

Sacramento's Literary
Review and Calendar:

Poetry Now

March 2005
Vol. 11, No. 03

A Publication of the Sacramento Poetry Center

It's

Color, Sigmund, brings us here to sadness.
All evening a nightingale sings,
though there is no such bird to this place.
East of this house a thousand juniper berries take flight
in a ruckus the neighbors think are geese
and two black-bellied crows visit
on the porch with loneliness, so thick bodied
and bellied I'm certain they are ancestors.
Do you understand Sigmund
now your dreams mean nothing to me, and mine
do not obey my orders?

Again it's spring, along a north ridge
dreams begin their lost places
like colors that fly across the sky as antelope.
Since March, the classroom lights
change my breath pattern,
I'm tempted by the lemon leaves
to crush them into a strong tea
and sleep without remorse.

But really doctor, a thousand ink wells
dashed along a line as horizon,
is really all eighty archangels breathing a sigh.
I hear it like I hear the high school children
play soccer across the back field,
like the thrum of an aircraft passing overhead.
If not in the daylight, then at night thoughts wander
like animals, coyotes over a prairie
forming a howl or jays in spring
clearing their beaks on the forsythia
awaiting the next well found pistachio.
I take form where I find it-
I'm skittish, sensitive to light
I dream and awaken, and beg mercy
from myself.



Denise P. Lichtig
reads with Paula
Sullivan on Monday,
March 7th at the
Sacramento Poetry
Center. See calendar
for details.

All night it rains, Sig, a gyre of rain
I can feel the ache begin in my arms
but not like you,
who'll move along the line where white peach
blossoms fly from the rain.
Maybe you'll look up to list
the things from the meadowlark for us to know.
But now you must believe the antelopes are colors,
the colors dreams,
and dreams just thoughts forming the uniform howl.
Along that north ridge
I think sometimes it rains just for you.

—Denise P. Lichtig

This Issue:

Terence Ahearn
Chris Dodge
Carol Frith
George Gott
Taylor Graham
Colette Jonopulos
Raud A Kennedy
Kathy Kieth
Denise P. Lichtig
Joyce Odam
Paula Sullivan

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Submissions of poems, artwork, and other works of interest to the Sacramento poetry community are welcome. See submission guidelines on page 10.

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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—and bringing to Sacramento the finest poetry we can get our hands on. Our offices are at 1631 K St. in the Sacramento Ballet Co. Bldg. Our phone number is: (916) 441-7395.

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President's Message

Hello again.

R Street Corridor, the New Place for Poetry

February has been a busy month. There are many things happening that I think are going to benefit poetry in Sacramento and also be beneficial to the operation of the Poetry Center. Poet Laureate nominations were closed for both the state and county. We have seen changes within the California Arts Council with the appointment of Muriel Johnson as director. And, the Sacramento Poetry Center has had a unique opportunity presented in a cooperative space at 25th and R Streets. This space will be called the Headquarters for the Arts or "HQ" for short.

The board of directors have voted to move SPC from the current 17th and K Street location to 25th and R "Headquarters for the Arts" collaborative. There will be many advantages to this new location. SPC will have: a collaborative calendar with the other organizations, opportunities to apply for grants in collaborative efforts, the ability to share costs such as insurance, office supplies, utilities, and media purchasing, a more eclectic reading space, the opportunity to provide more workshops and more. Our monthly rent will also be reduced. There will be about a two-month transition period from our current address to our new one. These next two months will be exciting and energizing for us.

Sacramento Poet, Noel Peattie, Remembered

Jane Blue shared the following remembrance: Noel Peattie died at Davis Sutter Hospital January 13, 2005, of cardiac arrest, after his second hip replacement. He was 72. He is perhaps best remembered for publishing *Sipapu*, a journal for librarians about the small press, the underground press, and the dissident press, between the years 1970 and 1996. He also published poetry under the imprint of Konociti Books, irregularly, from 1973 to 1996. He lived in a small house on agricultural land near Winters and his own four books of poetry (published by Regent Press) reflect his peace and joy in being on the land.

