



The Chronicle

*A Newsletter for the Department of English and Foreign
Languages at Texas Southern University/January 2004*

*Planning to write is not writing. Outlining, researching, talking to people about what
you're doing, none of that is writing. Writing is writing. Writing is like driving at night in
the fog. You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that
way.*

---E. L. Doctorow

PAST MEETS PRESENT: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

As part of Black History Month, the Department of English and Foreign Languages is sponsoring the program "Harriett Tubman Meets Sojourner Truth" on February 4 at 9:30 A.M. in the Sawyer Auditorium at TSU. This year's program features **Melissa Thibodeaux** in her trademark impersonation of Harriett Tubman. This onstage performance promises a rare meeting between two important figures of Black history when Harriett Tubman comes face to face with Sojourner Truth here at TSU. What can result from the convergence of these two high-spirited reformers is anyone's guess, but

the performance promises to be exciting. Encourage your students to attend this year's inspiring theatrical performance. This year's program for Black History Month is chaired by **Dr. Shirley Moore**.

POET LAUREATE NAMED FOR TSU

The Department of English and Foreign Languages has named **Dr. John B. Sapp, Jr.**, to the post of Poet Laureate at Texas Southern University for the academic year beginning September 2004. Dr. Sapp is the Chair of the Department of Chemistry in the Department of Science and Technology. Dr. Sapp has a long and distinguished career as a scientist, a dean, and an administrator, but he is also a well-regarded writer, essayist, and poet. We look forward to John B. Sapp's tenure as Poet Laureate for TSU.

SYMPOSIA & CONFERENCES

Dr. Juliette Bartlett-Pack has presented papers at various conferences over the past several months. At the South Central Modern Language Conference, October 30-November 1, 2003, Dr. Bartlett presented a paper on "Discovering the Past: Migration and Identity in Tess Onwueme's *The Missing Face*." At the Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities in Honolulu, January 8-11, 2004, Dr. Bartlett-Pack presented a paper on "The Struggle Continues: Modern Women Revolt in Tess Onwueme's *What Mama Said!*"

Dr. Bartlett is scheduled to present papers at two upcoming conferences. She will present papers on "Sweetness or Trap in Zulu Sofola's *The Sweet Trap*" at the African Yoruba Conference, University of Texas at Austin, March 25-26, 2004; and on the work "Tess Onwueme's *What Mama Said: Is Africa a Tragic Continent in the 21st Century?*"

The **Sixth Annual J. Marie McCleary Interdisciplinary Symposium** is scheduled for **March 25-26, 2004**. The focus of this year's program is the Artistic Legacy of Langston Hughes. The venue will be the University Museum at TSU, and the target audience the TSU larger community since the symposium encourages local presenters and invites students to participate. However, this year's program is being accented by way of an intense promotional campaign. The program's agenda has been distributed via the World Wide Web and through a direct mail campaign to colleges and universities in Texas and surrounding states. We hope to see attendees and presenters from many other institutions of higher education present at Texas Southern University in late March. For more information on the Sixth Annual J. Marie McCleary Interdisciplinary Symposium, contact Dr. Shirley Walker Moore at 7652 or moore_sw@tsu.edu.

STILL LOOKING FOR LOGOS AND MOTTOS

The Department of English and Foreign Languages seeks the design of a suitable logo and a written motto that incorporate the mission and ideals of the Department and its faculty. Your ideas are needed. Jot down your thoughts or draw a rough image of a motto and logo and furnish the information to Dr. Moore.

POETRY DAY ANNOUNCED

Earnest Snell, an example shown below will be displayed at this year's TSU Poetry Day. The Department of English and Foreign Languages announces the first annual TSU **Poetry Day** to be held **October 1, 2004**. The program will feature readings of original writing in poetry and other genres, as well as well-loved published poems, short stories, and excerpts from longer works. The program will also include music and other artistic exhibitions. Contributors are welcome from TSU, other educational institutions in Houston, and from the private community. For more information, contact one of the TSU Poetry Day committee members: Dr. Shirley Moore, Dr. Michael Sollars, Dr. Ron Samples, and Professor Arbolina Jennings. Many of the fine paintings and drawing of artist Snell's art will also be featured at an exhibit at the University Museum beginning February 2.



