

We Can't Get Enough of Some People's Writing

Margaret D. Bauer, Editor

For young literary scholars, one rule of thumb for submitting articles for publication is to note whether a journal has recently published on the same subject and, if so, to submit the article to a different publication. That is not the case with *NCLR*; we want to hear about – and from – talented North Carolina writers over and over again. In last year's introduction to the Flashbacks section, I noted the regularity of Charles Chesnutt appearances in *NCLR*, and this year's issue also includes an essay on the writer. Similarly, this is the third issue to include an essay about a Lee Smith novel – this time, an article on *The Last Girls*.

In 2011, we published an interview with Michael Malone, and in this issue you'll find Jordan Stone's essay on Malone's novel *Handling Sin*, which may inspire you to take a road trip through the 1980s with the novel's protagonist, Raleigh Hayes. I took the opportunity to read *Handling Sin* before I began preparing this essay for publication (as I often do so that the literary scholar doesn't spoil a novel's ending for me). The experience, as I told Michael Malone when I emailed him for some photographs, reminded me how often it seems that I finally get around to reading one of the books from my very long "want to read" list at just the right time. In this case, after losing my father last summer, it was fortuitous that I chose Michael's novel to read on the plane to Louisiana to spend Christmas with my family. The dying father in this novel sends his son on quite the scavenger hunt in an effort to show him what a blessed life he has, if he would only take some time to look up from his work and notice it. The resulting road trip ends in New Orleans, where family members are reunited, before the son must tell his father goodbye. Bittersweet, but inspiring. Thank you, Michael Malone and Jordan Stone for prompting this timely read.

Another familiar author is Allan Gurganus, whose writing has both appeared in and inspired other essays for *NCLR*. Here he is the subject of an essay by Zackary Vernon, which focuses on another aspect of the writer's creativity: his unique Halloween tradition. Zackary Vernon himself is becoming a regular *NCLR* contributor (see an interview by him earlier in this same issue, and he has also reviewed for us), which I hope will motivate other young literary scholars to explore the work of North Carolina writers and submit their essays and interviews to *NCLR*. We also welcome new book reviewers.

In this section, too, we have more poetry by two long-time regulars, James Applewhite, for whom our poetry competition is named, and Fred Chappell, who selected the winning poem last year. The winner of the 2013 James Applewhite Poetry Prize, Susan Laughter Meyers, has been a finalist all three years we have run the competition. Several other finalists are familiar from previous years of the competition, so their poems are in the Flashbacks sections both here and in the 2014 issue of *NCLR Online*, which came out earlier this year and can be accessed from our website. While you are there, take a look at the submission guidelines for our own James Applewhite Poetry Prize competition and for the Doris Betts Fiction Prize competition, which is sponsored by the North Carolina Writers' Network. We hope that seeing so many poets' return appearances motivates North Carolina writers to submit their work. Submissions are blind, and our readers vary from year to year, while our Poetry and Fiction Editors' high standards remain steadfast as they select the writers whose work will appear in our pages. I look forward to working again with old friends and to making new ones as we prepare these works for publication in future issues. ■

