

Sacramento's Literary
Review and Calendar:

Poetry Now

February 2005
Vol. 11, No. 02

A Publication of the Sacramento Poetry Center



YOSEFA RAZ was born in Jerusalem. She served in the IDF as a border guard and a Hebrew teacher. While completing her MA at UC Davis she won the Celeste Turner Wright Poetry Award two years in a row. Her work appears or is forthcoming in *ZYZZYVA*, *Bridges*, *Margie: The American Journal of Poetry*, and *Glimmer Train* as well as numerous online publications. Her first book, *In Exchange for a Homeland*, has recently been published by *Swan Scythe Press*. Gary Snyder called it “courageous, vulnerable work, hard won, and illuminating,” and Shirley Kaufman said, “In poems that resonate with family pain, army outrage, social savvy, Yosefa Raz already reveals in her first collection of poems the strength and social vision of an accomplished poet.”

This Issue:

**Catherine French
Laverne Frith
Albert Garcia
Tom Goff
James Grabill
Robert Grossklaus
David Humphreys
Raud Kennedy
Kathy Kieth
Vincent Kobelt
Yosefa Raz
Bob Stanley**

SECURITY CHECK AT ALLENBY BRIDGE

I took an old man's nail clippers
safety pins
chocolates.
I tore wrappers off birthday presents
that were never meant for me.
Shook out a thin, quiet woman's underwear.

Every cup the woman in the dusty black dress
packed in newspaper
so carefully –
white china with a green stripe –
went into a plastic cart.
She pulls at my sleeve.
Perhaps she is saying
“Don't break them.”

They told me:
Protect the security of the State.
Wear the uniform with pride.
How to say,
hada mamnua: this is confiscated;
ruch min hun: go in this direction;

how to take the women aside to a booth
when the metal detector goes off,

make them remove bracelet after golden bracelet,
pass the hand-held detector
over arms and legs, chest and back.

Little prices to pay
they say
there is no choice.
A humiliation of small details –
I fingered a businessman's toothbrush
I tried to untie the knots of string
holding together the pilgrims' striped blankets
with my clean white gloves.

The week the pilgrims returned from Mecca
they were detained on buses at the border for three days,
ate cucumbers and yogurt they brought in string bags.
A tall man carrying a beige suitcase told me,
“We are so glad to be home.”

The Jordan river slowed to a trickle;
the lowest spot on earth.
Shed your silver sandals.
Shed your stained white robes.
The concrete is burning.

Yosefa Raz reads on
Monday, February 14th at the
Sacramento Poetry Center.
See calendar for details.

President's Message

Hello Again,

Muriel Johnson Appointed to the California Arts Council

Muriel Johnson, a long time supporter of arts in the Sacramento region and former Sacramento County Supervisor, has recently been appointed to director of the California Arts Council. Ms. Johnson has always championed the arts and their promotion even in tight budget times. Hopefully, she will be able to get the California Arts Council back to where it was a few years ago. Last year the budget was cut from \$19 million dollars to \$1 million during the budget crisis here in California. More funding is proposed for this year and I believe that Ms. Johnson will be able to bring the arts the recognition that they deserve.

Straight Out Scribes Celebrate Their New CD: "Priorities"

Sacramento Poetry Center members, Staajabu and V.S. Chochezi, are releasing their new CD "Priorities." On Saturday, February 12, 2005, from 2-4 p.m. at the new Carol's Books, 300 Florin Road, the award winning poetry duo will officially celebrate the release of their second collaborative CD effort, "Priorities," with a release party and poetry reading.

"I am extremely proud of this CD," says daughter V.S. Chochezi. "There are 26 of some of our favorite poems on it accompanied by a variety of jazz tunes that blend very well with our voices."

"This CD is homegrown," says mother-poet, Staajabu. "The poetry was written here and it was mixed right here in Oak Park at Audio Technique studios with the creative expertise of engineer/musician Will Prince. It was also manufactured and packaged here in Sacramento by Rising Artist Media in midtown."

The public is invited to join the celebration at Carol's Books. Chochezi and Staajabu will read some of their newest work, play some cuts from the new CD and host an open mic. Light refreshments will be available. Children and elders are welcome. ADMISSION IS FREE! For more information contact Staajabu 916-452-1290/ staajabu@yahoo.com or Carol's Books, 916-428-5611.

Sacramento City College to Offer Latino, Chicano and Mexican American Literature Courses

"Sacramento City College has a class in Latino, Mexican American, and Chicano Literature offered at our Davis outreach center this semester. It meets Monday and Wednesday evenings, 5:30-6:45. A student can register online; the first class session is Wednesday, the 19th. The instructor is Danny Romero, a wonderful fiction writer who is now teaching for us at City College.

