

# THE OLIVE PRESS

BY RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

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## February Theme "Poetry Is Power"

Take this issue of the Olive Press filled with resident poetry to a quiet corner and enjoy.  
Such a privilege to present their inspiration.

### San Francisco City of Poets



Lawrence Ferlinghetti (1998) Janice Mirikitani (2000) Devorah Major (2002) Jack Hirschman (2006-2009)  
Diane di Prima (2009 - 2012) Alejandro Murgia (2012-2015) Kim Shuck (2017-2020) Tongo Eisen-Martin (2021-2024)

**T**he Poet Laureate program of San Francisco was established in 1998 by then-Mayor Willie Brown, marking a formal recognition of the city's status as a global literary powerhouse. The San Francisco Public Library oversees the selection process, honoring residents who have made significant contributions to the city's creative soul.

The honor first went to Lawrence Ferlinghetti, the legendary co-founder of City Lights Bookstore and a central figure of the Beat Generation. Ferlinghetti saw the role not just as a ceremonial title but as a platform for civic activism. During his tenure, he used his "Poetry as News" column in the San Francisco Chronicle to advocate for the removal of the Central Freeway and the creation of more walkable public spaces. Ferlinghetti famously said he'd rather be the Poet Laureate of San Francisco than anywhere else in the world. He called the city a "frontier for free poetic life" and figured it had more poets and readers than almost anywhere else. To him, San Francisco had this "island light" that pulled in dreamers and rebels.

And the tradition continues with Genny Lim, our current laureate and the first Chinese American in the role.

*"I am waiting for the day I stop being invisible  
and start being seen for who I am."*



from "Waiting", a poem reflecting on identity, the Beat Generation, and Anti-Asian violence.

## More Than An Art Form

Poetry has a special place at Rhoda Goldman Plaza, offering comfort, connection, and a gentle way to reflect on life's many chapters.

Through poetry, our residents can revisit memories, express emotions that are sometimes hard to say aloud, and share stories shaped by decades of experience.

Reading or listening to a familiar poem can spark conversation, laughter, or quiet moments of understanding among residents.

Writing poetry, even simple verses, encourages creativity and gives seniors a sense of purpose and voice. In group settings, poetry readings build community, creating bonds through shared words and feelings. Poems also provide rhythm and structure, which can be especially soothing and grounding.

At Rhoda Goldman Plaza, poetry is more than an art form; it is a bridge between past and present, between individuals and their community. It honors wisdom, celebrates resilience, and reminds everyone that self-expression and imagination continue to flourish at every stage of life.

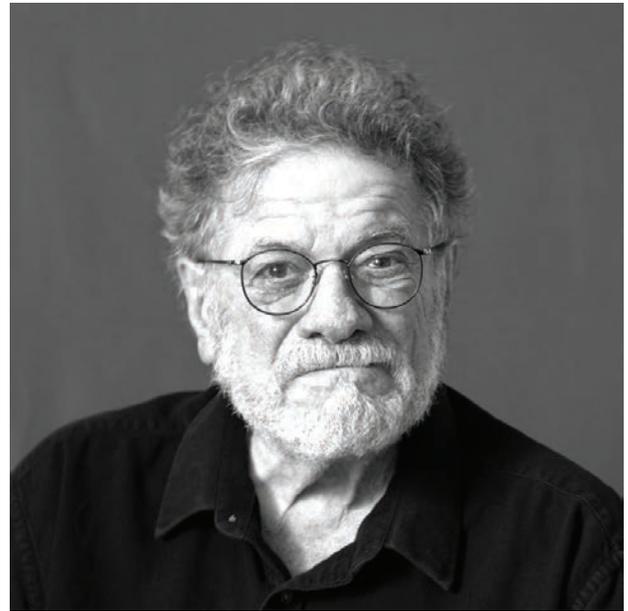


*"Your poems are dark and sinister, but with pretty pictures of a kitten rolling a ball of yarn they just might capture a wider audience."*



