

APPALACHIAN FREE PRESS



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A Letter from the Director:

Welcome to the Appalachian Free Press!

Thank you for reading our inaugural issue! We believe that news shouldn't be determined by wealth or location. Therefore, we decided to take the news into our own hands. That is why we invite you to write and express yourself in our future editions.

Today, we look at the past of Appalachia, taking a few snapshots of things that were because history informs the present. Given that we focus on the small stories and small towns, this paper is for *anyone* who feels like their voice is not heard.

I started this newspaper because a holistic Appalachian press is necessary to represent this area and educate everyone about what Appalachia *really* looks like. The amalgam of people is as diverse as anywhere else in America. Appalachian people represent all sorts of socioeconomic statuses, ethnicities, religions, races, and creeds. Yet, on the national and global stage, our area is washed with the brush of the "redneck yokel."

So, what is our goal, and why are we doing this?

Our current situation is dire. We live each day in an increasingly hostile environment, in an environment devoted to the dollar and not the community. Divisions have been sown to increase profit margins for a few people. Thus the name, *The Appalachian Free Press*.

I believe it's better to serve people, and what better way to serve than to help fix the divide? So much has been imposed upon us. We have been left in the aftermath of the development of a strict regional culture-- dogmas we adhere to because our forebears did.

Eventually, all we will have left are the stories we tell.

The present and the written word change the future. Therefore, presenting the news is a sacred mission that must be pursued to record accurate accounts of our experiences so that we can use them in the future to confront the struggles that we cannot comprehend.

That is why we are asking for your assistance in our next issue. The tapestry of Appalachia is long, vast, and woven with every color imaginable. We want to share your perspective.

We maintain the dogma that a free, open, fair press is crucial to the workings of our entire society. We must address laws when they are discriminatory. We must view our neighbors as friends and equals.

Our impetus is clear: we will replace apathy with empathy and ensure that *every* person receives dignity and respect.

As everything is equal under the law, nothing is equal in journalism. Every route, no matter how frightening, must be thoroughly searched. Those in power must be put under the highest scrutiny to address systematic faults and replace the ignorance that unjustly plagues our governance and judicial system.

That is the duty of the press, and thus it is our duty.

Please Enjoy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zeke Streetman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "Z".

Ezekiel "Zeke" Streetman
Director: Appalachian Free Press

Jo Ann's Corner

By Jo Ann Bullard

Good morning. Welcome to Jo Ann's Corner. Come on in and help yourself to a breakfast beverage.

Let's talk. I do like trivia. A friend who loves history told me some trivia about something most people don't know or even realize. This trivia or history relates to Native Americans and the United States. Well, he stated that 26 out of our 50 states in the United States have names that had to do with Native American Indians.

Here's the trivia. Now some of us know that Kentucky came from the word Kentake, an Iroquois place name meaning "meadow land."

For us in Tennessee, Tennessee came from Tanasi, which was the name of a Cherokee Indian town. For those of you from Alabama, it is the name of an Indian tribe native to the state of Alabama.

We all learned to spell Mississippi by using a little jingle, but its Indian name is shorter, called Misiziibi, which is the native name of the Mississippi River in the Ojibwe language. I won't go into all of the state names, but you can look them up.

Some of them are a little funny, like Iowa, which means in Ayuhwa, which is one of the tribal names of the Ioway Indian tribe meaning "sleepy ones." I can believe that. Perhaps the one state with the most bragging rights is Illinois which comes from the Illini tribe meaning "best people."

Finally, one state is named after a color. Oklahoma comes from Okla Homma, which means "Red Nation" in the Choctaw Indian language. So, the next time you do a little traveling around the United States, look up where the names of the states you visited came from.

You may be surprised by what you find. If you need a friend, you may want to go to Taysha, which means "friend" in the Caddo Indian language-- or just plain old Texas to most of us.

Oh, for some of our locals, Pellissippi means "winding waters" in Cherokee for the Clinch River near Pellissippi State Community College near Knoxville, Tennessee. Now that's my rant for today about history.



Time does seem to fly these summer days. I know that many of us have had to sometimes rely on our neighbors for help.

Now that may seem to be a given, but we don't always think how important our neighbors can be.

In my day, neighbors were very important. If you grew up on a farm, neighbors could be the difference in getting your crops in or not. Many farmers would work together with the neighboring farms to assist each other when baling hay, picking corn, putting up tobacco, and other things. Why, if a farmer's barn burned down, many neighbors would help him put up a new one. It was just what was expected a neighbor to do in those days.

