

Sacramento's Literary
Review and Calendar:

Poetry Now

November 2004
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A Publication of the Sacramento Poetry Center

Lichen

Black and green lichens adhere to
the slate straight granite, each rock

squared off. Even dried, the green
is electrifying and atop this peak

the bedrock is fractured
in columnar blocks. Thought

settles on ownership,
ground. How an unkeepable

covenant was accepted,
how no one understood

the commitment required.
The commandments do not

equivocate: *do not steal;*
do not covet thy neighbors

or their property.

From atop this peak,

anyone can see
how currents unfold around the globe,

weather each of us, though some round
down, and others slice off in paned sheets.

At high elevation, on square cut ribs,
(oh the world is always shattering up

or down) Moses stood with tablets.
A chisel beveled the hope of home,

the resurrection of will. What does
persecution teach if not to cross

the precipice between revenge
and compassion? Am I

delivered to remain insufficient,
to wave my arms, as insignificant

and essential as lichen whose
lilting edges furl along granite.

—Jody Ansell

This Issue:

Francisco X. Alarcón
David Alpaugh
Jody Ansell
Joseph T. Atkins
Art Beck
Rhony Bhopla
Lucille Lang Day
Garry Gay
Taylor Graham
Colin Harrington
Stephen Kessler
Mordecai Marcus
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Come November

The lightless evening falls under fire.
Destitute oaks wave their fingers
shivering, flailing, flames in the stove.
Dead leaves shriek into any wind dying.
A boy with bats in his hair keeps asking
tricky questions: a pumpkin with a candle
for a brain, is he as bright as anyone?
Listen. The candidates have answers.
The evening falls headless under fire.

—Taylor Graham

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Submissions of poems, artwork, and other works 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 send submissions to: **1631 K St., Sacramento, CA 95814**. Email submissions are not encouraged. Poetry Now is widely distributed free in area bookshops, coffeehouses, community colleges, etc. Your membership gets **Poetry Now**, **Tule Review**, and **Rivers** delivered to your door or box.

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Proofreader: **Ann Conradsen**
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Editorial Staff: **Jody Ansell, Ann Conradsen, Tom Goff, Barbara Jennings, 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 1631 K St. in the Sacramento Ballet Co. Bldg. Our phone number is: (916) 441-7395.

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President's Message

Millers' Benefit

Well, it is about that time again when the seasons are changing, nighttime falls sooner, and the tradition of the Sacramento Poetry Center benefit at Burnett and Mimi Miller's home is upon us. This year the benefit will be on December 2nd. This is a Thursday night, the first Thursday in December. Our featured readers will be Julia Levine and Kathleen Lynch. These two women are powerful writers that you should not miss. Look for more details on our website or call (916) 441-7395.

Julia B. Levine's recent awards in poetry include the *Tampa Review* Prize for Poetry, for her second collection, *Ask*; the Anhinga Poetry Prize for her first collection, *Practicing for Heaven*, (which also won a bronze medal from *Foreword Magazine*); the *Discovery/The Nation* Award; the *Pablo Neruda* Prize in Poetry, the *Lullwater Review* Prize in Poetry, and fellowships from the Sewanee Writer's Conference, the California Arts Council, and the Djerassi Foundation. She has been nominated multiple times for a Pushcart Prize. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals, including: *The Southern Poetry Review*, *Ploughshares*, *The Nation*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Poetry East*, and *Zone 3*. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley; she lives and works in Davis, California.

Kathleen Lynch has been a featured poet throughout Sacramento and also hosted the Barnes and Noble reading series at the Arden Fair mall. Kathleen Lynch is the author of *How to Build an Owl*, which won the Select Poet Series award from Small Poetry Press, and *No Spring Chicken*, which won the White Eagle Coffee Store Press award, and Small Poetry Press released her *Alterations of Rising* in its Select Poet Series. Her poems have been anthologized and appear widely in journals such as *Poetry* and *Poetry East*. Among her many awards, she received the *Spoon River Poetry Review* Editor's Choice Award 2000.

