VOLUME 1/3

POEMS FROM THE THIRD ANNUAL ARTISTS THRIVE SUMMIT

JULY 30-AUGUST 2, 2019
BEREA, KENTUCKY

CHRIS GREEN
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We are all looking,
all trying to figure it out.

Lord knows how Mom afforded the classes.

Lord knows how old I was
or where my sister lurked.

Lord knows.

Now I’m calling my sister and Mom,
doing what families do,
remembering where
we were, why we went, and how we survived.

Returning decades later,
to the street justly renamed
Martin Luther King,
I am looking
for the building I dreamt within,

the warping windows
and the long wood staircase climbing
into the reaches. The front rooms dressed
with a thousand pictures;
red-smelling, paint-coated fingers;
darkrooms and fixer; bright spirals of string.
Colors rubbed thick on construction paper
burst through every surface.

Art waited there, coiled
in its magic lair.
Rubric

One (Campus, Berea, Ky.)

What a concoction, inciting
Incantation in this dangerous
Dance of soulplace, duende, and
Connection across divides
that we may rally
to the artists’ side, and
Help bring forth discovered-sight and
Make room for hands—
Hands chapped, hands warmed,
Hands torn, and hands held—and
Embrace this moment
of mixing our human doings:
Here a way to make a map,
Gauge the mountain trail, and
Discern the best plantings,
that we might gather, spirits
young and old, and
Light heart fires for the next day’s joyful work.

Two (Southland, Lexington, Ky.)

In a small house on the second street beyond
the fifty-year-old strip mall, lives a potter
who grows a garden, his garage flung with cups
and three tiered saucers waiting to be fired.

Through neighboring yards quick-torn with
cleat turns, riffs of memory cross sidewalks,
squirrels or strollers scrolling across them.
The soil has again, somehow flowed reefs
of grass-weed roots over concrete edges,
and where once roots buckled, its stream
now bends s-turns, lending joy to bikes and
skateboarders. Let our rubrics roll

though the neighborhood, canvassing women
who grew up on tobacco farms and
have outlived even cigarettes, going past
these flip-flopped shops: an arcade now
A+ Comics, a video store to Old Kentucky Chocolates, Hancock Fabrics to Bluegrass Youth Ballet, Kelly's Ice Cream to Ali Baba's Market Place, and Benedictus Books next to Unbridled Spirits and the Blinds Man with Southland Baber Shop outlasting all next to the upstart Cherry Seed Coffee, out to the shallow, once-stream storm-wash gullies that disappear underground, and the birds above whose calls measure the morning, and the coffee cups drivers hold, the quiet bars, the forgotten fields, long paved, now Shriners’ Temple.

When rains burst and karst waters rise, let the rubric carry all the languishing paper away beyond blurs—the kids will be soon be home from after-school practice at the School of Creative and Performing Arts.
Mountain Hand-Mind

Sketching in a notebook, her hand-mind weaves a mural dedicated to loss and youth, discovering the box of relics she carries, displayed in her hands. Allowed, shown, and encouraged, her drawings speak of her elven eyes whose clear banners catch the texture of spring forest flowers.

On the southeast flank of Black Mountain, that long ridge, rests Eolia, Cherokee Wind, where a man lifts images like river stones and builds echoes that reveal the world.

In the utmost eastern crook of Kentucky, grows a man who runs the ridges and streams, poems mating with his mouth and smoking him.

Over that mountain in Virginia come women three daring to explore routes for artists and memory in their coal bored region; their hearts fierce with loss and resolve, curing the plague of corruption and uncaring; sharp eyes and dark hair, aging parents, addicted uncles, returning to do the begetting that women do for families, for communities, called because their time has come to comb the hills and connect and give hope as we work our way out and find our way together from the labyrinth of raw resource plunder, prisons, and addiction, to believe in what people do and know and are capable of, the way they sing and sway, the way they preach and pray, the way they paint the glimmering morning.