There will be a memorial for him at the Davis Friends Meeting House, 345 L St., Davis, at 2:00 p.m. March 12. His fifth book of poetry will be available then. For more information and to enjoy some of Mr. Peattie's poetry, please visit his website at <http://www.noelpeattie.com/>

PRAYER FRAGMENT

...and a little house, please.
way up
in an upland valley,
where I can watch the
silversmith river,

talking,
hammering smooth.

settling into its work.

--Noel Peattie
from *King Humble's Grave*
Regent Press, 2001

First Jewish Literary Magazine *Sambatyon* calling for submissions

Do you have a passion for writing about Jewish ideas or experiences?

Sambatyon, "a river of inspiration," is Sacramento's first Jewish literary journal. It may be America's first creative journal organized by a Jewish congregation and sponsored by the Jewish Federation. This unique journal will publish high quality, previously unpublished writing from any genre, including poetry, short stories, first chapters of novels, essays, drawings, and black and white photography. They are soliciting submissions from all writers in California and beyond. Writers need not have been published before.

Submission Guidelines:

Submissions of 3,000 words or less must be received by April 2, 2005. Publication will be in June 2005. Send submissions in WORD format or questions to callmesal@msn.com. Type "Sambatyon" in the subject line, or mail to Congregation B'nai Israel, Attn: Sambatyon, 3600 Riverside Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95831. The maximum number of submissions by a writer is three.

Landing Signals Re-issue Project

In a past issue, I mentioned that a *Landing Signals* re-issue project was underway with digital CD copies of the original cassette tapes being made for distribution. I was hoping that the cassettes and the *Landing Signals* books could be reintroduced during 2005, the 20th anniversary of the project. My intention was to get this great collection of Sacramento poetry back into circulation so people could enjoy the book and recordings. Unfortunately, due to copyright issues, SPC will no longer be pursuing this project. I apologize if you were anticipating this re-release of the work. We do intend to continue, as always, the support and promotion of poetry in Sacramento through other means and venues. Thank you for your understanding.

National Poetry Month, the look ahead...

National Poetry Month is coming next month and there will be some ramping up of poetry activity through March and into April. There will be workshops for families at SPC and other activities at the Center. Our calendar should also be jam packed with readings and workshops throughout the Sacramento region. Look for some good stuff next month...

Again, as always, thank you for your support of poetry in Sacramento. SPC relies on your donations and memberships to keep our programs and activities alive. Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Martin

Errata: Todd Walton's name was cited as Todd Walker under February's "What You Might Have Missed..."; sorry for any confusion. —RMG

Stretched East to West

Imagine: thin bottles of nearly-clear White Riesling arranged in a pyramid above the dark wines, the Arneis, Dolcetto. A *dessert wine*, the woman says, as if this explains the inflated price—you choose a cheaper wine, baseball cap, postcard with a photograph of the dessert wine.

Listen: —the ever-present rumble and grunt of vineyard music: tractors following rutted dirt paths. You're discouraged from investigating own-rooted twisting vines stretched east to west like maps that lead you inward to recesses you've forgotten—the touch of someone gone.

Imagine: the taste of apple strudel, boysenberry cobbler, coconut cream pie, chocolate pavé—with a peach and honey White Riesling, its liquid burn the passion you deny yourself; the postcard you address, but never mail.

—Colette Jonopulos



Colette Jonopulos lives, writes, and edits in Eugene, Oregon. She has two non-fiction books in print: *The One Thing Needful* and *Living Waters for a Parched Land*. Her poetry has appeared in numerous journals. She currently co-edits *Tiger's Eye: A Journal of Poetry*, with JoAn Osborne. The name of her new chapbook by Rattlesnake Press is *The Burden of Wings*; she will be reading at The Book Collector on March 9th. See calendar for details.

SPC
&
HQ
25TH
& R
MAY 2005

Blue Moon

It is all that is left to me at day's end: a hand-carved wooden bowl filled with sour apples—two with brown spots as if a thumb has pressed itself into their green skins—curious, not kind.

