

# The Messenger

---

Volume 2010  
Issue 1 *The Messenger*, 2010

Article 3

---

2010

## Goodbye Louisiana

Will Yarbrough

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#)

---


### Recommended Citation

Yarbrough, Will (2010) "Goodbye Louisiana," *The Messenger*: Vol. 2010: Iss. 1, Article 3.  
Available at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger/vol2010/iss1/3>

This Fiction is brought to you for free and open access by UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Messenger by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu](mailto:scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu).

# Goodbye Louisiana

Will Yarbrough

 You are our swamp tonight. The Lord's put you here— like Noah— under the siege of never ending flood which hails from the mouth of your broken levees that could not withhold our coming doom. Abandoned by your dry governing hands that judged us unfit to be saved, we are not the lovechild of the French quarter or the tourist of Harrahs casino. Under this swimming ink sky we do not parade through the procession of Mardi Gras, but march in waist high tribulation, carrying children on our shoulders who are in need of drink, not from the green and black speckled ocean that burns at their feet, but clean water from which they first tasted upon birth. Trudging through erased streets, bonded in brotherhood by baptism of ill-tempered revelation, in search of forgotten rescue, in need of unseen hope, we are met at the gates of refuge by lowered and loaded rifles, gripped tightly by military faces whose battle cry snarls like a guard dog, "Take one more step and we will shoot," they shout in unison as they cock their dripping levers. Thrown by the wreckful wind, we are displaced amongst your misshapen bones to sleep noisily on your muddied arms and legs. We cannot sleep, and we shall not rest until we are free from your skeletal choke.

So goodbye to you, Louisiana. Even when the Lord swallows up his flood, even when the mud ceases to be wet, even when our houses are rebuilt, we will not return to you. For when the Lord is again filled with anger you will betray us with the same kiss you planted on our cheek this night. We will not return for we know that as we write, inside the shattered homes of our sunken neighborhood are the floating bodies of those who looked in terror upon the water as it slipped between their clenched lips, crawled across their tongues, scratched away at their teeth, and suffocated their coiled throats, and we cannot bear to look upon their forgotten faces for they were once your own.