I felt, and how happy I was that I had found the drug that was going to make me feel not so scared and alone, the drug that was going to help me through the rough times. What I didn't realize was that drug would become my lover, my best friend, my savior, and once it had me in its relentless clutch it would try to kill me before it would let me go. But I didn't think that it could hurt me. I was 18; I could not conceive of mortality. I was an addict and I was scared and hurting and I found something that made me feel safe — something that took away the pain — I believed that I had found a life saver — that I finally possessed salvation."

Second Chance

"Come on in! The water's great!" Dave yelled from beneath the pier. Without hesitation, I dove into the dark brown abyss of Mississippi mud-water that we knew as the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Dave was right. The water did feel great — warm, but better than the hot and sticky, ninety degree weather typical of Jackson summers. As I stood up, the thick, gummy mud on the floor of the reservoir crept up past my ankles. I panicked for a moment, not quite sure if I could get loose. The goo around my feet had formed a suction, as if it were trying to hold me to the bottom and suck me under. Frightened, I jerked my legs away quickly, and to my relief, broke free without much effort.

"Damn, I think there's something alive down there!" I said, still half startled.

"What's the matter? Afraid of a little mud?" Dave said with a grin.

I looked up at the pier. "Come on in, Debbie," I said tauntingly.

"Hell no!" she replied bluntly. "That water's too nasty, and I can't stand that m-u-u-d. Come carry me."

I swam to the pier and lowered her into the water. She wrapped her legs around my waist and her arms around my neck. That was my Debbie! Good thing that we were the only people at the reservoir that morning, not that she would have cared if the whole world had been watching.

Debbie was my first real girlfriend. She was a cute little redhead; extremely dingy and, though I never would have admitted it, cheap. We had been dating for

Cathrine
1970 - 1989

Cathrine is dead. Not asleep. Not in peace.
Wrapped in absolute stillness that is
a fitting end to futility.
Housed in a box planed and tacked by
loveless days and men she pined over.
Icy fingers grip nothing, a familiar position
for hands warmed by illusion and misguided
passion.

An alabaster slab stands above,
name, dates, and bird shit epitaph
mirroring the reality of her life;
below, her rotting body swells and tears,
The only change she has ever known.



Lenora Laverpool

Yet we've never met
You fascinate me
Just by your motions
And the person I see

An illusion of love
You have brought to my life
While the reality of the possibility
Strikes as hard as a knife

A kiss on the cheek
I give you each day
As my dream for us to unite
Grows further and further away

So to you my friend
I say you've missed out
Simply by choosing
The more attractive route



untitled

f♦♦♦ off

Can you help me, please?

i have a problem
for which there is no answer
i have a problem
for which there is no question

you will forever fight
the whole of your familiar
you will forever extinguish
the meaning of my truths

Can you help me, please?

there is no pleasure
in association

i want to know
why you are the way you are
i want to know
why your life should be worth living

The Drought

The day was hot, the kind of hot that made everything seem stagnant and still, except for the sound of the crickets. Nothing moved, not even the dry pale grass quivered or rustled — not even one little bit. I felt like I was the only one or thing alive, except for the crickets.

I had gone on a walk to clear my mind, but it wasn't working — the more I tried, the more I thought, and the more cluttered my thoughts became. I began to think things, the kind of things that only a person can think to oneself, the kind of things that make you think you could possibly be crazy, and you wonder if other people have these kinds of crazy thoughts — and maybe — just maybe the whole world's crazy and nobody knows it. As I walked and thought, my feet kicked up the dry dust which stuck to my skin and mixed with my sweat. It made me feel gritty, so I thought I might go

down to the creek and take a swim. But then I remembered the creek had dried up. The thought crossed my mind again, "Was I the only one or thing alive?" Even the creek was dead — or at least for the while. The dry grass continued to lay still and the trees bore no leaves. Everything was so quiet. Why was it so quiet? I knew, the birds were not singing. There was no sound except for the crickets and my feet, feet which heavily pounded the dusty, dry road. I kept walking and thinking. It was the worst drought these parts have had as far back as anyone could remember. Everything was dried and shriveled.

As I walked, I saw in the distance "the abandoned shack." I used to think it was haunted. As I approached it I realized there was someone on the porch, an old and wizened man sitting in a rocker, rocking back and forth, back and forth. I called out to him, "Hello." — no answer.



Irene Peterson

always after

for a fleeting moment
life is as it was

before

then I remember
it will never be

before

it will always be

after





can't control the buses; we just ride them. I don't care what time I catch the bus, something unexpected always happens.

