

## Things to Do in Oakland When You're Alive

BY STEPHANIE YOUNG

There are certain things you shouldn't miss while you're in the Bay Area, including Moe's Books in Berkeley, the Camera Obscura in San Francisco, and the city of Oakland.

The first Oakland stop is Mama Buzz Café, where *Boog City* will host a West Coast reading on Thurs., Sept. 4. Mama Buzz is the place to get your own pair of "Oakland Booty" panties, or rent a book for five dollars every first and third Saturday. Owned

**Lake Merritt has a wire dome for injured birds that was built by Buckminster Fuller**

and operated by Jen Loy, the editor-in-chief and webmistress of local magazine *Kitchen Sink*, Mama Buzz is a good example of the prototypical Oakland arts space, serving up a multitude of pleasures—sandwiches, art exhibits, bubbly drinks, poetry readings, wine, fashion shows, new music—often you can get them all in the same place or within a three-block radius of each other. Oakland mayor Jerry Brown may not have made good on his promise to support the arts in Oakland, but the city's artists are doing their best to support each other.

Just around the corner from Mama Buzz is 21 Grand, where the calendar includes a bi-monthly poetry reading series curated by those mysterious New Brutalists, accordion festivals, performances by PornOrchestra (a group that performs live, improvised, and composed scores to pornographic films), and the famous Technomania Circus, which I am officially dubbing the "New Vaudevilleists."

It's not just coffee shops and arts spaces doing double duty in Oakland. U-Turn, a used and new clothing store, produces fashion shows for local designers and spoken word events on a small stage near their dressing rooms. Plus, I got three items for \$10 there last month: one pink, red, and blue half-shirt, red shoes from BCBG's last interesting season, and a pair of Navy-issue bell bottom jeans.

Where, you may be asking yourself, will I eat when I'm in Oakland? You will eat everywhere! But not without getting your exercise first. Lake Merritt, originally a tidal marsh connected to the bay, became The Lake when it was dammed in the late 1800's. They call it the Jewel of Oakland, and while you can people-watch



Neldam's Danish Bakery, Oakland, 2003.

Staci Foley Marengo photo

or saunter around its circumference, you can also observe lawn bowling, many geese, a string of lights that comes on at sunset, and a wire dome for injured birds, built by Buckminster Fuller. Fairyland, at the northwest tip of the lake, is the place to take kids if you've got them, and is rumored to have been the inspiration for Disneyland.

Also within walking distance of the lake are The Grand Lake Theater and The Parkway. Grand Lake opened in 1926, and the Wurlitzer organ that once accompanied silent films still plays before Friday- and Saturday-night shows. (The Paramount also shows movies during its

Friday-night summer series, with an organ, a cartoon, and various newsreels preceding classics like *The Bride of Frankenstein*, *The French Connection*, or *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*.) The Parkway is a second-run movie house with couches, pizza, and beer; it also shows local filmmakers' movies, Oakland Raiders games during football season, and a regular series of noir and cult films.

But you still haven't eaten ... I apologize ... as I can't possibly describe or list all the food in Oakland, see my attempt at a list below, including late night food. If it's on my list, it's also affordable. You definitely shouldn't miss

Everett & Jones' new flagship BBQ location near Jack London Square, pastries or cake from Neldam's Danish Bakery (Neldam's is 75 years old!), Pho 84 for Vietnamese downtown, or La Estrellita for Mexican.

After you eat, if you're tired of all that poetry, Taylor Brady and others recommend the Wednesday night Oakland A's home games, where tickets for the upper deck are \$1 or \$2 and the hot dogs are \$1.

I've still missed so much! Other areas to explore: Chinatown, Fruitvale, Laurel Glen, the Oakland main library, De Lauer's newsstand at 13th & Broadway ...

## Stephanie Says Where to Go in Oakland

### Bars

*The Alley*  
3325 Grand Ave., (510) 444-8505  
(Classic Oakland: Ron Dibble on piano)

*Geo Kayes*  
4044 Broadway, (510) 547-9374  
(Last time I checked, this was an area bar you could still smoke in)

*Kingman's Lucky Lounge*  
3332 Grand Ave., (510) 465-5464

*The Oasis Restaurant and Bar*  
135 12th St.,  
(510) 763-0404

*Radio*  
435 13th St., off Broadway  
(510) 451-2889

*Ruby Room*  
132 14th St., (510) 444-7224

### Baseball • Sports • Yoga

*Mosswood Park*  
MacArthur Blvd. and Broadway  
(For daily pickup soccer and basketball games, or that big field, ideal for Frisbee.)

*Oakland A's*  
www.oaklandathletics.com, (510) 638-4900

*Piedmont Yoga Studio*  
www.piedmontyoga.com  
3966 Piedmont Ave., (510) 652-3336

### Books

*Pendragon*  
5560 College Ave. at Ocean View,  
(510) 652-6259. (Used & new)

*Spectator Used Books*  
4163 Piedmont Ave., (510) 653-7300 (Used)

*Walden Pond Books*  
www.waldenpondbooks.com

### Del Ray Cross

San Francisco

the very idea

as writers become more experimental their finest poetry contains some sort of narrative element. the work generally hovers but they are experimental. a moving fantastic wonderful piece full of being choked to death. experimental and sensuous feminist poetry. a precursor to the modern novel. generously sprinkled with narrative tidbits and massive amounts of keyword poetry. lots of poems about murderers. regional and psychological fiction. novels dry humor drama and poetry illustrative of software engineering. more elements of character perform activity critical writing metaphor debates on mythology characterization dialogue memory imagery micro fictions.

3316 Grand Ave., (510) 832-4438  
(Mostly used, some new)

### Clothes

*Crossroads Trading Co.*  
5636 College Ave., bet. Ocean View and Keith/Shafter, (510) 420-5849

*Salvation Army*  
601 Webster, (510) 451-4514

*U-Turn Used Clothing*  
5241 Broadway at College Ave.

