

# GRAFFITI VERITE'

GV DOCU-SERIES

www.graffitiverite.com



## FILM REVIEWS

of

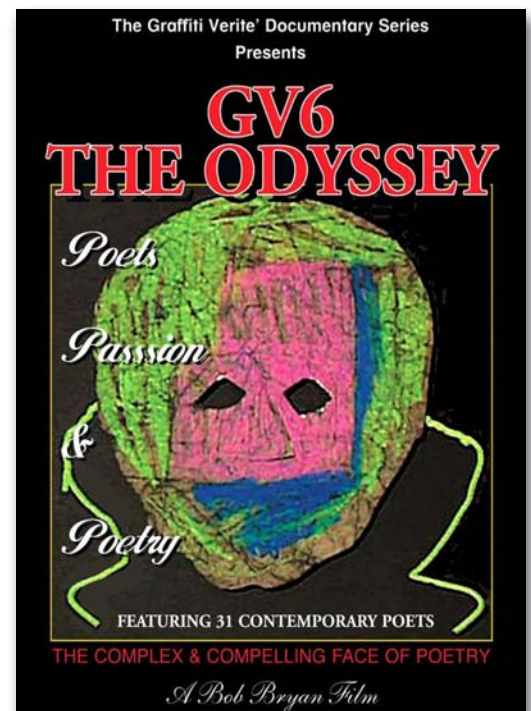
### GV6 THE ODYSSEY: Poets, Passion & Poetry

Directed by Multi Award-Winning Filmmaker Bob Bryan

**G**RAFFITI VERITE' 6 THE ODYSSEY is an interesting collage of ideas and personalities that confront the craft of poetry from the perspective of those who practice it. The secret life of poetry, poets, and how they think, work and live, is confessed in a candid style that is sometimes funny, sometimes freaky and sometimes thought provoking. It has an educational feel and would be suitable for teenagers. In the line up of talking heads there is an eclectic mix of poets, who range from the famous and experienced to the infamous and emerging. These varied perspectives offer vitality to the DVD.

In **GV6** you will find 31 poets of varied ethnicities, styles and talents who speak their hearts, minds and passions about poetry. It is clear that poetry is many things to many people, and for some it is an absolute lifesaver. I was especially taken by the discussions in the kitchen with a huge fake spider in the background (Brendan Constantine). Like I said, sometimes freaky...

An impressive quality to the DVD is the honesty of the project and its intent, and the candidness of the poets. No Hollywood face lifts or flattering lighting, no fashion fests or adolescent sniping, a simple gentle reverence for poetry. I hope that the target audience is won over. As Kahlil Gibran once said, *'poetry is a deal of joy and pain and wonder, with a dash of the dictionary.'* **GRAFFITI VERITE' 6** shows us that this is still a very current view.



-- Jayne Fenton Keane,  
[www.poetinresidence.com](http://www.poetinresidence.com)

“**M**y initial response from viewing **GV6** is that it is a marvelous work that seeks to bare the inner workings of the sensitized souls and the creative process of these artists who create and express their passion through poetry. I thoroughly enjoyed it., It's real!”

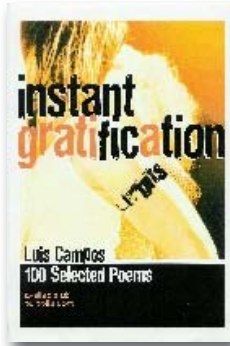
-- Glenn Towery, Filmmaker

“Hey Bob! Man, I thought I was a genius, but you got me beat from here to Hoboken! Great work! I haven’t played it yet, but I don’t have to have seen it to know its quality, judging from the care and imagination of the cover. CONGRATULATIONS!”



#### Review of **GV6**

“I thought it was magnificent! Had some very nice touches... a door closing, something else unexpected happening... that’s what we picky critics call ‘vitality,’ *letting things happen but also making things happen visually.* Obviously done with care. I give it three thumbs up!”



