

Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

Volume 11 | Issue 2

Article 42

January 2012

Bayou

Seth Tucker

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate>

Recommended Citation

Tucker, Seth (2012) "Bayou," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 11: Iss. 2, Article 42.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol11/iss2/42>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

Tucker: Bayou

BAYOU

**SETH BRADY
TUCKER**

The nights we play hide and go seek cling
to the first whispers of the coming digital age,
our schoolrooms slowly filled with Apple
IIe computers; the obsolete manila computer
punch cards boxed and set to mold in the basement.
It is serious business, these hot summertime
games, charcoal drawn under eyes, parachute pants

jungle camouflage, long black shirts clinging
with sweat. Our hiding spots are indicators of age,
the less inventive kids sent home early for apple
pie, any finish outside the top three, hard to compute.
Susie calls fifty and my first choice is cemented
by Tyler, who usually takes his sweet dadgum time
getting settled, the second by Ari, who poops his pants,

the third an impossibility because of rattlesnake dens.
I sprint between ancient oak and cypress trees
to the creek bed boundary. Some hiding places
are discovered simply by braving what others cannot,
and it is with this in mind that I quiet my breathing,
and crawl into the dark iron culvert, wiggling through
sticks and mud and salamanders. It is tight, the feel
of my ribs pressed into the metal grooves of the pipe,

Published by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The

Tucker

166

and when I squirm around to get comfortable, I am stuck
sideways, cemented by the mud I have bored
through. It takes two hours for me to realize no one
will find me, and it is the dark and cold dawn that provides
the first of two final miracles. The morning sun sends
bright red fingers through the swamp to warm me

enough to convince me there is a god. By nighttime,
exhausted and hoarse from screaming for help,
I am just as sure there is no god, and as a hard rain
begins to fall, slowly filling the creek bed with water,
the second miracle: the ebony and crimson twilight
caressing the cypress trees, the last sweet whisper
of sympathy for boys too stupid to know when to quit.