

IN FOCUS

California Writers Club/West Valley



April as National Poetry Month was inaugurated by the Academy of American Poets in 1996.

This issue celebrates the art of poetry.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

1Site Information Kathy's Corner	2
Corinne Copnick Info on Ebooks	3
Review and Refresh <i>Seder at Sea</i>	4
Karen Gorback bio <i>From the Window of The Coast Starlight</i>	5
Selling Your Poetry	6-7
Creative Work Book Report	8 - 11 11
Map and Meeting Information	12



Targeting the Muse



Chris Beauvais speaks at our April meeting. She'll recount how a person who

had hated poetry in school, with the exception of poems by John Lennon and Edgar Allen Poe, came to love the genre and went on to write verse that is appreciated by many poetry aficionados. How did this transformation

come about? In the mid nineties Beauvais took a creative writing class taught by a 60's poet named Jill Waldron. Waldron's inspiring instruction gave Beauvais a key insight: "She lit the proverbial fire inside me and made me realize it was the way it was taught, not the poetry."

Beauvais founded and continues to facilitate a monthly poetry workshop at an Encino bookstore. Beauvais is also a member of the prestigious Paradigm Poets, a group of local writing talent who meet regularly to share their work.

As for her preferred style of

poetry, our April speaker reveals, "I have an eclectic range of subjects, going from the humorous to the political, and some rhyming, but mainly free verse."

Along with nurturing her poetry prowess, she has become an expert archer. "I am an instructor at the local archery range. I refer to myself as Archer/Poet," says Beauvais.

Come to the April meeting and meet a modern Diana who sends both feathered shafts and free verse stanzas aloft - flying toward their individual targets.

- K. Highcove



Carol Muske-Dukes appears akin to the golden California Girls enshrined in the Beach Boys surfers' paeans, but the experienced educator is no breezy beach blonde. She's a literary power in the Golden State: In 2008 Governor Schwarzenegger appointed Muske-Dukes, USC professor of English, California's poet Laureate. He informed the awards audience, "*Carol Muske-Dukes is an accomplished and decorated poet and author. Her commitment to the literary arts and passionate belief that poetry can transform lives will serve as an inspiration for all Californians.*"

How does she inspire California writers? Muske-Dukes is the author of seven books of poetry, four novels and two collections of essays. In 2001 she founded the USC College's Ph.D. in Literature and Creative

Carol Muske-Dukes California Poet Laureate

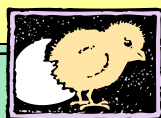
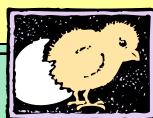
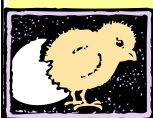


Writing Program, serving as the first director. Her poetry book, *Sparrow* (Random House, 2003), is a love story in verse, dedicated to her late husband, actor David Dukes.

Sparrow was a National Book Award finalist. She has contributed articles for *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* book reviews, and continues to publish. Her work has appeared in several prestigious literary publications.

Her latest novel, best-seller *Channeling Mark Twain* (Random House 2007), presents a woman poet who teaches poetry at a

(Continued on page 7)

Executive Board**President ... Dave Wetterberg****Vice-president/Membership ... Sheila Moss****Vice-president/Programs ... Yolanda Fintor****Secretary ... Danielle Ste. Just****Treasurer ... Dean Stewart****Board of Directors****Newsletter Editor, Publicity ... Kathy Highcove****Webmaster ... David Burr****Photographer ... Ken Wilkins****On Site Coordinator ... Betty Freeman****Critique Groups Coordinator ... Lillian Rodich****Open Mike ... Bill Sorrells****Members-at-Large ... Bill Hitchins****Karen Gorback****Submission Guidelines**

1. Try to submit a work two weeks in advance of publication.
2. Poems should be of moderate length. I edit to keep stanzas in the original form submitted.
3. Prose up to 400 words fills about a half page. Longer pieces need most or all of a page. It's helpful to the editors if your prose submission is edited down to below 1000 words. Use Spell-check before submission. Check for tense uniformity.
4. The editor reserves the right to accept or reject any work submitted. Space might be limited and the omission based on editing difficulties.
5. Be advised that the editor may need to make minor changes in text to reduce a document's size or correct grammatical or spelling errors.
6. Works not used may be stored and used in a future issue of InFocus.

Kathy's Corner

Suddenly spring is upon us and tweets, twitters and texts are heard throughout the land. Blogs are breaking out all over, and Facebooks need friends (and not the Quaker type). So many messages fly around in techie space that I wonder that there's space for bird song and normal conversation.

