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monterey poetry review

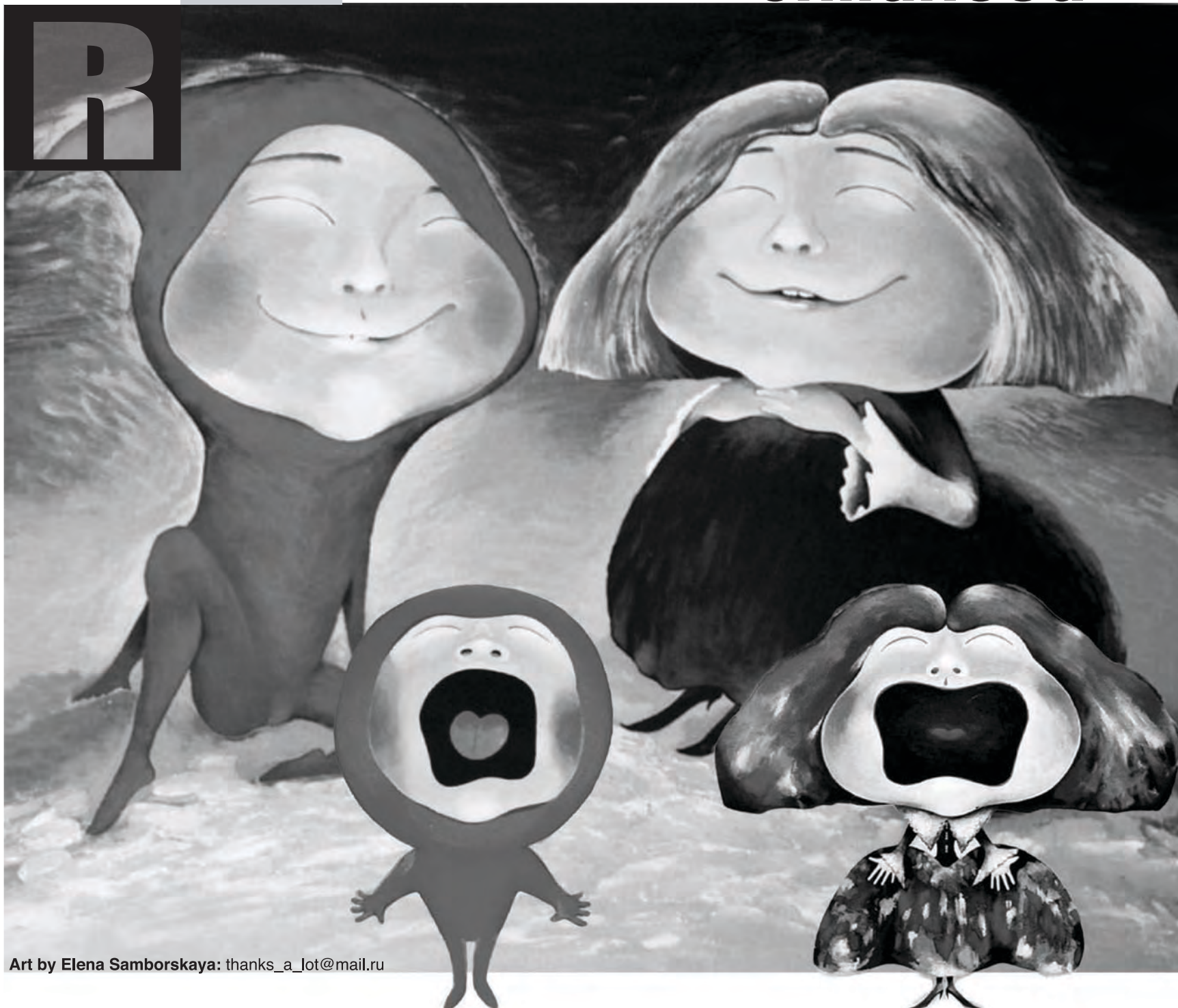
Spring 2007

Vol. 3 / No. 1

\$ Enjoy.00

childhood

cir. 4,000



Art by Elena Samborskaya: thanks_a_lot@mail.ru

featuring poets from the Monterey, Santa Cruz, and South Bay Counties

Gary Young 3

How beautiful they are

Rosie King 10

Taking you back

Esther Kamkar 12

Persian Lilac

Patrice Vecchione 6,7

Finders Keepers

Monterey Poetry Review
PO Box 5885
Monterey, CA 93944

www.montereypoetryreview.org

From the Editor



with their thoughts, memories and varied perspectives to create a unique issue. Thanks for playing along! I couldn't resist joining in the fun. — Megan

BABA YAGA

Forests in Russia grow fairy tales. I've seen
the birch ladies
clustering and whispering
in their classy upper registers,
too refined to gossip;
instead, they advise, looking down
at the young oak
who is stealing all the sunshine they avoid.
He's rowdy, undisciplined,
just a youngster bristling at being hemmed in
by maiden aunts primming above him,
crowding and crowing about him,
separating him from the inky deepness
where the hut that creeps on chicken feet
conceals a witch. I've heard
she dines on small boys
and fashions brooms
from their limbs.

SCHOOL BLUE

He scanned his past for a face
that eludes him, dream upon dream,
as he spoke of chalk and soft round rears,
each a face more memorable
than mere eyes or pursed lips,
each colored, patterned or flowered moon

in precise progression, grade upon grade,
reflecting his desire back at him.

Once, he leaned out from his desk space
and her full sphere brushed his shoulder
flaming blue ice. She felt it, too,
paused a millisecond, and did not
look back, but left the spot
tattooed with equations that he
could not see, and would never solve.

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**We apologize to Manfred Luedge for spelling his name
incorrectly on Page 12 in the Fall/Winter 2006 issue.**

**Special thanks to our supporters, advertisers and
distributors who made this issue possible!**

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This special themed
issue of the *Monterey
Poetry Review* marks the
beginning of our third
year of presenting area
poets and their work to the
Central Coast and South
Bay counties. We welcome
two new Board members,
Jennifer Lagier-Fellguth
and Belén Arellano, who
have given much time
and considerable talent to
the magazine. The theme
this time is "Childhood,"
and poets have graciously
sent in childhood photos



Maria Garcia Tabor

MARIA GARCIA TABOR is an editor of two literary
journals: the *Homestead Review* and the Henry
Miller Library's *Ping-Pong*. Her work appears in
Poets and Writers, the *iPrairie Schooner*, *The Cafe
Review*, the *Cold Mountain Review* and *Atlantis*.

GIRLS AND HORSES

In my backyard, I wrote a letter to God.
A world contained by a redwood fence.

Dug a hole with my mother's
Silver serving spoon

Bent with the effort, knees in dirt,
Sun on neck in a crinkled cotton dress.

Four years old, I couldn't spell
But knew God could decipher

My infant hieroglyphs.
Words folded into white paper.

I thought, "When people are buried,
They get to see God immediately."

I planted my letter, shaped a mound on top
And placed a yellow marigold as marker.

I asked God if he'd give me a painted horse.
My father's stone agenda

Did not include horses for girls,
But I knew that words somehow,

Could get me that horse.
Though I remain horseless

I still write.



Elizabeth Claverie

ELIZABETH CLAVERIE: I currently teach
poetry to middle school students, read
Pablo Neruda in Spanish, and train to
walk the 500 mile Camino de Compostela.
Moderately tattooed, I am unfinished art.
I enjoy all films, music and conversations
where words interplay like yellow jackets
around the picnic meat. I love city noise as
well as hiking through tall grass, listening to
field mice and water running...and from
time to time, I channel my dead brother.

SCATTERING DAD

she took a girlfriend

her sister
brother
husband
didn't want to go—

fog looped gray fingers
around the rise in
the valley floor
where she opened the
plastic bag that held
her dead father

she held it up
turned it upside down
dropped out the remains of
a 300 pound taxi driver
he fell to the ground
like wet dirt

a snake-like mist of
dust rose up from
summer's yellow weeds
just as the morning sun
strode proudly over the hill

you can't hurt us anymore
was all she said.

monterey poetry review, Vol. 3 No. 1

The mission of the *Monterey Poetry Review* is to make poetry
accessible to everyone in the community. We publish poets who
live in, or have strong ties to the counties of Monterey, Santa Cruz,
Santa Clara and San Benito. It is a free publication, supported by
donations and advertising. The MPR Organization is a fully
tax-exempt 501(c)(3) public charity and registered California
non-profit, for which all staff members donate their time and
talents. The 4,000 copies of each issue are distributed free to the
public in libraries, colleges, coffee shops, book stores,
community centers and by mail on request.

