

Sacramento's Literary
Review and Calendar:

Poetry Now

August 2005
Vol. 11, No. 08

A Publication of the Sacramento Poetry Center

Snail Sutra

Ghost trail, trick of light, stubborn wick
of sheen. I looked. I dangled on

my shrinking skeleton and peered.
Skid of slobber, parade of shine. Smear

of shimmer against red brick. I hid
every trace of my cosmic panic.

The life urge inched, spineless and alone.
The Void loomed, my worries won.

The clock ran ahead; I pushed past to pick
a fresh white rose and scrape off its thorns.

Death be nimble. Death be quick.
My shadow sprawled, my elbows poked.

Snail snooped on, repetitive and slick.

Rose, Snail, Skeleton, we licked the sun.

—Susan Kelly-DeWitt

Wave Of The Future, 1947

Mountbatten's plan
to partition India became fact
and Gandhi turned seventy-eight.

Lady Mountbatten sent birthday
congratulations. Gandhi's reply:
"Would it not be more appropriate
to send condolences."

The National Security
Council was created. Truman
was president and Henry Stimson claimed
the atom bomb had saved
a hundred thousand lives.

Oppenheimer sweated
after the fact: "Mr. President,
I have blood on my hands."

—Susan Kelly-DeWitt



Saint Francis

Sanctified by the ooze
of a leper's kiss, he thanked
God for his repulsion.

He said the world
is a good and happy place,
if you are hungry

if you are without
shelter or warmth,
if you are lonely.

Dying, he stretched
naked on the bare
ground, "to fight naked

with the naked..."
Where now in the cosmic
dust can he be found?

—Susan Kelly-DeWitt

This Issue:

Victoria Dalkey
James DenBoer
Carol Frith
Taylor Graham
Susan Kelly-DeWitt
debee loyd
Charlie Macdonald
Joyce Odam
Shawn Pittard
Allegra Jostad
Silberstein

Ramona Soto
Patricia
Wellingham-Jones

Reviewed:
Susan Kelly-DeWitt's
The Land
debee loyd's
noon, twilight, midnight
Joyce Odam's
Caught Against the Years

Susan Kelly-DeWitt reads with
Victoria Dalkey at The Book
Collector on August 10th.
See calendar for details.

Susan Kelly-DeWitt's *The Land* is published by Rattlesnake Press. Her other chapbooks include *Feather's Hand* and *To A Small Moth*. Her work has appeared in many journals and in several anthologies including *Claiming the Spirit Within* (Beacon Press) and *Highway 99* (Heyday Books). Her awards include a Wallace Stegner Fellowship for Poetry, the 1998 Chicago Literary Award, several recent Poets & Writers grants and four Pushcart nominations. She currently edits *Perihelion*, an online literary journal (<http://www.webdelisol.com/Perihelion/>), and teaches in the creative writing program of UC Davis Extension.

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Submissions of poems, artwork, and other works of interest to the Sacramento poetry community are welcome. See submission guidelines on page 10.

Poetry Now is distributed free in area bookshops, coffeehouses, community centers, colleges, etc. Back issues are available for \$3 each. Your membership gets **Poetry Now** and **Tule Review** delivered to your door or box.

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Calendar Editor: **Jody Ansell**
Editorial Staff: **Jody Ansell, Ann Conradsen, Tom Goff, Barbara Link, Pat Osfeld, and Ramona Soto**

The Sacramento Poetry Center is a non-profit corporation dedicated to providing forums for local poets—including publications and reading series—and bringing to Sacramento the finest poetry we can get our hands on. Our offices are at 1719 25th Street, Sacramento. Our phone number is: (916) 451-5569.

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President's Message

What Makes Community

I am writing this on our 6th consecutive day of triple digit heat. In common with most of you, I am able to escape into air conditioning for the greater part of my day. Yet, valley heat is an experience we can't avoid sharing. Thus, it creates a kind of ("Hot enough for you?") community.

Sweating side by side was surely part of the bond between those who came to Crocker Park on July 4th to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Leaves of Grass*. We were a sticky microcosm that day. Our readers ranged in age from 13 to 79. There were as many reading styles as there were readers. As I looked around at the attentive listeners, I saw people from many of the groups and venues that serve Sacramento's large and varied literary community.

And as we listened (through the steady roar of freeway, through the random vroom of motorcycles, through the intermittent whirr of helicopters) to each other read, as we shifted our chairs in and out of the sun, as we swigged down water, as we fanned each other with whatever came to hand, we became a community of our own: Walt's men and women, bound by the power of his words.

At our Board retreat a few days later, we talked about some of the ways SPC can help to build that sense of community. We want to do more collaborative events, more co-sponsorships. We want to reach out, in whatever ways we can, to the next generation. The more techno-savvy among us had some intriguing on-line ideas. And we decided that this year we want our Writers Conference to be community-based. A wide variety of excellent poets live, write and teach right here in Sacramento. We plan to feature some of them in our workshops and panels. And we hope that poets all across the spectrum (rap, sestina and everything in between) will come together and learn from each other.

SPC's Conference will be October 7th & 8th. Featured poets confirmed as we go to press: **Frank Andrick, Julia Connor, Carol Frith, Laverne Frith, Traci Gouridine and Susan Kelly-DeWitt**. September's *Poetry Now* will have the full line-up and all the details.

