

poetry*now*

January 2008

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

What is a Poem? Frances H. Kakugawa

Write, write, write, I say.

But what is a poem, you ask.

And how do I write?

What can a poem hold?

It is a fragile shopping bag

rice paper thin, egg shell thin

but oh, don't let its appearance

stop you from shopping.

Too heavy a load

may rip right through

and splat! It's all at your feet, or

rolling into a ditch, or

too shattered into pieces

for all the King's men and all the King's horses.

There is really no way of knowing

what weight it will hold

or the number of items

or size.

So place it gently, slowly,

into the bag.

test it for while, hold it close to your heart,

swing it away to and fro,

carry it a mile, feel it roll around the bag,

let its weight bounce against your knees.

skip, run, walk,

and if the bag is still intact

you know the content's just about right

And what do you do with bags torn apart

and content scattered at your feet,

with no one near to give you a hand.

why, just get a truck and haul them away.

And go shopping again.

My Love

Cleo Fellers Kocol

Her image burned into my memory, Her words repeating, entering The interstices where Love and liking Intersect, I look Into her eyes Again.

Yes, they say, yes. And I don't Know how To reply. A soft Aye?

I put down, the snapshot taken Before we started on our trip, Before the car hurtled Out of nowhere down The wrong way On a one way Street.

Her last words echoing and echoing, I wonder if I would be nearly as Devastated if I had known Her better, or maybe Better, if I had Known her Less.

Her Father's Belongings

Brad Buchanan

Everything that she can't have must be destined for Daddy, or so she believes. The stones set tantalizingly in concrete steps belong to me if only I could be bothered to claim them. If she could, she would scribble my name on all the sweet, forbidden things at Safeway. My appetites are long and brightly lit, patrolled by laws like gravity. She can go for days trapped inside the omnipotence she attributes to me. Nothing makes sense as mere impossibility. I try to avoid the blame, say I am not in charge of the leaves that sway out of reach, or the places she can't play but she won't hear of it. Everything needs a reason why or why not, and gods are the easiest-especially when they're parents, and say yes most of the time

Poetry Now, Sacramento's literary review and calendar, is published 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. Note that work submitted to SPC may also appear on SPC's website as well: sacramentopoetrycenter.org.

Please submit to SPC, 1719 25th Street, Sacramento, CA 95614, or email to grahampoet@

Poetry Now is distributed in area bookshops, Sacramento County libraries, and by mail to member-subscribers. If y9ou are interested in receiving Poetry Now, or want multiple copies to share with others, please contact us at the above address, or call SPC at 979-9706.

Editor: Bob Stanley Poetry Editor: Frank Graham Contributing Editor: Tim Kahl Design Editor: Elizabeth Krause

The Poet Tree, also known as the Sacramento Poetry Center, is a non-profit corporation dedicated to providing forums for local poets – including publications, (Poetry Now and Tule Review), workshops, special events, and an ongoing reading series. Funded primarily by members, SPC is entirely run by a volunteer board of directors. We welcome your input and your interest.

Board of Directors (as of Dec 2007) Bob Stanley, President Tim Kahl, Vice President Rebecca Morrison, Secretary Sandra Senne, Treasurer Frank Graham, Member at large Mary Zeppa, Member at large Stan Zumbiel, Member at large Brad Buchanan, Member at large

Contact us at 1719 25th Street, Sacramento CA 95814 <u>bobstanley@sbcglobal.net</u> 916-979-9706 Or visit our website at www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org.



Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission

president's message

Another year flies in, with its stories and its deadlines, all the seasonal variations one needs to fill up space and time. In the moment of composition, in the minute, the hour of deciding what it is that needs to be said, all falls away, time stops and the writer is lost in the web of connections...

In January, SPC will have readings every Monday at 7:30 – Art Mantecon features **Barbara Jane Reyes and Oscar Bermeo**, two talented young poets on January 7. Tim Kahl presents **Emmanuel Sigauke** and **Shevonn Blackshire** on Jan 14th. Rebecca Morrison hosts **Michael Cluff** and **Michael Garbarini** on the 21st, and I get to present an evening with **Frank Graham** on the 28th. Come on down to HQ – 25th and R - for a verse or two, and start the year right. We'll be there.

Mark your calendar now for our **April Writer's Workshop** – Indigo Moor is putting together an all-star lineup for the 2008 weekend event on April 4 and 5. As of press time, we have tentative commitments from Carl Phillips, Ellen Bass, Jane Hirshfield, Camille Norton, Joshua McKinney, and Quinton Duval. It's a full day of poetry – guaranteed to be the biggest SPC event in a long time. Don't miss it! No doubt you'll notice our new format for *Poetry Now* – a work in progress engineered by our new design editor Elizabeth Krause. We welcome any and all suggestions from readers – feel free to email or call SPC! Thanks for your support, and we look forward to seeing you as we begin our 29th year!

