



# poetry now

The Sacramento Poetry Center's Monthly Newsletter Journal for poetry

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

-----Poetry readings every Monday night at the Sacramento Poetry Center!-----

## **The Sacramento Poetry Center Press Presents The Second Annual Poetry Book Contest**

2009 Winner: Richard Spilman

2009 Judge: Dennis Schmitz

**Winning book manuscript will be published by The Sacramento Poetry Center Press.  
Winner will also receive a prize of \$1,000.00 and 50 free copies of their winning book.**

### **Guidelines:**

Submit 48-70 numbered pages of original poetry in any style. Manuscript must contain 2 title pages: Name and contact information (including email address, if possible) should appear on first title page only. Name should not appear anywhere else. Manuscript should be typed, single-spaced, paginated, and bound with a clip. The Sacramento Poetry Center will consider publishing additional manuscripts from the contest. Check for \$20.00 US per entry (multiple entries OK) should be made out to The Sacramento Poetry Center. Paid-up members of the Sacramento Poetry Center may enter the contest for a reduced fee of \$15. Please note that members of SPC will not receive preferential treatment in the judging process. Include a table of contents page and an acknowledgments page for magazine or anthology publications. Will read entries postmarked between January 1, 2010 and March 31, 2010. Enclose an SASE for announcement of the winner.

### **Entries should be mailed to:**

The Sacramento Poetry Center, Poetry Book Contest, P.O. Box 160406, Sacramento, CA 95816

***2010 SPC Writer's Workshop  
Weekend of April 17, 2010  
Check the SPC Website for details!***

**Oliver Rice** has received the Theodore Roethke Prize and thrice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. His poems have appeared widely in journals and anthologies in the United States, as well as Canada, Argentina, England, Austria, Turkey, and India. His book of poems, *On Consenting to Be a Man*, is offered by Cyberwit, a diversified publishing house in the cultural capital Allahabad, India, and is available on Amazon.

## TAYLOR

by Oliver Rice

\*

He is almost family.  
**Some kind of a philosopher.**  
**A wit.**  
A trial.

Up on the ladder to attach the Christmas angel,  
he proposed that we should have a gargoyle as well.

\*

He likes, he says,  
taking his turn at croquet,  
to bring the world to a halt for a moment.  
To make captions for humanoid cartoons.

He listens to the ironies, he says,  
to the dark fables,  
the silences  
in which someone has just been laughing,  
or lying,  
or praying.

Likes to startle himself  
by asking a foreigner's question.  
Or an idiot savant's, he says.

There are things, he insists,  
about which we must be exact.  
Sociology is watching us.  
And telling history.  
At its best and worst, you know,  
it is still cause and effect.

Eras are breaking out, he will announce,  
in his seaman's sweater.  
Or truth will not be quiet.  
Or let us spelunk in the common id.

\*

Eating together, he said,  
after the barbecue,  
tossing a stick for Cal to retrieve,  
is like singing parts.

The annual movie awards are traumatic for him.  
We are utterly exposed, he declares.  
Our profundities and our frivolities.  
Raw.  
The barbarians are in our genes.  
Like migraines.  
But then, anything must have a flaw to be authentic.

\*

He came from the Ozarks, he claims,  
perhaps facetiously,  
the oldest land mass  
uninterruptedly exposed to firmament.  
Where terrestrial life surely began.  
And wisdom.  
He dilates upon Lost Valley,  
Hemmed-in Hollow,  
the woodcock's dance,  
redbuds flowering in the April rain.

\*

We would not be surprised to learn  
that he once played the banjo.

Bidding us good night, one moonlit October,  
he would go out, he said,  
to the edge of the world and shout ---  
but in which direction,  
east by northwest, southeast by north?

**James Webb Wilson's** poems are drawn from his own life's experiences. He presents rich images through poetic language. His poems appear in numerous journals, including *Westward Quarterly*, *Cloud Appreciation Society*, *Nomad's Choir*, *The Poet's Art*, *Star\*Line*, and *Write On*. He lives in Vernon, CT.

**Dr. Merle P. Martin** is Editor of *Remodel Spokane* magazine. He is a Professor Emeritus from Sacramento State University. Dr. Martin is author of ten books, including three poetry books published by GrayDog Press. He has published numerous pieces in *Poetry Now* and won an Honorable Mention in SPC's 2008 contest.

## THIRTEEN TIME ZONES

by James Webb Wilson

Thirteen time zones across the Soviet Union  
From Leningrad to Vladivostok  
From Lithuania to the far reaches of Siberia  
The great expanse, the cultural diversity  
From town to town to Russian city  
Oh to ride trans-Soviet trains  
Just to see the many miles run up  
Miles across mountains and plains  
To see diversity start each new day  
To try to understand  
The thirty two Cyrillic alphabet  
Of the tapping code of the Gulag  
Oh to ride along and try to understand  
The five year plans – the Soviet State  
Controlling everything in the land  
From poetry writing to pig raising  
Across thirteen time zones of the USSR

## ambulance 61 never saw it coming

by Colin Dieden

espresso double shot  
half soy half regular  
sweetener whatever  
la brea is quite a confused and dizzy street  
all the kids have money  
and are ashamed of it  
but ive seen the kids that live south of here  
they too are embarrassed  
of the holes in their shoes  
and the paint peeling from their houses  
like the skin on the hands of their fathers  
the paint does not peel here  
they will smile i suppose  
once they come to learn that  
not all fathers have such rough hands

## SECOND AVENUE STUDY

by Merle Martin

Fast-food place,  
graffiti-bleached walls.  
plastic food-servers,  
gang and neo-grubby attire,  
street-life aromas.  
I see him from my booth's window,  
shuffling towards the entrance,  
step by painful step by step.  
If homeless, he has hidden his life-gear.

