

Sacramento's Literary
Review and Calendar:

Poetry Now

July 2005
Vol. 11, No. 07

A Publication of the Sacramento Poetry Center

Pomegranates

You like a child of Israel longed
for the kiss of cool pomegranate seeds
on your tongue
When we'd left our desert home for a lush land.
And when we returned there for a visit, you
dug up an entire multiple bush and
Brought it, roots and severed limbs,
sheathed in wet burlap,
To plant along two sides of our new acre.

They flourish here
roots and cuttings equally,
Stretch slender gnarled and prickly arms
to encircle our domain
Adrip with green-red globes like those that
bordered Aaron's priestly robe in Israel's
promised land.

Persephone, kidnapped to the underworld where
Pluto reigned, resisted
Ambrosia, filet mignon, exotic other fare
but ate half a dozen pomegranate seeds and so
Must consort with Pluto half of every year.

While I have eaten hundreds, even thousands,
and will swear
To gladly share with you those myriad months and
thousands more.

—Mildred Hunt

I Feel His Step

I feel his step,
(Or can that faltering step be his?)
As he comes into my garden.
The moon is new
But the night old;
My olive trees swish
Softly
In springtime's breeze.

With weighty tread
He walks alone
To find a shadowy grove.
And now again his knees
Press my leaf-strewn cloak.
I hear his pleading tones,
Passionate, poignant;
I hear his sighs,
His moan.
I feel the great, cold drops
That fall between the leaves.
And then,
At long, long last,
The sweet, warm rain
Of his tears.

—Mildred Hunt

Mildred Hunt has been published in *Ensign* and has self-published two chapbooks of poetry, *Book of Mormon and Other Poems* (accompanied by the illustrations of Susan Hunt), and *Poems*. Her work is informed by her faith, family, nature and a lifetime of experience rich with the triumphs and turmoils of enduring love and eternal marriage, seen through the heart of a true mystic.

Mildred Hunt reads on
July 11th at SPC. See
calendar for details.

This Issue:

Art Beck
Carol Frith
Christy Harden
Mildred Hunt
B.L. Kennedy
Kathy Kieth
Arthur Winfield Knight
Joyce Odam
Bonnie Rollin
Pearl Stein Selinsky
Michael A. Skinner
Philip A. Waterhouse
Diane Webster

Reviewed:

Kathy Kieth's
Why We Have Sternum

Synthesis

When red and yellow and green come in
From the outer rim of the color wheel,
And from them purple, orange, blue
Become, then cease, and all is still;
And the whirl of the wheel has died away,
And harmony has culminated,
The synthesis is perfect light,
Its facets known yet sublimated.

When body and spirit, knowledge, faith
Are fired, cooled, then fired again;
Genesis, life, awareness, death,
The whole awhirl, the fire aflame;
When all the dross is balanced off
And ballast tossed for purest flight,
Then shards of joy will coalesce,
Pouring forth celestial light.

—Mildred Hunt

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.

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

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

Board of Directors:
President: **Mary Zeppa**
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Staff: **Amy Picard**

President's Message

Mary Zeppa Elected President of the Board of Directors

Many of you know me well, others not at all. But friends and strangers alike, one thing we're likely to share is our passion for poetry. Writing poems is my way of making sense of the world. Reading and listening to the work of other poets expand that world 1000-fold.

And I believe in the power of community. I've been an active member of the Sacramento Poetry Center since 1981, a member of the Board of Directors since 1982; this will be my third term (1984-85 and 1990-95) as Board President. During my 24 years of continuous involvement, I've done everything from answer phones to co-edit publications (*Poet News* 1983-95, *The Tule Review* 1993-97), from stuff envelopes to serve as Executive Director (1985-1987). Because SPC has always been a largely volunteer organization, sometimes I was doing two or three of those things at the same time. It's the nature of the beast.

SPC has been a vital part of my life since some of you were in grade school. And I've long believed that an organization like ours works best when it operates collaboratively, when major responsibilities are shared among members of the Board (and capable volunteers), when the Board President's role is to lead, oversee and co-ordinate that collaborative work. That, with the assent and support of the Board, is what I intend to do.

