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Prepared by TIL Secretary William Jack Sibley

Dear TIL Members:

I can't wait to meet in person with so many of you, after our long months under COVID-19. The light at the end of the tunnel is here, and the TIL is ready to go.

The TIL Council and Past Presidents will be meeting *in person* in late September for the first time in over a year. Our meeting will be at The Wittliff Collections in San Marcos, Texas. I think so many of us have yearned for these TIL get-togethers to reconnect with each other. Of course, we will be planning for our *in person* TIL annual meeting and awards ceremony in **El Paso, Texas on April 22-23, 2022**. Mark it on your calendars!



I know many of you will want to come to El Paso as a return to what all of us love about our community, that camaraderie and interaction and, yes, the schmoozing and drinking we miss so much. Get ready to have a great time in El Paso. I'll be planning community events for the week preceding April 22-23, readings by our newly inducted TIL members, awards presentations, and our banquet Saturday night at Ardovino's Desert Crossing. We might even have a few post-TIL events on Sunday or Monday for those staying an extra day or two. Check our website, www.texasinstituteofletters.org, for the **El Paso schedule** once we are closer to the date. Also, in the fall, I'll be posting the link for reserving your room at the Hilton DoubleTree in downtown El Paso.

This summer I will also be busy filling the committees for our **literary contests**, which will be open for submissions in the fall. As always, I've been consulting the Officers, Council, and many of you, pestering people with emails and asking Members to serve as judges. My aim is always to have a diverse balance within each committee. I am grateful for those who are willing to serve. As you know, each contest has a small fee, and the money is evenly split among the judges of each contest, so that we can provide them with a modest honorarium for their valuable service. The details to enter our contests will be announced on our website in mid-September. Last year we broke the all-time record for the number of entries to our contests.

Even during the past two years of this pandemic, **the TIL has moved forward**, and even thrived, by adapting and using technology. We had a virtual annual meeting on April 17, 2021 that was attended live by one hundred participants and that has been seen on YouTube another one hundred times as of this writing (see the photos below). More of our contests are now fully endowed than ever before, and so the TIL is on solid financial footing for the future. About eighty-five percent of Members now regularly renew their membership on our website: even I remember when *all* Members sent in their checks. Siempre adelante!

Which leads me to my final plea: **please renew your membership** at: <https://www.texasinstituteofletters.org/payments/index.htm>, or consider an extra donation to help the TIL. These links are on the front page of the website, as well as on the Members page. If your name is not listed among Active Members, then we have not received your dues for the

current year. I guarantee you: the volunteer Officers and Councilors of the TIL will always be working hard to keep our literary community thriving.

As always, your suggestions and feedback about the TIL are welcome. You can contact me at: president@texasinstituteofletters.org.

Sergio Troncoso

Sergio Troncoso



Member News

Fifty-five updates from TIL Members, in the order received.

Cyrus Cassells: The Texas State Legislature will make appointments starting on Tuesday, May 18 to the positions of state poet laureate, state musician, state two-dimensional artist and state three-dimensional artist. The positions, created by SB 1043 of the 77th Legislature, are filled for one-year terms. The eight appointees were selected by a legislative-appointed committee for the exceptional quality of their work and for their outstanding commitment to the arts in Texas. The 2021 appointees include Texas Poet Laureate Cyrus Cassells of Austin, Texas

Olive Hershey: My 2021 goal is to complete work on a biography of Houston artist and activist, Gertrude Barnstone. With the welcome support of Houston Artists Fund, I tracked Barnstone through her years first as actress and artist, later as a fearless voice for racial justice and human rights. It was a wild ride, and I hope my book, "*Ay, Que Vida!*" records her vivid and sometimes scandalous language as she tells stories from memory. Actress, visual artist, political provocateur and member of the HISD board, she achieved notoriety and earned the respect of many in Houston's Black community for the battles she and one other liberal member waged every week against the immovable conservative majority opposing desegregation.

Annette Gordon Reed: My latest book, *On Juneteenth*, was published May 4th. It has been reviewed, among other places, in the New York Times—the daily review and the cover of the Sunday review—the Washington Post, and Texas Monthly. It debuted on the Times bestseller list last week.

Ellen Temple: I'd love for folks to watch our documentary film: "*Citizens at Last: Texas Women Fight for the Vote*" produced by Ellen Temple and Nancy Schiesari. After the premiere on KLRU/PBS Austin on March 19th, it's playing now on PBS stations all over the country and also streaming on their apps. It's also streaming on our website www.citizensatlastfilm.com. We're aiming for Texas and country wide concentrated PBS distribution in August. We're very proud of the film. Look for it on your local PBS station or on our website!

[Citizens at Last | Stream Now](http://www.citizensatlastfilm.com)

Citizens at Last is a documentary film that tells the story of Texas women who organized, demonstrated, and won the vote for women. Stream now on our website.

www.citizensatlastfilm.com

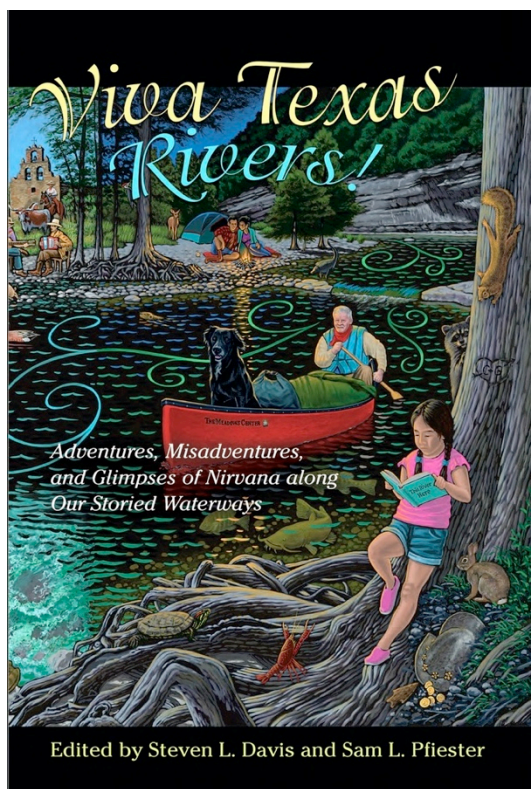
David Samuel Levinson: I'll be heading to the Virginia Center for the Arts (VCCA) this summer for a few weeks to work on the revision of a novel, *Do I Have a Story for You*.

