Faulkner Newsletter and Yoknapatawpha Review

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Lance P. Martin

Robert F. James

Joseph Zaitchik

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VI, No. 3

July-September 1996

cklist Expanded Irwin Work On New List

Burleson, Al. "Light in Oxford: Faulkner to Grisham, literature thrives here." The Huntsville Times, March 17, 1996, H-1. "A small joke in the sports department (of the Huntsville, Ala., newspaper) has always been to tell the one assigned to cover a ball game in Oxford (to) 'let some of the writing talent there rub off on you,' "Burleson writes. Burleson reports on John Grisham, Barry Hannah, Larry Brown, Willie Morris and others who have called Faulkner's Oxford home, and still other

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Fund Drive For Statue Is Launched

A drive for funds to make possible a life-size bronze statue of Faulkner planned for Courtsquare in Oxford is underway with early pledges by two banks.

Announced in Oxford have been pledges of \$5,000 each from First National Bank and Union Planters National Bank.

The statue is to be dedicated on September 25 of next year, the 100th anniversary of Faulkner's birth. It will be installed in front of City Hall, looking out over Courtsquare even as Faulkner would pause to do after checking for his mail when the building served as the Oxford Post Office.

Planned is a statue depicting Faulkner as he was in his mid-50s, following receipt of the Nobel Prize. It will portray the author in familiar hat and in tweed coat and khaki trousers, with pipe in hand.

Cost of the project is estimated at \$50,000.

Commissioned to do the statue through the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council has been sculptor William N. Beckwith of nearby Taylor, Miss.

Contributions to the fund drive may be made out to the William Faulkner Centennial Fund and mailed to the Fund at 107 Courthouse Square, Oxford, MS 38655. For particulars on the statue and the fund drive, call 601-232-2340.

Choosing Faux Faulkner Winners



A COFIELD PHOTO of Faulkner forms a backdrop at Elaine's Restaurant in New York on April Fool's Day as (from left) authors John Berendt, Tom Wicker, George Plimpton and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. choose the winners and runners-up in this year's Jack Daniel's Faux Faulkner Contest.

"Absaloon, Absaloon!" Wins 1996 Faux Faulkner for Lance Martin

Lance P. Martin, a New Orleans attorney, is the winner of the 1996 Jack Daniel's Faux Faulkner Contest with "Absaloon, Absaloon!," a Faulknerian-worthy tale of some strange goings-on in a place down in Jefferson, Miss., called the Spotted Horse Casino.

Martin was chosen winner during readings of finalist entries at an April 1 party at Elaine's Restaurant in New York.

Judging this year's contest were writers John Berendt, George Plimpton, Tom Wicker and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. Also present were Lynne Tolley of

Lynchburg, Tenn., great-grandniece of Jack Daniel, and Faux Faulkner coordinator Dean Faulkner Wells, Faulkner's niece and co-publisher with husband Larry Wells of *The Faulkner Newsletter*. Larry Wells served as master of ceremonies for the parody party.

Winning semi-finalist honors were Robert F. James of Vienna, Va., with "Santuary, sanctuary much," and Joseph Zaitchik of Wayland, Mass., with "Faulkner Answers His Critics."

Martin will read his winning entry on Sunday, July 28, at opening ceremonies of the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference at the University of Mississippi.

When Dean Wells telephoned Martin from Elaine's on a speaker phone to inform him that "Absaloon, Absaloon!" had won, an answering machine came on, eliciting a roar of laughter from media representatives present and who were waiting to hear the winner's response.

"I went to the gym and played basketball," Martin, 25, later explained. "I was too nervous to sit by the telephone and wait. When I came home and heard the message, I thought it was a cruel April Fool's joke at first."

A graduate of Springhill College and Tulane Law School, Martin began reading Faulkner only after finishing college. "I had read Joel Williamson's book (William Faulkner and Southern History, 1993) and that got me interested. I decided it was high time I read Faulkner."

Martin began with *The Sound and the Fury*. "I read half of it and put it down, thinking 'I'm a failure; I can't do it.' But eventually I came back to it. The second time, I picked up on what was going on."

Readings of other Faulkner novels followed, until Martin became totally immersed in Faulkner, he said. "I loved the language, the way it flowed, the



23rd Faulkner Conference Highlights

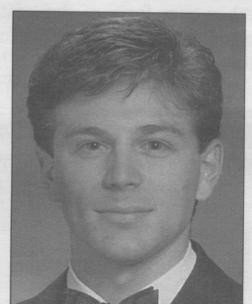
Scholars, critics and plain folk who just like to read William Faulkner will again converge on Faulkner's Oxford from most of the states and several foreign countries in late July for six days of lectures and other events expected to signal broader understanding and appreciation of the man and his work.

