

MONTEREY POETRY REVIEW

SUMMER 2005

VOL. 1 / NO. 2

\$ Enjoy.00

Featuring Poets from Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties



Art by Elena Samborskaya: thanks_a_lot@mail.ru

DAVID GITIN

Cosmic Nomads

SISTER KAY MCMULLAN

In Wind and Water

JOHN LAUE

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Tastes of Spearmint, Salt and Snake

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Father and Son

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Mountain Lions

FROM THE EDITOR



Megan and the "Poetbus" Photo: Mary Veselich

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 newsprint 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 from a few of the nationally-known poets who live in the Monterey Bay area, some locally popular poets, and poets whose work is being published for the first time.

Our centerfold features David Gitin, who sent in six new poems, along with Ken Bullock's review of David's recent book, *PASSING THROUGH*. David and his publisher, Dan Linehan, held a reading to launch the book at Morgan's café in Monterey. I was intrigued by his clean,

lyrical style that portrays much with few words, with musicality and with space. When I find a style that excites my imagination, like many of you, I pull out a scrap of paper and immediately try the form with whatever is on my mind at the time. Sitting there, I penned seven whimsical words:

Amerika

red skirt

white blouse

blue nipples

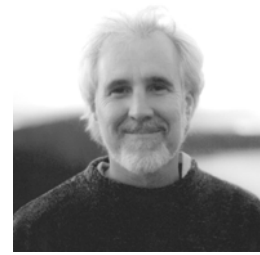
After auditioning it with the workshop members, and again with David during a class he gave with Maria Tabor at the Sunset Center in Carmel, I was surprised at the variety of interpretations these generous listeners brought to the poem. Listening, reading and absorbing flavors from one another stirs up and enhances our experiences as writers. As another small ingredient of Monterey Bay's poetic bouillabaisse, I hope the MPR will be a welcome addition to stimulate creativity.

To stay vital, the MPR, as a local poetry publication, needs local support. Thanks to the generosity of those who gave donations and took out ads to pay for the cost of printing, this 2nd issue expanded to twelve pages with a print run of 3,000, and still, we are publishing only a quarter of the poets who submitted their work.

How can you help?—Send a donation, do creative advertising—perhaps for your own book, favorite charity, writing class, open mic event or business, pass the hat at your writing group, or ask your town or arts council for a grant. Money raised goes only for printing costs. We also need volunteers to help with distribution, organization, and publicity.

Thank you for contributing your talent, time and support to the MONTEREY POETRY REVIEW.

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 *The Anthology of Monterey Bay Poets*. His new book, *WHAT A FATHER DREAMS*, is available at danecervine@cruzio.com.

SATURDAYS

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 each pulsing second, will soon become a bear too lumbering & restless to cuddle up close, nose to nose, black pupils pouring into each other as waterfall, as dark maple syrup ladled in this cradle of chest—muzzle to muzzle lapping the sweet taste of morning.

[First published in the *Hudson Review New Writers Edition*]

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 Maretta, Ric Masten, Sister Kay McMullen, Brian Morrissey, 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.

Deadline: Sept. 15. Upcoming theme: "States of Mind"

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

"How to pray?
You're gonna need a password.
But not now. And you're gonna see
it's numbers, not words. Didn't I tell you: if it's got words,
it's not prayer, and it's not a password either.
So what if I'm dead? What does that matter?
You think you bury your father and that's the end?
Schmegegge! What are you thinking, that the living
have a monopoly on life?
Give the dead some credit.
I didn't just die, you know. Think of the preparation. A man
has to get himself ready. And what did I ask?
That you pay your respects. So light the *yizkor*,
light the candle. *Ol!*
Tear the clothes, rend the garment, I said, and that you did.
Point my feet toward the door, I said, and that you did.

God takes what He takes, son, and the body follows.
But prayer? Prayer? Where was the prayer?
Listen: God created us first the feet,
then the rest.
So? So we bow the head when we pray
to show respect. Cover the head,
where's your *yarmulke*? *Daven, daven*,
rock back and forth... Now ask:
'Who am I? Who *am* I?
What am I here for?'
These are the things you ask,
but this is not prayer.
It's what you need to know before you start.
Why are we here? We're here to mend the world.
That's it.
Just remember, God doesn't answer prayers.
So don't ask.
Don't ask for anything.
Shopping is shopping. Prayer is prayer.
Don't confuse the two."

