

Sacramento's Literary
Review and Calendar:

Poetry Now

February 2006
Vol. 12, No. 02

A Publication of the Sacramento Poetry Center

The Century of Travel

Begin fueling. This is the century of travel.
I get in my car to show others I can escape.
I move through the cities and between them,
the dream of a peasant in 1910 breaking clods
of dirt with a shovel. This is the century of travel.
Two mouse clicks and I can watch a live feed of
a West Bank checkpoint. If I follow the links,
I can study a QuickTime film of an operation on
a human heart. As it slows down, I can slow
my own, emptying it of the need to race until
the needle comes to rest on E, then I can
begin fueling. Next thing, I'm off like a fiery horse
with the speed of light and a hearty hi-yo Silver—away!
Where will this century lead me? It whispers in my ear
to keep moving, avoid doubt. I must be certain I can
make it to the next station to again begin fueling. I begin
and let this energy start to use me. I click on a form and
fill out my name. How quickly others assail me from
somewhere I've never seen. Faster than a speeding bullet,
more powerful than I can imagine, able to leap from
city to city in a fraction of a second. Look!
It's a walkie-talkie. It's a cell phone.
No It's the Internet. It rides with me
in the rental car and tells me where to go.
My destination onscreen, I can think of avoiding judgment,
how far I'll have to go before I should begin fueling.
Begin fueling so I can wait, idling in
the mass hysteria of stalled traffic.
Begin fueling to deliver some kind of decision
the way past heroes would decide.
Begin fueling for the last leg of the journey
out to the safe hills where all the wires end, where the signals
float in the air like viruses and their intuitive spread.
Where should I hide when the next pandemic comes calling?
Already I sense something gaining on me;
I'm avoiding something, escaping into the plan
the desert is making for me. I can drive, drive, drive on
the flat expanse until I must stop and begin fueling.
My ritual at the pump rewards me.
I pray, pray, pray to always be able to begin fueling
because this is the century of travel.

—Tim Kahl



Tim Kahl's work has been published or is forthcoming in *Prairie Schooner*, *American Letters & Commentary*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Fourteen Hills*, *George Washington Review*, *Illuminations*, *Indiana Review*, *Limestone*, *Nimrod*, *Ninth Letter*, *South Dakota Quarterly*, *The Spoon River Poetry Review*, *The Texas Review*, and dozens of other journals in the U.S. (a complete list can be found at <http://mongryl.com/publications.html>.) He has translated Austrian avant-gardist, Friederike Mayröcker; Brazilian poet, Lêdo Ivo; and the poems of the Portuguese language's only Nobel Laureate, José Saramago. He also appears as Victor Schnickelfritz for the writing and poetics blog *The Great American Pinup* (<http://greatamerican-pinup.blogspot.com/>.)

Tim Kahl reads with
Jeff Knorr at SPC on
February 13th. See
calendar for details.

This Issue:

Justin Allen
V.S. Chochezi
Frederick Davis
Molly Fisk
Carolyn Franklin
Carol Frith
David Humphreys
Heather Hutcheson
James Lee Jobe
Tim Kahl
Jeff Knorr
Ariono-jovan Labu
LOB
Merle P. Martin
B. Z. Niditch
Jennifer Pickering
Staajabu
Brigit Truex
Philip A. Waterhouse
Margaret Young

Reviewed:

To Run With The Savages
by William S. Gainer

Interviewed:

Albert Garcia

President's Message

Keeping a Weather Eye Peeled

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 11.

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.

Managing Editor: **Robert Grossklaus** (dphunkt@mac.com)
Calendar Editor: **Robert Grossklaus**
Editorial Staff: **Jody Ansell, Ann Conradsen, Tom Goff, Barbara Link, Pat Osfeld, and Ramona Soto**
Design & layout: **Robert Grossklaus**

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.

Board of Directors:
President: **Mary Zeppa**
Vice President: **Bob Stanley**
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Advisory Board of Directors:
Luke Breit, Julia Connor, Patrick Grizzell, Burnett Miller, and Anne Rudin
Office Manager: **Robert Grossklaus**

Red sky at night, sailor's delight. Red sky at morning, sailor take warning. From whence came that old proverbial weather report? Its source is so deep in my consciousness, I can't quite place it. But this is one bit of lore I trust implicitly. And because a 5 p.m. red winter sky is what I've just seen, tomorrow (crossing my fingers just for luck) should dawn bright and clear. A day we could sail across: squealing for pure joy, counting our blessings.

As I write, it's the first Monday of our new year. We opted to extend our holiday by scheduling no reading on 1/2/06. Some folks may be going to just-one-more party. But I know I'm not the only one working as "a mule-skinner of the muse" * tonight.

What will this year bring? More storms than clarity? More chaos than peace? And what will we bring to it? It's our job to bear witness; it's our job to shed light. And it's also our job to describe a "sea-surface full of clouds" ** or the grey squirrel leaping and landing in the bare branches of a neighbor's red maple just outside our window.

And, just about every day, it's also my job to do some of the tasks that help keep the Poetry Center running. Often, it's riding herd and it's paperwork. It's the sort of work that manages to be tedious yet stressful. Still, when (with the help of experts like our Treasurer, MerryLee Croslin) you've finished and dispatched the work, there is a sense of completion, of satisfaction.

But in the work required when our bank notified us that SPC had been the victim of financial fraud, stress was uppermost and satisfaction nowhere in sight. As some of you already know, someone (allegedly a woman living in Modesto) acquired SPC's bank account number and our bank's routing number, had her own checks printed and began writing checks against our account. Fortunately, our bank discovered this fraud early. Fortunately, other Board members were also available to be on tap for trips down to the bank and to help with the required paperwork. Fortunately, SPC is not responsible for those checks. Unfortunately, as anyone who's been through this kind of thing is all too well aware, we went through a lot of chaos in the process. And it may not be over yet.

Still, let's turn from chaos toward light: as many of you already know, at its December meeting, SPC's Board of Directors amended Article 2, Sections 5 & 10, of the Bylaws to extend to each active, advisory, and contributing member of SPC the right to vote on each matter submitted to a vote at the annual meeting of the members of this organization, including the election of the Board of Directors. Our goal in making this change was well-summarized in Carol Frith's 12/19 e-newslet-

ter: to move "SPC toward increased inclusiveness and an added sense of cohesion among the membership."

Although our annual meeting is the only one at which SPC members can vote, they (you) are always welcome to join us on the second Monday of the month. Our next meeting is February 13 @ 5:45 p.m. @ Hamburger Mary's. Maybe I'll see you there.

Surely we'll meet at least once in February. The Calendar is, as always, chock full of events; for, rain or shine, chaos or clarity, on just about every night of the week: poets are bearing witness and shedding light.

—Mary Zeppa

* Doug Blazek

** Wallace Stevens, I believe

HQ opportunity for performance space

The Short Center is leaving HQ. The three remaining partners (Kabinet Films, Asylum Gallery and SPC) are looking for someone to share their space. It's a small shared office and a performance space (shared by mutual agreement & master calendar) for \$168 per month plus utilities. Ideally, we'd like someone who would complement what the rest of us do. All three partners would have to approve someone new.

Contact HQ @ 451-5569.

Warning: SPC/HQ is a Temperature-Challenged Space!

In other words: Baby, it's cold inside! We've been using small space heaters with (as you know if you've been to a reading in the last few weeks) limited success. We're looking for a better solution but, until we find one: when you come to HQ, DRESS WARM!

HEADQUARTERS FOR THE ARTS



So Long

You say that warm wind rattles Nebraska corn fields
so the northern ocean will answer the gray beard,
captive to loneliness, that there will come a day.

Remember driving across Great Salt Lake, January
blizzard swirling fractal patterns for 200 miles? How
far is the imaginary distance between two warm blankets?

You return to me occasionally, insubstantial as a change
in temperature. For the most part however, I cannot bring
you back. You are the one I will meet one day for the very

last time, over and over. You may be smiling, but history
repeats incessantly, Arcturus bright in its early summer sky,
jasmine filling the backyard breeze. I cannot say goodbye.

—David Humphreys

Siege of Corinth

They returned from their cruise yesterday
convinced that Venice was too crowded.
There may have been another way of seeing

things but infra-red was still just another one
of many. Byron was writing at the time,
eight years before he spread out despairing arms

before Goya's firing squad shootings of May
third 1808, sixteen years before his deadly rain-
storm. Life never ends any other way. Apple

seeds are often very bitter before a war is won or lost.
Often, it is the unexpected arriving in a windless
dawn above glassy water that lights eternal stillness.