Earlier, your familiar fingers stalled at each vertebra—the taste of pollen dust and sweat—a room lit with summer, gleam of paintings on eggshell walls, the dogs confused, crouched low on the carpet.

You asleep, sheet barely over your hip, soft snore rising; me in an oversized robe, feet bare on wooden floor—alone with the bowl, the apples, their sides brushed with red, bruises turned toward the second full moon in July.

—Colette Jonopulos

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poetry throughout the
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beyond?
For details, contact us
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poetrynow@sacramento
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Literary Calendar for March 2005

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

1 Tuesday

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

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

2 Wednesday

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

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

3 Thursday

California Lecture Series: Naomi Shihab Nye. Drawing on her Palestinian-American heritage, the cultural diversity of her home in Texas, and her experiences traveling in many parts of the world, Nye uses her writing to attest to our shared humanity. Author and editor of more than twenty volumes including: *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*, *Fuel*, *Never in a Hurry*, *Habibi* (a novel for young readers), *Lullaby Raft* and *Baby Radar* (picture books), and an anthology entitled *Is This Forever, Or What?: Poems & Paintings from Texas*. Nye has received numerous awards and honors, including those from the Lannan and Guggenheim Foundations, Library of Congress, Academy of American Poets, as well as four Pushcart Prizes, two Jane Addams Children's Book Awards, and nomination for the National Book Award. Crest Theatre, K Street. 7 pm. 766-2277 for tickets (\$20 & \$23)

Poetry Unplugged, TBA. Open mic before & after. 8 pm, Luna's Café, 1414

4 | poetryNOW

16th St. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free.

5 Saturday

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

The Book Collector celebrates its 10th anniversary! 1008 24th Street. Info: Richard Hansen, 442-9295.

6 Sunday

Poem Spirits, presents **Christina Mantecon**. **Nora Staklis** to give a brief talk on Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Sacramento Unitarian Church, 2425 Sierra Blvd., 6:00 pm, Rms 7&8. Info: Tom Goff, Nora Staklis, 481-3312; JoAnn Anglin at 451-1372.

7 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Denise Lichtig** and **Paula Sullivan**. Host: Susan Kelly-DeWitt. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. (17th & K). Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free.

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

8 Tuesday

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

9 Wednesday

CSUS: Trong Tran in the CSUS Library Gallery, 3-4 pm, info: Joshua McKinney, 278-6386. Free.

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

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

Rattlesnake Press: Colette Jonopulos celebrates the release of her new chapbook, *The Burden of Wings*, host, Kathy Kieth, The Book Collector, 1008 24th St., 7:30pm. Free.

10 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.

11 Friday

Escritores del Nuevo Sol presents **Tim Hernandez** reading from his new book, *Skin Tax*. 7:30 pm, La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R. Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or Joannpen@comcast.net.

CSUS: Donald Revell, CSUS Mariposa Bldg, room 1000, 7-8 pm, info: Joshua McKinney, 278-6386. Free.

12 Saturday

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

13 Sunday

Stockton Poetry's Corner. Lisa Derr reads. 7 pm, Barnes & Noble, Weberstown Mall, Stockton. Info, www.poetscornerpress.com or 209-951-7014.

14 Monday

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

Calendar continued...

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

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

15 Tuesday

CSUS: Jeffrey Vassuer (fiction) CSUS Library Gallery, 3-4 pm, info: Joshua McKinney, 278-6386. Free.

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

Third Tuesday Poetry Series: Patricia D'Alessandro and Nancy Cherry. Host: Kimberly White. Q&A follows reading, 7 pm at Arden-Dimick Library, 891 Watt (Watt & Northrup). Info: 264-2770. Free.

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

16 Wednesday

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

Urban Voices: Frank Andrick, hosted by BL Kennedy, 7-8 pm, South Natomas Library, 2901 Truxel Rd. Free.

CSUS: Jacqueline Diaz (poet), **Rebecca Wentz** (fiction), and **Kara Synhorst**

(poet), CSUS Library Gallery 7-8 pm. Info: Joshua McKinney, 278-6386. Free.

