



# IN FOCUS

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Newsletter of the California Writers Club/West Valley

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ISSUE 3

## Mind Your W's

**M**arcia Meier, our November speaker, is an author, award-winning journalist, writing coach and editor. She specializes in helping others realize their writing goals.

She writes for numerous publications, including *The Writer* magazine, *Miller-McCune Magazine* online, *Santa Barbara Magazine*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Huffington Post*. Her first book, *Santa Barbara, Paradise on the Pacific*, was published by Longstreet Press in 1996.

Following a 20-year career as a newspaper journalist, she served as director of college communications for a private liberal arts college and

then directed the Santa Barbara Writers Conference for five years. Marcia has taught collegiate-level journalism and writing for more than 10 years, and recently launched a creative writing program for teen writers in Santa Barbara, her hometown.

Two of her poems and a short story have recently been accepted for publication, and she's at work on a novel and a memoir. Marcia is a member of Pen USA and the Author's Guild.

Her book, *Navigating the Rough Waters of Today's Publishing World: Critical Advice for Writers from Industry Insiders*, was recently published by Quill Driver Books.

Our knowledgeable speaker will explain the importance of the **five W's** when a writer is



dealing with the modern multifaceted publishing world.

In other words, **WHAT** is happening in book publishing, **HOW** to work with agents, **WHO** is getting published in magazines and newspapers, and **WHERE** to promote and market. That leaves only **WHEN**, and the answer is **NOW!**

- Yolanda Fintor

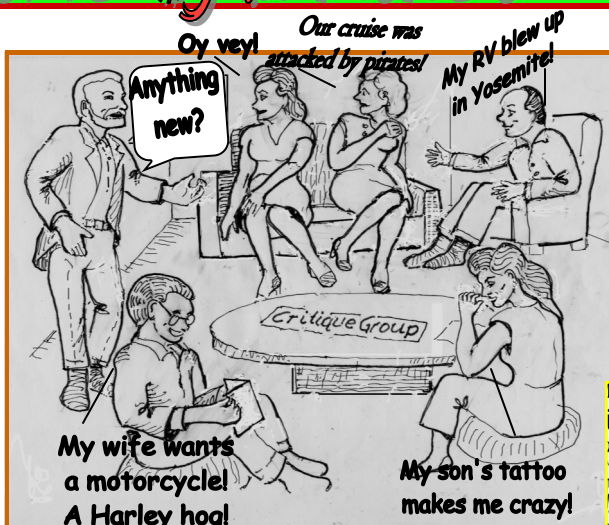
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## west valley whimsicals

A Schwartz / Highcove Production

Dave joins his critique group and asks:



GLAD to hear it!

Glad??

HUH?

Now you all have something NEW to write about!

EXPLAIN!

Whenever you have a new adventure, take a moment to write it down. Write what you're feeling and add a few details before you forget them. Stories are everywhere. Feed your muse!

## Executive Board

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## Local History Online at LAPL

By Anne Arnold Olivier

Anyone who writes historical fiction or nonfiction set in the Greater Los Angeles area should go online and browse through the digitized map and photo collections of the LA Public Library.

Need to know what Los Angeles looked like in the 1920's? The map collection contains over 100,000 items and images that date to over 100 years old. Among some of the gems are a sightseeing map of Los Angeles from 1940, and a map of L.A. County from 1929 on which you'll find a town named Girard, which would later become Woodland Hills.

The photo collection from Central Library's History Department contains more than 60,000 images that are available online, and more are being added every day from millions of photos. These photos come from the Security Pacific National Bank historical collection, the Shades of LA Compilations, and the Herald Examiner newspaper morgue. You'll find treasures such as Hollywood celebrity photos from silent film days, as well as historic Los Angeles photos dating from 100 years ago. There is a form that can be submitted online to obtain photos for commercial or private use, as well as a list of usage fees.

### To access the map and photo collections:

1. Click on [www.lapl.org](http://www.lapl.org)
2. Then, click on **Browse the Photo Collection** menu item at the main LAPL screen.
3. To access the map collection, click on **Visual Collections**—the fifth item down on the left hand bar menu of the main screen.