"Registration information can be found at the main Sacramento City College website: www.scc.losrios.edu. Prospective students can go through the online application process there and sign up for the class. If they want to call the Davis Center, where the class will be held, the number is 530-747-5200. Please take advantage of this unique opportunity. Mr. Romero has read at SPC in the past and is a wonderful poet. Check this out. With support and participation the class will continue many more semesters."

Submit Poetry to *Because People Matter*

Dorothy Wake is co-editing (with Seth Sandronsky) the March/April issue of *Because People Matter*—the progressive news & views bimonthly newspaper serving the Sacramento area & beyond (circulation now 18,500). March is National Women's History Month, and they're planning a poetry page—or perhaps even the entire centerfold (depending upon the quantity/qual-

ity of submissions) with the theme, "Women Poets Speak Out Against the War" (March 19-20 marks the two-year anniversary of the U.S. bombing and invasion of Iraq).

Submission guidelines: Poems should be no longer than 25 lines (shorter is better since space is limited). Submission deadline is February 1.

One submission per person, so send your very best. No poems will be returned, so it's important that you keep a copy of your submission. Also include your full name, phone number, and e-mail address. Send submission as MS-Word document attachment (if possible) to Dorothy Wake, dorothy@accessbee.com and Seth Sandronsky, ssandron@hotmail.com. If you are unable to send as MS-Word document attachment, then send in the body of an e-mail, making sure the line breaks, etc. are correct. No fancy formatting, please! Publication decisions will be made by Dorothy and other BPM editors.

December Benefit Update

The final total money raised during the benefit was \$969. This is a good and fun fundraising event each year. I always enjoy making some of the food and listening to the poetry during the night. It is warm and inviting at the Miller's home which has a magnificent collection of art. Please consider attending in the future if you have never made it to the event. Some new attendees this year were surprised at the close intimate setting and were very glad that they attended. SPC also sold a few ads in *Poetry Now* as a result and gained a few new members. Thanks again to everyone for participating and for supporting the Sacramento Poetry Center.

Thanks everyone for supporting the Sacramento Poetry Center. Get out there and support the artists at reading events, workshops and other venues. Keep poetry alive and strong in Sacramento.

Cheers,
Martin



Poetry Now, Sacramento's Literary REVIEW & CALENDAR, is published each month by the Sacramento Poetry Center and is funded, in part, with grants from the California Arts Council and the Sacramento Cultural Arts Awards Program of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission with support from the city and county of Sacramento.

Submissions of poems, artwork, and other works of interest to the Sacramento poetry community are welcome. See submission guidelines on page 10. Ads are \$25 for a 3X5-inch space.

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

Managing Editor: **Robert Grossklau**
(dphunkt@mac.com)

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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 1631 K St. in the Sacramento Ballet Co. Bldg. Our phone number is: (916) 441-7395.

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Want to advertise in *Poetry Now*?
For \$25 you can get a 3X5 space to showcase your store, event, book release, etc.

contact us at:

poetrynow@sacramentopoetrycenter.org

Café Tables

Driving down Newbury Street, I'm terrified
Of the bored moment.
You know the one.
A man and a woman sit
As a couple at a small table,
Drinking, eating, but not conversing.
Their eyes are crushed snails.
Their facial expressions, day old pancakes.
I've been that man, and the fear
Of being him again
Makes me
Look away.

—Raud Kennedy

Call for Poetry: "Open Circle" Public Art Commission: Les Birleson

The Sacramento Metropolitan Arts-funded public art commission project "Open Circle" by Les Birleson will include a large scale granite and glass "poetry circle." The poetry circle consists of 8 large glass tablets on which poetry will be etched. The panels are 30" x 38". The piece will be located at the Water Treatment Plant on Riverside Drive, near 11th. Poetry will be judged in accordance with its relevance to the theme of tolerance and inclusion. A stipend of \$250.00 will be paid to selected poets.

Concept:

The circle has been used for healing and centering of the human condition throughout history and across all cultures. It manifests in a multitude of ritual, symbolic and literal ways suggesting completeness, protection, and balance. The overlapping circles suggest commonalities, thought and interactions between people. Concentric circles suggest the movement and spread of thoughts and ideas outward from a source. The circle signifies unity in multiplicity, and by association, embracing diversity and inclusion of all peoples. Poets should feel free to submit works relating to any themes related to tolerance, inclusion, and healing.

Guidelines for Submissions:

1. The competition is open to residents of the greater Sacramento area.
2. There is no age limit.
3. Poems may not exceed 26 lines.
4. Each poem must be given a title.
5. Poems must be in typescript. (No e-mail submissions will be accepted.)
6. Each poet may submit up to two poems that have not been previously published.
7. Poems must be submitted in duplicate, with a cover note listing the author's name, address and phone number, and the title of the poem. Names should not be on the poems themselves.
8. Poems must be the original work of the author.
9. The authors of selected poems will grant the Artist and the City of Sacramento permission to publish the poems in any related materials, in relation to the project.
10. Poems must be received by February 15, 2005.