Theme for the 23rd annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference July 28 - August 2 at the University of Mississippi will be "Faulkner and the Natural World."

Joining the roster of scholars who will read formal papers pertaining to the "Natural World" theme since an advance notice on the conference in the last number of The Faulkner Newsletter has been William Kennedy, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the Albany cycle of novels, including Legs, Billy Phelan's Greatest Game, Ironweed, Quinn's Book, and The Flaming Corsage.

Other featured speakers during the week will include:

- Lawrence Buell, Harvard University; author of Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance; New England Literary Culture: From Revolution Through Renaissance; and The Environmental Imagination: Thoreauvian Writing and Its Ecocultural Significances.
- Mary Jo Dondlinger, author of a master's thesis on Faulkner at Arizona State University and forthcoming essays on Faulkner and Emily Dickinson.
- David Evans of Rutgers University, whose doctoral dissertation this year is on "Communities of Confidence: William Faulkner, William James, and the American Pragmatic Tradition."
- Myra Jehlen, Rutgers; author of Class and Character in Faulkner's South; American Incarnation: The Individual, the Nation, and the Continent; and the forthcoming Literatures of Colonization in English.
- A. Walton Litz, Princeton University; author of The Art of James Joyce; Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development; and Introspective Voyager: The Poetic Develop-



Lance P. Martin

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23rd Faulkner Conference

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ment of Wallace Stevens.

• Thomas L. McHaney, Georgia State University; author of William Faulkner's The Wild Palms: A Study and numerous essays on Faulkner and other Southern writers, and coeditor of William Faulkner Manuscripts.

• Wiley C. Prewitt Jr., an environmental historian who recently completed a permanent exhibition, "A History of Organized Wildlife Conservation," at the Museum of Natural Science in Jackson, Miss. Prewitt received a master's degree in history from Ole Miss in 1991.

• Diane Roberts, University of Alabama; author of Faulkner and Southern Womanhood and The Myth of Aunt Jemima: Representations of Race and Region.

• Theresa M. Towner, University of Texas at Dallas; author of essays on Faulkner, Toni Morrison and T. S. Eliot, and on gender and race.

• Jay Watson, University of Mississippi; author of Forensic Fictions: The Lawyer Figure in Faulkner and essays in Southern literature.

• Louise Westling, University of Oregon; author of works on Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers and Flannery O'Connor, and the forthcoming Green Breast of the New World: Landscape, Gender, and American Fiction.

A new tour of Faulkner's Mississippi, this one a day-long excursion to Columbus, Miss., will be on the program this summer along with six other tours that have been offered at past F&Y Conferences. Conference participants will choose between the Columbus visit and two tours of Oxford (one an overview, the other an architecture tour) or visits to New Albany and Ripley, Holly Springs, the Mississippi Delta, or Pontotoc.

The 1996 conference program will begin on Sunday, July 28, with a reception at University Museums for opening of an exhibition, "Sacred Space," a collection of Tom Rankin's photographs of the Mississippi Delta. Also on the opening day program will be dramatic readings from Faulkner's works, a buffet supper at the home of Dr. and Mrs. M. B. Howorth Jr., and the conference's first lecture that evening.

Other conference highlights will include sessions on "Teaching Faulkner," conducted by Robert W. Hamblin, Southeast Missouri State University; James B. Carothers, University of Kansas; Arlie Herron, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; and Charles A. Peek, University of Nebraska at Kearney. Scheduled also are discussions by Faulkner family members and townspeople, a slide presentation by Jimmy Faulkner, Faulkner's nephew, a Wednesday picnic on the lawn at Faulkner's home, Rowan Oak, and a

John Irwin Work Heads New Checklist

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Mississippi writers—Tennessee Williams, Eudora Welty, Richard Wright, Shelby Foote, Walker Percy, Richard Ford, Will Campbell, Ellen Gilchrist, and Cynthia Shearer, curator of Rowan Oak, whose first novel, The Wonder Book of the Air, was published in February by Pantheon Books. Burleson repeats the old joke that "Mississippians write more books than they read."

