



The Valley Scribe



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

Welcome Lynne Thompson

Poet Laureate for the City of Los Angeles



The San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club is honored to welcome Lynne Thompson, Poet Laureate for the City of Los Angeles, as our guest speaker on April 2, 2022 at 1:00, via Zoom, to help us celebrate National Poetry Month.

As a native Angeleno and daughter of Caribbean immigrants, Thompson says that she is proud to serve as L.A. Poet Laureate and as a literary ambassador for literature in general and for poetry in particular. While some question the importance of poetry in our lives, she responds that when humanity experiences difficult or joyous times—births, deaths, weddings, wars—they turn to the poets who wrap language around what they are feeling. Her own poetry addresses ancestry and family, as well as the events of our days. It is those poems that she is happy to share with us in celebration of National Poetry month.

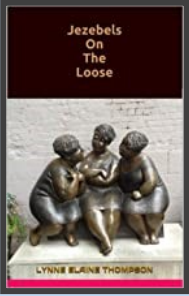
Thompson was appointed Los Angeles' Poet Laureate in 2021. Her most recent collection of poems, *Fretwork*, was selected the *Marsh Hawk Press Poetry Prize* winner and was published in 2019. A multiple Pushcart Prize nominee, Thompson is the author of *Beg*

No Pardon (Perugia Press), winner of the *Great Lakes Colleges Association's New Writers Award*, and *Start With A Small Guitar* (What Books Press).

Her work has been widely published and anthologized including in *New England Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Pleiades*, and *Best American Poetry 2020*, among others. Thompson serves on the Boards of Directors of Cave Canem and the Los Angeles Review of Books and is Chair of the Board of Trustees at her alma mater, Scripps College.

For additional information, please visit: <https://www.lynnethompson.us>

Note: CWC-SFV members will automatically receive an invitation to this presentation. CWC members from other branches should contact SVV VP/Zoom host Monte Swann by noon on March 1 at cwcsfhost@gmail.com to request a free invitation. Other guests may purchase admission to this presentation at <http://www.cwc-sfv.org> by noon on April 1. After purchasing admission, they will receive a Zoom invitation. We regret that we cannot accommodate late requests.



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Happy National Poetry Month. As I shared with you in the April, 2021 Scribe, I've always loved poetry—whether reading, listening or composing. And although I find this literary medium totally delicious, poetry is extraordinarily difficult for me to write, far more difficult than any other genre in which I work. I tend to write poetry when an event is so laden with emotion that poetry is the only way to address it. Watching my first child explore his world was one of those times. Rocking a new grandbaby to sleep was another. Please check out *The Valley Scribe* archive on our website (www.cwc-sfv.org) to revisit my poetry celebrating these milestones.

This year, in honor of our annual celebration, I'd like to share with you a couple of my favorite poets. Langston Hughes (1901 – 1967) is always near the top of my list. “Harlem” and “Dreams” are among my favorites. “Dreams” speaks to the fundamental human desire for hope, for dreams. His words are as relevant today as ever. (<https://poets.org/poem/dreams>)

Then, several years ago, my son asked me to read “something meaningful” at his wedding. Perhaps he thought I would select a verse from the beautiful Jewish liturgy often recited at wedding ceremonies. But for me, the choice was clear; and the attendees all smiled when I stood at the podium and read a few stanzas from *Oh the Places You'll Go* by the beloved children's writer Theodor Seuss Geisel (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1990). Has there ever been a poem written with more profound advice mingled with absolute, unapologetic joy?

Dreams
By Langston Hughes

*Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
frozen with snow.*

*You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself
any direction you choose.*

*You're on your own. And you know what you know.
And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.*

Excerpt from *Oh, the Places You'll Go*

If you enjoy poetry as a reader, a writer, or a listener, I hope you'll join us on April 2 for a special, CWC-SFV presentation, when we welcome Lynne Thompson, Poet Laureate for the City of Los Angeles, who will share with us some of her own poetry in celebration of National Poetry Month.

Karen Gorback Ph. D., CWC-SFV President



April Pleasures and Preparations



Dear Members:

Every April, members of the CWC-SFV enjoy National Poetry Month, bask in the beauty of the wild flower bloom, and prepare our branch for its June elections.

Special thanks to this year's nominating committee: Kathy Highcove and Bob Okowitz. This month they are preparing a slate of candidates to run for club president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. They will present the slate to club members in the May issue of the Scribe and at the May 7th general meeting.

The election will be held in June. All other board positions are appointed. If you have any questions or would like to have your name placed on the ballot, please contact Kathy Highcove at kghighcove@gmail.com or Bob Okowitz at apthealth@gmail.com.

Below are the specifics from the club's by-laws, adopted May 5, 2018.

Karen Gorback Ph. D., CWC-SFV President

President - Sets a professional and congenial tone for the club. Prepares agendas and presides over meetings of the Board, and general membership. The president shall, with the advice and consent of the Board, direct the affairs of the club in accordance with the Bylaws and Roberts Rules of Order. To fill vacancies the president appoints members of the Board, Chairpersons, and/or Members-at-Large. Under California Corporate law the president shall not also be elected treasurer.

Suggested qualifications: Outgoing demeanor, good organizational skills, open mind, positive attitude and accountable.

Vice President – Assists the President and assumes the duties of the President in his or her absence. Under California Nonprofit Corporate law the vice president may also be elected treasurer. If the vice president takes over the duties of the president, the same duties and requirements of the president apply. Sets a professional and congenial tone for the club. Prepares agendas and presides over meetings of the Board, and general membership. The president shall, with the advice and consent of the Board, direct the affairs of the club in accordance with the Bylaws and Roberts Rules of Order. To fill vacancies the president appoints members of the Board, Chairpersons, and/or Members-at-Large. Under California Corporate law the president shall not also be elected treasurer.

