

Sacramento's Literary
Review and Calendar:

Poetry Now

May 2005
Vol. 11, No. 05

A Publication of the Sacramento Poetry Center

The Sacramento Poetry Center is moving. Over its long 25-year history, the Sacramento Poetry Center has made several moves— a few years here, a few years there, but always seeking the right home (at the right price) for the office and our weekly reading series. For over 10 years that home was at the Ballet Building at 17th and K. Now, the Poetry Center and its membership have an exciting opportunity to join with other arts groups sharing space and rent at an arts complex located at 25th & R in Midtown Sacramento. In April, we moved the Poetry Center office and, in May, the Monday Reading Series will now be presented at the 25th & R location.

The process began in March, when the SPC Board was approached about joining as one of four organizations sharing a collaborative space operating under the name HQ: Headquarters for the Arts. In addition to the Poetry Center, three other organizations share the operation and management of the HQ space: Asylum Arts (an artists' cooperative), Kabinet (a film production company), and Short Center Repertory (a theatre company for developmentally disabled adults). Like other members of the board, I was attracted by several factors. We will pay less rent, be working with more arts organizations, and have more control over our space and when we can use it.

On March 26th, HQ held its open house during which Bob Stanley represented the Poetry Center with a reading that included a dedication poem to the new space titled "A place and a time" (see page 12). HQ and the open house were featured in an April 14th *Sacramento News & Review* article by Frank Marquardt noting that the four groups collaborating in the HQ space "complement one another creatively and in terms of their logistical needs for the space."

Already the HQ space has been put to good use since its creation in March, playing host to a number of film screenings, a poetry reading, and a Second Saturday reception showcasing the art on the walls by Asylum Arts members. Poetry Center readings and special events will add to a rich mix of film, theatre, poetry and art events that will be offered each month at the space. Check out upcoming events at the HQ space at the website: www.kabinet.org/hq

—Richard Hansen

This Issue:

Theresa Allen
Karen Baker
Margaret S. Burns
Robert Creeley
Lisa F. Hall
Richard Hansen
Kathy Kieth
Merle Martin
Joshua McKinney
Alexa Mergen
B.Z. Niditch
Richard Sederstrom
Bob Stanley

**HEADQUARTERS
FOR THE ARTS**



President's Message

Hello again.

We have finally reached the month of May. I hope National Poetry Month showed you how alive the poetry scene is in Sacramento.

Poetry Now, Sacramento's Literary REVIEW & CALENDAR, is published each month by the Sacramento Poetry Center and is funded, in part, with grants from the California Arts Council and the Sacramento Cultural Arts Awards Program of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission with support from the city and county of Sacramento.

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

Poetry Now is distributed free in area bookshops, coffeehouses, community centers, colleges, etc. Back issues are available for \$3 each. Your membership gets **Poetry Now**, **Tule Review**, and **Rivers** delivered to your door or box.

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

The Sacramento Poetry Center is a non-profit corporation dedicated to providing forums for local poets—including publications and reading series—and bringing to Sacramento the finest poetry we can get our hands on. Our offices are at 1719 25th Street, Sacramento. Our phone number is: (916) 441-7395.

Board of Directors:
President: **Martin McIlroy** [(916) 457-5119]
Vice President: **Mary Zeppa**
Secretary: **Bob Stanley**
Treasurer: **MerryLee Croslin**
Members of the Board: **Rhony Bhopla, Keely Sadira Dorran, Robert Grossklaus, Richard Hansen, Jose Montoya, and Sandra Senne**
Membership Coordinator: **Stanley Zumbiel**
Advisory Board of Directors:
Luke Breit, Julia Connor, Patrick Grizzell, Burnett Miller, and Anne Rudin
Staff: **Amy Picard**

Headquarters for the Arts at 25th and R Street

The Sacramento Poetry Center has finally moved into the new space at 25th and R. All the Monday night readings will now take place at the new address, 1719 25th Street. So, on Monday, May 2nd, be sure to go to our new address. The new space will have a different feel compared to the Studio 2 space at the Ballet Building. The room is much more intimate and will have different lighting and a constant array of artwork on the walls.

Women's Health Month: Benefit Poetry Reading Helps the Fight Against Cancer!