He orders a small soda, sits at a table  
near the far door. He is a regular,  
it seems. An employee trails him,  
thwarting any pocket stuffing.  
He whines his discontent.

A sweater two sizes too small  
climbs his back, exposing skin and briefs.  
Yellow shirt with turned-up collar.  
Recently shaved. Shabbily tidy.

Dirty, curly, whitish-hair,  
one lock trickling his forehead,  
sideburns drifting mottled cheeks.  
Large Slavic face, sad-clown brows,  
age-eroded ears, splashed nose.

His time-glazed eyes and canyon mouth  
jerk to find each voice, each movement,  
in the three-ring eating-room.  
This way – that way – back this way,  
seeming attentively confused.  
Then he sees me jotting notes.

He stares my departure.

Still.

**Dan Thomas-Glass** is the editor/lead spray-painter for *With + Stand*. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *1913*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, *Shampoo*, and elsewhere; his poetry/photography project on Interstate 880 was published by *Deep Oakland*. He is almost done with his dissertation on language poetry and rap music. He lives with his wife and daughter in Albany.

## ZONING

By Dan Thomas-Glass

The man in Stevie Wonder sunglasses  
points with an open hand at the stairs.  
Face turned up, he speaks to no one  
of the building perhaps, apartments

a 19<sup>th</sup>-century solution, now city's inelegant decay.

The brown paper bag in his hands is zoned as he is,  
commercial.

I'd wave blindly too.



Poet Kathy Keith

## **The Snake Salutes PFA!**

### **The Snake Turns Six!**

**Join us Wednesday, April 7**

*for cake and libations as  
we celebrate Rattlesnake Press's  
Sixth Birthday with a reading by*

**Carol Frith**

*from her new full-length poetry collection,  
two for a journey  
from David Robert Books.*

*The Book Collector,  
1008 24<sup>th</sup> St., Sacramento  
7:30 PM. Free!*

*The fifth issue of WTF!!! (a free  
quarterly journal from Poetry Unplugged at Luna's  
Café, Sacramento) is now available  
at The Book Collector.*

*Deadline for Issue #6 is April 15!*

*...and look for DAILY  
poetry/events/gossip on  
MEDUSA'S KITCHEN*

[medusaskitchen.blogspot.com](http://medusaskitchen.blogspot.com)

*Check out all things  
ophidian at  
[rattlesnakepress.com](http://rattlesnakepress.com)  
—Poetry with fangs!*

**Shawn Aveningo**, resides in Rescue, CA, grew up in St Louis, MO, has lived throughout various area of the US and Germany, while raising her three children. Through the years she has enjoyed diverse careers in software development, consulting, sales and real estate, as well as volunteered in the local schools and community. You can see more of her work published in *Rattlesnake Review*, *Medusa's Kitchen*, *PoetryNow*, *Poetz*, *WTF*, and *Survivor's Review*.

## WHERE DOES POETRY LIVE?

By Shawn Aveningo

For Billy it resides  
behind striped wallpaper  
he so meticulously  
peels back in vivid detail,  
exposing generations of stories  
careful not to destroy the glue.

For Mary it flies  
with geese,  
boards a ship with no captain,  
ready to depart  
on a journey  
solely navigated by her heart.

For William it sung  
in iambic rhythm,  
sonnets through centuries,  
inspiring young poets ,  
their metaphors paling  
in comparison.

For b.l. and d.a  
it rises from the b.s  
of life,  
the hypocrisy of humanity.

For Gene it was born  
a tender foal,  
for whom bets were placed  
at the racetrack,  
winnings giving rise to witty meter,  
watching all the girls go by.

For Marilyn it's found  
under fingernails.

For Michael it explodes  
in staccato,

For Jack it jumps  
from leather-bound  
history journals  
with eagerness  
of young puppies.

For Jimmy it bellows  
from a long lyrical branch,  
slow and mellow under the moon.

For Justin it croons  
syncopated tunes  
like jazz, pure and sultry.

Where does my poetry live?

I scribble and scream,  
my voice still not distinct.

So I dig into the grave  
of mistakes buried,  
haunted by their ghosts,  
until the ink in the well  
is my own blood  
now spilled upon the page.

**spc brown bag lunch series - poetry readings**  
**third thursdays at noon**  
**central library 828 i street, in sacramento**



John Hesselbein's work has appeared in *Cosumnes River Journal* and *Rattlesnake Review*. A firm believer in the unequivocal power of language, he enjoys reading to his daughter "Bella," whom he considers an inspiration without equal.

