

The Bitter Southerner Podcast
We Are Storytellers

0:00:00		[The Drive By Truckers: "Ever South"]
	Chuck Reece	It's "The Bitter Southerner Podcast" from Georgia Public Broadcasting and the magazine I edit, "The Bitter Southerner." I'm Chuck Reece, and this is our final episode of season 1. And we're gonna finish our first trip around the podcasting sun with an ode to one of the South's greatest exports to the world: its writing.
0:00:35		The written word is the foundation, the proverbial solid rock, of "The Bitter Southerner." It's the blood in our veins, the oil in our engine. And one could argue that it's also the blood and the oil of the entire South. And we have certainly learned that our audience feels that way over the five years that we've been in business.
0:00:59		So I recently asked our subscribers-- we call 'em "Bitter Southerner" Family Members-- to talk about their favorite Southern writers. And I was pleased to see that their tastes reflected the diversity of our region, with Jesmyn Ward, and Alice Walker, and Zora Neale Hurston landing in the top ten with the likes of Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner, and Harper Lee. Our readers also know that the powerful hold our region maintains even on the people who've left it still shapes the way we live our lives.

0:01:32		Here's Jesmyn Ward, one of the South's greatest living writers, and a National Book Award winner. And back to 2014, when she talked with Georgia Public Broadcasting's Celeste Headlee about exactly that.
	Celeste Headlee	You know, in many ways, you know, it's heartbreaking to read about what happened to you and your family, and what you went through. And yet, you've chosen to raise your daughter still in the South.
	Jesmyn Ward	Mm-hmm.
0:01:58	Celeste Headlee	Why? Was that a difficult decision?
	Jesmyn Ward	It is a difficult decision, You know, I've been in the outside world, I've been-- I've lived in different places. I lived in San Francisco. I lived in New York. I lived in Michigan for a time. And there-- there's even a-- I think a sense of freedom and relief that I often feel when I'm not in the South. And yet, DeLisle is home. My community is so tight knit, and people have been there for generations. Like, just when I count my mother's family, I have more than 200 relatives. And that's difficult to come by, right?
0:02:33		I wanted my daughter to grow up in that kind of environment and to have a really deep-seated understanding of home, and of what it means to live in this place where the landscape lives in your blood, and the people live in your blood, too.
	Chuck Reece	The landscape lives in your blood, and the people live in your blood. That's the word from Jesmyn Ward. She's also a professor at Tulane University in New Orleans.

0:03:03		[music]
	Chuck Reece	<p>Our audience knows the same things live in their blood, too. They look to Southern writers for lessons. They read a writer's take on the forces that bind all Southerners together, and they find new ways to interpret both their love for, and sometimes their disgust with, our region.</p>
0:03:33		<p>So let's take a couple of minutes to listen to a couple of "Bitter Southerner" readers talk about how their favorite Southern writers changed their understanding of the place we all call home.</p>
	Amanda Reynolds	<p>My name is Amanda Reynolds, and I live in Richmond, Virginia. So, my favorite author from the South is Flannery O'Connor, and I was first introduced to her in late middle or early high school.</p>
0:03:58		<p>And as a child, it was always a little on the darker side of things. She did not write about the things that we had traditionally been presented at that, you know, age level, grade level. And I was fascinated with her characters. And you couldn't tell who was the hero, who was the villain. It was all kind of in between, and you were left to draw your own conclusions.</p>
	Cory Haynes	<p>My name is Cory Haynes, and I live in Charleston, South Carolina. My favorite Southern author is James Kilgo.</p>

0:04:32		<p>And this could be a little biased 'cause I grew up in Athens, Georgia, but I was introduced to his work through some of his colleagues and friends, um, at UGA. His work has just touched me on a different level than other people's have. He described the kind of a struggle to maintain a connection with the natural world while living in a-a suburban area, being, you know, a Sunday school teacher, literary professor at Georgia.</p>
0:04:58		<p>I think a lot of people have been living in a city, or moved to a city and have lost touch with, you know, their emotional connection to the natural world in the South. And so hopefully-hopefully a younger generation can find these works and really relate to them in the same way that I have.</p>
		[music]
	Chuck Reece	<p>Something I know: our readers' love for and study of Southern writing, that's made miracles happen for "The Bitter Southerner."</p>
0:05:33		<p>In the early days, when we didn't have a nickel to pay our writers, we still had established veterans and younger writers alike offering their stories for us to publish. And we now have two volumes of what we call "The Bitter Southerner Reader," collections of our stories in print. So today on "The Bitter Southerner Podcast," we're going to spend some quality time with two of our contributors, and with some more of our family members, as we turn the pages of "The Bitter Southerner Reader Volume 2."</p>
0:06:05		[music]