A poetry reading featuring Traci Gourdine, Nicole Griffin, Heather Hutcheson, Kathy Kieth, Sandi Wasserman and others will help raise money to help local Sacramento resident Sharon Wright fight her recently diagnosed ovarian and colon cancer. She has been unable to keep up with her \$600 a month insurance costs. Local poets and people impacted by cancer are coming together to hear the poetry and voices of the community. Poetry is an important vehicle for healing and fighting a disease that affects the entire community. A \$5 minimum donation is requested to benefit Sharon Wright and the Lance Armstrong Foundation – LIVESTRONG www.laf.org. For more information, contact Heather Hutcheson at 916-498-8306 or the Sacramento Poetry Center at 916-441-7395.

Davis Whole Earth Festival

Don't forget to check out the Whole Earth Festival in Davis, May 6, 7, and 8, 2005. This is always a good time with lots of interesting vendors, food and entertainment. Some of our own Sacramento poets will be reading poetry during the festival. Straight Out Scribes will be reading there on Saturday afternoon. For schedules and information about the event, call 530-752-2569 or go to their website at <http://wef.ucdavis.edu>.

Poetry Boot Camp

A short, intensive workshop by Molly Fisk will be starting soon. The Poetry Boot Camp website has been spruced up with schedules and information for the potential workshopper. Check out the website: <http://www.poetrybootcamp.com>.

Ojai Poetry Festival

The Ojai Poetry Festival will be happening May 20-21 at the Libbey Bowl in Ojai, California. Poets featured at the festival will include Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Joy Harjo, Galway Kinnell, and Suzanne Lummis. For more information call (805) 477-3007 or go to <http://ovlff.com/poetryfestival/poetryfestival.htm>. The festival is presented by Ojai

Valley Library Friends & Foundation.

Remembrance

American poet Robert Creeley passed away on March 30, 2005, in Odessa, Texas where he was fulfilling a residency at the Lannan Foundation. Mr. Creeley was a recipient of the Lannan Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award. A poem of Mr. Creeley's...

A Song

I had wanted a quiet testament
and I had wanted, among other things,
a song.
That was to be
of a like monotony.
(A grace
Simply. Very very quiet.
A murmur of some lost
thrush, though I have never seen one.

Which was you then. Sitting
and so, at peace, so very much now this same quiet.

A song.

And of you the sign now, surely, of a gross
perpetuity
(which is not reluctant, or if it is,
it is no longer important.

A song.

Which one sings, if he sings it,
with care.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the new Poetry Center home at 25th and R Streets. Remember, we will be there on May 1st. Hope you will like it...

Thanks for supporting poetry in Sacramento and beyond...

—Martin



Observations

I
with enough
water and light
in the right season
things will grow
simple, obvious
like the pressure
of the water
through the garden
hose upon the grass.
this season is dying
yet there is hope
in the chrysanthemums

II
moons:
the moon descending
this morning behind
the hill that cupped
the valley filled
with fog masking
the river that con-
tinues to dry until
the rains come in earnest
that moon
disappearing as I rode up
the steeply pitched hill
appeared this evening above
another bowl embracing
a gentler scoop of houses
freeways, traffic lights,
and parking lots
its resurrection
above the horizon
took my breath

—Theresa Allen

Theresa Allen was born and raised in New York but has spent much of her adult life in California. She received her degree and teaching credential from CSUS and has been an elementary teacher at a small rural school for many years.

What You Might Have Missed...

AN AUSPICIOUS BIRTH took place at Luna's Cafe on Friday, April 8, when a new annual reading series debuted, thanks to B.L. Kennedy. Seven Sacramento Poets-of-Note gathered there for the First Annual Second April series: an evening of reading, not their own works, but those of poets who have inspired them over the years. This year's readers included Frank Andrick, Charlene Ungstad, Linda Thorell, Jose Montoya, Carol Frith, Jose Montoya, and Gene Avery. For three hours, Luna's comfortable venue was filled with poetry from a huge variety of writers, from Baudelaire to Emerson to e.e. cummings to Kerouac to Omar Salinas (*The Crazy Gypsy*)—even local poets such as Joyce Odam and Annie Menebroker were represented. To add to the evening, the seven powerful readers were occasionally backed up by Gene Avery on sax and Arthur Balderama on flute and guitar (and Bari Kennedy on bells!). A great beginning to an annual series of remembering our roots. —Kathy Kieth

