

SHORE LINES

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tar-pamlico literary workshop



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## A SENSE OF PLACE

FROM THE END OF THE ICE AGE, WHEN THE FOREBEARS OF THE TUSCARORA AND SECOTAN AND POMIIOC INDIANS BEGAN SETTLING THE PAMLICO-TAR RIVER BANKS, THE RIVER HAS PROVIDED A "SENSE OF PLACE." LIKE ALL RIVERS, OUR RIVER PROVIDES A NATURAL LINK OF ENERGY AND LIFE BETWEEN THE LAND, WATERS, AND LIVING THINGS OF THE WATERSHED. BUT THE RIVER ALSO PROVIDES A UNIQUE MENTAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PEOPLE LIVING ALONG IT, A SET OF SHARED FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES THAT, TAKEN TOGETHER, DEFINE OUR SHARED SENSE OF PLACE.

SOME MIGHT SAY THIS IS BECAUSE THE HISTORIC ROLE OF THE RIVER FOR TRANSPORTATION PERSISTS IN THE MODERN LANDSCAPE AND CULTURE. SOME MIGHT SAY THE RIVER PROVIDES A REGIONAL IDENTITY THAT TRANSCENDS ARTIFICIAL BOUNDARIES. I WOULD SAY, SIMPLY AND WITHOUT FURTHER EXPLANATION, THAT THE RIVER IS THE SOUL OF OUR REGION.

THE PAMLICO-TAR RIVER FOUNDATION SEEKS TO KEEP THE WATERS OF THE RIVER CLEAN, AND TO CONSERVE THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND QUALITY OF LIFE THAT MAKE THE PAMLICO-TAR AREA A SPECIAL PLACE TO LIVE. TO IDENTIFY THOSE QUALITIES THAT MAKE OUR REGION AND OUR RIVER SPECIAL, WE NEED TO EXPLORE OUR SENSE OF PLACE.

THAT'S WHAT SHORE LINES IS ALL ABOUT. DURING THE FOUNDATION'S MARITIME HERITAGE FESTIVAL, AREA WRITERS GATHERED TO PRODUCE A COLLECTION OF POETRY AND PROSE WHICH REFLECTS THE WAY WE FEEL ABOUT THE PAMLICO-TAR RIVER AND EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA. THE CONTENTS OF THIS VOLUME WILL, WE HOPE, HELP US TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE SPECIAL, ELUSIVE PARTS OF THE WHOLE THAT MAKE UP THE SENSE OF PLACE ASSOCIATED WITH OUR VERY SPECIAL PLACE.

JONATHAN PHILLIPS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
PAMLICO-TAR RIVER FOUNDATION

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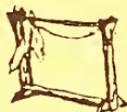
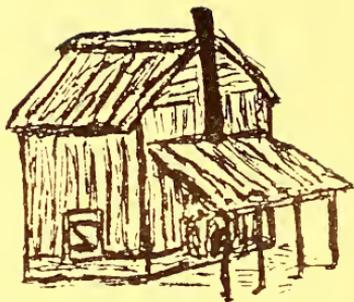
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WITH FUNDING FROM THE NORTH CAROLINA HUMANITIES  
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## PAMLICO-TAR RIVER HERITAGE FESTIVAL

WE MEET IN AN OLD CHURCH

WITH GHOSTS AND ANCIENT LIVE OAKS  
PLANTED IN THE YARD

OUR DIRECTOR, A GEOGRAPHER

CONVENES THE MEETING LIKE A PRIEST  
DOESN'T SPEAK OF SEDIMENT AND FLOW  
TALKS SOUL

"THE RIVER IS THE SOUL OF THE PLACE"  
HE PREACHES

I PICTURE WHIRLPOOLS

SWIRLING OFF CANOE PADDLES  
(PLATO SAYS SOULS SPIN)

I SEE A WHEEL CONNECTING EARTH AND SKY  
CLOUDS, RAIN, RIVER, AND EVAPORATION  
ELDERS SPEAK

IN THE OLD CHURCH, I LISTEN.

AMY HANNON

## ON OLD TOBACCO BARNS

SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE BRIGHT LEAF BELT  
THOSE BARNS OF BROWN AND GRAY  
COVERED WITH THEIR RUSTING TIN  
LEFT STANDING IN DECAY,

OUTMODED NOW BY PROGRESS  
REPLACED BY WHIRLING WHEEL  
NEW SQUATTING BULKS, ALL JUST ALIKE  
OF PLASTIC, WIRE, AND STEEL

OUTMODED NOW BY PROGRESS  
NO ONE HANDS THERE ANYMORE  
OR TIES GREEN LEAVES ON SLENDER STICKS  
TO HANG SIX DAYS TO CURE;  
NO ONE GATHERS THERE TO WORK OR PLAY  
OR PASS ON THE LOCAL NEWS  
OR CUTS A MELON IN YOUR SHADE  
TO COOL THE PRIMING CREWS,

OUTMODED NOW BY PROGRESS  
THROUGH ALL THESE YEARS YOU'VE STOOD  
TOOL OF A SPECIAL BREED OF MEN  
WHO FIRED WITH OIL AND WOOD  
WHO CHECKED THEIR LEAF THROUGH SMELL AND TOUCH  
WHO CURED IN YOU WITH PRIDE,

OUTMODED NOW BY PROGRESS  
AND SOMETHING SPECIAL DIED.

TAYLOR KOONCE

## THE MULLET STROKE

IT AIN'T LIKE IT WAS COUPLE OF YEARS AGO. WITH THE MULLET, I MEAN.

A FEW YEARS BACK THE PAMLICO RIVER THIS TIME OF YEAR WAS SO FULL OF JUMPIN' MULLET THAT NOBODY, NOT EVEN THE WORST FISHERMEN, COULD FAIL TO GET 'EM A MESS.

IT AIN'T THAT EASY NOW.

EITHER THERE JUST AIN'T AS MANY MULLET IN THE RIVER (MOST LIKELY) OR THERE ARE JUST AS MANY BUT THEY DON'T JUMP ANY MORE (LESS LIKELY).

AT ANY RATE, I CAN'T CATCH A MULLET THESE DAYS. THE DROP-OFF IN JUMPIN' MULLET HAS MADE MY PARTICULAR FISHIN' TECHNIQUE OBSOLETE.

I NEVER HAD ANY PATIENCE WITH A HOOK AND LINE. IF THE TURTLES DON'T GET MY BAIT, THE LITTLE FISH DO. AFTER A FEW HOURS OF FEEDIN' THREE-DOLLAR-A-POUND SHRIMP TO 25-CENT-A-POUND FISH AND DIME-A-DOZEN TURTLES, I GET AS FED UP WITH THE FISHIN' AS THOSE CRITTERS ARE GETTIN' FED UP WITH MY HIGH-PRICED BAIT.

MULLET FISHIN' USED TO BE A DIFFERENT STORY.

I COULD TAKE MY 12-FOOT SEARS AND ROEBUCK ALUMINUM JONBOAT, TIE UP TO A PILING, AND WAIT FOR THEM MULLET TO JUMP BY.