COURSE WORK COMPLETE

Congratulations to Professor Angela Bisong for completing her course work towards her doctoral program in English at the University of Houston. Her doctoral work investigates Women's Studies. She is looking at Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* from a cultural and imperialistic perspective. Her research includes works by three leading authors: *The Lives of Three Women* by Spivak, *Sargasso Wide Sea* by Rhys, and a novel by Susan Meyer

PUBLICATIONS TO NOTE

Dr. Michael Sollars has contributed three chapters for a multi-volume collection on British Dramatists of the Nineteenth Century to be published later this year by Indiana University and Brucoli Clark Layman Inc. Dr. Sollars wrote literary biographies of approximately thirty pages each on the playwrights Joseph Stirling Coyne, John Westland Marston, and Thomas W. Robertson. This new work on the neglected dramatists of Victorian England is the first such comprehensive publication undertaken on these dramatists.

Dr. Sollars has recently been informed that his satiric essay entitled “I, too, Have Long Digressed” has been accepted by the journal LISA, a French-based journal published in both the French and English languages. LISA is a peer-reviewed electronic journal that publishes essays on a particular theme in each issue. Dr. Sollars’ essay is a contemporary parody of Swift’s well-known “A Modest Proposal,” and will be included in the forthcoming issue of LISA on the subject of “Rewritings.” Dr. Sollars’ work loosely follows Swift’s essay in structure and language to present a contemporary problem in the shadow of the eighteenth-century satirist’s work.

Dr. Juliette Bartlett-Pack has written a chapter to be published in the text *Middle Passages and Conflicting Modernities: Migration and Identity in Black Women’s Literature*. Dr. Bartlett’s contribution, “Recovering the Past: Migration to Navigate Between Modernity and Tradition in Tess Onwueme’s *Legacies and the Missing Face*,” will be published later this year.

MANUALS OF STYLE: A CLEAR EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUIDE

Manuals of style are the makeover mavens of the academic writer. These are the diet and exercise handbooks that alleviate the excess, the overblown flaccid prose of turgid end-of-semester essays. Three favorites have been updated to help regain the spare, lithe, vigorous, even elegant style for the new generation of scholars.

The minimalist favorite *Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White first appeared in 1935, and the fourth edition (2000) offers only modest updating. Roger Angell writes a forward and E. B. White the introduction. The diminutive book with a stylish silver cover contains Eleven Elementary Rules of Usage (starting with the formation of the possessive by adding ‘s); Ten Elementary Principles of Composition (the first is to choose a suitable design and hold it); A Few Matters of Form (colloquialisms, hyphens, numerals, quotations, titles); Commonly Misused Words and Expressions (data, hopefully, etc.); An Approach to Style with a List of Reminders (not merely what is correct but what is distinguished and distinguishing); and a Glossary, all in about one hundred pages. This is the book we discovered in graduate school and the one we can recommend to other writers with the need at times to please and satisfy ourselves with (as White puts it) “the clear and almost perfect thought.”

The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers first appeared in 1906, and the 2003 version, the fifteenth edition, is in no way minimalist. This is the reference source that dispenses the wisdom of a hundred years of editorial practice, the book that seems to answer every publishing and formatting question. This edition expands its audience to users who work with magazines, newsletters, corporate reports, proposals, electronic publications, Websites, and other non-book and non-print documents. The information is organized in numbered paragraphs with descriptive heading and cross-references. Where else do we get the elements that make us a scholarly journal, a definitive approach to the marking of proofs, electronic submissions, copyright law and licensing agreements?

Chicago “house style” has always focused on consistency in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, hyphenation, and documentation; it’s the conservative approach tempered by pragmatism. One tidbit? For dates, the style most commonly used in the United States is the one now recommended by Chicago, the month-day-year (February 1, 2004, for example) with a comma before and after the year. In the month-day-year system (27 February 2004) no commas are used. Chicago rules are reliable guidelines, not imperatives.

