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Monuments

are odd things. In the case of our fair city, there is an entire boulevard flanked by Gilded Age homes that were constructed around larger-than-life statues of Civil War leaders, men who fought for the Lost Cause. Tom Robbins called it the “avenue of dead loser soldiers.” Yet there are still those who revere these men more than a century and a half after they were defeated and brought back into the fold of the Republic. Two Richmonders—spouses Anna Edwards and Phil Wilayto—have been at work for more than a decade to create a sort of monument that will pay homage to the enslaved people of African descent who were treated with such persistent cruelty it is almost unimaginable. *continued on page 12*

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COVER ILLUSTRATION by CATHERINE MCGUIGAN

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VCUarts and VCUarts Qatar to Present Leading International Conference on Islamic Art



Afrikan Boy, photograph by Hassan Hajjaj, 2013.

THIRTEEN OF THE leading scholars, curators and artists of Islamic art and architecture from around the world will present their latest research at the seventh Biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art, November 2 through 4, at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Hosted by the Virginia Commonwealth University's School of the Arts, and VCUarts Qatar in partnership with the Qatar Foundation, "Islamic Art: Past, Present and Future" will include a number of presentations addressing how Islamic art engages with contemporary politics, global capi-

talism, gender, religion and history, and how Western museums have approached collecting and curating the arts of the Islamic world.

"We are delighted to host the Hamad bin Khalifa symposium in Richmond this year," says James Frazier, interim dean of VCUarts. "The symposium is widely considered the preeminent conference on Islamic art and culture, and we are thrilled that our students, faculty and broader community in Richmond will have the opportunity to directly participate in the rich, cross-cultural dialogue led by our Doha campus. The symposia support our mission to advance teaching and learning across the university, and we are grateful to the Qatar Foundation

for supporting us in driving the international exchange of ideas and establishing a common ground through the arts."

Opening remarks will be delivered by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, chair of Qatar Museums, Doha Film Institute and Qatar Leadership, and a leading proponent of the arts as a catalyst for education, dialogue and exchange. She has become known internationally as the progressive force behind Qatar's mission to be the Middle East's foremost destination for the arts and culture.

Following the opening remarks, a keynote address will be given by the contemporary artist Lalla Essaydi, whose work often combines Islamic calligraphy with representations of the female form to address the complex realities of Arab female identity from the unique perspective of intimate, personal experience. Essaydi's work is held in the collections of a number of museums including the Louvre, the British Museum and the Harvard Art Museums.

The Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art is organized by Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom who have shared the Hamad Bin Khalifa Endowed Chair of Islamic Art at VCU since its establishment in 2006.

"The Hamad bin Khalifa symposia are remarkable in bringing together leading experts who present their cutting-edge work in accessible ways," Blair said. "This year's speakers are particularly notable for their wide range of experiences from the practical to the theoretical."

In its 13-year history, the symposium has been held in cities around the world that play significant roles in Islamic history. Past symposia were held in Doha, Qatar; Córdoba, Spain; Palermo, Italy.

In coordination with the symposium, up to 10 additional scholars of Islamic art from around the world will be awarded Hamad bin Khalifa Travel Fellowships. The fellowships support travel expenses for these scholars to attend the symposium as well as invitations to special events at which they will have a chance to connect with symposium presenters.

Nature Inspired Art by Luke Fleischman at Stir Crazy



Luke Fleischman hangs his work at Stir Crazy.

On display at Stir Crazy Café through July, an array of cut, welded and painted steel artwork by Luke Fleischman. Luke grew up in Powhatan and Goochland counties, the fourth of ten children, and his mother Jinny was an accomplished artist and always encouraged her children in pursuing the arts.



A decade ago, Luke retired as guidance director at Maggie L. Walker Governor's School. While he had dabbled over the years with freelance projects and illustrating two children's books, it wasn't until after his retirement that he discovered a new medium—sheet steel. He and his wife Catherine currently live in an 18th century home in rural Cumberland County Virginia, and he finds constant inspiration in the flora and fauna that surround him. **NJ**

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Lakeside Farmers' Market Celebrating Ten Years

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

DROP BY LAKESIDE Farmers' Market any Wednesday or Saturday, and chances are you'll find owners Sharon and Peter Francisco, mingling with customers and vendors; or you might find them seated in a couple of chairs next to the gently rotating water wheel, soothing as a Zen lullaby.

"It's a milestone to have ten seasons of the market behind us," says Sharon on a recent Saturday morning. Just behind us, a red-haired girl starts playing the fiddle, mainly Irish airs, and she's really good.

Sharon explains why she and her husband Peter, who sits in the chair next to hers, decided to open the market a decade ago. "We started it because we felt that it was a good catalyst for revitalization," she says. "We started at about the time Short Pump Town Center and Stony Point were starting, and we were afraid Lakeside might be left behind. This was another way to bring customers to the retail area and also to provide food for the community."

She points out that when Martin's closes at Brook Run Shopping Center this summer, Northsiders will have fewer options for grocery shopping. "We're going to actually be in a food desert here," she says. "We're not going to have grocery stores, so we hope that more and more people will come to the market because of that."

And you can purchase everything you need for your party and table at this farmers' market, either under the outdoor pavilion, or at Lakeside Farmers' Market Too, which is located inside the Town Centre. Some twenty to thirty vendors, depending on the time of year, offer a complete range of vegetables, fruit, preserves, honey, dairy products, (including ice cream) chips, nuts, meat, poultry and fish. Even goat milk soap and fresh cut flowers. What's more, unlike most products at big box grocery stores, the offerings at Lakeside Farmers' Market are locally produced, and in many cases, fresh as yesterday.

Some of the produce is so local that there is no carbon footprint left be-



Peter and Sharon Francisco.

hind at all, no fossil fuels burned to transport it here. About the only evidence are human footprints on the asphalt, because this farm is a scant 272 feet from the market. Kyle Anderber grows a whole assortment of produce on an acre-parcel directly behind the farmers' market.