Communication is in style and who badly needs to communicate? A writer, that's who. And we're a club of writers. Let's exchange information and try to keep up with the new forms of presenting a message. I am collecting the urls of websites that might interest those of us who want to learn new things or new ways to sell a story. Those websites will be listed in future issues in a regular column titled **Virtually Yours**.

Ken and Mabel Wilkins have been having difficult times with health issues. We miss him and hope he'll be back in April. Same sentiments for Norm Molesko who is recovering from two heart attacks. Get well, friends!

I hope you'll all find time to drop by the Katzenberg Room for our April meeting with the emphasis on poetry. We're going to bring our muse out of hibernation.



visit
the
CWC
booth!

Los Angeles Times**FESTIVAL
OF BOOKS**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH UCLA

REMEMBER: THE ANNUAL LOS ANGELES TIMES FESTIVAL OF BOOKS WILL BE HELD SATURDAY & SUNDAY, APRIL 24-25, 2010 AT UCLA

**405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024
Saturday: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

<http://events.latimes.com/festivalofbooks/>

Corinne Copnick loves to share the wealth. The author/editor, our March speaker, imparted to our members a wealth of current data about the emerging ebook market and, epublication.

Copnick recently decided to publish her latest book, **Cryo Kid**, as an ebook. After researching many forms of the self-publishing industry, the canny Copnick selected a package in the iUniverse website. She copied her text into that company's site, and as easily as one-two-three, she made her choices. She elected to edit herself, supply her own graphics and photos, and then market her book independently. Her visit to the Katzenberg Room was actually part of her marketing scheme. One hand washes another, in the ebook world: We writers learned about epublication and Copnick introduced **Cryo Kid** to a roomful of readers.

Why wouldn't busy Copnick choose the usual route of an agent, a hard copy company and their marketing plan? Several reasons: to retain more independence over

her own product - her book. She also knew that hard copy publishing is expensive and an author must go with the flow of the company decisions. Copnick decided that the way of the future is epublishing, kindles and marketing on the Net.

Copnick emphasized the importance of a new book's **launch**. She advised: one on one info gathering at the nearest book expo. An expo has agents, reps and editors connected to the current book publishers. A well organized expo is a perfect place to meet and greet the leading lights of the self-publishing industry.

Copnick also pointed out that the world of publishing is morphing into the speedier, cheaper and easier ways of publishing online. The world finds faster and faster ways to

share information in every genre. Blogs, Facebook, Linked-in and tweets are excellent ways to share information and make sales. The blog **redroom.com** is one site where writers can chat and exchange info.

Writers must adjust or be left behind in the emptying bookstores. Corinne Copnick is a visionary in many ways. She pushes herself and pushed our membership to get on the etrain before it leaves the station!



More Ebook Info

The topic of ebooks is a popular one in our CWC Branch newsletters. Many writers are getting interested and excited about the new tools of self-publishing. The March 2010 issue of the Orange County newsletter featured a long informative article by their member, Claudia Suzanne.

A quote: *We are in exciting and uncertain times as the book industry continues to be in a state of flux. We are at the beginning of a paradigm shift and things will not go back to the "good old days." The best way to prepare for the future is to get informed.*

Claudia's email addresses: claudia@claudiasuzanne.com or claudia@wambtac.com). Her ghostwriter address: claudiasuzanne.com. Go to www.calwritersorangecounty.org for additional info on ebooks.

RECOGNITION

Last month Lenora Smalley encouraged our CWC members to enter contests. Carolyn Howard Johnson followed that advice and just received First Prize in the \$2500 Franklin-Christophe Annual Writing Contest. Good for you, Caroline. Your follow-through paid off handsomely. Congratulations.



review and refresh Parenthetical Elements

In the 1800's, writers loved to fill their sentences with parentheses.

Father (to Mother's surprise!) wanted to attend the accordion concert scheduled (this year) to be held at the German beer garden.

Then parentheses made a gradual retreat. Now they're hardly seen any more. Today's writers use commas instead.

Father, not to Mother's surprise, preferred to watch the Dodger game on ESPN instead of the New York ballet performance on PBS.

Light Interrupters

Sometimes the natural flow of a sentence is interrupted by a light and unnecessary word or phrase. This word or word group is called a parenthetical element, or interrupter, and is set off with commas.

The damage, I am sure, will be repaired by the electrician.

Sometimes the information is interesting but not very important. When this is the case, the information is also set off with commas.

Judo, first included in the Olympic games in 1964, soon became popular with American teenagers.

