**Semper Fi of Appalachia**

**Angela Kelly**

**Clogging**

Tap, stamp, kick heel and sashay, little girl.
Red, shuffle, clatter, little man.
Whirl together, hands a tremble, heart of ash.
Blood stomps down hard so
Look away from that pretty child cousin.
The Lord says Look away. Wheel off.

**Buck Dance**

In the Buck Dance, the Male dances alone,
Though given Women’s Lilt, some women are now
Have Liltin’ enough to seize attention, dance solo.

**Flat Footing**

It’s a pretty, each turn high, tight.
Sliding close in, no stepping away or out,
This is home, rhythm riding true.

**Hoe-Down**

Center stage show-outs, even the preacher man.
He’s called out many a daughter,
Seamed up sons, both Cain and Abel.
In his last years he had that one-legged chicken, Carlos,
Claired he was some kind of Spanish rooster.
Amos kept trying to lay on a wooden leg,
Made them himself, out of oak, chestnut, dogwood, cedar.
But that rooster would peck everything out from under
Then he would fly at Amos like a demon.
That old leathered man would say,
There now, Carlos, there now.
Then give the level his daily bred and
His cow hood every night.
How he shot litted the shack.
Then one morning, Carlos was dead, cold arc
Of feathered gold, black, crimson cockscomb.
Then one morning, Carlos was dead, cold arc
Of feathered gold, black, crimson cockscomb.
And Amos walked into the river in December.

**Sister Ada**

There’s that picture of Jesus
Hung in the kitchen hall.
Glass pane hard broken,
Dry wall hunted alongside.
Monthly bills are there,
Held inside the metal scallop frame:
Carolina Power & Light,
County water bill,
Roeves Hardware, Shanks Feed,
Doctor bill from that female operation.
And she’s still laying in the back room
Under her granny’s quilts,
Not saying a damn word.

**Brother Amos**

Seemed he’d always lived alone.
In his last years he had that one-legged chicken, Carlos,
Claimed he was some kind of Spanish rooster.
Amos kept trying to lay on a wooden leg,
Made them himself, out of oak, chestnut, dogwood, cedar.
But that rooster would peck everything out from under,
Then he would fly at Amos like a demon.
That old leathered man would say,
There now, Carlos, there now.
Then give the level his daily bred and
His cow hood every night.
How he shot litted the shack.
Then one morning, Carlos was dead, cold arc
Of feathered gold, black, crimson cockscomb.
And Amos walked into the river in December.

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**Coraline**

That old leathered man would say,
There now, Carlos, there now.
Then give the level his daily bred and
His cow hood every night.
How he shot litted the shack.
Then one morning, Carlos was dead, cold arc
Of feathered gold, black, crimson cockscomb.
And Amos walked into the river in December.

**Etta Dean**

When she was sixteen, Elvis Presley came to town,
Posters in the drug store, ecstasy in the girls’ bathroom.
She stole out the back door with Mary Ruth and those Cole brothers,
The auditorium smelled of sawdust, Pinesoil and rancid popcorn oil.
But she and Mary Ruth had screamed and danced,
Drinking Coca-Cola laced with the Cole boys’ bourbon
And after midnight, it was the Cole boys who kissed and
Fondled them going home, no matter if they dreamed of Elvis or not.
And when her daddy whipped her, on the back porch,
Only five belt lashes, and he was silent as usual,
Stared up at the spattered stars crossing the orchard,
She breathed in apple, hornet glazed, ground rot, October.
And she dreamed of her first heartbeat,
The beautiful curled lip of a bad man’s mouth.

**Roscoe Deakins**

A-course I made moonshine, my daddy did, my uncles.
Once I drove Daddy’s 49 Plymouth all the way to Madison County,
It was maybe fourteen, it was about Christmas, snowin’ like blazes,
I was cold as a witch’s teat ’cause the heater never worked right.
I’m scared them bottles in the trunk was jitterin’ loud enough to wake the dead.

Another time when I was taking a load to Cullerhee,
That new sheriff, Wainsley, put the blue lights right on me,
I had to pop the trunk and he stood there thinking a while,
Then he gave fifty cent for a dollar bottle and I had to zip with him,
Finally he said he ain’t never seen me. Better not again.
That night, I was about drunk going back up Pritchard Creek.

I reckon I was about nine when summer that summer
When Mama started gettin’ me up even before the rooster crowed,
I’d walk up to the hiller to the still in the grove
To keep the fire goin’ so Daddy, Uncle Rev and Walt
Could go home and sleep before the second shift at the mill.

Lunch time my cousin Donny would come up,
Bring mama’s biscuits with sausage or ham,
Sometimes just sorghum molasses.
I liked it just fine.
I never did take to schoolin’ like Mae Ann or Buddy,
But Mama taught me to read the Bible, she taught me
Her roots and herbs and medicines which we sold.

