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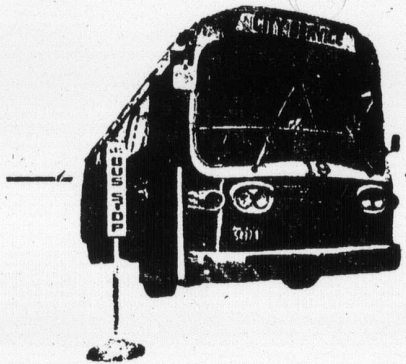
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Proud Southerner Young Black Writer Back Home In South

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

By Roy Hamric

DALLAS, Dec. 26 — Tom Weatherly, writer-in-residence at Bishop College, says he is one of an increasing number of young black writers returning to the South to explore their roots.

The 28-year-old Alabama native came to Dallas in August after spending seven years on the East Coast. He's back in the South now because "it offers something spiritual, sort of like coming home and feeling proud to be a Southerner."

"The South in particular hasn't used all its resources," he says. "It's lost everything from football players to writers."

But that may be slowly changing.

"SOUTHERN writers still have to go to New York or California to be recognized. Those are the cultural centers in this country, but Dallas has every right to be a cultural center. There's no reason it shouldn't be," he said.

Weatherly defines his politics as conservative. One of his current projects is to get a poem published in William Buckley's National Review magazine.

"I was influenced a lot by Buckley," said Weatherly, "but I disagree with him on a lot of things."

"The pure conservative philosophy offers the maximum in individual freedom," he said. "And when conservatives like the Buckleys have more influence, then conservatism, in general, will be straightened out."

CONSERVATISM is catching on among a growing number of young blacks, Weather-

ly said.

"Basically, my conservatism is a belief in a personal God and as much individual freedom as possible, along with a free market of ideas."

He said he was first impressed with the power of words by listening to a politician, Big Jim Folsom of Alabama.

"He could satisfy a segregationist and, at the same time, satisfy black voters, too," Weatherly said.

A Marine Corps veteran, he published his first book of poetry, "Mau Mau Cantos," this year and co-edited an anthology of black poetry, "Natural Process," to be released next month by Hill & Wang.

WEATHERLY said American black poetry has never offered a wider variety of forms, emotions or language. "You have more individuality among black writers now than ever before."

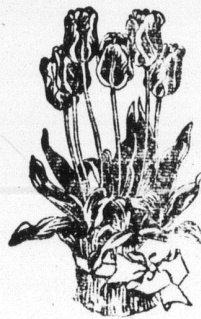
"This generation is bring-

ing more black poets in but you really can't call them black poets — they cover too wide a range of emotions and subjects," he said.

"You don't find as many honky-baiting poems now," he said. "Besides, a lot of white writers are writing honky-baiting poems nowadays, and if you agree one of the problems of the country is white racism, then it's a problem only whites can cure."

A teacher off and on for the past several years, Weatherly taught at Rutgers University in Newark, N.J., last year. Prior to that, he conducted a poetry workshop in East Harlem, sponsored by the New York Parks Department.

"The purpose of the program was to give kids something better to do than throw a brick or something, to try to teach them something useful like words," he said. "I believe words are powerful."



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