Secretary – Prepares and records minutes of board meetings, and membership meetings for an election or proposed amendment to official documents; handles incoming and outgoing correspondence; and maintains administrative files for the branch. Under California Nonprofit Corporate law the elected secretary may also be elected treasurer.

Suggested qualifications: Good writing skills, accountability and ability to summarize information.

Treasurer – Keeps proper books of account and reports the financial status of the branch at each Board meeting. Duties include: receiving and depositing all funds and paying bills as authorized by the Board; co-signs checks; and prepares quarterly financial reports as required by the Central Board of the California Writers' Club.

Suggested qualifications: Honest, has bookkeeping knowledge, organizational skills and accountability.

Jonathan Maberry Spoke On

The Genre of You

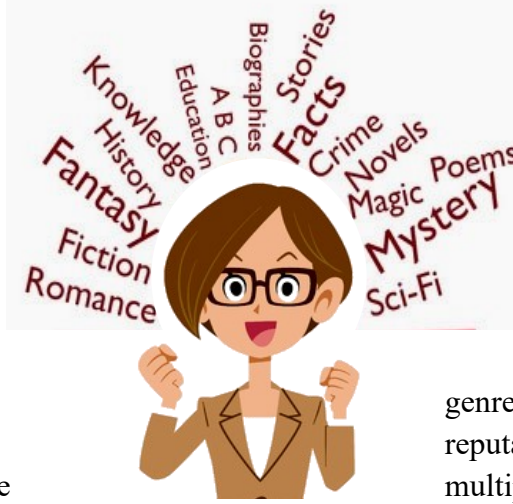
By Heather Bradshaw

Four thousand words a day! Are you mad? I almost fell off my chair. I felt like such a slacker. Is this normal? (4,000 words a day, that is, not me feeling like a slacker, which is perfectly normal). I did some research. Hemmingway banked five hundred words daily and considered that a job well done. Doable. I relaxed and picked myself up off the floor because I actually did fall off my chair.

Dressed in a bright, multi-colored turtlenecked shirt, award-winning, cross-genre writer, Jonathan Maberry came to remind us that writing is serious business, and that we'd better be having fun doing it. It was impossible not to catch his enthusiasm for the craft but, he advises, you have to be realistic about what type of writer you want to be: a hobbyist who simply loves to write, a semi-pro who is content to sell the odd article or story, or a full-time professional supporting yourself on writing.

As an undisputed professional himself, Maberry writes, successfully, in multiple genres: classic horror, thrillers, post-apocalyptic, mystery, comic books, poetry, plays, and even nonfiction - who can resist *Zombie CSU: The Forensic Science of the Living Dead*? He likes to draw too, and has submitted various book cover designs for his own work, sadly rejected but worth a shot right? Age range is not a barrier to Maberry's talents either, he writes for adults, young adults, and middle-school age readers; his award-winning series, *Rot and Ruin* is now recommended reading for eighth graders.

Maberry is a *just do it* sort of fellow. If an agent/publisher/producer/director calls to say we're looking for this or that, or can you do such and such, he responds YES, and works out the how-to later. To Maberry, a different genre is a new challenge to be mastered. For those of us who inwardly freeze and list all the reasons we can't take on a project in a genre with which we are not familiar, Maberry says, "There's no proof that you can't." Repeat



"Why not do more?" Maberry asked his Zoom listeners.

"You'll have fun and grow as a writer when you learn to write in a new genre."

that, "There's no proof that you can't."

How simple but true. Have confidence in your abilities and do not be self-effacing. Writers have enough critics, he tells us.

Why does Maberry get requests to write various projects

'out-of-the-blue'? He is his own genre, a best-selling writer with a solid reputation, who works hard, completes multiple projects and puts himself out there on social media. For instance, following a conversation thread on Twitter, he was asked to write a novelization of *Wolfman* from the movie script. What fun he had watching old *Wolfman* films for work!

Before starting a new project, Maberry suggests reading one of your most recent published pieces of the same ilk, the one that has passed through the mill of several editors, and shows you the quality and style to aim for.

To get the work day started, Maberry writes for fifteen minutes directed by a writing prompt he has chosen from an extensive list he has; some of these exercises, he mentions, have even turned into short stories. Warmed up and ready to go, he taps away on his keyboard, shooting for his word count goal of 2,500, which, once he accomplishes, earns him a tip in a money jar towards a vacation. However, if he fails to get to 2,500 words the next day, he removes the money!

How long does it take him to write 4,000 words? Eight hours, he says. Eight hours, though he takes a ten minute *timed* break every hour to update on social media, which he says is a must to build your brand. The dude has discipline. We'll assume he takes a well-earned

(Continued on page 5)

break for lunch and nature’s call, unless he has a commode chair, which would certainly save time. After being such a writing workhorse for all those hours, when on earth does he have time to edit *Weird Tales Magazine**? It’s mind-boggling but he does.

Maberry does not edit his own work until he has completed the first draft. He keeps the thread by writing the last chapter or two in the initial development stages, then flies towards that finish line, though the end is never set in stone and may change as the story develops. He referenced Faulkner as an example of this idea, and I found a quote from Faulkner in which he stated that before he began writing *As I lay Dying*, he knew what the last word would be and almost where the last period would fall. Amongst other writers whose writing and work ethic Maberry admires and quotes are; Stephen King, Richard Matheson, James Rollins and James Lee Burke.

Once the first draft is written, Maberry edits thoroughly and extensively through a series of passes, examining, individually, the plot, the sub-plot, and each character’s arc in the story. Done, off to the agent, then onto the next project. Why not spend the next two days writing a short story? Two days!