Irwin, John T. Doubling and Incest/ Repetition and Revenge: A Speculative Reading of Faulkner. Expanded edition. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. Irwin's acclaimed critical work on Faulkner has been in print since it was first published in 1975. This expanded edition contains two essays written by Irwin in the early 1990s, both related to the book's subject. The essays, delivered at the annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference at the University of Mississippi in 1990 and 1991, are "Knight's Gambit: Poe, Faulkner, and the Tradition of the Detective Story" and "Horace Benbow and the Myth of Narcissa." The former, Irwin writes in a Preface to this new edition, "examines Faulkner's self-conscious manipulation of detective story structures in the tradition originated by Poe's Dupin stories, an inquiry with implications

closing reception on Friday evening, August 2.

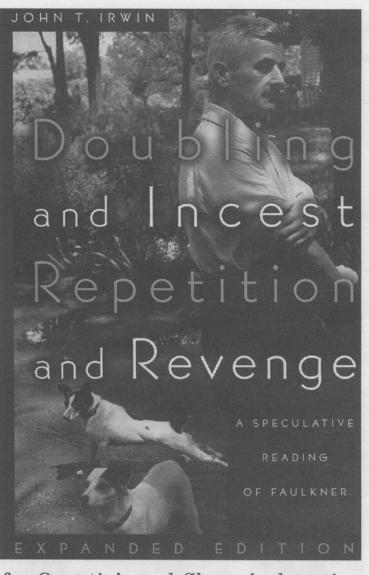
The University Press of Mississippi will again be exhibiting books about Faulkner, along with selected other works, published by UPM and other participating university presses throughout the country.

The Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference is sponsored by the Ole Miss Department of English and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, and coordinated by the University's Center for Public Service and Continuing Studies. For full particulars on the conference, including conference fees, registration, and lodging on-and-off-campus, contact the Center for Public Service and Continuing Studies at University, Miss. 38677, telephone 601-232-7282, fax 601-232-5138.

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for Quentin's and Shreve's detective work in Absalom, Absalom!" The latter essay "focuses on Horace Benbow as a transitional figure in the development of a single character structure whose earlier incarnation is Quentin Compson and whose later is Gavin Stevens, a character structure that forms the backbone of Faulkner's major fiction." The two essays have appeared, respectively, in The Arizona Quarterly and in American Literature, and were included also in the volumes of papers from the two F&Y Conferences, published by the University

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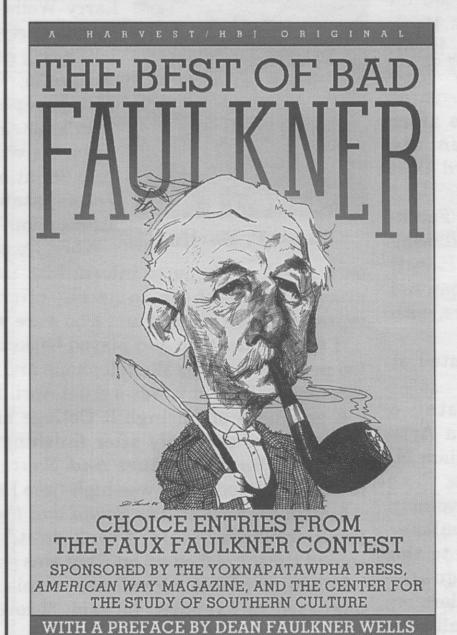
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Press of Mississippi. Doubling and Incest was Irwin's first book. "I still subscribe to the interpretation of Faulkner's fiction it contains, particularly where that interpretation has been expanded or modified by the two subsequent essays," Irwin writes. "I can only hope that in its new form the book will find a new generation of readers who, like myself, are admirers of our greatest modern American fiction writer." 245 pp. \$15.95.

PARODIES "POUNDED IN FURY"

Yoknapatawpha Press, co-sponsor of the Jack Daniel's Faux Faulkner Contest along with *The Faulkner Newsletter* and the University of Mississippi's Center for the Study of Southern Culture, is re-issuing the HBJ Books paperback edition of *The Best of Bad Faulkner*, edited by Dean Faulkner Wells.

This is Faulkner parody at its best: "As I Lay Dieting," "Abe's Saloon! Abe's Saloon!" "A Wal-Mart for Jefferson." The Best of Bad Faulkner brings together over forty of the best-of-bad entries, including a "Smokehouse" section with Faulkner parodies written by the likes of Peter DeVries, Shirley Jackson, Kenneth Tynan, Derek Willey, and "Ernest V. Trueblood," who is none other than William Faulkner himself.



