



Poetrynow



2 poems by Sharyn Stever

Birdland

I wanted finches,
two little red-headed songsters
so one wouldn't mourn away
the day and die of loneliness
and lack of love. But the wire cage
disturbed me too much like the mesh
of my mother's brain and her
wavering disbelief that she no longer
makes the obvious connections,
the wires of her brain dulled
pale then bright, then pale again
like birdsongs gone weak
when the cage door is stuck.
Today, it is raining language:
A song constant and repeating
yet never tiresome--Sitting at ease near
Mother, the husband, long dead, gives
advice. She listens then recounts her story
of scrub jays making a nest in the oleander,
how the female scares trespassers
away with her multiple squawkings.
Hear the rain as it pours and wind
slanting water curtains across the street
as if to wash away futility. Listen
to the synapses of rain miss each other.
Give in to what cannot be remembered
nor understood. Look carefully at Mother,
receding behind the curtain, translucent.
I wanted finches, two of them,
red-headed and lovely sounding.

Aubade

Only yesterday, I leaned out
over the edge of this table,
stretching to retrieve the saucer.
Shattered, the gilt rim spun
away from its broken center.
This morning the cup,
its red Russian horse galloping
toward the lip, warms my hands.
Earlier, when it happened,
when your hand touched my face,
your fingers descending from the temple
along cheekbone, under an eye. . .
Slowly, I thought about tenderness.
That it's not the command desire brings
but conversation in its most elemental form.
Not unlike music as it enters the body.
First through vibration then,
momentarily, absorbed in bone.

Sharyn Stever reads at The Book Collector Wednesday, October 11
Celebrate the release of *Heron's Run*, Sharyn's new chapbook from Rattlesnake Press.
The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street, Sacramento.

october2006

Too Much Land

Of impassable thickets, of sun-heated pines,
Too much abundance and I could care less,
Let it catch fire, these airless expanses,
These time-honored stones where hunters pace
Under a bare-faced moon. Here the fury
Of my adherent yoke transfixes me with a million
Eyes on this spit-spattered frontier, in these
Childhood fields of skeletons and scars.
Here the rising dust burns hot, never
A sweet drowsiness but the gray dress
Of memory where I arrange my own grave,
My future foretold, the ground mauled
And torn like an ex-lover's letter crushed in the palm.
September brings the taste of old disquiet,
Seed scattering in the wind, the darkening clouds
Descending low smelling of moth-eaten fabric,
Leafage gnawed by stars; this is the illusion
Of success, these ancestral hills, my destiny's breadth.
Come hot flower of flame, scorch and flatten,
Topple the familial foundation of these difficult days.

Naked

After they rolled dice and whispered as if he had no presence,
 And grain by grain, particle- by- particle

The night things stirred-- the new sun like a boat of gold, the splinters
 Of light rising like sap, haunch by haunch

Filling the boredom of now-it-is over, the matter of stars coming out
 Like a thousand adulteries, the shouts of the earth

Diminishing and the hoarse scents overlapping—

He lay there in the dirt, completely unguarded, the long narrow bars
 Of the body called root, the slivered curve

Of the spine: seed-pod bearing witness to the scene, blemished
 Drag-marked beauty, the reconciled dissolving,

Rotting, the funneled lily flung backwards--

Here lying separate, abandoned: raw and rudimentary, a condemned man
 Unparticular as bottom rushes and leaves,

Bare as white-water, hammer of thunder, razor of lightening,
 Heart drowning following one step behind

In its rattle of blood, proof of the-nothing-exceptional or manifested,
 No rumor of resurrection, or fragrant ritual

Only this shape, narrow shoulders hunched over like a vestigial claw--

Leonore Wilson's poetry has been published in such magazines as Quarterly West, Laurel Review, Third Coast, Madison Review, Pif, Poet and Critic, etc. She lives and teaches in Northern California

Three poems by Tom Miner

“Why?” She Asks

On the trail to Tomales Point,
I slog uphill in a cold drizzle,
Calves burning, stomach growling.

With each step the friction of my rain pants
Whispers my wife’s warm voice from home:
“Why?” she asks.

I turn a corner, look up to see
I am surrounded by a herd of tule elk
Frozen quiet, all eyes on me.

Portent

Cold wind whispers rain
Through ten thousand pines
Bruised clouds scuff the sky
While redtail hawk cocks its wings
And dives, a shred of winter in its beak.

This trail far from home
Rises before my feet;
I lean forward in reverence
Then quicken my pace.

Solstice

Drawn outside at midnight
By the honking of geese
I peer straight up
At a gibbous moon
Out of focus
In its bruised halo,
The sky upholstered with clouds,
Scent of citrus in the air.