—David Humphreys

Publisher and poet, **David Humphreys**, founded the Poet's Corner as a radio broadcast, poetry reading series, and audio/text website (www.poetscornerpress.com). He publishes books of poetry at Poet's Corner Press.

News In Brief

Sacramento Magazine spotlights **Straight Out Scribes** on page 23 of their January 2006. ■ "They're at it Again" by **A. D. Winans** appeared in January 2006 issue of *Because People Matter* ■ **Josh McKinney, Catherine Fraga, Cheryl Smith** and **Brad Buchanan** were featured on KXJZ's "Insight" show with Jeffrey Callison December 19th, 2005. If you missed it, it should be archived at <http://www.caprado.org/programs/insight/default.aspx?ShowDate=12/19/2005>. ■ **Laverne Frith**, who will have four poems in the *Song of the San Joaquin's* upcoming issue featuring "Poets on Poetry." **Carol & Laverne Frith** are also featured in the most recent *Medicinal Purposes Literary Review* with an interview and several poems. ■ **The Thompson Peak Writers' Workshop** in Janesville will host a workshop and reading and wine tasting (wine provided by Napa writer Jennifer Kerr and her husband Charles) with author **Roy Parvin** (*In the Snow Forest & The Loneliest Road*) on March 18th, 2006. The workshop and reading is \$50.00. Space limited to twelve workshop participants. Please call Dianna Henning at (530) 253-3303 if you are interested. ■ **Charles Graham Macdonald**, a poet and Davis High School special education teacher, died Jan. 18, 2006, after battling throat cancer. He was 49. A memorial will be held on Feb. 11, 2006 at 2 p.m. at Wiscombe's Davis Funeral Chapel. Donations may be made in memory of the deceased to the U.S. Fund for Unicef, Attention: Revenue Processing, Dept. 1800, 333 East 38th St., New York, NY 10016 or to the American Cancer Society, 1765 Challenge Way, Suite 115, Sacramento, CA 95815. ■ *Tiger's Eye: A Journal of Poetry* has a contest deadline of February 28. Guidelines: tigerseyejournal.com, or click on the link to the right of this post. Mail entries (3 poems, \$10, SASE) to Tiger's Eye, PO Box 2935, Eugene, OR 97402. Also, the Tiger's Eye gals would like to see your work space! Send b&w photos (preferably, though color will be accepted), and Colette and JoAn will choose one photo for a future cover of the journal. They say, "Don't clean up the mess; just show it like it is." □

What workshop can you take in Barcelona,
Paris, or your living room?

www.poetrybootcamp.com

What workshop gives you six new poems,
kind support, quick e-feedback?

www.poetrybootcamp.com

Join Molly Fisk & friends

February 19-24 and/or March 26-31

Literary Calendar for February 2006

Note: Unless otherwise stated, events take place in Sacramento, CA, area code (916).

1 Wednesday

Rattlesnake Press presents **James Lee Jobe** celebrating the release of his new chapbook, *What God Said When She Finally Answered Me*. Hosted by Kathy Kieth. (For this month only, the Rattlesnake reading will be held on the first Wednesday instead of its usual 2nd Wednesday slot.) 7:30pm, The Book Collector, 1008 24th St. Free. Info: 442-9295 or kathykieth@hotmail.com.

"Words Take Wing: Honoring Diversity in Children's Literature" at the Mondavi Center, UC Davis. Two lectures by Pam Muñoz Ryan at 11am & 5:30pm. Tickets available online at www.mondaviarts.org or by calling (866) 754-ARTS. \$5 students, \$10 adults. This event is co-sponsored by the UC Davis School of Education and the UC Davis Children's Hospital."

The CSUS Creative Writing department, in conjunction with the Visiting Scholars Program, presents "The Nymph Stick Insect: Science, Faith, and Poetry," a presentation and reading by Forrest Gander. 7-8pm, Amador Hall 150, CSUS. Free.

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

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9pm. Hosted by Khiry Malik and Rock Bottom. Sweet Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

2 Thursday

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

3 Friday

The Other Voice presents **Mehdi Moghaddam** for an evening of music, dance and poetry inspired by the Persian poet, Rumi. Hosted by Allegra Silberstein. 7:30pm, Unitarian Church Library at 27074 Patwin Road, Davis, CA.

4 Saturday

Escritores del Nuevo Sol's writing workshop and potluck on 1st Saturdays. 11am, second floor at La Raza Galeria Posada, 1421 R st. (15th & R). Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or joannpen@comcast.net.

5 Sunday

Poemspirits presents **Joe Finkleman** and **Susan Hennies**. They will be musically accompanied by **Phil Hildenbrand** and **Fran Reitano**. The evening also includes a brief presentation on the poet James Merrill by **Tom Goff**. Refreshments and open mic follow. Room 11 at the Unitarian Uni-

versalist Society of Sacramento, 2425 Sierra Blvd., 2 blocks north of Fair Oaks Blvd, between Howe and Fulton Avenues. Info: 481-3312 (Tom Goff, Nora Staklis) or 451-1372 (JoAnn Anglin).

6 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Sabrina Mathis**; host: Rhony Bhopla. 7:30pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts.) Info: 451-5569 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.

7 Tuesday

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30pm, Hart Senior Center, 916 27th St. (27th & J). Bring 15 - 20 copies of your one-page poem. 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.)

8 Wednesday

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

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9pm. Hosted by Khiry Malik and Rock Bottom. Sweet Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

9 Thursday

Sambatyon book release reading. Celebrating the publication of the first issue of *Sambatyon* ("River Of Inspiration"), a literary journal of Jewish writing in all genres: poetry, essays, short stories and first chapters from novels, all by authors who span the continuum of being religiously observant and boldly secular. Sponsored by an initial grant from the Jewish Federation of Sacramento. The Sterling Hotel, 1300 H Street, Sacramento, 7pm.

Poetry Unplugged presents: An evening of all open mic tributes to **Phil Goldvarg** and the publishing of the collection *What Makes Bones Talk* (\$7), a memorial collection of Phil Goldvarg's poems benefiting the Zapatista Solidarity Coalition. All money raised from the sale of *What Makes Bones Talk* will be donated to further the work of the ZSC (443-3424 and/or Zapa@zsc.org.) Published jointly by the 24th St. Irregular Press and AMP press, 1008 24th Street, Sacramento, CA. 95816. Hosted by Barbara Noble. Info: Art Luna: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com, Richard Hansen: richard@poems-for-all.com or 442-9295,

frank andrick: fandrickfabpub@hotmail.com or (209) 727-5179. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and poets are encouraged to read from their copies when they take to the open mic and stage at Luna's. 8pm, Luna's Café 1414 16th. Street (between N & O); free.

10 Friday

S/BAD (Sacramento Black Art of Dance) presents "Urban Works" featuring beau coup community dance troupes and spoken word artists. **Straight Out Scribes** will perform with a host of others. 8pm, CSUS, 6000 J Street, Sacramento in The Dance Space, 1010 Solano Hall. Tickets available at CSUS Ticket Office 278-4323 or at www.tickets.com. Info: Dr. Linda Goodrich, 278-4784.

Escritores del Nuevo Sol/Writers of the New Sun Annual Valentine's Day Reading-Fundraiser: 7:30pm. \$8 single; \$15 couple; \$5 students, seniors & members. La Raza Galeria Posada, 1421 R St., Sacramento. Info: Graciela, 456-5323

11 Saturday

A memorial for Davis poet **Charlie MacDonald**. 2pm at Wiscombe's Davis Funeral Chapel, 116 D Street, Davis, CA. Witty, much published, humble, sonneteer, student of Thom Gunn's, and a teacher of the art he knew deeply and originally. If you don't already have his selected poems, El Sobrante, you may find it here <<http://www.swanscythe.com/books/elsobrante.htm>>. Read more about Charlie Macdonald: <<http://www.davisenterprise.com/articles/2006/01/23/obituaries/344obit1.txt>>.

Bliss: An Erotic Evening; featuring poets from the pages of Rhony Bhopla's *Bliss: An Anthology of Erotic Poetry*. Poems-For-All Second Saturday Series; hosted by Rhony Bhopla. 8pm, The Book Collector, 1008 24th St., Sacramento. Free. Info: 442-9295.

Ruebi Freyja and **Phillip T. Nails** release their latest collections of poetry. Other featured performers will include **Gene Bloom**, **Mark Silverman**, **Cameron McHenry**, **Carly Patterson**, as well as a screening of **Marc Wilson** and **Robert Darling's** cartoon, *Pickle's Day Out* and other surprise guests. 8:30-11:30pm. \$10 Cover. (Cover charge also gets you a copy of each of their books). Luna's Cafe, 1414 16th Street (between N and O Street). Info: 441-3931.

