



The Valley Scribe

Newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Branch
of the California Writers Club



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Luis Rodriguez Uses Poetry to Impact and Change his World

It is an honor and a joy to welcome Luis J. Rodriguez as our guest speaker on April 3 at 1 pm via Zoom to help us celebrate National Poetry Month with a presentation titled "Does Poetry Matter?" Mr. Rodriguez was asked by Mayor Eric Garcetti to serve as Poet Laureate for the City of Los Angeles from 2014 – 2016. In addition to poetry, Rodriguez is a prolific writer in multiple genres. His website describes him as a "novelist/memoirist/short story writer/children's book writer/essayist, as well as a community & urban peace activist, mentor, healer, youth and arts advocate, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather." ([Luis Javier Rodriguez \(luisjrodriguez.com\)](http://luisjrodriguez.com))

I became acquainted with Mr. Rodriguez in a February, 2020 article in the Los Angeles Times titled "Does poetry matter? L.A.'s former poet-in-chief Luis J. Rodriguez explains why it's life changing." In the article, Rodriguez explains the tradition of recognizing poet laureates throughout history and his desire to make the term a household word. He strives to bring poetry to the people.



In the first year of Rodriguez' appointment, he was asked to do a minimum of six events, but he did 110. During his two-year tenure, he spoke directly to twenty-five thousand people and millions more via TV, radio, the Internet, and print media.

He says, "Poetry's appeal goes beyond the mundane or profit-oriented. Poetry is a powerful way to movingly and artfully convey ideas and emotions, which in turn is a way to impact and change this world. As long as the world needs changing, we'll need poetry" (Luis J. Rodriguez, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/10/2020).

Emerging from a young life filled with the terror of gangs, drugs and jail, Rodriguez has become one of the nation's most cherished literary artists. He also helped create Tia Chucha's Café & Centro Cultural, a multiart, multimedia cultural center in the San Fernando Valley, honored as a *2020 California Nonprofit of the Year*

Rodriguez has published 16 books, including a best-selling memoir [*Always Running, La Vida Loca, Gang Days in LA* \(Atria Books, 2005\)](#); a poetry collection in [*Borrowed Bones* \(Curbstone Books/Northwestern University Press, 2016\)](#); and a book of essays [*From Our*](#)

(Continued on page 2)

Karen's Corner

By Karen Gorback, CWC-SFV President



**national
poetry month**

Inspector*

**An errant bit of string
Or a fallen crumb.
The parakeet's feather
Or the dog's old bone.**

**Down in your world,
You grab with much pleasure
Such tiny things,
As if each a treasure**

Decades later, I composed "Jersey City Lullaby" while rocking my newborn granddaughter in her tiny nursery above the railroad tracks in Jersey City – her soft sleeping sounds a counterpoint to the cacophony outside her window.

Jersey City Lullaby

**Rocking the baby,
Clickety-clack.
Nursery's perched above the track.
Train bells clang, and sirens cry.
A Jersey City Lullaby.**

I hope you will join us for a special presentation via Zoom on April 3 at 1:00 pm as we welcome Poet Laureate Luis Rodriguez who asks, "Does Poetry Matter?" For me, the answer is clear. If laughing and loving and learning and rocking babies matter, poetry will always matter.

Karen Gorback

**1st Place 2005, Ventura County Writers Club Poetry Contest*

(Continued from page 1)

[Land to Our Land: Essays, Journeys, and Imaginings from a Native Xanax Writer \(Seven Stories Press 2020\).](#)

His awards include a Finalist for the 2011 National Book Critics Circle Award, a Lila Wallace Readers Digest Writers Award, a PEN Josephine Miles Literary Award, a Paterson Poetry Prize, a Carl Sandburg Literary Award, and fellowships from the Sundance Institute, the Lannan Foundation, the City of Los Angeles, the City of Chicago, the California Arts Council, and the Illinois Arts Council. Rodríguez is also Scholar in Residence at California State University, Northridge

Karen Gorback
CWC-SFV President

**"In essential things,
unity; in nonessen-
tial things, liberty.
In all things, com-
passion."**

Luis Rodriguez

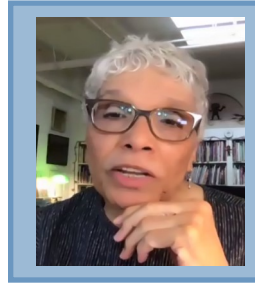


If You Plan to attend ...

All SFV club members will receive a Zoom invitation prior to this presentation. CWC members from other clubs may also receive a free invitation if—prior to the meeting—they contact Zoom host Monte Swann at cwcsfvhost@gmail.com. Guests may purchase admission to this program at www.cwc-sfv.org.

By Anat Golan Wenick

To end Black History Month with style, our club was honored to welcome Pat Cummings, author and illustrator of more than 40 books. Cummings beguiled us with stories and ideas on how to turn bad experiences in our lives into a compelling tale, especially one that would appeal to kids.



