Featuring Poets from Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties

DAVID GITIN
Cosmic Nomads

SISTER KAY MCMULLAN
In Wind and Water

JOHN LAUE
Premonitions from Paradise

PATRICIA WELLINGHAM-JONES
Tastes of Spearmint, Salt and Snake

ROBERT SWARD
Father and Son

SUKI WESSLING
Mountain Lions

Art by Elena Samborskaya: thanks_a_lot@mail.ru
Welcome to the second issue of the MONTEREY POETRY REVIEW, a quarterly devoted to publishing the many talented poets who live in or retain strong ties to Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. The idea for this publication came about while participating in the Monterey Bay Poetry Festivals of 2003 and 2004, an artistic uniting of our two counties by Pacific Grove’s then poet-in-residence, Ryan Masters, who also ran the Whitney Latham Lechich Poetry Workshop. The first issue of the MPR mostly featured poets from this workshop, which is currently under the direction of poet-in-residence, Kate Spencer.

Inspired by the ideas of Joseph Brodsky and others, an important goal of the Monterey Poetry Review is to make poetry accessible — hence the newspaper feel and the free distribution in coffee shops, schools, community centers and bookstores in towns and cities from Santa Cruz to Salinas to Big Sur and points between.

The MPR invites contributions of poetry, reviews of recently published books, and articles on poets, poetry events and venues. This second issue contains poetry articles on poets, poetry events and reviews of recently published books, and articles (up to 350 words) on local poets and events. Send email (preferred) to: montereypoetryreview@gmail.com

Deadline: Sept. 15. Upcoming theme: “States of Mind”

From the Editor
Megan and the “Poetbus” Photo: Mary V Foyich

Waking in the morning, Gabriel lays his seven year old body on top of me, chest to chest, nose to nose—peers into my eyes with his own deep, dark pupils sheathed in brown iris the color of horses—says What are we doing today... as he does each morning, the running family joke, how Gabriel must know the plan, the design. I have no such need, could stare into his oval pools without hurry, till noon—nose the tufts of his hair scented as sagebrush, wrestle under blanket till the din & dust of the week recedes, fades. This he is content to do—curious cub tucked in furry fold of father. I linger, knowing his body grows as he does each morning, today...

Saturday

Saturdays

Megan

Dane Cervine

DANE CERVINE is a member of the Emerald Street Writers in Santa Cruz, and serves as Chief of Children’s Mental Health for the county. Over 100 of his poems have appeared in college and independent journals, including the *Anthology of Monterey Bay Poets*. His new book, *WHAT A FATHER DREAMS*, is available at dane cervine@cruzio.com.

Monterey Poetry Review, Volume I No. 2

Contributors - Ken Bullock, C-7, Dane Cervine, Patrick W. Flanigan, Jason Forbes, Kelly Frye, David Gitin, John Laue, Ann Maretra, Ric Masten, Sister Kay McMullen, Brian Morrisey, Joshua Pastor, Barbara J. Rios, Christopher Robin, Samuel Salerno, Jr., Elaine G. Schwartz, Tom Snell, Robert Sward, Patricia Wellingham-Jones, and Suki Wessling

The MONTEREY POETRY REVIEW accepts 1-6 poems from writers and students from Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, reviews (up to 700 words) of recent books, and articles (up to 350 words) on local poets and events. Send email (preferred) to: montereypoetryreview@gmail.com or by post to: Megan Lee, Editor, PO Box 5885, Monterey CA 93944. Include a digital photo or snapshot, a short biography, and contact information.

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Staff - Editor: Megan Lee; Advisory Editor: John Laue; Contributing Editors: Ellen Bass, Robert Sward; Publicist: Lori Howell. Special thanks: Dan Linehan. Staff openings - Graphic Designer, Business Manager, Distributors.