3.

This is a Father

"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?
Mesbuggener, 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.]

* * *

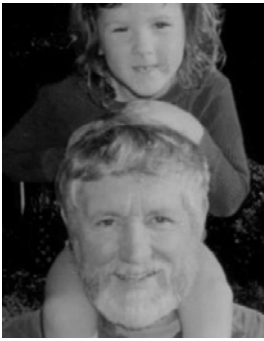
Robert Sward's father-son poems will appear in KIT KAT CLUB,
due out in Fall 2006.

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.



Tom Snell

TOM SNELL is a delighted grandfather with early roots on Maine's coastal islands. He now lives in Aptos.

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

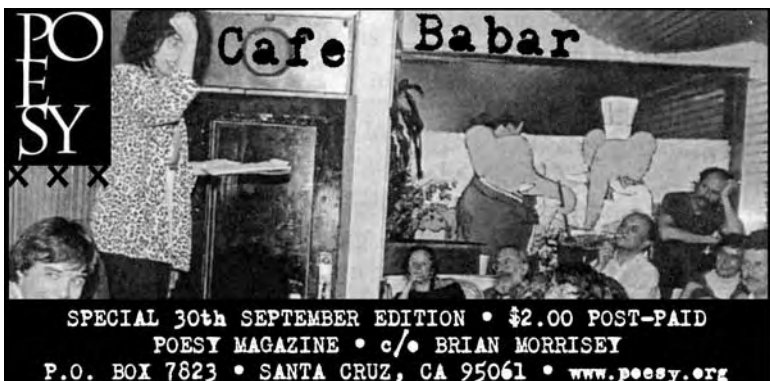
CALIFORNIA GARDEN

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



Kay McMullen

SISTER KAY MCMULLEN, SND, has had a life-long and continuing connection with the Monterey Peninsula, where she taught at the Mission School in Carmel, served on the staff at Villa Angelica, worked at the John XXIII AIDS Ministry and the Monterey County AIDS Project, and where she met the late Don Marsh, a Carmel Valley poet who encouraged her to write. She has read her poetry at the Portofino Café in Pacific Grove and on John Dotson's poetry program on KAZU. She is now a writer and researcher for the development office for her religious community, the Sisters of Notre Dame in Belmont, California, where she continues to be a part-time, early morning and stolen days poet.

STAND IN THE WIND

Stand in the wind where the continent ends.
The meadow is spicy with mustard's bright yellow
And the wind blows through you until you are the wind
Blowing gold poppies and orange painted cups.

The meadow is spicy with mustard's bright yellow
Before you the Pacific tosses indigo blue
All around dance poppies and orange painted cups
Tiny scarlet pimpernel and sweet scented alyssum.

Before you the Pacific tosses indigo blue
To the north Carmel River curls silent and green
At your feet scarlet pimpernel and sweet scented alyssum
Above the sky puffs huge billows of cloud.

To the north Carmel River curls silent and green
Weaves its channel through banks of white sand
Above the sky puffs huge billows of cloud
Behind you mountain forests of cypress and pine.

The river weaves through banks of white sand
And the wind blows through you and you are wind
In mountain forests of cypress and pine.
You are the wind where the continent ends.

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.



Patricia
Wellingham-Jones

PATRICIA WELLINGHAM-JONES, former psychology researcher, writer, editor and lecturer, is widely published in journals, anthologies and online. Her work appears in the *Anthology of Monterey Bay Poets* and *Poesy*. She won the 2003 Reuben Rose International Poetry Prize (Israel), grand prize in *Apollo's Lyre* Surprise Poetry Slam contest 2004, 2nd place in *A Long Story Short* Women's Issues contest 2004, and is a three-time Pushcart Prize nominee.

ARTIST'S TRUNK

I want to ride
in the back of Sylvia's car,
curled under the lid
of her trunk,
make a nest in the textiles
jumbled there: the pink
towel with white roses
wadded against
magenta terry,
the royal blue nylon
sleeping bag bunched
on sky-blue dropcloth.