Patricity presents "In Spirit & Truth" & Patricity's Birthday Celebration. Queen Sheba's Fine Dining, 1537 Howe Avenue Ste. 116 (Century Plaza) 3-5pm. Features **Heather Christian Arlington**, **Big E** (of **Born 2B Poets**) & open mic. For info: Patricia Turner-Green, 920-1020 or patricity_07@yahoo.com.

4 | poetryNOW

Calendar continued...

Note: Unless otherwise stated, events take place in Sacramento, CA, area code (916).

12 Sunday

Donald Sidney-Fryer reads *The Hashish Eater & Other Poems* by Clark Ashton Smith. Hosted by Richard Hansen. 4pm, The Book Collector, 1008 24th St., Sacramento. Free. Info: 442-9295.

The Pomo Literati, part of the KUSF Spotlight Series. A 2-hour literary program that interpolates poetry, recorded soundscapes, and live spoken word performance. **Tara Jepsen, David Houston & the Christyna's.** And a recording of **Patti Smith** reading her master prose work "Coral Sea" backed by **Kevin Shields** of My Bloody Valentine fame, with Cat Power's **Chan Marshall.** Also contemporary soundscape works by **LOB, G. Murray Thomas, and Rachel Savage.** Available on the airwaves from 2-4pm at 90.3 FM or www.live365.com/stations/kusf. Contact frank andrick, anchor/host & producer, at via e-mail or phone at fandrnickfabpub@hotmail.com or (209) 727-5179.

Poet's Corner presents Camille Norton reading from her award winning new book *Corruption*. Host: Melanie Sievers. 7pm, Barnes & Noble, Stockton's Weberstown Mall.

13 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Tim Kahl** and **Jeff Knorr**; host: Bob Stanley. 7:30pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts.) Info: 451-5569 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free.

Sacramento Poetry Center Board Meeting, 5:45pm, Hamburger Mary's (17th and K.) Info: spc@sacramentopoetrycenter.org or 451-5569.

14 Tuesday

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30pm, Hart Senior Center, 916 27th St. (27th & J). Bring 15 - 20 copies of your one-page poem. Info: Danyen, (530) 756-6228. Free. Workshop news, www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org, SPC Workshop News.

15 Wednesday

Urban Voices presents **Bill Gainer** and **Kel Munger**; hosted by B.L. Kennedy, 6:30pm, South Natomas Library, 2901 Truxel Rd., free.

F.U.S.E. Entertainment presents **Beatz & Poetry**. Age 18-20 \$8, 21 and up \$6; full bar. The Library, 9pm-2am, 7042 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento. Info: 501-0129 or 548-8890.

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

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9pm. Hosted by Khiry Malik and Rock Bottom. Sweet Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

16 Thursday

The Nevada County Poetry Series presents **Indigo Moor, Kate Stewart** and **Kathy Kieth.** \$5 general, seniors & students, and \$1 for those under 18. Refreshments and open-mic included. In the Off-Center Stage (behind the Center) at the Center for the Arts, 314 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA. For more information call (530) 432-8196 or (530) 274-8384.

Poetry Unplugged presents: **LOB** and **G. Murray Thomas** (former editor of *NEXT Magazine* from Long Beach) for a night of poetry and music. Hosted by frank andrick. Open mic before/after. 8pm at Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free.

An Evening Of Poetry with Ms. La-Rue' featuring **He Spit Fire** & open mic. Gwen's Caribbean Cuisine, 2355 Arden Way at Bell St. next to Leatherbees. Doors open at 7pm, the show starts at 8pm. Dinner & drink specials and DJ Barney B. \$5. Info: 284-7831.

17 Friday

S/BAD (Sacramento Black Art of Dance) presents "Urban Works" featuring beau coup community dance troupes and spoken word artists. **Straight Out Scribes** will perform with a host of others. 8pm, CSUS, 6000 J Street, Sacramento in The Dance Space, 1010 Solano Hall. Tickets available at CSUS Ticket Office 278-4323 or at www.tickets.com. Info: Dr. Linda Goodrich, 278-4784.

18 Saturday

Sacramento Underground Poetry Series presents **Laketa Stanley, Brian Randle, He Spit Fire** and open mic. Underground Poetry Series happens every third Saturday of the month. 7-9pm, Underground Books, 2814 35th Street (35th and Broadway). Mother Rose is the bookstore manager and La-Rue' is the series host. If you would like to be a featured poet please contact Terry Moore at 455-POET.

20 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Straight Out Scribes: Staajabu** and **V.S. Chocezi** with a Black History Month theme. Open mic follows. Rhony Bhopla hosts. 7:30pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts.) Info: 451-5569 straightoutscribes@yahoo.com 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.

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22 Wednesday

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Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9pm. Hosted by Khiry Malik and Rock Bottom. Sweet Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

23 Thursday

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

24 Friday

Art Foundry Gallery presents former Sacramento Poet Laureate **Dennis Schmitz.** 8pm, 1021 R St., Sacramento. \$5 contribution requested. Refreshments. Hosted by Luke Breit. Partially funded by Poets & Writers. Info at www.breitpoet.com/foundry.html or 446-POET.

25 Saturday

"The Show" presents **One Tough Poet, Tshaka Muhammad, Pastor Alonzo Morris** (Gospel perform-



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 Robert Grossklaus at: (916) 337-8962
by the 5th of the month preceding your event.

Thank you.

Calendar continued...

mance) & open mic. 7-9pm, Wo'se Community Center (off 35th and Broadway), 2863 35th St., Sacramento. \$5. Info: Terry Moore 455-POET. Sponsored by the Freedom Equity Group (<http://www.fegcorp.com/>.)

The Central Valley Haiku Club. 2-3pm. Barnes & Noble, 6111 Sunrise Blvd., Citrus Heights, CA 95610. Info: 853-1511.

UCDE The Music of Writing: Employing the Elements of Sound Rhythm. Maxima Kahn makes her living as a writer, editor/writing coach and graphic designer. She teaches poetry workshops in Grass Valley and at U.C. Davis Extension. She holds a B.A. in Music Composition and Performance from Bennington College, and has performed as a dancer in Vermont, Massachusetts, Texas, Colorado and California. 1-4pm

26 Sunday

Straight Out Scribes will perform poetry and stories for children ages 4-10 as a part of the International House Storytelling Program. International House, Davis, is an independent, nonprofit community organization. Its purpose is to promote respect and appreciation for all peoples and cultures. 2-3pm International House Community Room, 10 College Park, Davis. Info: Shirley German at (530) 758-4196 or Kathryn Tyson, (530) 753-5007, www.internationalhouse-davis.org/storytelling/index.htm.

27 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Mo Stoycoff**; host: Tim Kahl. 7:30pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts.) Info: 451-5569 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free.

28 Tuesday

SPC Poetry Workshop, 7:30pm, Hart Senior Center, 916 27th St. (27th & J). Bring 15 - 20 copies of your one-page poem. Info: Danyen,

(530) 756-6228. Free. Workshop news, www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org, SPC Workshop News.

Other Happenings @ HQ

New Julia Morgan Play, California Stage, right across the courtyard from the Poetry Center premieres it's original biographical play about Julia Morgan, the famous California Architect, through February 5. Performances Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm and Sundays at 2pm. \$19 General admission, \$15 for Poetry Center members. Even better deals for groups of 4 or more. Call 451-5822 for info and reservations.

Asylum Galleries: **Art Luna** and **Ann Tracy** photography and digital mixed media. A retrospective of their work on 2nd Saturday, February 11th 6-9pm. Asylum Gallery/HQ, 1719 25th St., (25th & R Sts.) in midtown Sacramento. The show continues on Saturdays and Sundays from January 7th to February 26th. Info: asylumgalleryathq@yahoo.com or Cherie Hacker (530) 295-1067 or Ann Tracy 804-6095. Asylum Gallery is looking for new artist members. Basic requirements are that artists pay monthly dues and agree to gallery sit. For more information please call Cherie Hacker (530) 295-1067.

Kabinet Films: Throughout the month of February, we'll be paying tribute to the great German emigre director **Fritz Lang**. Sunday, February 5th, 8pm: *Scarlet Street* (1945), Sunday, February 12th, 8pm: *Moonfleet* (1955), Sunday, February 19th, 8pm: *Rancho Notorious* (1952), Sunday February 26th, 8pm:

Whiskey Joe

Fourth avenue Whiskey Joe stinking away the day in a cluttered traffic court.

