House in Clear Lake, Texas  
by Sybil Pittman Estess

It was before the hurricane Ike  
many months ago. I toured the house  
on the bayou, for sale. So upscale.

It had a gray kitchen with all  
kitchen conveniences, gadgets.  
The sink window looked out at blue  
swimming pool, trimmed in blue tile.  
The bathrooms also were blue, navy.  
Navy-blue tile on the tubs. The grout  
on the blue was gold. The house was  
owned by an old psychiatrist, his wife.  
But they were splitting. They had just  
moved on out. The realtor said she  
would show me the doctor’s “study.”  
Before, I had met, however, horror.

A brown, standing stuffed grizzly  
who stood, claws up, greeting  
us at the door. There were other  
animals, too, the doctor had killed  
while on his hunts: a tiger, a cougar,  
a jaguar, some deer, elk and fox.

In his study, I expected some books.  
Perhaps a Freudian couch for his  
suffering patients whom he must  
have tried desperately to help. Instead,  
I found forty—I counted them—  
rifles on racks on the walls.

“And these do not include his  
antique collections in banks,” so  
the realtor told me. And in the same  
room was a clothes rack, with wheels,  
holding his wife’s twelve fur coats—  
most of them mink. Has the house
blown away, or sold? Guns and the furs?
What fate for the house with the creatures’
dead, pitiful souls? What has become

of that poor old doctor’s life-long rage?