Life and Letters

Volume XIIa
Spring 1995

→→→→→→→→→→→→

The students who participate in **Life & Letters** often describe their experiences in the life history writing class through metaphors. Although metaphor as a poetic technique sometimes loses its power through overuse, I recognize its enduring ability to express the inexpressible. In that sense, **Life & Letters** has become my metaphor for life. The power behind a well told story never loses its fervor or contact with life. The stories like the ones collected here and that I have listened to weekly for the past several years have become my teachers, helping me to give expression to this oftentimes tentatively received gift we call "life."

One student has described her stories as footprints; another, a patchwork quilt. They have become to some, an exercise in self-restraint, a treasure, a keepsake, and a journey, even a carrot on a stick. The class has become a fairy tale to others, and a catalyst. A slice of humanity. A step forward. It's even been called "fun." Recognizing the validity of the use of these comparisons and descriptions demands context. But the semester is gone. The stories have been told. The responses given. In their places, this collection becomes our way of passing on to you the richness of lives shared through **Life & Letters**. Read it as a story. And enjoy it as part of yours.

--------Joan Stear
USL, Lafayette, Louisiana
Spring 1995

Life & Letters thanks the University of Southwestern Louisiana
and Lafayette General Medical Center for their support.

→→→→→→→→→→→→

Front Cover (clockwise from upper right hand corner): Annie H. Calais;
Marion Embree (on right); Ruth B. Oates;
Mary Scheps and mother; Mallie Devenport; Florette Patin; Mitzi Doucet;
Wilma R. Bowles; (center) Ivan J. Arceneaux

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CREATIVE BOREDOM

by

Anne Comeaux

Long, hot summer days. Sultry, humid summer nights. Annoying house flies by day! Irritating swamp mosquitoes by night! No electricity to provide energy for heat or light! No electric fans! No radios! No televisions! No video arcades! No Nintendo games! Few bicycles for racing about the neighborhood! No accessible libraries! No Walmart or Toys R Us! Only the ingredients for boredom!

Boredom: that crippling disease-like attitude paralyzing mind and body! What havoc its power is capable of unleashing! Yet, within it lies the seed of creativity, the source of genius itself. How did a child of the 1930's and early 1940's cope with conditions and situations that make for boredom? To find an answer to that query, come and visit certain small boys living on the west bank of the Mississippi River in St. James, Louisiana.

A boy's mind! Gifted by its Creator for imagination and foresight, it perceives some salvageable debris in a trash heap. To its sharp focus, the metal cans, refuse from the kitchen, become treasures in the making. The cab of a toy truck takes shape in its young mind. In the distance he sees trees, small ones with sturdy round branches. He sees wheels turning. A hammer, a few nails or tacks, a saw stored for use in repairs, and a mother's cutting shears! The raw materials for a work of art are all within grasp.

An image emerges! Embellished by colorful pictures in a Christmas edition of the Sears Roebuck catalog, the image takes form.

Slowly, painstakingly, the cans are flattened, cut and shaped to form the cab of a small truck. Wood is cut, shaped and planed to form the chassis. Branches are cut into thin segments to serve as wheels. Finally there comes forth a toy--unmistakably it is a truck. A piece of twine tied to its front end, and the little boy becomes the envy of a neighborhood. But the quality of play has been enhanced by the construction of the toy. How long the toy lasts is irrelevant. The process engaged in has been a creative experience. Lessons have been learned through the process of construction--patience in production, acceptance of limitations, yet at the same time, the challenge of forging ahead for improvement. The art of improvising has been learned. Pride in workmanship, that priceless treasure, has been nurtured.

Another day, another time--the mood might be aggression. The need to defend himself or initiate warfare may prevail. Finding a forked branch with just the correct angle between its prongs is on this day's agenda. A piece of shoe leather, cut to a size of 2 ½-3 inches by 1 ½ inch to house the ammunition. Its corners are rounded for convenience and appearance. The leather portion is now attached to the rubber straps, and the rubber straps are securely fastened to the prongs of the Y-shaped stick with the other hand. Is the slingshot effective? Girls, get out of the way!

Another day, another mood! A reed hits his fancy. Bamboo canes with just the right bore. Cut a piece about six to eight inches in length, and hollow out the pith. Find a piece of wood such as a soft wood broom handle. Cut that piece about six to eight inches long. Carefully whittle away about half way up the length of the handle until one end, the whittled end, just fits the bore of the reed selected. The rest of the rod, the portion not whittled, will serve as a handle. The instrument now devised, a popgun, is essentially complete except for ammunition. In St. James Parish, the best

ammunition was the green fruit or seed from the china berry, a small tree named for the berries it bore. We usually called these China ball trees. The berries used as ammunition were fed into the bore of the popgun. Holding the reed portion of the popgun in one hand and swiftly inserting the portion with the handle into the bore where the berry was located caused the china berry to be propelled towards its target. How effective was this instrument? The young girls probably know that answer, too.

If one's mood became more artistic, the reeds might be fashioned into crude musical instruments. One end of the reed was cut on a slant to use as a mouth piece. This end was carefully sanded to make it smooth to the touch. One hole cut into the reed about an inch down from the mouth piece converted the reed into a whistle. If the budding musician wanted to experiment with varieties in sound, he might cut several holes into the reed to admit air. Covering one or more holes as he blew into the reed provided variations in sound. Competitive play occurred when several children constructed similar instruments of varying lengths and practiced their skills together.

Boredom? Did someone say anything about the hot weather? What happened to the flies and mosquitoes? Who cares? A generation of children solved these problems creatively.

→→→→→→→→→→

JEUNE ET JOYEUX
by
Annie H. Calais

All the joys and troubled times are intertwined in our lifetime. Back in the thirties I did not realize how these experiences would be treasured. Two such memories stand out in my mind today.

One spring when I was about eight, my sister Rita and I had measles. We were kept in a dark, dry room. At the peak of the red dots breakout a hurricane struck. The rains poured and slashed against the windows, the winds howled and the attic door flew away. Our bed was in the "grand chambre," the great room, and the ceiling began to leak. As Mama put buckets to catch the rain her fear that we would get wet intensified. One brother, Remi, took his harmonica and blew the blues with a two-fold purpose; to distract Mama and the patients. The fact that the barn directly behind the house was dislodged and rolling toward the house, one overturn at a time, was now consuming all of Mama's attention.

Rita and I were not supposed to know this, but the whispers and Abel's saucer-wide eyes gave it away. Remi played his harmonica faster and faster. The great room where we were was directly in the barn's path, so we moved to Papa's room which was considered drier and the last to go down when the barn hit us broadside. The wind was so strong the latch to the door of our bedroom broke and the door banged open and shut. Florent and Blue pushed the bed against it.