You, in turn, would help your neighbor if they needed help. It was one of those unwritten codes that people lived by. That's where the saying "I'm just being neighborly" came from when that neighbor helped you.

I remember when my mom and all our neighbors kept an eye on all us young 'uns to make sure we didn't get in trouble in my neighborhood. I know that kept me somewhat in line. Neighbors would also check on you if they hadn't seen you around at your regular time. Even the old saying of going to the neighbors to get a cup of sugar or flour was true back then.

Remember on that show "Tool Time" when Tool Man would talk to his neighbor over the backyard fence? We may not have had a fence, but we did have a backyard. It's a shame that many people don't get to know their neighbors today.

They are surely missing something by not. Having a good neighbor and being one is one of the most precious treasures in the world. All I have left to say is, "Howdy, Neighbor!"

Having said that, let's share a breakfast beverage and some Native American Proverbs. The Proverbs of today go like this,

"Our ancestors live on in us. Their tracks in the sands of time will always be there for all to see if one only looks for them."

"To have a good neighbor is a gift like the sunrise every morning. You should never take that gift for granted."

Thanks for coming! Enjoy your gift of today. Have a great day!



Appalachia Behind Bars:

An interview with Julie Gautreau, Lawyer and Criminal Rights Advocate

By Zeke Streetman
July 5, 2021

Q: How has the law been used to discriminate against impoverished people and African Americans?

A: I think of law in general as a system of preserving and protecting power anywhere laws have ever been written since the first civilization wrote the first law. And the people who always struggle most under that system are the poor, plus any social, racial, or ethnic minority.

One exception being where majorities live under colonial domination - in those cases, the colonizers use the law to exploit whole populations under their control. I mean, I believe we have to have laws. Still, I recognize that historically they have been manipulated to protect the interests of power and wealth, which is absolutely true of American law, beginning with the Constitution.

There was a golden opportunity to erase slavery, right at the outset of America's foundation, but the authors compromised and surrendered their egalitarian principles to the economic interests of landowners who depended on slave labor and the ongoing trafficking of human beings.

Q: What roles do prisoners play in county and community services?

A: That depends on whatever county or state we're talking about, so I'll just use Knox County, Tennessee, as an example.

Keep in mind that usually around 70% of local incarcerated populations here are pretrial detainees, people in jail on a charge they haven't been convicted of, and can't afford bail.

The remainder are being held on probation violations or ICE holds. So, if you can't make bond or you're held on a VOP, you might qualify for a work program. And there is a lot of interest among prisoners to get on work crews because they get pretrial credits off their sentence, they get out of their cells, and if they're lucky, get to go outside.

What they don't get is paid or reimbursed in any way for their service on those crews. They'd rather work for free than not at all, and I don't blame them. But they also, like all local jail detainees, have to pay for phone calls and jail visits with family, which are all video and all expensive.

The same county that works them for free makes them pay for visiting their kids so the county can get a fat kickback from the corporation that provides the tech. And the City of Knoxville is

complicit too. They lease a work truck to the Sheriff in exchange for providing free labor to do city work. And this is the irony: This unpaid prison labor includes maintaining the Odd Fellows Cemetery, where many freed slaves are buried.

Q: How did the 13th Amendment affect the local prison population?



A: The 13th Amendment bans slavery, except as a punishment for a crime for which the person has been convicted, right?

Well, in Knox County, people who haven't been convicted of anything work for free and pay for visits and commissary. Actually, their families pay for visits and commissary because it's kind of hard to pay for stuff when you're in jail working for no compensation.

But when I've complained about it, both to the County Commission and City Council over that truck lease, they say, "But they LIKE working! They're not slaves, they're volunteers!" So, go Vols, I guess, is their attitude. If nobody has to work, if they just choose to work while being trapped in jail, the system is perfectly moral. Everybody sleeps well.

Q: What sort of impact does our current penal system have on recidivism?

A: Statistically, I don't have any data for you on that, and there are lots of variables in answer to that question (National models, state-by-state, urban versus rural, etc.)

However, anecdotally, I can tell you in my thirty years of criminal defense practice for poor people, nothing in Tennessee - and I mean nothing - has been done to curb the levels of poverty that put people most at risk of breaking laws and becoming incarcerated.

