

# PORTRAIT OF SELF AS FAULKNER WITH DARLINGS

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*"In writing, you must kill all your darlings"*  
—William Faulkner (Allegedly)

Willie comes home to his Darlings after a long day of work at the power plant. They rise from where they were sprawled and run to greet him. *As I Sit Dying* leaps up, puts its paws on Willie's chest and begins licking his face as *My Mother is a Bird* runs to the living room, grabs a tennis ball and drops it at his feet. "Today's the day," Faulkner sighs as he calls the darlings out back one at a time to administer the 'Old Yeller' treatment. He shoots dozens of Darlings: *Light in July*, *The Vanquished*, *The Smell and the Fury*, and when he runs out of bullets he strangles them. Awoken by all the noise I march over from a mile down the road and catch Willie with only one darling left and shout "Bill! Would just one darling kill you?" even though I didn't care too much about his writing and only wanted to go back to sleep, later, it turns out *Yoknapatawpha County*, the only surviving darling, gave him a dozen or so novels and fifty some short stories and when I read the news, I let all my darlings sleep in my bed that night, contorting my body to make room for them all.