Archives

Over the past 25 years, the Sacramento Poetry Center has accumulated many publications, recordings, picture poems, drawings, and other things. This past summer, Mary Zeppa led the team of SPC interns and began the overwhelming task of organizing and cataloging our archives. They found all sorts of goodies in storage and have made very good progress towards our ultimate goal of having a complete archive in our library and a preserved archive. We are anticipating continuing this project with the next group of interns and/or any volunteers that may be interested. Please contact spc@sacramentopoetrycenter.org if you would like to help.

Landing Signals CD

Recently, the Landing Signals tapes have been pulled out of storage during our archiving project. The original tapes have been transferred to CD via our SPC sound system that you may have seen at our readings Monday nights. The raw digital master can now be used to make additional CDs and some plans are in the works. More details will be forthcoming in future issues of *Poetry Now*.

SMAC Video Grant

Recently, SPC submitted a grant to the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission for a chance to receive a video grant. This grant would allow us to shoot poets... let me re-phrase, film poets in action and compile a 5-minute video to be used for future grant funding, applying for corporate sponsorships, producing a 30-second television commercial, etc. More importantly, it will allow

us to show people what poetry is about, why it is art, why it helps to bring the community together and how hearing people's voices can make an impact on lives. Poetry is art; people should know this and a video presentation will be another tool that will effectively communicate to the public.

Thankful

Since this is a month of giving thanks, I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the Sacramento Poetry Center and to the poetry community. We have a strong group of writers in this town and have many outlets for reading and workshopping our art. Thanks to the Board members who have tirelessly volunteered their time and energy: Julia Connor, MerryLee Croslin, Rhony Bhopla, Traci Gourdine, Richard Hansen, Jose Montoya, Sandra Senne, Bob Stanley, Mary Zeppa, and Stan Zumbiel. Thanks to our advisory board members: Luke Breit, Patrick Grizzell, Burnett Miller, and Anne Rudin.

Thanks to our office manager Emily Newton for taking over the job, relieving me of some of the stress of managing the money, and doing a great job. Robert Grossklaus deserves thanks and appreciation for his job editing *Poetry Now*. Thank you *Poetry Now* staff for your hard work selecting from the overwhelming number of poems that are submitted; you are: Jody Ansell, Ann Conradsen, Tom Goff, Barbara Jennings, Pat Osfeld, and Ramona Soto. Ann Conradsen is also the proofreader for *Poetry Now* and without the great job she does *Poetry Now* wouldn't be as good a publication as it is.

Thanks to the co-editors of *Tule Review*, Luke Breit and Traci Gourdine, for their hard work and dedication.

And, thanks to this man, Danyen Powell for facilitating the Tuesday night SPC workshop for almost ten years now. Danyen, you are amazing!

I also want to recognize all the people who came out to Sacramento Poetry Day to celebrate the art and poetry community in Sacramento. Thanks too to Heather Hutcheson for her hard work at Fairy Tale Town and for conducting children's classes at local libraries.

Special thanks to Susan Bonta who has been hosting the fourth Mondays, Sandi Wasserman who always is willing to lend a hand or donate to SPC events, Tim McKee and James DenBoer who, as past board members, served with great enthusiasm and energy, and Rachel Savage, our former intern and calendar editor, who also did a fabulous job with press releases.

I also want to give special thanks to Mary Zeppa, Stephanie Antalocy, and Harold Schneider for facilitating the internship program and creating a place where interns can both receive "real-world" experiences at a non-profit arts organization and earn a few credits for school too.

The symphony is starting to play, telling me it is time to cut to commercial...

Almost lastly, I want to thank our interns for the number of hours they volunteer and the great job they always do with the projects we send their way. And, finally, thanks to our membership for supporting SPC all these years, for, without you, we could not exist. Enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday.

