

*A Publication of the Sacramento Poetry Center*



Philip Michael Goldvarg  
March 13, 1934 – June 14, 2004

Photo by Francisco J. Dominguez

### MY TUMOR

oye hermana, hermano,  
my tumor is messing with me tonight,  
but I won't give it that much power,  
but it thinks it has,  
roaming the shady caves of my being,  
looking for a home,  
pushing my dreams aside  
for an extra bathroom and a game room,  
poor little sucker  
never played a real game in his life  
or took a pee twice in the same day,  
but he had hopes,  
this little chingaso  
was not very good at messing,  
not subtle at all,  
was uncomfortable in a mask,  
it's 3:40 am  
and Chingaso is looking for his next move,  
he wants it to be impactful,  
explosive,  
hell, he wants to blow up  
the whole house,  
his footsteps are heavy,  
intrusive,  
they are deep sinkers  
and laugh a lot,  
they are meant to be remembered,  
he wants immortality like us all,  
my tumor is messing with me tonight,  
only has a few seconds until dawn,  
he sure is trying hard  
to beat the first rays of sunlight,  
where he could turn to dust  
by my magic hand.

PHIL GOLDVARG

#### **Contributors:**

**JoAnn Anglin, Cesar A. Cruz, Tom Goff, Phil Goldvarg, Xico González,  
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Wasserman**

## 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, literary criticism, and other work of interest to the Sacramento poetry community are welcome. Work must be accompanied by a SASE for return. B&W or high contrast color photos & brief bios of submitters are encouraged. Please note that poems, reviews, etc. submitted to any of the Sacramento Poetry Center's publications may appear on the Sacramento Poetry Center's website: [www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org](http://www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org). Please submit to 1631 K St., Sacramento, CA 95814.

*Poetry Now* is widely distributed free in area bookshops, coffeehouses, laundromats, and select bars. Your membership gets *Poetry Now*, *Tule Review* and *Rivers* delivered to your door (or box).

Managing Editor: Heather Hutcheson  
Editorial Staff: Jody Ansell, Ann Conradsen, Tom Goff, Robert Grossklaus, Barbara Jennings, Pat Ostfeld, and Ramona Soto  
Proofreading by: Ann Conradsen  
Calendar Editor: Jody Ansell



The Sacramento Poetry Center is a non-profit corporation dedicated to providing forums for local poets—including publications and reading series—bringing to Sacramento the finest poetry we can get our hands on. Our offices are at 1631 K Street in the Sacramento Ballet Co. Bldg. Our phone number is 916-441-7395.

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SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN  
ARTS COMMISSION  
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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello again.

### PHIL GOLDBVARG, SE FUE EL POETA

June was a sad month for the Sacramento poetry community. For those who have not heard, Philip Michael Goldvarg passed away on June 14, 2004. He was a generous and loving man who always had a warm smile, welcoming handshake, and generous hug when he greeted you. He was passionate about everything he did and provided inspiration for us all to become better citizens, poets, and people. We will miss him.

This issue of *Poetry Now* honors Phil and his memory with his poetry and the poetry of others remembering Phil. Thanks to everyone who submitted artwork honoring Phil. Due to limited space in *Poetry Now*, we could not include all of the poems in this issue. Please e-mail your poems to me at [spt@sacramentopoetrycenter.org](mailto:spt@sacramentopoetrycenter.org) and we will include your tribute poems on our website. Phil's family is requesting that you send a donation to one of his most fervent causes. Please consider sending a donation to: Zapatista Solidarity Coalition, 909 12th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, 916-443-3424.

### WELLSPRING WOMEN'S BOOK DONATIONS

I want to thank everyone for the response to the request for poetry books and journals for the Wellspring Women's Library. I have seen donations flow in over the past month and we have filled several boxes. But the Wellspring Women can benefit from additional donations from the community. Please donate to their library by bringing your donations to SPC. There is a box located outside our office door. We are located at 1631 K Street, at the corner of 17th and K. Thank you for your donations.

### TWO BOARD MEMBERS WILL BE MISSED

At our last board meeting, James DenBoer and Tim McKee submitted their resignations. James came to the board a year and a half ago with great marketing ideas and tremendous energy, energy he has used to the benefit of the poetry community. Instrumental in developing and implementing a marketing plan for SPC, James was an invaluable asset to the board.

Tim has been a board member and Monday night host at SPC for approximately five years. Tim has helped SPC reach a wide audience and has brought in new featured readers representing diverse backgrounds and geographic areas. Tim introduced new ideas and fresh perspectives to board meetings.

Thank you both for the thousands of hours you have donated to the Sacramento poetry community.

⌘ NOW AVAILABLE!

