



# WRITERSTALK

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Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

APRIL SPEAKER: FRED SETTERBERG

## Paving Memory Lane Fiction cements truths about East Bay's past

By Colin Seymour

When Fred Setterberg came to realize that his seemingly ordinary Baby Boomer upbringing in a blue-collar East Bay suburb was proving extraordinary, he knew he had to write a book about it.

Setterberg had written extensively for the *East Bay Express* and many other periodicals, so he had a journalism background and it seemed natural that he would write a memoir about the one era in American history when so many blue-collar ordinary Joes were able to buy little tract homes, as his family did.



As Setterberg puts it, "*Lunch Bucket Paradise* chronicles working class life in the Bay Area during the 1950s and 1960s—the dawn of the great suburban experiment and a world barely visible to us today." The problem with that premise was the danger that it would seem ordinary.

That may be the problem with your own memoir, and might be a reason to enhance it with your imagination, which is precisely the aim that ought to catalyze fiction. Or maybe you'd be better off sticking to first person and being yourself.

That's pretty much the launch point for Setterberg's April 10 presentation at our South

Bay Writers monthly dinner meeting. He seems to have fresh insights on the blur between fact and fiction that just might change your own outlook.

For *Lunch Bucket Paradise*, Setterberg took into account that the suburbs had been mythologized plenty. Too much, in his view. John Cheever and his Eastern cronies had portrayed the psyches of mostly wealthier suburbanites, and popular culture had draped a "tinsel-thin fantasy" over Mayberry, Mayfield, Springfield and the like. Setterberg hadn't recognized enough of his own milieu in much of it and wanted to portray that himself.

"In this highly personal book," Setterberg says, "I try to recreate the California in which I grew up, along with the oddness, complexity, and generosity of working people too often reduced to stereotypes in popular culture or neglected altogether."

It feels like a memoir, Setterberg acknowledges. "It seems that every time I take one tack I have to zig the other way. If I say no, it's not actually a memoir," he says, although he points out that much of it is historically accurate.

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MARCH RECAP

## Write What You Feel Passionate About

by K. O. Llewellyn

"Don't write that book."

Not the most encouraging words to a writer from an agent—and for *French Lessons* author Ellen Sussman, our speaker on March 13, they meant abandoning her treasured idea for a book.

Sussman had written two previous novels. One sold well enough to make the *San Francisco Chronicle's* best sellers list, but not well enough to please the publisher. The other never made it to print. Then she edited two nonfiction anthologies of personal essays.

The next book she proposed to her agent was a collection of three novellas set in Paris—which her agent nixed. "Three novellas! Don't write that book!" While she waited for another idea, Sussman decided to write *that* book of three stories taking place in one day in Paris.

When Sussman submitted the result, *French Lessons*, to her agent, it went to auction with eleven publishers bidding. Bought by Ballantine, it hit the *New York Times* Best Seller List, the *Chronicle's* list of best sellers, and is being made into a movie, leading Sussman to say, "Write the novel you desperately want to write, and that you feel passionate about." Several times during her talk, Sussman reminded us not to chase trends, or try to cater to the commercial market.

As *French Lessons* wrapped up, Sussman told her agent about a new book—the story of an American woman in Bali on business who is caught in terrorist bombings, survives, and later returns to Bali to find the man who saved her life.

*Continued on Page 6*

Special Poetry Edition

# President's Challenge

by Bill Baldwin  
President, South Bay Writers

## Fare Forward, Voyagers!



The quotation inscribed on our California Writers Club logo is, of course, "Sail On!" The words are taken from the poem "Columbus" by Joaquin Miller.

I like the quotation—not so much because of Columbus, but because of the spirit of exploration and adventure that the quotation embodies (though Columbus certainly showed daring in his voyages). It reminds me of Dante's portrayal (in the *Inferno*) of the Greek hero Ulysses (Odysseus) who, after returning to his home on the island of Ithaca, feels compelled to leave again and explore further; and, in Tennyson's portrayal (in the poem "Ulysses"), to "follow knowledge like a sinking star... to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." The comradeship embodied by Ulysses and his crew inspires me: "You were not made to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge."

We're all in this writing life together, we South Bay Writers. I want us to voyage forth together, to "sail beyond the sunset." I want great things for this club: writing conferences, workshops, retreats. I want us all to succeed fantastically. When I look into the future, I imagine us (as I've often said) as the "Literary Queen of the South Bay." Yearly writing contests, scholarships, and literary banquets with major guest speakers, notice in area media, and our members—me, you, *us*—recognized as significant writers and sought after by agents and publishers.

That is the *dream*. The challenge for us is *to get there*. If we all work together to lead this club of fellow-voyagers, to find great speakers, fashion great workshops, develop retreats and conferences, we can build that dream. Let's help each other write and publish, to find that agent or publisher, to market and promote our work. We have great opportunities here. Let's dive in together!

I took the title of this article from T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*. In the spirit of Ulysses, he says, "Old men ought to be explorers." Aye—and young men and women too! Let's "sail on" in the spirit of Tennyson—sail on to great undertakings:

"Come, my friends,  
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world."

WT

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We have a membership category that fits you. Dues are \$45 per year plus a one-time \$20 initiation fee. Contact the Membership Chair, Marjorie Johnson or sign up online southbaywriters.com.



## WritersTalk

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### Submissions

Members of the South Bay Writers Club are encouraged to submit their creative works for publication in *WritersTalk*. Suggested word limits are not absolute; query the editor. Electronic submissions should be text or attached MS Word file sent to newsletter@southbaywriters.com

### Guest Columns

*Almost Anything Goes* (300 words)

### News Items (400 words)

### Letters to the Editor (300 words)

to Andrea Galvacs  
newsletter@southbaywriters.com

### Creative Works

Short Fiction (1500 words)  
Memoir (1200 words)  
Poetry (300 words)  
Essay (900 words)

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### Announcements and Advertisements

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by Marjorie Bicknell Johnson

Editor



## Ode to Spring

r - p - o - p - h - e - s - s - a - g - r

This issue of *WritersTalk* celebrates National Poetry Month with an ode to spring.

The lines of a poem are, in many ways, the opposite of those found in a novel, where the description of a scene may spread over many pages; it's as though the novelist asks, why write a sentence when a paragraph will do?

The poet distills language down to its essence, and most good poems, as a rule of thumb, move the reader from the outside looking in to the inside looking out.

According to e e cummings, "... for life's not a paragraph and death i think is no parenthesis ..." He impressed my adolescent mind so much that I copied his poem "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r" into my notebook and kept it for sixty years. Besides words that characterize the essence of a grasshopper, he uses unusual punctuation and spreads the grasshopper's leap over three lines

The):l

eA

!p:

He ends by rearranging the letters of the title,

"to rea(be(rran(com(gi(e)ngly, grasshopper."

Cummings died fifty years ago, but his copyrights live on, so I cannot reproduce his poem here, but you can read it at

[www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15402.0](http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15402.0)

After I captured grasshoppers to watch them jump, it seemed to me that the leap should be represented as

ap

LE

LEAP

leap,

and I thought about the shape of the words.

My best friend and I made poems take shape by drawing the outline of a bug, filling it with typed words and other symbols as needed, and then erasing the outline. Not great poetry, but great fun—and much more difficult today using a computer.

To create a poem rather than merely filling a shape with symbols, you must choose words that give the essence of your subject, as in my poem "Flutter by" on the poetry page. You must understand that, to the Aztec in Mexico, the Monarch butterfly symbolized eternal life. Does this mean that I have written great poetry? Of course not, but it was fun and it has a message.

Creating a poem made me think about words and wonder how a poet finds the magic ones to resonate with a reader's soul.

How does one think about words, especially the *exact* words one needs for a poem? How does one create poetry? To find out, I asked several poets amongst South Bay Writers. Look for their replies on the poetry pages; I learned a lot.

What's more, by hopping out of your genre, you may find new ways to express ideas in your creative piece. Falling in love with language again will break the logjam in your mind.

WT

## View from the Board

by S. Halloran

Eight of us — President Bill Baldwin, Vice-president Colin Seymour, Treasurer Richard Burns, Secretary Sylvia Halloran, Newsletter Editor Marjorie Johnson, Central Board-NorCal Representative Dave LaRoche, and Members-at-large Andrea Galvacs and Dick Amyx met in Sunnyvale on March 7.

Items discussed:

- There are great synergistic possibilities for coordinating our branch meeting presentation in May (“Why and Whether You Need an Agent”) with the Fremont branch workshop, “Agents’ Day”, June 30.
- The first phase of analyzing last year’s summer retreat was presented and approved. Phase two will involve an ad hoc committee that to develop and set recommendations for the retreat planning process.