The Sacramento Poetry Center is in transition. We're just finding our feet in a new location; in our recent past, we've both gained some new, energetic Board members and lost some mainstays. I view myself as a transitional President and, as we all work together during my self-limited (one year) term of office, will do everything I can to encourage and support those willing to take on more responsibility. I look forward to hearing the ideas and sharing the energy of everyone who wants to be a part of this process.

—Mary Zeppa

Editor's Note

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

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

—Robert Grossklaus

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Poetry Now in your
business and help spread
poetry throughout the
Sacramento area and
beyond?
For details, contact us
at:
poetrynow@sacramento
poetrycenter.org.**

HEADQUARTERS
FOR THE ARTS



Literary Calendar for July 2005

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

1 Friday

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

2 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.

4 Monday

July Fourth Holiday

Celebrate the sesquicentennial of the publication of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* at Crocker Park with a reading by Sacramento area poets of "Song of Myself." Bring your own picnic. No alcohol or fireworks. 3-6pm. Info: Christina and Arturo Mantecón, 916-743-5329, arturo@mantecon.net. 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. Contact KVMR to verify holiday schedule.

5 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.)

6 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 Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

7 Thursday

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

4 | poetryNOW

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

Sutter Literature, Arts & Medicine (LAMP) writing workshop has disbanded for the summer. For more info, contact Chip Spann, 454-6802 or spannc@sutterhealth.org.

9 Saturday

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

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

10 Sunday

Stockton Poet's Corner. Charlie Stockdale reads. 7 pm, Barnes & Noble, Weberstown Mall, Stockton. Don Anderson hosts. Info, www.poetscornerpress.com or 209-951-7014.

11 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents Mildred Hunt, host: Keely Dorrn. 7:30 pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts) Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free

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

12 Tuesday

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

13 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 Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

Rattlesnake Press: Joyce Odam and Charlotte Vincent, host, Kathy Kieth, the Book Collector, 1008 24th St., 7:30pm, to celebrate the release of their new chapbook from Rattlesnake Press, *Caught Against the Years*. Free.

14 Thursday

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

Poetic Light Open Mic: TBA. 8-10 PM, Personal Style Salon, 2540 Cottage Way. Info: John Hughes, 270-2317. Free.

16 Saturday

Underground Poetry Series, Tom Nolt (and open mic), Underground Books, 2814 35th Street, next to the Guild Theater, info: Terry Moore, 455-POET.

Art Beck & B.L. Kennedy and Linda Thorell. Doors open at 7:30, reading begins at 8:00pm. HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts). Contact Robert Grossklau for more info: dphunkt@mac.com.

West Coast Premiere of *Drumvoices Revue* #13 (Book Signing and Readings) at Carols Books, 300 Florin Road, Sacramento from 3-5pm. See page 10 for full details.

17 Sunday

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

18 Monday

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

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

19 Tuesday

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

Calendar continued...

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

Third Tuesday Poetry Series: **Felicia Martinez** and **Tim McKee**. Host: Art & Christina Montecon. Q&A follows reading. 7 pm at HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts). Info: 743-5329. Free.

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

20 Wednesday

Urban Voices: **Gene Avery** & **Todd Cirillo** 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 Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

21 Thursday

Poetry Unplugged Day 1: **Jennifer Blowdryer** (author/playwright from NYC), **Alvin Orloff** (author / memoirist from SF), **Alan Satow**, **Ruebi Freyja**. Open mic before/after. 8 pm at Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Hosted by Frank Andrick. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascfe.com. Free.

Poetic Light Open Mic: **TBA**. 8-10 PM, Personal Style Salon, 2540 Cottage Way. Info: John Hughes, 270-2317. Free.

22 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.

Poetry Unplugged Day 2: J Street Cafe 1030 J St., Modesto 209-577-8007 7pm. **Jennifer Blowdryer**, **Frank Andrick** (poet/host poetry unplugged), **Joe Montoya** (poet/creator of Poetry Unplugged), **Chad Williams** (poet/musician), **Gilberto Rodriguez** (poet/dramaturgist); hosted by Frank Andrick.