Mama commandeered all the quilts, coats, raincoats and a tarpaulin to throw over us if needed to keep us dry.

By this time Mama had turned her attention to sending the boys out to find an ambulance. That is still a mystery to me because I had never heard of or seen one. It would have had to be horse driven and the dirt roads were impassable.

The boys did not have to go out because the barn stopped rolling forward a few yards from the house. My mother's prayers were answered and we stayed dry.

[As an addendum, I feel compelled to add the following: Today on a perfectly sunny day you can see me leaving my house with a leopard skin shoulder bag holding a rain hat, rain boots, an umbrella and a raincoat to be sure I stay dry!]

One window pane in the kitchen gave me countless hours of fun and entertainment. I looked out through one hand-made pane in particular because it was wavy and had ripples in it. This window pane faced the railroad track which was about two football fields away. When I watched through the pane and moved a certain way, up and down or side to side, the trucks or old model T's seemed to jump the track. Sometimes while looking through the pane, I saw a dog walk by. Half the dog went forward, then with a slight movement of my eye, the wavy pane seemed to cut in half and delay the second half of the dog. I could make the dog go forward and backward. My brothers and sisters and I watched the chickens, too. Half the chicken walked through the rippled pane, cut the chicken in half, and when we moved slightly, the other half strutted by, the parts connecting a little late. Parts of this glass acted like a prism because at times I saw rainbows of various colors. Parts of the pane were cut so that at other times I saw three chickens instead of one, as it walked surefooted in the

yard. To be sure it was a "wonder" pane, and my brothers, sisters, Genevieve, a niece, and I still laugh about it like we are still "jeune" and "joie de vie" fills our home.

A WARTIME WEDDING
by
Florette Patin

The date had been set, the church bans had been published, the wedding outfit had been bought. All was in readiness for my wedding on Saturday, June 13, 1942.

Ovey was stationed at Camp Bowie in Brownwood, Texas, with the 156th Infantry, Company F. He was due home for the wedding on June 12, but a revolting development occurred that changed all the plans. Ovey's furlough was canceled on June 10!

By luck--or fate--Mrs. Bruner, a friend of Mama's, was driving to Brownwood on Thursday to meet her husband, Lt. Col. Bruner, who was attached to the 156th Infantry Co. F. She offered to take me along.

We arrived in Brownwood on Friday morning. I met Ovey that afternoon and we "shopped" for a wedding ring. I use the word "shopped" very loosely because there was only one jewelry store in that small, dusty army town. I'll never forget that wedding ring! It was a plain little thing that cost all of six dollars.

Although the wedding date was not changed, much else was. The wedding was held in a tiny Catholic chapel on the army base. The ceremony was performed by the chaplain, Father Koenan. I had no family or relatives at my wedding, but many soldiers from F Company were friends of ours, and they were in attendance.

The little ceremony was impressive after all. I was escorted to the chapel by Lt. Col. Bruner, who also "gave me away." Mrs. Bruner was my matron of honor, and Ovey's friend, Harris, was our best man. I was met at the door of the chapel by my future husband. We entered the chapel under an arch of crossed bayonets formed by our soldier friends. During the ceremony, an "unknown" soldier walking past the chapel noticed a wedding in progress, came in, played the organ and sang "Ave Maria." He left before the wedding was over, and we never found out who he was. The "Ave Maria" has always had a special meaning to me.

There was, of course, no wedding reception, so after the wedding ceremony we moved into our first home-away-from-home--an attic apartment--deep in the Heart of Texas! One month later, when the furlough was finally granted, Ovey and I took our belated honeymoon to Carlsbad Caverns --on a Greyhound bus! Wartime brought many changes, heartaches and hardships--weddings included!

A BAKERY NEAR HOBO JUNGLE

by Ruth Burns Oates

Based on a conversation with John N. Burns

One day while we were living on Lillian Street, my brother John took me with him on a walk around the neighborhood. He was about seven years old and I was about five. John walked along whistling while I padded silently behind him. He led me around the corner and down the block to a bakery shop. The yeasty aroma of fresh-baked bread came down the street to meet us. Pausing in his whistling, John informed me, "They make bread in the bakery. When they wrap it, they throw the ones that tear into the trash! Maybe they'll give one to us, instead of throwing it away." He took my hand and turned purposefully into the bakery. The baker, a small man in blue work clothes topped with a white apron, was wrapping bread. With an alert look in our direction he turned back to his work, sliding a fresh loaf into the tray of the slicing machine, which, as we pressed close to watch, sliced the whole loaf at one time, then slid it to the end of the tray, where the baker with a practiced lift of his hands moved it along to the wrapping machine. Something resembling cellophane was quickly and deftly secured around the loaf. One after another, the baker put several loaves into first the slicer, then the wrapper, then placed each gently on his rack. John edged around him to peer hopefully into the trash can which stood beside the wrapping machine. The can was empty.

Resting his hands on the edge of the trash can, just under his chin, John looked up at the baker wistfully and asked, "Can we have one when the wrapper tears?"

"Sure thing!" the baker shot back cheerfully, and with his left hand he passed a fresh-sliced loaf along to the wrapper, where it was turned by the wrapping process. The baker immediately raked the fresh wrapper with one fingernail of his right hand, deliberately tearing it. Reaching under the machines for a paper bag and dropping the bread into it all in one motion, he said, "Here's one now. Sure, you can have it." The baker smiled into John's dark eyes as he handed him the bag of bread.

The baker's wife, meantime, in a shortsleeved dress with bright flowers scattered over it and her own spotless white canvas apron, had been busy at the glass shelves of the counter, putting fresh doughnuts and cookies into trays there. "Would you like some doughnuts, too?" she asked us in a warm tone as she looked straight at me.

Soon John and I found ourselves seated at a tiny glass table with dainty black metal legs that curved back and forth on their way to the floor. The chairs had small round white padded seats resting on graceful black metal legs and rounded backs. We each had a napkin with a fresh glazed doughnut resting upon it before us on the table, for the baker's wife insisted, "Sit here and eat at least one before you go." Beside his doughnut John had the bag of bread. Beside mine was a bag of doughnuts. The baker, a fine dusting of flour in the hair on his arms, joined his wife in seating and serving us. Both stood back and beamed at two dusty barefoot children with their toes curled 'round the slender metal chair legs, as with increasingly sticky fingers we savored two doughnuts each.

"They thought someone bigger than we were might take away our goodies if we went straight home," John said as, one day near his seventieth birthday, he reminisced about that trip to the

neighborhood bakery. "Of course, you and I were not afraid of that; we knew better. But they didn't, so they made sure we ate some first." John paused, remembering, then added with a twinkle, "I left that bakery a happy boy!