Emilio Zamora: I was fortunate to receive the OAH Roy Rosenzweig Distinguished Service Award in May 2021. According to the Organization of American Historians "The OAH Roy Rosenzweig Distinguished Service Award is presented each year to an individual or individuals whose contributions have significantly enriched our understanding and appreciation of American history."

Steve Davis: is pleased to announce the forthcoming literary anthology, ***Viva Texas Rivers: Adventures, Misadventures, and Glimpses of Nirvana Along Our Storied Waterways.*** This is an extraordinary collection of the best nonfiction writings and poems that capture “the spirit of place” of each Texas waterway. More than 50 TILeros are represented in this book including sixteen Lifetime Achievement Award winners: Gary Cartwright (Trinity), Sandra Cisneros (San Antonio), Robert Flynn (Red), John Graves (Brazos), Stephen Harrigan (San Marcos, Barton Springs), Leon Hale (Leon), James Hoggard (Brazos, Guadalupe), Elmer Kelton (Concho), Walter McDonald (Brazos), Larry McMurtry (Pecos), Pat Mora (Río Grande), Naomi Shihab Nye (Little Blanco), Américo Paredes (Río Grande), Benjamín Alire Sáenz (Río Grande), Jan Reid (Red, Río Grande), Bud Shrake (Río Grande).

This the newest book in the Wittliff Literary Series, published by Texas A&M University Press. We are partnering with TILero Andy Sansom, who founded the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment and has published more than thirty titles in his River Book Series with TAMU Press.) Andy has contributed his own writing on the Pecos, along with an Afterword on “The State of Texas Rivers Today.” You’ll see Andy in the canoe on the cover of the book, along with Steve’s dog, Ralfred. Pub date is September.

Carmen Tafolla’s “This River Here” kicks off the book. Other TILeros who appear are: Francis Edward Abernethy (Neches), Michael Berryhill (Buffalo Bayou, San Antonio Bay), Alan Birkelbach (San Gabriel), Elroy Bode, David Bowles (Río Grande), Mark Busby (Trinity), Bobby Byrd (Río Grande), Norma Elia Cantú (Río Grande), Chip Dameron (Brazos), J. Frank Dobie (Pecos), Gerald Duff (Sabine), John Erickson (Canadian), Wes Ferguson (Sabine), Andrew Geyer (Frio), S.C. Gwynne (Pecos), William Hauptman (Wichita), Joe Holley (Canadian), Paulette Jiles (Nueces), Joe R. Lansdale (Sabine), Attica Locke (Buffalo Bayou), Domingo Martínez (Río Grande), Bill Minutaglio (Llano), Karla K. Morton (Washita), Joe Nick Patoski (Guadalupe & Devils), Emmy Pérez (Río Grande), Sasha Pimentel (Río Grande), John Phillip Santos (San Pedro Creek), Jan Seale (Río Grande), William Jack Sibley (Nueces), Thad Sitton (Neches), Octavio Solis (Río Grande), W.K. Stratton (Leon), Larry D. Thomas (Concho).

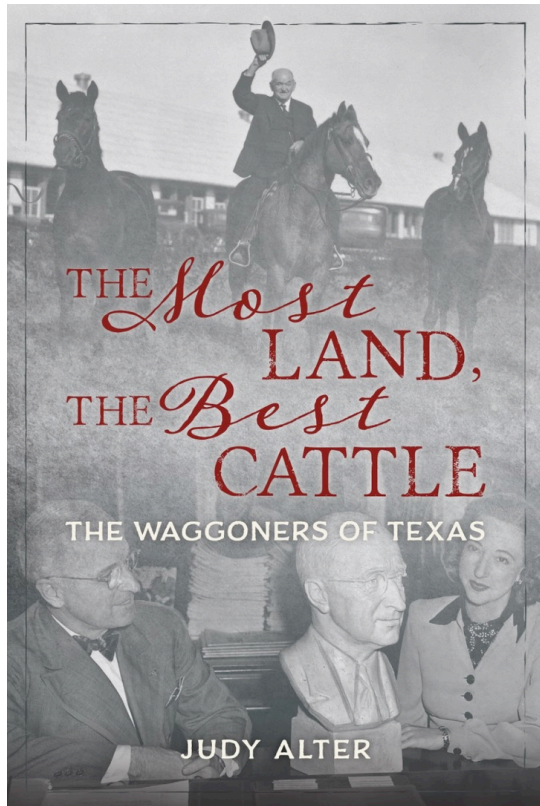


Jose Rodriguez: Poem "In the Presence of Sunlight" appeared in the April 26/May 3 issue of *The New Yorker*. Poem "The Last Time I Went to Church" and essay "Letter to the Student Who Asks Me How I Managed to Do It" appeared in the anthology *Nepantla Familias*, edited by Sergio Troncoso.

David Lee: spent the sequestration year putting together a Selected Poems for a new press, Samara Press. *Rusty Barbed Wire: Selected Poems* is due out in 2022.

Jim Sanderson: *Gambled Dreams* was published in March 2021.

Judy Alter: TwoDot Books will reprint two of my historical novels in June—*Libbie* (Elizabeth Bacon Custer) and *Jessie* (Jessie Benton Fremont). In September they will publish a new book, *The Most Land, the Best Cattle: the Waggoners of Texas*.



Lisa Sandlin: I've finished the third novel in the Delpha Wade series set in 1973 in Beaumont, TX. Will be sending soon to publishers. The first in the series, "The Do-Right," has been optioned for film. So, yep, everything's up in the air.

James Crisp: The Texas State Historical Association will publish my monstrously long volume, *Inside the Texas Revolution: The Enigmatic Memoir of Herman Ehrenberg* in that month, unless disaster strikes in some way -- all the proofing is done. I'm especially happy to tell the elite literary folks in the TIL that several important writers of poetry, fiction, and literary criticism show up in this edited work, including Walt Whitman, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and the Texas-born Henry Nash Smith.