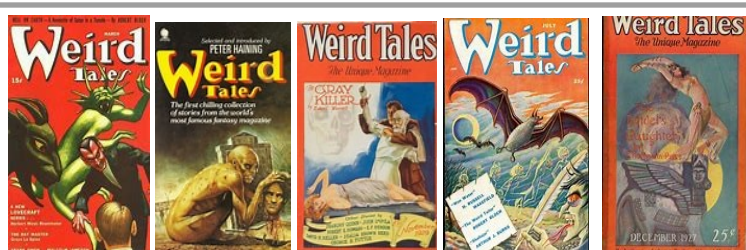
The genre of you. The writer is the brand. Jonathon Maberry is the brand. He advises against using different names for cross-genre writing because, hopefully, your audience for one genre may follow you to your next story of a different genre.

Active on Twitter, he likes to tweet questions that prompt conversation threads between his followers (thirty-five thousand). If you do choose to follow his

account, @JonathanMaberry, you will be privy to his humor and gems such as this:

“I had the rudest, slowest, nastiest cashier today. I guess it’s my own fault for using the self-checkout lane.”

Ha! Everything and everybody—including Maberry himself— are fodder for this author’s very active imagination and perpetual pursuit of fun.



***WEIRD TALES OPEN CALL!
OCCULT DETECTIVES**

*Weird Tales will have a new open call for pitches in March or April. That theme will be 'Occult Detectives.' As before, the window will be one for one week. And we will accept ONLY 1-2 paragraph pitches for a proposed story, and a sample of your writing from any other published work; both attached as separate Word documents. HOWEVER: please do not submit until the new open call is announced. No early (or late) submissions will be considered.

Jonathan Maberry Weird Tales Editor [Weird Tales](#)

If you missed Jonathan Maberry’s CWC-SFV March presentation or if you would like to hear him again, he will soon be speaking to the CWC High Desert branch at 10 a.m. on April 9th. For more information, go to [Welcome to HDCWC](#)

Coming Soon to a Zoom Room Near You

MAY 7, 2022
SFV Member Anat Goian-Wenick
“Turn Your Novel Into A Screen Play”
Want to see your novel come to life on the big or little screen? Zoom with the CWC-SFV and learn how!

JOIN OUR CWC-SFV
ZOOM ROOM ON THE FIRST
SATURDAY OF
EACH MONTH.

JUNE 2, 2022
Pamela Semuels Young
“Write Your Next Page Turner”
Whether you write mysteries, romances or non-fiction, learn the tips and tricks best-selling authors use to keep readers turning pages.

April Is National Poetry Month



Launched by the Academy of American Poets in April 1996, National Poetry Month reminds the public that poets have an integral role to play in our culture and that poetry matters. Over the years, it has become the largest literary celebration in the world, with tens of millions of readers, students, K–12 teachers, librarians, booksellers, literary events curators, publishers, families, and—of course—poets, marking poetry's important place in our lives.

Thanks in part to our [National Poetry Month partners and sponsors](#), each April the Academy is able to offer activities, initiatives, and resources so that anyone can join the celebration:

Order (for free) and display the official [2022 National Poetry Month poster](#)

Read about [30 ways to celebrate National Poetry Month online and at home](#)

Read about [30 ways to celebrate National Poetry Month in the classroom](#)

Join the Academy of American Poets for its [virtual Poetry & the Creative Mind gala on April 28](#)

Find online poetry readings and events on our [Poetry Near You calendar](#), and add your own

Encourage students in grades five through twelve to participate in the [2022 Dear Poet Project](#)

[Sign up for Poem-a-Day](#) and enjoy a free daily poem in your inbox, in April 2022 curated by award-winning poet Naomi Shihab Nye

Follow the thousands of celebrations taking place on social media with the official hashtag **#NationalPoetryMonth** and follow the Academy of American Poets on Twitter and Instagram [@POETSorg](#)

Share a **#PocketPoem** on [Poem in Your Pocket Day](#) on April 29

[Make a gift](#) to the Academy of American Poets

Learn about LA-based teen **poetry** slam at [National Poetry Month - California Teachers Association](#)

Add the official National Poetry Month logo to your events:



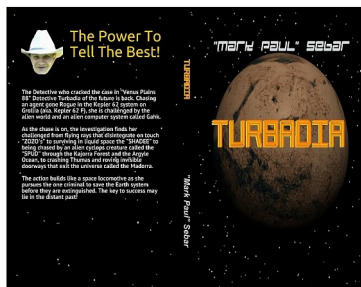
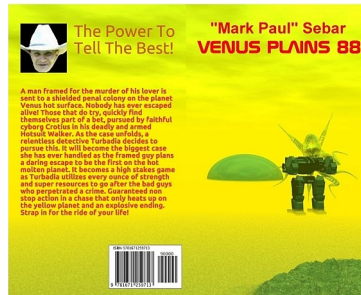
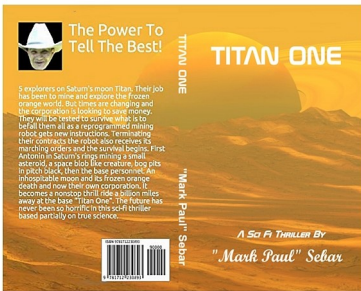
All the above material provided by *The Academy of American Poets*

The Latest Moves of Lifetime SFV Member “Mark Paul” Sebar

Editor’s note: For several years, “Mark Paul” Sebar, author, poet, editor, illustrator, has published his own work. He has produced a large collection of writings and novels, such as his *Ciera* series. Sebar tells us, “The entire *Ciera* series of books are FREE eBooks at Smashword.com or paperbacks available at Amazon for a nominal cost.

“*Ciera I* was published last year and is free. *Ciera II* will publish next at the end of April with *Ciera III* is available as a free eBook to download or read online at smashword.com.”

Below, Sebar tells us about another published three-book sci-fi series: *Titan One*, *Venus Plains 88* and *Turbadia* seen on Amazon at: Amazon.com : Mark Paul Sebar



My sci-fi novel, *Titan One*, takes place 1 billion miles away in the Saturn system on its largest moon, Titan. This story is about five corporate speculators set in the distant future.