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

17 Thursday

Poetry Unplugged, Jack & Adelle Foley. A St. Patrick's Day/Night Celebration of Bards & Muses. Open mic before & after. 8 pm at Luna's Café, 1414 16th St. Info: 441-3931 or www.lunascafe.com. Free.

18 Friday

CSUS: Jeanne E. Clark, CSUS Library Gallery, 7-8 pm, info: Joshua McKinney, 278-6386. Free.

The Other Voice: Katy Brown and Virginia Weigand, 7:30 pm, Davis Unitarian Church library, 27074 Patwin Road. Info: Allegra, 530-753-2634 or Betty, 530-753-1432.

19 Saturday

Third Saturday Series, TBA, 814 35th Street, next to the Guild Theater, info: Terry Moore, 455-POET.

20 Sunday

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

21 Monday

The Sacramento Poetry Center presents Chip Spann: Notebooks. Stan Zumbiel hosts. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org.

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

22 Tuesday

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

23 Wednesday

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

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

24 Thursday

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

25 Friday

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

26 Saturday

The Show, Born 2B Poets and Kontagiouz Soundz, 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.

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

Continued ⇨

Calendar continued...

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

28 Monday

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

29 Tuesday

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

30 Wednesday

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

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

31 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.

April 4, Monday

The Sacramento Poetry Center: **Catherine Webster** and **Muriel Zeller**. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free.

Terence Ahern is a graduate student at CSUS attaining a Masters in English. He has a MFA degree from UCLA in Theater Arts. He has won the Samuel Goldwyn Award for Creative Writing. He will be published in the Spring Issue of *Calaveras Station*, the CSUS literary journal, and he lives just outside Sacramento.

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The Carnival

she rode a ride
no seeable end
crack the whip
spun within spins

house with mirrors
broken body
no idea
if she was anybody

mounted a nightmare
on the merry-go-round
where the only way out
was to never be found

fleeing inside
shut out her own cries
asylum behind
her own sunken eyes

calliope grim
plays but one tune
and the misbegotten
wait for the moon.

— Terence Ahern

What You Might Have Missed...

SASSY/SLY/SEXY readers **Bill Gainer**, **Todd Cirillo** and **Will Staple** read from their book, *Roxy*, on January 18 at the Arden-Dimick Library. The title was taken from a poem by Cirillo about one foxy Roxy who rocked his world and apparently the worlds of the other two poets, too. Together, these three readers from the Grass Valley poetry contingent gave a lively performance for their appreciative audience, and the book is available from (among other places) Bill Gainer at gainer@oro.net. (\$12). —Kathy Kieth

DUETTING IN DAVIS was the highlight of a damp, Valley-foggy Friday night (Jan. 21) as **Joyce Odam** and **Carol Frith** held a unique reading. These two Sacramento treasures chose to read alternately that night at the Unitarian Universalist Society's **The Other Voice** series, weaving one voice, then the other into an impressionistic tapestry that lingered in the air long after we had all gone back out into the fog. Oh, and Joyce sang one of her poems at the end, adding to the haunting, sirens-calling-from-the-sea atmosphere. This is a compelling format that more poets should use! If you weren't there, you missed a very special treat.—Kathy Kieth

AFTER SEEING IMAGES FROM ABU GHRAIB

I don't want anything made
with human hands today.

Give me the skeletons of the sea
bleached coral to hold in my hand

a shard of pitted abalone.
Let me hold the quartz crystal

sure and transparent
the wild horse's molar.

In time
please let me love the hands that made
the little earthen Mayan man

decent and brave
his head broken the pieces lost.

—Paula Sullivan

THE LETTER

is folded over twice, two sheets
it's a birthday letter of sorts
each character, a figure, emblem
where recollection is worked
like gold pulled from a vein. it quenches
a holy thirst. call it drinkable gold
& I will show you the moment
of the letter. the pages beckon
oriole wings. I look at the words
improbable ribs that ring regret.
sorries are scribbled everywhere.
please take note of the praise
sensibility reddens in lamplight.