-Martin

Brief Bio for Rhony Bhopla

Rhony Bhopla was born in London, UK, and has lived in the US most of her life. Her poetry is inspired by her mentors and friends alike, who have come from a variety of places in the world as well as educational backgrounds. Also, she writes about herself, and her experiences abroad (not until many years later does she find the words). She is the newest Board member of the Sacramento Poetry Center and is planning to make a positive contribution to an already generous and dedicated team. Rhony is the founder of **Shilus** publications named after her mother Sushil (means good in Sanskrit), and recently published *Bliss, a Journal of Erotica*. Her poetry has been published in *Poetry Now*, *Tule Review*, *Poems-For-All*, *Clean Sheets*, *Tiger's Eye*, *Rattlesnake Review*, *Tea Party Magazine* (upcoming). She graduated from UC Davis with a B.S. in Biological Sciences and a minor in Comparative Literature.

The reading on Monday, November 1st, will touch upon most of her newest poetry relating to mental illness in the arts. *Bliss* will be available for sale. See the Calendar for details.

Take Back

You can't take back
the night of
blasting Baghdad bombs
or the night when
he rattled the door off its hinge
while you stayed still under your breath
until it sunk into your chest
You can't take back his fists against mom
or when you said to your mom "go back to India bitch"
Bitch, you can't take it back
It's like
the Hindus trying to take back
the swastika
hidden in their homes
perfectly placed on their mantels
Not in temples.
Hindus, you can't take it back
You can't take back shrapnel
embedded in tissue flesh nor
the tattoo anklet worn by the Grenadian native
blossom girl who once dreamed of a love
Innocence you can't take back
You can't take back
the moment you believed the
argument that genocide
has a role in life
And you can't take back
the desire to absolve your own life
when sometimes you realize
human intelligence and egotism

are unworthy of existence.

And while you can't take back —
I say this:
Give, you give you give and you give
until the rugged chafing of the ground
against your feet makes you one with the earth.

You give until your needs become unneeds.
Without one word uttered
you are one with love.

Here, take this—
love
a piece of me
my soul
have this, it's mine, you can have it. keep it. it's
yours.

—Rhony Bhopla

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Literary Calendar for November 2004

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

•1 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Rhony Bhopla**. Host: Bob Stanley. 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.

•2 Tuesday

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

•3 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.

•4 Thursday

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

•5 Friday

Albert Garcia and **Jeff Knorr** read their most recent work at Cosumnes River College, in Room BS129, from 12-12:50 pm. Info: Lisa Abraham, 691-7379.

•6 Saturday

First Saturday Series. **TBA**. Noah Hayes hosts, 8 pm, Theatre on the Boulevard, 1901 Del Paso Blvd. Open mic after. Info: Supanova09@hotmail.com or Sac_Town_Poetry@hotmail.com.

com. \$5 donation

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

•7 Sunday

Poemspirits: 6:00 pm, **Viola Weinberg** reads and JoAnn Anglin presents on Maxine Kumin. Sacramento Unitarian Church, 2425 Sierra Blvd., Rm 7/8. Info: Tom Goff, Nora Staklis, 481-3312.

•8 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center presents *California Anthology* authors: **David Alpaugh, Art Beck, Lucille Lang Day, Garry Gay, Taylor Graham, Stephen Kessler**. Host: Bob Stanley. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St. Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free

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

•9 Tuesday

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

•10 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: **Katy Brown**, reads from her new book, *The Quality of Light*; host, Kathy Keith, the Book Collector, 1008 24th St., 7:30pm. Free

•11 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 Saturday

Poems-For-All, **Robert Roden & Suzanne Somers**, hosted by Richard Hansen, 7:30 pm, The Book Collector, 1008 24th Street. Refreshments. Free mini-books. Info: Richard, 442-9295.

•14 Sunday

Stockton Poet's Corner. **Cyndi Torres**, winner, Stockton's Poetry Contest 2004, reads. 7 pm, Barnes & Noble, Weberstown Mall, Stockton. Info, www.poetscornerpress.com or 209-951-7014.

•15 Monday

The Sacramento Poetry Center presents **Jody Ansell**. 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.