-- Luis Campos, Poet

“I thought **GV6 THE ODYSSEY** was very informative and enlightening. I watched it twice because for a novice it was overwhelming at first. I then went through the the special selections and was able to put it all together. I do feel it can be use very much as an educational tool.

*I wished I could have had this kind of exposure as a high schooler and college gander.* I do believe that journaling ones thoughts is very important for self-growth and understanding.

There is a lot of information in this film and actually could be studied for a semester. One thing “ I got “ when I was done viewing the film was “ just get it down and work it out later. Thanks for letting me see view the film. I really hope this is a useful tool for young and old minds.”

-- Janice M Frucci,  
Head of Vocational Rehabilitation

A cyclone collage of images, words and ideas and of course humor. What poetry is; where it came from and where it may go? If its dead, alive or in transition? How many forms it has; if it needs one in the first place? Does any of it make the slightest difference? All of these questions are asked and explored from a variety of poets. 31 in all give their expertise, share their experiences, from the inside out. This film at times causes tears, reveals hidden hypocrisies, small biting and beautiful glimpses of what may be called “*Artistic Truth.*”

*Who am I? “A Dialog with myself...”* Wanda Coleman. What is it? What it should be? Not be? Art? Therapy? Clear, unclear, metaphor, feelings... something sacred?

*Topics:* Sexual Chaos, Nature -Loneliness, Patterns of Relationships, Oppressions and gangland and police responses, “...*The Funk of Dreamless men..*”- - Kamau Daaood.

African Americans, Asian faces, Latina faces, mixed races, angry faces, Armenian voices, women, straight, not so straight, white people ...all tell their stories. Taboos; deep painful emotions, attacking the past abuser, forbidden feelings... thoughts. *When can you write, where? How long does it take?*

*Poetry in the classroom...* Who is it written for? The Elite? Every man / woman, dirty old men? “*In Isolation I create phantoms....*” Chungmi Kim

*Who is a poet? Everyone? Reading them aloud in public?* “...something happens, vivid and alive- A sort of third thing is created...” Susanne Lummis. “*De nobis fabula narratur... Their Story is Our story... Vicarious thinking...*” --Elena Karina Byrne.

In the end, there are no conclusions, only their words... the poets speaking for themselves. If you have an interest in poetry, curiosity, an obsession, watch and take notes. Love, Peace and Knowledge

-- Jack G Bowman, MA MFT

“**G**ood job; your compilation makes for fascinating viewing --- and listening. Kamau Daaood’s reading had real power, and several other poets, too, made fine contributions in their poetry and comments. I expect it to be a hit in the classroom. ...Thanks again for all your work and dedication.



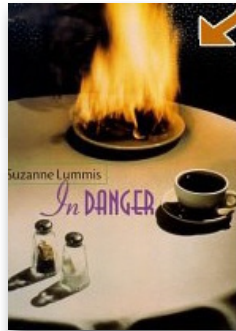
work. So meaning intensive that one could refer to it for a lifetime.

**GV6 is truly a breakthrough triumph!** Of the 31 poets depicted in the film, I note with dismay that 30 of them are not me.”



-- Steve Goldman, Poet

...And, say, that’s great news that your work is getting so much attention, so quickly. I’ll be showing sections of it to my UCLA Extension group on the last day of class, week after next.”



-- Suzanne Lummis, Poet

“**H**i again... I just have to say -- ONE MORE TIME how much I like / love the dvd.. I’ve actually bought quite a few (*ahem!*) books, cds, dvds etc from myspace ‘friends’ which has been great, but this one takes the biscuit. It’s such a bloody good idea. Wish someone in the Scottish poetry scene would produce something similar! I’ve watched it a few times now, and feel quite close to the people - I love them all. And, I really like your voice ... it packs a punch. And your words too of course, are great. I’m passing it onto a couple of friends for them to enjoy... Hmm thanks for bringing this into my life! *Nice!*”



-- Jerry Danielsen, Poet



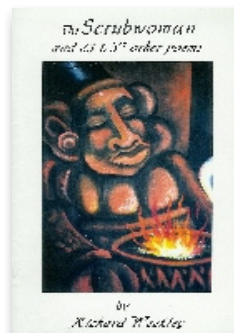
“**D**OCTOR, DOCTOR! YOU DID IT! I went out of town for a few weeks and my neighbor got my copy of the disc. I didn’t see the film ‘til last night.