MOTION: to form a committee to produce a procedure to follow when staging a writer’s retreat. (D. Amyx/D. LaRoche) Unanimous.

(The ad hoc committee chaired by Sylvia Halloran will include Dick Amyx, Richard Burns, Jerry Mulenberg, Rita Horiguchi, Rita Beach and Una Daly. Thanks to all.)

- The state California Writers Club third annual picnic is scheduled for July 21, 2012. Save the date. **WT**

Note from Editor: This is not the annual July SBW barbecue. The date for our July get-together has not been set.

## New Members

by Rita Beach

South Bay Writers wishes to welcome our newest members. **Dorothy Brown** is seeking knowledge about writing as well as hoping to learn more about publishing some of hers. She has written a two-act musical documentary, a memoir, and various articles. She lists theatre, dance, photography, interior design, and metal sculpting among her interest and hobbies. Feel free to contact Dorothy at dorothybrown1013@aol.com

Next, we welcome **Joel Orr**, who has a PhD in abstract math and is CTO of a software startup. Joel writes non-fiction, three different blogs, a monthly article

## The Shortest Possible Story Challenge

by Jamie Miller

The idea of the shortest possible short story would make an intriguing contest for the newsletter. I have written “Lockdown” in 200 words, but one I like better is a romance I call “Letdown” in 100 words. Of course, Hemingway took the prize for posterity with “For sale, baby shoes. Never used.”

In response, and showing my bias toward humor, I wrote this longish story (7 words if you don’t count the title): “For sale, 2 tickets to Cancun. Great engagement gift. Don’t need after all.”

Then there’s always the old entry in the romance theme:

“The Queen is pregnant?” roared the King. “My God, who did this?”

There is value in exercises like this in encouraging concise writing. And Lord knows, as wordy as I tend to be, I need the practice. —JM

## Short Short Story Contest

*WritersTalk* challenges YOU to write the shortest possible story.

Submit to newsletter@southbaywriters.com Deadline, April 25. There will be two prizes, one for the shortest story, one for the best story written in 100 words or less. The prizes: \$25 in cash, a See’s Candy gift certificate, and publication in *WritersTalk* for all honorable mentions. Which story gets which prize? Come to the May 8 South Bay Writers meeting to find out. **WT**

for *Machine Design*, and books — lots of books. Some of his eleven books are *The Simple Secret to Writing a Non-Fiction Book in 30 Days*, *at 1 Hour a Day*; *Every Man a Hero*, *Every Woman a Coach*; *Structure is Destiny: The Dandelion Paradox*; *The CIM Handbook*; and *The Victorious Engineer*. He coaches professionals who want to build a business around their books. Joel’s hobbies include playing guitar and singing, though he confesses his enthusiasm exceeds his talent. His family includes six kids, two step-kids, sixteen grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. You can visit his website at [www.joeltrainsauthors.com](http://www.joeltrainsauthors.com)

## Accolades

by Andrea Galvacs

At the February general meeting we heard that there is not much (if any) money to be earned by writing. It’s heartwarming to see that despite these financially-discouraging facts our members continue to do their craft.

**Bill Baldwin** submitted his poem “Los Gatos Revelers” to the *Los Gatos Anthology*.

Dr. **ArLyne Diamond**’s latest book, *Leading and Managing a Global Workforce*, is being serialized in *Outsourcing Magazine* in the United States as well as Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

**Valerie Frankel** published two books, *Katniss the Cattail: Guide to Names and Symbols in the Hunger Games* and *Buffy and the Heroine’s Journey*.

**Clarence L. Hammonds**’ book, *My Decades of Endurance and Survival*, has finally gone to press after five years of interruptions.

**Marjorie Johnson**’s novel *Jaguar Princess* was featured on PressReleasePoint.com on March 15. The links there go to press release sites and to Amazon.com.

Gamma Omega, a chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, an organization for key women educators, nominated **Audry Lynch** for the Area Honor Award for Service to the Profession. This month she has speaking engagements at the Federated Women’s Club of Alameda and at the Retirees of the Oak Grove Teachers Association.

**Steve Wetlesen** created poetic art for Strike Brewery Company. **WT**

Also, we welcome back **Jane Parks-McKay** who was a SBW officer in years past. She is returning after several years of family care giving. Glad she’s back with us.

New members are the heart, growth, and the future of our organization. We want to know more about you, and we invite you to send an email to newsletter@southbaywriters.com with a paragraph telling us who you are and what writing interests you have.

Please say hello and introduce yourself at a meeting. **WT**



# A Watermelon and A Thief

by Jill Pipkin

It was another scorching day in Tehran, Iran in June of 1973. Most stores closed from noon until four because of the heat, which could easily reach 110 degrees Fahrenheit. It was just after noon as I headed home from my teaching job at the English Institute. I was the lone walker on the street – the Iranians know not to venture out in the noonday sun. The sidewalk was covered with workers having their afternoon snooze. I stopped at an open fruit and vegetable market to pick out a watermelon. I had learned that the Iranians eat tons of melons in the summertime to cool themselves off while providing a juicy and nutritious treat.

Just a few days earlier I had returned from Kuwait where I had gone to get a new three-month visa for Iran. I still had a large amount of dollars and Iranian money in an envelope in my purse. I had taken the money there to buy things, but didn't have the time to shop.

Now I knocked lightly on a few melons, having learned the fine art of picking out a crisp one. A hollow echo indicates crispness – a dead echo indicates the watermelon is past its prime, is drying out, and may be mealy. I found an eight pounder that sounded just right, handed over some Iranian money, and continued on my way, juggling my watermelon with my purse and notebooks.

It wasn't long before a car stopped at the curb and a fellow leaned over to the passenger side and spoke out of the open window to ask me if I could change some money for him. I paused and pulled the envelope out of my purse and looked at the bills. They were all large, so I said, "No, I don't have change."

He jumped out of his car and circled around the back of it, coming very close to me. He grabbed the envelope out of my hand and rushed back around the back of the car to the driver's side. Still holding my watermelon and my other stuff, I took off after him, moving very fast. I intercepted him at the driver's door and pushed my big watermelon against his belly.

I had seen him stuff the envelope in a jacket pocket. I had him pinned against the door and I started yelling HELP! HELP! POLICE! POLICE! at the top of my lungs. There was no one around but I kept on yelling while I reached into his pocket and pulled out my envelope along with a wad of bills. I quickly backed away from him. He jumped into his car and roared off like the bandit he was. I counted my take. Pretty good. Not only did I have my envelope back, but I had scored about a hundred dollars. He'd know better than to attack a defenseless American woman armed with only a watermelon ever again!

—JP

## Search Engine Optimization

by Sherrie Johnson

I recently took a West Valley College Internet marketing course that emphasized Search Engine Optimization, SEO, and taught novices how to make their website pages rank higher on search engines such as Google. From my website, download a book about SEO and check the ranking of your website. See what I've learned about fake reviews. Find it all at [www.straightmangay.com](http://www.straightmangay.com)

WT

# Tips on Creating a Blogged Book

by Nina Amir

I have to admit that when I created my blogged book manuscript I kinda winged it. No one was writing or blogging about blogging books – not until I finished my first draft. If I were to do it again, I'd do it differently; I've learned some things since my final draft went off to Writer's Digest Books.

Here are some tips you can use when creating your blogged book manuscript:

1. **Plan an outline of your book's content.** Have a table of contents, a chapter-by-chapter synopsis, and subheadings for each chapter mapped out prior to beginning your book. The subheadings work as blog post titles.
2. **Create an actual manuscript.** Compose your blogs in a word processing document before pasting "installments" of your book online in the form of blog posts. In this way you will create a manuscript you can later revise and edit for the printed book or ebook. Set this up in advance by chapter with your chapter summaries on the first page of each chapter and each of your subtitles (the titles of your blog posts) listed below.
3. **Create categories that correspond with chapters or primary subject areas.** I made the mistake of not doing this in advance, and my blog could probably be more organized. Don't use chapter titles for your categories, though; they typically are not good search engine keywords or phrases.
4. **Create a list of tags.** I didn't do this either, and I wish I had. You can add tags with each post simply off the top of your head, but it's nice to have lists of tags from which to choose. You might even have them grouped by subject matter so you can easily copy and paste them into your posts.
5. **Organize your posts in your blog software.** Although you will be blogging your book page by page, which means just as a reader would read the book, someone showing up at your blog when you are halfway through it will not be able to easily begin reading on the first page. (Blogs feature the last post first at all times.) Organize links to each post in chronological order for a table of contents on a separate page; this allows readers to follow your book from chapter to chapter. Readers can click through from post to post and read your book without leaving your blog, basically turning one "page" at a time. Also, place a link to the previous and next post on each post.
6. **Put your manuscript in a binder and see your blogged book as an actual book from the very start.** If you print out the pages you write – post by post – and put them in a binder, you get to watch your book take shape. And when you blog your book, the book takes shapes quickly because you are writing every day.