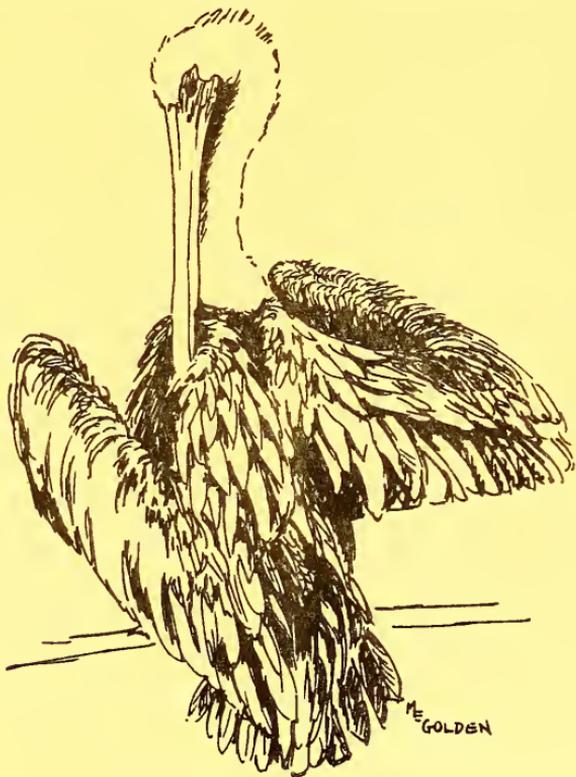
THEN I'D TAKE MY OLD SLAZENGER TENNIS RACKET--IT'S WARPED BUT STILL SOLID--AND SWAT THE FISH INTO THE BOAT AS THEY JUMPED PAST.

ON A GOOD DAY I COULD FILL UP THE BOAT WITH JUMPIN' MULLET, EVERY ONE OF 'EM WITH A TENNIS RACKET BURN ON THE GILLS.

LOTS OF FOLKS NEVER BELIEVED I FISHED THAT WAY. LIKE THIS LAWYER WHO FISHES NETS IN THE PAMLICO.

HE TOLD ME HE CAUGHT MULLET IN HIS NET, AND THAT WHEN A MULLET GETS SCARED HE TENSES UP AND BECOMES REAL HARD. THE LAWYER SAID HE DIDN'T THINK YOU COULD SWAT ONE OF THEM TENSED-UP MULLET INTO YOUR BOAT WITHOUT BREAKIN' YOUR RACKET.

SHOWS WHAT A BEAUFORT COUNTY SHYSTER KNOWS, WITH A SMOOTH STROKE AND A LITTLE BACKSPIN, IT DON'T MATTER HOW TENSED UP A FISH GETS. LONG AS YOU GET THAT RIGHT, THE ONLY PROBLEM YOU GOT IS SMACKIN' A MULLET OUT OF BOUNDS, INTO SOMEBODY ELSE'S BOAT. IF HE FALLS IN THE WATER THE FOOL THING WILL JUMP AGAIN DIRECTLY, AND YOU CAN TAKE ANOTHER SHOT AT HIM.



THE COLONEL BELIEVED ME, AND WANTED TO TRY MY FISHIN' METHOD DOWN ON THE NEUSE RIVER. HE WAS WORRIED THAT MULLET-SWATTIN' WOULD RUIN HIS TENNIS STROKE.

I DON'T PLAY NO TENNIS, SO I COULDN'T SAY. I DID RECOMMEND A RACKET WITH NYLON STRINGS, THOUGH. THEM GUT STRINGS JUST CAN'T TAKE ALL THAT MOISTURE.

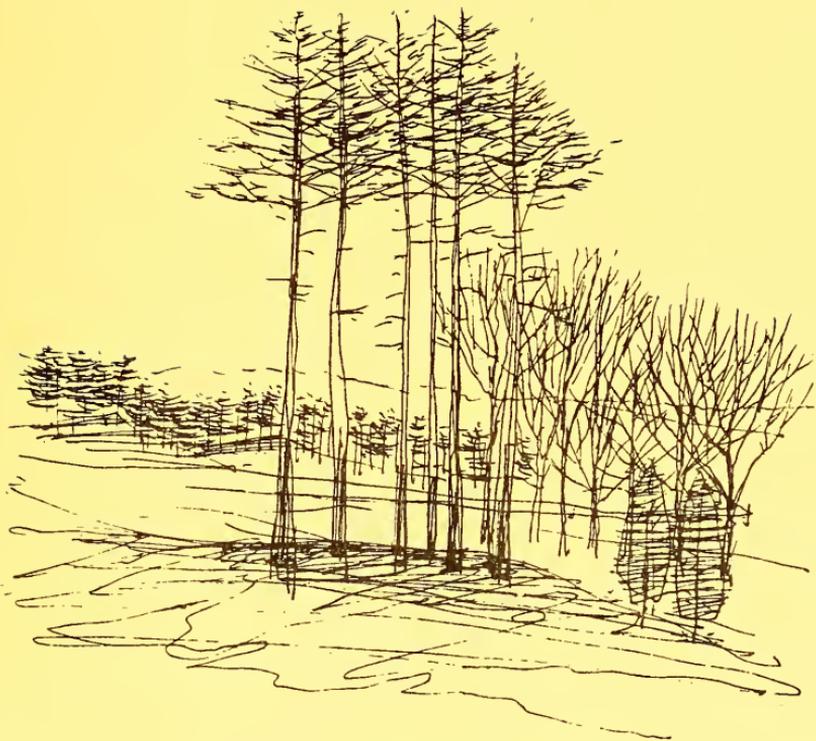
A MULLET IS DUMB, BUT TOWARD THE END OF THE SUMMER THEY GET A LITTLE SMARTER AND DON'T JUMP WHEN THEY SEE YOU OUT WITH THE RACKET. THEN YOU GOTTA OUTSMART 'EM. THING TO DO IS GO OUT IN WHITE SHORTS, A WHITE ALLIGATOR SHIRT, AND A FLOPPY HAT. THAT WAY THE MULLET'S THINK YOU'RE REALLY ON YOUR WAY TO PLAY TENNIS AND DON'T GET SKITTISH.

THE ONLY REAL PROBLEM I'VE HAD IS "MULLET ELBOW", 'CAUSE THE 'OL JOINTS CAN TAKE A BEATIN' AFTER YOU'VE BEEN WHACKIN' FISH ALL DAY. I DON'T USUALLY GET THE MULLET ELBOW, THOUGH, 'CAUSE MY BOAT'S SO SMALL IT'LL USUALLY GET FULL OF FISH AND SINK BEFORE I CAN SWAT ENOUGH MULLET'S TO HURT MY ELBOW.

I DON'T WANNA LEAD YOU TO BELIEVE THAT I INVENTED THIS SPORT. I LEARNED IT FROM AN OLD HERMIT WHO LIVED IN A DUCK BLIND ON CHOCOWINITY BAY. I ONCE SAW THIS GUY SMACK A MULLET WITH A 30-YEAR-OLD WILSON RACKET, INTO THE BOTTOM OF HIS SKIFF WITH JUST THE RIGHT SPIN TO MAKE IT BOUNCE INTO A COOLER HE HAD UP ON THE BOW. THAT 'OL' BOY WAS THE BEE-JORN BORG OF MULLET FISHIN', I RECKON.