"It's called Lakeside's Tiny Acre," says Sharon. "Kyle's worked with urban farming, and he's very knowledgeable and he uses only organic practices. He actually lets people go back there and see what he's doing. He has a greenhouse that he does some of the early



plants in." Even the compost he uses is part of an essay in sustainability. Tony Ammendolia, owner of Lakeside's award-winning craft brewery, gives the spent hops and grains, once a batch is brewed, to Kyle who uses it in his compost. So much of the Farmers' Market is about sustainability, a local effort that helps the nation resist a president who has idiotically backed us out of the Paris Agreement.

The market is open nine till three on Wednesdays, and from eight to noon on Saturdays. And the crowds have grown steadily. It's not unusual for a thousand people to come to the market on Saturdays. "Some of our customers have been with us since the beginning, but we see a lot of new faces every week," Sharon says. "We like to see the community coming together. It's really for all of Northside, and Peter and I grew up in the Northside. I grew up on Avondale in Bellevue and taught at Ginter Park School. Peter grew up on Seminary. And we still belong to Christ Ascension Episcopal Church."

Sharon's husband, Peter, has been actively involved in the rebirth of Lakeside for decades. He and his wife, both visionaries, saw the establishment of the Lakeside Farmers' Market as a perfect draw for the business corridor

known as Lakeside Avenue. And the Franciscos anted up.

"The land and the structure cost about half a million dollars," Peter tells me. "At the time we built, as Sharon said, Stony Point and Short Pump Town Center were coming up, and every bit of attention was put on those places. Lakeside is a shopping district that could have been easily forgotten, and now we're known as a place to go to find certain things and the community comes here to shop. We not only have the market, but we have over a hundred independently owned businesses."

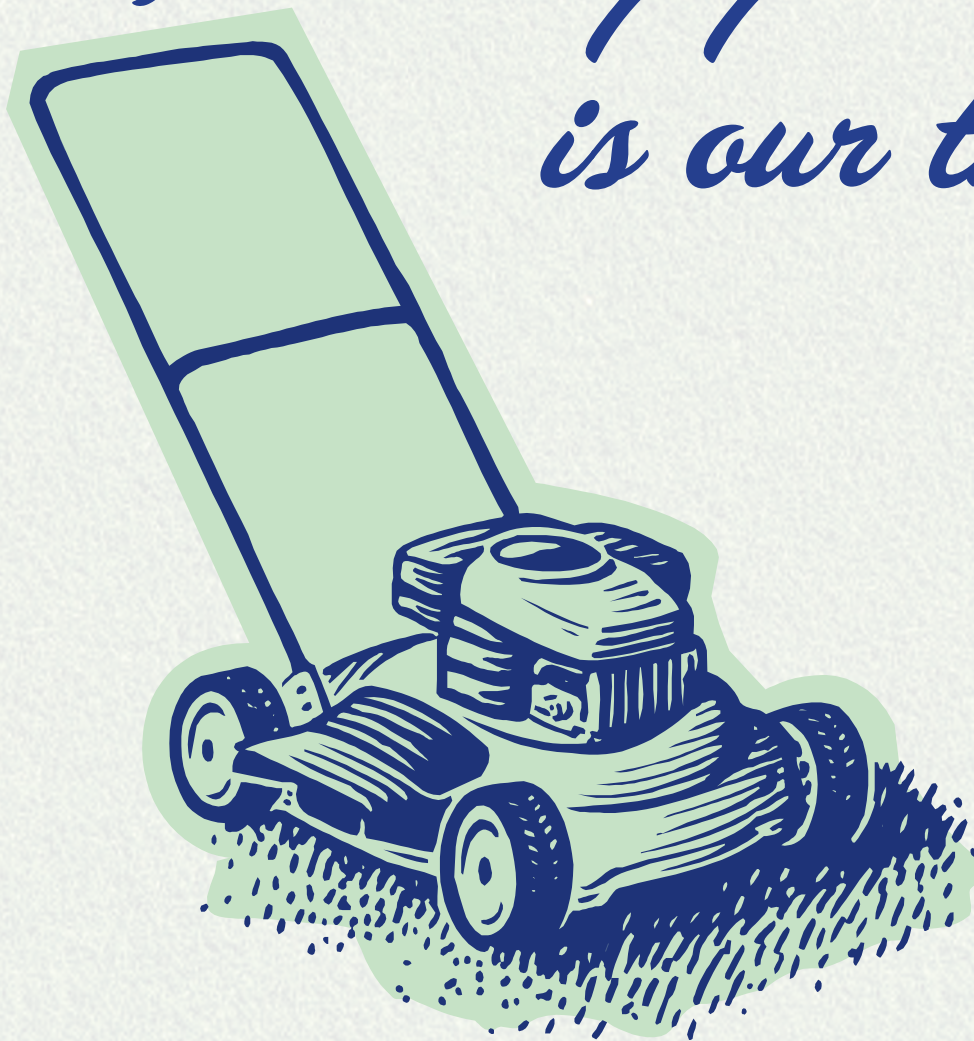
Sharon nods to her husband's words. "It's one of the last places that an independent entrepreneur can go and start a business and do it at some of the lowest rent rates out there," she says. "And we have a lot of female entrepreneurs here, and they feel safe and comfortable."

"And we're not like Carytown, because we have parking," Peter says. "You can ride a bike, you can walk, you can drive a car, and there's something for everybody. It's on a flat surface, and it's handicap accessible."

"We are the only permanent farmers' market in Henrico," Peter adds. "We own the land that has a structure that

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Terri Levandoski, one of the markets' first vendors.

is designed as a farmers' market. Even when the market isn't opened it's still a farmers' market. That is the only intended purpose of this pavilion."

Over the years, Lakeside Farmers' Market has consistently received kudos across the state and throughout the country. "We were listed as one of the top markets in the nation," Peter says. "We were selected as the top market in Virginia, one of the top twenty in America."

The Franciscos themselves, because of their unending support of Lakeside, have received numerous awards over the years. "We were selected as the community leaders of the year by the Henrico County Chamber of Commerce back in 2008, the same year we opened the market. We've gotten awards for some of the development we've done, and Keep Henrico Beautiful recognized us as a clean business award. HPAC gave us an award for historic preservation."


Vendors at Lakeside Farmers' Market accept EBT. "This is one of the reasons we have such great variety," says Sharon. "People using EBT don't have to go somewhere else because transportation is an issue."