Mail all entries to:
Open Circle Poetry
P.O. Box 314
Robbins, CA 95676

Pilot Light

Ash and yellow poplar light up the chilly
neighborhood after wet downpour overcast gray
above willows, evergreens, dogwood and red maple
a swirling dark curtain leaning into the push
and warm collar of steaming windows,
cold glass, metal chrome.

Another election has come and gone
with the city vaporized in morning fog
waiting for atonement in a thin blue flame.
Now, you may wash your hands.

—David Humphreys

www.poetscornerpress.com

Chapbook Poetry Contest
Judge: Dennis Schmitz author of seven books
including *The Truth Squad* by Copper Canyon Press

First Place Award of \$500.00

winner will be announced by June 1, 2005
send manuscript of 24 to 30 text pages of poetry
with \$15.00 reading fee to

Poet's Corner Press
8049 Thornton Rd.
Stockton CA 95209

Deadline for submission: March 1, 2005

www.poetscornerpress.com

New from Rattlesnake Press—

**Colette Jonopulos: The Burden of
Wings**

(Rattlechap #7)

B.L. Kennedy: Been Born Bronx
(SpiralChap #4, featuring art and poetry)



Remember! Feb. 15 is the deadline for
Rattlesnake Review #5. Send art and
poetry to: kathykieth@hotmail.com

Snake Books of all ilk are available at
The Book Collector,
1008 24th St., Sacramento

Literary Calendar for February 2005

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

1 Tuesday

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30 pm, 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, 9 pm, Channel 17 (depending on cable provider). Co-hosted by Regina High. (Sacramento viewing only.)

2 Wednesday

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

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9:00 pm, Sweet Finger Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

3 Thursday

Poetry Unplugged, TBA. Gilberto Rodriguez hosts. Open mic before/after. 8 pm, Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free.

5 Saturday

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.

6 Sunday

Poem Spirits, TBA. Sacramento Unitarian Church, 2425 Sierra Blvd., 6:00 pm, Rms 7/8. Info: Tom Goff, Nora Staklis, 481-3312; JoAnn Anglin at 451-1372.

7 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Cathy French** and **Albert Garcia**. Host: Susan Kelly-DeWitt. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. (17th & K). 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, 1-2 pm, KVMR 89.5 FM.

8 Tuesday

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

9 Wednesday

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

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9:00 pm, Sweet Finger Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

Rattlesnake Press: **Pearl Stein Selinsky** reads from her new chapbook, *Love and Other Complaints*; host, Kathy Kieth. The Book Collector, 1008 24th St., 7:30pm. Free

10 Thursday

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

12 Saturday

Poems-For-All: **Bob Stanley**; hosted by Richard Hansen. 7:30 pm, The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street. Refreshments. Free mini-books. Info: Richard, 442-9295.

14 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Yosefa Raz**; host: Bob Stanley. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free

Sacramento Poetry Center Board Meeting, 6 pm, Hamburger Mary's (17th and J.) Info: spc@sacramentopoetrycenter.org or 441-7395.

15 Tuesday

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

Third Tuesday Poetry Series: **Don Brennan** and **Christina Mantecon**. Host: Kimberly White. Q&A follows reading. 7 pm at Arden-Dimick Library, 891 Watt (Watt & Northrup). Info: 264-2770. Free.

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

16 Wednesday

Urban Voices: **Gene Bloom**; hosted by BL Kennedy, 7-8 pm, 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, 9:00 pm, Sweet Finger Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

17 Thursday

California Lecture Series: **Wendell Berry**. Poet, novelist, and great moral essayist, the recipient of awards from the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Letters, he has authored over forty books including *Jayber Crow*, *A Timbered Choir*, *The Unsettling of America*, and *What Are People For?* Crest Theatre, 1013 K Street, (916) 44-CREST. 7 pm

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

Escritores del Nuevo Sol, TBA. 7:30 pm, La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R.

Calendar continued...

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

Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or Joannpen@comcast.net.

18 Friday

The Other Voice: TBA, 7:30 pm, Davis Unitarian church library, 27074 Patwin Road. Info: Allegra, 530-753-2634 or Betty, 530-753-1432.

Third Saturday Series, **Queen Marianna Sousa**, 814 35th Street, next to the Guild Theater, info: Terry Moore, 455-POET

20 Sunday

Stockton Poet's Corner. TBA. 7 pm, Barnes & Noble, Weberstown Mall, Stockton. Info, www.poetscornerpress.com or 209-951-7014.

Third Sunday Writing Group
1:00-3:00 pm, various locations.
Info: eskimopi@jps.net or nancy_wallace@calpers.ca.gov.

21 Monday

The Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Tom Goff**. Stan Zumbiel hosts. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. 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, 1-2 pm, KVMR 89.5 FM.