I want to bury my face
in the down pillow,
wrap my shoulders
in a purple cobweb
of lacy wool shawl,
shove my feet
into the beaded
leather slippers.

I want to ride
home to Sylvia's studio
snuggled in orange jacket,
crimson robe
and suck on a green
spearmint drop
as I float
among colors like flavors,
textures like songs,
paintings like poems.

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

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 *Up & Under, Quick & Dirty Review*, 2005]

ASPIRIN AND THE SNAKE

Nicknamed Aspirin, the camp nurse
liked to hang out in the lodge kitchen
up to her elbows in potato salad,
wielding a wicked blade,
slapping hamburger patties
as if they had names.

On the Fourth of July
counselors gathered in the lodge
after they tucked campers
worn out from the holiday
into bedrolls, heard a few prayers, wiped
a few homesick tears. The young women
wound down from a siege of herding
small girls through outdoor fun.

That evening the 20-year-olds
entered the kitchen giggling,
dangled a rattlesnake—headless, with
buttons—
in front of the cook. They asked her
to cook it for them, didn't count
on her big-city ways: eyes rolled back
in her head as she crashed to the floor.

Aspirin glared at the girls, revived the cook,
helped her out to her cabin, to bed.

Returned
to the kitchen to dress down the counselors.
Shocked out of their laughter, they stood
shuffling from foot to foot.

Old enough to wag her finger and scold,
young enough to share the adventure,
Aspirin sent the girls out to skin and clean
the snake, found a big frying pan.
Late that night, swearing secrecy, they all sat
in front of a fire, washed down golden fried
rattlesnake rings with Pepsis and ghost
stories.

[First published in *Rattlesnake Review*, 2005]

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
baggy 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 *Edgz*, 2003]

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SUMRALL | DAVID SWANGER | ROBERT SWARD |
PATRICE VECCHIONE | GARY YOUNG | DEE ROE



Photo: Dan Linehan

David Gitin

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*, *Volour de Feu*, and *Big Bridge*. His newest collection, *PASSING THROUGH*, is published by Linehan 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

carrying water

buds swollen, the coil

flickers

Spring

antelope

dances with his gourds

snake

wiggles in other mouths

antelope-man

and snake-woman

are bound, hair strands entwined

Hermetic 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

on green trees

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

sparkling

fires

that continue

to write your name

AMMAN

evening

prayer

ascends

above city

traffic

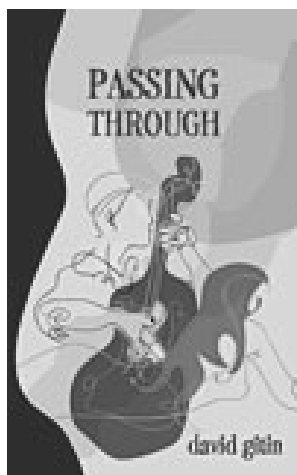
full

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* (Linehan 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 Wrists*—“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 caged/broken air//a thousand birds/will not return//flatbed 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.)

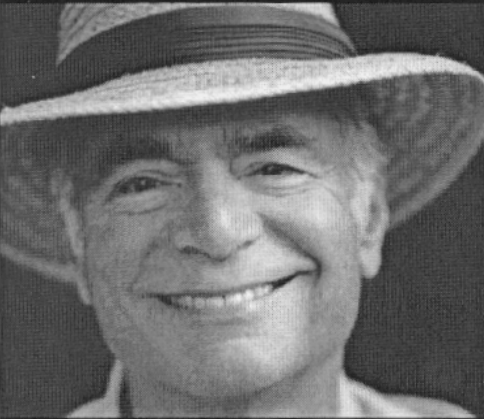
These elements of great themes, kept on the level of conversation, of friendship...or what can be said—or sung—to oneself:

“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.

Robert Sward
THE COLLECTED POEMS
1957-2004



INCLUDES POETRY FROM

Kissing the Dancer
Four Incarnations
Rosicrucian in the Basement
Heavenly Sex

*"I like the wide sweep of it. The father figure comes through consistently, there's a lot of buoyancy, and the son is consistent and fine too."
 —Robert Bly—
 (on Rosicrucian in the Basement)*

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 —Dana Gioia—*

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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

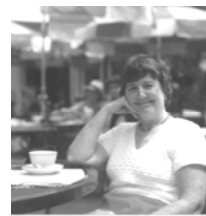
(after Antonio Machado)

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
 to let that light in.