In fact, the system does all it can to increase their poverty with insurmountable court costs. Not paying fees or fines gets your driver's license revoked. Getting your license revoked means it's nearly impossible to work almost anywhere in the state.

People who are poor when they go to jail come out poorer. That's been a problem forever. But, with the acceleration of for-profit prison models - private jails and prisons that do little more than warehouse people with no real supervision or protection - have come big money corporations that have taken over all the state and county-run prisons.

Commissary companies increasingly monetize every basic human need, down to shaving cream. Communications conglomerates package family contact with prisoners for investors' portfolios. People running the system no longer even pretend they care about stopping recidivism.

We've moved past trying to break the cycle of recidivism to a culture of creating incentives for jailing more and more people. And there is nobody in leadership anywhere, in either big political party, who is even a little serious about trying to reverse that trend. They talk about it, but they don't do anything because felons can't vote for them.

Q: What similarities have arisen between previously enslaved people and poor whites regarding the expansion of the industrial-prison complex?

A: There's a great book by journalist Shane Bauer - *American Prison* - that goes into depth about the history of American slavery as an underpinning of the prison industrial complex, which of course is all about embracing diversity if it means filling up prisons.

At the end of government-backed slavery, in the aftermath of the Civil War, there was a need - especially in the South - for free labor. That's how prison work farms and convict leasing developed.

Convict leasing is the concept on which the now-defunct Brushy Mountain State Prison was founded. They were used as coal miners - which, of course, led up to the Coal Creek War, but that's a whole other story.

Prisoners even built the original structure for Brushy. However, in the South, the vast majority of convict slaves were Black. And it was in the aftermath of the Civil War that legislatures began producing criminal laws to incriminate and incarcerate Black people. Not explicitly, but they knew what they were doing.

Those same laws ensnared poor whites as well, so, over time, criminal convictions used to enslave poor people absorbed both races. But the one constant is that Blacks have always been disproportionately oppressed by all penal laws in the US, in or out of the South.

There are still work programs in prisons, and prisoners of all races are used by companies outsourcing jobs for free labor. Examples today include prisoners being used to fight brush fires, prisoners being used to produce face masks during the pandemic. If they are paid, they are paid pennies on the hour. There's nothing wrong with prisoners having jobs if they are getting paid minimum wage, same as any worker, but that's not at all what is going on.

Q: Has law enforcement perpetuated or benefited from this discriminatory legal system?

A: The short answer is, yes, they benefit through an endless stream of federal grants that have resulted in most police organizations turning into de facto paramilitary units over the course of a few decades.

These police organizations are outfitted, trained, and armed like infantry. They get gifts from private companies, too, like Brinks giving them armored vehicles. But the real drivers of this system are sitting in Congress, state legislatures, and the Supreme Court. I would say that if you look at the whole of the criminal justice system, you see a machine that drives discriminatory laws and the discriminatory application of those laws.

Law enforcement officers are doing their job: enforcing a lot of bad, racist laws. So, big surprise that the culture of law enforcement draws a lot of racists into its ranks and that the framework of law enforcement across federal, state, and local agencies is bent to target poor communities, especially communities of color.

For example, law enforcement organizations get DOJ grants to round up drug dealers, right? So, you have all these task forces running around where they know they will catch the most drug dealers in impoverished areas of town where many people of color live.

Meanwhile, the legislatures churn out zero-tolerance laws that target drug dealers in high-density population areas for the strictest sentencing laws for nonviolent offenders. So, while in that sense law enforcers derive some benefit through grants that create more of them and give them bigger guns and even tanks to roll around in, the people who really perpetuate these laws are the politicians who want to look tough and who more and more are just transparently racist in the laws they create.

Q: Are there adequate legal services in Appalachia for indigent clients?

A: To be blunt, no. I was a public defender for thirty years in Knoxville. During the course of my career, I was fortunate to work in an office full of really committed indigent defense workers who were serious about their jobs, and our internal leadership fought hard to make sure we had the staff, the resources, and the facilities for giving our clients the best possible representation.

Throwing in a half-brag here, Knoxville's public defenders were and are considered as good as you can get in indigent defense, and there are a lot of other public defender offices where that is true. But even with good lawyers and staff, we were breathing through straws at times when caseload management got tight. And we had to fight all the time to keep what we had.