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Robert Sward

Robert Sward, born on the Jewish North Side of Chicago, bar mitzvahed, sailor, amnesiac, university professor (Cornell, Iowa, Connecticut College), newspaper editor, food reviewer, father of five children, husband to four wives, his writing career has been described by critic Virginia Lee as a “long and winding road.” In addition to poetry and fiction, he produces multi-media “collages” for the World Wide Web, works as an editorial consultant and leads workshops in poetry and Writing Your Life History.

Robert@robertsward.com
http://www.robertsward.com

1.

The podiatrist pronounces on his son’s divorce

“The time for sorry is past.
When a Jew gets divorced, even the altar sheds tears.
Rabbi says.
Look at these X-rays, perfect daughter.
Her feet we can fix. This is not a problem.
Perfect little girl, just a little knock-kneed.
My God, this is your daughter, a daughter
you’re leaving! Five thousand steps a day women take.
Fifty thousand miles in a lifetime. Where will that take her?
And where will you be?
Other people He created from the feet up
and at the end they get a brain.
But you it’s the other way around—and He forgot the feet.
All these years, all these years, and you got nothing on the ground.
In this life there are two things, son:
Children and money,
and in that order. What else?
Ach, so leave, leave if leaving is what you’re going to do.
You’re not going anywhere.
Truth is, you’re not going anywhere anyway.”

2.

From beyond the grave, the podiatrist counsels his son on prayer

“Where are you going?
That you don’t know, do you?
Yes, it’s me. Who else would it be?
You think I don’t see what you’re up to?
Wait, I’m not finished.
He’s in such a hurry to leave
but he doesn’t know the address.
Walk, walk, that he knows, the easy part.
How will you end up?
You think I’m hard on you? I’m not hard enough.
Where do they come from, smart guys like you?
And where do they go?
Head at one end, feet at another.
What kind of creature is this?
Meshuggener, a crazy man.
Two billion times in a lifetime it beats,
the heart.
And the brain, three and a quarter pounds,
150 million neurons. And for what?
To walk. What, again!
Walks out on a wife.
Walks out on a child.
You I didn’t walk out on.
For you I stayed—even now,
I may be dead, that’s true,
but I’m not going anywhere.
This is a father.”

[First published in The New Quarterly (Canada) 2005.]

* * *

Robert Sward’s father-son poems will appear in Kit Kat Club, due out in Fall 2006.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Beau Blue presents the first in a new series of internet broadsides:
MY ROSY CROSS FATHER, seven works from Robert Sward’s upcoming book, with mp3 sound, text and graphics at:

http://members.cruzio.com/~jjwebb

A Guggenheim Fellow, Villa Montalvo Literary Arts Award winner, and internet pioneer, Sward was among the first to embrace the Web as a viable venue for poetry and the oral tradition.
FALLING

Falling off last night’s dream
I wanted to be caught by the thickening air,
like my hand out the car window
speeding down the interstate.

The chickadee near my garden feeder
does this instinctively. She
steps off the branch,
– drops –
instantly gaining speed,
wings catching the denser air…

But I must learn it again and again,
letting go to falling,
– trusting –
becoming so hollow-boned
that I can extract the weight of doubt,
lightening my soul enough to fly.

February 11, 2005

CALIFORNIA GARDEN

The heavy gray of winter had lingered
so I had not noticed the cascades of color
the spring rains had brought to my garden.

But this morning the flames from
the wild rose, burning its way
to the top of the tree beside our house,
woke me for the first time.

In a daze I slipped out onto the deck
and was greeted by a wall of blossom.
The eager petals reached out their scent and,
like a small child wanting to show off a new toy,
pulled me, gasping,
round the corner
and into the astonishment of summer.

May 2005

IT’S HARD DIVING IN

It’s hard diving in –
diving into shadows
the scars of life
being cut off
separated from comfort.
You’d rather stay
on your own
small pebbled beach
and quit the struggle.
You don’t want
to go under.
The cold green water
will cut like a knife
and expose all
the raw tenderness
of dreams
discarded hopes
events that slashed
to the bone.
Finally, you dive
wary of hidden rocks.
Going in is the hardest
and you are surprised
when you catch
the counterpoint
of water and rock
and find a foothold
in swift currents.
You touch bottom.
SALT

You hand me
for the last time
the key to your car.
Salt water trickles
down your withered cheeks.