By taking these tips into account, you'll create a more satisfying experience for yourself and your readers. **WT**

*Editor's Note:* Nina's book, *How to Blog a Book*, will be published by Writer's Digest this spring. You can read some of her blogs at [howtoblogabook.com](http://howtoblogabook.com) and at [writenonfictionnow.com](http://writenonfictionnow.com)

## Speaker: Fred Setterberg

*Continued from page 1*

At the same time, it contradicted his journalism background to present dialogue the precision of which he couldn't verify. "There's no conversation you can remember as it happened or even the gist of a conversation. As a former reporter, reporting a scene as fact was anathema to me." That made fiction an attractive alternative.

Point of view also would have been limited more than he wanted in a memoir. In the novel "there's an unnamed first person narrator, it's chronological and the narrator becomes increasingly unreliable," Setterberg says. That worked for him but might not help us.

Some reality may come off as fiction in *Lunch Bucket*. "Some photographs are real," Setterberg notes. "One is of a guy in his forties digging in the back yard and it was just what I was looking for, but I've never met this fellow."

The father in the book "very much resembles my father," he says. An excerpt Setterberg often reads involves the father teaching his 'tween son how to pull up dandelions by the roots instead of the heads. That must have actually happened, right?

Not as it happens. Setterberg's wife had been the faulty weed-puller, and Fred himself had set her straight. It got him "imagining what it would have been like beheading the dandelions with Franklin."

He doesn't claim to be breaking new ground. "I've read a lot about the Depression," he notes, "but nothing's as vivid as the *Grapes of Wrath*." Yet that was journalism, too, he says.

"Steinbeck actually did a lot of reporting, especially on the Arvin camp. I'm really interested in that method of reporting a story and imagining the life of the story. Like Zola, in all of his books . . . he went into the mines, went into the taverns with the miners."

Like Zola, Setterberg didn't want his subject to be buried alive. **WT**

*Fred Setterberg will speak to South Bay Writers on Tuesday, April 10.*



**Ellen Sussman, Speaker for South Bay Writers, March 13** — Photo by Dick Amyx

## Recap: Write Your Passion

*Continued from page 1*

Her agent's response? "Don't write that book. Nobody cares about Bali." This was before *Eat, Pray, Love* became a best seller and a movie.



**Ellen Sussman** Photo by Dick Amyx

During the final negotiations for *French Lessons*, Ballantine asked Sussman what her next book might be. Without hesitating, she told them about the Bali story — and they loved it.

Sussman's advice to writers is simple:

- Join a writers group to find good readers who are *not* your loved ones, take good classes, and consider hiring a paid editor to go over your work before you send anything to an agent.
- Take yourself seriously. Say, "I am a writer," when asked what you do.
- Be consistent — although she writes daily, use any schedule that works for you. Try a "unit" system for more productivity — work 45 minutes, then take a break for 15 minutes to do mindless activity. The break gives you a "creative boost" so that when you sit down again,

the writing begins to flow immediately.

- The first draft should be written quickly since it's the discovery of your novel: What is this beast? Who are the characters? What happens in this novel? These questions are answered in the first draft, which is then crafted into your novel.
- Get rid of distractions. "Block the internet," she says, and recommends Freedom software to inexpensively turn off the net for a set period of time.
- Don't be afraid to disagree with your agent or editor.

One member pronounced Sussman's candid and energetic presentation the best she'd seen since she joined last year. If you're interested in Ellen Sussman's writing classes, email her at [ellen@ellensussman.com](mailto:ellen@ellensussman.com) **WT**



# Notes from the floor

by Marjorie Johnson

Marjorie Johnson called for help in several areas; “Not your blood – only your ideas.”



Members find the Directory of Experts in the back pages of *WritersTalk* useful for checking accuracy in a story, but many members prefer to use Google to get information.

Our Publishing Pathways mentors haven't had any emails. Perhaps we should list their areas of expertise.

The ensuing exchanges of ideas on the floor were a very useful form of mentoring. Members want more such spontaneous discussions in the future and found the conversations after our panel on publishing last month very valuable.

Sherrie Johnson volunteered some information about Smashwords. If you are selling through Smashwords, don't rely on their emails for news about your book sales because they don't contact you when one of their associates sells your book. Check your dashboard to see your total sales to date.

Jamie Miller suggested that WT have a short, short story competition.

Our speaker, Ellen Sussman, gave us a good tip as well, one needed by every writer. She takes a fifteen-minute break every hour to walk around, stretch, and do mindless jobs such as folding laundry.

If you have discussion topics to suggest, corner me at a meeting or contact me at [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com). However, be sure that what you tell me gets written down because sometimes I forget faster than I remember. **WT**



**South Bay Writers  
Meeting March 13**

*Photos this page by  
Carolyn Donnell*

# For you, Franz

By Carolyn Donnell

A story based on a 2008 prompt for WritersWeekly.com's 24-hour Contest.

The doorbell echoed as the petite elderly lady dressed in a smart, black knit pantsuit stepped into the small store. The silver-haired shop owner winked at her as she fingered her long string of pearls. He turned back to the program on his black and white television set.

The lady walked to the back wall and stretched her bony fingers under the third shelf of the bookcase. The item was still there, where she'd left it last week. She slid it from its hiding place and approached the counter.

"How much?" She held up a purse.

The owner's eyes widened and he grabbed at her hand. "NOT for sale."

"What do you mean?" The lady stepped back just out of his reach.

The owner tried to seize the purse a second time. "Where did you find that? It's private property."

"You're right about the private part," the lady's voice rose. "But it's my private property, not yours. I saw it when I was here last time, but I didn't have any money with me. I came back today prepared to buy it. How much?"

"I told you it's not for sale." He came around from behind the counter.

"This is mine." She swung her gold-tipped cane. "Where did you get it?"

He dodged the cane "What do you mean yours? That is one of the few family possessions left to me after the war. It belonged to my eldest brother."

"Your brother? I tell you, it's mine. I can prove it." She twisted a little ornament on the purse. The back came apart, revealing a hidden compartment.

The owner watched in astonishment as she pulled out several crinkled bills.

"Pre-World-War-II French francs?" He shook his head. "I'll be damned."

She turned the flap over and reached into what looked like a solid piece of burgundy silk. Her fingers, bent by arthritis, shook as they extracted another item.

"More money?" The storekeeper leaned forward, but she stepped back again.

"No. More valuable than that."

"More valuable than money?"

"Yes. To me it is." She glanced down at the envelope. "Franz," she whispered. "I thought I'd lost you forever." One thin salty tear found its way to the corner of her eye. She held up the paper. "You see, I lost this when I fled from France to Switzerland after the war. I won't ask how you got it or even report you, unless, that is, you refuse to return it to me."

The man remained silent.

"Shall I call a gendarme now?" She backed toward the door.

"Stop! That's mine." The man halted his arm in mid-air. "Wait. Did I hear you say Franz just now?"

"That's right." The lady stopped.

This time the storekeeper was faster. He grabbed the envelope and looked at the address. "Oh my God." He placed one hand on his head. "Wait here."

He disappeared into a back room and returned with a small, carved box. He opened it and took out an old photo beginning to fade into brittle age. He looked at the picture and then at the lady standing before him. The face of the woman in the photo reflected the same sharp features as the woman that stood before him now and showed the same long string of pearls and the same frothy silk camellia on the jacket lapel.

"This is you, isn't it?" He held the photo where she could see it.

The old lady squinted at the image of the young woman, arm-in-arm with a handsome young man. "Yes, it is. But how did you get this?"

She looked closely at the shop owner, at his high forehead, square jaw and slightly pointed ears.

"Franz," she whispered.

The storeowner reached out to steady her.

"Franz. You look like Franz."

"Yes. He was my brother."

"You said your family were all dead?"

"Yes."

"Franz too, then?"

"Yes. Many years ago."

"Oh." She handed the photo back.

"No. Keep it. It's rightfully yours. So is the purse."

"Yes, it is mine. Your brother helped me design it. More utilitarian than the so-called fashionable bags of the time, he always said. I patterned the chain from ones the caretakers at the convent where I grew up kept their keys on. Franz added the secret compartments—to stash extra cash and anything else one might want to keep near."