### Food

*Arizmendi Oakland*  
3265 Lakeshore Ave., (510) 268-8849  
(Co-op bakery, pizza)

*Boogie Woogie Bagel Boy*  
4301 Piedmont Ave., (510) 654-5211

*Everett & Jones BBQ*  
126 Broadway, near Jack London Sq.,  
(510) 663-2350

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# BOOG CITY

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# EDIT

## Oakland and Me

This is an email I sent earlier this summer to the poet Stephanie Young when she requested that people send her their reflections of Oakland.

Hi Stephanie,

So here's what I can tell u about Oakland and me:

I made my first trip out west in July of 1975 for my cousin Mark's bar mitzvah. My mom is one of six children—three boys, three girls—four of whom moved out west, meaning I have a good 60 or so relatives throughout Northern California, from Berkeley to Fremont, San Francisco to Oakland, and points in between.

I've been a big baseball fan since 1973, when I was six going on seven, and really wanted to see a ballgame when I was out in California that first time. Now, I hit ballparks on every trip I make, only I've added poetry readings and good used bookstores, too.

My parents passed up a day-trip to the Napa Valley and instead took me to what was then the Oakland Alameda County Coliseum (it's now the corporate-monikered Network Associates Coliseum) to see the A's, the three-time defending World Series champs, battle the Baltimore Orioles. It was T-shirt Day, but only the first 20,000 fans got a T-shirt, and I wasn't in

the lucky bunch, which made this eight-and-a-half year-old damn sad. It was a good game, though, with Jim Palmer starting for the O's and being run over by the Swingin' A's.

My only other Oakland tale worth a damn was in 1995, 20 years later, when my then girlfriend, poet Candace Walsh, and I stayed with Kimi Sugioka, a poet I knew from Boulder, Colo. I got real excited that Oakland was right next door to Albany, because I had lived and studied in Albany, New York.

Kimi took us to some neighborhood bar, which I think might have even been called the Albany Pub (Candace would later surprise me with a T-shirt from the place, which had a dog on it, too). In there, Kimi introduced us to a local who claimed to be Woody Guthrie's son Joady, and he regaled us with tales of growing up Guthrie.

The next day we saw Kimi perform as one part of the all-female poetry performance troupe Bloodtest, which also featured Angela Coon, who Chris Funkhouser's We Press, originally out of Santa Cruz, had once published. Then we went to some local Chinese restaurant and all wrote an exquisite corpse.

Now, Oakland means my cousins Sharon and Jim's nifty place up in the hills that Jim designed and built himself. I walk a real winding road down from there to get to the neighborhood bookstores, Pendragon and Diesel, or grab the BART to Berkeley or S.F.

Or, Oakland is my buddy Trane DeVore's apartment downtown, with its one Sleater-Kinney disc I don't own, his cozy kitchen, and a neighborhood Chinese restaurant where it feels like we're all sharing one table, the way it should be.

Letters to the Editor:

letters@boogcity.com

## Where to Find

# BOOG CITY

## The East Village

Acme

Alt 137

alt.coffee

Angelika Theater

Anthology Film Archives

Bluestockings

Bowery Poetry Club

Cafe Pick Me Up

CBGB's

CB's 313 Gallery

Cedar Tavern

C-Note

Continental

Lakeside Lounge

Life Cafe

Living Room

Mission Cafe

Nuyorican Poets Cafe

The Pink Pony

Religious Sex

See Hear

Shakespeare & Co.

St. Mark's Books

St. Mark's Church

Tonic

Tower Video

## Also Available In

### Manhattan

ACA Galleries

Here

Hotel Chelsea

Poets House

Revolution Books

### Williamsburg

Clovis Press

Earwax

L Cafe

L Cafe To Go

Sideshow Gallery

Spoonbill & Sugartown

Supercore Cafe

### Philadelphia

Kelly's Writers House

The Khyber

LaTazza



"Dreams and Memories:

The Art of Romare Bearden (1911-1988)"

Sept. 20-Nov. 1, 2003

Reception and book signing Sat., Sept. 20, 4 p.m.-6 p.m., free

with Myron Schwartzman, author of

Romare Bearden: His Life and Art and

Bunch Washington, author of Romare Bearden: Prevalence of Ritual

The opening will be a benefit for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

ACA Galleries 529 W.20th St., 5th Flr.

(bet. 10th and 11th avenues)

212-206-8080 • www.acagalleries.com

# Join the Community Supported Agriculture Movement

## BY GREG FUCHS

Thinking of the places I've lived reminds me of food. What we cooked, the restaurants I would take friends who were visiting to, the joints that had affordable meals made especially delicious by poverty, and the places we shopped for drinks, meat, treats, and vegetables. Taste and smell are inextricably linked to memory.

Food, like language, carries culture through the passages of time, even those dark times full of totalitarian rule, sickness, suspicion, upheaval, wandering, and war. Food defines our identities both defiantly as well as traditionally.

When I cook my grandmother Neva's chicken and okra gumbo with boiled eggs it is a way of carrying on our family traditions. My mother tells me that Neva added the eggs to extend their already stretched meat budget.

Cooking is also a way of asserting and preserving one's culture in spite of apparent repression. United States rule may have deemed French culture obsolete, but the people in the Louisiana countryside proved not as easily disposable as public policy.

New Orleans is red beans and rice every Monday, poor boy sandwiches for lunch, boiled crawfish on Good Friday, coffee sno-balls throughout the summer. Madrid is cheese, bread, and wine bought from the grocery store and eaten in Retiro Park, papas fritas in a touristy side street, and apple wine poured into the mouth from a long-spouted glass pitcher held at arm's length above the head. Albuquerque is corn chowder with green chiles, revered like a conquistador does gold, or, after waking from a long Sunday hangover caused by too much night at One-Eyed Jack's saloon, carne adovado at the twin restaurants in the Sandia foothills.

I lived in San Francisco for three years in the early 1990s. I cannot think of my time there without thinking of burritos. Each taquería had its own ambience and style, yet all Northern California burritos share a freshness of ingredients that far surpasses any I have ever eaten anywhere in the Southwest—including Albuquerque, Dallas, Houston, and Los Angeles. The

taquerías there cannot help but be delicious, because the produce in California is more plentiful than anywhere in the world.