You'll notice some other pretty cool online collections to browse, like Hollywood movie posters and fashion plates. Just keep scrolling until you see the **Map Collection** and click.

**Happy browsing!**



## Radio Play Appearances

Dean Stewart and Ray Malus will appear in a 15-minute Radio Play, titled *Christopher Angel*, at St. Martin-In-The-Fields Episcopal Church, on [December 12th](#).

The play and its musical score were created by Malus. *Christopher Angel* is a Chancel Drama dealing with the season of Advent. It will be presented at [8:00 AM](#) and [10:00 AM](#).

**Admission is open, and free.**

Contact Ray Malus at [raysplays@roadrunner.com](mailto:raysplays@roadrunner.com) for more information and details.



## Sing Out Strong!

**D**oraine Poretz is a poet and she knows it. She got right to the point when she began her address: **“Words are the music of**

**your life.”** She explained that poets use words to fashion a rhythmic sound pleasing to the ear – like music. And verse uses imagery to paint a scene, or describe the action. Modern poets often write free verse, as does Poretz.

Poretz defined the free verse style of poetry. "It's not just a bunch of prose strung together any which way," she assured us. "Free verse is like any story – it has characters, a plot, rising tension, climax and an ending...usually." She allowed that some free verse can be heard and interpreted in different ways by each listener or reader. And sometimes the ending is inconclusive...free to the nth degree. But all free verse should have a pulse, a flow that makes the words reach out for attention.

"Free verse is intimate speech between people," Poretz explained. "And - perhaps more importantly - poetry is a form of self-discovery. A poem can be a revelation."

Another important feature of poetry is the "spaces," the unutterable, but implied, background information. So many times, Poretz reminded us, one listens to a poem and feels deep emotions using an instinctive understanding, perceiving a basic truth with one's "third eye."

"But a modern poet," Portetz said, "does not write to suggest easy answers and may not feel the need to provide a TA-DA! ending. Many poems trail off or imply an ending – a reader must decide on the ending."

In her presentation, Poretz discussed specifically the dramatic monologue style of poetry. She first read *My Last Duchess*, a familiar poem to many of us former English

majors. The inferred menace of the poem's narrator still elicits chills, no matter how many readings. Then Poretz read a poem in the same dramatic monologue style from her latest book, *The Alchemy*.

We listened and became aware of a subtle beat, an energy and a web of thoughts that subtly shaped plot and characters in her verse. We heard the music of her life. We saw her images with our third eye. And we judged the time with Doraine Poretz an hour well spent.

- K. Highcove

Poretz' poem **“Lullaby in the Desert Night”** is found on page 11.



Esther Shifren and Doraine Poretz in a cheerful huddle over *The Alchemy*, Doraine's latest book.

## CWC Candid Camera

After a family emergency hiatus, Ken Wilkins, CWC/WV photographer, returned to our October meeting. Consequently, this issue has been enriched with his candid shots of our meeting, like the one above of Esther and Doraine, and the one below of four CWC/WV gentlemen chatting during the cookie break. We've missed our cameraman.

Welcome back, Ken!





# Allusions

An **allusion** is a reference to something in an area you expect your audience to be familiar with. Note how in the first example below the literary allusion to Tom Sawyer draws Tom's freedom, his innocence, and his sense of adventure into the nature of the priest.

**Literature** *Luckily, the priest had experienced a similar Tom Sawyer youth.*



**Mythology** *She wouldn't stop trying to play Cupid.  
The chocolate covered creampuff proved to be an Achilles heel.*

**Folklore** *Trying to stop it was like putting your finger in the dyke.  
Abner ran off like the gingerbread man.*



**Theater / Movie** *She cherished it with the passion of a Scarlett O'Hara.  
The little girl's charm, like Dorothy's oil can, loosened up the gruff old man.*

**The Bible** *The professor carried an air of Solomon about him.  
This simple honesty was about to bring down a giant.*



**Geography** (Cyrano's nose) *"When it bleeds ... the Red Sea!"*

**History** *Poly High playing El Camino is like the Spartans fighting the Persians.  
Tired of fighting the Battle of the Bulge, Sam finally went on a diet.*

**Contemporary** *The heat came in like an Iraqi summer.*



An occasional literary, biblical, historical, mythological, or contemporary allusion can be intelligent and effective. Just don't overdo it. Your readers will think you're showing off.