B. L. KENNEDY PAINTED the air of *The Book Collector* with words as Rattlesnake Press celebrated its first anniversary on Wednesday, April 13th. *Been Born Bronx*, B.L.'s latest collection, was released alongside a set of picture poem postcards (the first to be printed since Kenneth Patchen). Arthur Balderama and Gene Avery peppered the evening with guitar, sax, etc. —RMG

JOYCE ODAM, JANE BLUE & ANN MENEBROKER could all be found at the Natomas Library on Wednesday, April 20th, reading old and new poems. Hard to believe that so much greatness could be packed successfully into one hour, but this was a wonderful event filled with whimsical, melancholic, celebratory words from the mouths of three of today's greatest poets. —RMG

GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF CREATIVITY!

- * Learn new methods to spark your imagination
- * Free-write in response to various prompts
- * Receive feedback that focuses on the strength of the piece
- * Build community with women who share a love of the written word

When: Friday, May 13 - Sunday, May 15, 2005

Arrival begins Friday 2 pm; Farewell 2 pm Sunday

Where: Skyline Ranch

14480 Pendola Road

Camptonville, CA 95922

530-288-3300

Registration: Pre-registration is required

Fee: \$160.00, \$10 discount if registered by 4/30/05

Phone: 925-648-3115 EMAIL: visioncoachcindy@aol.com

Cindy Fisher, MA, CPCC leads creative writing, memoir and journaling workshops for women. She motivates and inspires her clients to write with passion. She is a certified workshop leader in the Amherst Writers and Artists method.

Literary Calendar for May 2005

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

1 Sunday

Poem Spirits, TBA Sacramento Unitarian Church, 2425 Sierra Blvd., 6:00 pm, Rms 7/8. Info: Tom Goff, Nora Staklis, 481-3312; JoAnn Anglin at 451-1372.

2 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Gary Thompson** and **George Keithley**. Host: Susan Kelly-DeWitt. 7:30 pm, at SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts). Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free.

3 Tuesday

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.

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.)

4 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.

5 Thursday

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

6 Friday

Escritores del Nuevo Sol presents **Samuel Iniguez** (host) and young SF Poets: Cinco de Miosis – Beginning of Rebirth. 7:30 pm, La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R. Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or Joannpen@comcast.net.

7 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.

9 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **The CSUS Advanced Poetry Workshop** with **Joshua McKinney**, host: Bob Stanley. 7:30 pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th St. (25th and R). Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free.

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

Sutter's Literature, Arts and Medicine

Program (LAMP) Special Event: Writing to Heal, Chip Spann, Sierra Health, 12:00-1:30 pm. 454-6802 spannc@sutterhealth.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.

10 Tuesday

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

11 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.

Rattlesnake Press: presents **debee loyd** and **Karen Baker** releasing their new chapbooks: *Noon*, *Twilight*, *Midnight* and *Vocal Exercises in Stone* (respectively); host, Kathy Kieth at The Book Collector, 1008 24th St., 7:30pm, free.

12 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.

13 Friday

Sutter's LAMP Program: Ellen Bass, hosted by Chip Spann, 7-8:30 pm at Sutter Resource Library, 2800 L Street, Suite 600. 454-6802 spannc@sutterhealth.org

14 Saturday

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

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

15 Sunday

Stockton Poet's Corner. TBA. 7 pm, Barnes & Noble, Weberstown Mall, Stockton. Info, www.poetscornerpress.com or 209-951-7014.

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

A. D. Winans, Ann Menebroker, Bill Gainer, hosted by Richard Hansen, 2 pm, The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street. Info: Richard, 442-9295.