"Like the letter?" The storekeeper handed the envelope back to her.

She nodded. "Like the letter."

"Would you like a drink? By the way, my name is Henri."

"Please. We have a lot to talk about."

Henri locked the front door and placed a "CLOSED" sign in the window.

Once inside the back room, she looked around the meagerly furnished area. "Is this where you live?"

"Yes. I live alone now. It's not much, but I don't need much."

*We'll see about that,* the lady thought.

She returned to the Hotel Ritz Paris later that day. "Here, Pierre." She held out the handbag. "I want a line of handbags like this one."

"Coco, what a good idea. We'll be partners again. Just like the old times."

She avoided Pierre's hug. *Partners maybe,* she thought, *but never like the old times.* "Pierre, darling. I have someone in mind to head the new department. His name is Henri. I want an office set up for him immediately."

*For you, Franz,* she thought as she fingered the letter in her pocket. The envelope was addressed to Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel. **-CD**

## Ed. Note:

WritersWeekly.com's 24-Hour Short Story Contest is held quarterly. You can enter the Spring 2012 contest, \$5.00 fee. Register at <http://www.writersweekly.com/misc/contest.php> You must enter in the contest before the topic is posted in order to submit your story. You cannot write your story beforehand. Start time for the Spring 2012 Contest is April 28, 2012 at noon central time.



# Poetry

## April 2012

### Nothing The Matter With Me

Stop dragging your shirt sleeves on the ground  
and stand up straight and don't slump.  
You just stand there like a frump  
swinging your arms, not raising them high,  
like you're supposed to do.

What's the matter with you?

Why aren't you wearing yellow and red?  
This time of the year our colors are bold.  
Your brothers and sisters do what they're told,  
Why can't you act like the rest of us,  
like you're supposed to do?  
What's the matter with you?

We shortened your sleeves, you put them back.  
We even tried painting you red and brown  
but you're still green, making rustling sounds.  
You have to be different from everyone else,  
not like you're supposed to do.  
What's the matter with you?

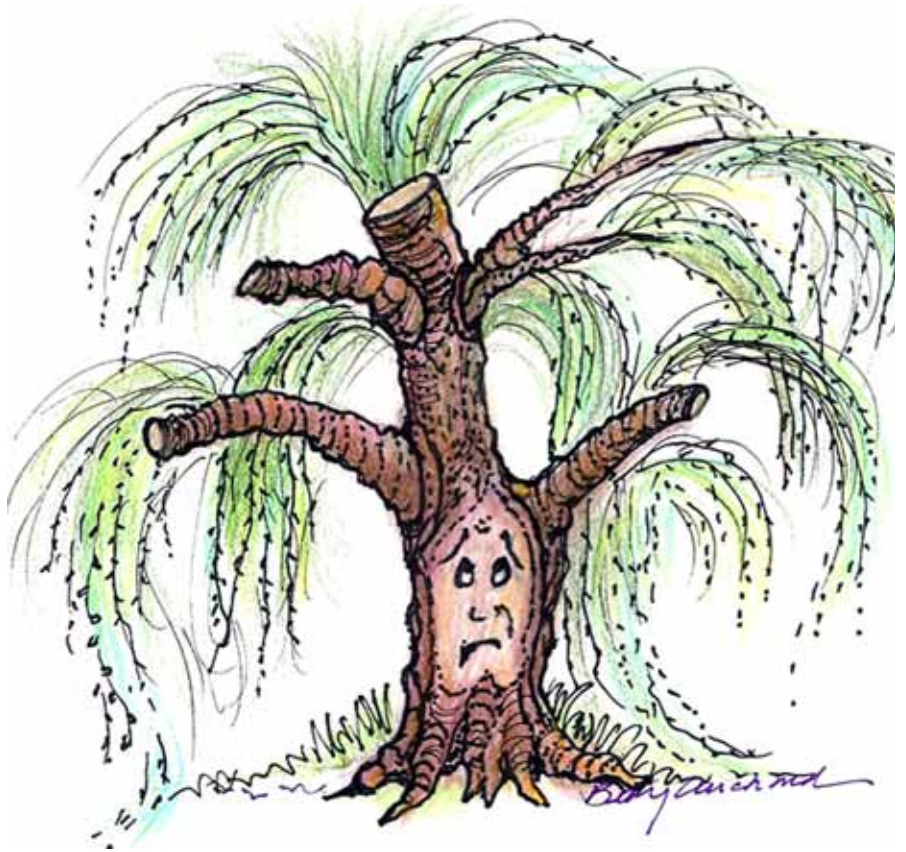
Why won't you try to be like us?  
Why do you always say you can't?  
No one will ever want you like that.  
You will never have any friends,  
like you're supposed to do.  
What's the matter with you?

A woodsman walking the forest one day  
spotted the strange looking crop.  
Why, he asked, would someone chop  
and hack a willow tree like this?  
That's not what they're supposed to do.  
I'd ask them, what's the matter with you?

A willow? The little tree thought on the words.  
Is that what I am? Not an oak?  
It's no wonder that I feel choked.  
Why didn't anyone tell me before?  
That's what they're supposed to do.  
Not say, what's the matter with you.

I don't know what a willow tree is.  
There are no others like me around.  
Where I came from might never be found.  
But I can stop trying to be an oak.  
That's not what I'm supposed to be.  
There is nothing the matter with me.

—Carolyn Donnell



### Ex Poetry? I'll Drink to That!

by Betty Auchard

After my husband died in 1998, poems came out of me all the time. Nine stories that appear in *Dancing in My Nightgown* were originally poetry. Instead of an article on how I write poetry, I have written a shaped poem titled --

#### Ex Poems? I'll Drink to That!

9 of the 70 stories in my first book were written as poetry.  
The publisher didn't want a mix of prose and poetry.  
She wanted to leave them out. I couldn't do that.

Gone, they would've left holes in my story.

But hey, they were free-verse poetry.

I took them out of the stanzas and  
turned them into paragraphs.

When you read them now

They still sound like

poems but

don't

look

like

poems.

—Betty Auchard

## Silent Partner

Watching pairs of Canada geese  
Feather to feather: how long will it take  
To notice they chose only one mate for entire life?  
Is the slenderest arched black neck the attraction?  
Or is it strongest wing beats for flights so far  
That only mortality can stop this paired migration.

Someone of our kind kept track  
Found elegance in the single-mate idea  
And so it became my wish as a girl.  
My choice a poet so declared with pride  
At his side I went flying along that same chosen purpose  
As I still do this and will for all my waking life.

He and I crisscrossed this country several times  
Soaring perhaps too near the sun: published a book together  
I've never regretted a minute of it, young as we were,  
Mourning only the brevity of life  
And if our poems were childish  
I floated like a happy child, having my heart's desire  
Until he died at age 47.

There is no other in the flock. Nor ever will be.  
I watch one of the geese alone  
Shadowless where reeds edge into water  
Some say the goose is not the smartest bird  
But there's a lot to say for loyalty.  
As for that book of immaturity:  
I stubbornly stand by every loving word.

— Pat Mariner Bustamante

## The Garden

The garden beckons,  
and warm days remind me  
that two seasons have passed  
since I last touched plants.

I ignored my roses,  
hydrangeas and pansies  
and stayed inside  
to write away my pain.

I forgot the joy of planting,  
but now I remember:  
I loved grooming old plants  
and pampering new ones.

The garden flourished  
two springs ago  
when I lived all day  
in my blue jeans and sweat.

It feels so good  
to get my hands dirty  
and pull weeds again  
in the loamy, wormy soil.

— Betty Auchard

## Orders of Magnitude in Green

I will go with you to walk among your flowers,  
To climb the sandy hillside by the road,  
And seek the place where orange poppies grow.  
Then we'll walk that hilltop high above the tides,  
Where wild purple iris reach toward our knees,  
And yield to our careless footsteps as we go.  
Show me the sunlit clearing where azaleas of pink  
Bow their discreet heads as we pass by, but offer  
Nectar to the hummingbirds who may pause to drink.

But then will you come along with me to seek  
The minute buds that shoot up from the mosses  
Growing green and soft when the spring rains fall?  
Come closer. You cannot see them from there.  
Bend down beside me, down on your knees,  
And worship this small miracle of life. Tell me of  
What you see, for my own eyes have grown old.  
Do delicate threads still lift tiny capsules high,  
To catch the faint breeze that bids them burst  
And fling even tinier spores toward the sky?