22 Tuesday

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23 Wednesday

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

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9:00 pm, Sweet Finger Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

24 Thursday

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

25 Friday

Poetry at the Art Foundry: TBA; host, Luke Breit, 7:30 pm, Art Foundry Gallery, 1021 R Street. Info: Luke, 446-POET. \$5 donation.

26 Saturday

The Show, **Noah Hayes**, **Flo Real**, **Amajah the Messenger** and comedian **Mike Winfield**. 7-9 pm. Wo'se Community Center until further notice. 2863 35th Street. Tickets, \$5 Underground Books or fromtheheart1@hotmail.com. Info: Terry Moore, 455-POET.

28 Monday

The Sacramento Poetry Center: **Vincent Kobelt**; Rhony Bhopla hosts. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free

What You Might Have Missed...

THE IRREPRESSIBLE **B.L. Kennedy** has taken over the reading series at the South Natomas Library and re-named it *Urban Voices*. This series was begun by **Pearl Stein Selinsky** several years ago, then co-hosted by **Tom Goff**. Bari has taken it over with much enthusiasm, and the library has promised to refurbish the already-comfortable meeting room, which is separate from the library itself and an excellent room to read in. December's poets were Local Ladies of Note **Kimberly White** and **Linda Thorell**, who gave spirited readings of their fine work. On hiatus in January, the series continues in February, third Wednesday, 7-8 p.m. Check it out! —Kathy Kieth

LIKE A SPEAKEASY, you enter the unmarked side door of the Arden-Dimick library for a poetry read. And on December 21, the contents were intoxicating: writer/teachers **Todd Walker** and **Robert Roden**, who also co-edits *The Silt Reader*, a now-classy journal that hasn't forgotten its 'zine roots. Gracious **Kimberly White** hosted, and there was an excellent turn-out for a cold night so close to Christmas.—Kathy Kieth

COMPASSION AND FRIENDSHIP were center stage (well, okay, center circle) at **Be Davison Herrera's** reading on January 7, as she read for Los Escritores at La Raza/Galleria Posada. Be was a long-time resident of Sacramento, where she contributed a vast amount of time and energy to the arts and, specifically, to poetry. Now she has moved to Corvallis, Oregon, and it's our loss. Friday the 7th was a rounded evening of music by **Jack Herrera** ("Dr. Sax") on flute, **Delece Vargas** on drum, and poems read by Be and by a variety of people she had invited to share poems about friends. Los Escritores is one of the most active groups in town, sharing poetry with the community on a very lively, regular basis. Check out their beautiful anthology: *Voices of the New Sun*.—Kathy Kieth

List Your Event:

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

Katy Brown, *The Quality Of Light*,
poems and photographs, Rattlesnake Press, 2004.
Reviewed by Laverne Frith

From the time that you pick up this volume, you have the feeling that you are engaging something special. The author's accomplishment begins with the attractive burgundy cover graced by a dramatic photograph and an intriguing title, *The Quality Of Light*. The seductive lighting in the photograph can be immediately associated with the title. It is a spiral bound volume of 39 pages of photographs of excellent composition and clarity, each accompanied by a poem that, in most cases, bears direct reference to the photograph. The press layout and production are excellent. Collectively, these are poems that speak again and again to the intimacy the poet has with the subjects, to that experiential track that allows her sensibility to shine through. As you progress through the pages you develop the feeling that you have signed on for a very pleasant and searching journey. The great care and attention to the framing and cropping of the photographic images adds to the power of the book.

But first and foremost is the poet's trail of language, a demonstration of the commitment and involvement she has with the subjects throughout. Katy Brown is observing, ruminating, turning experience over in the present, reviewing its historical understory as she leaves the reader with something to ponder. Page after page is filled with surprising variation, more than enough to maintain the reader's interest and involvement.

Consider the poet in the first poem, along with a companion, in the surround of Fountains Abbey, England, how the light echoes in the ruins, "we are here—no more substantial than a glint of sunlight...", "still time lingers in the roofless halls." The poet begins in awe of the world around her, especially the insistent quality of light.

In "Finality Of Stars", "daylight erupts" and the approaching storm is discerned in the distance. She is fascinated with the "tricks" of daylight and is moved to consider the cosmological, the darkness beyond.

In "Castlerigg Stone Circle", a heavily textured poem, formations older than Stonehenge are brought into dramatic focus, into deep landscape. She even feels the "rooks circle overhead looking for scraps." The truncated

light in the photograph adds additional drama.

"Roman Soldier" is, perhaps, one of the most singular poems in the collection, with only the ruins extant from a time when such soldiers roamed Northumberland, soldiers far from their homeland, there without their own sun "set over the seven hills."

One more defining example of how the photographs and poems interplay can be found in "Springtime In The Alley Of Regret" where the full range of light is revealed and where there is unison between the images in both poem and photograph. The poet's descriptions and extensions are natural and expansive, so believable in the context of the old stones, depressions, vegetation, and most of all, distilled light. So much more than place, the scene is fixed in time, things that have weathered and survived, available for viewing by those who still choose to come.