PAT CUMMINGS

www.patcumings.com • write@patcumings.com

Instagram: patcumingsbooks • Twitter: @PatCummingsBook

My books are available at
BOOKS ARE MAGIC

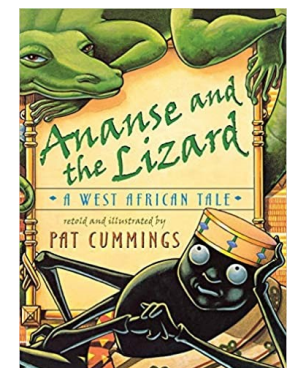
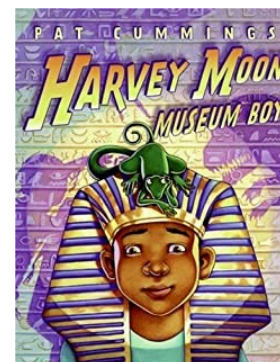
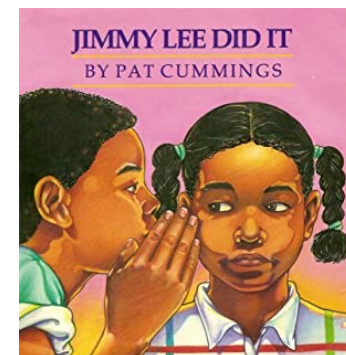
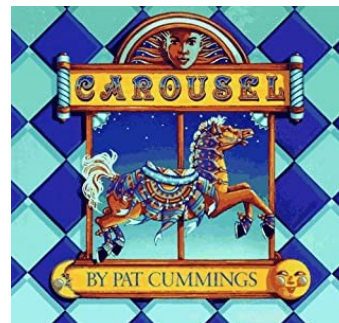
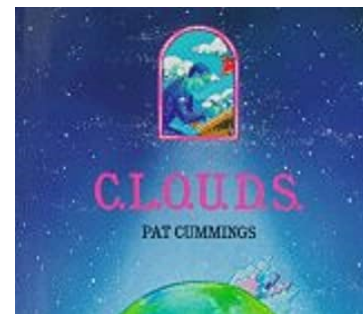
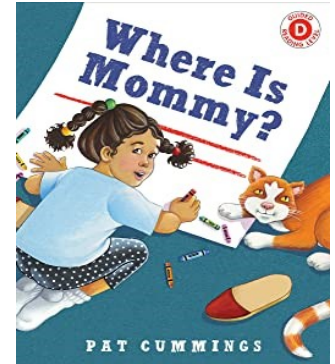
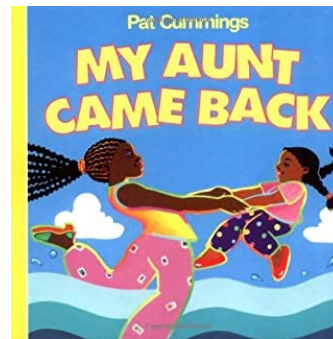
Since childhood, Cummings told us that she has experienced the same hurtful discrimination and abuse encountered by her BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) colleagues. But instead of letting hurtful experiences stifle her voice, she took Peter Straub’s advice: “I don’t shy from writing about incredibly unpleasant, distressing things.” Cummings has transform a negative experience into a teaching opportunity. Stories built around a no good, very bad experience fueled her writing. She discovered that her accounts of how horrible people can be to one another struck a chord with both young and adult readers.

Cummings challenged the Zoom audience to “think of the worst thing you’ve ever done.” And we’d mused on a past mistake, she went on to say: “I won’t tell you what I’ve done (Zoom chuckles), but I’ll tell you the worst thing that ever happened to me ...the most dreadful thing.” She revealed that she was inspired to write a book after seeing a car plunge into a river and seeing a brave man jump in the water to free the trapped driver. This gripping scene got her musing about what happens if a parent doesn’t come home, and out of the experience came the book *Where is Mommy?*

Cummings cautioned that presenting bad experiences and situations for kids is a very different process than for adults. Madeleine L’Engle once said: “You have to write the book that wants to be written. And if the book will be too difficult for grown-ups, then you write it for children.” For Cummings, when writing for kids, she remembers that they may not have had certain experiences. Also, since kids experience their world in the present, Cummings believes that a kid’s lit writer should simplify the character’s challenges and tamp down on backstories that are part of an adult story arc.

Finally, Cummings reiterated that finding a way to turn your bad experiences into a compelling tale can help a child make sense of dark topics and encourage them to accept themselves and be hopeful about their future.

Cummings concluded her talk by providing us her contact information, stating she’s willing to answer questions and provide advice on any ideas for a children’s book.



The Little Poem that Could ... Enter a Contest

By Anat Golan Wenick

Contests are one way an unpublished writer can make a name for himself and poetry is no different. But before rushing to establish yourself as the best candidate for a poet Laureate, it's best to have a game plan. Though some contests have no entry fee, most of them have an entry fee, so you may want to decide on how much you plan to spend in a year, since contests run year-round.