	Chuck Reece	We'll start with a writer who was firmly established before he contributed to "The Bitter Southerner," and was firmly established long before "The Bitter Southerner" was even an idea. His name is Daniel Wallace. Born in Birmingham, lives today in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
0:06:30		And many of y'all probably first heard his name back in 2003. The great British actor Albert Finney, who recently died, took on a starring role in a movie called "Big Fish" that was based on Daniel's novel of the same name. It's a beautiful book. And back in 2015, when we were just getting "The Bitter Southerner" rolling and had been up for about 18 months, I got an invitation from the University of North Carolina's Center for the Study of the American South to speak to their students.
0:07:05		That night, after I spoke to the students, I wound up drinkin' a bit with some local writers. And one of them was Daniel Wallace. And I have to confess, I completely fanboyed out with him, because I was, and-and for many years, had been an avid reader and fan of his work. After we talked a while, Daniel sort of whispered to me.
0:07:28		He said, "would you be interested in reading a story I wrote about the time I killed a chicken?" Now, if you had asked me 18 months earlier if we would ever get the likes of THE Daniel Wallace into our pages, I would have declared you nuts. But we published that story several weeks later. It's called "Killings," and it came complete with Daniel's hand-drawn illustrations.

0:07:55		And now, it's in Volume 2 of "The Bitter Southerner Reader." We asked Daniel to read a section of it for y'all. His story begins with a confession.
	Daniel Wallace	Well, I killed a chicken. That's my news.
		[music]
	Daniel Wallace	I cut its head off with a hatchet, the way people do. This chicken was the first thing I'd ever set out to kill, that I'd planned to kill over the course of many months, and the truth is it was weird, exciting, and sad.
0:08:29		[music]
	Daniel Wallace	I didn't kill it to eat, though it was eventually eaten, in a soup. I didn't kill it because it was a troublemaking chicken, though it was a troublemaking chicken. And I didn't kill it because it deserved to die, whatever that means. I killed it because I'd never killed a chicken before and I wanted to have that experience on my list of things I'd done, sort of like going to Venice, to be able to say, as I'm saying now, "I killed a chicken."
0:09:02		[music]
	Daniel Wallace	So after talking about it, engaging a few friends in my pursuit-- many of whom had a similar desire-- hunting for an appropriate venue and, I hoped, a seasoned killer to accompany me, I did it.

0:09:24		<p>And though you, you who's reading this now, you who may be a hunter of some kind, a gun owner, a man or a woman who goes out in the woods early in the morning for the express purpose of finding something to kill, you might find this discourse silly and vain. I killed a chicken! And this news, more than almost anything else I could write, tells you everything you need to know about me. It explains who I am and the kind of life I've lived up until right now: the kind of life that not only can go on for almost 50 years without purposefully shedding the blood of another living creature,</p>
0:10:02		<p>even a creature whose existence is predicated on being killed, who is born not only to die but born to be killed and eaten-- not only that-- but a man who felt there was something exotic in killing it, something magical and foreign that requires the assistance of something like a shaman, a guru, an ax-wielding sage.</p>
0:10:27		<p>It also describes my friends, some of whom understood my ambition, some of whom shared it, but none of whom, not a single one, had a chicken I could kill.</p>
		[music]
	Daniel Wallace	<p>My sister had a turkey she said I could kill. But I could tell-- even I who had never killed before-- that killing her turkey would be an ordeal. That turkey was huge; it would put up a serious fight. I was scared of her turkey.</p>

