

A Publication of the Sacramento Poetry Center

SPC 25th Anniversary Poetry Contest Winners

First Place

DEAD PINE

-for DP 1958-2003

By the time the semi struck you,
your flesh had already drunk

more dark than mine; had already stumbled through
chorded halls of earth and stone.

Only the rafters of your leaves were left,
intaglios of the bones of sky

you had broken through, and this rock shelf
where a clean wind hammers

saddles of the softest green.
Soon the treemen will throw the ropes, tie the harness,

call your girth out
in a nimbus where you'll finally fall.

Like the patient who told me, as a child,
he'd left his body

pinned beneath a schoolbus, while he rose above the cliffs
in a stalk of light. Once a week,

his gaze sliding along my shirt, he'd beg,
Tell me, what am I supposed to do?

with the years of Vicodin, the jobs he couldn't keep,
debt collectors calling on a phone

he wouldn't answer,
until I understood he wanted me

to take the body his life had ruined
and give it back, as it once had been-

prismatic, lustrous, whole.
Though he never said it. Though he wouldn't pay.

Though he drove one night
through five cities before passing out

in his car, a vial of pills
spilled like yellow seeds around his shoes.

The day the coroner called,
I went to sit beside you and found a hive

drifting from your dying wood.
And the gold they carried, and the queen they robbed,

swarming into a dark coil of hum-
well, it helped to think of him

like that: the spirit that he entered
waiting as a swarming robe,

the crushing weight finally lifted
from his chest, so that the boy in the backseat,

- face pressed against the rainwet glass-,
could finish what he started:

the cliffside swelling now, the road pitching suddenly
towards the blue-black hardness of the pines.....

JULIA LEVINE

Contributors:

**Bill Blazek, James DenBoer, Do Gentry,
Tom Goff, Julia Levine, Eileen Malone,
Amy MacLennan, Larry Starzec, and
Nancy Wahl**

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. 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).

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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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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello again.

Hope everyone had a good Memorial Day weekend. Hot days will be here soon and what better way to get out of the heat than to go to a Monday night SPC poetry reading. We will have the SPC 25th Anniversary Contest Winners reading on June 14th. Quality poetry from mostly the Sacramento area, so come out and see the winners. It should be a fun night.

Wellspring Women

Dennis Schmitz has asked SPC to help with a book donation drive for Wellspring Women. The organization would like to increase their library resources so they are asking for gently used books or journals of poetry. SPC has a box outside our office door at 1631 K Street to collect donations. The building is open during the day from 9-5pm and on Mondays usually until 9pm for the SPC reading. You can come down to SPC during these times to help the cause. Thank you, in advance, for your donations.

RT Buses

Soon you may see an ad traveling around town for the Sacramento Poetry Center on the backs of buses! That's right--transit ads for poetry. We will also have ads on the inside of the buses too... This should happen in late June or early July, right before SPC's anniversary. We are also reconstructing our website to coincide with the launch of the ad campaign.

Reading Raffle

On the fourth Monday of May SPC hosted the themed reading of "Healthy Women Across Cultures." Heather Hutcheson hosted the event and raffled two books to the audience. The raffle was free for attendees. Anita and Melinda won *The Women Artists Calendar* by Syracuse Cultural Workers and *Talking Like the Rain* (a children's book). Congratulations to both of you, and thanks for attending the reading.

Thanks to our supporters, members and volunteers for continuing to keep the Sacramento Poetry Center going strong.

--MARTIN

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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 ⌘



Don't miss June's events including:
An evening with SPC's 25th Anniversary Poetry Contest Winners
June 14, 2004
7:30 p.m.

ALSO...

Voices of the Dispossessed: An Experience with Amherst Writers & Artists
June 21, 2004
7:30 p.m.

Sacramento Poetry Center, 1631 K St., Sacramento (corner of 17th & K) in the Ballet Building

HELP

Dennis Schmitz
and
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. There will be a large box outside the office door.

SPC is located at 1631 K Street at the corner of 17th and K.

Sideshow

BY CATHERINE FRENCH

This swift-swirling circus in verse comes from a great magician, part trick rider, part brazen-voiced lady barker and roustabout. No: that alliterative alley-oop was just the opening calliope jingle. That was this tinhorn's roar: just to bring you in, o turnstiling ticket-clutcher.

Actually, Catherine French's book, which was awarded San Francisco's James D. Phelan Award for best book of poetry in progress, teases the reader even with its cover, the cover's sinister face on a sign offsets the underlying promise: "Continuous Admission." Accordingly, these poems admit the reader yet keep continuous risks coming, like flaming sticks at a juggler.