Sam Faye  
Community Director

## Jacques Marchand



Born in Luxembourg to Jews who abandoned Germany and fled again, four months before WWII began in Europe, Jacques grew up in and around NYC, became a historian, a consultant to TV docudrama producers, publisher of a scholarly journal and the monthly *Mother Jones*, later founding a communications company. Widowed with 3 kids in 1978, he met Eva and her daughter in 1982. Though both has lived on NY's Upper Westside in the 1970s, Eva and Jacques didn't meet until two years after he moved to SF with his brood. Today, two of their four kids remain in the Bay Area, while beloved grandchildren abound—five in the Bay Area, three in Brooklyn, two in North Carolina. Intrepid travelers, Jacques and Eva eagerly recall a year-long westward trip around the world, leaving SF with a one-way ticket to Bangkok and carry-on luggage only. Jacques writes poetry, is an avid reader of nonfiction, and quickly seizes opportunities to kibbitz in the café.



Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes  
Director of Resident Services

## William Carlos Williams

For this edition of the Olive Press, I thought back to my college English classes of poet William Carlos Williams who was also a working family physician in New Jersey. His mother was from Puerto Rico with Jewish roots. William Carlos Williams' poetry was modern, simple, and humanistic – perhaps what you would expect from a family doctor. He describes “My business, aside from the mere physical diagnosis, is to make a different sort of diagnosis concerning patients—as individuals”.



From *The Yellow Flower* (1953)

by William Carlos Williams

What shall I say, because talk I must?

That I have found a cure  
for the sick?

I have found no cure  
for the sick

but this crooked flower  
which only to look upon  
all men  
are cured

Iniesta I. (2012). The Iatrosalia (doctor poems) of William Carlos Williams. *Clinical medicine* (London, England), 12(1), 92–93. <https://doi.org/10.7861/clinmedicine.12-1-92>



Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN  
Director of Health Services

## The Ineffable

I've been accused of being maddeningly cheerful, so perhaps it is no surprise that I am drawn to poetry that explores the many joys in life. My favorite poet, Mary Oliver, has a reverence for the majesty of the natural world that serves as a much-needed reminder to take in the beauty that surrounds us.

"Every day  
I see or hear  
something  
that more or less  
kills me"

From *Mindful* by Mary Oliver

Mary Oliver's deep appreciation for the beauty in nature is a powerful invitation to make time to give thanks for the world around us.

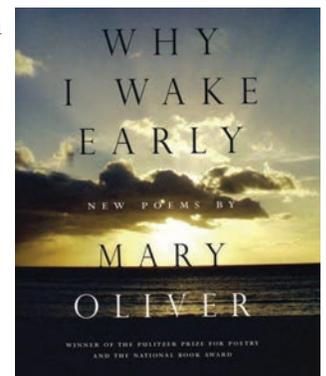
Oliver's vivid descriptions make magic of the mundane and welcome you to do the same.

I find that the imagery and cadence of poetry has a resonance that can be insistent and demands something of the reader. In return, the reader has the opportunity to feel true validation. This capacity to steep a reader in shared experience is humanity at its best.

"do you think there is anywhere, in  
any language,  
a word billowing enough  
for the pleasure

that fills you,  
as the sun  
reaches out,  
as it warms you."

From *The Sun*  
by Mary Oliver

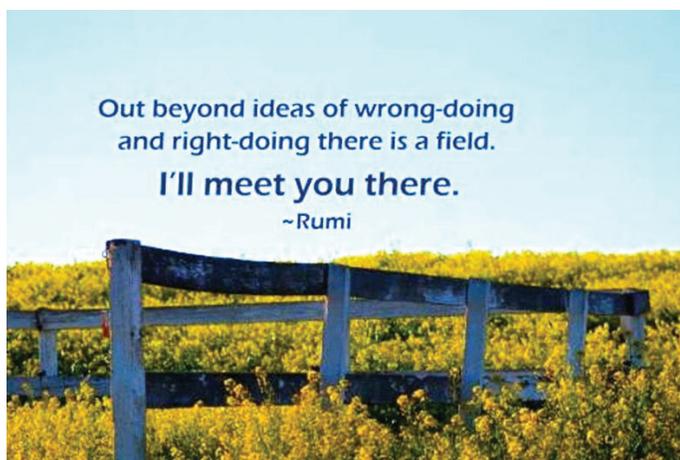


Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes  
Director of Resident Services

## Rumi Resonates

**R**umi, the 13th-century Persian poet and mystic, wrote with a depth of love and spiritual insight that continues to transcend time and resonate with me continually as I mature.