## SPOON SUENOS

by John Hesselbein

Dreams die faster than *Tecates*  
or handpicked tomatillos on the cutting board.  
But you say you *love* me, love my style.  
Shit, I'm just a flash in the spoon *mijo*,  
a real hot-shot.  
There will be others,  
and everybody will love them too.  
They will traffic in success and hope  
in little plastic *paquetes*  
to fill our minds and our veins.  
You know, they call it the lottery in the *barrio*  
and on the tier.  
*Real success.*

*Mira*, don't nobody give you nothing,  
you have to take it,  
but, you have to give it all back  
one way or the other.  
That's what they don't tell you.  
Believe it, *carnalito*  
And all you can ask for... in the end,  
is that they say  
"man, that *vato* had class,  
he had it made."  
But, *tu sabes?*  
It's all just a lie...  
just another spoon dream.

## CITY OF TREES

by John Hesselbein

I'm not exactly sure when I became  
Old Sacramento,  
seems like just yesterday I was  
New Folsom.  
I guess it must have been sometime  
between when they uprooted Shakey's Pizza  
and felled Tower  
everything,  
and much after Mitch Richmond  
was the prodigal son,  
(I think he does drywall now,  
or maybe he's dead too)  
when Auburn Blvd. was lined  
with strip clubs,  
sex shops,  
card rooms  
and taco joints  
that played live *mariachi*  
on Thursday nights,  
before they chopped it all down.  
It can still be found though,  
if you look hard  
among the rows  
of oak,  
Highland mulberry,  
southern sycamore  
and McKinley spruce  
with their  
cast off leaves and  
discarded needles,  
in this city of trees.

MONDAY, APRIL 19 - 7 p.m. (note early start time) - **Hot Poetry in Fremont Park Benefit for Chile** with Robin Aurelius, Mary McGrath, Bill Davis, Connee Davis, Debra DeBondt, Many Antoine, and Andy Anderson. Guests are encouraged to bring a picnic to eat during the reading.  
<http://fremontpark.net/>

## **Lisa Jones interviews Tim Kahl about Possessing the Self in Poetry**

. . . existentially speaking, I came to my own fiction

not really reproducible en masse, but as a scrap iron

heap of a man, yet wholly functional unit, certainly

as ambiguous as I now plainly stand here . . .

--excerpt from Tim Kahl's title poem, "Possessing Yourself"

So begins Tim Kahl's first collection of poems *Possessing Yourself*, hinting that, though the book features the more personal narratives and surreal examinations of the psyche that Kahl has been developing since he joined the Sacramento literary community, the reader will also find poems which engage the avant garde. Kahl was urged by his mentor Lawrence R. Smith not to leave his more experimental work out of the mix. The result is a book packed with poems that speak to Kahl's varied strengths: honest, creative accounts of marital life with two sons and fresh takes on boyhood, from the barber shop in Iowa to a perfect day of kickball with a girl, all exist alongside postmodern juxtapositions of pop-culture icons and philosophers. Martin Luther, Sesame Street's Grover and Tom Jones song lyrics are all invoked to lament loss of ecstasy and the challenge of finding authenticity, freedom, and acceptance in an overly-commercial and competitive world.

Well known to Sacramento poets as one of the major hosts of the SPC monday night reading series, Tim Kahl teaches composition at Sacramento City College and is the vice president of SPC. Kahl earned an MFA from Eastern Michigan's creative writing program (studying with Clayton Eschleman, as well as Smith). He spent some time in Brazil as a second language teacher and that eventually led him to transcribe some Brazilian poets and to the work of Fernando Pessoa. Pessoa's many different heteronymic identities (writing personalities), and philosophy of the role of the self in poetry, influenced much of the playful and surreal depictions of the self Kahl explores in the book.

Kahl has published very widely in a number of respected journals such as *Prairie Schooner* and *The Berkeley Poetry Review* and co-edits both *Tule Review* and *Convergence*. Learn how to buy the book and more about Kahl's transcription and reviews at <http://www.timkahl.com>. The following are excerpts from a much longer interview at his home in Elk Grove.

. . .

**You begin the book with a quote from Peer Gynt and you dedicate the book to all "genuine fakes."**

That is an important aspect of what I am trying to do in the book. There's a certain bit of earnestness about the self that I am bristling against or pushing up against. In so many writers today, there's a kind of honest and forthright depiction of the self that comes through and we all stand and clap for this person and how virtuous and wise they are.

I see the self as a much more slippery and difficult concept . . . . I am also very fond of trickster figures and that is why the Peer Gynt figure is there . . . . he is this person who is wracked by this sensibility of "Who am I? I'm this or that, I'm both. I'm multitudinous."



**I see “Sort and Accumulate” as a key poem in this book.**

It started out as an assignment. I grabbed Richard Zenith’s Pessoa and Company and started to read about him and found him very intriguing . . . . Also because of my time in Brazil--Pessoa is considered to be one of the Portuguese masters, everyone kept talking about him . . . . there’s hints of Ginsberg’s “A Supermarket in California”, but I was unconscious of that then. Now I look back and it’s very clear where some of those lines came from.