In the meantime:

Be sure to check out the August calendar. At SPC: **Sandra McPherson, Chip Spann,**

Susan Kelly-DeWitt and others celebrating **Charlie MacDonald's** new book from Swan Scythe Press: *El Sobrante: Selected Poems, 1975-2005* on 8/1, **Brad Buchanan** on 8/15, **Tryst with Destiny 2** on 8/22. And interesting things are always happening at other venues. You can find a place to hear poetry just about every night of the week in our very lively community.

And a warm welcome to a brand-new member of that community: Eleanor Lois (Nora) Buchanan, daughter of Kate Washington and Brad Buchanan, born July 1, 2005.

Editor's Note

Well, it's been almost a year since I took over as managing editor of *Poetry Now* and there have been more than a few changes since I started. *Poetry Now* will continue to change over time and I'd like to ask you for your input. Let me know what you think of the publication by filling out the poll on the back cover of this issue or by emailing your responses to me at dphunkt@mac.com. I'll be tallying the results on August 15th and printing them in September's issue. Of course, you can feel free to email your comments and suggestions to me at any time. I always welcome your feedback.

I look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions. Thanks again.

—Robert Grossklaus

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Sacramento area and
beyond?**

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at:**

**poetrynow@sacramento
poetrycenter.org.**



For Thom Gunn

They remind me, distant now...

The glittering eye, the jaguar tattoo,
Gone, but clear in the mind, memory's riddle—

After pressing so many poems on your attention,
This one will go unread, with your name in the title.

I'm using your bleak, if not comfortless
Conception of the afterlife—oblivion.

Though you may recall, to your chagrin,
My spiritual hopes leaned to the Rilkean.

Scanning your hundreds of poems, I'd claim a vital
Force remains, though it may be

Unwilling to read through another elegy.
You can't save me from an awkward foot or phrase.

That is certain. Only your exemplary
Work—the distillation of your days—

Remains as guide and model. It's enough.
If not, you shrug, that's, as poems are, tough.

—Charlie Macdonald



Charlie Macdonald has a new book from Swan Scythe: *El Sobrante: Selected Poems, 1975-2005*. Formalist poet C.G. Macdonald was born in Vallejo, California and graduated from U.C. Berkeley and U.C. Davis with degrees in Literature and Creative Writing. He has worked as a seasonal firefighter, singing telegram messenger, fifth grade teacher, and an awake overnight counselor. Most recently he worked in special education at Davis Senior High School. He has published poetry and reviews widely. He is currently battling throat cancer.

Gerti in Ordinary Shades of Brown (after Portrait of Gerti Schiele, 1909)

She has become a model for the talent of her brother—
sharply edged, as if with scissor-marks, where she
has been cut to a collage—but she is tired of posing,

her confining layers of clothing forever falling in a
careless crumple about her feet. Her colors smear.
She bends her unfinished face toward her shoulder.

—Joyce Odam

Central Valley Summer

First light, we're on the road,
how many miles of speeding asphalt
tire treads, the same gray staccato
of horns & brakelights, radio talk shows,
vehicle exhaust, exhausted as the weeds
along the shoulder, dusty faded-green
like cynical reminders of a spring
that's gone,

how many hours on the road,
and suddenly
a Delta breeze like opening
doors ~ cool dark stirring
of a wordless murmur

—Taylor Graham

New from Rattlesnake Press—

VYPER! A Journalzine of Poetry from Kids 13-19



**Fangs I: An Anthology of Snake Poems
which have appeared in
RATTLESNAKE REVIEW**

Deadline for Snake 7 is August 15!
Check for daily postings of poetry & events:
medusaskitchen.blogspot.com

All Snake publications are available at
The Book Collector,
1008 24th St., Sacramento

Literary Calendar for August 2005

Note: Unless otherwise stated, events take place in Sacramento, CA.

1 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Sandra McPherson, Chip Spann, Susan Kelly-DeWitt** and others celebrating **Charlie MacDonald's** new book from Swan Scythe Press: *El Sobrante: Selected Poems, 1975-2005*. Host: Susan Kelly-DeWitt. 7:30pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts). Info: 441-7395. Free.

BookTown, a bi-weekly radio show spotlighting the literary scene, co-hosted by Molly Fisk and Eric Tomb, 1-2pm, KVMR 89.5 FM.

2 Tuesday

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30pm, Hart Senior Center, 916 27th St. (27th & J). Info: Danyen, (530) 756-6228. Free. Workshop news, www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org, SPC Workshop News.

Terry Moore's Access Television Show, 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 9pm, Channel 17 (depending on cable provider). Co-hosted by Regina High. (Sacramento viewing only.)

3 Wednesday

Dr. Andy's Poetry and Technology Hour, host Andy Jones, 5pm, KDVS-90.3 FM. Info, culturelover.com.

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9pm. Host: Khiry Malik, Sweet Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeak.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

4 Thursday

Poetry Unplugged, **Tiger**, aka **Tiger Spirit**, aka **Le Tigre**. Hosted by Gilberto Rodriguez. Open mic before/after. 8pm, Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free.

Poetic Light Open Mic. 8-10pm, Personal Style Salon, 2540 Cottage Way. Info: John Hughes, 470-2317. Free.

Evening of Poetry. Host: La-Rue. 7pm. Gwen's Caribbean Cuisine, 2355 Arden Way. Info: 284-7831.

5 Friday

Local author/teacher/poet **Tim Bellows** shares selections of the book he co-authored, *Angel Cats*. Open mic follows;

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hosted by Donene Schuyler at Barnes & Noble, 6111 Sunrise Blvd., Citrus Heights (916) 853-1511, (916) 853-1424 or email: crm2885@bn.com for info. 7pm, free.