The handbook for students learning to do research particularly in the humanities is the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* by Joseph Gibaldi (a colleague in the NYU Comparative Literature Department) in its sixth edition (2002). This book is an introduction to the “customs of a community of writers who greatly value scrupulous scholarship and the careful documentation, or recording, of research.”

College students would do well to read every word from the introductory essay on the research paper as a form of exploration and communication, to finding a focus, avoiding plagiarism, compiling a bibliography, evaluating sources, taking notes, outlining, and writing drafts. Experienced scholars will benefit from the current edition which encompasses recent technological changes and includes guidelines for doing research on the internet, evaluating the reliability of web sites, using online library catalogs and full-text databases, and creating a computer file for the working bibliography. An appendix lists selected reference books by field and another explains other systems of documentation. The MLA handbook remains a primer for scholars at any level.

These three manuals do not compete; each has its place and makes its own contribution. Their bright makeovers may make them attractive to new readers but they remain comfortably useful old companions.

MTM WRITING CLINIC SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

The Minnie T. Metters Writing Clinic, located in MLK Center 252 is open for the 2004 Spring Semester beginning January 26, 2004. The tentative schedule is Mondays and Wednesdays 10-4; Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-4; and Fridays 10-12.

These hours are not enough for the student need or the demand for access to materials and computers for class related activities. Because the Clinic depends solely on the service of volunteers, faculty members are asked to work in the lab at least one hour for each section they suggest or require students to attend.

Students find the Writing Clinic quite helpful for a wide range of writing skills resources on CDs, videos, or audiocassettes, in books, or the Web. Students can also benefit from many on-line portable labs which can be accessed from any computer. Bedford/St. Martins' and Capital Community College's websites and Writer's Resources CD are three excellent grammar and composition sources.

The Bedford/St. Martin's site www.bedfordstmartins.com includes exercises on sentence structure, grammar, usage, mechanics, ESL-specific items, and documentation. While this site does not offer tutorials, students can practice concepts and get immediate feedback for incorrect answers as they complete the exercises in Exercise Central. One good feature of this site is that students' scores can be forwarded directly to the classroom teacher if the teacher provides the students with an email address to use.

The Houston Public Library provides a link to webster.comnet.edu but it can be accessed by typing in Capital Community College's web address. From the home page, users can retrieve information on Distance Learning Resources and numerous other topics. Most useful is the College Web-Page Directory and Guide to Grammar and Writing link to excellent tutorials and a bank of over 170 computer-graded quizzes under the Word and Sentence Level, Paragraph, Essay and Research Papers, and Principles of Composition—covering an exhaustive list of topics from adjectives to documentation.

Writer's Resources, the CD bundled with the English 131 textbooks, is a very helpful review tool. It covers three major areas: Skills (grammar and mechanics), Writing Elements (word tutorials, sentence sense, the paragraph, and the essay), and Rhetorical Patterns (ten patterns of development plus the summary). Each unit provides a short tutorial and a set of exercises that can be printed, if the teacher chooses to use them as homework checks or follow-up assignments. Although the exercises are easy, they can prove to be helpful in serving as reinforcement drills.

**Department of English and Foreign Languages
Minnie T. Metters Writing Clinic
Spring 2004
Martin Luther King Center 252**

	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5
<i>MONDAY</i>		McEwing	McEwing	Butler	Puder	Sollars	Kimble	
<i>TUESDAY</i>	McEwing	McEwing	McEwing	Douglas	Reese	Jennings	Saldivar	
<i>WEDNESDAY</i>		McEwing	McEwing	Reese	Puder	Sollars	Kimble	Turner

<i>THURSDAY</i>	McEwing	McEwing	McEwing	Reese	Reese	Jennings	Saldivar	
<i>FRIDAY</i>		McEwing	McEwing	Samples	Samples			

J. Marie McCleary SCHOLARSHIPS

Named after well-respected professor and chair who served the Department from 1955 to 1979, the J. Marie McCleary Scholarship fund offers awards to undergraduate or graduate majors in the Department of English and Foreign Languages. Applicants must have earned six credits of upper division courses with a grade of B or better, or at least six credits of graduate work in good standing. Complete eligibility and award details may be obtained from the Department of English and Foreign Languages.

