

by Luke Rodehorst, from Juked #6, Spring 2009

*The Oracle at Delphi
tells you to know yourself*

The oracle of Oxford, Mississippi tells you to sleep under a magnolia and wear overalls. The journey to Delphi is part of the preparation for the supplicant. On the way to Oxford you will cross the Yazoo River. Take a left at the blind fiddler (it might be nice to buy

him a drink). For either place, carry laurel leaves. The Oracle will always be a woman named Pythia. She smokes and drinks bourbon and is hard of hearing. Vapor rises from the earth, smelling something like propane and home cooking. Supposedly the Oracle is a virgin. I don't buy it because when I asked her about Cait she said something about open doors and closed doors, about how I should've known the moment showering became an exercise in cleanliness. I kicked myself the whole way back for asking such a wasted question. When I told the blind fiddler, he bought me a drink. I decided to take an alternate route home which delivered me to mourning doves in cotton fields, wishing I had a pocketknife and a map. I took up a handful of dirt. Fuck you, Pythia, and your vapors and cigarettes. I knelt to pray by a river, but couldn't clear my mind of morning sex and railroad ties. And then the sound of shape notes from the sweetgum, a congregation all in white. A man with six fingers on his left hand washes my feet. He traces a map in the dirt and tells me to follow the river. *Sure, I say, but where am I now?* He clears his throat, points and says you're here.