CSU Writer's Conference begins. Runs through August 7th. Keynote Speaker **Dorothy Allison**. Workshops, lectures, networking and feedback. Info: www.cce.csus.edu/cts/writersconference05/index.cfm.

6 Saturday

CSU Writer's Conference continues. Runs through August 7th. Keynote Speaker **Dorothy Allison**. Workshops, lectures, networking and feedback. Info: www.cce.csus.edu/cts/writersconference05/index.cfm.

Escritores del Nuevo Sol's writing workshop and potluck on 1st Saturdays. 11am, second floor at La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R. Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or joannpen@comcast.net.

The Know ART Party 6pm. Mercedes-Benz of El Dorado Hills. Art, eats, drinks & music. A celebration featuring tastings from regional wineries and restaurants, cigar bar, martini bar, silent art auction and more. 6pm. Tickets are \$50.00 each and may be purchased by calling (916) 444-1615 or visiting www.knowartparty.com. The Know ART Party is a fundraiser for the Arts & Business Council of Sacramento, promoting partnerships between the business and arts communities throughout the region. Sponsored by The Arts & Business Council.

7 Sunday

CSU Writer's Conference continues. Runs through August 7th. Keynote Speaker **Dorothy Allison**. Workshops, lectures, networking and feedback. Info: www.cce.csus.edu/cts/writersconference05/index.cfm.

8 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center: **Open Mic with Lemonade**. Bring your summer poems to read. Host: Bob Stanley. 7:30pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts). Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free.

Sacramento Poetry Center Board Meeting, 6pm, Hamburger Mary's (17th and K Sts.). Info: spc@sacramentopoetrycenter.org or

441-7395.

9 Tuesday

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30pm, Hart Senior Center, 916 27th St. Info: Danyen, (530) 756-6228. Free.

10 Wednesday

Dr. Andy's Poetry and Technology Hour, host Andy Jones, 5pm, KDVS-90.3 FM. Info: culturelover.com.

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9pm, Sweet Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeak.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

Rattlesnake Press features: **Susan Kelley-DeWitt** and **Victoria Dalkey**; host, Kathy Kieth. The Book Collector, 1008 24th St., 7:30pm, to celebrate the release of their new chapbooks from Rattlesnake Press, *The Land* and *In the Absence of Silver*. Free.

11 Thursday

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

Poetic Light Open Mic. 8-10pm. Personal Style Salon, 2540 Cottage Way. Info: John Hughes, 470-2317. Free.

Evening of Poetry. Host: La-Rue. 7pm. Gwen's Caribbean Cuisine, 2355 Arden Way. Info: 284-7831.

13 Saturday

Poems-For-All: **Frank Andrick, Michelle Tea, Rachel Savage** and **Rachel Leibrock** (with supplemental film images and wacky stuff); hosted by Richard Hansen. 7:30pm, The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street. Refreshments & free mini-books. Info: Richard, 442-9295.

Patricity in Spirit in Truth, open mic at Queen Sheba's restaurant, 1537 Howe Ave., 3-5pm. Info: Patricia Turner-Green, 920-1020 or patricity_07@yahoo.com.

14 Sunday

The Pomo Literati. KUSF 90.3 FM in San Francisco (www.kusf.org). 2-4pm. A two hour quarterly radio program that spotlights

Calendar continued...

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the spoken word. Live readings and sounds by **Guillermo Galindo**, **Chris Brown**, **Michelle Tea**, **Becca Costello**, and **Richard Hansen**. Pre-recorded rare works from **The Residents**, **Lee Ranaldo & William Hooker**, **Patti Smith**, **Diane di Prima**, **LadyMonster**, **Phillip Lamantia**, **Paul Dutton**, **Gene Bloom!**, **Beth Lisick**, **Edie Lambert**, and **The Cure**. It's Frank Andrick's B-day bash!! Info: fandrnickfabpub@hotmail.com or (209) 727-5179.

Stockton Poet's Corner, **Luke Breit** reads. Special host: Don Anderson. Luke has been a major contributor to Sacramento's writing community, helping to nourish local writers, and bring distinguished literary artists from elsewhere. Luke served 12 years as president of the Sacramento Poetry Center. Luke's work has appeared in anthologies and literary journals, including *The New Yorker*, *the Haight-Ashbury Literary Review*, *Zica*, *The New York Times*, and *the Mendocino Review*. 7pm, Barnes & Noble, Weberstown Mall, Stockton. Info, www.poetscornerpress.com or (209) 951-7014.

15 Monday

The Sacramento Poetry Center presents: **Brad Buchanan**. Stan Zumbiel hosts. 7:30pm. SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts). Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org.

BookTown, a bi-weekly radio show spotlighting the literary scene, co-hosted by Molly Fisk and Eric Tomb, 1-2pm, KVMR 89.5 FM.

16 Tuesday

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30pm, Hart Senior Center, 916 27th St. Info: Danyen, (530) 756-6228. Free.

Terry Moore's Access Television Show, 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 9pm, Channel 17 (depending on cable provider). Co-hosted by Regina High. (Sacramento viewing only.)

Third Tuesday Poetry Series: **Jean Vengua** and **Fausto Avendano**. Vengua is a writer/researcher in Filipino-American Studies, with articles in numerous scholarly journals in the US and Philippines. Her poetry has been published in a variety of journals. She teaches at UC Berkeley. Avendano is widely

published in several genres, including poetry and short story; he has written a novel and is currently professor of Hispanic Literature at CSUS. Hosts: Art & Christina Montecon. Q&A follows reading. 7:30pm at La Raza/Galería Posada, 1421 R St. Info: 743-5329. Free.