But when a word group is necessary to identify an element that precedes it, the element should not be set off with commas. In the following sentence, the words *the commuters usually took to work* are necessary to identify which of several buses is theirs.

The bus the commuters usually took to work was discontinued.

Heavy Interrupters

When a parenthetical element causes a heavy break in a sentence, the element can be set off with dashes in place of commas although dashes should be used sparingly to avoid jerky, disconnected writing.

Maya Angelou—poet, actress, storyteller—turned playwright late in her career.

Use parentheses when inserting a complete sentence as an aside. Notice that the following sentence carries its own punctuation, a period, inside the parentheses.

Medal of Honor winners (I know several personally.) are as normal as you or I.

Parentheses are used when inserting page references, dates, etc. as supplementary information.

The author's summary (p. 45) was badly needed by this time.

by Dave Wetterberg



Passover Seder in a Ship's Hold

This past Seder was the first time I was the Leader as I was the oldest man present. It brought back a flood of memories of Seders past. One in particular was a Seder aboard a British troopship in route to England during WWII.

That night while I rested in my hammock, Corporal Alvin Sinclair, the chaplain's aide, nudged me. "Are you Schwartz?"

"Yeah. Why?"

"Are you Jewish?"

"Yeah, what about it?" I growled, defensively.

"Well, as you know this is the first day of Passover, and the Jewish soldiers onboard are having Seder services. If you want to come, I'll take you there." I could not believe it. On this scow, a Seder Service!

"Yeah, I'll come."

I swung out of my hammock and followed Sinclair up the slippery companionway, across the wet deck, and down into another dark cavernous hold. A dim light illuminated about twenty men sitting around three adjoining tables, arranged as a U.

"This looks like Leonardo de Vinci's painting of the 'Last Supper'," I whispered.

The aide handed me a *yarmulke*, a Jewish skullcap, and left. I sat down at the end of a table and listened to a corporal at the head table conduct the Seder service in Hebrew. Another soldier passed piece of matzos amongst the congregation, followed by a slice of cheese and sweet ceremonial wine in small paper cups. I took the cup gently.

At the close of the Seder, the remaining matzos and cheese were passed out to the men who took back to our non-Jewish buddies.

Not only did the memory of that Seder remain with me but also the respect I had for our Protestant Regimental Chaplain who arranged the Seder and the distribution of different bibles when we first stepped aboard the ship's gangplank at the New York Port of Embarkation.

That was one Passover Seder I will never forget, I swore.

- Max Schwartz

Focus On Karen



The CWC-West Valley welcomed Dr. Karen Gorback last summer as a new member as well as a “member-at-large” on the board. As a past membership chair, treasurer, and president of the Ventura County Writers Club, Karen notes that she feels very much at home at the meetings and among the members of the CWC-West Valley.

“Like everyone else, I’ve been writing all my life,” she says, “Mostly essays, op-ed pieces and poetry.”

Then in 2000, Karen entered the Ventura County Writers Club Short Story Contest and won second place for a story titled “Going Back.”

“The best part of winning was reading my story out loud at a club meeting and hearing people laugh. After that, I was hooked and have been writing fiction ever since.”

Over the last few years, Karen has won spots in the New Works Festival at College of the Canyons in Valencia for her one-act plays “The Prom Dress” and “There is a

Season.” She has also received honorable mention in local contests for two short stories, “The Curative Properties of Chocolate” and “Hot Wings, Incorporated.” Karen is currently seeking an agent or publisher for a novel-length manuscript based on the short story “Going Back.” The manuscript chronicles the unpredictable freshman year of a divorced mom who goes back to college to face her fear of failure and find her place in the world.

In her day job, Karen is the Assistant Dean for Community and Career Education at Ventura College, where she develops the extension program and publishes the college’s Community Education quarterly brochure, the *Kaleidoscope* (CommunityEd.VenturaCollege.edu). She also manages the child development classes, business classes, and home economic classes, as well as a state grant to help provide career pathways for students at middle schools and high schools in Ventura. She’s taught graduate school for many years at California Lutheran University and for the last two years at CSUN in the School of Education.

“I am beyond fortunate,” Karen proclaims. “I continue to enjoy a long career in education; and I love the process of writing – always with the goal of making people smile. It’s so cool.”