On Saturdays I drove my sister Pearl into town and she always wore her good blue dress,
It was light as sky, the skirt floated around her
Little bitty self just like some kind of cloud.
And she could sell anything to anyone walked by,
Be it a scour wife, a tobacco man, or even a snake oil salesman.

When she died of the TB, she was but twenty year old.
I’ve took on seventy-eight years of age now, and
I still see Pearl putting Mama’s wares in the basket and
I swear to Jesus, the blue sky still don’t look right to me.
Angelita Burrows
Right after Wink Burrows got killed in Korea, his brother Ramey went about crazy. There’s too many accounts of what all he got into to even be true, but it was known that Sheriff Milkey told him to leave the County. Maybe even the state.
So he went down to South Carolina, he was down there maybe about four, five years, said to be working the peach orchards. That probably oughtna been true, Ramey was the smart one of the Burrows, he could bea banker or a store keeper, though his Aunt Wynona, who had prophesied before, dreamed on his birth night, he was gonna be a lawyer, she testified she’d seen thick books and the justice scale.
Years passed and when Ramey came back home, he had him a wife, her name was Angelita, she was Mexican or some such and some didn’t like it, they didn’t cotton to the Cherokee women either, that Hess Goodlow and Mac Earl had married, you was supposed to marry your own kind.
But if you saw that woman on the street, Angelita Burrows, say outside Sue’s Diner, or the Mercantile, you’d fallen down in some kind of stupor. Nothing this side of the Garden of Eden should look that fine. Though some said her eyes and her heart was black.

Eva Grace
She liked to tell people she’d been raised in a brothel in New Orleans. It sounded better than that dirt shack up in coal mine country. She had a rail on a silver ring in her navel, said that was proof, an homage to the red light district and her sweet mama, Evangeline, looking at such a jewel, any man would pull out his money then. Sometimes they weren’t lucky, she’d just play zydeco music on her record player, looking at such a jewel, any man would pull out his money then. Sometimes an homage to the red light district and her sweet mama, Evangeline, It sounded better than that dirt shack up in coal mine country.

what Thomas Earl kept talking about in the throes of his dementia
That must collie dog I brought home that spring kept killing the chickens. “That was feed on the table on Sundays, Mama wringing their necks on Saturday, us kids plucking the feathers on the porch, the pieces floured, fried in lard in a cast iron skillet after church.
I’d named her Lady, her head was high as a queen, coat cascading fine as silk, I brushed ever evening after chores. I’d named her Lady, her head was high as a queen, coat cascading fine as silk, I brushed ever evening after chores.
Mama said, “Earl, go get the shotgun, you gonna hafta lead her on up the hole. Once a dog starts killing chickens they ain’t no use. We can’t have this.”
So I called Lady and Mama shadowed me up the lane. She said, “Call her out in front and put that muzzle to the back of her head.” I said, “Mama, I can’t do that.” She said, “Yes, you will. Ain’t no choice here.”

Preacher Dwayne Whiteside
went into the Magnolia Nursing Home right after the Easter service, in the Year of Our Lord 1979. He’d been in need of retirement for some time, but that Easter, he misepoke considerably. Eating donuts on Good Friday would not send anyone to Hell. The Lord Jesus did not have a jet airplane and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse had not been sighted charging the Mayor’s house.
Sister Bessie, who claimed to be a third cousin, recorded his removal thusly, “Unforgivable, the Church has voted for the dismissal of the Lord’s very arrow.” Sister Bessie had never married and she tended to the melodramatic. She’d written down most of the family history, though after she died, in the Year of Our Lord 1994, her journals were found to be an odd fiction, she was not well in her recollection, not thought through, though everyone remembered her mama, Ida, the church organist, with great affection.
But there was one entry in Sister Bessie’s journal about the last days of Preacher Whiteside in the Nursing Home that gave us pause: “The nurses have complained about Preacher Whitesides’ horned toes. One called them ‘terrible little deets under the sheets’ and they said, that even the strongest of nail clippers were useless against them. How, even seemingly unconscious, the Preacher would aim a foot at any person who approached and slice them open easy as a razor to an apple. Eventually, they had to call the police, they had to call the police, they had to call the police, they had to call the police.