- Dave Wetterberg

*There is no creation without tradition; the 'new' is an inflection on a preceding form; novelty is always a variation on the past.*

— Carlos Fuentes (Myself with Others:

# Helpful Websites for Self-Publishers



Surfing the Internet to find publication for a nonfiction piece you've written? Try <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art1489.asp> This website has more than 100 links to other websites that feature markets and submission guidelines.

Want to do the writing, art work and PR all by yourself? Children's author Karen McQuestion publishes her own six children's e-books. She's reportedly sold over 30,000 in a year. Here are sites for more info on this author: <http://tinyurl.com/y53gnon> and <http://tinyurl.com/244pfjr> [Karen McQuestion](#)

If you missed it, this is a very informative article: [The Rise of Self-Publishing](#), ran in the April 30, 2010 issue of the New York Times. Here's an excerpt: *Last year, according to the Bowker bibliographic company, 764,448 titles were produced by self-publishers and so-called microniche publishers. (A microniche, I imagine, is a shade bigger than a self.) This is up an astonishing 181 percent from the previous year. Compare this enormous figure with the number of so-called traditional titles — books with the imprimatur of places like Random House — published that same year: a mere 288,355 (down from 289,729 the year before). Book publishing is simply becoming self-publishing.*

Read the entire article at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/02/magazine/02FOB-medium-t.html>

Sony predicts that within 5 years EBooks will overtake print books. Read more about the rise of self-publishing at this site: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/sony/7798340/Sony-ebooks-to-overtake-print-within-five-years.html>.

If you have a book or more on Amazon and haven't checked recently, Amazon has introduced a new area: [author pages](#). The site will display your bio, photo, books and allow you to include a blog Go to: [www.citiria.com/citiriapublishing/](http://www.citiria.com/citiriapublishing/)

If you want others to hear your storyline intro before buying your book or novel then a podcast is the way to go. Details on podcasts found at: <http://spotlight.mypodcast.com>

Or try a teleconference. This virtual conference or virtual meeting is rather informal. You don't have to be in the same room to give a presentation or have a meeting. You can do a presentation at home to an agent via teleconferences offered by citrix like [gotomeetings.com](http://gotomeetings.com) or [free](#) teleconference by [www.dimdim.com](http://www.dimdim.com). These sites ask an author to sign up for access to teleconference instructions.

Walmart is planning to market 2 e-readers, [Nook](#) and [Kobo](#), possibly on Oct. 24th. Check on the Walmart website.

**Self-publishing help is a click away on the Net.**

# Name Changes At the Border

When I would visit my Uncle Max in New York, it was strange to me because his last name was different than my father's last name. My uncle's last name was Pober. My father's last name was Rasky. Many Jewish immigrants had their name changed because their names were too long.

I have a little story to tell you which involved my father who came to Toronto, Canada, in 1920. My Uncle Max came to New York City via Ellis Island the same year.

The officials at the border crossing loved to shorten these names and were quite good at it. Our family name in Russia was Poberrezanski. Try pronouncing that name in one short breath. How it was shortened is quite interesting.

My father was about 32 years of age when he decided to leave Russia and work his way to America. My father's father owned a flour mill in a town called, Deshev, which was about 45 miles from Kiev. My father paid a lot of money to the officials in town to get visas and passports. He sewed some money in his clothing and got to a town called Transylvania in Romania. This was the town that Dracula called his neighborhood.

He was not alone. He took his wife, Pearl, my oldest sister, Paula who was eight, my oldest brother, Sam who was six and sister, Dorothy, who was four. The Pogroms in Deshev had become very dangerous for Jews. The Russian soldiers on horseback called the Cossacks would come into a town and kill as many Jews as possible. This became a big incentive for the Jews to leave the country.