•16 Tuesday

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

Third Tuesday Poetry Series: Dead Poets Night: **James Den Boer, Mary Zeppa, Richard Hansen, Susan Kelly-Dewitt, Luke Breit, Ann Menebrocker** will read their favorite works. 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.)

•17 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 Restau-

Calendar continued...

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

rant, 1704 Broadway. Info: www.malikspeaks.com or 492-9336. \$5 cover.

•18 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.

•19 Friday

The Other Voice: **Hanna Stein**, 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

JoAnn Anglin and **Luz Maria Gama**. 7:30 pm, La Raza Galeria Posada, 15th & R. Info: Graciela Ramirez, 456-5323 or Joannpen@comcast.net.

•20 Saturday

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

Terry Moore, Larry Ukali Johnson-Redd and **Au'Shaunti Pierce** recite

Candlelight Love Poetry, 7-9 pm, Underground Books, 2814 35th St, \$3.00. Open mic follows.

•21 Sunday

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

•22 Monday

The Sacramento Poetry Center: Book-signing event and celebration for *Los Escritores: Voices of the New Sun: Songs and Stories/Voces del Nuevo Sol: Cantos y Cuentos*. Susan Bonta hosts. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St.. Info: 441-7395 or www.sacramentopoetrycenter.org. Free

•23 Tuesday

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

•24 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.

•25 Thursday

Thanksgiving Holiday

•26 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.

•27 Saturday

The Show, featuring **Frank Andrick** and **TBA**. 7-9 pm The Guild Theater, 2828 35th St. Tickets, \$7 Underground Books or fromtheheart1@hotmail.com. Info: Terry Moore, 455-POET.

•29 Monday

Sacramento Poetry Center Presents Open Mic Night. 7:30 pm, Sacramento Ballet, 1631 K St.. 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.

Notchview

As when light reveals new aspects of the familiar in a subtle shift, these trails are transformed into lush, wet ferns and whistling thrush music, nothing like the old ski trails we have glided over for years, buoyed up to tree branch level sailing over the now mossy paths of late summer mushrooms and early fall flowers. We are alone in this today, undeterred, unmentioned in the moose tracks in the mud, the whirring of fall warblers in the branches, and the gentle rain misting the hilltop skies of this forest. We are breathing the peace of this place. It becomes our time for remembering who we are, what we can be.

—Colin Harrington

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.

David Alpaugh

David Alpaugh was born in Plainfield, New Jersey, in 1941, to parents who imbued him with a love of music and literature. Although he first became deeply interested in poetry in high school, after graduating from Rutgers University in English and obtaining an M.A. at University of California, Berkeley, he accepted a position in marketing and worked successfully in advertising for many years. It wasn't until recovering from colon cancer in 1982 that he quit advertising and started Small Poetry Press and later began writing and publishing his own poems. His work has appeared regularly in journals such as *Poetry*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *The Formalist*, and *ZYZZYVA*. In 1994 Alpaugh's first book, *Counterpoint*, won the Nicholas Roerich Poetry Prize and was published by Story Line Press. He continues to teach book design and poetry writing in the Bay Area.

The Young

are begging theory
to spare them from experience
politics from history
poetics from the line.

Some sprint, some hobble
to the table—all in time
break bread here
gulp the dead-black wine.

Art Beck

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

Castro Street

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

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

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

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

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make a point of using only the deserted

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lucille Lang Day

Scientist, poet, and publisher Lucille Lang Day was born in Oakland in 1947. She wrote her first poem at age six, and though she still thought of herself as a poet, she wanted to be a scientist, and she graduated in 1971 from the University of California, Berkeley with a B.A. in Biology. She continued graduate studies at Berkeley and received an M.A. in Zoology and a Ph.D. in Science and Mathematics Education. Day began writing poetry again during graduate school, took a class with the legendary Bay Area poet and teacher Josephine Miles, and completed the M.A. program in Creative Writing at San Francisco State University. In 1972, she joined the Berkeley Poets' Cooperative. She has worked as a teacher, journalist, and technical writer, and she is currently director of the Hall of Health, a small museum in Berkeley. She is a lecturer in Education at St. Mary's College of California and the editor/publisher of *Scarlet Tanager Books*, which she founded in 1999.