"The Quality Of Light", the title poem, is a special example of how effectively Katy Brown has merged photographs and poems on the page. The poem addresses the scene directly, displaying a full range of light, the nuances of some light interacting, reinforcing, subtracting, and sometimes challenging or contrasting, as it interfaces with other light. Light, as it falls on the meadow, brings back a surge of memory, evokes recall of "the land that shapes my heart, my thoughts, my past." The poet is truly in her zone.

Moving from photographs to poems and back again, this volume is a real feast. Katy Brown demonstrates a true gift of language as she leaves her intriguing lines hanging in the halls of ruins, spread across the landscape, celebrating the ways of animals, in the garden of William Wordsworth, even in sacred chambers. *The Quality Of Light* is a beautiful mixture of subjects, and a real test of her range. A lovely first book.

**Would you like to carry Poetry Now in your
business and help spread poetry throughout
the Sacramento area and beyond?**

**For details, contact us at:
poetrynow@sacramentopoetrycenter.org.**

Robert Grossklaus: How long have you lived in Fair Oaks?

Kathy Kieth: Sam and I have lived in Fair Oaks since 1993. We were both born in Sacramento, but wanted to live farther out, so we bought a house here in Phoenix Place, off Sunset and Hazel. It borders the tail end of Negro Bar, so we get to look out over oaks and fields and lots of wild turkeys, and we're surrounded by vernal pools.

RG: How long have you been writing and when did you decide you wanted to be a publisher?

KK: I've been writing most of my life but took many detours: I was a music major in college and spent many years teaching and making a living playing piano and organ and directing church choirs. Then I decided to get my MA at UOP in Music Therapy, then went on for a doctorate in Psych there. I worked briefly as a psychologist, then "retired" (okay, quit) in 1993. I started focusing more on writing poetry and eventually took classes at CSUS from Dennis Schmitz and Josh McKinney. Some of the kind poets here in Sacramento got me interested in submitting my own poetry, and I've been published in over 100 journals. Then the publishing bug bit me early last year, and the Snake was born. More and more ideas appeared in my head: first the Review, then the chapbooks, then the broadsides, then Snakelets (the kids' journal)—I'm not sure why I've taken on this additional craziness, actually, but it is very rewarding to me. Sacramento is full of very interesting, talented poets, and it seems important to get their words down in print. Besides, I'm sick of the idea that the only good things that happen in the arts come out of the Bay Area. That's certainly not true in poetry.

RG: Where does your fascination with snakes come from?

KK: I said in Issue #1 of Rattlesnake Review that the only thing that scares me more than rattlesnakes is poetry. We have rattlers in our yard every year, and I'm not particularly afraid of them, actually, but they do deserve a healthy respect. Like poetry.

RG: Your poetry often has a very musical feel to it; is this derived from your experience in music?

KK: I do think that music plays a big part in how I write. It seems like a lot of contemporary poetry has lost its music, become way too prose-y. Maybe this is because of the proliferation of free verse—nobody pays attention to rhyme and meter anymore. Writing in form has become politically incorrect. Still, I think writing in rhyme and meter is like playing scales: you don't have to use it in your own creations for public consumption, but it helps you hear the music in words, how to make them dance even in free verse—or prose, for that matter. (Some writing schools make students learn to write poetry just so their prose will be smoother.)

RG: How has time influenced you (i.e., your new chapbook [inserting shameless plug here] deals with time and quantum physics); where did the inspiration come from?

KK: Well, being 58 is all about time. But at any age, there's

never enough time, and the clock is the most obvious reminder of that. We're all "on the clock," yes? I had the image of the Higher Being (whether you call it God or whatever) as being the clockmaker, and we're all ticking clocks of various kinds. I see everything as part of spirituality: physics, art—to me, they're all just another way to talk about the central issue: death. How to prepare for it, how to use our time, how to be the best clocks we can be.

RG: I agree, the Bay Area is not the only place talent lies; still there seems to be a more vibrant community surrounding it. Do you think that this is, in large part, due to Sacramento's sprawling layout? It seems that one has to drive to Midtown to find poetry and art venues; do you think this is true?

KK: Yes, geography is a problem in our area (try living in the suburbs without a car!), but the Bay Area is just as spread out—hundreds of miles, actually. I think it's more about perception here. I worked in musical theater for years, and it was always an uphill battle against the glitzier shows in SF—partly because there was more money down there. But in poetry, we have lots of nationally-known poets here, and readings almost every night (true, they're mostly downtown), and several hundred people who are interested in poetry of various forms. Not enough of that glittery constellation was seeing its way into print, in my mind, so the Snake was born in order to remedy that. My goal is to eventually chronicle every poet in Sacramento, either in the journals, or the broadsides, or—when artists are ready—books. My only regret is that, so far, I can't afford to "perfect-bind" books, which would open up a whole new world. But I understand that machines for doing that are getting cheaper, thanks to the desktop movement, so who knows what lies in the future of that wily Snake?...