Now, what are speculators? Great question. They are people who sort of do a little or a lot of everything, for example, let's go back to the Wild West. You might have found a speculation company there. They did Banking, Mercantile, Mining, Ranching, Stage Transportation, maybe an independent railroad, etc., you get the picture. In the case of the five speculators, they did studies of geology, weather, mine Saturn's rings and moonlets, other science work on Titan for a corporation based on Mars.

In this story, an over-anxious executive decides to save the corporation monies by terminating their contracts and oh, them as well using a reprogrammed Mining droid. And now you have things setup, because the mining droid 'Kevin 201' is also a sexual pervert in that he often makes comments to the two ladies on the base and they tell him to "Beat it, creep!"

The geologist is an angry tempered Russian, the Mechanic of the base is a common sense guy just trying to stay cool, and the man who oversees the general local operations is a sort of cheerful, happy-go-lucky guy.

In this story, we learn a great deal about Saturn, Titan and many other things. The story builds action with quite a few surprises, and tight moments where we think someone will die.

The *Titan One* story is actually considered the start of my sci-fi trilogy, which is connected at the end with a character in two other sci-fi books that I published. The second book in the trilogy is entitled: *Venus Plains 88*.

A character in this book "*Venus Plains 88*" is a fiancée who is framed for the murder of his lover by an evil and very powerful senator named Gaylen Goth. Gaylen commands all military forces in the solar system both human and droid, and the soon is pursued by detective Turbadia—also the name of the third title in this series—is a detective who has near immortality because of the giant computer system built into the core of the Sun. Her special power allows her to instantly transfer to a new cloned body, painlessly and with memories intact. The excitement builds into a series of mysterious events as the good senator is out to extinguish the detective.

“Mark Paul” Sebar

American Author, Poet and Film writer "Mark Paul" Sebar

Sebar Literary Network
<http://www.sebar.com>
CEO West Valley Entertainment Media & Motion Picture Productions

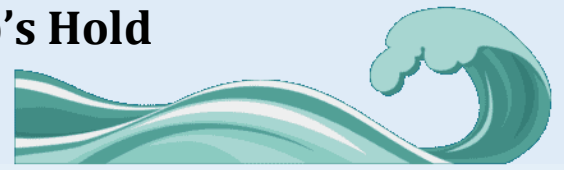
Sebar Publishing
<http://www.sebar.com/pub/>
The Power To Tell The Best!



Passover Seder in a Ship's Hold

By Max Schwartz

From the 2010 archives



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 time 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 the first day of Passover, and the Jewish soldiers on-board 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*, s 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.

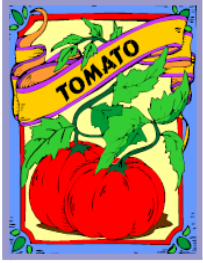
Now only did the memory of the Seder remain with me but also the respect I had for our Protestant Regimental Chaplain who arranged the Seder and the distribution of different Bibles when we first stepped aboard the ship's gangplank at the New York Port of Embarkation.

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



A BLESSED CROP FROM A SOUTHLAND GARDEN

We Californians are blessed when it comes to our growing seasons, especially when it comes to tomatoes. Sometimes the plants are carefully planted as early as mid-March. If there's a cold snap, prudent gardeners hold off planting the seedlings until the beginning of April. Extremely cautious gardeners wait until the end of April, remembering cold spells of 41 degrees. My husband and I are impatient; we plant in March. We're gamblers and most of the time we win. That's why we want to share our expertise on raising tomatoes.



Think of it as a how-to-do primer. *See Sheila and Jerry Reap a Field of Tomatoes*

The first step for an outstanding tomato crop is to prepare the soil. Augment the clay soil with amendments such as chicken manure, forest humus, worm castings and bat guano. Dig down about six to eight inches and then mix in the amendments. Next, buy the biggest plants the veggie budget will allow. Also, buy some tall cages to support the plants or use poles in tepee fashion. Plan on having two feet between plants since they do need room.

Once the plants are in, don't be surprised to find yourself hovering over the tiny plants like first time parents. Examine them for delicate yellow blossoms. As the plants become teenagers, you must support those magnificent tall green plants on trellises or poles.

Each ear scientists report that honey bee hives are decreasing. The reason is not yet known, but the situation is bad news. Whenever we see a bee, we try to lure it to the side garden where the tomatoes reside. Jerry and I discovered bees like barbecued steak. Once the aroma wafts in the air, the bees emerge from their secret spots. They prefer their steak medium rare. Be sure to cut the steak into bee size bites and place them on a paper plate. Then carry it to the blossom laden plants. A speedy delivery is of the essence since an impatient bee might decide to nibble on you, envisioning a feast of "Homosapien tartars."

First time gardeners have other problems to consider: blossom drop, leaf wilt and yellow spotted leaves. In the past the experts told us, "Feed them." But others said, "Don't feed; you'll just get bigger leaves." "Cut down on watering." "increase watering." And finally, "Use Blossom Set." Now we just use common sense.

The only thing they didn't recommend is praying, but we already had that covered. Our litany, developed over the years, goes something like this.

Dear God, We don't want a lot, but please give us some tomatoes. A homegrown tomato is heaven. Didn't You name it the love fruit? Besides its exquisite taste, it's nutritious. Thank You, Jerry and Sheila



Jerry intones the words as he places his trusty trowel over his heart. My job is to sprinkle fresh coffee grounds over the gar-

(Continued on page 10)



(Continued from page 9)

den. We aren't always sure if we will get the answer we want, but we see no harm in asking. So far it seems to be working.

About two months into the growing period, be prepared to celebrate. The newbie tomato gardener is allowed to shout “Hurray!” when he discovers hidden under the lush, feathery foliage a softball-sized tomato. Each day it grows a little more. A watched kettle doesn't boil, but a watched tomato luxuriates in being watched. Don't be too proud to stoop in some impossible positions to discover other fruit hidden near the bottom of the plants. Diligently lift the leafy branches to find the orange-red gems sequestered in secret bowers.