In this issue: Jessica Burgor, Marty Campbell, Francis
Cartier, Berta-Beatriz Cathéy, Elizabeth Claverie,
Cornelio S. Cocina, Nika Cruz, Patricia D'Alessandro,
Sarah Diehl, Nancy Gauquier, Philip Hackett, Francis
Hatfield, Peggy Heinrich, Esther Kamkar, Rosie King,
John Laue, Celia Lawren, Megan Lee, Barbara Levant-
Stern, George Lober, Ric Masten, Kay McMullen, Maggie
Paul, Zara Raab, Bernice Rendrick, Elena Samborskaya,
Deb Sandweiss, Catherine Segurson, Colleen Sundquist,
Maria Garcia Tabor, José Antonio Torres, Eleanor Van
Houten, Patrice Vecchione, Suki Wessling, Neal Whitman
and Gary Young.

The *Monterey Poetry Review* accepts submissions
of poems, books reviews, interviews and articles
of 300-700 words on local poets and events from
writers in or with ties to Monterey, Santa Cruz and
the South Bay counties. For full guidelines and
events see:
<http://www.montereypoetryreview.com>.

NEXT DEADLINE: MAY 15, 2007

The summer issue will not have a theme. Send up
to 6 poems on any topic in any form, compiled
in one Word file with a brief bio of 2-3 sentences,
and a photo (as an adult) in JPEG format by email
to montereypoetryreview@gmail.com - **Email
submissions are preferred.** Or, send submissions of
poems bio and photo by regular mail to: Megan Lee,
Editor, P.O. Box 5885, Monterey, CA 93944.

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Gary Young

GARY YOUNG’S books include *HANDS*, *THE DREAM OF A MORAL LIFE*, *DAYS*, and *BRAVER DEEDS*, winner of the Peregrine Smith Poetry Prize. His last book, *NO OTHER LIFE*, won the William Carlos Williams Award. Heyday Books released a new book, *PLEASURE*, last year. He edits the *Greenhouse Review Press* from Santa Cruz.

[From *DAYS*]

Our son was born under a full moon. That night I walked through the orchard, and the orchard was changed as I was. There were blossoms on the fruit trees, more white blossoms on the dogwood, and the tiny clenched fists of bracken shimmered silver. My shadow fell beside the shadow of the trees like a luster on the grass, and wherever I looked there was light.

•

The baby fusses. I read a book to quiet him, and he calms. His fingers open, show a lifeline, heartline, all the fates lurking in his flesh. He’s asleep when I finish, and one hand closes in a fist around my thumb. Somewhere he learned even dreams must be tethered to the earth.

•

Trembling and furious, the baby screams. He’s tired, and his own body frightens him. I hold him by his shoulders and sing. It’s a sad song, but he finally sleeps. It’s a sad song, but even silence can be a terror, and a violence, and I keep singing.

•

I’m a mother, too, she said, and took the child in her arms. She closed her eyes, kissed his head, smelled his neck. My baby is twenty-nine, she said, and she handed him back.

•

My son wakes screaming. His dreams are real; he’s riding a horse, and the horse falls down. He’s so young, I don’t know how to tell him all our joy is wrung from that terror. Did you like it, I ask him. Fall down, he cries, fall down. Did you like riding the horse? And he looks at me, stops sobbing, and says yes.

[From *BRAVER DEEDS*]

I was ten, and good at school. Reading meant the newspaper, Cuba, and missiles. I saw circles on a map; all of us inside them would be killed. At the market, my mother fought a woman for a box of powdered milk. My father said, at least we’ll go together. I wondered why he went to work, and why I had to go to school. And why was I the only one who stayed awake and planned escape, in a tunnel, underwater, in a car driving somewhere out of range?

•

I was afraid my father would fall asleep again, so I rode with him in the front seat and watched. That morning there were shooting stars over the desert. The mountains changed from pink, to red, then chalky white as the sun appeared. We crested a hill, and saw the wreckage of a car. A man sat weeping into his hands, and another man pulled a body, small, limp, and twisted, through the shattered windshield. Don’t look, my father said, but I had to. I was already looking. I’d been looking all along.

•

When Danny Lusk was sent to prison, I thought about the day he touched the devil when we were boys. He said, I know where the devil lives, down there, and he pointed to a hole he’d been digging. Help me, he said, and we dug all day. Our mothers shouted for us as the light began to fade, but we ignored them. Later, when I tried to leave, he said, no, keep digging, we’re almost there. Finally, an angry voice called my name, and I walked away. Danny stayed, and dug faster. I could hear him scratching at the bottom of the pit, and I heard him scream, I touched him, the devil. When I turned, he’d climbed out of the ground, and I could see the boy’s dark outline trembling against an even darker sky.

•

I waited for my mother in the greenhouse. It was warm, and I could feel the presence of the air. I practiced words in my breath on the windows. I thought I was alone, but an older boy in the corner called my name. I asked, how do you know me? And he said, I’m your brother. He said our parents had sent him away, but he knew me, and watched me every day. That night my mother said, someone is playing a joke on you, but I knew she was lying. I believed him, I still believe him, an orphan, a boy I could never be.

•

When I was five, I knew God had made the world and everything in it. I knew God loved me, and I knew the dead were in heaven with God always. I had a sweater. I draped it on a fence, and when I turned to pick it up a minute later, it was gone. That was the first time I had lost anything I really loved. I walked in circles, too frightened to cry, searching for it until dark. I knew my sweater was not in heaven, but if it could disappear, just vanish without reason, then I could disappear, and God might lose me, no matter how good I was, no matter how much I was loved. The buttons on my sweater were translucent, a shimmering, pale opalescence. It was yellow.



“The Monkey King” Woodcut by Barbara Leventhal-Stern

[From *NO OTHER LIFE*]

My son’s small voice wakes me from a dream. He’s on the coast with his mother, and when I phone them, he says, I was just dreaming of you. I had something to show you, he says, but you know that, you were here.

[From *PLEASURE*]

My son says, I wish I could be in my body. You are in your body, I tell him. No, he says, I’m in my self. Only my self, he says, and shakes his head. I wish I could be in my body, he says, and he walks away tapping one hand lightly against his thigh.

•

The boys have no idea how beautiful they are, and this, of course, makes them lovelier. They jog in loose formation. They stretch and run and never tire. Their uniforms, bloodied where a steel cleat has caught an ankle, or grass-stained and streaked with dirt after a hard slide, cannot camouflage their sadness or their splendor. They are so lonesome in their bodies.

FINDING THE POEM: SOME NOTES ON FORM

By: GARY YOUNG

I have been asked on more than one occasion to defend the prose poem, and to explain in particular how a poem can be a poem without ‘the line’. Curiously it is often poets working in free verse who make the most strenuous objection to prose poems, the same poets who argue for the legitimacy of free verse against those who champion poems written in formal meter and rhyme. Both arguments are absurd, and disingenuous as well. One might just as well be asked to defend the sonnet.

The prose poem has a history in the poetry of Europe and America that extends back more than a century and a half. It was appropriated by many of those same poets who first experimented with other free verse forms, and of course in China the fu, or poem in prose has a history that stretches back millennia.

After Appolinaire’s Calligrams and the visual explosions of Dada, after Modernism, Concrete poetry, Visual poetry, Language poetry and all the rest, to question the legitimacy of any poetic form is pedantic and unproductive. I am neither a critic, nor an apologist. I am simply a poet who has followed his appetites and his instincts to a congenial form.

My embrace of the prose poem is the result of a confluence in my work as a poet and my work as a fine printer. When I published *The Geography of Home*, an artist’s book in which the text runs in a single horizontal line across each page, I found myself seduced by a form that literally embodied the semantic landscape I was attempting to inhabit. My use of the prose poem is not based on any philosophic projection; it is a rather a matter of enthusiasm and practicality.

The paradox of any poetic form is that it simultaneously liberates and constricts. Any formal strategy will structure a specific logic, and every form accentuates or encourages a particular mode of thinking; I am tempted to say, a particular mode of wonder. Form is merely an architecture necessary to support the ceremony of the poem.