Then thrifting [is in the poem], which is one of the things that I take great pleasure in. The other thing that is operating there is this kind of commentary on American consumerism . . . how that desire to possess and own is the same kind of desire that is at the heart of projection itself . . . . In fact this [soccer] shirt is from a thrift store and I just love that it’s [got someone’s else’s name on it]. I love being Jerry for the day and then I can take it off and be Paul or someone else. You get to explore that and also the past. I always go with my kids and I don’t call it the thrift store anymore. I call it the Museum of Discarded Consumer Culture.

. . .

**Could you say more about why, in this poem, you align yourself more with De Campos [as opposed to Pessoa himself or his other heteronyms]?**

De Campos is the free-wheeling spirit. He’s the motor-mouth, like myself. He will come out and be touching on so many different things. He’s just somebody whose mind and imagination are alive and who does not have any regrets about letting that happen, does not feel a need or desire to curtail them in any manner or put them in a form that might be digestible, more of an advertising copy.

**Yes. One of the things I enjoy about your work is you are not worried about letting the idea of the poem, be the strength of the poem. You are trying to say something fresh and you are creative. Although I really do value sound and song, I feel a lot of people don’t put enough emphasis on meaning and saying something new!**

There are two ways people come into literature. Obviously I’m over-simplifying again, but to make a point. People come into poetry through intellectual interest and those people end up reading a lot of philosophy and have academic pursuits often and then there are others who come because it gives them a certain kind of emotional connection to what’s going on. And they are both legitimate! What happens is that sometimes people begin to seal themselves off from the potential of one of those two ways into literature and you could argue that that is the way Americans split off into these two camps.

**It often does feel like two major camps.**

Yes--it’s an American thing. To tell a European “you don’t know what you’re feeling. You’re all upstairs and there’s no feeling.” They would say “I don’t know what you’re talking about! There’s so much feeling in there also.” How can you talk about something intellectual without having some kind of passion there. That’s why a lot of people who write from the intellect feel abused--there’s a ton of emotion in there.

. . . Tu Fu said “Good literature makes you either think or feel. Literature that really lives makes you think and feel.” I came to literature because I wanted to think about stuff. In some respects, if you have a really active mind, literature is a good place to land. Maybe this is why science wasn’t able to maintain me in it’s icy grip--there’s just not enough room for your mind to negotiate all the stuff that you want it to negotiate. When you’re in poems and poetry that attempt to be voluminous, you have that opportunity. It is like mental monkey bars for you.

. . .

**You don't seem to do many form poems.**

There [are a couple] . . . I'm generally opposed to them. I don't get them when they are read aloud. I don't see what the purpose of them other than to just reiterate the space and time 400 years ago when those forms were invented--in another language, by the way, right? These are not native to American language.

I refer to those forms as poetry knock-offs. They certainly don't speak to our time and day here. If you want to talk about form and rhyme, I think you should talk about popular song, which is much more contemporary to our lives than the sonnet. There will always be somebody who needs that kind of template I guess. That's another problem I have with formalism though is you're concentrating so much on getting the template right that what a poet says is of secondary importance, and the poet has beautifully and elegantly sculpted lines that I don't care about.

. . .

I think it is important that I say more about what was the impetus for my trying to put song into poems. I've heard some people comment that this is just a trick or affectation--an excuse for me to get up and do my thing on stage and what does it have to do with poetry? My response to that is that when I was in Brazil, it was very interesting to me that there were poems that everyone that I bumped into from a certain generation could recite. The great Carlos Drummond de Andrade poem, "In the Middle of the Road there was a Stone--No meio do caminho tinha uma pedra"--I thought "Wow, that is really cool, how could that happen in the United States?" Even in other countries . . . everyone knew at least some lines from great epic poems from the past.

**And Chileans know Neruda's poems very well, I think.**

Another good example. It is just embedded in the culture in a way that--I just don't see it happening [in the U.S.] and I thought about this and got very sad. I thought "you know, poetry will always be the bastard child of American culture" and then I thought we do have that though. We do have that shared language that is immediately recognized only it is not poetry, it is song and more than song perhaps, advertisement, and movie lines. So that is another area that I would like to branch out to--to incorporate. And jingles, those damn things get in your head . . .

So that is why I wanted to take song and start to bring it into poems. I wanted to work it in the way that Eliot brings in Jessie Weston's grail imagery in "The Wasteland," for example, where you bring in this language that has a certain cultural currency that people will automatically recognize. Also, I like the fact that it allows a way to break the voice into different registers. When you are reading there's nothing more painful than to have the voice be in that one register the whole way through--even if it is beautiful . . .

There's a general feeling that once you invoke songs somehow you are diminishing the power of a poem and that songs and song writing belong to that form of existence referred to as entertainment. [Kahl throws his voice:] "Poetry is very serious work, Lisa. . . songs are just entertainment." . . . I'm hoping that song will overcome that notion a little bit.

Lisa Anne Jones

[alchemyofbirds.blogspot.com](http://alchemyofbirds.blogspot.com)

## Incontrovertible?

In graduate school at CSUS, a poet asked me if there was such a thing as an incontrovertibly good poem. We were out for the evening and I had time to think about his question. I thought "Yes", and I also nominated a poem at that time, "Skunk Hour" by Robert Lowell.