By mid-August you can expect to have your kitchen counter turn into a tomato depot. We caution you not to make the mistake many beginners make of refrigerating the bounty. Tomatoes are best eaten at room temperature. My husband always grabs one for his breakfast. I prefer my tomato at lunch in an exquisite tomato sandwich. At dinner, we dine on fresh mozzarella cheese intertwined with tomato slices, garnished with fresh basil and drizzled with extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar. In fancy restaurants it's called “caprese gratin.”

But now is not the time to be complacent, for with the advent of tomatoes comes their arch enemy, the formidable foe of all tomato growers—the citron green, many-legged, bright scarlet horned tomato worm. The elusive camouflaged creature is almost impossible to discern. However, it always leaves a distinctive calling card; black dots of excrement. The tomato worms rampage as they inch and crawl insidiously along the branches. The best time to catch them is early morning or dusk. You have to stare at a branch, and if you're lucky, you'll see the mischievous creatures, devouring feathery leaves on the way to the juiciest tomato on the plant.

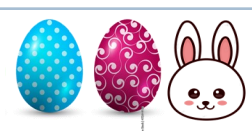
Feel free to follow our tactical plan which consists of dividing the watch into four hour shifts. In sheer desperation, we try yelling at the little red-horned monsters. Our neighbors were not enamored by our high-pitched angry shrieks. Of course, we discover that noise will not deter the beasts. We use our own cunning and subterfuge. Dressed in our own red and green camouflage outfits and holding field glasses, we stand still until we spot the green adversaries. Then we carefully don gloves and pull the stubborn creatures off the succulent branches. Care is required, because they do bite. I won't go into our disposal techniques except to say their fate fits the crime. Fear not.



By the end of August, the tomato worms should finally raise a white flag. The battle is over and your kitchen counter will once again be filled with homegrown tomatoes –albeit fewer in number. In less than a week, however, our once prolific plants slow down. We realize that the season is ending. It's time to say “adieu” to the wonderful tomatoes. It's never easy to bid farewell to our tomato season. We tend to get a bit morose, even shed a few tears. But, first time gardener, take heart. Next year as an experienced veteran, you'll be ready for the challenge and enjoyment of home-grown tomatoes!



Sheila Moss



Eggs, Chicks, Bunnies, and the Rituals of

By Anne Hansell



During my childhood years in Southern California, my family celebrated Easter by dyeing boiled eggs, hiding and hunting the eggs, and eating bunny-shaped chocolates. When I was about nine years old, my family and I visited my grandparents in Honolulu, Hawaii, during my spring vacation. They had a huge white house with a guest house in the backyard. Their property promised plenty of places to hide Easter eggs. But I learned that my grandparents didn't celebrate Easter. There would be no dyed eggs or bunny chocolates. I asked my parents why we didn't have Easter at Grandma's house. They didn't know how to explain it to us. Happily, my grandparents went out and bought eggs and other Easter stuff so their grandchildren could celebrate the holiday at their home.

When I got older, I learned why they didn't observe Easter. My grandparents were members of Japan's most orthodox Buddhist sect. The Orthodox Buddhists didn't believe in celebrating Christian holidays, such as Easter or Christmas. My parents were nominal (liberal) Buddhists, so they let us celebrate the Christian holidays.

During my university years, I chanced on some information about the origins of Easter while doing research for my history classes. Curious to learn more, I discovered some interesting facts about the origins of Easter. For example, the tradition of decorated eggs dated back 60,000 years—to Africa! Archaeologists found decorated, engraved ostrich eggs there. Centuries forward, graves of Sumerians (an ancient Mesopotamian civilization) and ancient Egyptians yielded symbols of ostrich eggs decorated in gold and silver. In both Northern Europe and Mesopotamia, eggs symbolized fertility.

In ancient Germany, locals associated an egg-laying hare called, "osterhase" or "oschter Haws" with Eostre, a West German goddess of fertility. Various German tribes celebrated the festival of Esotre every spring. German tribes named Angle and Saxon moved to Britain, bringing this custom with them.

In 595, Pope Gregory sent monks to convert the British to Christianity. To avoid alienating his new converts, the pope revised their pagan festivals into Christian holy days. Thus, the

festival of Esotre became the Easter celebration of Jesus Christ's resurrection. The Church changed aspects of the Esotre rituals into Christian symbols. For example: Easter eggs represented Jesus Christ's resurrection; eggshells symbolized Christ's tomb. A baby chick represented a reborn Jesus. The traditional egg roll down a grassy hill stood for the tombstone that rolled away to reveal Jesus' empty tomb. Bunnies delivered eggs to remind the faithful of the rebirth of Jesus and his resurrection — new life triumphed over death,

In Mesopotamia, early Christians dyed their eggs red, their symbol of the Christ's blood. The Church accepted this custom and allowed its members decorate their eggs.

In the 1700's, German and British immigrants brought their Easter traditions to America, and other Christians adopted them as their own customs. In 1875, chocolate makers, such as John Cadbury, saw a lucrative business opportunity by creating Easter candies such as chocolate Easter eggs and bunnies.

My research showed me that that Orthodox Buddhists and Jehovah's Witness were among certain groups who would never celebrate Easter. But non-Christian groups, such as nominal (liberal) Buddhists, were able to enjoy their Easter festival.

When members of my clan moved to America, they adopted a wide variety of Christian sects: Mormons, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Presbyterians and so on. I'm a Baptist myself while my husband, is a nominal Roman Catholic. Some of our relatives retain their Buddhist beliefs. To prevent unnecessary problems, clan leaders have established a strict rule: when we participate in family parties, we must leave our religious beliefs back at home. No religious or political discussions would be allowed at our clan gatherings.