Hand for a pillow,
chin attached to chest, he
groans asleep,
explodes to snores, then
snaps awake,
eyes darting,
as if he'd swallowed
yesterday.

—Merle P. Martin

Merle P. Martin has returned to poetry after a 25 year quietus. He has been published in a variety of magazines as well as the anthology *Beyond the Boundaries: an Anthology of Alaskan Writers*.

Sierra Dawn

Speeding I5's night,
LA to Sacramento;
only bearing a
sparse string of
flickering lights from
rigs and cars ahead;
mountains, miles right,
masked in blackness.

Darkness loosens;
form unwraps
first hopefully,
then suddenly; a
child's tracings:
black saw tooth peaks
uneven for lack of reason,
nudge rust-smearred clouds.

Sierra Nevada,
God's carved scepter, a
finger touch away.

North of Santa Nella, they
burst to crimson,
fade in chasing sunlight,
hiding from I5's sight
until the next
Sierra dawn.

—Merle P. Martin

Wheelchair Box

She turned her face to one side,
sighed slowly;
then at 37
died.

Her sister and mother organized
her clothes and private things.

That's when they found that
cardboard box:
jotted notes of poetry,
embryonic art,
sketchings of a novel;
creative seeds
awaiting nurturing.

She'd had Multiple Sclerosis,
learned early that her
later days would be
mutinous muscles;
collected unfinished projects,
packed them away in the
wheelchair box for her
crippled days.

Her cancer devoured even that,
leaving parched dreams
thirsty for time.

—Merle P. Martin

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Interview with Albert Garcia by Heather Hutcheson

Albert Garcia is the author of two books of poems, *Rainshadow* (Copper Beech Press) and *Skunk Talk* (Bear Star Press), and of *Digging In: Literature for Developing Writers* (Prentice Hall). His poems have appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *The Laurel Review*, *Poetry East*, *Mid-American Review*, *Yankee*, *The North American Review*, and other journals. Albert lives in Wilton with his wife, Terry, and three children and, after having taught community college English for 17 years, now serves as dean of the Language and Literature Division at Sacramento City College.

Inspiring, thoughtful, down-to-earth, and remarkably humble, Albert Garcia explains: "I am a poet who chooses to meditate on small things. I like poets who do that (Roethke, Wright, Kumin, Kooser, Collins), and I hope to fit into that tradition in a positive way." An asset to the poetry community, Garcia is undoubtedly creating meaningful and valuable work. His newest collection *Skunk Talk* is receiving acclaim throughout the country; the collection was recently featured on NPR as Garrison Keillor read two of Albert's poems for *The Writer's Almanac*. In addition, his poem "August Morning" will be featured in U.S. poet laureate Ted Kooser's syndicated column.

The following interview features lines from Garcia's poetry that inspired my questions of him. I hope you enjoy this opportunity to learn from his precision, subtlety, and heart.

(from "Covering the Citrus")

The grass is wet. He points the light
at a young lemon,
covers it with a sheet. Already
he feels a snapping chill
through his jacket. His shoes
gasp in the damp soil. There is his wife
through the dining room window
paying bills. There is his daughter.
Here he is, protecting what he can

HH: These poems give us some insight into what it means to be a father, a husband, and a son. They present the marvels of relationships; they juxtapose love and cooperation and responsibility... Can you describe these responsibilities, especially the responsibility to "protect what you can"?

AG: When I was putting the book together, I didn't think consciously of those roles, but I am all of those things. As you see your parents aging, you want to protect family relationships. And you want to protect your children. That is a common enough impulse, but it's often difficult. I have a real interest in seeing a world—which is a pretty good world in many ways—stay that way. I hope that there is an optimism overall in the poems.

(from "Fig")

When we tear through its skin
it looks like flesh
with seeds

or the tender insides
of a sea anemone—
soft, red,

something to relish...

HH: From cover to cover, fruit populates this collection: apricots, melons, pears, loquats, citrus, figs, etc. What does it mean to eat and to grow fruit?

AG: I have had a lot of fruit in my life. In my family, if there is a snack to be had, we have fruit. There will always be a fruit bowl on the sink. One time a waiter asked what my son would like for dessert and was surprised that my son said he wanted the fruit cup.

I don't consciously set out to write poems about fruit, and metaphorically fruit functions differently in each poem. It is something that seems to epitomize pleasure and life—positive connotations. Even the fig, as grotesque as it may appear in the poem of that title, is delightful. The final lines of that poem aren't negative lines. The fruit flies react to the fig the same way I would. Fruit is such an important part of the California landscape. The people, the industry, the crops are all connected. I guess the images of fruit in my poems reflect my connection to California as a place.

(from "August Morning")

I wander from room to room
like a man in a museum:
wife, children, books, flowers,
melon. Such still air..

HH: "August Morning," the prologue poem, introduces many of the themes of the collection, especially the concept of "sweetness." What does "sweetness" mean?

AG: It's there in relationships and in appreciating what I have. There are many small sweets [in life] and I look at them in positive ways. Some people are very easy to be depressed. I think I am fortunate in many ways, in my relationships with my wife, relatives, kids, friends; in the places I've lived—all of those things. The poems reflect that, I suppose.

(from "Looking Around" from *Rainshadow*)

Red Bluff grows. They've moved
the county library
to an abandoned Safeway.
You stroll in from the sidewalk's heat –
half expecting the chip-toothed
checker, her sophomore bagboy –
and stop at the local history display,
old photos of ferries crossing the river.
The quiet astonishes you.

HH: How does where you live now influence what you are writing about? *Rainshadow* seemed to contain more family history, more writing about a different farmscape. In addition, it contains predominantly narrative poems. What are the major differences between *Skunk Talk* and your first collection: *Rainshadow*?

AG: I wanted to be writing more poems that are observations of what I'm noticing now and these include observations of my family, of moments and objects that strike me as meaningful. I wanted to write poems that are a bit more meditative than narrative—in strange ways sometimes.

(from "What Do You Say, Grandfather?")

What do you say
when 73years
of orchard are gone?

Stand in the middle
of what saws and dozers have done
and let your mouth go dry;

HH: What are the similarities between teaching and farming?

AG: They are different ways of being in the world. I admire people who are working with the land; it is a very different life to be reading student papers. My job now [as Dean] seems even further away from growing things.

I think of how my older relatives used to talk, talk about the weather and crops and local news... Writing is a way to take a love of language and apply it to...that other world I came from.

(from "A Scene Driving Past the Corner Market")

Was he thinking

he should step on the bird's head
to end the pain, prevent

the girl, too young for words herself,
from seeing? Or was he saying

anything beyond, Damn look at that,
amazed on a warm spring day

on a walk to the market,
at the kind of frightening, beautiful miracle

the world can give a man

HH: What are the kinds of frightening, beautiful miracles that have been delivered to you?

AG: That is a hard question. The image in the poem is certainly one. What I am trying to do is stretch the definitions of beautiful and frightening. There is beauty in the grotesque sometimes because of the shock. The fruit flies in the fig poem are like this. I am glad for that incident to have happened because it seems so miraculous. I am afraid to label other things this way; sometimes they won't be as beautiful. There are terrible accidents that, if you look at them in a different way, have beautiful elements to them.

(from "August Morning")

How do I start this day,
I who am unsure
of how my life has happened
or how to proceed
amid this warm and steady sweetness?

HH: How has your life happened?

AG: Have you ever had a notion of waking up and finding yourself at a certain point in your life and being surprised? Sometimes I experience a little momentary jolt of awareness of where I am in life. I have three kids. I have a job I never would've dreamed I would have twenty years ago. It's both big and little things. Sometimes I think: I never knew we had that potted plant; where'd that come from?

I think the notion of being open to surprise in your own life diffuses the monotony. Life can be monotonous—if you see it that way—but it doesn't have to be. There is wonder all around. Surprise can't be planned, of course, but we all know it's important to good writing. My best writing moments are when I'm surprising myself.

(from "I Watch You Paint")

I see now
The man's hand
is on her shoulder. There
is wind. Her white dress
blows tight against her body.
I want to ask you
what is happening
but it seems
the wind is in you.

HH: What is your favorite poem in this collection?

AG: What is in here anyway? "August Morning," "I Watch You Paint." I like the notion of a story within a story within a story. I enjoyed writing that poem. I like "Fig" for the reactions when I read it. I like the poem "Waking." It is darker; I am grappling with an issue that's harder. I like

it for that reason. At various times, almost every poem has been my favorite. You should be in love with poems as you are working on them.