All three-ring kidding aside, French's poems are generally of great elegance and wit, gathered appropriately into three loose thematic groups (or hoops): "Mumbo Jumbo," where the verses treat the daunting business of sorting out the world and its language; "Hocus Pocus," where the poems bear brief witness to sense-dazzling events, or acts of poetic logic; and "Presto-Change-O!" This last act needs little setup from an assistant: it's that old Rilkean trick Transformation, but in French's own sharp take.

Reviewer
TOM GOFF

A representative poem from "Mumbo Jumbo" might be "Alphabet," where the speaker reminisces on the resistance each letter put up when she was learning to read (yet even then, the shapes gradually softened like soup into meaning):

The truth is I dreaded each wide letter
and by extension the aging yellow-white pages
with the standard letter-bearers—apple, zebra,
xylophone, coat. These physical counterparts
were secret code I would never crack[...] I knew
how they failed in that attempt to join
the physical and the abstract, how each sound
fell short of the world[...]

These lines evoke the miracle that is a child's struggle to read with neither hooked-on-phonics polemic nor cheap wonderment. What's more, they awake in me a recollection: that I knew very early—just as many child readers comprehend—precisely such shortcomings, inadequacies of language, while learning to love words, even for their flaws.

Of equal aptness to the "Hocus Pocus" section is "Flock of Swifts," whose opening scene-setting is accomplished in action:

It is an outpouring like one of the plagues.
During the rainstorm, they wash like water
into the house, down the chimney, then into the front room
before they catch against the chain curtain
and cram the fireplace.

The whole poem hovers at the level of that arresting first stanza (note the scratchy onomatopoeia of "catch," "chain curtain," and "cram") as the maddened swifts follow group instinct and get stuck.

And finally, the reader can move into the last segment, "Presto-Change-O!" Here, "Prosaic Opening" likens a morning's unfurling blossoms to an eye's opening not too surprisingly—and yet we're surprised, as wordplay spreads the eyelid-petals:

One reflexive blink
as the aperture dilates to what it can admit.

Or a door. Some putz standing in the desert
for years before his Egyptian riddle until
thick stone gates roll away like the ocean parting [...]

Such trickery—where "a door" = "adore," where that one word, "putz," joggles the solemnity—indicates a mischief in French that belies the poems' initially even tenor. Read, but be quick, and you may catch metaphysical wit changing into actual laughter, and back. We in Sacramento are lucky to count Catherine French one of us, and her nimble book honors the shelf it alights on.

Sideshow: Poems by Catherine French. 66p. Available from University of Nevada Press, Reno, Nevada 89557-0076. Published 2002. ISBN # 0-87417-512-7. Paperback.

STILL LIFE WITH CHEESE AND A FLOWER

The block of cheddar looks
good, one orange slice curling
away on my wife's plate,
so does the rose in the bud vase,
the flower opening wide, petals
still smooth, creamy white with
rouge tinged edges. Perhaps
I'll dry them, put some in an
envelope—this will take some
time—then drop them in the mail
and send them to the same woman
who slices cheese with such
artistry then eats it with an apple.
When she opens the envelope
she'll say, "Where did these
come from?" I'll savor the memory
her question will bring. I will not
answer, and then after a while, I will.

LARRY STARZEC

COMMUNIQUÉ

Just one wrist flick of a letter opener,
wicked sharp, to slice through the envelope flap,
Shucking the papers clean,

she smoothes the sheaf, trues the crease
and laps up words right down
to the dots and crosses. So begins

the translation, from salutation to close.
She is a code breaker, looking
to twist and skew each bit of news

to find a declaration, perhaps
an invitation. But the letter
does not yield. No message emerges

to give her what she wants.
She touches the ink bleeding her name,
folds the sheets, surrenders.

AMY MACLENNAN

LITERARY CALENDAR FOR JUNE 2004

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

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

Tuesday, June 1

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

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

Wednesday, June 2

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

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9:00pm, Charles Ellick, coach of 1st Place SF AND 3rd Place Oakland slam teams. Jamaica House Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. \$5 cover. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336.

Thursday, June 3

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

Saturday, June 5

First Saturday Series. Rodzilla. Supanova hosts, 8pm at Luna's Cafe, 1414 16th St. \$5 donation. Info: upanova09@hotmail.com. or Sac_Town_Poetry@hotmail.com

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

Sunday June 6

Tribute to Ben L. Hiatt, poet, editor and publisher, at the Placerville Town

Hall, 549 Main Street, 2pm. Readers: Ben L. Hiatt, Dave Boles, Taylor Graham, Ann Menebroker, D.R. Wagner, Phil Weidner, and Gordon Kirkwood-Yeats. Music: A Tree Full of Owls, original-alternative country. Hwy 50 to Placerville, right on Bedford, left on Main to Town Hall.