Bob Stanley

SPC POETRY CONTEST SPRING 2008

FIRSE PRIZE \$100 / second prize \$50 / exird prize \$25ben xonorable mentions (\$10 Gift certificates from barnes & noble)

Deadline: February 15, 2008 Winners Will be notified in marcx, featured in poetrynow, and invited to read at a special reading at spc.

send one anonymous copy of each poem along with a coper skeet listing titles, first lines and contact information.

entry see \$4 per soem send your soems to spc 2008 contest / 1719 25th Street / sacramento, ca 95816

11 X 10⁶

Laura LeHew

for Aunt Charlotte who gave me a paper clip necklace on Thanksgiving Day.

6,000,000.00

Eleven million paper clips collected by an 8th grade class – a clip for a life extinguished

by self-glorified xenophobia and effective excessive force. Lives memorialized

on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass, the government sanctioned rape

and ravage of the Jews. "Racially inferior" people sacrificed depicted in the culmination of genocided paper clips:

Jews Gypsies, Gays, Disabled, Etc. 5,000,000.00

Lives Lost in the Holocaust 11,000,000.00

in a railcar that wound its way to concentration camps like Dachau to sort for selection: forced labor and medical experimentation

infectious contagious diseases, fevers, bone grafts, and neutering the unlucky to extermination camps at Chelmno, Belzec, Majdanek,

Sobibor, Treblinka, or perhaps even Aushwitz-Birkenau with its four (4) Zyklon B gas chambers.

By kids who had the courage to explore, "what does six million look like?"

Graduating Orange County Colette Jonopulos

Southern California, where the American Dream came too true. Lawrence Ferlinghetti

June meant graduation on my birthday, theme parks, thick coconut scent of suntan lotion, bodies stretched

brown and animal-like on the sands of Newport, that slice of coast where everything unfastened, turned from

monochromatic, from unknown to always known. Our ostentatious mall with its poppy seed hotdog buns,

peaches heaped on Belgian waffles, Baker's heels instead of tennis shoes: advent of my uneasy slide from

child to woman, the shift never effortless, and everyone watching. My Montebello/Pasadena/Redondo/Orange

County parents left behind, laid perpetually side-by-side, tree roots lifting them toward unremitting sunshine, toward

who I was at 19, at 33, who I never was. And still this on-ramp, off-ramp fever kicks it up to forty—up to

fifty—a show so overt, so determined, when I brake, I'm back on stage, a virginal eighteen in platform heels.

Blaming Hagel Jack Lindeman I say you were a beast of burden touched in your brain by the most unequivocal hardships, rock bottoms, abrasive insects

with stingers as lethal as the points of spears. A few men could fathom your executioner's lingo and I was tired of learning rules, memorizing how indifferent most laws are to their own words. I was tired of seeing the universe in the shape of a pear. One evening an accumulation of thunders like the wrath of Zeus descended on my mind and I knew the sound of that insatiable deity speaking bluntly, as you verbosely defined, who opened and shut the door on our lives. Were you setting the world straight with your synthetic turbulence? I listened like one of Odysseus' men to your Siren wails but avoided the rocks. The schools of thought dwindled like uprooted plants and you came like a lifeline until the middle of my own barbarian century culminating in bulldozing corpses and anyone doing anything to anyone else that had never been done before.

No Dilemma Jack Lindeman

You can see the night is full of frightening decisions you haven't made yet. There are the stars like a battalion of soldiers being led by militant moonlight from one sky to another. That's possibility for you because you were raised by your parents to go where you please even if you didn't know exactly how to get there. Yet tomorrow there will be other assignments and nothing more for breakfast than a small bowl of what you have always believed in.

cipher

Jordan Reynolds

That s what I am here Trees ignore my whispers chatter to themselves My footsteps filled with blown leaves

Rain water falls through me collects in pools fills hollow earth I grasp a flower browns under my touch the wind taking it wheresome off

Mission Street, San Francisco, 5:54 AM Colette Jonopulos

"Until they address the needs of the mentally ill, people will have a sleeping situation that is totally inappropriate for them."