She has published four full-length collections of poetry: *Self-Port-*

trait with Hand Microscope (1982), *Fire in the Garden* (1997), *Wild One* (2000), and *Infinities* (2002). *Fire in the Garden* was selected by Robert Pinsky for the Joseph Henry Jackson Award. She also wrote the libretto for *Eighteen Months to Earth* (1998), a science-fiction opera.

Reject Jell-O

The man I married twice—
at fourteen in Reno, again in Oakland
the month before I turned eighteen—
had a night maintenance job at General Foods.
He mopped the tiled floors and scrubbed
the wheels and teeth of the Jell-O machines.
I see him bending in green light,
a rag in one hand,
a pail of foamy solution at his feet.
He would come home at seven a.m.
with a box of damaged Jell-O packages,
including the day's first run,
routinely rejected, and go to sleep.
I made salad with that reject Jell-O—
lemon, lime, strawberry, orange, peach—
in a kitchen where I could almost touch
opposing walls at the same time
and kept a pie pan under the leaking sink.
We ate hamburgers and Jell-O
almost every night
and when the baby went to sleep,
we loved, snug in the darkness pierced
by passing headlights and a streetlamp's gleam,
listening to the Drifters and the Platters.
Their songs wrapped around me
like coats of fur, I hummed in the long shadows
while the man I married twice
dressed and left for work.

Garry Gay

Photographer and haiku master Garry Gay was born in Glendale, California, in 1951. He attended Moorpark College and earned a B.P.A. degree from the Brooks Institute of Photography in 1974, and he has worked as a commercial and fine art photographer since graduation. He currently lives in Windsor, California, with his wife, Melinda, and their daughter, Alissa.

He started writing poetry in a variety of forms in high school and college, but only began writing haiku in 1975. He now writes almost exclusively in haiku, tanka, renku, senryu, and rengay. Rengay is an Americanized version of Japanese linked verse (renku) that Gay created and popularized in the early nineties. Gay's haiku first began appearing in anthologies in 1979, and three years later he published his first two collections, *The Billboard Cowboy* and *The Silent Garden*. His other collections are *Wings of Moonlight* (1993) and *River Stones* (1999). He often pairs his poems with photographs, as he did in *The Long Way Home* (1998). Gay was a cofounder of the Haiku Poets of Northern California, the American Haiku Archives in Sacramento, and Haiku North America. He has also edited several anthologies of haiku.

Haiku

New snow
the path you made last night
has gone with you

Slowly...
the scarecrow
becomes the snowman

Hole in the ozone
my bald spot...
sunburned

Bald tire
still getting good mileage...
as a tree swing

Family reunion—
again explaining
what a haiku is

Taylor Graham

Born Judith Ann Taylor in 1944 in Pasadena, Taylor Graham grew up in the Los Angeles Basin. At California Lutheran College she studied German, French, and Spanish, later receiving her master's degree in Comparative Literature from the University of Southern California. She worked for a year as a reporter and photographer before marrying Hatch Graham, a forester and wildlife biologist, and moving to Alaska in 1972. In Alaska she began working with search-and-rescue dogs, which has strongly influenced her poetry.

A late bloomer as a published poet, Graham did not publish her first book, *Looking for Lost*, until 1991, but she has since published five other books of poems, including *Casualties: Search and Rescue Poems* (1995) and *Greatest Hits* (2002). She has also recently published tales of horror and traumatic fantasy.

Chances

These are the birds who nest
in our chimneys,
bundling combustibles
where the draft
sucks flame. Or,
in a ramshackle weave
of sticks and string,
hang their breakable young
on a high thin twig
over nothing.
And if the birdlings grow
to any weight and feather,
they show them, by flapping
of parent wings,
one has only to outstep the edge
to fly.

