

NEW BEGINNINGS

By Marilyn Williams

The small cottage squatted at the end of a weeded lane, traversed only by the occasional bicycle and the feet of country folk. And the feet of the young man now bent over the hearth, sweeping ashes into a dustbin. The feet of the old woman who'd lived here all her life had shuffled up the lane for the last time in October.

The cat, grey as smoke, rubbed against his ankles. He brushed her aside. "You know she's gone, don't you, old girl?"

He rose to empty the dustbin into the winter garden and brought in firewood to rekindle the fire against the February chill. The taxes had taken a big chunk of Gran's money, and the carpenter would need much of that remaining for the changes they'd discussed endlessly last summer—the distillery, the greenhouse, the internet.

He sat out the vinegar and water. Throwing open the doors and windows to the pale rays of the new moon, he began the ritual cleansing of hearth and home, releasing the spirit so it wouldn't be trapped and warding the home against intrusions. Then he rekindled the fire in the hearth using a mix of pine and hardwoods with aromatic herbs. White smoke billowed out, then up the chimney. He felt Gran's benediction.

Grey circled twice and curled up on the hearth rug, purring. She'd stay.

The new witch of Woodsy Hollow was open for business. His first client had just began her tentative way toward his front door.

TO EDUCATE, ENCOURAGE AND INSPIRE!

We meet at the Carnegie Memorial Library in Lake Charles, LA (411 Pujo Street) on the first Saturday of each month from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. We then adjourn to Jason's Deli on Ryan St. All members and guests are welcome to join us for lunch!

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2015

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KATRINA

By Mark Wayne Allen

High wind,
Carrying water,
Hit Louisiana on its lowest border,
A category 5 they say it was,
That wrecked the city of New Orleans,
Hundreds died, maybe thousands,
With winds so great and water of death,
The Super Dome turned into a shelter,
While Fats stayed home, what a mess,
The recovery took almost a decade,
They will never be through,
The devastation totaled millions,
From the mighty hurricane that blew.

UNREMEMBERED THINGS

By Beth Savoie

The day he proposed, we lay on the grass in the park and painted our life in the clouds. Stolen kisses behind the kids' backs. Apology roses igniting passionate embraces. Waltzing in the moonlight after the first snowfall. A life we would've created together.

Now they are sketches of unremembered things erased by the wind.

I look in the clouds, trying to find what I've lost. My sister nudges me and my eyes come back to the casket being lowered in the ground. The earth is cool, silky, leaving brown smudges on my hands as I throw the first of the dirt that will bury our un-lived memories.

Words are spoken—mumbled apologies, awkward pauses, useless platitudes—I can't listen to them.

I turn back to the bright blue sky and strain to hear the whisper of the clouds as they sail away with my unremembered things.

LAYING IN WAIT

By Lowell Bergeron

I put my plate on the stack of unwashed dishes. It had been days since we took over the place and waited for the owner to return. We didn't know the guy. We'd never seen him. We had a job to do and that was all we knew.

"Think we should clean em up?" Darby asked.

Darby and I have worked together for a long time. He's twice as big as me and was responsible for most of the mess in the sink.

"Why don't you?" I asked him.

He shifted in his chair. I don't know how it held up, but after some creaking and moaning, it stayed intact.

"Just asking," he said patting his massive stomach.

"We'll clean up a mess soon enough when our host comes home."

"How long do we wait?" Darby asked opening and closing the cabinets and refrigerator.

"I hope he comes home before we run out of food."

Darby grunted.

"I don't want to be here with you with no food."

"Funny," he said.

I walked to the living room and looked outside. The rain continued to come down, flooding the street. Our old sedan glistened in the street lights.

"You think we should hide the car?" I shouted to Darby.

"Go ahead," he said. "I move too slow."

"No need," I said. "He's here."

Darby wobbled into the living room and stood as much behind the door as he could. I waited off to the side. We pulled our guns.

I SEE YOU

By Sherry Perkins

You are just behind my eyes
in a misty fog – untouchable
beauty and heartbreak
imagination and envy
angelic and demonic

You are here, your perfect silhouette
disappears around the corner – ghost-like
worldly and innocent
inspiration and frustration
steel and satin

You are in the melodies of music
melting my soul – unintentionally
course and smooth
open and hidden
complex and simple

You seep from the coyote's call,
crying out – mysterious
wild and tame
unknown and comfortable
fulfilled and yearning

I see you.

HAIKU

By Beverly Martin

falling summer tears
precious drops washing, cleansing
fill the dawning day

surface smooth as silk
moonbeams paint the night water
golden path to shore

messenger so small
ruby throated avian
treasure of springtime