I hope to see many of you next year,

C.M. Mayo: In these too quiet times I've been working steadily on a book about Far West Texas, and for a spell every morning, my German skills—a website in German is forthcoming, as are translations of some of my works into German. www.cmmayo.com

Geoff Rips: My novel, *Personal Geography*, will be published by Welcome Rain Publishers in September

Greg Garrett: During the pandemic, Greg Garrett published the US, UK, and audio versions of his latest nonfiction book for Oxford University Press, *A Long, Long Way: Hollywood's Journey from Racism to Reconciliation*. Although he hasn't done a live book event, he did talk with audiences around the country—and in London and Paris—from the corner of his bedroom. His literary novel *Bastille Day* has been accepted for 2022 publication by Raven Books, and he began work on his next nonfiction book on racism and white supremacy for Oxford this spring at a cabin in the Sangre de Cristos.



Katie Hoerth: I've had a productive writerly harvest this season. My poetry manuscript, *Flare Stacks in Full Bloom*, has been accepted for publication by Texas Review Press and is slated for release by the year's end. This will be my fourth full-length poetry collection. In addition, I won the Poetry of the Plains and Prairies Prize (POPP) for my chapbook manuscript, *Prairie Madness*. The book will be hand-printed and published by North Dakota State University Press next fall. My poems have been accepted for publication in a few literary journals, among them are *Apricity*, *Tipton Poetry Review*, *Texas Poetry Assignment*, and *The McGuffin*. This fall, I will be reading at SCMLA as part of Poet's Corner in Houston.

Ron Rozelle: I have a new novel, *'Leaving the Country of Sin'*, out from Texas Review Press and am enjoying leading memoir and creative writing Zoom workshops for the Women's Institute Houston and the Brazosport Center for the Arts and Sciences.

Dave Parsons: Has poems published or forthcoming in *Louisiana Literature*, *As You Were: Military Experience & the Arts*, *The Chrysalis Project*, *Writing Texas*, *Odes and Elegies: Eco-Poetry from the Texas Gulf Coast* (edited by Kathrine Hoerth) and *LEVEL LAND: Poems for and about the I35 Corridor* (edited by Crag Hill & Todd Fuller). He also had his review of the book, *The Million Dead, Summ'd Up, Walt Whitman's Civil War Writings*, (Ed Folsom/Christopher Merrell) published in *The Houston Chronicle Community Newspapers*. He was deeply honored to be named one of the Ten Legends of Conroe in Arcadia Presses', *Images of America: Conroe*. He and his colleague, Cliff Hudder were thrilled to again host their annual celebration of Walt Whitman's birthday month on May 12-13 with over sixteen poets at a in-person dinner/reading and a Zoom program with Whitman scholars, Ed Folsom and Christopher Merrell. Though still teaching a LSC-Montgomery veteran theme English classes, he has added teaching writing workshops at the new University of St. Thomas satellite campus in Conroe. He has been awarded a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts to perform readings and workshops this summer in underserved areas in and surrounding El Paso. He asks that any suggestion of non-profit venues be sent to him: dmparsons@suddenlink.net

Larry D. Thomas: Has a new poetry chapbook out from Right Hand Pointing titled *States of Red and Blue: Musings of a Prodigious Kindergartner*. The collection was first published in November 2020 in a limited edition print format (handmade and designed with unique covers by Dale Wisely, publisher and editor of Right Hand Pointing and Ambidextrous Bloodhound Press). In March 2021 the collection was republished online by Right Hand Pointing and is now available at the press Web site: www.righthandpointing.net. Thomas's poems also appear in the current issues of the *Arkansas Review: A Journal of Delta Studies*, *Concho River Review*, *Deep South Magazine: Southern Culture and Literature*, *Delta Poetry Review*, *San Pedro River Review* and *Voices de la Luna*. Link to cover of *States of Red and Blue: Musings of a Prodigious Kindergartner* <https://www.issues.righthandpointing.net/larry-d-thomas-states>

Bob Flynn: My story, "Living with the Hyenas" was read twice by Libby Villari on Suzanne Savoy's "Lunchtime Story Reading for Adults", sponsored by the Lewes Public Library in Rhode Island. In addition to the live audience there was a Zoom audience with viewers from the NYC area, Texas and Canada. Libby Villari was a regular on the Friday Night Lights TV series and was the grandmother in Richard Linklater's *Boyhood*. Until the pandemic closed theaters she was touring as Ann Richards in Holland Taylor's show "Ann" and hopes to bring the play to San Antonio.

Rosemary Catacalos: Has a poem in the May 2021 issue of POETRY.

Reginald Gibbons: Published his eleventh book of poems, *RENDITIONS* (Four Way Books). In 2022, Jackleg Press will reprint his Texas novel, *SWEETBITTER* (which won the Jesse Jones Award for Best Book of Fiction in 1995 and also the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award). He recently joined Jackleg Press as an editorial advisor (<https://jacklegpress.org/team>). This autumn he will receive the Fuller Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame (see https://chicagoliteraryhof.org/events_entry/fuller-award-reginald-gibbons). With Russian poet Ilya Kutik, Gibbons has completed a years-long project of translating a volume of *SELECTED POEMS OF BORIS PASTERNAK* and also *MARINA TSVETAeva: A PORTRAIT IN POEMS*, which is a selection of Tsvetaeva's poems accompanied by poems written to or about her by other Russian poets.

Jesse Sublett III: Here's my update: After spending 12 months of the pandemic lockdown writing my book on Frank Smith, the master criminal of Travis County in the 1977, and Ronnie Earle, the district attorney who took him down, I turned in the manuscript to Casey Kittrell, my editor at UT Press, at the end of February. Next step, wait for the peer reviews to conclude. Idle hands are the Devil's workshop, right? So, I set up my easel again and started painting like a madman. I started posting my new bird paintings on Facebook and Instagram last week and have already sold a few. It's been a strange year and spending more time birding definitely helped keep me relatively sane, and by painting my most favorite feathered friends feels like returning the favor. Here are a couple examples from the May 2021 burst of acrylic madness (and they can all be found on Instagram at [jessesublett.visualart.](https://www.instagram.com/jessesublett.visualart/))



Carolyn Banks: In the 1990s, Fawcett published five of my comic mysteries set in the equestrian world. Today I received my contract from Sapore Books in London to reprint these as a boxed set, which is the way I first envisioned them! The books are *Death by Dressage*, *Murder Well-Bred*, *A Horse to Die For*, *Death on the Diagonal* and *Groomed for Death*. Each of these books features Robin Vaughan, a rider with funny observations on just about everything. I'm so glad she will be resurrected. Meanwhile, my agent is about to circulate my newest novel, *The Importance of Being Erica*, a comic novel featuring Oscar Wilde as one of the characters. Fingers crossed!