23 Saturday

Sutter LAMP presents: **Pat Schneider**, host: Chip Spann. Sutter Resource Library, 2800

L St., Ste. 600. 7-8:30 PM. Info: Chip at 454-6802 or spannc@sutterhealth.org.

Poetry Unplugged Day 3: Hidden Passage Books, 352 Main St., Placerville: 530-622-4540, 6pm. **Jennifer Blowdryer**, **Frank Andrick**, **Joe Montoya**, **Gilberto Rodriguez**, **Ruebi Freyja**, **Star Vaughn**, (writer/publisher of *Blue Fur* haiku zine); hosted by Frank Andrick.

25 Monday

The Sacramento Poetry Center: **TBA**. Rhony Bhopla hosts. 7:30 pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts). Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free.

26 Tuesday

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

27 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 Fingers Jamaican Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

28 Thursday

Poetry Unplugged, **TBA**. Open mic before/after. 8 pm at Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascfe.com. Free.
Poetic Light Open Mic: **TBA**. 8-10 PM, Personal Style Salon, 2540 Cottage Way. Info: John Hughes, 270-2317.

30 Saturday

The Show, **Nercity Blues** and **Michelle Taylor** 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.

CSUS Summer Writers' Conference

Share an intensive weekend of inspiring lectures, hands-on workshops and networking opportunities with writers and publishing insiders this summer at California State University, Sacramento. Take your writing to the next level, explore new genres, and learn how to publish your work while forging relationships that will help to challenge and sustain you throughout the year.

Keynote Speaker:

Dorothy Allison is a nationally acclaimed novelist, essayist, memoirist, and poet. Her first novel, *Bastard Out of Carolina*, won the Lambda Award and was a finalist for the National Book Award. Her other works include *Cavedweller*, *Trash*, and *Two or Three Things I Know For Sure*.

Workshop Leaders:

David Bianculli: Criticism and Commentary
Richard Hellensen: Playwriting
Sandy Lynn Holman: Children's Literature
Kristen Iversen: Memoirs
Joshua McKinney: Poetry
Al Young: Novels

For more information, please contact Manuela McClary at manuela@csus.edu or visit www.cce.csus.edu/writersconference

Coming in October of 2005

SPC's Writers Conference
(details next issue)

List Your Event:

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

Thank you.

Time Sketch

No matter where I go the sand falls. I go through myself
in window reflection and the glass bends back.

I slide through air and things take my place.

I go through time like a message.

Twilight remembers me with its strange light.

I grow luminous. Time has replaced me with itself.

I fit the blue shadows of transition and feel no difference.
When I am there--I am here--how could you know me?

—Joyce Odam

As If All Time

somewhere
my death sits waiting
with gifts of apples
in his lap
smiling into the direction
from which I will come
and practicing
the word he will say

it is a brimming afternoon
everything lazy and green
and young
and he has eloquent eyes
for me to enter
when I see him waiting there
as if all time
were his to have
beneath that tree

—Joyce Odam

[appeared in *Sou'Wester* and *Lemon Center*
for *Hot Buttered Roll* (chapbook)]

Joyce Odam has had poetry published by hundreds of publications, including *Christian Science Monitor*, *Rattle*, *Seattle Review*, *The Lyric*, and *Bellingham Review*. Her numerous awards include being Grand Prize winner of Artists Embassy International's Dancing Poetry Contest (1999), the 1997 Voices International Bernie Babcock Memorial Award, and a two-time winner of the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc. Golden Pegasus Award. She is editor of both *Poetry Depth Quarterly* and *Brevities*, co-editor of Poet's Corner for *Senior Magazine*, and on the revolving Editorial Board of *California Quarterly*.

In her latest collection, *Caught Against the Years* (SpiralChap #5 from Rattlesnake Press), Joyce combines her poetry with artwork by her daughter, **Charlotte Vincent**. The two of them will appear at The Book Collector to celebrate the release of this book on Wednesday, June 13. [See inside calendar for details.]

The Hunt

Bald eagle displayed
in leafless cottonwood
swivels its head
from ice-laced river
to cornstalk field—
fish or mouse in an eye blink.
While the black and white cat
steps footprint into footprint
through rattle-dry weeds;
body wound for a pounce
eye to eye with a meal.