BACK WHEN THE FISH WERE PLENTIFUL, I'D GO AFTER MULLET WITH MY TENNIS RACKET ALL THE TIME, I GOT TO WHERE I DIDN'T KNOW IF "SERVING MULLET" MEANT PUTTIN' COOKED FISH ON THE TABLE, OR TOSSIN' LIVE ONES INTO THE AIR AND USIN' MY RACKET TO SMACK 'EM INTO ANOTHER FISHERMAN'S BOAT.

BUT LIKE MOST ALL THE OTHER FISH, THERE JUST AIN'T NO MULLET IN THE PAMLICO LIKE THERE USED TO BE. I'M GOIN' TO HAVE TO GET INTO A NEW RACKET.



white pines & hardwoods. H. Morris

## A FUNDAMENTAL VIEW OF THE BIRD

WHO SAID DUCKS IS GOTTA FLY NORTH?

THERE'S THESE MALLARDS  
 RIGHT HERE IN RIVER CITY  
 DIDN'T GET THE WORD  
 THEY JUST LAZIES 'ROUND THE PIER  
 TWELVE MONTHS TO THE YEAR  
 EATIN' BUGS AND CORN;

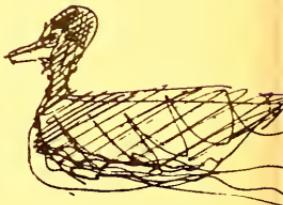
IF THEY'D LISTEN TO THE WORD  
 DO LIKE THEY'S SUPPOSE TO  
 JOIN UP WITH THE FLOCK  
 THEY'D BE UP AT HUDSON BAY  
 OR SOMEWHERE UP THAT WAY  
 WHERE THE GREAT MALLARD ONCE WAS BORN;

BUT THIS IS A REBEL BUNCH  
 MAKING THEIR OWN WAY  
 FLOATING 'ROUND QUACKING LIBERALISMS  
 IN THE SUMMER SUN  
 HAVIN' TOO MUCH FUN  
 THE DEVIL'S GONNA GETT'UM;

AND THEY'RE RAISIN' UP THEIR DIDDLES  
 THE SAME WAY  
 LEARNIN' EACH DUCK SON AND DAUGHTER  
 TO SWIM IN OUR WARM WATER  
 WE OUGHT NOT TO LETT'UM;

I SAY: "DUCKS IS GOTTA FLY NORTH!"  
 THEY ALWAYS HAS  
 IT'S THE RULE  
 I LEARNED THAT IN SCHOOL  
 I'M GONNA TAKE MY GUN  
 AND SHOOT 'UM.

TAYLOR KOONCE



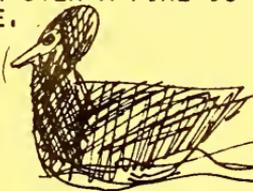
ALL YOU DO TO COOK A WILD DUCK IS PUT IT ON THE GRILL OVER MEDIUM HEAT. SOME FOLKS STICK HUNKS OF APPLE OR ONION IN THE CAVITY WHERE THE GUTS WERE. I DON'T. THE TOTAL COOKING TIME FOR A LARGE WILD DUCK IS ONLY ABOUT HALF AN HOUR, WHICH ISN'T ENOUGH TIME FOR THE APPLE OR ONION TO IMPART ANY FLAVOR.

MEDIUM HEAT IS AROUND 375 DEGREES AT THE GRILL SURFACE. HARDWARE STORES SELL INEXPENSIVE THERMOMETERS FOR GRILLS, OR YOU CAN USE THE BURNT-PALM METHOD I PREFER. ALL I DO IS HOLD MY PALM OUT CLOSE TO THE GRILL'S SURFACE. IF I CAN HOLD IT THERE FOR ABOUT FIVE SECONDS BEFORE SNATCHING IT AWAY, THE HEAT'S MEDIUM. LESS THAN THAT MEANS THE FIRE'S NOT HOT ENOUGH. BETTER TO HAVE A LITTLE MORE THAN LESS HEAT FOR DUCKS, AS THEY TEND TO DRY OUT, AND PROLONGED COOKING FOULS 'EM UP.

I ROTATE THE BIRD EVERY TEN MINUTES OR SO, WITH MORE TIME FOR THE BREAST SIDE. IF I HAVE A SECRET, IT'S BASTING THE BIRD WITH ORANGE JUICE WHILE IT'S COOKING TO MOISTEN IT. I USUALLY SQUEEZE ORANGES RIGHT OVER THE DUCK. SOMETIMES I BRUSH OR SPOON ON A COATING OF ORANGE MARMALADE FOR THE LAST TEN MINUTES OF COOKING TIME, MAKING SURE TO GET IT CHARRED A BIT AND BROWNED.

I LIKE TO SERVE DUCK MEDIUM RARE, PINK BUT NOT QUITE BLOODY IN THE MIDDLE, SO WHEN I THINK IT'S DONE, AFTER SAY, FIFTEEN MINUTES COOKING ON THE BREAST SIDE AND TEN ON THE BACK, I POKE A SMALL HOLE IN THE BREAST, RIGHT BESIDE THE BONE, AND TAKE A LOOK. IF THE BLOOD DOES RUN OUT AND IT LOOKS RED INSIDE, I KNOW IT'S DONE.

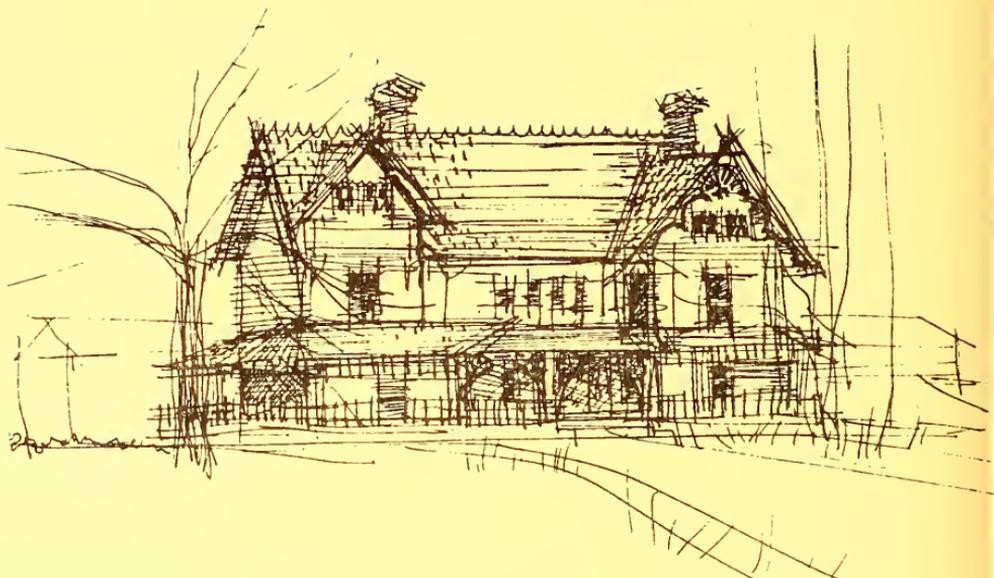
I TAKE THE DUCK IN THE HOUSE ON A PLATTER WITH SOME ORANGE OR APPLE WEDGES AND I SHOW IT TO THE GUESTS, WHO SAY, OOH, AND AAH, BECAUSE A WHOLE DUCK ROASTED CRISPY BROWN OVER A FIRE IS A BEAUTIFUL, PRIMITIVE THING TO SEE.