Paul Boden

slingshot of electricity overhead, buses hiss through town legless and cold-blooded

as if every stop in the city is somewhere to escape to,

ease under. Wind reaches inside your shirt as you descend onto Mission, where you were

taken by your impermanence on an uphill ride on quarters, bodies

scented sour, *f-this, f-that* shouted into the emptiness

when "come" would be the sound of welcome: coming home, coming coming coming

home; the ride shorter than expected, serpent on track ready to

spark itself to life as if you'd close your eyes and wake outside your

own voice, blue flash of lights, damp of eyelashes. You

find no cloak for cheap liquor or stale urine, no substitute

for the insatiable urge to look up at cables connected to a source that hisses out intention: coming coming coming Writing in earth You arrange symbols with bones they clink making words Old rooms filled with our

Holes in the ceiling show our patterns Morse Code glittering across skin Pinch the sky hold it beneath your ears Tiny voices rushing to explain

Through the Round Window Lisa Jones

y post is drawn to those

Any poet is drawn to these words: bone, cut, breath, skin and O'Keefe knew too, the language of bones: what could be seen, in the hollow of the pelvis, the infinite gifts of the circular window.

Her lush perception, her round and curving lines. The possibilities of yellow and green--rivers traversing our surface.

Looking back down from the airplane, at our expansive aging face, with all its shapes and shadings, I see the beauty of both our footsteps and the places we did not step.

O'Keefe you walked those lines, even bragged of your daring or perhaps you simply wanted us to know the truth that only women tell--

that there was never certainty; that every egg-shaped view of the sky, every dip in to the center of a flower, was wonder, yes, but also gall --a hard-earned, wild and frightening freedom.

Broken Buddha

Michelle Kunert

I found a broken Buddha statue on 10th and E Street by a little second hand and close out grocery market in a sidewalk pavement of shrubbery he was about a yard high before ruggedly split into ruins barely recognizable by his robe and left headless like Nike I went into the store and asked, "Is that your "Buddha" that got broke? Did any of the punks or drug addicts hanging around here come and smash your statue up so badly, beyond repair?" cause I felt from it some tragedy of karma releasing. The black man behind the register said, "No mon," I said again "Are you sure it's not yours, because it made me feel bad?" Again he assured , "Nope." But I wondered if he did have a site to see downtown and just didn't know Like Bishop Gallagos, AJ Stevens Caesar Chavez, Iron cats, the Vietnam Veteran Memorial and the Broken Pieces of Buddha at 10th and E Street.

Sacramento Area Literary Calendar January 2008

3 Thursday – *Poetry Unplugged* features TBA at Luna's Café. Hosted by Mario Ellis Hill. Festivities begin at 8pm and there will be an open mic as well.

5 Saturday

All are invited to *Escritores del Nuevo Sol's* writing workshop and potluck. 11am. at La Raza Galeria Posada, 1024 22nd Street, Sacramento. For info call Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or joannpen@comcast.net. Website: www.escritoresdelnuevosol.com Special Reading at Luna's - *Songs for Maya* hosted by B.L. Kennedy, Featuring **Litany** with **Miles Miniaci**, Mario Ellis Hill, Vincent Cobalt, Robert Lozano & Others

7 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Barbara Jane Reyes and Oscar Bermeo**. Art Mantecon hosts - at HQ for the Arts - 1719 25^{th} Street. 7:30pm

8 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.

9 Wednesday

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

10Thursday

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.

11 Friday

Isis Bazaar presents **Candy**, **Taifa Jamari** and **Bene' Bailey**. (Candy's CD Release Party for *Embrace*).

Second Fridays from 8 to 10pm, 122 "I" Street in Old Sacramento. \$5.00

12 Saturday

Culture Collection presents **Random Abiladeze**, hip-hop artist **Izreal**, vocalist **Carla Fleming** and **Khiry Malik Moore**. Second Saturdays from 2 to 4pm. 6391 Riverside Blvd in Greenhaven. FREE!

14 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents a reading by **Emmanuel Sigauke.** Hosted by Tim Kahl. HQ for the Arts - 1719 25th Street. 7:30pm

the

tiger's eye poetry contest has returned to planet earth...

with larger prizes, , , \$500/\$100/\$50 a new deadline... 2/28/2008

And a bolt from the blue:

One contest entrant will be awarded an editors' choice chapbook contract. This prize is in addition to the top three prizes, and consists of 50 copies, and publication in the Mid-Spring 2008 Issue. The three poems submitted to the contest will be considered a representation of your best work. If your poems are selected, we will ask for additional poetry, and work with you to develop a gorgeous 20-30-page chapbook.

send 3 poems/short bio/sase/\$10 to

tiger's eye poetry contest p.o. box 2935 ● Eugene, Oregon ● 97402

15 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

16 Wednesday

Moore time for Poetry: Terry Moore's Access Television Show, 9pm, co-host Tyra Moore. Access Sacramento, Channel 17

17 Thursday

Poetry Unplugged at Luna's Café. 8pm. hosted by Frank Andrick. Free.

