

HEALDSBURG AND BEYOND!

*Forty Writers Celebrate
a Special California
Town and Beyond*

A HEALDSBURG LITERARY GUILD BOOK



MCCAA BOOKS • SANTA ROSA



McCaa Books

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Healdsburg Literary Guild
P. O. Box 1761
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Preface

THE HEALDSBURG LITERARY GUILD is delighted to publish this new book, *Healdsburg and Beyond!—Forty Writers Celebrate a Special California Town and Beyond*. It follows a number of previous Guild publications, including *Healdsburg Alive!*, *A Day in the Life of Healdsburg*, *Present at the Creation*, *Healdsburg Haiku*, and several poetry chapbooks. The contents of this new book are the results of an open call the Guild issued last year.

The book features forty writers and poets and their fifty-two poems and seventeen short stories. It is organized into three sections.

The first section, *Healdsburg*, has poems and short stories set in Healdsburg and its environs.

The second section, *and Beyond!*, has poems and stories set, as the title implies, beyond Healdsburg's environs, although many of the pieces could best be categorized as place neutral or anywhere place. However, readers will visit several other states in the United States, and countries in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

The third section, *Literary Illuminations*, features the fifteen winning entries in a quarterly contest the Guild conducted for its members from the first quarter of 2013 through the first quarter of 2015.

Enjoy what our writers and poets have to say!

Open Mic

Jodi Hottel

One by one, we step to the mic,
worshippers of the word,
granted an audience
for four meager minutes,
a paltry container for
all we have to say.

One after another we violate
the time constraints. At first
a meek trickle spills forth, then
words gush over the dam.
One among us swaggers to the mic,
casually mentions his 27 books.

Another's words are difficult
to decipher, but ring like bells
of pain, loneliness.
The final poet fills out his skin,
his poems a second body hovering
above his hands.

We've all wandered here –
pilgrims offering up prayers
at a holy site, or perhaps
B movie zombies,
clutching our sheaf of papers,
yearning to be heard, redeemed.

Air
Gor Yaswen

This is what is,
for the artists
in greatest numbers:
we work on “air,”
as angels do,
and air must sustain us.
More fine than that;
we labor on
the very matrix
air but fills.
What we do
is invisible to most,
and unprovable to any.
We perform works
with no rewards
of outer nature;
go unthanked by those
whose “air” we charge
and are treated
as the angels;
un-seen nor believed.
Our lives may seem shambles,
as we shift about
in constant struggle
to maintain ourselves,
but once-a-while
we’re transcendent;
loft from the labor
of our living
toward Enormity,
and are brought back
with nothing won,

but all changed,
and as we thus dance
upon the horizon
of hills which confine
usual living,
we sometimes strike
noble silhouettes
of inspiration to others
against the fervent flush
of an awesome sky,
and cause some
to look up,
where they can see it:
this “air” we’ve altered.

My First Kiss

Ed Thompson

At certain times of the year I tend to get slobbery sentimental, and lately I've been thinking about my first kiss. The unfortunate recipient of that kiss, which happened on my twelfth birthday, was a girl named Florence. Her parents had emigrated from Italy, and they had named her after that famous city. The other kids in our fifth grade class sometimes called her "Minnie Mouse" because her upper front teeth protruded slightly more than absolutely necessary (unless stripping the bark from a tree limb was somehow involved). But I thought she was mighty cute anyway, especially when her nose wriggled while she nibbled cheese.

For weeks before the birthday gift that Florence had promised me, I practiced diligently on my forearm until the skin started to pucker and the peach fuzz withered, prompting my mother to threaten to take me to the doctor to see if I had leprosy.

Still, when the fateful day finally arrived, I was not accomplished at the fine art of osculation. In my defense, Florence presented a couple of problems even for an expert. Because of those front teeth, there was no belay point below her lips, and it was very easy to slip off into the void beneath her chin. And I don't think I've mentioned her nose: it was not a "button." Instead it was long and aquiline—Roman, if you will. Putting it as charitably as I can, it was in the way. To further compound matters, since I was in constant danger of hyperventilating, I couldn't keep any suction going; and so, of course, I immediately ended up in the no man's land under her chin. It didn't occur to me until later in my career that since I was in the vicinity of her neck anyway it could have been an option.

Her family moved shortly after the ordeal (I don't think there was a connection), and I never saw her again. Later, we heard they had moved back to Italy and her namesake city. Florence wasn't a particularly devout child, but I've always worried that she might have become a nun out of disappointment. Lately I've been thinking of taking a trip to Florence. While there I would check out the convents, and if I found her I would...but, no; it would never work. I'm too out of practice; my forearm, even shaved, is no longer as attractive as it once was; I probably still couldn't avoid the void; and with those high collars the older nuns sometimes wear, the neck still might not be an option. Best to let things be. I will go read a bodice ripper instead.