Our aspiration? To help those who start the muddy path of art find their footing and pursue their spirit calling in society filled with desire and denials; to give them a way of lighting and making a path, of finding respect, belonging, of questing for common dignity, of finding faces in the wood, of embodying their bringing, their clarion calls and love.

For Lola, Jeff, Jacob, Melissa, McKenna, and Idalina
**My Head and Stay**

*Performed by Fanny (Sewanee) Begley*

*My head and stay is called away*
*And I am left alone;*
*My husband dear, who was so near,*
*Is fled away and gone.*

*It breaks my heart, ‘tis hard to part*
*With ones which are so near*
*Where shall I go to vent my woe*
*Or ease my troubled mind?*

*In wisdom’s ways may we spend our days,*
*Much comfort did we find.*
*My love is gone, in dust he lays,*
*And I am left behind.*

I transcribed these and the seven other lyrics in this collection from songs performed by members of the Begley family on October 1, 1937, in Leslie County at Hell for Certain, where the creek of the same name runs into the Middle Fork of Kentucky River, ten miles north of Hyden near the Perry County border.

Fanny (age 17), Clay (age 21), and Kenneth (age 25) are siblings; their cousins are Alice (age 17) and Lee (age 20). These determinations were made using the 1930 Census.

The songs were recorded by Alan Lomax and his wife Elizabeth Lyttleton Harold during their two-and-a-half month trip through ten Kentucky counties in the fall of 1937. In a letter to the Head of the Music Division at the Library of Congress, Lomax relates,

Leslie County is perhaps the most backward and the most isolated section of Kentucky. Until two years ago there were no roads into her county seat, Hyden, and it was only two months ago that the power companies finally brought electric power into the county . . . Last weekend I set out to drive from Pine Mountain Settlement School, just over the border from Leslie in Harlan, Kentucky, to Hyden, about thirty miles distant. I was two dusty days on the road.  

These Lomax recordings are part of the following holdings: Alan and Elizabeth Lomax Kentucky collection (AFC 1937/001), Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Digital recordings can be accessed by the “Lomax Kentucky Recordings <http://lomaxky.omeka.net/>”. The URL for each recording is footnoted.

Thanks to Sam Cole for sharing what she heard in three of these songs.

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1 [https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/687](https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/687)

2 Undated letter to Dr. Harold Spivacke, Head of the Music Division at the Library of Congress, quoted in the sleeve notes to *The Music of Kentucky, 1* (C.D., CD2013, Yazoo, 1995).
Willie Moore

Performed by Alice Begley

Willie Moore was a king, his age twenty-one
He courted a damsel fair;
her eyes was as bright as the sunset at night
And wavy black was her hair

He courted her both night and day
’Til to marry they both did agree;
When they came to see their parents at night,
They said this could never be.

She threw herself in Willie Moore’s arms
oftime she did before;
And not one time did he think that night
That Sweet Anna would he see no more.

Was about the tenth of June
That time we remember well;
In a little brook beside cottage door
The body of Sweet Anna was found

This song was composed by a man in west,
A man we may never see;
I would tell his name, but it would be in vain
His initials was ARD

Louisville Visual
Art ≡ UVA Wise,
Office of Economic
Development &
Engagement ≡
Good Ground ≡
Appalachian Artisan
Center ≡ United
Fine Arts Academy
≡ Virgil Bowlin &
Peerless Mountain
≡ DrummingWorks
≡ Chicago Artists
Coalition ≡ Coaltown
Dixie

https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/696
Song, Heritage, Dance

Throwing off desk and memo, they—the bassist, the soprano, the lead singer, the recent starter, the educated and trained, the long player—unleashed, for this night, the jazz standard, red-dress croon, piano-poise posture, the nest within which unwinding conversations rest.

What is it like to let out those notes and songs whose patterns rest deep in your lobes? Is it a rush? Is it a loss? Is it a time showing what you are, what you can be, what you have set aside?