Because of my family history, I now believe that religious beliefs are a private matter; folks should enjoy Easter and other holidays and keep their personal beliefs private.

FAMOUS WRITERS BORN IN APRIL

By Heather Bradshaw



Shakespeare. That's it. Celebrate. See you in May. Okay, okay, we'll keep going. Did you know that April 23rd is actually the estimated birthdate of William Shakespeare? His baptism was registered on April 26th, 1564, and so,

since Catholics were expected to baptize their children not more than three days after the birth, it is considered unlikely that Shakespeare was born before April 23rd. Interestingly, he died, at the ripe old age of 52, also on April 23rd.

Another April birthday, William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, once said, "Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart."

Something beautiful to slow down and mull over, like daffodils in spring.

Next: Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Hans Christian Anderson, *Fairy Tales*. Washington Irving, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*,

SONNET 18: SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY? BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Anthony Horowitz, *The Power of Five* series, Deborah Harkness, *A Discovery of Witches*, Robert Bloch, *Psycho*, Italian-English writer, Rafael Sabatini, *Captain Blood*, mystery writer, Lisa Unger, *In the Blood*, and crime writers; Ian Rankin, *Knots and Crosses*, Sue Grafton, "*A*" is for *Alibi*, and Ngaio Marsh, *A Man Lay Dead*.

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.



Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Still I Rise

By Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines

Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

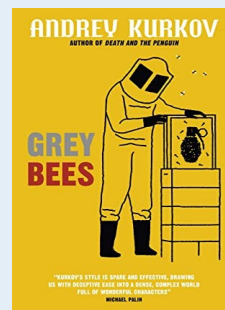
Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.



There's also American playwright, August Wilson, *Fences*, fantasy writer; Terry Prachett, the *Discworld* series, science fiction/fantasy author, Anne McCaffrey, the *Dragon riders of Pern* series, Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* and English poet, short story writer, and children's author, Walter de la Mare, *Memoirs of a Midget*. To conclude this month, we'll highlight Ukrainian comic author and Kyiv resident, Andrey Kurkov who shares his birthday with the Bard. When Russia invaded Ukraine, Kurkov, normally a humorist, said, he "didn't feel ready to laugh at anything", and stopped working on his new novel. These days, he spends his time interviewing with news reporters about the horrors of the conflict.

Kurkov's 2018 novel, [Grey Bees](#), is scheduled for release in the United States this April. Set in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, the book follows two old men living in the neutral zone between Ukrainian Army positions and those of the separatists, one of whom is seemingly more interested in tending his honeybees than in the conflict around them. If you're able to support a fellow author and Ukrainian this month, the book is available for preorder.



Andrey Kurkov

Happy Birthday to our members celebrating in April!
You're in excellent company.



SAN FERNANDO

Valley Writers

A BRANCH OF THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB



Whether you have been published or have always wanted to write, please join the San Fernando Valley branch of the California Writers Club for monthly Zoom meetings to learn more about the craft and business of writing. This series is free for members from any branch of the California Writers Club. Please visit cwc-sfv.org for membership information or single-lecture admission.

Every month, in towns and cities across our state, branches of the California Writers Club meet in a Zoom room or in person to welcome a speaker with tips, information and the latest trends in the writing world.

Every month, each branch prepares a newsletter or report that can be read online if you go to cwc-sfv.org to find their websites and social media connections. The one good thing that has come out of the COVID shut-down has been the emergence of CWC Zoom rooms and an opportunity for our California Writers Club to network and share information and presentations like never before.

Below, you can see just one of the presentations that are available for any CWC member. Please take a look.

Kathy Highcove, *The Valley Scribe* editor



Christopher Vogler

THE ARCHETYPES OF CHARACTER: A Guide to the Eight Major Functions

The creation of lifelike, multi-layered and compelling characters is among the most challenging skills a writer must master. The concept of psychological archetypes offers one key to understanding the jobs that characters must do in order to move a story along. All of us, and all the characters we create in our stories, have the inner potential to express many different identities and ways of operating in the world. The eight major archetypes as identified by story analyst Christopher Vogler in *THE WRITER'S JOURNEY* represent the essential functions that drive an entertaining plot and allow our characters to bring forth different levels of their being. The archetypes are a useful set of tools in the writer's arsenal of techniques, and can make your stories and characters more human, believable and compelling to the reader. In this presentation, Vogler will outline the archetypes and how they work, and will share his recent discoveries about human character from Greek and Roman myths.

For those who missed Vogler's December presentation on *The Hero's Journey*, it may be viewed online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Af_9f8u1P0&list=PL8b8cfBzkHVJRdFONWzl4VsmCSR7Trz-I&index=8

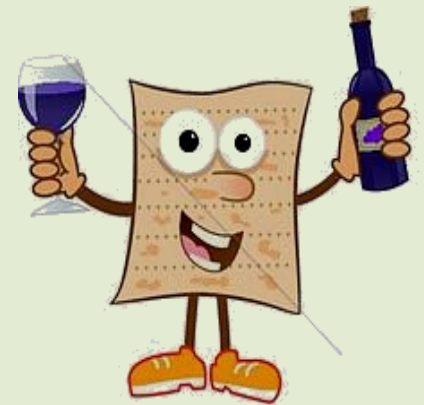
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Bob Isbill
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The Thing About Matzoh

By Michael Edelstein

There's this thing with *matzoh*, it tastes blah in *Sriracha*
And, thus, of course, it's not right for hot sauce
The stuff tastes like balsa. It's totally no good with salsa
Matzoh's may be thought holy, but they're so-so with guacamole
They're even worse with refried frijoles
Though they know how to fill ya'
They can't compete with a tortilla
The latter can be rolled, served hot or cold
The *matzoh* knows the Yiddish lexicon
But it can't compete with Mexican
And so, as it's served not hot, sir
You can keep your bone dry *matzoh*
Also, when it comes to one's digestion
Matzoh causes bowel congestion
You know that *Yidlach* have been hopin'
With matzohs, their bowels would be locked open
Thus, even in your interior
Matzohs are most inferior
Tortilla's, my friend sail right through
Titillating a Jew or two
And lastly the lofty *Matzoh Breis*
Are second to Huevos and Refries.
It requires extra *chutzpah*
To be a champion of *matzoh*
And yet perhaps, the best of all
An albondiga's no matzoh ball.
Know, *bubelah*, it won't kill ya'
To substitute with a tortilla.