From the Window of the Coast Starlight

*Better than a sky suite at Staples or a garden box at the Bowl,
my coveted window seat on the northbound Coast Starlight.
LA to Seattle.
Thirty-three hours.*

*With the Channel Islands disappearing on the horizon,
the conductor lectures on the convergence of currents, sunken pirate ships and whale migrations. What a delicious afternoon, soaking in the view, accompanied by a passionate dissertation on the beauty and the beast of the sea.*

*Leaving the coast, we shadow the Sacramento River with an unscheduled stop in Dunsmuir – something about an overheated engine.
But city slickers on a train trip don’t fret over such delays.
“If we wanted to get there fast, we would’ve taken a plane.”*

*All too soon, our coach chugs back to life, skirting snow-capped Shasta.
“Isn’t it remarkable!” fellow travelers gush, captivated by the imposing summit filling our windows.*

*Midnight brings a brilliant full moon reflecting off Crater Lake, turning night into day.
I press my nose against the cold window, desperate to imprint the image on my drowsy brain. Will I ever again see anything so remarkable in my lifetime?*

With the fingers of Puget Sound drawing us into Washington State, Mount Rainier looms in the distance like the mysterious peak in Close Encounters of the Third Kind. And like Richard Dreyfus, I am mesmerized.

Finally, inching toward Seattle Station, my window fills with the cityscape. Nice, I suppose, in a Frank Lloyd Wright sort of way – But paling in the company of the vast Pacific, the Channel Islands, tiny hamlets, the Sacramento River, snow-capped mountains, and that oh, that so remarkable midnight moon glistening off of Crater Lake.



By Karen Gorback

Marketing Your Poetry

What is the modern definition of poetry? I searched sources for the answer. Modern poetry is difficult to define. For example, today's poetry need not rhyme, as in former years. My conclusion: enjoy writing poetry in any style you wish. But, that said, there are still general rules for submitting a poetry manuscript to an agent or editor.

The following information is from the *Writer's Book of Checklists: The Quick Reference Guide to Essential Information Every Writer Needs* by Scott Edelstein (c1991)

Six Guidelines for Preparing a Poetry Manuscript:

1. Type each poem, no matter how short, on a separate page.
2. Your poem may be either single-spaced (double-spaced between stanzas) or 1 1/2-spaced (2 1/2 spaced between stanzas)
3. In the upper left (flush left) or the upper right (flush left against an imaginary margin three inches from the right edge of the page), type the following information, single-spaced, one item or set of items per line:
Your name (not your pseudonym); your street address, R.R.D. number or P.O. box, city, state or province; zip or postal code; country
4. Drop down four lines; type the title of the poem, flush left, in all capitals.
5. Drop down three more lines; begin text of the poem.
6. Do not list any byline, pseudonym, word or page count, or organizational or institutional affiliation. After the poem has been accepted for publication, instruct your editor to publish it under your pen name.

Now to the "nitty gritty" of writing poetry. The information below is from the *2008 Poet's Market*.

Mistakes Poets Make

1. **Not reading a publication before submitting work.**
Researching a publication before submission.
2. **Submitting inappropriate material.** Send what the editors ask for, not your own favorite work.
3. **Submitting an unreasonable number of manuscripts or poems.** Again, follow the guidelines.
4. **Ignoring the editor's preferences regarding formats:**
If an editor lists a preferred manuscript format, follow instructions. Be alert to e-mail submission formats. Follow directions.
5. **Omitting a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE):**
Unless the editor gives alternate instructions always include a #10 SASE for an editor's reply.
6. **Writing bad cover letters (or omitting them completely):** Cover letters have become an established part of the submission process. Unless the editor says otherwise always include a cover letter.

In addition, the following should be taken into consideration:

Don't list all the magazines where your work has appeared; limit yourself to five magazine titles. The work you're submitting has to stand on its own.

Don't tell the editor what a good poet you are-or how good someone else thinks you are.

Don't tell the editor how to edit; lay out or print your poem. Some of those decisions are up to the editor.

Don't point out the poem is copyrighted in your name or include the copyright symbol. All poems are automatically copyrighted in the poet's name as soon as they're "fixed." (i.e., written down), and editors know this.

Possible clashes or misunderstandings with editors:

An editor is rude: If it's a matter of bad attitude, take it with a grain of salt. Maybe he's having a rotten day. If abusive language is used it needs to be reported.

An editor harshly criticizes your poem: If an editor takes time to comment on your poem, even if the feedback seems overly critical, consider the suggestions with an open mind and try to find something valid and useful in them. If, after you've given the matter fair consideration, you think the editor was out of line, don't rush to defend your poetry or wave your bruised ego in the editor's face. The editor has the right to do so. **Move on!**

An editor is slow to respond to a submission:

The editor could be having problems. It is necessary to be patient.