Let what plays in the cabinet of our hearts surprise and delight each other; the tales of our paths and plights. Inside a celebration of trees, the shagbark hickories, white oaks, and black walnuts that grow high over secluded glens,

mother and daughter, daughter and mother, leap and heel clap, the fast-paced flat footing, Zoe’s dark, triangle dress and fiddle fielded against the quilt background of 143 solid tic-tack-toe squares whose shared white curves interlace against which dance now three women, as if they’ve just jumped on down, the third in black stomp-heels that clack with the torrent and flows, her red and black china poblana skirt weaving jarabe tapatío circles on the stage to the Latin drive of congas, Quechuan flutes, mandolins, and charangos, mate-mixing mountains in Nicaragua and Guatemala, Ecuador and Appalachia.

(...)

p7
Like how the student worker concentrated, small saw in hand, trimming the broom straw to even up the top of her hand-sized craftwork, a line of art advocates outside make brooms with sorghum straw imported from Mexico, local grown now being too costly to buy. I first heard of sorghum molasses when I lived in West Virginia where college students spoke of it as a half-forgotten, grand-parent tradition. Now I learn its first seeds were imported in the 1850s from China and South Africa and promoted as a rebellion against sugar cane to farmers who wanted sweetness and to make a little cash too, such that in forty years most mountain farms had a few acres. Though most older Appalachians remember it, few still harvest. But one seventy-year-old West Virginian, whose mother lived to a 100, remembers that “it was a big deal. When somebody was making molasses, the community came together“ to leaf and cut the cane, squeeze it in a horse-drawn mill, boil the juice, drain off the syrup, and enjoy seeing each other.

How long does heritage take? My father tickled my back, as his did, and I tickle my daughter’s. Now when I look stressed, she tickles mine.

Listen, listen! Let’s join hands and dance.

---


Liason

A necklace of shells, these tables array the room in beard and braid, with raised arms, sandals and toes, and, oh, those neon yellow shoes—voices and ears, sheens and tones, whose etymology fades beyond the known into this chance to meet and delve and work and dare to connect and emerge and surge into forms that discern shifts and dawning paradigms. Glasses and earrings such as you’ve never seen!
**Out to Leslie County**

Thrive went on down to Hyden,  
some music there to meet;  
Yeah, we went on down to Hyden  
some Bluegrass makers to greet  
and get all gloried in their sound.

From rural and urban South Carolina and Pennsylvania;  
from Louisville, Brooklyn, and Atlanta;  
from Cornell and Queens;  
From West Virginia, Ohio, Montana, Vermont and Alaska;  
from Birmingham and Providence—  
We came,

We artists-activists, administrators, community creators,  
We actors, poets, fiber artists, painters, sculptors,  
We NGO CEOs and professors,  
We came  
cultivating mindfulness and awe,  
bussing it on out to Hyden  
in Leslie County, carved  
as if from the great old forest—  
no wagon road until the 1880s,  
its iron and timber riding the tides  
of the middle fork of the Kentucky.  
First paved roads in 1932.

“In the heart of the Kentucky  
mountain region the physiography  
is rough and rugged, with unsurpassed  
scenery and with a veritable maze  
of high winding ridges with very steep  
slopes and deep, narrow, meandering  
gorges, in many sections deeply  
forested. The county is probably rich  
in coal, gas, and oil, but these resources  
have remained practically undeveloped:  
the county has no rail and in fact few  
facilities for transportation. Archeologically  
Leslie County has never been investigated.”

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The Great Reaping Day
Performed by Fanny (Sewanee) Begley and Edna Feltner

There is coming a day when to judgement we’ll go,
There to reap as in life we’ve sown;
Death eternal we’ll reap if you sow to the flesh,
Heaven’s joy then will never be known.

May we sow the righteous seed for the reaping,
Which is coming to everyone!
Oh, the joy on that day when we hear Jesus say,
“Come ye blessed, a crown you have won!”

If we win life eternal, there’s no time to lose—
Look around you, the fields are white.
Go yea forth to the fields, go and reap golden grain,
Soon will fall all the dark shadow of night.

