

# CALLAHAN COUNTY STAR SPOTLIGHT

## WRITERS, TEACHER & STUDENT SHOWCASE

(All submitters retain ownership)

# PREMIER EDITION

Submissions sought to:

Star

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com

S.A.S.E. for returns

--WANTED--

20 lines,

double spaced or less

Poetry

Fiction or Non

### Josh's Poem

I can't understand why,  
But I hear you  
In a bird's song  
In a seashell's wind,  
From a violin,  
When water falls  
You're all around,  
So warm and comfortable.  
I can't understand why  
I miss you most of all.

I can't say  
we would not have been inspired,  
but you made sure we were.  
I pause to wonder if  
It was destined to occur.  
And then I let it go,  
Because I'll never know.  
And even though you're gone,  
Your legacy of light is bright,  
As bright as the smile you left behind.

Sometimes life doesn't make sense,  
But I've learned so much  
From your life  
And your death.

-Lori Storts  
Dallas, Texas

### WINTER

A CHILL GREET'S THE MORNING LIGHT. The frost lies across the grassy meadow; it makes a crunchy sound under the feet upon walking to the creek to see the wonder of the ice as the sun comes up and causes sparkling magic upon the trees and grasses, as though fairies had used their magic wands to create a wonderland too beautiful to describe.

The realization that all this beauty ~just for a moment~ is for the eyes of the beholder makes the heart overflow with gratitude that this moment will reappear from time to time; thought it is as if it has been tucked away in a treasure chest of memories; and is a beauty too wonderful to forget.....

- By Johnnie Elma Anderson  
Midland, Texas

#### Coming Soon!

We will be printing on this page a calendar that will list contests, prizes, awards and calls for submissions. We hope it will help you, the writer have resources and contacts for the presentation of your work. If you have knowledge of such events that you thing would be a good entry for this section, please let us know, with the contact information.

Each entry with brief biographical notes. All must be family oriented; no smut, slander or liable material.

### Standing Alone

What they gonna feel  
When they really know  
That there's no right or wrong  
Only different ways to go.

And when the wind blows  
And they've all gone home  
I know I'll still be here  
Standing alone.

I'm feeling my way  
Around in this night  
Crawling on splintered hands  
And dirty knees.

I bump something  
Startled in silence  
And I ask why  
And please.

Then I see the light  
From your beautiful face  
And I know I was meant  
To find this place.

- Lori Storts  
Dallas, Texas

### Oh, What Trouble My First Hair Cut Caused

My brown curly hair had taken a long time to make its appearance. I was born with a lot of dark black hair but it soon fell out. I was bald and many people thought I was a boy until I was a year old. I was so happy when the hair came back in. As it grew it became brown and very curly. It grew longer and longer and I thought it was very pretty. I enjoyed playing in the sun and wind and the hair began to get broken or split ends and the color was changing from the constant sun. The shiny brown curls became a little dull.

One of Mother's cousins came to visit; she was a beauty operator and told Mother it would help my hair to trim the split ends. She would be happy to trim it for me. Grandmother thought this was a great idea. The beauty operator used a lot of patience as I was not used to being still very long at a time. Finally the cut was over and I was pleased when I looked in the mirror. My hair looked much better; I thanked her before she left our house.

Soon Daddy came home from work and the first words from his mouth were, "What happened to your hair?" He was very upset because his opinion was that no little girl needed to have her hair cut or even trimmed unless he gave his approval. Mother was shocked because she had never considered the grooming of the children were not her total responsibility. It was a little scary for me because I had never seen them upset with one another before.

They soon kissed and made up. I learned that communication between family members is very important. But I was very proud of my hair.

his songs "Time Changes Everything"... After the end of WWII our road system was gradually improved. Some roads were paved... others were graveled. Mz. Esther's Red Hill is still there. Mz. Esther's house is still there, but it's about to fall down. The yard is all grown up with weeds and brush. Mz. Esther has long since gone on to her heavenly reward. Daddy has been gone for a number of years now...and all his mules have gone for much longer than that.

There's still a road up Mz Esther's Red Hill but that road is now paved (FM2485). Nobody gets stuck on Mz Esther's Red Hill anymore.

## Thoughts on Literature

We sing all of the time. Some say we sing in our casual conversation. Over centuries we have come to categorize this as one aspect of poetry. We all have the music that we prefer to listen to, and much of that is poetry which we assign notes of pitch. The sounds we find in the combination of words are often so special that we designate it as poetry. Especially important are the words you or I as an individual, compose as being a very special expression of our ear. We enjoy the sound, notably when we make it. But, there is that other part of poetry or literary language that is just as important. It is the idea that is expressed. It is that notion that you or I have, that makes one leaf or one rock, different from any that has ever been written about. Both of these endeavors, the pursuit of beauty in sound, and the pursuit of beauty in thought, are what makes creative writing important to us as an individual, and important to us as a part of society and its culture.

Patrick Ready

### MZ ESTHER'S RED HILL

by Terry Keeling

We hated/dreaded/feared/respected that hill!

A few days ago, I passed by a car that was stuck in the ditch by the side of the road. He had pulled off too far and went down. You don't see that very often anymore.

