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Writing a Book about Mississippi poet Hubert Creekmore (Summer 2022)

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**Mary Knight, Communications Specialist, UM Development,
wrote the life of Hubert Creekmore**

Hubert Creekmore, a native of Water Valley, Mississippi, was a closeted writer who moved to New York City in the late 1950s to escape the oppressive politics and intolerance of his home state. Creekmore, who died in a taxi cab on the way to JFK airport at age 59, is known for three novels and for being a Cold War poet. His life is was rich, albeit less known, as his Mississippi contemporaries William Faulkner and Eudora Welty.

My creative residency grant allowed me the time to focus on what type of biography of Creekmore I'd like to write and gave me the freedom to think big and boldly. After reviewing Jennifer Shapland's book on Carson McCullers and Ralph Eubanks' *A Place Like Mississippi*, I decided to create a book that is a mesh of biography, autobiography, and a pictorial essay on the Mississippi that shaped us both.

During my residency, I recorded my thoughts on various aspects of Creekmore's life that I find interesting, juxtaposed with my own experiences and observations on how things were and are today. I plan to include photos I took during the residency trip to Windsor Ruins that will show places of interest to Creekmore or myself and illustrate how each impacted us.

My residency cemented that, while creativity doesn't always come on a schedule, having a chance to center myself on this project did provide the creative space and momentum to get it moving forward. My goal is to have a manuscript outline to send to publishers by the end of the year.