May we sow righteous seed for the reaping,
Which is coming to everyone!
Oh, the joy on that day when we hear Jesus say,
“Come ye blessed, a crown you have won!”

Every day passing by, you are sowing a seed—
Fruits of life or of death will bear.
When you reap what you sow, to that land may you go,
To that bright happy home over there!

May we sow righteous seed for the reaping,
Which is coming to everyone!
Oh, the joy on that day when we hear Jesus say,
“Come ye blessed, a crown you have won!”

Every act you perform is a seed to someone
For the influence will never die
Then be careful each day what you do, what you say
For you’ll meet it again, by and by

May we sow righteous seed for the reaping,
Which is coming to everyone.
Oh what joy on that day when we hear Jesus say,
“Come ye blessed, a crown you have won.”

7 https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/699
The Moonshiner Song

Performed by Kenneth (K. D.) Begley

Moonshining, moonshining,  
I’ve been for seven long years.  
I have spent all of my money  
for car whiskey and beer.

I go up to my hollow; I put up my still.  
I make you a gallon for a two-dollar bill.

I go to the drug store, I drink with my friends.  
No woman to follow to see what I spend.

No children to squeal and squall—  
if you ever want to live happy, don’t marry at all.

Start loving pretty women,  
I wish that they were mine.

Their breath smells so sweetly,  
like that good ole moonshine.

They give you their best milk  
So sweetly like the dew on the vine.

I’d rather live up some dark hollow  
Where the sun may never shine  
Than for you to be another man’s woman  
When you promised that you’d be mine.

---

8This recording seems to be two songs, both of which are transcribed here.  
https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/686
In nineteen thirty-five, the WPA brought Hyden High School into being, whose basketball court, Dean Osborne explains, now hosts a five hundred seat auditorium and the Kentucky School of Bluegrass & Traditional Music,

Dean’s brain child first born in 2005 from a hard-won fight, earning support from federal congressional representatives, state community college systems, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Dean shows us how hope is done and grown with a low-cost, two-year “program [that] prepares individuals for careers as independent studio artists & business owners designers, performers & studio technicians.”

During our tour in one of the sound booths, Artists Thrive! visitors envision a recording rebellion: Hoong Yee shares that her high school gym class in Queens had 95 people, over a fourth of Hyden’s whole population; and in a listening room that holds three thousand albums, neatly stacked, in open wooden boxes, I imagine Lu Aya, co-creator of the Bronx based Peace Poets “a family born of Hip Hop, heart, and hope,” recalling the start of his own song work.

Soon Bobby Osborne, Dean’s elderly uncle in a bright red shirt, leads his school of twenty mix-aged summer mandolin students to play for us and then he cuts loose, too.

They brandish hope against the depleting lies of a coal-only economy, which didn’t start in Leslie until 1940, its people having to migrate to more easily accessed and exploited coal counties before.

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Dream of a Miner’s Child

Performed by Fanny (Sewanee) Begley

A miner was leaving his home for his work,
He heard his little child scream.
He went to the side of his little girl’s bed,
“Dear Daddy, I’ve had such a dream!

Dear Daddy, don’t work in the mines today,
For dreams so often come true.
Dear Daddy, my daddy don’t go away,
I never could live without you.

I dreamed the mines were all streaming with fire,
The men all fought for their lives.
Just then, the scene kept changing at the mouth of the mine
Was covered in sweet hearts and wives.

Dear Daddy, don’t work in the mines today,
For dreams so often come true.
Dear Daddy, my daddy don’t go away
I never could live without you.

Go down to the village and tell all your friends
That sure as the bright stars to shine,
That something’s going to happen today:
Dear Daddy don’t work in the mine!

https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/687
Let’s talk exile and hope. Let’s talk creation.

In ‘31, Bobby was born in Thousandsticks (through which the Hal Rogers Parkway now runs), a bottomland four mountain miles outside Hyden where no car could go. His dad taught school and the family raised a big garden and lived close to the land, until his dad uprooted the family just before World War II to head to Dayton, Ohio, to work for the National Cash Register factory that’d keep his boys far from coal.