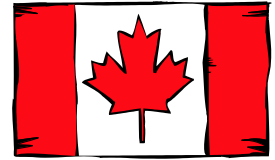
My father, his wife and three children spent a year making their way to Belgium in 1919. My father was very good at languages and learned Hungarian, Polish, German, Italian, and Latin. His English was not good but he managed. He booked passage on a freighter to Halifax, Nova Scotia. It took eight days. The officials in Halifax looked at his documents.

"Your name, Poberrezanski, is too long," said the official in charge. "I am going to change the Rezanski part to Rasky." My father shrugged his shoulders and said, "Yes." We took a train to Toronto with a new last name.

I checked the phone books and found that our new name Rasky was the only one in the phone book. The official that gave us our name created a new unique name. (I wasn't born till 1925 and when I was able to read and write found out we had a unique name.)

Uncle Max's story is a little different than ours. He left Russia in 1920 with his wife and two kids. He flew by plane to Ellis Island. The officials at Ellis Island said, "Poberrezanski is too long. We are going to change your name to Pober."

Now you know how two brothers came to Toronto, Canada, and New York and they both have different names.



**POBERREZANSKI**

**might work in**

**Canada, but**

**in the U.S. of A.**

**your name is ...**



**Mr. Rasky!**



By Ed Rasky

Introducing **Barry Basden**, a fellow member of the Internet Writers Workshop and editor of the Camroc Press Review found at [www.camrocpressreview.com](http://www.camrocpressreview.com).

Basden writes prose and poetry and appears regularly in e-zines and other publications. Below are samples of his work:

## Fire Escape

by Barry Basden



**Y**esterday, I browsed in our used bookstore down at the square, trying to find something I might actually read, though whatever I might find would certainly be available cheaper and tax free on Amazon.com. I always try to support our little store, which is barely hanging on. We only have the one. Besides, I like talking to the owner, an aging, chain-smoking hippie who moonlights out on the highway at the Hill Country Motel lounge to keep her store open. "Every town needs a bookstore," she says. She plasters the front window with anti-war slogans and plays Country Joe and the Fish and other forgotten rockers from the Sixties inside the store. She is one of about three hardcore liberals in this town. I'm not one of the other two, but I could have been maybe thirty years ago. Now I'm much too comfortable. Still, I like that she reminds me of what I lost somewhere along the way to here.

After an hour of lamenting about the state of the world, I came home with a book of Chekhov's short stories and found the house behind mine on fire, with flames shooting out of its back windows and curling up over the roof. I didn't see anybody around, but the 9-1-1 lady said the fire truck was on its way. We only have the one. The fire grew fast, kicking up a fierce, scorching wind. I grabbed my garden hose and aimed a puny stream at the thing. Snorting and cackling, it drove me back. I called emergency again and shouted into the phone. "You tell them if they don't get here soon, my house is gonna be on fire, too."

"They're on their way, sir," she said calmly.

I never heard the siren, but volunteer firemen in heavy gear rushed up and scurried about, dragging their big hoses and looking a bit uncertain. They might have been characters in a Buster Keaton film except for all the noise--the hissing and roaring, the muffled bangs, the yelling, the eucalyptus tree exploding into a fireball.

The men fought the blaze for six chaotic hours before it finally surrendered, the house by then a soaking, gutted mess, the swimming pool completely blackened. A charred, dirty smell settled across the neighborhood and my lungs felt ragged. My house had escaped, but as the sun set, cinders lounged on my patio and a pall of smoke waited inside for me to serve drinks.

Instead, I opened windows and turned on ceiling fans throughout. But when I found the book of stories by the front door, I went straight to an easy chair, propped up my feet, and began to read. No use letting reality interfere with a good story.

## Stealthy Diet

By Barry Basden

My wife scolded me last night  
when she couldn't find  
the organic blue corn  
chips  
she'd hidden from me.

I found them earlier  
behind a carton of lime-  
flavored Perrier  
and ate them all,  
sprinkled with organic cayenne pepper  
and extra Celtic sea salt.

I try to eat  
the healthiest  
junk food possible.