There are prices to be paid for the west coast bounty that I enjoyed. This price is hidden inside the seductive berry or the luscious tomato. It is the cost of agribusiness. We are gambling the future sustainability of the earth for cheap abundance today. To paraphrase the Global Resource Action Center on the Environment: in a system concerned only with maximizing profit and efficiency,

animals are nothing more than production units, and workers a cost of production.

Ironically, in New York, the epicenter of mechanical production, the most anti-idyllic city in North America, we have an opportunity to not only defy agribusiness but to create some good memories. Join the community supported agriculture movement, a partnership between consumers, farmers, and community organizations.

This year I joined the Open Center Blooming Hill Farm CSA. I

paid Guy Jones of Blooming Farms \$360 in April. For 22 weeks, June through November, I receive a weekly mess of delicious organic produce. Jones does not even use organic pesticides. When we met he said, "The only thing that touches my food is rain."

There are 24 CSA organizations in New York, from Washington Heights to Coney Island.

To join a CSA, contact: Just Food, P.O. Box 20444, Greeley Square Street, N.Y., NY 10001; (212) 645-9880; www.justfood.org

*For 22 weeks, June through November, I receive a weekly mess of delicious organic produce.*

## Eating Well on a Lousy But Steady Income: Caracas Arepa Bar

### BY NANCY SEEWALD

I wish the **Caracas Arepa Bar** (91 E.7th St., 212-228-5062) were closer to the Financial District where I work. Actually, I wish the weather wasn't so goddamn hot and humid, so I could jump on the 6 train, sweat-free, and head up to the East Village for a lunch respite, away from the awful lunch-hour bustle of the cubicle class and the heavy machinery that is constantly tearing up the streets down here.

I could escape from the abysmal food scene, which consists mainly of murky, suspiciously spacious delis serving low quality bulk salad ingredients from a trough. Or the too filling, seven- to eight-dollar sandwiches sold to us captive workers throughout Midtown and Lower Manhattan who crave fresh ingredients.

I went to the Arepa Bar at the suggestion of a friend who used to live in Caracas. To the best of her knowledge, bringing the arepa—which is ubiquitous in Venezuela—to New York City had never been done before, at least not in the East Village. Since the tiny storefront has only about five tables, we went fairly early on a Friday night to avoid the crowds, and with a bottle of wine in hand (the BYO policy saves you lots of money!).

The lovely-looking Venezuelan waiter was quick with the corkscrew and the menu. About half the tables were full, and most of the customers were speaking Spanish. We ordered a basket of tequenos, which are a sort of Venezuelan mozzarella stick, and three arepas: Reina Pepiada, De Pabellon, and De Guasacaca.

The tequenos arrived as appetizers, and were delicious—

worlds apart from the greasy and overwhelming cheesiness of mozzarella sticks. The cheese, a Latin American variety, is encased in a small, crispy wheat flour shell. Break them in half and pour the hot sauce, which is already on the table, into each piece. Wonderfully, they are not greasy yet could satisfy any hangover-induced greasy cheese craving.

*The arepas arrived one at a time, since the cook makes them all to order.*

The arepas, warm cornmeal pockets stuffed with various cold ingredients, arrived one at a time, since the cook makes them all to order. The first, Reina Pepiada, a chicken salad with avocado sauce, was great. The De Pabellon—shredded meat, black beans, and plantain—is a bit more exotic and also delicious. The only one that didn't please was the De Guasacaca, a Venezuelan guacamole with cheese. It was too salty and intense, and my dinner companion, as well as a friendly Venezuelan couple sitting next to us, told me that Guasacaca is typically used as a sauce for meat.

I attempted to eat the arepas with a fork and knife, because

I have learned that even a slice of pizza can be rendered gourmet with a fork, knife, and a bottle of wine.

But once I picked it up and ate it like a sandwich, I realized that the contrast between the thin, crispy exterior and savory fillings could not be fully appreciated when dissected with utensils.

There are also plenty of options for vegetarians, including three arepas filled with different cheeses, a vegetable and cheese arepa, and a vegan one with mushrooms and tofu. There are also a couple of yuppified varieties which I doubt are served in Caracas, such as the arepa with cheese, tomatoes, basil, olive oil, and balsamic vinegar.

After the tequenos and the equivalent of one arepa each, we decided to take the remaining two halves (we had finished the Reina Pepiada) to go, so we would have room for dessert. The waiter told me that the desserts on offer that night were the arroz con leche and the tres leches, a "milky cake," as the menu translates. I opted for the latter and it was heavenly. It provided all the comfort of a bread pudding, with a cinnamon flavor and meringue on top. Get it. I'm still fantasizing about it.

The cheapest arepa on the menu, at \$2.25, is plain with butter or nata, a Venezuelan sour cream. The Reina Pepiada cost \$3.50, and is absolutely enough for lunch, a snack, or even a small dinner, depending on your appetite. If you go for dinner try a few different things. Our total bill came to thirty dollars, with tip. Oh, and for the New Yorker seeking a respite from the heat, the Caracas Arepa Bar is air-conditioned.

### YOUNG *from page 1*

**Gaylord's Café**  
4150 Piedmont Ave., (510) 658-2877  
(Coffee and ice cream since 1976. Open daily 'til midnight. Often voted best place to meet people.)

**Genova Delicatessen**  
5095 Telegraph Ave., (510) 652-7401

**Grand Lake Oakland Farmer's Market**  
Grand Ave. and Lakepark Way across from Grand Lake Theater, every Sat. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

**La Estrellita Cafe & Bar**  
446 East 12th St., (510) 465-7188  
(A's Fan Radio, www.asfanradio.com, broadcasts live from La Estrellita every Thursday night from 9:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.)