Which brings Peter to the ten bike racks in front of the market that can accommodate forty bicycles. "We got a small grant from Virginia Tech to put up the bike racks, and their idea is that people who are on SNAP have got

limited transportation to get to market to shop. They may have to walk or ride a bike or rely on somebody's car to get there. They gave us a small grant to put the ten bike racks in and that was a \$10,000 project."

As I walk through the market I see a number of vendors who have been here since the very beginning. Among them is Terri Levandoski. She is surrounded by cut flowers—black-eyed Susans, gaillardia, feverfew, penstemon, money plant, euphorbia, larkspur, dianthus, yarrow, and love-in-the-mist—all cut from her own garden in Valentine Hills just two miles to the north.

Terri remembers what she was thinking not long before the market opened ten years ago: "Somebody's got to enjoy these flowers I grow. I'm going to stand on the side of the road with a big straw hat and sell flowers." But she didn't have to do that. Once Lakeside Farmers' Market announced it was opening, Terri became one of the first four vendors there. This is the same woman who creates the arrangements for all the tables at Stir Crazy every Monday.

"I sell only fresh cut flowers that I grow," she says, "They don't come from South America." 

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GOOD DEEDS

Bobby Shore Extending Kindness to Strangers

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN



Bobby Shore, owner for the past two years of Decatur's Garage on MacArthur Avenue in Bellevue

IMAGINE YOU'RE A stranger in a strange land. You and your family had to escape your homeland because of what amounted to genocide. There would come a time when the dictator's thugs would hunt you down, torture you, slaughter you, along with your wife, and the infant she cradled in her arms. It was just a matter of time, so you had to get out. Some countries slammed their doors in your face, equating you with the brutality of the regime you were trying to get away from. You and your wife and your baby spent time in refugee camps, caged like livestock.

Finally you find a haven, thanks to some good-hearted folk. It's hard, though, navigating your way through this alien culture. You work hard, but can barely make ends meet, just scraping by to supply your wife and baby with shelter, food and clothing. Then it's time to have your car inspected, an old, donated car, but still adequate transportation to ferry you to and from work, and to the endless doctor appointments for you child. The

owner of the garage you take your car to informs you it will cost a whopping six hundred and sixty dollars to get this older Honda roadworthy again. Might as well be sixty-six hundred. Or sixty-six thousand. Fact is, you haven't got two dimes to rub together, and you need that car to survive.

Leave it to Bobby Shore, owner of Decatur's Garage in Bellevue, to do the right thing, the kind of thing Americans, in better days, had been known for the wide world over—a generosity of spirit, an almost frenzied rush to help our foreign neighbors in distress, a willingness to open our doors to the homeless and tempest-tossed who simply yearned to breathe free.

Back in May, one of Bobby's regular customers told him about a family of Syrian refugees in need. Their car would not pass inspection, and there was a lot of work needed before it would. Bobby told them to bring it in, but they could never have guessed the magnitude of his munificence.

When I talk with Bobby, he downplays what he did, as if this is what is expect-

ed of us all. When someone posted Bobby's good deed, the number of positive comments overwhelmed him. "I was surprised," he says. "I didn't have any idea this was going to happen. I was not expecting this."

He describes what was wrong with the car. "It had a problem with the hi-vac system for the defroster and that was an expensive part and we took care of that," says Bobby. "And one of the headlight retainers was broken and wouldn't stand up for headlight aim, so we took care of that. We replaced a bulb." He also threw in an oil change, and checked all the tires. And for his services, which included the state inspection, Bobby didn't charge these new Americans a red cent. "We don't mind helping people out," he says.

He mentions the words of a former pastor at the Shore's house of worship out in Mechanicsville—Shady Grove United Methodist. "He quoted it right," says Bobby. "He said, 'When you do for other people, it makes you a better person.' I think it does. My parents were big in the church, helping people they didn't know. My dad was always like that. I didn't know the people whose car we worked on. But they needed help, and I could help."

Bobby's two daughters, Amber and Ashley, along with his wife, Valerie, also believe it is our duty as human beings to help when we are able. "Amber is in the youth band and she does mission trips," Bobby says. "Ashley, my younger daughter, is already an acolyte. And Valerie's always involved."

The Shores take part in the Bellevue Merchants Association's two major annual events. "My family's always there for both of them," says Bobby Shore. "This past year at Christmas on MacArthur, we ran out of candy, so we're going to have to buy more for next year's event. And last year at National Night Out we served more than two hundred snow cones."

And then Bobby says this, words we might all want to live by: "It's just about being honest, and doing what is right."

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Memorial Park

ANA EDWARDS AND HER HUSBAND, PHIL WILAYTO, sit on the couch in their living room surrounded by stacks of books everywhere. They are making final preparations for a conference to be held in mid-June and under the deadline gun. Next to Phil stands a statue, about half-life-size, of a man with a manacle around his wrist. It is carved of dark, rich, tropical wood—mahogany or rosewood. Ana is the first to speak, and she tells me about her childhood, growing up in the east end of downtown Los Angeles. Her mother, white, was a painter; her father, black, was a sculptor. “When I was five years old I was with my dad at the Watts Riots where he was taking photographs,” she says. “And there is an existing photograph of a little girl in a white dress running around a corner as the tanks are rolling down the street. Turns out that’s me.”

Her mother’s parents were both descended from Norwegian immigrants. Her father’s family came from East Texas, Alabama and Louisiana, on about the time of the Civil War. But her father’s people had called this country home well before the Civil War. “Before that time they came from North Carolina and ultimately Virginia,” says Ana. “It appears that one of the women on my grandmother’s side may have been born in Virginia before 1820.”

That ancestor had been made pregnant by either an overseer or an owner, and, to avoid embarrassment, was sold to a family in North Carolina. That’s the anecdotal story. “It will be wilder when we have the confirmation,” Ana says. “And that kind of thing was not uncommon.”

Many contemporary blacks who can trace their roots back at least a hundred and fifty years, will probably discover they have ties to Virginia. “They almost inevitably find one of their ancestors traces back to Virginia,” she says. “Richmond was the second largest domestic slave market in the country.” The largest was in Louisiana.

“Richmond was the fountainhead for the trade,” Phil says. “Richmond was wholesale, New Orleans was retail. So Richmond really was the epicenter.”