What’s a boy to do new in a city with electricity and running water? His fingers ripe with fiddle tunes and his guitar shoulder slung, he heads to Middletown, gets on WPFB Barn Dance Radio, is piped around the nation, rides the zip and zing of bluegrass—that hot new thing—and takes up the mandolin, finds himself drafted to the Marines, serves in Korean mountain combat for two years, returns in ‘53, with “medals and decorations,” and carries on with all the bluegrass rage, the Osborne Brothers’ first hit, “Ruby, Are You Mad at Your Man” quick climbs the charts in ‘56, Bobby’s high-lonesome tenor leading the charge.

They’d run, Detroit to Wheeling, Cincinnati and beyond, becoming the first bluegrass band to play at a college—Antioch, 1960—and break out 23 albums in 22 years, forming the bluegrass musician’s-musician “countrypolitan” bedrock for waters that now flow worldwide, like in Tokyo where a joint called “Rocky Top” (after that Osborne Brothers recording) reinvents blue for an island country crazy for that grassy sizzle.

After the Brothers’ outburst, they remained connected with Leslie even as mountaintop removal and union busting were revving up to destroy the mountain working class again. In ‘93 they started the Osborne Brothers Hometown Festival—the first year having just two bands for an afternoon,

then Boom, Boom, Boom, Down the Mountains . .

(...)

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Acres & Percentage of Leslie Country Surface Mined

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>4,539</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3,858</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>5,468</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8,126</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8,537</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10,199</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>8,853</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
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</tbody>
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... Came, with almost a fifth the county destroyed by MTR.

Things get light, and things grow dark, like with the Frontier Nursing Service that in 1925 started in Leslie: nurses rode creek routes on horses to serve the women and families in ten mountain counties. By 1989 they had treated “90,000 people and assisted at 22,247 births.” Renamed the Frontier Nursing University, in 2018 FNU awarded 285 people degrees in Nurse Midwifery and 324 people became Nurse Family Practitioners and 30 more Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioners, more students than ever, numbers jumping each year, its mission being to “prepare competent, entrepreneurial, ethical, and compassionate leaders in primary care to serve all individuals with an emphasis on women and families in diverse, rural, and underserved populations” — So FNU is moving its campus right outside Lexington, because, as FNU President Stone...

explains, “[C]hange is necessary in order to keep up with the increased demand for quality health care, grow enrollment at FNU and meet the needs of our students.”

Thus, FNU purchased the rundown “67-acre campus in . . . the former United Methodist Children’s Home” and is abandoning Leslie County to be part of the medical hub in Lexington with much lower costs for IT and classes. Better to be just 6.5 highway miles down the way from the Bluegrass airport and near Keeneland, a racecourse that “was born” in 1936 from the “desire” of Lexington “horsemen . . . “to breed, race, and improve the stock of thoroughbreds” —that heritage horse farm handed down to a revolutionary brigadier.

From a 1861 property map, including land that now holds Keeneland and the new FNU Campus. Slave totals are not listed. https://www.loc.gov/item/2011588004/
Darling Corey 21
Performed by Clay Begley

Wake up, wake up, darling Corey!
What makes you sleep so sound?
I hear those marshals are coming
For to tear your steel house down.

Get up, get up, darling Corey!
Get up and get your gun.
Get up, get up, darling Corey,
For trouble has just found a gun.

Last time I seen darling Corey
He was standing in the door
Shoes and stockings in her hands
Feet on the floor

21 https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/688
In the Pines

Performed by Kenneth (K. D.) Begley

Through the pines, through the pines,
Where the sun never shines,
Don’t shiver when the cold wind blows.

The longest train that I ever saw
was the day I left my home.
The day that I left my darling girl,
was the day I left my home.

Look up, look down this lonesome road,
Hang down your head and cry.
True love, true love don’t lie to me,
Tell me where you stayed so long.