His work is so relevant today in society, our culture, and religion. Each time I am given a piece of his poetry as a gift, I am drawn to ponder over it and feel as though something I am going through, he is identifying in that moment. His poetry speaks to the soul's longing for connection—between human and divine, lover and beloved, self and universe. Through simple yet profound language, Rumi invites me to look inward, embrace transformation, and discover unity in love. The enduring power of his work lies in its ability to awaken compassion, dissolve boundaries, and remind us that meaning is often found not in answers, but in the journey of the heart.



From *A Great Wagon* by Rumi



Geoffrey Washburn  
Director of Life Enrichment

## The Age of Creative Incline



Fields of Pemberly by Sharon and Leah Herman

**T**he annual poetry issue is one of my favorites. It draws out the hidden poets of RGP—though few residents would describe themselves that way. Nevertheless, I truly enjoy reading their work.

The life chapters of our 70s, 80s, and 90s can be a time to return to the natural self-expression of our younger years. After all, what four-year-old doesn't dance, sing, or draw? In our elder years, we can develop a "creative incline" fueled by a lifetime of wisdom and experience. This season of aging can be just as productive as raising children or achieving professional goals.

Furthermore, it is healthy to reactivate and explore our inner "inquisitive self-revealing child." Scientific research also suggests that maintaining a "muse"—through daily creative focus—improves cognition and happiness. Poetry and song are innate and we cannot help it when our inner lives boil over into inspiration. Free up your feelings and share!



Allison Rodman  
Director of Sales & Marketing

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## Letting Go by Bob Demchick

The world that I knew seems now to have ended  
With madness and sanity so easily blended  
Toward total disorder we clearly have trended  
The nation I love is daily something offended.

While I think like a lion, I behave rather mousy  
There's no doubt about it, I'm feeling quite lousy  
My partner tries hard to be very spousy  
But I respond by acting resoundingly grousy.

All hopes as of now are thoroughly dashed  
Any chance of civility totally trashed  
Legislative partnering completely smashed  
Inspid utterings are said unabashed.

This self-centered Potus at all times is crass  
The Oval Office now sees no more class  
It has been said that "This too shall pass"  
But he just plays golf or sits on his ass.

I'm told that things will surely get better  
Such thoughts could clearly not be all wetter  
My wife tries so hard my mind to unfetter  
Perhaps it is best that I stop and just let her.

When thinking at times of that ignorant elf  
Who cares for nothing except for himself  
I'll just put my feelings away on the shelf  
And learn to be happy inside of myself.

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*Writing in poetic form can help bring one's emotions to the surface and relieve inner tension. Even when the product is of questionable quality, the process is rewarding. For me, anything that bolsters the next three years is worth pursuing. Read at your own peril. - Bob*

## Skipping In Lisbon by Jacques Marchand

Then, arms about waists,  
hip to hip,  
skip once more with me  
on rain-slicked cobbles in Lisbon's wintry streets

I am yours unutterably  
and you entirely mine.

Hidden beneath our  
umbrella, dance a last time with me.

Into forgetfulness.



And More.....

## Sunshine by Carl Kerwick 0630

Good morning, sunshine so pink and blue, so  
What will you bring on this day, only you know  
While sharing each moment with me on the  
With the brightness of your pink and blue,  
Freeing my inner being, living truly same or  
I am the being I am supposed to be.  
I submit myself to this path, while seeking to  
All the while sharing with the world entirely  
Good morning, sunshine so pink and blue,

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## Warrior

by Jane Cutler

The elderly are warriors  
Inching forward over  
Unmapped, unmarked terrain,  
Each on their own course.  
Inching forward  
Toward that destination  
No one wants to reach.