I am on the brink of unmistakable
change. snap. I remember his kiss
the foxes in winter, pyramids of snow
my heart is a pond. in the sky
a half moon. I fold the letter
twice into a paper mosque.

—Paula Sullivan

After a childhood chasing fireflies in the Midwest, **Paula Sullivan** moved to California to study zoology at UCLA. She earned her degree from the University of California, Davis. Paula began writing poetry around the age of eleven after which she received her first rejection slip from *The New Yorker* magazine. More recently her work has appeared in *Coe Review*, *Wisconsin Review*, *Owen Wister Review*, *Black Dirt* and *The Acorn*. She writes poetry, makes art and divides her time between the North Coast and Carmichael.

Paula Sullivan reads with Denise P. Lichtig on Monday, March 7th at the Sacramento Poetry Center. See calendar for details.

Umbra #0275

I have come to the Gates
of Finality

And I notice
you are not there.

Not there Nobou.

Though I have asked you
to be mon frere
in the morning sunlight
and in the darkness
beyond our dreams.

#6430

—George Gott

Kyoku #0251

Shivering with iniquity
and hoarding the precious moments
to keep us content.

Yet it is not springtime.

It is that thing again
when Neptune is whirling
with Uranus.

Not you and me.

And now I can realize
you are a woman
I have never met
and all of the women
I have never met.

And now my loneliness
that is my death
that is the singer within me
that is the mermaid and seabird.

And yet I tell myself
I am the bullsnake of ecstasy
when my eyes are indelicate
and I am frozen beneath the dust.

#6423

—George Gott

The Nightmare Parable, produced in conjunction with *Permafrost: A Literary Journal*, 2004

reviewed by Carol Frith

Do Gentry's chapbook, *The Nightmare Parable*, winner of the 2004 Permafrost chapbook competition, is now available from the poet (bichette3@aol.com). This astonishing collection focuses on the mysterious and semi-legendary woman known as Helen, the companion (as Do explains in the chapbook's brief introduction) "of Simon Magus, the great first-century Gnostic teacher." Helen, the Tyrian prostitute regarded by Simon Magus as "Woman of Light" or "World Soul," – a kind of Gnostic incarnation of the feminine aspect of the divine – becomes the focal point of Gentry's collection, subsuming in the complex androgyny of the Gnostic godhead the identity of Helen of Troy, and prefiguring, perhaps, a subsequent literary incarnation as HD's Helen in Egypt.

Gentry's text turns through wheels of birth and re-birth, repetitional cycles of darkness and light: Helen as prisoner of the Demiurge, wandering the earth. "The nights were treacherous as black ice:/" writes Gentry in the poem, "In Which She Has Forgotten Her Name," "Sidewalks lined with shop windows/where patient mannequins,/unclothed and bald,/were sheathed afresh/in stylish black synthetics./" – the divine spark trapped in non-living matter, woman as plaster of Paris mannequin, the darkness re-identifying logos and/or the absence of logos. Reconfirming Helen's multiplicity, Gentry writes in "Simon the Magician," that "He observed each of me in turn/in the winged mirror:/" Helen, as her multiplicity implies, is transformational, like "the ash (which has no shadow)/" (from "Helen at the New Moon").

In "Helen Improvises God," Gentry writes of "the Ineffable" as "neither having willed nor wished/nor desired nor commanded,/" This is the Gnostic godhead, un-generated yet generational, post- as well as pre-existent, "a beggar in tattered clouds of dust,/a celestial wind,/" Helen herself is inextricably drawn to the Pleroma. "Bound round by a garment/fine as dust, I was thrust back/each day into the body/the soul had begun to ripple out of:/" ("The Patience of Helen"). In "Helen Recalls Her Lovers," Gentry's Helen remembers "...a lover whose hands/were a fine mist,/the invisible dimension of wind,/" the lover here subsuming, perhaps, the characteristics (or non-characteristics) of the "Ineffable"

itself. In a letter, Gentry has observed that "The Gnostic syzygy is both two and one – two being the illusional/apparent aspect and the one being the divine."