19Saturday

Underground Poetry Series presents LaRue and Yoke Breaker plus open mic. 7-9pm, \$3.00. Underground Books, 2814 35th Street (35th and Broadway).

21 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents Michael Cluff and Michael Garbarini. Hosted by Rebecca Morrison. HQ for the Arts - 1719 25th Street. 7:30pm

22 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

23 Wednesday

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

24 Thursday

Poetry Unplugged at Luna's Café. 8pm. hosted by B.L. Kennedy. Free. Features: Suzanne Roberts, Charlene Ungstad, Noel Kroeplin

26 Saturday

"The Show" Poetry Series features **Kafiah from Phoenix, Khiry Malik Moore and Candy.** 7:00 to 9:00pm. All ages are welcome. Cost: \$5.00 2863 35th Street off 35th and Broadway. Contact: (916) 208-POET.

28 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center features **Frank Graham**. Hosted by Bob Stanley. HQ for the Arts 7:30pm

29 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

January 2008 ● poetrynow ● 5

check us out @ tigerseyejournal.com

Breasts

John Aylesworth

I still like boobs a lot, after all these years: ones that sag a little when they're pulled out of their sling, small ones that don't need to be held and perk right up like puppies, anxious for a petting.

I even like the ones that are gone, slashed off in war with cancer, left only in memory, the pull by lips kissing, hungry.

Cultivating Thorns

Cynthia Linville

For Cindy and Harry Hurn

This beat up tin bucket full of used nails followed you from San Francisco to Toronto to Yorkshire, England when nearly nothing else did except a soft grey sweatshirt a red enamel tea kettle and the tome you wrote (but gave up publishing after only one rejection).

These nails --

retracted from our coastal love shack ripped from our daughter's tree house recycled from the rotting rose trellis -anchored us to the separate crosses we bore across continents and seas.

Thirty years later

I find this bucket of rusty metal in a shadowed corner of your garage after we bury you today and I am tempted to plant them alongside you to see what kind of tree would grow.

Pandora's Language? Brad Buchanan

Her favorite objects are also her favorite subjects, so she has learned them well: box, birdie, fish, and bubble; shoe, hat, apple, and ball.? She bounces the box and unlaces the bubble, wears the fish and chirps at the apple, picks the birdie from a tree, lets the hat drown in the sea, bursts the shoe with a poking finger closes the ball at the sign of danger she needs better words or a different world; I can't tell which, since I'm too old.

Her favorite subjects must renew themselves in objects like clothes or clocks: ball, apple, hat, and shoe, bubble, fish, birdie, and box.

Smile

Brad Buchanan

It's one of those ads where they want to give you a pang of guilt, disgust and grief: children with the worst cleft palates you've ever seen. They're also impoverished, obviously, and need your help. You wonder how any surgery, no matter how careful and generous, could solve even the obvious problem. Their eyes follow you, half-hopefully, as you note their foreshortened lips and think: disfigured, permanently or not, they can never be beautiful.

She, on the other hand, has a plump red mouth between soft cheeks, and sees her own happiness everywhere. She gestures at the accusing page where damaged infants await a saving scalpel to bring their faces back with a second, healing mutilation, to something other can love as human and wholesome, not a ripped-open gash exposing bone too young to tell its terrors—and she murmurs, "Smile."

I only hope that, when she's older and lonely, having done something wrong or not, she'll take this hint and call me on whatever toy she finds lying around.

At The Place Of Five Troughs

Dianna Henning

A herd of cows came to drink, their tongues Afloat in the water, their hooves mired in mud. They swiveled the large boulders of their heads, Rubbed them against posts To rid themselves of horse-flies That congregated around their ears. Watching the Holsteins, I thought of the summer I became The sole bottle whisperer on a beach so abandoned Even the reef seemed human. With my drink's cold rim Flush to my lips, I pressed sound Into my empty glass bottle, heard its echo spring Out the neck's opening To land like fall's leaf on my shoulder. With an index finger, I followed the bottle's seam, And thought of the cows I always passed On my way to the ocean, their lax contentment In a world without fracture. Do they know that by following the cracks in their path They'll find the fault line, That any water in the trough only pulls them deeper?