Maintaining good editor/poet relations.

Poets should finesse their communications with editors regarding problems, especially in initial letters and e-mail. Don't carp or quarrel or whine. Stay professional, no matter what kind of problem you're trying to work out.

A POSITIVE NOTE—PROMOTE YOUR WORK

Create poetry postcards that are informational announcing a reading or new publication. They also can be used to share your poetry. Simply type one of your poems on one side of the card, using an attractive, readable font, then indicate the title of the collection and include ordering information. Keep all text and design elements on the far left of the postcard back so they don't interfere with addressee portion of the card.

Meet the public: Do poetry readings and book signings. Get in touch with bookstores and coffeehouses. Find out when open "mic" readings are scheduled. Sign up, read your poems. Widen your scope: Would the local historical society be interested in an appearance? Is there a community group who might enjoy having you read and sign books as part of their meeting programs? Would a friend be willing to sponsor a "poetry night" house party with you as the featured reader?

IS IT A 'CON'? THINK BEFORE YOU TRUST.

Some contests are "con" games. Some are legitimate. The question is how to tell the difference. Do your homework.

READING AND CONTEST FEES:

Keep the following points in mind: regarding reading fees:

Is the market so exceptional that you feel it's worth risking the cost of the reading fee?

What makes it so much better than markets that do not charge fees?

Has the market been around awhile?

What are you paid if your work is accepted?

Are reasonably priced samples available so you can judge the production and quality of the writing?

However, reading fees don't necessarily signal a suspicious market. They're becoming more popular to offset the cost of editors and publishing and it's up to the individual poet to decide whether paying a fee is beneficial.

Contests: Watch out for contests that charge higher-than average fees. Be aware if fees are out of proportion to the amount of prize Money. Find out how long the contest has been around. Verify whether prizes have been awarded each year and to whom.

Chapbook and book contests: send for one of the winning publications to confirm the publisher puts out a quality product. Regard with skepticism any contest that tells you you've won something, and then demands payment for an anthology or any other item.

SUBSIDY AND ON DEMAND PUBLISHERS

Poetry books are difficult to sell to the book-buying public. Few of the big publishers handle these books and those that do feature "name" poets. While some self-publish (i.e. take full control of their book, working directly with a printer), others turn to subsidy publishers ("vanity publishers") and print-on-demand (POD) publishers.

There are many differences between publishing and POD publishing, as well as similarities. (having to pay to get published is a big one). Poets must take responsibility for their decisions. Ask questions, do research on presses, and read the fine print on the contract.

Today's poets should keep all options open for publication and promotion of their word..

Prepared by Helen S. Katzman

Publishing a volume of verse is like dropping a rose-petal down the Grand Canyon and waiting for the echo.

- Don Marquis



(*California Laureate continued from page 1*)

women's detention facility and is inspired by the women's writings while living in prison.

Muske-Dukes once held that same teaching position and the book is based on her experiences teaching creative writing in a program called "Free Space" at a women's prison on Rikers Island in New York. The program morphed into "Art Without Walls -Free Space," which used art to provide services to needy children and families.

Many Californians may not know that California has an official poet laureate nor know the criteria for the position. Here's the score: A poet laureate must be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate to serve a two year term. The program is run by the California Arts Council. To qualify the poet must be instrumental in educating the public and working on community projects that enhance the cultural development of the California citizenry.

Muske-Dukes has immersed herself in community projects and worked to involve children in composition and the arts throughout her professional career. Her latest inspiration is the Magic Poetry Bus, her statewide project that brings poetry into the schools. She's used a youthful poetry performance group called Get Lit to turn on young audiences to rhythmic descriptive verse

She comments on the need for introducing poetry in our schools while minds are young:

The great John Keats famously said that poetry "should come as naturally as leaves to a tree." Years ago, when I taught for the Poets in the Schools program in New York, I saw how naturally poems came to kids. The imagination is wild and untamed and alive up until about fourth grade, when a sense of self-consciousness and the huge pressure of peers and the commodification of what is original within us gains ascendancy (that is to say, when kids start looking outside the self to be told what is inventive by product promotion or conventional pedagogical thinking).

To view a Magic Bus Performance filmed at USC click on: <http://college.usc.edu/news/stories/697/all-were-aboard-on-the-magic-poetry-bus/> To visit the MuskeDukes website: www.carolmuskedukes.com and tune in www.magicpoetrybus.org for more information and to become a fan of **The Magic Poetry Bus** on Facebook. Carol will be at the Festival of Books. **Please come visit the Katzenberg Room, Carol. We're ready for your good vibrations.**

- K. Highcove

CROSSINGS

To cross a stream
with you,
quiet, peaceful, strong, alive.