### 25% DISCOUNT TO POETRY NOW READERS!

A Bibliography of the Published Work of Douglas Blazek, 1961-2001. Edited with an introduction by James DenBoer. Florence, MA: Glass Eye Books, 2003. 180 pages with slick pictorial covers.



\$15.95 retail; 25% discount to *Poetry Now* readers. No bookstore or institutional orders at this price; please inquire. Add 75 cents sales tax for California residents and \$2.00 Media Mail postage within the U.S. Checks, money orders, or major credit cards accepted.

PAPERWORK  
1517 3RD STREET  
SACRAMENTO CA 95814 ⌘

### ROBERT GROSSKLAUS

Beginning in September, Robert Grossklaus is the new Managing Editor of *Poetry Now*. He has come to us by way of Bakersfield and Santa Cruz and has volunteered his editorial skills to the Sacramento Poetry Center. You may see some exciting changes in *Poetry Now*. Welcome, Robbie, to the Sacramento Poetry Center and thank you for donating your time and energy to *Poetry Now*.

Heather Hutcheson is stepping down as Managing Editor after the August issue. (Please note that the August issue will be smaller.) She has dedicated too many hours to count over the last nine years (yes, that is 9 years). I want to thank her for her dedication to the poetry community. She will continue to be involved with SPC through the Workshops for Families she teaches throughout the year. Thank you, Heather.

### REGIONAL TRANSIT (RT) AD CAMPAIGN

Look for RT buses around Sacramento and pay attention to the ads placed on the tail of the bus. You may see SPC's ad as you are driving or walking around. The ad campaign will run for approximately six weeks. Funded through a grant from the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission's Mini-Marketing program, this campaign is meant to increase awareness of SPC and our long-standing presence in the Sacramento community.

### POETRY IN MOTION

With the help of SPC member Rhony Bhopla and community activist Brian Fischer, a movement to place poetry on regional transit has begun. Rhony and Brian have taken the first steps toward this goal and need some further community help. "Poetry in Motion" is an idea that would place poems on RT. This would mean poetry featured on buses and light rail for people to enjoy during their ride to work, shops, school, or elsewhere. How you can help... Please send letters or e-mail to SPC in support of this idea. With your letters, we can show RT officials that the community supports this idea. Please also see the ad on page three for more information.

As always, I want to thank you, the members, the volunteers, the donors, and the board members for making the poetry community in Sacramento stronger. We all should be proud of the poetry heritage and energy within the Sacramento area.

--MARTIN

## Is your library overflowing? Consider sharing and help Wellspring Women

with your donation...

We are collecting gently used books of **POETRY** to increase and diversify our library collection.

Please drop off your donations at the Sacramento Poetry Center office -- 1631 K Street at the corner of 17th and K. There will be a large box outside the office door.

## THREE POEMS BY BRUCE MOODY

### THE SIGHTLESS LEAVES

The sightless leaves can see the rain  
When dark before the dawn it falls.  
The bark, the boughs can speak its name.  
The birds who huddle from the pain  
Of icy eaves know well all tongues  
For halcyon and hurricane.  
The language of the fox knows Cree,  
And easy pens his egg-theft plan,  
For wind knows he from she  
And stone knows girl from man.

### A THOUSAND FISHES

How many fishes are in the sea,  
In the lake,  
The stream?  
So what?  
Do you think God counts  
What  
He is?

### AREN'T WE A PAIR

The rust-hulled tanker with the flaking yellow stack  
Ambles up the river.  
With a tug following behind,  
Its snout,  
Proud in the air.  
Like a poodle  
On the leash of a bum.

*On Monday, July 12th, at 7:30 pm, the Sacramento Poetry Center will feature Bruce Moody. Moody's work has appeared in the New Yorker, Look, The National Review, The National Lampoon, Botteghe Obscure, and The Michigan Quarterly; his poems have appeared in numerous magazines; his novel The Decline and Fall of Daphne Finn was published by Coward McCann.*

*His Will Work for Food or \$ about his experiences as a roadside panhandler, published by Redwheel/Weiser and a large-print edition by Thorndike Press, is available at any bookstore, on the internet, and in autographed copies at [blesstheroadside.com](http://blesstheroadside.com).*

### LAST SECONDS OF DAWN

last seconds of dawn  
rest on my dreams  
perched like crows  
ready for flight,  
both have wings  
of unknown power,  
eyes that see  
beyond a fading sky,  
their messages mime branches  
cloaked in song,  
breaking in morning breath.