DAVID PUTNAM







House at Turner - U.S. 1  
4.20-60 H. Harris

## GRANDPA

GRANDPA USED TO ROCK IN A LARGE WOODEN CHAIR ON THE LANDING AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS. BACK AND FORTH, BACK AND FORTH. WE CAME TO LOVE THAT OLD FAMILIAR CREAK OF THE WOOD AS THE CHAIR AND THE FLOOR MADE THE RHYTHM AND THE MUSIC FOR HIS STORIES.

GRANDPA DIED, AND WHEN I WENT BACK TO VISIT THE HOUSE, I WOULD LIE THERE IN MY OLD FAMILIAR BED TRYING TO GO TO SLEEP, JUST SORT OF SILENTLY THINKING ABOUT ALL THE GOOD MEMORIES THAT WE'D SHARED IN THAT HOUSE--GRANDPA TELLING STORIES, ME SITTING ON HIS KNEE AND ROCKING IN THAT OLD ROCKING CHAIR. I DON'T KNOW WHEN, EXACTLY, I REALIZED I COULD HEAR THAT CREAKING WOOD OUTSIDE MY DOOR.

I GOT UP SLOWLY AND OPENED THE DOOR AND LOOKED OUT ON THE LANDING, BUT NOTHING WAS THERE. THEN I COULDN'T HEAR THE CREAKING SOUND ANY MORE. I WENT BACK TO BED AND WAS JUST ABOUT TO FALL ASLEEP AGAIN, WHEN I HEARD A SCRATCHING METAL SOUND OUTSIDE THE WINDOW, A SOUND LIKE GRANDPA USED TO MAKE WHEN HE'D TAKE THE METAL PAIL FROM THE WELL AND SLOWLY GO AROUND THE BARE GROUND OF THE YARD PICKING UP TWIGS. A SCRATCH AND A THUMP AND ANOTHER SCRATCH.

WHEN I WOKE UP THE NEXT MORNING, I TOLD GRANDMA ABOUT IT. SHE SAID THEY'D OFTEN HEARD THE CREAKING CHAIR, AND WHEN THEY CHECKED THE LANDING, NO ONE WOULD BE THERE.

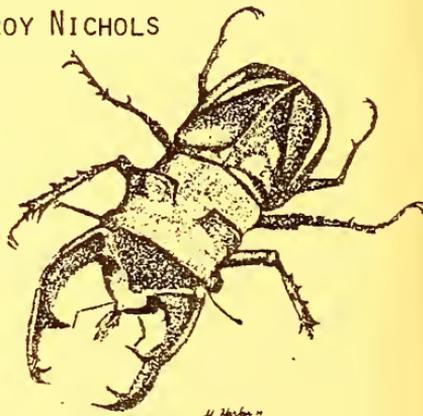
IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SUNNY MORNING AND BREAKFAST SMELLED SO GOOD COOKING. I WALKED OUT ONTO THE PORCH AND INTO THE YARD JUST TO ENJOY THE SUNNY AIR. I WALKED AROUND THE CORNER UNDER THE SPREADING OAK TREE AND LOOKED OVER TO THE WELL OUTSIDE MY BEDROOM WINDOW. THERE SAT THAT OLD METAL PAIL--FRESH FULL OF TWIGS.

AS TOLD TO JOHN GOLDEN

## THE SQUASH PLANT THAT ATE WASHINGTON

THE MAD HUNGARIAN MUTTERED SOFT, SLOW AND CRUEL  
NO TURNIPS FOR ME, NO MELONS NOR PEAS NOR BEANS  
SHALL I WASTE MY TIME UPON LIKE A FOOL  
WHEN I CAN HAVE ZUCCHINI DEVOUR THE UNCLEANS;  
    HA, HA, HA, HE GIGGLED IN TERROR  
    AS HE WATCHED THE HORROR GROW  
    AND THEN HE KNEW HE HAD MADE AN ERROR  
    WHEN THE THING ATE HIS LITTLE TOE;  
HEAVEN HELP US, HE SCREAMED IN ANGUISH  
WHAT DREADFUL THING HAVE I DONE THIS DAY?  
ALL THE LIGHTS WILL SOON BE EXTINGUISHED  
ALL MANKIND WILL BE FORCED TO PAY;  
    WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT WHAT I HAVE DONE?  
    MY SQUASH IS GOING TO EAT WASHINGTON.

LEROY NICHOLS



## SIXTY NINE--GOING ON SEVEN

AT SIXTY-NINE A VIVID IMAGINATION IS LIKE BEING BALD AND LEFTHANDED--NOTHING CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT, YOU JUST HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT.

OUR RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION IS LOCATED ON THE PAMLICO RIVER AND KNOWN AS NORTH SHORES. IT SHOULD BE CALLED CANINEVILLE, FOR THERE ARE DOGS ALL OVER THE PLACE.

THERE IS A PROFESSIONAL POLITICIAN IN OUR TOWN WHOM I SHALL CALL JOE. IT IS HIS DUTY TO CAMPAIGN FOR THE CANDIDATE OF HIS PARTY. IF HIS SUPERIORS TOLD HIM AL CAPONE HAD BEEN RESURRECTED AND WAS RUNNING FOR THE PRESIDENCY ON THEIR PARTY TICKET, JOE WOULD MAKE AN ALL-OUT EFFORT TO ELECT AL CAPONE. HE WOULD NEVER EVEN THINK ABOUT THE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES. NOW I LIKE OLD JOE, BUT EVERY TIME I SEE HIM, PART OF THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERETTA HMS PINAFORE RUNS THROUGH MY HEAD.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY BEGAN HIS CAREER AS AN OFFICE BOY, AND HE TELLS HOW HE ADVANCED: "I ALWAYS VOTED AT MY PARTY'S CALL AND NEVER THOUGHT OF THINKING FOR MYSELF AT ALL. I THOUGHT SO LITTLE THEY REWARDED ME BY MAKING ME THE RULER OF THE QUEEN'S NAVY."