YOU DID IT! It looks great, boss!

How do you feel about it? Are you happy? You did a hell of a job? What’s next? Vacation? Another film? Wasssssssup? Tell me, you **GENIUS!** “



-- Brendan Constantine, Poet



**GV6: THE ODYSSEY** Nicely done. Good synthesis and effects.

(*What a bunch of editing.. Wow -- you amaze!*)



-- Richard Weekley, Teacher / Poet

“**I**t is beautiful. Dazzles! Really is a short punchy course in what it is to be a poet, and what poetry is. Invaluable! Big congrats!

... Saw the Film a second time. It is a reference

“Congratulations on your poetry DVD. I thought the featured poets each had something worthwhile to say and the content was interesting throughout. I wish you much success with this and future projects.”

-- Jim Natal, Poet / Publisher

“Wow, wow, wow...  
*Great job!*”

-- Rod Bradley,  
Filmmaker, Poet



## (GV6) THE ODYSSEY: POETS, PASSION, & POETRY

One of the things I'm always hearing about is how poetry is no longer viable or useful in the creative world. Unless, obviously, you can turn it into a pop song and make enough money to buy some land in Tokyo.

But other than that, the general opinion for poetry and where it's headed is not an optimistic one. Fifty years ago, if your luck held out, you actually had a shot at making some decent money on poetry and poetry alone. Now, you're lucky if you can walk away with a contributor's copy of the few magazines that still publish poetry. And people point to that, the serious decline of magazines that feature poetry or books released by major publishing companies, as evidence of how no one gives a damn about it anymore. I hear that a lot, and honestly, I can't say I believe it.

If you really think no one cares anymore, head over to Google, or whatever search engine turns you on (*I prefer the easy ones, obviously*) and hunt down web sites like [www.pathetic.org](http://www.pathetic.org), or look up a few e-zines and ask the editors how many submissions they receive in a given period, or head out to the fringe of publishing and see how many writers are

kicking ass in the self-publishing field. It's nothing to get excited about, and it's probably not going to change the world anytime soon, but it will prove, if nothing else that poetry's in better shape than some people are saying.

And some people take a completely different route to keep poetry alive, like DVDs, which is one I honestly, for some strange reason, never envisioned as a means to the end of moving poetry along. Again, I don't know why it never occurred to me that you could promote poetry on DVD. It might have something to do with the way the obvious almost never comes to my mind until it's entirely too late to do anything about it. But I can't say for sure.

At any rate, that's pretty much what filmmaker Bob Bryan has set out to accomplish with **Poets, Passion & Poetry**, which is the latest and, according to Bryan, final installment in what has been a six film series dedicated to not only poetry, but to graffiti, and a more specific, focused branch of poetry, hip-hop. To watch even one is to watch a subject that the people involved are clearly immersed in. It's something they know everything there is to know about it, and it's something they want other people to know more about. So far, the series has done quite well to that end, with numerous festival appearances and awards, and positive reviews from just about everybody who's come into contact with it. And it's not difficult to see why, if **Poets, Passion & Poetry**, which is the one I'm dealing with here and now, has anything to say about it.