Authors' Biographies

MARY ADLER reminds herself daily of the question Mary Oliver asks: “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” Adler’s mystery novel *In the Shadow of Lies* is set in the Bay Area during World War II.

SANDRA ANFANG is a poet, teacher, and visual artist. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals including *Spillway* and *West Trestle Review*. She is a Poet/Teacher in the Schools and hosts a monthly poetry series in Petaluma. For her, to write is to breathe.

SHARON BARD, co-editor of *Steeped: In the World of Tea* and author of *Reinventing the Wheel: Self-Healing for Spinal Cord Injuries*, has traveled in over 40 countries. Her poetry, short stories, interviews and essays have been published in the U.S. and Britain.

STEFAN THOMAS BOALES worked for *La Voz Bilingual Newspaper* for several years as both writer and illustrator, has had several sci-fi haiku published in *Scifaikuest*, and won four ribbons for poetry at the Sonoma County Fair. Stefan is currently hibernating for winter.

J. R. BRADY has been writing since the 1970s. She is a produced/published playwright and poet. Her work has appeared in the United States, Scotland and Paris. She has published two books—*The Space Between* and *Persona*.

SHER LIANNE CHRISTIAN, author of *Star Kissed Shadows*, and her husband John host the Third Sunday Literary Open Mic in Sebastopol. John accompanies Sher on keyboard live and on their CD *Sweet Tongue*. Sher and John provide poetry and music for events and groups.

AMITABH VIKRAM DWIVEDI, a university professor in India, has authored three books: *A Grammar of Hadoti*, *A Grammar of Bhadarwahi*, and a Hindi poetry collection, “Chinar ka Sukha Patta” (Dried leaves of Chinar). His poem “Mother” was included as a prologue to *Motherhood and War: International Perspectives*.

LINDA M. ELLWOOD'S first interest in poetry arrived in high school, but was soon put aside for college, work, travel, and motherhood. Eight years ago, she picked up her pen and a bottle of ink, and it hasn't stopped flowing.

DONNA EMERSON'S publications include *CALYX*, *Spillway*, the *New Ohio Review*, *Quiddity*. Her poetry and photography publications include *Lumina*, *Healing Muse*, *Stone Canoe*, *Passager*. She's completing her first full length poetry book. Recent awards include a Pushcart and "Best of the Net" nominations.

GABRIEL FRAIRE has been a writer more than 45 years. He has had two of his plays produced in New York City, has had five books published in addition to hundreds of newspaper articles and columns. He was the 2014–2015 Healdsburg Literary Laureate.

ARMANDO GARCIA-DÁVILA has won awards for his prose and poetry and was named the Healdsburg Literary Laureate for 2002–2003. He refers to himself as the "Blue Collar Poet," and says, "I am neither an academic nor an intellectual and try to write in the voice of the common man."

VILMA GINZBERG, retired psychologist, Healdsburg Literary Laureate 2008–2009, served on the Healdsburg Literary Guild's Board [2003–2015], hosting its monthly Salon for years. She has published five books of poetry and two volumes of memoir, and enjoys reading in local poetry venues.

DON HAGELBERG was imprisoned for refusing induction on November 22, 1963. In the 1970s, he hosted "Live Poets," a weekly two-hour show on KPOO. He attended Sonoma State Extension, U. C. Berkeley Extension, Stanford Extension, and Oxford Extension for classes in Sustainability, Addiction Treatment, and Poetry.

CRAIG HARRIS, a long time Sonoma County resident, loves literature and creative writing. He has previously published works in the *Mendocino Gazette*, the *Bohemian*, the *Sonoma State Mandala* and *Tiny Lights*. He was one of the winners in the inaugural Charles Bukowski Poetry Contest.

KAREN HAYES was born in Healdsburg. She spent several formative years living on Fitch Mountain, entertaining herself along the Russian River. She was previously published in *Healdsburg Haiku*.

TERESA HENRY now makes her home in northern California. Originally from the eastern U.S., she is a retired attorney and educator. Her debut collection of poems is projected for release in 2016. She is a member of the Academy of American Poets.

MARVIN R. HIEMSTRA, a San Francisco-based poet, humorist, and social commentator, performs around the world. Publications include *The Tower Journal*, *Amsterdam Quarterly*, *The Satirist*, a DVD titled *French Kiss Destiny*, and a collection—*Poet Wrangler: droll poems*. Marvin is working on a memoir, *Kindness or Nothing*.

GENE HOTTEL, loves to read poetry and occasionally to write poems—when they will not leave him alone.

JODI HOTTEL'S work has appeared in *Nimrod International*, *Spillway*, *Ekphrasis*, *Naugatuck Review*, *Touch*, and anthologies from the University of Iowa Press, Tebot Bach, and the Marin Poetry Center. *Heart Mountain*, her poems about the Japanese American internment, was winner of the 2012 Blue Light Press Poetry Prize.