That same day
my old mentor
now wrung out of words,
is helped aboard
the hospice van
for her final trip
to the ocean
foaming salt spray.

Days later
a young friend delivers
a healthy infant
from a body salty
with sweat, tears
of gratitude drop
on her squalling son.

After autumn fires,
winter rains
rush down canyons
to the Pacific, mix
their mountain waters
with the salt sea
which, in another season’s turn,
rises to a sun-blasted sky,
then waters a seed
planted in a new bed.

[First published in San Gabriel Valley Poetry Quarterly, 2003]

BUNDLED IN RAGS

She walks the streets as if trapped
in a loop of memory, wearing costumes
snatched from a closet,
on the stage of our downtown.

Varying length, pattern and hue
a layered mix of skirts
droops over gray tights
haggy on thin legs.

She wears a floppy hat
above faded scarf over headband,
two jackets over a sweater
even in 100 degree heat.

Once she leapt into partners’ arms
in the theaters of Europe.
Now her little troupe has four legs each—
five dogs tethered to a shopping cart.

Each morning she points her toes
at the miles they’ll walk that day.
In cold rain or sun, unable to rest,
those old dancer legs force her out
bundled in rags.

[First published in Edges, 2003]
DAVID GITIN, born in Buffalo, NY, was influenced by the work and friendship of Allen Ginsberg, Charles Olson, and Robert Creeley. Moving to San Francisco in the mid-60s, he co-founded Poets Theater, edited Bricoleur, produced radio programs for KPFA in Berkeley, and associated with many of the Beat poets and legendary musicians of the time. Since 1974, he has taught creative writing at Monterey Peninsula College, and for 19 years, worked as a jazz disc jockey at KAZU. Among his hundreds of publications, Gitin’s work has appeared in Rolling Stone, The New York Times, and Poetry Nippon, and currently in The Anthology of Monterey Bay Poets 2004, The Café Review, Voleur de Feu, and Big Bridge. His newest collection, PASSING THROUGH, is published by Linchan Press.

COSMIC NOMADS

space curves
a closed
universe

resistance
waves
back to the center

the 200 million year
cycle ‘round the galaxy

what matter
collided to jar
the Pleistocene?

Mercury
Venus
a rise of speed

among the stars
suns
caught in our skins

life
membraneous
imitates the flow

that we too know
chance is it? moves
through us

SNAKE-ANTELOPE

antelope leads
horns sharp for the race
he carries beans and squash

snake follows

snakes

buds swollen, the coil

flickers

Spring

Antelope

dances with his gourds

snake

wriggles in other mouths

antelope-man

and snake-woman

are bound, hair strands entwined

Hermes spine
& its center
power

we distribute
to universe

TRINIDAD

mangroves overhang the narrows

mullets leap six feet

out of the water

and belly-flop back in

blue herons glide above

vultures perch

deeper in the journey

scarlet ibis swirl

alighting at sundown

like Christmas

and we return

LAKE LADOGA

vapor

rises

milky

white

birches
BEAUTY
above the tree
line
you
skyblue
canopy
I ascend
like a goat
into the o-
zone
sparking
fires
that continue
to write your name

AMMAN

evening
prayer
ascends
above city
traffic
full
moon
out the window
new
year

David Gitin’s PASSING THROUGH
By Ken Bullock

David Gitin—cofounder of Poets Theater at the Straight Theater in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury, and past participant in music shows (with Charles Amirkhanian), as well as former poetry programmer on KPFA-FM and jazz DJ on Pacific Grove’s KAZU—is author of eight books of poems, including two by Berkeley’s Blue Wind Press (THIS ONCE and FIRE DANCE), and his newest, PASSING THROUGH (Linecan Press, Monterey, where Gitin lives and teaches), his first book in fifteen years.