Running at about seventy-two minutes, with numerous special features, including complete readings from all thirty-one of the featured names, **Poets, Passion & Poetry** is an in-depth look at thirty-one different poets, from countless walks of life, philosophies, and personalities. It's not just limited to their own work, which is a major aspect of the documentary and one of its main points, to show you how wildly diverse and varying poetry can be. The documentary also intends to bring you closer to the poets themselves, something that is generally left up to a few words in a short bio on the back of their book. And this where the whole

thing held the most interest for me. I love poetry, as it's probably pretty easy to tell, but what I like more, possibly, because I don't deal with it as much is direct contact with the poets themselves. I find that part relentlessly fascinating, to hear where the writer got his start, what brought him in, what keeps him going. I don't think it should be taken as personal gospel, but I do think there's something to be said for listening to your peers, your contemporaries and maybe, at most, using that opportunity to try adding something onto your own ideas and beliefs. The idea is to get you thinking about sides of poetry you might not have looked at before. **Poets, Passion & Poetry** brings out this opportunity brilliantly, offering more perspective than I think I've ever seen gathered in a single place.

And just so you know, the poetry's not bad either. There's some brilliant, brutal work to be found throughout. It's the kind of insight, intelligence that makes you wonder why these people aren't getting all of the credit they truly deserve. All of them had something to say, but some of them struck me in such a way that I had to seriously wonder why the hell these people aren't in the same regard as Bukowski, Angelou and the like. Of course, there's no guarantee that you're going to love every poet's work. But really, there's nothing about this that demands you do that. In my mind, lining up all these major forces in poetry is a lot like setting up a music festival. If you don't like the first act, well, stick around for the next one, because it's not going to be anything like the one you just saw, and so on.

Personally, I found something good or, at the minimum, interesting, in every poet that came on. I can't guarantee watching **Poets, Passion & Poetry** is going to be like that for everybody, but I can almost definitely promise that you won't be bored. Director Bob Bryan is clearly aiming this at not just people who might be starting out at poetry, but people who have no real experience in the medium to begin with. I honestly think this is the group Bryan wants to approach most of all, more than the people who already have a rough idea of what Bryan's trying to express. I'm talking more about the ones I mentioned at the start of this, who don't think poetry has anything to say

in 2006. Bryan wants to prove to those people that the truth of the matter is that poetry is as alive, vibrant, and vicious as it was in the days of *Dorothy Parker* and *Anne Sexton*. Thanks to his excellent, well-paced, well-handled direction, I don't think he's going to have any problem continuing to do this, as he's done with the previous five volumes.

*This is an essential purchase for anyone who's either already well-immersed into the world of poetry, or someone who just wants to know what the whole thing is about.* Bryan is a documentary director of serious, confident talent. He's the kind of guy you want to keep your eye on, because there's a very good chance that anything he happens to be involved with is going to make for an extremely worthwhile trip. For less than forty bucks, you get a documentary that's a prime example of how the phrase "*No wasted motion*" applies to a film, and you get an in-depth look at some of the most talented, underrated writers of this moment in time. As far as I know, you couldn't possibly ask for more than that.

-- Gabriel Ricard, Staff Interviewer  
**UNLIKELY 2.0**



I was a Venice virgin.....until taken one night to a poetry event at Beyond Baroque, back when it was on West Washington Boulevard. Wasn't that a great introduction to Venice? It was Alice through the looking-glass, a whole different world, and this movie reminds me of the excitement and novelty of that long-ago arrival in an unknown country. *What a piece of work is GV6: THE ODYSSEY!*

Filmed in the intimate settings of the poets' own homes, or in natural surroundings, interview segments alternate with the reading of shorter or longer bits of poetry. There are lots of interesting, quite agreeable visual effects. The whole thing has an amazing unity, considering all the different places where it was shot. *Bob Bryan and everyone else involved in the production did a hellacious job.* Of course, I'd be crazy about anything with Wanda Coleman in it. What I like best about **GV6**, in fact, is that it's packed with Venice poets. Coleman has been on the scene since the

Beat days, and her poem *“His Old Flame, Lady Venice”* is definitive. There’s photographer Rod Bradley - check out his business card from the early 80s, with the motto *“Neither master nor slave.”* Luis Campos joined the original Venice Poetry Workshop in 1969. Steve Goldman has run Venice Poetry Readings in the New Library and the Old Jail. Jim Natal and Jeanette Clough do the HyperPoets reading series at the Rose Café.