At the threshold
 a child waits patiently;
 she stands by the door
 and asks us to play.

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]

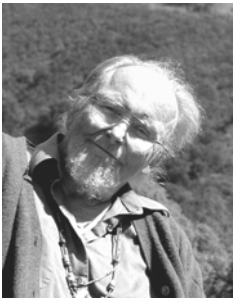
HARDER THAN EVER

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]



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
barbed and hooked where it bends
pink cocktail olives
stuffed with ivory pimentos
skewered at both ends

in place it magically fits in
but on the counter top in the sink
it appears sinister
like some gleaming
surgical device
left here by intruders
from outer space
perhaps
an instrument of torture
dating from the Inquisition
my natural exuberance
curbed
by this cruel Spanish bit

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

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



Joshua Pastor

JOSHUA PASTOR, born and raised in Monterey Bay, retains joyous 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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Wired Wash Café Open Mic
FRIDAY 7 pm Sign up – 7:30 Start
135 Laurel Street @ Pacific, Santa Cruz
<http://www.geocities.com/poesyinc>



A.D. Winans at the April 20th reading

THE WIRED WASH CAFÉ

By Christopher Robin and Brian Morrisey

THE WIRED POETS, as we like to refer to them, are poets who've lived hard, long and deliberate, seeing everything. Their experiences may not be that different from the man doing his laundry a few feet away from our mic stand. The Wired Wash Café readings are the only free speech open mic in Santa Cruz featuring poets from all over the country.

When the big-wigs show up: Winans, Cherkovski, Nicosia, to our little hole-in-the-wall poetry venue, very gracious but not always talkative, I wonder why the folks in our little artsy-fartsy town have not jammed the place up to the rafters, lined the staircase and snatched every available chair; come in from the outside, put down their 40 oz., stubbed out their cigarettes, bought some coffee or nothing at all, and sat their asses down to hear some real cold, brilliant truth? (And with considerable promotion, all hands on with no outside funding, but the local weeklies rarely run our press releases, if at all).

Sure they've made their bones, and they have the unique gift to shake us out of our collective apathy, to strike us where it is most needed. A woman who'd never been to our reading before, walked in one Friday when A.D. Winans and Neeli Cherkovski were hanging out before the reading and told her friend: "I just walked in and felt at home right away." Poetry is not dead and it hasn't all been said before. We are all a part of it, this small press web (and not necessarily the internet, but we'll include it, to be fair). I still meet my heroes through the mail and often they show up at the Laundromat. Poetry is very relevant in this pseudo-democracy, fascist corporate-run country called the USA. Take part, I say to you, the same thing I tell the homeless guy peering into the window on a Friday night. Take part. It's for everybody. "It's all about getting together, man, and it's free."



Brian and the "Wired Poets" of the WWC welcome all to the Friday open mic in Santa Cruz



John Laue

JOHN LAUE, a former Associate Editor of the national literary journal, *San Francisco Review*, won the Poetry World Award in 1997, and his forty-page chapbook, *PARADISES LOST* was published by Northstar Press (Hiram, Ohio). His poems have appeared in numerous places, including the anthology *Grow Old Along With Me* (Papier Mache Press), the audio tape of which, read by Ed Asner and Ellen Burstyn, was one of five finalists for 1997's Spoken Word Grammy Award (won by Hilary Clinton) and the poetry textbook, *Snapshots of Planet Earth* (Oxford University Press, Australia). Since retiring from teaching in 1992, John has been a Coordinator of the Writers Union Reading Series in Carmel, California and the local Chapter's annual national poetry competition.

THE HELICOPTER RIDE: KAUAI

"America, why aren't you more angelic?"