RG: Your print run for Rattlesnake Review is fairly small, yes? Do you see it growing in the near future? I know there's a demand, but there's only so much you can do and keep it free...

KK: My print run is 250. That started because 11X14 cardstock (the original size of the Snake) came in packages of 252. Later I tried running more but had trouble getting rid of them all in three months, so 250 it is. I suppose I could always increase the run, especially if I "went national" and had subscriptions and all, but for now I'm sticking to the original intention of the Snake, which was to be mostly local and to avoid all that subscription folderol.

RG: You currently produce multiple-formatted chapbooks. What was your inspiration for the SpiralChaps and do you see yourself expanding further into other media (e.g., audio, video, etc.)? Or perhaps other text formats?

KK: The SpiralChaps were intended to fill the need to publish art or photos alongside poetry. Such books can be hugely expensive to perfect-bind. Desktop publishers across the country are trying all sorts of formats in order to publish while keeping costs down; the spiral binding seems to work for me (and for some others I've seen), especially since I already had the machine, having already switched to coils for the Snake and Snakelets. As for future formats, the need is there for all the ones you mentioned—the only restrictions are my limited knowledge and equipment, plus time and expense. The Snake "empire" has room for ANYthing, and these days, it feels like we're growing by leaps and bounds (if snakes can be said to "leap"...). But I have to TRY (at least) to stay within my resources, both financially and personally. Who knows what the future will bring?

Albert Garcia is the author of a book of poems, *Rainshadow* (Copper Beech Press, 1996), and of *Digging In: Literature for Developing Writers* (Prentice Hall, 2003). His poems have appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *The Laurel Review*, *Poetry East*, *Mid-American Review*, *The North American Review*, and other journals. He has received an Emerging Artist Fellowship from the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission and an Academy of American Poets Award. Albert lives in Wilton, California with his wife and three children and now serves as Interim Dean of the Language and Literature Division at Sacramento City College.



The day I was born

the shad were running.
On a slow green stretch of river
a man hoisted three pounds
of flapping, mouth-gaping silver
onto hot smooth rocks
the way God, I imagine, lifted
me from nothingness
and plopped me gasping
into Enloe Hospital, Chico, California.
It was midmorning.
Walnut and almond orchards
steeped in the humidity
of valley irrigation.
Workers picked ripe apricots.

I want to say something miraculous occurred—
a cure for a disease,
the discovery of a new species.
But I've researched the date: nothing happened.
I've even made up the part
about the shad fisherman
though it's likely
someone was out on the river
that same morning
feeling his line drift with the current,
content with a cold canteen of water
and the real possibility
of a catch, a story, something to add
to his drawn-out days of ordinary wonders.

(first published in *Mid-American Review*)

One Lesson

If you fly a mile up
you'll see the rivers
like pliant twists of gleaming rope
dropped loosely over the valley.

Forget that.

Come down to the water's edge
where you'll feel the uneven
terrain of stones beneath your feet,
smell the green current,
hear traffic
rush behind you and a thicket
of willow and elderberry.

Take the hand
of your son or a neighbor kid
and walk with him into the river,
feeling its icy life.

Tell him about the sturgeon
up from the Delta,
gut full of bottom life,
eyes pink beads of prehistoric
mystery. Tell him
that fish has been here
as long as his grandfather,
sliding around the bottom,
patient for something
we will never know.

Tell him to listen
to the lap and eddy of water,
to kingfisher—
whatever he can hear—
to sounds that make his pulse dance
and bring the world near.

(first published in *Eclipse*)

FEED THE TIGER

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Although **Catherine French** is not a clerk working for the State, she does many mornings wake wondering whether she has turned into a beetle or not. No antennae — so far, so good. But there is dream life to go with the waking and working life. She continues to tap out poemicals (slant rhymes with “chemicals”) and scramble them around afterward. One book, *Side Show* (University of Nevada Press), one chapbook, and multiple journal publications (to include *The Nation*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Suisun Valley Review*, *The Mississippi Review* and others). She was awarded the James D. Phelan Award from the San Francisco Foundation.

Sanctum

I make myself watch
as the organs are removed,
rinsed and poured into jars
looking like peach halves or rhubarb.

The canopic heads delight me:
grinning, stern, mild and merciless.
I wore them so well!
I love theater even now.

But when the heart is sealed
in its separate chamber,
ache vibrates
where it used to dwell and I can't
hide anymore. How unfair.

Now relatives gather
around my body's clean hearth,
reminisce how at birth I was
put together and held in warm arms,
a welcome as odd as this party.

Gold leaf presses my eyelids closed.
I've feared blindness
the way others don't want to know.
Now I flee to more foreign senses,
try to distinguish the perfumes filling me.
Resin, honey, natron,
and that leveling scent
cutting through them all.