Come with me to the stream, and let us clamber down,  
Down to where water laps our toes, and we'll search.  
Find me a leaf, still green, drifted here by the flow,  
Stranded on this bank. Touch it, lift it gently. Feel it cling  
To the damp, nurturing breast of Earth. No leaf-errant,  
But a living small thing complete. A graceful herb,  
Called liverwort. Oh, graceless name! It clutches  
Earth with filaments scarce visible in the sun,  
Lifts spore cups on threads as fine, awaiting a droplet  
To carry spores away. Then its season's work is done.

So we share our green worlds, with your glorious flowers  
That reach toward our hands to be picked as we roam,  
And my plants, tiny and shy, too delicate to take away  
To captive hospitality we'd offer in our home.

And as we wander, looking about us, looking down,  
Remind me again to look up, up to where redwoods  
Reach toward heaven, wear clouds for a crown!

— Jamie Miller

# How I create poetry

by Jamie Miller

I'm a very slow writer. Most poets probably write thirty lines of poetry every day before breakfast, but the same effort may take me a week. There must be a rhythm, and it should fit into a classic song pattern. And the lines should look good, each line having about the same number of characters, but not just broken at whatever place fits them into the box. When I finish a poem, I want the reader to think about its subject.

Most of my writing bears on nature, as does "Orders of Magnitude in Green" which began when I walked along the ridge south of the lighthouse at Point Reyes. I stayed with the theme of plants in their settings but jumped to San Mateo Memorial Park where mosses and liverworts, a whole world of tiny plants, live by a stream. The poem is a musical composition, moving homeward while evoking feeling as Smetana's "Moldau" rolls on to join the Danube.

I began "Aurora" after viewing exquisite images of the sun taken from an orbiting solar observatory, images breathtaking in the advances they offered since my retirement from NASA. People of my generation had only the poor pictures taken of solar prominences and flares when a total solar eclipse allowed the view of the circumsolar action. When I read a news article about the storms on the sun and how it would play out with Earth's magnetosphere—the aurora borealis and the northern lights—I remembered my great-uncle Karl Johann, my Uncle Charlie, and the old stories about the northern lights that he brought from Upper Saxony.

"Aurora" seemed to develop as a symphonic form with a first movement, "Pastorale," as I remember Uncle Charlie, followed by a second movement, "Tempestuoso allegro ma non troppo," as I invoke the storms on and within the sun. And then back to earth, with a movement almost "Pastorale" again.

I wonder if our grandchildren will ever see what I have seen, or if the ancient secrets of the Rhine Maidens' shields will die with me. Polar bears will go extinct in the wild, as will the snowfields that Uncle Charlie saw when the aurora played. Will it make a difference? —JM



Photo from Wikimedia Commons

## Aurora

I remember draperies moving gently with the winds,  
Winds that came unheard and unfelt, out of the silence of the night,  
Stirring those draperies that floated in the sky, beyond my northern home.  
They moved to the music of an unknown ballet, seen only by mystics and gods,  
That came in winter to my northern land, when nights were dark and long.  
They went away when the full moon shone or summer nights grew short.  
Old men knew, who'd watched the night. "Northern Lights," they'd say.  
Sunlight shining on ice-fields to the north, or glinting from shields of maidens,  
Maidens that guarded treasures once hidden in lands left far behind.

Would the old men have believed fantastic tales now told  
Of storms on the sun, of tornadoes, whirlwinds, vortices that swirl  
Out of unknowable depths, bursting upward, thrust out into jets  
A hundred Earthspans high? Of loops and arches flung upward  
Only to shrink back into the maelstrom from which they came?  
Could they conceive of shreds of glowing gas torn away, fading to dark,  
Speeding outward to a rendezvous with us, invisible bits of eternity trapped,  
Brought to Earth by magnetic lines, unheard and unfelt, out in the silence?  
Now, glowing draperies move to the music of an unknown ballet, seen only  
By mystics and by gods. And by cold silent quartz eyes, ever circling Earth.

No. How could the old men have believed? Far easier were glinting shields  
Of treasure-guarding maidens. Now the old men are gone, and with them  
Their Northern Lights. But are they still there, those draperies moving silent  
In the northern sky? I look north, but see nothing but the sky-glow of  
Ten million human lights scattering back from a blanket of sea-haze  
And human smoke. But take me back. Take me to the northern home of  
My childhood days. Take me beyond, to the plains of North Canada,  
And let me see for myself what glories adorn the black sky. Let me see the  
Milky Way again, and show it to children who have never seen what I have.  
Take me south, and let me see if Southern Lights mirror those of my youth.  
Prove that the glories of the night sky remain, though we damage our world.

I'm an old man myself, now. Perhaps I shall one day know.

— Jamie Miller



## March Poetry Madness

by Susan Taylor Brown

I'm in the March Poetry Madness Contest where poets are assigned a word and matched up in head-to-head battles to write a kid appropriate poem. Readers vote, winners move on to the next round. Some of the words are insanely difficult. Some are funny. The poems are great fun to read, most of them light, funny verse. I was assigned the word "nonconfrontational." Yikes! You can see what I did with at <http://bit.ly/ABIUO1> and hopefully like it enough to vote for it. STB

## Poetry begins with an image

by Jacqueline Mutz

My poetry begins with an image, an impression, a feeling that materializes in words. The words come almost of themselves, a series of brush strokes and what emerges is a small bit of my soul upon the page. —JM

### To Martha, My Mother

Today is the day  
I will just breathe  
and exhale the night  
from my lungs,  
and open my eyes to the  
light of the sun's  
soft touch,  
warmth spread close.

Today is the day  
I will touch the earth,  
feet planted firmly,  
the earth pulsating  
my life,  
with a promise  
of tomorrow.

~j mutz



(16-nonconfrontational)

## At 13, I Walk on Eggshells

More than the way your hands paint bruises the world can't see  
I fear your words, and the way they tattoo themselves in my brain  
creating a chorus of put-downs that play in an endless loop,  
reminding me of all I am not, in your eyes.

Your words are my only gift from you and I carry them close,  
like the most precious of jewels. I can't help myself.

In this house, nonconfrontational  
is just another word for survival.

— Susan Taylor Brown

## Ode to the Night Sky

When I was a little boy,  
my parents would take us out  
to movies

on Saturday nights  
and when we got home  
around midnight,  
the Milky Way,  
the whole galaxy,  
the River of Light

ran across  
the entire  
darkness of space,  
the myriad stars  
and closer ones,  
these seen  
individually,  
filling the heavens.

I was enthralled  
and wondered

whether the lights above  
were the City of the Angels,  
and what lay beyond them?

The City of the Angels  
has been brought north to my hometown  
and now the River of Light  
is dammed to grey faint ugliness  
by the glare of floodlights  
and the dust and smoke of pollution.  
The children cannot see the River today  
and they need to see it  
in all its glory.

We all do.

The Bible says that  
at the Dawn of Creation  
the stars sang for joy.  
Let them sing again.  
Starlight is a human right!

— Stephen C. Wetlesen

# On My Poetic Art Process

by Stephen C. Wetlesen

The request from *WritersTalk* for a short outline of my creative process in the new genre of Poetic Art forces a confession from me. The truth is, I do not consider myself a poet so much as a frustrated visual artist—a painter. In my deepest soul, I desired to render oils, drawings, and watercolors of landscapes, portraits, and events, but found I lacked any discernable skill or talent with the brushstroke, so I gave it up to pursue a career.

Later in life, however, I found that I still yearned to create objects, to make or reveal beauty. Through many years of dabbling and experimentation, I realized in fits and starts that I still really wanted to be a painter. Therefore, as an alternative to any physical tableau, I slowly derived the new genre of Poetic Art, which sounds like poetry, but in a deep sense is not. Gradually learning and applying aesthetic theory and artistic commentary, I attempted to utilize pure thought itself, expressed by elegant rhythmic language, as my paintbrush. I hoped to thus paint what I saw or imagined.

My haiku defining Poetic Art follows all rules of haiku, “paintbrush” being a California seasonal word with a subtle double meaning. It connotes an artist’s paintbrush, yes, but also the deeply colorful and vibrant Indian Paintbrush flowering plant.

## Haiku for Definition of Poetic Art

Thought as artifact  
Word as visual structure  
Line flow as paintbrush.

An American friend living in Brazil, who learned I hoped to paint with thought taking the form of rhythmic language, cited some research articles and called my concept a form of synesthesia, the cross-connection or mixture of senses, where, for example, someone might “hear” colors or “taste” a musical sound. Similarly, I often strive to “sketch” human life models during sessions in a local art gallery with poetic word patterns I combine with rather crude drawings.