And the reason for this was the enactment by British Parliament of the Slave Trade Act of 1807, also called the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, which outlawed transatlantic slave trade.

“It went into effect in January of 1808 and it took a few years to get going, but for the thirty years leading up to the Civil War the slave market in Richmond grew exponentially,” says Phil.

A perfect storm was brewing which would lead to Richmond’s dubious claim as one of the world’s larg-

est slave markets. “The world price of cotton was skyrocketing,” Phil says. “Eli Whitney had invented the cotton gin, and so there was this tremendous need for enslaved labor because that was where the super profits were. In the Deep South, on those cotton plantations, you couldn’t get anybody but enslaved people to do that work.”

On about the same time, Virginia’s once rich soil had been depleted by over-farming cotton, and there was a glut of slave labor. “So Virginia found it more profitable to sell people than to grow cotton,” says Phil. “Enslaved people were one of the largest exports from Virginia at that time, and a tremendous part of the state’s economy. They actually began to grow people for sale. They started what they called ‘breeder plantations,’ and people were treated exactly like a cash crop.”

Turns out Richmond was perfectly situated as a shipping center for this human cargo. “Richmond had the James River, that’s where the expression sold down the river came from,” Phil tells me. “It had railroads. As a matter of fact, some of the railroads that later became the CSX used to advertise, ‘If you send your adult slaves on our train, we’ll carry their children for free.’”

If a town or a village was landlocked or had not rail service, the slave brokers in Richmond had a third option, a hideous thing called the overland trail, that must have been a perpetual “trail of tears” for the blacks forced to walk it.

“It ran from Fredericksburg through Richmond, and then through major cities and towns all the way down to Mobile, Alabama,” says Ana.

In a coffe, they were herded like cattle—these women, men, boys and girls.

“There are descriptions of coffles with anywhere from one hundred to two hundred people,” Ana says, her eyes wide. “They were chained together either by ankle, or neck-to-neck, and they would make that trek from market to market. Richmond has that very specific benefit of being a port city in terms of the James River, but also being centrally located in terms of the major walking or riding routes. It was an ideal place for businessmen and traders from the South to come to acquire slaves. Or they could simply place an order, and the enslaved people would be shipped down and delivered. They did have to be given just enough water and food because you do have to keep people alive, and they have to be useful when they get to market.”

Richmond’s economy became increasingly dependent on this despicable business. Folks were making money hand over fist, and infrastructure was needed.

“There were forty to fifty auction houses along Fif-

BY CHARLES MCGUIGAN
PHOTOS BY REBECCA D'ANGELO

A MONUMENT FOR THE AGES



Ana Edwards and Phil Walayto

teenth Street, which was called Wall Street at the time,” says Phil. “You had dozens of trader offices clustered around Seventeenth and Eighteenth at Broad. These trader offices often had penned area in the back that would hold enslaved people. There were also six to eight jails like Lumpkin’s Jail.”

Lumpkin’s Jail, which was called the Devil’s half-acre, was just three blocks away from the Virginia state capitol. From the descriptions I’ve read of Shockoe Bottom in those days, it sounds like the stockyards of Chicago in the time of Upton Sinclair.

“It was a slave trading district,” Phil explains. “The only one that was larger than it was in New Orleans. In Richmond you had these traders and they would

go around to the countryside and they would buy enslaved people and bring them back and put them up in the jails and then they would be sold and then they would be shipped out. There were contemporary accounts of this.”

One such account came from Eyre Crowe, an English painter and social realist, who accompanied William Makepeace Thackeray on his visit to America in the 1840s, acting as the novelist’s amanuensis—a sort of glorified secretary. On the sly, Eyre Crowe would slip into auction houses and begin sketching. “He did them surreptitiously because the auction house owners weren’t interested in having it documented,” according to Ana.

At about the same time Thackeray visited Richmond,

so too did Britain’s other noted novelist—Charles Dickens. In his book, “American Notes” Dickens wrote, “I left with a grateful heart that I was not doomed to live where slavery was, and I have never had my senses blunted to its wrongs and horrors in a slave-rocked cradle.”

When I ask Ana how it was possible for plantation owners and their wives to view the daily horrors of this institution and simply accept it, she shakes her head. “Richmond was a slave society, this country was a slave society,” she says. “There’s a long history of acculturation to having servants, and before that serfs. So it’s an inherited idea that you’re entitled to your servants. It’s also the fact that a farm takes so many people to run it. You’re accustomed to having all of these people around to make things work for your plantation, for your way of life. The beginnings of people thinking of slavery as wrong is a jumbled, roiling debate that is both internal and external at the very time the country is getting started. By the time we get to 1800, to the point that they really are deciding what kind of economy is going to sustain and keep secure the United States, they have decided that they cannot exist without slavery. And therefore you get the beginning of a very sophisticated determination to justify it, and people are raised from infancy with that idea.”

I still can’t wrap my mind around this, and Phil invites me to consider our own times. “People live in Richmond, knowing that people die in the city jail at a rate far greater than other jails, but they live with it,” he says. “They don’t think about it. They don’t have to see the jail, and see those segregation cells, and see the people with mental challenges who are living in their own feces and being beaten by guards, all of which happen in this city today. And a hundred years from now people might say, ‘How could a city that thought of itself as genteel and enjoyed the craft beer industry and restaurants live a couple miles from a place of torture?’ But we do it. And most people, even if they saw slavery, didn’t see the auction, they didn’t see the whipping, they didn’t see the rape, they just saw that’s how black people live. Ten thousand people live in substandard housing with terrible conditions in this city today, and other people just go along their way and go to the Byrd and Kuba Kuba.”

“With slavery,” says Ana. “Lots of money was being made. I used to draw the analogy with car dealerships. It’s a big ticket item. If you sell a few, you can make some money, and with that money you can buy some more and make even more money. So it was one of the reasons kidnapping free people was an experience that became commonplace by the time you get into the 1840 and 1850s. You could make money, and lots of it.”

