

Clif Ross teaches English at Berkeley City College. In addition to "Translations from Silence," he has published half a dozen books, including a collection of interviews with the California poet, William Everson ("The Light the Shadow Casts," 1996, Stride Publications, UK), translations of Latin American literature and political criticism, and other work. In 2005 Ross represented the US in Venezuela's World Poetry Festival, and his first film, "Venezuela: Revolution from the Inside Out" was released in 2008 by PM Press, based in Oakland, California. Clif is currently working with Marina Sitrin on a book of oral testimony of Latin American social movements entitled, "Insurgent Democracies: Latin America's New Powers" and his next movie will focus on agroecology.

Andrena Zawinski has been teaching at Laney College since 2002 after moving to the Bay Area from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She is an award winning educator and poet. She is also Features Editor at PoetryMagazine.com and runs a Women's Poetry Salon. Her poetry appears widely in print and online.
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The Pickers

"Stronger and stronger, the sunlight glues
 The afternoon to its objects..."
 from *Against the American Grain*, Charles Wright

The pickers, backbent and dozens abreast, rise before the sun
 past the blonde grasses, behind the concertina wire
 running between Soledad and Salinas, move in squats,
 toss artichokes from sun-pocked fields into pickup cabs,
 calloused fingers pricked by the thorny thistles.

They pour seeds into rivulets of dry earth
 that will burst into lettuce, chard, the great bouquets
 of broccoli and cabbage along El Camino Real's humpback hills
 where foremen watch, arms folded across their dusty boredom
 and the long light of days stretching inside another summer.

Bodies at work, long after limbs tire, long after chests heave
 beneath bird-bone beads, abalone shells, scapulars dangling
 from red strings, or even chains of gold glinting off the sun,
 faces muffled in scarves and hoods, sweat scenting the air,
 backbent and dozens abreast, birthing a history of earth.

And so they move, the pickers, silhouetted against the horizon,
 westerly winds crossing groves and vineyards farther north,
 farther south, they move, follow the crops, follow the seasons,
 Steinbeck's ghost among the harvest gypsies in the fields,
 pen in one hand, pail in the other, working towards some end.

As sure as low clouds cool the day down, the bodies turn
 toward evening, lay down the ache of the field in the stretch of legs,
 slope of shoulders, move toward dreams of the unburned, pain-free,
 unafraid, unspent paper in the pocket for some half-hold on a home
 on the road, birds skittering tree branches at sunset,
 pecking at the unpicked.

--from SOMETHING ABOUT. Also appeared in *The Progressive Magazine* and *Monterey Poetry Review*.

The Disappeared of Argentina

In the barrio of Pompeya,
each one has a name and a face:
Olivia, Jose, Emilio, Oscar, Cecilia, Esperanza...
The space they inhabited
remains reserved for them
around our table in the long hall of the neighborhood center
where children learn the tango
and families gather to share a meal.
The disappeared are a shadow inside every
other house in the country:
the empty chair in the living room,
the gaps in the picket line,
the emptiness between a mother's arms
or the hollow in the bed beside the lover.
Thirty thousand emptinesses continue their final trip
in the back seats or trunks of green Ford Falcons
barrelling down the dark streets of Buenos Aires,
Cordoba or Resistencia:
They continue to free fall out of helicopters
into the glimmering ocean below;
they continue to scream in the torture cells
of the factories of death and the Military Mechanic's School;
they continue to dig their own graves in secret locations;
they continue to refuse to confess or, again,
they break down and turn their mothers in;
they continue to feel their bones rattle and teeth
chatter with fear;
they continue to be followed into blind alleys or
up to the doors of homes they'll never reenter.
That's the way it is with the disappeared who never disappear:
In Argentina they outlive the living.