## East, West, Home's Best

by Jane Cutler

A glorious San Francisco day, crystalline clear blue rain-washed winter sky; the air fresh, with a hint of a breeze; people walking quickly – hurrying, where?

Jason, Tim, and I are driving back to Rhoda Goldman from my medical appointment at 18th Street and Capp, in the heart of the Mission.

Traffic keeps us traveling at a slow pace, which we welcome. It lets us enjoy the changes of scenery: the colorful new murals on the buildings and in the narrow alleyways; inviting, unfamiliar shops; a famous bakery; taquerias. And as we turn north, an unusual little restaurant, Lebanese, small plates, says the sign. It catches all our eyes. Tim and I very tentatively suggest, perhaps, stopping. It is, after all, lunchtime. Jason – smiling and serenely conscientious – drives on. We pass small parks, breathtaking old Victorians, and I think: “You’re not in Kansas anymore, Dorothy!”

And so, chatting cheerfully, we wend our way across the city. We are feeling happy and free.

Soon enough, it’s familiar territory. We make our final turn and pull up in front of Rhoda Goldman. And I feel what I always do at that moment: an involuntary and altogether pleasant sense of relief.

I am home.

November 10, 2025  
beautiful.  
the answer to that.  
path, help me with my troubled past.  
finding myself along my future path.  
different,  
find the essence of myself.  
unashamedly of myself.  
lighting the sky so brightly for all to see, what can be.

## RESIDENT OUTINGS



**Filoli Gardens**  
Top to Bottom, Left to Right:  
Alice Y., Eileen S., Jane G., Herlinda C.,  
Joanne C., Jara H., Judith R.,  
Karen S., Alice Y., Paula T. Marc S.,  
Hannah C., Jason A., Peter M.



**Temple Emanu-El**  
Left to Right:  
Eileen S. Jane G., Ed J., Phylis D., Judith R., Eva D., Joan L. Paula S.



**Fairmont**  
Left to Right:  
Tim C., Aubrey L., Joan L., Eileen S., Herlinda C., Priscilla S., Karen S. Phylis D. Barbara G.,  
Joanne C., Toni B., Paul C., Celia, C., Rose H., Priscilla S.



**Portraiture Show**

**Left to right: Paulette A., Carly F., Judith R., Tim C.**



**Chanukah Nightly Lighting**

**Left to right: Geoffrey W., Connie M., Bonnie S., Suzy M., Eileen S.,**



**Roryography**

**Left to right: Jacques M., Rory D., Lynn R., Lydia W., Eva D.**



**Flower Arrangement**

**Left to right: Phylis D., Paulette A., Joan L.**

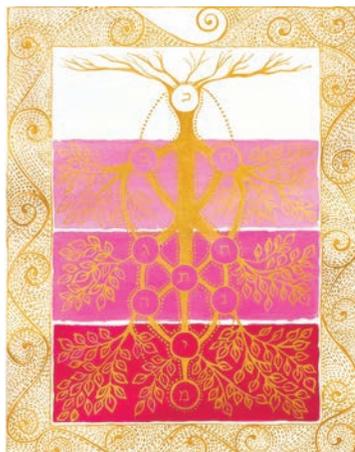


**Art with Kimberley**

**Left to right: Doris C., Max R., Gianni C.**

## The Birthday of the Trees!

**W**hen you come into the land and have planted all manner trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden; three years



it shall be forbidden to you: it shall not be eaten.

Leviticus 19:23;

This ancient law continues to instruct us to tithe the fruit of trees in the fourth year, and then, in the fifth year, we may eat it with a celebration.

This law necessitated a way to count the number of years of the tree, and hence a date was set, the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Av or TuBishvat, as “The Birthday of the Trees.” That will be February 2nd this year.

While we no longer practice these ancient agricultural laws in the diaspora, this holiday has morphed over the millenia in many ways. It can be a day of gratitude for agricultural abundance, a sort of Jewish version of Earth Day, a day to plant trees, or, my favorite: a mystical holiday.