Buddhism for example), or a contest that is only opened to published poets (Contest that do not have an entry fee are usually only open to published poets and offer the biggest prizes).

Many contests specify whether you can submit solely online or via mail, where contact information should be provided, and limit page and word number, and will not refund your money if you submitted work that does not align with the required length.

Keep a list of which contests you entered and when, the amount you spent and the outcome, so you can enter different contests the following year, or come back to those you liked with new material. Next, decide what you want to get out of a contest. Some contests only offer a monetary prize, while others also provide the writer with copies of the work. Other prizes include traveling and lodging stipend, teaching position and mentorship.

And last, but not least, research the contest's reputation. How long has it been running? Where the winning poems are published and how many people read the publications? How many copies do you get and is the entry fee worth it? Many contests provide the judge's name so you can research his or hers experience and professional background.

Do your research. Read the submission guidelines carefully as some contests look for a single entry while others for an entire collection, and check out the Frequently Asked Questions. Make sure this is not a contest specific to a subject, like contests that seek translated poetry from another language or culture (Italian and Zen

Now that you are ready to submit, here is a sample of few upcoming contests. Other contests not listed here will open later in the year. For a complete list of contests, grants and awards visit Poets & Writers (<https://www.pw.org/grants>) and Reedsay (<https://blog.reedsay.com/writing-contests/>)

Deadline: 15 September 2021 (Contest opens for entries on April 15, 2021)

Guest Judge: Chen Chen

Awards: A \$1,500 prize, publication of the manuscript, and 25 contributor copies is awarded annually to a poet whose work explores how place, shapes identity, imagination and understanding. Three finalists will be announced, and all previously unpublished work will be considered for publication as a general submission to the journal.

Entry Fee: \$15.00

Important to Note: Special attention is given to poems that exhibit multiple vectors of thinking: artistic, theoretical, and social, which is to say, political.

Oberon (<http://www.oberonpoetry.com>)

Deadline: 10 April 2021

Awards: A prize of \$1,000 and publication in Oberon is given annually for a single poem.

Entry Fee: \$18.00

Important to Note: Submit up to three poems of no more than two pages each. Entry fee includes an issue of Oberon.

New Ohio Review (<http://www.ohio.edu/nor>) **Deadline:** 15 April 2021

Awards: Three prizes of \$1,500 each and publication in New

Ohio Review are given annually for a poem or group of poems, a short story, and an essay.

Entry Fee: \$20.00

Important to Note: Submit a poem or group of poems of up to six pages or a story or essay of up to 20 pages. Entry fee includes a subscription to New Ohio Review. All entries are considered for publication.

Spoon River Poetry Review (<http://srpr.org/contest.php>)

Deadline: 15 April 2021

Awards: A prize of \$1,000 and publication in Spoon River Poetry Review is given for a single poem. The winner also receives a \$500 honorarium and travel and lodging expenses to give a reading at the Spoon River Poetry Review annual gala.

Entry Fee: \$20.00

Important to Note: Submit up to three poems totaling no more than 10 pages. Entry fee includes a subscription to Spoon River Poetry Review.

Omnidawn Publishing (<http://www.omnidawn.com/contest>)

Deadline: 19 April 2021

Judge: Thylas Moss

Awards: A prize of \$1,000 and publication in OmniVerse, the

(Continued on page 5)

online journal of Monidawn Publishing, is given annually for a single poem. The winner also receives 50 copies of a

Entry Fee: \$10.00 (\$5.00 for each additional poem)

Important to Note: Submit a poem of 8 to 24 lines.

Sixfold (<http://www.sixfold.org>)

Deadline: 23 April 2021

Awards: Two prizes of \$1,000.00 each and publication in Sixfold are given quarterly for a group of poems and a short story.

Entry Fee: \$5.00

Important to Note: Online submission only. Submit up to five poems totaling no more than 10 pages or up to 20 pages of prose.

Tupelo Press (<http://www.tupelopress.org/contests>)

Deadline: 30 April 2021

Judge: Victoria Chang

Awards: A prize of \$3,000.00, publication by Tupelo Press, and 25 author copies is given annually for a first or second poetry collection.

Entry Fee: \$30.00

Important to Note: Submit a manuscript of 48 to 88 pages. All entries are considered for publication.

Poetry International (<http://poetryinternational.sdsu.edu/submissions/pi-prize.html>)

Deadline: 30 April 2021

Awards: A prize of \$1,000.00 and publication in Poetry International is given annually for a single poem (\$3.00 for each additional poem).

Entry Fee: \$15.00

Important to Note: Online submissions only. Submit up to three poems. All entries are considered for publication.

Marsh Hawk Press (<http://www.marshhawkpress.org>)

Deadline: 30 April 2021

Judge: David Lehman

Awards: A prize of \$1,000.00 and publication by Marsh Hawk Press is given annually for a poetry collection.

Entry Fee: \$25.00

Important to Note: Online submissions only. Submit a manuscript of 48 to 84 pages.