0:11:02		I didn't tell her I was scared of her turkey. I told her I would kill it if I could find someone who had experience killing turkeys and who could be there with me when I did it and after a week of not trying even a little to find someone to help me kill the turkey, I told her I hadn't found anybody so she would have to kill the turkey herself if she wanted it dead, which, in the end, she didn't. I think she was just trying to do whatever she could do to help, and was willing to sacrifice her turkey for me.
0:11:35		That's love.
	Chuck Reece	That was Daniel Wallace reading part of his essay, "Killings." We'll post a link to the full piece, with his illustrations, in the show notes, and we'll give you Daniel reading the entire story for you.
0:11:55		Daniel's decision to write for us really felt like a landmark progression for our little magazine. And when we talked to him for this show, he told me that "Killings," a true story, had actually taken him out of his comfort zone, because he had worked only as a novelist before. Maybe we were both lucky. Daniel says the experience actually brought new life to his writing.
	Daniel Wallace	"Killings," uh, this was my first creative nonfiction essay, I think, um, that I'd ever written.
0:12:28		Uh, and then my second was the the second piece I-I published in, uh, "The Bitter Southerner" about my mother. And getting into, um, that form, things started to feel fresher to me.

	Chuck Reece	Fiction or nonfiction, great writing has to speak to big truths. And Daniel Wallace says his forays into nonfiction for "The Bitter Southerner" actually led him to a new and entirely different kind of book project.
0:12:57		He's now working on a nonfiction book that will feature his brother-in-law, William. William was an outdoorsman, admired by his family for the very full life that he seemed to live. But William, sadly, ended that life by his own hand. And now Daniel is working on a book based on William's diaries.
	Daniel Wallace	He would definitely be in "The Bitter Southerner" if he were alive. He-he was a writer, and an illustrator, a cartoonist. He mapped all of the great Southern rivers.
0:13:29		He was a kayaker, a mountain climber, and published ten books on, um, how to be in the world, in the outside world doing these things. He was-- so he was generous, but he was also the kind of man that I think a lot of men wanted to be. Um, and, um, I had his diaries for a really long time before I looked at them, because I had to battle this idea, um, of what it meant to do that--
0:13:59		to look at, um, the private writing of, uh, somebody that you know-- or anybody. His life, um, was really that of-of two people in one. Uh, the-the William that-that we got to see, um, who-who did all these amazing, heroic things, and then this other secretive, dark William who was so full of self-loathing and insecurity and- and inability, really, to see a place for himself in the world where he felt secure and happy,

0:14:34		and-and who, in fact, um, had been working toward killing himself, um, for 30 years. And his journals document that. And so that's, uh-- there's a lot of-of other things going on in this book, but that's it in a nutshell.
0:14:56	Chuck Reece	I'm expectant to read that, and-and it makes me wanna ask you a question, too. I mean, I think that, you know, it would sound like, given the fact that we're talking about, uh, first about, uh, you killing a chicken and the-- and secondly about, uh, the-the- the life of your late brother-in-law-- you know, you dwell particularly in-in pretty dark territory. And one of the things that I've always found about your writing is that that's not the case.-
0:15:28		You know, so many of the books-- and-and at least this is my opinion-- so many of the books that-that we think of, uh, as classics among Southern literature tend to have pretty dark subject matter at the heart of them. But every time I've ever read one of your novels, I have always felt that there was, at the heart of them, this essential sweetness.
0:15:59		As you move into this kind of nonfiction thing more fully, uh, is that something that you intend to- to retain? Is that just part of who you are as a writer and a human being? Or have you even thought about that at all?
	Daniel Wallace	I have thought about it, because the-the nature of this book is-is a little bit darker. Um, I think that you're right. Uh, it's important to me to- to provide a light somewhere there, and it's-- because I feel like it's my role as a writer to do that.

0:16:33		I don't, uh, I don't get any joy out of writing a story that says, "everything sucks-- period."
	Chuck Reece	I don't think those do any of us much good.
	Daniel Wallace	No, they don't do any of us good. Uh, but in telling a story about, um, this incredible person, I think that I'm trying to not only celebrate him in-in all his complexity.
0:17:06		Uh, but it also-- the act of storytelling itself, uh, is, uh, is a light. And one of the reasons-- of the many reasons-- he killed himself is because he didn't tell his story. He was his own double agent and did not share that interior world even with the woman he loved-- my sister-- more than anything.
0:17:36		Not being able to tell your story for whatever reason, uh, is not a good thing. And, uh, that's part of the reason that I wanna tell it. And-and honestly, uh, he-- in one of his last, uh-- he loved to write to-do lists.
	Chuck Reece	Mm-hmm.
0:17:54	Daniel Wallace	And one of his last, last lists was to destroy his journals. Uh, he'd been working toward killing himself for decades, but he seriously was- was putting things together for- for a good week, you know, b-- um, getting all his papers in order and whatnot. So he had every opportunity to do that. Uh, he didn't. And my sister found them and read them.