To see the crisp clear sky
with you,
as the clouds roll into blue.

To hear the song or wail of a bird
with you,
in tune with the wonder of life.

To smell the wild, the sage
with you,
pure, no need of change.

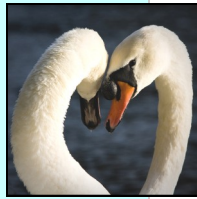
To sense the touchless touch
with you,
across a stream or up the trail.

To feel at home with all things
with you,
with the snake, the birds, the trees.

To glean the wordless words
with you,
of love and care and trust.

To be at your side
with you
for as far as I can dream.

- Dean Stewart 1996



PITTER PATTERNS

I watch the pitter of rain
In puddles where little translucent men
Jump up and down
Joyfully
Down the concrete sidewalks
Into asphalt streets
Celebrating
In big block parties
The eminent coming of spring.

- Lenora Smiley 4/98

Going Down Fighting



Missing my youth
Going down fighting
To tell you the truth
New image is frightening
Tried Turn About Cream
Plus latest cosmetics
They're only a scheme
For fighting Genetics
Nose appears to be longer
Brows at work etch a frown
Dancers legs now... less stronger
Cheeks are rouged like a clown
Nature's a friend
She's an enemy too
One must try to amend
What she's doing to you
Keep preserving your youth
Get some help here and there
Birthday? don't tell the truth
Go and color your hair
Going down fighting
From both inside and out
Dance those legs...be delighting
It is time now to shout
I HAVE TURNED LIFE ABOUT!

A doodle by Leslie Kaplan 6/19/09

Team Sharing



The way I see my reality,
it's good to be alone at times,
with one's thoughts and one's activity.
However,
it's much richer and precious for me,
to be warmly sharing with another,
not offering in one direction only
in a limited superficial manner.
I prefer a back and forth sharing
of feelings, ideas, things and caring.
I give to you. You give to me.
We are involved in team sharing.

© Norman Molesko, 2009

ANDY'S PRAYER

The soft pink in her cheek
was driving Andy crazy,
But she stared straight ahead;
Controlling charm was easy.

The morning in her hair
Cascaded down one shoulder;
Poor Andy held his breath;
He wished he'd been born bolder.

The folding of her hands,
The way her blouse was clinging,
Made Andy pray that God
would keep the bell from ringing.

-Dave Wetterberg 3/02



MUSES & ANGELS

*Muses and Angels sitting next to me
Inspired by life and what's supposed to be*

*Muses and Angels sitting in front of me
Their spirits bigger than their bodies I see*

*Experience and successes are remembered
Past as Past
New life is present for them to see*

*Muses and Angels with Joy in the faces
Reveal life of memories for places they've been*

*Actors and Agents
Writers and Bosses
CBS, NBC, ABC - See*

*To the Oscars, the Globes
To the Parties on T.V.
Muses and Angels sit with me*

*Walkers hold talkers
Hair full of wonder and thunder
Listen to each other*

Art fills the soul of these Muses and Angels

*Song rains on me suddenly and spontaneously
as music is heard from past memories
La de da - da da- de da.... Ahh
Muses and Angels are singing for me*

*Youth to inspire, I sing my song
My Heart
My Soul
My Joy
Muses and Angels share wisdom with me*

*Fame and Riches
Cars and Bars
Life from afar is not locked in a Jar*

Muses and Angels from life once lived

*STAR
The Sparkle
The Glamour
The world was to see
As Muses and Angels sent out creative inspira-
tional energy*

*My Muses and Angels have freeness to fly
Minds young as a child
Teenager to Adult*



*To Now
Never forgetting How*

*Muses and Angels sitting next to me
May look old
Still, they have bodies to hold
As Gold*

*Muses and Angels looking at me
I see you still have stories to be*

*My Muses and Angels
Take Flight
with Me.*

- Vivian Hartman



*One morning in April
the sky exploded
into torrents of rain sparkles
and birds wove in between the streams,
the dark arches of their wings
reflected in roadside puddles.*

*One morning in April
a crimson rosebud slowly unfurled
and turned toward the sun,
stem and leaves bent silently,
imperceptibly in gratitude,
toward light and life.*

*One morning in April
wind clattered into my life
setting leaves and bells and bits of wood
into a symphony of sounds
so often missing in the confusion
and first conscious moments of my dawn*

*One morning in April
the sky was cloudless and faded blue.
Birds gathered on my window sill,
busy with their own gossip,
oblivious to the notes of my song,
unaware my tears had disappeared...*

- Lillian Rodich

THE LAST LEAF

By December, one
leaf remains
at the tip of the topmost branch,
a tiny flag on a mast
in winter's storm-wracked sea.
Though weighted with snow and ice,
whipped, whirled, and clawed
by countless gales,
the leaf sustains its hold.