Ashland Poetry Press (<http://www.ashlandpoetrypress.com>)

Deadline: 30 April 2021

Judge: Maggie Anderson

Awards: A prize of \$1,000.00, publication by Ashland Poetry Press, and 50 author copies are also given annually for a poetry collection.

Entry Fee: \$27.00

Important to Note: Online submissions only. Submit a manuscript of 48 to 96 pages.

DIAGRAM/New Michigan Press (<http://www.thediagram.com/contest.html>)

Deadline: 30 April 2021

Judge: Ander Monson

Awards: A prize of \$1,000.00, publication by New Michigan Press, and 25 author copies is given annually for a chapbook of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, or hybrid-genre work.

Entry Fee: \$20.00

Important to Note: Online submissions only. Submit a manuscript of 18 to 44 pages.

Ploughshares (<http://www.pshares.org>)

Deadline: 15 May 2021

Judges: Paige Lewis will judge in poetry, Kiley Reid will judge in fiction, and Paul Lisicky will judge in nonfiction.

Awards: Three prizes of \$2,000.00 each and publication in Ploughshares are given annually for a group of poems, a short story, and an essay. Each winner also receives a consultation with the literary agency Aevitas Creative Management.

Entry Fee: \$24.00

Important to Note: Writers who have not published a book or a chapbook with a print run over 300 are eligible. Submit 3-5 pages of poetry or up to 6,000 words of fiction or non-fiction.

Georgia Review (<http://thegeorgiareview.com/the-lorraine-williams-poetry-prize>)

Deadline: 1 May 2021

Judge: Arthur Sze

Awards: A prize of \$1,500.00 plus publication in Georgia Review is given annually for a single poem.

Entry Fee: \$15.00 (No fee for current subscribers)

Important to Note: Submit up to 3 poems totaling no more than 10 pages. All entries are considered for publication.

Atlanta Review (<http://www.atlantareview.com/guidelines/international-poetry-contest>)

Deadline: 1 May 2021

Awards: A prize of \$1,000.00 including publication in Atlanta Review is given annually for a single poem.

Entry Fee: \$15.00

Important to Note: Online submission only. Submit up to 5 poems. All entries are considered for publication.

Breakwater Review (<http://www.breakwaterreview.com/contests>)

Deadline: 1 May 2021

Awards: A prize of \$1,000.00 and publication in Breakwater Review is given annually for a single poem.

Entry Fee: \$10.00

Important to Note: Submit 3 poems. All entries are considered for publication.

The March writing exercise: Use these three words—pompous, llama and sandwich in a story or a poem.



Cotillion Dropout

By Pat Avery

My pet llama, Susy, attended Llama Cotillion to prepare for her debut in the pompous llama society.

Rules were strict and unbending.

She needed to sit with her legs discretely crossed, unlike the way she typically sprawled across our sofa. She must no longer nuzzle strangers as she passed in the street, a habit that has resulted in several embarrassing relationships.

While sipping tea, she should delicately eat her sandwiches. Finally, she must spit into a spittoon rather than in people's faces.

Susy hated school. The other llamas teased her as she attempted her leg crosses and fell on her tummy instead. Showing considerable restraint, she successfully gave up nuzzling unknown people. Her argument for continuing friendliness was compelling. She stated how sad it would be to remain anonymous in our neighborhood. Nuzzling, she noted, would be the cure. Susy ate cucumber sandwiches with such gusto that she failed the dainty consumption requirement. A blanket of crumbs dotted her chest after every afternoon tea. She was fully capable of using a spittoon – when she wanted to. So, this was a skill she readily embraced.

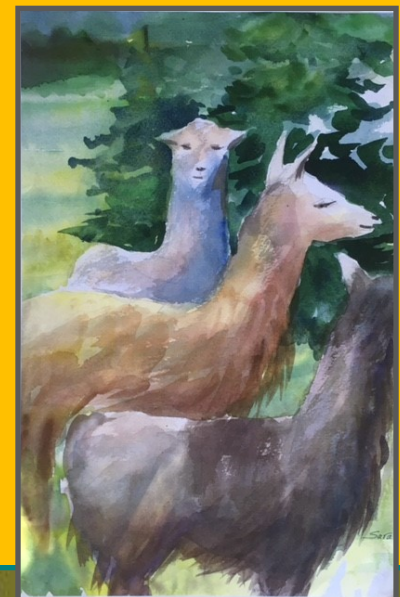
For graduation, all the llama grads lined up alphabetically. Susy was near the end. Only Zelda came after. Zelda was a snooty llama, perfect in every regard. As the names were called, I could see Zelda's mouth moving, undoubtedly whispering llama taunts. Finally, as Susy was summoned to get her diploma, she reached her breaking point. With a loud splat, a stream of spit hit Zelda between the eyes. A collective gasp erupted from her classmates as the headmistress of Llama Cotillion tore up Susy's diploma.

Sent home in disgrace, I concluded that for Susy, homeschooling was the only alternative. After months of patient instruction Susy became a happy, spitless llama but was barred from debuting at the pompous Llama Society Ball.