My arms are wrapped
and folded with linens which fit
like a uterine glove,
pleasing my love for symmetry.
The thin crust of symbols
hooked to my embittered shell
serves me well:

The thick bronze face covers my transparency;
A jade scarab will resurrect my heart's waste;

An ivory eye over the forehead
signals my neglected gift.
I must navigate with it now.

Symbols are sanctum
I understand as I'm lowered
into the first coffin, a safe room
to sit with my grim analyst,
Conciliatory, but I'm disarmed.
No more Mr. Charm.

As the second coffin quakes shut,
my nostalgia seeps with the myrrh.
If I still had a marrow, it would glow
with cheap emotion. But I'm hollow
and bound, an oiled skin
pushed through reeds
onto water. Even now I fight surrender,
the wrong fight, I understand
only as the waters part
around me in welcome.

(from *Side Show*)

Albert Garcia and **Catherine French**
read on Monday, February 7th at the
Sacramento Poetry Center.
See calendar for details.

A 1975 graduate of UCLA, and a poet for over three decades, Bob Stanley left behind a business career to pursue a Master's degree in the CSUS creative writing program, and he hopes to teach English at a local community college in the Fall. His poems have been published in numerous journals and anthologies, including *The Sacramento Anthology* and *The Dreamlife of Johnny Baseball*. A board member and host for the Sacramento Poetry Center, Bob lives in the Arden area with his wife Joyce, and their four children. He's currently working on a jazz opera entitled *Xanadu*.



in the quiet

how long did you wait until you found
yourself in the quiet?
Was it the piano, softly rolling like waves
so that you could see?
Was it her painted face, colors so vivid
it changed your perception
of what life could mean, what a face might
say of understanding?

Or was it just you, having waited until
the time was right?
the tree in the forest seeing the forest
for the first time.
What you must remember, asking
these questions over
and over, is to find this place once more,
within you, here in the quiet.

—Bob Stanley

Bob Stanley reads at
The Book Collector
on Saturday, February 12th.
See calendar for details.

The Edges Light Up

As the morning windows glistened
with forest sense, light-green leafhoppers
and infrared beetles scrambled their foothold
pinpoint clockwork. Pumpkin leaves,
widening, imbibed solar fluids from open air
as honey bees worked visitation, their ankles
caked with pollen. If insects can be happy,
they must have been. Certain hornets find
themselves belligerent. Certain ants can end up
so angry they fight wars. So the honey bees
discovered themselves happy, perhaps feeling
joy in fullness of blossoms, richness of the pollen
and the calling colors. And they know how
they can be of use for the cause,
the life of the hive, the life of the day.

If you tend
blossoming plants bees are visiting, you might try
it with sky-blue calm, picturing health for the plant,
for the bees, and people. Listen, nothing bad
will happen. Don't be afraid of them.
The bees can see your earnestness in synch
with their own. They will know you as part
of the afternoon. Be calm near the bees,
and they will return to help continue the work.

—James Grabill

After Punching Out

The last light threw off its cars. If it wasn't one car,
it was another, barges of the intersections
pressing on down the river, truck scent, window
fumes and stone gravity clockwork forest green
and breathing still, not moving much in the moving,
the gravitational trailers loaded with washers and cattle,
the news with blowback and blood lace, the oak floors
at Grandma's now dust in the slippery gravel of light,
the lost presidential sentences in an undertow sliding
downward. As a jewelry door swung open, a ruby
started to glow as if someone were walking up the stairs
into it, into the rubyness of the ruby and person,
the lamp of the ruby switched on to see beyond
and beyond. A tractor drove down a tiny thread
at the edge of civilization. A woman who woke
wrote a gardening book. The passages all gardened.
It was a matter perhaps of generations, nose rings,
Pabst, Easter dresses, patulous incense, interweaving
mathematical curves, and cures from tropical root
consonants, from limbs of dancers who'd broken
the code back in the occupation, whatever they were doing.
It could have been a pleasure, waiting on the new light,
being able to stand wide-open the hour that doesn't talk
back very much, given a corner of calm, where fir trees
shake into a seed's hovering over that oncoming train
shuddering massive steel ignorant from industry.