0:18:27		<p>And then she had every opportunity to destroy them. And she didn't. And so this is the intellectual kind of, um, cavern that I, you know, was in when I was trying to just make my mind up as to whether this was appropriate for me to do, to-to really, um, get this perspective on somebody's life and know somebody better than I know anybody.</p>
0:18:59		<p>Now, you know, knowing him, knowing both sides of him, I know him better than I know myself. And so what I-I think has happened here, or what I like to believe is happening here, is that he did want his story told-- he just couldn't tell it himself.</p>
	Chuck Reece	<p>That is maybe the most elegant summation I've ever heard of the value of storytelling in and of itself.</p>
0:19:29		<p>Because without it, if we don't tell what's inside of us, it becomes something we have to wrestle with internally, which can, uh, cause problems in a variety of organs in the body.</p>
	Daniel Wallace	<p>Mm-hmm. Mm, I absolutely-- I-I absolutely believe that's true, especially now.</p>
0:20:01	Chuck Reece	<p>Once again, that was North Carolina-based author Daniel Wallace. And here's what my experience with Daniel over the last few years has taught me: that I should never be blind to what might come from a so-called chance encounter. One of our "Bitter Southerner" Family Members is about to share with us a similar experience.</p>

	Cherie Mabrey	Hi, I'm Cherie Mabrey, and I live in Catawba, South Carolina, which is a tiny town outside of Charlotte, North Carolina. My favorite Southern writer is Tennessee Williams.
0:20:33		I enjoy his writing because I-I see it. I know it. I know someone in my family that is just like Tom or other characters.
	Chuck Reece	Cherie Mabrey used to direct community theatre. Before that, when she was in college and still studying, she had directed one of Tennessee Williams' lesser known plays. And she got a chance to tell him about it a couple of years before he died. They were at an arts fundraiser in North Carolina.
0:21:03	Cherie Mabrey	I just kind of boldly walked up and said, "Hi, uh, my name is Cherie, and I directed one of your plays." And he wanted to know which one. He was expecting "Street Car" or one of the other, uh-- and when I said "I Can't Imagine Tomorrow," he, like, totally turned face front to me and-and was just riveted to everything else I said.
0:21:28		And of course, I was riveted to everything he said. So, it was really, really neat.
	Chuck Reece	Ever since that, Cherie says, when she reads a play or poem by Tennessee Williams, she still hears his voice. Now, let's meet Laura Relyea. Back in 2015, Laura had an itch to write a story about why she had tried to lose her Southern accent.

0:22:02		<p>Now, I got it. When I first moved to New York City in 1984, folks heard my accent and I often heard mockery come back. Now, sometimes, once a person had determined that I could, in conversation, construct a compound-complex sentence on the fly, my accent became “charming.” But you know, over time, it’s hard to lose a mountain twang like this one, so I just determined I’d have to be damn proud of the way I talked.</p>
0:22:31		<p>In Laura’s essay “With Drawl”-- get it? Two words: with drawl-- Laura remembers trying to get rid of her own Southern accent at the age of 10, which was when her family moved to Chicago from Charlotte, North Carolina.</p>
	<p>Laura Relyea</p>	<p>School started not long after. My teacher introduced me to the class, told them I was from Charlotte. The class was diverse: Filipino, African-American, Caucasian, Polish. But Southern? Not one, save me.</p>
0:23:04		<p>[music]</p>
	<p>Laura Relyea</p>	<p>The interrogations and accusations felt close to immediate, especially when I opened my mouth. “She must be racist,” they said. They called me stupid, slow. It didn’t matter I was in advanced classes or was nerdily bookish. It didn’t matter that a good number of my best friends in Charlotte had been black.</p>