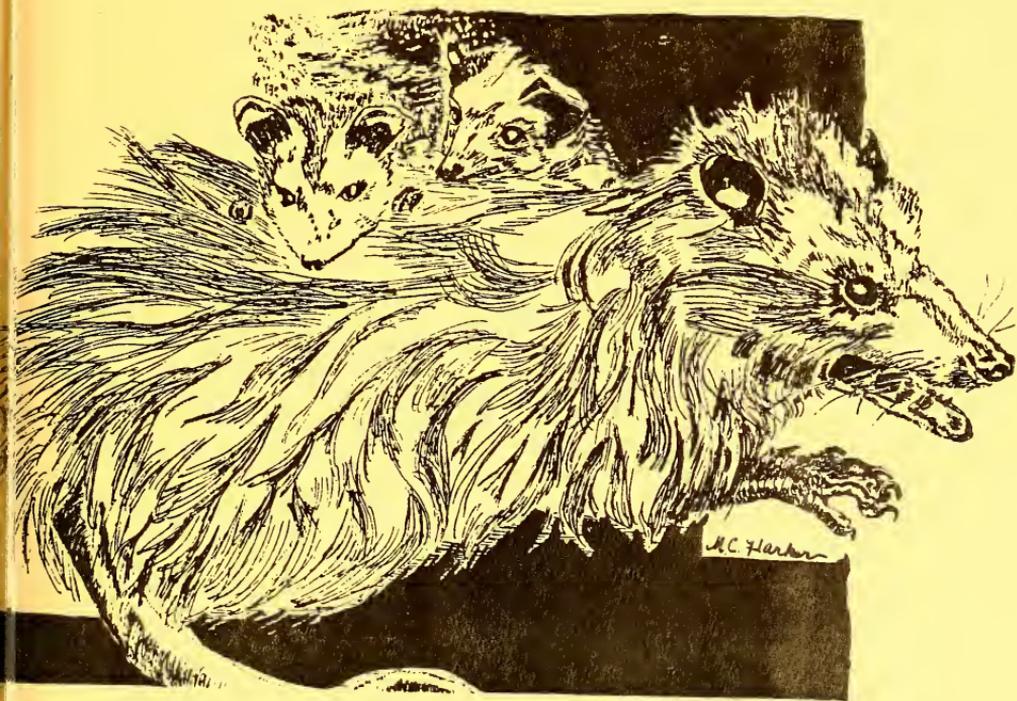
OF COURSE, I DO NOT MEAN TO PUT JOE DOWN....

LONNIE A. SQUIRES

## WAKE UP PEOPLE

HOW MUCH LONGER WILL THIS STREAM FLOW  
FREE OF THE TRASH THAT DWELLS BELOW?  
HOW MUCH LONGER WILL THIS WATER GLISTEN?  
WAKE UP, PEOPLE, TAKE NOTICE AND LISTEN!  
YOUR BREATH MAY NOT BE PUNGENT AND STALE  
BUT THAT WHICH YOUR CHILDREN WILL INHALE?  
CEASE TO MARVEL THE PUMPING PISTON  
WAKE UP, PEOPLE, TAKE NOTICE AND LISTEN!  
FOR THOSE OF US WHO CAN STILL BREATHE  
CHIDE FELLOW MAN, IN ANGER SEETHE  
WAKE UP, PEOPLE, TAKE NOTICE AND LISTEN!  
YOU'RE DRIVING YOUR OWN TO THEIR EXTINCTION.

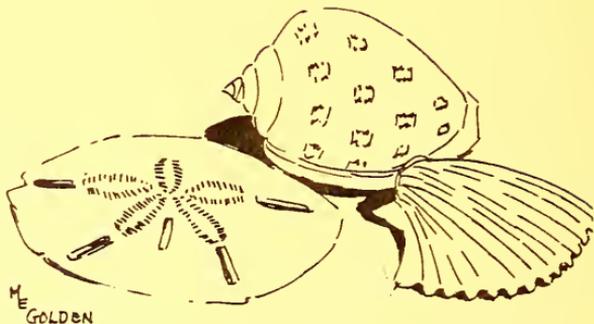
SUSAN HARDISON



## PAMLICO RENDEZVOUS

TWICE A WEEK  
WE MEET IN THAT TIME SLOT  
FALLING BETWEEN  
THE END OF THE BUSINESS DAY  
AND SUPPER;  
OUR PULSES RACE, WE PANT FOR BREATH  
WE GRUNT, WE GROAN  
WE GASP AND MOAN;  
THEN COMES A SIGH OF RELIEF  
ONCE AGAIN  
WE SURVIVED AEROBICS.

SUSAN HARDISON



## EARLY COMMERCE

TODAY THE BOAT COMES FROM UPSTREAM  
WE RISE IN EARLY DARKNESS  
CARRY BASKETS OF RED CORN AND  
SUNFLOWER NUTS  
TO BEAUTIFUL RIVER  
CARRY CLAY VESSELS FILLED WITH  
DRIED LEAVES  
OF DREAMING-SMOKE  
GRANDMOTHER TELLS HOW THIS SMOKE WILL  
SEE FEASTS  
DRUM BEAT, CIRCLE DANCE  
RATTLES MADE OF TURTLE SHELL  
ENDLESS CHANT  
FOUR DIRECTIONS RISING  
WHITE, YELLOW, RED, BLUE  
BEAR, EAGLE, OTTER, DEER

MY HEART BEATS, FEET FLY  
NOT FROM SMOKE OR GRANDMOTHER STORIES  
BUT WANTING WHAT BEAUTIFUL RIVER BRINGS:  
GIFTS TO SEAL MY COUSIN'S PROMISE  
OF MARRIAGE IN THE SPRING.

AMY HANNON

## BLUE CHANNEL CRABS FROM THE PAMLICO RIVER

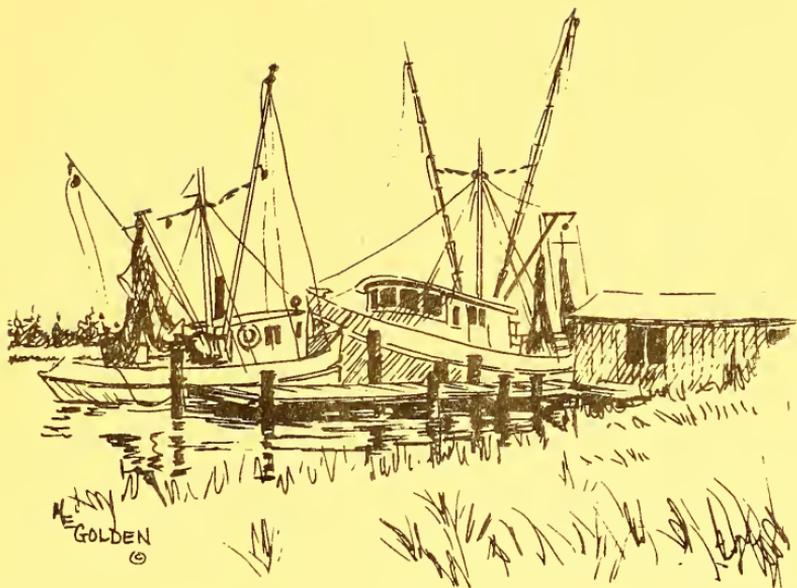
NO SELF-RESPECTING CAROLINIAN WOULD ATTEMPT TO COOK A CRAB, HARD OR SOFT, WITHOUT FIRST CLEANING IT, MUCH LESS WOULD HE EAT IT.

