

July/August 2007

"Relax / I tell them / you're inside / poetry now" —Julia Connor



Anticipating the Ending of Summer

by Stephen Sadler

The high mornings belong to the remaining meadows,
 which catch the light late, after it has tumbled around
 the world and climbed the mountains with no sense
 of gravity. It is here in the pristine light of August
 that the stupor of spring comes at last to the high places.

Here is a flower:
 in China, named the hermit; we name it narcissus.
 To seek solitude; to stare endlessly into the self.
 Liberation; captivity.

I don't believe I imagine this place, I think it
 comes from memory. It seems a better denial
 of winter, better than the poultice of heat just outside.

The man who sold drugs nearby seems to have vanished.
 I wonder what happened to his young son.

Here is a hermit flower
 in an alpine field. There are a million
 objects between here and there,
 like brushstrokes in a cathedral.

Here is a narcissus.

Here is a replica of heaven.

Maybe the young man is home with his son.
 Maybe only the heat keeps him captive.

Here is a flower, shaped like a bell.

Here is the summer light, ringing that bell.

San Joaquin Valley by the Rails

by Carol Louise Moon

Trees and trees and trees,
 and rows of green trees,
 Bees and bees and bees
 and boxes of bees.
 Trees and poles, and trees
 and poles, and trees.
 The hay. Don't forget the hay,
 the rows of bales of hay.

And the cotton and the bins,
 and bins and cotton, and
 the blue canvas tops of
 bales of dirty cotton.
 More poles, and cows —
 the dotted land of cows,
 and more cows. And the
 California Aqueduct.

And rows of ducks not seen
 from the rails. They're
 there, out there, out in the
 somewhere. Somewhere
 there lots of birds and owls
 and cow birds, and other
 birds, and so many birds,
 and herds of cows.

But I never heard the cows
 from the rails.
 And the rows of dirt
 Many rows of dirt and
 dirt and dirt, but no plants,
 just earth worms—
 earth and worms, and worms
 and earth, but I never

saw the worms by the rails
 just the dirt. The promise.
 The Golden Promise of cows,
 and birds, and trees,
 and bees, and bales of hay
 and cotton.

Poetry Now, Sacramento's literary review and calendar, is published at least ten times a year by the Sacramento Poetry Center, and is funded in part with grants from the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission.

Submissions of poems, artwork, reviews, and other work of interest to the Sacramento poetry community are welcome. Work must be accompanied by a SASE for return. Note that work submitted to SPC's publications may appear on SPC's website as well: www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org.

Please submit to 1719 25th Street, Sacramento CA 95814, or via email to: poetrynow@sacramentopoetrycenter.org.

Poetry Now is distributed in area bookshops, Sacramento County libraries, and by mail to SPC member-subscribers. If you are interested in receiving *Poetry Now*, or want multiple copies to share with others, please contact us at the above address.

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Contributing Editor: Tim Kahl
Poetry Editor: Frank Graham
Calendar Editor: Allison Himelright



The Poet Tree, Inc., also known as **The Sacramento Poetry Center**, is a non-profit corporation dedicated to providing forums for local poets—including publications, workshops, and a reading series. SPC is entirely run by a volunteer board of directors.

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president's message

Come and listen, come and read. By now you should have received the latest edition of *Tule Review* — thanks to guest editor Mary Zeppa, series editor Brad Buchanan and layout maven Robbie Grossklaus for all their work on this superb piece! This long standing SPC tradition continues to please local poetry readers. Something new for SPC? A new venue — and a fine turnout at Carmichael Library for Jan Haag and Sue Staats. This Second Monday series continues in Carmichael with Stan Zumbiel and John Allen Cann. Meanwhile, 25th and R has been busy as well. We had standing room only for Luke Breit and Jose Montoya on June 18th at HQ for the Arts — special thanks to Frank Graham for presenting these two superb writers on the same bill.

When art programs get cut, we all suffer. If you have not heard yet, Sutter Health has chosen to close the very successful SutterWriters program. I have always considered this program a mark of Sutter's commitment to the community and to providing health on many levels. Perhaps by the time you read this, the decision-makers at Sutter will have realized the value of this program. What's good for the community should be good for the corporate enterprise. Let's hope that, in this case, wisdom prevails. To lend your support, you can write to Patrick Fry, President and CEO Sutter Health, 2200 River Plaza Drive, Sacramento, CA 95833.

