

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

CERF+ The Artists  
Safety Net ≈ Dean  
Osborne Band ≈  
Grayson Gallery  
& Art Center ≈  
Kentucky Arts  
Council ≈ Kentucky  
Just Us ≈ Brushy  
Fork Institute  
≈ Artists Thrive  
Consultant ≈ James  
Jones and the  
Bluegrass Travelers

(...)

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.

Kentucky Main  
Street / Kentucky  
Heritage Council ≈  
Appalachian Arts  
Alliance ≈ Southland  
Drive ≈ College  
Art Association ≈  
Rhode Island State  
Council on the Arts  
≈ Kentucky Just Us  
≈ AIR Institute of  
Berea College ≈ C4  
Atlanta ≈ The Price  
Sisters

## 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,  
they 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<sup>1</sup>

*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.<sup>2</sup>

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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<sup>1</sup> <https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/687>

<sup>2</sup> 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 <sup>3</sup>

*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

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<sup>3</sup> <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.

(...)

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. <sup>4</sup> Now?  
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. <sup>5</sup>

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.

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<sup>4</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Identification, History, and Distribution of Common Sorghum Varieties, H. N. Vinall, J. C. Stephens, and J. H. Martin, Technical Bulletin No. 506, Washington D.C.: July, 1936.

<sup>5</sup> Mike Costello, “Tradition so Rich, So Fragile, So Sweet,” 100 Days in Appalachia, 7 Nov. 2017. <https://www.100daysinappalachia.com/2017/11/07/tradition-rich-fragile-sweet/>

## 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!

Pete and Jessie ≈  
Pratt Institute ≈  
Association of Arts  
Administration  
Educators ≈ Ralph  
Stanley II and the  
Clinch Mountain  
Boys ≈ Columbus  
Area Arts Council  
≈ The Peace Poets  
≈ Bobby Osborn  
Mandolin Roundup  
III ≈ One Accord ≈  
Interaction Institute  
for Social Change

## 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.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Funkhouser, W D, and William S. Webb. Archaeological Survey of Kentucky. Vol. 2. Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky, Dept. of Anthropology and Archaeology, 1932. P. 232.

## The Great Reaping Day<sup>7</sup>

*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."

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<sup>7</sup> <https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/699>

## The Moonshiner Song<sup>8</sup>

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.*

(...)

<sup>8</sup>This recording seems to be two songs, both of which are transcribed here.  
<https://omaxky.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."<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup>

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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<sup>9</sup> "The Kentucky School of Bluegrass & Traditional Music," Hazard Community and Technical College. <http://ksbtm.hazard.kctcs.edu>

<sup>10</sup> "About Us." The Peace Poets. <http://thepeacepoets.com/about-us/>

## **Dream of a Miner's Child** <sup>11</sup>

*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!*

<sup>11</sup> <https://lomagky.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 e-lectricity 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 “countryopolitan” 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.

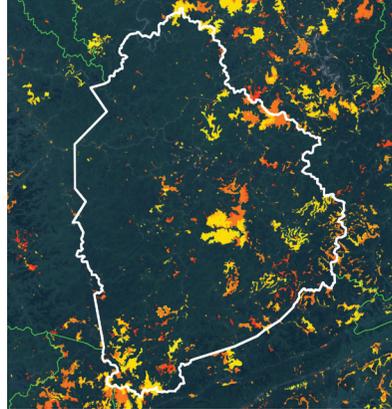
After the Brothers' outburst, they remained connected with Leslie even as mountaintop removal and union busting were revving up to destroy the mountain working class again. In '93 they started the Osborne Brothers Hometown Festival—the first year having just two bands for an afternoon,

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

(...)

Acres & Percentage of Leslie Country Surface Mined<sup>15</sup>

1985	4,539	1.8%
1990	3,858	1.5%
1995	5,468	2.1%
2000	8,126	3.1%
2005	8,537	3.3%
2010	10,199	3.9%
2015	8,853	3.4%



... 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.”<sup>16</sup> 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,<sup>17</sup>

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”<sup>18</sup> —

So FNU is moving its campus right outside  
Lexington, because, as FNU President Stone

<sup>16</sup> “Carol Crow-Carraco, “Breckinridge, Mary Carson,” *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, ed. John Kleber, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992.

<sup>17</sup> “Statistics,” Frontier Nursing University, 2019.

<https://frontier.edu/about-frontier/frontier-statistics/>

<sup>18</sup> “Vision & Mission,” Frontier Nursing University, 2019.

