

as Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Schelling, and Julia Kristeva, Kreiswirth analyzes the gap between *heimlich* and *unheimlich*. He argues that Faulkner uses Bon's and Christmas's characters to create "an elaborate discursive machinery designed to generate epistemic gaps, and gaps within gaps, that put representative undecidability on exhibit" (p. 128). According to Kreiswirth, Bon is uncanny because of his intimacy and knowability: Rosa feels as if she knows so much about him without having ever seen him. However, this intimacy is broken when his ancestry is uncovered: "things change drastically when the repressed heredity link has come home—has become *heimisch*" (p. 131).

Adam Gussow's "Plaintive Reiterations and Meaningless Strains: Faulkner's Blues Understandings" is valuable because of his measured approach to literary criticism. Gussow deconstructs fanciful imaginations of the blues' influence on Faulkner by explaining proximity fallacies and asking, "What *did* Faulkner actually know about the blues, and when did he know it?" (p. 58). He tediously works through documentable connections Faulkner had to the blues and shows how his representation of the blues is often in a marginal, particular register of white response in a dialectical racial dialogue. Gussow's chapter is refreshing and should be used in graduate seminars as a model for good scholarship. He takes a pairing academia might call "sexy" (the blues and literature) and makes it unsexy, which is exactly what current scholarship needs.

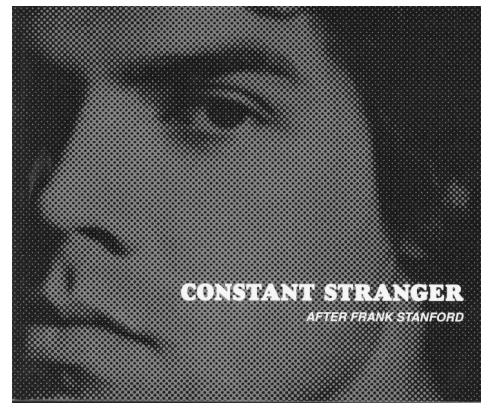
While *Faulkner's Inheritance* was published in 2007, it is still timely. The book's continued relevance is a testament to the how vital questions of inheritance are to Faulkner's works, and how those questions anticipate those of affect and queer theory today. Indeed, this collection challenges even the idea that there is a past and present for Faulknerian scholarship, but rather something uncannily in-between.

-Jill Fennell



***Constant Stranger: After Frank Stanford.* Edited by Max Crinnin and Aidan Ryan. (Buffalo, New York: Foundlings Press, 2019. Pp. 285, acknowledgments, contributors. \$22.00, paper)**

Readers interested in a cultural, biographical, and aesthetic appraisal of poet Frank Stanford's meteoric career—one that ended abruptly when he went into the back bedroom of a small



white clapboard house in Fayetteville, Arkansas, about 7:00 in the evening of June 3, 1978 and banged off three rounds from a .22 caliber pistol into his own heart—need look no further than this splendid gathering of elegies, interviews, remembrances, and life studies edited by Max Crinnin and Aidan Ryan. During his brief span (twenty-nine years) spent mostly in the tri-state region—Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi—that forms the heart of the Delta, Stanford amassed an astonishing corpus that includes everything from the lyric brilliance of his first published collection *The Singing Knives* (1971) to the astounding *The Battlefield Where the Moon Says I Love You* (1977), a stream-of-consciousness epic of 15,283 lines purportedly begun when the poet was still in his teens.

Crinnin and Aidan provide several biographical and critical sketches of the poet, and A. P. Walton's essay "Lives and Works: From Myth to Mythology," adapted from his 2015 master's thesis at Lund University entitled "Toward Innumerable Futures: Frank Stanford & Origins," is undoubtedly the most thorough. An indefatigable researcher, Walton's footnotes contain such minutiae as the "imitation pearl grips" of the revolver that the poet used to end his own life and the fact that the divorce petition of his widow, Ginny Crouch Stanford, was received and filed on June 1, 1978, just 48 hours before the prolific author's apparent suicide (p. 121). Walton also relates that Stanford's wife and his partner in Lost Roads Publishers, fellow poet C. D. Wright, confronted him with his infidelities shortly before his death, but cites a police report stating conclusively that his fatal wounds were self-inflicted (p. 122). Yet Walton doesn't let the lurid details of Stanford's star-crossed relationships interfere with a perspicacious assessment of the poet's prodigious gifts. Moreover, he offers an abridged compendium of characters appearing throughout Stanford's oeuvre that includes Abednego the Gypsy, Mama Julinda, Charlie B. Lemon, Ray Baby, and Jimbo Reynolds, an old shoeshiner in the University of Arkansas student union who remained close friends with Stanford until the poet's death (pp. 124-140). Crinnin and Ryan include other excellent essays in a similar vein, such as Leo Dunsker's "'The Great Poem of Death in These States': The Battlefield Where the Moon Says I Love You and Its Canons" (pp. 166-173).