**Neldam's Danish Bakery**  
3401 Telegraph Ave., (510) 658-1967

**Oakland Grill**

301 Franklin St., near Jack London Sq., (510) 835-1176 (Inexpensive breakfast)

**Pho 84**  
354 17th St., (510) 832-1338

**Taqueria San Jose**  
3433 International Blvd., (510) 533-5748

**Tin's Tea House**  
701 Webster St., (510) 832-7661  
(Downtown Oakland, excellent Dim Sum, inexpensive)

#### Fountain Pen and Stationery Needs

**Piedmont Stationers**  
4171 Piedmont Ave., (510) 655-2375

#### History • Museums

**Black Panther Tours**  
www.blackpanthertours.com, (510) 986-0660  
Tours of area Black Panther historical sites begin at the West Oakland Public Library at 18th and Adeline and cost \$20 in advance.

**Oakland Museum of California**  
www.museumca.org  
1000 Oak St., at 10th St., (510) 238-2200  
(Second Sundays are free!)

#### Late Night Dining

**Koryo Sushi**  
4390 Telegraph Ave., (510) 594-0661

**Merritt Restaurant & Bakery**  
203 East 18th St., (510) 444-8680

**Szechuan Restaurant**  
366 8th St., (510) 835-7878  
(Get the onion cakes)

#### Movies

**Grand Lake Theatre**  
www.renaissancerialto.com  
3200 Grand Ave., (510) 452-3556

**The Paramount**  
www.paramounttheatre.com  
2025 Broadway, (510) 465-6400

**The Parkway**  
www.picturepubpizza.com  
1834 Park Blvd., (510) 814-2400

#### Poetry • Music • Galleries

**Mama Buzz Café**  
www.mamabuzzcafe.com  
2318 Telegraph Ave. at 23rd St., (510) 465-4073

**Oakland Box Theater**  
www.oaklandbox.com  
1928 Telegraph Ave., (510) 451.1932

**Stork Club**  
www.storkcluboakland.com  
2330 Telegraph Ave., (510) 444-6174  
(Rock and Roll Oakland)

**The Temescal Arts Center**  
511 48th St., (510) 923-1074

**21 Grand**  
www.21grand.org  
449B 23rd St., (510) 44 GRAND

# Stephanie Young

Oakland

## ***Sweet, Bid Me Hold My Tongue, For In This Rapture I Will Surely Speak The Thing I Shall Repent***

How bad is it, in the morning  
folded into quarters in the pocket of my favorite pants  
a slight or passing regret. An engine  
unexpectedly at rest, keeper of accounts—  
the mouth, as I have described  
I got it bad  
in the morning, my hips very tight  
but don't get me wronged. I computed the sun's true bearing, swore  
an oath declaring innocence: I am an original Californian  
to go to the trees for hunting clouds, a tempest in the cinerama dome.  
I was a shop girl you compromised—  
me, I will never be a shop girl again. I am a calculating machine  
to be learned by heart to steer the ship, I have been persuaded  
against the main stem, I, having an internal cavity.  
Which includes pity for the entertainment  
for it is irresistible to behave in a certain way despite one's conscious wish.  
Such as cleanliness, vile concentration of straight lines, vault of the sky,  
I pressed my face into the pillow to conceal the sound of sobbing  
for when I'll not have hands but polished silver models.

# Eileen Tabios

St. Helena, CA

## ***Tincture***

(Conjurations #4-13)

tinkering with the sky

harvest birthing waves of long-haired dancers (San Ildefonso, 2002)

heat bronzes kiva steps

turquoise hem trawls dirt for pieces of the sun masquerading as corn kernels

no wonder, when she lowers vision, she looks "literally shattered"

"Clouds play a larger role than demarcating spatial perspective: Unchain the narrative!"

children behave like windchimes

ebony-capped women equal butterflies

all humans comprise The Tribe

a damp cheek inexplicable yet, like crème suede boots, belonging

Oh! this intimacy with a catch of breath

And Adrienne notes that quitting ballet at sixteen is to become permanently haunted\*

And, despite cheekbones like Siberian steppes, \_\_\_\_\_\*

And "one could always look forward to reincarnation"\*

And CLANG!

And \_\_\_\_\_

And \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ And

(\*—after Adrienne Sharp's "The Brahmins")

# BAY AREA

## Lake Merritt, Oakland 2003.

Andrew Nevin Rado photo



## **Taylor Brady San Francisco You Lose More Slowly**

What's left of a rough night  
is what we dream about the dream  
next morning Tanya says of ghosts  
in marine fog I guess they're ghosts  
with guns they want to take us  
back an hour or two. Children too,  
their wheels and the little wagon  
cling in ridges of a fingerprint.  
When you think of gravity this way  
to overflowing in another episode  
which is to say I knew, she says,  
faces in the street would be what came  
to me at night because the titles  
in the dream spelled out part  
two of three. That part was the worst.  
The very worst. Well, that and you  
still whimpering fantastic mammal things.

## **James Meetze Oakland from Serenades**

We have nothing here, that we have all but obliquities  
from which we garner an imperceptible truth.  
That is truth in nature as in how we behave  
because all else is said and done.  
We make transparent what we feel as it is natural—  
as the sky is particularly blue—to disclose the facts  
of checkered, as you call them, pasts.  
You say coy as ghosts of summer in what little shade.  
I say why not be furious at last  
from all angles at once.  
We have spectacular positions at each window  
for the streets to see if not too hurried to look.  
We are parenthetically nouveaux.  
Where in truth resides an ability to let go of  
jealousies  
inherent in newness.  
We are everything is fine.  
The slender world a bed, love, breeze in the morning  
a place to rest our heads.  
Have I told you I want to make silence a city  
in which to live and write without sirens or  
drunkenness?  
I say silence is never completely quiet but enough so  
to speak softly and be heard.  
You say to sing softly is to carry the big burden of  
song.  
Lights of things we have or things we have  
in light of the obdurate summer.