In the backyard,
A chill shivers the leaves
Of the grapefruit tree,
Polishing the dimpled skin
Of the bulbous fruit.

Inside, my wife and daughters
Nestle under fat quilts,
The cat curled on the couch
Like a cashew. Their warmth
Tugs at my back like a tide.

The honking now: far off
To the south. Winter twitches
Through my sinews.

A writing instructor at Sacramento City College, Tom Miner lives near the Sacramento Zoo with his wife Elisabeth and two daughters, Sara and Mieke. When not scribbling poems, he is hiking in the Sierras and climbing mountains. Last fall, he trudged for 23 days on the Annapurna Circuit/Base Camp trail, surviving Thorung La, at 17,800 feet, the highest pass in the world.

spc poetry contest 2006

final judge: Sacramento poet laureate Julia connor

**first prize \$100 / second prize \$50 / third prize \$25
ten honorable mentions (\$10 gift certificates from barnes & noble)**

**entry fee \$3 per poem
send your poems to
spc 2006 contest / 1719 25th Street / sacramento, ca 95816**

**deadline: december 15, 2006
winners will be notified in january, featured in poetrynow,
and invited to read at a special reading at spc.
*send us your poetry now***

Sacramento Literary Calendar for October 2006

Monday, October 2

Sacramento Poetry Center presents
Andy Jones and **Brad Henderson**.
7:30 p.m., SPC/HQ for the Arts,
1719-25th (25th and R) Tim Kahl hosts.
451-5569. Free.

Taylor Graham reads at The Other Voice in
Davis 7:30pm at Davis Unitarian Church

Tuesday, October 3

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30pm, Hart Senior
Center, 27th & J. Bring 15 - 20 copies of
your one-page poem. Info: Danyen, (530)
756-6228. Free.
www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org/SPC
Workshop News.

Wednesday, October 4

Mics and Moods features **Heather Christian**
at Capitol Garage, 1500 K Street. 10pm-
midnight. Features and Open Mic hosted by
Khiry Malik. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or
492-9336. 21 and over / \$5 cover.

Thursday, October 5

Poetry Unplugged presents TBA. Open mic
before/after. Hosted by Mario Ellis Hill.
8pm at Luna's Café, 1414 16th Street.
Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free.

Vibe Sessions at Cobbler Inn, 3520
Stockton Blvd. (next to Colonial Theater)
Hosted by Flo Real 8-11pm. \$5.00 All ages.
Open Mic for comedians, singers, poets.

Saturday, October 7

First Saturday Poetry Series
Sojourner Truth Art Center, 2251 Florin Rd.
(Corner of Tamoshanter and Florin). 7pm.
Hosted by Noah Hayes and Felicia McGee.
All ages / \$5.00. Come early for workshop.
Info: www.malikspeaks.com

Escritores del Nuevo Sol's writing workshop
and potluck on 1st Saturdays. 11am.
La Raza Galeria Posada, 1024 - 22nd Street
(NEW LOCATION) Sacramento. For info call
Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or
joannpen@comcast.net.

Monday, October 9

Richard Beban reads at the Sacramento
Poetry Center. Hosted by Indigo Moor. 7:30
p.m. SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719-25th (25th
and R) 451-5569. Free.

Tuesday, October 10

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30pm, Hart Senior
Center, 27th & J. See Oct 3 for details

Wednesday, October 11

Sharyn Stever reads at the Book Collector.
Come celebrate the release of *Heron's Run*,
Sharyn's new chapbook from Rattlesnake
Press. The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street,
Sacramento. Rattlesnake will also release
Tim Kahl's new littlesnake broadside:
Mysterious Rebus.

Mics and Moods at Capitol Garage, 1500 K
Street. 10pm to midnight. Features and
Open Mic hosted by Khiry Malik. Info:
www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. 21 and
over / \$5 cover.

Dr. Andy's Poetry and Technology Hour,
host Andy Jones, 5pm, KDVS-90.3 FM or
subscribe to podcast at www.kdvs.org.
www.culturelover.com.

Thursday, October 12

Vibe Sessions features **Random Abiladeze**
– up and coming local spoken word and hip-
hop artist at Cobbler Inn, 3520 Stockton
Blvd. (next to Colonial Theater) Hosted by
Flo Real 8-11pm. \$5.00 All ages. Open Mic
for comedians, singers, poets.

Poetry Unplugged presents TBA. Open mic
before/after. Hosted by Geoffrey Neil. 8pm
at Luna's Café, 1414 16th Street. Info: 441-
3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free.

Monday, October 16

Sacramento Poetry Center presents
Poets of Luther Burbank High School.
hosted by Bob Stanley. 7:30 p.m., SPC/HQ
for the Arts, 1719-25th
(25th and R) 451-5569. Free.