MY MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON
by
J. M. Jennings, Jr.

I met her by accident. She and my younger brother Eddie were the same age and had a date to attend a Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity party. He had managed to borrow a car for the evening. I had a date for the same Phi Kap party but no car. So we double-dated.

Margaret lived on Broadway near Willow St. in uptown New Orleans. She was a tall, slender, blond girl and was on her high school basketball team. Somehow, she had acquired the nickname of the Broadway Bombshell. Love at first sight? I don't recall, but
I did not date any other girl during the rest of my schooling at Tulane.

We found inexpensive ways to spend time together. One of our favorite things to do was to ride the Broadway bus (seven cents each including transfer) from her house to St. Charles Ave. and transfer to the streetcar. The seven cent bus and trolley ride took us to the end of the line at the foot of Canal Street and the Mississippi River.

There we would board the ferry that crossed the river to Algiers on the west bank. The fare for walk-on passengers was five cents per person but was collected when the passengers walked off of the ferry on the Algiers side. We stayed on board and didn't get off during round trip after round trip. All that riding cost us nothing, but we saw many romantic ships and tow boats and the moon and stars.

The return streetcar ride back to Margaret's house also cost us seven cents each. There was a K & B drugstore on the corner of St. Charles and Broadway. On a rare occasion, we would stop for an ice-cream soda. Once we stopped at Casimento's restaurant for a pair of huge dill pickles.

Margaret and I sat together in Tulane's McAlister Auditorium on 8 December 1941 and listened to President Roosevelt's call for a declaration of war against Japan, his "day of infamy" speech. It was there that we made the decision to marry, although the proposal and acceptance was unspoken, and our marriage was delayed for a year, until Dec. 23,1942. World War two had started and in 1943 I went to sea in a destroyer.

In 1944, I was reassigned to the Navy Post Graduate School. There were no quarters for us in Annapolis, and it was necessary for Margaret and our first born daughter, Ann, to camp in a rented house in a suburb of Washington, D.C. Because of strict gas rationing, Margaret could not drive her car too many miles.

An experienced taxi-cab driver and his wife were her next-door neighbors, and they became good friends. Taxi-cabs had no limit to the gallons of gasoline that they were allowed. This man only drove in the daytime as he didn't feel safe at night on the streets of the Capitol.

She began to notice that her Chevrolet's gas tank was always full no matter how far into the month's ration she was. One night she found out why. Her friendly cab driver had been draining gasoline from his cab at the end of his shift and pouring it into her Chevy's tank. She had found a friend in a most unlikely place.

In late summer, I managed to rent a summer cottage on the South River near Annapolis. There we would live through the winter until the following summer. A plumbing shop installed a cast-iron, coal burning stove in the living-dining room. A heating system had never been necessary before

in this cottage that had only been occupied in the summer.

I went to the ration board for a permit to buy coal. John L. Lewis' Coal Miners Union was on strike, and coal mining had halted. The ration board was sympathetic but would only allow one ton of anthracite coal. The neighbors, who were year-round residents, volunteered the opinion that one ton of coal might last a month if the weather stayed warm. The weather did stay pleasant for a few weeks but then got icy.

The winter of 1944 was intensely cold and was a difficult struggle for the New Orleanians in that summer house. Oranges froze in the kitchen cabinets at night. There was no washing machine, and Margaret washed the dirty clothing by hand in the bath tub. When she hung the wet laundry outside to dry, the washing froze solid in minutes.

Margaret never became discouraged. She cried only one time that winter. She and I had discovered two pairs of rusty ice-skates under the house and strapped them onto our shoes. The pond at the rear of the cottage had frozen solid, and she sent me down to test the safety of the ice. I found it a foot thick, and slithered awkwardly away from the pier. "It's thick enough to hold up a horse!" I called back.

Margaret stepped down daintily on the ice and went right through into icy water up to her waist. She cried:" Why did this have to happen to me? Don't stand there and laugh! Come help me out." I glided gracefully to the rescue and, while reaching for Margaret, broke through the ice also. Thus, our skating adventure ended with us sitting around the coal stove drying our shoes and clothes.

Margaret can also be aggressive when she feels it necessary. In 1950, the Korean War commenced. I was recalled to active duty and ordered to Pearl Harbor. We had three children under seven years of age and Margaret wanted the family of five to be together.

Somehow Margaret found a way to talk to the Commandant of the Eighth Naval District in New Orleans and got him to agree to help secure transportation to Oahu for her and the children. At least, he said he would see what he could do. Shortly, this Admiral's Aide phoned to say that there was a transport ship leaving the Oakland Naval Supply Center in three days. Could she be there on time? That day, she packed clothes for the three children and herself and talked her way into commercial air transportation to California. She did not get bumped off during that DC-3 flight and arrived in San Francisco in time to depart on the U.S.S. General H.W. Butner (AP-113).

Margaret is gentle and kind, but she can handle her .38 Colt like a John Wayne or a Marshall Dillon. She saw that her five children attended college. She always remembers to write prompt thank-you notes. She bowls weekly, goes to an aerobics class three times a week and arises at 4:30 AM to accompany me on my morning walk. She taught me to be cheerful and to wear pajamas at night instead of skivvy shirts and skivvy shorts.

Margaret and I still do things together. She is at her class today learning to use Word Perfect 5.1 properly on the home computer. She will share this knowledge and, in return, learn something of Life & Letters.

I have no doubt who has had the most profound influence on my life. It is Margaret, my wife and best friend.

→→→→→→→→→→

SOME EARLIEST MEMORIES
by
Marion Embree

Because my maternal grandparents, Joseph and Rosa Schloss Van Os, lived in Virginia, my paternal ones, Theodore and Blandina Dreyfus, lived in Louisiana and my maternal grandmother suffered from Bright's Disease, I was both places during by early childhood. My mother had two older brothers, Irvin, 12 years older, and Henry, 10 years her senior. Each time Grandma Rosa become critically ill, Mother was called to Norfolk.

I have several earliest recollections, one of which is Livonia, Louisiana, at Grandma and Grandpa Dreyfus' home. I could have been four, no older, and we are in the big backyard stuffing geese. Grandma is letting me poke corn in a goose's mouth while she holds its jaw open. I know I was afraid at first, but after a few grains, it got to be fun. I trusted Grandma to hold that jaw so my fingers would be safe.

My next memory is playing in the aisle of a train bound for Norfolk, Virginia. We had to sleep together, Mother and I, in a Pullman lower berth. At bedtime that night, Mother had to do a good washing on my hands and knees so as not to give both of us a dose of coal dust. We changed trains in the middle of the night, I in a gown and pink coat. Mother dressed, only to have to crawl right back in a berth!

