

ART ALIVE

White Water

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thin rubber web. Our guide explained how we would be perched on the inflated part of the raft only, that the center was too thin to hold our weight. His instructions gave the trip a sense of danger and I looked forward to when we would begin. I could see my father starting to look nervous, allowing my mother and sister to allay their own fears by teasing him.

Most of the trip was uneventful; it had not rained in weeks leaving the water low and the rapids unimpressive. The promised adventure was little more than a leisurely ride down a lazy river amusement park ride, the kind usually reserved for overweight grandparents. Luckily our guide kept everyone entertained. He realized early on my affinity for the water, wholly different from my sister's aversion to it. He spent much of the time jokingly pushing me over the side of the raft. After nearly half an hour of our innocent fun he gave me a mischievous wink.

"The secret." He said. "Is to grab at a person like ya mean to throw them over the side." Said as he performed the described action with me. "But then you surprise someone else by kickin em over the side." And he laughed as he kicked my sister into the water, she screamed as if he had just thrown her from a cliff, but my hysterical laughter drowned out her cries. I noticed my parents laughing as well, finally a fun memory we could share.

"I like the straight forward approach." My father said, laughing as he shoved our guide over backwards without warning. Our raft seemed to laugh with us as it rocked on the nearly calm water. Our laughter quickly subsided as our guide resurfaced, face down, his blood staining the water around him as it flowed from a deep gash in his head. We stared silently as the raft continued to rock. My sister began to scream in terror as the guide's blood surrounded her, she clawed at the side of the raft, desperate to escape the water. My mother hurriedly pulled her over the side as I jumped into the river. I wanted to save him, but I could see how the water played with his limbs like a puppeteer, how it kept the white of his skull cleansed of blood. As I swam closer, making my way through the blood, I hoped he would jump up to scare me, his eyes full of laughter.

I came out of my daze of the past, again feeling the bark at my back. Beside me I could hear my father muttering under his breath the same phrase repeated.

"It was just an accident. It was just an accident. It was just an accident..."

Poets

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ry I write the more I am inspired. I don't tend to write in the same place because I am so inspired by where I am. To write new things, I have to be in different places."

"I write whenever I have the time, although senioritis is a terrible disease," Ferrell said. "Any desk and chair will do."

In summing up the evening and the fruitful exchange of ideas as a mentor, Gibson shared a conversation she had with Carroll.

"I asked Rachel what she's gotten out of this and she shared that she is no longer writing for herself," Gibson said. "There is a dialog that you have with yourself as a poet and there's a lot that's internal. It is through this process of revision that you go out and connect to other people through the poetry."

"Think Globally, Act Locally"

Hairdresser's Saga

I'm in a funky mood, she says.

Hunches over the shampoo bowl,
works my head
into a Mango Madness lather,
locks in the shine with an icy rinse.

*Husband up 'n dosey doe'd
off with some bimbo.*

*Left three hungry young'uns.
Rent's due.*

Swallows black coffee, straight up.

Need your brows waxed.

Paints hot paraffin arches,
rips them off with a vengeance,
leaves a screaming radish
above each eye.

*Got a teenage daughter
out of control, actin' ugly,
like to trade 'er in.*

Scissors whirl around my head
in a weird ballet.

*Should we cut it all off
today hon?*

Valerie Macon

The Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poets Series originated in 2003 upon the advice of then North Carolina Poet Laureate Fred Chappell. It is named after Chappell and former NCPS president Marie Gilbert. The Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poet Series supports the mission of the North Carolina Poetry Society to foster reading, writing and the enjoyment of poetry across the state.