Tuesday, October 17

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30pm, See October 3 for details

Wednesday, October 18

Urban Voices presents **Mary Mackey**. The renowned novelist, poet, filmmaker and publisher is also a dynamic reader. Don't miss this! Hosted by B.L. Kennedy, 6:30 – 8 p.m. South Natomas Library, 2901 Truxel Rd. Free.

Mics and Moods at Capitol Garage, 1500 K Street. 10pm to midnight. Features and Open Mic hosted by Khiry Malik. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. 21 and over / \$5 cover.

Moore time for Poetry: Terry Moore's Access Television Show, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 9pm, co-host Tyra Moore. Access Sacramento, Channel 17. updates: tvguide.com. (916) 208-7638.

Thursday, October 19

Poetry Unplugged presents **Bob Stanley**. Open mic before/after. Hosted by frank andrick. 8pm at Luna's Café. See October 5 for details.

Vibe Sessions at Cobbler Inn, 3520 Stockton Blvd. (next to Colonial Theater) Hosted by Flo Real 8-11pm. \$5.00 All ages. Open Mic for comedians, singers, poets.

Saturday, October 21

Underground Poetry Series features Red Fox poets **Wendy Williams & Brigit Truex** plus **Lori Jean Robinson** and **Random Abiladeze**. plus open mic. 7-9pm, \$3.00. Underground Books, 2814 35th Street (35th and Broadway). La-Rue' is the series host. If you would like to be a featured poet contact Terry Moore at 455-POET.

Sunday, October 22

Taylor Graham will be reading from her new book, [*The Downstairs Dance Floor*](#), winner of the [*Robert Phillips Poetry Chapbook Prize*](#). The Book Collector (1008 24th St., Sacramento) at 4 pm.

Monday, October 23

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Joshua Clover**, author of *The Totality For Kids* (2006) and *Madonna anno domini* (1997) winner of the Walt Whitman Award from The Academy of American Poets. Clover teaches at UC, Davis, and contributes to *Village Voice* and the *New York Times*. Host Tim Kahl. 7:30 p.m., SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719-25th (25th and R) 451-5569. Free.

Tuesday, October 24

SPC Poetry Workshop, (See October 3 for details)

Wednesday, October 25

Dr. Andy's Poetry and Technology Hour, 5pm, KDVS-90.3 FM or www.kdvs.org.

Mics and Moods at Capitol Garage, 1500 K Street. 10pm to midnight. Features and Open Mic hosted by Khiry Malik. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. 21 and over / \$5 cover.

Thursday, October 26

Poetry Unplugged features **Art Beck and Jane Blue** plus open mic before/after. Hosted by B.L. Kennedy. 8pm at Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free.

Vibe Sessions presents **Kevin Sandbloom** at Cobbler Inn, 3520 Stockton Blvd. (next to Colonial Theater) Hosted by Flo Real 8-11pm. \$5.00 All ages. Open Mic for comedians, singers, poets.

Saturday, October 28

"The Show" Poetry Series features Neo-Soul vocalist **Kevin Sandbloom** from Los Angeles, plus extended open mic time **Born 2B Poets** with special guest **Bloom Beloved**. 7-9 pm Wo'se Community Center (Off 35th and Broadway), 2863 35th Street, Sac; \$5.00. Info: T.Mo at (916) 455-POET.

30 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center
no reading tonight

The Setich Manor Poems by B.L. Kennedy (Rattlesnake Press, 2006)

Reviewed by Bill Gainer

B.L. Kennedy's new book, *Setich Manor Poems*, is definitely one of his better works. I first ran across a sampling of these poems a couple of years ago in Kennedy's book *Been Born Bronx* and thought, "he needs to do more of this." Kennedy is known for working across a wide range of poetic styles and genre, and though he has often touched the confessional and observational form I feel he has never found complete abandon there – until now! In *Setich Manor Poems* Kennedy lets go and gives us a poetic narrative of sixteen untitled poems that welcome the reader to his home, his city, his life. He tells of the place he lives and yes, oddly – loves. His confessions, though pointed, are in-fact teased with the tenderness of the un-acted sin and his observations, though seemingly raw, are lightened with a sly affection.

Kennedy steps into the confessional poem like it is a comfortable old slipper just rediscovered from under the couch: he tells his secrets, admits his fantasies and makes his confessions – he tells the reader who he is: "Stoned at Setich Manor/Bud supplied by baby poet/Phillip T. Nails/I secretly plan to kill/God but instead/We watch TV."