Another flash of memory is a picnic near Yorktown, Virginia, on a visit when Grandma Rosa was able to be out. There were Mother, her parents and a cousin, Les Van Os, visiting from New Orleans. Grandpa Joe had a brother in New Orleans who had four children. These were Mother's cousins, and we saw them often.

A FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
SUBTITLE: TWO WORDS ARE WORTH A THOUSAND PICTURES

by

Mary Scheps

Clarence mustered up his strength and took our family to dinner at Delmonico's on our fiftieth wedding anniversary August 28, 1989. The party consisted of our two sons, their wives, and our four grandchildren. Although there was no program, I had prepared a little speech, not knowing that Philip and Eddie had been planning and working for months on a surprise party to celebrate the occasion. Our daughter-in-law, Mary, had made a beautiful scrapbook of the clever invitation and all the cards and letters of congratulations. A large sign saying "Happy Anniversary" had been placed across the front of our house, and a wonderful catered dinner was spread in the dining room.

Here are the words I spoke at Delmonico's:

I would like to say something and then sit quietly and enjoy the rest of the evening. Skipping the love and gratitude, which is too emotional, I would like to characterize each of you with a phrase you have uttered which has found a permanent place in my vocabulary. To start at the top, Clarence said shortly after we were married, "Good things don't just happen. You have to make them happen." Another of his sayings is, "Never expect anything and you can never be disappointed." And another--"It's only money." So feel free to order anything you want tonight.

Going on to Philip, the most optimistic person I've ever know, his words to remember are, "Ho, there," spoken in a loud, cheery voice every morning when I waked him up to go to school. He also said, "I'm glad you had the guts to do it," when Eddie quit college. I could have killed them both. Philip himself didn't have the guts to quit until he had earned four higher degrees, including an M.B.A. and a Ph.D.

Mary taught me this: "Nothing anyone says can ever hurt you--only the way you take it can hurt you." The same idea is expressed by Shakespeare in <u>Hamlet</u>: "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so."

Eddie is the perfect example of the still waters that run deep. He is a "can-do" guy, consistent himself, but tolerant of the inconsistencies of others. Two phrases that he frequently uses are, "No problem," and "It's a possibility." I'm glad he finally found that going back to college was a possibility.

Jane's phrase is one we use when things look bleak and difficult: "Think of it as fun." She said this when she asked me to sell their New Orleans home, a "mansion" held together with chewing gum and coathanger wire.

On to the grandchildren--Ranny, Susy, Swain, and Mary. I call them "the student," "the thinker," "the scholar," and "the enthusiast," although I could probably shift these words around and still have good descriptions.

Ranny's words, spoken diplomatically the first time he ate crawfish: "Well, they aren't good, and they aren't bad." With this philosophy, he gets along very well.

Susy loves all things animal, vegetable, or mineral--especially animal. If she had her way, the world would be a kinder, gentler place. She may have to do it alone, but that's all right because from the time she put on her first sock, her phrase was, "Don't help me. I can do it by myself."

Swain is not at all bothered by being the youngest. When he was five, he looked at a list of activities posted on the refrigerator, gave me his best frown, and said, "I can read, too, you know." Then he proceeded to read the list, stumbling only on the word "expedition." Well, Swain, you have devoured many a word since then, and many more are still to come.

And my baby Boulie (Mary) makes every day a celebration and every meal an occasion. She is the enthusiastic one. When she was a very little girl and received a present she didn't like, she would hand it back and say, "Would you save it for me, please?" Once when I told her that if she slept in my room she would have to sleep with the lights out, she replied, "That's all right, I can take trouble--remember, I had my tonsils taken out." Probably her mother had told her to think of it as fun, and her father had said, "No problem."

In sum, I predict that if you do not get cold feet, you will leave your footprints in the sands of time. In any event, make good things happen, like Clarence does, get out of bed on the right side, like Philip does, think good thoughts, like Mary does, solve those problems, like Eddie does, think of it as fun, like Jane does, cherish your independence, like Susy does, read a lot, like Swain does, forget your troubles, like Boulie does, and, like Ranny, eat plenty of those so-so crawfish.

There is just one thing that Grammpy and I forbid you to do. Can you guess what it is? No? Here's a hint: It has six letters in it. Yes, you got it--

CHANGE."

This ended my speech. When we returned home, Philip drove the car across the lawn and right up to the front steps. "What's going on?" I wondered. It took several seconds for me to realize why the big crowd had gathered on the porch and was shouting, "Here they are!"

I spent the rest of the evening hugging my family and friends, repeating "I can't believe it!" It really was a wonderful surprise. The two little words, "I do," had been worth a thousand pictures.

THE COTTON GIN
by
John Townsend

As Bubba, Dick, and I emerged from our car, driven by Mama, an excited group of ten-year-olds from my fourth grade class came dashing up, all wanting to make the ride to our field trip destination in our Model B Ford. In particular they wanted to ride with Mama because during prior trips she had become their favorite among the mothers who lent themselves as chauffeurs for our various excursions outside the classroom. Mama laughed, "Whoa! Hold up there! You all can't ride. Let's see how Miss Bennett has you divided up."

At her urging, we all walked into the building and to our classroom where Miss Bennett and the other mothers waited. The classroom bell rang as we entered the door. Miss Bennett called roll quickly, dividing the class into three groups. There were supposed to have been four cars, but one of the mothers had called to say that she was sick.

We ended up with nine of us in our car, stacked two deep in the rear where I sat with David Sheffield and Richard Colbert. Each of us had a girl on our lap, mine, Jean Trigg. I think David, who sat next to me held Barbara Green, while Richard held Lell Hamner. Mary Louise Cromwell, who was tall and slim sat in front atop Betty Waits. I don't remember the name of the number nine, another girl.

Our destination was to be a cotton gin, or compress, located at Frierson, Louisiana, some 25-30 miles south of Shreveport by way of highways 1 and 175. It was the first of three trips that our class would make that year. I recall that we talked a lot, asking Mama a myriad of questions about most everything under the sun. We also played some word games or told riddles for the others to solve. The forty minute ride went quickly.

As we drove up to park beside the office of the cotton gin, Mr. Martin, one of the owners, greeted us. He warned each of us to stay together and follow his lead as we moved into the ginning area. We moved onto and across a loading area. From there we had a view of a black man lowering a metal pipe into a load of cotton in a high-sided wagon drawn by four mules. The heaped up pile of cotton began to collapse into itself as the raw cotton bolls were sucked up through the tubing to be carried into the gin. In a matter of minutes the huge wagon was emptied, followed quickly by another wagon under the chute. In those days around 1937, there were few trucks or trailer combinations. The horse- or mule-drawn wagons outnumbered them five to one.