TO CLEAN A HARD CRAB, ONE SHOULD WEAR GLOVES. WITH A LONG SHARP POINTED KNIFE, GO TO THE TUB OF LIVE CRABS AND PIERCE THE SHELL OF ONE, JUST BEHIND THE EYES. THIS WILL RENDER IT LIFELESS AND IT CAN BE BROUGHT UP OUT OF THE TUB ON THE POINT OF THE KNIFE. IT THEN CAN BE PLACED IN ONE HAND AND, WITH THE OTHER HAND, THE SHELL CAN BE REMOVED. CUT OUT THE "DEAD MEN FINGERS" (THE SPONGY PIECES ON EACH SIDE), CUT OFF THE FACE AND APRON ON THE UNDERSIDE, AND CLEAN OUT THE ENTRAILS. THE LEGS MAY BE LEFT ON OR CUT OFF. THE CLAWS ARE BROKEN OFF AND PUT IN THE BIG CRAB POT AFTER THEY, ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE CRAB, ARE WASHED WELL WITH A SCRUB BRUSH.

FOR CAROLINA HARD CRAB STEW, PUT THREE DOZEN CLEAN HARD CRABS IN A BIG CANNING POT. ADD TWO CUPS OF WATER, TWO RED HOT PEPPERS, A QUARTER POUND CUBED SALT PORK FRIED OUT WITH ALL THE DRIPPINGS, AND BRING TO A BOIL. DROP CORN MEAL DUMPLINGS ABOUT THE SIZE OF A FIFTY-CENT PIECE INTO THE WATER RIGHT AWAY AND ALLOW TO BOIL RAPIDLY FOR EIGHTEEN MINUTES. STIR OCCASIONALLY SO THE CRABS ON TOP CAN GET DOWN IN THE JUICE. THE JUICE MAY BE THICKENED SLIGHTLY JUST BEFORE SERVING BY MIXING A LITTLE CORN MEAL IN A LITTLE WATER, STIRRING IT INTO THE POT, AND COOKING THE STEW ANOTHER THREE MINUTES.

SPREAD PLENTY OF NEWSPAPER ON THE TABLE UNDER THE PLATES, BECAUSE TO ENJOY CRAB STEW, YOU MUST LET THE JUICE RUN DOWN TO YOUR ELBOWS. ALLOW A WHOLE EVENING FOR DINING ON CRABS COOKED THIS WAY. THIS IS NOT A MEAL TO BE EATEN IN A HURRY.

ARLENE CRISP AASEBY

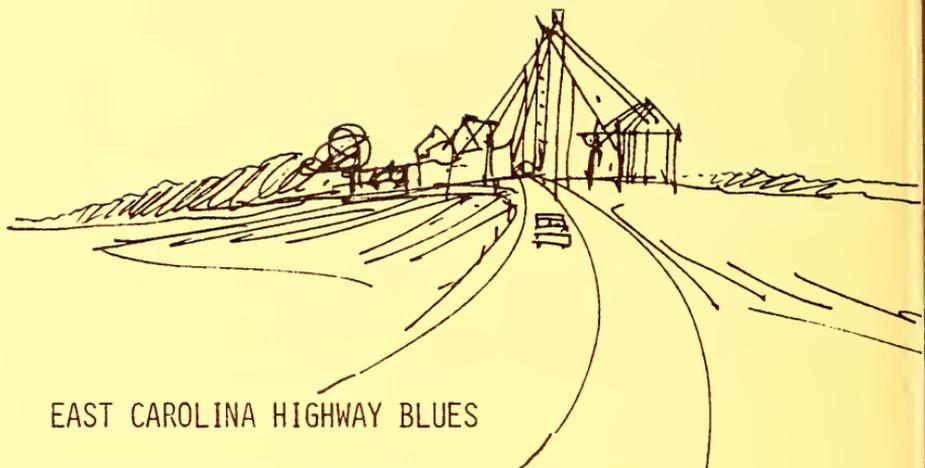


## NOTHING IS FOREVER

LONG YEARS AGO, BEFORE THIS TOWN WAS MADE  
BESIDE THE RIVER--THERE WERE NO SHIPS OF TRADE,  
NO STREETS NOR ROADS, JUST NARROW WINDING TRAILS  
TROD BY THE PAINTED RED MAN, WHO HUNTED BIRD AND BEAST  
FOR SKINS TO KEEP HIM WARM, OR FOOD ON WHICH TO FEAST;  
WITH STOLID ZEAL, HE FOLLOWED ANCIENT RITES,  
TOILED THROUGH THE PLEASANT DAYS, SLEPT THROUGH  
THE STAR-LIT NIGHTS  
HE SWAM OR FISHED, ENGAGED IN TRIBAL WARS,  
SMOKED PIPES OF PEACE, AND GAMED UPON THE SHORES,  
WHEN, FROM THE BLUE, LARGE SHIPS FROM DISTANT LANDS  
BROUGHT WHITE-SKINNED STRANGERS WITH CLEVER, KNOWING  
HANDS  
WHICH FELLED THE TREES, BUILT SHELTERS FROM THE RAIN,  
PLOWED 'FURROWS, TILLED SOIL, AND PLANTED FRUITS AND  
GRAIN  
AND MADE OF TANGLED JUNGLE A FERTILE OPEN PLAIN,  
THE YEARS ROLLED ON--'TIL NOW THERE IS NO TRACE  
OF THE STOIC RED MAN--HE'S VANISHED FROM THIS SPHERE  
WHERE ONCE HE DWELT, AND IN SOME FUTURE YEAR  
WE TOO SHALL FADE, OUR SIGNS WILL DISAPPEAR  
WE'LL DWELL NO LONGER HERE BECAUSE A STRONGER RACE  
WILL DESCEND UPON THIS LAND FROM REALMS OF OUTER SPACE.

MARION P. CONNER





## EAST CAROLINA HIGHWAY BLUES

IF THESE FARMERS ARE REALLY AS OVERWORKED AND  
UNDERCOMPENSATED

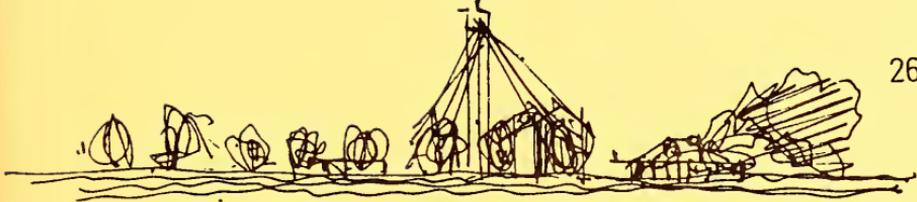
AS THEY SAY THEY ARE  
IT SURE DOESN'T PUT THEM IN ANY RUSH  
ON THE HIGHWAY;

LATE-MODEL PICKUPS FIDDLE-FART ACROSS THE  
COASTAL PLAIN  
TEN MILES AN HOUR BELOW THE SPEED LIMIT  
DID I REALLY COME HERE BECAUSE THE PACE OF  
LIFE IS SLOW?