# REA



## Chris Stroffolino

San Francisco

### ***B & D Is Not For Breakfast and Dinner Anymore***

Living off my mother in death  
but not in an economic way  
(though she tried to soften the dad-blow)  
to give nothing may be to give hunger  
and they say the dad gives better  
or that yearning's ambition  
to keep the gift in its place  
"it's your own fault for being  
so uncompromising"  
that she has predisposed me  
to health and abuse  
and what seems mismanagement in March  
by June may be washed judge-clean  
though the standards whose vices  
we're out of synch with  
can no longer safely be equated  
with the father she gave as a scapegoat  
to be dishonored by all but the silence  
mercy could mercenary  
in her infinite ends of becoming  
if words be inappropriate to what they approximate

## Joseph Lease

Oakland

### ***Free Again***

When I can't sleep I am full of red buds and torn curtains and shiny cars parked in a lot. My lower-middle class manners tear through my upper-middle class manners: I stared at braided colors in water while my peers figured out the art of the deal. I was (I wanted to be) a Midwestern boy with a disco in my eyes—Chicago Jew, greengolden suburb Jew, son of a Coney Island Jew. When I drank I got punched up by luminous waves of anger. I thought I had to choose between winning in New York and being a good person. I'm not a good person: a good person doesn't talk about himself—or so good people tell me. What is our country. Did it start as blank, as blank blank, as blank blank blank. I would love to fly to Vegas for the punk festival—we aren't the first culture to "monetize relationships"—force steel splintering force breathing moisture in the air: the city dissolves, one long story of corruption: USA means the outer miracle kills the inner miracle: history has to live with what was here: no images no lightning no letters of flame: leaves move clouds move money moves night pushes through the money—

## Donna de la Perrière

Oakland

### ***Risen***

*How one finally connects the world*

in the new body ryder clouds twist the moon into torsos legs arms heels  
I follow my mother around the house  
I go into the woods  
(or do) (or go)  
the house is not restful  
is not part of me  
(when I said the whole universe I meant this room)  
nature's logic knocks the shit out of you  
(I meant you get lost)  
several minutes of anything physical  
(I meant no one can leave)

## Delia Tramontina

San Francisco

### ***from A More Coherent Morning***

Chapter 1

My light bulb just went out and I think it's about the wind. I think it's like the wind oozing through the instrument of my decaying windowpane the way my grandfather use to play the tops of the glass orange soda bottles. I'm not being metaphorical. If I spend all my groggy time recording dreams I'll never be sleepy enough to say something quirky. My arm hurts and when I'm tired I rhyme unconsciously. I don't remember the rest of my dreams. They escaped, knowing I'd write them down this morning, like a butterfly tacked to whatever it is they tack butterflies to. There is something dreamlike about the half-glow of a room with a missing light bulb. I wonder if my stomach growls because it's eating itself. These concrete walls are freezing and it's July outside.

## Catherine Meng

Berkeley

### ***[First Swim]***

[I knock around the building]  
[Not quick enough to make fists]

[Now I am outside] [Fog making the day slow]

[Heart rate slow from ten years of waiting] [Concrete] [Concrete] [Concrete]  
[Concrete-slow] [Beating with heat absorbed]

[What passes through the cover of clouds] [Yet

there is no warmth here] [There is a wall to turn from]

[The head is full of many shiny fish sides] [Flayed aside  
their head & bones]

[We say, "fish"] [Then we say, "fish"]

[The hands are numb] [The genitals & tongue are swollen]

[A hand has taken up my face] [For this

I apologize] [I turn from the wall into a hallway  
holding rotting cala lily] [3 cala lily rot in the long day of the hall]

[Now I am outside rewinding my memory in hopes of my car]

[Inside the fog]

[Thankfully the building has had holes cut in it  
& set with glass] [To let the light in]

[Wall to turn from toward an old reservoir] [Thin river damned to overflow its borders]  
[It houses many fish]

[We say, "fish"] [Carcass on a cutting board stripped of its flesh]  
[Then we say, "fish"] [Flash below surface]

[I am outside looking weird as I can in the mirror]  
[Where have the hands gone? The ones that tore hair from my head  
which later stopped up the drain?]

[I am outside with the tree] [To turn from the wall into]

# Meritage Presses Words into Books

BY JANE SPRAGUE

Reflecting how poets make instead of inherit language, the press is named after "meritage," a word created to describe the Bordeaux-style of wine-making that uses California-grown grapes. Meritage style combines the grapes of cabernet, cabernet franc, and merlot to create a wine characterized by robustness in flavor, bouquet, color, and body—symbolizing the passion underlying the vision of Meritage's artists.

—Eileen Tabios, publisher and editor

Poet Eileen Tabios began publishing Meritage Press (St. Helena and San Francisco, Calif.) in 2001 with the intention of publishing printed matter—including books, chapbooks, artist's books, and broadsides—while creating a performance art space to enact aesthetic explorations toward political and cultural goals.

"I like to mix up books with more intimate projects ... I think it's because poetry, ultimately, is an intimate form," says Tabios. Her vision is to have as much of a multidisciplinary approach as possible. The first publication, 2001's *Cold Water Flat*, by John Yau and Archie Rand, is a limited edition etching and text collaboration. *100 More Jokes From The Book of the Dead*, a monograph depicting an etchings-based collaboration by Yau and Rand, with an essay by Yau, followed it later that year. *100 More Jokes*

From *The Book of the Dead* garnered media coverage from *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, *Columbia University Spectator*, and *The Education Digest*, as well as exposure through Rand's exhibit work.

The following year, Meritage published *er, um*, a limited edition chapbook of 10 poems by Garrett Caples, with ink drawings by Hu Xin, and a poetry e-chapbook, *Selections From a Museum of Absences*, by Luis Francia ([www.meritagepress.com/museum.pdf](http://www.meritagepress.com/museum.pdf)), which deals with the psychological and poetic aftermath of the events of September 11th.

As a one-person publishing endeavor (with the assistance of a poet-intern), Tabios spends a year working on the production of each book. The latest Meritage book, Barry Schwabsky's *OPERA: Poems 1981-2002*, exemplifies Tabios' intent for the press, which is "to publish those who otherwise may not ever be published, a difficulty beyond the general poetry threshold difficulty. In [Schwabsky's] case, this is a poet who's been invisible in the poetry scene for over a decade, despite a brilliant start by being published in *POETRY* at age 19! *OPERA* encompasses 21 years of writing which occurred outside of any poetry scenes, having been developed mostly in private."