The poems in PASSING THROUGH range in mood from elegiac (“the door/slopes of light/your body/a delay/in glass”) to wry humor (“chuckle down/fear/year/after year/’smile/like a porpoise”)—both just quoted are complete poems, titled by the first two and three words, respectively.

Widely praised by older contemporaries—including Allen Ginsberg (“maybe the clearest sort of writing anyone can do”), Robert Creeley, Larry Eigner and John Cage—Gitin characterizes his poetry only as “lyric” (“the blue/rain the/silky descents”—from In the Write—“about as close to Verlaine as I ever got!”)—spurning not only the attribution of his poems to various schools (“the whole ‘gang’ approach to literary history leaves too many people out—Michael Hannon, Luis Garcia or Jack Marshall, for instance”)—but also the cliché of dubbing his brief poems “minimalist” (“Haiku, yes—but even more on my mind were the short lyrics in The Greek Anthology; I minored in Classics…or that story of Basil Bunting showing Ezra Pound a German-Italian dictionary that translated ‘Dichten’ [to compose poetry] as ‘Condensare!’”)

Gitin went to SUNY at Buffalo, where he met poet Charles Olson. But he majored in Philosophy; his advisor was Marvin Farber, student of Edmund Husserl, founder of Phenomenology—an interest he shared with poets Carl Rakosi and George Oppen, two of the poets (along with Louis Zukofsky, Bunting and Charles Reznikoff) in An ‘Objectivists’ Anthology, edited by Zukofsky, which Gitin discovered through reading Pound. Trained as a pianist and violinist, Gitin spoke of conflicting ambitions: to work with words or music; something else he shares with Jack Marshall and Carl Rakosi. Music finds its way into the poetry, but not necessarily as some other styles have represented it: “Jazz—sure, an influence, but I don’t think you’d snap your fingers [to the poems].” A linguistic musicality, not mimetic.

The thirty-four poems in PASSING THROUGH—few as long as a page—are noted as being written between 1965 and 1996…most of them originally published in the previous seven books, dozens of little magazines, or displayed in a few exhibits, on a few websites. These were the “originals” that have gone through a new distillation. Condensed from multiple stanzas to a few lines in some cases, they’ve also been rearranged on the page with a more visibly musical sense, emphasizing subtle, sometimes funny, rhythms and tonalities of language as it is thought, read, overheard and spoken.

They range over and touch on perceptions that other poetry usually makes thematic and explores discursively, as if what’s perceived has to be thought of before being seen, processed by an aesthetic sensibility before appearing in a poem.

David Gitin’s poems treat the objects of these perceptions in the way they appear through language, not neglecting ambient sound, what’s overheard, even noise…to bring up the analogy of a jazz influence again, there’s a post-Hawkins lyricism of playing against the changes…and like classical epistles, dialogues, they’re responses to others, to their language, sometimes making a language in common—not of rhetoric, but of nuance, shared concerns:

“For John Tchicai/ light eaged/broken air/ a thousand birds/ will not return/ flattened truck/carries a giant/ fish”. (This, for the saxophone-composer friend, best-known in America as a player on Coltrane’s Ascension album and mainstay of mid-60’s NYC free jazz groups—who’s recited Gitin’s poems in concert or had his sidemen chant them chorally—recalls Eric Dolphy’s remark that music, once it’s been played, just goes away into the air.)

Or: “For Carl Rakosi/ out/in the open/ the shimmer/of light/ where the blacktop // appears to end// curves/to continue” (The crystallized form of what Gitin wrote on meeting Rakosi, which could be read as a kind of Virgilian illumination of continuity between generations. Rakosi, always contemporary, died a year ago in his 101st. year.)