We moved inside the building where the noise was terrific. Some of the girls plugged their ears with their fingers. We watched as the cotton bolls came tumbling from a hopper into a maze of quickly moving combs or forks that swiftly separated the fiber from the cotton seeds which fell down onto a belt that took them to a storage area where the hulls would be made into cotton seed meal. Both hulls and meal would be used as animal food or in later years made of compressed to extract the oil from the seed.

The fiber was sent to a chamber where it began to grow in sheets forming layer after layer until a bale was formed then expelled onto rollers where a couple of men would pierce the cotton with hooks and roll the bale out onto the loading dock. We followed our guide onto the dock where boxcars on the railroad siding were being loaded.

We boys, in particular, watched in awe as the men would slam a cotton hook into the top of a bale and flip it around to move it to the edge of the dock beside an open box car door. Some used a ramp across the gap between dock and car. There were three cars being loaded. One man, a big black man we heard called Bo, amazed the group by using a pair of cotton hooks to flip bale after bale from the dock across the open gap onto the floor of the box car. It was done seemingly effortlessly. Some of the class clapped their hands in appreciation. With a big grin, he tipped his hat then seized a bale, spinning it up and across the gap and through the door.

"Anybody want some lemonade?" asked Mr. Martin. A lot of "yea's" were heard as we hastily followed him to a shelter under which were some tables and benches. Miss Bennett spoke up, "Bill, you, John, David, and the other boys help the ladies with the baskets. We have some sandwiches and cookies to eat." "Hot diggity!" someone shouted as we boys ran to the cars.

It wasn't only cookies. We also found a pie and cake. By the time the twenty-four of us in the class plus five adults finished eating, not a morsel remained for the expectant flock of sparrows tittering about the shelter. A happy but tired group boarded the cars to make the trip back to our school on Line Avenue.

→→→→→→→→→→

MY CHILDHOOD YEARS
by
Mallie Devenport

My brother Harold and I were the first and second born of six siblings. Our home was in New Orleans, but we spent many weeks visiting our paternal grandparents' home in Jeanerette, Louisiana. Living in the large home were Aunt Hilda and Uncle Carmen; aunt Amalita, a single schoolteacher; Aunt Mina, a widow who worked as a clerk in the general merchandise store; her two children, Sadie, a teacher, and Dickie, her son, a student. Aunt Lolol, also a widow, ran the house and stayed at home. These aunts were Dad's sisters.

The home in which all these people lived was huge; the largest room was the dining room. To a five year old, the table seemed so very long, alway covered with a long tablecloth. Seemed the table was always "set." Breakfast was served at 7 a.m., and everyone ate together. Dinner was served at noon because all family members were able to eat together for the main meal, served promptly at 12:10 p.m. The meals were scrumptious. Aunt Lolol was a good cook and had kitchen help named Lena who had been taught to cook by Aunt Lolol. I especially remember the cushaw, a squash, smothered in butter, sugar, and spices, and the fresh fig ice cream.

After all the folk had returned to work to finish up their day, Harold and I were told to lie down and nap on the daybeds on the porch. Part of the wrap around porch on the house was screened where the daybeds were. It was difficult to fall asleep so early in the day for a five-year-old and a six-year-old who weren't sleepy. We did as we were told, mostly feigning sleep. On waking from our naps, we were taken for a walk *au village* where we were treated to a lollipop, a scoop of ice cream on a stick dipped in chocolate, or, if Uncle Carmen took us, we went to the parlor where he had his beer and we ate pretzels.

The longest visit Harold and I stayed in Jeanerette was in May of 1929 when Mama was expecting my brother Francis, her fifth child. Like the other four *accouchements* deliveries, the baby was to be born at home. The adults thought that Harold and I should be staying in Jeanerette when the baby came. Since school was no problem, it would be a help to Mama, who would have only the two little sisters, Margie and Nookie, both a bit young to be away from home. Harold and I were older, and we seemed to be the favorites of these aunts. Also, we had stayed with them so much.

The aunts and uncle truly tried to "do" nice things for us while we were on this visit. Uncle Carmen and Dickie made a "slide" for us to play outdoors. When it was completed, we were asked to try it out. Harold went first, wearing overalls. He slid down well. I had my turn, but wearing a dress, I picked up splinters galore on my little thighs. The splinters were not very deep into the skin and were easily removed. The wood had not been properly sanded. I refused to play on that slide again.

The grandparents' home was located on Church Street. It has been remodeled, but it is still there. Across the street was the Jeanerette Elementary School where Aunt Amalita and cousin Sadie taught. Behind the house about 250 to 300 yards was the Southern Pacific train tracks. Many hobos came to ask for food. There was always something to share with them. Harold and I were well aware of hobos.

When darkness fell and we prepared for bed, Harold and I were not always sleepy, especially if we had napped too long. My aunts told us that if we did not go to sleep the hobos would come and

get us. They would go into another room and knock on the walls and call "Harold!" or they would tell us that Ko-la, the ice man who delivered ice for the ice box, would haul us off in his sack if we were not asleep. (I may insert here that only one aunt (Mina) had grown children. The other three were childless. They did not realize how they put fear in us, or DID they?) Even with their teasing, the aunts gave Harold and me love and showed their generosity by helping Mama as they did.

As we grew older, we were unable to stay with them except during our summer vacations, shared with my sisters Margie and Nookie. Daddy came from a family of ten children. The family, while some lived in nearby towns, came together for weddings, funerals, and reunions. Along with their many children, there was hardly room for anyone else, for family filled up the place fast.

Aunt Hilda, the only one left of the ten "Bernards," is still living. She will celebrate her 101st birthday April 9, 1995. She yearns for the "old days" when family was so close and meant so much. Visits were so meaningful, and there was always room for more family and friends. I, too, remember the "olden times" and the wonderful memories I recall.

SLI/USL
by
Ivan J. Arceneaux

I think I owe USL a million dollars. No, it's not what you might think. It's not like I'm a millionaire or anything and that I made it because of USL. The University didn't give me an education. I only spent one semester matriculating at SLI officially. The summer of 1946, I only took two courses, neither of which helped me to get rich.

No, I owe USL a million dollars as payback. I'm a sports fan. A sports fiend, really, and I've attended thousands of sporting events at SLI/USL, never paying admission to any athletic event. Not once. I've snuck in free all my life.