*OPERA* is a remarkable book. Ideas of song, language

Schwabsky twins images that resonate in the ear and on the page and pairs words with their opposites. Words are repeated, then altered, then paired again or broken apart newly, revealing other hidden/revealed aspects of the voices between this "we," grappling with the doubleness of desire and experience and their (our) shared complications. The final poem:

Clearing

Favorable moonlight  
in all directions. Don't try  
and make it real. You'll never have that  
experience  
long enough to write about. Someone else's  
voice

will have to burn with it. You keep  
starting something you don't know how to stop  
but it stops.

Schwabsky is grappling with the doubleness of love, desire, of thinking in language, emotion, and image in simultaneity, and with how to reconcile aspects of "we" among others, individuals, in the blur of longing where boundaries mesh, dissolve, break, and give way to something more: those moments of "the nothing / but desire / you've seen / I am."

The next Meritage endeavor is its new imprint, BABAYLAN, a Bisayan word that can be translated to mean "poet-priestess." "The

*'I like to mix up books with more intimate projects ... I think—it's because poetry, ultimately, is an intimate form,' says Tabios.*

play, and delicate negotiations of desire and love create poetry deft and strange—strangely beautiful—and bound with dual meanings, the piecing apart of things, of language, of the unsaid, the left out, the impossible to contain. From the title poem, "Opera":

Corrected hair. Face smooth  
as mirror. Unsurpassable song.  
Living death. Unhanded. Unhanded.  
Theatrical weeping. "He" becomes "she"  
and "you" becomes "he" and "we"  
becomes "we" becomes "we" becomes "we."  
Pears shaped like apples. Pears  
that taste like apples that taste like grapes.

Babaylans were storytellers, healers, and community leaders in the Philippines whose positions were disrupted by the invasion of Spanish colonizers over four centuries ago," says Tabios on Meritage's website. "BABAYLAN resurrects itself in the 21st century to facilitate the dissemination of Filipino literature."

Tabios plans to publish *PINOYPOETICS*, an anthology of English-language Filipino poets discussing their poetics edited by Nick Carbo, through BABAYLAN in 2004.

Meritage Press books are available through Small Press Distribution, [www.spdbooks.org](http://www.spdbooks.org), and from the publisher, [www.meritagepress.com](http://www.meritagepress.com)



Staci Foley Marengo photo

## NEW FROM PORTABLE PRESS AT YO-YO LABS

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# Some Girls Have All the Luck



BY STACEE SLEDGE

Take one tremendously talented singer/songwriter/guitarist who stepped off the always-teetering indie pedestal back in the mid-nineties, and place her smack dab in between two equally gifted musicians. The result? Some Girls, a vibrant new trio made up of Juliana Hatfield, Freda Love, and Heidi Gluck.

Some Girls traces its roots back to late-eighties Boston, when Hatfield and Love comprised two-thirds of the burgeoning scene's seminal indie rock

*Hatfield's voice has grown deeper and breathier with age, lending itself nicely to the record's inspired refashioning of the Robert Johnson classic 'Malted Milk.'*

band the Blake Babies. The jangle-pop indie darlings who carved out a sweet sound that belied a frequently dark lyrical core called it quits in 1992. But a one-off 2001 reunion reminded the two women how much they enjoyed playing together.

As tapes traveled through the post between Love's Bloomington home and Hatfield's Cambridge address, snippets of notes became full-fledged songs shimmering with potential. When they decided to meet up for demo sessions, Love's multi-instrumentalist Indianapolis friend Heidi Gluck joined in to flesh out the sound. It didn't take long to realize the chemistry and chords were there to record a full-length record.

Some Girls' debut release, *Feel It* (Koch Records), is out this month. The skillfully spare production by Love's husband Jake Smith (Mysteries of Life, Vulgar Boatmen) steps out of the way of these 11 sparkling songs, as he makes the difficult seem simple.

Hatfield has received her share of accolades over the years, but she's also taken a few critical kicks. Her confidence is at an all-time high on the band's first single, "Necessito." ("Critics with their death threats, I just drown them out.") A funky, relaxed ode to the necessity of loud music, the composition is pared down, clean, and comprised of a deceptively straightforward and catchy as hell riff, which is played over and over to winning effect.

Tape rolls sloppily into "The Prettiest Girl," an ode to a Hatfield high

school classmate who was rumored to have attempted suicide. Love's steady, buoyant beat underscores the simple chorus, while a background chant of "hey hey" lies under a layer of choppy guitar.

Every song on *Feel It* is accessible without being predictable, and a healthy handful of them are instantly catchy. You'd be hard-pressed to hear "Necessito" or "On My Back" just once and not find them running repeatedly through your head.

Hatfield's voice has grown deeper and breathier with age, lending itself nicely to the smattering of blues-influenced numbers on the record, including an inspired refashioning of the Robert Johnson classic "Malted Milk." For those who have heard Hatfield's live renditions over the years, this studio recording is a true treat, with an undercurrent of rumble and texture in her voice and Gluck's slide guitar lazily swaying throughout.

Love's songwriting skills have sharpened with this release. Sung by Hatfield, "Almost True" wouldn't sound out of place on one of Sheryl Crow's older, stronger efforts. Love has penned an instantly classic lyric, "Our love is real and almost true," while Hatfield adds a haunting

whisper during the bridge, barely audible beneath the song's surface.

With a decidedly Velvet Underground-tinged backbeat, "Launch Pad" is the lone song sung by Love on *Feel It*. Hatfield and Gluck entwine their backing vocals throughout, as the song reaches a controlled frenzy and then abruptly ends in a happy, exhausted heap.

A groove that weaves together pop, alt-country, blues, and even a fragment of funk, Some Girls' signature sound snakes through each of these tracks. Simple beats bookend unexpected turns, capturing an exact yet casual feel. There's no slick sheen here, only a truthful, organic groove.