Poemspirits. The series is in hiatus until October. Info: 481-3312.

Monday, June 7

Sacramento Poetry Center presents Sandi Wasserman & Kara Synhorst. Host, Bob Stanley. 7:30pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. (17th & K). Info: 441-7395 or sacramento-poetry-center.org. Free

BookTown, radio show, 1st & 3rd Mondays, hosts Molly Fisk and Eric Tomb, 1-2 pm, KVMR 89.5 FM.

Sacramento Poetry Center Board Meeting, 6 pm, Hamburger Mary's, 17th and K Streets. Info: spc@sacramento-poetry-center.org or 441-7395.

Tuesday, June 8

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

Wednesday, June 9

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

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, Tazuo Yamaguchi (check out his bio on Malikspeaks web calendar), 9:00pm, Jamaica House Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. \$5 cover. Info, www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336.

SNAKEBYTES Series: JoAnn Anglin reads, Kathy Kieth hosts. JoAnn

writes nonfiction as well as poems about human nature, and has been published in THE SACRAMENTO ANTHOLOGY, THE ANTHOLOGY OF THIRD SUNDAY POETS, THE PAGAN MUSE, and VOCES DEL NUEVO SOL. Joanne's chapbook, WORDS LIKE KNIVES, LIKE FEATHERS (Rattlechaps #2), will be available. The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street, 7:30 pm. Info: Kathykieth@hotmail.com.

Thursday, June 10

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

Friday, June 11

Other Voices, Beulah Amsterdam & Carole Stedronsky. Davis Unitarian Church, 27074 Patwin Road, Davis, 7:30 pm. Info: Betty, 530.753-1432 or Allegra, 209.753-2634. Free.

Saturday, June 12

Poems-For-All, Julie Reyes, Alan Satow and Whet Girls. Host Richard Hansen, 7:30pm, The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street. Reading, refreshments, free mini-books, Info: Richard, 442-9295.

Monday, June 14

Sacramento Poetry Center presents SPC Contest Winners, hosted by Tim McKee. 7:30pm, Sacramento Ballet Building, 1631 K St. (17th & K). Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramento-poetry-center.org. Free

Tuesday, June 15

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

Terry Moore's Access Television Show airs every 1st & 3rd Tuesday at 9 pm on Channel 17 (depending on your

cable provider). The broadcast features interviews, poetry, dance and gospel music; co-hosted by Regina High. (Sacramento viewing only.)

Wednesday, June 16

Third Wednesday Poetry Series Sharon Fain & Patrick Grizzell. Hosted by Kathleen Lynch. Reading followed by Q&A. 7pm at Barnes & Noble, Arden Fair Mall, 1725 Arden Way. Info: 565-0644.

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

Thursday, June 17

Poetry Unplugged, TBA, hosted by TBA. Open mic before/after. 8pm. Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info 916-441-3931 or www.lunascfe.com. Free.

Friday, June 18

Escritores del Nuevo Sol presents Susan Hennies & Joe Finkelman. 7:30pm at La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R. Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323. \$5 donation, no one turned away.

Saturday, June 19

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

Sunday, June 20

Stockton Poet's Corner Sharon Woodward Jacobson & From the Heart. 7pm, Barnes & Noble, Weberstown Mall, Stockton. Info: www.poetscornerpress.com or 209-951-7014.

www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org

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

Monday, June 21

The Sacramento Poetry Center presents Chip Spann and Liz Robinson: Voices of the Dispossessed: An Experience with Amherst Writers and Artists. Stan Zumbiel hosts. 7:30pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. (17th & K). Info, 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free.

BookTown, a bi-weekly radio show spotlighting the literary scene, co-hosted by Nevada City poet Molly Fisk and Grass Valley bookseller/collector Eric Tomb, airs 1-2pm PST on KVMR 89.5 FM, Nevada City.

Tuesday, June 22

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

Wednesday, June 23

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, Dirk Huelstrunk of Frankfort/Main Ger. & Ainsley Burrows, 9:00pm, Jamaica House Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com (calendar) or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

Thursday, June 24

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

Friday, June 25

Poetry at the Art Foundry, Kathleen Lynch & Becca Costello; host Luke Breit, 8pm. 1021 R. Street. Info, Luke, 446-POET \$5 contribution.