Margie's Llamas

By Sara Coyle

My friend Margie raised 53 llamas on her ranch—believe it or not! She knew the name of everyone. I'm sure she fed them sandwiches, which they probably spit out since they were so pompous and loved to spit. It was amazing to see them come to her when she called out their name, like Creme Puff, the baby of Eclair. Sparkler, was born on the 4th of July. My friend Margie still has her sense of humor, but her llamas have been sold.



Llama painting by Sara Coyle, to see Sara's work: [Sara's Paintings and Poetry: Coyle, Sara Lou, Coyle, Sara Lou: 9781721139385: Amazon.com:](#)

Weather or Not

It whispers in from the sea
Muffling growling smashes of incoming tide
Stealing sinuously up cliffs
 Infiltrating a thousand shy canyons.
 Nothing stops the advance.

A misty blanket eating asphalt
 Devouring overhanging houses,
Until there is little to see
 Except the tail of crawling car,
 Ineffective headlights
 Bombarding a wall of glaringly opaque mist.

Ephemeral water slides around corners that disappear
 Then reappear abruptly and gone again,
Outrunning windshield wipers
 As a killer curve
 Vanishes into a wall of gray.

But not yet.

Complacent in her corner of the Valley,
 She knows none of this
The news has not touched her.
 She is safe from the day.

Backing out,
 Turning the wheel to face the road
There is none.

A wall of gray-white wet dangling flannel.

Lots to do.

Weather.
When there is Weather
 Perfectly sane people forget how to drive.
People in L.A. don't like Weather.
The majority moved West to avoid it.

She is a Native.
Tough, resilient.
 Her city doesn't intimidate her.

She moves straight toward the curb
Protecting a line of houses blocking the way.

They have to be there.
 There hasn't been an earthquake.

Inching ahead,
 With assured instinct she turns right,
 Avoiding an invisible curb

To chase a rainbow
 On an overcast day.

June 12, 2020

Nance Crawford





Andrea Polk, Membership Chair CWC-SFV

Our Website. cwc-sfv.org

Member Opportunities. Of our 22 clubs, 20 are continuing to offer speakers to members via on-line meetings. As a member of the San Fernando Valley branch of the CWC, you may attend other branches' regular monthly speaker meetings. Some CWCs charge a minimum fee for their members to attend. As our member you would be asked to pay the fee their members pay. The website list below will help you find opportunities for you to attend. Fees are subject to change. Questions? Contact andipolk4@gmail.com

Northern California

1. Berkeley
cwc-berkeley.org (\$5.00 fee)
2. Central Coast Writers
centralcoastwriters.org
3. Fremont Area Writers
cwc-fremontareawriters.org
4. Marin
cwcmarin.com (Free thru June)
5. Mount Diablo
cwcmtdiablo.org
6. Napa Valley Writers
napavalleywriters.net (\$5.00 PayPal)
7. North State Writers\Not meeting
8. Redwood Writer
redwoodwriters.org (\$5.00)
9. Sacramento
sacramentowriters.org (free 2-20-21)
10. San Francisco Peninsula
cwc-peninsula.org
11. San Joaquin Valley Writer
sjvalleywriters.org
12. South Bay Writers
southbaywriters.com

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13. Tri-Valley Writers
trivalleywriters.org (\$5.00)
14. Writers of the Mendocino Coast
writersmendocinocoast.org

Southern California

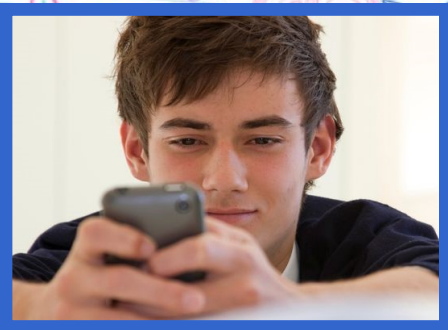
15. Coastal Dunes CWC
coastaldunescwc.com
16. East Sierra
ridgewriters.wordpress.com
17. High Desert
hdcwc.com
18. Inland Empire
jecwc.com
19. Long Beach
calwriterslongbeach.org
20. Orange County
calwritersorangecounty.org
21. Writers of Kern
writersofkern.com



JUST IMAGINE IT

By Leslie Kaplan

Being young again
 Feeling the excitement
 Of a passionate attraction
 Hoping he will call
 In the middle of the night
 Saying he can't sleep
 Because he aches for you
 The yearning is mutual
 Like the first awakening
 Like an electric shock
 Like an electric kiss
 Morning finally arrives
 After a sleepless night
 The first awakening
 Obsessed with yearning
 To feel his warm hands
 Caressing your bare body
 Feelings never felt before
 is this thing called love
 Or just the beginning
 Of growing up