The poems I am most enthusiastic about now aren't in the book.

(from "Our Start")

It's seven a.m. I steer
slowly, cutting low beams
through the veiled light. Between us,
on the seat: a jumble of maps, receipts, candy.

HH: Describe your love poems—especially "Our Start," the title poem, and "Your Pregnancy."

AG: I did not set out to write love poems. I'm lucky to be in a good relationship; this naturally appears in the poems.

"Our Start" was written around the central image of being in a car with [my wife] and seeing her hair wet. This poem started with an image and worked around it. I let it grow into what it grows into.

(from "Rain Gutters")

She's on a ladder, scooping
decayed leaves and pine needles,
gravel washed off the asphalt shingles—
slopping the sludgy mess
into a paint bucket.

HH: What if I say these are all love poems?

AG: I can see that. It is easier to say that than to say they are all political poems or poems of social commentary. I take that as a compliment. Too often we think of "love" poetry in too narrow a way, perhaps as poems in which the writer professes love for another. Certainly that's a famous part of our tradition in poetry, but I would think poems that honor everyday moments—cleaning rain gutters, for instance—can be seen as a kind of love poem. The act of writing poetry is a way of loving the world. It's not necessarily what I set out to do when I write, but it's frequently what happens.

HH: What do you love?

AG: Family. Friends. Places: the place I grew up, the place I am living now, being in those places, being with others in them. Having grown up on a walnut orchard (I feel privileged to have experienced that). Now, here I am living sort of out in the country [in Wilton]... again, I feel privileged. I have wild turkeys outside, water fowl, not just the animals – the place overall is something to love. [I love] early morning (I can't sleep in past 6:30 a.m.). [I love] food.

HH: Why celebrate these things through poetry?

AG: I want other people to experience those things the way I have; I am hoping to get them to see the world in a different way.

Writing poetry is an act of vanity to a certain degree. I'll admit that, but I hope it goes further. As poets, we hope that people will appreciate our work on a personal level; beyond that, it is a pleasure to be within the words.

**Poetry Now welcomes interviews
with poets, local and otherwise.
Please email interviews as Word
attachments to: dpunkt@mac.com**

“A Keeping Room,” Jeanine Stevens explains in a footnote to this chapbook’s title poem, is, “In country homes, a buffer between the elements and the real living area,...”, a disjunctive, elaborative space where “drying herbs tied with raffia” and “craft projects” are stored, a half-hidden holding area where art and trope intersect memory. In these poems, Stevens investigates not only memory, but the nature of the repressed, the sublimated, and the submerged. In “Water Striders,” she explores “...the sandy bottom, bright shadows, black as licorice,” her suppressed material typically both bright and black. In “Pictures,” she writes of “...radioactive sugars” that “...feed/another picture, negative images/in purple, pale green...”, constructing in a line or two, a terrifyingly physical (as well as psychic) pathology of the enclosed. In Stevens’ work, the hidden and the concealed are always trying to surface. In the poem, Acorn, for example, she writes that an acorn which she has placed on her desk “...begins to move,/”... “...a small larva, white as milk,/tumbles out, twists, flips, gyrates/hatches early in the warmth of the room./”, the autonomy of the irrational repressed passing back into consciousness. Similarly, in “The Keeping Room,” under wine barrels, “pale, ivory-skinned roots creep out/over the gravel barrier, poke above/ground—longish fingers with fleshless tips/”, blind, probing retrieval points of memory. Conversely (and ominously), experience that is open and evident seeks to become hidden. In “Summer Solstice,” sun “leaks under shrubs/and granite boulders/creates pools/of Midas gold/”, the sunlight distilling, becoming malevolent, liquid, and subterranean.

In “Valley Oaks,” Stevens addresses dementia – memory pathologizing – comparing the afflicted woman in the poem to an oak tree: “...fifty organic chemicals, all the same pattern,/nature’s tendrils reaching too far for plaque to shock,/surprise, disrupt switches. But her tough fibers/are indifferent, new categories destroyed every day./”, the woman’s memory altering itself pathologically, morphing into new dissociations. Memories fade and decay. In the poem, Sifting, the poet is winnowing in a Maidu site along the Sacramento River and finds that “...some particles like words/are too distant to catch in this finer mesh./”, words (tropes) representing here the repressed that reworks itself, retheorizing its content into art, those “craft projects” stored in the keeping room. Stevens further investigates the aesthetic function of memory in “Still Life.” “...Will this still life/empty all pigment? In seconds, I heft/the whole harvest in my arms/”, the art-making function simultaneously synthesizing and desynthesizing content, the submerged becoming a kind of transfer pattern or code. In “The Home at Varykino,” “...the poet, hesitant, remembers yellow/daffodils resting underground and waits for peeling/birch trees to slip, release opaque sheets from last year’s/memories. ...”, memories opaque from interference and/or inhibition. “Theories of Forgetting” is, significantly, the title of the closing poem in this collection. “I am not convinced we do remember everything,/or that anything is ever forgotten—...” writes Stevens enigmatically, the implied reference to extinguished response theory confirmed a few lines later, where she refers to “...garnet cinders, like suppressed/thoughts smoldering until needs be such, what Behaviorists/call ‘spontaneous recovery.’...”, the sudden and seemingly inexplicable return of a previously extinguished conditioned response: what is repressed, what has “died down” suddenly erupting, catching fire again in the “keeping room,” “a rustle of red cellophane, a carnelian rash,/a spreading breath exchanged with air./”. Art and memory, repression and interference, “—there still remain so many theories of forgetting./”

I assure you, however, that you will not soon forget *The Keeping Room*. This is a stunning collection with delicate and tasteful visuals beautifully produced by Rattlesnake Press. You can purchase *The Keeping Room* at The Book Collector, 1008 24th St., Sacramento, CA, or order it directly from Rattlesnake Press, 4708 Tree Shadow Place, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. \$5.

This morning I taught 6th graders to write poetry using a technique called surreal juxtaposition, which I explain to them just means putting weird things next to each other. We played a game that resulted in phrases like: the frozen armchair of bent jurisprudence, and whirling skateboards of desperate self-discipline. That took 42 minutes. Then I bought gas and a cup of coffee and went to a friend’s house to get a few more details from her in order to write her son’s obituary. This was our second day talking about him, so I was only there for an hour and a half, and only twice did I burst into tears.

I came home, answered three phone calls and eight e-mails, and typed up my notes, trying not to forget anything she told me and to make the paragraphs and quotations sound as though they belonged to each other. I wove in the thoughts this boy’s dad had e-mailed to me as well, read the whole thing to my friend over the phone, made some corrections, printed it out, and delivered it to The Union so it would make tomorrow’s paper. All of that took about three hours, well, four if you count drive time, buying another cup of coffee and an egg-salad sandwich, and preventing several cats from sitting on the keyboard. I also spent a couple of minutes not looking at the huge pile of laundry on my bedroom floor and the revolting conditions in the bathroom.

Then I brought a copy of the obituary back to my friend’s house, gave her a quick hug and hopped in the car again to drive to the hospital, where I teach writing to cancer patients. Now I’m sitting at a long formica table, watching my students (some with their own hair, some with wigs or hats on) do a 15-minute freewrite on who their heroes are. I’ve already had them do warm-ups: writing about water, fire, their favorite shoes, and where their grandfathers came from. Today, I love these people more fiercely than usual, which I guess is where writing obituaries will get you.

At the end of this two-hour class I’ll go home and feed the cats, water the parched and gasping yard, and probably eat two tomatoes out of my hand for dinner. There isn’t anything else palatable in the house that I know of, except ice cubes. I may or may not manage to stay awake until 8:30.

Why am I telling you this? People are so mystified by what a poet does all day. This isn’t a typical day, of course, it’s more packed with fresh grief than usual, includes a little more driving. But it’s in the ballpark. Just so you’ll understand when you next walk up to me on the street and say “Have you written any poems lately?” and I smile and say, “No, not lately.”

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Short Story

Illustrious first day of my time in print journalism
a traditional novice assignment: update the paper's
'morgue' —biographic a photo files—the morgue
for this journal is located in a mezzanine and I hoped
I was showing the pros in the newsroom below
I had the proper demeanor for a graveyard environ
when one of them, trying no doubt to concentrate
on his own work, shoutd -Hey, you, you up there,
stop the fucking whistling!-

—Philip A. Waterhouse

March 20

The dawn seems agreeable
for a change
March is ridiculous
it's a premature spring
and it may yet snow
unsuspecting sunflowers
the cat coughs heavily
near the Japanese yew.