9:15- The bus driver is still in the store. I hear someone behind me say that he must be doing drugs since he keeps dragging that bag behind him. He now comes out with a cup of coffee, and another bus just passes by. It's probably the one that I need to ride.

9:30- I just boarded the #2 bus. There are empty seats on this bus, and it's much colder. There are a lot of hispanics on this bus because there are many who live in the Bellaire area. These people on this bus don't look like they're going anywhere special, just downtown. There's a Mexican woman teaching a man Spanish. The man is black, but he's not American. I think he's from Africa or Jamaica because he doesn't have a Spanish or American accent. At first I thought he was Cuban.

The woman has him repeating certain words and saying vowel sounds. He's good though, because he can hold a conversation in Spanish. He probably knows three or four different languages.

9:45- There's no change except that the bus driver is driving so slow that I'm afraid that we might stop in the middle of the street. I think they sometimes start daydreaming. I hate bus drivers. They're rude, obnoxious, and they pretend to be important. Some stupid man is beating on the back of my seat, disturbing my thoughts. It's like he's doing it on purpose because I can't see the purpose. Maybe he's entertaining himself. Now other people are starting to look back there at him. I still have to catch another bus just to get up the hill to the university. It's already 9:50, and I'm not even off this bus yet. If Dr. Worsham has a problem with my being late, this log should explain everything clearly.





Diana Hornick

I gaze out towards the dark and endless horizon while waves rush in below my feet.

As high-tide rolls in, I feel fear combined with awe while I watch the waves crash into the rocks below. My feet are merely two or three yards above these forceful waves. A wave is defined as "a ridge or a swell moving to and fro along the surface of the ocean." Therefore, these are more than waves thrashing the coast of Maine. They are thunderous masses of fury colliding frantically into the coastline.

I have never observed anything else this powerful in nature. I have, however, witnessed hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and other powerful forces of nature. But the sea is so natural, not a "mutant" of nature like those storms. The sea rages into the rocks below me. It speaks to me through the winds it brings to the shore, "I am the strongest force in nature and I dare you to challenge me."

I cannot.

The rumbling mass slams itself onto the rocks below. Then, it abruptly, yet gracefully, glides back toward the open sea. It seems undecided which direction to take. Undecided or not, it is serious and I can feel its seriousness all around me. I know it can easily jump up, wrap its cold and salty arms around me, then drag me into its depths.

I realize how powerless and minute I am, as a human being, on this earth. There are too many unexplainable forces of power on the planet, and I am not one of them. But the sea is. This coastline is. Maine is.

It is getting colder and darker. The northern breezes off of the Atlantic Ocean frigidly blow in my face. I am glad I wore my denim jeans and jacket today. The summers are so pleasant, the winters so harsh. I'd live here if it weren't for the nasty, winter weather. Another





Diana Hornick

reason to live here is because Bangor is nearby. Stephen King, my favorite author, was born, raised, and will probably die in Bangor, Maine. He centers most of his novels and short stories here in Maine. And to think, I am only 50 miles south of Bangor.

As I look to my left and right, I feel enveloped by the colossal rocks. The tall telephone poles that line US 1 rise unnaturally above my enclosed haven.

The coast of Maine is all that one imagines it is, and more. I can always see a lighthouse from anywhere on the beach. All of the beaches are lined with gargantuan to near-microscopic sized rocks. And the aroma of lobster dinners and salt breezes from the sea saturate the air.

While sitting upon these rocks and watching the sea below, I enjoy thinking. Thinking of nothing. Thinking of everything. Large masses of water seem to have

that effect on me. All is peaceful; I feel too relaxed. In one breath I can describe the sea's overwhelming power, yet in the next breath I feel calmness all around me and throughout my body.

There is no place else on earth to think, feel, and be one with nature like on Maine's coast.





Kevin M. Brown

glass

it's winter through the glass
the air seems crisp
all is still
the world a portrait
cold and clear

winter skies

winter skies
unequalled calm
serenity of the soul





Phu T. Doan

Before we left, my mother gave me her shirt that she was wearing, and I treasure it to this day.

As we departed the house, my heart began to pound faster and faster, harder and harder. Dad warned us not to look scared. We tried, but it was so difficult and even more difficult to stop crying. My mind went berserk; I missed Mom, yet I feared getting killed or stranded in the middle of the ocean. Most of all, I feared never getting to hold my mother ever again. At the age of ten, all the surprise and tension was killing me physically and mentally. I was scared, scared of everyone and everything I saw. I tried my best not to worry Father so much. For him, this no return journey was twice as hard on him than on me. If we were caught, Father would go to prison for a very long time. It was the most painful thing for him to leave his wife and children for the freedom of his two oldest boys. If we stayed in Vietnam,

we would pack our bags and go to war in Cambodia when we turned fifteen. To me, my father was the bravest man in the world; I will always be proud of him.