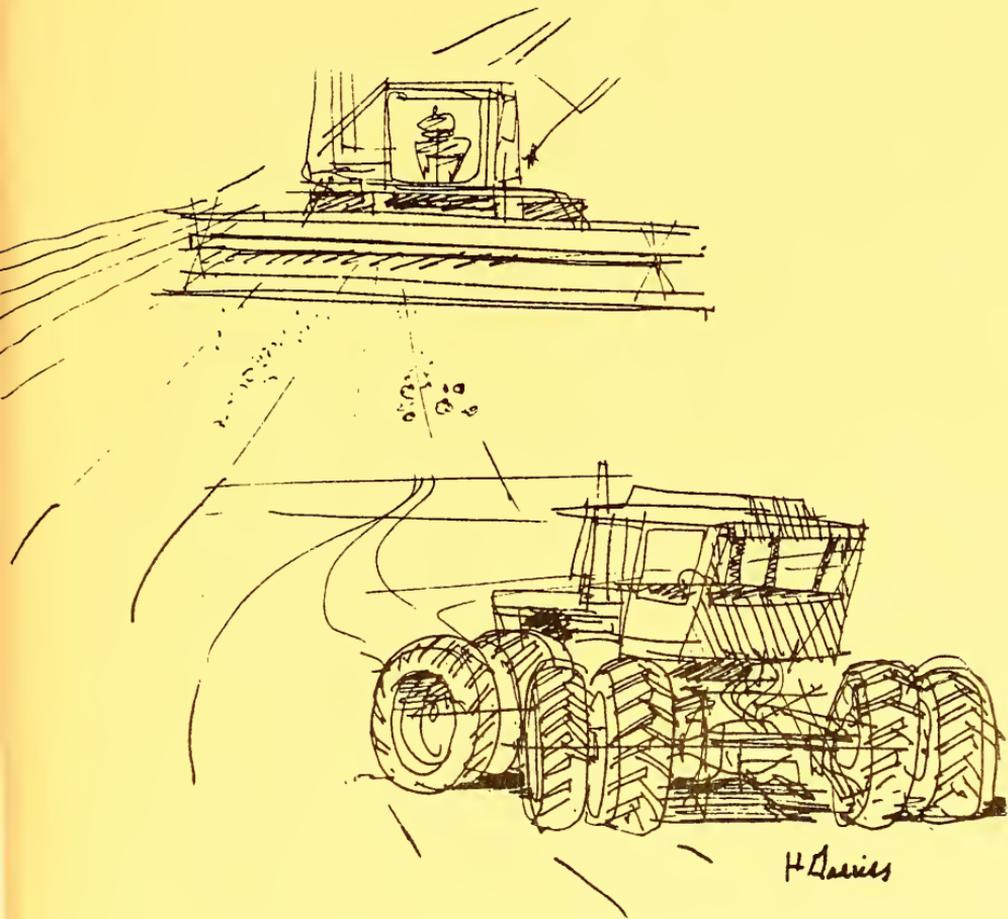
BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS.

MAYBE THEY ARE TO BE CONGRATULATED  
FOR NOT GETTING ALL IN A RUSH  
I SHOULD LEARN A LESSON  
BUT I SQUANDER MY PRAYERS ON PLEAS TO THE  
ALMIGHTY TO LET ME  
DRIVE 55 AGAIN.

JONATHAN D. PHILLIPS



8-24-02



H. Davies

## A QUART AND A HALF LOW

TO ANYONE WATCHING FROM SHORE, IT LOOKED LIKE JUST ANOTHER FISHING BOAT. IT CERTAINLY WAS NOT A PLEASURE BOAT. NO, THE SLOW RHYTHM OF THE ENGINE, THE SCRUFFY SKIFF IN TOW, THE WANT OF PAINT AND A NAME CLEARLY LABELED IT "WORKBOAT."

BUT ON THIS FINE AND FRIDAY AFTERNOON, THE TOOTHLESS OLD CREW OF THE NC2859 HAD MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO THAN FIND FISH.

CAP'NS BERKLEY HARKER AND JOHN SMITH WERE HAULIN' LIQUOR FROM NORTH HARLOWE, KNOWN IN THOSE DAYS OF THE EARLY '50'S AS THE MOONSHINE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD.

"SLOW 'ER DOWN A HAIR," JOHN SMITH CROAKED. "YOU'RE MAKING IT MIGHTY HARD TO POUR."

WITH PRACTICED HAND, ALBEIT A LITTLE SHAKY, SMITH POURED PRECISELY A QUARTER OF AN INCH OF BOOTLEG WHISKEY FROM EACH OF THE SIXTY HALF-GALLON FRUIT JARS THEY HAD ABOARD. "SKIMMIN' OFF THE CREAM," HE CALLED IT.

HE KNEW IF HE STARTED WHEN THEY LEFT NORTH HARLOWE, HE COULD HAVE THREE PINTS OF HIS VERY OWN WHISKEY BY SUNDOWN.

AS THEY CHUGGED UPSTREAM TOWARD NEW BERN, THEY SWAPPED "WAR" STORIES. THEIR VOICES ROSE ABOVE THE NOISE OF THE ENGINE AND DRIFTED ACROSS THE WIDE EXPANSE OF NEUSE RIVER.

THEY TALKED OF CLOSE CALLS WITH THE FEDS. OF CHUMS WHO HAD BEEN "PENITENTIARIED" AND HOW LEARNING TO WEAVE CHAIR BOTTOMS DURING THEIR MANY SOJOURNS TO THE STATE PEN IN RALEIGH HAD FAILED TO DETER THEM FROM GOING BACK TO THE WORM AND THE MASH RAKE.



H. Maria

SMITH SAT IN THE OPEN DOOR OF THE ENGINE ROOM, USING HIS BONY KNEES FOR LEVERAGE AS HE WENT ABOUT HIS METHODICAL MEASURING OF THE WHITE LIGHTNING.

"OLE ZEB," HE SAID, "USED TO CALL IT SQUIRREL WHISKEY."

CAP'N HARKER WORKED THE CRUDE TILLER, LEANING A LITTLE TO PORT, KEEPING A WARY EYE OUT FOR NET STAKES. "NEVER HEARD IT CALLED THAT," HE SAID.

"YEP, CALLED IT SQUIRREL WHISKEY. SAID WHEN HE WENT A-HUNTIN' OF A COLD MORNING, HE'D JUST TAKE ALONG HIS "RELAXER" AND HAVE HIM THREE OR FOUR DRINKS AND PRESENTLY WHEN HE'D SEE A SQUIRREL OUT ON A LIMB, HE'D FORGET THE GUN AND CLIMB RIGHT UP THAT TREE AND CATCH THE SQUIRREL HISSELF."

LANDMARKS ALONG THE WAY TRIGGERED STORIES THAT EACH HAD HEARD MANY TIMES BEFORE.

THEY ARRIVED UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS AND OFF-LOADED THEIR CARGO ONTO THE SHORE OF A NARROW CREEK NEAR SANDY POINT. WORKING AS A TEAM, THEY MADE LITTLE COMMOTION AS THEY TURNED THE TWO BOATS AND HEADED BACK OUT INTO THE RIVER.

SUDDENLY, THEIR SENSES WERE ASSAULTED BY THE THUNDER OF A POWERFUL MOTOR, A BLINDING SPOTLIGHT, AND THE AWARENESS OF SEVERAL GUNS AIMED IN THEIR DIRECTION. FEDERAL AGENTS DEMANDED TO COME ABOARD IN THE NAME OF THE LAW.