Separately, would you please publish this query:

Carolyn Banks wonders if any TIL members can give her more information about the publisher of *De Profundis (Annotated)* by Oscar Wilde. There is a 22-page biographical introduction, unsigned, that offered a few details about Wilde that I hadn't seen elsewhere. The only information about the publisher is this note on the final page: "Made in the USA, Coppell TX, 06 February 2021." Carolyn Banks would like to know more and hopes anyone with information will email her at

cbanks@austin.rr.com.

Karla k. Morton: Is bursting with joy to announce that her newest book: *"The National Parks: A Century of Grace"* (TCU Press) has been unleashed on the world! Morton and fellow Texas Poet Laureate Alan Birkelbach spent 4 and 1/2 years traveling to ALL of America's National Parks - writing poetry, taking photos and putting their work in the hands of the incredible TCU Press editors who created an absolutely gorgeous hard-bound, full-colour coffee table book. Morton and Birkelbach are even donating a percentage of their royalties back to the National Parks system.

Here is the book trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUAVTbasfl&feature=youtu.be>

And here is the great interview with Foreword Magazine:

<https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.forewordreviews.com%2Farticles%2Farticle%2Feditor-in-chief-matt-sutherland-interviews-karla-k-morton-and-alan-birkelbach-authors-of-the-national-parks-a-century-of-grace%2F&data=04%7C01%7C%7Ca2b00c38b87b4561067d08d91f8e683c%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C63757551877777366%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikh1aWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=TvfZtbx79Z8brKFJYwC5GQsWla0lj4U%2Fj%2F7XrPnvY7A%3D&reserved=0>

The Foreword of the book was written by TIL's newest inductee: international singer/songwriter Michael Martin Murphey! He was so inspired by the book that he is working with Morton and Birkelbach on an album based on their National Park poems! Also, Morton's audio-book version of her National Heritage Wrangler Award winning poetry book *"Wooden Lions"* (Texas Review Press) has just been released - just in time for the summer road-trips! https://www.amazon.com/Wooden-Lions/dp/B08YD7ZQ6D/ref=sr_1_5?dchild=1&keywords=audio+book+Wooden+Lions&qid=1622153415&sr=8-5

Alan Govenar: After a year of major surgeries and a tough recovery, I got a clean bill of health in New York City on March 4, 2020, just as the pandemic began to take hold. In April, I began writing a novel *"Boccaccio in the Berkshires,"* that will be published in September 2021 by Deep Vellum. I also finished work on my artist book *"A Pillow on the Ocean of Time: A Poetry Journal,"* which chronicled my health travails and is now moving into the world. Currently, I'm in the process of finishing a feature-length documentary called *"Looking for Home,"* to be released in the fall, and preparing for a staged reading of my new musical *"Stompin' at the Savoy,"* based on my children's book about the legendary swing dancer Norma Miller.

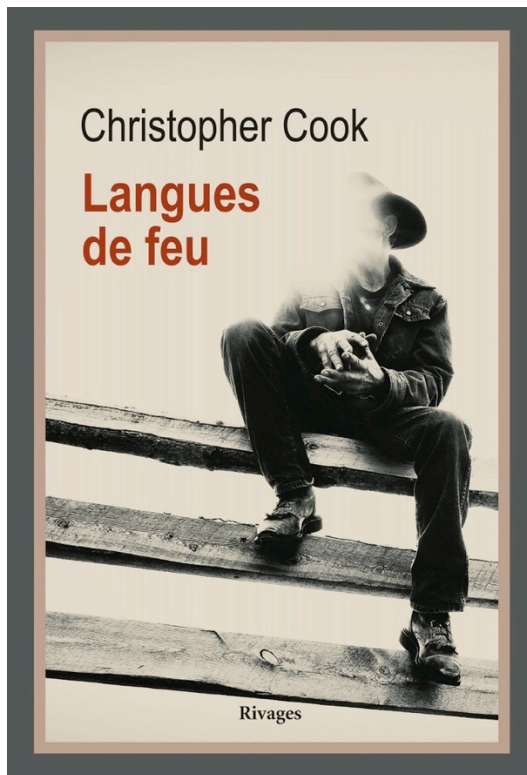
Octavio Solis: May 30th, *"The Almeda Fire: Rogue Valley, Oregon"* a new essay published in the Zyzzyva Studio on-line, <https://www.zyzzyva.org/2021/05/30/the-almeda-fire-rogue-valley-oregon/> June 24th, Seattle Repertory Theatre's *"Plays in Process"* hosts an interview in which the announcement is made that I will be collaborating with David Hidalgo and Louie Perez of Los Lobos on a new Ritchie Valens musical to be directed by Tony Taccone.

<https://www.seattlerep.org/audience-programs/newplay/plays-in-process/a-ritchie-valens-musical/>

Clay Reynolds: I did publish a short story in *The Concho River Review*, "Who Reads Proust," which will be, I hope, part of a forthcoming collection I'm in the process of assembling. Also Tony Daniel, editor at Baen Press, invited me to do a thirty-minute video podcast about my work and writing in general. It's available as follows: <https://www.youtube.com/c/BaenBooksShow/videos>. It can also be found on iTunes and Spotify <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-baen-free-radio-hour/id625313693?i=1000518344247> and

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/4eXcckgXXOW2ESG0JnwOto?si=Q27Z1vV8TpioWt2lipZm6A>