Between six and seven o'clock we met two men in their late twenties at a strange coffee shop somewhere near the riverfront in Saigon. One of the men escorted my brother away. That was another painful blow because I felt the man had taken a part of me. I cried silently and tried very hard not to make a scene. As we went on with the plan, Father and I went with the other man. We traveled for two or three hours. The land around us was full of wild grass and uncultivated farm land. The man looked around alertly when we entered a small trail. After a little while, we got to this medium-sized barn. It did not look to me like this barn was functional. The night got dark and chilly. The man warned us not to look suspicious and absolutely not to make any noise. When





Phu T. Doan

we got inside the barn, I could barely see, but when I focused I saw people lying on the ground. I estimated about fifty people, all who managed to get there using one plan or another. In the meantime, I thought about my older brother. I kept bugging my father about him. He assured me that everything would be all right. As I sat among this strange crowd, I began to think about my mother, older sisters, and younger brothers. When a person is far from home and surrounded by strangers, it is natural for family to be first on the mind. I felt so helpless.

After hours passed, sitting, thinking, hoping, wishing, and praying, I suddenly heard a noise from a distance. It sounded like someone was yelling. Father heard the noise, too. He pulled me up and moved to the door. Many people were sleeping, but some also heard the hollering. As the noise came closer and closer, the

words became clear. "Split up! The police are coming ... Run! Run! Run!" Gunshots accompanied the voice.

Father and I hurried out the door with everyone else. Some of the sleeping people rushed out as though they were chased by a nightmare, leaving their belongings behind. At first, we ran straight towards anywhere. We tried to run on the narrow strips of land between the rice fields. It was dark, so we were extra careful not to fall into the rice fields. The land was very muddy. I began to lose ground; Father, a fast and strong runner, pulled me out of the mud. Many people screamed, especially the old women and girls. Some of them could not run on the narrow land strip which divided the rice fields, so they fell down in the deep mud. The mud could sometimes reach over the knees. The police were coming closer and closer. They were shooting everywhere. Father noticed that we were near a river; it was logical





Phu T. Doan

experienced enough to handle the boat in the water for the several days it would take to get to Indonesia.

The boat was about twelve to fifteen meters and was loaded with seventy-eight passengers. Inside, odors of gas and vomit drifted. Women and children stayed inside the cabin, no room except to sit. The men stayed on deck to act as fishermen. The next morning, about seven o'clock, while we were moving, we saw a fishing boat. The people on the boat were curious to see who we were. They asked us several questions, but we brushed them off with a couple of answers to avoid them getting closer to us. I found out later that they were fishermen from Phu Quoc, a communist industrial town. That was bad news because most of them worked for the government. We were glad when they left, knowing they were still suspicious of us.

The danger was not over yet; we were still inside

Vietnamese water. As evening came along, my father spotted through his binoculars a boat in the far distance traveling at a great speed. Father, with his expertise, told us that the boat looked like one of the patrol boats equipped with weapons. The people once again grew terrified. Equipped with only a map and a compass, we didn't know if we had entered "freedom waters," international waters where the Vietnamese government had no authority over us.

After watching us for thirty intense minutes, the fearsome patrol boat turned around. Father figured we must have entered international waters. We all were in a state of joy and felt like we were free already.

The second night of the trip, we relaxed more, relaxed in a sense of being free from everything. Now, in the middle of the huge water, our tiny boat filled with passengers mourning. Each had his or her own sorrow,





which without exchanging, we understood. Later that night, a minor storm passed by; I prayed that it would not strengthen. We managed through it without any damage. I was surprised at how everyone kept so calm. I guess we knew we were sailing a thin line between life and death. As time progressed into the next day, Father mentioned that if we saw any ships, we would try to get their attention for food, water, gasoline, and maybe they would even rescue us.

During most of the trip, my brother and I sat close to our father. I suffered from sea sickness, throwing up the entire trip; my brother remained healthy, high-spirited the entire time. The third night Father sighted a ship and started to signal SOS. After a few flashes, they signaled back some code. Father translated that the ship wanted us to come to them; therefore, we did what they requested. After trying to reach them for thirty to forty-

five minutes, Father said we weren't getting any closer. Instead, we were headed back in the direction we escaped from, Vietnam. Naturally, we stopped and turned around. That ship tried to trick us. We all agreed that it was a Soviet ship.