Helen's transformative nature reasserts strongly in "Helen and the Alchemists" where Helen is described as "...dense matter./" becoming a cloud that "condensed,/ and fell/ night after night:/" In "Simon," the Magus is likewise transformed: "Then he is the sun./...The light./And the shadows/", a numinous conflation of Gnostic and alchemical symbology. In "Helen Invokes the Invisible Presences," Gentry envisions a white bird sailing "into the heavens that rise/circle after invisible circle/like the borders you cross on a train/" "Stars open like orchids/", she writes in "Helen and the Blue Door," the bird becoming Helen, Helen becoming the bird. Startlingly enough, in "Helen in the Four Quarters of the World," referring (perhaps?) to Simon, she writes that "he holds the first glowing bulb in his palm/like the wounded body of a bird./", this savior/godhead/animus-become-lover now holding the avian symbol that is Helen herself lightly in his hand. Gentry closes *The Nightmare Parable* with "The Hypostasis of Helen," presuming quite possibly for Helen a Gnostic participation in the godhead. Helen becomes "...the messenger./," "[a]nd the letter she carries, sealed in light./" Over and over in this collection, Gentry successfully harnesses her skilled lyrical music in the service of the complex metaphysic that engages her. One of Sacramento's most gifted poets, Do Gentry is now making a name for herself nationally, and deservedly so. The "letter she carries" is indeed "sealed in light."



2005 Sacramento
Jewish Film Festival
Saturday, March 12
and Sunday, March 13
at the Crest Theater
For show info and tickets:
www.thecrest.com

tiny teeth...the Wormwood Review poems, by Ann Menebroker, R. L. Crow Publications, 2004

\$12, available at the Book Collector, 1008 24th St., Sacramento, CA or at www.amazon.com

Reviewed by Carol Frith

The poems in this outstanding collection were published originally by the late Marvin Malone in his legendary little magazine, *The Wormwood Review*, and, just as you would expect from a collection of *Wormwood Review*/Ann Menebroker poems, the work in this volume is frank, truthful and experiential. Far from being a simple process, however, Menebroker's mapping of experience seems to focus on the strangely uncalibrated circularity of daily events. The collection opens with the poem, "Repossessed." Menebroker and a partner purchase a repossessed house "with nothing on either side of it but dirt/"... "...Only spiders are/ there who have spun a million webs.../" Menebroker scrubs the walls clean and paints them. "...We/ will get caught in our own webs, thank you..." she explains, in this way altering the objective reality of the neglected and web-ridden repo in order to recreate, subjectively to reweave, a new and replacing set of metaphorical webs.

Experiential circling can sometimes be interpersonally devastating. "Mate," a minimalist masterpiece, consists of the following: "Sometimes/even when I don't/want you/I want you to keep/wanting me./ It is destroying us." Occasionally, the looping wheel of experience in Menebroker's work becomes warmly reciprocal, as in the poem, "this...": "the way to stay beautiful/is to avoid mirrors/and look only at those/who truly love back."/

In "Holiday in Glass," Menebroker considers "all the glass windows/in front of California nursing homes/" that "look out onto the streets/and the old eyes inside/watch over the city traffic/in order to dismay us." Menebroker watches the patients "registering the years/like tired erections.../", an endless circularity of the poet looking inward and the patients (and the windows!) looking outward, with no real possibility of exchange, because, "nothing gets in that is/not bottled and prescribed."/

"California Chablis" is a miracle of reflection and recollection, circling and recircling in the poet's consciousness: "3:40 p.m./the sun fractures/everything in the head/and still/we do go on/another glass/chilled this time/", the wine itself a memory now: "My brothers/

are lost in my mind/their children/draw pictures/inside my lids/" Menebroker continues, "we were much alone/ always between arriving or leaving/", her cyclical, almost hallucinatory perception of family history mingling in this poem with the wine-clear California Chablis.