—Diane Webster

For Him

Rounding third, touching
home—My man cheers.
His hot dog, grease and all,
the screaming crowd, the toot-
toot-toot of horns, the players
spitting, clutching crotches,
cross themselves, slowly
appraise, wind up
to pitch, and pitch, and pitch.

The innings crawl the clock.

I am bored, but this is for him,
and through a life, how many
different "hims"? How many times,
"this is for him?"

—Pearl Stein Selinsky

Pearl Stein Selinsky was raised and educated in New York, continuing her education in California. After she retired from teaching in the Los Angeles School District, she moved to Sacramento (with her husband, Victor) where she earned her Master's Degree in Creative Writing at the California State University, Sacramento. While there, she won first place in both the Bazzanella and Room Of One's Own competitions sponsored by the English Department. In addition, she has won a number of prizes in poetry competitions and has served as a judge in poetry competitions as well. Her work has appeared in *Vintage 45*, in anthologies entitled *Only In Her Shoes*, *To Honor A Teacher*, and *The Sacramento Anthology: One Hundred Poems*. Her poems have also been published in *Poetry* (Chicago), *Ekphrasis*, *Poetry Now*, *Poet's Guild*, *Zambomba*, *33 Review*, *The Prairie Star*, *Nostalgia*, *Mediphors*, *P.D.Q.*, *CQ*, and *Tule Review* among others.

Out of the Dark

Rising up out of the dark and up on to the headlands.
Vast tide pools like dark milk on either side.
False dawn banked on the horizon like glowing embers.
Cool, sharp air through the car's open windows as we flow over a bridge rushing toward morning and the dawn...

—Michael A. Skinner

Daybreak at the Eastern Edge of the World

Every day I drive into a Technicolor sunrise.
Such is daybreak at the Eastern Edge of the world.
I must cross two rivers before I reach the sea.
Each river is spanned by thin web of steel and concrete.
I work a stone's throw from the ocean and I gauge the tempo of the day by the colors of the sea.
A dark blue sea portends a calm day.
A green sea speaks of storms to come.
A slate gray sea: the storm is here.

—Michael A. Skinner

Michael A. Skinner, a 48 year-old African-American, is an itinerant web developer in Sacramento.

Castro Street

For in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven.

It certainly won't be heaven, in fact
I'm beginning to suspect the next world
will be something on the order of
Castro Street. At first, I'll try looking

for you everywhere. I'll stalk the frantic
bars and chic delicatessens. I'll search
for you behind the mirrors that hang
on the walls of every likely curio store.

I'll try not to be frightened by the shop
windows full of leather sex masks I know
couldn't cover your smile, but I'll
make a point of using only the deserted

women's toilets in the bars, not just
because it's safer but hoping
for the odd chance you might
be hiding there. Only what hope do we

have? The next world will be
the real thing. The wild Halloween
impersonators barely sense the shadows
moving in the crowd, or how absolutely

orderly and flawless the final process
is. Tonight, Death's a Nazi Peter Lorre.
He won't put up with any mixing
of the sexes. It makes him sick,

and, beyond that, bores him to despair.
He has a nice clean world where everybody
pays their rent on time and little kids
only get to show their guilty faces on the street

after they've learned their lesson. We'll never
find each other there. The women have to live together
in tough condominium complexes on the other
side of town. They won't let you out, and I'll be lost

where we're not wanted, in the forest of broken
buildings, basement passageways, sheds with hidden doors,
and ladders inside walls they've set between us.
That same obsessed prick who snatched away

your grandmother's mind right in the stuttering
middle of her rage at your bewildered granddad,
the same screeching masquerader my grandmother heard
coughing so helplessly at midnight in my drunken

grandfather's chest – is going to see to it
that we'll never see each other again.
We'd better whisper and make our quiet peace together while we can.

—Art Beck

Art Beck reads with B.L. Kennedy and Linda Thorell on July 16th. See calendar for details.