We were friends

Lisa Jones

in a booth, under the cut papers, papel picado--cherry lime, orange, blueberry, and lemon colored silhouettes of deer, crow, and coyote surrounding us. Gilded red sombreros and painted wooden maracas on the walls. A buttery afternoon light, softened by the shade of the room, drunk by the pinatas and the silk flowers. Lime colored ice sparkled in our glasses. Your brown eyes were warm, the muscles in your face calm, as if, in that vibrant wilderness, you had found something, the one bird that had eluded you. Your gaze, relaxed and steady. I felt like water, shimmering. Turning straw into gold, I told you about my motorcycle days. That's when I slid to the side and pulled my white skirt above my knee showing you the purple, pink gash, the gravel pattern extending upward. You leaned forward. Then the colorful animals began to dance in their paper forests, whispering "She's got him", We didn't notice them. I let the fabric fall against my leg, we brought our eyes and words above the table, but in truth, I had you, caught in the folds of my skirt.

Returning to Redwoods

Philip Crosby

for Edith

We bring the old to trees, the peace is overpowering. I hear my ears. The soft earth comforts canes and hard benches are always forgiven. All through the park people are sleeping, sun lounges sleek as canoes, fingers dangling on the ground like in water. All around us is the silence of lasting. I see a snow crowned shadow led to a picnic table looking up at welcoming branches. I used to lead, now I am led by memory; Soon enough I will feel arms.

The Narrowing Point

Joyce Odam

This long path between trees, their shadows criss-crossing in the last of sunlight –

This long perspective into evening, this soft intensity of light – how soon the darkness

will know itself and obliterate the narrowing point the eye is fixed upon.

Circles

Taylor Graham

All these years, and I'm still an undergraduate in search of the perfect circle. Not Cleopatra's cave, grounded in geography, myth, and tragic history, but a "mansion for all lovely forms."

Is it such a dangerous dream? The walls of crystal and sulphur keep caving in upon each other. The elusive arcs and tangents – the sweet trumpets that bid us listen long after we wished to be asleep – the straight-up

surprise ascension of the dove, or is it an English skylark? Awake at 3 a.m., I lie puzzling the dark. All these imperfect pieces. At last the morning news breaks in. Mauritania, Iraq, Afghanistan.

Goodbye

Joyce Odam

Say it simply. Say it softly and sadly. It is the longest word you will ever say. Give it a black border for the death it imitates.

Let it go freely. You cannot call it back. It is a word without a meaning.

A quick word. A spondee word. It will come of its own volition. You cannot regret it.

Let it take everything it needs. How you hoarded it. How you refused it – keeping it

longer than necessary. Let it have your regret, that baggage of doubt, that second thought.

Swimming Upstream Cynthia Linville

Words not spoken stick in my throat like tiny fish bones that want to be whole fish again, want to swim up slip out land on your plate (slippery bait) caught between your knife and your lips to be filleted or be kissed.

January 2008	 sacramento's literary calendar & review 		POETRY CENTER	Our thanks to	Mímí and		tor nosting .SPC's 2007		It was a great		provided a	welcome	financíal boost	for the poetry	center!					$\overline{\mathbf{v}}$	
www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org	FEBRUARY 15, 2008 – DEADLINE FOR SACRAMENTO POETRY CENTER'S ANNUAL POETRY CONTEST – SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS!	poetry <i>now</i>	A PUBLICATION OF THE SACRAMENTO POETRY CENTER	poems inside from:		JUNN AYICOWOLUI	Philip Crosby	CLEO Fellers Kocol	Taylor Graham	Díanna Henning	Lísa Jones	colette Jonopulos	Frances H. Kakugawa	Michelle Kunert	Lанга LeHew	Jack Lindeman	cynthía Linville	Joyce Odam	Jordan Reynolds		
poetry <i>now</i>			spc b	olog	:	www	v.sa	cra	me	nto	opo	etr	yce	ent	er.ł	510g	gsp	ot.	com	L	٦
The 1 1719	Poet Tree, Inc. 25 th Street amento, CA 95816	Every SPC PC 7:30 PM	OETRY	W	ORKSH		, 27 th	& J	• I	Bring	g 15-	20 c	opie	s of y	our	one-	page	e poen	n		
Read	UARY 2008 ings at SPC/HQ fo days, 7:30 PM	or the Arts																			
January 7th Barbara Jane Reyes & Oscar Bermeo											H.H.	Ľ	The second	F.F.	N.	A		1.27			
-	ary 14th manuel Siga	uke								Sp	a)	and white	X	N N N	Se.	A		10	È		
JANUARY 21ST									stil	13	30	Su	1	V	YX	B	S	97			
Michael Cluff &									2-1	and the second	2	57	2.5	1	1 m	Sec.		3			
Michael Garbarini									3	-	0		2	~	1-						
IANIIA	ARY 28TH													-					Gulf	July.	
Frank Graham																					
	vi viiviil	The Poet dedicated																			

dedicated to providing forums for local poets – including publications, workshops, and a reading series.