PHIL GOLDBVARG

### A POEM FOR YOU, BROTHER PHIL

what's he done with his life  
so far,  
our brother Phil?  
The list is pretty long:  
he's married 2 excellent women,  
has children and grandchildren who love him  
and respect him,  
went to war on ships  
so he practices peace,  
he's worked long in the service of others  
keeping public agencies honorable,  
he's mentored lots of other poets  
made books showcasing their work,  
took his art and humanity into social services  
with LOOKING FOR HOME,  
he's walked the walk with Farmworkers,  
shared his poems about truth

justicia

gente

corazon y alma,

honored his own and his children's heritages  
with poems about love

and mothers

and death

and courage,

now he's showing us the management  
of illness

apparently it means keeping on

keeping on with more poems

to skewer our consciences

to inform our hearts and brains,

always keeping in touch

with the width of the planet, its suffering,

remembering friends,

celebrating,

Viva, Phil, Viva.

BE DAVISON HERRERA

POETRY-IN-MOTION~~~~~ Brian Fischer and Rhony Bhopla are spearheading a campaign toward a Poetry Project on our public transportation system. Submit poetry -- including those of youth, and those reflecting the spirit of Sacramento -- you would like to see on local transportation! EMAIL ADDRESS: [sevaspc@yahoo.com](mailto:sevaspc@yahoo.com)

# LITERARY CALENDAR FOR JULY 2004

Note: Unless otherwise stated, events take place in Sacramento, CA; phone numbers in 916 area code.

## Thursday, July 1

Poetry Unplugged, Gene Bloom. Open mic before/after. 8 pm, Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info: 441-3931 or [www.lunascfe.com](http://www.lunascfe.com). Free.

## Saturday, July 3

First Saturday Series. TBA. Noah Hayes hosts, 8pm, Theatre on the Boulevard, 1901 Del Paso Blvd. Open mic after. Info: [Supanova09@hotmail.com](mailto:Supanova09@hotmail.com) or [Sac\\_Town\\_Poetry@hotmail.com](mailto:Sac_Town_Poetry@hotmail.com). \$5 donation

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](mailto:joannpen@comcast.net).

## Sunday, July 4

Poemspirits. On hiatus until October. Info: 481-3312.

## Monday, July 5

Sacramento Poetry Center presents Edythe Haendel Schwartz. Host: Bob Stanley. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. (17th & K). Info: 441-7395 or [www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org](http://www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org). Free

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

## Tuesday, July 6

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

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.)

Free Writing Workshop: The Nature of Parenthood. Andrea Ross, Cache Creek

Nature Preserve writer in residence.

Tuesdays, June 29-July 27, 10AM-12, Cache Creek Nature Preserve, UC Davis. Participants commit to attend 4 of 5 classes. To reserve, or for info: 530-661-1070.

15 Minutes of Fame: Poetry and prose readings by Sacramento authors. 6:30 p.m., Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info: 441-3931 or [www.lunascfe.com](http://www.lunascfe.com). Free.

## Wednesday, July 7

Dr. Andy's Poetry and Technology Hour, host Andy Jones, 5 pm, KDVS-90.3 FM. Info, [culturelover.com](http://culturelover.com).

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, Taz, from Chico, 9:00 pm, Sweet Finger Restaurant (Formerly Jamaica House), 1704 Broadway. Info: [www.malikspeaks.com](http://www.malikspeaks.com) or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

## Thursday, July 8

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

## Friday, July 9

Sacramento Poet Terry Moore opens for Smokey Robinson at the Silver Legacy in Reno, 8:00 pm. Info: [fromtheheart1@hotmail.com](mailto:fromtheheart1@hotmail.com)

Escritores del Nuevo Sol presents Minerva Daniel & Danny Romero. 7:30 pm, La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R. Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or [Joannpen@comcast.net](mailto:Joannpen@comcast.net).

## Saturday, July 10

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

## Monday, July 12

Sacramento Poetry Center presents Bruce Moody of Crockett, CA, host: Tim McKee. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. Info: 441-7395 or [www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org](http://www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org). Free.

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

## Tuesday, July 13

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

## Wednesday, July 14

Rattlesnake Series: Laverne Frith celebrates the publication of IN THE TRANSLATED DAY. Kathy Keith hosts. 7:30 pm, The Book Collector, 1008 24th St. Info: 966-8620, [kathykieth@hotmail.com](mailto:kathykieth@hotmail.com). Free.

Dr. Andy's Poetry and Technology Hour, host Andy Jones, 5 pm, KDVS-90.3 FM. Info: [culturelover.com](http://culturelover.com).

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9:00 pm, Jamaica House Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: [www.malikspeaks.com](http://www.malikspeaks.com) or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

## Thursday, July 15

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

## Saturday, July 17

Capital City Artists Collective's 3rd Saturday Workshop, poetry, live music, open-mic, 7-10 pm, 4320 Stockton Blvd. Info, Terry Guilford, 457-0831 or Shalo, 348-4005. Refreshments. \$5 cover, kids free.