On another major financial topic, SPC will be raising annual dues from \$25 to \$30 for regular members, effective September 1, 2007. So send your annual dues in now, and you can save the \$5 increase. Note that students and other subsidized members remain at the existing rate. And if you feel generous, and want to support the local poetry world — readings, newsletters, a workshop, a journal, a website, a blog — whatever we can do to help — then send whatever you can. We thank you for your assistance.

—Bob Stanley
President

poetry & calendar submissions

submit poems to poetry editor:

grahampoet@aol.com

submit calendar items to:

Alioso02@aol.com

2 poems by Jenny Jiang

Learning

Clutch of breath. Buckle of knees. I am the dark crouch along the bank.
Egrets startle into broad arrows of light.

The cormorant on a twist of tree in a gray rain—wing and neck outstretched
like angled anger or the rebellion of belief.

Another word for *waiting*.

I wait for my own thin, black want to unfurl oily pinions, crane an empty throat
into the wet sky. My eye fixed on the dark, eddying rush.

Two egrets in a field patched with star thistles. Wraiths of curve and line. Lifting, settling,
folding, fanning, towards, away. This is how they say *Yes*.

Another word for *grace*.

I can fall, bury my face in rain-filled grass, breathe soil and water, raise
my raw forehead, dripping cheeks. This is how I say *please*.

Another word for *prayer*.

In the meadow, the white watching arc on spindled legs. Shadow.
Light. Shadow. Light pours over the hunt.

Eye and beak, neck and heart trained in one direction. I am learning.



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Returning From Visiting The Convalescent Home

In the dark wind, husks
of seed pods rustle; grasses
leaning, knocking into one another
a soft and brittle chiming.

Tomorrow in the morning, I'll walk
among the careless, amber weeds
full of their wet, jeweled light.

See how it was—the keening
then the kneeling—
and how they too have flung
their last bruised kernels away.

Audience of One

by A.D. Winans

Old songs with half-forgotten lyrics
play inside my head
older still movies play on the
bark of my skin
Oklahoma, South Pacific, West Side Story
singing on the tip of my tongue
humming my way back to yesterday
left alone with ghostly echoes
that serenade the dead
I can almost feel the ignited passion
lost lovers draped on my bed
tasting the melody riding up and down
my spine
Memories of my parents old Victrola
vinyl records spinning
on a balanced groove
a love affair so fragile
it was like trying to thread a needle
in the teeth of a storm
Fading
fading
fading
now like an old flame sipping
on a cup of coffee
at my favorite cafe
a smile on her face
fingers snapping foot tapping
to the music that made us as one
Evaporating in the face of dawn
like clouds taking foreign shapes
like the smoke rings my father
blew my way as a child
Frank Sinatra crooning in the
background
the way of music
sex
love
God
and death
playing to an audience of one



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Sardines

by Robert F. Thimmesb

The metropolis
packs me
in aromatic emissions
sprinkled
with last night's graffiti;

cacophonous cans
cluster
my free-floating brain,
nourished
by silent pockets
of leaf and hedge;

a towering oak
creates a silent mosaic
of exclamations
from vagabond
and troubadour
sardine and scavenger;

black macadam veins
pulsate dioxide diversions
through my oasis, green of fern
and weeping willow—
with unmeasured leaf for a frazzled soul
and a honky-tonk song
from an unfathomed depth.

All The Circles

by Marie Rippenhoff-Talty

and half circles of GOODBYE
give the word a cozy symmetry.

But the E
at the end

intimates its true meaning.
Those prongs pierce—stab your heart;

not a metal fork
but a word

that passes easily through your ribs—
robs a strong ventricular muscle of its

powerful
contraction;

disrupts the symmetry—
the full circles of your days.

2 poems by Jordan Reynolds

Cypresses

That's why he turned himself in:
that's where the trees were asking

why they were pink.
Why was the cypress so solitary that

he painted it over the city?
He saw it through a window and it

turned higher and more violently than the light
turned. It towered the steeple and he overcame

himself. He saw the lilies
himself, and the irises purpled an entire countryside.

In the field the blue cart was a horizon wandered
in some wheat.

Bridge Fire

The smoke rose, a topless trunk,
to the birds. And they, impeccably
white, circled it. Flight
was lost in the searching, they were
snipped appliquéd, construction paper
V's. Smoke covered Sun, like someone
carved a w/hole through the sky.
As one of the pasted frames tossed through
the void I wondered which side
I stood on. I wondered wings, the flying,
where it would bring me. The bird, circled
back, answered the question, and
disappeared into the blue.