The archway entrance to the SLI campus on the southeast corner of College Avenue and Johnston was exactly three and a half blocks from the front door of the Arceneaux residence at 103 Avenue B. When I was growing up there, I spent my after school afternoons either on the playgrounds at Cathedral or on the campus of SLI. At SLI I flew kites in the big front yard of Martin Hall until SLI grew up and got sophisticated or whatever and kiting was banned at that location. So we kiters discovered the empty field across the boulevard. An even better site, it was across the street from DeClouet Hall, the girls dormitory, and the female pulchritude of SLI would come out to the pasture and watch and/or hold the kite strings and/or sit in their dorm windows to watch and be watched. Then one day construction began on a dorm on the side street that separated our kite-flying pasture from the cypress grove, and our USL kite flying days were over. Or maybe we grew up and kite flying was no longer a part of a lazy spring afternoon.

Whenever the girls were serious enough to fly our kites or the weather was too windy to have any success launching them or I got bored with kiting, I remember walking over to the cypress grove. It was not my kind of place, really. I mostly just passed through it on the way to some place else and enjoyed the shade cover and the beauty of the old odd cypress trunks and trees. But the thing I remember most and liked the best was a little plaque with the words that hung on one of trees at the entrance of the grove:

I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.
--Joyce Kilmer

I liked to read that poem and to think about it. I sometime walked to the Grove just to read it and to think about it. And whenever I see a cypress tree to this day, I relive those precious moments at that beautiful scene and those powerful words from the SLI cypress grove.

But most of all, I went to the cypress grove as a short cut to the football stadium to watch the SLI football team, featuring little All-American Glynn Abel, practice. I still love to watch a football team practice. I was the unofficial waterboy for the Cathedral football team from the day I started school there in the third grade. In the 60's, when I was pastor at St. Jules, I would frequently drive by and stop to watch USL practice in the late afternoons. Many fans did then. Back of the new

McNaspy Stadium, the practice field was open and easily accessible. I could watch from my parked car or walk up to the sidelines from either Lewis Street or Girard Park. Sometimes it was only me and one other--Prof Cambre; we were the most regular of the regulars. I never stayed long. But I always stopped. Since moving to West Congress in 1993 and living exactly one mile from Cajun Field, I often stop when I drive by the practice field. I must be getting old, though. It's not the same thing. The high chain link fence on Cajundome Boulevard does not invite viewing, and the field today is almost inaccessible by car. I'm usually the only spectator, and that's no fun.

During those earlier years, though, one day Mom said I could go to the SLI football game that night with the big boys. I was the youngest of the Avenue B boys. So I tagged along, excited. They tolerated me, reluctantly, because they had to. We left early in broad daylight, got to the stadium, and walked all around it sensing and feeling the excitement of the fans and the hucksters until we came to "THE" hole in the shrubs that served as the fence. Near that opening, an SLI freshman with his beanie covering the beginnings of new growth--from the shaving of his head that was part of his initiation at SLI--stood sentinel. He was deep in conversation with some girls. The big boys had learned that the freshman guards did not take their jobs too seriously. They were more interested in the girls than in the little kids that hung around. So, one by one, the Avenue B boys crawled through the opening. There must have been five or six of us, with me, the littlest, going through last. Finally, we were inside the football field. I crawled through those bushes for all the SLI football games until McNaspy Stadium was built with a chain link fence encircling the field.

Only once in my whole career was I ever foiled in my attempts to sneak into the old SLI football field. One time, for whatever reason, the freshman guard was distracted enough from talking with the girls that he spied us on hands and knees crawling under the bushes. He caught me by the seat of my pants as my head and shoulders were almost on the other side. He carried me to his supervisors and, threatening me with hellfire and damnation, they ran me off the SLI property. I went home dejected, crying, alone, rejected. That's the only game I ever remember missing

The barrier fence at McNaspy didn't really matter. By then I was a priest, coaching at St. Joseph in Rayne, and USL policy encouraged high school coaches to bring their football players to all home games. My Saturday night schedule in Rayne called for me to hear confessions from 7 p.m. "until." The "until" usually wasn't very long in the fall. Only a few regulars waited for the 7 p.m. shriving. Most came before supper time. When I went into the church at 7 p.m., my station wagon had already been parked facing Lafayette, and my football players had already fought out their seating arrangements and were waiting in the wagon for me to lock the church and roll up my cassock on the run. After dashing to the car, I raced down old Highway 90 to McNaspy Stadium for the kickoff. We usually made it just on time. We liked to get there early as we had to enter the side gate on the north end of the stadium which brought us right past the USL locker room entrance. From there we could watch the players up close before going to the wooden bleacher seats that were temporarily placed on the track in front of the stadium seats. These select reserved seats on ground level were the best seats in the house, we thought, and they were free. So what if we couldn't see part of the play because the USL bench and players were blocking our line of vision! I don't remember ever missing a USL home game in my five years in Rayne. The kids wouldn't let me miss, even if I would have wanted to. For one thing, Steve Gossen was one of the stars at USL, and his cousin Fred was one of the stars at St. Joe.

Although I love football, basketball is my game of choice. I love every part of that game. It combines the one-on-one element essential to manly competition with the team concept of cooperation and community. I've played it with utter enjoyment all my life. One of the clippings Mom saved in my baby book the recount of my winning the city elementary school scoring title in the spring of 1941 with an average of four points a game. I remember all our league games were played at the old Lafayette High gym on North College which was a thrill in itself. One of my later life memories is being one of the five American students selected to practice with the Swiss basketball team in preparation for the 1952 Summer Olympics and playing against the visiting Olympic teams that summer.

Basketball on the SLI campus was something else. I don't remember attending any games before the old Earl K. Long gym was built across from the Catholic Student Center. I do remember being around that gym much of the time. My cousin, Lee Louis "Boulet" Martin, was attending USL on a baseball scholarship. He lived with us on Avenue B, and I lived in the SLI gym. Sneaking into the basketball games was easy. I had become part of the woodwork, a regular gym rat. I just walked in with the team carrying a basketball or a water bucket or a towel and walked right past the ticket taker. No one ever questioned that I wasn't official.

Later, during the great years of USL basketball under Beryl Shipley, Blackham Coliseum was the venue. I was coaching some legendary basketball teams myself at St. Joseph in Jeanerette. Ship and I became pretty good personal friends as well as coaching colleagues. My players and I were welcome at all USL games at Blackham. When I returned to Lafayette in 1963 as pastor, St. Jules was just a straight shot down Bertrand Drive to Blackham. I continued to walk into the building right past the ticket-takers as I had always done with my players--the first few times, I think, in my clerical garb--bought my program and went to my favorite viewing spot, standing near the first little wooden steps leading up from the coliseum floor to the seating area and got a million dollars worth of entertainment free, watching some great basketball players like Marvin and Bo and company.