The pseudonymous poet **Art Beck** was born Dennis Dybeck in Chicago, Illinois, in 1940. He attended John Carroll University in Cleveland and the University of San Francisco, and has mostly lived in California since 1960. He lives in San Francisco with his wife, Kathleen Phelan, and their three children. Beck's literary career has been conducted simultaneously with a business career; Beck is currently a credit administrator at a California subsidiary of a major international bank. He has published two collections of verse, *The Discovery of Music* (1977) and *North Country* (1981), and a long narrative poem, *Enlightenment: Notes for a Scurrilous Life*, *The Rediscovered Poems of Giacomo Casanova* (1977). He has also published two books of translations: *Simply to See*, a translation of Luxorius (1982), and *Rilke* (1983).

The Ming Dynasty

In Memory of Gregory Corso

Kit showed him
the heart-shaped necklace
I'd given her a decade ago.
It was 500 years old.
"Do you know what this is?"
No one ever knew.
It was rhetorical.
"Of course I do,
it's a piece
of Ming Dynasty pottery,"
he said, instantly. He was
already half-drunk
at noon, and he needed
a shave, a clean shirt,
a comb, a shot of Scope,
a new life. He had
a poem in his back pocket.
He was ruined. It was
impossible not to like him.

—Arthur Winfield Knight

The Saturated Earth

I lie in bed, holding you,
listening to the rain,
listening to your breathing—
and to our dog sighing—
in the corner. Outside,
plum and cherry blossoms
fall to the saturated earth,
and a helicopter hovers
over the trees and rooftops.
It has been like this for days
now. I don't mind the rain.

—Arthur Winfield Knight

Christy Hadon makes her home in Sacramento, living in constant fear of the sudden publication of her first story, "Super Sandels," written at age 8. Her work has appeared in *Medicinal Purposes* and *Alpha Beat Soup*. She is currently completing her MA in English at CSUS.



One Last Look

When I turned my scales
to you your sinking rock
word sore moorings
I watched the writing of canoes batter
slim flanks into position
float away

Droplets magnify tiny
circles of you
distorted I think: this
the remnant of feeling

Green water tight
around my unmoored craft
cool and silent understanding
I was always this fish silver
minnows under me
I wonder
how long you will hold
your breath or cease
fighting, sink I
search for remains

—Christy Harden

Anomaly

There is no word for woman
bachelor no hearty place
to tell how I leave books all over
my floor eat out of cartons wear
old boyfriend's sweats: scalps from the kill

We are passed the marriage age era
gone when need dictated mating we
are not lobsters or penguins with exception I
am not in any case
patent leather gator skin gorilla battered
tagged and trunk loaded I am
otherwise

Still this path is weedy uncharted
I grate through gravel chafing up
dust that stings my nose and I
cannot see through it sometimes
uncharted I am lucky and lost
others fear me

—Christy Harden

Full Circles

Sometimes I am full of the moon
dry and white inside
too many lakes evaporated
made hollows and craters full
of itself

Shadows eclipse my sides
I must move on too
parched I thirst only for water
shimmered fish and hair green
strands swallowing in currents
moon chalk mixes to form paste bottom
feeders turn over white to
perform crystals

Everything is a cycle even
when we die too young
stirrup our eels and emerge
part and particle of the recovery
in the night sky always there
in the chorus
in the slipping of the scales

—Christy Harden

Why We Have Sternum

by Kathy Kieth, Rattlechaps Chapbook Series #13.1. Rattlesnake Press 2005

Reviewed by Carol Frith

The sternum, of course, is that flat bone lying just in front of the heart, its manubrium, or handle, narrowing down into the gladiolus (blade), and finally terminating in the xiphoid process. The function of this osseous dagger (reminiscent of that Masonic third-degree symbolism of the heart with a sword approaching it) is to protect the cardiac area, a disjunctively vivid symbolism that sets the tone for Kathy Kieth's passionate and unsettling series of poems about the human heart. The sternum, Kieth goes on to tell us in her title poem, *Why We Have Sternum*, hardens in adults into a "...jail...bone/cage that closes soon enough..." Early on in this collection, Kieth acknowledges the complex, conflicted, and often oppositional bundle of impressions, images and metaphors that cluster around the concept of the heart and are, therefore, implicit in her enterprise. "Any Book About the Heart," she writes "walks a nasty guywire that cuts/into the feet,..." Poised on such a perch, "The heart is doomed, anyway: those/predators are within, not without - /," the incautious dilemma of such a book and the human heart being equally precarious, equally threatened.