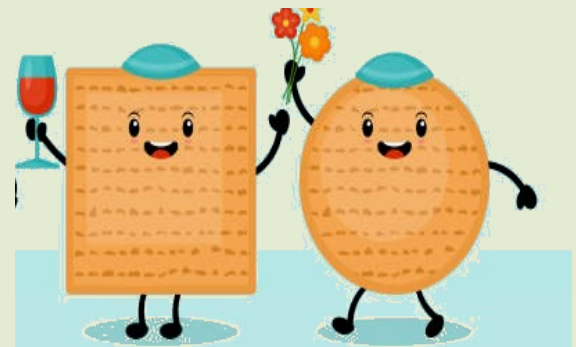
Guacamole! Olé!



Enjoy!



Love that kosher guacamole!



A Page of Poetry for April

Is Any of This Real?

When I survey
The world around me
I sometimes wonder
"Is any of this real?"



Animals and people,
Grass, trees, flowers,
Cars and aircraft,
Mountains and oceans,
Racing round the sun
At a dizzying pace,
While the Milky Way
In which we're held
Speeds through space
Towards collision with
Andromeda one day.



How did this come to be
From invisible energy?
Where are you and me
In this fantastic scheme,
Is it all just a dream?



This is so bewildering
To contemplate
I set it aside
And have a plate
Of something sweet
To eat.



- Edward Louis Braun



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

O'Keefe's Can Can Review

Whirling whorls of color,
Petal petticoats flirt and flutter.
Pistol pantalets twist and tease
To the beat of "*Gaité Parisienne*."
Maurice Chevalier struts and winks,
Tilts his straw boater with a cane.



All caught up in step-motion,
Displayed on a gallery wall.

- Mary Shaffer

SPRING TIME

When ever I think about spring
I think about cherry blossom trees.
I think about walking along the river
I think about the Potomac river in Washington D.C.
I see the Japanese cherry trees covered with delicate
Pink-white blossoms-
They give the impression as if each tree is covered with lace
And when I walk along the river
I see the shadows of the trees reflected in the water,
I feel as if I am surrounded within a lacy curtain,
And I feel the beauty, gentleness, free spirit of nature
All around me.



- Marganit Lish



Hungarian youth take part in the traditional Easter Sprinkles game on Easter Monday.

Growing up, Easter Sunday was all about church, new spring dresses and shiny white shoes for my two sisters and me. Dyed eggs and chocolate bunnies

were all a part of it, as was the food: glazed ham, stuffed cabbage, sausages made in the basement and smoked in the backyard smokehouse, potato salad. The toppers for dessert were baked sweet noodles and walnut rolls. Back then, walnuts were only sold in the shell. The task of removing the meat from the shell fell to me and my sisters, a chore we didn't particularly relish. Crushing the nuts by turning the handle of the heavy metal grinder was more to my liking.

As much as I enjoyed all of the above, there was Easter Monday to look forward to as well. We called it Sprinkling Day. It was a fun day when preteen boys and girls acted out this custom transplanted from Hungary under the watchful eye of the parents.

The ritual began with a knock on the door. When Mother or Father answered, there stood a boy (sometimes two, if they were on the shy side) that my sisters and I knew from school or church. They recited a poem in Hungarian that required some practice on their part. Translated, the poemsaid:

*As I passed by your house the other day,
I Looked at your garden
And to my dismay, I noticed
your beautiful flowers wilting
May I have your permission to sprinkle them?*

What they were asking to do in a somewhat poetic way, was to sprinkle perfume over the heads of the girls in the house. Parents always gave their permission, as was expected.

Of course, my sisters and I had heard the knock on the door and were already on the run by the time the boys gave chase. We didn't just stand there and let them sprinkle cologne on us. They had to catch us. If we didn't like the boys, we tried very hard not to get caught. But, if we liked them, we didn't run very fast. Getting doused with cheap toilet water (as we called it then) was fun only if we liked the chasers.

After the chase, the enthusiastic visitors received their prizes from our parents. The reward was usually colored Easter eggs or candy, along with a few cents in change. The enterprising boys then went on to another house on their list, and my sisters and I waited to see who would be next to knock on the door. All In all, Easter Monday always proved to be an egg-citing day.

Recipe for Baked Noodles

4 quarts water
1 tablespoon salt
16 ounces wide noodles
¼ pound butter, melted
2 cups cottage cheese
½ cup sugar
¼ cup sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Bring water and salt to a boil. Add noodles and cook on medium heat until noodles are tender (about 8 minutes). Rinse and drain with cold water. Place ¼ of the noodles into a buttered baking dish. Pour ¼ of the butter over noodles, spread ¼ of cheese and sprinkle ¼ of sugar over this first layer. Continue the remaining three layers in this manner. Bake for 30 minutes. Serve hot.

To serve as a main dish, omit the sugar.



FOOLED IN APRIL

Of course I can fly
 Just watch me
 I begin to run as I spread my arms
 My legs are now running in space

Upward into the sky
 Try to catch me I say
 Teasing and taunting him
 Come on down he calls
 I have something to show you
 Can I trust him?



Will he reveal my secret?
 He dangles the tempting bait
 I can't make out what he holds
 I float down and land beside him
 This he says is Snowball's foot

I found it in the alley he says
 Snowball our pet rabbit had run away
 He spins the rabbit's foot on the key chain
 I begin to cry
 How can he hop?