While most poets seek to speak of

their inner emotions and sometimes their relationships with other people and places, I found myself rendering a landscape, portrait, or abstract with language.

Thus I came to see my project as an entirely new form or genre, Poetic Art, not to be confused with poetry per se but distinguished from Conceptual Art, which transmits ideas with two or three-dimensional structures.

Poetic Art is oriented to scenes, events, or objects as observed by the artist or conceived in the mind’s eye.

In all humility and modesty, I was inspired by Einstein; he showed matter and energy were interchangeable, a single deep essence. I hoped to follow suit by fusing and unifying thought, language, and word rhythms into a realm one and the same with the canvas. Thus it has come about that, since the late 1990s, I have built a modest business taking Poetic Art commissions, painting various events and occasions with thought language in the same way others are paid to sketch.

The first essential aspect of Poetic Art is to develop a deep ability to SEE in a world where most people think they see, but don’t. Others think that seeing on a deep level is childishly easy, but it isn’t. First and foremost is simply the ability to NOTICE things that others overlook.

Therefore, the first part of my process is to intensely scrutinize and pay attention, to seek and merely take note of everything around me: the big and small, the strange and mundane, and the unusual and bizarre.

For just one of countless concrete examples, a few years ago, I took the Amtrak Coast Starlight passenger train

north from San Jose to Oregon. In the still dark predawn hours, many people were awake and sitting in the observation area, doing things like knitting or quietly chatting, but all looking away from the dim silhouette of the jagged spire peak of the huge dormant volcano, Mount Shasta. So dim and faint but still clearly visible to the attentive eye, Shasta in such tones was utterly beautiful in a gauze-like sense.

Yet there was more. Juxtaposed right over the mountain’s tip, elevated just a few degrees, was the brilliant amber orb of the planet Jupiter, shining like a gemstone beacon crowning the treeless snowy glacier rock terrain. The cone-like crater mated to a shiny world formed one great abstract sculpture that any art gallery would be proud to exhibit, yet, out of several dozen passengers, I alone noticed the otherworldly beauty obviously visible to all! Inspired, I wrote “Three Mount Shasta Haiku.”

For one to truly See (capitalization intentional) and then create fluid poetic lines to evoke that deep vision is a skill that takes many years to learn, and I’m as yet just a novice. I have trillions of light years to go before I’m adequately observant.

— SCW

## Three Mount Shasta Haiku

Pure white distant heights.  
Californian Tibet,  
your eyes its cities.

Jupiter above  
predawn spire peak silhouette.  
Sight from railroad car.

Imagine, summit  
seen from roaring steam Blue Goose!  
Endless shrill whistles.

— Stephen C. Wetlesen



# On Coming Up with My New Poems

by Richard A. Burns

The idea for Indian Song 3 sprang from the mere fact that I had written Indian Song 1, and why shouldn't Indians sing more songs? By the way, my father-in-law is Shoshoni and left me with a few recordings of his songs in the Shoshoni language (which I don't understand a lick), but his voice and chant are very evocative, inspiring, and poignant. His songs were very simple and not as profound as I'm trying to be.

I don't wait for a muse but I don't write every day either. Usually, I write when I feel so guilty about not producing I must spring forth with more; also for contests or challenges which literally set up a demand for me to write. I think interesting things every day, and I wish I wrote every day to match.

When I'm dry for a long time, I might go to other people's collections, read a few poems and try to summarize each in a few words (prose) as to its meaning or moral, or some standout part of technique. Then I put away that collection, and see what I can come up with independently (absolutely no copying), probably with far different characters and setting, but aiming at some similar (or newly thought up) message. Milton Berle said stealing someone else's joke is the sincerest form of flattery. But writers must dress it up a bit differently, of course, so we aren't accused of plagiarism.

I have a rather robust collection of half-finished and fresh ideas saved in a folder to go back and polish when time permits. That's where this came from, though much has changed in the crafting phase. —RAB

## Indian Song 3

a sapling sprouts from a single seed  
so seasons slip by and pine-nuts become great trees  
sun and moon watch us, laugh at our woes  
note our smallest victories

mothers with arms warm and caring  
bring up their bright-eyed princesses  
and future braves to be strong with arrows sharp  
and chiefs with eyes that see and learn

great fathers wild wolf to waning moon to seething sun say simply  
O, people, hunt your meat; O, harvest grass;  
O, set your village near flowing waters clear and cold;  
O, care for plants and all who breathe

— Richard A. Burns

## My poems come to me

by Suzy Paluzzi

My poems come to me from both inside and outside. Often I am moved by a memory, emotion, action, or sight and feel the need to express it. Then, the words seem to rise from my innermost being, not due to any force of my own. Lately, I have been writing poems during the late night. My poetry is usually compact because the moment that touches me is profound. —SP

## Mom's Earrings

Dangly, spangly,  
Glittery, gold  
Smooth and worn  
Heirloom, bold.  
Perched on the globes of her earlobes.  
Sachet scent, precious memory.

— Suzy Paluzzi

## From a Dog (who today is much missed)

I am old:

Please excuse my mistakes  
Especially when I see you wrinkle your nose,  
But I think you and I are of an age  
(I adore every smell and every move you make)  
We seem to be climbing steep stairs together  
Though I cannot see them.

I hear you pant  
At the same time I am panting, sometimes.  
Often when speaking of me  
You use the word "shepherd"  
I sense there some value —  
I am proud of this label  
Though your words "good dog"  
Are my greatest delight.

If I can't keep up  
If I lose the way  
Please forgive me,  
I am trying my best.  
It was my intention to never leave you  
(But you have forgiven my errors before)  
I stand at some strange door now.

I beg your permission to leave  
But not willingly, and however I strain  
At a new leash that chokes me,  
Somehow  
Some part of me  
Will make my way back to your side  
So again we will dream together.

— Pat Mariner Bustamante



"The Fireman's Dog" from *The Independent Fourth Reader* by Watson, 1868.





— Photo from Wikimedia Commons

## Monarch Butterfly Poem

by Marjorie Johnson

The Monarch butterfly has wintered in Mexico for thousands of years, and to the Aztec, the butterfly symbolized eternal life.

Flutter by  
Life is a flutter by  
Eternal life, a butterfly  
Flutter bye  
Butterfly  
Flutter bye bye  
Flutter flitter glitter sky  
Flutter bye bye flitter glitter color  
Flittering fluttering painting the sky  
Flutter bye flitter glitter bye philter  
flitter bye glitter philter brush  
:: Flutterflitterfluttersputter  
Spitter bye flitter philter brush  
Sputter bye spitter flitter bye philter  
Spittering fluttering painting the sky  
Sputter by by splitter glitter color  
Sputter flitter spitter die  
Flutter bye bye  
Butterfly

— M. Johnson

## The Perils of Procrastination

Time's wide river  
rushes us downstream  
not to the vast, abundant sea  
but toward an ever-closer view  
of the drain.

— Sylvia E. Halloran

# Terse On Verse: April

By Pat Bustamante

## April Fuel

Have some fun. You deserve it!  
Might stoke you up to change your beat  
Drive some different "opus," swerve it  
To the "funny side of the street."  
Today give some friend a laugh!  
And that is half  
Of what makes us all complete.

— Pat Bustamante

APRIL not only is Poetry Month but also is a terrific time to experiment with humorous verse. April Fools Day and "spring madness" cooperate to set the tone. Even though Spring started in March, there is no stopping it in April.

The famous poet Edward Lear is associated with a form called the limerick. It's simple and fun. First two verses rhyme, usually in pentameter (five heavy accents in the words); next two verses are shorter, rhyming as a separate pair, and return to a match with lines one and two for the fifth line. If you have never written a poem in your life, you can easily master those five lines. Two samples:

## Tricky: Look Out

Will you or won't you come to dinner?  
(Followed by an excellent yarn-spinner!)  
Fragrant sauce on mysterious meat  
Certainly plenty of veggies to eat;  
One never leaves that buffet feeling thinner.

## St. Patrick's Day Stout

Hooray for the color green!  
Mid-March comes that day so keen.  
But after loud celebrating,  
(Much too much extenuating)  
That color (Urp!) on one's face may (alas) be seen.

I hope you've sent something for this month's special poetry issue. It's not too early to start gearing up for June's issue either. That month keeps the greeting card business alive! Not to mention Mother's Day in May; there can never be too many poems about (or for) mothers. Father's Day approaches in June, with graduation and lots of weddings, and then summer vacation looms. Might I convince you to send a short poem on any of those subjects?