I thought then, as I do now, that if there was ever a poem you could nominate as outstanding, it would be Lowell's poem. I do not know how much you know about Lowell or the poem, but a few things have to be said. Lowell was a blue blood and he understood quite well history as social awareness, so saw about him a tradition of being ripe for the challenge of his intellect. He meant to take exception to what was told to him in his life, challenging the plan, place, and setting. He wanted to re-associate his psychic self to the legendary surface of his belonging.

He was also a troubled man. The biographies about him trade on his mental problems. They mean to explain his art in relativity to his perception of his reality. The poem "Skunk Hour" comes from his book *Life Studies* published in 1959. The book was supposed to herald in the confessional poem, and "Skunk Hour" can be read this way, but it doesn't quite catch it all.

In many ways, our understanding of what "Skunk Hour" means depends on its structure, something I liken to the scaffold scenes in Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. There we understand a synthesis in both social and psychological process obligated to the "step-by-step" scaffold scenes. I could be wrong here, but one blue-blood knowing another and borrowing from him when constructing a poem about change in social structure fits. Maybe more to the point, since Lowell's genes belong to the area, an uncle or grandfather probably told stories to Lowell as a young man about cousin Nathaniel.

The poem has eight stanzas, the first half's history produces the second half psychology. The poem's famous opening "Nautilus Island's hermit/heiress still lives through winter in her Spartan cottage" is so loaded that to study it here would surfeit the amount of space allowed me for this endeavor. Besides, this isn't about what makes the poems great, but rather the point of the poem's greatness.

The Hermit Heiress is a play on spinsterhood not being without its rewards. It provides for an elemental cruelty; the woman is a victim of a certain social framework, so much so that she has become framed by it and seen as an emblem. Her revenge is of course to make us pay, "she buys up all/the eyesores facing her shore/and lets them fall."

Perhaps they are "eyesores" but speeding up waste and decay so as to denounce time, inhabiting it in such a way as to replace the natural process with one's own design, perhaps is not the best thing to do, socially or politically.

The third and fourth stanzas introduce rank outsiders whose designs are better or worse depending, but one point is established, namely that what we think as readers either in the poem or in life depends upon the description we provide. Here "our summer millionaire" and "our fairy decorator" provide alternatives as bankrupt by an abject loneliness more felt than known.

This is the merry social setting revealing the old and new worlds of the island. Lowell's narrator, thought to be the author himself, finds himself embroidered in the goings on. Thus, the first four stanzas create the psychic environment the last four stanzas will act upon.

The second half of the poem begins:

“One dark night,  
My Tudor Ford climbed the hill’s skull;  
I watched for love-cars. Lights turned down,  
They lay together, hull to hull,  
Where the graveyard shelves on the town . . .  
My mind’s n not right.”

And so we have the workings of a disturbed and inexact mind at play on the visage before him one evening as he strolls out. It is not important what is there, but what it means to him. The next stanza affords this deepening towards the psychology of the speaker . . . I hear/my ill-spirit sob in each blood cell,/as if my hand were at its throat . . . /I myself am hell;/nobody’s here—“

The internal drama of a less than spotless mind [sic] perhaps, but the outside world has been subsumed and digested resulting in the last two stanzas of the poem providing the image of the skunk and her “column of kittens” in the garbage and refusing to be scared off from their awful diet.

The structure of the poem suggests a process where we spy the Hermit Heiress as integer for the space and time of tradition being acted upon along with the new intentions of the millionaire and fairy. This produces in vague cadence a slow drawing towards the rundown state of being appropriated in the life of a skunk as it “swills the garbage pail”.

But does this make the poem incontrovertibly good? No, and it is an idiot’s bet to think that the question for mine or anyone else’s money can be solved for. Yet “Skunk Hour” for my money establishes certain qualities that any poem considered great or good is obligated to. It nominates a structure that does not merely collect the thoughts of the poet but also acts as a history within the confine of the poem. It then understands that as it (the poem) progresses, it needs to answer for and react to how it begins towards a finish that posits a certain signature in the writing.

This means that the poem provides odd details built upon, felt through, creating a mood found in the narrator’s voice denoting a struggle as to share and articulate his being “not right”. The only way to do this is not through explaining, but providing an image, a description of the skunk we react to in much the same way the narrator reacts to the way he views his home.

These are crucial elements and might be argued as such for all poems, but it must be remembered that the exception proves the rule, and this is the poem’s final gift: It means we are not all right until we tell ourselves we are, and even then, what we tell ourselves doesn’t quite get it, does it? So we need the poem, a poem as it works in the static land of description and definition, shared but not known, expressed but not fully realized save for the way it is meant in the reading, and there always debated and never, thank goodness, incontrovertible.

**Wednesday, April 21, 24th Street Theater**  
**2791 24th Street, 7 p.m.**

**Screening of the documentary:**  
**Red Poet: The Story of Jack Hirschman.**

Q&A with the filmmaker, Matthew Furey, and reading by Jack Hirschman after the movie. \$10 admission for Jack's film and reading, plus this will get you into the ThinkingPeople's Shorts Showcase (4 films) at 6 p.m. and the short film Lychee Thieves.