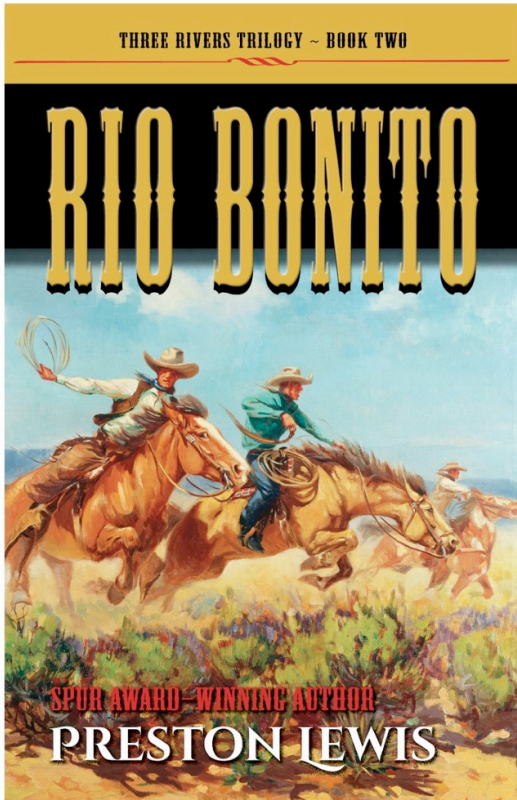
Christopher Cook: Still living in Prague, Czech Republic, which is slowly reopening after a very tough pandemic autumn and winter. Spring, meanwhile, is dragging its heels. We've yet to see 70 degrees, and the sun remains in hiding. Even so, I've some good writing news to report. The endless saga of my novel *Robbers* being adapted into a movie or TV series recently entered a new stage when it was optioned by a company in LA for a feature film. I'll be co-writing the screenplay. This is at least the fifth time it's been optioned, so we'll see. When it comes to working with the film industry, I tell my writing friends to just keep rolling the dice and expect nothing. At least the option checks are useful. Otherwise, I'm nearing the completion of another short story collection that will likely be published in France. My last collection (two novellas and three stories) was published in France under the title *Langues de feu*. I've not published it in the USA. But I'm now thinking of publishing both collections in the USA if I find an interested publisher. I also hope to make a trip to Texas later this year to spend time with family and friends now that restrictions on international travel have eased. On a final note, I still miss my buddy Jan Reid. I'm happy his last novel is being published this summer by TCU Press.



ire'ne lara silva: This October, Alabrava Press will be publishing a limited-edition bilingual chapbook of my short story, "*Hibiscus Tacos*," and FlowerSong Press will be publishing, "*FirstPoems: ani'mal, INDiGENA, and furia*," a reprint of my first collection of poetry and earlier works. I've also just signed a contract to be a writer at large for *Texas Highways Magazine*, which published the essay that won this year's Shrake Short Non-fiction Award.

Gerald Duff: My novel BLOOD TELLS will be published this year by Lamar University Literary Press. It is my fifteenth book of fiction. Also, the forthcoming book from the Wittliff Collection's VIVA TEXAS RIVERS! will include a section from my novel BLUE SABINE.

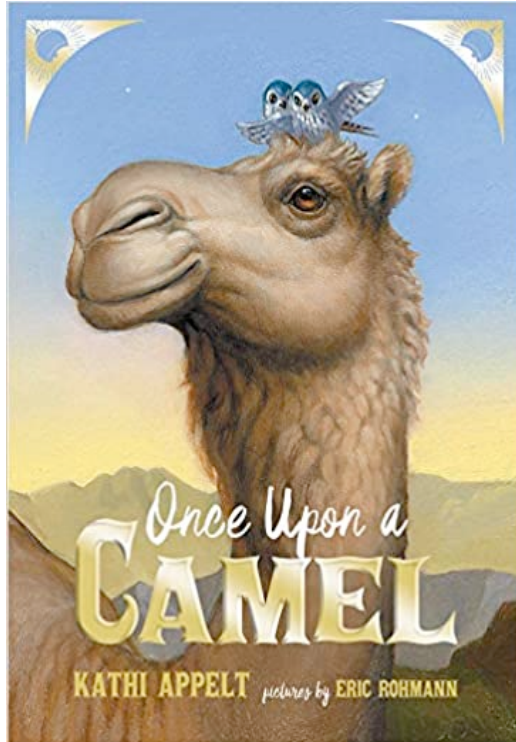
Preston Lewis: *Rio Bonito*, the second volume in the Three Rivers Trilogy on the Lincoln County War by 2021 TIL inductee Preston Lewis of San Angelo, is scheduled for an August release by Five Star, and *Rio Hondo*, the third book in the series, is contracted for a 2022 publication. In spite of the pandemic, 2020 was a good year for Lewis with the publication of *First Herd to Abilene* and *North to Alaska*, the fifth and sixth volumes in his *Memoirs of H.H. Lomax* series, by Wolfpack publishing. CKN Christian Publishing last year also released *The Gulag P-Pa Diaries*, his bittersweet memoir of grandparenting. In February two of his short fiction pieces—"A Grave Too Many" and "The Hope Chest"—earned him Will Rogers Gold Medallion Awards for short stories. Lewis is the author of 37 western, historical and juvenile books and anthologies.



Ricardo Ainslie: Happy to announce that I recently received a Fulbright Scholar Award to spend four months in Vienna, Austria, next spring working on a book on the nature of community. What is “community”? How do communities work for us, psychologically, and what happens when that function is eroded by conflict and strife? I’ll be housed at the Sigmund Freud Museum and Archive during my time in Vienna.

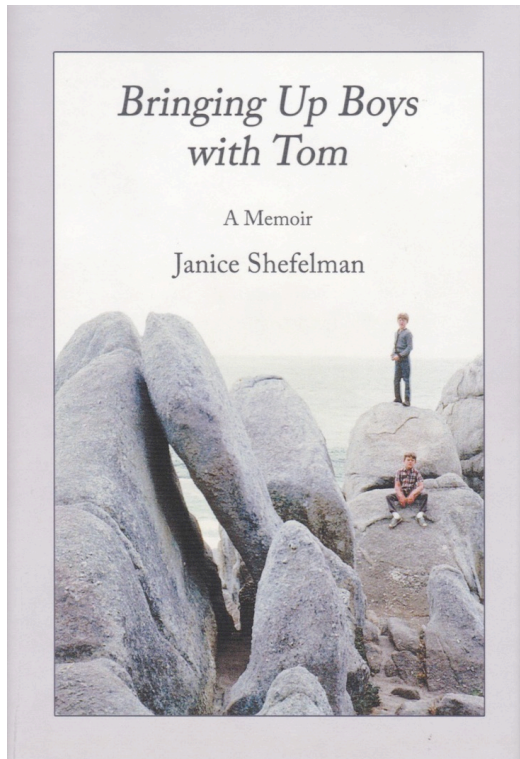
Jesus Trevino: In between my own writing I am continuing to post interviews with Latino writers on my Latinopia website. View the latest literary interviews at <http://latinopia.com/category/latino-literature/latinopia-word/> I have about 150 such interviews there.