Saturday, June 26

The Guild Theater Poetry Series "The Show," Ainsley Burrows and Lee Knight, Sista Shay hosts. 7-9pm at the Guild on 2828 35th St. \$7 Tickets at Underground Books next to the Guild or fromtheheart1@hotmail.com. Info: Terry Moore, 455-POET.

Monday, June 28

The Sacramento Poetry Center presents Frank Taber. Susan Bonta hosts. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org Free

Tuesday, June 29

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

Wednesday, June 30

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

Mahogany Urban Poetry Series, 9:00 pm, Jamaica House Restaurant, 1704 Broadway. Inf: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

Get Your Summer in order!

All at SPC Monday Night Series: 7:30pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St:

July 5

Edythe Haendel Schwartz

July 12

Bruce Moody

July 19

Diana Henning

July 26

SPC Birthday Reading

August 2

Lynne Knight and Quinton Duval

August 9

Peace Reading

August 16

Indian Independence Day Reading with Rhony Bhopla and Friends

August 23

David Humphreys

August 30

California Lectures Reception

**SPC POETRY
CONTEST WINNERS**

We received well over 200 entries this year, and the winners included on the following pages of this issue were selected from an exceptionally strong collection of work.

Dennis Schmitz, our final judge, made his selections based on what he called the "human qualities" that showed through in the poems, and spoke highly of the poems in general.

Special thanks go out to our screening judges, Patrick Grizzell, Robin Richie, and Sandi Wasserman, for many hours of reading and analysis.

Congratulations to our winners, and to all the poets who entered this year's contest.

--BOB STANLEY
CONTEST CHAIR

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 by the 5th of the month preceding your event. Thank you.

**SEND US
YOUR
POETRY
NOW**

SPC 25th Anniversary Poetry Contest Winners

2ND PLACE — NANCY WAHL

THE OLD WORLD VANISHED, BUT A NEW ONE APPEARED,
GREEN AND BEAUTIFUL...

The Prose Edda

Astride his steed ready to do battle, Odin sits,
a raven on each shoulder, valkyries ministering about,
and a rainbow bridge: pictures in a book
that a young girl with a guarded smile,
fixed in her colorless world,
would be haunted by in the years that lay ahead.

The doctor peels the mind as deftly as one peels
an apple, and you chew through memory
like one starved for sweetness. For months you walk
around, somnambulistic avoiding the core of anything—
those little frangible pips as though they were
the seeds of an apocalyptic battle between the gods,
but the core is still in the girl bound by old shadows
twisting trust into tangled knots and closing everyone
out so that you need now to cross Bifröst, that colorful
bridge, get past those old Snorri tales—those floods
and disasters—and the pummeling, yes, that too,
of your small fists against Heaven the day your father
drove away, forever. The good doctor sits,
his shoulders straight. The kind you'd like to lean on
and do for a time as *his* ministering angels
unravel clouds, permit tears—soft veils of virga at first
and then the flooding, washing over all the
anger and muddied colors. In some other place,
some other time even are those who have waited
long for you. Now bold as gods and capricious ravens,
and as spontaneous, you come to them
astonished by all the bright new colors—everything
picture-perfect, green and beautiful.

NANCY WAHL

3RD PLACE — DO GENTRY

WHITE TRANSFORMATION

A white knife of lightning
peels back the sleepless sky.

God holds his good eye to the lens
looking,
then looks away.

In a white room,
on a narrow white cot,

she counts the hot white hours
of sleeplessness,

as her wristwatch,
with its luminous gaze,
measures the complex
mathematics of pain,

the long equation of insomnia
chalked on the wall above her.

Amid the white noise of conversation,
words drift toward her like ash.

The edges of her body
have already begun to blur

and the light shining through her hands
is blinding.

DO GENTRY

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1631 K St., Sacramento, CA 95814