At last the winds retreat.
The leaf still clings,
flutters in April breezes
until lost to view
in burgeoning new foliage.

- Mary Shaffer 3/02



April in the Valley

Open doors and windows
April is here.
Inscribed in shimmering silk
Like a new flower
In a bouquet of seasons.
Spring enters without knocking
Spraying my skin
With fragrant new life.
Left behind
Are my squeaky winter shoes
Blinking in the glow of street lights
Begging to come inside,
Like stitches of paralyzed time
Swollen limbs in old tree branches
Lick their winter wounds at dawn.
A yawn of spring fever
Waiting for April's fingerprints
Lingers in my Valley soul
To rejuvenate my spirit.

- Kyle Birnberg-Goldstein

FLOWER

Filigree fern-framed,
Coral petals pursed to kiss.
Above, a bud winks.
As the bee thirsts for nectar
I yearn to taste your sweetness.

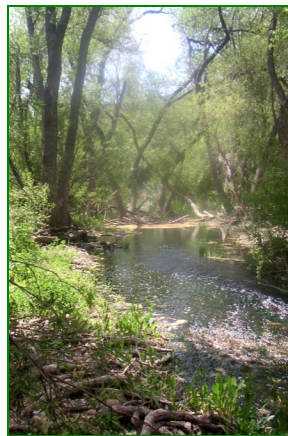
- Ray Malus



PINK MOON

Named for the pink star moss
that sprays across vales and meadows,
pink that shows
between seedling rows in fields, .
pink that peeks from behind hedges,
lolls on the sides of hills and ridges,
spreads itself-
like pink butter on bread ,
covers the countryside
in pink silk shawls.
So much pink it reflects
in the mirror of sky.
Could that be why
the full moon in April
preens and shines with light
that appears to be rosy?

- Lenora Smalley



TAI CHI TEACHER

Slowly he
starts,
raising his arms to move
his hands like two pale birds
over ripples in a pond.
Turning to lean
raising flat palms to push back disquiet.

Moving sideways,
feet find their place
with care, as if in
search for stepping stones
across a sacred stream.

Fingers closed,
moving to touch the power of peace,
waist turning and bending
for the finale.
Arms overhead hold a moment
of unity in time..

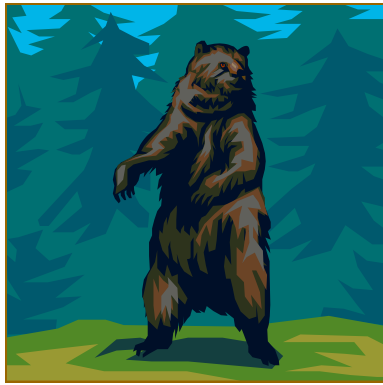
- Kathy Highcove



TO BEAR OR NOT TO BEAR

- **Sheila Moss**

First time readers of John Irving's books might not expect the occurrence of a bear situation in the story - but loyal readers aren't a bit surprised. Think of:



The World According To Garp (1982).

His 12th novel, *Last Night At Twisted Creek*, a novel which spans three generations and five decades, is set in the 1950's. A young 12-year-old boy, Daniel (Danny) Baciagalupos, tries to protect his father (Cookie) from what he fears is a huge bear. He wields a cast iron fry pan - one that his father supposedly used in a past bear encounter.

Unfortunately, the "bear" turns out to be Injun Jane, his father's 300 pound lover. What ensues is a cover-up and subsequent flight from the New Hampshire logging camp.

Evil in this story is personified by Constable Carl, a character who spends years tracking the Baciagalupos from New Hampshire to Boston to Toronto to Iowa City when Danny attends college. A Blue Mustang which seems hell-bent on running over Danny's son Joe casts dark shadow over the family. What makes the car so sinister is that it is driverless. Another pivotal character is Ketchum, Dominic's life long friend and a second father to Danny. He cautions Cookie that Carl has been "crazed" in his quest to avenge Jane's death.

On the lighter side, Cookie ends up in Boston

at the Italian (but, of course) restaurant of a distant relative. While he loves experimenting with sauces and fish dishes, the head chef says Cookie's desserts are a complete failure. Unfortunately it is his signature secret ingredient in his pizza that betrays his presence to two ladies from the logging camp who recognize it and go back to tell Car where Cookie is.