**Ann Privateer** is a poet, photographer, and retired school teacher who grew up in Cleveland, Ohio but has lived in northern California most of her life. Her poems have appeared in *Manzanita*, *Poetry and Prose of the Mother Lode and Sierra*, *The Arts of the Sierra & Sacramento Region*, *Poetalk*, *Sex in Public*, *Tiger's Eye*, *Steele*, and *The Sacramento Anthology: One Hundred Poems*.

**GIRLS WHO STAND OUTSIDE**  
by Ann Privateer

My grand daughter calls them, the girls,  
she greets them when we go out,  
they are kind and gentle, ask about  
her vacation, stroke her cheek. She  
knows them, they stand in the same  
spot outside their door, wear the same  
short black dresses, the same spike heels.  
Children love what they can count on.  
We share a court yard. On hot  
nights everyone's windows are open.  
By day we wave or smile when caught  
in the window. My grand daughter imitates  
their dog's bark. Late at night I see a man  
turn in their window, he looks unsure  
of which way to go, wears a sheepish face  
while visiting blond women of the night.

**THE SITTER**  
by Ann Privateer

Thin, flushed body, chopped  
hair with a reddish glow,  
a far off gaze seems to be

one degree away from tears. Her  
angled nose holds her together  
as she clutches a stripped towel

then drops her cover when the clock  
starts, climbs on the pedestal  
revealing zero body fat. Five minute

sketches then twenty for three  
hours, one break. Quick strokes  
rough it in or leave parts out.

Long limbs take action, arms fling up  
and out, then graze the floor. A closer  
pose reveals childlike breasts with tiny

silver rods like old fashioned  
tie pins piercing both nipples.  
When asked if she's a dancer

she says ballet, that this is her first.  
We all clap, she's handed a fat  
envelope then disappears.

**Geoffrey Neill** is a poetry reading host at Luna's Café. He reads at SPC on March 29 with Rebecca Foust and Julie Bruck.

#### list of attachments

by Geoffrey Neill

he cant think  
he goes home  
and writes a list of attachments  
crosses them off with one continuous line  
that snakes through the binding letters  
like the seal slithers around the thrashing great white  
or like the the veins nerves and ducts of desire twist and marble  
through the guts the heart the throat and the mind and squeeze them  
like they are half-filled water balloons  
he writes the list again and this time stencils stars beside some  
circles or underlines others  
brings the paper to his face and smells it puts his lips to it  
imagines his death a dozen different ways

**Laura LeHew's** poems have appeared in *A Cappella Zoo*, *Eating Her Wedding Dress: A Collection of Clothing Poems* from Ragged Sky Press, *Gargoyle Magazine*, *Her Mark Calendar '07 & '09*, *Pank, you say. say.* and the 2010 edition of the *Syracuse Cultural Workers' Women Artists Datebook*. Her chapbook, *Beauty*, was published by Tiger's Eye Press in 2009.

## PANCAKES

by Laura LeHew

A young couple with a baby wait in front of the restaurant. Waiting for the doors to open, for it to be 9:30. Time for brunch. The girl tells me how they just got off a cruise and hadn't eaten in two days. How the cruise was too bumpy. Everyone was sick. How they had heard this place had good food. They sit at a table next to mine. Leave when the baby is too fussy, the food too expensive. Two couples plunk down at the table just abandoned. The men leave on their John Deere hats; the women cross their spray tanned legs, tap at the entries on the menus with their faux French manicured nails *well where the heck are the sourdough pancakes – that's what they're known for here* they murmur. When the waitress comes by the women tell her *honey, just have the chef whip us up some sourdough pancakes*. The waitress explains how they don't have pancakes though they do serve an excellent French Toast made with Challah bread, huckleberries and hazelnuts. But they want Sourdough. Sourdough. So she sends them down the road a ways—*not far*—for pancakes—guaranteeing them they won't find what they are looking for.

**Lowell Jaeger** teaches creative writing at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, Montana. His poems are forthcoming in *The Iowa Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *The Coe Review*, *Poetry Flash*, *Georgetown Review*, *Big Muddy*, *Antioch Review*, *Louisiana Review*, *Pacific Review*, *Hawaii Review*, *Poetry East*, and *The California Quarterly*. Jaeger's first two collections of poems, *War On War* and *Hope Against Hope*, were published by Utah State University Press. His third collection of poems, *Suddenly Out of a Long Sleep*, was published by Arctos Press in 2009.

## IF MY WRECKING BAR COULD TALK

by Lowell Jaeger

he'd say,  
to hell with it.  
Rip it out.  
No good to anyone  
anymore. Don't get  
feint-hearted.  
Just pry the nails,  
grab a hammer  
and smack it  
down. Knock out  
a window and toss  
the old wallboard in heaps  
on the lawn.

It don't  
mean diddly. Bud, you get touchy-feely  
with me, I'll sweat the piss out of you  
till you're swinging me like an ax,  
busting studs out  
by the toenails.

C'mon, man, beat me!  
 Slug the knot in your gut.  
 Strip the memories.  
 Haul 'em to the landfill.  
 Torch this pile of crap.  
 Sledge the chimney  
 to cinders.

Nothing lasts forever.

Face it, Bud . . .  
we ain't leaving  
nothing behind.