HONORABLE MENTION — BILL BLAZEK

SWIMMING IN THE RIVER'S CANT

The scale, the song, the pitch,
 A hum, a tune, a croon,
 Arms rising, heads bowing,
 The rhythm and magic of an echo,
 Scales like ladder rungs up and down,
 Five steps, whole steps,
 Half steps, quarter-steps,
 Sharps that lift and flats
 That deepen and sadden,
 Children an octave higher,
 The harp in their small throats
 Quivering twice as fast to keep up,
 The oscillation, repetition,
 Cycles of ebb and flow,
 The vibration, shuttle, sine wave,
 And the beat in every chest.
 Reeds humming, bowstrings twanging,
 Taut skin thumping and throbbing across a hollow,
 Lips honking from the base of horns,
 The music and pulse of life,
 The squeak of fingers over silk and
 The rustle of garments unzipping
 While lovers fetch, kiss, clasp and eat,
 Shoes thudding, feet stepping out
 From crumpled pants, slips, and skirts,
 Breath building, bodies thrusting,
 Screams and clawing at the top,
 Muscles going slack,
 Moans and tones subsiding,
 The pop of sticking, sated flesh pulled apart,
 Whispers in the muffle of night,
 The sighs, the laughter, the goodbyes,
 Or the distance and the silence
 Through a kicking gestation
 Before the slap of blue babies to pink
 Wailing, shrieking, and pausing for air,
 Then the flailing, grimacing, and the bellowing,
 A barb of joy in a midwife's heart,
 And much later the wheezing and the gurgle,
 The rasp and
 Rattle from leathered bronchi
 The rending, sobbing, and the gasping,
 The shrieking, piercing, and the howling,
 The whirl, funnel and the whistle
 Of winds from the maw
 That enthrall, enthrall us with these sounds,
 Sounds we can never stop.
 We rise on cue, enrobed, stiff collars pinching at our necks,
 Palates open, diaphragm firm and lowered,
 Lungs loaded and cocked,
 The notes of this music on the paper
 We hold in our hands. The baton drops
 And we begin our trembling.

BILL BLAZEK

HONORABLE MENTION — EILEEN MALONE

INSINUATION

Of how when bowing, bending
 to examine the fat beauty of the slug
 its snail shell on its back
 not the object of its shadow
 but the entire benediction
 wild hyacinth text to write
 dill to read; dead wasps to catalog
 if we want to know how it turns out
 we have to read someone else's story
 the blades of our shoulders, like wings
 point to the terrible storm-black sunset
 we are wingless, breathing beings
 anecdotes spilling like earth from our hands
 not the predetermination of angels
 frozen mosquito-like in the filaments
 of electric light bulbs
 can go on for weeks on end
 brightly and boldly knocking
 making a ruckus, or not, believing, or not
 reconfiguring how far we must
 push desire forward in order to touch
 moonlight shiver or dreamlight stains
 on oil spills in glass puddles
 anyway, if we did have wings
 they wouldn't be with feathers
 pigeon, incense-smoke gray
 they'd be made of fierce skin
 stretched taut across the salt-white digits
 of our hind forelimbs
 —bat wings
 or crackling like tracing paper
 dried communion wafers, old parchment
 blind eyelids sketched with violet veins
 pulled over thin hollow bird bones
 as it is
 we study various strategies of flight
 and suffer shoulder blades that yearn
 from, not to, the insinuation
 of wings.

EILEEN MALONE

Sacramento Poetry Center
 is pleased to announce the

25TH ANNIVERSARY POETRY CONTEST WINNERS

- 1st Prize
Julia Levine — \$100
 "Dead Pine"
- 2nd Prize
Nancy Wahl — \$50
 "The old world
 vanished, but a
 new one appeared,
 green and
 beautiful..."
- 3rd Prize
Do Gentry — \$25
 "White
 Transformation"
- Honorable Mentions:
- Bill Blazek**
 "Swimming in
 the River's Cant"
- James DenBoer** (2)
 "American River
 Sunrise"
 "Walking-Around-
 Praying"
- Do Gentry** (2)
 "The Magician"
 "The Rehearsal"
- Eileen Malone**
 "Insinuation"
- Julia Levine**
 "The Raft"
- Nancy Wahl**
 "The Almond Trees
 of the Valée des
 Consuls"

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FEED YOUR HEAD

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the hungry mind
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HONORABLE MENTION — JAMES DENBOER

AMERICAN RIVER SUNRISE -for Jian Wang

First light, behind the Sierra,
washes the sky pale red and gold,
opens the many eyes
that are watching the painter
shape the flat gray trees, raise
the smoke of the new clouds.
Before dawn, the river was snow.

Where the fish breaks under the mist
his brush circles, wanders
off toward the gravel bar bunching up
dark against the current.

To make a new sun rise
is also Adam's task; to make us see
what takes our breath away toward meaning
what we want to say about
emerging from the hidden and unsaid.

You would not believe how many
magentas and blues are on the move,
how amber outlines
the long roots of the sycamore
drowned under the cut bank.

That pearl of white
dotted on the bristles of his old splayed brush,
luscious, creamy as an eyeball,
looks back straight up at the painter,
and then spins away inside his head,
asking to be slashed across his canvas
to catch first light snow-cold as the river.

JAMES DENBOER

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