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OPERA: Poems 1981-2002

By Barry Schwabsky

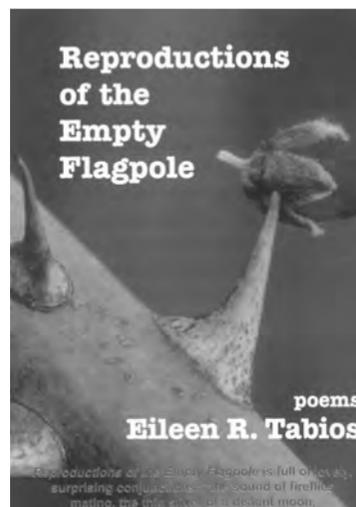
\$14.00; ISBN No.: 0970917929

Meritage Press (St. Helena & San Francisco)

www.MeritagePress.com

Each page of Schwabsky, so compressed, so lenient, so observed, keeps to an erotic variety: the experiment, the experience is all. Such poetry makes difficulty its pleasure and can never be explained away any more than love itself. But for all that, this poetry is not old-fashioned but is really wandering in the newest waters of our art.

—David Shapiro



Reproductions of the Empty Flagpole

By Eileen R. Tabios

\$12.95; ISBN No.: 0971333289

Marsh Hawk Press (New York)

www.MarshHawkPress.org

The crisp, almost scientific clarity of her syntax is relentlessly undermined by fabulous leaps from sentence to sentence, by paradox, radical juxtaposition, lurking sexual innuendo, and unpredictable narrative swerve. Hers is a poetics of social and cultural interrogation in which she succeeds in uniting what she would call "the convex with the concave."

—Forrest Gander

# NYC POETRY CALENDAR

**WEEKLY EVENTS SUNDAY**  
 2:00pm (SS) Frequency Reading Series (free)  
 3:00pm (BF) Back Fence (\$3 cover + \$3 min) Featured poets + open mike.  
 (ABC) Our Unorganized Reading (\$2) Open mike.  
 6:00pm (CSC) Cornelia Street Cafe (\$6) Featured poets.

**MONDAY**  
 6:00pm (BPC) Totally Open Poetry Slam (\$3) Sign up starts at 5:30.  
 7:00pm (B13) Bar 13 (\$5, \$4 w/student ID) Features, slams, themed reads, and always an open mike.  
 (Night) Saturn Series (\$3) Featured poets + open mike.  
 8:00pm (WS) Wabi Sabi (free) Open mike/performance with music improvised by house dj.  
 10:00pm (BPC) The O'Debra Twins "Show and Tell" (\$3)

**TUESDAY**  
 6:30pm (BPC) Roundtable Reading  
 8:00pm (MC) Muddy Cup Featured poet + open mike.  
 (Night) Saturn Series (\$3) Featured poets + open mike.  
 8:30pm (BU) Buttafly Open mike/performance.  
 9:00pm (ML) M Lounge (free) Open mike.

**WEDNESDAY**  
 6:30pm (BPC) Roundtable Reading  
 8:00pm (MC) Muddy Cup Featured poet + open mike.  
 (Night) Saturn Series (\$3) Featured poets + open mike.  
 8:30pm (BU) Buttafly Open mike/performance.  
 9:00pm (ML) M Lounge (free) Open mike.

**THURSDAY**  
 7:00pm (BCC) Brown Chocolate Cafe (\$7) Open mike.  
 (BPC) NYC-Urbana Poetry Slam (\$5) Long-running championship slam.  
 7:30pm Calliope's Corner (WRHU 88.7FM) Can also be heard online at WRHU.org.  
 8:00pm (TA) Archway (free) Open reading.  
 (KK) Kay's Cafe (\$5)  
 (VDP) Live Thursdays Open mike/performance with Kerry Brotin jazz trio.  
 10:00pm (BPC) Beatboxing and The Art of Spoken Word (\$5)

**FRIDAY**  
 6:00pm (CSC) Pink Pony West (\$6) Featured poet + open mike.  
 6:30pm (BPC) The Taylor Mead Show (\$5) (OCT) Ozzie's Poetry Night (free) Open readings.  
 10:00pm (NPC) Nuyorican Poets Cafe (\$5) Spotlight poet + slam.  
 12:00am (NPC) Nuyorican Poets Cafe (\$5) Open mike.

**SATURDAY**  
 3:00pm (TEI) The Ear Inn (free) Three Featured Poets.  
 4:00pm (BPC) "Teacher! Teacher!" (\$10) 13th, 20th and 27th only.  
 7:30pm (CI) Open Mic/Slam Competition (\$5)

**SPECIAL EVENTS**  
**1 MON**  
 8:00pm (BPC) SEMI-PRO TOOL (\$6) (CL) Largo Reading Series (free) Featured poets + open mike.  
**2 TUES**  
 5:00pm (BPC) AIDS Crisis in Africa (\$10 suggested) Poetry Marathon. 30 readers per hour.  
**3 WED**  
 7:00pm (BPC) Soft Skull Press (\$5) Sneak peek reading series.  
 9:00pm (BPC) Doveman/Selva (\$5)  
**4 THURS**  
 No Events Listed  
**5 FRI**  
 8:00pm (BPC) Theatre of a Twoheaded Calf (\$10) "The Difference Engine" by Samantha Hunt.  
 10:00pm (BPC) Simmons/Evans (\$25, \$20 advance) With Anthony Braxton Quintet at 11:15.

**6 SAT**  
 6:00pm (Tribe) Renaissance Art from Palestine  
 8:00pm (BPC) The Theatre of a Twoheaded Calf (\$10) "The Difference Engine" by Samantha Hunt.  
 10:00pm (BPC) Simmons/Evans (\$25, \$20 advance) With Anthony Braxton Quintet at 11:15.

**7 SUN**  
 1:00pm (Hal) Wordsmiths (free)  
 2:00pm (BPC) Poetry on the Bowery (\$8) (OB) Poet to Poet (\$3 + \$3 min) Featured poets + open mike.  
 4:00pm (BPC) City Lights Book Party (free) Celebrating the release of *Nine Alexandria's*.  
 4:00pm (Tribes) Readings  
 8:00pm (BPC) Theatre of a Twoheaded Calf (\$10) "The Difference Engine" by Samantha Hunt.

