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- Blowing Rock - Juanita Rose Brown Tobin

Born on February 12, 1915 to Charles F. and Hattie Young Brown. Her mother grew up on Ransom Street and was educated at the Skyland Institute. She married a "saw mill man" from Mortimer and the Brown family moved around quite a bit when Juanita was young. She made frequent trips back to Blowing Rock to visit and occasionally live with her grandmother.

Juanita graduated from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing in 1944. For twenty years, she worked as a psychiatric nurse at Dorothea Dix Hospital, the state psychiatric hospital in Raleigh. She remembered "I worked in Broughton Building, the worst building on the hill (Dix Hospital). The census averaged 66 patients, one third chronic schizophrenia and mental retardation, one third criminal, and one third drug/alcohol addiction and youth acting out." She returned to Blowing Rock to take care of her mother in the early 1980s.

Tobin is primarily remembered locally as a poet. She recalled "Sam Ragan convinced me I should write poetry. I was forty two and I was taking a class from him at State College in Raleigh. I was working as a psychiatric nurse at Dorothea Dix Hospital. I thought if I could learn to write, I could teach some of my patients. I felt like that would help them."

Juanita authored six books of poetry in her life: *Ransom Street Quartet*, *License My Roving Hands*, *white family saga*, *The Crooked Pine*, *In Grape Time*, *Kingpins and China Dolls*, *Zekes and a Zillion Cats*. She won many awards...