At times Irving's writing meanders as he weaves his colorful characters into his complicated plot. Semicolons abound, making some impossibly long sentences. But the descriptions are realistic, whether Cookie is in the kitchen demonstrating his culinary skills or feeling the tingling cold on a hunting trip.

Ever the writer, Irving shares the writing process with his reader. Danny, Dominic's son, becomes a well known author or novelist who writes in a rustic third floor room. He uses post-its to remind himself of characters, etc, as well as trying out opening and closing sentence. He is stuck on his starting his next novel so he writes down several possible first sentences.

Although the central character of Danny's novel is Ketchum, he decides to go with Angel. Finally he gets the sentence that works. The last sentence becomes the opening sentence—"The young Canadian, who could not have been more than fifteen, had hesitated too long. For a frozen moment, his feet had stopped moving on the floating logs."

Danny reflects, *Oh God, here I go again. Here I go again.*

Perhaps it's not his best book, according to some literary pundits, but I feel that Irving still tells an interesting unorthodox tale in *Last Night at Twisted Creek*. I won't soon forget his minor character Injun Jane or the bizarre Blue Mustang.

Inspiration Defined

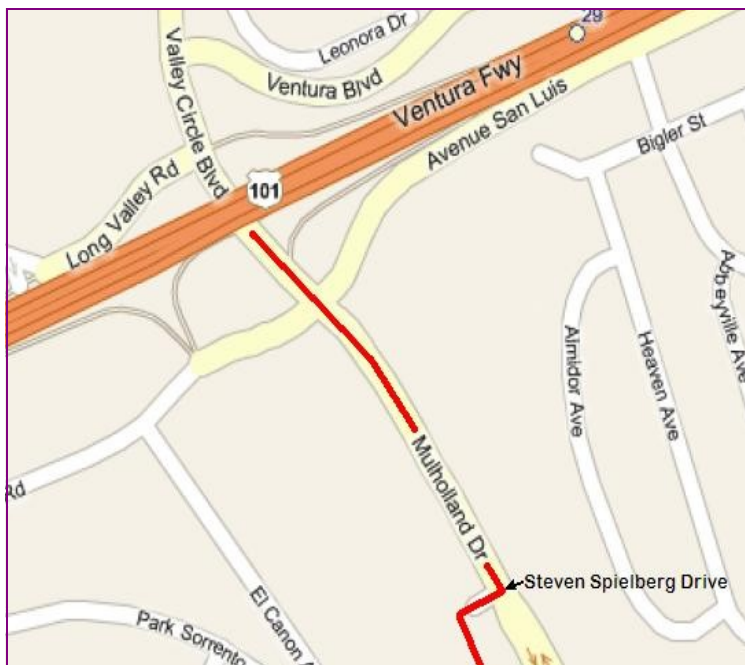
Essence and Elements

When I think of poetry I consider its elements, its meter and figurative language and formal forms. The essence of a poem—the flavor and awakening of the senses and the sensitive and imaginative ways of interpreting the world around us - transfers real emotions to the reader. Free verse seems to express these feelings more easily, but formal patterns can accomplish the same when used by the pens of skilled and sensitive poets.

Poetry

on the wings of words
small symbols transported to paper
our emotions are stimulated
our senses tantalized
our memories awakened
just by looking at strange marks inscribed
on a once blank page

Lillian Rodich



From the 101 Freeway exit on Mulholland Drive, travel south on Mulholland and turn right at Steven Spielberg Drive, then turn left and follow the route to the large parking lot on the left for Villa Katzenberg. If you are stopped by the MPTF Security, tell the official that you are attending a CWC meeting.

MEETINGS

The California Writers Club meets the first Saturday of the month at the Motion Picture and Television Fund complex:

Villa Katzenberg
23388 Mulholland

Woodland Hills, CA 91364-2733

NEXT MEETING

Saturday, April 3rd., 2010 at 1:30 p.m.

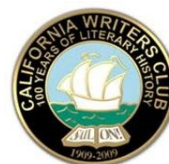
MAILING ADDRESS

c/o Dave Wetterberg, 23809 Friar Street
Woodland Hills, CA 91367-1235

Contents copyrighted by the respective authors.

Unattributed articles copyrighted by CWC/WV.

cwcwestvalley.org



IN FOCUS

Dave Wetterberg
23809 Friar Street
Woodland Hills, CA 91367-1235