Ana notes that some of those involved in the Revolutionary War became opposed to slavery after having spent a lot of time with enslaved people. She mentions the Polish military engineer Tadeusz Kosciuszko, along with Lafayette, and even George Washington. “There was this interesting relationship

between Washington and his manservant during the war, a man named William Lee," she says. "And Kosciuszko, he also got an enslaved man as his servant. Lafayette had a man named James Armistead. In each of those cases, they were deeply affected by the relationship that they had with those men through that war such that they altered their approach toward slavery. They either went whole hog toward abolition and manumission of their enslaved people, or convinced others to do that. Washington, for example, did make provisions for his enslaved people to be freed upon his death. It's important to look for those stories."

The story Ana and Phil want told to all posterity is the one about Richmond's slave district. The seeds of that story were unearthed in archives some twenty-five years ago by Northside's own historian Elizabeth Kambourian. At the time, as she was researching a book on Gabriel's Rebellion at the Library of Virginia, Elizabeth came across an old map of the city's oldest quarters—Shockoe Bottom. On that map, like an X marking the spot of buried treasure, was a simple legend which read: Burial Ground for Ne-



Artist rendering of Lumpkin's Jail.

groes, according to Phil. "Elizabeth researched this, and found that there was a cemetery there, the only municipal cemetery where blacks could be buried and most of them were enslaved," Phil says. For almost ten years Elizabeth tried to publicize her findings, but no one seemed interested. That is, until Janine Bell of the Elegba Folklore Society invited Elizabeth to make a presentation to the Slave Trail Commission.

"So Janine began to incorporate the burial ground in the annual night walk of enslaved Africans," says Phil. "The week after the burial ground was incorporated in the walk for the first time, the story I wrote came out in the Free Press about the burial ground and Gabriel."

That Gabriel, of course, was the freedom fighter who, in the late summer of 1800, led a carefully planned, but aborted, slave rebellion that would see

Gabriel and twenty-five of his followers hanged to death.

The burial ground itself is located between I-95 and the railroad tracks, and between Fifteenth and Sixteenth streets. A large chunk of it is under the interstate. Its history is utterly unique, and, had it not been for the investigative work of Elizabeth Kambourian, it might well have been forgotten forever.

"It was a cemetery that probably got started informally as being on the other side of the (Shockoe) creek from the village of Richmond around the 1750s and was in operation until 1816," Ana says. "It was also the site of the city gallows which was where Gabriel was executed."

For many, many years this remarkable rebellion led by a literate blacksmith and owned by the Prossers in Henrico County had been conveniently brushed under the carpet. For one thing, it caused two of Virginia's leading politicians to open serious dialogue about the institution of slavery. "Jefferson and Monroe met for a couple of years after it, debating whether or not to end slavery in the United States," says Ana.

The final outcome of the rebellion was

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Ana Edwards and Phil Walayto pause at a marker along Richmond's Slave Trail.

bad news for enslaved people throughout Virginia. The powers that be came down with an iron fist, smashing any small freedoms enslaved blacks might have enjoyed in an earlier time.

"They passed codes that made it illegal for more than three black people to stand together at any point in time,"

Ana says. "They couldn't travel as freely between city and plantation as they used to. The hiring out practice got clamped down on a little more."

And the plantation owners and the political hacks who represented them did all they could to revise the history of this noble rebellion of enslaved people,

pretty much what the British would have done with the Boston Massacre had they won the Revolutionary War.

"In that moment it was politically dangerous for them," Ana says. "They had quelled it and they were going to put a lid on the potential of people understanding just how important

that rebellion was."

On October 10, 2004, an historic highway marker recognizing Gabriel's execution and the slave cemetery was placed along the sidewalk of East Broad Street between Fifteenth and Sixteenth. Two months later, Ana and Phil helped form the Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project, whose mission is to reclaim Richmond's black history in Shockoe Bottom.

"So much focus in celebrating black history is on the twentieth century and the Civil Rights era," says Ana. "But there's still a lot of misunderstanding and lack of clarity of what that was born out of. Slavery was bad, it ended, and we've been fighting for our civil rights ever since." Key milestones in black history have been all but ignored. Which is one of the primary reasons Phil and Ana hope to one day have a Memorial Park that honors and acknowledges the important part that Shockoe Bottom played in this history.

Currently, the nine acres Ana and Phil have identified for this memorial park is something of an urban desert of asphalt and concrete, railroad tracks and an elevated interstate highway.

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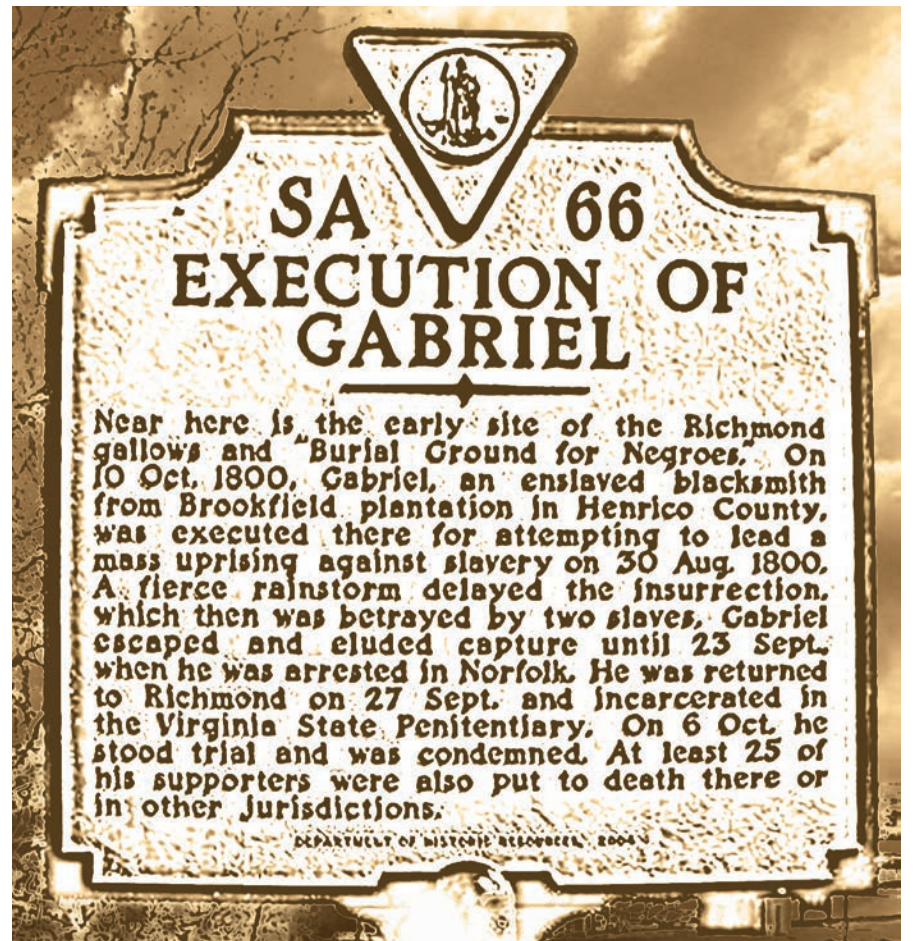
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Historical marker on Broad Street in Shockoe Bottom.