Illustrated with well-known caricature sketches of the Nobel Laureate; preface by Dean Faulkner Wells; trade paper; 150 pages.

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Faux Faulkner Party



GATHERED TO TOAST FAULKNER at a parody party at Elaine's Restaurant in New York on April 1 were Lynne Tolley (standing at left), great-grandniece of Jack Daniel, and Dean Faulkner Wells, Faulkner's niece, and (seated, from left) Faux Faulkner judges John Berendt, Tom Wicker and George Plimpton.

JACK DANIEL'S FAUX FAULKNER CONTEST

How to Write Bad Faulkner

Start by reading Faulkner for at least ten years. The successful parodist will have absorbed Faulkner's style and syntax and have developed a feel for his dense sentence and paragraph structure. To attempt to imitate Faulkner without this knowledge is a lost cause. Contest semi-finalists usually select a Faulkner character and place him in a situation of their own devising, such as Flem Snopes selling Yugoslavian cars (Title: "Yugo Down, Moses"), or play to a single idea, such as making Benjy the "dummy" in a bridge game, or build up to a single famous line, such as Faulkner's self-parodying "Between scotch and nothing, I'll take scotch." (Jack Daniel would have loved that one!) Irreverent wit and humor are prerequisites but the parodist will be well-advised to serve up his concoction with a dash of humility and grace. After all, nobody writes like William Faulkner.

How to Enter the Contest

Send your typed, double-spaced manuscript (500-word limit) to: Faux Faulkner, The Faulkner Newsletter, P.O. Box 248, Oxford, MS 38655. Be sure to include a title for the entry, your name, address and phone number. If you wish confirmation of receipt, enclose a self-addressed postcard. By entering the contest, contestants automatically release publication and promotional rights to Jack Daniel's and The Faulkner Newsletter. The winner of the contest receives round-trip air fare for two to Oxford and complimentary registration and lodging for the annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference held each summer at the University of Mississippi. Deadline for the 1997 contest is Feb. 1, 1997.

The Judges

The Faux Faulkner Contest is now in its seventh year. Judges of the contest over the years have included John Berendt, John Grisham, Jack Hemingway, Barry Hannah, Willie Morris, George Plimpton, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Wallace Stegner, William Styron and Tom Wicker.

"Absaloon, Absaloon!" Wins 1996 Faux Faulkner for Lance Martin

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cadence, the rhythms. I've always been interested in history, and Faulkner is very perceptive in dealing with the history of the South, with race relations, the shared past, the Civil War."

A few weeks before the deadline for this year's contest, Martin read about Faux Faulkner in The Times Picayune, and the "parody devil" rose in him.

"I put off writing it until a few nights before it was due," he said. "You can't do much in 500 words, so I wrote one of those long (Faulknerian) sentences. The last book I had read was Big Woods, with its running commentary on history and geography and topography. The casino issue is very prevalent here in New Orleans, and I thought immediately of Sutpen's 'One Hundred Grand.' "

Faux Faulkner, now in its seventh year, is sponsored by Jack Daniel's in cooperation with the University of Mississippi's Center for the Study of Southern Culture and Yoknapatawpha Press and its Faulkner Newsletter.

Here now, the 1996 winner and runners-up:

"Absaloon, Absaloon!"

By LANCE P. MARTIN

Streaks of rainbow light and voices of ill-placed mirth emanated through the deep woods, piercing its teeming sanctum and illuminating tangled roots and ancient mounds (erected, occupied and foolishly thought owned by Indian settlers of old as if anyone could own or even tame these woods but long since vacated without so much as a trace of their existence save the names attending its topography, ghost names of long-vanished warriors, loosely fashioned on its devastated, weary soul) now trampled by a cacophonous crowd, townsfolk and hill dwellers, degenerates and socialites, gathered, commingled, amok within that once decrepit, crumbing, vine-addled and razed sepulcher of a madman's doomed vision, an edifice embodying all damnation and ruthless unchecked and violent pursuits some said the savagery and integument and bloody legacy festered still, almost materializing out of the dank, steamy mist if you paused breathless and looked carefully but no obstacle or even notice for the resources of Fox Snopes, the personification and even embodiment of the zeitgeist of his neighbors' congenital gullibility and fallibility (and who Miss Hotmeadow disdainfully referred to as equal parts Shylock, shyster, and pettifogger), as much a part of man as the peat moss and wisteria and cotton of that region rising promiscuously from that dark, fertile loam, and the deer, bear, and fox that waited each year in silent vigil for Major de Spain and his buddies, and so, with keen ratiocination and an eye to inveigle, vile alchemist that he was, resurrected phoenix-like from those stagnant and charred ashes, a garish monstrosity (some say with the help of a descendant of that same French architect HE hunted mercilessly through the unforgiving marsh), multi-leveled, pulsating, a throbbing, blinking beast, its bowels disgorging a cache of coins, chips, booze, cards, coaxing them through the big woods, lemmings drawn by its magnetic attraction, sucked into its sucker's vortex, past the once hallowed ground of those Indian mounds, into that dreaded arena of past blood spilt and mad ambition dashed, still permeating and seeping with punishment and retribution, yet tangibly extinct, disguised, no transformed with glimmering columns and arches, marble-glazed proticoes, gilded hallways and banisters, snakes of light slithering through its chambers and blinking chandeliers hanging sentinel over the greed and waste and the willing, unwitting exchange of commodities, the gesticulating servants crouched over the greedy felt tables, the hyperkinetic crowd pushing forward, eager and hungry, the tinkering machines, the maddening, furious, relentless