Now, that's an example of a good public defender office. There are some jurisdictions in Tennessee where I think the public defender offices are underwater. But there is more to indigent defense than public defenders; there is a whole sphere of the private bar with good lawyers in private practice who provide legal representation to poor people. Those are the lawyers that legislators and judges abuse the most. And, by extension, they often abuse their clients.

If you are a private appointed lawyer in an indigent case, you are entitled to compensation. The hourly rate for those lawyers is embarrassing. It hasn't changed in over thirty years. How many cost of living increases have occurred in three decades?

And with the pittance these lawyers get, they still have to get judges to approve their fees before sending in their fee claims for reimbursement. Some judges actively slash their fee claims and

basically tell the lawyers they think they're lying about how hard they work. Or maybe the judges don't think you should work that hard for poor people. But that is the culture among the powerful, across all three branches of government: Poor people don't matter.

They won't pay lawyers to help the poor because, to them, the poor don't matter. So no, legal services in Appalachia are inadequate, but not for lack of ability or commitment on the part of lawyers. It's the culture of contempt for the poor and the exclusion of the poor that is a foundational element of power in the South.



The Heartland Series: Vignettes of Popular History in Appalachia

By D. Wright

July 12, 2021

Do you ever have an urge to scratch your 80s media fix? During the mid-1980s across the United States, there was great concern with preserving rapidly dying memories as the previously remote areas of the country became more and more interconnected.

The Heartland Series is a newscast project that set out to “celebrate the people (of Southern Appalachia) and their land.”¹ Quirky, informative, and mostly entertaining, this program shed light on the unique culture only the geography of Southern Appalachia could produce.

While this series, originally produced as a limited run series commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park in 1984, falls sort of capturing the true variation of human experiences in the area, it is a celebration of the storytelling tradition still practiced in Southern Appalachia today.

The Heartland series certainly does not seek to reconstruct the identity of the region, but rather to preserve, for their audience, a way of being that was under serious threat of disappearing forever.

Knoxville based WBIR produced the Heartland Series from 1984 until the final regular broadcast in 2009. In all, WBIR aired thousands of brief episodes to be played in between news broadcasts that featured information on people, stories, songs, ecology, and ongoing conservation efforts in Southern Appalachia.

Throughout the decades-long run, Bill Landry, a Chattanooga, actor, and writer, hosted and produced the program. As new generations of Southern Appalachians grew up, Landry’s program introduced the living story of a region to an audience that likely would not normally encounter such ethnological information. Although Landry, as a typical East Tennessee historian, often highlighted Eurocentric viewpoints of the region, he ably interviewed people whose stories would have died with them.

Some highlights from the Heartland Series include the storytelling of former Cades Cove residents, coverage of the woolly aphid crisis of the Smokies, features of old time music and instruments, and recreations of historical events. In most instances, the brief features of the Heartland Series recognize the dignity of the people interviewed and a deep respect for their lived experiences.

¹ Landry, Bill. “Prologue,” *The Heartland Series* vol. 1, WBIR. 1984.

One large shortcoming of the programming is an absence of quality historiography on the role of the Cherokee people and the Mississippian culture that preceded them. For example, a segment on Sequoyah, creator of the Cherokee syllabary, referenced misconceptions that Sequoyah was a Cherokee outsider, that he created his syllabary without the help of Cherokee women or his family, and endorses the caricature of American Indian men as divinely inspired through an innate harmony with nature.²

Those unfamiliar with this story might not encounter a counter narrative to this common mistruth in Southern Appalachian history. The opportunity to dispel misconceptions and to advocate for restorative justice was missed and it would be harmful to any viewer of this program not to recognize its shortcomings.

In all, the Heartland Series recognizes Appalachians who lived in styles only the geography of this region could produce. It introduces us to A. D. Bohannon, a fisher and autoharp player who raised black bears as a form of livestock. Ulysse Roberts, a moonshiner who discovered his product had the power to destroy. Ethel Birtchfield, a riddle maker and farmer from Roane Mountain. The Campbell family, who worked as coal miners for the Horse Creek Coal Mine. Ray Hicks, teller of odd 'Jack Tales' from the mountains of Western North Carolina.



It is doubtful that the stories of these people and many exceptional Appalachians like them would be preserved and reach the broader Appalachian audience without the Heartland Series.

If you are interested in viewing the Heartland Series, the first ten volumes (1984-1989) are available on Youtube. You may also catch a spattering of episodes played during current WBIR late night and weekend broadcasts.