16 Monday

The Sacramento Poetry Center presents Poetry Reading to Fight Cancer, featuring: **Traci Gourdine, Nicole Griffin, Heather Hutcheson, Kathy Kieth, Sandi Wasserman**, and others. Stan Zumbiel hosts. Sacramento resident Sharon Wright, diagnosed with ovarian and colon cancer last year, can't afford her \$600 per month insurance costs. Local poets and people impacted by cancer are coming together to raise money to fight cancer and help Ms. Wright with increasingly unaffordable medical costs. We encourage all to come and hear the poetry and voices of the community. Poetry is an important vehicle for healing and fighting a disease that affects our entire community. Cost: Donations to Sharon Wright and Livestrong requested, \$5 minimum. Info: Heather Hutcheson, Center for Collaborative Planning, 498-8306, Heather@connectccp.org or Martin McIlroy, SPC, 441-7395, spc@sacramentopoetrycenter.org. 7:30 pm, SPC/HQ for the Arts, 1719 25th (25th and R Sts).

17 Tuesday

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

Calendar continued...

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

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

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

18 Wednesday

Urban Voices: Kathy Kieth, Charlene Ungstad hosted by B.L. Kennedy, 7-8 pm, South Natomas Library, 2901 Truxel Rd., free.

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

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

19 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.

20 Friday

The Other Voice: Julia Levine and Ruth Schwartz, 7:30 pm, Davis Unitarian Church library, 27074 Patwin Road. Info: Allegra, 530-753-2634 or Betty, 530-753-1432.

Escritores del Nuevo Sol presents Veteranos stories, poems, music; MCs Esteban Villa & Jose Montoya. 7:30 pm, La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R. Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or Joannpen@comcast.net.

21 Saturday

Underground Poetry Series, Black Men Expressing Tour, Underground Books, 2814 35th Street, next to the Guild Theater, \$3.00 admission, info: 455-POET.

Escritores del Nuevo Sol Children's reading, book signing, **Francisco Alarcon:** POEMS TO DREAM TOGETHER / POEMAS PARA SONAR JUNTOS (New York: Lee and Low Books 2005):1:00 pm. La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R. Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or Joannpen@comcast.net.

22 Sunday

Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area (HAGSA) invites you to hear **Anatole Lubovich** in a program of his poetry and music—serious and humorous, irreverent and iconoclastic — at the Unitarian-Universalist Society of Sacramento, 2425 Sierra Blvd., 3 pm. Coffee and light refreshments. Free.

23 Monday

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

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.

24 Tuesday

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

25 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.

26 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.

Sutter's LAMP Program: Jack Hirschman and Agneta Falk, hosted by Chip Spann, 7-8:30 pm at Sutter Resource Library, 2800 L Street, Suite 600. 454-6802 spannc@sutterhealth.org.

27 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.

28 Saturday

The Show, Keisha Moore reads and Open Mic Love Poem Night. The best open mic love poem gets \$25.00. Wo'se Community Center, 7-9 pm, 2863 35th Street. Tickets, \$5 Underground Books or fromtheheart1@hotmail.com. Info: Terry Moore, 455-POET.

Looking ahead...

The 1st Monday in June will be the Poet's Corner Press 2005 Chapbook Prize winner's reading. The contest is judged by Dennis Schmitz.

Would you like to carry Poetry Now in your business and help spread poetry throughout the Sacramento area and beyond?
For details, contact us at:
poetrynow@
sacramentopoetrycenter.org.

List Your Event:

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

Thank you.

Migration

Long necked, legs stretched
The Pelagian bird tries the wind
Soars even in sleep
To instinctual southern harbors

In origami's unfolding
The crane unflaps its wings
Turns its head inside out
Becomes an envelope to open
Into a thin flat sheet

A boy comes in at seven years
Toys with the undone paper square
Almost makes a wing, a backward beak
A down-turned tail
Then tidily smooths the paper out
Staring at the pattern of the creases

As you exit
You neatly swallow your well-phrased defense
Cast your focus on a blinding bulb
Throw aside your Pendergrass coat
Go out of style

—Karen Baker

In Transit

leaven works
what rises
may be bread
put in a word
water it
soak for three summers
any beach, any coast
if it rains
find shelter
a teardrop is a prism
every night
the shadows stretch
and hunch at noon
and hunch
my feet are full
of crumbs of sand
I bake

—Karen Baker

Karen Baker
reads with debee
loyd on May
11th; see calendar

Karen Baker is a Modesto poet. She was born on Staten Island, grew up in Rockford, Illinois, and has lived in California's Central Valley for many years. She is fascinated by the possibilities and limitations of language and by the synergy experienced in writing groups. In Modesto, she writes with the Licensed Fools, AWG (Another Writing Group), and an unnamed women's poetry group. She has three adult children and lives with her husband, Ron, in Modesto. She also enjoys studying dreams.