## Sunday, July 18

Stockton Poet's Corner. no info at press time, 7 pm, Barnes & Noble, Weberstown Mall, Stockton. Info, [www.poetscornerpress.com](http://www.poetscornerpress.com) or 209-951-7014.

Third Sunday Writing Group: 1:00-3:00 pm, various locations. Info: [eskimopi@jps.net](mailto:eskimopi@jps.net) or nancy\_wallace@calpers.ca.gov.

## Monday, July 19

The Sacramento Poetry Center presents Dianna Henning. Stan Zumbiel hosts. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. Info: 441-7395 or [www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org](http://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.

## Tuesday, July 20

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

Third Tuesday Poetry Series (formerly Third Wednesday) James Lee Jobe and Maya Khosla. Host: Kimberley White. 7 pm, Arden-Dimick Library, corner of Northrup and Watt, Info: 565-0644. Free.

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

## Wednesday, July 21

Dr. Andy's Poetry and Technology Hour, host Andy Jones, 5 pm, KDVS-90.3 FM. Info, [culturelover.com](http://culturelover.com).

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9:00 pm, Jamaica House Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: [www.malikspeaks.com](http://www.malikspeaks.com) or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

## Thursday, July 22

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

## Friday, July 23

Poetry at the Art Foundry: Robin Rule & Daniel Essman. Luke Breit hosts. 7:30 pm, Art Foundry Gallery, 1021 R. Street. Info: Luke, 446-POET. \$5 donation.



[www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org](http://www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org)

Monday, July 26

The Sacramento Poetry Center: SPC Birthday Reading. Susan Bonta hosts. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. Info: 441-7395 or [www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org](http://www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org). Free

Tuesday, July 27

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

Wednesday, July 28

Dr. Andy's Poetry and Technology Hour, host Andy Jones, 5 pm, KDVS-90.3 FM. Info: [culturelover.com](http://culturelover.com).

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9:00 pm, Jamaica House Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: [www.malikspeaks.com](http://www.malikspeaks.com) or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

Thursday, July 15

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

Saturday, July 31

The Guild Theater presents "The Show," featuring Black Men Expressing Summer Love Poem Tour, special guest emcee Becca Costello. 7-9 pm at the Guild on 2828 35th St. Tickets at Underground Books next to the Guild or [fromtheheart1@hotmail.com](mailto:fromtheheart1@hotmail.com). Info: Terry Moore, 455-POET.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

## Tryst with Destiny: Poets Celebrate the Beauty of India Hosted by: Rhony Bhopla

Monday, August 16, 2004, 7:30 p.m.

The Sacramento Poetry Center invites you to join us for an evening of poetry as well as music, song & classical dance.

The Center will become a stage for Indian culture, education, and unity. Join us for book give-aways, handouts, and guest performers.

Sacramento Poetry Center, 1631 K St., Sacramento, CA 95814. [www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org](http://www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org).

### REGULAR WRITING WORKSHOPS

The Central Valley Haiku Club. Call 916-355-3506 for meeting times and locations.

First Saturday of every month: 11 am, La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R. Los Escritores del Nuevo Sol (Writers of the New Sun) is a literary community, established to foster and honor the literary and artistic cultures and traditions of Chicano, Native American, Spanish, and Eskimo-language communities. Members write in Spanish, English and/or both. Contact Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323.

First Sunday of every month: Poetry Circle from 2-4 or 3-5 pm in Davis. Contact Claudette at [claudett@dcn.org](mailto:claudett@dcn.org) for location.

First Sunday of every month: Wordsmith Writer's Workshops of Lodi - "Join us at Field of Beans Coffee House, 720 W. Lodi Avenue, Lodi, 1:30-3:30 pm, for creative adventures in writing. Make new friends & enjoy great coffee, too! Field of Beans has a great atmosphere, big, spacious, comfortable environment, welcoming, lots of art on the walls. Enjoy this location and come away with some great writing! If you have any questions, please contact: Melanie Turner Chestine 209-367-4865 or [mturner@mcvins.com](mailto:mturner@mcvins.com) for more info."

Third Sunday of every month: Third Sunday Writing Group meets from 1-3 pm in Sacramento. Contact Nancy at [nancy\\_wallace@calpers.ca.gov](mailto:nancy_wallace@calpers.ca.gov) for location.

First and Third Monday of every month: The Davis Poetry Workshop (critique) meets at Delta of Venus café (between 1st and 2nd on B St) at 8 pm.

Every Tuesday: SPC Writing Workshop at 7:30 pm, at the Sac Senior Center, 27th and J Streets. Call Danyen at 530-756-6228.