“We would like to see that it be treated in equal parts like a museum site, but more along the lines of the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton,” Ana says. “The value of that site is in the footprint because it ties in the original footprint of the city of Richmond from 1737 and takes you through the journey of African people of Richmond, through enslavement, through the Civil War, and out again.”

Eventually they hope it is developed as large memorial park which would encompass Lumpkin’s Jail, the Burial Ground, the site of auction houses and other aspects of Richmond’s slave district and industrial center. “The burial ground will finally get to be articulated as a cemetery or as a site of contemplation and memory,” says Ana. “If you start with the cemetery you can grow that history because of all the other sites in the park. And we literally have the archaeological resources just under the surface to mine that will produce the evidence to carry those stories forward.”

And the stories that are unearthed may come as a surprise to many. Shockoe Bottom, in its heyday, was the center of much of the city’s trade and industry. It fairly bustled and was a melting pot of sorts. Folks lived in close quarters.

“This was the place where all kinds of people came together, and I mean that in terms of class and occupation, but also racially,” Ana says. “This is where the mixing of the people of Richmond was far more active than any other

place. This is where you will begin to find the stories of people who can trace their ancestry to both black and white ancestors.”

Everyone knows about the abolitionists—the Quakers and Methodists—who denounced slavery. But there were other individuals who actually made the intimate leap for integration. “Those relationships also contributed to that dynamic,” says Ana. “So you’re going to find the worst of the behaviors and some of the best of the behaviors in a place like Shockoe Bottom because that place at that time was really the cauldron for this history.”

Then Ana Edwards tells me something I had never thought of before. It was something she learned from an archivist at the Museum of the Confederacy. “He had mapped out the population of Richmond before the Civil War, in terms of where people live,” she says. “And do you know what? It was more mixed than we are now. The period of segregation that came with Jim Crow after the Civil War is what completely segregated us into neighborhoods. Before the war, Richmond was much more integrated. Servants lived near where they worked. The tradespeople lived near each other because, you know, everybody’s on foot or horse or cart or whatever. Life was hard enough without things being far away, so everybody lived near each other. And that day to day proximity made for the opportunity for all kinds of relationships. Because people are what people are. **NJ**”

MEDITATION

Tai Chi, Meditation, and Qi-Gong At Won-Buddhist Temple in Mechanicsville




Tai Chi expert KaeSung Kim teaches at Won-Buddhist Temple in Mechanicsville.

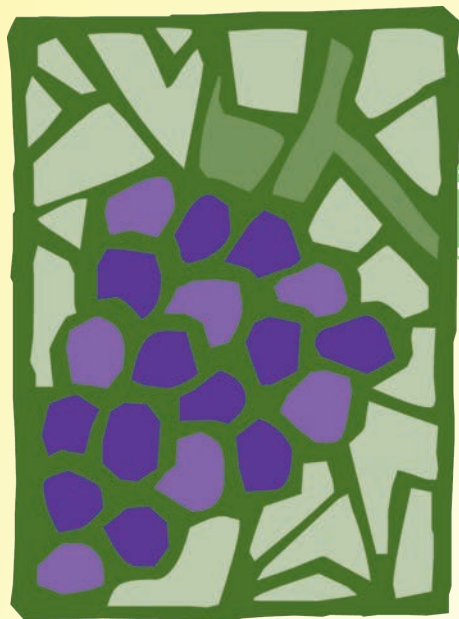
REV. KAESUNG KIM IS a Won-Buddhist priest with a special ministry in Tai chi, Qi-gong and meditation. Now living in Mechanicsville, she has studied and taught for over twenty years in Korea, Japan, Hawaii, and the continental United States. She is an expert in Yang-style Tai Chi.

This summer, Rev. Kim will lead two special sessions at the Won-Buddhist Temple in Mechanicsville.





According to the "Healthy Lifestyle" section of the Mayo Clinic's website: "Tai chi is an ancient Chinese tradition that, today, is practiced as a graceful form of exercise. Originally developed for self-defense, tai chi has evolved into a graceful form of exercise that's now used for stress reduction and a variety of other health conditions. Often described as meditation in motion, tai chi promotes serenity through gentle, flowing movements."

No experience is necessary for participation in any of the sessions. Wear loose clothing. Drop-ins welcome. There is a suggested donation of \$5-10 for each session. 

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Should They Stay, or Should They Go?

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

IT'S ALL VERY COMPLICATED.

Much more complicated than an outsider would ever understand.

There's that old joke. "How many Richmonders does it take to change a light bulb?"

"Three: One to change it, and two to reminisce about the old light bulb."

There's more than a little truth in that. Some Richmonders still call the Boulevard Bridge the Nickel Bridge, even though the toll fare is now a dime and quarter. That toll hasn't been a single nickel for more than forty years. Others still call The Diamond, Parker Field; Altria Theatre, the Mosque; and so on.

Whether it's apocryphal or not—and I suspect it is—a reporter, shortly before Mark Twain's death, asked the celebrated author where he would like to go if he knew he were going to die the following morning. Without a pause, Twain said: "Richmond." When the reporter asked why, Twain supposedly said, "Because it's always fifty years behind the times."

Some might argue a hundred and fifty years behind the times. After all, it's been about that long since the Civil War ended. And yet some Richmonders are still waving the Stars and Bars.