Kathi Appelt: *ONCE UPON A CAMEL*, will be released in early September 2021. Based upon the legendary U.S. Army Camels that were based in Camp Verde, Texas in the mid-nineteenth century, the book will be published by Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, an imprint of Atheneum/Simon and Schuster. The cover and interior art are by Caldecott Award Winner Eric Rohmann."



W.K. (Kip) Stratton: Will speak at the 2021 Quanah Parker Medicine Mounds Gathering in Quanah, Texas. The event, which runs from June 17-June 20, is a celebration of Comanche culture and the legacy of Comanche leader Quanah Parker. The gathering also gives the public a rare opportunity to visit the Medicine Mounds, which are a series of dolomite hills southeast of Quanah. The Comanche and other Native peoples consider them sacred. Kip's address is based on his *Texas Monthly* article, "What Happened at Pease River Wasn't a Battle. It Was a Massacre," which ran in the December 2020 issue of the magazine. While writing it, Stratton drew on historical research by TIL members Paul Carlson and Ty Cashion, among others. "I've had a great time helping the Parker family organize the Quanah event," Kip says of the Medicine Mounds gathering. "However, I have had to drive through Bob Flynn's hometown, Chillicothe, many times when I've been in the vicinity of the Medicine Mounds. Flynn has told his relatives and friends in Chillicothe outrageously nefarious lies about me over the years, so I've feared one of them would take a shot at me while I was there. So far, it hasn't happened, knock on wood!" (Kip is just kidding, of course.) Kip also has an essay about his lifelong relationship with Interstate 35 appearing in the July issue of *Texas Highways*

Janice Shefelman: I have a new memoir, *Bringing Up Boys with Tom*. Here's an excerpt from the dust jacket. The cover image is attached. "When Tom asked Janice to marry him, she smiled and said, "Yes, if I don't have to cook or have children." She is still lukewarm about cooking but says, "Bringing up our boys was one of the greatest joys of my life. "After a yearlong trip around the world, as told in *Honeymoon Hobos*, Tom and Janice created a home that "shelters daydreaming" to quote from *The Poetics of Space*. There, Tom taught the boys to draw and make things with their hands. Janice opened up the world to them by reading books aloud and planning family trips, including a climb to the summit of Mt. Rainier. Together they strove to encourage creativity, an adventurous spirit, knowledge of our cultural heritage, and empathy for other cultures."



Mark Busby: Retired from teaching at Texas State University at the end of June 2020. As the author of the first major book about Larry McMurtry (*Larry McMurtry and the West: An Ambivalent Relationship*), Mark has been called upon to comment in several places about Larry's death (*Texas Monthly* and the Blair Lewis podcast, *Namastir*). Mark is currently working on an article about the relationship between McMurtry and Ken Kesey based on the night Kesey spent at a party at our house in Wimberley after a talk and Kesey's discussion of his strong relationship with McMurtry, based on their time together as Stegner fellows at Stanford.

Sandra Cisneros: On September 7, Vintage will publish Sandra's new book, *Martita, I Remember You*. Additionally, she has a new book of poetry coming out next fall.

Kevin Prufer: My newest book, *The Art of Fiction*, came out to good reviews from Four Way Books. And almost simultaneously the Spanish translation of my book *National Anthem (Himno nacional)* was published in Madrid by Bartleby Editores.

Sergio Troncoso: Edited the new anthology *Nepantla Familias: An Anthology of Mexican American Literature on Families in between Worlds* (Wittliff Literary Series and Texas A&M University Press), which received a starred review from *Kirkus Reviews*. The Texas Book Festival featured the anthology as its April Book Club selection. Sergio has been interviewed in the online magazine *The Rumpus* and the radio show *Words on a Wire*. Those interviews and others are available on his website: <https://sergiotroncoso.com/guides/news/index.htm>. Finally, an op-ed essay adapted from the anthology's introduction appeared in the *Houston Chronicle* on April 18, 2021. In late May, he was interviewed by Pati Jinich in El Paso (Pati's Mexican Table) for her PBS special on "La Frontera." Sergio's novel, *Nobody's Pilgrims*, is forthcoming in May of 2022. He is working on a new novel and other (TIL) work this summer.



Gregg Cantrell: Book, *The People's Revolt: Texas Populists and the Roots of American Liberalism*, published in 2020 by Yale University Press, won the Kate Brooks Bates Award for Historical Research from the Texas State Historical Association. He was also named winner of the Deans' Research Award at TCU, where he holds the Ralph and Erma Lowe Chair in Texas History.

Bruce Bond: Published three books this year: *Behemoth* (New Criterion Prize, Criterion Books), *The Calling* (Parlor Press), and *Patmos* (Juniper Prize, UMass). His book *Liberation of Dissonance* recently won the Nicholas Schaffner Prize for Literature in Music and so will be released next year from Schaffner Press. Two other books are also forthcoming: *Invention of the Wilderness* (LSU) and *Choreomania* (MadHat).

Barbara Ras: *The Blues of Heaven* (Pitt Poetry Series) is now out. Praise for the book includes:

"*The Blues of Heaven*, by Barbara Ras, radiates with immense tenderness—here are poems of vivid painterly wonderment, perfect pacing and weight, elegantly woven counterpoints of shimmering imagery. How does she do this? A book of infinite love and depth." —**Naomi Shihab Nye**

"The sweet and dark weight of being has never been more capably measured than in *The Blues of Heaven*. In poems about personal and national griefs, about the world at hand and the world that must be journeyed to, and about the creatures of creation and the tender, creatural self, Barbara Ras engages in acts of vision, ecstasy, and conscience. As the speaker in one poem declares, "I will work in fields of fire." And true, in the midst of a period in our human history that has been nearly unendurable, Ras has given us a book of extraordinary shining." —**Rick Barot**

"Ras is expansive in her inquiries into consciousness, conscience, and compassion." — **Donna Seaman-Booklist-Advance Review**



Loretta Diane Walker: Chapbook *From the Cow's Eyes and Other Poems* was selected as the winner of the William D. Barney Memorial Chapbook Prize, 2021, from The Fort Worth Poetry Society. The contest honors deceased Fort Worth poet William D. Barney, one of the most distinguished poets Fort Worth has produced, a former member of FWPS, and past president of the Poetry Society of Texas. He won the national Robert Frost Award in 1961 and was Texas Poet Laureate in 1982-83.