I stayed to the pines, where no sun never shines,
Those shivers where the cold wind blows.

22 https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/694
general’s great-great-grandson, whose great-grandmother owned 31 slaves in 1860,\(^{23}\) much like other of Keeneland’s heralding horsemen whose family farms had been (and are) attended by people in the hamlets of Frogtown, Slickaway, and Little Georgetown, first founded by ex-enslaved and freed people, whose land, over the years, has been bought away and is now some of the most costly in the county.

I know this is reductive, I know I’m missing facts, but I’m angry at history, I’m angry at Frontier, I’m angry that my father and grandfather took me to the races at Keeneland, which was one of the beloved places in my childhood, and I’m angry that I want to go back, and that I know this history, and that wealth and prestige and cost are what it seems to all be about.

I’m angry that Leslie County, starting as fully and firmly Republican—tossed together just after Reconstruction in 1878 from the back-country scraps of three mountain counties—still votes Republican, with 89% of votes going to t-Rump in 2016, bless their hearts, even as their lives are riven by addiction and extraction.

Once 90% old growth forest, from 1940 to 2014, over two-hundred & ninety-four million tons of coal was wrenched\(^{24}\) enough for over eight-hundred and twenty-six billion 100-watt light bulbs, to burn all day and night for year, or just 67 days of powering our whole fucking nation—\(^{25}\)


\(^{24}\) Data derived from the Kentucky Geological Survey.

A Few More Days in Sorrow

Performed by Fanny (Sewanee) Begley and Lee Begley

A few more days in sorrow,
A few more days in pain,
A few more days in sorrow
’till I meet mother again.

I’ll ne’er forget that morning
Mother called me to her bed.
Threw her loving arms around me
And this is what she said,

“My darling I must leave you
But you won’t be left alone.
Just put your trust in Jesus
And an angel will carry you home.”

I’ll ne’er forget that morning
Mother lied beneath the sod
My heart was almost broken
But I put my trust in God.

A few more days in sorrow,
A few more days in pain,
A few more days in sorrow
’till I meet brother again.

I’ll ne’er forget that morning
Brother called me to his bed.
Threw his loving arms around me
And this is what he said,

“My darling I must leave you
But you won’t be left alone.
Just put your trust in Jesus
And an angel will carry you home.”

I’ll ne’er forget that morning
Brother lied beneath the sod.
My heart was almost broken
But I put my trust in God.

A few more days in sorrow,
A few more days in pain.
A few more days in sorrow
Until I meet my sister again.

(*...*)

26 https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/708

p21
but did anyone in Leslie have the capital to invest, to buy the industrial, human-hours, and transport power, let alone the property value and taxes and law firms to lay waste to the land they love?

Give me a rubric that reveals how to value artists, Give me a rubric to help us find community and commonality,

The students I teach from eastern Kentucky and West Virginia coal counties have families who have worked and loved and lost and suffered and suffered.

Did you know a tenth of Leslie Countians (97% white) have left in the last ten years to seek “opportunity”? That only 38% of people there 16 years old and older are in the work force (compared to 63% nationwide) and how it still has over twice the nation’s unemployment rate, with per-capita market income being one third of the nation’s, with a third of its citizens in poverty? Or that 42% of adults are obese, with only a fifth as many doctors as the average in our fare county, and with all that in mind—if not in heart,

for we have not dwelt with the faces, imagined the lives, their joys or pains, their hope and griefs—let’s now recall what it means to hold

(...)

p22
up art and
Bluegrass
and mandolins and
sing and stand and gather
past the twilight
with the mountain forest,
and learn what it means for us,
—in our full weird, joyful-serious-vigor—
and process our day as we sit
scattered along the sides of
the celebration’s grand pavilion
crowded with wrinkled white-faces
in close-knit clumps of collapsible
canvas chairs, quiet except for applause.
(What did they, or we,
feel with this infusion?
Affirmation and fear,
embrace and distance,
joy and suspicion?)