Readers come to every poem with certain expectations, and traditional poetic forms create an anticipation of the ‘poetic’ that prose does not. It is this very lack of expectation which makes the prose poem supremely subversive and supple; the reader may be seduced in wholly unanticipated ways. By eschewing the ornamental apparatus of received poetic forms, the prose poem must rely wholly on the music and the honesty of its own utterance. When they’re successful, prose poems achieve a subtlety and a power to convince that lineated poems can not.

The reader’s diminished expectation of a poetic experience also makes the prose poem an especially demanding form. There are no signposts which telegraph: this is a poem. Because it is prose, and shares more visual equivalence with the language we use to negotiate newspapers, contracts or personal correspondence, it must work especially hard to embrace the rapture of language we identify as poetry.

My attraction to the prose poem is emotional rather than critical. The prose poem is a maternal form. It is comforting and embracing, but it can also be smothering, constricting; once inside there is no way out, no place to rest until the poem is finished. It is a clot of language, and must convince through revelation.

But in truth, what I treasure most about this form is the moral pressure it exerts. The prose poem encourages a particular kind of modesty. It might even at times achieve a certain humility, a humility which may, through grace, be reflected back upon the poet’s own heart.

[Originally published in *Silverfish Review*]



Celia Lawren

CELIA LAWREN grew up in Florida, honed her political skills in Washington D.C.'s environmental legislation heyday in the 70s, moved to California to help save the coast from offshore drilling, and now runs her own consulting firm for Silicon Valley companies. She writes poetry and cycles the backroads of San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties in her spare time.

LIGHTING UP IN THE BOMB SHELTER

We didn't care that missiles in Cuba were aimed at our homes. We were
twelve-year-old girls running barefoot through wet summer grass in the dark
headed for a slumber party in the bomb shelter.

Cinder block cavern carved into basement corner, walls lit up in buttercup yellow
a curious Cold War feng shui conceived by my sister for her home ec class.
It was packed with Free World amenities:

central air and heat, running water and a full-service bathroom.
Cans of pineapple, peas and tuna gleamed under fluorescent lights
next to gauze bandages, water jugs, stacks of dusty army blankets.

Perched atop bunk beds, we painted our toes *Red Hot Red*
curled each other's hair around pink sponge rollers
licking catsup and potato chip salt from our fingers.

We giggled nervously as I lit one of Mama's smuggled menthol cigarettes.
Sucking ferociously on each stick, we mimicked the women in magazines and movies.
It wasn't until daylight that we noticed

the singed sheets and hastily rubbed catsup into the burns.
When the girls left, Mama told me she smelled smoke the night before.
I remembered the floor vents above us – one next to her La-Z-Boy.

I dreaded what was coming--could see Mama's jaw tense
feel the air brush my skin before the smack sounded, before the blood
exploded through my cheek. That thin bony hand holding

more terror than any warhead from Cuba. But she didn't hit me.
Gathering sheets to the laundry room, we stood
side by side, scrubbing red stains in silence.



John Laue

JOHN LAUE edited the *San Francisco Review*, won the Poetry World Award in 1997, and has many publications and awards to his credit.

POET AT TEN

On hot summer Sundays
when the air was thick
with the smell of fresh-cut grass,
he hopped in sneakers down the sidewalk
never hitting cracks.

Churches, their great doorways open,
offered him another world:
O universe of mystics,
bowed heads of believers
praying in the dimness.

He wanted to go in,
to feel the cool air smooth his cheeks,
kneel and sing,
nodding his head to neighbors,
but his feet would not stop.

Looking up, he passed them,
hopped through each tall steeple's shadow
like a toad by the legs
of a dignified, unconcerned man
who might, at any moment, step on him.

Help Wanted: An accountant to donate
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Thanks!



Kay McMullen

KAY McMULLEN, SND, is a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur who previously taught at the Mission School in Carmel, served at Notre Dame House of Prayer, Carmel, and with the John XXIII AIDS Ministry in Monterey. She now lives in Belmont and works as the grants and research coordinator for the SND

development office.

CATECHISM LESSON

The first question – Who is God? –led nowhere.
It sat fat and solid as Peter in the desk behind me,
Peter stinky with little boy sweat and tuna fish sandwich.

Then, the second – Where is God? – And Mystery sang!
Everywhere, Everywhere, rolled the answer –
Into the secret corners of our rambling brown-shingle house,
Along the creek that ran through Tilden Park,
And vibrating through Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*
As I lay on my back staring up into the rumbling underbelly
Of Mama's grand piano.

I did not get many gold stars for catechism lessons
But the answer to the second question is all I've ever needed –
Everywhere, Everywhere.

Lori Howell, Author

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author of children's books,
inspirational poetry, and
a murder-mystery novel



Deb Sandweiss

DEB SANDWEISS recently moved to Monterey from the Bay Area. She teaches P.E. at Carmel Middle School, and enjoys working out, reading, writing, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.

MY RELIGION

"We want the Masheach now!" we chanted
from the bus at the orthodox summer camp.
Blessings before washing the hands.
Blessings before and after lunch,
Devorah and the foreign yet familiar curve of Hebrew.

Friday night in our dining room,
White plates and heavy silver candlestick holders.
Dad's kiddish cup with a splash of grape juice.
Long Shabbat candles and a match pulled out of a matchbook
from the kitchen junk drawer by the rotary phone.

The family piling into the green Chevy
Off to Temple Beth Shalom. "We don't want to go."
"It's boring!"

It smelled of cheap perfume and musty sport's coats,
of wooden benches and worn carpet.

Sit and stand on command
Listen to the Rabbi chant indecipherable words.
Sermon time and we go outside, where we listened hopefully
for the "*Adon Olam*," our signal the service would come to a close.
The Reception Hall. Sugar cookies with colored sprinkles, *challah*,
and grape juice.

Kisses from shrunken old people while mom and dad smiled
proudly.



Sarah Diehl

SARAH DIEHL is an editor and writer in Pacific Grove. Her poems appear in *Quarry West*, *Red Wheelbarrow*, *Dancing on the Brink of the World*, *The Peralta Press*, *Porter Gulch Review*, *Convergence* and *The Anthology of Monterey Bay Poets 2004*. She is the co-author of NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND NONPROLIFERATION.

MAY CROWNING CEREMONIES

The gray hulk of church walls
contracted on our procession
of white; pale blue streamers
drooped from a satin pillow,
barged for a rose crown
borne on a current of hands.
An organ billowed, "Ave Maria, bless
holy Mary this church upon earth."
Our virgin fathers gowned
in purple and gold dispersed
tart smog of incense
with a soft metallic clap.
A select girl child crowned
the plaster replica of Mary,
her feet crossed doves on a globe
crushing snakes, her body gloved
in hard cloak of blue and white.
Every May crowning night, the red-
pink cactus bloomed on our patio,
fleshy skirts opening, dusty feelers
tossing pollen to the dirt, star
of its one tongue licking the ripe air.



Ric Masten

RIC MASTEN is a Poet, Troubadour, Unitarian/Universalist Minister, Song Writer, Philosopher, one who radically and rationally redefines the human experience in contemporary terms, author of nineteen books, and a friend and ally in the struggle for wholeness in life and living.

A FARM ACCIDENT YEARS AGO

the horses shied and the wild-eyed bolted from the field
racing back toward the barn
traces flying
the mower still attached
and running close behind
your father shouting an alarm
as that ugly snapping arm
reached out
taking everything off at the ankle
weeds and corn and hollyhock
and then in slow motion
sweeping through the stems
of two small boys frozen in surprise

and sometime later
in a photograph we find
those grinning little peg-legged Petes
proud as punch posing

though the color and shape
are exactly right
an artificial limb is what it is
and can be put on and taken off

but the story that comes with it
walks
and walks and walks

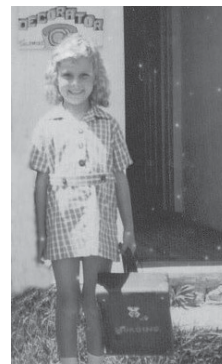


Zara Raab

ZARA RAAB grew up on the North Coast, where her grandparents' grandparents settled in the 1800s. She attended Mills College and University of Michigan, and worked as an editor and writer for National Geographic Society and New Republic Books. She now lives and writes in northern California. Her poems have appeared in *Arts & Letters*, *North American Review*, *Carquinez Poetry Review*, *Marin Poetry Center Anthology*, *North Coast Literary Review*, and elsewhere.