0:23:30		Race wasn't something that occurred to me on the red-clay playgrounds of Charlotte. But in Chicago, they wouldn't let me forget it. My Old Piedmont drawl pigeonholed me, and there was no relief in sight, until it occurred to me: Lose the accent. And that's precisely what I set about doing.
0:23:57		For months I didn't speak in class unless called upon. Mostly I kept to myself and sat in the back, hovered over my textbooks, listening. At lunch I fumbled with my bubble packet of milk, ate my turkey sandwich and studied the way my classmates spoke: "ruff," not roof; "pop," not Coke or Co' cola; "Mom," not Mama. Each linguistic sacrifice pained me, but if I was going to make a life for myself in Chicago, I had to assimilate.
0:24:33		As an adult I've learned that being Southern isn't just about a hometown or an accent, it's a state of mind. It's an assumption that the tea will be sweet, that the bulk of the year will be passed with a thin film of salt on your skin, that our histories come with a distinct sordidness that's better to embrace and grow from than deny. But the truth remains: with the sacrifice of our language, we begin to sacrifice our culture and identity.
0:25:07	Chuck Reece	That was Laura Relyea reading just a small part of her "Bitter Southerner" story, "With Drawl." Laura told me that experiencing discrimination when she got to Chicago as a child because of the way she talked-- that was eye-opening.
	Laura Relyea	It was one of the hardest things, uh, that I'd gone through. And you know, I'd moved around a lot.

0:25:31		<p>But most of my childhood was in Charlotte, and, uh, my-my biological father's from Virginia, and we just-- we were in the South a lot. Um, I lived a pretty privileged existence, and I hadn't experienced discrimination like that in any form or fashion, really. And I'm grateful that I did, because it kind of opened my eyes to all sorts of different ways that people are discriminated against.</p>
0:25:58		<p>And-and it let me to this kind of life of observation and interest in advocating for people who-whose voices get suppressed.</p>
	<p>Chuck Reece</p>	<p>You know, one of the things I loved about this story, too, was the reaction to it, because people were commenting on social media in a way that-that made me think they felt like you had expressed something clearly for them that they had wanted someone to express, and had almost desperately wanted that.</p>
0:26:36		<p>Do you remember some of the things that people said to you after this story came out?</p>
	<p>Laura Relyea</p>	<p>Oh, my gosh. There-- it was overwhelming. I, uh-- there was equal parts nostalgia and then people just expressing ways that they had been-- they had experienced discrimination against the way that they sounded. There was like a whole thing where people were just talking about regionally specific phrases that they wanted to share.</p>
0:27:00		<p>It made me feel at home, I guess.</p>

	Chuck Reece	Well, people wanna hear, you know, the language that they grew up with, you know, which has an almost infinite number of peculiarities in the South. Uh, they wanna know that they were not alone in that language, you know? And I remember when I read your first draft of the story, and I got to the section where you were talkin' about sigogglin' and carryin' groceries in a poke.
0:27:29		Uh, you know, I grew up in the-- the '60s and '70s in north Georgia sayin'-- you know, you'd go to the grocery store and they'd say, "you want 'em in a paper poke?" And I-- I am frequently delighted when I get to have conversations with people like that, because I just think it's a lot of fun to parse through the language of the South. And-- I don't know.
0:27:59		It-it seems like when you have another person in a conversation who's had a similar kind of experience to you on the-- you know, being on the other end of the sociolinguistic discrimination, uh, you feel this almost instant sense of kinship with the other person.
	Laura Relyea	Absolutely. One of the great unifiers, especially of the South, is definitely food, but I'd say our language is-- it's an easy thing to get nostalgic about because when you're removed from it, you know--
0:28:29		Even in Atlanta, there's so many people coming in and out of that city, from all over the world, it's a place where like Southern accents kinda stand out. I-I am grateful that from doing this story and paying attention to things more, uh, I can call out where people are from specifically.

	Chuck Reece	Mm-hmm.
	Laura Relyea	Uh, I was in a class the other day, and the instructor had a very distinct way of speaking.
0:28:58		At the end of class, I went up to her and I was like, "are you from Sandersville?" 'Cause Sandersville, Georgia's a very specific place, uh, where we have lots of good friends from, but it's a very distinct accent, middle Georgia accent. And she was! She was exactly from Sandersville. And she was like, "how did you know?" And I was like, "you sound exactly like some people that I care about very deeply." Um, so that was funny.
0:29:25	Chuck Reece	I wanna read you something that you wrote, from this story, and then ask you a question about it. "When I moved back to the South, to Atlanta, there were few things I hoped for more than the return of my Southern accent. But much to my chagrin, the twang and drawl I longed to hear was seldom found in the city, despite living in what's considered to be "the Deep South." A hard fact became clear to me: native Atlantans might as well be unicorns."
0:29:59		Since-since then, uh, you've moved away from the South again and moved back again. Uh, and-and now you're in Athens. Do you think you have a better chance of finding your drawl again than northern Atlanta?
	Laura Relyea	Yeah, hopefully. I mean, my husband's parents are from Mississippi and Macon, Georgia, so just being around them.
	Chuck Reece	That-that'll help.
	Laura Relyea	A bit is helpful.