## Heroes of Vietnam

By Barry Basden

**Gunships hovered above the treetops  
while the spotter dropped down in  
his bubble helicopter to peer into  
shaded hooches for targets,  
a job few survived.**



**We later became friends,  
though the war always  
stood between us.  
One day, in heated  
argument, I spat out,  
All the heroes went to Canada.**

**It hovers over me still.**

## Yosemite, Once Home of the Miwok

Quaking aspen,  
singing leaves  
quiver in new-born breezes.

Silver birch,  
fettered to the landscape  
bend over in whistling wind tunnels.

Ribbons of dark green trees  
scatter along the gray carpet  
of the valley floor.

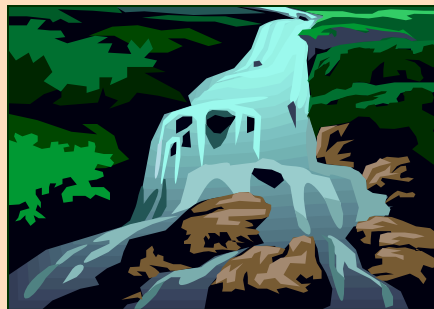
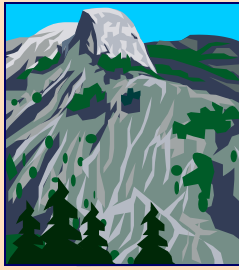
Antlers of snow  
perch on mountain tops:  
remnants of winter storms  
resisting melt down.

Slate cathedral walls,  
divide sunlight into brilliant beams.

Plants,  
struggle in hidden crevices,  
and cling to life,  
existing on sparse lichen  
and morning dew.

Granite sculptures hardening  
in the earth's bowels  
erupt like giants  
reaching for the sun,  
centuries in their struggle to emerge,  
then gouged into shapes.  
by blades of ice.

Far off mountain silhouettes,  
blue and black paper cut-outs,  
are pasted against the sky.



Water plunges restlessly  
over granite obstacles,  
preaching the gospel  
of its magnanimous spirit.  
Waterfalls, insisting on power  
and strength as persuasion,  
capture run-off from mountain giants....  
and spill with joy  
over boulders and fallen trees,  
over shiny submerged rocks,  
finally bubbling across sand and pebbles  
into quiet lakes.  
Miwok legends clinging to ancient trees  
and rock formations  
whisper in tongues long forgotten  
and drift into the present  
like snow flurries in the spring  
While far above,  
within walls of a granite cathedral,  
only silent prayers exist,  
no words uttered by indestructible voices...  
A face, a magnificent profile,  
there among the clouds,  
above the falcon's nest,  
above intervention by sterile spirits.

-Lillian Rodich





## Ode to a Painting of a Girl on a Swing

I've watched her swing since before I could speak my name  
in my childhood home, on her piece of painted sky.  
She swings in unfelt breezes in her frame  
standing upon her swing with wistful eyes.

When I was just the age of my canvas friend  
I played on the swing my father built for me.  
It hung outside in the real-world sun and wind.  
Perhaps from her swing on the wall she was able to see

And her wistful gaze was due to her only wish  
that she could play outside with the real live girl  
but I was envious of her perfect bliss  
Swinging alone in an ideal canvas world.

That girl, still young, still swings on my wall inside  
and I am now much older than my friend.  
But when my daughter and I play on our swing outside  
then the three of us are girls on swings again.

- Anne Arnold Olivier

## The Three Fates: My Life in Ancient Greek

I wonder if Clothos, spinner of the thread of life,  
used pink colored thread  
to spin me from her loom in 1963? I hope so.  
Pink was cool then.

And how long did Lachesis, who measures the thread of our lives,  
measure mine?

At least 46 years. I hope there's still plenty  
of thread left.

But Atropos, ancient hag who cuts our life thread when we die,  
when the time comes for you  
to snip my thread  
I hope you lose your scissors.

- Anne Arnold Olivier



## RAINING...IN L.A.

Too much sun gets boring  
Rain seldom comes  
But it has arrived  
Asphalt roads and other man made things  
Welcome the shower bath  
Cleansing the scum away  
Thirsty earth shows her freshened green dress  
Air smells like a lady after her bubble bath  
Refreshing...happy...sexy  
Old folks in rocking chairs snooze to the sound  
Pitter patter drip drip drip  
Young lovers snuggle in their beds  
No better time to make love  
Ah, the rain in L.A.