I've said it before and I will say it again: a poem can summarize whatever writing project you have going, fiction or nonfiction. It can be the "credo" that keeps your writing on track.

WT

## How Do I Create?

by Pat Bustamante

Short bursts, that's all the time I've got. At work I am interrupted a lot; they just will not let me write poems all day. However, in those times they are talking engineering — of which I am totally ignorant so their secrets are safe with me — I scribble away desperately hoping to finish a thought before the next interruption. To summarize poetically,

How do I create? I thrive on chaos, deprivation.  
I cannot highly recommend it —  
You have to already recognize the  
Patricia I-am-challenged-here sensation.

— Pat Bustamante

## My Desk

My desk is in a shambles,  
and the various stories  
are in piles ... not by  
category or in date  
order, or in any  
order, just in  
pointless  
piles that  
make it  
hard to  
locate  
stuff

— Betty Auchard



“Five Peas in the Shell” from *The Independent Fourth Reader* by Watson, 1868.

## The Writer Writes

What the writer writes, no one knows,  
As she sits at her desk and worries the prose.  
She twists it and turns it, outlines ‘til she’s blue,  
And when the draft is done, she starts it anew.  
A second, a third, a fourth draft and more,  
Until the wretched book goes out the door.  
Off to the agents, in the dark, black pit,  
And one, two, three agents don’t like it a bit.  
But maybe God smiles and along comes some hope,  
Agent Nine likes the characters, setting, and scope.  
She sends it back with marks galore,  
So much to fix the writer faints to the floor.  
After repairs it goes to agent again,  
Who sends it to 18 editor friends.  
16 say “No, not with a stick,”  
But 17 and 18 say it’s their pick.  
The bidding war ensues, with dollars supreme,  
And it’s finally published, but reviewers are mean.  
Still, the public adores it, the writer says “Phew!”  
And continues her work on book number two.  
The labor proceeds, a convoluted affair,  
That repeats and repeats, so writers, beware.  
You won’t likely get rich, you may tear out your heart,  
And when you finish your book, you’re just at the start.

— K.O. Llewellyn

## Lost World

I’ve been searching for something for many years  
The dim lost world of my youth that  
seems shrouded in mist  
A different time  
A different pace  
A different place  
It’s elusive and seek as I do  
it hides too well  
I look but it seems to scamper  
just out of sight  
Was it real then  
or just a passing glimpse  
of the way  
I wish that it had been  
An unhurried,  
more peaceful world  
full of wonder  
As time passes it seems harder  
to recall the innocence,  
the hope,  
the promise of the future  
I have one more place to look  
but that must wait  
For it may be hidden in a place  
from which I cannot return

— Chuck Peradotto

## Three Practicals

**INTELLIGENCE** is this, having the ability to learn, now  
Cope with learning, without a formal education. Wow!  
And have that certain amount of mentality, brain-power  
To be certain of yourself always, using wit, every hour  
Be sure of information, using acumen or the spreading  
Spreading, news intelligently; and always with, tidings  
Show your intelligence by acting out, with some sense  
Use good sense with mother-wit; do not appear dense

**KNOWLEDGE** having the information or the education  
Education, information, needed for knowledge; is action  
When you acquire knowledge, it is like having evidence  
Evidence, like a testimony, a sure case or idea whence  
Whence, is a source? You receive it from what or where  
And you have knowledge; you know how much you care  
Put knowledge together is mind-boggling. It’s a lot of acts  
You now have knowledge; and then, you gather all facts

**INSIGHT**, it is a look into, a long word; it’s intuitiveness  
Look yes, we need more insight on this topic, directness  
The word insight is used, people say, it’s a second sight  
Is that so? I don’t know. It is more of a sixth sense, right?  
So, thinking right is used; think of the word immediately  
Insight carries with it, also signification and this, stately

**Intelligence, knowledge, insight**, a terrific combination  
**Intelligence, knowledge, insight**, known as gratification

— Clarence L. Hammonds

# Poetry Month 2012

by Carolyn Donnell

In 1996, the Academy of American Poets established April as the month to celebrate poetry. Since then they have tried to widen national attention to the art of poetry, to living poets, to our complex poetic heritage, and to poetry books and journals. Several organizations are planning to participate on April 26 in Poem In Your Pocket Day. Pick a poem you love, carry it with you, and share it with friends all day. 30 Poets, 30 Days is another activity where a selected poet will have 24 hours to tweet his or her daily insights. You can get a new poem every day by email or you can look at the site's National Poetry Map to find out what is happening in your state.

Poets.org suggests 30 ways to celebrate (one each day.) Except for Poem In Your Pocket Day, they can be done in any order.

1. Celebrate Poem in Your Pocket Day
2. Read a book of poetry
3. Memorize a poem
4. Revisit a poem
5. Put poetry in an unexpected place
6. Bring a poem to your place of worship
7. Attend a poetry reading
8. Play Exquisite Corpse (a game)
9. Read a poem at an open mic
10. Support literary organizations

11. Listen on your commute
12. Subscribe to a literary magazine
13. Start a notebook on Poets.org
14. Put a poem in a letter
15. Watch a poetry movie
16. Take a poem out to lunch
17. Put a poem on the pavement
18. Recite a poem to family and friends
19. Organize a poetry reading
20. Promote public support for poetry
21. Start a poetry reading group
22. Read interviews and literary criticism
23. Buy a book of poems for your library
24. Start a commonplace book
25. Integrate poetry with technology
26. Ask the Post Office for more poet stamps
27. Sign up for a poetry class or workshop
28. Subscribe to our free newsletter
29. Write a letter to a poet
30. Visit a poetry landmark

To find contests, grants, and other resources for poets, refer to sites like [pw.org/grants](http://pw.org/grants) (*Poets & Writers*); [winningwriters.com](http://winningwriters.com); [writermag.com](http://writermag.com) (*The Writer Magazine*); [writersdigest.com](http://writersdigest.com) (*Writer's Digest*); and [fanstory.com/page/poetry\\_contests](http://fanstory.com/page/poetry_contests). **WT**

## 32nd Annual Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition

Lorian Hemingway is an author and granddaughter of Nobel laureate Ernest Hemingway.

The first-place winner will receive \$1,500 and publication of the winning story in *Cutthroat: A Journal of the Arts*. The second and third place winners will receive \$500 each. Honorable mentions will also be awarded to entrants whose work demonstrates promise. The entry fee is \$15 for each story postmarked by May 1, 2012. Submission details at [www.shortstorycompetition.com](http://www.shortstorycompetition.com)

## Dream Quest One Contest

The Dream Quest One Poetry & Writing Contest—Summer 2012 is open to anyone who loves expressing innermost thoughts and feelings into the beautiful art of poetry or writing a short story that is worth telling everyone. And welcome to all who have the ability to dream. Write a poem or short story for a chance to win cash prizes. All works must be original. For details, visit [www.dreamquestone.com](http://www.dreamquestone.com)

More information will appear in May *WritersTalk*.

## Los Gatos declares April as National Poetry Month

by Victoria M. Johnson

Poetry Los Gatos, a group lead by Parthenia M. Hicks, the Poet Laureate of Los Gatos, presents a variety of events throughout the month of April. From an Open Mic reading, to a Photography Ekphrasis event, to a Poetry Movie Night featuring the film *Il Postino* and the poetry of Pablo Neruda. The events are free and open to the public. For more information visit the Poet Laureate web page at [www.losgatosca.gov/index.aspx?NID=1704](http://www.losgatosca.gov/index.aspx?NID=1704)

**WT**

## WRITERSTALK Challenge

### What is it?

Twice a year, in February and August, awards are given to contributors to *WritersTalk*. You need take no special steps to enter this competition; if your piece in one of the designated genres is published in *WritersTalk*, you are a contestant in the Challenge.\*

### Genres

Fiction, 500 – 1500 words  
Memoir, 500 – 1200 words  
Essay/Nonfiction, 500 – 1200 words  
Poetry

### Judging Periods

January 16 through July 15  
July 16 through January 15

### Prizes

One winner will be selected from each of the eligible genres. Each winner will be awarded a cash prize of \$40.

### Judging

Judging will be done by *WritersTalk* contributing editors and other Club members whom the contributing editors may ask to assist.

\* Eligibility for the *WritersTalk* Challenge is limited to members of the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club; judges may not judge in any category in which they have an entry. **WT**



## Directory of Experts

*Do you have specialized knowledge that might help a writer bring authentic detail to a scene? Send a message to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com) and we will add your listing to our directory of experts.*

### **Astronomy, History of Astronomy**

Bob Garfinkle [ragarf@earthlink.net](mailto:ragarf@earthlink.net)

### **Banking**

Pam Oliver-Lyons [polpap@prodigy.net](mailto:polpap@prodigy.net)

### **Character Development**

ArLyne Diamond, Ph.D.