17 Wednesday

Urban Voices: **Barbara Noble** and **Suzanne Roberts**, hosted by B.L. Kennedy. 7-8pm, South Natomas Library, 2901 Truxel Rd. Free.

Dr. Andy's Poetry and Technology Hour, host Andy Jones, 5 pm, KDVS-90.3 FM. Info, culturelover.com.

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9pm, Sweet Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeak.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

18 Thursday

Poetry Unplugged: **Indigo Moor**. Hosted by Frank Andrick. Open mic before/after. 8pm at Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free.

Poetic Light Open Mic. 8-10pm, Personal Style Salon, 2540 Cottage Way. Info: John Hughes, 470-2317. Free.

Evening of Poetry. Host: La-Rue. 7pm. Gwen's Caribbean Cuisine, 2355 Arden Way. Info: 284-7831.

19 Friday

Escritores del Nuevo Sol presents **Susan Hennies** and **Joe Finkleman** with musical accompaniment by **Francesca Reitano** on Native American flute, and **Mark Halverson** on percussion. Open mic follows. 7:30pm, La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R Sts. Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or Joannpen@comcast.net. \$5. No one turned away for lack of funds.

20 Saturday

Underground Poetry Series: **Sharon "Sha-lo" Logan**, Underground Books, 2814 35th St. (next to the Guild Theater). Info: 455-POET.

The Nevada County Poetry Series': Cowboy Poetry. Featuring: **Mick Vernon**, **Janice Gilbertson** and **Harold Roy Miller**. 7:30pm. These poets bring the Cowboy Way and the Western Spirit to life! Tickets can be purchased at the door for \$5 general, seniors and students, and \$1 for those under 18. Refreshments and open mic included. In the main theater at the Center for the Arts, 314 W. Main St., Grass Valley. For more information call 432-8196 or 274-8384.

21 Sunday

Third Sunday Writing Group 1-3pm, various locations. Info: eskimopi@jps.net or nancy_wallace@calpers.ca.gov.

22 Monday

The Sacramento Poetry Center: **Tryst with Destiny 2: Poets Celebrate the Beauty of India**. Arts of India Dancers will kick off the event with authentic dance to commemorate the event. Rhony Bhopla hosts. 7:30pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts). Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramento-poetrycenter.org. Free.

23 Tuesday

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30pm, Hart Senior Center, 916 27th St. Info: Danyen, (530) 756-6228. Free.

24 Wednesday

Dr. Andy's Poetry and Technology Hour, host Andy Jones, 5pm, KDVS-90.3 FM. Info: culturelover.com.

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9pm, Sweet Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broad-

continues...➤

List Your Event:

To have an event listed on the SPC Literary Calendar, please email us at: calendar@sacramentopoetrycenter.org, dphunkt@mac.com or call Jody Ansell at: (916) 739-0768 **by the 5th of the month preceding your event.**

Thank you.

Calendar continued...

Note: Unless otherwise stated, events take place in Sacramento, CA.

way. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

25 Thursday

Poetry Unplugged: **Joe Donohoe** and **Bucky Sinister** w/ guests. Hosted by Frank Andrick. Open mic before/after. 8pm at Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free.

Poetic Light Open Mic. 8-10pm, Personal Style Salon, 2540 Cottage Way. Info: John Hughes, 470-2317. Free.

Evening of Poetry. Host: La-Rue. 7pm. Gwen's Caribbean Cuisine, 2355 Arden Way. Info: 284-7831.

26 Friday

Poetry at the Art Foundry: **Brad Buchanan**. Host: Luke Breit. 7:30pm, Art Foundry Gallery, 1021 R. Street. Info: Luke, 446-POET. \$5 donation.

27 Saturday

The Show, **Queen Sheba from Virginia**. 7-9pm. Wo'se Community Center until further notice. 2863 35th Street. Tickets are \$5 at Underground Books or fromtheheart1@hotmail.com. Info: Terry Moore, 455-POET.

29 Monday

SPC Open Mic reading. Host: Traci Gourdine. 7:30pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts). Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free.

BookTown, a bi-weekly radio show spotlighting the literary scene, co-hosted by Molly Fisk and Eric Tomb, 1-2pm, KVMR 89.5 FM.

Call for articles!

SPC would like to include your articles about the Sacramento poetry scene on its website. There is no limit to the length of these articles. Please send your work to:

Sacramento Poetry Center
1719 25th Street
Sacramento, CA 95816.

You may also email your articles as Word attachments to dphunkt@mac.com or

poetrynow@sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address on each page.

Slam Poetry in Sacramento and Beyond

by Ramona Soto

What is slam poetry? It is a spoken-word performance of stunning imagery. It's sometimes angry, often hilarious, always passionate. It can be interactive. Because it's primarily a performance art, this type of poetry often doesn't make it into poetry journals. Make no mistake, however, this is poetry!

Sacramento offers great opportunities to see, and even be part of, this exciting form of word artistry. Check out the calendar for the Mahogany Urban Poetry Series every Wednesday night, as well as "The Show," every last Saturday of the month.

On Saturday, July 2, Khiry Malik Moore hosted the "Battle of the Bay," a highly animated poetry slam in which poets from five cities (including Sacramento) vied to get closer to their goal of competing in the nationals in Albuquerque in August. The evening was full of energy, passion, and humor, with fast-moving performances by representatives of slam teams from Oakland, Berkeley, Palo Alto, San Jose, and Sacramento. This slam "battle" consisted of three rounds of five poets each, each poet performing for three minutes, then scored by judges selected from the audience.

