

THIS ISSUE

George Brosi

The first new novel by Jayne Anne Phillips in nine years has been thoroughly trumpeted by the national literary media, and we are proud to include a pre-publication excerpt of this West Virginia author's new novel from Alfred A. Knopf in this issue and to make her our featured author. When I read her first novel, *Machine Dreams* in the mid-eighties, I'd never read anything that captured my father's World War II generation and my own Vietnam generation so well. I still haven't. Meredith Sue Willis is an ideal commentator on Phillips. Both writers are from the same generation, come from small West Virginia towns not far away, now live in nearby New Jersey cities and both are married to physicians. What a contrast between this proximity and the perspective of our other critic, Stéphanie Durrans, who has always lived across the ocean, but has many insights as well.

One of the most accomplished native authors and critics of regional literature died this fall. To have Sharon Hatfield write so powerfully of the life of Danny Miller in this issue helps ease the pain but cannot fill the void his passing leaves in our hearts.

One of the greatest thrills of working for a literary magazine occurs when a brand new author appears on the scene. Patsy Harmon's first book has made a terrific splash, and we're proud to include additional work by her in this issue. Our photographer, Tom Martin, has been taking unique and beautiful pictures for decades, but we believe that many of you will be enjoying his work for the first time as well.

This issue—with contributions from Loyal Jones, Gurney Norman and Joyce Brown, along with our constant companion, Sidney Saylor Farr—has a sterling line-up of old reliables. Hey, and how about our resurrecting Don Askins. Silas House doesn't belong with these seniors, but he qualifies as a star in our field despite his relative youth. And Julia Nunnally Duncan, like Silas, a native who has stayed put and written four books, has a strong following as well. Our other poets are proud new discoveries for us and we hope for you as well. Enjoy!