[ArLyne@DiamondAssociates.net](mailto:ArLyne@DiamondAssociates.net)

### **Counseling/John Steinbeck**

Dr. Audry L. Lynch

[glynch0001@comcast.net](mailto:glynch0001@comcast.net)

### **Engineering: Mechanical,**

### **Aero, Aerospace**

Jerry Mulenburg

[geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net)

### **Growing Great Characters from the Ground Up**

Martha Engber [marthaengber.com](mailto:marthaengber.com)

### **Hiking, Backpacking, Scuba, Bicycling, Classic Cars, Running**

Rick Deutsch

[MrHalfDome@gmail.com](mailto:MrHalfDome@gmail.com); 408-888-4752

### **Hospital and Nursing Environment**

Maureen Griswold

[maureengriswold@sbcglobal.net](mailto:maureengriswold@sbcglobal.net)

### **Internal Medicine/Addiction Disorder/ Psychology**

Dave Breithaupt [dlbmlb@comcast.net](mailto:dlbmlb@comcast.net)

### **Marketing and Management**

Suzy Paluzzi, MBA [jomarch06@yahoo.com](mailto:jomarch06@yahoo.com)

### **Mathematics: Teaching and History/Fibonacci Sequence**

Marjorie Johnson

[marjohnson89@earthlink.net](mailto:marjohnson89@earthlink.net)

### **Real Estate, Horses, Remodeling,**

### **Southwest History**

Reed Stevens

[reedstevens@earthlink.net](mailto:reedstevens@earthlink.net); 408-374-1591

### **Profile Writing**

Susan Mueller [susan\\_mueller@yahoo.com](mailto:susan_mueller@yahoo.com)

### **Teaching and the Arts**

Betty Auchard [Btauchard@aol.com](mailto:Btauchard@aol.com)

### **Telecommunications Technology**

Allan Cobb [allancobb@computer.org](mailto:allancobb@computer.org)

### **Television Production**

Woody Horn 408-266-7040

### **Thanatologist: Counseling for Death, Dying, and Bereavement**

Susan Salluce [susansalluce@yahoo.com](mailto:susansalluce@yahoo.com)

## CWC Around the Bay

These are published meeting locations and times for other CWC branches in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. If you're thinking about attending one of their meetings, be sure to check the website first for details.

**Berkeley:** 1:30 third Sundays, Oakland Public Library Main Branch. [cwc-berkeley.com](http://cwc-berkeley.com)

**Central Coast:** 5:30 third Tuesdays, Bay Park Hotel, 1425 Munras Avenue, Monterey. [centralcoastwriters.org](http://centralcoastwriters.org)

**Fremont:** 2:00 fourth Saturdays at DeVry University, 6600 Dumbarton Circle, Room 204, Fremont. [cwc-fremontareawriters.org](http://cwc-fremontareawriters.org)

**Marin:** 2:00 fourth Sundays, Book Passage in Corte Madera. [cwcmarinwriters.com](http://cwcmarinwriters.com)

**Mount Diablo:** 11:30 second Saturdays, Hungry Hunter, 3201 Mount Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette. [mtdiablowriters.org](http://mtdiablowriters.org)

**Redwood:** 3:00 first Sundays at Copperfield's Books, 2316 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. [redwoodwriters.org](http://redwoodwriters.org)

**Tri-Valley:** 11:30 third Saturdays, Oasis Grille, 780 Main Street, Pleasanton. [trivalleywriters.com](http://trivalleywriters.com)

**Sacramento:** 11:00 third Saturdays, Luau Garden Chinese Buffet, 1890 Arden Way, Sacramento. [sacramento-writers.org](http://sacramento-writers.org)

**San Francisco/Peninsula:** 10:00 third Saturdays, Belmont Library, 1110 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont. [sfpeninsulawriters.com](http://sfpeninsulawriters.com)

## Conferences and Workshops

### **Redwood Writers Conference April 28**

*by Sandy Baker*

Talented authors, cutting edge ebook distributors, and savvy literary agents will help beginning and veteran writers take the next step in their craft at the Redwood Writer's "Next Step" Writing Conference April 28 in Santa Rosa.

The conference will feature keynote speaker David Corbett, one of America's most highly praised mystery and thriller writers; Mark Coker, the founder of ebook distributor Smashwords; Joel Friedlander, whose website, [thebookdesigner.com](http://thebookdesigner.com), helps authors navigate the world of book design; agents Laurie McLean of Larsen-Pomada Literary Agents and Verna Dreisbach of Dreisbach Literary Management; and a luncheon panel will share ways to "Leap into Tomorrow's Publishing."

For registration and more information, go to [www.redwoodwriters.org](http://www.redwoodwriters.org).

### **Fremont Area Writers Agents and Producers Day**

Meet with Literary Agents Michael Larsen, Elizabeth Pomada, and Mary Kole; Film Producers Debbie Brubaker and Lloyd Silverman; Developmental Editors Alan Rinzler and Charlotte Cook; Screenplay Consultant, Jon James Miller; and Writer's Coaches Barbara Brooker and Susanne Lakin.

Agents and Producers Day is June 30, 2012, 10:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., at Hyatt Place, 3101 West Warren Avenue, Fremont. \$55 for Members, \$65 for Non-Members. Please contact Geraldine Solon at [gsolon082007@gmail.com](mailto:gsolon082007@gmail.com)

Deadline: May 1, 2012.

### **Children's Book Writers Workshop**

This summer, July 9 – 13, we will present the tenth Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop in the exquisite Oregon coast town of Oceanside.

Summer Workshop 2012 promises to be our best yet. The instructors for the workshop include five established children's book authors specializing in YA and middle school novels, picture books, non-fiction, magazine pieces, and poetry; two children's book editors; and one children's book agent.

More and more of our students are publishing and signing with agents. If you are ambitious to publish a children's book (or simply adore children's books) this is the workshop for you. It will allow you to connect directly with authors, editors, and agents who are active in the children's book business. The course is available for graduate credit. For more information, visit our website at [www.occbww.com](http://www.occbww.com)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 SBW Board meeting 7:30p	5	6 7:30p Open mic Barnes & Noble Almaden, San Jose	7
8	9	10 6:00p Regular Dinner Meeting, Outlook Inn Sunnyvale	11	12	13	14
15 Deadline <i>WritersTalk</i>	16	17	18	19	20 7:30p Open mic Barnes & Noble Pruneyard, Campbell	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	April 2012				
Future Flashes						
May 8 regular meeting						

## Ongoing Open Critique Groups

### Our Voices

Meets in Santa Clara, every other Thursday 7:15 p.m. Genres: Fiction, nontechnical non-fiction, memoir. Contact: Dave LaRoche – dalaroche@comcast.net

### Valley Writers

Meets at Valley Village Retirement Center in Santa Clara, Mondays 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Contact: Marjorie Johnson – marjohnson89@earthlink.net

### Note:

Come to a South Bay Writers dinner meeting to look for others who may want to form a critique group in your genre.

### Your ad could go here

\$7 per column inch for SBW members

\$10 per inch for nonmembers

## Stay Informed

Sign up for the SBW email list to receive meeting and event announcements. [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com)

## Members Books

Go to [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com) to see the members' gallery and members books. Add your book to our website.

## South Bay Writers Anthology



\$10

At the meeting.

On the website.

[southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com)

## Poetry Readings

### Poets@Play

Second Sundays: Check for times  
Markham House History Park  
1650 Senter Rd., San Jose

### Poetry Center San Jose

Willow Glen Library  
3rd Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.  
1157 Minnesota Ave., San Jose

Free and open to the public. For more information, contact Dennis Noren at [norcamp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:norcamp@sbcglobal.net)



## South Bay Writers Open Mic

Read from your own work, from your favorite authors, or just come to listen. See calendar for schedule.

Contact Bill Baldwin (408) 730-9622 or email [WABaldwin@aol.com](mailto:WABaldwin@aol.com)



## California Writers Club

South Bay Branch

P.O. Box 3254

Santa Clara, CA 95055

[www.southbaywriters.com](http://www.southbaywriters.com)

## MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

**Next Monthly Meeting**  
**Tuesday, April 10, 6:00 p.m.**

Lookout Inn  
605 Macara Avenue, Sunnyvale  
At the Sunnyvale Golf Course

**Fred Setterberg:**  
**Paving Memory Lane**

*WritersTalk* deadline is always  
the 15th of the month.