A lot of content was packed into each three-minute performance, with poets tackling everything from social issues (education, violence, immigration) and politics (San Jose poet Kim Johnson: "Don't accuse Allah of playing Jenga with skyscrapers"), to dysfunctional loveall with great wit and intelligence.

In the end, the Sacramento team proved victorious and was looking forward to competing in a series of slams held in other cities leading up to the nationals. (Find out the results of the nationals at <http://www.poetryslam.com/>, the official website of Poetry Slam, Inc.) The evening ended with an impromptu haiku slam. Nazelah Jamison (Naz) was the unanimous winner, scoring with sly and radically witty satire.

Don't miss out on the rich and inspiring world of slam poetry we have throughout Northern California and right here in town!

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Caught Against the Years

poems by Joyce Odam, with artwork by Charlotte Vincent,
SnakeRings SpiralChap Series #5, Rattlesnake Press 2005
Reviewed by Carol Frith

Caught Against the Years is a visually stunning collection, a credit to Rattlesnake Press' impressive spiral chap series. Combining Joyce Odam's conjuring lyrical voice and her daughter, Charlotte Vincent's, equally lyrical artwork (crisp and evocative, sometimes representational and sometimes almost Dali-esque), this haunting and sensitive collaboration explores the transient intersections of time, art, and mortality by way of the controlled chronologies of form. Time, like light, in Odam's poetry, is formative, her chiaroscuro world of recollection becoming a translatable metaphor for mutability. In the impressive sestina, "The Remembering", Odam writes, "Imagine haunting yourself with memory that would deny/ the loosened darkness—the omnipresent light—/", the darkly formal repetitional strictures of the sestina imposing themselves over and over until you become "...the falling echo in the resounding light,/a fragment count in the scope of time,/". Time, light, and the chaos of time: in "Time Sketch," the poet writes, "I go through time like a message./Twilight remembers me with its strange light./I grow luminous. Time has replaced me with itself./", time and light conflating. Memory, in this instance, becomes an inorganic concomitant of light.

Time dislocates, strange immanence of days and hours. "In The Dark-Throated Birds Go By," Odam writes, "the calendar thinks/it has turned in a dream/it hangs in confusion upon the wall/recounting itself to find its error/". The poet continues in "She Smiles and Says Good Morning" with, "everything is wound:/the shadows/her nerves/the changes/everything but the clock./", time reversed and reversing, intersecting and intersected, time dislocating language, calendars, and clocks. "My thoughts fly/wrongly/over the clocks and calendars/as I live backwards/", she writes in "Over the Clocks and Calendars," time becoming syncretistic only when it begins to subsume itself. "Time can be measured/", says Odam (in the poem of that name), "in instant or eternity/they are the same/".

In "Time-Scape," Odam is "...unnerved by the hum of my/own time-held distraction./", time for the poet transforming itself from a pre-existing formula (a predictable aesthetic correlative) into the intuitive "hum" of ephemerality, "A tangle of light/" she writes in "Time Piece," "through an old tree/...I held time in disbelief.../". Time shifts and sometimes fractures: broken temporal shards. In "Time Fracture," Odam writes, "I pick up my suitcase, stuffed full of glass,/and turn in another wrong direction./" In "The Soft Rain," "the clock.../...breaks in/...with time.../with its reality.../ altering everything/pulling everything away/", time confirming itself to be a forever treacherous contextual medium, always shifting and shattering.

"...And we must hurry/through the failing echo of the light/", writes Odam in *Caught Against the Years*, time here once again objectified as light. Time for Odam (and Vincent) is separation and genesis, content and context, a transliterating and shifting medium continually morphing forward into eschatology: "After the moment has closed the hour/" writes Odam, "there will be no other." ("Death of the Clock").

I highly recommend this fine book by Joyce Odam and Charlotte Vincent. It can be purchased from The Book Collector, 1008 24th St., Sacramento, CA, or ordered directly from the author: Joyce Odam, 2432 48th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95822 for \$8

Evening Tanka

Clouds still twilight bright,
the moon full and vigilant
between the topmost
branches of the redwood tree,
young frogs begin their singing.

On the road to home
a clutter of white blossoms,
like snow carpeting
the gray and brown rock below,
a flutter of wings above.

—Allegra Jostad Silberstein

Pale petals will fall

With five pale lavender petals around each
red heart, with a sunburst of pistillate stars,
flowering plums light the overcast sky,
flame against this counterfeit of dusk:
those shades of gray above
that push against the bones below.

Outside a concrete and brick building,
the medical clinic in Hillah, terror flowers:
blood pools in the street,
body parts gathered and piled on blankets,
shoes and tattered clothes thrown in a corner,
angry crowds seeking news of relatives
shouting *Allah akbar! Allah akbar!*

Where does it begin...
this binding to terror springing from religion
or rising from some wasted-land of hate
where arid spirits do not see
the plum flower
only the flowering pools of blood.

How does it end?

I know pale petals will fall to earth
and purple leaves emerge,
giving shade in summer's heat.
Bare branches will etch the edges
of winter and spring surely
will come again
with blossoms to light the overcast sky.