The next day we noticed food, water and gasoline supplies dwindling, the major supplies of gas and water drastically low. Maybe the owner of the boat did not plan well or maybe there was not enough room to store more. Whatever the case might have been, our remaining gasoline probably would not last but one or two more days. The water had to be conserved. Everyone was to drink a smaller quantity and drink only twice a day. Among the group there was always disagreement and dissatisfaction, providing extra work for my father and crew members who tried to keep everyone calm.

Fortunately, at about five p.m. that night we





Phu T. Doan

spotted a humongous oil tanker from Taiwan heading towards Thailand. First we asked them to pick us up, but they were busy with their business. Instead, they gave us a couple barrels of gasoline, water, and food, more than our boat could store. We felt very grateful to them. After a short-lived excitement, we moved on.

The following day everyone looked weary. Most of the crewmen received bad sunburns, including my father. Even though their bodies were exhausted, their minds thought about the Thailand pirates. According to the map, we were nearing Thailand water where many pirates operated. We were aware of the horrible news about the sea robbers. They robbed, raped and killed innocent people who tried desperately to find freedom. The pirates knew the "boat people" brought everything of value that they owned with them. Pirates were the worst people on this planet. My father and the crew

directed the women and children to go inside the cabin; the men stayed up on deck like they did the first day on the boat. This time, though, instead of acting like fishermen, the men were armed and ready to defend. We would rather die than let these pirates walk on us. Through the day, practically everyone looked around alertly. We kept very quiet. We felt like they were about to creep upon us any time now. I could see the frightened look on everyone's face. This was probably the worst time of the whole journey. I prayed and hoped that whoever or whatever we were waiting for would never show up. The fifth night, we began feeling a little at ease. We traveled smoothly without sighting anything until nine or ten o'clock that night. We met a ship from East Germany. They were very kind to us; they gave us food, drinks, cigarettes and gasoline. We communicated in both English and French. They asked us why we left



Vietnam; we replied that we could no longer stand communism. Of course, we knew the answer offended them; after all, we were talking about them also. Today, to think back, the East Germans probably understood our feelings well because now they are no longer communist. After the long conversation, we moved on to our destination, Indonesia, which was oncoming.

Next morning, when I woke up, amazingly enough I saw land. My father, who had stayed up all night, informed me that it was Indonesia, and the only thing he could do now was to go parallel with the land to see if there were any habitats. During this period of time, we knew there were many refugee camps set up along these islands. Also, there were boats and ships patrolling these areas to help out the "boat people." We hoped to see these camps or ships. Our patience ran low as the day progressed. On the sixth night came the moment we

waited for, we saw little houses along the beach. Sure enough, it was a refugee camp. One boat came out and greeted us. Our long struggle had paid off.

Today, after ten years, the experiences of my father, brother and I are always on my mind. We were the lucky ones. Many unfortunate people died of starvation or were murdered either by the Vietnamese government or by the terrible sea robbers. My oldest sister died in 1986 of starvation and thirst after the boat's motor stopped operating. The boat drifted for thirty days. My father, sacrificing his happiness for the safety of myself and my brother, is responsible for saving seventy-five others.

He recently passed away from kidney failure.



Irene Peterson

with me

born of heart
not of womb

loved by spirit
not of blood

learned by compassion
not by pain

touched by understanding
not by the hand

gone of your body
not of my mind

angry of my loss
not of your peace

sheltered from life
not from death

stay with me ...

in memory of her adopted mother





John J. Eicher

gradually awakened the senses.
Shimmers of gold danced
in ripples of water,
Then bounced off salt grass
and back into the sky.

White, green and orange,
the cork swayed in the water,
tethered to the man's brush
by a spider's silken thread.
For hours it seemed,
as the minutes would pass,
Nothing would move
but the creatures of nature.
Then suddenly the cork
would disappear under water.

The line becomes taught
and the pole would bend.
Then the painter and tools
would work as though one,
And on to the stringer
one more speck or red drum.

From the live well beside him
another shrimp he would offer;
A stroke back with his brush,
Then a gentle stroke forward,
Take up the slack line
and find that comfortable spot.
The painter's feet dangling;
he's at peace by the water.





Jenet Renee Hickman

There's No Place Like Home

"Boo, I think Mama's callin' ya." "Freda, no she ain't. I didn't hear her." "Girl, go see what she wants." "Alright, doggit." "Jenet, come here girl." "Okay, Grandma." "You have to crawl under the house and untangle that damn dog again. His leash is caught on something and make sure he don't run 'cause I'm gonna whip his stupid ass." "Grandma I always gotta go under the house, shoot. That dog make me sick, huh." "Girl, get under there."