My Dearest Dear

Have I taken you for granted?
It's not what I'd ever intend
Not what either of us wanted
Nor a thought I would want to send
I see you always in pure white
At the highest point of my life
That scintillating sublime night
When you became my darling wife
We have always cared and do care
Only you for me and me for you
Desiring everything to share
Suffering from slips and miscues
We got lost from precious there to here
But our love is too cherished to lose
Let us be once more the loving pair
Enfolding as one my dearest dear

Michael Edelstein



A New Era Has Begun

A new era has begun
There will be falsehoods and lies
disingenuity will occur
but not on the scale
we have come to expect
The great flimflam orange fraud
has stumbled off the stage
Certainly to be heard
as the media rejoices
in his inanity, his insanity
It sells even as it smells
Stinks to high heaven
Of which he knows
absolutely nothing
Let us genuflect
to our renewed old world
Take joy, exult,
in Old Glory unfurled
As the worm burrows
on its way south
Truth unvarnished
can stand pure
As the sun smiles
over our capital once again.

Michael Edelstein



Review and Refresh

Music in Poetry

Rhythm

In poems, "the beat goes on" according to the words and the syllables in the various lines. For example *unique* has two syllables (*u-nique*) and the heavy beat is on the *-nique*. The word *reference* has three syllables (*ref-er-ence*) with the stress on the *ref*. *Traditional* has four syllables (*tra-di-tion-al*) with the heavy beat on the *-di* and so on. These syllabic beats occur in everyday speech and prose.

I can't imagine diving from that high.

... but in rhythmic poetry the beats take on definite, predictable patterns.

Whose woods these are I think I know,

His house is in the village though ...

Rhyme

Rhyme is the repetition of the same sound or of a similar sound.

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;

Close to the sun in lonely lands

Ringed with the azure world he stands.

But usually poets alternate the rhymes

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,

"And your hair has become very white,

And yet you incessantly stand on your head.

Do you think at your age, it is right?"

A single word can also rhyme with the end of a longer word.

Worships language and forgives

Everyone by whom it lives.

Further on in the same poem, the last syllable of a three syllable word rhymes nicely with the last syllable of another three syllable word.

Time that is intolerant

Of the brave and innocent.

When the rhyme is in the last syllable, as in the lines above, it is a masculine rhyme, generally a more forceful sound, whereas the agreement of sound in two consecutive syllables is a feminine rhyme, usually more light and delicate, as in *laden* and *maiden* below.

With rue my heart is laden

For golden friends I had,

For many a rose-lipt maiden

And many a lightfoot lad.



Meter

The following combinations of stressed and unstressed or accented and unaccented syllables are referred to as feet.

The *iamb* (delay) - unaccented syllable, accented syllable

The *trochee* (only) - accented-unaccented

The *anapest* (in my heart) - two unaccented-one accented

The *dactyl* (happily) - one accented-two unaccented

Two feet in a line is called ... *dimeter*.

Three feet ... *trimeter*. Four feet ... *tetrameter*.

Five feet *pentameter*. Six feet ... *hexameter*.

And so on.

Thus ... *and the sheen on their spears was like stars on the sea is anapestic tetrameter* and ... *beside the lake beneath the trees is iambic tetrameter*.

The master poets were experts in combining words with rhythm and music. If you enter these waters and choose to follow a basic rhythm pattern, you must be consistent throughout. If you drop the pattern even slightly (without a good reason) the reader will spot it and the poem will be ruined in the same way a pin can destroy a balloon.

Some poets won't attempt rhythm and write free verse. If you attempt a rhythm pattern and you carry it off, however, the words of your poem can provide a beautiful musical background as it speaks, as Shakespeare did in this sonnet.

Sonnet 73

That time of year thou may'st in me behold

When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang

Upon those boughs which shake against the cold

Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day

As after sunset fadeth in the west,

Which by and by black night doth take away,

Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire

That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

As the deathbed whereon it must expire,

Consumed by that which it was nourished by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,

To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

— Dave Wettberg

Always
The dawning of a new day
The melody a child plays
Is smiling on us from his bright eyes

Daylight
The kind that makes it all right
The kindness of a sunrise
Golden river
Reaching out to everybody

Sunshine
The kind you're always hoping that you will find
When no one sees your cold night
It's simple as the Dayshine, Dayshine
Can you see it

Dayshine
It's not hard to see it
Just raise up your head and feel it
Shining on you

Sunlight
It's always there for your eyes
A silent friend who can't lie
You know it's always there each morning

His eyes
They always rain when you cry
He's waiting here with arms wide
Simple as a valentine
With only one word

Dayshine
It's soaring out from his eyes
His hands are full of sunrise
So simple like the day shines, day shines
There's no reason

Dayshine
Does it need a reason
Every morning every morning
Waiting waiting

Feel the warm light on your face
Silence whispering your name
Love or curse it, will it change?
Day can't help but shine this way



Ester Benjamin Shifren has attained her goal. When the pandemic shut-down began, she vowed to compose a verse a day—from March 2020 to March 2021. And she did it! But on she goes, each day sharing her “jingles” with scores of social media followers. What’s next? Ester will soon publish a new book: *Rhymes in Covid Times*. Please read the article below to learn more about her 2021 plans.