The heart is a shadowy, transformational aesthetic object "...shoved into an attic to grow/mould or dry out and burst into cracks:/" (The Heart is a Dusty Armoire:) or The Heart is a Fractured Map— a "clutch of faulty clues and dead-end/streets: mismarked, torn corners,/" its "...torn edges/beyond mending:..." In *Rooting Out the Witch*, the heart is "...pulled out/of its chest still beating, then turned into/a witch-tool by a rain of painful days.../", the first image reminiscent of Aztec Teotihuacan sun worship. Living in the fifth solar dispensation, Aztecs believed that the movement of the sun was powered by the pumping arterial blood of human sacrifices. Kieth seamlessly elides this image of blood ritual with an evocation of seventeenth century English witch hunts wherein she is able to "Find all those lost hearts and show them/the grace of a witch-finder--...", no matter, of course, that the witch-finder, not unlike the Aztec priests, most often dispensed grace through execution.

Kieth's heart is subject to violent contradictions and amalgamations. In *The Heart is a Broken Mirror*, it "...reflects only/in pieces: razor/shards of dis-/continuity:..." Or it becomes an empty bucket (The Heart is an Empty Bucket:) in which "...the handle pries/ loose, rivets turn orange, and finally/the weight of every rusty nail, every/primrose, takes its final, awful toll.../" Sometimes the heart totally and unexpectedly "decamps," "...taking all its bloody/lump-thumps and broken promises and trailing/arteries along for one helluva bumpy ride.../" (The Heart is a Rascally Truant). In *The Heart is an Invalid*, it "...sits alone, the only/prisoner in a foreign countryside: marks/off days one smoke at a time,..." In *A Riot of Sunbeams*, "...Too much/sun explodes the normal rhythm:/requires a shock of shade/".

Referential and allusive, an almost verbal noun, Kieth's heart is at once transitive and intransitive. In her closing poem it becomes a silver chalice "that holds a handful of pure-cut/diamonds, a cupful of tough little/pebbles of light..." "Pull out a bucketful of cour-

age," writes Kieth, "and/tip the chalice, finally—send/rivers of light splashing..."

Why We Have Sternum will definitely send "rivers of light (and shadow!) splashing" through your day. I highly recommend this collection. In addition to Kathy Kieth's spellbinding poems, the chapbook is visually rich, with classy and arresting cover art by Sam Kieth. You can purchase *Why We Have Sternum* at The Book Collector, 1008 24th St., Sacramento, CA, or order it directly from Rattlesnake Press, 4708 Tree Shadow Place, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Price: \$5.00.

The Heart is a Pipe Organ—

some with the wheeze and grumble
of old churches in the country, played

only on Sunday: mice nesting in
the bass, gnawing on musty wood: spiders

webbing over the piccolo and lying
in wait behind the tibia. Others show

the slick and shine of big cities: services
every day: special concerts for tourists:

constant tinker and tune... But each heart
plays a fugue through its 60,000 miles

of pipes: scarlet streams of notes fly along
in an ever-changing cadence chosen

second-by-second: moods of allegro, then
lento, then con amore: secret music

meant only for the ears of the doctor who
eavesdrops, the baby at the breast, that

sudden press of a lover...

—Kathy Kieth

West Coast Premiere of *Drumvoices Revue #13*

(Book Signing and Readings) at Carols Books, 300 Florin Road, Sacramento on Saturday, July 16 from 3-5pm.

Drumvoices Revue #13 honors Sonia Sanchez and Amiri Baraka, world renowned writers and activists. This issue contains poetry, fiction, and essays by 41 Northern Californians: Including Reginald Lockett, Leticia Del Toro, Hortense Simmons, Dennis Schmitz, Odessa Bethea, Otis Scott and Danny Romero.