IT TOOK ONLY MINUTES TO FIND THAT THEY HAD NO CONTRABAND EITHER ON BOARD THE BOAT OR BENEATH THE NETS ON THE TINY SKIFF. THE AGENTS LEFT THEM IN A HAIL OF THREATS AND CURSES.

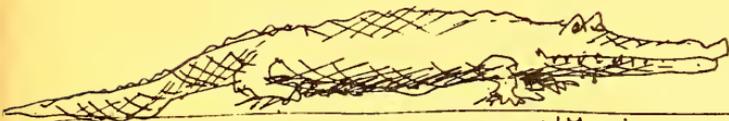
SHAKEN AND SILENT, THE TWO OLD MEN SAT FOR A FEW MOMENTS REFLECTING ON THEIR CLOSE CALL. JOHN SMITH DREW A LONG SIGH. "HOW DEEP YOU SUPPOSE IT IS HERE, BERK?" HE FINALLY ASKED.

HARKER CRANKED THE ENGINE. "WE'RE IN THE CHANNEL."

"OH," SMITH SAID GLUMLY.

AS THE NC2839 MADE HER SAD WAY UPRIVER, MOONLIGHT GLISTENED ON ITS HERRINGBONE WAKE WHILE FAR BELOW THREE SMALL JARS OF MOONSHINE RESTED ON THE MUDDY BOTTOM.

MAXINE CAREY HARKER





12-9-80

H. Davis

## FIRST VISIT TO MY BOXED-IN MOTHER

IT'S LIKE THE U. S. POSTAL SERVICE  
 ONE OF THOSE STORAGE BOX STATIONS  
 NO DAILY PICKUP AND DELIVERY  
 JUST STORAGE;

I WALK THE LONG HALL  
 SEARCHING FOR MY PIGEONHOLE  
 WHY DOES IT SMELL LIKE A VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE?  
 FRAGILE BIRDS, CAGED IN WHEELCHAIRS, CHIRP  
 SOFTLY  
 WOUNDED SPECIES LIE, MOUTHS AGAPE, SLEEPING PAST  
 OLD AGE  
 ONE DEMENTED TORTURE OF A SOUL SCREAMS HER  
 ANGUISH;

OH, GOD, KEEP ME WALKING  
 DON'T LET ME STOP HERE  
 I WANT TO RUN...TO LEAVE;

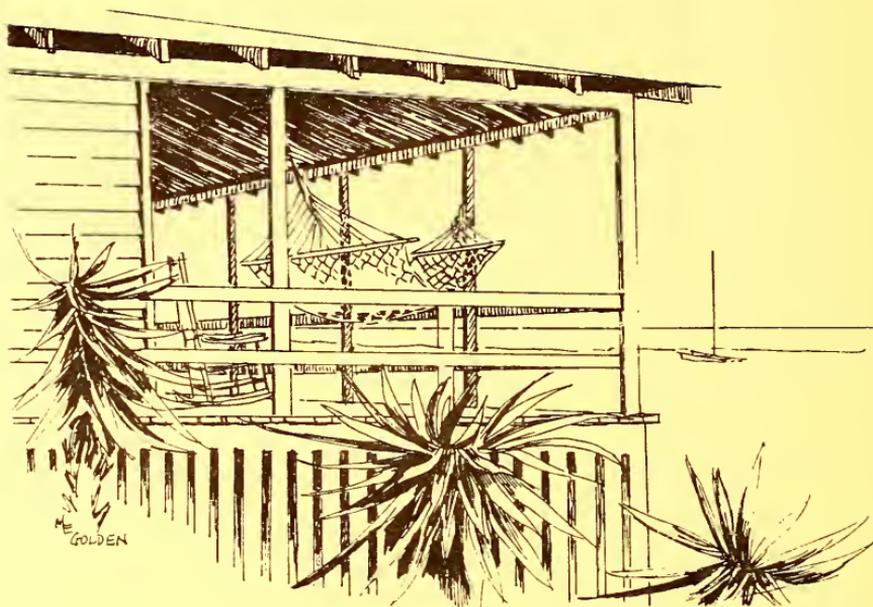
SHE'S WAITING  
 BEEN WAITING ALL DAY SINCE THEY WOKE HER AT SIX  
 FOR OATMEAL AT EIGHT;

GOOD  
 HER NAME CLINGS CROOKEDLY TO THE DOOR  
 HELD BY TAPE BECAUSE SHE'S NEW  
 NEXT WEEK IT'LL BE IN CALLIGRAPHY AND FANCY  
 NOW IT'S PRECARIOUS AND A-TILT;

SO IS SHE;

HAVEN'T GOT SPACE TO CUSS A CAT IN  
 THE HUG LASTS AS LONG AS SHE CAN STAND;

SIT ME IN THE CHAIR....



WE TALK  
 OF SMALL ROOMS  
 AND MUTE ROOMMATES  
 OF LARGE-PEA MEALS THAT DEFY HUNGER  
 OF PAINTING THE WARDROBE  
 AND RED GEORGIA CLAY  
 OF BROKEN ARMS  
 AND MOTHER'S DAYS PAST;  
 HER FACIAL TIC GIVES THE CONVERSATION A FALSE  
 HUMOR  
 HAIR, ONCE AUBURN, NOW STANDS IN STUBBORN WHITE  
 WISPS;

I CAME FROM HER  
WHEN SHE WAS WARM AND VITAL  
NOW HER SHRIVELED BODY MAKES A COMMA  
ON THE EDGE OF THE CHAIR;

WHEN DUSK GATHERS AT THE CASEMENT WINDOWS  
I RISE TO GO;

LIFT MY FEET TO THE BED NOW, AS YOU LAY ME DOWN;  
THE FOURTH TIME I SAY GOODBY  
I GO;

PLEASE  
MASTER OF THIS UNIVERSE  
DON'T LEAVE THAT PIGEONHOLE UNSERVICED LONG  
LIFE CAN BRIM SO FULL  
WHY DOES IT HAVE TO STAGNATE SO IRREVERSIBLY?  
I DON'T CARE IF THE CALLIGRAPHY  
NEVER MAKES IT TO THE DOOR.

JERRIE LYNN OUGHTON

## PAMLICO SUNSET, I GUESS

I LAY IN BOBBY'S ARMS AT WATER'S EDGE  
 HIS KNEES SUPPORTING MY NECK  
 MY BODY NUMB FROM TITTIES DOWN

WHEEL CHAIRS  
 OLD BEGGARS  
 ENDLESS HOSPITAL ROOMS  
 A HUGE BLACKNESS...  
 I LOOKED INTO THE FACE OF THIS COUSIN  
 WHO HAD JUST SAVED MY LIFE:  
 "IT'LL BE AWHILE BEFORE WE FIGURE  
 THIS ONE OUT"

IF I COULD JUST LIE  
 UNDER AN OAK FOR A YEAR  
 MY BACK TO THE SUN  
 I WOULD BE HEALED  
 LIKE THE OLD CATS IN DADDY'S BARN.

MIKE HAMER