BLACKBOARD MIGRATES

In January 2004 the TSU BlackBoard (<http://texsu.blackboard.com>) upgraded to higher level 6, which will eventually link with Banner and upload class rosters automatically. BlackBoard provides instructors with a Web presence for courses so that materials and documents are readily accessible, communication between student and instructor as well as among students is expedited, on-line assessment is made possible, and group projects may be facilitated and eventually exhibited and published.

In fact, Blackboard 6 in combination with Tegrity serves as an excellent platform for Distance Learning programs and instruction. Distances Learning courses require careful planning, development, and review since an entire semester of lessons must be pre-packaged to ensure quality and effectiveness on delivery. Indeed, many of the best-practice guidelines given by experts at a TSU Distance Learning Staff Training at the UT TeleCampus in Austin, Texas (December 16, 2003) are applicable and useful for university classes meeting regularly in a campus classroom.

Retention in Distance Learning classes at UT is very high, 96% for graduate courses, 87% for undergraduate. Among the factors responsible this success are the following: Courses are taught by full-time, tenured faculty as part of a regular semester work load. Instructors have been given a grant (\$5,000 to \$10,000) and one semester release time for course development. Courses are reviewed by experts. The instructors author, teach, and own their own courses, and share the copyright with the university for three years. At UT, for every 25 students, an instructor is entitled to a graduate assistant for the course.

Student retention is expedited by providing students with extensive information and guidance from their first inquiry about a course or program. Students receive a written flier, a CD, and a telephone line to help them through the registration and first week of semester process. Distance Learning courses use text books, but also provide course

packs, which include a CD and on-line access to all campus services: library, bookstore, tutoring, and counseling. These services are made available on line on a 24-hour basis through the university or through an outside vendor which the university purchases and makes available to the student. Tutoring, for example, has been successfully outsourced to www.smarthinking.com, which is staffed in real time by graduate students many of them working out of the University of Hawaii.

MINERVA POETRY PROGRAM

The recent meeting of the Minerva Literary Association held November 25, 2003 was highlighted by a series of poems read by four writers from the University. Presenters included Donna Harmon, Donna Kilgore, Dr. Ronald Samples, and Dr. Michael Sollars from the Department of English and Foreign Languages; and Dr. Eugene Barrington from the Department of Political Science. Their poems are presented below.

Two Gentlemen

*One was born to riches and fame,
The other had to 'X' his name.
Established politics was first one's embrace,
Number two struggled to get power for his race.*

Each had a charisma decidedly his own,
One was from fate's pedestal and the other an
earthly throne.
They were both extremely intelligent men,
Destiny brought them to a violent end.

Being destiny's darlings, they were easy prey,
Neither could avoid the obstacle of harm's way,
Both had compliments who were beautiful and
fair,
Women who had heavy burdens to bear.

Gentleman one fell in Dallas on a sunny day,
Mister X died of a bullet barrage near Broadway.
Until today, humanity has not assessed its lost,
To the world, they were merely bearing a heavy
cross.

Those gentlemen helped write history anew,
Because each was to himself true.
This is a tale of dreadful pain,
Written in blood, an eternal stain.

They did not seek false laurels of fame,
In those hours, their death was our shame.
We will try to purge violence spirit today,
And seek a least costly and more humane way.

Ghastly was the way they went,
Under the same mantle, as if go sent.
"I will not expand on this tale of woe,
greet me in peace, and in peace I go."

This is their monument for all to see,

Perched high thru all eternity.
Eugene Barrington

Remembrance

I remember the beautiful sun rise,
And tales of the ancient slave's cries,
A victory sought and a prize never won,
Work days extending from dawn to dusk.

The talk of a new freedom at the "wake,"
With concerted efforts to make,
Alliances with the sons of our oppressor,
To become liberty's proud possessor.