**Please Note: TO HAVE AN EVENT POSTED ON THE SPC LITERARY CALENDAR, PLEASE CALL JODY ANSELL AT 916-739-0768 or e-mail us at [calendar@sacramentopoetrycenter.org](mailto:calendar@sacramentopoetrycenter.org) by the 5th of the month preceding your event. Thank you.**

SEND US  
YOUR  
POETRY  
NOW

**FOR PHIL  
IN THE SPIRIT OF TOM JOAD**

Where do you find a hero?  
If he's Phil Goldvarg, you find him wherever  
the unlucky are abused  
wherever the powerless are finding their  
power  
where people choose peace over war,  
choose justice over oppression  
choose love over hate.

Where people are being demeaned,  
uncompensated for their labor,  
taken advantage of because of their color,  
their faith, their alien status,  
there you find Phil.

Where boys are sold into slavery,  
girls are sold into the sex trade  
workers are sold into factories, into danger  
and pollution and filth,  
there you find Phil.

Where women are raped and disappeared  
where prisoners of struggle are tortured,  
where protestors' lives are crushed by tanks,  
there you find Phil

But:  
Running the maquiladoras --  
Running the church --  
Running the military --  
there you won't find Phil

He won't be with captains of industry, or  
landholders,  
the politicians, the mercenaries, the popes, the  
prison wardens  
he won't be in ballrooms or back rooms or  
castles or mansions.  
he won't be in fine cars or fine clothes or jets

Phil is always the one outside:  
outside the prisons and the military bases and  
the state capitol.  
He is in the plaza, in Chicano Park, in the  
streets, in the fields.  
He is with the hungry, the homeless,  
the janitors and maids,  
against the bombers and media manipulators  
and industrial thieves.

You can always find Phil in Vieques, in Chile, in Colombia,  
in Cesar Chavez Park, in Capitol Park, in  
Southside Park  
in Palestine, in Baghdad, in Nicaragua and El  
Salvador, in Kosovo and Mexico.

He is with Peltier and Subcomandante  
Marcos, with Mandela and Mumia  
He is always on the border, on the frontlines,  
on the side of justice  
Always in the hearts of the people, in the heart  
of the matter, the heart of the struggle,  
in the heart of what's good,  
and honorable and fair and right.  
There, always, is the real hero.  
There, always, is Phil

JOANN ANGLIN

**DANCE FAITH**

when we are asked if we have faith, we dance,  
when we are asked if we love, we dance,  
we dance in recognition of each other,  
flowing movement of trust that embraces our dreams,  
our feet are familiar to earth,  
ground, waters, air, surfaces,  
we confront great tragedy with dance,  
remove pain and broken heart with dance,  
our body in flight  
is eagle,  
our body at rest  
is panther,  
our body in movement with shadow  
is blending of souls,  
is dance of faith.

PHIL GOLDVARG

**WARRIOR, MAESTRO**

Phil	our people
prayer warrior	and yourself
entering	
the physical plane	let words
merely to connect	and oraciones
with us mortals	slow dance together
flying through museums	healing
and cafes	your cuerpo
spittin' truth	and bringing
while droppin' verbal sage	the energia
against the machine	you need
	to reach
	another day.

Phil  
maestro  
turning history  
into lessons  
in 3 verses or less  
decolonizing

CESAR A. CRUZ (TEOLOL)

## IXTAKUATLI

In memory of Philip Michael Goldvarg

Águila blanca  
White eagle  
abandonas estos cielos  
por otros nuevos  
pero tu vuelo es viejo  
y tus alas se llenan de vida otra vez  
You have begun your flight into the sixth sun  
*Xicuacen Tonatiuh*  
caresses your wings  
and you are free  
like *ehecatl*- the wind -  
carries your feathers of knowledge  
and disseminates them to the four corners  
of the world  
y tu canto de águila blanca  
resonates throughout Turtle Island  
which weeps your departure  
Ixtakuatli yaotl

Guerrero águila blanca  
White Eagle Warrior  
You fought great battles  
and there will be more to come  
Armed with wisdom and righteousness  
you confronted ignorance and wickedness  
You looked the enemy in the eyes and  
did not flinch  
You stood your ground  
y luchaste con todas tus fuerzas  
with all your strength you fought  
y sabes que?  
En el *tepochcalli* de la vida  
The school of life  
You taught us to stand up and fight  
You taught us that truth is light  
that words are power  
that cultura is pride  
that humbleness is carnalismo  
that life is poetry  
and that understanding is love  
Hermano águila blanca  
Guerrero warrior de gran espíritu  
siempre fuistes y serás  
nunca reconociste fronteras  
y con tus alas protectoras refugiastes  
y aliviaste el dolor de los adoloridos,  
Hermano águila blanca  
gracias por enseñarme a volar  
Hermano águila blanca  
gracias por compartir tu vuelo conmigo  
Hermano águila blanca  
gracias por tu inspiración  
Hermano águila blanca  
gracias por tu valor  
Hermano águila blanca  
gracias por tu espíritu  
Hermano águila blanca  
te extrañaremos  
Hermano águila blanca  
te queremos  
Hermano águila blanca  
vivirás en mi corazón  
Hermano águila blanca  
tu vuelo no terminado  
Porque sé que te esperan nuevos cielos  
por conquistar.