—Allegra Jostad Silberstein

Victoria Dalkey is a Sacramento native whose poems have appeared in many publications, including *Abraxas*, *bakunin*, *Birmingham Review*, *Cimarron Review*, *Napa Review*, *Suisun Valley Review*, *Quercus*, *In 'Lak Esh: A Collaboration of Vision and Voice by Northern California Artists and Poets*, and *Landing Signals: An Anthology of Sacramento Poets*.

She is the author of two chapbooks, *Twenty Nine Poems* (published in 1999 by Red Wing Press) and *In the Absence of Silver*, forthcoming from Rattlesnake Press. The premier performance of *sub rosa*, her collaboration with composer/guitarist Gilda Taffet, featuring soprano Claudia Kitka, which received a New Works Award from the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, was presented at the CSUS Festival of New American Music in 2001.

Dalkey is also a freelance writer and art critic. Her reviews, interviews and feature articles have appeared in *Arts*, *Art of California*, *Art Week*, *West Art*, *Ceramics Monthly*, *Glass Art*, *The Sacramento Bee*, *The Oakland Tribune*, and *Horizon: Valley Arts*. Since 1976, she has written art criticism for *The Sacramento Bee*. She has also written introductory essays to catalogues on the works of Wayne Thiebaud, Manuel Neri, Sheila Sullivan, Charles Eckart, and the Artists Contemporary Gallery (formerly the Artists Cooperative Gallery).

Benita

1. 1956

Mornings we ate the pale yellow petals
of tea roses, big as potato chips,
creamy and curling on the tongue,
and peeled camellias down
to the quick green core.
Afternoons we sat on the sloping terrace
watching the trucks go by on C Street.
Once you told me how you prayed
one of the drivers would stop
and take you to Reno or L.A.,
anywhere away from the alley house
that smelled of cat piss and cigarettes,
the close kitchen where your mother sat
carving soap cakes into camellias,
your father, the ex-smalltime boxer,
scrubbed clams for cioppino
and cursed his job driving truck.
Benita, small goodness,
we could have changed places that day,
could have become each other.
You could have stayed while I kept on leaving.

2. 1966

At 21, you have been married five years.
You have two children.
Your father is dead.
Your mother has moved to Alaska.
Your husband feels trapped
wants to go on the road
with a minor league team.
You call me now and then
but I have little to say.
I finished my degree.
I have all my teeth.
I have no babies.
My new husband is an artist
and a college professor.
I am starting graduate school.
I won't get pregnant for three years.
On weekends we go to foreign films
come home and make love casually.

3. 1969

I have ravaged the garden.
The kitchen table is piled with blossoms.
My fingers pluck the slick-furred
buds of camellias, peeling each pink layer back
until there is nothing left.
I sort the petals into piles
and wonder why I don't call you
tell you I'm pregnant, ask you
how it will be, what I will feel.
The black dog who leaps at my feet
is spattered with the blood of roses,
the semen of plum blossoms.
I listen for the voices of children
outside, fingers plucking at buds.

—Victoria Dalkey

Easter Sunday

Snapshot by the pond: Slant light falling jagged
on the new green world. Mother in pink suit
with padded shoulders, brother in blue serge
and me, awkward would-be ballerina in yellow ruffles,
white shoes, white gloves. No father, of course.
Was he there, taking the picture? Not likely.
The pond's in the picture, deep and dark
its fountain spray glinting in the sunlight.
The old frog hidden in the rocks, watches
the pregnant carp, white skin sloughing off gold.
Later, I'll dive in, let the fish bite my thighs,
cleanse myself of church, father, redemption
the risen Christ floating up over the pond
as I wash myself in the dark waters.

—Victoria Dalkey

Victoria Dalkey reads with
Susan Kelly-DeWitt at The
Book Collector on August
10th; see calendar for details.



noon, twilight, midnight

by **debee loyd**, Rattlechaps Chapbook Series #10. Rattlesnake Press 2005.

Reviewed by Shawn Pittard

Lust, love, color, music, and the sun, moon and stars dance with language on the pages of **debee loyd's** *noon, twilight, midnight*. In the title poem, which acts as a prologue, loyd leads us into the “symphonic conversation/i have with myself while i whirl and skip across/the floor of my mind.” In *noon, twilight, midnight*, loyd welcomes the reader onto the dance-floor.

The title to debbee loyd's collection is taken from Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances*, his last composition. It is retrospective and self-reflective. Its three movements evoke the phases of his adult life. *noon, twilight, midnight*, also in three parts, shares that sense of movement, the sense of taking stock—and not without regret. As she writes, in the title poem: “wishing every day i had bought the ruby violin.”

Reds of many shades and hues appear in loyd's poems. From the “ruby violin” to the “red-ruby hair” of her “Aunt Carmen, my father's/favorite sister,” who drove a “blackcherry Camaro.” loyd remembers her and thinks about taking on her free-spirited ways. “i may buy a Camaro/keep dyeing my hair//buy richly colored cheek bluster/take a lover half my age/reap what the devil sows.”

The poems in the chapbook's first section, *noon*, are recollections. Meditations on a lost lover and on the wars she has seen in her lifetime—in poems with titles like “wrestling the demon” and “mustered out.” In “workshop in santa cruz, 2002” she writes: “Buddha is in the middle/surrounded by American soldiers,” and, “reaching for what is left of the soldier,/the part that came home.” loyd concludes *noon* by introducing another recurring character in her symphony: the moon. “i knew the moon before anyone walked on it. before rocks were/quarantined, before i was born my mother knew the moon. we know the /cycles it spins. how cleansing moonlight can be. how flattering.”

twilight introduces Mexico and the deft use of Spanish words. In “el sol,” loyd becomes more lyrical, elemental, and sensual: “i came unprotected/from the heat/needling to be loved like that/just one time/when the hand fits and/fingers twine to a tune/struck from stone on stone/rock on rock/not lust/but a keening wail inside.” In “bike trail,” loyd introduces an alter-ego, a “shadow-girl” named Jackie, reminiscent of Aunt Carmen, who wants “desperately to hitch hike/with hell's angels/wear a bandana/go braless/she is desperate to know/wind whipping her hair.”