In 1993, I enrolled in the USL/Greenhouse physical fitness program. As a USL student, I have access to the Bourgeois Hall facilities, and carry a "for real" student card. Now I can get into all USL activities just by waving my card. I haven't missed a football or basketball game in two years and even take in some baseball and softball and track. That ID is my most precious piece of plastic, and the most used.

But, you know, it's not as much fun getting in as a student as it was sneaking into games. It feels almost too legal. Maybe I'm getting old. Maybe I enjoyed the larceny too much. Anyway, in my will I plan to leave USL a million dollars. That's what it has been worth to me over the years. Only I don't have a million dollars to leave. A friend of mine claims that he left his alma mater, the University of Kentucky, a million dollars. His will stipulates that one thousand dollars be given to the UK with the proviso that an endowment be established and the principal not be touched until the fund reach a million dollars and then the interest could be withdrawn each year in perpetuum.

I think I'll ask my lawyer to write something like that for me. I think I can find the thousand dollars. And I think USL could use a million dollars endowment in my name. In fact, I think I might even ask my lawyer to add in that the next basketball arena be named "THE ARCENEAUX ARENA," payment enough and a fitting tribute to SLI/USL.

→→→→→→→→→→

MRS. FOOTE'S KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL
by
Wilma Roy Bowles

My first encounter with formal education was that of schooling with Mrs. Daisy Baker Foote, owner of a kindergarten school in her home. Mama enrolled me in the Fall of 1934 when I was four years old. I have vivid memories of my hair being combed and plaited into three large braids with ribbons on each braid. I don't remember the color of the dress or the ribbons I wore that first day when Uncle Joe walked me to school. This he did daily, returning for me when school was dismissed. The distance to the school was not far from his home on Walnut Street. We walked the few blocks to the corners of Sixteenth and Apple Streets to Miss Daisy's home.

Inside my new school was a long table with long benches on each side. A piano stood on the opposite wall. Five windows were near the table, one window near the front door and one window to the left of the piano. The piano stool turned all the way around. Occasionally, one of us would sneak a turn to sit and make the three hundred and sixty degree turn without getting caught. Homemade book shelves and an American flag decorated the wall nearby. A coal stove helped to heat the room in winter. In a large cardboard box were toys given by parents of past and present students. I later found out that Miss Daisy's husband was the builder of the table, benches and book shelves.

Each morning we recited the "Pledge of Allegiance." We were taught to sing songs like "Mary Had A Little Lamb" and "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" while Miss Daisy played the piano. She read and reread nursery rhymes and stories like "Red Riding Hood," "The Three Little Pigs," and "Humpty Dumpty" until my playmates and I could recite them like parrots.

We learned how to count to one hundred and write our ABC's, copying them and printing our names in our "Big Chief" writing tablets. Each child had a cigar box which held paste, scissors, colors and a pencil. I remember the stack of coloring books we used to learn how to color inside the lines..

Miss Daisy also taught piano lessons for a fee after school. I don't recall the price for piano lessons, but Mama paid one dollar a week so I could attend school. This fee included a noon day snack. I remember a play period which was spent playing games in the yard. During the winter months or rainy days we played quiet games or we placed our heads on the table for a nap.

I was fortunate later on to be one of Miss Daisy's piano students. I was a student of the piano from first grade to eleventh grade. Miss Daisy was a member of Good Hope Baptist Church, and each year we were presented in recital there. I really enjoyed piano lessons and had my share of taps on my fingers with her famous "red, white and blue fat pencil," as we students dubbed it.

One summer night as I practiced a hymn on our piano at home, Miss Daisy and her husband were out walking. As they walked by, I guess I struck a wrong note. At my next lesson, Miss Daisy explained where I made the mistake. I also played hookey from piano lessons one day. She found our, and my punishment was to draw the staff , both treble and base clef from one sheet of a lesson.

The experience of kindergarten and having known this wonderful lady will always be a cherished memory.

HIS TENDER LOVING CARE

by

Mitzi Doucet

I have had many crises in my life, but I believe my bouts with cancer have changed my way of living the most. It was after taking a mammogram in May 1988 that I learned I would need a biopsy because of two suspicious areas. The biopsy showed cancer cells.

On June 2 I had a mastectomy. I suffered little physical pain compared to the emotional turmoil. For comfort I turned to prayers and reading. Dr. Bernie Siegel's books, Love, Medicine, and Miracles and Peace, Love, and Healing, gave me much hope. From the "12-step" meetings, I learned to live one day at a time. My physical recovery was extremely short. The usual cancer treatments were unnecessary. I still take Nolvadex pills, a cancer prevention medication, twice daily.

Upon going for my first checkup with my oncologist, Dr. Meza, I showed him a mole on my leg which for the past year I had suspected to be a malignant melanoma. He felt certain that it was, and he made an appointment for me at M.D. Anderson. Before going to Houston, I asked a friend, Marlene Broussard of Abbeville, to pray over me as I was extremely fearful of the outcome. After praying, Marlene said, "Mitzi, I see Jesus removing all cancer cells from that mole."

My appointment in Houston was on Friday. The surgeon who was to do the biopsy had two oncologists examine the mole. All three doctors described it as a perfectly shaped malignant melanoma. The following Monday I received the results--free of cancer cells.

In the fall of 1993, I faced another threat of cancer--another possible mastectomy. Blessed again, this time just before surgery, the doctor decided that I had a sebaceous cyst. He canceled my surgery. The next day the cyst was removed in Dr. George Smith's office--not an operating room!

A few days later, I discovered the "perfectly shaped malignant melanoma" had reappeared. Dr. Adrien Stewart removed it and said that later more extensive surgery would be needed. She said it was a malignant melanoma. The biopsy came in from New Orleans--free of cancer cells.

How has being a cancer survivor changed my life? In many ways it has helped me to appreciate life more fully. It has opened my eyes, mind, and heart to the many blessings in my life and of my family. I believe that God, the medical profession and I can do much to make me healthier, prolong my life, and make me a happier person.

This Thursday, April , 1995, I report to St. Mary's Imaging Center for my yearly cancer tests. I hope the good Lord still has me in His tender loving care.