*"They say that hope is also harvested and planted. They also say that the wind and the rain and the sun are now saying something different: that with so much poverty, the time has come to harvest rebellion instead of death." –Subcomandante Marcos from Chiapas: The Southeast in Two Winds, A Storm and a Prophecy*

## THE PROPHECY OF A CORN HUSK

for Phil Goldvarg

along red adobe fields  
where clay sits in pots  
and corn husks dry in buckets  
there is a melodic sound  
coming from a pan  
over a fire  
that a hand holds in place  
waiting for flattened corn  
to bake and thicken  
and to be tossed  
into a bowl  
stitched from husks...

la doña quickly peels  
the few remaining corn  
peeling the seeds  
into a wooden board  
smashed by a rock  
with but a few sprinkles  
of water,  
the tortilla is formed  
ready to battle  
the fire and metal  
that will stretch it  
into nutrition  
chapanecos  
will devour...

sunset begins to whisper  
and the men will quickly return  
to feed and sleep;  
the corn husks  
will soak over night  
to protect the corn  
a calloused hand  
will wrap tortillas in  
the following morning  
in hopes the men  
will walk safe  
under a sunrise  
whose sunshine  
understands  
that warmth  
is the corn  
kissed by a pair  
of husks...

panning to the right,  
an audience of milpas  
dance to the song of the wind  
under a radiant moon  
whose glow illuminates  
earthly elements  
of a feather, stone and a husk  
meeting in ceremony  
under the stars...

SAMUEL AGUIAR INIGUEZ

## SOME THINGS WE NEVER GET TO DO

There are some things we never get to do,  
first kiss from a pink tongue  
on a lonely mouth,  
first poem published,  
shimmering gold  
on a white pearl,  
say, look here *mija*,  
I was a poet,  
our familia name dancing

side by side,  
we offered dreams  
in a quiet title,  
there are some things we never get to do,  
know that somewhere,  
someone hears our heart,  
that somewhere,  
someone is watching our dream,  
there are some things we never get to do.

PHIL GOLDVARG

# PRAISING, THAT'S IT!

## BOOK REVIEWS

### BY TOM GOFF

Rainer Maria Rilke: *Sonnets to Orpheus*. Translated by Edward Snow. \$22 (hb). 122p. North Point Press, 19 Union Square West, NY 10003. Published 2004. ISBN # 0-86547-611-x.

For some years now, Edward Snow's free-verse translations of Rilke have allowed that German-speaking Czech poet (really an almost stateless wanderer for much of his life) to speak in English as the modernist he was at heart, his mastery of the sonnet, the elegy, and other verse forms notwithstanding. Chances are that if you know the two books of *New Poems*—their sculptural intensities inspired by Rodin—you know them in Snow's version; and he has had equivalent success with Rilke's earlier *Book of Images*, as well as the *Uncollected Poems*, his terrific choice of works the poet mysteriously failed to unify.

So much does Snow emphasize the unknown Rilke, the poet of unsuspected toughness, of constant flickers of poetic improvisation, that he risks slighting the writer's pet projects. In particular, Snow would like to revise the myth Rilke himself generated: that after beginning the *Duino Elegies* in high style in 1912—ready to utter his whole vision of life's and death's interconnectedness—he fell helplessly silent for almost ten years. Silent, that is, until (working furiously in a secluded tower in Switzerland) he recaptured his touch in one magic February, in 1922. Inspired as perhaps no other poet has ever been, Rilke poured forth the mystical utterances that would complete the *Elegies*, prompted by a creative icebreaker: the fifty-five *Sonnets* that are our subject. So goes the legend, much of it true, if we credit Rilke's account of his suffering and triumph.

But Snow's introduction to his recent (2000) translation of the *Elegies* should be read between the lines: it's clear that this sequence of ten poetic meditations in the grand manner is not completely to Snow's taste, nicely rendered as his version is. So it's a relief to see enthusiasm return as Snow now discusses, and then renders, the *Sonnets to Orpheus*, with a clarity and (unrhymed) musicality these intimate poems—often inspirational teachings—require.