While listening to the church bell chime,
There were pastoral joys in the summer time.
Dreams of marrying my girl Cherry,
And choking on the stem of a ripe blueberry.
Often, we listened to old Miss Maud,
As she talked about the lawd.
Jail house lawyers would debate,
The true nature of human hate.

Dad letting me drink from his lass,
And bringing home a circus pass.
On Sunday, Mon would get in her best frock,
Then share the lead of their eight member flock.

There was the day that Sam died,
And my irritation as everyone cried.
I often had feelings of joy,
But gone are the days when I was a boy.

Life was simple then,
No one thought "Of mice and men,"
Nor was my soul filled with fire,

Because I had not boarded the train of human desire.

I remember having deep regret,
When learning the nature of economic debt.
There were many sickly days for Man,
When she could summon added charm.

You Can't Kill My Blackness

Many trophied head hunters
faint in spells of think steeping sweat\weak from
the trigger down spill out into history
As heroes
who failed to fade
the savage lot

sack the prize
and million of brittle bones
protrude from the earth
like prickly spider thorns
monument to this lost endeavor

You can't kill my blackness

It splashed upon the galaxies
like laughing lava
spewing down molten rocks
When time was in her pregnant beginning
it moved like a jet stream of summer light
darting along the folds
of a draped sky
Tirelessly the Olympian
swims in an ocean
of velvet rich melanin
The universe unlimits itself

You can't kill my blackness

It dances along the rim of eternity
to be collected
with the wet petals of sprint's children
then betrothed
to the rhythm of life
Its strength supports the hands of
gravity
they cares the vessel that holds
the cycle of birth and death

You can't kill my Blackness

It is in the rock of ages
shattered into a trillion dreams
It is in the fiery blue planets

Very often things went bad,
And we sought the advice of dad.
For our family, life was a horrible fight,
But my parents taught us the beauty of "black"
plight. *Eugene Barrington*

that move about the celestial womb
whose clock reminds man
his will is mortal

You can't kill my Blackness

Because my Blackness is in God!
Donna Harmon

The Other Woman

I have been the other woman...

Sleeping alone
On cold lonely nights,
Crying in abandonment
Throughout long, forlorn days.

I have been the chain-smoking,
Floor-pacing
Behind-the-curtains-through-the-blinds-checking
Waiting-for-the-telephone-to-ring-listening
Ticks-on-the-clock-counting
Ostracized
Criticized
Denigrated
Other woman

I have been the around-the-corner-dropping
Two-blocks-away-in-the-dark-leaving-off
Averting-eyes-and-conversation-in-the-daytime
Hand-wringing
Date-broken
Lied-to
Patient
Resigned
Other woman

It was not until
He was finally mine
That I understood
Why she sent him my way.
Donna Kimble

Country Airs

(After William Carlos Williams's "Raleigh Was Right")

We cannot go to the country
for the country will bring us no peace.
There are no violets or daisies in the country.
Flowers will not grow in hostile air and polluted
soil.
Only yellow, orange and red alerts
flourish in this country.

Poets sang of the loveliness of the country
but that was long ago
When forests were dense and water was clean.
Now Forests are thinned,
waters are polluted,
grounds are seared.
Love cannot set roots in parched earth.

Once farmers plowed with ease of pockets,
When profit came from ease of mind.
But now profits are about deep pockets.
And deep pockets make empty heads.
And empty heads make war
And loaded nuclear warheads.
There is no escape for any enemy
of this country.

Do not believe that we can live
today in the country
for in this country we seek no peace.
The only patriots in this country
are contained in Acts
from which there is no escape
not even in this country.

There is no escape to the country,
for the country is overrun with bushes.
We have lost the glory
of what was once this country
Now that this country
has taken on airs.

Donna Kilgore

When It's Personal...