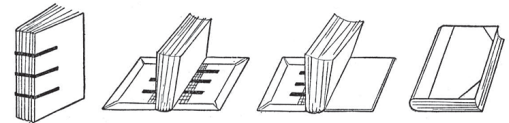
Trespasser

by Dianna Henning

The philandering swagger of one neared your place,
a small ewe blood-gutted in din of daylight, but you unfortunately
lost sight of just where it headed. Your spattered coveralls
rode up your crotch as you leaned further to aim,
"Steady now," you said, your shoulders like tightly tied twine.
They're somewhere at the edge of things, places not yet borne.

You've seen such scoundrels dig out ground squirrels,
pocket gophers, and worse yet, one of your field Jerseys,
laboring under a botched birth, her calf's head half emerged,
but the tongue, too tempting, like a pink peony torn
ragged from the mouth, the mother's mooing so mournful
you shot both her and the coyote. Tonight, when they sing up

the lunatic moon, you'll return to your rocker
on the front porch. A man's got rights to protect his interests,
the chamber oiled and cleaned. You'll wager one
eventually comes sulking down the meadow, its mouth slavered with hope
like the calf's delicate tongue stepping out into the world,
eager to lap the still lingering.



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literary calendar

for the Sacramento region & beyond

JULY/AUGUST 2007

edited by Allison Himelright

Production note: Due to late publication this printed calendar begins in the later in the month of July. Go online to the SPC website for a complete and updated calendar.

9 Monday

SPC Board of Directors meets at Carmichael Library, 5605 Marconi Avenue. 5:45-7:00pm.

Sacramento Poetry Center presents Catherine French. 7:30 pm at Carmichael Library, 5605 Marconi Avenue. Bob Stanley and Indigo Moor host.

10 Tuesday

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

Bistro 33 Poetry Series. 8:30 pm Open Mic after. Bistro 33 in Historic Davis City Hall, 226 "F" Street, 3rd and "F" Streets in Davis.

11 Wednesday

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

12 Thursday

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

15 Sunday

Third Sunday Writing Group. Free creative writing workshop. 10th & U, Sacramento. Contact Nancy Walker for more information @ oolalaparee03@yahoo.com

16 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents Cache Creek Nature Preserve Writers. 7:30 pm at HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th Street. Rebecca Morrison hosts.

17 Tuesday

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

The Moore Time for Poetry TV series presents Pastor Alonzo Morris and choir plus R & B artist Willie Whittl. Cablecast on channel 17, Comcast Cable @ 5:00 am.

19 Thursday

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

21 Saturday

Underground Poetry Series. Open mic. 7-9pm, \$3.00. Featuring TBA. Underground Books, 2814 35th Street (35th and Broadway). Hosted by Terry Moore. www.terrymoore.info

23 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center in collaboration with Alliance Francaise to help celebrate the French Film Festival July 20-29. Hors d'oevres and visual entertainment. After the featured readers, please join the open mic and read poems in French, in translation or about France. 7:30 pm at HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th Street. Rebecca Morrison hosts.

24 Tuesday

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27 Thursday

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

28 Saturday

"The Show" Poetry Series. 9 pm at Wo'se Community Center (Off 35th and Broadway), 2863 35th Street, Sacramento. \$5.00. Info: T.Mo at (916) 455-POET.

August 2007

2 Thursday

Poetry Unplugged features TBA. 1414 16th Street. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free. Festivities begin at 8pm and there will be an open mic as well. Hosted by Mario Ellis Hill.

5 Sunday

PoemSpirits featuring guest reader TBA. Free and open to the public; open mic, light refreshments provided. Bring a favorite poem to share, yours or another's. Location: UUSS, 2425 Sierra Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95825: www.uuss.org. Contact: Tom Goff or Nora Staklis: 916-481-3312, or JoAnn Anglin: 916-451-1372.

6 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center
No reading.

7 Tuesday

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

The Moore Time for Poetry TV series presents poet Nikki Skies from Los Angeles. Cablecast on channel 17, Comcast Cable @ 5:00 am.