—B. Z. Niditch

Woody

Sticky dew kisses the concrete
Lovingly syrupy sweet
Clinging to steel toe boots
Trekking towards gravel which
Has no use for sweetness of perfume
Sawdust demands my attention
The task at hand is monumental
Despite the sticky residue losing
It's grip amid bulldozers
At 5 am

—Carolyn Franklin

B.Z. Niditch is a poet, playwright,
fiction writer and teacher as well
as founder and artistic director of
The Original Theater in Boston.
His work is widely published in
journals and magazines through-
out the world, including *Colum-
bia: A Magazine of Poetry and Art*,
The Literary Review, *Denver Quar-
terly*, *Hawaii Review*, *Le Guepard*
(France), *Prism International*,
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Bloom (Budapest), *Antioch Review*,
and *Prarie Schooner* among others.

Carolyn Franklin was born in Sacra-
mento and has been writing since she
was a teenager. She is currently working
on obtaining an A.A. in Journalism and
her C.P.P.

Madi Gras

Bourbon Street
the other side of midnight,
easy with laughter,
wild and distilled apologies.

Buildings decorated like slot machines,
platinum glitter
& gold confetti freckling
the red- brick cobblestone.

Street vocalists hymning and scating;
jook- joints loud & proud
vibrating the boardwalks
a sulky- sad bluez,
jazzy saxophonics
& new age booty- hop.

Crowds mixed as chop- suey
adorned in plastic flourecent beads
like ancient pharaohs.

Everybody rowdy, tilted
sideays as kick stands
grooving off beat, unruly
in celebration palming sixteen ounce
styrofoam cups filled
something pink, thick & frothy.

—Ariono- jovan Labu

Off The Map

Tonight i need
serenading incense of blue mangoes
purple kiwi
hugging the walls of sky.
Ocean mattress
polluted obsidian lilacs
& you dressed
dynasties ago,
third- world amazonian,
bamboo colored *Kente* skirt
listening to slow lullaby's
Sade canvassing sulky
luv ballads.

Tonight i want
to hear stuttering tongues
cosmic nebulism,
to wear the scent
ginger & jungle berries,
wear your smooove cocoa- butter
lavender skin
like pregnant moonglow
a clear dusky night,
gluttonously drink
sweet- spiced vintage honey
cinnamon silt
your river Eden.

—Ariono- jovan Labu

Recently Released/Available Again:

(★: added this issue)

1. *More of Me Disappears* by **John Amen**
(Cross-Cultural Communications)
2. *Not made by hand : selected poems 2002-2004*,
by **David Anderson** (RockyDell Resources)
- ★. *aurelia occulitica lamantia* (littlesnake broadside #20) by **frank andrick**
(Rattlesnake Press)
- ★. *Amuse* by **Charles Ardinger** (Instagon)
5. *Tule Review: Winter 2005* ed. **Brad Buchanan, Keely Dorran & Robert Grossklaus** (Sacramento Poetry Center)
- ★. *Bad Girl at the Altar Rail* by **Sharon L. Charde** (Flume Press)
- ★. *Selected Poems and Prose Poems* by **Kirby Congdon** (Presa :S: Press)
- ★. *Blood Cocoon* by **Connie Fox** (Presa :S: Press)
- ★. *Time & other poems* by **Hugh Fox** (Presa :S: Press)
10. *To Run With the Savages* by **Bill Gainer** (Rattlesnake Press)
11. *Skunk Talk* by **Albert Garcia**
- ★. *Field of the Cloth of Gold* by **Tom Goff** (Poet's Corner Press)
- ★. *What Makes Bones Talk* by **Phil Goldvarg**
(24th Street Irregular Press/AMP press)
14. *Palabras de Leynie y Cooty Boy* by **Phil Goldvarg**
(Stormy Sky Publishing)
- ★. *Finding the Top of the Sky* by **James Grabill** (Lost Horse Press)
16. *Interlink and other Nature/Humankind Poems*
by **Victoria C. G. Greenleaf** (Cypress House)
17. *affected* (CD) by **Robert Grossklaus** (Polymer Grove)
18. *Kissing Einstein* by **Robert Grossklaus** (Polymer Grove)
19. *Vyper #2* ed. **Robert Grossklaus** (Rattlesnake Press)
- ★. *Presa #2* (Winter 2006) ed. **Larry Hill** (Presa :S: Press)
21. *Rattlesnake Review #8* ed. **Kathy Kieth** (Rattlesnake Press)
22. *Snakelettes #5* ed. **Kathy Kieth** (Rattlesnake Press)
- ★. *Thee End Ov Thee Century: An Anthology ov Poetry Chapbooks (1990-1999)* by **LOB** (Instagon)
24. *The Smokehouse Boys* by **Shaunna Oteka McCovey**
(Heyday Books)
25. *Letters With Taloned Claws* by **Eileen Malone**
(Poet's Corner Press)
26. *Nomads* (littlesnake broadside #19) by **Indigo Moor**
(Rattlesnake Press)
27. *The Cook Inlet Poems* by **Rebecca Morrison** (Flyway Press)
- ★. *Brevities #35* ed. **Joyce Odam**
28. *The Silt Reader #7* ed. **Robert Roden & Barton M. Saunders**
- ★. *the development of love in pineapple twilight* by **Lynne Savitt**
(Press :S: Press)
30. *The Keeping Room* by **Jeanine Stevens** (Rattlesnake Press)
31. *Footsteps in My Heart* by **J. B. Thomas**
32. *Beware of the Night* by **J. B. Thomas** (book & CD)
- ★. *Poems* by **Ben Tibbs** (Presa :S: Press)
34. *Public Places, Private Spaces* (littlesnake broadside #18)
by **Claudia Trnka** (Rattlesnake Press)
35. *Sambatyon ("River Of Inspiration")* by **various**
- ★. *The World's Last Rodeo* by **A. D. Winans** (Bottle Of Smoke Press)

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

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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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Local blogs/websites to check out:

Brad Buchanan: www.miracleshirker.blogspot.com

James DenBoer: <http://www.paperwrk.com>

Gary Thomas Edwards: www.gthomasedwards.com

Frith Press: www.hometown.aol.com/ekphrasis1

Robert Grossklaus: www.xanga.com/dphunkt6/

Richard Hansen: <http://www.sacfreepress.com/poems/>

Ben L. Hiatt: <http://digitaldawg.blogspot.com/>

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James Lee Jobe: <http://putahcreek.blogspot.com/>

Colette Jonopulos: <http://colettej.blogspot.com/>

<http://tigerseyepoet.blogspot.com/>

Christian Kiefer: <http://xiankiefer.blogspot.com/>

Kathy Kieth: <http://medusaskitchen.blogspot.com/>

LOB: www.tif.org

Crawdad Nelson: <http://www.crawdadnelson.com/>

Larry Stenzel: www.larrystenzel.com

Anthony Vieira: <http://malaclypticzirconium.blogspot.com/>

Patricia Wellingham-Jones:

<http://www.wellinghamjones.com>

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

Straight Out Scribes: Thursday, Dec 1, 2005
Poetry Unplugged at Luna's Café
Reviewed by LOB

River Poem

Slow and easy
In this fall of Han Lu
mother of minnow
Swimming in nursery schools
Sleeping in cradles
of algae and sedge

dance floor
to Damsel-fies
gyrating turquoise unions
to tambourine s of leaves

tomb to families of oak
anointed in my waters
last rites repeated
in the currents passage

riparian spring
to hare and fox
drunk in the tent of dusk
and apricot light
of a Samhain moon

place of wading
into muddy beginnings
pools of clarity
changing my course often
lithe as the water snake's glide.

—Jennifer Pickering (O'Neill)

Open Circle in Land Park

Those poets chosen are all well-known and published: Jose Montoya, Julia Connor, **Jennifer Pickering**, Mary Catherine Rice, Patrick Pfister, Pearl Stein Selinsky and Viola Weinberg. Montoya calls "Open Circle" a "magnificent combination of art and poetry."

