

Welcome to MAYPOP

Even after all these years outdoors on our family farm in Middle Tennessee, whenever I stumble across passion flower blooming mid-pasture I'm still taken aback by its sudden appearance—so seemingly out of place, that splash of purple on a dropcloth of green.

And I always recollect the first time I spotted *Passiflora incarnata*, twining the spokes of a long-abandoned hay rake sacrificed to the weeds. As Andrew Hudgins states with sublime accuracy in "Seventeen," his poem about memory and childhood and rite of passage, "But then I didn't know that they had names, those roadside weeds." To an eleven year old out roaming the hillsides, this flower—complicated in composition and overstated in its splayed layers of petal, corona, and hairy appendages—was exotic beyond imagination and defied naming or description.

Tennessee's official wildflower is a survivor, seeming to find portion wherever it wants: along railroad tracks and in roadway ditches, in unmowed fields and dense thickets; often it is one of the first natives to re-emerge in disturbed landscapes, and our passion flower grows from one end of the state to the other.

The origin of its common name, maypop, is a point of some contention. One source refers to the plant's disappearance at killing frost, its habit of devoting perennial energies underground where an elaborate root system allows the vine to "pop" suddenly in Spring. Another source says the name comes from the yellow, egg-shaped, edible fruit that "may pop" when you touch them, and which have led to yet another less common name, wild apricot.

By whatever name you choose, Maypop seemed a perfect title for a magazine, and especially one publishing Tennessee writers, and specifically, members of the Tennessee Writers Alliance.

We are a varied bunch, multi-layered, complicated, blooming in every corner of the state. We wrap our words against abandonment, creating a new symbology often dependent on the landscape itself, and we seem to be able to survive in any soil. When cold weather comes, our intricate roots are substantial and sustaining.

At recent board meetings of the TWA one focus of discussion has been on projects that promote the membership, that offer more services and opportunities. Maypop, we hope, is one answer to that challenge. Please accept this invitation to submit your work—poetry, short stories, book reviews, essays, creative nonfiction—for inclusion in your online magazine. Please visit www.tn-writers.org for submission guidelines.

John Keats said, "The poetry of the earth is never dead," though perhaps sometimes it lies dormant. For that passion flower in full bloom, or a plant readying itself for coming winter, Maypop wants to be fertile ground where TWA members can find root, showcase their best colors, and find sustenance and community.



Randy Mackin, Editor