Arthur Ray at his Mama’s Funeral
He hung up the phone, said to us, “Funeral’s Thursday.” Left the room. She was old, sick and his visits had trailed away somehow.
In other words, she’d been gone from him a long time. During the last year, he’d even spoken of her in the past tense.
Always a broad stout woman, she’d shrunk down like a puppet He mumbled to himself, that ain’t even her in that box.
He wore his only suit, which had grown tight across his belly, The room seemed full of strangers and whispers.
Early on, he planted his back against the chipped wall of the hall Allowing no cousins, old neighbors or church folk to approach him blind.
They were so gray, so old, full of the Jesus Pentecostal shit he hated. And when the preacher (certainly a stranger) called them to the parlor, Like an altar call, saying, “Brothers and sisters, let’s join hands to pray.” He laughed aloud, “Preacher, you ain’t never gonna jerk a tear outta me.”
As most filed to the coffin, he walked to the filling station on the corner. The old man at the counter, had a familiar name and a Parkinson’s tremor.
He wore his only suit, which had grown tight across his belly, The room seemed full of strangers and whispers.
Like an altar call, saying, “Brothers and sisters, let’s join hands to pray.” He laughed aloud, “Preacher, you ain’t never gonna jerk a tear outta me.”

WINTER/SPRING 2013
Jebbediah, Coming Home

He’s an old man now, in suspenders. He won’t even say the years.

There’s a shopping center now where Gran Pappy’s farm stood.

But Aunt Lilith’s old home place is still backwoods, snake bait,

house long burned down, but a righteous chimney still standing,

Something of a hearth drowned in weed, rhubarb out back,

blackberry bramble, crows cawing in the storm broke crabapples.

He remembers drinking whiskey behind the church at age thirteen,

killing hogs before November frost, the charred smell of the smoke house.

A Christmas dance in the Vance’s barn, the sharp clean of his new shirt,

how Adeline pulled the collar off his neck and kissed the life out of him.

You went away to a fancy Northern college so nobody could call you hillbilly.

You lied to explain your corn-pone accent, said you were an army brat,

had lived everywhere, all over the world. You’d studied your countries.

Freshman, sophomore year, it worked out for you, perfect deception,

but then that boy from Sevierville showed up with hound dog eyes,

said he could smell mountain on you, said you was so lonesome.

He wasn’t been home since, and twenty years later, you still

remember that lanky Tennessee boy, Miller Coates, how he kissed you

fierce, sharper than a toothache, and how you’re sitting in your big house

now thinking about a dead time, a gone boy, remembering the Valentine

card he shoved under your dorm room door, it was the best thing ever,

that pink heart slip of paper: I love you better than the devil loves fire.

LINDA FLOWERS LITERARY AWARD

The North Carolina Humanities Council invites original, unpublished entries of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry for the 2013 Linda Flowers Literary Award. Submissions should celebrate excellence in the humanities and reflect the experiences of people who, like Linda Flowers, not only identify with North Carolina, its people and cultures, but also explore its problems and promises.

For complete submission guidelines and prize details, see the North Carolina Humanities Council website at www.nchumanities.org. Questions may be directed to Donovan McKnight, program officer at 336-334-4770 or dmcknight@nchumanities.org.

DEADLINE: postmark date August 15, 2013

The North Carolina Humanities Council was privileged to have Linda Flowers as one of its members from 1992 to 1998.

That my book about Eastern North Carolina might touch a chord with some people... I had not anticipated. What they are responding to in Throwed Away, I think, is its human dimensions: the focus on real men and women making their way in the face of a changing, onrushing and typically uncaring world... This humanistic apprehension, I tell my students, is as necessary for living fully as anything else they may ever hope to have...

~ Linda Flowers, in a letter to the North Carolina Humanities Council Membership Committee, July 1992

Angela Kelly, of Spartanburg, SC, is the author of four poetry chapbooks, most recently Post Script from the House of Dreams (winner of the 2006 South Carolina Poetry Initiative Prize, published by Steppeing Stone Press). Her full length poetry collection Voodoo for the Other Woman is forthcoming from Hub City Press in March 2013. Additional individual poems have been published in numerous journals including North American Review, The Bloomsbury Review, Nimrod, Kalliope, Rhino, Yemassee, Inkwell, Rosebud, The Ledge, and Parnassus. In addition to the Linda Flowers Literary Award, Kelly was awarded the South Carolina Fellowship of the Arts from The South Carolina Commission of the Arts in 1999, received the 2011 Carrie McCray Nickens Fellowship presented by the South Carolina Academy of Authors, received the 2012 William Matthews Poetry Award from the Ashville Poetry Review, and has been awarded fellowships from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Vermont Studio Center.

PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS

Karen Gilchrist (2001)
Joseph Bathanti (2002)
Heather Ross Miller (2003)
Barbara Presnell (2004)
Kermit Turner (2005)
Kathy Watts (2006)
Susan Weinberg Vogel (2007)
Kristin Hemmy (2008)
Katey Schultz (2009)
Traci Lazenby Elliot (2010)
Nancy Dew Taylor (2011)

Read more previous winning submissions at www.nchumanities.org/linda-flowers.

2012 SELECTION COMMITTEE

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