All that said, Monument Avenue is a part of our history, and I've never been one for revisionism. Denying the past, invites catastrophe in the future. Tearing down monuments does not alter the past in the least. What's more, these monuments to Lee, Stuart, Jackson, Davis and Maury, are constant reminders of the era in which they were erected, that horrific time of old Jim Crow, the incessant racism that would ultimately lead to the Civil Rights movement. And we should never forget that.

I remember when I first arrived in Richmond back in the 1970s, a freshman at VCU, with the entire city at my disposal, new and unexplored. I would wander nights up Monument Avenue, favoring the medium strips and not quite com-



prehending why someone would erect a monument to a general who had sworn a sacred oath to protect and defend the Constitution, only to desert his nation and join what amounted to insurrectionists. At that time, I often thought had I been black I might have been tempted to do what the Irish did on March 7, 1966 on the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rebellion. The IRA blew up a statue of Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson erected by the British on O'Connell Street in Dublin.

Ten years before that, in Budapest, a hundred thousand Hungarian revolutionaries demolished a massive statue of Joseph Stalin. All they left behind were his boots in which they planted their national flag.

In recent times, Islamic fundamentalists in Iraq and Syria, armed with explosives and bulldozes, have laid waste to countless statues and monuments, things ancient as the hills that can never be replaced. Their only reason for this wholesale destruction was to erase history.

There are some who claim the

Civil War, which saw the deaths of 600,000 American citizens, was about states' rights and not slavery. Consider the following excerpts from the articles of secession from several southern states.

This one's from Mississippi: "Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery—the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subvert-

ed to work out our ruin."

Here's Louisiana's: "As a separate republic, Louisiana remembers too well the whisperings of European diplomacy for the abolition of slavery in the times of annexation not to be apprehensive of bolder demonstrations from the same quarter and the North in this country. The people of the slave holding States are bound together by the same necessity and determination to preserve African slavery."

This is from Alabama: "Upon the principles then announced by Mr. Lincoln and his leading friends, we are bound to expect his administration to be conducted. Hence it is, that in high places, among the Republican party, the election of Mr. Lincoln is hailed, not simply as a change of Administration, but as the inauguration of new principles, and a new theory of Government, and even as the downfall of slavery. Therefore it is that the election of Mr. Lincoln cannot be regarded otherwise than a solemn declaration, on the part of a great majority

of the Northern people, of hostility to the South, her property and her institutions—nothing less than an open declaration of war—for the triumph of this new theory of Government destroys the property of the South, lays waste her fields, and inaugurates all the horrors of a San Domingo servile insurrection, consigning her citizens to assassinations, and her wives and daughters to pollution and violation, to gratify the lust of half-civilized Africans."

And Texas: "In this free government all white men are and of right ought to be entitled to equal civil and political rights; that the servitude of the African race, as existing in these States, is mutually beneficial to both bond and free, and is abundantly authorized and justified by the experience of mankind, and the revealed will of the Almighty Creator, as recognized by all Christian nations; while the destruction of the existing relations between the two races, as advocated by our sectional enemies, would bring inevitable calamities upon both and desolation upon the



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fifteen slave-holding states.”

During the war, the following appeared in “Southern Punch”, a newspaper printed right here in Richmond: “The people of the South, says a contemporary, ‘are not fighting for slavery but for independence.’ Let us look into this matter. It is an easy task, we think, to show up this new-fangled heresy — a heresy calculated to do us no good, for it cannot deceive foreign statesmen nor peoples, nor mislead any one here nor in Yankeeland. Our doctrine is this: WE ARE FIGHTING FOR INDEPENDENCE THAT OUR GREAT AND NECESSARY DOMESTIC INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY SHALL BE PRESERVED, and for the preservation of other institutions of which slavery is the groundwork.”

Getting back to the monuments though. I have never really liked giant statues of mere men, who, by their very nature, are flawed. Placing larger-than-life versions of specific men on pedestals seems somehow sacrilegious, impious at

best, for men are not gods. Which is probably why the monument to Matthew Fontaine Maury has always been my favorite. Pathfinder of the seas, father of oceanography, inventor of the torpedo. Though this monument contains a seated Maury facing east to the Atlantic Ocean, it is dominated by a sea-tossed Mother Earth, with human beings rising out of the water, the Mother of All Life. Fish, dolphins, jellyfish and birds encrust the outer edge of the monument in a fluid motion. And then there was a beautiful thought Maury had concerning ocean-going vessels. He called them “a thousand temples of science for all humanity”, and seemed to earnestly believe that ships brought human beings and nations closer together. Turns out he was right about these temples of science, these ships that conduct scientific experiments which have gathered data that proves global climate change is real, giving all humanity a chance to reverse the damage mankind had done.

I’ve have talked with scores of peo-

ple over the last couple weeks about what we should do with Monument Avenue. Some have recommended removing the statues and placing them at the Civil War Center, or else in Hollywood Cemetery. There are a lot of ways you could go on this, and I know in the end it will not be my decision or that of any other individual. We will come to some consensus on it. I will never know what it must be like to see these statues through the eyes of a black man or black woman whose ancestors were enslaved. How could I? I’m white. But I try to imagine.

Here’s what I think, though. One of the most important images missing from Monument Avenue is a statue of an enslaved human being. I would like to see J.E.B. Stuart moved to a new rotary island to the west, at Allison or Strawberry. In Stuart’s place, I envision a pedestal, twenty feet high, carved rough-hewn of black marble or granite. On top of that I would like to see a giant bronze statue of an African-American family, snapped chains

dangling from manacles, backs and legs scarred with the cicatrix of endless whippings and degradation. And I would like to see this trio—man woman and infant—facing westward. This would be a colossus more than fifty feet high standing atop a twenty foot base. And each member of this family, even the little baby, would look well over the heads of the Confederate equestrians and their small and antiquated ideas. These three would see beyond racism into the future of a freedom that must be absolute. **NJ**


Editor’s Note:

My gifted daughter, Catherine Rose McGuigan, was able to capture to perfection The Colossus of Monument Avenue. I am forever in awe of her talent and her profound generosity of spirit. My deep gratitude to her always for the privilege of being her father.

The Honorable

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Northside 3rd Voter District



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RAINBOW MINUTES

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Where It All Happened



A S GAY HISTORY CAN attest, there's a hallowed site on Christopher Street in New York's Greenwich Village.