<https://frontier.edu/about-frontier/vision-mission/>

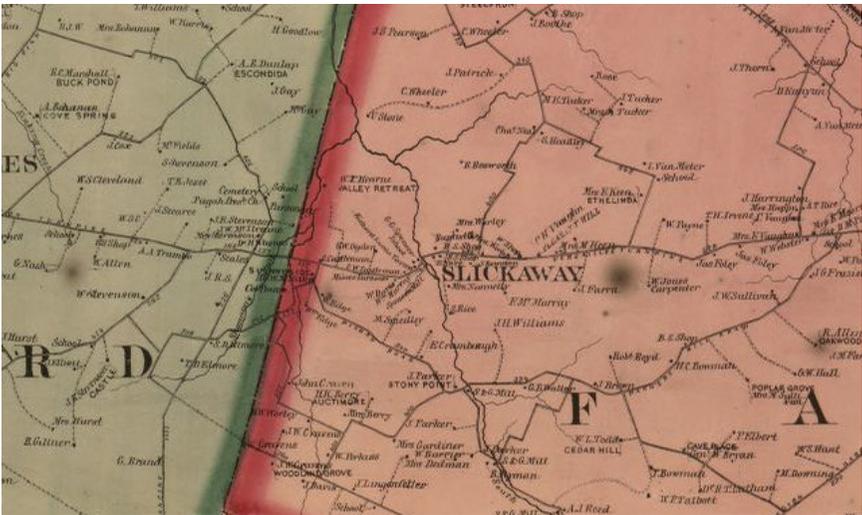
(...)

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.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus, FNU purchased the rundown “67-acre campus in . . . the former United Methodist Children’s Home” and and 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”<sup>20</sup> —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/>

<sup>19</sup> Bill Estep, “Talk of Moving Buildings Upsets Leslie County,” Lexington Herald-Leader 30 Sept. 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Scott A. Carmony, A Model Racing Plant: Founding and Economic History of Keeneland Racetrack, Masters Thesis, University of Louisville, 2004, p. 46. Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 210. <https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/210>

## Darling Corey <sup>21</sup>

*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*

≈ Pratt Institute ≈  
The Greater Kanawha  
Valley Foundation  
≈ Bobby Osborne  
& the Rocky Top  
X-Press ≈ C4 Atlanta  
≈ Americans for the  
Arts ≈ Doyal Lawson  
& Quicksilver ≈ Art of  
Community: Rural SC  
- Bamberg County/  
Create: Rural South  
Carolina ≈ Lonesome  
River Band ≈ MACED  
≈ Triangle ArtWorks  
≈ Stuart's Opera  
House

<sup>21</sup> <https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/688>

## In the Pines <sup>22</sup>

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.*

Campbellsville  
University ≈ Cultural  
Alliance of York  
County ≈ Ramblin  
Grass ≈ Montana  
Arts Council ≈ Arts  
& Business Council  
of Greater Boston  
≈ Eddie & Martha  
Adock with Tom  
Gray ≈ Artist Trust  
≈ Berea College ≈  
Gary Brewer and the  
Kentucky Ramblers

<sup>22</sup> <https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/694>

general's great-great-grandson, whose great-grandmother owned 31 slaves in 1860,<sup>23</sup> 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<sup>24</sup>  
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*—<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Wikipedia, 2019. "Abraham Bowman," Date of access 22 Nov 2019,  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham\\_Bowman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Bowman)

"Mary Keene, Fayette County." 8th Census, 1860: Kentucky, Slave Schedule, [Washington D.C.]: Bureau of the Census.

<sup>24</sup> Data derived from the Kentucky Geological Survey.

<sup>25</sup> "Total electricity end use in the U.S. from 1975 to 2018 (in billion kilowatt hours)," Statista,  
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/201794/us-electricity-consumption-since-1975/>

## A Few More Days in Sorrow<sup>26</sup>

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.*

<sup>26</sup> <https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/708>

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

(...)

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** <sup>27</sup>

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

<sup>27</sup> <https://lomaxky.omeka.net/items/show/705>

## Seas & Shores (For Edwige)

We sat together under the great, unwallied 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.

(...)

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.”

≈ Alternate Roots  
≈ Sunrise Ridge ≈  
Emily Hall Tremaine  
Foundation ≈ Queens  
Council on the  
Arts ≈ The Moron  
Brothers ≈ Friends  
of South Western  
Virginia ≈ New York  
Foundation for the  
Arts ≈ The Grascals  
≈ Artsbridge ≈ Ohio  
Arts Council ≈

## 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

**ARTISTS  
THRIVE**