In 1993

When the First Tower shuddered
And dropped to one knee
Like a stunned boxer
Jabbed in the
Solar Plexus,
My sister emerged from within
Coated with soot,
Lungs filled with gasses,
Collapsed as ambulance
Whisked her away

But time heals
And duty calls
So she returned
To her corner
In those mighty Towers
Bolstered by courage
And girders of steel

On September 11, 2001
Both Towers
Wobbled and reeled,
Knees buckled,
But this time, they unceremoniously
Thudded to the ground,
A proud champion
Blind-sided
by
A sucker punch
From a dirty fighter

Horrified, she froze,
Drenched
By a searing rain
Of fuel, and paper, and tissue
Then fled
The towering pursuer
The billowing particles
The visceral remnants
That had once embodied a great champion

Swimming a sea
Of debris and death and dread
She stumbled forward,
Body and lungs coated
with
White mist
Of history and martyred remains.

Because she is alive
When so many succumbed,
The proper response would be to be
Pious
And thankful
And forgiving

But when it becomes personal
When it is family who is persistently haunted by
Hatred and anger
There is no cheek to turn
No beatific wisdom to spout
o sheathing of the sword
No neighbor to love

But rather you will return to the primitive
To cast stones
To shatter visages
To crucify innocents
To study war

You will devolve to the lowest life form
Beyond reason
And compassion
And soul
And become some ignominious creature
A remorseless terrorist desiring to visit misery
on others

When it becomes personal

You become
Something and someone
Of which you are not proud

But after much haranguing
And beating of chest
Your soul will confront its true self
And regret the anger
And forgive the ugliness you had become

And you will understand that
Like those Towers
That fell with the dignity
Of the innocent souls within its being
A true champion always wins
When its spirit is pure

And you will remember
Even when it becomes personal
You owe it to the ones you love
To become a Tower
Of Hope
And Love
And Honor
And Benevolence
A symbol of all
Of the Goodness
That America
Is really supposed to be

Donna Kilgore



In Memory of Cedar Wax Wings

Migrant birds and
vicious boys with Crosmans,
redundant, mix
like oil in water, oozing
death the color of Cooney's
pummeled, pulverized face, purchasing
memberships with high attrition, low enrollment,
lower still graduation, exchange,
though even, still
robbery, the warehouse trade
for substance, subsidy.
Is this a way to win?
Christian,
the power of manufactured martyrdom,
some Ghandian perversion. No
Job in aught of this.
The lemmings flow,
like channel water to its wasted end,
bereft of separate being,

piper's pipe but pen to put to paper,
to write a check,
to beg a meal,
to earn a stay,
to aught but make a difference;
food, but not for thought,
fodder,
a quartered equivalency,
too short for constitutional,
to pad the roll, to fill the coffers.
Be ye fruitful, multiply:
the Pope's demographer outdoes me
long before I do. The boys,
mere boys,
and thus accusing,
take toll and trophy,
laugh and leave
the rotting stench still steaming.

Ron Samples

Riddle Me This

“...These thanks we offer, Lord, not with the expectation of thy bounty but with the unconditional acceptance of thy free will.”

Willy bids us think of this,
that love unbending truly loves,
but,
bending proves not love,
not now, nor ever was.
Hence,
riddle me this,
for I am left with child
and thus must be obstetric:
does evil exist?
Iago's anger argues not
but something undiscovered,
undisclosed,
perhaps, though felt,
commensurate;
and, absent secrecy,
Satan's fallen star,
his dis-
 aster,
the same.

Meanwhile,
Desdemona,
Desdemon,
Des du monde,
has always had her issues,
the gender's dearth of power,
one,
the blameless expectation of her state,
another,
the father,
impotent and awed by Moorish might,
seduces thus the daughter,
the warrior, paid assassin, thus
can never be loved lover.

Another case,
the misfit's case,
but case so un compelling
gets thee thus to the nunnery of the text,
for therein proffers answer,
ascetic,
riddled but with bookish glitch
but answer nonetheless
thought and told and therefore
some Iago
takes to heart,
makes it felt,
bestows it ontic status.