**Howie Good**, a journalism professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz, is the author of 11 poetry chapbooks, including *Still Life with Firearms*, *Visiting the Dead*, and *My Heart Draws a Rough Map*. He has been nominated three times for a Pushcart Prize and four times for the Best of the Net anthology. His first full-length book of poetry, *Lovesick*, was released in 2009 by Press Americana.

## JUST LIKE EDGAR ALLEN POE'S BLUES

by Howie Good

I found my heart wandering  
the streets of Baltimore,

penniless,  
raving unintelligibly,

dressed in someone else's clothes.  
It was coming from a funeral,

or going to one,  
and when I omitted to ask whose,

it was gone.  
But, all these years later,

mere acquaintances  
continue to receive letters

begging for \$10 for the fare home.

## WHITE SHEETS

by Sean King

White sheets  
White sheets  
Walk city streets

White sheets  
Walk city streets  
With guns  
Run brother run!

Blue sheets  
With badges  
Walk city streets  
With guns  
Run brother run!  
White supremacy is what they be pressing

Blue sheets  
With badges  
Walk city streets  
With guns  
Run brother run!  
White supremacy is what they be pressing  
America is still regressing

Blue sheets  
Blue sheets  
Cowards patrol city streets  
With guns and badges  
Run brother Run!  
White supremacy is what they be pressing  
America is still regressing  
Obsessing with oppression  
Confessions of hypocrisy  
Racism and poverty  
Hate and illiteracy  
Prison and slavery  
Lies of democracy  
Uncle Sam and stolen land  
Go together like a glove and a hand  
You can't acquit  
When it fits like a white noose  
Around a black neck  
Like black cargo piled into a slave ship  
Like black slaves being raped  
You can't acquit when the crimes are sick  
Like cocaine that will have you flying  
Those cops sho' be lying  
We thought she was reaching for her gun  
We thought he was going to shoot us with his back  
We didn't know she was having a seizure  
We thought his wallet was a gat  
Is that a fact?

Is that a fact or another lie  
When you make a mistake do you always shoot 50 times  
Do you apologize for your crimes  
Do you admit you were out of line  
There is a thin line between life and death  
You may still be breathing  
But your soul has cashed its final check  
Check  
Check  
Check your mind and your mental  
Check your mind and your mental  
Are all of these assassinations coincidental  
A coincidental accident  
An accidental coincidence  
An unintentional incident  
An incidental accident  
A coincidental incident  
A media misprint  
A Freudian slip  
A 50 finger trigger happy trick  
31 shots fired  
Even had time to reload the clip

We just wanted to slow the subject down  
That's why we kept pumping him with lead even  
after his head hit the ground  
That's why I shot him in the back  
Even after his face was pinned to the ground  
How's that story sound?

Blue sheets  
Blue sheets with badges  
Modern day assassins  
Walk city streets with guns  
Run Brother Run!  
White supremacy is what they be pressing  
America is still regressing  
Obsessing with oppression  
Confessions of hypocrisy  
Racism and poverty  
Hate and illiteracy  
Prison and slavery  
Lies of democracy  
Uncle Sam and Stolen Land  
Go together like a glove and a hand  
You can't acquit  
When it fits  
Like a white noose around a black neck  
Like black cargo piled into a slave ship  
Like black slaves being raped  
How can you acquit when the crimes are sick  
Like cocaine that will have you flying  
Those cops sho' be lying

*.... continued on next page*



*White Sheets, continued....*

And for their sins young brothers and sisters are dying  
and the world  
Is left with traumatized mothers crying  
Thanks to the LAPD  
Thanks to the OPD  
Thanks to the Sac PD  
Thanks to the Bakersfield PD  
Thanks to the NYPD  
Thank you to judges in the NYC  
Thanks to due process and opportunity  
Thanks to politics and hypocrisy  
Thanks to justice and democracy  
Thanks to stereotyping and flawed policy  
Thanks to the schools for their accurate teaching of history  
Thanks to prop 21 for helping me to see  
Kids belong in jails and penitentiaries  
You sure have made me feel safe  
in the land of the free  
Land of milk and honey  
Land of opportunity  
Everyone has the right to vote  
All inclusive democracy  
Doing what's best for the people  
Trickle down Reaganomic policy  
We're all treated equal  
In this Utopian Merit Based society  
All I got is from hard work  
No advantages have been given to me  
Get on with our lives  
No side effects from slavery  
Every one guaranteed due process  
NO signs of hypocrisy  
The right to bear arms  
We can handle the responsibility  
We all get along in America  
We're just one big happy family  
Ain't that right?  
Right?  
Right?  
You have the right  
You have the right  
Right to remain silent  
Anything you say can and will be used against you  
If you live long enough to make it to a court of law

Blue sheets  
With badges  
Modern day assassins  
Freeze  
Turn around with your hands in the air  
So we can just start blasting..

**Tom Goff's** poems, book reviews, and articles on California poets have appeared in such print or online venues as *The Sacramento Anthology: 100 Poems*, *Rattlesnake Review*, *Medusa's Kitchen*, *Poetry Now*, *Tule Review*, *Perihelion*, *Jacket Magazine*, and *Sacramento News and Review*. He has written three chapbooks, the latest one *Sinfonietta*.