In the 15th century, the mystics in Sfat, Israel, initiated a celebration patterned on the Passover seder, of a fruit meal to remember “the tree with its roots in Heaven.” And what is that? The Torah! Or, it can also symbolize love from the Holy One, cascading down into this world. When we here on earth perform mitzvot, deeds of righteousness and kindness, that, in turn, stimulates God’s flow of love. So keep doing your bit to keep it flowing!



Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky  
Community Rabbi, Rhoda Goldman Plaza

## Hands On!

**N**ew art teacher, Nancy Gittleman is passionate about ceramics, art and world travel. She holds a degree in Ceramics and Art Education from Indiana University. She served in Niger, West Africa with Peace Corps with women in cottage industries. She has been teaching art and ceramics for 48 years in public and private schools, art centers and organizations, arts organizations, museums and community centers in Louisville, Kentucky, the greater Chicago area, New York City and the San Francisco Bay Area. Nancy worked as an art teacher and ceramic specialist in San Francisco Unified School District for 33 years teaching.

Nancy is thrilled to be part of the Rhoda Goldman activities team. Her class is once a month third Tuesdays at 10:00.



## Year End Tax Letter

RGP prepares a year-end tax letter outlining the operating expense dedicated to Health Services which may be requested by tax preparers or accountants. If you would like to receive a copy of this letter, please contact Christine Leung [ChristineL@rgplaza.org](mailto:ChristineL@rgplaza.org).



*Residents*

- 2 Bonnie S. 19 Joan L.
- 4 Stephen C. 22 Ruth G.
- 7 Barbara G. 26 Joan W.

*Staff*

- 1 Lualhati V. 7 Emma Sarai J.
- 2 Almaz M. 11 Leonora C.
- 3 Belinda V. 14 One J.
- 5 Wen Xian H. 21 Sabrina C.



*Honor a Birthday*

*Celebrate the birthday of a friend or loved one with a gift in their honor to RGP! With a tribute gift. JFCS will send a card with your greeting by email or postal mail.*

*To make a gift online, donate.jfcs.org/rgp  
Or gift envelopes at the RGP Front Desk.*



**The Olive Press**

**A theme focused monthly newsletter for RGP.**  
Contributions from RGP staff, residents, and guests.  
Production Team; Managing Editor, Allison Rodman  
Copy Editor, Charlie Karam.  
Comments are welcome. allisonr@rgplaza.org

**Rubie Manatad and Hung Duong**

**P**lease meet employees of the month Rubie Manatad (January) and Hung Duong (February).

**Rubie** has been a caregiver at RGP for 3 years and says she loves the spirit of teamwork in Health Services. She also loves working with residents, especially when they share jokes and moments of laughter with her. She has 3 children, who are all working on college degrees. For fun, she enjoys walking in the park.

She is originally from Visayas, Philippines.

**Hung Duong** has worked with RGP Maintenance for 5 years and enjoys helping residents. He was working in restaurants before coming to RGP and he says he is really glad he made the switch. He has two children, in college and high school, and in his spare time, he enjoys relaxing with the family. He moved to SF 34 years ago from Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam.

When you see Rubie and Hung out in the community, make sure to say hi and thank you for all their kindness and hard work.



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A DIVISION OF JEWISH FAMILY  
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RCFE #385600125



RHODA  
GOLDMAN  
PLAZA

175

YEARS

Jewish  
Family and  
Children's  
Services



## *See Memory Care Through a New Lens*

Open House of the Redesign  
The Terrace Memory Care Program

*Sunday, February 22nd*

*From 3:00 - 4:30 pm*

Explore our warm atmosphere,  
personalized Montessori approach and  
engaging daily programming to help your  
loved one thrive in a community that takes  
care of you like family. See memory care  
differently — take a closer look today.

RSVP

Call Allison 415.345.5072 or E-mail [AllisonR@rgplaza.org](mailto:AllisonR@rgplaza.org)