The *Sonnets* came to the poet as he pondered the last letters of Vera Ouckama Knoop (a friend of the poet's daughter Ruth); these described vividly the leukemia that ended this talented dancer-musician's life at nineteen. Thoughts of Vera's fate mingled with musings about the mythic poet Orpheus, and with certain experiments in the sonnet form Rilke had recently been attempting (so much for the notion of total prior "blockage"). Once Rilke was started, there was no stopping the singing, as this example illustrates:

Wait . . . , this taste . . . Already it's escaping.  
. . . A bit of music, feet tapping, a hum—:  
You girls, with your silences, your warmth,  
dance the knowledge of the tasted fruit.

Dance the orange. Who can forget it,  
the way it fights, drowning in itself,  
against its sweetness. You've possessed it.  
Its deliciousness has entered you.

Dance the orange. Fling the warmer landscape  
out from you, so the ripe fruit may glow  
in its native breezes! Aglow yourselves, peel

perfume from perfume! Create a kinship  
with the pure, reluctant rind,  
with the juice that fills the happy fruit!  
[First Part, Sonnet 15]

Fine as this poem is on its own, it also benefits from the context. Other sonnets help adumbrate its theme: how life's intensified by death, so that this poem's images might emanate from an "orange" realm habitable only by the dead, conjured into being by Orpheus (the Greek poet-musician, spirit of resurrection and transcendence); Vera may be among the "girls" the speaker summons, as if in the person of Orpheus himself.

If extended works of poetry have each a distinct voiceprint, the *Duino Elegies* would fluctuate steeply, even erratically, above and below a vocal midpoint, as the poet swings from oratorical crowd control to anguished or ecstatic soliloquy and back. The *Sonnets to Orpheus* have a more even tenor, yet still pulse with vibrancy. They speak, intimate, instruct, reminisce, epiphinize, epitomize, or intone, with something like Buddhist serenity.

Snow has remarked of the *Elegies* that these, in the poet's view, were his masterwork, the *Sonnets* merely an unexpected "reward or 'bonus' confirming the high oracular achievement" of the former. But in Snow's new version, the *Sonnets* render that verdict exactly reversible: it is as if Rilke suffered his spectacular blockage and release simply to say through the *Sonnets* (as one of them exclaims) "Praising, that's it!" Rilke may have been summoned, like his Greek singer, to earn the right to that simple praise of life, life lived up to and over the threshold of death. So: reader, go out and get ready to dance that particular orange.

JoAnn Anglin: *Words Like Knives, Like Feathers*. Chapbook, 29p. Rattlesnake Press, 4708 Tree Shadow Place, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Inquiries: Kathy Kieth: kathykieth@hotmail.com. Published 2004. ISBN # 0-9753350-1-4.

In this well-conceived chapbook, the reader is treated to the work of a fine Sacramento poet (and poetry teacher; member of Los Escritores Del Nuevo Sol; and partner with Nora Staklis and me in hosting the Unitarian PoemSpirits reading series) at her most poignant and perceptive. The sampling is generous, at an even thirty poems, and pitched at a high level.

Here, for example, is the arresting "When your parents die," which will resonate with anyone who has lost one or both parents, and which manages its homely central metaphor without a hint of tawdriness:

When your parents die

things stop, but the stopping grows—  
a cigarette hole in your life that is neither  
precise nor fixed. Its ragged edges smolder.  
You stop seeing the evening news  
through their eyes, forget to think  
about their friends, stop going to their  
house, driving on certain streets [ . . . ]

This sustained rumination, simple in diction, nevertheless builds to a shapely conclusion. Many of the poems employ a comparable diction: meditative and plainspoken yet moving. One rueful poem, "Young Wives," could be emblematic of any generation of wives and mothers, each making mistakes that are uniquely its, afflicted by its particular guilt yet universally human ("We yearned to hold once more / those babies, born heedlessly / to incompetent bumbler, stunned / by the sudden flush of helpless love. . ."). Anglin is also good (as in the poem "Normal") on our inabilities as elders to attest clearly to what we've witnessed: what we know about time and its interaction with the shifting cityscape. Her wry humor—part of her essential makeup—coalesces, in such verses, around the paradox of inarticulateness in the articulate. But make no mistake: Anglin is highly articulate, her conception of subject often bold. Note these lines, from "Dead Sheep on the Mountainside," with just the right Baudelaire-in-America startle:

Now the wool only warms the ground for the ants.  
Now only the meat bees visit.