ching.

ching.

ching.

of the slots, ill-mannered and poorly-clad, scratching and clawing in their maddening effort to feed the behemoth's swollen belly, HIS terrible legend and horror transmogrified into this decadent mausoleum, and all the while, Snopes the mountebank, gleeful, glib, surveying his domain: the Spotted Horse Casino (although in the streets and alleys of Jefferson they called it Sutpen's 100 Grand).

And somewhere, beyond it all, far in the deep recesses of the brackish bog, faint yet immutably distinct, a human voice, howling.

"Sanctuary, sanctuary much"

By ROBERT F. JAMES

It was a summer of hysteria. The light in August was full of it and of an odor of verbena and the smell of fear. The angry crowd milled in the square, grave, austere, detached, charismatically challenged and desperate to get a life. They

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Faux Faulkner Finalists

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searched with blank, bleak eyes down the road leading south to Freshmen's Bend, where the university stood placid, indomitable, unprofitable. "We got to preserve order," said P. C. Grimm, addressing the now panting throng from the courthouse steps, a shameless savageness in his voice. "We must not let this new Snopes feller run roughshod over our groves of academe. He's got to be shown this town's not big enough for one more annual conference—and we, the thought police of Jefferson, are the ones to see to it!" A thunderous cheer went up. "First there was Flem Snopes. Then came Lump and Rush Limbaugh Snopes. Then Eck Snopes and Yuck Snopes. Then Truman and Ike Snopes. Then Wall Street Panic Snopes and Whitewater Investigation Snopes. Then Mink Snopes and Skunk Snopes. Now there's Hound Dog Snopes, and by God we have got to do somethin' about him!" Suddenly it was too late. "Get us some rope!" the crowd shouted, all insatiable, hot and bothered. "Sound the fire alarm!" Grimm shouted. "Sound the fire alarm!" The angry mob surged, out of the square, across the ditch, over the river and through the woods, onto the campus, in the conservatory with the rope by Colonel Mustard (his statue, granite, apparitionlike and unconquerable, erected circa 1873 by two sons not worthy to pass on the name). There on the stage they found Hound Dog Snopes, bejeweled, blowdryed, massively sideburned and jumpsuited in implacable undeviation of Bad Taste. As they pressed forward, they saw his head and waist glint simultaneously like the flash of a heliograph as a footlight struck the cheap aviator glasses and behemoth belt buckle. From its midst, Grimm plowed a path to the front of the crowd. "Go on back to Memphis and let our university alone!" he shouted, hurling a rotted tomato. Dodging the missile, Hound Dog lifted his microphone and spoke these words: This conference is not devoted to me as a man, but to my work—a life's work in the rock and the roll of the human spirit, not for glory and least of all profit, but to create out of country and rhythm and blues something which did not exist before. So this conference is only mine in trust. Our tragedy today is a general and universal fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There are only the questions: When did I die and how much did I weigh? Until we learn these things, we will attend conferences as though we stood and watched the end. I decline to accept my end. It is easy enough to say that I am immortal simply because I will endure: but when the last ding-dong has disappeared, the last ring-ding been eaten, the last ho-ho nibbled, the last twinkie consumed, there will still be one more sound, that of my inexhaustible voice, still singing "You can do anything, but stay off-a my blue suede shoes." Thankyou. Thankyouverymuch.