My favorite pairing of poems are in the book's final section, *midnight*. Titled “yellow” and “orange.” “bring me yellow,” loyd writes, “take me there/through the steam of the bath/yellow rose and *tejas*/the haunting thumping *ritmos*/of *musicas tejanos*/inscribe on the yellow-gold/how much you love me/To Jackie: *te amo*.” In “oranges,” two pieces of fruit are carried from home, “picked off my tree,” and taken on a journey. “all week i touch the oranges through the bag/feel their pregnant shape/their cooled skin/holding juice and seeds.” When the speaker eats the oranges “the juice runs down my throat/down my fingers/i chase it with my tongue/ its pungent perfume lingers/as i ride the smell of it.”

In *midnight*, the speaker is self-confident and mature; and she finds a wondrous new love in a grandchild. In “for dominic,” she writes about the place she loved the most, “a hotel on Mexico's baja sea,” and how “the place i love became changed into a someone/the side of your sweet-smelling head to me/the place i love most is within your sight/so you can see me cheering, blowing *besitas*.” And it is here, in *midnight*, that the *duende* Lorca wrote about appears, as loyd weaves her themes of music and human emotion once again in “fugue.” “no one knew the depth of grief/the sobbing rose and fell/with the tempo/each note chasing the other/wildly, across the silence.” In “plea,” the speaker turns to the moon we met earlier, calling on it “to bring me some light/some wisdom.” “moon, do not desert me now,” the speaker pleads, “I rely on your shine/how it guides me/leads me/will lead me/out of the dark.”

The arc of *noon, twilight, midnight* is satisfying and intriguing. The narrative is held together between sections by the repetition of loyd's major themes. The reader enjoys the next red, the next new way of incorporating musical terms, the changes in the speaker's perspective as time passes. loyd, a Modesto Poet Laureate, does not disappoint the reader with the collection's concluding poem, “las tres velas,” or, the “the three candles,” after a painting by Marc Chagall. The mystical painting depicts young lovers on their wedding day, who “stand on a flying carpet.” Hard-won wisdom is shared with the bride: “choose one *vela*—*una velita sola*—/one single candle to light the way.”

noon, twilight, midnight is both well-written and well-produced; another handsome Rattlechap from Kathy Kieth's Rattlesnake Press. You can purchase *noon, twilight, midnight* at The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street, Sacramento, CA, or order it directly from Rattlesnake Press, 4708 Shade Tree Place, Fair Oaks, CA 95628 for \$5.

fugue

the story devolves into itself
a fugue with stretto, stacked
a cloverleaf freeway of notes
passing each other, playing over
under, repeating itself, saying
its name like a mantra

as into her hands she wept
crying wetly into open palms

no one knew the depth of grief
the sobbing rose and fell
with the tempo
each note chasing the other
wildly, across the silence
battering the quite into
submission to the wailing
melody
now completely entwined
within itself

—debee loyd

The Land

by Susan Kelly-DeWitt; Rattlesnake Press, 2005

reviewed by James DenBoer

Susan Kelly-DeWitt is a poet of natural nouns; she points directly at things — flowers and trees, animals and insects; grandmothers and Iron Age murder victims. She uses all the primary colors, and silver, carmine, pink and lemon as well. In this latest book there are mockingbirds, owls, egrets, alligators, wolves, rats, lizards and spiders. There are oaks and dogwood, fungi and roses, tulips and cedars. And to all of these Kelly-DeWitt brings her precise, scientist-like descriptions:

A bumblebee embraces with her whole queenly body
a willow catkin's pollen-starred fur . . .

That is, she creates by naming what exists in the world around her, observing with empathy and without overt judgment. Such a poet faces particular challenges. She must make those nouns come alive beyond their naming, into meaning. As she gracefully foregrounds the quotidian — all that we see, as poets or not — she must also carefully, carefully, move us into larger preoccupations: the self, the selves of others, all that not seen by microscope or telescope or the naked eye: the meaning of what is seen, parsed only by those (us) able of self-regard.

Susan Kelly-DeWitt manages this task well. There are not only “mustard flowers in the painted/ fields” but “death's eyes hidden/ behind fanned black branches.” There are flocks of birds (“Migration”) not only described but formed on the page, who are aiming toward “a South/ of the mind, a Paradise/of wishes.” There is the pain of politics and war: “when the dogwood blossoms fly apart, a shrapnel of white petals.” And there are conclusions drawn to guide us:

. . . like ogre spider
who carries her web on her back
and slings it to trap
whatever she needs
to live

Kelly-DeWitt's careful knowledge holds also of her craft: she has earned for herself (over years; the only way to learn) an easy handling of the perennial problems of where to start the poem, where to break each line (and on what principle), and where to end the poem. Her starts are anchored: “This afternoon . . .”; “Last night . . .”; “I was hiking . . .” In many poems, the rhythms depend on decisive enjambment, managing effects not attainable by a phrasing based simply on breath. Sometimes her endings have a distinct Oriental flavor:

White
egret — friend
from home!