Brief Highlights of Drumvoices Revue: A Confluence of Literary, Cultural & Vision Arts: Sixty-Four Poems ("kwansabas") and Three Essays honoring Amiri Baraka's 70th Birthday and the 40th Anniversary of the Black Arts Movement-plus "black and soaring," a B.A.M. overview with photo collages by Howard Ramsby, and a retrospective anthology of 14 Baraka poems; Forty-One Poets, Activists, Essayists, and Fiction Writers from Sacramento/Northern California including Genoa Barrow, Charles Curtis Blackwell, David Covin, V.S. Chochezi, Leticia Del Toro, Teri Glass, Allan Gordon, Katherine Hastings, Be Davison Herrera, Ted Hornback, George Austin Jones, Ariono-jovan Labu, Diane P. Lando, Sinh Quang Le, Danny Romero, Dennis Schmitz, Hortense Simmons, Otis Scott, and Kimberly White-selected and introduced by Odessa Bethea.

The "kwansaba," a poetic form consisting of 49 words distributed over 7 lines, was created in 1995 by the Eugene B. Redmond Writers Club (in East St. Louis, Illinois).

The EBR Writers Club was founded in 1986 and named after East St. Louis Poet Laureate Eugene B. Redmond, Editor of Drumvoices: English Dept. Box 1431, SIUE, Edwardsville, IL 62026-1431; (618) 650-3991.

(For nearly 15 years Redmond was a Professor of English and Poet-in-Residence in Ethnic & Pan African Studies at CSU-Sacramento.)

Contact Persons: Carol's Books, (916) 428-5611, Eugene Redmond., (618) 650-3991; Email: eredmon@siue.edu or Faye Kennedy (916) 484-5025; fayek@springmail.com

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

poetrynow@sacramentopoetrycenter.org
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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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Recently Released/Available Again:

1. *Vocal Exercises In Stone* by **Karen Baker** (Rattlesnake Press)
2. *Why I Collect Moose* by **Svea Barrett**
winner the first Poet's Corner Press chapbook contest 2005
www.poetscornerpress.com
3. *Leaning Against Time* by **Neeli Cherkovski**
4. *An Absence of Silver* by **Victoria Dalkey** (Rattlesnake Press)
5. *Roxy* by **Todd Cirillo, W.S. Gainer, & Will Staple**
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10. *LittleSnake Broadside #12: Don Feliz*
11. *Skin Tax* by **Tim Z. Hernandez**
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13. *The Land* by **Susan Kelly-DeWitt** (Rattlesnake Press)
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15. *After Modigliani* by **Stephen Kessler**
16. *Tell it to the Rabbis and Other Poems 1977-2000*
by **Stephen Kessler**
17. *Why We Have Sternum*s by **Kathy Kieth** (Rattlesnake Press)
(see review on page 9)
18. *Rattlesnake Review #6* ed. **Kathy Kieth** (Rattlesnake Press)
19. *Snakeletes #4* ed. **Kathy Kieth** (Rattlesnake Press)
20. *noon, twilight, midnight* by **debee loyd** (Rattlesnake Press)
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36. *On Tuesday, When the Homeless Disappeared*
by **Marcos McPeck Villatoro**
37. *The Wrong Side of Town* by **A.D. Winans**
(trans. into Russian by **Aleksey Dayen**)
38. *The Battered Bride Overture* by **Mary Zeppa** (Rattlesnake Press)

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Perfectly Clear

Furthermore, let me make this promise: I will undertake steps to put into motion courses of due action that will guarantee it will not be necessary while my term in office to have to resort to such due courses in action again and that all of you will be proud to remember that you were lucky in the future to be present on this very ground to be witness as these very first steps were originally being took under due resort to embark into legendary action You try running the election campaign for that candidate.

—Philip A. Waterhouse

Painting With Words

Some poet
Falls in the Sacramento River

I watch her lips
Turn blue

Form
Last
Words

A trick of nature

Maybe painting those lips
Will make a poem

Tomorrow
I will sell books

For food money

—B.L. Kennedy

B.L. Kennedy reads with Art
Beck and Linda Thorell on July
16th. See calendar for details.

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All responses must be received by **August 15th, 2005** and the results will appear in September's issue.