Hence,
Riddle me this,
the midwife old
and God some vicious economic,
does goodness exist,
the myth of Job
mere myth,
the scholar bribed—
no scholar else—
with rank and pay and tenure,
while we,
ever humanists,
seek motives for our monsters,
no monsters else
but men,
nor Muslims, blacks, nor Hitlers,
the dominatrix recompense
for excess pose of power...,
indeed,
does aught exist,
or is not aught but aught,
some warp in zero manifold,
some sum beyond the whole,
some plus and minus combo?
Riddle me this,
For I must be obstetric.

Ron Samples

Icarus Flies Aboard Starship

Something truly amazing,
Boys and girls tumbling
Earthward out of the stars--

Golden one and all,
Long tethered in space,
Now looking earthward
Winging homeward
Gliding on feathers
Of glistening metal and tile;

Suited sleekly in astro armor
These star strollers
Dressed to kill, fly by:
High tech, high toned
High test, and high strung
They blaze into sight;

Yes, Nature's defiant,
Rebellious they are
Each and every one,
Deeming Groundless
Gravity's grave;
Still pride bent
Remaining Gravity's grand master
Flying god-like
Among far starlight

But now Gnomonic is Icarus
Soaring still
Hubris high—

But bastard born
Is this doomed descendent
Of the sun-bound son of Daedalus

All in a moment,
Unspeakably—

Highjacked.

From
Heaven
Blue
These
Boys
And
Girls
Fall
Hell
Howling
Bound
Like
A
Ball bouncing red across the playground of the
gods.

Left etched across the heavens
Looms a celestial funeral pyre,
A supernova,
A dead son--
Yes, almost sublime.

Michael Sollars



The Great Ball

The last time I saw my father
Or thought I saw him
Was when a great red rubber kickball
Sailed toward him like a falling sun.
I remember that afternoon as though
I was still standing on the white, padded home plate.
All the bases loaded, a small brown-haired
Boy on first base jumping up
And down and all the while making me nervous
As the ball-capped pitcher swung
His bony arm and rolled the ball with a high bounce

Toward me. As the ball hopped closer over the
Cracked asphalt, I heard Johnny on second yell:
'Kick it a mile. Over everybody's head. Out of this world.'
And just as my foot struck the ball
Billy on third screamed above the wind,
'Run! Run!'
But I stood there on home
And followed the ball as it floated red in the air
And hid the sun for a split second.
It grew smaller and smaller, and finally seemed to
Hang in the afternoon sky.
Then everyone was running;
Billy and Johnny ran for more bases while the chubby boys
In the outfield
Darted after the falling ball,
Some of them jumping up and down
And shouting like birthday boys.
The stretched out their short arms,
And their faces grew giant grins as they readied themselves
To catch the prize,
But they'd forgotten in that moment all the times before
When the ball had come down on them like a globe
And bounced back out of their arms,
Making them scurry about the playground after it
As it led them about in a new game.
And then I saw the ball start to fall;
Everyone in the game seemed to disappear as
My father stood in the long afternoon shadows,
Far beyond the home run line.
'Catch it, pa,' I called. 'Catch it for me!' And then,
'For me,' I called again with a dry mouth and wide eyes.
But he didn't see the ball. He didn't even look up.
He disappeared just as the great ball hit the earth

And Billy came across home base and pushed me away so he could tag.

Michael Sollars

The Minerva Literary Association holds several scheduled meetings each year under the direction of Drs. Samples and Moore. The Minerva Literary Association offers those from the University opportunities to present papers in front of their peers. Presentations may be on any pedagogical, creative, analytical, or theoretical topic related to either of the two academic disciplines housed in the department. The seminar's one-hour format typically allows for two or more short presentations, and, of course, light refreshments. To present your work at an upcoming meeting of the Minerva Literary Association, please contact Dr. Samples.

Last Thoughts...

*Little rice, little bean,
No meat in between.
Hard work ain't easy,
Dry bread ain't greasy.*

----*Beloved*, Toni Morrison

To submit information for the next issue of *The Chronicle*, a Newsletter for the Department of English and Foreign Languages, please submit your topics and copy to Professor Michael Sollars. *The Chronicle* results from the efforts of the Newsletter Committee whose members include Arbolina Jennings, Joyce McEwing, Ron Samples, and Michael Sollars.