Kathy Highcove



Many years ago, in a South African newspaper, I used to read short, daily inspirational rhymes by a poet whose name I recently, for the life of me, could not recall. In those years I remember thinking, "I can do that!" The gift of rhyming runs in my family, and we often exchanged letters--of which I still have some copies--compiled entirely of what we called "jingles."

Since my childhood I composed poetry and songs, and later wrote and produced annual musical stage productions in the S. African town where we lived. But, a few years ago I chose to forego poetry in favor of writing a memoir about my family's century in Shanghai. My idyllic childhood had ended when I was a young child of five, when our family, as British Alien Allies, suffered a three-year internment as POWs of the Japanese during their WWII occupation of Shanghai, the "Paris of the Orient."

During the early days of Corona isolation an idea began taking shape in my head... I began recalling the daily poems by the "name-forgotten" poet! I suddenly felt compelled to start a daily rhyming regime--that I thought would surely end when I reached one hundred! During that first year I gathered a lot of social media followers, so I put out the question to my South African groups and soon got an answer! The poet's name was Patience Strong! I felt inspired and empowered! I googled her, and got detailed information—the internet is wonderful!

Well, year one ended without my skipping a single day of rhyming, and sometimes I added bonus poems. I have an amazing Muse who almost dictates the lines! My daily social media posting has brought people, with whom I lost touch years ago, back into my life. I will soon publish a selection in a book titled, "Rhymes in Covid Times." I'll include photos of important events and also some images of my own artwork.

It's been an exciting journey that isn't ending--I'll continue to rhyme on!

Ester Benjamin Shifren

Oy gevalt, I'm "Ois-ge-zoomed!"
 Much more of this and I'll be doomed!
 Each day another zooming session—
 Is this some new form of aggression?
 Everything revolves around
 The newest lessons that abound,
 From experts in so many fields,
 Who hope that it increases yields
 When listeners take up all their offers,
 Replenishing their empty coffers!

MY ONE-YEAR RHYMER-VERSERY!

BINGO! I've reached the one-year mark
 From when I started with a spark
 Of inspiration for my jingles!
 First I wrote some short line singles
 And as I wrote, my muse took hold
 With inspiration that was gold!
 I wrote on many subjects then,
 And didn't give up, not even when
 Politics and Covid reigned
 In all the news, and I felt pained!
 And even when my book is out
 I'll write my rhymes, and all about
 My thoughts, and topics of the day—
 And always have a lot to say!
 So thanks to all who lend an ear,
 You are to me so very dear!

Daily poem from Ester Benjamin Shifren

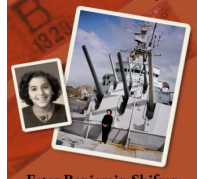


Ester Benjamin Shifren is the author of

Hiding in a CAVE OF TRUCKS

[Amazon.com: Ester Benjamin Shifren: Books, Biography, Blog.](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B089888888)

HIDING IN A CAVE OF TRUCKS
 A Dramatic Jewish Family's Century in Shanghai and Internment in a WWII POW Camp



Ester Benjamin Shifren

P2ña



she spells her name Pit2nya
or P2ña with an enyay wiggle
tuxedo cat with white paws, all four
black tipped fur variegated to greys
my purrsonality kitty

when I go to bed
I find her laying crosswise
on my side of the bed
daring me to move her
but I do and she purrs

not sitting on my lap
but by my side
she bonks my elbow
asking me to bonk her head back
I do, with my knuckle

P2ña accompanies me
to the refrigerator
looks up at the door
pleading “open it,
feed me. feed me neow!”

in her carrier
she hunkers near the back
allowing the vet
to man-handle her
and to charge us plenty

Sylvia Molesko



*There are two means of refuge
from the miseries of life: music
and cats.*

Albert Schweitzer

*Cats know how to obtain food
without labor, shelter without
confinement, and love without
penalties.*

W. L. George



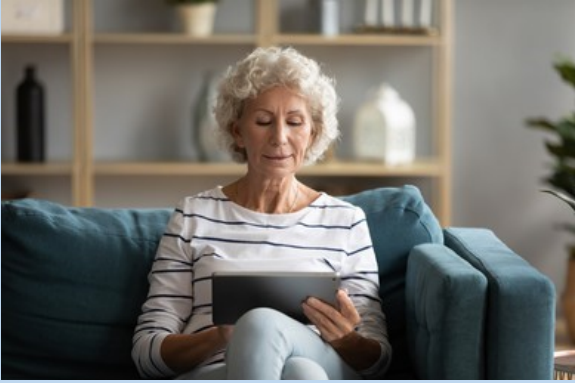
Spring Morning

alabaster faces
hidden in crystalline Spring
Winter's icicles
tangled in the underbrush

frozen drops
join a string of jewels
decorating branches
like Spring blossoms

faces somewhere
amidst new-grown greenery
illuminated
by a glowing sun
melt into smiles

