

THE GAR DIARIES

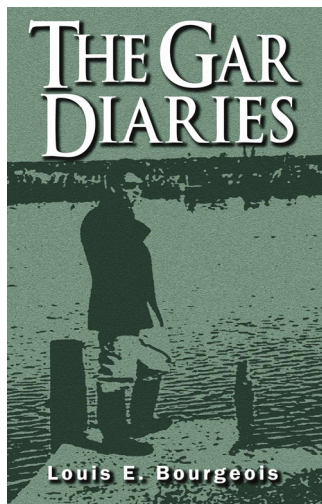
by Louis E. Bourgeois

The Book

The Gar Diaries, in an almost surreal way, deals with the problems of growing up working class in South Louisiana toward the end of the 20th century. The main character, Lucas Jeanfreaux, has no illusion about his troubled life along these bayous of Louisiana.

Born into a troubled, working class existence at the very end of the Vietnam war, Lucas understands only three things at a very early age: there was a war and now it's over, there is something dark about his life, and, somehow he is not like other people.

With extraordinary honesty, *The Gar Diaries* will appeal to your most sensitive side and your most brutal side. Lucas Jeanfreaux will carry you through the beauty and horror of his world and his fight for inner redemption.



The Early Reviews

Every once in a while a book comes along that captures the universal truths which we all suspect exist but cannot verify until we read them on the printed page. *The Gar Diaries* is just such a book; full of breathtaking highs and lows, penetrating insight, wicked humor, and those universal truths which we covet. The verdict is in: this is the non-fiction debut of a major American writer, a book that will be discussed for years to come.

J.E. Pitts, *Oxford American*

Poetic and pungent in detail, *The Gar Diaries* is a collection of stories fiercely wrought at the hand of one who learned life's lessons early. A melancholy child with sharp self-awareness and sense of purpose, Louis Bourgeois soaks the pages with images of his southeastern Louisiana existence as a gar fisherman's son. The gar, considered a trash fish, is a delicacy among the poor and working class people Bourgeois grew up among. He is like the gar, offering a feast of evocative writing, redolent of violence and redemption. From the darkest of places, his pen began to move and the words came, weaving the fabric of a boy's coming of age and a man in a black crepe blazer on his way to fame.

Kathy Rhodes, author of *Pink Butterbeans*, and editor of *Muscadine Lines: A Southern Journal* and *Muscadine Lines: A Southern Anthology*.

The Gar Diaries is, indeed, a testament to genuine survival. Written as a memoir, the boy-child Lucas, riddled with adult tribulation, transports the reader through bayous, suburbs, and cities of Southeastern Louisiana to discover his identity within the societal constraint of the working class. As Lucas matures, he delves further into the hardcore, personal realms of trial and error. The honest, yet sometimes, decisively derisive, deviant language of author Louis Bourgeois sets the tone for a smooth, provocative read — as Lucas reaps the whirlwind of good and evil.

Katherine Tracy, *Thunder Rain Publishing Corp.*

What happens to a child who grows up amid the polluted canals and bayous of Slidell, Louisiana? Told in the vernacular of working-class southeast Louisiana, Louis E. Bourgeois's memoir, *The Gar Diaries*, shows us a world where a child, out of loneliness and fear, tries to eat cockroaches, where men beat their wives unmercifully and take drugs in front of the children. This is a place where rabid dogs run in the streets and hideous worm-like creatures swim in the ditches. The book is about wounds — emotional, psychological, and physical — and about the scars that remain after these wounds have "healed." More than that, as the wild chickens at the end of the book demonstrate, it is about survival. Louis E. Bourgeois is a survivor, and *The Gar Diaries* is fascinating.

Hiram Goza, author of *Birds of Paradise*

The Author

Louis Bourgeois was born in New Orleans, Louisiana and raised in the Slidell /LaCombe area, as well as East New Orleans on Bayou Sauvage. Louis has published translations, fiction, memoirs, poetry and interviews in over two hundred magazines and journals in North America, Europe and Asia.

Bourgeois' books include, *Through The Cemetery Gates*, *The Distance of Ducks*, *The Animal*, *Cora Falling Off the Face of the Earth*, *White Night*, *Fragments of a Life Thirty-two Years Gone*, and *OLGA*.

Louis is also the co-founder and editor of VOX, an independent experimental literary journal based in Oxford, Mississippi.



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