I first set foot in my grandma's house when I was three months old. Whether I wanted to be there or not I had no choice for I was a victim of unfortunate circumstances. I was born in San Diego, California on July 18, 1969 to a young woman aged twenty. My mother, Glory Jean, and my father were never married. My mother is

a very independent woman who doesn't believe in either marriage or the idea of spending her life with one man who may try to become her dictator. However, my father was allowed to see me at my mother's discretion. One day while I was at my sitter's, my father came by to pick me up—but never returned me. My mother was frantic; she used everything she had to find me. Well, she found me with my father, who had no intentions of returning me to my mother. My father and his parents were going to take my mother to court to gain custody of me. My mother said there was no way in hell they were going to keep me. My mother and grandma flew me to Louisiana and to this day, September 10, 1990, twenty-one years later, my father still does not know where I am. Because of his love for me, he made a mistake which cost him the



Jenet Renee Hickman

chance to see his first born bloom.

The year was 1969, when integration had not fully taken place in Louisiana. My grandmother is not prejudiced, yet my white skin color as a baby truly aggravated her. She told me a story about an incident that remained in her memory. When I was about four months old, my grandmother and I went to the store. One has to keep in mind that I was an extremely bright baby with light brown curly hair and slanted eyes. However, she left me in the basket for a few seconds to go get an item. A white lady was standing by the basket adoring and playing with me when my grandmother returned. "What a beautiful baby. What couple are you babysitting for?"

"I ain't babysittin' for anyone; this is my grandchild."

My granny said the woman almost fell over dead because she had mistaken a black baby for a white baby.

After that incident, my grandmother went home and replied to my aunts, "When is this girl going to change colors 'cause she is too white?" My grandma prayed I would turn colors, but I think the gods were ignoring her prayers because until the age of five, I remained the same.

DeRidder is a small town approximately thirty miles west of Lake Charles. Even today, the blacks stay on one side of the town and whites on the other. But in some areas, the neighborhoods are mixed. I stayed with my granny for four years until my mother finished school in California. At the age of five, I moved to Houston but every summer I was back at my granny's house in DeRidder. My granny's house was located on 1523 Sunset Street. The house was green with white window sills, a gigantic front and back yard, and a gray concrete front porch. My grandma would plant orange



Jenet Renee Hickman

house, I simply found a string and tied it around a chicken neck for bait. There were many crawfish holes in my granny's yard and sometimes you could see a crawfish pecking out of its hole like a little kid hiding from its mama. I had to have been crazy to get up at 3:30 a.m. with my aunts, uncles and granny to go fishing at Cameron and Bundicks (about 1980, a cousin drowned in a whirlpool at Bundicks and another drowned when he fell out of his boat). We would sit in that hot boiling sun for hours. But man, I loved it. I wouldn't have had it any other way even if one paid me. We would bring fried chicken, sandwiches, cookies, chips, beer and cokes. We would stay until night, then head back home.

When I was young I did the most stupid things and my eyes sometimes played tricks on me (except for Santa Claus). One day my aunt Freda, her boyfriend, his brothers, sisters and I went to Bundicks. My aunt's boy-

friend and his brothers went to another part of Bundicks to fish while us girls went swimming (in our clothes, it was unexpected). Everyone was swimming and having a good time. I was being aquatic, swimming underwater with my eyes open trying to see through the murky water. Ever heard of "the boy who cried wolf"?

"Alligator, alligator! Freda, an ALLIGATOR!"

Everyone was screaming at the top of their lungs trying to get out of the water. Since I was little and couldn't swim as fast, I expeditiously proceeded to climb onto my aunt's back, grabbing her neck too tightly to hang on, so that I almost cut off her air supply. I was in the process of climbing on her head with my legs tied around her neck before she stopped me. Well, everyone made it to the shore safely and Edgar and his brothers ran back when they heard the screaming.

"Boo saw an alligator." "It's right there, you see





Jenet Renee Hickman

furious when granny moved out of the house because it was our house. To me it meant no more family gatherings, holidays or one of the many happenings around the house. I grew up in that house. I must have cried because it felt as though someone was stealing from me.

But I realized no one can rob me of my many happy, sometime humorous memories of growing up in DeRidder on 1523 Sunset Street. My aunts are now married with kids. DeRidder is home to Mae Mae and Freda emigrated to Newton, Texas. It seems as though my childhood never ended because it stays in my mind forever through my family's never-ending stories. Places, people and things may change on the outside but things are better than ever on the inside. Moreover, I learned from my childhood that it doesn't take much to make one happy. As long as one has family and friends who love him/her dearly, one's wealth will always be plentiful. I

know because my wealth originated in a house on a dirt road on 1523 Sunset Street.





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