Commenting on her experimental poem, "The Way to Truth," Menebroker has said, "It was a small outrageous act...Truth is as much part of our personal choice as our personal experiences." And we have seen that Menebroker often patterns experience circularly: "The Repetition of Morning & Death & Six O'clock" is, in fact, structurally annular as well, opening with "The old dog's neck turns. He watches me./I am sipping gin/at six o'clock in the morning,/and I have built an early fire/to warm the death in me."/ The poem closes with the lines: "...I am turning the clock back./ I am sipping gin/at six o'clock in the morning,/and I have built an early fire/to warm the death in me." Here, the poet is consciously circularizing experience by physically turning back the clock, her reprising turn of mind reflecting again in "A Round of Ones": "she drinks one/& he drinks one/others drink one/a round of ones/" and yet again in the wonderfully named "A Poem to Carry Around So You Won't Forget Where You Are Going When It is Vital to Remember": "...a return flight/will take you back/...from where you left/to go to Alaska/before you left/for Alaska." Menebroker's images, turn, circle and turn again.

"Chain Letter 1980" engenders a kind of repetitional dread: "It starts with a prayer/and ends with a warning:/...56 hours have gone by./I wait like someone finishing/the last few lines of a story./An O.Henry ending./", a dread explored and redeveloped in "How It Is": "same work as the day/before and the week/before that./feeling a sharp sting/on my arm, look down/but nothing is ever there./...it's hard to imagine/teeth that little." – the agonizing, centimeter-by-centimeter toll exacted by the repetitional quotidian.

Menebroker closes the collection with "Bicycle": "...rode a/few feet, fell off/...got up and on again./hey, you don't forget/years of spinning/your wheels." A master of the circular experiential, Ann Menebroker spins language like no one else. Go to the Book Collector (or www.amazon.com) and buy *tiny teeth*.

Perfumed Envelopes in the Alley

Tin mailboxes line the gravel path,
their wood posts aged a silver gray.
The stones tickle my bare soles
as I look through my box
for the letter you'd said you sent.
But it's not there, and it's as if
I'm no longer there either,
just a shell standing in front
of an empty metal box.

Chipped teeth litter his face,
bruised lips smear his cheeks,
salty blood trickles from his nostrils.
But he still stands, hands clenched
as fists at his sides, knuckles cut,
as he looks down at his opponent
stretched out moaning in the sluice
running in the alley's gutter. His boss,
his wife, his father, his life.

—Raud A Kennedy

Poem for Laura, Disapproved of by Her Father

It will be all right;
I have had this premonition
in a burst of bird song
on a bright day
which had been overcast
a moment before
and no bird had been visible
or heard all season.

You may approach your father
as your self;
he will approve now;
he will be changed,
and you can love him again.
He will say,
“Bless you, bless you.”
It will be okay.

—Joyce Odam

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Study in Blue

A milk-blue pitcher sits on the mantel
underneath that landscape
your father never finished, a rough-sketch
in oils, desert foothills climbing
toward a summit. Finished or not,
your mother framed it after he was gone,
and placed that pitcher alongside.
Someplace he took you, maybe, as a child.
No scene you'd recognize, with that unearthly
blue between the ridges; blue
outlining contours, and poured into every
unaccounted space. Ultramarine.

As if your father could fake distance
with that hue, a foundation color
meant to deepen the warmer tones
he would have added, had he stayed.

—Taylor Graham

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Living Room
(In honor and memory of Noel Peattie)

It might be a starry night
but who inside would know?
Here in the living room,

a clock slowly ticks and tocks;
a cat turns in its sleep
and squeaks; water gurgles

in a radiator; the walls
themselves quietly shift.
Sounds of silence: a snuffle,

barely audible, crackle of a light
timer, buzz of a fridge.
All this night music moves

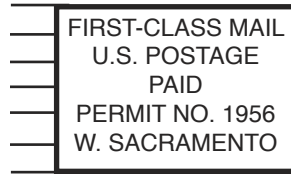
together, in one direction,
simple and steady, on
and on. Sometimes it seems

that everything good has come
and gone. Yet here we are,
here in this living room,

listening to a few
more measures of song,
silently singing along.

—Chris Dodge

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