These elements of great themes, kept on the level of conversation, of friendship…or what can be said—or sung—to oneself:

“woke up this morning/ breathing oranges” [Portions of this review first appeared in The Berkeley Daily Planet]

KEN BULLOCK met David Gitin in 1970 at San Francisco State University, Associated with Theatre of Yugen (Noh and Kyogen) for 25 years, he writes reviews for The Commuter Times and The Berkeley Daily Planet and is a member of the Bay Area Theater Critics Circle. Some of his translations are on frankshome.org, which also features poetry by David Gitin.

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Samuel Salerno, Jr.

A lifelong resident of the Monterey Peninsula, SAMUEL SALERNO, JR. teaches English at the Stevenson School in Pebble Beach. He has an M.A. in Linguistics from the University of London and is completing an MALS degree in Humanities at Wesleyan University during the summer. His work has appeared in *Freshwater* (Connecticut) and *The California Quarterly*. He also has published a book, *Pygmalion’s Cross* with Lighthouse Press.

**FUGUE**

I.
One moment of air—
a flight of sound—
and I follow the staircase
to light;
each key a step
as if riding the whale’s back
to some unknown
communion with forever.

II.
The great tail hangs
like an unanswered question;
A thrust of life
and the tall spout heaves
its last lonely sigh.

We breach a final time
and then fall weightless
into the bowels of a cathedral.

**WE DREAM**

(after Antonio Machado)

We dream! We dream!
In the half-light
between waking and memory
the warbler sings to us.

Outside the sky is brightening;
the air unfolding its arms
to meet this day.

We are opening a door
within us

Soul, do you take her hand?

Barbara J. Rios

BARBARA J. RIOS, retired in Santa Cruz, worked as a law librarian in New York City for attorneys who represented the poor. Barbara has written five poetry chapbooks and published her memoirs.

**NO SPARE PARTS**

It’s not for me to donate
or dispose of myself for you.
When by some act of fate
or quiet death
I’m through
with my bodily shell,
it goes bravely
to its own hell
or happily to pastures
now unknown.
No surgeon’s knife
is authorized
to rearrange
or borrow parts of me or you
for interchange.
Perhaps if I were kinder,
as a tribute to longevity
I would offer my token
gesture but by then the heart
you want to transplant
will undoubtedly be broken.
So leave me out
of your recycling equation.
When I am gone just say goodbye.
No part of me would want to stay
behind
only to have a second chance
to die.

[From *Things Could Change*, 1997]

**HARDER THAN EVER**

It should be easier to die
leaving the kitchen floor unswept,
forgetting promises not kept
and wishes unfulfilled—
with creative urges stilled
or crushed.

It should be easy to let go,
choked by used-up love’s stale breath
or knowing of a child’s cruel death;
easiest of all to relinquish life
now that struggles no longer challenge
but torment me.

But I find it difficult to die
when, hardened by increasing age,
I am sustained at last
by unrelenting rage.

[From *Taking It With Me*, 1990]
to this illusive parasite
I must play host
for the rest of my life
by this cruel Spanish bite
curbed
my natural exuberance
dating from the Inquisition
an instrument of torture
perhaps
from outer space
left here by intruders
a surgical device
but on the counter top in the sink
in place it magically fits in
this spiny-finned pilot fish
watching it
dart in and out of my mouth
knowing that
it is secretly holed up
somewhere in there
waiting to eat
and although
it does feel good
to dine with molars again
symbolically
the moment this metallic interloper
was parked in my mouth
marked for me
the beginning of the end

POEMS FOR THE VIOLIN

Ric Masten

Poet/artist RIC MASTEN was born in Carmel, CA. With 18 books to his credit, he has toured extensively over the last 35 years doing readings in universities and appearing on television and radio. He lives with his wife, Billie Barbara, a poet/woodcarver, in the mountains of Big Sur.