0:30:27		Um, yeah, the good thing about unicorns, though, like native Atlantans and native Athenians-- um, once you meet a couple, you-you meet more and more. They-they travel in herds. Um...
	Chuck Reece	Yes, they do.
	Laura Relyea	Uh, but, um, the longer you stay, the longer you-you find more people who've been there for a long time. I hope I-- I don't know if I'll ever actually get a full Southern accent back, but I'm hopeful that my son will have one, raising him here.
0:31:02		Cause we're not going anywhere. I'm done moving. So--
	Chuck Reece	Good-good-good for you. I'm glad to hear that. Maybe-maybe what we need to do is schedule, you know, some dialect lessons for you or something. I can train you. Uh, like, for instance, uh, say to me however you would say it naturally, "I will get you a beer."
	Laura Relyea	I will get you a beer.
	Chuck Reece	See, what-what it needs to be is, "I get you a beer."
0:31:34	Laura Relyea	I-I get you--
	Chuck Reece	I get you a beer.
	Laura Relyea	I get you a beer. You want a cold beer?
	Chuck Reece	You want a cold beer, I get you a beer. See, a little training like that, we can get you there. Well, we love you, Laura Relyea, and, uh, we love your writing for us, and-and now that you're back home, we can't get-- wait to get more of it into "The Bitter Southerner."

0:31:56	Laura Relyea	Thank you. Thank you for having me, and thank you for running this story. What-what started as just a short tangent turned into a very long thing. But I'm glad to have written it. Thank you.
	Chuck Reece	You're welcome.
		Laura Relyea is one of my favorite talented writers, and she lives in Athens, Georgia. Her essay, "With Drawl," is included in "The Bitter Southerner Reader Volume 2."
0:32:36		Now, the fellow you're about to hear is Tad Bartlett. Tad lives in New Orleans, but he's from Selma, Alabama. And he co-wrote a piece for us a while back with Maurice Ruffin. And Maurice, if you haven't heard, is making big waves in the literary world, and recently got a glowing "New York Times" review of his first novel, "We Cast a Shadow." It's a great book.
0:33:01		But every time writers like Tad and Maurice bring us a new story, one thing that happens is that we get to learn about the writers who inspired them. So we asked Tad to tell us about his favorite Southern writer.
	Tad Bartlett	If I had to be pinned down to one, I would say my favorite Southern writer is Louis Nordan. The thing that always attracted me to, uh, to Southern writing is-- if you can pin a genre on it-- is, um, for me, it's-it's the way authors deal with intergenerational debts, either on a larger social level or even on a more personal level.

0:33:36		<p>And that-that's something that I've always looked for and tried to do in my own writing, and it wasn't really until I read Lewis Nordan's "Music of the Swamp" that I saw what to me was just sort of the perfect marriage of-of those two things, both the personal and the social.</p>
	Chuck Reece	<p>Lewis Nordan grew up in Itta Bena, Mississippi. Isn't that a musical name for a town?</p>
0:33:57		<p>And Tad says that Nordan's book, "Music of the Swamp" opened his eyes in a way other Southern stories had not. The book centers on a young boy named Sugar Mecklin and his broken relationship with his alcoholic dad.</p>
	Tad Bartlett	<p>In the final scene of the book, um, Sugar's older, and he's laying in bed with this woman who he thinks he might love. And, uh, he-he immediately starts thinking about, uh, well, his dad, of course, right. What-- the conclusion he comes to as he's laying in bed with this-this, uh, this woman and thinking about his dad and their inability to-to talk about love with each other is, um, that there is great pain in all love, but we don't care.</p>

