

Sense of place evoked in Eric Gudas poetry

Poet Eric Gudas finds inspiration for his poems from recollections of his childhood bedroom to his Hancock Park neighborhood, where he lives with his wife and daughter.

A setting's sights and smells lead him to the emotions. "I get more out of the details than big statements," he says.

His first full-length book—

an 80-page paperback—"Best Western and Other Poems," was recently published.

The title comes from the motel he and his father stayed at during a journey to his grandmother's funeral years ago. It was written at 15, when he embarked on his writing career, said the Maryland native, who is working on his PhD in English at UCLA.

His dissertation is on Southern poet Eleanor Ross Taylor, who turns 90 in June.

"Her language is incredibly compressed, taut dense," he said.

While he favors 20th cen-



POET Eric Gudas in Hancock Park.

Photo by Sarah Riordan

ture literature, he recently taught a class in 19th century American poetry, and also teaches Shakespeare to undergrads.

Whoever the author, poetry speaks to him like no other genre. "You get the feeling the writer is speaking to you," he says.

Gudas has been described as "a dark Whitman chronicling a world of objects made to be thrown away" and a writer of poems which "celebrate our aliveness here on earth and stops time long enough for us to realize it."

He and his wife, animator Alyssa Sherwood, live on Arden Blvd., with daughter Lilly, 5.

"I love the sense of community here," says Eric. "It's a rare part of L.A. where you have actual conversations with people on the street."

Read excerpts from his book, at www.ericgudas.com