This brought back memories of days gone by...when such a thing was common... particularly on Mz Esther's Red Hill. I remember one particular time when our phone rang and I answered it.

"Tell your daddy there's a car stuck over here on my hill. It slid off into the ditch and it looks like it's stuck pretty bad. He probably needs to bring his team of mules over here and pull it out. Can you remember to tell him?"

The year was 1944, and I was five years old-growing up on a farm in Leon County, Texas, about half way between Houston and Dallas. When the phone rang (three shorts - that was our ring.) Mother was right in the middle of taking the butter out of the churn and she asked me to answer it. I recognized Mz Esther's voice right off, and had a pretty good idea what she was calling about. It wasn't the first time I had taken one of her calls.

This time of year (January) it wasn't unusual at all for folks to get stuck on Mz

Esther's Red Hill. We didn't have any paved roads at that time...we didn't get the first one till several years later. Most of our roads didn't even have very much gravel on them...some of them didn't have any. When we had a lot of rain, the roads could get really, really bad. Sometimes they would be virtually impassable. Sometimes even the school bus couldn't get through.

#### Mz Esther's was The Worst One

Of all the bad roads in our community, however, there was one spot that was, without question, the absolute worst-Mz Esther's Red Hill. Located about a half mile south of our house, it was a long, steep red clay hill, and Mz Esther Wilmer lived at the very top...Hence the name - "Mz Esther's Red Hill". Except for the church and the school, this hill was probably the best known landmark in the entire community. There wasn't a person-adult or child-within five miles who wasn't familiar with Mz Esther's Red Hill... and it's reputation.

You seldom got bogged down on the hill itself, but it would get so slick, you would slide off into the ditch and couldn't get out. Mz Esther wasn't able to help any of the folks that got stuck, but she would call over to our house and tell Daddy he was needed.

**Daddy and His Mules:**  
Daddy would hitch up his

mules and go pull the vehicle out of the ditch. He had several mules but for this job, he usually used Jake an d Red, the two biggest, strongest mules he had. Daddy always responded when he was called. He usually didn't charge anything for this service, especially if it was a neighbor. There were certain priorities with regard to folks that got stuck on the hill. Number one on the list -without question - was Dr. Powell. If Dr. Powell got stuck, you got him out ASAP. He might be on his way to deliver a baby, treat a sick child, or something else equally as critical. Number Two on the list was the mail carrier- we called him the "mail rider" (a throwback to the days when the mail was delivered on horseback). He was our link to the outside world. I walked out to the barn and delivered Mz Esther's message to Daddy. He was busy fixing a broken spoke on a wagon wheel, but he stopped what he was doing, and walked toward the mule lot.

"I guess I better hook up Jake and Red and go over there and pull him out. You can go with me if you want to. Go tell your mother where you're going." This made my day. Maybe I would get to hold on to the lines and give commands to Jake and Red, just like Daddy did. They never paid any attention to me...but I pretended they did, just the same.

#### A Full Load in His Turtle Hull.

A few minutes later, we come in sight of the car in the ditch. Daddy frowned a little bit "That looks like Old Man George Jackson's car" he said. "If he's carrying a full load, we may have trouble pulling him out."

I had heard Old Man Jackson's name mentioned at times and had heard him described as the "Biggest Bootlegger in the Country"... but I wasn't read sure just what that meant. Old Man Jackson seemed to be kind o nervous and impatient as he reeted Daddy. The way his car was squatting low in the back, it looke like he had a heavy load of something in his turtlehill Sure enough, when Daddy hitched Jake and Red to the front bumper, they couldn't budge it.

"I guess I'll have to go back and get Blue and Pat," Daddy told me. "You stay here and hold Jake and Red till I get back." This was a job I could handle. I sort of hoped Old Man Jackson would talk to me a little bit, but he never said a word. He just kept walking back and forth, sort of nervous like.

It didn't take Daddy long to get back with Blue and Pat, and with the four mules hitched together, the car came out of the ditch pretty easy. Old Man Jackson didn't say much-he just thanked Daddy, mumbled something about "being late" and drove off in a hurry.

#### Who Was His Passenger?

Occasionally, there were other strange (and somewhat awkward) stories that unfolded on Mz Esther's Red Hill. There was one Saturday evening when a car got stuck there and the diver spent three hours trying to get it unstuck himself before he finally got up and asked for help. The reason for his reluctance soon became apparent. The lady with him definitely was not his wife. We never did hear whether or not his wife found out about his little problem.

**It Was Like a Real Person:** We tended to look at that hill as more than just an inanimate object. It was almost as if the hill had a life-a personality-of it's own. That hill was our enemy...it represented a threat to our mobility.

Someone planning their travel might be heard to remark "If I can just make it up to the top of Mz Esther's Red Hill, I'll be OK. I can make it on across Leon Prairie alright, and hit the Old San Antonio Roa and get on into Normangee." Folks would even call to get a report on the current condition of the hill "Well, it looks pretty slick" Mz Esther might report. "But Louis Miller made it all the way to the top about an hour ago. If it doesn't rain any more, you'll probably be OK."

CHANGES...  
As Bob Wills said in one