What the Driver Said

Bakersfield, CA, Route 9

People on the bus brush against us, their bodies and their words.
They sit close to their driver who listens to how they came to be
in this dry valley town where there's too much dust, not enough rain.

A pregnant woman turned out by her family in LA gets off at New Stine.
Another man learned too late his father was his grandfather.
Two boy-men out of prison, late on child support payments.
Their girlfriends are bitches.

I'm not eaves-dropping.
I sank my seventy-five cents into the tower fair and square.
It costs less than a dollar to hear the people I see.

A woman accused of stealing has got to find another job.
Her cousin shares photos from a party last month.
They look so pretty dressed up.

We all know how to lean and swing with the bus's slow turns.
We listen for the downshift before the driver stops.

Three brothers in long t-shirts on California Avenue, too broke to board.
The driver says loud, *Ya'll come on if you want a ride.*
They run from the shade of the shelter, mount the steps, saying nothing,
sit in the way back.

The bus heaves forward,
as the sun wedges through the window like a knife blade
and the stoplight blinks from red to green.
Ya'll come on if you want a ride. Ya'll come on.

—Alexa Mergen

Linda Kay

the cold December morning
stills
sagging skies devoid of
patterns
untrudged snows seem
old
laden limbs a random
clutter
and nothing stirs as if
nothing
matters

a child has died today

—Merle Martin

Ghosts of Fourth Avenue

Julia Vinograd

They were Bohemians when I was at Berkeley;
next North Beach Beatniks; then Hippies
flowering Haight Street near Ashbury.
I watched them as they jarred the park with
spaced out nakedness.

I watched them from some
distance. I was of
their generation, but
I had betrayed
them, or they me; or
maybe we were just
slaves to warring truths.

Now heavy of years, she limps in well-worn boots
before world-weathered faces to stage her poetry.

Black tam with yellow band, 60s smock,
beads hanging from neck to sagging bosom.
Glasses on her nose, mike choked in one hand,
book trembling in the other; she begins, as if
time did not exist.

Singing, shouting, glaring words that
spatter ordained matters.

Fifty years of roaring, unstilted rage.
Ginsberg, Baez, Vietnam, Civil Rights;
the party-regardless establishment.

“Listen! Listen to our screams!
Reality’s a surface; anger is its seams.”

I stood again in
Golden Gate Park,
distance between us;
Air Force uniform
safely
tucked
away.

—Merle Martin

White, two-story structure, trimmed in yellows and blue;
tucked in windows and doors; top story with a
narrow staircase bursting with Alaskan flowers.
Club 25, built in 1916, nestled in Fourth and J;
dwarfed by the leering glass and steel of
Wally Hickel’s Captain Cook Hotel.

An artist’s dream: Two blocks west - Cook Inlet,
ringed by ever ivory peaks; ancient shamans
guarding Susitna, the Sleeping Lady. To the
north, water edges the port, then seeps to
Knik Arm and the Matanuska Valley. On a
rare clear day, Denali’s shadowed peaks seem
close enough to touch. To the east, the Chugiak
guard Anchorage’s stubby collage.

Snug rooms; tables crowded under teeming seascapes.
Gawking tourists and nonchalant regulars sip their
thick clam chowders; inhale ambrosia sourdough rolls.
There are ghosts here, sharing my noontime musings.
Patricia; Art Meiser too; crazy Robin and even Lu.
Others I don’t know: derelicts from the city’s past.

This ancient setting tastefully touched by man
allowed me to glue together life’s jagged shards;
mingle with my ghosts. Now the Club 25 will be
no more, not at this hallowed location. It will be
towed to some less real-estate valuable site.
There’ll be no flowers on that delicate staircase;
no regulars and tourists drinking martinis,
slurping clam chowder; no artist’s panorama;
no more ghosts from my past.