JING LI had taught English in one of China's academically elite high schools before she came to America as a graduate student, and taught another twenty years of Mandarin Chinese in San Francisco. She was the first place winner in the 2015 Redwood Writers Memoir Contest.

MARIANNE LYON has taught music for 39 years. Since returning from teaching in Hong Kong in 2012, she has been published in numerous literary magazine, journals and reviews. She is a member of the Napa California Writers Club and the Healdsburg Literary Guild.

MARK MEDIN has been writing poetry since his early high school days. In 2008, after a long period of creative dryness, he found renewal through Haiku. The poem in this volume is thoroughly influenced by that inspiration. In 2014, Mark and his wife moved from the Sonoma Valley to Temecula, California.

RUSS MESSING muddles on. He has just finished his second book of poetry which should be hot off the presses by mid-January and is lucky enough to have the best wife, three children and five grandchildren that a man could imagine. He makes great olive oil.

EDWARD MYCUE is a San Francisco poet. He was born in Niagara Falls, New York, and raised in Texas from age eleven. He has been a Lowell Fellow at Boston University, a Macdowell Colony Fellow, a Peace Corps teacher in Ghana, and he taught American Literature.

TIMOTHY NONN sits at his desk writing on a laptop from 9 to 5 every day except Sunday. He's from a working class family, so he approaches the craft of writing like a typical worker. Writing is his work, and he loves it.

RENELAINE PFISTER'S stories, essays and poems have been published in her native Philippines and in the U.S., including *Vintage Voices* 2012 and 2014, *And The Beats Go On*, YWCA's *Cry of the Nightbird*, and *Filipino Fiction for Young Adults*.

MARGARET RAYMOND began writing at eight, became a journalist at sixteen, a script doctor at twenty and turned to fiction when she retired. She has prizes in poetry, short stories and plays. She is now writing a mystery series set on the Russian River.

JANE RINALDI has lived in the American north, south, east, west, and in Italy, but has never felt closer to nature than here in Sonoma County, where colors are vivid, wildlife is plentiful, and are so wonderfully observable. And time to dream and fantasize...delightful!

LILITH ROGERS has written books of prose, poetry, children's picture books and is working on her memoir. Watch her become Rachel Carson at Rachel Carson Returns on YouTube. She'll be happy to come to your venue and perform her Rachel Carson piece live.

KATHRYN ROTH has ink in her veins, coming from a family of newspaper professionals. The former newspaper publisher, editor, journalist for the *Healdsburg Tribune*, she finds the transition from AP-style writing to creative poetry and prose a welcome challenge.

MARYANN SCHACHT writes poetry as a daily meditation practice and a way to exist emotionally and politically in today's world. It also helps her to have a tolerant husband and a bird feeder outside her kitchen window. Her first book was *Pan the Trickster: in Poetry and Life*.

ROBERT SHAFER served four years in the US Navy and worked thirty-five years as a film/video editor in San Francisco. He currently resides and writes in Napa, California. He enjoys reading books to his two grandsons and reciting poetry at open mics in the North Bay.

SUSANNA SOLOMON gets her inspiration from actual sheriff's calls in the newspaper the *Point Reyes Light*. Her short story collection, *Point Reyes Sheriff's Calls*, came out in 2013 from HD Media Press. Solomon lives in Northern California and runs her own electrical engineering business.

MARIAM STEPHENS was born and raised in Belfast, Northern Ireland. She has traveled extensively and has lived in England, Ireland, Indonesia, California, and Hawaii. She currently resides in Sonoma County. Writing has occupied a steady place throughout her years.

PATRICIA E. SULLIVAN has been writing poetry since age five. A poet, songwriter and lyricist, she is a third generation Californian and lives in Sonoma County. She says she was “seduced by words as a child when my grandmother shared with me *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*.”

PATRICK E. TAYLOR MD is a retired neurosurgeon. The author of three novels, he has just finished his first non-fiction work. He owns and operates a vineyard in the Dry Creek Valley, living with his wife and word processor in Geyserville and Sausalito.

ED THOMPSON taught high school English for forty-one years. After retirement, he started playing golf and ping-pong, writing the occasional piece, observing current affairs with a somewhat jaundiced air, and sometimes forgets what day it is.

JACQUELYN WELLS has written since she was a youngster and has had four of her short plays and two murder mystery plays produced, plus three short stories, two poems and six newspaper articles previously published. She enjoys the short form’s requirement that makes *her get to the point*.

RHODA WOLFE is a memoirist, journalist, and short story writer currently working on her first novel. She is the author of *The Tapestry of Hope* and *Seamless Phases*, curricula for addiction and mental health professionals. She lives in Sonoma County, California.

GOR YASWEN is a self-taught writer, poet, and artist published in periodicals, anthologies, CDs, 16 books, and 26 chapbooks. He teaches LIFELIST life-writing at the Sebastopol Senior Center and hosts Word-Art (on-air open-mic) each first Sunday on Occidental’s KOWS FM.