ODE TO A REMOVABLE PARTIAL DENTURE

feigning nonchalance
like an adolescent
purchasing a prophylactic
I furtively
bought a tube of Fixodent today

a disturbing experience
although I am no stranger to the realm
of crowns bridges and caps...
remove the fixed frontal facades
and I’m left with nothing
but pegs notches and gaps
the sunny smile you see
is not the one I displayed in youth
but once the dentist’s artistry
is cemented down
and the tongue wearies of exploration
one tends to forget the truth

receding hairline
trifocals - liver spots
all have been taken in stride
but not this recent oral acquisition
this sculpted wire amalgam
skewered at both ends
stuffed with ivory pimentos
pink cocktail olives
barbed and hooked where it bends
this sculpted wire amalgam

but not this recent oral acquisition
all have been taken in stride
trifocals - liver spots
receding hairline
one tends to forget the truth
and the tongue wearies of exploration

or...? the tongue
as it will, if so

and to think
for the rest of my life
I must play host
to this illusive parasite

Joshua Pastor

JOSHUA PASTOR, born and raised in Monterey Bay, retains joyful memories of the region. He lives in Washington D.C.

PAJARO

Waves of mist recede
from the valley at sunrise.

Workers haul crates of berries
from the fields,
their footprints
trail
like feathers
from a dying bird
and bury themselves in earthen pools.

At the bend in the road,
a family gathers
to toss
fresh flowers
at the base of a crucifix
made of thin lumber.
A light wind blows over them from the west,
scattering the remnant fog
and swelling the valley
with a mournful smell
of roses and red berries.

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VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK: HAWAII

I
Look how cloud shadows sead across
the flat black surface
of the crater's floor.
Incense sticks, rice,
a few red orchids scattered on the rim
by worshippers of Pele,
the Hawaiian fire goddess.

On this side
of the circle of cliffs
silence except for
the rush of wind
through iron-tough bushes
recalling a faraway jet engine.

One white tropicbird,
its shadow far below,
rides the currents
exactly above
the crater's center,

II
A second crater's walls
are steep and stained
with yellow sulphur.
Steam vents
from cracks in the floor
where black domes rise,
hot blisters.

Acrid gasses
choke us
on the walkway
to the overlook.
A sign warns those
with breathing problems—
Stay away!

"These lava fields
remind me of
jumbled asphalt
after an earthquake's hit,"
says my companion.

I remember reading
that our astronauts
trained here.

III
Desolate craters,
bare lavas,
bleached skeletons of trees—
I should go home
yet this place draws me
with its vastness,
aves me with its waste.

Nothing live can thrive here long.

It isn't the hell I knew
replete with tortured souls
and twisted faces,
but there's something here
I recognize,

perhaps a memory
stored deep within key cells
and shared by each of us,
last remnant of an era
when the earth was young.

I hope it's that.

Please let it not be
what I fear: the urgent message
of a future sense,
a clear, unerring premonition—

EPIPHANY AT SEACLIFF BEACH

"where ignorant armies clash by night"
—Matthew Arnold

It's sunset and high clouds
are puffs of pink against light blue
while waves wash in and gently
break upon the shores of Monterey Bay.
It's a world of limitless potential,
a infinity of vistas
as the sun sinks into the crease
where pastel sky meets water.
Now as the whoosh of surf resounds
far lights begin to shine around the bay,
each a twinkling star-like point
against the land's squat darkness.
The spectacle's enough to comfort me,
to make me momentarily forget
the blinding bursts of bombs,
the white-hot glaring fires of wars.
All around this ample world,
each individual with his/her tiny lights
and his/her total of awakenings,
some happening just now
as separate globes go bright.
It's enough to cause me to have faith,
to make me cry out loudly, "Love thy neighbor!"
trusting that we'll win
the crucial race to consciousness,
the race against ourselves,
the crazy, painful, brutal, tender,
half-illumined human race—

[Helicopter and Volcanes National Park: Hawaii were first published in PARADISES LOST, North Star Press, Hiram, Ohio, 1997. Epiphany at Sealcliff Beach was first published in COASTLINES: EIGHT SANTA CRUZ POETS, Small Poetry Press, Concord, CA, 1996]
C~7

C~7, a popular spoken word artist in the Monterey Bay area, has performed for three years at open mics across the country from Virginia to Ohio, Missouri to Cali. He has recently been assisting as a host at the Monterey Rubber Chicken Poetry Slam. Check out more of his longer poems, his CD and local activities at www.cdbaby.com/cd/chamber7.