OSCAR

Not the tail-wagging beagle who followed her everywhere in the fields off Laurel Street—short-haired, spotty, floppy-eared, who later took up sheep rustling, not the black and white pugs, round-cheeked and -bellied, faces upturned, mouths dripping, rears wriggling—no, this was Oscar, the marigold-colored mutt who, the day she sat splay-legged by the nasturtiums on the summer veranda, trotted up from fields of corn and when she started up, sprang and bit—hard—her silent, upturned face, spilling the blood that sent its waves through her, along the dress she wore, her sister's dress, the one already red, now red again in each seam stitched by the mother's hand.



Nika Cruz

NIKA CRUZ moved from Australia to Santa Cruz in 1999. Her poems have appeared in or are forthcoming in several literary journals including *Rattle*, *Road to Reality*, *Rabbit Hole* and *Spork*.

FITTING IN

I keep thinking about it, walking over to David Pitt that morning as he cowered in his chair, waving his hands, trying to dodge the fists and cuffs of our classmates in 6th grade, his eyes wild, darting now and then toward the door. He could count on it, as soon as the teacher stepped out. A swarm of kids surrounding him, they'd yank his matted, blonde hair, split his lip, mash their heels into his old, scuffed shoes. Sometimes his eyes would catch mine and a smile would flicker across his face, as if he could tell I was different. I'd quickly look away, hide my face in a book or study my hands. But that morning as Angela Rominski dug her nails deep into his arm, she caught it, that brief gaze. She picked up a ruler, thrust it toward me, called my name out, loud. "Hey Lynika wants a turn you guys." The kids drew back, marched over, facing me now, chanting, do it, do it, do it! I slid my chair back, the warmth draining from my chest as I stumbled over, snapped the ruler against his back. The children whooped as he let out a loud sob, slumped over his desk and buried his face in his arms. I slunk back to my chair, longed for him to lift his head again, I wanted to say sorry, to hear him say 'I hate you.' But he kept crying, shoulders heaving, his shabby gray shirt tucked into his faded shorts, the room thick with noise, my eyes shifting to the door, quiet on its hinge, closed on us still.



Peggy Heinrich

PEGGY HEINRICH's poems have appeared in many literary magazines and anthologies, including *Negative Capability*, *Blue Unicorn* and *Texas Review*. She was a former editor of *Connecticut River Review*. Her fourth book of poetry, *A MINEFIELD OF ETCETERAS*, was recently published by iUniverse.

SEESAW WITH A GHOST

O father I rage at your loving me
only when my feet were bound
detaining me from straying
onto paths of broken brick

O father I rage at our collaboration
confining me to a tiger cage
I am a womanchild grown
to feast on replicas of you

O father why can't I ignite anger
from lukewarm coals of forgiveness—
I still want to nest my hand in yours
my small hand, my full-grown hand

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Jessica Burgor

JESSICA BURGOR is a graduate of UC Riverside with a major in Creative Writing. She has lived in the Bay Area all her life and currently resides in Hollister, California.

THE NAVEL

No excuses, no drama, none of that self-pitying bullshit. I won't have it. You, me, we're all scarred! From the moment we're born, all of us are amputated. Kicking & cold & shocked & screaming, covered in blood and congealed Crisco-like crap... birth brands us! The navel, well and truly, is a mark of trauma... of what a bitch it is just to exist. It's a symbol, our proof that we've all been crippled, raw and ugly, in the most drastic of ways. Yes, believe it; you too have been vulnerable! Mask your pain, we all know how; we're human, we're experts. Go ahead, pretend you're unscathed, pure and unmarred... but you really were once naked and attached. But that pretty, purposeless little scar is your right to be here. Sure, if you must, be in denial, run-amok, or run and hide from your innie or outtie, your bumpy little badge, your vacant little hole sealed off and away from being nurtured and adjoined. The cord is cut, it's been severed, dried and shriveled up, dead and fallen off... but you aren't! You need to know that your wicked wound that eventually scabbed over, is the first of many scars. Fine, you're secure, I believe you... Waste your life, feign innocence, lie... it's our way! Lessen the blow, soften the impact, sugar coat it... just look at the navel! We give it a cute, bubbly name and call it "bellybutton." Once the childish home of lint, dirt & grime...later, bejeweled and adorned, we make it sexy. Pierced & sensual, it's kinky, almost masochistic how we decorate our pain... make it pleasure. Tan it, skewer it, and expose it between short tops and low jeans. It's either the biggest lie... or the most honest fad we've had so far.



Patrice Vecchione

PATRICE VECCHIONE teaches workshops for children and adults through her program The Heart of the Word: Poetry and the Imagination. A frequent speaker on the connection between writing and spirituality, she teaches for UCSC Extension, Esalen Institute and other schools and organizations. She is the author of a book of poems, TERRITORY OF WIND (Many Names Press) and a nonfiction book, WRITING AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE: FINDING YOUR VOICE BY LOOKING WITHIN (McGraw-Hill), and the editor of several anthologies of poetry, including WHISPER AND SHOUT: POEMS TO MEMORIZE (Cricket Books), TRUTH AND LIES AND REVENGE AND FORGIVENESS (Henry Holt), books which have been listed among the New York City Public Library’s and School Library Journal’s Best Books of the Year. Forthcoming in spring, also from Holt, is FAITH AND DOUBT.

CENTURIES OF BELIEFS AND QUESTIONS

BOOK REVIEW OF PATRICE VECCHIONE’S ANTHOLOGY “FAITH AND DOUBT” by GEORGE LOBER

I remember the first poem that caught fire with me and the first book by a single poet that I devoured from cover to cover, but catching inspirational flame is not the same as laying a foundation—that experience, the building of a lifelong fascination and respect for the power of poetry, was reserved for a number of remarkably similar books, now all regrettably out of print, but deeply influential on me. All were small, poignant anthologies stocked with remarkable poems by poets from a spectrum of historical periods, cultures, and backgrounds; and all contained poems in a variety of styles. The combined effect for me was exhilarating: here were poets across histories and cultures revealing that poetry was a common music for which there were many rhythms and dances. Here were books filled with poems that spoke to a younger me, and forty years later, they remain books cherished for the introduction they provided to the power and beauty of language.

To this collection, I now can easily add Patrice Vecchione’s latest book, *Faith & Doubt*, an anthology based upon the two driving voices inside most readers and almost every writer. As Joy Castro in *Faith & Doubt* so clearly explains,

“writing poetry is itself a kind of wrestling with faith and doubt. Doubt that I have anything worth sharing with others wrestles with my faith that when we risk digging down deeply and honestly into our own intimate and quirky experiences and reflections, we cannot fail to connect with others’ own most private thoughts and feelings; and doubt that words can express what I long to say wrestles with my faith that the effort can lead me home.”

In this work Patrice Vecchione has gathered poets from across centuries and the world who speak of their own faith or doubt: be it the faith or doubt in a merciful God; faith or doubt in a childhood belief, a friend, a lover; or in the verity of justice or even poetry itself. In this small collection, poets as diverse as Martial and John Ciardi join the 13th century poet Sufi Rumi, the 8th century Chinese poet Li Po, the Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai, the modern Arabic poet Saadi Youssef, and the Native American poet, Stephen Meadows in expressions of personal belief and doubt.

Under Vecchione’s selection, Shakespeare and Nobel luminaries Neruda and Szymborska gather to share space with contemporary poets such as Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, Lucille Clifton, Kay Ryan, or California Poet Laureate, Al Young, and the resulting juxtaposition is compelling. Consider, for example, how in the first poem of the book, Kaylin Haught speaks to God and hears her say yes:

I asked God if it was okay to be melodramatic
and she said yes
I asked her if it was okay to be short
and she said it sure is

Yet later on, Akasha Gloria Hull watches God metaphorically crumble,

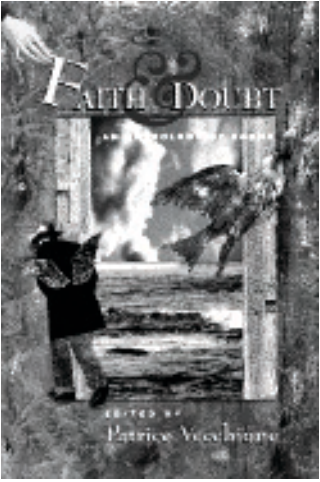
And he didn’t seem to notice
when the energy changed
His magic wand,
that marvelous staff of life,
became just a well grown stick

In *Faith & Doubt*, Elizabeth I writes of “The Doubt of Future Foes,” Charles Harper Webb speaks of “The Death of Santa Claus,” and Robert Sward in “Son of the Commandment” recalls the rigors of religious education. All speak to the struggles between what we choose to believe and what we question.