December 1st, 2005 was the 50th anniversary of the day Rosa Parks stood up for her rights in this country and refused to give up her seat on a bus. This act of defiance and solidarity is now recognized as one of the true historical moments in racial rights in America. So it was no doubt that any poetry reading happening on this night would be filled with political commentary and hat tipping to Mrs. Parks. The reading at Luna's Café that night was exactly that. Starting off with a strong open mic segment hosted by Mario Ellis Hill we heard from locals like Gene Bloom (reading a piece about Charles Manson), and Frank Andrick (reading a new quatrain inspired by B.L. Kennedy). But the true force of the night came from the featured readers "Straight Out Scribes", a powerful poetry duo featuring poetess Staajabu and her daughter, poetess V.S. Chochezi, who have been performing as a poetic duo since 1991. They performed pieces both together and individually which added to the entertainment value and kept their performance energy level progressive. Their combined efforts were very jazz influenced, with one of them reciting a monologue and the other adding a "second line" sort of follow up, accenting the words and the message of the poetry. I found it to remind me of the 1970's poetry troupe "The Watts Prophets" but obviously with a feminine aspect and approach. And with it only being a duo, and the Prophets being four men, there was a lot less going on and it was easier to follow both of them. Individually, Staajabu had a lot more storytelling, wisdom and feelings in her words, where Chochezi's poetry was more descriptive of events and happenings that she commented on. Both were filled with political commentary and high praise for Rosa Parks throughout the performance, and urged everyone listening to follow their dreams and what they believed in as an overall message. More information on books, CD's, and happenings regarding Straight Out Scribes, can be found on the web at www.straightoutscribes.org

The weekly poetry happening at Luna's Café continues to be an epicenter for performance poetry happening in the Sacramento area. With touring poets, and a rotating collection of hosts, this reading has something to offer all aspects of the local poetry community. Thursday nights, Luna's Café, 1414 16th St., 8pm, all ages, free.

Reviews and/or articles of local poetry events are always welcome. Please email your work as a Word attachment to: dphunkt@mac.com.

Since 1991, V.S. Chochezi and Staajabu, a mother daughter poetry duo known as Straight Out Scribes, have self-published 6 books of poetry, produced 2 spoken word CDs and produced 159 poetry readings at Carol's Books and KINKS International in Sacramento. Their very popular poetry series, "Poetry On A Saturday Afternoon" closed June 28, 2003 after ten years of featuring some of Sacramento's most talented writers, poets and musicians.

The Scribes have made over 400 appearances as featured readers, speakers or presenters at poetry venues, forums, workshops, conferences, conventions, political forums, rallies, churches, festivals, schools, colleges, community programs, radio and television programs and events in Sacramento, the Bay Area and beyond. Their writings have appeared in numerous publications; the most recent are, *San Francisco's Artists Against Rape* anthology (2005) and *Drum Voices* (2005). They are currently spotlighted in the January 2006 issue of *Sacramento Magazine*.

Their self-published books are: *Crucial Comments and Vicious Verses*, *BAMM*, *This Queendom Come*, *Taking Names and Pointing Fingers*, *African Reflections*, and *Scribes Rising*. They have produced two CD's, *Mind Quake* (2000) and *Priorities* (2005).

Scribes Rising, their newest publication, is a poetry anthology that includes some of their newest work, old favorites and poems by Jr. Scribes, Jessicah and Tisho. The duo have received the following awards: The Coalition of Labor Union Award for cultural contributions to the labor movement 2005, The Sacramento Sound of Soul award for best poetry group of 2002, Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission New Works Awards for 1994 and 2001, Outstanding Women of Color Award 2001, Black United Fund of Sacramento Valley Walter Bremond Community Service Award 1999.

Staajabu, the founder and mother/grandmother was born in Philadelphia, PA and raised in Camden, NJ. She is a writer, graphic artist, poet, producer, and administrative assistant.

V.S. Chochezi, daughter, has two daughters of her own; Jessicah, age 21 and Tisho 20. V.S. was born in Riverside, CA and raised in Camden, NJ. She graduated Delaware State College with a BA in Journalism and California State University Sacramento with a Master's in Communication Studies. V.S. is a writer, poet, producer, community activist, publications specialist and Jr. College Instructor. V.S. is known to close friends and family as Sananaa.

The Scribes are members of ZICA Creative Arts and Literary Guild and supporters of the Birthing Project, Because People Matter, The All African Peoples Revolutionary Party, The Jericho Amnesty Movement, the Sacramento Poetry Center and Sacramento Area Black Caucus. They have been working on the Campaign of Pennsylvania political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and nine members of the MOVE Family Africa since 1989. Their website is www.straightoutscribes.org.

A hint of recognition

Ethiopians knit their brow
Jamaicans do a double take
Native Americans give
A knowing nod
Nigerians often seem certain
South Africans cock the head
To one side, squint their eyes and sigh
African-Americans look quizzically

Perhaps it's the locks
crowning the head
The ankh in the earlobe
Or around the neck
The red, black, green
And gold bracelets
The Marley T-shirt
The thick lips,
Gapped teeth highlighted
By a bright smile
The mud-cloth and the
Gye Nyame on the outfit
The accents – Jersey
Mixed with Valley
Sprinkled with Puerto Rican
Influenced Spanish
Matriarch, strong back,
Straight neck, sure foot
That catches the eye and
Captures the imagination

The double chocolate
Caramel coated
Cinnamon toasted
Burnt custard hues
Or a little something extra
In the attitude

Don't get it twisted
It's not about a wannabe
Because even the stiff straight
Preacher, one generation before
In black robe and white collar
Who speaks only North Carolina
Tinged English and knows a few
Words in Kiswahili would be
Difficult to distinguish from
Several Nigerian brothers we know
See we don't suffer from
Identity confusion

It's an unmistakable resemblance
The true testimony that shows
While we can't pinpoint
The exact location
Yes, we're clearly related
Solidly connected
Long lost separated coast to coast
Born here or across the sea
Africans are who we be.

—V.S. Chochezi



photo by Jessica Pratt

Another day

Here I am again
Caffeine racing through
My system from the
Rhino coffee I just drank
Rank and file workingwoman
Waiting at the copy machine
Tapping my foot to the rhythm
Caffeine urging me
To run hurdles, do jumping jacks,
Back flips, stretches, touch toes
Who knows how long I'll
Have to wait, marking time as the
Machine mysteriously and ominously
Duplicates, facts, stats, maps, and reports
By the hundreds with a green strobe light
And a clack tap squeak swoosh swoosh tap tap
Will a machine some day make copies of us
With a clack tap squeak swoosh swoosh tap tap?

Breaking up big rocks on a chain gang
Breakin' rocks and servin' my time

Poems, songs, rhymes, come to mind
while keeping time
To the clack tap squeak swoosh swoosh tap tap
Another day
Clack tap
Another day away
Squeak
From the things I love
Swoosh swoosh
Waiting
Tap tap tap tap tap tap tap
To go home.

—Staajabu

Straight Out Scribes read at
SPC/HQ on February 20th.
See calendar for details.

James Lee Jobe has been published in *Manzanita*, *Tule Review*, *Pearl*, and many other periodicals. His poems are also included in *The Sacramento Anthology: One Hundred Poems*, and *How To Be This Man: The Walter Pavlich Memorial Anthology. What God Said When She Finally Answered Me* (Rattlesnake Press) is his 4th chapbook.



Mercy

Morning comes again to the valley, with noisy crows,
with tired dogs walking home, satisfied.
I'm not dead. Every time I open my eyes,
I'm really a little surprised.
Mercy, mercy.

Outside, the jasmine blooms. Smelling it,
I'm quite sure that plants have souls,
and that heaven must smell like my patio.
That would be mercy,
wouldn't it?

—James Lee Jobe

Coexistence

Kitty stalks the grasshopper for five minutes,
Then, at the moment when she should pounce,
Kitty rolls over on her old speckled back,
Rolls, stretches,
And wanders away.
Kitty The Merciful has granted life.
I catch the grasshopper in my ballcap
And carry him across the quiet street
To the lovely green Eden of the park.
All three of us enjoy! ed ourselves.

—James Lee Jobe

Let It Rain

Rain, please let it rain big bellowing slashes
of water crashing through the mulberry tree,
my three redwoods, my life; let it rain.

Wash clean the old dirt in the cracks, rain,
clean the hard edges of things, this life;
Heaven, clean this earth, let it rain.

Mohammed's horse was so excited by the truth,
that he ascended into Heaven, too! Let it rain
truth, one word in each raindrop that falls.

The truth isn't one thing for you and another
for me. Rain washes through both our lives,
cleansing, rinsing, whispering. Let it rain.