Most or all of the other 31 poets represented here also have Venice connections of some kind, showing up time after time at Beyond Baroque and other venerable venues, leading workshops, publishing in the Free Venice Beachhead, and so on. The bearded witch of Ocean Park, francEye, is known as the female Charles Bukowski. Lynne Thompson is a self-described *“recovering attorney,”* and Marie Lecrivain is *“writer in residence at her apartment.”* For the most fascinating reader in the group, I’d have to pick Chungmi Kim.

The comments of the poets are grouped together by theme, suggesting that they were asked to elaborate on at least some of the same questions, but no questions are ever heard. The comments are made in such a way that knowing the questions is unnecessary. It’s a technique you have to have tried yourself in order to realize how much skill went into the editing.

You can tell that one of the suggested topics was the relationship between poetry and dreams, and another, teaching the young. Several of these poets teach at the college level, others are or have been involved with introducing elementary school children to poetry. Steve Goldman speaks of the need to *“evoke poetry from the kids, not to teach it.”* Wanda Coleman addresses young poets with some very interesting thoughts.

Brendan Constantine, who comes from a theatrical family, talks about how his father asked him the equivalent of *“What are you going to be when you grow up?”* Momentarily relieved to find that his son had no ambition to be an actor, the father was instantly dismayed when the answer proved to be *“poet.”* How had young Brendan managed to hit upon the one career more hopeless than

acting, where even the successful are bums, and the unsuccessful are something even worse?

***This movie and its accompanying extras make up a motherlode of quotable remarks and observations.*** I notice this in particular because I collect quotations and present them organized by topic. Here’s an example of my kind of quotation, from Shahe Mankerian: *“The minute that we have the notion that there is such a thing as taboo, I think the writer is obligated, and I underline that word obligated, to write about those issues.”*

Johnny Masuda, whose work is described as *“not for the faint of heart,”* writes about stuff like being raped as a child. His demeanor can be offputting. *“Johnny’s the guy that you don’t want to come knocking at your door at midnight, because he’s not bringing good news.”* Still, he has nice eyes.

I have only one problem with this movie, and it’s as insignificant as a freckle on the Mona Lisa’s elbow, but I’m going to mention it anyway. The bleeping of naughty words is not only annoying but inconsistent. I heard a few rude ones with perfect clarity, and a couple of cusses are only partially bleeped. If the bleeping was done in earnest, it’s not a very good job. If it was done in a mocking spirit, it’s a miscalculation. The very fact that it’s unclear whether the bleeps were added with satirical intent, should tell you something. Is it federally mandated that censored words must be covered up by an extremely irritating and attention-craving audio cue? Couldn’t some other sound be substituted - a musical chord, for instance, or even silence? The dreaded bleeps strike a jarring note, and detract from a splendid piece of work that otherwise closely approaches perfection.

For some reason, a recurring vision comes to me where a small group of teenagers gather before a TV, somewhere in rural America, to watch this movie. There still are towns without poetry workshops, and there still are vast distances between places. I can see **GV6** becoming a monster hit not only among the urban literati, but among the young and hopeful who live in places where they feel culturally deprived.

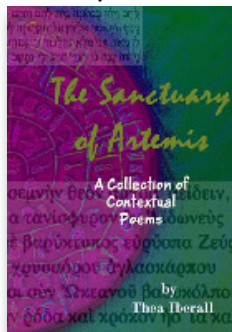
Better yet, I'd love to see this movie exported on a large scale. Some foundation should buy thousands of copies and give them away overseas, to anyone who will take them. Let's get something out there to show that America is not all *Miami Vice* or *Dallas*, and that Americans are not all *Rambo* or *Britney Spears*.