Two gems in this successful anthology include Vecchione’s own “Finders Keepers” in which the speaker’s father retains “a kind of faith in the possibility / a nickel has,” and Gary Young’s “When I Was Five,” in which the poet recalls the childhood moment after losing a sweater when, “I knew my sweater was not in heaven, but if it could disappear without reason, then I could disappear, no matter how good I was, no matter how much I was loved.”

With this work Patrice Vecchione offers more than an accessible anthology of good poems by great poets; she offers the comfort that literature can provide to all who wrestle in their own lives with the tension between belief and uncertainty, acceptance and disillusionment. She offers fifty-three eloquent voices inviting us all to the power and beauty of language.

[George Lober is a former winner of the Spectrum Prize for Poetry and the national Ruth Cable Memorial Prize for Poetry. His first book of poems, SHIFT OF LIGHT, was published in 2002. He currently lives in Carmel, California.]



FINDERS KEEPERS

Just what can be found with eyes open?
\$10,000 in coins, anyway.
Enough to fill a few five-gallon jugs.

When his friend asked for a loan,
“Take this,” said my father,
pointing to a bottle full
of the small money
other men leave behind.
A kind of faith in the possibility
a nickel has.

The wristwatch I wear daily
was left on a park bench
till my father came along.
Once, shortly after my mother left,
bills were due and Dad was down
to soda crackers and cigar butts.
In line to buy a cigar,
with his shoe,
he reached for a fifty,

Most people look in the wrong direction,
locating faith above them.
Pennies don’t fall
from Heaven.
They’re down below; more likely
to be found near sewer drains,
on the asphalt, beside dog droppings
and spent matches, worn shoes
even beggars leave behind.

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CHILDHOOD

If the hummingbird existed when I was a child,
its whirring flight, flash of color and tiny,
yet certain song, not for an instant, did one
appear to me. Nor the red-bodied dragonfly
with see-through wings. Never a bright green
grasshopper, dancing on skinny legs.
And butterflies were few. Of course, there was
robin;
everyone talked about his breast in spring. Ants
entered our kitchen upon occasion, a miniature,
short-lived parade I failed to appreciate.

How often I missed the abundant, native beauty--
splash of sea water or sweet clover, rose on the vine.
The present was nothing to me. Clouded by fear
and sorrow, days slipped through my fingers
like the shells of sunflower seeds, refuse
walked upon. The past I glorified or
spit at, waiting, impatient for a train
to hasten my future.

Now all wings--fluttering or momentarily still--
stop me. There is no hurry. Life desires attention,
to look and listen, not in preparation for danger,
but to catch a glimpse of the girl in flight,
her rainbow skirts a spinning top.

HONEY AND SALT

Not like there wasn’t any honey.
And not as if there was no salt. White as fog,
it poured like rain. Not as if we had no door;
the night came in. Not as if the cats lost their
tongues;
the china bowl never held its milk for long.
Not as if there were no books. Stories cut a
swath
through the forest to my heart.
Not as if there were no questions.
I asked them till my mouth went silly.
Not as if the road didn’t end.
I got to the edge of the cliff,
and what was I to do?

MY GORDIAN KNOT

In the silence that followed my mother's angry outbursts lived the dust of a thousand years. Thick, it clotted my throat. The rasp of her tongue wasn't the enemy nor sins she flushed out of me, though they belonged to no one. When she flung herself at me, a helter-skelter of words run amuck, tossed at my future, stonewalling my heart, she reduced her beloved daughter to prey. Each time, the awful floor refused to swallow me. All the doors of our pavillion were locked. Guilt twisted my insides; shame secured the knot. My fingers I picked at till the wet relief of blood. In my mouth a taste like burning hair.

Just once I wish I could have met her eyes, said, "No," turned on my heel, walked out in my patent leathers, pinafore unblemished. If I'd known bravery, I could have fled remorse, left it damp and squirming, staining my mother.

AND WHY DO YOU?

Because she was in the photograph all along only I never noticed.

The car was going faster than the clock; pointless to coax it into stopping.

The weeping came out my mouth, ran down my shirt, was insufferable.

Having gotten damp the matches wouldn't light.

Because he asked me.

I know what I know and I know what I have to lose. Or I know what I know and I know what I have to lose.

Because of the blink of her eye, her shoulder to the wind.

Water came up to the window, then retreated.

Because hungry, there is nothing like honey on the tip of the tongue; those nearly imperceptible bee stings gone wild.

After all these years, I am still afraid of the dark.

Because what is at the corner of the eye is always most compelling.

Her hand was held. My name called over and over.

Because of shoes, unbuckled as they are.

Because I am the flame thrower and the fire eater, and when I swallow everything burns.

Upcoming Patrice Vecchione Local Events:

- * Poetry Workshops, Monterey Public Library: Mar. 3, May 12
- * Speaker, Asilomar Reading Conference, Pacific Grove, Mar. 10
- * Poetry reading, In Celebration of the Muse, Santa Cruz, Mar. 10
- * Book signings and readings for Faith and Doubt: Bookshop Santa Cruz, Apr. 12, 7:30 p.m.; The Works, Pacific Grove, Apr. 21, 7:30 p.m.
- * Poetry Workshop Tor House, Carmel, Apr. 14
- * Writing Workshop, Esalen Institute, Big Sur, Aug. 17-19

For more info contact:

heartwrd@mbay.net or www.patricevecchione.com

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POEM TREES: POETRY TAKES ROOT AT ROBERT DOWN SCHOOL

For nearly thirty years I've been a poet who teaches the thing I love best. Public schools and private, elementary, middle and high school, libraries and community centers--I'll teach poetry anywhere. We study poems and we write them. Poetry gives one a way to say what's most true. It's a way for children and grown-ups alike keep the imagination-muscle supple. Robert Down School in Pacific Grove has made a place for poetry to flourish. Teacher Judy Wills and principal Linda Williams make it possible to bring poetry to their school. Crossing guard Mary Logan stops traffic so I can safely cross and librarian Bev Paxton alerts me to new poetry books. The children call out "Poetry" when I walk down the halls! The teachers ready their children for our workshops, opening not only the doors of their classrooms but the doors of their hearts. Could any life be better?



Patrice Vecchione with her young poets from Ms. Wills' second-grade class at Robert Down Elementary School in Pacific Grove.

Sway in the Wind

by Lexi Robrer

If I were a tree
my leaves would sway in the wind.
At night I would dance round
in the starry sky.
But in the autumn
my leaves would fall to the ground.
In the winter
I would be able to feel all the animals
asleep in hibernation.

The Breeze Against Me

by Jayna Nicholas

I feel some breeze against me.
I hear a rush and clatter.
In the corner of my eye,
I see beautiful leaves.
I look to see
where all this beauty is coming from.

When I turn my head,
I see a long brown trunk.
I step back to see it whole,
And when I see it,
I see a beautiful tree.

Climbing

by Joseph Escareno

There are four spider trees
at Caledonia Park.
One has an entrance
and half of one is cut off.
The entrance has a lot of branches!

And I climb it.

Blow in the Wind

by Cameron Reeves

I am a tree.
My blood is my sap.
My leaves are my hair.
My leaves and my branches
blow in the wind.
My sap flows to my heart.

I Love My Tree

by Kane Miller

I can feel the roots inside me,
going here to there;
they stretch far and come back in.
The blood that runs inside them
does not care at all.
My tree cannot walk and cannot talk,
but he follows me everywhere.
He follows me in my heart.
My family does not know.
My tree has fire red leaves,
orange, silver, and yellow leaves.
He follows me everywhere.
He will always follow me
in my heart.

Listen

by Alex Morgan

I listen to a tree.
I sense the roots of the tree.
I think about how they live.

Birch Trees

by Shira Kershner

I see a lake.
On the bank
there is a birch tree.
It's bark is white.
That means it is a white person.
On the other side of the lake
there is another birch tree.
It's bark is black.
That means it is a black person.

Leaves

by WooChan Shim

Trees have leaves.
Blue, red, green, or orange,
falling on the ground.
The rake is cleaning up the leaves.