—James Lee Jobe

Katrina

the moon has been
passed down
through the pine's spiky
fish-spine fingers
to the lifted-up
mittened hands of the
tulip tree broad black
silhouettes witness against
a starless night

passed down
as if nothing could
hold its light
support its weight
any longer
and it sank
like a pearl
beneath the new and watery
horizon

the wavering line
that is rising
with the sun
as if dawn upward
pushed higher
with the
accumulation of
shoes and cars and toys
beds and lamps and dishes

a watery line
that is tapping
at the eaves
lapping the ceiling
throwing a semaphore
of light against
the desperate street sign
pleading STOP
to no avail

—Brigit Truex

Brigit Truex was born in Washington D.C., has lived in Maryland, Massachusetts and various parts of California. She has lived in Placerville for the past six years. Her work has appeared in *Folio*, *Cape Cod Life*, *Rattlesnake Review*, *PDQ*, and *Manzanita* as well as in the anthologies: *100 Poems*, *Nantuket*, and *Little Town USA*. She is the founding member of Red Fox Poetry which meets weekly in Placerville.

Strawberries

Whose brown hand chose this fruit,
sized to fit between
thumb and finger, gently,
secreted close to the mounded earth,
beneath layers of serated green, the
swollen bud-end of a plain
white flower turned
blood-red in the heat, the accumulated
color of bending over
and over below a ripe sun?

And what is the reward, the dizzy
rush of standing upright at the end
of the row, at the end of the day,
a respite, a lull, of letting muscle
and tendon go slack, while I reach
willingly, freely,
into a clean white bowl, to choose
one plump, polished berry with its
finely dimpled skin, heady with
the essence of leisure, a sweet surfeit
on the tongue, juice on the chin,
the time to savor it?

—Brigit Truex

The Master

Long into the night,
past the hour of the
whippoorwill's calling
he sorts the separate
gems by color and
category, assessing
each for flaws,
imperfections,

intolerant of

imbalance
in the rightness of things,
certain in his own ability
to create masterpieces
of polished metals, their fiery
ores, the secreted precious stones
pulled from the crushed earth,
while behind him

the moon is a perfect pearl.

—Brigit Truex

Arrangement

When she was sick
she'd always want her dad.
We'd gone out,
when she was three,
left her with the sitter
and a little fever;
and there she sat
back in the crib
she'd given up a week before,
arms out to his call.

When he calls I ask for his pickup
to make a run or two.
He says to be careful,
not to let anything break.
I say yes, as always,
puncture-wound
my hand while loading;
get it dumped anyway,
potty chair and all.

The boys trash the house
while I'm gone—
it matters less and less.
Tomorrow I'll get a tetanus.
Next year, most likely,
he'll gether all the time.

—Frederick Davis

Homestead

In the house he grew up
there were no halls;
protection, at least,
from a certain kind of corner.
His parents had two TVs
each, raised him between station breaks.
It gave him a monkish air;
he was often mistaken for a beggar.

He went to sea, stayed sober,
clove-hitched swap handles
to the fantail--a long clean wake.
A Methodist wife claimed him,
disbelieved the salt. They married
poor; their first bathroom,
from years of slumlording,
had a urine coat. He cleaned it
gladly; she gave him in gratitude
babies, dypepsia, a future.

His parents purchased double plots
a piece, bequeathed him all
their tubes. He gave them
to St. Vinnie's, tried
but couldn't keep the glow.
When he went, the corners just fit.
They remember him just down the hall.

—Frederick Davis

Cruelty's Rewards

as I pummeled him with my fists
I blacked out
he wouldn't leave my house
after I told him to—so I attacked him

I'd been having a bad night
the kid at my house
he'd followed my roommate's girlfriend there
like a lost gutterpunk puppy
with his pathetic cringing dog
following *him*

he pleaded,
then demanded that I let him stay
I told him no
and followed with an elbow
to his head
our fight took place on a stage:
the sidewalk in front of my place
where the corner boys sold dope
and the old whore waited,
every night

after our fight
the young black men on the corner
suddenly liked me
they were always there
smoking cigarettes, reciting raps
hanging around a rented SUV
my display of cruelty meant
I had heart
they started affectionately
calling me "j-bo"
it gave me a deep, warm feeling
that I was strong, that I could
survive here
and like never before,
I could see the value
of cruelty's rewards

later I look back with complete
desolation
and remember a night
I was desperate in Oakland
throat caught up with gasping air
the horror and thrill of hitting a body
in the morning looking down
the hands that are never enough

—Justin Allen

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Alone With Labor

(with thanks to *Man Is The Bastard*)

Sometimes I think about all the floors I used to sweep
All the carpets I've vacuumed
All the tables I've scrubbed
All the trash cans I've emptied
All the ashtrays I've washed
All the garbage I've heaved into 3 a.m. dumpsters

Sometimes I think about all the floors I used to mop
All the toilets I've bleached
All the mirrors I've windexed
All the tampons I've tossed
All the chairs I've straightened
All the time I've lost

How well I know the rhythm and feel and loneliness
Of being alone with labor
Thoughts take eons, stretch into the distance of the day
The work continues, the repetition
Your body becomes unconscious, the motions automatic
You are only aware of the effort, the energy, the sweat
Dimly, as the mindless work induces trance

Some people make work doing thinking
When I was growing up that seemed to me like a dream
For hours at work I would worry and ponder
"I am the son of a Janitor" I thought
"What does that mean?"

—Justin Allen

Teaching Dream

The class already started. Huge.
You have words ready but the stick,

marshmallows in your teeth and eyes
expectant through the auditorium.

You are dressed oddly, lace and boots
so each step thumps and rustles. Stop

to realize you are still carrying
the dog which hasn't moved this whole

time so you set it, heavy on the lectern
and the eyes say what you know already.

The words grow larger in your throat.
Something dripping loudly.

—Margaret Young

Margaret Young earned an M.A. at UC Davis. Her first collection, *Willow from the Willow*, was published by Cleveland State University Poetry Center in 2002. She was a 2005 recipient of an Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist grant. She now lives in Merced, California.

Justin Allen was born in Bakersfield, California in 1979. He began writing in the 2nd grade. After dropping out of high school, Allen lived in various American towns and cities holding down jobs as a janitor, dishwasher, factory worker, grape picker, telemarketer, among others. He continues to attend college occasionally, where he may someday graduate unless he becomes successful first. He has been self-publishing 'zines and chapbooks since 1999, and has had writing published in a handful of other obscure spots in Xerox and online. His writing appears regularly in the *Sacramento News & Review*. He lives in Sacramento and, in addition to writing, creates video and sound art.

Rochester, Where

your love lives
in Tuesday blue on a street
named for a Victorian scientist.
You walk out mornings
leaving him sealed in a smell
which is sleep, which is you
and encounter the transactions
March is making.
Last night's moon, that peach
has rolled behind the office towers
to ask another city.
Tulips curled like wimples
poke bark along the smeared ripe lawns.
If there were a cathedral
its bells would be pealing
some announcement of beginnings
but in these tunnels of old
elms and houses only the highway
rings down noise. The raspberry
odor of bursting twigs,
car wash buckets
glistening with soap and rags stiffened from
winter in the cupboard
are memory's new hats,
are all you need for now.

—Margaret Young



Jeff Knorr reads with Tim Kahl at SPC/HQ on February 13th. See calendar for details.

Tune Up

Vern can't look at his neighbor's farm without thinking of cocaine. The rows of furrowed dirt raised into symmetrical lines running toward the horizon puffed and leveled for lettuce. It drives him back inside to a full-length mirror flat across two green milk crates in the garage where he pulls a razor knife from a tangle of chrome tools and creates a small white field. He's sniffing like he's got a late February cold numbing drip of snot running his throat and he's cool on all the back pasture mint green but the small John Deere needs new plugs. He's armed. He's hunt ready as his dog. Sockets. Wrenches. The purpose of powder in his pocket is going to give that god damned tractor a working over.

—Jeff Knorr

God in the Fire

In the puddle of air that surrounds him the morning is stale, sweet ferment of tequila. He knows there are no more words for this. No more scale for the headache, throb and desire in the living current. He has one last number to call; Monday, sober and raining he'll dial the HMO's dependency center seven digits of despair under his fingers. The day opens because he's found something blowing in him he has not known before, a sudden shift as blinding as yellowed sun he will find filling empty cups, the windows, his hands after he burns his own life like a mound of fall leaves.

—Jeff Knorr

Jeff Knorr is the author of five books including a collection of poems, *Standing up to the Day* (Pecan Grove Press, 1999) and *Keeper*, a collection of essays and poems (Mammoth Books, 2004). His poetry has appeared in *Connecticut Review*, *Chelsea*, and *Red Rock Review*, among others. He currently teaches writing and literature at Sacramento City College.

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