Suddenly an electric shock
 Enters my nose and jolts me
 As I sit straight up
 Out of a deep sleep away from this dream
 There beside my bed stands my brother

The practical joker
 He holds a bottle of smelling salts
 Laughing at me as I shake from shock
 Fully conscious now I see him
 Holding a key chain with a rabbits foot

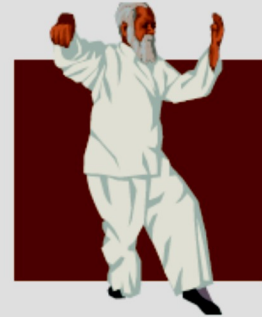


Just like the one in my dream
 Or was it a dream?
 Can I really fly every night?
 Did I see my rabbits foot twice?
 What is real and what is a dream?

My brother dangles his key chain
 It's Snowball's foot he repeats
 I begin to cry as he says **APRIL FOOL**

- Leslie Kaplan

TAI CHI TEACHER



slowly he starts,
 raising his arms to move
 his hands like
 two birds gliding low
 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
 searching for stepping stones
 across a sacred stream.

fingers closed
 reaching to touch the power
 of peace.

waist turning and bending
 for the finale,
 arms overhead holding a
 Moment
 of meditative harmony

- Kathy Highcove

Hooded, or Being Black for Dummies Review Satire at its Best

by Elaine Mura

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Penned by rising-star playwright Tarrance Arvelle Chisholm, *HOODED, OR BEING BLACK FOR DUMMIES* makes its Los Angeles debut in 2022, when the [Echo Theater Company](#) tackles this totally irreverent, ferociously funny, biting dark comedy about the meaning of “blackness” in today’s world. No holds are barred as *HOODED* explores racial identity, privilege, and pop culture with insight, passion, and hilarious humor. But, just in case the audience misses the point, *HOODED* even has a neon “laugh” sign to clue them in.

The coming-of-age story begins when Marquis and Tru, both 14-year-old black boys, meet in the holding cell of their local constabulary. Marquis (Jalen K. Stewart) lives in the affluent suburb of Achievement Heights and attends a private prep school; a prep school prank landed him in his current situation. Meanwhile Tru (Brent Grimes) is a street savvy kid from deep within the inner city of Baltimore; he maintains that his color landed him in the same cell. It doesn’t take long for Tru to decide that Marquis, adopted by a white family at birth, has lost touch with his black roots. But Tru has plans to acclimate a reluctant Marquis to what he needs to know about being black. In fact, Tru writes a guide – along with a compendium of 2pac’s lyrical words – to help Marquis in his transition. But when Marquis loses his Guide, rippling effects begin to overtake his pals at the prep school. Hunter (Vincent Doud) thinks that it might be fun to be black, while Fielder (Ezekiel Goodman) is never sure exactly what’s happening to his closest friends. Meanwhile, the preppie girls (Betsy Stewart, Tasha Ames, Clare Margaret Donovan) just might find blackness to be a turn-on.

Helmed by skilled director Ahmed Best, this fresh, very funny, satirical take on “blackness” becomes the most politically incorrect view of racism to hit live theater this year. And a chuckle-fest, to boot. To quote Best, “It builds a world where we can question our perception and beliefs about one another and discover the sameness in our differences.” After all, weren’t Nietzsche and 2pac really saying the same thing? Aided by a very talented cast led by Grimes and Stewart, this uproarious over-the-top comedy steams along until its final, gripping conclusion. *HOODED* is definitely a thought-provoking look at the racial and cultural stereotypes and prejudices which often create today’s headlines. And which represent the conundrum facing people trying to understand the social dynamics going on all around them. Besides that, *HOODED* is also highly entertaining – a double whammy for the audience: to laugh and to learn at the same time.



Tasha Ames, Clare Margaret Donovan, Betsy Stewart, Jalen K. Stewart, and Brent Grimes – Photo by Cooper Bates



*Jalen K. Stewart, Vincent Doud, and Ezekiel Goodman
Photo by Cooper Bates*

HOODED, OR BEING BLACK FOR DUMMIES runs through April 18, 2022, with performances at 8 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, and Mondays, and at 4 p.m. on Sundays. The Echo Theater Company performs at the Atwater Village Theatre, 3269 Casitas Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90039. Tickets are \$34 with Pay-What-You-Want on Mondays. Proof of full vaccination or a negative PCR test within 72 hours (plus valid identification) are required for admission; patrons must also remain fully masked throughout the performances. For information and reservations, call 310-307-3753 or go [online](#).



Jalen K. Stewart and Brent Grimes – Photo by Cooper Bates

Writing a Poem

to speak my heart in simple terms
should be a simple task for me
an artist chooses simple colors
mixes and matches to load
his canvas with the nuances of
guarded emotions

to describe emotional pain
subtle under tones cannot
be written with primary colors

perhaps white gray black
dawn's glow rain clouds midnight
shades of joy
shades of despair.

what can I do with failing eyesight
and a passionate and guarded soul

Lillian Rodich

First Draft 12/14/21.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

In the coming year, CWC-SFV monthly meetings will resume in the Saban Center for Health and Wellness which is located in the Motion Picture and Television Fund Campus at:

23388 Mulholland Drive
Woodland Hills, 91364
Woodland Hills, 91364
<http://cwc-sfv.org/>



AT A FUTURE DATE, THE MPTF MEETINGS WILL RESUME AT THIS WOODLAND HILLS LOCATION



INSIDE THE SABAN CENTER FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS.



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ENJOY CALIFORNIA WILDFLOWERS

Don't Miss The Next Zoom Room

Please join our gallery on April 2, 2022 for a presentation by the Poet Laureate of the city of Los Angeles: Lynne Thompson