0:34:37		<p>It's worth it. You know, for me, a lot of the things I write are dealing with relationships between fathers and sons, and, um, it doesn't take a great psychologist-- although it's invisible to me-- um, that I'm trying to figure out my relationship with my father. And something about Sugar Mecklin in "Music of the Swamp" and the way Lewis Nordan wrote him, it made me realize answers to questions I didn't even know I was asking. And that's-that's the best writing.</p>
0:35:02	Chuck Reece	<p>Now, that's how the wheel keeps turning, see? Great writing plants new questions inside of us, and those little seeds can grow to become new stories. And to see how that happens, I'd invite you to read the story Tad Bartlett and Maurice Ruffin wrote for us a little over a year ago called, "Kings of the Confederate Road."</p>
0:35:27		<p>It was a remarkable dialogue between two native Southerners, one of them white-- Tad-- and one of them black-- Maurice-- as they visited Confederate monuments on a road trip from New Orleans to Selma.</p>
		<p>Now, "The Bitter Southerner" could never have had this little garden of stories growing without our Family Members, so I think it's time for me to shut up and let one more of them tell you why she loves a particular writer-- the late Pat Conroy.</p>

0:36:06	Andrea DeSantiago	<p>My name is Andrea DeSantiago, and I live in Brooks County, Georgia. My favorite Southern writer is Pat Conroy. I had the privilege of meeting him a few years ago at the Savannah Book Festival, and it is a memory that I cherish. And his autograph is one of my prized possessions. And there's actually a quote from "My Reading Life" that sums him up for me, and it says,</p>
0:36:30		<p>"here is all I ask of a book: give me everything, everything, and don't leave out a single word." And when he autographed my copy of that same book, his autograph reads, "For the love of words." And to me, that's just him in a nutshell. You really got the sense that this was a hometown native writing what he knew.</p>
0:36:56		<p>You could feel the humidity in Charleston. You can, you know, smell the-the breeze from the marshes, and you can see the people walking and interacting in the streets and in the stories. And you know it's from a place of, you know, personal knowledge and experience. And he takes you to that place with him.</p>
	Chuck Reece	<p>Our thanks to all our "Bitter Southerner" Family Members for lending us their voices for this finale of Season 1. If you'd like to become a member of our growing family, just visit our site at bittersoutherner.com.</p>
0:37:34		<p>And you know, if you think you've got a Southern story bubbling up inside of you, you might consider submitting it to the Folklore Project section of our site, where we bring the world a new essay from our readers every single week.</p>

		All right, that's it for us today. You can go to our website to read stories from all our beloved contributors, and you can subscribe to our podcast.
0:37:59		And if you decide to listen back through Season 1 again, Laura Relyea has a suggestion for ya.
	Laura Relyea	I get you a beer. You want a cold beer?
	Chuck Reece	Yeah, man, I'll get you a beer-- 'specially if you feel like kicking back and listening to some folks with twangs in their voices-- folks who really don't give a damn what you think about the way they talk. And you know, we've had plenty of such voices this season. So do crack open a cold one, or a fizzy water, if you prefer-- we don't care what you drink. We just want you to listen again.
0:38:28		And don't be sad, children. We'll be back with Season 2 before you know it. And if you've got an idea about what stories we should tell next season, let us know. Hit us up on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram. In the meantime, if you like "The Bitter Southerner Podcast," please do review and rate it on Apple's iTunes, even if you listen to it somewhere else. That helps us make sure that new folks get to hear "the twang. "

0:38:56		<p>Throughout season 1, the Mighty Mighty Sean Powers has been our producer, and Sara Shahriari has been our wise editor. My personal thanks go out to Dean Charles Davis of the University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism, because Sean and Sara are both former students of Charles', and I'm grateful to him, because these two, they got chops. And proper respect to the gang of storytellers in the newsroom at GPB who have helped us improve every episode. Thanks, y'all.</p>
0:39:28		<p>To the whole crew of our magazine, thank you, 'cause you know none of this happens without you. Thanks, as always, to my good friend Patterson Hood and his band, the almighty Drive By Truckers, for giving us "Ever South" as our theme song. Thanks to Blue Dot Sessions for the additional music this episode. "The Bitter Southerner Podcast" is a co-production of Georgia Public Broadcasting and "The Bitter Southerner Magazine." I'm Chuck Reece. And until Season 2, please remember to hug more necks, to abide no hatred, and to keep doing the things that you love with the people you love.</p>
0:40:06		We'll see you very soon.
		[music]