The title poem, in its modesty and power, in its recognition that the poet sometimes says the opposite of what the poem itself “says,” deserves a full quote:

The land is a long
book I've been
reading. When I open
the pages

my fingers turn
to dust.

For Susan Kelly-DeWitt, the land (the world) *is* a long book; she *has* been reading it carefully for many years, she *will* turn to dust reading it — but in this handsome little book, as in all her work, her fingers now touch, bring life, make art.

The Land is available for \$5 at The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street, Sacramento, CA, or order it directly from Rattlesnake Press, 4708 Shade Tree Place, Fair Oaks, CA 95628.

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Reviews, articles and pictures can be sent via email to:

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or dphunkt@mac.com.

Please keep book reviews between 500-1500 words, event commentaries between 100-250 words and interviews and articles between 500-2000 words.

Please note that accepted work will also be available on our website:

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Recently Released/Available Again:

1. *Vocal Exercises In Stone* by **Karen Baker** (Rattlesnake Press)
2. *Why I Collect Moose* by **Svea Barrett**
winner the first Poet's Corner Press chapbook contest 2005
www.poetscornerpress.com
3. *The Miracle Shirker* by **Brad Buchanan** (Poet's Corner Press)
4. *An Absence of Silver* by **Victoria Dalkey** (Rattlesnake Press)
5. *Bone Sprockets* by **G.O. Clark**
6. *The Other Side of the Lens* by **G. O. Clark**
7. *A Box Full of Alien Skies* by **G.O. Clark**
8. *Selected Poems 1972-2005* by **Eric Greinke**
9. *LittleSnake Broadside #14* by **Bill Gainer** (Rattlesnake Press)
10. *Vyper #1* ed. **Robert Grossklaus** (Rattlesnake Press)
11. *The Poetic Light* by **John A. Hughes**
12. *The Land* by **Susan Kelly-DeWitt** (Rattlesnake Press)
(see review on page 10)
13. *Been Born Bronx* by **B.L. Kennedy** (Rattlesnake Press)
14. *After Modigliani* by **Stephen Kessler**
15. *Tell it to the Rabbis and Other Poems 1977-2000*
by **Stephen Kessler**
16. *Why We Have Sternums* by **Kathy Kieth** (Rattlesnake Press)
17. *Rattlesnake Review #6* ed. **Kathy Kieth** (Rattlesnake Press)
18. *Snakeletes #4* ed. **Kathy Kieth** (Rattlesnake Press)
19. *noon, twilight, midnight* by **debee loyd** (Rattlesnake Press)
(see review on page 9)
20. *All From Elsewhere* by **William Ludington**
21. *El Sobrante: Selected Poems, 1975-2005* by **Charlie Macdonald**
22. *We Have Tress* by **Alexa Mergen**
23. *an acre of violets* by **Crawdad Nelson** (24th street irregular press)
24. *The White Bone Harp* by **Barbara O'Donnell**
25. *Lost Soul Child* by **Barbara O'Donnell**
26. *Dreamwalker* by **Barbara O'Donnell**
27. *The Town* by **Barbara O'Donnell**
28. *Caught Against the Years* by **Joyce Odam**,
illus. by **Charlotte Vincent** (Rattlesnake Press)
(see review on page 7)
29. *Brevities #28 & #29* ed. **Joyce Odam**
30. *Some Rhyming Lines About Felines* by **Liz Purcell**
31. *A Whooping Crane Diary* by **Jeff Ross**
32. *The Common Fire* by **Shelley Sevren**
33. *Priorities* CD by **Straight Out Scribes**:
(916) 452-1290 or straightoutscribes@yahoo.com
34. *Mudsong* by **Michael Spring**
35. *Greatest Hits 1981-2004* by **Hannah Stein**
36. *On Tuesday, When the Homeless Disappeared*
by **Marcos McPeck Villatoro**
37. *The Battered Bride Overture* by **Mary Zeppa** (Rattlesnake Press)

Local blogs/websites to check out:

Brad Buchanan: www.miracleshirker.blogspot.com
Robert Grossklaus: www.xanga.com/dphunkt6/
Richard Hansen: <http://www.sacfreepress.com/poems/>
Ben L. Hiatt: <http://digitaldawg.blogspot.com/>
James Lee Jobe: <http://putahcreek.blogspot.com/>
Colette Jonopulos: <http://colettej.blogspot.com/>
<http://tigerseyepoet.blogspot.com/>
Kathy Kieth: <http://medusaskitchen.blogspot.com/>
Larry Stenzel: www.larrystenzel.com

Do you have a poetry blog or website you'd like people to know about? Email the web address to: dphunkt@mac.com.

After Four Days of Rain

Every table filled
even the one
in the middle of the room
the one people watch
when talk dulls
and food dallies

Old-timers slurp coffee
frown at the noise
in the usually empty space

They josh with Bonnie
too busy handing around eggs
picking up napkins
pouring drinks
to answer with her normal
racy remarks

The busgirl sweeps
dishes into pans
swipes tables with a rag
that needs a bath

The stylish black spikes
of her hair straight up
on a frazzled head
reflect the morning
she is weaving through

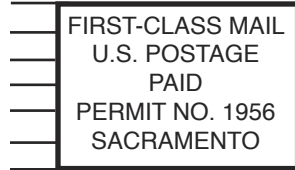
The laughter level
of neighbors
released from the prison
of home
bounces off the ceiling
gives the workers
primetime headaches
while the cash register
rings

—Patricia Wellingham-Jones

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