Where do ghosts go when you move their building?
Do they follow and shiver in strange surroundings?
Do they remain as homeless shadows? Or do they
attach themselves to one of the last visitors?

Apparently the latter.

—Merle Martin

Merle Martin reads
on Monday, May
23rd (see calendar).

Merle (Mel) Martin is a retired professor and writer of poetry and short stories. His works have been included in such publications as *Beyond the Border: Poems and Short Stories of Alaskan Poets*, *Invoking the Muse*, *The Sound of Poetry*, and various poetry quarterlies. He spent 15 years in Alaska, traveled to the Russian Far East, and will be teaching in Thailand this summer. Much of his writing reflects impressions of his travels. His writing influences have been Robert Browning, e.e. cummings, Steve Allen, Robert Service and the Alaskan poet Thomas Sexton. He describes his poetry as “. . . sound stories bordering on the baroque.”

“Come Down”
After Keith Waldrop

“And he made haste, and came down,
and received him joyfully.” (Luke 19:6)

The sycamore of the Bible is a kind of fig tree:
Ficus sycomorous. And into such a tree,
Zacchaeus climbed, to gain a truer vantage
as Christ passed. Or so the story goes.
How can we know intent after the fact?
Disparate causes may lead to the same act,
and effects grow more miraculous
each time the teller pauses. Perhaps
an earthly hunger drove his ascent,
to scabble for fruit beyond his reach.
After all, climbing was not new to him;
a small man, Zacchaeus had proven himself
in a world of taller men. He was a chief
whose wealth increased his stature, proving
once again that providence can raise
the shrewd and dwarf the less industrious.
Why pay for figs when they were near at hand?
The Lord helps those who help themselves.
Besides, he liked to be above the press
of rubber-necking zealots on the road.
Consider how Christ must have felt
when he glanced up into the glare and saw
Zacchaeus cradled in that tree, a man who did not give
a fig for those who stood there in the dust below.
Much has been made of Christ’s command,
which was by most accounts direct.
One wonders what his tone revealed.
A momentary lapse perhaps, by one who hoped
to make a point. It’s likely that Zacchaeus understood
such parlance (so vital in his line of work.)
He was a man whose station could accommodate
a certain grace because his own commands were
not to be ignored. The subtleties of saving face
sometimes demand that one become a host, and so,
smiling, he saw the task at hand: to descend
and have some commerce with the man.

—Joshua McKinney

Second Annual Reading:
The CSU Poetry Workshop
with Joshua McKinney is on
May 9th (see calendar).

Joshua McKinney is the author of two award-winning books of poetry: *Saunter* (University of Georgia Press, 2002) and *The Novice Mourner* (forthcoming from Bear Star Press, 2005). His work has appeared in such journals as *American Letters & Commentary*, *Boulevard*, *Colorado Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry International*, *Volt*, and many others. He is an Associate Professor of English at California State University, Sacramento, where he recently received the Outstanding Teaching Award for the College of Arts & Letters.

**Another Day in
the Perishing Republic**

That I might thrive,
I went out to run
as I had the day before
and the day before that.

It was late afternoon;
the lowering sun
hung in the pine tops,
smoldering there

as ravens roosting
loosened veils of
pollen, until the very air
shone gold. Awash in light,

I marveled at the real
world, its fullest
wonders felt, not told.
Content, I labored

up a grade to where
two ways converged,
and in the distance saw
a dancing man,

car door still open
beside him. I thought it joy,
or perhaps awe
at the same light I had seen.

He finished then, and
turning, saw me,
still far off, and raised
a hand. I waved back,

watched him as he drove
away. And all was good.
But when I reached the place
where he had been,

and stopped, and stood
there, sweating, out of breath,
I found a king snake
he had stomped to death.

—Joshua McKinney

Twenty-four Guitars and a French Police Car Siren
Lines Rearranged from the Chatter and Noise in “Beginning Guitar”

Starting at the same time does not make music.
Being in tune starts to make music
if we are in tune at the same time.

“Individual practice” of twenty-four guitars
makes less music than the police car siren
if music is control.

Twenty-four guitars playing twenty-four pieces at once
make more music
if music is spirit.