8 Wednesday

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

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Materials and methods:

The avant-garde Russian art movement known as OBERIU [roughly translated as the The Union of the Real Art] had as its main practitioners Daniil Kharms, Alexander Vvedensky, Nikolai Zabolotsky, Yakov Druskin, Leonard Lipavsky and Nikolai Oleinikov. This group operated in 1920s Russia; however, only Druskin survived the Stalinist purges. Though the group was no longer active after the arrest of all but Druskin, Druskin's efforts to save the work of his colleagues resulted in their work being embraced later by underground samizdat writers in the 1960s.

OBERIU's aesthetic of alogism existed somewhere between the Theater of the Absurd and Dadaism while their penchant for performance art-like happenings associates them with the Situationists (though perhaps lacking the rationale for why such disruptions serve a larger purpose that the Situationists possessed).

The staunch adherents of OBERIU, the inner sanctum of the movement, referred to themselves as chinari, which has been loosely translated as "an authority of nonsense" or "a kind of gazer," and as such, they set out to write poems that defied ordinary logic. One sort of poem that they wrote was what has become known as the "neighboring worlds" poem.

The chinari believed in the concept of "neighboring worlds," the idea that an item in the real world was formed according to the rules that existed in another world. Windows and the surface of a body of water were considered to be borders between neighboring worlds. Animals and trees were lives shaped by neighboring worlds whose rules were so foreign that they were incomprehensible.

They went even farther in challenging basic materialism in that they held language, specifically nouns, as responsible for a belief in objects. Lipavsky wrote, "Language cuts the world in pieces," and in his Theory of Words he proposed the creation of an ur-language which was composed only of processes and verbs.

More interesting than this, though, is the fact that Vvedensky and Kharms earned their keep as children's writers and would, therefore, write extensively in rhyme. Rhyme was seen as the engine that spurred on the progress of the poem. They would also mine items from Russian folklore and incorporate these into the poems that they wrote for adults.

So let's summarize some aspects of the Chinari. They wrote poems that were illogical, but they rhymed. They incorporated aspects of their indigenous folklore into their work, and they questioned an essential materialism by positing that things in the physical world had secret connections to an alternative world that rendered them virtually unknowable in this one.

The end result of mixing together all these factors might be something like a cross between Lewis Carroll, the Brothers Grimm and Bishop Berkeley.

Projects in the Home.

In attempting to put together an OBERIU-like piece one might start with two common objects that suggest some sort of odd connection between them. Vvedensky did this in one of his poems entitled "Rug/Hydrangea." From here the next challenge is to play with language so that one's sensibilities seem to be forestalled. However, one must do this in a way that preserves rhyming within the poem. The use of slant rhymes, eye rhymes, and exact rhymes could all be employed (however, most of the time the rhyme would be employed at the end of the line in order to preserve the allusion to children's verse.) The final ingredient would be to throw in some aspects of American folklore (just to make things more relevant to one's own culture; however, one might also refer to the black sunflower from Baba Yaga.) The reference to folklore is an arbitrary one, and because one audience for this kind of poem might be children (in the same way that "Jabberwocky" makes kids giddy), one could make reference to the magical elements of some children's stories. For my money, William Steig's *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* has all the earmarks of the best folklore stories (you probably know Steig from his other blockbuster children's book *Shrek*). And no one would begrudge any poet who made a reference to Thing One and Thing Two or Star-Belly Sneetches.

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President's Report, page 2

sacramento's
literary calendar
& review



poetrynow

A PUBLICATION OF THE SACRAMENTO POETRY CENTER

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Marie Rippenhoff-Talty

Dianna Henning

Jordan Reynolds

Tim Kahl's

MUNDIAL EXPERIMENTAL:

The avant-garde Russian

art movement OBERIU &

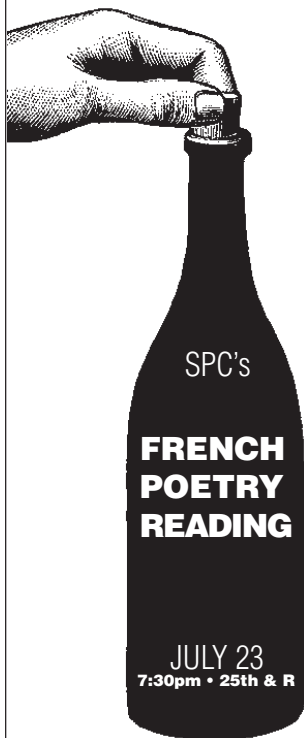
DANIIL KHARMS

POETRY



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