- Leslie Kaplan



Chocolate ice cream, orange blossoms, sticky fingers, riding bareback, the cool stream bed, fresh air after rain, the oak of red wine, a passionate kiss, the baby's smooth bum, grilled onions and garlic, home-grown tomatoes, the rhythm of French, the twinkle of an old man's eye — the idea, the vision, the memory evoked. Observe, feel, gather, and share ... this is why I write.

- Andrea L. Polk

I write for enjoyment. I like putting words together and making something out of nothing.

Short stories are my forté, so I write descriptions of places, I put characters in them, and I show the characters doing things, thinking thoughts, and talking to each other.

Though they are fictional, my characters might be modeled on friends and enemies from my past or present. Or they might be complete products of my imagination.

-Dave Wetterberg

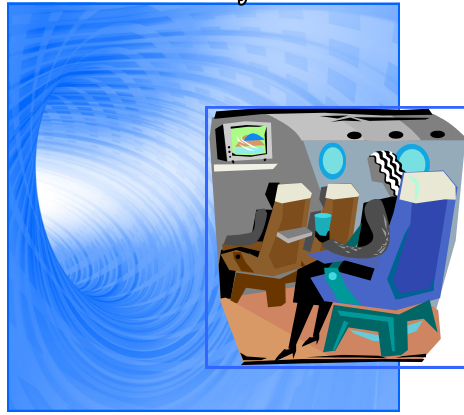
Never mastered painting — neither oil nor acrylic.

Studied piano and Celtic harp — but my songs were not idyllic.

Tried sewing, crochet, cross stitch, and crewel — but the stitches were never tight. And so to quench my creative thirst, all I can do is write.

- Karen Gorback

## The Snowy Tunnel



On a clear spring day many years ago I boarded a KLM constellation airplane flying from the edge of the Mediterranean Sea in the Middle East to the United State of America.

The flight itself was pleasant in spite of the constant noise coming from the airplane's propellers.

The first fuel stop was in Amsterdam, Holland, (The Netherlands). The passengers aboard the plane did not have to disembark from the plane. The ground crew was quick and efficient, and before long the flight continued.

As the flight headed west, daylight quickly turned into darkness. Before long there was an announcement from the Captain informing the passengers to be ready for the second fuel stop.

As the plane was descending towards the runway, bright lights were seen from the plane's windows. They shone in the darkness like bright stars guiding the way for the flight crew to land.

And then the plane landed! And what a sight it was to behold. From the plane's window I saw tall white narrow walls on both sides of the plane. They were so CLOSE to the plane. It seemed as if the walls were hugging the plane. And the plane was gliding slowly and smoothly inside this tall white tunnel until it stopped!

Again, we the passengers were asked to remain on board. In the meantime I could not stop moving from one side of the plane to the other. I wondered how the plane came to be parked in this narrow white walled tunnel.

I finally asked one of the stewardesses, "What is this white wall surrounding us?"

Her reply: "It is solid ice and snow; we are refueling in Iceland!"

It was the first time in my life that I saw real ice and snow in that shape! The rest of the flight was as pleasant as it began, and we landed in NewYork safely!

- Marganit Lish



## ONCE INSIDE A CANYON

Centuries ago, Sinagua Indian women  
toiled to bring water up  
steep canyon walls to their rude abodes:  
Simple walled-in shelves,  
ceilings of limestone, and  
charcoaled rear walls,  
halfway between sun-scorched scrub  
and cool oak-covered oasis below.  
Cacti on south wall,  
pines on perpetually-shaded north.  
Climates separated by alignment to  
the sun, as well as altitude.

We tramped down the foot-path  
dotted with purple prickly-pear blossoms,  
the stillness broken only by shrill bird-calls,  
peered into the abyss, bottom concealed by outcroppings,  
then huffed laboriously upward, wondering  
how the Sinagua women managed that climb.