Magical Tree

by Stephanie Provice

Once I saw a tree,
a big oak tree.
It had long branches
and a fat stump.
The tree was in my backyard
in the middle of flowers.
It had hundreds of leaves,
was shaped like a cat
in a garden.
its color was light brown.
I never saw it before.
The tree must have come here
by magic.

The Tree

by Mackenzie Sebok

If I were a tree
I would make air for people to
breathe.
I would let moths and butterflies
rest on my leaves.
I would make shelter
for people in the rain.
I would grow tall and fall,
then rot and make soil for plants.



Philip Hackett

PHILIP HACKETT, originally from Boston, now lives in San Francisco. Author of 20 books of poetry, he received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature (Litt.D.) in 1999. He produced the widely-known International Poetry Reading Series at the San Francisco Press Club and continues to produce other quality poetry events. For readings, contact: hackettphilip5@yahoo.com. Philip Hackett, P.O. Box 330168, S.F., CA 94133. Tel: 415-434-2001.

SUFFER THE CHILDREN TO PLAY

Whoever thought
they'd be sleeping in the gutters
in America?
In the doorways,
with their lost pride?
Sleeping beneath
corrugated boxes,
over sidewalk grates
in winter?
No jobs,
broken families.
Many let out of the asylum,
returned from an unpopular war,
drug addicts bent on slow suicide,
single mothers.
All
without food, clothing, and housing.
Education,
medical insurance,
a steady income,
for these unfortunates,
luxuries unobtainable.
Some
more fortunate among us
would have them identified,
would have them tattooed,
like those of another time,
scapegoats.
Their needs
won't pass us by,
wavering in this place
won't do.
Press secretaries
and campaign managers
can't excuse
those in the race,
not after looking
into the faces
of people
without even a place to defecate.
Beware,
be kind,
linger.
Look into their eyes.
Look at their wandering shoeless feet.
Lonely, weary,
their hearts beating,
still beating with hope,
America!



Berta-Beatriz Cathéy

BERTA-BEATRIZ CATHÉY was born in San Francisco at the start of World War II, and was taken to Hawaii by her mother on the last convoy in 1945. Since 1961, she has lived in California, Mexico, Japan, Spain, Texas, Minnesota, and currently, in the Monterey Peninsula.

STRING OF SONGS

from childhood, at 8 years

1.
Little boys with rocks
are hitting gulls and small girls
with sand in their socks.
2.
When a jasmine waits
she stays for the little boy
just beyond the gates.
3.
The hurt mejiro flies
beyond my helping hands
then dies.
4.
They lift no bird, those three
the leaf, the twig
and the fallen branch.



Francis Cartier

FRANCIS CARTIER, Ph.D., a Pacific Grove resident since 1971, is retired from the Defense Language Institute. He has authored four textbooks, four science fiction short stories, a poetry chapbook, and many scholarly articles.

THE SECRET

This young mother and her daughter,
Perhaps going on five,
Are both dressed in clean Thrift-shop.

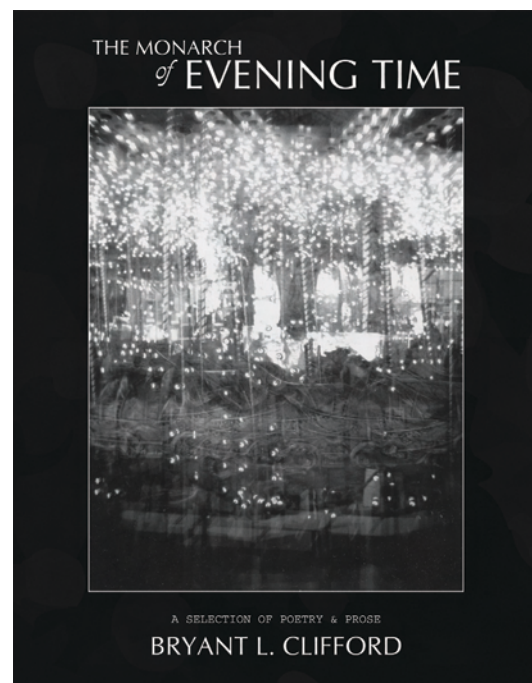
The girl is prancing along,
Grins skipingly alternating with laughter.
She's chattering in a giggling voice
That masks (from me, at least)
Any clue to the source of her joy.

Perhaps it all just comes from inside her.

The mother clutches her hand
And stares blankly ahead
As though dreading their destination
Or some grim place they started from.

She knows something the little girl
Doesn't know.

*Look for Bryant Clifford's
new book!*



Available at The Henry Miller Library, Big Sur
<http://themonarchofeveningtime.com>



Suki Wessling

SUKI WESSLING is a writer and publisher of Chatoyant, a small poetry press, and the mother of two growing children.

THE REDNECK IN ME

First year away from home
went to visit Grandpa, a man
I hardly knew.

He lived in a trailer park

a nice one, for seniors.
I ran through the tiny streets
mornings, felt tall
and much too vigorous.

His neighbors looked at me

real strange. Ritchie, he said,
(my dad) was the odd one.
When all the other boys
was out playin football

Ritchie he was always reading.

You can't escape your destiny
though I guess you can wiggle
it a bit. I was at Stanford
always reading, soon enough
to be emancipated Phi Beta Kappa

with nothing much else to sell.

But the redneck is in me, behind me –
when I turn real fast I can see it.
That wagon-circling urge
not to be too much, to love
the coarse things in life.

A trailer park. Walking barefoot
in summer. Eating eggs with ketchup.
The sorts of things you get
without looking too far out the horizon.



Eleanor Van Houten

ELEANOR VAN HOUTEN lives in La Selva Beach, which inspires many of her poems. She has been published in an anthology, *The Porter Gulch Review*, and *Monterey Poetry Review* and has read at In Celebration of the Muse in Santa Cruz.

BASEMENTS

On the hot summer afternoons
of my childhood, we went down
into cool, shadowy basements.
While sweat dried on our brows
and cotton shirts unstuck from our backs,
we drank tart, icy lemonade
played checkers and gin rummy
read movie magazines.
An old brass-bound leather trunk
in Grandma's basement held
her ivory silk wedding dress.
Gazing into a cracked and smoky mirror
I saw my ten-year-old self as a bride.
In auntie's basement, my first kiss
was tentative with soft, closed lips.
Afterwards we sprang apart, red-faced.
He threw a pillow at me to break the spell.



Colleen Sundquist

COLLEEN SUNDQUIST is a visual artist and poet in Pebble Beach. "I find I am exploring creativity in random ways. I constantly explore new styles of writing and painting. So many people encourage me to 'find a style and stick with it.' However, as in my life, I continue to paint outside the lines."

BOLOGNA SANDWICH DAYS

God how I miss the bologna sandwich days!
My only loss was the head falling off my rocking horse.
Exhaustion was the 72 rides on the tire swing.
Stress was the unruly kneesocks
I skipped down to my ankles.
Riches were counted in marbles and agates.
Frustration was those 60 painstaking moments
Of the countdown between the picnic lunch
And the inner tube.
The only terror
Was toads
And God only knows how they sure
Didn't turn into princes!



Cornelio S. Cocina

CORNELIO S. COCINA "I grew up in Earlimart, California, a blink-of-an-eye town on Highway 99, in Southern San Joaquin Valley. I journal daily, live in Pacific Grove and like a good dose of scotch to keep things...well, right."

PLAYING PELON

once when we were twelve
on a bad crazy moon in Earla
our stingrays flat
Joe, Valley, myself & someone
else?
roamed the night air
for the hell of it
we watched the streets
for purdy-eyed girls, empty
coke bottles, La Llorina & for
that crazy bald-headed
school janitor, we called
Pelon
& once, after yelling out
Pelon
much too often
after sweeping up the fifth-grade
he high-tailed after us
we ran as fast as we can
in this stiff night air
in Earla
me not as fast as the others
cornering at State & something
else?
snagged, oh Jesus
on a chain-linked fence
barbed-wire penetrating
my soul and Pelon here
sucking on a tooth-pick
pulling out a
22 pistola
or a brand new piece of
white chalk?
alcohol & tortillas
on his breath
"Do natcho coll me Pelon again!
Dju unnerstanddit me! Eber!"
"But it wasn't me! It was them!"

hard, cold, ground
echos of cabron and chingao
upon echoes
my side aching from fear
the others, mi amigos
los tres moscateers
at the next block yelling out
that man's name
it was all in the game
laughing & running & running
around
that night in Earla
under a bad crazy moon
alone & finally brushing
myself off, praying
to get my sorry-ass home
walking,
i turn & see
this crazy white-haired
woman laughing
making her way towards
me, chills racing up
my spine, ahh shit in gear
running just as fast
as i can.