Foremost of the remembrances about Stanford is Steve Stern's "Frank Stanford (1948-1978): An Appreciation." A graduate of the University of Arkansas MFA program in Creative Writing, Stern is an award-winning author of short story collections that include *Isaac and the Undertaker's Daughter* (1983) and *The Book of Mischief* (2015). He recalls that "Frank Stanford, the poet, is the only man of whom I can say I saw the movie and read the book before I met him" (p. 66). Of course, Stern alludes

to Stanford's avant garde film profile, *It Wasn't A Dream, It Was A Flood* (1974), and the book was *The Singing Knives*, a volume that he describes as "one of the most savagely beautiful books I know" (p. 66). Stern remembers the poet as a genuine charismatic with his conclave of devoted followers: "Late of an evening I've heard Frank, grown restless, say to a room full of friends 'Let's put on a pot of coffee and write all night'" (p. 70). He notes that the strange and estranging phenomenon of death held an irresistible allure for Stanford: "It is the same audacious impulse that incites a boy to prowl about a derelict mansion or steal upon a girlfriend's clothesline" (p. 70), and proceeds to quote these lines by the poet: "When no one is looking / We touch the thin underthings / Of death to our lips." No less compelling is Ginny Crouch Stanford's "Requiem: A Fragment," laid out in the poet's highly associative, somnambulist mode: "Frank's poems were quiet as a needle gliding through silk; they made the bride's trousseau and her burial gown" (p. 78). Here her evocation of Eros and Thanatos replicates beautifully her late husband's manner, but she refuses to romanticize his last moments: "I remember the strange staccato rhythm of three shots mixed with his voice, that deadly duet; Pop Oh! Pop Oh! Pop Oh!" (p. 75). Such a grim threnody stops short of lament for a peace-parted soul. A sublimely gifted painter, Ginny Stanford's portrait of Hillary Clinton now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in the Washington, DC.

Crinnin and Ryan bring together a series of other tributes, such as Ata Moharrieri's absorbing conversation with 89-year-old Benedictine monk Leenus Orth, who taught English to Stanford at Subiaco Academy in the Ouachita Mountains in Arkansas. Moharrieri's skill as an interviewer is impressive; he knows which questions will lead the aged preceptor to call up the poet's years as a student and his growing passion for Chaucer, Shakespeare, Donne, Keats, and Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood* (1952). Moharrieri introduces asides—"A few bubbles gur-

gled to the pond's surface"—that intimate the poet's imagination was in a state of perpetual ferment (p. 59). The editors also offer a spate of elegies for Stanford that include Aidan Ryan's own engaging entry: "when he died every woman / He had loved lined up to toss delicate palmfuls / Of dirt on his box" (p. 36). Best of these is probably Leon Stokesbury's "A Few Words for Frank Stanford: 1948-1978," which evokes so memorably the night of Stanford's death: "It fell to us to clean the sick mess up,— / so we drove over, and slid up into his yard / and parked the car. The honeysuckle stank" (p. 28). But Stokesbury's mourning is ultimately what scholar Jahan Ramazani would term compensatory: "When he sat down at a desk / the juice crackled and came" (p. 30). R. S. Gwynn and Forrest Gander contribute affecting verse testimonials as well. One could not hope for a better introduction to poet's turbulent life and legacy than *Constant Stanger: After Frank Stanford*.

--Floyd Collins

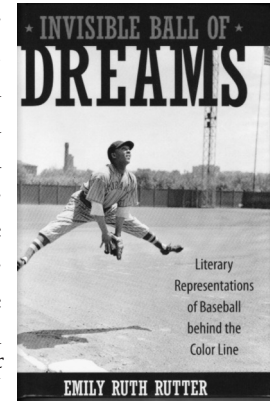


***Invisible Ball of Dreams: Literary Representations of Baseball behind the Color Line.* By Emily Ruth Rutter. (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2018. Pp. ix + 190, acknowledgments, index. \$70.00, hardcover)**

Baseball meticulously curates its past. Historians, both amateur and professional, work to uncover the most obscure minutiae relating to the national pastime. Broadcasts are peppered with archaic references to statistics long forgotten. The length of past games, the umpires, and attendance are all recorded for future reference. However, even with this predilection to procure and preserve facts about the game's history,

baseball is guilty of ignoring a large portion of its past. Its references, statistics, and representations are, for the most part, exclusively white.

Until Jackie Robinson broke Major League Baseball's color barrier, the Negro Leagues were the primary outlet for black players to showcase their talents. Teams barnstormed across the nation and thrilled crowds with their flair and high caliber of play. Sadly, the exploits of African-American players were haphazardly recorded and the informality of Negro League operations means preserved scorebooks and statistics are largely incomplete and disproportionately underrepresented in the baseball archives. Thus, the true prowess of greats like Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson, and their experiences while playing, may never be known.



Emily Ruth Rutter attempts to uncover some of this incomplete past in, *Invisible Ball of Dreams: Literary Representations of Baseball behind the Color Line*. Rutter seeks to mine what she calls the "shadow archive," to unmask the largely ignored lived experience of black players during baseball's Jim Crow era (p. 7). Rutter's approach is unique. She examines the literary representation of the black baseball experience in order to develop a better understanding of players lives. Rutter contends, "imaginative literature plays a crucial archival role, both revivifying baseball behind the color line and raising epistemological questions about its past," while filling in the gaps left in this "shadow archive" neglected by baseball historians (p. 5).

One of Rutter's stronger arguments is that portrayals of the African-American experience within baseball are largely presented from a white perspective with black players often employed as stock characters working only to ad-