SOUL WINTER

Cold winds blow inside
Darkness falls in early hour
It must be winter

Kelly Frye

KELLY FRYE was born in Pinch, WV, and attended George Washington University in Washington D.C. She now resides in Monterey and plans to record a CD of her poetry and music.

SUICIDE

Grabbed a stone to eat.
Chewed away my teeth.
Swallowed them like pills
and overdosed slow and
turning like spit in a fire.

CIGARETTES

Pastel shapes on closed eyelids; blind
from a Marlboro in a hospital. Excrement
slips loose from my behind. I’m locked in
a psych ward, locked from my melts
while drugs, methamphetamine are
circulating like newspapers on doorsteps.
My dealer brings two squares. The sharp
smell of chemicals lures a nurse to my
bathroom ten minutes after I went blind
and that myself. She scolds me gently. I
want to hold myself against her chest and
cry why until it caves in and explodes her
very own healthy lungs.

FOOD CHAIN

Heard a mountain
lion caterwauling
in the distance. A good
kill?
Dreamed she came in
through the screen,
at
all the kittens.
But kittens, I said
to my husband,
would be like raisinettes
to a mountain lion.
We eat raisinettes,
my husband answered.

DISPLAY

against the frosted upstairs window
of the veteran’s hall, framed
by cinderblock and dim streetlights, a
violin
held to the shoulder of its player
her music turned visual
her solitude, displayed

Jason Forbes

Jason Forbes graduated from UCSD with a degree in literature. He can be reached at subvino@aol.com

PACIFIC’S EDGE

Walking along the shore of the Pacific Ocean
I picked up an ordinary stone
and noticed a dull similarity—a reflection.
Tossing the stone to the rough sea,
thinking the waves would change direction,
I realized I was wet
and cold
and my hands
were empty.

Suki Wessling

Suki Wessling’s work has been published in nationally distributed literary journals. She is also the publisher of Chatoyant (www.chatoyant.com), a small poetry press in Aptos.

NUMB

I am not
numb.
Trying to convince myself
once more of this,
pressing fingers into fists,
nails into palms to know
I am not numb.

Across from me,
this creature,
divinity,
awaits me
in his touch
if I could only feel it now.

I can sense his eyes
searching my body
for signs of nakedness,
vulnerability.

'I only,'
he breathes upon my neck
hoping I might arch it
to his lips,
'she were not numb.'

I pull away.
Tuck into myself for sleep.
Limbs draw into body
as fingers
have been drawn into palms.

Here in the day
stretched out for the world
(but not for him)
to see,
I ache.
I am not
numb.

ANN MARETTA resided in Monterey as a military wife. While working for the City of Monterey and taking classes at Monterey Peninsula College, she pursued her passion for photography.

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The Flowering Tree

In my garden a certain tree blooms every summer. It does not bear fruit but covers itself with more flowers than there are numbers in the world. Its joy and generosity are amazing—to produce such beauty and not have eyes.

Elaine G. Schwartz

El Mundo Desafinado

El mundo desafinado
llora por su alma perdida
la busca en los ritmos de la vida
absorbe el toque del tambor
de los altiplanos magicos
huele las canciones dulces
de los ninos recien nacidos
recoge los alientos sibilantes
de los ancianos moribundos
aspira el ritmo de las pisadas
de la gente descalzadas
encuentra su alma
dando vueltas sin cuidado
en los vientos salados
de los mares tormentados

The Dissonant World

The dissonant world
mourns her lost soul
searches for it in the rhythms of life
she absorbs the drum beats
of the highlands
smells the sweet songs
of newborns
gathers the sibilant breaths
of dying elders
inhales the rhythmic footsteps
of the barefoot ones
encounters the careless whirlwind
of her soul
in the salty winds
of tormented seas

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