**8 MON**  
 8:00pm (BPC) Latino America en el Bowery (\$5)

**9 TUES**  
 7:00pm (BPC) Taylor Mali release party (free) Celebrating the release of *Conviction*.  
 (BOB) Acentos (\$5) Featured poet + open reading.  
 8:00pm (BR) BBR Reading Series Two Featured Readers.  
 10:00pm (BPC) Los Vinos (\$5)

**10 WED**  
 7:00pm (BPC) Dixon Place in the House (Church) Brooklyn Poets Circle (\$3) Featured poet + open reading.  
 8:30pm (BPC) Shaba Sher (\$6) Persian Poetry.

**11 THURS**  
 6:00pm (ACA) D.A. Levy Lives (free) Celebrating the renegade press in America.

**12 FRI**  
 5:30pm (BPC) Morris set-up Featured poet + open reading.  
 7:00pm (BPC) Butch Morris (\$15) Sets at 7:30 and 8:45.  
 11:00pm (BPC) Africa Friday

**13 SAT**  
 12:30pm (FLA) Queens International Poetry Festival (free) Featured poets.  
 1:00pm (BPC) Coalition of the Written Summit Part 1: What's in a name? Poet and Spoken Word Artists.  
 2:00pm (149) Nomad's Choir (\$3) Open reading.  
 5:00pm (Tribes) Dawoud Kringle on Sitar (\$5)  
 6:00pm (BPC) Morris set-up  
 7:00pm (BPC) Butch Morris (\$15) Sets at 7:30 and 8:45.  
 7:30pm (MM) Girlsalon Literary Night (\$7) Readings + forum for lesbian/queer writers.  
 10:00pm (BPC) Comedy Benefit

**14 SUN**  
 12:00pm (BPC) The Sparrow Follies  
 3:00pm (BPC) Benefit for New York Nights (\$5)  
 6:00pm (BPC) Morris set-up  
 (TFC) Spiral Thought (free) Featured poets + open mike.  
 7:00pm (BPC) Butch Morris (\$15) Sets at 7:30 and 8:45.

**15 MON**  
 7:00pm (BPC) First Anniversary Party Featured poets.

**16 TUES**  
 6:00pm (CSC) Poetry & Prose from the Writer's Room (\$6)  
 7:00pm (BPC) First Anniversary Party Featured poets.

**17 WED**  
 8:00pm (BPC) Starpeople

**18 THURS**  
 5:00pm (BPC) Reading New York Book Party John Tytell reading.  
 7:30pm (TNS) Poetry Society of America (\$7, \$5 students) Acclaimed/Emerging poets.  
 11:59pm (BPC) The New Soil Band \$5

**19 FRI**  
 7:30pm (LESTM) Noche Multicultural (free) Readings in English and Spanish.  
 8:00pm (BPC) Rick Shapiro  
 10:00pm (BPC) Uncle Jimmy's Dirty Basement  
 11:59pm (BPC) Basement Hang

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**20 SAT**  
 2:00pm (BPC) The Pedestal (\$5) Featured poets.  
 7:00pm (BPC) Bamboo Girl Zine 5th Annual Benefit Party  
 7:30pm (AAWW) (re)collection (\$5) Featured readers + open mike.  
 10:00pm (BPC) Uncle Jimmy's Dirty Basement

**21 SUN**  
 2:00pm (BPC) Farm Benefit Poetry Splat For Organic Eco Ruutilla.  
 4:00pm (OB) Poet to Poet (\$3 + \$3 min) Featured poets + open mike.  
 5:00pm (BPC) World of Poetry (\$5) (Tribes) NYSCA Reading (\$5)  
 7:00pm (BPC) Reincarnation All Over Again (\$10) The Lord Buckley Show.  
 9:00pm (BPC) John Kruth (CC) Chaos Club (free) Open mike.

**22 MON**  
 5:00pm (BPC) Art Wall Opening Jackie Saccaco.  
 7:30pm (BPC) High Culture (\$5) A new play by Reese Thompson.

**23 TUES**  
 7:00pm (BPC) Start Me Up (\$5) Featured poets.  
 (BOB) Acentos (\$5) Featured poet + open reading.  
 9:15pm (BPC) Hal Sirowitz  
 9:30pm (BPC) Poetry + Karaoke = Fun (\$6)

**24 WED**  
 7:00pm (BPC) Ladies on the Mic (GP) Green Pavilion (\$5) Featured poets + open mike.

**25 THURS**  
 7:00pm (BWB) Women's Poetry Jam (\$2) Featured poets.  
 11:59pm The New Soil Band \$5

**26 FRI**  
 5:00pm (CK) Open Mic (free)  
 8:00pm (BPC) Rick Shapiro  
 10:00pm (BPC) Uncle Jimmy's Dirty Basement  
 11:59pm (BPC) Basement Hang

**27 SAT**  
 1:00pm (BPC) Urban Word Youth Slam  
 6:00pm (BPC) Readings (\$5) Featuring new and recently published works.  
 7:00pm (Tribes) Lenor Von Stein  
 10:00pm (BPC) Uncle Jimmy's Dirty Basement

**28 SUN**  
 1:30pm (BPC) Skidrow Magazine Benefit (\$10) Magazine included.  
 4:00pm (BPC) Kunle Mwanga Quartet (\$10) Two sets.  
 5:00pm (Tribes) A Small Dream in Red Voice and Saxophone Duo.  
 7:00pm (BPC) Brigitte Secard's Book Party (free) For "Soulfire, the Birth of Wild Aliveness".  
 9:00pm (BPC) Patricia Dienstfrey and Brenda Hillman's Reading Party For "The Grand Permission: New Writings on Poetics and Motherhood".

**29 MON**  
 No Events Listed

**30 TUES**  
 6:30pm (BPL) Brooklyn Public Library (free) Featured poets.  
 7:00pm (BPC) Q2: Queens Too (\$5)

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