Loretta was the featured poet and panel guest for Maharishi International University, Iowa, *Switchgrass Review*, Matwaala 2021, Poets-of-Colour Festival: African American Women Poets, and the San Antonio Poetry Society. She also was a participant in various other Zoom presentations. In April, she was the featured poet for Cathexis Northwest Press. Her poem "Will We Desire Touch?" was set to music and

featured in “We Have a Voice!” A Virtual Concert presented by the Peninsula Women’s Chorus of Palo Alto, California.

She was a featured poet for ColorStory:2021. Leslie Gaworecki created a visual interpretation of her poem “When the Earth Writes Poetry” and Heidi Lowell created a visual interpretation of her poem “Poet Dreaming.” Color: Story is a community event with a collaborative visual art and literary exhibition and a dynamic opening/reading/ poetry slam, created by artists Marlo Saucedo and Leslie Gaworecki to bridge creative worlds. Her poem “Stiletto” is a featured poem in the AC Poetry Walk VISUAL POETRY EXHIBIT - ATLANTIC CITY’S DUCKTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD, 2021. AC Poetry Walk is a collaboration between Murphy Writing of Stockton University, the Noyes Museum of Art and the Ducktown Community Development Corporation. The AC Poetry Walk will be displayed for one year.

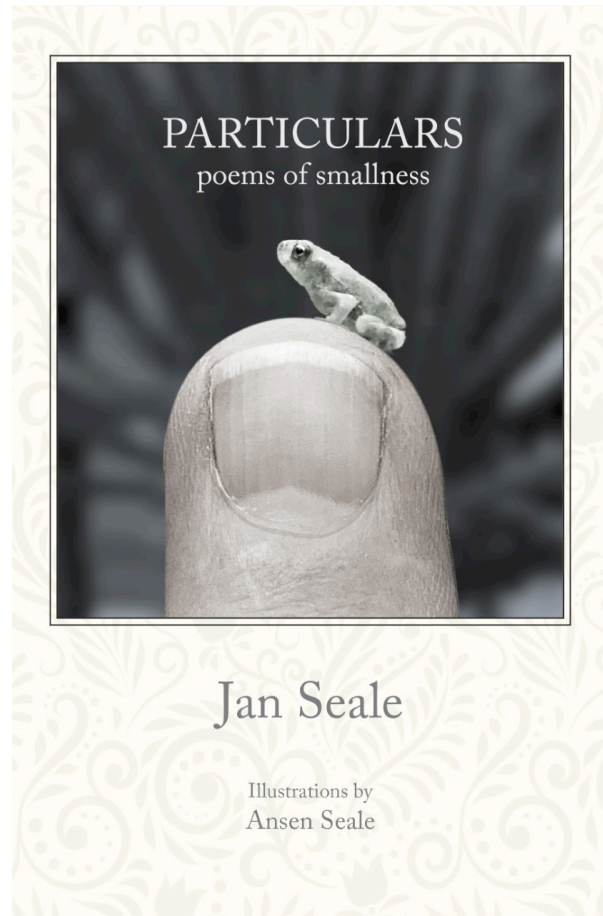
Loretta poems appear in *Writing Texas 7*, *TejasCOVIDo*, *Langdon Review*, *Texas Poetry Ballots*, *Texas Poetry Assignments*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Odes and Elegies: Eco-poetry from the Texas Gulf Coast* (her poem “The First Juneteenth” was nominated for a Pushcart Prize), *Boundless Poetry, 2021: The Anthology of the Rio Grande Valley International Poetry Festival*, *Phenomenal Literature, Vol. 5, Issue 2*, *Lucy Writers Platform: Cambridge*, *A Salute to Women of Color*, *A Salute to Men of Color*, *Conestoga Zen*, *The Pennsylvania Poetry Society Prize Poems*, and **Black Dog & One-Eyed Press**.

She has work forth coming in *Afrofuturism*, *Black Comics and Superhero Poetry*, the *Connecticut River Review*, *Switchgrass Review*, *Texas Poetry Calendar, 2022*, *Porter House Review*, and the *Poetry Society of Texas Book of the Year: Prize Poems*. Her full-length manuscript *Day Begins When Darkness is in Full Bloom* (Bluelight Press) is scheduled for publication in 2021.

Steven Schneider: Had three poems published in *Odes and Elegies: Eco-Poetry from the Texas Gulf Coast*. He also participated in a reading to launch this anthology, edited by Katherine Hoerth and published by Lamar University Press. Steven also had his poem “Kachina Natural Bridge Moonglow” accepted for publication in *Cirque, A Literary Journal for the Pacific North Rim*. Professor Schneider also presented a paper entitled “Wiki Projects for Adult Learners in Creative Writing” at the Excellence in Online Learning Conference hosted by UTRGV and participated on a panel on “Consciousness and Creativity” hosted by Maharishi International University.

James L. Haley: With the naval adventure novel Captain Putnam for the Republic of Texas safely in the bookstores, James L. Haley is teaming with his previous co-author Marilyn Duncan for Texas Women and the Law, which will be the fourth in their Taming Texas series for 7th graders, published by the Texas Supreme Court Historical Society and distributed free to schools by the Texas State Bar. Then--deep breath--he will spend the next year finally wrapping *Frontier Crucible: Society in the Republic and Antebellum Texas* for the University of Oklahoma Press.

Jan Seale: Has been participating in a project valuable to Texas and outside poets during the pandemic, the ongoing Texas Poetry Assignment headed by poet and professor Laurence Musgrove of Angelo State University. Zoom programs featuring individual poets as well as group readings have included suggested topics about the inauguration, the pandemic, early memories, summertime, witnesses, and other topics. Jan's poem, "Landfall," was included in *Odes and Elegies: Eco-Poetry from the Texas Gulf Coast* edited by Katherine Hoerth. Her poem, "The Roma Bluffs," will soon appear in *Viva Texas Rivers!* edited by Steven Davis and Sam Pfiester. In May, Jan did a reading in the Back Porch Chat series at Quinta Mazatlan Nature Center, using poems from her new book *PARTICULARS: poems of smallness* (Lamar University Literary Press.).