Stephen Kessler

Countercultural poet, translator, journalist, and editor Stephen James Kessler was born in Los Angeles in 1947. He grew up in exclusive Beverly Hills and resented his privileges. Kessler received a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1968, and in 1969 when he went to the University of California, Santa Cruz, for graduate school, he experimented often with LSD, which finally triggered a transformative six-month psychotic episode. He emerged from jail and mental hospitals sure of his creative path, finishing a master's at Santa Cruz and going on to publish chapbooks and work as an editor. *Nostalgia of the Fortuneteller*, his first collection of poems, was published in 1975, and he has since published over a dozen books of poetry and translations. His most recent collections are *After Modigliani* (2000) and *Tell It to the Rabbis and Other Poems 1977-2000* (2001). He lives in Gualala, on the Mendocino coast, where he is the editor of the *Redwood Coast Review*.

Cigarette Case

When you come to smoke
with me in the mountains
I like the spark in your eyes
when we light up

the mist over the river reminds me
of the drift our friendship follows
through years of dinners in town
at Chinese restaurants where the beer
in our frosted mugs cooled and seduced
our tongues as we talked

in the pavilion of moonlit religion
tobacco was our sacrament
and the taste of gossip
left us reckless
with useless and beautiful
bad habits

Excerpts from *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present*.

On Monday, November 8th

Sacramento Poetry Center presents California Anthology
authors: David Alpaugh, Art Beck, Lucille Lang Day, Garry
Gay, Taylor Graham, Stephen Kessler.
Hosted by Bob Stanley.
See calendar for details.

URGENT E-MAIL TO POET PHIL GOLDVARG

*52 Short Stanzas from the 4 Directions
for a Real Life Hero*

*October 12, 2004, Día de La Raza
La Galería Posada, Sacramento, Califas
C/S*

I OCELOTL EARTH OF NORTH

I'm writing you
these lines
to complain

about
your unnerving
silence

this is the first
e-mail I've sent
in a long time

now I got
a brand new
iMac computer

because my old
Power Mac
just died

the very day
I tried to open
my e-mail

after returning
from Mexico
in Mid July

and came across
Graciela Ramírez's
sad message

to *Los Escritores*
announcing your
June 14 passing

at first
I thought it was
the tears

of despair
and anger
in my eyes

but soon
I realized

the screen
in front of me
was as blank
as I was

II
QUIAHUITL
FIRE OF THE EAST

I cried and cried
for the real
fool I am

longing for one
of those piercing
long *gritos* of yours

hermano,
I saw again there
walking around

the nurses' station
in the San Diego
hospital

just two days after
your open head
operation

hermano,
you were a true
poet prophet

willing to speak up
really out of tune
against the current

your poetry
as your life
was always true

to your selfless
commitment
to others

especially
the poorest and
neediest of all—

the indigenous
peoples of
las Américas

you knew
no limits
no ethnic divides

you walked your talk
and always spoke
la neta—the truth

III
ATL
WATER OF THE SOUTH

poetry for you
was an everyday
praxis of faith

all demanding
all consuming
all rewarding

a poem for you
was not a mere
abstraction

a poem was made
of flesh and bone
cried and laughed

often marched
alongside you
to many rallies

hermano,
how many times
and occasions

you were
the first to arrive
and last to leave

you really put all
poets of the land
to shame

you understood
the windy tongues
of many birds

with time
you became
a real *maestro*

of bilingual
codeswitching
barrio poetics

carnal, you had
alma y corazón
de chicano

los jóvenes
te respetaban
como elder

IV
EHECATL
WIND OF THE WEST

for four months
I have mourned you
alone in silence

my old Mac couldn't
take it and refused
any more commands

all incoming e-mails
kept bouncing
like my heart

but today it is
el 12 de octubre
el Día de la Raza

as our gente celebrates
their resistance to
global colonization

we are set to honor
your exemplary
life and work

and no longer
can I contain
this silence

I'm re-reading
and retrieving
all of your e-mails

you sent me
with your poems
and messages

that always brought
a breath of spirit
to my days

hermano, for me
e-mail cannot be
the same without you

I'm sure
this urgent e-mail
I'm sending you

won't be left
unanswered
forever

—Francisco X. Alarcón

I Have Loitered

I have loitered at city parks
Watching old men pick their noses
In the twi-light of insanity
I have observed old women fumble
In broken down purses
For non-existent dreams
I have watched children
Play in scarred sandboxes
Destroying sand castles
Like soldiers at war