Despite the Heartland Series' sometimes antiquated material, the series still remains a celebration of the region and the people that colored Appalachia's cultural attitudes and

² Landry, Bill. "An American Genius," *The Heartland Series* vol. 1, WBIR. 1984.

perspective. Keep a critical eye when viewing and remember that there are so many more stories to be told, and that we have many opportunities to learn from those around us.

Photo Credit :WBIR

Should We Keep Appalachia Other'd?

What We Talk About When We Talk About Appalachia

By Zane Gray

July 14, 2021

The question lingers, booms³: what is someone from Nashville doing, claiming to represent Appalachia?

It would be all too easy to content myself with Ronald Eller's attempt to universalize Appalachia in the introduction to his now-classic study on the development of Appalachia, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (2008), and simply repeat: *We are all Appalachians*.

However, this answer, understandably, makes those engaged in the cottage industry of Appalachia discourse uncomfortable.

Take the niche hit, *What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia* (2018), in which Elizabeth Catte—in step with critics of the imperialist 'gaze' (such as Edward Said in his *Orientalism*)—draws the distinction between "ways of seeing or looking at Appalachia...[in projects] created by Appalachians as opposed to those that are about Appalachians" (99).

Clearly, this piece falls into the latter category.

Catte—as well as those who are, arguably, not even especially aligned with Catte's populism—claims that attempts to 'modernize' Appalachia have required a narrative of Appalachia as the 'other America.'



³ This opening is an homage to David Foster Wallace's opening remarks in his co-authored 1990 work *Signifying Rappers*, in which Wallace ponders his anxiety in representing the largely black culture of rap.

This quality of otherness is often conditioned by the needs—psychological, sociological, economic, etc.—of those existing outside the region: e.g., most recently in the 'Trump Country' genre—which is an effort, [built on false assumptions](#), by a conglomerated, wide-spread media apparatus that fetishizes certain portions of the Appalachian population, particularly downwardly mobile whites, in order to understand the ailments of the common American circa the 2016 election.

Appalachia is the 'other America,' meaning that we compartmentalize our anxieties about ourselves into an image of Appalachia that stands apart from ourselves in such a form that we could understand it as an environment to regulate and master. These images often do not account for certain factors, which then return in unexplainable forms, requiring further mystification: America's sleep of reason produces the monsters of Appalachia.

Yet, I will argue, this 'otherness' that Appalachia finds itself characterized as a framework that is quite easy for us to swallow since it does not reflect a challenge to how we live our day-to-day lives in a materially meaningful way. A more authentic otherness, understood as integral to both Appalachia's internal mechanics and the way those mechanics influence and are determined by their surroundings, is necessary to comprehend Appalachia in a way that questions our own self-understanding.

It is an otherness that will ultimately reflect our own uprootedness.

As mentioned earlier in reference to Said, the process of defining regions in a particular ('hegemonic') framework, such as Appalachia as 'Trump Country,' to open up new markets is, of course, not unique to Appalachia.

Going back to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1820), this idea ([¶246](#)), which means to explain the unfolding mechanics of a state-regulated market economy ('the inner dialectic of society'), claims that for this kind of economic system to perpetuate its social dynamics, the vast amounts of wealth collected from the surplus-value (that is, money made that does not go toward the cost required to continue to produce a particular commodity) belonging to a bourgeois class must find expression through the expansion of markets.

As David Harvey points out in his article "The 'New' Imperialism: Accumulation by Dispossession," the surpluses created by intense capital extraction (such as by Jeffersonian yeoman farmers in the American South via slave labor on the vast tracts of land made available through the 'founding' of America) necessitates the expansion of markets, particularly by what Harvey calls 'geographical expansion.'

Geographical expansion is nothing less than the formal creation of new territories that can be assimilated into a particular, often ideological, economic vision, often for the sake of 'progress,' though rarely improving the quality of life of the inhabitants.

New locations are titled so that the movement of people and goods between these borders can be regulated and maintained.

Thus, it should come as no surprise that, following the Keynesian expansion of the US economy during WWII, Appalachia should find itself the target of development projects that ignored the particular needs of Appalachia in favor of a framework that was compatible with the needs of an ever-expanding and unstable economic system.

In this sense, I can sympathize with critics of the othering of Appalachia. Insofar as a people's outwardly projected image is determined by the needs of those looking in, they will remain either without a platform or only given a platform if they reflect the particular needs of those who would profit off of them.