—James Grabill

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We accept poetry, book reviews, event commentary, poetry-related articles and interviews. Accompanying these with short biographies and pictures (B&W or high-contrast color JPEGs are preferred) is welcomed. Please submit 3-6 poems at a time. Email submissions of poetry are not encouraged. Please send your work along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

Poetry Now c/o
Sacramento Poetry Center
1631 K St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

Reviews, articles and pictures can be sent via email to: poetrynow@sacramentopoetrycenter.org or dphunkt@mac.com

**Please note that accepted work will also be available on our website:
www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org**

Recently Released:

1. *Bliss Volume 1* ed. Rhony Bhopla
2. *The Nambuli Papers* by Greg Boyd. "Boyd writes with a sardonic black humor that alternately fascinates and repels." — *The Los Angeles Times*
3. *California Poetry from the Gold Rush to the Present* ed. Dana Gioia, Chrissy Yost, & Jack Hicks
4. *Tidewriters: The Lost Reel* by Greg Boyd
5. *The Quality of Light* by Katy Brown
6. *Hell's Anonymity* by Jack Cavanaugh Jr.
7. *Leaning Against Time* by Neeli Cherkovski
8. *Roxy* by Todd Cirillo, W.S. Gainer, & Will Staple
9. *Love Letters to God* by Ruebi Freyja
10. *Living With Myth* by Taylor Graham
11. *littlesnake broadside #8* by Robert Grossklaus, from Rattlesnake Press (free at The Book Collector or at readings around town)
12. *The Tenderness House* by Dianna Henning
13. *Skin Tax* by Tim Z. Hernandez
14. *Urban Savage and Other Poems* by G.B. Herron
15. *Art In Heaven* by David Humphreys. "The ambition and intensity of the collection, where serenity or passion are constant, are qualities that will stay with the reader after the book is closed..." —Tom Goff
16. *The Burden of Wings* by Colette Jonopulos.
17. *Been Born Bronx* by B.L. Kennedy
18. *After Modigliani* by Stephen Kessler
19. *Tell it to the Rabbis and Other Poems 1977-2000* by Stephen Kessler
20. *Keeping Time in the Clock Shop* by Kathy Kieth
21. *Rattlesnake Review #4* ed. Kathy Kieth
22. *Tiny Teeth: The Wormwood Review Poems* by Ann Menebroker
23. *A Sense of Melancholy* by Joyce Odam
24. *Brevities #21 & #22* ed. Joyce Odam
25. *These Rivers* by Shawn Pittard.
26. *The Bitter Suite* by Robert Roden
27. *The Silt Reader #6* ed. Robert Roden and Barton M. Saunders
28. *Love and Other Complaints* by Pearl Stein Selinsky & Victor Selinsky. "Shrewd and playful"—Dennis Schmitz, former Poet Laureate of Sacramento
29. *The Common Fire* by Shelley Sevren
30. *The River Speaks* by Nora Laila Staklis. "This collection of deliciously textured words appeals to all the senses." —JoAnn Anglin
31. *Collected Poems* by C. J. Stevens
32. *Islands of Earshot* by A. P. Sullivan. "An invigorating mind-ride—Sullivan's poems are headlong but nimble. They startle, they enthrall with word-play, they go deep." —Dennis Schmitz
33. *Of A Feather* by Brigit Truex
34. *On Tuesday, When the Homeless Disappeared* by Marcos McPeck Villatoro
35. *Skull & Crosswords* by Julia Vinograd

Most books listed here are available at
The Book Collector: 1008 24th Street
Sacramento 442-9295

**Do you have a recently released book or know of one that you feel should be listed here? Contact us at:
poetrynow@sacramentopoetrycenter.org with the title,
author and any quips, quotes or even lengthy reviews of the work.**



Tom Goff reads at
The Sacramento Poetry Center
on Monday, February 21st.
See calendar for details.

Tom Goff is an instructional assistant at the American River College Reading Center, where he's written student materials on reading poetry. He is also associate editor at Poet's Corner Press.

Star Sonnet

Revealer of the star at the apple's heart,
you slice the fruit across its tart-sweet equator.
Didn't you say we are much the same matter
as those cosmic makings we dream ourselves apart

from: planets, comets, the flame and plume of the sun?
You adroitly knife a spiral nebula strip
of peel from one more apple. Permit me to whip
the world, that antique clock, in a backwards spin,

O planet-compounded whirling-particle girl.
Collapsing around an indivisible star-cell—
there is time, so much time ahead. A June day...grass-

green rays, gold lights flick across an ivory dress
that ornately proclaims: This hot-enough-morning-to-stun,
call me Cool Moondust Woman—the one, the one.

—Tom Goff

Vincent Kobelt will be reading from his latest chapbook scheduled for release spring of 2005, *Way Light Ripples on Water*. Recently he has been trying to get the juices out of apophony. Apophony is another term for ablaut which simply means a change in the root vowel of strong verbs: sing, sang, sung, drink, drank, drunk, or weave, wove, and woven. He hears music in these changes. From his fascination with apophony the development of a new poetry form, entitled "spynje," has emerged. Spynjes consists of eleven lines or stanzas. The first nine lines follow the changes in tenses of the strong verb and it ends with an unrhymed couplet. He invites you to come hark to *Way Light Ripples on Water*, at the Sacramento Poetry Center on February 28th at 7:30 p.m.



Elbow

When I kiss and blow
your elbow
ripples of music wiggle
out the nipples
of your breast.

—Vincent Kobelt



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