John Blair: My new poetry collection *The Art of Forgetting* will be out from Measure Press this August, & I've been the recent recipient of the 2021 Frost Prize in Poetry from the Robert Frost Foundation and the 2021 Rash Award in Poetry from Broad River Review.

Celeste Bedford Walker: May 8 and 9, and May 15 and 16. My play '*Greenwood: An American Dream Destroyed*' performed the Tulsa Performance Arts Center. (Clips from rehearsal of Tulsa production featured on BBC's coverage of Centennial events) **June 1.** Radio Interview with Priscilla Leder on Bookmarked Radio Show discussing plays "*Greenwood: An American Dream Destroyed* and "*Sassy Mamas.*" **June 15.** Panelist on the historical legacy of Tulsa Massacre and Juneteenth for CEO and employees of Bank of America, Cleveland OH. **June 17.** Karamu Theatre's production of "*Greenwood*" will premiere on PBS (regionally) and on multiple social media platforms. (Below, Celeste at Tulsa's Reconciliation Park for Centennial Commemoration activities, which include my play "*Greenwood: An American Dream Destroyed.*")



Marcia Daudistel: *Across the Border and Back: Music in the Big Bend* by Marcia Hatfield Daudistel with photographs by Bill Wright, has been delayed. The book was originally scheduled for a July release, but will now be released in February of 2022. Due to a hiring freeze, retirements and delays due to the pandemic, books appearing in A&M's spring/summer catalog have been delayed. The book is in design along with other books with photographs, art or illustrations. Books that are text only have been outsourced. Although disappointing, unfortunately this is the reality for many publishers now. I will see page proofs this fall, so it does move forward, slowly.

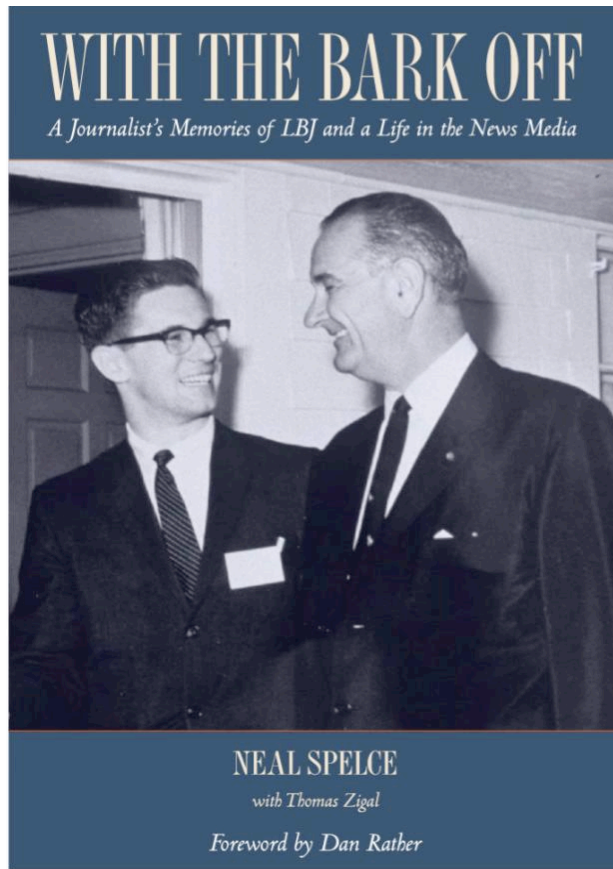
Naomi Shihab Nye: Has been invited to join the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, founded in 1780. Her book about trash, *Cast Away*, has been adopted as a summer read for kids in the UK and Canada.

Gene Fowler: Will kick off several months of live promotions for his new book, *Metro Music -- Celebrating a Century of the Trinity River Groove*, with a program at the Allen Public Library on Aug. 26. It will be archived on YouTube. The Frontier Times Museum will host Gene's illustrated talk on Dr. J. I. Lighthall, aka The Diamond King, at the American Legion Post in Bandera on October 21. Medicine showman and frontier fashionista, Lighthall died in San Antonio, days after his 30th birthday, in 1886.

His business card is exhibited in the museum. In a 1953 issue of *Frontier Times* magazine, J. Marvin Hunter wrote that people still remembered how "San Antonio was electrified" by this "strange individual" and his compelling performances on Military Plaza.



Tom Zigal : Assisted longtime Austin newsman Neal Spelce with Spelce's memoir – *With the Bark Off: A Journalist's Memories of LBJ and a Life in the News Media* – which will be published in September by the Briscoe Center for American History in partnership with UT Press. Dan Rather has written the foreword. An excerpt of the book appeared in Texas Monthly online in May, and another excerpt will appear in the summer issue of *Alcalde*, the alumni magazine of the University of Texas at Austin. Neal Spelce was a news reporter and TV anchor in Austin for more than 60 years. He is best known as the on-the-air reporter hunkered down behind KTBC's station wagon and reporting live from a CB-like radio microphone as the sniper rained bullets from the University of Texas Tower in August 1966. Zigal videotaped 40 hours of interviews with Spelce, much of it focused on the newsman's relationship with LBJ and Lady Bird Johnson. Spelce and Zigal crafted the memoir from those tapes and other sources.



William Jack Sibley: My third novel *"Here We Go Loop de Loop"* will be published in September (below). It was excerpted in the online *eMerge* chapbook and selected for the *eMerge 20th Anniversary collection of Best Works*. "Sibley's boisterous comic novel blends small-town satire and humanist warmth as it unspools its tales of isolated people learning to love. His prose is sharp and evocative." — **BOOKLIFE**. "Larry McMurtry meets *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This is Sibley's best yet." — **Steven L. Davis**. "His spectacular voice, his aptitude for creating instantly indelible characters in richly funny scenes, his perfect pacing and splendid particularity are dazzling and hypnotic." — **Naomi Shihab Nye**. "Wonderful example of generous escapism and a book to be recommended." -- **KIRKUS Reviews**

I also finished a new play *Rain/Princess Elizabeth/Malta* in Feb. and judged a comedy writing competition, "Humor Me" in March and am also included in the forthcoming book from the Wittliff Collection and Texas A&M, *VIVA TEXAS RIVERS!* www.williamjacksibley.com.



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