-- Pat Hartman,  
VIRTUALVENICE.COM



-- Dr. Thea Iberall, Poet

“It’s gorgeous!! You did a great job. Thank you from the Poetry community for doing this beautiful documentary.”



**T**HE ODYSSEY is a powerful and varied introduction to modern poetry. Through a combination of interviews and poetry excerpts from 31 SoCal poets, it presents a complex and relatively complete picture of what poetry is. The poets include provide a diverse overview of the poetic talent in SoCal. Among them are Elena Karina Byrne, Jeanette Clough, Wanda Coleman, Kamau Daaood, francEyE, Thea Iberall, Suzanne Lummis and Richard Weekly.

Thank heaven the DVD isn't as breathless as the press release.

*“These Poetic Artifacts are likely the Magical by-products of countless hours of disciplined rewriting and soul-searching. This complicated and fastidious process has evolved to a point where each and every passionately inspired word is contemplated, weighed and juxtaposed.”*

*Every published ‘word bubble thought’ threatens to be a near-perfect embodiment of that sublime aha birth-marked moment of sublime*

*revelation.”*

Whew! Luckily the poets in the video are much more down to earth in their discussions of poetry. They treat poetry as something both magical and everyday. If the video shows anything, it is that poets are eminently qualified to discuss their craft, because they do so poetically. That is, obliquely, rather than trying to hit it squarely.

**THE ODYSSEY** attempts to answer the great unanswerable question: What is poetry? One of the best definitions I have heard (from one of my college professors) is “the art of saying It [whatever It may be] in other words.” The 31 poets in **THE ODYSSEY** define poetry by talking about it, without ever actually trying to define it. By circling around the core of what poetry is, they give a fuller picture of poetry and its power than any flat, direct statements could. Perhaps Brendan Constantine say it best: “Life cannot be described as effectively as it can be embodied.”

*The movie is shot and edited both creatively and effectively.* The structure works well, interspersing the poets' comments with excerpts from their poetry which illustrate their points. Critically, the complete poems are included as a bonus feature. The poets are artfully shot in their “natural environments”—offices, classrooms, living rooms and bedrooms—in such a way that the backgrounds offer further glimpses into their character. Also included are images of their respective book covers, which works aesthetically and as an aid to finding their works, if your curiosity is piqued.

Among the bonus features, in addition to the complete poems, are little featurettes on *Contextual Poetry*, by Thea Iberall, and *What is a Chapbook?*, by Brendan Constantine. Both are informative sidebars, although perhaps the video medium could have been used more effectively had Constantine actually demonstrated the construction of a chapbook. There are also little words of advice from the poets. These are all good supplements to the issues raised in the movie itself.

The question arises, who is this movie's intended audience? One obvious answer is teachers and students. Much of the discussion concerns, directly

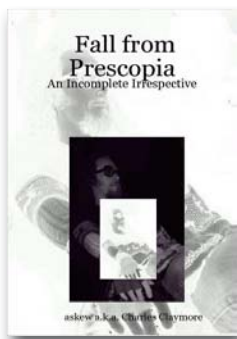
or indirectly, the teaching of poetry. It would make a great video both for teachers to watch, to get ideas on their teaching, and to show in the classroom. (*I assume that possible classroom use is the reason for the rather arbitrary censorship in the movie: “Shit” but not “shat”, “fuck” spoken but not printed.*) This video would make a very powerful teaching tool, both for stimulating discussions of poetry, and for providing some strong examples of modern poetry.

But I believe this video would work well with a larger audience, namely anyone with a passing interest in poetry. To be honest, I don't see it capturing the attention of someone who's already resistant to poetry. It starts with an assumption that poetry is interesting, and doesn't struggle to grab its audience's attention. But someone who is already curious would find its revelations fascinating.

In the end, director Bob Bryan has created a thorough and intelligent introduction to the workings of poetry today.