Lillian Rodich



ETHAN

Your eyes are dark brown
You hardly ever frown

Come to me, precious baby
We will build bridges, maybe

The sun shines through your smile
Your tears flow like the river Nile

The sound of your ecstatic giggle
Soothes like a magical madrigal

Some years have gone by
Yet the dreams never die

Yearning still to strengthen the tie
These surreal times, hopes are high

Giving you a hug is now out
Only blowing a kiss is allowed

You are barely six, a kindergarten academic
While we are all consumed by this pandemic

keeping distance, covered with mask
Searching in your eyes, a difficult task

Uncertain whether I have heard
The secret you whispered to me afterward

Surely! we will build bridges together
Over the abyss, pulled by a tether.

Come back soon to visit us
Only in the backyard, with so much fuss.

Pirhiya Goldstein

California's First Poet Laureate was a founding member of the California Writers Club



Ina Coolbrith

Copa De Oro (California Poppy)

Thy satin vesture richer is than looms
Of Orient weave for raiment of her kings,
Not dyes of olden Tyre, not precious things
Regathered from the long forgotten tombs
Of buried empires, not the iris plumes
That wave upon the tropics' myriad wings,
Not all proud Sheba's queenly offerings,
Could match the golden marvel of thy blooms,
For thou art nurtured from the treasure-veins
Of this fair land; thy golden rootlets sup
Her sands of gold—of gold thy petals spun,
Her golden glory, thou! of hills and plains,
Lifting, exultant, every kingly cup



Editor and poet Ina Coolbrith was born Josephine Smith to Mormon parents in Nauvoo, Illinois. Her uncle, Joseph Smith, was the founder of the Mormon Church. Her father died when Coolbrith was an infant, and her mother subsequently left the church and remarried. In 1849 the family moved to California, lured by the Gold Rush. Coolbrith was educated in Los Angeles, and as a teenager published her first poems in local newspapers. A brief, abusive marriage and the infant death of her son marked the end of Coolbrith's teen years.

In 1865 Josephine Smith took her mother's maiden name and became Ina Donna Coolbrith. She settled in San Francisco, where she hosted many salons, helped to co-edit (with Bret Harte) the journal *Overland Monthly*, and was the first woman to become an honorary member of the Bohemian Club.

In 1874 Coolbrith adopted three foster children and began a career as a librarian that lasted for two decades. Working at the Oakland Free Public Library, she encouraged Jack London's and Isadora Duncan's early reading.

Coolbrith published four collections of poetry in a range of formal structures, including *A Perfect Day* (1881) and *Wings of Sunset* (1929). Though the 1906 San Francisco earthquake destroyed Coolbrith's home, many of her poems, and notes for an autobiog-

raphy, she became California's first poet laureate in 1915.

Ina Coolbrith Park is located on San Francisco's Russian Hill. She is buried at Oakland's Mountain View Cemetery, in a grave that was unmarked until 1986, when the Ina Coolbrith Circle erected a headstone there.

Information for the above article was provided by the Berkeley Historical Plaque Project website: ([Berkeley Historical Plaque Project - Berkeley City Hall\(berkeleyplaques.org\)](http://Berkeley Historical Plaque Project - Berkeley City Hall(berkeleyplaques.org)))

The CWC Connection to Ina Coolbrith

Ina Coolbrith was a founder member, along with Jack London and Joaquin Miller, of the California Writers Club. In Coolbrith's honor, the Central CWC Board has bestowed an *Ina Coolbrith Award* to members who have given distinguished service to our club. In our branch history, CWC-SFV co-founder Betty Freeman, and MRMS constructor, Ray Malus, have received this award.

Kathy Highcove



**Our official location
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**Motion Picture and
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AT

23388 Mulholland Drive

Woodland Hills, 91364

<http://cwc-sfv.org/>



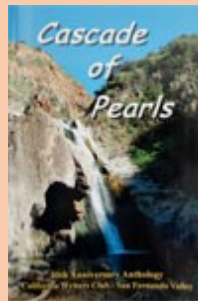
Pitter Patterns
Lenora Smalley

I love the pitter of rain In puddles
where little translucent men jump up
and down in glee
and with all their tiny kin
dance down the concrete sidewalks
into windy, rain-slick streets,
celebrating in big block parties
the imminent coming of spring.



CWC-SFV Anthologies

2017



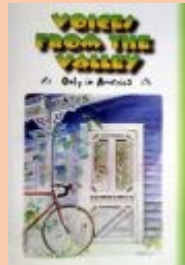
2009



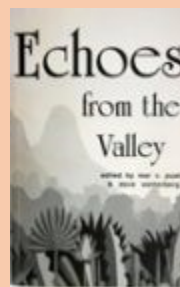
2006



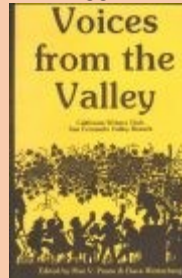
2003



1999



1994



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