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This Issue

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THIS ISSUE

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Millions of people all over the world know the songs, “Jackson,” “The Rev. Mr. Black,” “The Coming of the Roads,” “Ode to the Little Brown Shack Out Back,” “Coal Tattoo” and “Coward of the County.” But not nearly as many people know the name Billy Edd Wheeler, despite the fact that he wrote all of those songs and hundreds more, recorded by approximately one hundred and fifty singers around the world, including Elvis, Loretta Lynn, Judy Collins, Ritchie Havens, Chet Atkins, Kenny Rogers, Hank Williams, Jr. and Conway Twitty. Billy Edd Wheeler is not just a songwriter, but also the author of outdoor dramas and plays, and books of humor, poetry and fiction. He is also a distinguished visual artist, as a quick perusal of this issue will testify. Billy Edd Wheeler is our featured author, artist and singer for this issue. He is also a graduate of Berea College, class of 1955. We here at *Appalachian Heritage* deeply appreciate Billy Edd’s generosity in making this issue possible. We hope you will thoroughly enjoy all his work on the CD and on the pages as well!

Beyond the Billy Edd Wheeler section, we have enjoyed presenting for you what we hope is an appealing array of fiction, poetry, and reviews. Barbara Kingsolver’s *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* has been perched near the top of the best-seller lists all year long, inspiring legions to follow the example of her family in rural Southwest Virginia that attempted an important experiment in eating locally-grown food. The other book reviewed here, *Strange As This Weather Has Been* by Ann Pancake, is a novel about the impact of mountaintop removal coal mining that deserves special interest. Thousands of people all over the region have heard vocal performances by “Sparky” Rucker. Fewer know him as a scholar, especially of the Civil War, and as a folklorist, so his article on “Ballad of Tom Dooley” should be a real treat for many. All this is filled out with fiction and poetry as well as another column from former *Appalachian Heritage* editor, Sidney Saylor Farr, this time an excerpt from her new book, *My Appalachia: A Memoir*, which the University Press of Kentucky just published.