BREAKING OUT
by
Woodson Hopkins

First mates not only exist on ships at sea, or matrimonial rolls throughout the land--they live happily in the hearts of the old, trampled over by time, but resilient to memory on long winter nights or balmy spring days. From the front porch rocker to the garden swing, they--now and then--emerge to remind them of days of yore and the frolic youth. Not to have a playmate was a haunting enigma of his childhood. Whether he was overly concerned with a friendless existence remains a mystery. Perhaps it was a sense of boredom, or more naturally, a coming of age that brought on a strong urge to see the world or--better still--have the world come to him. For whatever voids filled his life there was no awareness on his part that he was missing out on anything special. Only when he began to talk to himself did his family raise the "red flag" of concern. Among their initiatives on his behalf was to show him off by having his installed as one of two mascots of the high school pep squad. Except for a few oohs and ahs from the motherly types, he drew little attention from the rank and file football fan and, for the worse, found no one of the same gender and age with whom he could relate. Church would provide, or so his family thought, a source from which to find another little boy to play with their little boy. But it didn't pan out. His brother, who sometimes teased him, said it was because he put secular lyrics to sacred songs, always off pitch. He seemed destined to live out his life behind the picket fence that surrounded their house on Higgins Street--without a playmate. It was only after Mary Ellen or Bobbie, his sisters, started taking him to the talking movies that he sensed freedom and release from his wooden compound.

By the time he made his first movie, the Saturday afternoon matinee had become a tradition among young movie goers, especially in towns like his. And it was at the movies he made his very first friend, a funny little guy who made him smile and sometimes laugh when he impersonated grown ups. They hooked up real well together, neither talking much, just mimicking others. His family was overjoyed with the social blooming of their little boy and encouraged him to go over to his friend's place every Saturday. His sisters would ring up the other family to find out their schedule. Meeting at the movie house soon became routine for him and his friend. Pleased at his new circumstances, he was quite willing to overlook the necessity of someone accompanying him, never questioning his friend's expanded liberties. While he was fortunate to have two sisters, his friend had one. He had a big brother. His friend had a big dog.

While their times together were filled with glee, a certain sadness seemed to hang over the other family. One Saturday at the theater before his friend and family showed up, he listened in on a conversation between two women. Since he considered himself a liberated young man of the world, or at least of Humble, Texas, he listened in on what they had to say. It seems that a few years earlier, his friend's father, Walter, and his uncle, Ube, had met with tragedy on a business trip to New York City. Someone stole cousin Oswald away and would not return him. One woman hinted that Walter had sold the tike to a local theater owner and promoter because he was ugly, had large ears, and was hard to manage. It was terrible stuff, but what followed from the woman's mouth stunned him, and his heart fairly ached for the family. After fighting hard to get Oswald back, Walter and Ube finally had to give up and head home. It was a stressful scene at Grand Central Station when the pair departed without Oswald. The tale turned real morbid when the informant whispered that his

motherless friend had actually been conceived on the train before it reached St. Louis, and in tones he could hardly hear, further revealed that no one was sure who his father was, Walter or Uncle Ube. Both had their determination to produce another son to take Oswald's place.

He was too young to pay heed to such gossip and quickly put it from his mind when his friend showed up, along with his sister and the dog, happy and as animated as ever. Whether it was their odd looks or unusual clothes that set them apart, he was not quite sure; but they had a way of drawing a crowd wherever they went. He soon found out that he wasn't the only one clamoring for their attention. But it was a one way street. They never came to play at his house. It was always up to him to seek them out. At times their place became crowded with all sorts of animals. Both Walter and Ube loved animals and kept any number around, but no one bothered to complain. Their presence kept the children happily occupied. Once they had three pigs at the same time. Walter trained them all to dance, even the pigs. It was nothing to see them pirouette to looney tunes. How lucky he was to have such friends. He was certain his mother would think likewise despite the gossip surrounding them.

The time came, however, when he was forced to look at them in a different light. Their animated ways seldom brought laughter as in the old days. He was getting older, growing up, while his friend and his sister stayed the same. He would be starting school next year and meet new faces. Another life waited for him, but they seemed content to follow the old ways. When he left their place for the last time, he did so with a feeling that they had served a purpose. A few parting words crossed his lips: So long, Mickey, you little rat. You, too, Minnie. Take good care of Pluto and tell Mr. Disney he's the best.

LIFE AND LETTERS
by
Joe Glorioso

My name is Joe Glorioso. I am an addict. Accidently, I became an addict in September of 1992 to the most powerful of all drugs--LIFE and LETTERS. I stand before you not to seek your sympathy or your help, but to lure you into my trap of addiction.

Since 1992 I have been driven mercilessly to write a five minute essay for the booklet. In the past I succeeded, more or less. But today my little, old mind cannot write a single word that makes sense. I am burned out. Therefore, because I must write something, I'll search my semester's efforts to find a couple excerpts that would suffice. Maybe.

The first two paragraphs come from a story about my immigrant father's first job in America. Although the words were originally mine, they were heavily edited to make for easy reading by my skillful, delightful and cute editor. From my story "Ain't Lived Yet," told in my father's voice, I quote two paragraphs:

> *Somebody strutted in with a guitar, another with a fiddle, and one with a washboard draped around his neck. They banded together to make the damnedest music I ever heard. In the kitchen, on the cabin's porch, and on the grass outside, those folks shuffled, pranced, and gyrated their hips to the music and loud singing, sometimes sad, sometimes lively.*
>
> *Several bottles of wine were passed around. Everybody drank from the bottle. Finally, it was my turn. Down went the worst wine ever to touch my lips and scorch my throat. "White boy, dance with me!" called out one teenage woman. Everybody joined in challenging me. And I couldn't dance. Center stage on grassland, encircled by black folks, wildly clapping in time to gaudy music, passing a bottle from mouth to mouth and having a good time, I danced, a white boy with a black girl.*
>
> *If you've never been to a Saturday night brawl given by black folks, you ain't lived yet.*

The next paragraph, edited by my dutiful and pretty editor, is from a story entitled "Salesmanship, Sir, Salesmanship." It was the opening paragraph that earned a "C-" from my editor.

> *A sleepless night. Thursday silently shaded into Friday. A secretary and bookkeeper, unknowing of their destination or the bumps and ruts ahead, were on board a fast moving race car hell-bent into a free-wheeling world to spend one and a half million dollars. Friday crept slowly--reading labs, playgrounds, health programs, bands, and libraries punctuated each and every hour. A million and a half dollars to be spent in ten weeks: mission impossible. Yet the mere fact that I was young seemed miracle enough to sustain a dream and keep it interesting.*

My name is Joe Glorioso. I am an addict. I am addicted to cruising my memory bank of almost thirty thousand yesterdays, countless ordinary days, thousands of happy, hilarious days, and

a few sad ones. There are hundreds of my wonderful, enlightened and enterprising fellows, like me, who share my addiction. Join in the spirit of our adventure in times past. Be seduced by our endearing, alluring and beautiful editor. Smoke lustily from our golden glass pipe that is LIFE and LETTERS.