And life rolls on and Kennedy rolls to the next poem. He carves away the fluff and demonstrates a clarity of language that is only found by the most practiced of poets. Kennedy moves from poem to poem in a rhythmic sequence, telling of the little things that fill the days and how even the most quiet moment has something to say: "Here the dead walk/Here the flowers fail/Here the loneliness is/All and nothing/Strung out, greased up/Worm and dirty/Paul comes to collect/The rent."

Kennedy's *Setich Manor Poems* are a confession of who he is: a poet of rare observation and honest insight – a true wordsmith. He doesn't write about bricks and mortar – he writes about the soul of the place, the passion of its people and moments of their lives that make them who they are. In *Setich Manor* Kennedy has found a clear voice and uses it – these poems are wonderful.

Shadowlines by Irene Lipshin. (Rattlesnake Press, 2006)

Reviewed by Shawn Pittard

Irene Lipshin writes between "the shadowlines" of retrospection and introspection in her new collection of poems from Rattlesnake Press. She delves into "the dark/backward of time" in the title poem until, as she writes in "Eve and Adam," she is "completely/released/from yesterday's myth." Ms. Lipshin flips the Book of Genesis's who-came-first paradigm in the poem's title, and gently debunks the myth of Adam's rib, offering science's "mitochondrial Eve" in its place. This is one of many satisfying poems that chronicle her journey to "become herself."

Ms. Lipshin's journey is the backbone of *Shadowlines*, which includes affectionate poems about her parents; a father whose Lucky Strike cigarette was a reassuring "lantern he held, smoke wafting/in rings above his head" and a mother who taught her daughter life lessons during "Sewing Lessons." Of her mother, she writes, she "taught me to read patterns/like road maps, sometimes taking shortcuts/or ignoring directions." She "told me/some threads are so fragile, they might break." Nowhere is Ms. Lipshin's journey handled with more metaphoric skill than in "Journey Cake," its final couplet echoing her mother's lesson.

JOURNEY CAKE

The lovers, four inches tall,
alabaster entwined limbs,
journey from Santorini
wrapped in tissue—
such tenderness.

This couple,
future bride and groom,
traveled in a backpack
in Greek island taxis and buses,
through train stations and airports,
x-ray machines, conveyer belts,
luggage inspections, customs,
until they crowned a wedding cake.

How could we know this marriage was more fragile
than alabaster carried across the ocean?

In “Road Trip,” we travel with “girlfriends connecting/the lifelines of our journeys.” All have experienced the breaking of those fragile threads. Ms. Lipshin writes about the “detours” that surprised them just “when we thought we had it all.” These fellow travelers have transcended their disappointments, though, and “toss sorrow out the window/directions clear and simple/the compass pointing toward the horizon/the rising sun a constant.” And in “Territorio Nuevo,” Ms. Lipshin lays claim to new places all her own.

TERRITORIO NUEVO

In one year I dipped my toes
in the Pacific
Atlantic
Mediterranean
Adriatic
Aegean

I planted my flag
in the sand we had never walked before.

The shore is mine.

In addition to embracing the world, Ms. Lipshin also questions and confronts the world. In “Ghandi’s Children,” she reacts to a newspaper photo “of a mother cradling a child,/blank saucers gazing at her house of rubble./Who should she trust in the quest/of men against men and war of gods?” After learning “only fifty Jews/remain in Damascus” and describing them as “endangered along side/the Lesser Kestrel,” she contemplates a Solomon’s choice in her heartbreaking and provocative poem, “Choice.” In regards to the fighting in and around Israel she posits an antithetical question to the one asked during the Viet Nam War. Rather than “must we destroy the village to save it?” she asks whether Jews must “rip/ourselves in half or/give the land away to keep it.”

Shadowlines is another fine chapbook from Kathy Kieth’s Rattlesnake Press. The production quality is high, including the atmospheric cover photograph—taken by the author at The Alhambra in Spain. *Shadowlines* can be purchased at The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street, Sacramento, CA, or it can be ordered directly from Rattlesnake Press, 4708 Shade Tree Place, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Price: \$5.

Thanks to all the SPC Members who have renewed memberships in the last four months. It has been a very tight year financially, and your prompt renewals have made a difference. We wouldn't be able to put on our Monday night readings, or print PoetryNow or Tule Review without your annual support. Sixty-three people joined or rejoined between June and September of this year. In addition, we received donations from three individuals. Check the list below – these are some of the people who are helping to keep your independent “member-sponsored” Poetry Center going. Thanks to all of you!

-Bob Stanley

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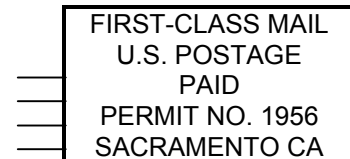
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www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org