- Erica Stux



## Indian Prayer

Let my eyes behold the beauty of a  
red and purple sunset.

Make my hands respect the things  
you have made.

Make me wise so I may know the les-  
son you have hidden in every leaf  
and rock .

I seek not to be stronger than my  
brothers, but to be able to fight my  
greatest enemy, myself.

**Yellow Hawk, a Sioux Chief.**

## Lullaby In The Desert Night

*for my daughter*

For you are the wishbone that shall stay whole.  
A teepee of wonder, an Indian's promise.  
And arrow of moons has startled your bones.  
And no storms shall harm you.

Rise on your left foot my slim-hipped darling.  
Or rise on you right, you cannot fail.  
For you are the lizard eating the sky,  
even as you are the mountain basking in sand.

And that is why desert animals  
prowling the night,  
sleep peacefully  
by your side.



© Doraine Poretz

CWC/WV October speaker

# Autumn Is

By Ray Malus

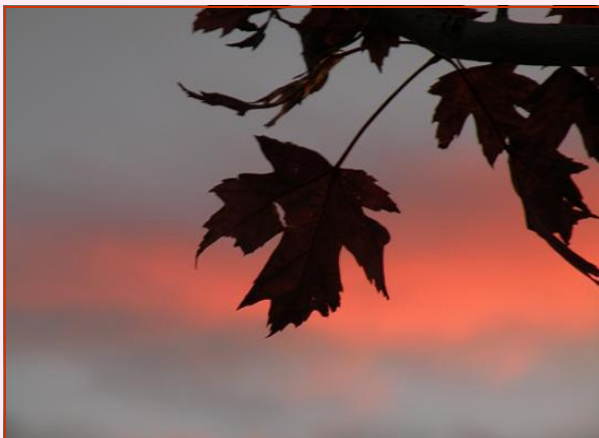
Autumn is the rekindled smoke of too-long-dormant hearths.  
The thrilling shiver of the year's first frost.  
The shrouded velvet dusk of hasty sunsets,  
and golden cider warmed and spiced with cloves.

Autumn is the waxy scent of freshly-opened crayons.  
The gleam of newly polished schoolroom floors.  
The smell of pristine notebooks, filled with promise.  
The must of textbooks, rife with unlearned lore.

Autumn is a tinkling harpsichord in muted, doiled parlors.  
The gleam of lemoned furniture in wanly sunlit dens.  
The camphor sting of cedar-chest-sequestered woolen blankets.  
The medicinal miasma of Vicks Vaporub.

Autumn is the caramel rainbow of a forward pass  
etched into an ice-blue sky, one Sunday afternoon,  
pomegranates, pumpkin pies and bowls of salted nuts,  
and dark arrays of sweet-sticky pitted dates.

Autumn is a meditation on eternity,  
A celebration of dearly purchased wisdom.  
It is the grace before the evening family meal,  
the quiet prayer before a winter's sleep.



## TALKING TURKEY 2010

**Please bow your heads; We gather together to feast with peaceful breaking of gluten free bread, offering thanks or good thoughts or nurturing mindsets, to the Creator, or The Source or The Universal Truth – yes, I know you don't pray, you meditate, whatever - for the bounty or produce or organic life forms, in memory of the Pilgrim or Anglo-Saxon Survivors or the Post-Columbian Invaders, who feasted with the Native Americans or The People or The Wronged Ones, after surviving a hellish winter ordained by God or Buddha or Gaia, and so I'm carving this tofu turkey, stuffed with purely pesticide free products, and everyone will now...please... pick up his or her knives and forks or chopsticks... and dig in.**

by Kathy Highcove

Revised and reprinted every November—my annual editorial indulgence. &:-)





## CIRCLE BACK

**J**ack stepped quickly past two drunken braves sprawled on the rough pine porch of the saloon. Paiutes have lost their pride, he thought, and glared back at the men. But how have I helped my tribe, my real family? I moved here when my parents died and tried to live like a white man with Dave Wilson's family. Ha! It was like trying to sew a sturdy boot from doeskin. Even though I changed my name to Jack Wilson, I'm still Wovoka, son of a Piute shaman ... still a poor Indian. And what is my future?