-- G. Murray Thomas

“I really appreciated the way the narrative flowed throughout the presentation.



It was captivating -- and my friends thought so as well!”

-- Askew, Poet

If you can buy only one poetry program this year, buy this odyssey of 31 poets who read, rant, and philosophize about what they do.

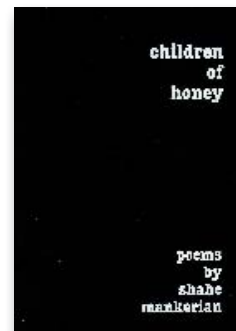
This treasure trove of contemporary poets spans all ages and ethnicities—just having them together here is exciting. Each poet is articulate and passionate.

*Viewers who already love poetry will be grateful to have so much solid poetry at hand and hear it read so well by its creators. Those new to poetry or unfamiliar with the art will get a gentle and stimulating education.*

High school and college students, as well as adults, should respond well to the film as there is so much here to discuss and explore. The bonus features include complete readings. *Recommended for all collections. Poetry lives here!*

-- Ernest Jaeger,  
LIBRARY JOURNAL

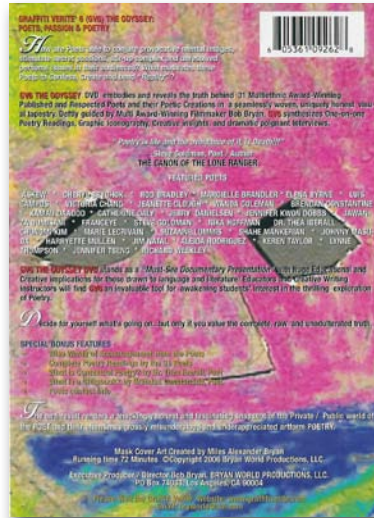
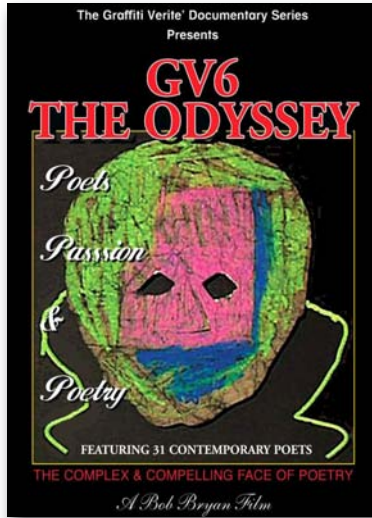
“... What an Odyssey it is! Bravo to you.”



It must've been an incredible journey.”

-- Shahe Mankerian, Poet





The **GV DOCU-SERIES** is currently available online @ **Amazon.com Instant Video** where DVD's can also be purchased for Schools and Libraries domestically and abroad.

**Contact:** BRYAN WORLD PRODUCTIONS  
 PO Box 74033 Los Angeles, CA 90004  
**Website:** www.graffitiverite.com

Telephone (323) 856-9256  
 E-mail: bryworld@aol.com

**OTHER LINKS:**

- **GV6** Review Part 1 <http://www.graffitiverite.com/GV6ReviewsPart1.pdf>
- **GV6** Review Part 3 <http://www.graffitiverite.com/GV6ReviewsPart3.pdf>
- **GV6** Poet's Bios <http://www.graffitiverite.com/GV6PoetBios.html>
- **GV6** Webpage <http://www.graffitiverite.com/GV6-The-Odyssey.htm>
- **GV6** Press Release <http://www.graffitiverite.com/GV6PressRelease.html>

**ORDER YOUR DVDS DIRECT OR THROUGH YOUR LIBRARY DISTRIBUTOR**

Amazon | Baker & Taylor | Follett | Midwest Tape | MVD | OverDrive



**DIRECT ORDERING INFO:** GV eStore | [www.graffitiverite.com/GVPurchaseOrderPPR.pdf](http://www.graffitiverite.com/GVPurchaseOrderPPR.pdf)