

THESE OCCURRENCES

Harold is just 16,
but he's being tried
as an adult along
with eight other West
Sacramento gang members
for murdering Pierre, a
young East Sacramento
man who they said had
bad mouthed their gang.
Police say the gang
had been drinking all
afternoon & had a
15 year old girl set
Pierre up. When another
15 year old member with
a handgun couldn't
shoot, Harold grabbed his
hand & forced the trigger.
These occurrences are
no longer uncommon.
Is this now the
rite of passage
for our youth?

AN ARTIST

I asked Don, who
has been on the
wagon for a year,
why he started drinking
again, & he said
he's short tempered
& wine softens
him, makes him
easier for Vicky
to live with. Then
why did you quit
to begin with I
asked & he said
lack of energy.
He has plenty of
energy now. In
his sly way I
believe he's measuring
wine to fit his mood
just as he measures
each brush stroke
he lays down inside
a chosen canvas.

BAD

I used to lie
about Chuck Keeny,
the kid who busted
my left wrist boxing.
When I got home
I told everyone
he was a tough
kid, which he was,
but I stretched it
by telling friends
he cold cocked two
loud mouths at a
ball game. I thought
making him look bad
would make me
look a little better.

BEFORE ME

I sometimes think
Buffer knows more
than I do. When
I act strangely,
in a way that
would embarrass
me if another
person watched,
he looks at me
thru half-closed
lids, his expression
subdued & tolerant.
He either loves
his human friend
unconditionally or
has lived this
life before me.