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Catherine Segurson

CATHERINE SEGURSON has been published in *Coastal Living Magazine*, *Slow Trains Literary Review*, and previously in *Monterey Poetry Review*. She worked for two years reading stories and screenplays for *Zoetrope All-Story Magazine* and is an MFA graduate from California College of the Arts in San Francisco. In June, she will have a story in the *Taj Mahal Review*.

LUNCH

I decide we should eat lunch together. Actually my daughter decided. She is two. She simply veered off the sidewalk and into the café. So I followed. The waitress greeted us like she knew us from before. My daughter followed her to our table on the patio with the glass roof. I followed my daughter. The busboy brought water and bread. My daughter reached for the bread and asked me for some water. The water contained lemons. It arrived at our table in an icy pewter pitcher with lemons floating around inside.

My daughter decided to order the steak salad. Nice choice, thought I. So I ordered one too. My daughter passed the bread my way, and a bird landed on the glass roof. The bird began to peck. It pecked until our salads came.

When our salads came, my daughter picked all the corn out of hers. She set the corn aside on the bread plate. Then she held the bread plate up over her head with both hands. The bird came in through a hole in the patio screen and landed on the plate. My daughter laughed. I laughed too. I almost choked on a piece of steak. The bird ate all the corn and then hopped down from the plate and onto the table with us.

I gave the bird a piece of bread. It ate the piece of bread, and while it was eating my daughter cleared the salad from her plate which had a rim. She poured water from the pewter pitcher into the salad bowl plate. She slid it over to the bird. The bird jumped inside and splashed the water over itself by dipping its wings and shuddering. We both laughed and laughed.

The other diners failed to notice the bird bath taking place at our table. Soon more birds came inside through the hole and we fed them too. I made another bird bath with my salad dish. The birds started to sing. My daughter took her napkin and waved it above her head and swirled it up and down to the music. I did the same with my napkin. The birds danced and fluttered. Soon the check came. I forgot I left my credit card at home. My daughter climbed down from her chair and followed the birds out the front door. So I followed her. The waitress didn't even notice.



Rosie King

ROSIE KING was born and raised in Theodore Roethke's hometown, Saginaw, Michigan. A graduate of Wellesley College, she came west in 1966 and did her master's degree at San Francisco State and her doctorate in Literature at UC Santa Cruz. Her poetry was first honed as she was teaching beginning poets and writing a dissertation on the poetry of H.D. She's practiced and taught Rosen bodywork for over twenty years and lived for six years as a Zen monk at Green Gulch and Tassajara. She makes her home, with pond, fruit trees, and garden, near the beach in Santa Cruz. Her first book, *SWEETWATER*, *SALTWATER*, is forthcoming from Hummingbird Press in February.

RAIN SONG

for a child longed for

On a wet day
you want me to speak of earlier rains.
So I take you back
to the break in the hedge under the rose arbor,
white trellis arching up over the path,
old stone pieces, dark green leaves,
and the small roses climbing.

I take you back
under the rose arbor, the way through
to the backyard with the cherry tree—
up a ladder, in the branches,
mouths and buckets full of sweet bright fruit.

I show you the house we lived in,
high and white like a castle on the corner,
the stone lions guarding their urns of
geraniums,
my mother in her garden,
violets and lilies, spring
mornings after rain. Summer
and the mourning dove's early
song in the deep shade of the willow,
the peonies by the driveway
blooming always on my brother's birthday.

You want to know how I could ever leave.
I tell you how the clouds moved
more and more slowly, how I knew
the willow's every branching,

how the hiding places in the berry bushes
vanished, and— like a bird
whose song, *Who am I? Who
am I?*, pressed up in her throat—
I knew I had to fly.

BLUE GIRAFFE

for my father

In the shadow of the bank building
where the wind flapped your hat
you'd take me up and up
and I'd ride your shoulder past the green light
to eat mashed potatoes in the Bancroft Hotel.
If my head bumped a corner, you'd kiss it;
when I lost my blue giraffe,
you found it.

Now, in your winter dream,
hoodlums take you underground,
your old heart pounding,
just tunnels of ice, jagged chunks that shift and crash
as if the whole conglomerate of cold
were caving in on top of you.
It seems to go on all night,
not knowing where they're going to dump you.
You shiver a little as you tell me,
while I, at your bedside,
pull the quilt closer.

I want to say remember
when you were a farm-boy
chopping firewood with your grand-dad,
that hill where the spring came out of a cave,

your mouth watering for the musk-melons he'd
stashed there?

You grew up, left that woodlot and your ax,
made your passage beyond those woods,
went far north—and then, remember,
you took us back to that Culleoka farm,

summer evening coming on,
Nanny in her white chair, all of us
out in the yard eating melons,
and up in the tree-shadows,
fireflies . . .

Silently, to the night-light,
to the wind blowing snow past the window,
I say all this, and more,
as you go down into sleep, your face
changing back into a boy's.

SATURDAYS

A whiff of eggs and bacon,
my red plaid shirt with snaps, blue jeans that
zip up the side—I'm running downstairs,
my mother's laughing, still in her apron,
on her tiptoes for the picnic basket,
my father's calling from the basement stairs,
already pulling his high-tops on,
my brothers scrambling in the hall closet for theirs.
I grab my toast—strawberry jam—
We're going!

We're on the running board
into the velvety back of the old blue Chrysler,
past the putting greens, the cemetery, over
the Tittabawassee on its bumpy bridge,
to the straight gravel road by fields and woods, and on
to the turn at last—the new green sign
to our farm! Split rail fences, first apple trees,
past Shad and Mary's paint-peeled shack,
up the little hill by the root cellar
here's the farm bell on its post, the yellow-brick house,
the old red barns, the silvery silo—
forty acres, pine woods beyond—
the sweet dry smell of hay, the steamy
stench of manure, and now, for us, the white-plumed
whinnies of horses.



"Circus Girl and Goat" Woodcut by Barbara Leventhal-Stern



Nancy Gauquier

NANCY GAUQUIER's poems have been published in several literary magazines, most recently in *Free Verse*, *Remark*, and *Zen Baby*.

THE TREES

In infancy,
lying in the carriage outside,
while my mother weeded the garden;
gazing up at the tangle of branches,
as they traced across the new blue sky
thin spring branches gently tipping their
fresh green leaves, sighing in a slight
breeze,
This must have been the birth of hope,
seeing such things could exist.



Bernice Rendrick

BERNICE RENDRICK (left) is a senior writer who has lived in Scotts Valley for 35 years. Her childhood was spent on a farm in Kansas. She started writing poetry at Cabrillo College when she was fifty and has since been published in many journals and anthologies.

PIE MAKING

My aunt carved
a vine of flowers
for vents in the pie crust.

Grandmother wove a trellis
over sugared blackberries
gathered that morning.

Mother braided
the scraps
into cinnamon strips.

My pie crust falls apart.
I patch it with clumsy palms.
We eat it like those broken

wafers, bland and dull, placed
on our tongues at church.
Restless, I'd turn
to a warm ray of sun
on the pew, or consider my sins
in the rose flower

on the stained glass window.
I knew then, I know now,
each thing our hands make

or our souls find
where light has signed it
saves us, forgives.

[First published in COAST LINES]



Maggie Paul

MAGGIE PAUL earned her M.A. in English Literature from Tufts University, and an M.F.A. in Poetry from Vermont College. In addition to poetry, she writes essays, book reviews and interviews.

Maggie teaches writing at CSUMB and edits books, manuscripts, and academic papers for Wise Words Editing Services. A founding member of Poetry Santa Cruz, her chapbook, *STONES FROM THE BASKETS OF OTHERS*, was published by Black Dirt Press in 2002.

AS A CHILD

The moon stood watch for me
and the pines draped in their fine, dark needles.
Now and then a dove or a crow, darkness itself
I gather, despite how preoccupied it was with its own pain.
In the making of me, a thousand Nor'easters
raging outside the window, my bare feet stabbing the stairs
the way a dove stabs the sky, trying to avoid being
in the middle of things, destined for the middle.
Evenings, broken bits of frozen stars, drops of water turned
ice, snow, wishing to become something else.