Yet, I cannot shake the feeling that if Eller is correct—if we are all Appalachians—then we are all displaced people who are, to a large degree, othered to ourselves in the wake of cultural dissolution.

We, embracing this otherness, manifest an anxiety reflected from the most callous calls of the decline of Western Values to neo-pagan cultural spheres that seek a return to a holistically integrated lifestyle, or foregrounded and, sometimes, celebrated in the aesthetics of vaporwave and other self-consciously 'postmodern' artforms.

So, if Appalachians want to know themselves authentically, where can they go?

Take the example of Knoxville: on the one hand, this is a region that celebrates

its Appalachian pride, embracing its historical roots that paint a picture of progress and solidarity.

On the other hand, like anywhere else in the country, those who have had the most influence in shaping Knoxville are those who have had the fewest ties to the community. Often, they are brought in as specialists to facilitate modernization in the forms of damming, 'urban renewal,' and the cycles of gentrification starting back with the first mountaineers' often hostile relationship with native peoples.

The art scene that arises from this college town is cosmopolitan and built on the same technologies that deny the possibility of an authentic return to a nostalgic agrarian vision agrarian mode of mountain living.

Not that I mean to discourage those involved in these communities. Many of these art scenes attempt to negotiate more traditional forms of Appalachian culture into modern technologies, seemingly co-existing with movements such as Afro-futurism in their attempts to embrace features of a modern, global economy while holding onto traditional forms of expression.

On the other hand, we have the pockets of impoverished regions on the outskirts, and within the city, [the homeless are treated with hostility as their camps are uprooted to make Knoxville less of a so-called 'shithole region.'](#)

Who are the true Appalachians?

How a publication like Appalachian Free Press can represent Appalachia for the good of all of its residents remains an open question. Only time will reveal the truth of this claim.

The presence of invasive species from Kudzu to the Starling already presents obvious objections about diametrically opposed interests. All I can say for now is that Appalachia stands as a great contradiction.

Geographically, [its delimitation has been hotly contested up to the present.](#) Its people make up a wide variety of classes and interests. Our understanding of the region as culturally distinct seems at the very least problematic.

Without ignoring the historical particularities of the region's development (something which, ideally, this publication will be capable of charting), I believe we must keep in mind that the historical 'othering' of Appalachia is what has allowed those who are geographically detached to gain some proximity to it.

In reference to the title of this article, it is a more challenging and authentic othering of our traditional modes of understanding the Appalachian region that can allow us to seek new types of political formation and mobilization.

Just as there was no guarantee that America would reach the shape that it is in today in the aftermath of any number of its historical developments, there is no guarantee of success that can be provided in embarking on such a project.

While we cannot unreflectively rely on Appalachian traditions to create the conditions for a broadly satisfactory political consensus, we must not forget that it is in the contested space of Appalachian traditions that this work necessarily must unfold. However, we cannot unreflectively rely on our traditional methods of identification to produce broadly satisfactory results. In this hope, a new Appalachia can be fashioned, one that can embody a more genuinely universal grounding.

This new form of life is an inevitability. The question now is: how do we want to partake in its unfolding?

In the wake of global existential problems, it is clear that we either live together or fry together. As [Rosa Luxemburg's popular slogan](#) goes, the necessity of discovering a new form of life is a question of the choice between socialism or barbarism.





Rock City

By Aimée LaFon

July 1, 2021

Listen- to the relentless pour of tears.	I wonder how the clouds feel as
My murky red body melts	Shifting stones beneath me.
In showers of forgiveness.	I cannot forgive-
We forge a pact between blue and green	But orange tears a cave in beyond these
Mists that fog my womb.	

You who believe- I yield to this-	Give way to the serpent-tongue boughs-
Consider my gifts. I am the lover	Of blindness. The visions of what
You lost when you forgot to love	Yourself. I am waiting-

Acceptance is a garden,	A corpse with dwindling color
Paired so perfectly, but forgetful.	In secondary schemes of sentience,
The labor pangs that brought you here-	Run deeper than the blood in these vales,
	But they

Never fruited.

I cannot erase myself.

You must do that for me.

Only then will I see that

- mud-

Is your penance to me.



Congratulations, you have made it to the end of our first edition. If you liked what you read and want to tell your story, our email address is appalachianFP@yahoo.com. Please send criticism and submissions for our next issue there! We accept news articles, photography, art, critical essays, and poetry. Our next theme is: Appalachia in the Present.