Poems of politics or quiet protest ("If You Are Poor"), too, are interspersed among more ruminative items, as if to say: complacency is not part of this poet's nature. This collection, fine as it is, does not display quite the complete Anglin range. For that, one must also include such poems as "Our Campbell Soup" (in the *Sacramento Anthology: 100 Poems*), which is at once delicate whimsy and adroit social satire—but *Words Like Knives, Like Feathers* is mighty fine, and benefits from effective editing by Kathy Kieth, chief "wrangler" of the newborn Rattlesnake Press.

## LOS CUENTOS

los cuentos dance en rios de mi mente,  
flowing songs waiting to be sung,  
olas clap their hands for recognition,  
buscan por mi lengua,  
tiempo es una mariposa,  
alas that glory in their freedom,  
los cuentos are waiting to be told,  
to be sung,  
there's not much time,  
rivers run to the sky  
or kiss the ocean,  
los ninos are waiting,  
we need to sing before we forget.

PHIL GOLDBVARG



## STUDENTS FROM JOSHUA MCKINNEY'S POETRY COURSE AT CSU, SACRAMENTO

### GRACE

And when at last the summer sun  
    had darkened the green fruit  
    to a bruise-like hue,  
  
and the plums hung heavy  
    from the highest boughs,  
    the child I was then dared  
  
to shinny up the trunk,  
    crotch and belly to the bark,  
    to gain the first smooth fork,  
  
and thence with spindly limbs  
    to pull myself aloft.  
    And still the best fruit,  
  
out of reach, hung gemlike  
    in the cloud-flecked sky.  
    The crows began to lift then,  
  
scolding my nearness to their world,  
    and their wings unfolding  
    sent a tremor through the tree.  
  
Emboldened, I climbed on,  
    yet so intent on hand and foot  
    that my ascending head pressed up  
  
into a hive I had not seen.  
    And in confusion I descended then,  
    all caution gone, half falling, half  
  
flung to earth where I hit hard  
    yet rose and stumbled on,  
    a venomed halo round my head.  
  
Uncertain as to what it was that caused  
    my pain, I howled as much  
    at ignorance, as I passed  
  
beneath the orchard shade  
    and up the path unto the house,  
    my crawling scalp aflame.  
  
My mother must have heard  
    my cries, for she stood before the door,  
    the morning news rolled in her fist,  
  
and as I reached her fell to smite  
    me on the head and neck, upon my  
    burning back and arms, and even  
  
on my swollen face, as the broken  
    bodies of bees rained golden  
    down onto my feet, as I writhed  
  
under her terrible urgency,  
    as I screamed repentance  
    for I knew not what.

JOSHUA MCKINNEY

### SEEDS OF RYE

Little boy,  
you run too  
fast, past my  
  
outstretched hands  
grasping for your  
shirttails, flapping  
  
in the wind.  
Your bare soles,  
dirty with  
eroding soil,  
  
patter through the  
field, grown for  
a cover crop.  
  
This hardy,  
annual grass  
I stand in.  
A deep breath  
of rye burns  
my nostrils.  
  
Naked to harvest  
  
my hands are  
not enough  
to catch you.

CHRIS MIRRELL

### DON'T TELL ME

I should be  
proud  
  
Of my daughter's  
death  
  
I put her down  
for a nap  
  
She went down  
in a helicopter  
  
You should be  
proud  
  
She died  
a soldier for her country  
  
The paper said  
  
That's me  
beside her coffin

CONNIE GUTOWSKY

### WHEN WARM BREEZES BLOW

you walk through  
my windows  
  
night closes curtains  
satin black  
  
memory pillows  
me softly  
  
in silence  
I see  
  
you sweep the stoop  
we sat on  
  
by the sea  
smell sweet  
  
apple cider  
on the stove  
  
waiting for me  
  
in bed  
my pale feet  
  
search for sand  
on clean sheets  
NATASHA STANFORD

### RELEASE

Father, Son,  
and Holy Spirit  
  
the pastor utters  
covers  
my nose  
dunks me under  
peewarm water  
  
the flock stares  
  
and my lungs burn  
for breath  
  
I look for my sins  
floating  
filthy in the holy  
tank  
  
but see nothing  
except freckles  
staining my  
nose

TINA ROYER

**DREAM**

dream is soft hand pressing my eyes,  
embracing sound of vision,  
vibrations that dance  
beyond all possibility,  
takes me as partner  
in her winged arms,  
we press close  
in new creation.

PHIL GOLDBVARG

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## PRAYERS NOW

*for Phil Goldvarg and responding  
to "Lost Prayer" by Phil Goldvarg*

Are crowned with jewels  
from the finest silk and ermine  
from kings and centuries

Songs...  
arias with no apology  
for how grand they are

These  
prayers  
are a dance

Across wind  
across tierra  
across stage

Bless you  
in this hour  
receive peace  
in these  
prayers now

SANDI WASSERMAN

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