Now contemplate the work
of the tidy young performers and Bobby
in his 88 years of poise,
mandolin at the ready,
a graceful red shirt
embracing his old-man belly,
laying it out before an audience of four-hundred folks
at the Osborne Brothers 26th Hometown Festival—
the Kentucky’s quiet Middle Fork close by,
mountains, rich with evening, ringing round.
I am Just as Rich as You  
Performed by Alice Begley and Clay Begley

You may live in a mansion and ride in a limousine,
Sit on thrones of splendor and visit kings and queens,
but death it will end your pleasure if to God you’ve been untrue.
I’m on my way to heaven, I’m just as rich as you.

I’m just as rich as you, I have a mansion too.
John went without Jesus, for the love beyond the blue.
Father owns it all, the earth and heaven too.
I have a crown awaiting, I’m just as rich as you.

≋ BridgeValley Community & Technical College
≋ Salt Creek ≋ South Carolina Arts Commission
≋ Larry Efaw and the Bluegrass Mountaineers ≋ Tamarack Foundation for the Arts
≋ Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts

27 https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/705
Seas & Shores (For Edwige)

We sat together under the great, unwalled pavilion, the mountains rising up around the Middle Fork of the Kentucky River. open
We—one born in Paris, France, the other in Lexington, KY; one art-trained in Portland, ME, one in Bloomington, IN; one thirty, one fifty years old; one black, one white—settled on the outskirts of a pool of gray-haired white faces.
I can’t say how the conversation unwrapped, but that it opened and dilemmas were shared the path from art to seeing art as action, as a tool of discovery and recovery for each and every person to express desire and love and loss and connections to their communal whole. Edwige, a season after parting, your story called to me, so I searched the internet and learned.

leaves and water,
a place of bones
away from words,
where truths trail
and spin, the trust
of stories wave-cast
upon the shore,
the flash of foam
settled from the sea,
smells of ruptured
coasts, sky-deep
herd of surging
spirit arms, flocks
outstretching,
not sundered
but streaming through
dreams close enough
to glimpse, too far
to recall, to touch,
but on their winds
we sing and sail,
shadows of water
held high into the blue
still of the night
and the moon.

(...)

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Note Derived from <http://www.edwigecharlot.com/about>:

“From installation, collage, and printmaking to create hybrid works, plants motifs have become the means in which Charlot grapples with identity and culture. With plants, each species, rich with its own specificity and distinction, like the cultures of the past and present, she creates a space for something new, a visual creole, blending and mixing mediums and techniques.”
Who would have guessed

a child who failed hand-writing,  
who could not say “r” or “l”, turning  
“world” into “woowd,”  
and was in speech therapy for six years,  

Who would have guessed  
this child who could not spell and still cannot,  
who took basic grammar his senior year,  

Who would have guessed  
that he would find a home in a lair  
of words and images,  
a home in the beauty of human consciousness,  
in the human need to discover and surprise, to make  
and create?  
I mean, of course.  
Of course.  
Of course.  
How easily  
we are shaped  
by what we are allowed to love.
**BIOGRAPHY**

*Chris Green* is always figuring out where, what, and who he is. He currently directs the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center at Berea College, where he is also an associate professor of Appalachian Studies. Chris is author of *Rushlight: Poems* and *The Social Life of Poetry: Appalachia, Race, and Radical Modernism*, which won the Weatherford Award for the best non-fiction book about southern Appalachia. He has also edited *Coal: A Poetry Anthology* and co-edited *Radicalism in the South Since Reconstruction*, a collection of essays. His most recent scholarly work is a co-written chapter called “Writing Appalachia: Intersections, Missed Collections, and Future Work.” Over the last decade, Chris has written about 1,000 poems in the haikai tradition as actualized through his position as a white, male, Buddhist professor living in Huntington, West Virginia, and Berea, Kentucky.
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POEMS
FROM THE THIRD ANNUAL
ARTISTS THRIVE SUMMIT

CHRIS GREEN