“Can we talk and giggle now” makes more music
than the police siren
or the twenty-four guitars
if music is the human voice,
spontaneous and happy.

Doing makeup on the sly makes music—
glitter, eye liner, lip gloss,
all applied with wanton childishness,
if music can be silent
and rebellious too.

—Richard Sederstrom

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Ivanhoe, Page 57

“Meanwhile, spectators of every description thronged
forward to occupy their respective stations,
and not without many quarrels concerning those
which they were entitled to hold.”

Beyond our new dock, the forty feet
we could afford to knock together
this year, the lake lies silver.
By afternoon the air will lie heavy
and I will have a choice—
to lie in my hammock and let another page
or two of *Ivanhoe* put me to nap,
or lie in my hammock long
enough to decide if our glow of water
is finally warm enough to swim in,
or float naplike in the silver embrace.

Or I could retire to my little shop
for a few steamy minutes of typing,
try not to bother gray Phoebe
in her nest on my door sill
so much that she fails to feed her brood,
but let her teeter on the edge
of her birch twig sentry post
while I write a few lines about
our yearly month of life together.

Creedence Clearwater wails
“Commotion,” which to Phoebe I am.
It can’t be worth much to her
in her mothering that “Midnight Special”
helps me shine light on the commotion
of her life, but any minute’s show of life
is worth more than all of *Ivanhoe*,
more than all the naps I will ever want,
and I will apologize by leaving again.

—Richard Sederstrom

Studying Homer

While reading the Iliad, it would be nice to dream
of Ilion in those days before the Greeks arrived
chasing that miserable Helen whose cream
colored skin so bewitched dumb Paris, who contrived

to kidnap her but when she got here
Helen turned into some kind of miserable shrew.
Nothing pleased her – all was small beer.
Her shrill complaints in the palace threw

the servants into hissy fits, made
it impossible for the king to rule on this or that decree.
She was beautiful all right, but what tirades
rang in our ears. Personally, if it was up to me

(and I advocated this) I'd ring up Menelaus in Athens
and tell him we're shipping her back, UPS overnight, don't ask.

–Margaret S. Burns

Ode to Noam Chomsky

“Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.”
If I were Ogden Nash, there would be
a joke hidden within a name like that –
a cantata with no home key.

“Squirrels are the devil's oven mitts.”
Grammatically correct, meaning imperfect.
He analyzed words, pesky adverbs, constructions,
conjunctions, pidgin English, sentence deficits.

“Raw bread cries in the empty red night.”
Green's mind proved Chomsky's Point –
the Big Bang of LSD left the syntax intact
but sense and synapses diverged with the speed of light.

–Margaret S. Burns

after reading August Kleinzahler's poem, "Green Sees Things in Waves."

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I'm Nine

It's a free country
our veteran neighbor said
listening to and watching
two talk shows at once.
I'm going to a picnic
of my own making;
Jake's portable radio and TV
will not stop talking.

"Even all those redneck voices
and opinions are important,"
Jake says,
"more than even Army brass.
When you grow up,"
silently giggling
by my salad days,
"you may make public policy."

Sure, I nodded
over the dogwood fence
munching on yesterday's pasta
and Jake tells me
he feels abandoned
by family, God and country.

I do not understand
being only nine,
there is a shot heard
round the neighborhood.

—B.Z. Niditch

one

you are the light
that projects my cells
onto the fabric of life
to blend our existence
in the quantum cinema

—Lisa F. Hall

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A place and a time

there's something to be said for the first time

the first poem in front of a crowd
the first painting you ever showed
the first dance recital
the first kiss
something to be said
something to remember

there's something to be said for a new place
a new space
an idea a dream a lot of work
leaves lawyers meetings pleases
thank yous setbacks waiting
phone calls

but a new place a space for the arts
that's us
we're the arts
look around and congratulate yourselves
because the
space for the arts
isn't that what we're always trying to make
in our lives
a little space for the arts?
and here it is
not so little either!

so the next time you're washing dishes
or stuck in traffic
remember this place
and remember that place in yourself
that's everywhere
somewhere out there on
the highway of life,
the Twenty-fifth and R of the late summer of your
stroll through this tree-filled valley town,
remember there's always
a place
and a time.

—Bob Stanley

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