

EDITOR'S NOTE

SUMMER READING, SUMMER SIPPING

by Sara Camp Milam



SUMMER IS NOT MY FAVORITE SEASON, and as far as I can remember, it never was. I dislike the following activities, in combination or individually: wearing a bathing suit, sweating, and getting sunburned. And all three are utterly unavoidable in this part of the country between May and September. (I'm a really fun person, though. I swear!)

Then again, summer's good for a few things. The top two are cold drinks and good books. When I was younger, this meant the Parrot-Ice brand of gas-station slushies slurped while reading trashy mysteries that were maybe not quite age appropriate. Today, my summer fantasy looks more like a glass of rosé, or a Campari and soda, served alongside a fresh novel, preferably humorous, that errs on the lighter side of literary fiction. Last weekend, *The Vacationers* by Emma Straub fit that bill. (My colleague Melissa was lukewarm on this story of affluent, dysfunctional Manhattanites vacationing in Mallorca. If you read it, let us know which side you're on.)

From ages eight to fifteen, my other favorite thing about summer was spending three weeks at camp in the North Carolina mountains. These days, my lanyard skills are rusty and I doubt I could scramble up a rock wall, much less rappel back down. Instead, I look forward to the adult equivalent of camp: the SFA Summer Symposium. By the time you read this, we will have just returned from a weekend in New Orleans learning about po-boys, banh mi, and Technicolor Bourbon Street cocktails.

In the hope that you, too, enjoy a refreshing summer beverage, we packed this issue of *Gravy* with cocktail stories. It seemed like the right kind of summer reading—and then, as luck would have it, we hit a few toast-worthy milestones. First, we won the James Beard Foundation Award for Publication of the Year. And a personal achievement: This issue marks my five-year anniversary as *Gravy's* editor.

We raise a happy-but-sad toast to Devin Cox, our longtime graphic designer for *Gravy* and myriad other SFA projects. You know that "SFA Look" you've come to associate with our printed materials? That's Devin. As his career grows in Austin, Texas, Devin is retiring from *Gravy*. We can't thank him enough, and we wish him the best. In the next issue, you'll meet our incoming designer, Richie Swann. 🍷

PHOTO by Sara Wood.