Allen Ginsberg

We sail past peaks and ridges,
wheeling, teetering by ledges,
barely clearing crests,
then dipping into verdant valleys.
Each new vista opens up
an alternate universe
which momentarily stops our breaths.
Then we pause above low clouds
our shadow, only yards below,
surrounded by a rainbow aura.
"That's sunlight separated
by the spinning blades," the pilot says.
We all stare and marvel
at the angelic shape and radiance
on that misty white.
But I believe I am the only one
who wonders, "Why not us as angels,
or the people who remained behind,
or even better, all our governors,
the president and congress?"

The Whitney Latham Lechich Poetry Workshop meets on Thursdays, 7-9 pm, starting again in September in Pacific Grove. Beginning and experienced poets of all levels are welcome to share their poems and receive positive feedback. Contact 373-1519 for details or email: pgpoetkate@yahoo.com

VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK: HAWAII

I

Look how cloud shadows
scud across
the flat black surface
of the crater's floor.

Incense sticks, rice,
a few red orchids
scattered on the rim
by worshippers of Pelé,
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,
broken lavas,
bare, bleached
skeletons of trees—

I should go home
yet this place draws me
with its vastness,
awes 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"
—Mathew 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,
an 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-illuminated human race—

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

The Rubber Chicken poetry slam happens every 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 7-9 pm, at Morgan's Café, 498 Washington St., Monterey. Hosts Garland Thompson Jr., Kitty Petrucelli and C-7 welcome you to participate in the open mic and the slam, or to just come by to listen to and enjoy the spoken word. \$2 to \$5 at the door.



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 smokes while drugs, methamphetamines 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 shat 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.



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.

FOOD CHAIN

Heard a mountain
lion caterwauling
in the distance. A good
kill?

Dreamed she came in
through the screen,
ate
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.



Ann Maretta

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.

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.

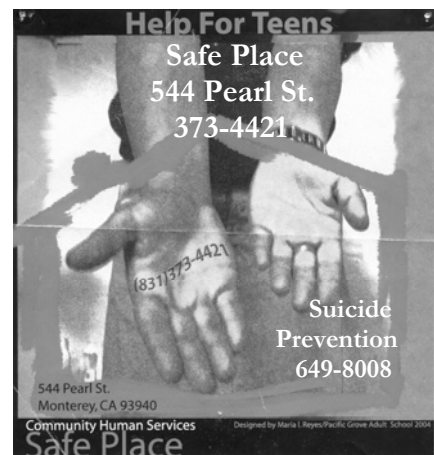
Across from me,
this creature,
divinity,
awaits me
in his touch
if I could only feel it now.

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

'If 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.





Patrick W. Flanigan, M.D

PATRICK W. FLANIGAN is a hematologist and medical oncologist practicing in Salinas, California. He is the author of two poetry books, SURVIVING THE STORM and MILK AND COFFEE.

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.

FOG

Some mornings are very quiet.

Fog obscures color and detail,
muffles sounds,
keeps birds in their nests,
whispers "stay in bed."

It bathes plants and earth,
bejewels spider webs,
moistens rose buds,
silences footsteps.

Fog quietly delivers its message:
move softly,
love gently,
accept mystery.

[First published in *Surviving the Storm*, Pacific Grove Publishing 1999.]

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Elaine G. Schwartz

ELAINE G. SCHWARTZ, educator and writer, recently left Monterey Bay for the high desert of New Mexico. Her poetry, best described as a tapestry of place and political imagination, has appeared in the *Porter Gulch Review*, *The Anthology of Monterey Bay Poets*, and the *Canadian Journal*.

EL MUNDO DESAFINADO

El mundo desafinado
Hora 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 recién 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

[First published in the *Porter Gulch Review*, Spring 2005]

Lori Howell, Author
P.O. Box 2434
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831-624-5674
Writer of Children's books,
inspirational poetry, and
murder-mystery novel.

DISCOURSE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES...

--after Li Po, *Conversation in the Mountains*

If you were to ask me why I dwell at the shore
I would share with you the flight of pelicans,
Seals coursing through cresting waves,
Pungent wrack moldering at the sea's edge.
Bestow upon you sea spawned mussels,
moon snails, and sand polished glass.
We would walk the ever changing sands
finding comfort in the sea.

[First published in *Poets Against the War Internet Anthology*, 2003]

THE DISSONANT WORLD

The dissonant world
mourning 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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