## BACKING INTO THE GARAGE AT NIGHT

by Thomas Goff

It must be a male gambit, the left  
(risk) hand wobbling the wheel this  
way that, the right (monitor) hand

massaging the passenger headrest  
like a buddy shoulder. In no other  
life endeavor would Neighbor Man

display back end first, the rear bumper  
his notional rump, horse easing assways  
into stall. The putdown of one day,

setup for sunup's charge light  
brigade into the commute. Can he  
even grasp what beauty brake

lights conjure in a garage?  
Witness the red gas rose, the red  
gas rose, note how the walls

glow, four slabs tainted just  
taking up the refrain.  
Light-shadow pink,

then ash. Envision a sword  
of light pounded out on an anvil  
of smog. The edge if any

stays sharp no longer than  
lodged in the hot tailpipe,  
plume flute, smithy of exhaust.

**Lytton Bell** earned a poetry scholarship to the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Arts and later graduated Magna Cum Laude from Bryn Mawr College. She has published two chapbooks, won five poetry contests, and performed at many local poetry venues. Her work has appeared in over two dozen publications.

**Brenda Kay Ledford** is a member of NC Writer's Network. Her work has appeared in *Asheville Poetry Review*, *Pembroke Magazine*, *Capers*, and many other journals. She received the Paul Green Award for her poetry chapbooks, *Patchwork Memories* and *Shew Bird Mountain*.

## DON'T GROCERY SHOP WHEN YOU'RE HORNY!

by Lytton Bell

I'm sorry I licked the cucumbers, but  
it's really not my fault  
I wandered the stocked aisles in a daze, seduced  
by plentitude

In my dazzled trance  
the dark-eyed butcher boy, his apron  
stained with blood, asked me four times:  
did I want meat?

How many times did I plunge my hand  
into the self-service bin  
then lift the stolen candy to my mouth (sorry)?  
Spreadable cheeses, strong liquors

paper towels – even the plump, soft rolls  
talk dirty here  
In the hot roaster, breasts and thighs  
gleam in their juice

and nevermind the long-necked beers  
heavy cream, hot links, giant herbed meatballs  
I wonder if I am glowing brighter  
than every one of these 100 watt flood bulbs

lined in an untidy row  
The extension cords extend  
a little longer as I pass  
I squeeze the red bulb

on the tip of the baster pour au jus  
finger the pronged meat fork, jostle the jello cups  
Near the automatic doors an alarm  
goes off (and off, and off)

I feel a stab of guilt for the starving people of the world  
an incredulity that amidst this opulence  
a single one of us cannot manage to get  
what she needs

## HOMEMADE

by Brenda Kay Ledford

Mama made my clothes.  
No patterns.  
She looked at the catalog,  
cut pieces from memory.

Growing up, I never owned  
a store bought dress.  
Mama could turn flour sacks  
into a wardrobe.

In the second grade,  
a swing ripped my dress.  
With her silver thimble,  
Mama made the garment

run across the playground again.  
Her peddle sewing machine  
hummed late at night.  
Pink roses rambled

across a ruffled dress.  
Daises bloomed on pajamas.  
A plaid skirt and blazer  
kept me snug in winter.

When I outgrew my clothes,  
Mama made a Log Cabin quilt.  
Lying in bed, each stitch  
from her fingertips

whispered words of love.

**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](http://sacramentopoetrycenter.org).

**Submit poems** and a 30-50 word bio to [clinville@csus.edu](mailto:clinville@csus.edu). (Electronic submissions preferred.) Submissions may also be mailed along with a SASE to SPC 1719 - 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento, CA 95816.

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Monday, March 29, 2010

7:30pm - 9:00pm

Sacramento Poetry Center

1719 25th St.

Sacramento, CA

FREE, donations requested

Rebecca Foust and Julie Bruck  
plus local favorite, Geoff Neill

Donations will support the UC Davis MIND Institute to  
support autism research.

Rebecca Foust: Educated at Smith and Stanford and the mother of a son with autism, she writes and teaches in northern California. Holds an MFA from Warren Wilson College. Foust's poetry is published or is forthcoming in: *Atlanta Review*, *North American Review*, *The Hudson Review* and more. She has earned awards including two Pushcart nominations in 2008. *Dark Card* and *Mom's Canoe* won the 2007 and 2008 Robert Phillips Poetry Chapbook Prizes, and her full length book, *All That Gorgeous*, *Pitiless Song* won the 2008 Many Mountains Moving Poetry Book Award and will be released in 2010. Also to be released in 2010, by Tebot Bach Press, is *God, Seed*, a book of environmental poetry with art by Lorna Stevens.

Julie Bruck: The author of two collections from Brick Books, *The End of Travel*, and *The Woman Downstairs*. Her work has appeared in: *The Malahat Review*, *Ms*, *Ploughshares* and *The New Yorker*. She has taught at Concordia University and been a resident faculty member at The Frost Place. A former Montrealer, she now lives in San Francisco. Her awards include: National Magazine Awards - Gold award in poetry, 1999; National Magazine Awards - Gold award in poetry, 1998; QSPELL Book Awards - A.M. Klein Award for Poetry, 1994; Randall Jarrell Prize - Second Prize, selected by Donald Hall, 1992; MacDowell, 1991.



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*Carol R. Landberg*