



IMAGE: Daniel Calder

THE SINKING OF THE MV SEWOL

David Starkey

David Starkey served as Santa Barbara's 2009–2011 Poet Laureate. He is Director of the Creative Writing Program at Santa Barbara City College and Co-editor and Publisher of Gunpowder Press, as well as the author of seven full-length poetry collections. Over the past thirty years, he has published more than 500 poems in literary journals such as *American Scholar*, *Georgia Review*, *Prairie Schooner* and *Southern Review*.

In the swift and changing
currents of the Maenggol
Channel, a sharp turn

to starboard, then the ship
listing to port, then hard
back to port. Soon,

the loading bay was flooded,
and the four hundred tons
of iron in the hold—destined

for the naval base—made
righting the ship impossible.
Ah, well, I heard an old man say,

as we watched the news
at LAX while waiting
for our plane, they are only lives

lost. We'll all lose ours someday.
I turned to stare at him,
astonished, and he smiled,

his face heavy with sin,
his eyes like two portholes,
the water rushing in.