LOST BOY

What did you expect me to do
while you were chopping wood
preparing the fire? I remember.
I followed the dusty copper colored trail
to where it bent and broke at the ridge.
I slid down and climbed up a path
made by wolves. I wanted to go
the way they go. Anyone would want to
if they saw the sky like that, soaked in gold,
or smelled the hooves of a hundred four-legged animals
on the dirt beneath their feet. You were busy,
chattering grown-up talk, trying to impress the others
with your arms full of wood. I had my blanket.
The boulder was a house. I lay beneath it and stayed
warm. I sang to let the animals know
I love them. I sang to be like one of the birds
who visited as I slept. I wish you'd never
come here with your dogs and radios.
It was so peaceful
hearing the sound of my own voice.



Marty Campbell

MARTY CAMPBELL, born in Oakland and raised in the Midwest, lived for 24 years on St. Croix, USVI. Now back in California, writing poetry continues to be the consistent thread in his life. His work appears in *The Caribbean Writer*, *Hammers*, *Rhino*, *Hampden-Sydney Poetry Review*, and anthologies *Yellow Cedars Blooming* (Virgin Islands) and *Jack Straw Writers 2006*. After four years in the Santa Cruz Mountains above Corralitos, he has just moved to San Francisco.



Patricia D'Alessandro

PATRICIA D'ALESSANDRO, Pennsylvania native and a resident of California for sixty years, received her Bachelors degree in Human Relations and Organizational Behavior from University of San Francisco, and studied creative writing at SFSU. She has four poetry collections, and her final collection will be published in April 2007. Her essays and poetry have appeared in numerous national and international publications.

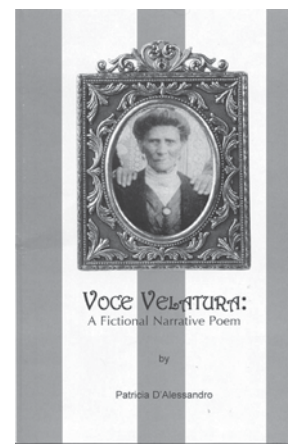
FATEEMA

from the back she looks as though she carries
ten day's laundry – a snail masquerading
in paisley print, with threads of gold that glow
around her middle, that weights her body in a curve
from weekly rounds

but when she drops her bundle down
on our kitchen floor
sits cross-legged and unrolls
bolts of silk from India
shirred wool from Istanbul
linens and fine lace from Pakistan,
patterned swaths explode on our linoleum
as with her sun-brown hands
she lifts
and rolls
and fondles
one
by
one
each handmade work of art
she folds around her arm
to drape in falls of splendor from her pack
that decorates the kitchen floor
like a stage.

I sit beside her
rest my head on her tired legs
soft as Sultan pillows and she smiles
as I listen to her sell
in broken English
that dress with colored threads
cross-stitched across the chest
my mother buys when I am five
and wear, watching from the window
until she comes again.

Voce Velatura: A Fictional Narrative Poem by Patricia D'Alessandro



Creating an imaginary exchange of letters between herself and her mysterious maternal Italian grandmother, Patricia D'Alessandro has developed a fictional narrative poem that is spiritual and childlike in its clarity and longing. Her visit to the Italian village of Bellosguardo only accentuates the mystery which developed from her research on the 19th century Risorgimento (a political movement for the unification of Italy), that evolved into the timeline for the narrative.

*To Order: Send name, address, eMail to:
Patricia D'Alessandro
15300 Palm Drive # 175,
Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240
Phone: 760-329-6130. \$10. includes s/h*



"Esther's Bear" Woodcut by Barbara Leventhal-Stern

Neal Whitman

NEAL WHITMAN, a retired medical school professor, is a volunteer docent and life member of the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation. His work has appeared in *Monterey Poetry Review*, *The Macguffin*, and his chapbook of prose and poetry, *CHAPTER AND VERSE*.

LIBRARY CONVERSATION

Hidden behind a pop-up book,
I listened to the librarian answer the phone.
"Hello, Park Branch."

Pause.

"Yes, this is the Carmel Library."

Pause.

"The other's the Harrison."

Pause.

"The Park Branch is local history and kiddie lit."

Pause.

"Yes, we do have children in Carmel."

I look up and wonder.
KITTY LITTER?



Esther Kamkar

ESTHER KAMKAR'S voice, the rarely heard voice of an Iranian woman and an American mother living in the Bay Area, is informed by her childhood memories, dreams, and poetic imagination in a new language, here and now. Her work appears in *Disquietingmuses.com*, *Bellowing Art*, *Monserrat Review*, *Sandhill Review*, and in the anthology *Let Me Tell You Where I've Been*. Her chapbooks include *A LEAPORD IN MY POCKET*, and *HUMMINGBIRD CONNECTIONS*.

PERSIAN LILAC

Smell of Persian lilac
Hot water
A little person
With me in the tub.
The small head
Pressed against my chest
All four legs stretched out
Ready to talk.
She said:
Men pee standing up
I said:
We women, have two things sticking out
Our breasts
She said:
I already know that.
When I grow up
I want to be just like you.
I made her head like a unicorn's
She scrubbed my back
Her hands slippery
Her smell sweet.
I said:
I'm going to help you
Grow up nicely.
She said:
I already know that.

Her back was so straight.

TAMAR'S DEER-LIKE RUN

Almost every day in the morning
she calls me to braid her hair
in front of our mirror in the hallway.

I stand behind her, we look at each other
in the mirror and I'm told to
make it good, make it tight.

I hold her heavy dark fruit-scented
ponytail, stand on tiptoes to part her hair
one source and three black waterfalls.

My fingers interlace with hair and listen
to the waving rhythm:
under center over under center...

The strand on the right as it passes under
the one in the center says:

Listen, to love and to let go is the only way.
The strand on the left curves under
the one now in the center and says:
Can't we hold for a while before we let go?

And the third strand shifting over
to give up its space says:
The best way is to love and to hold on,
the letting-go part is for the birds.

Under center over under center...
I braid my daughter's hair;
the making of this shiny spiral cord
now dangling between us.

My work is done
when I know that this braid is a good braid
when I kiss the tassel of her hair.

THE SCISSORS

You are a child
The nail that holds together
The blades of the scissors;
You pivot the father-blade
And the mother-blade
In a way that the sharp edges
Work one against the other:
To cut
To snip
To clip
A well working unit
Efficient
The points could even pierce
your heart.



José Antonio Torres

JOSÉ ANTONIO TORRES, born on the East Coast, has lived in Santa Cruz since 2005. He has just begun an M.A. program in Poetics at New College of California in San Francisco.

ALVARO'S STORY: ENTERING AMERICA

In his mother's
arms, the truck
is a balanced
cradle. The slight

push of legs
steady

on tin-
wood floor.

The sand of
road (small

rocks pinging
metallic

bottom), leaves
miniature dust storms

and *Mexico*
in the distance.

A tunnel's
consecrated

cave consumes
the truck.

Vision strays
years into the past.

He explains
his mother's face

disappears
reappears

only in the headlights
of the occasional car.

Her features round,
bent by shadow, becoming

full/half/crescent/new.
Lightly, she says:

*Nunca dejo que te
pase nada.*

*Con migo siempre
estas cuidado.*

Her voice drifts
onto him like a

weightless blanket;
into him like

breathable air:
Nunca dejo que te

pase nada.
Con migo siempre

estas cuidado.
Pin of light becomes

alien country.
In the truck, *Un caballero*

corners himself
from illumination.

Alvaro releases
himself from her

arms, stands at
the rear of the truck's

bed, looking back
at the abandoned

land; its topography
like the skin

of an ancient man.



Frances Hatfield

FRANCES HATFIELD is a psychotherapist in Santa Cruz, grandmother of the most magnificent child to ever crawl the earth, and sometimes a gardener, but not often enough.

ARIA

Cherry blossoms have never been the same
since I was twelve
and Madame Butterfly sang under them
on a stage in a small Louisiana town where
I ceased to be a child

Before that spring,
every year I climbed the tree in my yard
and floated in the creamy froth
waiting for the fruit

but after her aria
I stood under the tree
in new heels and stockings
not made for shimmying
and watched the petals,
seeing for the first time

how tragic their fall,
how impossible the distance
between heaven

and earth