Faulkner Answers His Critics

By JOSEPH ZAITCHIK

then Yes. Parentheses demon-driven into parentheses into parentheses, flashback dispossessing flashback dispossessing flashback, straining within the "Non-Stop or Life-Sentence" (Fadiman, Clifton, New Yorker-New Yorker, more: "Anti-narrative, a set of complex devices used to keep the story from being told ... as if a child were to go to work on it with a pair of shears" and with him the damners and damners with faint praise, juxtaposed against the defenders and justifiers (Warren, Robert Penn, Southern-born and Southern-bred, seeing "the legend not merely the legend of the South ... but a legend of our general plight and problem ... a modern world in moral confusion"): the confusion, not the moral but apparent stylistic, but of necessity both, but attacked by Devoto, Bernard, as "mere bad writing"; not justified by Wilson, Edmund, regretting "an indolent taste and a negligent workmanship": but against these juxtaposed Warren and Aiken and Cowley, Malcolm (not relinquishing the burden of *The Portable Faulkner* (Viking, 1946))

and many but not myriad others seeing with lambent eyes and defending with sound and fury

he does it only when he has realized that even the despair or remorse or bereavement is not particularly important to the dark diceman ... and i i will never do that nobody knows what i know and he i think you'd better go on up to cambridge right away (and he, not he but he, more and more non-stop or life? and what's the point? and i up yours, you critic, all the way to cambridge!) Yes and more and more life and i not willing to repudiate the sentence and manumit the reader and sic the syntax and sic the punctuation

"Quentin." Mother said. Don't let"

and how else but *sic* when thought reversed and sentence reversed and who would dare a period?

and very sic As I Lay Dying, drawing the casket would you believe to economize on words? and Aiken, poetdefender bequething discovery:

"the whole elaborate method of deliberately withheld meaning ... to keep the form—and the idea—fluid and unfinished, still in motion ... and unknown, until

Paris Review To Publish "Absaloon, Absaloon!"

Lance P. Martin's winning entry in the 1996 Jack Daniel's Faux Faulkner Contest, "Absaloon, Absaloon!" will be published in *The Paris Review*, George Plimpton, founding editor, announced at the April 1 parody party at Elaine's Restaurant in New York at which the winner was chosen.

Plimpton, one of the Faux Faulkner judges, said the winner will appear alongside this year's winning entry in the International Imitation Hemingway Competition, sponsored by Harry's Bar & American Grill.

Plimpton cautioned, however, that the parodies of both Faulkner and Hemingway must maintain rigorous literary standards. The Paris Review expects to publish good Bad Faulkner and good Bad Hemingway, Plimpton said. "That is to say 'Bad Faulkner' and 'Bad Hemingway' in the proper spirit of things, but not 'Bad Bad Faulkner or Hemingway."

Richard Ford Wins PEN/Faulkner Award And Pulitzer Prize

Richard Ford's 1995 novel *Independence Day* (Knopf) has won the 1996 PEN/Faulkner Award after having earlier won this year's Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

Ford and four other nominees for the PEN/Faulkner Award were honored at ceremonies at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington on May 18.

The PEN/Faulkner, the largest annual juried prize for fiction in the U.S., carries a top prize of \$15,000, with the other four nominees each receiving \$5,000.

The other nominees are Madison Smartt Bell for All Souls' Rising (Pantheon); William H. Gass, The Tunnel (Knopf); Clair Messud, When the World Was Steady (Granta); and A. J. Verdelle, The Good Negress (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill).

Independence Day, Ford's fifth novel and sequel to The Sportswriter, continues the story of Frank Bascombe, now a 44-year-old real estate salesman in Haddam, N.J. The story takes place over a few days around Independence Day in 1988 as Bascombe deals with details of his life; his ex-wife; a rebellious 15-year-old son; an on-again, off-again girl-friend; reluctant clients; and his partner in a root beer stand operation.

the dropping into place of the very last syllable": disorder leading to order, but Yes necessitating a second and third reading, and not until then to be manumitted, not until then the lambent eyes relinquished from the myriad pages: and I in Stockholm

discovered that my doom, fate, was to keep on writing books ... while the blood and the glands and flesh still remained strong and potent, the heart and the imagination still remained undulled to follies and lusts and heroisms of men and women: so that you

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh... Yes. I see. I see now. That's how they do such, gain such. That's the rule. I see now. struggling through the ophidian jungle that is our shared human experience, may see the light, august intruder, unvanquished, and find that you too, even you too, have learned to endure.

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