

WHITE SOUTHERNERS
CANDIDATES IN CREATIVE WRITING

Comments by Arna Bontemps

There is, in my opinion, a touch of greatness in at least two of these applicants in creative writing: Woody Guthrie and Thomas Sancton. Both are wonderful bets. The rest of the field shapes up about as indicated by the following order:

	Group
1. Woody Guthrie ****	49
2. Thomas Sancton ****	4
3. Robert Penn Warren ***	45
4. Robert Ramsey ***	45
5. Robert Gibbons ***	4
6. Hudson Strode ***	4
7. Stetson Kennedy **	4
8. Barbara Tunnell Anderson **	45
9. William Kimbrough **	4
10. Frank Goodwyn *	45
11. Mary B. Gwathmey	4

The stars indicate my own odds. One or two observations might be added:

- A. The case of Strode seems rather odd. One wonders how he could be helped by a fellowship, considering his age, his secure position and the nature of his project. It would seem a pity (from my point of view) to deny the young fellow who follows him on the list a chance in view of the above, despite the fact that Strode's accomplishment is obviously far greater.
- B. Gibbons looks very good, but it might be fair to ask what he did with his Knopf fellowship.
- C. Kimbrough is rather remarkable in view of his age, but the above list was not influenced by such consideration. He is a talented story-teller but doesn't seem to have anything important to say at this stage of his career.
- D. I'm impressed with Kennedy's last book. His new one, too, is promising.
- E. Barbara Anderson's outline puzzles me. The mulatto theme is a great one and urgent, but I'd hate to see it muffed. The note about Strode also applies to her (though her achievement is less): age, security, etc.
- F. Mary B. Gwathmey --?!!!