I have observed growing boys
Slide down snake slides
Chased by keystone cops
Sniffing lethal gas
On death's window ledge

I have watched listened
And observed
Only to return home
And close the door

—A.D. Winans

What We Saw

The sign read POEMS \$25.

No, you said, it's PERMS.
\$25, same price for any style.

I said, surely a sonnet
costs more than free verse
but less than a villanelle.

Too obsessive, you said.

Do you villanelles
are obsessive, or the fact
that I saw POEMS

on a storefront
between La Barata
and the Asia market

when you swear it was
a beauty parlor?

—Taylor Graham

Insects, Flowers, or Birds?

Which is it?
Flower or wasp waving its head
from behind the trees of morning?
No. Just a girl— fourteen or so—
trailing her feet in the grass.
Her breasts are teaching themselves
to lean into the days to come
when their blossoming will be
nearly impossible to pass
without your eyes turning like stars.
A frog in a stone pond.
It burbles like your father,
until you see that it is your father
ready to give you
somber marching orders.
Get the hell out of here, Billy,
he croaks. Let not the day
waste the sunlight on your warming hands.
Here's a small green snake.
Lift it at the middle;
watch it become your mother's
most Victorian bracelet
as she smiles to say:
I know such beauty
may only be a dripping leaf to you.
A flight of birds comes to rest,
puffing from the morning's exertions.
When you are dead
someone will pull your wings apart,
pin them up,
immerse your guts
in amateur's alcohol.
But now they are
still birds' wings.
Whirring blue-green
and singing: don't be afraid, Billy,
it was the same for your father
when he could not tell
the beautiful from the ugly.
It will be the same for you
as you whirl in the ears
of every face
and lap up the beauty
of your sharpening desires.

—Mordecai Marcus

Lines.

Behind these
bent chords, tangled
wires spun through hard rubber
coating into outlets
that carry volts across
red metal teeth,
plugged sockets
at the recess of a surge protector,

an adaptor
of crystalline white glass
transcends the soft follicles
of light bulbs, knitting
at the knots
of a severed filament
with heat.

Long after smoke,
through this plastic choked air,
I see brown water
on cracked windows,

your eyes.

—Joseph T. Atkins

My House

January 8, 1956

They built our house
when I was born.
In an old photograph
two girls are hopping
over the mounds
of earth where foundation
gaped, forty-eight
years ago now. There was
possession in their spindly legs
and pleated woolen coats
leaping on something new.
Houses went up like
bank accounts then,
solid as footholds
in newly turned earth.
They built a house
when I was born
because they were dreamers
who would raise
dreamers within.

—Colin Harrington

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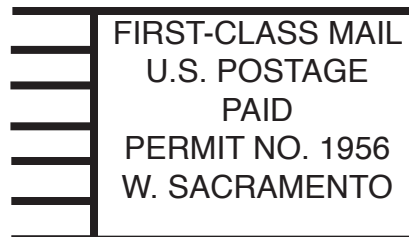
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poetrynow@sacramentopoetrycenter.org.

—A.D. Winans

a good poem should be
as satisfying as a ride
in a 57 Chevy
your first french kiss
an explosive wet dream
a good poem should be
smooth as Jack Daniels
tasty as Cajun creole
leave you high
as a Miles Davis concert
a good poem should leave you
topsy turvy
like Miles Davis making love
to his Sax
a good poem is like
eating Chinese
it makes you hungry
for more

A Good Poem



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