Photographs dating back to 1899 show two stables at 51 and 53 Christopher Street. But with the creation of Henry Ford's Detroit auto plant the same year, the property soon became a French bakery. In 1930, the two buildings became one to create a teahouse named Bonnie's Stone Wall, which became a restaurant popular for banquets and wedding receptions. In the 1940s, its name changed to

Bonnie's Stonewall Inn. After a fire gutted it, the property sat vacant, and in 1967 it opened as a gay club called Stonewall Inn. No one would have guessed that just two years later, on June 28, 1969, at that very site, the Gay Liberation Movement would take off.

On June 24, 2016, the Stonewall Inn officially received its designation as a U.S. National Monument from President Barack Obama, making it the 412th unit of the National Park System. The 7.7-acre site is widely regarded as the birthplace of the modern LGBTQ civil rights movement and is the first U.S. National Monument dedicated to LGBT history.

The Birth of the Gay Pride March

On November 2, 1969, in Philadelphia, a resolution was made at the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations that sparked the creation of Gay Pride celebrations. In part, it read:

"We propose that a demonstration be held annually on the last Saturday in June in New York City to commemorate the 1969 spontaneous demonstrations on Christopher Street and this

demonstration be called CHRISTOPHER STREET LIBERATION DAY. No dress or age regulations shall be made for this demonstration. We also propose that we contact Homophile organizations throughout the country and suggest that they hold parallel demonstrations on that day. We propose a nationwide show of support."

Thus was born the Gay Pride parade as we now know it.

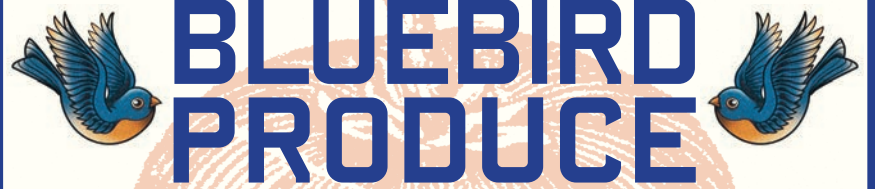
Dr. Evelyn Hooker's Discovery

Psychologist Dr. Evelyn Hooker conducted research in the 1950s, challenging the notion that homosexuality signaled mental illness. Having earned her doctorate from Johns Hopkins in 1932, she became a psychology researcher at UCLA. She decided to study gay men at the urging of a gay friend, Sam Fromm. He said, "It is your scientific duty to study people like us, homosexuals who function very well and don't go to psychiatrists." In her study, she administered high-

ly-regarded personality tests to heterosexual and gay men. Her research found that the two groups were psychologically indistinguishable.

At first, her conclusions caused heated debate amongst scientists. But in 1973, the American Psychiatric Association officially removed homosexuality from its list of psychiatric disorders. While there was still much work to be done to de-stigmatize what it is to be gay, Evelyn Hooker had shattered one enormous myth. **NJ**

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION by DOUG DOBEY



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BOOK REVIEW

Ghost Songs: A Memoir

by FRAN WITHROW

REGINA MCBRIDE was just seventeen years old when her parents committed suicide, her mother killing herself five months after McBride's father. "Ghost Songs" is McBride's haunting story about dealing with this indescribable loss.

McBride's writing reminds me of Joan Didion's "The Year Of Magical Thinking," which I cherish and have read several times. Both these memoirs have a poetic quality, and the authors describe events in their lives in an objective way that only heightens the power and intensity of their stories.

Told in abbreviated vignettes, some only a paragraph or two long, McBride flows back and forth between the past—with all its heartbreak—and the present, with its own sadness, as she struggles to find a way to make a life for herself. The writing is spare but intense, lyrical but heartbreaking. I could not put this book down and finished it in one day.

McBride, one of four children, struggles mightily after her parents' death. She lands in a psychiatric institute after she "can't stop crying," and tells the doctors she sees the ghosts of her parents. After her hospitalization, McBride's troubles continue. Just a teenager herself, she grapples with caring for her younger sisters and trying to complete her education. She faces poverty, loneliness, and disconnect along the way.

Adding to her grief are continuing visions of her dead parents, though most of the time she won't look at them. She calls them "enchantments." "Spirits are drawn to me because there is a door in me that's open but it shouldn't be," she explains to her therapy group.

I felt deep sadness for her entire family. Her parents' once robust love fades as her father struggles to find work, and as both parents deal with their four children and McBride's difficult, live-in grandmother. McBride's mother and grandmother also suffer from mental instability, and the conflict in the home deeply affects McBride and



her siblings, who respond by cutting class and doing drugs.

After her parents' deaths and her disappointing attempts to support her younger sisters, McBride experiences a yearning to travel to Ireland, the land of her ancestors. Her plan is to become an actress in Dublin, after visiting "Yeats country" in honor of her father, who loved this Irish poet. Could this be her path to redemption, a way of reconnecting with her parents? She was particularly close to her intelligent but unlucky father, who talks to McBride about seeking "Tir na nÓg." "What is teernanog?" asks McBride as a child, and her father, pointing across the ocean, answers, "It's the land where there is no pain or sorrow."

Pain and sorrow are evident throughout the book, but McBride's time in Ireland leads her to a different understanding of herself, her parents, and her siblings. In Dublin, she looks at photos of her mother, determinedly watering trees in their New Mexico yard, and decides it's time to return home. The ghosts may still be there, but perhaps now McBride can look them in the eye. **BB**

Ghost Songs: A Memoir
by Regina McBride
Tin House Books
\$15.95
312 pages

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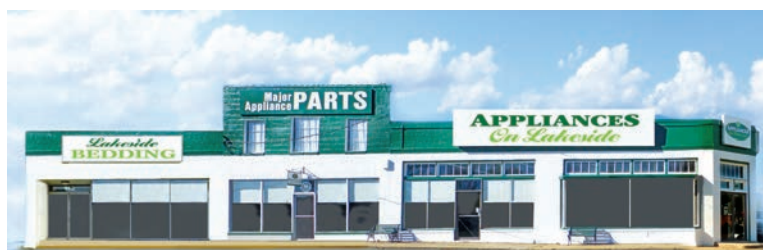


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