Someone shouted, "Look up! The sun is disappearing!"

Jack raised his head and squinted at the blue sky. He saw a black circle cover the sun's rim. He held his cotton shirt tail in front of his face to look again, but the sun was still too bright. His eyes teared from the glare, and he felt nauseated. The street scene receded, swirled like a whirlpool, and formed a golden orb surrounded by black. Jack collapsed next to the grocer's cart. A dream took over his mind.

He watched a great feathered hoop roll toward him from the West. When it stopped, Jack watched the future in its center: White people sank into the ground. They lay in disheveled piles of gingham and denim. Bonnets and neck scarves blew across deserted streets. Simultaneously, dead Indians rose from their graves on a barren hill. They walked to the empty main street. Jack caught sight of ghost animals rising from the dust. The once plentiful deer, beaver, bear, wolf and buffalo materialized and ran into vibrant green forests and fields. Square buildings of the town faded away and were replaced by a large village of tipis.

The Ghost People moved together, joined hands and formed a circle. In silence, the wraiths danced in a shuffling step. The dancers' forms were pale and their faces were gaunt. Circle, circle and with each

step their clothes took on more color. Faces soon shone with health and they began to chant, "Back again, begin again." From the village the living heard the song and came slowly forward to join the circle. All danced together and their moving feet now stamped the beat. Again, again, again ... Jack's mind felt rather than heard the words of the pulsing dance.

A deep voice spoke behind his ear, "Join the Ghost Dance. Honor the four seasons, the Circle of Life. Dance to bring back your world. "

"Who are you?" Wovoka asked the Voice.

"Turn and look at the Great Savior, Wovoka. Listen to my words: Tell your people they must dance to renew their world."

The shaman turned to stare at a bearded man who watched his face with deep penetrating eyes. The stranger smiled and raised his right hand in blessing... then the figure was lost in bright light as the uncovered sun bore down on Jack Wilson's face.

And that was the beginning of the Ghost Dance.

## EPILOGUE

*Wovoka's vision might be categorized today as a very intense dream. He woke from his dream*



*and related the message of the Great Savior. The idea of reincarnation caught the attention of tribes across the West. In the late 1800's most of the tribes had been corralled into arid reservations, and hundreds of tribal members had died of starvation and disease. The Ghost Dance spread across the West, and many tribes performed it for hours at a time until some dancers collapsed in delirium and exhaustion. Whites soon became mistrustful of the dance, and sometimes it was banned by white authorities. Fear of the Ghost Dance and Indian uprisings led to the Wounded Knee massacre of Indian women and children, and eventually the battle known as Custer's Last Stand. The Ghost Dance delivered more pain, not a revival of the Native Americans' pre-white man world.*

**- Kathy Hlghcove**

## 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, November 6th, 2010 at 1:30 p.m.

## MAILING ADDRESS

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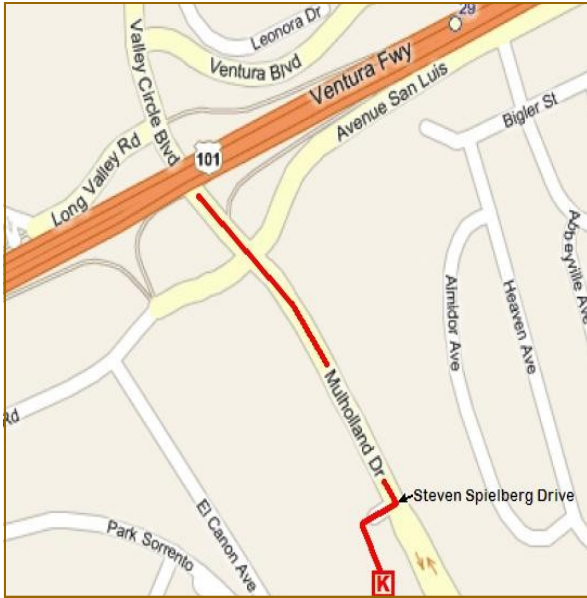
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